



Georgia Post Roads

Journal of the Georgia Postal History Society EST.1984

Volume 31, Issue 2

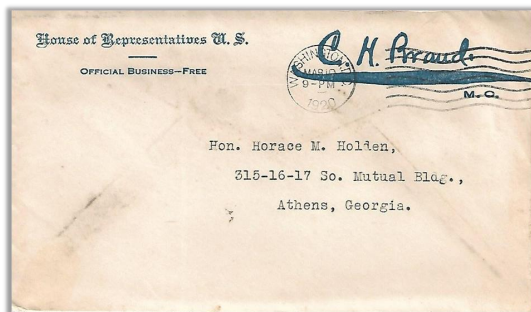
Spring 2023

Whole Number 122



Georgia Postmaster Free Frank Letters

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Congressman's Elaborate Franking Handstamp



King Hardware Advertising Covers



CANTON, GA. – A Postmaster's Postmark

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Georgia Post Roads is published quarterly by the Georgia Postal History Society. Membership is \$15 annually. Single copies of *Georgia Post Roads* are \$4. Membership applications are available on our web page.

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Georgia Postmaster Free Frank Letters

By Michael Wing



The contents of early postmasters' franked letters are rich sources of local history as well as insights into the business ventures of those community leaders. The covers themselves provide a look at the details and evolution of the laws concerning the postmaster's franking privilege. Several early Georgia covers provide us with material for study.

The free frank - the privilege of sending mail free of postage - has always been controversial. It was particularly so during the nineteenth century when Congress frequently changed the laws governing use of the frank and expanded and contracted the group of officials accorded the privilege. Congress itself made liberal use of the franking privilege and was the focus of much of the controversy.

Postmasters enjoyed the franking privilege, a legacy of the British postal system, from the first days of the republic. Although marginally less notorious than the use of the frank by politicians, it was controversial in its own right.

The frequently changing laws governing the postmaster free frank reflect this (Figure 1). As recipients of political patronage, these early postmasters were political figures in their own right.

Summary of Postmaster Free Frank Laws

Act of February 20, 1792 (1 Stat. 237, 238):
All letters and packets to and from the Postmaster General and his assistant are to be conveyed by post free of postage.

Act of May 8, 1794 (1 Stat. 361):
Extended the franking privilege to deputy postmasters for letters sent or received by them, not exceeding one-half an ounce.

Act of March 2, 1799 (1 Stat. 737):
Reenacted the provisions of February 20, 1792 and continued to extend the franking privilege to postmasters.

Act of March 3, 1825 (4 Stat. 110):
Each postmaster given franking privilege for letters sent or received by them, not exceeding one-half an ounce.

Act of July 2, 1836 (5 Stat. 88):
Provided that no postmaster shall receive, free of postage or frank, any letter or package containing anything other than paper or money.

Act of March 3, 1873 (17 Stat. 559):
Repealed all laws and parts of laws permitting transmission by mail of any free matter whatsoever.

From: *United States Domestic Postage Rates 1789 -1956*; Published by the Post Office Department, Washington, D.C.

In the first decades of the nineteenth century the Post Office was by far the largest agency of the federal government constituting nearly a third of the federal civilian workforce.

In 1828 there were 7,350 post offices and postmasters.¹ The businessman who secured an appointment to one of those political plums increased his profit advantage over his competitors with each letter he sent or received, and the cost of postage was high.

Figure 1. Postmaster free frank laws passed by Congress (partial listing).
(Courtesy Richard Frajola, www.frajola.com.)

In 1840, for example, sending a letter from Baltimore to New York City cost 18.75 cents, representing more than a quarter of a laborer's daily wage of 72 cents.²

Most examples of postmaster free frank letters before 1845 are single sheet folded letters, which allow for the contents as well as the cover itself to be studied.

The section of law dealing with postmasters' franking privileges was brief.

The Law

March 3, 1825 - An Act to reduce into one the several acts establishing and regulating the Post-office department.

Sect 27, And be it further enacted, that letters and packets to and from the following officers of the United States shall be received and conveyed free of postage. Each postmaster provided each of his letters or packets shall not exceed half ounce in weight.

And, that postmasters shall receive, free of postage, one daily newspaper each, or what is equivalent thereto...

Moving the Goods and the Mail to the Frontier

Their situation as the point of communication between coastal towns and the frontier made the pursuit of trade and shipping a natural fit for early postmasters in coastal towns such as St. Marys and Darien. It seems more than coincidental that these Georgia postmasters engaged in business pursuits in which postage was a significant expense.

Darien, Georgia is situated sixty miles south of Savannah at the mouth of the Altamaha River. It was founded in 1736 by Scottish Highlanders recruited by James Oglethorpe. These settler soldiers were intended to defend the new colony of Georgia against encroachments by the Spanish and French. While they performed admirably as defenders of the colony, from the very start Darien was deeply involved in trade with the Creek Indians to the interior.³ Its position on the mouth of the Altamaha River system made it the natural gateway to Georgia's vast interior.

Darien postmaster Isaac Snow was a partner in a retail/wholesale business, Campbell and Snow, in Darien. He was also a shipping agent, coordinating the shipment of goods up the Altamaha/Ocmulgee to Macon, as well as coastwise from major ports such as New York to Darien.



The August 28, 1826, Figure 2 cover from Darien, franked by postmaster Isaac Snow, bears the distinctive Darien red oval postmark with flourishes at the sides and italics state name. This postmark was in use from January 1826 to April 1837.

Isaac Snow (1797-1842) was born in Providence Rhode Island and came south in his early twenties. He was named postmaster of Darien in 1821 and maintained the position until his death in 1842.

Figure 2. August 27, 1826, Issac Snow free frank mailing.

The Figure 2 mailing is addressed J.B. Wick and Company at Macon and contained an accounting for tobacco and sugar that had been shipped to Mr. Wick at Macon (Figure 3).

