

Penobscot Postal History

Hancock County, Maine

Last update for this page: 07/07/2026

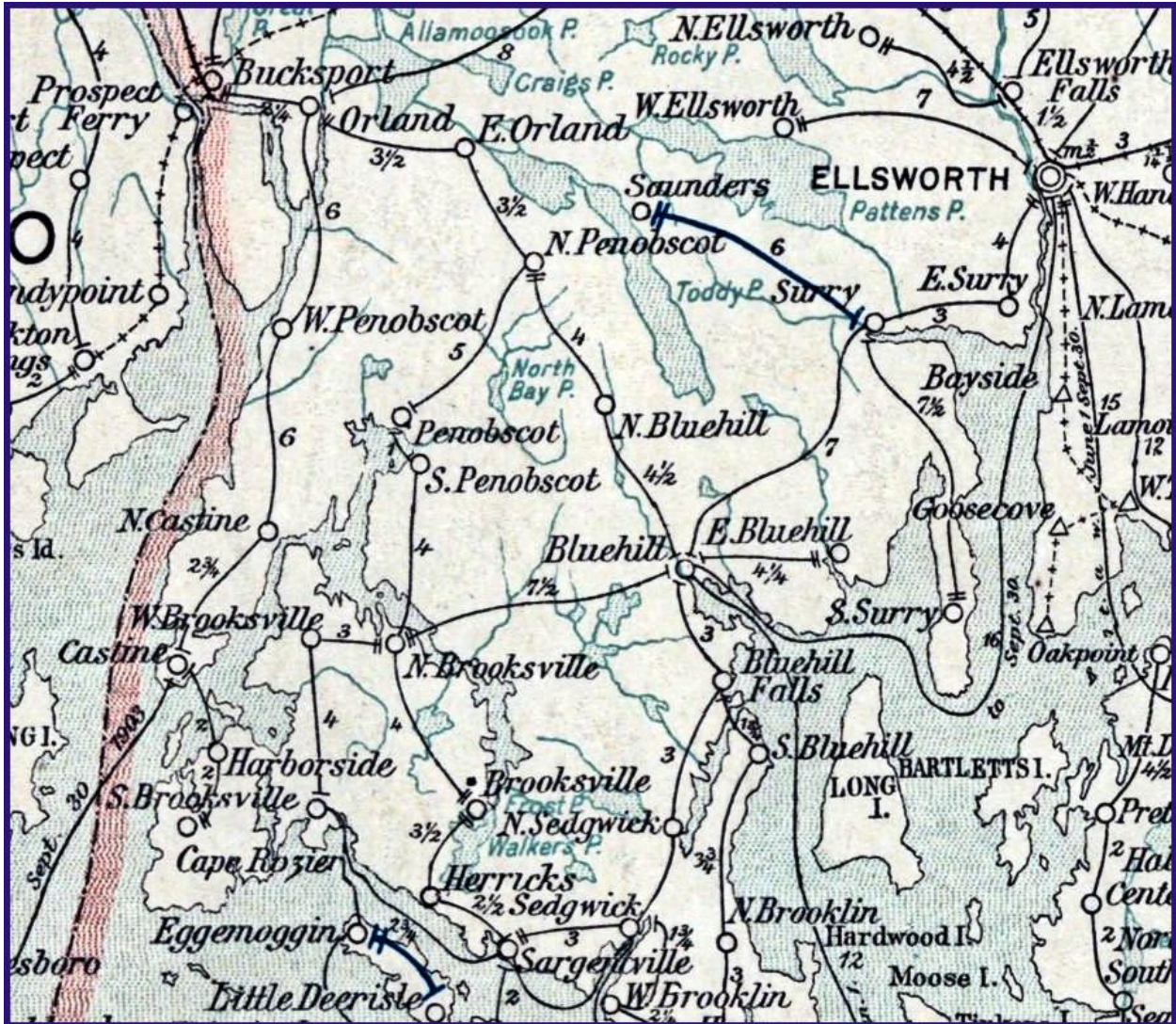
This page is part of the Maine Postal History website—a project of the Maine Philatelic Society.
For more information, see <https://www.mainephilatelic.org/mph>.

Penobscot was settled in 1760 and incorporated on February 23, 1787, from Majorbigwaduce Plantation, also known as Plantation Number Three. The original area of the plantation included what is now the Town of Castine and part of what is now the Town of Brooksville, as well as the Town of Penobscot. Castine was set off in 1796, and Brooksville in 1817.

During the history of Penobscot, there have been nine post offices. Two of the post offices, North Penobscot and South Penobscot, were converted into Rural Stations, abbreviated RS, under the supervision of the Postmaster of Penobscot. They are listed here as separate post offices to indicate their distinct status and align them with the information in [*The Post Offices of Maine 2022*](#).

Briefly, the history of these nine is as follows:

1. [North Penobscot](#) Post Office opened on 22 September 1836 and closed on 11 November 1851.
2. [North Penobscot](#) Post Office reopened on 1 June 1853, and was converted to North Penobscot RS Penobscot on 30 December 1966.
3. [North Penobscot RS](#) Penobscot Post Office (formerly North Penobscot Post Office) opened on 30 December 1966 and closed on 31 July 1968.
4. [Penobscot \(3\)](#) Post Office opened on 28 December 1831 and closed on 8 December 1832. [What does it mean when there is a number after the name of the post office?](#)
5. [Penobscot \(3\)](#) Post Office reopened on 27 February 1833 and is still operational. (For Penobscot (1) and Penobscot (2) Post Offices, see the [postal history page for the Town of Castine](#).)
6. [Penobscot Centre](#) Post Office opened on 7 June 1887 and closed on 11 August 1887.
7. [South Penobscot](#) Post Office opened on 24 February 1857, and was converted to South Penobscot RS Penobscot.
8. [South Penobscot RS](#) Penobscot Post Office (formerly South Penobscot Post Office) opened on 23 April 1965 and closed on 1 September 1977.
9. [West Penobscot](#) Post Office opened on 14 March 1879 and closed on 31 October 1908.



Above:

In 1903, Penobscot had four post offices: North Penobscot, Penobscot (3), South Penobscot, and West Penobscot. Detail from Post Route Map of the State of Maine 1903; download courtesy of the Norman B. Leventhal Map and Education Center at the Boston Public Library.

