



The Journal of the Empire State Postal History Society

March 2011

Whole No. 16 New Series

Alan Parsons, President
David E. Williams, Editor

Drew A. Nicholson, Chr. Publ. Comm.
Lawrence J. Laliberte, Production Editor

Inside This Issue

Departments

Editor's Box 2
 Cover of the Issue: *Back Cover*

Regular Features

Columbia County Corner, By George DeKornfeld 16

Articles

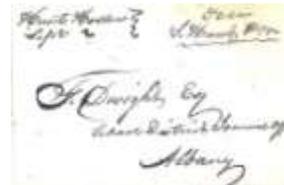
Special Delivery Indeed 3
 By Robert L. Markovits 3
Report from the Stockade 4
 By Bob Bramwell 4
Doane Cancels of Essex County 10
 By Glenn Estus 10
19th Century Allegany County Post Offices: Part I 21
 By William Howden 21



Page 3



Page 10



Page 26



EXCELSIOR!



The Journal of New York State Postal History

Published March and September by the

EMPIRE STATE POSTAL HISTORY SOCIETY

P.O. Box 482

East Schodack, NY 12063-0482

Web site: <<http://www.esphs.org>>

Articles for **EXCELSIOR!** are solicited. They remain the property of the authors and the ESPHS. Please contact the Editor and the author to request reprint rights or use in another publication. Please send articles and re-publication requests to the

Editor:

David E. Williams
7115 Abbey Woods Dr NE
New Salisbury, IN 47161-9644
812.366.4749/ Fax: 812.366.4749
E-mail: <davidinindiana@aol.com>
E-mail: <btcod114@localnet.com>

* * * * *

The **ESPHS** also publishes a **Bulletin**. Please send articles and Society news/information to the

Editor:

Bob Bramwell
P O. Box 4150
Pinehurst, NC 28374
910.295.5808
E-mail: <rbramwell@nc.rr.com>

SOCIETY OFFICERS

President: Alan Parsons
809 Holley Rd., Elmira, NY 14905
607.732.0181
E-mail: <alatholleyrd@aol.com>

Vice President: Carl Blazejewski
114A Quail St
Albany, NY 12206-2405
518.465.3497

Secretary: *George McGowan*
Address in heading
518.479.4396
E-mail: <geolotus2003@nycap.rr.com>

Treasurer: Dr. George DeKornfeld
1109 Rt. 8A Stop 2
Millerton, NY 12546-5511
518.329.1295
E-mail: <Gdekornfel@fairpoint.net>

For MEMBERSHIP in the ESPHS, write to the Secretary at the heading address.

Dues are \$20.00 per year. There is a \$1.00 fee upon joining.

ADVERTISEMENTS are gladly accepted. Please contact the Secretary at the above address.

Editor's Box

Thank you once again to all of our authors who were kind enough to send along some excellent articles. This month, Bob Bramwell continues his in depth studies of Schenectady postal history with his *Report from the Stockade*. Also George DeKornfeld sends along another edition of *Columbia County Corner*, this time taking a slight detour into an adjacent county to look at the Town of Amenia in Dutchess County. Robert Markovitz has a nice one page article which I have a special connection to entitled *Special Delivery Indeed*. Glenn Estus treats us to a couple of fine articles; one on the *Doane Cancels of Essex County* and a second one which became this issue's *Cover of the Issue*. I also would like to give a special acknowledgement to William Holden, who is both a new member of ESPHS and a first time author. His article on *19th Century Allegany County Post Offices* makes for fine reading. Now is a plea for other members to step up to the plate and send your articles for the upcoming September 2011 issue. Share your knowledge. Thank you. PS: Please note my new address, phone #, and email address above!

SPECIAL DELIVERY INDEED

By: Robert L. Markovits

When does a collector not mind overpaying by almost 1000% for a philatelic item?

As a specialist of United States and worldwide special delivery stamps, proofs, essays and postal history for more than 50 years, I have seen most of the rarities in the field pass through my hands. But the greatest rarity, definitely not from a philatelic point of view, just arrived in early 2011 through the courtesy of our editor David Williams. His sharp eyes spotted the item on the Internet and alerted me.

I spent \$10 on the item and the delivery was held up for three weeks pending the purchase of additional material from that dealer. Now the cover rests on my philatelic desk, proudly displayed for all to see.

In 1927, the United States issued a special delivery stamp picturing a motorcycle, in purple. This stamp, a ten cent denomination, paid the ten cent first class special delivery rate which was in effect from October 1, 1885 through June 30, 1945. The rate in 1942, the date of the cover, was 10c for first class mail weighing up to two pounds. During this period, the messenger was paid by the number of pieces of special delivery mail delivered; his wage was eight cents per first class letter.

After July 1, 1945 until the end of the Special Delivery service on June 7, 1977, the messengers became regular postal service employees. It was also part of their messenger service to supply missing street addresses as was the case for this cover.

Frank S. Bump of Binghamton, N.Y. sent a special delivery letter to William B. Markovits in Middletown, N.Y. The envelope did not contain a street address. Binghamton marked the letter with a two line purple handstamp "**Special Delivery/ Fee Paid...10 cents,**" a nice marking. William B's law and Certified Public Accounting office was located at One North Street from 1932 to his death in the 1970s. It was my law office for more than 40 years until I moved to another Middletown location a few years ago.

You guessed it. This was a letter to my father. It wound up in the philatelic mainstream 68 years later, and now resides with me.



It was serendipity through the watchful eye of a keen philatelist. Thank you, David.

Robert Markovits may be contacted at RLMarkovits@aol.com

REPORT FROM THE STOCKADE

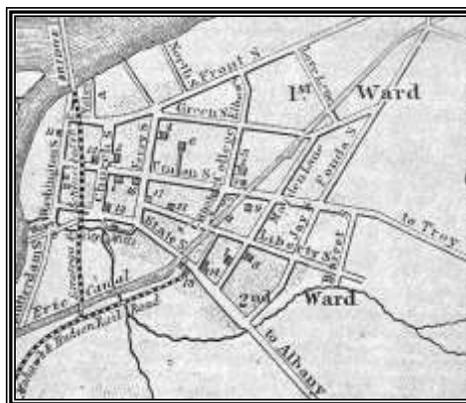
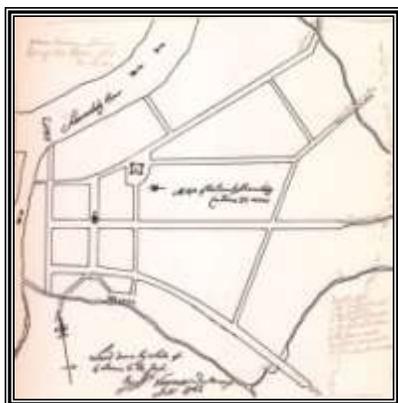
By: Bob Bramwell

Volume I of the *American Stampless Cover Catalog* (ASCC) reports that manuscript post marks were used in Schenectady between 1800 and 1817, then again between 1826 and 1829. No indication is given as to how many different manuscripts, or writer's "hands", have been associated with the Schenectady post office during these years, so this report explores that question – subject to the limit of one collection¹.

Between 1793 and 1836, Schenectady had three postmasters: Joseph Shurtleff (1793 – 1810); Jacob Thurston (1810 – 1820) and James Van Slyk Ryley (1820 – 1836). Given the size of Schenectady (population about 3,500 in the town and surrounding area) and its agricultural nature, these men might have processed all the mail passing through Schenectady by themselves. Or they might have hired clerks. There are two ways to attempt to discover the answer. First, find a name in the *Register of Officers and Agents, etc.* for these years under the caption [Post Office Department] Clerks and Assistants, their Emoluments and Places of Employment, which listed some, but not all, post office employees subordinate to postmasters in the United States. Second, study the handwriting on a large number of manuscript covers then find proven handwriting samples for postmasters and candidates for the clerk position.

Both of these investigatory techniques are problematic. Footnote 2 describes some limitations concerning the *Official Register* investigation not the least of which is that half of this manuscript period has passed before the first *Official Register* is published. Finding handwriting samples attributable with certainty to postmasters, let alone postal clerks, in the early 1800's outside of major cities such as Boston, New York and Philadelphia is a small miracle.

Post office activity, often represented by postmaster compensation, is another indicator of whether the postmaster would at least *like* to have an assistant. As we look at the term of each Schenectady postmaster we will also look at the recorded annual compensation. First, let's look at the town of Schenectady during the manuscript period. The map on the left starts with the streets existing in about 1763. The map on the right shows Schenectady in 1835 and the biggest change is the addition of the Erie Canal and two early rail roads. Otherwise, a few large agricultural tracts of land have been subdivided for additional housing – the population in Schenectady having increased 50% between 1800 and 1830.



Major Joseph Shurtleff (1793 – 1810)

Under postmaster Shurtleff, my guess is that the post office operated out of Moses Beale's hotel on State Street in Schenectady (the road to Albany on the 1835 map). Beale operated a coach line that carried passengers and mail westward from Albany through Schenectady to Canajoharie and back on a weekly basis. The hotel was located a few blocks from the business district and convenient to the area of greatest residential density. During this time, Shurtleff was principally a public administrator and served in the State legislature as well as town clerk but had no known business location.

