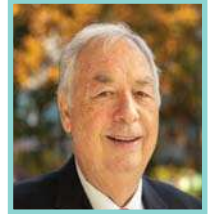


The Postal History of a Premier Southern College – Trinity College to Duke University

by Tony L. Crumbley



In William Powell's brief study, *Higher Learning in North Carolina*, he states that there are more colleges and universities in North Carolina than any other Southern state except Texas. His count, at the time, was 71. That number undoubtedly has increased since the work was published in 1970.

One of the State's premier, private universities had a meager beginning as a one-room log cabin. Figure 1, John Brown's schoolhouse, was a private subscription school founded some time before 1835 by Allen M. Frazier on his property in Randolph County. Frazier was a pioneer Quaker in the Trinity community. Frazier moved his school to a new location in 1838. During the summer of 1838, Brantley York was hired by the Methodist and Quaker community to develop a school for the community. The school was immediately successful. In 1839 York proposed to establish a permanent academy. A group of Quakers and Methodists raised the funds for a new facility.

The school was incorporated by the North Carolina legislature on January 1841 as Union Institute Academy. The academy was a boarding school. There were no dormitories; the students roomed with local residents. Brantley York stayed at the school until 1842 when he turned it over to Braxton Craven.

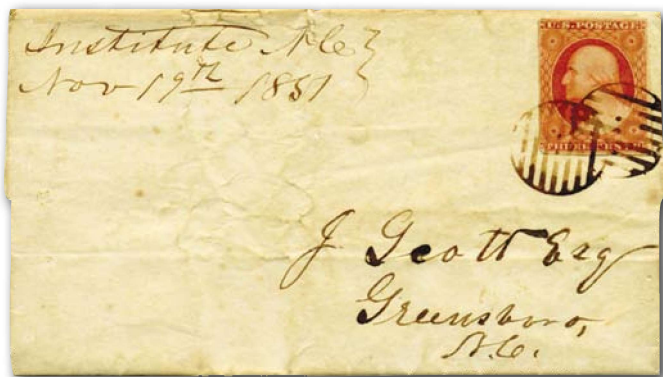
On January 24, 1850, John L. Brown was appointed postmaster of Institute in Randolph County. The name of the post office obviously was taken from the name of the school there. The post office of Institute lasted just over two years, until June 1, 1852, when the name was changed to Normal College. This was a result of the rechartering of the school from Union Institute Academy. Martin S. Leach was appointed postmaster on that day. The state legislature of North



▲ **Figure 1.** Brown's Schoolhouse, a private subscription school, the original building located on John Brown's property in Randolph County. Allen Frazier operated a school there until it was moved to a new location in 1838. In the summer of 1839, Brantley York, hired as a contractor to run the school, opened a new facility named the Union Institute Academy, in a joint venture with the help of the local Quaker and Methodist community.

Carolina had rechartered the school as Normal College in 1851.

Figure 2 is a folded letter posted from Institute on November 19, 1851, paid with a 3¢ 1851 orange brown postage stamp cancelled with a seven-bar circular grid cancel. The cover was addressed to J. Scott, a lawyer in Greensboro. The date line of the letter was "Normal College, November 16, 1851." In it L. H. Carter, Secretary of the Hesperian Society, asked Mr. Scott



◀ **Figure 2.** November 19, 1851, folded letter datelined "Normal College, November 16, 1851," and addressed to Greensboro (Guilford County). It was paid with 3¢ 1851 orange brown postage stamp cancelled with a seven-bar circular grid cancel. As short-lived a post office as Institute was, it is remarkable that a cover has survived posted there.

if he would be willing to become a member of the society at Normal College.

With a new post office name and a new postmaster, new markings began to appear. Figure 3 is an envelope posted from Normal College on May 21, (1853) with a manuscript postmark. It was paid with a 3¢ 1851 dull red Washington postage stamp, addressed to Mr. Bryant Bennett in Hamilton (Martin County). The reverse of the envelope has a red embossed corner card marking of the school that states, “North/ Carolina State/ Normal/College/Randolph. N.C.” By this point, the college must have been doing well to be able to afford its own advertising envelopes. This is one of the first educational advertising covers from the state.

A second cover with the “Normal College” manuscript postmark is illustrated in Figure 4. This cover was posted on February 23, 185x, with a manuscript “Paid 3 cts.,” addressed to Dr. James J. Ramsey, Mt. Vernon (Rowan County). The penmanship flourish makes the prepayment seem like 13 cents, but 3 cents was the correct rate for a single letter paid in cash or with a postage stamp. The manuscript postmarks were used at this post office until the late 1850s when the Type 1 postmark was introduced.

