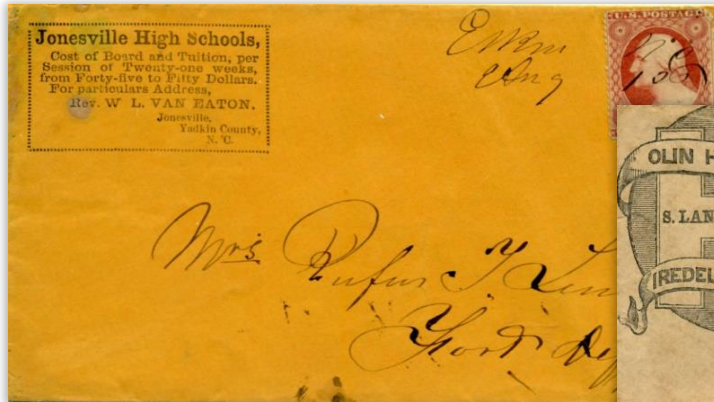
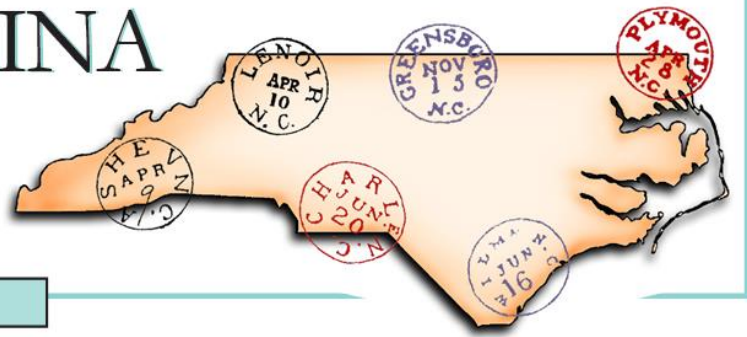


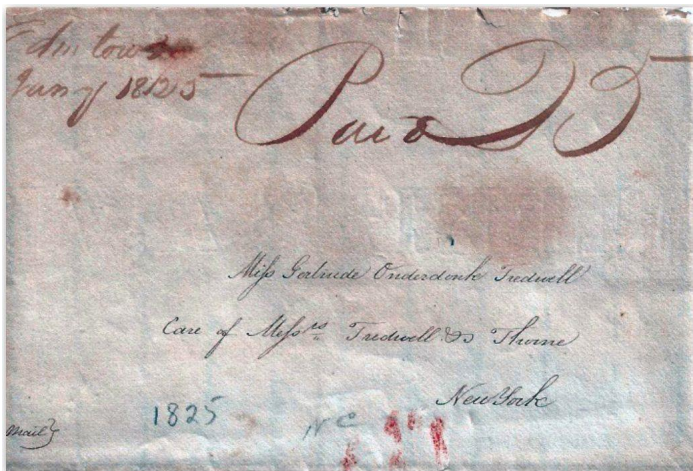
# NORTH CAROLINA POSTAL HISTORIAN

The Journal of North Carolina Postal History

VOLUME 43, NO. 2 SPRING 2024 WHOLE 166



Brantley York - Methodist Clergyman and Educator  
His Schools' Postal History



"Incidents" in the Life of a Slave Girl



Paul C. Cameron Correspondence

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

One of the brightest feathers in the cap, so to speak, of the North Carolina Postal History Society is its website. Well-designed and easy to navigate, the website provides its users with a large and growing number of helpful resources for philatelic collecting and research. We know, from the inquiries we receive regularly through the website, that it is accessed by philatelists and general historians far and wide.

We are indebted to Scott Steward, one of the Society's most active members, who has served as webmaster of the Society website for seven years. Scott also serves as Vice President on our Board of Directors. Scott is in the process of stepping down from the webmaster role, and we want to take this opportunity to express our heartiest thanks to him for his constant efforts to maintain the website's high quality and wide appeal.

We welcome Society member, Danny Brinkley, to the role of webmaster and thank him for his willingness to assume this responsibility. Danny's interest in postal history is evident in his authorship of several articles for this journal, including yet another interesting one in this issue. He brings technical expertise to this new role, and we are delighted to have him on board.

Congratulations to Steve Swain, our journal co-editor! The Board of Directors of the Southeast Federation of Stamp Clubs, at the Southeastern Stamp Expo, held January 26-28, announced Steve as the winner of the prestigious 2024 Rowland Hill Award. This recognition is a lifetime achievement award bestowed annually to a philatelist who has made outstanding contributions to philately in the southeastern United States.

Steve is one of the major philatelists working to highlight and advance the postal history of this region. His interest in Georgia postal history led him to the editorship of the Georgia Postal History Society's quarterly journal and to the presidency of that society as well. Steve is also the editor of the journal of the Florida Postal History Society. He has published numerous books, articles, and research papers. Steve holds multiple leadership positions in philatelic organizations.

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The Society recently received an inquiry from Jeremy Bradham, a preservation specialist for Capital Area Preservation, a nonprofit organization which saves and restores historic buildings in Wake County, North Carolina. This group has just finished restoring the John and Nancy Strain House in Wake County.

In Jeremy's words, "Thanks to the meticulous records on your website, we know that John B. Strain was a Confederate postmaster at Middle Creek until the end of the war, and after he was pardoned, he served as postmaster from November 1865 through 1868 when the post office closed." Jeremy wishes to hear from any of our members who might have any information on John B. Strain and his service as postmaster. He can be contacted at [jbradham@cappresinc.org](mailto:jbradham@cappresinc.org).

It's time for that urgent reminder to pay your Society dues if you have not done so already. A red dot on your mailing label indicates that you should mail your membership check to Harry Albert, Treasurer. And we hope you'll consider including an extra amount to strengthen the Society's finances as a sustaining member.

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



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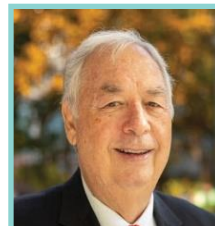
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## Brantley York - Methodist Clergyman and Educator His Schools' Postal History



by Tony L. Crumbley

Born in Randolph County in 1805, Brantley York (Figure 1) was the seventh of nine children. His grandfather had immigrated to the United States from Yorkshire, England and his father was a distiller and miner. Because of his father's uncertain employment, York was forced to go to work at an early age to help support the family, resulting in his receiving only thirteen months of formal education.



▲ **Figure 1.** Richard Brantley York, 1805-1891. Born in Randolph County, he became a leader in education and religion. During his career, he opened five schools. The first school would later become Duke University. Much of his work was done after he became totally blind.

He found that he loved to read and joined a library society to access books. His autobiography says he read 1,000 pages a week once he had access to books. The library society met at the Ebenezer Church in Randolph County. In 1823, York was converted to the Methodist Church through camp meetings held there.

York began teaching at Bethlehem Church in Guilford County in 1831 and was licensed to preach in 1833. In 1838, he moved to teach in northwestern Randolph County in a one-room schoolhouse known as Brown's school. By the summer of 1839, the school was replaced

by a two-room structure.

