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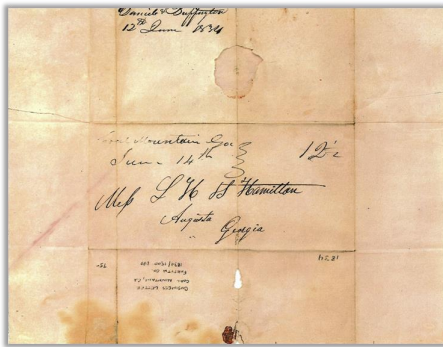
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Whole Number 119



Point Peter Cover Travels the World

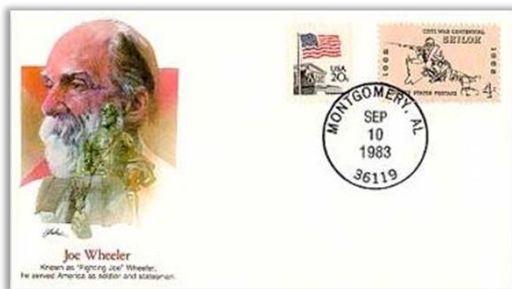
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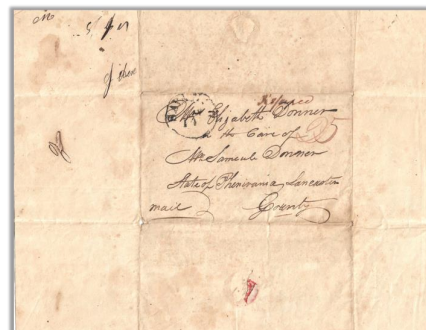
Scarce Coal Mountain Cover



The DeSoto Hotel, Savannah, Georgia



Fighting Joe Wheeler Postal History



“Refused” Savannah Letters

The Georgia Postal History Society is a non-profit, educational organization whose purpose is to cultivate and to promote the study of the postal history of Georgia, to encourage the acquisition and preservation of material relevant and necessary to that study, and to publish and to support the publication of such knowledge for the benefit of the public.



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Point Peter Cover Travels the World

By Nancy B. Clark



Figure 1. From Point Peter, Georgia to Private Daniel L. Turner, Co. 28, Camp Presidio, San Francisco, California.

There has been little written about Point Peter in Oglethorpe County. In an attempt to correct this, the author went exploring into our non-exhibited Oglethorpe County holdings. What surfaced led to an exploration of World War I Vladivostok and the Trans-Siberian Railway.

Located on tributaries of the Broad River, Point Peter (Figure 2) is now an unincorporated community in Oglethorpe County, twelve miles northeast of Lexington, between Vesta and Carleton, at the junction of five roads.

In southeastern Georgia, there is another Point Peter (Figure 3 marker) where there was once a fort. Located in Camden County near St. Mary's, it is on a peninsula between the North River and Point Peter Creek, which flows into the St. Mary's River¹.

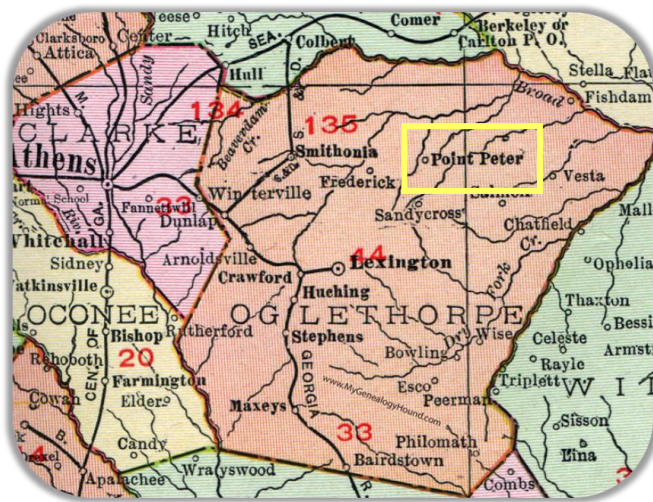


Figure 2. Point Peter, Oglethorpe County Georgia.

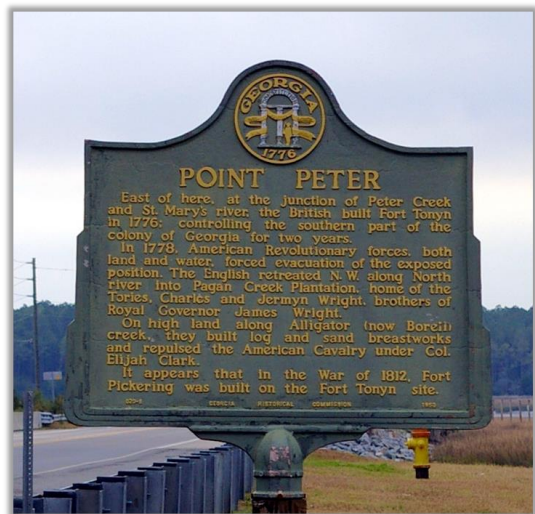


Figure 3. Point Peter, Camden County Georgia.

So how do we know the Figure 1 cover was an Oglethorpe County letter?

The recipient, Daniel Lee Turner, was born there September 25, 1899. His father was George Mark Turner and his mother², “Mrs. G. M. Turner” in the return address, was the author of the missive.

Turner does not show up in the 1920 census, but the 1930 census reveals he is farming near his family farm, though it is listed as Glade district³ at that point. Neither his father, his mother, nor he had attended school, but all three could read and write.

Turner Hill Road outlines much of Point Peter, from the Lexington-Carleton Road around to Glade Road, near where it meets up with Lexington-Carleton Road near where the Glade Volunteer Fire Department is now. At some point, the Turner family probably had considerable land to farm. The family located in the Glade District of Oglethorpe County when his grandfather, John Mitchell Turner (1854-1928), relocated here from Paulding County, Georgia, just west of Marietta, where his great grandfather⁴ had moved when he left Laurens, South Carolina.

Daniel’s draft registration card (Figure 4) shows Point Peter, Georgia as his home. He is listed as a farmer, white skinned, tall, medium build, with brown hair and eyes, and 18 years old.

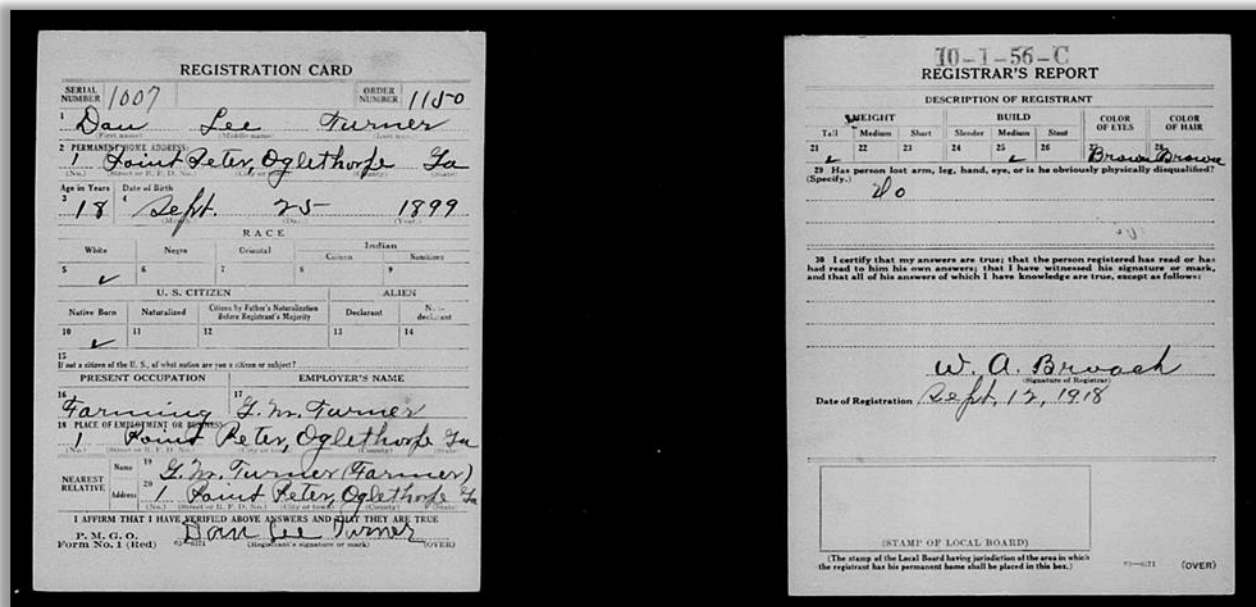


Figure 4. Daniel Turner’s draft registration card.

