Georgia Post Roads

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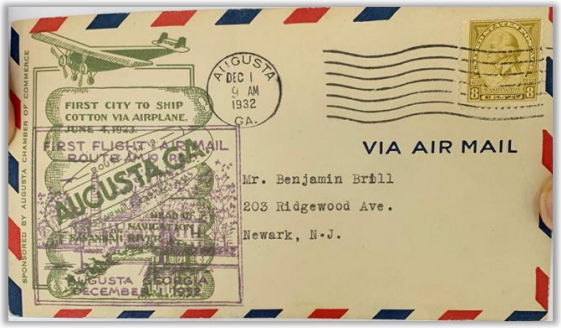
Penfield, Georgia

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

Early Railway Mail from Augusta and Beyond



Augusta Ships Cotton by Air

Spring Place, Georgia

Georgia Cameo Covers – Part III

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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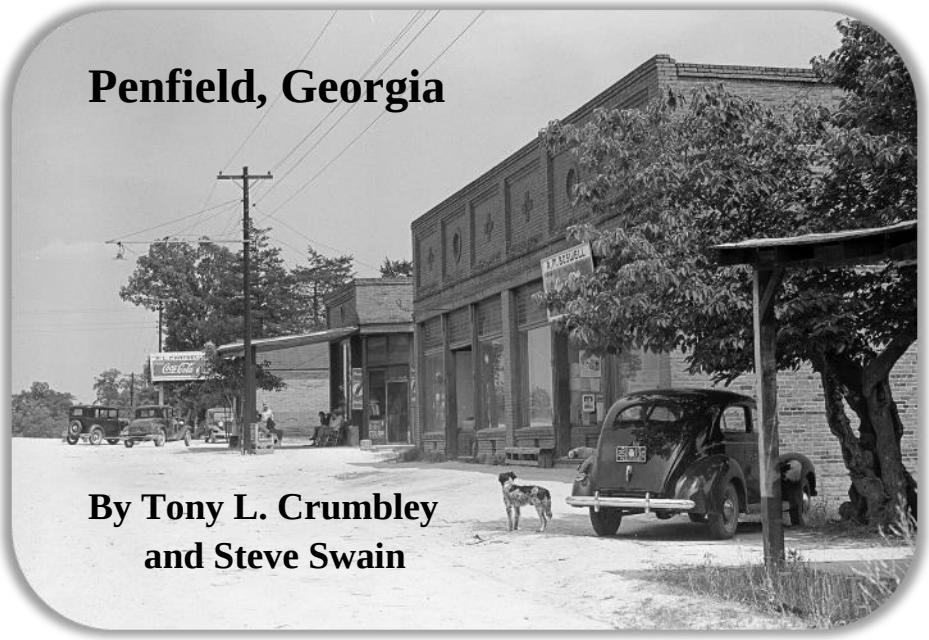


Penfield, Georgia

By Tony L. Crumbley and Steve Swain

The community of Penfield in Greene County, Georgia, approximately eighty-five miles east of Atlanta, was established shortly after 1829. Penfield was named for Josiah Penfield (1785-1828), a Savannah merchant, silversmith, and watchmaker (***Figure 1***)[1].

Figure 1. Josiah Penfield watch paper. (Ornamental packing placed inside a watchcase bearing the maker's or repairer's name.)

Penfield bequeathed $2,500 for educational purposes to the Georgia Baptist Convention (***Figure 2***)[2]. The bequest was accompanied by a financial matching challenge. The Convention organized a manual labor school that opened in 1833 as Mercer Institute. The facility was renamed in 1837 as Mercer University in honor of Rev. Jesse Mercer of Greene County, a major contributor to the matching gift challenge.

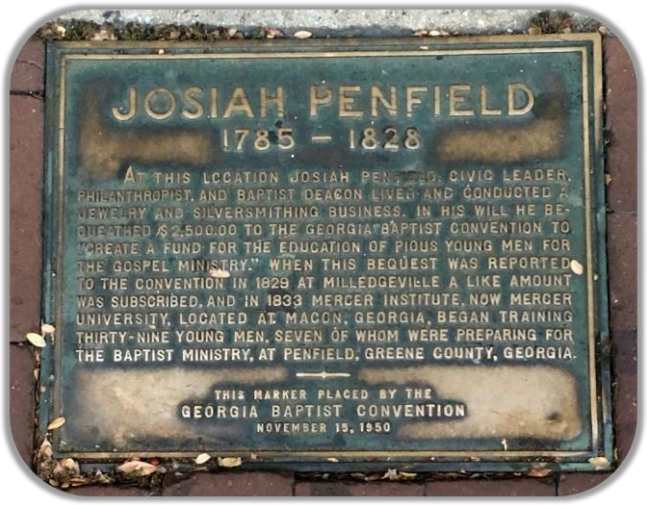


Figure 2. Conveying the history of Josiah Penfield and his $2,500 bequest, this plaque is placed in the sidewalk on Broughton Street in downtown Savannah.

As the university grew, a Female Academy (1838), post office, bank, mercantile stores, print shops, Male Academy Preparatory School (1847), hosiery mill, and cotton warehouses opened on the 450 acres that surrounded the campus (***Figure 3***)[3].

