

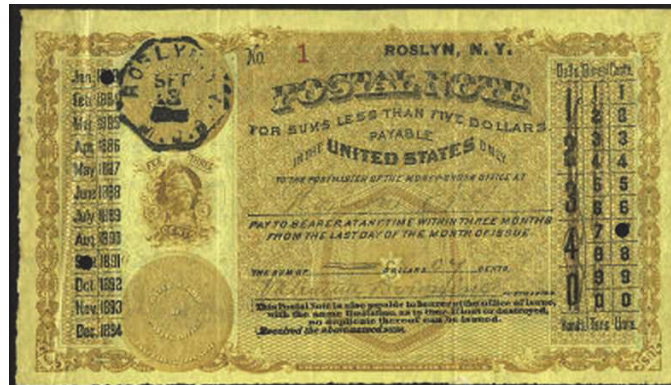
Roslyn, Long Island, New York

An 1883-1894 Postal Note Timeline

Including an Introduction to the 1883-1894 Postal Note Series and A Brief Postal History of Roslyn, New York

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A September 3, 1883 "First Day of Issue" Postal Note. This is a Type I, Serial #1, from Roslyn, New York. The note is issued for seven cents, incorporates an octagonal cancellation, and was payable at the Roslyn Post Office. This yellow paper, produced by Crane Paper Co., was only used on Type I notes.

Many collectors are aware of the facts which led the Union government to the invention, and subsequent engraving and printing of Postage and Fractional Currency. Those same people would also be aware that Postage and Fractional Currency served a dual purpose. The first was to alleviate a major hole in the economy formed by the hoarding of most gold, silver, bronze and copper coins. The second was to provide a means to send small amounts of money through the mail virtually undetected.

Fractional Currency was printed over a fourteen year period from 1862 through 1876. By 1876, the U.S. Mint had significantly increased production of small coins to the eventual result that Fractional Currency was no longer needed. Or was it?

As the number of small coins increased in availability and Fractional notes wore out and were re-deemed, the American people were still faced with a need to securely transmit small amounts of money through the mail. Postal Notes were first given consideration in 1875, the government having foreseen the imminent end of Fractional Currency. The objective was to introduce a convenient, easy-to-use, new type of note. The plan was for these notes to be printed on watermarked banknote paper using engraved plates. They were to have effective safeguards against counterfeiting, and they needed to be simple to understand and easy to fill out. There was also the need for these notes to fit into an ordinary letter size envelope. The government spent years studying the problem.

In 1882, the American Express Company initiated a private money order system. This was the impetus for Congress to pass HR5661, the legislation which introduced Postal Notes. On Monday, September 3, 1883 the sale of United States Postal Notes began in Post Offices throughout the nation. During the next twelve years, the government contracted with three different firms to produce Postal Notes. Five different types were produced (Type I-Type V) and two sub-types (Types II-a and IV-a).

The first contract was awarded to the Homer Lee Bank Note Company of New York City and it ran from September 3, 1883 until September 2, 1887. The second contract, from 1887 to 1891, was awarded to the American Bank Note Co. of New York City. Thomas F. Morris was placed in charge of the



Type I notes were engraved and printed by the Homer Lee Bank Note Company of New York City. The ornate back design does not resemble anything else in American finances. During bidding competition, against 6 other companies, Homer Lee was awarded the first four year contract which ran from September 3, 1883, until September 2, 1887. These notes were the longest of any of the Postal Note types.

design. Morris is best known to paper money collectors for his design work on the Educational Series \$1, \$2, and \$5 Silver Certificates of 1896. The final contract to produce Postal Notes was given to Dunlap and Clarke, a Philadelphia, Pennsylvania firm. The issue of Type V notes as they are known by collectors began on September 3, 1891 and ended with "Last Day of Issue" notes on Saturday, June 30, 1894.

Government archives show that 70,824,173 Postal Notes were purchased during the twelve year series. That large number shows the extreme success of Postal Notes, which were the progeny of Postage and Fractional Currency and the forerunners of today's modern Postal Money Orders. Even though almost 71 million Postal Notes were issued, only about 2,000 notes are known to exist. What happened to the other notes? They were used as planned, cashed, and finally sent to Washington, D.C. for verification where they met with a fiery end to prevent their fraudulent re-use.

