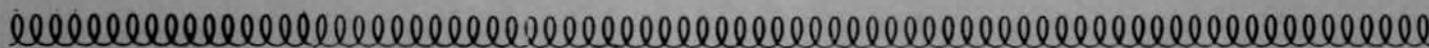




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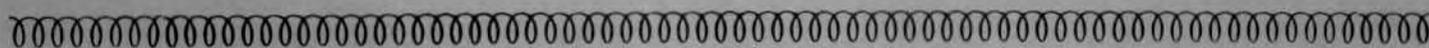
THE JOURNAL OF  
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## Postal History of Cape May County, New Jersey

by Mary Law

As far back as 1772, the sending, transporting, and receiving of mail was a "risky" business. Some notes concerning this from the April 8th issue of the *Pennsylvania Gazette* were: ... "a genteel stage wagon ... with two sets of horses will set out ... letters and passengers for Cape May will receive attention." Also, a number of letters awaited picking up at the post office in Philadelphia, some for well-known persons in Cape May and Upper Cape May.

In the next century, a claim was made that the mail service was irregular, with attempts being made to get two and sometimes three mails a week. The mails were all carried by the stage lines. The *Cape May Ocean Wave* of April 16, 1857, tells of the delays and the need of a daily mail in the following article:

We need a daily mail. That we have no direct mail communication between Cape Island and Cape May Court House, our county seat, but once a week, is a fact known to all. A letter written here on Wednesday may go direct to the Court House on Thursday, and an answer be returned on Saturday, by the Bridgeton mail; but at any other time in the week our letters must be sent up by the Bayside mail on Mondays, Wednesdays or Fridays to Tuckahoe, and there stopped until the next down mail to the Court House, thus performing a journey of nearly fifty miles, while the distance is only thirteen miles direct from here to the Court House.

Between the census of 1840 (5324 persons) and the census of 1860 (7130 persons), there was an increase of 1806 persons residing in Cape May County. It was obvious that the postal needs of these families needed to be addressed. Also, in 1860, Cape May (County) was passing from one epoch into another. Among other things, the old stage coach was soon to give way to the railroad train; since 1850, the price of land in the county had nearly doubled; and the conflict of affairs that ended with the War of the Rebellion was becoming intense.

### CHAPTER V: POSTAL HISTORY OF BOROUGH/CITIES

All of the post offices in the Ocean/Beach communities are either boroughs (the smallest unit of municipal government in New Jersey) or cities, plus there is one inland borough, and thus do not come under any of the townships of Cape May County; that is why they are listed separately.

**WOODBINE:** Around the time of the Civil War, Mrs. William S. Townsend, who lived in Dennisville, gave the name of Woodbine to this area. It commemorates the abundance of that wild flower which grew here.

In 1880 it was described as a hamlet on the West Jersey railroad, 16 miles southeast of Millville. By 1892, the town was being settled in a way that no other Cape May County area had been settled. It was the fulfillment of Baron DeHirsch's dream to develop a Jewish refugee resettlement project. Sixty-two farms of 30 acres each were laid out for refugees who had fled Russian persecution. The new colonists bought farms, complete with farmhouse, outbuildings, and stock, for \$1200. each. Within a year of its founding, Woodbine had 700 inhabitants.

This is the only inland borough in Cape May County. It was once a part of Dennis Township but the New Jersey Legislature incorporated Woodbine as a borough on March 3, 1903. Hersh L. Sobsovitch was the first mayor.

The Woodbine post office opened on December 29, 1891, with Wilbur E. Young as the first postmaster. A total of ten individuals have held the postmastership since establishment of the office. Their names and year of appointment are:

John W. Young (1892)

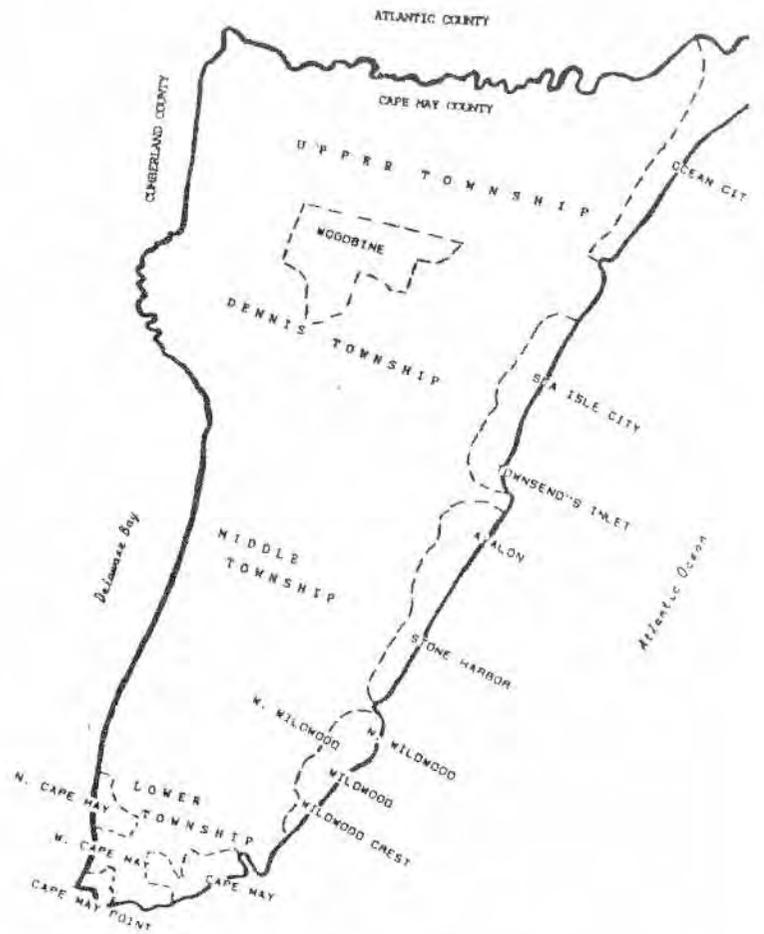
Herman Rosenfeld (1894)

Jacob Feldman (1895 and 1923)

Leo Danerhirsh (1914)



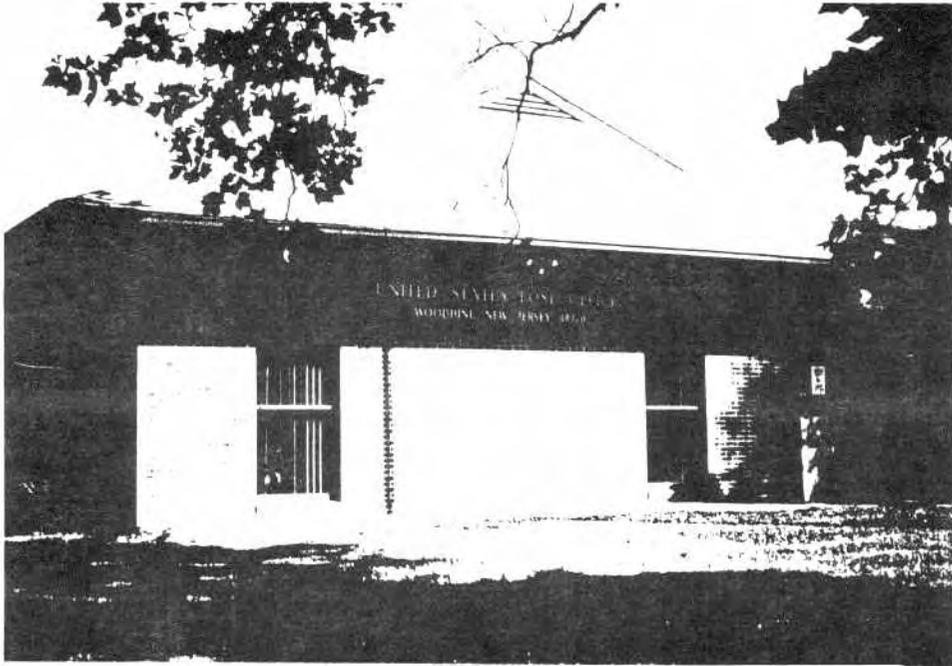
Mail Sleigh in New England  
Museum



Boroughs/Cities of Cape May County

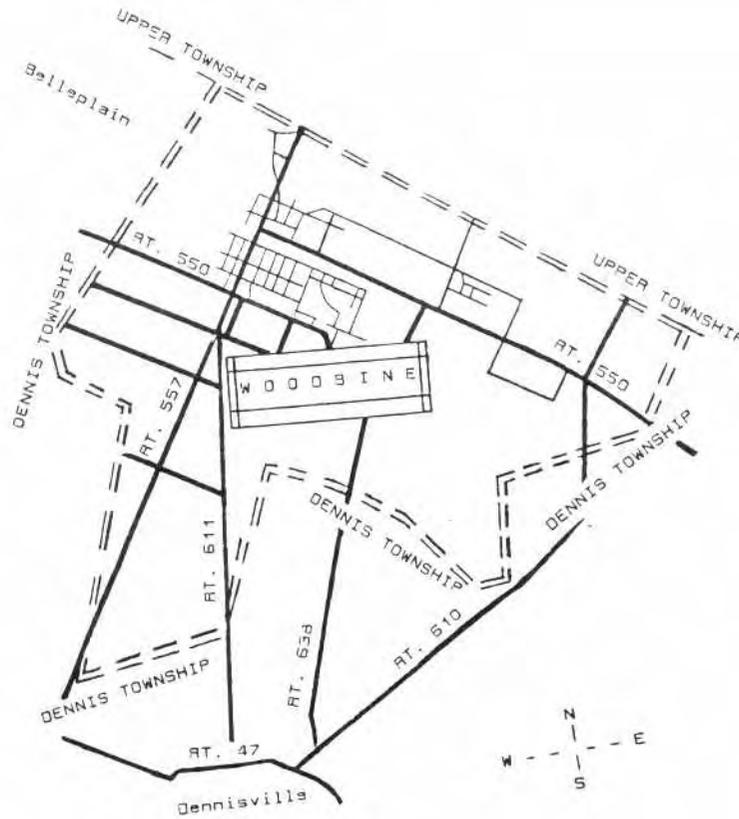


Cape May Post Office, 1992



WOODBINE post office - 1992

BOROUGH OF WOODBINE



TWO LINE OUTLINE: Post Office with Past & Present History

Milton Katz (1933)  
Irma Goodman (1935)  
Clara (Katz) Spindel (1937)  
Maynard C. Rosenfeld (1948)

The present postmaster, Donald Heckman, was appointed on September 15, 1973. Four years later, a new facility was built to further improve the postal services for this community. It opened on May 26, 1977.

During the time that Leo Danerhirsh was postmaster, there was an active rural mail route. In answer to an inquiry on February 5, 1916 as to which Rural Free Delivery carriers in New Jersey started their routes on or about 11 a.m., the Department of Agriculture was informed that rural route number 1 in Woodbine departed at 10:45 a.m. (and by car.)

The borough of Woodbine has grown and changed over the years, as has the post office. It has been the recipient of mail transfers from nearby towns which lost their post offices. Examples include Dennis Townships' East Creek (which closed in 1899 with mail sent to Eldora); Eldora and Belleplain, both of which closed in 1934; and Upper Townships' Petersburg, which closed in 1959. The mail from these towns was officially transferred to the Woodbine post office and is still handled by them.

The mail delivery area of the Woodbine post office includes the Upper Township communities of Petersburg, Steelmantown, Tuckahoe and Marshallville. They also deliver mail to towns in Dennis Township, Woodbine, and Corbin City. This large delivery area explains the reason why Woodbine's four rural carriers deliver mail in two of Cape May County's townships: Upper and Dennis; and also in portions of three counties: Cape May, Cumberland and Atlantic. Woodbine's zip code is 08270. (For additional information on the Woodbine Post Office, see Chapter One: "Postal History of Upper Township.")

