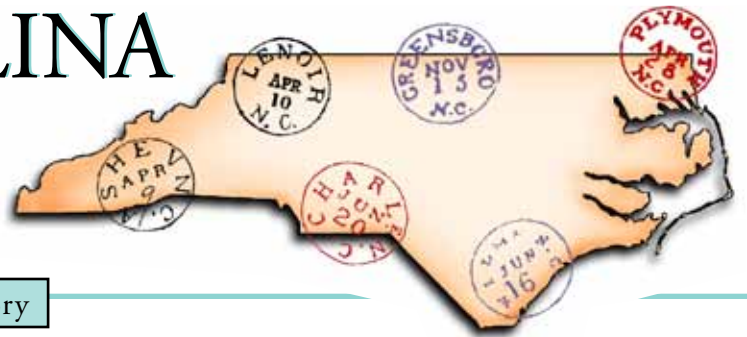


NORTH CAROLINA POSTAL HISTORIAN

The Journal of North Carolina Postal History

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The Other National Air Mail Week



Bethany Church Post Office



North Carolina Covers in the Kilbourne Sales



Blackwater River Boat - Waterway Mail



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By the time you receive this issue, the holiday season will be waning and as we begin a new year, I am pleased to report that the society remains healthy with a stable membership and a high-quality journal. The membership is an active one as evidenced by members participating as board members and contributing a wide variety of interesting articles for the *North Carolina Postal Historian*. Membership is currently 125, an increase of four from last year. The Board of Directors provides a continuity of leadership that has grown from a small number of postal enthusiasts who started a small newsletter in 1982 to what our society is today.

At the annual Board of Directors meeting on July 28, 2018, the idea of a digital edition was suggested. As a result, the annual dues notice this year includes a choice for a digital option to be available.

Board member Scott Steward and editor Dick Winter are working on improving the search feature for those using the library of past journal issues available on the society website.

George Slaton, a new board member, is compiling a list of North Carolina regional libraries that the society could work with to generate new member by improving access to the *North Carolina Postal Historian*. The journal and society website are attracting more attention from researchers, most recently, the Surrey County Historical Society.

We expect to soon issue an updated Author/Subject Index for all of our journals. The last one was sent to our members in January 2010, almost nine years ago.

I was very surprised to read a well-researched article in the Fall 2018 issue of *The Journal of the Society of American Bayonet Collectors, Inc.*, citing an article in the Spring 2012 *North Carolina Postal Historian* on the postal history of the Raleigh Bayonet Factory. In addition, we have had an inquiry this year for assistance in locating old post office photographs. I expect to see continued interest in using the journal as a research tool.

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I have just received news that the Southeast Federation of Stamp Clubs has recognized Tony L. Crumbley as the recipient of the 2019 Rowland Hill Award. Established in 2005, the award is named after Sir Rowland Hill, the creator of the first postage stamp. It is awarded annually to a philatelist who has made outstanding lifetime contributions to stamp collecting in the Southeastern United States. Tony becomes the 12th Rowland Hill honoree. Tony will accept the Rowland Hill Award on January 26th, 2019, at the Awards Banquet of the Southeastern Stamp Expo in Peachtree Corners, Georgia. Scott Mark, Chair, Southeastern Stamp Expo 2019, writes, "...if there are any members who wish to come down to Atlanta at the end of January to join Tony for dinner and be present for his award presentation, those members would be most welcome. Dinner is \$55 per person, with a choice of chicken or salmon. Our room rate is \$98/night. If there are any NC Postal History Society members who want to join us, I would waive the show entry fee and invite them to join us in our hospitality suite on Friday and/or Saturday evening." The full press release can be viewed at http://www.sefsc.org/uploads/3/2/0/3/32038353/tony_crumbley_rh_award.pdf. Tony is to be heartedly congratulated for this recognition by the Southeastern Federation of Stamp Clubs.

I wish all members a happy new year for 2019 and I know we will all look forward to another year of collecting and exploring our state's postal history.



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The Other National Air Mail Week – Rare North Carolina Covers



by Steve Swain

In the Summer, 2018 issue of the *North Carolina Postal Historian*, Tony Crumbley's "National Air Mail Week Revisited on the 100 Anniversary of the First Air Mail Service" article described the enormously successful festivities and events surrounding the May 15-21, 1938, National Air Mail Week celebration. Little known to many philatelists was another National Air Mail week during October

government employees for 24 hours. Essay contests were sponsored for high school students who were to write about "Wings Across America." The Boy Scouts, college fraternities, civil, fraternal, and veteran organizations were all asked to pitch in to promote the celebration week. Posters announcing the national event were displayed at post offices, schools, and business offices.



▲ **Figure 1.** DC-4 Skymaster stamp issued in conjunction with the national event. The stamp was issued on September 25, 1946, a month before the first day of the 1946 national event.



▲ **Figure 2.** DC-4 Skymaster postal stationery issued in conjunction with the national event, but also a month before the first day of the 1946 air mail week event.

27 – November 2, 1946. Not nearly as well publicized and promoted as the 1938 event, the philatelic items associated with the 1946 event are few and far between and, as such, are considered rare. Why were the two events so different in their promotion to the general public? Why was the 1946 event not as attractive to philatelists?

On Saturday, May 14th, 1938, festivities for the celebration of National Air Mail week were kicked off with the issuance of a new 6-cent Eagle multi-colored air mail stamp. Each town across the nation was encouraged to create its own cachet, a commemorative design or slogan that would be printed on the envelopes. Thousands of covers with special town cachets, postmaster autographs, pilot autographs, etc., emerged from the 1938 celebration.

Airmail service was provided to even the most remote locations, when pilots all over the country were asked to donate their services and be sworn in as

These and other 1938 promotions, events, cachets and autographs are in stark contrast with those of the 1946 National Air Mail Week. Granted, there was a stamp issued in association with the 1946 event, the 5-cent DC-4 Skymaster (Figures 1 and 2). However, unlike the 6-cent Eagle multi-colored stamp issued on the opening day of the 1938 air mail week and closely tied to the 1938 celebration, the DC-4 Skymaster was issued on September 25, 1946, a month before the first day of the 1946 national event.

