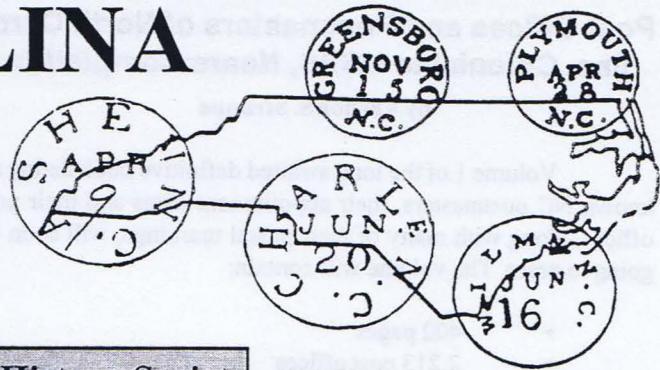


# NORTH CAROLINA POSTAL HISTORIAN

The Journal of the North Carolina Postal History Society



Volume 15, No. 3

Summer 1996

Whole 58



*The Virginia Creeper*

Affiliate #155 of the American Philatelic Society



## Post Offices and Postmasters of North Carolina, Colonial to USPS, Nears Completion

by Vernon S. Stroupe

Volume 1 of the long awaited definitive book listing all known NC postmasters, their appointment dates and their post offices, along with many of their postal markings, will soon be going to press. The volume will contain:

- ♦ 402 pages
- ♦ 2,213 post offices
- ♦ 805 handstamp cancellations
- ♦ 371 manuscript cancellations, and
- ♦ 374 supplemental markings.
- ♦ 84 cover illustrations

Nearly two years in compiling, volume 1 is the first of four volumes. It contains 33 counties, Alamance through Durham. Volumes 2 and 3 will contain counties Edgecombe through New Hanover and Onslow through Yancey. Volume 4 will contain two cross references, Postmaster to Post Office and Post Office to County, plus Appendix and Bibliography.

The distribution of the volumes is under negotiations. All NCPHS members will be offered a copy at reduced price. Both bound and unbound volumes are expected to be available.

## IN THIS ISSUE

James City: A Black Community in North Carolina	3
Tony L. Crumbley .....	3
All Aboard for the Virginia Creeper	
Tim Hensley .....	5
Waterlily, Currituck County	
Scott Troutman .....	8
Sodom, Madison County	
Scott Troutman .....	9
North Carolina's Only Embossed Postmark?	
Tony L. Crumbley .....	10
Postmarks or Cinderella's?	
Vernon S. Stroupe .....	10

## The Well is Dry !!

The five plus articles listed above are the last available for inclusion in this issue of the Postal Historian. Note that this issue only runs 12 pages instead of the usual 16. Will the next issue have only 8 pages? We hope not!

But to insure that from happening, why not sit down with your collection, pick out your favorite cover, research it a little at the library, and write about it: the markings, the post office, the addressee and addressor, and the history of the time in which it was written. Voila! You have shared your favorite cover with the rest of us.

If you cannot type, just make your handwriting clear. If you can type, so much the better. If you can put it in Word Perfect and send us a copy disk - great. For illustrations, a good photocopy is acceptable.

Please, just do it, doing it is much more satisfying than doing nothing.



## North Carolina Postal Historian

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### President

Robert H. Hunt  
PO Box 545  
Reidsville, N.C. 27320

### Treasurer

Thomas Richardson  
Rt. 2, Box 26  
Trinity, N.C. 27370

### Editors

Tony L. Crumbley  
PO Box 219  
Newell, N.C. 28126

### Vice-President

Alan Vestal  
PO Box 1338  
Clemmons, N.C. 27012

### Secretary

Alan Vestal  
PO Box 1338  
Clemmons, N.C. 27012

### Vernon S. Stroupe

PO Box 8879  
Asheville, N.C. 28814

# James City: A Black Community in North Carolina

by Tony L. Crumbley

The History of James City began with the seizure of New Bern by the Union Army in March 1862. Following its capture and subsequent occupation, New Bern became a refugee center for thousands of North Carolina slaves who sought freedom and safety within the Union lines. In an effort to accommodate the escaped blacks, Federal Army Chaplain Horace James established a camp for freed men in 1863 south of New Bern. At first the camp was known as the Trent River Settlement or Trent River Camp, but, towards the close of the war it, became known as James City in honor of its founder.



Horace James had a significant impact upon this settlement. James was appointed Superintendent of Negro Affairs in Federally occupied North Carolina in January 1863. He served in this capacity until March 1865 when Congress established the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen and Abandoned Lands to provide aid to ex-slaves. James was appointed Assistant Commissioner for North Carolina for the Freedmen Bureau, an office which he held until December 1865. He resigned to take on the task of developing farms for former slaves.

From the immediate postwar period until 1900, James City remained a cohesive black community whose inhabitants struggled collectively to secure an economic and political foothold. Their primary goal throughout this period was to obtain ownership of this land. They fought a long court battle which failed in 1893.

In 1880 the heirs of Colonel Peter G. Evans sold 618 acres of land to Mary S. Bryan of New Bern. Mrs. Bryan was the wife of James A. Bryan, a large land-owner within the state. He became President of the Atlantic & North Caroling Railroad, a portion of which ran through James City.

Upon acquiring the James City property, Bryan began

systematically trying to collect rent from the inhabitants. The residents, however, claimed they had paid no rent since 1867. The blacks offered Bryan \$2,000 for the 600 acres, which included James City. He declined their offer, and began eviction proceedings. These proceedings brought about a court case which the blacks lost in 1893.

At this point near riot broke out and the governor had to call in the N.C. State Militia to restore order. On April 26, 1893 the residents of James City signed leases with Bryan for three years at a rate of 50 cents to \$1 per 50 x 100 ft. lot. This agreement resolved the potentially violent racial conflict.

Having gained clear ownership to the James City properties, Bryan set out to make it turn a profit. He began advertising to rent to various lumber companies portions of the waterfront land not actually occupied by blacks. In 1893, three companies rented sites in the James City vicinity. These were the Blades Lumber Company, the New Berne Lumber Company, and the S.H. Gray Manufacturing Company. These firms held five year leases at a cost of \$95 per year.

