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TWO EARLY BURLINGTON COUNTY STAMPLESS COVERS

Two New Jersey Postal Prodigals Return

By Arne Englund



Courtesy NJPHS Member Arne Englund

Arne Englund explores the stories of two covers he once owned, from Arneytown in 1833, and Evesham in 1837, now reacquired.

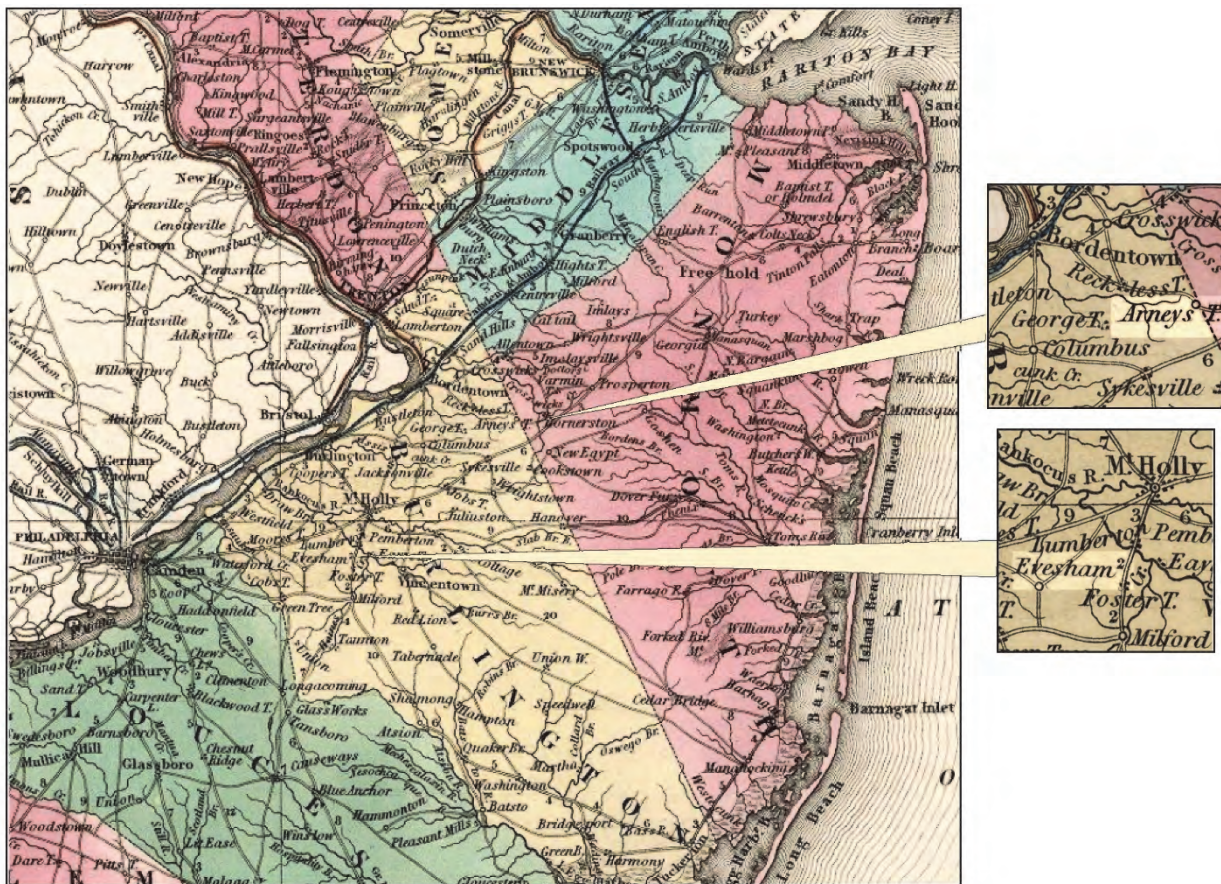
The two manuscript-cancelled New Jersey stampless covers in this article have several things in common. Arneytown and Evesham, New Jersey are both located in Burlington County, Arneytown in North Hanover Township and Evesham in Evesham Township. Both are DPOS (Discontinued Post Offices). Both contain Quaker dating, one in the letter's dateline and the other in the docketing. And both were originally bought by me in the mid-1970's, later sold, and much later reacquired by me separately after they spent time in several other collections and dealer stocks....