By 1857 when the perforated stamps were issued, Postmaster Leach had obtained a 37 mm balloon handstamp postmark. Figure 5 shows a cover posted from Normal College on December 18, (1858). It bears a 3¢ 1857 dull red postage stamp

Figure 3 ►

May 21, (1853), envelope from Normal College to Hamilton (Martin County), paid with a 3¢ 1851 dull red Washington postage stamp. The reverse has one of the state's earliest embossed college corner card markings.



Figure 4. ◀ February 23, 185x, Normal College cover to Mt. Vernon (Rowan County) with another manuscript postmark. The flourished penmanship makes this appear to be “Paid 13 cts.” instead of “Paid 3 cts.”

Figure 5. ►

December 18, (1858), cover showing the 37 mm balloon handstamp from Normal College to Waughtown (Forsyth County). This Type 1 postmark was the only handstamp used at Normal College. It was introduced in the late 1850s shortly before the post office name was changed again.



and was posted to J. A. Waugh, Esq., Waugh Town (Forsyth County). This postmark is recorded used only in the late 1850s just before the post office name was changed.

In 1859, the school changed its name to Trinity College. Federal records show the name changed to Trinity College on February 18, 1859. Figure 6 is a cover posted March 10, (1859) from the Trinity College post office to Mr. John Gregory, Halifax (Halifax County). The postmark used was a 26 mm Type 1 black, circular datestamp recorded used from 1859 until late 1869. Martin Leach was the postmaster when this letter was posted, but was replaced two days later by Malcom Shaw on March 12, 1859. The postmaster used a circular grid killer to cancel the 1857 issued 3¢ postage stamp.



The cover illustrated in Figure 7 was posted in Trinity College on November 7, (1861) with a boxed PAID handstamp and manuscript "5." This Confederate cover was addressed to Mr. M. S. Phillips, Fair Haven (Moore County).

Illustrated in Figure 8 is another Confederate cover with a 10¢ postage stamp (CSA No. 12) mailed January 30, (1864), to Miss M. P. Mangum, Red Mountain (Orange County).

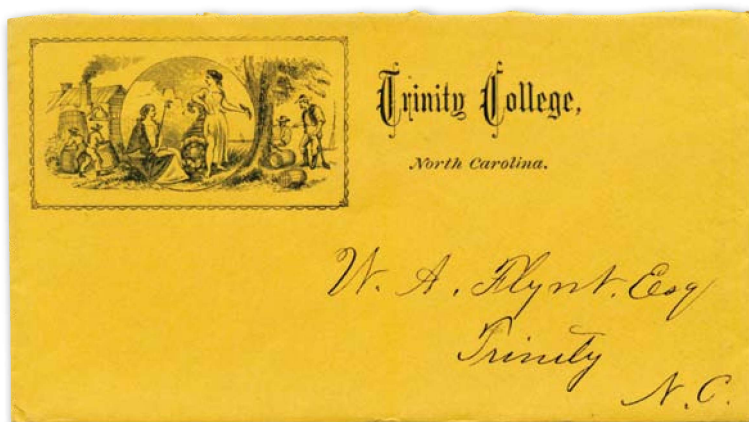
In April 1865, the Trinity College school was forced to suspend operations because Federal forces were camped on its grounds. In October 1865, Braxton Craven, its popular president, who had resigned in January 1864, was returned by unanimous vote. He re-opened the school in January 1866 and remained at Trinity College until his death in November 1882.

◀ **Figure 6.** March 19, (1859), envelope from newly-named Trinity College to Halifax (Halifax County). The 26 mm Type 1 postmark was used after the post office name was changed to Trinity College until late in 1869. A circular grid killer was used to tie the postage stamp to the cover.

