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Express
Ocean Mail
Overland
Post Offices



Territorial
Statehood
Postal Rates
Postal History

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EDITOR'S ARENA

GROWING OLDER A couple of years ago, when your Editor reached that plateau where he received the APS award for having survived fifty years of membership in that Society, the time element therein was rather frightening. But that has worn off to the extent that he takes advantage of it by including the following item. The author is that ubiquitous and talented ANON.

Youth laughs at us old-timers
 And maybe youth has cause,
 For when your hair gets gray and thin
 You don't expect applause;
 Perhaps we're not so handsome,
 Perhaps we're not so spry,
 But when youth gets as old as us,
 Then youth won't wonder why.

For we have fought the battles,
 And we have led the van,
 And made this life an easier road
 For many a young man;
 And he will do tomorrow
 A lot of things that pay,
 Because old-timers thought them out
 And tried them yesterday.

We know the world is changing,
 The ways of trade are new:
 Men put new labels on their goods,
 New roofs on houses, too,
 But still the old foundation
 That some old-timers laid
 Remains the cornerstone of all
 The progress men have made.

BALPEX '77 At the Labor Day weekend show of the Baltimore Philatelic Society Samuel Arlen received a gold award for his showing of "Western Express Franks on U.S. Stamped Envelopes". In addition The U.S. Postal Stationery award was his. Paul J. Wolf, whose excellent stories on Black Jacks grace the pages of our "*Western Express*," changed allegiance, and received the Vermeil award for his entry of Cape of Good Hope triangles.

TERRITORIAL POSTMARKS Our member, Dr. Owen Kriege has collaborated with Dr. Sheldon Dike to produce a second edition of the ARIZONA TERRITORIAL POSTMARK CATALOGUE. This second edition has many changes and improvements. Among others are almost 150 new postmark types, over 800 changes in earliest or latest known dates and almost 600 changes in value. Illustrations have been rearranged to make it much easier to compare with the tabular data. The catalog may be secured for \$20.00 postpaid, either from Dr. Kriege at 98 Beech Woods Drive, Madison, CT 06443, or from Dr. Dike at 1420 Carlisle Blvd. N.E., Albuquerque, N.M. 87110.

In addition to the above Dr. Dike has a 1977 edition of the *New Mexico Territorial Postmark Catalogue*. There are many changes and additions in this updating of the 1965 edition. This may be secured from Dr. Dike for \$10.00 postpaid.

EDITOR'S ARENA (Continued)

EXPRESS MAIL 1836-39 At the end of August last year the Collector's Club of Chicago published Dr. James W. Milgram's study of the Express Mails of 1836-1839. This hard cover publication contains a very complete illustrated history of an early attempt by the Post Office Department to speed up the mails between its northern and southern extremities. The 214 page book may be secured for \$20.00 postpaid from the publishers at 1029 North Dearborn St. Chicago, IL 60610. There is also a De Luxe Edition for \$25.00.

BACK ISSUES of W/E Elsewhere you will find an advertisement of the fast dwindling stock of back issues of WESTERN EXPRESS. Some years have but one or two issues available — for 1955, 1960 and 1961 there are none at all.

WADDELL SMITH MEMORABILIA When Colonel Smith died in 1970 his will noted that his large collection of Pony Express items, ranging from paintings thru saddle bags, stamps and covers, to Marin County, on condition that it be kept intact on his two-acre home in San Rafael, Cal. But the County Supervisors voted against the acceptance, and later the Department of Parks and Recreation decided it didn't want the responsibility either. Finally, early in 1977, thru the efforts of his widow and son, it was donated to the museum in Lexington, which is but 30 miles from the St. Joseph Eastern terminus of the Pony Express. Colonel Smith, great grandson of one of the three founders of the Pony Express might have liked this.

APS PROGRAM The exhibit program for the 1977 Annual Convention of the APS in San Francisco last year, carried more than a listing of the exhibitors and the advertisements of the dealers. Members of your Society furnished two articles for that program — and with the permission of the publishers one of these articles is reproduced in this issue of WESTERN EXPRESS. Our president, Basil Pearce has woven an interesting historical background to a letter addressed to President Polk in 1846. I am sure that you will enjoy it. The letter is from Lt. Col Ruff, camped with his Battalion near Santa Fe.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

- New Members**
- #685 Howard J. Selzer, P.O. Box 37, Des Plaines, IL 60017
(Collects Express, Wells Fargo)
 - #686 James E. Sherman, 1402 Camino Miraflores, Tuscon, AZ 85705
(Collects Express and Stagecoaching documents & other Memorabilia)
 - #687 Jesse L. Coburn, 6269 Avenida Ganso, Goleta, CA 93017
(Collects Express, Towns)
 - #688 Edward S. Gibbons, 818 W. Pine St. Lodi, CA 95240
(Collects California covers, cancels, Postal History & pc.)
- Change of Address**
- Leonard M. McCabe, Jr. 471 McArthur, Clovis, CA 93612
 - Fred Smoot, 25 Parkwood Dr., Daly City, CA 94015
 - Ronald Wilbur, P.O. Box 1417, Redondo Beach, CA 90278
 - Paul J. Wolf, P.O. Box 7005, Missoula, Mont. 59807
- Deceased**
- #639 Floyd Cooney

POSTAL HISTORY OF THE COLORADO SAN JUAN

Chapter VI, San Miguel County

Part Two

by Ray L. Newburn, Jr.

LEONARD

Established May 23, 1900

Discontinued Dec. 31, 1940

Leonard was located on the west side of Leopard Creek at an elevation of 7740 feet (Placerville Quadrangle, 1953). Originally called Haskill's Spur, it was the site of a long spur track on the Rio Grande Southern Railroad used chiefly for loading lumber.¹¹⁶ The old road to Haskill left the rail line at that point (see Haskill). The town was reportedly started by four Spanish American War Veterans who drew lots for right to name the town. R. Leonard was also the third postmaster. In the 30s the town had a population of 28.¹³²

Mail always came to Leonard via the railroad. A narrow, hollow 4-bar with the numeral 1 is widely reported from the early period, then one other marking until some last day cards.