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TWO NEW JERSEY POSTAL HISTORY PRODIGALS RETURN

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Source: David Rumsey Maps¹

Fig. 1: Thomas Gordon 1834 map of New Jersey, showing locations of both Arneytown and Evesham.

ARNEYTOWN, NJ



Arneytown is located along Province Line Road on the border of North Hanover Township in Burlington, and Upper Freehold Township in Monmouth County, Province Line Road being on the boundary line between the Provinces of East Jersey and West Jersey. According to Wikipedia, it is an unincorporated community, two miles north of Jacobstown. The area was once referred to as “Upper Freehold” by 18th century Quaker settlers.

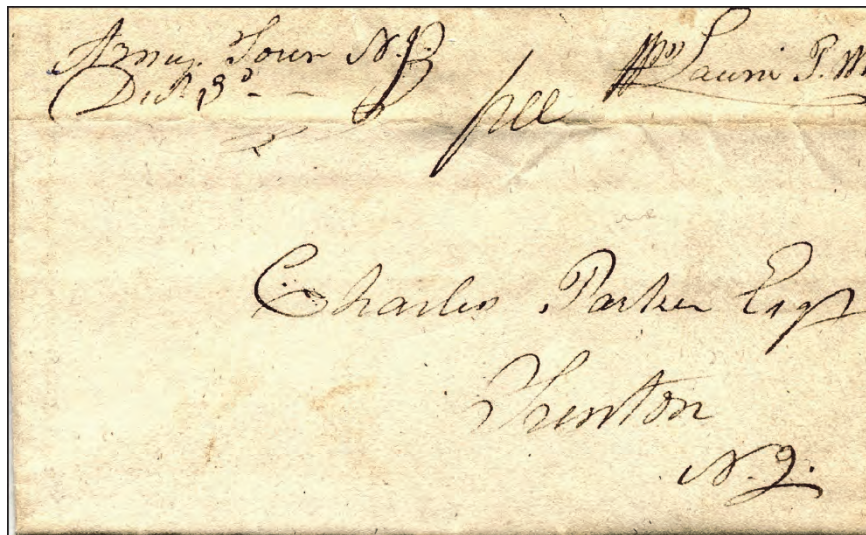
According to Franklin Ellis' 1885 *History of Monmouth County, New Jersey*, the land where Arneytown village is situated is part of The William Dockwra tract, which John Arney purchased from Benjamin Borden in 1705. In 1739, Joseph Arney and others petitioned the Chesterfield Monthly Meeting, at Crosswicks, asking that a monthly meeting be kept at Arney's house. In 1756, Joseph Arney deeded an acre and a half, on which a meeting house, belonging to the Upper Freehold Meeting was erected. Among the names found on the low headstones in the old burial ground are those of Lawrie and Canfield.

Henry Bisbee's *PLACE NAMES* (1955) contains the following description:

“ARNEYTOWN: Also spelled ARNEY'S TOWN on map of 1849 and referred to as 'UPPER FREEHOLD' in the Monthly Meeting of the Society of Friends (1781). The Arneytown of today [1955] is practically a deserted village of half a dozen houses in NORTH HANOVER township near the MONMOUTH COUNTY line about four miles east of CHESTERFIELD and two miles north of JACOBSTOWN. Of the houses at the road junction only three are at present occupied.”

ARNEYTOWN, N.J POST OFFICE

The Post Office at Arneytown, N.J. was established April 24, 1827 with William Lawrie listed as the first postmaster, and was discontinued Feb. 8, 1871, with mail then to be sent to nearby Jacobstown, N.J. The 1834 *Register of All Officers and Agents... United States* lists Arneytown, N.J. with William Laurie as Postmaster, his compensation for 1833 being \$8.63. The 1851, 1857 and 1862 U.S. Postal Guides all list John Darby as Postmaster.



Courtesy Steve Roth, NJ Stampless Manuscript Database

Fig. 2: A stampless cover endorsed by postmaster Wm Lawrie, dated Dec. 30, (1833), sent free with a postmaster free frank.

Henry Bisbee in *Place Names in Burlington County New Jersey* (1955) notes: “John Darby, the shoemaker and grave digger, was the postmaster during the forty-four years of its existence.” Arneytown was obviously a small village what with Darby serving as the village postmaster, shoemaker and grave digger!

