

Baldwin was responsible for the introduction of Hanover's first handstamp postmark in 1797. Previous to 1797 (and for a brief period a few years later), letters mailed from Hanover, whether carried by a private carrier or an official post rider, bore only manuscript markings of place of origin and postage charged. Sometimes, especially in the case of letters carried by private carriers, even these markings might be missing.

Figure 1-6 shows an example of Baldwin's straightline postmark, catalog Type P1, on a cover from 1797. The postmark was applied by a handstamp, being struck in black and measuring 33½ millimeters by 4 mm. The manuscript "15" at the upper-right corner of the cover indicates that 15 cents postage, required for a distance of between 150 miles and 199 miles (Table 1), was to be paid by the addressee. Had the postage been prepaid by the sender, the cover would have been marked "PAID."

There is some disagreement over how many different varieties of Baldwin's postmark exist. Chambers (1933) in his list of early straightline postmarks listed this postmark but gave its size as 32½ mm by 4 mm. He further listed it as being used only in 1798 and included a red version as being used in September 1798. The fourth edition of the *American Stampless Cover Catalog* (Phillips, 1985) lists two size varieties of the Baldwin postmark. One, listed as being used in 1797 only, measures 33½ mm by 4 mm. The other, used from 1798 to 1800, measures 30½ mm by 4 mm.

I have examined nine examples of this postmark. It turns out that the variations in the lengths of the different examples are the result of different spacings of the ", N. H." elements of the marking, including the comma. The "Hanover" segment is always the same length, 18 mm. It appears, then, that length differences represent random differences from periodic loosening, tightening and replacement of type elements, specifically those of the state abbreviation. Thus, there are not two distinct, constant

TABLE 2
U.S. Domestic Postage Rates
in Effect March 2, 1799 - Jan. 31, 1815
and March 31, 1816 - April 30, 1816

Distance (miles)	Rate (cents)
0 - 39	8
40 - 89	10
90 - 149	12½
150 - 299	17
300 - 499	20
500 +	25



Figure 1-6. This 1797 folded letter bears an example of the first Hanover handstamped postmark. Postage was 15 cents for a letter traveling between 150 miles and 199 miles, as shown in Table 1.