Issac Snow faced devastating tragedy in his early years in Darien. In 1824, one of the deadliest hurricanes to ever hit the Georgia coast ravaged Darien and surrounding areas. Snow's young daughter, two younger brothers, and his wife's sister were drowned. Snow's house, and several other buildings were swept into the river as well. Snow and his wife Sarah were only able to save themselves by clinging to a tree until the storm abated.⁴ Since most of the town of Darien was destroyed or flooded, it is assumed, but not confirmed by contemporary accounts, that his store/post office was also damaged. In any case he was back in business by 1826.

Darien 28th Aug. 1826
Messrs John B. Wick & Co.
Gentlemen
Above you have receipt
for Sugar & Tobacco sent you by Mr. Green's
druggon. Mr. G. could not take the liquor & would
not take the others for less than three hundred
which we agreed to pay him.
Very respectfully
Your Obedt Servt
Campbell & Snow

Figure 3. "You have script for Sugar and Tobacco sent you...."

Along with the receipt, which had been torn away, Snow explains to Wick that, "Mr. G could not take the liquor and would not take anything less than three hundred dollars which we agreed to pay him."

It was common practice on the early America for cash poor frontier farmers to use whiskey instead of cash payment. A few decades earlier, an attempt by the government to tax this whiskey led to an armed standoff in Western Pennsylvania known as the Whiskey Rebellion. The inland farmers saw whiskey as a medium of exchange, not a commodity to be taxed. President George, Washington personally intervened to quell the uprising with minimal violence. The tax was to be repealed and was no longer in effect by 1826.

Issac Snow
Free Pkts.
Messrs J.B. Wick & Co.
Macon Ga.

On November 6, 1826, postmaster Snow again wrote to Wick conveying an accounting of goods shipped from New York. (Figure 4).

Messrs J.B. Wick & Co.
To Campbell & Snow Dr
To Paid freight for Franklin Vg.
1 Hhd of Sugar 2. 67
3 Casks Churn 30 . 90
4 Bags Coffee 4 . 96
32 Bbls 40 12. 80 17. 53
Freight on landing above 1. 50
Storage on truck 1. 50
Freight on shipping 1. 50
Com. receiving & forwarding 3. 00
Total \$24. 83

Figure 4. November 6, 1826, Issac Snow free frank mailing. An accounting of goods shipped from New York.

This letter focuses on the challenges of shipping good up the river. Snow explains that the shipping charges were higher than customary due to the river being low. Goods were polled up and down the Altamaha to the confluence with the Ocmulgee and then north to Macon, 255 miles upriver from Darien.

He takes the opportunity to solicit business; “Should any of your friends want anything done in the way of receiving and forwarding shall be pleased to do their business for them...” The prospect of a new store in Perry, Georgia is mentioned.

In addition to the letters between Snow and Wick, correspondence from 1826 also exists between trader Simon Nichols and Wick. Even though native Americans had been pushed far to the west in the ninety years since the founding of Darien, money was still to be made trading with the Creeks, who had recently lost all lands in Georgia. Nichols was seeking entry to the Creek Nation, then lying west of the Chattahoochee, to pursue trade with the Creeks. He gives interesting and detailed advice to Wick on details of the possible trade as well as which goods he should order from New York,⁵ a transaction that would likely have been facilitated by postmaster Snow.



John B. Wick was every bit as enterprising in the recently chartered city of Macon as was his Darien associate Isaac Snow, as one of his advertisements in the Macon newspaper shows (Figure 5).

Business News and a Global Pandemic

St. Marys is located in the far southeastern corner of Georgia on the coast on the banks of the St. Marys River, which separates Georgia from Florida.

The area of Florida near Saint Augustine was not a frontier in the sense that the interior of Georgia was a frontier. Saint Augustine was the oldest European city in the country. Florida, recently a Spanish possession, had become a United States territory in 1821. This opened the territory to legal immigration from Georgia. In the following years, American settlers were flooding into Florida and open a new opportunity for American commerce. Fighting between Americans and Seminoles, one of the reasons Spain was glad to part with Florida, continued unabated in other parts of the territory.

Figure 5. John B. Wick Macon newspaper advertisement. (Courtesy William J. Griffing, Spared and Shared.com.)

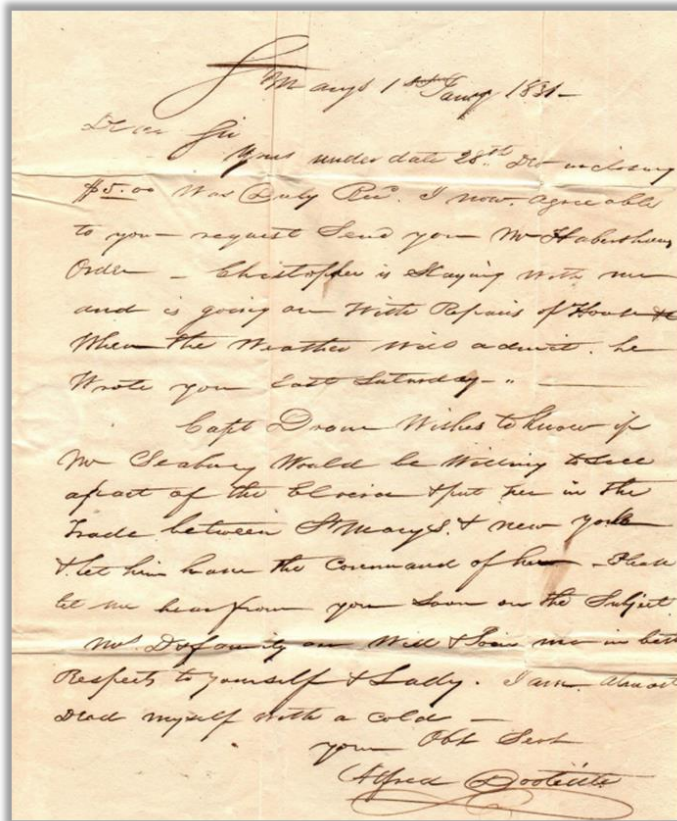
A January 1, 1831, letter bears a red circle S^t MARYS GEO postmark and the frank of A Doolittle P.M. (Figure 6).

