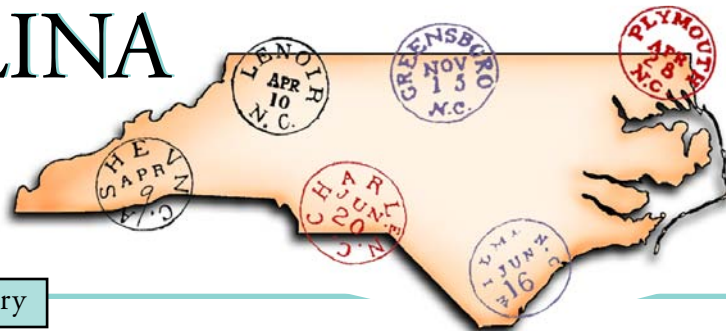


# NORTH CAROLINA POSTAL HISTORIAN



The Journal of North Carolina Postal History

VOLUME 35, NO. 4    FALL 2016    WHOLE 136



The Wilmington &  
Raleigh Rail Road  
Company  
(Route Agent Postmarks  
and Covers)



305-H-1



305-H-2



305-H-3



305-I-1



305-J-1



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

This issue is the 136th issue of the society's journal and I am pleased to report that the North Carolina Postal History Society is healthy in terms of membership and continuing quality improvement in a number of areas.

As reported in the previous President's Message, the new NCPHS website went live on 13 June 2016. It is easier to navigate, and the Google Custom Search feature will be a valuable tool for readers, postal historians doing research and authors preparing articles for our journal. There have been so many topics covered in the past that a wealth of research material is available for the author to expand on subjects previously covered or determine if a topic has been covered at all. This author has been able to locate only a few states that publish a postal history journal, and only that of New Jersey approximates ours. The journal is not only the public face of the society but unites our society's membership by exposing each other's research interests and providing opportunities to network with each other. Members from opposite ends of the state have found common interests and have shared important information with each other.

During the process of determining the technical details and advantages of the web site upgrade, the board members have communicated with each other to arrive at consensus on the changes. Future website costs are projected at \$600 annually. The website is hosted on the Amazon Cloud. Through the contractor who upgraded our website, we now have 24/7 monitoring of our site, daily offsite backups protecting all our data, and server disaster recovery. The society has kept dues constant for years and no increase has been requested this year. Current dues and contributions from sustaining members are

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expected to cover the journal's printing costs and the website maintenance.

Our able editor, Dick Winter, always ensures that we have a quality journal with excellent articles on an amazingly wide variety of postal history topic. We always welcome new contributions, even short ones. As we all know, every cover, post office and postmaster has an interesting story to tell. If any of the membership would like to write an article or needs help with references or illustrations, please contact me, Tony Crumbley or Dick Winter and assistance will be available. In a similar vein, if any member has a topic on which they would like an article to be written, please contact me and we will see if we have an interested author. Thank you all for supporting the society.

Dues notices for 2017 go out with this journal. I hope you will continue to support the society with an additional donation, as so many of you have done in the past. We still have a few members who are delinquent in paying their 2016 dues. We have continued sending them the quarterly journal in expectation that this was merely an oversight on their part. Since this is the last journal for 2016, this also will be your last journal for those delinquent in paying their 2016 dues.

A red dot on your mailing label means we have not received your dues for 2016.



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# The Wilmington & Raleigh Rail Road North Carolina's First Chartered Railroad, 1833-1854

by Tony L. Crumbley



In the past, several articles have been written in the *North Carolina Postal Historian* about North Carolina's first railroad, the Wilmington and Raleigh Rail Road. A new book, just released by James C. Burke titled, *The Wilmington and Raleigh Rail Road Company, 1833-1854*, has provided considerable new information on the formation and operation of this railroad. The information in this book, plus the addition of some new covers to my collection, has motivated me to update the postal history data that we have on this railroad.

As of this date, I don't believe the final documentation of all the route agent rate markings used on the Wilmington & Raleigh Rail Road has been made. Nor is there a consensus of all the known covers with these markings. This article will focus on these two issues as well as provide a brief history of the railroad. In addition, it will provide all the known postmarks and rate markings used by the route agents on the railroad and a census of all the known covers with these markings.

The very first railroad locomotive is attributed to Richard Trevithick, a British engineer, who invented the steam locomotive in 1804; however, it would take more than twenty years before the first permanent steam railroad was put into operation, Stephenson's Stockton & Darlington Railway in 1825. The first intercity railroad, the Liverpool & Manchester railway, opened in 1830.

In the United States, the Charleston & Hamburg Railroad and the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, each chartered in 1827, were the test models, but were not put into service until later.

By Section 26 of "An Act to Incorporate the Wilmington & Raleigh Rail Road Company," passed by the North Carolina General Assembly in 1833, the company was permitted to open the tracks for use after each ten miles were completed. This act spelled out the general route to be taken, beginning in Wilmington and heading towards Raleigh.

The charter of the Wilmington & Raleigh Rail Road Company was amended in 1835 to allow the company to change the route of the railroad. Rather than connecting Wilmington to Raleigh, the capitol and business center of North Carolina, the railroad would connect to Weldon, from which the Petersburg Railroad ran north toward Baltimore.

This decision was made partly because Raleigh citizens were not supportive of the project. Most of the private funding came from Wilmington. During the 1836-1837 North Carolina General Assembly, the state approved a two-fifths funding for railroads. The state would fund two-fifths to match the three-fifths from private funding. Three railroads were approved for

this funding but the Wilmington & Raleigh Rail Road was the only one to be funded in this manner.

This state-funding program would prove crucial to the railroad during the economic panic of 1837, when most private railroads went bankrupt. Governor Dudley signaled the commencement of work on the railroad by turning the first shovel of dirt on October 25, 1836. The plans were to have the crews working on each end of the line, moving towards the middle for completion. By early 1837, contractors with an average of 900 laborers were at work on the railroad. In November 1837, the train was in operation between Halifax and Weldon of the Northern Division. This was the first regular train running over a significant distance in North Carolina. The locomotive and cars were used every day except Sunday and Tuesday to carry passengers as far as the track was open. In late December 1837, twenty miles of track were open on the Southern Division from Wilmington.

The success of this railroad was based upon it becoming a part of the major east coast connector, from New York through Baltimore, Norfolk, and North Carolina to Charleston, Savannah and other places south. To speed this process along the line, stage coaches were used to connect the portions of the railroad under construction. In addition, the Wilmington & Raleigh Rail Road purchased a small fleet of steamboats to connect Wilmington with Charleston by sea (see "Wilmington & Raleigh Steamboats" by Richard F. Winter, NCPHS Vol. 23, No. 3, Fall 2004). This would prove to be one of the earliest, multi modal transportation systems in the nation. The Wilmington & Raleigh Rail Road operated its steamship line between Wilmington and Charleston from 1837 until it was rendered unnecessary by the completion of the Wilmington and Manchester Railroad in 1854.

The Charleston docks of the steamboats of the Wilmington & Raleigh Rail Road were located at the foot of Lauren Street, south of the Charleston shipyard. The railroad company owned six ships during its 17 years of steamship operation. They were named "Boston," "North Carolina," "Governor Dudley," "C. Vanderbilt," "Wilmington," and "Gladiator." All were side-paddle, passenger vessels. The steamboat line was considered an extension of the railroad into South Carolina.

Throughout the construction of the railroad, the transportation line stayed in operation even though the railroad was not completed. It was awarded a contract to carry the mail along a portion of the "Southern Great Mail" route as early as 1838. The steamboat line to Charleston completed the connection over the water and the stagecoach covered the land

route between the separated portions of the line as they were completed.

We have a personal account of travel on the railroad while it was under construction from Frances Anne Kemble's *Journal of a Resident on a Georgia Plantation 1838-1839*. Mrs. Kemble wrote of her trip on December 23, 1838. After departing Weldon by train between eight and nine o'clock in the evening, she arrived at the end of the northern section of the line four hours later. The train stopped in the middle of a wooded area where they were told to disembark and board one of the three, four-horse coaches waiting on them. The coaches then traveled that night through the swampland on log roads. The stage arrived in Stantonsburg shortly after sunrise. The 160 mile trip to Wilmington took two days to travel. She then had a six-hour layover in Wilmington to board the steamboat to Charleston. The steamboat trip took between twelve and sixteen hours more to arrive in Charleston.

