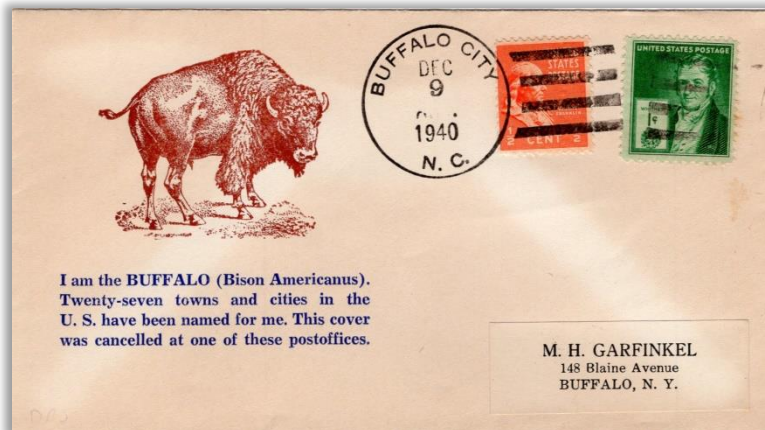
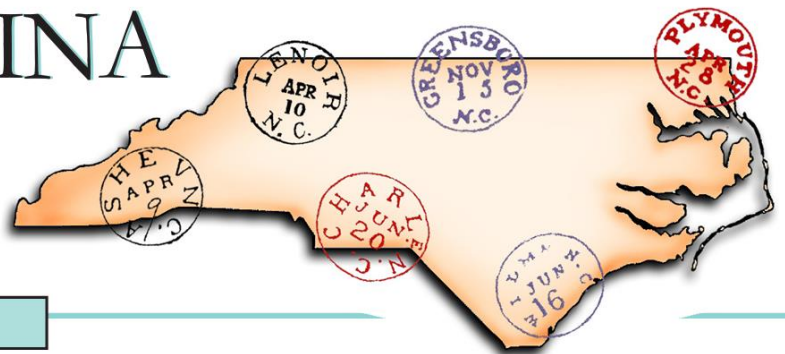


# NORTH CAROLINA POSTAL HISTORIAN

The Journal of North Carolina Postal History

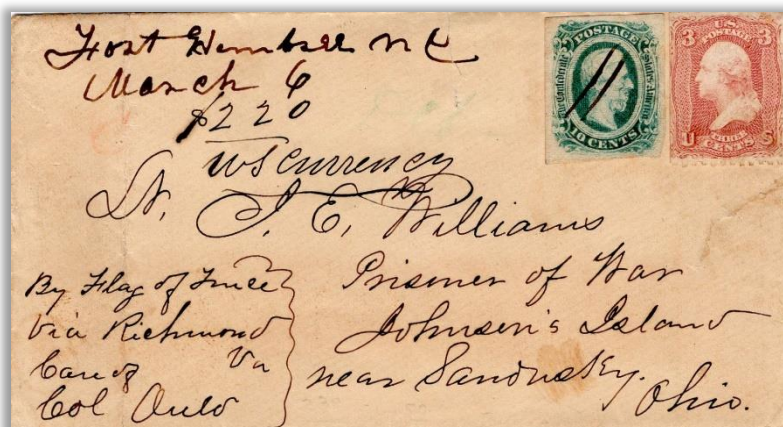
VOLUME 42, NO. 1 WINTER 2023 WHOLE 161



Buffalo City – North Carolina's  
Wild West Town



Alexander County Postal History



Fort Hembree, N.C. Cover to  
Johnson's Island, Ohio

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

**T**he new year is upon us, and the recent Christmas holidays are a glorious memory. For me, those memories include a pleasant annual task. Since I began collecting postal history ten or so years ago, I've begun a new Christmas custom. Let me explain. Though, unlike many Society members, I did not collect stamps as a youngster, I paid a lot of attention to the letters which arrived in our family mailbox. I was fascinated by the handwriting on the covers, the postmarks, and the variety of stamps affixed. Though the old purple three-cent Statue of Liberty stamp predominated, there were others I found appealing. This attention to stamps led me, as an adult, to buy only commemorative stamps for use as postage. In this way, I became familiar, over the years, with many stamp issues from the 1960s and the following decades. So, when, as a new collector, I began attending stamp shows, I was pleased to see stacks of vintage mint sheets of stamps for sale, at face value or less, on dealers' tables. These issues of yesteryear felt like old friends, and I couldn't resist buying sheets of vintage stamps I particularly liked and remembered. These are mostly stamps with a face value of four to twenty cents. So nowadays, as I address Christmas cards, I pull out these vintage stamps - of which I've accumulated far too many! - and affix eight or ten of them on each Christmas envelope. Some friends commented favorably, assuring me how much they look forward to receiving my card "with all the pretty old stamps!" I've come to enjoy this annual ritual, and, who knows, maybe I'll inspire someone to become a collector!

A number of our members adopted a North Carolina public library or other institution last year, answering the Society's call "to educate the public about North Carolina postal history." It is gratifying to hear recently from one of those members about his experience. He told me that he visited his library to make the History/Heritage Room aware of his gift membership. "

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"We got the journal and we like it!" came the immediate reply. The next comment was, "What is postal history?" That question gave him the opportunity to share with the librarian how postal history plays an enormous part in county history, touching on related subjects like genealogy, the development of early communities, and geography. As a result of this conversation, he received an invitation to give a presentation at the library on the subject of postal history, with an emphasis on its place in the county's history. This experience demonstrates in a dramatic way the collaboration and exchange of ideas that can emerge from adopting a library and fostering a good relationship with those staff librarians who specialize in county and regional history. These librarians are extremely knowledgeable and can provide us postal historians with guidance in our research.

In the last issue of the *Postal Historian*, you received your membership renewal form for 2023. A RED dot on the mailing label of the present envelope indicates that you haven't yet renewed. Please send your membership renewal as soon as possible.

You might consider adopting a favorite library or institution this year. And remember that your additional sustaining gift ensures the financial strength and viability of a society of which we can be rightfully proud and pleased to support.



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## Buffalo City – North Carolina’s Wild West Town

by Tony L. Crumbley

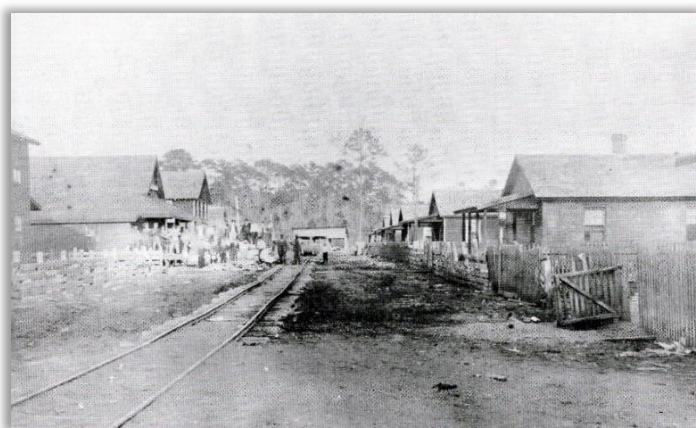


The history of Buffalo City can best be summed up with wild times with logging and moonshine. Unlike other towns in Dare County, much has been written about Buffalo City. Even movies have been produced about what is now a ghost town.

The community was located on the land side of Dare County near Mill Trail Creek. Today, the land is part of the Alligator River Wildlife Refuge.