With mail arriving once a week from each direction, it is unlikely that postal duties took up much of the postmaster's time. However, since the mails were the main conduit for moving "value" – cash and bank bills – from one place to the other, it is wise to ascribe a high degree of public trust to the postmaster position and to imagine that Shurtleff took this responsibility seriously. Part of that may have entailed handling the mails in the presence of another person.

What can we say about how Joseph Shurtleff carried out his duties, at least as far as postmarking mail is concerned? The ASCC shows that a straight-line device was in use at least between 1797 and 1802 and that manuscript postmarks are recorded starting in 1800. My collection contains straight-lines between 1797 and 1801 but my earliest manuscript postmark is January 9, 1804:

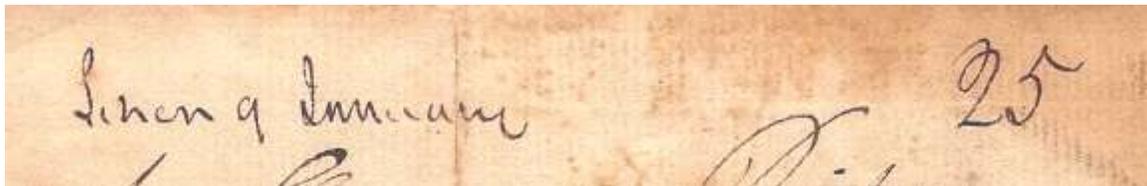


Figure 1. Manuscript attributed to postmaster Joseph Shurtleff, January 9, 1804.

The only other manuscript I have from Shurtleff's tenure is a March 26, 1809 folded letter sheet (FLS). Schenectady is again abbreviated "Schen":

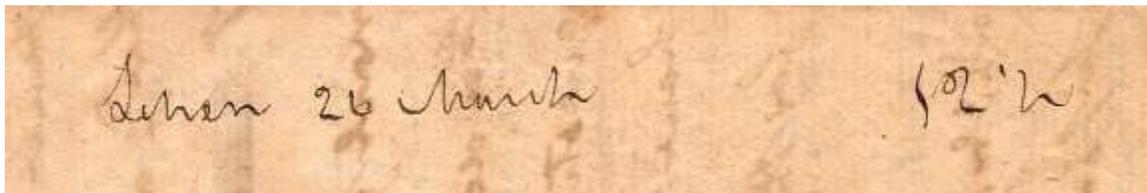


Figure 2. Manuscript attributed to postmaster Joseph Shurtleff, March 26, 1809.

It is my conclusion that both postmarks were written by the same hand and I choose to attribute them to Joseph Shurtleff.

Jacob Thurston (1810 – 1820)

Jacob Thurston was a silversmith and jeweler in Schenectady. I have found no record of where his shop was located, but it was probably on State Street, which had already been a commercial street before the Great Fire of 1817 destroyed over 600 buildings on the old wharf and manufacturing district of Washington Avenue and causing a migration to State Street. I think it is natural that Thurston's jewelry shop would have contained the post office as well.

During Thurston's decade as postmaster, several different "hands" postmarked Schenectady's mail. The earliest such is dated June 4, 1811:



Figure 3. Manuscript attributed to Jacob Thurston, June 4, 1811.

Of the 15 covers I have from Jacob Thurston's term as postmaster, 6 are postmarked in this hand, which is characterized by use of the abbreviation Schen^{dy} for Schenectady and by placing the date on line with the town name. The latest of these is June 4, 1817:

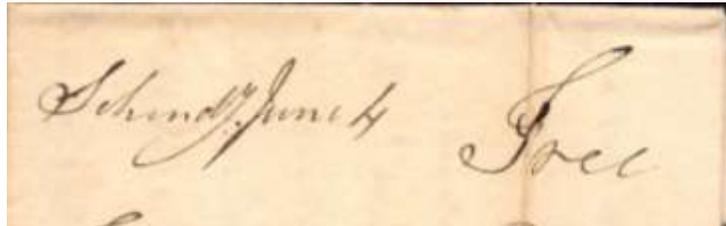


Figure 4. Manuscript attributed to Jacob Thurston, June 4, 1817.

Very little has changed in penmanship in the elapsed period of 6 years. Since I have no known samples of Thurston's handwriting I cannot state that this is his hand, but I am tempted to do so since the earliest date for which a different hand appears in Schenectady is November 30, 1815:

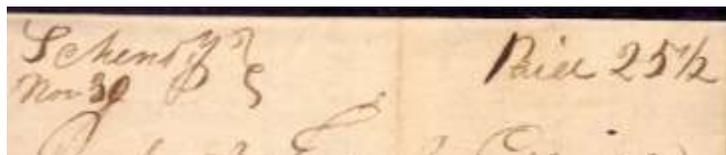


Figure 5. Manuscript attributed to unidentified clerk, November 30, 1815.

The marker of this hand is the high connecting line between the "c" and "h" in Schen^{dy} and the high starting position of the pen in the capital "S," plus placement of the date below the

town name. This hand, the “ch” marker intact, is seen on a very late dated cover of Jacob Thurston’s postmastership, February 29, 1820:



Figure 6. Manuscript attributed to unidentified clerk, February 29, 1820.

The inaugural *Official Register* of 1816, on page 56, lists Deputy Postmaster Jacob Thurston’s compensation as \$395.81. This amount places him in about the 60th or 70th percentile of all postmasters. In that year, for instance, the postmaster of Buffalo, NY earned compensation of \$515. No Clerk or Assistant Postmaster was listed for Schenectady, but the cutoff date for information presented in the *Official Register* of 1816 was approximately September 1815. Thurston’s compensation rose to \$501.60 in fiscal year 1817 and to \$532.81 in 1819.

James Van Slyk Ryley (1820 – 1836)

James V.S. Ryley was appointed postmaster of Schenectady May 1, 1820. Ryley was a local boy with a varied resume. His father was a gunsmith whose customers included the local branch of Mohawks, from whom the lad learned the native language. He served several terms as Sheriff of Schenectady County, and a stint as translator to the U. S. commission negotiating articles of treaty with the Chippewa Nation at Saginaw, Michigan. Later in life he was appointed Judge to the Court of Common Pleas. During his tenure, the Schenectady post office became situated in its own building on Liberty Street, a short walk from “everywhere” in town north of the Erie Canal (#21 on the 1835 map).

According to the 1825 “Blue Book”, Ryley operated the post office at least up to that time without a postal clerk. For this and another reason I ascribe a few manuscript postmarks to Ryley’s hand, such as this FLS from May 25, 1820 – 5 weeks into his term:



Figure 7. Manuscript attributed to James V. S. Ryley, May 25, 1820.

Other than a September 1820 letter postmarked in this hand, the only other examples of it I have are a few free franks ending with the September 2, 1828 letter seen in **Figure 8**.



Figure 8. Manuscript attributed to James V. S. Ryley, September 2, 1828.

A few years into Riley's term, a locally made 33mm (brass and wood) double circle hand stamp postmark device appears. This device however, showed wear fairly quickly and was used only in 1824 and 1825.

During that time, one manuscript postmark appears in other than Ryley's hand, this from January 29th, 1825:

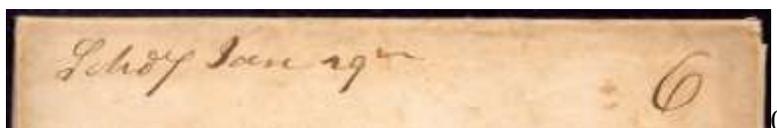


Figure 9. Manuscript attributed to unidentified clerk, January 29, 1825.

This FLS carries the only appearance of this hand, which is reminiscent of the manuscripts of Jacob Thurston's unidentified clerk but is positively dated by the letter's contents. It is possible that the "old clerk" was recalled for some reason.

During the period 1826 to 1827, when no hand stamp is seen on Schenectady mail, I find this one "hand" on Schenectady mail. Following is the earliest, on a FLS postmarked June 4, 1826:

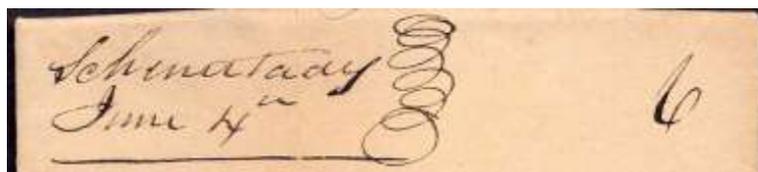


Figure 10. Manuscript attributed to unidentified clerk, June 4, 1826.

I have 5 letters postmarked by this hand and no other between June 4, 1826 and April 16, 1827, after which the 30mm cast metal SCH'DY / N.Y. double circle hand stamp appears and no further manuscript postmarks (other than the September 2, 1828 free frank shown above) are known to me. The ASCC date of 1829 is undoubtedly correct and the shortcoming is undoubtedly in my collection.

Ryley's compensation during his long tenure grew substantially: \$510.13 in fiscal year 1821; \$542.09 in 1823; \$623.42 in 1825; \$642.76 in 1827; \$759.03 in 1829; \$740.49 in 1831; \$962.27 in 1833; \$1,182.41 in 1835 and \$1,372.22 in 1837. Remembering that Congressional fiscal years are notated to the end point, the doubling of postmaster compensation between 1827 and 1837 is a good reflection of the commercial impact on Schenectady of the Erie Canal and the railroads that turned Schenectady into a hub of transportation and westward migration.

