



# NJPH

The Journal of  
**NEW JERSEY POSTAL HISTORY SOCIETY**  
 ISSN: 1078-1625

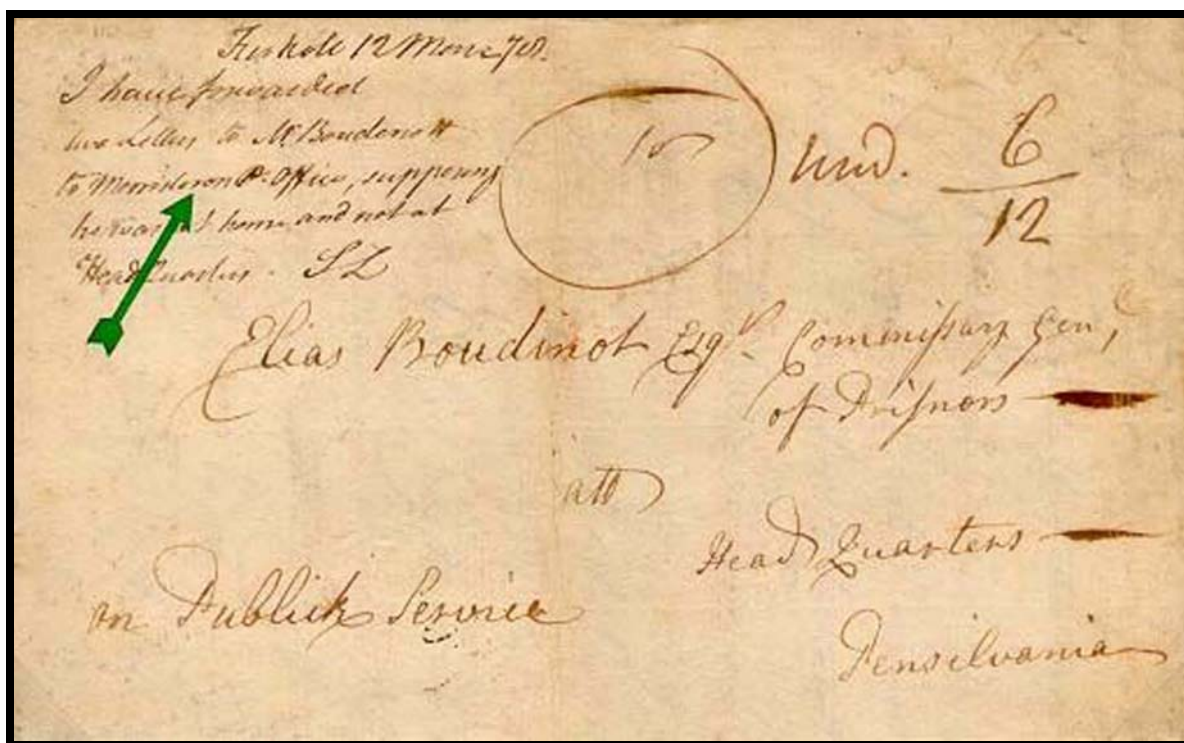
Vol. 31

No 4

Whole Number 152

November 2003

## ~ Revolutionary War Cover ~ Morristown, NJ ~



**Dated February 25, 1778. Forwarded from Fishkill, NY March 12, 1778, via Morristown to Headquarters, Valley Forge, PA~ for more information, see page 121.**

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**NEW JERSEY POSTAL HISTORY SOCIETY, INC.**

APS Affiliate #95 - PHS Affiliate #1A - NJFSC Chapter #44S ISSN: 1078-1625  
Annual Membership Subscriptions \$15.00

Website: <http://members.aol.com/njpostalhistory/phsindex.htm>  
or enter "NJPHS" in your browser's search window and go from there.

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**2004 MEMBERSHIP DUES**

It's that time of the year again. Enclosed with this issue of *NJPH* is your Society membership dues notice for 2004. Against rising costs for copying and mailing *NJPH* to you, the Society has held dues to \$15.00 per year. Please consider a tax-deductible contribution with your dues payment before year's end. It will go a long way to ensuring the Society's economic well being in the year to come. Dues should be sent to our Treasurer, Andy Kupersmit at New Jersey Postal History Society, Inc., C/o Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries Inc., 60 East 56<sup>th</sup> Street, 4<sup>th</sup> floor, New York, NY 10022. Remember that each paid up member is entitled to place two free classified ads per year in *NJPH*. Please be sure to fill out the enclosed form and return it to our Secretary, Jean Walton at 125 Turtleback Rd., Califon, NJ 07830.

\*\*\*\*\*

**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

We have a new treasurer! Andrew Kupersmit has graciously agreed to take over the position. Andy is a professional philatelist with the Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries and has a broad interest in all of New Jersey's postal history. We wish him well. As his first order of business for the Society, he will be collecting dues for 2004. Please be sure to forward your dues promptly to him before the end of the year.

We have received a special invitation to participate in the Empire State Postal History Society's "Exhibitor Challenge" which will be held at ROPEX 2004 in Rochester, New York on June 18-20, 2004. I plan on exhibiting at this show and hope that other members will also participate so that New Jersey's postal history makes a nice showing. Because space fills up quickly, if you have an interest in exhibiting either a multi or single frame exhibit, be sure to visit the ROPEX website for a prospectus: [www.geocities.com/rpastamps/ropex\\_\\_pro.html](http://www.geocities.com/rpastamps/ropex__pro.html) or write ROPEX 2004 Exhibit Chairman, 42 Maynard Street, Rochester, New York 14615-2022.

ROBERT G. ROSE

## THE MORRISTOWN POST OFFICE

by Donald A. Chafetz

The story of the Morristown Post Office stretches back to the very beginning of the Revolutionary War. Washington's three encampments in Morristown starting in 1777 placed the small community of 250 souls in the middle of the war, and consequently created a need for a post office.

The origin of the post office in 1777 is a little murky, but has been pieced together from a number of sources. The post office seems to have functioned until the end of the war in 1780, and then slips from sight, reappearing in the records around 1792.

Once it was firmly established under the Constitution government in 1792, its history is uneventful except for the numerous moves it made between the 1840's to the 1860's. The history of these moves has been pieced together from articles found in the clipping file of the Morristown Public Library. [Ref. 1-6] Most of the articles are undated with no source cited. They also refer to contemporary buildings or businesses which no longer exist. The result is that sometimes the moves appear a little confusing.

The listing below of the postmasters and their term of service is taken from the website of the United States Postal Service. Some of the above-mentioned articles cite dates of appointments of postmasters which are different than the Postal Services dates. In all cases, the Postal Services dates are used.

In the Postal Service listing, following the names of some of the postmasters is a description of their occupation and party affiliation. In many cases, the early postmasters handled the postal business as an adjunct to their normal occupation. The political party affiliation was important in the 19th century since the "spoils system" was used by politicians to reward their supporters. One of the spoils was to be appointed as postmaster. This system came to an end in the late 19th century with the establishment of the Civil Service. At that time, the job of postmaster became a full time occupation, independent of the political party in power.

The covers seen below are contemporary with the time period discussed and are used to illustrate some of the services available at the time or events occurring.

### 1. Coffee-house

In the early days, mail for Morris County was left at a coffee-house in Elizabethtown and at one owned by George Barlett, located where the store of the S.B. Carson Company now stands. The number of coffee houses increased between 1740 and 1745 so that the mail for Morristown was left only at Barlett's.

### 2. 03/06/1777

**Smith, Hugh**

General George Washington's encampment dates at Morristown were:

January 3, 1777 – May 28, 1777

July 3, 1777 – July 11, 1777

December 7, 1779 – June 10, 1780

The following appointment date is taken from the New Jersey Archives, Second Series, Volume 1, p. 308.

**Post Office in Morristown**

*March 6, 1777*

*A Post Office is just opened and kept by Hugh Smith Esq. at Headquarters in Morristown, NJ through which we receive the Philadelphia Mail once a week. The Post arrives at Fishkill on Wednesday and sets out again for Morristown on Thursday morning.*

Apparently Smith was the military postmaster assigned to Washington's Headquarters during his first Morristown stay.

The following description of the military post office is found in the book *The Spirit of the Revolution*, pages 259-260. [Ref. 13.]

*One special branch of the postal service was the post-office and postmaster with the Main Army. This postmaster traveled with the troops and shared all their inconveniences and hardships in the field.*

*The cost of this service, which was maintained at Headquarters, was about one hundred dollars per month and the method of mail delivery had been for the mail-riders passing nearest to where the army happened to be to turn off from their regular route and deliver the mail to the army post-office.*

*This method was changed toward the latter part of the year 1777. It was ordered in October of that year that the regular mail-riders pay no attention to the position of the army, but deliver all army mail to the post-office nearest; the postmasters at such points were authorized to hire special expresses to carry the mail to army Headquarters direct.*

*There had always been difficulty in keeping a good man in the position of postmaster at Headquarters for any length of time, as the pay was quite low, ten dollars per month, with two rations a day and forage for two horses. Most of the men who held this position resigned because they had no rank or authority and found themselves considered on a par with the common soldier. There was no distinguishing uniform for the position, though one of the postmasters is known to have worn green clothes, probably of his own designing.*

*The list of names of men who filled this honorable position is not complete. Thus far we know Hugh Smith, Hugh Hastings, Baxter Howe, John Durham Alvey, and Samuel Loudoun.*

The next information we find regarding the Morristown post office is found in: [Ref.12]

**THE LEDGER OF DOCTOR BENJAMIN FRANKLIN**

Post Office at Headquarters, postmaster Hugh Smith

Entries posted April 5, 1777 – July 5, 1778

The Post Office at Head-Quarters (Hugh Smith P. M.)		Contra:	
1777. To Balance of Acc <sup>t</sup> . ending this day	29. 2. 11	July 5. By Balance of quarter ending this day	67. 14. 1
From To Dr. of Dr. ending this day	54. 3. 10	July 5. By Dr. of Dr. ending this day	132. 10. 6
1778. To Dr. of Dr. ending this day	79. 13. 4	July 5. By Dr. of Dr. ending this day	156. 15. 8
	<u>154. 18. 4</u>		<u>355. 9. 3</u>
Balance due Hugh Smith	202. 1. 4	Balance brought down	202. 1. 4
To Cash advanced him Aug 16 <sup>th</sup> 1777	22. 10. -		
To do - advanced him Dec 4 <sup>th</sup> 1778	43. 15. -		
Balance due Hugh Smith	<u>135. 16. 4</u>		<u>135. 16. 4</u>
	<u>202. 1. 4</u>	Balance brought down	135. 16. 4

The following is an extract from a letter to the President of Congress, Philadelphia from Headquarters, Morris Town, April 2, 1777:

*P.S. I have ordered the Deputy Qr. Mr. General to establish proper Relays of Expresses between this and Philadelphia, that intelligence may be occasionally conveyed in the most expeditious Manner. [Ref.15]*



Letter datelined Morristown, May 28, 1777, sent by express on date of Washington's departure from Morristown. Sent by John Fitzgerald, Aide-de-Camp to General Washington to Major General Greene. It went to Boundbrook, NJ requesting "Places will be necessary for the Paymaster General & Adjutant General, also some places for the Post Office Master.



3. 10/05/1777

King, Frederick (Riding Saddles)

This is the first non-military Morristown financial record listed in “Benjamin Franklin’s Ledger, p. 46. The actual appointment date of Postmaster King must have been earlier.

