

WESTERN EXPRESS

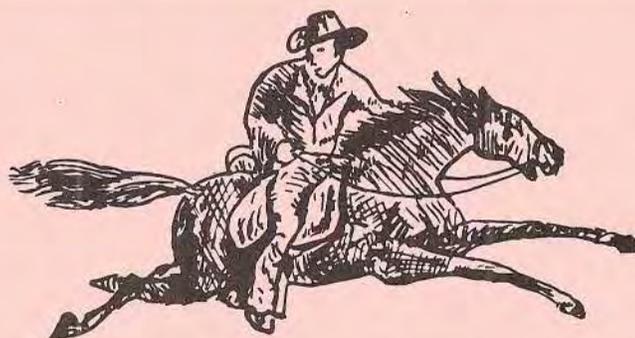
RESEARCH JOURNAL OF EARLY WESTERN MAILS

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OCTOBER, 1975

Express
Ocean Mail
Overland
Post Offices



Territorial
Statehood
Postal Rates
Postal History

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EDITOR'S ARENA

SILVER ANNIVERSARY With this issue, **WESTERN EXPRESS** becomes a 25-year publication. Yes, Vol. I, No. 1 made its appearance under date of January 1951, with Emerson Barker of Denver as Editor. Emerson died in March of that year after being responsible for just three issues, and Henry Clifford took over for a six year period. He was followed by Mel Nathan, whose term as Editor ran for seventeen years, at which time your present Editor was appointed.

Since that modest beginning in 1951 the pages of **WESTERN EXPRESS** have carried truly cyclopedic information for the collector of Western covers. Just what will the next 25 years bring?



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THE LEAVENWORTH AND PIKES PEAK EXPRESS COMPANIES

David T. Beals III

Introduction

The purpose of this article is to trace briefly the history of the Leavenworth and Pikes Peak Express Company, the Jones and Russell Express Company, and the Central Overland California and Pikes Peak Express Company, as well as their relationship to each other, and their postal history.

The narrative of this article has been taken primarily from the series of articles published in the *Kansas Historical Quarterly* from 1944 through 1946 (Ref 1) which was an exhaustive work containing many extracts from original documents. We have just discovered H. Parker Johnson's fine article on Jones and Russell in the *American Philatelist* of November 1944 (Ref 4) and note that there are some differences, which we feel are probably based on different interpretation of original sources, although the whole story is basically the same. We would recommend both articles to those interested in pursuing this subject further.

The discovery of gold by W. Green Russell in Cherry Creek at the present site of Denver in the summer of 1858 was a signal for a stampede, which by the spring of 1859 assumed epic proportions.

While some cabins were erected in the winter of 1858-59, the first permanent settlements were named Auraria, Denver City and Montana City and were located on Cherry Creek. The first U.S. Post Office was opened in Auraria in early 1859, and the name was changed to Denver City on Feb. 11, 1860. Needless to say, a demand for mail, express and transportation services was immediate.

The "jumping off" places on the border began to vie with each other for a share of the outfitting business. Kansas City, Leavenworth, Atchison, Westport and St. Joseph each argued its superiority as the best place to outfit, and each maintained that it was the terminal of the best route across the plains.

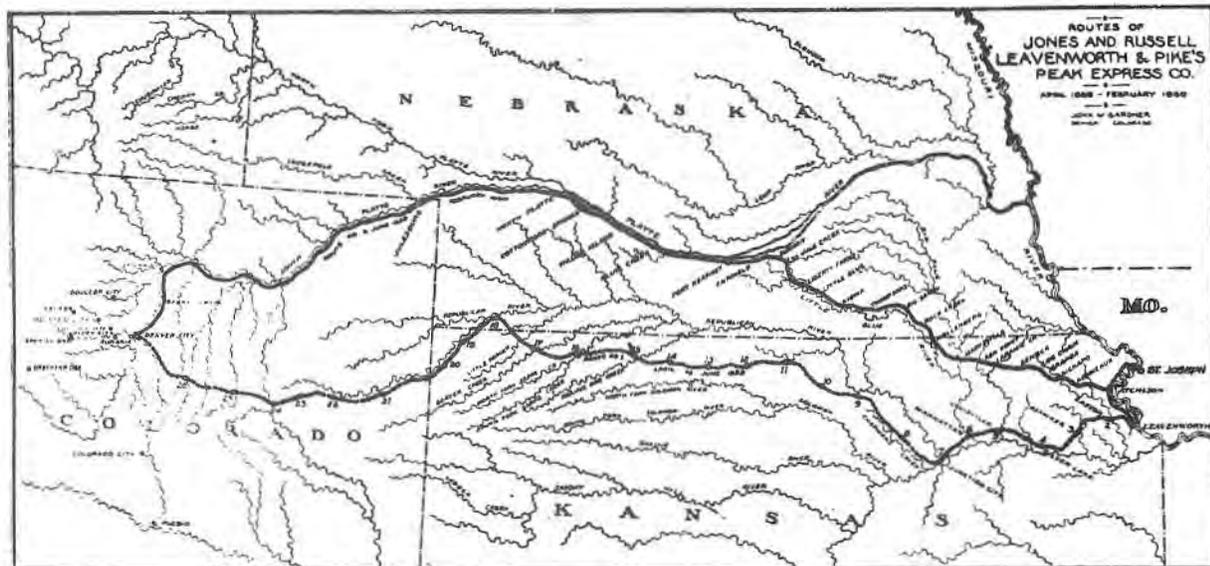
In 1855 William H. Russell and Alexander Majors, who had been in the freighting business, formed a partnership and established headquarters at Leavenworth City, from whence they operated to Forts Kearney and Laramie. Their business expanded enormously during the Mormon troubles of 1857-58, when they had the contract to supply Col. Albert Sidney Johnston's army in Utah. By 1858 William B. Waddell had joined the firm as Treasurer, and Russell, Majors and Waddell was known as the largest freighting firm in the West.

On his trip to the new gold fields in the spring of 1859 (via the Leavenworth & Pikes Peak Express), Horace Greeley described the size of this operation with its "acres of wagons . . . pyramids of extra axletrees . . . herds of oxen . . . and regiments of drivers . . ."

During the winter of 1858-59 William H. Russell and John S. Jones (who had been a major sub-contractor of Russell, Majors and Waddell for ten years) were in Washington discussing the development of express service to the West with government and congressional officials. Among other ideas (including the Pony Express), the plan to run a stage coach express to the Pikes Peak region was conceived. Alexander Majors (and presumably the treasurer Waddell, also) declined to participate in this venture, and the firm of Jones and Russell was born shortly thereafter. In the meantime, Russell, Majors and Waddell continued their regular freighting business to the gold mines of Colorado as well as elsewhere in the West.



THE LEAVENWORTH AND PIKES PEAK EXPRESS COMPANIES (Continued)



Routes used by the Leavenworth and Pikes Peak Express Companies

The Territory of Colorado was not organized until February 28, 1861; thus, in 1859 the Kansas-Nebraska line extended to the Continental Divide. West of the divide was Utah, this placed Boulder in Nebraska and Breckenridge in Utah. State lines have been drawn in as an aid to the reader.

Map drawn by John M. Gardner.

from *THE AMERICAN PHILATELIST* - November 1944

The Leavenworth and Pikes Peak Express Co.

This so-called company actually was not a corporate entity. It was the name used by the first express service operated by Jones and Russell to the Denver area. No charter was ever issued in its name. During the winter of 1859 Jones and Russell bought 1,000 fine Kentucky mules and sufficient Concord coaches to operate a daily coach each way between the Missouri River and Denver. For this equipment they gave their notes payable in 90 days, and thereafter the concern was never without serious financial problems. These purchases were actually made by Ben Holladay, who thereby presumably became a virtual silent partner in the enterprise.

