Flat Rock,
North Carolina

Henrietta, Rutherford County,
Confederate Cover?

Delta, A Landing on the
Black River

Affiliate #155 of the American Philatelic Society

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

This year is well underway and we have some new resources available to the membership. First, Maurice Bursey has updated the Author/Subject Indexes to the *North Carolina Postal Historian* and its predecessor, the *NCHPS Newsletter*. The last time the Indexes were updated was in the Winter 2009/2010 issue. Now, we can use this important tool to access another nine years of articles. Maurice has made a very valuable contribution to our society with this update. The Indexes will be mailed as a Supplement to the Spring 2019 issue of our journal.

Another important project is being coordinated with our website contractor by our webmaster, Scott Steward. This is a major upgrade to the software used to create our website, including a number of security upgrades. Cyber threats are an ever-present occurrence and a constantly changing reality in our web-based world. Keeping the website safe is a prudent necessity.

It's not too early to consider planning to attend the Charpex show on July 27 and 28, 2019, in Charlotte at the Central Piedmont Community College. This show always has something for everyone and hosts the annual general meeting of the North Carolina Postal History Society. During our general meeting we elect new Board members, provide society status, and present our award for the outstanding article in the *North Carolina Postal Historian* from the previous year. Then we have a program which is always interesting and educational. The general meeting is followed by a meeting of the Board of Directors and selection of officers by the Board if their terms are completed. If you can attend, it is well worth the effort and a great opportunity to meet fellow members.

We have received notification of an important postal history symposium to be held later this year. It is the "The Civil War Postal Exhibition and Symposium 2019," sponsored by the

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Confederate Stamp Alliance and the American Philatelic Society, to be held on October 24-26, 2019, at the American Philatelic Center in Bellefonte, Pennsylvania. There will be a bourse, 125 competitive-frame exhibition, as well as interesting programs. This sounds like an important and unique event. The details are available on https://stamps.org/Blog/post/civil-war-postal-exhibition-and-symposium-announced or write to Jerry S. Palazolo, 5010 Raleigh LaGrange Road, Memphis, TN 38128.

To emphasize the growing importance of our society, the journal, and the website has become, I have received two requests for assistance in the past two days. One is from a researcher in Asheville and another from a youth group volunteer who is helping a student start a stamp collection. Our website really is getting our message out there.

Last but not least, our treasurer is sending out reminders for our delinquent members to pay the 2019 dues. There are 18 members who still have not paid their dues. In today's busy world, it's sometimes difficult to keep up with dues, particularly if one belongs to several organizations. Contributions in excess the $15.00 dues are welcome and help keep our dues low.

The Editors would like to thank member John Olson for lending his time to decorate the envelopes of this issue and the last one with all the colorful obsolete postage stamps. This has saved the editors hours of work and added to the interest of the envelopes.

Flat Rock, North Carolina-
From the Perspective of Lenoir Ray via Postmarks

by Tony L. Crumbley

In preparation for a recent trip, I pulled a book from the shelf to take along to read on the flight. The book had been there since I purchased Vernon Stroupe's collection and library. It was well known to me as a postal history of Henderson County, North Carolina.

The book, published in 1970 and titled *Postmarks: A History of Henderson County, 1787-1968*, was authored by Lenoir Ray. He began collecting information on the post offices of Henderson County in 1958, and spent ten years digging into the details of post offices and individuals. The dust jacket of *Postmarks* is illustrated in Figure 1.

I was quite surprised that this 412-page postal history of the county did not contain a single image of a cover. The dust jacket, however, was full of postmarks from the county, enough to catch the eye of any collector.

As I began reading the book, I wondered what Ray was going to do to fill the contents of the book. On the first page, I discovered his approach. I was about to delve into a very detailed history of the postal operations of Henderson County, its offices, as well as some of its genealogy.

In the second paragraph was a description of the mail wagons of 1820 which I had never seen before. The paragraph follows:

> On the high-roads the post offices were served by mail coaches. They were an impressive sight. They are described, in an order by Postmaster General Habersham, issued in 1799, as follows: "The body painted green, colors formed of Prussian blue and yellow ochre; carriage and wheels red, lead mixed to approach vermillion as near as may be: octagon panel in the back, black; octagon blends green; elbow piece on rail, front rail and back, red as above; on all doors, Roman capitals in patent yellow, 'United States Mail Stage' and over these words a spread Eagle of size and color to suit."

How could I have missed this bold description all these years? Every picture I have ever seen was black and white, and not very impressive.

When I began the book, my thoughts were that this would be a great resource of information for a journal article on the

postal history of Henderson County. I had not finished the first chapter before I had determined that would be an impossible feat as there was too much detail in the book to be condensed into one article.

To give you an idea of the detail within the book, I submit the following quote:

> The first post office was Claytonville, established August 30, 1826. There seems to be no local information and only a few meager references to it in the government records. There was a strong possibility that it was in that part of Henderson County which later became Transylvania County.
>
> The first postmaster was John Clayton. He was born December 31, 1785, the son of Lambert and Sarah Davidson Clayton. In the Davidson River cemetery at Pisgah Forest is this legend on Lambert Clayton's tombstone: "Sacred to the memory of Lambert Clayton, born near Dover, Delaware, June 22, 1755, died July 12, 1828. Having entered the American Army in 1776, he served his country faithfully during the whole war; was present of the battle of King's Mountain, Guilford Court House and Eutaw Springs and received at the close of the war an Honorable Discharge."
>
> That was not all he received, however, for a grateful country also gave him a land grant in this western wilderness and allowed him the privilege of fighting in a new manner for his way of life.

I think it is safe to say, there is no other postal history of a U.S. county written today as detailed as this book is on Henderson County. Clearly, there is more to be found here than can be absorbed in one reading.

My focus in this article is on one post office within the county and to provide the reader with a sampling of the detail that Ray shares, along with images of the actual covers that passed through this particular office. Of course, I chose Flat Rock as it has always intrigued me. Ray's book uses 71 pages to provide the history of this office.

The first land grants for the Flat Rock area were made in 1789-90. The four largest grants were to David and Andrew Miller, Abraham Kuykendall, and John Earl. The Millers were land speculators who lived in Rutherfordton, and Kuykendall
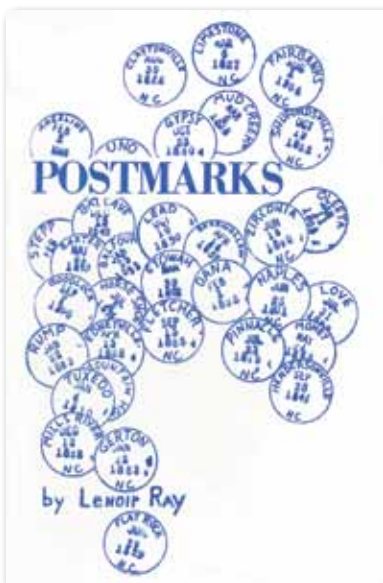
was from eastern North Carolina. John Earl and Abraham Kuykendall were the most well-known settlers. Earl operated the first grist and lumber mill and Kuykendall was a miller and an inn keeper.

