



The Maine Philatelist

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Cumberland precancels

A fifth type and some new facts on the other four

By Stephen G. Rich

Cumberland, Maine has probably the largest variety of early precancel types of any office that used this method of handling mails prior to the 1890s. Every once in a while a new part of the story is discovered. Earlier, I reported on Ezra Cole's cover, the large circle type of precancel used in the late 1850s. The book, *Maine Postal History and Postmarks*, published by Sterling T. Dow, provides some excellent leads which materially extend the story.

The accepted numbering of the styles of precancels is not the same in the official precancel catalogue and in Mr. Dow's book. Neither of the systems is chronological, and each represents merely the order in which the various types were made known to the catalogue editors and to Mr. Dow. The precancel

nature of these printed postmarks is now generally recognized, but was not clearly realized by several writers. This was due to the fact that precanceling after affixing of stamp to envelope has been less usual than precanceling in the sheet. The whole group can now be reduced to systematic order.

The earliest type is printed circle of the 1850s. The use of it to carry a circular date in the fall of 1856, and on another cover with the three-cent 1857 Type 1 stamp, thus indicating early use, are reported in Dow's book. The Cole cover, illustrated here, has a Type 2 1857 three-cent stamp. This 33mm circle type, called Type 3 in anticipation of future listings, and "fourth type" by Dow in his book, is clearly the earliest.

The next type used is apparently the best known of them all, the one with town and date in two lines of 18 pt. Gothic bold condensed capitals. This was long the only known printed cancellation and precancel type of Cumberland, and has been in the *Official Precancel Catalog* for many years as Type 1. Dow calls it "second type." A fair number of copies are known, both off and on cover. It is known only with the one-cent 1857 stamp, but which of the many types of this stamp was used does not seem to be recorded.

This type may possibly have been used after or between the next two, but we lack information to make such an assignment probable. Dow writes as if this were known on the three-cent 1857 Type 1, but apparently that statement is based upon confusing it with the next two types. Such an error need not worry us, for the source articles and books are by no means specific in their statements.

Apparently following this Gothic or block type of precancel, we have two types in 12 pt. Scotch Roman upper and lower case. The evidence points to the best known of these being the next one used. This is Type 2 in the *Official Precancel*

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The purpose of the Society, a non-profit Maine corporation, is to promote philately in the Pine Tree State. Membership is open to anyone. Membership applications are available from the Secretary, listed below.

Dues are \$5.00 per fiscal year (ending in June).

Life Membership is also available.

Contact the Secretary for details.

Articles for publication should be sent to the Editor at address below.

OFFICERS

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Mr. Max Lynds
P.O. Box 761

Houlton, ME 04730

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18 Elmwood Ct.

N. Berwick, ME 03906

email - rickstambaugh@xpressamerica.net

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EDITOR

Dr. Everett L. Parker

719 Moosehead Lake Road

Greenville, ME 04441-9727

email: eparker@midmaine.com

PUBLISHING SCHEDULE

The Maine Philatelist is distributed to members in January, April, July and October of each year. Below is a list of deadlines for each issue and the anticipated mailing date. While deadline for copy (articles) is firm, the anticipated mailing date is just that -- a "best guess" of mailing.

| ISSUE COVER DATE | DEADLINE FOR COPY | JOURNAL TO PRINTER | ANTICIPATED MAILING DATE |
|------------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|
| January | Dec. 15 | Dec. 30 | Jan. 15 |
| April | March 15 | March 30 | April 15 |
| July | June 15 | June 30 | July 15 |
| October | Sept. 15 | Sept. 30 | Oct. 15 |

Maine stamp club meetings



Stamp clubs in Maine are invited to become members of the Maine Philatelic Society. We will publish, free of charge, meeting information and locations.

WATERVILLE STAMP CLUB

The club meets on the first and third Friday from September to May and on the third Friday only during June, July and August. Meetings are from 6:30 to 9 p.m. at the Kennebec Valley Technical College (KVTC) on Western Avenue in Fairfield (Exit 35 of Interstate 95). For information, call 872-5107. Nonmembers are invited to attend.

BELFAST STAMP CLUB

It appears the Belfast Stamp Club is no more. Could someone please confirm the status?