On March 15, 1859, a party under Col. William J. Preston departed Leavenworth to lay out a route via Fort Riley and thence along the westerly divide between the Republican and Smoky Hill Rivers. Apparently they did a great job of surveying and laying out the route, since they arrived in Denver on April 23, by which time the first coach had already left Leavenworth (on April 18). The first trip was uneventful but required 19 days, arriving in Denver on May 7. The first east bound trip departed Denver on May 10 and arrived on May 20, a time of 11 days, which triggered a tremendous impromptu civic celebration in Leavenworth.

Service continued throughout the spring and early summer of 1859. The route was the shortest one possible (469 miles); there were 27 stations, including Leavenworth, Easton, Osawkie, Silver Lake, St. Marys Mission, Manhattan, Junction City and Denver. The fare was \$125.00 per person, including 20 pounds of luggage. The charge for letters was 25¢. Jones and Russell advertised in the Leavenworth Daily Times that stages would depart from the Pacific Hotel whenever they had a full load, but as a minimum on every Tuesday.

Your author has recorded the covers of this company and its two successors from the collections available to him and from auction catalogues of the last five years.

THE LEAVENWORTH AND PIKES PEAK EXPRESS COMPANIES (Continued)

The Leavenworth and Pikes Peak Express Company used two very similar 35 mm markings (illustrated below). The abbreviation for Leavenworth is LEATH in marking #1, and LEAV'H in #2. We have verified the use of the second marking on only two covers, both dated July 2nd (see figure 1) and we would like to hear of others.



Figure 1



Figure 2

We have thus far recorded 7 east bound covers, of which the earliest, postmarked at the Leavenworth postoffice on May 21, was carried on the first east bound trip. Five west bound covers have been recorded, the earliest of which was carried on the second west bound trip. It was postmarked Stouts 0 (ms) April 15 1859 and marked by the company on April 30th, and the latest (as we shall later see) one dated July 2 was carried on the last west bound run of the Leavenworth and Pikes Peak Express Company. There is an eastbound cover also marked July 2. However, we do not know if this was the last east bound trip, or whether there was one more.

Thus twelve Leavenworth and Pikes Peak covers have thus far been recorded and we would appreciate xeroxes of other Leavenworth and Pikes Peak Express Company covers in order to expand this study.

Westbound mail was either postmarked St. Joseph, Missouri, (the terminus of the Hannibal and St. Joseph Railroad) or points east, while eastbound mail was deposited at the Leavenworth postoffice upon arrival.



Figure 1

THE LEAVENWORTH AND PIKES PEAK EXPRESS COMPANIES (Continued)

Covers carried by this service were marked with a 35 mm circular handstamp by the company. The date was omitted sometimes. Some postal service was provided by the Auraria and Coraville postoffices (established Jan. 18, 1859) Evidence suggests that both of these "Post Offices" were closely related to the Express Company as no postal contracts for U.S. Mail service to this area were yet in effect. This unusual combination of an ms townmark and express marking certainly suggest such a relationship.



The Jones and Russell Express Company



On May 11, 1859, three weeks after the inauguration of the Leavenworth and Pikes Peak Express, Jones and Russell purchased the John Hockaday line, which held a government contract (Route No. 8911) for transportation of mail to Salt Lake City via the Platte River route. This necessitated the abandonment of the route via Fort Riley and the Soloman-Republican divide. Hockaday termed this virtually a forced sale, since after a large capital investment (almost \$400,000) to provide weekly service, the Post Office Department directed that it be reduced to semi-monthly.

The new route along the Platte River via Marysville, Fort Kearney and Julesburg had long been used by Russell, Majors and Waddell to haul freight and thus presented no problem. However, further expense was incurred in shifting equipment to the new route in the summer of 1859. The first coach by way of the Platte left Leavenworth on July 2 and arrived in Denver on July 9. Since the company had no postal contract from Julesburg to Denver, the express charge of 25¢ per letter was continued, which created no little ill will in Denver. The distance of the new route was 665 miles, and the mail had to be picked up and deposited at the St. Joseph, Missouri, postoffice by the terms of the government postal contract. Consequently, at this time the operations of the company started moving to St. Joseph. The last run of this service occurred on February 23, 1860.

We have recorded eighteen eastbound covers and one westbound cover (see Figure 2), for a total of nineteen showing the Jones and Russell marking.

THE LEAVENWORTH AND PIKES PEAK EXPRESS COMPANIES (Continued)



Figure 2

The only westbound cover we have recorded originated in Warrensburg, Missouri

These covers were all marked with a 35 mm circular marking, all containing the words "Denver City." This probably indicated the collection in Denver of the express charges on *all* mail so carried. Oddly enough, this marking was used through the spring of 1860, through the Central Overland was organized in February. The earliest date we have recorded is July 29, 1859, the latest is June 7, 1860, both on eastbound covers and two undated examples. We would like to know if a "first day" (July 2, 1859) exists.



The Central Overland California and Pikes Peak Express Company



In the face of increasing financial difficulty, Russell, Majors and Waddell came to the rescue and took over the Jones and Russell Co. In order to operate the Pony Express and other ventures, a new company, the Central Overland California and Pikes Peak Express Company, was incorporated in Kansas on February 13, 1860. This new firm bought out the assets (such as they were) of the Jones and Russell Express Company. The company headquarters was established in St. Joseph in April, and the Pony Express service to California was inaugurated on April 3, but this fascinating saga is beyond the scope of this article.

Except for the name, service to Denver continued through the spring of 1860 as it had under Jones and Russell. William H. Russell became the president of the COC&PPE and Benjamin F. Ficklin replaced Jones as superintendant of the Denver operation.

In August, 1860, E. F. Bruce was awarded the first U.S. mail contract for service to Denver from Julesburg, where it was left by the COC&PPE. Bruce seems to have been forced to engage the

THE LEAVENWORTH AND PIKES PEAK EXPRESS COMPANIES (Continued)

COC&PPE to carry the mail all the way, the first weekly through government mail service leaving Denver for Leavenworth (and St. Joseph) on August 14, 1860, and from St. Joseph in Early September. The Denver express service was increased to tri-weekly with mail being sent by express, if so requested, at an extra charge of 25¢ per letter (this was reduced to 10¢ later in the month: see below).

During the summer of 1860 the Hinckley Express Company (previously operating from the mines to Denver) extended its service to Omaha, where it connected with the Western Stage Company, thereby even further increasing COC&PPE's competitor. To meet this, the COC&PPE reduced the passenger fare to \$75, and the express charges for letters to Denver to 10¢.

It became apparent that Bruce could not himself perform under the terms of his contract, and later in the fall the Post Office Department concluded a new mail contract for the Denver mail service with the Western Stage Company, which operated west from Omaha. This provided substantial competition for the COC&PPE in the Colorado business, and loss of mail revenues.

The winter of 1860-61 was particularly severe, causing increased operating problems, and Congress failed to provide a contract for daily mail service to California by the COC&PPE on the Central Route (presumably due to political pressure). On March 2, 1861, a new postal contract was concluded with the Butterfield Overland Mail Company (which had become associated with Wells Fargo) for such service, effective July 1, 1861. Thereupon, Butterfield signed a subcontract with COC&PPE under which this firm was to continue operation of the routes from Salt Lake City eastward.

In the face of increasing financial pressures on Russell, Majors and Waddell, on April 26, 1861, Bela M. Hughes (a cousin of Benjamin Holladay) succeeded William H. Russell as President of COC&PPE, and thereby Holladay assumed complete control.

In September, 1861, the eastern terminal of the COC&PPE was moved to Atchison by Post Office Department order, the Hannibal and St. Joseph Railroad having been extended to that point.

The burgeoning financial problems which plagued these companies from the beginning became even more severe during the fall and necessitated further substantial rate reductions. Finally, the very severe winter of 1861-62 seems to have delivered the "coupe de grace," and on March 22, 1862, the assets of the COC&PPE were sold by public sale on the steps of the Massasoit House in Atchison to Ben Holladay for \$100,000.00. It had long been common gossip that COC&PPE meant "clean out of cash and poor pay." Upon assuming complete management, Holladay paid the debts of COC&PPE (over \$500,000.00), negotiated a remarkable reorganization of the line, and continued the service as the Overland Stage Line.