The 1930 census shows Turner living near his parents, renting a home, but by the 1940 census, he is still single, now living with his parents in Point Peter, Oglethorpe County. Turner died on June 8, 1981, in nearby Clarke County, where the local hospital is located, and is buried with several family members in Clark Cemetery, Lexington, Oglethorpe County, Georgia.

The cover that is the focus of this article surely doesn’t look like much, but the story it has to tell is fascinating.

Addressed to Private Daniel L. Turner, Co. 28, Camp Presidio, California, and mailed at Point Peter, Georgia, November 5, 1918, there are a host of further directional notations, so that, even though the stamp is missing, it has a tale to tell.

It is likely that Private Turner reported to Camp Hancock in Augusta, home of the Keystone 28th Keystone Division, likely the “Co. 28” referenced in the address.

On October 1, 2018, the number of personnel ill with Spanish Flu at Augusta's Camp Hancock jumped from two to 716 in just a few hours. On October 5, Camp Hancock was quarantined with 3,000 cases of flu, but the quarantine came after forty-seven cases had already reached the nearby city. By evening, more than fifty soldiers were dead, while many more had contracted pneumonia. Though seriously affected by the Spanish flu epidemic, Georgia escaped the massive numbers of sick and dying counted in other states along the East Coast.⁵

The author of the letter had no idea where her son was headed, but the folks at Camp Presidio wrote "Enroute to Siberia/Last heard from in/ Honolulu, Hawaiian(sic) Islands." The missive received the "SIBERIAN REPLACEMENT TROOPS / SIBERIA" forwarding handstamp (Figure 5).

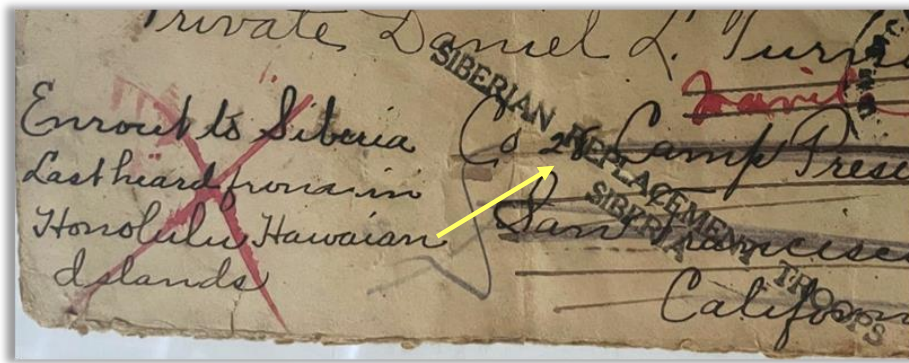


Figure 5. "SIBERIAN REPLACEMENT TROOPS / SIBERIA" forwarding handstamp.

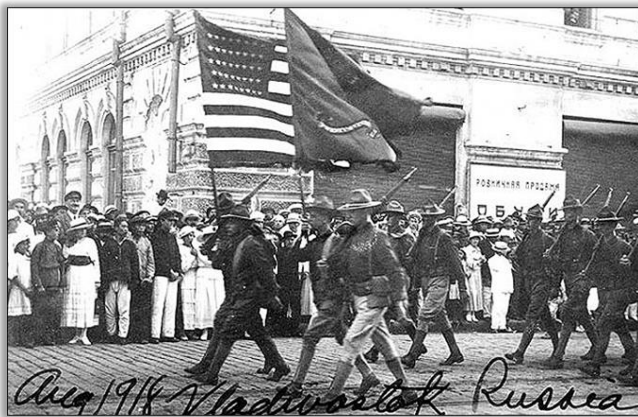


Figure 6 is a 1918 photograph of American troops parading in Vladivostok, Russia⁶.

Where the missing postage stamp once was (Figure 7), there's a partial strike of a "U. S. POSTAL AGENCY / SIBERIA" postmark, which is known from December 20, 1918, to April 14, 1920⁷.

(For reference, to the right of the Figure 5 image is an image of a 1919 "U. S. POSTAL AGENCY / SIBERIA" postmark.)

Figure 6. American Troops parading in Vladivostok.



Figure 7. "U. S. POSTAL AGENCY / SIBERIA" postmark.

As part of 7,950 soldiers in what was called the American Expeditionary Forces (A.E.F.), headed by General William S. Graves, the main purpose of the contingent was to take an apolitical position and focus on making sure the Trans-Siberian railroad stayed operational. Railroad experts were brought in to run the railway as efficiently as war allowed. They operated in connection with Japanese, British, French, and Czechoslovak troops. The American forces were comprised of troops from both the Philippines Department and the United States. Assuredly, an eye-opening exposure to the world for a farmer from rural Georgia!

On August 3, 1918, The Adjutant General cabled the commanding general, Philippines Department, to send by the first available United States Army transports the 27th and 37th Infantry Regiments, one field hospital, a telegraph battalion, and one ambulance company to Vladivostok, fully equipped, including winter clothing. To bring the regiments up to war strength, 5,000 infantry soldiers from the 8th Division were added to bring the Philippine regiments up to war strength.

The troops from the Philippines Department sailed from Manila on August 5 and 12, and the commanding general, A. E. F., Siberia, with a part of his staff and 1,889 enlisted personnel, departed from San Francisco on August 14. The contingent from the Philippines arrived at Vladivostok on August 15-16; those from the United States on September 2⁸.

I can find no indication of what capacity was served by Private Daniel Lee Turner, only that he survived.

The handwritten notations about Evacuation Hospital Number 17 (Figure 8), which was located in Vladivostok, the main entry and exit port for troops, might place Turner as a wounded combatant, a mentally ill combatant, suffering from the Spanish Flu or it might indicate he served as part of the hospital corps.

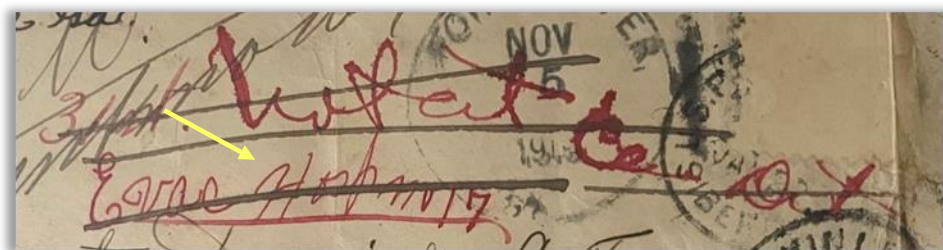


Figure 8. "Evac Hosp No 17."

