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The Story of the USS Oklahoma



A hand painted cachet by May Luhta adorns this ship cover, sent from the **USS Oklahoma** two and a half years before her demise at Pearl Harbor, Dec. 7, 1941. See article on page 3.

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DUES TIME AGAIN!

If your dues have not yet been paid, you will find an enclosed reminder for dues payment for 2016. Dues are still \$15 a year, and again this year you have the option of paying your dues online by Paypal (no extra fee), by going to our web site [www.NJPostalHistory.org] where you will find a link for membership renewal in the column at left. You can also donate to the Society at the same time, if you would like. We are happy to accept your dues and donations in whatever form you find like!

PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

Our faithful band of contributors has once again provided a broad range of topics of interest to our Society’s membership. Captain Larry Brennan returns in another of his long-running series of New Jersey built naval ships, this article detailing the history of the Battleship USS *Oklahoma*, sunk during the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor. Larry Lyons continues his series on New Jersey local posts, this article featuring Fearey’s Mustang Express from Newark. John Trosky and Jean Walton collaborate on an article featuring a Colgate Palmolive commercial usage of an air mail cover sent by Pacific Clipper service, posted from Jersey City, the long-time home of that company. Ed & Jean Siskin provide illustrations of several 18th century Colonial New Jersey covers, previously unreported, that Society member Dr. Timothy O’Connor found during the course of conducting archival research. I have provided census data on the stampless straight line handstamp from Springfield. Our webmaster, Warren Plank, provides an update of ongoing improvements and additions to our Society’s website, and Alpine New Jersey is this issue’s Hometown Post Office.

Come on! We need some new contributors to this Journal. If it’s only a scan of a single favorite cover from your collection, with a brief description, that’s all we need to get you published in these pages. Please email me or Jean at our addresses above and we’ll get you going!

Finally, I wish to thank the many of you who have so generously made donations to the Society. It is those donations that enable the Society to publish and mail *NJPH*, while maintaining the dues at a modest \$15 a year. If you have not as yet submitted your dues for 2016, a friendly reminder is enclosed with this issue.

And, yes, *World Stamp Show-NY2016* (May 28-June 4 at the Javitts Center in NYC) is fast approaching. Be sure to make your plans to see this incredible show.

ROBERT G. ROSE

**THE FIRST U.S. WARSHIP SUNK ON 7 DECEMBER 1941:
NEW JERSEY-BUILT BATTLESHIP, USS *OKLAHOMA* (BB 37)¹**

By: Captain Lawrence B. Brennan, U.S. Navy (Retired). Member, NJPHS

**“*Oklahoma* failed to fire a single shot in anger
during two world wars.”**

Captain Herbert Fox Rommel, Jr., U.S. Navy (Retired)
Pearl Harbor Survivor of USS *Oklahoma*²

The first and last U.S. warships sunk in the Pacific during World War II were violently destroyed with the massive loss of life; both were built by New York Shipbuilding in Camden, New Jersey; both suffered fatal damage from multiple torpedoes; both capsized within 12 minutes. The battleship, USS *Oklahoma* (BB 37), was sunk at Pearl Harbor on the morning of Sunday, 7 December 1941, with the loss of 429 officers and men; suffering the second greatest number of casualties that morning. Together with USS *Arizona* (BB 39) more than 60% of the fatalities that morning were suffered by these two ships on Battleship Row. *Oklahoma* was struck on the port side by as many as nine aircraft-launched torpedoes.³

Nearly 44 months later, the heavy cruiser, USS *Indianapolis* (CA 35),⁴ was sunk when struck in the starboard bow and amidships by two torpedoes fired by the Imperial Japanese submarine *I-58* in the Philippine Sea on Monday, 30 July 1945, with the loss of approximately 880 officers and men. A further sad coincidence was that the last Commanding Officer *Indianapolis*, Captain McVay, the only naval officer court martialed and convicted for the loss of his ship in combat during either world war, was the son of Admiral Charles B. McVay, Jr., U.S. Navy,⁵ the World War I Commanding Officer of *Oklahoma* while she was deployed to European waters.

Today, USS *Missouri* (BB 63) is moored at the final berth occupied by *Oklahoma* astern of the sunken hull of *Arizona*. Both *Missouri* and *Arizona* were built at the New York Naval Shipyard in Brooklyn. Nearly forgotten on the opposite side of Ford Island is the sunken hull of USS *Utah* (AG 16 ex BB 31), a target ship which had been built as a battleship at New York Shipbuilding Company in Camden. Entombed within *Utah* are the remains of six officers and 58 men⁶ including the heroic Chief Watertender Peter Tomich, U.S. Navy who was awarded the Medal of Honor posthumously for his selfless efforts in evacuating his shipmates from the boiler room as his ship capsized.⁷

This however is the story of *Oklahoma*.⁸

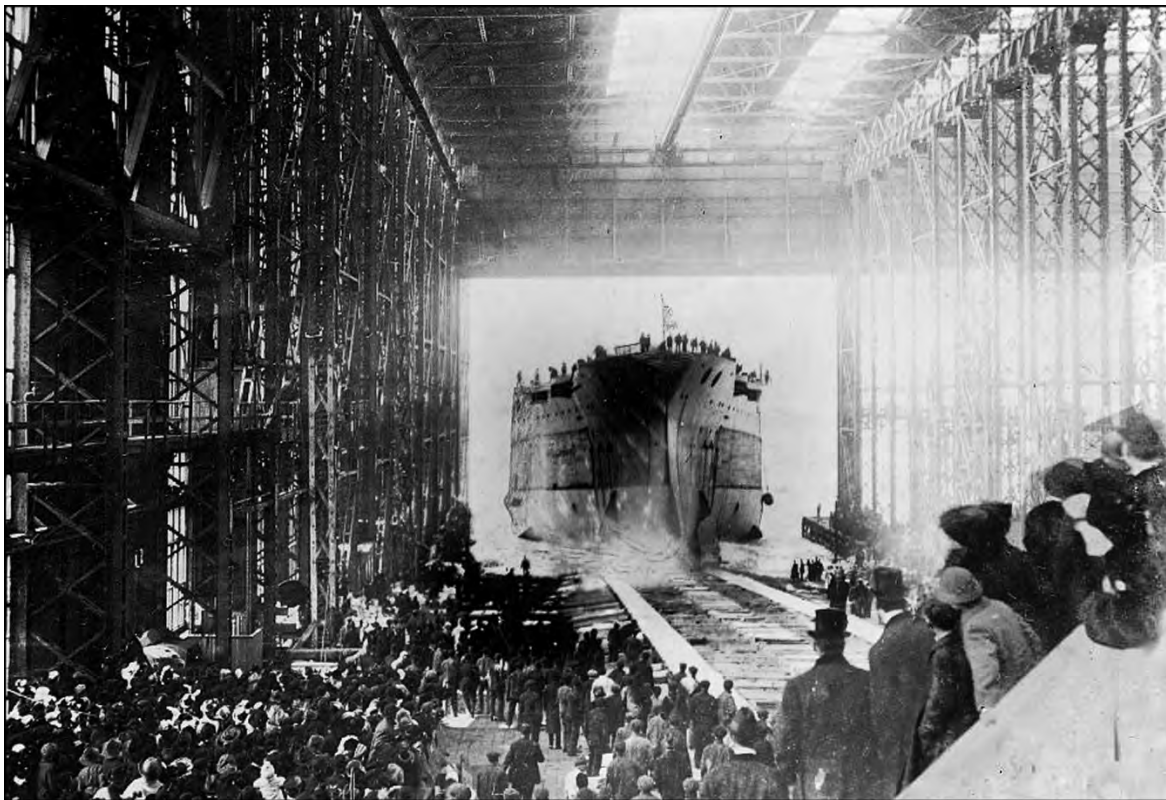
Oklahoma is one of three U.S. battleships sunk as the result of enemy action. The other two were USS *Maine* in 1898 and USS *Arizona* at Pearl; none were underway when lost. She is the only one which did not sustain a massive magazine explosion which caused the destruction of the hull and consequent large number of casualties. *Maine* reportedly was sunk by an external mine allegedly placed by Spanish agents in Havana in early 1898, although the proximate cause was in doubt. Admiral Rickover produced *How the USS Maine was Destroyed* (Washington DC: GPO 1976), written to support the conclusion that the loss of the ship was caused by heating and

FIRST WARSHIP SUNK 7 DEC 1941: USS *OKLAHOMA* ~Capt. Lawrence B. Brennan, (Ret.)

ignition of the ship's coal in bunkers adjacent to the magazines. It is generally accepted that *Arizona* was lost as the result of a magazine detonation caused by a large bomb (probably a converted battleship shell) dropped by a Japanese bomber which penetrated the armored deck forward near turrets one and two. Despite suffering more combat "hits" than either *Maine* or *Arizona*, or both combined, the magazines of *Oklahoma* did not explode.

Beginnings:

Oklahoma was ordered on 4 March 1911 during the Taft Administration. She was the second of a pair of *Nevada*-class battleships, the U.S. Navy's first super-dreadnoughts and oil-burning ships. *Oklahoma* was the only US warship ever named for the 46th state.⁹



Picture courtesy Wikipedia¹⁰

Fig. 1: Launch of Oklahoma on 23 March 1914 at the New York Shipbuilding Company at Camden, New Jersey.

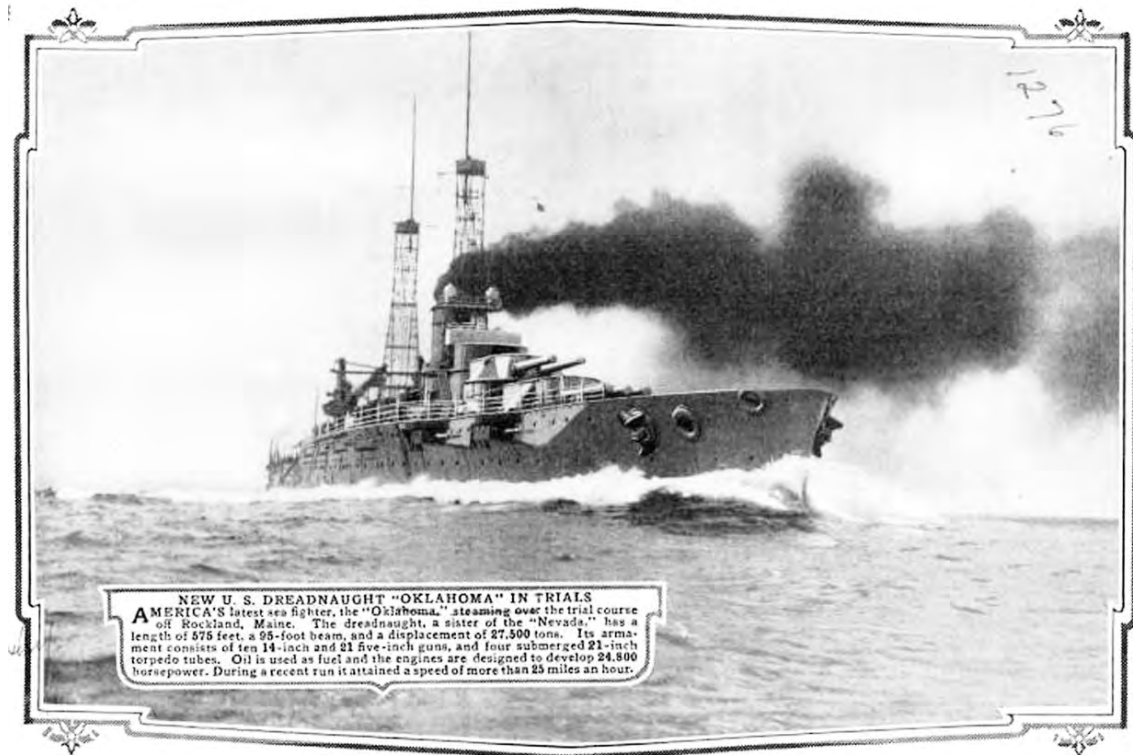
As constructed, she had a standard displacement of 27,500 tons and a full-load displacement of 28,400 tons. She was 583 feet long, had a beam of 95 feet 6 inches, and a draft of 28 feet 6 inches. She was powered by 12 oil-fired Babcock and Wilcox boilers driving two dual-acting triple expansion reciprocating steam engines, with 24,800 indicated horsepower, resulting in a maximum speed of 20.5 knots. She had a designed range of 8,000 nautical miles at 10 knots.

Capt. Lawrence B. Brennan, (Ret.) ~ FIRST WARSHIP SUNK 7 DEC 1941: USS *OKLAHOMA*

As-built armor consisted of belt armor from 13.5 inches to eight inches. Deck armor was three inches with a second one and a half inch deck, and turret armor was 18 inches or 16 inches on the face, five inches on the top, ten inches on the sides, and nine inches at the rear. Armor on her barbettes was 13.5 inches. Her conning tower was protected by 16 inches of armor, with eight inches of armor on its overhead.

Her armament consisted of ten 14 inch guns, arranged in two triple and two twin mounts. As built, she also carried twenty-one 5 inch guns, primarily for defense against destroyers and torpedo boats. She also had multiple 21 inch torpedo tubes. Her crew initially consisted of 864 officers and men.

Oklahoma's keel was laid down on 26 October 1912. She was launched a year and a half later on 23 March 1914. The launch was preceded by an invocation—the first in half a century for a U.S. warship. On the night of 19 July 1915, a year plus after launching, large fires were discovered underneath the forward main turret, the third in a U.S. battleship in less than a month. The fire had been caused by “defective insulation” or a mistake made by a dockyard worker. This casualty delayed the battleship’s completion so that she was not commissioned until 2 May 1916 at Philadelphia Navy Yard, with Captain Roger Welles, U.S. Navy¹¹ in command.



From Popular Mechanics Magazine, March 1916.

Fig. 2: Oklahoma under way during sea trials off the coast of Maine in 1916.

The First Years

Following commissioning, the ship remained on the East Coast. After the United States declared war on the German Empire in April 1917, *Oklahoma* was unable to join Battleship Division Nine, which had been sent to support the Grand Fleet in the North Sea, due to a lack of oil available in the United Kingdom. In 1917, she underwent an upgrade of her guns, including installation of anti-aircraft defense, and repositioning of her 5 inch guns. While berthing conditions were cramped, the sailors enjoyed multiple educational opportunities. They also spent their time on athletics, including boxing, wrestling and rowing meets with the crews of USS *Texas* (BB 35) and the New Jersey-built tug USS *Ontario* (AT 13). These competitions led to fleet-wide establishment of athletic teams by the 1930s.

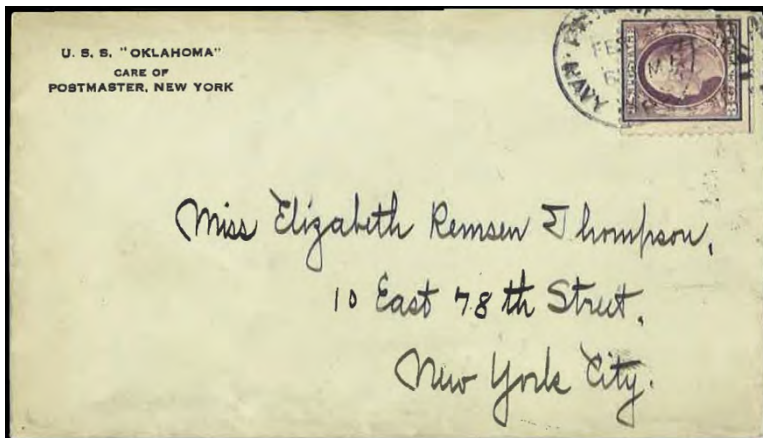


Fig. 3: A USS *Oklahoma* corner card on a cover to New York City, circa 1918, posted ashore without censor markings.

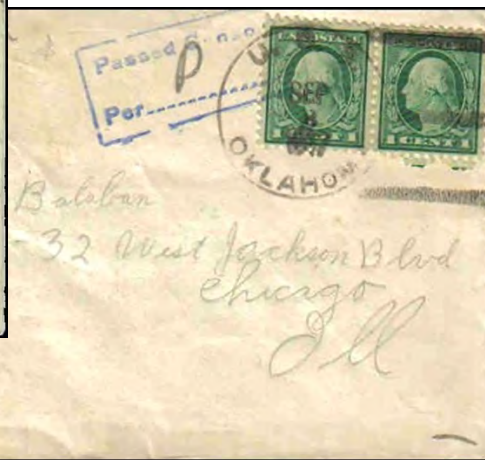


Fig. 4: A September 8, 1917 *Oklahoma* cover with a Passed by Censor marking and a 3-bar cds (Loey Type 3(AC)) cancel.

World War I

Oklahoma enjoyed a relatively pacific war. On 13 August 1918, she was assigned to Battleship Division Six under Rear Admiral Thomas S. Rodgers, and departed for Europe with her sister ship, *Nevada*. On 23 August they rendezvoused with destroyers USS *Balch* (DD 50), USS *Conyngham* (DD 58), the New Jersey-built USS *Downes* (DD 45), USS *Kimberly* (DD 80), USS *Allen* (DD 66), and USS *Sampson* (DD 63), 275 nautical miles west of Ireland's west coast, before steaming for Berehaven Harbor, where they waited 18 days before *Utah* arrived. The division remained at anchor, tasked to protect American convoys sailing in the area, but was only underway once in 80 days. Just before the end of hostilities, on 14 October 1918, while under command of Captain McVay, she escorted troop ships into an English port, returning on 16 October. Then, the ship conducted her initial drills at anchor in nearby Bantry Bay where the crew played football and raced small craft. She suffered six casualties to the 1918 flu pandemic between 21 October and 2 November. *Oklahoma* remained off Berehaven until the end of the war on 11 November 1918. Shortly thereafter, several crewmen while ashore were involved in fights with members of Sinn Féin, forcing Captain McVay to apologize and compensate two town mayors.



Arlington Nat. Cemetery image¹²

Fig. 5: Admiral Charles B. McVay, Jr., U.S. Navy, WWI Commanding Officer of Oklahoma.



Navy Photo # NH 44401¹³

Fig. 6: USS Oklahoma wearing experimental camouflage, circa 1917.



Fig. 7: A 21 January 1918 Oklahoma cds Locy Type F (O7a) cancel rated R2 in the USCS Postmark Catalog and censor marking on a post card sent to upstate New York.

Convoying President Wilson and Between the Wars

Oklahoma sailed for Portland, England on 26 November 1918, and was joined there by *Arizona* on 30 November, *Nevada* on 4 December, and ultimately Battleship Division Nine. These ships served as a convoy escort for the former German liner, USS *George Washington* (TT 31081) carrying President Woodrow Wilson to peace negotiations in France following WWI. She then spent early 1919 conducting winter battle drills off the coast of Cuba, and on 15 June 1919, she returned to Brest, escorting Wilson on his second trip, and returned to New York on 8 July. A part of the Atlantic Fleet for the next two years, *Oklahoma* was overhauled, and early in 1921, she proceeded to the west coast of South America for combined exercises with the Pacific Fleet, before returning later that year for the Peruvian Centennial.

