

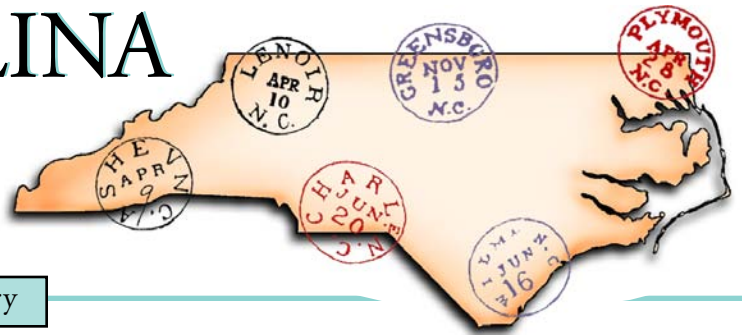
# NORTH CAROLINA POSTAL HISTORIAN

The Journal of North Carolina Postal History

VOLUME 30, NO. 4

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WHOLE 116



Overhills, Another Fort Bragg  
Post Office

North Carolina's  
Registered Letters



Meat Camp,  
North Carolina

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The North Carolina Postal History Society held its annual meeting during CHARPEX 2011 at Charlotte on Saturday, August 6, 2011. At the start of the meeting our new Literature Award was presented to Charles F. (Frank) Hall, Jr. for his article "The Postal History of Fort Bragg, North Carolina," which was selected by the Board of Directors as the best article in Volume No. 29, the four issues of our journal in 2010. There were a number of fine articles in these issues, resulting in a difficult choice for the Board members. Our October 2011 *NCPHS Newsletter* showed pictures of the award and of the presentation of the award to Frank. We will continue to recognize the best contributions to our journal, the *North Carolina Postal Historian*, with this annual award presented each year at our annual meeting.

At the annual meeting, Bill DiPaolo and myself, whose terms as Board members reached an end, were re-elected to new terms on the Board. This was in accordance with the By-Laws that require officers to be members of the Board. Additionally, Roy Elmore was elected to a three-year term on the Board replacing John Allen, who has served for the past nine years as a member of the Board. Thank you John for all those years of service to the society.

With this issue goes the dues notice for 2012. The Board, which also met during CHARPEX 2011, agreed to hold the dues at the very low price of \$15, which actually is less than it costs to produce and mail our journal. We have been able to afford to do this, however, because we receive a large number of contributions from our members above the minimum dues requirement. Those contributions are essential for our continued financial health. I ask all members to consider sending an extra donation with their 2012 dues payment so we can continue producing this fine journal. Please remember to pay you dues promptly.

The status box of the *North Carolina Postmark Catalog Update* (back page) will show more changes. Hoke and Hyde Counties

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have been completed and will be on the Smithsonian National Postal Museum web site by the time you read this. Some additions to "completed" counties with new postmarks and new dates of use also have been made. To date, the postmarks of 48 counties and one large city have been documented. Many of the early counties will require significant changes due to the extensive amounts of modern material available in the collections of the Postmark Collectors Club, but that will have to wait until all the counties have been created. Currently, there are 2,543 pages on-line, with 9,828 markings shown that were not previously documented.

Having selected a new web site designer, work has started on building our web site, but it is going more slowly than I had hoped. My expectation still is that the site will be operating before this year is completed. There is, however, still much work to be done.

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 e-mail 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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# Overhills, Another Fort Bragg Post Office

by Charles F. Hall, Jr.



The Summer 2010 issue of the *North Carolina Postal Historian* featured an article entitled “The Postal History of Fort Bragg.” It reviewed the history of the area now within the boundaries of Fort Bragg from its earliest settlements by the Argyle Scots in the early 1700s through the purchase of the military reservation lands in 1918 and the evolution of Camp Bragg and later, Fort Bragg, into the nation’s largest military post. A total of six discontinued post offices were confirmed within the area originally purchased by the United States for a cantonment and firing area for the army field artillery. These post offices were Munroe (1832-33), which became Argyle within a year (1833/1918), Inverness (1854/1912), Gillisville (1885-96), Endon (1896-1902), Lumberdale (1902-08), and Antonia (1885-96). Another possible post office was Dial (1882-1903) but although it was very close to the post boundaries, its precise location could not be confirmed. Other post offices that served the population of the area later enclosed by Fort Bragg were reviewed. Although they were in close proximity to the boundaries, they were not actually on the military reservation. These were Montrose (1813/1910) and Manchester (1852/ 1948).

Additional research has identified another discontinued post office, named Overhills. It served a large hunting resort and agricultural enterprise owned by prominent northern investors, including the Rockefellers and Harrimans. Figure 1 shows a current North Carolina Highway Map with the Overhills area outlined in green. When the property was put up for sale, the United States Government purchased it in 1996 to enlarge the Fort Bragg reservation. Located in Harnett County, north of the Little River, which was the northern boundary of the post from 1918 until 1996, Overhills contained over 40,000 acres at its peak. It may be best known for its Rockefeller Family associations, but Overhills’ history mirrors the full cultural and commercial chronicle of the Sandhills region.

The first European inhabitants of the Sandhills were Scots and English settlers and the areas they settled were a collection of sandy hills, long leaf pine forests, small streams and pocosins that encompassed an area situated primarily in

Scotland, Robeson, Moore, Cumberland, Harnett, Richmond and Hoke Counties. It did not support intensive agriculture, but it had a great natural resource in the vast long leaf pine forests, which in turn, supported a lucrative and flourishing naval stores and lumbering industry. The long leaf pine, *Pinus Australis*, was ideal for turpentine production. It was more productive than other pitch pine trees. The trees were very tall and could be tapped for the sap by cutting a “vee” shaped trough near the bottom on the tree. Figure 2 illustrates this process in a 1903 stereo view card. Clearly shown are the tools and methods used in collecting crude turpentine. The resin ran down into buckets or specially made clay vessels and transferred to barrels. Another cut would be made above the existing cut each succeeding year to collect sap until the worker could reach no higher. Trees could be tapped for up to 10 years. During the



▲ Figure 1. Fort Bragg depicted on a current North Carolina Highway Map. The Overhills area is the northernmost part and is outlined in bright green.

age of wooden ships, there was great demand for turpentine, tar, pitch and rosin. Turpentine was used not only for naval stores, but in medicines, soap, varnish, paint and ink. There was also a strong market for tall pines for ship masts during the age of sail.