In an advertisement by Bryan in 1895, he speaks of the virtues of the land and its close proximity to the 2,500 inhabitants of James City, no small community for the time. By the turn of the century residents of James City became dissatisfied with their ability to purchase the land they resided on, therefore, they began to move to property nearby that could be purchased. When a large number of lots were occupied, they became known as New James City. By 1923, at the death of Bryan the number of tenants had declined dramatically. By 1960 the village had virtually vanished. The last resident, William Spivey, a descendant of Washington Spivey, James City's first postmaster, left early in 1970. A portion of the old James City property has now been taken up by US Hwy 70 which bypasses New Bern.

James City's first postmaster, Washington Spivey, was a farmer and merchant. He ran a local store. He had been elected constable of Craven County Township #7 prior to his appointment as postmaster in 1888. In the law suit to reclaim the land back from Bryan, Spivey had been the leader, and was the individual which filed suit. Spivey's Store became a meeting place for local residents who viewed the merchant as the community leader, though it is not certain, we would expect he was the only postmaster at old James City.

The postmasters of James City were:

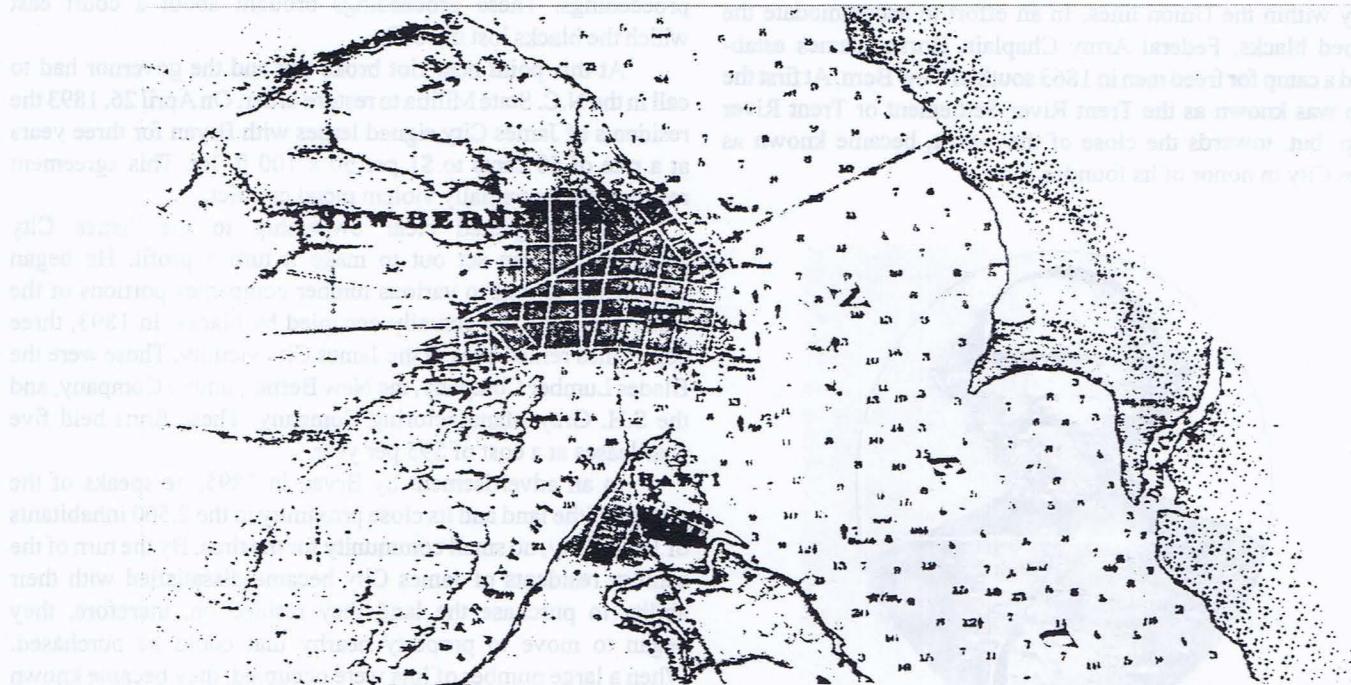
Washington Spivey	11 Jan 1888
Charles H. Whitehurst	1 May 1908
Sylvester F. Faison	1 Nov 1909
Madrid D. Frazell	9 Jun 1915
Abraham Harvey	5 Feb 1919
Discontinued	14 Apr 1923
Richard H. Sawyer	31 Jul 1923
Discontinued	27 Feb 1926
John L. Hardison	10 Mar 1926
Joseph D. Fisher	25 Oct 1930
Mrs. Vida Grantham, Acting	6 Jul 1934
L.C. Cannon, Acting	1 Apr 1935

Samuel Leferts Dill  
Discontinued  
Dorothy W. Hargett  
Discontinued  
Name changed to Community Rural Branch, New Bern

