

BADGER POSTAL HISTORY

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE WISCONSIN POSTAL HISTORY SOCIETY
VOLUME 60 | NUMBER 1 | FEBURARY 2020



nsylvania



uth Dakota.



Virginia.



Figure 21: Madison, Mississippi.



Figure 23: Madison, Tennessee.

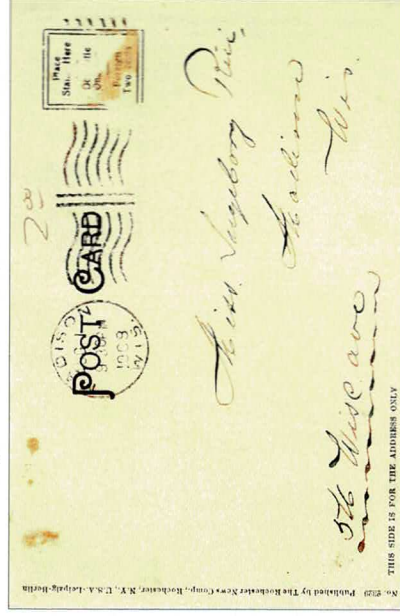


Figure 24: Madison, Wisconsin.



1995-1996 Archeological Excavation of the Williamson, Wisconsin Mill.

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ESSAGE

al History Society

we will be a good
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IS member's exhibits

CONTACT INFORMATION

Badger Postal History is published quarterly (August, November, February, May) by the Wisconsin Postal History Society, an affiliate of the Wisconsin Historical Society, Wisconsin Federation of Stamp Clubs and the American Philatelic Society.

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SHOW CALENDAR

FEBRUARY 8

60TH ANNUAL EXHIBITION AND BOURSE

Janesville Stamp Club, bourse and exhibits. Holiday Inn Express, 3100 Wellington Place, Janesville, WI. Sat. 9:30a-4p.
C: Aimee Devine (608) 758-1354, 2111 E. Luther Rd., Janesville, WI 53545
E: spanishmoss72@sbcglobal.net

FEBRUARY 29-MARCH 1

STAMPFEST '20

Milwaukee Philatelic Society, bourse only. St. Aloysius Gonzaga Hall, 1441 S. 92nd St., Sat. 10a-5p, Sun. 10a-3p.
C: Robert J. Mather (262) 968-2392
E: burrobob@wi.rr.com

MARCH 21

BAYPEX '20

Green Bay Philatelic Society, bourse and exhibits. St. Matthew Catholic Church, multipurpose room, 2575 S. Webster Ave., Green Bay, WI (parking in rear), Sat. 9a-4p.
C: Mark Schroeder (920) 337-9616
E: markthetuba@gmail.com

MARCH 21-22

ROCKFORD 2-3-4 STAMP EXPO

Rockford Stamp Club, bourse and exhibits. Forest Hills Lodge, 1601 W. Lane Rd., (Hwy 173), Rockford/Loves Park, IL. Sat. 10a-5p, Sun. 10a-4p.

APRIL 5

DANEPEX '20

Badger Stamp Club, judged exhibits & bourse. Crowne Plaza Hotel, 4402 E. Washington Ave. (across from East Towne Mall), Madison, WI. Sun. 10a-4p.
C: Bob Voss (608) 838-1033, P.O. Box 35, McFarland, WI 53558
E: lestamps@charter.net

MAY 2-3

WISCOPEX 2020

WFSC 89th Annual Convention, hosted by the Fond du Lac

MAY 29-31

COMPEX '20

Chicago Area Philatelic Societies, judged exhibits & bourse. Guerin College Prep., 8001 W. Belmont Ave., River Grove, IL. Fri. & Sat. 10a-6p. Sun. 10a-4p.

JULY 11

BAY DE NOC STAMP & COIN SHOW

Bay De Noc Stamp and Coin Club, bourse only. Bay College, 2000 N. 30th Sreet, Joseph Heirman Buildings, Room 952 (accessed from Danforth Rd.), Escanaba, MI. Sat. 10a-3p EAST-ERN STANDARD TIME
C: Richard Reiffers (906) 233-9261
E: rgrpaperboy@earthlink.net

JULY 17-19

MINNESOTA STAMP EXPO

Maplewood Stamp Club, Twin City Philatelic Society, Lake Minnetonka Stamp Club, Minnesota Stamp Dealers Association, judged exhibits, seminar and bourse. Crystal Community Center, 4800 N. Douglas Dr. North, Crystal, MN. Sat. 10a-5p., Sun. 10a-4p.

