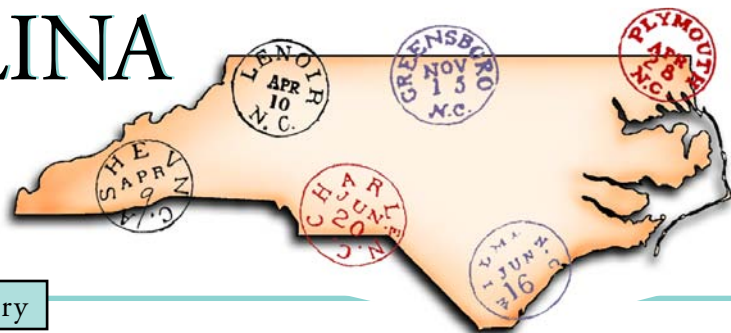


# NORTH CAROLINA POSTAL HISTORIAN

The Journal of North Carolina Postal History

VOLUME 41, NO. 2 SPRING 2022 WHOLE 158



Military Postal Censorship  
During World War II

Biltmore, North Carolina



Last Known Cover Going  
South on Washington to  
Richmond Route

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As I write this quarterly message to our members, I'm witnessing what I hope is the last gasp of winter weather. The temperature last night was 22 degrees here in the Charlotte area, but fortunately the next few days are expected to be considerably warmer. I hope too that we're all witnessing, with the falling infection rates, the last gasp of the COVID virus. Stamp shows are returning, so there seems ample reason to be optimistic.

Scott Steward, our capable society webmaster, continues to improve and enhance our very popular website. He reports receiving, in response to his request for members to submit images of North Carolina post offices, a large number of new images to post on the website. This online file of post offices from around the state can be accessed by clicking on the "Resources" tab at [ncpostalhistory.com](http://ncpostalhistory.com). Boyd Morgan submitted over sixty images of post offices from a number of different North Carolina counties. He promises more to come. And Fred Kerr submitted images of some of the older post offices from Sampson County. We're grateful to both these postal history collectors for their willingness to record and provide these interesting photographs which help to tell the story of the postal system in the "Tarheel" state. And we encourage all of you to join in this effort! In submitting images to [scott\\_steward@hotmail.com](mailto:scott_steward@hotmail.com), please note the name and county of the post office, as well as the date the image was taken. And, so Scott will recognize your submission as such, please note "PO Photo" in the subject line.

As you page through this issue of the *Postal Historian*, you'll see an article devoted to the members who answered the call to Adopt-A-Library or other historical institution for membership in the society. As president, I'm gratified to see great enthusiasm

## IN THIS ISSUE

<b>North Carolina Censored, Military Postal Censorship During World War II</b> by Charles F. Hall, Jr. ....	3
<b>North Carolina Adopt-A-Library Program</b> by George Slaton.....	14
<b>Biltmore, North Carolina - The Town Named After the Largest House in the Country</b> by Tony L. Crumbley.....	15
<b>Mystery Cover</b> .....	20
<b>The Last Known Cover Going South on the Washington to Richmond Route</b> by Jerry Wells .....	21
<b>Machine Cancel Update</b> by Richard F. Winter.....	22

on the part of our membership. In just one quarter, we see members who are actively strengthening this organization through gathering post office images for the website and adopting libraries to provide helpful resources for the study and research of North Carolina postal history.

Richard F. Winter, our co-editor whose NCPHS Member Profile appeared in the Winter 2021 issue of the *Postal Historian*, has been honored with yet another award! The Southeastern Federation of Stamp Clubs gave its Rowland Hill Award for 2022 to Dick at its Awards Dinner at the Southeastern Stamp Expo on Saturday evening, January 29, 2022. The Rowland Hill Award was established in 2005 to recognize outstanding lifetime contributions to philately in the southeastern United States. As a recipient of this award, Dick joins former honorees in the Southeast "Hall of Fame." Congratulations, Dick!

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



## NORTH CAROLINA POSTAL HISTORIAN

(Library of Congress No. ISSN 1054-9188.)

Web site [www.ncpostalhistory.com](http://www.ncpostalhistory.com)

The *North Carolina Postal Historian* is the official journal of the North Carolina Postal History Society. It is published quarterly in January, April, July and October.

Membership in the Society is \$15 per year. Applications for membership may be obtained from the Secretary/Treasurer. Submissions for the *Postal Historian* or inquiries may be addressed to the editors.

President	Vice-President	Secretary/Treasurer	Editors	
George Slaton 1230 South Street Cornelius, NC 28031 <a href="mailto:geoslaton@gmail.com">geoslaton@gmail.com</a>	Scott Steward 16311 Manning Road West Accokeek, MD 20607 <a href="mailto:scott_steward@hotmail.com">scott_steward@hotmail.com</a>	Harry Albert 105 Gatestone Court Cary, N.C. 27518 <a href="mailto:hlabert78@gmail.com">hlabert78@gmail.com</a>	Tony L. Crumbley PO Box 681447 Charlotte, NC 28216 <a href="mailto:tonycrumbley@bellsouth.net">tonycrumbley@bellsouth.net</a>	Richard F. Winter 5432 Geneva Terrace Colfax, NC 27235 <a href="mailto:rfwinter645@gmail.com">rfwinter645@gmail.com</a>

### Board of Directors

#### Term Ending 2022

Scott Steward  
Charles F. Hall, Jr.  
Harry Albert

#### Term Ending 2023

Stefan Jaronski  
Timothy McRee  
Richard F. Winter

#### Term Ending 2024

Alan Vestal  
George Slaton

# North Carolina Censored Military Postal Censorship During World War II

by Charles F. Hall, Jr.



This article presents a study of World War II, censored military mail using North Carolina postal covers to illustrate the story. The *North Carolina Postal Historian*, Vol. 40 No. 3, Summer 2021, contained a study of civilian postal censorship during World War II. This article continues the study of postal censorship.

Mail to and from civilians during WWII was censored by the United States Office of Censorship, which also developed guidelines for censoring the press, film and news. Military mail, however, was processed differently. It was handled under policies developed by the War Department, the predecessor of today's Defense Department. Under the auspices of the War Department, the Departments of the Army and Navy operated their own censorship systems.

Military mail is defined for this study as mail between civilians and servicemen and women or between military personnel. Generally, military mail that circulated only within the continental United States, was not censored; however, there were some exceptions such as the highly sensitive Manhattan Project (the Atom bomb program) and personal mail from military prisons in the United States. Another notable exception was the censorship of detained, interned and incarcerated U.S. enemy noncombatants, which included the internment of aliens and sometimes citizens, of Japanese, German and Italian origin. While this category of censorship is outside the scope of this study, it is mentioned to illustrate another form of censorship within the continental United States under the overlapping and sometimes, competing, scopes of authorities of the Office of Immigration and Naturalization, the Office of Censorship and the War Department.

World War II in Europe began on September 1, 1939, when Germany invaded Poland resulting in France and Britain declaring war on Germany on September 3, 1939. By mid 1941, almost every European country was involved, with only Portugal, Ireland, Sweden, Switzerland, and Spain managing to remain neutral. The United States declared neutrality in the European War but many leaders foresaw the prospect of becoming involved. The years 1940 and 1941 saw the United States greatly expanding its military preparedness for future conflict. This included planning for postal censorship if war occurred. Naval and army personnel were trained in setting up and operating censorship procedures. When Japan attacked the United States naval and army bases at Pearl Harbor in the Territory of Hawaii on December 7, 1941, Congress declared war on Japan. Since Germany and Italy were part of the Axis

Agreement with Japan, these nations soon declared war on the United States, which found itself in the middle of the Second World War.

The U.S. Office of Censorship, which operated the civilian postal censorship system made it clear early in the war that censorship was a wartime expedient and temporary. Even though the military services operated their own separate postal and media censorship programs, their censorship was also understood to be temporary. Civilians and military personnel accepted censorship as a wartime necessity. The war ended in Europe on May 8, 1945, and in the Pacific on September 2, 1945. Executive Order 9631 ended Civilian censorship and terminated the Office of Censorship, but postal censorship had already stopped on August 15, 1945. The American military services stopped censoring military mail on or about September 2, 1945. Censorship of civilian mail did continue by the United States military, as well as the other occupying powers in the German and Austrian zones of occupation throughout the 1940s. In the case of Austria, the U.S., British, French and Russian military authorities continued postal censorship until 1954. Postwar military censorship in Europe is a separate topic and outside the scope of this article.

When the United States entered the war, the pre-war planning and training of military censorship systems and staff paid off. The War Department, through the separate military services, soon set up their own procedures for censoring mail to ensure classified information and other unauthorized information was prevented from reaching the home front.

Mail posted in the United States that was addressed to army military personnel or locations was sent to a postal concentration center, which was a type of facility set up by the War Department and Post Office Department to process U.S. Army mail. The mail was first sorted according to theater, such as European or Pacific theaters, and then shipped through the Army Postal Service to a base post office (BPO), which further broke down the mail by Army Post Office or APO number. Army units were assigned an APO number and that number was an integral part of the soldier's address, which directed it to the unit postal clerks. The final step was "mail call," when the mail was handed out to the servicemen and women, who eagerly awaited that letter or package from home. A similar system handled mail for naval personnel with the Fleet Post Offices (FPO) performing the postal concentration center operations for the navy.