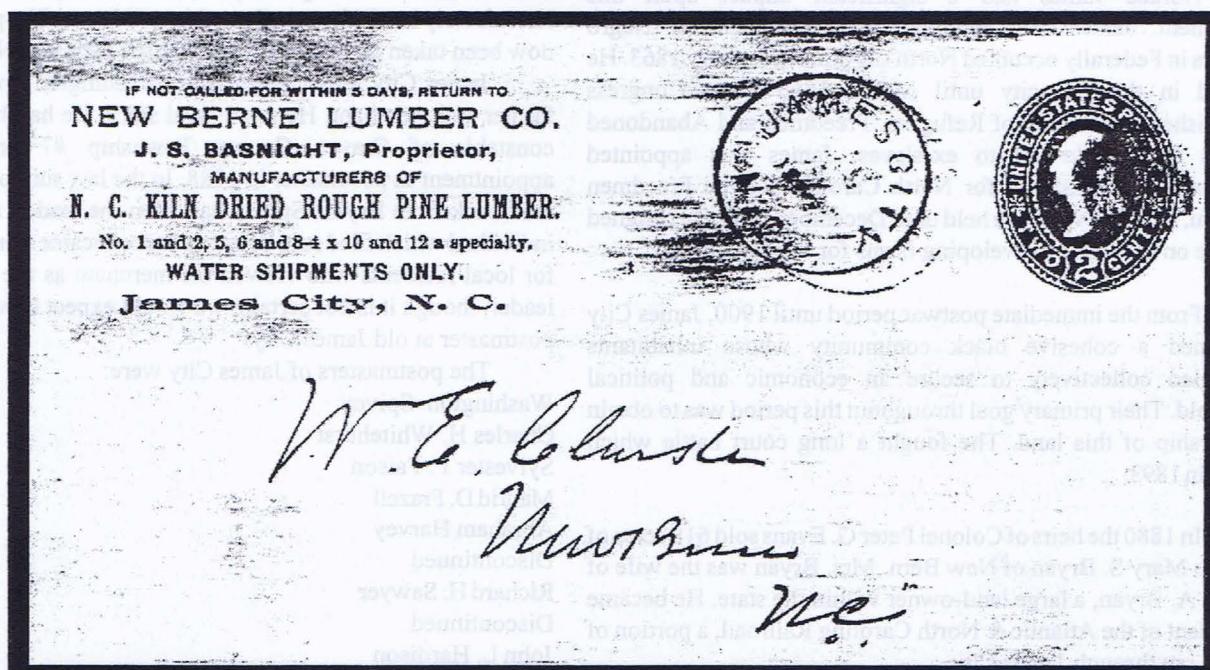
26 Jun 1935  
15 Apr 1943  
1 Aug 1950  
31 Jul 1967

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James City: A Black Community in North Carolina, 1863-1900, Joe A. Mobley, NC Dept. Of Cultural Resources, 1981



New Bern and James City (Hayti), lower center, taken from an 1867 U.S. Coastal Survey Map  
*Map Collection, N.C. State Archives*



Advertising return corner card of New Berne Lumber Company, one of the three original firms to lease property on the out-skirts of James City, dated Dec. 30, 1893 on a U314 postal stationery.

## All Aboard for the Virginia Creeper

by Tim Hensley

The orange rays of the late October sun are just beginning to peep over the ridges surrounding the tobacco-market town of Abingdon as the Norfolk and Western Train 201, the daily-except Sunday mixed to West Jefferson, rattle-bangs to a stop in front of the faded, red-brick station. Pulling one coach, one baggage car, one mail car, and several assorted freight cars, the ancient Class M locomotive, No. 382, celebrating her fiftieth anniversary in this year of 1956, casts a wavering silhouette against a nearby warehouse. The heat from the stack contrasts sharply with the cool mountain air.

Inside No. 201's coach, Conductor Ralph White ambles along, taking up tickets from the few riders inside, under his arm he carries a carton of lollipops, for today the "candy man" makes his traditional appearance on the Abingdon Branch, a Saturday morning treat for all the youngsters living along the line.

Reeling his Hamilton from the deep pool of his pocket, the conductor notes that, at 7:40 A.M., the train is already ten minutes behind schedule. However, he assures all within hearing distance, "we'll be on our way as soon as 'Honey Fitz' gets done with his whistle."

Up on the throbbing boiler of Engine 382, Engineer Fitzhugh Talmadge Nichols is making hurried adjustments to his custom-made "boot leg" whistle. Satisfied that all is sound, he scoots along the running board and swings his stout figure through the door on the fireman's side. In a matter of seconds, two wisps of white steam from the musical pipes of the metal organ signal that the mixed is moving on.

With a gentle jolt, we are off on a journey back in time, promenading grandly through the pumpkin patches and the fodder-shocked fields of harvest. Around every bed of the fifty-five and-a-half mile route will be beauty to behold as the time-forgotten train breaks through the narrow gorges cut by cascading streams into sun-splashed meadows and furrowed farmlands. In fact, on the way up to White Top, Virginia and down to West Jefferson, N.C., the Virginia Creeper, affectionately named for both its slow speed and for the many varieties of ivy encountered along its way, will pass through some of the most spectacular scenery in the South.

The Virginia Creeper was a rare bird even to have lasted as it did into the second half of the twentieth century. Though the concept of the mixed train is as old as railroading itself, the evolution of the modern-day species can be traced to Depression era economics more than anything else.

To the isolated inhabitants of the mountains that hugged the Creeper, the railroad was their main connection with the outside world, bringing them the basic necessities for daily living as well as mail-order notions from the Sears-Roebuck catalogue and letters from Aunt Levicy. They traveled the mixed to make application at the county courthouse for a marriage license, take a piano lesson, have a saw sharpened, or reach their favorite fishing holes. To them, the train was one of the own.

Chartered as the Abingdon Coal and Iron Railroad in 1887, the line made little progress until, in 1898, it was reorganized as

the Virginia-Carolina Railroad. By 1905 its owner, W.E. Minge, had completed laying rail from Abingdon through Damascus to Konnarock, Va, a distance of almost thirty one miles, in order to reach the fine Appalachian hardwood lumber that could be found there.

In 1912 the Norfolk and Western bought a controlling interest and financed a forty-nine mile extension toward Elkland, N.C., from a place called Creek Junction. Two years later the construction was completed giving the railroad a main line of almost eighty miles. Business was brisk on the branch. In those days trains 201 and 202 were operated as a regular four passenger car varnish run between Abingdon and West Jefferson.

In addition to the passenger trains, there were often as many as six freight trains a day, assisted by pusher engines stationed at White Top and West Jefferson. It was not unusual to see a doubleheader coming off the branch with forty or fifty cars, and it took all air and hand brakes, tied up with a spring pole by men with backbone and courage, to get safely down White Top Mountain.

Business declined when timber resources were exhausted and the Great Depression hit, and the runs from West Jefferson to Elkland and from Abingdon to Konnarock were discontinued in 1933. After that Nos. 201 and 202 were deemed sufficient to serve the needs of the "creeper" counties, and they were degraded to mixed train status, making-up and terminating at Bristol and running to and from Abingdon as an extra. A single Class M locomotive could usually handle what livestock and lumber business that remained, augmented only occasionally by a car of copper ore, electrical components, gasoline, soapstone, or wood by-products.

