



The Maine Philatelist

Vol. 30, No. 3

January 1998

Whole No. 110

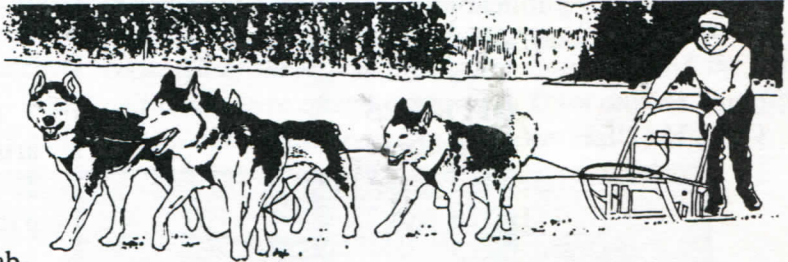
Dog teams delivered the mail during harsh Maine winters

By Bruce L. Corey
of Westbrook

During the early 1930s Dog Team Route 1392 was established between Oquossoc and Kennebago (Grants Post Office) to get the mail and supplies in and the mail out. The Maine Central Railroad spur line from Oquossoc to Kennebago had been discontinued years before as well as the flag stops at Kamankeag, Realty and Cupsuptic.

The right of way made an excellent trail for the winter dog team run which passed through the short-lived tiny settlement of Johns Pond on the run to Kennebago (Grants Post Office). The Oquossoc and Portland R.P.O. had been discontinued on November 30, 1917, but mail still came into and left Oquossoc by closed pouch service on the Maine Central Railroad from Rumford.

The cover illustrated (Figure 1) is one of a set, "Carried by



Dog-Team Route 1392 Oquossoc & Kennebago (Grants P.O.) Me." and signed by Fred B. Fowler (Driver). Postmarked at Oquossoc, Maine 31 DEC 1934 P.M. and backstamped at Grants, Maine 1 JAN 1935 A.M. Another cover exists for the return trip and would be cancelled at Grants, Maine 1 JAN 1935 and backstamped at Oquossoc, Maine JAN 1935. The round trip was about 25 miles.

The following letter is from the dog team driver to the person requesting the two covers.

Located on the western side of Lake Mooselookmeguntic, Upper Dam was completely isolated after the steamer service was shut down and the lake frozen over for the winter. A dog team route was established from Upper Dam to the famous log depot

and post office at Bemis on the Maine Central Railroad. Until the lake ice was frozen solid, a longer run of about 10 miles each way was made along the southern shore. Later the most direct route would be across the lake and south of Toohacher Island. The round trip was about 15 miles.