In the 1850s, two Buffalo, N.Y. men developed a plan to purchase large tracts of land near water and harvest the timber for sale. These two men, Frank and Charles Goodyear, purchased 100,000 acres of forested swamp land in 1888, just twenty miles from today’s Manteo. The timberland was extremely isolated, accessible only by water. The Mill Tail Creek flowed into the Alligator River which provided access to the Intracoastal Waterway and the entire US east coast.

The Buffalo Timber Company brought in its own labor force, which included African Americans and 200 Russian immigrants who built the town in the middle of the wilderness. Plain, simple three-room houses were built along Main Street where the train track had been built to carry the timber. Rows of houses were built with rejected lumber from the mill. Figure 1 is an image of Main Street as it looked in its later years.



▲ **Figure 1.** Main Street, Buffalo City. Note the rows of houses built along the railroad tracks. Each house had three rooms: a kitchen, living room, and bedroom. No electricity or water.

One row of houses was painted red which is where the white residents lived. The second row was painted white, and this is where the African Americans and immigrants

lived. The town was modeled on a combination of two classic designs: New England mill town and Southern plantation. The company provided housing and food as well as schools and hospitals. This was done by paying workers with “script,” or currency, which could only be used in the company store.

There was no electricity or plumbing for water. Residents had to go to their community pump which was located beside the post office. The post office was a house, three houses down from the Dare Forest Store Co.

Figure 2 is an image of the aluminum company script known as “Plunk.” Pay for workers ranged from thirty cents to \$2.50 per day depending on the job. Clearly, the workers were not making a living. They were only there to survive.



▲ **Figure 2.** Aluminum coins called “plunk” were used to pay workers thirty cents to \$2.50 a day wages. These could only be spent at the Dare Forest Store Co.

The first post office in Buffalo opened on October 11, 1889, with Postmaster Charles A. Whallon. Figure 3 is an example of the 29 mm handstamp that was used in 1900. By 1912, the



◀ **Figure 3.** This is the first recorded Type 1 handstamp used in the Buffalo City post office. Only one of these has been recorded.

postmaster was using a Type 2 cancel. This was a 31 mm, 1908, Type A/2 4-bar cancel.

In the early 1900s, Buffalo City had a population of 3,000 which was the largest town in Dare County. By 1903, the vast majority of the virgin timber had been harvested. The town was abandoned, and the post office closed on August 15, 1903.

In 1907, the Dare Lumber Company bought the town and land and began operation again on February 29, 1908. The post office re-opened. Tradition suggests the town was renamed Daresville. The post office and citizens still used the Buffalo City name.

On August 8, 1913, Charles C. Duvall was appointed postmaster. Figure 4 is a photo of Duvall and his wife, Mattie.



▲ **Figure 4.** Claude C. Duvall and Mattie Leary Duvall both would serve as postmasters at Buffalo City. Claude from 1913 until 1921 and Mattie from July 2, 1928, until June 7, 1929.

Figure 5 is a cover postmarked by Duvall on August 6, 1920. This Type 3 handstamp was used from 1914 until 1921.



▲ **Figure 5.** BUFFALO CITY, N.C., AUGUST 6, 1920, Type 3 handstamp recorded used from 1914 to 1920. This is a 1910, Type B4, 4-bar cancel used by Postmaster Duvall.

By 1921, the mill operation had dwindled, and the post office once again closed on June 15, 1921. At this point, Postmaster Duvall and his two brothers took over the operation of the town on September 11, 1922.

Emily M. Smith became the seventh postmaster of Buffalo City. Except for a brief time when Mattie T. Duvall was appointed on July 2, 1928, and served until June 7, 1929, Smith resumed the position of postmaster and served until the post office finally closed in 1947.

With the massive supply of timber no longer available, the residents of the town had to figure out a new way to make a living. In 1908, North Carolina became the first state to pass a referendum to outlaw alcoholic drinks. In 1920, Prohibition was passed for the entire U.S. Stills were easy to make and operate and Buffalo City's extreme isolation made a perfect environment for illegal activity.

Highly profitable, large scale bootleg operations flourished in Buffalo City. Shipping routes and markets from Florida to New York were already well established. The town history records that moonshiners made it clear that their plan was to make quality whiskey. The recipe was always the same: 400 gallons of water, 100 lbs. of rye, 300 lbs. of sugar, and five lbs. of yeast. This would produce thirty-five gallons of 107-proof rye whiskey per week. Some would be aged in smoked kegs or made with hickory chips added for flavor.

There were speakeasys in New York that would only serve the quality moonshine from Buffalo City. At one point, the Feds raided five stills in Buffalo City and confiscated 50,000 gallons of moonshine.

In the 1870s, George Washington Creef designed a new style of boat that was perfect for navigating the shallow water of the Albemarle and Pamlico Sound. These ships could carry a large load of fish or lumber. Creef set up shop in Manteo in 1888 and built the *Hattie Creef*, Figure 6, named for his daughter (Figure 7). This ship carried the mail to and from Buffalo City along with much other material.





▲ **Figure 6.** The *Hattie Creef*, a historic boat built by George Washington Creef in 1888 and named for his daughter. This ship carried the Wright brothers to Nags Head along with their flying machine. It also carried the sugar for the stills and the mail into Buffalo City.



▲ **Figure 7.** Hattie Creef, George Washington Creef's daughter.

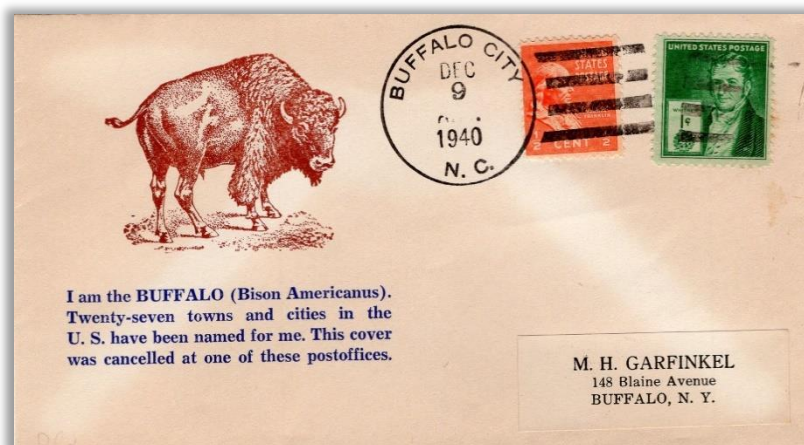
The 55-foot boat also carried Orville and Wilbur Wright from Elizabeth City to Nags Head with their flying machine.

The boat is also noted as docking in Buffalo City with full loads of sugar. Tons and tons of sugar would arrive and loads of moonshine would leave. When transporting a load of moonshine by boat, the bootleggers would tie the jugs together on a line that was dragged behind the vessel. If revenuers appeared, they cut the tether and retrieved the sunken containers later. The *Hattie Creef* would serve the area until 1978 when she was finally dismantled.

When Prohibition ended in 1933, the demand for illegal liquor dropped severely, thus putting most of Buffalo City moonshiners out of business. With the lumber harvested, and no stills to operate, by 1950 the town was completely abandoned.

The cover in Figure 8 has the last known handstamp from Buffalo City. This Type 4, 1936, Type F/1 4-bar circular date stamp is recorded used from 1940 until 1944. The post office officially closed on May 31, 1947.

