

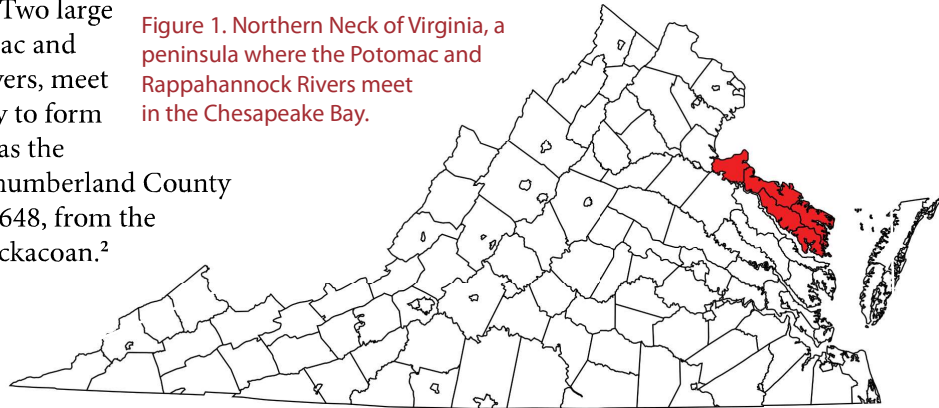
JENKINS EXPRESS – A NEW LISTING

Patricia A. Kaufmann

Background

Before 1600, the Chickacoan Indians lived on the peninsula known as the Northern Neck of Virginia for at least 10,000 years. Figure 1 shows its location within the State of Virginia.¹ Two large tributaries, the Potomac and the Rappahannock rivers, meet in the Chesapeake Bay to form the peninsula known as the Northern Neck. Northumberland County was created Oct. 12, 1648, from the Indian District of Chickacoan.²

Figure 1. Northern Neck of Virginia, a peninsula where the Potomac and Rappahannock Rivers meet in the Chesapeake Bay.



The Northern Neck encompasses the counties of Lancaster, Northumberland, Richmond and

Westmoreland. King George County is also included by some as part of the Neck. For hundreds of years, Northumberland remained a county largely isolated from the rest of the state due to the lack of a road network. This northernmost peninsula of Virginia became the ancestral home for some of America's greatest colonial families. It was the birthplace of three of the first five presidents of the United States: George Washington, James Madison and James Monroe. Richard Lee and Francis Lightfoot Lee, two of the signers of the *Declaration of Independence*, made their homes there and Robert E. Lee was born there.

Newly Recorded Express Covers

No Civil War express company mail in the region of the Chesapeake Bay has been identified and recorded until now, although the delivery of mail is known to have existed in the area along the Union-patrolled river borders. The Neck was under Union control for most of the war, although the residents were decidedly

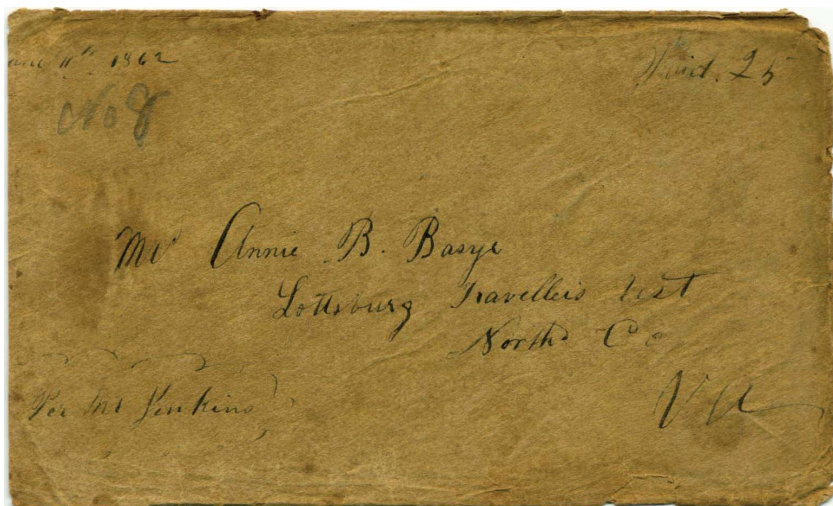


Figure 2. Cover carried across the Rappahannock River for 25¢ by Jenkins Express from Pvt. Henry Basye to his wife in Lottsburg, Va.

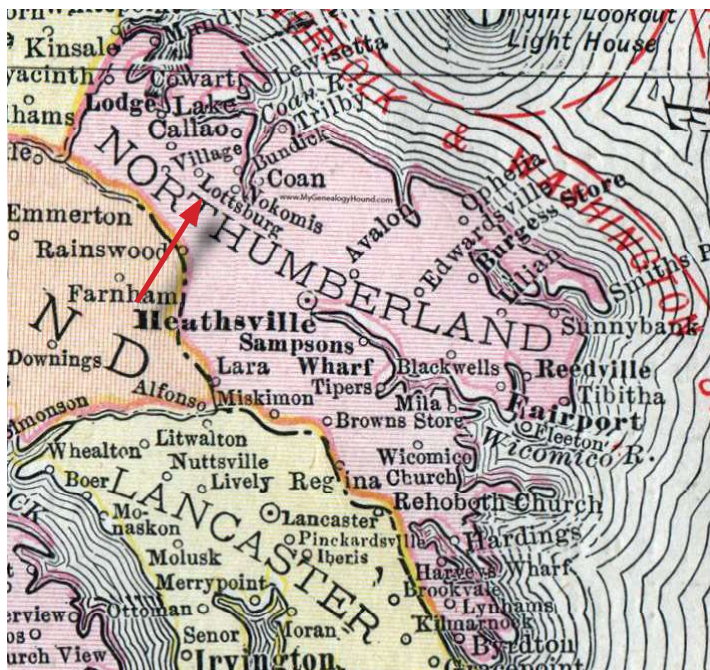
Figure 3. Northumberland and Lancaster counties, showing the town of Lottsburg (visible just above the “THUMB” of “Northumberland”).

Southern and owned a large population of slaves.

At first glance, the cover in Figure 2 is a somewhat ordinary-looking stampless use. But, when closely examined, it immediately makes the astute postal historian’s heart begin to race.

The envelope is addressed to “Mrs. Annie B. Basye, Lottsburg, Traveller’s (sic) Rest, Northd (Northumberland) Co[unty] Va.”

Illustrated in Figure 3 is a close-up of the area showing Northumberland and Lancaster counties, including the town of Lottsburg, which Henry and Annie Basye called home. Lottsburg is located on the Coan River, a tributary off the Potomac. Nearby is Cowart, their home at the end of life.