#### **PECK'S BEACH**

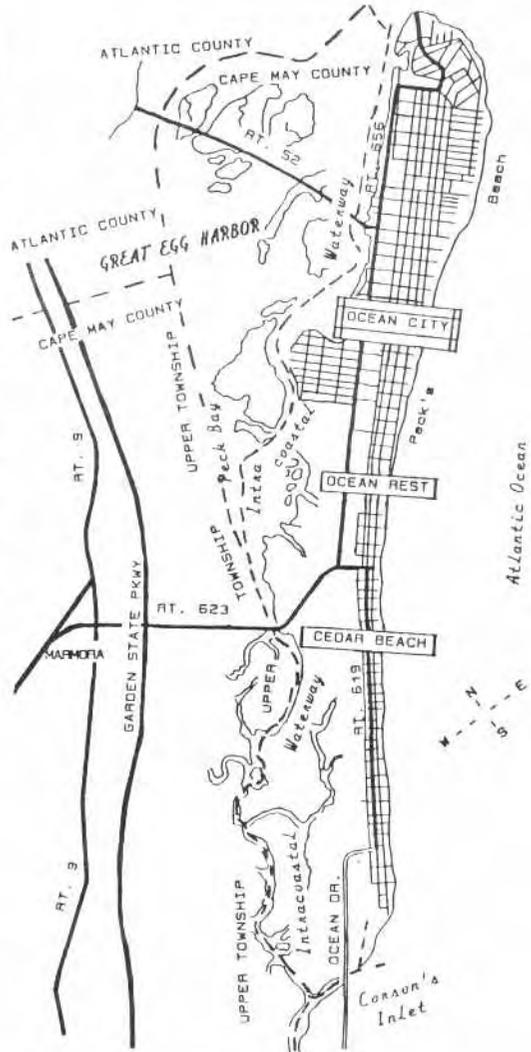
**OCEAN CITY:** Ocean City grew from the strongly prohibitionist Methodist summer resort started on Peck's Beach in 1879 by three minister brothers. The Ocean City post office was established at this seashore community on March 2, 1881 with the Rev. William H. Burrell as the postmaster. It was not an easy task to get the mail through to this town. An 1881 report of the Ocean City Association contained information received concerning the attempt to obtain a post office. Also reported was the request for securing a direct mail route from Philadelphia to Ocean City. But this became a long, controversial matter, and when the post office was established, the stage line between Pleasantville and Somers Point carried the mail; whereas, the Board thought that the Pleasantville-Somers Point spur of the railway should carry it.

It may be that Ocean City's mail was carried by stage until the railway from Sea Isle City was constructed in 1884, three years after the opening of the Ocean City post office. In a 16-page history of Ocean City, written in 1899 by the first postmaster, William Burrell, he tells of his "hardships with the mail," saying that he frequently carried the mail himself to Sea Isle City and back.

An interesting part of local postal history: a first occurred between Ocean City and Stone Harbor on August 7, 1912! Marshall Reid flew what was called a hydroplane from Stone Harbor to Ocean City, picking up and delivering U. S. Mail pouches. The 29-minute flight was said to have given the mail a 12-hour head start over the normal dispatch time out of Stone Harbor. But it was erroneously reported, and accepted by the citizens, that the first air mail flight in the United States had taken place; in reality, it was the first air mail flight in New Jersey. According to Harold Lee, author of "The Fact That Isn't", even the Post Office Department had accepted the story as fact, and authorized a re-enactment of the flight on the 25th anniversary in 1937. Lee claims that Edward Keogh, in his book entitled *Saga of the U.S. Air Mail Service*, gives the distinction of the first air mail flight to Long Island, New York, and wrote a very descriptive report on it. Keogh also reported:

A few other similar experiments were made.... and the Post Office Department, recognizing the possibility of developing the airplane into a practicable means of aerial transportation, made recommendation to Congress early in 1912 for an appropriation

CITY OF OCEAN CITY (Peck's Beach)



OCEAN CITY post office - 1992

TWO LINE OUTLINE: Post Offices with Past & Present History  
 ONE LINE OUTLINE: Post Offices with Past History



of \$50,000 with which to start an experimental service, but Congress refused. But, in 1916, funds were made available...

Based on this authoritative knowledge, "it thus appears that Ocean City did serve a useful purpose in a public relations sense by helping to build up the pressure on Congress to vote money for something (which) proved feasible.

In addition to the first postmaster, William Burrell, thirteen postmasters have served at the Ocean City post office. Their names and appointment years are:

R. Howard Thorn (1887 and 1893)  
R. Curtis Robinson (1889)  
Edward Sutton (1901 and 1923)  
Benjamin Smith (1914)  
Everton Corson (1928)  
J. Reeves Hildreth (1930)  
George Greis (1934)  
Leroy Jeffries (1935)  
Theodore Adams (1954)  
C. Wesley Barclay (1961)  
Michael Dattilo (1970)  
Basil Randazzo (1981)  
James Fusco (1988).

Four years before he became Ocean City's third postmaster, R. Curtis Robinson purchased the fourth weekly newspaper in Cape May County, the *Ocean City Sentinel*. Ownership was a partnership with W. H. Fenton but later Robinson became the sole owner. He had been widely employed with various newspapers prior to this time.

**OCEAN REST:** Was it possible that nearly 12 years after a post office had been established in Ocean City that the population had increased enough to warrant an additional post office on Peck's Beach? Nevertheless, the Ocean Rest post office was opened on January 28, 1893, and discontinued on September 28, 1893. The first postmaster, William L. Smith, served only eight months. It was then re-established on May 19, 1897, and Clifton Smith was the postmaster for eight months.

He was succeeded by the original postmaster, William L. Smith, on January 13, 1898. Five years later, on June 30, 1903, this post office was discontinued with the mail going to the main Ocean City post office. This post office location was at the site of what is now the Christian Brothers Catholic Summer School on Asbury Avenue.

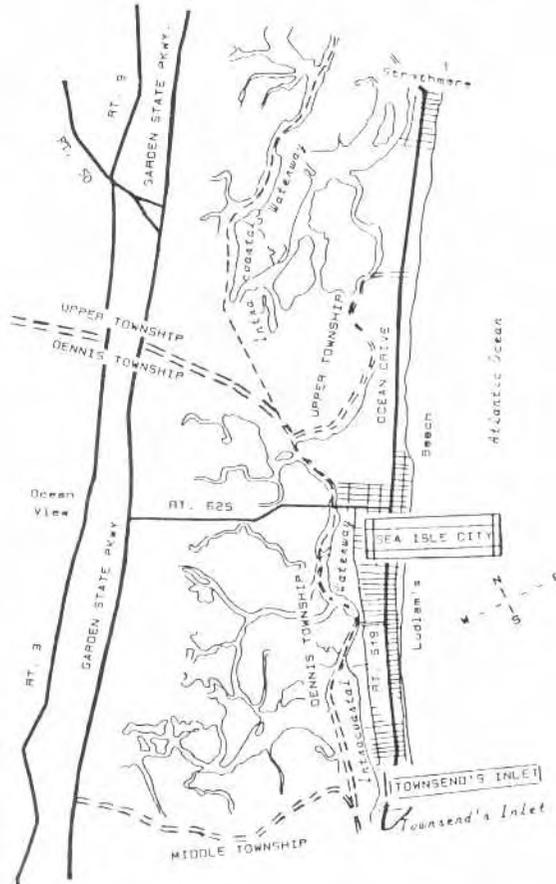
**CEDAR BEACH:** Once again, Ocean City had two post offices; this one was in existence for only three years. The Cedar Beach post office opened at a location on the south end of Peck's Beach on June 13, 1900, with Richard G. Yocum as the first postmaster. It was discontinued on May 30, 1903, with Jacob H. Gaul as its last postmaster. Postal business was then conducted from the Ocean City post office.

#### **LUDLAM'S BEACH**

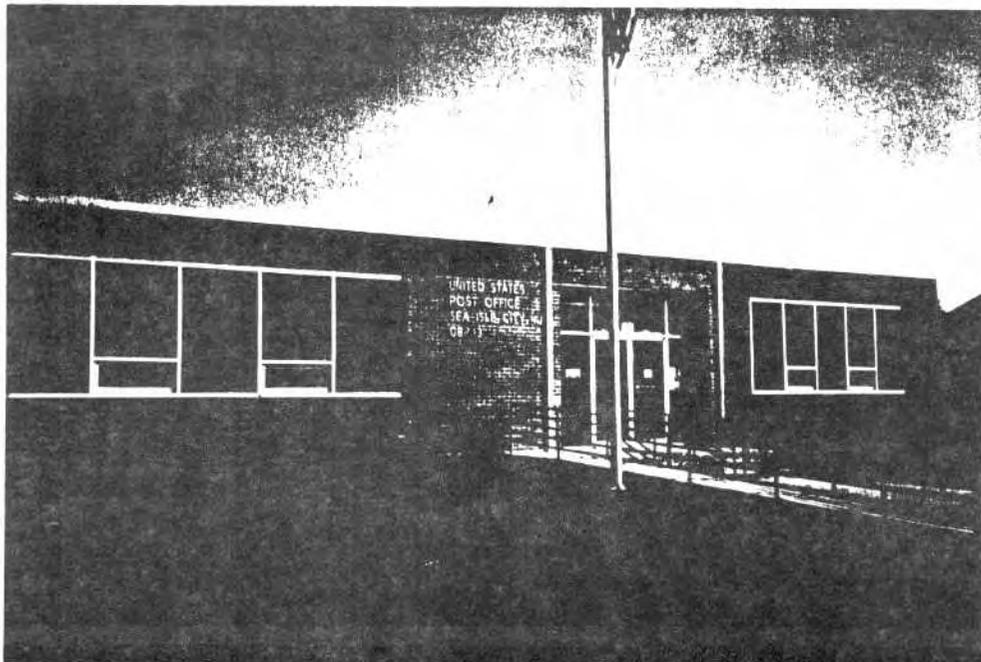
**SEA ISLE CITY:** This island was known to King Nummy's tribe of Leni Lenape Indians as "Happy Hunting Grounds." By 1692 it was owned by Joseph Ludlam, which is why it is generally called Ludlam's Beach. The strip of land ran from what is now Corson's Inlet to Townsend's Inlet, and for many years was part of Dennis Township. It was known as Ludlam's Island and was stocked with cattle.

Around 1880, Sea Isle City was laid out by Charles K. Landis, the founder of Vineland and Hammonton, to include the whole of Ludlam's Beach. By 1882, the town had an established post office. George Whitney was the postmaster when the Sea Isle City post office opened on June 20. It was located at the southwest corner of what is now 44th Street and Landis Avenue. A brief description of this landmark site is in the city's (1982)

CITY OF SEA ISLE CITY and TOWNSEND'S INLET (Ludlum's Beach)



SEA ISLE CITY post office - 1992



## souvenir Centennial Book:

One hundred years ago, when Sea Isle City first began, the post office was located there (44th & Landis); it was on some of the highest land on the island which kept the building from being destroyed during heavy storms.

The city grew and the post office was moved to a more accessible location. In its place, The Three Sisters, a small Italian meat market, grocery store and pizza parlor was built. In 1972, the building was bought by Mike and Edith Romano and became Romano's Restaurant.

In 1993, it is a real estate office.

Besides the first postmaster, 16 other persons served as postmasters and three as acting postmasters. Their names and year of appointment are:

John Morris (1883)  
William Bryant (1885)  
J. Monroe Chester (1889)  
J.P. Delaney (1893)  
Lewis Steinmeyer (1894)  
Lewis Chester (1898)  
Edward Duncan (1901)  
James Chapman (1905 and 1922)  
Thomas Ludlam, Jr. (1915)  
Richard Rosenbaum (1927)  
Ira Hess (1932)  
Thomas Whittington (1934)  
Elmer Reed (1953)  
Dolores Sweetman (1973)  
Robert Piacentino (1991)  
Richard Menta (1993)

Acting postmasters have included Charles Camp (1920); later followed by what seems to have been a "power play" (all within three months) for the dubious job of being an acting postmaster: Mary Lamanna (September 1926), Gustave Mornhiweg (October, 1926), and (again) Mary Lamanna (December 1926). All acting postmasters were gone by January 22, 1927 when Richard Rosenbaum took office.