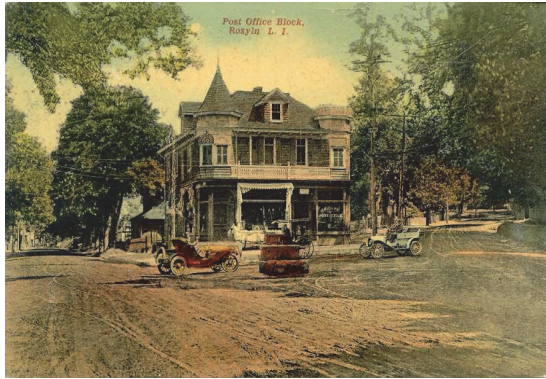
A Postal History of the Roslyn, New York Post Office

Roslyn, New York is a nearly 400 year-old village located on the North shore of Long Island. The town, which encompasses only 0.6 square miles, is home to some of the oldest buildings in the United States. The village was founded in 1643 after Robert Fordham and John Carmen sailed from Connecticut and settled in the Hempstead Harbor area. In 1838 a post office was established in Hempstead Harbor and six years later, on September 7, 1844 the name of the town was changed to Roslyn. The Post Office approved the name change on October 24, 1844. The name was changed due to postal confusion with the other "Hempsteads" in Long Island and their distances from each other. The town name was actually decided upon by a board of individuals who lived in the immediate area. The members had rules which specified the name should be short, pleasant-sounding and not chosen for any other post office in the United States. Of the proposed names only ten fit the rules. Of these ten, the name Roslyn received the most votes and was subsequently approved. Mr. Cairns, who was part of the committee to come up with a favorable name for the town, chose Roslyn because the surrounding valley reminded him of Roslin, Scotland.

One of the things that aroused my early curiosity about Roslyn's Postal Notes was the Postal cancellations. I was studying different aspects of the notes in my collection one day, and lo and behold, I saw several Queens County cancellations on my Roslyn notes. It should be noted that the town of Roslyn lies within the boundaries of Nassau County, not Queens County. I did not understand how this could be. Upon investigation, I discovered on January 1, 1899, Nassau County was created from the eastern-most portion of Queens County. This was not a clerical error by the post office. It was my lack of knowledge pertaining to Long Island, where I live. This small anomaly is what led to my research and subsequent writing of this article.

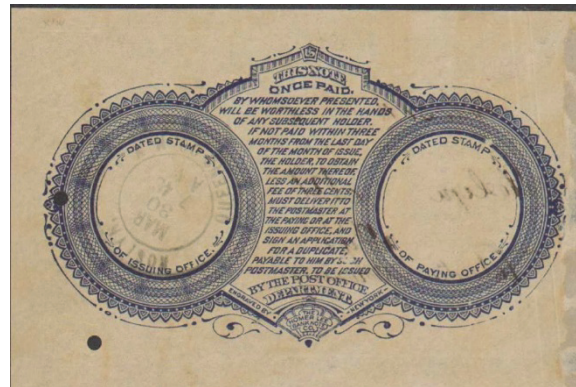


The Roslyn Post Office c. 1905, at the Junction of Bryant Ave. and East Turnpike. It had a drive up window on the east side (right side facing the viewer) where a person could drive their horse and buggy to pick up their mail. The Elijah Ward horse trough was given to Roslyn in 1884 and remains to this day. Mr. Ward was a Congressman during the American Civil War.

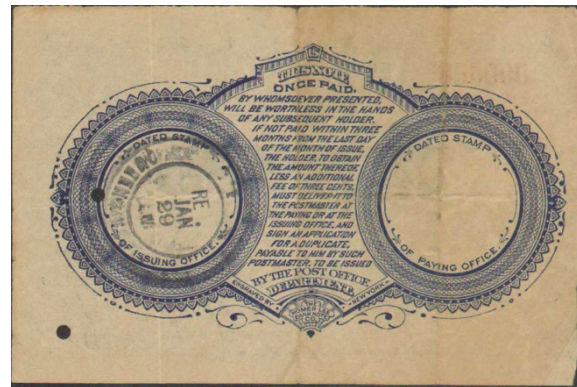


Another view of the Post Office in Roslyn Village, c. 1910. Pickard's Drug Store is on the left with the Post Office on the right. Mr. Pickard commissioned most of the post cards which depict his store and the Post Office. The cards were very big sellers especially before most people had their own cameras. In 1901 the first street lights were installed in Roslyn and by 1910 cars were already replacing horses.