A rather comical gimmick to promote the 1946 event was described in the December 2, 1946, issue of *Life* magazine (Figures 3 and 4):

"For 18 hours, the citizens of Milwaukee Wis. were as befuddled as anybody in the U.S. To celebrate National Air Mail week, the Post Office Department had puckerishly installed a loudspeaker inside a mailbox located on one of Milwaukee's main street



▲ **Figure 3.** Pedestrians peering into a mailbox containing a loud speaker on a Milwaukee, Wisconsin street corner.



▲ **Figure 4.** The “mailbox voice” announcer talking to people about the new 5¢ air mail rate.

intersections. Then they ran a wire to a second-story office window overlooking the mailbox. In the office, an announcer squatted, plugging the new 5¢ air mail rate and gleefully ribbing people who dropped letters in the box.”

With little tangible and serious promotion, there are a very few philatelic items associated with the 1946 air mail week worthy of collecting. Unlike the 1938 event with thousands of city and town cachets, finding covers with cachets associated with the 1946 week is challenging. And when covers are found, most are not even franked with the DC-4 Skymaster issue. Worse yet, some cachets do not even have the correct dates for the event. An example is seen in Figure 5 with a Kennebunk,



Figure 5. ▶ Kennebunk, Maine, 1946 Air Mail Week cover franked with a 3¢ Jefferson “Prexie” and handstamp showing incorrect event dates of “Oct. 27 – Nov. 4,” instead of Nov. 2.

Maine cover franked with a 3-cent Jefferson Prexie and event dates of Oct. 27 – Nov. 4, instead of Nov. 2.

But a silver lining in the contrast between the collectible items of the 1938 event and the 1946 event are two rare covers from Tony Crumbley’s collection, Figures 6 and 7. Consistent with 1938 celebration covers, the October 29, 1946, Charlotte and Fayetteville covers display a National Air Mail Week cachet (with correct event dates). The Charlotte cover is a postal stationery type using the “official” DC-4 design. And, most importantly, both covers are signed by their respective Postmasters: Geo. E. Wilson, Jr., Charlotte and M.M. Shaw, Fayetteville.

In the final analysis, I believe it is fair to say that a concerted, well-designed and tightly managed 1946 celebration was clearly not the objective as with the activities in 1938. Instead, the primary focus and goal in 1946 was a marketing campaign to announce the air mail rate change, nothing more. A few special flights, a limited number of town cachets and an autograph here and there. As an air mail cover collector, I believe the 1938 event stands alone as a truly special, national celebration, one that offers numerous and intriguing philatelic collecting themes.

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Figure 6. ▶
 October, 29, 1946, Charlotte (Mecklenberg County) to Fayetteville (Cumberland County), proper and scarce National Air Mail Week cover. (Courtesy of Tony)



◀ **Figure 7.** October, 29, 1946, Fayetteville to Charlotte another proper and scarce National Air Mail Week cover. Both covers, sponsored by the Fayetteville Squadron of the Civil Air Patrol, were signed by the postmaster of the office where it entered the mail. (Courtesy of Tony)

New Marking

A cover showing a new Creston (Ashe County) marking was submitted by Jimmy Jordan of Wilmington, one of our members who routinely submits new postmarks for our *North Carolina Postmark Catalog Update*, posted on our website. Not only is it a new postmark for our catalog, but it also is an unrecorded county postmark for North Carolina. This 33 mm postmark reads "Creston Ashe Co./North Carolina" and is dated 27 January 1886. It was struck on an 1 cent 1885 brown on buff postal card.



Bethany Church Post Office



by George Slaton

Long before Iredell County, North Carolina, was established in 1788, its settlement was well underway. What later became known as the Great Wagon Road, originating in Philadelphia, snaked westward to Pennsylvania's Cumberland Valley, then turned south through Virginia's Shenandoah Valley, and crossed into North Carolina at Stokes County. Just south of the Shallow Ford on the Yadkin River, a branch of the legendary road led southwestward about 35 miles to the Fourth Creek Settlement around what is now Statesville, North Carolina. By the early 1750s, eager emigrants arrived in the area of Fourth Creek and began to build new lives in a formerly remote wilderness.

These early settlers were primarily Scots-Irish Presbyterians who established the Fourth Creek Meeting House in 1753. By the early 1770s, however, the membership bounds of the church had grown so large that the Presbyterians residing to the northeast, along Fifth Creek, felt their numbers were sufficient enough to form a new congregation. They issued a bold demand entitled, "A Remonstrance to the North Carolina Presbytery... in April, 1773," insisting that the congregants of the Fourth Creek Meeting House be divided, and another house of worship be established. After considerable discussion, this plan was adopted, and, in



1775, Bethany Church was established to the northeast (see Figure 1). A capable pastor was sought to serve these churches.

The Reverend James Hall was one of the more remarkable figures in piedmont North Carolina during the American Revolution and the early years of the new Republic (see Figure 2). Born in 1744 near Carlisle, Pennsylvania, he moved with his family to the Fourth Creek Settlement about 1752. He attended Crowfield Academy near Mount Mourne in the southern portion of what became Iredell County. Hall graduated in 1774 from Nassau Hall, later Princeton University, in the colony of New Jersey. His tutelage under Dr. John Witherspoon, a Presbyterian divine and president

of the college was a formative one. Witherspoon was the only clergyman to sign the Declaration of Independence and he was later a delegate to the Continental Congress. James Hall was heavily influenced by the revolutionary views of his mentor.

When James Hall returned to North Carolina in 1778, he was called to minister to the aforementioned congregations. The American Revolution was already underway, and in 1780 the British began to focus their military efforts on the southern colonies. Early the following year, when Lord Earl Cornwallis' British army undertook its second invasion of North Carolina, Hall and his fellow Presbyterians were poised to



▲ **Figure 1.** 1808 Price Strother map of Iredell County showing portions of neighboring counties and Bethany Church underlined in red, about 8 miles northeast of Statesville. The red dot in the upper right corner is Shallow Ford (Yadkin River), at Huntsville, where a branch of the Great Wagon Road heads southwest to Statesville.



◀ **Figure 2.** The remarkable career of James Hall is described on this North Carolina Historical Highway Marker. Hall was the first pastor of Bethany Presbyterian Church and instrumental in establishing Ebenezer Academy.