On March 7, 1840, the last spike was driven into the rail system to connect the northern and southern parts of the railroad. It is reported that the spike was driven at 12:00 PM and the first train from Wilmington reached Weldon at 9:00 PM. Figure 1 shows a map of the railroad route and the construction dates as the line progressed simultaneously from Weldon south and from Wilmington north. The total cost of the project was \$1.9 million. At its completion, the railroad was 160 ½ miles long, the longest railroad in the world at the time.

Figure 2 is an invitation to General S. F. Patterson of Wilkesboro from the President and Directors of the railroad inviting him to attend a celebration in Wilmington on April 15, 1840, for the completion of the railroad on March 4, 1840. The letter was posted from Wilmington on March 11, 1840.

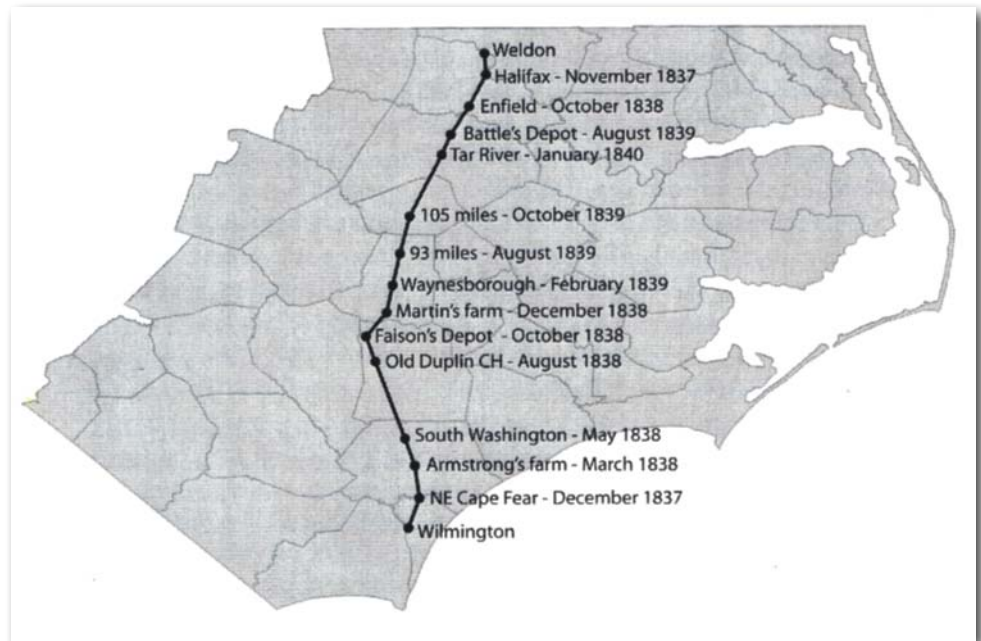
During the last six months of 1840, the railroad created a revenue of \$152,424. Of this, \$11,665 was revenue from the U.S. Post Office Department. This is an indication that carrying the mail was an important part of their operation.

In 1840, the Wilmington & Raleigh Rail Road acquired twelve locomotives, eight passenger cars, four post office cars, and fifty freight cars. The first ten locomotives were named for the counties through which the line passed. The "Brunswick" was the first steam locomotive to make the trip from Wilmington

to Weldon in March 1840. This engine was still in operation in 1858.

In 1849, the railroad converted its metal-topped wooden rails to metal T-rails that were purchased from England. This improvement would ensure that the rail line would operate well into the future.

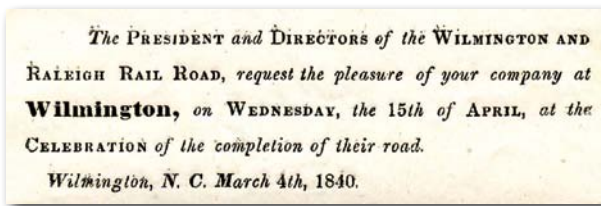
Additional major changes were underway that affected the Wilmington & Raleigh Rail Road in 1849. Work on the grading of the Wilmington & Manchester Railroad began on a four-mile section between Sumterville, (later, Sumter, South Carolina) and Lynch's Creek on New Year's Day 1849. Soon work began at the Wilmington terminus of the same railroad on February 22, 1849. The Wilmington & Manchester Railroad was completed in early 1854. This rail line would run to



▲ **Figure 1.** Route of the Wilmington & Raleigh Rail Road as construction proceeded south from Weldon and north from Wilmington showing when various locations were reached. During construction, land transportation was used to ferry passengers and cargo between the completed portions of the railroad. (Courtesy of *The Wilmington & Raleigh Rail Road Company*)

Sumter, South Carolina, and connect with other major railroad lines south. As a direct result, this connection would do away with the need for the steamboat service between Charleston and Wilmington, reducing travel time by 24 hours. The last railroad steamboat arrived at Wilmington from Charleston around February 3, 1854.

When the railroad stockholders met in 1855, the railroad's name was changed to the Wilmington & Weldon Rail Road, reflecting the actual destinations of the railroad. The effective date of the new name was February 14, 1855, ending the era of the Wilmington & Raleigh Rail Road. By the close of 1854, the Wilmington & Raleigh Rail Road had transformed the



▲ **Figure 2.** Text of an invitation mailed from Wilmington (New Hanover County), March 11, 1840, to General S. F. Patterson in Wilkesboro (Wilkes County) inviting him to a celebration of the completion of the railroad.

economy of eastern North Carolina by exploiting the agricultural and commercial potential of the region.

The significance of the Wilmington & Raleigh Rail Road in the context of American railroad history is in its “pioneering” efforts. First, it was a well-planned and engineered railroad. The civil engineering at the time tested the limits of early railroad technology. Second, the organization of the company was significantly different, being based on a “public-private partnership,” which aided in the financial stability of the operation. Third, the multi-model function, unheard of at the time, combined stage coach, steamboat, and railroad, allowing the system to get into full operation nearly three and a half years before the rail line was completed.

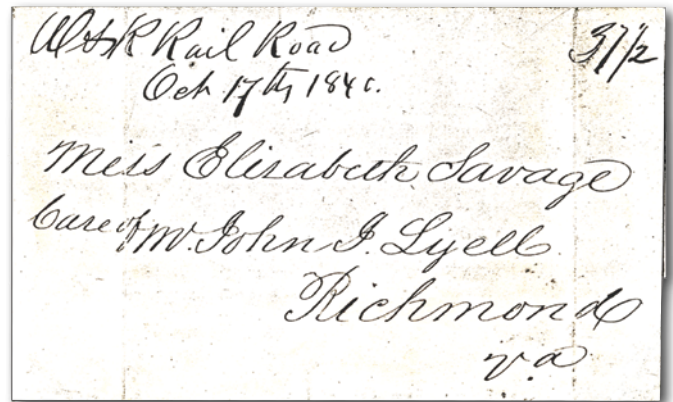
As mentioned earlier, the first formal agreement with the U.S. Post Office Department to carry mail on a portion of the railroad was signed in 1838. This agreement did not include providing railroad mail agents on the trains. In 1839, new mail contracts with the Wilmington & Raleigh Rail Road were signed. Route No. 2071 covered a short section from Weldon south and Route No. 2072 covered the larger section from Wilmington north. According to the original research of John Kay, published in Charles L. Towle’s book, *U.S. Route and*



▲ **Figure 4.** Honour’s City Post 2-cents carrier stamp paid in Charleston, S.C. to have cover delivered to the city pier for transport to Wilmington on Wilmington & Raleigh Rail Road steamship. Route agent marked 10 cents postage due.

*Station Agent Postmarks*, the first route agent assigned to the Wilmington & Raleigh Rail Road was James C. Townley on March 16, 1840. The purpose of the route agent was to take charge of the mails on the route assigned. He received and delivered pouched mail at the terminals of the route and along the way. Uncanceled mail received on board was canceled by the agent as he was the first postal employee to receive the mail into the postal system. If it was an unpaid cover, he also marked the postage due.

Figure 3 is a copy of the earliest recorded cover known to have been carried on the Wilmington & Raleigh Rail Road. While only a black and white photocopy, the “W & R Rail

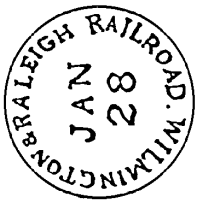












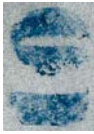













▲ **Figure 3.** October 17, 1840, folded letter addressed to Richmond, Virginia, a black and white photocopy of the earliest cover postmarked by a route agent on the Wilmington & Raleigh Rail Road. The agent also marked 37½ cents postage due. This cover hasn’t been seen since it was in the Jim Harris collection.