This cover has several interesting points to note. First, the handstamp is fresh, a clear indication of its infrequent use. Second, the cachet is from a Buffalo, New York collector who was collecting covers from the twenty-seven Buffalo-named post offices. I wonder if he knew that this post office was named for his town, not the bison.



► **Figure 8.** BUFFALO CITY, N.C., DECEMBER 9, 1940. This Type 4, 1936, Type F11, 4-bar circular date stamp was the last one recorded used in Buffalo City. The cover is from a Buffalo, N.Y. collector who was seeking covers from the twenty-seven cities named Buffalo.

For a postal history perspective, Figures 9 and 10 are additional examples of covers with the BUFFALO CITY postmark.

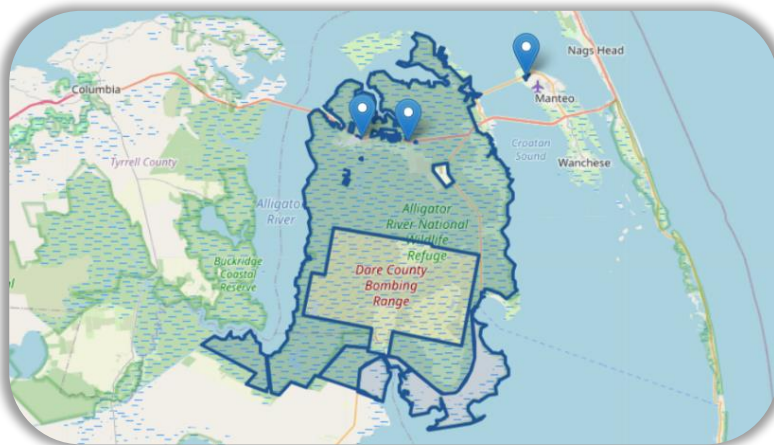


◀ **Figure 9.** February 19, 1945, 4-bar cancel on a WWII Victory War Bond label, not valid for postage.



**Figure 10.** ▶ February 14, 1911, 4-bar cancel on a postcard to Miss Mamie Davis, E. City, N.C. Note the additional address of "Hosiery Mill," the hosiery and knitting mills area of North Carolina at that time.

Today, Buffalo City is part of the 152,000-acre Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge (Figure 11).



◀ **Figure 11.** Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge is located on the Albemarle Peninsula in eastern North Carolina. The refuge was established in 1984 to protect the rare pocosin wetlands and their associated wildlife.

The only marker of the town is a road sign that says Buffalo City Road, a road today known as "the road to nowhere" as it ends in scrawny pines and gum swamp trees. As postal history collectors, we can still obtain small bits of this once Wild West town of North Carolina.

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Outer Banks History Center, State Archives of North Carolina.



# The Postal History of Alexander County, N.C.



By Charles F. Hall, Jr.

Nestled between the Brushy Mountains and the foothills of the Appalachians, Alexander County is one of North Carolina's hidden gems. It offers the visitor the opportunity to experience a variety of scenic excursions among rolling countryside, attend an Apple Festival, dig for rare gems at Hiddenite, and shop among local fruit orchards.

The county is 255 square miles in area and the 2020 census recorded 37,271 residents. Although Alexander County is classified as a piedmont county, it is a gateway to mountains and lies between two major corridors to the North Carolina mountains: NC 421 to the north and I-40 to the south.

The county seat, Taylorsville, is described as “twenty miles from everywhere,” meaning it is about twenty miles from some of the larger cities in the neighboring counties, such as Hickory, Newton, Lenoir, North Wilkesboro, and Statesville.

Alexander County was formed in 1847 from the larger neighboring counties of Wilkes, Iredell, and Caldwell and it owes its origins to the fact the Brushy Mountains created an insular area which affected transportation and trade between surrounding towns.

With the growth in population during the late 1700s and early 1800s, a need was recognized to form a county to serve and represent the residents of the area. Taylorsville was soon established to be the county seat near the older community named Morrison and later, James Cross Roads, on land donated by private citizens for the purpose. A temporary courthouse was soon built, and a permanent brick courthouse was built in 1858.

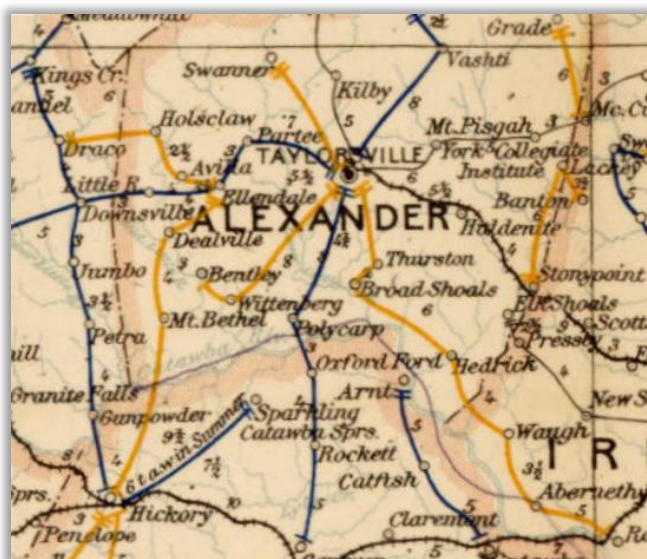
The county was named after William J. Alexander of Mecklenburg County, who was a member of the legislature and a speaker of the House of Commons. Sources differ on the origin of the name for Taylorsville, the county seat, but the two options cited are General Zachary Taylor, commander of U.S. forces in the Mexican war or John Louis Taylor, who was a state supreme court judge from 1818 to 1829.

Historically, Alexander County has been primarily a rural county but has had a diversified economy. The primary enterprises have been agriculture, mining, poultry, beef cattle, dairying, apple production, textiles, paper, and furniture, all of which have been affected over the years by market and technology changes.

Alexander County operates its own locally owned eighteen-mile railroad line, The Alexander Railroad Company was bought from the Southern Railroad in 1946, when Southern divested their Alexander County extension. It connects Taylorsville in Alexander County with Statesville, in Iredell County.

Alexander County offers the postal historian both rewards and challenges. The North Carolina Postmark Catalogue records thirty-eight identified post offices, but only twenty-three have known markings. Some of these, such as “All Healing” (May 28, 1902, to December 23, 1902) and “Muscadine” (May 28, 1892, to November 4, 1892), were very short lived.

Figure 1 is the Alexander County postal route map, circa 1900.



▲ **Figure 1.** United States Post Office Department, Alexander County Postal Route Map, circa 1900.

Alexander County's postal history began with James Cross Roads, which first opened in Iredell County on March 7, 1831. When the new county of Alexander was formed, it became an Alexander post office effective January 15, 1847. By November 26, 1847, it was renamed Taylorsville to conform with the new town of that name.

An example of mail from James Cross Roads was not located for this article. However, a manuscript marking has been documented.

Figure 2 exhibits an early cover mailed on March 2, 18XX with an 1851-57 imperforate three-cent Washington and a circular datestamp that dates from 1854 through the mid-1860s. Those markings date it between 1854 and March 2, 1861.



▲ **Figure 2.** Circa mid to late 1850s cover was posted from Taylorsville to Mount Mourne, N.C. in Iredell County. Mount Mourne was established in 1805 and is still in operation.

Following the trends of post office consolidation, many rural post offices closed over the years and today three post offices remain: Taylorsville, Stony Point, and Hiddenite. Early postal covers from Alexander County are not common and the most frequently encountered are from Taylorsville and Hiddenite. Hiddenite is the source for many surviving covers because of its mining activities. It also had a hotel and spa in the 1800s.