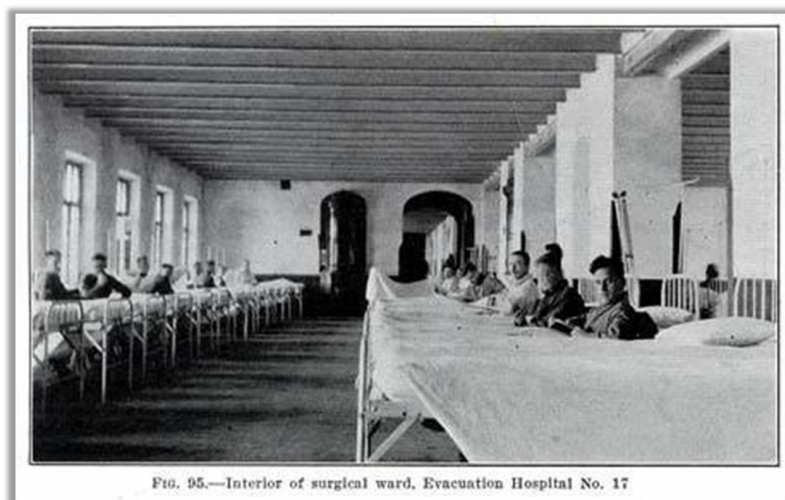


Figure 9. Surgical ward at Evacuation Hospital No. 17.

Figure 9 is a postcard showing the interior of the surgical ward at Evacuation Hospital No. 17.

Fort Presidio is known for its medical facilities, from the Spanish-American War through World War II, so Turner may have trained there prior to his voyage to Vladivostok via Hawaii for hospital work. His veteran's Bureau paperwork doesn't show any disability benefits, only the conversion from War Term Insurance to U. S. Government Life Insurance on his departure from the military.

A veterinary unit was part of this Evacuation Hospital unit effort, and being a farmer, Turner may have been assigned to caring for horses and other animals, which might have been a natural fit. It is all speculation as the author cannot locate any paperwork positioning Turner in a particular job.

“R. to W.” (Figure 10) could be a sorting/alphabetization tool, as T comes between R and U. But underwritten by “unknown,” it is likely indicating **R**eturn to **W**riter.

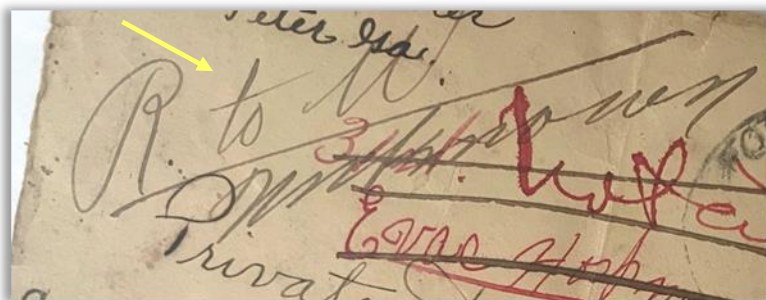


Figure 10. “R to W” - Return to Writer.

There is a partial postmark on the reverse (Figure 11) which appears to be from Manilla, Philippines. On the left is the marking on the Point Peter cover; the image on the right is from a Naval Cover Museum listing⁹.



Figure 11. Manila, Philippines postmark.

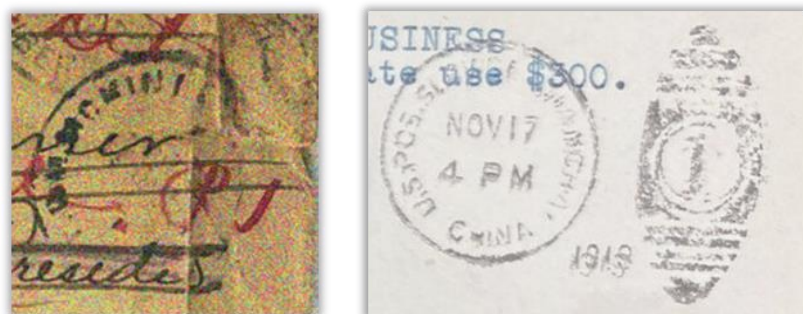


Figure 12. “U. S. Postal Agency Shanghai, China.”

The partial handstamp on the Point Peter cover, shown on the left in Figure 12 and lightened for clarity, has not been definitively identified. A best guess is that it was reads “U. S. Postal Agency Shanghai, China,” a duplex used by the U. S. Postal Agency in Vladivostok in 1918. For comparison, on the right is a marking cropped from an eBay listing.

In speaking with an expert in the field, Al Kugel (who has since passed away), he said that it was unusual for mail to be treated by so many hands. But given that this was a very confused time for mail carriage, and with this being a search, ultimately in vain, for a soldier, it was quite reasonable for mail to have such a variety of postal markings. He also indicated that records would not reveal which ship ultimately brought the letter to Siberia nor which took it back stateside as it was an as-available service at this point and there were no naval postal markings.

Not only did at least one young man from Point Peter travel the world, a letter from his mother did as well.

Point Peter had a post office for one hundred seven years, from July 14, 1849, to December 31, 1957. Lexington, the Oglethorpe County seat, was established December 19, 1793, with its first post office September 1, 1800. The post office is still operational.

The postmark on the cover that is the focus of this article was in use at least by 1915. A book published in 1906 stated that Point Peter had 125 residents¹⁰. In a generalized survey, it has been estimated that extant Point Peter covers may total forty, including all postmark varieties.

Examples from our collection, below, of Point Peter postmarks document the use of pen, handstamp, and machine to prevent stamp reuse. We have seen, but do not possess, American war between the states mail in a family's correspondence. We have never seen an antebellum use.



1880



1890



1904



1915 - 1918



1937



1942

Point Peter also had two Rural Routes, both established December 1, 1904. R.F.D. The #1 route was discontinued May 15, 1954. R.F.D. Route #2 ended May 31, 1935.

Endnotes

- ¹ It was important in the War of 1815, marked with a historical marker, but the fort itself was a ruin by 1870 and the land currently is an active archaeological site.
- ² Leona Wailes Amason Turner.
- ³ Glade is the Military District where Point Perter is located.
- ⁴ Green Berry Turner, Sr., May 21, 1804-November 12, 1864, who moved with his parents to Georgia from South Carolina.
- ⁵ World War I in Georgia, Georgia Encyclopedia.
- ⁶ https://siberiantimes.com/other/others/features/f0246-8000-us-troops-deploy-in-siberia-the-27th-and-31st-infantry-regiments-act-to-stabilise-russia/?comm_order=best.
- ⁷ Thanks to Al Kugel's online exhibit p. 11, at "United States Intervention in Siberia During and After World War I" (Exhibit) (militaryphs.org).
- ⁸ An account of the American Expeditionary Forces in Siberia, August 1918, to March 1919, by Captain Lawrence B. Packard, U. S. A., April 1919. On file, Historical Section, the Army War College.
- ⁹ navalcovermuseum.org.
- ¹⁰ *Georgia Comprising Sketches of Counties, Towns, Events, Institutions, and Persons*, Vo. 2, Candler & Evans, transcribed by Kristen Bisanz.

Georgia Cover Seen at Auction



Schuyler Rumsey Philatelic Auctions Sale 35 U.S. Postal History: Advertising & Illustrated Covers

The Great Airship Races, Savannah, Georgia.
Red and blue illustrated ad cover showing airships in flight.
Franked with 2¢ Seward imperf, Scot #371, tied by "Savannah, Ga., Oct 30, 1909" machine postmark.
Very Fine and rare.
Realized: \$675.

