



EMPIRE STATE  
POSTAL HISTORY  
SOCIETY

## APS UNIT 28

Meets twice annually

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## A LONG-DELAYED POSTMARK FOR LONG BEACH

By Frank Braithwaite

The Long Island Railroad's 6½-mile spur from Pearsalls was completed in May 1880, connecting the New York City populace with Long Beach's pristine beaches. The February 17, 1881 *New York Times* reported that Richard H. Southgate had rented the new Long Beach Hotel from the Long Beach Improvement Company for the year, with renewal privileges for five years.

This hotel had 1,200 rooms and included 16 cottages and four miles of beach front. Southgate, former proprietor of the United States Hotel in Saratoga Springs, was to be the hotel manager and Long Beach postmaster. In 1881, mail from Long Beach was handled through the Pearsalls (Lynbrook) post office and, for the next four years, by the Brooklyn post office. I have yet to find a marking from Long Beach for these years. Because it was only open from May to October, postmarking devices may not have been ordered during the first few years.

In 1887, for some unexplained reason, the Long Beach Hotel post office did not open until July. There were occasional reports of the tracks getting washed out in severe weather, but I found no such report for this year. On July 20 the hotel and post office opened for business with a new hotel manager and postmaster, John Devine.

This was the first year Long Beach handled its own mail. Devine ordered a postmarking device, but it did not arrive in time for the opening of the hotel. Instead, the hotel date stamp was used as a provisional postmark device until the official one arrived in early September. The hotel stamp of August 10, 1887 is shown with an enlarged inset. A second cover shows the official Long Beach postmark on September 3, 1887.

I have seen hotel stamps on many covers, usually as receiving marks, but not as a postmark. Any reader who has examples from Long Island showing otherwise, please send me a scan to [FBRAITH@OPTONLINE.NET](mailto:FBRAITH@OPTONLINE.NET). The obvious exceptions would be the ones that were approved by the U.S. Post Office Department, such as Manhasset Manor. ■