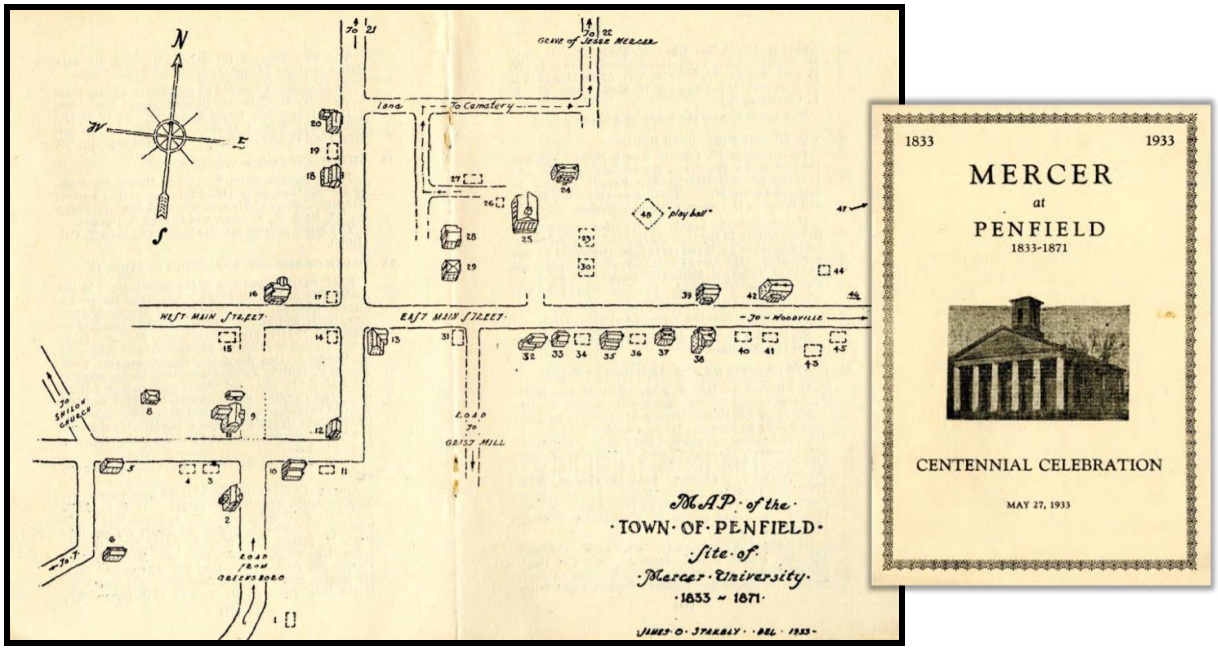


Figure 3. Town of Penfield, 1833 – 1871.
Map included in the 1933 Mercer at Penfield Centennial Celebration brochure.

At the Mercer Institute's founding, it consisted of a red clay farm and two hand hewed log cabins. Enrollment for the first term was thirty-nine students. Tuition for the year was $35. Boarding was $8 per month and each student had to provide his own bedding, candles, and furniture.

The ***Figure 4*** cover bearing a PENFIELD, GA postmark was posted on Nov. 7, 1863. It carries a Confederate #12 in greenish-blue color.

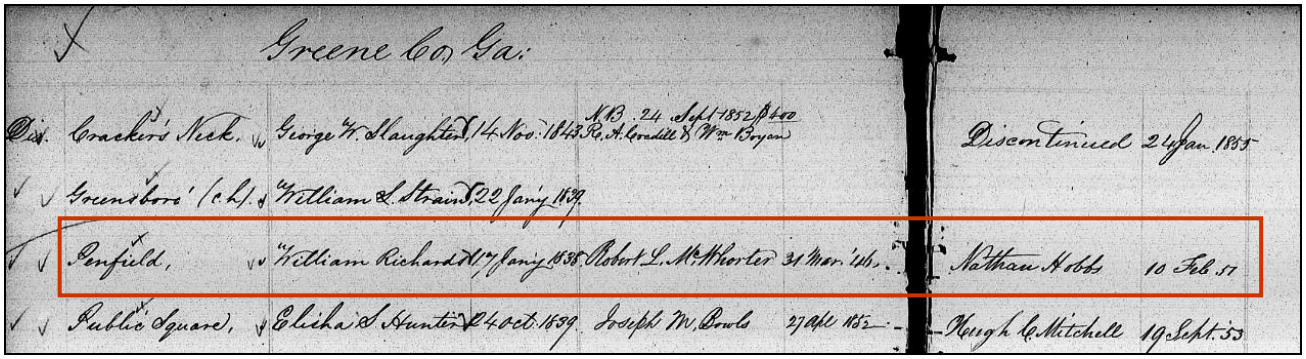
The cover was mailed to Dr. Eben Hillyer, a physician and honored citizen of Rome, Georgia.

Figure 4. 1863 PENFIELD, GA mailing to Rome, Georgia. (Author's collection)

Offered by Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries at their March 3, 2017, "The Civil War and Confederate States" sale, ***Figure 5***'s cover carries a January 27 (1861) circular datestamp with a grid cancel tying a 3-cent Dull Red, Type III (Scott 26). The cover is an outstanding Independent State use during the two-week period between Georgia's secession and admission to the Confederacy. The attraction of the cover is completed with the MERCER UNIVERSITY PENFIELD GA. embossed cameo corner card.

Figure 5. MERCER UNIVERSITY PENFIELD GA. cameo corner card.

Penfield's postal history includes the story of a colorful postmaster, Nathan Augustus Hobbs, Sr. As recorded in the "National Archives Postmaster Appointments" for Greene County, Georgia (***Figure 6***)[4], Hobbs was appointed postmaster on February 10, 1857, and served in that position for thirty years of his ninety-nine-year life.


