

Research Resources on Maine Postal History

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The Basic Sources

Dow, Sterling T., *Maine Postal History and Postmarks*. [book] This was the original state post office book. Includes post office listing compiled by University of Maine Prof. George Davis Chase, who traveled to Washington and transcribed Post Office Department records for Maine. Originally published 1943 by Severn-Wylie-Jewett; reproduced by Quarterman Publications, 1976. The 1976 reprint added several new articles including the two which follow. The 1943 edition of the book has been archived online by HathiTrust.org: <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/uc1.b4512618>



Prof. Chase

Dow, Sterling T., “The Origin of the Portland, Maine, Post Office” published as an addition to the 1976 reprint of *Maine Postal History and Postmarks*.

Hecht, Arthur and Paul Hannemann, “The Postoffices of the District of Maine” (1957) published as an addition to the 1976 reprint of *Maine Postal History and Postmarks*.

Lynds, Max, **Maxlynds.com**. [website] Includes Bruce Hazelton’s Maine post office worksheets, based on Sterling Dow’s work illustrating postmarks from the 1800s, and information on cross-border mail. <http://maxlynds.com/wp/postal-history/>

Maine Philatelic Society, *The Post Offices of Maine: A Rarity Guide*, edited by Bruce Hazelton. [book] 1995. This was the modern update to the Dow/Chase post office listing. Addenda and errata appeared in *The Maine Philatelist*, [periodical] Jan., Apr., Jul., and Oct. 1996, Apr., Jul., and Oct. 1997, Jan., Apr., Jul., Oct. 1998, and Jan. and Apr. 1998.

Primary Sources:

U. S. Post Office Department and U. S. Postal Service

U. S. Post Office Department and private publishers, *Table of Post Offices of the United States* and **other titles**. Listings of post offices, published between 1803 and 1873.

U. S. Post Office Department, *U. S. Official Postal Guide*. [official printed documents, archived on a private website]. Contains postal regulations and lists of post offices, published annually or biannually, with monthly supplements, 1874 to 1954.

Links to digital versions of both publications above can be found on StampSmarter, a website with many other good resources.

https://stampsmarker.org/learning/Home_USPOD.html

U. S. Post Office Department/U. S. Postal Service, *Directory of Post Offices*, published annually from 1955 through 1980, supplanted by *National ZIP Code & Post Office Directory*, and subsequently *National Five-Digit ZIP Code & Post Office Directory*. After the switch to being a ZIP code and post office directory, the accuracy of the post office information diminished significantly over the years. Publishing of hardcopy Directories ceased in the early 2000s.

U. S. Post Office Department, **Records of the Post Office Department, 1773-1971**, at the National Archives, <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/357>. This is a series of ledgers with many notes on post office openings, closings, and name changes. The **Record of Appointment of Postmasters** is in three parts: handwritten ledgers, microfilmed, and digitized. Getting to the specific record sought can be challenging; some helpful background information for searching the postmaster appointments is on in the **Finding Aid for U. S. Postmaster Appointment Records, 1789-Present**, available at <http://www.mainephilatelic.org/pma-findingaid.pdf>

Record of First Returns Received from Postmasters, 1789-1818 is a valuable substitute for the appointment records from before 1814, which were destroyed in a fire in 1836.

Record of Appointment of Postmasters, 1814-1832 is often hard to read. It is organized by post office name rather than by state.

Record of Appointment of Postmasters, 1832-1971 is organized by state and county and is much easier to use. However, it is more difficult to find the county desired.



This illustration from the Record of Appointments of Postmasters for Piscataquis County reveals one of the problems with interpreting handwritten records. This entry for Kineo has been incorrectly transcribed by some as Haines or Hines, leading to the erroneous entry for Haines as a post office in the 1995 edition.