FIRST WARSHIP SUNK 7 DEC 1941: USS *OKLAHOMA* ~Capt. Lawrence B. Brennan, (Ret.)

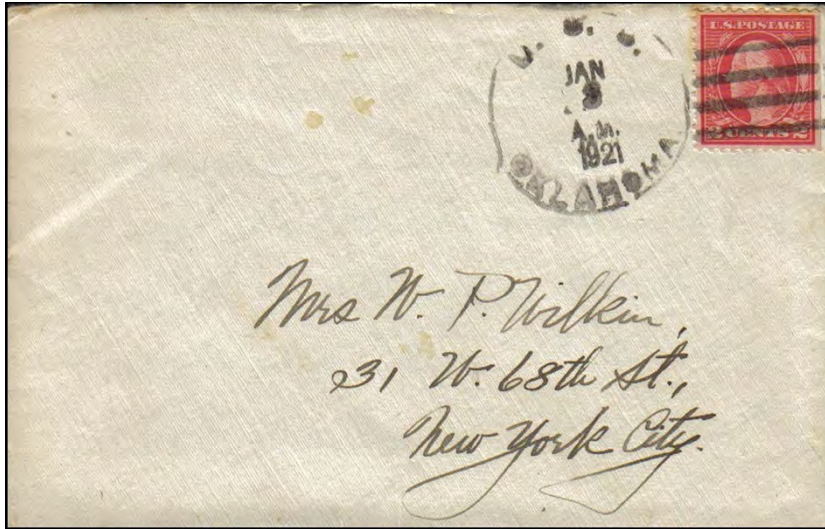


Illustration courtesy the online Naval Coastal Museum¹⁴
Fig. 8: Early (3 January 1921) cover with Locy Type 1u 4-bar cancel rated R1 in the USCS Postmark Catalog.

Oklahoma then joined the Pacific Fleet and participated in a training cruise. The largest collection of U.S. battleships since the Great White Fleet departed San Francisco on 15 April 1925 and arrived in Hawaii on 27 April, where they conducted war games. The fleet then departed for Samoa, visiting Australia and New Zealand before returning home. In early 1927, she transited the Panama Canal and joined the Scouting Fleet. In November 1927, *Oklahoma* entered Philadelphia Navy Yard for an extensive overhaul: the addition of eight 5 inch guns; an aircraft catapult was installed atop of one of the after turrets; she was substantially up-armored with anti-torpedo bulges and an additional two inches of steel on her armor deck. Her beam was expanded to 108 feet, the widest in the U.S. Navy and just within the width of the Panama Canal.



Fig. 9: A registered strike, Locy Type 9v dated 30 November 1926 from an Oklahoma penalty envelope, and a Locy Type 5s 3-bar cds cover with a postmark dated 1 August 1927.



Fig. 10: A 1934 Christmas cover addressed to Herbert Rommel, Jr. from his father (see page 3).

Oklahoma returned to the West Coast in June 1930 for fleet operations through spring 1936. That summer, she carried midshipmen on a European training cruise. The cruise was interrupted with the outbreak of civil war in Spain, as *Oklahoma* steamed to Bilbao, Spain arriving on 24 July 1936 to rescue American citizens and refugees whom she carried to Gibraltar and French ports. She returned to Norfolk on 11 September, and departed for the West Coast.



Fig. 11: Covers relating to the 1936 training cruise with Locy Type 3(AC-BTT) cancels showing various ports.

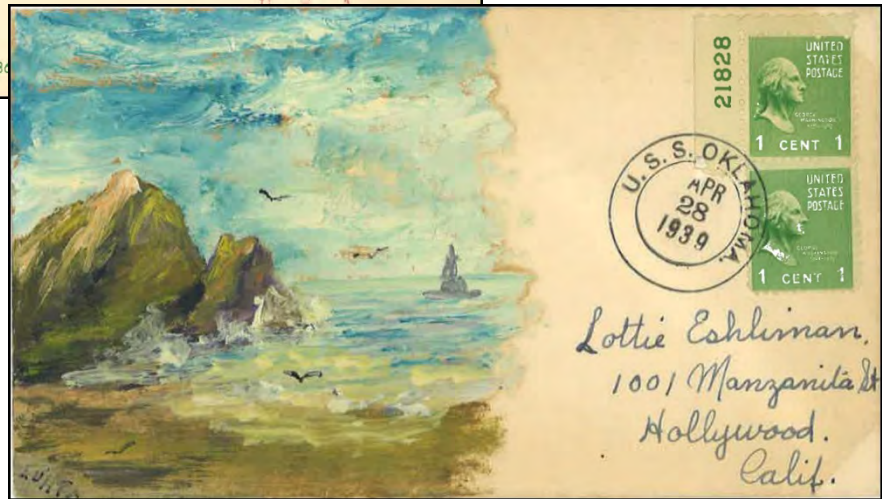
Fig. 12: While on her 1936 training cruise, *Oklahoma* was tapped to rescue Americans caught in Spain at the outbreak of the civil war there. Locy Type 3(AC-BTT). Note slogan "Aids Refugees/Bilbao Spain."

Oklahoma was based at Pearl Harbor from 29 December 1937; only twice did she return to the mainland, once to have anti-aircraft guns and armor added to her superstructure at Puget Sound Navy Yard in February 1941 and once to have armor replaced at San Pedro in mid-August 1941. On 23 August, after encountering rough seas, she had to deviate to San Francisco, the closest navy yard with an adequate dry-dock, where she remained until mid-October.



Fig. 13: A Navy Day cover for a NROTC cruise, while stationed at Honolulu, T.H. (Hawaiian Territories). Locy Type 3(AC-BTT).

Fig. 14: Idling the time away in Hawaii; May Lutha produced this nice hand-drawn cover showing a Locy Type 9 2-ring cancel from 1939. It is addressed to Lottie Eshliman, a well-known cachet artist in her own right.



Pearl Harbor

The Imperial Japanese Navy’s strike plan for the Pearl Harbor operation was largely influenced by the Royal Navy’s strike from a single carrier, HMS *Illustrious* (R 87), on the Italian battle fleet at the Battle of Taranto using aerial torpedoes despite the shallow depth of the water. According to Admiral Cunningham, “Taranto, and the night of November 11–12, 1940, should be remembered for ever as having shown once and for all that in the Fleet Air Arm the Navy has its most devastating weapon.”¹⁵

Figure 15 below is an aerial view of “Battleship Row” moorings at Pearl Harbor on the southern side of Ford Island, 10 December 1941, showing damage from the Japanese raid three days earlier. In upper left is the sunken *USS California* (BB 44), with smaller vessels clustered around her. Diagonally, from left center to lower right are: *USS Maryland* (BB 46), lightly damaged, with the capsized *USS Oklahoma* (BB 37) outboard. A barge is alongside *Oklahoma*, supporting rescue efforts. *USS Tennessee* (BB 43), lightly damaged, with the sunken *USS West Virginia* (BB 48) outboard. *USS Arizona* (BB 39), sunk, with her hull shattered by the explosion of the magazines below the two forward turrets. Note dark oil streaks on the harbor surface, originating from the sunken battleships.¹⁶



Navy photograph 80-G-387565

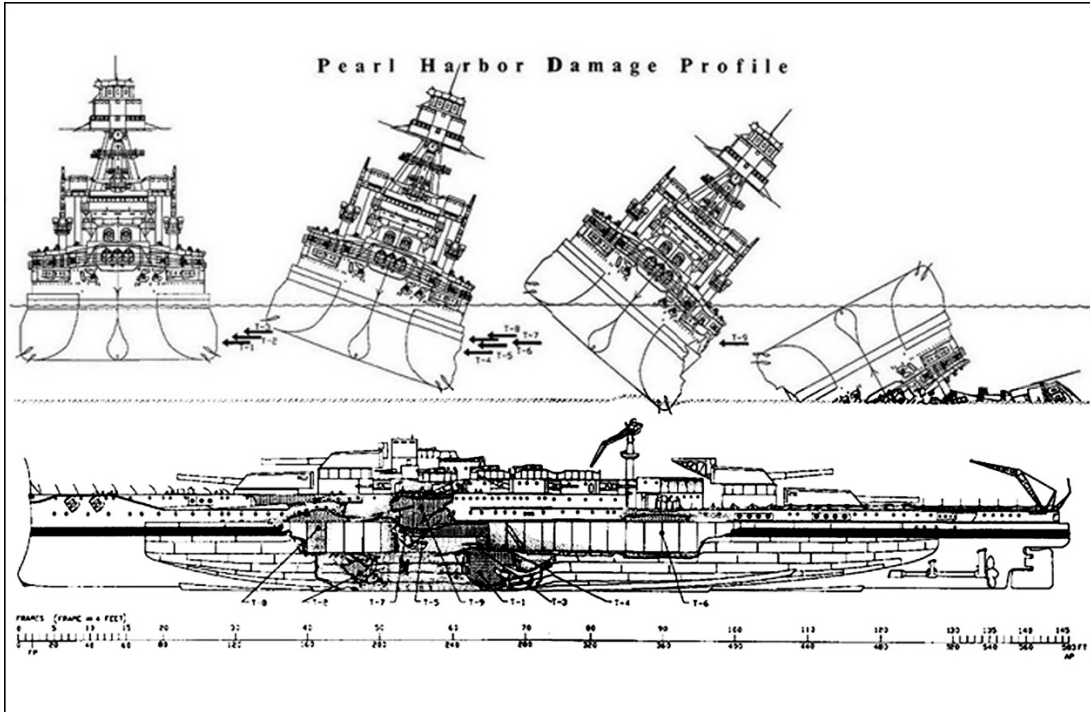
Fig. 15: Aerial view of “Battleship Row” moorings at Pearl Harbor on the southern side of Ford Island, 10 December 1941.

On Friday, 5 December 1941, *Oklahoma* returned to Pearl Harbor; it was her last day underway. Then, on Sunday, 7 December 1941, the first of four waves of the Japanese air strikes commenced more than an hour after USS *Ward* (DD 139)¹⁷ reported that she had attacked a Japanese midget submarine after searching for two hours near the harbor entrance.¹⁸ *Oklahoma*, moored outboard of USS *Maryland* (BB 46), was fatally wounded during the first of four waves of air attacks that morning. While the crew was ordered below for protection from the attack and to their battle stations, many of the men were trapped when *Oklahoma* capsized.

Fig. 16: Radio alert issued Dec. 7, 1941 – THIS IS NO DRILL! All Army, Navy, and Marine personnel to report to duty.¹⁹

PENY 5-7-41 253M		U. NAVAL AIR STATION, KODIAK, ALASKA	
Original		NAVAL COMMUNICATIONS	
Heading: NFO NR 63 F L Z F5L 071830 CBQ TART 0 B1			
From: CINCPAC		Date: 7 DEC 41	
To: ALL SHIPS PRESENT AT HAWAIIAN AREA.			
Info: - U R G E N T -			
DEFERRED unless otherwise checked	ROUTINE.....	PRIORITY.....	AIRMAIL.....
AIRRAID ON PEARL HARBOR X THIS IS NO DRILL			

FIRST WARSHIP SUNK 7 DEC 1941: USS *OKLAHOMA* ~Capt. Lawrence B. Brennan, (Ret.)



US Navy photo, courtesy of NavSource Online²⁰

*Fig. 17: This drawing shows the damage to USS Oklahoma caused by the Japanese torpedoes. It also shows Oklahoma capsizing, and how she came to rest in the muddy bottom of Pearl Harbor. Each black arrow represents a torpedo hitting the ship.*²¹



Fig. 18: A cover from Oklahoma, two days before the attack, with notation at upper left noting the sinking on 7 December. Oklahoma returned to Pearl Harbor for the last time on the afternoon of the 5th. Because the cover was addressed to a recipient in Hawaii it appears to have escaped censorship or perhaps it was delivered on Saturday, 6 December 1941.

Capt. Lawrence B. Brennan, (Ret.) ~ FIRST WARSHIP SUNK 7 DEC 1941: USS *OKLAHOMA*

Oklahoma's Commanding Officer, Captain Howard D. Bode, had departed the ship just before the attack began and stayed on board *Maryland*. *Oklahoma* was sunk by at least six torpedoes and multiple bombs. She capsized within 12 minutes as a result of lack of watertight integrity following the torpedo hits on her port side. *Oklahoma's* bilge inspection covers had been removed for a scheduled routine inspection the following day (8 December 1941). This precluded counter flooding to prevent capsizing.²² Her crew abandoned ship but many of the men remained in the fight, clambering aboard *Maryland*.



Fig. 19: A photo of Captain Howard D. Bode, U.S. Navy. Bode was Commanding Officer of *Oklahoma* for only a month.²³



Fig. 20: The capsized *Oklahoma*.²⁴



Fig. 21: A hand-drawn-colored post-battle Japanese damage assessment map of the Pearl Harbor attack (80 cm x 60 cm) was prepared by Mitsuo Fuchida, lead pilot of the attack, and is inscribed with the warning: “Top Secret.” According to Fuchida’s memoirs, the chart was used for his briefing of Emperor Hirohito on 26 December 1941. Fuchida sent the radio signal “Tora! Tora! Tora!”

Illustration from the *Japan Times*, showing a map which fetched \$435,000 in a Christie’s Auction in 2013.²⁵

USS Oklahoma - Reports by Survivors of Pearl Harbor Attack

(These oral reports from that day, which bring this story alive, are from the Naval History and Heritage Command.)²⁶

Commanding Officer, USS *Oklahoma*, Captain Howard D. Bode reported that the:

1. [S]equence of events of the attack of Japanese planes on the U.S.S. *Oklahoma* and other naval units in Pearl Harbor ... [began] about 0750, December 7, 1941: The first indication of the attack was the explosion of bombs dropped at a low altitude (100-150 ft.) on the southwest hangar of Ford Island. Almost simultaneously therewith the ship was struck within a few minutes by **three torpedoes on the port side at frames 25, 35-40 and 115**. Those torpedoes were definitely seen approaching. **The ship began to list to port immediately after the first hit. It heeled to angle of 45 degrees after the third hit. Two or three additional torpedo hits were felt.** Great quantities of oil and water which covered the major portions of the weather decks were forced up by the explosions. **The ship continued to heel rapidly and turned over through an angle of about 135 degrees in about eight to ten minutes.** [Emphasis added.]
2. With the first warning of the attack the call was sounded to man the anti-aircraft battery and immediately thereafter the ship went to general quarters. Although the anti-aircraft battery was manned within a few minutes after the call and the ready ammunition boxes were being opened, because of the rapid heeling of the ship and the oil and water on the decks, it was impossible effectively to service the guns....²⁷

The following are excerpts from reports by three naval officers, a Marine officer, a chief petty officer, and a first class petty officer. Different men had different and conflicting views of the tragic events which were compressed in time and compounded by the violence and trauma of the Sunday morning unexpected attack.

Ensign H. F. Rommel wrote:

The first bombs were from dive-bombers on the hangars at Ford Island. Then a torpedo plane, coming in from over Ford Island, dropped a torpedo at a ship at 10-10 dock. The ship was hit about midships and the explosion seemed upward with many splinters.

I ran aft and passed the word "A cruiser has just been sunk. These are real bombs and real torpedoes. Man the anti-aircraft battery."

The ship listed slowly but steadily. No word was received over the speaker to abandon ship. I escaped via the overhang hatch and was picked up by a battleship motor launch. We continued pulling men out of the water...[Emphasis added.]

Pay Clerk D. L. Westfall wrote:

The word was passed "Away Fire and Rescue Party;" just as I was leaving my room **the second word was passed for all hands to man their General Quarters Stations closely followed by a shock of a hit...time was a few minutes before 8:00 A.M.**

I started for my station in Radio Central; as I was passing along the third deck up a port ammunition passageway, **I felt two more hits. The lights went out in the passageway** except for one battle light and two panel lights in the boat crane machinery space.

By the time I reached the compartment abreast the armory **the ship had picked up a 10-15 list to port**; there were a couple of battle lights on in this compartment. Water and oil were bubbling up

along the junction of the bulkhead and deck of the electrical work shop, port side. Repair personnel were busy closing watertight doors. ...

Radio equipment apparently was out of commission ...About this time **the word came along from man to man to “Abandon Ship”**...after some minutes, Ensign McClelland, who was beside me in the line, said he was feeling faint and then collapsed. I noticed other men dropping around me. I stooped over to pick up Mr. McClelland but when I stooped over I got dizzy and fell. I seemed to be paralyzed from the waist down, had great difficulty breathing, but had enough strength in my arms to drag myself to the ladder and up a couple of steps before collapsing completely...

The action of everyone I observed was cool and purposeful as soon as they fully realized we were actually under attack. The only confusion was occasioned by lack of lighting. My life itself is proof of the courage and disregard of personal danger on the part of unknown shipmates. [Emphasis added.]

Second Lieutenant William G. Muller, Jr., wrote:

I had just returned aboard ship on the 0745 motor boat; the boat came alongside the gangway at approximately 0750. On reaching the Junior Officers' mess the word came over the loud speaker system, **“Air attack, all unengaged personnel seek cover, these are real Japanese bombers.”** I could hardly believe that this was a real attack but the excitement and reality of the voice convinced me to move. I left the mess and started aft, first stopping off at my room to get my pistol. My room is on the starboard side, just aft of the Junior Officers mess. I left my room and went over to the port side to enter the third deck. I finally found an opening in the line and started down the ladder. I had just reached the third deck and was almost opposite the ladder **when the first torpedo hit. The explosion came from the vicinity of the Wardroom and was not a violent one.** The line was still moving down into the third deck and I was opposite the Communication office **when the second torpedo hit. This explosion caused violent repercussions and the whole ship seemed to tremble.** I figured the hit was almost adjacent to where I was standing.

By this time I decided to leave as **water was beginning to flood into the third deck and the ship started listing to port.** I assume there were a couple hundred personnel in that third deck and only a few of us were able to reach a hatchway in time. **Two more torpedo hits** were sustained by the time I was able to work my way back to the hatch I had entered and to get up to the second deck. **The ship was about 35 to port by this time and the decks were too slippery and steep to walk on.** I worked my way to starboard by use of dogs and fittings on the bulkhead. During this time **I heard the last two explosions which were somewhere amidship or aft. There were six torpedo hits that I heard in all.**

With difficulty I made the starboard side and climbed into my room which I knew had an open port. The porthole was almost overhead and I climbed through it, **slid down the side which inclined about 50** and jumped into the water. [Emphasis added.]

Ensign J. M. Doherty wrote:

When the word was passed to man battle stations I left the J.O. [Junior Officers] Mess for the third deck. On the way down the ladder, the first bomb or torpedo hit. Before I ever got to the Communications Office, oil was pouring into the compartment A-122-P from a hole near frame 60. **We had no time to set Zed [“Zed” or “Condition Zed” refers to the closure of all watertight hatches and doors] and I guess there were four or five hits in about five minutes.** The ship listed to port and oil was knee deep on the third deck after the first five to seven minutes. [Emphasis added.]

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Shipfitter, First Class, W. T. Link wrote:

Time was short and in such time word was passed, “Japanese Airplane Attack--All unengaged personnel seek cover on the third deck--Set condition Zed--Man your Battle Stations.”

By sending the men to seek cover on the third deck, jammed ladders prevented quick access to repair stations and also crowded repair stations. ...

