

# NJPH



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## A COVER'S ANALYSIS

One of the joys I have found in collecting covers is playing detective -- determining the story behind the cover. Recently, with the very able assistance of Mr. Calvet M. Hahn, I was able to unravel just such a story.

The item in question is a stampless cover, dated and docketed August 22, 1797, sent from Morristown, New Jersey to New York City. What makes the cover particularly intriguing are the notations found in the upper right hand corner of the cover's front and a reference inside to a stagecoach. The obvious question to answer is whether the cover's markings are stagecoach postal markings or something else. If something else, then what?

To begin to unravel the story, I first started with a brief review of the Morristown to New York City stagecoach service. The earliest reference I have been able to locate concerning such a service indicates a line probably was established in 1771.<sup>1</sup> This service was provided by Daniel and Silas Burnet, and they called their line the "Morris town Stage Waggon." Their route by waggon was from Powles Hook (Paulus Hook in Jersey City) ferry, to Springfield, and then to Morristown (see Figure 1). The trip was made every Thursday from Powles Hook with the return trips being made more or less at regular intervals.<sup>2</sup>

The same source indicates the service was still operational in 1775 as indicated by an advertisement in the 'Rivington's New York Gazetteer.' Yet another advertisement from the same source indicates a rival line commenced operations at about the same time. This second-line was run by Constant Cooper.<sup>3,4</sup>

The next reference I found to a Morristown stage line is for the year 1790.<sup>5</sup> The line still ran from Powles (or Paulus) Hook to Morristown. One can surmise from a study of New Jersey's situation during the Revolution that the stage line ran very infrequently, if at all, during the war. The service probably recommenced operations on a regular basis in the late 1780's. Thus, by the time of the letter under examination, written by Dr. Lewis Condict of Morristown, in 1797, the Morristown stage to Powles Hook was well established. Perhaps one final indication of this is shown by an advertisement of July 12, 1798, in the Morristown newspaper 'The Genesis of Liberty.' The ad is for the Morris and Powles Hook Stage which left every Tuesday and Friday morning from Morristown and returned from the Hook each succeeding morning.<sup>6</sup>

With this as background, let us move on to a consideration of the cover. The cover's markings to be examined are as follows:

W<sup>N</sup> 56

Box 5/

As stated earlier, the letter was written by Dr. Lewis Condict and was sent to a Timothy Green. With the help of Mr. Hahn, I found the key to understanding the marking is furnished by reading the letter's contents. In the letter, the doctor ordered a box of bark and stated "...I will send you the money by the next stage provided any person goes in with whom I can trust it safely." Additionally, he asked if "...perhaps you may afford it rather lower, as you

will receive the cash down."

The price for the box of bark is not explicitly stated, by the notation on the cover may provide the clue we need. As previously noted, part of it reads:

Box  $\frac{5}{3}$ .

This notation could mean that a box cost 3 shillings with the mark above the 3 being an "S". Three shillings at that time was equivalent to 37½¢ (Ed. - The '5' noted in type is not meant to suggest that the symbol was the number five.).

A second clue is furnished by a doodling on the letter's bottom:

$$\begin{array}{r} 56 \\ 28 \\ \hline 84 \end{array}$$

This arithmetic, as pointed out by Mr. Hahn<sup>7</sup>, could mean that the price of the bark may have been reduced to 28¢/box; therefore, two boxes would cost 56¢. The 84¢ would be the total cash price for 3 boxes. Perhaps after Dr. Condict paid for one box at the price of 28¢, he decided to order two more at the same price. Thus, the 56 on the cover's front could signify the amount due for the two additional boxes. I have not been able to put an interpretation on the remaining notation:

$\frac{W^N}{W}$

Perhaps some reader can provide an explanation.

For completeness, we should mention that the cover's outside markings and those on the letter's bottom, as well as the letter's docketing, are all written in the same hand. Mr. Hahn has identified this writing as that of Timothy Green.<sup>8</sup>

Thus, from the above analysis, I have come to the conclusion that the letter was carried by stagecoach to New York City, but the cover's notations are not stagecoach postal markings. They are markings associated with merchandise ordered.

Before leaving this letter, I would like to present a brief biographical sketch of Dr. Lewis Condict, since he was locally quite famous.