To recap observed postmarks during the tenure of James Ryley, what I can document is:

- ➔ Manuscript postmarks exclusively from May 25, 1820 to September 2, 1820;
- ➔ A gap from September 2, 1820 to May 20, 1824 during which I have no covers;
- ➔ Use of the 33mm hand stamp from May 20, 1824 to December 27, 1825 during which there is but one manuscript postmark;
- ➔ Manuscript postmarks exclusively from April 10, 1826 to April 16, 1827;
- ➔ Use of the 30mm hand stamp from October 6, 1827 to August 20, 1835 during which time there is the one Riley free frank manuscript.

Some Unanswered Questions

Even with the time gaps that are evident in this article, I feel that each postmaster had but one clerk and that, only after being in office for some time. While this may be a reasonable guess, I would like to compare the *postmaster compensation* figures, kindly provided to me by Tom Mazza, with *post office revenues*, which I have only for years after the manuscript era. If anyone has post office revenue data for Schenectady from 1792 to 1839 I would be grateful if it were shared.

Another measure of the complexity of post office operations, almost independent of postmaster revenue, is the number of bundles that must be made up each day of the week. That is dependent on the number of routes, the number of post offices along those routes and the number of exchange offices such as the endpoint of each route, and of course the absolute volume of outgoing mail. I imagine the demand for clerks rises as the demand for closings increases. This is another area of research I have yet to tackle for any period before 1837, and again I would appreciate hearing how other members have tackled this question in their own studies.

Yet another factor in demand for postal clerks is the extent to which the postmaster worked as a postal clerk himself. It is widely known that postmaster appointments were, certainly from the presidency of Andrew Jackson in 1830 onward, political plums and postmasters were often absentee landlords. While I know a little bit about each of Schenectady's first three postmasters, I don't have any feel for their approach to the job. I would be interested to hear about instances where members were able to find reports written by postmasters in the early 19th century that described how they administered their post offices.

¹ All material illustrating this article is from the author's collection and there are some gaps I would like to fill. Anyone who has Schenectady postal history material that would enhance the accuracy or scope of this report is urged to email me or send information to me at POB 4150, Pinehurst, NC 28374.

² Starting with the first session of the 14th Congress, all government departments, including the Post Office Department, were required to provide detailed lists of senior officers, of department heads and sub-heads and so forth. These were printed in limited editions. As such, few copies exist to this day and I do not know that even the Library of Congress has a complete set. If they do, it is not available in digital access form. Private individuals who hold copies published in the early 19th century would do this author a great service by contacting him.

Bob Bramwell may be contacted at rbramwell@nc.rr.com.

DOANE CANCELS OF ESSEX COUNTY

By: Glenn A. Estus

Doane Cancels are a category of postal history dealing with handstamp cancels issued to smaller post offices in the United States at the beginning of the 20th Century. This type of cancel is named after Miss Edith R. Doane who first studied them about 60 years ago. The current published reference to Doanes is found in *United States Doanes (2nd Ed.)* published by La Posta Publications in 2002. The work was edited by Richard W. Helbock and Gary Anderson using information submitted by state coordinators. The New York state coordinator is ESPHS member Maris Tirums.

One of the features that make Doanes so interesting is that they occur in three major distinct types. The postmark designs were, in effect, experimental, and given a clear example from which to work, it is quite easy to identify the particular type and thus to know something about when the marking was first used. The three types of Doanes are known simply as types 1, 2, and 3. Each type received distribution during a discrete number of months during the years 1903 – 1906, and the number of the types corresponds to the chronological order of their introduction. (*United States Doanes* p. 8)

Type 1 Doanes are very easily identified. They have 5 bars, the top and bottom bars are unbroken; the middle 3 bars are broken by a number ranging from “1” to “9.” There are other less prominent differences, but the 5 bars are the quick and easy identifier. Type 1 cancels were distributed from the first half of 1903 through the end of September 1903. There are no Type 1 Doanes known from Essex County.

Both Type 2 and Type 3 Doanes differ from Type 1 in having 4 killer bars with the outside bars unbroken and the inside 2 bars broken by a number from “1” to “9.”

Sometimes identifying a cancel as either Type 2 or Type 3 becomes difficult since Type 2 bars were essentially hollow and over time could become clogged with ink making them appear to be Type 3 cancels, which were issued with solid bars.

Another difference between Types 2 and 3 is the typeface use in the post office names. Type 2 is more Romanesque in nature, with letters having small serifs. Type 3 letters are more block type.

Essex County Type 2 cancels

Cascade (1904 - 1919) was originally called Cascadeville (1879 - 1904) and was a hotel at the extreme western edge of the Town of Keene on the Cascade Lakes. The post office was in the hotel and was probably a summer post office only. According to Chester L. Smith in “Summer and Winter Resort Post Offices” published in *The American Philatelist* (July 2000), it was definitely a summer post office between 1914 and 1919, the year it was discontinued. However, according to H.P. Smith in *The History of Essex County* (1885), Cascadeville “is open only during the summer months.”





Ironville (1876 - 1911) is in the Town of Crown Point. According to the website <http://www.penfieldmuseum.org>, the 'hamlet is listed as the "Birthplace of the Electric Age", being the site of the first industrial application of electricity in the United States.' In the Penfield museum there is a small display of postal materials including the actual Doane cancel and cards and envelopes showing the Doane cancel used on the last day of the post office, August 31, 1911.

Lake Placid Club, in the Town of North Elba, was an exclusive resort and winter sports center that in later years would become the center of the Olympic movement in Lake Placid. The Lake Placid Club was on one side of Mirror Lake and across the lake was Lake Placid itself.

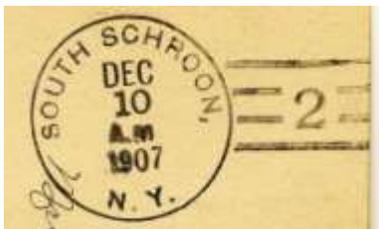


The Lake Placid Club post office was originally named Morningside from 1899 to 1905 before the name change. The post office existed as an independent office until 1958 when it became a station of Lake Placid. It was discontinued sometime in the early 1980s.

Schroon River was in the Town of North Hudson. The post office was established in 1903 and discontinued in 1915. The previous post office under the same name operated from 1842 to 1902. Illustrated is the Doane cancel used as a receiving mark on January 15, 1907. The name of the post office was misspelled in the cancel as Scroon River.

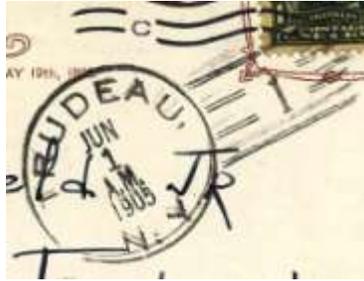


Severence, in the Town of Schroon, used its cancel for a long time: from at least 1905 to 1913. The office still operates on NYS Route 74 about 1 mile east of Interstate 87.



South Schroon was located in the Town of Schroon as well. It was a very small post office almost on the county line between Essex County and Warren County. It operated from 1868 to 1991.

Trudeau, in the established as a post office on until March 31, 1956. The Trudeau Institute, a research tuberculosis in the early part office served both the were taking the “cure.” deal of mail that needed to be Doanes are known in both



Town of St. Armand, was December 9, 1903 and existed post office was located at the center in the fight against of the 20th Century. The post Institute and the patients who There must have been a good processed since Trudeau Types 2 and 3.

Undercliff was in the Town of North Elba. Smith notes that Undercliff was a summer post office during its entire existence from 1893 to 1913. Like Lake Placid Club and Trudeau, the Doane cancels from this office are known in both Types 2 and 3. The illustration shows the hollow lines in the bars very well.



Essex County Type 3 cancels

Boquet (the last syllable rhymes with “wet”), in operation from 1897 to 1925, is a hamlet on NY Route 22 in the town of Essex. It was named after the Boquet River which flows through the central part of Essex County from the Adirondack High Peaks into Lake Champlain at Willsboro. Originally called Boquet, the post office name was changed to Bouquet in 1925 and was discontinued in 1935 when the area was serviced out of Essex, about 3 miles away.



Essex. I am assuming that it was also a summer post office from 1906 to 1916 even though Smith doesn't list it in his article.

Craterclub was a post office from 1906 until 1959. It is still a small summer resort community just south of Essex, N.Y. on Lake Champlain. Even today the residents are informed that the water system will be turn about the beginning of May and turned off at the end of October. According to Smith it was listed as a summer post office between the years 1916 to 1958. During the summers of 1958 and 1959 it was a Rural Station of

Hurricane (1896 - 1939) was another summer post office in the Town of Keene at the foot of Hurricane Mountain. The office seems to have done a good amount of business in the previous year since it was assigned the number “4” in the bar.

Lake Placid Club: See Lake Placid Club under Type 2 above.

Minerva was located in the south western part of Essex County in the Town of Minerva. This post office is still in existence. This was the second Minerva post office, and it was established in December 1868. It used a Doane cancel into the middle of 1913.



Moriah is located in the town of the same name. According to the references only one example of this Doane is known: May 1, 1909. The number in the bars is “9” making it the post office with the highest number in the group.

