



EMPIRE STATE
POSTAL HISTORY
SOCIETY

APS UNIT 28

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AN EARLY GLOBAL MARKETING FIRM'S TRIBULATIONS

By Bob Bramwell

Dr. Williams Medicine Company, a cross border venture, was an early global pharmaceutical firm founded by Canadian George T. Fulford who owned the rights to Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People. Walter T. Hanson, a Schenectady druggist with a mailing list covering England, British India, and South America, began selling the patent medicine in South America in the 1890s. He mailed a letter from Schenectady to Valparaiso, Chile on March 28, 1899. It bears a *cartero* (carrier number) mark, "4 in C," indicating it was on top of a letter bundle prepared for Carrier 4, who wrote *nota* (see note) in purple crayon at the top.

The reverse has postmarks tracing its arrival in Valparaiso on May 7, 1899 at 10 a.m. (RECEPCION 7.V.99 M10). Carrier 4's delivery attempt was unsuccessful and he wrote in purple crayon *no ai el n[umer]o indicada* (the number indicated does not exist) and his name — *Corde*. The letter went next to Valparaiso POSTE RESTANTE / CORRESPONDENCIA SOBRANTE (Surplus Correspondence) dated 9. V. 99. — 4T (May 9, 1899 4 p.m.) where it was advertised in the second quarter (blue pencil 611, crossed out when not claimed) and again in the third quarter (number 18).

The front then was stamped NON RECLAME / NO RECLAMADO (unclaimed) and bagged for return to the US Dead Letter Office in Washington, where it was received October 30. The corner card clearly identified the sender, so the Foreign Division clerk applied the Return To Writer pointing finger and passed the letter to the letter dispatch section.

On the front we see Washington's OCT 30 / 5 PM / 99 outgoing postmark, and returning to the reverse, a Schenectady postmark used as a receiver on October 31, 1899 at 9 AM.

This letter made its round trip to Chile and back in seven months. Here's how it was handled: dispatched from Schenectady March 28, 1899 to New York City for transfer to a contract steamer to Aspinwall, Panama; transferred via rail across the Isthmus to Panama City; loaded onto a Pacific-based steamer for the run down to Valparaiso; received in Valparaiso May 7. ■