LEONARD, COLO. (3) 1906/09/04-1909/07/18

CI:P,1,0:280:T;M,D,H,Y;S:G;G:hollow 4-bar with numeral 1, seen in black and magenta, hollow bars filled in over the years

LEONARD, COLO. (2½) 1919/12/17

CI:P,1,0:315:T;M,D,Y;S:G;G:wide 4-bar

LEOPARD

Established Oct. 6, 1890

Discontinued Apr. 6, 1892

Leopard, often called Leopard Creek, lay on the north side of its namesake near the entrance to Price Canyon at an elevation of 8600 feet (Sams Quadrangle, 1967).¹²⁷ The creek, called the Rio del Codo on most early maps, purportedly acquired its new name from a leopard seen in the vicinity. Although the animal proved fictitious, the name stuck.¹³³ Leopard Creek had a 10 car passing track of the Rio Grande Southern where hay and grain were loaded.¹¹⁶

The Leopard post office "opened" just four days before trains began running through to Placerville. Eighteen months after it closed, a new post office was opened three miles to the east in Dallas Divide.

Mail came via the railroad. No postmarks have been reported.

LIZARD HEAD

There were two attempts in 1898 to re-establish this former Dolores County office in San Miguel County. Both were rescinded. (See Lizard Head in Chapter VII.)

POSTAL HISTORY OF THE COLORADO SAN JUAN (Continued)

NEWMIRE

Established Apr. 4, 1895

Name changed to Vanadium May 17, 1913

Newmire was located along Big Bear Creek at its junction with the San Miguel River, elevation 8750 feet (Telluride Quadrangle, 1904; Gray Head Quadrangle, 1953). With a 1900 population of 27⁸⁵ and a 1910 population of 11⁴⁴, Newmire didn't amount to much until a large mill to process carnotite was built there in 1910. ¹¹⁶ ¹¹⁷ It may well have gotten its start as a supply point for the important Silver Pick Mine, eight miles up Big Bear Creek, which began extensive development about this time. Shortly after the carnotite mill was built, the name of the town was changed to Vanadium (see same).

Mail came to Newmire via the ubiquitous Rio Grande Southern Railroad.

NEWMIRE, COLO. (3) 1907/08/25-1912/11/07

CI:P,1,0:310:T;M,D,Y;S;G;G:narrow 4-bar

NOEL

Established July 23, 1909

Discontinued Apr. 30, 1919

Re-Established Oct. 30, 1919

Discontinued June 30, 1923

Noel was established as a spur on the Rio Grande Southern for shipping hay and named after Sim Noel a nearby farmer.¹¹⁶ For some reason the Dallas Divide post office was moved a bit more than a mile west to Noel on July 23, 1909. There on the outside of the curve where Leopard Creek turns south, at an elevation of 8800 feet, was a post office for almost fourteen years (Montrose Quadrangle, 1911; Sams Quadrangle, 1967).

As usual the mail came by rail.

NOEL, COLO. (3) 1910/07/10-1914/07/28

CI:P,1,0:310:T;M,D,Y,H;S;G;G:narrow 4-bar

NORWOOD

Established Dec. 22, 1887

Still Operating

Norwood lies at the east end of Wrights Mesa, three miles southwest and 800 feet above the San Miguel River, at 7006 feet elevation (Norwood Quadrangle, 1964). Cattlemen established a headquarters there in 1885 to use on the way to and from ranges to the south. And there one Harry Capp established the first store and in 1887 became the first postmaster.⁴ He named the office for his home in Missouri.¹³⁴ The building still exists, preserved by the Ladies Federated Club of Norwood.⁴

At first the cattle ready for market were driven to Dallas or Montrose. When the Rio Grande Southern arrived just 17 miles away in Placerville, the cattle were taken there. By this time, 1890, there were 30,000 cattle in the Norwood area. The 1900 population of Norwood was only 61 officially, but there were more cowboys alone than that during roundup.⁴ ⁸⁵ By 1910 Norwood had grown to 212.⁴⁴ Farmers began taking up claims on Wright's Mesa as early as 1887 and soon built Gurley Reservoir to assure themselves a water supply. Gurley Reservoir was enlarged twice and Cone Reservoir added to it.⁴ By 1930 the population of Norwood exceeded 400 and has remained between 400 and 500 since that time. The town has even managed to support one or more of seven weekly newspapers most of the time since 1891.⁶⁰

**POSTAL HISTORY OF THE COLORADO SAN JUAN
NORWOOD (Cont.)**

Norwood has always been served by a mail route running from Placerville to Naturita or beyond. Early covers are scarce, the cowboys seemingly not being given to much writing.

The following have been reported:

NORWOOD COLO (3) 1896/01/30
CI:P,1,0:275:T;M,D,Y;S;G;R:cork blob

NORWOOD COLO. (3-) 1899/04/28 (See Fig. 50)
CI:P,1,0:275:T;M,D,Y;S;G;G:target

NORWOOD, COLO. (3) 1908/09/12
CI:P,1,0:315:T;M,D,H,Y;S;G;G:narrow 4-bar

NORWOOD, COLO. (3) 1910/09/09
CI:P,1,0:325:T;M,D,H,Y;S;G;G:narrow 4-bar
The existing specimen is very heavily inked, with letters touching one another.

NORWOOD COLO 1911/07/17
CI:P,1,0:310:T;M,D,H,Y;S;G;G:4-bar

NORWOOD, COLO. 1915/11/?
CI:P,1,0:315:T;M,D,H,Y;S;G;G:wide 4-bar
Various machine cancels are seen as early as 1930.



Figure 50

Yes, it is a Morey Mercantile front, but it has a nice corner card, a clear strike, and is one of only two 19th century Norwood postmarks reported.