Newcomb, in the Town of Newcomb, was established in 1863. Newcomb is still in operation and borders both Warren and Hamilton Counties. Like Moriah above, there is only one example of the Doane cancel listed: May 21, 1907.



North Hudson is located in the Town of North Hudson. This is a very small town; even today the population of the township is less than 200. Originally called West Moriah, the name was changed to North Hudson in 1850. The post office still operates.

Raybrook, the second post office by this name in the Town of North Elba, opened in 1887 and continues in operation today. This post office is located between Lake Placid and Saranac Lake. The name was spelled as one word until 1908 when the spelling was changed to Ray Brook.



Reber, in the Town of Willsboro, operated from 1880 to 1918. A small hamlet in the western part of the Township, Reber was originally going to be called Flackville, but there was already a Flackville post office in New York State. Reber is a completely made up name.

Trudeau: see Trudeau under Type 2 above.

Undercliff: see Undercliff under Type 2 above.





Wadhams, in the Town of Westport was originally called Wadhams Mills from 1826 to 1906. The name was changed to Wadhams on March 8, 1906. The earliest recorded Doane is June 7, 1906, soon after the name change. According to Postal Bulletin #21881, service was suspended on September 18, 1992 and the office was discontinued on November 5, 1994.

Whiteface, in the Town of North Elba, was originally established in 1892 and closed in 1911. Smith says this office was a summer office from 1898 - 1911). Only one example of this Doane has been recorded: August 1, 1908.

Some final remarks

In the 1995 Tirums listing there were a few other post offices mentioned, but which didn't show up on the 2002 LaPosta book. Mr. Tirums responded to my inquiries with the following remarks which I include to show that researchers need to continually make sure their research is up to date.

Lake Placid Type 3: "I (Tirums) deleted this listing in February 1996 as the very few reports were dubious."

St Hubert's in the Town of Keene: "this listing has been deleted. I can't find my notes on this, but I believe there simply was no credible report to keep the listing".

Moriah in the Town of Moriah: "I (Tirums) still have this listed, but based on a single report"

Newcomb in the Town of Newcomb: "deleted in March 1997 - existence of 4-bar cancel was confirmed that conflicted with single Doane report (which apparently was based on weak example where the number was illegible)"

To conclude this story, we have put all the information into this simple table.

Essex County Doanes				
Name	Type	Num	Earliest	Latest
Boquet (1897-1925)	3	2	29 Jul, 1907	21 Jun, 1911
Cascade (1904 - 1919)	2	2	25 Jul, 1905	3 Aug, 1909

Craterclub (1906 - 19590)	3	1	5 Jul, 1907	
Hurricane (1896 - 1939)	3	4	8 Jul, 1908	22 Aug, 1908
Ironville (1876 - 1911)	2	2	14 Oct, 1905	28 Jun, 1909
Lake Placid Club (1905- 81)	2	4	23 Sep, 1905	18 Oct, 1908
Minerva (2nd) (1868 -)	3	3	4 May, 1907	15 Jul, 1913
Moriah (1816 -)	3	9	1 May, 1909	
North Hudson (1850 -)	3	2	12 Nov, 1906	16 Apr, 1907
Raybrook (2nd) 1887 -)	3	5	16 Jan, 1907	6 Mar, 1907
Reber (1880 - 1918)	3	2	30 Jul, 1906	18 Jan, 1909
Sc(h)roon River #2 (1903 - 1915)	2	1	8 Sep, 1906	4 Jun, 1907
Severance (1892 -)	2	2	31 Aug, 1905	18 Sep, 1913
South Schroon (1868 - 1991)	2	2	28 Aug, 1905	15 Oct, 1910
Streetroad (1879 - 1909)	2	2	26 Feb, 1906	7 Sep, 1909
Trudeau 2 (1903 - 1956)	2	1	4 Mar, 1904	15 Jan, 1908
Trudeau 3 (1903 - 1956)	3	2	12 Jan, 1906	12 Jul, 1907
Undercliff 2 (1898 - 1913)	2	2	26 Aug, 1904	15 Mar, 1906
Undercliff 3 (1898 - 1913)	3	2	16 Aug, 1909	4 Aug, 1911
Wadhams (1906 - 1992)	3	3	7 Jun, 1906	15 Sep, 1909
Whiteface (1st) (1892 - 1911)	3		17 July 1908	1 Aug, 1908

References:

Helbock, Richard W. & Anderson, Gary, *United States Doanes, A Catalog of Doane Cancellations, Revised 2nd Edition*, La Posta Publications, 2002.

Kay, John L. & Smith, Chester M., *New York Postal History: The Post Offices and First Postmasters from 1775 to 1980*, American Philatelic Society, 1982.

Smith, Chester M., "Summer and Winter Resort Post Offices," *The American Philatelist* (July 2000).

Smith, H. P., *The History of Essex County, New York*, 1885.

Tirums, Maris, "New York City (sic) Doanes" *The Journal of New York State Postal History*, pages 1-17, Winter to Spring 1995.

Glenn A. Estus may be contacted at gestus2002@yahoo.com .

COLUMBIA COUNTY CORNER

By: George DeKornfeld

This issue, we'll temporarily be defecting out of Columbia County to take a brief journey directly south into Dutchess County, specifically, to the Town of Amenia.

Although I pass through this town each time I travel between home and office, there remains of Anemia a childhood memory that well-predates my living anywhere near this scenic area of the Hudson Valley. As a youth, living in southern Westchester County, my Aunt and cousins, travelling north from Princeton, New Jersey would stop and join my family for a day

trip to visit my Great Aunt Ruth who, like many “city people” (she lived in Yonkers) would regularly head upstate to summer in Amenia and other nearby country locations. These trips were sadly infrequent and even more sadly, time has taken its toll on my memory (it was the early 1960’s and I was really young), but I do recall feeling like we ended up in a quaint little village sprouting out of the middle of some great, green wilderness as compared even to that of my hometown, suburban Scarsdale.

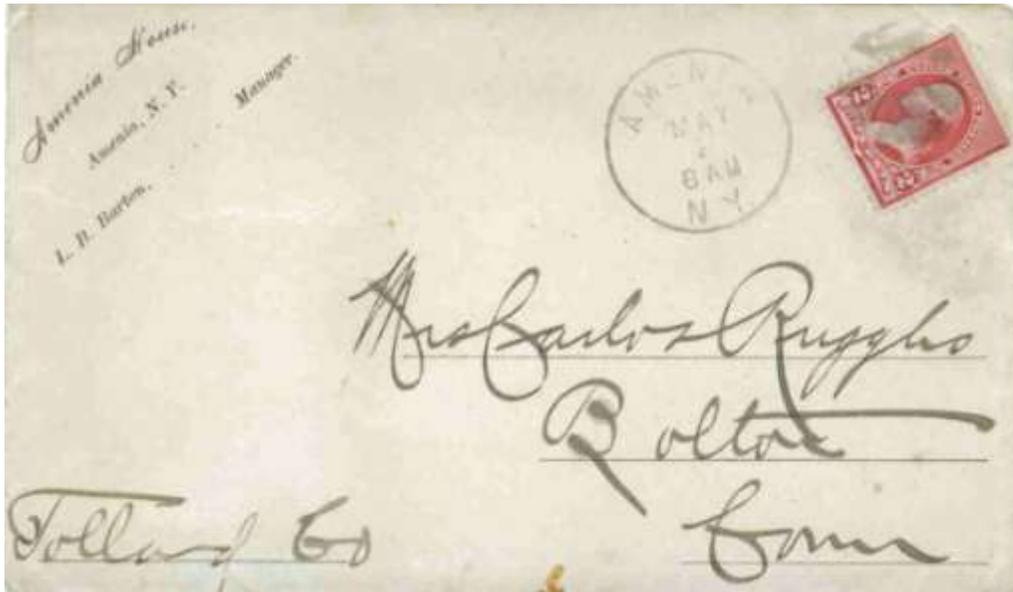


Figure 1: A corner card of the Amenia House Hotel appears on this 1894 cover sent to Bolton, Conn.

Figure 1 shows a cover mailed in 1894 from The Amenia House Hotel by a travelling salesman to his wife in Bolton, Connecticut. The envelope shows the hotel’s somewhat spartan corner card. Appropriately franked with 2-cent **carmine** George Washington Bureau issue, the stamp is tied by a crossroads-style killer in duplex with a 28-mm Amenia circular date stamp.

Figure 2 illustrates the more ornate letterhead of the enclosed hotel stationary that reads “*THIS HOTEL is pleasantly located opposite the Harlem R.R. Depot. Every attention given to the requirements and comfort of the guests and requisite convenience for commercial travelers and tourists.*”



Figure 2: A portion of Amenia House stationery showing an ornately designed letterhead.

Finding a horse shoe as part of a logo is typical for this area as horse riding was, and is, highly popular in this region. Yet, it is curious to find one pointing downwards as is printed on the hotel's letterhead (I always thought they were meant to be pointing upwards so the luck can't 'pour out'). And was this Aunt Ruth's summer retreat of so many years later? No family records can answer this question and compliments of my memory or lack thereof mentioned prior, I'll likely never know for sure.