Dr. Condict was born March, 1773, in Morristown, and died at the age of 89 on May 26, 1862. One of his medical claims to fame was the public inoculation of his two year old daughter with a new English vaccine for smallpox. Professionally, he held many posts in the local, state and national American Medical Society. However, it was in the field of politics that he achieved true fame. At various times, he held local political appointments (Sheriff 1801, County Judge, 1818), as well as being elected to the New Jersey State Legislature (1805-1809). While there, he served as Speaker (1808-1809). His political career expanded when he became a long-time member of the United States House of Representatives (1811-1815 and 1821-1833). Finally, he held the position as the first president of the Morris and Essex Railroad Company.<sup>9,10</sup>

-Donald A. Chafetz-

#### References:

1. Cunningham, John T. "Chatham At the Crossing on the Fishawack." Chatham,



N.J.: Chatham Historical Society, 1967, p. 15.

2. Ibid
3. Ibid
4. Hahn, Calvet M. "The Provisional Post of the United States," The Collectors Club Philatelist, Vol. 54, No. 2, March 1975, pp. 97-98.
5. Cunningham, op cit. p. 48.
6. "Morris and Powles Stage," The Genesis of Liberty, July 12, 1798, col. 4
7. Letter dated December 30, 1976 from C.M. Hahn to D.A. Chafetz.
8. Ibid
9. History of Morris County, New Jersey, 1739-1882, W.W. Munsell & Co., New York: George McNamara, 1882.
10. Cutler, Ralph H. Jr., and Carl B. Scherzer (eds.). "Morristown and Morris Township A Guide to Historic Sites" Morristown, NJ: The Washington Association of New Jersey, 1975, pp. 26-27.

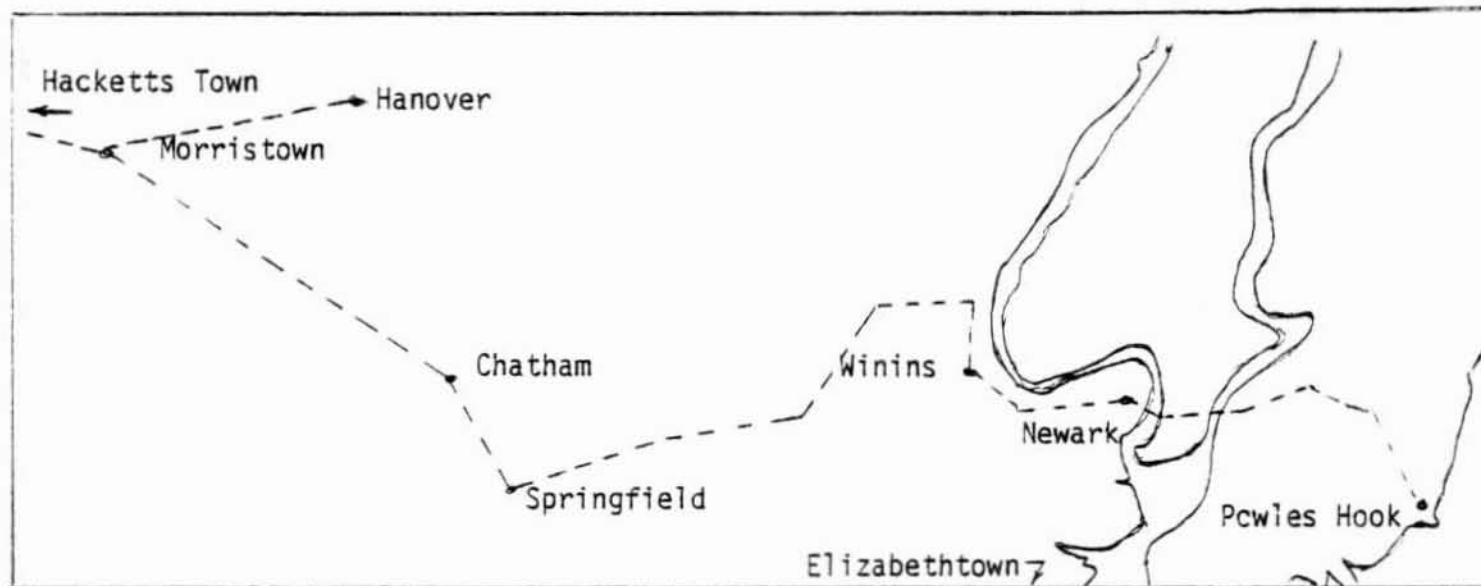


Figure 1. Morristown Stage Post (Courtesy C.M. Hahn)

22 August 94

East Louis Condict

Morristown

St. Louis Green Co. Inc.