YORK COUNTY STAMP CLUB

The club meets on the second and fourth Thursday of each month beginning at 7:30 p.m. at the Sanford Masonic Hall, Elm Street, Sanford. Usual events include raffle, auction, presentations, refreshments, and an occasional visit from a stamp dealer. Dues are \$5 per year. For information, contact Secretary Tracey Levasseur, 329 Ross Corner Rd., Shapleigh, ME 04076.

UNION RIVER STAMP CLUB

The Union River Stamp Club meets the third Thursday of each month from April through November at the Ellsworth Library, beginning at 6:30 p.m. For information, contact Eric Beal at 827-2686 or Eric.Beal@umit.maine.edu.

KENNEBEC VALLEY STAMP AND COLLECTOR CLUB OF AUGUSTA

The Kennebec Valley Stamp and Collector Club meets the first and third Tuesday of each month at the Central Maine Power Company headquarters on Edison Drive in Augusta. Meetings are from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. For additional information, call Shirley MacKay at 622-7978, or contact by email at kildonan@prexar.com.

Cumberland precancels a fifth type and new facts

Continued from page 1

Catalog and Dow's "third type." This is a two-line device, with state, month and day on the second line, and in it we have the Type 1 1857 three-cent stamp used on the only known cover or copy.

Placed thus as early use, presumably in 1857, this type is known from the famous "Acton Cover" found by Demers in 1932, and illustrated in *The Precancel Bee* of February 1933. The illustration was mutilated to comply with then existing illustration law; but a proof which I have of the cut before it was thus chipped shows clearly that the stamp is the Type 1 of the three-cent 1857. The cancellation was printed in the same operation as the printed portions of the address on an envelope with stamp affixed, as with all the Cumberland precancel types. Dow is thus not in accord with all the known facts when he states that it is not yet "found in the precancel state." His statement is, of course, due to acceptance of the old supposition that precanceling was done only in the sheet and before affixing.

Fourth in time of use is a similar type, not yet listed by the *Official Precancel Catalog*, and named "first type" by Dow, who apparently follows Ashbrook's one-cent 1851-57 on this. Again the 12 pt. Scotch Roman type is used, but here only the state and town in one line, with manuscript date beneath it. Dow states positively that this type is used in 1859. The stamp is evidently a one-cent 1857.

The reader should not be distracted or misled by manuscript datings used with this or the following type. Since the requirement of dating of precancels was revived by official order for certain classes of service in 1938, we have seen manuscript datings in use again on some of these stamps. This does not affect the precancel nature of the usage.

The fifth type of precancel, so named and correctly in point of time order by Dow, has been illustrated by him in his book, and mentioned briefly. The two illustrations with this present article will give the story in perhaps as full detail as needed. They show portions of the fronts of two of the three covers thus far known with this printed device, a genuine precancel.

The device itself is a 28mm circle with double border. It is printed, not handstamped; it is printed in the same ink, with the same depth of impression as printed portions of the address and in the case of the 1864 cover, the corner card. The month and date are filled in manuscript on the 1862 covers, but on the 1864 Black Jack cover, the month is inserted in the printing operation, and only the day is filled in. The dating in each case is in the same ink and hand as the manuscript parts

of the address.

In the 1862 covers are circulars dated March 15, 1862, offering certain town record forms and books, manufactured by Horace I. Gray, the printer at Cumberland. Mr. Gray was, as far as we can tell, the user of all the Cumberland precancels. The 1864 cover is empty; but similar covers with 1867 and 1868 dates in the address contain 1867 and 1868 circulars similarly dated. We are making no rash assumption, therefore, in believing that the cover with 1864 in the address was mailed in mid-March 1864, not in any other year.

As the stamp is at the left in the "Acton" cover of the type used third in point of time, we may safely think that the intention with the 1862 covers was to place the stamp in that same position. Hence the device is there; but the stamps were affixed elsewhere. Pen cancelling was resorted to in order to fill this discrepancy; a few scratches on the three-cent cover illustrated, but "1862" written on the one-cent stamp on the other cover.

In 1864 the precanceling device was placed on the right, where it hit the stamp. Mr. Gray's corner card was added in the other corner. The stamp in this case is the two-cent Black Jack, thus far the only precancel reported on this stamp. Being of 1864 use, previous to introduction of grill, it is the ungrilled Black Jack.