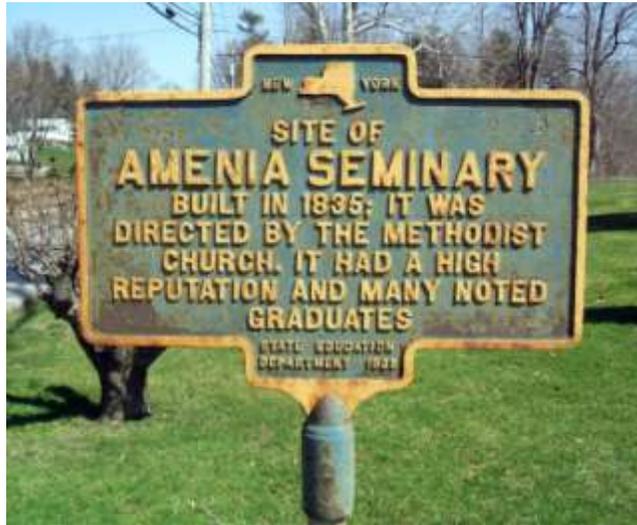
So I started with a sentimental detour and I do need to get to the original intent of this article (which will be found to be about the Amenia Seminary), but first a little taste of Amenia's history:



A land patent known as the Great Nine Partners Patent was created in northeast Dutchess County in 1697, part of which officially became Amenia in 1788 after having been settled circa 1742 by a Captain S. Hopkins. Two stories circulate about the derivation of this town name, these being likely somehow intertwined. One describes the word Amenia in an association with the low blood cell count deficiency termed anemia suffered by the town's founder, Jeffrey Ottman. The second believes the name was derived from the Latin *amoena*

which means 'pleasant to the eye.' A Dr. Thomas Young is credited with coming up with this name in 1762. To be sure, any state historical markers on the town's outskirts dwell strictly on the second name derivation as it certainly sounds much more appealing.

The town includes the hamlets of Amenia Union, Smithfield, Leedsville, Wassaic, Amenia Center, Sharon Station, and South Amenia. Amenia Center (Amenia), interestingly enough, was moved about one-mile south in 1805 to meet a cross roads for the Dutchess Turnpike which, roughly running east to west, connected Poughkeepsie with Hartford, Connecticut. Early industry focused on farming (Gail Borden, Jr., who in 1856 invented condensed milk, opened his first factory here), and, like so many other settlements in the area, on iron mining. The Amenia Union Post Office, now discontinued, was open between 1823 and 1917, whereas the Amenia PO opened on July 1, 1807 remains open to this day.



Finally, we arrive at the main intention of this article. In my daily travels through Amenia using Route 22, on the east side of the street a few hundred yards north of the Route 44 (Dutchess Turnpike) intersection, up on a small hill there stands an imposing building that up until a few years ago held the Amenia Elementary School. Local school reorganizations and economic factors led to the closing of the school with this elementary level division joining the multi-level school complex in Wassaic. Built in the late 1920's and prior to being the Amenia Elementary School, this building had originally served as the Amenia High School, which had originally been located directly across the street in a building that the burgeoning local population outgrew. The high school preceded the elementary school's move to Wassaic. The building had lain abandoned but remaining in excellent repair since the end of the 2008/2009 school year. I had always noticed a NY State historic marker at one of the entrances. Curiosity finally dictated a stop to check it out and there I discovered that the marker reads: "*Site of Amenia Seminary built in 1835; it was directed by the Methodist Church. It had a high reputation and many noted graduates.*"

For once, my memory held up and I recalled that our own Drew Nicholson, a long-time student and specialist in Dutchess County postal history, had shown me a rather glamorous looking advertising cover from this very seminary. I knew I potentially had an article in the making.

In the mid-1800's, there simply weren't any non-private high schools as New York hadn't yet mandated a free, public secondary education. For those that could afford it for their children, these private academies existed to provide this instruction and the Amenia Seminary, erected on Cook's Hill, became a well-known and respected institution that helped bridge this gap in the Hudson Valley, ultimately drawing local students, as well as those from the rest of the state, and New England. A picture of the Seminary is seen below.



As a Methodist institution, many learned men served as principals and instructors, perhaps one of the most famous being Erastus Otis Haven (1820 – 1881), seen in a photo at left. Erastus was a Bishop of the Methodist Church following serving as Amenia Seminary principal in 1846 and subsequently president of the University of Michigan and Northwestern University, as well as the chancellor of Syracuse University from 1874 to 1880.

Figure 3 shows a stampless folded letter of 1853 in-bound to the Amenia Seminary from Purdy's Station (1849 – 1893), New York (WES).



Figure 3. An inbound 1853 cover to Amenia Seminary from Purdy's Station, NY.

Possibly errantly rated 5-cents as an unpaid letter as shown by the crossed out '5,' the letter was prepaid the required 3-cents (Act of March 3, 1851) as per the "Paid 3" handstamp and sent on its way. The letter, written by the addressee's sister, discusses life and events back home such as winter parties, health of relatives, and the stealing of "a great deal of fowl." The recipient, John T. Hunt may have been a son of Joseph D. Hunt, the patriarch of a large New York Methodist family and one of the first and most ardent supporters of the Seminary.

In 1868, part of the hill upon which the Seminary sat was leveled and made into a ball field, eventually making the 'Old Sem', as it became to be known, an important local attraction. During a reunion held in 1903, Professor S.T. Frost, formerly a student and later principal of the Seminary (1868), was quoted as saying:

We had then come upon later times when a school must have an athletic field. But a swamp and soft ground nearly encircled the building on three sides. The highway was in front - well no wider than it is now. (Horses only, cars had not yet been invented).

The immediate site of the building, on a hill of moraine, was simply perfect; but you scarcely left the doorstep before you were pinched for room...The first thing to be made was a ball-field, and drill ground; for the savor of the powder of the Civil War was yet in the air.

How you yourselves responded to the call to level down the hill, and change the old swamp into the finest baseball diamond! I still recall the splendid teams (of horses) that came from the rich farms all about....How Amenia opened her eyes on the opening day.

In the latter part of the 19th century, public schools in New York became commonplace and at least partially contributed to the demise of the Amenia Seminary, which saw its doors close permanently in 1888. For a brief time, the structure was used as a boarding house, and then as a hotel called the Iron Springs Spa. Today, the building shown in Figure 3 serves as The Amenia Town Hall, having been purchased from the Wassaic School District for \$1.00.

Oh, and Drew's cover? It can be enjoyed in **Figure 4**. What a spectacular cover it is!



Figure 4. This cover was mailed from Amenia Seminary to Dover, NY.

George DeKornfeld may be contacted at Gdekornfel@fairpoint.net.

19TH CENTURY ALLEGANY COUNTY POST OFFICES: PART I

By: William Howden

More than twenty-five years collecting the 19th century postal history of Allegany County (located in the Southern Tier near the toe of New York State), gave me a five volume collection which included not only many Dead Post Offices (DPO's), but also a number of manuscript post offices.

In 2006, I organized an exhibit of eighty 19th century Allegany County post offices, which included over fifty manuscript post offices. Early in 2010, I hit the jack pot by acquiring seven additional post office covers, and later, at the ROPEX (Rochester) stamp show, three more! Three of the ten were new manuscript post offices. Unfortunately, I had to pass on an additional cover. It was a gem, but I can't afford everything.

After adding the new post office material to the general collection, I decided to pull all of my manuscript post offices, which were scattered throughout the collection, to make an updated list of what I had, and also write up the post office with a corresponding manuscript cover description, for my records. This resulted in a total of fifty-seven different post office manuscript covers in my care, which are documented below.

After completing the manuscript updating, and after acquiring a new 2010 Allegany county Tourism map, I decided to also write up a number of additional dead post offices, which I do not have covers from, just because they need to be remembered by more than the few who live at each location. Yes, most of the "places" are still occupied, even though there is no village or even a central hamlet, as well as no post office.

The 2010 county map amazingly included a number of the 19th century settlements once having a post office located with a black dot! It might not be exactly where the post office was located in the 1800's, but it is undoubtedly a closer location than just a description that places them merely in a particular township. There is also the possibility that a township has changed from what it was when the post office was active. New information has also been added, including three post offices documented in this article. The result is another listing, of thirty-one additional dead post offices of Allegany County, which will follow as Part II of the 19th century Allegany county post offices in a future issue of *Excelsior!*

What follows is a summary of my 57 19th century manuscript post offices of Allegany County. I include post office dates, location information, and a philatelic description of the postal markings on the cover representing each manuscript post office in my possession, listed alphabetically.

An **Alfred** post office has existed since 1817, with its first location at present Almond. The second Alfred location, the time of this cover's mailing, dates from 3/9/1822, at a place called Baker's Bridge (Alfred Station), where it remained until 1894, when it moved a third time to super-cede Alfred Center. Alfred and its post office remain active. My folded letter includes a manuscript "Alfred, NY / Ap 26th, 48" and "5" the unpaid 1845 postal rate for a distance less than 300 miles.

The **Alfred Centre** post office was established on 3/15/1850, and was located at present

Alfred from that date until changed to Alfred Center in December of 1893. Six months later it became Alfred (III). Its location was three miles south-west of Alfred Station (Alfred II). My envelope includes a manuscript "Alfred Centre / Dec 9." There is no year date, but is probably 1855. It also has a manuscript "5" for an unpaid letter, the 1851 rate; due 3c for under 3,000 miles and 2c for sending unpaid.