The Office of Censorship had the authority to examine mail that crossed U.S. borders and that included outbound mail sent



from the continental United States to an overseas or U.S. territorial army APO or navy FPO. This mail was not typically censored, but the Office of Censorship could hold and investigate mail of special interest. The army and navy had their own separate systems to examine and pass mail sent from a military unit outside of the lower 48 states back to the United States.

The censoring of military mail sent by servicemen outside of the continental United States usually started at the unit level. For naval and marine personnel, officers were tasked to examine the mail and take appropriate action, which was usually to stamp the cover with the typical U.S. Navy 30mm circular censor marks illustrated in **Figure 1**. The officer would place their initials inside the censor mark. Sometimes classified parts of a letter would be cut out, as illustrated in **Figure 2**, or returned to the sailor or marine as not passed. This graphic example of a portion of a censored letter from the battleship U.S.S. *Wisconsin* with portions of the text missing and was provided to the author by the U.S.S. *North Carolina* Battleship Memorial. It is recorded that officers of the U.S.S. *North Carolina* gathered in the ship's wardroom to censor mail.

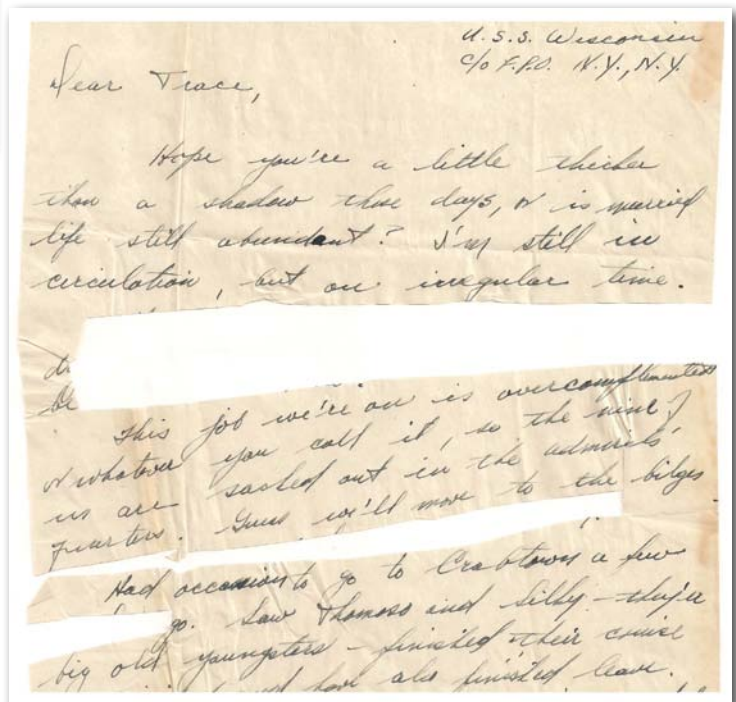
APOs were assigned to U.S. Army units and followed the unit as it moved, but some were assigned to locations and serviced whatever units might be based there. The unit or base would have officers assigned to examine the letters and if passed, would stamp the army oval within a rectangle on the cover and initial it. The standard army censor mark is illustrated in **Figure**

3. This marking was a 1" x 1 1/2" rectangle with an oval inside, which collectors refer to as the "racetrack" censor mark. The oval could be outlined by one or two lines. It usually had the censor's number or initials inside the mark. The army also used a shield censor marking, but that marking is not common. This censor marking is illustrated in **Figure 4** on a cover posted on December 1, 1942, by a private in the Army Air Corps and sent by air mail to New London (Stanley County.) While the return address on the front of the envelope doesn't show an APO, the soldier wrote a complete set of information on the reverse of the envelope that included his name, rank, serial number, unit and APO, which was #886. When this letter was mailed the location of APO 886 was listed as Karachi, India. At some point, however, someone wrote in pencil on the reverse, "Sicily." The unusual shield-shaped handstamp in purple showed that the letter passed examination by censor No. 70. The censor also wrote his name and credentials beneath the censor marking.

As with the naval censor marks, there are variations in the standard army rectangular mark. Occasionally mail was censored at the base, or more rarely, the theatre level, but it was almost always done at the FPO or APO level. Base censorship is examination done above the unit level. First, we will examine a few covers censored at the army unit level. **Figure 5** illustrates a letter written before the United States entered the war. It was censored and passed by an army officer at the APO level. This air mail cover was from a soldier in a coastal artillery



▲ **Figures 1.** Standard naval censor handstamps indicating the contents of the letter or card were allowed to pass. Space was available in the center for a censor's initial or other identifying marks. Several versions of these marking exist.



**Figure 2** ▶

A graphic example of a censored naval letter where portions of the letter were cut out. Letter from the battleship U.S.S. *Wisconsin* provided to the author by the U.S.S. *North Carolina* Battleship Memorial.

battery stationed in Trinidad, British West Indies. It was mailed on May 29, 1941, to the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad in Wilmington (New Hanover County). It shows an American Base Forces circular datestamp with the APO 803 included. It also has a black rectangular "Passed by US Army Examiner 702" censor stamp. This was one of the bases granted to the United States in 1940 by the British in exchange for 50 old

American destroyers. The cover was paid with a blue gray 15 cents Presidential series stamp. This shows that the United States censored mail from some overseas bases before entering the war. Because the British were already at war they required the United States to censor mail to and from this base.

Posted on May 26, 1945, from a soldier in the 79th Airdrome Squadron located at Clark Field, Luzon, the Philippines (APO

**Figure 3** ▶

Standard U.S. Army censor markings, a rectangle with an oval inside containing a censor's number. Single- or double-lined ovals exist, which collectors call "racetrack" censor markings. A shield-style censor marking is also known, but was not common.



◀ **Figure 4.** An example of the unusual shield-style censor marking in purple on a December 1, 1942, envelope from APO 886 (identified on the cover reverse), listed used from Karachi, India, at this time, to New London (Stanly County). Censor No. 70 identified himself with a signature below the censor mark.

**Figure 5** ▶

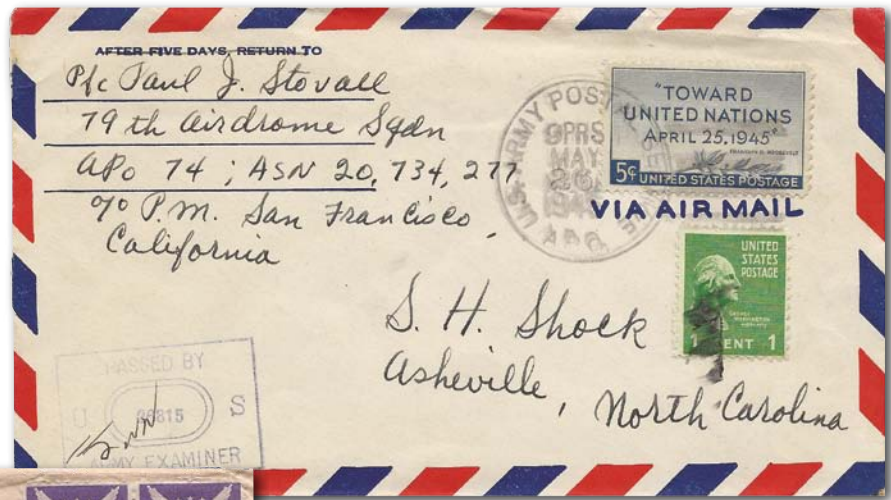
May 29, 1941, air mail letter from a soldier in the coastal artillery battery stationed in Trinidad, British West Indies, to Wilmington (New Hanover County). This verifies that the United States censored mail from some overseas bases before entering WWII because the British were already at war and required censoring.





**Figure 6** ▶

May 26, 1945, air mail envelope from Clark Field, Luzon, the Philippines, addressed to Asheville (Buncombe County) and paid 6¢ for the concessionary air mail rate for armed forces personnel stationed outside the United States. This letter was censored at APO 74.



◀ **Figure 7.** May 7, 1945, air mail letter from Papua, New Guinea, sent to Swannanoa (Buncombe County) and also paid the 6¢ air mail rate from a soldier in the Army Air Corps of Headquarters Base "B" Services Command (APO 503) Army examiner No. 203 passed this letter using the initialed standard army censor marking.



**Figure 8** ▶

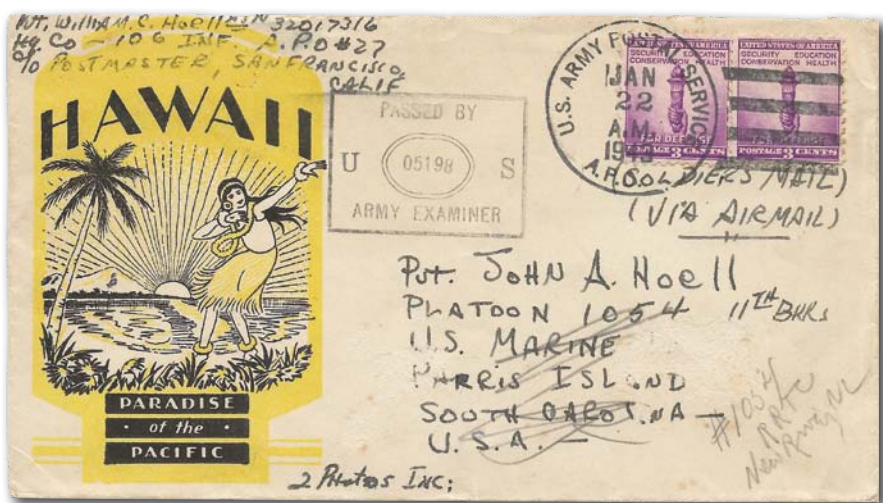
May 26, 1945, letter sent in a patriotic cachet envelope from a soldier in the 5th Replacement Depot (APO 711), Manila, the Philippines, to Whiteville (Columbus County). The censor mark, was struck over the flag and shield cachet, maintaining the lower left position on the envelope.