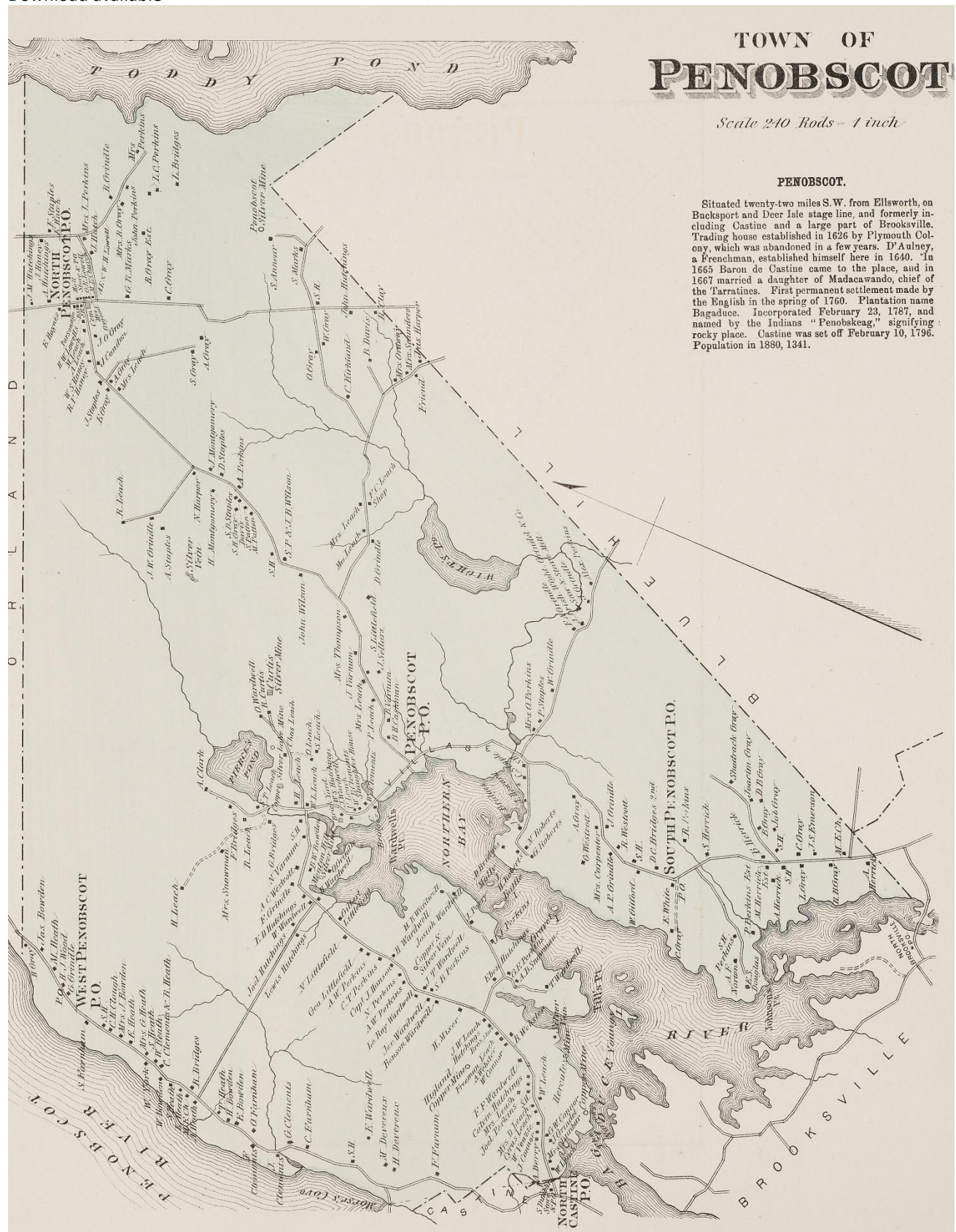
<https://collections.leventhalmap.org/search/commonwealth:cj82km77v>

On next page:

In 1881, Penobscot had four post offices: North Penobscot, Penobscot (3), South Penobscot, and West Penobscot. Note that the southwest edge of the town was also close to the post offices at North Castine and North Brooksville. Map detail from the 1881 **Atlas of Hancock County, Maine**, by George N. Colby. Download available from

https://digitalmaine.com/atlas_hancock_1881/41/

Download available



North Penobscot

22 September 1836:

North Penobscot Post Office opened.

22 September 1836:

Harry Lowell became the Postmaster of the North Penobscot Post Office.

12 August 1845:

Stephen Wardwell became the Postmaster of the North Penobscot Post Office.

30 June 1851

Mrs. Mercy L. Wardwell became the Postmaster of the North Penobscot Post Office.

11 November 1851:

North Penobscot Post Office closed.

North Penobscot

1 June 1853:

North Penobscot Post Office reopened.

1 June 1853:

Austin L. Wardwell became the Postmaster of the North Penobscot Post Office.

9 July 1863:

Mrs. Phebe D. Osgood became the Postmaster of the North Penobscot Post Office.

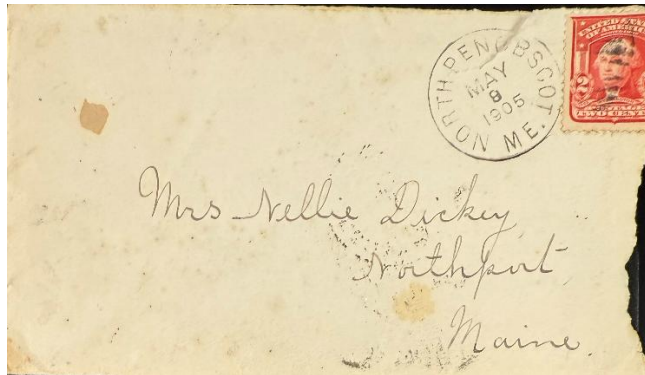


26 March circa 1865:

The outer circle of the circular postmark is 27.5 mm in diameter with a circled hand-stamped PAID.

23 October 1899:

Mary L. Grindle became the Postmaster of the North Penobscot Post Office.

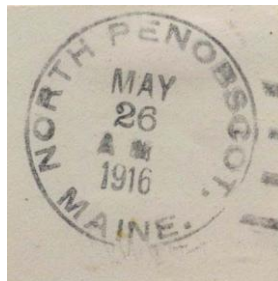


8 May 1905:

The circular postmark is 28.5 mm in diameter with a nine-bar oval duplex killer.
A similar postmark on a cut square dated 19 November 1902 is known.

28 April 1906:

Annie L. Hutchins became the Postmaster of the North Penobscot Post Office.



26 May 1916:

The size of the postmark and the type of killer are unknown.

In many cases, surviving postmarks are only small cut pieces. While they show what the dial of the postmark looked like, **today the recognized best practice is to save the entire envelope or card that bears the postmark.**

4 April 1936:

Henry I. Harriman became the Acting Postmaster of the North Penobscot Post Office.

6 May 1936:

Henry I. Harriman became the Postmaster of the North Penobscot Post Office.

14 April 1939:

Mrs. Arlene Wescott became the Acting Postmaster of the North Penobscot Post Office.

6 May 1939:

Mrs. Arlene Wescott became the Postmaster of the North Penobscot Post Office.

7 December 1943:

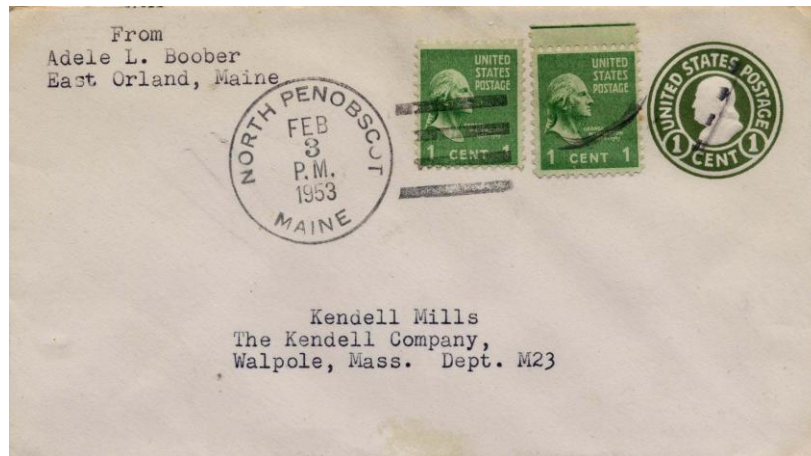
Mrs. Beatrice D. Lowell became the Postmaster of the North Penobscot Post Office.

10 February 1950:

Mrs. Katheryne B. Churchill became the Acting Postmaster of the North Penobscot Post Office.

3 March 1950:

Mrs. Katheryne B. Churchill became the Postmaster of the North Penobscot Post Office.



3 February 1953:

The circular postmark is 30 mm with a four-bar F/1 killer.

December 30, 1966:

North Penobscot Post Office was converted to North Penobscot RS Penobscot Post Office.