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Bisbee apparently wasn't aware that William Lawrie was the first postmaster and served for many years. In 1837, Lawrie filled out and signed a Post Office Department location form for the "Arney-Town P.O." which requested "the name of the Post Offices nearest your Office and their distance from it by the mail route", to which he answered "New Egypt three Miles – RecklessTown four Miles, Crosswix (sic) seven Miles, Borden Town eight miles-" and relative to the P.O. being on a waterway: "Situating with One & a half Miles of Crosswix Creek on the west side".

Thomas Gordon's 1834 Gazetteer of New Jersey lists: "Arneystown, p-t (post town) of Hanover t-ship, Burlington County, near the eastern line; 13 miles N.E. of Mount Holly, 175 from W.C., 11 from Trenton S.E., and S.E. from Bordentown; contains a store, tavern, 15 dwellings and a large meeting house pertaining to "Friends," surrounded by a country of fertile loam."

The Arneytown post office was most likely situated in either the store or the tavern. "The Arneytown Tavern," also known as the Lawrie House, was built c.1731. It was recorded as a tavern in 1762 when William Lawrie deeded it to Richard Platt."² The Lawrie House is still standing today.



Fig. 3: A modern view of the Lawrie House.



Fig. 4: A photo from the Historic American Buildings (HABS) collection, NJ-134 showing the Lawrie House ca. 1933.³

ARNEYTOWN, N.J. 1845 SFL

The first letter in this article is an Arneytown, NJ stampless cover which is manuscript postmarked "Arneytown N.J. Dec 27" and is datelined the same in 1845. There is no rate marking or free frank marking. However, it was sent to "Hon Geo Sykes MC Washington DC." As a congressman, letters were sent to him free of charge. It is docketed on the back with Quaker dating "Rec'd 1st Mo 20th 1846 ans- Dr Geo W Canfield." (note that it apparently took over three weeks to get to D.C.!) Please see the excellent article and revision on NJ Quaker dated postmarks by Wm. Coles and Ed & Jean Siskin in the May 2022 *NJPH*.⁴

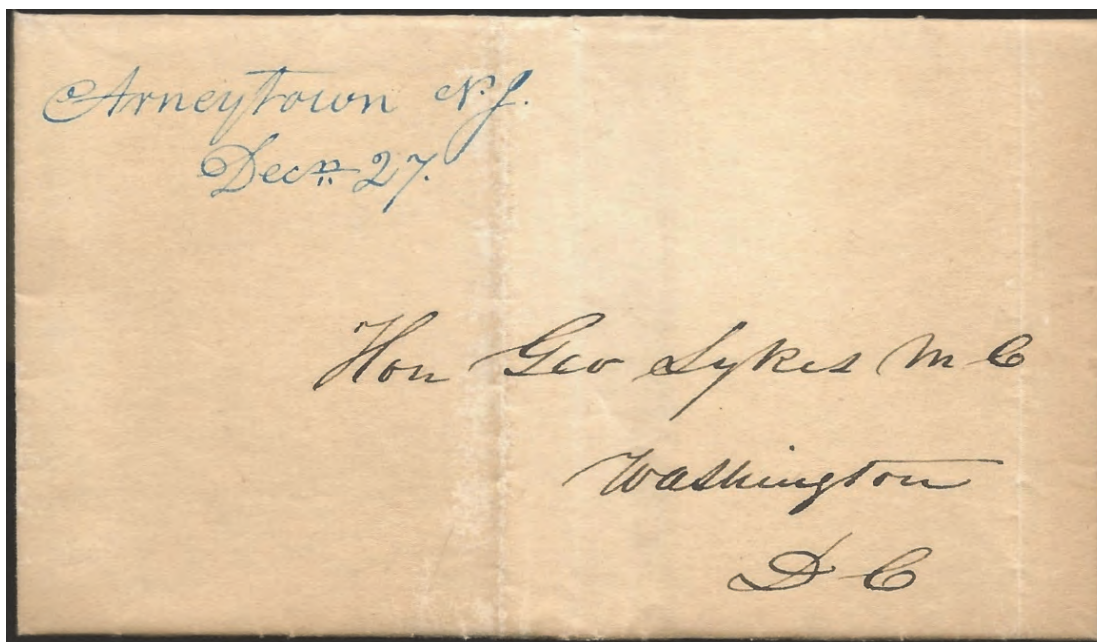


Fig. 5: The address panel of this SFL, dated Dec. 27 (1845) and addressed to Hon. Geoge Sykes, M C, Washington, D.C.