The area that became Overhills was owned by the Scots McDiamid family, which presided over the golden age of the lumbering and naval stores industry. By the end of the 19th century, the increasing prevalence of iron hulled ships and depletion of the long leaf pine forests led to the decline of the



traditional industries that had supported the area for generations. By 1892, the family patriarch, Daniel McDiarmid, had died and the demise of the forest based industries led the family to put their land up for auction.

A period of transition then followed that lasted over a century. A succession of owners oversaw the transition of the property from lumbering and naval stores to hunting preserves, multi-use vacation resorts for wealthy business men and their families and friends to its current role as part of the largest military post in the country, Fort Bragg.

The next owner after the McDiarmid family was the Consolidated Lumber Company. It continued lumbering operations for nine years, followed by English shipping company owner, William Johnston, the first operator who used the property as a hunting preserve. This was a period in which wealthy northern sportsmen developed hunting preserves in the South. Rail travel could bring the owners and their hunting parties from the northern cities quickly and comfortably. The early 1900s witnessed the growth of



▲ **Figure 2.** This stereoview card, copyrighted in 1903 and published by Underwood and Underwood, shows workers collecting pine resin from one of the turpentine orchards on the Sandhills, near Pinehurst. A worker in the background is scraping a tree high above his head to start the resin flow. The men in the foreground are collecting sap from buckets into barrels and loading the barrels onto ox carts for transport to a collection point. Turpentine collecting was one of the principle occupations of the area that became Overhills. (The author's collection)



▲ **Figure 3.** Among the many buildings and facilities of Overhills was the Clubhouse. This grand structure was originally built in 1913 for the Kent-Jordan Company, the predecessor of the Overhills Country Club. It was one a center of activities for the owners' families and guests. Clustered near the Clubhouse were vacation homes for the owners, guest houses, the train station and post office, stables, kennels, recreational facilities, including the Donald Ross golf course, and other support structures. (Courtesy of The North Carolina State Archives)

many bird, waterfowl, fox hunting and big game clubs and preserves in North Carolina and Overhills grew out of this movement. The first step in the development of Overhills was the Croatan Club of Manchester. Manchester was a small community on Little River in Cumberland County, just south of the hunting preserve property. This club consisted of over 20,000 acres that had originally been a part of the McDiarmid property. Wealthy sportsmen, notably William DuPont, invested

in the enterprise. By 1911, a partnership formed by James Francis Jordan and John Kent, a conservationist, purchased the Croatan Club of Manchester property and formed the Overhills Country Club. The owners began to transform part of the mostly timbered property into a club complex containing a clubhouse, golf course, a horse barn and kennels for the hunting dogs. The 18-hole championship golf course was designed by the great Scottish designer, Donald Ross. Figure 3 shows the impressive clubhouse where the investors, their families and guests could further enjoy the pastoral amenities



▲ **Figure 4.** This photograph shows Mr. Rockefeller with two unidentified friends in their fox hunting attire. This attests to the level of sophistication of Overhill's activities. (Courtesy of The North Carolina State Archives)

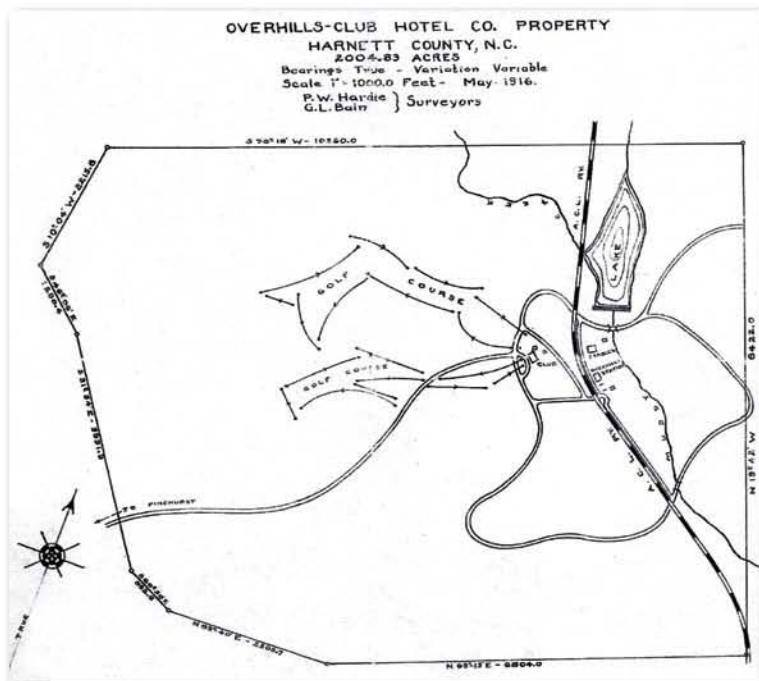
of the resort. In Figure 4 one of the prominent members of the Club is illustrated, Percy Rockefeller.

Although the Jordan-Kent partnership ended with the death of Mr. Kent and Mr. Jordan leaving the company, another prominent figure had visited the property and became interested in its further development. This was Percy A. Rockefeller, a nephew of John D. Rockefeller. Along with diplomat and businessman William Averell Harriman, Mr. Rockefeller formed

illustrates the sophistication of the hunting scene, showing Percy Rockefeller and friends ready for the hunt in fashionable attire.

The Atlantic Coast Line Railroad (ACLRR) ran on a north south axis through Overhills and was ideally located for bringing the owners and their guests as well as freight and baggage to the resort. Figure 5 illustrates the Overhills Clubhouse and central area called “the Hill,” showing the railroad going through the property. The ACLRR had acquired the tracks of the Cape Fear and Yadkin Valley Rail Road and built the railroad station in 1913 during the ownership of the Kent-Jordan Company for the owners and guests. The Atlantic Coast Line Railroad merged with the Seaboard Air Line in 1967 to form the Seaboard Coast Line Railroad. The ACLRR built a small separate freight station about 1920.