HELP WANTED

We need your help! We are trying to add all past issues of WPHS Research Bulletins to our website. To do that, we need to scan each issue. Those scans can then be posted on the Federation website. We have a couple of people already that can help with this task, but we can use all the help we can get. The old axiom

ADVERTISING RATES

CAMERA-READY COPY ONLY

Contact editor with advertising questions.

PAGE SIZE (W x H) 1 ISSUE 4 ISSUES

Full (7 1/2 in. x 10 in.) \$30

Half (7 1/2 in. x 5 in.) \$15

\$90

\$45



INSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

AMENDMENTS TO WISCONSIN POSTAL HISTORY SOCIETY CONSTITUTION May 3, 2020

Wisconsin Postal History Society Constitution as adopted on May 20, 1973, that Constitution shall be amended in favor by the Members present or by proxy at the Annual Meeting of the Society at Wisconsin, May 3, 2020.

Wisconsin Postal History Society Constitution is hereby repealed and replaced by the following new article:

Article 5 shall be President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, and a Board of four Directors elected to two-year terms, with two Directors up for election each year. All other officers shall serve for one-year terms.

President, Vice-President and Treasurer, or Secretary and Treasurer may be combined

shall take effect as of the Membership Meeting in 2021. To accommodate the transition from staggered two-year terms, all members of the Board of Directors shall be up for election in 2021. During or soon after that Membership Meeting, the Board of Directors shall elect by lot which two Director positions shall serve an initial one-year term. The remaining three shall be deemed elected for two-year terms. For subsequent membership elections, the election shall be for the full two-year terms provided above.

Article 5 of the Wisconsin Postal History Society Constitution is hereby amended by the addition of that paragraph:

in the event of Directors otherwise result in a tie, the President shall cast the deciding vote.

Article 5 of the Wisconsin Postal History Society Constitution is hereby amended as follows:

~~Secretary-Treasurer~~ shall be to countersign and affix the seal of the society to all papers to be sealed; keep a record of the proceedings of the Board of Directors and the minutes of the society; and systematically keep all books, papers, and documents belonging to the society. The duties of his or her activities as may be required by the Board of Directors. The principal purpose of the society is to keep and account for all monies, credits and property of the Society which shall be kept in an accurate account of all monies received and disbursed; and render such reports as may be required by the Board of Directors.

Wisconsin Postal History Society Proxy Vote Form Annual Meeting, May 3, 2020

I, the undersigned, a Member in good standing of the Wisconsin Postal History Society, and therefore eligible to vote at the Annual Meeting of that Society on May 3, 2020, hereby appoint:

Ray D. Perry

or, failing him, a second person:

(insert name or N/A)

as my proxy to vote on my behalf at the above meeting of the Wisconsin Postal History Society and at any adjournment of that meeting.

My proxy may
vote as he or
she thinks **

** or
instructions for
proxy
(insert
instructions or
N/A. If no
instructions
given, proxy will
vote as he or she
thinks
appropriate)

This proxy is valid only for the Annual Meeting on May 3, 2020 (or any adjournment thereof).

Signed: _____ Date: _____
Name Printed: _____

If you can not attend the meeting in person, please fill out the above proxy statement for your vote on the Constitutional Amendment and mail it to the Secretary of the Society at the address above. The proxy statement must be received by the Secretary of the Society no later than May 3, 2020.

FICATION

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Postal History

19 issue of *Badger* t, the text of the arti- tion. Second, the cov-

to highlight the invita- cago & North Western re 1 in the article. A ation was shown in

railroad postal history duded figures 3-5 in raukee and Mississippi e Chicago, Milwaukee, as the Milwaukee C&NW system, in fact W's chief competitors

overs associated with the Chicago, St. Paul : eventually a part of

M&M was never part not fit well with the substituted a C&NW

was one of rapid ex- ailroad history. It is an not for the faint of

these points.



REDUCED TO ASHES: WILLIAMSONVILLE, WI

BY CHRISTOPHER N. BARNEY
Wisconsin Postal History Society

Nine months and five days. That was the unfortunate lifespan of the Williamsonville Post Office, in Door County, Wisconsin.