I never did hear “Abandon ship” and Repair One did not all escape... [Emphasis added.]

Perhaps the most brutal account concerned the loss of more than a quarter of the men lost with *Oklahoma*. Chief Machinist I. M. Hull wrote about 125 men remained in an air pocket in the shipfitters shop, but when the space was opened, water rushed in as air rushed out. Only one man of this group saved himself by swimming to the CPO [Chief Petty Officer] pantry on the third deck and out through an open porthole.

The lights were out. ... **The ship had listed 90 to port** so I tried to swim out through the same hatch but was washed back again and landed in the C100s along the Conveyor. I dogged the door down to the shipfitter shop. **The ship listed another 90** thus being all the way over. **We had about 125 men in the C100s. After 4 hours, the men tore the door off the shipfitter shop. Water and oil came into the C100s** and rose to waist level. I swam to the CPO pantry and out a port hole. **None came with me. I left the ship about 1300, 5 hours after the ship sank.**²⁸ [Emphasis added.]

Crewmen were trapped within the capsized hull, some survived for days within air pockets. Julio DeCastro, a Hawaiian civilian yard worker, organized a team that saved 32 *Oklahoma* sailors in the days immediately following.

Salvage and Wreck Removal

Wreck removal of *Oklahoma* commenced on 15 July 1942 under Captain F.H. Whitaker, U.S. Navy and a team from the Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard. In 1943 she was righted. Unlike the other battleships - except *Arizona* - that were salvaged following Pearl Harbor, *Oklahoma* was too heavily damaged to be returned to service. She was decommissioned and stricken on 1 September 1944, a year and a day before the surrender of Japan. Eventually she was stripped of all remaining armaments and superstructure before being sold for scrap in 1946. The hulk sank in a storm while being towed from Oahu to a breakers yard in San Francisco Bay on 17 May 1947.²⁹ *Oklahoma* received a single battle star.



Fig. 22: Salvage operations on *Oklahoma*. The attack killed 429 crewmen.



Fig. 23: Aloysius Schmitt, the chaplain, helped other sailors escape the sinking ship through port holes. (The Washington Post)²⁸

Both images from Dependent web site³⁰



Fig. 24: A commemorative cover for the refloating of *Oklahoma* with Locy Type 2z cancel, a mute mark from Fleet Air Base, Hawaii, and a censor marking. The cover is autographed by USS *Utah*'s final commanding officer, Rear Admiral Solomon Silas "Little Izzy" Isquith, U.S. Navy, who received the Navy Cross for his heroism on 7 December 1941 and subsequently commanded the salvage force at Pearl Harbor.

Memorial and Reinternment

In 2003, a part of the fire control tower support mast from *Oklahoma* was recovered from the bottom of Pearl Harbor. In 2007, it was delivered to the Muskogee War Memorial Park where the 45 foot long, 22,000 pound, barnacle-encrusted mast section is now on permanent display. On 7 December 2007, the 66th anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor, a memorial for the men killed in the attack was dedicated on Ford Island.

Only 35 of the 429 sailors and Marines who died with *Oklahoma* were identified in the years following the attack. The remains of 388 unidentified sailors and Marines were first interred as unknowns in the Nu'uano and Halawa cemeteries, but were all disinterred in 1947 in an unsuccessful attempt to identify more personnel. In 1950, all unidentified remains from *Oklahoma* were reburied in 61 caskets in 45 graves at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific in Honolulu.

In April 2015, the Department of Defense announced that the remains of unidentified *Oklahoma* crewmen would be exhumed with the goal of returning identified remains to their families. The process began in June 2015 – using dental and medical records and gathering DNA samples from the crew's relatives. Some 61 rusty coffins from 45 graves were found each to contain several bundles of bones, often mixed up. A recent *Washington Post* article explained:

Their bones are brown with age after 50 years in the ground and, before that, months entombed in their sunken battleship beneath the oily waters of Pearl Harbor. Legs, arms, ribs, vertebrae. Some have blue tags tied with string, identifying the type of bone. Some have beige tags, indicating that experts also want samples for DNA testing.”...

FIRST WARSHIP SUNK 7 DEC 1941: USS *OKLAHOMA* ~Capt. Lawrence B. Brennan, (Ret.)

In the immediate aftermath of Pearl Harbor, the handling of the crew's remains suffered error, confusion and poor record keeping. Most were retrieved during the long salvage operation, especially after the *Oklahoma* was righted in 1943, but the bodies had been reduced to skeletons. By 1944, the jumbled remains, still saturated with fuel oil, had been buried as unknowns in Hawaii. ...

Father Schmitt's corroded chalice and water-stained Latin prayer book were found in the wreckage...

[Now] the bones have been exhumed from a cemetery in Hawaii to be brought to a new laboratory in Nebraska for scientists to begin the task. The goal is to send the remains of those who died back home. "It's important for the families," said Carrie Brown, an anthropologist with a newly created agency, the DPAA [Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency], which is responsible for accounting for those captured, killed or missing in action.

Debra Prince Zinni, a forensic anthropologist involved in the project, said they now had the techniques needed to carry out the project, but admitted it would take years to complete...⁵³

In January 2016, the Department of Defense "announced positive identification of five USS *Oklahoma* sailors: ... Petty Officer 1st Class Vernon T. Luke, 43, of Green Bay, Wisc., Chief Petty Officer Duff Gordon, 52, of Hudson, Wisc., Chief Petty Officer Albert E. Hayden, 44, of Mechanicsville, Md.; Ensign Lewis S. Stockdale, 27, of Anaconda, Mont.; and Seaman 2nd Class Dale F. Pearce, 21, of Labette County, Kan."³²

Avoidable Fatalities

While neither loss nor casualties could have been avoided, the excessive number of deaths could have been reduced by strict adherence to sound policies and practices. The casualty lists were expanded because of the failure to perceive the risks of combat (an all too frequent lack of situational awareness) when the warning signs were obvious.

War warnings³³ preceded the loss of *Oklahoma* by more than a week but inexplicably she was scheduled for a routine inspection on Monday, 8 December 1941. As a result the ship's bilges had been opened and the flooding caused by multiple torpedo hits on the port side caused *Oklahoma* to capsize rapidly, trapping many sailors as she quickly capsized. It is questionable if *Oklahoma* could have been "buttoned up" on the morning of 7 December or if counter-flooding could have been successful in the 12 minutes between General Quarters and capsizing but there was no realistic chance of remaining afloat in the condition in which she found herself, open internally and heavily damaged on the port side by multiple torpedo hits. The same is true for the demilitarized *Utah*. Captain Bode's 20 December 1941 report described his ship's material condition.³⁴

10. Condition Zed was being set. Ship, third deck and below was practically in condition Yoke, at the beginning of the attack. Not possible to determine exact degree of closure under present conditions. Situation (rapid flooding) did not permit of correcting heel or trim or other measures listed.³⁵

These unseaworthy and “unbatteworthy” conditions existed not only in *Oklahoma*. Rear Admiral Samuel Eliot Morison, U.S. Naval Reserve (Ret.), normally cautious in criticism of warriors, wrote:

California, flagship of Vice Admiral W. S. Pye ...although the last of the battleships to be hit...was less prepared than any for the blows. Her material condition as to watertight integrity was bad; [fn. 48] It is a well-known fact, although never publicly admitted, that battleships carrying admirals’ flags, although taut and smart in appearance, were commonly inferior to others in readiness and material condition because (1) of the practice of ‘marking them up’-that is, overlooking shortcomings at material inspections in order not to mortify or annoy the admiral; and because (2) admirals and their staffs demanded lots of “spit and polish,” turning out cocktail tables and the like, which took men from important tasks. In the case of *California*, a material inspection was about to be made, which may explain but cannot excuse the fact, admitted by the commanding officer, that six manhole covers to the double bottoms were off, and the securing nuts of 12 others were slacked away. [Citations omitted.] Too many of her officers were ashore; and some of those on board failed to act quickly or intelligently. There was a delay in sounding General Quarters and ordering Condition Zed set.³⁶

Driving home the lack of foresight and critical thinking which permeated the CINCUS staff, Morison further quoted the Commanding Officer’s Report of 26 January 1942 that *California*’s “progressive flooding was caused by a combination of battle damage, **non-closure of watertight fittings**, and rupture of ventilation ducts.” [Emphasis added.]³⁷ The loss of major ships due to refusal to counter-flood continued into 1942. On 9 February 1942, USS *Lafayette* (ex SS *Normandie*) suffered a fire while being converted to a high speed troop transport in New York Harbor. The ship’s fire-fighting system had been disconnected. The New York Fire Department pumped thousands of tons of water to douse the fires above *Lafayette*’s main deck. The ship developed a list to port. Vice Admiral Adolphus A. Andrews, U.S. Navy, Commander, Eastern Sea Frontier as well as Commandant, Third Naval District, rejected recommendations by many including the ship’s designer Vladimir Yourkevitch, to counter-flood. *Lafayette* lost stability and capsized at her berth on the Hudson (North) River. Between 17:45 and 18:00 on 9 February 1942, authorities considered the fire under control, and began winding down operations until 20:00. Water entering the ship through submerged openings and flowing to the lower decks negated efforts to counter-flood, and *Lafayette*’s list gradually increased to port. Shortly after midnight, Admiral Andrews ordered *Lafayette* abandoned, and the ship continued to list, a process hastened by the 6,000 tons of water that had been played on her. *Lafayette* eventually capsized during the mid-watch (0245) on 10 February, and came to rest on her port side at an angle of approximately 80 degrees.³⁸

A generation later, Navy nearly lost a super-carrier under construction at the New York Naval Ship Yard in Brooklyn. Fifty yard workers were killed and more than 330 injured when on 19 December 1960, a fire erupted on board the nearly completed *Constellation* (CVA 64) which was fitting out. The New York City Fire Department extinguished the fires over 17 hours. The hull did not capsize because, in part, there was counter flooding to keep her stable.³⁹

The failure to prepare the capital ships of the U.S. Fleet for combat in view of the war warnings demonstrates an unfathomable degree of lack of situational awareness and near total absence of a warrior’s ethos and the recognition of the risk of battle.

FIRST WARSHIP SUNK 7 DEC 1941: USS *OKLAHOMA* ~Capt. Lawrence B. Brennan, (Ret.)

By contrast, the following Rule of Engagement was promulgated on board USS *Enterprise* (CV 6), at the same time while she was delivering aircraft to Wake Island:

U.S.S. ENTERPRISE

At Sea, November 28, 1941

BATTLE ORDER NUMBER ONE

1. The ENTERPRISE is now operating under war conditions.
2. At any time, day or night, we must be ready for instant action.
3. Hostile submarines may be encountered.
4. The importance of every officer and man being specially alert and vigilant while on watch at his battle station must be fully realized by all hands.
5. The failure of one man to carry out his assigned task promptly, particularly the lookouts, those manning the batteries, and all those on watch on the deck, might result in great loss of life and even loss of the ship.
6. The Captain is confident all hands will prove equal to any emergency that may develop.
7. It is part of the tradition of our Navy that, when put to the test, all hands keep cool, keep their heads, and FIGHT.
8. Steady nerves and stout hearts are needed now.

G. D. MURRAY,
Captain, U.S. Navy, Commanding

Approved: November 28, 1941.
W. F. HALSEY
Vice Admiral, U.S. Navy,
Commander Aircraft, Battle Force⁴⁰

Oklahoma and *Indianapolis* would doubtless have suffered far fewer losses if these guidelines had been followed.



Illustration from the National Postal Museum
Fig. 25: Oklahoma on its side, after 7 December 1941.

Remaining Artifacts

The National Postal Museum at the Smithsonian houses some remarkable artifacts from Oklahoma, relating to the attack on Pearl:

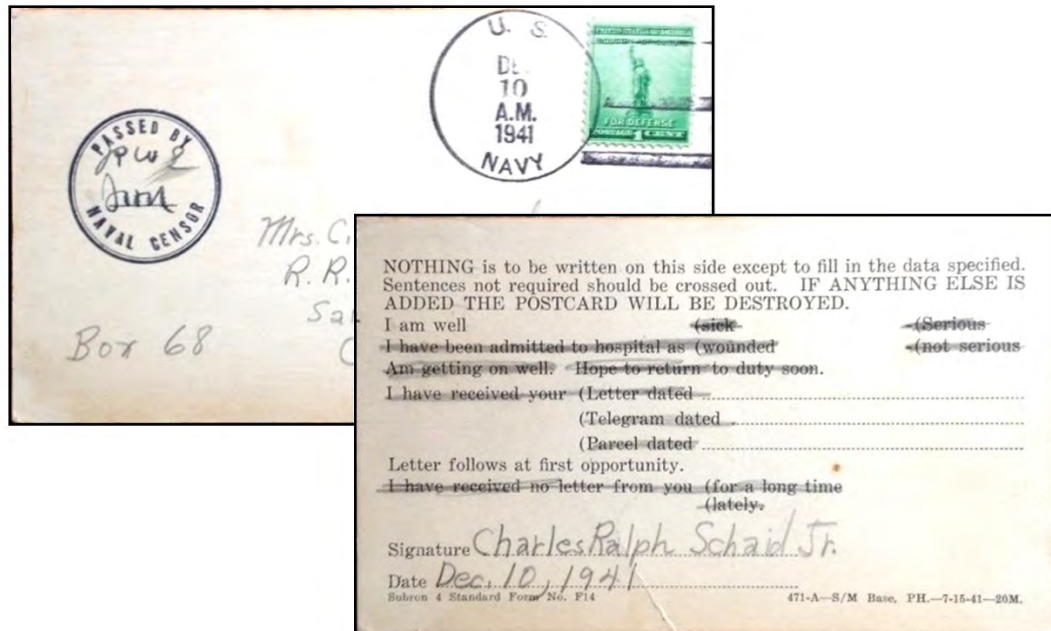


Fig. 26: A registered handstamp for Oklahoma, bearing the Dec. 6, 1941 date.



Fig. 27: A strike from this handstamp (Locy Type 9v) autographed by Ensign Herbert F. Rommel, USNR.

“I am well” cards were issued to sailors after the bombing at Pearl, so sailors could let their families know they were OK. An example is shown in *Figure 28*.



*Fig. 28: A regulation post card issued to survivors at Pearl to advise their families of their condition. The card, with a Locy Type 3z cancel, was sent by Musician First Class Charles Ralph Schaid, Jr.(1915-2003) who was member of Oklahoma’s band. He served in the Navy between 1936 and 1946.. N.B. This card was sent at the one cent rate, prior to “Free Mail”.*⁴¹

ENDNOTES:

- ¹ Copyright 2016 by Lawrence B. Brennan. All moral and legal rights reserved. This may not be copied, republished, or distributed without the express written consent of the copyright holder.
- ² Captain Herbert Fox Rommel, Jr., U.S. Navy (1915-2007) commanded five commissioned ships and the Washington Navy Yard. He enlisted in the U.S. Naval Reserve and then was commissioned and called to active duty in 1939. He was a Turret Captain in *Oklahoma*. After *Oklahoma*, he was transferred to USS *Gridley* (DD 380) where he served for nearly three years ultimately as the ship's Executive Officer, ending the war as a Lieutenant Commander in command of the destroyer, USS *Wilkes* (DD 441).
- ³ There are two action reports submitted by the Commanding Officer, Captain Howard D. Bode, U.S. Navy. The reports are dated 18 December 1941. http://www.wwiarchives.net/servlet/action/doc/Ar_bb37_12181941 and 20 December 1941 http://www.wwiarchives.net/servlet/action/doc/Ar_bb37_12201941.
- ⁴ Laid down on 31 March 1930, USS *Indianapolis* (CA35) was the second of two *Portland*-class cruisers. Built at the New York Shipbuilding Company, *Indianapolis* was launched on 7 November 1931. Commissioned at the Philadelphia Navy Yard the following November. *Indianapolis* fought throughout the war in the Pacific suffering damage from a kamikaze. She returned to the West Coast in 1945 and in that summer she sailed alone to deliver critical parts of the first nuclear weapon to Tinian. Around 0015 on 30 July, *I-58* hit *Indianapolis* with two torpedoes on her starboard bow and amidship. Fatally damaged, the cruiser continued ahead but sank in 12 minutes. Of the approximately 880 men who went into the water, fewer than 320 were rescued with four of those later dying from their wounds.
- ⁵ Charles B. McVay, Jr. was an admiral in the United States Navy who had more than 40 years of commissioned service (1890-1932). McVay was born on 9 September 1868 in Edgeworth, Pennsylvania. He was an 1890 graduate of the United States Naval Academy. During the Spanish–American War (1898), Ensign McVay served on board USS *Amphitrite* (BM-2), a double-turret monitor which patrolled the waters off Cuba, Puerto Rico, and Key West and participated in the shelling of San Juan in May 1898. In 1908, after serving as a navigator in USS *Hartford* and USS *Alabama* and a tour at the U.S. Naval Academy, McVay was given command of USS *Yankton*. During World War I, McVay commanded three vessels, an armored cruiser and two battleships: USS *Saratoga*, (ACR 2), USS *New Jersey* (BB 16), and USS *Oklahoma*. After the war, McVay served as a commander in the Yangtze Patrol. In 1929, he was promoted to Admiral and commanded the U.S. Asiatic Fleet. He retired in October 1932 and died on 28 October 1949.
- ⁶ *Dictionary of American Fighting Ships* online at <http://www.hazegray.org/danfs/battleship/bb31.htm>.
- ⁷ Cutler, Thomas, "Lest We Forget" *US Naval Institute Proceedings*, June 2004, Vol. 130/6 1,216. <http://www.usni.org/magazines/proceedings/2004-06/lest-we-forget-peter-tomich-uss-toledo-ca-133> Chief Tomich was honored by the destroyer escort USS *Tomich* (DE 242).
- ⁸ This article deals with the history of USS *Oklahoma* and the events immediately surrounding her loss. It is beyond the scope of this piece to address the strategic and tactical events which contributed to the success of the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor, such as the failure of Navy leadership in Washington to immediately communicate the scheduled delivery of a message to the Secretary of State by the Japanese ambassador at midday along with the destruction of equipment at the Japanese embassy (obtained as a result of breaking Japanese code), the U.S. Army radar observers' failure to recognize the Japanese in-bound strike on Oahu, the failure of U.S. Army Air Corps to conduct proper patrols to search for Japanese ships and aircraft, and the failure of local naval commanders at Pearl Harbor to report the early morning attack on Japanese "midget submarines" at the entrance to Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941 by USS *Ward* (DD 139).
- ⁹ This article reproduces information from Wikipedia at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USS_Oklahoma_%28BB-37%29, which in turn depends heavily on information on the DANFS (Dictionary of American Fighting Ships) site at <http://web.archive.org/web/20070911120713/http://www.history.navy.mil/danfs/o2/oklahoma.htm>. As *DANFS* is a work of the U.S. government, its content is in the public domain, and the text is often quoted verbatim in other works (including in some cases Wikipedia articles). Many websites organized by former and active crew members of U.S. Navy vessels include a copy of their ships' *DANFS* entries.
- ¹⁰ A Library of Congress Photo (<http://loc.gov/pictures/resource/ggbain.15699/>), reproduced on Wikipedia at https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/1/15/Oklahoma_BB37_5126122996_044c2569b0_o.jpg.
- ¹¹ Roger Welles (1862–1932) was a U. S. naval officer, the first commanding officer of *Oklahoma* and appointed the first "Navy Mayor" of San Diego. Welles gave 33 years of service in a variety of billets, eventually being promoted to Rear-Admiral. As an ensign he was engaged in surveys in Alaska, where he made a study of native people culture and language in his spare time. He served two years in the post of Special Counsel to the World's

Columbian Exposition in Chicago, and was awarded by its board for research on Orinoco River Indians. A former commander of the Naval Training Center in Newport, his command of *Oklahoma* was a short period of time mainly involving the command as a training ship. This was because the oil-fired boilers that she used were not able to be fueled in England, as German U-boats had drained their supply. After he turned over command to Rear Admiral Spencer K. Wood he was appointed Director of the Office of Naval Intelligence (April 1917–January 1919). Welles married Harriet Deen Gardner on 17 October 1908, who followed her husband's ship to Asia and later published accounts of journeys in *Scribner's Magazine* and the popular book *Anchors Aweigh*. He was entered on the Navy's Retired List on 7 December 1926, at the age of 64; he died in New York on 26 April 1932.