York developed a plan for an Education Association with the local Methodist and Quaker community. He formed the Union Institute Academy, later to become Normal College.

Figure 2 is one of the earliest recorded Education Advertising covers from North Carolina. It was posted from Jamestown (Guilford County) to Miss Mary Shield in McMinnville, Warren County, Tennessee. The cover has a red embossed shield advertising on the reverse flap reading North Carolina Normal College, Randolph, NC. This is one of the two recorded covers with this corner card marking. Normal College would later become Trinity College and move to Durham in 1892. In 1924, its name was changed to Duke University.



▲ **Figure 2.** Jamestown, NC (Guilford Co.), August 9, (1852). Brantley York would start Union Institute in 1838. The school would later become Normal College. This Normal College cover is one of the earliest advertising covers from an educational facility in the state.

York put many hours of hard work into Union Institute. He taught over fifty male and female students, accomplished fundraising, and used time at night to prepare for his classes.

All of this put considerable stress on him. He considered his long hours of reading the cause of his blindness in 1853 at age forty-eight. But it seems that blindness was hereditary in his family. His only recollection of his grandfather was a picture of the old gentleman in total blindness. York remarks in this autobiography: "I remember standing between his knees while he passed his hands over my face and head."

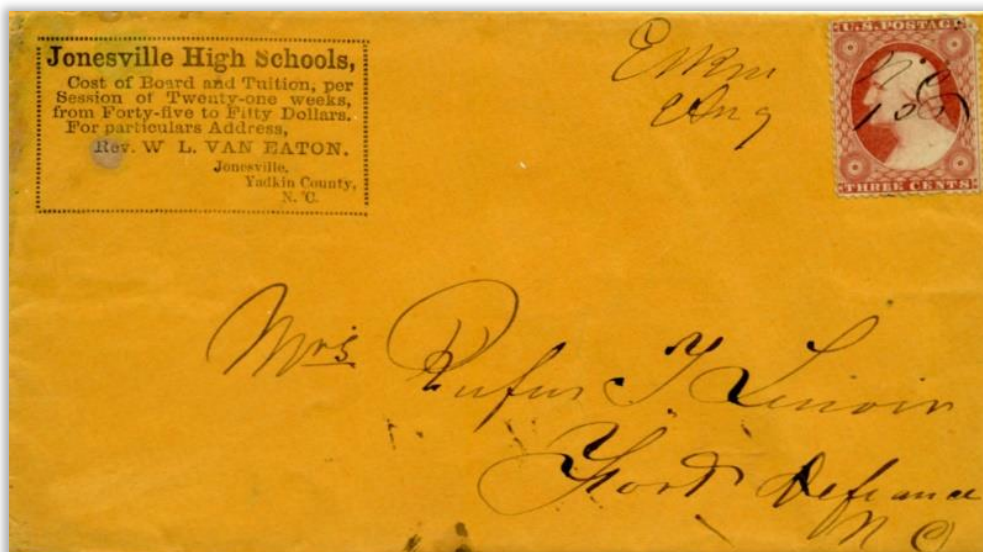
York had barely reached middle life when he likewise lost his sight. However, his blindness did not slow him down. The best part of his life was worked out in almost total darkness. Much in demand as a Methodist minister, York preached throughout the Carolinas and Virginia. He acquired quite a reputation at church camp meetings.

By 1842, he had changed schools by starting Clemmonsville High School in Davidson County. The school opened with forty students. In the winter of 1847, York moved to Jonesville in Yadkin County. At this point in his life, he focused on his preaching.

In his autobiography, he mentions Jonesville High Schools, (Figure 3), stating that it was a good academic school located in a permanent facility. He does not, however, mention teaching in the school.

In 1851, York started Olin High School in Iredell County. Figure 4 is an illustrated advertising cover from Olin High School, circa 1857, the year after York left the school.

The cover was posted from Olin in Iredell County. The Olin post office changed its name from New Institute in February 1856 to Olin. Figure 4 is one of the earliest covers posted from the town.



◀ **Figure 3.** Elkin, NC (Surry Co.), August 1, 1856. In the winter of 1846-47, York moved to Jonesville and focused on preaching. In his autobiography, he speaks highly of the Jonesville High Schools. This is a corner card from the school dating to 1856.

**Figure 4.** ▶ Olin, NC, April 24, (1857). Olin would change its name from New Institute in 1856 to Olin. This corner card was mailed the year after York moved from Olin.





During the early to mid-1850s, York began publishing his books. In 1854, he published the first edition of *York's English Grammar* (Figure 5) with 2,500 copies printed. In 1859, an enlarged edition was published of this work by a New York printer.

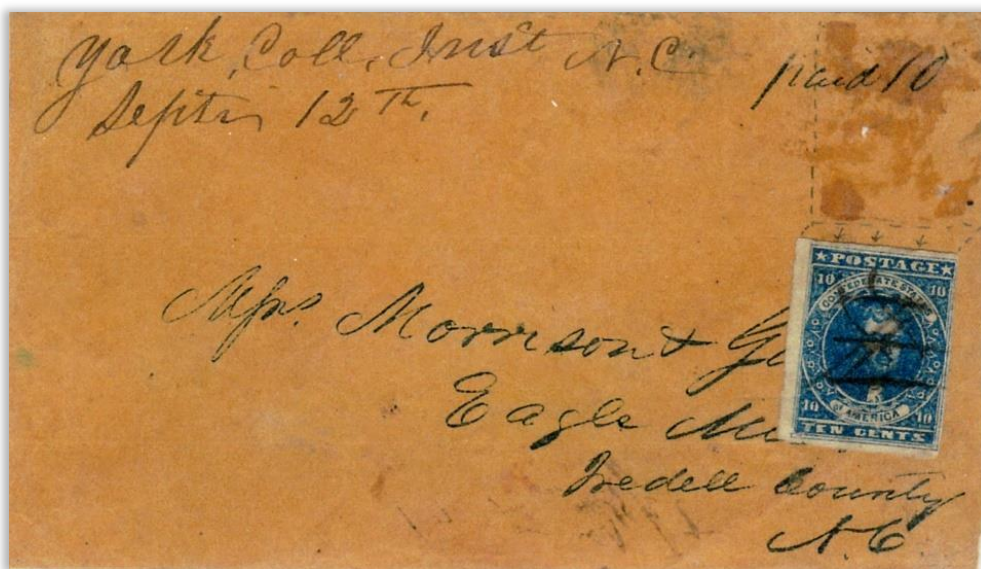
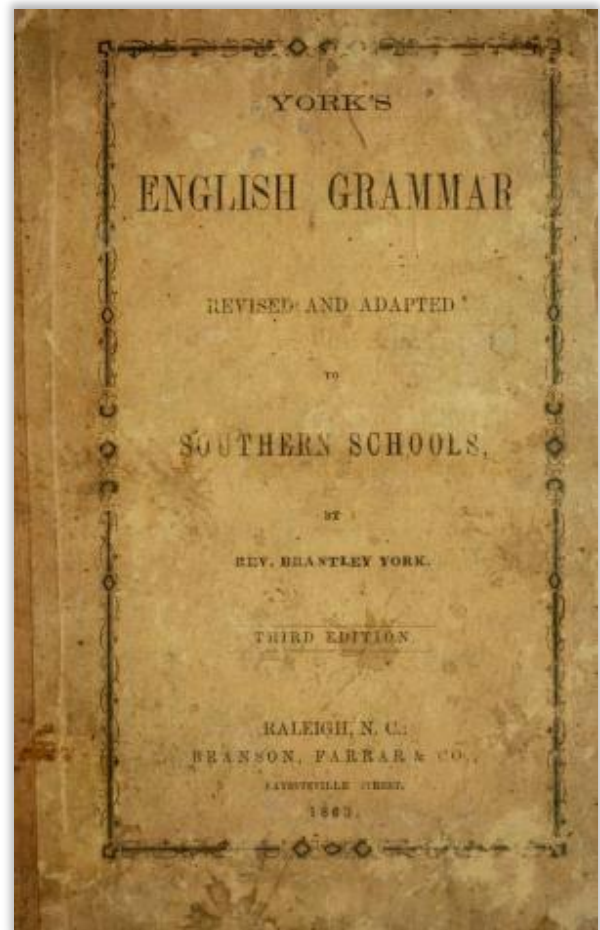
From Olin, York moved to Alexander County in January 1856 to establish York Collegiate Institute. Figure 6 is the only known Confederate cover from York Collegiate Institute. He remained at the York Collegiate Institute for several years. However, he traveled extensively, preaching and promoting his books. He made it clear that he was opposed to secession because he felt that it was the same as war and he was opposed to war.