▲ **Figure 3.** Bethany Presbyterian Church was formed in 1775 by congregants of the Fourth Creek Meeting House. The present building was constructed about 1855.



◀ **Figure 4.** Ebenezer Academy, incorporated by the North Carolina legislature in 1822, was the most prominent center of learning in early Iredell County. The original hewn log building (circa 1823) still stands.

respond. James Hall recruited patriot troops from the Bethany, Concord, and Fourth Creek congregations, and they gathered under his command. The well-known militia general, William Lee Davidson, resisting the British crossing of the Catawba River at Cowan's Ford on February 1, 1781, was killed while directing his troops. It is a testament to James Hall's reputation that he was offered command of Davidson's forces. Though Hall declined the offer, his reputation was only further enhanced.

In the years following the close of the American Revolution, the fertile lands of Iredell County attracted a flood of new settlers. We can only surmise why Bethany Church became a post office in 1822 (see Figure 3). Most likely the population of the immediate area continued to grow, and that certainly would have been a factor. But there are two additional developments which point to the centrality of Bethany Church in the life of the surrounding community.

The first of these developments was a new school. In 1822, the North Carolina legislature incorporated Ebenezer Academy located at Bethany Church. Ebenezer was organized under the influence and leadership of James Hall and his nephew, William A. Hall, another Presbyterian minister and the Academy's first teacher. Ebenezer Academy is considered the most important of Iredell County's early centers of learning, educating young males from the more elite southern families in the region and beyond. Many of its graduates later served in the fields of medicine, law, religion, and politics. The academy was closed in 1856, and subsequently the building served as a public school until 1903. The academy building (circa 1823), though bearing some alterations, still stands (see Figure 4). The Bethany Church post office undoubtedly processed mail for the students at Ebenezer Academy, as well as for area residents.

The second development involved the cemetery on the grounds of Bethany Church. Though the congregation likely

began its burying ground in the very early years of its existence, a remarkable effort in 1825 formalized its appearance and significance. On a Monday morning, several hundred people who had camped on the church grounds utilized twenty-eight four-horse teams and one five-horse team to quarry and transport rock from the Vandiver and Kilpatrick quarries, both located about three miles from the church. After hauling numerous loads of uncut rocks, the workers hammered and dressed the stone, constructing a wall around the cemetery (see Figure 5). “Perhaps for despatch (sic), neatness, and durability, the work is not excelled by anything of the kind in the state,” wrote an observer to nearby Salisbury’s newspaper, the *Western Carolinian* on August 4, 1825. “That the dead should be interred in decency, and that places appropriate for interment might be kept suitably enclosed,” he wrote, “is a principle as well-founded in Scripture, as it is consonant with reason.”

The beneficiary of continued growth in the area, a prominent academy of learning, and an impressive burying ground, Bethany Church proved to be a suitable location for a post office, one which endured for nearly sixty years.

One of six recorded covers from the Bethany Church post

office is illustrated in Figure 6. The folded letter bears the manuscript postmark, “Bethany Church NC, April 28 1840.” The letter is datelined “Bethany, April 27th 1840” and addressed to “Joseph H. Wilson Esq, Charlotte, N. Ca.” The manuscript “10” rate reflects the distance of less than eighty miles from Bethany Church to Charlotte, North Carolina. The writer, “J. M. Wilson,” is John Macamie Wilson (1808-1881) who was then serving as Bethany’s pastor. The addressee is Joseph Harvey Wilson (1810-1884), the writer’s brother, a prominent attorney in Charlotte who would serve as Speaker of the North Carolina Senate following the Civil War.

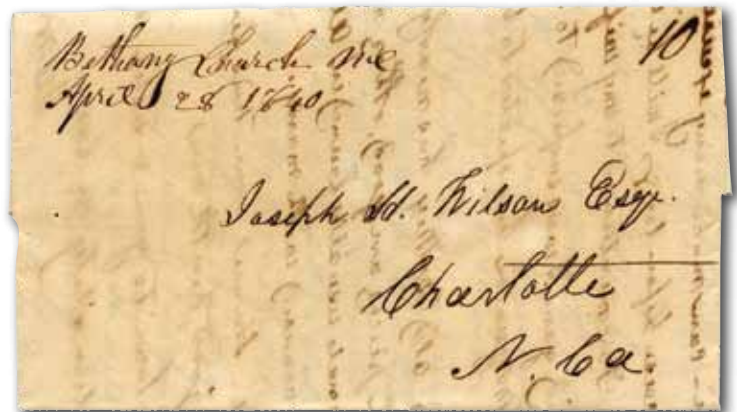
A second stampless folded letter is also penned by John Macamie Wilson to his brother, Joseph. This cover is shown in Figure 7, marked with a similar “Bethany Church NC, December 26th 1843” manuscript notation and addressed to “Hayneville, Alabama,” with a manuscript “25,” indicating that the distance to the latter post office was over four hundred miles and 25 cents postage was due.

A third cover bears witness to the service of the Bethany Church post office during the 1850s. The cover in Figure 8 features a “Bethany Church NC, March 5 1855” manuscript post-



◀ **Figure 5.** This impressive rock wall around the cemetery at Bethany Church was constructed over a period of three summer days in 1825. Hundreds of workers from the community were involved. After hauling numerous loads of uncut rocks from two nearby quarries, the workers hammered and dressed the stone, constructing a wall around the cemetery.

Figure 6. ▶ April 28, 1840, folded letter with dateline of April 27, 1840. Addressed to a prominent attorney in Charlotte (Mecklenburg County), it is one of six recorded covers from the post office at Bethany Church. The letter was sent unpaid and marked in Bethany Church for 10 cents postage due at destination. (Collection of Tony Crumbley)



mark and is addressed to a minister in “Rockville, rowan (sic) Co, N.C.” The 3 cents stamp is pen-canceled. When the foregoing three covers were posted, William A. Dunlap (1801-1886) was postmaster at Bethany Church, and all three manuscript cancels are clearly in his hand. Figure 9 shows his gravestone at the Bethany Church cemetery.