A Pair of Type-II Postal Notes Issued from the Roslyn, New York, Post Office



This Type- II Postal Note was printed by the Homer Lee Bank Note Company of N.Y., issued on March 30, 1885, and was payable at Roslyn, N.Y. A handwritten amount of 5 cents is also punch cancelled for that amount in the two numerical columns. During Homer Lee's 4 year printing contract the Post Office made numerous design changes. The end results were Type-I, II, II-a, and Type-III Postal Notes being issued. The Postmaster during this time was Valentine Downing.



Another Type-II Postal Note, this one issued on January 29, 1886, was redeemable at Jamaica, N.Y. Most surviving Postal Notes were issued for either one or two cents and are considered to be souvenirs. This fragile paper survivor from the past is actually made out for 50 cents and would have been for payment of some form of goods or debt. The note at the top of this page is serial #523 while this note is #668. Only 145 Postal Notes were issued during that 10 month period which indicates Roslyn must have been a smaller, very quiet Post Office. At the time of issue the Postmaster was Samuel Hooper. Notice the Queens County cancellation on the back.

Two More Surviving Examples of Roslyn, New York's Postal Note Past



This example engraved and printed by the American Bank Note Co. also of New York City was issued on February 7, 1889. The second four year contract ran from September 3, 1887, until September 2, 1891. The amount on this note is two cents with an additional issuing fee of three cents. This item is a Type IV Postal Note with 188- in the date. A Type IV-a, Postal Note would have had 189- in the date. The engraving change from the 8 to the 9 in the year was the ONLY printing plate change made during ABNCo's contract. The Queens County, N.Y. cancellation can clearly be seen on the back of the note.



My final Roslyn note, issued on January 17, 1893, is what current collectors refer to as a Type V Postal Note. These notes were produced by Dunlap & Clarke, a printing firm located in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Other than the name change on the front (bottom) and eliminating the words American Bank Note Company from the back design, the plates are identical to those used by American Bank Note Company for Type-IV-a Postal Notes. Most collectors believe that these plates were sold to Dunlap & Clarke when the ABNCo finished its contract. The final printing contract began on September 3, 1891 and ended with the "Last Day of Issue" notes on June 30, 1894. The Postmaster who signed these last surviving notes was Francis S. Titus. The note employs a plain, single circle cancellation: "Roslyn Jan. 17, 1893 N.Y".

Two Historic Views of the Long Island Rail Road Station at Roslyn, New York



The Long Island Rail Road began operations in 1834 with service reaching Roslyn in 1864. Mail arrived by train twice a day and was then taken by horse and carriage down the hill to the post office in Roslyn Village. Upon arrival clerks would begin sorting the mail to get it ready for delivery.



Roslyn Depot c. 1908-1910. To the left of the station is a Trolley Car. In 1907 the Trolley began service through Roslyn to Mineola but ceased operating in 1920 due to the increase in cars. In 1887 the present depot was built, after the old one was torn down. This was the same year that telephone service was established in the area.

About the Author:

I first started collecting at the age of 8 or 10. Bottle caps, match books, marbles, baseball cards, whatever would all eventually give way to U.S. coins. Coin collecting kept my interest for quite some time. There always seemed to be an abundant supply of change coming into our home for me to go through. This was no great surprise because my mom was a part-time waitress. Coin collecting stayed in my blood for years but eventually it was time to move on. The little round metallic discs had lost some of their appeal.

In 1991, quite by accident, I discovered Paper Money. More specifically I became extremely focused on United States Postage and Fractional Currency. The hands got sweaty, the pulse quickened and before I knew it I was hooked and on another journey for collectibles and knowledge. These small historically interesting pieces of paper transformed my otherwise mundane life-style into a much broader collecting passion than coins had ever done. These items were like miniature "magic carpets" which had the capability of transporting me back to the 1862-1876 time period in which they were commonly used. The approximate size of a lot of the notes was smaller than today's business cards. But don't let their size fool you. These notes were very powerful. They lifted me from the couch in front of the television and prompted me to create some award winning paper money exhibits and to try my hand at writing articles. This chapter in my life has taken me to many different show locations and introduced me to a diverse cross section of very interesting fellow collectors.

The past 10 years Postal Notes of the 1883-1894 series have become the "new kid on the block" for me. A good deal of my spare time is now focused toward Postal Notes and related material although I still pursue the occasional Fractional Currency note as well as my many other collectibles.

If you have any Postal Notes that you would like to discuss I'm always receptive. Please forward any correspondence you may have to: briveadus2012@yahoo.com and I will be sure to answer your emails.