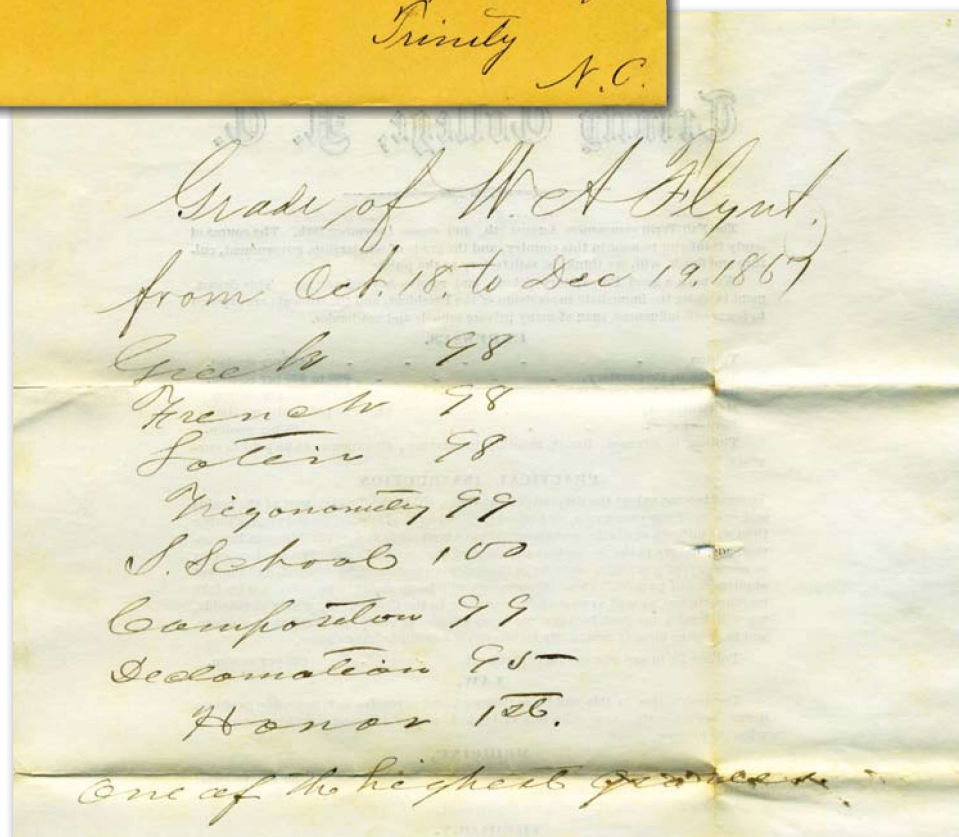
Figure 7 ▶
November 7, (1861) Confederate cover from Trinity College to Fair Haven (Moore County), paid 5¢ in cash. Malcom Shaw had become postmaster on 12 March 1859 and continued as postmaster through the war.



◀ **Figure 8.** January 30, (1864), envelope from Trinity College to Red Mountain (Orange County), paid with CSA No. 12. Again, the postmark was the 26 mm Type 1 circular datestamp of Trinity College, the latest recorded used so far was February 3, 1865.



◀ **Figure 9.** Decorative, printed corner card advertising envelope for Trinity College carrying the report card of student W. A. Flynt to his father in Trinity. Its use in this case was in December 1867.



◀ **Figure 10.** Trinity College president, Braxton Craven, penned the grades of W.A. Flynt for the semester October to December 1867. He commented at the end of the grades listing that these were "One of the highest grades."

Figure 11a. ▶
Top portion of the front side of W. A. Flynt's grade report, a printed circular defining the school's expenses and courses of instruction. Note: the school offered law, medicine, theology, engineering, and architecture. The form was printed August 1, 1866, and slightly modified in pen for the Fall 1867.