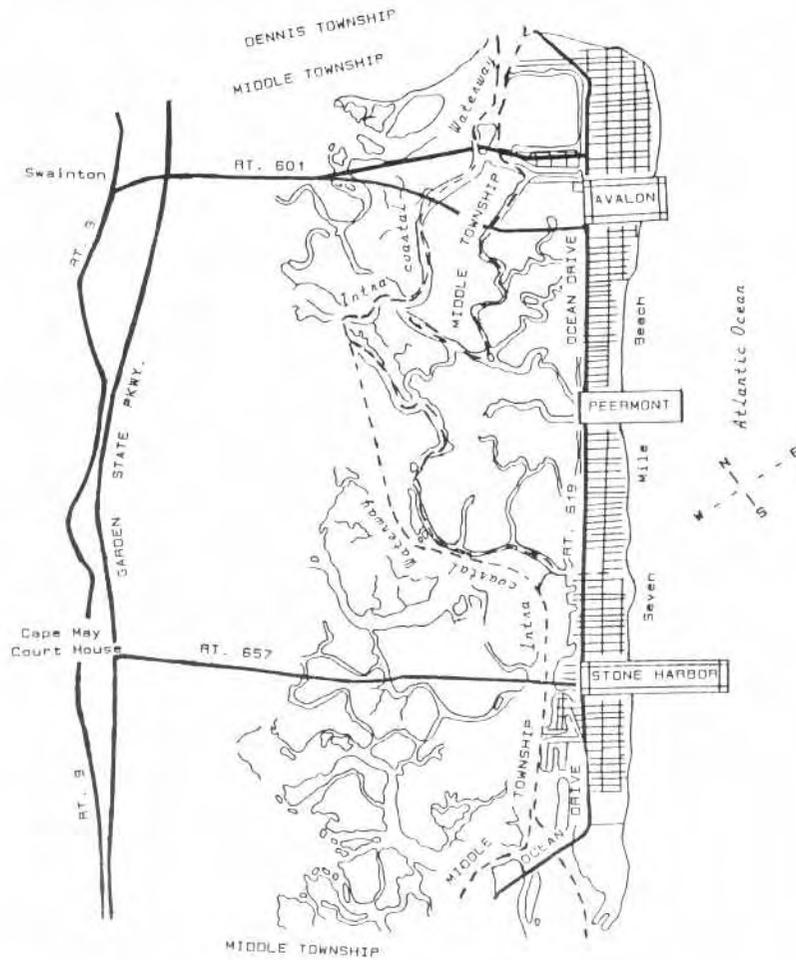
Postmaster Thomas Ludlam, Jr., probably was related to the pioneer family who first owned this land of Ludlam's Island/Beach in 1692. Although Ludlam held the postmaster position for only five years, his name helps to connect history to his father, Thomas Ludlam, Sr. The father was the mayor of Sea Isle City in 1884-1896 and again in 1899-1906, along with being a Chosen Freeholder (a member of the county governing body). He was instrumental in the development of the town. He was also the editor of the *Cape May County Times* that he later bought; he remained as editor until he sold it in 1907. During this time, he was the postmaster and a teacher in the barrier island community of Dennisville.

J. P. Delaney, a short-term postmaster (September, 1893 to March, 1894) was also one of the first proprietors of The Lafayette. This was an early hotel here and was located on Landis Avenue between what is now Kennedy Boulevard and 42nd Street. Lewis Steinmeyer, who succeeded Delaney and became the sixth postmaster of Sea Isle City (1894), was also its mayor from 1910 to 1913.

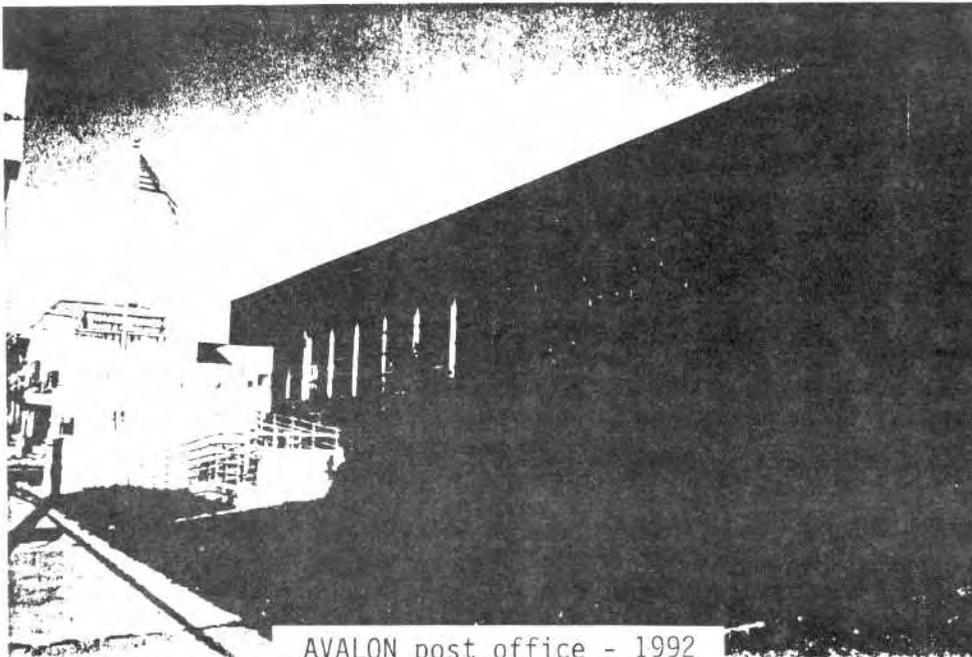
Postal delivery was established on June 16, 1924. Louis Lamanna was the first mailman, and for several years, the only one. (Note: it was a person with the same last name who was acting postmaster on two occasions in 1926.)

A modern post office building was erected in 1959 on the corner of Kennedy Boulevard and Central Avenue. Elmer Reed had been postmaster since 1953, and continued in this position at the new post office.

BOROUGH OF AVALON & STONE HARBOR (Seven Mile Beach)



TWO LINE OUTLINE: Post Offices with Past & Present History  
 ONE LINE OUTLINE: Post Offices with Past History



AVALON post office - 1992

**TOWNSEND'S INLET:** Located on Ludlam's Beach, establishment of the Townsend's Inlet Post Office occurred on August 10, 1904, with John M. Evoy as the first postmaster. Joseph Fisher was appointed the postmaster in 1907 but remained only 20 months. William Shellem was the proprietor of the Inlet Store which was built in 1908. He became the postmaster of Townsend's Inlet on the last day of that year and stayed as the postmaster until his death in 1932. According to postal records, Shellem retained this office until 1964 which would be a span of 64 years and would discount the previous statement here that he died in 1932. Is it possible that a relative with the same name was the postmaster from 1932 until 1964?

Regardless, on April 24, 1964, Dolores Sweetman became the postmaster at Townsend's Inlet which was located at 8515 Landis Avenue. Then on December 31, 1970, this post office was changed to a station of the post office in Sea Isle City, sharing the same zip code. (Officially, it was a Class 5 Finance Station.)

After 80 years of service, the Townsend's Inlet post office was closed in 1988 and the residents and visitors of this small community are now covered completely by the Sea Isle City post office.

**\*\* CLARIFICATION:** there were two different Townsend's Inlet post offices. The one described above; the other one was (actually Townsend Inlet) in Middle Township, had its name changed to Swainton, was discontinued and the area is now served by the post office in Cape May Court House.

**AVALON:** Avalon is a part of Seven Mile Beach and is located east of the town of Swainton on the mainland. It was founded by the Seven Mile Beach Company in 1887, and four years later, in 1891, a borough was created. The West Jersey Railroad received its right of way to operate through Avalon in 1889. Thomas Bray was the first mayor, and by 1895 the population was 105. Only one year after Avalon was founded, the Post Office Department established the Avalon post office. It opened on July 9, 1888 with George W. Smith serving as the first postmaster during his brief residence in this community. Smith had been a captain in the Civil War.

The next two postmasters served only one year each: Platt Brower was appointed in 1892, James F. Corson in 1893, and in 1894, Walter A. Smith took over the job and served for 40 years. The next five postmasters and their year of appointment were:

Minnie I. McKeen (1934)  
Hiram S. McKeen (1938)  
Olga M. Halstadt (1951)  
Edward C. Lawrence (1951)  
Elmer S. Holmes, Jr. (1956)

Following the retirement of Holmes, the Avalon post office was without a postmaster for a few years. In the interim between Postmaster Holmes' retirement and the postmaster appointment in 1993, approximately 14 Officer-in-Charge assignments provided this post office with some leadership. On January 9, 1993, Donald K. Grosse of Green Creek, NJ, received the appointment. Grosse began his postal career in June, 1957 as a letter carrier in Wildwood.

**PEERMONT:** Seven Mile Beach was the location of the Peermont post office, and it existed for 27 years. On May 29, 1907, the opening took place with Mary E. Mahan as the first postmaster. In 1919, M.E.M. Shuttleworth became the postmaster, and she served until May 30, 1934, when this post office was discontinued with mail being transferred to the Avalon post office.

**STONE HARBOR:** A post office was set up here (Stoneharbor) on July 3, 1894, with Hiram W. Godfrey as postmaster and that service was received from Avalon. Three more postmasters served: Lin R. Beecher, George F. Rummel and Smith S. Hand. Then, on January 15, 1900, it was discontinued. But five months later, on June 19, 1900, it was re-established with John McCormack as postmaster. On December 1, 1931, the spelling became two words and the Stone Harbor Post Office was permanently established. In 1912, Marshall Reid returned to Stone Harbor with a mail pouch during the hydroplane flight mentioned under Ocean City.

Post offices in New Jersey from which rural carriers start on service of their routes about 11 A. M.

-----oOo-----

Post office	Route	Leave
Bridgeville	1	11 (1st portion)
Chester	1	11.30
Delaware	1	11.15
Delaware	2	11.30
Flanders	1	11
German Valley	1	10.45 (2nd portion)
Great Meadows	1	11
Lafayette	1	11.15 (Auto)
Newfoundland	2	11
Newton	1	11.15
Newton	2	11.15
Newton	3	11.15
Newton	4	11
Oakland	1	10.45
Oakridge	1	11.30
Pittstown	1	11 (2nd trip)
Pittstown	2	12 (2nd trip)
Port Murray	1	10.45
Tuckahoe	1	11.15
Tuckerton	1	11.45
Vienna	1	11
Washington	2	11
Woodbine	1	10.45 (Auto)

Note--Where a route is divided that portion served at 11 o'clock or later is shown. In the two cases marked (Auto) the carrier leaves the post office earlier than shown when serving his route by horse drawn vehicle.

Report of Rural Route departing time.



Stone Harbor post office

## **FIVE MILE BEACH**

**ANGLESEA:** This new town on the north end of Five Mile Beach, opened a post office on November 19, 1883, with William A. Thompkins as postmaster. The name was originally recorded as Anglesia but one month after opening the post office, it was officially changed to Anglesea. Eleven postmasters served the post office at Anglesea. The turn-over for this position was frequent and Jason Buck held it the longest: four years in his first term, and 18 years in his second. All the others served from one to four years. Also, two acting postmasters took charge before a regular postmaster was appointed, all in 1918. Besides the first postmaster, others and their appointment years are:

Sarah D. Tompkins (1886)  
John J. Sturmer, Jr. (1887)  
Jason Buck (1889) and (1897)  
John Taylor (1893)  
Lorenzo B. Shivers (1915)  
Mary E. Miller, acting, (1918)  
Martha P. Corson, acting, (1918)  
Robert Bright (1918)  
Harry C. Wheaton (1920)  
Joseph H. Long (1921)

The Anglesea post office remained for 41 years but on June 30, 1924, it was discontinued and the mail was transferred to the Wildwood post office.

