

Feline Manuscript Cancellations by GREG BALAGIAN

Manuscript cancellations existed long before other forms of cancellation on letters and postcards, or even before stamps came into use. They consisted of the postmaster's handwritten name of the post office and state in ink in a variety of styles.

In addition, either the words "Paid" or "Free," or the postal rate were written numerically.

Manuscript cancellations made a brief resurgence with the advent of Rural Free Delivery in 1896, when rural mail carriers would use an indelible pencil to cancel local mail en route.

In my collection of "feline postmarks," I have several wonderful examples of such

cancellations. Most of them are either rare or scarce, as they come from old and discontinued post offices.

Richard W. Helbock, who is one of the most prominent specialists of United States postmarks, grades their rarity on a scale from 1 to 9, with 9 as the scarcest. Manuscript cancellations are generally considered more difficult to obtain than postmarks made by various devices.

LIONVILLE, Chester County, Pennsylvania (PA) is a village formerly known as Welsh Pool and later as Red Lion, named after the prominent local Red Lion Inn.

Operating from 1826 to 1966, the post office was given the new name Lionville, as

there was already another Red Lion in Chester County.

Figure 1 shows the cover mailed in 1856 from Lionville to Parkesburg, PA franked by a 3-cent stamp to pay for the ½ ounce domestic letter rate for distances less than 300 miles. The scarcity is "1."

RED LION, New Castle County, Delaware, is a small rural town named after the local 18th century Red Lion Tavern. The post office was established in 1827 and discontinued in 1895.

The stampless folded letter mailed in 1846 from Red Lion to Middletown, Delaware with the "Paid 5" inscription paid for the ½ ounce domestic letter rate for a dis-

tance of less than 300 miles. The scarcity index of the postmark is "3." (Figure 2)

LEOPARD, Chester County, PA was a village named after the Sign of the Leopard Tavern built in 1917 serving as an inn, store, tavern, with a post office which was established in 1866 and discontinued in 1905.

Mailed from Leopard to West Chester, PA, the stamped postal card has a one-cent imprinted indicium that paid for the domestic postcard rate. The scarcity index is "4." (Figure 3)

PANTHER CREEK, Yadkin County, North Carolina is a village named after the creek of the same name which in turn was named after cougars, also known as panthers, cata-

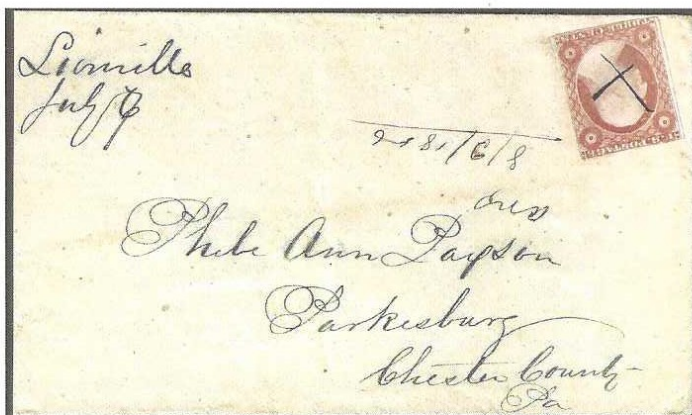


Figure 1.
LIONVILLE,
Pennsylvania

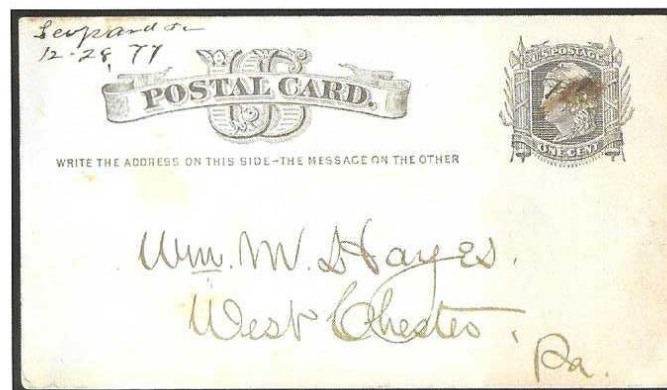


Figure 3.
LEOPARD,
Pennsylvania

Figure 2.
RED LION,
Delaware

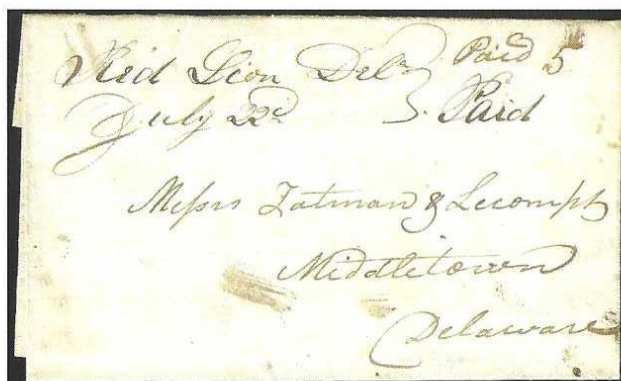
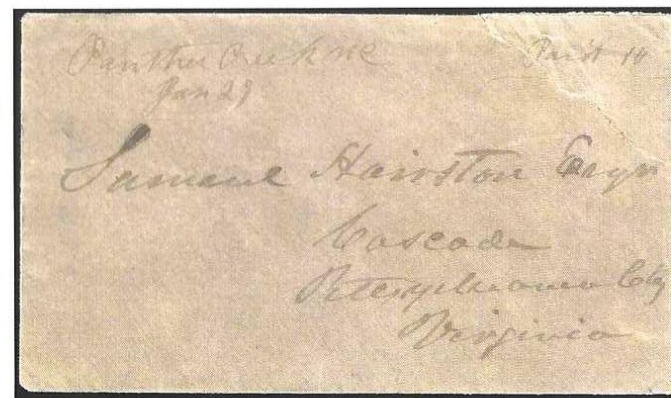