POSTAL HISTORY OF COLORADO SAN JUAN (Continued)

(NEW) OPHIR (Ophir Station)

Established June 3, 1922

Still Operating

The Rio Grande Southern climbed up the northern approach to Lizard Head Pass on its way to Rico via the most spectacular trackage on the road, and best of all was the famous Ophir Loop. Crossing the Lake Fork on a high trestle, the tracks climbed up the south side of the canyon of the Howard Fork for over a mile, looped around and came right back to the Lake Fork climbing continuously a 3 to 3¼% grade. Seven additional bridges were required in this short loop. And right on the 180° turn they built a depot for Ophir, which lay two miles on up the Howard Fork (see Old Ophir). The post office from nearby Ames was soon transferred here (see Ames), and maps of the time show Ophir Station (Ames P.O.). The (Old) Ophir post office closed in 1921, so in 1922 the name of the post office at Ophir Station was changed from Ames to Ophir.

New Ophir almost immediately began to build up around the Ophir Loop trackage as the latter was laid in 1891. There on the Howard Fork at an elevation of 9250 feet (Ophir Quadrangle, 1955) more people came to live eventually than in either Ames or Old Ophir. New Ophir was not without its problems, however, largely spelled SNOW SLIDES. A slide on Feb. 20, 1897 took out the entire depot and four loaded railway cars. The depot was then rebuilt inside the loop and became a favorite target of railroad photographers for more than half a century.¹²⁷

New Ophir soon had two stores, two saloons, a hotel, a blacksmith shop, and even an occasional newspaper.¹²⁷ As ground around the loop was filled, people built up the Howard Fork toward Old Ophir. In 1909 the Alta Mine (see Sultana) built an aerial tramway to carry their concentrates from the mill down to Ophir. This operated as late as world war two (perhaps even to 1948).¹³⁵ The post office was in the depot for many years, but for the last quarter century has occupied a small private structure which must make it one of the smallest offices in the United States.

Mail came to (New) Ophir via the railroad. Its postmarks, of course, were Ames until 1922 and have been listed with that town (see Ames). No reports have been received of Ophir postmarks during the period from 1922 through the 30s, although such surely must exist. Postmarks from this period, of offices still operating, tend to be ignored.

(OLD) OPHIR

Established May 17, 1878
Re-established June 12, 1920

Discontinued Oct. 31, 1918
Discontinued Jan. 31, 1921

Howard's Fork was explored by Lt. Howard of the Baker Party (see Chapter I and Howardsville in Chapter IV). Prospectors followed and the first claim was staked in 1875. By 1877 good ore was being taken out of the region from several mines and in 1878 the fine Gold King was discovered. And so a town came into existence on the largest relatively flat spot of land in the area, on the north side of the Howard Fork at 9700 feet elevation (Ophir Quadrangle, 1955)⁵⁴ Named for the biblical location of King Solomon's mines,¹³³ Ophir acquired the third post office in the county.

POSTAL HISTORY OF THE COLORADO SAN JUAN (OLD) OPHIR (Cont.)

By 1879 there were said to be 400 to 500 miners in the region around Ophir. The special 1885 census for Ophir showed a population of 130 within the townsite, which was platted in 1882.⁵⁴ ¹⁰⁵ The 1900 population was 127⁸⁵ and that of 1910 was 124⁴⁴, but these *may* well have included Ophir Station. Ophir even had a weekly newspaper, the "Ophir Mail," from 1894 to 1904.⁶⁰

The Ophir District (officially the Iron Springs District) saw 16 mines shipping ore in 1883. The year 1884 saw the Gold King alone shipping \$50,000 in gold bullion. Three 60 stamp mills were operating in Ophir in 1897 and a fourth mill was under construction.⁸⁹ The best properties proved to be the Alta and adjacent Gold King workings. A small town built up near these mines (see Sultana), and after 1909 all concentrates came straight to the Rio Grande Southern via the new Alta tramway (see New Ophir). And so a town with electric lights, waterworks, schools, churches, saloons, and other evidences of civilization began to fade. A few families still lived there in 1941.⁴⁹

Early mail service was "difficult." In Nov. 1879 the mail carrier rifled the registered mail, dumped the rest, and departed for points unknown. The new carrier made one trip and said he wouldn't do another for \$5,000. By mid-December Ophir had had no mail for four weeks. By early January there was still no mail from Silverton and hadn't been any from Rico for 10 days. The snow was four feet deep and the carrier from Rico had nearly frozen to death on his previous trip.⁴⁹ The carrier who did freeze to death in a slide in December 1883 was noted in the chapter introduction.

The earliest mail route serving Ophir was from Silverton to San Miguel over Ophir Pass and via Ophir. The route to Rico was a stub line between Ophir and Rico. This was the situation when the events of the previous paragraph occurred.^{33a} In 1881 routes came in from Silverton and from Ouray via Placerville and Ames. From Ophir the mail went on to San Miguel and Telluride on one route and to Rico on another.¹¹⁴ In 1883 and 1885 there was only the route from Silverton on through to San Miguel and Telluride, but by 1885 winter service had ceased over Ophir Pass leaving Ophir on a stub route from Nov. 1 to Apr. 30.⁶⁹ ⁷⁰ By 1889 there was the summer route from Silverton and an all year route to Ames.⁷¹ After the arrival of the Rio Grande Southern at Ames in 1890 the mail came just from Ames.⁷² ⁷³ ⁷⁴ ⁷⁵



Figure 51

This relatively plain but finely wrought little town and county marking was struck in magenta as was the (attached?) star killer. It went to our friends Hudson & Slaymaker, the Silverton attorneys.

**POSTAL HISTORY OF THE COLORADO SAN JUAN
(OLD) OPHIR (Cont.)**

Ophir postmarks are the most common of the obsolete offices of San Miguel County during the 19th century, but only one 20th century strike has been reported!