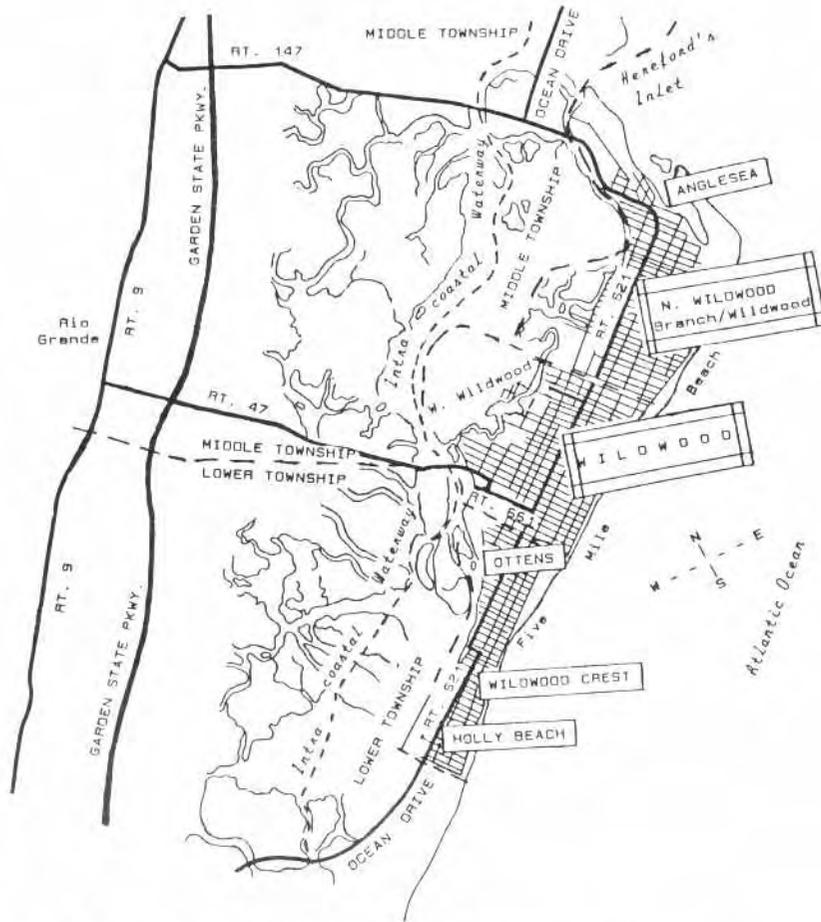
Anglesea was officially incorporated as a borough on June 5, 1885 with the name changed to the borough of North Wildwood on May 23, 1906. It was incorporated as a city on April 2, 1917, and is today an active resort city. Although a North Wildwood post office had served as a station to the main office in Wildwood, the designation was changed to a branch on May 15, 1961. For the last 20 years, the North Wildwood branch has been located at Taylor's Variety Store on New Jersey Avenue, and shares the same zip code as Wildwood.

**HOLLY BEACH:** Although a lighthouse was built near Turtle Gut Inlet in 1874, the southern portion of Five Mile Beach continued without direction until 1880. At that time, Aaron Andrews of Vineland, NJ, founded the Holly Beach Improvement Company and bought a tract of land for the purpose of developing a small community. By 1885, Holly Beach was made a borough. With the growth of this community, the Holly Beach post office was established there on November 26, 1883, and Jennie L. Osborn was named the first postmaster and served for nearly 10 years.

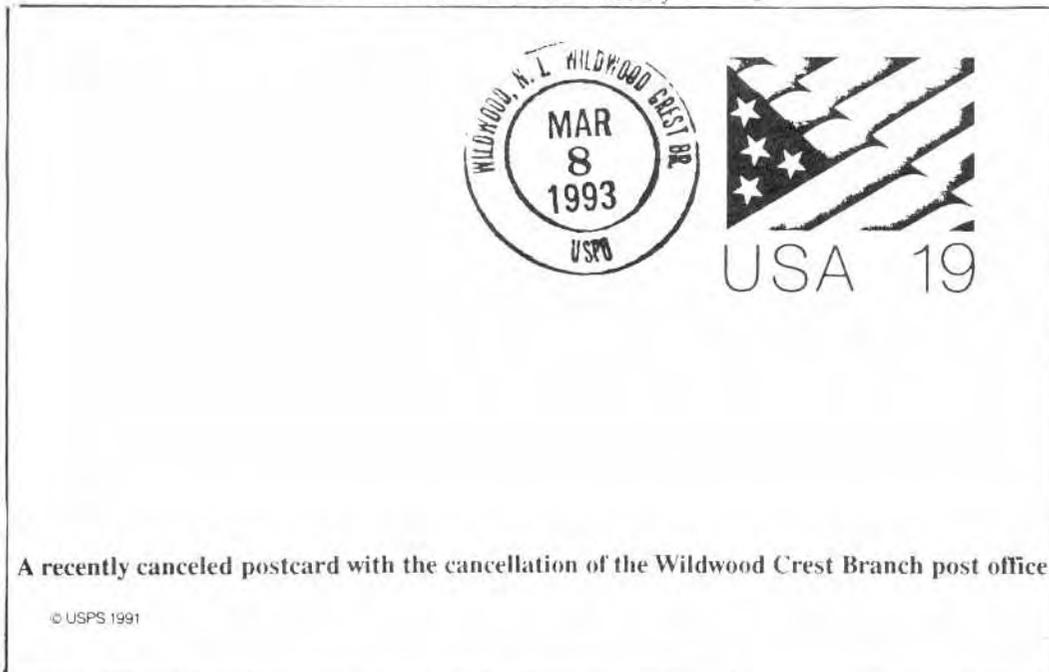
This was another post office which endured a name "change." In 1895, two years after Frank E. Smith was appointed as postmaster, it became Hollybeach. It remained so until 1905 when it again became Holly Beach, and was designated as Station 1 to Wildwood. Besides Osborn and Smith, only three other individuals served as postmasters here: William E. Foreum (1897), Frederick C. Meyer (1901), and Israel T. Woolson (1911). Thirty years after its opening, on April 30, 1913, the Holly Beach post office was discontinued, and the mail was transferred to Wildwood.

**WILDWOOD CREST:** Meanwhile, another post office had been established on Five Mile Beach, just north of Holly Beach. The Wildwood Crest post office opened on July 23, 1909, with Leslie Hallen as the first and last postmaster, serving only a little less than four years. It was discontinued on April 30, 1913, the same date that saw the closing of Holly Beach. The mail was transferred to the Wildwood post office. But that is not the end of mail service in Wildwood Crest. For the past 20 years, there has been a branch of the Wildwood post office located here. For 15 years, it was located in Anderson's Variety Store on New Jersey Avenue; and for the last five years, just down the street at 6011, in Sincerely Yours Card Shop. The Wildwood Crest branch shares the same zip code as Wildwood.

THE CITIES & BOROUGHS OF "THE WILDWOODS" (Five Mile Beach)

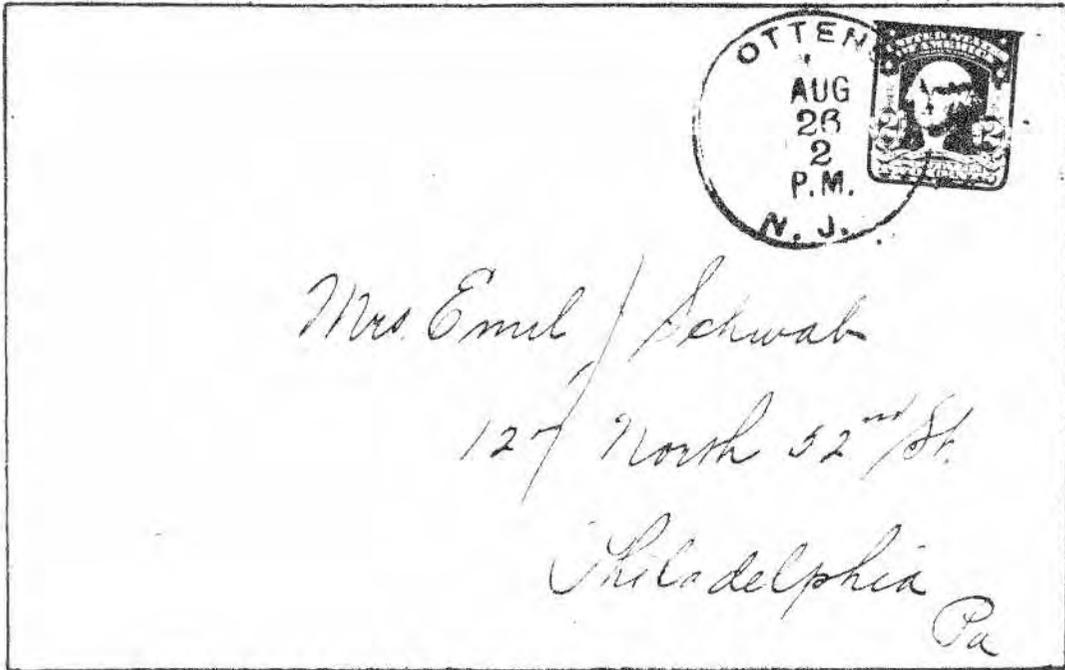


TWO LINE OUTLINE: Post Offices with Past & Present History  
 ONE LINE OUTLINE: Post Offices with Past History



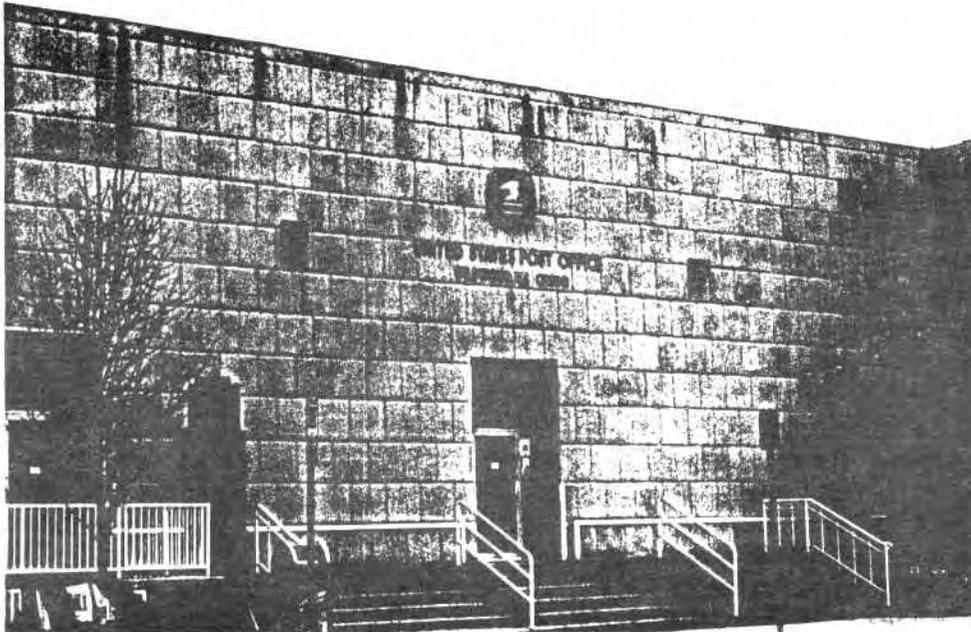
A recently canceled postcard with the cancellation of the Wildwood Crest Branch post office.

© USPS 1991



Two canceled envelopes from the Ottens Post Office:  
c1905 doane 3 1906-13 and 1910 4-bar 1906-13 PC





WILDWOOD post office - 1992



*Al Campbell*

**MAIL, IRISH STYLE** — Wildwood Postal Clerk Jane Norton of Court House, right, adds an Irish flair to the handling of mail and selling of stamps to customer Roxane Krivitski of North Wildwood on March 17, St. Patrick's Day. Postmaster Shirley Columbo said it's done to get to know customers, and to show them their importance to the Postal Service. Norton was one of three clerks who wore special green to mark the day.

**OTTENS:** This town was located on Five Mile Beach also, just south of Wildwood. The Ottens post office was established there on May 22, 1906, with Joseph P. Boon as the first postmaster but served only one year. This post office lasted a brief seven years with four postmasters serving. They were, in addition to Boon: Amos S. Leek (1907), Joseph W. Marsh (1909), and Horace R. Leidig (1911). As it turned out, Leidig was the last postmaster at Ottens because it was discontinued on April 30, 1913 with the mail being sent to Wildwood.