Henry Basye married Anna (“Annie”) Ball Harding on Dec. 27, 1859.³ She was the daughter of William Washington Harding and Rebecca A. Traverse.⁴

At the upper right of the cover is manuscript “Paid 25” and, at lower left, “Per Mr. Jenkins.” To a serious student of Confederate postal history, the 25¢ rate immediately resonates as something unusual.

The date of “[J]une 8th 1862” is also written on the cover, as well as a penciled “No 8.” The numbering is familiar to soldiers of any war. Wartime letters and envelopes were frequently numbered, as mail was often lost or delivered out of the order when written during the chaos of war.

This Jenkins Express use is blessedly not a guessing game, as many philatelic conundrums are. It comes with certainty, for the original letter providentially describes the delivery process.

The penciled June 8, 1862, six-page letter reads, in part, (punctuation added throughout this article for clarity, although not spelling corrections):

I take this chance to write you a few lines by Mr. Jenkins, if he can get home safe. He is the man who brings letters to us. I saw him the other day. He told me that he would carry this letter to Lottsburg. You can get it when he calls for it ... This man Jenkins charges 25¢ a piece every letter that he brings or carries so I told him that if he would carry this letter to you and bring an answer that I would give him a half dollar and he said he would do so by this means. I can get a letter from you every time that I send one to you. I don't think that I shall get more than one in a month unless you can send me one now and then by some other way. But if we cross the James River you will not hear from me for two or three months or it may be longer ... I am going to send you the same amount (\$20) by Mr. Jenkins if he will carry it to you ... I am afraid to put it in the letter because if Yankeys [sic] cross him he would have to throw his letters away and maybe he could keep the money. He can fool me if he has a mind to do so. Fifty cents is a big price to pay for a letter but I will give \$5

for every one that I get from you ... Your very affectionate husband Henry Basye.

In military records at the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), shown in Figure 4, Henry Basye is recorded as a 28-year-old private who enlisted March 27, 1862, and mustered into Company D, 9th Virginia Cavalry Regiment. The regiment was known as the "Lancaster Cavalry," as the men were from Lancaster County, Northern Neck of Virginia.

Henry was present on all rolls until May 1864, at which time he was either noted as sick or AWOL through the final roll on Oct. 20, 1864. There is no further record. However, this correspondence – both letters and postal uses – proves he was still in the field, regardless of what the military records state.

Henry's letters are mostly quite long, and many have superb battle content. They are generally written in pencil and on any piece of paper upon which he could get his hands. At least one letter is written on three different types of paper and others, such as the Figure 5 example, are penned on lined pages torn from a small 3½- by 5½-inch binder.

The correspondence was sold by an elderly Basye family member almost a decade ago and has mostly already been disseminated in the marketplace. The lot was acquired more than 1,000 miles from Northumberland County and more than 150 years after

Henry wrote the letters to his wife.

I was fortunate that the purchaser, although not a philatelist, was someone I've dealt with off and on for the last few decades. He correctly assumed there was postal history significance to the penciled express designation and description of mail conveyance in the letter and thus asked my opinion. Because of my help, I was given first opportunity to buy out of the lot, which is historically exciting, as well as important to Civil War philately.

The second express use, shown in Figure 6, is also addressed to Annie in pencil. In ink is noted "Politeness of Mr. Jenkins" and "Paid 25cts" with a penciled "No 13" to indicate the

Figure 5. One of Henry Basye's letters, written on pages torn from a small binder.

Confederate.)
 B 9 Cav. Va.
 Henry Basye
 Pvt. Co. D, 9 Reg't Virginia Cavalry.*
 Appears on
 Company Muster Roll
 of the organization named above,
 for Mch. 1st. 1862.
 Enlisted:
 When Mch. 27, 1862.
 Where Camp Stafford
 By whom Capt. Lewis
 Period 3 yrs.
 Last paid: Capt. S. Baker
 By whom Mch. 1, 1864.
 To what time Present
 Present or absent Present
 Remarks:
 *This company was successively designated as Captain Lewis' Company Virginia Cavalry; Captain Lewis' Company, 1st Battalion Virginia Cavalry; Captain Lewis' Company and Company D, 9th Regiment Virginia Cavalry.
 The 9th (also known as Johnson's) Regiment Virginia Cavalry was organized by S. O. No. 6 Hd. Qrs. Aquia District, dated January 18, 1862, which directed the addition of two independent companies to the 1st Battalion Virginia Cavalry, the latter having been formed about November 1st, 1861, with eight companies. Captain Sanford's Company served with the battalion and the regiment until its reorganization, about March 18, 1862, when it was assigned to the 15th Battalion Virginia Cavalry as Company A.
 Book mark:
 (642) J. Basye Copyist.

Figure 4. One of the military records of Henry Basye, Company D, 9th Virginia Cavalry Regiment.