Central Overland Postal History

The first marking used by this company is a 5 line straight line woodblock, 33 x 34 mm. illustrated in Figure 3, used in March 1860 (it arrived in Des Moines from Denver City on March 10).

THE LEAVENWORTH AND PIKES PEAK EXPRESS COMPANIES (Continued)

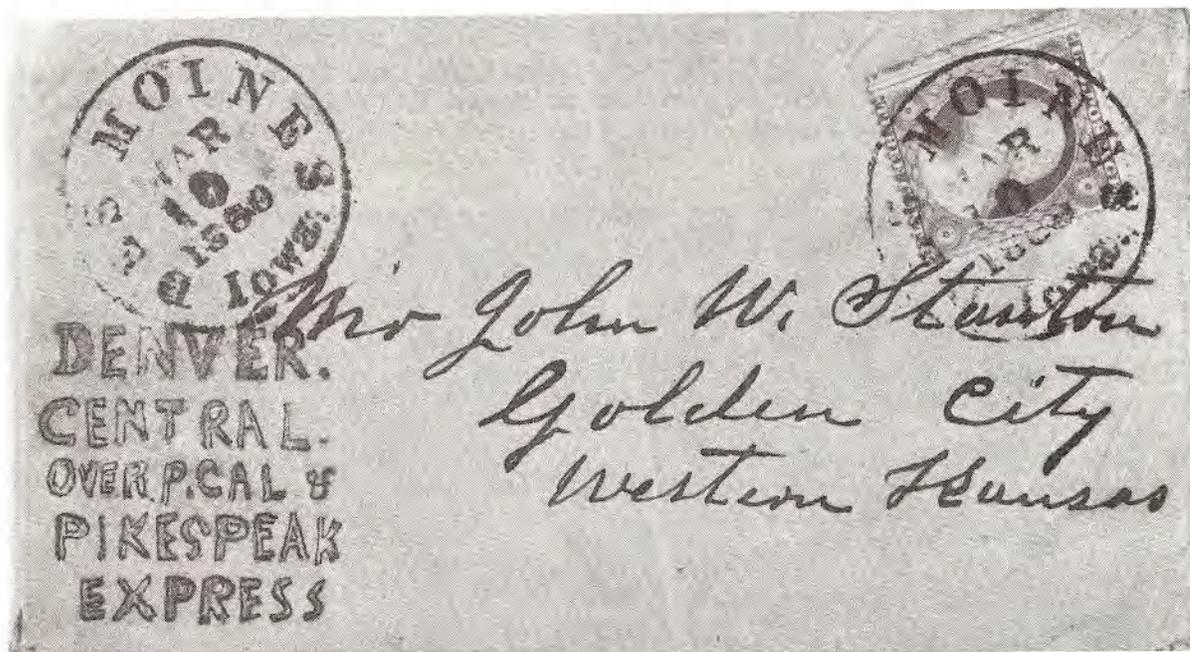


Figure 3

Two examples of this most interesting marking have been reported. The outline in black ink that appears on this one appears to be contemporary, although we can not be sure whether it was applied by the express clerk to strengthen a weak marking, or by the recipient.

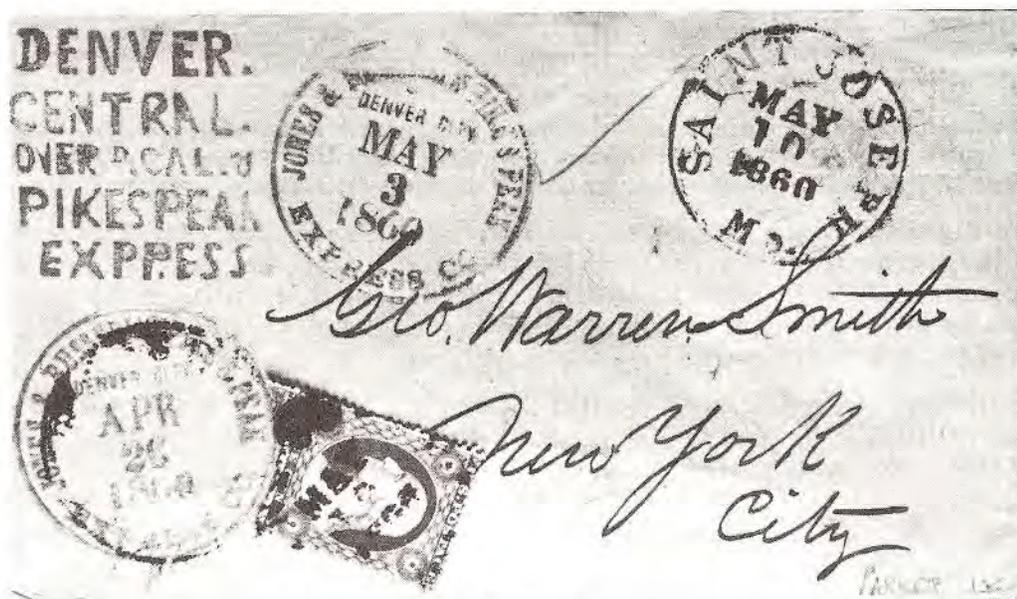


Figure 4

The other example, dated May 3, 1860 shows a remarkable combination of the straight line marking together with two strikes of the Jones and Russell marking. We are at a loss to explain the reason for such a usage.

THE LEAVENWORTH AND PIKES PEAK EXPRESS COMPANIES (Continued)

Apparently the straight line was available, and was used intermittently, following the inauguration of this service on Feb. 23, 1860. The old Jones and Russell marking for some reason (possibly of convenience), also continued to be used until receipt of the new oval COC markings in early June, and thereafter (June 7) there is no further recorded usage of either of these markings.



Figure 5

This cover shows the only reported use of the Central Overland label tied to cover (a couple of others exist untied) and an unusual double strike of the marking, one dated October 29 and the other October 30. This possibly indicates a one day delay of the scheduled departure.

Forty two eastbound covers carrying this marking have been recorded, of which the earliest is June 6, 1860 and the latest May 25, 1861. Of these, five also carry the marking of the Hinckley Express Company (between June 10 and July 31, 1860), indicating carriage between the mines and Denver by that company. It should be noted that the last A of California is always missing in the Denver City, K.T. marking.

Eight west bound covers have been reported showing the St. Joseph, Mo. COC&PPE oval, of which one (dated March 28, 1861) is struck in green, for a total of 50 covers. The earliest westbound use is November 6, 1860 and the latest is September 12, 1861.

THE LEAVENWORTH AND PIKES PEAK EXPRESS COMPANIES (Continued)



Figure 6

The rarest COC&PP marking is that from Leavenworth City KT of which only two have been recorded. Both are dated Denver City October 6, 1860 and Leavenworth City October 12.

Since weekly through mail service became available on August 14, 1860, and since many covers between Denver and the east exist after that date without express company markings, we would conclude that the covers used thereafter and carrying COC&PPE markings were carried by the supplementary express service previously mentioned.

We cannot fully explain the handling or routing of the several covers from Auraria and Coraville used before April 14, 1860, properly postmarked and carrying no express company markings. Possibly our readers can help.



Conclusion

We would not wish to speculate as to the percentage of existing covers, which have been included in this study. However, we believe it to be significant and sufficient to determine the relative scarcity of the various markings and usages. We would appreciate xerox prints of other covers, particularly those showing unusual usages and new dates, or even previously unreported markings: as we would like to prepare a list of all known covers for subsequent publication.

Fakes

Unfortunately covers with most of these markings faked do exist. We have examined photos of those covers in possession of the American Philatelic Research Institute which had been declared to be faked by competent authority.

These fakes executed between the late 1940s and into the 60s are extremely well done. The one

THE LEAVENWORTH AND PIKES PEAK EXPRESS COMPANIES (Continued)

ingredient is that they are all extremely attractive, excellent strikes of the markings, and in splendid condition. Beyond that, we are told by an eminent authority, the difference between the genuine cover and the fake can not be properly described in words.