**WILDWOOD:** This town was founded by Philip Pontius Baker of Vineland, state senator from Cumberland County, in 1890. It is located on the center part of Five Mile Beach and about six miles northeast of Cape May City. Although there was much activity and business ventures here in the late 1800's, it wasn't until the January 1, 1912 consolidation of two improvement companies that Wildwood actually began its direction as a first rate resort. Long before the building of the boardwalk and piers, and the coming of railroad services, the Wildwood post office had already been set up. It had been established on September 14, 1889, with Reuben W. Ryan serving as postmaster. This first post office was in the general store built by the Baker Brothers who hired Mr. Ryan to be in charge of the store. He was young, energetic and successful. As Wildwood grew, he not only received the postmaster appointment but also became influential in many enterprises. Other persons who were postmasters at Wildwood include:

Henry W. Marts (1898)  
William B. Livezey (1900)  
J. A. Harris (1910)  
George N. Smith (1914)  
James A. Harris (1923)  
Patrick J. Shortt (1934)  
Joseph C. Bransfield (1947)  
Larry Fitzpatrick (1976)

The present postmaster, Shirley Columbo, received the appointment on February 4, 1984.

It is interesting how unofficial "notes" concerning the mail are found in various books. The following is an example: separated from Wildwood by an inlet, the community of West Wildwood became its own borough in 1920. Although there is no official record of any postal history here, in the book *Tales of the Jersey Cape*, there is mention that mail service was started in 1921. Could this have meant that since West Wildwood had just been taken from Middle Township and became a borough, they were then entitled to service from the Wildwood post office? The Wildwood post office is a large first class facility serving the postal needs of the Five Mile Beach residents and tourists who look at the island, not as many small communities, but as a whole, as "The Wildwoods." The zip code for Wildwood is 08260.

#### **THE CAPE MAY'S**

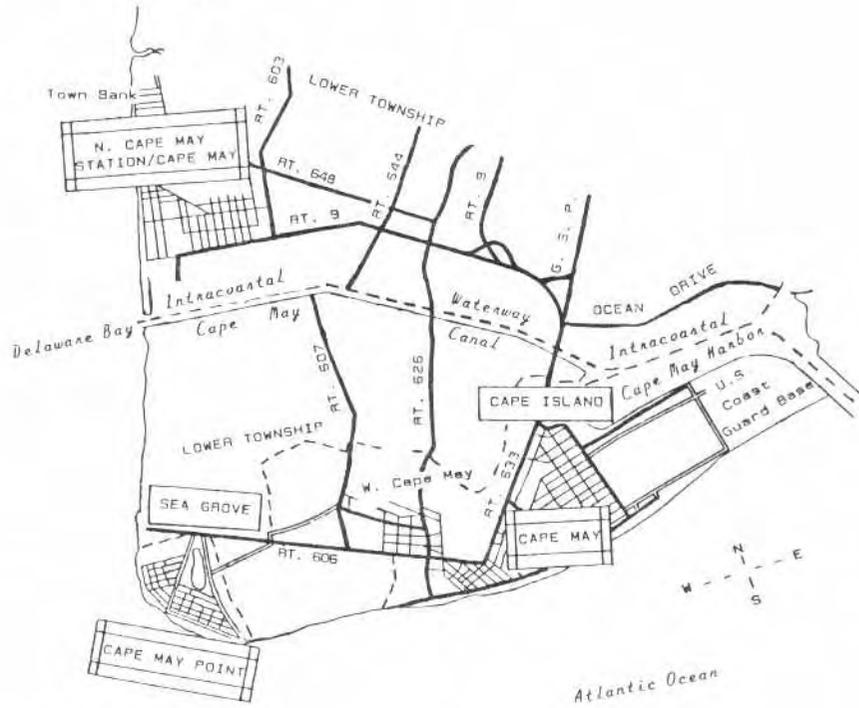
**CAPE MAY:** The Cape May post office received its name when the third post office in Cape May County, Cape Island, had its name changed to Cape May. The original post office had opened in 1804, was in the hotel of Ellis Hughes and he was the first postmaster. Almost exactly 65 years later, the name change occurred with Joseph Ware continuing as the postmaster. Some of the postmasters have been:

Jonathan Garrison (1871)  
Joseph Hughes (1882)  
Waters Miller (1886)  
Frederick Melvin (1886)  
Furman Richardson (1889 and 1898)  
John Thompson (1894)  
Walter Leaming (1901)  
William Williams (1904)



CAPE MAY POINT post office - 1992

"THE CAPE MAY'S" (Southernmost area of C.M.C.)



TWO LINE OUTLINE: Post Offices with Past & Present History  
 ONE LINE OUTLINE: Post Offices with Past History

James Taylor (1907).

A 1907 issue of the *Cape May Herald* announced the nomination of Postmaster James E. Taylor of Cape May for a full term of four years which was confirmed by the U. S. Senate. The article said, "Postmaster Taylor has served since June when he was appointed to succeed William F. Williams, resigned."

The rest of the postmasters at Cape May are:

Soi Needles (1916)

Frank Cassidy (1925),

Jere Chambers (1933)

Lemuel Miller, Jr. (1936)

Irene Pharo (1952)

Thomas Stevens (1954)

Robert Greenfield (1965)

Also Harvey Williams and Herbert Anger

Robert "Gene" Rohrer was appointed in 1989 and is the present postmaster. The Cape May post office, besides serving the City of Cape May, also has two branches: North Cape May and the U. S. Coast Guard Base.

**NORTH CAPE MAY:** This is a branch office of the Cape May post office and is located in a small shopping center. This community borders on the original Cape May County settlement of Town Bank. North Cape May is a part of Lower Township and the main post office in Cape May is a separate city but both share the same zip code: 08204. The North Cape May post office began on September 12, 1966, and helps to serve the postal needs of Lower Township which has only one other post office.

**COAST GUARD BASE:** If you follow Munro Boulevard, after passing through the guarded gates, you will see the Base Post Office, the fourth building on the right. Although this branch has limited hours, each day a clerk from the Cape May post office arrives to not only distribute the mail but to sell stamps and money orders to the base personnel, and to take (picked up) mail back to the main office. The road you follow which goes past the post office and through the middle of the base, was named in honor of Signalman First Class Douglas Munro. He was the only Coast Guard person to receive the Medal of Honor, and was killed in World War II.

**CAPE MAY POINT:** The 157 foot lighthouse at Cape May Point is considered the finest landmark in the area and has been a silent sentinel for 134 years. Many of the 400,000 visitors since 1988 have climbed the 199 steps to the top. The historical structure is in the process of undergoing renovations which will include new paint on the cylindrical building, restoration of the light by replacing the lantern and rebuilding the roof. The Cape May Point lighthouse first began shining its light in 1859, seventeen years before the Sea Grove post office was established here in 1876 with Alexander Springer as the first postmaster. He continued as postmaster when the Sea Grove post office became the Cape May Point post office - - two years later in 1878.

Lewis Townsend Stevens, in his "THE HISTORY OF CAPE MAY COUNTY, NJ", chapter XXVIII: Distinguished Visitors, tells this story:

Soon after Cape May Point was established, John Wanamaker, of Philadelphia, bought property there and erected a summer home. When President Benjamin Harrison was inaugurated, he appointed Mr. Wanamaker his Postmaster General and they became warm friends. In June, 1889, Mrs. Harrison and the family were guests at the Wanamaker cottage for a few weeks, and liking Cape May well, so expressed herself. The President also paid one visit. During the winter of 1889 90, friends of the President built a handsome \$10,000.



Hand-cancelled post card which reads (with date): USCG BR.CAPE  
MAY USPS



Photo of the Coast Guard Base Post Office.

summer cottage, and through -Postmaster General Wanamaker presented the house, deed and keys to Mrs. Harrison. The reason why this little story is told here is that there is another story about Postmaster General John Wanamaker that perhaps not many people know about. He was the first to champion Rural Free (Mail) Delivery. As a Cape May Point summer resident, PMG Wanamaker is the slim connection between that town and this story about the Post Office Department and Rural Free Delivery.

Before Rural Free Delivery became a permanent institution, Postmaster General John Wanamaker, appointed in 1889, was the FIRST to champion the idea of rural delivery. But it was a long fight! Study authorizations, small appropriations, and later, another PMG's refusal to consider rural delivery of mail, all delayed the beginning of RFD. Even though Wanamaker experimented with RFD in 46 communities, receiving favorable comments from farmers, townspeople and postmasters, by the winter of 1891, and with no action taken, it was still under discussion all over America. PMG Wanamaker continued to express his views as to why RFD should be made not only permanent but should be extended. He said, "Rural Free Delivery brings new life, importance and dignity to the locality", and, "I confidently look forward to the time when the extension of Rural Free Delivery comes to the smaller towns ... and cover the country districts with a letter carrier service." The permanent establishment and extension of RFD, however, did not come about while Wanamaker was Postmaster General.

Although the 52nd Congress finally passed a Bill in March, 1893, appropriating \$10,000 to be used in carrying the mail to the farms. It seemed that RFD was off to a good start but a new Postmaster General, William Bissell, simply rejected the idea. Again, in 1895, Bissell refused Congress' \$20,000 for additional RFD experimenting, and he shortly thereafter resigned as PMG. William Wilson, as the next Postmaster General, chose his hometown of Charles Town, West Virginia, to begin a free mail delivery experiment for the farmers. In total, he selected 44 routes in 29 states which proved the success of the experiment, and the usefulness of the new service. So, in 1896, Rural Free (Mail) Delivery was born.

Although Cape May County rural mail carriers had not much need of such a conveyance, this photo shows the vehicle used by rural mail carriers in "snow-bound" areas. This mail sleigh is in a museum in New England. At the Cape May Point post office, Ammon Wright was the postmaster when rural free mail delivery was established nation-wide, although it was during his second term. He had been appointed the second postmaster in 1885 but was replaced by John Reeves in 1889. Wright then served from 1893 until 1897 when the position became the job of Edward Springer. Other postmasters at Cape May Point have been:

Charles Markley (1915)  
Alexander Haldeman (1925)  
Frank Hughes (1936)  
Francis Gerew (1940)  
Mrs. Ray Gerew (1941)  
Katherine Tyrrell (1961)  
Peter Ballare (1963)  
Rachel Hill (1964).

Following the retirement of Ms. Hill, an Officer-in-Charge assignment in 1992 went to Bonnie Kozak whose regular job is as a postal clerk in Cape May Court House. She not only sold stamps and distributed mail but her friendliness turned what the Cape May Point postal patrons called a bleak place to pick up mail into a community gathering spot. Radio news, music, a pot of coffee, and a jar of jelly beans helped. Kozak became so popular that more than 240 of the 250 year-round residents signed petitions urging that Kozak be appointed postmaster, and were sent to Postmaster General Marvin Runyon. The mayor of Cape May Point told her that as an elected official, he envied such a percentage of support. Even the U. S. Congressman for this district was unable to help. All of which caused, following the appointment of the postmaster, a local newspaper to headline their article "POPULAR DOESN'T MEAN (JELLY) BEANS WHEN IT COMES TO THE

POSTAL SERVICE." The reason for Kozak being passed over? A present U.S.P.S. policy that "no clerk be appointed until all the managers (who were displaced in management cutbacks) were placed." Kozak has gone back to her old job, and the new postmaster, Joseph Damato (1993), a postal supervisor from Cherry Hill, NJ, has now taken over his duties.

**UPDATE:** There are now eight post offices and three branches located within the cities and boroughs of Cape May County (the fourth branch in North Cape May is in Lower Township) serving the postal needs of its many residents. At various times through the years, the Post Office Department opened and closed seven other post offices on these island communities.

The U. S. Postal Service seems to be "loosening up" a little, or should it be called "getting smart?" During the spring and summer of this year (1993), orders were received at ALL post offices directing each to hold an open house for postal customers at which time they should be shown around even the formerly inaccessible parts of the post office. The intent of this is to improve public relations! Extended Saturday hours have also been ordered to better accommodate the public, along with the setting up of Postal Advisory Councils in various districts, made up of persons interested in the modernizing of the Postal Service.

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**References:**

- Post Offices and Postmasters of Cape May County, NJ, 1802-1970* by Craig Mathewson, Jr.
- History of Cape May County* by Lewis Townsend Stevens
- Tales of the Jersey Cape* by CMC Chamber of Commerce Bicentennial Commission
- Cape May County Magazine of History & Genealogy*
- The Official (souvenir) Book of The Sea Isle City Centennial* by The Centennial Committee
- Rural Free Delivery Celebrates 85 Years of Love-In-Action* by Ruthann Saenger (1981)



Postcard showing a recent North Wildwood (Branch) post office cancellation.