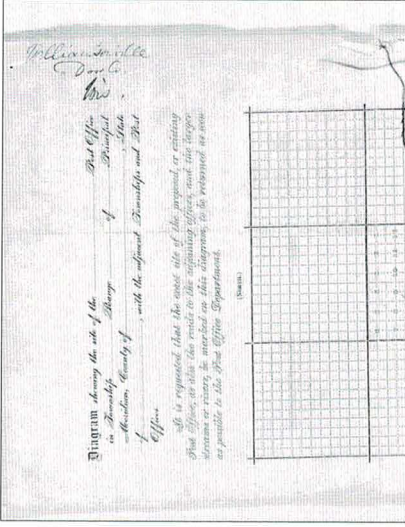
The reason for the short-lived office's sudden closing was both tragic and heartbreaking – the two-year-old hamlet of Williamsonville was squarely in the path of the deadliest and most destructive forest fire in U.S. history, the Peshtigo/Door Peninsula fire of October 8, 1871.

The Williamson family moved to Door County from Oshkosh, Wisconsin around 1869, and immediately set about buying land parcels in and around Gardner township. The Williamson family consisted of patriarch John Sr., wife Margaret, eldest son John Jr., sons Thomas, James, and Fred, daughter Maggie, niece Maggie O'Neil, the wives of John and James, and John's baby.

The family had come to Wisconsin from Canada in early 1869. Shortly thereafter, the Williamses went to Door County and began purchasing land parcels in Gardner and Brussels townships for the purpose of constructing a shingle mill and harvesting the virgin timber surrounding it. By 1870, in addition to the mill, they had constructed a boarding house and four dwelling houses. By May 1871, the number of houses constructed had doubled to eight. Additional improvements included a large barn, a general store, a potato patch next to the boarding house, two wells and a black-



Figure 1: Close up of 1899 lumber mill group photo showing Thomas Williamson (L) and William Neely (Source: Marquette Regional History Center).



[illegible]

Figure 3: December 1870 Application for a new Post Office.

WILLIAMSON'S MILL/WILLIAMSONVILLE
APPLICATION FOR POST OFFICE ESTABLISHMENT

DATE: December 9, 1870

P.O. NAME: Williamson's Mill

P.M. NAME: John Williamson

LOCATION: SE-1/4, Section 35, T27 R24 Door County, Wisconsin
On Route 13100, being the route from Green Bay to Sturgeon Bay, mail carried 3 times per week. Contractor's name is Victor Degrandgagaraga.

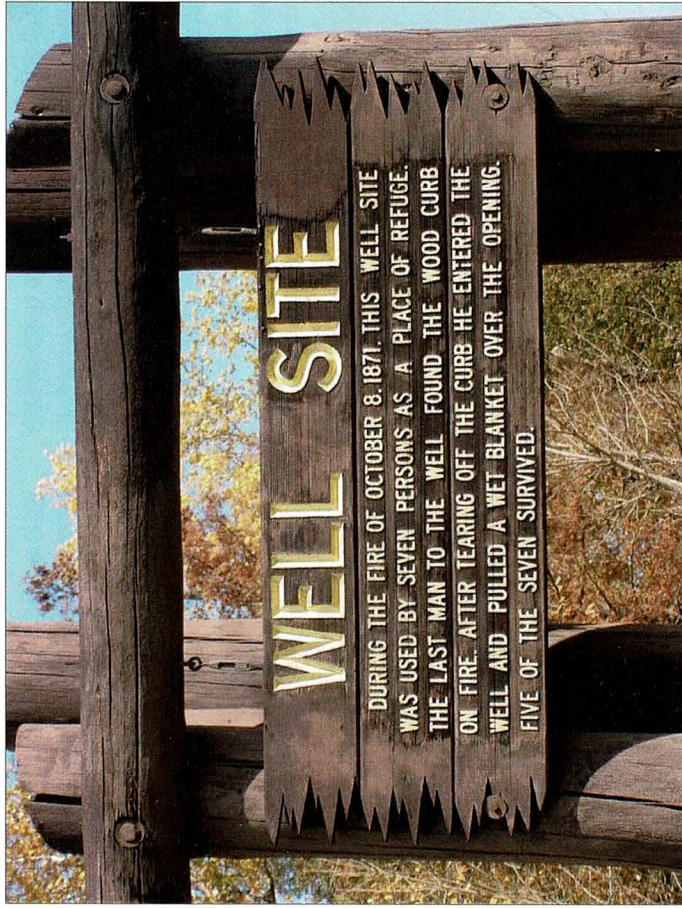


Figure 4: Tornado Memorial Park Well Site Sign, Circa 2010s.

the distance.