Until 1828 with the completion of the Buncombe Turnpike, the mountains of western North Carolina were inaccessible to most. With the completion of this road, a trip from the South Carolina coast could be made to Flat Rock in ten to fourteen days. Even with such a long journey, the affluent of South Carolina began to summer over in the Flat Rock area to escape the "fever of the country," as they called malaria which was rampant in Charleston but not heard of in the mountains. The Low Country and Flat Rock connection will play a future role in the postal history of Flat Rock.

The first post office opened in Flat Rock in 1829 soon after the opening of the Buncombe Turnpike. At this time, Flat Rock was in Buncombe County and moved to Henderson County when it was formed in December 1838. The first postmaster was John Davis. John had been born in 1781 near Wytheville, Virginia. He spent his early years in Tennessee, later moving to Mussel Shoals, Alabama. With the call for troops during the war of 1812, he enlisted in the militia and served under Colonel Coffee. John participated in all the major battles with Col. Coffee. After the war, John moved to South Carolina and opened a mercantile business. In 1823, he moved to Flat Rock and purchased property. Ray states in his book:

> Flat Rock gained a cosmopolitan citizen. Having lived in five states, served nearly four years in the Army and participated in the only successful campaigns of the war, Davis was a man of education, ability and influence. Col. Coffee was only too happy to assist in having a post office established at Flat Rock with John Davis as postmaster. He was appointed June 29, 1829.

On October 12, 1830, Postmaster Davis conveyed 1,390 acres to Mitchell King, including the dwelling house that author Lenoir Ray was living in when he wrote his book. Davis moved to property he owned just north of the South Carolina state line, where he built a hotel. No postmarks have been recorded from Davis' term as postmaster.

William Murray, postmaster of the first Limestone in Buncombe County, moved to Flat Rock to manage Mitchell King's property and business enterprises. On March 2, 1831, Murray was appointed as the second postmaster of Flat Rock. He would serve until 1835. A letter from Postmaster Murray survives and indicates that he was not the most educated person in the county. A portion of the letter follows with no corrections to his grammar or spelling:

> …with respect to painting of your long hous intire. You Furnish the paint. I will find oile & Compleat or have it done in a good & workeman like maner for $50 and plais it to my credit. The SurcumStans is this I got Shroat the Panter with me & he is without imploymnt at this time.
>
> If you conclude to have the work don pleas forward the paints as Soone as convent pleas forward from 8 to 10 caggs of Paint You will pleas to describe the colors that you fancy if white 8 cagg of white lead & one of vardigreas for the window faising & blinds. You will have the goodness to right to me as Postmaster at Leimstone making any inquiry respecting your affairs in B. & It shall be attended to promptly
>
> Yours
> Respectfully
> Wm Murray

In compiling data for *Post Offices and Postmasters of North Carolina, Colonial to USPS*, one stampless cover was found and a tracing made of Postmaster Murray's manuscript postmark. Figure 2 is a black and white photocopy of this cover, an August 8, 1831, folded letter to New York City.

◄ **Figure 2.** August 8, 1831, Flat Rock to New York City folded letter showing manuscript postmark. Letter sent unpaid and marked at origin for 25¢ postage due at destination. Letter sent under William Murray, Flat Rock's second postmaster.

Figure 3. ►
April 30, 1837, unpaid letter from Flat Rock to Fayetteville (Cumberland County), where 18¾¢ paid as well as 12½¢ to redirect to Spencer (Davidson County). Note early PAID with pointing hand postal marking of Fayetteville. The cover was posted by Postmaster Peter Summey.

In 1835, the Postmaster's position turned over to Alexander Pearson for one year. Ray does not mention him within the book. On May 16, 1836, Peter A. Summey was appointed postmaster. Peter took out a land grant on December 21, 1830, and settled on Earl's Creek where he operated a mill. The post office, however, continued to be housed within a tavern on King's property.

Figure 3 is a letter posted from Flat Rock on April 30, 1837, when Peter Summey was postmaster. The letter was posted to H. W. Nelson, Civil Engineer, in Fayetteville, and was forwarded to him in Spencer. The letter content is about railroad building in North Carolina. The 18¾ cent-rate covered the postage for a distance of 150 to 400 miles. The 12½-rate was the rate to forward the cover from Fayetteville to Spencer, a distance of 80 to 150 miles. Note the "pointing hand" PAID handstamp of Fayetteville, used from November 1824 to June 1843.

Peter remained postmaster until March 12, 1838, when George Summey, Peter's son, was appointed postmaster. The postmaster change was due to the fact that the tavern had become too rowdy for people to come by and get their mail. The post office was moved to the mill. It stayed there while Flat Rock became a part of the newly-formed Henderson County in December 1838.

It seems that the people did not like going to the mill for their mail either, as on April 22, 1840, John Mills was appointed postmaster and moved the post office to his store. That lasted only until December 30, 1842, when George Summey was reappointed. George would serve until January 24, 1845. Figure 4 is a cover posted from Flat Rock on June 23, 1843,

while Postmaster George Summey was postmaster. The cover was posted to Col. John Manning in Columbia, South Carolina, from Mitchell King, owner of the tavern where the post office was located on several occasions.

On January 24, 1845, the Rev. Peter Stradley was appointed postmaster. Ray speculates that the change once again was due to the rowdiness of the tavern and the public not wanting to go there for mail. Postmaster Stradley came to Flat Rock in 1834. He and his brother, Thomas, both served in the Royal Scots Greys and were in the Battle of Waterloo. Stradley came as a Baptist minister and later founded the First Baptist Church of Hendersonville. In Flat Rock, he operated a blacksmith shop where he made axes, hatchets, knives, nails and horse shoes, among other things. In 1970 when Ray published his book, this building was still standing in front of the current post office building. During Postmaster Stradley's tenure, the postal history of Flat Rock became more active.

Figure 5 is a cover franked with a 1851 orange brown 3¢ stamp, dated 20 January (1852) from Flat Rock to Reverend C.C. Pinckney, Jr. of Charleston, South Carolina. Much of the remaining mail from Flat Rock went to South Carolina where it survived. The stamp is canceled with a pen cancel and the envelope with a manuscript postmark.