Before the post
Continued on page 3

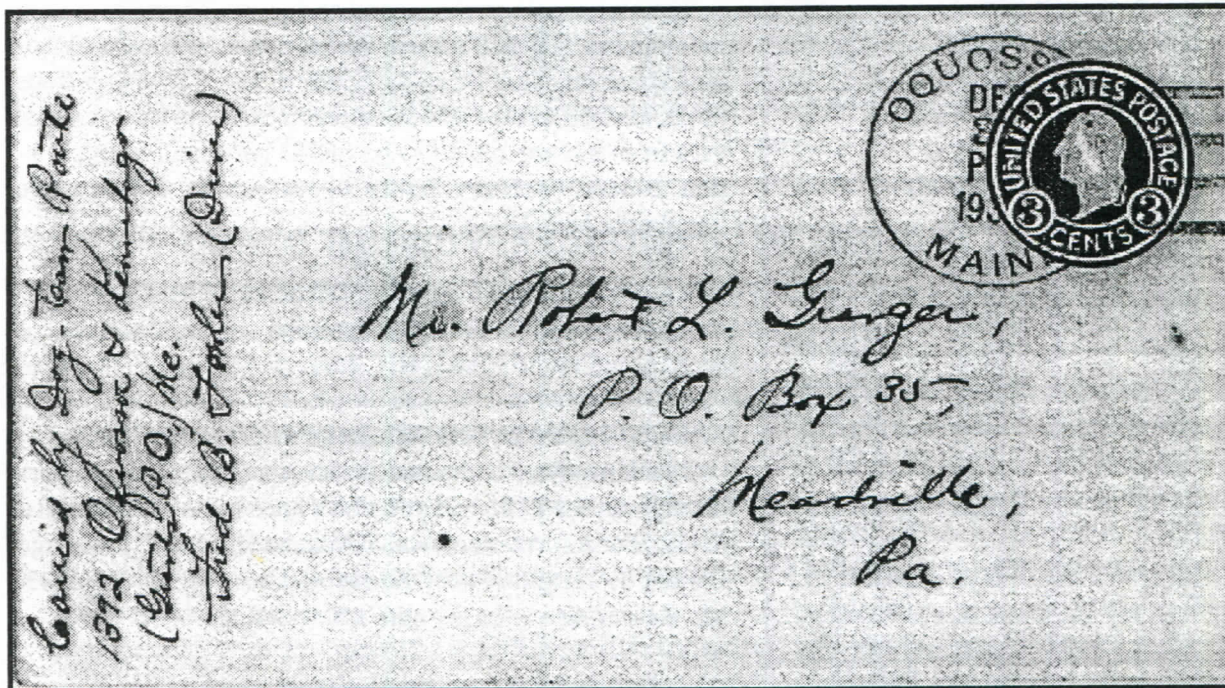


Figure 1

The Maine Philatelist is published quarterly by the Maine Philatelic Society, Inc.

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 per year.

A Life Membership is also available.

Contact the Secretary for details.

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

OFFICERS

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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.

PORTLAND STAMP CLUB

The club meets on the second Wednesday of each month at the Maine Veterans Home, 290 U.S. Route 1, Scarborough. The meeting starts at 6:30 p.m. and usually ends about 8:30 p.m. Nonmembers are invited to attend.

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

The club meets on the third Thursday of the month at noon. The location changes each month. For information, call Dick Gerry, president, at 866-3583.

YORK COUNTY STAMP CLUB

The club meets on the second and fourth Thursday of each month from 7:30 to 9 p.m. in the basement of People's Heritage Bank on Main Street in 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 Lesvaseur, Rt. 1, Box 3206, Shapleigh, ME 04076.

UNION RIVER STAMP CLUB

The Union River Stamp Club meets the first Thursday of each month at the Ellsworth Library, beginning at 7:30 p.m.

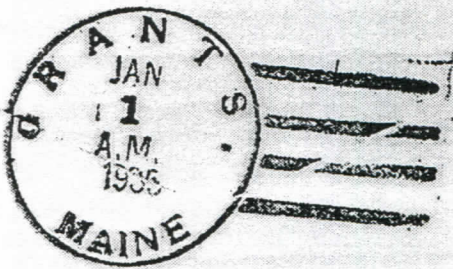
UNITARIAN-UNIVERSALIST STAMP CLUB

The Unitarian-Universalist Stamp Club has members throughout the U.S., and you don't have to be a Universalist to join. For information, send a business size SASE to George Barner, 8 Arlington Street, Kennebunkport, ME 04046-6343. Mr. Barner also edits the club's newsletter.

Dog team mail in Maine was not common; some covers must remain

Continued from page 1

office at Bemis was closed on 29 September 1934, outgoing dog team covers from Upper Dam would be backstamped at Bemis and the reverse for covers headed back across the lake.



The cover illustrated (Figure 2) was postmarked at Upper Dam, Maine 7 MAR 1936 A.M. It also has a three line rubberstamp cachet in magenta ink, "VIA DOG TEAM

FROM/UPPER DAM ME./TO BEMIS, ME."

NOTE: The manuscript direction in upper left of the cover, "Bemis to Upper Dam, Me." could be a mistake. It also could mean that this cover was carried on the return run to Upper Dam." I'll let you figure it out!

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Mr. Corey speculates that it is possible that dog teams were used to convey mail elsewhere during the winter and that special covers might exist. Of particular note were routes from Rockwood to Northeast Carry, from Rockwood to Seboomook and from Rockwood to Chesuncook. All of these post offices were open during the winter and roads were often not the best. Does anyone have information about other possible dog team mail in Maine?)