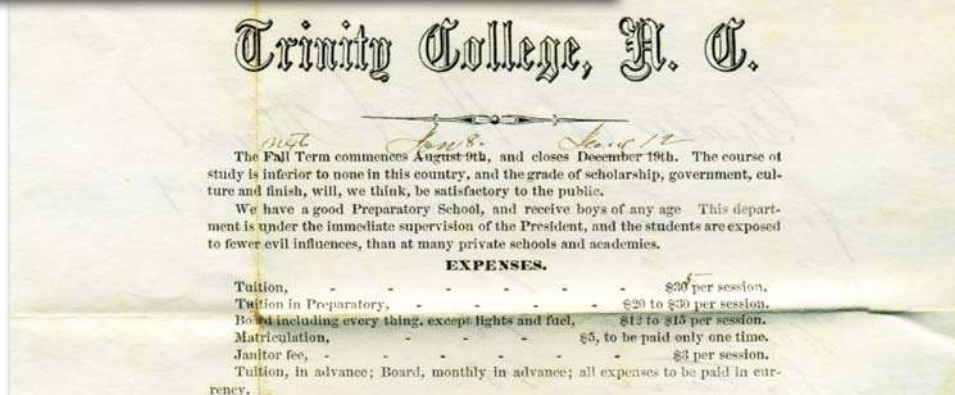
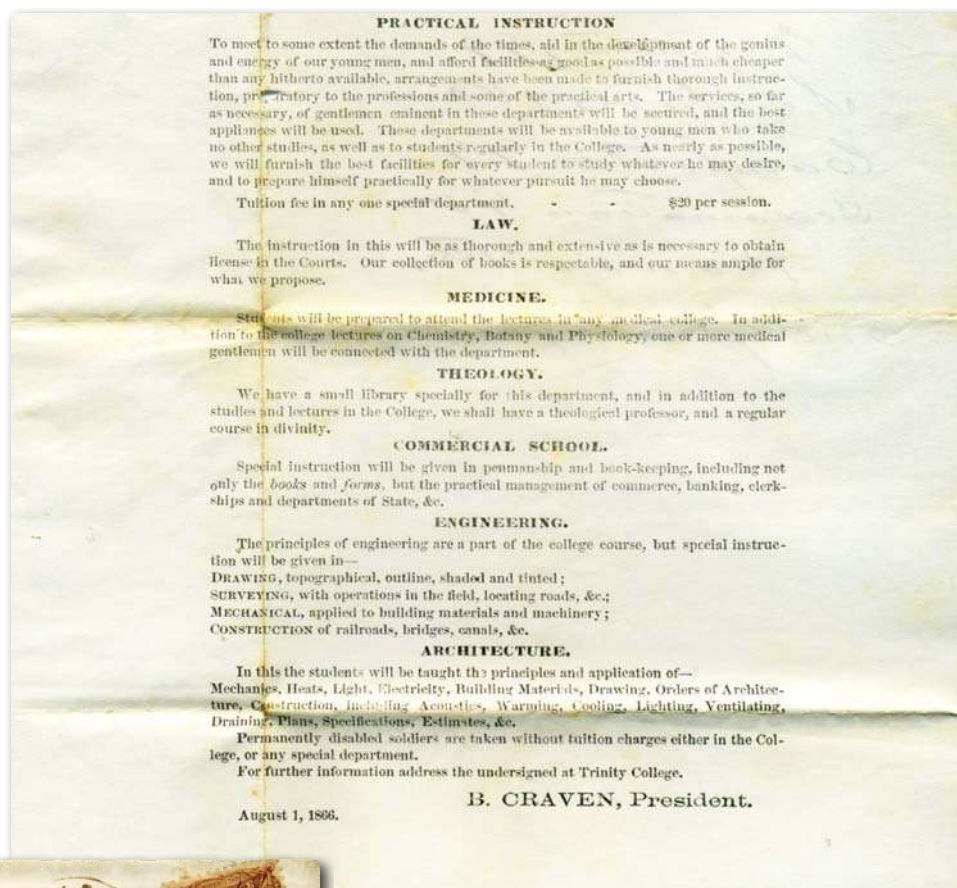


Figure 9 is a hand-carried envelope with a very decorative, printed corner card advertisement for Trinity College. The envelope contained a grade report of student W.A. Flynt (see Figure 10) for the period October 18 to December 19, 1867. This was penned on the reverse of a printed circular (Figures 11a and 11b, top and lower portions of the circular), prepared

a year earlier to describe the school, the required expenses and the courses available in a number of different disciplines. With the exception a few changes that were penned on the printed circular to make the information applicable for the next term of education, the printed information of President Braxton Craven still was applicable. His areas of education at the school

Figure 11b. ▶
Bottom portion of the August 1, 1866 printed circular prepared by Braxton Craven. It listed the basic of practical instruction at the school and the various departments of instruction, each with an additional expense.



◀ **Figure 12.** May 6, 1869, envelope paid 2¢ unsealed circular rate with a 2¢ brown 1869 post horse and rider stamp, addressed to Lake Landing (Hyde County). The postage stamp was tied with a four-circle target killer.



Figure 13. ▶
13 September 1869, envelope paid with 3¢ 1869 ultramarine postage stamp for the normal letter rate to Wytheville, Virginia. The Type 1 Trinity College circular datestamp is known used until November 1869.



focused on law, medicine, theology, engineering, architecture, as well as general education. This was quite an undertaking for a school of no more than 200 students. It is interesting to note that tuition was \$30.00 per session, which was a six-month period. With all of student Flynt's grades stated at 95 and greater, Craven noted that these grades were one of the highest that had

been assigned. One would think student Flynt would have gone on to be a significant member of the community; however, a web search for his biography did not produce one.

