

# ALBANY INSTITUTE OF HISTORY & ART

## A Guide to the William Law Learned Peltz Collection of Postal History, 1702-1969

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### Summary Information

**Repository**

Albany Institute of History & Art Library

**Creator**

William Law Learned Peltz

**Title**

William Law Learned Peltz Collection of Postal History, 1702-1969

**Identifier**

BC 256

**Date**

1702-1969

**Physical Description**

7.92 linear feet; 7 boxes

**Physical Location**

The materials are located onsite in the Museum.

**Language of the Material**

English

**Abstract**

William Law Learned Peltz (1882-1961) was an avid collector of Albany memorabilia and a philatelist. He had a lifelong interest in postage stamps and postal history and was a founding member of the Fort Orange Stamp Club in 1926. His stamps document postal history from the pre-stamp through stamp periods.

This collection includes correspondence, scrapbooks, and stamps.

## **Preferred Citation**

Preferred citation for this material is as follows:

William Law Learned Peltz Collection of Postal History, 1702-1969, BC 256. Albany Institute of History & Art Library, Albany, New York.

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## **Conditions Governing Access and Use**

### **Restrictions on Access**

None

### **Copyright**

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## **Immediate Source of Acquisition**

Accession: #BC 256

Accession Source/Date: Gift of the W.L.L. Peltz Estate, September 1966

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## **Processing Information**

Processed by C. Derven, February 2000. Finding aid updated by H. Cox, September 2020.

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## **Biographical/Historical**

William Law Learned Peltz was born in May 1882, in Albany, New York, to John DeWitt (1853-1904) and Mary Marvin Learned Peltz (1856-1888). He graduated from the Albany Academy, Yale, and the Albany Law School. A practicing attorney and member of the Albany Bar, Peltz served as both president and chairman of the board of the Mechanics & Farmers Savings Bank.

Peltz married Kathryn Hun (1880-1978) and together they had two children: Caroline Peltz Schultz (1908-2007) and William Learned Peltz (1909-2003). He was an avid collector of Albany memorabilia and a philatelist, and was a founding member of the Fort Orange Stamp Club in 1926. Peltz died in Selkirk, Albany County, New York on March 26, 1961, and was buried in the Albany Rural Cemetery in Menands, New York.

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## Scope and Contents

The William Law Learned Peltz Collection of Postal History, spans from 1702-1954, with the bulk of the collection covering from 1790-1890. The collection consists of three series: Miscellaneous Items, The Albany Postal History Collection, and Scrapbooks.

The correspondence encompasses manuscript letters, stamped and stampless covers, postal cards, corner cards, circulars, hand stamps and machine cancellations. Letters and envelopes are mounted within these volumes in a variety of ways, including corner clips, glue, and staples, often with Peltz's penciled annotations.

During a visit to the Peltz family in 1963, Norman S. Rice, then curator at AIHA, examined the Peltz Collection and arranged for its transfer to the Institute. In 1967, three honorary curators, Kenneth de Lisle, Robert Gallup and Donald Curran, were assigned to work on the Peltz Collection.

This trio's familiarity with the Peltz Collection predates its acquisition by the Institute; all three were Peltz's fellow members of the Fort Orange Stamp Club. During the late 1950's, Peltz arranged for de Lisle and Gallup to refine organization and description of the Peltz Collection regarding the Pre-Stamp and Stamp periods.

Following Rice's appointment as Director of the Albany Institute in 1967, Gallup and de Lisle were authorized to reorganize, and at least partially, reformat the entire Peltz Collection. Duplicate items were sold to fund the project. Volumes of the stampless period, organized by de Lisle, are marked by his distinctive handwriting, while Gallup's contributions are generally typed.

During the 1967 reorganization of the Peltz Collection additional material was added. Supplementary materials include photostats of material from other collections such as the New York State Library and the New York State Historical Association, print reproductions, illustrations, typed transcriptions of letters, charts, and descriptive text written by Gallup and de Lisle.

The additional fourteen binders, or scrapbooks, are arranged chronologically with attention to specific stamp issues. These volumes have not been organized, arranged, or described other than during Peltz's early attempts at collocation. During interviews with Ken de Lisle, it was determined that these binders functioned as a reference collection, from which material was drawn, for the fifteen volumes of series II.

The Peltz Collection bears witness to several New York State Capital Region philatelic "finds." These discoveries of large groups of correspondence were made primarily by members of the Fort Orange Stamp Club. Mr. Peltz, in turn, built his collection through purchases from these finds. There are many unique and noteworthy items in this collection.

## Contents List

The following section contains a listing of the materials in the collection.

