Postal History of
Wake Forest
University

Postal History of
Columbus County

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

IN THIS ISSUE

At this close of another holiday season, I begin my message to you again. My hope is that your holiday season was enjoyable and that the New Year brings good health and philatelic enjoyment. This begins the 31st year of the North Carolina Postal History Society. We continue to show growth in our membership as well as growth in the research and knowledge that we are able to pass on to the public about North Carolina postal history. The editors are very appreciative of the support of our authors, who make this possible.

One of the things we want for the future is to get our auction on the web site. The preliminary work has begun. It is not a simple process to create the software for the numerous features of a successful on-line auction site; but, this is our goal. Hopefully, it will be completed and tested during the next few months. When we are satisfied that it will work properly, we notify everyone and resume the auction.

Congratulations to Bill DiPaolo, who received a Gold and the U.S. Philatelic Classics Society medal at FLOREX 2013 (December 6-8) for his exhibit "The Gentleman from Pennsylvania." This under-appreciated exhibit tells the story of the life and times of James Buchanan through philatelic items of the period.

A short article appears on page 11 that discusses Village Post Offices. The article includes the locations that the Post Office Department has published for North Carolina Village Post Offices. We think this subject would make an interesting article of modern North Carolina postal history. Hopefully, one of our readers will look into this further, providing pictures from some of these post offices and show the postmarks that can be found from them.

The status box of the *North Carolina Postmark Catalog Update* (back page) will show more changes. A new PDF for New Hanover County and a separate one for the city of Wilmington have been prepared and added to our web site under the North Carolina Postmark Catalog Update project. Wilmington joins Asheville, Charlotte, and Greensboro as separate PDFs. The updated postmarks of 65 counties and four cities now have been documented. Additional changes to previously completed counties continue as time is available. Remember, if you want to know if a county has had changes made since you last viewed it, check the date in parenthesis after the name of the file posted. Also, the date of a revision appears in the lower left corner of the first page (map page) of each county. Counties that show only a month and year have not had additional updates. Currently, there are 3,635 pages on-line, with 14,128 markings that were not documented in the original catalog.

A large number of our members have paid their dues for 2014, with many contributing a little extra as sustaining members. The early and generous response is very encouraging. The extra donations help us with the increased costs of providing the journal. Please remember to pay your dues now if you have not already done so. Dues for 2014 remain at $15 for the year, which includes four issues of our journal, the *North Carolina Postal Historian*. Donations above the regular membership amount are deductible as we are a non-profit, educational organization. All contributions will be very helpful to our society.

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@triad.rr.com, or write to me. My mailing address appears at the bottom of this page.

Dick Winter

A Postal History of Wake Forest University

by Tony L. Crumbley

In William Powell's chronological listing of North Carolina colleges, Wake Forest University is listed as the sixth college to open within the state. Surprisingly, four of these six colleges are still operating today – Salem College, Louisburg College, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and Wake Forest.

The beginning of Wake Forest College was driven by a movement within the 1830 Baptist State Convention. A leading motive of the convention was to serve as an organization for establishing an institution that would provide education under Baptist guidance.

At the March 26, 1830, Baptist State Convention, 14 men (seven ministers and seven laymen) appointed Samuel Waite, a graduate of Columbia College, New York, and pastor of the Newbern Baptist Church, to be its agent to explain to churches, associations and individuals the need for a college to provide "an education in the liberal arts in fields requisite for gentlemen."

For three years, Samuel Waite traveled over the state in his wagon with his wife and daughter by his side. He traveled to churches and associations as well as individual homes.

He is credited with speaking to over 15,000 Baptists during his travels. Afterwards he reported back to the State Convention that there was sufficient support for a school.

In 1820, Dr. Calvin Jones purchased 615 acres of land in Wake Forest Township. Dr. Jones built a two-story farmhouse

▲ **Figure 1.** March 28, 1823, folded letter from Wake Forest to Louisburg (Franklin County) showing free frank of postmaster Dr. Calvin Jones during the first year of post office operation. Previously, Jones had been postmaster of Smithfield (Johnston County) from 1796 until 1799 and Falls of Neuse (Wake County) briefly in early 1830 before being re-appointed postmaster of Wake Forest again on 8 February 1830, where he served until 1832.

Figure 2. ▲
November 12, 1829, Wake Forest to Columbia, South Carolina, another cover with the free frank of postmaster Calvin Jones. He was considered one of the founders of the North Carolina Medical Society. After moving to Raleigh in 1803 he was very active there and served, among other activities, as mayor of Raleigh from 1807 until 1809.

on the land, where he practiced and taught medicine. On January 3, 1823, he was appointed the first postmaster of Wake Forest. This is the same Calvin Jones who had served as postmaster in Smithfield (Johnston County) from 1796 until 1799. Later he was postmaster of Falls of Neuse (Wake County), when the Wake Forest office was moved there briefly in early 1830, returning back to Wake Forest in February 1830. He served as Adjutant General of the State Militia for five years, including the period of the War of 1812. He remained as Wake Forest postmaster until 1832. Figure 1 is a postmaster free frank of Calvin Jones dated March 28, 1823. Another Jones free frank on a folded letter dated November 12, 1829, is illustrated in Figure 2.

In 1832, Calvin Jones decided to put his property on the market. He placed an ad in the Raleigh newspaper the same year the Baptists decided to purchase land for a new college. John Purefoy, a Baptist minister, learned of the property and convinced the North Carolina Baptist

Convention to purchase the farm for $2,000, on which to establish the school it had been planning. The school was named "Wake Forest Institute" and was located 15½ miles north northeast of the capitol building in Raleigh. Figure 3 shows the Wake Forest Township from an 1871 map of Wake County published by Nichols & Gorman in conjunction with the county surveyor, Fendol Bevers. This township is in the northeastern part of Wake County alongside Franklin County. The red arrow shows the location of Wake Forest Institute (called Wake Forest College in 1871) alongside the Raleigh & Gaston Railroad line, and immediately to the south, the railroad station ("depot" on the map) at Forestville. The school opened to boys in February 1834. Samuel Waite was elected president of the new institution.

Seventy-two students were enrolled by the end of the first year, so architect John Berry of Hillsborough was hired to enlarge the facility. Berry designed three brick buildings and one classroom structure to replace the Calvin Jones House (which was relocated) and two professors' houses. All three buildings were constructed between 1835 and 1838. The professors' houses, known as the North Brick House and the South Brick House because of their locations, were first occupied by Professors C. W. Skinner and Amos J. Battle. The classroom building burned in 1933 and the North Brick House was demolished in 1936, leaving the South Brick House as the only survivor of the early Barry-designed campus buildings.

Figure 4 is an interesting letter dated June 7, 1835, from a student at Wake Forest Institute to his father in Murfreesborough (Hertford County), who had asked about the state of religion at the school. The son's response was "the state of religion in school at present is very dull and no signs for a revival. We have preaching twice a day on Sundays and prayer meetings nightly." The student, Thomas Jenkins, goes on to ask for clothes but surprisingly, no money.

The Raleigh & Gaston Railroad, constructed along the eastern border of the school property, was completed in 1840. The closest railroad station to the school was in Forestville, so students got off the train there and walked to the Institute. Due to the railroad, the school grew rapidly, changing its name in 1838 to "Wake Forest College."