The Confederate period is represented by a fourth cover in Figure 10. This cover, of dark brown paper typical of the war years, is stamped with a single CSA No. 7. The partial manuscript postmark “..thany Church NC, June 11th 1863” indicates that the additional 5 cents stamp originally affixed to the cover is now missing. (The 10 cents rate had become effective July 1,

Figure 7. ▶

A December 26, 1843, folded letter from Bethany Church post office is datelined December 22, 1843. The letter was addressed to Hayneville, Alabama. It was sent unpaid and marked for 25 cents postage due at destination. This rate reflects a mailing distance of over 400 miles. (Collection of Tony Crumbley)



◀ **Figure 8.** This envelope of March 5, 1855, bears a pen-canceled 3 cents 1851 stamp. The cover is addressed to the post office at Rockville in adjacent Rowan County. All three covers are clearly in the same hand of postmaster, William D. Dunlap. (Collection of George Slaton)

Figure 9. ▶

Gravestone of William A. Dunlap (1801-1886) in the cemetery of Bethany Presbyterian Church. Dunlap was postmaster at Bethany Church from 1822 to 1825 and 1832 to 1856.



◀ **Figure 10.** June 11, 1863, envelope with partial Bethany Church manuscript postmark tied to the single 5 cents CSA No. 7 indicating that a second 5 cents stamp is missing. In 1863, the 10 cents rate was in effect in the Confederate States of America. This cover is addressed to the Iredell County post office of Houstonville. (Collection of Tony Crumbley)

1862). The cover is addressed to “Houstonville, Iredell County, N.C.,” a very early post office which dates to 1804. William D. Summers was postmaster at Bethany Church throughout the war.

A visit to Bethany Presbyterian Church, the site of this noteworthy Iredell County post office some eight miles northeast of Statesville on Highway 21, is a worthwhile one. The present church building was constructed about 1855. Ebenezer Acad-

emy stands nearby. And the cemetery is interesting as well. In addition to the gravestone of William A. Dunlap, one can also view the gravestones of other postmasters: Hugh Roddy Hall (1802-1856) who served from 1830 to 1832 and was Principal of Ebenezer Academy for twenty-five years, and William L. Dunlap (1847-1916) who served for six weeks in 1869 and again from 1874 until Bethany Church post office was discontinued in 1880 (see Figures 11 and 12). ■

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Figure 12. ▶

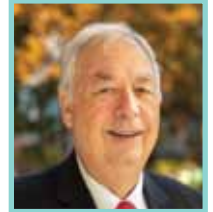
Gravestone of William L. Dunlap (1847-1916) in the cemetery of Bethany Presbyterian Church. A nephew of James Hall, the first pastor of the church, this Dunlap was postmaster at Bethany Church for six weeks in 1869 and again from 1874 until the post office was discontinued in 1880.



◀ **Figure 11.** Obelisk-style gravestone of Hugh Roddy Hall (1802-1856) in the cemetery of Bethany Presbyterian Church. He served as postmaster at Bethany Church from 1830 to 1832 and was Principal of Ebenezer Academy for 25 years.

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

North Carolina Covers in the Siegel Kilbourne Sales



by Tony L. Crumbley

Rarely in a lifetime does a collector have the opportunity to witness the sale of such high quality Confederate material as in the Robert A. Siegel sales of June 28, 2018 (No. 1186) and October 28, 2018 (No. 1190) featuring the “Kilbourne Collection of Confederate States Stamps and Postal History.”

The collection was begun more than seventy-five years ago when Charles and Lucy Kilbourne began collecting Confederate covers. They had sharp eyes for quality material. Upon their passing, their son Lincoln, who had enjoyed collecting with his parents, sold the Confederate Postmaster Provisionals that they had assembled. This sale, 20 years ago, smashed all records for these provisional stamps and markings.

Lincoln continued to add to the collection and twenty years later placed the patriotic covers, 10-cent rose, TENS and frameline stamps on the market. Scott Trepel of the Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries was quoted as saying the sale “is the last great collection from an old era of Confederate philately to be dispersed.”

The first sale consisted of 367 lots. Of these, 24 lots were North Carolina covers. From this sale, only 32 lots sold for under \$500 and only five of the North Carolina covers sold for less than \$500. The two top-selling covers in the sale were a

“hanging Lincoln” cartoon patriotic cover (MS-4) posted from Camden, Mississippi, with a 10-cent rose issue postage stamp. It is estimated that about four of this design patriotic covers are known. This cover sold for \$45,000 plus the 18% commission. The other top-seller was a double-rate (80 cent) Trans-Mississippi Express rate cover with four 20-cent green CSA No. 13 postage stamps from Eufaula, Alabama. This cover sold for \$42,500 plus 18% commission.

Figure 1 illustrates a Carolina City (Carteret County), Type 4 circular datestamp tying a Confederate green Jefferson Davis, CSA No. 1 postage stamp, to a Jefferson Davis Medallion, 11-star flag and sunburst patriotic design patriotic cover (JD-1C). The auctioneer stated that he thought “this is the most beautiful Confederate Patriotic cover in existence.” Without a doubt, it is an eye catcher being sold for \$27,000 plus 18% commission. This is the second most valuable North Carolina cover sold to date. Only the Rutherfordton, North Carolina, Confederate Provisional cover (72x1), which catalogues for \$60,000, has sold for more. A second Kilbourne cover that sold for \$27,000 plus 18% commission had a strip of five 20-cent green, CSA No. 13 postage stamps, sent from Montgomery to Dadeville, Alabama. This was the largest known multiple of the Confederate 20-cent green on cover.

Figure 1. ▶

Lot 593 - An outstanding example of the first-issue Confederate stamp tied by the Type 4 Carolina City circular datestamp to a red and blue Jefferson Davis Medallion, 11 star flag and sunburst patriotic cover. The cover was addressed to Argyle (Cumberland County) and sold for \$31,860 including commission.



Have You Given Us Your E-mail Address?

We would like in the future to be able to send information to members using e-mail, but we lack valid e-mail addresses for many of our members. Please help by sending your e-mail address to Harry Albert, the Secretary-Treasurer at harry.albert@eeco-net.com or Tony Crumbley at tcrumbley2@bellsouth.net.