Road” manuscript cancel, dated October 17, 1840, is an indication the folded letter was given to the mail clerk on the train and postmarked by him on board.

From 1844 until 1851, mail was carried on the line seven trips a week. From 1852 until 1860, there were 14 trips per week.

It is interesting to note that many of the covers with Wilmington & Raleigh Rail Road route agent markings have letter datelines from Charleston, South Carolina, but have no Charleston postal markings. Seven of the known railroad covers have Honour’s City Post carrier stamps, indicating they were handled by the private delivery service in Charleston. It is apparent that the letters were not delivered to the Charleston post office but taken to the pier for the steamer to Wilmington, later to be postmarked by the railroad route agent. Figure 4 is an example of such a cover. This folded letter was carried by Honour’s City Post in Charleston to the steamship pier in Charleston with a 2-cents black on bluish paper Charleston carrier stamp, pen canceled, to pay the fee to carry the letter to

 <p>305-H-1</p>	<p>No covers recorded with this datestamp</p>
 <p>305-H-2</p>	 Type 1 Red  Type 2 Blue  Type 1 Blue <p>Manuscript - 5, 10, 12½, 18¾, 25</p>
 <p>305-H-3</p>	 Type 3 Red  Type 4 Blue  Type 5  Type 6  Type 7 Red, Blue  Type 8  Type 2 Red, Blue  Type 3  Type 4  Type 5 Blue  Type 6  Type 7 Red  Type 8  Type 9 Red, Blue <p>Manuscript - Free, 5, 10, 12½, 18¾, 20, 25</p>
 <p>305-I-1</p>	 Type 9  Type 10  Type 10 <p><b>FREE</b> Blue Manuscript - Free</p>
 <p>305-J-1</p>	<p>No stampless covers recorded with this datestamp</p>

**Table 1**  
Notes  
1. Datestamps - 85% actual size  
2. Rate handstamps - actual size

the pier. Later, a railroad route agent applied the postmark Type 305-I-1 in blue ink and a Type 10 handstamp rate “10” marking. The letter was addressed to a specific street address in New York City with 10 cents postage due.

Considerable study has been done in the past on the postmarks of the Wilmington & Raleigh Rail Road by researchers such as Remele, Towle, Harris and Stroupe. We know there are several different manuscript postmarks and at least five different handstamp postmarks. Table 1 illustrates the known postmarks recorded in Volume 4 of *Post Offices and Postmasters of North Carolina, Colonial to USPS*, edited by Vernon Stroupe, et. al. Among other data, Volume 4 provides a section of all the known railroad markings of North Carolina using identification numbers established by Charles Towle. Table 1 does not illustrate the manuscript postmarks, which Towle had identified as Types 305-Q-1 and 305-Q-2. These two types are shown in Figure 5. Table 1, however, does illustrate each of the five handstamp postmarks, which Towle identified as Types 305-H-1, 305-H-2, 305-H-3, 305-I-1, and 305-J-1 and shows all recorded rate handstamp and manuscript markings seen with each postmark. The three postmarks that are the most similar, Types 305-H-1, 305-H-2, and 305-H-3 can be identified with Jim Harris Type numbers 1, 2, and 3 as follows: Type 1 has smaller letters (2.75 mm, tall), a smaller “N” at the end of “Wilmington,” a small Ampersand, and a period after “Road.” Type 2 has larger letters (3 mm, tall), a normal “N” and Ampersand, and a period after “Road.” Type 3 has larger letters (3 mm, tall), a normal “N” and Ampersand, and no period after

“Road.” Each of the three Type 305-H postmarks measure 30 mm in diameter.

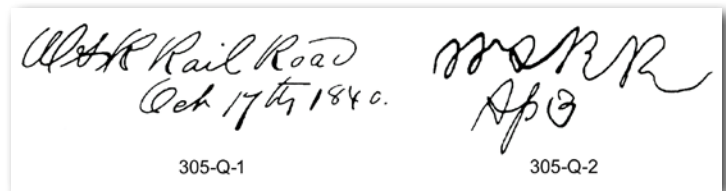
There are many different rate markings used on unpaid covers processed on the Wilmington & Raleigh Rail Road. To date, little research has been done on these markings. When one compares other North Carolina cities during this era, none have the large number of handstamp postmarks and different rate markings as the Wilmington & Raleigh Rail Road. One focus of this article will be to explore the handstamp postmarks and the different rate markings used from 1840 until 1853 by the railroad route agents.

Remele first identified the five route agent postmarks shown in Table 1. Towle later provided standard identification numbering and added the manuscript postmarks. Type 305-H-1 appears to be the earliest of the postmarks. To date, in the author’s census of 141 covers, there are no examples of Type 305-H-1.

The earliest recorded date for postmark Type 305-H-2 is March 27, 1844, illustrated by Figure 6. This folded letter was datelined March 12, 1844, in Havana, Cuba. It was carried by favor to Savannah, Georgia, on the brig *Havana*, and hand-carried to Charleston, where it was taken to the steamship pier to go on board a Wilmington & Raleigh Rail Road steamer to Wilmington. It was postmarked by the route agent on March 27, 1844.

Examples of the Type 305-H-2 postmark are recorded in both red and blue ink, and used from 1844 until 1851. Late 1851 uses of Type 305-H-2 show dates of September 9th and

**Figure 5.** ▶ Manuscript postmarks of route agents on the Wilmington & Raleigh Rail Road with Towle numbering. Other spelling versions exist.



◀ **Figure 6.** March 27, 1844, earliest recorded use of route agent postmark Type 305-H-2. Folded letter dateline March 12, 1844, Havana, Cuba, by favor on board the brig *Havana* to Savannah, then to Charleston, where it went by Wilmington & Raleigh Rail Road steamship to Wilmington. It was postmarked by the railroad route agent on March 27th and marked for 25 cents postage due.

December 5th. Figure 7 illustrates postmark Type 305-H-2 used on a folded letter from Charleston, bypassing the Charleston post office and taken to the pier for the steamer to Wilmington. The letter was dated in Charleston on September 8, 1851, and was addressed to New York City. It was prepaid with a 3-cents 1851 dull red stamp, and canceled with a blue circular grid killer. The postmark and cancellation were applied by the route agent of the Wilmington & Raleigh Rail Road.

The Type 305-H-2 postmark has been recorded with three different handstamp rate markings as well as a number of manuscript rate markings. Two different rate handstamp "5" markings are recorded, of which one cover each is recorded in blue ink and one "10" rate cover in blue also.

It seems the Type 305-H-3 handstamp was the workhorse of the Wilmington & Raleigh Rail Road route agent postmarks. Associated with this postmark are 14 different rate handstamps and seven different manuscript markings. Both red and blue inks were used. The earliest recorded use of Type 305-H-3 is March 2, 1843, in red ink. This cover, as well as three other early uses of this postmark, is used on covers addressed to Governor Morehead and located in the North Carolina State Archives in Raleigh.

Figure 8 is an example of Type 305-H-3 postmark used on the railroad on July 9, 1845. The cover originated in Wilmington and was mailed to Baltimore, Maryland. The postmark is in red ink with a black ink manuscript "10" rate for postage due. The red ink was the first color to be used by the route agents on this railroad. The majority of the covers posted before 1849 show the red ink use.

The latest recorded use of the Type 305-H-3 postmark is December 7, 1851, on a cover which was posted from Wilmington to New York City. Figures 9 and 10 show examples of late use of this postmark. Each was posted in 1851 using blue ink. Figure 9 is an unpaid, folded letter from Charleston

dated July 8, 1851, addressed to New York City. The rate marking is a Type 6 handstamp "5." On July 1, 1851, single letter rates were reduced for distances less than 3,000 miles to 3 cents if paid and 5 cents if unpaid. The latter applied to this letter. The letter was marked by the route agent on the Wilmington & Raleigh Rail Road on July 9th. Seven examples of this small rate marking are recorded.

Figure 10 illustrates a Type 3 rate handstamp "10" on an unpaid folded letter with the Type 305-H-3 postmark in blue ink addressed to New York City. It originated in Charleston on June 12, 1851. The letter was postmarked by the railroad route agent on June 13, 1851. Two examples of this rate marking are recorded.