Motive power on the line was limited to a class M 4-8-0 (usually number 382, 396 or 429, all of which were outfitted with a heavily flanged spark-arrester stack to prevent fires from starting on the thick-forested right-of-way; No 495 was also used until it dropped its crown sheet near Damascus in 1953) or lighter, owing to the weight restrictions on the many bridges, most of which were built of heavy timber bents. With the Class M's maximum tractive effort of only 40,163 pounds, it was necessary to either double head or double the hill on the trip up to White Top if the train exceeded 325 tons (about 5 cars). And the return trip up the other side of the mountain was not much easier.

As for bridges, there were 108 of them, in all makes and sizes; sharp curves, more than a hundred of them, were also a problem. Flash flooding provided a constant threat, and more than once the railroad rebuilt the branch after raging torrents tore out fills and trestles.

Pulling out of Abingdon, we leave the heavy-duty Walton-Bristol main line about half a mile north of the station, veering to the right as we slowly move out onto the much lighter rail of the Virginia Creeper. Gradually picking up speed, the train soon reaches the maximum allowable speed of twenty-five miles per hour, making its way through dense, undulating woodlands hemmed in by craggy cliffs and over several "dry bridges". As

our train passes over one of these spans, it spooks out from under it some cattle that had been using it for shelter.

Once past Watauga, we break away from the high cliffs and steep drops into meadowlands. After a flag stop at Alvarado, little more than a country store and a church nestled around the tiny station house, we progress through the fields of Delmar, Drowning Ford, and Vails Mill. Along the way, the loud chime whistle sounds to clear the farmer's lanes.

At Damascus, population 1,726, a "city" by Abingdon Branch standards, we slow for our first scheduled stop. Shortly after the turn of the century, this community was an early rail center where connections were made with two short-lived lumber lines, the standard gauge Beaver Dam Railroad (which tied into the Crandall & Shady Valley) and the narrow-gauge Laurel Railway. But as the lumber trade died off, so did the area's prosperity.

From Damascus to Creek Junction, the train flirts with the Tennessee border, playing a sort of leap frog with the restless water of White Top Creek, an excellent trout stream, which we will cross nineteen times in little more than eleven miles. There are no passengers for either stream side Laureldale or Taylors Valley (home of the only two-story station on the branch) today, although they are both favorite stops of tourists in the spring and summer because of their lush growth of rhododendron and mountain laurel. Reaching Creek Junction, the train stops to drop off and pick up the mail for nearby Konnarock.

The engineer takes this opportunity to refill the tender with water from an old, tuscan-colored wooden tank. The methodical sound of steel clanging against steel can be heard ringing over the gurgling waters, as the fireman attempts to blow up a good head of steam. Though we have been climbing steadily since Alvarado, we are now about to start up the steeper slopes of White Top Mountain, which will demand every ounce of fortitude and skill that the "Mollie" (as the Class M's are dubbed by the engine crews) and the men in her cab can muster.

The exhausts of the engine are coming slower and slower now as it leans into the grade of White Top Mountain. On both flanks of the mountain the speed limit has been reduced to eighteen miles per hour, but we do not even approach that speed. The Virginia Creeper slows to a crawl, very much in danger in stalling.

Just when it seems as if the twelve-wheeler is about to bog down, a long blast of the meadowlark whistle signals a two hundred yard stretch of level land, and we ease to a stop at Green Cove station.

On the cedar platform in front of the white and green trimmed depot stands a bespectacled gentleman clad in a khaki work suit held together by suspenders. His balding pate is hidden beneath a black uniform cap, with a brass badge above the bill that identifies him as "A-g-e-n-t". This is Mr. W.M. Buchanan, who, in addition to being the railway's representative here, also holds the Western Union franchise and is postmaster and proprietor of a small store, all of which are housed under the station's roof.

Anyone can see that the picturesque depot was the central gathering place in the tiny hamlet of Green Cove, but its importance is best related by Mrs. Anne Gentry, who grew up here. (Like so many other residents of the Appalachian region,

she and her husband had to leave the economically depressed area for the more prosperous industrial cities of the North).

"In the mornings we'd get up and wait for the train to come in", Mrs. Gentry fondly recalls. "After it was gone, we'd peek through the pigeon holes in the corner that was the post office, watching Mr. Buchanan stamp all the letters and waiting to see if we got any mail."

Soon the train's work at Green Cove is completed. In the comforts of our friendly visit it was easy to ignore the arduous journey that lies ahead, but from here to White Top we will be challenged by a sustained 3 percent gradient for a distance of two and a half miles. As the crow flies the distance between stations is only a mile, but the rough terrain necessitates a three-mile route by rail, so we circle and climb around the Abingdon Branch version of "Horseshoe Curve".

Getting out of Green Cove, the flanges of the steel wheels scream in pinched protest as the 382 swings around the too-tight bend a mile beyond the station. Fighting hard to hold the slippery rails, made even more slippery by the fallen leaves, the straining engine marches to the steady beat of its own exhausts.

Pistons pounding back and forth in their cylinders, the old Class M lunges into a final left hand curve. With its safety valve shouting in triumph the 4-8-0 coasts to a stop at the White Top station. Directly ahead is the summit of the White Top grade. The station's altitude of 3,585 feet makes it the highest point attained by a passenger train each of the Rockies.

Our short stay at White Top completed, it is now time to continue on our journey. Slowly the Virginia Creeper pulls out of the station, edges its way over the crest, and begins to ramble down the other, "yon side" of the mountain on a roller-coaster ride into N.C.

Blue smoke issues from chafing brakeshoes now as Engineer Nichols keeps our consist in check with a minimum reduction of the automatic or "big" air. He takes these extra precautions against derailments here because of the severe weight restrictions of the bridges, even the miniature Wreck Car kept at Bristol is not allowed on this branch line.

The first town we reach in the "Tar Heel State" is Nella, near the bottom of the grade. Actually, the town is known by that name only in the pages of the N&W timetables; originally it was called "Allen", but the riders often confused it with Alvarado, so the spelling of its name was simply reversed. To further add to the confusion, the inhabitants of the hollow refer to it as "Husk". Whatever its name, it is marked only by a general store whose siding is peppered with signs, and by Jimbo, the Heinz-57 "Hound of Husk" that keeps guard over it.

