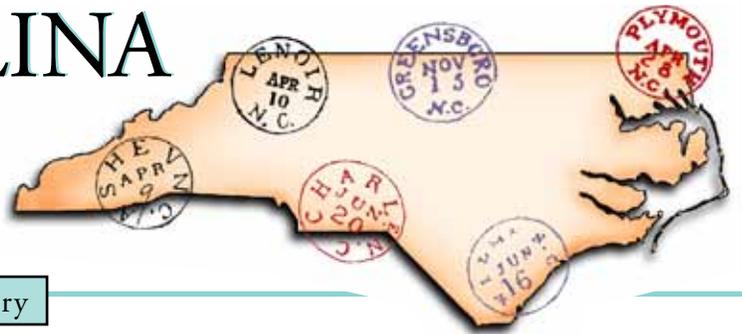


NORTH CAROLINA POSTAL HISTORIAN

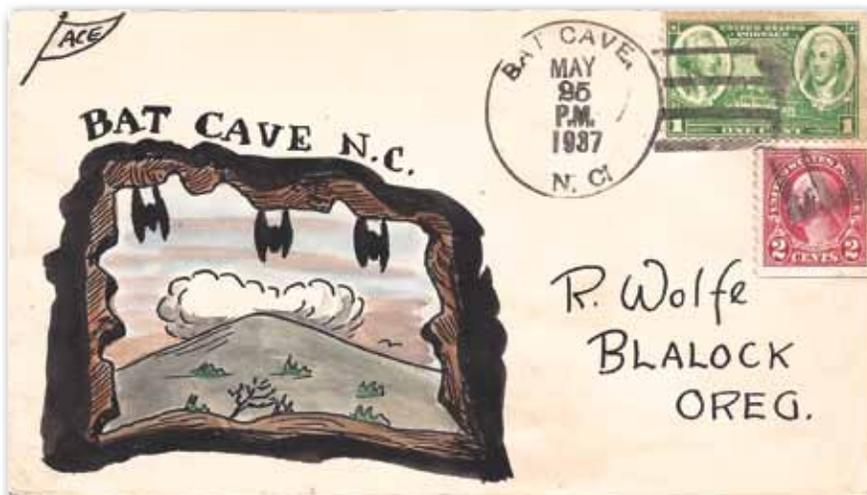


The Journal of North Carolina Postal History

VOLUME 37, NO. 4 FALL 2018 WHOLE 144



**North Carolina in the
Great War 1914-1918**



**The Cave Post
Offices of North
Carolina**



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The big news since the last issue is the annual meeting of the North Carolina Postal History Society at Charpex in Charlotte on July 28, 2018. Attendance was very good and a very interesting program was presented by veteran postal historian, Harvey Teal, on the "Wilmington and Manchester Railroad." His program was highlighted by a collection of artifacts excavated at the site of the destruction of the engines and rolling stock of the Wilmington and Manchester Railroad by the Union Army in February 1865. Harvey Teal also has written several books on South Carolina postal history.

Two of the society board members' terms expire in 2018. At the annual meeting, the membership approved a motion to elect Alan Vestal and George Slaton to serve for a three-term ending in 2021.

The annual Literary Award was presented to George Slaton for his article, "New Sterling – Third Creek Settlement in Iredell County," published in the Spring, 2017 issue. His well researched article exemplifies the caliber and scope of material found in our journal.

Following the general meeting, the NCPHS Board of Directors Meeting was held with Frank Hall, Dick Winter, George Slaton, Scott Steward, Alan Vestal and Harry Albert present. The society is in sound financial condition with a cash balance on hand as of July 28, 2018, of \$11,929.40. The Board approved the recommended 2019 budget. Secretary-Treasurer Harry Albert reported that those society members who contribute in excess of their annual \$15.00 dues significantly help with the operating expenses, which are mainly the costs of publishing and mailing the *North Carolina Postal Historian*. The current membership of the society is 121, down a few numbers from the report at the July 2018 Board meeting. We have removed a couple of non-paying members and four complimentary memberships from our membership roll.

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The Board expressed an interest in providing a digital version of our journal in addition to the printed edition. The annual dues notice for 2019 will give members a way to send in their choice.

Dick Winter presented an update on the North Carolina Postmark Catalog Update. The digitalization project, which began in 2005, now has 99 of 100 counties completed as well as five major city post offices: Asheville, Charlotte, Fayetteville, Greensboro and Wilmington. Work continues on Yancey County and then Raleigh will be developed as a major city post office. Dick has given the state, national and world postal history community an invaluable gift by committing immeasurable time and his extensive knowledge to this important project.

The Minutes of the 2018 Board of Directors meeting on July 28, 2018, has been posted on our website under the News tab.

The 2019 dues notice has been printed and will be sent out with this issue of the journal. Please note the new mailing address for our Secretary-Treasurer. The dues notice asks that you submit your 2019 payments to NCPHS, 105 Gatestone Court, Cary, NC 27518. Members are encouraged to submit their dues promptly and to become a sustaining member. Sustaining members who contribute more than their annual \$15.00 dues help the society in two ways: It allows us to keep the annual dues at a very reasonably low cost and helps enormously with our printing and mailing expenses.



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North Carolina in the Great War 1914-1918



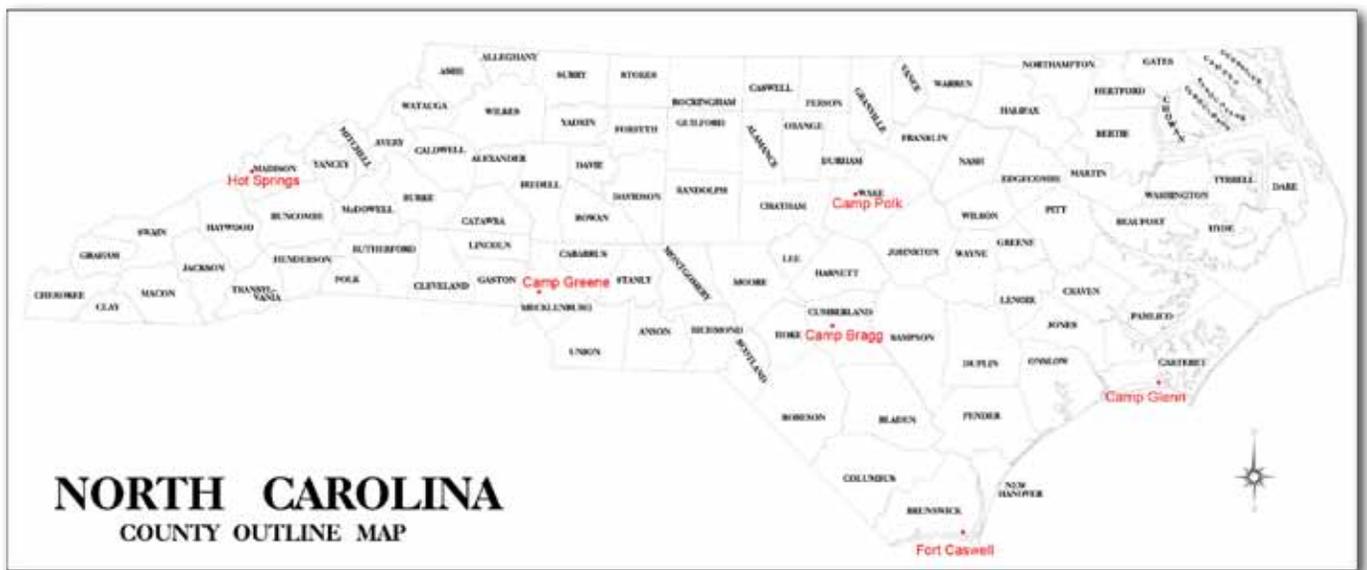
by Charles F. Hall, Jr.