The letter is quite interesting and reads:

Dr Sir My brother Israel Canfield a staunch democrat is an applicant to the office of collector of the port of Galveston Texas. He is a resident merchant of that place and is well calculated in education and by experience in mercantile business to fill that office with ability – although I say it who perhaps should not, I never knew a man of business talents and habits superior to him –

His claims to the office are these, he has always been a consistent democrat and a supporter of democratic men and principles, he has served in the army of Texas and been twice a prisoner of the Mexicans, the last time one of the Mier prisoners who were decimated and every tenth man shot by order of Santa Anna

If you can assist him in any way you will oblige your friend and well wishes GW Canfield

Hon Geo Sykes

Arney Town 27 Decr 1845”

Sir My brother Israel Canfield
 a staunch democrat is an applicant for
 the office of collector of the port of Galveston
 Texas. He is a resident merchant of that place
 and is well calculated by education and long
 experience in mercantile business to fill that
 office with ability - although I say it with justness
 should not I know a man of ~~the~~ business
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 His claims to the office are these, he has always
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 oners who were decimated and every tenth man
 shot by order of Santa Anna
 If you can assist him in any way you will oblige
 your friend and well wisher G. W. Canfield

Hon Geo Sykes
 Army town 27th Decr 1843

Fig. 6: The letter, written in a clear hand, requests a favor.

George Sykes, a democrat from New Jersey's 2nd District, was an elected member of the U.S. House of Representatives from March 4, 1843 to March 3, 1845, and again from Nov. 4, 1845 to March 3, 1847, this time filling a vacancy left by the death of Samuel G. Wright. Sykes was born Sept. 20, 1802 in Sykesville, North Hanover Township, Burlington County. Educated by private teachers, he became a surveyor and real estate attorney (conveyancer). "After leaving Congress, he served as a member of the council of properties (*sic*: *Proprietors*) of West Jersey and was a member of the New Jersey General Assembly from 1877 to 1879." He died Feb. 25, 1880 near Mansfield Township, Burlington County, and was interred in the Old Upper Springfield Friends Burying Ground near Wrightstown, N.J.

George Wetmore Canfield, the writer of the letter, was born Feb. 24, 1806 in Morristown, N.J. He was a physician who practiced in Monmouth, Burlington, Ocean Counties, N.J. He lived his life and died July 25, 1881 near Ellisdale, N.J. (also called "Shelltown") near Arneytown, and

is buried at Crosswicks, Burlington County His second wife was Margaret Smith Lawrie, possibly a sister or cousin of postmaster William Lawrie.

Israel Canfield, who brother George was writing to Sykes on behalf of in 1845, was born Aug. 27, 1808 and died Nov. 30, 1850 at Arneytown, N.J. He was enrolled in Capt. Ewin Cameron's Company, Oct. 17, 1842, as a mounted Ranger. It has been noted that he "faithfully performed his duties as 1st Sergeant and was honorably discharged from the service of the Republic of Texas, 16 Feb. 1844. He is buried in the yard of the 1st Pres. Church, Morristown, N.J."

THE MIER EXPEDITION

The Mier Expedition is a story all on its own. Wikipedia explains, "The Mier expedition was an unsuccessful military operation launched in November 1842 by a Texian militia against Mexican border settlements; it was related to the Somervell expedition. It included a major battle at Ciudad Mier on December 26 and 27, 1842, which the Mexicans won. The Texian attack was launched partly in hopes of financial gain and partly in retaliation for the Dawson Massacre (as named by Texans) earlier that year, in which thirty-six Texas militia were killed by the Mexican Army. Both conflicts were part of continuing efforts by each side to control the land between the Rio Grande and Nueces River. The Republic of Texas believed that this territory had been ceded to it in the Treaties of Velasco, by which they gained independence; but Mexico did not agree."⁶

On Dec. 30, 1842 350 Texan soldiers attempted to capture the town of Ciudad Mier, Tamaulipas on the Mexican side of the Rio Grande, but were unaware of the extent of the Mexican troops inside the town. In the aftermath of this unsuccessful attack, 243 Texans were taken prisoner and were subsequently marched toward Mexico City.