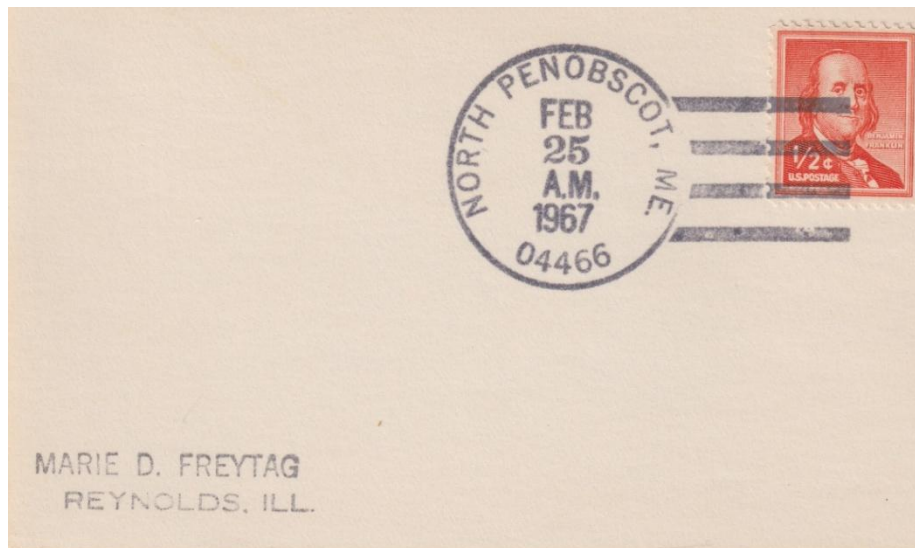
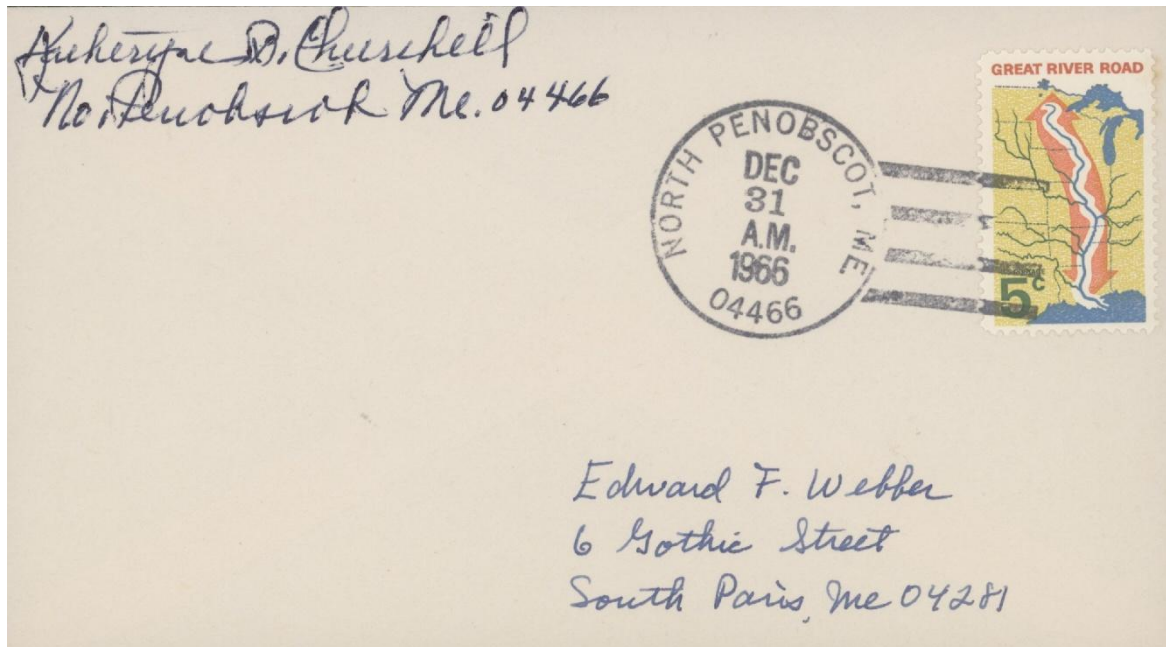
North Penobscot RS Penobscot

30 December 1966:

North Penobscot RS Penobscot Post Office (formerly North Penobscot Post Office) opened.

31 July 1968:

North Penobscot RS Penobscot Post Office closed.



31 December 1966 and 25 February 1967:

This four-bar postmark, with a dial 33mm in diameter, from the North Penobscot Post Office was still in use after it was reclassified as a Rural Station of Penobscot. Postmarks from rural stations don't necessarily show any indication that they are rural stations. It is perfectly normal, and common, for rural stations to continue using the postmarks of the former post office. The half-cent stamp does not represent an actual postal rate paid; it merely reflects a practice of some postmark collectors to provide a low-denomination stamp that can be cancelled as part of a postmark request.

What does it mean when there is a (1) or (2) after the name of a post office?

Sometimes, the numbers (1), (2), and (3) appear after the name of a post office. These numbers indicate the first, second, and third localities of post offices of the same name. For example, if the post office name is used for two separate post offices in two different places, at different times, they will be identified in this manner. A specific example... the Lakewood Post Office in Ellsworth near Graham Lake, in operation from 1898 to 1918 is designated as Lakewood (1), while The Lakewood Post Office near the summer theater in Madison, which operated from 1941 to 1967 is Lakewood (2).

These numbers ***do not*** indicate the separate time periods of a post office which closed for a while and then reopened ***in the same area***.

Be aware also that these numbers do not represent numbered stations. Some larger places, like Auburn, have postal stations with numbers. These differ from the post offices we call Auburn (1), Auburn (2), etc. For examples of numbered stations, see the Maine Postal History pages for Auburn or Portland.

Finally, the numbers do not appear in postmarks or official post office publications or communications. However, they are used by postal historians and collectors trying to be precise about the post offices being discussed.

For information on post offices Penobscot (1) and Penobscot (2), see the [postal history page for the Town of Castine \(https://www.mainephilatelic.org/mph/Castine.pdf\)](https://www.mainephilatelic.org/mph/Castine.pdf).

Penobscot (3)

28 December 1831:

Penobscot (3) Post Office opened.

28 December 1831:

William Snowman, Jr. became the Postmaster of the Penobscot (3) Post Office.

8 December 1832:

Penobscot (3) Post Office closed.

Penobscot (3)

27 February 1833:

Penobscot (3) Post Office reopened.

27 February 1833:a

Charles Dunbar became the Postmaster of the Penobscot (3) Post Office.

21 December 1835:

Wilson Carpenter became the Postmaster of the Penobscot (3) Post Office.

11 July 1848:

Horatio Hutchings became the Postmaster of the Penobscot (3) Post Office.

19 August 1850:

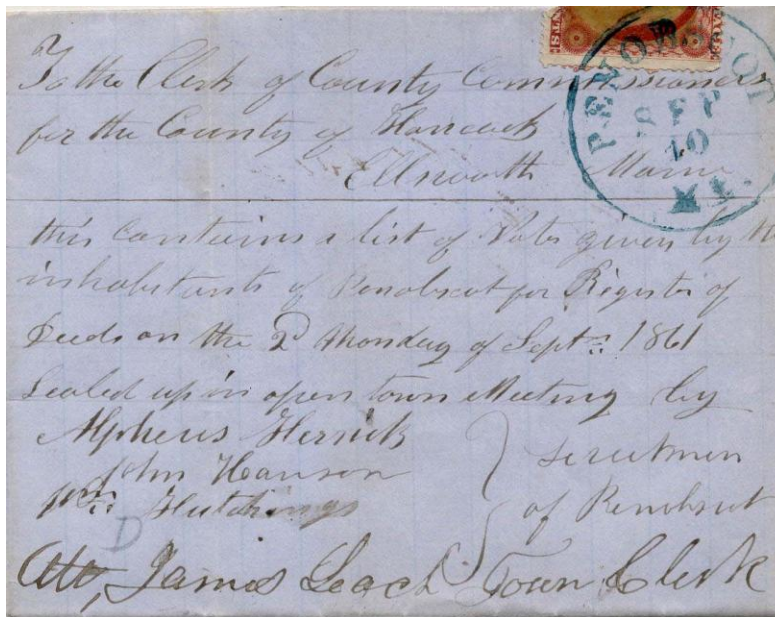
John P. Wood became the Postmaster of the Penobscot (3) Post Office.

6 November 1855:

Reuben H. Perkins became the Postmaster of the Penobscot (3) Post Office.

31 May 1861:

Willard C. Collins became the Postmaster of the Penobscot (3) Post Office.