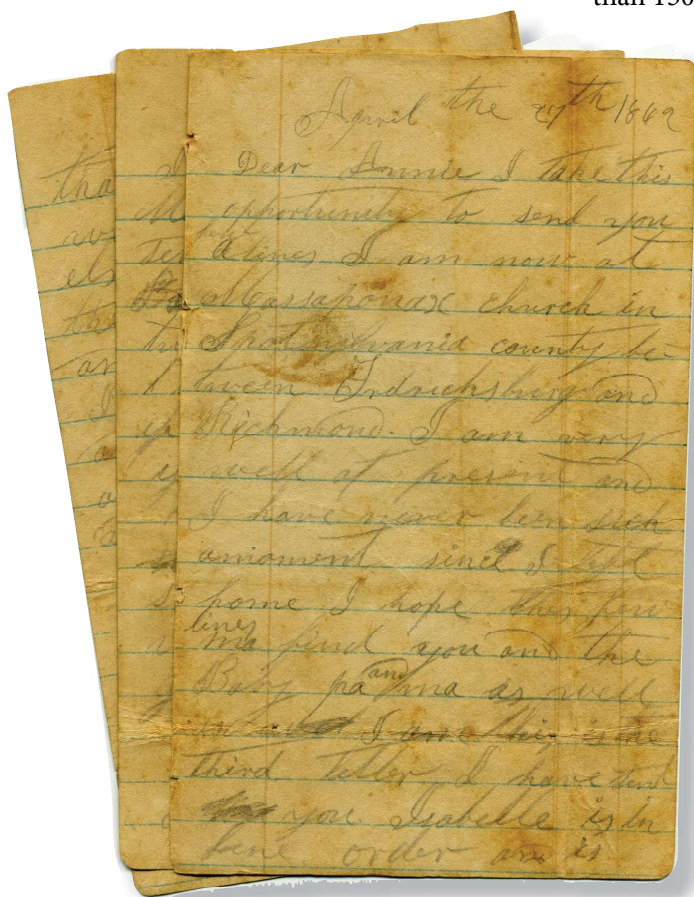
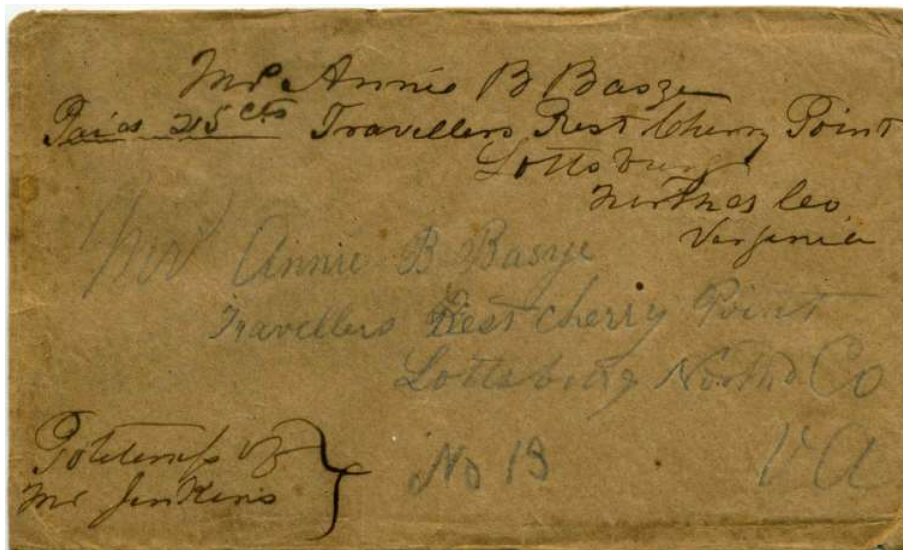


Figure 6. A second express use sent "Politeness of Mr. Jenkins" and "Paid 25cts," directed to Annie B. Basye at Travellers [sic] Rest, Cherry Point, Lottsburg, Northd. Co. Virginia.



number in the series. It is directed to "Mrs. Annie B. Basye Travellers Rest, Cherry Point, Lottsburg, Northd. Co. Virginia."

Traveler's Rest and Cherry Point appear to be a routing directive with Lottsburg as the final destination. It is not certain where Jenkins crossed the Rappahannock with his cargo of letters. It likely varied depending on the location of Union troops patrolling the river.

The enclosed letter is dated "July the 16th 1862," about a month after the first express use.

In the second express letter Henry relates, in part:

I take this opportunity to write you a few lines by Mr. Jenkins. He is here this morning and says he is going down tomorrow. We are now on this side of Richmond about 9 miles at the time that Charles Betts left. We were on the south side of Richmond about 30 miles but after the Yankeys were driven back under their gunboats, we fell back on this side. The big fight at Richmond that you speak of is over, for this time we have flogged the Yankeys bad and have driven them away from Richmond about 35 miles and but for the gunboats we would have captured McClelland's whole army ... I had rather be up here two to one than to have the war down home and be there myself. It is the best thing that ever happened for the northern neck leaving it unprotected. I tell you that it is an awful thing for an army to pass through a country, friend or foe. Our colonel (W.H.F. "Rooney" Lee) is a son of General (Robert E.) Lee. Our regiment stands very high in the estimation of General Lee. You know that he is the boss dog of the boneyard and he stands very high in my estimation. I don't think there is a better General in the world than he is ... We have not seen (brother) Octavous since the last battle was fought ... I was close to brother William the other day but did not see him. He was in the same battle I was in. His battery took the Yankeys battery. Dick (a third brother, Richard) is well; I saw him today.

The Basye Brothers

Louis Octavous Basye (1838-95), one of Henry's brothers, served as a private in Company F, 40th Regiment Virginia Infantry and rose to the rank of 3rd Sergeant. He was captured at Falling Waters, Md., July 14, 1863, during the retreat from the Battle of Gettysburg when Lee's men could not cross the Potomac due to rain-swollen rivers and the loss of a pontoon bridge at nearby Falling Waters to a Union cavalry raid. Octavous was exchanged at Baltimore on March 3, 1864. Henry's letters spell his brother's name Octavous, although I found it spelled many ways.

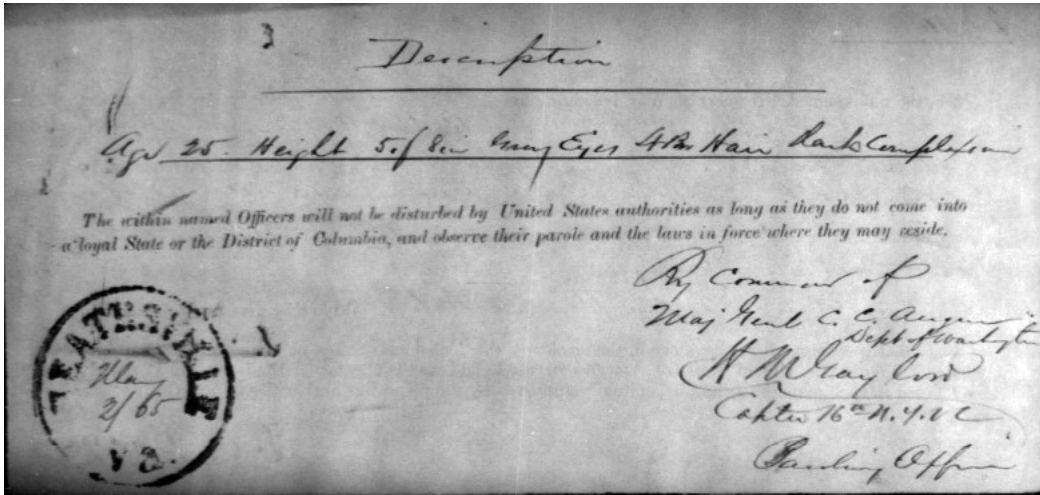


Figure 7 (above). Louis Octavous Basye's May 1865 parole.