U. S. Post Office Department, **Site Location Reports of Post Offices, 1837–1950**. [official handwritten, typed, or printed documents, archived on the website] The Site Location Reports were forms filled out as part of establishing post offices or after offices were operating, giving information about their location relative to other offices and other features. At the National Archives: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/608210>

U. S. Post Office Department and private publishers, **Post Route Maps**, various years found on StampSmarter.com [website] <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1g4EGYDoiZR9EMR-he2W35LgX5iokrSmt/view>. Post Route Maps of Maine that are available for unrestricted download are detailed in **Post Route Maps of the State of Maine 1796 – 1942**, available at <http://www.mainephilatelic.org/PostRouteMaps.pdf>.

U. S. Post Office Department/U. S. Postal Service. **Postal Bulletin**, published daily, weekly, or bi-weekly, under slightly different names, from 1880 to today, containing, among many other things, notices of post office changes. [official printed documents archived on website] <http://www.uspostalbulletins.com/Home.aspx>

U. S. Postal Service, **Postmaster Finder**. [website] <https://about.usps.com/who-weare/postmasterfinder/welcome.htm>. This has been the official place for recording postmaster appointments since 1986.

More Secondary Sources

Carter, Russ, ***Numbered Navy & Marine Corps Post Office Locations, Volume 3***. [book or CD-ROM] Military Postal History Society, seventh edition.

<http://www.militaryphs.org/publications.html>

Maine Philatelic Society, <http://www.mainephilatelic.org> [website] Includes data and text drawn from the book, *The Post Offices of Maine 2022*, with frequent database updates. The mainephilatelic.org site also now incorporates web pages on the postal history of more than 400 individual Maine cities and towns. These pages, which are being revised and enlarged, include basic data on openings and closings, and may include postmaster appointments and images of covers, postmarks, and post offices. These city and town pages were originally developed by the V. F. Thomas Co. and published as the Maine Postal History website.

Phillips, David G., ***American Stampless Cover Catalog: The Standard Reference Catalog of American Postal History***. [book] D. G. Phillips Pub. Co. Vol. 1, 5th edition, © 1997. The U. S. Philatelic Classics Society now owns the copyright and is in the process of updating the catalog, with the working copy online at <https://d2jf3tgwe889fp.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/ASCC-Maine.pdf>

Post Mark Collectors Club, ***PMCC Directory of Post Offices – Maine***, edited by Kelvin Kindahl. Editions 1 to 8, 1995 to 2022. [printed list]

<http://www.postmarks.org/directory/>

Stets, Robert J., ***Postmasters and Post Offices of the United States, 1782—1811***. [book] La Posta Publications, 1994. This book is an excellent compilation, primarily based on hundreds of pages of handwritten records from the *Letter Books of the Postmaster General* and other sources.

Contacts in the Postal History Collecting Community

American Philatelic Society <https://www.stamps.org>

Brunswick Coin and Stamp Club <http://www.brunswickmainecoinclub.com> presents four shows every year, with many coin and stamp dealers. Shows take place at the exhibition hall at the Topsham Fairgrounds.

Maine Philatelic Society <http://www.mainephilatelic.org> email contact: Dr. Everett Parker, everettparker1245@gmail.com Publishes *The Maine Philatelist*, which regularly includes articles on the post offices and postal history of Maine.

Post Mark Collectors Club <http://www.postmarks.org> New England Chapter, which publishes *New England Postmark Newsletter*. Email contact: Kelvin Kindahl, kelvino1027@gmail.com

United States Philatelic Classics Society <https://www.uspcs.org>

Waterville Stamp Club <https://www.thewatervillestampclub.com> Hosts MAIPEX (in the fall) and MUDPEX (in the spring), the two major shows in Maine dedicated just to stamps and postal history. Large table/live auction. Venue for shows is VFW hall in Winslow.

Information about contacts, meetings, and events of stamp clubs (Bangor, Brunswick, Ellsworth, Waterville, York County) in Maine is at the Maine Philatelic Society website, <http://www.mainephilatelic.org/upcoming>.