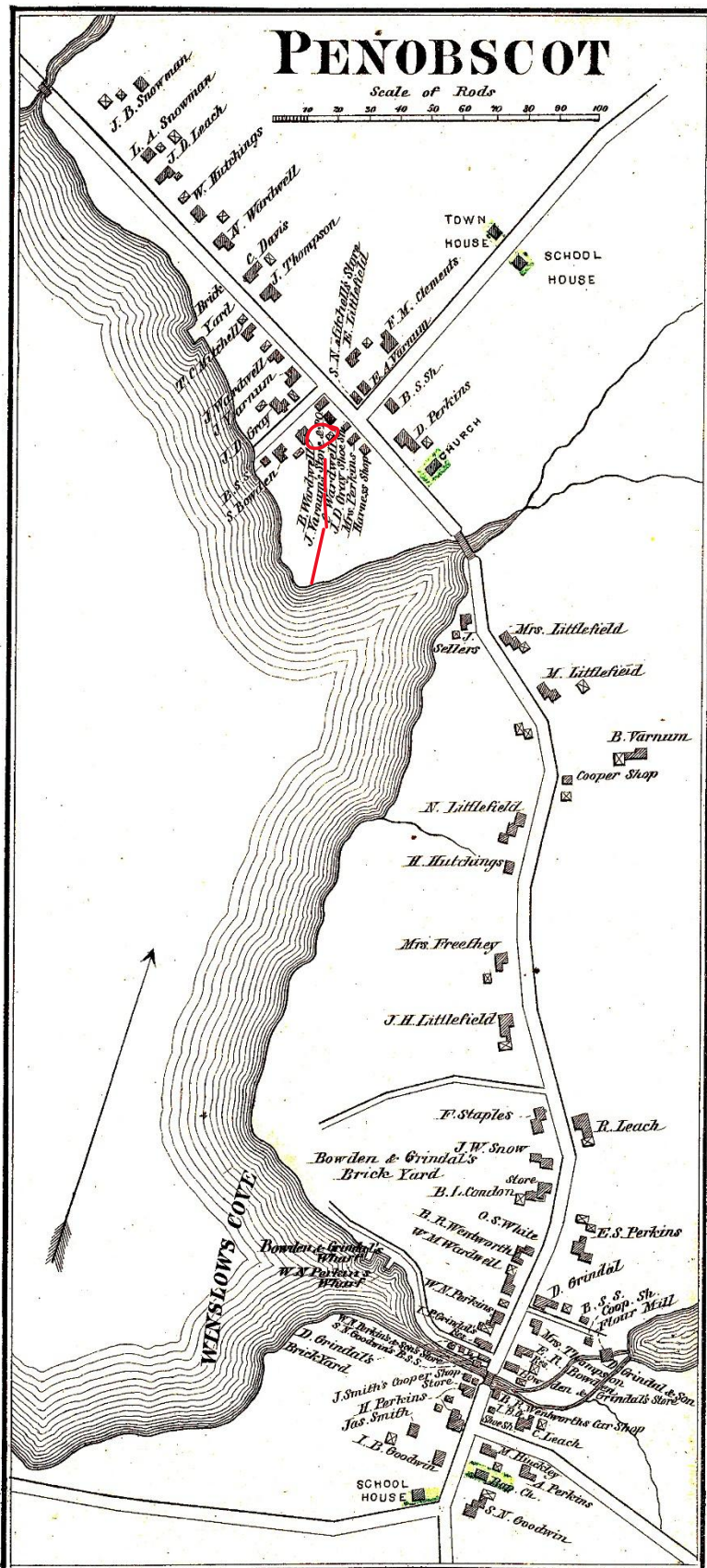


10 September 1861:

The circular postmark is 26 mm in diameter, and the postmark is used to cancel the stamp.

15 February 1864:

Miss Sylvia W. Perkins became the Postmaster of the Penobscot (3) Post Office.



Map of the village of Penobscot, from the 1881 *Atlas of Hancock County, Maine*, by George N. Colby. According to the official records of Postmaster Appointments, the Postmaster of Penobscot in 1881 was Miss Sylvia W. Perkins. According to the 1880 U. S. Census, Sylvia Perkins was a boarder in Josiah Varnum's household; and here the Post Office is located with his store, as marked in red.

Map is available for download from Digital Maine Repository: https://digitalmaine.com/atlas/hancock_1881/40

11 November 1885:

Nora Mitchell became the Postmaster of the Penobscot (3) Post Office.



27 February 1887:

The size of the circular postmark is unknown.

6 August 1889:

Benjamin H. Cushman became the Postmaster of the Penobscot (3) Post Office.

4 April 1893:

Nora Mitchell became the Postmaster of the Penobscot (3) Post Office.

12 April 1897:

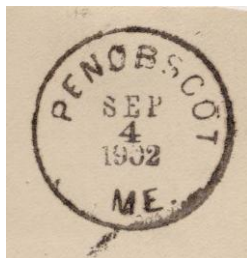
Benjamin H. Cushman became the Postmaster of the Penobscot (3) Post Office.

4 April 1893:

Nora Mitchell became the Postmaster of the Penobscot (3) Post Office.

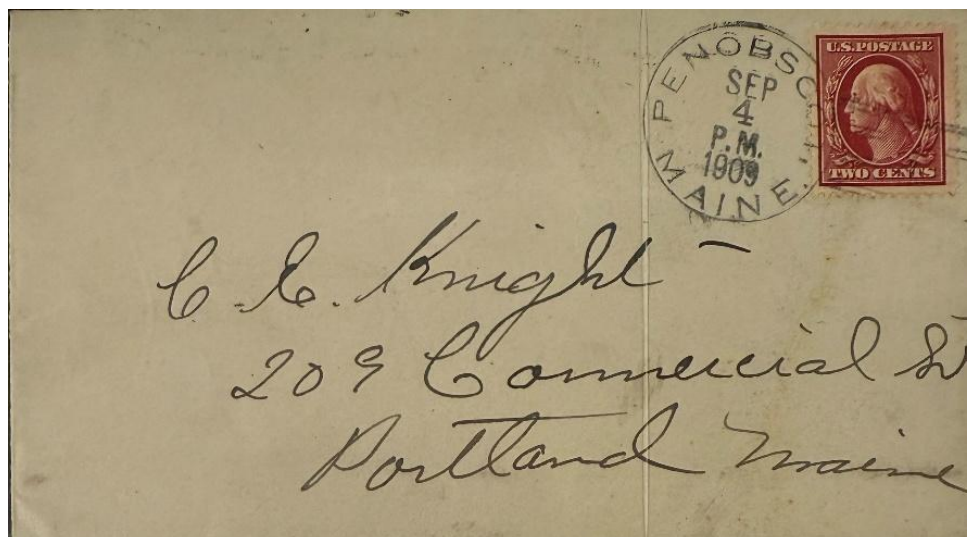
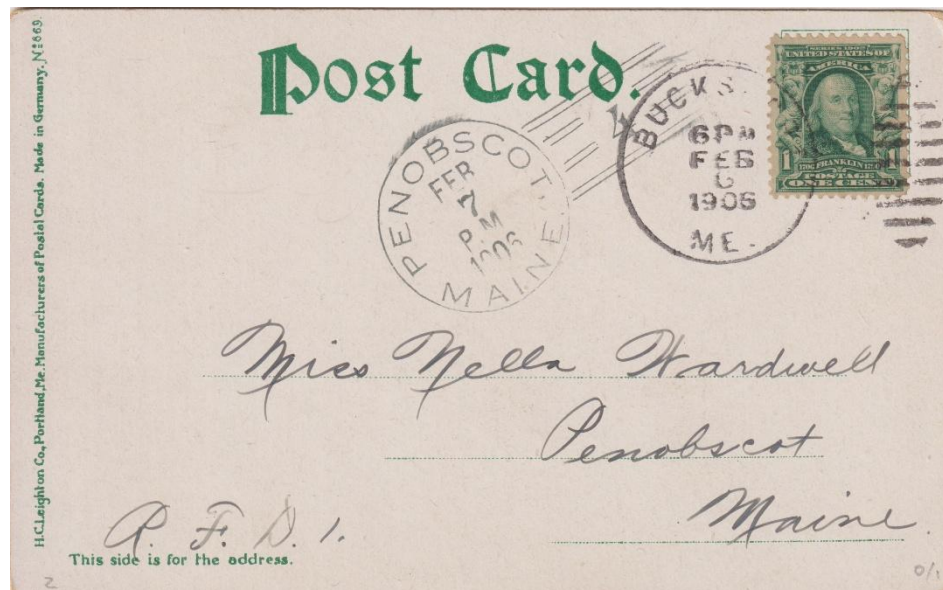
12 April 1897:

Benjamin H. Cushman became the Postmaster of the Penobscot (3) Post Office.