Postmaster Stradley introduced the first post office circular datestamp of Flat Rock. The earliest recorded use is of this postal marking is December 31, 1853. Figure 6 on the next page is an example of this postmark used on a cover with a 1851 dull red 3¢ stamp. The cover was posted to Garlands, Virginia, and endorsed to go southeast via Columbia, South

Figure 4. ▶
June 23, 1843, Unpaid folded letter from Flat Rock to Columbia, South Carolina, marked for 18¾¢ due at destination. Letter from Mitchell King, who owned the property of several of the post offices, to Col. John Manning. Cover posted by George Summey in his second term as postmaster.
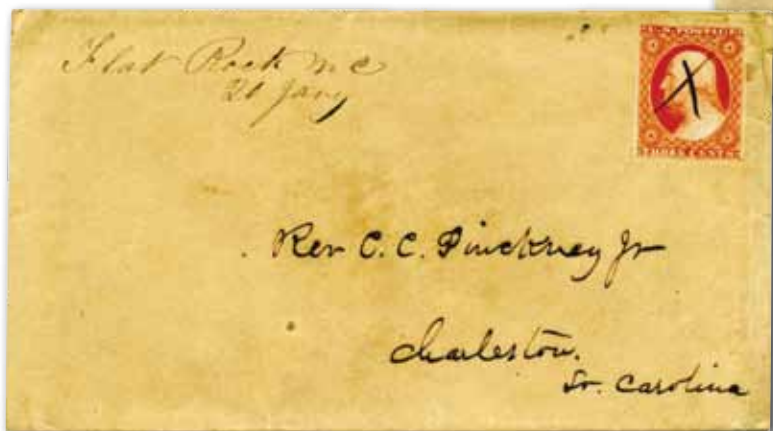
◀ **Figure 5.** January 20, (1852), letter paid with 1851 orange brown, 3¢ stamp to Charleston, South Carolina. Peter Stradley was Flat Rock's first postmaster to receive and use postage stamps.

◄ **Figure 6.** August 23, 1854, cover from Flat Rock to Garlands, Virginia, paid with an 1851 3¢ dull red stamp. Postmaster Peter Stradley used the first circular datestamp in Flat Rock, a townmark used from 1853 until 1867. This cover was endorsed to go southeast via Columbia, South Carolina.

Figure 7. ►
June 26, 1861, envelope paid 5¢ Confederate letter rate from Flat Rock to Columbia, South Carolina. The Type 1 circular date-stamp was used by Confederate postmaster Stradley, who also procured the Paid 5 handstamp. This home-made envelope was made from ruled paper, indicating the shortage of paper even early in the war.

◄ **Figure 8** July 1, 1862, Flat Rock to Adams Run, South Carolina. Effective July 1, 1862, the single letter postage rate increased from 5¢ to 10¢. This cover was posted on the first day of the new rate. Postmaster Stradley struck the cover twice with his Paid 5 handstamp to indicate payment of 10¢.

Carolina, a clear indication of the travel patterns necessary because of the mountains.

As war clouds mounted over Flat Rock, times there became more interesting. North Carolina was very reluctant to enter the war; yet, most of Flat Rock was made up of Charlestonians. Clearly, this hotbed of secessionists in a Union territory must have caused difficulties. On May 20, 1861, when North Carolina seceded from the Union, a celebration was undertaken. North Carolina formerlly was admitted into the Confederacy on May 27, 1861. For four days the Confederate post office in Flat Rock with Postmaster Stradley could use U.S. stamps until the Confederate post office took control on June 1, 1861. No cover, however, has been reported for this very short period.

Thanks to several hoardes of covers that survived in Charleston and Columbia, we have many examples of the Confederate postal history in Flat Rock, primarily because some prominent families spent large amounts of time there.

Figure 7 is an example of the five-cent Confederate postage rate that first went into effect on June 1, 1861. This "Paid 5" cover was posted June 26, 1861, to Miss Susan Middleton in Columbia, South Carolina. The circular datestamp is the same one that Stradley had used before the war. With no postage stamps available, he had somehow procured a Paid 5 handstamp to show the paid letter rate. The envelope is a home-made envelope made from ruled paper.

On July 1, 1862, the Confederate postal rate was increased from five-cents to ten-cents for a single letter. Figure 8 is a cover posted on July 1, (1862) with a double strike of the Paid 5 handstamp to make up the ten-cents rate. The cover is made from the fly sheet of a penmanship text book, an indication of the shortage of paper already taking place in Flat Rock. Figure 8a shows the paper from which the envelope was made.

Without a doubt, more Confederate wallpaper covers exist from Flat Rock than any other post office. Figure 9 is an

Figure 8a. ▶
Inside of Figure 8, the June 26, 1861 adversity envelope that was made from the flyleaf of a penmanship text book, shown here reduced in size.

◀ **Figure 9.** October 14, (1862), Flat Rock to Adams Run, South Carolina. The 10¢ rate was paid with horizontal pair of Confederate De La Rue printed 5¢ stamps tied to a bright yellow, brown and gray wallpaper cover. Adams Run was a community not far from Charleston.

Figure 10. ▶
August 28, 1863, cover to Miss Susan Middleton, Columbia South Carolina, paid 10¢ Confederate rate with straight-line PAID handstamp and "10" with serif numeral handstamp. The cover is made from very crude Confederate paper.

◀ **Figure 11.** July 3, 1863, another cover to Miss Susan Middleton at Columbia, South Carolina, paid 10¢ rate, this time with the non-serif "10" handstamp and the Type 1 circular datestamp. This cover also made with crude paper.

example of one such cover. Franked with a horizontal pair of Confederate 1862, De La Rue, 5¢ blue stamps printed in London, the envelope was made from bright yellow, brown and gray wallpaper. It was addressed to Adams Run, South Carolina, 25 miles west southwest of Charleston. A rimless 10-bar grid was used to cancel each of the stamps.

With the postage rate change to 10 cents per single letter, Postmaster Stradley had to obtain a 10-cents handstamp

marking device. He acquired a straight-line PAID handstamp and two different "10" handstamps. One "10" handstamp had serifs, while the other was without serifs.

Figure 10 illustrates the PAID and "10" handstamp with serif used to pay the 10¢-rate for an August 28, 1863, cover to Miss Susan Middleton in Columbia, South Carolina. The PAID and "10" marking without serif numeral is shown in Figure 11, a cover posted from Flat Rock on July 3, 1863, with the Type

1 circular datestamp of Flat Rock, again addressed to Miss Susan Middleton.

Figure 12 is one of two known examples of the PAID "10" + "10" to make the 20 cents-rate for a ½-1 ounce letter. This cover was posted December 6, 1863, to Miss Alicia Middleton in Charleston, South Carolina. The circular datestamp is the Type 1, 31.5 mm postmark and both "10" handstamps are the serif variety.

Flat Rock played an active role during the Civil War as one of its citizens was a key member of Jefferson Davis's cabinet. Christopher Gustavus Memminger came to Flat Rock in 1839 when he was 36 years old. He was a successful attorney and politician. As a child, he was orphaned. Because he was noticed as being quite gifted, he was soon adopted by the Governor of South Carolina. When President Davis was assembling his cabinet, he chose Memminger to be the Secretary of Treasury. He served in this position until June 15, 1864. Memminger is pictured in Figure 13.

During the war, he moved his family to Flat Rock and after Richmond was threatened by the Union Forces, he proposed the Confederate Capitol be moved to Flat Rock as it would be a safe place. That idea was not carried through because President Davis felt he needed to be in an accessible location. Because he was not an official of the Confederate Government at the war's end, Memminger was not imprisoned by the Federal forces.