During the Civil War, York continued to work from his home at York Institute. He taught grammar at the school and preached when he could.

In 1869, he opened his fourth school, Ruffin Badger Institute in Chatham County. The school opened with forty students but only lasted until 1872 when it was closed.

Upon visiting commencement ceremonies at Rutherford College in 1872, York was invited to lecture at the college which he did until 1877. He remained in his home at the college until August 1881.

**Figure 5.** ▶  
*York's English Grammar.*



▲ **Figure 6.** York Collegiate Institute, NC (Alexander Co.), Sept. 12, 1862. Manuscript Paid 10 with Scott #2 Patterson print used over Paid 10. York moved to Alexander County in January 1856 and founded the York Collegiate Institute. He would stay in the area through the war preaching and teaching at the school.

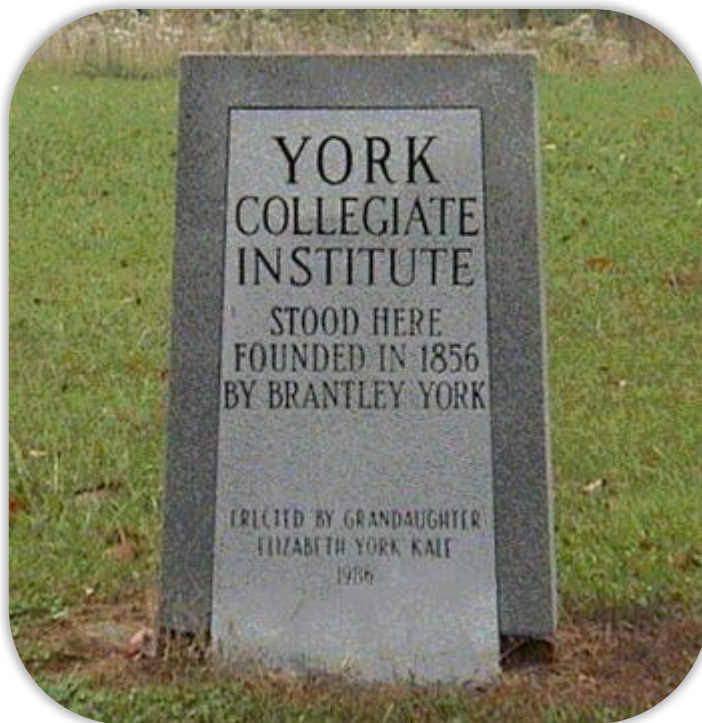
Figure 7 is a cover posted from the Rutherford College post office in 1884, a few years after his move. It is one of the few fancy college postmarks used in North Carolina.

In 1881, York opened his fifth school, New Salem and Randleman High School in Randolph County. Few educators in the state have accomplished so much.

York married his first wife in 1828. She died after giving birth to a daughter. He remarried and had a total of eleven children. As they got old enough, they would travel with him on his preaching and teaching missions.



▲ **Figure 7.** Rutherford College, NC (Burke Co.), H. M. Johnson, PM, February 5, 1884. In 1872, York visited Rutherford College for their commencement program. He was asked to lecture at the college which he did from 1872 until 1877. This fancy postmark from the college is one of the few known college fancy cancels.



Brantley York died in 1891 and was buried in the former York Collegiate Institute community in Alexander County. Alumni have placed a marker at the site of the school (Figure 8).

◀ **Figure 8.** York Collegiate Institute historical marker.

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[www.NCPostalHistory.com/resources/North-Carolina-postmark-catalogue-update/2018.n](http://www.NCPostalHistory.com/resources/North-Carolina-postmark-catalogue-update/2018.n)



## “Incidents” in the Life of a North Carolina Slave Girl Can Be Read Between the Lines of Postal History

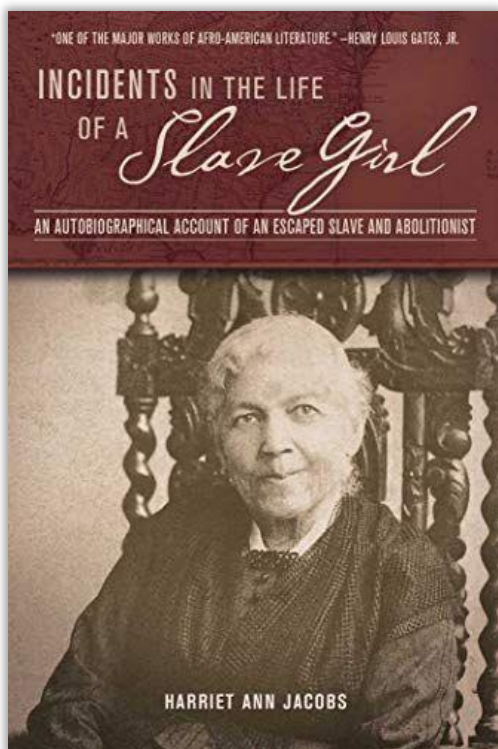


By Kevin Lowther

**Editor’s Note:** This article originally appeared in *Kelleher’s Stamp Collector’s Quarterly*, First Quarter 2023. We thank author Kevin Lowther and *Kelleher’s Stamp Collector’s Quarterly* Editor Randy Neil for permission to reprint this article. Modifications have been made to the original layout and content of the article to conform to the requirements of the *North Carolina Postal Historian*.