Alfred Doolittle (1800-1860) was a native of Vermont and served as postmaster of St. Marys from 1828 to 1848. He maintained an ongoing business relationship with George S. Brown, (1796-1833) a fellow New-Englander. Although this letter was addressed to Brown at St. Augustine, Brown never maintained a permanent residence there.



Figure 6. January 1, 1831, A. Dolittle free frank mailing.

He was using the St. Augustine post office while he was doing business in the area. He was involved in shipping as well as lumber, foodstuffs, and cotton. He conducted business in St. Marys, his primary residence, and also out of Wickford, Rhode Island.



The letter (Figure 7) discussed the receipt of payment and orders to be shipped. Also discussed is the proposal that Mr. Brown sell a local captain part interest in a vessel (the *Elaine*) to be employed in the St. Marys to New York trade.

In August 1832, postmaster Doolittle wrote to his friend and business associate Brown, who again was traveling. While the cover (Figure 8) reveals an interesting point of postal law regarding the forwarding of mail, the contents of the letter reveal the extent to which history indeed does repeat itself.

The cover has a red ST MARYS postmark and free frank of postmaster A Doolittle. It was posted on August 11 (1832) to George S. Brown at Bridgeport, Connecticut. Mr. Brown was not in Bridgeport when the letter arrived and the letter received the Bridgeport postmark on August 17 and forwarded to Brown in Wickford, Rhode Island. The “free” inscription and signature of postmaster Doolittle were struck through and the rate for the next leg of the journey, 12 ½ (cents) was written in.

Figure 7. “Capt Drane wishes to know if Mr. Peabody would be willing to sell a part of the Elaine....”

The charging of the standard rate of postage to the new destination is not a peculiar feature of the forwarding of free frank mail.

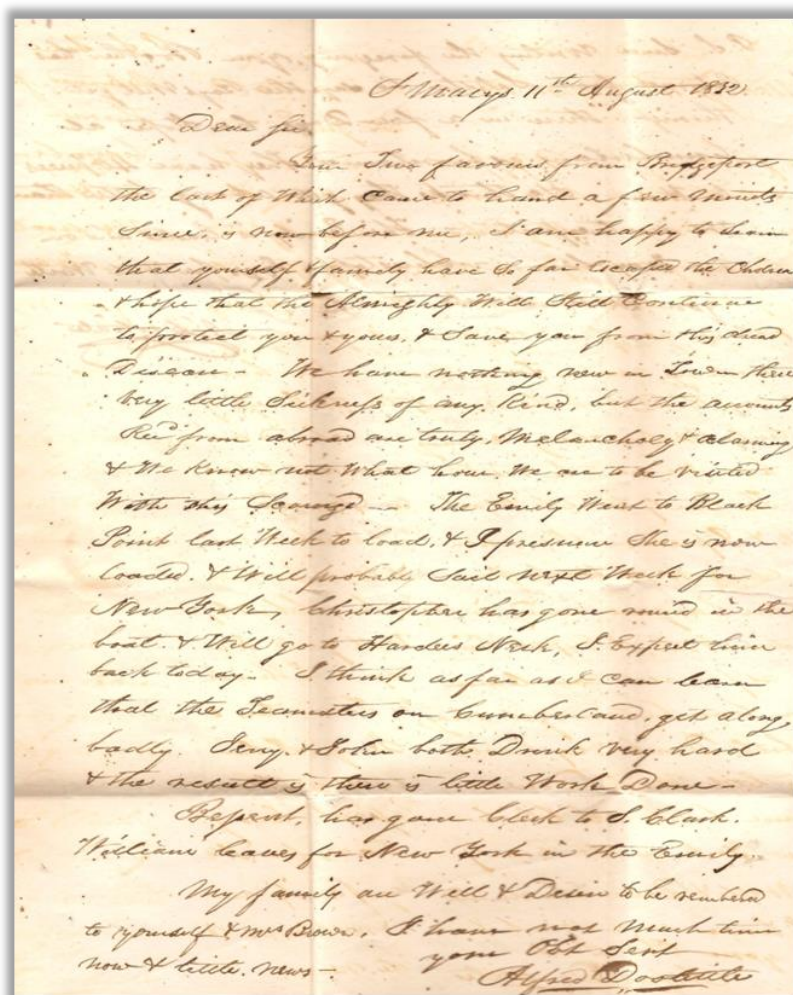
Prior to the passage of Postal Act of June 12, 1866, Section 1 (effective July 1, 1866), an additional rate to the second destination was charged on all pieces of letter mail that required forwarding.

If the document had to be forwarded to additional post offices, several additional rates could be charged.⁶



Figure 8. Forwarded free frank mailing. (Courtesy William J. Griffing, Spared and Shared.com.)

The August 11, 1832, letter from Doolittle is shown in Figure 9, with its transcript presented below.



St. Marys 11th August 1832

Dear Sir,

Your two favours from Bridgeport, the last of which came to hand a few minutes since, is now before me. I am happy to hear that yourself & family have so far escaped the Cholera & I hope that the Almighty will still continue to protect you & yours & save you from this dread Disease. We have nothing new in town. There [is] very little sickness of any kind, but the accounts received abroad are truly melancholy & alarming & we know not what hour we are to be visited with this scourge.

The Emily went to Black Point last week to load & I presume she is now loaded & will probably sail next week for New York. Christopher has gone round in the boat & will go to Hardee's Neck. I expect him back today.

I think as far as I can learn that the Teamsters on Cumberland get along badly. Jerry & John both drink very hard & the result is there is little work done.

Figure 9. August 11, 1832, letter from A. Doolittle. (Transcription courtesy William J. Griffing, Spared and Shared.com.)

Repent has gone Clerk to S. Clark. William leaves for New York in the Emily.

My family are well & desire to be remembered to yourself & Mrs. Brown
I have not much time now & little news.

