

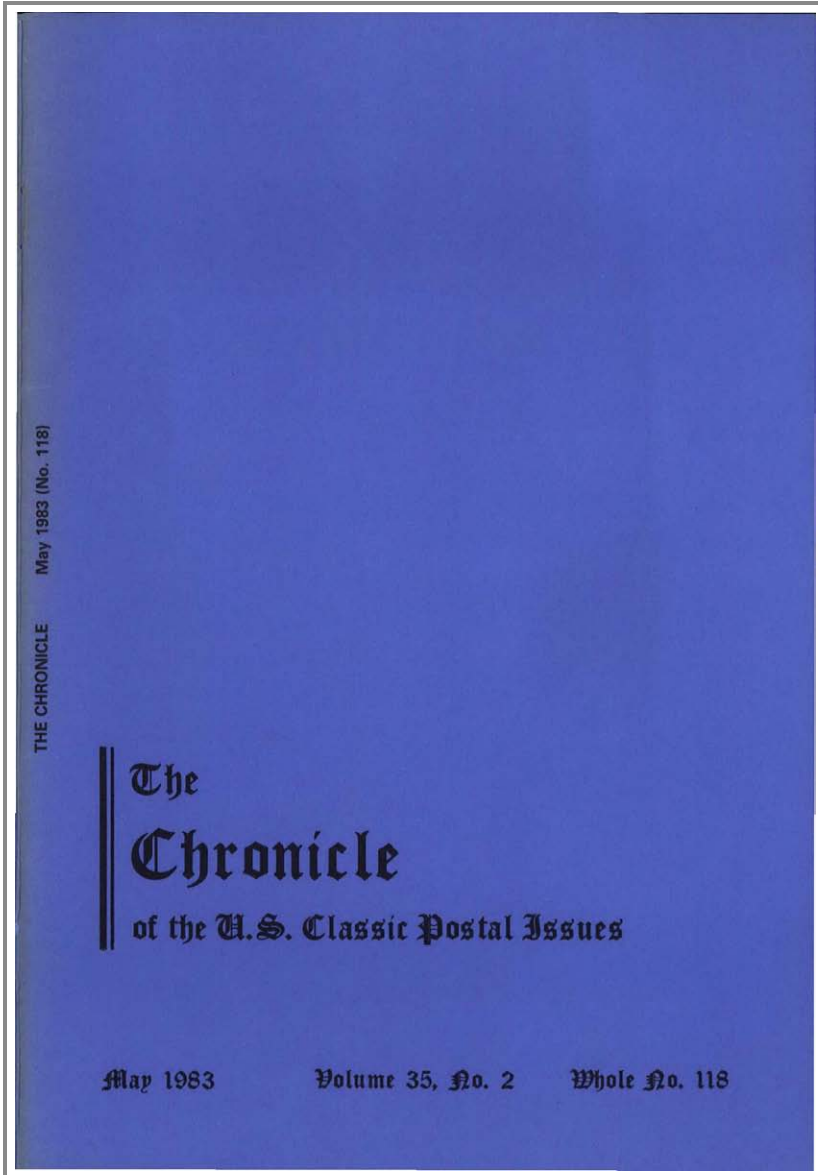


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## A DELAWARE RIVER MARKING

FREDERICK A. VALENTINE

The folded stampless cover illustrated here originated at "Tusculum" on Oct. 2, 1834, and was posted at Wilmington, Delaware, on Oct. 3. It was then sent by river steamer to Philadelphia. The postal markings consist of a red 26mm WILMN. DE. circular postmark dated Oct. 3, an orange-red octagon containing a side-wheeler steamboat (34mm by 21mm), and a faint red ms. "6." The reddish ink of the octagon is quite oily, so that it has soaked out in the way old inks of that period sometimes do. Furthermore, the aging of the cover would make it very difficult to have faked this cover because the creases and tears intrude into the edges of the marking. There is no running of ink onto the edges of the tear. The cover was purchased from an old-time Los Angeles dealer about 20 years ago.

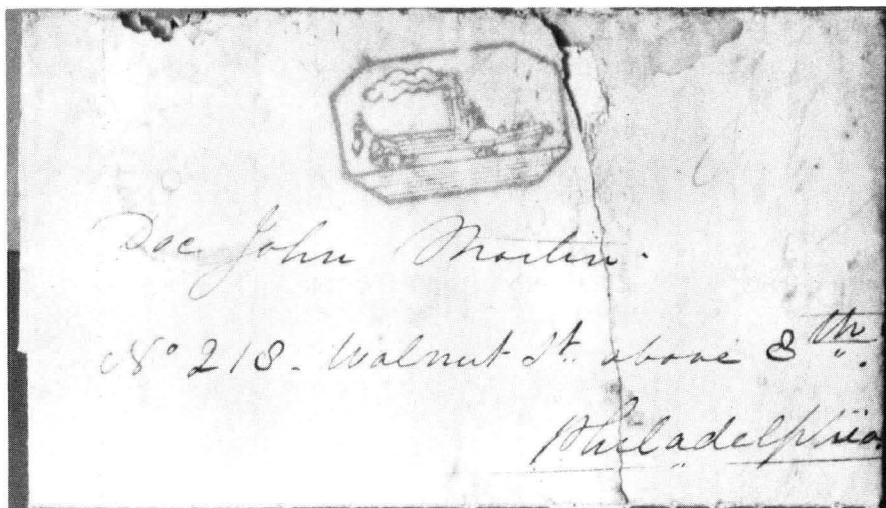


Figure 1. Folded letter with Wilmington postmark, Oct. 3, (1834), and handstruck marking in red.