Greene Co. Ga.

Dis.	Crackers Neck.	George W. Slaughter	14 Nov. 1845	N.B. 24 Sept 1852 R. A. Goodlett & Wm Bryan		Discontinued	24 Jan. 1855
✓	Greensboro' (c.h.)	William L. Strain	22 Jany 1839				
✓	Penfield,	William Richards	17 Jany 1838	Robert L. McWhorter	31 Mar. 1846	Nathan Hobbs	10 Feb. 57
✓	Public Square,	Elisha S. Hunter	4 Oct. 1839	Joseph M. Bowles	27 Apl 1852	Hugh G. Mitchell	19 Sept. 53

Figure 6. Appointment of postmaster Nathan Hobbes, February 10, 1857.

As told by a great granddaughter, "living into your 90s in the late 1800s was a rare event, enough so that Nathan had at least seven news articles written about him."[5] One such article appeared on September 15, 1883, in the *Sunny South* publication:

> *Another remarkable landmark is "Old Uncle Nathan Hobbs" whose name and long gray beard are familiar to every Penfield student. Though in his 94th year, he is still hale and hearty; chops cotton, builds cow houses, reads without eyeglasses, enjoys a good joke, eats collards, corn bread, pound cake, pig-iron, chunks of wood, sole leather and anything that may come along, and digest it all like a grist mill.*[6]

After the Civil War, the university moved to Macon, Georgia. It has grown to more than 8,700 students in twelve schools and colleges. After the move of the school, Penfield survived on the strength of the cotton industry. The town flourished until 1919 when the boll weevil ended its economic viability.

Today, the village of Penfield is distinguished by the Greek Revival architecture of the Old Mercer Chapel (***Figure 7***), now a Baptist Church. The church is on the National Register of Historic Places.

Figure 7. Old Mercer Chapel is among the most revered churches among Georgia's Baptists and is one of the best Greek Revival churches in the state.

Endnotes

1 https://www.americanantiquarian.org.

2 https://www.sutori.com/en/story/southern-statues-of-savannah--Y3zniehWTuJ3iGk1R7tWebWG.

3 https://ursa.mercer.edu/bitstream/handle/10898/2851/Penfield%20Booklet.pdf;sequence=1.

4 https://catalog.archives.gov/search?q=Penfield%20Georgia%20postmasters.

5 http://denise-livinginthepast.blogspot.com/2015/04/52-ancestors-no-32-nathan-augustus.html.

6 Ibid.

Now Available
Digitized Georgia Postal History Society
Bulletin and *Georgia Post Roads*

With a May 1985 release, the *G. P. H. S. Bulletin* was the first journal of the Georgia Postal History Society. The first three volumes were titled *G. P. H. S. Bulletin*. The second three volumes were titled *Bulletin*. The first issue of *Georgia Post Roads* was published in September 1991.

The Society extends its gratitude to Francis J. Crown, Jr., Douglas N. Clark, and Nancy B. Z. Clark (prior editors of the *Bulletin* and *Georgia Post Roads*) for their contributions in creating digital files of the publications.

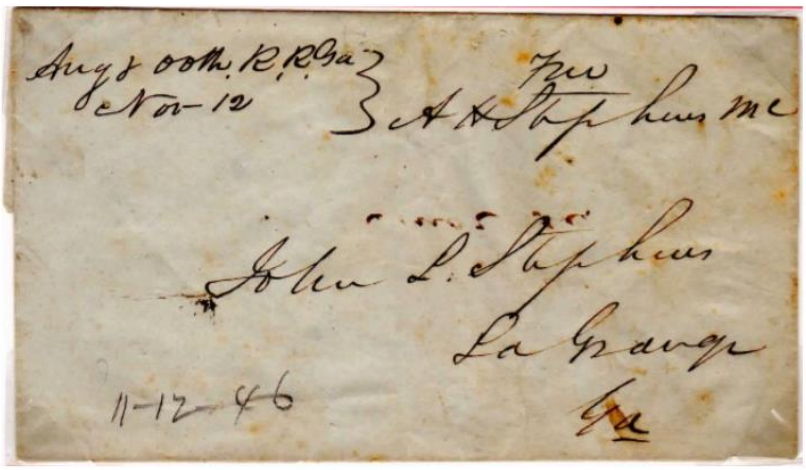
The publication files, in an Adobe PDF format, are available on the Georgia Postal History Society's web page at http://www.sefsc.org/georgia-postal-history-society.html.

Also provided is an index for the *Bulletin* and *Georgia Post Roads*. Guidance for searching the digital files is provided in the Searching the Digital Files document.

Early Railway Mail from Augusta and Beyond

By Douglas N. Clark

Two recent *Georgia Post Road* articles (by Baab and Crown) have dealt with handstamped railroad markings applied on routes having Augusta as a terminal. The manuscript markings of railroads in Georgia began to appear somewhat earlier than the handstamps and are of significant interest from a postal history point of view.



The earliest railroad mail handlers in the U.S. were route agents, beginning work in Georgia in 1846.

The first Railway Post Office (R.P.O.) was established in the Midwest in the mid-1860s. So, any antebellum railroad marking must have been that of a route agent rather than an R.P.O.

Figure 1 is a cover postmarked by an Augusta & Oothcologa Route Agent with postage paid by the franking privilege of Congressman Alexander H. Stephens.

Figure 1. Cover postmarked by an Augusta & Oothcologa Route Agent.