4 September 1902:

The size of the circular postmark is unknown.



7 February 1906 and 4 September 1909:

The circular postmark is 28 mm in diameter with a Doane 2/4 killer.

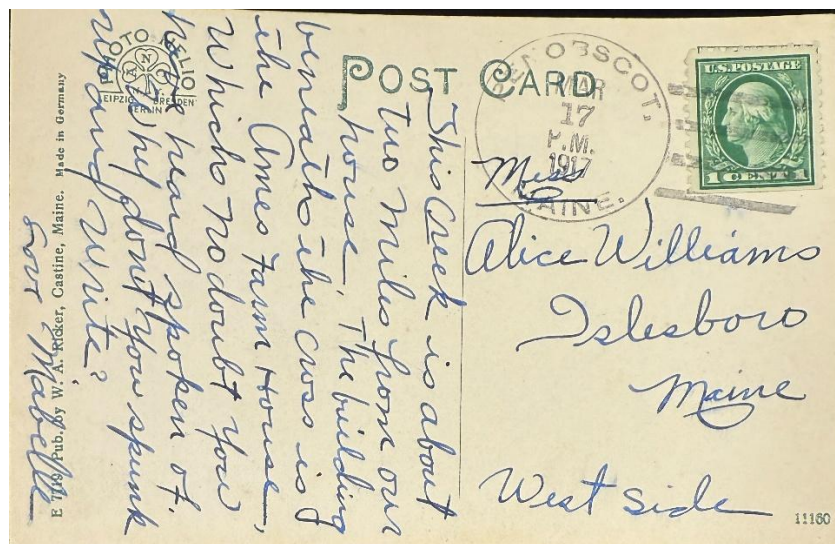
Other examples of this postmark are known between 25 July 1905 and 23 December 1924

23 March 1914:

Roy F. Leach became the Postmaster of the Penobscot (3) Post Office.

6 April 1915:

Earl. F. Sellars became the Postmaster of the Penobscot (3) Post Office.



17 March 1917:

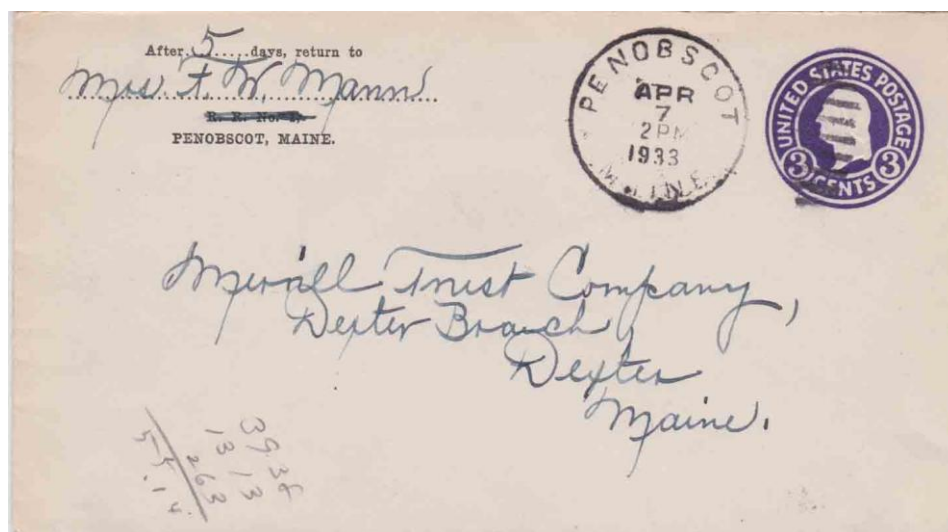
The circular postmark is 32.5 mm in diameter with a four-bar B killer. A similar postmark and killer dated 5 July 1919 is known.

12 September 1928:

W. Lawrence Bridges became the Acting Postmaster of the Penobscot (3) Post Office.

15 December 1928:

William L. Bridges became the Postmaster of the Penobscot (3) Post Office.



7 April 1933:

The circular postmark is 30 mm in diameter with a nine-bar oval duplex killer. A similar postmark and killer dated 10 July 1939 is known.

2 February 1939:

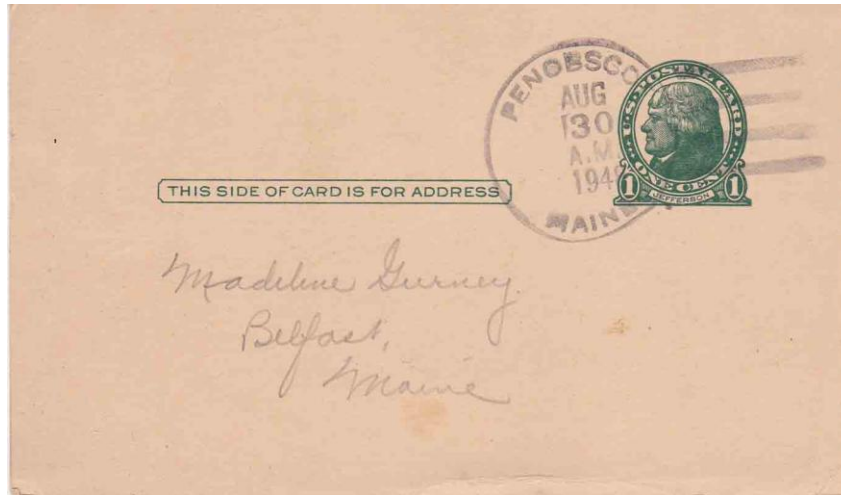
Melvin A. Wardwell became the Acting Postmaster of the Penobscot (3) Post Office.



12 June 1939: Registered letter sent to a bank in Bangor. This envelope, fully opened by the bank with holes punched for filing, received a 30mm circular date stamp with a nine-bar oval duplex killer. The letter reached the Bangor Post Office later that same day, and per the bank's stamp, it was received by the bank the next day. In that era, and for many decades prior, it was common practice to do banking by registered mail, which was inexpensive at that time. The sender spent 21c to send \$22 in currency (as noted in handwriting on the back) to be deposited into his bank account.

1 December 1939:

Mrs. Regina H. Bridges became the Postmaster of the Penobscot (3) Post Office.



30 August 1948:

The misshapen postmark is about 33 mm in diameter with a four-bar F/1 killer. Similar misshapen postmarks and killers dated 3 March 1950, 27 February 1950, 2 December 1959, and 21 March 1963 are known.

10 November 1951:

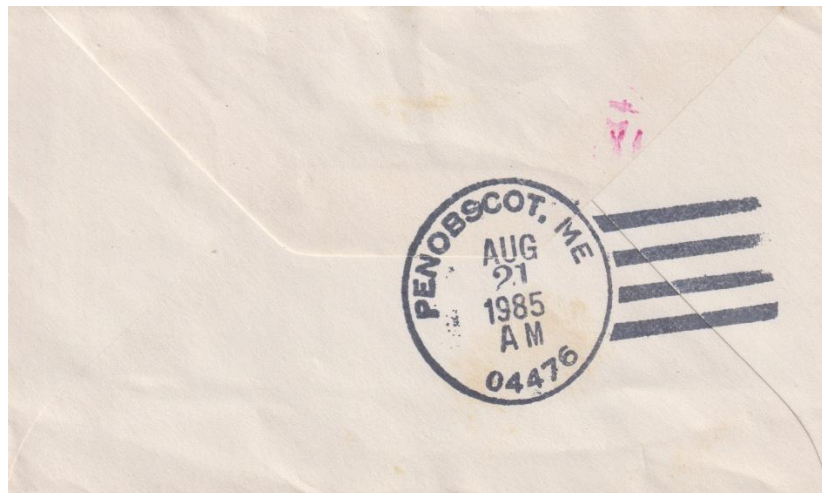
Mrs. Bridges' surname was changed to Perkins by marriage.