In later years, his granddaughter married Robert E. Lee's grandson. In 1945, his home "Connemara Farm" was sold to none other than Carl Sandburg, perhaps North Carolina's most noted author. Sandburg lived there until his death in 1967. The home has been restored and is a visitor's center today.

The importance of Flat Rock during the war can be seen in the volume of mail recorded that has survived. In our Confederate database of over 5,000 covers, there are 89 covers recorded from Flat Rock. By comparison, Concord, which was a much larger town, has only 26 covers recorded.

After the war was over, Peter Stradley was removed from office. His son, Cephas Stradley, was appointed postmaster on June 25, 1866. Cephas managed a store in Flat Rock. After marrying Nancy Patton, he moved to Dalton, Georgia, and his sister, Salome Stradley, took over the post office on December 9, 1868. She served as postmaster until August 1, 1877. Salome was Flat Rock's first female postmaster.

John P. Patton was appointed postmaster to succeed Salome. He had a store two tenths of a mile from the current post office. Patton's wife was the niece of Salome Stradley, so the change in postmasters must have been a family affair.

The next postmaster was Matthew S. Farmer. He was appointed August 11, 1879. Farmer moved the post office back to the Stradley building where his brother-in-law, James Ripley,

Figure 12. ▶
December 6, 1863, cover to Miss Alicia Middleton at Charleston, South Carolina, paid a double rate (½-1 ounce weight) with the "10" serif handstamp struck twice. This is one of only two recorded example of this use.

▲ **Figure 14.** October 6, 1883, envelope from Flat Rock to Charleston, South Carolina, paid the normal internal rate with an 1875 vermillion 2¢ stamp. Postmaster Matthew Farmer introduced the Type 3 circular date- stamp on this cover, measuring 28 mm. A fancy killer, a cross within a circle, was used to cancel the stamp. The 2¢ rate indicated the envelope contained some type of printed matter.

◀ **Figure 13.** Christopher Gustavus Memminger, Flat Rock attorney and politician, was President Jefferson Davis' Secretary of Treasury. Because he was not an official of the Confederate Government at the war's end, he was not imprisoned by the Federal forces.

kept a store. Farmer had just taken over the management of the Farmer Hotel. It was not likely that he played an active role in the post office operations. Farmer remained postmaster until November 1, 1897. During his era, the office received its third circular datestamp. Figure 14 is an example of this Type 3 handstamp, a 28 mm handstamp used October 6, 1883, on an envelope addressed to Charleston, South Carolina. A fancy killer, cross within a circle, was used to cancel the stamp. The 2¢ rate indicated the envelope contained some type of printed matter.

During the time that Matthew Farmer was postmaster, the mail delivery to the office changed from stage coach to railway mail service. Since the Depot was two miles from the post office, a mail messenger had to be hired to pick up and deliver the mail. The first messenger to be hired was the blacksmith,

Mr. Markley. Most of the time, his son James Ripley Markley carried the mail to the post office.

As early as February 1887, Postmaster Farmer introduced a new circular datestamp. The Type 4 handstamp measures 27.5 mm and is a double circle handstamp. Figure 15 is an example of a cover showing this postal marking, posted on July 17, 1887, to Liverpool, England. The cover was carried from New York on the Guion Line steamship *Alaska* on July 19th under U.S. contract to Liverpool, arriving on July 27, 1887. The arrival postmark at Liverpool citing "U.S. PACKET" was used until 1903.

By 1892, Postmaster Farmer had replaced the double circle datestamp with a new 27.5 mm circular datestamp. Figures 16 and 16a illustrate the front and reverse of a cover with an example of this marking used to forward a cover from

Figure 15. ▶
July 17, 1887, envelope from Flat Rock to Liverpool, England, paid the 5¢ UPU rate to England. The 27.5 mm Type 4 double circle datestamp was introduced in 1887 by Postmaster Farmer. This cover was sent to New York and then by the Guion Line steamship *Alaska* to Liverpool, arriving at Liverpool ten days after being posted in Flat Rock.
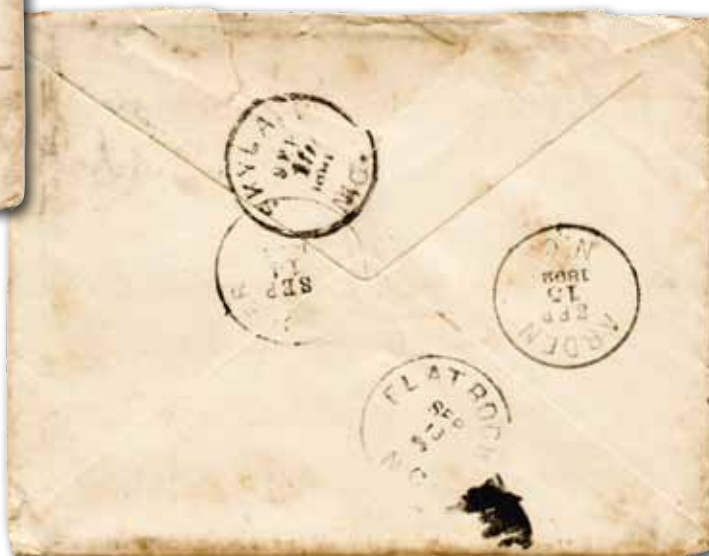

◀ **Figure 16.** September 14, 1892, Flat Rock, previously unrecorded circular datestamp measuring 27 mm, used on this cover by Postmaster Farmer to indicate it was to be forwarded from Flat Rock to Fletcher (Henderson County). The envelope originated in Middleborough, Kentucky, on September 11, addressed to Flat Rock.

Figure 16a. ▶
Reverse of the cover showing arrival at Flat Rock (September 13), Fletcher (Henderson County, September 14), Arden (Buncombe County, September 15), and Skyland (Buncombe County, September 16). The receiving postmarks were required at the time to be marked on the reverse of the letters.

◀ **Figure 17.** August 26, 1892, Flat Rock to London, redirected to Geneva, Switzerland, and returned to London, another example of this new datestamp described in Figure 16. This cover was sent to New York, where it was placed on the North German Lloyd steamship *Havel* for Southampton. Thomas Cook & Son in London changed the address and sent it to their agent in Geneva. Cover later returned to London.

Figure 17a. ▶
Reverse of the cover showing arrival at New York on August 29, London on September 7, Geneva on September 9, and return to London on September 12, 1892. A portion of a black handstamp on the reverse shows handling by Thomas Cook & Son and a faint purple handstamp indicates it was handled by London forwarding agent Brown Shipley & Co., to which it was sent from Geneva.

Middleborough, Kentucky, to Miss Ravenal in Flat Rock, later redirected to Fletcher (Henderson County) and then Skyland (Buncombe County). The 1879 *Postal Laws & Regulations* ordered that "…all letters received from other offices or post-offices for delivery or for redistribution to other offices or post-offices must be postmarked on the reverse side with the date and, when possible, the hour on which they were received." This requirement was discontinued on May 8,1913, by Postmaster General Order No. 7107.