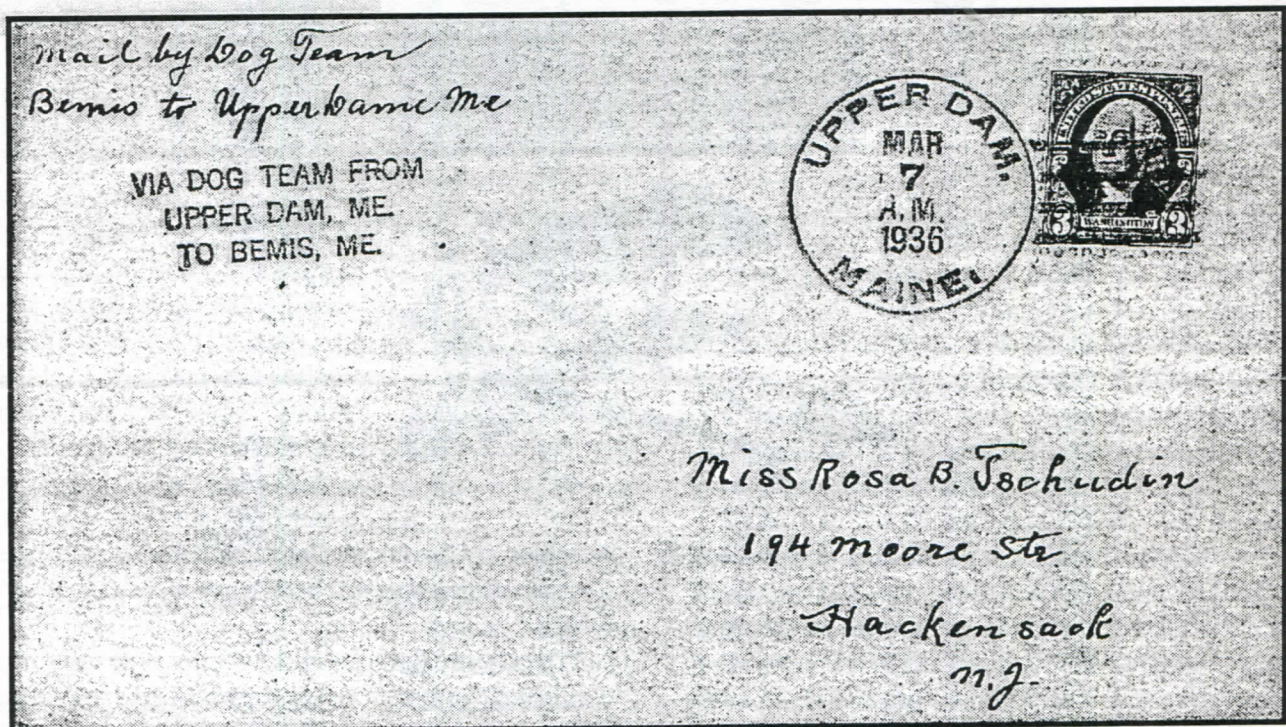


Figure 2

MPS board approves changes for annual MUDPEX stamp show

The Maine Philatelic Society's Board of Directors has approved changes in the operation of MUDPEX, the society's annual spring stamp show. The changes mainly focus on the auction, both silent and oral, and came about following comments from some members that streamlining was needed.

Another reason is a need to increase net income from the show to forestall a possible future dues increase. While the society is in no present financial danger, costs are increasing and there is a feeling that additional income is needed to offset future higher costs.

Beginning with the April 25 MUDPEX, a 10% commission will be assessed on auction buyers' invoices. A buyers' commission is standard practice among many auction houses,

and in some instances is as high as 15%. A 10% fee will help pay for auction costs.

Also beginning this year, a 50¢ fee will be charged for unsold lots in the silent auction. Each year, a substantial number of lots remain unsold following the silent auction, and board members believe charging a small fee for these lots will encourage participants to make up larger lots for the auction.