**THE LEDGER OF DOCTOR BENJAMIN FRANKLIN**

Post Office at Morristown, postmaster Frederick King

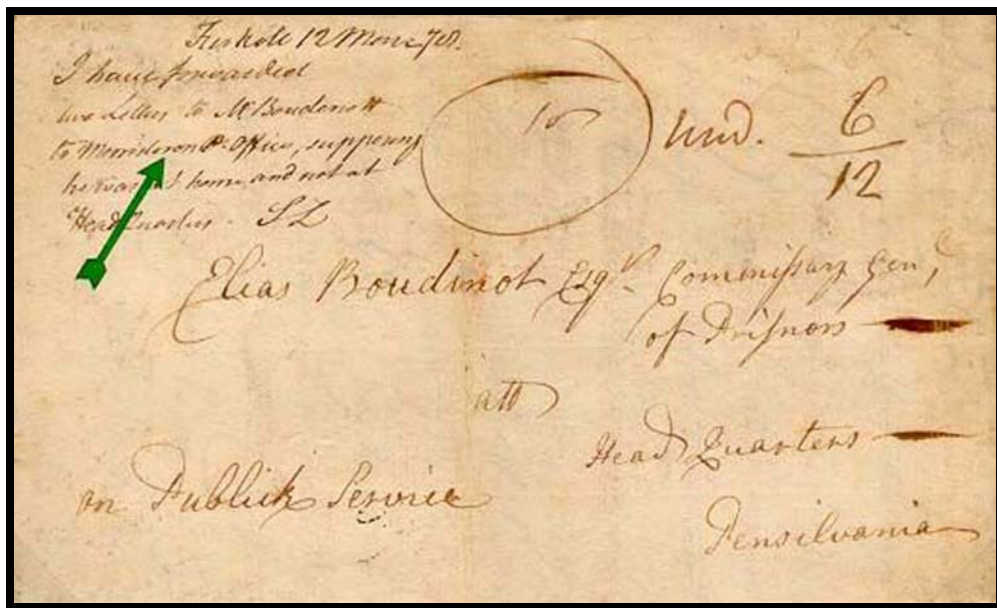
Entries posted October 5, 1777 – August 27, 1778

D <sup>r</sup> The Post Office at Morristown		Frederick King Postmaster Contra		C <sup>d</sup>			
1777	Oct 5 <sup>th</sup> To Balance of 5 <sup>th</sup> Oct. and 5 <sup>th</sup> Oct.	£	53. 8. 9 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	1778	Jan 4 <sup>th</sup> By Cash paid James Benson Esq <sup>r</sup>	£	12. 15. 7 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>
1778	Jan 24 <sup>th</sup> To Balance of 5 <sup>th</sup> Oct. and 5 <sup>th</sup> Oct. 1777	£	7. 6. 10 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	June 23 <sup>rd</sup> By Balance due F. King of 5 <sup>th</sup> Oct. and 5 <sup>th</sup> Oct.	£	29. 14. 11 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	
1778	August 27 <sup>th</sup> To Cash p. by Gen <sup>l</sup> Howard	£	86. 2. 3 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	Aug 27 <sup>th</sup> By Balance due F. King of 5 <sup>th</sup> Oct. and 5 <sup>th</sup> Oct.	£	50. 7. 3	
		£	98. 17. 10 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>			£	98. 17. 10 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>

Postal Service records also show that Frederick King was appointed sometime between January 28, 1782 and March 26, 1782. It appears, however, that the office was not in continuous operation as it is not listed among the original 75 post offices under the United States Government in 1789.

King’s first quarterly report account was rendered to the post office department on March 26, 1782. He resigned in 1792, four years previous to his death (April 4, 1796) and the commission of his son, Henry King, from Postmaster General Pickering, was received on June 14, 1794.

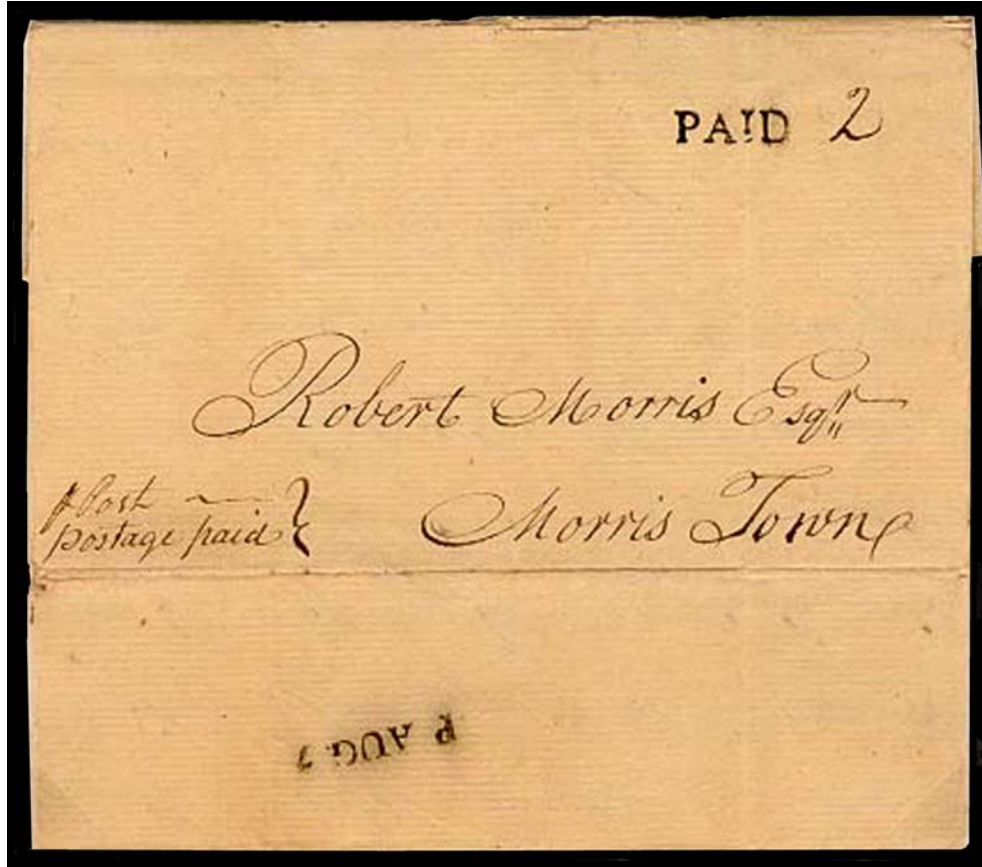
The following letter is the only non-archival one known to the author which mentions the Morristown post office during this time period.



Dateline  
Boston,  
February 25,  
1778.  
Forwarded  
from Fishkill,  
NY March 12,  
1778, via  
Morristown to  
Headquarters,  
Valley Forge,  
PA  
Postal rates:  
Way fee - 6 dwt  
to Boston; 6  
dwt from  
Boston to  
Valley Forge  
(under 400  
miles).

In 1781 Morristown was being served by the following post-riders:

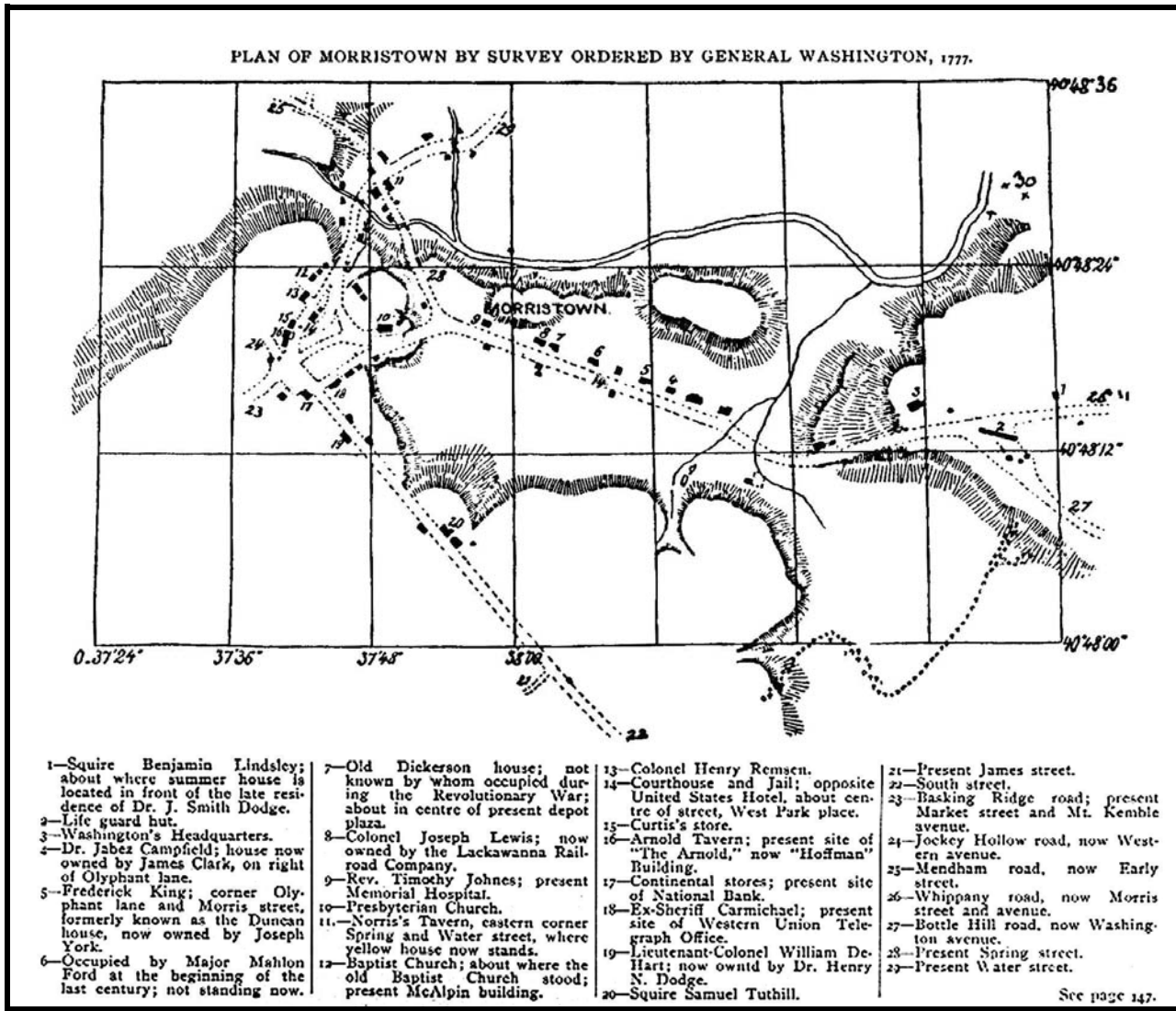
- Philadelphia to Morristown – James Martin
- Morristown to Fishkill, NJ – Daniel Ayres [Ref. 13]



*Letter sent from Philadelphia to Morristown, dated August 7, 1782.  
Effective January 1, 1782, Congress restored the rates of 1775  
Postage fee of 2 dwt. for 60 – 100 miles.*

The town's first postmaster (Frederick King) opened an office in his home on King's Highway, today's Morris Street. The King house was at the corner Olyphant Lane and Morris Street, formerly known as the Duncan house, now owned by Joseph York. [See map, following page.].

It was a little old house that stood considerable distance back from the sidewalk and nearly opposite to where the Schuyler-Hamilton House is located. At one time there was a boarding house there and later a hotel known as the Washington Hotel, not the present one which is on Lackawanna Place and Morris Street.



[Map source: Ref. 7]

Important Buildings:

- No 3: Washington Headquarters
- No 5: Frederick King House
- No 14: Opposite of US Hotel
- No 16: Arnold Tavern ~ site of Benedict Arnold Court Martial

King's full-time occupation was making riding saddles for Morrissetown's wealthy citizens in a factory on the site of the old, but still standing Washington Hotel. He operated the post office as a sideline at his residence.

'Mr. King's house in Morrissetown' was designated by Washington's order as the scene of a general court martial, which sat there for a succession of trials from Jan. 30 to March 13, 1780. It is singular that the only two houses of citizens mentioned by name in Washington's general orders, so far as known, were that of Frederick King and ....

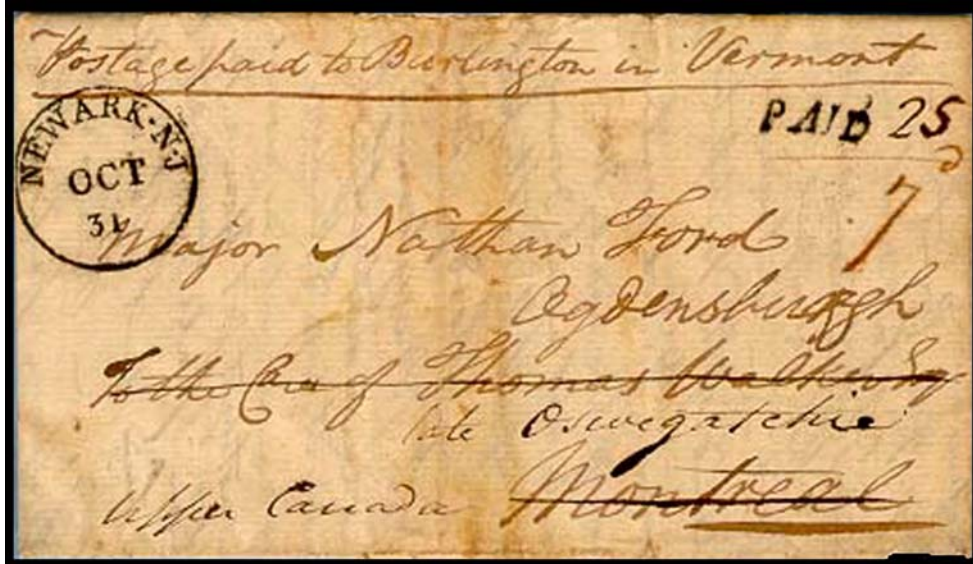


4. 06/12/1792 – 04/09/1834

King, Henry

This date is from the *Letterbooks of the Postmaster General* (Letterbook "A," Page 527). [Ref. 16] The first financial return was dated March 20, 1793. Because his account is first listed in the records after 1789, it appears that Henry King was the first postmaster of Morristown under the U.S. Constitution.

He continued to act as postmaster until April 10, 1834 (42 years ) when he was succeeded by Edward Condit. Henry died on March 2, 1837.