30 June 1972:

Mrs. Beverly J. Reynolds became the Officer-In-Charge of the Penobscot (3) Post Office.

7 April 1973:

Mrs. Beverly J. Reynolds became the Postmaster of the Penobscot (3) Post Office.



21 August 1985:

32 mm circular date stamp including the ZIP code. Has a four-bar killer.

11 March 1991:

Mary C. Lanpher became the Officer-In-Charge of the Penobscot (3) Post Office.

28 December 1991:

Laurier R. Martel became the Postmaster of the Penobscot (3) Post Office.

1 April 2004:

Mary C. Lanpher became the Officer-In-Charge of the Penobscot (3) Post Office.

12 June 2004:

Claire A. Manyak became the Postmaster of the Penobscot (3) Post Office.

19 October 2013:

Penobscot (3) Post Office was converted to a Level 6 (6-hour) Remotely Managed Post Office under the direction of the Postmaster of the Castine Post Office.



6 June 2016: Double-circle date stamp is 30 mm in diameter.

26 February 2026:

Penobscot (3) Post Office is still operational at 21 North Penobscot Road, Penobscot, Maine 04476. GPS: 44°27'53" N x 68°42'36" W.



21 July 2020:
Penobscot (3) Post Office – Photo Credit – Jim Husson

Penobscot Centre

We have not found the name Penobscot Centre on maps, but it appears that the short-lived post office was located at the home of Leroy Wardwell, west of, and on the opposite side of Northern Bay from, the Penobscot Post Office. Detail taken from map from the 1881 *Atlas of Hancock County*, by George N. Colby, shown on the next page.

7 June 1887:

Penobscot Centre Post Office opened.

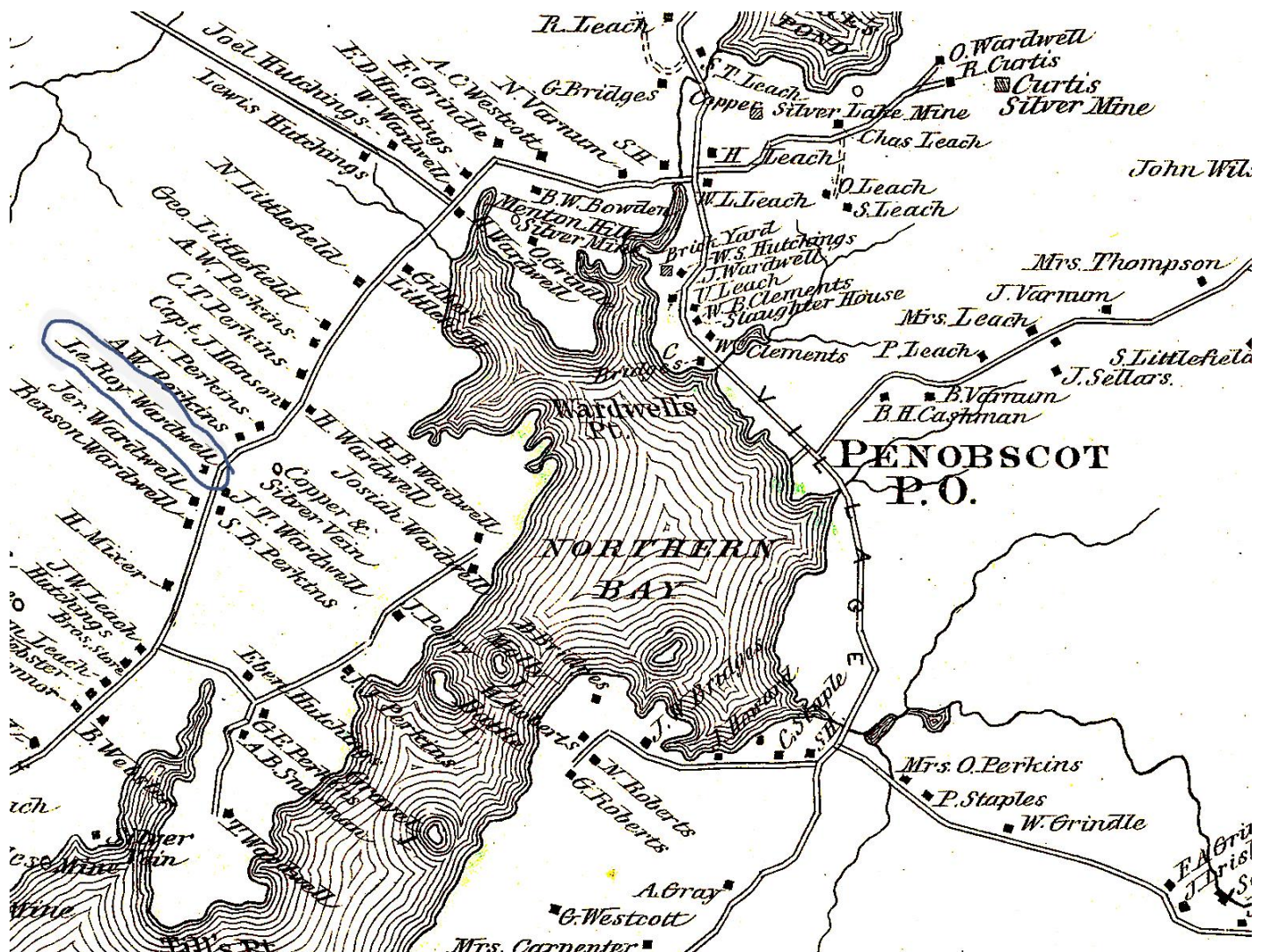
7 June 1887:

Leroy Wardwell became the Postmaster of the Penobscot Centre Post Office.

11 August 1887:

Penobscot Centre Post Office closed with service from Penobscot (3).

<https://www.mainephilatelic.org/mph>



This enlargement of a detail from a map in the 1881 **Atlas of Hancock County, Maine** shows the residence of LeRoy Wardwell, Postmaster of Penobscot Centre during the few weeks of its existence. According to a report Mr. Wardwell filed with the U. S. Post Office Department, his proposed location was three miles from the Penobscot Post Office, and three miles from the North Castine Post Office.

Source of the map:

https://digitalmaine.com/atlas_hancock_1881/41/

Source for Mr. Wardwell's report:

<https://catalog.archives.gov/id/68415820?objectPage=801> and

<https://catalog.archives.gov/medialz/dc-metro/rg-028/M1126/M1126-255/M1126-255-0804.jpg>

South Penobscot

24 February 1857:

South Penobscot Post Office opened.

24 February 1857:

Edward Wight became the Postmaster of the South Penobscot Post Office.



30 July 1883:

The size of the postmark is unknown. A similar postmark dated 25 August 1899 is known.

27 January 1886:

Benjamin R. Wentworth became the Postmaster of the South Penobscot Post Office.

22 December 1886:

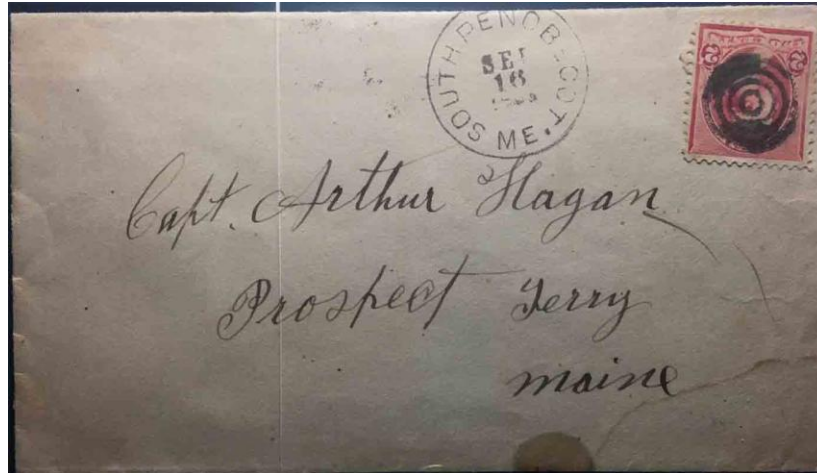
Elisha R. Bowden became the Postmaster of the South Penobscot Post Office.