OPHIR, OURAY CO, COLO. (2-) 1879/07/22-1881/01/05 (See Fig 51)

CI:P,1,0:265:(T,C);M,D,Y;S:R;G:solid 5 pt. star
small maltese cross on either side of COLO., seen in magenta, blue, and black

OPHIR COLO. (3) 1882/10/3

CI:P,1,0:270:T:M,D,Y;S:G,?:magenta blob

OPHIR COLO. (3-) 1883/01/03-1888/11/21

CI:P,1,0:265:T;M,D;S:R,R:crossroads, 4-ring target, etc. seen in black and magenta, day number is large (4 mm)

OPHIR COLO (3) 1896/05/13

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

OPHIR COLO (3-) 1912/12/24

CI: P,1,0:325:T;M,D,H,Y;S:G;G: wide 4-bar

PANDORA

Established Aug. 5, 1881

Discontinued Nov. 12, 1885

Re-Established Mar. 28, 1902

Discontinued Oct. 15, 1902

Pandora began in 1876 as a village called Newport (after Newport, Kentucky) along the north bank of the San Miguel River two miles above (east of) Telluride.⁴ The elevation is 9000 ft. (Telluride Quadrangle, 1955). The Pandora and Oriental Mining Co. built a 40 stamp concentration mill there in 1881 and the added population apparently justified a post office.⁸⁹ Although there was never a post office by the name of Newport in Colorado there had been one, which was about to be re-established, in California. Once again the potential for confusion between handwritten Cal. and Col. apparently dictated a new name, and Pandora, after the mining company, was chosen.⁴ The population in 1885 was 30, but this was apparently insufficient to justify continuing the post office with Telluride only two miles away.¹⁰⁵

Pandora has never ceased to exist. Maps have always shown it. The population was still 35 in the late 1930s.¹³⁶ The mill has been rebuilt, enlarged, and/or modernized several times, first in 1888 when it began handling ore from the great mines of Marshall Basin (see Smuggler and Telluride). The population rose back to 100 in 1902 and 1903, apparently justifying briefly a post office once more.¹³⁷ The mill site is still occupied today by the mill of the Idarado Mining Company which works many of the mines of the Telluride and Red Mountain area through one vast underground working.¹³⁰ And there are still a few homes in the area.

Mail has always come to Pandora from neighboring Telluride. Only one postmark has been reported to date.

PANDORA, COLO. (3) 1885/03/31 (See Fig. 52)

CI-P,2,0:280,270:T;M,D,Y;S:R;G:cork blob

POSTAL HISTORY OF THE COLORADO SAN JUAN (Continued)



Figure 52

It's not the most beautiful cover in the world, but I wish I owned it. No others have been reported from Pandora.

PLACERVILLE

Established Apr. 22, 1878

Still Operating

The second office established in San Miguel County, Placerville is still operating, though it has moved around a bit during its century of existence. The original town was built along Leopard Creek just above its junction with the San Miguel River. It was created by the needs of the placer miners in the area, hence its name.⁵⁴ In 1885 it had a population of 50¹⁰⁵ and was a natural division point for mail and freight going to and from the mines on the upper San Miguel or west to Norwood and beyond.

When the Rio Grande Southern built through in 1890 there wasn't enough room for their facilities along Leopard Creek, so they built a mile away, on the San Miguel River, and the town followed.¹¹⁶ Its 1900 population was still 50,⁸⁵ but by 1910 had grown to 105.⁴⁴ The great rain of September 1909, mentioned in the first part of this chapter practically washed the town away, and it was rebuilt a bit further up stream.¹³⁶ Its present location is largely on the northeast side of the San Miguel River a half mile above Leopard Creek at an elevation of 7300 feet (Placerville Quadrangle, 1953).

The 1940 population of Placerville was still 52, with the town a large cattle shipping point, as it had always been since cattle became important in the Norwood area (see Norwood). With the loss of the Rio Grande Southern, the town is little more than the junction of two state highways, and modern maps give no population though still listing the town.

POSTAL HISTORY OF THE COLORADO SAN JUAN (Continued)
PLACERVILLE (Cont).

In 1879 mail came to Placerville straight from Ouray. Another mail route then went on from Placerville to Salina in central Utah.^{33a} By 1881 the route from Ouray had been extended to Ames, Ophir, and San Miguel.¹¹⁴ In 1883 the route from Ouray came via Portland and Aurora and now went straight to San Miguel and ended in Telluride. The route to Utah served several western Montrose County towns on the way. A separate route now ran from Placerville to Rico via Ames and Trout Lake.⁶⁹ By 1885 the mail came to Placerville straight from Montrose, the other routes remaining basically unchanged.⁷⁰ In 1889 the Denver and Rio Grande had built south to Ouray, so the mail came to Placerville from the nearest railhead at Dallas. The route to Utah now ended in Montrose County, where it connected with the Utah route. The Telluride route ended there but connected with one from Rico via Ames. And there was a stub route to Haskill.⁷¹ The next year the railroad arrived and carried the mail for the next half century. Placerville remained the starting point for routes into western San Miguel and Montrose counties during this entire period.

Placerville postmarks are relatively common throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, although individual strikes (e.g. the county and pm marking) can be quite rare.

PLACERVILLE, COLO. (2½) 1880/08/25-1883/01/13 (See Fig 53)

CI;P,1,0:285:T;M,D,Y;S:R;G:target

The V in Placerville is larger than the other letters

Seen in magenta (1880) and black (1882, 1883)



Figure 53

This magenta beauty is the earliest strike reported from Placerville, 2-1/3 years after the office opened. Isn't there a manuscript out there somewhere?

**POSTAL HISTORY OF THE COLORADO SAN JUAN (Continued)
PLACERVILLE (Cont).**

PLACERVILLE, COLORADO (2½) 1884/05/26-1886/05/21
CI:P,2,1:300,285;180:T;M,D,Y;S:G;G:target, etc.

PLACERVILLE, SAN MIGUEL CO., F.A. BROWN, P.M. COLO.
(2½), 2,2,2½) 1887/06/01
CI:T,1,0:320:T,C;M,D,Y;PM,S:G,R;G;R,G:no killer

PLACERVILLE COLO. (3) 1888/04/10-1888/05/09
CI:P,1,0:280:T;M,D,Y;S:G;R:4-ring target, etc.