An **Allen** post office was established on 9/4/1824 and was once located near the center of the eastern edge of Allen Township, on the post road from Dansville to Angelica. It was closed on 2/28/1902, with mail service then by the Angelica Post Office. My envelope has a manuscript "Allen, NY / 10-25-81" tying Sc. #207 to the cover addressed to Independence, Oregon. The 3c green paid the 1879 postal rate for ½ ounce.

An **Allen Centre** post office was in service from 1/31/1831 until 12/2/1878, and was located west of Allen and south of Grove, centered in the town of Allen. My folded letter has in manuscript, "Allen Centre NY / Sepr 14." The year 1834 is docketed inside. A manuscript "12½" was the 1816 rate for 81-150 miles.

An **Alma** post office was established on 3/23/1855 from West Shongo. A ca. 1880's map shows the Alma post office at the center of Alma Township. Today Alma is located near the south-west corner of the township, at the center of the bottom tier of townships and still has its post office, unobtrusively located (in 2009) in the fire hall. My Sc. #U10 postal stationery envelope includes a faded manuscript "Alma May 2nd 1861." The imprinted 3¢ oval is manuscript canceled with an "H."

The **Almond** post office was established on 3/9/1822, when Alfred moved to present Alfred Station, and was located on the postal route from Bath to Olean, at the east edge of the township. The village and post office remains active. My folded letter has, in manuscript, "Almond /20/ April." The year 1827 is docketed inside. The postmaster to postmaster mailing also has in manuscript "Free."

The **Andover** post office was formed on 11/3/1824. Today Andover and its post office are centered in the town of Andover, between Independence and Alfred townships. My envelope includes a manuscript "Andover NY / Aug 16." It has no year date, but is probably after 1845. It also bears a manuscript "5" for the unpaid 1845 postal rate of under 300 miles.

Angelica is Allegany County's earliest post office, established on 7/1/1809. Located north of today's Belmont, away from the Genesee River, Angelica still became a thriving settlement and political center of the county in its early years, and remains very active. My 1825 (docketed) folded letter, written by Philip Church regarding the Genesee Valley Canal proposal, includes, in manuscript, "Angelica / Dec 5" and a "6"; the 1816 postal rate for a distance of under thirty miles.

Belvidere is located three miles north of Belmont and was forced to move a short distance when the Erie Railroad went through in 1851. Originally Hobbieville, the Belvidere post office operated from 11/17/1851 until 4/30/1932. Mail service was subsequently provided by the Belmont post office. My ladies cover, most probably from 1853, has in manuscript "Belvidere NY/Sep 6" and "Paid 3," the postage rate for under 3,000 miles.

The **Birdsall** post office was established on 5/3/1830, on the post road from Dansville to Angelica, and survived until 1969, with two short closures, from 1859 to 1864 and 1903 to 1906. Located east of Mien, after closure it was serviced by the Angelica post office. My 1¢ U.S. Postal Card (Sc. #UX7) has in manuscript “Birdsall July 31 1885” at top. The black imprint is cancelled with a pen stroke.

A **Black Creek** post office was established on 8/23/1825 in the town of New Hudson, north of Cuba. Condensed to Blackcreek in December of 1896, it was restored to Black Creek in December of 1905 and remains in service within a small settlement. My envelope has a manuscript posting date of “Oct 13/55” and includes a pen cancelled 1853 franking of the 3¢ issue of 1851 (Sc. #11). A manuscript “Black Creek N.Y.” is above the posting date. Effective April 1, 1855, compulsory prepayment of mail was mandated.

The **Burns** post office opened on 7/14/1846, before which it was DeWitt’s Valley. Located north of Almond, it survived two closures, from 1883 to 1896 and 1897 to 1899. It finally closed on 9/30/1946, with service then provided by Arkport, Steuben County. My cover includes a manuscript “Bums NY / July 16.” There is no year date, but it is probably 1865. It is franked with Sc. #65 and which is cancelled with three pen strokes.

Caneadea was originally located where Rushford is now, with its post office beginning on 3/3/1816. The name was changed to Rushford, as was the post office, on 3/25/1820. With Caneadea re-located to its present site, on the west bank of the Genesee River between Oramel and Houghton, the post office was re-established on 12/7/1825 and remains active within its small crossroads settlement. My folded letter includes in manuscript “Oct 30” with the year 1850 docketed on the inside, and a manuscript “5” to pay the 1845 rate for less than 300 miles. There is also a manuscript “Caneadea NY” at the left edge.

A **Centre Almond** post office opened on 2/16/1827, closed on 11/14/1865, and was served in those years by a single postmaster, Lazarus S. Rathbum. Located between North Almond and Allen, it was on the post route from Pike to Almond. My Civil War era yellow envelope has a manuscript “May 24, 1864” with the “1864” written over a Sc. #65 franking at left side, below a manuscript “Centre Almond N.Y.”

Previously South Nunda, a **Centreville** post office operated from 10/13/1820 until 12/17/1892, when the spelling was changed to Centerville to correspond to the town name. It remains active. A cross-roads settlement, once the hub of the 1815 Allegany Road, it is located north of Rushford, at the north-west corner of the county. My folded letter has, in manuscript “Centerville NY” and “8 April” at top left. “1831” is docketed inside. At top right is a manuscript “M S White P.M.” A postmaster letter, it does not have the required “free” post mark.

A **Ceres**, N.Y. Post Office was established on 2/25/1851, from Cerestown, Pennsylvania, located across the road, and the state line, from each other. Ceres is found between Portville (CAT) and Little Genesee, at the south-west corner of the county. My 1852 docketed envelope has a manuscript “Ceres NY” & “June 21” on its face, and a manuscript “5,” the unpaid 1851 rate for less than 3,000 miles.

The **Cuba** post office was established in May of 1824 and remains active, located on the 1818 Allegany Road (Leicester to Olean), between Friendship and Hinsdale (CAT), and is

presently located in a new building at the western edge of the village. My 1841 docketed folded letter has in manuscript "Cuba," "Sept 6" and "10," the 1816 rate for a single letter traveling 31 to 80 miles.

An **Eagle** post office was established on 6/21/1826, serving until the township was transferred to Wyoming County on 4/1/1846. It was located in the north-east corner of pre April, 1846 Allegany County, and in south-west corner of the township, west of Pike. My 1840 (docketed) folded letter includes a manuscript "Eagle NY" and "Dec 28" plus a manuscript "Paid 12 ½," the 1816 rate for mail traveling 81-150 miles.

An **East Hill** post office was formed on 9/10/1832 and served until 5/11/1846, when the entire township was transferred to Livingston County. It was located in Genesee Falls Township, on the west side of the Genesee River, north of Portageville. This folded letter has in manuscript "East Hill NY" and "Dec 14 1837" plus "Free" and "Wm Robinson PM." He was the first postmaster of the post office.

An **East Rushford** post office was opened on 12/18/1857 and hung on until 3/2/1880. Much of the settlement was destroyed in a massive 1864 flood, and today is under Rushford Lake, formed by construction of the Caneadea Dam in 1927. My cover has in manuscript "East Rushford NY" & "Feb 5." There is no year date, but is probably 1858 or 1859. It is franked with a re-cut Sc. #11 which is pen cancelled.

A farming community first known as Fighting Corners, the **Friendship** post office was established on 4/2/1821, and remains active; located between Cuba and Belvidere. My folded letter is docketed 5/7/1825. The front includes in manuscript "Friendship NY" and "May 8," plus "18½," the unpaid 1816 single letter rate for a letter traveling 151 to 400 miles.

A **Genesee Valley** post office was formed on 6/4/1830 and served until 8/21/1849 with Samuel Van Campen as the only postmaster. It was located between Belmont and Scio (two miles south of Belmont), on the Scio-Belmont Road (perhaps on the east side of the Genesee River. There is presently a road on both sides of the river.) My folded letter is docketed 1832 and includes in manuscript "Genesee Valley" and "April 6" plus "Paid 10," the 1816 rate for a distance of 31 to 80 miles.

The **Granger** post office, successor to Hickory Swale, was opened 2/5/1842 and was located north of Grove on the 1817 post road from Angelica north to Nunda and Batavia. It closed on 9/29/1900, with mail service then provided by the Hunt (LIV) post office. A folded letter bears a manuscript "Granger N.Y." and "Feb 7" (1853 is docketed) plus "Paid 3," the 1851 prepaid rate for a distance under 3,000 miles.

A **Grove** post office was first established on 1/2/1828, serving until 5/14/1859, when it became East Granger. Grove was re-established 5/15/1884, with final closure on 8/10/1888, with mail service subsequently provided by Swain. It was located on the 1832 Angelica to Moscow (Leicester) post road, north of Angelica. My folded letter has in manuscript "Grove NY" & "June 30th" (1848 is docketed). Also is a manuscript "Free" at top left, and "S C Jones," / "PM Grove NY" at top right of cover.

The **Hallsport** post office began operation on 7/12/1852 and closed on 5/15/1907, with mail service then provided from Wellsville. It was located at the south-east corner of the county,

east of Shongo, where the settlement remains. The year 1861 is docketed on my patriotic flag cover franked with a pen cancelled Sc. #26. A manuscript "Hallsport" / "NY June 1st" is at the bottom left of the cover.