Approaching Tuckerdale, the country begins to open up into farmland again. Our next stop is Lansing, where lunch for the crew is handed on from a cafe near the station. (The trays, with payment left on them, will be taken back on the return trip.)

There is no business at Bina today, so we go on to Warrensville, shirting along the headwaters of the New River, crossing its north fork before we roll into town. We drop off a few passengers here, then head on to the next stop, Smethport. There is no need to stop in Smethport, so we go right on to West Jefferson, the end of the line, grinding to a halt in front of the depot in the farming center, population 871, which also offers some fine home-cooked meals in restaurants on the town square.



There is a half-hour layover in West Jefferson as the crew prepares for the return trip. They turn the locomotive around on the wye and take water. Then they do considerable switching on a team track crammed with cars awaiting the offerings from local auction markets, mostly green beans, livestock and tobacco.

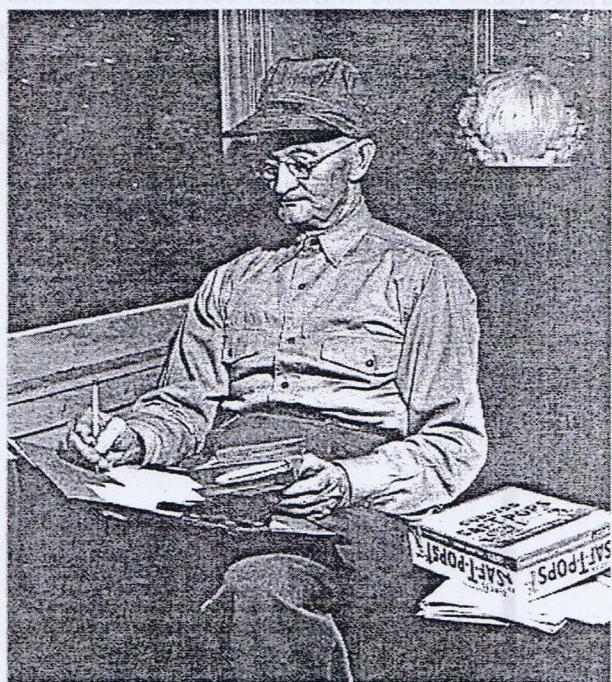
The layover completed, the Virginia Creeper begins its trip back to Abingdon. Since most of the train's work was done on the way out, the scheduled running time on the return trip is twenty minutes shorter. Having less work for himself and his crew, Conductor White is free to retire to his "office" (actually two facing seats in the coach) to catch up on some paperwork.

At closely spaced intervals "Candy Man" White reaches into the box of lollipops beside him and goes back to the open service door of the baggage and mail car, now the last of the train behind the coach. Along the way barefooted children beat a path trackside, hiding the candy they already received behind their backs and begging for some more goodies to come sailing their way. But they can't fool the conductor, for he knows who each of them is and where he or she lives.

Northward from Tuckerdale, the rails rise up steadily for ten and a half miles to White Top. The steep gradient makes it still a tough climb, but not as bad as it was on the southward trip. After a regular stop at Damascus and getting flagged down again at Alvarado, the train rolls into Abingdon right on schedule at 3:10 p.m. All passengers are normally discharged here, but we are invited by Conductor White to ride on into Bristol with him.

From Abingdon to Bristol, though again running as an extra, Train 202 is handled just like a regular passenger train, right down into Union Station. There the crew is relieved of duty. The

hostler and his "helper" (the switchman who "follows" him) detach the locomotive and take it to the roundhouse, where it will be serviced on the third shift.



From the book "Steam, Steel & Stars: America's Last Steam Railroad", photographs by Winston O. Link, text by Tim Hensley, 1984.

# Waterlily, Currituck County

by Scott Troutman

Shown below is a postal card with a four bar killer cancel from Waterlily, N.C. dated May 27, 1937. It has taken me six years to find anything with a Waterlily cancel. Waterlily is a small village on the mainland of Currituck County. It sits on a marshy peninsula which juts into the Currituck Sound, due west of the Corolla lighthouse. The post office operated from March 3, 1893 until February 19, 1938.

Corolla had no road going into it until sometime in the 1940's. The way you got there was a boat from Waterlily. Indeed, Waterlily may have been created originally as a drop off point for materials to build the lighthouse in the 1870's.

Waterlily's heyday came about because of a tiff among rich duck hunters. In 1874 a group of New York businessmen founded a waterfowl hunting club called the Lighthouse Club at Corolla. They had one strict rule: NO WOMEN! In 1922 they snubbed Amanda Marie Louise LeBel Knight of Rhode Island by not letting her in.

Mr. Edward Collin Knight, her husband, was a railroad magnet (he owned sizable portions of the Pennsylvania Railroad), a publisher and an architect. At his wife's insistence he bought land on the outer banks opposite Waterlily and for \$380,000 constructed a huge manor house with nine bedrooms, eight baths and 20,000 square feet overall. It had a sea water swimming pool and five miles of sound side shoreline