Postal service began on March 19, 1914, with the first post office located in the ACLRR passenger station, which it shared with the telegraph office (see Figure 6). The first postmaster was John T. Bowers. This office served the owners, their guests and the estate employees. During the 62-year history of the post office, there were seven postmasters. Originally the mail was picked up “on the fly” by the passing train grabbing the mailbag from an apparatus called a mail crane. The mailbag



▲ **Figure 5.** A map of Overhills depicting the center of the estate, called “the Hill.” It contained the train station (that also housed the original post and telegraph offices), golf course, clubhouse, lake and other important buildings. (Courtesy of North Carolina Archives)

the Overhills Land Company in 1921. The estate then began an era of expansion both in land and sports activities. By 1930, it had grown to about 41,000 acres and featured a wide range of activities: quail, deer and turkey hunting, fox hunting with hounds and horses, golf, polo matches, tennis, clay shooting and a vibrant social scene. Mr. Harriman, who had inherited his father’s railroad fortune, was a successful businessman who later became governor of New York, Secretary of Commerce, Ambassador to Great Britain and the Soviet Union. He was also a candidate for the Democratic Party nomination for President in 1952. He served in a variety of high level diplomatic positions, including Assistant Secretary of State. In addition, he was an avid polo and racing enthusiast and had business interests in several thoroughbred racing stables and breeding stock. He later became interested in skiing and he established Sun Valley Resort in Idaho. Figure 4 vividly



▲ **Figure 6.** This remarkable photograph of the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad Passenger Station was taken about 1924. The telegraph office and the original post office were contained in the passenger station, as confirmed by the “Overhills Post Office” sign. The post office operated here from 1914 until 1944, when the postmaster’s husband, Walter Edward Bruce, Sr., built a small separate post office a short distance from the original one. Seated on the automobile running board are Walter Edward Bruce, Sr., a carpenter for the estate and a valued long term employee, Sabra Coble, wife of Charles Coble, an Overhills employee, and the Coble’s daughter, Katherine. (Courtesy of W.E. Bruce Jr.)





▲ **Figure 7.** The second post office was established in a small structure built for that purpose in 1944 by Mr. Walter Edward Bruce, Jr., husband of the postmaster, Ms. Vernice Bruce. It was a short distance from the original post office that had been in the ACLRR passenger station, and operated until 1976. This photograph depicts the "Overhills Post Office" sign. The sign was later changed to U.S. Post Office. (Courtesy of W.E. Bruce Jr.)

hung from the crane and was snatched by a steel catcher arm on the side of the mail car on the train. This practice had stopped by the time Ms. Vernice H. Bruce became postmaster in 1943 and the mail was transported to and from the post office by vehicle. After Ms. Bruce became the postmaster, her husband, Edward Bruce Sr. built a new building to house the post office. This small building was very close to the railroad station. This office is shown in Figures 7 and 8. It remained there until the post office closed with Ms. Bruce's retirement in 1976. The building was then moved a short distance to another location on the estate and used for storage.

When postal operations ceased on June 18, 1976, federal postal inspectors visited the facility and removed the records, funds and any other materials of interest. All that remained were the counter, mailboxes and items that could not be used in other post offices. The building was not government property and was left to the estate. Although service had been suspended with the retirement of Ms. Bruce, the office was not officially discontinued until March 9, 1979, 33 months later! Suspension dates listed in the *Postal Bulletin* often did not coincide with the dates the offices were removed from the books.

The post office operated as a fourth class post office, the lowest category. Considering that the post office at Overhills operated from 1914 until 1976 and served not only the local inhabitants but also the Overhills business mail, there is a remarkable paucity of postal material from this post office.

The postal history is remarkable in several respects. The post office served not only the sportsmen and their families and

guests, but also the employees and commerce of the estate as well as people living in the vicinity. It is also an example of a small fourth class rural post office in modern times that generated a modest amount of mail,



**Figure 8.** ▲ Another view of the second post office from the late 1940s. Postmaster, Ms. Vernice H. Bruce, sits on the steps. She retired in 1976 and with her retirement, postal operations ceased permanently. (Courtesy of Patricia Penny.)

serving only about 25 families and the Overhills business correspondence. It illustrates a challenge to contemporary postal historians in that my research for this article discovered only one post card with the Overhills cancellation (Figure 9), a cover in Tony Crumbley's collection (Figure 10), and a few covers that are in the family of the last postmaster, Ms. Vernice Bruce. These are a July 1, 1971 first-day cover commemorating the inauguration of the United States Postal Service (Figure 11) and a last day of issue cover (Figure 12).

The *North Carolina Postmark Catalog Update*, maintained and updated by the North Carolina Postal Historical Society, is available through the web site of the National Postal Museum,





**Figure 12. ►**

Last day of service cover cancelled by postmaster Vernice Bruce on June 18, 1976, addressed to Miss Jacquelyn Bruce, Yorktown, Va. Vernice Bruce served as postmaster of Overhills for 33 years, the longest serving of the seven postmasters during 62 years of operations of the Overhills post office. (Courtesy of W. E. Bruce Jr.)



a part of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. The catalog, which strives to document and illustrate every known North Carolina postmark, currently illustrates six cancellations for Overhills ranging from 1921 to 1972. Each is a circular datestamp with four bar cancellations of the 1910, 1931, 1936 and 1963 types. This paucity of postal material is certainly a reflection of low volume and attrition over the years. It is hoped that additional research in business or family archives may uncover more postal material to expand the understanding of the Overhills Post Office and its scope of operations.

Overhills' destiny was to encompass far more than a hunting estate. During the 1920s, it was an exclusive resort for the Rockefellers, Harrimans and other owners, but by the 1930s, it had become a vacation site primarily for the Rockefeller family. It offered the family and their guests a wide range of sporting activities. In an effort to become self-sufficient, a diversified set of commercial enterprises was established. Extensive farming operations were spread throughout the property and tenant houses and barns and other farm buildings were scattered throughout the estate. The Lindley Nursery Company from the Greensboro area opened a branch near the eastern edge of Overhills in 1911 and grew much of their nursery stock there until it went out of business in 1932 during the Depression. They shipped merchandise from the Overhills ACLRR freight station. The Lindleys also had a home at Overhills.

Ms. Isabel Rockefeller developed an interest in assisting in the prevention of tuberculosis. She was possibly inspired by the incidence of that prevalent disease, which at the time was difficult to treat until the advent of modern drugs and by a Tuberculosis Sanatorium, located in nearby Hoke County, adjacent to Fort Bragg. Originally named Sanitarium, it had its own post office that operated from 1914 until 1948, when it was renamed McCain Sanitarium for Dr. Paul P. McCain, a prominent superintendent. To promote respiratory health, Ms. Rockefeller established the Hope Farm Preventorium as a facility for young people from homes where a parent had tuberculosis. The Preventorium, as the name implies, offered a healthy diet and lifestyle to prevent the spread of the disease to the children. The Preventorium hospital was located in the

former home of the Lindleys, who had operated the nursery.