While back I asked Tony Crumbley, a dealer specializing in North Carolina postal history, whether he had any folded letters from the small town of Edenton, circa 1820s to the 1850s. He sent me a large bundle, from which I selected four.

Why Edenton? A few years before, I had stumbled across a book entitled *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl, Written by Herself*<sup>1</sup> (Figure 1).



▲ **Figure 1.** *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl, Written by Herself.* (Harriet Ann Jacobs.)

As I usually do, I looked first at the back of the book for the acknowledgements and index. On the last page, to my utter surprise, was a short letter written in 1860 by George W. Lowther. My father was George F. Lowther, but that is merely a coincidence.

The George Lowther in the book was vouching for the authenticity of the incredible story published in Boston shortly before the start of the Civil War. Lowther (no relation that I know of) had been raised in Edenton and knew the book’s author. He had been born into slavery himself on a large plantation near Edenton owned by a Lowther family.<sup>2</sup>

“I knew of her treatment from her master,” George wrote, “of the imprisonment of her children; of their sale and redemption; of her seven years’ concealment’ and of her subsequent escape to the North.”<sup>3</sup>

The enslaved girl was Harriet Jacobs, shown in Figure 1, a year or two before her death in 1897. She had been born enslaved in Edenton in 1813. To elude her lecherous master, Dr. James Norcom (Figure 2), she would hide for seven years in a crawl space in the attic of her grandmother’s house.



▲ **Figure 2.** Dr. James Norcom.

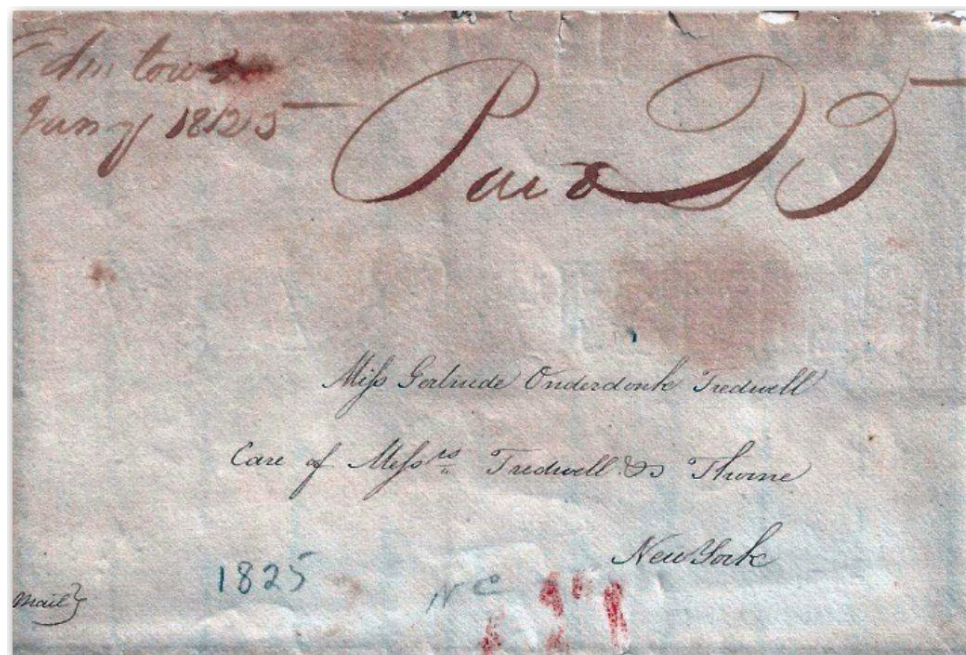
Her grandmother was free and respected by both races. Harriet escaped by water to the North in 1842. In the late 1850s, at the urging of the Abolitionist, Amy Post, she began writing what is now considered a classic among slave narratives.

My plan was to illustrate Jacobs's story with stampless letters postmarked in Edenton (Figure 3), a port tucked away in the northeastern corner of the state on Albemarle Sound.

The four covers I bought from Crumbley had period postmarks. Each related tangibly to individuals Harriet would have known, or known of, while enslaved, including the infamous Dr. Norcom. The earliest of the four letters (Figure 4) was written on January 17, 1825, by Mary M. Collins (1806-1837) to Gertrude Tredwell in New York, a cousin to the Tredwells in Edenton.



▲ **Figure 3.** Edenton, North Carolina.



▲ **Figure 4.** Mary M. Collins mailed this folded letter from Edenton, NC (Chowan Co.) to her cousin in New York in January 1825. It was docketed "Paid 25."



*"You probably heard of your cousins visit to Raleigh during the sitting of the Legislature. [They] have just returned delighted with our Capitol. They found it very gay, altho the citizens were somewhat disappointed at not seeing Lafayette at the expected time."*

(The Marquis de Lafayette, a young French nobleman who served General George Washington as an aide in the American Revolution, was touring the United States.)

Mary apologized for the brevity of her letter, as she was preparing for a wedding, and asked Gertrude to greet her brothers Josiah and Williamson, as well as sister Henrietta, who were visiting with the Tredwells.

The Collins family would leave its mark on Hattie. The first was laid on New Year's Day of 1818 when her uncle Joseph was sold to the Collinses.

It was a rude awakening for six-year-old Hattie, who had not realized, while living in the cocoon of her grandmother's house, that she too was owned by others.

Joseph was sent to the Collins plantation at Somerset, outside Edenton. A few years later, in 1828, he and his young master, Josiah (Figure 5), tussled when the latter ordered Joseph to obey his commands more quickly.



▲ **Figure 5.** Josiah Collins III (1808-1863) owned Harriet Jacobs's uncle Joseph.

After Joseph threw Josiah to the ground, and was about to be publicly whipped, Joseph "ran." He reached New York, only to be recaptured and brought back to Edenton in chains.

Hattie later remembered watching Joseph ("ghastly pale, yet full of determination") as he was marched from the landing up Broad Street to the jail.<sup>4</sup> He would remain there for several months, then was sold to a New Orleans buyer. He would escape again, but eventually vanished from Hattie's life. She had considered him a brother.

On November 5, 1839, William E. Snowden posted a long letter in Edenton (Figure 6) to his mother in New York.



▲ **Figure 6.** William E. Snowden, while visiting Edenton, N. C., for the first time in 1839 wrote to his mother in New York.

Snowden would marry the daughter of Joseph B. Skinner, an Edenton attorney who owned several plantations. It was Skinner who recaptured Harriet Jacobs's runaway uncle in New York.

He had arrived a few days earlier on his first visit to the South. Within speaking distance of where he was staying, with the family of Joseph B. Skinner, Harriet Jacobs was in her fifth year wedged into her crawl space.

"Your wandering son is again quietly settled among kind + hospitable people," he began his three-page letter. But then he noted self-consciously that "I am the only grown male white about the house. . . ." Nevertheless, "I feel quite at home. . . . There is no stiffness + and no appearance of pride of family, but that is because they do not think it necessary to show it. Aristocratic notions are ingrained in them."