Figure 5 is a cover posted from Wake Forest on August 11, 1838, to Mrs. David White in Concord, New Hampshire, from John B. White. The dateline reads "Wake Forest Institute." John White had become the math instructor at the school. He
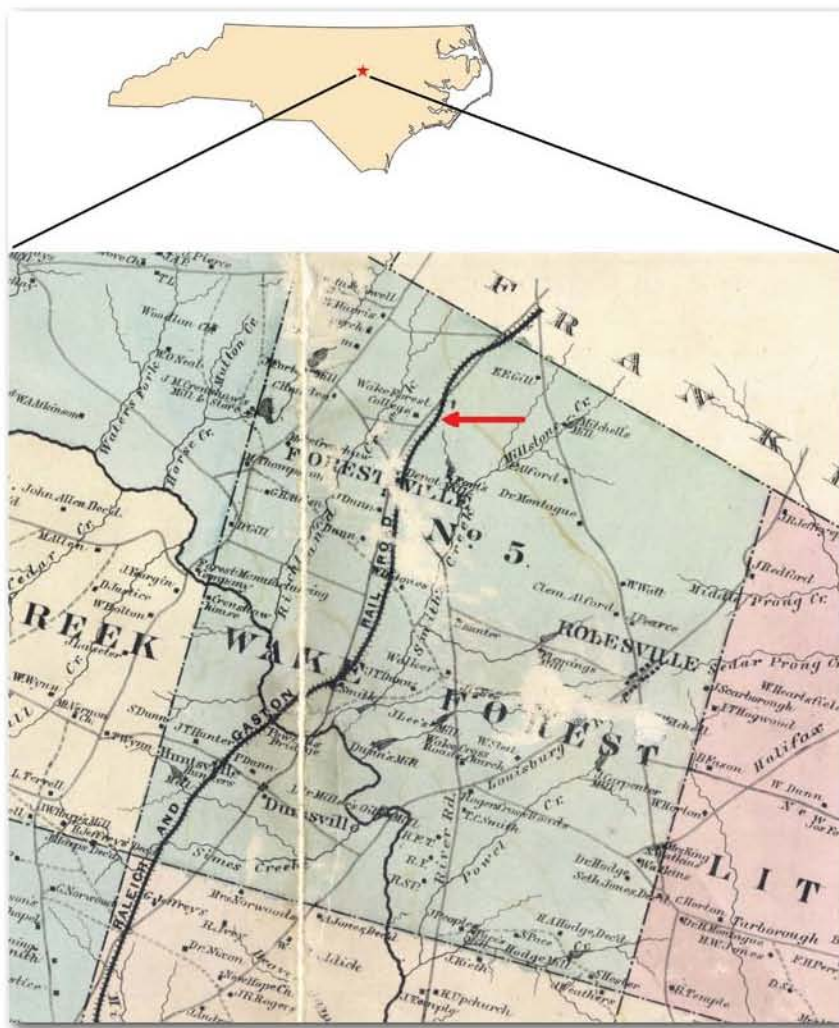
▲ **Figure 3.** Wake Forest Township from an 1871 map of Wake County. The red arrow shows Wake Forest College alongside the Raleigh & Gaston Railroad, 15½ miles north northeast of the Capitol of Raleigh. Forestville, where the railroad had a station, is located just over a mile south of the school.

was a graduate of Brown University. In 1850, White was appointed president of the college. His focus was to raise funds to maintain a prosperous college.

The Raleigh & Gaston Railroad was a controversial subject for the college. Because there was a railroad station in Forestville, slightly over a mile away, the railroad would not put another station at the school. For years, the town of Wake Forest tried to get the railroad to move the station from Forestville to Wake Forest without success. Finally, in 1848 the post office in Wake Forest closed, leaving only the post office in Forestville to serve the school.

The Forestville post office opened in 1838 as Alston's Store. It operated until 1839, when the name was changed to Forestville. Figure 6 is an early manuscript cancel from the Forestville post office, a postmark used from 1839 until 1842 and then intermittently until 1851. It was used here on a May

◄ **Figure 4.** Folded letter datelined June 7, 1835, from Wake Forest Institute, posted at the Wake Forest office, by student Thomas D. Jenkins to his father in Murfreesboro (Hertford County), who asked about the state of religion at the school. The son replied "the state of religion in school at present is very dull and no signs for a revival." He went on to ask for clothes but not for money as most college students do.

Figure 5. ►
Folded letter posted at Wake Forest on August 11, 1838, and addressed to Concord, New Hampshire. The Wake Forest postmaster marked the letter for 25 cents postage due from the addressee, Mrs. David White. The letter was from John B. White, the math instructor at Wake Forest Institute, a graduate of Brown University. In 1850 he would become president of the school.
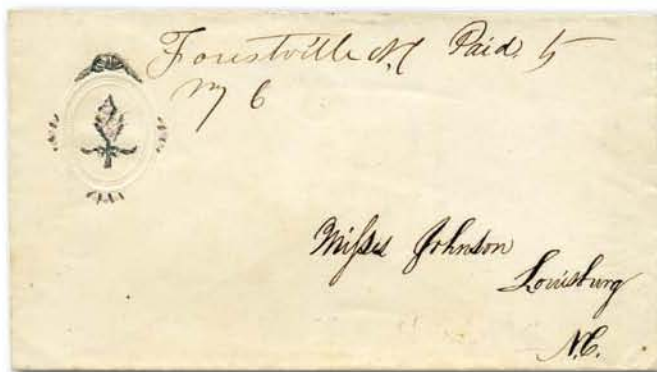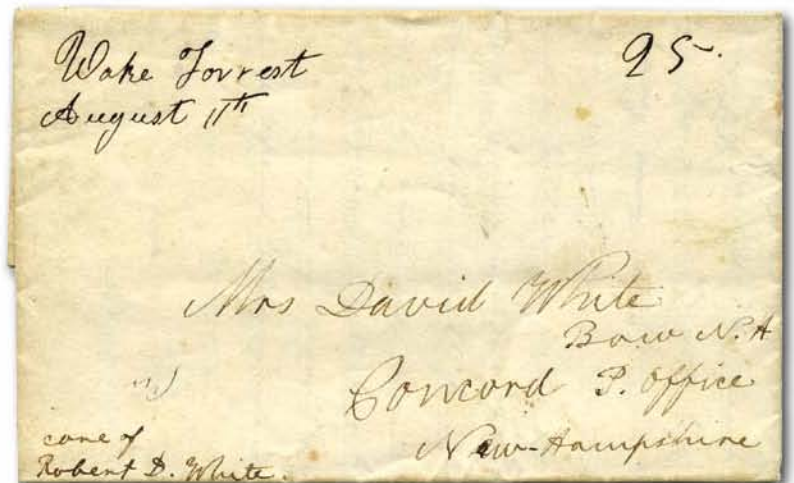
◄ **Figure 6.** Embossed lady's envelope with hand-coloring in the embossed design was posted on May 6, 184x, addressed to Louisburg (Franklin County). The Wake Forest post office had been discontinued, requiring Forestville to handle the mail for that area. The envelope was marked that the 5 cent rate had been paid. The manuscript postmarks of Forestville had been replaced by a handstamp in 1842, but manuscript cancels still were occasionally used until 1851.

6 ,
ca.

▲ **Figure 7.** Forestville, May 10, ca. 1850, embossed lady's envelope addressed to Chapel Hill (Orange County). This was the first circular datestamp and rate hand stamp "5" used at Forestville. The datestamp was used from 1844 until after the Civil War, first in red and from 1851 in black ink. This letter was due 5 cents at destination.