Description	Box	Folder
<b>Miscellaneous Items, 1836-1934</b>		
Receipts and Bills, 1864-1869	1	1
Correspondence, 1934		2
Reprint of Express Mail, by Ward Hinman, 1836-1839		3
Two copies of <i>The Hudson River Mail: 1804-1858</i> , by Kenneth de Lisle		4
<b>The Albany Postal History Collection, 1702-1895</b>		
Volume I. Colonial Period, 1702-1790, of the Peltz Collection contains examples of manuscript Albany postal markings and ten instances of the Type I Albany straightline. Ken De Lisle's definitions of type I and II straightlines are included in this volume. Correspondents in this binder include Reyes Schermerhorn, Philip Schuyler, Henry Glen, Sir William Johnson, Aaron Burr and Nicholas Low. The volume begins with the earliest known manuscript Albany marking and ends with the latest known use of type I. Pages 1-14 are manuscript markings and pages 15-30 display type I straightlines.	2	
Volume II. Albany Straightlines, 1789-1799, begins with the earliest recorded Type II straightline and ends with the last known Albany straightline. This volume encompasses straightline types II through V and includes examples of way letters. Correspondents include Nicholas Low, Henry Glen, John B. Schuyler, Benjamin Bourne, Joseph Newton and Captain Charles Williamson. Pages 1-11 detail type II, pages 12-16 feature type III, page 17 includes type IV, Albany's rarest postmark, pages 18-24 specify type V, pages 25-26 are comprised of way letters, pages 27-35 conclude type V examples, and pages 34-35 return to type III.		
Volume III. Stampless Period, 1799-1845, documents the use of types VI through X Albany Circle postal markings. This binder begins with the earliest known example of type VI. Besides circumstantiating the use of the various circle types, the correspondence in this collection also indicates the effect upon postage rates of the War of 1812, the Postage Act of 1816, and		

franking privileges accorded to Postmasters and Members of Congress. Correspondents include Nicholas Low, Henry Glen, John and Isaiah Townsend, Samuel Law, Aaron Burr and Christopher & Gerrit Lansing. Type VI markings appear on pages 2-4, type VII on pages 5-9, type VIII on pages 10-13, type IX on pages 14-20, the 10¢ rate prepaid appears on page 21, the 10¢ rate collect on 22-26, and type X Circles are featured on pages 27-33.

Volume IV. Stampless Period, 1845-1855, itemizes changes in postal rates and documents the use of types IX through XV circles. Correspondence in this binder is primarily addressed to the Otsego County Bank in Cooperstown, NY. This binder contains the latest known examples of Albany Post Office markings. Material on pages 1-10 illustrates postage rate changes from 1845-1851, page 11 contains examples of type XI circles, pages 12-23 detail postage rate changes from 1851-1855, pages 24-26 contain type XII circles, pages 27-30 show type XIII circles, pages 31-32 have types XIV and XV circles.

Volume V. The Hudson River Mail, 1804-1850, is grouped according to theme and organized chronologically, documents the postal markings, both stampless period circles and strikes canceling stamps, accorded to mail sent by ship, boat, sloop and steamboat on the Hudson River. Material in this binder ranges from the earliest ship letter to later uses of Hudson River circle markings.

Correspondents include Nicholas Low, Isaiah and John Townsend, and James Dexter. Detailed analysis of materials in this binder can be found in Kenneth De Lisle's monograph *The Hudson River Mail: 1804-1858*, (Albany: Albany Institute of History & Art, 1969). The 37 pages of this volume contain a variety of straightline and circular stamps.

Volume VI. Hudson River Railroad Mail, 1837-1871, contains correspondence conveyed by railroads along the Hudson River. This binder contains over forty examples of manuscript markings, straightline and circular hand stamps, arranged chronologically according to length of use. Seven types of Albany railroad hand stamps have been identified regarding items in this binder. Also included are railroad mail U.S. Express Mail hand stamps. Other material includes railroad stock certificates, freight bills, handbills, and tickets. Correspondents include James Dexter, John Townsend, A.G. Flagg, and Seth Lowe. The binder consists of 42 pages.

Volume VII. The 1847 Issue & 1851-1856 Issue, 1847-1857, highlights the first United States stamp and subsequent early issues. Correspondence addressed to the Otsego County Bank in Cooperstown, NY figures heavily among the covers in this binder. The binder includes monotype, colored and embossed corner cards from Albany organizations and institutions including The Albany Academy, Albany Law School, Boardman Pianos and Albany Iron

and Saw Works. Pages 1-10 display the 1847 issue; pages 11-42 present the 1851-1856 issue.

Volume VIII. 1857-1860 Issue, 1857-1861, while documenting stamp issues of this time span, also contains over forty corner cards from a variety of Albany merchants, including Albany Atlas & Argus, Bacon & Stickney, Boardman, Gray & Co., Pruyn Vosburgh & Co., and George Hepinstall. Pages 1-5 show 1¢ circular rates, pages 3-20 show 3¢ stamp use, and pages 20-39 document corner card use with 1857-1860 3¢ rates.

Volume IX. 1861 Issue, 1861-1862, 1861-1866 Black Jacks, 1861-1868, documents the use of 1¢, 2¢, 3¢, 10¢, 12¢ and 30¢ stamps of the 1860's. Included in the binder are embossed corner cards and circulars. Correspondents include Egbert B. Lansing, James Gazeley, Otsego County Bank and William Little. Pages 3-23 present the 1861 Issue, first design, pages 24-33 display the 1861-1862 Issue, pages 34-37 have 1861-1866 Black Jacks.