The postmark reads "Aug[usta] & Ooth[cologa] R.R. G[eorgi]a. This route is longer than that of the Augusta & Atlanta route agent, indicated in the markings illustrated by Crown. In fact, the Route Agent contract was held jointly by the Georgia Railroad, from Augusta to Atlanta, and the Western & Atlantic Railroad, running north from Atlanta to Oothcologa, which today is Calhoun, Georgia. The Augusta & Atlanta R.R. route agent handstamps were used on a longer route than the postmark indicates, at least into 1848.

The known manuscript markings on railroads in Georgia are illustrated in Crown's *Georgia Stampless Cover Catalog and Handbook.*

Bibliography

Francis J. Crown, Jr., *Georgia Stampless Cover Catalog and Handbook*, published by the author, Madison, Al (1997).

Francis J. Crown, Jr., "More on the Augusta Railway Post Offices," *Georgia Post Roads* 29, No. 4 (Fall 2021), p. 15.

Bill Baab, "On the right track: Trains and Railway Post Offices (RPOs) in Augusta, Georgia," *Georgia Post Roads* 29, No. 3 (Summer 2021), p. 6-9.

Augusta, Georgia - First City to Ship Cotton Via Air

By Bill Baab

Invention of the airplane and its eventual acceptance as a means of shipping materials long distances in short amounts of time ultimately led to a new collectible for philatelists called first flight covers. The covers are specially prepared envelopes carried on inaugural flights of airlines, first flights over a pre-selected route, or flights by a special aircraft, e.g., blimps. The covers were postmarked with the flight's date and backstamped with the date and time of arrival, proof it was indeed carried on the aircraft.

Special cachets marking the events are often found on such covers, increasing their value and popularity with the collecting public. In fact, such popularity prompted the U.S. Post Office Department to include in its 1926 *The Postal Bulletin* extensive instructions to postmasters to ensure appropriate circulation took place and proper markings were added.

A unique event took place in Augusta, Georgia on June 4, 1923, when the city became the first in the nation to ship cotton via an airplane. A U.S. Army bomber deemed powerful enough to haul the two heavy bales (each estimated to weigh more than 500 pounds) was the means of transportation.

Figure 1. Pilot of cotton bales flight accepts letter of greetings from Augusta city official .

The flight-to-be began with a city official handing the pilot an envelope containing a letter of greetings to the mayor of New Bedford, Massachusetts, destination of the cotton bales (***Figure 1***).

After landing in that city's airport, the bales were taken by truck to nearby cotton mills where the fleecy material was converted into specially marked aprons. The flight then continued to Washington, D.C. where the aprons were to be used at a Masonic Convention.

Commemorating the June 4, 1923, first flight of cotton bales, ***Figure 2*** shows a special cachet struck in green on the back flap of a cover (rotated). The cachet's text is positioned over a design of six bales of cotton, with a rendering of an airplane at the top of the cachet and a view of downtown Augusta and the Savannah River at the bottom.

But an entirely different first flight event is the real commemoration.

Note in the center of the ***Figure 2*** cachet "ROUTE A.M. 19 – AUGUSTA, GA. – FIRST AIR MAIL FLIGHT, DEC1, 1932." This is the commemoration for which the cachet was created, not the cotton bale flight. Including the cotton bale flight event in the cachet's design was simply to enhance the notoriety of Augusta.

Revealed on the cover's front (***Figure 3)***, the mailing was postmarked "AUGUSTA GA. | DEC 1 1932," franked with an 8-cent George Washington Bicentennial stamp.

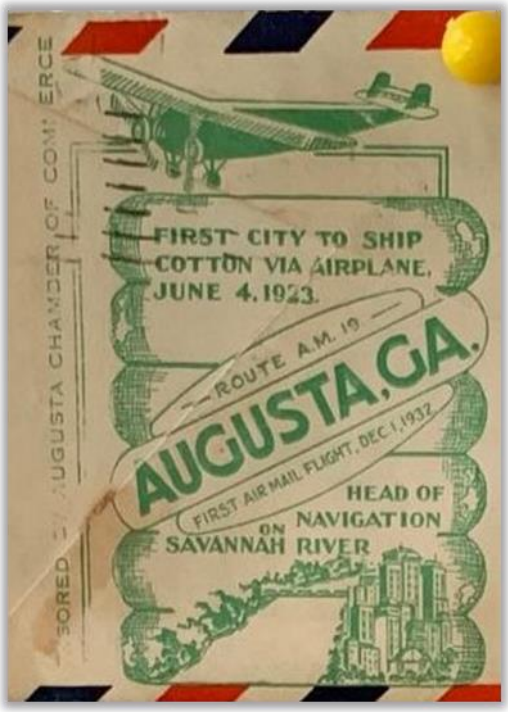


Figure 2. "First City to Ship Cotton Via Airplane" cachet.

Note the two cachets, one being the same green colored design as on the cover's back flap. The purple-colored cachet was created for the December 1, 1932, first flight and found on numerous covers.