"On February 11, 1843, 181 Texans escaped but, by the end of the month, the lack of food and water in the mountainous Mexican desert resulted in 176 of them surrendering or being recaptured. This was in the vicinity of Salado, Tamaulipas."

An outraged Santa Anna ordered all the prisoners to be executed, but "General and Governor Francisco Mejia of the state of Coahuila refused to follow the order. The new commander, Colonel Domingo Huerta, moved the prisoners to El Rancho Salado. By this time, diplomatic efforts on behalf of Texas by the foreign ministers of the United States and Great Britain led Santa Anna to compromise: he said one in ten of the prisoners would be killed.

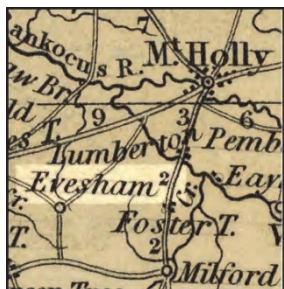
"To help determine who would die, Huerta had 159 white beans and 17 black beans placed in a pot. In what came to be known as the Black Bean Episode or the Bean Lottery, the Texans were blindfolded and ordered to draw beans. Officers and enlisted men, in alphabetical order, were ordered to draw. The seventeen men who drew black beans were allowed to write letters home before being executed by firing squad. On the evening of March 25, 1843, the Texians were shot in two groups, one of nine men and one of eight. According to legend, Huerta placed the black beans in the jar last and had the officers pick first, so that they would make up the majority of those killed.

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Captain Ewen Cameron had drawn a white bean, but was ordered executed anyway by Santa Anna a month later while being held at Perote Prison.”

Israel Canfield obviously drew a white bean also and according to the terms of the lottery was not executed. As noted previously, he was honorably discharged in Feb. 1844. In late December of 1845, he was still living in Texas as a “resident merchant” of Galveston.”⁷ Relative to his brother George’s request to Congressman and fellow Quaker, George Sykes, I was unable to find any information as to whether or not Israel Canfield actually received the position of Collector at the Port of Galveston, TX.

EVESHAM, N.J.



The Evesham, N.J. Post Office was, according to Kay & Smith’s *New Jersey Post History*, applied for in 1808, with Henry Bennett as first Postmaster. Bisbee’s *Burlington County Place Names (1955)* also states that it was first opened April 1, 1808 with Bennett as first P.M. In the 1834 REGISTER, Samuel Swain is listed as Postmaster with a compensation of \$12.88. On Aug. 6, 1845, according to Kay & Smith, the P.O. name was changed to Marlton with Samuel Swain as Postmaster. Bisbee says that the office was “moved” to Marlton in 1845. It should also be noted that, according to Woodward’s *Burlington County History*, the name of the Evesham Baptist Church was changed to the Marlton Baptist Church a little over a week later, on Aug. 15, 1845.

Evesham is listed in Gordon’s 1834 N.J. Gazetteer as “p-t. (post town), Evesham t-ship, Burlington County, 8 miles S. W. from Mount Holly, and 4 miles S. E. from Moorestown, 34 from Trenton, and 147 from W. C.; contains a Quaker meeting house and several dwellings.”

EVESHAM, N.J. 1837 SFL

The other cover discussed in this article is an 1837 stampless letter postmarked in manuscript “Evesham NJ June 5th” and rated “6” in manuscript. It is addressed to “Isaac Cooper/Vine Street at the Corner/of John Street/opposite Franklin Square/Phia.” The letter itself bears a Quaker dateline, and reads as follows:

6th Month 4th 1837

Esteemed friend

I had information that Wills and his company was to meet last 3rd Day at thy Cedar Swamp to divide the Thorn lot into two parts one for thee and one for them by Commissioners appointed for that purpose. As I apprehended thee had some dependance on my attention to thy concerns of that nature in Jersey, I concluded to Attend and did so, and they have run Round the Swamp and made a Division of it into parts and have advertised in the Jackson paper printed at Woodbury the time to meet there for Ballotting according to the act of Assembly. I have not the paper and do not know the time but thought best to let thee know their proceeding that thee might render such attention thereto as thee thinks proper - I have no doubt but when they compleat the Division they will proceed Immediately to Cutting –