Suddenly, a large, black cloud skimmed over the treetops, felling trees as it sped along. When it reached the clearing of Williamsonville, the cloud exploded in long sheets of fire, falling like a torrent, setting literally everything ablaze – the houses, store, barn, shingle mill. The mill workers had tried, in vain, to extinguish the structure fires, then gave up and attempted to save themselves. The superheated air accompanying the flames was deadly to those who breathed it in. Many settlements south of Williamsonville were obliterated by the same conflagration, including Brus-

from the ground, put her feet between them, and covered herself with her wet blanket. Even though another woman burned to death literally inches from her, Margaret survived. Thomas wound up running through the fire until he found a small square of land which had been cleared. He laid there, face down, while the fire scorched his back and burned his feet, and trees fell all around him. He thought he would burst into flames but did not, and fell unconscious.

When he woke up, about three or four o'clock, the smoke and flame had cleared away. Thomas tried to stand but was too weak. He did not know where

parched he paid this no mind, and drank deeply. He later commented that it did not taste like water.

There were a few other survivors there, including Margaret, who had been led there from where she survived the fire. They were laying under what was left of their blankets, for it had gotten quite cold after the fires went out.

Margaret asked Thomas if he had seen any of the family – he said he had not and set out to find them if he could. He got Cyril Jarvis to ‘halloo’, thinking there might be survivors in the woods. When Cyril did so, someone answered who sounded to Thomas like brother John Williamson. He called out to the person and asked them if they were John – they said no. Thomas had wandered past many dead bodies, not recognizing any of

them due to their badly burned condition, then he walked through the potato patch. There he found the body of brother John, the postmaster. He looked natural to Thomas – both of his shirts were burned off, but not his pantaloons. It is hard to imagine what Thomas felt upon discovering his dead brother, but it must have been extremely emotional for him.

Thomas went back and told his mother of the discovery of John's body. She asked him to take her away from the hellish environment, to Sturgeon Bay or at least to an unburned house. Margaret also suffered for lack of water, even drinking some muddy water on the roadside. At the next clearing, all the buildings were burned but they found two horses there, still alive, and Thomas

indicated by what appears to be cedar shingles with initials of the deceased on them. The Wisconsin Historical Society lists Tornado Memorial Park as an 'Uncatalogued Burial Site', indicating that human remains still exist there.

It is not known how long Thomas and Margaret remained in the area, but they eventually relocated to Oshkosh, where Margaret died in 1894 at age 75. Margaret also operated a boarding house there. Thomas sold off the Williamsonville parcels in 1878. He married the former Viola Neely in 1874, and together they started a family. Thomas and Viola left Oshkosh about 1887 and relocated to Negaunee, in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, where Thomas partnered with brother-in-law William J. Neely in the operation of the Johnson Lumber Mill on the shore of Teal Lake near Negaunee. The partnership continued until 1900. Thomas, semi-retired after that, remained available for counsel in the lumber business due to his many years of activity in that field. He was also sought after for his knowledge of timber land and real estate values.

Although he was not a man who made friends easily, those who knew him best testify to his kindness of heart. He was suddenly stricken with apoplexy and died shortly thereafter on July 21, 1915, just three weeks after his 70th birthday. There was true sorrow over his passing.

Viola carried on but succumbed to pelvic cancer on May 14, 1921 at age 64. Surviving them were two sons and two daughters, who carried the family line to the present day. One of Thomas' sons, John B. Williamson (1880-1956), carried on his father's tradition by founding the Independent Lumber & Fuel Co. in Negaunee. The civic-minded J.B., as he was known to scores of people, remained active in the business until retiring in 1953. He was also elected to the Negaunee Board of Education, serving six consecutive three-year terms, holding all of the board offices during that time. The highlight of his period of service was the construction of the Central Grade School in Negaunee.