Snowden had come to tutor the Skinner children. “The most advanced scholar I will have is a 12 yr old . . . who is to learn Latin.” Joseph Skinner, Edenton’s leading lawyer and owner of several plantations, insisted on his children learning foreign languages. It was Skinner, as the Collinses’ attorney, who had captured Harriet’s fugitive uncle Joseph in New York and brought him back to Edenton in irons.<sup>5</sup>

Skinner had married Maria Lowther in 1810.<sup>6</sup> Their son Tristram (Figure 7), born in 1820, would be called from college in 1840 to manage the family’s plantations. Commissioned a captain in the 1st North Carolina Infantry, Tristram would be killed in 1862 at Mechanicsville, Virginia.



▲ **Figure 7.** Tristram Lowther Skinner (1820-1862) (middle) as he appeared as a lieutenant in the North Carolina Infantry. (Courtesy of the State Archives of North Carolina.)

William E. Snowden, having embraced Southern hospitality and now a pastor, would marry Harriet Skinner in August 1842. Her relationship to the Edenton Skinners, if any, is unknown.

Another Lowther in Joseph B. Skinner’s household was his enslaved valet, the same George (1822-1898) whose validation of Harriet Jacobs’s story had caught my eye a few years earlier. George (Figure 8) had been born to another of Skinner’s slaves, Polly Lowther, who was a baker.



▲ **Figure 8.** George W. Lowther (1822-1898) was Joseph B. Skinner’s slave and valet whom he freed in 1843. Lowther moved to Boston where he became active in Abolitionist circles. In 1860 he wrote a letter validating Harriet Jacobs’s book.

George’s father is not known. What is known, however, is that Skinner manumitted Polly (1780-1864) in 1824 when George was two. He took a direct role in educating the manifestly intelligent boy, whom he described in his 1850 will as “my favorite and faithful Body Servant.” In the early 1840s, Skinner made George a free man.<sup>7</sup>

As he grew into adulthood, during Harriet’s seven years of invisibility, George would have passed often within the range of the peephole she had made in the eaves of her “apartment.”

Harriet would finally escape Edenton and the clutches of Dr. Norcom in the same year as George’s manumission. Now free himself to leave Edenton, George left for Boston, where Harriet’s brother John had encouraged him to settle.

George established himself in Boston as a hairdresser and became active in the Abolitionist movement. Harriet and her daughter Louisa attended George’s wedding in 1852 to the daughter of a mixed-race man who had been born in 1800 in Virginia. In 1878, he would be elected to the Massachusetts legislature.



The third cover (Figure 9) was addressed to Dr. Norcom's daughter Elizabeth (1826-1849) in Lawrenceville, a village west of Emporia in southern Virginia. The year is unknown, but the "Paid" and "5" markings indicate it was posted during the early or mid-1840s when Elizabeth was an adult.

**Figure 9.** ▶

Mailed in Edenton, N. C., in the 1840s addressed to Elizabeth Norcom, daughter of Dr. James Norcom.



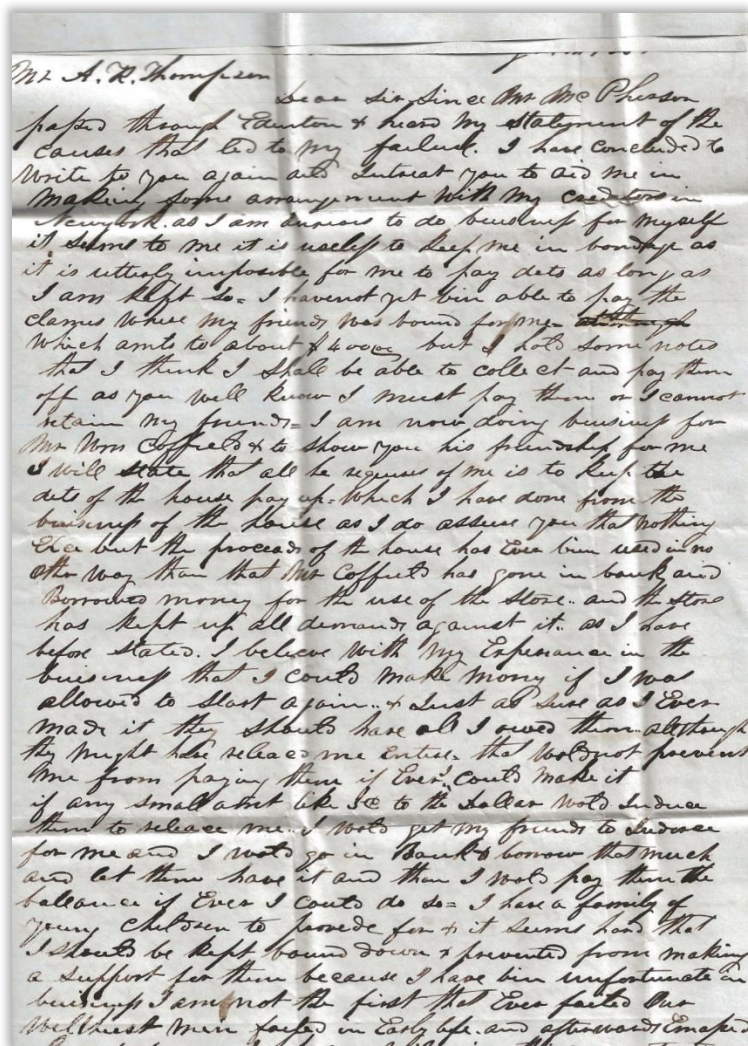
Harriet Jacobs, as a member of Dr. Norcom's household, would have cared for Elizabeth as an infant and young girl until, that is, Harriet vanished in 1835. How might a nine-year-old girl process the sudden, unexplained disappearance of a servant she had been taught belonged to the family?

Harriet, who had been taught to read and write by a former mistress, now used the mails to inform her nemesis, Dr. Norcom, that she had fled to Canada, although she was actually in New York. Elizabeth probably witnessed a display of her father's venomous rage when he learned of Harriet's flight. She would also have been aware of his futile trips to New York to recapture Harriet, who quickly moved on to the Abolitionist center in Rochester and later to Boston.

Enoch Jones, the writer of the last of the four Edenton covers (Figure 10) had nothing to do with Harriet. He did, however, interact with the Coffields, who had purchased Harriet's father in 1824. Writing to a businessman in New York on February 14, 1851, Jones spoke of "the causes that led to my failure," and lamented that he was being held in "bondage" by his creditors.

**Figure 10.** ▶

Enoch Jones, writing from Edenton to a New York businessman in 1851, mentioned that he was working for James Coffield, a plantation owner regarded as one of the most violent slaveholders in the Edenton region.



Jones operated a store in Edenton and in the 1850s would have a hotel across Albemarle Sound. The plantation based Coffields, in exchange for Jones managing their house in town, had borrowed money to keep the store open.