74), **Figure 6** shows a poorly-struck U.S. Army Postal Service circular datestamp on an air mail cover addressed to Asheville (Buncombe County). The unit censor applied and initialed the rectangular "passed" handstamp. The 6¢ air mail rate per half ounce was a concessionary rate for air mail "...to and from the personnel of the armed forces of the United States stationed outside the continental United States..." (Postal Bulletin 18354 of December 26, 1941). Payment was by an ultramarine United

Nations Conference five cents stamp and a one cent Presidential series George Washington stamp.

**Figure 7**, also paid the concessionary air mail rate with a horizontal pair of violet American Eagle 3-cents stamps. The cover was sent from Papua, New Guinea, by a soldier in the Army Air Corps of Headquarters Base "B" Services Command (APO 503) to the Moore General Hospital in Swannanoa (Buncombe County). Army Examiner No. 203 passed the



◀ **Figure 9.** January 22, 1942, envelope with a colorful cachet of the “Paradise of the Pacific” mailed by a soldier in the 106th Infantry Regiment to a marine at Parris Island, South Carolina. Letter redirected to the Marine Corps Air Station at New River, near Havelock (Craven County). The censor for the sender’s unit, APO 27 in Hawaii, passed the letter.



▲ **Figure 10.** May 19, 1942, envelope sent surface mail from an Army Air Corps officer of 33rd Bombing Squadron (APO 922) from Townsville, Australia, to Fort Bragg (Cumberland County). It was censored by a base censor; but, not clear why the letter wasn’t sent “Free” under the U.S. mail system as allowed members of the armed forces from April 1, 1942.

correspondence and applied his stamp. It is cancelled with the double circle U.S. Army Postal Services circular datestamp. The letter was probably examined before the cover was sealed since servicemen were encouraged not to seal their mail to expedite the examination process.

**Figure 8** illustrates a cover mailed to Whiteville (Columbus County) on May 26, 1945, from a soldier in the 5th Replacement Depot (APO 711), Manila, the Philippines. This envelope has a flag and shield patriotic cachet over which the army “double racetrack” censor stamp was placed, maintaining its lower left position on the envelope. By this time the war in Europe was over and attention was being placed on preparing for the invasion of Japan. The circular datestamp was a standard U.S. Army Postal Service APO marking without the APO number.

While Hawaii was not admitted to the United States as a state

until 1959, it was a U.S. territory during WWII. **Figure 9** illustrates a colorful, cached envelope mailed by a soldier in the 106th Infantry Regiment to a marine at Parris Island, South Carolina. The letter was redirected to the Marine Corps Air Station at New River, near Havelock (Craven County). The letter was examined and passed by U.S. Army censor No. 05198 in Hawaii. The writer notified the censor there were two photographs enclosed in the letter.

Examples of censorship at the Base level are shown in the next two covers. By May 1942, the U.S. was fully engaged in the war and U.S. forces went to Australia to prepare for the Solomon Campaigns, including the decisive battle of Guadalcanal. **Figure 10** was posted on May 19, 1942, at Townsville, Australia, where the 33rd Bombing Squadron was based. The envelope was paid for regular surface mail with an



Australian 3 pence ultramarine stamp surcharge to a new rate of 3½ pence and canceled with an American Base Forces circular datestamp. The letter was opened, examined, sealed with a red “Opened by U.S. Censor” resealing tape. It was stamped by the base censor with a black rectangular marking. The cover was sent to a soldier at Fort Bragg (Cumberland County). It is not clear why the letter was not sent “Free” unless the U.S. postal system was not yet operating out of the Townsville location. The free franking privilege was a service available to all military personnel (effective April 1, 1942, under Postal Bulletin 18418). The Australian stamp could have been a tip-off of the unit’s location but was allowed by the censor. The lack of the standard rectangular “racetrack” army censor mark may mean the censoring devices had not yet been shipped to this unit.

**Figures 11a and 11b** illustrate the front and reverse of a U.S. Army issued “Blue Envelope,” a printed envelope to be used for soldier’s mail under certain circumstances. It had precise instructions on the front regarding what could be mailed in the envelope and to whom it could be mailed. The instructions were for soldiers who wished confidentiality in private or family matters and who felt that censorship of a specific letter by their unit censor would cause embarrassment. A special envelope was authorized that allowed censorship action to be taken by the base censor rather than the unit censor. In the case of this letter, the Base Censor No. 1059 affixed the censor, round handstamp on the front. This letter was posted on December 22, 1943, to an addressee in Charlotte (Mecklenburg County). The rectangular base censor, army handstamp on the reverse indicates the date of censorship, December 26, 1943,



▲ **Figures 11a and 11b.** U.S. Army issued this “Blue Envelope,” a special circumstance-use for “Enlisted men who wish of private or family matters and who feel that censorship of a specific letter by their unit censor would cause embarrassment...,” It held a December 22, 1943, letter to Charlotte (Mecklenburg County). While the soldier whose letter was enclosed belonged to APO 649, his letter was censored by Base Censor No. 1059. Backstamps indicate letter censored on December 26 and left the base the next day.



**Figure 12** ▶ Reverse of a floral pattern post card showing both unit and base censoring. “Free” post card mailed from APO 512 Algeria in North Africa (APO 512) on March 12, 1943, to Biltmore (Buncombe County). It was censored first by the unit censor No. 06404 and later by the base censor No. 0631.



and the other date may show when the letter left the base for transit back to the States.

A cover showing both unit and base censor markings is illustrated in **Figure 12**. Shown here is the reverse of a floral pattern postcard with a "Happy Easter" message, which was mailed to Biltmore (Buncombe County). It was mailed from APO 512 (Algeria in North Africa) on March 12, 1943. It carries two censor stamps. One is a round "Passed by U.S. Examiner, Base 0631, Army" and the other is the common rectangular "Passed by U.S. Army Examiner 0604." It went through two different censors, one at the unit level and the other at the base level.

Most but not all international military mail was handled by military censors. **Figure 13** was mailed from Camp Butner, an army training camp in Durham and Granville Counties. This envelope was sent by air mail to a private citizen in Port Blanc en Baden, Morbihan, France. It carries a number of different stamps to make up the 50¢ air mail rate to France: a 1934 orange 6¢ printed air mail envelope, a 1943 red violet James Madison 4¢ Presidential series stamp, a 1941 blue 30¢ cent air

mail stamp, and a 1941 violet 10¢ cent air mail stamp on the reverse. It was canceled with a Camp Butner Universal Machine Type DT 300 cancel and a black Durham N.C. metal duplex Type E2 cancellation on the same day, May 30, 1945. The letter was not examined at Camp Butner, but was opened, examined and resealed by a censor of the Office of Censorship (No. 5281) based in New York City. While this was mailed from a military address, it was sent to a foreign civilian addressee. The U.S. Office of Censorship had the authority to examine mail crossing U.S. borders. Camp Butner was a Branch Station of the Durham Post Office during its existence from 1942 to 1946.

**Figure 14** shows the front and reverse of a letter sent by air mail from Seymour Johnson Field in Goldsboro (Wayne County) on January 9, 1943, to Halfwaytree, Jamaica, in the British West Indies. It was paid the 10-cent air mail rate with a 1940 1¢ bright blue green Henry Wadsworth Longfellow stamp of the American Authors series and a 1934 red orange 9¢ stamp of the National Parks series. At Jamaica the envelope was opened, examined and resealed by British censor No. 823



◀ **Figure 13.** May 30, 1945, air mail letter from Camp Butner to Port Blanc en Baden, Morbihan, France. Letter paid 50¢ for air mail rate to France with a 1934 orange 6¢ printed air mail envelope, a 1943 red violet James Madison 4¢ Presidential series stamp, a 1941 blue 30¢ cent air mail stamp, and a 1941 violet 10¢ cent air mail stamp on the reverse. It was censored by the Office of Censorship in New York City, that had responsibility of censoring mail across U.S. borders even though it was from a military address.

**Figure 14** ▶

January 9, 1943, air mail cover from Seymour Johnson Field in Goldsboro (Wayne County) to a civilian in Halfwaytree, Jamaica, paid 10¢ air mail rate with 1940 1¢ bright blue green Henry Wadsworth Longfellow stamp of the American Authors series and a 1934 red orange 9¢ stamp of the National Parks series. Letter censored at Jamaica by a British censor.





◀ **Figure 15.** February 3, 1942, air mail letter from a Chief Bosun's Mate at the U.S. Naval Station, West Bank, Balboa, Canal Zone, addressed to Winston-Salem (Forysth County). It was paid the military concessionary air mail rate of 6¢ with a vertical pair of red violet 1934 George Washington Goethals stamps of the Canal Zone and censored there by a navy censor.

