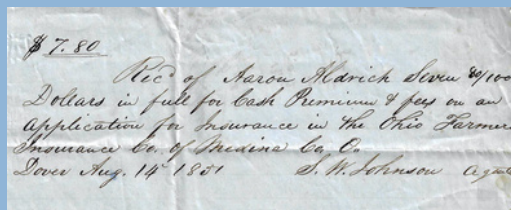


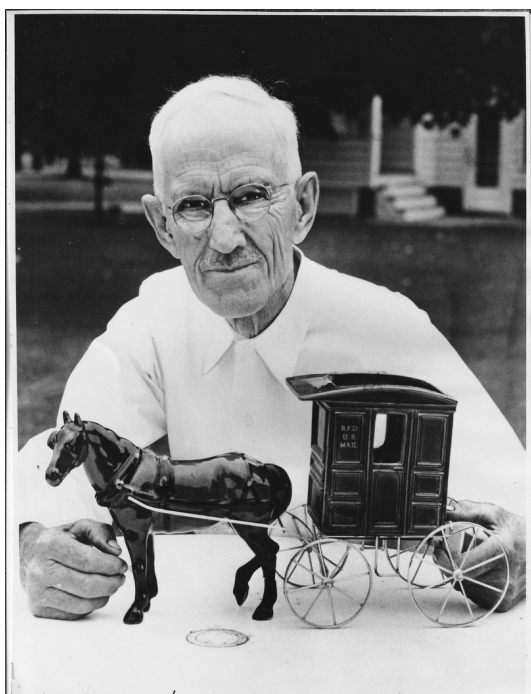
# BAY VILLAGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## Preserving the Character of Our City



## The West Dover Post Office

The first recorded post office in Dover Township was kept inside of **Asahel (Asa) Porter's** store on the lake shore near the Avon Lake border. Asa Porter, one of Dover's first settlers served as Postmaster there in 1815. A **Postmaster** is the head of an individual post office, responsible for all postal activities inside a specific post office. 5 years later, **Reuben Osborn**, another of Dover's original settlers, moved the post office into his home on Lake Road and became Postmaster himself. The post office moved quite a few times throughout the 1800s. From Reuben Osborn's home and to multiple grocery and family stores, including the Cahoon Store. There were also many changes in Postmaster along the way!



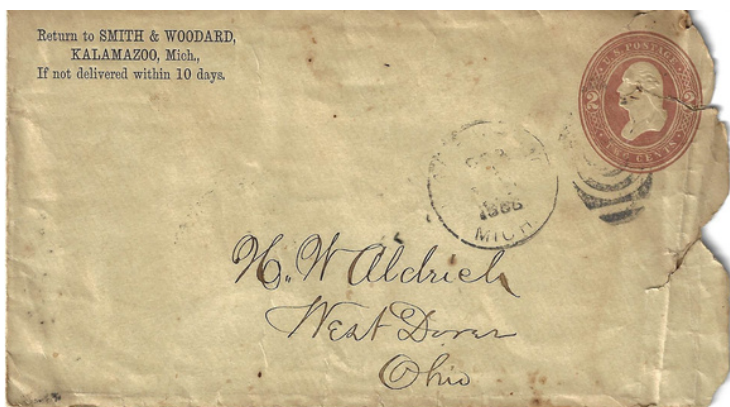
At one point, the post office resided in yet another Dover resident's home. This resident's name was Gus Fortlage, who served as Postmaster during the time. He was offered a contract to start the first rural mail route out of West Dover. This meant they would deliver mail to the residents in the rural areas surrounding West Dover, as far West as Nagel Road (in what is current day Avon). Gus, however, did not wish to deliver the mail himself. Instead, he recruited Ernest A. Wuebker, also known as Ernie, to be the mailman for this new post office. Ernie would receive fifty dollars a month (about \$1700 in 2023) and was required to provide his own transportation at his own cost. This sounded like a great deal to Ernie! In 1904 he became West Dover's first rural letter carrier and began delivering mail either by bicycle or horseback. The mail would have taken several days to be delivered.



At the time, the population was scarce. Ernie recalls only 10 houses on Lake Road from the banks of the Rocky River to Dover Center Road. Later, Ernie purchased a green mail wagon that could be drawn by horse, a much more comfortable ride than either bicycle or horseback. However, the real upgrade came in 1916 when he upgraded up a Model "T" Ford. By 1925 the mail route was completely motorized. As roads and automobile technology continued to improve, mail routes were merged, and the West Dover Post Office was closed in 1935. Ernie retired after over 30 yrs of service, happy to retired to his beekeeping and fruit farm!