- ¹² From Arlington National Cemetery web site at <http://www.arlingtoncemetery.net/cbmcvayjr.htm>.
- ¹³ A Wikipedia photo at https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:USS_Oklahoma_BB-37.jpg.
- ¹⁴ This scan by Jon Burdett, in the Naval Cover Museum at http://www.navalcovermuseum.org/wiki/images/7/70/JonBurdett_oklahoma_bb37_19210103.jpg.
- ¹⁵ Simpson, Michael (2004). *A life of Admiral of the Fleet Andrew Cunningham. A Twentieth-century Naval Leader*. Routledge Ed., p. 74. ISBN 978-0-7146-5197-2.
- ¹⁶ Official U.S. Navy photograph 80-G-387565.
- ¹⁷ She was sunk on 7 December 1944 by a kamikaze.
- ¹⁸ Morison, Rear Admiral Samuel Eliot, *History of United States Naval Operations In World War II, Volume III, The Rising Sun in the Pacific, 1931-April 1942* (Boston: 1948 Little, Brown & Co.) pp. 95-98.
- ¹⁹ The Horse's Mouth at <http://horsesmouth.typepad.com/hm/2009/12/december-7-1941.html>.
- ²⁰ Original diagram from <http://navsource.org/archives/01/037/013719a.jpg>.
- ²¹ Oklahoma History at <http://www.okhistory.org/kids/usshistory2>.
- ²² <http://web.mst.edu/~rogersda/umrcourses/ge342/Salvage%20of%20USS%20Oklahoma.pdf>. It was incredible after the War Warning of November 1941 to schedule a routine inspection of *Oklahoma*, or any other combatant vessel. But that was precisely what was ordered by Vice Admiral William S. Pye, U.S. Navy, Commander, Battle Force, United States Fleet. Interestingly, Admiral Pye was Acting Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Fleet between the relief of Admiral Kimmel and the arrival of Admiral Nimitz for less than two weeks 18-31 December 1941. His most memorable act was to recall the relief force sent to relieve Wake Island. Subsequently, Admiral Pye became Commander, Task Force ONE consisting of the remaining battleships in the Pacific Ocean which were based on the West Coast. He was relieved in October 1942 and the following month he became President, Naval War College, continuing on the retired list and served until after the Japanese surrender when he was relieved by Admiral Raymond A. Spruance, U.S. Navy.
- ²³ Photo from <http://uboat.net/allies/commanders/4343.html>.
- ²⁴ Wikipedia article using Nara photo 295984 at <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/295984>.
- ²⁵ <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2013/12/07/national/japanese-pearl-harbor-attack-map-fetches-425000-at-u-s-auction/#.VmWrlcOFOpp>.
- ²⁶ Naval History & Command web site at <http://www.history.navy.mil/research/library/online-reading-room/title-list-alphabetically/p/pearl-harbor-survivor-reports/uss-oklahoma-reports-survivor-pearl-harbor.html>.
- ²⁷ <http://www.history.navy.mil/research/archives/digitized-collections/action-reports/wwii-pearl-harbor-attack/ships-m-r/uss-oklahoma-bb-37-action-report-07-dec-1941.html>.
- ²⁸ <http://www.history.navy.mil/research/library/online-reading-room/title-list-alphabetically/p/pearl-harbor-survivor-reports/uss-oklahoma-reports-survivor-pearl-harbor.html>.
- ²⁹ Oklahoma History at <http://www.okhistory.org/kids/usshistory2>.
- ³⁰ <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/uss-oklahoma-the-first-us-victims-of-the-second-world-war-are-finally-coming-home-a6771916.html>.
- ³¹ "USS Oklahoma: The first US victims of the Second World War are finally coming home", *Washington Post* <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/uss-oklahoma-the-first-us-victims-of-the-second-world-war-are-finally-coming-home-a6771916.html>.
- ³² <http://www.jsonline.com/news/wisconsin/two-state-sailers-who-died-on-uss-oklahoma-identified-b99656307z1-366110821.html>.
- ³³ <http://www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar/PTO/EastWind/CNO-411127.html>.
4 November 1941
FROM: Chief of Naval Operations
ACTION: CinCAF, CinCPAC, Com 11, Com 12, Com 13, Com 15
INFO: Spenavo London Cinclant

242005

Chances of favorable outcome of negotiations with Japan very doubtful. This situation coupled with statements of Japanese Government and movements their naval and military forces indicate in **our opinion that a surprise aggressive movement in any direction including attack on Philippines or Guam is a possibility.** Chief of Staff has seen this dispatch concurs and requests action aades [addressees] to inform senior Army officers their areas. Utmost secrecy necessary in order not to complicate an already tense situation or precipitate Japanese action. Guam will be informed separately.

28 November 1941

FROM: Chief of Naval Operations

ACTION: Com Pnncf, Com Psncf

INFO: Cincpac Com Pncf

Refer to my 272338. Army has sent following to commander western defense command.

Negotiations with Japan appear to be terminated to all practical purposes with only the barest possibilities that the Japanese Government might come back and offer to continue. Japanese future action unpredictable but **hostile action possible at any moment.** If hostilities cannot repeat not be avoided the **United States desires that Japan commit the first overt act. This policy should not repeat not be construed as restricting you to a course of action that might jeopardize your defense. Prior to hostile Japanese action you are directed to undertake such reconnaissance and other measures as you deem necessary but these measure should be carried out so as not repeat not to alarm civil population or disclose intent. Report measures taken.** A separate message in being sent to G-2, Ninth Corps Area re subversive activities in the United States. Should hostilities occur you will carry out the tasks assigned in Rainbow five so far as they pertain to Japan. Limit dissemination of this highly secret information to minimum essential officers. Unquote. WPL 52 is not applicable to Pacific area and will not be placed in effect in that area except as now in force in southeast Pacific sub area and Panama naval coastal frontier. **Undertake no offensive action until Japan has committed an overt act.** Be prepared to carry out tasks assigned in WPL-46, so far as they apply to Japan in case hostilities occur. [Emphasis added.]

<http://www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar/PTO/EastWind/CNO-411127.html>

<http://www.cv6.org/1941/btlord1/btlord1.html>.

³⁴ Since *Oklahoma* “was practically in condition YOKE,” it is clear that Condition YOKE had not been set. Rather, she remained in the lower state of readiness, Condition XRAY which provided the least watertight integrity and the greatest ease of access throughout the ship. It is set when the threat to the ship is minimal. Condition XRAY is set during working hours when the ship is in port and there is no danger of attack or from weather. The minimum degree of tightness permitted on an operational ship is condition XRAY. When condition XRAY is set, all fittings marked with a black X are closed. <http://www.usshancockcv19.com/naulmaterialconditions.html>.

³⁵ <http://www.history.navy.mil/research/archives/digitized-collections/action-reports/wwii-pearl-harbor-attack/ships-m-r/uss-oklahoma-bb-37-action-report-07-dec-1941.html>.

³⁶ Morison, Rear Admiral Samuel Eliot, *History of United States Naval Operations In World War II, Volume III, The Rising Sun in the Pacific, 1931-April 1942* (Boston: 1948 Little, Brown & Co.) pp. 111-12.

³⁷ Morison, Rear Admiral Samuel Eliot, *History of United States Naval Operations In World War II, Volume III, The Rising Sun in the Pacific, 1931-April 1942* (Boston: 1948 Little, Brown & Co.) p. 113.

<http://www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar/PTO/EastWind/CNO-411127.html>.

³⁸ Ardman, Harvey, *Normandie: Her Life & Times*, Franklin Watts, 1985; Maxtone-Graham, *The Only Way to Cross*. New York: Collier Books, 1972; www.supsalv.org/SalvReports/USS%20Lafayette%20Salvage.pdf.

³⁹ USS CONSTELLATION (CVA 64) FIRE http://bldg92.org/blog/USS_Constellation_Fire/N.Y./Region | NYC; Haberman, Clyde, “Recalling a Brooklyn Disaster Otherwise Forgotten”, *New York Times*, December 20, 2010. http://www.nytimes.com/2010/12/21/nyregion/21nyc.html?_r=0.

⁴⁰ <http://www.cv6.org/1941/btlord1/btlord1.html>.

⁴¹ From the U.S. Militaria Form blogsite at <http://www.usmilitariaforum.com/forums/index.php?/topic/168850-1941-pearl-harbor-postal-history-post-yours/>.

N.J. LOCAL POSTS: Jabez Fearey's Mustang Express, Old and New Theories

By Larry Lyons

This is the eighth of a series of articles on New Jersey's local stamps. Local Posts were established as early as the 1840s by enterprising private individuals and companies who carried letters within city limits – including to and from Post Offices. They flourished for a number of years until they were finally outlawed by the government. The author, Larry Lyons, is a noted authority on United States local stamps, and is the editor-in-chief of “The Penny Post,” the prize winning journal of The Carriers and Locals Society. We appreciate his contributions.

In 2005 Bruce Mosher wrote a deeply researched and extensive article on this company.¹ In his article Mosher concluded in 2005 that the *Scott Catalogue* date which was then given for this company as 1870 was not correct and should be revised to be 1887. Presently the *Scott Catalogue* gives the date of this company as 1887 (?) probably based on Mosher's conclusion. In 2002 Bruce Mosher published his epic “*Catalogue of Private Express labels and stamps.*”² On page 93 of his book, Mosher says “Jabez Fearey & Co.'s Mustang Express (1870) See Fearey & Co.'s Mustang Express. On page 73 of his book Mosher lists (Jabez) Fearey & Co.'s Mustang Express (1887) and states:

Local private mail (?) express company that was operated in the Newark, N.J. Metropolitan area by Jabez Fearey, the local Pacific and Atlantic Telegraph Co. agent. This label (sometimes called a stamp with a reported value of 5¢) is illustrated and priced in the local stamps section of *Scott's Specialized Catalogue of U.S. Stamps.*³

I have some new thoughts concerning this company and some newer information. But first I need to state what we know from earlier writings.

Dr. W.H. Mitchell⁴

Some credence should be given to a contemporary writing about details concerning a company. The trick is the interpretation of those details. In October 1887, Dr. W.H. Mitchell wrote the following:

The city of Newark, N.J., like all large cities, finds the District Telegraph system to be of much use to its inhabitants and business men, and this want is met by

FEAREY'S MESSENGER DISPATCH.

This dispatch has its wires and district telegraph instruments, for the use of the patrons and is also connected with the Public Telephone Co. of Newark, the N. Y. & N. J. Telephone Co. and the Western Union Telegraph Co. The dispatch has its office with the Western Union, wherever its offices are located in city limits.

NJ LOCALS: Jabez Fearey's Mustang Express ~ Larry Lyons

The suburbs of Newark, being somewhat scattered, and having much business to do between them and the city, the proprietors, during this spring (1887) procured from the west, 50 Mustang ponies. The scenes that followed when the messenger boys were mounted, baffles description. The people were treated to a Wild West show on Broad St. daily, minus an admission fee.

Tuesday, June 21st, 1887, a simple adhesive made its appearance with a value of five cents, although there is no value expressed on the stamp, and the issue of this stamp brings us to

THE "MUSTANG EXPRESS."

Jabez Fearey & Co., Proprietors, a printed slip accompanies each message, which is signed by the recipient of the letter giving time of delivery. These slips are returned to the office and preserved.

The back of the printed slip gives the fees for city service.

"All letters or parcels delivered within one mile from Broad and Market streets, 10c. An answer, 5c. extra."

"All letters or parcels delivered to points more than one mile from Broad and Market streets, 20c. Answer 5c. extra."

"Messengers will be hired out by the hour at 20c. per hour. Special rates for New York, and points outside of city limits."

The messengers of this post found their way to all the surrounding towns and villages, Woodside, Bellville, Irvington, the Osanges[sic], Roseville, East Newark, Harrison, Waverly, Elizabeth, etc., and to New York.

It may be well to mention here that there has been for years a regular messenger who carried letters between Newark and New York, charging 10c. per letter, and 5c. to wait for an answer, but this has no connection with the Mustang Express.

The dispatch transacts all the regular business of a District Telegraph Co., having police and firemen on call as well as messengers, and as Newark is an important manufacturing city, and has its own suburbs, most of the surrounding country does business in Newark, and do not depend on the metropolis.

The stamps were in use the last I was in Newark, and are yet, for all I know to the contrary, though how long they will be, or if they conflict with postal regulations or not, I do not know; but I understand that when they have no "*face value*" they are all "O.K." as far as the Government definition of stamps goes. These labels [sic] not having a moneyed value, are not considered as stamps by the post office authorities.

Dr. W.H. Mitchell.

There is a lot of good contemporary information in Dr. Mitchell's report. My first question was "why did Fearey's Mustang Express need 50 horses?" If they were only doing metropolitan letter and parcel delivery in Newark a handful of horses would have been plenty. The answer was given by Mitchell when he stated at least ten surrounding towns to be serviced by the messengers.

My second question was "what are the rates?" Again Mitchell gave the answer as "all letters or parcels delivered within one mile from Broad and Market streets, 10 cents. An answer, 5 cents extra." "More than one mile 20 cents with 5 cents extra for a return answer. Special rates for long distances were 20 cents per hour." Mitchell also states that these rates were chosen to equal those of another "regular messenger."

My next question was "what kind of a business was Fearey's Mustang Express operating?" My answer, based on the year 1887, it has to be a special messenger service, or an express service. The messages would include telegrams. At this date he could not operate a local letter service. He would have been shut down if he tried to do that. Augustus Peck and Thomas Jacques established the City Letter Express business in Newark in June of 1856. They lasted about 9 months. Rogers Penny Post also tried to operate a local letter post in Newark in April-July of 1856. Both posts only operated to bring letters to the post office. Both quickly succumbed as the government expanded their services for letter pick-up. By 1887 the government post office was fully functional and would not tolerate an upstart local post attempting to carry mail. It's also quite likely the express service was all packages, some containing letters, which required a large contingent of horses and riders.

What was the purpose of the stamps? First I'm using the word stamps because they had a fixed cost of 5 cents. (See *Figure 1*.) The stamps would pre-pay for the package delivery and could also pre-pay 5 cents for an answer. No multiple stamps on packages or bulky mail have survived because of the nature of what they were—wrapping on packages which would be discarded. Only one example of a 5-cent stamp on an envelope is reported and this would more than likely be an answer to what was delivered. It would contain a receipt or an answer to a question, possibly concerning when to ship again and what quantity.

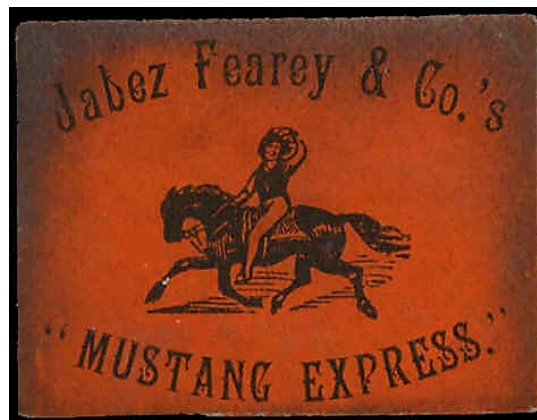


Fig. 1: The undenominated, black on red glazed paper, 66L1, Jabez Fearey's Mustang Express stamp from Newark.

NJ LOCALS: Jabez Fearey's Mustang Express ~ Larry Lyons

This could be as simple as a card to fill out. This would not necessitate detaining the horsemen from his other deliveries. It could also be an answer to a telegram. These were probably mostly discarded when they were received by the original sender which is why they don't exist today. The one recorded example could be representative of 100-200 such return messages. (See *Figure 2*.) The cover shown here has a certificate of genuineness from the Philatelic Foundation, PF 493692 dated January 28, 2011. The certificate states the envelope has either contents or docketing of June 16, 1887. This is five days before Mitchell noted an appearance of the adhesive. The cover is ex-Ferrari.

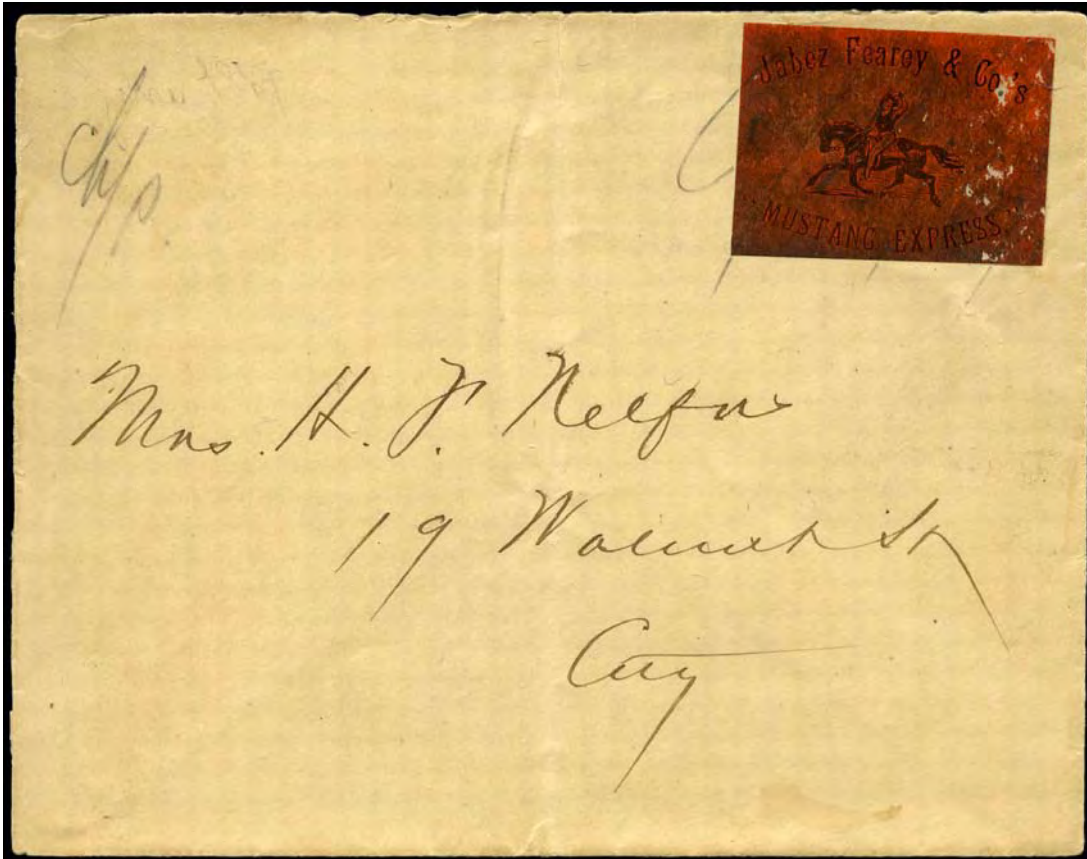


Fig. 2: The only certified Jabez Fearey's Mustang Express stamp, 66L1, on cover. PF 493692, January 28, 2011.