It should be remembered that most if not all of these covers were copied from the *genuine* article — certainly as far as the markings are concerned. We are listing below the pertinent information from these covers:

Express Marking	Postmark	Stamp	Addressee
*Leav. & Pikes Peak July 29 Station 16 (ms)	Leav. City KT AUG 3 1859	U10	Miss Mary Brown McHenry, Ills.
*Leav. & Pikes Peak JUL 29	Leav. City K.T. Aug 2 1859	U10	A. D. Stacey Charleston, S.C.
Leav. & Pikes Peak JUL 2	Leav. City KT. JUL — 1859	U10	Charles Neal Wrightstown Pa.
Leav. & Pikes Peak JUNE 20	Leav City KT	U10 & #26	Illegible in photo
Jones & Russell Sep 8, 1859	Leav. City KT SEP 1 — 1859	#26	J. M. Bloomerbiggs Galion, Crawford Co. O
Jones & Russell Nov 17, 1859	Leav. City KT	#26	Mrs. Wm. Carruthers Booth Po. Herkimer Co. NY
C. O. Denver City FEB 23 (also an undated strike on reverse)	Saint Joseph Mo. (Double Circle)	#26	M. J. Penel Concord Morgan Co. Ills.
C.O. Denver City DEC 4 and Co Sf Joseph Mo. Dec 10 (also undated DC strike on reverse)	Same as above	3¢ Star Die	Charles Neal Wrightstown Pa.
C. O. Denver City JAN 22	Same as above	3¢ Star Die	Wm. E. Chamberlain Pine Island Illinois
C.O. Denver City JUL 26	D C Saint Joseph Mo AUG 2	#26	Miss M. C. Chamberlain Duaniel I (?) Winnebago Co. Ills.

* These two must have been a slip on the part of the “manufacturer”. In as much as the last westbound trip of the Leavenworth and Pikes Peak Express was on July 2, 1859. We consider it most unlikely that there was an eastbound trip on this late date. We are not however absolutely certain.

We would very much like to have xerox copies of any genuine covers which might be “related” to any of the above, and of course any other fakes known to any of our readers.

THE LEAVENWORTH AND PIKES PEAK EXPRESS COMPANIES (Continued)

Acknowledgements

Assistance in the preparation of this article is gratefully acknowledged from S.M. Arnold, T. J. Alexander, John Eggen, Marc Haas, D. L. Jarrett, C.C. Hart, N.L. Perssons and Paul Rohloff.

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1. "The Pikes Peak Express Companies", *Kansas Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XII, No. 2, May 1944, No. 4, Nov. 1944, No. 8, Nov. 1945; Vol. XIV, No. 1, Feb. 1946.
2. *The Overland Mail*, LeRoy H. Hafen, Arthur H. Clark Co. 1926
3. *Kansas Post Offices*, Robert W. Baughman, the Kansas Postal History Society, 1961
4. "Jones & Russell's Leavenworth and Pike's Peak Express Co.", H. Parker Johnson, *The American Philatelist*, November 1944



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CONTENTS OF A LETTER
From the Collection of
Kenneth Harrison

Burns Creek, Cal. November 17th, 1850

Dear Brother:

In my last letter, written on the Rio Grande, I informed you how I got through Texas. In this I shall tell what has happened since. At El Paso many of the boys changed their oxen and wagons for pack mules and beat the rest of the company to California one month. Wagons were worth nothing on the Rio Grande because there are 500 of them there laying rotting already. I saw no good chance to trade so I went ahead with my team joining John Jordan's trains. We crossed the river in a boat made of 2 wagon beds, and being a boatman myself I had charge of steering the loads across. A hurt received by a fall on the right side of the boat I still feel at times. I believe we left the Rio Grande on the 15 of July — not having my journals at hand I can't be precise as to dates. A march of 3 days brought us to Rio Mimbres a beautiful stream of cool clear water full of small fish of the perch kind. The bottoms were covered with grass. This, like all other streams in this country soon to lose itself in the sand after leaving the mountains.

25 miles to the north were copper and gold mines which have been worked by the Mexicans till lately. Maj. Stein of Dona Ana is coming next week to reopen them so he told us, and a gent of Socora is raising a co. to dig gold on the Pristo branch of the Gila. It would not surprise me if the mines were found to be an extension of the Cal. mines. If New Mexico is not a mining country it is worthless to the whites, for nothing is to be seen but ragged mountains and arid plains covered only with useless brush and a little dry gram grass. The only running water we saw from the Rio Grande to the Gila, a distance of 450 miles was the Mimbres and San Pedro; both of these afford some chance for irrigation and cultivation. From Rio Mimres we went 25 miles to the Ojo Del Vaca (Cow spring). Here we found 5 Mexicans waiting for us, to steal mules. We put them under guard. The next night they stole 5 from the next train.

Next day we started for Dry Lake which we reached after traveling 30 hours. Distance 40 miles without water. Here I gave Willard my mule and let him take what provisions he wanted and he went on ahead and joined a mule train. I have not seen him since but he is at San Diego at work for 10 dollars a day. If he does not take the mine fever and will stay there he will do much better. Though I wish Willard well I do not wish to have any intimate connection with him in business. I could not tell him anything without making him mad. Tix useless to write particulars. All I have to say, if I believed I have another brother that would use me so, I would treat him as a stranger. Willard, while he was with me and after he left me, tried to injure me with the rest of the co. a thing I would scorn to do by him. But enough of this which no doubt is as disagreeable to read as write.

From Dry Lake we went 25 miles to Lost Creek, for the first time I tied up my cattle with the guards among the horses; that night 25 oxen were stolen. 16 men, including myself chased the Apaches 50 miles where we found the cattle, 2 of them butchered, the rest we drove back to camp their hoofs worn out unfit anymore to work. The night after our return McDonalds Co. lost 30 the same way, 26 of which they recovered. Here too, a young man on guard was mistaken for an indian and shot while asleep. A young lady died of fever and Capt. Jordan lost a son age 14 from the same complaint. Lost Creek will be remembered by us all. When we arrived at Santa Cruz on the San Pedro one yoke of my steers had worn their feet out and I sold them for a horse and gave 10 dollars boot. This horse I lost near Los Angeles by theft. I sold my wagon for another horse which I have now. One yoke of steer I let a man have to use

CONTENTS OF A LETTER (Continued)

the mines refusing 40 dollars for them, just because the man's team was failing and he could not buy another yoke — and many books and things I left the same way.

Now I hear the trains have gone to San Diego and I shall probably not get a thing I left behind. I left the ox train at Santa Cruz and packed one horse and rode another. At the Pimo Village I was sick of fever and swelled spleen in consequence of suffering for water 1 day. The Pimos has been represented as very honest but they stole my ammunition, hatchet, comb and shirt while I was there 3 days.

The trip down the Gila is the most disagreeable you can conceive. No grass for the animals — nothing but muskeet beans which however are nearly as good as corn. Water brackish and quite warm. Weather hot — thermometer in the shade during the day 90 to 120. Roads so dusty you can scarce see a man riding. Such was the Gila.

At the Colorado we paid 2 for men and 3 for horses ferriage. On leaving the river we must encounter the Desert of 100 miles with 5 watering places but only 1 to recruit on beans and grass. In this Grande Journado of 110 miles I think I saw the carcasses of 1000 mules or horses perished for want of food or water. On striking the mountains of Cal. the air was cool and pleasant. Soon we began to pass vineyards and herds of cattle and horses. These cattle were worth from 10-16 dollars but in the mines 100 dollars per head. I went due N. from Los Angeles into the Tulare Valley thence across the San Joachin (pro. San Wawkeen) to Aqua Fria mines near Mariposa. There I had the mountain fever the effect of cold on the lung for 2 weeks. The 3 week I worked and cleared 15 dollars. Then came to Indian Gulch; staid and worked 1 week. Made 6 dollars then came here and worked last week and made 6 dollars clear of expenses. By these statements you will see I got in the mines the first of October and have made nothing of importance clear of expenses.