The Type 1 circular datestamp of Trinity College continue to be used until November 1869. Figures 12 and 13 are two examples of this postmark used to mail envelopes with the 1869

postage stamps. Each stamp is canceled with a four-circle target killer. Figure 12 illustrates the unsealed circular rate paid 2¢ with a brown 1869 post horse and rider stamp, on a May 6, 1869, envelope addressed to Lake Landing (Hyde County). It probably had a copy of Craven's school advertising circular shown in Figure 11. It is the only recorded example of this 1869 postage stamp from Trinity College.

Figure 13 shows the 3¢ ultramarine 1869 locomotive stamp on Trinity College September 15, 1869, cover to Wytheville, Virginia, paying the normal letter rate. Four examples are known of this postage stamp used from Trinity College.

The 1870s and early 1880s were quite a time for the Trinity College post office. Postmaster Cornelia Z. Lench was appointed December 20, 1866, and served until May 23, 1898. Sometime in the early 1870s she introduced a new postmark, Type 2, shown in Figure 14 on a November 7, 1875, envelope to Raleigh (Wake County). This handstamp was used throughout the 1870s. The cover was paid the 3¢ letter rate with a green 1873 Washington postage stamp on an envelope with a new

type of Trinity College advertising corner card. The cut cork canceller was used for several years, but by 1879, all but 6 of the petals had fallen off.

Figure 15 is a cover posted to Mr. W. A. Flynt at Dalton Institute located at Little Yadkin (Stokes County). The content is from a student at that school thanking Mr. Flynt for assisting in getting him into the school. It seems student Flynt, from Figure 10 grade reporting, had moved on to become a professor at Dalton Institute. The 1873 issued 3¢ green Washington postage stamp was canceled by a four circle target killer that had been used after the war ended. The postmark on this cover also was the Type 2 circular datestamp.

By May 9, 1881, Postmaster Leach had received her third type of postmark handstamp. The Type 3 postmark was used from 1881 until at least March 1883. This 28 mm handstamp, Figure 16, had two outer circles.

In 1882, Brayton Craven, President of the school died ending almost 40 years at the helm of the school. The loss of his leadership brought about uncertainty at Trinity College. With

Figure 14. ▶

November 7, (1875), cover from Trinity College to Raleigh (Wake County). This Type 2 circular datestamp and cork killer was used from 1871 until 1879. This corner card is the second recorded corner card for the school under this name.



◀ Figure 15. October 4, 1875, cover posted from Trinity College to Mr. W. A. Flynt, a professor at Dalton Institute, Little Yadkin (Stokes County). This was the same person who was a student at the Trinity College in 1867 and whose grades were shown in Figure 10.



Figure 16. ▶

March 19, 1883, cover from Trinity College to Germanton (Stokes County). From 1881 until 1883, the Trinity College postmaster used this Type 3 circular datestamp with a double circle rim and a target killer.



the help of three well-to-do Methodist business men, a new president, John F. Crowell, was brought to the campus in 1887. Crowell was a Yale graduate and jumped right in changing the curriculum. Crowell felt the best thing to do for the school was to move it from its rural setting to a more urban environment. With the help of fellow Methodist Julian Carr, they convinced Washington Duke, of tobacco fame, to provide the financial support to move the campus to Durham (Durham County).

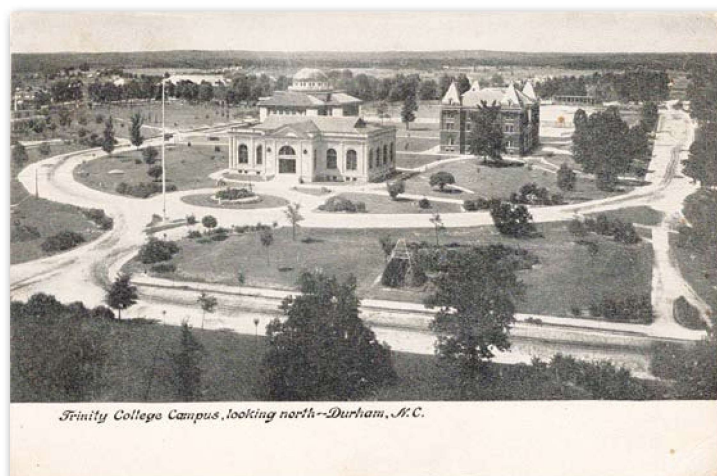
On September 1, 1892, the fall semester of Trinity College began in Durham. President Crowell later wrote that even though the change was less than 100 miles from Randolph County to Durham, it was ten thousand miles away psychologically.