Also we have four later covers, which have been mentioned in this discussion. These bear ungrilled Black Jack or grilled three-cent stamps, and are 1867, 1868, and 1869 usage. The stamps are pen-cancelled, and the handwriting of the cancellation is identical with that used for filling in the address. On the three-cent covers, town and date are used, tying the stamp to cover.

The indications thus are that the cancelling, without printed portion, is likewise actually still precanceling. However, it is hardly likely that these manuscript precancelings can be listed by the *Official Precancel Catalog* pending further information. Meanwhile, the known and sure precancels from Cumberland, these five types, printed precanceling done on envelope with stamps affixed, but prior to mailing, can be re-listed in their order of use. There are these five types, and their rearrangement in the order of use will bring order into this town's precancels.

(EDITOR'S NOTE: This article is reprinted from the August 28, 1943 issue of Stamps magazine (Vol. 44, No. 9), and the information is thus dated and submitted for information only. We are reprinting articles only because we have nothing else to publish. What can you contribute?)

Early postal history of Oxford County region

The first settlers of Paris traveled on foot, making the journey to New Gloucester, Waterford, Bethel and Rumford through the woods and guided by, where practicable, the courses of the principal streams and by spotted trees. In time, roads were cut out and journeys could be made by horseback in summer and on sleds in winter.

Paris was settled about 20 years before a post office was established in the town, and previous to that time, the small amount of mail made by the inhabitants was left in the nearest office to be brought in by any person who happened to be in the vicinity of the office.

For some years New Gloucester was the nearest office, and after that, Poland received the mail intended for Paris and surrounding towns. Dates of the establishment of post offices in various towns in the county are as follows:

Fryeburg, January 1, 1798
Waterford, September 29, 1800
Brownfield, January 1, 1801
Paris, April 1, 1801
Norway, April 1, 1801
Sumner, June 21, 1811
Hebron, April 13, 1815
Albany, April 1, 1815

The first mail carrier or post rider in the region was Jacob Howe. From about 1800 to 1802 he was on the route from Poland to Bridgton. In 1802 he extended his route to Waterford and in the following year began making weekly runs starting from Portland and traveling through Gorham, Raymond, Standish, Bridgton, Waterford and returning by way of Norway, Paris, Hebron, Poland, New Gloucester and Gray.

Waterford was for some years the distributing office for western and central Oxford County. The trip was made on horseback, the post rider carrying, beside the mail pouch, a pair of saddlebags containing papers to be delivered on the route. He was armed with a tin horn, or trumpet, on which he blew a blast before he reached a post office, or house, where papers were to be left in order that parties might be ready and his business dispatched as soon as possible. He was often delayed by bad weather and bad roads. He did not advertise to be at a given place at a given time, and so timetables would have been of little account.

Prior to the 1800s, the *Portland Gazette* was the paper generally subscribed to in this region. Then the *Eastern Argus* was started and was generally subscribed to by Republicans, the *Gazette* being Federalist in politics.

Letter postage was high but few letters came through the mails and into the several districts in those days. In 1815 post offices had been established in towns north of Waterford and that year the mail reached Waterford from Poland on Friday

night. Saturday the postman made a circuit into the towns in western Oxford County and went back to Waterford, and on Monday came to Norway and Paris and from here to Woodstock and Rumford.

In 1812, William Swain of Waterford brought the mail line from Poland to Waterford. He generally traveled on horseback, but if anyone desired he would take a wagon and carry him. In 1820 the business had so increased that he drove a four-horse coach. History states that he was the father of Jabez Swain, long the popular driver between Augusta and Portland.

About the same time (1812), a Mr. Brown of Waterford contracted to carry the mail from Waterford by way of Norway and Paris to Portland. He used a one-horse wagon and would sometimes take a passenger or two. Brown was succeeded by James Longley, who was the first to drive direct from Portland to Paris and Norway, and return.

John B. Stowell succeeded Longley, and after a few years he in turn was succeeded by G.G. Waterhouse. Mr. Waterhouse drove direct to Paris, where he connected with two tri-weeklies, one running through Norway, Greenwood, Bethel, Gilead, Shelburne, and Lancaster, New Hampshire, and the other through Woodstock and Rumford to Andover and Dixfield. G.G. Waterhouse was a resident of Paris Hill.