Great events often cast their shadows before they occur. In August 1914, when the European powers started a war which soon escalated to include six continents, the looming shadows of war were cast upon the United States. Although the government adopted a policy of neutrality in 1914, the country was eventually drawn into the conflict and Congress declared war on the Central Powers in April 1917. The United States had long followed a policy of avoiding involvement in European wars, an involvement that the country had historically avoided, beginning with the advice of George Washington to stay out of foreign entanglements. When the Great War, or World War I (WWI), as it later became known, started in that fateful August of 1914, the European countries had embarked on another of their conflicts fueled by military arms races, entrapping alliances, dominance and nationalist tensions. The United States and North Carolina ultimately did enter the war. The state's participation will be told through this brief study of the period's postal history. Figure 1 show the North Carolina military installations and camps that will be discussed in the article.

Prior to WWI, Europe had enjoyed a general peace between the end of the Napoleonic era in 1815 until 1914.

There had been the German and Italian wars of unification and the Balkan wars and a short but decisive war between France and Germany in 1870, but these were limited in scope. This relative absence of major wars ended when Austria declared war on Serbia in July 1914. The major European powers were obligated by entangling treaties to come to the aid of their allies. Russia declared war on Austria-Hungary. France was treaty bound with Russia. Germany, likewise, had a treaty with Austria. When Germany attacked France through neutral Belgium, Great Britain was obligated to defend Belgium and declared war on Germany on August 4, 1914. The continental war soon spread into a world war, ultimately involving 25 countries and their overseas possessions. Britain, France and Russia, later joined by Italy, Japan and the United States as well as other lesser powers, were known as the Allies. Germany, the Austrian-Hungarian Empire, Ottoman Turkey and Bulgaria formed the coalition known as the Central Powers.

The spark that ignited the war was the assassination of the heir to the Austrian throne, Franz Ferdinand and his wife, Sophie, by a Serbian nationalist, Gavrilo Princip, on June 28, 1914, in the Bosnian city of Sarajevo, then an Austrian province. This act not only brought a strong retaliation by the Austrian Hapsburg Empire against Serbia, an independent



▲ **Figure 1.** The North Carolina military installations and camps of WWI are shown in red on this statewide map. They include Camp Bragg, Camp Glenn, Camp Greene, Camp Polk, Fort Caswell, and the Hot Springs Internment Camp.

Balkan country, but also set into motion a series of events that led to the most destructive war in history to date, resulting in an estimated 20 million dead and upsetting the world order in ways that persist today, particularly in the Middle East and Eastern Europe. World War II was merely a continuation of World War I, fueled by the post-war resentments and unsettled world economic and political conditions.

When WWI began, the mood of the country was strongly against involvement in that distant conflict. On August 5, 1914, President Woodrow Wilson signed the Proclamation of Neutrality, and he was re-elected in 1916 on a platform of neutrality. As time progressed, it became very difficult to stay out of the conflict, principally because of the German submarine warfare. Submarine warfare is now an accepted practice, but in WWI, the use of submarines to sink enemy ships was considered barbaric. When the war began in 1914, trade between the United States and Germany was cut off because Britain not only controlled the sea lanes but also had very effectively blockaded German ports, halting imports of foods and critical materials. Germany felt that it had no choice but to use submarine warfare to stop trade between the United States and Britain and France. A German U-Boot, or submarine, torpedoed and sank a British passenger liner, the *Lusitania*, on May 7, 1915, with the loss of 1198 lives. The ship was carrying war materials for Britain, but the public did not know that during the war. There was outrage in the United States and Britain over the passenger ship sinking. One North Carolinian, Owin Hill Kenan from Wilmington, was aboard and survived the liner's sinking. Based on this experience, he joined the American Ambulance Field Service in May 1916. Because of the bad publicity from the *Lusitania* sinking, the Germans suspended unrestricted warfare. But since the German battle plan to defeat France involved violating Belgian neutrality, the Germans had already begun to lose the public relations battle. U.S. foreign policy was to remain neutral, but on January 31, 1917, Germany resumed unrestricted submarine warfare, which still was at that time considered by many in the United States as inhumane. On February 3, 1917, the United States

broke diplomatic relations with Germany. Then, a telegram from the German foreign minister (the famous Zimmerman telegram urging Mexico to make war on the United States) was made public further exacerbating the bad relations with Germany and the Central Powers.

The Allies became alarmed when Russian Czar Nicholas II was overthrown by revolutionaries on March 15, 1917, an act which made Russia's continued participation in the war uncertain. The Allied nations, Britain, France and Italy, urged President Wilson to enter the war. On April 6, 1917, Congress declared war on the Central Powers. By violating Belgian neutrality, bungling diplomatic efforts, and effective British propaganda, the Germans had already lost the public opinion war. The war was hailed in the United States as the "War to make the world safe for democracy" and the "War to end all wars."

Even though the shadows of war had loomed for almost three years, the United States was very unprepared to field an army in Europe. The only experience that the small U.S. Army had seen since the Spanish-American War of 1898 was a force sent to the Mexican border in response to a raid into Texas on March 8, 1916, by Mexican revolutionaries, including Pancho Villa. A punitive force was raised from state National Guard units. North Carolina activated its three National Guard regiments, the 1st, 2nd and 3rd infantry regiments, Cavalry troops A and B, Ambulance Company No. 1, Hospital Company No. 1., and Engineer Companies A and B. A total of about 3,500 men were sent by train to Camp Stewart near El Paso. Although they never caught Pancho Villa, these guardsmen did acquire field experience in a desolate and barren environment. The United States also intervened in Mexican politics in Vera Cruz.

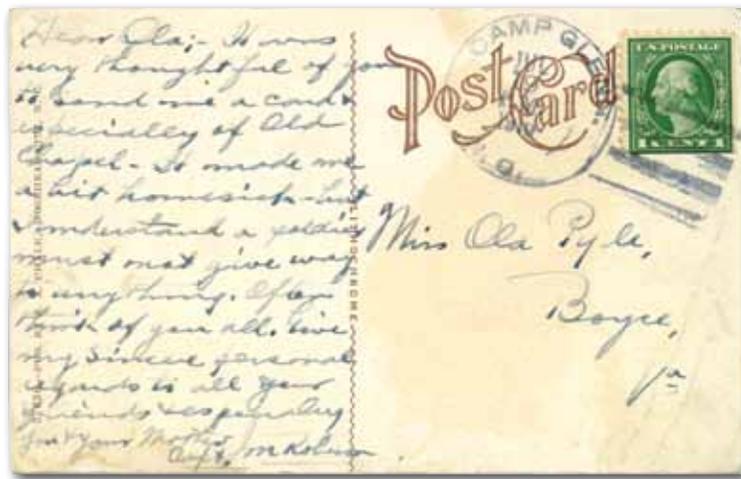
North Carolina had only one active Federal military post and that was Fort Caswell located on the Brunswick County side of the mouth of the Cape Fear River. Dating from before the Civil War, Fort Caswell was modernized before WWI and mounted heavy coast artillery. It was manned throughout the war to protect Wilmington from a seaborne attack. Fort Johnson was



◀ **Figure 2.** Fort Caswell, North Carolina's only Federal active military installation at the start of WWI. It was originally established in 1826 to guard the approaches to Wilmington and was used by Confederate forces from 1861-65. After the Civil War, it was again used by the army as a coastal artillery installation during the Spanish American War and WWI as well as WWII. In 1949, it was de-activated and became a summer retreat for the Baptist Church.

Figure 3. ▶

September 7, 1918, envelope from a Fort Caswell soldier to Vincennes, Indiana. His return address indicates he was in the 4th Company. The stamps were cancelled with a Type H2 Metal Duplex handstamp. Southport, a port city in Brunswick County, was the closest town to Fort Caswell and handled the facility's mail. Both the stationery and envelope were provided to the soldiers by the YMCA, as illustrated by the logo corner card.



◀ **Figure 4.** Camp Glenn was a North Carolina National Guard camp located on the Bogue Sound just west of Morehead City. Many Guardsmen who trained here served in WWI units that formed the 30th Division. Posted on July 19, 1916, this postcard was canceled by a black 1910 Type B 4-Bar handstamp. The soldier probably was one of the North Carolina guardsmen mobilized in 1916 for the Mexican Punitive Expedition. This type of postmark is the only one recorded for Camp Glenn. The post office operated from August 2, 1915, until February 6, 1929. (courtesy of Tony Crumbley)

a small fort at Southport on the Cape Fear River that had been manned before and during the Civil War, but had been unused as an artillery installation since February 21, 1881. Although still owned by the U.S. Government, it played no active role in WWI. (Figures 2 and 3 relate to Fort Caswell.)