A **Hickory Swale** post office operated only from 9/30/1830 until it was succeeded by Granger on 2/5/1842. Located between Hume and Grove, the area remains very rural. My 1840 (docketed) folded letter, seen in **Figure 1**, is addressed vertically, and includes in manuscript "Hickory Swale"/ "NY Sep 10th," and "25," the 1816 rate for a single letter sheet traveling over 400 miles in distance to its destination post office.



Figure 1. This 1840 cover which bears a manuscript Hickory Swale, New York manuscript cancel was mailed to York County, Maine.

The **Hobbieville** post office opened on 1/19/1835 and closed in November of 1851 when its name was changed to Belvidere. It was located north of Philipsville (Belmont) on the west side of the Genesee River at a crossroads junction that was moved after the Erie Railroad construction went through the settlement in 1851. My folded letter, as seen in **Figure 2**, has in manuscript "Hobbieville" and "Dec 21," plus "Paid 5¢," paying the 1845 rate for a distance less than 300 miles. 1847 is docketed inside.

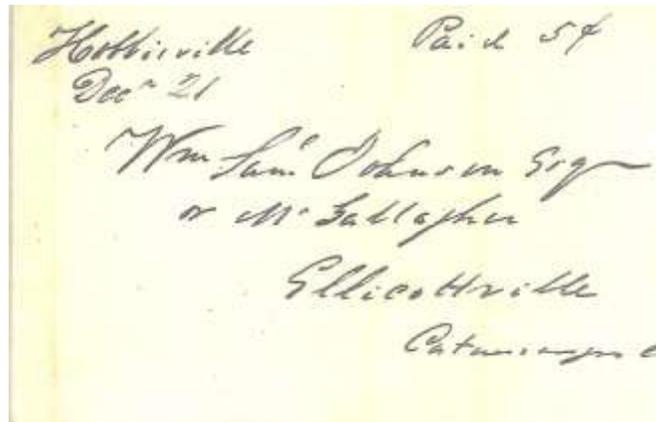


Figure 2. An 1847 folded letter with a manuscript marking of Hobbieville, New York.

The **Hunts Hollow** post office was established on 5/1/1827, in the town of Portage, on the post route from Almond through Portage to Pike. It was lost to Allegany County when the town of Portage was transferred to Livingston County in June of 1849. The 1843 (docketed)

folded letter seen in **Figure 3** has in manuscript by the first postmaster; “Hunts Hollow” and “Sept 2,” with “Free”/“S. Hunt PM” at the top of the cover.

Figure 3. This 1843 letter bears the free frank of Hunts Hollow postmaster S. Hunt, as well as the manuscript Hunts Hollow town marking.



An **Independence** post office was first established on 1/3/1824. It closed on 2/13/1829 and was reopened 2/26/1830, serving until 11/30/1911, with mail service then by Andover. The hamlet is located in the south-east corner of the county at the junction of two post roads. My U.S. Postal Stationery cover, Sc. #U34, bears a manuscript “Independence NY” and “Sep 26.” It has no year date, but probably dates after 1851. The embossed stamp, paying the under 3,000 mile postage rate, is not “killed.” This cover is illustrated in **Figure 4**.

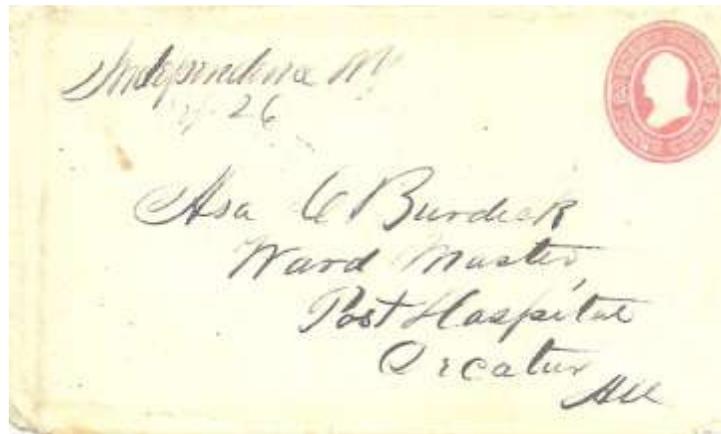


Figure 4. This cover bears a manuscript Independence, NY town marking.

A **Little Genesee** post office was opened on 4/18/1828 in the town of Genesee, located at the south-west corner of the county, between Ceres and Bolivar, in the midst of very dense forest. The post office continues to serve its small community. My early envelope includes in manuscript “Little Genesee N.Y” / “Dec 4 1848,” at top left and at top right a manuscript “5,” the 1845 rate for less than 300 miles. Envelopes came into popular use after 1845, when the per-sheet rate was negated.

The **New Hudson** post office was established on 7/14/1849, in its township located at the center of the western edge of Allegany County. It suffered a short closure from 10/8/1858 to

5/10/1862. After closure on 4/30/1902, it was served by Black Creek. My cover includes in manuscript “New Hudson”/ “NY Mch 25” at top right. It bears no year date, but is perhaps from 1852. It is franked with Sc. #11 at top left, cancelled with a pen-line through a circle. In 1851, the letter rate was set at 3c, for a destination under 3,000 miles, with an adhesive stamp required.

First known as South Branch from 1835 to 1846, the **Nile** post office was established on 3/26/1846 and served for 111 years, terminating on 9/20/1957, with mail service then provided by the Friendship Post Office. Nile is located today at the southern border of the town of Friendship, north of Wirt. My cover has in manuscript “Nile NY” and “May 14” at bottom left corner. No year date is shown, but it is probably after 1855, when compulsory prepayment was ordered. It is franked with Sc. #11, which is pen cancelled. It is addressed to an early Almond settler, Veranus McHenry.

A **Nunda Valley** post office opened on 1/13/1830 and was lost on 5/11/1846, when the town of Nunda was transferred to Livingston County. It was located between Ossian and Portage Townships, east of the Genesee River and north of Oakland. My folded letter has in manuscript “Nunda Valley NY” and “Sept 21 1834” and “12 ½,” the unpaid 1816 rate for a distance of 81-150 miles. It also has a manuscript “Via Avon,” a request for routing by way of the distribution point (Avon) for mail traveling from Canandaigua to Fort Niagara, or east through Auburn, as it is addressed.

The **Oakland** post office was opened on 3/28/1823, and was located between Portage and Nunda. It was lost to Allegany County when Nunda Township was transferred to Livingston County on 7/5/1849. My small folded letter is shown in **Figure 5**. It has in manuscript “Oakland NY” and “Aug 3” at the bottom. The year 1841 is docketed inside. Also in manuscript, at top left, is “6 Paid,” the 1816 rate for a letter traveling a distance of less than 30 miles.

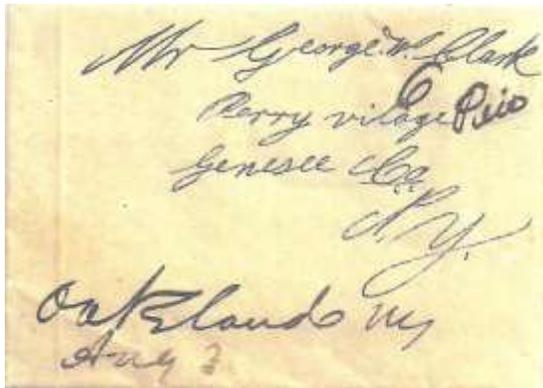


Figure 5. This small, pre-paid folded letter, mailed in 1841, bears a manuscript town marking of Oakland, NY.

The first **Oramel** post office was established on 6/10/1850, and closed on 10/22/1850, when it became Rounsville. On 3/29/1852 it again became Oramel, surviving until closure on 3/31/1968, with mail service then by Belfast. Once the capitol of the Genesee Valley Canal, it is located in the town of Caneadea, north of Belfast. My cover, with an illustrated address tablet, has in manuscript, “Oramel NY” and “Jan 4/69” next to an 1867 grilled Sc. #94, which is pen cancelled. This cover can be seen in **Figure 6**.



Figure 6. This fancy address tablet type envelope has a manuscript Orael, NY town mark.

A **Philpsville** post office was established 3/6/1838, and served until 1/21/1859, when it became Belmont, located in the town of Amity, on the west bank of the Genesee River. My folded letter has a manuscript “Philpsville NY” and “May 30.” The year, 1844, is docketed. A manuscript “Paid 18 $\frac{3}{4}$ ” represents the 1816 rate for a single letter traveling 150-400 mi

The **Phillip’s Creek** post office which opened on 12/9/1845 was located east of Philpsville (Belmont) and west of Alfred Centre (Alfred). In December of 1894 the apostrophe was dropped. The Phillips Creek post office lived on until closure on 9/15/1909, with service then provided by the Belmont Post Office. A four stroke pen cancel kills a Sc. #65 on the left of my cover, while a manuscript “Phillips Creek / March 11” is at top right. No year date is noted, but the cover probably dates to after 1865.

A **Pike** post office was active in Allegany County from 7/4/1818 until 4/11/1846, when the town of Pike was transferred to Wyoming County. It was located north of Hume, on the Allegany Post Road (dating from 1815), running from Geneseo to Centerville. My folded letter has a manuscript “Pike NY” & “Feb 4.” The year date, 1835, is docketed. A manuscript “18 $\frac{3}{4}$ ” is at the top right and represents the unpaid single letter rate of 1816 for 150-400 miles.