On March 3, 1845, Congress approved new postal rates, effective July 1, 1845. Letters weighing a half ounce or less and going less than 300 miles required 5 cents postage and those going over 300 miles, 10 cents. These changes greatly impacted the post office staff. They reduced the previous rates based on five distance categories to just two. They also eliminated letter rates based on the number of sheets of paper in the letter, considering now only the weight of a letter. It appears this is what fueled the increase in "5" and "10" rate markings used on the Wilmington & Raleigh Rail Road.

The Type 305-H-3 postmarks now appeared with six different "5" rate markings and 8 different "10" rate markings recorded. Most of the rate markings are scarce and some unique. The Type 6 rate handstamp "5" is the most common with 7 examples known. Of the "10" rate markings, the Type 8 is the most common with 7 examples recorded.

Of the "5" rate markings, Types 3, 4, 5 and 8 have only one example recorded. Figure 11 shows a Type 8 rate handstamp "5" on an unpaid letter to Strickland's Depot (Duplin County). At the time the post office name most often was referred to as Strickland's or Stricklands. The folded letter outer sheet of

**Figure 7.** ▶

September 8, 1851, folded letter from Charleston to New York, paid with 3-cents 1851 dull red stamp. Letter by-passed the Charleston post office and was taken to the pier for Wilmington & Raleigh Rail Road steamship to Wilmington. Railroad route agent applied blue Type 305-H-2 postmark on September 9th and canceled the stamp with a blue circular grid killer.







◀ **Figure 8.** July 9, 1845, folded letter from Wilmington to Baltimore, Maryland. Letter taken to the railroad station in Wilmington, where the Wilmington & Raleigh Rail Road route agent accepted the letter and struck the red Type 305-H-3 postmark. He rated the unpaid letter for 10 cents postage due in manuscript.

**Figure 9.** ▶  
 July 9, 1851, Type 305-H-3 postmark with Type 6 handstamp "5" rate marking on a folded letter with Charleston dateline of July 8, 1851, to James Couper Lord Esq. of New York. Seven examples of this small rate marking are recorded. Postage due of 5 cents was the new unpaid letter rate for a letter going 3,000 miles or less from July 1, 1851.



◀ **Figure 10.** Folded letter from Charleston on June 12, 1851, to New York City. The railroad route agent applied the blue Type 305-H-3 postmark on June 13, 1851, and the Type 3 rate marking for an unpaid letter going more than 300 miles to New York. Two examples of this rate marking are recorded.

**Figure 11.** ▶  
 Folded letter outer sheet of unknown origin addressed to Mrs. Sherwood, wife of Dr. Sherwood, the postmaster of Strickland's Depot (Duplin County). The red route agent Type 305-H-3 postmark is dated January 23 along with a red Type 8 handstamp rate marking. Only one example of this marking has been recorded.



unknown origin was addressed to Mrs. Sherwood, wife of Dr. Sherwood, the postmaster of Stricklands. The red Type 305-H-3 postmark is dated January 23 along with a red handstamp rate marking for 5 cents postage due.

Figures 12 and 13 show dramatically different "10" rate markings. Figure 12 illustrates a folded letter outer sheet addressed to New York City. It has a Type 305-H-3 route agent postmark with a Type 6 handstamp rate "10" marking for the postage due. Both markings are in red ink. Only one example of this rate marking has been recorded. Note how similar this is to the Type 7 rate handstamp "10," which seems to be the same marking just hollowed out. Only two examples of the Type 7 have been recorded.

Figure 13 illustrates an unpaid, folded letter from Charleston to Philadelphia with the Type 305-H-3 postmark dated October 27, 1846, and a Type 9 rate handstamp "10" marking. This is a significantly taller marking with a much larger center within the zero. The Type 9 rate marking is known in red and blue ink.

Beginning around June 1850, the Wilmington & Raleigh Rail Road route agents started using a new type of postmark, Type 305-I-1. This postmark has been recorded on 17 covers. Two different five-cents rate markings, one ten-cents rate marking, and a "FREE" handstamp have been recorded along with a manuscript "Free." It appears this postmark was used only in 1850-1851, and is recorded only in blue ink. Figure 14 is an example of the Type 305-I-1 postmark used with the Type 9

**Figure 12.** ▶

Type 305-H-3 route agent postmark with a Type 6 ten cent rate marking used on an unpaid, folded letter outer sheet without origin. Wilmington & Raleigh Rail Road postmark date is April 10th. Only one example of this marking had been recorded and it is in red ink indicating use before 1850.



◀ **Figure 13.** Unpaid folded letter originating in Charleston and addressed to Philadelphia, with a Type 305-H-3 route agent postmark dated October 27, 1846. The postage due is marked with a Type 9 ten cent rate marking. The Type 9 rate marking is known in both red and blue ink.

**Figure 14.** ▶

June 12, 1850, Type 305-I-1 route agent postmark in blue with Type 9 five cent rate marking. The letter originated in Wilmington and was addressed to Fayetteville. This is the earliest recorded use of this marking. Note the slanted top of the "5," characteristic of the Type 5 rate marking.



handstamp rate “5.” This unpaid, folded letter from Wilmington was addressed to Fayetteville (Cumberland County), and was processed by the railroad route agent on June 12, 1850. This is the earliest recorded use of this marking. Note the slanted top of the “5,” characteristic of the Type 5 rate marking.

Figure 15 is an example of the Type 305-I-1 postmark used with the Type 10 handstamp “5” rate marking in blue. This is one of only two recorded examples of this “5” rate marking. The cover was posted unpaid from Wilmington to Dr. Sherwood in Strickland's Depot (Duplin County). At the time the post office name most often was referred to as Stricklands. The cover was processed on the railroad on December 3, 1851, where the route agent applied the postmark and rate handstamp.

The ten-cents rate covers with the Type 305-I-1 postmark are the most common. Only one rate marking is recorded and

eight examples are known. Figure 16 is an example of this slanted “10” rate handstamp. It is found only in blue ink. This folded unpaid, letter from Charleston to James Couper Lord, Esq. in New York City was posted by the railroad route agent on January 28, 1851, using a Type 305-I-1 postmark and a Type 10 handstamp rate “10” marking. The cover was taken to the pier in Charleston and carried on the railroad mail steamship to Wilmington, where it was placed on the railroad to New York.

A new “FREE” handstamp is seen with the Type 305-I-1 postmark as an additional rate marking. Figure 17 is the only known example of this handstamp. This folded letter originated in Wilmington on June 31, 1854, and was addressed to Dr. Sherwood in Strickland, North Carolina. The Wilmington & Raleigh Rail Road route agent postmarked the letter later the same day. Since the letter was addressed to the postmaster, it



◀ **Figure 15.** Unpaid folded letter from Wilmington to Stricklands (Duplin County), with a Type 305-I-1 route agent postmark in blue and a Type 10 “5” rate handstamp, also in blue. This is one of only two recorded examples of this “5” rate marking. The cover was processed by the route agent on December 3, 1851.

**Figure 16.** ▶ Unpaid folded letter from Charleston to New York carried by the railroad steamboat to Wilmington. On January 28, 1851, it was processed by the railroad route agent with a Type 305-I-1 postmark and a Type 10 rate handstamp for the postage due. This slanted “10” handstamp is the only one recorded for use with this postmark.



◀ **Figure 17.** June 31, 1854, unpaid folded letter from Wilmington to Stricklands (Duplin County), with a Type 305-I-1 route agent postmark and “FREE” rate handstamp, both in blue ink. This is the only recorded example of the free handstamp. The cover was processed by the route agent later the same day.



was allowed to go “Free” of charge. Also, this is the latest use of a Wilmington & Raleigh Rail Road cover that has been recorded.

On July 1, 1847, the first U.S. postage stamps were issued. Although they are not rare, they are considerably scarcer than the stamps of the 1851 issue. North Carolina received a total of 15,500 five-cents stamps and 5,200 ten-cents 1847-issue stamps. A total of 14 towns in North Carolina received these stamps and one railroad, the Wilmington & Raleigh Rail Road. At this time the railroad had route agents, who received 1,500 five-cents stamps and 300 ten-cents stamps. The route agents listed in the official records of the post office department as receiving these 1847-issue postage stamps were:

Agent	City	Date	10-cents	5-cents
G.G. Lynch	Weldon	8/31/48	100	500
A. Sherwood	Weldon	8/31/48	100	500
W.A. Walker	Weldon	8/29/48	100	500

By comparison, Wilmington received the most 1847 stamps – 6,300 five-cents and 1,900 ten-cents stamps. Raleigh received 3,400 five-cents stamps and 1,600 ten-cents stamps.