And I may further inform that I do not nor have I believed they have any just right to any part of the Swamp for I still believe that Abraham Mallack and Joseph who was James' father made a Division of their survey. Abraham sold his part to Thorne. Under whom thee holds and Josephs part ^to some one Else And is^ was in the (G?- F?) and we now own it. That opinion is strengthened because I saw among their papers a map of the Division of the Survey held by those two old men into two parts, the Division line being the same now divides between thee and Our Tract, but there is no Name or writing on the Map to certify the division. I apprehend the Map was made for a Division and the actual division compleated afterward and probably there is a writing somewhere to Certify Such division, but if Such writing cannot be found, if thee could find the Old Deed from Mallack to Thorne (or whoever it was that Mallack sold to), I think it would Set all right. I would sudget thy Serch in the Secretarys Office at Trenton to see if either a division or the Deed from A Mallack could be found.

I felt it my duty to give thee the foregoing information And Remain thy friend
John Evans

NB: I remonstrated to Wills and the Commissioners against their proceeding and informed them how I believed the Title was.

Note: The writing here is not as clear as in the Arneytown letter, and this transcription has taken some liberties with punctuation (often missing altogether), and names – not always clear. Some of the original spelling has been retained.

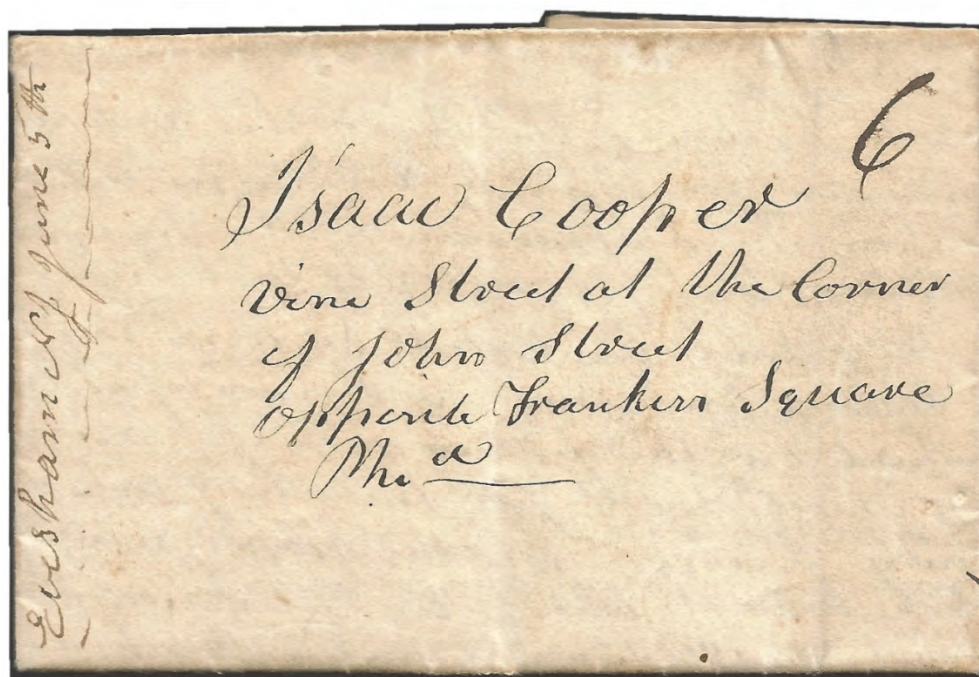


Fig. 7: My second prodigal returns ~ an 1837 cover from Evesham with a manuscript postmark, rated 6¢ to Philadelphia. It is written by John Evans to Isaac Cooper.

6th Month 4th 1837

Esteemed friend

I had information that With and his company was to meet last 3rd day at the Cedar Swamp to divide the Thorn Lot into two parts one for the sons one for them by Commissioners appointed for that purpose as I apprehended they had some dependence on my attention to the concerns of that nature in Jersey I concluded to attend and did so and they have run round the swamp and made a division of it into parts and have advertised in the Jackson paper printed at Woodbury the time to meet there for balloting according to the Act of Assembly I have not the papers and do not know the time but thought best to let thee know their proceeding that they might render such attention thereto as they think proper - I have no doubt but when they complete the Division they will proceed immediately to letting - and I may further inform that I do not now have behind they have any just right to any part of the Swamp for I still believe that Abraham Mallack and Joseph who was James father made a division of their Survey Abraham sold his part to Thomas Under whom the hold and Joseph's part ^{to someone else} was in the G. O. tract and be now own it that opinion is strengthened because I saw among the papers a map of the division of the Survey held by those two Old men into two parts the division line being the same that now divides between the Cedar Cree Tract - but there is no name or letting on the Map to testify the division I apprehend the Map was made for a division and the actual division completed afterward and probably there is a writing somewhere to testify such division but if such writing cannot be found if they could find the Old Deed from Mallack to Thorn (or whoever it was that Mallack sold to) I think I would set all to rights I would suggest thy search in the Secretaries Office at Trenton to see if either a division or the Deed from A Mallack could be found