The next highest selling North Carolina cover was a Salisbury, North Carolina prison cover, Figure 2. Stated as “Perhaps the most desirable of all the Confederate Prisoner-of-War covers.” The cover was posted with a 10-cent red CSA No. 5 stamp and a US 1861 3-cent rose stamp from Salisbury Prison to Philadelphia. Only three POW covers are recorded with the CSA No. 5 postage stamp. This lot sold for \$11,000 plus 18% commission. The next lot in the sale was another Salisbury Prison cover, Figure 3, with a CSA No. 5, which sold for \$2,100 plus 18% commission. This cover did not pay the US postage and was marked for 3 cents postage due.

Even though the Kilbourne Postmaster Provisionals had been sold earlier, there was a small group of patriotic covers with Postmaster Provisionals included in this sale. One of which was the Chapel Hill Postmaster Provisional (15XU1) shown in Figure 4. There are fewer than ten of the Chapel Hill Postmaster Provisionals recorded and only three are on patriotic envelopes. All are on 10-star Confederate Flag patriotic covers (F10-3). This cover is addressed to W.W. Lenoir, Camp Lee, Grahamville, South Carolina and considered the finest of the three. The cover was estimated to bring \$4,000-\$5,000 and was knocked down at \$7,500 plus 18% commission.

Another remarkable cover in this sale which brought three times its estimate was the Wilmington 5 Paid, Type 10c circular

datestamp, tying a CSA No. 1 to a 12-star Confederate flag, Cannon and Verse Patriotic design (CN-1c variety), Figure 5. The cover was posted at Wilmington (New Hanover County) on January 28, 1862, and addressed to Judesville (Surry County). Despite some minor faults and a close margin stamp, this cover netted \$10,620 including the commission – an outstanding price.

Figure 6 is another outstanding example of a North Carolina Confederate cover. It had a vertical pair of CSA No. 7 placed over the indicia of an obsolete 1854 US 3 cent, red on buff, Nesbitt embossed envelope, and was posted from Hillsboro (Orange County) to Salem (Forsyth County), where a bold strike of the Salem ADVERTISED handstamp was applied. This cover was estimated to bring \$300-\$400 and was knocked down at \$2,200 plus 18% commission. This is one of only two recorded examples of the Salem advertised marking.

The sale contained four North Carolina wallpaper covers. These covers were knocked down between \$600 and \$8,500 – quite a range. The top-priced cover, shown in Figure 7, illustrated a Fayetteville datestamp tying a 2-cent brown-red, CSA No. 8 postage stamp to a green brown and violet wallpaper cover. The cover was a drop rate cover posted at Fayetteville. Although the postage stamp was dated April 9, 1863, before the earliest known use of the 2-cent stamp, Fayetteville

Figure 2. ▶

Lot 734 - July 17, 1862, Salisbury Prison cover posted with a CSA No. 5, 10-cent red stamp plus a US 1861 3-cent rose stamp to Philadelphia, paying both the Confederate and US postage. The previous year date was left on the postmark. Only three Prisoner of War covers are recorded with the 10-cent red stamp. The cover netted \$12,980 including commission.



◀ **Figure 3. Lot 735** - The second of the three known POW covers with the CSA No. 5, 10-cent red stamp. Posted from Salisbury (Rowan County) also on July 17, 1862 (previous year date was left on the postmark) it was addressed to New York City. Since the US postage was not paid it was marked for 3 cents postage due in at destination. The cover netted \$2,478 including commission.



◀ **Figure 4.** Lot 544 - The only North Carolina Provisional included in this sale was the Chapel Hill Provisional 15XU1. It is one of less than 10 known Chapel Hill provisionals and the better of the three known on 10-star Confederate Flag Patriotic Provisionals. The cover was posted in Chapel Hill (Orange County) on January 25, 1862, addressed to Grahamville, South Carolina. It netted \$8,850 including commission.

Figure 5. ▶
Lot 618 - This 12-star Confederate Flag, Cannon and Verse patriotic cover, Type CN-1c variety, was posted with a Davis 5-cent green CSA No. 1, tied by a Wilmington Type 10c circular datestamp on January 28, 1862. It was addressed to Judesville (Surry County). Even with small faults, the cover netted \$10,620 including commission.



◀ **Figure 6.** Lot 745 - A vertical pair of CSA No. 7 stamps was placed over an obsolete US 1854 Nesbitt 3-cent red embossed envelope and tied by a Type 5 blue Hillsboro (Orange County) cancel. The cover was posted to Salem (Forsyth County), where the bold ADVERTISED handstamp was applied. This is one of only two recorded examples of this marking. The cover netted \$2,596.

Figure 7. ▶
Lot 753 - One of the four wallpaper covers included in the sale was this cover posted from Fayetteville (Cumberland County) with a CSA No. 8 paying the drop letter rate in Fayetteville. The cover is made from a green, brown, and violet wallpaper. Though dated 1863, it is felt that this is an 1864 cover with misdated handstamp. The cover netted \$10,030, undoubtedly a record for a North Carolina wallpaper cover.



was known to have misdated covers, and this cover was believed used in 1864. This is clearly a showpiece cover.

Another wallpaper cover that was sold at a high price is illustrated in Figure 8. On this cover a blue Greensboro circular datestamp tied a blue green CSA No. 12 postage stamp to a blue and gray wallpaper cover, addressed to Littleton (Halifax County). Even though the cover had been slightly reduced at the top, it brought \$1,400 plus 18% commission.

The twenty-four North Carolina covers in the first sale netted \$106,453 with commissions. This was an indication that there is still a strong collector demand for quality North Carolina Confederate material.

The October 2018 sale consisted of 425 covers of which 15 were North Carolina covers. Two North Carolina covers were pulled from the sale – Lot 1368, a block of five 2-cent brown-red stamps, CSA No. 8, from Clemmonsville (Davidson County) to Huntsville (Yadkin County). This cover was considered fake. The other cover was a Wilmington patriotic cover, lot no. 1615, but the reason for it being removed from the sale was unknown. Of the 13 North Carolina covers that were sold, only five hammered down at less than \$1,000.

The highest priced North Carolina cover in this sale was lot no. 1398 (Figure 9), which netted \$2,500, plus 18% commission. This Salisbury (Rowan County) cover had a CSA No. 10 frameline stamp tied to the cover, which was addressed to Wolfsville (Union County). It was posted in early November

1863. This particular frameline example had large margins and essentially complete framelines all around with the bottom line recut, a very fine frameline issue on a small cover. The envelope contained a letter dated “Oct. 30th, 1863, Camp Vance near Morganton, N.C.,” a Confederate military camp. The letter related to camp life and to hunting down deserters. The frameline stamp is the scarcest of all Confederate general issue stamps.