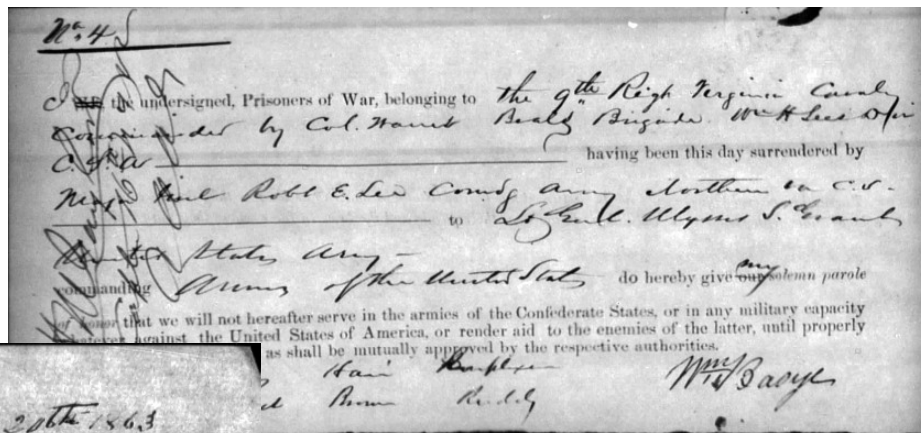


Figure 8 (right). William Basye's Oath of Allegiance

Figure 9 (below). Letter showing reimbursement for Dick Basye's horse, which was killed in action July 20, 1863. (NARA)

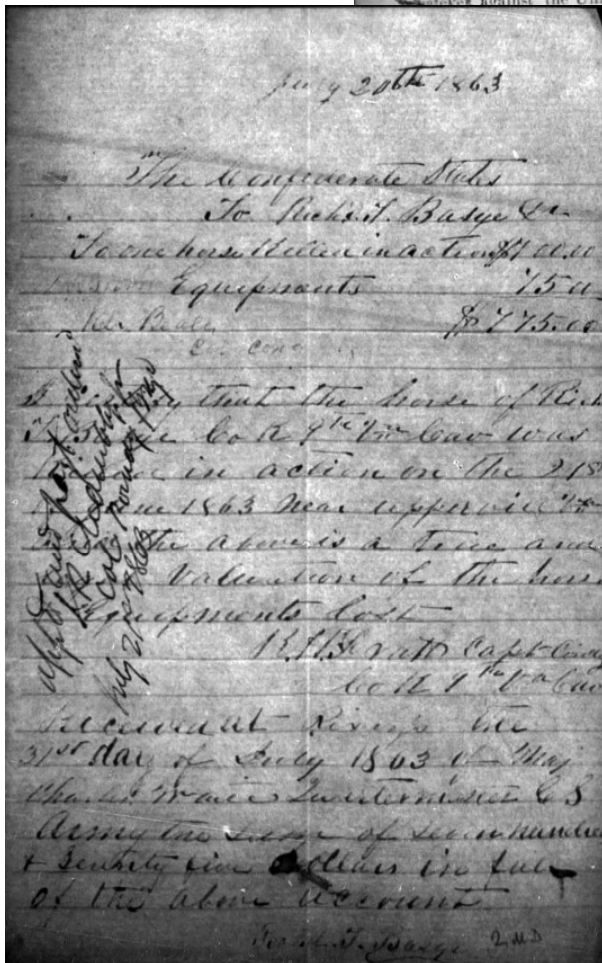


Figure 7 shows Octavous' parole, dated May 2, 1865, at Heathsville, Va. (Northumberland County), in which he is described as age 25, five feet, eight inches tall, with gray eyes, light brown hair and dark complexion.

William Bayse (1829-64), Henry's older brother, enlisted the same day as Henry. He also served as a private in Company D, 9th Regiment Virginia Cavalry, Capt. Meriwether Lewis' Company of "Lancaster Cavalry," Gen. Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia. He was listed as sick from Oct. 19, 1862, through January 1863. He was present at the final roll on Oct. 20, 1864.

Brother William's Oath of Allegiance is shown as Figure 8, and his parole is dated and handstamped the same day as his brother Octavous. William's physical description is close to his younger brother's at five feet, seven and a-half inches tall with hazel eyes, brown hair and ruddy complexion.

Richard (Dick) Basye, the fourth brother, served as corporal, then 2nd sergeant in Company K, 9th Regiment Virginia Cavalry, also known as the Richmond County Cavalry. He was in the same regiment but in a different company.

Figure 9 reveals a July 20, 1863, letter stating that Dick's horse was killed in action near Upperville, Va. Dick was paid \$700 for the horse and \$75 for equipment.

Battles along the Rappahannock

It has been asserted that more pitched battles were fought along the banks of the Rappahannock River than any other river in this country. Fortunately for citizens of the Northern Neck, these battles were more often on the southern side of the river.

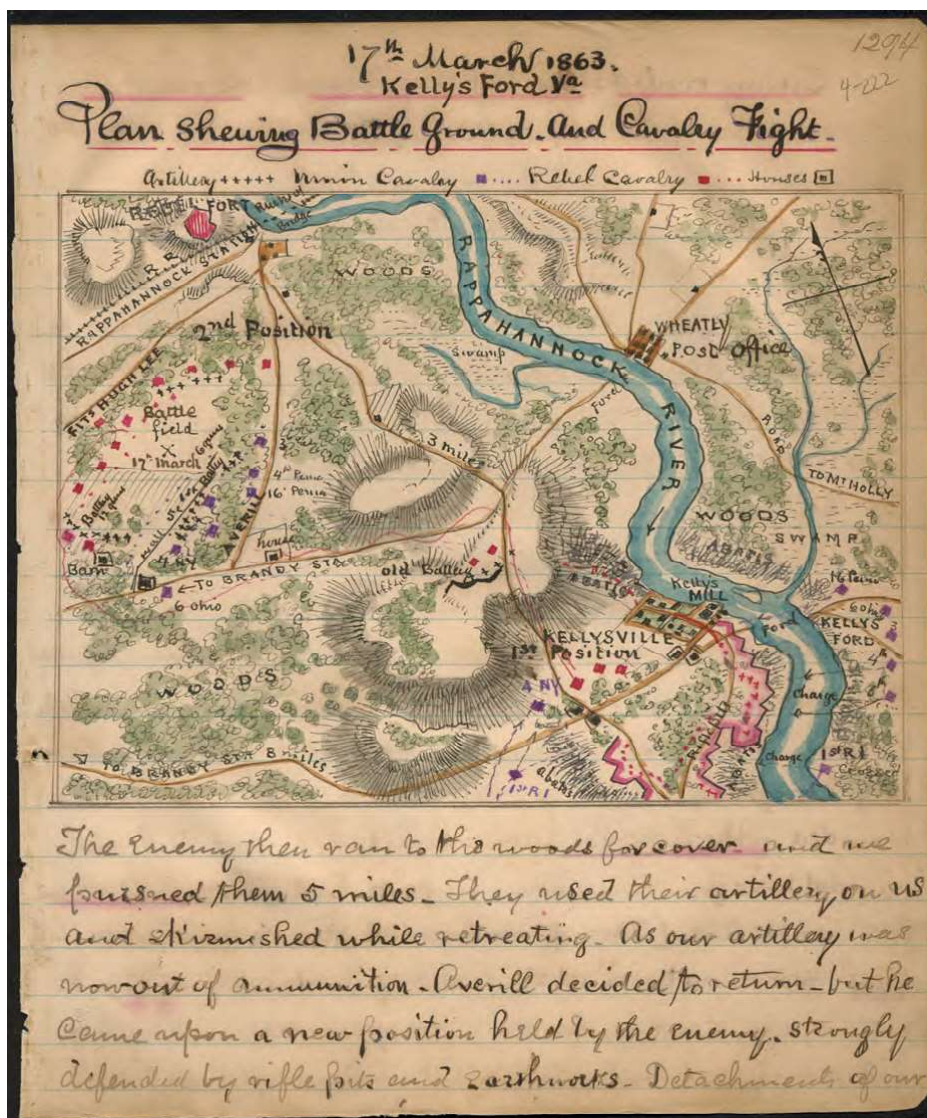
The river and coastal blockade set up by Union Gen. Winfield Scott to stop the flow of supplies into the South took effect in 1861. It was known as the Anaconda Plan. Hundreds of Union gunboats plied the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries, opening fire on any vessel that ventured too far from shore. Union raids were conducted on plantations for food in an area rich with natural resources, crops and livestock; they also took slaves. The Northern Neck had few home guards to protect the area.