*International mail: Dated Morristown, October 28, 1799 via Burlington Vermont to Montreal Canada. Postage to border 25 cents (over 500 miles) and from border to Montreal 7d.*



*First Morristown handstamp: Dated February 22, 1807, 10 cents for 40 – 90 miles.*

**THE MORRISTOWN POST OFFICE ~ Donald A. Chafetz**

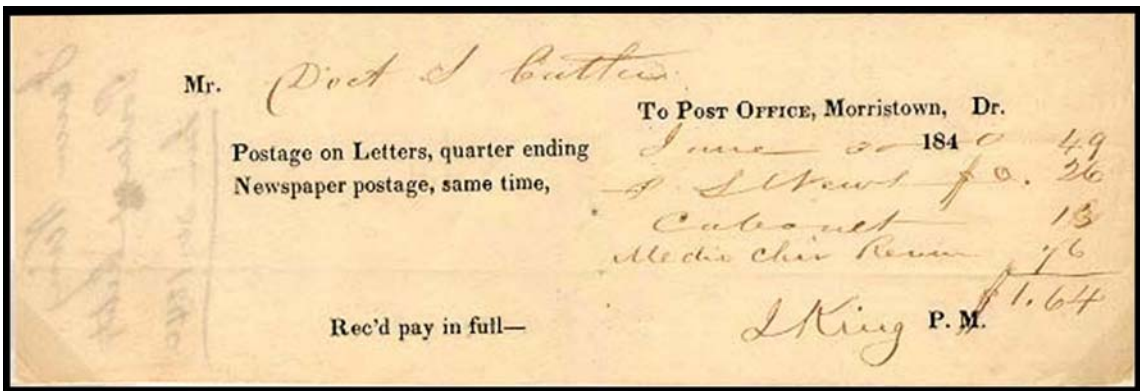
- a. From its inception, the local post office had been located where the Hotel Washington now stands in Morris Street, most of the population being concentrated in that vicinity.
- b. In 1815, however, many residents began to complain that the office on Morris Street was too great a distance from the famous Morristown Green, this part of town having become more thickly settled, and in order to satisfy the complainants, Postmaster Henry King sold his house on Morris Street, and in March 1820, purchased a small building on the present site of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The new location of the post office gave townspeople a more convenient location for mail deliveries and pickups.

In 1794, Henry King joined the company of volunteers under Captain David Ford, raised to go to Western Pennsylvania to suppress an unlawful rioting of the inhabitants there, known then and since as the “Whiskey Boys.”

**5. 04/10/1834 – 11/11/1836 Condit, Edward**

Postmaster Condit for some reason, whether from illness or death cannot be learned, was succeeded by Jason King on November 12, 1836. This official was not related to his two predecessors of the same name.

**6. 11/12/1836 – 06/20/1841 King, Jason**



*Receipt dated June 30, 1840. During the early 1840's, the postmasters at many towns regularly charged the postage to box holders and regular customers, submitting a bill at quarterly or monthly intervals.*

**7. 06/21/1841 – 07/05/1843 King, Jacob M.**

On June 21, 1841 Jacob M. King received his commission of postmaster. He was a grandson of Frederick King, Morristown’s first postmaster and a son of Henry King, the town’s second postmaster.

8. 07/06/1843 – 08/24/1851

Roy, Joseph J.

- a. During Roy's administration, the change was made from the house opposite the Green to a building on the Miller estate. It was located on what is now the site of Hibler's store (later Central P. & L. Co.) on South Street. This time it had to leave its home not to satisfy the people, but to make way for the Methodist Church, which had purchased the Park Place property
- b. Next it moved back to the Green to the old New Jersey Hotel (Park & Speedwell) which is where the Epstein's store was situated.
- c. The hotel burned down in 1846, so the office was moved back to its former location in the Miller Building.

9. 08/25/1851 – 04/13/1853

Crater, Philip W.

10. 04/14/1853 – 04/10/1861

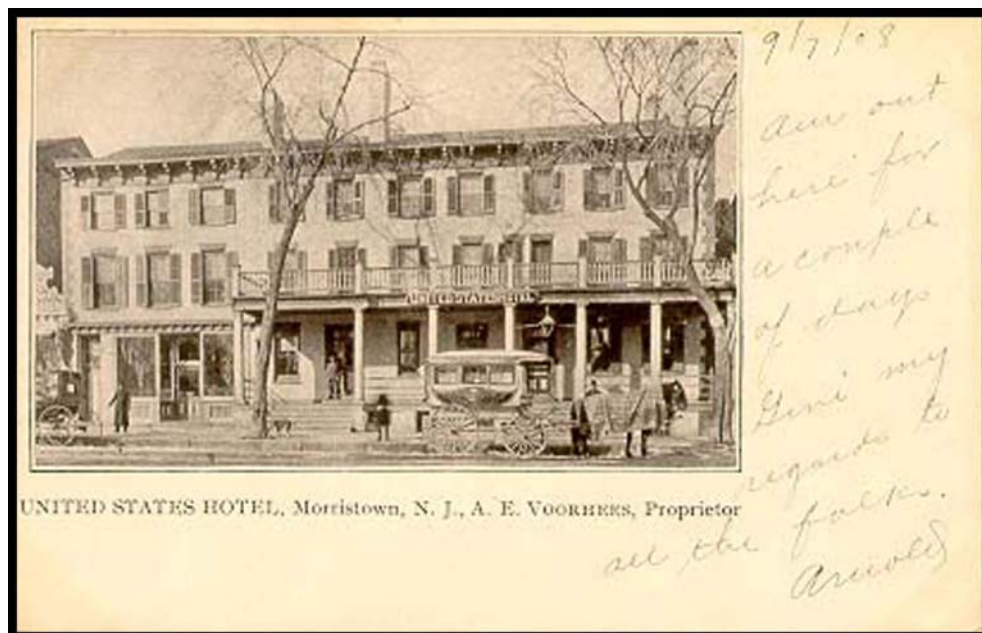
Nathan B. Luse (Hotel Proprietor)

- a. The post office moved to the Morristown Trust Co. building (corner Park Place and Market Street).
- b. Later it was moved a few stores down on Market Street to where the Independent Hose Company is located (Market Street near Maple Avenue).

11. 04/11/1861 – 11/16/1866

Alanson A. Vance (Republican, newspaper editor)

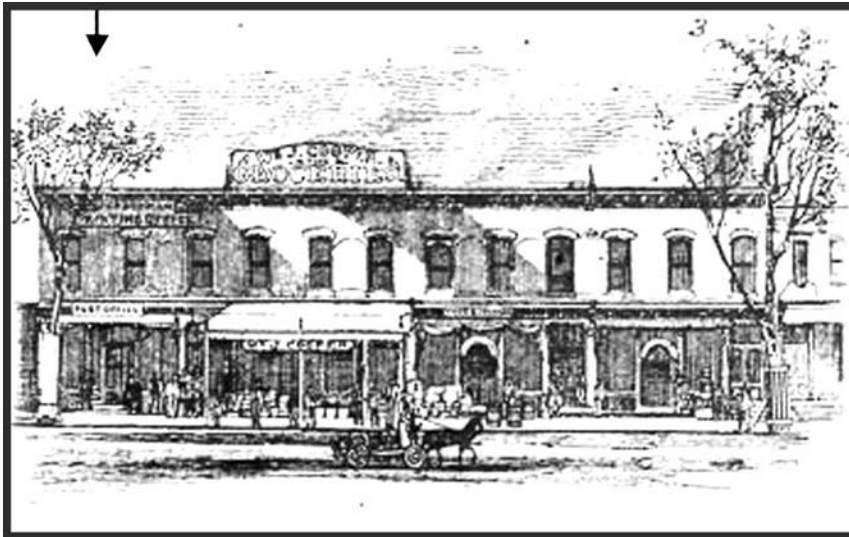
- a. In 1865, there is an item in a local paper that the office had moved to a new building two doors from the old site and adjoining the store of J.C. Bird, which probably means that the office moved to 15 Park Place. This is the present site of Andrew G. Phillip's hardware store on West Park Place. That building was burned in March 1866.



United States Hotel

## THE MORRISTOWN POST OFFICE ~ Donald A. Chafetz

- a. For three weeks, the office was conducted temporarily in the room that became the bar of the United States Hotel. It had been previously occupied by George C. King's hat store (Park Square building).
- b. A few weeks later the office was moved to William Cooper's brick store on Market Street. The two-story building is now owned and occupied by the NY & NJ Telephone Company's central exchange.



*W.J. Cooper grocery store. Post Office is located at the extreme left of the picture as you look at it.*

- c. The Wood Estate offered to erect a building on the Park Place site of the burned structure. While this plan was being executed the post office was located in the basement of the National Iron Bank building, 11 Washington Street.
- d. The new post office was erected on the site of the burnt post office building on Park Place. It was occupied at the earliest possible time and much of the work was done after postmaster Vance had taken possession.

The first money orders were issued July 3, 1865.

### 12. 11/17/1866 – 04/10/1867

**Stanburrough, Albert H**

On November 17, 1866, under President Johnson, the appointment of Albert H. Stanborough for postmaster of Morristown was announced, but he never took the oath of office as Mr. Vance was protected by the "tenure of office" act and he could not be removed while the Senate was not in session. Efforts were made to oust Mr. Vance, but he held over during 1865 and 1866 until he was reappointed April 11, 1867.

### 13. 04/11/1867 – 03/17/1875

**Alanson A. Vance (Republican, newspaper editor)**

During the latter part of his administration, the post office department instituted a free delivery service in Morristown. Mr. Vance entered his protest, believing that, at that time, it was not needed and residents were outspoken in their denunciation of the government's pet scheme. Some of the latter refused to accept mail from the two carriers that had been appointed. The post office was a popular spot for meeting neighbors and exchanging news.



The postmaster was sent to Washington to represent the interests of the citizens, but there he was ordered by the authorities to increase the price of individual letter boxes from \$2.00 to \$4.00. The carrier system lasted just two years, and with its abolishment, the price of boxes was returned to \$2.00.



*Foreign destination: Morrystown June 28, 1870 to Germany; received July 16, 1870. Postal rate 10 cents for direct link United States to Bremen, North German Union*

**14. 03/17/1875 – 02/25/1887 John R. Runyon (Republican, stationer & bookbinder)**

During Runyon's administration the office was moved to the building on Park Place (near his music store) later occupied by Dugeon's (or Donnelly's) dry goods store. The site later became the location Epstein's Store, South Park Place.

The postmaster attended personally to the domestic money order business, and it was due to his efforts that the foreign money order service was added.



*During the 1870's – 1880's, fancy cancels were used in many post offices. Morrystown's cancel, July 16, 1873: 8 pie wedge cancellation.*



**THE MORRISTOWN POST OFFICE ~ Donald A. Chafetz**

**15. 02/26/1887 – 01/26/1891**

**Edward A. Quayle (Democrat, lawyer)**

Quayle, a former mayor, re-instituted the free delivery system which was started with four carriers. The carrier delivery system was inaugurated October 1, 1888. This time the idea took. The flow of “golden” people into the area – tycoons who believed life should be convenient – may have had something to with the change of attitude.



*Machine cancellation dated May 28, 1888.*

The office was at 18 Park Place when he took it over. His brother G.H. Quayle was assistant postmaster at the time.

**16. 01/27/1891 – 01/31/1895**

**James C. Youngblood (Republican, lawyer)**

The office was at 18 Park Place when Youngblood became postmaster.



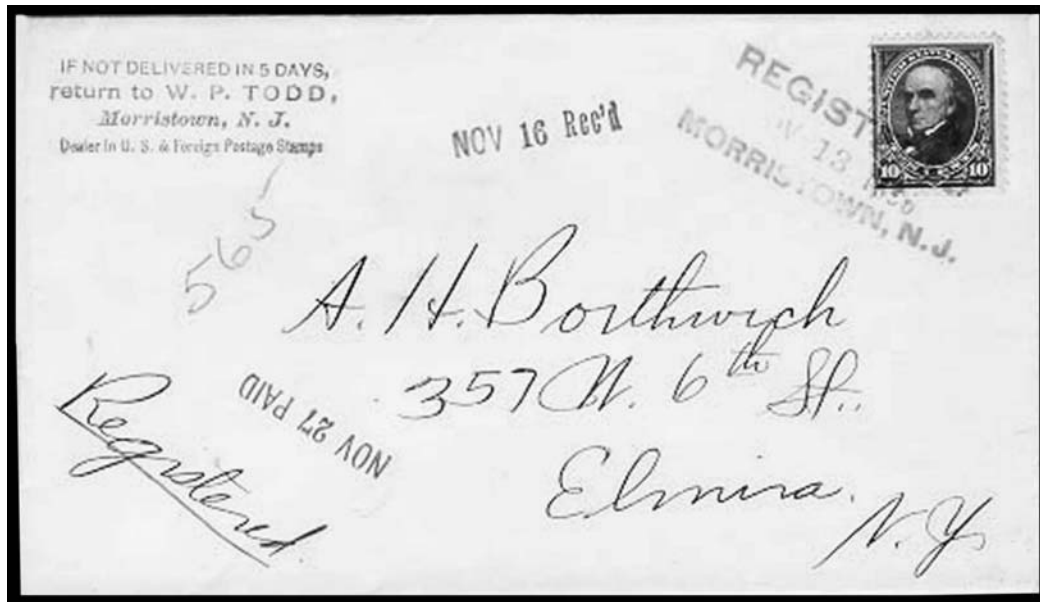
*Special delivery letter, dated May 15, 1894, 8 am; backstamped Brooklyn, May 15, 11 am.*

17. 02/01/1895 – 01/27/1899

Stephen Breese (Democrat, real estate broker)

When more room was needed, the office was moved to the present site of the Kresge \$1 Store, South Street, where it remained until a new building was completed.