A second example of this unrecorded 27.5 mm circular datestamp is illustrated in Figures 17 and 17a, an August 26, 1892, cover from Flat Rock to London, redirected to Geneva, Switzerland, and then redirected to London, England. It was sent to New York to go on board a transatlantic steamship to England. On August 30 the cover left New York on the North German Lloyd steamship *Havel* and arrived at Southampton on September 6, 1892. The cover was addressed to London, where Thomas Cook & Son, acting as a forwarding agent, placed a label over the British address indicating the cover be redirected to their agent in Geneva, Switzerland. Two days later the letter we redirected by the Geneva agent back to London

care of Brown Shipley & Co. in London. Brown Shipley & Co. placed a purple handstamp on the reverse to the effect that the letter was to be retuned to them if it hadn't been called for in 30 days. Apparently, it reached the addressee while in London. Use of forwarding agents was a common technique used to get mail to travelers in Europe at this time.

On April 19, 1892, the Flat Rock post office became a money order office.

By 1894 the Flat Rock circular datestamp was changed again. This new marking was identical to the marking shown in Figures 16 and 17 except that the diameter was almost 2 mm larger and the separation between "Flat" and "Rock" was a little wider. The new postmark, Type 5, is shown on Figure 18, a cover posted September 12, 1894, in Flat Rock and addressed to Oban, Scotland. Since it was not called at the Oban hotel and it was redirected to a hotel in Crieff, and finally a hotel in Glasgow. The letter still was not called for so it was sent to the Glasgow Returned Letter Branch and finally the G.P.O. in Edinburgh for disposal; however, it was not disposed of as indicated. The addressee was eventually was located in Glasgow, most likely a tourist on travel in Scotland.

Figure 18. ▶
September 12, 1894, Flat Rock to Oban, Scotland. The Flat Rock circular datestamp was identical to the marking shown in Figures 16 and 17 except that the diameter was almost 2 mm larger and the separation between "Flat" and "Rock," a little wider. This cover moved around Scotland between three hotels and two major cities before the traveling recipient was located, resulting in numerous postmarks and readdresses.

◀ **Figure 18a.** Reverse of the cover showing that twice on the front and reverse notes were made by postmasters that the cover was not called for and it was returned to Scotland's two largest cities to decide what to do with it. Fortunately it was not disposed of and the recipient ultimately was found.

Figure 19. ▶
The grocery store operated by J. F. Brookshire where the Flat Rock post office was located during the tenure of Rev. Lynch Brookshire as postmaster.

Postmaster Farmer was followed briefly by Benjamin P. Stepp who was appointed on November 1, 1897, and then Phidilia P. Evans on January 2, 1900.

On December 9, 1901, the Rev. John Lynch Brookshire was appointed postmaster. Brookshire was the son-in-law of Thomas E. Waters who was the postmaster in Upward (Henderson County). Figure 19 is a photo of the Brookshire store where the post office was located.

Two rural routes were established in Flat Rock on February 1, 1905. The route one carrier was John Seymour Jones and the

carrier on route two was William B. Huggins. One of the post offices replaced by the rural routes was the office of Upward, where Postmaster Brookshire's father-in-law was postmaster. In 1907, route two became route one from Zirconia. The Rev. Brookshire served until February 11, 1913.

John Seymour Jones, the route carrier, was appointed postmaster of Flat Rock on February 11, 1913, Figure 20 is a cover forwarded by Postmaster Jones on July 7, 1914. Originally, the cover had been mailed from Summerville, South Carolina, to East Flat Rock, but ended up in Flat Rock. The cover has a

Type 9 circular datestamp of Flat Rock, which is a 31.5 mm Type B 4-bar cancel that was used there from 1913 until 1915.

In 1921, the post office was advanced to a third-class office, removing it from the country store category and requiring the postmaster to devote his full time to its operations. For the next 15 years, it swung from third to fourth class, reflecting the instability of the times.

Postmaster Jones was replaced by Walter F. Justus on March 8, 1922. Postmaster Justus wanted to put gas pumps at the post office but the former postmaster, who owned the building, would not allow it; so, on July 1, 1922, Postmaster Justus moved the post office to the Patton store building. Figure 21 is a cover posted from Flat Rock on August 14, 1931, to Kew Gardens, Long Island, New York. Since the addressee could not be located in Kew Gardens, the cover was returned to Flat Rock. The Kew Gardens delivering postman wrote in pencil, upper left, "not at/add 177," apparently trying more than one address. At the Kew Gardens post office the cover was struck with a purple, two-lined handstamp, "RETURN TO WRITER,/ CANNOT BE FOUND." This cover has a Type 11, 35 mm, non-standard 4-bar circular datestamp of Flat Rock.

On May 18, 1934, Lois Edney was appointed acting postmaster. Postmaster Justus went on to become a railway mail clerk.

At this point, there are 25 more pages in Lenoir Ray's book on Flat Rock. However, I am going to end here with a tale that he begins with:

When the town of East Flat Rock was incorporated and a lady from Charleston, who owned property on Highland Lake,

received a tax notice from East Flat Rock. She became extremely agitated over this and went to the Court House. When the tax collector finally calmed her down and got her story straight, he realized that it was not the small property tax that bugged her – but the question of residence. She wanted him to confirm this fact. There was nothing he could do about the town boundaries, of course, and his dilemma was to satisfy her and the East Flat Rock tax collector. His answer was worthy of King Solomon.

"My dear lady," he told her, "you may pay the tax and still be a resident of Flat Rock, for – Flat Rock is not a place, but a state of mind." ■

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Figure 20. ▶
July 7, 1914, cover from Flat Rock, to East Flat Rock (Henderson County). The cover originated in Summerville, South Carolina and was addressed to East Flat Rock (Henderson County), but was sent to Flat Rock in error. It was redirected to its original address with a Type 9, 31.5 mm, Type 3, 4-bar circular datestamp used in Flat Rock from 1913 to 1915.

◀ **Figure 21.** August 14, 1931, Flat Rock to Kew Gardens, Long Island, New York. The cover was posted using a Type 11, 35 mm, non-standard 4-bar circular date- stamp. This marking is only recorded used in 1931. By 1932, the post office was using a standard 4-bar cancel. Undeliverable at Kew Gardens it was returned to Flat Rock with the purple, two-line handstamp, "RETURNED TO WRITER,/CANNOT BE FOUND."

Old Mystery Cover

No answers were received for the mystery cover from the Winter 2018-2019 journal, submitted by member Greg Stone. It was posted on 19 September 1897 and addressed to Iron Station (Lincoln County).

The editors think the cover originated in McCains (Union County), but cannot be certain as we have no other cover from McCains, with which to compare.