Scarce Stampless Cover – Coal Mountain to Augusta

By Ted O. Brooke

Coal Mountain is an unincorporated community about four miles north of Cumming in Forsyth County, Georgia. Forsyth County was created in 1833 from the original Cherokee County. When it began, it was located on the “Old Federal Road” as described on a historical marker at the present-day intersection of Georgia highways 9 and 369.

The highway crossing east and west at this intersection was the first vehicular way and earliest postal route west of the Chattahoochee. Beginning to the east on the Hall-Jackson county line, it linked Georgia and Tennessee across the Cherokee Nation.

Rights to use the route were granted informally by the Indians in 1803 and formally in the 1805 Treaty of Tellico, Tennessee. Prior to that time, the trace served as a trading path from Augusta to the Cherokees of northwest Georgia and southeast Tennessee.

The origin of the name of Coal Mountain remains unknown, in spite of intensive investigation. Coal deposits do exist in Georgia (for example in Dade, Walker and Chattooga counties) and several coal mines have operated in the state. However, Coal Mountain, Georgia does not have and never has had coal deposits or coal mining operations.

There are several fanciful tales regarding Coal Mountain’s name, including one ludicrous fabrication of sacks of coal being brought to the area from Oklahoma in 1834 and scattered about on the ground.

Postmasters

The National Archives’ *Postmaster Appointments for Forsyth County Georgia, Records of Appointments of Postmasters and the Establishments of Post Offices* show George Kellogg as the first Postmaster of Coal Mountain, appointed March 8, 1834 (Figure 1).¹

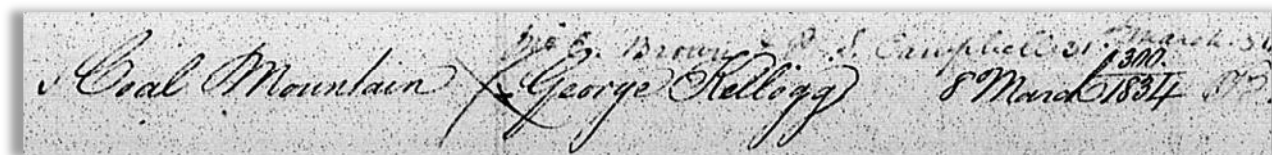


Figure 1. George Kellogg, Coal Mountain’s first Postmaster, appointed March 8, 1834.

Kellogg was born on March 3, 1803, in Litchfield Co., Connecticut and died May 14, 1876, in Forsyth County, Georgia. Kellogg made his home near Six-Mile Creek on the Federal Road where he kept a store and served for many years as Postmaster of Coal Mountain. As a leading citizen of the county, he was chosen as an agent for the state to valuate Cherokee land and improvements following ratification of the Treaty of New Echota in 1836².

Kellogg retained his Postmaster position through September 25, 1860, when Truman E. Kellogg was appointed Postmaster (Figure 2).

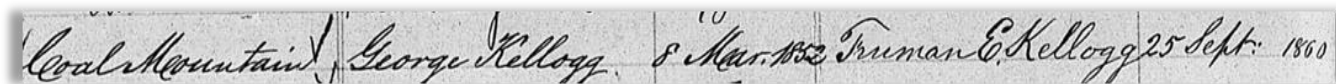


Figure 2. Truman E. Kellogg was appointed Coal Mountain's second Postmaster on September 25, 1860.

Truman Kellogg is shown in the household of George Kellogg in the 1850 and 1860 census, assumed son of George.

Research did not confirm this. However, potential insight is offered in the records of the Georgia Confederate Army during the American Civil War³ providing an entry for Truman E. Kellogg as:

1st Corporal, Co. E, 14th Georgia Infantry. Enlisted July 4, 1861. Killed at 2d Manassas, VA, August 29, 1862.

The National Archives records show that during the tenure of Postmaster John H. Thomas, appointed May 10, 1905, the Coal Mountain post office discontinued operations and mail was sent to Cumming, Georgia effective March 15, 1907 (Figure 3).

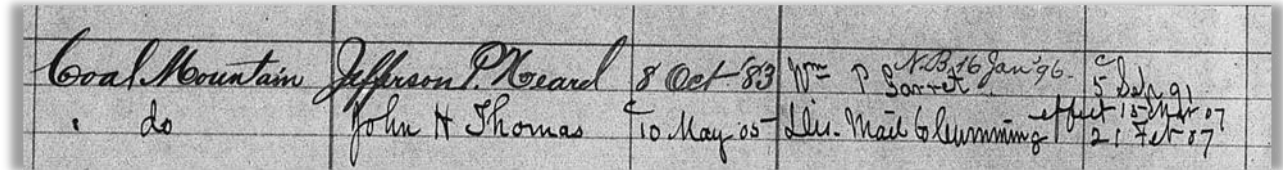


Figure 3. Coal Mountain post office operations discontinued effective March 15, 1907.

The Figure 4 stampless mailing from Coal Mountain to Augusta, Georgia is an example of the scarce postal history available for Coal Mountain. Sent June 14, 1834, this cover was posted less than four months after the opening of the Coal Mountain post office.

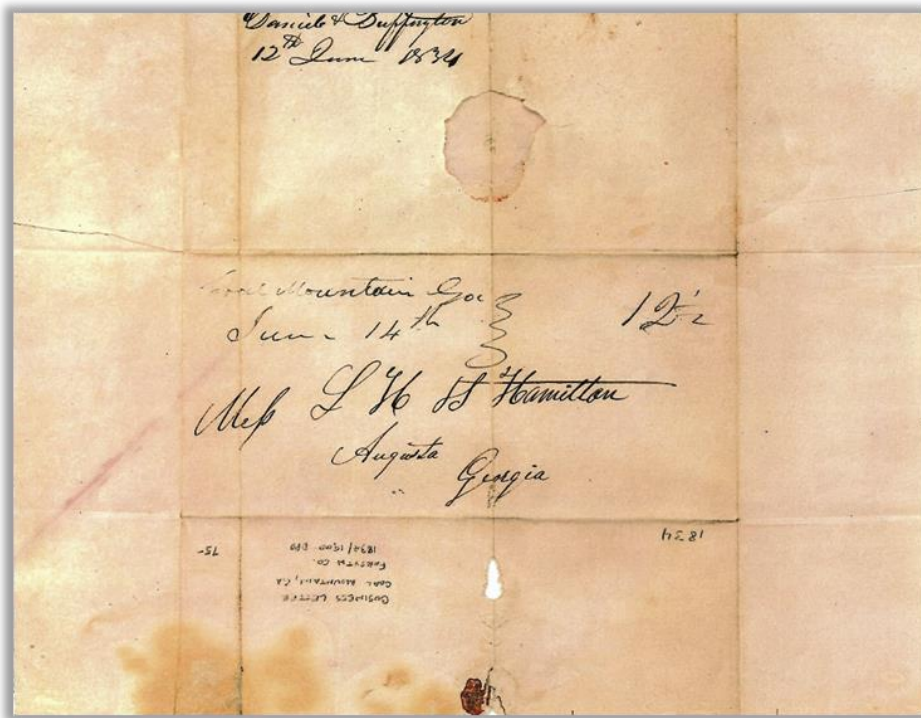


Figure 4. June 14, 1834, mailing from Coal Mountain to Augusta, Georgia.

The mailing is a business letter from Daniel & Buffington to Miss L. H. S. Hamilton. Information about the Daniel & Buffington business has not been located. The State census of 1834 shows only a “James Daniel” and one person named “Buffington” in 1834 Forsyth County as Thomas Buffington, the owner of the Etowah Tavern.

The letter inside the tri-folded stampless cover is presented in Figure 5.