The first stamp canceling machine was added to the equipment and two mounted carriers were added. During Breese's administration, mail deliveries were extended to the outskirts of the town, and later into Normandy Park.



*Registered cover, dated November 13 1896; backstamped November 14, 1895*

The administration was so efficiently conducted that approval was voluntarily expressed on all sides.

In 1897, a search was started for a new post office site. Nine years later, when Clarke was postmaster, the 1 Morris Street site was agreed upon.

Stephen Breese was in business at one time with the late George Ross. They had a real estate office in the old Bell Building at the corner of Park Place and Bank Street. Ross and Breese didn't get along well. Everybody liked Steve, so they made him Postmaster in 1895.

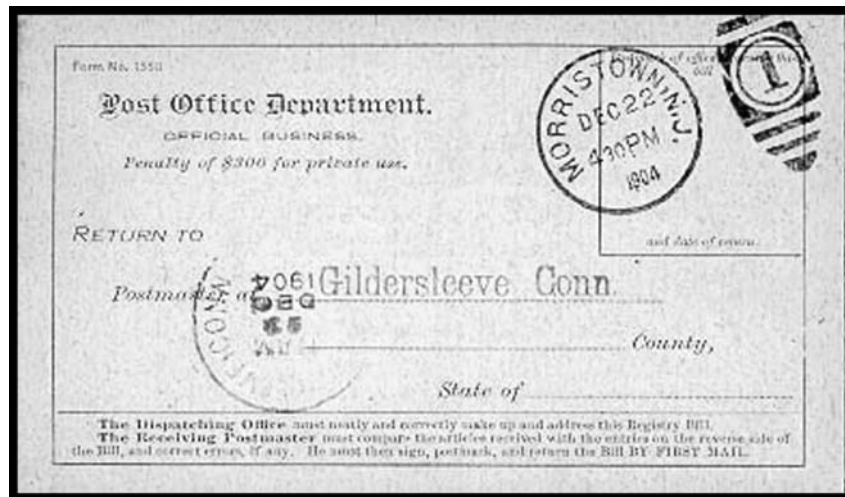
18. 01/28/1899 – 06/05/1901

John E. Fennell (Republican, lawyer)

Fennell was the acknowledged leader of the Republican Party in Morris County. It was mainly through his efforts that the rural delivery wagon was installed.

19. 06/06/1901 – 06/20/1910

George L. Clarke (Republican, store clerk)



*Registry bill sent December 21, 1904, received December 22, 1904.  
Official business so no postage required.*

During Clarke's administration, talk of the need for a new post office crystallized and appropriation of \$35,000 was made for the land. The site at the corner of Morris Street and Dumont Place was deeded to the government December 10, 1909 by C. Franklin Wilson. A movement was started for an appropriation of \$150,000 toward a building.

20. 06/21/1910 – 04/26/1914 Charles McCollum (Republican, proprietor of livery stable)

21. 04/27/1914 – 01/12/1923

Eugene S. Burke (Democrat, local business)

During Burke's administration, work was started and completed in 1915 on the new post office located at the corner of Morris Street and Dumont Place.



*Morristown Post Office on the Green*

22. 01/13/1923 – 06/25/1934

Bodine, Charles W. (Republican)



*Flight by Major James H. Doolittle (later General) between dawn and dusk in one day over all the routes covered by George Washington in his travels. The event occurred during the bicentennial of the birth of George Washington. Cover signed by Postmaster Bodine,*

23. 06/26/1934 – 01/30/1954

Noncarrow, Russell J. (Civil Service)

24. 01/31/1954 – 09/29/1961

Brown, Russell A.

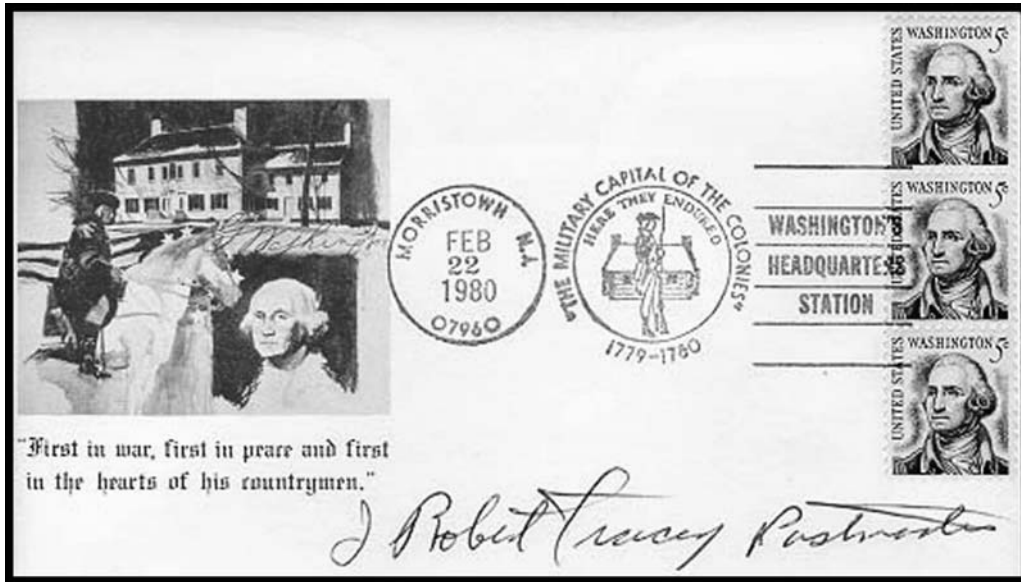
25. 09/30/1961 – 02/01/1989

Tracey, John Robert

John Tracy as postmaster sought to move the post office again. His search this time was not for a spot convenient to his business or his family. Instead, it was for a site convenient to the people. This time, however, a move is not so easy. The search for a new Morristown Post Office became a long battle involving politics, real estate interests, business interests, and the man on the street. It was resolved by the naming the Ridgedale Post Office the main Morristown post office in 1969. That post office is located at 150 Ridgedale Avenue. The post office on the Green became a subsidiary.



*Cover commemorating the change over of the United States Postal Department to the United States Postal Service on July 1, 1971.*



*One of many special cancellations that was available during the Bicentennial celebration. Cover signed by Postmaster Tracey.*

In these last 15 years, the job of postmaster has been filled by a number of different individuals:

- |                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| 26. 02/02/1989 – 02/26/1989 | Grayson, Douglas M. . (Officer-In-Charge) |
| 27. 02/27/1989 – 06/29/1989 | Bramante, Joseph J. (Officer-In-Charge)   |
| 28. 06/30/1989 – 11/03/1989 | Grayson, Douglas M.. (Officer-In-Charge)  |
| 29. No appointment date     | Hoening, Andrew K.                        |
| 30. 11/04/1989 – 04/16/1993 | Allocco, Ralph E.                         |
| 31. No appointment date     | Grayson, Douglas M.. (Officer-In-Charge)  |
| 32. 04/17/1993 – 09/02/1996 | Davidson, James M.                        |
| 33. 09/03/1996 – 01/27/1998 | Iarossi, Nick (Officer-In-Charge)         |
| 34. 01/28/1998 – 02/12/1998 | Balliro, John (Officer-In-Charge)         |
| 35. 07/18/1998 – 03/05/2000 | Carman, John T.                           |
| 36. 03/06/2000 – 06/15/2001 | Thompson, Carl P. (Officer-In-Charge)     |
| 37. 06/16/2001 -            | Allocco, Dennis M.                        |



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3. "The Morristown Post Office," date unknown.
4. "Post Office Near Center of Town Most of the Time," Pierson, Aldus H., Daily Record, April 13, 1940.
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15. Writings of Washington, p. 348.
16. Letterbooks of the Postmaster General (Letterbook "A"), Page 527.



**WE WELCOME THE FOLLOWING NEW MEMBERS:**

**William W. Sammis**, 436 Thomas Road, Ithaca, NY 14850-9653, email [cds13@cornell.edu](mailto:cds13@cornell.edu),

Interests: Expresses, locals, parcel delivery companies [2004]

**Judith Stewart**, 330 W. Washington Ave., Elmira, NY 14901, Interests: pipe organ covers [2003-04]

**Werwinski, Bernard T., Sr.**, 179 Southampton Dr., Smithville, NJ 08205,

[BTWCover@verizon.net](mailto:BTWCover@verizon.net), Interests: DPOs, auxiliary markings, foreign destinations [2003]

**Michael A. White**, P.O. Box 5222, Saipan, MP 96950, email [mwhite@saipan.com](mailto:mwhite@saipan.com), Interests: Postal History of Long Beach Island [2004]

**WE NEED ARTICLES NOW!**

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**New Jersey postal history are always welcome.**

**PLEASE submit these to your Editor: Robert G. Rose  
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## THE ORGAN CAPITAL OF THE WORLD: Part II

### Manufacture in Washington Borough, Warren County, New Jersey by Len Frank

*[This is the second of a three-part article on the organ and piano companies of Washington, NJ. In our last issue (August 2003, Vol. 31, No 3, Whole No. 151,) Len Frank showed the advertising covers of Daniel F. Beatty. This issue deals with The Cornish Company, and the following issue will cover other smaller organ companies with an overall map and timeline. Ed.]*

#### JOSEPH BARTELS CORNISH [CORNISH & COMPANY]

The Cornish Company, originally Cornish & Company, was also a very large manufacturer of organs and pianos in Washington, New Jersey. It rivaled Beatty's enterprise in every way, and from a philatelic point of view, also produced many extraordinary advertising covers, some of which are amongst the most highly sought after for their use of color and detail.

Cornish had begun in the business as Beatty did, as a salesman of organs produced by others. For a while he worked for Beatty, learning advertising, hence he too specialized in mail order selling. In the late 1870s, Joseph B. Cornish took over the Dawes and Wycoff organ business near the Morris Canal, starting his own production in 1879. He soon outgrew that location, and moved to a new site, a brick factory at the corner of W. Washington Avenue and Hornbaker (now S. Lincoln) Street, which expanded in time to 45,000 sq. ft., with drying kilns, veneer sheds and wire forming capability. He started making organs at a rate of fifty per month.

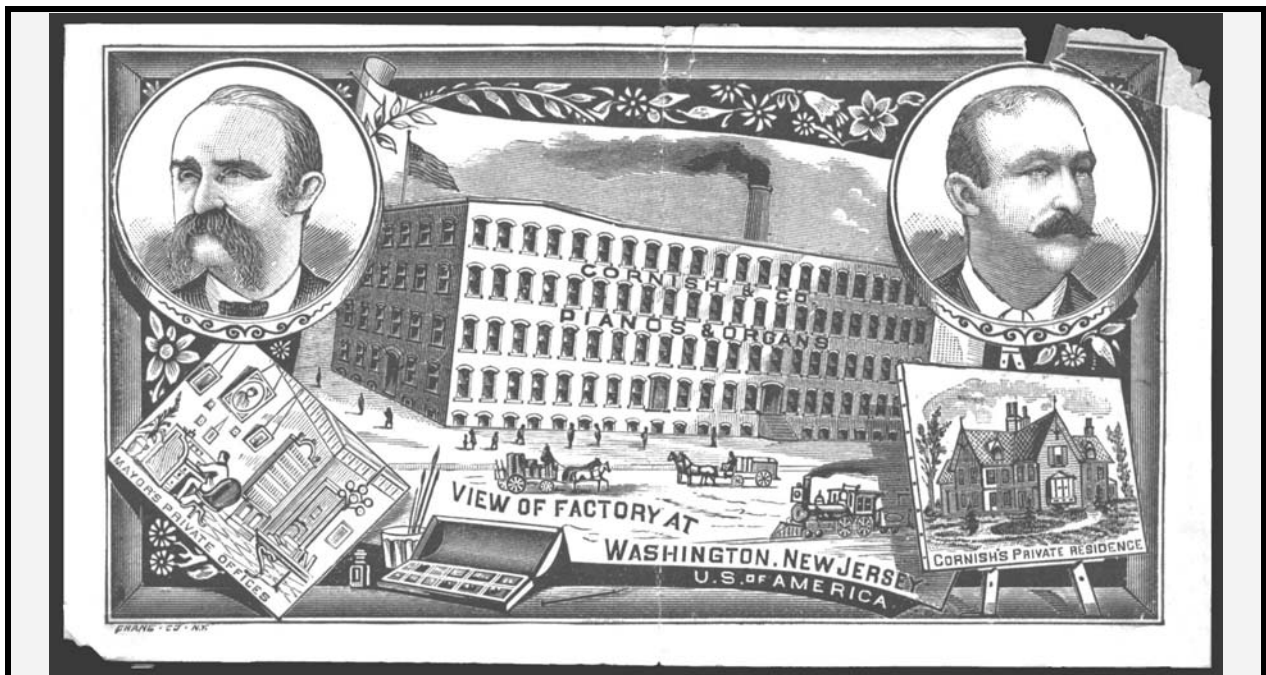


*Three generations were involved in the life of the Cornish Company ~ left to right, father, grandson, and son. This black & white reproduction does not do justice to this lovely cover, likely from 1908-10, which was produced in tan, gold and green with additional advertising on the reverse.*

During the 1890s, Joseph Cornish, with his son Johnston, became the leading organ maker in Washington. He advertised that he was producing 10,000 instruments per year, and that sales were valued at \$1,000,000 per year. His advertising included the Ladies Home Journal in 1903. Organs were sold worldwide. There was steady employment for some four hundred men and the company was known to practice good labor relations. It was considered that working for Cornish was the best employment that could be had in a blue collar town such as Washington. Grandson Joseph B. Cornish II joined the company on reaching his majority.