How Long Did Fearey's Service Last?

The horses were procured in the spring of 1887. Jabez Fearey died November 16, 1890 at Matawan, N.J.⁵ He was local manager of the Postal Telegraph Co. in Newark at the time of his death. Fearey's obituary says "He was proprietor of the Mustang Express of Newark, a local post that run [sic] in that city several years ago..." This past tense description, if accurate, indicates that Fearey's Mustang Express may not have lasted into 1888, since three years ago (i.e. 1887) would seem to be a reasonable minimal interpretation of "several years ago."⁶ If this is true the company operated for approximately 7-8 months or less. This would also account for the lack of surviving examples.

What is the significance of referring to Fearey's company as a local post? Even Dr. Mitchell referred to Fearey Express as a "post" but he also acknowledged it as a "dispatch of the District Telegraph Co."⁷ Hussey's in New York is classified as a "local post" but we know their operation existed to deliver messages, notices, insurance bills and instant messages, not regular mail.

Additional Information

The cover shown in *Figure 3* has perplexed students for decades. It is U277 postal stationery issued in 1884-86 which would have been available in 1887. The indecipherable date could be June 27, 1887 at 3 P.M. This could be a drop letter at the Newark Post Office. The Jabez Fearey stamp is problematic. The cancel is unknown and has been called a counterfeit cancel. It does not tie the stamp to the cover. The PF certificate number PF 31035 was issued on Sept. 8, 1969 and states "The Scott 66L1 stamp did not originate on this cover." Someone would have to fully explain this cover to give it a chance. The gum on the stamp could be examined scientifically to see if a negative opinion could be corrected. Other scientific testing could also be of use.



Fig. 3: Postal stationery U277 with a Newark circular datestamp of June 27, 1887, 3 P.M. The Jabez Fearey stamp is not tied to the cover by a cancel. The cancel has been considered to be counterfeit. PF 31,035, September 8, 1969.

NJ LOCALS: Jabez Fearey's Mustang Express ~ Larry Lyons

The cover shown in *Figure 4* is a counterfeit. The stamp on the cover is a counterfeit with differences from the original. The paper of the stamp is light yellow instead of the red glazed of the genuine stamp.



Figure 4. A counterfeit Jabez Fearey stamp on a cover. The stamp has several differences from the genuine stamp and is printed on yellow paper instead of red glazed paper.

Back to the Start Date

The notice shown below in *Figure 5* for the Pacific & Atlantic Telegraph Company says “FEAREY’S” and 180½ Market Street. The manuscript date in the middle of the form is June 10, 1871. This notice may have resulted in confusion as to the start date for Fearey’s Mustang Express. The Mustang Express notation is non-contemporary. This notice concerns telegrams and does not have a relation to the start of the messenger and parcel delivery business which Fearey started in the spring of 1887.

The Knapp notes say the following:

“In 1870 Jabez Fearey and his brother resided at No. 23 Orleans Street, Newark, New Jersey and established (A) business at No 180½ Market Street.

At about this time, Mr. Fearey was the agent of the Pacific Atlantic Telegraph Company at the above address, which was taken over by the Western Union Telegraph Co. in about 1881.”

This author concludes Jabez Fearey was in the telegraph business for many years. He didn’t conceive or start the Mustang Express Company until the spring of 1887.

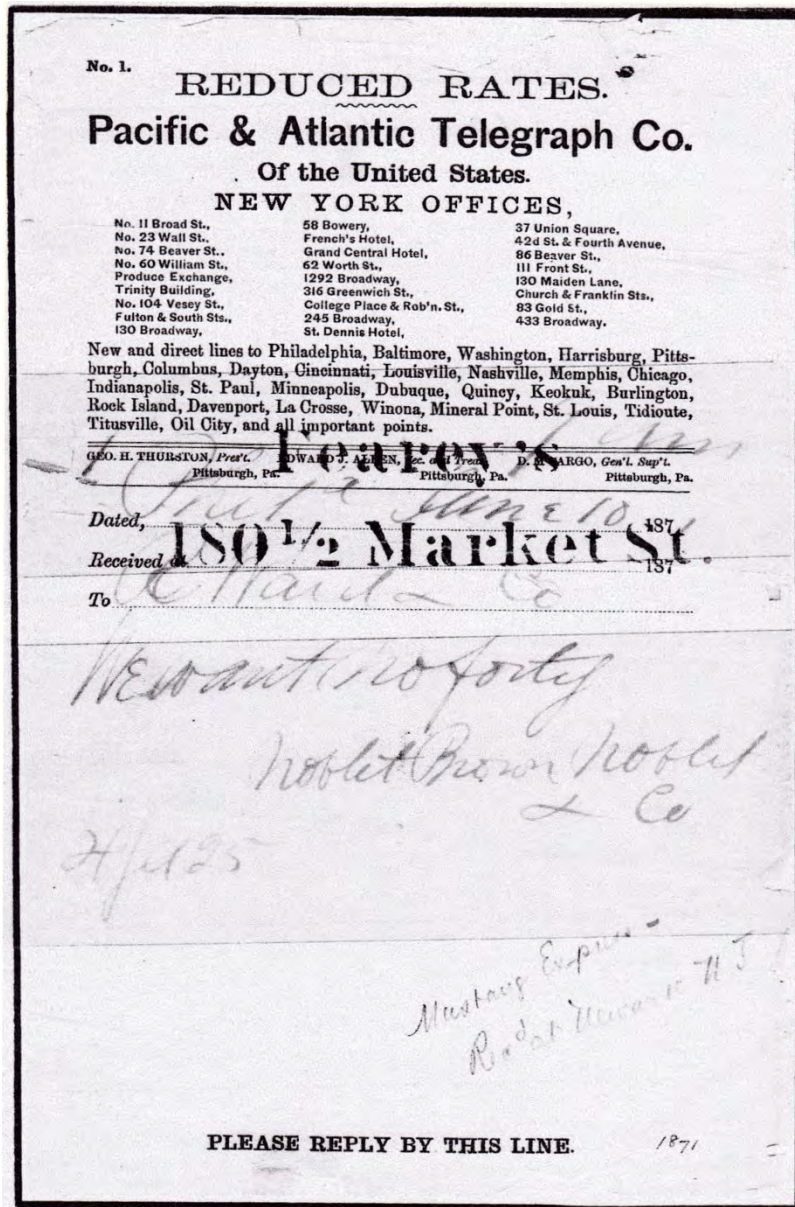


Fig. 5: A notice addressed to Fearey's at the 180½ Market St. address with a light notation "Mustang Express." The notation is not contemporaneous, so the date of the notice cannot be taken as evidence of the existence of the Mustang Express at this early date.

Provenance

Both of the known Jabez Fearey Mustang Express covers were owned by Dick Schwartz. They appeared together as lot 1758 in the Schwartz sale, held at Siegel Auction Galleries on June 27-29, 2000. Alan Geisler acquired the lot. When the Geisler holdings were dispersed by the Siegel Auction Galleries on December 3, 2008, the covers were sold separately as lots 1181 and 1182. The cover to 18 Walnut Street was resold by Schuyler Rumsey in his sale of December 6-8, 2010 as lot 1253. The cover was certified as genuine on January 28, 2011. The other cover to 75 2nd St. has not resurfaced.

Rarity

The unused stamps have a *Scott Catalogue* value of \$275.00 in italic. Most examples are heavily oxidized. I estimate that 10-12 examples of the stamp are known.

ENDNOTES:

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- ¹ Jabez Fearey's Mustang Express – It did not exist in 1870! *The Penny Post*, Bruce Mosher, October 2005, Vol. 13, No. 4, pages 30-35.
 - ² A self-publication.
 - ³ *Catalog of Private Express Labels and Stamps*, Bruce H. Mosher, self publication, 2002.
 - ⁴ *Philatelic Journal of America*, October 1887, Dr. W.H. Mitchell, page 222.
 - ⁵ Obituary, *The Independent Philatelist*, Bayonne City, N.J., Dec. 1890.
 - ⁶ *The Penny Post*, Bruce H. Mosher, October 2005, Vol. 13, No. 4, page 30.
 - ⁷ The Newark District Telegraph Co. was established in March 1887 which was the “spring of 1887” when Fearey started his business.

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Mendham, NJ 07945
or robertrose25@comcast.net**

STAGE OPERATIONS AND THE MAILS IN NEW JERSEY: AN UPDATE

By Steven M. Roth

In 2013 I published a two-part article describing stage operations in New Jersey.¹ In this update, I will describe two stage covers I acquired since the original publication as well as one folded letter where I describe the process I follow and the indicia I consider when analyzing a potential stage-carried letter.

English Town Stage

Figure 1 originated in English Town on September 26, 1775. The folded letter was privately carried and never entered either the British Parliamentary mail system or the competing colonial mail system. The folded letter is an example of scarce stage mail carried during the Revolutionary War at the time when staging operations were beginning to close down as the theater of combat rolled south from Massachusetts to the middle colonies after April 1775.

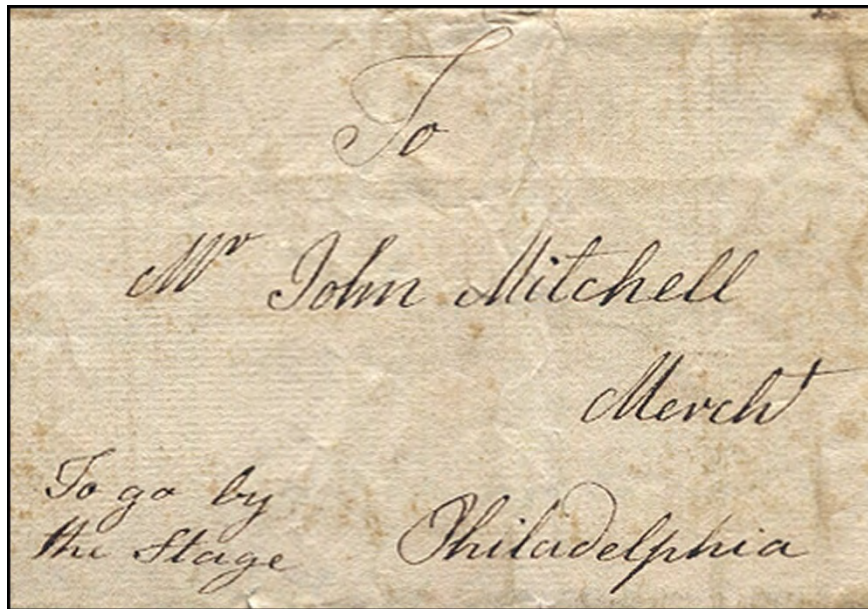


Fig. 1: September 26, 1775, noted "To go by the Stage."

There is no documented stage route from English Town (present-day Englishtown in Monmouth County) to Philadelphia. It is likely, however, that there were one or more accommodation/feeder lines that serviced English Town and other small New Jersey towns nearby.² These accommodation lines would carry mail privately among the small towns they serviced or to and from one of the established through stage lines that carried mail between Philadelphia and New York (in both directions).

Not only is it not possible to identify the accommodation stage line that carried this folded letter on part of its trip to Philadelphia, it also is not possible to tell which through-line carried the letter to Philadelphia after receiving it from the accommodation stage line. The likely choices are the Bordentown & New York Stage Line; the Burlington Stage Line; or, the Trenton & Brunswick Stage Line.

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Each of these through stage lines met the Philadelphia stage boat southwest of English Town (at Bordentown, Burlington and Trenton, respectively) along the Delaware River. The most likely hookup with the English Town stage would have been at Trenton, which was closest to English Town; or, perhaps, at Bordentown; or, if neither Trenton nor Bordentown, then at Burlington, in each case based on the respective town's distance from English Town. This is speculative, however, not dispositive.

When this cover was mailed, the colonies had recently fought the British at Lexington and Concord, at Breed's Hill and Bunker Hill, and were laying siege to Boston which still was occupied by the British. General Washington recently had taken command of the Boston siege as one of his first acts after being appointed commander-in-chief of the Continental Army on June 15.

Cape May Stage

Figure 2 is a folded letter that originated in Cape May and was carried to Philadelphia where the driver deposited the folded letter into the Drop Letter mail box at the Philadelphia Post Office, and the letter received the Philadelphia CDS [STETS Type C-1]. Although there would have been 1¢ Drop Letter postage due from the addressee, this was not indicated on the folded letter, as sometimes was the practice of the Philadelphia Post Office in the early 19th Century. The folded letter was internally dated June 22, 1817; the Philadelphia CDS was dated June 23.

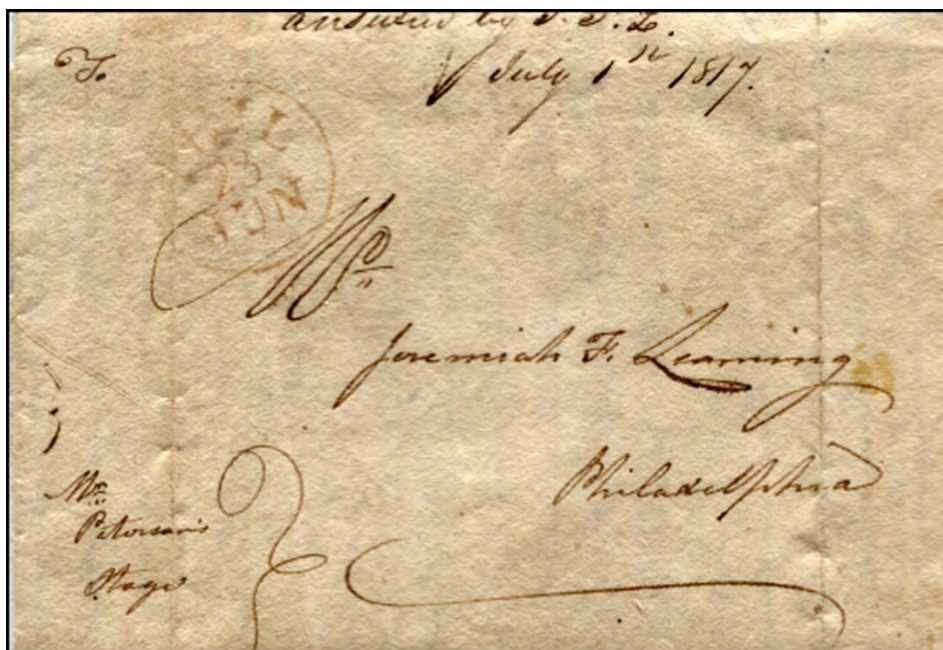


Fig. 2: June 23, 1817, noted by "Mr. Peterson's stage."

By 1800, a weekly stage line had been established between Cape May (sometimes then still referred to as Cape Island) and Cooper's Ferry (present day Camden). This line passed through Cape May, Cumberland, Salem, and Gloucester Counties on its way to Cooper's Ferry, with stops along the way.

At Cooper's Ferry, the stage boarded the Philadelphia stage boat for carriage across the Delaware River to Philadelphia.

It is likely that the “Mr. Peterson” referred to in the endorsement on the folded letter was the driver of the stage although he might have been the owner of the stage line and the driver.

Bordentown Cover

The third folded letter, *Figure 3*, is one that might or might not be a stage-carried cover.

The folded letter is internally datelined “Bordentown le 19 Fevrier 1790” [Bordentown 19 February 1790]. It was addressed to Philadelphia and was carried there out-of-the-mails, arriving February 22.

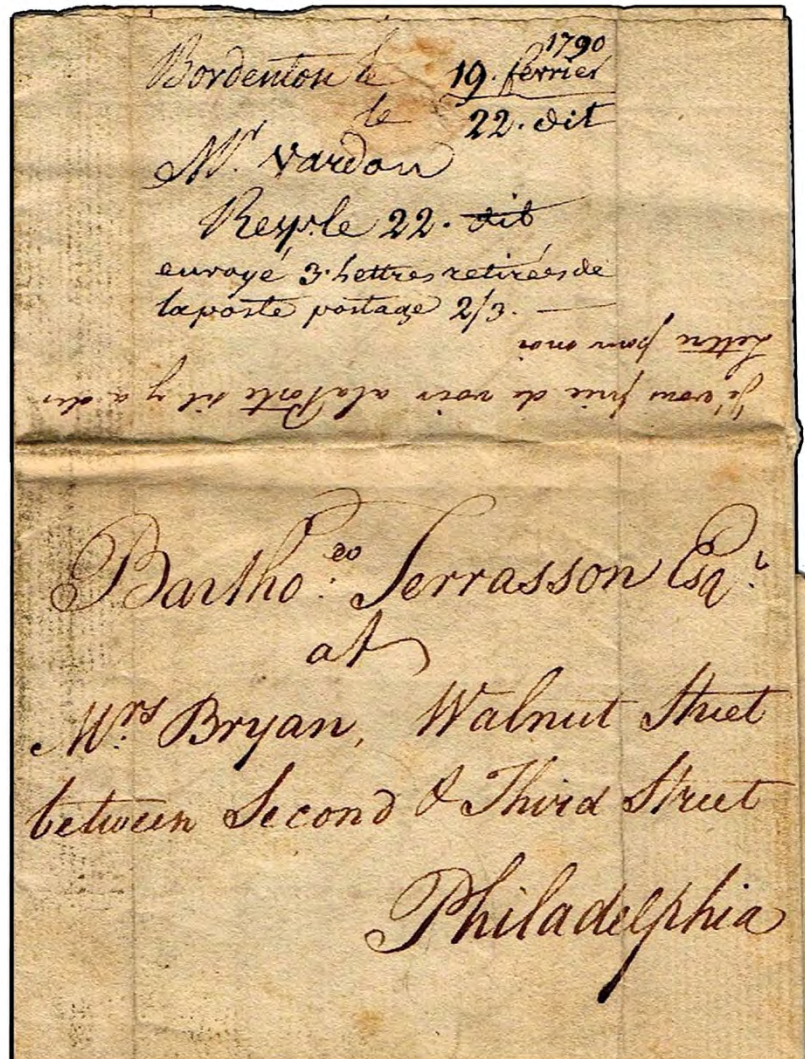


Fig. 3: Datelined Bordentown Feb. 19, 1790, this letter was sent to Bartholomew Terrasson in Philadelphia. The note (upside down is this scan) says, “Please check at the Post to see if I have any letters.”