Control of the river changed hands many times during the war, as it did in many regions.

Some of the most famous battles of the war were fought along the banks of the Rappahannock. Figure 10 maps the well-known Battle of Kelly's Ford fought March 17, 1863.

Thousands of African-American slaves also escaped across the river to freedom. Figure 11 shows fugitive slaves fording the Rappahannock during the war.

Figure 10. Period map of the Battle of Kelly's Ford, March 17, 1863. Library of Congress.





Entered according to act of Congress, in the year 1862, by Alexander Gardner, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the District of Columbia.

Figure 11. Vintage stereoscope showing fugitive slaves fording the Rappahannock River during the war. Library of Congress.

Northumberland County Post Offices

Few U.S. post offices existed in Northumberland County even before the war. In the 1861 register of U.S. post offices in Northumberland County are listed:

- Burgess's Store - Elizabeth B. Burgess, postmaster
- Lottsburg - L.S. Winstead, postmaster
- Heathsville C.H. - Gustavus B. Campbell, postmaster
- Union Village - Warren P. Hill, postmaster
- Wicomico Church - Edgar Blackwell, postmaster

The same U.S. post offices are listed in the July 1, 1862, corrected register but no postmasters are listed.

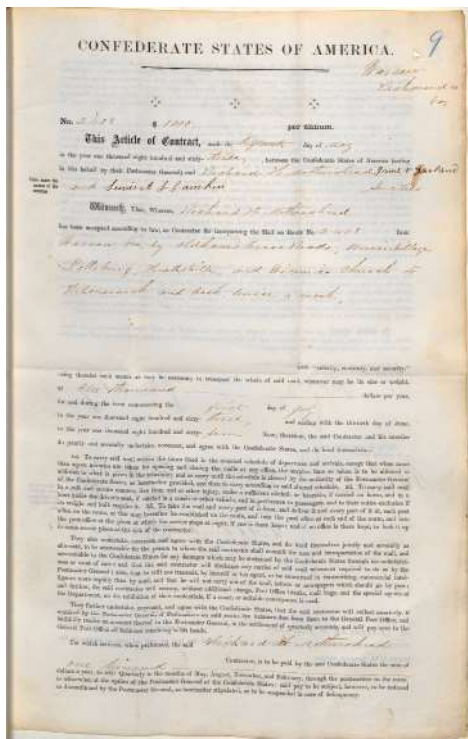


Figure 12 (left). First page of mail contract for Route 2408 for villages in Northumberland County, Virginia (NARA).

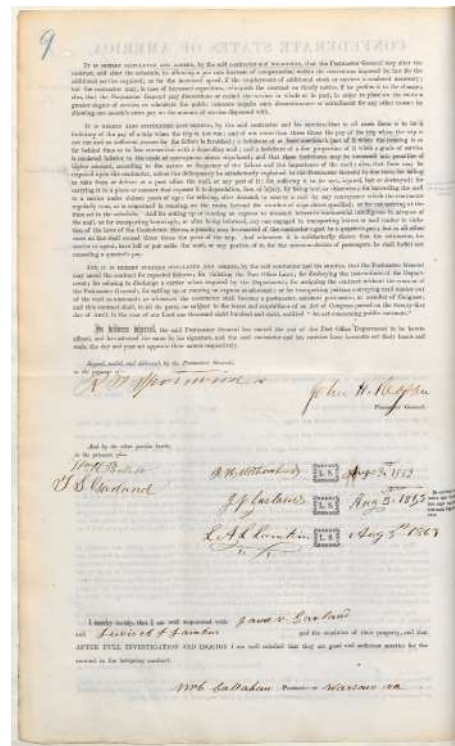


Figure 13 (right). Second page of mail contract for Route 2408 for villages in Northumberland County, Virginia, signed by PMG John H. Reagan (NARA).

In a search of just shy of 1,000 Confederate Post Office Department records, I could not find a mail contract that included the aforementioned post offices for the years 1861-62. One of the two books of postal contracts for Virginia is missing from the digital records. But I did find the relevant 1863-67 records.

The front and back of the Warsaw, Richmond County, Va., Confederate mail contract is shown in Figures 12 and 13. The contract is dated May 15, 1863, and is signed by CSA Postmaster General John H. Reagan and Richard H. Mothershead, James V. Garland and Lewis S. Lamkin. It names Mothershead as contractor for transporting the mail on route No. 2408 from Warsaw, Va., by Oldham's Cross Roads, Union Village, Lottsburg, Heathsville and Wicomico Church to Kilmarnock and back, twice a week.

Without relating endless battles and skirmishes, let's just say that maintaining control of the area was challenging. There was (for a while) a railroad bridge over the Rappahannock River at Tappahannock as well as a simple pontoon bridge.

The Basye Correspondence

In most cases, Henry specifies exactly by whom he is sending his letters – by a named slave, a soldier on furlough, by the post office or other means. On postally carried letters sent “due,” he usually signs his name and rank as required, but he does not on letters entrusted to friends, servants or by private carriers.