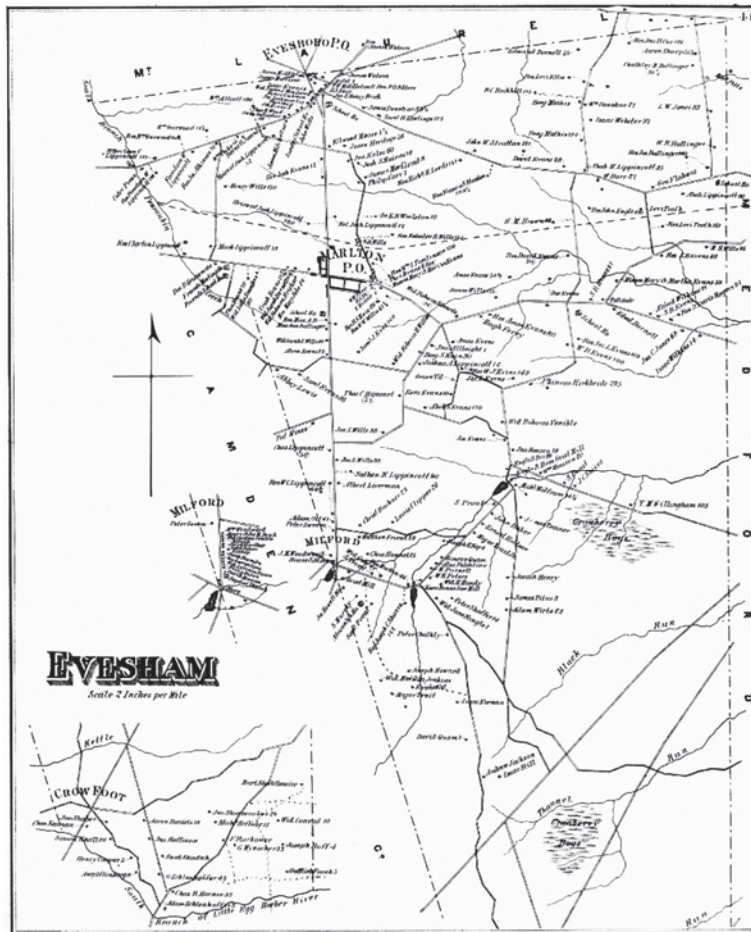
I felt it my duty to give thee the foregoing information and remain thy friend

NB I remonstrated to With and the John Evans Commissioners against their proceeding and I informed them how I believed the Title was

Fig. 8: The letter itself - regarding the ownership and division of lands around Evesham.

According to Maj. E.M. Woodward's 1883 *History of Burlington County*, John Evans (1774-1841) was born and died in Evesham Twp, and "was a noted surveyor, publicly identified with the interests of the township and county, and served in the State Legislature." The Swarthmore College website notes that he was a member of the Evesham Monthly Meeting, which is actually located in Mt. Laurel Township. Ancestry.com says Evans was "born in Evesham, Burlington, New Jersey on 17 Feb 1774 to Enoch Evans and Mary Wilcox. John Evans married Rebecca Cowperthwaite and had 6 children. He passed away on 18 Mar 1841 in Cropwell, Evesham Township, Burlington County, New Jersey." Henry Bisbee describes Cropwell as "a few houses at a junction of Routes 40 and s-41. (1955) It is less than a mile west of the village of Marlton. A Friends Meeting House was built here in 1760. The present building was erected in 1816."

I have not been as successful finding information on Isaac Cooper, the addressee, and whether he may have been in some way connected to Coopers Ferry, the old name, until 1829, for the town of Camden.