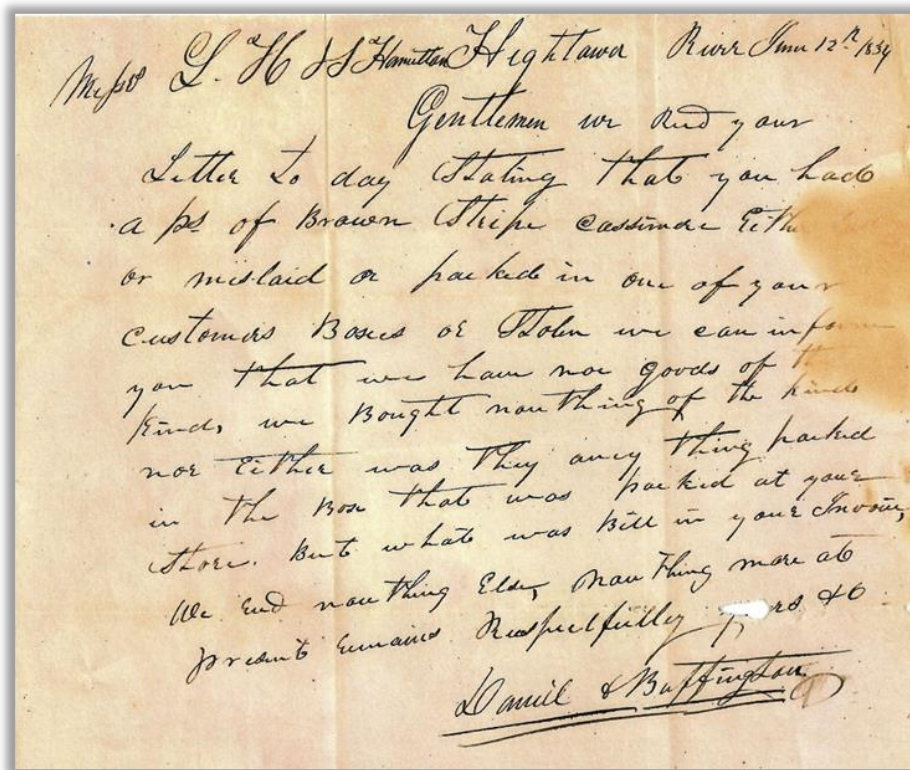


Figure 5. Letter to Miss L. H. S. Hamilton, Hightower River.

A transcript of the letter follows. Indications of potential word alternatives are offered.

Miss L. H. S. Hamilton Hightower River, June 12 1834

Gentlemen we recd. your Letter today stating that you had a ps. of brown stripe cassimere (sic) either lost [word faded] or mislaid or packed in one of your containers boxes or stolen. we can inform you have no <more> goods of th <this> [word faded] kind, we bought <more things of the kind> nothing of the kind nor <more> either was they (sic) anything packed in the box that was packed at your store but what was bill)sic) in your invoice, We end (?) nothing else, nothing more at present remains. Respectfully, yrs. & c.

Daniel & Buffington.

Endnotes

- ¹ <https://catalog.archives.gov/search?q=Coal%20Mountain%20postmasters>.
- ² Don L. Shadburn, *Pioneer History of Forsyth County, Georgia* (Roswell, GA, W.H. Wolfe Associates, 1981), pages 308-312, Chapter 26, "George Kellogg Family."
- ³ <https://books.google.com/books?id=9gauDwAAQBAJ&pg=PA1861&lpg=PA1861&dq=Truman+E.+Kellogg>.

Sources

<http://www.usgenweb.org/ga>.
<http://www.usgwarchives.net/ga/gafiles.htm>.

The DeSoto Hotel, Savannah, Georgia

By Tony L. Crumbley

The first DeSoto Hotel in Savannah was built in 1834 on the original site of the Oglethorpe Barracks. History tells us that the barracks never housed any US troops. The Oglethorpe Barracks were purchased in 1879 by the Savannah Hotel Corporation. Their intent was to build a luxury hotel facility to attract travelers on their way to Florida.

On New Year's Day 1890, the Corporation opened a 300-room hotel. Their marketing material touted it as being one of the finest examples of modern construction. They offered a swimming pool, lighted miniature golf, a solarium, soda shop, and a barber shop.

The Figure 1 advertising cover is from the hotel in 1895, quite an impressive facility. The cover was printed by Loughhead & Co., Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The hotel would survive for seventy-five years. On New Year's Eve 1965, the Savannah Symphony Women's Guild held their Diamond Jubilee Ball and closed the facility.



Figure 1. Savannah, GA. May 8, 1895. Scott #250 tied to the DeSoto Hotel corner card cover. This facility first opened in 1890 and would operate as such until 1965.

The Hilton Hotel chain would build a new DeSoto on the old site and open it in 1968. The author can say he has stayed a week in the facility, and it felt like any other Hilton Hotel.

In 2017, the DeSoto underwent major renovations under new owners. It is now called The DeSoto by Sotherly which has the reputation of being a true luxury hotel.

Sources

https://www.Savannahnow.com/news/2017-07-221/it_was_never_anything_other_desota.

Fighting Joe Wheeler Postal History

By Bill Baab and Steve Swain

Editor's Note: Although Joseph Wheeler has not been commemorated on a U.S. postage stamp, there are numerous postal related artifacts that could be included in an appealing postal history collection: CDVs, Camp Wheeler postcards, Wheeler letters, and Wheeler commemorative covers. This article offers a history of Joseph Wheeler and examples of associated postal history.

On the corner of Aumond Road in Augusta, Georgia at its intersection with Walton Way is a huge immovable boulder (Figure 1). Thousands of vehicles pass by it daily, but few passengers or drivers give it more than a glance. The inscription carved into its face reads:

"JOSEPH WHEELER. Born on this site Sept. 10, 1836. Lt. Gen. Com(anding), Confederate Cavalry 1865. Maj. Gen. U.S. Cavalry 1898. His name and fame will live and be loved as noble deeds are honored among men. Placed by Annie Wheeler Auxiliary No. 2, U.S. W(ar) V(eterans), 1926."



Figure 1. Joseph Wheeler boulder monument, Augusta, Georgia.

The Veterans chapter was formerly known as U.S. Spanish War Veterans, but by the time this historical marker was erected, there were few if any survivors of the war popularly known as the Spanish-American War.



Figure 2. Joseph Wheeler.

Joseph Wheeler ((September 10, 1836 – January 25, 1906) (Figure 2) seemed destined for a military career, but even he would not have been able to predict the extent of it.

He was appointed to the West Point, N.Y., military institution from Georgia in 1854. He was small in stature and, it was reported, just barely made the required height to enter the academy. So, he decided to become a cavalryman, knowing his short legs could make it hard for him to keep up during marches of the longer-legged infantrymen. And anyway, he would rather ride than walk.

Following his graduation from the U.S. Military Academy in 1859, Wheeler found himself a brevet second lieutenant in the 1st U.S. Dragoons. He then attended the U.S. Cavalry School in Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania. Completing the course on June 26, 1860, Wheeler was transferred to the Regiment of Mounted Rifles stationed in the New Mexico Territory. It was during a scrap there with hostile Native American Indians that Wheeler acquired his nickname of "Fighting Joe." On September 1, 1860, he was promoted to a full-fledged second lieutenant. Then the Civil War erupted.

Wheeler always considered himself a son of the South, so he resigned from the U.S. Army and on March 16, 1861, found himself in the Confederate Army. His rise through the ranks was rapid. On October 30, 1861, he was promoted to brigadier general. By January 20, 1863, he had become a major general and later a lieutenant general. On January 22, he was assigned to the command of all cavalries in Middle Tennessee.