**Figure 16** ▶

April 7, 1942, air mail letter from the Naval Air Station in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, addressed to Ivanhoe (Sampson County). It was paid the 6¢ concessionary air mail rate, which was canceled by an International Machine Type IN-1x cancel, a type unique to Pearl Harbor and quite scarce. A double-circle naval censor handstamp was struck in the lower left corner and initialed by the censor.



using the standard British Postal Censor No. P.C. 90 sealing tape. The reverse of the envelope shows it reached Half-Way-Tree on January 14, 1943. Seymour Johnson Field was activated on June 12, 1942, as Headquarters, Technical School, Army Air Forces Technical Training Command and became a U.S. Air Force base in 1956. It remains an active U.S. Air Force base, housing the 4th Fighter Wing and support units. The letter was paid 10¢ for air mail postage, the proper domestic rate to Jamaica. The 6-cent concessionary rate did not apply because it was not to or from overseas military personnel.

Each of these last two letters are examples of mail to or from a soldier that did not warrant examination by the army but were instead examined by U.S. civilian or British censors.

It is important to discuss these military post offices in a little more detail. The APO numbers were assigned to specific army or army air force units. There were approximately 1000 APOs, with APO #1 assigned to the First Infantry Division. APOs moved with the unit. A good example is APO 512, which was illustrated in Figure 12. The unit was identified by the return address, the 78th Chemical Smoke Generator Company, that

used 4.2" mortars to fire smoke shells for cover and concealment. The 78th received its APO number on September 20, 1942, when it arrived in England. When it moved to the Mediterranean theater, the APO also went to Gibraltar in October 1942 and then to Algiers, Algeria, on November 25, 1942. On July 20, 1944, APO 512 moved to Caserta, Italy, and its last location was established on April 6, 1947, at Leghorn, Italy. It was discontinued on September 8, 1947.

Next, we will examine a few covers censored at the navy unit level. **Figure 15** illustrates an air mail envelope from a Chief Bosun's Mate stationed at the U.S. Naval Station, West Bank, Balboa, Canal Zone. It was posted on February 3, 1942, addressed to a woman in Winston-Salem care of the J.C. Penny Company. The envelope was paid the military concessionary air mail rate of 6¢ with a vertical pair of red violet 1934 George Washington Goethals stamps of the Canal Zone. The letter was censored by a naval censor, who struck in the lower left corner his censorship approval with initials.

The air mail cover, shown in **Figure 16**, was sent by a Lieutenant (j.g.) stationed at the Naval Air Station in Pearl



**Figure 17** ▶  
May 20, 1943, envelope mail by a Carpenter's Mate Third Class in the 22nd Naval Construction Battalion (no FPO number at this time) at Sitka, Alaska, sent in first class surface mail "Free" to Camp Butner. Letter redirected within Camp Butner to Station Medical Department. A third different type of naval censor handstamp in magenta was struck in lower left corner and initialed by the censor.



◀ **Figure 18.** Mailed from the U.S.S. *Sumter* (APA 52) an attack transport, this air mail envelope was posted on February 19, 1944, addressed to Ridgeway (Warren County). It was paid 6¢ for the concessionary air mail rate. The naval censor affixed his blue circular stamp in the lower left corner with his initials approving the contents of the letter.

Harbor, Territory of Hawaii, on April 7, 1942, addressed to Ivanhoe (Sampson County). It was paid the military concessionary air mail rate of 6¢ with a 1941 carmine 6 cents twin-motored transport plane stamp. The stamp was canceled by an International Machine Type IN-1x cancel, a type unique to Pearl Harbor and quite scarce. It is reported that this is the earliest date of this marking with the unusual killer. At an earlier time, the killer portion of the postmark had the name of the Air Station in between the horizontal lines. The naval censor affixed a different double-circle censor marking in the lower left corner with an initial approving the contents of the letter.

**Figure 17** is a cover that was mailed on May 20, 1943, by a Carpenter's Mate, Third Class, in the 22nd Naval Construction Battalion, to a Corporal in the Station Complement at Camp Butner (Durham and Granville Counties). The mail clerk at Camp Butner noted that the recipient had moved from Headquarters Company of the 78th Division to the Station Medical Detachment. The cover was marked "Free" by the sender. On March 27, 1942, Congress had authorized free first-

class mail service for all members of the armed forces to any person in the United States or its territories. This was announced in Postal Bulletin PB 18418 of April 1, 1942. This privilege was suspended at the end of 1947. This cover was cancelled in the upper right corner with a "22nd Naval Constr. Batt.," three bar circular datestamp. Distinctive unit cancels are not common. The cover was passed by the U.S. Navy Censor circular handstamp in the lower left corner and validated with manuscript initials of the censor. FPO 8120 was assigned to this construction battalion, but the FPO number was deleted before this cover was mailed in May 1943. A penciled "Sitka, Alaska" on the reverse, written perhaps later, was consistent with the location of the battalion.

Sent by air mail to Ridgeway (Warren County), from the U.S.S. *Sumter* (APA 52), which was an attack transport ship operating in the Pacific, **Figure 18** illustrates another navy-censored envelope. Having participated in operations in the Marshall Islands, the ship sailed to the South Pacific for amphibious training during which this letter was mailed by a member of the crew. It was paid the military concessionary air

mail rate of 6¢ with a 1941 carmine 6¢ twin-motored transport plane stamp. The cancellation was a Locy Type 2z circular datestamp, a rubber handstamp with four wide bars to the right and “U.S. NAVY” substituted for the name of the ship. The naval censor affixed his blue circular stamp in the lower left corner with his initials approving the contents of the letter.

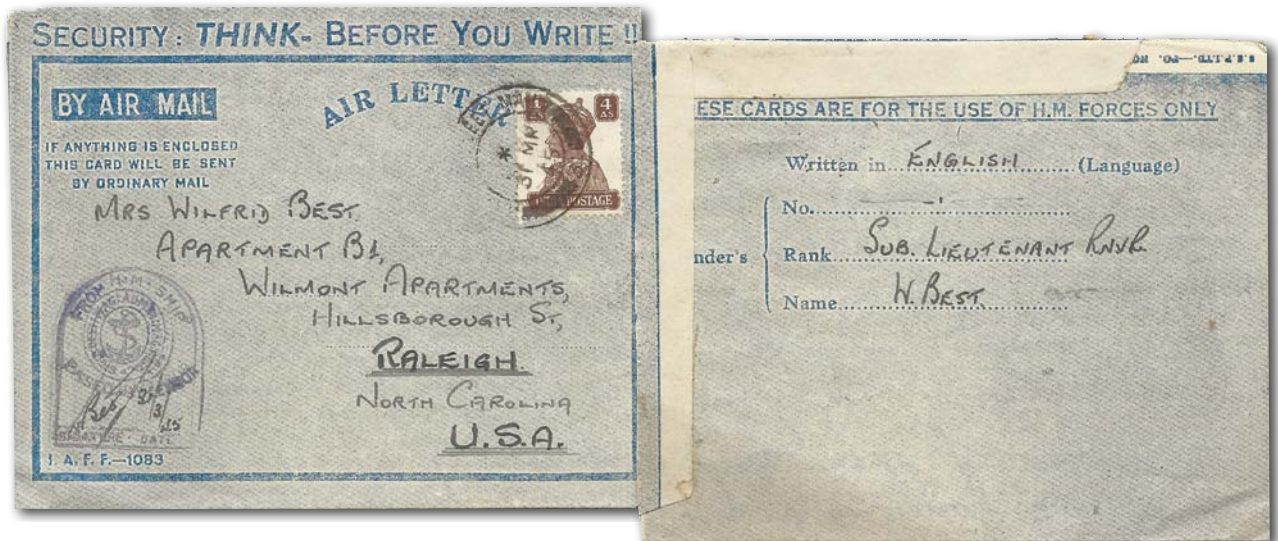
**Figure 19** illustrates a navy-censored letter with another style censor handstamp. This air mail letter was posted from a Lieutenant in the 122 Naval Construction Battalion on February 21, 1945, to a recipient in Selmer, Tennessee. It was paid the military concessionary air mail rate of 6¢ with a 1934 orange 6¢ air mail stamped envelope. At Selmer on March 2 the letter was rerouted to the Marine Corps Air Base at Cherry Point, which was supported by a Branch post office of New Bern (Craven

County). When posted, the 122 Naval Construction Battalion did not have an FPO number, but on-line records indicated it was located at Samar, the third largest of the Philippines Islands. It was censored there. The cover was received at Cherry Point Marine Corps Air Base on March 5, 1945.

Finally, while not U.S. censored military mail, **Figures 20a and 20b** illustrate the front and reverse of an incoming military cover from an allied nation that was censored. This air mail letter sheet was from a British naval officer mailed on March 31, 1945, to Raleigh (Wake County). It was censored by a British naval censor and did not require additional U.S. examination when it entered the country because of a cooperative agreement between Britain, Canada and the United States to accept mail that had been censored by one of those

**Figure 19** ▶

February 21, 1945, from Lieutenant in the 122 Naval Construction Battalion to a recipient in Selmer, Tennessee, redirected to the Marine Corps Air Base at Cherry Point, which was supported by a Branch post office of New Bern (Craven County). 122 Naval Construction Battalion did not have an FPO number at the time, but was located at Samar, the third largest of the Philippines Islands, where letter censored.



▲ **Figures 20a and 20b.** March 31, 1945, British air mail letter sheet from India to Raleigh (Wake County) paid with a 1941 chocolate 4 annas stamp showing the image of King George VI, father of the current Queen. It was censored by a British naval censor and did not require additional U.S. examination because of a cooperative agreement between Britain, Canada and the United States to accept mail that had been censored by one of those countries.



countries. This air mail letter sheet was issued for use by British military personnel. There is a security warning on the front. The reverse has the notation "These cards are for the use of H.M. [His Majesty's] Forces Only." The British called this a "card" but it is an air mail letter sheet that allows for a written message inside, then is folded and sealed as a very light-weight letter. In the lower left corner was struck the British Naval Censor's handstamp, initialed and dated. The cover was paid with a 1941 chocolate 4 annas stamp showing the image of King George VI, father of the current Queen.