The prospects are that as soon as it rains so the small gulches (branches) can be worked I shall average 5 to 8 dollars per day. Mining is a lottery.

Flour is worth 25 to 30 cents lb., pork 40, beef or venison fresh 25, onions 100, potatoes 35 to 40 cts. lb. These prices will increase soon as the rain sets in. It is 80 miles to Stockton but that is the nearest P.O. so you may direct me there and I will send for the letters by men who follow that business. I as not feel like urging my friends to come here — prospects look to me rather gloomy. The richest diggings are gone but should gold fail at the same time everything must fail. The Company sent by the Gov. to the Colorado to make a treaty with the Yuma Indians about their killing John Glanton has had a fight with them and killed 50 of them and capturing some horses. I fear the Indians will revenge this killing by killing emigrants coming to Cal. when the force is withdrawn. I send enclosed a piece of gold I found yesterday to my mother. I do not send it for its beauty, size or worth but because it is in a convenient shape to send. The gold dug here varies from the size of a gnats eye to the size of a walnut. The piece I send is the common size I have found. I have not got any letter from Mass since early spring so you may depend I am hungry for one.

Love to all, goodbye
D A Learned



POSTAL HISTORY OF THE COLORADO SAN JUAN, CHAPTER III, PART TWO
by Ray L. Newburn, Jr.

LOST TRAIL

Established Jan. 28, 1878
Re-established May 14, 1883
Re-established June 27, 1892

Discontinued Sept. 30, 1879
Discontinued Aug. 14, 1884
Discontinued May 10, 1894

Lost Trail was located on the north bank of the Rio Grande at its junction with Lost Trail Creek, about 30 miles east of Silverton (Finger Mesa Quadrangle, 1964).²⁶ Crofutt describes it as "a post office and ranch hotel."³² He suggests "the accomodations are — well, camp out, that's the best."³² Crofutt was no dude. It must have been some "hotel". In the early period, before the Stony Pass road was completed in 1879, cargo was shifted from wagons to pack animals at Lost Trail.²³ Interestingly, Lost Trail is the site of a forest service camp ground today and people are still sleeping at Lost Trail. In 1879 mail went through Lost Trail three times a week each way between Silverton and Antelope Springs (Post road No. 67, 1881 ed.)

In 1883 the mail came from San Juan by "special supply" (which seems to mean irregularly).⁶⁹



Figure 12

Only known cover from the short-lived Lost Trail post office, complete with a beautiful corner card! Correspondence to the Silverton law firm of Hudson & Slaymaker, without which, postmarks from many of the rare towns in the San Juan would not be known.

(Photographed by David L. Jarrett)



POSTAL HISTORY OF THE COLORADO SAN JUAN, CHAPTER III, PART TWO (Continued)

ROSES CABIN

Established June 27, 1878

Discontinued Sept. 19, 1887

Rose's Cabin was located on the north side of Henson Creek just below the creek coming out of Schafer Gulch (Handies Peak Quadrangle, 1955). This is 15 miles west of Lake City and six miles west of Capitol City at an altitude of 10,860 ft. The cabin was built in 1874 by Charles (more often referred to as Corydon^{29,49}) Rose who came from Howardsville to prospect. In 1876 Rose opened his cabin as a stopping place for travellers.⁶² By 1880 Crofutt described Rose's Cabin as "a small mining camp" consisting "of a post office, store, restaurant, a few miners' cabins, and about fifty population."³² On Jan. 1, 1881, the Lake City Mining register described Charles Schafer as the proprietor of the general store and hotel at Rose's Cabin²⁹, and he had been operating at least the store since early 1878⁴⁹. The 1885 edition of Crofutt included a smelting and concentrating works and 120 people in the town.³⁹ The Golconda mining company remodeled several of the buildings for more comfortable use as recently as 1920, and one of these was torn down for the lumber only 15 years ago.²⁹

In 1880 there was daily mail service from Lake City (post road No. 15, 1881 ed.) and some form of stage from Animas Forks as well.³² By 1885 there was mail six times a week during the spring and summer and once a week October 1 to March 31 from Lake City (Post road No. 105, 1885 ed.)³⁷. There was still mail to Animas Forks via Mineral Point as well.⁷⁰ Since there was activity in the area well into the 20th century, it is not obvious why the Rose's Cabin post office closed in 1887, although mining was generally depressed in the area from 1883 until 1889 (see Lake City).
ROSES CABIN COLO (2) 1882/6/27