Your obedient Servant, Alfred Doolittle

P.S. Since writing the foregoing, your brother has returned from Satilla [Georgia]. He says the boys will get through there in a few days. He stopped at Cumberland as he returned. They have 40 pieces to haul. He thinks they get along better than we anticipated. The Emily is loaded and on her way home. Christopher says he will write you next mail. In haste. A. Doolittle

Brown seems to have traveled frequently on business and postmaster Doolittle kept him informed on the logging and shipping matters at home in St. Marys vicinity. It is known that both Brown and Doolittle were slaveowners and it is assumed that the teamsters cutting timber on Cumberland Island were slaves.

The scourge of cholera, from which Doolittle invokes Divine protection, was indeed worthy of being feared. The cholera pandemic of 1829 to 1837 began in south Asia and had spread to Russia by 1831. It reached western Europe by 1832 and entered North America through the ports of Quebec and New York. Exact statistics on the death toll were not available in most parts of the United States. In New York, which had good recordkeeping, the epidemic left 3,515 dead out of a population of 250,000. In 21st-century terms, that death toll would exceed 100,000 out of the city of 8 million.⁷ By way of comparison, the Covid pandemic has resulted in 44,000 deaths in New York City as of December 2022.

Cholera is a severe intestinal disease spread through contaminated water and poor sewage disposal, a fact not known until the 1850s. The 1829 to 1837 outbreak did not seem reach Georgia.⁸

Was That Legal?

A letter sent from Savannah on February 6, 1826 (Figure 10), seems on initial inspection to be a misuse of the frank. It is addressed to Zalmon Wildman at Charleston.



Figure 10. Legal franking relying on provision that the privilege traveled with the postmaster.

Wildman (1775-1835) was postmaster of neither Savannah nor Charleston, but rather Danbury, Connecticut. He was a prominent Danbury hat manufacturer who had opened the first hat stores in Charleston and Savannah in 1802. The letter was written by Mark Hoag of Savannah. Hoag was either an employee or agent of Wildman and the letter was a report to him on the status of the Savannah hat shop and an update on inventory matters.

The cover is in fact legal. The frank traveled with the postmaster who could send and receive mail while traveling.⁹ This of course required to cooperation of the second postmaster, in this case Savannah, to accept the letter to be posted. In cases where the postmaster was the sender, he was required to affix his signature. Since Wildman was the intended recipient in this case that was not possible.

The markings, in addition to the indistinct Savannah postmark, include the manuscript inscription “12 ½,” which had been struck out, and the word “free” written to the left.

It would appear that the letter was sent with the rate to be paid in Charleston. Wildman, his status as a postmaster proven, picked up the letter in Charleston, and the rate was marked as free after marking through the rate.

Although legal, it is an example of how broadly written and permissive the law was concerning the frank by postmasters. Zalmon Wildman, was the quintessential example of an absentee postmaster. He was active in a number of pursuits and traveled extensively. The post office salary of a few hundred dollars a year was far outweighed by the value of the free frank. His correspondence is well preserved and plentiful.

A Northern Conspiracy?

Postmasters Snow, Doolittle and Wildman, were natives of New England. Three postmasters from out of state making bank in Georgia raises the question as to whether sectional bias was involved in their appointment, especially since New Englander John Quincy Adams was President during the 1820s.

In all likelihood, this was not the case. A minority of Georgia postmasters during that era were actually Georgia born. For example, in 1816, out of seventy-one listed Georgia post offices, only thirteen of the postmasters were native Georgians.¹⁰ Rather than sectional bias, this seems to be a reflection of the Georgia population in general. There was heavy immigration into Georgia during the period from Virginia, the Carolinas, and New England. Only one of the postmasters in this study was born in Georgia. Also, each of the postmasters was appointed during a different presidential administration. These appointments were, however, valuable patronage jobs and selections were indeed political.

Post offices earning more than \$1,000 a year were direct presidential nominations requiring Senate confirmation. Postmasters for offices earning under that amount, all of the above mentioned, were appointed by the First Assistant Postmaster General.¹¹

Pushing the Edges of the Law

Many postmasters were not wealthy businessmen, but all were prominent members of the community. Even if a postmaster did not use the frank for high volume business mail, he still could misuse the privilege.

A cover from Greensborough, Georgia (Figure 11) provides an example of this. The cover bears a red circular “GREENSBOROUGH GEORGIA” postmark and a red straight line “FREE” marking with a manuscript W.L. Strain PM.