These were the same Coffields who had a legacy of violence which was extreme even among slaveholders. In the 1820s, the Coffield brothers, James and Josiah, owned 600 slaves. Both were notorious for their brutality. In her autobiography, Harriet described James, whom she called Mr. Litch, as “an ill-bred, uneducated man . . . There was a jail and a whipping post on his grounds; and whatever cruelties were perpetrated there, they passed without comment. He was so effectually screened by his great wealth that he was called to no account for his crimes, not even murder.”<sup>8</sup>

The year before he bought Harriet’s father, James Coffield murdered two slaves who had been found with a ham and some bottles of wine which a flood had dislodged from the meat house and wine cellar and washed some distance from the plantation.

“Murder was so common on his plantation,” Jacobs wrote, “that he feared to be alone after nightfall. . . . His brother [Josiah] . . . was at least equal in cruelty. His bloodhounds were well trained . . . and a terror to the slaves. . . . When this slaveholder, his shrieks and groans were so frightful that they appalled his own friends. His last words were, ‘I am going to hell; bury my money with me.’”<sup>9</sup>

Josiah had died in 1837. Harriet was in hiding and would have heard of his demise from her grandmother who lived just below her garret. James died in 1843 shortly after Harriet had escaped to the North.

“Cruelty is contagious,” Harriet concluded in *Incidents*. The men had no monopoly on violence. A woman she referred to as Mrs. Wade was known for unceasing brutality. “The barn was her particular place of torture. There she lashed the slaves with the might of a man. An old slave of hers once said to me, ‘It is hell in missis’s house. ‘Pears I can never get out. Day and night I prays to die.’”<sup>10</sup>

George W. Lowther vouched for the authenticity of Harriet Jacobs’s book because prospective publishers and some in the Abolition movement feared it would be received by the public as just another novel in the vein of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, which had been written a few years earlier by another Harriet, Harriet Beecher Stowe.

Jacobs considered approaching Stowe for advice before beginning to write *Incidents*. When Stowe wrote condescendingly to suggest that she might incorporate Jacobs’s experience into her sequel, *A Key to Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, Jacobs, perceiving a racial snub, rejected collaboration and decided to write her own story. They would not meet until 1871, when they reconciled.<sup>11</sup>

In March 1864, as the Civil War entered its final excruciating year, Jacobs wrote hopefully to L. Maria Child: “A Power mightier than man is guiding this revolution, and though justice moves slowly, it will come at last. The American people will outlive this mean prejudice against complexion.”<sup>12</sup>

But after visiting Edenton in 1867, for the first time since her escape, she abandoned the idea of resettling there. “I find it hard to have faith in rebels,” she wrote. Washington was no better. When she died there in 1897, lynching had become rampant, and the specter of Jim Crow stalked the South.

There was no escape, it seemed, from the violence and bigotry into which she had been born.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Harriet A. Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl, By Herself*, Jean F. Yellin (editor), Cambridge, MA.: Harvard Un. Press, 1987.

<sup>2</sup> George W. Lowther was born enslaved in Edenton, North Carolina, in 1822. The white, slaveholding Lowthers owned hundreds of slaves. The surname remains very common in Chowan County, in the state’s northeast corner.

<sup>3</sup> Jacobs, *op. cit.*, p. 205.

<sup>4</sup> Jean Fagan Yellin, *Harriet Jacobs, a Life*, New York: Basic Civitas Books, 2004, p. 21.

<sup>5</sup> Jacobs, *op. cit.*, p. 223.

<sup>6</sup> Jacobs, *op. cit.*, p. 264 n7.

<sup>7</sup> Black and white Lowthers, with roots in Edenton, still pronounce their surname as the British do—“ow” rhyming with “cow.” The American pronunciation rhymes with “low.”

<sup>8</sup> See [www.blackpast.or/african-american-his-story/lowther-george-w-1822-1898](http://www.blackpast.or/african-american-his-story/lowther-george-w-1822-1898)

<sup>9</sup> Jacobs, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

<sup>10</sup> Jacobs, *op. cit.*, p. 47.

<sup>11</sup> Jacobs, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

<sup>12</sup> Jacobs, *op. cit.*, p. 221.



## Paul C. Cameron Correspondence



By Danny Brinkley

**T**ony Crumbley is a source of valuable philatelic information and history, as well as interesting postal covers. I recently requested from Tony covers having Raleigh postmarks and he obliged my request with a set of covers from the 1800s.

Several of these covers were addressed to Paul C. Cameron (1808 – 1891) (Figure 1). More recently, Tony provided me with probably a hundred additional covers addressed to Mr. Cameron. It should be noted that none of these covers contained any contents, but there is a lot of information on the covers based on who they were addressed to, who they were from, the type of postage used, and the postmarks. Although the exact purpose of these covers can't be determined without their contents, one can speculate on them.

One question came to mind while examining these covers: Where did all these covers come from? Mr. Crumbley stated that some of these covers were from a sight-unseen lot that he successfully obtained from a Robert A. Siegel auction. Although the exact history of these covers is not known at this time, it is believed that they were sold by the University of North Carolina to which many of the Cameron family letters were donated.



▲ **Figure 1.** Paul Carrington Cameron

(These letters are available in Chapel Hill on microfilm.) Since the UNC Library was more interested in the contents, they presumably saw little value in the covers and sold them.

While preparing a presentation for the Raleigh Stamp Club, I “Googled” Paul Cameron and found out that he was a significant historical figure in North Carolina’s history. I knew nothing about Mr. Cameron prior to this investigation. Most of the information used in this presentation either came from Wikipedia or NCpedia.

Paul Carrington Cameron was the second son of Duncan Cameron and Rebecca Bennehan. Duncan’s father was an Episcopal priest, John Cameron. John was the son of Duncan and Margaret Bain Cameron of Ferintosh in the Highlands of Scotland and was descended from members of Clan Cameron of Lochiel.

John Cameron married Anne Owen Nash, the niece of North Carolina Governor Abner Nash. Duncan Cameron studied law under Paul Carrington of Charlotte County, Virginia and eventually became one of the largest plantation and slave owners in the South. However, this article will be focused on Paul Cameron and correspondence covers addressed to Mr. Cameron, but the information on his relatives will provide a background for some of this correspondence.

Paul was born in Stagville, North Carolina (Durham Co.) on September 25, 1808. Apparently, Paul was named after his father’s law instructor and was educated at the University of North Carolina (1823 to 1825), graduated in 1828 from the American Literary, Scientific, and Military Academy (Norwich University in Vermont), and attended Trinity College from 1828 to 1829.

He married Anne Ruffin in 1832 and they had seven children. Anne was the daughter of Thomas Ruffin, also from Hillsboro, North Carolina. Thomas Ruffin was the Supreme Justice of the North Carolina Supreme Court. Paul inherited his uncle’s share of the family estate in 1843 and inherited his father’s property in 1855 (his father died in 1853) making him one of the wealthiest persons in North Carolina at the time. He later purchased plantations in Alabama and Mississippi.

The first illustrated cover (Figure 2) is a U10 envelope addressed to Mr. Cameron in Raleigh and has an indistinguishable green postmark presumably from either an Alabama, Mississippi, or Tennessee post office.