I have been in contact with two descendants of Thomas Williamson, Kay (Williamson) Anttila of Menominee, Michigan and John Williamson of Hampton, New Hampshire. Both are great-grandchildren of Thomas, and were enthusiastic supporters who contributed much to this project, for which I am exceedingly grateful. I am also indebted to Roland Koski of the Negaunee Historical Society for Williamson family information, and to Maggie Weir and Ginny Haen of the Door County Historical Museum for their gracious assistance in this endeavor. Thanks must also be extended to Megan Thornton, Nichole Sorensen and Dr. John Richards for

sharing their files of the 1995-96 archaeological excavation of Williamsonville done by Dr. Elizabeth Benchley and her staff at UW-Milwaukee. Their findings shed much light on how the residents of Williamsonville lived – and died – in their all-too-short time there. Thanks also to Jamie Ireland of Woodlawn Cemetery for providing Williamson burial records.

The final link to my investigation came on Tuesday, September 24th when I visited Tornado Memorial Park, on the site of Williamsonville. It had been purchased by the Door County Parks Department in November, 1927. Chillingly, the site hadn't been cleared or improved since the 1871 fire. For 56 years, its partial foundation remnants, charred stumps and blackened earth had stood in mute testimony to the horrors visited upon its residents on that fateful October night. By 1937, a park had been created, complete with a gated entrance and memorial plaques. It was an automobile wayside for travelers until recently, when the state highway was relocated and the road passing the park became a county trunk highway.

When I visited the site, my first destination was the memorial plaques, one of which had just been installed in June, 2019, showing the names of the 60 souls who had their lives tragically cut short 148 years earlier. After failing to procure state funding, the Friends of Door County Parks group gathered enough funds to have the plaque made and installed. I then walked across the visitor's parking lot to see the restored well site, where five of seven persons had survived the

that victims are still buried there was also sobering. Finally, I visited the Door County Historical Museum in Sturgeon Bay, where a somber display commemorating the fire was seen.

When I left Door County, I had gained a new respect and reverence for what had occurred on that long-ago October night. I also had a sincere admiration for Thomas Williamson, who teetered on the brink of death that night and, despite the overwhelming grief and sadness of losing 9 family members in one night, pulled himself up by his boot straps and crafted a new and fulfilling life – one created out of the ashes of Williamsonville.



Figure 7: June 2019 photo of Tornado Park plaque dedication showing Friends of Door County Parks members.

WILLIAMSONVILLE POST OFFICE DATA:

Established as Williamsonville - 1871 January 03
Changed to Tornado - 1872 January 29* Discontinued- 1879 January 20; Reestablished- 1879 September 11
Discontinued- 1907 February 28, mail to Brussels
Location: Section 35, T27N R24E, Gardner Twp
Mvd to NW-1/4 Section 1, T26N R24E, Brussels Twp (1879)
Mvd to NW-1/4 Section 2, Brussels Twp (1885)
Mvd to NE-1/4 Section 36, T27N R24E, Gardner Twp (1895)



MADISON CARDS COLLECTION

BY FERNARD G. COLOMBE

As with most stamp collectors, post card collectors, and postal history collectors, when one category of collecting about comes to an end, we turn to another. My main interest is U.S. stamps and I keep current with all the new issues. I also have a large foreign collection from when I was a boy and another that I started in the early 1980s. However, many years ago, I started collecting post cards from the many antique shops I have visited. As our state capital is Madison, the World Book Encyclopedia lists twenty five states with a town or city with "Madison."

So why not collect? The search was on to find a city or town in each of the fifty states named "Madison." I located towns with the name in the states of Alabama, Arkansas, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Maine, Minnesota, Missouri, Mississippi, Nebraska, North Carolina, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia and of course, Wisconsin. However, I was unable to find a Madison located in Pennsylvania. Currently, I am still looking for Madison card cancellations for the states of Alabama, Arkansas, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia.

In 2015, I decided to write to the post offices I had not found and have them send a current cancel on an enclosed post card, and all have been gracious in replying.

NO application, USPS archives (2 pg)
y information
information for John Williamson, Jr.
family
-94), Robinson & Kustermann, publishers, Green Bay, Wis.
consin (The Great Fire of 1871), (pp 421-428), S.J. Clarke Publishing Co., Chicago, 1917

oor County Post Offices, Brown County Historical Society, 1996
sin – Expositor Job Print, Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin, 1881
Post Office information, 1968, 1992
1996, Peshtigo Historical Society, reprint of "Fire at Peshtigo", 1968, Prentice-Hall
zes Victims of 1871 Fire (2019)
al Investigation, STH 57 Improvement Project, Brown, Kewaunee and Door Counties, WI, Project I.D. 1480-04/08-
e's Fire: A Historical Archaeological Investigation of the Peshtigo Fire's Impact at the Williamsonville Site
ee, May 2005)
s of Fire at Williamsonville, Wisconsin, October 8, 1871, Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters, 1990
ation
mson family information
material