Some property was sold over the years. In 1934, Percy Rockefeller died and his estate was settled in 1938. In the same year, the Overhills Land Company sold about three fourths of the property to help pay taxes and raise capital. Overhills, Inc. was formed in 1938 to manage that part of the property used by the Rockefeller family and Overhills Farms, Inc., which was formed also in 1938 to oversee the property's farming operations. During the next five decades, Overhills continued to serve as a Rockefeller family resort and additional facilities were constructed, notably Birdsong House. Its 20 plus rooms were used by the Rockefeller family along with Croatan, another mansion, that was constructed. Both had indoor swimming pools. The farming operations were managed under the sharecropping system until the 1970s when large scale corporate farming was introduced. Overhills Farms, Inc. produced cotton, tobacco, pigs, cattle, and soybeans. Timbering was again carried out and during World War II, turpentine was produced. In 1986, Avery Rockefeller, who had assumed the management of the property in 1938, died. Family interest in the property declined and by the 1990s, the property was open for sale.

When the decision was made to sell Overhills, Congress appropriated \$15,000,000 in 1993 to purchase part of the property. The purchase was concluded in 1997 and Overhills changed again, this time for use as a training area for Fort Bragg. Only about 11,000 acres of the original 41,000 acres were left when the property was acquired by Fort Bragg.

Following the purchase of the property by the United States government, the historic properties have been unoccupied. The reservation is used only for military activities and is not open to the public without permission. This area of the North Carolina Sandhills has witnessed an extraordinary cavalcade of history, but the physical and architectural artifacts are slowly



receding into the shrub oak and pines of the pre-turpentine days. Overhills has come full circle and has transitioned from virgin long-leaf forest to turpentine orchards to sportsman's club to family retreat to forest again. The halcyon days of Overhills and its thriving recreational and commercial operations are fondly remembered by the employees who often lived there with their families for many years as well as the owners and guests who once enjoyed the splendid social scene, rustic beauty and serenity of another era.

Overhills survives as a place name on period maps and in the memories and photographs of those who visited, lived and worked there. The archives of the Overhills Land Company now reside in the collections of the North Carolina Archives and History. The Fort Bragg Cultural Resources Program has fortunately recorded and published the Overhills oral history for posterity. The postal history of Overhills is another window into that unique piece of North Carolina's past and it is hoped that as additional postal material from Overhills is located, the postal significance of this remarkable episode in the North Carolina Sandhills will be expanded. ■

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## New Markings

The cover shown in Figure 1 illustrates a new marking not previously reported. The cover was submitted by Jack Scott of Raleigh. The year is not shown on this envelope from Yanceyville (Caswell County) to Rapid Ann Station, Culpepper County, Virginia, but we know that it has to be during the period 1857-61, when the perforated 3¢ stamp was used. Note that the spelling of the 25.5 mm circular datestamp is "YANCYVILLE," not the regular town name of "YANCEYVILLE." It is very easy to miss the fact that the town name is misspelled. This is the second postmark variety with the misspelled name that we have recorded for Yanceyville. The first one is shown in the *North Carolina Postmark Catalog Update* as Type 2, a 32 mm diameter circular datestamp. Recorded examples of the larger circular datestamp have been seen with the dates 18 December 1857 and 5 September 1858. The larger datestamp is superimposed on the cover illustrated to show the difference.



**Figures 1. ▲**  
Newly reported Yanceyville postmark misspelled "YANCYVILLE" on an undated envelope from the period 1857-61. Superimposed is another larger misspelled circular datestamp of Yanceyville in the *North Carolina Postmark Catalog Update*.

## North Carolina's Registered Letters

by Tony L. Crumbley



A formal registering system for valuable letters did not come into being in the U.S. Postal System until 1847. Prior to this, it is obvious that money and other valuable items were transported by the U.S. mail system. These items were carried at the trust of the postal employees.

In the *Postal Laws and Regulations* of 1847, we find the first mention of a need to “record” valuable mail.

*Sec. 218. Money, or other valuable things sent in the mail, is at the risk of the owner. But if it be lost, the Department will make every effort in its power to discover the cause, and, if there has been a theft, to punish the offender.*

*Sec. 219. In every case of loss by mail ... The Department should be informed without delay, of all the circumstances connected with it. Particular care should be taken to state the name of the office in which the letter was placed, the day on which it was so placed, and whether by the writer himself, or by another person, the day on which, if at all, it was actually mailed, the names of the writer and the person addressed, the amount, and if practicable, a particular description of the valuable enclosures, the amount of postage marked on the letter, and whether unpaid or paid, the office to which addressed, and whether mailed direct thereto, or to another office for distribution, and the route by which it was sent, with any further particulars that may aid the Department in its investigation respecting the cause of loss.*

*Sec. 220. No reported loss will be investigated by an agent, unless satisfactory evidence is produced, either by the certificate of the postmaster, or some other disinterested individual that the money or other thing was deposited in the post office.*

An 1845 Post Office Department directive has been cited as the reason postmasters began an unofficial registration of letters of value before official registration became a service. Proof of mailing became an important issue and tracing a letter's path was important.

Some postmasters marked letters of value and some would indicate money was enclosed. Others marked on the way bill accompanying the mail between post offices that the letter was of value. A few postmasters even marked covers with a bold

“R” to indicate they were recorded. The earliest of these markings are from Pensacola, Florida, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Natick, Massachusetts and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, each in 1845. Figure 1 illustrates a folded letter mailed on Christmas day, December 25, 1846, from Charleston, South Carolina, to Philadelphia. The large blue “R” was struck at Philadelphia showing the letter was a recorded letter. Postmasters often would keep notes in their official registers of letters of value that passed through their office.



**Figure 1. ▲**  
December 25, 1846, folded letter from Charleston, South Carolina, to Philadelphia marked with the large blue “R” when received in Philadelphia as a “recorded” letter, a predecessor to registered mail.