New Mystery Cover

This 185x cover (1858 - 1861) was addressed to McRay's Store (McCray's Store), in Alamance County. Where did the cover originate?

A red dot on your mailing label means we have not received your dues.

THE CASE FOR A HENRIETTA, RUTHERFORD COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA, CONFEDERATE COVER

by Ken Miller

This will be a short course in the entertainment value of collecting postal history. What is the cost of entertainment these days? A restaurant, a show or concert, a "night on the town?" This small cover has paid for several weeks of entertainment.

The initial Identity

Figure 1 illustrates a cover with a CSA No. 12, 10¢ stamp canceled with a manuscript cancel that seems to be "Henrietta, NC/ Jun 22" (1863 or 1864), addressed to Petersburg, Virginia. The cover's size is 4 5/16 x 2 5/8 inches.

▲ **Figure 1.** "Henrietta, NC/ Jun 22" (1863 or 1864), cover addressed to Petersburg, Virginia, franked with a single CSA No. 12, 10¢ stamp canceled with a manuscript cancel. Actual origin of cover unknown.

The possibility of a Confederate cover from Henrietta, Rutherford county, North Carolina

1. The monograph, *North Carolina Post Offices and Postmasters,1860-1866*, by Vernon S. Stroupe does NOT list Henrietta as a Confederate post office for North Carolina. This monograph was published by the North Carolina Postal History Society in the Winter 1991-92, as Whole Number No. 39 to the *NCPHS Newsletter* on the 10th anniversary of the society.
2. The North Carolina Postal History Society currently lists Henrietta, Rutherford County, as operating from 20 September 1887 to 18 August 2007.
3. The High Shoals Baptist church was formally organized on 5 March 1831 at approximately the spot where the Henrietta

dam is now located - on the Second Broad river, the NE side of present day Henrietta.
4. There is a listed a High Shoals post office in Rutherford county 1828-1868; however, this post office was closed on 21 April 1868 and the name was transferred to Highshoals (one word until 1968) in Gastonia county: This was the site of the war of 1812 Highshoals Iron Works. It is on the Catawba river, about 50 miles east and north of present day Henrietta. This was a site with access to iron ore, limestone and timber for charcoal, all of which are necessary for iron production.
5. If this cover really was from the Henrietta community in Rutherford county, then it would have been marked High Shoals, NC - the post office serving this community during the Confederate era.

Conclusion: No Confederate era cover would have been marked as Henrietta, North Carolina.

Is the cover genuine?

1. The recipient was Mrs. Eliza F. Vaughan (25 August 1837 to 11 March 1905). She was married to George W. Vaughan (9 December 1835 to 31 March 1905). He was a Corporal in E. Graham's Co. Virginia Horse Artillery, (Petersburg Artillery). Both are interred at Blandford cemetery, ward D-OG Square 63, Section 6, in Petersburg, Virginia.
2. Her father was Reuben Rolfe (1780 -1853), born in Mecklenburg County, Virginia, and died in Dinwiddie County. He had been a Corporal, 1st Regiment (Yancey's) Virginia Militia, during the war of 1812. In 1830 he married Elizabeth F. Audas and they had four children:
   John Reuben Rolfe - son born in 1831 - in Mecklenburg County, Virginia, 3rd Virginia Cavalry.
   Eliza Francis Rolfe - daughter 1837 -1905 born in Dinwiddie County, Virginia.
   William S. Rolfe - son - born in 1840 - 3rd Virginia Cavalry.
   Ada A. Rolfe - daughter - born in 1849
3. This cover has been made out of an unused pink ledger page, folded with the printed side inward (See Figure 1a).
4. This seems to be a genuine Confederate era cover, the only questionable detail is the identification of the post office of origin.
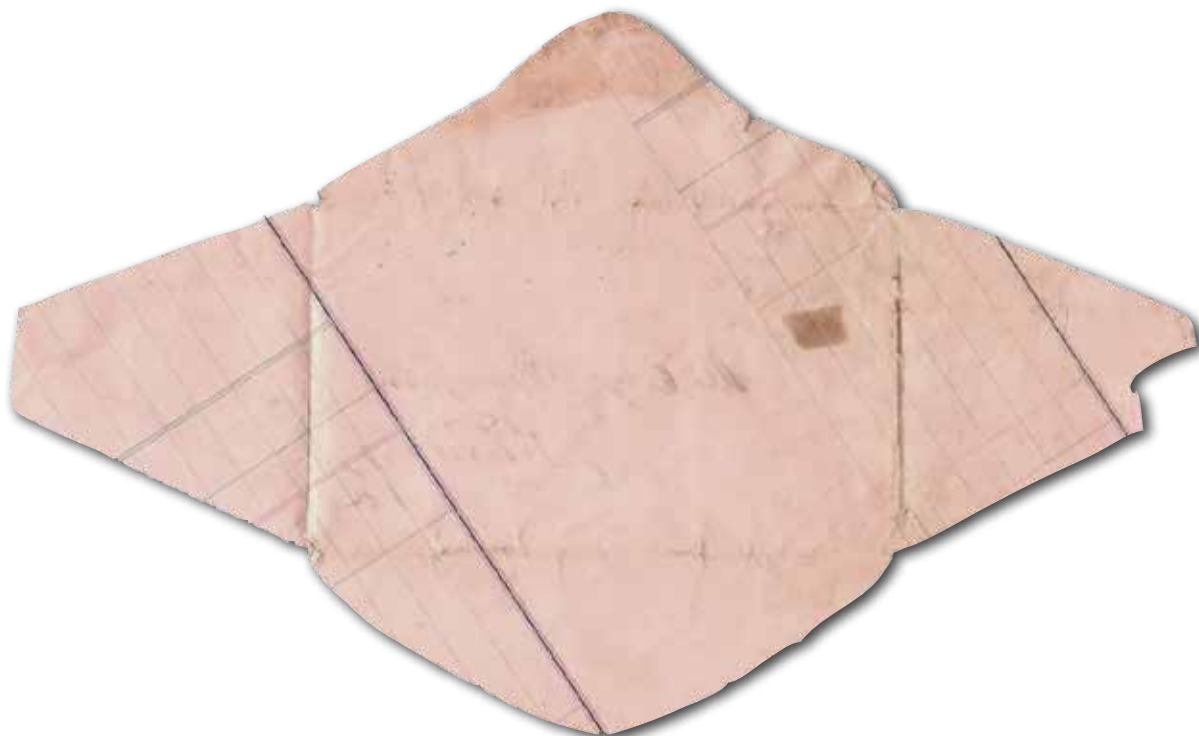
Inside of the hand-made envelope from an unused, pink ledger page. Unfortunately, there are no clues here on the origin of the cover.

Mistaken State Identity?