In the census of 1847 covers maintained by the U.S. Philatelic Classics Society, there are 73 recorded covers originating in North Carolina. This total does not include the Wilmington & Raleigh Rail Road covers. Wilmington has the most of the North Carolina 1847 covers with 27. The U.S. Philatelic Classics Society census of Wilmington & Raleigh Rail Road 1847 covers totals 23 covers. Of these, 11 are five-cents covers and 12 are ten-cents covers. Unfortunately, of the 12 ten-cent covers, the Philatelic Foundation has declared that five are fake covers. Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that although the railroad received far fewer 1847 postage stamps than the larger towns, a large number of the railroad covers have survived.

Shown in Figure 18 is a pair of 5-cents 1847 stamps on a folded letter from Charleston, South Carolina, to Ghent, Belgium, carried on the Wilmington & Raleigh Rail Road. The

French name for Ghent was Gand, as we see in the address. The letter was written in Charleston on February 19, 1848. The cover has a Type 305-H-3 route agent postmark in red ink, dated February 22nd. A complete description of this cover appeared in this journal in 1997 with a black and white photocopy image (see “Charleston, S.C. to Belgium via Wilmington & Raleigh Railroad” by Richard F. Winter, NCPHS Vol. 16, No. 1, Spring 1997). While the details of this cover will not be repeated here, the cover now can be shown in color.

A previously unrecorded cover with a horizontal pair of the 5-cents dark brown 1847 stamps is shown in Figure 19. This cover has a Type 305-H-3 route agent postmark in blue ink indicating a use in either 1850 or 1851. Unfortunately, there is no more information about this cover, including whether or not it has a good certificate.

Figure 20 is a splendid example of the 10-cents 1847 stamp used on a Wilmington & Raleigh Rail Road cover to New York City. The cover originated in Charleston on April 23, 1851, and was taken directly to the Charleston pier to go on board the railroad steamship. A Wilmington & Raleigh Rail Road route agent posted it April 24th. There is a manuscript receiving mark of April 29, 1851, inside the cover. The route agent postmark was a Type 305-I-1, used with a Type 10 rate handstamp “10.” The stamp is cancelled with a four-bar pinwheel cancel in blue. This killer often is described as a “propeller” fancy cancel, and characteristically used by the Wilmington & Raleigh route agents. The additional rate marking would indicate the letter weighed more than a single rate and that another rate was due.

As of this writing, only one example of the Type 305-J-1 postmark has been recorded. Remele used this example to produce the tracing for his book. Figure 21 is an illustration of the cover from an old black and white photocopy. It is on an envelope to Washington, Connecticut, that has a corner card marking of the Carolina Hotel in Wilmington. A 3-cents dull red 1851 stamp paid the postage. Jim Harris felt this route agent postmark was used only in the month of April of 1853.



◀ **Figure 18.** February 19, 1848, letter written in Charleston, South Carolina, addressed to Ghent, Belgium. Letter carried by Wilmington & Raleigh Rail Road steamship to Wilmington. Cover marked by railroad route agent with red Type 305-H-3 postmark on February 22nd and sent it to New York, where Cunard steamship *Hibernia* carried it to England. British debit Belgium 1 shilling 8 pence and Belgians marked 24 decimes postage due at destination.

**Figure 19.** ▶ Envelope from unknown origin addressed to Philadelphia and paid with a horizontal pair of 5-cents dark brown 1847 stamps, postmarked on the Wilmington & Raleigh Rail Road on April 8th, either 1850 or 1851. A Type 305-H-3 route agent postmark was used in blue ink.



◀ **Figure 20.** April 23, 1851, cover from Charleston to New York City taken to the Charleston pier of the Wilmington & Raleigh steamship for transport to Wilmington. A Type 305-I-1 route agent postmark was applied on April 24 as was a Type 10 rate handstamp, both in blue ink. The stamp was canceled with a “propeller” killer, often described as a fancy cancel and known to be one used by this railroad’s agents. The additional rate marking indicates the letter weighed more than a single rate and required a second rate.

**Figure 21.** ▶ Black and white photocopy of the only known example of route agent postmark 305-J-1. Remele used this example in his 1958 book documenting the known route agent postmarks for the Wilmington & Raleigh Rail Road. Harris believe that the postmark was used only during the month of April 1853. It is shown here on a paid cover to Washington, Connecticut that has a corner card marking of the Carolina Hotel in Wilmington.



◀ **Figure 22.** January 10, (1853), folded letter outer sheet paid with a 3-cents dull red 1851 stamp canceled in black ink cross hatches. The manuscript postmark in black ink reads “Wil & Ral R R/(Month and day date).” Letter was addressed to Hon W A Graham, retired governor in Hillsboro (Orange County).

Since the railroad would continue to operate beyond 1853, it is curious why more covers have not been recorded. The author has never seen the Type 305-J-1 in later years.

The last marking to be discussed is a manuscript postmark used on this railroad. Towle listed two manuscript postmarks, 305-Q-1 and 305-Q-2, shown in Figure 5. Each of these postmarks abbreviated the name of the railroad in different ways, “W&R Rail Road/(full date)” and “W&RR/(Month and day date).” A third manuscript style is shown in Figure 22. This postmark reads “Wil & Ral R R/(Month and day date).” This folded letter outer sheet was paid with a 3-cents dull red 1851 stamp canceled in black ink cross hatches. The cover was postmarked on the railroad January 10, (1853) and was addressed to retired governor, Hon. W. A. Graham in Hillsboro (Orange County). It was written in a more legible handwriting than the Towle manuscript postmarks, which appeared in the 1840s.

Except for manuscript markings, all the covers illustrated in this article have either red or blue ink markings. The catalogue lists some black markings and several of Stroupe’s photocopies indicate black ink was used. Of the nearly 100 railroad covers,

the author has personally examined, none show black ink was used; however, the census reflects the Stroupe notes.

Clearly, not all the mail carried by steamboat from Charleston to Wilmington received railroad transit markings. Figures 23 and 24 are examples. Figure 23 is a prices current mailing from A.S. Willington & Co., Charleston, South Carolina, dated October 17, 1851, and addressed to Providence, Rhode Island. It was paid with a 3-cents orange-brown 1851 stamp. A pencil notation alongside the stamp, placed there either by a collector or dealer, has identified the stamp as position 4R on the early state of plate 5. The letter has a manuscript “Way” and the stamp was postmarked in Wilmington on October 19. This cover undoubtedly was carried on a Wilmington & Raleigh Rail Road steamship to Wilmington, where it entered the postal system as a way letter. It was postmarked there instead of on board the train by a Wilmington and Raleigh Rail Road route agent. The letter was placed on the train going north among all the bagged mail from Wilmington.

Figure 24 is another example of an envelope from Charleston with an Honour’s City Post 2-cents stamp. Honour’s City Post was a privately operated mail and package delivery service,

**Figure 23.** ▶

October 17, 1851, prices current from A.S. Willington & Co., Charleston, addressed to Providence, Rhode Island. Letter entered postal system at Wilmington as a “Way,” undoubtedly carried on the Wilmington & Raleigh Rail Road steamship from Charleston. Letter was paid with 3-cents orange-brown 1851 stamp.



◀ **Figure 24.** Honour’s City Post 2-cents stamp used to carry this unpaid envelope to the Charleston pier of the Wilmington & Raleigh Rail Road steamship for transport to Wilmington. Cover addressed to Philadelphia and posted at Wilmington on 15 February (ca 1851). The Wilmington postal clerk marked 10 cents postage due. Envelope not marked by route agent on train as it was in a sealed mail bag.



operated in Charleston from 1851 until 1858. It carried mail primarily between businesses and hotels to the post office. In this case, Honour's was used to carry the letter to the pier in Charleston. The letter, addressed to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, was carried by steamship from Charleston to Wilmington, where it received the Type 8 circular datestamp used there from 1840 until 1861. A ten-cents rate marking for this unpaid letter was applied at the Wilmington post office, indicating the postage due for over 300 miles travel to Philadelphia. The cover was then placed on the railroad and carried north. It received no route agent marking because it was in a sealed mail bag from Wilmington. Since both of these two covers would have been carried on the railroad steamboat, they can be considered part of the railroad's postal history.