1845 envelope addressed to Louisburg (Franklin County). Figure 7 is an example of the first hand stamp used at Forestville. This cancel was in service from 1842 until after the Civil War, first in red ink until 1851, and then the color was changed to black. The cover here is an embossed lady's envelope posted in Forestville on 10 May 185x to Chapel Hill (Orange County). The envelope was marked for 5 cents postage due at destination with the rate handstamp that looks like the letter "S."

Figures 8a and 8b. ▲ ▶
Forestville, July 1858, Scott #24 paying 1 cent drop letter rate for local use rather than transmission to another post office. Envelope addressed to a young lady, "Present," meaning local, and enclosed an invitation to attend a "Social and Cotillion Party" on July 5th.
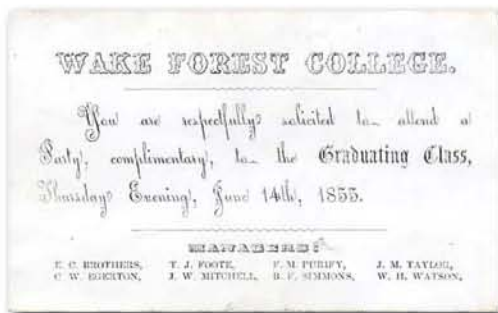
▲ **Figure 9.** A printed invitation to attend a party for the graduating class of Wake Forest College on June 14, 1855.

A great example of the Wake Forest College having to use the Forestville post office is shown in Figure 8a. This small, embossed envelope contained a solicitation (Figure 8b) to attend a "Social and Cotillion Party" on July 5th. Although the year is not on the solicitation, based on the use of the perforated 1 cent stamp on the envelope, the only year that July 5th occurred on a Monday was 1858. The one cent drop letter rate was used for a letter placed in the post office, not for transmission, but for local delivery only. In this case the recipient picked the letter up at the Forestville post office.
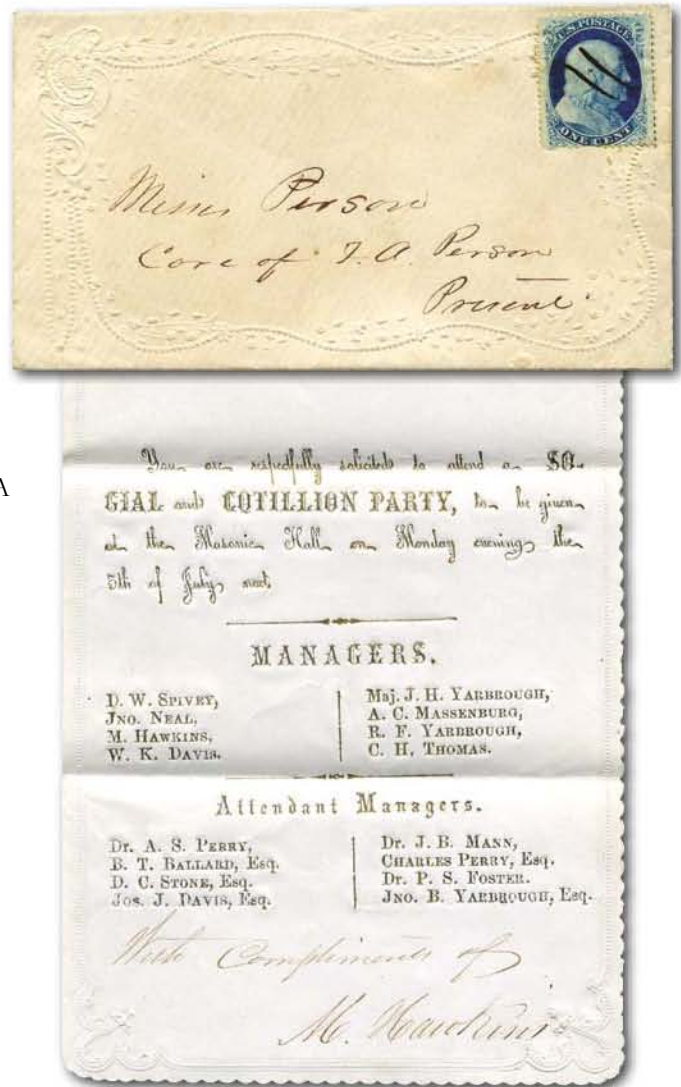
A

printed invitation to attend a party for the graduating class of Wake Forest College on June 14, 1855, is illustrated in Figure 9.

Figures 10a and Figure 10b show the envelope and enclosed report card mailed from the college on June 23, 1856, using an 1851 3 cent imperforate stamp for postage. The quarterly report was sent to Isaac Williams of Hintonsville (Pasquotank County), presenting his son's excellent performance in languages (Latin and Greek) and mathematics. It was posted at Forestville.

Forestville, June 23, 1856, envelope and enclosure from President Washington M. Wingate of Wake Forest College to Isaac Williams of Hintonsville (Pasquotank County). The enclosure, a quarterly academic report, presents Williams' son's excellent performance in languages (Latin and Greek) and mathematics. Scott #11 paid the three-cent postage.

The card was signed by Washington Manly Wingate, who became president in 1854 when President White resigned.

President White had been an able leader, but the temper of the time was unsuited for a Northern-born leader of the school. He served during some turbulent times. During his tenure, however, the quality of students' improved and new faculty was added. Wingate, the new president, was an alumnus of the school, graduating in the class of 1849. The 26-year old was the first alumnus to serve as president and would remain in that position for 30 years. Throughout the first eight years of Wingate's administration, he graduated 66 students, over half the total number graduated during the first 20 years of the school.

This growth surge, however, was cut short in 1861 with the Civil War. The Conscription Act of 1863 did not exempt students. For three years during the war, the school ceased to operate. The buildings were used as a girls' school and as a Confederate military hospital.

Even with the school closed, Wake Forest College history continued. Figure 11 is the only Wake Forest College cover recorded during the war, and is one of only 21 North Carolina Confederate college covers that have been recorded. This cover was posted at Dunnsville, North Carolina, on