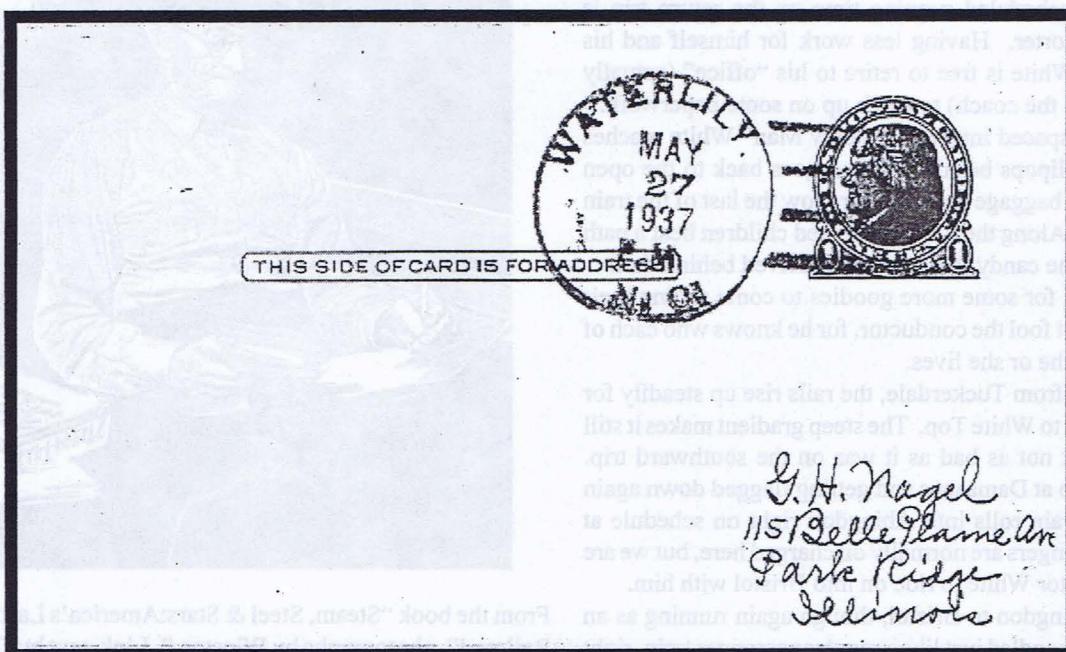
for duck hunting.

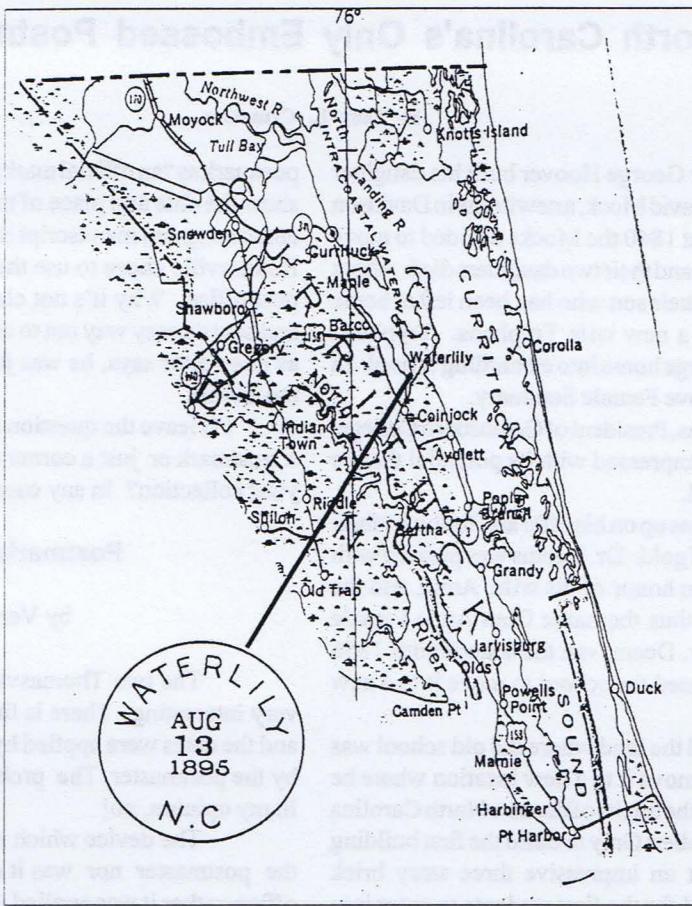
Mrs. Knight loved the name Waterlily. She had the wooden casings in all the public rooms in her castle hand carved in an Art Nouveau waterlily style. Tiffany's made the light fixtures and also designed the silverware, both with waterlily patterns.

The Knights entertained in grand style most every Friday or Saturday night. Orchestras from New York were ferried over to "Corolla Island", the official name of the house after they had a moat dug around it. The local people joined in the dancing and other entertainments as the Knights usually invited people from Corolla and Waterlily to these shindigs. All this was done formally with engraved invitations. All the party arrangements no doubt kept the Waterlily postmaster busy.

The Knights both died in 1936 and the good times ended. The town of Waterlily pretty much died as well. Over the years, the house, renamed the Whalehead Club, has been everything from a hunting lodge, a Coast Guard training center, a school and a testing grounds for rocket engines. Today it is identified with Corolla and its association with Waterlily is all but forgotten.

Bibliography  
"The Whalehead Club" by John Railey, *The State*,  
August 1989.





Section of 1960 U.S. Coast and Geological Survey showing the correct location of Waterlily, which is incorrectly shown on the POD Post Roads map of 1912.

## SODOM, MADISON COUNTY

By Scott Troutman

A new book out called "Come Go Home With Me" by Sheila Kay Adams details growing up in the small Madison County community of Sodom, N.C. While Sodom only had a post office from October 1, 1898 to November 11, 1901 the community had origins at the time of the Civil War and existed well into the 1970's. Mrs Adams indicated they finally did change the name, but she does not say to what it was called. [New name was Revere, ed]

In the book, however, she does describe the story of how the town got its unusual name."Sodom got its name back during the Civil War. The story goes that there was a regiment of

Confederate soldiers camped down around Hot Springs and a Union regiment camped right over the line in Tennessee. Right where Sodom is located, there resided a band of prostitutes that "serviced" both regiments. A circuit-riding Baptist preacher came through the area and held a revival. He commented from the pulpit that there was more sinning went on in that little community than went on in Sodom in the Bible. The War ended, the prostitutes moved on, but the name stuck."

### Bibliography

- "Come Go Home With Me", Sheila Kay Adams, University of North Carolina Press, 1995.

## North Carolina's Only Embossed Postmark?

by Tony L. Crumbley

Early in the 19th century George Hoover built his daughter and son-in-law, Elizabeth and David Mock, a new home in Davidson County, North Carolina. About 1840 the Mocks decided to move to California. In 1846 Elizabeth and their two daughters died. About this same time Charles Mock, their son who had been left at home in Davidson County, married a new wife Tryphena. Tryphena decided she would turn their large home into a boarding school. In 1849 she opened the Sylva Grove Female Seminary.