As mentioned earlier, the Wilmington & Manchester Railroad with its connection to the South Carolina railroads, greatly changed the operation of the Wilmington & Raleigh Rail Road company. The railroad, with its new name of the Wilmington & Weldon Railroad, would continue to operate during the Civil War and play a major role in maintaining the supplies for the troops. The Wilmington & Weldon Railroad eventually merged into the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad, which today is a part of the current CSX Transportation System.

A census of all the known Wilmington & Raleigh Rail Road covers is presented in Table 2 on the next page. Shown are the dates of their use, color of the postmark, any stamps on the covers by Scott's Catalog number, the rate markings and type on the cover, the postmark catalog number, addressee, origin and notes. The 1847-stamped covers are listed separately at the end of the main listing, first the 5-cents covers and then the 10-cents covers. ■

#### Author's notes:

The research for this article has taken several months to assemble and compile the data. The article would not be possible without the early research conducted by Vernon Stroupe, now deceased. He assembled copies of countless covers for all of North Carolina that are now in the society's

postmark archives. I would also thank editor Richard Winter for all of his help in developing the charts and tables for the article, as well as his advice and direction for the article.

I would like to request copies or scans of any unrecorded markings you may have in your collections. You may contact me at the address listed on the journal's masthead page.

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Date	Year	Color	Stamp	Rate	Type	Cat. Number	Address	Origination	Notes
18-Apr	1853	Black	11			305-J-1	Mr Anthony Smith, Washington, Ct	Wilmington	Carolina Hotel Corner Card; <b>Fig 21</b>
10-Jan	1853	Ms	11			305-Q-1	Hon W A Graham Hillsboro, NC		<b>Fig 22</b>
17-Oct	1840	Ms		37 1/2	Ms	305-Q-1	Miss Elizabeth Savage, Care of John I Lyell Richmond, Va		Earliest recorded cover; <b>Fig 3</b>
11-Aug		Ms				305-Q-1	Dr Calet E Winston, 143 Biddle, Baltimore, MD		Stamp missing; Ms 1868?
7-Jun	1841	Ms		12 1/2	Ms	305-Q-1	John H Raleigh		
9-Aug		Blue	11			305-I-1	Messu N L McGrady & Co, New York	Charleston	
5-Nov	1851	Blue	10			305-I-1	James Couper Esq, New York		Paid Cancel on stamp
22-Jan	1851	Blue		Free	Ms	305-I-1	Willis M. Sherwood PM, Strickland, NC		
10-Feb	1852	Blue	4LB8	5	10	305-I-1	Honble James G. King, New York, City	Charleston	Honour's City Post
Jun-31	1854	Blue		Free	Blue Hs	305-I-1	W.M. Sherwood PM, Stricklands NC	Wilmington	<b>Fig 17</b>
23-Dec		Blue		No rate		305-I-1	W.M. Sherwood PM, Stricklands, NC		
27-May	1851	Blue		5	9	305-I-1	Mr William B. Rodmon, North Washington, Beaufort Co, NC		
29-Sep	1851	Blue		5	9	305-I-1	Dr William Sherwood MD, New York		Due rate after 3 cent rate in effect
3-Dec	1851	Blue		5	10	305-I-1	W.M. Sherwood MD Stricklands, NC	Wilmington	<b>Fig 15</b>
12-Jun	1850	Blue		5	9	305-I-1	Col Alex. Elliot, Fayetteville, NC	Wilmington	<b>Fig 14</b>
22-Jan		Blue		10	10	305-I-1	Jas Couper Lord Esq, New York		
28-Jan	1851	Blue		10	10	305-I-1	Jas Couper Lord Esq, New York	Charleston	<b>Fig 16</b>
20-Feb		Blue		10	10	305-I-1	James Couper Lord Esq New York		
20-Feb	1851	Blue	4LB8a	10	10	305-I-1	H Grimel Esq 40 Maiden Ln NY, NY	Charleston	Honour's City Post; <b>Fig 4</b>

▲ **Table 2.** Census of all known Wilmington & Raleigh Rail Road covers arranged by route agent Type number. Covers with 1847 stamps are listed separately at the end.



26-Feb	1851	Blue		10	10	305-I-1	James Couper Lord Esq New York		
6-May	1851	Blue		10	10	305-I-1	Mr Judephus Baldwin Nashua, NH		
18-May	1851	Blue		10	10	305-I-1	James Couper Lord Esq, New York	Charleston	
18 ?		Red		10	Ms	305-H 2	C.P. Relf Esq, Phildelphia		
5-Feb	1848	Red		18 3/4	Ms	305-H-2	Capt W G Freeman, US Army, Washington	Forth John- ston NC	
24-Feb	1846	Red		5	Ms	305-H-2	His Execl W A Graham, Gov Raleigh, NC		
25-Feb	1846	Red		5	1	305-H-2	Mr E Killen Fayetteville, NC		
28-Feb	1851	Blue		10	Ms	305-H 2	Mr Judson Stugil Fairfield Conn	Charleston	
27-Mar	1844	Red		25	Ms	305-H-2	John Turner Esq 161 Wil- liams St, New York	Havana Cuba	<b>Fig 6</b>
27-Jun	1843	Red		12 1/2	Ms	305-H-2	The Hon. Duncan Cam- eron, Raleigh, NC		
9-Sep	1851	Blue	10			305-H-2	Messurs N L McGrady & Co, New York	Charleston	<b>Fig 7</b>
5-Dec	1851	Blue	11			305-H-2	James C. Lord Esq, New York		
17-Feb	1852	Blue	11; 4LB8			305-H-2	Messrs Rice & Wasm, Pearl St, Boston, Mass	Charleston	Honour's City Post
27-Oct		Blue		5	2	305-H-2	Hon Wm A Graham, Ra- leigh, NC		
18-Oct		Blue		10	1	305-H-2	Mr Peter Mallett, NY		
9-Jul	1845	Red		10	Ms	305-H-3	James Richards Esq care of Howard Mullbery, Balti- more	Wilmington	<b>Fig 8</b>
20-Aug				10	Ms	305-H-3	Mesurs Boggs Southward #88 West St, NY		
17-Nov	1846	Red		10	Ms	305-H-3	C.P. Relf Esq, Phildelphia	Charleston	
1-Sep		Red		5	Ms	305-H-3	Miss Catherine D Derosset, St Mary School, Raleigh		"Via Goldsboro"
7-Nov	1845	Red		5	Ms	305-H-3	Mr E Fullen, Fayetteville, NC		
2-Mar	1843	Red		12 1/2	Ms	305-H-3	His Excellency J M Mor- head, Gov. Raleigh, NC		Archives Raleigh

1-Jun	1845	Red		12 1/2	Ms	305-H-3	His Excellency J M Morehead, Gov. Raleigh, NC		Archives Raleigh
19-Jun	1843	Red		12 1/2	Ms	305-H-3	His Excellency J M Morehead, Gov. Raleigh, NC		Archives Raleigh
18-Feb	1844	Red		18 3/4	Ms	305-H-3	His Excellency J M Morehead, Gov. Raleigh, NC		Archives Raleigh
16-Mar	1845	Red		25	Ms	305-H-3	Shubael Hutchins Esq, Providence, RI	Charleston	
29-Mar	1845	Red		25	Ms	305-H-3	Shubael Hutchins Esq, Providence, RI	Charleston	
21-Apr	1845	Red		25	Ms	305-H-3	Hon Wil. A Graham, Hillsboro		Archives Raleigh
18-Jun	1845	Red		25	Ms	305-H-3	Shubael Hutchins Esq, Providence, RI		
23-Feb	1851	Red	9X1 (2)			305-H-3	Miss W F ? NewOrleans		
21-Oct	1851	Blue	11			305-H-3	Mr Chas Renan, 119 Maiden Lane, New York		
7-Dec	1851	Blue	10			305-H-3	?Robert & Co, New York		Cork cancel on stamp
9-Sep	1851	Blue	10			305-H-3	Mesurs N L Mcgeady & Co, New York		Blue grid cancel
8-Jul	1851	Blue	10			305-H-3	G W Modecan Esq, Raleigh, NC		
1-Nov		Blue		Free	MS	305-H-3	Dr Will M Sherwood, Stricklands, NC	Wilmington	
17-Feb	1851	Blue		No Rate		305-H-3	Will M Sherwood, Stricklands, NC		
17-Mar	1850	Blue		No rate		305-H-3	Dr W M Sherwood, Stricklands, NC		
16-May	1851	Blue		No rate		305-H-3	Dr W M Sherwood, Stricklands, NC		
4-May	1851	Blue		No Rate		305-H-3	Dr W M Sherwood, Stricklands, NC		
29-Jun	1851	Blue		No Rate		305-H-3	Dr W M Sherwood, Stricklands, NC		Rat eaten cover
30-Aug	1849	Blue		10 over 5		305-H-3	W John C MacRae, Natural Bridge, Va		Ty2 ten over Ty6 Five
5-Apr	1851	Blue		5		305-H-3	John C McRae Esq, Raleigh, NC		
18-Jul		Blue		5	5	305-H-3	Col Alex Elliot, Fayetteville, NC		
18-May	1850	Blue		5	6	305-H-3	Miss Ella Alexander, Palmers Spring, Meck co, VA	Roberson Po, Brunswick Co	
9-Jul		Blue		5	6	305-H-3	James Couper Lord Esq, New York	Charleston	<b>Fig 9</b>