In summary, both civilian and military mail was censored by the United States and the other belligerent nations. The civilian

censorship program was managed by the Office of Censorship; however, the military services operated their own separate censoring processes. Each service used distinct censor marking devices, with the navy and marines typically using a circular mark and the army usually employing a rectangular device containing an oval space for the censor's initials or signature.

The author would like to extend a special thanks to Dann Mayo, publications editor of the *Military Postal History Society Bulletin* for providing technical information and editorial suggestions. ■

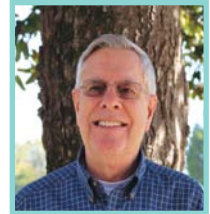
#### References:

- "122nd Naval; Construction Battalion." <https://www.history.navy.mil/content/dam/museums/Seabee/UnitListPages/NCB/122%20NCB.pdf> (Accessed February 28, 2022).
- Billings, Bart. *Military Machine Censors, World War II Period, Part C, U.S. Navy Generic Machine Censors*. (Dublin, OH: Machine Cancel Society, 2003).
- Broderick, Wilfred N. and Mayo, Dann. "Civil Censorship in the United States During World War II." (Civil Censorship Study Group and War Covers Club, 1980).
- Carter, Russ. *Numbered Army & Air Force Post Office Locations, Volume 1 BPOs, PRSs, & Regular APOs 1941-1964*. 7th edition revised. (Great Falls, VA: Military Postal History Society, 2009).
- \_\_\_\_\_. "A 3-Digit Racetrack Censor Marks-An Update." *Military Postal History Society Bulletin*, Vol. 58, No. 3, July 2020.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The 'Authorized' Army Theater Censor Mark." *Military Postal History Society Bulletin*, Vol. 58, No. 4, October 2020.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The 'Authorized' Army Base Censor Marks." *Military Postal History Society Bulletin*, Vol. 58, No. 4, October, 2020.
- Catalog of United States Naval Postmarks*, Fifth Edition, David A. Kent Ed. (New Britain, CT: Universal Ship Cancellation Society, 1997).
- Dictionary of American Fighting Ships*. James L. Mooney, Ed., eight vols. (Washington DC: Naval Historical Center, Navy Department, 1959-81).
- Hardies, John. "US Racetrack Censor Varieties from the Middle East." *Military Postal History Society Bulletin*, Vol. 58, Nos. 1-2, April, 2020.
- Helbock, Bill. "Common as Dirt-The 6-Cent Transport Airmail Stamp." *Military Postal History Society Bulletin*, Vol. 59, No. 1, January 2021.
- Mayo, Dann. Personal Communications.
- Nazak, Phillip. "The U.S.P.O.D. Metal Duplex Handstamp History and Its Use in the U.S. Navy Post Office through the Years 1908-1958. Part 4-Fancy Type F Censors and Type 6 Security Censors-Branch Numbers and Navy Numbers." *U.S.C.S. Log*, Vol. 87, No. 5, Whole No. 1038, May 2020.
- "Numerical listing of APO's, January 1942 - November 1947" <https://archive.org/details/NumericalListingOfApos/page/n1/mode/2up> (Accessed March 8, 2022).
- "U.S. Postal Bulletins and PL&Rs, 1880-2013" [www.uspostalbulletins.com](http://www.uspostalbulletins.com) (Accessed February 28, 2022)
- "When You Are Overseas." U.S War Department Pamphlet No. 21-1," [https://www.google.com/books/edition/When\\_You\\_are\\_Overseas/OE69dAuUjrUC?hl=en&gbpv=1&dq=U.S.+Wa+Department+Pamphlet+No.+21-1&pg=PP1&printsec=frontcover](https://www.google.com/books/edition/When_You_are_Overseas/OE69dAuUjrUC?hl=en&gbpv=1&dq=U.S.+Wa+Department+Pamphlet+No.+21-1&pg=PP1&printsec=frontcover) (Accessed February 28, 2022).

### Have You Thought About Sharing Your Knowledge?

We welcome an article that you would like to share with our members and will work with you to help bring it to our journal. Contact Tony Crumbley at [tonycrumbley@bellsouth.net](mailto:tonycrumbley@bellsouth.net) to get started.

# North Carolina Adopt-A-Library Program



by George Slaton

**W**e are very pleased to announce that the Adopt-A-Library program, proposed in the Fall 2021 issue of the *North Carolina Postal Historian*, is a resounding success! Seventeen of our members stepped forward to adopt a North Carolina library or similar institution. In a few cases, when a desired library had already

been adopted, those members were happy to adopt another one. What a wonderful and effective way to act on our mission “to promote, study, and educate the public about North Carolina Postal History!” Those members who have adopted a library are noted below in bold letters, followed by their chosen library:

**Bryson Bateman**

Wayne County Public Library, Goldsboro

**Ralph Baumgardner**

Jackson County Public Library, Sylva

**David Brinkley**

Olivia Raney Local History Library, Raleigh

**Lindsey Cooper**

Rube McCray Memorial Library, Lake Waccamaw

**Pascual Goicoechea**

Hocutt-Ellington Library, Clayton

**Frank Hall**

Morganton Public Library, North Carolina Room,  
Morganton

**Steve Jackson**

Wilkes Heritage Museum, Wilkesboro

**Art Keeter**

Union County Public Library, Monroe

**Tim McRee**

Iredell County Public Library, North Carolina Room,  
Statesville

**Boyd Morgan**

Heritage Research Center, High Point Public Library,  
High Point

**Vernon Morris**

Pack Memorial Public Library, North Carolina Room,  
Asheville

**Anders Olason**

Charlotte Mecklenburg Public Library, Robinson-  
Spangler Carolina Room, Charlotte

**Pierre Oldham**

Randolph County Public Library, Randolph Room,  
Asheboro

**Bruce Patterson**

New Hanover County Public Library, North Carolina  
Room, Wilmington

**David Reedy**

Cumberland County Public Library, Local and State  
History Room, Fayetteville

**George Slaton**

Cabarrus County Public Library, Lore Room, Concord

**Richard Weiner**

Johnston County Heritage Center, Smithfield

In addition the following libraries previously had become *North Carolina Postal History Society* members:  
Forsyth County Public Library, North Carolina Room,  
Winston-Salem  
Rowan County Public Library, Edith Clark History  
Room, Salisbury

I began to haunt the stacks of the Concord Public Library as soon as I was old enough to walk the mile or so downtown on my own. Many of you, I'm sure, had the same experience. We found that the local library is an enriching place where we could enter a repository of knowledge nowhere else to be found.

When I began researching a particular North Carolina post office for the *Postal Historian* several years ago, my first step was to visit the local history room of the library in the county where that post office was located. There I found a very knowledgeable local history librarian who was, in every case, eager to provide whatever help I needed.

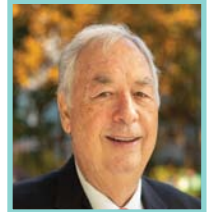
Several librarians proudly pointed out their copy of the Society's four-volume *Post Offices and Postmasters of North Carolina*. Others retrieved a file of articles, compiled over many years, on their respective county's post offices. They located useful city and county histories, as well as genealogies. They shared anecdotes that only a local historian would know.

It's altogether fitting that our public libraries enjoy and profit from a membership in the North Carolina Postal History Society. The more resources we can provide a library, the more that library can provide for its readers and researchers. ■



# Biltmore, North Carolina - The Town Named After the Largest House in the Country

by Tony L. Crumbley



In the 1880s, George Washington Vanderbilt II began visiting the Asheville, North Carolina, mountain area with his mother. These visits made him decide that he wanted to build a summer home in the area. He decided to name his “little mountain escape” “Biltmore” from “DeBilt” (his ancestors’ place of origin) and “moor” (Anglo-Saxon for open, rolling land).

Vanderbilt bought nearly 700 parcels of land totaling 100,000 acres. The post office serving this area was Best (Buncombe County). **Figure 1** is an example of the Best postmark used in 1887 on an envelope to Morganton (Burke County). The postmark duplexed with a Maltese Cross killer was used to cancel a 2¢ 1883 red brown Washington stamp. John A. Porter was appointed postmaster of Best on April 9, 1880, and served until March 26, 1883, when Thomas M. Porter was appointed postmaster.

Construction on the house began in 1889. In order to accomplish the construction of the Richard Morris Hunt-designed

house, a woodworking factory had to be built along with a brick kiln that could produce 32,000 bricks a day. A three-mile railroad spur had to be built from Asheville to bring construction material to the site. The main house construction required labor of 1,000 workers and 60 stone masons. This construction was enough for a new town, Biltmore Village, to be built to support the estate.

George Vanderbilt opened the estate as an unmarried gentleman on Christmas Eve, 1895. Family and friends from across the country attended the event. George married Edith Stuyvesant Dresser in 1898. They would have one child born at Biltmore in 1900 and named Cornelia Stuyvesant Vanderbilt. Cornelia grew up on the estate.