PLACERVILLE COLO. (2½+) 1897/03/24-1897/12/18
CI:P,1,0:275+:T;M,D,Y;S:G;G:3 ring target

PLACERVILLE, COLO. (2½) 1908/09/26-1910/09/29
CI:P,1,0:315:T;M,D,Y;S:G;G:narrow 4-bar with numeral

PLACERVILLE, COLO. (2½+) 1910/12/05-1914/10/14
CI:P,1,0:310:T;M,D,H,Y;S:G;G:wide 4-bar
A very lopsided version of this (?) strike seen 1918/08/12

PLACERVILLE, COLO (2½) 1917/08/11
CI:P,1,0:315:T;M,D,Y;S:G;G:wide 4-bar struck in purple

SAMS

Established May 7, 1903
Re-Established July 27, 1927

Discontinued Dec. 31, 1919
Discontinued Oct. 1950

Sams was apparently named for an early sawmill operator.¹³³ Located at an elevation of 8450 ft. four miles west of the summit at Dallas Divide (Sams Quadrangle 1967), the "town" had a long railroad spur from which many timbers and cut lumber were shipped.¹¹⁶ The 1910 population was 31,⁴⁴ and the town was probably never much bigger. The 1967 topographic map of the area shows a ski tow up the hill to the south. Perhaps Sams shall rise again!

Mail always came to Sams via the Rio Grande Southern Railroad. I have seen other Sams postmarks of the 4-bar type listed below, but I don't have a record of the dates.

SAMS COLO. (3) 1909/04/17 — 1909/08/10
CI:P,1,0:285:T;M,D,Y;S:G;G:target

SAMS, COLO. (3+) 1928/04/06
CI:P,1,0:320:T;M,D,Y;S:G;G:wide 4-bar

POSTAL HISTORY OF THE COLORADO SAN JUAN (Continued)
SAN BERNARDO

Established June 29, 1892
 Re-established Jan. 29, 1907

Discontinued Nov. 20, 1905
 Discontinued Apr. 7, 1907

The San Bernardo mine is mentioned as having produced some high grade ore as early as 1884.⁸⁹ By 1945 it was one of four mines which together had produced \$5,500,000 worth of ore from silver-gold-lead veins in Yellow Mountain (on the east side of the Lake Fork) and San Bernardo Mountain (on the west side).² As the mine grew in importance the post office at Trout Lake was moved 1½ miles north to the small settlement on the river and railroad at 9480 feet and immediately below the mine entrance at the 9720 foot level of San Bernardo Mt.

San Bernardo was never very big, having a population of 27 in 1900.⁸⁵ Whenever townspeople mentioned San Bernardo, outsiders always confused it with San Bernardino, California, so the townspeople changed the name to Matterhorn, since Yellow Mountain to the east somewhat resembles that Alpine peak.⁹⁵ This is an interesting switch, since the post office didn't change its name, and it was usually the latter that worried about Cal-Col. confusion. The railroad had two spurs and a section house there, and an aerial tram was soon built to bring ore down from the mine.¹¹⁶ By 1940 the population was down to nine,⁹⁵ the mine no longer operating.

Mail came via the railroad. No postmarks have been reported.

SAN MIGUEL

Established July 16, 1877

Discontinued Sept. 19, 1895

San Miguel City was sited along the north side of the San Miguel River about 1½ miles west of modern Telluride in August, 1876. Exactly why this spot was picked is not clear except that it was in the middle of a nice pine and cottonwood grove.¹ Perhaps it was a compromise between the Keystone Placers two miles west and the trail into Smuggler Basin to the east. Its elevation of 8744 feet is just 50 feet less than the center of Telluride (Telluride Quadrangle, 1955). The name was apparently taken from the river.¹

The town was surveyed Oct. 10, 1877 by one Charles Sharmon.⁵⁴ By 1880 it contained "several good stores, a hotel, two stamp mills, and one concentration works" plus 200 people according to Crofutt.³² The San Miguel Journal was published there from July 1881 into 1882 when it moved to Telluride, but another weekly, the San Miguel Messenger, was published from 1886 into 1888.⁶⁰ The 1885 population was 175 (compared to 850 in Telluride).¹⁰⁵ And finally on March 2, 1885 they even got around to filing the plat of the town site.⁵⁴

San Miguel was always a supply point, watering spot, housing, you name it, for the miners. But Telluride was nearer the mines, grew more rapidly, and became the county seat when San Miguel County was created. Whatever San Miguel had, Telluride had more of it. By 1895 Hall noted San Miguel had been almost totally "absorbed" by Telluride.⁵⁴ A few people remained in some of the houses until quite recently, however. The population was 15 in 1940¹.

**POSTAL HISTORY OF THE COLORADO SAN JUAN
SAN MIGUEL (Cont).**

The mail routes into San Miguel were discussed in the general introduction to this chapter and will not be repeated here. Postmarks are about what would be expected from a town which reached 200 people for a short time. A number exist but are not common. The known manuscripts come after a simple circular date stamp without year date!

SAN MIGUEL (3½-) (1878)/06/17

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

San Miguel Colo 1878/07/29-1878/09/10 (See Fig. 54)

ms. in black or brownish black

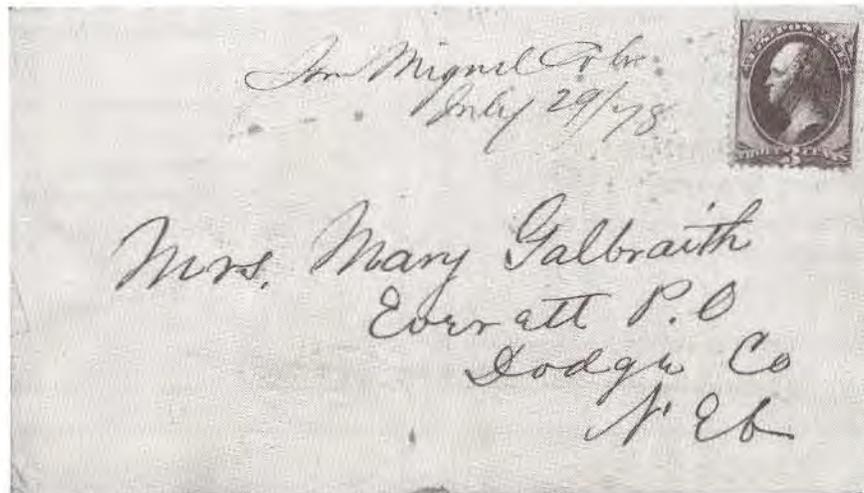


Figure 54

This San Miguel manuscript was *preceded* by a simple cds. Was there an even earlier manuscript? And what happened to the cds?