17-Jul	1845	Blue		5	6	305-H-3	His Excellency W A Graham, Gov Raleigh		Archives Raleigh
15-Aug		Blue		5	6	305-H-3	E Fuller Esq, Fayetteville		
18-Aug		Blue		5	6	305-H-3	Mrs Annie H Wheat, Enfield, NC		
11-Sep	1849	Blue		5	6	305-H-3	Col Gaston Meares, Shocco Springs, Warren Co, NC		
14-Sep		Blue		5	6	305-H-3	Rev Jno F Spright, Tarboro, NC		
27-Oct	1846	Blue		5	3	305-H-3	His excellency W A Graham, Raleigh		Archives Raleigh
1-Jan	1846	Red		5	7	305-H-3	Rev M Ashley Curtis, Hillsboro		
23-Jan		Red		5	8	305-H-3	Mrs CC Sherwood, Stricklands, NC		<b>Fig 11</b>
01 Mar?	1848	Red		5	7	305-H-3	Gov. William A Graham, Raleigh, NC		Archives Raleigh
4-May				5	7	305-H-3	Mr E A Voglen, Salem, NC		
16-Jun	1846	Red		5		305-H-3	Hon Exc W A Graham, Gov Raleigh		Archives Raleigh
8-Aug	1848			5	7	305-H-3	Gov Wm A Graham, Raleigh		Archives Raleigh
17-Aug	1849	Blue		5	7	305-H-3	Jennett Md Turluire, Montpilier PO, NC	Wilmington	
19-Sep	1849	Red		5	7	305-H-3	Geo W Mordecai Esq, Raleigh, NC		
30-Nov	1848			5	7	305-H-3	Wm A Graham, Raleigh, NC		Archives Raleigh
9-Dec	1848			5	7	305-H-3	Wm A Graham, Raleigh, NC		Archives Raleigh
?				5	5	305-H-3	Dr W M Sherwood, Stricklands, NC		Major tear from top of cover
5-Apr	1851			5	4	305-H-3	John C McRae Esq, Raleigh, NC		
24-Jan	1850	Blue		10	2	305-H-3	Miss H Endicott Cof Wm Endicott, NY	Charleston	
10-Jan		Red		10	2	305-H-3	Charles Tobis Esq, New Orleans		
7-Feb		Blue		10	2	305-H-3	James Deshon Esq, Boston		
19-Feb	1849	Blue		10	2	305-H-3	Capt R H Tucker, Main	Charleston	
6-Mar	1851	Blue		10	2	305-H-3	Jas Couper Lord Esq, New York		
18-Mar	1851	Blue	4LB8	10	2	305-H-3	James C?, New York	Charleston	Honour's City Post

8-Apr	1851	Blue		10	2	305-H-3	Jas Couper Lord Esq, New York		
14-May	1848	Red		10	2	305-H-3	Mesurs Cornelis & Co, Phildelphia, Pa		
10-Jun	1849	Blue		10	2	305-H-3	? J Brown, Phildelphia, Pa	Charleston	
3-Aug		Blue		10	2	305-H-3	Mr Guy R Phelps Scy, Hartford, Ct	Wilmington	
15-Ju?		Blue	4LB8	10	2	305-H-3	Mesus Powers & Wrightman, Philadelphia, Pa	Charleston	Honour's City Post
4-Dec		Blue		10	2	305-H-3	Mr Lauren Esq & Others, Fayetteville		
13-Jun	1851	Blue		10	3	305-H-3	Jas Couper Lord Esq, New York	Charleston	<b>Fig 10</b>
9-Jan	1851	Blue		10	3	305-H-3	James Couper Lord Esq, New York		
20-Jan	1851	Blue	4LB8a	10	4	305-H-3	James H Durham Esq, Pittsfield, Mass	Charleston	Honour's City Post
20-Feb	1849	Blue		10	4	305-H-3	Mesurs L Hutchins, Providence, RI		
22-Mar		Blue		10	4	305-H-3	Mes Bulea Ludlow & Co, New York	Charleston	
12-Dec		Blue		20 Over10	5	305-H-3	Rev P Reilly, St Mary College, Raleigh, NC		
10-Apr		Red		10	6	305-H-3	Jno W Mitchell Esq, 24 Napan St, New York		<b>Fig 12</b>
24-Jul		Red		10	7	385-H-3	Hon: Secary of the Treasury, Washington DC		
25-Sep		Red		10	7	305-H-3	Chubail Hutchins Esq, Providence, RI		
18-Dec		Blue		10	8	305-H-3	Mrs WW Blackman, Bridgewater, N York		
6-Dec	1847	Blue		10	8	305-H-3	Mrs WW Blackman, Bridgewater, N York		
17-Jan	1849	Blue		10	8	305-H-3	Mr John C MacRae, Natural Bridge, Va		
4-May	1849	Blue		10	8	305-H-3	Mesures Davis & Brown, Philedelphia		
11-Jan	1851	Brown		10	8	305-H-3	Jonathan Thompson Esq, New York, Ny	Charleston	
19-Apr		Blue		10	8	305-H-3	Mr John C McRae, Natural Bridge, Va		
12-Dec		Blue		10	8	305-H-3	Mrs WW Blackman, Bridgewater, N York		
27-Oct	1846	Red		10	9	305-H-3	C P Relf Esq, Philadelphia, Pa	Charleston	<b>Fig 13</b>

1-Apr	1847?	Red		10	9	305-H-3	G W Modecan Esq, Goldsboro, NC		
6-Apr		Blue		10	4	305-H-3	H C Mills Esq, Newark, NJ		
27-Oct	1845	Blue		10	9	305-H-3	Mr Issac Brown, Providence, RI		
5-Dec	1846	Blue		20 ms over 10	9	305-H-3	Messur Litithut, New York		
22-Mar		Blue		10	4	305-H-3	Messur Bulea, Ludmont Co, New York		
15-Jul		Blue		10	2	305-H-3	Messurs Powers & Weightman, Philadelphia, PA	Charleston	Honours penny Post
<b>1847 Covers</b>									
25-Jan	1848	Red	1 (pr)			305-H-?	Greenock, Scotland		
25-Jan	1848	Blue	1 (2)				South Carolina		
22-Feb	1848	Red	1 (pr)			305-H-3	Monsure De Coster, Gand, Belgium	Charleston	<b>Fig 18</b>
5-May	1849	Blue	1 (2)			305-H-3	Messrs Banges & Co, Amsterdam, Holland	Charleston	Per America New York
6-Mar	1850	Blue	1			305-H-3	John D Williams Esq, Fayetteville		7 bar grid cancel
16-Mar	1850	Blue	1			305-H-3	J.De Coster, Gand, Belgium	Charleston	Per Steamer Canada; 4 seg wedge cancel
29-Mar	1850	Blue	1			305-H-2	Mr J. De Coster, Gand, Belgium	Charleston	Per Seamer Niagara
14-Oct	1850	Blue	1 (pr)			305-H-3	Mess Powers & Wrightman, Philidelphia		4 wedge pinwheel cancel
11-Mar		Red	1 (pr)				Mess Ludlow Beebee & Co, Phildelphia		
8-Apr		Blue	1 (Pr)			305-H-3	Mesuers Powers & Wrightman, Philadelphia		Front; <b>Fig 19</b>
3-May		Black	1 (pr)				Geo? Waynesboro		Question this only 2 known Black CDs
18-Aug			1			305-H-3	C N Webb Esq, Halifax SC		
9-Aug	1849	Blue	2			305-H-3	Beebe Ludlow & Co, NY, NY		
30-May	1850	Blue	2			305-H-3	David Anderson, New York City	Wilmington	10 used as cancel; PF considered Fake
24-Apr	1851	Blue	2	10	10	305-I-1	James Couper Lord Esq, New York	Charleston	Stamp Tied with pin wheel cancel; <b>Fig 20</b>
10-Jan		Blue	2				Miss MM Castle, Parma Center, NY		10 used as cancel; PF considered Fake