Throughout Ernie's career as a mail carrier, he would have seen many variations of stamped envelopes and postage stamps. The first **general issue U.S. postage stamp** went on sale on July 1, 1847 in New York City. One, priced at five cents, depicted Benjamin Franklin. The other, priced at ten cents, depicted George Washington. These stamps would have been cut out from pre-gummed, non-perforated sheets.

In 1853 the first **stamped envelopes** were issued. A stamped enveloped is printed with the stamp already on it and then sold at the cost of postage plus the cost of manufacturing the envelope. Beginning January 1, 1856, all mailers were required to prepay postage using U.S. postage stamps. The envelope below shows an example of a stamped envelope issued in 1853. The portrait within a frame format became very common over the next century and was sued for than 500 major varieties of stamped envelopes.



Stamps and stamped envelopes most often featured figures such as Benjamin Franklin, George Washington, or historical events or monuments, such as a depiction of the Mayflower. Below you will find more examples of early stamped envelopes and postage stamps.



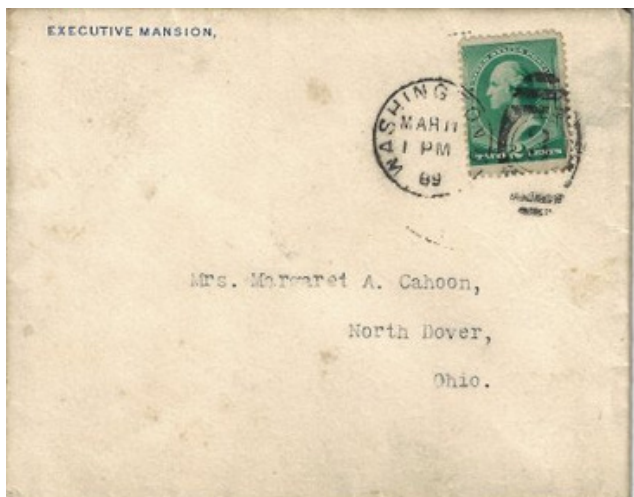
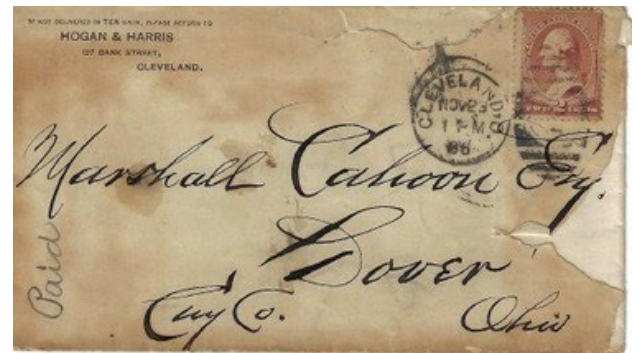


This letter was written and addressed by Mrs. Mary A. Aldrich out of West Dover, Ohio. The recipient is her Grandma. It was postmarked on November 5, 1887 at 2:30pm at the Cleveland Post Office.

This envelope shows the earliest example of a United States **stamped envelope**, issued July 1, 1853. It features an embossed profile of George Washington within a green oval, it was also issued in red.

This letter was written and addressed by Mr. Marshall Cahoon out of Dover, Ohio. Postmarked on November 23, 1886, at 1:00pm at the Cleveland Post Office.

This stamp is a 2 cent 1883 series United States postage stamp, perforated. It depicts the profile of George Washington.



This piece of mail was written and addressed to Mr. Margaret A. Cahoon of North Dover, Ohio. It was postmarked on March 11, 1889 at 1:00pm at the Washington Post Office.

The stamp shown was first issued on August 15, 1887. It is perforated and cost 2 cents. This green color was a new addition to the original red brown issue.



# Design Your Own Stamps

## Supplies Needed:

- postage stamp template
- drawing and coloring utensils
- scissors
- glue

## Instructions

- First, print the postage stamp template found below.
- Using your drawing and coloring utensils, design your own stamps! The U.S. Postage system releases new stamps every year. Visit the Postal Museum's virtual stamp collection here: <https://postalmuseum.si.edu/collections/us-stamps> to explore thousands of stamp designs. On the right hand side you are able to filter by "Date," with examples dating back to early forms of postage in the 1750s.
- Optional: Cut and glue your stamps to the outside of pretend letters and envelopes. Note: these are not official postage and cannot be used to mail items.



- If you are interested in philately, the study of stamps, stamped envelopes, and other items related to postage, and would like to begin collecting stamps, we encourage you to reach out to Mr. Michael Lynn. Mr. Lynn would be happy to get you started with a stamp collection kit, all at no cost. You can reach him via email at [usstamps@mac.com](mailto:usstamps@mac.com).
- We would love to see the stamps you create! Share a picture with us via email [bvhsrosehill@gmail.com](mailto:bvhsrosehill@gmail.com), or share on Facebook and tag Bay Village Historical Society



# My Stamps