◀ **Figure 2.** A U10 envelope (EKU 1854) addressed to Mr. P.C. Cameron in Raleigh (Wake Co.). “Plantation Tools 1856” is written on the front of the envelope and was presumably regarding either an Alabama or Mississippi plantation owned by Mr. Cameron.



**Figure 3. ▶**

A U9 envelope (EKU 1854) with a blue Norfolk, Va. postmark addressed to Paul Cameron in Hillsboro, NC (Orange Co.). The July 1, 1858, postmark makes this a pre-Civil War cover.

U9 envelopes were first issued in 1854. Although the actual name of the plantation can't be deciphered, the remainder of the pencil written notes over the address read “plantation tools 1856.” Mr. Cameron served on the North Carolina Supreme Court from 1856 to 1857. The date and address on this cover is consistent with Mr. Cameron's term on the court in Raleigh.

The second cover illustrated (Figure 3) is a U9 envelope addressed to Mr. Cameron in Hillsboro (Orange Co.). The back flap (not illustrated) is embossed with “Rowland & Brothers, Norfolk VA” inside an oval. Although a good reference hasn't been found yet, it is assumed that Rowland & Brothers were involved with shipping products to and from Norfolk for Mr. Cameron since this was the nearest large port to Mr. Cameron's Orange County home.

This envelope was cancelled with a blue, 33- millimeter Norfolk, Va. cds having an integral July 1, 1858 date.

Several covers were sent from George Pumpelly Collins who married Paul's daughter Anne. George managed plantations owned by Paul in Tunica County, Mississippi.

An example cover is shown as Figure 4, a U59 envelope (EKU 1864). The envelope is cancelled with a blue, 24- millimeter Memphis, Tenn. postmark with an integral June 15 date. Since Memphis fell to the Union forces in 1862, this cover could have been used during or after the Civil War.

Several covers were sent from George Washington Mordecai to Mr. Cameron. George Washington Mordecai married Paul's sister (Margaret Bennehan Cameron).



**Figure 4.** ▶

A U59 envelope (EKU 1864) with a blue Memphis, Tenn. postmark addressed to Paul Cameron in Hillsboro, NC sent by his son-in-law George Collins.



◀ **Figure 5.** A U59 envelope (EKU 1864) with a blue Type 14 Raleigh, NC. (Wake Co.). postmark addressed to Paul Cameron in Hillsboro, NC sent by his brother-in-law George Washington Mordecai.

Mr. Mordecai trained as a lawyer, was involved with the Experimental Railroad and the North Carolina Railroad, was elected president of the Bank of the State of North Carolina (succeeding Duncan Cameron), and became president of the Bank of North Carolina.

The NCpedia reference also mentions that he converted into gold some \$500,000 of bank deposits near the end of the Civil War, which he secreted from possible confiscation by Union forces.

Most of these covers are believed to be post-Civil War uses because they are United States Postal Service envelopes (U58) with either black or blue Type 14 Raleigh postmarks. The U58 envelopes were first issued in 1864. The black Type 14 Raleigh postmark was in use from October 31, 1865 (post-Civil War) to August 29, 1873, and the blue Type 14 Raleigh postmark was in use from January 6, 1868 until April 3, 1869. The cover shown in Figure 5 was postmarked June 25, 1868.

The next two covers were sent from Kemp Plummer Battle to Mr. Cameron. Kemp Battle was another significant figure in North Carolina's history. He was a lawyer, railroad president, university president, educator, and historian. Mr. Battle and Mr. Cameron were involved in the reopening of the University of North Carolina in 1875 (closed since 1871). He was named the president of the University in 1876 and served in this capacity until 1891.

The first cover (Figure 6), a Kemp P. Battle corner card, is a U82 envelope with a black Type 14 Raleigh postmark. The second cover (Figure 7), also a Kemp P. Battle corner card, is a U159 envelope with a Scott Number 147 stamp added for double rate postage. The cover bears a black Type 14 Raleigh postmark.

The U159 envelopes were first issued in 1874. It should be noted that there is a time gap between the use of the Type 14 and Type 15 Raleigh postmarks. Black Type 14 Raleigh postmarks are reported to be used until August 29, 1873, and the black Type 15 Raleigh postmarks weren't used until November 13, 1875.

Based on these dates and examination of the second cover, it is believed that the end date for the use of the black Type 14 Raleigh postmark can be changed to May 10, 1874.

An early United States Postal Card is shown as Figure 8. This postal card is either a UX1 or a UX3 (watermark size not determined) and is cancelled with a black Type 15 Raleigh postmark. This postmark is reported to have been used from November 13, 1875, until January 7, 1886.

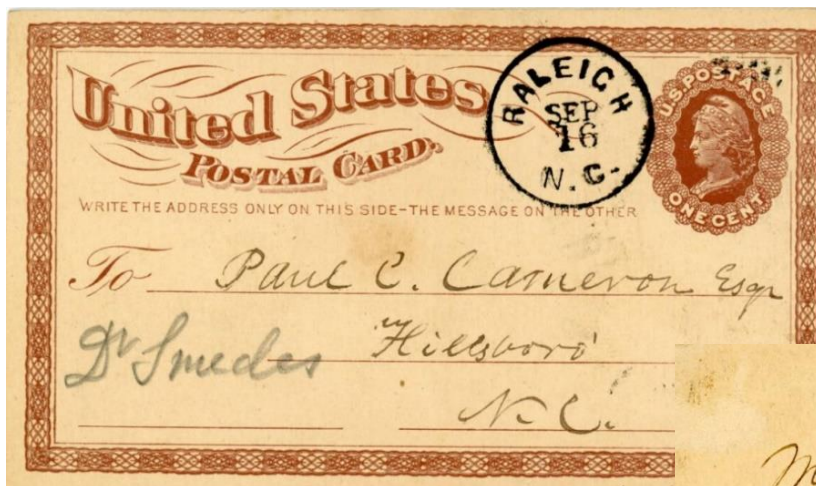
The card is addressed to Mr. Cameron in Hillsboro. The note on the back (Figure 9) is dated September 16th, 1875, and discusses some financial transaction with "A. Smedes." This cancellation potentially represents another change to the earliest used date for the Type 15 Raleigh postmark to September 16, 1875



◀ **Figure 6.** A U82 envelope (EKU 1870) with a black Type 14 Raleigh, NC (Wake Co.) postmark addressed to Paul Cameron in Hillsboro sent by Kemp P. Battle. This postmark was in use from October 31, 1865, until August 29, 1873.