10-Feb		Blue	2			Mess Ludlow Beebee & Co, Phildelphia		
10-Feb		Blue	2		305-H-3	Eaton Bubut, Phildelphia		
16-Mar		Blue	2		305-H-2	Wm. Hill, Secretary, Raleigh		front
27-Mar		Blue	2			Shawneetown, Ill		
2-May		Black	2			Mrs M A Hunt, New York City		Question this only 2 known Black CDs
5-May			2		305-H-3	H W Wood Esq, Wilmington Va		10 used as cancel; PF considered Fake; may not be
6-May		Blue	2		305-H-3	Mr Samuel Henry, Prescott, Ma		10 used as cancel; PF considered Fake
7-Jun		Blue	2; 4LB8		305-H-3	Messrs Powers & Weightman, Phildelphia	Charleston	4 wedge pinwhell cancel Honour's City Post
27-Dec		Blue	2			Miss Malissa Hunt, Prairie Du Chien, Wi		PF considered Fake

## Raleigh and Gibson's Station Railroad



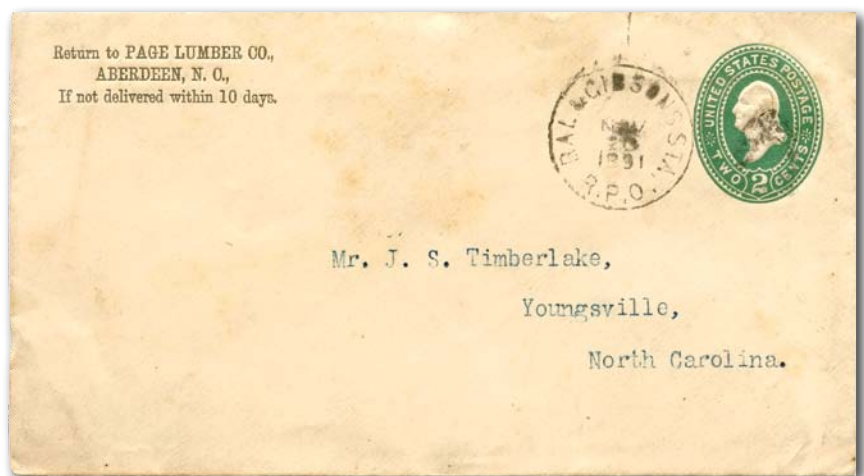
by Richard F. Winter

A recent cover find has brought to light a small North Carolina railroad that was not in the books as far as railroad postmarks was concerned.

It was listed as a railroad for which a railway post office marking had not been seen. Now that has changed. While there is little known about this railroad, I will attempt to piece together some isolated facts, mostly from on-line sources. This task was precipitated by seeing a scan of the cover and not finding its postmark in the recorded documentation of the Mobile Post Office Society, upon which we rely so much for railroad postmarks.

Figure 1 illustrates a 2-cent 1887 Plimpton & Morgan and Purcell stamped envelope with a business corner card marking of the Page Lumber Co., Aberdeen, N.C. (Moore County). It was addressed to Youngsville in Franklin County. The postmark on the envelope reads "RAL. & GIBSON'S STA./R.P.O." with the date, 20 November 1891. This was the postmark applied by the Railway Post Office

(R.P.O.) clerk on board the train to process mail picked up as loose letters along the route of the train. I call these loose let-



▲ **Figure 1.** 20 November 1887, Plimpton & Morgan and Purcell stamped envelope to Youngsville (Franklin County) with a business corner card marking of the Page Lumber Co., Aberdeen, N.C. (Moore County). Postmark reads "RAL. & GIBSON'S STA./R.P.O.", an unrecorded railway postal clerk datestamp.

ters because they were not in sealed mail bags transported by the train. This mail, in uncanceled condition, could have been handed to the clerk at the various train stops or removed from unattended post office boxes at the stations. Before the Civil War, the agents on board the trains were known as route agents. Starting in 1862 and transitioning to well after the Civil War, mail agents on board the trains were referred to as Railway Post Office (R.P.O.) clerks. Their postmarking devices now had the names of the rail line termini and the initials “R.P.O.” as we see in the postmark on this cover.

According to John Kay’s “Directory of Railway Post Offices,” the Raleigh & Gibson’s Station Railroad in North Carolina ran 109 miles over the Raleigh & Augusta Air Line Railroad’s tracks from 11 June 1888, having been previously established as the Raleigh & Hamlet Railroad. It was discontinued on 4 December 1888, reverting to the former name. It was reestablished on 26 December 1888 and ultimately changed back to the Raleigh & Hamlet Railroad on 23 December 1890. The designation resulted from a 10.5 mile portion being completed from Hamlet to the border with South Carolina at Gibson’s Station. This short section had one additional station at Ghio, about midway between Hamlet and Gibson’s.

Figure 2 shows a portion of North Carolina from Rockingham (Richmond County) to the border with South Carolina on an 1886 Shaffer’s Township Map of North Carolina. The 10.5 mile railroad section from Hamlet to Gibson’s Station, opened in 1884, appears on the right side with the two railroad terminals underlined in red. For reference, Rockingham is about nine miles northwest of Hamlet. This short railroad section was intended to become the beginning of a rail line from Hamlet to Charleston, South Carolina, but did not proceed past Gibson’s Station for the next 25 years. The freight route to Charleston never materialized as planned, but eventually tied into other existing railroads to eventually make the link in the 20th Century.

During the operation of the Raleigh & Gibson’s Station Railroad it carried mail under contract to the Post Office Department. The Annual Report of the Postmaster General ending 30

June 1890 listed it as route 13034 for the 10.5 miles from Hamlet to Gibson’s Station and route 13010 for the 97.5 miles from Raleigh to Hamlet. Two post office clerks made six round trips per week. The average weight of mail traveling from Raleigh to Gibson’s Station each day was 222 lbs. The average speed of the train was just over 21 mph in both directions. One apartment in a rail car was used for mail, measuring 11 x 6.75 feet. The mail crew per trip consisted of one clerk. Unfortunately, I have not seen the 1891 or 1892 Reports to ascertain if the railroad still was in use, although the John Kay information would suggest it wasn’t.

Since the Raleigh & Gibson’s Station Railroad was in operation for less than three years, it is no surprise that it has taken this long to see a cover with the R.P.O. datestamp after many years of research by specialists in railroad markings. Its use on this cover is a very late use, presumably after the line was no longer in use by that name. If so, it may mean that the marking device still was carried by the clerks on the Raleigh & Hamlet Railroad. ■

Sources:

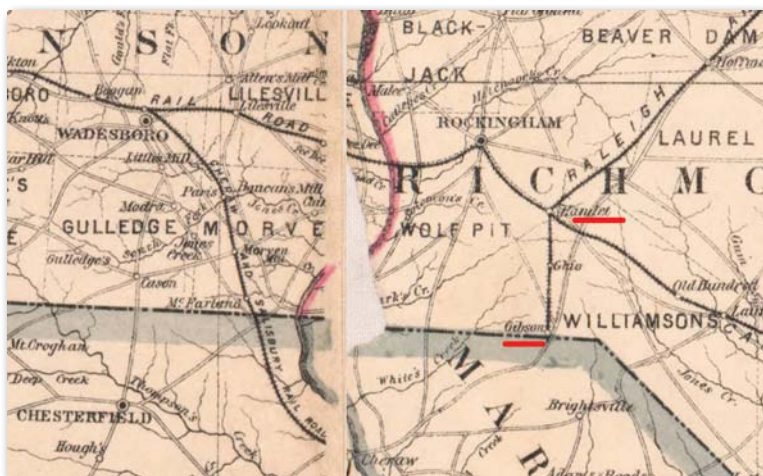
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◀ **Figure 2.** Portion of North Carolina from Rockingham (Richmond County) to the border with South Carolina on an 1886 “Shaffer’s Township Map of North Carolina.” The terminals of the 10.5 mile section from Hamlet to Gibson’s Station are underlined in red. Rockingham appears about nine miles northwest of Hamlet.



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