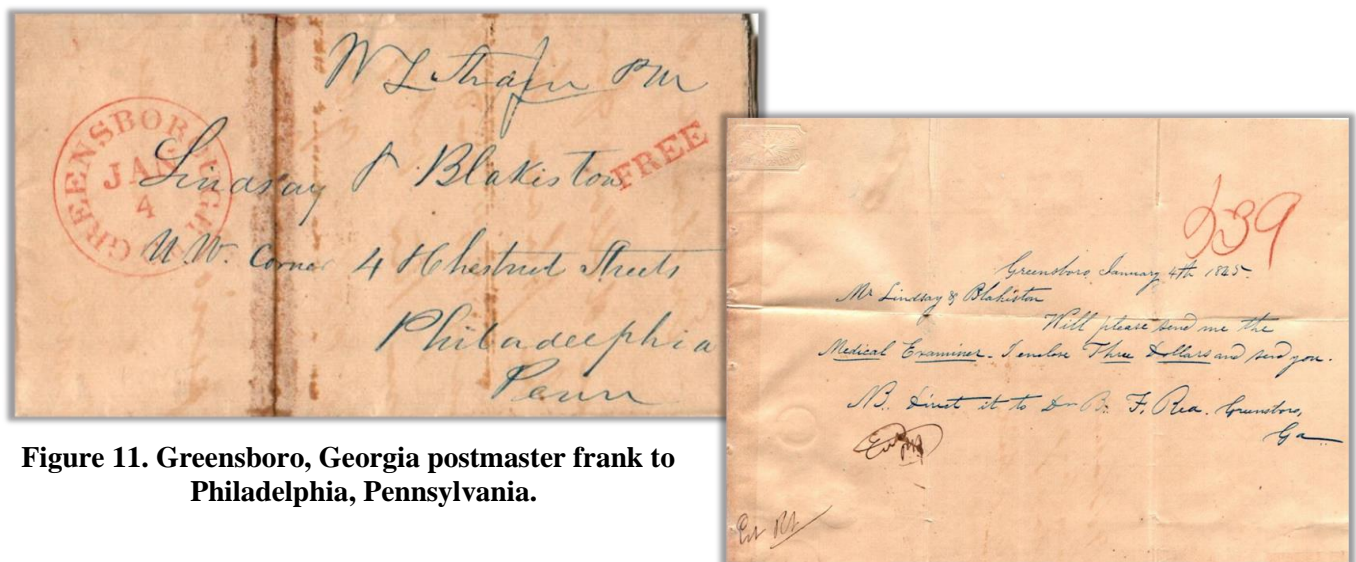


Figure 11. Greensboro, Georgia postmaster frank to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

In January 1845, postmaster William L. Strain sends a short note to a publisher in Philadelphia, ordering and enclosing payment of three dollars for a copy of, "The Medical Examiner," to be shipped to Doctor B. F. Rea, a local physician and long serving member of the Georgia Legislature. Using the frank to save on postage costs was exactly the kind of abuse that outraged the public.

Additionally, the letter violates the law in a more technical sense. Before the Act of March 3, 1845, took effect, ½ ounce letters were considered to constitute only one sheet. This was true for all mail, not just franked covers.¹² Postal scales were not a feature of most post offices prior to this act. By enclosing three dollars (or any additional item), Strain would seem to be adding another violation, albeit minor compared to using the frank to conduct business for another.

Enough is Enough: The Act of 1845

Scarcely three months after postmaster Strain used the free frank as a favor for his friend, the free frank ride came to an end. To be sure, it was likely not likely petty breaches such as Strain's that provided the impetus, but more dramatic abuses. One postmaster was using his free frank to run a lottery and another had used it to mail out 13,000 circulars advertising his newspaper.¹³ The privilege of the free frank, which postmasters had enjoyed, used, and sometimes abused since the beginning of the Republic was, "...utterly abrogated, and repealed." The wording was brief and clear:

March 3, 1845, An Act to reduce the rates of postage, to limit the use and correct the abuse of the franking privilege, and for the prevention of frauds on the revenues of the Post Office Department.

SEC. 5. And be it further enacted, That the twenty-seventh section of the act of Congress entitled "An act to reduce into one the several acts for establishing and regulating the Post Office Department," approved and signed the third day of March, in the year one thousand eight hundred and twenty-five, and all other acts, and parts of acts granting and conferring upon any person whatsoever the right or privilege to receive and transmit through the mail, free of postage, letters, packets, newspapers, periodicals, or other matters, be, and the same are hereby, utterly abrogated, and repealed.

SEC. 6. . . he shall, in every such case, endorse on the back of the letter or package so to be sent free of postage, over his own signature, the words "official business." And for any such endorsement falsely made, the person so offending shall forfeit and pay three hundred dollars.

Congressional Second Thoughts

It took Congress only two years to change its mind. After the blanket abolition of the free frank, over one third of postmasters quit.¹⁴ However, the Georgia postmasters just discussed stayed at their jobs.

On March 3, 1847, an Act was passed repealing Section 5 of the Act on 1845. In short, the franking privilege was reinstated. The reinstatement however applied only to those postmasters earning less than \$200 per year. All of this same group of Georgia postmasters earned in excess of that amount and none of them regained the free frank.

Franked Mail with a New Look

The Act of 1845 had its own impact on the look of letter mail even before the first US postage stamps were authorized in 1847. The section of 1845 law that called for postage rates to be calculated based on weight rather than the number of sheets, had the effect of making the use of envelopes feasible for the first time, for both franked and paid letters. Before 1845, the envelope would have been considered as a second sheet, doubling the rate. The single folded letter with the address and content on the same sheet would soon become a thing of the past.

The first patent for an envelope folding machine was issued in England in 1845, and first practical high volume envelope folding machine was invented by Russell L. Hawes of Massachusetts in 1853.¹⁵ Envelopes became cheap and widely available just at the time the law made them practical to use.

An 1858 free frank letter from Nacoochee, Georgia (Figure 12) demonstrates this point.



Mailed on July 27, 1858, the cover demonstrates a late usage of the black circular “NACOOCHEE GA” postmark and the signature of postmaster C.S. Williams. The use of envelopes was uncommon prior to the postal law of 1845.

Nacoochee was a small post office with earnings of under \$200 per year, allowing postmaster C.S. Williams to continue to use the free frank after the Act of 1847, ended the privilege for larger post offices.

Figure 12. Nacoochee, Georgia postmaster C.S. Williams free franking.

The mailing contains a letter (Figure 13) on fine blue stationery. Postmaster Charles Williams writes to Glennville, Alabama planter George H. Thompson discussing the gold mining potential of some of Thompson’s property in the Nacoochee area as well as the commercial potential of a mineral spring in the area.