It is estimated that Vanderbilt spent most of his inheritance on the construction of the house. With the congressional passage of income tax laws and estate expenses, Vanderbilt began the sale of 87,000 acres of his land to the Federal government. When he died in 1914 his wife had to close the deal to sale this land, which became the Pisgah National Forest. **Figure 2** is a 1914 image of the house and grounds that Vanderbilt built.



◀ **Figure 1.** August 8, 1887, envelope sent from Best to Morganton (Burke County). The attached Maltese Cross was used to cancel the 2¢ 1883 red brown Washington stamp.

**Figure 2 ▶**

An image of the “Biltmore” house and stables as shown on a 1914 postcard. George Vanderbilt built this home on 100,000 acres of land that he purchased before the house was constructed.

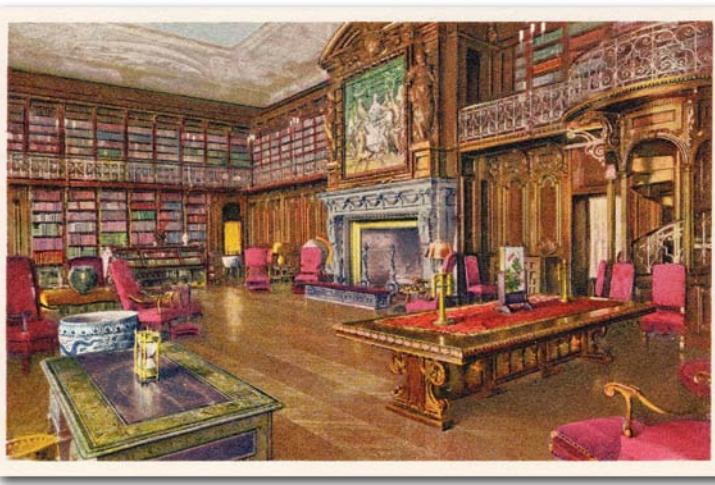




▲ **Figure 3.** Picture post card view of the Banquet Hall, the largest room in the house measuring 42 x 72 feet. The central table could seat 64 people.



**Figure 4 ▲**  
Picture post card showing the Tapestry Room which was 90 feet long. The room contained tapestry as early as the 15th century.



**Figure 5 ▲**  
Picture post card view of the two-story library which contained 10,000 volumes in eight languages, reflecting Vanderbilt's interest in literature.

So, just how big is this house? The total floor space is 178,926 square feet; clearly the largest in the United States. The next largest is Oheka Castle in West Hill, New York, with 109,000 square feet. Only four houses in the United States are over 100,000 square feet in size. The White House in Washington, D.C. has only 55,000 square feet. The total house space covers four acres. There are 250 rooms, 35 bedrooms, 43 bathrooms, 65 fireplaces, and 3 kitchens. The house was built with electricity because Vanderbilt knew Thomas Edison.

The following three post card pictures from the 1930s-1940s period illustrate some of the interior of the house: first, the Banquet Hall (**Figure 3**) is the largest room, measuring 42 x 72

feet. The table could seat 64 guests, and the vaulted ceiling is 70 feet tall; second, to the left of the entrance is the Tapestry Room (**Figure 4**), which is 90 feet long. Third, the library (**Figure 5**) is two stories tall and contains 100,000 volumes in eight languages.

Originally, the third floor had guest rooms and the fourth floor had 21 bedrooms for female servants. The male staff was housed in rooms over the stable complex. "Biltmore" has the largest basement in the United States. The basement contained numerous activity rooms. There is a 70,000-gallon heated swimming pool with underwater lighting, a bowling alley, and a gymnasium. The basement also contains the main kitchen,



**Figure 6** ▶  
April 14, 1890, purple, double-circle datestamp, the first postmark used by Postmaster Thomas Reed in the Biltmore post office and identified as a Type 1 postmark, used on an envelope to Franklin (Macon County). Note the target killer on the stamp is in black ink, indicating it was made by a separate device.



◀ **Figure 7.** June 4, 1890, another cover from the same correspondence to Franklin, postmarked seven weeks later with a Type 2 postmark, which would be used until 1896.



**Figure 8** ▶  
August 14, 1898, cover from Biltmore to Chicago, paid with a 2¢ 1898 copper red stamp of the Trans-Mississippi Exposition issue. This cover shows a Type 3 circular datestamp that now has time included in the handstamp.



pastry kitchen, rotisserie kitchen, and walk-in refrigerators, as well as servants' dining hall, laundry rooms, and bedrooms for additional staff members.

The estate was planned as a facility that would be self-supporting. One of the profit centers was Biltmore Dairy Farm. As a child, I can remember milk being delivered to my home more than 100 miles away from the Biltmore Dairy. The Vanderbilts began scientific forestry programs, poultry farms, cattle farms, and hog farms. Today, the estate is still owned by Vanderbilts' descendants and covers approximately 8,000 acres. The Biltmore Company is one of the largest employees in Asheville. The dairy barns were turned into the Biltmore winery in 1985. Two new luxury hotels have been built on the estate. The property has a tax value today of \$157 million. The estate is one of North Carolina's largest tourist attractions.

On March 4, 1890, the town name was changed in post office records from Best to Bilton. This must have been an error on

someone's part because Postmaster Thomas J. Reed, appointed in April 1889, had the postal records change the name from Bilton to Biltmore on March 20, 1890, 16 days later. No postmarks are known with the Bilton name. **Figure 6** illustrates a 32 mm purple, double-circle datestamp used by Postmaster Reed on April 14, 1890. It is identified as a Type 1 postmark of Biltmore. The envelope was addressed to Franklin (Macon County). The black ink on the stamp killer indicates it was made with a separate device.

By June 4, 1890, Postmaster Reed had received the Type 2 datestamp, a 28 mm black, circular marking shown as **Figure 7**. It also was used on an envelope of the same correspondence to Franklin as the previous cover. By this time, construction had already been started on the "Biltmore" house. This postmark would be used throughout the remaining construction period.

**Figure 8** is a Type 3, 28 mm black circular datestamp used at Biltmore from 1897 until 1902. The cover was paid with a

2¢ 1898 copper red stamp of the Trans-Mississippi Exposition issue and was addressed to Chicago, Illinois.

The **Figure 9** cover has a Type 4 circular datestamp. This postmark is similar to the Type 3 postmark, except the name "BILTMORE" is larger than in the Type 3 marking. On this cover it was used to forward the envelope back to the sender in North Tarrytown, New York, where it had originated on December 23, 1902. This outstanding cover has an ornate, double outline Biltmore registered marking forwarding the cover to Senator Chauncey DePew. Apparently, DePew had been visiting the Vanderbilts, but had returned home. A similar, ornate

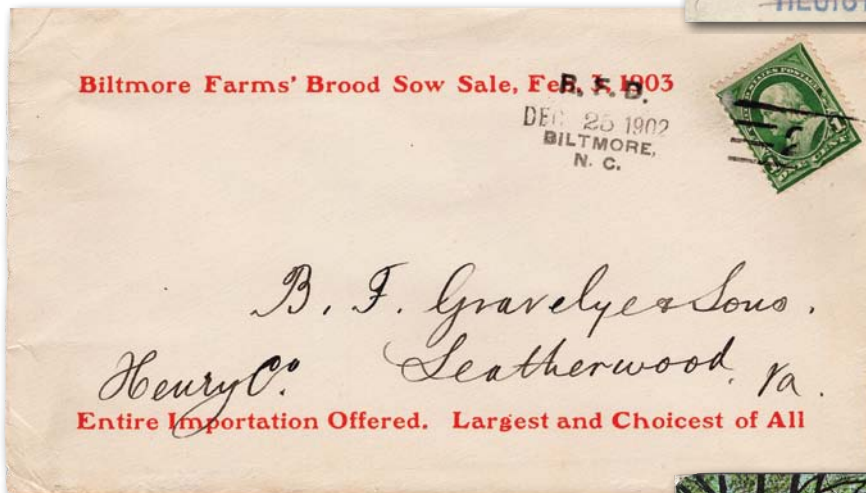
Biltmore registered marking, slightly larger with a solid outline was used in 1894. (Cover courtesy of Darrell Ertzberger)

Rural Free Delivery (RFD) first came to North Carolina in 1889. By 1902, Biltmore had its own RFD. **Figure 10** is an example of a Type 1 N (2) RFD marking use on a cover from Biltmore to Leatherwood, Virginia. The cover advertises a Biltmore Farms' brood sow sale to take place on February 3, 1903. It was posted on December 25, 1902. This is one of three different cancels recorded used on Biltmore RFD routes.

By 1910, Biltmore Village had been built with many of the buildings designed by Richard Sharp Smith, the resident archi-

**Figure 9** ▶

Perhaps one of the most classic covers from Biltmore is shown here. The cover was mailed from North Tarrytown, New York, on December 23, 1902, to Senator DePew, a guest at Biltmore. By the time it arrived, Senator DePew had gone back to New York. Since it was registered, the Biltmore registered handstamp was applied on December 29, 1902, when it was returned. (Darrell Ertzberger collection).



◀ **Figure 10.** December 25, 1902, advertising envelope for a Biltmore Farms' brood sow sale on February 3, 1903, sent to Leatherwood, Virginia. This is one of three different RFD postmarks recorded for Biltmore.

**Figure 11** ▶

By 1911, much of Biltmore Village had been designed and constructed by architect Richard Sharp, the resident architect of "Biltmore." This image of Biltmore Village is from a 1911 postcard.





tect of Biltmore Estate. Smith had taken over in 1895 at the death of Richard Morris Hunt. The image in **Figure 11** is a 1911 bird eye view of Biltmore Village.