In 1853 Dr. Charles Deems, President of Greensboro College, visited the school and was so impressed with its potential that he offered to purchase the school.

The Mocks took Dr. Deems up on his offer and followed their father to California in search of gold. Dr. Deems was pleased with his purchase and re-named it in honor of his wife, Anna, and the lovely glen it was located in, thus the name Glen Anna Female Seminary came into being. Dr. Deems ran the school until 1856 when John W. Thomas purchased the school to move it to a new location in his town.

John Thomas had owned the land where the old school was located but decided he would move it to a new location where he was building a new town along the tracks of the new North Carolina railroad. Thomas employed Robert Gray to build the first building of this new school. He built an impressive three story brick structure which was completed for the first students to enter into in February 1857.

A few years earlier Mr. Thomas had built a store along the tracks and had hired Julius T. Goldberry to run the store. On September 24, 1853 Julius became the first postmaster of Thomasville, a job he undoubtedly carried out in a corner of the Thomas store.

The name of the town was derived from the Thomas family name and a good friend of the Thomas family, Dr. Rounsville, the town's first physician who had lived with John Thomas prior to this marriage in 1851. Dr. Henry E. Rounsville became Thomasville's second Postmaster on June 15, 1855, a job he held until April 30, 1865 when the feds closed the office.

It is during Dr. Rounsville Postmaster years that the postmarks in question appear. Prior to the 1861 Confederate balloon postmark, we have not recorded postal markings from Thomasville. Thomasville was no small place by 1860—the census indicated 308 individuals lived in Thomasville.

In my collection of covers, I have two covers posted from Thomasville in 1859—both franked with copies of US #11. Both stamps are canceled with a ms. Pen stroke and each cover has an embossed oval corner card which says Glen Anna Female Seminary Thomasville Davidson Co. Within each embossed corner card is the date of posting, August 1 and September 21, the inks clearly matching the ink of that on the stamps.

Now the question arises, is this embossing a postmark? The editors of the upcoming NCPHS book, Post Offices and Postmasters of North Carolina have concluded that it is not a postmark. The author, however, thinks differently.

A review of my trusty dictionary indicates the definition of

postmark as "an official mark placed on mail to cancel the stamp and show the date and place of mailing." Clearly this combination of embossing and manuscript markings indicate just that Postmaster Rounsville chose to use the corner card as the postmark for his post office. Why it's not clear — perhaps he had no handstamp and saw an easy way out to abide by postal regulations or perhaps as one editor says, he was just lazy and chose not to handstamp the covers.

I'll leave the question up to you. What do you think — is it a postmark or just a corner card? Do you have similar covers in your collection? In any case, let me know what you think.

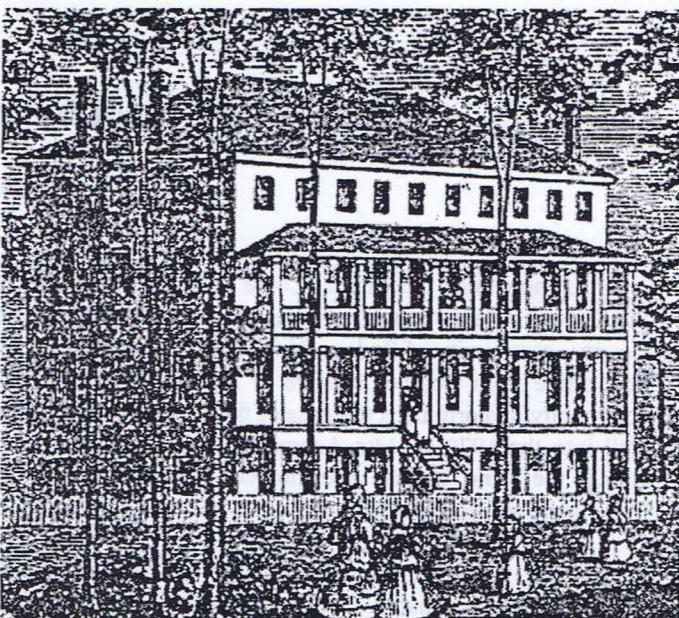
### Postmarks or Cinderellas?

by Vernon S. Stroupe

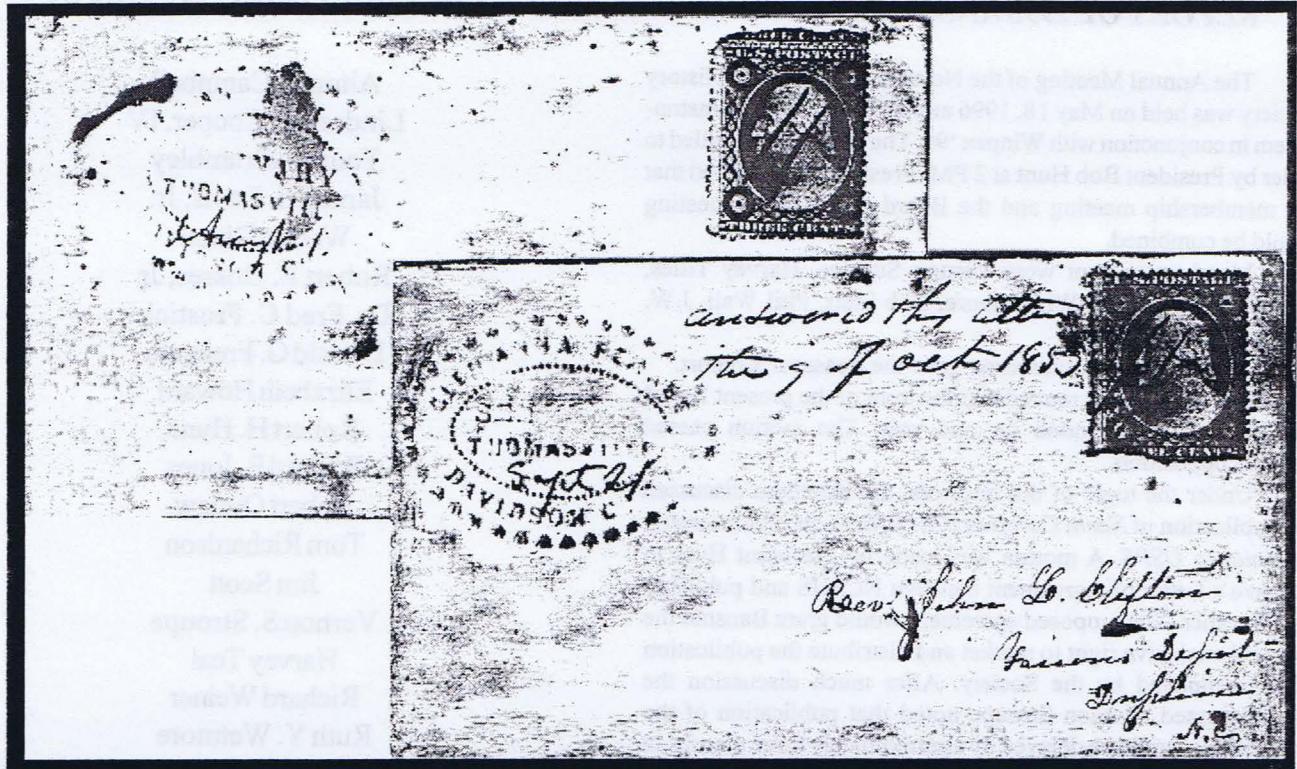
The two Thomasville blind embossed corner cards are very interesting. There is little doubt that the pen cancellation and the dates were applied by the same pen and that pen was used by the postmaster. The problem that remains is this a postmark? In my opinion, no!