A second North Carolina frameline, lot. No. 1396, from Raleigh (Wake County), was sold in the sale and netted \$1,800 plus 18% commission (Figure 10). The cover was addressed to Summerville (Harnett County), and was posted on June 12, 1863. It was canceled with a partial Raleigh Type 12 circular datestamp in blue. Only nine frameline covers are recorded from North Carolina.

Another North Carolina cover in this sale to surpass \$2,000 was lot no. 1516, a Raleigh Postmaster Provisional (68XU1) on a 12-star Confederate Flag patriotic cover (F12-3). Shown in Figure 11, this August 20, 1861, cover was addressed to St. Lawrence (Chatham County) and was hammered down at \$2,100, plus 18% commission.

The 13 North Carolina covers that were sold in this sale netted \$19,588 including commissions. It is doubtful that we will see another sale anytime soon that will contain as much high-quality North Carolina material as these two sales contained.

The full auctions and prices realized for these two sales can be found on--line at <https://siegelauktion.com>. ■



◀ **Figure 8.** Lot 809 - Another wallpaper cover was a Greensboro (Guilford County) cover with a 10-cent greenish blue, CSA No. 12 stamp canceled with two strikes of a blue GREENSBOROUGH circular datestamp, Type 5. The envelope was made of gray and blue wallpaper and was addressed to Littleton (Halifax County). Even though the cover had been slightly reduced at the top, it sold for \$1,652 including commission.

Figure 9. ▶
Lot 1398 - The highest-priced North Carolina cover in the October 2012 sale had a Confederate frameline stamp, CSA No.10, posted from Salisbury (Rowan County) in early November 1863 to Wolfsville (Union County). This frameline stamp had large margins and essentially complete framelines all around with the bottom line recut, a very fine frameline issue on a small cover. It contained a letter written at Confederate Camp Vance near Morganton (Burke County). Only 9 frameline covers are recorded from North Carolina.



Figure 10. ▶
Lot 1396 - A second North Carolina frameline, from Raleigh (Wake County), to Summerville (Harnett County), posted on June 12, 1863 was sold for \$1,800 plus 18% commission. It was on a blue cover and canceled with a partial Raleigh Type 12 circular datestamp in blue. Only nine covers from North Carolina are recorded with the frameline stamp.



◀ **Figure 11. Lot 1516** - One of five Raleigh Postmaster Provisional patriotic covers recorded. This red provisional was used on a 10-star Confederate Flag patriotic Type F10-3. The cover was posted August 20, 1861, addressed to St. Lawrence (Chatham County). It was hammered down at \$2,100 plus 18% commission.

Mystery Cover

Our mystery cover was submitted by member Greg Stone. It was posted on 19 September 1897 and was addressed to Iron Station (Lincoln County). Help is needed in identifying the post office of origin as the postmaster wrote the manuscript postmark very poorly.



Blackwater River Boat, – Waterway Mail Route in North Carolina



by Richard F. Winter

After the Seaboard & Roanoke Rail Road Company extended its line from Suffolk, Virginia, to Weldon, North Carolina, in 1842, a new contract mail service became available that included waterway service to North Carolina. Figure 1 illustrates a map of the Seaboard & Roanoke Rail Road between Portsmouth, Virginia and Weldon, North Carolina (Halifax County).



The Mail Route

The first mail contract for the new Blackwater boat mail route, Route 2856, was awarded to W. H. Thompson at \$3,500 per year to carry mail three times a week from July 1843 to June 1847. The mail was placed on board a steamboat at Franklin Depot, Virginia, on the Blackwater River. The small steamboat continued south on the Blackwater River to the North Carolina border, where it joined the Nottaway River to form the Chowan River. The route then continued down the Chowan River until it flowed into the Albemarle Sound at Edenton. From here it proceeded south to the Roanoke River and up it to Plymouth. Depending on the route contract that followed, the route distances were listed from 99 to 108 miles. At the northern end of the route, mail was to be taken from the rail road car at Franklin Depot. At the southern end it was delivered to a coach at Plymouth. Since Plymouth is about 6½ miles up the Roanoke River, some think the riverboat stopped at a landing on the Albemarle Sound, where there was a road leading directly to Plymouth. I believe the riverboat route went up river to Plymouth, which I think more likely since a steamboat could easily navigate the river.

Figure 2 shows a map of the Blackwater mail route. This map is an excerpt taken from the 1839 post road map of North and South Carolina produced by David H. Burr, late topographer to the Post Office Department and geographer to the House of Representatives of the U.S. Government. It was published a few years before the Blackwater boat route was established, but it provides more details than maps subsequently produced and available for this article. The red dots and underlines show the starting point, Franklin Depot, Virginia, and ending point, Plymouth, North Carolina. The blue line is the waterway path of the mail route.

◀ **Figure 1.** 1847 map of the Seaboard & Roanoke Rail Road from Portsmouth, Virginia, to Weldon, North Carolina, showing Franklin Depot in between “S&R” and “R.R.” on the heavy black line. Here was the connection to the steamboat route south. (Courtesy of the Library of Congress)