The cover shown in **Figure 12** shows the Type 6 postmark, a metal duplex Type H2 used in Biltmore from 1911 until 1912. There are 7 horizontal bars in the killer.

The cover in **Figure 13** has a Type 7 postmark, another metal duplex Type H2 with six horizontal bars in the killer. The envelope was posted on July 6, 1913.

As mentioned earlier, in 1914, Vanderbilt died from complications from an emergency appendectomy. His widow completed the sale of 87,000 acres of the land to the Federal Government. She also sold Biltmore Estate Industries in 1917 and Biltmore Village in 1921.

In January 1922, Biltmore received its first machine canceling device. **Figure 14** is an example of this Columbia Postal Supply Company machine cancel. This machine produced a cancel that is cataloged as a Type G 1W, and used here in 1922. The printed



◀ **Figure 12.** June 8, 1912, cover from Biltmore to Richmond, Virginia, showing use of a metal duplex Type H2 postmark, cataloged as a Biltmore Type 6. The smaller lettering and the seven bars in the killer identify this type.

**Figure 13** ▶  
July 6, 1913, cover from Biltmore to Connelly Springs (Burke County). The postmark used was a Biltmore Type 7 postmark, another metal duplex Type H2 handstamp with six horizontal bars in the killer.



◀ **Figure 14.** January 20, 1922, cover from Biltmore to Ironwood, Michigan. This is the first machine cancel used at Biltmore, a Columbia Machine Type G-1W. The corner card indicates Biltmore had a U.S. Public Health Service Hospital and the Red Cross associated with it.

corner card tells us that the village at Biltmore had a U.S. Public Health Service Hospital No. 45 and the Red Cross organization associated with it.

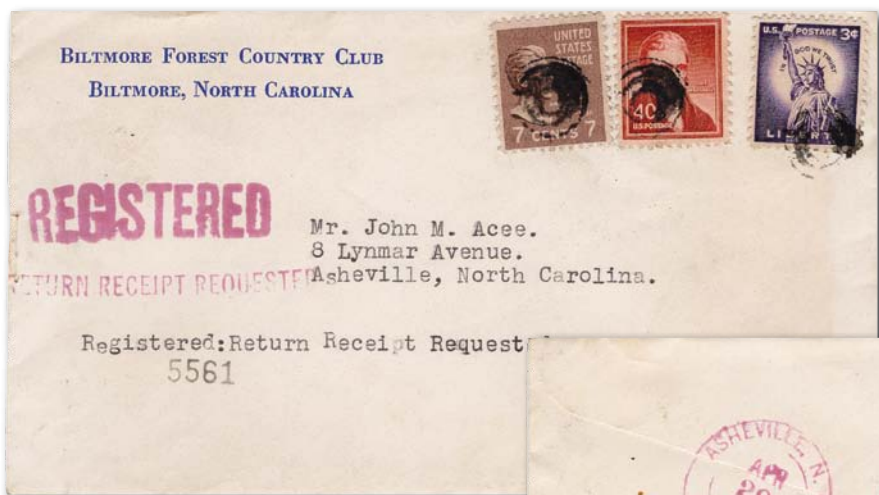
The last cover to be shown (**Figures 15a and 15b**) illustrates the front and reverse of a registered cover with the postmark “Asheville, N.C./Biltmore Station” struck on the reverse of the envelope. It was posted on April 29, 1957, with two strikes of this marking across the envelope’s sealed flap. In January 1929 the Biltmore House Station was created under the Asheville post office as a branch office. By 1936 the name of this branch office showing on postmarks was reduced to “Biltmore Sta.,” which continues to this day. The cover was from the Biltmore Forest Country Club and was sent as a registered

letter to an address in Asheville, perhaps carrying a monthly bill. It was paid 50¢ in stamps, 3¢ first class postage, 40¢ registration fee with \$5.00 or less indemnity, and 7¢ for a return receipt showing to whom and when it was delivered. ■

#### References:

“North Carolina Postmark Catalog Update.” [www.ncpostalhistory.com/resources/North-Carolina-postmark-catalog-update/](http://www.ncpostalhistory.com/resources/North-Carolina-postmark-catalog-update/) (Accessed February 6, 2022).

“Biltmore Estate.” [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biltmore\\_Estate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biltmore_Estate) (Accessed February 6, 2022).



◀ **Figure 15a.** April 29, 1957, front of registered cover from Biltmore to Asheville posted at the Biltmore Branch Station of Asheville. It was paid 50¢ in stamps for 3¢ first class rate, 40¢ registration fee with \$5.00 or less indemnity, and 7¢ for a return receipt showing to whom and when it was delivered.



**Figure 15b** ▶

Reverse of registered cover showing two strikes of the Biltmore Branch Station circular datestamp in magenta across the envelope's sealed flap.

## Mystery Cover



This cover of 1 April 185x or 186x was sent to John A Sykes in Company Shops “in hast if you please.” Can you identify the post office where it originated?

Send your answer to Tony Crumbley ([tonycrumbley@bellsouth.net](mailto:tonycrumbley@bellsouth.net)) or Dick Winter ([rfwinter645@gmail.com](mailto:rfwinter645@gmail.com)).



# The Last Known Cover Going South on the Washington to Richmond Mail Route

by Jerry Wells



The cover in Figure 1 was on one of the last trains traveling the Washington, D.C. (hereafter referred to as “Washington”) to Richmond, Virginia, route before mail service between north and south was terminated on May 31, 1861. It was mailed the day after North Carolina legislators voted to secede from the United States of America and six days before her admission to the Confederate States of America.

The beginning of the American Civil War was gradual. Eleven southern states withdrew from the United States of America over a period of just over six months. Each state legislature created its own process for secession, as none is defined in the U.S. Constitution. The U.S. Post Office Department continued to provide mail service in the seceded states until all hope of a peaceful resolution to the rebellion was gone. It was gone after the attack on U.S. troops at Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor, South Carolina, on April 12-13. On May 27, 1861, the U.S. Postmaster

General announced that on May 31, 1861, mail service between the United States and the seceded states would be suspended. Southbound mail was to be directed to the U.S. Dead Letter Office. The actual date, however, was impacted by events in Virginia and Tennessee. This article only discusses the last days of mail service between the United States and the seceded states east of the Blue Ridge Mountains. For a review of mail service west of the Blue Ridge Mountains during this time, see Walske<sup>1</sup> and Walske and Trepel.<sup>2</sup>

The most common and direct route for most north to south mail east of the Blue Ridge Mountains was the Washington to Richmond, Virginia, route (mail Route 4101 via Fredericksburg, Virginia). However, the contract with the Richmond,

Fredericksburg & Potomac Railroad Company was annulled on May 18, 1861, one of the earliest suspensions of service of mail delivery between north and south prior to the May 31, 1861 general suspension.<sup>3</sup>

An alternate mail route between Washington and Richmond was still available after May 18. From Washington the railroad route crossed the Potomac River to Alexandria, Virginia, and traveled southwest to Gordonsville, Virginia, along the Orange & Alexandria Railroad. The route then continued southeast to Richmond on the Virginia Central Railroad (mail Route 4241).<sup>4</sup>

It would not remain open long. The Virginia Ordinance of Secession that state legislators passed on April 17, 1861, required approval by public referendum. It was approved on May 23, 1861. Early the next morning, U.S. Army units crossed the Potomac River, occupying Alexandria. Orange and Alexandria Railroad tracks were destroyed south of Alexandria. The action was deemed necessary to protect the U.S. Capital from enemy forces that might occupy the

heights along the Potomac River overlooking Washington. Thus, on May 24, 1861, the last Washington to Richmond mail route closed.

A survey of known surviving covers that would normally have been carried southbound on the Washington to Richmond route a few days before or after May 24, 1861, is illustrated in *Special Mail Routes of the American Civil War: A Guide to Across the Lines Postal History*.<sup>5</sup> The survey indicates the last cover to arrive in Washington, on May 21 with no postal markings indicating non-delivery, was postmarked in Portland, Maine, on May 17, 1861, and was addressed to Richmond, Virginia. All southbound covers in the survey expected to arrive in Washington on May 24, 1861, or later, in transit to southern



▲ **Figure 1.** May 21, 1861, cover from Baltimore, Maryland, to Elizabeth City (Pasquotank County), paid with 3¢ 1854 red Die 5 Nesbitt & Co. stamped envelope.

destinations (all to Virginia, North Carolina or South Carolina) bear markings that they were sent to the U.S. Dead Letter Office or returned to the sender.

The cover in figure 1 was not included in the survey. It is the latest known southbound letter to travel on the Washington to Richmond route and may have been on the last train that passed through Alexandria, Virginia, before the mail route was terminated on May 24, 1861.