The **Portageville** post office operated from 3/11/1828 until 4/1/1846, when the township was lost to Wyoming County. Located on the Genesee River, it served as the portage point around the cataracts of the Genesee. It was a veritable wilderness in 1833. My folded letter includes a manuscript “Portageville NY” and “Jan 26” at the top left, plus “18 $\frac{3}{4}$ ” at the top right of the cover. The year, 1833, is docketed inside.

A **Richburgh** Post Office existed from 10/2/1838 until the “h” was dropped on 11/4/1893. The Richburg Post Office continues to serve; located north of Bolivar. Both townships were major recipients of the 1882 oil boom and continue to produce some oil. My early envelope has “Richburgh NY” / “May 17th” in manuscript. The year, 1849, is docketed. The cover, seen in **Figure 7**, also bears a “5,” the single letter rate for under 300 miles.



Figure 7. This Richburgh, manuscript cover dates from 1849.

Originally Sumner’s Valley, the **Rockville** post office was first formed on 8/12/1839, but closed on 8/3/1864. It was re-established on 3/2/1883 with final closure on 1/31/1934, after which service was provided from Belfast, located a few miles north of Rockville. My folded letter has in manuscript “*Rock Ville Ny*,” and “**March 23**” in blue ink. Also in blue ink is “**12 ½**,” representing the unpaid 1816 single letter rate for mail traveling between 80 and 150 miles. The date “March 18, 1843” is docketed inside.

The **Short Tract** post office was established on 8/26/1820, and it was condensed to Shorttract in December of 1895. It remained such until closure on 4/30/1900, when mail service was then provided by Fillmore. It was located on the post road between Nunda and Angelica. My embossed ladies cover is shown in **Figure 8**. It has in manuscript “Short Tract / P.O.” and “Apl 21” at lower left. It has no year date, but probably is from 1857. It is franked with Sc. #26, Type II, pen cancelled & applied at the top left of the cover which is addressed to Oramel, Allegany County.



Figure 8. This Short Tract manuscript cover most likely dates from 1857.

A **South Bolivar** post office existed from 1/18/1854 until 1/31/1901, and was located ten miles east of Ceres and south of Bolivar, near the Pennsylvania state line. The tiny settlement had been raised from decay by the year 2010, with two new landscaped homes replacing three decrepit, vegetation overgrown and uninhabited dwellings. My cover has a manuscript “S Bolivar / March 16” at left-bottom, and above it, is franked with a pen cancelled Sc. #65. There is no year date, but probably is 1863. It is addressed to Moscow, NY, which is present day Leicester (LIV).

A thriving farm community in its early years, the **Spring Mills** post office was in operation from 10/17/1827 until closure on 11/14/1925, with mail service then provided by Whitesville. The area remains rural and is located in the south-east corner of the county, south of

Whitesville. My folded letter includes in manuscript, "Aug 23" (the year 1831 is docketed), and also a manuscript "6," the unpaid rate for a distance not over 30 miles. Above the month and date is a manuscript "Spring Mills N. Y."

The **Stanard's Corners** post office operated from 4/24/1860 until December, 1894, when the apostrophe was dropped. It continued until 3/23/1895, when it became Stanards. The cross-roads community has always been spelled with two "N's;" the post office with only one. My cover includes a faded manuscript "Stanard's Cors ('s' high) NY." and is franked with a pen canceled and tied Sc. #158. The date, 1/20/1875, is docketed inside. The enclosure includes several payment coupons, and is addressed to Hallsport, N.Y.

A **Swainsville** Post Office operated from 2/2/1853 until 6/21/1862, when the name was changed to Swain. Originally located near the Ossian Township border until 1857, when Ossian was given away; then south of the Livingston County border, west of Canaseraga. I have a stained cover with a manuscript "Swains / Ville NY" and "May 1." It bears no year date; probably after 1853, but a possible early use if were 1853. At top right is fancy manuscript "Paid 3," representing the rate for a distance of under three thousand miles at the 1851 rate.

The **Wellsville** post office opened on 2/25/1835, when the village was incorporated. Located on the Genesee River south of Scio, and west of Elm Valley, the post office and the village are both very active today. My folded letter has a manuscript "Wellsville NY" and "May 12" at the left, and a manuscript "12 ½" at the top right (paying the 1816 rate for a distance of 81-150 miles.) The year 1842 is docketed on the inside.

Located west of Allen and south of Short Tract, the **West Allen** post office was established on 2/28/1879 and closed on 2/28/1902, with mail service then provided by the Angelica post office. Today the area remains rural with dirt cross-roads. My cover includes a manuscript "West Allen NY" and "Feb 2 1879." It is Franked with a Sc. #184, pen canceled with two diagonal strokes.

A **West Almond** post office opened on 7/13/1826, had a three month closure in 1880, then served until 2/28/1902, with mail service then provided by the Almond post office. It was located on the Turnpike between Almond and Angelica. My cross-border folded letter has in manuscript "W Almond / Augt 13" at top left, with a docketed date of 8/4/1851. A manuscript "3" is crossed out, as partial payment was not acceptable. A manuscript "10" (collect) in pencil, with a blue hand-stamped "6D" in a circle (Canada due) is at right. A lower left hand stamp is "UD States" (D high) in a blue horse shoe exchange mark. Three Canadian transit markings are on back.

The **West Clarksville** post office was established on 7/26/1837, located south of Cuba in the town of Clarksville. The post office still serves the small community. Clarksville is one of three townships in the county never having a post office with the town name. My cover includes a manuscript "W Clarksville NY / Nov 16" at left, and at top right, "Paid / 3," both in blue ink. It has no year date, but probably 1855. It is addressed to Seymour.

A **West Genesee** post office was established on 4/4/1833, and closed 7/17/1856. It was located north-east of Portville (CAT), on the post road via Belfast to Portville; on the west side of Dodge and Deer Creeks. A cemetery and several homes line the road today. My envelope includes in manuscript "West Genesee NY / Jan 13" at lower left; "Direct" at top and "Paid 3" at

top right. Three cents paid the under 3,000 mile 1851 rate. There is no year date, but probably 1853, or very close to it.

The **Whitesville** post office was established 7/24/1833, in the south-east corner of the county on the Hornellsville (STE) to Whitesville post road; north of Spring Mills. My small, embossed ladies cover has at lower left, in manuscript “Whitesville NY / 27 Oct” and at top right, “3 Paid” (the prepaid 1851 rate under 3,000 miles). It has no year date, but undoubtedly is after 1851.

A **Whitney’s Crossings** post office, first established 6/24/1855, was located at the Garwoods Railroad Station, between Swain and Canaseraga. On 3/17/1894, the “s” was dropped and a Whitney Crossings post office survived until closing on 11/15/1935. My cover includes a manuscript “Whitney Crossing” / “April 21/69” at left (two months before a one month closure; 6/17 to 7/19, 1869). It is franked with Sc. #114, at top left; tied and canceled with seven pen strokes.

A **Whitney’s Valley** post office was established on 5/7/1830, with Royal Whitney the first postmaster. It was located in the north-east corner of Allegany County, and became Canaseraga on May 5, 1857. My postal stationery envelope (Sc. #U9) includes in manuscript, “Whitneys Valley” / “NY June 12” at left. It has no year date, but undoubtedly is 1855 or 1856. The three cent embossed imprinted postage oval is two-pen stroke canceled.

The rural Township of **Wirt** post office was established 1/15/1847 and survived only until 2/24/1860. Even today, the only settlement in the town of Wirt is Richburg. The town of Wirt is located east of the town of Clarksville, and north of Bolivar. I have a ladies cover that has in manuscript “Wirt NY.” / “July” / “23” at top left. There is no year date, but it is probably ca. 1858. The cover is franked at right with Sc. #26, Type II, and is pen canceled.

A **Wirt Centre** post office formed on 9/29/1865. The spelling was changed to Wirt Center in December of 1893, serving until closure 6/15/1905, with Friendship then providing postal services. The town of Wirt is located south of Friendship. My buff postal stationery (Sc. #U59) cover is scribble pen canceled over the oval embossed 3c imprint. “Wirt Centre N.Y.” / “Feb 21st 66” is in manuscript at the top.

The **Wiscoy** post office opened on 7/17/1849, succeeding Mixville, and served until 12/31/1967, after which it was served by the Portageville (WYO) post office. Wiscoy, west of Rossburg, is located at the top of the county, west of the Genesee River on the post road via Angelica, Hume, Pike, and Warsaw. My small ladies cover has in manuscript, “Wiscoy N.Y.” / “March 1” at top right. The year 1858 is docketed on the enclosure. Franking is Sc. #26, which is three pen- stroke canceled, and attached diagonally at top left of the cover.

References:

- Petri, Pitt, *The Postal History of Western New York* 1960.
- O’Brien, Frank, *Wellsville Daily Reporter*, Series on Allegany County P.O.’s, August, 1995.
- Kay, John L. & Smith, Chester M., *New York Postal History: The Post Offices and First Postmasters from 1775 to 1980*, American Philatelic Society, 1982.
- Chlanda & Wilcox, Editors, *Manuscript Post Offices of New York State*, 1984.
- Allegany County High Adventures Tourism map, 2010.

William Howden may be contacted at bhowden65@yahoo.com