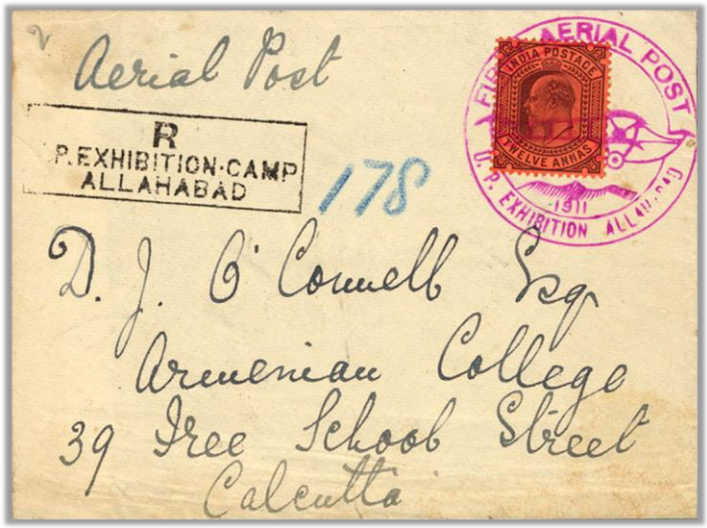
Figure 3. AUGUSTA GA. | DEC 1 1932 mailing to Newark, N.J.

Figure 4's cover presents a clearer image of the December 1, 1932, cachet.

Looking closely at the strikes of the two cachets on ***Figure 3***'s cover's front, a probable scenario for the dual-cachet is the "First City to Ship Cotton" cachet was applied first to the cover's back flap and front followed by a strike on the front of the "First Flight Route AM 19 P.O.D." cachet.

Figure 4. December 1, 1932, Augusta first flight cover mailed to Jacksonville, Florida.

Years later after the June 4, 1923, cotton flight from Augusta, the city of Atlanta, in copycat fashion, shipped a bale of cotton via airplane to the chairman of the Democratic Party in Washington, D.C. But that event was not commemorated by a specially cacheted cover.



The first official postal delivery flight did not take place in the U.S. A February 19, 1911, flight of short duration took place during the United Provinces Industrial and Agricultural Exhibition in India. The flight from Allahabad to Naimi took 13 minutes. Covers carried were marked by a special, large circular postmark, "FIRST AERIAL POST, U.P. EXHIBITION ALLAHABAD 1911" (***Figure 5***).

The first official American airmail delivery was made on September 23, 1911, by pilot Earle Ovington under the authority of the United States Post Office Department.

Figure 5. Cover from first official airmail flight by airplane, India, 1911. (Courtesy of the Smithsonian National Postal Museum)

However, the first "scheduled" U.S. Air Mail service began on May 15, 1918, carrying mail from Washington, D.C. to New York City (***Figure 6***). A photograph of the plane used in that first service flight is shown in ***Figure 7***.

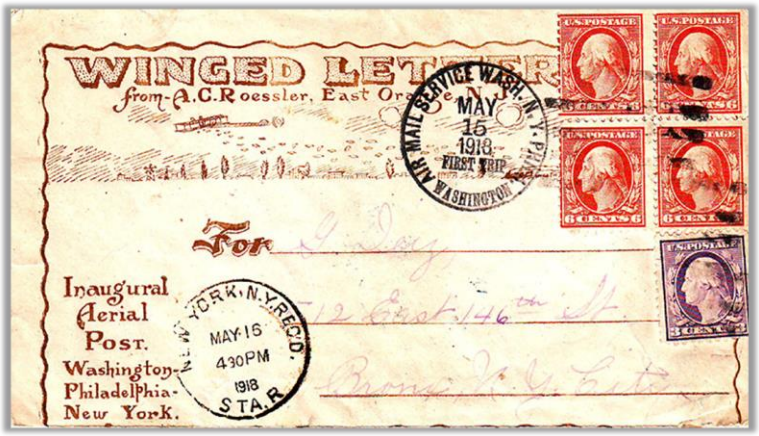


Figure 6. An A.C. Roessler cover carried on the first scheduled U.S. Air Mail flight from Washington DC to New York City, May 15, 1918.

Figure 7. First U.S. Air Mail flight takes off from Washington, D.C. on May 15, 1918, flown by U.S. Army pilot Lt. George Boyle. (U.S. Army photo)

Sources

- Online archives of *The Augusta Chronicle*.
- Wikipedia.

Literature and Exhibiting Awards

Congratulations are extended to Society members Nancy B. Z. Clark and Douglas N. Clark for literature and exhibiting awards awards earned at recent philatelic shows.

Nancy was awarded a Gold for her "Steamship City of Rockland" article at the October 9 SESCAL 2021. Nancy also earned a Silver for her "World War II Trainee and POW Mail Camp Wheeler, Macon, Georgia" article.

A Large Vermeil along with an American Association of Philatelic Exhibitors award of honor was earned by Douglas and Nancy at the September Philatelic Show in Boxborough, Massachusetts for their "The 1971 Revalued Postal Stationary First Day Covers."

Spring Place, Georgia

By Tony L. Crumbley

Located in Murray County in the extreme northwest of Georgia, Spring Place was first settled by Cherokee Indians. In 1801, the Moravian Brethren from Salem, North Carolina founded a school to educate the Cherokee. This mission continued until 1833. Many of the early leaders of the Cherokee nation were taught lasting skills. With the removal of the Cherokee, the Moravian Brethren moved the school to Oklahoma.

In 1805, James Vann (February 1766 – February 1809) (***Figure 1***) built a home at Spring Place. Vann was Chief of the Cherokee tribe. This two-story red brick house still stands today (***Figure 2***).

Figure 1. Cherokee Chief James Vann.

Figure 2. Chief Vann's house in Spring Place.

The first post office opened in Spring Place in 1810. It is the second oldest post office in north Georgia.

At the beginning of the Civil War, there was very little wealth in the county and virtually no industry. When Georgia seceded, Murray County sent hundreds of men and boys into the war. In 1864, two skirmishes took place just west of Spring Place, one on June 25, 1864, with the 8th Michigan Cavalry. On February 27, 1865, there was a skirmish at Spring Place between Confederates and the 145th Indiana Infantry. Spring Palace was known as an area occupied by Confederate guerillas.