The only other pre-war facility in North Carolina at the start of WWI was Camp Glenn situated on Bogue Sound just west of Morehead City in Carteret County. It was a National Guard training camp from 1911 until 1918. It later became a naval base and the first Coast Guard air station from 1920 to 1921. Many of the National Guardsmen sent to Texas during the 1916 Mexican Punitive Expedition and later called up to active duty again in 1917 most certainly trained at Camp Glenn (see Figure 4).

Prior to the United States entering the war, there were some efforts to increase preparedness. On July 21, 1916, a bill was passed in Congress to greatly expand the U.S. Navy. A small number of Americans volunteered to help Britain and France. Four North Carolinians joined the French Air Force, forming the celebrated "LaFayette Escadrille." Other Americans served voluntarily on the Western Front of the war as ambulance

drivers. When the nation did enter the war, a great patriotic fervor swept the country. Everyone wanted to do their part.

Faced with the need to field a large army, state National Guards were called up, a draft was instituted on May 28, 1917, and the army expanded from approximately 212,034 troops of all ranks to over 4.7 million soldiers and sailors. Of these, 116,516 died in service. The death rate was very high considering that the army had only about three months of combat on the Western Front. The U.S. Navy and Marine Corps also saw an increase in size. The United States entry into the war was decisive in ending the stalemate which existed on the Western Front. After more than a year of organization and training by British and French cadres, the American Expeditionary Force (AEF) began to arrive at the front in the Spring and Summer of 1918.

North Carolina's contribution to the war effort was significant. The North Carolina National Guard was activated and together with the South Carolina and Tennessee National Guards, formed the 30th Infantry Division, the "Old Hickory" Division, at Camp Sevier, South Carolina, near Greenville. Before they could begin to train, the troops had to clear the

area and erect their barracks and other buildings. The 30th Division was typical of the early units formed from National Guard Units. They had to turn in their obsolete equipment and draw up-to-date arms and equipment. With no combat experience, they relied on British and French instructors and also used British and French equipment, particularly when they arrived in Europe. The 81st Division, the “Wildcat Division” was composed of drafted men, into which many North Carolinians were drafted. There is a memorial to the 81st Division on the North Carolina State Capitol grounds in Raleigh. The 30th Division also is memorialized on the capitol grounds in a granite monument to the Old Hickory Highway (old North Carolina State Highway 10) in memory of those who served in WWI. (Figures 5 and 6 describe two covers from Camp Sevier.)

The largest post in North Carolina during WWI was Camp Greene, near Charlotte, which trained thousands of draftees. Drafted soldiers made up the “National Army” as opposed to the “Regular Army” (career army) or the “National Guard,” which were volunteer soldiers such as those North Carolina National Guardsmen who were activated in 1917 to help form the 30th Division. Camp Greene was named for Revolutionary War hero, General Nathaniel Greene. The post was established in July 1917 and was located near Charlotte, then a city of

50,000. The government acquired 2,728 acres of land southwest of the Charlotte city limits. The camp reached its maximum population of 41,000 personnel by February 1918. Between September 3, 1917 and June 30, 1919, it had trained approximately 60,000 troops.

Two distinct cancellations were in use at Camp Greene and are illustrated in Figures 7 and 8. Both are Universal Machine cancellations, but each has a different dial size. A satellite post to Camp Greene was Camp Council located near Charlotte. It was an artillery post and does not have a known postal cancellation.

Ironically, most North Carolina soldiers did not train in their home state, but rather in either Camp Sevier or Camp Jackson, both in South Carolina. The 81st Division contained many North Carolina Soldiers. It was organized at Camp Jackson in the summer of 1917 and trained there.

Heavy and field artillery played a pivotal role in WWI because they could cause large numbers of casualties from long ranges. To train the rapidly growing artillery troops, the War Department needed a Field Artillery post with good weather so that artillery could be exercised year-round. A 120,000 acre area 10 miles northwest of Fayetteville was established. A new post was created and named Camp Bragg after North Carolina Confederate General Braxton Bragg. Although the land was

Figure 5. ▶

June 4, 1918, envelope from a soldier at Camp Sevier to his family in Wilkesboro (Wilkes County). Camp Sevier, South Carolina, was the training site for the 30th Infantry Division, which was formed from the North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee National Guards when they were activated in the Spring of 1917. Many of the soldiers from North Carolina who fought in France were trained there.



◀ **Figure 6.** May 7, 1918, postcard mailed from Camp Sevier to Greensboro (Guilford County). The card shows a large group of soldiers with the caption, “Singing Class, Camp Jackson, Columbia, S.C.” The sender has scratched out the camp and location and wrote in “Camp Sevier.” On the message side of the card, the sender writes his unit, which was the 105th Sanitary Train. During WWI, the sanitary train was the medical section, therefore he was in the medical corps of the 30th Infantry Division.

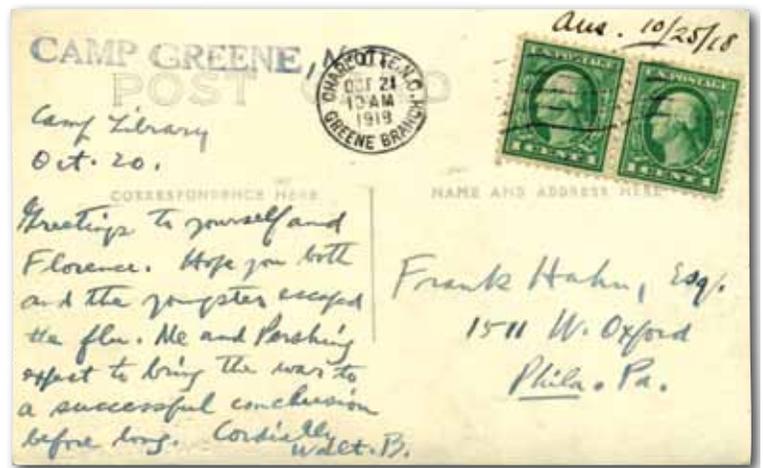
purchased and construction begun, the war ended before Camp Bragg was put into use. The first field artillery unit, the 5th Field Artillery, did not arrive here until November 1920. In 1922, Camp Bragg became a permanent post and was renamed

Fort Bragg. This is now the army's largest military installation and is known as the home to the airborne and special operations. Pope Field, later to become Pope Airforce Base, was established on the Camp Bragg grounds. It was started too

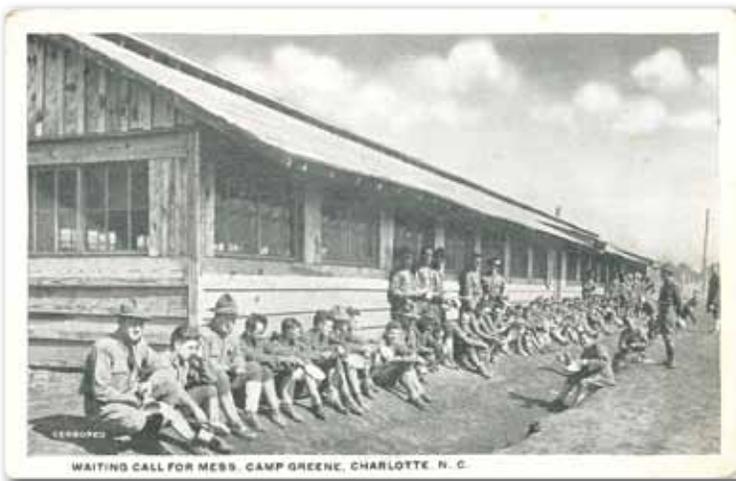


◀ **Figure 7.** The Camp Greene Post Office opened on August 1, 1917, as a branch of the Charlotte Post Office and used two types of cancels. This is the first type, a 23 mm black Universal Machine Type BSB 300, used from September 26, 1917, to December 3, 1917. The letter was mailed on October 6, 1917 to Milltown, Indiana. The envelope has a bold American flag patriotic corner card. (courtesy of Tony Crumbley)

Figure 8. ▶ Camp Greene, Type 2, 20.5 mm black Universal Machine Type DSB 200 cancellation used from December 8, 2017 until December 18, 1918. The postcard was written at the camp library and mailed to a Philadelphia on October 21, 1919. It has a straight line "CAMP GREENE" stamped across the upper left in black. (courtesy of Tony Crumbley)



◀ **Figure 9.** This unused postcard illustrates the rough, temporary building construction and the standard issue WWI uniforms of the soldiers waiting for chow. Note the campaign hats and the canvas gaiters. In the lower left of the photograph, the word "censored" is printed, denoting that the photo was cleared for publication.