In more than one letter to Annie, Henry warns her not to put anything in her letters that she does not want others to see because the letters are all opened and read. He has much more news he could tell her but is not allowed to do so.

On the regimental rolls, Gus. A. Betts is listed as regimental postmaster for the 9th Virginia Cavalry, Army of Northern Virginia. Gustavus A. Betts (1829-1907) enlisted the same day as Henry and William Basye. He was from Heathsville and enlisted at age 32.

Figure 14 is a surgeon's certificate dated Aug. 26, 1863, which states Henry Basye is unable to perform actual cavalry duty because of an injury received several years ago that affects his kidneys and his bowels. Nonetheless, Henry continued serving in the army, but was useful in other ways.

An example of one of Henry's closing signatures is shown in Figure 15, which ends his letter with, “god bless you and family your affectionate Husband Henry Basye.”

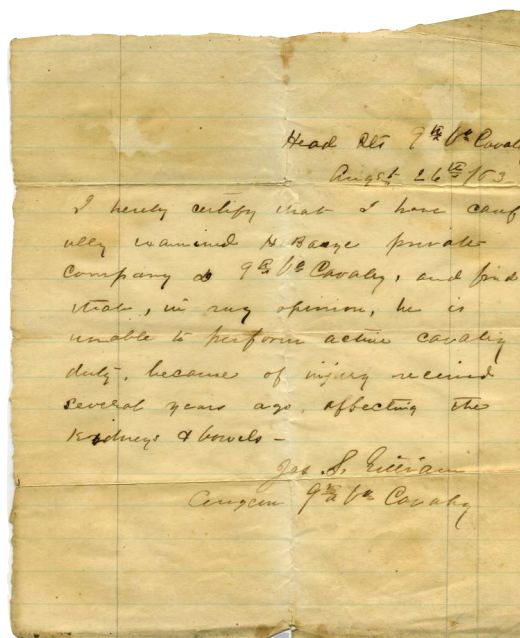
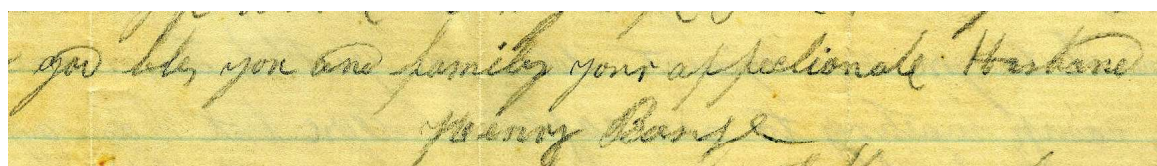


Figure 14 (above). Surgeon's certificate dated Aug. 26, 1863, stating Henry Basye is unable to perform actual cavalry duty.

Figure 15 (below). Example of one of Henry Basye's letter closings.



Who was Jenkins?

I searched period newspapers for announcements of Jenkins' express service, but without success. From the Basye letter content, it appears Jenkins most logically hailed from Lottsburg or nearby.

My first thought was that he was either a civilian with time to travel or that he was a member of the 9th Virginia. Jenkins was undoubtedly a local man who knew the residents, as well as ways to evade Union patrols to cross the river.

In the 1860 federal census, there were only two men named Jenkins. One was 59-year old oysterman Samuel "Jinkins" who seemed too old for the task. The other was his 17-year-old son, a much more likely candidate.

I continued the process of elimination, searching out other men named Jenkins from the area but eliminated them one by one.

Samuel Jenkins is found in the military records listed as a 19-year-old oysterman who enlisted as a private March 1, 1862, and was mustered into Company G, 40th Virginia Infantry. He was in the same regiment as Octavous Basye. He was experienced on the water and could presumably elude Union patrols.

While there were other men named Jenkins in the 40th Va., none were from Northumberland. According to the *Virginia Regimental Histories Series*, Samuel Jenkins died of disease June 7, 1864, but I could not find that mentioned in the NARA records. This is not uncommon, however, as military records are inconsistent at best.

While there is no positive proof that the express carrier was Samuel Jenkins, I consider him a strong candidate. Neither is there evidence of express uses later in the war, which is consistent if he died in mid-1864.

More importantly, Basye himself tells us exactly why there is no 1864 or 1865 express mail. In a letter dated July 4, 1864, he writes to Annie: *"I will send this letter by mail as there is no running the blockade to home (Jenkins) like there used to be before we crossed the James River."*

Basye-Acknowledged Mail Conveyors

Many names are diligently acknowledged in Henry Basye's letters as courtesy mail carriers, soldiers, messengers or facilitators of some nature.

The 9th Virginia Cavalry participated in the most famous engagements of the war with Army of Northern Virginia generals Robert E. Lee, J.E.B. Stuart and Stonewall Jackson – a stellar cast of characters. If quoted in full, the letters would easily fill a fascinating book. But to postal historians, the carrier names are equally important.

In an April 28, 1862, letter he says he is sending a letter home with *"one of our servants ... you must put stamps on it so that if the servant dont get it, it will come by mail."* Henry describes a complex passing of letters from one Lottsburg citizen to the next until the mail ultimately made its way across the river and letters were posted at the Montague post office in Essex County.

Presented alphabetically, the following list is of those mentioned in Henry's letters as carrying letters to or from Lottsburg/Henry in the field. There are often references to more than one person carrying one letter from its origin to its destination. "Servants," of course, is a euphemism for slaves who were often entrusted as messengers. Full names were often not mentioned, with only first or last names noted.

- BARNES, Alpheus
- BARNES, F.
- BARRY, D.B.
- BASS, Mr.
- BASYE, Dick
- BEACHAM, Jo
- Bill, (no last name given – could be servant, soldier or friend)
- BOUIE, Mr.
- BRENT, A.J.
- CARTER, Charles
- CARTER, William
- CARTER, R.
- CARTER, William (“one of our company”)
- CLAYBROOK, Frederick
- CLAYBROOK, Mr.
- COLES, James
- CONWAY, George (cook for 9th Virginia Cavalry)
- CORBIN, Monroe (servant of Richard Corbin)*
- COX, George
- COX, Capt. L. (9th Virginia Cavalry)
- COX, T.C.
- CRALLE, William S.
- “Dr. Bill” – no last name given
- EDWARDS, Robert (Co. K, 9th Virginia Cavalry)
- GARLAND, Daniel
- HALL, Mr.
- HALL, L. (soldier going home)
- Dr. Harding (soldier going home)
- GULLICK, Joseph (soldier on furlough)
- HASTINGS, Mr.
- HAZZARD, Joseph
- JENKINS, Mr.
- Joe (no last name given – could be servant, soldier or friend)
- JOHNSON
- MICHEL, Littleton D.
- MITCHELL, R.J.
- MITCHELL, Mr.
- MOONE, J.
- NORRIS, Eppy (Henry sometimes misspells it “Norrice”)
- NORRIS, Henry
- PIERCE, Walter
- RICE, Samuel
- RICE, Mrs. Samuel
- ROCK, Mr.
- SAMPSON, Thornton – lives one mile from Heathsville
- Servant to Lt. Pierce
- Servant Frederick (to Richard Corbin)
- Servant George
- Servant Jim (Joe Moone’s slave)
- STRAUGHN, Samuel L.
- TAPSCOTT, Albin
- TAPSCOTT, C. (9th Virginia Cavalry)
- TAPSCOTT, Mr.
- TOLES, John (a substitute in their company for only one month)
- TURNER, Charles
- WALKER, William
- Web, Tip (more likely spelled Webb),
- WESTMORELAND, William Walker
- WESTMORELAND, “by one of the Westmoreland boys”