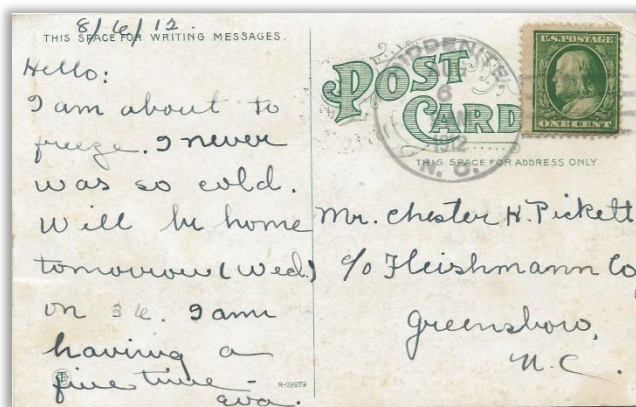
Figure 3 illustrates an example cover from the Davis White Sulphur Springs in Hiddenite. The corner card advertises the commercial and scenic attractions of Hiddenite. Although there is no longer a commercial mining industry, Hiddenite continues to be a popular destination for rare gem and rock prospectors.



Posted on August 6, 1912, from Hiddenite, the color postcard in Figures 4A and 4B shows the springhouse at the Davis Hotel at Hiddenite. Healing springs and spas were popular recreational and health improving destinations in the nineteenth and early twentieth century in North Carolina. The cover has the same Type 4, 32 mm circular datestamp illustrated in Figure 3.



▲ **Figure 4A.** Image side of color postcard from Hiddenite showing the springhouse of the Davis Hotel.



▲ **Figure 4B.** Address side of color postcard from Hiddenite to Greensboro, N.C.

◀ **Figure 3.** August 16, 1910, Hiddenite postmarked cover. The cover's circular datestamp is the Type 4, black, 32mm, 1906, Type A/1, 4-Bar marking used from 1909 until 1913.



Table 1 provides a timeline for the post offices that were transferred from Iredell and Caldwell Counties to Alexander County when it was formed in 1847. Although part of Alexander County was formed from Wilkes County, it did not inherit any post offices along the way.

He enlisted on May 29, 1861, for the war in Mecklenburg County but he was discharged on April 28, 1862, for a disability. The address places him in Hill's Company of the 7<sup>th</sup> North Carolina regiment. Hill's Company was Company A, which was commanded by Captain Junius I. Hill from Iredell County.

**Table 1**  
**Post Offices Moved from Other Counties**  
**to Alexander County When Formed on January 15, 1847**

Post Office Name	County/Counties of Origin	Status
<u>Little River</u>	Established in Burke County on February 19, 1827. Moved to Caldwell County on January 11, 1841. Moved to Alexander County on January 15, 1847	Discontinued on September 15, 1906
<u>Wittenbergs</u>	Established in Burke County March 3, 1834. Moved to Caldwell County on Jan 11, 1841. Moved to Alexander County on January 15, 1847.	Name changed to Wittenberg in 1877, discontinued on March 15, 1909
<u>James Cross Roads</u>	Established in Iredell County on March 7, 1831. Moved to Alexander County January 15, 1847.	Name changed to Taylorsville on November 26, 1847, still in operation.
<u>Mount Pisgah</u>	Established in Iredell County on May 13, 1817, moved to Alexander County January 15, 1847	Discontinued April 15, 1909

During the Civil War, Alexander County did not suffer the destruction that occurred in eastern North Carolina. But in mid-April of 1865, Union Colonel Palmer's brigade, a part of General Stoneman's army that raided through the western and piedmont counties, passed through Taylorsville. They are reported to have plundered along their path, but no major damage is recorded.

Alexander County did contribute a significant number of troops to the Confederacy. Out of an 1860 total population of 5,600, 1,302 men served in the Southern army, almost a quarter of the county's census.

Based on surviving examples, correspondence increased during the Civil War, such as the Figure 5 mailing from Taylorsville.

The sender's name, written at the top of the envelope, was J.P. Marshall and the recipient was Sergeant William Dewey Marshall, who was born in Virginia, but lived in Alexander County before the war, where he was listed as a farmer.



▲ **Figure 5.** Bearing a Type 1, 30 mm, blue circular datestamp PAID and circular 5 Cents handstamps, the cover was posted in January 1862.

Company A was created with men from Alexander and Iredell Counties and was mustered into service in August 1861 at Company Shops, now Burlington, in Alamance County. Both J.P. Marshall and William D. Marshall enlisted on the same day and were both in Company A of the 7<sup>th</sup> North Carolina Infantry. They may have been related, but the author could not establish a relationship from available records.

J.P. Marshall attained the rank of sergeant and was killed in action on July 3, 1863, at Gettysburg. William D. Marshall survived the war and appeared in the 1900 census in Alexander County at age seventy-six.

Figure 6 is an additional window into Alexander County's participation in the war. It presents an interesting research opportunity for the postal historian.



▲ **Figure 6.** Mailed April 9, 1863-4 from Taylorsville, the cover displays the most prevalent Civil War period circular datestamp, the black 30 mm, Type 1, and a ten-cent Jefferson Davis stamp.

The letter was addressed to Rev. N.A.H. (Norman Avery Harwood) Goddin. He was born in Virginia and lived in Wilson County, North Carolina in 1860 where his occupation was listed as a Methodist clergyman. He enlisted in Company G of the 5<sup>th</sup> North Carolina Infantry on May 15, 1861, and was commissioned as captain of the company, but he resigned on August 17, 1861. A review of the 1850 census finds him living in Alexander County with a family named Perry and his occupation was listed as a farmer.

Reverend Goddin has a pre-war Alexander County connection, who presumably sent him this post. In the 1863-64 timeframe, he received his mail at Littleton Depot, a stop on the Raleigh and Gaston Railroad, now in Halifax County. The Littleton post office first opened on April 7, 1820, when the town was in Warren County. Changes in county lines moved the town and post offices into Halifax County effective October 30, 1839. Littleton remains an operating post office today, one of nine in Halifax County.

After the Civil War, Alexander County's economy continued to be primarily agricultural but began to develop light industry. Figure 7 is a 1913 Taylorsville postmarked commercial envelope from the Watts Manufacturing Company, showing growth of manufacturing by that time.



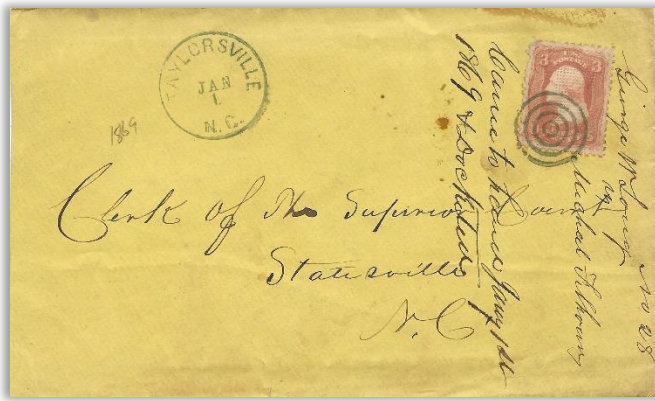
▲ **Figure 7.** Two-cent Washington cancelled with a Type 9, black, 31 mm circular datestamp metal duplex, Type H2. The mailing highlights the diversified economy of Alexander County. (Courtesy of Tony Crumbley)

Additional Reconstruction and late 1800s covers from Taylorsville are shown in Figures 8 through 11.