A final note since the cover originated in Baltimore, Maryland. There was a U.S. mail route that ran from Baltimore via Old Point Comfort, Virginia, to Norfolk, Virginia (mail Route 4149)<sup>6</sup>. The contract for the water route was held by the Baltimore Steam Packet Company (Old Bay Line). On May 7, 1861, one of the company's steamboat packets was detained by Federal naval authorities at Fort Monroe, Old Point Comfort, Virginia. The captain was advised to terminate their regular service at Old Point Comfort rather than Norfolk which was then under Federal naval blockade<sup>7</sup>. US troops maintained firm control of Fort Monroe, Old Point Comfort, Virginia, throughout the war. ■

#### Endnotes:

1. Walske, Steven C. *Post Office Mail Sent Across the Lines at the Start of the American Civil War, May to July 1861*. (Louisville, KY: Leonard H. Hartmann, 2003).
2. Walske, Steven C. and Scott R. Trepel. (2008) *Special Mail Routes of the American Civil War: A Guide to Across-the-Lines Postal History*. (The Confederate Stamp Alliance, 2008).
3. Feldman, Hugh V. (2017) *United States Railroad Mail, Routes and Contracts, 1832-1875*. (Chicago, IL: The Collectors Club of Chicago, 2017), 835-40.
4. Ibid, 858-61.
5. Walske (2003), 6-7.
6. Feldman, Hugh V. (2008) *U.S. Contract Mail Routes by Water (Star Routes 1824-1875)*. (Chicago, IL: The Collectors Club of Chicago, 2008), 294-96.
7. Brown, Alexander Crosby. *Steam Packets on the Chesapeake, A history of the Old Bay Line Since 1840*. (Centreville, MD: Tidewater Publishers, 1961), 49.

## Machine Cancel Updates



by Richard F. Winter

Figure 1 illustrates a Columbia Postal Supply Company machine cancel used on a post card sent from the Glen Rock Station of Asheville to Berlin (Dallas County), Alabama, on 10 October 1922. The designation of the marking is postmark type HS and the cancellation type is 1W. After checking with the Machine Cancel Society, the postmark was confirmed to be a new earliest known use (eku) for this postmark. According to Volume 4 of *The Columbia Story*, by Reg Morris, Robert J. Payne, and Timothy B. Holmes, published in 1997 by the Machine Cancel Society,

the Glenrock Station used a Columbia Machine of this type from 25 March 1925 until 3 April 1929. Before Robert Payne passed away, he sent the society's editor of their journal, *The Machine Cancel Forum*, his Excel listing of machine cancels from examples that he personally had examined. His listing advanced the eku of this postmark to 14 August 1923. Now we can further advance the eku to 10 October 1922, which is a significant advance of the earliest use date.

Most collectors are familiar with the "pointing hand" rubber handstamp used in post offices to return undeliverable mail to the senders. Scott



▲ **Figure 1.** 10 October 1922, post card from Asheville's Glen Rock Station to Berlin, Alabama, with Columbia machine Type HS 1W cancel, a new earliest known use.



Steward briefly discussed this type of marking in his article “A Survey of Auxiliary Markings in North Carolina,” published in the *North Carolina Postal Historian*, Spring 2016, Whole No. 134. He showed an example in his Figure 16 of an undelivered letter returned to Greensboro with a magenta “pointing hand” auxiliary marking. A much scarcer example is shown in Figure 2. This is a “left pointing hand” machine cancellation used in a large post office that had much more undelivered mail to return. The cancel was a Universal Machine Service Marking, reading “Returned/To/Writer/Unclaimed.” It was on a letter returned from Charlotte on 5 March 1964.

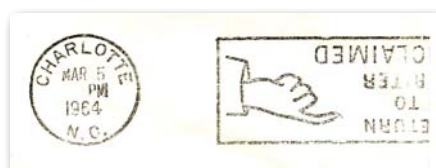
The Machine Cancel Society has published two monographs on Service Markings. The first monograph was titled, “*American Service Markings*” by Reg Morris and Robert J. Payne, published in 1991 as Specialized Study No 10 of the service markings attributed to the American Postal Machine Company. This was followed in 1999 by Specialized Study No 30, “*International Service Markings*,” by Robert J. Payne and edited by Bart Billings, with the service markings attributed to the International Postal Supply Company. The service markings were specifically prepared so that machines could apply other than the usual cancellations, markings that recorded certain handling functions within the postal service.

The earliest uses of service markings were those that indicated receipt of mail. Between 3 March 1879 and 8 May 1913, post offices were required to mark first class mail with a receiving mark. The regulations were rescinded in 1907 for post cards and in 1913 for letter mail. Other service marking uses

relate to postage due, mail delays, mis-sent mail, returned mail and various other military uses. Figure 2 is an unlisted service marking. There may well be other examples that Payne had not seen, but I suspect all are uncommon markings.

Figure 3 illustrates another example of a similar service marking, this example provided by Alex J. Savakis, the editor of the Machine Cancel Society journal *Forum*. His example shows a 28 March 1955 “left pointing” hand Universal Service Marking used at Charlotte with the same boxed wording as Figure 2, but the postmark dial shows it was used on machine No. 1, a different postmarking machine.

The Summer 2012 (Whole No. 119) issue of the *North Carolina Postal Historian* was devoted to the “Pioneer North Carolina Machine Cancels.” In the summary tables were listed all the known pioneer machine cancels of North Carolina during the period before 1926, listed by post office alphabetically and then by machine manufacturer within each post office. An error was made for the two earliest-listed Winston-Salem machine cancels that I would like to correct now. The Columbia Postal Supply Company machine cancels Type A 2 dies 1 and 2 were misidentified. Volume 3 of *The Columbia Story* by Reg Morris, Robert J. Payne, and Timothy B. Holmes, page 34 of Volume 3, shows examples of Type A2 die 1 and die 2, and page 253 show their dates of use. Die 1 was used from the beginning in 1902 until at least April 1902. Then it was replaced by die 2 with larger lettering. Both dies now are illustrated in the *North Carolina Postmark Catalog Update* for Forsyth County and also illustrated here in Figure 4.



▲ **Figures 2.** An unlisted “left pointing” machine cancellation of the Universal Machine Service Marking used at Charlotte (Mecklenburg County) on 5 March 1964.



▲ **Figures 3.** Another “left pointing” machine cancellation of the Universal Machine Service Marking at Charlotte on 28 March 1955 on a different machine, No. 1. (Courtesy of Alex J. Savakis, editor of the Machine Cancel Society journal)



◀ **Figures 4.** Corrected listing in the *North Carolina Postmark Catalog Update* for Forsyth County, Types 4 and 5, based on *The Columbia Story* by Morris, Payne, and Holmes.

## SEEKING

Confederate and Southern States  
Postal History as well as a few  
Select Customers for such.

### Carolina Coin & Stamp, Inc.

Tony L. Crumbley  
P.O. Box 681447, Charlotte, NC 28216  
704.395.1191  
tonycrumbley@bellsouth.net



## BIG LICK STAMPS

*Buying and selling Stamps, Covers &  
Collections of the World*

**Cary Cochran**  
Owner

P.O. Box 163  
Locust, North Carolina 28097  
1.800.560.5310  
carytj@yahoo.com

### Public Auctions Fine Stamps and Postal History

Schuyler  
Rumsey  
Philatelic  
Auctions

47 Kearny Street  
Suite 500  
San Francisco  
California 94108  
t: 415 781 5127  
f: 415 781 5128

email: [srumsey@rumseyauctions.com](mailto:srumsey@rumseyauctions.com)

UNITED STATES

BRITISH COMMONWEALTH

WORLD WIDE

*Hugh M. Clark*  
Rare Postage Stamps  
Est. 1965

By Appointment Only

301-592-1477  
25stampede@verizon.net

## 2021 SUSTAINING MEMBERS

Harry Albert  
W. Bryson Bateman  
Ralph Baumgardner  
Daniel Brinkley  
D. Wayne Burkette  
David Burnette  
Maurice Bursey  
Christopher Chamberlin  
Gregory Ciesielski  
Hugh Clark  
Cary Cochran  
Lindsey T. Cooper  
William Cromartie  
Tony Crumbley  
F. David Dale  
Ken Dickert  
Bill DiPoalo  
Richard Easingwood  
Roy Elmore  
Patrick Enfinger  
Joseph Farkas  
Pascual Goicoechea

Frank Hall  
Todd Hause  
Ralph Heid  
Sam Hudson  
Steve Jackson  
Jimmy Jordan  
Art Keeter  
Rodney Kelley  
John Kimbrough  
Douglas Mattox  
Tim McRee  
David Mielke  
Ken Miller  
Boyd Morgan  
Vernon Morris  
Anders Olason  
Pierre Oldham  
Mike O'Reilly  
Steve Pacetti  
Bruce Patterson  
Jason Pipes

Peter W. Powell  
David Reedy  
Tom Richardson  
Schuyler Rumsey  
Allan Schefer  
William Shulleeta  
George Slaton  
Robert Soeder  
Scott Steward  
Gregory Stone  
Steve Swain  
Dave Swart  
Harvey Tilles  
Alan Vestal  
John Walker  
Rich Weiner  
Jerry Wells  
Kent Wilcox  
Douglas Williams  
Richard Winter  
Judy Woodburn

(47.8% of membership)

## NEW MEMBERS

Rowan Public Library  
Pack Memorial Library  
Charlotte Mecklenburg Public Library  
Cumberland County Public Library  
Wake/Olivia Raney Local History Library  
Johnston County Heritage Center  
High Point Public Library  
Morganton Public Library  
New Hanover County Public Library  
Iredell County Public Library  
Hocutt-Ellington Memorial Library  
Cabarrus County Public Library  
Rube McCray Memorial Library  
Jackson County Public Library

## NORTH CAROLINA POSTAL HISTORIAN



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

**May 15**

*North Carolina Postmark Catalog Update*  
**All Counties and Five Large Post Offices are  
available on <http://www.ncpostalhistory.com>**

(Alamance thru Hoke Counties have been updated,  
as well as Asheville, Charlotte, Fayetteville and Greensboro)