When I acquired this folded letter as part of my purchase of *Figure 1*, the seller fervently wanted this folded letter to be a Bordentown stage cover. Unfortunately, while it might indeed be just that, there is no way to tell.

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Nothing about this folded letter indicates it was carried by stage. It might have been, but there is no outer endorsement or internal statement to suggest it had been. It could just as easily have been carried in the pocket of some traveler.

However, if the folded letter had been carried by stage, there is no way to tell if it was carried on the Bordentown stage, the Burlington stage (some folded letters originating in Bordentown were carried on the Burlington stage rather than on the Bordentown stage) or carried aboard one of the other through-lines to Philadelphia such as the Trenton stage. To some extent, all three of these stage-lines shared common routes, in part, diverging from one another when they approached their respective hometown bases.

So, while I would like to think I have added another Bordentown stage cover to the cumulative census and to my holdings, I am afraid there is no way to determine that *Figure 3* is anything other than a stampless folded letter originating in Bordentown that was carried (somehow) out-of-the-mails.

ENDNOTES:

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- ¹ Roth, S.M., "STAGE OPERATIONS AND THE MAILS IN NEW JERSEY", NJPH Vol. 41, No.1 (Whole No. [189](#)), p.9ff; and May 2013, Vol. 41, No. 2 (Whole No. [190](#)), p.64ff.
 - ² Another possibility, suggested to me by Robert Rose, is that the folded letter was carried by a traveler on his way from English Town to Philadelphia, who dropped the letter off at Hightstown, New Brunswick or somewhere else where through-lines operated. This, of course, would eliminate the accommodation stage line from the process.

JERSEY CITY TO MANILA BY CHINA CLIPPER: A Colgate Cover

By John A. Trosky & Jean Walton

Just as the United States was entering the deepest part of the Great Depression, the Post Office Department inaugurated a new Trans-Pacific mail service that captivated the attention of the public. The *China Clipper* – the name alone inspired thoughts of the far Pacific, palm trees, exotic destinations with mysterious characters, maybe Terry and those Pirates or the infamous Dragon Lady perhaps awaiting you at your final destination. Here is a cover that has a story to tell not only about its sender but also about the famous way that it was conveyed to its final destination. This standard #10 air mail envelope with the usual blue and red lozenge border, and showing a preprinted corner and green ink meter, originated in Jersey City in February of 1940 and arrived in the Philippines 9 days later. The rate for this letter was properly paid at \$.50 for the first ounce for the complete trip to the Philippines. This rate had been reduced from the inaugural rate in November of 1935 at \$.25 per zone. The original three zones were San Francisco to Hawaii, Hawaii to Guam and Guam to Manila which would have cost a total of \$.75. This route was later extended on to Hong Kong and the rate was reduced to \$.20 per zone in 1937 with another reduction to the rate paid by this cover in February 1940.

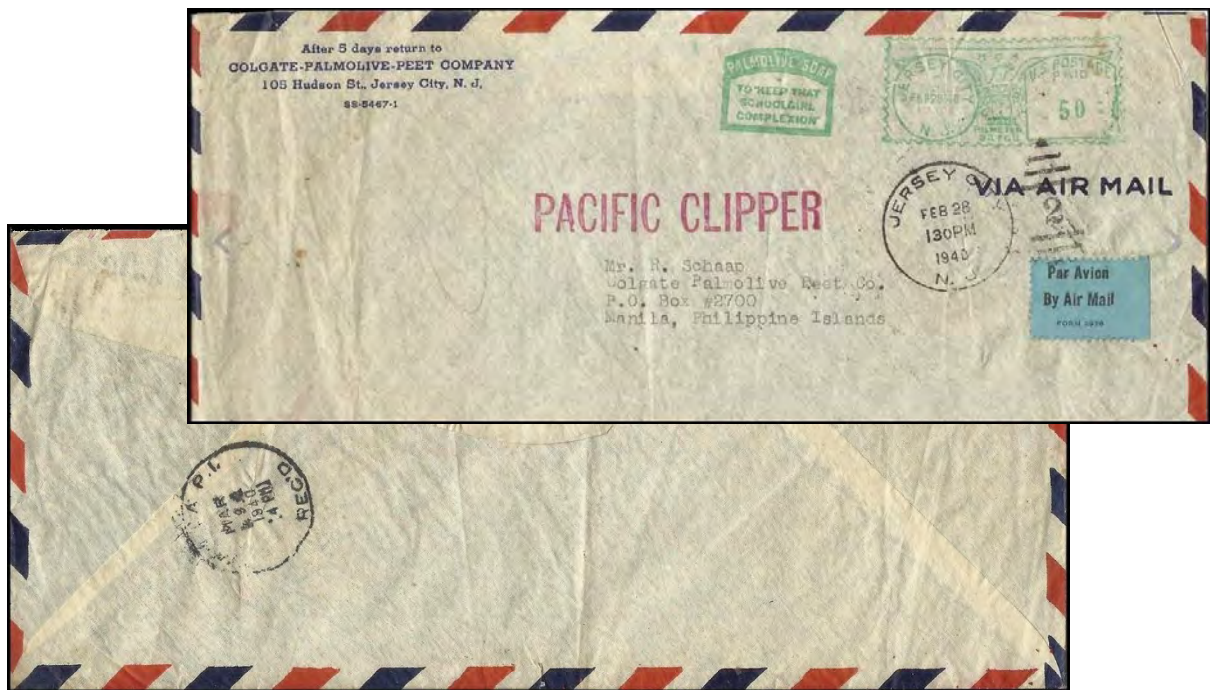


Fig. 1: Cover with an advertising slogan meter from the Colgate-Palmolive-Peet Company in Jersey City, to one of their subsidiaries in the Philippine Islands. The Jersey City cancels are dated Feb. 28, 1940, and a PACIFIC CLIPPER handstamp in red. The cancel on receipt in the Philippines is dated March 8th, or possibly the 9th.

This is a nice non-philatelic Pacific Clipper usage, sent with a Colgate-Palmolive-Peet corner, with a company slogan meter, paying the 50¢ rate. The slogan reads, “Palmolive Soap, to Keep that Schoolgirl Complexion.” The envelope was cancelled using a duplex hand cancel at the Main office of the Jersey City Post Office on Washington Street, just mere steps from the headquarters of the Colgate-Palmolive-Peet Company on Hudson Street. This may have been where the Pacific Clipper red stamp was placed on the envelope along with the blue Par Avion adhesive label.

William Colgate established a starch, soap and candle making company on John and Dutch Streets in New York in 1806, but as the business grew, he saw a need to expand and he established a starch factory across the river in New Jersey in 1820 in the Paulus Hook area along the Hudson River directly across from lower Manhattan and his original John Street location. At the time, the move was called “Colgate’s Folly.” However, in spite of the move across the river, the company flourished and by 1847, he built a soap factory. The neighborhood

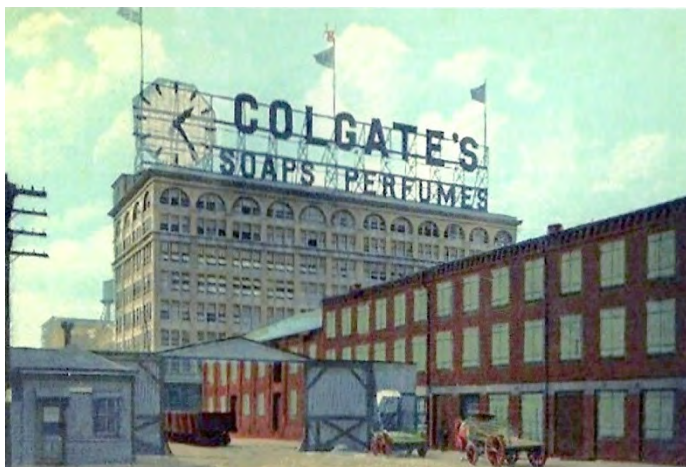


Fig. 1: Colgate factory in Jersey City, ca. 1912.¹

was once home to a British garrison during the Revolutionary War which was overrun on August 19, 1779 in a daring nighttime raid by Major “Lighthorse” Harry Lee, whose descendent was General Robert E. Lee of Civil War fame. There is still an obelisk in Paulus Hook Park that commemorates this raid. It formerly stood in the center of the intersection of Grand and Washington Streets.

This area was ripe for development and in the early 19th century a group of three New York City investors purchased land on the west bank of the Hudson in the area of what was soon to become the Colgate Soap and Perfume factory for a town they planned to call the Town of Jersey. The entrepreneur, inventor and investor, Robert Fulton also purchased land here to run his steamboats from New Jersey to New York City which represented the final missing link to places such as Newark, Philadelphia, and beyond going west. He started the first steam ferry service in the world in 1812 between Manhattan and what was to become Jersey City. Many of the early 19th century homes in the area still contain codicils in the original deeds that no ferry boats may be docked on the property. This was one way of Fulton controlling competition. With the simultaneous arrival of both the railroad and the Morris Canal in the same locale, the economic engine that this area of Jersey City would become was sealed. With a large supply of immigrant labor, easy transportation by land and water and proximity to a major metropolis, it was easy to see why William Colgate chose this site for his plant.

Colgate is probably known by many of its iconic brands which were invented and manufactured here. Colgate was the first company to sell toothpaste in jars and later on in collapsible tubes. When mentioning Colgate today, most people think immediately of the toothpaste, however, those persons born and raised in the New York City, Hudson/Bergen/Essex County region of New Jersey also think about the largest clock in the world. This landmark clock was in the shape of an octagon representing a play on one of the company’s best products, Octagon Soap. It was installed atop the main headquarters building in 1906 to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the founding of the company. The original 40’ wide version, built by the Seth Thomas Clock Company, was removed in 1924 and replaced by an even larger one at 50’ wide, the world’s largest. However, rumor has it that there is an even larger clock currently in Mecca, Saudi Arabia, among three others said to be larger. The clock was relocated to ground level after the departure of Colgate from Jersey City in 1985 when the remaining buildings of the plant

were all demolished. Manufacturing went to the Midwest and the corporate headquarters returned to Manhattan where they were founded so long ago. The present day clock, the same one from 1924, currently sits on State of NJ-owned property which is leased to the Colgate Palmolive Company.

Over time Colgate would continue to grow and expand, eventually merging with the Palmolive Soap Company of Milwaukee, Wisconsin and the Peet Soap Company of Kansas City Missouri in the late 19th century. They also later absorbed the company founded by Gerhard Mennen in Newark. Anyone who lived or worked in the area of the Jersey City plant remembers the familiar smells of soap and perfumes wafting through the air at different times of day. Occasionally, there might even be an unseasonable “snow storm” from the plant when fine soap particles would escape from the manufacturing area and be seen floating through the air. They became an industrial giant; at one time the plant complex in Jersey City covered six city blocks, and had subsidiaries in many countries abroad, including the Philippines.

November 22, 1935 saw the first trans-Pacific flight. This China Clipper service, as it was called, captured the imagination of the nation and the world since it was the first commercial flight to navigate the Pacific as well as being an “all American” flag route, stopping in Hawaii, Midway, Wake, Guam and the Philippines. It was a bit of a misnomer that the route was called the China Clipper route since *China Clipper* was the name of the inaugural aircraft flying the route and not the final destination.

That first flight, however, didn't carry any passengers at all, just 58 mail pouches stuffed with 111,000 letters weighing over 2,000 pounds. The entire mail cache was almost 100% philatelic in nature. This “First Flight” cover was a sought after collectible by stamp collectors worldwide. The 58 pouches represented such a huge commitment in mail that some of the luxurious passenger furnishings that had been installed on the clipper had to be removed to fit all of the mail inside. This was the largest shipment of mail ever taken on board an aircraft at that time. Frederick Noonan flew as the navigation officer. He would later join Amelia Earhart on her ill-fated attempt to be the first woman to fly around the world. This would so capture the imagination of the country that there would be a movie made the following year starring Pat O'Brian as an airline executive and Humphrey Bogart playing a steely eyed pilot in a film called *China Clipper*. There were also Clipper inspired toys and souvenirs sold and even Clipper beer! Passengers were not accepted until October 21, 1936 after that initial first flight that Postmaster General Farley had seen off in San Francisco almost a year earlier. President Roosevelt awarded Pan-American Airways the Collier Trophy upon completing this first passenger flight. This trophy was awarded by the National Aeronautic Association for the greatest achievement in aviation in America.

“Awarded to Pan American Airways for the establishment of the Transpacific airline and the successful execution of extended overwater navigation in the regular operation thereof. 1936”

The initial fare for the San Francisco to Manila run was \$799 one way which would be over \$10,000 in today's currency.

JERSEY CITY TO MANILA BY CHINA CLIPPER ~ John A. Trosky & Jean Walton

The cover which inspired this article was posted on February 28, 1940, addressed to a Colgate representative in the Philippines, where it arrived nine days later. The trip across the U.S. probably took a day, or about 11 and a half hours of flying time in 1940.² Crossing the Pacific would require six days, which included five legs and 59 hours and 48 minutes in the air, before the Pacific Clipper landed in Manila.³ This same trip by the fastest steamship would have taken 15 to 16 days.

The original Pan Am Clippers were Sikorsky S-42s, but more space and longer ranges were needed. The Martin M-130s provided what was needed for the first regular service. Crossing the Pacific would require larger flying boats than Pan Am originally had, to be economically feasible.

In 1939, the Boeing 314s and 314As were added. With a payload five times that of the Martins, twelve B314s and B-314As finally brought the Pacific service into its own. Each had a maximum gross weight of 84,000 pounds. Their wide boat hulls have ample room for passengers and cargo, with wings so thick that a flight engineer could crawl out to the engines and service them in flight. They were the widest passenger aircraft until the Boeing 747 many years later. By 1940, when the envelope in question was sent from Jersey City to Manila, the airboat in use was likely a B-314. This aircraft, one of the largest ever built, weighed over 40 tons, had a range of 3500 miles, and could reach a ceiling of 19,600', and carried 74 passengers on day trips or 40 in reclining seats overnight.⁴



Fig. 2: Route map of FAM-14 across the Pacific.

SAN FRANCISCO
U. S. A.-Hawaii-Guam-Philippines

Orient Exp.		Pan American Airways Co. (PAAP)		Orient Exp.	
(s)	PM			AM	(z)
Wed.	3 00	Lv	SAN FRANCISCO, (Alameda), Cal.,... (PST)	Ar	10 30
Thur.	8 30	Ar	HONOLULU, (Pearl Harbor), H. I... (HLT)	Lv	12 00
					Tues. Mon.
Fri.	6 30	Lv	HONOLULU, (Pearl Harbor), H. I... (HLT)	Ar	6 30
	3 00	Ar	MIDWAY ISLAND..... (MLT)	Lv	6 00
					Sun.
Sat.	6 00	Lv	MIDWAY ISLAND..... (MLT)	Ar	5 00
			(International Date Line)		Sat.
Sun.	3 00	Ar	WAKE ISLANDS..... 165°	Lv	6 00
					Sun.
Mon.	6 00	Lv	WAKE ISLANDS..... 165°	Ar	7 00
	5 00	Ar	GUAM ISLAND..... 150°	Lv	6 00
					Sat.
Tues.	6 00	Lv	GUAM ISLAND..... 150°	Ar	6 30
(s)	5 00	Ar	MANILA (Cavite), P. I..... 120°	Lv	* 4 00
					Fri. (z)
(x)					
Wed.	8 30	Lv	MANILA, (Cavite), P. I..... 120°	Ar	1 45
	1 50	Ar	MACAO..... *	Lv	-
	3 05	Ar	HONG KONG..... *	Lv	8 30
					Thur. (z)

*—Departure from Manila subject to advancement to previous afternoon as occasion demands.
All times are approximate other than at San Francisco westbound and at Honolulu eastbound.

Fig. 3: A typical schedule, showing the five legs of a trip to the Philippines.

The Pacific Aviation Museum describes these planes:

The Boeings were enormous. By way of comparison, the dominant passenger airliner at the time was the twin-engine Douglas DC-2, which carried 14 passengers over routes nearing 1,000 miles and cost about \$80,000. In contrast, the Boeings cost \$620,000 apiece—just under ten million of today’s dollars. They could carry 74 passengers, cargo, and mail over 3,500-mile hops. Boeing had previously built the XB-15, which was heavier than the later B-17. Engines strong enough to give the XB-15 good performance had not been available, so that project died. Boeing responded to Pan Am’s needs by adapting the 150 foot wing of the XB-15 and the engine nacelles to an enormous flying boat body. Using new Wright 1,500 hp and later 1,600 hp Twin Cyclone engines, the 314A was able to carry this enormous bulk at cruising speeds of 188 mph.

The only class was first class. Passenger compartments had heavy sound deadening. The aircraft had couches instead of just seats. On overnight flights, they could convert into beds. The passenger space was divided into five compartments. In addition, there was a spacious main lounge, separate men’s and women’s restrooms and changing rooms, and even a bridal suite in the tail. Food was served on China plates, and the level of cuisine was high. In addition, on most parts of the journey, passengers only flew during the day and slept at comfortable hotels at night. Pan Am loved to use nautical terminology, so it called its cabin attendants stewards and later stewardesses. For this level of service, prices were beyond the reach of anyone but the super wealthy. In 1939, a one-way ticket from San Francisco to Honolulu cost \$278, and a one-way ticket to Hong Kong cost \$1,368. In 2010 dollars, these were \$4,317 and \$11,803.

... Pan Am made half of its annual revenues from the carriage of mail. ... In fact, the first Pacific Clippers flew for almost a year delivering cargo and mail before they began to carry passengers.⁵

At the start of WWII, the U.S. military took over Pan Am’s Clipper fleet of eleven Martin M-130s and Boeing B-314s, and requested Pan Am’s personnel to operate them.⁶ During the war, Pan Am Pacific Clipper flight crews became some of the most important civilians in the US military. They trained hundreds of military personnel in long range overseas navigational techniques, as well as in the use of charts developed by Pan Am to train combat pilots – not just in navigation – but also in intelligence on the many Pacific islands that Pan Am had flown to or over. Unfortunately, for the luxurious Pan Am Clippers, the aircraft were suddenly stripped of their interiors to become high lift long range cargo aircraft. Pilots sometime made up to 20 Pacific runs in 25 days.

The luxurious Clipper interiors – seen below – were stripped for military use.



Fig. 4: Pacific Clipper Dining Area



Fig. 5: Pacific Clipper Lounge



Fig. 6: A B314 in harbor. Many airports were not yet able to handle such large aircraft, but the flying boats solved that problem by landing on the water.

Because of the popularity of the Clipper service, the Post Office Department issued a special 25 cent Air Mail stamp on November 22, 1935 to commemorate the route with the inscription “November 1935” on the stamp for the payment of postage on this service.



Fig. 7: Scott #C20 in plate block format showing the famous Pacific Clipper aircraft. C21 was issued in 1937 in the identical design in green at \$.20 to reflect the new reduced rates to Manila.

