

### History of the Post Offices in Newberry County

During the Colonial Era, the delivery of mail was by chance or by personal arrangement and often greatly delayed. Following the Revolutionary War and the passage of the United States Constitution, the delivery of mail came under the direction of the Federal Government. Postmasters were appointed, and the "post office" became the place chosen by the postmaster. Often the post office was a tavern, home, or later a commercial business. With no personal delivery, mail was kept by the postmaster until picked up by the individual or by someone who could take it to the recipient. Early mail was paid for on the receiving end, and the cost was determined by distance.

**Newberry Court House Village had the County's first appointed postmaster in 1798. His name was Mr. Frederick Nance.**

Over the years, many new and noteworthy Newberrians would be appointed as postmaster. From that initial single post office, the number of post offices grew as development within the County occurred. Mail came in by stagecoach on a line that ran between Asheville and Columbia. In Carwile's *Reminiscences of Newberry*, there is a vivid description of how the mail was scattered over the counter of the old Newberry Hotel located on the southeast corner of Pratt and Caldwell Streets and how the author worked after school as a night clerk whose job included "getting out of bed every other morning at two and four o'clock to deliver the mail bags to the departing coaches."



By 1810, two other Newberry County post offices were added besides the one at Newberry Court House Village. Both were in the north and northeastern portions of the County (Poplar Grove and Hendersonville). Steadily over the following decades, improved roads and transportation along with the coming of the railroad in the Mid-Nineteenth Century, gave rise to post offices throughout the County. Many locations had names that have faded into the past. By 1900 there were 37 post offices within Newberry County! That number dropped to 32 around the time of the opening of the second Scott Building post office in 1906; and upon completion of the more efficient Taylor Building post office, in 1913, the number and location of post offices had dropped to include only Newberry, Chappells, Oldtown, Silverstreet, Helena, Prosperity, Slighs, Little Mountain, Peak, Pomaria, Jalapa, Kinards, and Whitmire.

1



**In 1877, Newberry was the 4<sup>th</sup> busiest post office in the State of South Carolina.**



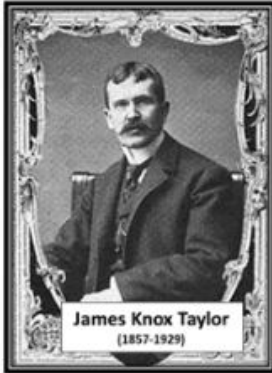
**Newberry Post Office on the Corner of Caldwell and Friend Streets (1<sup>st</sup> Scott Building)**



**Post Office in the Scott Building on Caldwell Street**

Following the location of the Post Office in the first Scott Building at the corner of Friend and Pratt Street, the Post Office was located in a larger building which was also known as the Scott Building. This building was located, however, just across the street from Central United Methodist Church on Caldwell Street. In less than a decade, two factors precipitated the building of "newer" post office. One was that a larger building was needed and the other factor was the availability of federal funding. The new building would be but a short distance away on the corner of Friend and College Streets.

2



James Knox Taylor was the Supervising Architect for the United States Treasury from 1897 until 1912. During his administration, he and his staff were credited with the design of numerous buildings, including the Newberry Post Office which was begun in 1911 and opened in May of 1913. Educated at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where he returned to join the faculty following his retirement from public service, Mr. Taylor's architectural designs reflect the Beaux Arts style of architecture. This style can be defined as an academic Neo-Classical style which is both eclectic very ordered in its formal presentation marked by monumental construction and sculptural detail. The "fine arts" or "beautiful arts" French style emanates with a sense of grandiosity befitting public buildings such as governmental buildings like post offices, banks, train stations, libraries, and schools. The style's grandeur and massive scale bespeaks the civic pride of early 20<sup>th</sup> century America following the financial gains generated from the Industrial Revolution.