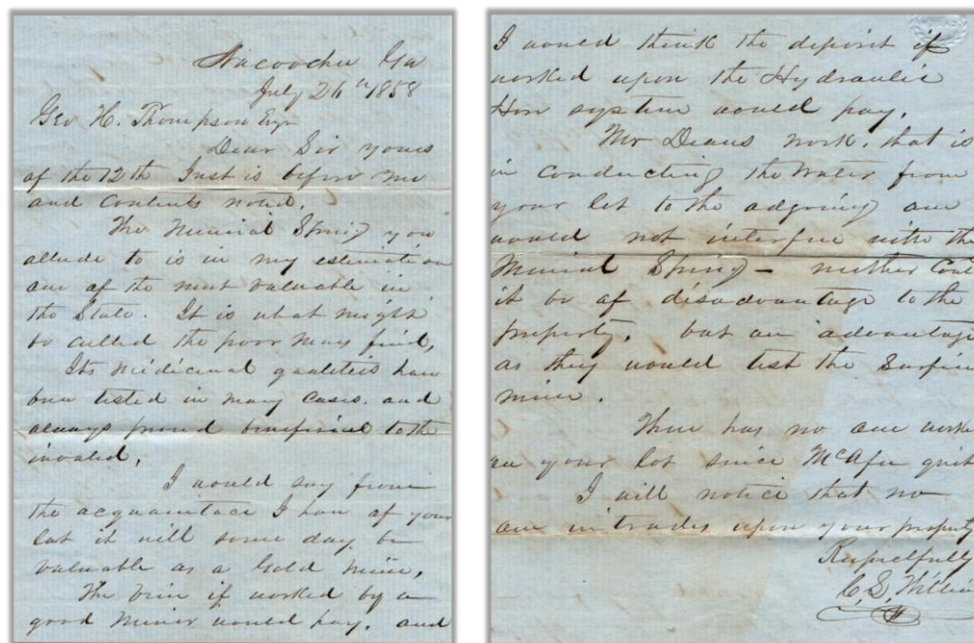


Figure 13. Letter discussing gold mining potential in the Nacoochee area.

While postmasters in Darien and St. Marys, Georgia discussed maritime and riverine shipping, it is not surprising that the topic of interest for the postmaster of Nacoochee was in the ground. In 1828, the discovery of gold on Duke’s Creek in the Nacoochee Valley sparked a huge gold rush twenty years before the discovery of gold in California.

The post office in the trading post at Nacoochee opened in 1837, one year before the branch United States Mint opened in Dahlonega, twenty-four miles to the southeast in neighboring Lumpkin County. The Dahlonega mint was devoted exclusively to the production of 5, 2½ and 3-dollar gold pieces and remained open until the Civil War. As the site of the mint, and the center of gold mining activity, Dahlonega is remembered as the site of the gold rush.

Ending and Replacing the Free Frank

The process of eliminating the postmasters free frank, which began in 1845, and modified in 1847, was permanently put into law by Congress in 1873. This Act, effective on July 1, 1873, (17 Stat. 559) repealed all free frank laws, not only those applying to postmasters but to other government officials and departments as well. The free frank as it applied to Congress, and other special recipients, such as military members serving in war zones, would be reinstated in coming years.

The elimination of the free frank in 1873, applied only to the sending and receiving of personal mail. The need for the Post Office and all government offices to use the mail in the conduct of government business remained.

For a few years, official stamps were used but finally discontinued in 1884, at least for a time. The use of ‘Penalty Mail,’ envelopes with the iconic wording. “Official Business, Penalty for Private Use Three Hundred Dollars,” proved more practical. The cost of printing was less since the envelopes did not require security printing and they did not have to be stored under lock and key. The use of Penalty Mail was authorized in 1877.¹⁶

Conclusion

The loss of the free frank privilege was not as grievous a loss as it might seem. For example, the letters mailed by the postmasters in Darien and St. Marys in the 1820s and 30s would have cost a minimum of 12 ½ to 25 cents, depending on the destination.

By the late decades of the nineteenth century, letters to destinations of up to 3,000 miles cost two cents. This rate reduction was possible only in part to improvements in transportation. The free frank privilege, for postmasters and myriad other officials, was not paid out of tax money as such, but rather by increasing the postal rates for paying users of the mail.

Endnotes

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- ¹⁶ Katz, Farley P, “The Law and the Lore of the \$300 Penalty for Private Use Envelopes.” *The American Philatelist*, September 2020, 789.

“Thank You” Contributing Members

The Society thanks the following members for their generous contributions sent with their 2023 membership dues. These funds help defray the expenses associated with the publication of the journal and promotion of the Society at stamp shows and requests for information about the Society.

John Allensworth

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W. Newton Crouch, Jr.

Francis J. Crown, Jr.

Jim Curtis

Marvin Fetter

Lamar Garrard

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Michael Perlman

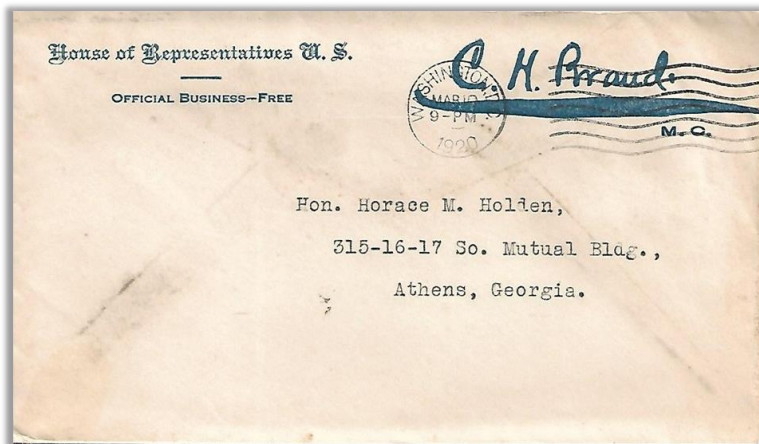
John Seidl

George Slaton

Michael Wing

Georgia Covers Congressman’s Elaborate Franking Handstamp

Until the 1860s, members of Congress spent a great deal of time carefully inscribing their names on the upper right-hand corner of official letters and packages. One member boasted that if the envelopes were properly arranged, he could sign as many as 300 per hour.¹



After the Civil War, Senators and Representatives reduced the tedium of this chore by having their signatures reproduced on rubber stamps.

Figure 1 is a March 11, 1920, mailing from Georgia’s Congressional Representative C. H. Brand to Hon. Horace M. Holden, Athens, Georgia, a distinguished member of the Georgia bar and a former justice of the State Supreme Court.

Figure 1. March 11, 1920, free franking mailing from Georgia Representative C. H. Brand.