▲ **Figure 11.** Dunnsville (Wake County), September 19, 1862, envelope to Petersburg, Virginia, on Wake Forest College advertising cover. Horizontal pair of Scott #7, 5-cent blue Archer and Daly on London paper, paid the 10-cent rate. Woodcut picture of Wake Forest College was used as an advertising corner card. School was shut down at time of this cover's use. Dunnsville was only in operation during the war.
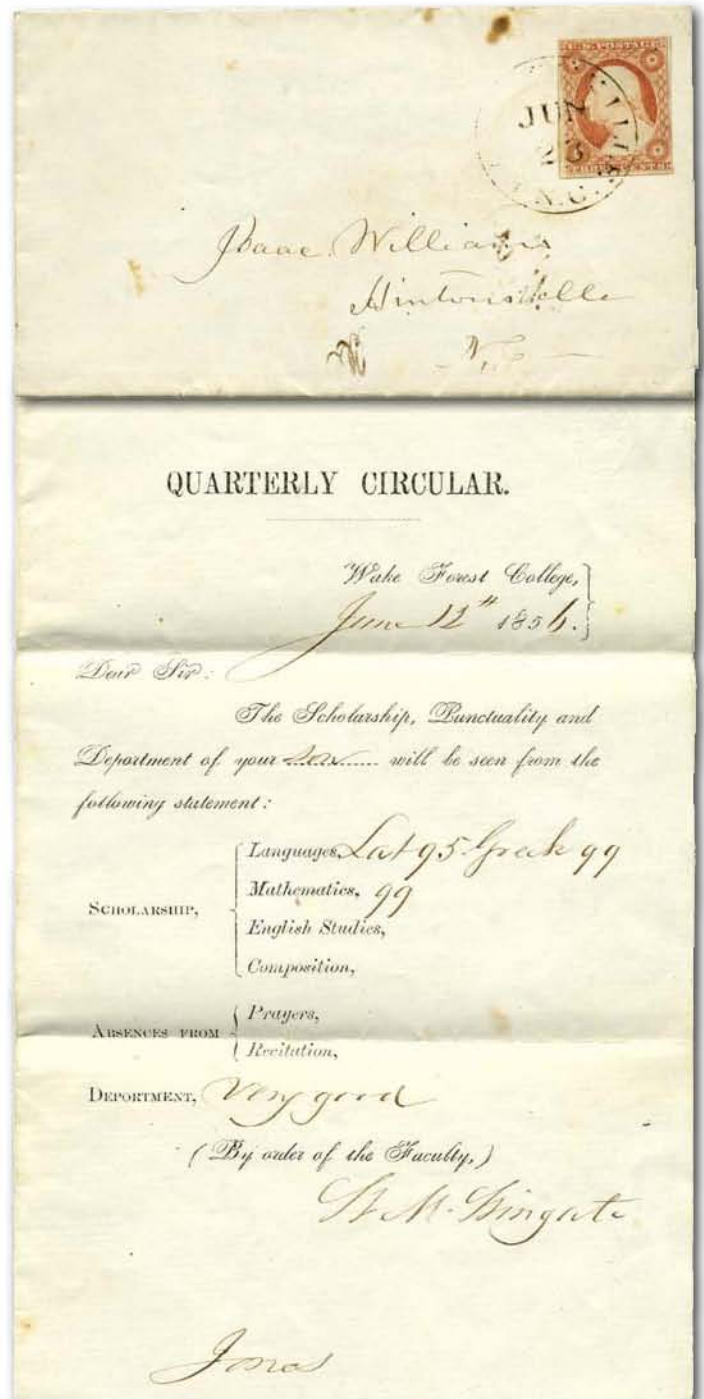
September 19, 1862, with a pair of 5-cent Archer & Daly stamps printed on London paper and paying the 10-cent rate to Petersburg, Virginia. The Dunnsville post office was opened on October 16, 1861, and was closed by the end of the war. It did not re-open after the war. Thus, it is a scarce Confederate-only post office. John H. Bell was the postmaster.

Figure 12 is an example of a Confederate cover from Forestville posted on January 1, (1863), to the Flat River post office in Orange County. It was franked with a horizontal pair of the 5-cent Archer & Daly stamps printed on local paper.

(Hertford County). Note the fancy geometric killer on the stamp. With the reopening of the school, there was a renewed effort to lobby the Raleigh & Gaston Railroad to move their depot from Forestville to Wake Forest. The relocation finally took place in 1874. In anticipation of this move, the post office in Wake Forest was reopened on April 28, 1873. Robert Timberlake was named postmaster,

Figure 13. ►
Forestville, March 11, 1870, post-war reconstruction period envelope to Murfreesboro (Hertford County). Scott # 114 paid the 3¢-rate with a fancy geometric killer.

When the war ended, the needs of the college were great and the financial prospects poor. Yet in November 1865, barely six months after the end of the war, nine members of the Board of Trustees, acting with unwarranted courage, authorized the resumption of classes at the college. Dr. Wingate was persuaded to resume the Presidency, and on January 15, 1866, fifty-one students were enrolled. Enrollment gradually increased as the region and the economy slowly recovered during the Reconstruction Era.

A Reconstruction Era cover is illustrated in Figure 13. It was posted in Forestville on March 11, 1870, with a 3-cent stamp of the 1869 issue, and was addressed to Murfreesboro

and the name of the post office was changed to Wake Forest College. It would have this name for the next ten years.

Figure 14 is a post office return receipt card posted with an octagonal Wake Forest College datestamp dated February 1, 1883, and sent to Ridgeway (Warren County). The post office would be renamed "Wake Forest" on December 13, 1883.

By 1893, the post office had received a metal datestamp from the Post Office Department. Figure 15 is an example of this handstamp used on a Wake Forest College corner card cover. The cover was missent to Oxford (Granville County), where it was redirected to Brinkleyville (Halifax County). For a brief time in 1896, Wake Forest used a violet, straight-line postmark. Two covers with this postmark have been recorded dated February and March 1896. Figure 16 is an example of this scarce postal marking on a March 14, 1896, cover to Brinkleyville, another Wake Forest College corner card cover.

The Wake Forest post office received a steel duplex canceler with a seven-bar oval killer by 1906. Figure 17 shows an example of this cancel on a locally-used postal card.

Throughout the late 19th century, the school continued to grow and prosper. Dr. Charles Taylor was appointed president in 1885 and began to raise large sums of money for the school. He would eventually obtain a gift of $1.5 million. His administration from 1885-1905 also brought enrichment to the academic program in a variety of ways. Academic departments
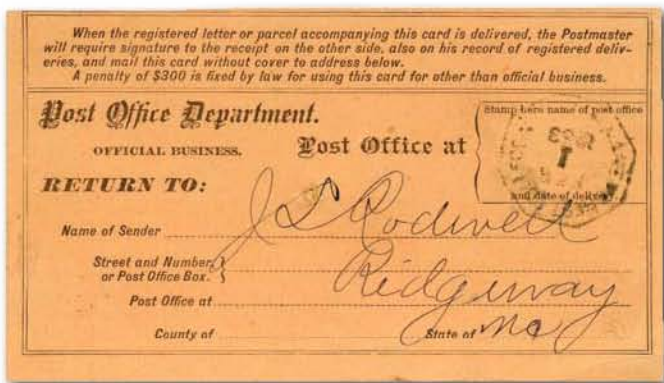
▲ **Figure 14.** Post Office Department return, registered receipt from Wake Forest College to Ridgeway (Warren County). The octagonal datestamp of the Wake Forest College post office, the origination office, is dated February 1, 1883.

Figure 15. ▶
Wake Forest, April 4, 1896, envelope with Wake Forest College corner card marking missent to Oxford (Granville County) and re-directed to Brinkleyville (Halifax County). Government-supplied metal datestamp with time and date.

were increased from eight to thirteen and the size of the faculty more than doubled. Two new schools were added: the School of Law in 1894 and the School of Medicine in 1902. Progress also included the addition of three new buildings; a science laboratory, a general classroom building and a new

◀ **Figure 16.** March 14, 1896, violet straight-line postmark struck three times on a letter to Brinkleyville (Halifax County). This rare cancel was used only for a brief time in 1896. Enclosure is from a male student at the college.
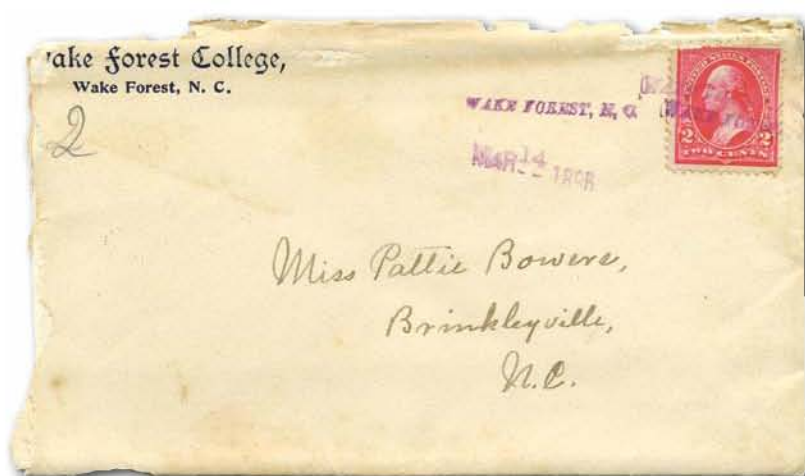
Considerable growth continued at the school. In 1905, there were 313 students enrolled. By 1927, that number had grown to 742. Growth was seen in the studies of religion, English education and social sciences as well as medical studies. Wake Forest joined other schools and began to focus more on sports teams for the school.