"Tusculum" should not be confused with Tuscaloosa or such similar names occurring in Alabama or elsewhere in the deep South. There is a Tusculum, N.J., and a Tusculum, Va. Of these only Tusculum, N.J., might qualify, although this seems unlikely because of its location. There is a good possibility that Tusculum refers to an estate or institution in or near Wilmington, Del. The enclosure written by a Mrs. R.C. Connell supports this point of view, and it is reproduced here for that reason.

Tusculum, Oct. 2d., 1834

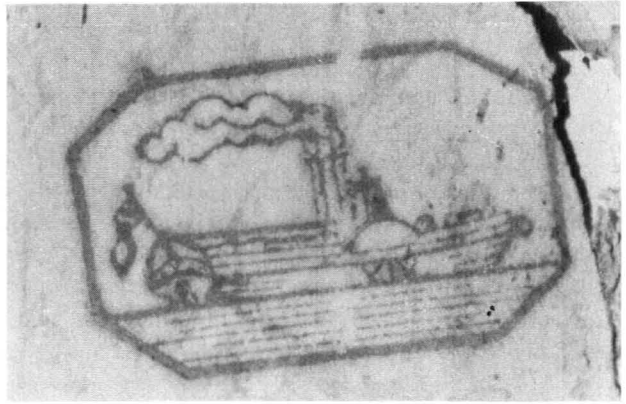
Mr. C. has just arrived and alarmed us a good deal with regard to the Cholera — he wishes me to decide about Martin's coming. I really know not what to do. I am sorry the responsibility is thrown on me — I can only say that if there are any new cases up in the city and fresh cause for alarm that I think he had better come with you, particularly if he can be absent from his studies without serious detriment. He will also have to make an arrangement about his music lessons — but if the alarm has subsided and no new cases and Martin would rather stay why let him do so. Still I confess, I would feel better if he were here . . . I had a note half written to you yesterday, but Mr. C. would not wait until I would finish. Mr. C. I suppose told you that Alex has gone to Dover, he returned yesterday evening and has a severe cold. However, he is not bad enough to keep at home for he has gone into Church tonight. There is a four days meeting at St. Andrews Church — We have nothing new that I know of in our City.

R. C. Connell

There is a letter for you — it appears to come from one of the new post offices — name Sunflower.

The references to Dover, the brief interval between the dateline and Wilmington postmark date, and the implied proximity to Philadelphia strongly suggest an origin near

**Figure 2. Enlarged view of octagonal handstamp.**



Wilmington. In view of the above information it appears that this marking should be listed under the category "Inland Waterways Mail Markings" in the *American Stampless Cover Catalog*. The 6¢ rate may very well be the rate for distances not over 30 miles, since Wilmington and Philadelphia are only about 25 miles apart.

Additional information about Tusculum would be much appreciated since I have not been able to locate it precisely.

**Review: Opinions: Philatelic Expertizing — An Inside View.** Edited by Elizabeth C. Pope. Published by The Philatelic Foundation, 270 Madison Ave., New York, N. Y. 10016. 150 pages, hardbound, over 60 photographs. \$20.00 from publisher.

I must admit that I'm prejudiced in favor of puzzle-solvers. Having neither the temperament nor the talent myself, I find what they do nothing short of magic. So, I'm more than mildly interested when a book comes along that combines problem-solving with philately.

*Opinions* is a fascinating collection of philatelic problems delivered to the experts of the Philatelic Foundation for solution — and, it's hoped, for the accolade of accolades — "Genuine in all respects." Often the conclusion is a surprise to the reader and not always a happy one, nor for that matter is there always a conclusion. I would be less than honest if I did not admit to fits of frustration that the decision is at times left up in the air — but these are minor challenges to a delightful and most informative collection.

For added spice, the cake includes an overview of the procedures followed by some of the more artful forgers and counterfeiters, with selected examples of their work as well as the methods used to expose their forgeries.

The five chapters of *Opinions* provide examples of problem stamps and covers originating in the United States, the Confederate States, the American Possessions, Foreign Offices, and the British Commonwealth and General Foreign. The sampling has been chosen to cover almost all fields of philatelic interest. Equally varied are the approaches taken by the experts to come to their conclusions. And the touch of humor every now and then as evidenced by such titles as: Genuine Stamp, Genuine Cover, Fake Use; Fancy Cancells, Fact or Fantasy?; and A Shade of Difference Makes a Major Difference adds to the pleasure of this scholarly collection of essays. The book is heavily weighted in the direction of U.S. Classics, on and off cover. This reflects the proportion of such material coming through the Foundation for expertizing. The authors of the articles in the U.S. Classics area are well-known members of this society.

Elizabeth Pope, the Editor, has concocted a brew that is palatable and addictive — a selection of articles by well-respected and most familiar names of philately intended for fits and starts of reading with the challenge — put me down if you can. I readily admit that I couldn't!

Herbert Bohren