The old drivers were men of ability and integrity. They were not only responsible for the welfare and safety of the passengers, but were also custodians of the United States mail. Often times large remittances of money were entrusted to them, and important business given them to transact. Many of them had remarkable memories, and would remember the numerous errands they were asked to do. They were kind-hearted and obliging, full of anecdotes.

In those early days, the postage for letters was 25¢ for 400 miles and over; 18 2/3¢ for 150 miles, not exceeding 400; 12 1/2¢ (nine pence) between 80 and 150 miles; 10¢ between 30 and 80 miles; and 6 1/4¢ (four pence, half-penny) for any distance under 30 miles.

The above were the rates on any sheet of paper or any size, and consequently, large sheets were generally used. There were then no self-sealing envelopes and letters were secured by means of wafers or wax. Postage on letters might be prepaid or not, at the option of the letter-writer. These peculiar letter rates made it quite a difficult task to make up the quarterly accounts at the post office and they were often returned for correction.

Newspaper postage was one cent per copy within the state or if published 150 miles beyond the state limits. Beyond that distance, the postage was a cent and a half each. The post rider usually claimed the newspaper postage as part of his compensation and was permitted to collect it.

Two new discoveries of perfin use in Maine

AFTER 10 DAYS RETURN TO
CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS
 PORTLAND 3, MAINE



Traffic Department
 Eastern States Farmers' Exchange
 West Springfield, Mass.

These two covers (photographically cropped) show new discoveries by Vince McDermott of Brunswick. They are 1951 and 1952 use, both from Portland, with perfin (and corner card) of Canadian National Railways. That's all we know.

021
 AFTER 10 DAYS RETURN TO
CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS
 PORTLAND 3, MAINE



Are YOU on the Internet?

Here is a list of MPS members with e-mail

Albert Aldham
bertaldham@webtv.net
Joe Antizzo
Joeantizzo@aol.com
Louis C. Bakula
grampsusn@aol.com
Robert (Bob) Barker
rebarker@rebarker.com
George Barner
georgebarner@adelphia.net
Al Barth
cfercat@megalink.net
Chuck Brand
shakerdom@hotmail.com
Tom Cieslinski
tomciesl@midmaine.com
Gary Clark
gclark1@tampabay.rr.com
Nancy B. Clark
nbc@Cape.com
David Costain
dcostain@midmaine.com
Roger Curran
rdcnrc@evenlink.com
Dr. John Engle

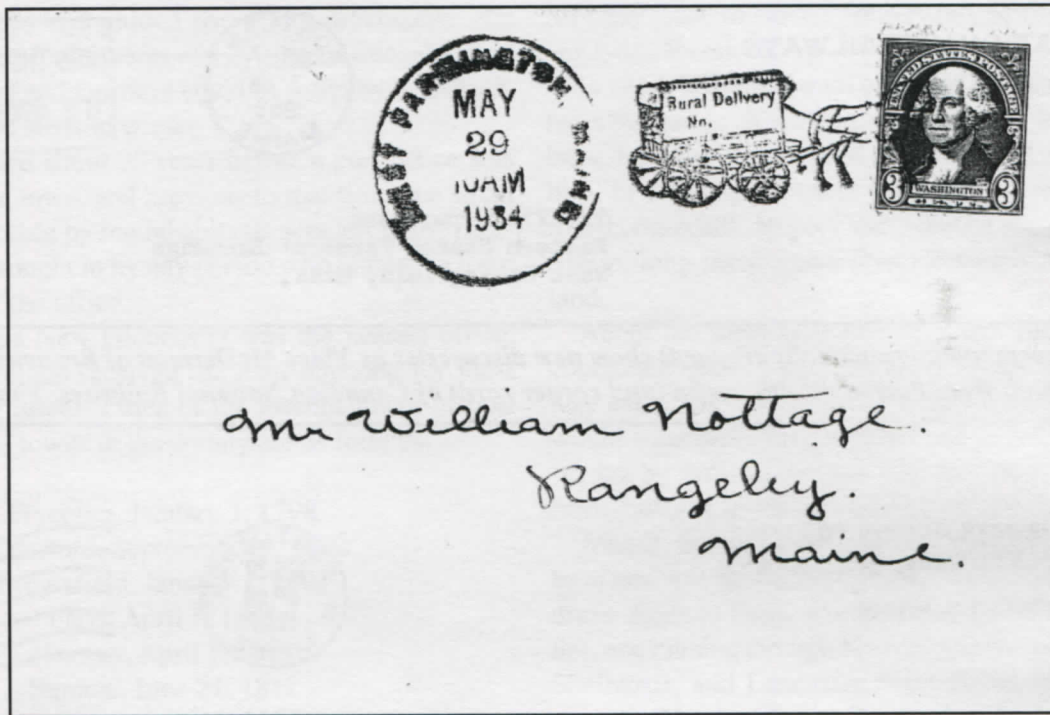
johnngle@mac.com
Jim Forte
jimforte@postalhistory.com
Dan Goodwin
dgoodwi3@maine.rr.com
Robert Gross
bobgrossrc@adelphia.net
Stuart Haskell
GCH127@aol.com
Gary W. Hibbard
ghibbar1@maine.rr.com
Terence Hines
TerenceHines@aol.com
Alf Jordan
ajordan1@maine.rr.com
Kelvin Kindahl
kanda@javanet.com
Dick Laetsch
precancel@aol.com
Steve LaForge
stephenlaforge@netscape.net
Rick Lancaster
modcover@gwi.net
James Larsen
larsenj@c2i2.com