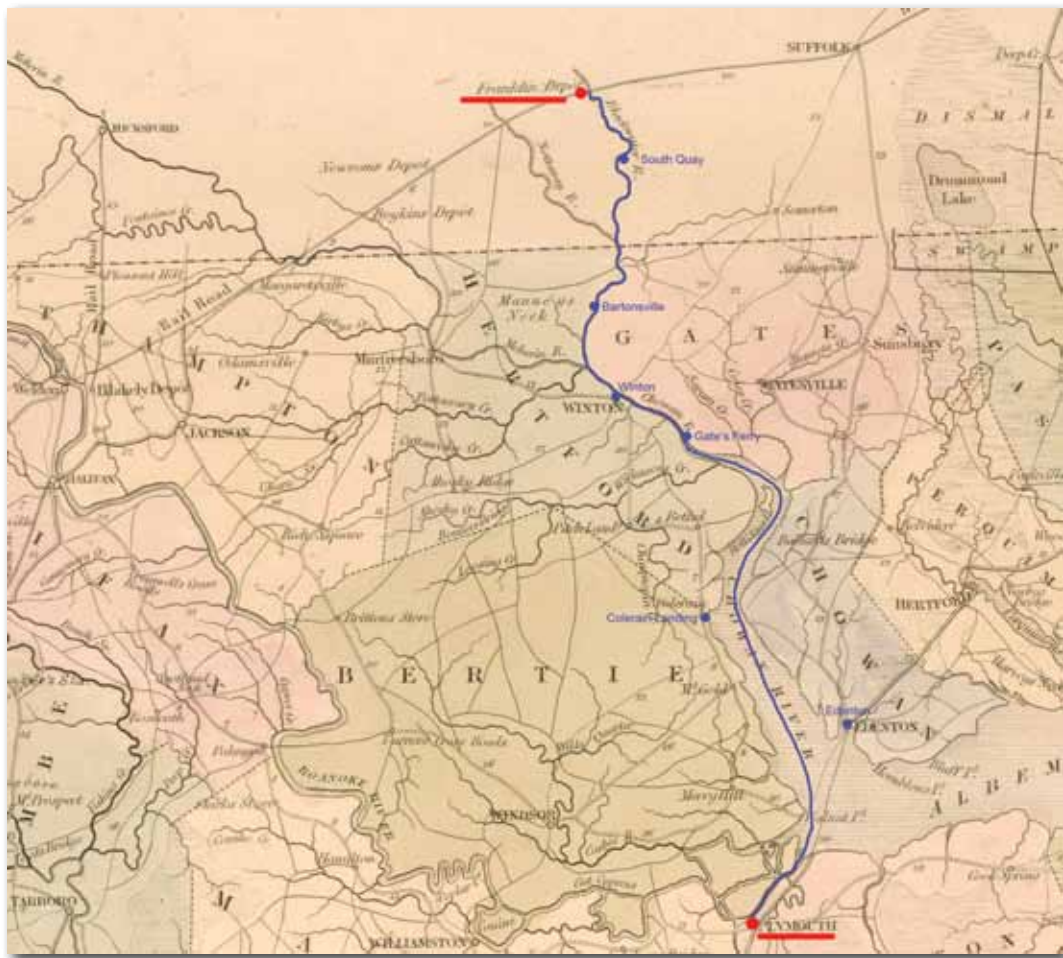
The Mail Contracts

Hugh Feldman, in his book *U.S. Contract Mail Routes by Water (Star Routes 1824-1875)*, identified five mail contracts issued for this route between 1847 and January 1866. They were:

1. Route 2856 – awarded to W. H. Thompson at \$3,500 per annum, July 1843 to June 1847, three times a week.
2. Route 2850 – awarded to William H. Thompson at \$2,500 per annum, July 1847 to June 1851, three times a week.
3. Route 5661 – awarded to Robert Dickinson, at \$2,500 per annum, July 1859 to June 1861, three times a week.
4. Route 5305 – awarded to Albemarle Steam Packet Company, at \$22/mile, July to December 1865.
5. Route 5050 – awarded to Robert Dickinson, at \$2,354 per annum, January 1866 to May 1869, twice a week.

Feldman also identified six landing places on the route between Franklin Depot and Plymouth. These were South Quay, Va; Bartonville, NC; Winton, NC; Gate’s Ferry, NC; Colerain Landing, NC; and Edenton, NC. I do not know if these were the only landings or just the ones he could locate. I have shown these locations as blue dots on the Figure 2.

Charles L. Towle introduced the philatelic public to the Blackwater boat route agent marking in his “Railroad Postmarks” section of the *The Chronicle of the U.S. Classic Postal Issues*, August



▲ **Figure 2.** The Blackwater waterway mail route is shown by the blue line on this excerpt from the 1939 post road map of North and South Carolina produced by David H. Burr, geographer to the House of Representatives of the U.S. Government. The red dots and lines show the terminuses of the route, Franklin Depot, Virginia and Plymouth, North Carolina. Besides these are six other landing places (blue dots) that have been identified.

1988, Vol. 40, No. 3, Whole No. 139. He identified additional mail contracts for the route as follows:

6. Route 5037 – with payments of \$2,000 per annum, in 1868, three times a week (presumably with Robert Dickinson).
7. Same route – with payments of \$2,600 per annum, for 1869 to 1871, three times a week (presumably with Robert Dickinson).
8. Same route – with payments of \$4,000 per annum, starting in 1872, three times a week (presumably with Robert Dickinson).

He also identified the following mail agents on the route: E. T. Murfre in 1867, called a mail messenger; E. B. Dozier in 1869 also called a mail messenger; and W. K. Hammond in 1871, now called a route agent.

The Route Agent

Charles L. Towle in his book *U.S. Route and Station Agent Postmarks* wrote these "...men appointed by the Post Office Department to accompany the mails on trains and steamboats were normally called route agents." It made no difference to the Post Office Department whether the mail was carried on a train or a boat. In either case it was handled by R.P.O. (railway post office) personnel, agents of the post office and the office was a railway post office whether on a train or a boat. Henry A. Meyer of Evansville, Indiana, wrote a series of articles from September 1949 to March 1951 on U.S. domestic waterways mail markings, which was published in the *S.P.A. Journal*, the official organ of the Society of Philatelic Americans. His comments on the route agents that rode contract mail boats is helpful to repeat.

These route agents were employees of the Post Office Dept., not of the boats, sorted mail, accepted mail bags containing letters which had been mailed at post offices, put off the mail for towns along the river, accepted letters mailed by passengers, and by people who appeared at a landing with a letter, sold stamps, and postmarked letters received outside the mailbags. From the (1850's) down to about 1875, the postmarks used by these route agents were of almost any style and in almost any wording which pleased the route agent. One can (often) tell a steamboat route agent's mark from a railroad agent's mark by the presence of such words, abbreviations and expressions as S.B., Steamer, River Mail, Riv. Rt., St. Bt., R.M., Mail Line, M.L., Mail Route, Riv. Agt., Route 7309, etc. Knowing what towns are on an easily navigable river also helps identify the waterborne routes. Letters handled by route agents never cost, nor paid, any extra fee as the route agent's sorting room was a miniature U.S. Post Office.