An act passed March 3, 1853, gave the Postmaster General authority to develop a uniform plan for registering letters of value within the mails. On March 3, 1855, an act was passed that established the formal registration of letters within the U.S. Postal System. This act would officially take effect July 1, 1855.

With this official service came the first fees charged by postmasters specifically for this service. Effective July 1 a surcharge of 5 cents in cash was added to each registered letter. Postmasters were “forbidden to mark any letter of entry of any kind of registered mail.” Some postmasters ignored this however.



The additional fees for domestic registered mail with no indemnity in the early years were as follows:

1845 through June 30, 1855	No fee
July 1, 1855 - June 30, 1863	5 cents (cash)
July 1, 1863 - May 31, 1867	20 cents (cash)
June 1, 1867 - December 31, 1868	20 cents (stamps)
January 1, 1869 - December 31, 1873	15 cents (stamps)
January 1, 1874 - June 30, 1875	8 cents
July 1, 1875 - December 31, 1892	10 cents
January 1, 1893 - October 31, 1909	8 cents

Notes: Prior to June 1, 1867, payment was made in cash with no stamp added. Beginning July 1, 1898, indemnity value was placed on the registered letters.

When the Confederate Postal System began, it adopted all the Union procedures. One would assume this would have included registered mail. No records exist, however, that a formal system for registered mail existed in the Confederacy.

The 1857 *Postal Laws & Regulations* provided that “all registered letters are, before mailing, to be numbered on the upper left hand corner; their number to correspond to those on the letter bills.” The *Postal Laws & Regulations* never required that the word “Registered” or its equivalent be marked on the letter. Some postmasters, however, used a handstamp containing this word or wrote it on the letter.



▲ **Figure 3.** Registered letter posted May 13, 1869, by U.S. Internal Revenue assessor in Wilson to Oxford (Granville County). The IRS assessors had the franking privilege only if writing to another assessor, thus the need for the 3 cents postage with the 15 cents registration fee, Scott #77 and #114 and manuscript “Reg N 47.”

The 5 cent fee did not provide any indemnification in the event of loss of the letter, as is now the case. A notation on a



▲ **Figure 2.** Second type and only one pictured in Milgram's book from an unknown source, a June 12, 1870, cover from New Bern to Wilson (Wilson County), paid 3 cents domestic rate and 15 cents registration fee with black straight-line REGISTERED handstamp.

cover indicating that a registration fee had been paid is extremely rare. It was frequently the practice in Canada to mark MONEY LETTER on valuable mail. At a few offices in the United States these words also were used. Confusion sometimes occurs because registered letters address to Canada were occasionally marked MONEY LETTER when they entered the mails at a Canadian exchange office. These are not U.S. postal markings.

Shortly after the 1855 act took place, registered handstamps began to show up across the system. The earliest recorded example in North Carolina is listed in *Simpson's U.S. Postal Markings 1851 - 1861* as a blue straight-line, 38½ x 5 mm marking of New Bern, used from 1855 - 1857. The author has not, however, seen an example of this marking.

Figure 2, illustrated in *United States Registered Mail, 1845-1870* by James W. Milgram, M.D., shows a New Bern cover posted June 12, 1870, with a black straight-line, 41 x 6 mm registered marking. This is the only other marking listed from North Carolina in Milgram's census of registered markings up to 1870.

In looking at the available knowledge of registered covers from North Carolina, it is quite obvious much work is yet to be done. In the author's collection of more than 10,000 North Carolina covers, there are fewer than 100 registered covers, an indication of their scarcity.

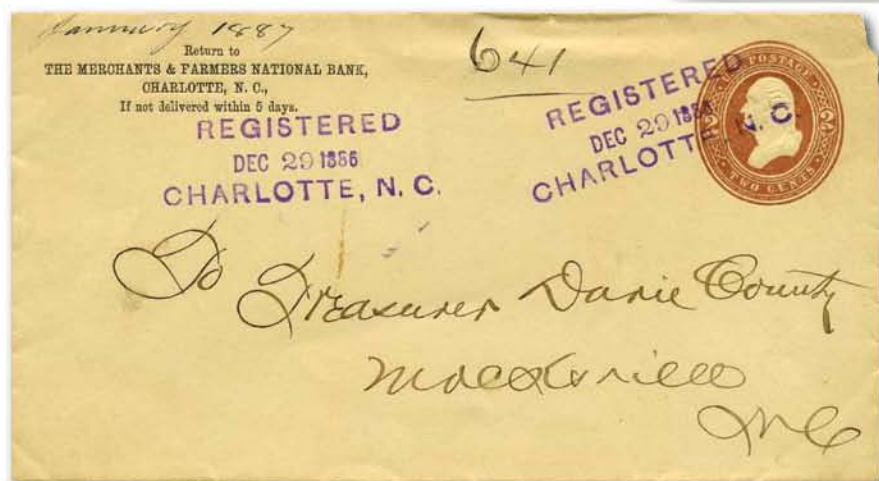
Figure 3 shows the earliest example of registered mail in this holding. The cover was posted May 13, 1869, from Wilson to Oxford (Granville County). No earlier example is in the census records of the North Carolina Postal History Society. The location of the 1856 issue

New Bern cover listed in *Simpson's U.S. Postal Markings 1851 - 1861* is unknown.



◀ **Figure 4.** March 11, 1877, registered letter from Lexington (Davidson County) to New Market, Virginia, paid 3 cents domestic rate plus 10 cents registration fee and marked in manuscript "Reg Noi. 63."

**Figure 5.** ▶ April 12, 1878, registered letter from Raleigh (Wake County) to Mocksville (Davie County) with purple oval handstamp showing registration. The stamps have been removed from this envelope. To the left is the registration number in pen, "90."



◀ **Figure 6.** Three-lined registered handstamp of Charlotte on December 20, 1886, cover to the Treasurer of Davie County in Mocksville. Front of envelope shows only domestic postage paid with 1883 Plimpton issue stamped envelope.

**Figure 6a.** ▶ Reverse of stamped envelope shows 10 cent registration fee paid with horizontal strip of five 2 cents stamps, Scott #210. The handstamped name on the reverse is not a Charlotte postmaster but may be an assistant in charge of registered mail.







◀ **Figure 7.** Single straight-line, black REGISTERED NO. handstamp used in Bowman's Bluff (Henderson County) on November 19, 1888, to Whiteside Cove (Jackson County).