Mo 58

Cartersville, N. York

St. Louis Green Co. Inc.

Box 2/ 2056

Figure 2. Condict Letter

# COLUMBIA K-7, M, O, and P (Modified Pike)

A COMPILATION BY JOHN KOONTZ

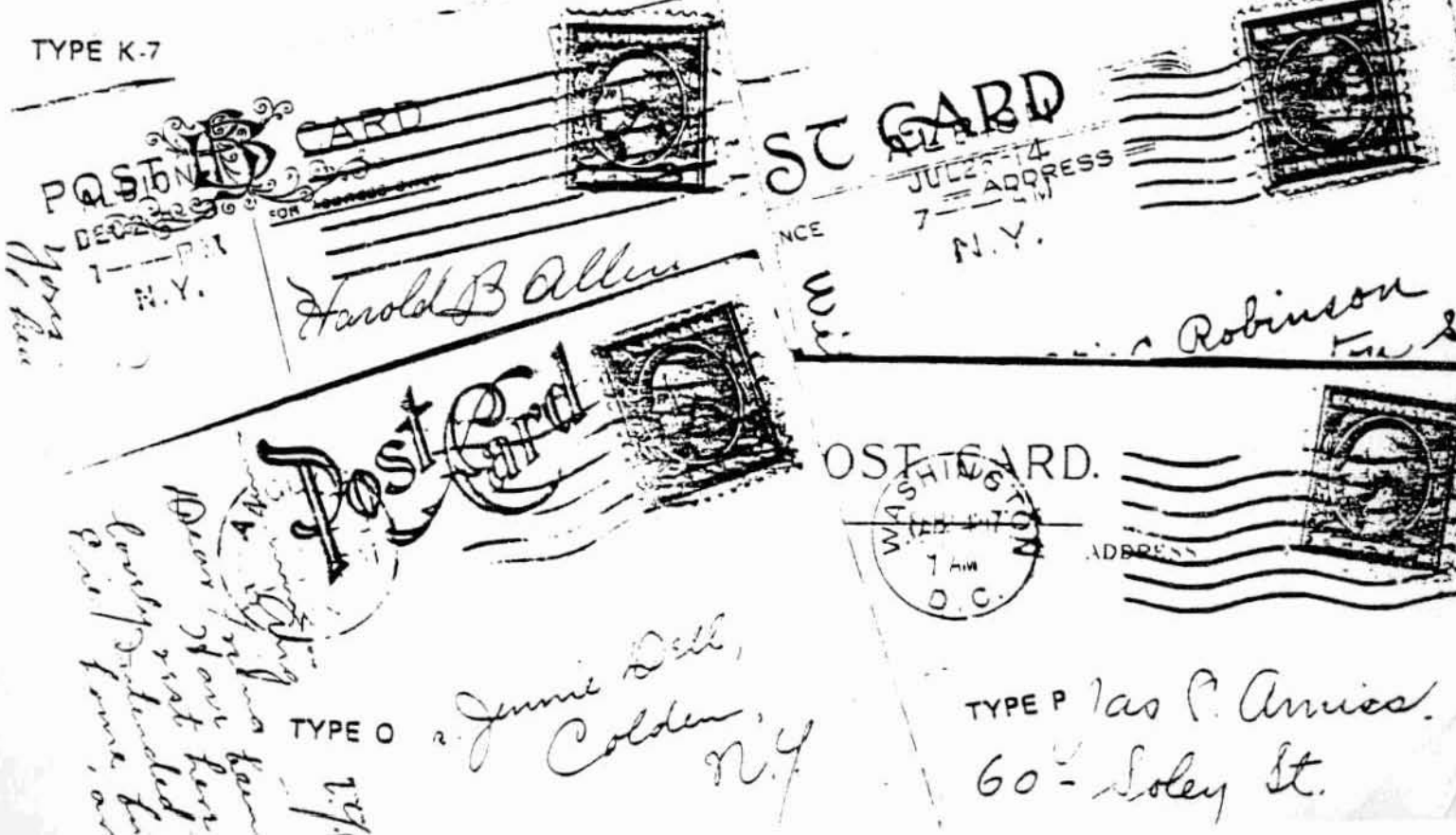
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TOWN		YEAR REPORTED																																						
		13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40											
NEW JERSEY:																																								
AUDUBON	P						X		X		X																													
MILLVILLE	K-7	X		X																																				
MILLVILLE	M		X																																					
MILLVILLE	O					X	X	X																																
MOUNT HOLLY	K-7		X																																					
MOUNT HOLLY	M		X	X	X	X																																		
MOUNT HOLLY	O			X		X	X																																	
PITMAN	P								X	X																														
ROCKAWAY	P										X																													
ROCKY HILL	P						X					X	X							X	X							X	X	X										
WESTWOOD	P				X	X	X		X	X																														
		13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40											