Finally, 10 bids will be accepted on silent auction items before the item is sent to the oral auction. Previously, five bids sent the item to the oral auction. This should reduce the number of lots going to oral auction and thus reduce the time it takes to complete the auction.

Pony Express With Wings ...Or how Uncle Sam's Flying Postmen came to be

By H. Steve McCord

*"Neither snow, rain, sleet,
nor gloom of night..."*

No branch of the U.S. Post Office exemplified this slogan better than the fledgling U.S. Air Mail Service, and no employee was more typical of the intrepid pilots who flew the air mail than James H. "Jack" Knight. Knight's regular route was between Omaha and Cheyenne -- one segment of the newly formed transcontinental relay service between New York and San Francisco, with around-the-clock flights in both directions.

Having completed his usual run and deadheaded back to North Platte, Knight was looking forward to a good meal and a warm bed. However, bad weather had delayed the connecting flight from Omaha to Chicago. It was up to Knight to get the air mail through. At 2 a.m. on February 23, 1921, he took off on the 432-mile route to Chicago. He had never flown the route before -- even in daylight. Flying east, Knight followed a compass course for Des Moines. He later told a reporter that on this leg he was "fairly dead from lack of sleep" and had to hold the control stick between his knees while he slapped his hands together to stay awake.

A few miles past Des Moines, he flew into a blinding snowstorm. Forced lower by the storm, he skimmed the treetops until he sighted the lights of Iowa City. At 4:45 a.m., low on fuel, he decided to land. While waiting for a break in the storm, he munched on a sandwich and cat-napped. At 6:30 a.m., he took off on the last 200 mile stretch. Checking his road map -- the only navigational aid he had besides a compass -- Knight began to pick up landmarks around Chicago. With his engine sputtering ominously, he made a perfect landing at 8:40 a.m. He became an instant celebrity, as waiting photographers and reporters swarmed around him.

The mail, which had left San Francisco at 7:30 a.m. on the 22nd, was transferred to another plane and pilot, and was soon on its way to New York, where it arrived at 4:50 p.m. on the 23rd -- 33 hours and 20 minutes after it had begun its cross-country trek.

The next day, a previously unsympathetic Congress passed a \$1.25 million appropriation for the Air Mail Service by a two-to-one vote. In the words of Otto Praeger, Second Assistant Postmaster and tireless promoter of the

Air Mail Service, Jack Knight and his fellow pilots had demonstrated "the entire feasibility of commercial night flying." This was indeed a major step forward for a service which had its tentative beginning only a few years before.

In its military appropriation for 1917-18, the Congress had provided \$100,000 "to experiment with aeroplane mail." Praeger -- at the time a little-known figure in Washington -- had to convince his boss, Postmaster General A. S. Burleson, that the Post Office Department could ride to glory on a "pony express with wings."

On May 15, 1918, when the first air mail service was scheduled to begin between Washington, Philadelphia and New York, a distinguished group of government officials

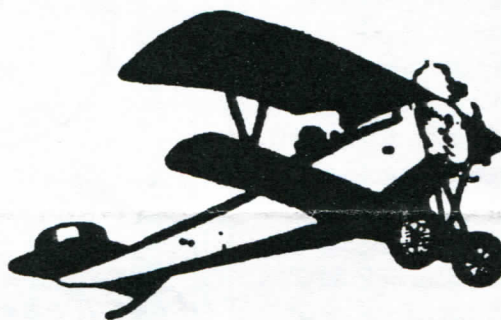
gathered at the Polo Grounds in Potomac Park, near the White House. President and Mrs. Woodrow Wilson were present, along with Burleson, Praeger and a host of other dignitaries, when Lt. George L. Boyle, an Army pilot detailed to the Post Office, climbed into his Curtiss JN-6H "Jenny." Boyle, who had only recently received his "wings," was chosen less for his flying ability than his political connections; his fiancée was the

daughter of Charles McChord, an Interstate Commerce Commissioner who had been a good friend to the Post Office.