1. *The List of Post Offices in the United States 1862*, Wierenga 1981 reprint, lists Henrietta four times: Michigan, New York, Ohio, and Wisconsin. No North Carolina or Confederate post offices with this name are listed.
2. There is no Henrietta in Mississippi past or present, though Mississippi seems the most obvious alternative state for this manuscript marking.
3. A Henrietta, Missouri, was platted in 1868 but the post office was named Henry (Ray county) when established in 1869. The name was changed back to Henrietta in 1908. There was no Confederate Postal system or post offices in Missouri. Thus we must eliminate Missouri as a possible candidate.

Alternative North Carolina Towns:

Figure 2 shows an enlarged view of the manuscript cancel. Enlarging and enhancing the manuscript cancellation convinced me of two things: 1) the state was North Carolina, and 2) the post office's first letter was H. Two possibilities for the spelling seem to be "He....." or "H....ton."
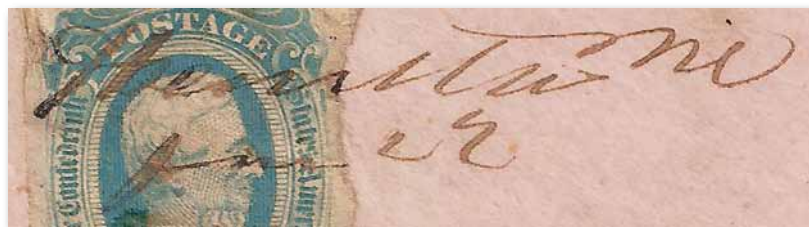
▲ **Figure 2.** A 200 percent enlarged view of the manuscript postmark still makes it very difficult to determine the post office of origin.

"He....." post office names from North Carolina with Civil War dates:

1. Healing Springs (Davidson County), 1834-1905
2. Heathville (Halifax County), 1836-1945
3. Helton (Ashe County), 1849>
4. Henderson, (Granville County),1838-1881
5. Hendersonville (Henderson County), 1841>
6. Herringsville (Sampson County), 1858-1882
7. Hertford (Perquimons County), 1792>
8. Hester's Store (Person County), 1854-1905

"H....ton" post office names from North Carolina with Civil War dates:

1. Hamilton (Martin County), 1803 >
2. Helton, Ashe County), 1849 >
3. Hilliardston (Nash County), 1821-1903
4. Hilton (New Hanover County), 1862-1865
5 Hookerton (Greene County), 1819 >

Of these, HAMILTON in Martin county seems to me to be the match. It was on the upper Roanoke River and had a population of about 225 people during the war. Here the Confederates built Ft. Branch, which successfully defended access to the vital Weldon Rail Road from the southeast. Ft. Branch was briefly captured on 12 December 1864, but the Federal troops were not able to maintain their initiative and quickly retired back to their base at Williamston.

Hamilton did receive a replacement circular datestamp from the Confederate postal system, a 30.5 mm circular datestamp with sans serif letters. Figure 3 shows the two Hamilton circular datestamps used during the Confederate period. This implies that their original postmarking device had been lost or destroyed at some point - making some use of manuscript postmarks probable. One manuscript postmark for Hamilton has been recorded in the North Carolina Postal History Society Confederate cover
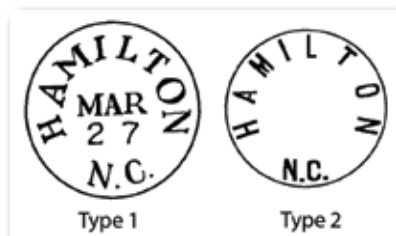
▲ Figure 3. Confederate datestamps used at Hamilton (Martin County). The Type 1 was Federally issued and used early in the war while the Type 2 was Confederate issued.

records, but it is not similar to the Figure 1 postmark. The marking is shown in Figure 4.

Postscript

Figure 4. ▲
Manuscript postmark of Hamilton (Martin County) use in May 1863.

The unit that Eliza's husband was in, E. Graham's Co., Virginia Horse Artillery, (Petersburg Artillery) was in "eastern North Carolina guarding the Weldon RR" in June of 1863. This could be a connection for a letter posting at Hamilton, North Carolina. In June of 1864 this unit was back in the Petersburg area.

Hamilton, Virginia, has been offered as a possible posting, and one of their recorded manuscript postmarks is similar. However, Eliza's brothers in the 3rd Virginia Cavalry do not appear to have been in that vicinity in June 1863 or June 1864.

Ultimately, my interest is in covers from the Western mountains of North Carolina. If it turns out that this cover is not in my area of interest I will pass it on to someone who collects that area.

Thanks to the North Carolina Postal History Society who questioned the possibility of a Confederate Henrietta, North Carolina, and thus started me on this extended odyssey.

Many thanks to Joseph Raleigh, Cherl and Sherrie' Raleigh of the Macon, Georgia, branch of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, all of whom helped me with computer skills and to read this manuscript name with clearer eyes. ■

Ken Miller, kenmillerguitars@gmail.com

Editors' Comments: While we cannot identify the desired origin of this cover and feel that it may not be a North Carolina postmark, we are interested in assisting Ken in finding an answer to his cover question. We also feel that his efforts to find the answer should be passed on to our readers. Ken has provided his email address and motivation for learning this cover's origin. Hopefully, one of our readers will help him find the answer.