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# Recruit a New Member

## British-Occupied New Brunswick (NJ) Cover

by E. E. Fricks

One of the two reported covers from the British occupation period of New Brunswick, NJ during the Revolutionary War has surfaced.<sup>1</sup> It was discussed in the *Collectors Club Philatelist* (based on an auction listing) several years ago.<sup>2,3</sup>

None of the three show any evidence of postal handling at New Brunswick and were likely carried to New York in message pouches; there is no indication that the British Army attempted to reestablish a post office at New Brunswick during the occupation. The cover displays no indication that a British post office in New York provided service. Rated originally 2/-, the six page letter was rerated 3/- and shows a London bishop mark of 9 May.

The letter provides some information regarding garrison life. We learn that letters traveled from New York by packet, probably to Portsmouth. A considerable amount of British officer mail was carried in official despatch pouches.<sup>4</sup> The letter, datelined February 16, 1777, follows (original spelling retained for the most part):

My Lord

It is a long while since I wrote to you which is owing to my hardly ever having time and very seldom paper. We ended our campaign Nobly and went into a sort of winter Quarters, and would have been very comfortable had it not been for the too much Servarty of a Hessian Colonel, his name was Raul. He was Quartered at Trentown on Delawar with three Regiments of Hessians. He was informed from all sides that he was to be attacked the next morning but nothing could bring him to believe that they would come. However the Rebels crossed the River in the Night in Extreme bad wether and in the morning about Nine they drove in his Regiments and Entered the town along with them. The Hessians were were Quartered in a Hollow had not time to get well formed. Raul was killed & about six Hundred of his People taken. I had sent a small detachment of Light Infantry there the night before which was to return to me next day. They got off without Loss as did a small detachment of Light Dragoons. Between four and five Hundred Hessian also got off but the rest were taken. This happended on 26th Decembr. since which we have Brought our Quarters nearer to Each other So as to be in force everywhere. There has been some Scirmishing since but of ne great Consequence. Except at PrinceTown where a body of Eight or Nine Thouson Rebels fell in with (the) 17th & 55th on their March when the 17th and a part of the 55 attacked them, beat their first Line back, killed a gret many officers and men and wounded one of their General officers and Retreated to a different part of our Army. They have in this Province a body of about ten Thousand men, a purpose to distract our Quarters and Convoys. But if they dont take very good care they may get a Cursed knock. I was at first Quartered at PrinceTown butnow at this place. We are greatly Crouded but I dont mind it. I have gone thru a great deal of fotgear this year and thank God with good Health. I have not had my Cloaths off since the month of June. General Howe, I find, without my knowledge, wrote home to Lord George Germargne [Germaine] in my favour and I find he Expects me to get a Company in the Guards. I wrote last Packet to Lord George G-requesting his good offices and telling him that Sir William Howe had wrot in my favor I believed though he had never told me of it. In short I wrot they must give me something. We are so Crouded that i sleep 11 in a Room and we are obliged to fight for Hay & Corn very often, which is a dear way of Buying it.

There are fourteen Shirts of mine ready made at Mr. Robertsons. I wish they would make them out to two Dozen, and send send them to Hog and Kinloch to be forwarded by the Portsmouth Waggon directed to me in care Lieut. Archbald, Marines. I shall be sure to get them or any sent inthat way as it comes by a Man of War. A cask of the very best ale or any thing of that sort, might be sent by Glasgow. Mutton Hams a good thing. If John Robertson could get me a good Jedburgh Cheese old, it would Convience our Army that Tivotdae beats Cheshire. I was happy in having it in my Power to make a Sergant of 22d an officer, Recommended by the good town Jedburgh the day after I got their letter. I beg to be Rememberd all our friends in Haddington Jedburgh & Laveder. If the war lasts another year I intend Please God to come home to attend Parliament. In the meantime they ought to give me a Bonny Thing. My most Sincere good Wishes attend My Lady and Every one of your family. God Bles you all. Pray desire John Robertson to buy a Lottery tiket for me if there be a Lottery this Year.

6

*[Handwritten signature]*

The Earl of Lauderdale  
Glasgow  
J. Martland  
Edinburgh

*See file from New York  
Dec 20 to 1776*

*[Handwritten mark]*



*John Martland  
Glasgow*

*16 Feb 1777*



I am ever your most affect. & Most Obliged Brother.

John Maitland

The lack of any attempt to reconstitute any of the elements of civil government in the occupied areas of New Jersey makes one wonder at British strategy. Perhaps Lord William Howe never intended to hold the conquered areas? He ordered the army into winter quarters on December 14, 1776 and reported to Germain his nervousness at the strung out and exposed garrisons. "The chain, I own, is too expensive," he explained but,

I was induced to occupy Burlington to cover the County of Monmouth, in which there are many loyal inhabitants: and trusting the the almost general submission of the County to the southwest of this chain, and to the strength of the corps placed in the advanced posts, I conclude the troops will be in perfect security.<sup>5</sup>

The Hessian garrison at Trenton under the command of Col. Johann Gottlieb Rall numbered 1,300-1,400 consisting of three German infantry regiments, some jagers, a detachment of artillery, and 20 dragoons from the British 16th Regiment. Contrary to Maitland, Rall was well-aware of his exposed condition as reflected in his despatches. Curiously he took no precautionary steps to protect his position, underestimating the determination of his adversary. Rall spent the evening before the attack with Abraham Hunt, the postmaster of Trenton, a man who professed strict neutrality throughout the Revolution but who held a commission as a lieutenant colonel in the New Jersey militia. One wonders at his motives in seeing that Rall spent the evening playing cards and drinking.

In the attack on the 26th, Rall suffered a mortal wound, Hessian casualties numbered 110 with 918 captured; the remainder escaped, corroborating Maitland's report.

At Princeton on January 3, 1777 Washington with about 1,200 Continentals and a force of militia (hardly Maitland's eight or nine thousand) surprised LtCol Charles Mawhood and the 17th Regiment of Foot outside the town. In a spirited action that saw Brig. Gen. Hugh Mercer surrounded and killed, Washington personally led the Pennsylvania militia in an assault that annihilated the 17th and destroyed part of the 55th. Continuing the attack, Washington's men pushed the remainder of the 55th and the 40th out of town in a full rout. This action saw Lt Alexander Hamilton's artillery bombard a portion of the 55th in Nassau Hall, the results of which still show on the building's walls.<sup>6</sup>

A major result was a withdrawal to New Brunswick, which was garrisoned with 5,000 troops; no wonder Maitland was cramped.

The garrison was withdrawn, along with all other British troops in New Jersey, to New York on June 25, 1777.

1. Tom Clarke, "A Timeless War Letter from 1776/1777," *Lu Posta*, vol. 19, no. 5, 113, Oct-Nov 1988, pp. 66-68.

2. E.E. Fricks, "The Postal History of New Brunswick," *CCP*, vol. 58, no. 3, July 1979,

3. Rigby Postal History Auctions, Ltd., February 1975

4. Marion Balderston and David Surett, *The Lost War*, Horizon Press, New York, 1975.

5. Peter Force, *American Archives: Fourth Series, Containing a Documentary History of the English Colonies in North America from the King's Message to Parliament of March 7, 1774, to the Declaration of Independence by the United States*. M. St. Clair Clarke and Peter Force, Washington, D.C., 1837-1846, vol. 5, pp. 1316-17.

6. Richard M. Ketcham, *The Winter Soldiers*, Doubleday & Co., 1973.

\* \* \* \* \*

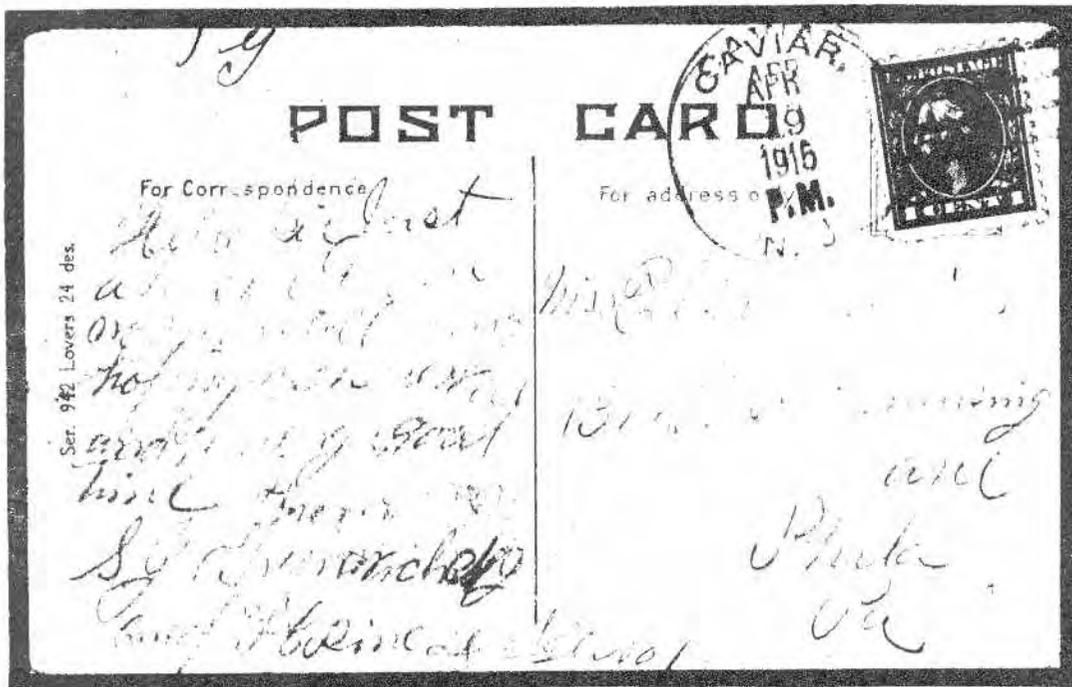
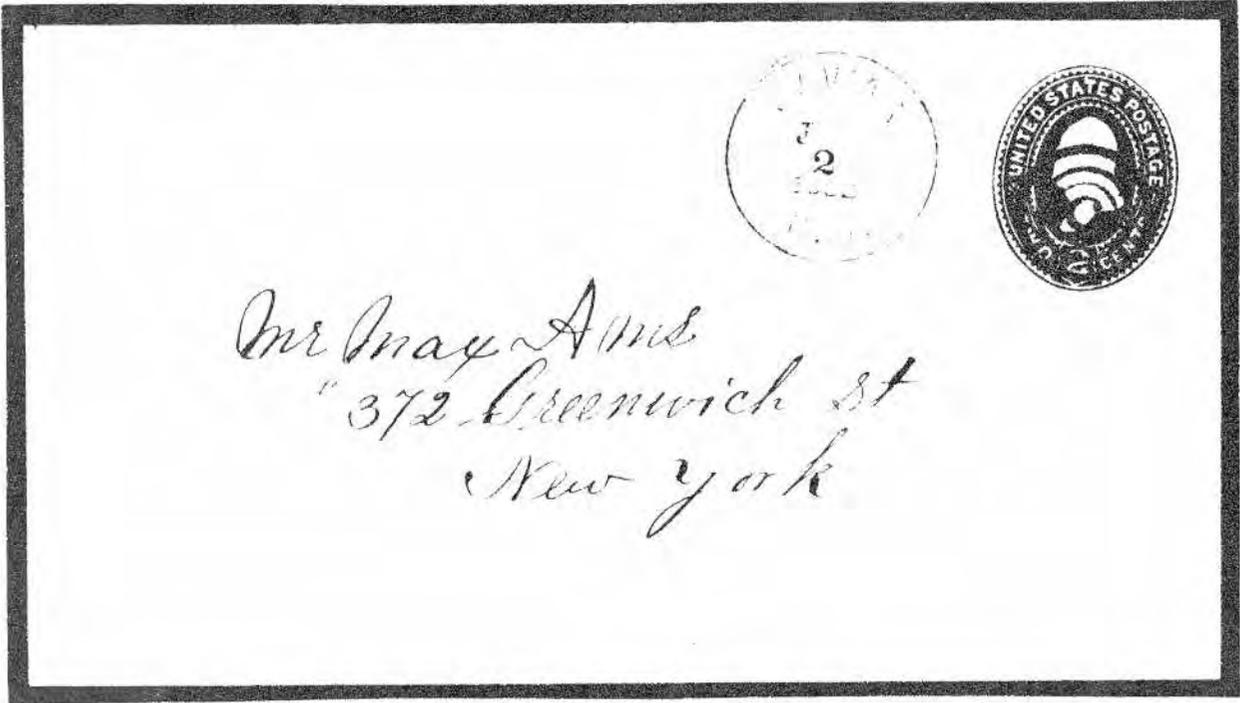
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# New Jersey Discontinued Post Offices