When Army Sergeant E.A. Waters gave the customary command "contact," Boyle triggered the ignition and Waters swung the prop. The engine coughed once and died. It stubbornly refused to start, in spite of Waters' repeated attempts. To everybody's embarrassment, the crowd began to snicker. Finally, somebody thought of checking the fuel tank -- and found it empty! Refueled, the Jenny sputtered to life and Boyle took off for Philadelphia.

But his troubles were far from over. About an hour later, he ran low of fuel and landed in a farmer's field near Waldorf, Maryland, 20 miles southeast of Washington. He'd flown in the wrong direction! Adding insult to injury, he damaged the airplane in landing, and the mail had to be chugged back to Washington in a Model T Ford. An inauspicious start, to say the least.

Fortunately, for the future of the Air Mail Service, Boyle's counterpart, Lt. James C. Edgerton, fared somewhat better on his maiden flight from Philadelphia to Washington. He landed at the Polo Grounds later the same day, thereby completing the first scheduled air mail service



Post Offices of Maine

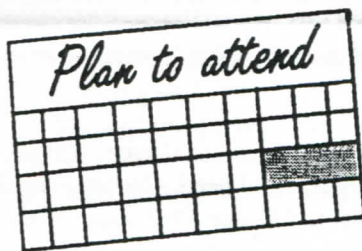
A regular feature



This photo of the Alfred Post Office was taken in 1959 and shows the front of the building. Notice the old-style letterbox at the left of the door. The Alfred Post Office is located in York County and was established on February 23, 1801 and has been in continuous operation since. Thanks to Secretary Bruce Hazelton, who loaned the photo. Do YOU have a photo of an old post office? Send it to the editor with as much information as you know about it.

New England stamp shows of interest...

January 11: Stamp Cover & Card Festival, East Inn (formerly Days Inn), I-691, Exit 10, East Main Street, Meriden, Connecticut. Contact John F. Dunn, P.O. Box 5050, White Plains, NY 10602. Telephone (914) 997-7261. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Free admission.



January 25: Stamp & Coin Show, Masonic Temple, 304 Center St., West Haven, Connecticut. Contact Christopher Komondy, 33 Liberty St., Chester, CT 06412. Telephone (860) 526-2700 or FAX (860) 526-2799. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Free admission and parking.

February 1: Stamp & Coin Show, Holiday Inn, 80 Newtown Road, Danbury, Connecticut. I-84 Exit 8. Contact Barry Rickert (203) 792-4659. 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Free admission and parking.

March 7-8: SOPEX '98, Elks Lodge (BPOE Lodge 65), 652 Andover St., Lawrence, Massachusetts. Contact John Harrigan, P.O. Box 1335, Lawrence, MA 01842. Telephone (603) 362-5453. Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Sunday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Free admission and free parking.

April 25: MUDPEX '98 Stamp Show & Auction, sponsored by Maine Philatelic Society, Kennebec Valley Technical College, Fairfield, Maine. I-95 Exit 35. 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Stamps and supplies, auction, etc.

Pony Express With Wings

Continued from page 4
in the United States.

The Army continued to fly the mail until August 10, 1918, when the Post Office Department took over the service. Initially there were 17 planes, mostly remodeled war-surplus de Havilland DH-4s, flown by civilian pilots recruited from the ranks of Army flight instructors.

Those were the days of seat-of-the-pants and self-sacrificing pilots, who were determined to get the mail through at any cost. From 1918 to 1927, 32 pilots gave their lives in the Air Mail Service. Floyd Hall, a one-time airplane pilot and chairman of Eastern Air Lines, paid these pioneer pilots a glowing tribute: "Let me assure you that it took a high order of courage to fly those hand-me-down, war-weary de Havillands... a nervous collection of whistling wires, of linen stretched over wooden ribs, all attached to a wheezy, water-cooled engine. What magnificent men, in those flying machines!"

Hall's tribute seems all the more deserved when one considers the paucity of navigational aids available to these pioneer pilots -- especially on flights made at night and in bad weather. In daylight, pilots navigated mainly by visual contact with the ground, using highways, railroads and other familiar landmarks. At night, they depended on occasional ground lights and bonfires lit by friendly farmers. Night landings were sometimes aided by magnesium flares dropped by the pilot himself, or by automobile headlights at points of intended landing. The pilot's only weather service was his own eye cocked aloft, combined with a "feel" for the weather which came with experience.