◀ **Figure 10.** September 10, 1920, postcard from Camp Bragg to Montgomery, Pennsylvania. The earliest Camp Bragg cancellation recorded to date is May 28, 1919. This post office was a branch of the Fayetteville post office. The postmark is a Universal Machine Type DSB 300. Camp Bragg was changed to Fort Bragg on September 30, 1922, reflecting the change from a temporary post to a permanent one. (courtesy of Tony Crumbley)

Figure 11. ▶

New tank training ground at Camp Polk, located on a 22,000-acre site west of Raleigh (Wake County) on the north side of Hillsboro Street, across the road from the North Carolina Agricultural and Engineering College (N.C. State). The site previously was the North Carolina State Fairgrounds. The post was closed by February 1919 and never reached its potential to support WWI.



late to contribute to U.S. forces in WWI during the active combat period prior to November 11, 1918. There are no wartime postal covers from Camp Bragg known to the author. The earliest Camp Bragg postal marking recorded to date is May 28, 1919. Figure 10 illustrates the machine cancel used at the Camp Bragg branch post office of Fayetteville.

Tank warfare was introduced by the British on September 16, 1916, at the Battle of the Somme. The tank was one of the new innovative technologies of the war. When the army needed a tank training site for the new U.S. tank corps troops, a large 22,000-acre site west of Raleigh was selected. It was named Camp Polk and occupied the North Carolina State Fairgrounds on the north side of Hillsboro Street in Raleigh, across the road from the North Carolina Agricultural and Engineering College, later renamed North Carolina State University. Construction started in September 1918. It was designed to accommodate 8,000 troops but about 5,000 men in seven battalions actually arrived there. Figure 11 illustrates tanks in training at Camp Polk. Like Camp Bragg, the war was over before Camp Polk reached its potential. The end of the war on November 11, 1918, and the great flu epidemic caused the post

to close by February 1919. There is no known cancellation for Camp Polk. The nearby West Raleigh Post Office would have provided postal services.

Besides training camps, North Carolina was the site for an internment camp for non-military German prisoners of war at Hot Springs in Madison County. This very interesting establishment came about when the United States declared war on the Central Powers on April 6, 1917. German merchant and passenger ships that were in U.S. ports were seized. Their crews were not military prisoners of war but were civilian “enemy aliens” who would be interned until the end of the war. The government rented the Mountain Park Hotel and its 160 acres at Hot Springs (Madison County) to establish the “U.S. Internment Station at Hot Springs.” See “Hot Springs, North Carolina – A World War I Internment Camp” by Richard Winter in the Winter 2008 issue of the North Carolina Postal Historian for more details on this camp. The station eventually housed 2,314 internees. During the war, 27 German wives and 19 children moved to the area to be near their interned family members. The officers were housed in the Mountain Park Hotel and the enlisted men lived in barracks on the grounds.

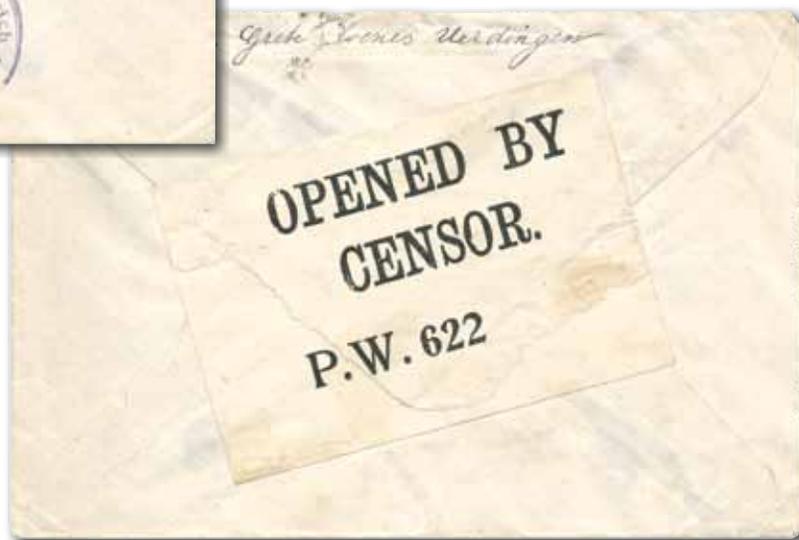
Figure 12. ▶
 15 May 1918 postcard from the Internment Station, Hot Springs (Madison County) to Görlitz, Prussian Silesia. The card shows the required INTERNED CAMP and CENSORED/U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE/HOT SPRINGS, N.C. handstamps in magenta ink as well as the Columbia Machine Type G 2WT cancellation. No postage was required because the postcard was going overseas. (courtesy of Richard Winter)



◀ **Figure 13a.** September 15, 1917, cover from Uerdingen, Germany, to an internee at the Hot Springs Internment Station. The cover passed first through the German censor at the “Auslanderstelle Emmerich” and then went through the “Schweizer Centrale fuer Kriegsgefangene” or “Swiss Center for Prisoners of War,” a Swiss humanitarian organization that operated in neutral Switzerland to expedite prisoner of war mail between warring countries. It arrived at the Hot Springs on November 17, 1917.



Figure 13b. ▶
 Reverse of envelope showing it went through the British mail, where it was opened and examined by a censor and resealed with a label on which was printed “OPENED BY CENSOR./ P.W. 622.” By the time the letter reached the internment station, the interned civilian had been paroled to Sunbury, Pennsylvania.



The wives and children rented housing in Hot Springs, and it is reported that the children went to local schools. The station operated from June 1917 to the Summer of 1918, when the internees were moved to Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia. This station produced some of the more interesting international, censored mail to and from the internees. (Figures 12, 13 and 14 illustrate and describe a few covers to and from the Hot Springs Internment Camp.)

The July 1918 edition of the *U.S. Official Postal Guide*, published by the Post Office Department, contained instructions for Prisoners of War mail and stipulated that “Sailors and civilians on interned vessels and in war prisons or camps, are assimilated to soldiers who are prisoners of war.” Prisoner of war mail sent to overseas addresses were allowed to be sent free of postage, according to international convention; however, if a prisoner of war sent a letter to an address within

the United States, there was no provision for free transmission. In other words, a prisoner could send a letter to Germany free but if he sent it to a relative or friend in the United States, he would have to pay the prevailing rate. Either way, the letter would be censored. The regulations even contained instructions for sending money orders to U.S. prisoners detained in Germany, Austria, Hungary, Bulgaria and Turkey. Money orders were sent to Americans in prisoner of war camps through the Bureau of Prisoner Relief of the American Red Cross. The internees at Hot Springs followed these regulations also.

After the German internees were transferred out of the Hot Springs facility, the Surgeon General and the War Department established a general hospital there for convalescing soldiers. It was designated General Hospital No. 23. The state was the site of three other general hospitals set up by the War Department. They were General Hospital No. 12 near Biltmore Village in Asheville, General Hospital No. 18 at Waynesville and General

Hospital No. 19, at Azalea, near Asheville. All four of the general hospitals were located in western North Carolina, which was thought to offer a healthy recuperative environment. The Surgeon General and War Department were faced not only with treating wounded soldiers, but also the victims of infectious diseases acquired when the troops were crowded together coupled with the lack of preventive vaccines. Tuberculosis and later, the great influenza pandemic of 1918, presented even greater challenges.