Philippe C. Lebel
PCLEBEL@hotmail.com
Rev. Robert Leon
bobleon@tabletoptelephone.com
Max Lynds
Max@pwless.net
Paul R. Maynard
Maynard25@Charter.net
Vince McDermott
vjmcdermott@aol.com
Andrew J. Moran
amoran66@yahoo.com
Ed Muzzy
edmuzzy17@aol.com
Robert W. Olmsted
cal@americanletters.org
Everett L. Parker
eparker@midmaine.com
Phil Peverada
peverada@midcoast.com
Thurlow Pitts
antares23@hypernet.com
Jack Pooler
car99@comcast.net
Steven Pottle

sp Pride@aol.com
Gil Roderick
destamps@acadia.net
William W. Sammis
cds13@cornell.edu
John E. Sawhill Jr.
bsawhill@suscom-mainse.net
Art Scarano
a.j.scarano@att.net
Barry Serpell
serpellmaine@aol.com
Roland Simard manacorp@aol.com
Henry Stevens
hstevens@stamps.win.net
Ron Stewart
sstewart@clinic.net
Henry G. Turnbull
AZNPTHGT1@webtv.net
Edwin F. Whitney
edfwhitney@yahoo.com
Richard Williams
richwilljr@adelphia.net
Kennedy L. Wilson
k-mew@midcoast.com

A postal history feature
by Rob Washburn
of Skowhegan

Maine Cover of the Quarter

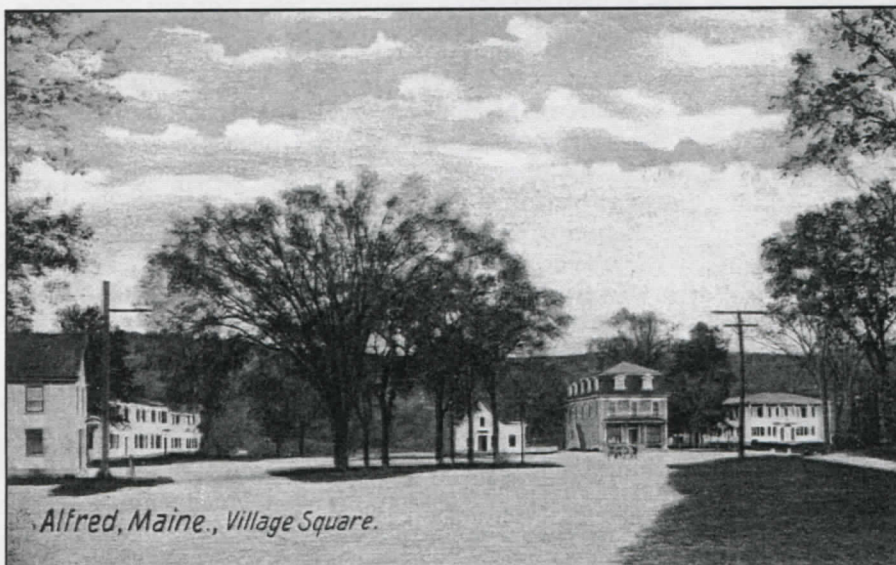


The above cover features an unusual and fancy May 29, 1934 Rural Delivery No. West Farmington, Maine cancel in magenta.