Figure 17. ▶
Steel duplex canceler with 7-bar oval killer supplied by Post Office Department to Wake Forest on October 26,1906, postal card, locally used.

gymnasium. The campus was landscaped, and with the able assistance of President Taylor's co-worker, Tom Jeffries, over 400 trees were planted, making the tree, Magnolia grandiflora, almost synonymous with the Wake Forest campus.

President Taylor was succeeded by Dr. William Louis Poteat of the Department of Biology. Affectionately known as "Dr. Billy" to a host of students during his twenty-two year administration, he continued to promote the general growth of all areas of the college. Special emphasis was placed on development in the area of sciences, reflecting in part the interests of the president and also in part the need to enrich the premedical training required of the new School of Medicine.

In 1930, the Trustees selected Dr. Thurman D. Kitchin, Dean of the Medical School, to fill the presidency. Kitchin served for 20 years, during which he would enhance the School of Law. Figure 18 is a cover from the Dean of the School of Law at Wake Forest College to the Dean at the University of North Carolina School of Law, Chapel Hill (Orange County). The cover was posted in the early 1930s. Later, Dr. Kitchin would

oversee the removal of the School of Medicine to Winston-Salem in 1941, just before the war began.

The medical school became known as the Bowman Gray School of Medicine of Wake Forest College. World War II brought other changes. Although the college was able to remain open, the enrollment dropped to 474 in 1942. The college met this crisis in 1942 by modifying its century-old admissions policy and becoming a coeducational institution. To further fill the void left by so many potential students away at war, it leased its facilities to the Army Finance School. It also trained Army medical staff. Figure 19 is an envelope from PFC J. P. Satterwhite, Army Medical Service, attached to the Army Specialized Training Unit of the Bowman Gray School of Medicine to
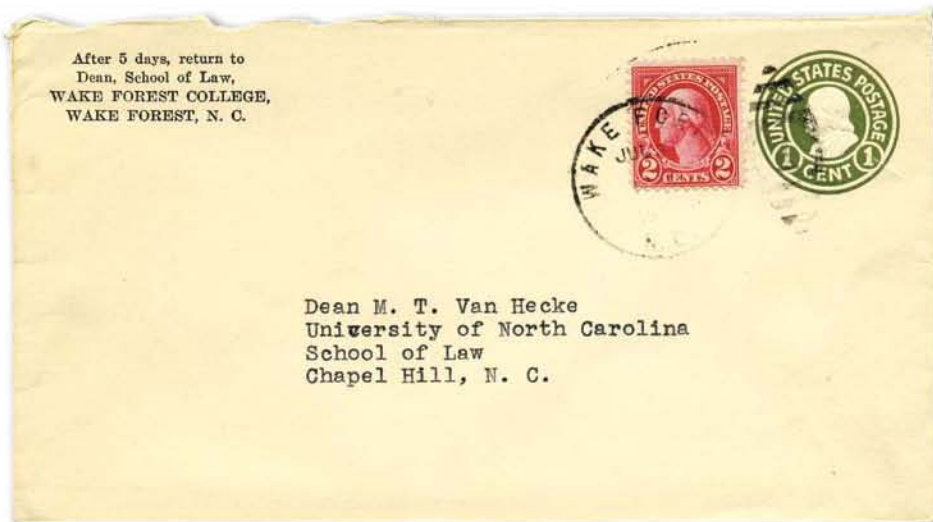
▲ **Figure 18.** Wake Forest, July 31, ca. 1935, to Chapel Hill (Orange County). During the 1930s Wake Forest's growth included a School of Law. This cover is from a Dean of the School of Law to The Dean of the University of North Carolina School of Law..
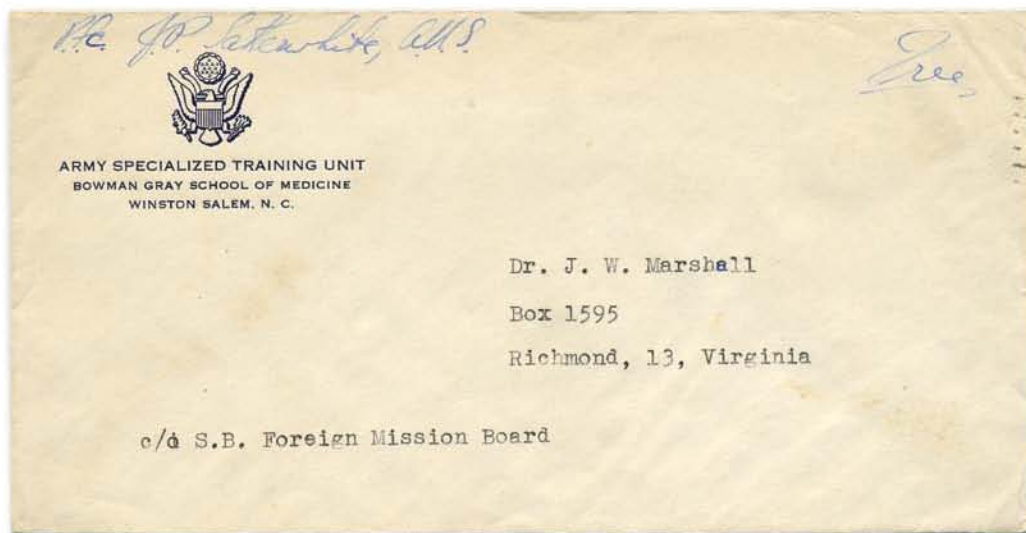
▲ **Figure 19.** Envelope from PFC J. P. Satterwhite, Army Medical Service, attached to the Army Specialized Training Unit of the Bowman Gray School of Medicine, Wake Forest College in Winston-Salem. Letter sent free to Richmond, Virginia for military.

wanted to bring the entire Wake Forest College to Winston-Salem. The move of the medical school in 1941 was just the first step. Once the war ended, the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation pro-posed to give the school $350,000 a year if the whole college would move to Winston-Salem. In 1946, the Board of Trustees and the Baptist constituency agreed to the proposal.

Thus, the college was moved 110 miles to Winston-Salem. The community and the Reynolds family con-tinued to support the school with millions of dollars to build new facilities and attract quality faculty.

A 320-acre site was provided by Charles and

Richmond, Virginia. The cover was posted free, which was allowed for military personnel. In the post-war period, enrollment mushroomed with the return of the veterans, and reached a peak of 1,762 students in 1949.

Following the lead of James B. Duke in moving Trinity College to Durham, the Reynolds family of Winston-Salem

Mary Reynolds Babcock. On October 15, 1951, 20,000 people watched President Harry Truman break the ground for the new campus. The school opened its doors at the new Winston-Salem location in 1956. Since that time it has become one of the nations' top-25 universities with 7,400 students and offering 40 different majors. ■

Mystery Cover

Our new mystery cover has a purple circular datestamp that is very hard to read because all the letters weren't inked properly. The cover is addressed to Trinity College (Randolph County) and was posted on 1 July 1884. Can you figure out in which post office it was posted?

