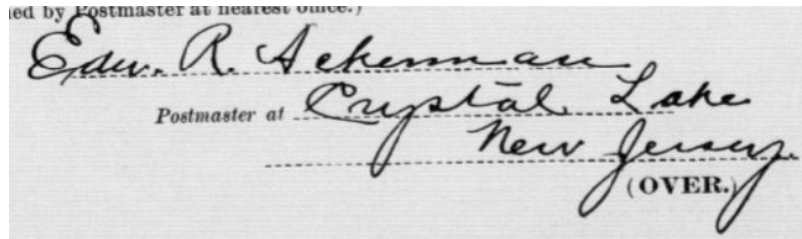


Crystal Lake Post Office

By Colin Knight

On Saturday March 17th, 1894 a fourth-class Post Office was opened in Crystal Lake¹ with Edward R. Ackerman appointed Postmaster by the 39th Postmaster General, Mr. Wilson S. Bissel. As a fourth-class Post Office, the Crystal Lake Post Office brought in annually less than



\$1,900 (55k in 2018) in gross receipts from the sale of P.O. boxes, stamps, stamped envelopes, postal cards and newspapers. Interestingly enough the sale of ‘waste paper’ was also

calculated into gross receipts, waste paper being defined under legislation brought about in 1883 by the Pendleton Act as, “dead newspapers, printed matter, and twine sold.” The Postmaster of a fourth-class Post Office drew a government salary of under \$1,000, and could also collect a commission on money orders sold. Crystal Lake Post Office offered money orders on and off in the early years, offering them continuously from 1914 on.

In the original application filed with the office of the Postmaster General on May 4th 1893, Edward R. Ackerman lists the New York Susquehanna & Western’s Crystal Lake Depot as the prospective location for the future Post Office. On the application, Ackerman noted that about 300 people inhabited the Crystal Lake area at that time, though when asked how many people the Post Office would serve responded, “Cannot give you a stated number.”



The 1902 Bergen County map printed by E. Robinson & Co. of New York City shows the Post Office located in the Crystal Lake Station. In 1903/1904 Jennie Lockwood (nee Arthur) became the first Postmistress at the Depot, Mrs. Lockwood being the daughter of Louis L. Arthur, owner and proprietor of the nearby Arthur’s Hotel (Crystal Lake Inn).

The role of a fourth-class Postmaster in the community was not one taken lightly. The position brought about prominence to the title holder, with the Post Office being the center of

¹ The Crystal Lake Post Office was the first in the modern Borough of Franklin Lakes, predating the Campgaw Post Office by three years, ten months, and 26 days

civic life. Having a Post Office in one's business² was a sure way to bring people in, the foot traffic and sales associated with it more than compensating for the small, but honorable, government salary. Crystal Lake Post Office, being located in the rail depot, made it easy to route mail through Paterson and beyond. In 1911, Mrs. Jennie Lockwood drew a salary of \$128³. Being a fourth-class Post Office, records kept on salary are scant, by 1912 the Rural Free Delivery (RFD) program had shut down one-fifth of fourth-class Post Offices, replacing local mail pickup with free delivery services to residences. In early October of 1916, mail service at the Crystal Lake Post Office was to be discontinued and mail routed through the Oakland RFD service, but by the end of the month this order was rescinded and mail service would still be available at Crystal Lake⁴.

For the next decade, mail services were available at Crystal Lake, until finally being decommissioned on September 15th, 1926, with mail rerouted to neighboring Oakland. The station was torn down in the early 1960's and disposed of in the woods behind the Crystal Lake Inn, which would meet a similar fate a decade later.

The Crystal Lake Post Office had six Postmasters during its run, listed here in order of service and date appointed:

Edward R. Ackerman: March 17, 1894

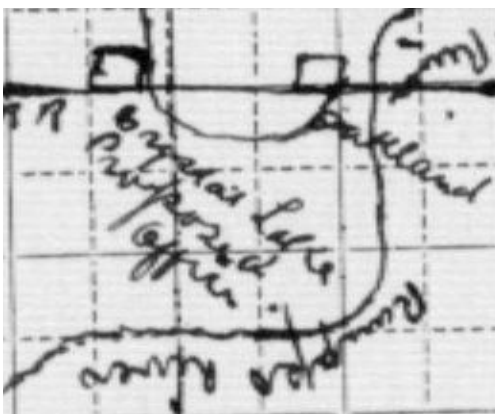
Jennie Lockwood: December 9, 1903

Walter J. Baker: March 14, 1914

Mary E. Johnson: March 16, 1917

Warren O. Ackerman: June 7, 1923

Frank Weise: April 19, 1924



² Or in the case of the Campgaw P.O., as a still extant addition on the back of the private Pulis residence (430 Pulis Ave)

³ At the same time, Campgaw Postmaster William V. Pulis (and future first Mayor of Franklin Lakes), received \$230

⁴ Similar efforts to shut down the Campgaw Post Office occurred in early 1909, with the same result of the discontinuation rescinded. Mail was also to be rerouted through Oakland. This was 7 years after the nationwide implementation of Rural Free Delivery in 1902.