It was written that "he was conspicuous as a raider and was constantly employed in guarding the flanks of the army, cutting Federal communications, covering retreats and obtaining information for army commanders." Wheeler definitely sat tall in the saddle.

The first postal related items associated with Wheeler date to the early years of the Civil War. Carte de Visites (CDVs) are a type of small photographs the size of visiting cards. Such cards were commonly traded among family, friends, and visitors in the 1860s. Faced with the financial demands of the Civil War, an act of Congress placed a new luxury tax on "photographs, ambrotypes, daguerreotypes or any other sun-pictures." Photographers were required to affix a properly denominated revenue stamp on the back of the image and cancel it by initialing and dating it in pen.

Figure 3 is a Joe Wheeler CDV with a 2-cent U.S. Internal Revenue stamp (Scott #R15c) affixed to and cancelled on the reverse of the card.

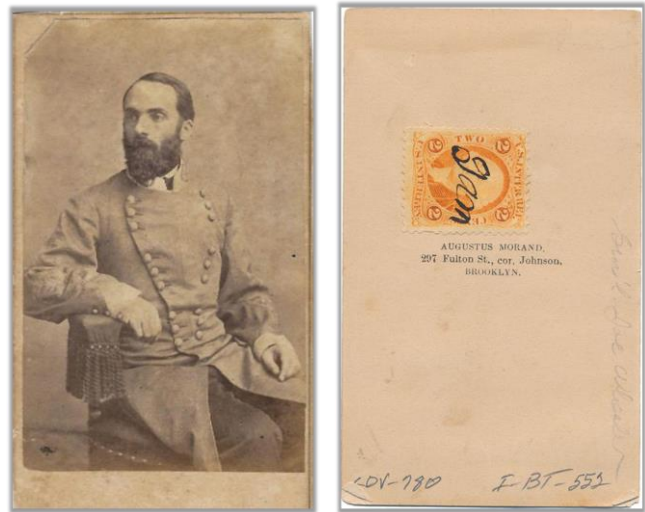


Figure 3. Joe Wheeler CDV with 2-cent revenue stamp affixed to the reverse of the card.

Wheeler's cavalry proved to be such a menace to Union lines of communication that railroads were guarded by blockhouses at vulnerable points. During Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman's Carolina Campaign following his "March Through Georgia," Gen. Wheeler's cavalry corps was responsible for the Yankees' lone defeat at the Battle of Aiken on Feb. 11, 1865. Brigadier Gen. Judson Kilpatrick's cavalry force was routed and could have been captured if not for an over-eager Rebel who accidentally pulled the trigger of his gun,

warning the Federal troops of Wheeler's presence. Legend has it that during his haste to flee the scene, Kilpatrick's hat blew off and was "captured" by Wheeler.

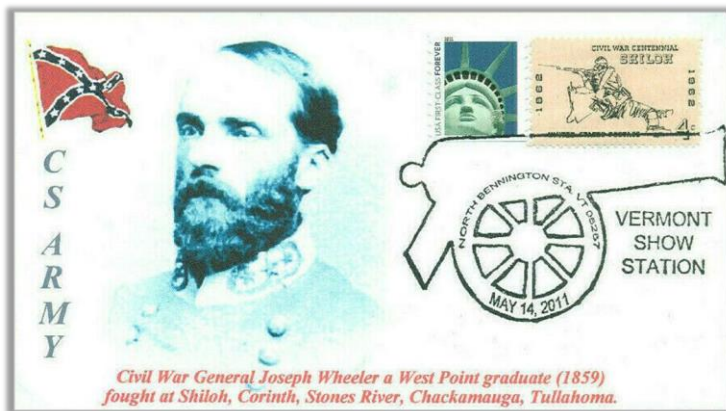


Figure 4. Joe Wheeler commemorative cover.

Wheeler's cavalry was active at the battle of Shiloh, April 6-7, 1862, in southwestern Tennessee. There are numerous covers commemorating Wheeler and his participation in the battle. Figure 4 is one such cover franked with the 4-cent Shiloh issue, Scott #1179.

Following the end of the Civil War, Wheeler moved to Wheeler, Alabama (the town was named in his honor) and began the first of three terms as a Congressional Democrat representing that state's 8th Congressional District. He also became a planter. But there was more action ahead for Fighting Joe.

Under the headline "Fighting Joe," the Augusta Chronicle published the following on Feb. 7, 1898, after the breakout of the Spanish-American War:

"Gen. Joe Wheeler's standing offer of his military services to the War Department is not buncombe. He is a born soldier, a distinguished veteran and despite advanced years (he was 62) is as active as a cat."

In May 1898, President William F. McKinley appointed Wheeler a major general in the U.S. Army and "Fighting Joe" was soon on his way to Cuba to join Teddy Roosevelt and other volunteers to battle the Spanish.



Figure 5 is a photograph of Roosevelt (far right) and Wheeler in the forefront holding his hat.

After landing at Daiquiri, Cuba, Wheeler defeated a Spanish force under Lt. Gen. Linares at Las Guasimas on June 24, 1898. A week later, Wheeler was the senior officer in immediate command of the field in San Juan. He was also the senior of the commission that negotiated the surrender at Santiago.

Figure 5. 1898 photo of Lieutenant-Colonel Theodore Roosevelt and Gen. Joseph Wheeler.

Wheeler, sometimes with the accompaniment of his daughter, visited various U.S. cities to view and take part in commemorations associated with the Civil War. One such city was Boston, Massachusetts where Wheeler and his daughter attended Memorial Day celebrations in 1899.

After returning from Boston, Wheeler received a letter and parcel from General Wilmon W. Blackmar who served as Judge Advocate General for several Massachusetts governors. Blackmar was also the Chairman of the Reception Committee for Kinsley Post 113, a branch of the Grand Army of the Republic, Department of Massachusetts. The letter informed Wheeler that the Kinsley Post 113 was honoring him with a specially designed sword and belt, as was enclosed in the parcel.

On June 24, Wheeler sent a "Thank You" letter to General Blackmar (Figure 6).

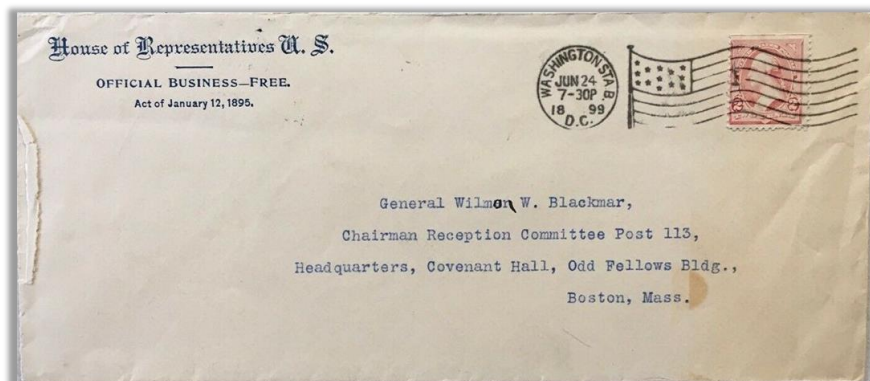


Figure 6. To General Wilmon, Boston, Mass., from Joe Wheeler, June 24, 1899.

Note the cover carries a WASHINGTON STA. B D.C. flag cancel postmark on an OFFICIAL BUSINESS - FREE House of Representatives U.S. corner card envelope. Even though as a current member of the House of Representatives Wheeler was not required to affix proper postage to the mailing, the cover was franked with a 2-cent Washington issue, Scott #252.

The enclosed letter (Figure 7) expresses Wheeler's gratitude for the "exquisitely beautiful sword and belt... a lasting memento of Memorial Day 1899."