Figure 55

Later the San Miguel post office got a bit fancier. Even the killer is an uncommon grid.

(To be continued on April 1978)



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BLACK JACKS WEST

by Paul J. Wolf

PAWNEE FORK, KANSAS

Overpaid by 1¢ in the often seen convenience overpayment by a pair of Black Jacks. The CDS contains the full date, Apr 4, 1866. The stamps are rather vaguely tied by several strikes of a target killer.

This community was established Oct. 22, 1859 just North of the Arkansas River on the Santa Fe Trail. Redesignated Fort Larned on May 29, 1860, this name continued to be used during the Civil War. It was apparently changed back after the war.

According to David T. Beals, III, the owner of this cover, the President of the US Philatelic Classics Society, three markings are known during the Territorial period, one manuscript, and two handstamps.

Since Kansas Black Jack covers rank among the rarest of all the States, clearly postmarked and dated examples are highly desirable. I am deeply grateful to Mr. Beals for his cooperation in furnishing this cover and the accompanying notes.



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A GROUP OF WESTERN EXPRESSES (Continued)**McDOWELL'S EXPRESS (CONT).**

Next appears an editorial in *Alta California*, Aug. 1, 1850, the first which pertains to McDowell:

“Editorial.

Express to Nevada City.

Mr. James S. McDowell starts at 10 o'clock this morning for Nevada and will run an express regularly between Sacramento and that place. He will leave this city every Thursday at 10 o'clock, A.M. and return the subsequent Tuesday...”

This express was also known as the Sacramento and Nevada City Express. Now we have the item showing the accomplished fact in the *San Francisco Transcript*, Sept. 7, 1850:

“News. New Express Office.

We noticed that another express office has just been opened in this city, for the purpose of facilitating communication with the miners. Messrs. McDowell & Co. have fitted up a room in Brannan's Row, a few doors below the post office on Front St. The express will leave Nevada City and other mines in that direction...”

McLAUGHLIN & MANN'S EXPRESS

From *Marysville Herald* of June 2, 1853 we read:

“McLaughlin and Mann now carry passengers through from Marysville to Downieville, in a day. Their coaches have been running to Foster's Bar since the 24th of April. From the Bar to Downieville, “mule navigation” is still a locomotive necessity which we trust, will be obviated by a good stage road between those points, before next winter.”

They had the good will of the community. We read from the record of the same paper of July 14, 1853:

“McLaughlin and Mann, stage proprietors and our most respected friends, have dissolved partnership. In this dissolution, McLaughlin has lost a Mann that is a man. Debtors to the firm, will call at the Captain's office and settle.”

Thus the friends parted and McLaughlin was left by himself. From the same of the 19th of July, 1853 we read the following:

“Our old friend, Charles McLaughlin, since the dissolution of his partnership with Mr. Mann, still pursues the even tenor of his way. Every morning, regularly, at 6 o'clock, aided by his gentlemanly assistant, Mr. Charles P. Henry, he dispatches coaches for the following points: Bidwell's Bar, Downieville, and Dobbins' Ranch, via Oregon House — the coach for Sear's Diggings leaves at 3½ o'clock, A.M. He also runs 3 or 4 trips a day, to and from Sonorian Camp. McLaughlin's horses and carriages are among the best in the state — his drivers are all steady, excellent men and excellent hands with the ribbons — and his office has the good luck to be located in the “Western” where our friend, John Keller, ministers with so much skill to those who are suffering from thirst. We had the pleasure of knowing Mr. McLaughlin in Ohio, in the palmy days of the old Ohio Stage Co., and knew him to be a trump!”

Charles McLaughlin was in and out of expressing for some time. He had a long run and gained a good name for himself.

A GROUP OF WESTERN EXPRESSES (Continued)**MASSEY'S YREKA & HUMBUG EXPRESS**

The owner and operator of this express, was John N. Massey. His route ran to the North between Yreka, Humbug, Little Humbug and the Klamath River. After a time, Massey bought out Kistle and Moffet (See *Siskiyou Chronicle* of Aug. 27, 1859). Here is the first ad we see in the *Northern Journal* of Jan. 19, 1860 in which we read:

"John N. Massey's Yreka & Humbug Express.

Leaves every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday for Humbug, Little Humbug and the Klamath River and returning Wednesday, Friday and Sunday. Goes to Beaver and Humbug Creeks on the arrival of every Atlantic Mail.

All orders promptly attended to at reasonable rates.

Office at Roman's Book Store, Yreka."

MESSENGER AND CO.'S EXPRESS (1850)

From the *Stockton Journal* of Aug. 24, 1850 we have the following:

"Ho! For the North!

The subscribers have placed a line of excellent stages on the route to Sacramento City and having paid some attention to the selection of their stock, pledge their best endeavors to merit the patronage of the traveling public. The best accommodations can be had at their stopping places on the road. This line goes through by daylight.

Time of leaving, The Stockton House, Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 7 o'clock, A.M.

Missouri Hotel, Sacramento City, Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, at 7 o'clock, A.M.

Passengers can register their names at either of the above places.

D.D. Messenger & Co."

From the *Sacramento Transcript* of August 19, 1850 we see the following:

"Ang. Reynolds. . . Express

from Sacramento City to Stockton and all parts of the Southern Mines. . . This express will run in connection with Messenger & Co.'s Sacramento and Stockton Stage leaving Sacramento City on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday and Stockton on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. . ."

F. J. METTE & CO.'S EXPRESS

Mette started to get into the business, by offering cheaper rates and every other available inducement that he could. He met incoming boats and made other connections. He met and connected with stages, not that he had any plan but he got there on time.