Although the United States' involvement in WWI was short-lived, it was decisive in forcing an end to the war. North Carolina made significant contributions in manpower and materials. Three major army training facilities, a coastal artillery fort, four general hospitals and an internment camp were located in the state. North Carolina's naval namesake, the armored cruiser U.S.S. *North Carolina* was one of the U.S. Navy's prominent capital ships and provided a variety of services, from convoy duty to troop transport. She was a

Figure 14. ▶

September 11, 1917, cover from Hot Springs Internment Station to Stockholm, Sweden. Straight-line purple "INTERNED CAMP" handstamps across the Hot Springs circular datestamp and "OFFICIALLY CENSORED/DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE/HOT SPRINGS, N.C." on the left side were struck at the Internment Station. The letter was sent to German relief organization in Stockholm that served as a postal service for civilian mail that could not be delivered directly to Germany because of wartime restrictions between combatants.



◀ **Figure 15.** June 3, 1917, postcard mailed from on board the USS *North Carolina*, ACR-12, an armored cruiser launched in 1906, to Springfield, Massachusetts. This vessel pre-dated the modern battleships such as the USS *North Carolina*, BB-55, launched in 1940. A circular censor handstamp in magenta ink verified that the postcard was passed by a censor on June 3, 1917, with the initials, probably of a junior officer on board.

Tennessee Class pre-modern battleship armored cruiser, the ACR-12. She made aviation history on November 5, 1915, when she launched the first aircraft from a ship by catapult while underway. She also brought troops home from the European theater between December 1918 and July 1919 (see Figures 15 and 16).

The United States Postal Service and the military postal services played an indispensable role by tying the armed forces and the home front together and transmitting military and commercial communications. As in all wars, mail was crucial to morale on the battlefield and on the home front. Since the country was unprepared for the war, post offices, both domestically on military bases and overseas, had to be established very quickly.

Another aspect of interest to the postal collector was the first use of postal censorship on virtually all overseas military and civilian mail by the combatants. Before the United States entered the war in April 1917, mail to and from the United States was censored by the warring powers if it entered their postal systems. Although censorship on across the lines mail

had been practiced during the Civil War, WWI saw the first widespread use of censor operations on practically all mail going out and entering the United States during the war and up until the end of the U.S. occupation of Germany in 1923. The postal service also re-introduced the use of free franking for the soldiers and sailors. They had to write their name and unit on the cover and were not charged for postage. The Hague Convention of 1907 attempted to set up rules of war and among them, combatants were to process prisoner of war mail without cost across international borders.

Mail censor regulations were drafted by the Censorship Board, established by Executive Order No. 2729-A of October 12, 1918. The censorship process involved servicemen's mail being opened and read by approved censors, usually unit officers, who approved them if there was no classified or restricted information and sent on to the recipient by applying a censor marking and sealing it with an adhesive strip.

Even before the United States entered the war, mails coming into the country from countries already at war were censored by European combatant and neutral governments to ensure



◀ **Figure 16.** August 23, 1917, letter from a lieutenant from onboard the USS *North Carolina* to his son in Fall River, Massachusetts. The cover was censored the same day and received a Locy Type 3 postmark of the armored cruiser. Note the pre-printed corner card with a photo of the ship and the return instructions.

Figure 17. ▶ April 10, 1916, cover from South Africa to Winston-Salem (Forsyth County). Prior to the U.S. entry into WWI, foreign mail from warring nations mailed to the United States was censored by the country of origin for security purposes. South Africa was part of the British Empire and therefore also at war. The cover has a blue circular PASSED CENSOR handstamp signifying it was passed by the South African censor. It took until May 23 to reach Winston Salem.





◀ ▼ **Figure 18.** October 21, 1918, another censored civilian envelope from Chapel Hill (Orange County) to Rotterdam, Netherlands. It was opened, examined and sealed by the censor. Netherlands was a neutral nation but apparently the letter passed through the British mail system and was censored there.



Figure 19. ▲ ▶

23 October 1916, 19. Le Havre Gobelins, France, to Wilmington (New Hanover County). The United States was neutral, but mail sent out of France was censored for security reasons. The cover has three oval French censor stamps OUVERT PAR L'AUTORITE MILITAIRE translated as "Open by military authority." The envelope was opened and sealed with a paper tape printed with "Controle Postal Militaire" or "Military Postal Control."



that Central Power spies could not communicate. Figures 17, 18, and 19 show a few examples of civilian censorship on mail from foreign countries during WWI.

The First World War enjoyed great popular support, unlike some subsequent wars. Many students at the state's colleges and universities wanted to join the war effort. One very successful government program that allowed students to join the military yet remain in school until they finished was to join

the Student Army Training Corps or the SATC. Students were enlisted in the army or navy, wore uniforms and received military training as well as continuing their education. There were two courses of study, one to earn a four-year degree and another based on learning technical skills needed by the military. When the students graduated, they entered the military for the remainder of their obligation. Many of the state's colleges and universities participated, including Atlantic

Figure 20. ▼ ►

November 26, 1918, humorous post card posted from West Raleigh, near N.C. A & M College (now N.C. State University) to Warrenton (Warren County) by a student enrolled in the Student Army Training Corps (SATC). After the combatants signed the Armistice on November 11, 1918, and active combat ended, the SATC was no longer needed and demobilization began in December 1918.



Christian College, Biddle University, Catawba College, Davidson College, Elon College, Lenoir College, NC College of Agriculture and Engineering, the University of North Carolina, Shaw University, Trinity College and Wake Forest College. The University of North Carolina also offered a Marine Corps curriculum under the SATC program. This differed from the Reserve Officers Training Program, or ROTC, where students were specifically enrolled in a baccalaureate program leading to a military commission after graduation.

The army continued to train at Camps Sevier or Greene and by the Spring of 1918, the North Carolina troops in the 30th and 81st Divisions as well some separate units were ready to join the American Expeditionary Force (AEF) as the army began its movement to the European battlefields. At this point the war was almost a stalemate. After almost four years of unimagined carnage, neither the Allied or Central powers had been able to achieve a decisive breakthrough on the Western Front. Germany had been able to force a Russian surrender and mount a massive offensive in the Spring of 1918 on the Western Front, but it did not break the allied lines. The French army had suffered huge losses, the British army was holding and the Italians had also suffered significant casualties. On the Central Powers side, Germany had taken large losses and the civilian population was struggling with food and materials shortages caused by the allied naval blockade. The Austrian-Hungarian Empire, the Ottoman Turkish Empire and Bulgaria were severely weakened by four years of war. In short, the

armies were deadlocked and the civilian populations were affected by food shortages and political instability caused by years of sacrifice without an end in sight.

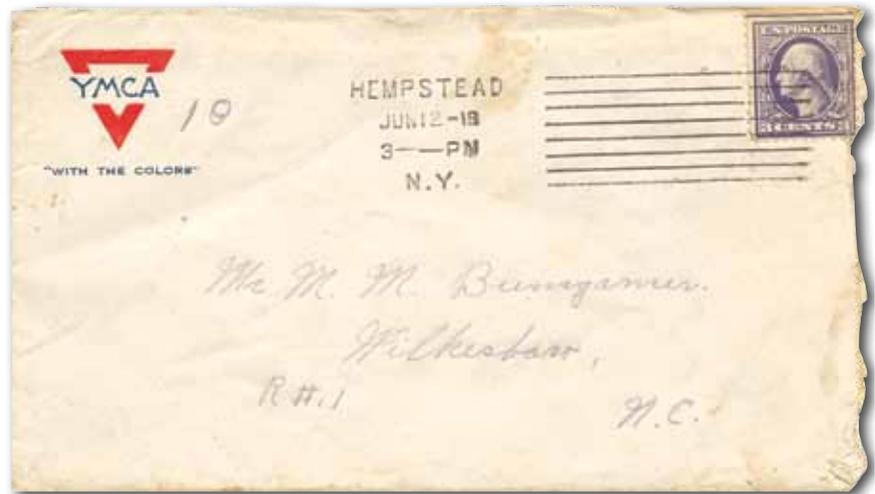
The arrival of the AEF in France and Italy was to change that. The American entry into the war encouraged the European allies to believe that there was new hope for a victory. The fresh American troops, although not yet combat tested, added enough manpower to eventually achieve decisive victories. From September through November 1918, the Americans fought in the successful offensives at Chateau-Thierry, St. Mihiel and the great Meuse-Argonne offensive that broke the German main lines and forced a retreat that threatened the collapse of the German front. The 30th Division, under British command, had crossed the seemingly impregnable German defensive line, the "Hindenburg Line" in late September. As a result, the German Government realized they were facing not only military defeat but internal dissent and possible revolution. The German Kaiser was forced to abdicate and Germany asked for an armistice, which was accepted. Combat effectively ended on November 11, 1918, when the armistice took effect. The war did not officially end until August 25, 1921, when Germany and the United States signed a peace agreement. The Allies however, occupied western border areas of Germany until 1930 to enforce German payment of reparations to the Allies and to provide a buffer zone to France from a future German attack. The U.S. Army contribution to the occupation of the German Rhineland