TYPE M

TYPE K-7



## NEW JERSEY'S LONGEST SERVING POSTMASTER

The postmaster with the longest service in New Jersey was John N. VanZant of Blawenburg, Somerset County.

He assumed the position of postmaster on April 23, 1866, under President Andrew Johnson, and was still postmaster upon his death on June 16, 1935, in the administration of Franklin D. Roosevelt. Thus, he served under 16 Presidents and 29 Postmasters General.

When President Herbert Hoover laid the cornerstone for the New Post Office Building at 12th and Pennsylvania Avenues in Washington DC, Mr. VanZant was the honored guest of Postmaster General Walter F. Brown, in recognition of the fact that he had more service than any other living employee.

Mr. VanZant was succeeded by Miss Frances VanZant, probably a relative.

Mr. VanZant's service of 69 years and two months was probably the second longest service as a postmaster in the history of the United States Post Office. The longest service, I firmly believe, was that of Roswell Beardsley, North Lansing PO, Tompkins County, NY. He assumed office on June 28, 1828 and left office on January 27, 1903, a total of 74 years and seven months service.

-John Kay-

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## CHANGES TO NEW JERSEY POSTAL HISTORY

Page 59	Academy (Sta. Newark, 07102) Discontinued Ja 30, 1976
Page 85	Browntown (Br. Old Bridge, 08857) Chgd Je 30, 1975 to (Sta. Old Bridge, 08857)
Page 88	West Carteret (Sta. Carteret, 07008) Disc Ag 4, 1977
Page 89	Alfred Vail (Br. Eatontown, 07724) Disc My 1, 1975
Page 90	Circle Plaza (Br. Manasquan, 08736) Disc. Ag 31, 1977
Page 93	Locust (Br. Rumson, 07760) Disc. Je 30, 1970
Page 96	Spring Lake Heights (Br. Spring Lake, 07762) Disc. Ap 21, 1975
Page 135	Lopatong (Br. Phillipsburg, 08865) Disc. Ag 17, 1972
Page 32	Add Foster Village (Sta. Bergenfield, 07621) Ag 23, 1977 Active
Page 43	Add Red Lion (Br. Vincentown, 08088) Ag 17, 1977 Active
Page 51	Add Coast Guard Base (MOU, Cape May 08204) Oc 7, 1977 Active
Page 81	Add Downtown (Br. Trenton, 08608) Oc 10, 1977 Active
Page 99	Add Dover Annex (Sta. Dover, 07801) Ag 24, 1977 Active



## MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

### Resignations

Frederick R. Sayen  
Steven M. Roth

Hamilton Square  
Rockville, MD

### New Members

Dr. Robert Harper                      Blackwood  
Collector's Club of Chicago   Chicago

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## EDITORIAL

The new year brings the promised change in format; I hope they meet with your approval. Let's take this opportunity to thank the following members for contributions forwarded with membership payments:

Edward Moore Vickers  
Bertha K. Schuck  
Charles W. Weeks

George Y. Fisher Jr  
John W. Edge

Such contributions help to keep the Society solvent and able to publish. With the projected rise in postage rates, we may face another crisis. However, we have one right now -- articles for your journal. We have a listing of railroad markings by Bill Coles and more information from John Kay. Then nothing. This issue contains a fine contribution by Don Chafetz which can serve as a model for all of us. More such efforts are vitally needed.

The Spring Meeting will be held in conjunction with SOJEX, April 16, 1978 at the Sheraton in Atlantic City.

REMEMBER 1978 DUES ARE DUE! YOUR DUES ARE THE LUBRICANT TO KEEP THE WHEELS OF THE SOCIETY TURNING.

# New Jersey Postal History

1771-1900

N. B. May 23

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*Aug 1, 24*



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