The device which made the embossing was not used by the postmaster nor was it applied on the premises of the post office, rather it was applied in the office of the Glen Anna Female Seminary, presumably with a hand operated embosser for the purpose of a return address. I do not believe the dating by postmaster Rounsville changes that.

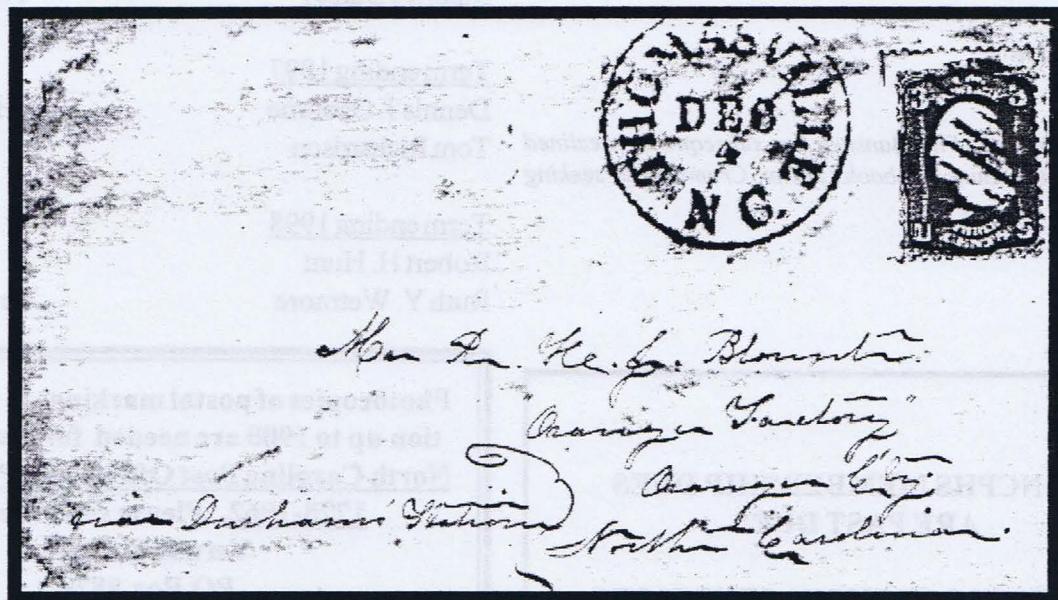
Fanciful usages of various devices as cancelers are rare, but they do exist. Several will be found in the first volume of our new book, *Post Offices and Postmasters of North Carolina, Colonial to USPS*. Patterson and Franklin markings come to mind.



Glen Anna Female Seminary  
in a wood-block engraving, 1849-1871



Two covers with the blind-embossed corner card of Glen Anna Female Seminary. Manuscript dating within the embossed oval substitutes for a manuscript cancel or cds.



Post Civil War cover used from Thomasville with balloon cds

## REPORT OF 1996 ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual Meeting of the North Carolina Postal History Society was held on May 18, 1996 at the Elk's Club in Winston-Salem in conjunction with Winpex '96. The meeting was called to order by President Bob Hunt at 2 PM. President Hunt stated that the membership meeting and the Board of Directors meeting would be combined.

Members present were Vernon Stroupe, Harvey Tilles, Tom Richardson, Jim Whittlemore, Bob Stets, Phil Wall, J.W. Tatum, and Alan Vestal.

Treasurer Tom Richardson gave the treasurer's report.

Vernon Stroupe moved that the term of the present Board of Directors be extended for one year. The motion passed without opposition.

Under the topic of old business, the members discussed the publication of *North Carolina Post Offices and Postmasters, Colonial to USPS*. A motion was made by President Hunt to approve a Letter of Agreement between NCPHS and publisher Phil Bansner. The proposed agreement would grant Bansner the sole and exclusive right to market and distribute the publication when completed by the Society. After much discussion the motion passed. Vernon Stroupe noted that publication of the first volume would be delayed by approximately three months in order to include many new postmarks which recently became available to the Society.

A motion was made and passed to approve the purchase of a scanner (\$1,049) for editor Stroupe.

After the members voted to hold the next annual meeting at Winpex in 1997, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Alan Vestal

[Editor's note: Phil Bansner has subsequently declined to print and distribute the book. Editor Crumbley is seeking other means.]

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Photocopies of postal markings in your collection up to 1900 are needed for illustration in *North Carolina Post Offices and Postmasters, 1778-1962*. Please send them to:

Vernon Stroupe  
PO Box 8879  
Asheville, N.C. 28814

Thanks to the several members who have responded!