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Sidebar: A Note on one of Basye's Carriers

In an Aug. 3, 1862, letter Henry says, "I send you a few lines by Monroe Corbin, a black man that belongs in our company. He is going to start home today. He has a wife at Mrs. Davenports. She lives in Heathsville in front of Ma's house ... Monroe will take this letter to ma's and she will send it to you as soon as she can by Frederick." The way Henry phrases it to give Monroe the last name of Corbin, it appears Monroe might have been one of the few blacks who fought with arms within the regiment. In later letters, Monroe is listed as a "servant" (slave) of Richard Corbin, owner of Moss Neck Plantation near Fredericksburg. Monroe may have been the product of a white master and slave woman and thus took the last name Corbin. While blacks did serve in some Confederate units, their names were not on the rosters, as it was against Confederate Army regulations. *The New York Times* reported on July 11, 1863, "After the battle of Gettysburg in July 1863...reported among the rebel prisoners were seven blacks in Confederate uniforms fully armed as soldiers. Then again, maybe not, as Monroe escaped to the Union in October 1862 and took Basye's letters and boots with him."

The Basye letters are bursting with battle news, as well as terrific detail on how the mail was transmitted.

Henry sent his letter of Sept. 24, 1862, by Monroe Corbin, and says in part, "Old Stonewall pitched into Harpers Ferry that morning so severe that the Yankeys (sic) surrendered with 8,000 Yankeys and 2,000 Negroes and we did not lose a man ... I am one of the wagon guards ... we are going to start for Martinsburg tomorrow."

This letter was mailed in Winchester, Va., on Sept. 25, 1862, with a handstamped soldier's "Due 10" (CSA catalog type G⁵), as shown in Figure 16. Confederate soldiers were allowed to send mail home postage due with the addressee paying the postage (not free of charge).



Figure 16. Winchester, Va., handstamped soldier's "Due 10" marking on cover sent Sept. 25, 1862, from Henry to Annie Basye.

On April 22, 1863, Henry writes, “[Your pa] sends his letters (by) private couriers as he does not think the mail will get through. You can send letters to me if you can get them to L.D. Michel’s and he will send them across the river to Montague’s post office.” Montague was in Essex County on the southern side of the river.

In a letter written in anguish on May 11, 1863, Henry screams in all caps, “I MUST TELL YOU THAT STONEWALL JACKSON DIED THIS MORNING ABOUT 4 O’CLOCK FROM HIS WOUND IN THE ARM. HIS PLACE CANNOT BE SUPPLIED IN THIS CONTINENT. THERE IS SOME TALK OF STUART TAKING HIS PLACE AND IF HE DOES IT CANNOT BE FILLED, FOR HE IS TO BE COMPARED TO JACKSON AS I WOULD. IN FACT HE IS NOT WORTHY TO TIE JACKSON’S SHOE. He was wounded by his own men ... I would have rather any other man in the army be killed except R.E. Lee himself and myself.” It is clear he idolized Jackson and even nicknamed his second child “Stonewall.”

The next day he pens another letter crying, “THE DEATH OF JACKSON IS CONFIRMED, THE PAPER CAME OUT ON THE 11TH IN BLACK. He died on the 10th of May at 3 and one-half o’clock P.M. His death has done our cause more harm than the loss of 20,000 men.”

In the Third- and Fourth-quarter 2020 issues of *Kelleher’s Stamp Collectors Quarterly*, I wrote a more historically detailed article on this group of correspondence, which lists these same messengers chronologically instead of alphabetically, and includes short, relevant quotes from the letters in which they were noted. If you have further interest, you can easily search out these articles online.

These are by no means all the Basye letters nor mentions of all mail facilitators, but it is a reasonable nucleus. Not all Basye letters passed through my hands. Many letters went to manuscript collectors and not to postal history students. Some of the earliest mail messengers mentioned were later killed in battle. From this list, it would be relatively easy to flesh out their profiles from military records.

To be clear, none of these men who unofficially handled the mail would be recognized in a philatelic catalog except for Mr. Jenkins, who was formally paid for his services. Nonetheless, slave deliveries are a popular collecting area. Together, all names help paint a picture of how mail was moved during the war. Virtually all Confederate mail in this area was transported while evading Union patrols.

Federal Census Records - Henry Basye and Family

I found the Basye family name with many inventive spellings in census and military records. Some variations were Basey, Besye, Baisey, Bayse, Basy, Basge, Bassie and Bassey. Variations are attributable mostly to phonetic spelling, illegible handwriting and poorly educated clerks.

Henry Basye was born in Northumberland County March 5, 1835, the son of William Falcon Basye, Sr. (about 1790-1846) and Harriet Caroline Deshields Basye (about 1801-70), who were married Jan. 20, 1820.

In the 1850 federal census, the Harriet Basye household is recorded as Harriet Basye (age 49), Richard (12), Octavus (10), Josephine (8), Mary (6), Henry Tolson (40 – black) and John Thomas (15 – black). Son Henry, our correspondent, appears to be missing from the mix, as does his older brother William Falcon Basye (1829-64), who was likely the eldest brother to whom all the work fell in the wake of his father’s death in 1846.

In the 1850 slave census, William Basye, Sr. (who is apparently really “Jr.” to the 1790 born Basye) is shown as the owner of 42 slaves (31 male, 11 female) ranging in age from 1-60. Harriet Basye is noted as owner of eight slaves ranging in age from 1-63. None of her slaves match the ages

of the two blacks recorded as living in her household; perhaps they were free black servants or mulattos who took last names.