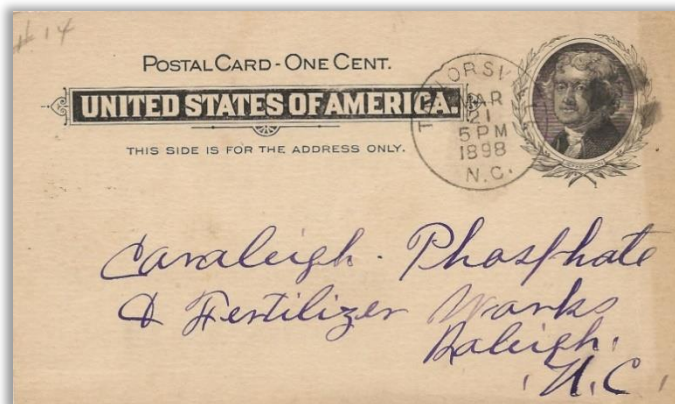
▲ **Figure 8.** Sent to Davidson College in Mecklenburg County, this Nesbitt cover is a Die 26 and the stamp measures 24.5 mm in width. The cover could be from the late 1860s to 1870s. The circular datestamp is green or possibly blue. (Courtesy of Tony Crumbley)





◀ **Figure 9.** Mailed to Statesville, in Iredell County, this cover's mailing date is confirmed by the 1869 docketing. It has a Type 5, 27 mm, black circular datestamp used from 1865 to 1870. The Scott A25 perforated grilled stamp is canceled with a four-circle target killer that was used after the Civil War.

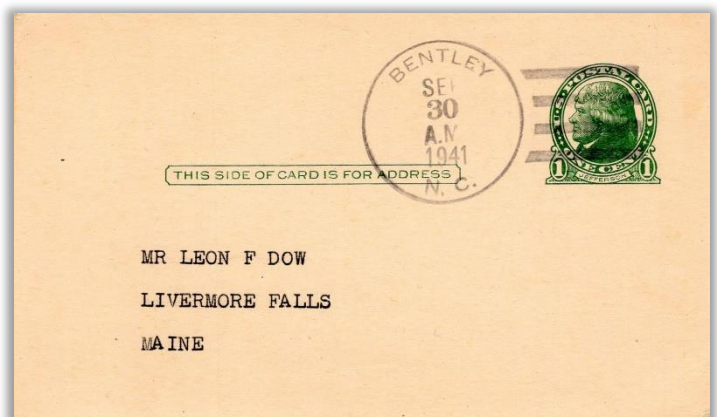
**Figure 10.** ▶ An envelope mailed from Troutman's in Iredell County to Hiddenite in Alexander County. The cover was mailed on July XX, 1891, and the receiving marking is the first recorded postal marking for Hiddenite, the Type 1 black 28 mm circular datestamp, with a first documented use of July 9, 1891. The two-cent carmine stamp was an issue of 1890-93 and was canceled with a four-circle target killer similar to that used at Taylorsville.



◀ **Figure 11.** Reflecting the agricultural economy of Alexander County, this postcard is addressed to a Fertilizer Company in Raleigh and asks for price quotes. The Type 7, 28 mm black circular datestamp dates from the 1895 to 1907 period, which is consistent with the March 21, 1898, date the card was canceled. The Jefferson portrait is canceled with a four-square black killer that succeeded the four-circle target killer used from the late 1860s to the 1880s.

Many county post offices have left little or no evidence of their commerce. Figures 12 through 17 show mail from some of the smaller post offices: Bentley, Mount Bethel, York Collegiate Institute, Petra Mills, and Stony Point, which is the only office still open.

**Figure 12.** ▶ The Bentley Post Office, in the south-western section of Alexander County, was established effective January 24, 1884, with William W. Teague as postmaster. It closed on September 30, 1941. This example was posted on the last day of service and has the only recorded postal marking, the Type 1, 32 mm, Type F1, 4-bar cancellation. (Courtesy of Tony Crumbley)



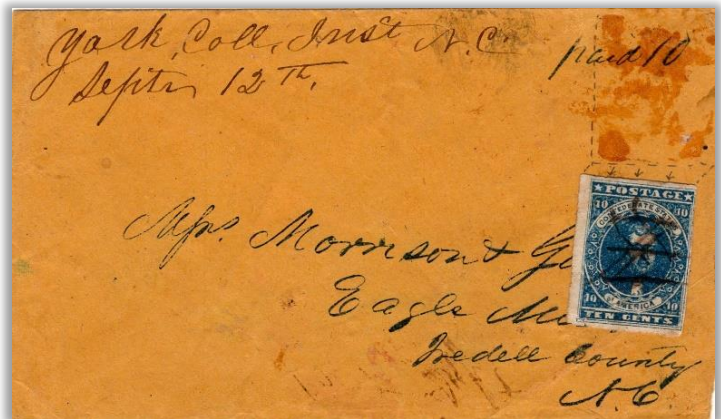


◀ **Figure 13.** The cover was posted from Mount Bethel which opened on May 8, 1876, and operated until at least 1899. Both black circular handstamps and manuscript cancelations were used. The only recorded circular date-stamp for Mount Bethel is the 28 mm black marking with documented use from July 27, 1893, to January 10, 1899. (Courtesy of Tony Crumbley)

A scarce marking from York Collegiate Institute is illustrated in Figure 14. The school was established in 1854 by the Reverend Brantley York in the Rocky Springs community in eastern Alexander County. Reverend York was an educator and Methodist minister who started several academies in North Carolina, including Trinity College, the forerunner of Duke University.

This original post office, established on December 13, 1855, was York College Institute. It was renamed Montane Female Seminary on April 2, 1859, then changed back to York College Institute on November 28, 1859.

A final name change to York Institute came on December 4, 1903. It was discontinued on February 29, 1908, and the mail directed to Hiddenite.



▲ **Figure 14.** This circa 1862-64 cover has a scarce marking from York Collegiate Institute, a manuscript "Paid 10" and a ten-cent CSA stamp. The ten-cent blue Jefferson CSA stamp was canceled with a pen. The stamp was apparently applied after the manuscript "Paid 10" was written but before the mail was posted. (Courtesy of Tony Crumbley)

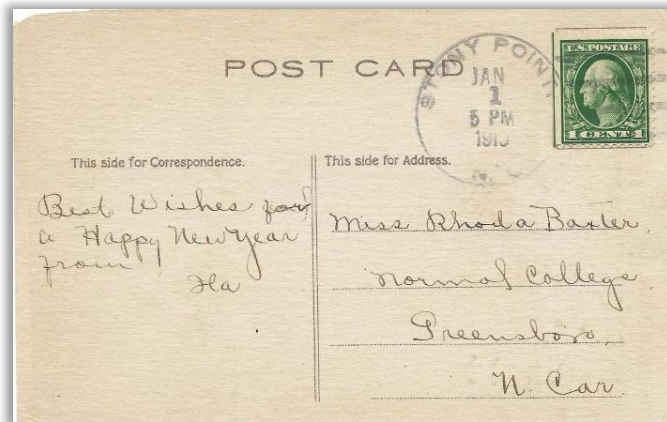


◀ **Figure 15.** This cover illustrates a mailing to Little River from Petra Mills, in neighboring Caldwell County. The Little River Post Office changed counties three times as counties were formed and boundaries re-drawn. It originally opened in Burke County on February 19, 1827, and was incorporated into Caldwell County effective 11 January 1841. When Alexander County was formed in 1847, partly from eastern Caldwell County, it became an Alexander County post office on January 15, 1847. It was discontinued on September 15, 1906. Petra Mills was also in eastern Caldwell County but managed to remain in that county until it closed also in 1906. The name was changed to Petra on July 26, 1894.