In 1857, John L. Beall was appointed postmaster of Spring Place. He would serve until July 11, 1861, when John S. Beall became postmaster. The second Mr. Beall would serve throughout the war.

Figure 3 is a cover posted September 3 from Spring Place. The cover is a Scott U-9 printed by George B. Nesbitt Co. in 1854. The postmark is a 33mm "SPRING PLACE, Ga." marking. The U-9 envelope was no longer valid for postage. However, the envelope was used and the U.S. postage was obliterated with the Confederate "10" cent handstamp.

Figure 3. Spring Place, GA, September 3, circa 1863. Paid 10 cover mailed to Sumter, SC. The CSA Ty. B 10 marking was applied to a pre-war Nesbitt envelope.

Sources

- *Confederate States of America Catalog and Handbook*. Kaufmann, Crown, Palazolo, 2012.
- www/Wikipedia.org/wiki/murray_County_Georgia.
- *The Turbulent Decade. Georgia's Post Offices 1860-1869,* Francis J. Crown, Jr., 2007.

Georgia Cameo Covers – Part III: Augusta Covers and Atlanta Covers and Their Printers

By Fred Rodriguez

In a previous installment of this series of articles showcasing Georgia cameo covers, I presented a table providing the number of known cameo cover designs for towns in Georgia. Below is a portion of that table presenting data for Augusta and Atlanta covers.

Table 1
Georgia Cameo Covers
Town Name and Known Covers

Augusta	43
Atlanta	24

This installment of the article series highlights Atlanta cameo covers. But we will begin with illustrations of additional cameo covers from Augusta, Georgia which was the topic of a previous installment. These Augusta covers are especially attractive and rare.

Figure 1. Sherman, Jessup & Co., Saddlery & Leather, Augusta, Georgia.

Figure 2. Little Giant Corn Mill, Scott & Mockbee, Augusta, Georgia.

Figure 3. Luther Roll, Carriages & Harness, Coach & Harness Materials..., Augusta, Georgia.

Figure 4. Roberts, Coskery & Co., Augusta, Georgia.

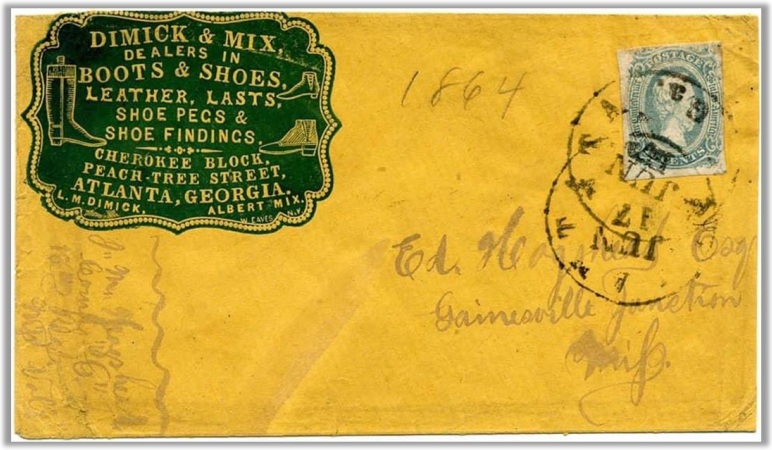
Figure 5. John Nelson, Groceries, Wines, Liquors &c., Augusta, Georgia.

Atlanta cameo covers are the second most plentiful covers located up to now. Most Georgia cameo designs made by die-sinker engravers are unsigned, but a few do carry the engraver's signature. Those signed were usually made by W. Eaves from New York. A few were made by Philadelphia engravers Thomas Calvert and the two brothers A. & M. McClement.

William Eaves was the most prolific of the cameo engravers working in mid-19th century America. He produced a great diversity of designs for merchants from New York to California, Maine to Florida, and a half a dozen or so in Georgia.

The Eaves imprint is found in the Augusta covers of the Goodrich and the Archer cameos and the imprint of T. Calvert on the Girardey cameo.

Some of the better Atlanta cameo covers are illustrated below.



Courtesy of Patricia Kaufmann Confederate Postal History, ***Figure 6*** is a large green embossed illustrated cameo corner card of Dimick & Mix, Dealers in Boots & Shoes, etc.

A CSA 11, 10¢ blue (2 margins) is tied by double strikes of an ATLANTA / Ga. // JUN / 17 [1864] cds. A tiny "W. Eaves NY" (manufacturer of ad cover) is included in the lower right corner of the cameo. Addressed To Ed. Hogshead, Esq., Gainesville Junction, Miss. with soldier endorsement of "Jn. M. Hogshead, Comp. "G", 15th Regt. Miss. Vol."

Figure 6. Dimick & Mix. Dealers In Boots & Shoes…. Atlanta, Georgia.

At the time of mailing, this was Adam's Brigade, Loring's Division, Army of Mississippi. "A charming and scarce use from a BRASS BAND musician."

An S. T. Biggers (grocer and commission merchant) brown cameo corner card with illustrations of flour bag, sugar barrel, tea crate and bottles of wine is shown in ***Figure 7***.

This is an extremely fine, spectacular Eaves cameo design used in the confederacy with the Atlanta postmaster's provisional handstamp.

Only six or seven Atlanta provisional covers have corner cards, and this is the only one with the distinctive Biggers design.