Tornado Memorial County Park

ation: 8518 County DK, 10 miles South of Sturgeon Bay

id fall hues of maple trees at Tornado Memorial County Park seem to remind those who pass by under of how Williamsonville and its people were blotted out on the same day as the Peshtigo ne quiet three-acre park is nestled along the old state highway in southern Door County. The Williamsonville, which was in one day reduced from a new and growing crossroads town to a
of land named as Tornado Memorial was the first park of nineteen in the Door County Park 1927 from Albert and Elinda Eickelberg.
consin DOT began to use the park as a highway wayside. And contracted with the Door County maintain it. The park's wayside designation was removed in 2008 with the expansion of now maintained by the Door County Parks Department.
in important start to the county's commitment to the park system because it was our first park," stem Director George Finney. "It memorializes Williamsonville and the era that the burning all that is left of that town and the firestorm that destroyed it."

monson, brothers who immigrated to the Green Bay area from Canada in the late 1860's, settled n as Williamson's Mill. The settlement grew around the steam powered shingle mill built next to within a year. The small town saw much growth, adding a general store, a large barn, a boarding potato patch, a blacksmith shop and a total of eight houses, all within a
According to a WDOT report in 1995, 75 people lived in the town.
been uncommon to see fire within the forest. Fire provided a useful children.

Welcoming atmosphere

"Tornado Memorial now has a more park like atmosphere. We moved the lawn, placed back around"

Acreage: 3 acres



Figure 1: U.S. Scott 957 (1948) showing the capitol of the State of Wisconsin, Madison.

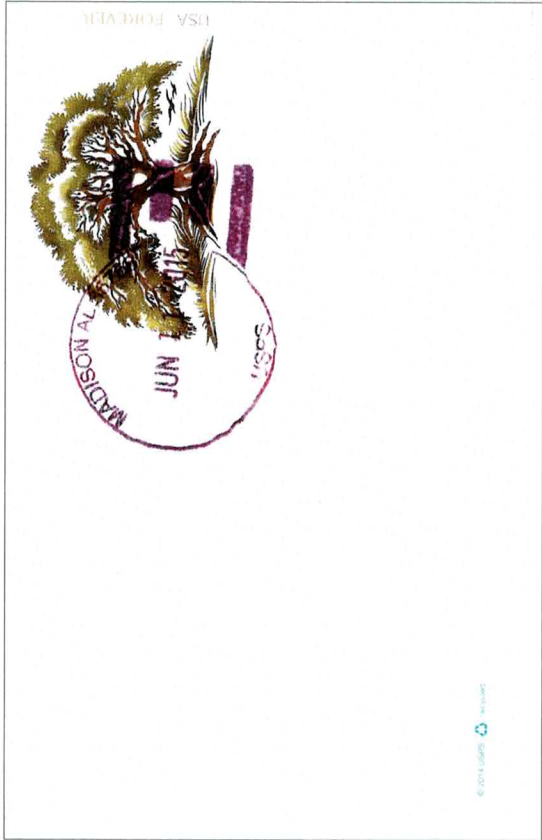


Figure 2: Madison, Alabama.





Figure 5: Madison, Florida.



Figure 7: Madison, Illinois.

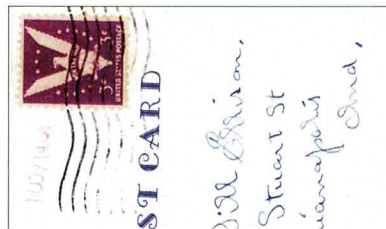


Figure 9: Madison, Kansas.

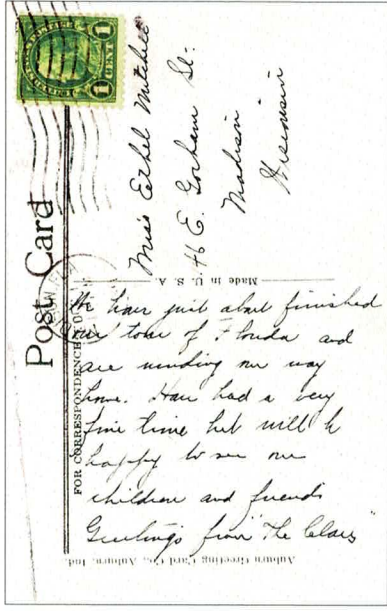


Figure 12: Madison, Missouri.