By the time of the founder's death in 1910, business had begun to decline. With the decline of the popularity of organs and the death of Cornish Senior in 1910, and son Johnston now in charge, manufacturing converted to phonographs. The business continued to decline for some years prior to the time of Johnston's death in 1920. Johnston left the business to his son Joseph B., but without Johnston's guidance, business declined even more rapidly. The equipment and machinery had not been replaced since before WW1 and was old and worn out. Electrical power was 133 cycles instead of the new standard of 60 cycle A.C. It also needed replacing, as did the steam boiler it serviced. In 1921, the company, with its outmoded facility, was in receivership and was liquidated in 1926.

John J. Farrell purchased the property and remodeled it as the Farrell Arms Hotel. It was destroyed by fire in 1934. Concurrently, the Cornish mansion on Belvidere Street was sold to a Mr. Birdsall, who in turn sold it to the Klu Klux Klan. The Klan left Washington not long after their purchase when the minister-secretary disappeared with the Klan's money.



*A flyer from Cornish & Company - Joseph left and Johnston right. Johnston served as the Mayor of Washington [note lower left picture]. This factory was at W. Washington & S. Lincoln [then Hornbaker St.] and was to grow much larger over time.*

*Joseph B. (Bartels) Cornish was born in Bethlehem Township, Hunterdon County, New Jersey, April 3, 1834. He attended the town's public schools and at fourteen (1848) he was employed in his father's country store at West Portal, Hunterdon County. Working with his father, he gained an extensive knowledge of the mercantile business. He married Adeline Johnson. They had a son, Johnston who was born in Bethlehem Township, Hunterdon, in 1858. Joseph, his wife Adeline and eight year old son, Johnston, moved to Washington Borough, Warren County, New Jersey, in 1865, when Joseph was thirty-one years old. It was there that he formed a partnership with his brother-in-law, Henry W. Johnson, and conducted a general store for a number of years, Joseph becoming known as one of the best merchants of Warren County.*

*Seeing the potential for good organ sales, he opened a retail office in Washington to represent organ manufacturers. He sold organs made by Robert Hornbaker. Hornbaker started business in 1852 as a woodworker, and by 1860 was making reed organs, operating the first organ factory in Washington, N.J. Cornish also handled Beatty organs. For a while he was employed by Daniel F. Beatty and learned the technique of mass advertising. With growing organ sales, Joseph in 1879 purchased the organ business of Dawes and Wycoff (which was located along the Morris Canal and Belvidere Avenue) to manufacture the Cornish Organ. With his son Johnston, he organized Cornish and Company in 1880 and began manufacturing organs. Cornish took advantage of the Beatty factory fire of September 21, 1881 and Beatty's later financial troubles by promoting direct mail sales, as he had learned from Beatty. Cornish and Co. prospered and outgrew the small factory. In 1880, Cornish purchased a larger brick woodworking factory at the corner of West Washington Avenue and Hornbaker Street (now South Lincoln). Later additions expanded the building to 45,000 sq. ft. of floor space. Cornish added pianos and, in time, was selling more pianos than organs.*

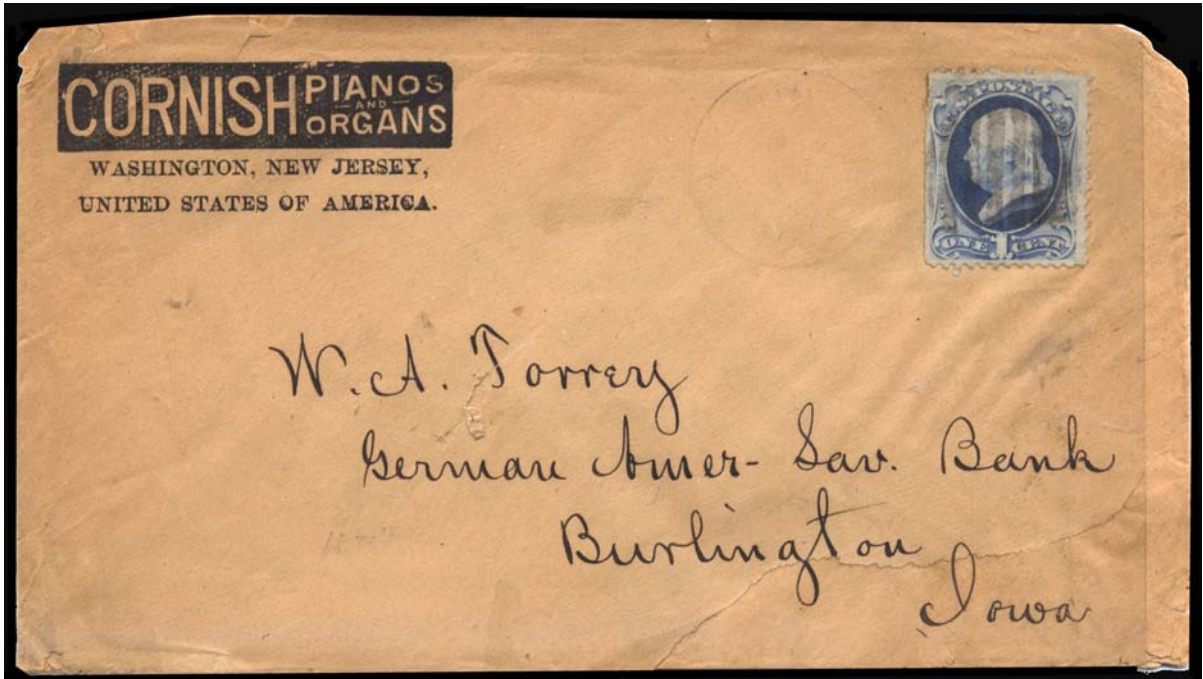
*Joseph was a director and vice president of the First National Bank of Washington. He was appointed bank president in 1900. In 1901 the Cornish Company was incorporated in the State of New Jersey, with the senior Cornish as president. He served as president until his death in 1910. He had also been active in politics, as a Democrat, and had considerable influence on the state level. He was secretary of the State Senate in 1868 and '69 and served as State Senator from 1873-1875. In 1879 he was in court and was imprisoned at the State Prison in Trenton for one year. He was convicted of forgery along with ex-senator, and ex-chief-of police of Phillipsburg, Jacob H. Sweeny. They had attempted to pass a forged Warren County note for \$10,000. A petition signed by 215 prominent citizens asked that Joseph should be fined in lieu of imprisonment. On appeal, he received a reprieve (stay) by Governor McClellan, but the court upheld his conviction and he served his time.*

*His son, Johnston Cornish, was educated in the public schools and at the business college in Easton, Pa., graduating with high honors. He served as assistant in the office of his father and as a junior member of Cornish and Co. Later he became responsible for the management of the company's extensive business.*

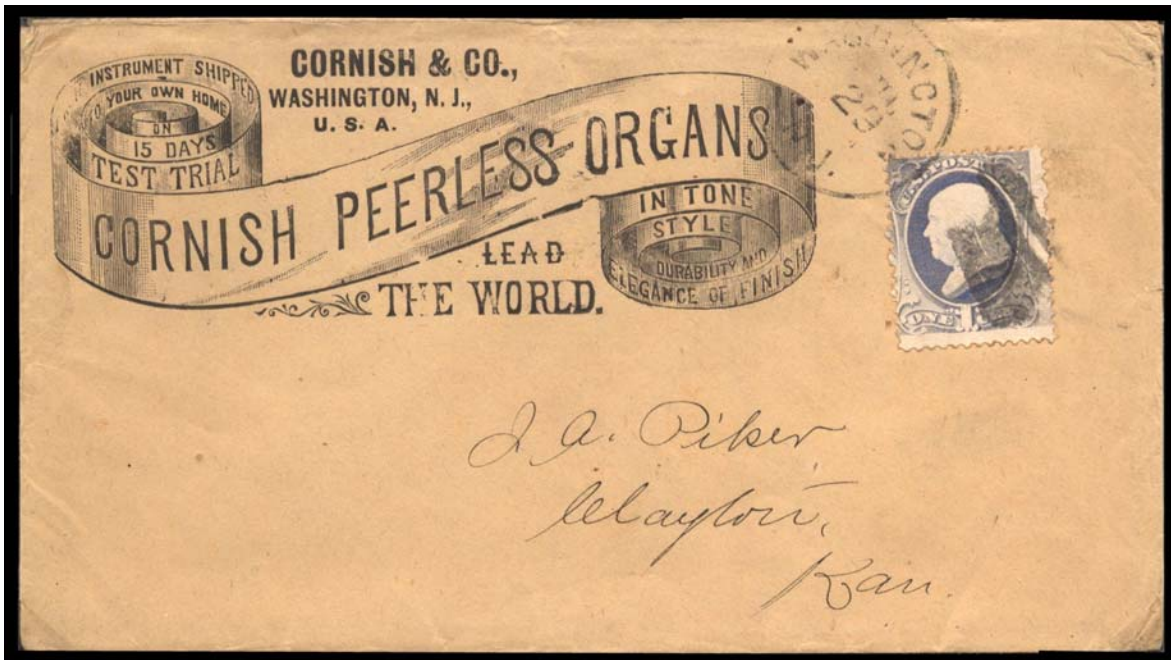
*Like his father, Johnston showed an early interest in politics. In 1884 he was nominated and elected mayor of Washington, New Jersey, over Daniel F. Beatty. Johnston was then reelected, without opposition, serving three consecutive terms. He then ran for and was elected to the State Senate for Warren County. At the close of his Senate term he was elected in 1893, by the Fourth District of New Jersey, to the U.S. Congress. He served a second time as a New Jersey state senator in 1899, for Warren County. During this time, he was actively engaged in the affairs of the Cornish Company. In 1905 he again ran for State Senator and was elected for a three year term. Johnston was urged to run again. He won this time with the largest ever majority. Johnston, like his father, became one of the most influential men on the Democratic State Committee.*

*Johnston married Margaret Banker of Mecklenberg, NY, in 1885, and took up residence with his wife at the old homestead on Belvidere Avenue. A son, Joseph Banker Cornish, was born in 1887. At 21, he also joined the family business. He married Ellen Haggerty of Phillipsburg, NJ and also resided at the house on Belvidere Ave. Joseph B. Jr. was serving as postmaster of Washington at the time of his father's death in 1920. Johnston died of a heart attack, complicated by uremia that followed, on June 26, 1920 at the age of 63. His funeral was one of the largest ever seen in the Washington area.*





*A very early Cornish cover - no legible cancellation, but possibly used in 1879. No Cornish & Company name. This may have been used before the move to new quarters on W. Washington Ave. & Hornbaker St.*



*A cover from the early 1880's - using the Cornish & Company name.*





An 1880's cover. Note "Sent on Test Trial Everywhere." This artistic cover was done all in blue, and was used around the time of the move to the West Washington location.



An 1890 cover from Washington, NJ to Virginia. Cornish shipped organs all over the world, as did Betty, a fact which created a lot of bad deb, when payments could not be made because of the war..

**CORNISH AMERICAN PIANOS AND ORGANS**  
**CORNISH CO.** WASHINGTON, N. J., U. S. A.  
 ESTABLISHED OVER FIFTY YEARS



**THE PRINCESS**

An entirely new design not shown in our present catalogue. It is unique in appearance and perfect in every detail.

The instrument is usually fitted with our double reed millionaire action, which for beauty of tone is unequalled. The action contains 122 Cornish Orchestral Reeds—Four complete sets (two reeds to each note) as follows:  
 Principal - 24 Dupason - 24  
 Melodia - 37 Celeste - 37

**12 Stops**—Principal, Celeste, Piano, Harbony, Melodia, Echo, Dupason, Vox Humana, Bass Coupler, Treble Coupler, Dupason Forte, Principal Forte.