By the end of World War II it became pretty obvious that the age of the great flying boats was at an end. There were numerous converted wartime aircraft that could carry twice as many passengers much faster and further than the 1930s era Pan Am Clippers. Just like the luxury trains and steamships of bygone ages they succumbed to the advance of aircraft design that now allowed people of more modest means to fly the world. By 1946, most of them had been sold to private interests or for scrap. The last one ended service as a charter to the Bahamas in 1950. It is not known whether there are any survivors still out there. Pan American Airways continued to call its aircraft by the name of Clipper in various forms right up until its demise. However, modern day flying was simply never the same. The luxurious travel by transpacific flying boat is only a distant memory now for a very, very few.



Fig. 8: Pacific Clipper in flight.

ENDNOTES AND REFERENCES:

- ¹ https://www.njcu.edu/programs/jchistory/pages/C_Pages/Colgate_Palmolive.htm
- ² <https://airandspace.si.edu/exhibitions/america-by-air/online/flyacross/index.cfm>
- ³ <http://www.clipperflyingboats.com/transpacific-airline-service>
- ⁴ <http://www.clipperflyingboats.com/pan-am/boeing-b314>
- ⁵ <http://www.pacificaviationmuseum.org/pearl-harbor-blog/pan-ams-pacific-clippers>
- ⁶ See more at: <http://www.pacificaviationmuseum.org/pearl-harbor-blog/pan-ams-pacific-clippers#sthash.YkW5sS32.dpuf>

REFERENCES:

- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colgate_Clock_\(Jersey_City\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colgate_Clock_(Jersey_City))
<http://www.colgate.com/app/Colgate/US/Corp/History/1806.cvsp>
<http://www.roadsideamerica.com/tip/10407>
<http://postalmuseumblog.si.edu/airmail/>
<http://www.sfgate.com/bayarea/article/China-Clipper-s-flight-made-history-75-years-ago-3165474.php>
http://www.avsim.com/pages/0502/clipper_history_feature/flyingboats.html
<http://www.flyingclippers.com/timeline.html>
<http://www.collectorsweekly.com/stamps/airmail>
<http://www.aviation-history.com/boeing/314.html>
Hudson County: The Left Bank by Joan Doherty Lovero American Historical Publications

NJ STRAIGHT LINE HANDSTAMPS: Springfield, NJ

By Robert G. Rose

[The author continues his series of articles on New Jersey straight line handstamps of the stampless era. The first, on Lawrenceville, appeared in the August 2015 (Vol. 43, No. 3, Whole number [199](#)), and the second in the November issue (Vol. 43, No. 4, Whole number [200](#)), on Haddonfield.]

In 1846, the Springfield post office used a straight line handstamp, its first hand stamped postmark applied to stampless mail. Only four examples have been recorded with usages between June 9 and October 3, 1846. Curiously, this handstamp, presumably produced locally from printer's type face, divided the town's name into two segments, reading as SPRING FIELD. All four reported examples of this 42 x 3½ mm handstamp were applied in blue ink with the date added below in blue manuscript. All rate markings are in manuscript. Two examples of this handstamp are illustrated below followed by a census of the four recorded covers.



Fig. 1: August 28, 1846 to Bridgehampton, New York.¹

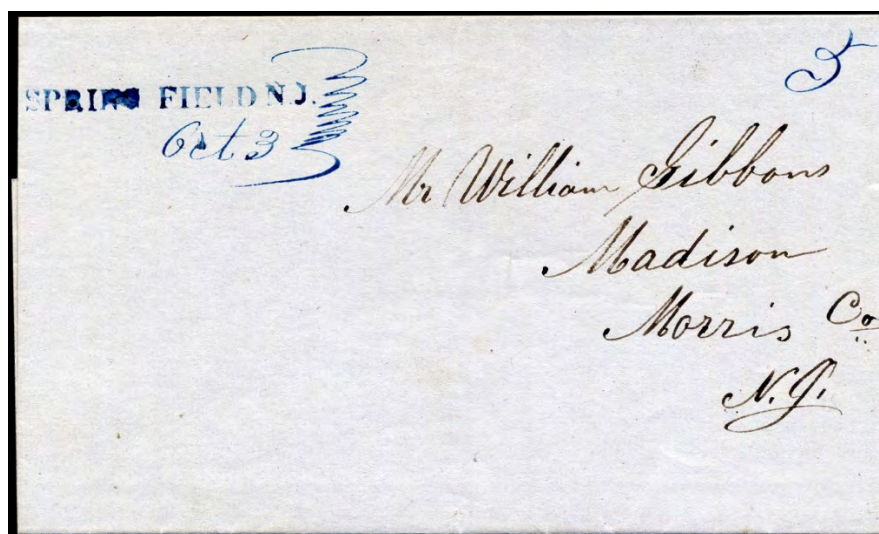


Fig. 2: October 3, 1846 to Madison, New Jersey.



Fig. 3: Mead Hall in Madison, the home of Gibbons, is now part of the campus of Drew University and serves as the administrative center and houses the office of the president.

Springfield Straight Line Census

Postmark Date	Destination	Source
Jun 9, 1846	Washington, D.C.	William Weiss Auction, Norman Brassler Collection, Sale No. 127, lot 2078, 1/27/96
Jul 2, 1846	Washington, D.C.	Christie's Robson Lowe, David Jarrett Collection, lot 634, 10/9-10/90
Aug 28, 1846	Bridgehampton, NY	Robert Kaufmann Auction, William C. Coles, Jr. Collection, Sale No. 33, lot 453, 3/8/84
Oct 3, 1846	Madison, NJ	Al Zimmerman Auction, lot 24, 12/8/81

Society members who have knowledge of additional usages of this handstamp are encouraged to send cover scans and year dates when known to the author at robertrose25@comcast.net .

ENDNOTES:

¹ This cover is illustrated in William C. Coles, Jr.'s *The Postal Markings of New Jersey Stampless Covers*, Collectors Club of Chicago, 1984, Figure 34, p. 29.

NEW FINDS OF EARLY NEW JERSEY POSTMARKS

By Ed & Jean Siskin

In the early 1970s, a team of philatelic students headed by Alex L. ter Braake researched early American postal history. The result was *The Posted Letter in Colonial and Revolutionary America* published in 1975, to honor America's forthcoming bi-centennial. One conclusion from his landmark book was that more early American postmarks existed in institutions than in collectors' hands. Even though some of these postmarks have been released to the collectors over the last 15 years,¹ the conclusion remains that many more rare early American postmarks remain in institutions than in private hands today. This makes it difficult to find out what exists since inventorying postmarks tends not to be an historical institution's priority.

Thus if we are to know about these rare postmarks, some dedicated collector has to convince an institution to let him carefully examine their documents and then spend the time necessary to identify the hidden gems. One hero in this regard is Dr. Tim O'Connor of Boston. Over the years he has spent many hours searching institutional documents so that we can learn what exists.

During a recent visit to the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Tim identified and photographed four covers that are of particular interest to New Jersey collectors.

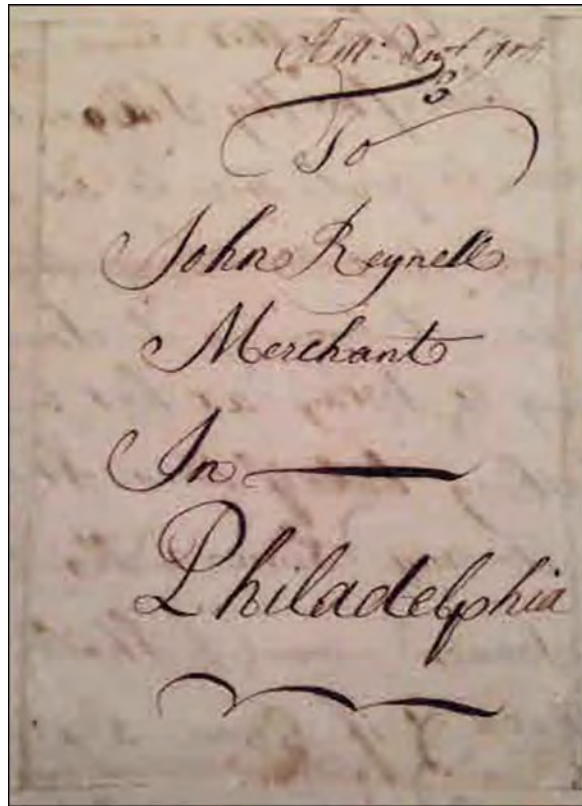


Fig. 1: Perth Amboy to Philadelphia, postmarked "Am - Dwt 3" – a second known example. This letter is datelined 1734.

Figure 1 is a cover originating in New York City, datelined March 5, 1734, which traveled via Perth Amboy to Philadelphia. It is postmarked “Am – Dwt 3.” This is the second known example of this “Am” postmark. The other example was reported in New Jersey Postal History Journal Number 168 dated November 2007.² That cover, the only recorded example in private hands, is dated June 7, 1745.



Fig. 2: Perth Amboy to Philadelphia, postmarked “Amboy 2 Dwt” – the only known example of this “Amboy” postmark. This letter is datelined 1743.

Figure 2 shows a cover from Bristol, England, datelined September 13, 1743, which traveled via Perth Amboy, New Jersey to Philadelphia. It is postmarked “Amboy 2 Dwt.” This is the only example of this “Amboy” postmark of which we are aware.



Fig. 3: Woodbridge to Philadelphia, postmarked “W 6 dwt.” This letter is datelined 1746, earlier by 20 years than previous examples.

NEW FINDS OF EARLY NJ POSTMARKS ~ Ed & Jean Siskin

The cover in *Figure 3* is datelined London, January 15, 1746, and is postmarked “W 6 dwt.” It traveled via Woodbridge, New Jersey to Philadelphia and was forwarded to London by John Gill, a well know Quaker agent. This postmark is the third example known but is 20 years earlier than previously identified postmark.



Fig. 4: This cover originated in Madeira in 1748. It has no postal marking, which suggests it was privately carried.

Figure 4 shows an interesting cover in that it does not have any postal markings. It originated in Madeira, June 13, 1748. It is marked “via Amboy.” The absence of postal markings suggests that it was privately carried from the ship’s landing to Philadelphia. We consider this cover particularly interesting. Madeira was a major wine producer and was in frequent communications with merchants in major American cities. At one time we had a collection of mail from Madeira to Philadelphia via various ports. We had seven different ports, which did not include an Amboy example.

We collectors and students of early American Postal History owe fellow member Dr. Tim O’Connor thanks for his efforts in bringing this rare material to our attention.

ENDNOTES:

¹ There have been a few examples of deaccessions of early American postal history. In each case, the Institution sold some cover sheets and retained the basic documents with a photocopy of the material sold.

Limited material from North Carolina's State Archives was sold in Siegel Sale 845 on May 15, 2002. Siegel Sale 944 on October 24, 2007 dispersed some gems from the Historical Society of Pennsylvania Archives.

² Please see Vol. 35, No. 4, Nov. 2007, Whole No. 168 at <http://njpostalhistory.org/media/archive/168-nov07njph.pdf>.



February 2016 Web Update

Warren Plank - [Webmaster](#)



OUR NEW WEBSITE IS ALMOST HERE!

It has been quite some time since we launched our updated website in 2007 and now it's time to get "with it" once again. I was actually hoping to be able to launch with this issue of our journal, and did accomplish quite a bit during the Christmas break from the shows and travel – but I still have a little way to go.

Get a sneak peek by clicking here:

<http://www.NJPostalHistory.org/musetest>

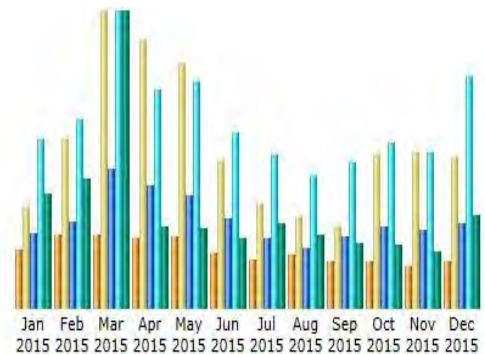
Font sizes need adjusting, and several pages need to be fleshed out – but you'll get the idea. The most important functionality will be the ability to host our Member Galleries right within our site. The old image slideshow application was sold and taken off line as we knew it. The Picasa files are yet viewable, and I encourage you to visit there while awaiting this update: [NJPHS Picasa Albums](#).

If you get a chance to visit the new website, please feel free to provide feedback. We want this site not only to last the next ten years ☺ - but would like to provide you the best user experience. Please send comments or suggestions to me at :

webmaster@NJPostalHistory.org

2015 YEAR IN STATISTICAL REVIEW

With over 10,000 unique visitors visiting our site almost 30,000 times and "hitting" on over 100,000 pages, 2015 can certainly be considered as a banner year for our Society's content and mission!



Month	Unique visitors	Number of visits	Pages	Hits	Bandwidth
Jan 2015	874	1,503	3,578	8,135	6.49 GB
Feb 2015	1,106	2,520	4,157	9,034	7.28 GB
Mar 2015	1,091	4,430	6,677	14,239	16.74 GB
Apr 2015	1,046	4,004	5,926	10,505	4.58 GB
May 2015	1,060	3,650	5,433	10,845	4.47 GB
Jun 2015	828	2,192	4,313	8,433	3.96 GB
Jul 2015	723	1,575	3,337	7,417	4.75 GB
Aug 2015	791	1,376	2,921	6,398	4.12 GB
Sep 2015	694	1,214	3,409	7,018	3.64 GB
Oct 2015	710	2,296	3,910	7,966	3.58 GB
Nov 2015	618	2,332	3,728	7,476	3.22 GB
Dec 2015	711	2,245	4,103	11,123	5.23 GB
Total	10,252	29,337	51,492	108,589	68.05 GB

THE STATISTICS – TOP 20 DOWNLOADS Nov, Dec 2015 & Jan. 2016

- /media/pdf/HunterdonCoPMs.pdf
- /media/pdf/BurlingtonCoPMList.pdf
- /media/archive/102-mar93njph.pdf
- /media/pdf/rothstage.pdf
- /media/pdf/SussexCoPMs.pdf
- /media/journal/189NJPH2013feb.pdf
- /media/pdf/NJDPOPUzzlebook.pdf
- /media/archive/095-nov91njph.pdf
- /media/journal/feb11njph181.pdf
- /media/archive/027rrmap-marnjph78.pdf

- /media/pdf/BurlingtonCoPMList.pdf
- /media/journal/189NJPH2013feb.pdf
- /media/archive/107-mar94njph.pdf
- /media/pdf/SussexCoPMs.pdf
- /media/archive/074-sep87njph.pdf
- /media/archive/162-may06njph.pdf
- /media/journal/186njphmay12.pdf
- /media/archive/173-feb09njph.pdf
- /media/pdf/LPeckSussexCty.pdf
- /media/journal/190NJPH2013may.pdf

THE STATISTICS – WHERE OUR VISITORS LIVE

I always find it fascinating to see where our website visitors are from. Below in order are stats from our last Journal “push”.

November 2015				December 2015				January 2016			
Locales	Pages	Hits		Locales	Pages	Hits		Locales	Pages	Hits	
China	cn	1,547	1,702	China	cn	1,275	1,498	Russian Federation	ru	5,693	5,759
United States	us	928	3,348	United States	us	1,059	6,828	China	cn	1,278	1,362
Ukraine	ua	624	661	Ukraine	ua	1,031	1,052	United States	us	1,229	12,813
Germany	de	121	578	Malaysia	my	153	163	Ukraine	ua	680	700
Unknown	zz	109	187	Russian Federation	ru	112	165	France	fr	414	444
Romania	ro	101	106	Unknown	zz	65	104	Romania	ro	178	187
Ireland	ie	48	101	South Korea	kr	62	70	Japan	jp	108	311
Great Britain	gb	31	93	Romania	ro	51	62	Turkey	tr	78	79
Netherlands	nl	31	60	Germany	de	45	275	Brazil	br	72	104
France	fr	23	49	Ireland	ie	44	48	Unknown	zz	72	100
Italy	it	22	90	France	fr	40	114	Germany	de	67	482
Poland	pl	22	28	Great Britain	gb	27	105	Belarus	by	65	67
Brazil	br	20	36	Netherlands	nl	22	43	Great Britain	gb	57	92
Russian Federation	ru	18	46	Brazil	br	17	112	Vietnam	vn	43	49
Canada	ca	13	69	Italy	it	15	59	Czech Republic	cz	42	66
Sweden	se	10	16	Switzerland	ch	9	14	Netherlands	nl	36	43
Latvia	lv	7	7	Poland	pl	9	28	Kazakhstan	kz	34	34
Vietnam	vn	6	7	India	in	7	24	Luxembourg	lu	33	35
Estonia	ee	6	6	Japan	jp	6	32	Azerbaijan	az	26	26
South Korea	kr	5	11	Vietnam	vn	6	10	Mexico	mx	22	27
Taiwan	tw	4	23	Sweden	se	5	14	Georgia	ge	22	22
India	in	4	13	Portugal	pt	3	14	Ireland	ie	21	31
Philippines	ph	3	7	Spain	es	3	10	Poland	pl	21	27
Czech Republic	cz	3	47	Iran	ir	3	3	Spain	es	19	25
Lithuania	lt	3	5	European country	eu	2	31	Sweden	se	19	41
Others		19	180	Others		32	245	Others		177	463

BECOME A CONTRIBUTOR TO THE MEMBER’S EXHIBITION HALL

As our new website becomes a reality sometime in May of this year, I would like to remind all members that it is easy to share your collections with other members, and the collecting world at large. Anonymity may be preserved if you would prefer.

Along with the popular collection **Post Offices of New Jersey - A History Told Through Postcards**, as well as **Postal History Covers of Judge Caleb Valentine** along with **New Jersey Stage Mail** and **New Jersey Advertising Covers**, we have added **Colonial Covers of New Jersey**, **Stampless Covers of New Jersey**, and **Express Mail Covers of New Jersey**. These are all available if you “Sneak Peek” the new website: [CLICK HERE](#).

Members are encouraged to share their most interesting collections within our society pages – or if you have one or a few items that would fit one of the existing galleries. What better way to help expand our collecting hobby than by drawing interest?

Whether you want to submit an entire collection anonymously, or have a dedicated page somewhat like a display at one of the stamp shows is up to you. If it is 500 covers, or just one – contact your [webmaster](#) and I’ll help you through the process.

A SNEAK PEEK OF OUR NEW HOMEPAGE – <http://www.NJPostalHistory.org/musetest>



MEMBER NEWS:

MANY THANKS FOR DONATIONS SENT WITH 2016 DUES:

OUR GRATEFUL THANKS TO DONORS	
Edwin C. Black	Robert Livingstone
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George Kramer	Nathan Zankel
Peter Lemmo	

NEW MEMBERS & MEMBER CHANGES:

New Member: William J. Latzko, 215 79th St, North Bergen NJ 07047-5727, wjl@Latzko.us , collects Hudson County
Returning member: Craig L. Martin, 74-711 Dillon Rd, #9502 Desert Hot Springs, CA 92241, saracy3@gmail.com , Researching Cumberland Co/Bridgeton/individuals including Lucius Q.C. Elmer, Samuel Southard, more
Address Changes: From : Edwin C Black, 61 Nestor Road, West Orange, NJ 07052 To: Edwin C Black, 61 Nestro Road, West Orange, NJ 07052
From: William H. Johnson, 13691 Metropolitan Pkwy, Suite 250, Ft. Myers, FL 33912-4350 To: William H. Johnson, 13691 Metro Pkwy, Suite 250, Ft. Myers, FL 33912-4350
Email change: Daniel Elliott – change email to delliott@geosyntec.com from dwephd2005@gmail.com

HAWKINS V. MAULDING, JR – 1935-2015

We were very sorry to learn of the passing of Dr. Hawkins Maulding, Jr., a long time member, on October 27, 2015, at age 79. He is survived by his wife of 34 years, and a son and daughter, as well as step daughters and grandchildren. Hawkins said he began collecting New Jersey material on a whim which grew to 37 boxes, and an addiction to collecting. He will be missed.