Postage for the registered fee was placed on the reverse of the cover.

Figure 7 illustrates a single straight-line, black REGISTERED NO. handstamp used in Bowman's Bluff (Henderson County) in 1888. This is an indication that even small town post offices used registered handstamps.

In 1870 the registration fee was changed to 10 cents. Covers bearing this registration fee become more common in North Carolina. Figure 4 is an example from Lexington (Davidson County) to New Market, Virginia, with a manuscript registered marking, "Reg No. 63."

The first registered handstamp marking in the author's collection is from Raleigh (Wake County) dated April 12, 1878 (Fig. 5). This purple oval is known only on a cover piece. The stamps have been removed.

By 1886 Charlotte (Mecklenburg County) had a three-line registered handstamp of the type that would become common across the United States (Figures 6 and 6a). By 1889 the registration marking was changed to an oval cogwheel.



▲ **Figure 8.** Purple oval registered datestamp used on June 28, 1889, cover from Raleigh to Reidville, South Carolina. Stamps paid 2 cents domestic rate plus 10 cents registration fee. The registration number was written to the left of the stamps, "1227."



▲ **Figure 9.** July 7, 1886, registered letter from Soap Stone Mount (Randolph County) to New York City showing blue control number applied at New York. This control and the amount paid are the only indications of registration.

Raleigh also used a purple oval handstamp to show a letter was registered. Figure 8 is an example posted June 28, 1889, to Reidville, South Carolina.

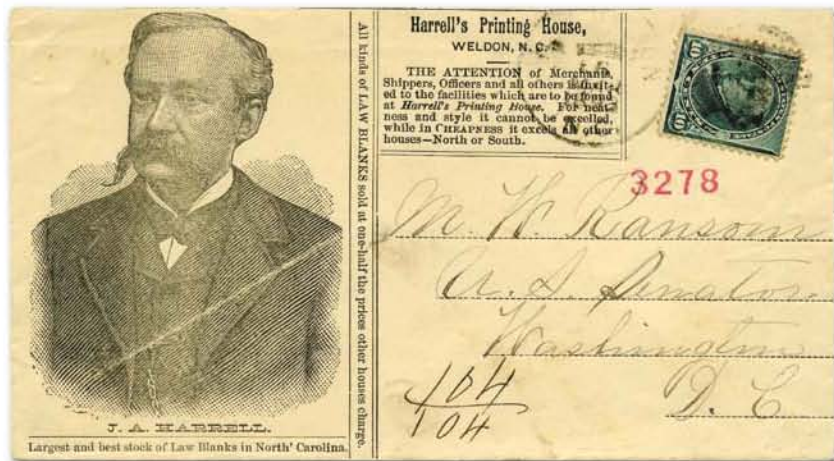
Illustrated in Figures 9, 10 and 11 are the introduction of a new registration process, the handstamping of a control number by the receiving post office. New York and Washington, D.C. used a numbering handstamp to record each new registered letter. New York used blue ink on the July 7, 1886, cover from Soap Stone Mount (Randolph County) and purple ink on the November 24, 1887, cover from Wallace (Duplin County). Washington, D.C. used a bright red ink to show the registration number of the March 16, 1893 cover from Weldon (Halifax County).

**Figure 10.** ▶

November 24, 1887, registered letter from Wallace (Duplin County) to New York City. Here the registry control number struck at New York was in purple ink, number 92059. The letter was paid 2 cents domestic rate plus 10 cents registration fee.

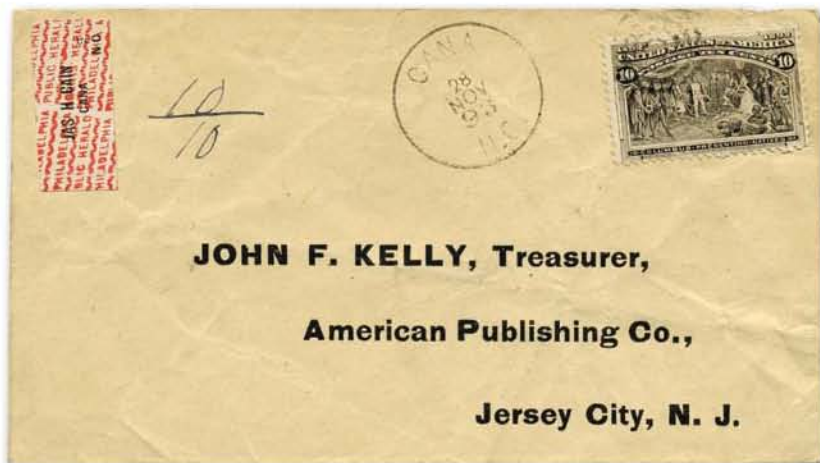


◀ **Figure 11.** March 16, 1893, registered envelope with advertising of Harrell's Printing House in Weldon (Halifax County) to Washington, D.C. with registry control number applied at Washington, D.C. in bright red ink, number 3278. 2 cents domestic rate plus 8 cents registration fee paid with single a 10 cent stamp.



**Figure 12.** ▶

Posted from Cana (Davie County) on November 28, 1893, this registered envelope to Jersey City, New Jersey, was paid 10 cents for 2 cents domestic rate plus 8 cents registration fee. Red and white label in the upper left corner for the *Public Herald* newspaper of Philadelphia with the Cana postmaster's name printed on it, James H. Cain.



On January 1, 1893, the registry rate was lowered to 8 cents plus the necessary postage. Figures 12 and 13 show examples of this new rate using the then current Columbian Exposition stamps. Figure 12, posted from Cana (Davie County) used the 10 cent stamp. Note the red and white label in the upper left corner for the Public Herald newspaper of Philadelphia with the Cana postmaster's name printed on it, James H. Cain of Cana. The postmaster's middle initial was incorrectly printed in *Post Offices and Postmasters of North Carolina*. Figure 13 is an interesting cover from Hinton (Guilford County) on December 5, 1895, to Salem (Forsyth

County) in that it has no indication that it is a registered cover other than the added postage.

Figure 14 is an example of a large oval handstamp used in Mt. Airy (Surry County) on a December 30, 1897, advertising cover to Mocksville (Davie County). This cover was posted by a visitor in town who placed a return address of Hartford, Connecticut, in the upper left corner.