was originally about 240,000 soldiers in nine divisions. The American occupation zone was the northern sector of the Coblenz Bridgehead on the left bank of the Rhine River. The U.S. force withdrew in 1923 and therefore, from a historical

and postal history perspective, WWI lasted from April 6, 1917 until January 24, 1923. Figures 21 through 26, with their descriptions, illustrate covers from the period of the American participation.

Figure 21. ▶

In the spring and summer of 1918, the American army began movement to France. This cover was mailed on June 12, 1918, by a soldier to a relative in Wilkesboro (Wilkes County) from Hempstead, New York. Likely, he was en route to an embarkation point. The cover is another example of a YMCA envelope furnished to soldiers. Since the letter was mailed within the United States it was not censored.



◀ **Figure 22.** Once a unit arrived overseas, its mail was censored. This letter was mailed from "somewhere in France" on December 27, 1917, to the soldier's mother in Raleigh (Wake County). The soldier was a Lieutenant in the 28th Infantry Regiment. It was cancelled by the U.S. Army Postal Service and has a blue circular censor stamp with "AEF PASSED AS CENSORED" with the censoring officer's signature written over it. To ensure free franking, "Soldier's Mail" and the name, rank and unit are written on the cover.



Figure 23. ▶

October 18, 1918, postcard sent through U.S. Military Postal Express Service to Winston-Salem (Forsyth County). It has two censor stamps, one square "Passed by Base Censor AEF" and another circular "AEF PASSED AS CENSORED." The card shows a column of military trucks on the front with a caption that says, "These supply trains will continue moving as long as you folks buy bonds."





◀ **Figure 24.** December 7, 1918, to Windsor (Bertie County) this postcard shows a scene in Neufchateau, France. It was canceled with a "Postal Express Service" circular datestamp and was stamped with a blue circular "AEF PASSED AS CENSORED" marking. The soldier wrote his unit, the 316th Field Artillery, in the text on the card as required for free franking. If the card had been captured, an intelligence officer could associate the unit with the photograph on the postcard and surmise the unit's approximate location.



▲ **Figure 25.** Although the date is not clear, this cover printed for the YMCA was mailed to Wilkesboro (Wilkes County) through the US Army Post Office by a soldier in the 323rd Infantry Regiment, a unit of the 81st Division. This division was made up of draftees from North Carolina, South Carolina and Florida. It also has a purple handstamp "AEF PASSED AS CENSORED" stamp. The cover was printed for the YMCA facility located at the Casino Grand Cercle at Aix Les Bains in south east France. Far from the front this facility was taken over by the YMCA as a club (without the gambling equipment) for American soldiers.

Figure 26. ▶

The shoulder insignia of the 30th or “Old Hickory” Division, a national guard division made of North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee units, was introduced in 1917. Distinctive unit shoulder insignias were first authorized in the Great War. The card lists the battles that the division fought during the push to break the Hindenburg Line. The insignia contains the roman numerals for 30 (30th Division) and the letters “OH” for Old Hickory, Andrew Jackson’s nickname.



The armistice did not end the war and Germany did not surrender. The war officially ended when the Treaty of Versailles was signed on June 28, 1919, in the Palace of Versailles in Paris. This treaty was unilaterally imposed on the Central Powers and re-arranged many continental European boundaries. The treaty was greatly resented by Germany and Austria. Both countries lost large territories but Germany was forced to sign a “war guilt” clause and pay large reparations in money and raw materials. The conditions created by the Treaty of Versailles inevitably led to the Second World War.

Although the signing of The Treaty of Versailles formally ended the war, the American army did not all leave Europe. The treaty required Germany to pay the Allies reparations in both money and materials, such as coal. The treaty also required Germany to de-militarize parts of its western border areas, such as the Rhineland-Palatinate. These areas were

occupied by American forces until 1923. Other areas of Germany, such as the industrial Ruhr, were occupied by the other allies, France and Belgium up until 1930. This was to ensure German compliance with the treaty conditions. Much of the postal history of the AEF in Europe actually relates to the postwar occupation of this area of Germany from 1918 to 1923 by some American units. Many AEF units did return home soon after the war and postal history can help track soldiers and their units through their wartime travels. Figures 27 and 28 show two covers during the occupation period

In summary, the postal history of the Great War adds an important perspective to understanding the global scope of the war and puts the war on a personal level by introducing us to the wartime experiences and relationships of the soldiers, sailors and civilians involved in this first truly global war. ■



◀ **Figure 27.** The AEF was ordered to occupy the German Rhineland until 1923. This cover was mailed to a family in Raleigh (Wake County) by a captain in the medical corps and contained a letter with the heading “Coblenz, Germany, Dec. 17, 1918.” The cover has “Officers’ Mail” handwritten on the upper right and a lightly struck circular censor’s stamp and a handwritten “OK” place in the lower left by the censor with his signature. The writer identifies his unit as the “Third Ammunition Train.” Military censorship continued after hostilities ended and into the period of occupation of the Rhine River area.



◀ **Figure 28.** April 12, 1919, postcard to Charlotte (Mecklenburg County) from soldier in the occupation force who served in Evacuation Hospital 16. The card is censored because even though the fighting was over, the countries had not signed a peace treaty. The circular datestamp cancel contains “Third Army, the date, and APO 927” and the circular censor’s stamp contains “AEF PASSED AS CENSORED” with the national emblem within the circle. The abbreviation “APO” is for “Army Post Office.”

Figure 28a. ▶ Face of the postcard, printed in Germany, showing five views of the Rhine River in the Coblenz area, which was the center of the American occupation sector.



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The Cave Post Offices of North Carolina



by Thomas Lera

To understand and chronicle “cave” post offices in the United States, I have studied and collected postal history material for the past 35 years on speleophily, which is the study of cave and bat stamps, and other philatelic cave-related items. Exhibiting these materials, I have won a single frame and multi-frame Grand Awards and have written two books *Bats in Philately – American Topical Association Handbook 128* in 1995, and *Cave Post Offices* published by Cave Books in 2011.

Before moving to Florida from Virginia, I was an APS philatelic judge, a president of NAPEX, and the Winton M. Blount Research Chair at the Smithsonian National Postal Museum. I became a Fellow of the Royal Philatelic Society London in 2012, received the *Smithsonian Institution Secretary’s Research Prize* in 2014, was inducted in *The APS Writers’ Unit #30 Hall of Fame* in 2015, and was awarded the *Distinguished Philatelic Texan Award* in 2016. Now retired, I continue to be a member of several philatelic societies, research postal history, write and travel.