Everything was new. The items moved were meager. A railroad boxcar transported the college bell, safe, and several thousand books. The faculty of eight in 1890 at Trinity became a faculty of 17 in Durham. Only two professors chose to move to Durham. The college enrollment jumped from 113 students to 180 students in Durham.

The contrast between the old campus and the new one was dramatic. In old Trinity College, students lived in the community boarding houses and the college consisted of a single all-purpose building. In Durham, a more typical campus atmosphere prevailed. The campus was built on a previously used county fairground where trotting horses raced and steeple chases were held. Three main buildings, seven residences for faculty, and athletic fields were built. Figure 17 is a 1907 post card with an early view of the campus in Durham.

The main building named for Washington Duke was a three-story brick building with a central bell and clock tower, which is pictured in Figure 18 from a 1908 post card posted from Durham. The building contained offices, meeting rooms, classrooms, the library, and sixty dormitory rooms. In 1911 this building was lost in a fire, the only campus building ever lost to fire.

The cover illustrated in Figure 19 was posted January 21, 1893, from Durham with a Type 3 postmark of Durham. This



◀ **Figure 17.** For the fall semester of 1892, Trinity College began its curriculum in the new location of Durham (Durham County, formerly of Orange County). The post-card illustrates a 1907 view of the campus.

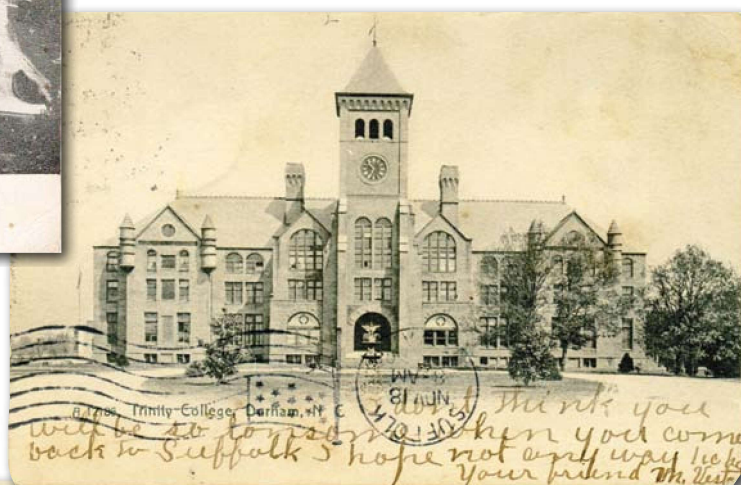
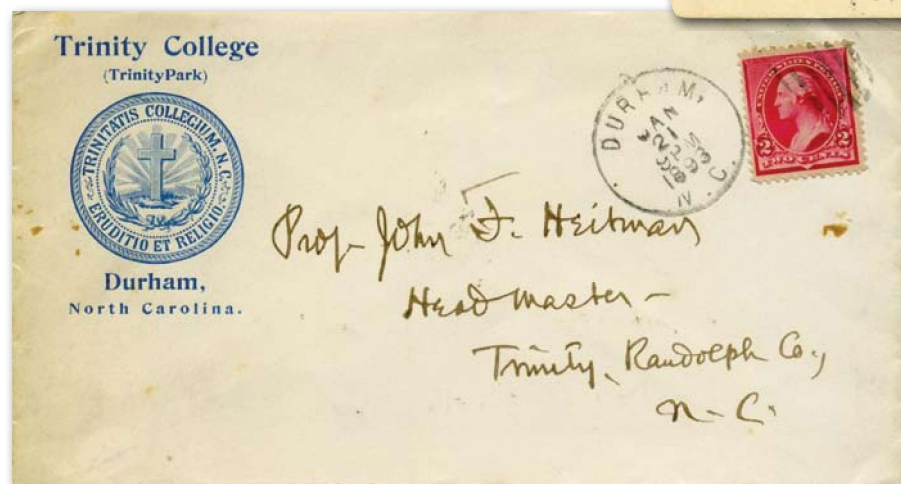
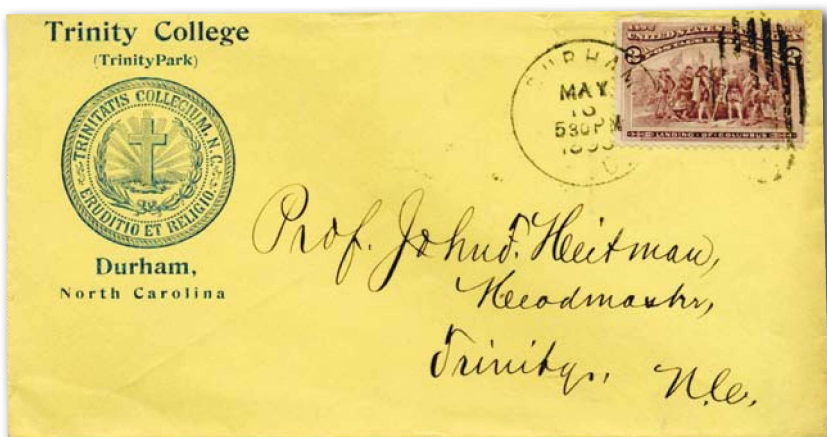