The entire mechanism of the action is strong, yet simple, and there is little possibility of the instrument getting out of order.

The Organ is supplied with our patent wind-chest and bellows, constructed from the very finest material that the market produces. They are automatic and self-regulating, and cannot be injured by inexperienced players.

**WARRANTED FOR 25 YEARS**

The Case is constructed of solid black walnut or quartered oak, thoroughly kiln-dried and seasoned; it is oil-finished and hand-rubbed over three coats of varnish. The design is original and extremely rich and elaborate. The top is canopied and ornamented with a superb French bevel plate mirror; it has a music desk and every modern improvement.

Entirely modern and ultimate model.

Dimensions—Height, 6 feet 7 inches. Length, 3 feet 9 inches. Width, 22½ inches. Weight, 400 lbs. for shipment, about 400 lbs.

An organ equal to the "Princess" if sold through a local dealer, would cost anywhere from \$90 to \$110. Our Wholesale Factory price is \$55 on the easy payment plan. Special discount for cash. See other side of this circular.

Prices quoted are for the organ fitted with 5 Octave Double Reed Action, 12 stops, 122 reeds. If a larger action is desired we can furnish this organ with our Vocalia Action, 172 reeds, 16 stops, for \$25.00 extra; or with Orchestral Action, 221 reeds, 18 stops for \$55.00 extra.  
 A 6 Octave, 12 stop, 146 Reed Action will cost \$6.00 extra; a 6 Octave, 16 stop, 208 Reed Action, \$10.50 extra; an 18 stop, 257 Reed Action \$15.00 extra.

STYLE No. 63,000

**THE CORNISH AMERICAN PIANOS AND ORGANS**  
**The Princess**  
 STYLE No. 63,000

**THE** organ shown on the reverse side of this sheet is one of the most beautiful and thoroughly satisfactory styles ever developed by our designers. It is made in full five and six octave size and can be fitted with any size or power of action that may be desired, although for practically all purposes the action suggested and with which the instrument is regularly fitted will be found ample powerful.

The design is marked by great richness of effect and at the same time an actual simplicity that is most pleasing, and although it cannot be shown in our general catalogue until a new edition is issued, we predict that it will be our most popular medium priced model for this year—in fact for years to come, as it is one of those designs that never go out of style. We do not believe that a more beautiful model has ever been produced by any other maker even at double the price we ask for it, and we know that no other maker can offer an instrument that will excel it as to quality, at any price.

We are asked many times every day to advise intending purchasers as to which of our styles we think is the best bargain or the most suitable organ. It is not always an easy matter to do this, as we have such a variety of styles, but we do not hesitate in saying that when a medium priced instrument is wanted for general use, the "Princess" model will give splendid all-round satisfaction and is great value for the money.

**OUR INSTALLMENT OFFER**

**W**e will endeavor to make it as plain as possible. All we ask from you when you order the instrument for a year's trial, on extended terms of payment, is some sort of evidence that you are getting a good faith.

The best way to prove your sincerity is to send the first payment with your order. But if you prefer to await the arrival of the instrument before making the first payment, it will be sufficient if you will send us a reference from your Postmaster, Banker, Express Agent or some Merchant of your town.

After thirty days' trial, if you are satisfied that you have a real bargain, another payment will be due—and each month thereafter until the whole amount is paid. If the first payment is not sent with your order, the same amount upon for the first and second payments should be sent together.

If at any time within a year you are not perfectly satisfied with the instrument, you simply return it and get all your money back.

We look and deliver the instrument free on board cars here and insure safe arrival at your depot; you to pay the freight unless we are allowed to add it to the price of the instrument, in which case the same should be sent with the order or included in the first payment also. Any amount that you pay for freight will be returned to you if the instrument is sent back—we pay freight both ways if you do not keep the instrument.

The instrument can be paid quarterly or half yearly, by special agreement with us if more convenient to you, but we prefer the monthly installments.

**THE PRICE OF THE ORGAN IS \$100.00**—this is what an organ of this class would cost for an instrument of apparently equal value, although we believe there is no organ made that can compare with the Cornish.

**OUR FACTORY PRICE IS \$55.00**

ANY OF THE FOLLOWING TERMS WILL BE ACCEPTED

\$10 down, balance \$5 a month  
 \$15 down, balance \$4 a month  
 \$25 down, balance \$3 a month

**IF HALF IS PAID DOWN and the balance in monthly payments of \$5, the price is \$53.50**

**IF THE WHOLE AMOUNT IS PAID after thirty days' trial, the price is \$52.50**

**IF ALL CASH IS SENT WITH ORDER as to delivery as of all further bookkeeping, we will allow a further cash discount of 5 per cent. from the cash after trial price, bringing it down to only \$49.88**

Whether you wish to try the organ you are bound to be pleased in the trial you will try.

After a careful trial of the method of teaching by mail, which are now so desirably popular, we have been able to make an arrangement with the U. S. School of Music, of New York City, by means of which we can present to every purchaser of a Cornish Piano or Organ, a certificate entitling the holder of it to a course of two years free tuition. The certificate is sent with each instrument.

**CORNISH CO. (ESTABLISHED OVER 50 YEARS) WASHINGTON, N. J., U. S. A.**

PLEASE FILL IN CAREFULLY, GIVING FULL PARTICULARS. DETACH THE FORM AND MAIL TO US: MESSRS. CORNISH CO., Hereby bid order for one Style No. 63,000, Princess Organ, in case (say what or oak), for which I enclose the sum of \$.....

I wish to purchase upon the following terms:

Ship organ to..... depot.....

Yours truly.....

Printed and published by the Cornish Co., Washington, N. J.

A Cornish flyer from 1898 illustrating a Princess Organ; the back describes prices and payment methods.

**A NECESSITY IN EVERY HOME.**  
 THE PEOPLE'S POPULAR MUSIC THAT CHEERS, ELEVATES AND INSPIRES  
**CORNISH AMERICAN PIANOS AND ORGANS**  
 FROM \$155.00  
**PIANOS AND ORGANS**  
 FROM \$25.00  
**36th Year in Business.**  
 During our existence as a firm of piano and organ manufacturers we have issued many catalogues, but to commemorate our 36th Anniversary we are now issuing an entirely new catalogue, an art souvenir of surpassing beauty and interest. The front page of the cover has a reproduction in colors of a remarkable oil painting, the subject of which is "AN ANCIENT EGYPTIAN CHOIR," a band of old-world singers and players, showing the various musical instruments in use in the land of the Pharaohs a thousand years before the Christian Era. We will send this elegant catalogue **FREE** TO ANY INTENDING PURCHASER WHO WILL MENTION THE EDITOR'S COMPLIMENT and send for it AT ONCE.

Ask for the New Catalogue with Fifty 1898 Models to Select from.

Ask for New 1898 Catalogue of DON'T FORGET!

Residence, 609 and Center South at Washington, New Jersey.

This elegant souvenir describes 31 of our latest models of the CORNISH AMERICAN PIANOS AND ORGANS, gives lowest possible prices at factory cost. Full particulars of our popular method of business—Factory to family direct, saving all agent's, dealer's and middleman's profits. Ask for the new catalogue (1898 models) and write to-day. It Costs Nothing but the Asking.

**CORNISH & CO.,** Established 36 Years. Washington, New Jersey.

An ad for Cornish in 1898.

**THE CORNISH AMERICAN PIANOS AND ORGANS**  
**FREIGHT RATES**

Some firms advertise that if you buy from them you have no freight to pay, and agents and dealers will tell you the same thing, but the fact is, the purchaser always pays—directly, as in our case, or indirectly, in the price of the instrument.

Our plan is to sell the piano or organ at factory cost plus a small profit and the purchaser see exactly what portion of the cost of the instrument delivered is represented in freight. It is a fair method and must commend itself to any intending purchaser.

We refund all freight charges paid if an instrument is returned to us.

**Average Cost of Freight on Pianos and Organs to the Different States in the Union, and to Canada**

TO	Average cost of Piano, weight based 300 to 350 lbs., according to size.	Average cost of Organ, weight based 300 to 350 lbs., according to size.	TO	Average cost of Piano, weight based 300 to 350 lbs., according to size.	Average cost of Organ, weight based 300 to 350 lbs., according to size.
Alabama.....	\$11 00	\$5 00	Nevada.....	\$18 00	\$8 00
Alaska.....	.....	.....	Nevada.....	23 00	15 00
Arizona.....	26 00	16 00	New Hampshire.....	5 00	2 00
Arkansas.....	14 00	9 00	New Jersey.....	2 00	90
California.....	30 00	13 00	New Mexico.....	29 00	13 00
Colorado.....	25 00	12 00	New York.....	4 00	2 00
Connecticut.....	4 00	2 00	North Carolina.....	9 00	4 00
Dakota, N.....	17 00	8 00	Ohio.....	5 00	2 00
Dakota, S.....	17 00	8 00	Oklahoma.....	18 00	8 00
Delaware.....	4 00	2 00	Oregon.....	20 00	15 00
District of Columbia.....	4 00	2 00	Pennsylvania.....	4 00	1 75
Florida.....	13 00	5 50	Rhode Island.....	4 50	2 00
Georgia.....	12 00	6 00	South Carolina.....	10 00	4 50
Idaho.....	38 00	17 00	Tennessee.....	11 00	5 00
Illinois.....	7 00	2 50	Texas.....	15 00	6 00
Indiana.....	6 00	2 50	Utah.....	23 00	16 00
Iowa.....	12 00	6 00	Vermont.....	6 00	2 50
Kansas.....	12 00	4 00	Virginia.....	6 50	3 00
Kentucky.....	9 00	3 50	Washington.....	35 00	17 00
Louisiana.....	12 00	5 50	West Virginia.....	6 00	3 00
Maine.....	7 00	3 50	Wisconsin.....	11 00	6 00
Maryland.....	4 00	2 00	Wyoming.....	30 00	13 00
Massachusetts.....	5 00	2 50			
Michigan.....	8 00	3 50			
Minnesota.....	13 00	6 50			
Mississippi.....	12 00	6 50			
Missouri.....	12 00	6 00			
Montana.....	25 00	11 00			

**CANADA**  
 All pianos and organs shipped from the United States into Canada are subject to a duty of 10 per cent. on the value of the instrument. For example, an organ costing \$20.00 would be \$22.00, or a piano costing \$150.00, \$165.00. Freight charges from \$1.00 to \$10.00, according to distance. For full particulars of our terms of sale, see the back of the catalogue. However, the Cornish American Piano and Organ Co. is prepared to sell at a lower price than those of any Canadian manufacturer.

**SPECIAL 5 PER CENT. DISCOUNT FOR CASH**

IN connection with our general schedule of prices and terms of sale printed on the other side, we direct the special attention of intending purchasers to our liberal inducement when it is convenient to send cash with order.

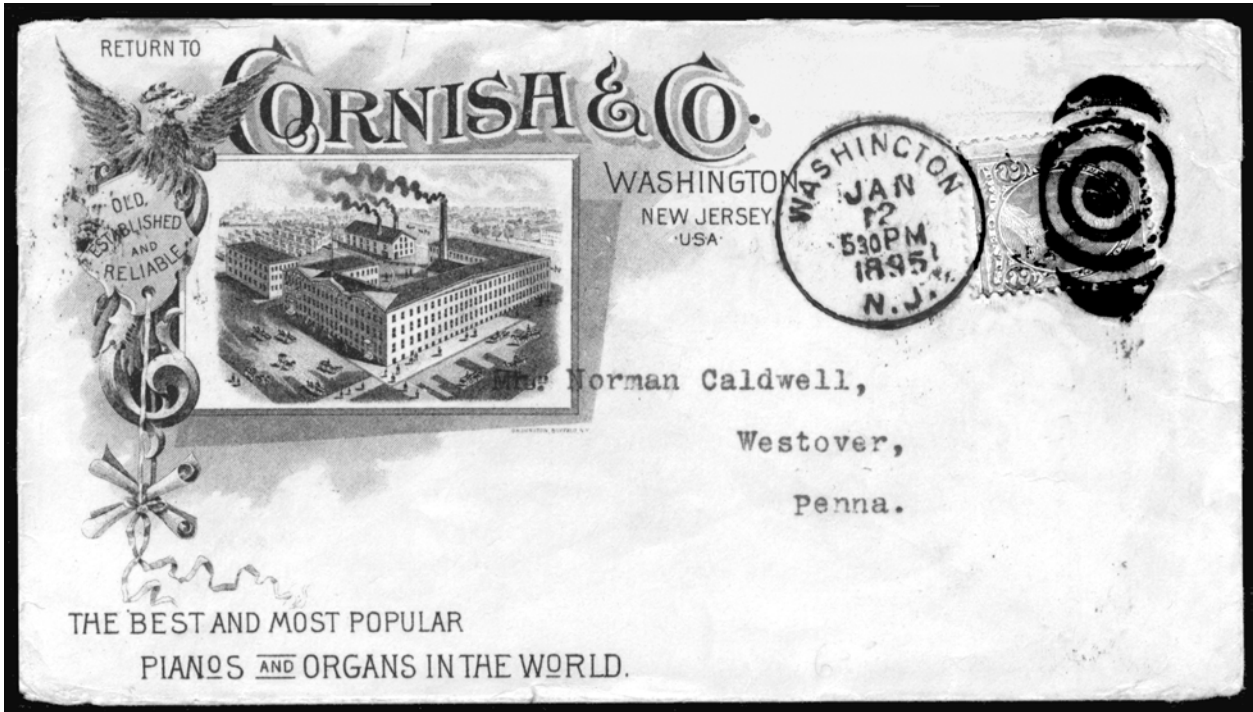
Shipping costs are not exorbitant, considering weight and distance.