Two control number markings can be found on the cover in Figure 15, added to the February 25, 1905, Charlotte, registered





◀ **Figure 13.** December 5, 1895 registered letter from Hinton (Guilford County) to Salem (Forsyth County) with 2 cents Columbian stamp paying domestic rate plus 8 cents small Bank Note stamp paying registration fee. No indication letter is registered except for extra payment.

**Figure 14.** ▶ Large oval registered handstamp used in Mt. Airy (Surry County) on a December 30, 1897, post card to Mocksville (Davie County). This card was posted by a visitor in town who placed a return address of Hartford, Connecticut, in the upper left corner.



◀ **Figure 15.** Two control number markings are on this registered letter of February 25, 1905, from Charlotte to Boston with a purple double circle registered marking along with the black oval, "dumb" Charlotte postmark. The blue "948" control mark was placed on the cover in Charlotte and the purple "48502" was added in Boston.

cover with a purple double circle registered marking along with the black oval, dateless Charlotte postmark. The blue 948 control mark was placed on the cover in Charlotte and the purple 48502 was added in Boston.

By the 1920s, most offices in the state were using boxed registered markings. Figure 16 shows the use of these boxed

registered markings on an April 1912 cover from Greensboro (Guilford County) to Canton (Haywood County) and returned as an unclaimed letter. The use of these boxed registered markings would continue until the introduction of the tear-away registered stickers. ■

## Bibliography:

Alexander, Thomas J. *Simpson's U.S. Postal Markings 1851-1861*. Columbus, OH: U.S. Philatelic Classics Society, Inc., 1979.

Beecher, Henry W. and Anthony S. Wawrakiewicz. *U.S. Domestic Postal Rates 1872 - 1999*. Portland, OR: Cama Publishing Company, 1999.

Milgram, James W., M.D. *United States Registered Mail, 1845 -1870*. North Miami, FL: David G. Phillips Publishing Co., Inc., 1998.



Figure 16. ▲

April 1912 registered letter from the United States Marshal's office in Greensboro (Guilford County) to Canton (Haywood County) and returned as an unclaimed letter. Boxed registered handstamps now in use.

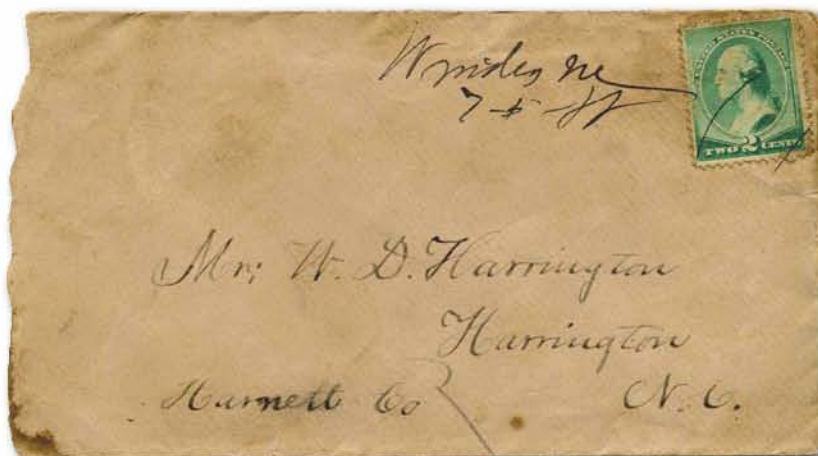
## Mystery Cover



Only one member responded to the mystery cover in the last issue. A correct answer from Greg Ciesielski was received saying this 24 July 1864 lady's envelope originated in Leaksville (Rockingham County). According to William S. Powell's *The North Carolina Gazetteer*, in 1967 Leaksville was merged with Draper and Spray to form the town of Eden.

Can you locate the office shown by the manuscript cancel on this envelope dated 5 July 1888?

Send your answer to Tony Crumbley or Dick Winter.





# U.S. Naval Lyceum and Midshipman Archibald MacRae

by Richard F. Winter



Figure 1 illustrates an interesting cover from the collection of Vernon Stroupe, a folded letter dated 14 April 1839 addressed to Midshipman Archibald MacRae, U.S. Ship *Cyane*, Mediterranean Squadron,

17 November 1855 of causes that I have been unable to learn. When this letter was written he was attached to the 20-gun U.S. Sloop *Cyane* serving in the Mediterranean Squadron. The squadron used Port Mahon in the Spanish Balearic Islands, the first American overseas naval base, for resupply and ship repair. The U.S. Sloop *Cyane* had departed for the Mediterranean on 24 July 1838 and returned back to the States on 16 May 1841. By 1845, MacRae was stationed on board the 18-gun U.S. Sloop *Boston*, operating first with the Brazil Squadron and later assigned to blockade the Mexican east coast. However, the U.S. Sloop *Boston*, on her way to join the blockading squadron, was wrecked on Eleuthra Island in the Bahamas during a squall on 15 November 1846. The ship was a total loss, but all hands on board were saved.

Later MacRae participated in the U.S. Naval Astronomical Expedition to the southern hemisphere during 1849-52, a scientific and exploring expedition commissioned by the U.S. Congress and conducted by the Department of the Navy to gather astronomical data in Santiago, Chile. During this expedition, Lieutenant MacRae was dispatched to explore the area from Uspalatta Pass in the Andes Mountains near the

Chilean border to Buenos Aires in 1852-1853, during which he collected scientific and anthropological artifacts.

Why was this letter sent to Brooklyn? The Naval Lyceum, located in the Brooklyn Navy Yard was an officers' school established by Commodore Matthew C. Perry in 1833. It was a place for self-study and included a library, reading room, and lecture hall. At the time midshipmen typically received instruction at sea or on receiving ships at navy yards, but the Lyceum provided an academic setting, which some in the Navy opposed.



**Figure 2.** ▲ Black oval handstamp of U.S. Naval Lyceum, struck on reverse of Figure 1.

Port Mahon. In the lower left corner are routing instructions that read, "Care of the/U.S. Naval Lyceum/Brooklyn/N. York." The letter was posted at Wilmington (New Hanover County) on 20 April 1839, shown by a red orange circular datestamp of Wilmington, type 7, from *Post Offices and Postmasters of North Carolina, Colonial to USPS*, Volume 2. To the right was a red orange handstamp PAID and immediately to the right of that "25" in red ink to show that 25¢ had been paid for a single-sheet letter going a distance of more than 400 miles to Brooklyn, New York. So, the letter was fully paid to Brooklyn, but no further.