Figure 18. ▶ 1908 image of Washington Duke Building, built to house offices, classrooms, library and some dorms. It burned down in 1911, the only campus building ever lost to fire.



◀ **Figure 19.** January 21, 1893, cover from Durham back to "Trinity, Randolph County," paid single letter rate with 2¢ 1890 carmine Washington postage stamp canceled by a Durham Type 3 metal duplex Type F handstamp. While Trinity College no longer was in Randolph County, there still was a school there, to which this cover was addressed. First recorded advertising cover from new Durham location.



◀ **Figure 20.** May 10, 1893, another cover from Durham back to Trinity (Randolph County), paid 2¢ letter rate with an 1893 brown violet Columbian Exposition postage stamp canceled by a Durham Type 3 metal duplex Type F handstamp. Professor John Heitman was the headmaster of the high school that existed now where the former Trinity College resided. Note, the sender no longer used the destination post office name of “Trinity College,” which was to change in June 1894 to “Trinity.”



Figure 21. ▶

May 4, 1894, cover from Durham to Littleton (Halifax County) canceled with a Durham Type 4 metal duplex Type G handstamp used from 1894 to 1895. The corner card illustration is the Washington Duke Building of Trinity College.



◀ **Figure 22.** November 7, 1917, mourning cover sent from Henderson (Vance County) to the Trinity Alumni, not the West Durham School, but Trinity College, corrected in pencil. A flag cancel, American Machine Type A14, was used at Henderson. At destination a Durham College Station cancel Type 1 was used on November 9, 1917, first used at the post office station in 1915.

marking was a Type F metal duplex handstamp. Note the blue Trinity College corner card marking with the notation “Trinity Park.” This cachet indicates the school’s new focus towards the Methodist Church.

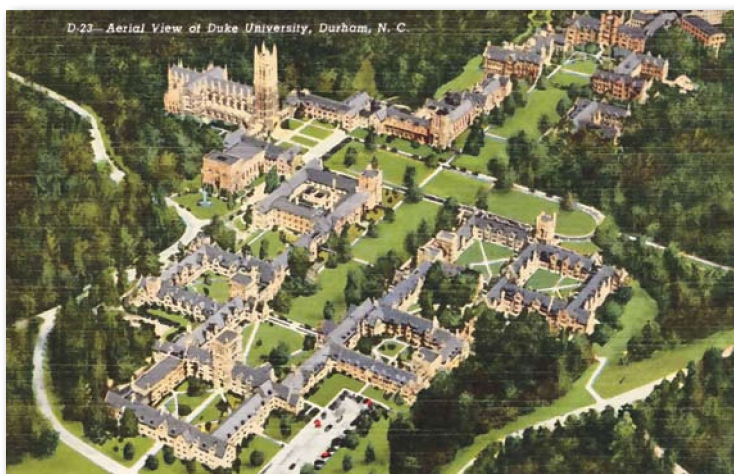
The illustration in Figure 20 has the same corner card marking as Figure 19 with the Type 3 circular datestamp of Durham, a Type F metal duplex used from 1890 until 1896. The interesting thing to note with this cover is that it is addressed back to the Headmaster in Trinity (the post office name changed from

Trinity College to Trinity in June 1894). Trinity College had reverted to a local high school and later Trinity College Prep School, retaining many of the old faculty. The school remained as such until 1908 when it reorganized under state law as a high school. In 1924, the original college building was demolished.