**Figure 16.** ▶

Stony Point post office was originally opened in Iredell County on February 17, 1826, but transferred to Alexander County on January 15, 1847. This printed green three-cent cover is marked with an unrecorded 23 mm circular datesamp and a pen stroke cancel. It probably dates from the 1870s. Stony Point was called Sloan on the 1904 Atlantic, Tennessee & Ohio Railroad Post Office Division of the Southern Railroad route. Sloan refers to the railroad depot, but the official post office was named Stony Point. (Courtesy of Tony Crumbley)



◀ **Figure 17.** A Happy New Year postcard mailed from Stony Point on January 1, 1915, to Greensboro in Guilford County uses a black, 32.5 mm circular datestamp with a 4-bar marking to cancel a one-cent George Washington stamp. It is not recorded when this marking was first used, but the last recorded usage of the previous marking, the Type 3, 28.5 mm circular datestamp, was on April 25, 1912.

The postal history of Alexander County also reflects that two post offices in Caldwell County were discontinued in the late 1800s and early 1900s. These were Holtzclaw, with an Alexander post office, and Jumbo, discontinued on September 30, 1905, with mail routed to Dealville in Alexander County.

This also happened to four post offices in Iredell County, where the community post offices were closed, and the mails rerouted outside of the county to a nearby post office in Alexander County. Two of these were Banton, discontinued on January 31, 1905, with mail to Stony Point, and Elk Shoal, discontinued in Iredell County and moved back to Alexander County on August 6, 1881.

Two other Iredell post offices were discontinued: Evalen, on August 24, 1901, and Fulbright, on April 30, 1912. Both of these towns' mails were routed outside of the county to Stony Point in eastern Alexander County, very close to the Alexander-Iredell line.

Another chapter in the postal history of Alexander County was the Taylorsville & Charlotte Railroad Post Office.

From approximately 1894 to 1946, the Southern Railroad (Figure 18) operated a sixty-four-mile railroad postal route that connected Taylorsville to Charlotte and served sixteen, and later seventeen, other towns along the route through Alexander, Iredell and Mecklenburg counties.



▲ **Figure 18.** Southern Railroad locomotive, circa 1930.

They operated that route after the Southern Railroad acquired the Atlantic, Tennessee and Ohio Railroad in 1894. The route was then called the Atlantic, Tennessee and Ohio Division, but by 1911, it had been renamed the Charlotte to Taylorsville Route.

The Figure 19 postal card was sent from Troutman's in Iredell County on the Alexander & Charlotte RPO route to Elmwood also in Iredell.

Since it has no Troutmans markings, other than the inside address, it could have entered the mails by posting it on the train, where it received the RPO cancellation. It then went north to Statesville and then east to Elmwood, where it was sent on to Amity, arriving September 20.

The one-cent stamped envelope was canceled with a 330-F-2 RPO circular datestamp dated September 19, 1905. There is also a faint ELMWOOD NC circular datestamp dated September 20, 1905, and a receiving circular datestamp from Amity dated September 20, 1905. The stamp was also canceled with a 4-wedge circle killer.

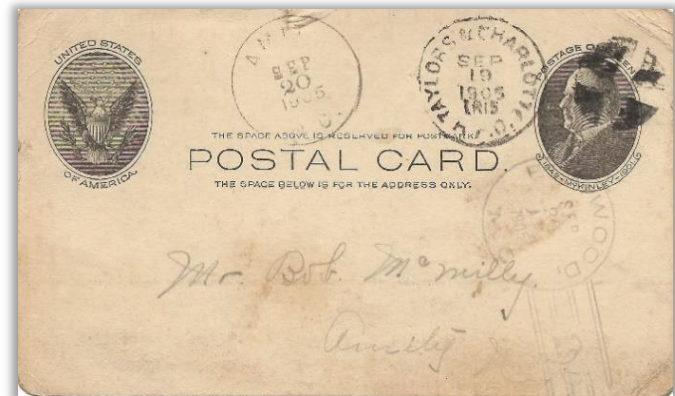
The Figure 20 cover to Stoneville, in Rockingham County, was posted on RPO route 330 E-1 and has a June 27, 1914, dated, 29.5 mm RPO "TR23" circular datestamp. It was canceled with a second faint Taylors & Char. RPO circular datestamp and a faint horizontal ellipse RMS killer. RMS on the killer stands for "Railway Mail Service."

**Figure 20. ▶**

The commercial corner card has a Williamsburg, N.C., in Iredell County, return address. This post office closed in 1905 and the town was put on a Harmony Post Office RFD route. This letter probably entered the mails at Harmony and went to Statesville to be put into the Alexander & Charlotte bag, although it does not have a Harmony Post Office Marking.

During the period of service, there were some changes in post offices served. (Table 2). A rail car would have been designated to process the mail sent or picked up along the way at any of the towns or depots on the route. Mail could also be posted on the train. That route is reported to have operated until 1946.

It was an important link in mail service between Alexander County and its neighboring communities to the south, some of which previously were in Iredell County before Alexander County was established. There are at least five postal markings recorded for this RPO route.



▲ **Figure 19.** Postal card sent from Troutmans in Iredell County on the Alexander & Charlotte RPO route.



In summary, Alexander County has a postal history reaching back to its formation in 1847, but only twenty-three of the thirty-eight documented post offices have known postal markings. The fifteen which have no existent markings were mostly short-lived post offices that left little trace of their operations. Through this article, the author hopes additional postal markings from Alexander County will be found and made available to postal historians.

Unless otherwise noted, the illustrations are from the author's collection. The author would like to thank Tony Crumbley for permission to use several scarce covers from his collection and valuable assistance in identifying postal issues and periods of use.



**Table 2**  
**The Taylorsville & Charlotte Railroad Post Office Route**  
**Depicting 1904 and 1911 Post Offices Served**

The Original Atlantic, Tennessee & Ohio Division 1904.			Renamed The Charlotte to Taylorsville Route in 1911.	
1. Charlotte	11. Clinord (Not identified)		1. Charlotte	11. Oswalt
2. Derita	12. Troutman		2. Derita	12. Troutman
3. Croft	13. Barium Springs		3. Croft	13. Barium Springs
4. Huntersville	14. Statesville		4. Huntersville	14. Statesville
5. Caldwell	15. Iredell		5. Caldwell	15. Loray
6. Cornelius	16. Sloan (Stony Point)		6. Cornelius	16. Scotts
7. Davidson	17. Hiddenite		7. Davison	17. Stony Point
8. Mount Mourne	18. Taylorsville		8. Mount Mourne	18. Hiddenite
9. Mooresville			9. Mooresville	19. Taylorsville
10. Shepherd			10. Shepard	

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## Member Profile: Pierre (“Pete”) Oldham



by George Slaton

Pierre Oldham, better known as “Pete,” grew up in Chatham County, North Carolina near the small community of Bynum, about three miles northeast of Pittsboro. Significantly, the Bynum Post Office (1879-1972) would play a formative part in Pete’s life. His ancestor, Sarah Oldham Grady, was the postmaster there from 1927 to 1936. Though she died just after his birth, Pete, as a young boy, became a regular patron of that post office, visiting regularly to buy plate blocks of new issues. Just before moving away from Chatham County, Pete visited its rural post offices, acquiring a postmarked stamp issue from each one.