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Pony Express With Wings

Continued from page 5

The decade of the 1920s brought many improvements. In 1921, the Post Office Department enlisted the services of General Electric and American Gas in lighting an 80-mile stretch between Columbus and Dayton, Ohio. Beacons were installed at 10-mile intervals along this route. The lighting of all established air mail routes was completed in 1925. Emergency landing fields were constructed at intervals of 25 miles -- an important provision, considering the frequency of engine failure and the vagaries of the weather.

After 1926, two-way radios and wing-tip landing lights came into general use. Under aegis of the U.S. Department of Commerce, place markings on rooftops, water tanks and other prominent structures became commonplace.

Experiments conducted by the U.S. Army and the Guggenheim Foundation eventually yielded the instruments and know-how for all-weather flying. Using a bank-and-turn indicator invented by Army Lt. William Ocker, a sensitive altimeter produced by William Kollsman and gyro-stabilized instruments developed by Elmer Sperry, Army Lt. James H. "Jimmy" Doolittle made the world's first complete "blind" flight on September 24, 1929, thereby ushering in the era of modern all-weather instrument flying. But we're getting ahead of the story. Let's go back to 1925.

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Part II of this two-part series will be printed in the April issue of The Maine Philatelist. The article originally appeared in the Fall 1996 issue of Strut & Axle, quarterly journal of the Owls Head Transportation Museum in Owls Head, Maine. It is reprinted with kind permission of the Museum. The April segment will also include a chronology of U.S. Air Mail as it relates to Maine in an interesting article by Leo Boyle.)

**The
Maine Philatelic Society's
annual MUDPEX
will be held at the
Kennebec Valley
Technical College in Fairfield
on Saturday, April 25
PLAN TO ATTEND!**

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

Father and 13-year-old daughter collecting U.S. postage on a limited budget. Looking to pay face or a little higher for newer issues, mostly Scott numbers 2000-2800. Please contact Robert Vear, P.O. Box 501, Waterville, ME 04903-0501. (2-98)

Wanted: Portland, Greenwood and Albany ad. covers, postal history, postcards. Buy or generous trade for other Maine. Charles Brand, 2031-31st Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94116. (2-98)

Wanted: modern (since 1970) U.S. covers. I am especially looking for junk mail transportation coil covers, Express mail, postage dues, insured mail, Certified mail, etc. Contact Rob Washburn, P.O. Box 840, Skowhegan, ME 04976-0840. (2-98)

Check your collections, accumulations, etc., for Pitcairn Island stamps and covers. I'm looking for 1938 "Radio Established Over Pitcairn" covers with dates other than March 18. Also looking for Newfoundland covers. Everett L. Parker, HC 76, Box 32, Greenville, ME 04441-9727. E-mail to: eparker@moosehead.net. (4-98)

Wanted: Maine hunting and fishing stamps on license. Will pay a minimum of \$10 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. (4-98)

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. (3-98)

Wanted to buy: Maine fancy cancels on cover or postal cards, stampless to 1920 only. Let me know what you have. Gil Roderick, 52 Fern St., Bangor, ME 04401. (2-98)

FOR SALE

Precancel approvals: town and types 15¢, classics, 1922-26 general, bicents, prexies, perfins available. Buro approvals starting at 5¢. Good mixed precancel lots. 2,000-\$25.00; 10,000-\$110.00. Mixed buros, 2,000-\$25.00, 10,000-\$110.00. Dick Laetsch, 108 Ashswamp Road, Scarborough, ME 04074. e-mail: precancel@aol.com (2-98)

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. (1-98)

- RS = CPO -

ADDENDA AND ERRATA (Continued)
The Post Offices of Maine: A Rarity Guide

There are addenda and errata to The Maine Philatelic Society's recent book. Additional updates will be published in forthcoming issues of *The Maine Philatelist*. Note under "Explanation of Terms," New Hampshire should read "Maine."