CI: P,1,1:255-170+:T;M,D,Y;S;R;G: target

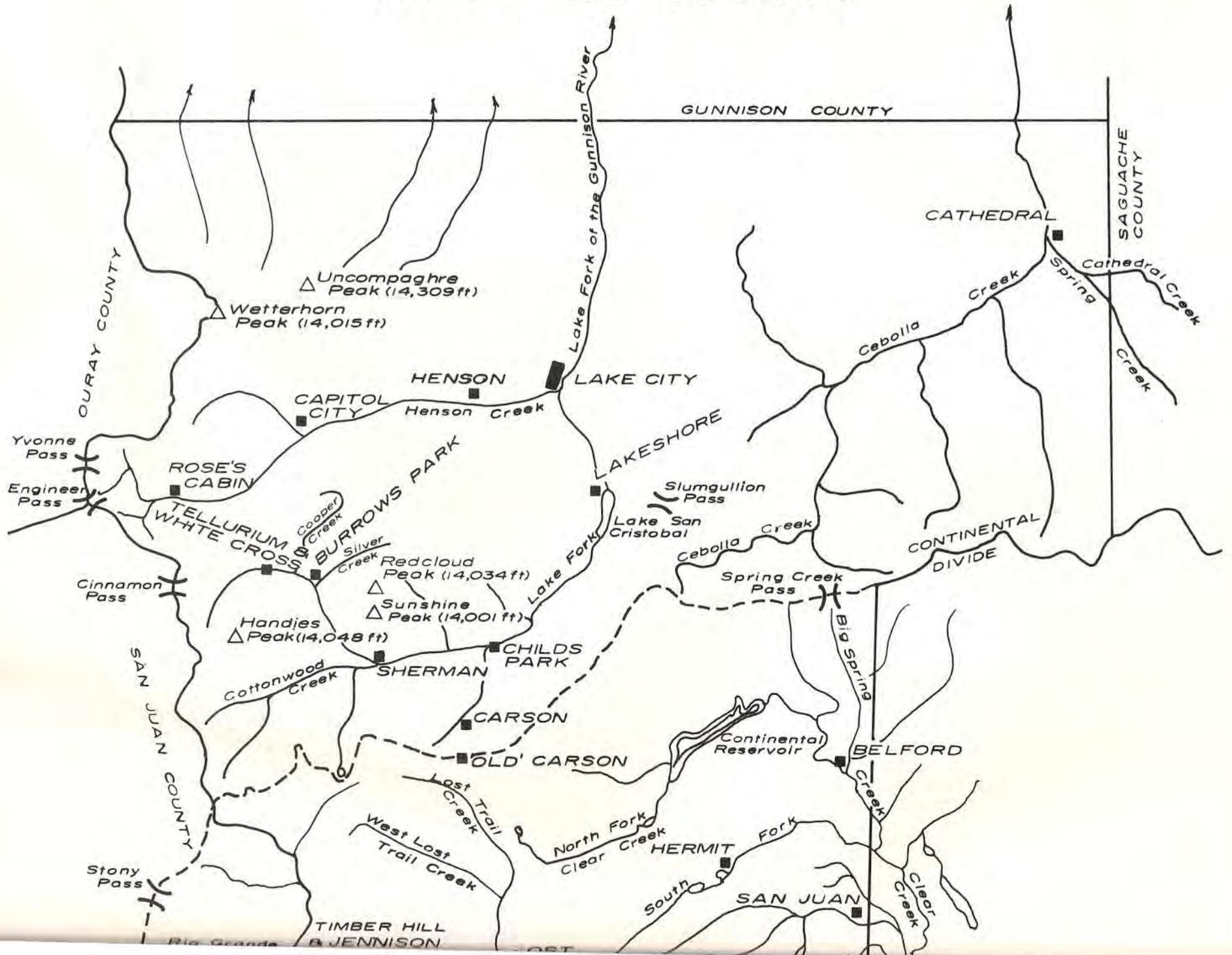


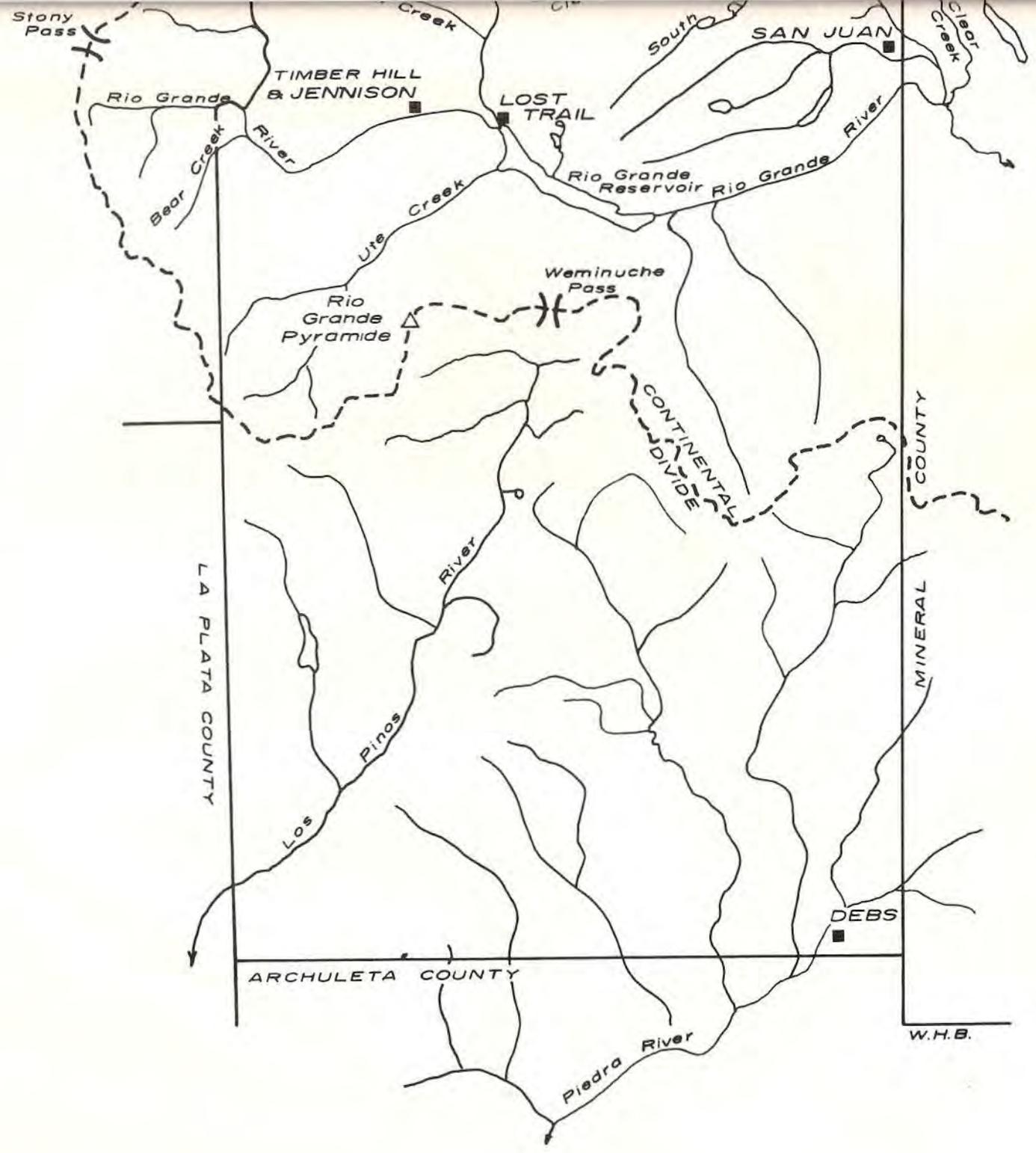
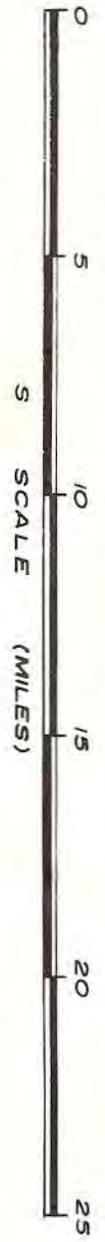
Figure 13

Herb Stone worked at Rose's Cabin for a short time before moving to Capitol City (See fig. 9). Unfortunately this card was "double struck" at the post office. Other Rose's Cabin postmarks have been rumored to exist, but they have yet to be shown to the author.



HINSDALE COUNTY





POSTAL HISTORY OF THE COLORADO SAN JUAN, CHAPTER III, PART TWO (Continued)

SAN JUAN

Established June 24, 1874
 Re-established Feb. 28, 1900
 Re-established July 5, 1922

Discontinued Mar. 18, 1895
 Discontinued May 14, 1904
 Rescinded Mar. 8, 1923

Some records indicate that San Juan was in Mineral County, after that county's creation in 1893^{13,63}, but the location on a recent topographic map is a few hundred feet inside Hinsdale County, so it is discussed here (Bristol Head Quadrangle, 1959). This location is on the north side of Crooked Creek, just under a mile above its junction with Spring Creek. Early maps do seem to show San Juan about two miles to the southeast at the confluence of Spring Creek and the Rio Grande River, so it may well be the location was moved at some time.^{26,32} San Juan took its name from the area and hence indirectly the river.⁶³ The town was often called San Juan City rather than just San Juan.²⁰

The Griswolds attribute the founding of San Juan City to a pioneer settler, one (Harry) Franklin, although their reference doesn't confirm this.^{20,64} During its brief year of glory as the county seat (as described earlier), the courthouse was established in a building owned by W.H. Green, the clerk and recorder, and no special buildings were ever constructed.⁶⁴ San Juan City appears to have been the division point between the road north to Lake City and the road west over Stony Pass. In later years the post office is described as located at San Juan Ranch,⁶⁵ and this may well be somewhat removed from the original San Juan City.

In the early days San Juan was on the main route from Del Norte to Lake City and to Silverton, and it had daily service (Post road No. 76, 1881 ed.).³² In 1885 service was still six times per week (Post road No. 104, 1885 ed.).³⁷ In the early 20th century service was from Creede via Antelope Springs to San Juan and back every Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday, while Antelope Springs got the mail from Creede every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday.⁶⁵ According to Don La Font, who sometimes carried the mail, the San Juan post office was still operating in 1896. Further, La Font's story makes it plain that what was happening "in the field" wasn't always exactly what is recorded in the records from Washington, D.C.⁶⁵

SAN JUAN COLO (3) 1887/8/21

CI: P,1,0:260:T;M,D;S;G;R:target



Figure 14.

This cover was almost certainly sent sometime between 1880 and 1883, since the first steel was produced in the Pueblo area in 1880 by Colorado Coal and Iron Company of South Pueblo⁶⁸, and of course the 3¢ rate went out in October 1883. Few people lived in the environs of San Juan, and covers are extremely scarce.