Send your answer to Tony Crumbley or Dick Winter.

Village Post Offices

The following has been extracted from the Post Office Department web site, http://about.usps.com/news/electronic-press-kits/expandedaccess/vpo-fact-sheet.htm:

The U.S. Postal Service announced the concept of the Village Post Office in July 2011 as a way to continue providing convenient access to postal products and services in more rural communities across the nation.

The first Village Post Office (VPO) opened in Malone, WA, in August 2011. On Dec. 19, 2012, the 100th VPO, located in Linden, IN, began operations.

• VPOs are located within existing communities in a variety of locations, including convenience stores, local businesses and libraries, and are operated by the management of those locations.

• VPOs offer a range of popular products and services — the ones most used by customers — including PO Boxes, Forever stamps, Pre-paid Priority Mail Flat Rate envelopes and a mail collection box.

• By being located inside established businesses and other places consumers already frequent, VPOs offer Postal Service customers time-saving convenience, and in most cases, longer hours than regular Post Offices.

The following Village Post Offices are listed for North Carolina:

Name	Address	City	Name	Address	City
Bolivia	3732 Sunset Harbor Rd SE	Bolivia	Maple Hill	330 NC Hwy 50	Maple Hill
Bolton	953 South Green Swamp Rd.	Bolton	Mineral Springs	5602 Waxhaw Hwy	Mineral Springs
Coats	379 McKinley St	Coats	Henrietta	2684 Harris-Henrietta Rd..	Mooresboro
Crouse	2912 W. Hwy 150	Crouse	Raleigh	1210 New Bern Ave	Raleigh
Norman	3642 Hwy 220 N	Ellerbee	Ruffin	10971 US Hwy 158 W	Ruffin
Evergreen	7351 Old Hwy 74	Evergreen	Semora	4809 Hwy 57	Semora
Fontana Dam	300 Woods Rd.	Fontana Dam	Sophia	5958 US Hwy 311	Sophia
Harris	5337 Hwy 221 South	Forest City	Olin	1025 Tomlin Mill Rd.	Statesville
Falcon	8145 Godwin Falcon Rd.	Godwin	Traphill	10935 Longbottom Rd.	Traphill
Burnsville	273 Toe River Rd.	Green Mountain	Ernul	5610 Hwy 17 N	Vanceboro
High Shoals	3687 Gastonia Hwy	Lincolnton			

The Postal History of Columbus County

by Charles F. Hall, Jr.

ocated in the southeastern coastal plain of North Carolina, Columbus County is a fertile and verdant land that is characterized by an enterprising population and a diversified business environment consisting primarily of agriculture, timbering, wood products and light industry. Columbus County was named for the discoverer Christopher Columbus and was originally a part of Bath County. In the late seventeenth century, Bath County comprised what are now Columbus, Brunswick, New Hanover and Bladen Counties. Columbus County itself was formed in 1808 from New Hanover and Bladen Counties and has had several boundary revisions over the years. As North Carolina's third largest county, it is bordered by Horry County, South Carolina, and the North Carolina counties of Robeson, Brunswick, Bladen and Pender. Figure 1 illustrates Columbus County from an 1886 Shaffer's Township Map of North Carolina (courtesy of The North Carolina Collection, University of North Carolina).

The first inhabitants of Columbus County were Native Americans. At the time the first known European settlers arrived in the land in the early 1700s, the predominant tribe was the

▲ **Figure 1.** Columbus County from the 1886 "Shaffer's Township Map of North Carolina" showing township divisions, principal cities, roads, railroads and natural features. (Courtesy of The North Carolina Collection, University of North Carolina).

Waccamaw Siouan Indians. John Swann was one of the earliest settlers in Columbus County and in 1730, was granted 500 acres on "the west side of Wickmaw Swamp." Wickmaw was apparently an early name for Waccamaw. The ancestors of today's residents came from a wide variety of cultures. The first Europeans were the English and Scottish immigrants arriving through Wilmington and were soon followed by African Americans. In the early 1700s, a French Huguenot protestant family, the Bordeaux family, entered the Carolina Colony at Charleston and moved to the Cape Fear region. They soon spread into Columbus County and their descendants are prominent today in Columbus County, having contributed several postmasters.

There are other citizens of French origin who are thought to be the descendants of refugees from French Haiti, which suffered a violent revolution ending in 1803. The Formy-Duval family may be one of these, also contributing a postmaster. In the early part of the 20th century, the enterprising Wilmington businessman Hugh McCrae sought to develop the Cape Fear area, including Columbus County, by creating farming communities for European immigrants. This enterprise attracted many German settlers to eastern Columbus County and the community's post office was aptly named Newberlin. The population grew over the years and many of these early family names can be found in the county today. In 1810, Columbus County had a population of 3,148. By 1910 that number had grown to 28,020, and by 2010, increased to 58,098. Columbus County has had several boundary revisions over the years. The last one was in 1915. Today, the area of Columbus County is 954 square miles. There are 13 towns with operating post offices now.

The county is a region of farms and forest, winding rivers, including the historic Cape Fear, and the third largest natural fresh water lake in North Carolina, Lake Waccamaw. The most significant industries are agriculture, forestry products, a number of light industries, and a major wood products plant operated by the International Paper Company.

The county is predominantly a land of small towns, the largest of which is Whiteville, the county seat with a population of 5,148 in 2000. Other prominent towns are Fair Bluff, Chadbourn, Riegelewood, Delco, Cerro Gordo and Tabor City. The rural nature of the county made postal communications important to the early inhabitants. The first post office was established as Columbus Court House on March 25, 1811, with James B. White as postmaster. By 1821, the name was changed to Whiteville. Fair Bluff opened the second county post office on July 1, 1815 and it remains an operating post office today.

As the population grew and new communities sprang up, so did new post offices. A total of 94 post offices have been recorded in Columbus County but some have had spelling variations, such as Whiteville has been recorded as Whitesville. As in many rural communities throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, post offices were often located in country stores and were an important community institution and social gathering place.

Early rural postmasters did not receive salaries but were entitled to a portion of postage sales, which in many cases, amounted to a few dollars a year. Some early post offices were located in the postmasters' homes. Many were short-lived because of lack of business or consolidation. The construction of the Wilmington and Manachester Railroad, that by 1853 ran from Eagle's Island across the Cape Fear River from Wilmington to Wateree, South Carolina, spurred economic growth by helping get crops, wood products and naval stores to market. Columbus County stations along the railroad during the Civil War and antebellum period were Brinkley's or Brinkleys (currently Delco), Maxwells (present day Bolton), Flemington (currently Lake Waccamaw), Whiteville, Grists's (near present day Chadbourn), Cerro Gordo and Fair Bluff.

The postal history of Columbus County is scant and a diligent search for covers has produced only a small number of examples from the small post offices which existed only for a short period. One of the post offices that was authorized for a very limited time was Josephine, which was established on February 15, 1902, but the order was rescinded by April 15, 1902. Another was Levingston, which was open from March 4, 1904 to October 31, 1904. Today, there are 13 towns with post offices and they are listed here, with the years they were established and the name of the first post office at that location: Whiteville (1821, originally Columbus Court House in 1811) , Fair Bluff (1815), Cerro Gordo (1853), Bolton (1877, started as Maxwell in 1858), Chadbourn (1882), Evergreen (1883), Lake Waccamaw (1883, starting as Flemington in 1868), Hallsboro (1884 as Bogue in 1861), Clarendon (1885), Nakina (1916), Delco (1918, started as Robinson in 1833), Brunswick (1926) , Tabor City (1895 started as Mount Tabor in 1885) , and Riegelwood (1963 started as Cronly in 1883).