6 August 1889:

Calvin Leach became the Postmaster of the South Penobscot Post Office.

26 August 1893:

Susie M. Roberts became the Postmaster of the South Penobscot Post Office.

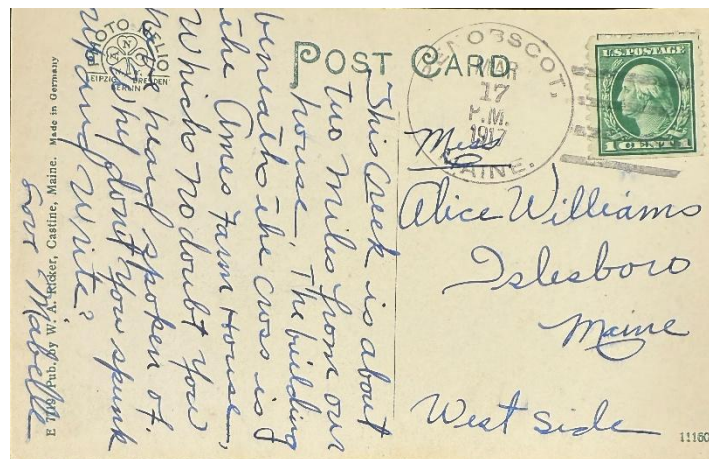


16 September 1893:

The circular postmark is 27 mm in diameter with a four-circle target killer. A similar postmark and killer dated 18 Jun 1889 is known. A similar postmark on a cut square dated 9 May 1904 is known.

27 August 1897:

Calvin Leach became the Postmaster of the South Penobscot Post Office.

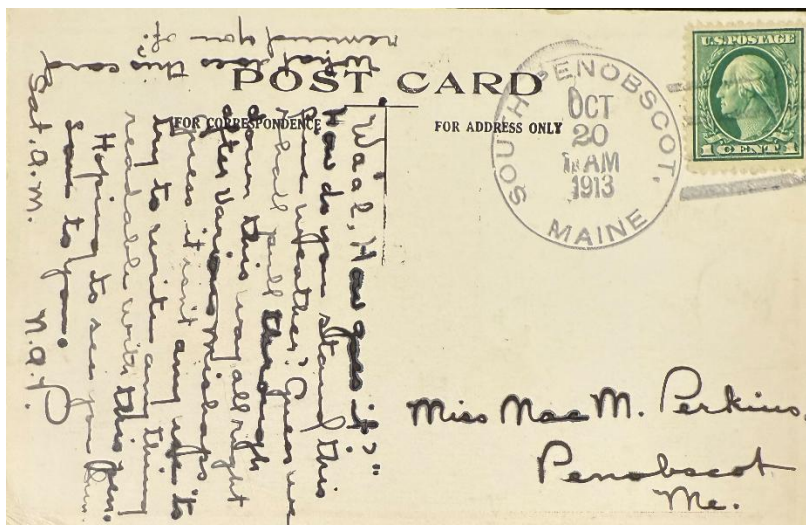


16 October 1907:

The circular postmark is 29 mm in diameter with an eight-bar oval duplex killer.

15 November 1910:

Albert P. Leach became the Postmaster of the South Penobscot Post Office.



20 October 1913:

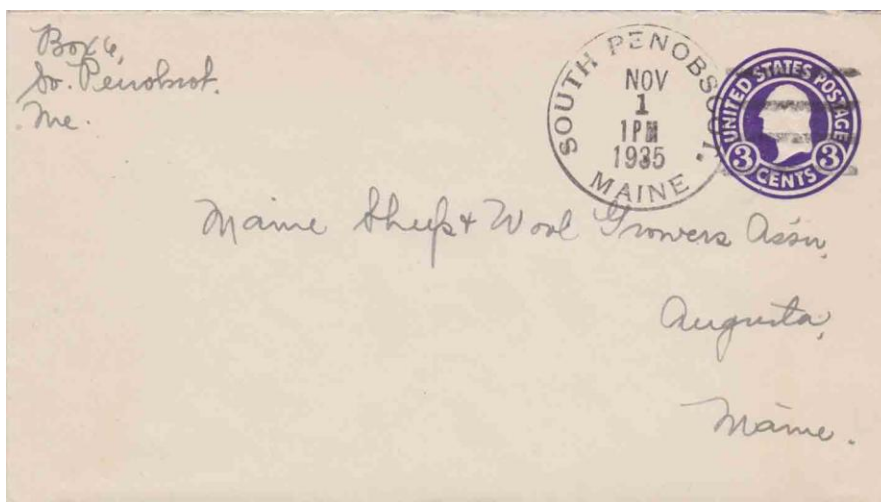
The circular postmark is 32 mm in diameter with a four-bar B killer.
A similar postmark and killer on a cut square dated 30 July 1915 is known.

28 July 1929:

Miss Kate M. Peterson became the Acting Postmaster of the South Penobscot Post Office.

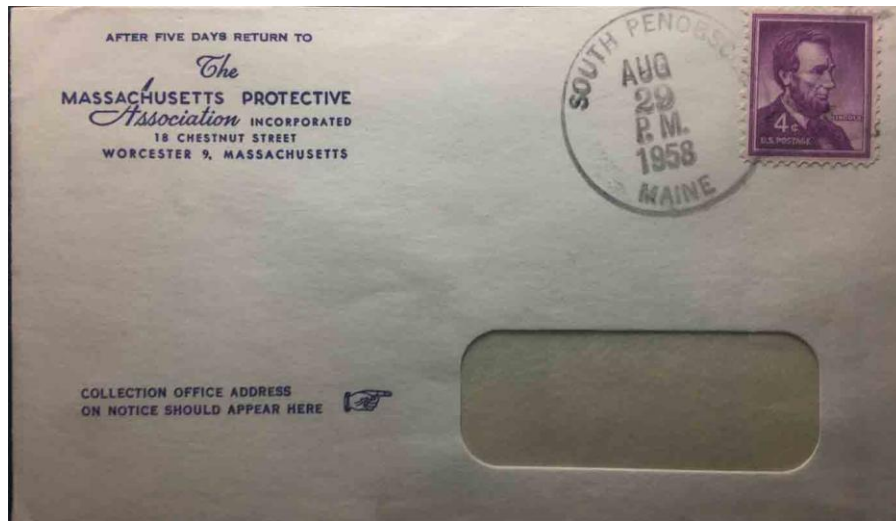
23 November 1929:

Miss Kate M. Peterson became the Postmaster of the South Penobscot Post Office.



1 November 1935:

The circular postmark is 33 mm in diameter with a C/2 killer.
Similar postmarks and killers dated 3 August 1946, 7 July 1944, and 17 July 1947 are known.



29 August 1958:

The circular postmark is 33.5 mm in diameter with a four-bar F/1 killer.
A similar postmark and killer dated 10 October 1950 are known.

28 February 1965:

Mrs. Arlene B. Gross became the Acting Postmaster of the South Penobscot Post Office.

April 23, 1965:

South Penobscot Post Office was discontinued and converted to a rural station of Penobscot (3) Post Office.

South Penobscot RS Penobscot

23 April 1965:

South Penobscot RS Penobscot Post Office (formerly South Penobscot Post Office) opened.



24 January 1968:

The 4-bar postmark, with misspelling, has a circular date stamp with a diameter of 28 mm.

The double-circle date stamp at the left has an outer diameter of 32 mm.