The 1890s would see continued growth to the college. Figure 21 is an illustration of a cover with the corner card of the Duke building at Trinity College. The cover was posted from Durham on May 4, 1894, addressed to Littleton (Halifax County). The

Figure 23. ▶

April 12, 1928, Durham College Station cover to Bristol, Virginia, showing the latest known use of the Type 1 College Station cancel. This metal duplex Type E2 handstamp was used on a Duke University Department of Music corner card. Strangely, since the James Duke endowment in 1924, which resulted in the name change to Duke University, very few Duke University advertising covers have been seen.



◀ **Figure 24.** Aerial view of the West Campus of Duke University in the 1950s, which is even larger today. The Trinity College of Arts and Sciences has been a part of this campus since it was formed at Durham in 1892.

postmark was a Type 4 Durham circular datestamp, classified as a metal duplex Type G handstamp, which was used in 1894 and 1895.

By World War I, Trinity College had become one of the foremost liberal arts schools in the South. Figure 22 is a mourning cover posted from Henderson (Vance County) with a flag cancel, American Machine Type A14. The cover was posted on November 7, 1917, to Trinity Alumni, Trinity College, Durham. On November 9, 1917, it arrived at Durham's College Station and received a partial strike of the Type 1 postmark for that station. This was an indication that a post office had been opened on campus. This marking was first known used in 1915 and continued in use until 1928. Figure 23 is the latest known example of this Type 1 metal duplex Type E2.

In December of 1924, James B. Duke, the son of Washington Duke, founded the Duke Endowment. It established a \$40 million trust fund to support colleges and hospitals in North and South Carolina and to fund construction for the new urban business, medical center, and law facility. With that contribution, the school was renamed Duke University.

It seems strange to the author that with the name change to Duke, virtually all college advertising covers ceased to exist. Figure 23 is one of only two Duke covers in the author's collection. The other is a simple corner card for the purchasing department? Is the reason for this the demise of all advertising covers? I think not. Perhaps the school felt its reputation was such they were no longer needed. I'm sure by then that they were playing Carolina in basketball.

Duke University today has grown greatly since the movement of Trinity College to Durham. Today there are twelve different schools including Trinity College for the Arts and Sciences and additional twelve University-wide educational institutes, initiatives and centers. The schools cover a large variety of curricula including religion, medical, business, engineering, law and environmental sciences. The image in Figure 24 is an aerial view of the campus in the 1950s, which is even much larger today and spread over two campuses. Quite an achievement for a man who wanted to build a school in his honor. ■

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Maurice M. Bursey 1939 - 2022



by Tony L. Crumbley

One of our most productive authors and collectors closed his albums on August 5, 2022. Maurice M. Bursey will be missed by many of our members. He became a member of the North Carolina Postal History Society (NCPHS) in 1984, which was only two years in existence. From 2008 to 2021, he became one of our most valued writers, producing 14 lengthy and well-researched articles for the *North Carolina Postal Historian*.

He created the first cumulative index to the *North Carolina Postal Historian* in 2001. After that, he significantly updated the original index in 2010 and again in 2019 by adding author and subject indexes in special supplements issued to the regular journal issues at the time.

Maurice was responsible for getting the 200th anniversary postal card for the University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill, issued by the United States Postal Service on September 14, 1993.

The biographical summaries of 11 North Carolina educators were authored by Maurice in William S. Powell's *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, and he was a coauthor on two others. Excerpts of these writings also appear in *NCPedia*, a website that “highlights North Carolina’s unique resources, people, and culture to enrich, educate and inform.”

In his later years of collecting, Maurice focused on North Carolina Confederate postal history. When his North Carolina Confederate collection was sold, it was the largest to have ever come on the market and included many small post office towns, many of which were the only known examples. Maurice was active in the update of the *Confederate States of America Catalog and Handbook of Stamps and Postal History* published in 2012. Also he was active in providing information for the North Carolina Confederate Cover database, which the NCPHS maintains.

Dr. Bursey was born on July 27, 1939, in Baltimore, Maryland. He received his Bachelor and Master Degrees from John Hopkins University in 1959 and 1960. In 1963, he received his Doctor of Philosophy degree from John Hopkins as well.

Dr. Bursey became a professor of chemistry at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill in 1964. He retired from there in 1996. He has been a Professor Emeritus since 1996. Maurice married Joan Marie

Tesarek in 1970. The couple had two children: John Thomas Kieran and Sara Helen Moyer Bursey.

Maurice will be missed by many. Renea and I will especially miss his detailed Christmas letter each year. ■