Pete’s philatelic interests grew steadily from the time he was ten years old. That interest began in Boy Scouts and was greatly encouraged by his family physician who, learning of Pete’s interest, gave him a Scott catalogue and a variety of foreign stamps. Soon, Pete was searching the ads in *Boys’ Life* magazine, ordering packets of

stamps and then stamps on approval which he took to his fifth and sixth grade classes to share with collector friends. He recalls how his collection taught him about different countries and oriented him to world geography. Pete still has the United States National stamp album his parents gave him and continues to add stamps to it, though he has adopted its accommodation limit of 1959. In time, Pete began a collection of British North America. “The stamps of Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island,” he notes, “are really beautiful.”

Pete graduated from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and the University of North Carolina School of Law. In 1971, Pete and his wife moved to Asheboro where they raised their daughters. Pete practiced law there. Now retired, he has more time for his stamp, postal history, and other related interests.

Pete likes to say that he follows the example of Franklin Roosevelt who suggested that he was a “collector” rather than a “philatelist.” Pete’s lifelong appreciation and study of history inform the direction of his collecting interests. His study of the American Civil War led him to join the Civil War Philatelic Society in the 1970s. Initially, he searched for different North Carolina Confederate covers. Then, at a show in Asheville, he purchased a cover addressed to Thomas W. Cofer, the Virginia manufacturer of pistols for the Confederacy. Given that only thirteen examples of the Cofer revolver exist, and given that its market value is now the highest of all Confederate revolvers, Pete found pleasure in owning a cover with an interesting historical association.

He then began to focus more particularly on searching for covers with fascinating historical backgrounds. One of his favorite finds since then is a Confederate cover from Asheboro, bearing the corner card of a local attorney, so mirroring both Pete’s city of residence and his profession.

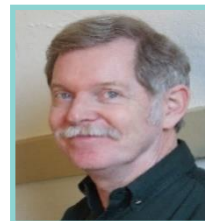
Over the years, Pete adopted the philosophy that one or two really desirable purchases a year can provide sufficient satisfaction. His recently emerging interest in Confederate provisional stamps parallels this new approach. Pete names the provisionals from New Orleans, Fredericksburg, and Petersburg as among his favorites. Not long ago, browsing online, he saw a fine Baton Rouge provisional and purchased it immediately. He admires this stamp’s unusual and rare multi-color design. The provisional stamp from Lenoir, North Carolina remains on his radar for future acquisition.

Pete’s particular North Carolina interest has been in covers from the counties of Chatham, where he was raised, and Randolph, where he has lived for about fifty years. These include postal covers from the larger towns of Pittsboro and Asheboro and the much smaller historic post offices such as Trinity College and Brower’s Mill.

Many years ago, when Pete learned about the proposed organization of the North Carolina Postal History Society. He attended its first meeting and has been a member ever since! He particularly enjoys reading the Society’s quarterly journal and learning about post office locations he has not visited. We are fortunate that Pete currently serves on the NCPHS Board.



## Fort Hembree, N.C. Cover to Johnson's Island, Ohio

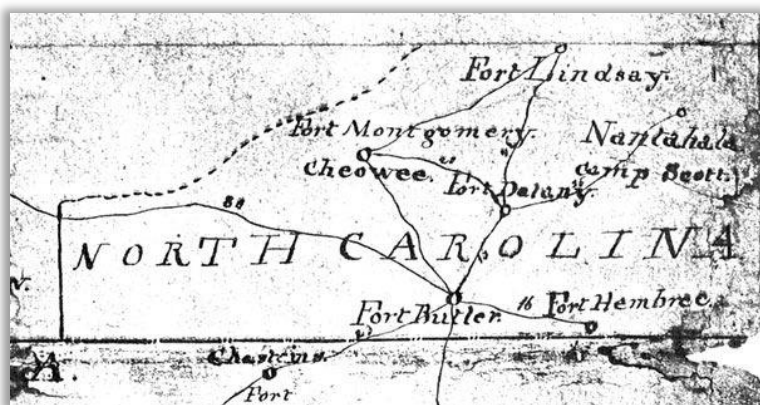


by Ken Miller

In 1835, a small number of unauthorized Cherokees signed the Treaty of New Echota, exchanging the territory of the Cherokee Nation for \$5 million and land in Indian Territory west of the Mississippi River. The U.S. Senate ratified the treaty the next year, setting the stage for Cherokee Removal.

The U.S. Army, along with state militia forces, built forts and roads in the Cherokee Nation to facilitate the collection and removal of over 12,000 Cherokees, 3,000 of whom lived in Western North Carolina. Removal was a massive operation, requiring the arrest, collection, imprisonment, and deportation of thousands of people. To facilitate this operation, the Army constructed posts in the surrounding area. One such post was Fort Hembree formed in 1837.

Figure 1 is a drawing showing the locations of various forts constructed in North Carolina. Fort Hembree is seen in the lower right.



▲ Figure 1. North Carolina Trail of Tears Association map.

In 1860 George W. Hayes, State Representative for Cherokee county, ran for election on the promise to create a new county named for Statesman Henry Clay of Kentucky. The new county would be taken from Cherokee and Macon Counties. Land from Chunky Gal Mountain to the Nantahala watershed on the east and north were taken from Macon County. Land from Pinelog Creek at the state line to the Hiawassee River on the west and north came from Cherokee county.

Just at the outbreak of the Civil War, western North Carolina created three additional counties: Clay and Transylvania along its south-western boundary, and Mitchell on its north-western border.

These were created due to some of the growing population feeling isolated because of the mountainous geography. Specifically, they desired county seats that could be reached in less than a day's travel and thus be more easily accessible. The bill proposing these three counties was passed on February 15, 1861. The counties did not have official Delegates to the North Carolina Secession Convention in Raleigh on May 20, 1861.

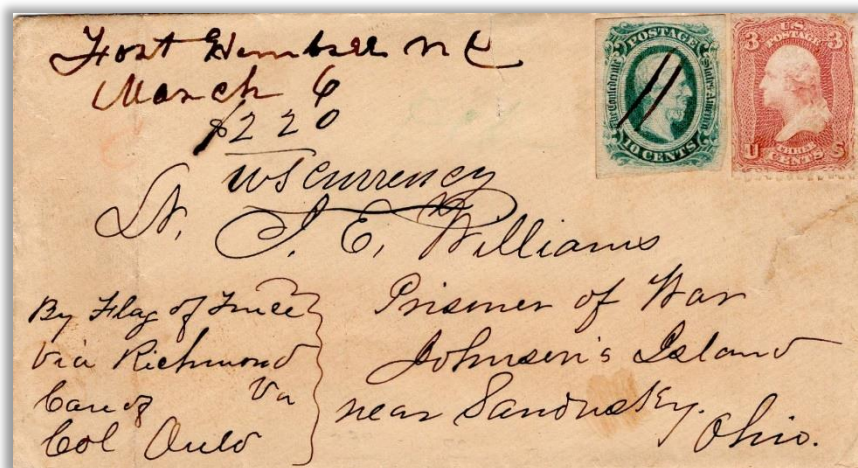
The original name of the town in the Clay County area was Hiwassee and its post office was opened in 1839. The name for the post office was changed to Fort Hembree on August 8, 1843. Clay County was then, and is still, the third smallest county in North Carolina.