William Falcon Basye (“Jr.”) was born to William Falcon Basye (“Sr.”) in 1829. He is buried in Roseland Cemetery, Reedville, Va., The names should more accurately be I, II and III. This is not the first time I’ve encountered this sort of naming nightmare. In the federal 1840 census records for him, there are 28 persons in his household, 10 of whom are free white persons and 18 slaves.

In the 1860 census, the “Henry Basye household” consisted of Annie’s parents W.W. Harding (the listed head of household, age 50) and Rebecca A. Harding (58), as well as Annie Basye (listed as Ann, 20), Henry Basye (23) and Henry W. Travers (40). Travers may have worked the farm with Harding. Brother Richard Basye is documented as living nearby.

In the 1860 census, the Harriet C. Basye household lists Harriet as 57, L. Octavous (19), listed as a carpenter, Novella J. (16) and Mary M. (15).

Twenty years later, in the 1880 census, Henry “Baisey” (sic) is listed as age 44, Annie as 38, Novella M. as 16, Falcon Wm. as 11 and Harry D. as three years old.

Also in 1880, nearby L. Octavus “Baisey” is listed as a 40-year-old carpenter whose wife is named Willie; she was only 17. Although variously spelled Octavus, Octavius, Octavous and Octavious, the name I found on their son’s birth certificate is Octavus, although Henry’s letters spell it Octavous, and thus is mostly what I used in this article. The father (L.O. Basye) on the birth certificate is listed as 49 years old and his wife as Wilmeth (Willie) Settle Crowther (maiden name), age 28. The father’s parents were verified as William Falcon Basye, Sr. and Harriet Caroline Deshields, thus Octavous is affirmed as Henry’s younger brother.

Moving into the 20th century, the 1910 federal census, lists Henry as a farmer and Annie as keeping house. They are shown as being married for 50 years with their home still in Lottsburg, Northumberland County, Va. They are recorded with six children, only three of whom were still living. Son Harry Deshields Basye (age 30) is shown residing in Henry’s household, along with

his wife, Iola (age 25). In his 1956 newspaper obituary, Harry Basye’s home is noted as Traveler’s Rest Farm, Cherry Point. Figure 17 shows a highway marker at Cherry Point, the transit point to Lottsburg as listed on Henry’s letters to Annie.

Henry Basye died Jan. 2, 1916, from organic valvular heart disease, as shown on his death certificate in the Virginia death records.⁶

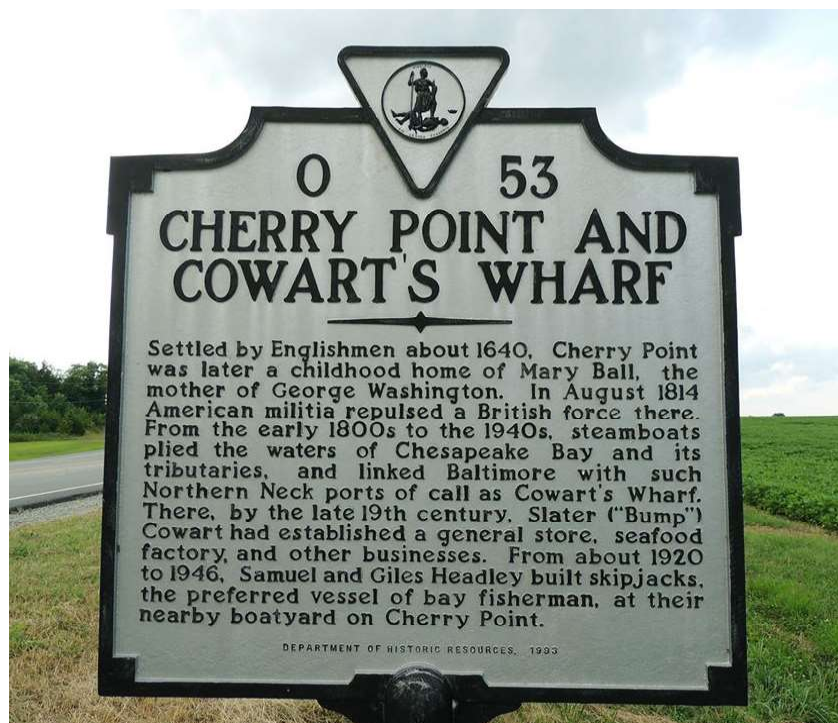


Figure 17. Historical highway marker at Cherry Point, the transit point to Lottsburg on Henry’s letters to Annie.

The recorded years of birth and death vary depending on the source, but the death certificate is presumably accurate and that is the source used.

Anna (Annie) Ball Harding was born Feb. 17, 1840, and died before Henry on May 29, 1915, of stomach cancer at their home in Cowarts, Va. as reported on her death certificate.

Closing Thoughts

The Basye correspondence begins almost from the start of Henry and Annie Basye's life together during a time of national tragedy – a married life that began more apart than together. The 1910 census confirms their love endured through these trials and more. Three of their children predeceased them; we don't know why. Their correspondence provides postal historians with two important covers from a hitherto unrecorded express service from the Chesapeake Bay region.

Trish Kaufmann was first introduced to Confederate postal history in 1965. She became active in organized philately in 1969 and became a full-time dealer in 1973, today specializing in solely in Confederate stamps and postal history while continuing to maintain an enthusiastic connection with organized philately.

ENDNOTES:

1. Bill Draper, "The Northern Neck of Virginia," My Generations, http://billdraper.net/html/body_north_ern_neck.html/, accessed May 30, 2020.
2. Northumberland County, Virginia, Genealogy, Family Search, www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Northumberland_County,_Virginia_Genealogy/, accessed May 30, 2020.
3. www.ancestry.com, Virginia, Select Marriages, 1785-1940 [database online], page 137, line. 35, Provo, Utah, USA, Ancestry.com Operations, Inc, 2014, Accessed May 30, 2020.
4. www.ancestry.com, Virginia, Select Marriages, 1785-1940 [database online], page 137, line. 35, Provo, Utah, USA, Ancestry.com Operations, Inc, 2014, Accessed May 30, 2020.
5. Patricia A. Kaufmann, Francis J. Crown, Jr., Jerry S. Palazolo, editors, *Confederate States Catalog and Handbook of Stamps and Postal History*, 2012, Confederate Stamp Alliance, www.csalliance.org.
6. Virginia Department of Health, Richmond, Va.; Virginia Deaths, 1912-2014.

RECORDING NEW CSA FINDS

New Confederate finds are still being documented for future editions of the *CSA Catalog*. In addition to new, unlisted finds, I am seeking quality images to replace old black and white tracings or poor-quality images that were used in earlier catalogs. It is important that new images be quality 300 dpi .tif or .jpg files if they are to be used in future editions.

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