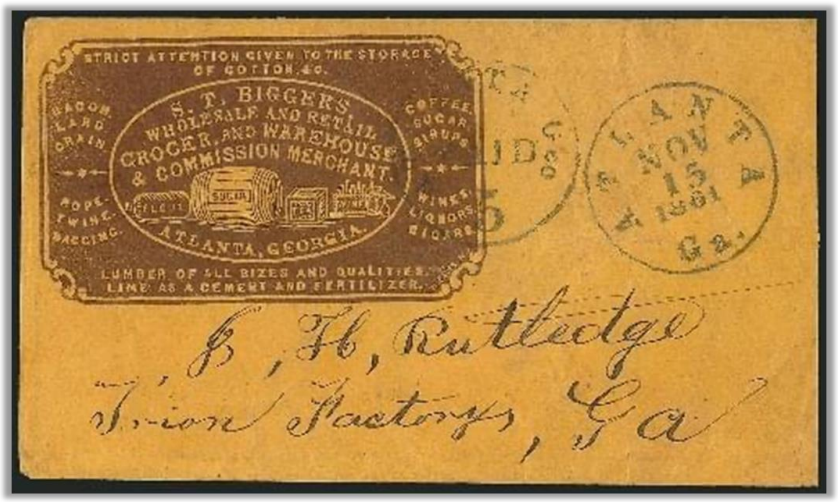
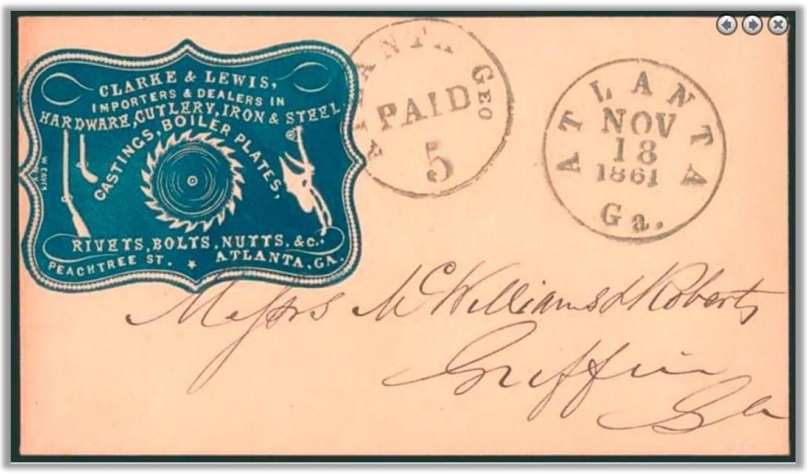


Figure 7. S.T. Biggers Wholesale and Retail…. Atlanta, Georgia.



Bold strikes of a provisional handstamp and "Atlanta Ga. Nov. 18, 1861" circular datestamp are seen on ***Figure 8***'s Clarke & Lewis hardware blue embossed cameo corner card to Griffin Georgia.

W. Eaves N.Y. imprint is seen in the far-left center portion of the cameo.

This is an extremely rare confederate gun cover.

Figure 8. Clarke & Lewis, Importers & Dealers…… Atlanta, Georgia.

Figure 9 (courtesy of the U.S. Philatelic Classics Society) is a black and white image of a June 17, 1861, Atlanta, Georgia Planter's Hotel cameo cover. The cameo is a blue embossed type. Note the provisional 5-cent black 31-mm handstamp.

On July 22, 1864, the armies of the North and South met in a bloodbath known as the Battle of Atlanta. The Planters Hotel became a military hospital, but not just a hospital for

Figure 9. Planters Hotel, Atlanta, Georgia.

Southern soldiers. By 1864, both armies treated the wounded from the Union and the Confederacy as equally as possible. Therefore, the hotel would be filled with the injured wearing both blue and gray.

Figure 10. Trout House, Atlanta, Georgia.

Courtesy of the Rodriguez Archives, a circa 1857 Trout House, Atlanta, cameo cover mailed to Athens, Alabama is shown in ***Figure 10***.

Built in 1849 by Jeremiah F. Trout, the Trout House was one of three hotels in antebellum Atlanta. It was a four-story brick building at the southwest corner of Decatur and Pryor Streets. Confederate President Jefferson Davis spoke there during his visit to Atlanta of February 16, 1861.The hotel was destroyed during General Sherman's burning of Atlanta.

Additional Atlanta cameo covers are shown below.

Figure 11. Jones' Livery & Sale Stables

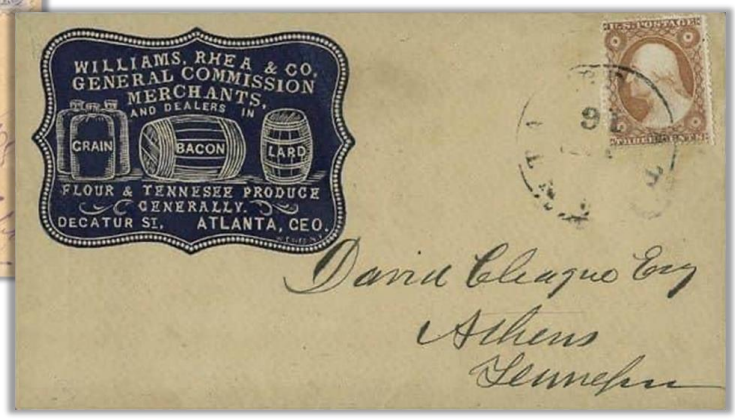


Figure 12. Williams, Rhea & Co.