Some post offices changed names over the years, with an interesting example being the current town of Delco, in eastern Columbus County. The first post office was called Robeson but with the influx of German settlers attracted by Hugh McCrae's lure of prosperity in his planned agricultural colonies, the name was changed to Newberlin, effective April 1816, 1907. The United States entered World War I on April 6, 1917, and in a wave of nationalistic fervor, the name was changed to Pershing in honor of American General John Pershing. The Post Office Department never recognized the name of Pershing and the name was changed to Delco in June 1918, reportedly named for the Delco Light Plant Company electrical lighting system installed in the local high school.

The illustrations that follow show examples of mail that cover 177 years of Columbus County postal history. Some of these post offices have been discontinued or renamed. Unless otherwise credited, the postal covers are in the author's collection. ■

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◄ **Figure 2.** January 24, 1837 folded letter from Robeson, located in Brunswick County, to Fayetteville (Cumberland County). This office first opened as Robinson in 1833, but changed to Robeson within a year. The spelling changed to Robeson's about 1845. It became a part of Columbus County in 1877 when the county borders changed. This office closed September 20, 1890. Another post office named Robeson opened four years later in August 1894. Based on post road maps it appears that the two Robeson post offices were located at the same place. On April 16, 1907, Robeson changed to Newberlin and during World War I, it changed again to Delco. Robeson was a stop on the Wilmington and Manchester Railroad but the station itself was called Brinkleys or Brinkley. (Courtesy of Tony Crumbley)

Figure 3. ►
Green Swamp, January 21, 1863, to Pendleton, South Carolina. This short-lived office operated from October 18, 1855 to December 11, 1866. The manuscript cancel featured here is the only known cancellation for Green Swamp. The cover carries two Confederate Scott #6 stamps. (Courtesy of Tony Crumbley)

Figure 4. ▶

Whiteville, July 21, 186x, to a soldier in the 18th Regiment, North Carolina Troops, in Richmond, Virginia, with two Scott CSA #4 paying 10¢ rate. Both names "Whitesville" and "Whiteville" were used on postmarks during the Civil War. Whiteville is the county seat and largest town in Columbus County. The first post office in the county was established there as "Columbus Court House" on March 25, 1811, but was changed to Whiteville by 1821. It was name for James B. White, who contributed the land for the courthouse in 1808. (Courtesy of Tony Crumbley)

◀ **Figure 5.** Whiteville, October 14, 1864, to Salem (Forsyth County) with Scott CSA #12 and a Type 3 circular datestamp used from December 2, 1863 to February 7, 1865. The stamp also appears to have been pen canceled.

Figure 6. ▶

Whiteville Station, February 7, 1874, to Bethania (Forsyth County), with scarce blue oval railroad station handstamp of the Wilmington, Columbia and Augusta Railroad at Whiteville. The Wilmington and Manchester Railroad was chartered in 1847. By 1854, it ran 161.5 miles from Eagle's Island at Wilmington to Camden Crossing, South Carolina. In 1870, it was reorganized as the Wilmington and Carolina Railroad and shortly thereafter, to the Wilmington, Columbia and Augusta Railroad, but its lease terminated in 1878. It continued as the Wilmington and Manchester Railroad until it was taken over by the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad in 1898-1900. (Courtesy Tony Crumbley)

◀ **Figure 7.** Whitesville, August 16, 1872, to Bethania (Forsyth County). The spelling of the post office name changed back and forth between "Whiteville" and "Whitesville" from its beginning in 1811 to at least 1872. This cover shows a 27 mm Type 4 black circular datestamp.

Figure 8. ▶
Whiteville, October 8, 1945, patriotic cover to Columbus, Ohio. It was produced by Ralph E. Davis of Wilmington, North Carolina, one of North Carolina's active cachet-makers during the war. Patriotic covers were popular in World War II and there were hundreds of designs.
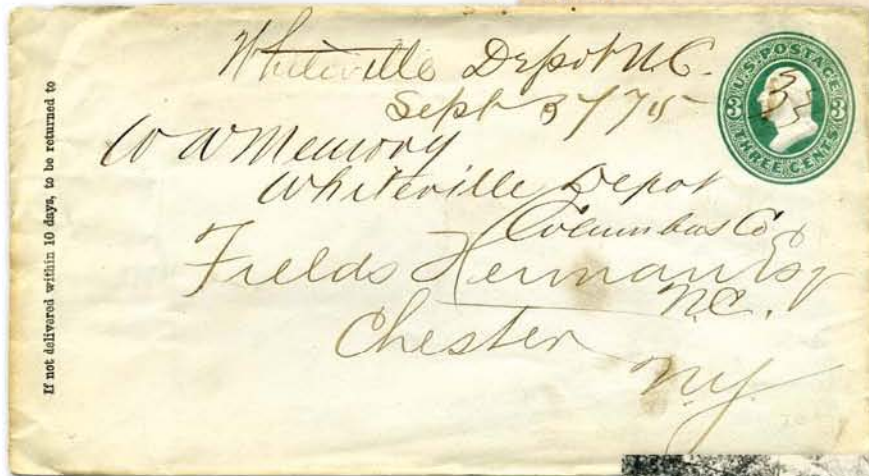

◀ **Figure 9.** Whiteville Depot, September 5, 1875, to Chester, New York. The Whiteville Depot office was established on November 19, 1874, but its name was changed to Vineland on November 5, 1885. This embossed envelope has a manuscript postmark and a three cent green 3¢ stamp with a pen cancellation. (Courtesy of Tony Crumbley)

Figure 10. ▶
Circa 1950s real photo post card of the Whiteville Post Office, noting that it is a first class post office serving a "Thriving Community of 5000." (Courtesy Tony Crumbley)

◀ **Figure 11.** Vineland, October 16, 1909, post card with Best Wishes greetings (reverse) to Trenton (Jones County). The post office was established in November 5, 1885, on the Wilmington and Manchester Railroad a mile from Whiteville. Vineland was named for the many vineyards in the area. It was closed by December 1, 1929, and its mail sent to Whiteville. It bears a 1¢ stamp, Scott # 331 of the 1908-09 issue.