Wheeler closes the letter with an acknowledgement of a now united country saying:

"That one who once wore the grey should receive so grand a testimonial from the wearers of the blue, proves that the Nation is indeed reunited, and it shall be my pride to hold your gift as a token that the union of the states is, in the words of your immortal son: 'One and inseparable now and forever'."

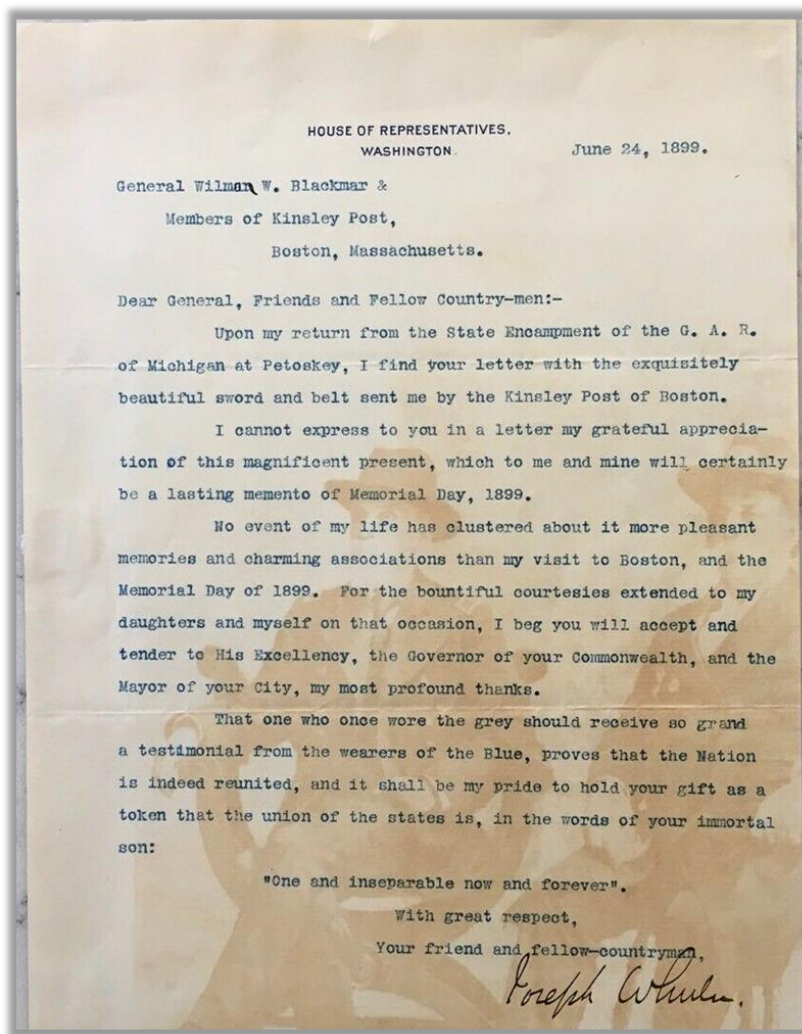


Figure 7. Wheeler's letter expressing gratitude for the gift of the sword and belt.

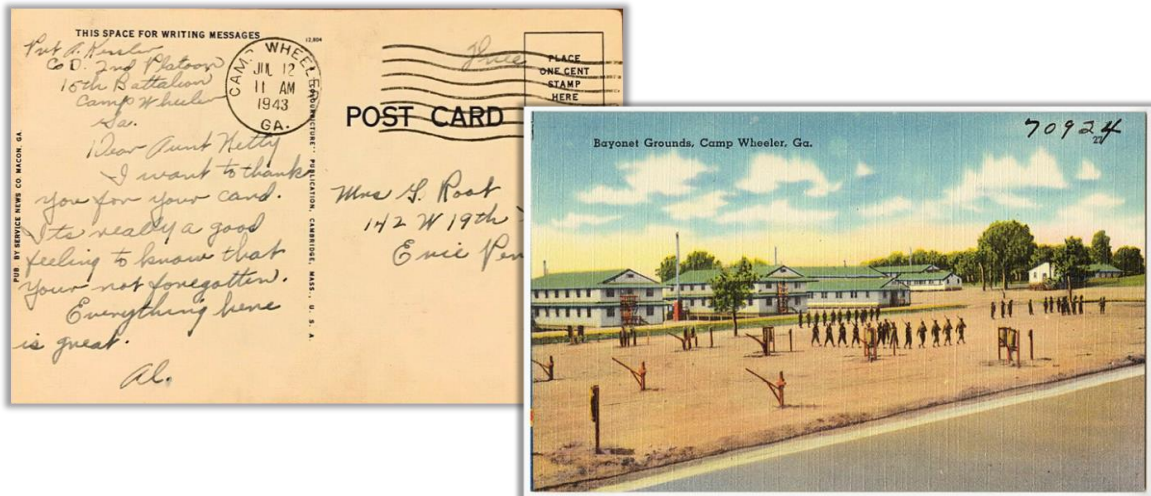
Wheeler died of pneumonia at age 70 on January 25, 1906, while visiting a sister in Brooklyn, N.Y. He was one of a few ex-Confederate officers to be interred in Arlington National Cemetery.

Camp Wheeler, an army training camp in Macon, Georgia during 1917-19 and 1940-46 was named after Joe Wheeler as one of the many commemorations after his death. The training camp was situated on 21,480 acres in what is now east Macon for World War I, and then on 14,394 acres during World War II.

Editor’s Note: See Nancy B. Clark’s article, “World War II Trainee and POW Mail – Camp Wheeler, Macon, Georgia” in the Spring, 2021 issue of Georgia Post Roads.

An entertaining collecting theme are Camp Wheeler postcards sent by soldiers stationed at Camp Wheeler to family and friends back home. The image side of the cards depict all facets of the facilities and camp life such as main thoroughfares in the camp, rifle practice, YMCA buildings, bayonet grounds, returning from drill, the motor pool, the regimental band, and much more.

Below are examples of such postcards mailed from Camp Wheeler.



Fighting Joe’s legacy also lives on in his adopted home state of Alabama that honored him with the naming of Joe Wheeler State Park, Wheeler Lake and Dam and, Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge. Also, there is Joseph Wheeler High School in Marietta, Georgia, Wheeler County in Georgia and, finally, the main thoroughfare of Wheeler Road in Augusta.