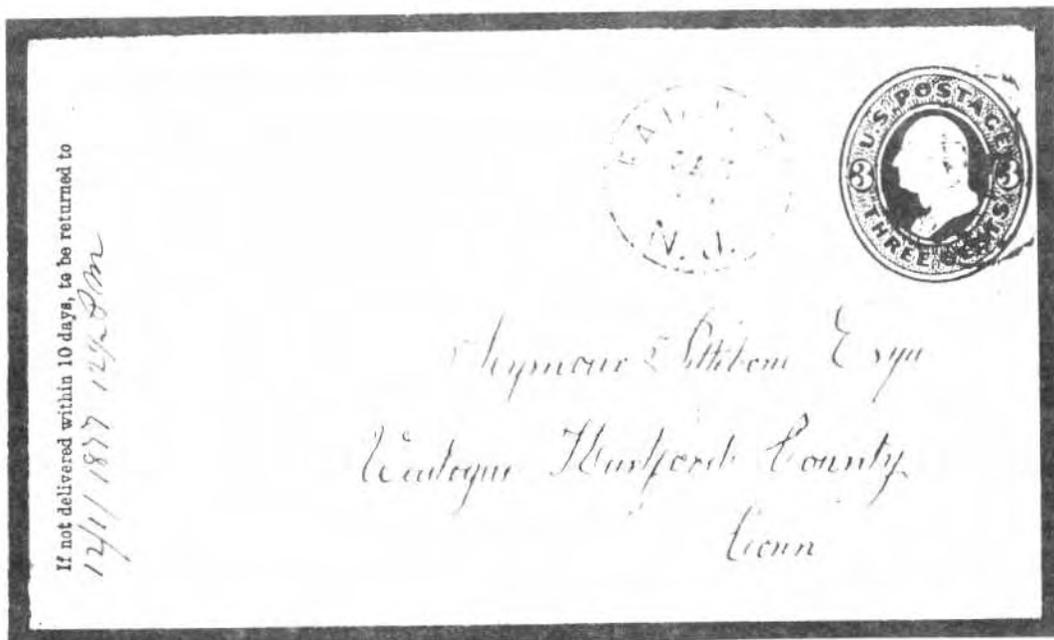


CAVIAR - Cumberland County - 1892-1921



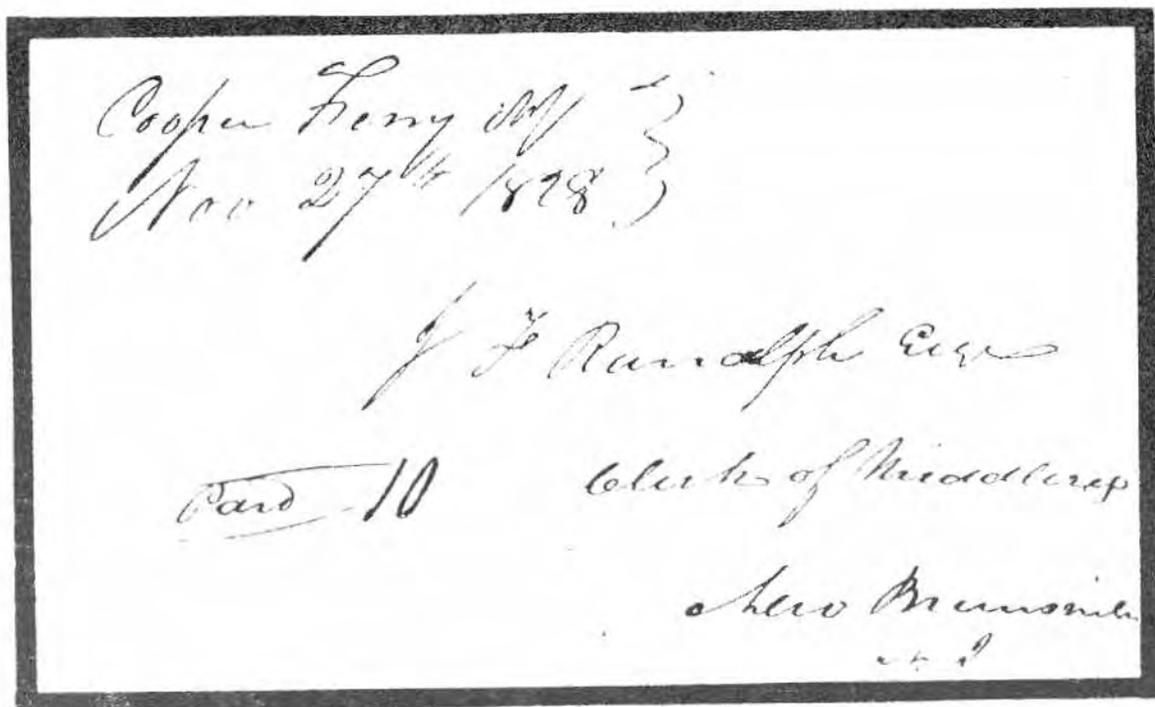
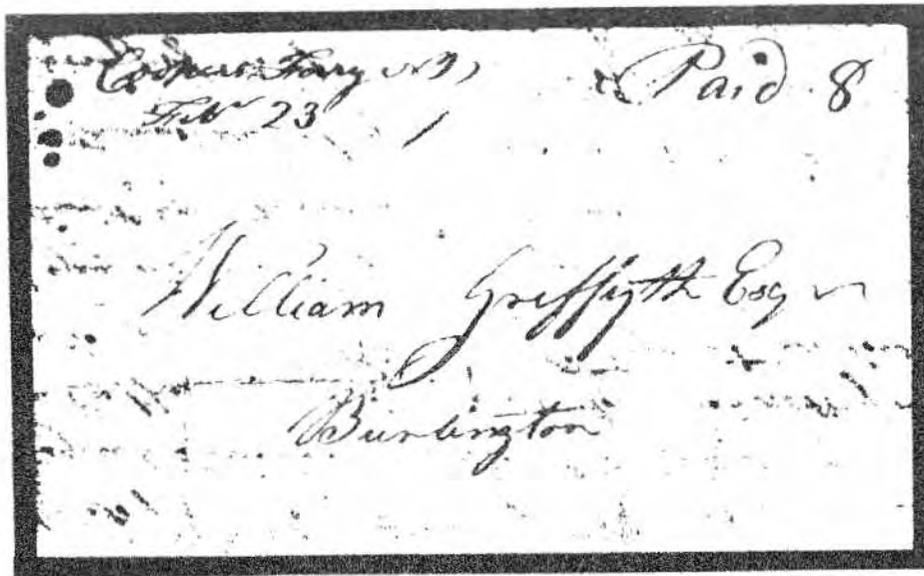
# New Jersey Discontinued Post Offices

FAIRFIELD - Essex County - 1873-1903



# New Jersey Discontinued Post Offices

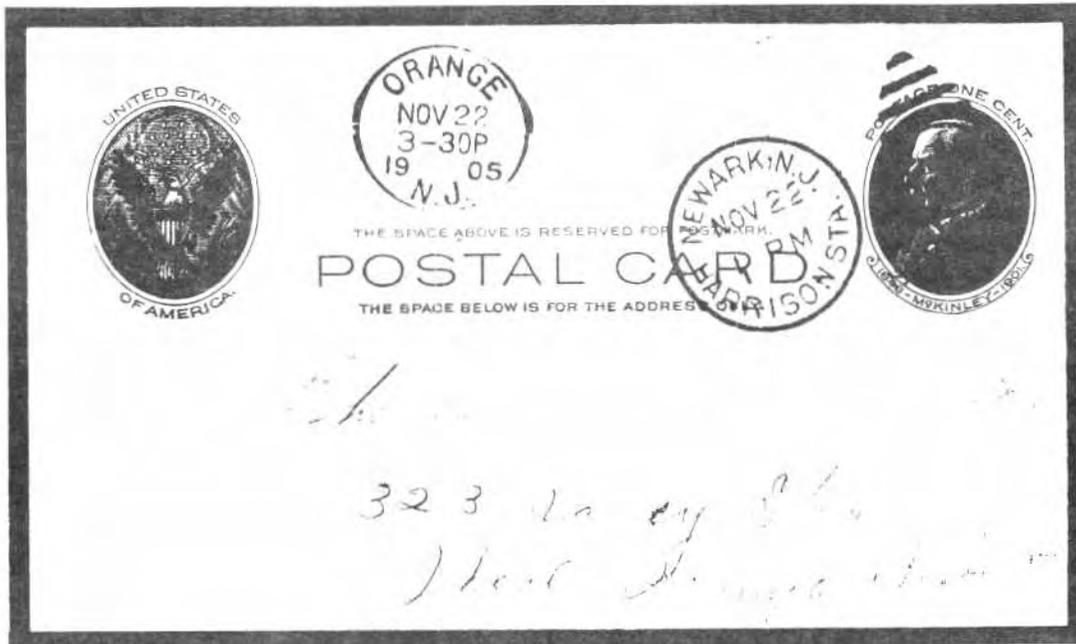
COOPERS FERRY - Gloucester County - 1802-1829



# New Jersey Discontinued Post Offices



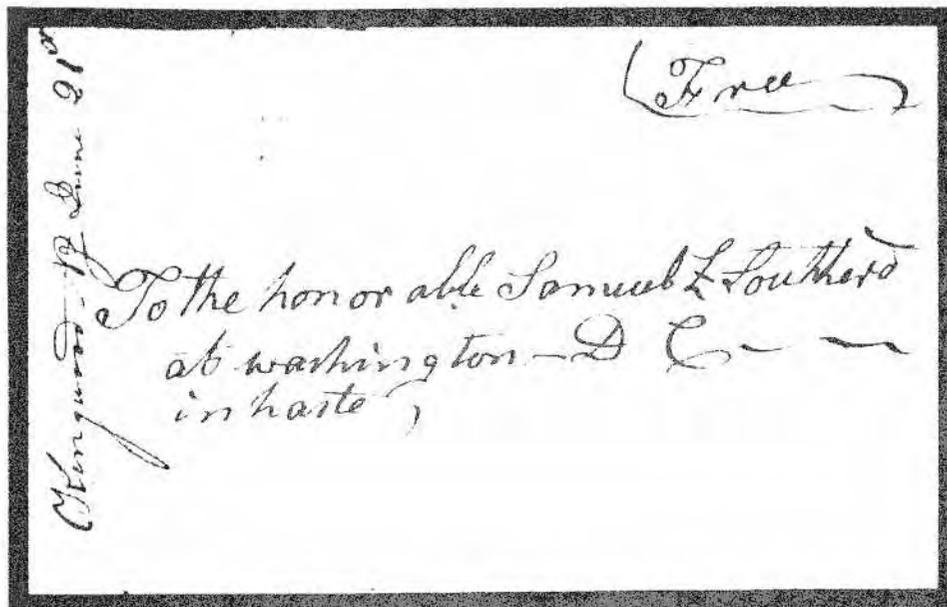
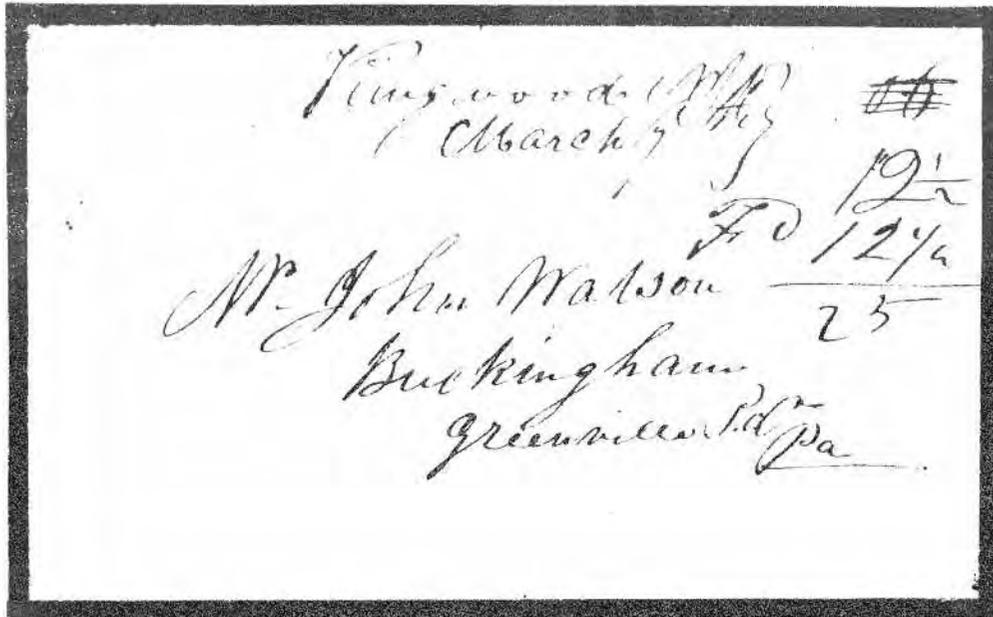
HARRISON STATION - Hudson County - 1883-1908