*This small factory pictured on this 1880's return envelope...  
looked like this in 1896, on the front of another return envelope.*





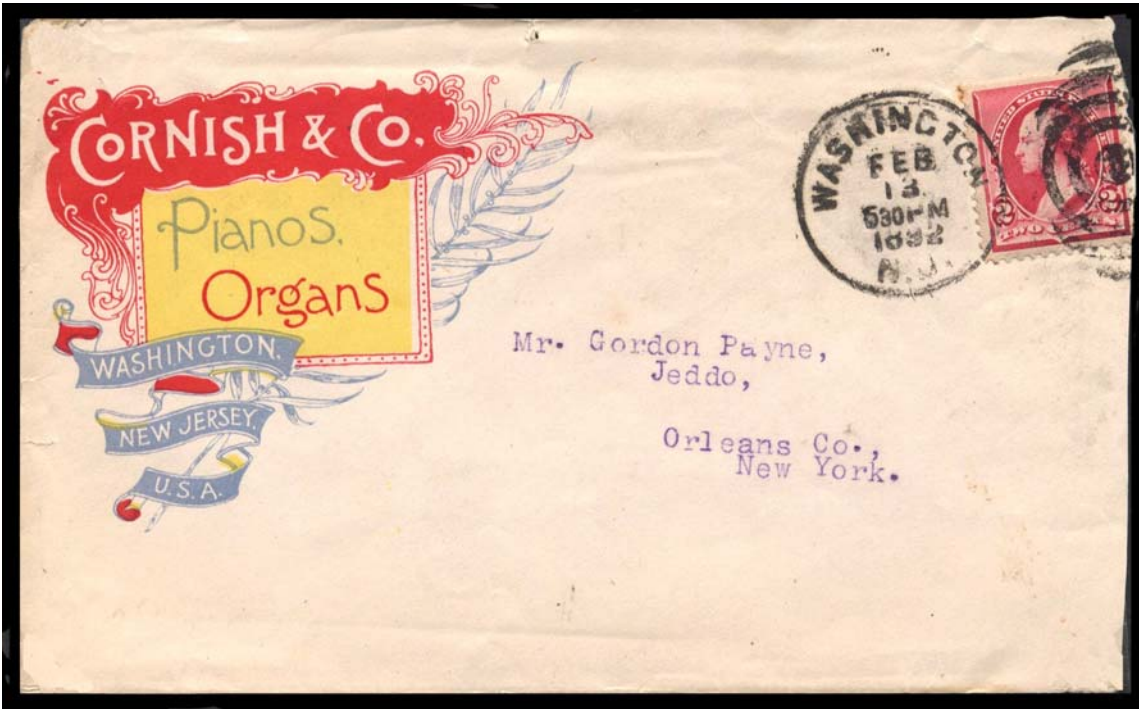


Like Betty, Cornish sometimes used the backs of their covers for additional advertising, as we see on the back of the 1895 cover above, pictured below.



THE ORGAN CAPITAL OF THE WORLD: PART II ~ Len Frank

In the 1890's, color began to play a very large part in the advertising covers produced by Cornish. These two covers, shown below, had both a black & white and a color version, both present in the collection. Foolishly, we show the color versions - which of course our black & white reproduction will not show.



This 1892 cover was produced in bright colors of red, yellow, and gray-blue.



This 1897 cover was also produced in color - this time in red, white and blue.



By the late 1890's Cornish was producing some very desirable and spectacular multicolor advertising covers. Cornish had long made pianos, but pianos were beginning to be a larger and larger part of their business, over organ sales.



Both of these covers, the one featuring the piano above, and the organ below, are done in full color. These covers are both rare and expensive, and there are six of them in this collection, 3 each of a piano and an organ, with different postmarks and variations in the cachet. Those shown here are used from Washington, the piano cover in 1900, and the organ cover in 1903.





THE ORGAN CAPITAL OF THE WORLD: PART II ~ Len Frank



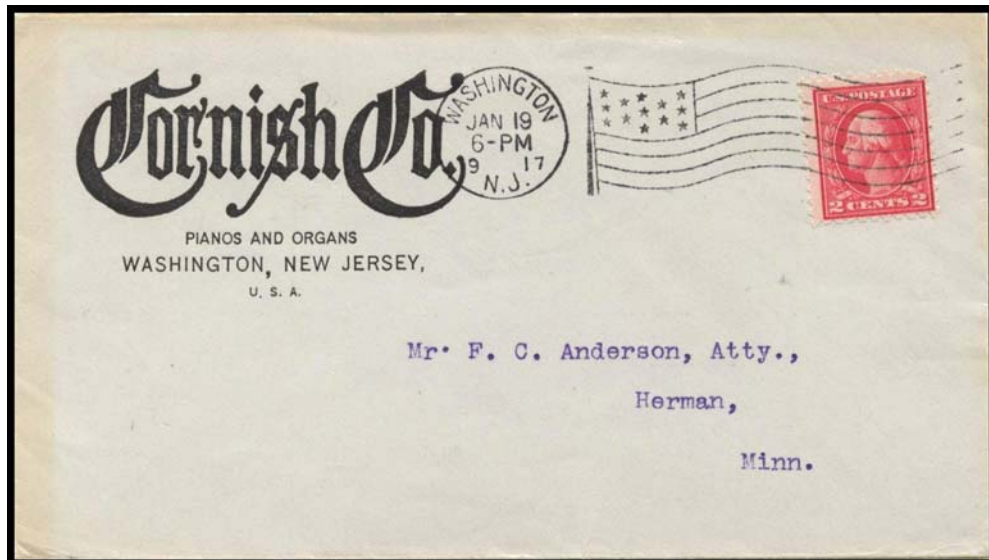
*This colorful large sized 1910 cover with a Washington flag cancel - shown here necessarily reduced - shows the change of emphasis from organs to pianos by this time.*



*Cornish used letterheads as colorful as their advertising envelopes. This 1911 letterhead bears the names of all three members of the Cornish family, including Joseph, Sr., although he passed away in 1910. Note the name of Alvin Florey, who served as General Manager, while at the same time being a part of Florey Bros., which produced small grand pianos.*

*This is a late usage of a Cornish cover, with a 1917 flag cancel.*

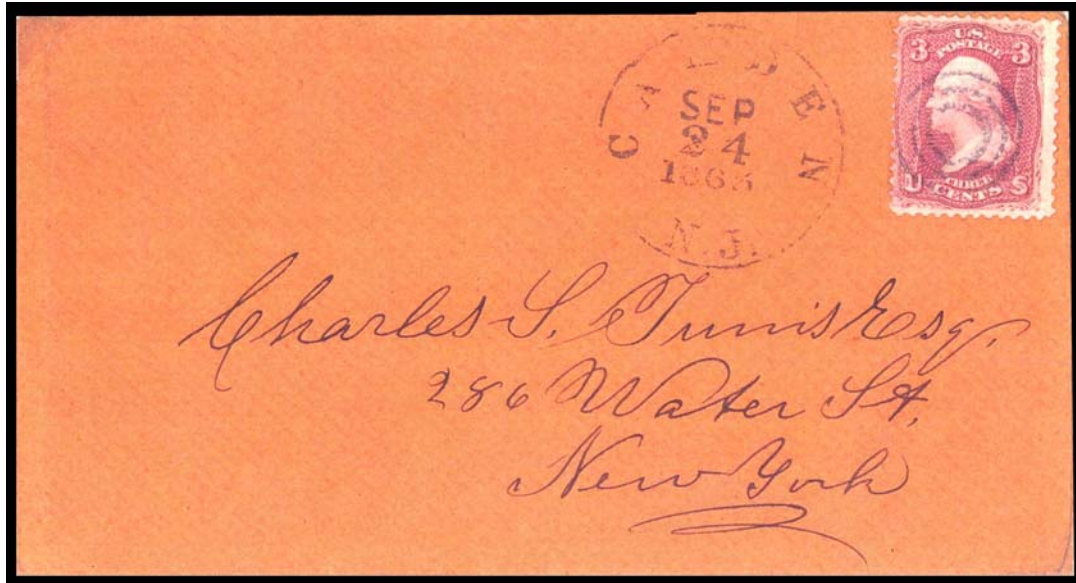
Part III, in the next issue of NJPH, will cover the several other organ and piano companies that also were producing organs and pianos in Washington, NJ, and include a map and timeline.



## CAMDEN'S INVERTED DATE CIRCLE HANDSTAMPS

by Gene Fricks

One of the peculiarities of Camden's postal markings of the 19<sup>th</sup> century has to be the inverted date circle handstamp. The date circle portion of the marking clearly lies to the left of the killer in a conventional layout. The date circle is 25mm in diameter; the marking has only been seen in black.



*An upright 32mm circle date stamp on a cover from 1863.*

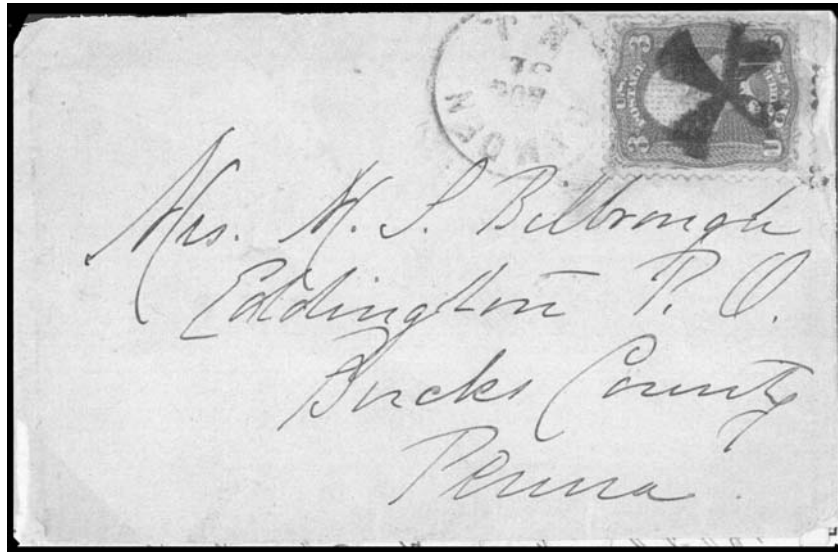


*An early 25mm inverted circle date stamp on the envelope issued in 1864.*

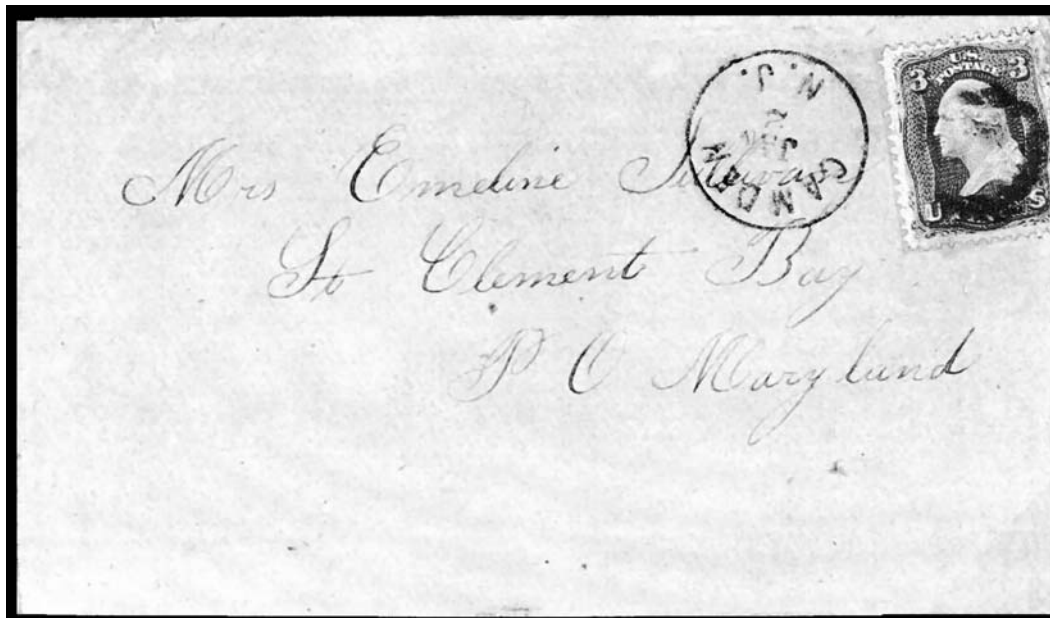
**CAMDEN'S INVERTED DATE CIRCLE HANDSTAMPS ~ Gene Fricks**

This marking seems to make its initial appearance about 1864 and soon becomes the predominant marking from this post office. In 1863, the 25mm double-ring circular date stamp and a 32mm handstamp are the preferred instruments. We find the inverted date circle marking on the 1867 grill issues, the 1869s and the large Bank Notes at least to 1874.