I am in the process of writing an updated edition of *Cave Post Offices*, going into more research on the postmasters, postmarks used, and location maps where available. A few of the major sources of information regarding the postmasters and post offices can be found at:

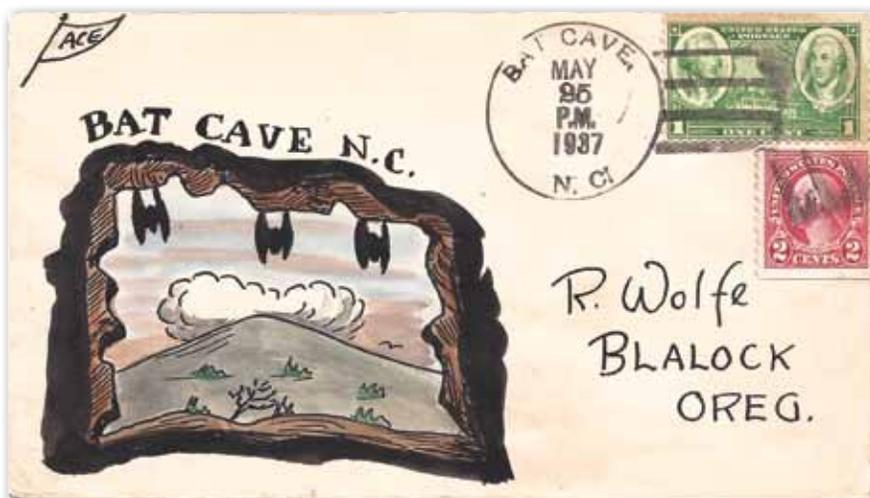
- The digitized daily *U.S. Postal Bulletin and U.S. Postal Laws and Regulations* at <http://www.uspostalbulletin.com>.
- *Official Register of the United States, containing a List of Of-*

ficers and Employees in the Civil, Military, and Naval Service. The Post Office and The Postal Service, Washington D.C. Government Printing Service, published every two years.

- Prior to 1971, the primary sources of information are National Archives Microfilm Publication M1131, *Record of Appointment of Postmasters, October 1789 – 1832*, and M841, *Record of Appointment of Postmasters, 1832 – September 30, 1971*. Record Group 28: Records of the Post Office Department, 1773 – 1971.
- *Reports of Site Locations, 1837 – 1950*, from Records Group 28, Georgia, North and South Carolina.
- Various state postal history societies including the North Carolina Postal History Society (NCPHS), www.ncpostalhistory.com/. Bat Cave postmark types are from this site and labeled as NCPHS Type “#.”
- Historical maps were found at the University of Texas Libraries, Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/topo/virginia/>.
- American Spelean History Association, provided comments on the organization and layout, and have posted updates on their website <http://www.cavehistory.org>.

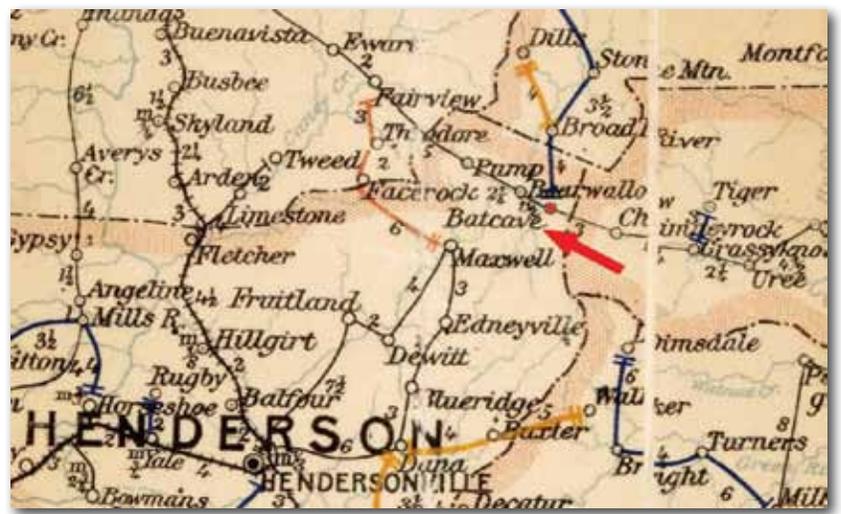
There are only two cave post offices in North Carolina. If, after reading this article, you have postmarks of any caves, natural bridges, or grottoes in your collection, I would appreciate a scan sent to me at: frontier2@erols.com.

Bat Cave (12/12/1878 – open)



◀ **Figure 1.** Illustrated Cover, Art Cover Exchange, by W.C. Sharp, Ace # 70, Kannapolis, N.C.; NCPHS Type 6, 33 mm 1925 Type C/1 4-Bar postmark used on a cover from Bat Cave to Blalock, Oregon.

Figure 2. ▶ Bat Cave (Henderson County) illustrated on the *Postal Route Map of The States of North Carolina and South Carolina*, A. von Haake, Topographer, P.O. Dept. of 1st of June 1896. <http://dc.lib.unc.edu/cdm/singleitem/collection/ncmaps/id/611/rec/8>. (accessed September 6, 2018.)



Bats remain a mystery to most people as many have never seen one, yet they live all over the United States. Bats are warm blooded, have fur, their babies are live born rather than hatched from eggs, and they are the only mammals that can fly. Bats are the world's most important predators of night flying insects, consuming mosquitoes, beetles, moths, grasshoppers,

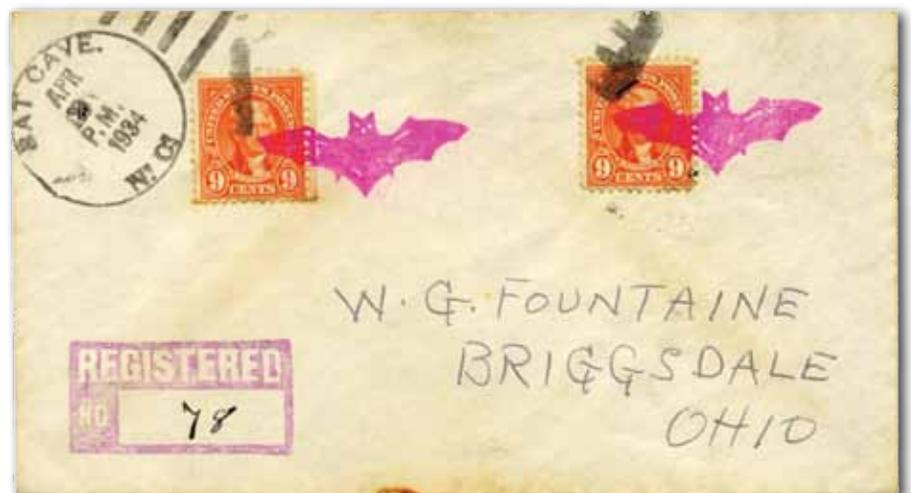
and many bugs that could destroy crops.

Bats have always played an important part in myths because they are nocturnal animals. People have regarded them as evil spirits - friends of witches, vampires, and other creatures of the night. They are a favorite Halloween motif (see Figures 3 & 4)



◀ **Figure 3.** Halloween cachet from Bat Cave to Pottstown, Pennsylvania; NCPHS Type 7, 34.5 mm 1931 Type C/1 4-Bar circular datestamp dated 10/31/1935 with add-on double circle Witch Creek, California M.O.B. (Money Order Business) datestamp of 11/9/1935. (courtesy of Tony Crumbley Collection)

Figure 4. ▶ Registered letter from Bat Cave to Briggsdale, Ohio; stamps cancelled with magenta bat, not authorized by the post office so postmaster applied by hand the black marking on each stamp. The Bat Cave postmark is NCPHS Type 6, 33 mm 1925 Type C/1 4-Bar postmark dated 04/02/1934. (courtesy of Tony Crumbley Collection)



About half of all bats in the United States roost in caves, as they are dark and quiet. But trees and buildings can be good roosting places too. Many bats go into a deep hibernating sleep during the cold winter months, having stored enough energy in their body fat to last them until spring.

Collections of postage stamps, covers and other philatelic materials on caves and cave related topics such as bats, have been around since 1936 when Cuba issued the first cave stamp, and Chile followed in issuing the first bat stamp. While earlier bat stamps had been issued, they were stylized, artistic drawings, as seen in China's 1894 Dowager issues. The 1- and 9-candareen stamps have five stylized bats in a ring surrounding the Chinese tree of life. These five bats are called "wu-fu", symbolizing the five great happinesses – health, wealth, long life, good luck and tranquility.

On December 22, 1879, the Chimney Rock Post Office in the western-most part of Rutherford County was moved three miles west northwest into Henderson County (see Figure 2). At the same time its name was changed to Bat Cave and Louisa T. Duvall was appointed postmaster. The listing of additional

postmasters of Bat Cave from 1879 to 2012, when it became a Remotely Managed post office of Lake Lure, may be found on the North Carolina Postal History Society website, <http://www.ncpostalhistory.com/> under the Resource Tab, go to NC Postmark Catalog, scroll to Henderson County and open the PDF, then go to pages 4-5 of the Bat Cave post office.