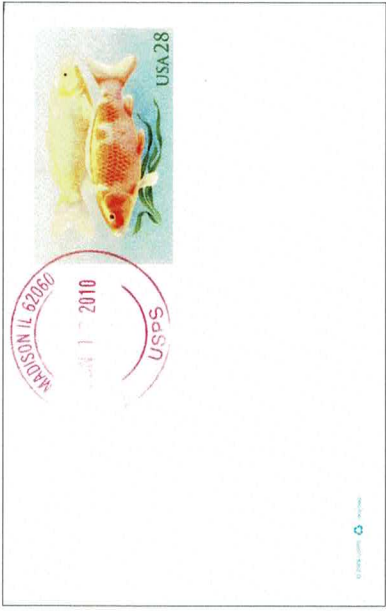


Figure 14: Madison, North Carolina.

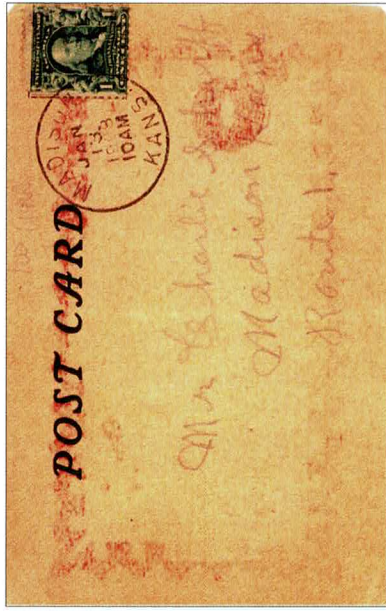


Figure 16: Madison, New Hampshire.

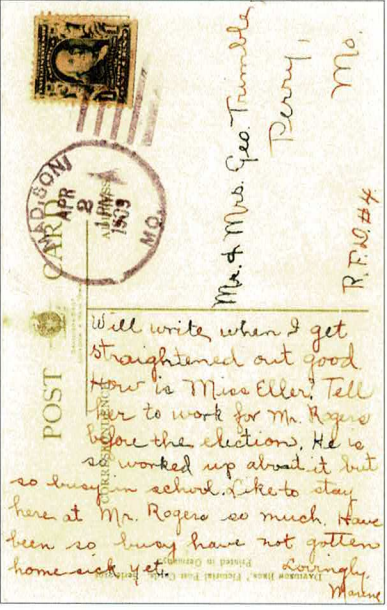


Figure 13: Madison, Mississippi.

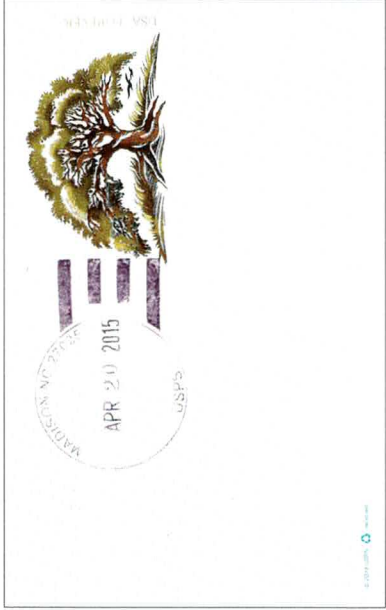


Figure 15: Madison, Nebraska.

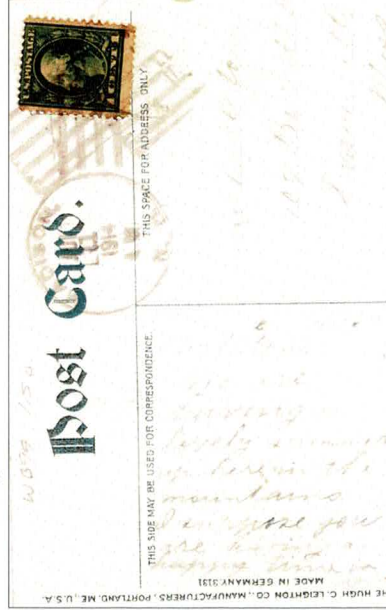


Figure 17: Madison, New Jersey.