The 1876 map at left shows Evesham Township, and it is peppered with Evans and Wills family homesteads.⁸ The Black Run Preserve, located in Evesham Township, is a preserved cedar swamp, and might possibly be the cedar swamp mentioned in the above letter.⁹ It lies slightly to the southwest of the old town of Evesham.

Now known as Marlton, it is near the Camden County line, the Cedar Swamp may also have been in what is now Camden County. In 1837 Camden County was still a part of Gloucester County, not being formed into a separate county until 1844. Evans mentions an advertisement in the Jackson paper from Woodbury, which is, of course, in Gloucester County.

Fig. 9: 1876 map of Evesham Township, showing property owners.⁸

THESE TWO COVERS are two of the earliest NJ covers that I acquired when I started collecting New Jersey Postal History almost 50 years ago. In the mid-1970s, when I was a teenager, I would sometimes help out in the small shop of a stamp dealer, Peter Leslie, in Chester N.J. I also helped Pete at some of the area stamp shows, including NOJEX.

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Pete told me there was a society of collectors for New Jersey postal history, and I joined NJPHS in late 1975. At one of the area shows, I talked to a dealer, Richard Michelli, about my NJ Postal History. He joined NJPHS not long after I joined. After talking to him at the show, he soon after called me and said he was buying or had bought a large group of NJ stampless covers. I now realize that these may have been Frank Engel's collection of NJ SFLs.

I ended up buying several SFLs from Richard – these two covers, a Bass River Hotel and a stampless from Manalapan, which I wrote a short article on in the March 1979 issue of NJPH.

Over the years, my interest became more concentrated on Northern NJ postal history, and I sold these covers to Brad Arch and through the society auctions which were held for so many years.

More time passed and my interest again became more statewide. I immediately recognized each of these covers when I saw them again. I think when you start collecting, the images of the few items you have just get permanently embedded in your head.

I required the Evesham cover from Ebay in 2002. I don't remember now where the seller was located. And I believe that I may have found the Arneytown cover again at VAPEX in Virginia around the same time. Both had traveled around a bit over the years. So, I'm happy to have them back again and look at them as "Prodigals." Over the years, I've recognized other covers that I've sold or traded turning up in dealers' boxes after a passage of time, sometimes in other areas of the country!

As a postscript, I'd love to get another Bass River Hotel SFL. I've got half a dozen stampless addressed to Franklin Adams at Bass River Hotel, but none postmarked from the post office there. I'd like to write a *NJPH* article on the Bass River Hotel/New Gretna Post Office. If anyone has one they'd be willing to part with, please contact me at: alenglund@aol.com or the NJPHS secretary/editor at: NJPostalHistory@aol.com.

ENDNOTES:

¹ This New Jersey map was originally published by Thomas Gordon in *The History of New Jersey*, published by Daniel Fenton in Trenton in 1834, in which Arneytown (sic) is described as 13 miles N.E. of Mount Holly, and Evesham as 8 miles S. W. of Mount Holly, both towns with Quaker meeting houses. It is available on the David Rumsey map site and is available [here](#).

² Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arneytown,_New_Jersey.

³ HABS (Historic American Buildings Survey) on the Library of Congress site, lists Lawrie House, Arneytown in Monmouth County NJ. See <https://www.loc.gov/resource/hhh.nj0298.photos/?sp=1>.

⁴ "Looking Backward: Quaker Postmarks on New Jersey Stampless Covers," by Wm. Coles, and Ed & Jean Siskin, *NJPH*, Vol, 50, Np. 2, [Whole No. 226](#), p. 97.

⁵ Wikipedia: George Sykes - [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Sykes_\(New_Jersey_politician\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Sykes_(New_Jersey_politician))

⁶ Wikipedia: The Mier Expedition. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mier_expedition

⁷ Canfield authored a diary of his life in prison during this time – a possible basis for a future article on this subject.

⁸ Evesham Twp map, part of *Combination Atlas Map of Burlington County, NJ*: compiled, drawn and published from personal examinations and surveys. Philadelphia: J.D. Scott, 1876. Folio. 84pp. Maps, illus. Accessed 8/17/2022 at West Jersey History Project: http://www.westjerseyhistory.org/maps/burlco_scott_1876_atlas/index7.shtml. The West Jersey History Project has many nice old maps for those interested.

⁹ Black Run Preserve, see <https://blackrun.org/>