On the reverse of the cover is a 34 x 26 mm black oval handstamp with a full-rigged sailing ship in the center and the wording "U.S. NAVAL LYCEUM" around the circumference. Figure 2 illustrates a clear image of the marking taken from the *American Stampless Cover Catalog*, Volume 2, to show the details as the marking seldom is as clear on covers. I will discuss this marking and its significance a little later.

The addressee of this letter joined the U.S. Navy in the late 1830s and became a Midshipman on 26 January 1837. He advanced to Passed Midshipman on 29 June 1843, and to Lieutenant on 25 June 1850. He died only a few years later on

One of the services performed by the Lyceum was that of a forwarding agent for mail to naval personnel in overseas destinations. The Lyceum knew where the naval vessels were operating and how to get mail to them. Mail from the Lyceum was sent in closed dispatch bags or parcels and shows no markings other than U.S. postal markings to get the mails to the Lyceum, along with the Lyceum handstamp. The oval sailing ship handstamp of the Lyceum used at the Brooklyn Navy Yard is not a rare marking, but clear examples are highly sought by maritime collectors and command high prices. ■

## A Little on Meat Camp, North Carolina

by Scott Troutman



When a dealer at a small show here in Pennsylvania had in his stock the cover shown in Figure 1 from Meat Camp, N.C., I was like Rick on the “Pawn Stars” television show in that “I just had

So the meat camp was made to store their goods until they were finished and ready to head back home.

According to information from “History of Watauga County, North Carolina,” the meat camp had a “cabin in which the old

hunters stored their meat and hides when on hunts in this region, [which] stood in a rocky patch just above the bend of Moretz’s mill pond.” The meat camp predates Moretz’s Mill (grist and linseed oil) as John Moretz and his family didn’t come there until 1839. Moretz’s mill dam was made of stone, and is said still to be there, but the mill burned down in 1847. He rebuilt it but in the end tore it down in 1885 when he moved to Deep Gap.

Having your meat camp near a stream made good sense. Meat could be sunk in the cold water of the stream to preserve it until it could be further prepared. That which you wanted to take home

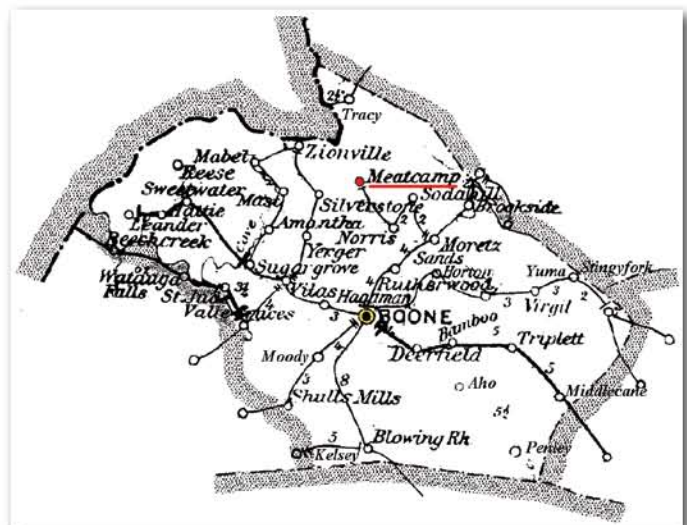


▲ **Figure 1.** June 10, 1908, cover from Meat Camp (Watauga County) to Metrose, Pennsylvania, with 2¢ domestic postage canceled with a 1906 Type A/1 4-Bar cancel.

to have it.” With a strange name like that there just had to be a story. And there was.

Meat Camp is located about six miles due north of Boone in Watauga County (Figure 2). Boone of course is named for Daniel Boone and it turns out that Meat Camp was named for a meat camp that Daniel Boone had nearby. Daniel Boone did not live at Boone, but rather along the Yadkin River to the east. His old homestead is under Kerr Lake if I remember correctly.

I knew from history books that Daniel Boone would go into the Western mountains of North Carolina, Tennessee, and Kentucky, with a group of hunting buddies and they would shoot as many as 1,000 deer at a time. These trips could last weeks or months. In those days the money was in selling the deer hides, which would fetch about a dollar each. I have been told that is why to this day a dollar bill is called a “buck.” Even if you are as good with a long rifle as Daniel was said to be, it takes a while to accumulate a 1,000 or so deer.



▲ **Figure 2.** North Carolina Post Roads Map of 1911 for Watauga County showing Meat Camp in red about six miles north of Boone.



would have been smoked or turned into jerky unless it was winter and cold enough to freeze. "History of Watauga County, North Carolina" indicates the meat camp was "sort of a primitive packing house" and the creek assumed the name Meat Camp Creek.

So that is the story. The town of Meat Camp had a post office beginning May 7, 1860, which was operated by Edward Hodges. He continued to operate it as a Confederate post office during the Civil War. Many of the Moretz family served as postmasters over the years. The post office was discontinued July 5, 1943, and the town is pretty much gone today.

Through the courtesy of Tony Crumbley, we are able to show three additional covers from Meat Camp (Figures 3 through 5). ■

#### Bibliography

1. "History of Watauga County, North Carolina," [www.newriversnotes.com/nc/wauhis.htm](http://www.newriversnotes.com/nc/wauhis.htm).



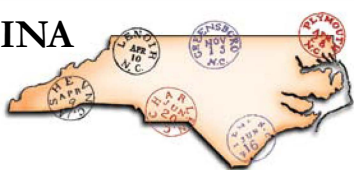
◀ **Figure 3.** October 19, 1901, stamped envelope of 1899 Plimpton issue from Meat Camp to New Market, Virginia. Letter registered and paid 8¢ registration fee along with 2¢ domestic rate.

**Figure 4.** ▶  
1902 McKinley 1¢ postal card from Meat Camp on January 9, 1908, to Tyrone, Pennsylvania. Cancellation same type as in Figure 1.



◀ **Figure 5.** August 12, 1929, 1¢ postal card from Meat Camp to Oakland, California with a 1925 Type C/1 4-Bar cancellation.

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## North Carolina Postmark Catalog Update

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**Alamance through Hyde**

Minor changes have been made to some of the other counties

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