

Albany Institute of History & Art  
Library

**BC 256**

**The W.L.L. Peltz Collection  
of Postal History**

1702-1969

7.92 lin. ft., 7 boxes

- Series I. Miscellaneous Items, 1864-1969
- Series II. Albany Postal History, 1702-1954
- Series III. Scrapbooks, 1867-1929

February 2000

### **Biographical Note**

William Law Learned Peltz, 1882-1961, was a graduate of 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 was married to Katherine Hun Peltz. An avid collector of Albany memorabilia and a philatelist, Peltz's lifelong interest in postage stamps and postal history is evident in his role as a founding member of the Fort Orange Stamp Club in 1926 and, in 1946, his gift to Brown University of his prestigious Special Delivery Collection.

### **Scope and Content Note**

The W.L.L. Peltz Collection of Postal History, 1702-1954, bulk 1790-1890, consists of three series: Series I, Miscellaneous Items; Series II, The Albany Postal History Collection; Series III, Scrapbooks.

Besides gathering this heterogeneous group of correspondence, which encompasses manuscript letters, stamped and stampless covers, postal cards, corner cards, circulars, hand stamps and machine cancellations, William Law Learned Peltz effected some rudimentary arrangement. Letters and envelopes are mounted within these volumes in a variety of ways, including corner clips, glue and staples. Peltz's penciled annotations are evident throughout the Peltz Collection.

Subsequent to W.L.L. Peltz's death in 1961, the Peltz Collection was marked for deposit in the New York State Historical Association in Cooperstown, N.Y. This decision stemmed from the predominance of correspondence contained in the Peltz Collection addressed to the Cooperstown Bank, or in philatelic terms, the "Cooperstown Find." 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. It was acquired during 1965 as a gift from Mrs. Peltz. 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 men, as well as Mr. Peltz, were members of the Fort Orange Stamp Club, a mainstay for Capital Region philatelists from its inception in 1926. During the late 1950's Peltz arranged for de Lisle and Gallup to refine organization and description of the Peltz Collection with regard to, respectively, the Pre-Stamp and Stamp periods.

With Norman Rice's appointment as Director of the Albany Institute in 1967 and the designation of de Lisle, Gallup and Curran as honorary curators of the Peltz Collection of Postal History, additional work was performed on the first fifteen volumes in the collection. Rice authorized Gallup and de Lisle 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.

In the course of his work on stampless letters (Series II, Volumes I - VI) Kenneth de Lisle assigned fifteen consecutive "types" or classifications to the postal markings of the Albany, N.Y. post office. These types span 1773-1865 and include straightline and circular strikes. During a series of three interviews in January 2000, de Lisle discussed his role in the arrangement and organization of the collection. As a result of these interviews it was determined that all instances of phrases like earliest known and latest used were made entirely at Ken de Lisle's discretion. Readers should consult his checklist attached to this finding aid.

Readers should be aware of Kenneth de Lisle's monograph *The Hudson River Mail: 1804-1858*, (Albany: Albany Institute of History & Art, 1969), two copies of which reside in Box 1, folder 4 of this collection. The monograph provides detailed analysis of material contained in volumes V and VI of the Peltz Collection. With the appearance of this monograph, Norman Rice and the honorary curators of the Peltz Collection had hoped to inaugurate a series of imprints analyzing the Peltz Collection; no further publications were issued.

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 a number of 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. The finds reflected in the Peltz Collection include correspondence to the Otsego County Bank located by George Cooley (or the "Cooperstown Find"); the "Townsend Find" of Townsend Foundry letters, made by Fort Orange Stamp Club member George Habbstand; substantial correspondence from the State Comptroller's Office, also acquired by George Habbstand, which includes a Lockport Provisional; and incoming correspondence to James Gazeley, a monument carver located adjacent to the Albany Rural Cemetery.

Individuals whose correspondence is present in the Peltz Collection include, markedly Nicolas Low (40 items) and Henry Glen (17 items), as well as Sir William Johnson, Stephen Van Rensselaer, Leonard Gansevoort, Aaron Burr, James Gazeley, James Dexter, Dr. William O. Stillman, Edward Vosburgh, and Chauncey M. Depew. Companies and corporate bodies include Boardman, Gray, & Co., Bacon & Stickney, Provisioners; Albany Atlas and Argus, Albany Agricultural Works, Richard A. Pease, E.H. Bender and George Hepinstall. Engravers whose work is represented in the collection's corner cards, circulars and postal cards include Hoffman & Knickerbocker, E. H. Bender and John E. Gavit.

While replete with items that uniquely reflect upon both Albany history and postal history, the Peltz Collection contains a number of noteworthy items. These include an ALS from Sir William Johnson with an unbroken seal, three letters from Aaron Burr discussing his military and legal careers, a signed letter from William B. Winne, Albany's first letter carrier, an elaborately detailed circular from Boardman, Gray & Co., and a number of corner cards of Albany businesses engraved by Gavit. From a philatelic perspective, the collection is notable for a 1½ war rate privilege cover, a rich array of bootleg letters, the first pictorial of 1869, an 1869 two color issue, John E. Gavit's Albany Provisional essays, Albany Army Relief Bazaar stamps (including a full sheet of the 10¢ adhesive), a selection of rare adhesives and hand stamps from private mail carriers, and unique instances of the 1847 3¢, 5¢ and 10¢.

This finding aid was prepared by Caleb Derven.