In another of his articles Meyer wrote about how different were the working conditions of the route agent on a river boat and a railroad. He used examples of the conditions on a large steamboats on the Mississippi or Ohio Rivers. While the steamboat on the Blackwater River would not have been so large, the parallel applies here as well as the large rivers. He wrote:

Lucky indeed was the route agent or the R.P.O. clerk who was assigned to a steamboat route rather than a railway run. There was no swaying postal car, no flickering oil lantern, no lunch-box packed by his wife, no hectic time-schedule to plague his days. A Mississippi or Ohio River steamboat was probably the most comfortable, enjoyable conveyance in the whole world in the latter half of the 19th century. The postal employee assigned to such duty had a neat little office of his own. He had a stateroom for his own use, with a comfortable berth and wall-hooks for his extra clothes. His office was heated in the cold weather by a little coal stove, and a cabin boy was assigned to the duty of keeping it replenished. The office and stateroom were lighted by the latest carbon-filament bulbs hung on a drop-cord.

The boat proceeded at a leisurely rate of speed, giving him plenty of time to sort the mail and have the pouches ready for the next landing. He ate excellent and ample meals at the officer's table with the "genial and accomplished gentlemen," who the steamboat advertisements of those years tell us were the captain and clerk of the boat. (The mate was usually another proposition; he was often chosen for his vocal ability to "bellar" at the languid roustabouts). The mail clerk did not even need to carry the mail-bags down the steps and over the landing stage at the way-landings. That job was performed by the "mud clerk," a young man who was learning the duties of freight and passenger clerk aboard the boat. From every point of view, the steamboat mail clerk was probably the most comfortably situated appointee in the entire post office system.

The Covers

As mentioned earlier, Charles L. Towle wrote about the Blackwater Boat route agent postmark in August 1988 as a new waterway agent marking based on two examples submitted by Frank Bowling, Jr. of Virginia. He did not show the covers; however, he just provided a verbal identification of the new agent postmark. Using a standard system that Henry Meyer had developed to identify inland and coastal waterways markings, he identified the new marking as: "H-4-c, BLACKWATER BOAT, VA., 24.5 mm., black, 1866-1869." The description started first with a letter "H" that identified the geographic area, Norfolk to Savannah including tributary bays and rivers. This was followed by a number assigned for the inland or coastal Post Office Department contract, after which was a lowercase letter to denote the variety of the marking recorded. This was followed by the lettering in the postmark, the diameter in millimeters of the circular marking, the color of the marking, and the year date(s) of the marking seen used.

MacDonald illustrated the marking in his 1997 book, seven years after Towle's death. The marking is shown in Figure 3. I don't know if Towle or MacDonald made the tracing of the

Figures 3 & 4. ▶

1 May 186x - cover from unknown origin addressed to Edenton (Chowan County) and properly paid 3¢ postage with rose-red, 1867 F-Grill stamp canceled by a target killer. To the left was struck a 24.5 mm circular postmark by the river boat mail agent (see inset as Figure 4, a tracing found in MacDonald's book, *Postal Markings of U.S. Waterway Routes, 1839 – 1997*. Since the majority of the route landings are in North Carolina, there is a high probability cover originated in North Carolina.



Blackwater Boat agent postmark. Because of the light strike of the marking on the cover the date was mistaken for “Mar 1” instead of “May 1,” which can be discerned only under high magnification. MacDonald’s listing included a Roman numeral for the estimated market value. For this new agent marking MacDonald estimated its value at \$200-\$300 in 1997.

The cover from which the tracing was made is illustrated in Figure 4. The agent on board the river boat received this letter as a loose letter and canceled it as required. This envelope without contents was paid the proper inland rate of 3 cents with a rose-red, 1867 F-Grill postage stamp, cancelled with a black target killer. To the left was struck the 24.5 mm circular postmark of the agent on the Blackwater river boat. The letter was addressed to Edenton, one of the known landings of the Blackwater river boat. I do not know where the letter originated. It could have originated at Franklin Depot in Virginia or any of the landings south on the route of the steamboat. Since the majority of the landings are in North Carolina, there is a high probability that it may have originated in North Carolina.

The second cover with the Blackwater Boat agent postmark is shown in Figure 5. This cover was given to the mail agent on the Blackwater route steamship, addressed to William S. Pettigrew at Lake Scuppernong (now Lake Phelps), in Washington County, North Carolina. Pettigrew owned and operated two plantations in the Lake Scuppernong region, one in Washington County and the other in nearby Tyrrell County. The letter

was paid 3 cents with a rose-red, 1867 F-Grill postage stamp, cancelled with a black target killer. It was tied to the cover with a portion of the BLACKWATER BOAT, VA. cancel dated 22 April. A docketing notation on the left side by the recipient indicated the letter was written on April 21, 1868, by Jno. M. Jones. The docketing provides the year, 1868, making the cancel date one day earlier than the earliest known use of this grill postage stamp. The origin of this cover is not known. Like the earlier cover it was handed to the mail agent on the steamboat somewhere on the steamboat’s route. This cover traveled Route 5037 to the southern terminus of Plymouth, where it was sent to its destination about 12 miles southeast of Plymouth. As with the other cover I feel there is a high probability that it originated in North Carolina. As far as I know these are the only covers known to have been on this route.

In Charles L. Towle’s August 1988 Chronicle article introducing the Blackwater Boat route agent postmark as a new waterway agent marking, he wrote that this postmark was eventually succeeded in the early 1870s by H-4-a, a Portsmouth, Virginia and Plymouth, North Carolina, mail agent postmark. This combined railroad and waterway route added 35 more miles in Virginia to the route. It is quite possible that a cover showing this route agent marking was handled completely within North Carolina, making it another scarce North Carolina waterway cover (see Figure 6). ■

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◀ **Figure 5.** 22 Apr 1868 - envelope from unknown origin to Lake Scuppernong (Washington County), properly paid 3¢ postage with rose-red, 1867 F-Grill stamp canceled by a target killer. To the left was struck a 24.5 mm circular postmark of the river boat mail agent. This cover traveled Route 5037 to the southern terminus of Plymouth, where it was sent to its destination about 12 miles southeast of Plymouth.



◀ **Figure 6.** Portsmouth and Plymouth mail agent postmark used on combined rail and waterway route that replaced Blackwater River route in early 1870s.

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