POSTAL HISTORY OF THE COLORADO SAN JUAN, CHAPTER III, PART TWO (Continued)

SHERMAN

Established June 19, 1877
 Re-established May 16, 1895

Discontinued Nov. 13, 1886
 Discontinued Apr. 5, 1898

Sherman was located on the north side of the Lake Fork, at its junction with Cottonwood Creek, some 16 miles above Lake City. (San Cristobal Quadrangle, 1907; Redcloud Peak Quadrangle, 1964) It was apparently named for one F.S. Sherman, attributes unknown.²⁹ Strictly a mining camp, Sherman's principal problems were the price of silver, the cost of transportation, and the elements. Unlike most Hinsdale camps, Sherman had more trouble with water than snow. It was located in a lovely spot that unfortunately tended to flood every year during the spring runoff.⁶⁶ A dam built in later years broke in a cloudburst shortly after the turn of the century and buried a good part of the town.⁴⁹ A visit to the site today reveals remnants of cabins buried in rocks and debris.

Croftt found Sherman to be an up and coming camp of 100 citizens in 1880 with daily mail on the Lake City-Animas Forks run (Post road No. 77, 1881 ed.)³² By 1885 service was six times a week from Lake City during the Summer (July-Spet.) and once a week the rest of the year (Post road No. 106, 1885 ed.)³⁷, but service over Cinammon Pass to Animas Forks had ceased.⁷⁰ Although there were many mines around Sherman the town rose and fell with the Black Wonder Mine. In 1895 a tram was built from the mine to a new mill in town (moved from Tellurium-White Cross) and designed for an attempt to recover gold (following the repeal of the silver purchase act in 1893)²⁹. There just wasn't enough gold in Sherman, and the stockholder's money soon gave out. During this period, mail service was a part of the Lake City to White Cross run.⁷² Another attempt in 1900 apparently ended in the aforementioned dam failure.²⁹ There was a final revival of the Black Wonder in 1925 with part of the town cleaned up and even street lighted.²⁹ but neither of these last two revivals lasted long enough for the post office to be re-established.

SHERMAN, COLO. (2½) 1881/??-1882/04/27.

CI:P,1,1:270,180:T;M,D,Y;S:G,G:maltese cross



Figure 15.

An 1881 usage of this strike was offered in the "Parker Johnson Sale" in 1969. Other Sherman postmarks are rumored from time to time.



POSTAL HISTORY OF THE COLORADO SAN JUAN, CHAPTER III, PART TWO (Continued)

TELLURIUM

Established Aug. 24, 1875

Discontinued Oct. 4, 1880

The first post office in Burrows Park and the third in Hinsdale County, Tellurium was established on the north side of the Lake Fork, in the upper end of the Park, immediately east of the mouth of Cleveland Gulch (Handies Peak Quadrangle, 1955; Redcloud Peak Quadrangle, 1964)²⁶. This was two miles upstream from the post office of Burrows Park established one year later at the camp called Argentum. The site of Tellurium appears to be virtually identical with that of Whitecross (see same) whose post office was established in 1882. Wright says of the 13 cabins receiving mail in Whitecross in 1900 "only two—were of the town of Tellurium," implying there may have been a slight separation.²⁹ All sources say the town was named for the semi-metallic element tellurium, which often occurs combined with gold and silver in a gold-silver telluride called sylvanite. Crofutt notes that the camp was named by parties who *hoped* to discover that mineral but as of 1880 had failed.³²

In October 1880 Crofutt found only a dozen persons in Tellurium and mentions an expensive mill standing idle. Mail came via the same post road (No. 77) that served Sherman and Burrows Park, all three camps being on the important Cinammon Pass route between Lake City and Animas Forks. Tellurium had disappeared from the 1885 edition of Crofutt. The Gunnison Silver Mining Co. (see cornercard, Tellurium cover) built the first mill in the area, and it remained there until it was moved to Sherman in 1895, so it is probably the mill seen by Crofutt.

Tellurium Colo. 1878/5/14

Manuscript in purple, pen cancel in same ink

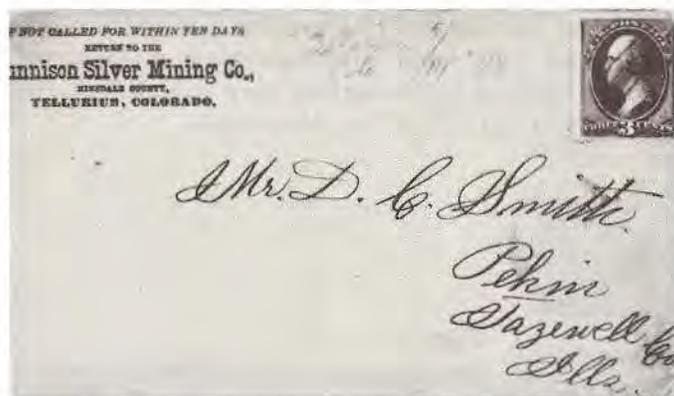


Figure 16

No other covers from Tellurium have been reported, or even rumored, but a cover from the same D.C. Smith correspondence, with the same Silver Mining Co. corner-card exists mailed from Lake City, July 2, 1878. Are there other unreported items?



POSTAL HISTORY OF THE COLORADO SAN JUAN, CHAPTER III, PART TWO (Continued)

TIMBER HILL

Established Apr. 25, 1879

Discontinued Jan. 3, 1881

Post office records show Timber Hill as simply a name change for Jennison. Whether in fact the site was the same is uncertain, as discussed under Jennison. There is a nearby timber covered bluff, some 600 feet above the Rio Grande River, called Timber Hill, which apparently constituted one of the first steep places on the Stony Pass road.²³ The name for the hill almost certainly predated that for the town, but who named the hill and why? Crofutt notes that "ranch and post office comprise the place, with mountains, bluffs, and timber on all sides."³² Apparently Timber Hill was still a ranch, as Jennison had been. Mail service came three times a week each way from Silverton and from Antelope Springs (Post road No. 67 intersecting No. 76 at Antelope Springs, 1881 ed.). After the railroad was completed into Silverton in 1882 most traffic overy Stony Pass ceased and so did most mail service.

No postmarks are known from Timber Hill.



WHITE CROSS

Established Sept. 28, 1882

Discontinued May 15, 1912

White Cross was named for a natural white cross formed by intersecting quartz veins on the side of 13,542 foot Whitecross Mountain immediately to the south.²⁹ At virtually the same site as Tellurium (see same), on the north side of the Lake Fork just east of Cleveland Gulch (Redcloud Peak Quadrangle, 1964), the post office was moved there from Argentum (post office name, Burrows Park) further down the park. At least as early as 1878 families were wintering in the park,⁴⁹ a decidedly rigorous undertaking at 10,500 feet in the San Juan Mountains.



Figure 17

There is no obvious reason for manuscript cancellation seven years after the White Cross post office opened, but it was used for at least six months in 1889. No slightly earlier covers exist, perhaps to give evidence of a deteriorating hand-stamp.

As was true for most camps, White Cross had its up and downs. It was down in 1895 when the mill was moved to Sherman (see Sherman & Tellurium) and up again in 1900 when the Tabasco company built a new mill and a tram from their mine.²⁹ During this period there were 300 men receiving mail at White Cross, and the town had a store, hotel, saloon, boarding house, two stables and 13 cabins.²⁹ By 1905 the Tabasco was abandoned, apparently large a stock

POSTAL HISTORY OF THE COLORADO SAN JUAN, CHAPTER III, PART TWO (Continued)

promotion scheme.²⁹ In 1885 Whitecross received mail six times a week from Lake City during the summer, once a week from Oct. 1 through June 30 (Post road No. 106, 1885 ed.)³⁷ Similar service existed during most of the town's life, although winter service was curtailed completely during down periods such as 1897.⁷² By 1911, mail was only by "special supply".⁷⁴ In existence for 30 years, White Cross was the third longest-lived office in Hinsdale County.

White Cross Colo. 1889/06/04-1889/12/28

Manuscript in black, pen cancel

WHITE CROSS COLO. (3½) 1893/5/16

CI:P,1,0,275:T;M,D,Y;S:G;G:star in circle:purple

WHITE CROSS COLO. (2) 1903/8/3

CI:P,1,0:280+:T;M,D,Y;S:G;G:3 circle target



Figure 18

White Cross used a rather pretty postmark with a circled-star killer, both struck in purple ink, in 1893. Note that this is from the same W.F.E. Gurley correspondence as the manuscript cancellation (fig. 17) 3½ years earlier, though addressed in a different hand.