From the *San Francisco Bulletin*, of June 13, 1859:

"New Stage Line! Daily.

Between Oakland and Martinez, via San Pablo, Pinole and Rodeo Valley. LOW RATES OF FARE. On and after Monday, June 6, 1859, the above line will run as follows: Leave Oakland every morning on the arrival of the first boat from San Francisco, arriving in Martinez at 3½ P.M. Returning, leave Martinez every morning at 8 o'clock, or on the arrival of the boat from "Benica" arriving at Oakland to connect with the 2½ o'clock P.M. boat for San Francisco. FARE through, \$1.50

F. J. Mette & Co."

A GROUP OF WESTERN EXPRESSES (Continued)**F.J. METTE & CO'S EXPRESS (Cont)**

From the same paper and date:

“San Pablo Stage Notice — Change of hours —
On and after Tuesday, June 14th, the San Pablo Stage, Mette & Co.'s Line, Will leave
Oakland, on the second trip, on the arrival of the 4 o'clock boat from San Francisco.
F. J. Mette & Co.”

MONTANA STAGE COMPANY.

From the *Sacramento Union* of March 23, 1866, we find the route not alone was the most direct but also the cheapest:

“Montana! Quickest and Cheapest
route! On or about the 1st day of April 1, I will run a line of stages (connecting with the
Oregon Steam Navigation Co.'s Steamers) from the Columbia River to Pen D'Oreille
Lake. Those connecting with the Steamer through the Lake, thence with Passenger
Trains to Blackfoot City.

Fare from Columbia River to Blackfoot City, including Steamer on Lake, \$100. Tickets
for the through trip will be sold in Portland, at the office of the Montana Stage
Company.

Wm. K. Ish, Proprietor.

P.S. Persons wishing to go to the Blackfoot Mines will find the above route cheaper by
about one-half, than any other, as the distance by land is only about one-third as great
as by any other route from California or Oregon. Present rates of Fares from San
Francisco per Steamer to Portland, Cabin, \$15. Steerage, \$5. Established rates from
Portland per O.S.N.Co.'s Steamers to Stage Line, \$25. Total from San Francisco to
Blackfoot City, \$128.

Wm. K. Ish.”

Also the next month an ad appeared, announcing the cheap rates and telling of the route, the most
direct. From *San Francisco Alta California* of April 27, 1866:

“To Montana via Salt Lake.

In answer to many questions and inquiries relative to the route by Salt Lake to
Montana, we learn that passengers can be landed in Virginia City, Montana Territory,
in about eleven days. The regular Overland Stage carries passengers from Placerville to
Salt Lake connecting with the stage to Virginia City. The stage fare to Salt Lake from
Placerville is One Hundred and Twenty Five Dollars in coin and from Salt Lake to
Virginia City one Hundred and Seventy-Five Dollars in currency. A telegram sent to the
agent of the stage line at Salt Lake will secure connection at that point with the stage
to Virginia City.”

Ish, not only owned but drove his express. He became quite a factor in the development of the
express in the Northwest.

W. F. MONTGOMERY & CO.

From *Alta California*, of Feb. 8, 1851. we find:

“W. F. Montgomery’s Express.

Running regularly to Humboldt, Trinidad, Gold Bluffs and Klamath River and all parts of the Klamath and Trinity districts. Packages of every description forwarded and delivered with the utmost dispatch. Gold dust, coins, etc., insured against all risks and forwarded to all principal cities of the U.S. and Europe. Our arrangements are now such that patrons can safely rely on our business being properly attended to.

Office with Wells, Fargo and Co., corner of Clay and Montgomery Sts.

Feb. 7.

W.F. Montgomery.”

Then there was an item in the same paper, the next day that told of the opening of the new express and spoke of the confidence in him:

“Express to the Klamath Mines.

Mr. W. F. Montgomery has engaged in the express business between San Francisco and the Klamath Mines, as well as Humboldt, Trinidad and Gold Bluffs. Mr. Montgomery is well qualified for the business and we are confident will properly attend to all the business entrusted to him.”

MOONEY & MERRICK’S YREKA & HUMBUG EXPRESS

This express started out as a Mooney and Merrick owned express. It ended up as an express owned by Joseph Mooney. The route lay between Yreka and Humbug, Little Humbug and camps along the Klamath River. Also Beaver and Humbug Creeks.

From the *Northern Journal* of Jan. 26, 1860, we find:

“Mooney and Merrick’s Yreka and Humbug Express.

Leaves every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday for Humbug, Little Humbug, Klamath River and returns on Wednesday, Friday and Sunday. Goes to Beaver and Hungry Creeks, every week.

All orders promptly attended to at reasonable rates. Office at Roman’s Book Store, Yreka.”

From *Yreka Union* of Feb. 11, 1860 we see:

“Mooney and Merrick’s Express,

Leaves every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday.... on the arrival of every Atlantic Mail.”

The final ad that we have found in the *Yreka Weekly Union* of May 5, 1860 about three and a half months later:

“Mooney and Merrick’s Express.

Leaves every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday for Humbug, Little Humbug, Klamath River....”

After May, the firm became known as Joseph Mooney’s Express.

A GROUP OF WESTERN EXPRESSES (Continued)**NEILON'S SALMON RIVER & SCOTT VALLEY EXPRESS**

This is one of the unusual instances in the early West, where a lone woman, who had to support herself, turned, with a good deal of bravery, to expressing to earn a living. The idea that she ventured on the road with mail, parcels and money, and a passenger or two, showed her bravery and fortitude.

For the operator of this express, was a woman by the name of J. Neilon. She ran the express between Sawyer's Bar and the Black Bear Mines. Her ad sounds like that of a woman's — with the appeal of comfort and gentleness.

From *Yreka Journal* of Aug. 15, 1877 we read:

"Salmon River and Scott Valley Express.

Mrs. J. Neilon, Proprietress,

Leaves Etna every Tuesday and Saturday for Sawyer's Bar and Black Bear Mines, returning leaves Sawyers Bar every Wednesday and Sunday. Express frieght taken at reasonable rates. Gentle saddle animals always in readiness to convey passengers.