**Supervising Architect J. Knox Taylor and His Staff**

Sitting (Left to Right): Mr. Harrison, Mr. Kemper, Mr. Taylor, Mr. Low  
 Standing: (Left to Right): Mr. Hamilton, Mr. Plant, Mr. Wetmore, Mr. Sutherland

**Buildings Designed by Mr. Taylor and His Staff**

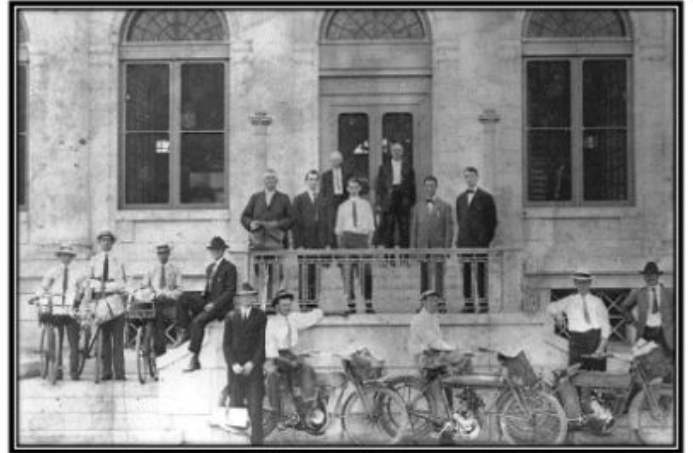
- Denver Mint, Denver Colorado (1897)
- Philadelphia Mint, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (1901)
- U. S. Post Office/Court House, San Francisco, Calif. (1905)  
 (Now the U. S. Court of Appeals, Ninth Circuit)
- U. S. Custom House, Houston Texas (1907-1911)
- Ellis Island Immigrant Hospital, New York, NY (1908)
- U. S. Post Office, Newberry, South Carolina (1911)
- Alaska Governor's Mansion, Juneau, Alaska (1912)





The Newberry Weekly Herald, 19 Sept. 1911

**BIDS INVITED.**  
 TREASURY DEPARTMENT, office of the Supervising Architect, Washington, D. C., September 6, 1911. **SEALED PROPOSALS** will be received in this office until 3 o'clock p. m. on the 11th day of October, 1911, and then opened, for the construction, complete (including plumbing, gas piping, heating apparatus, electric conduits and wiring and lighting fixtures) of the United States postoffice at Newberry, S. C. in accordance with drawings and specification, copies of which may be obtained from the custodian at Newberry, S. C., or at this office at the discretion of the Supervising Architect.  
 James Knox Taylor,  
 Supervising Architect.



*"Neither snow nor rain nor heat nor gloom of night stays these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds."*

This unofficial motto of the U.S. Postal Service is actually from the writing of the Greek historian, Herodotus, in his *The Persian Wars*. It would seem that the Persians operated a very efficient system of postal couriers who were known for their loyalty.

Postmaster: C. J. Purcell  
 from 1902-1913

It was during Mr. Purcell's administration that the first home delivery was made in Newberry.

First City Carriers:  
 Appointed in 1908  
 Mr. J. C. Dominick  
 A. J. Bowers, Jr.  
 B. H. McGraw

4



# 5

## Important Dates in U. S. Postal History

- 1775—Benjamin Franklin appointed Postmaster General under Continental Congress
- 1823—Navigable waters designated post roads by Congress
- 1838—Railroads designated post routes by Congress
- 1847—U. S. postage stamps issued
- 1853—Stamped envelopes issued
- 1855—Registered Mail began and PREPAYMENT OF POSTAGE REQUIRED
- 1858—Street letter boxes installed
- 1860—Pony Express started
- 1862—Railway mail service began experimentally
- 1873—U. S. postal cards issued
- 1893—First Commemorative stamps issued
- 1896—Rural free delivery began experimentally
- 1898—Private postcards authorized
- 1911—First carriage of mail by airplane sanctioned by Post Office Department
- 1924—Scheduled transcontinental airmail service began
- 1950—Residential deliveries reduced to once a day
- 1963—ZIP Code and sectional center plan implemented
- 1967—Pre-sorting by ZIP Code mandatory
- 1974—Self-adhesive stamps tested



Cost to Mail a Letter in 1913= Two Cents  
Most Common Stamps Depicted Washington and Franklin



Commemorative Stamps Issued in 1913  
(Parcel Post)