POSTAL HISTORY OF THE COLORADO SAN JUAN (continued)

Appendix — Postmark Coding Scheme

The postmark coding scheme used in this series of articles is William H. Bauer's "descriptor system" which he has described completely elsewhere.⁶⁷ Two minor additions are noted in the appropriate place below.

Each postmark is normally described in two lines, with a third line describing special features used only in rare cases. The first line begins with the city name and state exactly as written in the postmark, using letters of the same case, the same abbreviations, and the same punctuation. County and postmaster names are given when the postmark includes them. This is followed by a number in parentheses which is the height of the letters in the name to the nearest half millimeter. This is an addition to the Bauer system, made to distinguish postmarks which were otherwise indistinguishable, for example, the Lake City markings of 1892 and 1893. The final item in the first line is the date or earliest and latest dates known for the marking. If a number in the postmark is completely unknown, a question mark is used. If a letter or number is illegible or missing but seems possible to give from spacing or other evidence, a capital X is inserted to indicate indirect evidence. The latter practice is also an addition to the Bauer system.

The second line of the description gives in turn the shape, nature of the framing, size, contents, type of lettering, killer information, and color if other than black, each piece of information separated by a colon.

Shape is given by CI (circle), OV (oval), RC (rectangle), SQ (square), HX (hexagonal), OC (octagonal), or a word such as SHIELD or HORSESHOE.

Framing is given by a letter and two numbers separated by commas. The letter may be P (plain), T (toothed), C (cogwheel), R (rimless), H (deliberately heavy), or F (fancy). The first number gives the number of outer frame lines, the second the number of inner frame lines.

Size is given in tenths of millimeters (but only to the nearest half millimeter) for each framing line, outside to inside. For ovals and rectangles the horizontal dimension is given first separated from the vertical by a small x. Values refer to the *middle* of each line.

The contents of the postmark are given in four units separated by semicolons. The first unit is the top half of the rim (roughly), the second the center part, the third the bottom half, and the fourth any exterior elements (commonly the year date on some postmarks near the turn of the century). Abbreviations used are T (town), S (state), M (month), D (day), Y (year), H (time of day), C (county), and PM (postmaster). Parentheses are used to indicate multiple elements on the same line.

The type of lettering is given in two units, first for the rim, then the center, separated by a semicolon. If there is a shift from town to state name then three units are used arranged in the same order as the contents units. The abbreviations used are R (Roman or serifed letters), G (Gothic or sans-serif letters), E (extended or stretched horizontally), I (italic letters), and S (script letters).

Killers are described in general terms wherever they are clear enough. Target, grid, star, maltese cross, etc. are typical descriptions. Cork or Pen (cancel) are often used. Occasionally nothing is given when "things are in bad shape."

Bauer has used greater detail in his complete system for all postmarks, but that above seems adequate for these articles. The author is indebted to him for his help in this work. Sheldon Dike also kindly offered permission to use his system, which has the advantage of greater brevity but the disadvantage of requiring an illustration to differentiate between similar types. Perhaps, in a future more complete work on Colorado, illustrations can be used.

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BLACK JACKS WEST
by Paul J. Wolf

Honolulu, Hawaii to Yarmouth, Nova Scotia

A very fine example of mail "through" the United States. Franked with a 30¢ 1861, Scott #71, and a Black Jack to make up a 32¢ rate. The red circular handstamp "Honolulu U.S. Postage Paid" indicates that the Hawaiian inland postage, 5¢ or possibly 10¢ for double weight, was paid in cash. The stamps are cancelled by the San Francisco cogs.

The rate material available, including the Meyer-Harris "Hawaii" provides no basis for explaining this cover, but it seems likely that the rate is made up of twice the 15¢ rate from San Francisco to Nova Scotia, prior to 1867, plus 2¢ for the captain of the private ship that carried it from the Islands to San Francisco. The "Ship Fee" was a flat charge, not based on weight, so it would have been 2¢ for either a single or double weight letter.

This cover was also published in the *Chronicle* of the US Philatelic Classics Society for August, 1974, Vol. 26, No. 3, Whole No. 83.



BLACK JACKS WEST

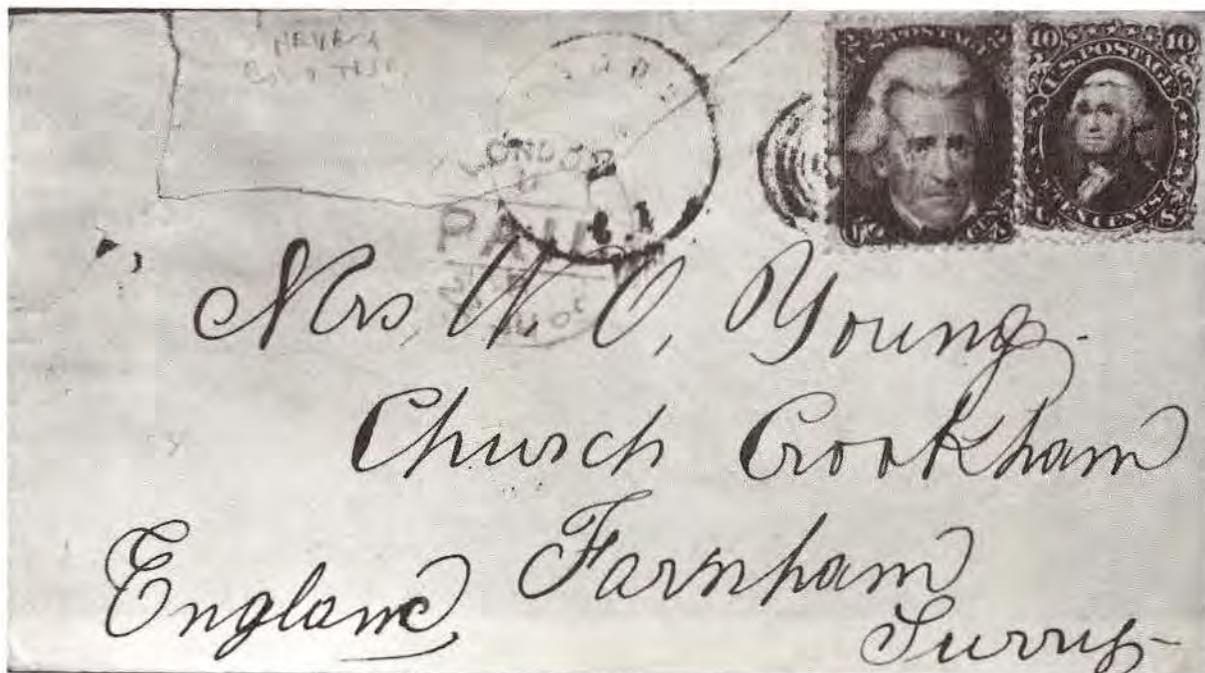
Colorado Territory to England

Effective January 1st, 1868, the rate for a 1/2 ounce letter to Great Britain was reduced from 24¢ to 12¢. Since the 1869 issue came along about 15 months thereafter, the period in which Black Jacks were commonly used, at the 12¢ rate, is short, and covers showing this rate are much scarcer than examples at the 24¢ rate, which was in effect for a much longer period.

This cover originated in Nevada, Colorado Territory, and is addressed to Surrey, England. Postmarked Jun 2, NYD, a London transit marking in red fortunately carries the complete date 22 Jun 68. The stamps are a 10¢ 1868 Green, without grill, Scott No. 68 and an ungrilled Black Jack, #73.

There are no U.S. transit markings to indicate the route this cover took, but 20 days from Colorado Territory to London is considerably better time than a similar letter would make today.

This letter is one of a number in the same correspondence, some from Nevada, others from Black Hawk Point, Colorado Territory, that have been seen. This one, and at least one other, are distinguished, if you care to call it such, by having been torn open carelessly by the recipient.



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