(If you have a candidate for Maine Cover of the Quarter, please send a photocopy of your cover against a black background to Rob Washburn, P.O. Box 840, Skowhegan, ME 04976).

Post Offices of Maine

A regular feature



Alfred, Maine., Village Square.

This photo shows the post office at Alfred, Maine. According to Bruce Hazelton's The Post Offices of Maine, A Rarity Guide, this post office was originally established in York County on February 23, 1801, and is still operating. Do YOU have a photo of an old post office? Send it to the editor with as much information as you know about it.

This is the LAST Maine post office photograph we have on hand. If you want this feature to continue, we'll have to have some more as soon as possible!

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor:

In reference to the question about the Portland Claims & Inquiries Cancel shown in the January issue of *The Maine Philatelist*, I would offer the following.

The Claims & Inquiries Office of the Portland Post Office is listed in the phone book (871-8461). They do exactly what their title implies -- they handle insurance claims and answer questions about such things as bulk mail and other matters. Sometimes they handle correspondence which requires a date stamp, so they have a cancelling device.

Vince McDermott
Brunswick

Secretary's Report *Bruce Hazelton*
Secretary

NEW MEMBERS

Carl W. Knightly Jr., 217 Town Rd., LaGrange, ME 04453.

Ms. Eileen M. Brennan, 282 East Pond Rd., Jefferson, ME 04348

Kenneth Busque, RR1, Box 1014, Clinton, ME 04927-9618

ADDRESS CHANGE

Richard E. Bedford, 358 Paris Rd., Hebron, ME 04238-3418

THE CLASSIFIEDS

Classified advertisements are free to members. You may use this space to buy and sell, trade or swap. When sending an advertisement, please mark it for the Classifieds and indicate how many issues you wish it to appear. All ads will appear twice and be removed unless otherwise indicated.

WANTED

Wanted: modern (since 1970) U.S. covers. I am especially looking for junk mail transportation coil PNC covers, Express mail, postage dues, insured mail, Certified mail, auxiliary markings. Rob Washburn, P.O. Box 840, Skowhegan, ME 04976-0840. (4-04)

Wanted: Maine hunting and fishing stamps on license. Will pay a minimum of \$20 each for every license I need. Also want Maine (and other New England states) Old Home Week seals. Terence Hines, P.O. Box 629, Chappaqua, NY 10514-0629. (4-04)

Information needed to further research on Maine NARROW GAUGE RPOs. Need RPO, month, day, year, train no. ME 4 BAR COLORED cancels, need P.O. name, month, day, year, time, color. Will respond to all information received. Bruce L. Corey, 108 Marilyn Ave., Westbrook, ME 04092-4624. (4-04)

Collector is looking for covers from Houlton Air Force Base Station. If you have same, please contact me. Telephone: 538-9788 (home) or 532-2291 (work). My e-mail is max@ainop.com Max Leigh Lynds, P.O. Box 761, Houlton, ME 04730-0761. (4-04)

Wanted: perfins used in Maine, on cover or off (with good town cancels). Special interest in AJS (Auburn) and RB (Bangor) -- users not yet identified. Will buy or trade. Vince McDermott, 22 Beech Dr., Brunswick, ME 04011. (4-04)

We urgently need quantities of used Japanese stamps from the period of 1876 (Old Koban Series) through 1955. Dealer stocks, accumulations, bundle material from this period needed for our specialist customers. Will buy anything and everything (used only) at fair prices or will select only what we most urgently need at near to full Scott retail. Prompt payment always. Forty-five years in the trade! John B. Head, P.O. Box 7, Bethel, ME 04217. (4-04)