Brand's franking privilege is confirmed by his somewhat elaborate handstamp signature in the upper right of the cover. The "M.C." below the handstamp's heavy graphic flourish stands for "Member of Congress." Senators used "U.S.S." for "U.S. Senate."

Charles Hillyer Brand (April 20, 1861 – May 17, 1933) (Figure 2) was an American politician, businessman, jurist, and lawyer. He was born in Loganville, Georgia and graduated from the University of Georgia in Athens in 1881. He was admitted to the state bar in 1882.²

In 1894 and 1895, Brand served in the Georgia Senate and was the president pro tempore of that body. Brand was the solicitor general of the western district of Georgia from 1896 through 1904 and succeeded Richard B. Russell, Sr. as the judge of the state superior court in 1906. He served in that position until 1917.

Brand was then elected as a Democratic representative of Georgia's 8th congressional district in the 65th United States Congress and served seven consecutive terms in that district.



Figure 2. Charles Hillyer Brand.

After his congressional apportionment in 1932, Brand successfully ran for an eighth term in Georgia's newly redrawn 10th congressional district. He died in Athens while still in office and was buried in Shadow Lawn Cemetery in Lawrenceville, Georgia.

Endnotes

¹ https://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/minute/Senate_Ends_Franked_Mail_Priviledge.htm.

² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Hillyer_Brand.

King Hardware Advertising Covers

By Steve Swain

Somewhat akin to today's The Home Depot's offerings of products for both professionals and homeowner "do it yourself" patrons, beginning in the late 1880s the residents of Atlanta and surrounding towns went to King Hardware for their hardware and home items. The company sold not only traditional hardware, tools, and equipment, but also numerous "houseware" items such as kitchen appliances, tableware, pots and pans, light bulbs, garden hoses, and rakes.

The King Hardware Company of Atlanta, Georgia was founded in 1882 by George Edward King (November 1851 - March 1934). The company began with limited capital and barely enough stock to fill a room. It struggled in its first year but grew steadily into the giant that it would become in the Atlanta business community.

As the company became successful, King bought out four major competitors from the 1900s through the 1920s. King established his company's headquarters on Peachtree Street and expanded to thirteen branches.

Figures 1 and 2 (next page) are circa late-1940s photographs from the Georgia State University library of the outside of King Hardware on Peachtree Street¹ and an inside view looking toward the store's front door².



Figure 1. Peachtree Street view of King Hardware.



Figure 2. Interior view of King Hardware.

A component of King Hardware’s advertising strategy beginning in the late 1880s was mailings with elaborate, decorative corner card designs and all-over cover advertising.



Figure 3’s January 6, 1898, mailing to Peck, Stowe & Wilcox, Southington, Connecticut, has an elaborately framed red image of the building on Peachtree Street where King Hardware was located.

The company’s name to the right is also elaborately bordered.³

Figure 3. January 6, 1898, King Hardware advertising cover to Peck, Stowe & Wilcox, a factory specializing in tin-processing equipment and a diversified array of tools.

The cover’s reverse all-over advertising (Figure 4) promotes King Hardware’s “Stoves at Factory Prices.” A mere \$4.00 “buys a good one,” but even better stoves could be had for as much as \$50.00.

**Figure 4. King Hardware Company
“Stoves at Factory Prices.”**



King Hardware's stoves are also advertised on a February 8, 1900, mailing again to Peck, Stowe & Wilcox (Figure 5). As can be seen on the cover, by 1900 King Hardware was advertising its Savannah location as well as their Atlanta store.



Figure 5. King Hardware Company - Atlanta & Savannah.
(Author's collection.)

The reverse of the cover (Figure 6) promotes the King Steel Range as "guaranteed from top to bottom."

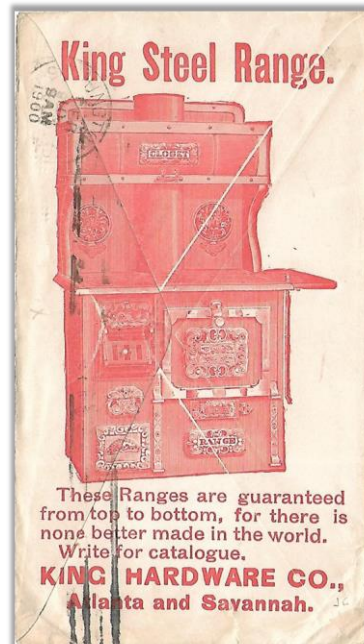


Figure 6. "King Steel Range.
Guaranteed from top to bottom."

Advertising the "best and most lasting planter made," Figure 7's cover postmarked February 24, 1898, to Peck, Stowe & Wilcox, displays an image of the King Cotton Planter.⁴



Figure 7. February 24, 1898, cover advertisement
of the King Cotton Planter.



Figure 8. Scrape blade advertisement on
February 24, 1898, King Hardware cover.

The cover's reverse image (Figure 8) is a "scrape" King Hardware sold to attach to the cotton planter or tractors. Scraper blades are designed for moving topsoil, gravel, and other materials in the land clearing process prior to and during planting.

King Hardware's heyday as a major player in the Atlanta and surrounding areas' hardware markets came to an end in the mid-1920s with formation of Ace Stores in Chicago, Illinois. The company was named after the ace fighter

pilots of World War I, who were able to overcome all odds. Ace Stores expanded nationwide and was renamed as Ace Hardware.

Today, Ace Hardware has 4,418 stores in North America, most of which are independently owned and operated. The Home Depot has 2,284 stores in North America.

Further history about King Hardware can be found in the company's self-published 1946 book, *King Hardware Company and Atlanta*, edited by Dean Simpson Paden.

Endnotes

¹ https://dlg.usg.edu/record/gsu_lane_2058?canvas=0&x=701&y=552&w=2369.

² https://dlg.usg.edu/record/gsu_lane_13308?canvas=0&x=692&y=480&w=284.

³ <https://www.ebay.com>.