Figure 13. Immel & Cunningham.

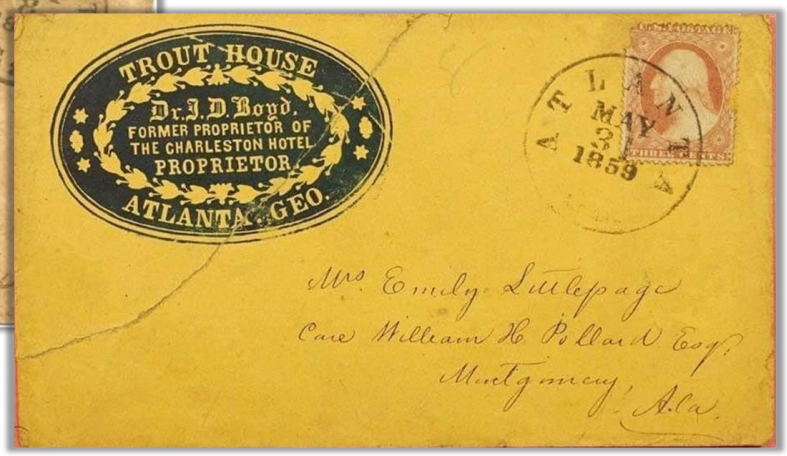


Figure 14. Trout House. (2nd cameo design.)

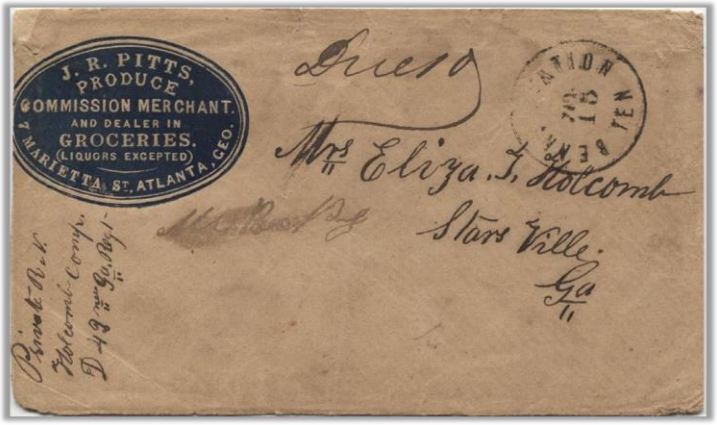


Figure 15. J.R. Pitts.

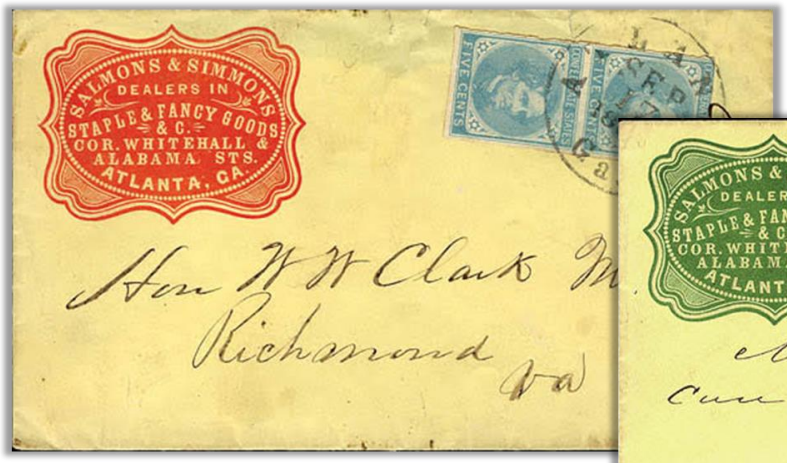


Figure 16. Salmons & Simmons (red).

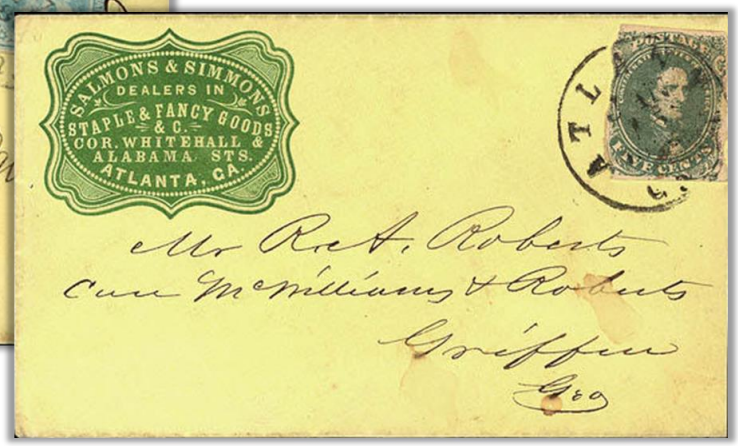


Figure 17. Salmons & Simmons (green).

Figure 18. Atlanta and West Point R.R. Co.

The next installment of this series (Part IV) will illustrate the Georgia cameo covers from other towns from A to K. Part V of the series will present covers for Georgia towns for the letters L to Z.

Upon completion of this series, links will be provided on the Georgia Postal History Society's webpage for all 150+ Georgia cameo covers. For now, those interested in viewing the covers can join the Facebook group "Georgia Cameo Advertising Covers."

We thank my brother Jose Luis Rodriguez for providing all of the illustrations for these articles that are from his extensive collection and database of covers known to him. His collection is now housed in the Huntington Library and Art Museum in California.