◄ **Figure 12.** December 4, 1912, Fair Bluff 1¢ McKinley (Scott UX22 postal card to Charleston, South Carolina. In 1815 Fair Bluff was the second post office established in Columbus County. It continues operation today. It is a pleasant community on the Lumber River. The Wilmington and Manchester Railroad reached Fair Bluff in 1854 and helped develop the area. In the 19th century, naval stores were an important industry. (Courtesy of Tony Crumbley)
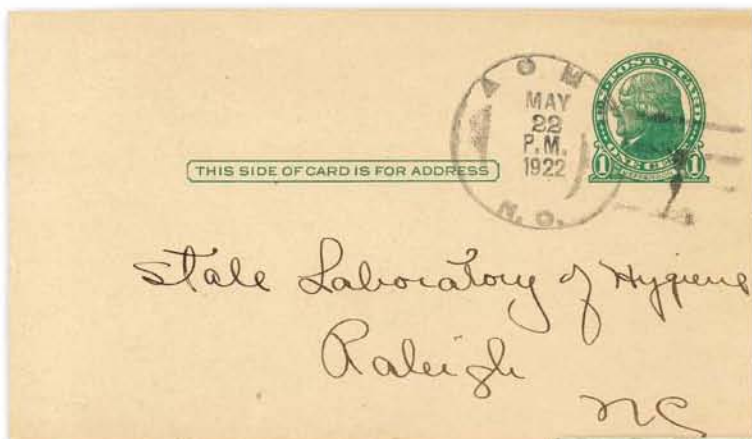
Figure 13. ►
September 26, 1944, Clarendon to Sandersville, Georgia, on a real photo post card showing the Whiteville National Guard Armory. Clarendon in southwest Columbus County began postal operations on February 13, 1885 and is still open today. The author of this post card wrote "Clarendon is not a town – just a post office."
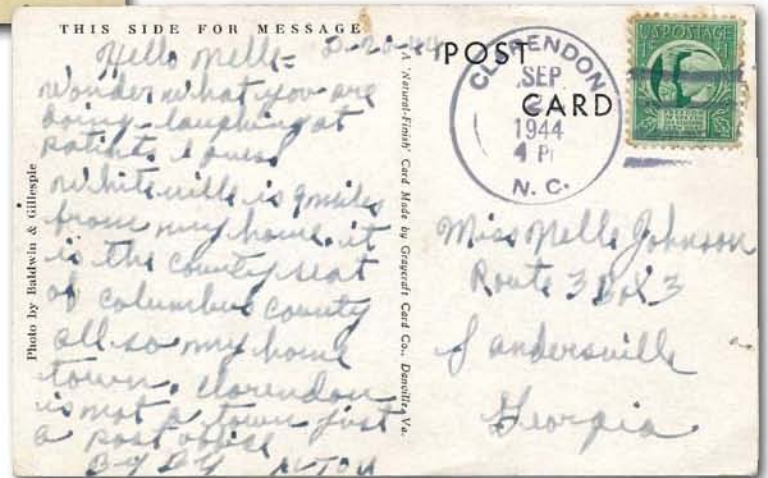
◄ **Figure 14.** March 25, 1909, Newberlin to Rochester, New York, on a floral front post card. Newberlin, formerly Robinson/Robeson, operated from April 1907 until June 1918. After the country's entry into World War I, Newberlin was not felt to be a patriotic name. The post office was renamed Delco in June 1918 for the Delco Light Plant Company electrical lighting system installed in the local high school.

Figure 15. ►
March 12, 1906, Cronly to Schoharie, New York, on a post card depicting the Wilmington, N.C. courthouse. The Cronly post office operated from April 16, 1883, to July 11, 1911, when the name was changed to Acme after a fertilizer company located there. A pine fiber plant which made mattresses stuffed with pine straw and a fiber rug operation also was located in Cronly.

Figure 16. May 22, 1922, postal card from Acme in north eastern Columbus County to the State Laboratory of Hygiene, Raleigh (Wake County). The post office began operation on July 11, 1911. It was the site of the Acme Fertilizer Company and several fertilizer and chemical plants. A large paper mill was later constructed by the Riegel Paper Corporation and the post office name was changed to Riegelwood in 1963. The Jefferson Scott postal card, Scott UX27 had the message "Please send typhoid vaccine for 25 people at once."

Figure 17. November 7, 1898, striking advertising cover from Chadbourn to Lumberton (Robeson County). The envelope advertised the Chadbourn Colony Department of the Farm, Field and Fireside Company of Chicago. The Chadbourn post office has been in operation from May 26, 1882 to the present. The community, previously named Timbervile, was incorporated in 1883 and was a station on the Wilmington and Manchester Railroad. From 1895 to 1905, Chadbourn was the largest strawberry market in the world until affected by the strawberry weevil and declining market conditions. (Courtesy of Tony Crumbley)

Figure 18. June 18, 1907, real photo post card from Evergreen in northwest Columbus County to Gulf Mills, Pennsylvania. The picture shows a tragic 1905 scene from Chadbourn. The berry crop had to be dumped beside the railroad tracks for lack of cars to carry the crop to market. This loss of this crop was significant blow to the growers and the uncertainty of being able to deliver the berries to market contributed to the downfall of the strawberry industry. The Evergreen post office was opened on July 31, 1883, and is still open today.

Figure 19.
October 5, 186x, post-war envelope from Cerro Gordo to Sumter, South Carolina, with a manuscript postmark. The town was named for a famous American victory in 1847 during the Mexican War, which translated to "big hill." The post office was established on August 8, 1853, and is still an active post office today. The 3¢ stamp (Scott # 65) was pen canceled. (Courtesy of Tony Crumbley)
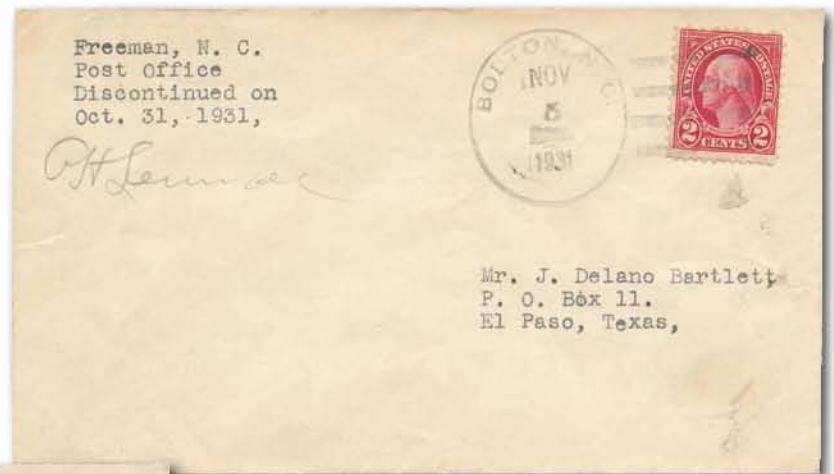
Figure 20. ▶
April 20, 1909, Scott UX19 postal card of 1902 from Tabor in southwest Columbus County to a fruit dealer in Charleston, South Carolina, to order a crate of "nice fresh cabbage." The Tabor post office began as Mount Tabor but was renamed Tabor on June 15, 1895. The name was changed again on April 1, 1935, to Tabor City. The postal card was canceled with a 1908 Type A/2 4-bar handstamp.

◀ Figure 21. July 15, 1899, postal card (Scott # UX14) from Grists to Greensboro (Guilford County). The post office originally was named Grist's Station in 1866, a depot on the Wilmington and Manchester Railroad in western Columbus County. The depot post office was closed in March 1892. It reopened on May 13, 1892 three quarters of a mile to the west of the railroad station and was named Grists, but was discontinued on May 14, 1921 and the mail was routed to Chadbourn. (Courtesy of Tony Crumbley)

Figure 22. ▶
November 5, 1931, envelope from Bolton to El Paso, Texas. Located in Brunswick County, Bolton became a part of Columbus County in 1877 following a redrawing of the county line. Originally it was named Maxwell (January 1858-April 1866) and renamed Bolton in April 1866. Bolton was the center of large logging and milling operations in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This cover has a 1930 Type E 4-bar cancel. The corner address notes the closing of the nearby Freeman Post Office five days earlier.

◀ Figure 23. October 1897 envelope from Mollie in southern Columbus County to Waterville, Maine, paid with 8¢ stamp (Scott # 257) on 2¢ embossed envelope (Scott # 312). The post office was established on February 18, 1890 and was discontinued on February 28, 1931

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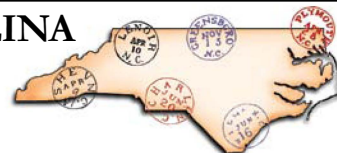
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