Bat Cave Nature Preserve is a designated 93-acre National Natural Landmark near the community of Bat Cave, NC, which, in 1879, had only about 200 residents.

The cave system consists of ten passable and several impassible entrances leading into a complex underground network. The main chamber is more than 300 feet long and approximately 85 feet high. A 1984 survey measured the total length of its passageways at 5,560 feet, making the Bat Cave system the second longest known granite fissure cave in the world, and the longest granite cave in North America.

The cave itself is closed to the public. However, the preserve is open from mid-April through September when it closes until the following April to allow the Indiana Bats to hibernate undisturbed.

Figure 5. ▶ August 31, 1893, cover from Bat Cave to Edneyville (Henderson County), with a NCPHS Type 1, 27 mm circular datestamp.



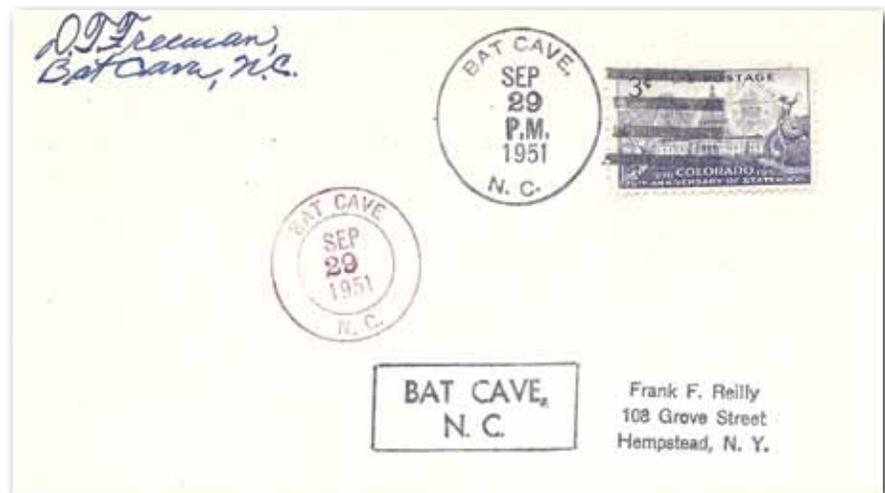
◀ **Figure 6.** October 20, 1902, cover from Bat Cave to Hendersonville (Henderson County), with a NCPHS Type 2, 28 mm circular datestamp.



▲ **Figure 7.** Left, Bat Cave, Type PSS 841(4), precancel first used in December 1974; Right, NCPHS Type 3, 28.5 mm Doane Type 2 - 2 postmark used between August 16, 1904 and October 10, 1910.



▲ **Figure 8.** February 6, 1899, postal card from Bat Cave to Shipley, England, with NCPHS Type 2, 28 mm circular datestamp. Postal card twice redirected in England to Skipton and Grassington in York County and then to Newhaven, Sussex County, England.



▲ **Figure 9.** Three different Bat Cave postmarks. NCPHS Type 9, 32.5 mm Type F/1 4-Bar; Type 10, 29 mm magenta double circle; the bottom rectangular postmark is for third-class mail.



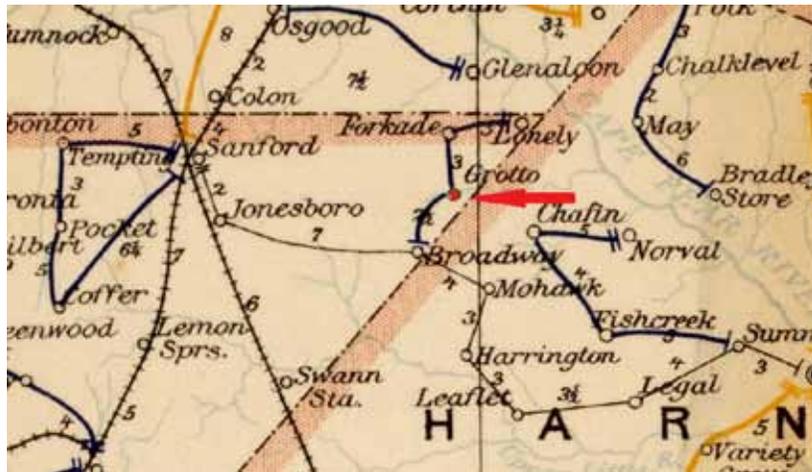
▲ **Figure 10.** Four Bat Cave Temporary Station pictorial cancellations. Note the subtle design changes. The first is for the Hickory Nut Gorge Dogwood Festival in 1991. The next three are for the National Stamp Collecting Month in 1992, 1997, and 1998.



▲ **Figure 11.** NCPHS Type 21, 30.5 mm red self-inking postmark with zip code 28710. The Bat Cave Post Office is shown on the left side of the envelope.

Grotto

(03/03/1893 – 03/31/1905)

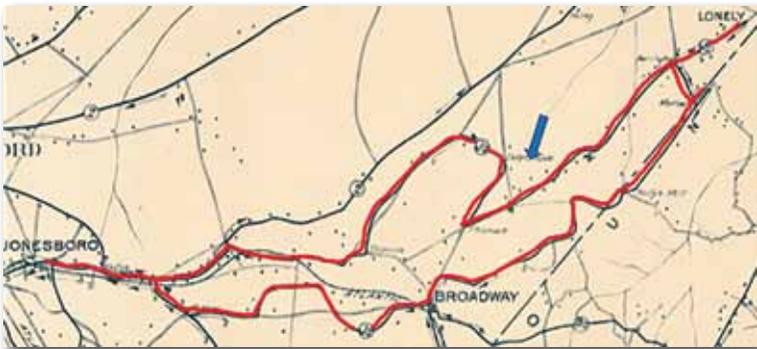


▲ **Figure 12.** Grotto (Moore County) illustrated on the *Postal Route Map of The States of North Carolina and South Carolina*, A. von Haake, Topographer, P.O. Dept. of 1st of June 1896. <http://dc.lib.unc.edu/cdm/singleitem/collection/ncmaps/id/611/rec/8>. (accessed September 6, 2018)

In 1893, Grotto was in Moore County, two and one-half miles from Broadway, six miles from Lonely, and one-half mile east of Mail Route No. 18363. A site survey completed by Postmaster Judson C. Thomas on January 25, 1893, indicated mail was carried twice a week on Mail Route No. 18363 between Broadway and Lonely. The above map in 1896 shows mail was delivered three times a week (dark blue line between Broadway and Lonely via Grotto).

The post office was discontinued on March 31, 1905, when service changed to rural free delivery on Route J2 from Jonesboro (see Figure 13).

In 1908 Lee County was formed from portions of Chatham and Moore Counties. This placed Grotto in Lee County at the same location as shown in Figure 12; however, the post office closed in March 1905 and never was reopened.



◀ **Figure 13.** Rural Free Delivery in Lee County North Carolina, Route J2. The blue arrow is the approximate location of Grotto. North Carolina Collection, *Rural Delivery Routes in Lee County, United States Post Office 1910-1919*. <https://dc.lib.unc.edu/cdm/singleitem/collection/ncmaps/id/1726/rec/5>. (accessed September 6, 2018)

There are no known postmarks from Grotto, North Carolina. If you have one of these postmarks in your collection, I would appreciate a scan sent to me, Thomas Lera at: frontier2@erols.com.

Collecting thematic cave postmarks and researching the histories of these towns and their postmasters makes speleophilately an interesting, absorbing and relaxing pastime. Also, it has also connected me to others from all over the world, who

have become long-distance friends. Speleophilately keeps your mind active, and an active mind remains a young mind. Enjoy your thematic collections.

I thank Tony Crumbley and Richard Winter for their encouragement, comments and items used in this article, and the North Carolina Postal History Society for maintaining one of the best state postal research websites. Bat Cave postmarks are typed according to the list provide on the NCPH website. ■

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