*25mm circle date stamps on 1867 issue F Type grill stamps*

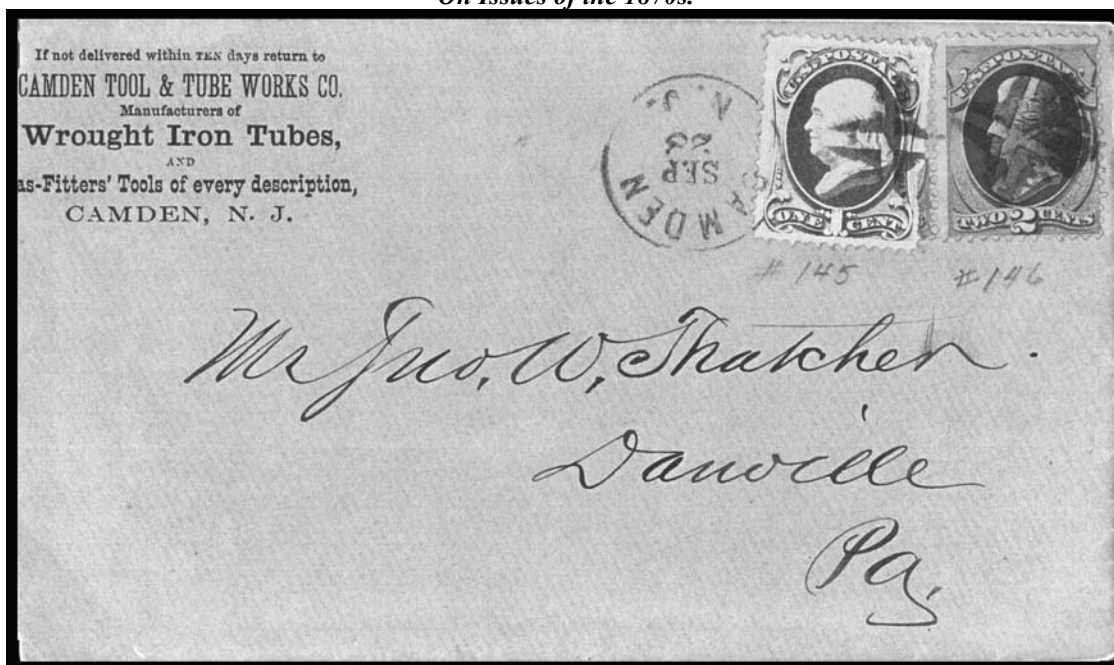


*Note the various type of cork "killers" used with the inverted date stamp.*

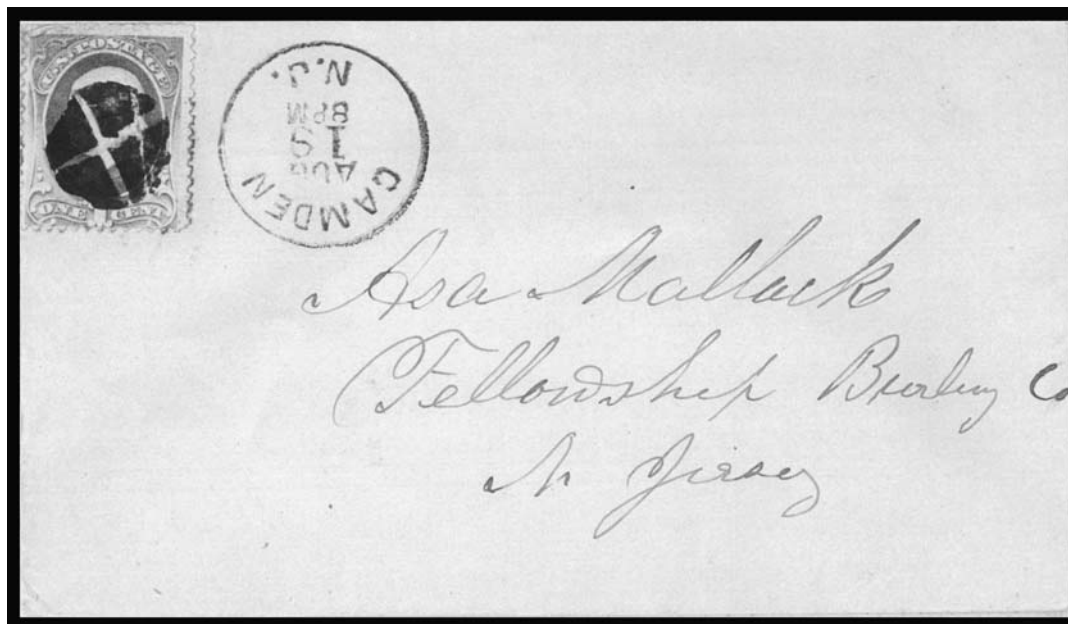




*On Issues of the 1870s.*



About this time, a more conventionally oriented 27mm date circle marking comes into use.

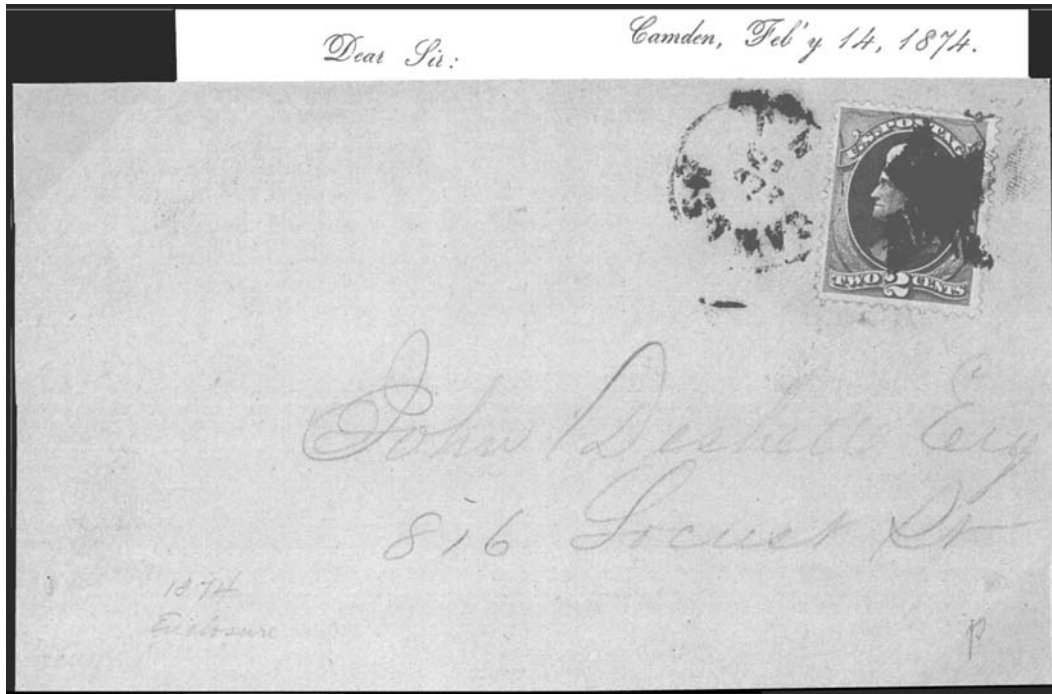


*27mm circle date stamp turned upside down.*

The persistence of the inverted marking and the variety of hand carved killers suggests that this was the preferred instrument of a single clerk. The condition of the example with the February 14, 1874 dateline shows considerable wear and deterioration. Perhaps about this time the clerk replaced the handstamp.

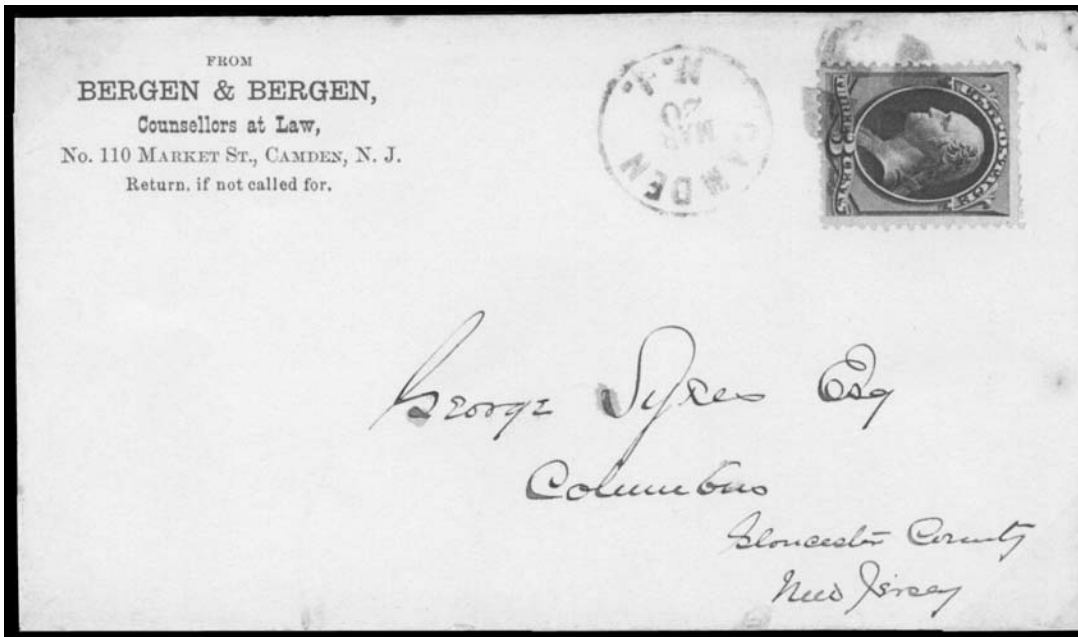


CAMDEN'S INVERTED DATE CIRCLE HANDSTAMPS ~ Gene Fricks



*Note wear on this 25mm circle date stamp on this 1874 cover.*

An interesting aspect of this that suggests the inverted date circle was deliberate is a run of covers with the 1873 Bank Note issue with the new conventional handstamp where the entire marking is inverted. This gives an optical effect that is similar to the older marking.



*On 1873 Bank Note Issues*

However, soon we see the marking applied in an upright position. A new clerk might be at work, the "inverted" clerk might have tired of the game, or the postmaster might have finally reprimanded him for "flying upside down."

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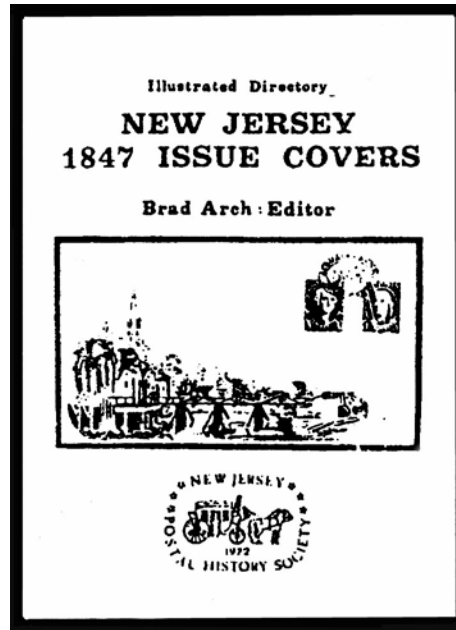
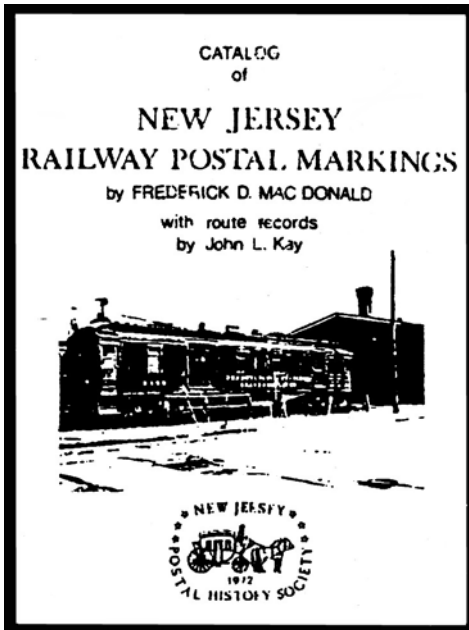
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