MEMBER NEWS

LEAP YEAR CHALLENGE TO MEMBERS!

Paul Jackson, a long time member now deceased, always sought Leap Year (February 29) covers. We challenge you to find some among your collection, and if found, send along a scan which we will feature on our web site.

Paul never had one to show, although he did find an article about a Flemington 1944 February 30th(!!) cancel, which we featured in our [Vol. 36 No. 1 Whole number 169 Feb 2008](#) issue, and showed an example.

An Ebay search netted no covers from New Jersey, but we did find a couple addressed to New Jersey:

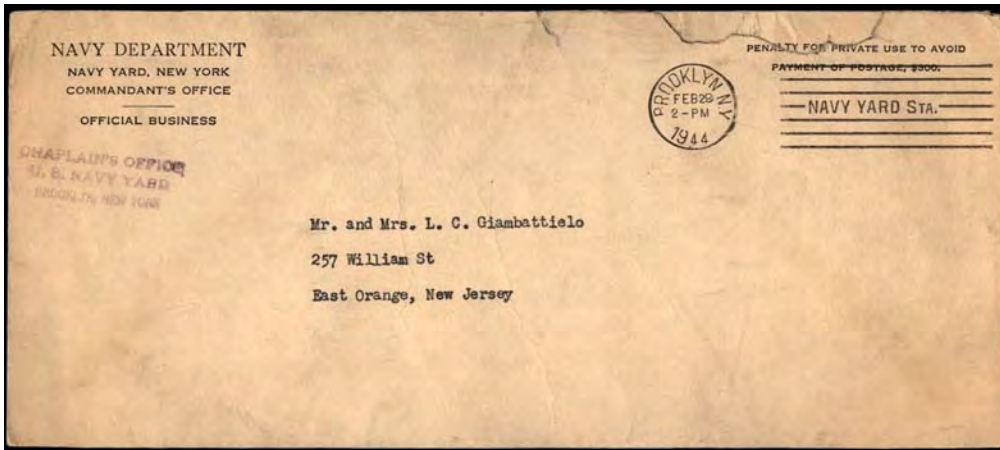


Fig. 1: A Navy Department cover sent from the Navy Yard in Brooklyn to East Orange, NJ on February 29, 1944.



Fig. 2: A cover sent from USS YELLOWSTONE to Shrewsbury, NJ. It is dated February 29, 1972.

This is a Leap Year, and if all goes as hoped, this journal will be sent to you on February 29 with a Leap Day cancel. If you have a February 29 New Jersey cover in your collection, send a scan along to NJPostalHistory@aol.com and we will show it proudly on our web site.



HOMETOWN POST OFFICES: Alpine, NJ

By Jean Walton

Hidden away in the northeastern-most corner of New Jersey is the town of Alpine, in Bergen County. It sits in the highlands of the Palisades, with lookouts 500' above the Hudson River which remind us of what Hudson himself must have seen when he first entered the Hudson River Valley. At the base of the cliffs is a dock, and a winding road that leads up to the top.



Fig. 1: View of the lookout at Alpine, New Jersey, across from Yonkers, NY.

The Palisades of New Jersey have always been remarkable, though perhaps more remarkable before these basalt cliffs were quarried years ago to produce the many brownstones on Manhattan Island. A basalt intrusion produced these cliffs 200 million of years ago. Verrazano described them in 1541 (before Hudson’s exploration in 1609) as “looking like fence stakes.”¹ Anyone who has seen them will know exactly what he meant.

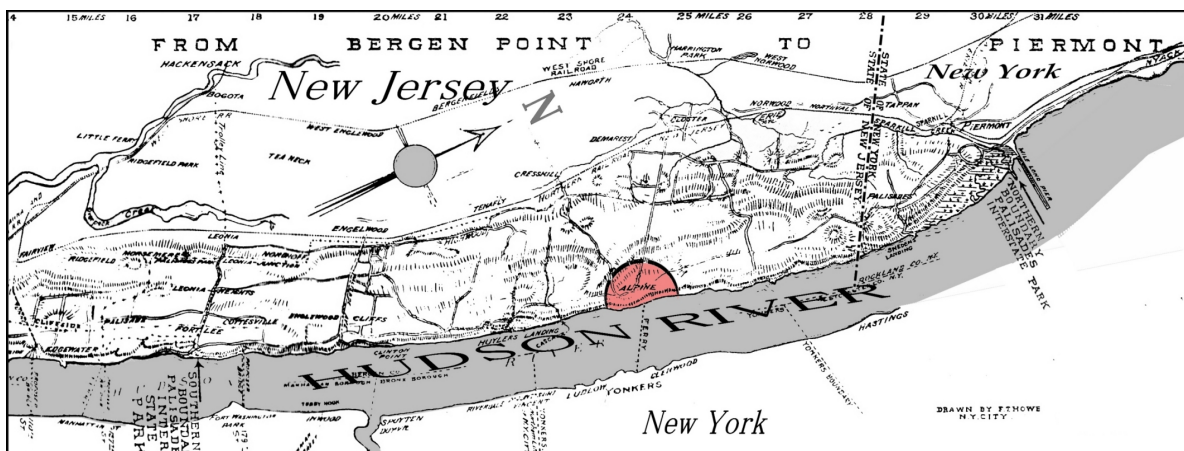


Fig. 2: Map of the Palisades along the Hudson River, showing the location of Alpine near the NY border.

HOMETOWN POs: Alpine, NJ ~ Jean Walton

An invasion into New Jersey of the British forces in the Revolution occurred near this point, to drive the Continental forces from Fort Lee. It was often told that Cornwallis landed his 5000 troops at Alpine – modern history however has put doubt into this site as the landing point. It appears that the landing actually took place a mile and a half further south, at what is now known as Huyler’s Landing.² But the landing site at Alpine did have a significant history of its own. Beginning in 1868, a ferry company was incorporated to carry passengers between Yonkers and Closter Landing (its earlier name – the name was changed to Alpine Landing by 1871 when the post office was opened). The mile-long crossing took 7 minutes. It continued in business even after the George Washington Bridge – 7 miles to the south – opened in 1931, carrying 300,000 vehicles annually. When the Tappan Zee Bridge opened in 1955, loss of revenues caused it to close, and by December 1956, it was no more.³

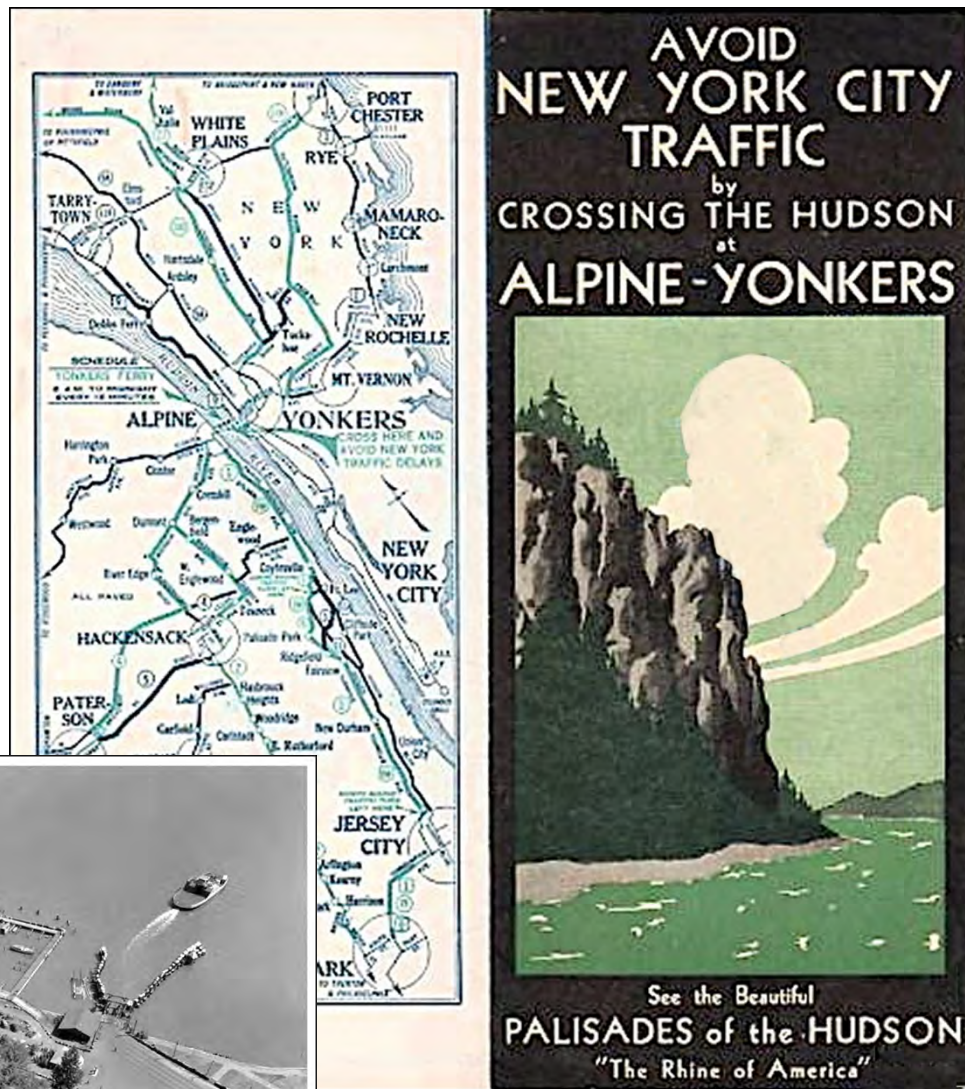


Fig. 3: Brochure promoting the Alpine-Yonkers ferry as the quicker choice for Manhattan, avoiding traffic delays.⁴



Fig. 4: The Alpine terminus of the Alpine-Yonkers Ferry, as seen from atop the Palisades.³

The docks at Alpine did see military use in World War I. Troops were marched from Camp Merritt in nearby Cresskill to Alpine Landing, for a ferry ride to Hoboken, where they then embarked in ships to the front in Europe.

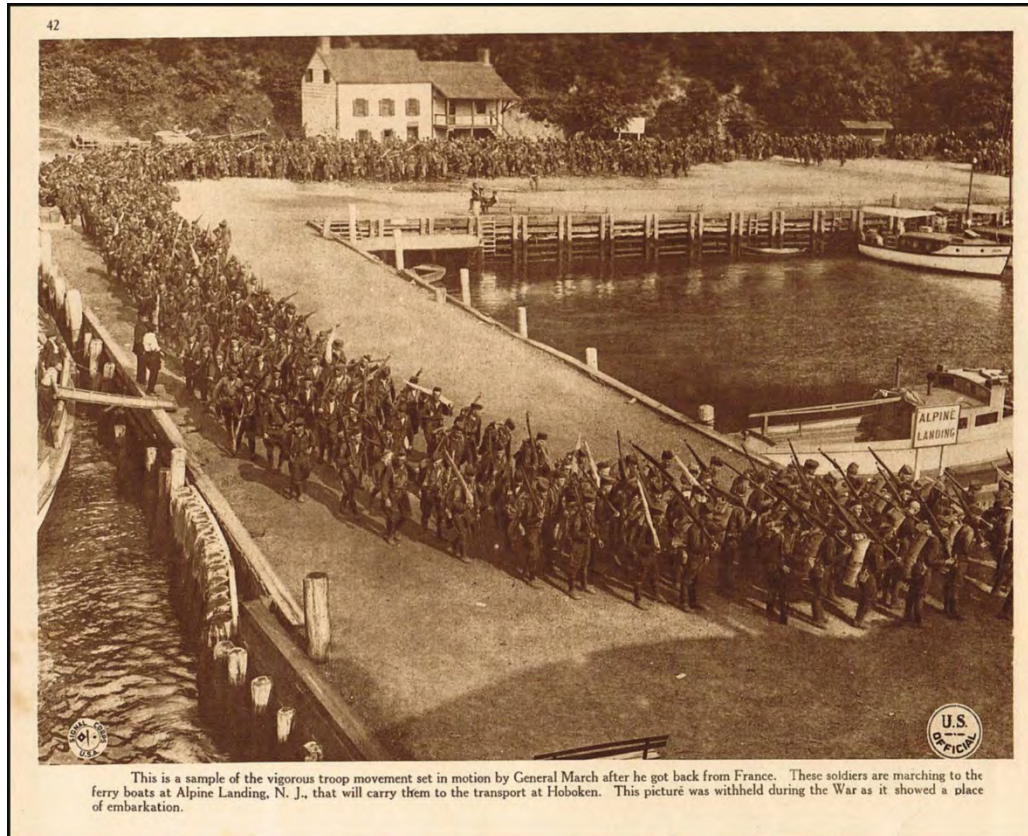


Fig. 5: Troops departing from Alpine Landing in 1918. They will be ferried to Hoboken for overseas transport during WWI.⁵

Alpine, along with Closter, are most easily accessed these days by the Palisades Interstate Parkway, 11 miles of which are in New Jersey, from the George Washington Bridge to the NY state line. Created to preserve the Palisades themselves, this park has taken over this section of land as well as some communities, like nearby Skunk Hollow, a community of free blacks which existed here from 1806 to 1907. Almost all remnants have been removed in the construction that took place when the Palisades Parkway was built between 1948 and 1956.⁶

The population of Alpine has never been high – in the last hundred years it has never gone above 2200, and is currently fewer than 2000 people. A post office was established as Alpine in 1871, and continues in operation today. In 1871 it was located in the J. DuBois store at the intersection of Closter Dock road and Old Dock road. At that time there were only 17 buildings in the district, including houses, church, general store and post office.



Fig. 6: Alpine P.O., located in the general store. ⁷



Fig. 7: An Alpine post card, showing the Lookout, with an Alpine and a Closter cancel, used in 1906.

The seclusion and wooded highlands give this community a feeling of remoteness, although it is only 20 miles from Manhattan. This has lent to the development of a community of mansions, where the wealthy can have access to the city, and still enjoy the seclusion this provides. Interestingly, the Alpine post office provides no delivery service, as residents today do not want it.

Today Alpine boasts higher property values than the Hamptons, or some of the exclusive Hollywood properties (and not surprisingly, the highest property taxes in New Jersey, although the tax rate itself is very low), with median homes selling at over 4.5 million dollars. It has become a haven for many well-known celebrities from the world of entertainment and sports, who come here not to be recognized. There is a preponderance of gated mansions and limousines, with gardeners tending the elaborate grounds. It is unlikely that any of these celebrities are actually picking up their own mail at the post office, which is a tiny office housed in the town hall.



Fig. 8: Current home of the Alpine post office (Zip 07620), courtesy of Evan Kalish and the Postmark Collector's Society web site.⁸

Fig. 9: Alpine's tiny post office inside the borough hall.



Fig. 10: the bank of post office boxes

HOMETOWN POs: Alpine, NJ ~ Jean Walton

A list of Alpine postmasters follows:

Alpine NJ Postmasters

<u>Name</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Date Appointed</u>
Joseph DuBois	Postmaster	04/06/1871
Edward Kohler	Postmaster	08/09/1893
Joseph DuBois	Postmaster	11/26/1897
Frederick J. Browning	Postmaster	9/24/1914
Anton Rinschler	Postmaster	5/10/1918
Charles A. Wendt	Postmaster	1/26/1921
Anton Rinschler	Postmaster	6/1/1926
Mrs. Christine Rinschler	Postmaster	4/9/1937
Gilbert LaTourette	Postmaster	3/30/1938
Mrs. Margaret Bonavenia	Postmaster	10/31/1942
Mrs. Violet M. Burkhardt	Postmaster	6/30/1945
Mrs. Evelyn T. McGill	Postmaster	6/30/1951
Ralph D. Mallia	Postmaster	3/17/1973
Anna F. Kubik	Officer-In-Charge	10/1/1976
Henry F. Levitski	Officer-In-Charge	2/1/1977
Mrs. Marilyn J. Schaub	Postmaster	4/9/1977
Maureen M. O'Kane	Postmaster	5/2/1981
Jane B. Milligan	Officer-In-Charge	3/18/1983
Carol A. Alexander	Postmaster	7/9/1983
Irene Prinjinski	Officer-In-Charge	1/25/2005
Frank J. Pawlowski	Postmaster	3/19/2005

*From the USPS Postmasterfinder at <http://about.usps.com/who-we-are/postmasterfinder/welcome.htm>.

ENDNOTES:

¹ EPA's Greening the Apple at <https://blog.epa.gov/blog/2013/05/the-palisades-building-blocks-for-new-york-city-and-the-nation/>.

² Hidden New Jersey at <http://www.hiddennj.com/2013/09/history-revised-cornwallis-redirected.html>.

³ Skirt Check," story of the Alpine-Yonkers ferry at <http://www.njpalisades.org/skirtCheck.html>.

⁴ From a blogsite at <http://soyosunset.yuku.com/topic/2431/Old-Yonkers-Alpine-Ferry?page=2#.VstzheYXOjs>.

⁵ Ebay lot #161977805282 showing one of the official government views from WWI

⁶ Story of Skunk Hollow: <http://palisadesny.com/history/skunk-hollow-history-19th-century-community-free-a/>

⁷ D'Avino Gallery of POs on Postcards can currently be seen at [NJPHS Picasa Albums](#).

⁸ Post office views at Post Mark Collectors Club site at <http://www.postmarks.org/photos/us.php?st=NJ>.

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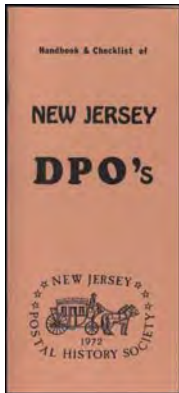
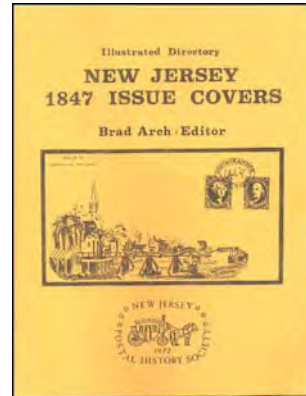
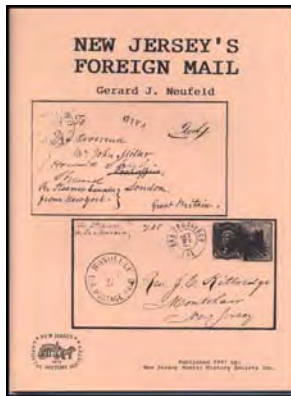
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