Volume X. 1869 Issue, Bank Note Period, Special Delivery, 1869-1895, confirms the use of the first United States pictorial stamp, the first two-color issue and special delivery items. The binder includes registered covers, insurance company covers and national and continental bank note printing. Numbering among the correspondents are James Gazeley and Chauncey M. Depew. Pages 1-9 contain covers with the 1869 Issue, pages 10-35 consist of Bank Note Period covers and pages 36-38 show Special Delivery items.

Volume XI. Albany and New York State Departmental Offices, 1836-1870, portrays correspondence posted during official state business. Covers exist from a variety of offices including the Adjutant-General's Office, Public Instruction, offices of the City and County of Albany, the State Normal School and State Military Agencies. The 41 pages in this binder are arranged, in no specific order, according to agency.

Volume XII. State and Government Departmental Offices, 1853-1880, itemizes covers from New York State and U.S. Government agencies. Included in this binder are covers with departmental Post Office strikes. This volume is rich in departmental corner cards and includes selections designed by Bender and Gavitt. Correspondents include the Office of the State Assembly and the Secretary of State. Pages 1-18 are Assembly covers, pages 21-27 are from the New York State Senate, pages 28-31 are Secretary of State Mail, page 32 is Treasurer's Office mail, pages 33-35 includes covers from State and Federal Courts, pages 36-44 includes New York State Executive Department correspondence, pages 47-49 include the Comptroller's Office, pages 51-61 are completed by the Bank, Canal and Insurance departments.

Volume XIII. Private Mail Carriers and The Albany Essay, 1844-1895, documents mail carried by businesses in competition with

government services and die proofs, color trials and reprints of the 1851 John E. Gavitt designed Albany Essay. Correspondents include Seth Low and Rev. O Scott. Pages 1-7 show Brainard & Co. covers, page 8 includes stock certificates for the Albany Exchange Co., pages 9-12 are Hale & Co. covers, pages 13-15 are from Boyd's City Express, pages 16-19 include Thompson & Co. stamps, page 20 shows a Powell's Albany and Schenectady Express stamp, page 21 has Pullen, Virgil & Co. covers, pages 22-28 detail examples of the 1851 Albany Essay.

Volume XIV. Patriotics and Albany Sanitary Fair Stamps, 1861-1864, shows the use of corner cards with patriotic designs and Albany Army Relief Bazaar-issued stamps. This volume contains correspondence from over fifty individuals, including letters to and from soldiers. Pages 1-32 contain patriotics, pages 35-40 display Sanitary Fair stamps.

Volume XV. Fancy Cancels, 1861-1867, itemizes the range of Albany postal cancellations in use during the 1860's.

Correspondents include James Gazeley and the Otsego County Bank. The 35 pages of this volume illustrate the use of 24 cancellation marks.

#### **Scrapbooks, 1867-1954**

Volume I, 1867-1870, contains bank mail with fancy cancellations and postal cards. 5

Volume II, 1871-1881, details National Bank Notes.

Correspondents include the First National Bank of Albany and the Otsego County Bank.

Volume III, 1873-1876, consists of Albany merchants' correspondence. Correspondents include James Gazeley, James Bradford Prince and A.V. De Witt. Companies include Weed Hudson Sewing Machines, Singer Sewing Machines and Delaware & Hudson C. & R.R. Co.

Volume IV, 1879-1884, includes correspondence and postal cards for James Gazeley, Townsend & Jackson and other Albany merchants.

Volume V, 1882-1887, is comprised of mainly 2¢ brown stamps on covers addressed to, among others, John P. Boyd and Dr. W.O. Stillman.

Volume VI, 1888-1890, highlights the use of 2¢ greens during the late 1880's. Correspondents include Dr. William O. Stillman and John de Witt Peltz.

Volume VII, 1890-1892, primarily demonstrates the use of 1¢ and 2¢ stamps during the 1890's. Many of the covers are addressed to Dr. William O. Stillman. 6

Volume VIII, 1893-1894, covers the use of 1¢ and 2¢ pictorials.

Most of the covers are addressed to Dr William O. Stillman.

Volume IX, 1895-1897, ranges from early machine cancellations to

various hand stamps of the late 1890's. Dr William O. Stillman and Chauncey M. Depew number among the correspondents.

Volume X, 1898-1899, contains special delivery items and examples of machine cancellations by the Barry Co. device. The covers, addressed to Dr William O. Stillman, are from a variety of Albany merchants and state departments.

Volume XI, 1900-1903, showcases early 20th century postal cards. Addressees include Abram Lansing and Chauncey M. Depew.

Volume XII, 1904-1954, has early 20th century postcards with a variety of Continental stamps as well as turn of the century corner cards.

Volume XIII, 1915-1929, is comprised of covers addressed to W.L.L. Peltz and George Habbard. A selection of early business reply cards from Albany businesses are included.

Volume XIV, 1873-1883, includes national bank note covers, 1¢ and 2¢ stamps. Many of the covers, with intact letters, are addressed to James Gazeley.