**BC 258**

Box   Folder/Binder

**Series I. Miscellaneous Items**

.42 lin. ft. (1 box)

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| 1 | 1 | Receipts and Bills, 1864-1869, contains examples from Albany merchants such as E.H. Bender, Annseley & Co. and the Albany Saw Works. |
|   | 2 | Correspondence, 1934   |
|   | 3 | Reprint of Express Mail, 1836-1839, by Ward Hinman   |
|   | 4 | Two copies of <i>The Hudson River Mail: 1804-1858</i> , by Kenneth de Lisle  |

Box   Folder/Binder**Series II. The Albany Postal History Collection**

3.75 lin. ft. (15 binders arranged chronologically and thematically)

2   Volume I. Colonial Period

Volume I, 1702-1790, of the Peltz Collection contains examples of manuscript Albany postal markings and 10 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.

Volume II. Albany Straightlines

Volume II, 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 also 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. 1799-1845 Stampless Period.

Volume III, 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. 1845-1855 Stampless Period.

Volume IV, 1845-1851, 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, N.Y. This binder contains the latest known examples of Albany Post Office markings. Material on pages 1-10 illustrates postage rate changes from 1845-1851, p. 11 contains examples of type XI circles, p. 12-23 detail postage rate changes from 1851-1855, p. 24-26 contain type XII circles, p. 27-30 show type XIII circles, 31-32 have types XIV and XV circles.

Box   Folder/Binder[2]   Volume V. The Hudson River Mail.

Volume V, 1804-1850, 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.

3   Volume VI. Hudson River Railroad Mail

Volume VI, 1837-1871, contains correspondence conveyed by railroads along the Hudson River. This binder contains over 40 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 with regard to 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

Volume VII, 1847-1857, highlights the first United States stamp and subsequent early issues. Correspondence addressed to the Otsego County Bank in Cooperstown, N.Y. 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.

Volume VIII, 1857-1861, while documenting stamp issues of this time span, also contains over 40 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, p. 3-20 show 3¢ stamp use, and p. 20-39 document corner card use with 1857-60 3¢ rates.

Volume IX. 1861 Issue, 1861-1862 Issue, 1861-1866 Black Jacks

Volume IX, 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, p. 24-33 display the 1861-1862 Issue, p. 34-37 have 1861-1866 Black Jacks.

Box   Folder/Binder

- [3]   Volume X. 1869 Issue, Bank Note Period, Special Delivery.  
Volume X, 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.

- 4   Volume XI. Albany and New York State Departmental Offices.  
Volume XI, 1836-1870, portrays correspondence posted in the course of 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.  
Volume XII, 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, p. 32 is Treasurer's Office mail, p. 33-35 includes covers from State and Federal Courts, p.36-44 is New York State Executive Department correspondence, p. 47-49 include the Comptroller's Office, p. 51-61 are completed by the Bank, Canal and Insurance departments.

Volume XIII. Private Mail Carriers and The Albany Essay.  
Volume XIII, 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, p. 8 includes stock certificates for the Albany Exchange Co., p. 9-12 are Hale & Co. covers, p. 13-15 are from Boyd's City Express, p. 16-19 include Thompson & Co. stamps, p. 20 shows a Powell's Albany and Schenectady Express stamp, p. 21 has Pullen, Virgil & Co. covers, p. 22-28 detail examples of the 1851 Albany Essay.

Volume XIV. Patriotics and Albany Sanitary Fair Stamps.  
Volume XIV, 1861-1864, circumstantiates the use of corner cards with patriotic designs and Albany Army Relief Bazaar-issued stamps. This volume contains correspondence from over 50 individuals, including letters to and from soldiers. Pages 1-32 contain patriotics, pages 35-40 display Sanitary Fair stamps.

Box   Folder/Binder

[4]   Volume XV. Fancy Cancels

Volume XV, 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.

Box   Folder/Binder**Series III. Scrapbooks**

3.75 lin. ft. (14 volumes arranged chronologically)

- 5   Volume I, 1867-1870, 56 items, contains bank mail with fancy cancellations and postal cards.

Volume II, 1871-1881, 180 items, details National Bank Notes. Correspondents include the First National Bank of Albany and the Otsego County Bank.

Volume III, 1873-1876, 116 items, 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, 166 items includes correspondence and postal cards for James Gazeley, Townsend & Jackson and other Albany merchants.

Volume V, 1882-1887, 132 items, 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, 149 items, highlights the use of 2¢ greens during the late 1880's. Correspondents include Dr. William O. Stillman and John de Witt Peltz.

- 6   Volume VII, 1890-1892, 107 items, primarily demonstrates the use of 1¢ and 2¢ stamps during the 1890's. Again, many of the covers are addressed to Dr. William O. Stillman.

Volume VIII, 1893-1894, 140 items, covers the use of 1¢ and 2¢ pictorials. The majority of the covers are addressed to Dr William O. Stillman.

Volume IX, 1895-1897, 209 items, 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, 189 items, 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, 188 items, showcases early 20th century postal cards. Addressees include Abram Lansing and Chauncey M. Depew.

- 7   Volume XII, 1904-1954, 176 items, has early 20th century postcards with a variety of Continental stamps as well as turn of the century corner cards.

Box   Folder/Binder

- [7]   Volume XIII, 1915-1929, 128 items, is comprised of covers addressed to W.L.L. Peltz and George Hubbard. A selection of early business reply cards from Albany businesses are included.

Volume XIV, 1873-1883, 114 items, includes national bank note covers, 1¢ and 2¢ stamps. Many of the covers, with intact letters, are addressed to James Gazeley.