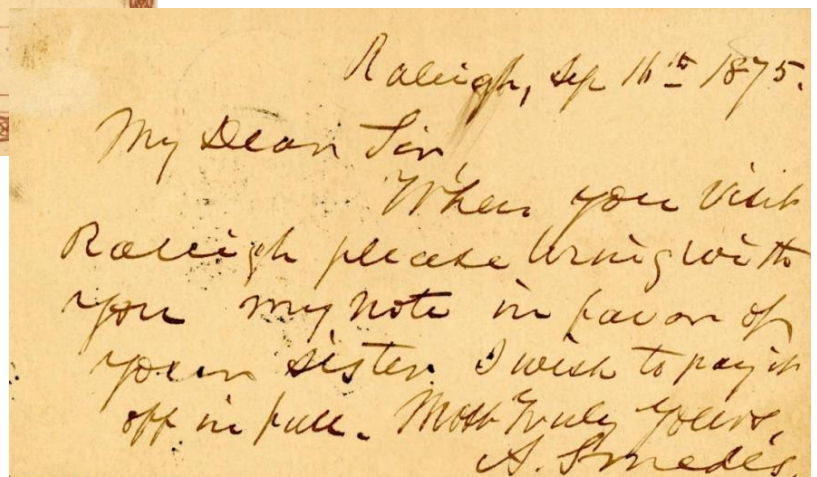


**Figure 7.** ▶  
A U159 envelope (EKU 1874) with a Scott 147 stamp (EKU March 1, 1870). This envelope is dated with a May 10, black Type 14 Raleigh, NC (Wake Co.) postmark and addressed to Paul Cameron in Hillsboro sent by Kemp P. Battle. This postmark was in use from Oct. 31, 1865 until August 29, 1873.



◀ **Figure 8.** A UX1 or UX3 Postal Card addressed to Mr. Cameron and dated on the back with September 16, 1875. This card is postmarked with a black Type 15 Raleigh (Wake Co.) postmark.

**Figure 9.** ▶  
Message side of Figure 8 postal card.





The next cover (Figure 10) has a State of North Carolina Treasury Department corner card cachet and is addressed to Mr. Cameron in Hillsboro. This letter was sent by "Mr. Worth" who is believed to be John Milton Worth. Mr. Worth was the state treasurer from 1876 to 1885.

This cover was franked with a Scott 207 stamp that has been cancelled with a black Type 17 Raleigh postmark variety dated August 17th. This postmark was in use from March 15, 1881, to June 20, 1882. The earliest documented use of Scott 207 is August 7, 1881. Based on the short span of use for the Type 17 Raleigh postmark, the postmark on this cover is believed to be August 17, 1881.



◀ **Figure 10.** State of North Carolina Treasury Department corner card addressed to Mr. Cameron, franked with a Scott 207.

**Figure 11.** ▶ North Carolina Executive Department corner card cover addressed to Mr. Cameron in Hillsboro.



The next two covers (Figures 12 and 13) are franked with Scott 210 stamps and have a black Type 18 variation Raleigh postmarks. Both letters are addressed to Mr. Cameron at the St. Luke's Home in Richmond, Virginia. The handwriting appears to be the same. The Figure 12 cover is dated December 24, and the Figure 13 cover is dated January 24.

Dr. Hunter Holmes McGuire established the St. Luke's Home for the Sick as a private surgical hospital in 1882. McGuire's skill and reputation as a surgeon attracted many patients to the fledgling hospital including some from outside Virginia.

Although I have not located any details on Mr. Cameron's visit to St. Luke's, it is assumed that Mr. Cameron was being treated at this facility.

Additional covers in the group obtained from Mr. Crumbley were addressed to Mrs. Paul C. Cameron at the St. Luke's Home that were postmarked January through April of 1886, April through May of 1887, March through April of 1888, and January through July of 1889. The latest dated cover out of this group is shown as Figure 14. This is a Scott U311 envelope having a black Type 19 Raleigh postmark dated July 3, 1889. It is assumed that Mrs. Cameron was also treated at St. Luke's over several years.

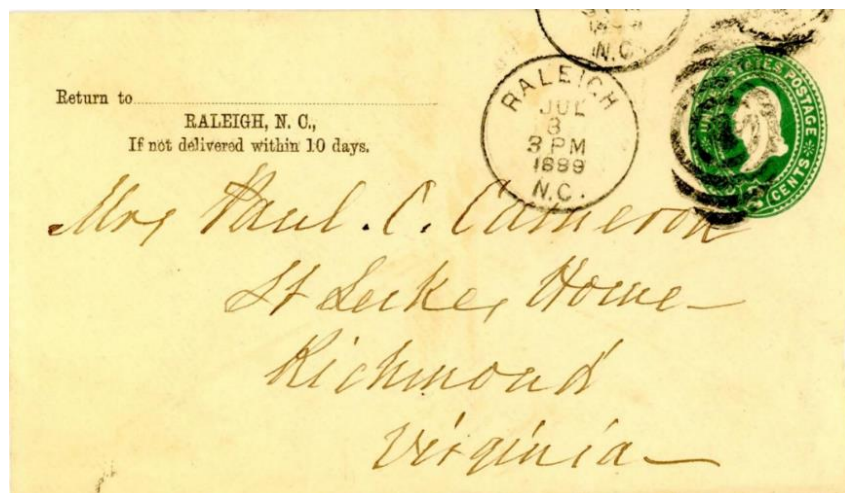


◀ **Figure 12.** Franked with a Scott 210, the cover is addressed to Mr. Cameron at the St. Luke's Home in Richmond, Virginia. This cover has a black Type 18 Raleigh (Wake Co.) postmark variety dated December 24. This postmark was in use from December 20, 1885, to October 23, 1888. The earliest known use of Scott 210 is October 1, 1883.



**Figure 13.** ▶

Franked with a Scott 210, the cover is addressed to Mr. Cameron at the St. Luke's Home in Richmond, Virginia. This cover has a black Type 18 Raleigh (Wake Co.) postmark variety dated January 25. This postmark was in use from December 20, 1885, to October 23, 1888. The earliest known use of Scott 210 is October 1, 1883.



◀ **Figure 14.** A U311 envelope addressed to Mrs. Paul C. Cameron at the St. Luke's Home in Richmond, Virginia. This cover has a black Type 19 Raleigh (Wake Co.) postmark dated July 3, 1889. This postmark was in use from March 14, 1889, to February 14, 1890. The Scott U311 was first issued in 1887.



The final cover illustrated (Figure 15) is a mailing franked with a Scott 219D and has a black Type 20 Raleigh postmark dated July 10, 1890. This letter has The National Bank of Raleigh printed on it as the return address.

This letter was sent about six months prior to Mr. Cameron's death on January 6, 1891. Although Duncan Cameron died thirty-eight years earlier, both he and son died on the same day, January 6.

Although I have only superficially "scratched the

surface" of the Paul Carrington Cameron story, there is much to learn about the history of our country and state through the study of postal covers. More of the story would be available with the contents of these letters, but this will have to wait until another day.

Many thanks to Tony Crumbley for introducing me to covers, introducing me to the North Carolina Postal History Society, and for making many interesting covers available to me.

Figure 15. ▶

Addressed to Mr. Cameron in Hillsboro, this cover has a black Type 20 Raleigh (Wake Co.) postmark variety dated July 10, 1890 (about six months before he dies). This postmark was in use from Jan. 2, 1891, until Nov. 25, 1893.



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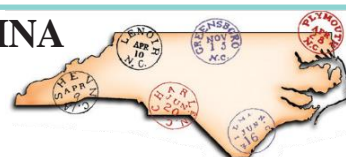
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