⁴ Ibid.

H.R. Harmer Postal History Videos

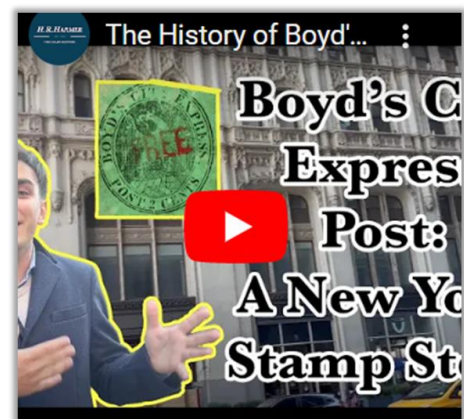


Georgia Postal History Society member Charles Epting is the President/CEO of H.R. Harmer, one of America's premier philatelic auction houses. Charles and his staff have made available on their website (<https://hrharmer.com>) videos of Charles' visits to various towns associated with significant postal history.



In one video, Charles sets out to find the Waterbury Post Office, where Postmaster John W. Hill created some of the most famous fancy cancels of all time.

In another video, Charles gives a walking tour of the history of Boyd's City Express Post in Manhattan.



Visit the H.R. Harmer website to view these and more excellent videos. While at the site, also view auction catalogs with high-quality images of outstanding postal history items.

Edwin (“Ed”) Jackson

1943 – 2022

Edwin (Ed) Jackson, age 79, of Athens, Georgia passed away on Tuesday, January 10, 2023. Ed was the Vice President of the Georgia Postal History Society for many years and contributed numerous noteworthy articles to *Georgia Post Roads*. Ed was also a founding member of the Georgia Federation of Stamp Clubs, now called the Southeast Federation of Stamp Clubs, and served on the board of directors since its creation. He was the official photographer and archivist for the Southeastern Stamp Expo, the annual philatelic show of the Southeast Federation of Stamp Clubs.



Ed was a longtime member of the Athens Philatelic Society and was a pioneer of online philately helping create an online newsgroup for stamp collectors in 1995. He was awarded the Rowland Hill Award in 2008 by the Southeast Federation of Stamp Clubs for his outstanding lifetime contributions to philately in the Southeastern United States.

Ed was a Senior Public Service Associate Emeritus at the Carl Vinson Institute of Government at the University of Georgia, retiring after forty years of dedicated public service. Over his long and distinguished career, he became known as the authority on Georgia history and Georgia state government. In 1982, Governor George Busbee designated Ed as a “Framer of the Georgia Constitution” for his work in drafting the new state constitution. As a true scholar of Georgia history, it has been said that if Georgia had an official “state historian”, it would have been Ed Jackson.

Ed’s numerous awards and recognitions include the University of Georgia Walter B. Hill Public Service Award, the Governor’s Award in the Humanities, the Berryman Service Award, and Outstanding Educator Award from the Georgia Council for the Social Studies (GCSS), a two-time recipient of the President’s Award for Outstanding Service from GCSS, Georgia Historical Society’s John MacPherson Berrien Award and, in 2012 while retired, the Sarah Nichols Pinckney Volunteer Award. In 2004, Ed was awarded the “Vexillonnaire Award” by the North American Vexillological Association for his work with the Georgia General Assembly’s efforts to redesign Georgia’s state flag.

Ed authored, co-authored, and edited many books, manuals, articles, and other publications including *The Georgia Studies Book*, *The Handbook for Georgia Legislators*, *The Handbook for Georgia State Agencies*, *James Oglethorpe: A New Look at Georgia’s Founder*, *Flags That Have Flown Over Georgia*, *Georgia’s Boundaries: The Shaping of a State*, and many others. He always utilized the latest in technology in his public service and created and edited over fifteen websites on Georgia history, government, and geography.

Ed is survived by his wife of forty-seven years, Annette Franklin Jackson, his three daughters, and six grandchildren. Ed will be remembered for his exceptional contributions to philately and Georgia history.

CANTON, GA. – A Postmaster's Postmark

By Fred Rodriguez

During the late nineteenth century, postal markings were decentralized, and many postmasters became very creative with the use of postmarks. Many began using fancy cancellations of all kinds, some even denoting their lodge affiliations (mostly Masonic cancels), some patriotic, and some even illustrating skulls, birds, and other intriguing images.

Some postmasters began using what I call “vanity postmarks” when they began to buy postmarks offered privately that incorporated their name in the device. One such example is shown in Figure 1.



Figure 1. CANTON, GA. postmaster postmark.

This postmark from Canton, Georgia, in Cherokee County, the town where I make my home, is dated December 9, 1879, with postmaster R. F. Daniel's name within the double circle town marking. The magenta-colored postmark is accompanied by a star within a circle fancy cancel in the same-colored ink cancelling a three-cent Washington stamp.

The postal rate during the period from July 1, 1863, to September 30, 1883, was three cents per one-half ounce to any part of the U. S. Unlike today, when postage costs continue to rise constantly, in 1883 the first-class postage dropped from three cents to two cents. The cover or small envelope is addressed to a Mr. James Vincent at the Appeals Office in Brunswick, Georgia. After it was posted in Canton, it was routed to Marietta where it received a black transit postmark on the same December 9. No Brunswick, GA receiving cancel was applied.

Ruben F. Daniel was appointed postmaster on June 15, 1869, and remained in that post until February 7, 1881, when Wells B. Whitmore took over the mails. The post office at the time was typically in a general store or any kind of store owned by the postmaster. It was rare for the post office to have a standalone, dedicated building in the 1870s. Ruben Franklin Daniel died in 1885 and his grave is in Canton.

As a side note, the railroad came to Canton in 1879, the year that this cover was mailed. The railroad connected Canton to Woodstock and Canton, being the county seat, continued to grow and became a thriving town with cotton mills and marble works as its main industries.

I venture to ask how many of these postmaster postmarks are known from Georgia. Does anyone have an idea or examples in their collection of Georgia postal history?