PG	POST OFFICE	TOWN	R	COUNTY	ESTABLISHED	DISCONTINUED	NOTES
50	North Bethel (2)		9				
51	North Brooklin		1			23 September 1992	
52	North Edgecomb		1			1 January 1992 31 Dec 1992	Changed to Edgecomb (2)
53	North Jay		1			?	Changed to North Jay Sta., Jay
53	ADD North Jay Sta., Jay	Jay	6	Franklin	?	?	Formerly North Jay. Changed to North Jay CPO, Jay
53	ADD North Jay CPO, Jay	Jay	0	Franklin	?	Operating	Formerly North Jay Sta., Jay
54	North Limington (2)			York			
55	North Perry		9				
55	North Scarborough (1)		9				
56	North Sebago Rural Sta.	Sebago	1			?	ADD: Changed to North Sebago CPO, East Sebago
56	ADD North Sebago CPO, East Sebago	Sebago	0	Cumberland	?	Operating	Formerly North Sebago Rural Sta., Sebago
56	North Sullivan		1			6 April 1993	Changed to Sullivan (2)
57	ADD Northwest Annex, Portland	Portland	10	Cumberland	1993	November 1995	
57	North Whitefield		1			1 February 1993	Changed to Whitefield (2)
57	Norway Sta. No. 1	Norway	6	Oxford	3 March 1936 (EKU)	?	
57	No. One						First line seen 1891 spelled "Number One" Third line seen 1903 as "Numberone" (one word).
58	Number Fifteen Br. Portland	DELETE					
58	Ocean Park CPO Old Orchard Beach	Old Orchard Beach	0			Operating	
59	Orono Sta. No. 1	DELETE Maine					
59	Otisfield		4				
60	Otter Creek		8				
61	Peak's Island						Delete "s" in Peaks Island Sta.
61	Peak Island Sta. (not Peak's)						ADD: Changed to Peaks Island Sta. in the 1960s.

* EKU means "Earliest Known Use." LKU means "Latest Known Use."

President's Message

By Everett L. Parker

Christmas is over and for most of us, it's time to return to our albums and stamps. It was a nice, quiet holiday season up here in the woods, just the way we like it. And thanks to those of you who sent Christmas cards. They were greatly appreciated.

As you will read elsewhere in this issue, the Board of Directors is working on ways to streamline the annual MUDPEX stamp show to encourage more people to attend and participate in our auctions, both silent and oral. We will continue to meet and discuss ideas. Your input is solicited. Please write and let me know how we can make the show more interesting and productive for you. As I am fond of saying, nothing is etched in concrete and change is good for us.

At this writing, we have 225 paid-up members. That a far cry from the less than one-third of that number on board three years ago. I would like to publicly thank the members of our Board of Directors and YOU for helping the Maine Philatelic Society regain its footing. And now a challenge: if each one of us added only one new member, we'd double our membership to 550. Far-fetched, maybe. But I'll bet if you asked someone who is not a member, and showed them this journal, you could sign them up right away. How about it, are you up to the challenge?

Maine Philatelic Society
HC 76, Box 32
Greenville, ME 04441-9727

Are YOU on the Internet?

In order to offer more rapid communications, we will publish e-mail addresses of Maine Philatelic Society members and officers ONLY if they wish to be listed. Please e-mail your address to the president to be included here. If you're not on the Web, look into it -- there are hundreds of sites worldwide to explore!

George Barner = gbarner@cybertours.com

Nancy B. Clark = nbc@Cape.com

David Costain = dcostain@telplus.net

Terry Drummond = bulldog@somtel.com

Jim Forte = jimforte@postal history.com

Dick Laetsch = precancel@aol.com

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Richard Warren = dickw@midcoast.com

Edwin F. Whitney = edwhitney@clinic.net

Anyone interested in designing a home page
for the Maine Philatelic Society?

SPRINGFIELD MA 011 DEC # 2

What are YOU doing to promote
philately in Maine?

TO:

Kindahl, Mr. Kelvin #549 (6-98)
29 Clark Street
East Hampton, MA 01027-2329