Apparently the 4-bar date stamp for the South Penobscot Post Office remained in use for years after the South Penobscot Post Office was converted into a Rural Station of Penobscot. It also appears that the device had remained in use despite the misspelling. The editors have not seen an example of a 4-bar circular date stamp for South Penobscot that has both the ZIP code and the correct spelling.

1 September 1977:

South Penobscot RS Penobscot Post Office closed.

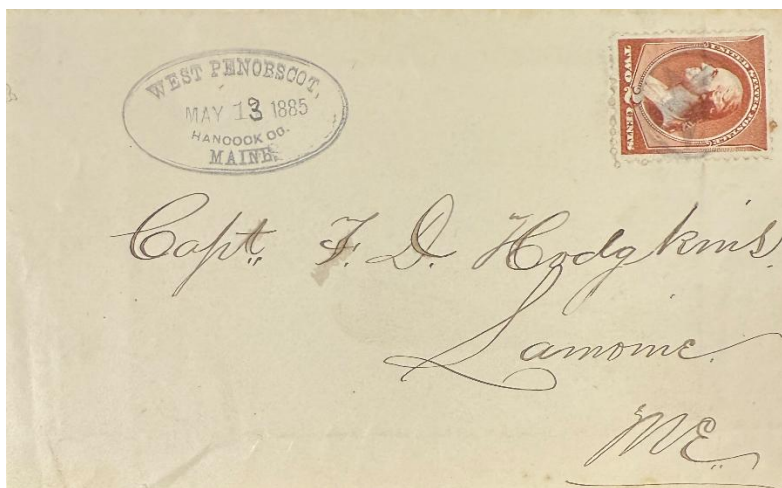
West Penobscot

14 March 1879:

West Penobscot Post Office opened.

14 March 1879:

Hamilton J. Wood became the Postmaster of the West Penobscot Post Office.



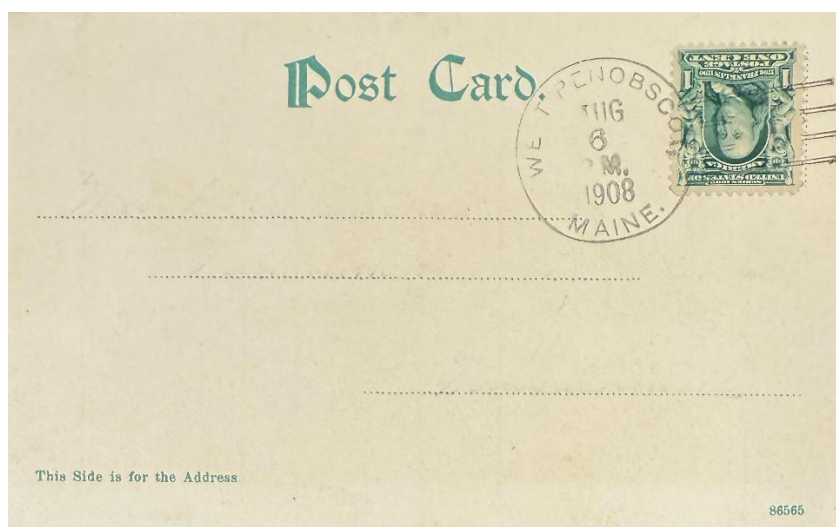
13 May 1885:

The double-ringed oval postmark is 39 x 21 mm with a fancy solid star killer.



20 December 1903:

The size of the circular postmark is unknown.



6 August 1908:

The circular postmark is 30 mm in diameter with a Doane 2/1 killer.
Similar postmarks and killers dated 24 June 1908 and 26 October 1906 are known.

31 October 1908:

West Penobscot Post Office closed.

Credits:

This document is based on the original web page compiled by the V. F. Thomas Co. (2021), with revisions and additions by James Husson and Brian Damien (2024-5).

Thank you for the contributions to this page by the Strout Family, the [Willett Thompson Collection](#), Kelvin Kindahl, and Jim Husson.

Thank you to the Waterville Stamp Club (<https://thewatervillestampclub.com>) for helping ensure this project's continuity.

Sources:

Postal History

Maine Postal History Gateway at Maine Philatelic Society:
<https://www.mainephilatelic.org/mph>

The Post Offices of Maine 2022, Maine Philatelic Society:
<https://www.mainephilatelic.org/books/TPOOM>

Postmaster Appointments

U. S. Post Office Department. Appointments of Postmasters records, Hancock County, Maine, via Ancestry.com, or via U. S. National Archives website. Hancock County appointments are in two files. The first file has only four frames. Most of the appointments are in the second file (which as of 05/19/2026 is incorrectly labeled as Penobscot County):

<https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78746582> (only four frames)

<https://catalog.archives.gov/id/78746587> (incorrectly labelled as Penobscot County)

For help in researching appointments see the Finding Aid for U. S. Postmaster Appointment Records, 1789-Present,

<https://www.mainephilatelic.org/pma-findingaid.pdf>.

The Digitised U. S. Postal Bulletins and PL&Rs 1880-2013
<http://www.uspostalbulletins.com/>

U. S. Post Office Department Reports of Site Locations, Hancock County, Maine. Site Location Reports for the Post Offices in the Town of Penobscot.

North Penobscot:

<https://catalog.archives.gov/id/68415820?objectPage=750> and the five following pages.

Penobscot:

<https://catalog.archives.gov/id/68415820?objectPage=799> and the following page, then

<https://catalog.archives.gov/id/68415820?objectPage=802> and the five following pages.

Penobscot Centre:

<https://catalog.archives.gov/id/68415820?objectPage=801>

South Penobscot:

<https://catalog.archives.gov/id/68415820?objectPage=899>

West Penobscot:

<https://catalog.archives.gov/id/68415820?objectPage=994> and the two following pages.

→ *It is important to note that the archives of the Reports of Site Locations are incomplete, and do not represent all the sites where the various post offices were located.*

Additional material can be found at Research Resources on Maine Postal History:

<http://www.mainephilatelic.org/books/post-office-sources.pdf>.

Town of Penobscot History

Colby, George N. ***Atlas of Hancock County, Maine***. S. F. Colby & Co., 1881. Digitised versions of pages showing the Town of Penobscot, and Penobscot village, can be downloaded from

https://digitalmaine.com/atlas_hancock_1881/40/ and

https://digitalmaine.com/atlas_hancock_1881/41/

Maine State Archives. ***Counties, Cities, Towns and Plantations of Maine: A Handbook of Incorporations, Dissolutions, and Boundary Changes***. 1980.

https://digitalmaine.com/arc_publications/11/

Mitchell, Frederick B. ***Penobscot Bicentennial, 1787-1987***. Published by Penobscot Historical Society in 1987.

Penobscot Historical Society.

<https://www.facebook.com/PenobscotHistoricalSociety/> and

<https://penobscothistoricalsociety.weebly.com/>

Town of Penobscot official website:

<https://penobscotmaine.org/pages/about-us> and

https://penobscotmaine.org/uploads/penobscotcompplan_2024-final.pdf

Wheeler, George A. *History of Castine, Penobscot and Brooksville, Maine; including the Ancient Settlement of Pentagoet*. 1875. Available for download from the Internet Archive: <https://archive.org/details/historyofcastine00whee/page/n7/mode/2up>

Postmarks

Anderson, Gary. Maine Doane Cancels, from the *Doane Cancel website*,
http://www.doanecancel.com/maine_doanes.html
<http://www.doanecancel.com/doane.html>

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Disclaimer:

As with any database of this size, occasional errors—especially typos—are inevitable. Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this work and to correct any mistakes made by previous authors. We take full responsibility for any errors and encourage you to bring them to our attention so that we can make the necessary corrections.

Determining the size and type of a postmark or killer is as much an art as it is a science. Many of the cut squares originate from the digital Willett/Thompson Collection at the Post Mark Collectors Club Museum (<https://postmarks.org>). Those postmark dimensions have been estimated by comparing them to a known object, such as a stamp, and using proportional ratios. These measurements may vary by a millimeter or two. Additionally, parameters such as V span or wBar for four-bar killers can be difficult to assess without examining the specimen firsthand. Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of these interpretations.