# New Jersey Discontinued Post Offices



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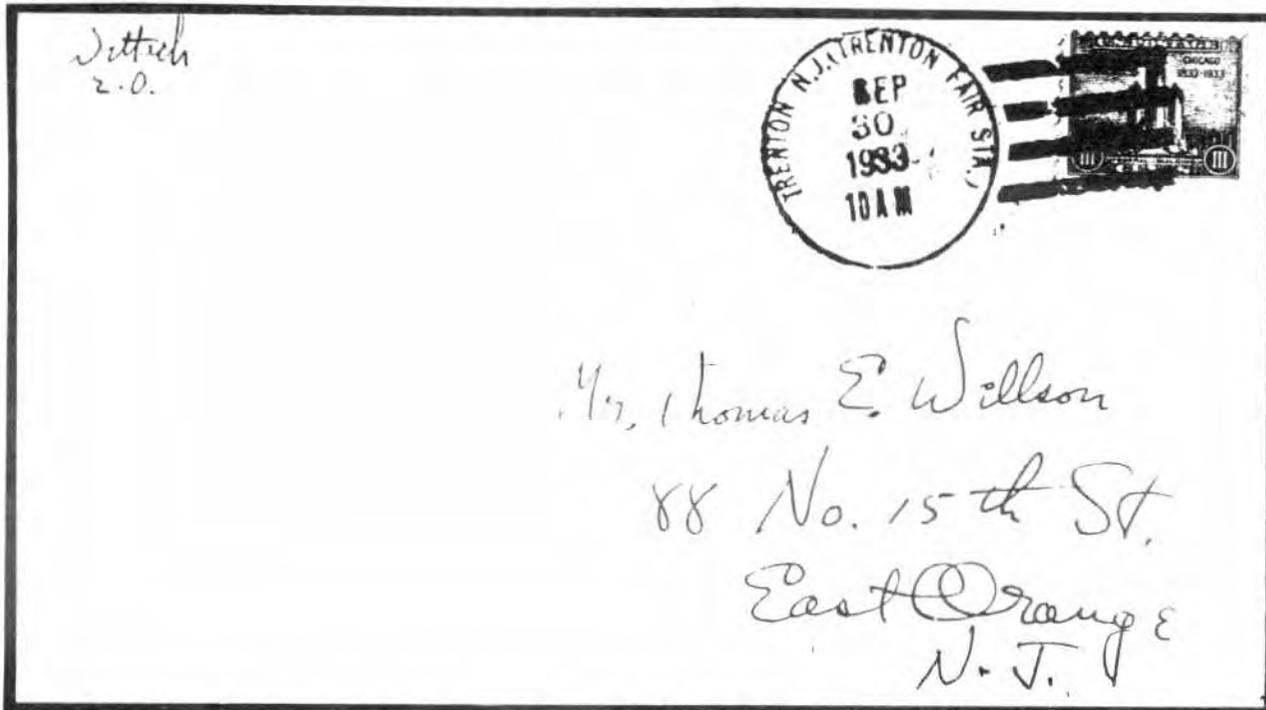
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Another TRENTON NJ (TRENTON FAIR STA.) cover, to suppliment those that appeared in Whole Number 94 of the New Jersey Postal Histoey Society Journal. We are still looking for additional years of use. What can you report ?



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**DISASTER NOTICE :**

On September 1, 1993 our entire stock and supply of Back Issue NJPH Journals, up to Whole #83 was destroyed by being inundated with water, caused by a burst water pipe in the storage area. There are no longer any back issues available from our first sixteen years of publication. Back issues will only be available starting with Whole Number 84, from now on.

Brad Arch, Editor

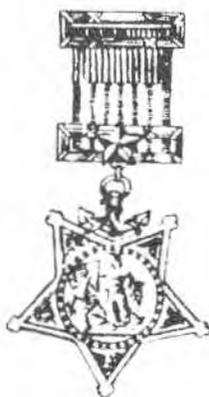
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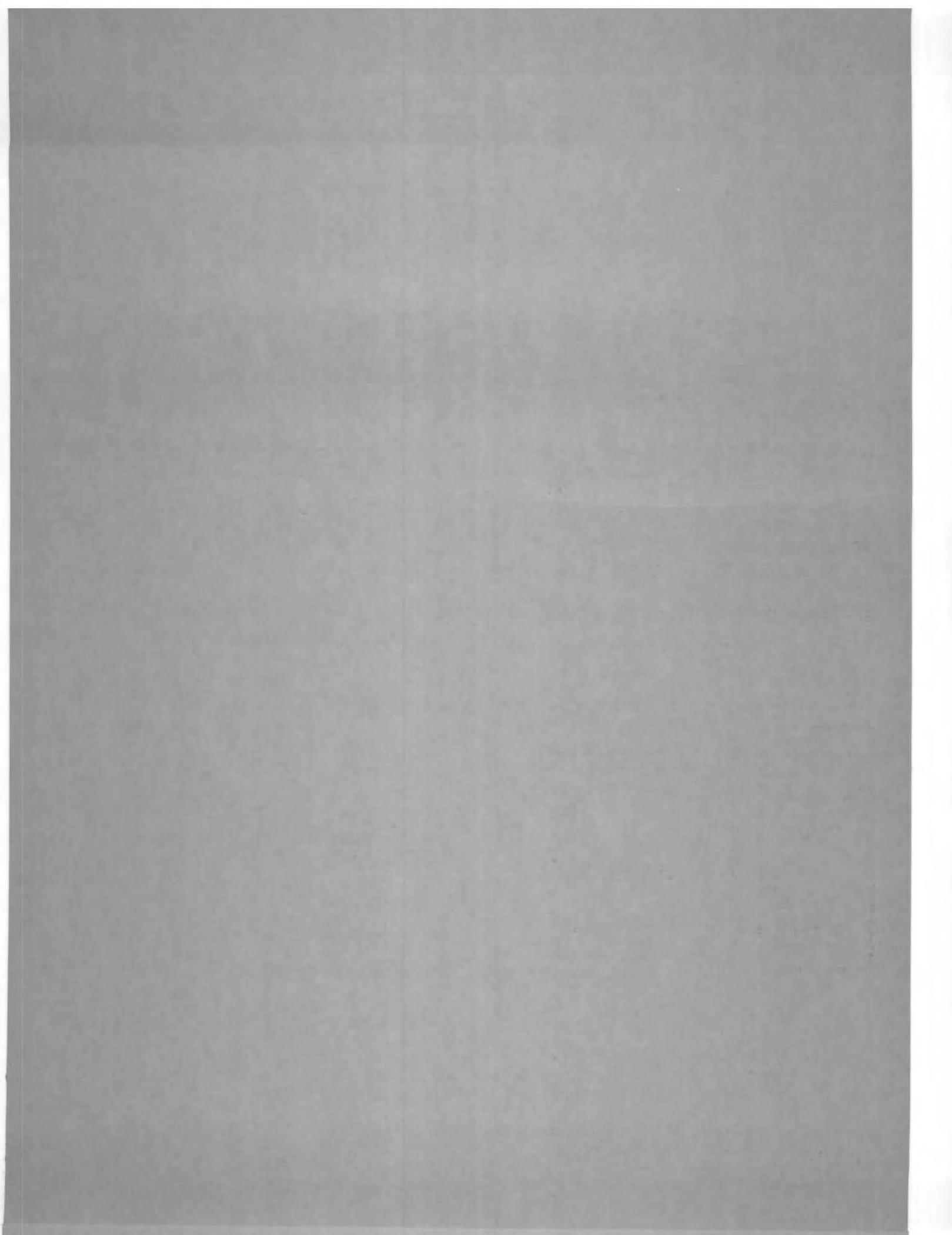
**- AWARD WINNERS -**

The New Jersey Postal Historian Award for the best article to be published in the 1993 issues of the Journal, has been awarded to Mary Law, for her continuing series of articles on the postal History of Cape May County NJ. The Award consists of one year free dues, being for the 1994 membership year.. Congratulations !!

**Exhibit Award Winners - CONGRATULATIONS !!**

- MERPEX** Sept. 3-4-5, 1993 - Cherry Hill NJ
- GOLD & NJPHS Award** - '19th Century Post Offices of Cape May County NJ" Craig Mathewson
- SILVER** - "New Jersey circa 1869" Brad Arch
- BRONZE** - "Newfield NJ" Gerard Neufeld





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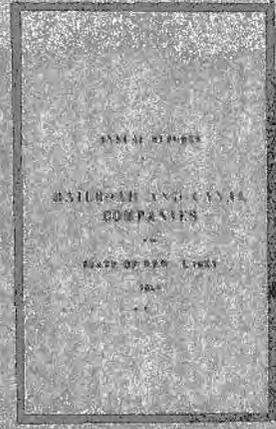
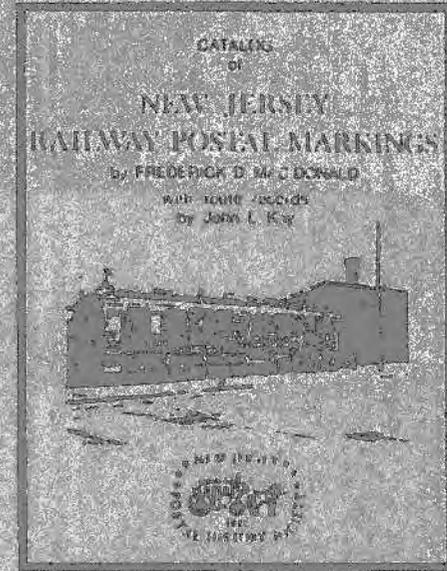
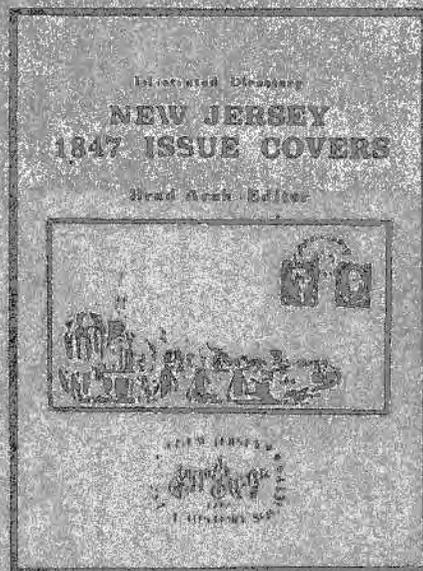
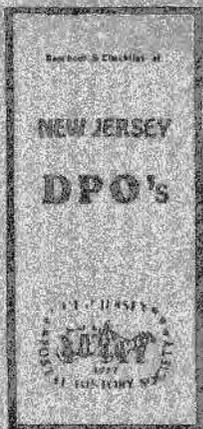
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