Figure 4.
PANTHER CREEK,
North Carolina



mounts, or mountain lions that were dwelling in nearby terrain. The post office was established in 1808 and discontinued in 1907.

My letter from Panther Creek to Cascade, Virginia, ca. 1845-1848, has a "Paid 10" inscription for the one-ounce domestic letter rate. The postal rate at the time was 5 cents per ½ ounce. (Figure 4)

The Civil War era cover mailed from Panther Creek to Anderson, South Carolina (SC) is franked with a 10-cent Confederate States stamp to pay the ½ ounce domestic letter rate for distances over 300 miles. (Figure 5)

Another Civil War era cover mailed from Panther Creek to Anderson, SC with a "Paid

10" inscription covers the ½ ounce domestic letter rate for distances over 300 miles. The scarcity index of both postmarks is "4."

PANTHER CREEK, Cass County, Illinois is a township which was also named after the abundance of cougars in the area. The post office was established in 1837 and closed in 1957.

The cover mailed in 1856 from Panther Creek to New York City, New York franked with a 3-cent stamp pays for ½ ounce domestic letter rate for distances less than 300 miles. The scarcity index for the postcard is "5." (Figure 6)

PANTHER SPRINGS, Jefferson County, Tennessee (TN) was a pioneer village. Ac-

cording to a story, it was named after early settler Colonel Bradley who killed a large panther near the big spring. The post office was established in 1832 and was active until 1870 when the village was incorporated into Hamblen County when it was eventually closed. (Figure 7)

A stampless cover mailed from Panther Springs to Knoxville, TN bears the inscription "5" to pay for the ½ ounce domestic letter rate for a distance less than 300 miles. The scarcity index of the postmark is "6."

TIGERVILLE, Terrebonne County, Louisiana, my last manuscript cover, is from a community which according to belief was so

named because early settlers mistook native cougars for tigers. The post office was open from 1847 to 1988.

My stamped envelope, mailed from Tigerville to Knoxville, TN in 1871, has an imprinted 3-cent indicium to pay for the ½ ounce domestic letter rate for distances less than 300 miles. The scarcity index is "4." (Figure 8)

Other "feline manuscript" cancels most likely exist, though no catalog has been published at this time.

One manuscripts cancel for which I am currently searching is from Leopold, Indiana. When I find one, I will share it. 🐾

Helbock, Richard W. U. S. Post Offices, Series of 8, compiled by La Posta Publications: Oregon, 2001



Figure 5.
PANTHER CREEK,
South Carolina

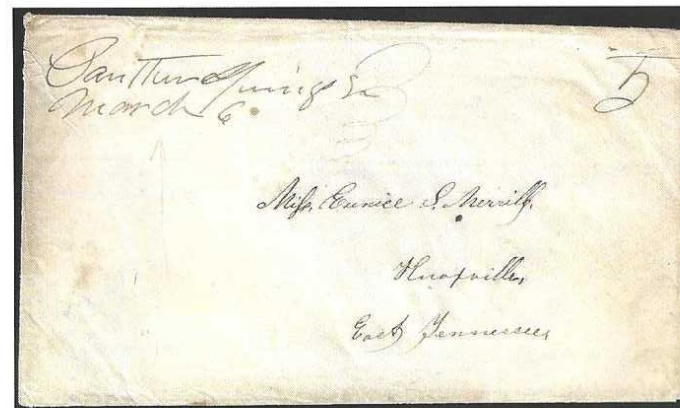


Figure 7.
PANTHER SPRINGS,
Tennessee

Figure 6.
PANTHER CREEK,
Illinois

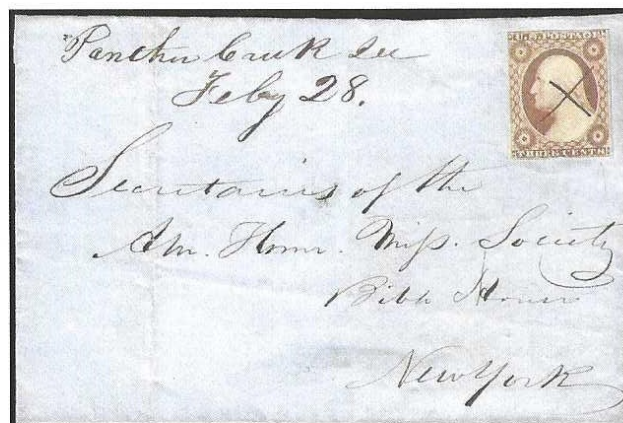


Figure 8.
TIGERVILLE,
Louisiana