Wanted: Maine Express Covers (and others): with labels, hand-stamps, manuscript markings or cornercards. Express Company labels and stamps (such as for newspapers, parcels or free franking) off cover also sought. William W. Sammis (Bill), 436 Thomas Rd., Ithaca, NY 14850-9653. (4-04)

Wanted: Early USN postcards of battleships with ship cancels before 1920 (called classics): BB2 USS *Massachusetts*, BB4 USS *Iowa*, BB5 USS *Kearsage*, BB7 USS *Illinois*, BB8 USS *Alabama*, BB9 USS *Wisconsin*. I have other BB covers and postcards for trade. Also interested in topicals, especially flowers on stamps, and Antarctic stamps. Louis C. Bakula, P.O. Box 150, West Poland, ME 04291-0150. (4-04)

Seeking exhibit quality Andover, Maine material from the period 1 January 1913 through 30 June 1916. Postal cards, postal stationery, covers, parcel wrappers, postage dues, precancels, perfins, booklet panes, multi-denominational covers, i.e., overseas or international uses, postal history, post office forms, postal item relating to Andover, Maine. Single items to large lots. Send photocopy with price. Postage refunded if not purchased. R.M. Arndt, P.O. Box 60292, Midland, TX 79711-0292; email: Texas432@webtv.net (4-04)

FOR SALE

Precancel approvals: town and types 15¢, classics, 1922-26 general, bicents, prexies, perfins available. Buro approvals starting at 10¢ each. Good mixed precancel lots. 2,000-\$35.00; 10,000-\$145.00. Mixed buros, 2,000-\$35.00, 10,000-\$175.00. Dick Laetsch, 2 Shady Creek Ln., Scarborough, ME 04074. email: precancel@aol.com; web site: www.precanceledstamps.com (4-04)

For sale: DPO, Macy, ME - Doane 1906 on PPC, Rarity 8. First \$75.00 takes it. Carl A. Burnham, RR1, Box 559, Limington, ME 04046. Telephone 637-2871. (4-04)

For sale -- helping friend dispose of father's collection. Sheets, blocks, booklets, assorted postage at face. Airmail, singles, blocks half of catalogue value. Mint postal cards, postal reply cards. Please ask by Scott number. Charles Boudreau, 37 Center St., P.O. Box 498, Machias, ME 04654-0498. Telephone 255-3918. (4-04)

For sale: Eight Scott International albums, worldwide, Vol. 1, 2, 3, 10, 11, 12, 16, 17. Thousands of stamps included. Gary Soper, P.O. Box 15461, Portland, ME 04412 (207) 892-9372. (4-04)

Election concluded

Election of new officers has been completed, with Max Lynds of Houlton elected president, Bruce Hazelton of North Yarmouth elected vice president, James Foote III of Manchester elected secretary, and Rick Stambaugh of North Berwick as treasurer.

A total of 55 members mailed ballots by the March 15, 2004 deadline. That's an outstanding percentage considering we have at the moment 180 members. If only our state and local elections would have that kind of participation!

Perhaps the best news is the fact that five members were nominated for seats on the Board of Directors. Names of these people were sent to the new president in the hope that the board will be fully staffed in the near future.

President Lynds said plans are well under way on a fall show in Aroostook County, and it is hoped that other shows will take place this year elsewhere in Maine. If you would be willing to help with a show in your area, contact the president as soon as possible.

On another, less positive note, there remains a critical need for new research to be published in these pages. At the moment there are only two short articles awaiting publication. We need someone to write something. Clippings are appreciated, but we need lengthy articles. Come on now, someone in Maine must be doing some kind of research or something related to philately!

Maine Philatelic Society
719 Moosehead Lake Rd.
Greenville, ME 04441-9727

TO:

It's time for MAIPEX '04!

The Waterville Stamp Club
will sponsor MAIPEX '04
on April 24, 2004, at its usual venue,
Carter Hall at Kennebec Valley
Community College in Fairfield.
Plan to attend!

Stamps and Supplies
U.S. Postal Service desk
Giant Board Auction
Post cards and Covers
Refreshments available

9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Table Auction closes 12:30 p.m.
Oral Auction starts 1:00 p.m.
OLD Exit 35 on Interstate 95



IMPORTANT NOTICE:
If (6-04) appears after your
name on the mailing label, it's
time to renew your dues!