The town names Hiwassee and Murphey used in this article are spelled as they were spelled during this period. There are now communities in Towns County, Ga. and Cherokee County, N.C. spelled Hiawassee. Murphey lost its "e" in the 1870s.

The new county included the post offices for Fort Hembree (the county seat), with Robert B. Chambers postmaster, and Tusquitee (discontinued in 1907), with John H. Johnson postmaster. The first court was held in the Methodist church near the fort. After the Civil War, Fort Hembree was renamed Hayesville to honor Representative George Hayes. Hayesville was granted a U.S. Post Office on May 7, 1868, and its first Postmaster was John W. Duncan.

Mailed from Fort Hembree on March 6, 1864, the manuscript markings on the Figure 2 cover show the mailing contained \$2.20 in U.S. currency for Lt. J. (Jacob) E. Williams (1830-1865), then at the Johnson's Island Prisoner of War camp in Ohio. The letter was probably sent by his wife, Excey L. Williams. Both U.S. and Confederate stamps were used on this cover. The U.S. stamp was not cancelled as was typical on covers containing money.

Note the "By Flag of Truce" marking in the lower left of the cover. South to North "Flag of Truce" mail from the eastern half of the Confederacy was typically funneled into Richmond, Virginia. There, Colonel Robert Ould, the Confederate Exchange Officer, took charge of delivering the mail to the Old Point Comfort (Union) post office. The Old Point Comfort post office handled all of the Flag of Truce mail as well as mail to and from Union forces stationed in the southeast.



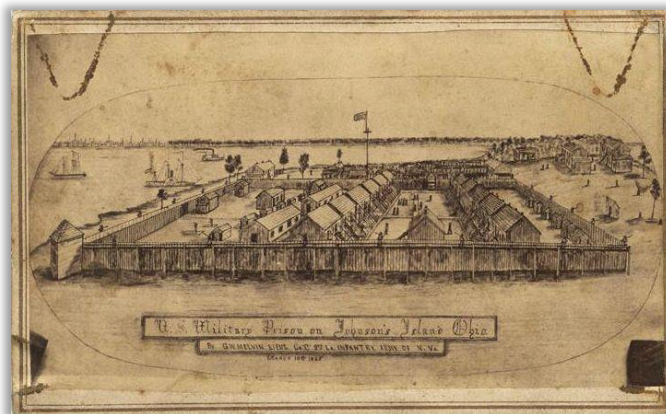
▲ **Figure 2.** To Lt. J. (Jacob) E. Williams then at the Johnson's Island Prisoner of War camp in Ohio.

Old Point Comfort was the post office for Fortress Monroe, the largest fortress in the United States. It was located on the east side of Hampton, Virginia, and was never under Confederate control. Fortress Monroe was also the staging area for POW exchanges during most of the war. Near the end of the war, City Point, Virginia, on the James River, about twenty-three miles below Richmond, became the exchange point for POWs. Thus, Lt. Williams was sent there instead of Fortress Monroe.

Jacob E. Williams (1830-1865) and his wife, Excey L. Williams, moved from Fentress County, Tennessee to Clay (then Cherokee) County, North Carolina. In the early 1850s, he enlisted in Co. A, the "Cherokee Rangers," 19th Regiment, North Carolina Troops (2nd Reg N.C. Cavalry) on June 18, 1861, in Murphey (Cherokee Co, N.C.), as a Sergeant. This was the first Confederate unit organized in the area. On November 6, 1862, he was elected 3rd Lieutenant.

Williams was captured at the battle of Hanover, Pennsylvania, fifteen miles east of Gettysburg, on June 30, 1863, as part of J.E.B. Stuart's ill-advised cavalry raid through Maryland and Pennsylvania. He was then sent to Johnson's Island, Ohio, owned and named by Leonard Johnson (1807-1898).

The Johnson's Island Prisoner of War camp (Figure 3) was opened early in the Civil War and was predominately used for commissioned officers. The camp had the lowest death rate of any POW camp North or South. However, its location on the southwestern shore of Lake Erie made for bitter winter temperatures. Confederate prisoners seldom had clothing suitable for those winters. During the forty months of its existence, approximately 10,000 men were processed into the stockade on Johnson's Island. Most were Confederate officers. Twenty-six were either generals or officers who became generals during or after their imprisonment.



▲ **Figure 3.** Johnson's Island POW camp during the Civil War.

Others confined there were a small number of privates, bushwhackers, guerrillas, and citizens suspected of disloyalty to the Union. The maximum number of prisoners at any one time was about 3,224 in January 1864. In 1865, Williams was approved for exchange and reached the City Point Virginia exchange area on February 24. There he died, never reaching Confederate Richmond.

**Editor's Note:** From the collection of Tony Crumbley, Figure 4 is a C.S.A. Paid 10 turned cover with the inside being a hand carried cover to a Mr. J. T. Plott in Fort Hembree. The cover's addressee is Miss Julia Plott. The Plott family was located in Clay County, N.C. and Towns County, Ga. They are famously responsible for the development of the Plott Hound, a very famous dog still preferred for bear hunting.



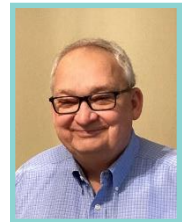


▲ **Figure 4.** Fort Hembree C.S.A. Paid 10 cover.

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## Philip T. Wall April 30, 1930 – August 29, 2022



by Pete Oldham

Sometimes it is difficult to converse with others having differing opinions. However, there are topics and interests that transcend those differences. With Phil and me, the topic of our friendship and bond was the love of stamps.

I first met Phil at Cape Hatteras Stamp and Coin in Greensboro, NC in the late 1970s. We hit it off well enough to go for a bowl of ice cream nearby, followed by many years of meeting for lunches at local restaurants and visits in our respective homes.

Phil had collected stamps since he was ten years of age and had a keen interest in early U.S. stamps. I was swept off my feet by his extensive collection of the U.S. five-cent Scott #1 and the New York Postmaster Provisional. However, his most comprehensive collection and knowledge pertained to the Brattleboro, Vermont provisional, and I believe him to have been the foremost expert on that stamp.

Phil was not just a collector. He was a philatelist in the truest sense. His research and articles resulted in him receiving the Distinguished Philatelic Award from the United States Philatelic Classics Society in 1995. In 1997, he received the Luff Award for Philatelic Research from the American Philatelic Society of which he had been a member since 1946. Phil was president of the North Carolina Postal History Society from 1993 to 1995. Phil sponsored my membership in the United States Philatelic Classics Society.

I could never leave Phil's house without him loading me down with philatelic materials as he disbursed his collection of philatelic literature over the past several years. Phil grew up in Asheboro, North Carolina, and received a B.S. degree from High Point College, and a L.L.B. degree from Wake Forest School of Law. He worked for several financial institutions in Greensboro before opening his own law office. He retired in 1977.

Phil is survived by his wife, Miriam, two children, and five grandchildren. He will be remembered and missed.



Philip Tracy Wall

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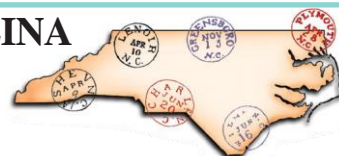
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## NORTH CAROLINA POSTAL HISTORIAN



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