



The Overprint

Newsletter of the Reading Stamp Collectors' Club

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**Most Meetings Held the first Tuesday of Every Month at 7:00 p.m.
Meeting Site: Berkshire Commons, 5485 Perkiomen Avenue (Route 422)
Turn North on Lincoln opposite of the Dairy Queen.
Proceed 300 feet, turn left on Washington and look right of center at the stop sign.**

Tuesday, March 4, at 7:00 p.m.

“Specialized Switzerland”

...presented by Dr. Carlson Chambliss

**The three sweetest things on earth; Swiss chocolate,
Swiss Maidens and Swiss Stamps.
Ok, we will only have the Swiss Stamps at the meeting,
but if we can only have one, that is the best!**

Weather or Not?

Basically, if either the Reading or Exeter Schools close for the day, or close early, the meeting is automatically cancelled.

If the weather is questionable, we may still cancel—check with an officer before going out in severe cold below 15 degrees, or in ice, snow, etc.

Dues are Due

Dues for 2014 are due and payable if you have not as yet blessed our Treasurer, Mike Matus, with your \$10 family payment. Please mail a check to him at 157 Lucinda Lane, Wyomissing, PA 19610. It would help him to close the books if you could do this before the end of March. Thanks!!!

The Ultimate in "Going Postal"

We recently took a look at mail delivery in the Roman Empire.

Now let's take a look at the movement of mail in colonial America.

Until almost 1640, and in many areas even long after, mail was sent via friends, merchants, slaves and Native Americans.

For example, in South Jersey the Lanope Indians (related to our Lenape) acted as mail carriers.

What made the service interesting was that the Lanope sometimes attacked settlers. I know of no instance where the "postmen" attacked one of their patrons (although it well could have happened) but if such hostility occurred it may have been the first instance of "going postal."

In 1639, the General Court of Massachusetts designated a Boston tavern as the exchange point for mail leaving or arriving in the colony from overseas.

This followed the European custom of using taverns as post offices, as well as for some banking transactions in the past.

Local authorities set up routes in their areas and in 1673 a route between New York and Boston was established. Cutting edge progress, it failed. However, the pathway generally became part of a major roadway.

Ten years after the initiation of the Boston-New York route, Governor

William Penn founded Pennsylvania's first post office.

In 1692, Thomas Neale was contracted by the British crown to set up a colonies-wide mail delivery system. Neale had never been to North America and had no idea what he was up against. Thus, he failed and the postal service passed hands until it was bought out by the British government.

The postal system continued to lose money. But in 1753 Benjamin Franklin, and an assistant, took over the project. By 1760 the post office was making a profit. Good management was a definite part of the success, but no doubt that the increase in population created opportunities in a nation of greater population concentration.

Franklin would end up losing his job for being too sympathetic to the colonies in the stormy times before the Revolutionary War, but the die was set. After interference by the conflict, the mail was delivered for ever after.

Postscript: Your editor is a life member of the Society for PA Archaeology and an article in our journal a few years ago documented mail delivery by Natives.

Interaction between colonists and Indians resulted in a complicated relationship. For example, Berks Countians were taken prisoner during the French and Indian War by Natives who spoke Pennsylvania Dutch!