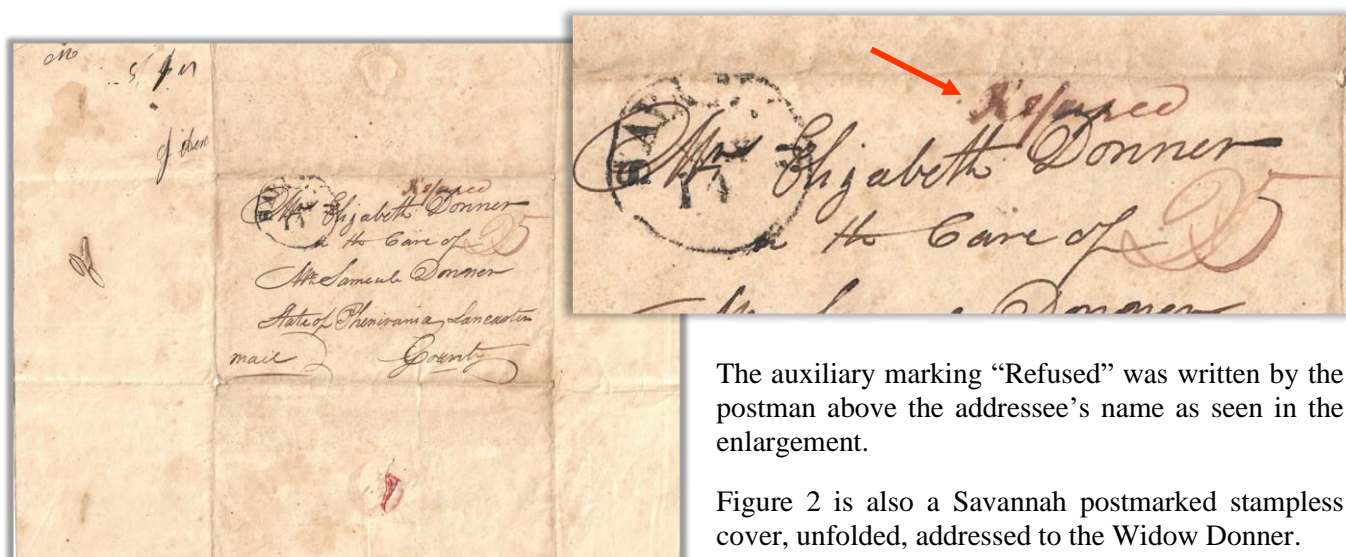
“Refused” Savannah Letters

By Steve Swain

Before the introduction of postage stamps, it was the recipient of mail, not the sender, who generally paid the cost of postage, giving the fee directly to the postman on delivery. Only occasionally did a sender pay delivery costs in advance, an arrangement that usually required a personal visit to the post office.

The task of collecting money for stampless letters greatly slowed the postman on his route. But worse, the addressee would at times refuse a piece of mail, which had to be taken back to the post office and then hopefully returned to the sender.

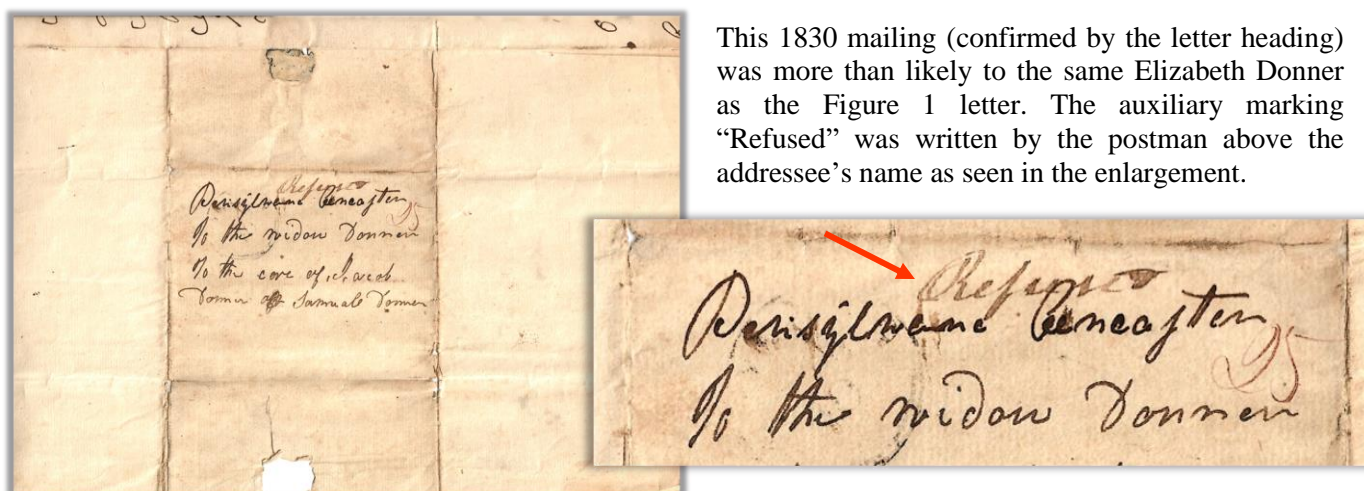
Figure 1 is a stampless cover, unfolded, postmarked SAVANNAH GA. sent to Elizabeth Donner, State of Pennsylvania, Lancaster County. The mailing is dated May 14, 1822, as confirmed by the heading on the letter portion of the cover.



The auxiliary marking “Refused” was written by the postman above the addressee’s name as seen in the enlargement.

Figure 2 is also a Savannah postmarked stampless cover, unfolded, addressed to the Widow Donner.

Figure 1. May 14, 1822, stampless letter from Savannah, Georgia to Pennsylvania.



This 1830 mailing (confirmed by the letter heading) was more than likely to the same Elizabeth Donner as the Figure 1 letter. The auxiliary marking “Refused” was written by the postman above the addressee’s name as seen in the enlargement.

Figure 2. March 24 1830, stampless letter from Savannah, Georgia to Pennsylvania.

Why were the two letters refused on the attempted delivery to Elizabeth Donner? Did Elizabeth Donner not live at the address? Did she not know the person who sent the letters and, therefore, did not want the letters? Did she indeed know the senders but did not want the letters? All are possible reasons.

But a very probable explanation was the cost of accepting the mailings. Note the “25” manuscript marking on the right side of both the Figure 1 and Figure 2 image enlargements.

From March 31, 1816, to June 31, 1845, the single letter postage rates were:

- Not over 30 miles, per letter sheet: 6 cents
- 31 to 80 miles, per letter sheet: 10 cents
- 81 to 150 miles, per letter sheet: 12½ cents
- 151 to 400 miles, per letter sheet: 18½ cents
- Over 400 miles, per letter sheet: 25 cents

(A single letter was defined by the number of letter sheets until 1827. Thereafter by weight, one ounce being a single letter until 1845, and one-half ounce thereafter.)

Thus, each of the Savannah to Pennsylvania single sheet mailings required a fee to the recipient of twenty-five cents.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, a day's wage for a laborer (e.g., a blacksmith) in the 1822-1830 timeframe was typically fifty to eighty-seven cents. A butcher's salary was ninety-two cents a day. A painter earned \$1.32 a day. For each of these professions, and many others, a twenty-five-cent letter delivery fee would be a significant percentage of a day's salary.

Moreover, a pair of gloves cost sixty-two cents; a pair of stockings thirty-three cents; a corn broom seventeen cents; a blanket \$1.65; twenty-one cents for a pound of butter; and thirty-one cents for a pound of codfish. In comparison, a twenty-five-cent letter delivery fee was easily seen as unreasonable and unnecessary. Again, this just may be the most probable explanation for Elizabeth Donner refusing the mailings from Savannah.

The Postal Reform Act of 1845 introduced modified postage rates. How significant was the seemingly exorbitant cost of mailing a letter for the analysis and decisions culminating in the 1845 Act?

Steep letter rates had certainly discouraged use of the mails for routine social communication. But it is fair to say that business mailers' dissatisfaction with the high letter postage was the principal impetus behind the mid-century reforms. The major share of correspondence was accounted for by shipping merchants, brokers, retailers and other commercial agents. Business groups, joined by social reformers, organized cheaper postage associations that advocated a sharp reduction in letter rates.

A noteworthy element in the postage rate scenario were private firms offering to carry letters outside of the mail to capitalize on the merchants' and general public's dissatisfaction. The Post Office Department attempted to regain its service monopoly by prosecuting some of these “private expresses,” but the attempts failed in 1843 with the case against Adams Express.

The Postal Reform Act of 1845 addressed all the issues. Congress tightened the government mail monopoly to cripple private mail companies and letter rates were reduced to make business and public posts more attractive.

Sources

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Kielbowicz, Richard B., *Universal Postage Service: A Policy History, 1790-1970*, University of Washington, Seattle; prepared for the Postal Rate Commission, November 15, 2002.