Delta
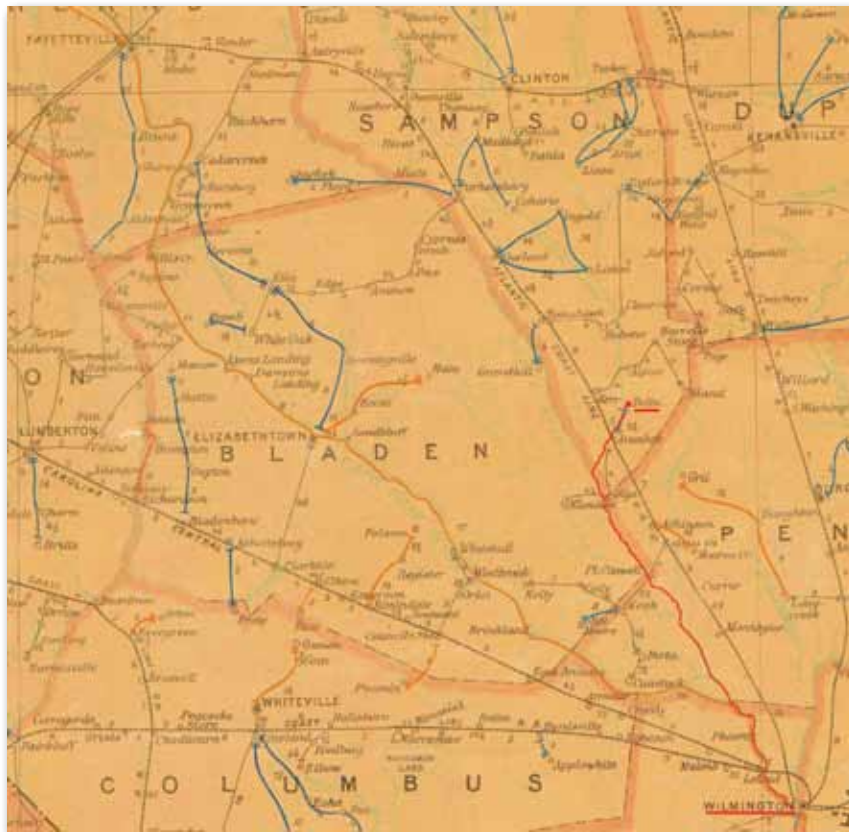# A Landing on the Black River

by George Slaton

My friend, Charles Brown, pulled his truck into a clearing just off Ivanhoe Road in the extreme southern portion of Sampson County, North Carolina. Moments later Charles and I left the truck and entered a grove of pine trees, picking up a faint trail leading toward the Black River. It was late September, but the day was a humid one, and soon we were swatting furiously at swarming mosquitoes. Fifteen minutes later, having made our way over varying terrain, we stood on the muddy bank at a bend in the river. Here the dark waters of the Black River flowed sluggishly. "Well, we're at the site of Delta's river landing," said Charles, pointing to a low pile of moss-covered bricks, "but this is all that's left of it."

I found it difficult, standing on the quiet riverbank, to imagine that this deserted spot was ever the scene of thriving commercial activity. Charles, a native of the surrounding area, is surely one of the few persons who are aware of the location of this former settlement. His willingness to trek through the pine woods ensures that the site is not lost to history.

Delta (frequently described as Delta Landing), was a shipping point on the Black River from which locally produced goods and naval stores were directed sixty miles by water to the port city of Wilmington, North Carolina. Figure 1 illustrates a portion of the 1901 Post Route map of North and South Carolina, showing the Delta post office in red in the southern portion of Sampson County. Also, in red is the river path from Delta to

▲ **Figure 1.** A portion of the 1901 Post Route map of North and South Carolina, showing the Delta post office in red in the southern portion of Sampson County. Also shown in red is the river path from Delta to Wilmington (Black River and South River to the Cape Fear River, then south to Wilmington).

Wilmington, transiting the Black River, connecting with the South River and ultimately the Cape Fear River as it passes into Brunswick County, then down to Wilmington.

By the late 1700s, William Robinson, a Sampson County planter, was engaged in commerce in the Delta area, using a large cypress boat manned by six oarsmen. His grandson, John Winfield Scott Robinson (1848-1927), established a turpentine distillery and a general store at Delta and shipped naval stores to Wilmington on his twelve-by-fifty-foot flat boat. Scott Robinson, as he was known, gradually transformed Delta into a small, but thriving, trading center and steamboat landing on the Black River. Figure 2 shows the overgrown and deserted site of Delta's river landing on the Black River. Naval stores and other products were shipped from this point down river to Wilmington. By the early 1880s, Delta boasted a physician, two general stores, two building contractors, two coopers, and a millwright. Significantly, Delta by then had a post office as well, and Robinson was its postmaster. A sandy road, illustrated in Figure 3 leads from Ivanhoe into the site of the former community of Delta. Through the woods to the left of the road lies the old river landing. Delta's commercial establishments were located to the right of the road and beyond. Mail was delivered to Delta three times a week from Ivanhoe (blue line on the Figure 1 map).

Scott Robinson was a prominent and influential local figure. He served as postmaster at the Black River Chapel post office from 1874 to 1880. Robinson was a member of Black River Chapel and was later buried in its cemetery. The grave site of John Winfield Scott Robinson (1848-1927) is in the cemetery of Black River Presbyterian Church, Ivanhoe, North Carolina (see Figure 4). He was likely instrumental in closing the post office at Black River Chapel in 1880 and moving it to Delta, two and one half miles north, in the same year. Surely Robinson's prospering business interests in Delta figured heavily in the relocation of the area's post office! Robinson then served as postmaster at Delta from 1880-1884.

The history of Delta's postal operation from 1880 to 1917 is represented by a surviving postcard. (see Figure 5) It is addressed to "Greensboro N.C" and bears a 1¢ green Washington stamp canceled by a "DELTA/JAN/1/1916/AM/N.C." 4-bar postmark.

Both steam and flatboats plying the Black River increased in number in the 1880s. Captain John D. Kerr built a small stern-wheel steamer and named it *Delta* for the little community

◄ **Figure 2.** The overgrown and deserted site of Delta's river landing on the Black River. When Delta was a thriving trading center in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, naval stores and other products were shipped from this point down river to Wilmington, North Carolina. This is the location today of that once-used landing.

Figure 3. ►
This sandy road leads from Ivanhoe, 2½ miles south of Delta, into the site of the former community of Delta. Through the woods to the left of the road lies the old river landing. Delta's commercial establishments were located to the right of the road and beyond. Figure 1 shows that mail was delivered to Delta three times a week from Ivanhoe (blue line on map).

where he operated a turpentine distillery, general store, and cooperage. Though it is not known how frequently the *Delta* made the trip to Wilmington, it is likely that the steamboat carried the mail from the Delta post office.

The history of the little steamer *Delta* had its share of challenges and tragedy. Brothers Charles and William Howe, owners of the Black River Navigation Company, claimed the right to exact tolls from steamboats passing Howe's Bluff. When the Delta was denied free passage, Captain Kerr filed suit against the navigation company. Kerr's suit was successful, and the Howe brothers spent twenty days each in jail.

In the early hours of April 19, 1887, the *Delta's* boiler blew as it steamed upstream. The decks buckled, and the boiler exploded through the hold and sailed into the darkness, felling a stand of cypress trees. Two crew members were killed, their bodies flung into the swampy margins of the river. Captain Kerr suffered a broken arm. Though the *Delta* was badly damaged, she was raised and overhauled and continued her run between Delta and Wilmington.

A decline in the area's production of naval stores, as well as the proximity of the Cape Fear and Yadkin Valley Railroad which passed through nearby Ivanhoe, North Carolina, may have contributed to the eventual demise of Delta and its post office. At any rate, the post office ceased operation in 1917, and its mail service was diverted to Ivanhoe. ∎

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Figure 4. ▶
Grave of John Winfield Scott Robinson (1848-1927) in the cemetery of Black River Presbyterian Church, Ivanhoe, North Carolina. Robinson, former postmaster at this church when it was known as Black River Chapel, served as postmaster of Delta from 1880-1884.

◀ **Figure 5.** January 1, 1916, postcard from Delta (Sampson County) to Greensboro (Guilford County) paid with a 1 cent green Washington stamp. It was hand-stamped with a Type 1, 31.5 mm black, 1906 Type A/1 4-bar cancel. (Courtesy Tony L. Crumbley)

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NORTH CAROLINA POSTAL HISTORIAN

If you'd like to contribute information or articles to the Summer *POSTAL HISTORIAN* please submit them by **May 15**

North Carolina Postmark Catalog Update

The following counties and cities are now available at

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Alamance through **Yancey** less **Raleigh**

(Counties Jackson thru Mecklenburg have been updated)

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