Mrs. J. Neilon."

By the year 1877, the West was not as "wild and wooley" as it was in the early '50's, when vigilantes were used instead of courts, to clean up crime. However, the company did not last very long. That is the only evidence — the ad — that tells us of this expresswoman.

NICHOLAS' YREKA & HUMBUG EXPRESS

From *Yreka Wemi-weekly Union* of November 5, 1862 we find the following:

"Wm. T. Nicholas' Yreka and Humbug Express.

The above express leaves Yreka every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, returning the same days. All orders promptly attended to at reasonable rates.

Office at R. Q. Dewitts Drug Store."

From the same paper, *The Yreka Semi-weekly Union* of the 13th of January, 1864 we have the following:

"Yreka and Humbug Express.

Daily line of stages from Yreka to Forks of Humbug and Ridgeville. Leaves Yreka every morning at 9 o'clock for Hamkinville, Canal Gultch and Humbug Creek. Arrives at Ridgeville at 12 o'clock, M. Leaves Ridgeville at 3 o'clock, P.M., Forks at 3½ o'clock and Frenchtown at 4 o'clock, P.M. All orders attended to with promptness and dispatch.

Wm. T. Nicholas,
Proprietor."



REVISITING THE AMERICAN FRONTIER*

Basil C. Pearce

Recently I was confronted with the need for a renewed vision of the American Western frontier. On a recent trip through deserted mining camps in California and Nevada, events came to mind concerning empire building and for a look at the reality of the past. In searching for one event, which could be documented and be made highly visible, I settled on the occupation of the Southwest by General Kearney and his Army of the West.

To set the stage for this story we must return to the year 1846. James K. Polk was President and our nation was in an expansionist mood. The Pacific Coast was 3000 miles away from the population centers of the East and not yet secure, and the American frontier west of the Missouri was generally unknown — also not secure from foreign domination and control.

In 1846 the United States began a "war" against Mexico for the acquisition of territory — mainly New Mexico, Arizona and California. To this end the Army of the West was organized at Fort Leavenworth in June. Its Commander was Colonel Stephen W. Kearney and its mission — the occupation of the broad territory stretching from New Mexico to California.

The advance division of this force consisted of 300 regulars, a regiment of mounted volunteers from Missouri, and five additional companies of volunteers, for a total of 1700 men.

The second, or reserve division, comprised another regiment of Missouri volunteers, a battalion of four companies, and the Mormon Battalion, in all about 1800 men.

The supply train for this force contained 1000 mules and 400 wagons and the advance army left Fort Leavenworth late in June.

One can speculate as to the wisdom of sending an army of 1700 men, mainly composed of undisciplined volunteers, on a march of a thousand miles over desert-type country occupied by hostiles to conquer by force of arms if necessary interior provinces such as the American Southwest. It was a radically different matter from the proposed occupation by naval forces of a coast province like California.

After a march of 650 miles the Army arrived at Bent's Fort on the Arkansas. On the 2nd of August the Army resumed march heading for Santa Fe on a route nearly identical with the later line of stage travel. On the 14th, 15th and 16th respectively the Army reached Las Vegas, Tecolote and San Miguel de Vado.

At each of these places Kearney — now a brigadier-general by commission received at Las Vegas — made a speech from housetops, absolving the people from their allegiance to the Mexican Governor, and promising protection to the life, property and religion of all who would submit peaceably to the new order of things.

On the 17th the Army passed the ruins of Pecos; and on August 18th the Americans entered Santa Fe at 6 p.m. The flag of the United States was raised at sunset and saluted with thirteen guns. General Kearney slept in the old palacio and the Army encamped on an adjoining eminence. Thus the capitol of New Mexico was occupied without the shedding of blood.

Hd. Qrs. 1st Battalion 1st Regt. M. V. B.
 Encampment near Santa Fe
 Augt. 22nd 1846

To His Excellency
 The President of the United States
 Sir

On the 16th inst. I received (by express from Fort Leavenworth) a note from the Hon^{ble} S. H. Echison, Senator from the State of Missouri, informing me that I had been appointed to fill the vacancy occasioned by the non-acceptance of Wm. M. Hughes of the commission of Captain in the Regiment of Mounted Riflemen—

In accepting this appointment I beg that I may be permitted to perform the military duties in which I am at present engaged in New Mexico as Lieutenant Colonel of the 1st Regt. of Missouri Mounted Volunteers—
 any orders from the Adjutant General's office will reach me if directed to me at Santa Fe per express from Fort Leavenworth—

I am, Your Excellency's
 Obedt. & Obliged Servant,
 C. F. Huff
 Lt. Col. 11th Regt. M. V. B.

A flag-staff to bear the stars and stripes was raised in the plaza and a Captain Emory selected a site for a fort and work was started on Fort Marcy. The animals were sent to the region of Galisteo to a grazing camp guarded by a detachment under Lieutenant Colonel Ruff. An express for the states was dispatched on the 25th.

Through the early part of September the General gave his attention to the organization of a civil government which was put into operation on the 22nd. On the 25th Kearney set out on the march to California where his exploits form another story.

Turning our attention now to Lt. Col. Ruff (mentioned above) we find that he was the second ranking officer of the First Missouri Volunteers. There are references (cited later) that he was much disliked and the qualities that made him unpopular with the volunteers procured him a captain's commission in the regular army.

At the outset we made reference to an event that could be documented and made highly visible — living history, if you will.

Illustrated is a folded letter from Lt. Col. Ruff (mentioned above) to James I. Polk, the President. The contents concerning his captain's commission but the interesting part is the heading on the letter — "Encampment near Santa Fe, Aug. 22, 1846" — four days after the American occupation. The contents of the letter are as follows:

*Hd. Qrs. 1st Battalion 1st Regt. M.M.V.
Encampment near Santa Fe
Augt. 22nd 1846*

*To His Excellency
the President of the United States*

Sir

On the
16th last I received (by express from Fort Leavenworth) a note from the Honbl. L.R. Atchison senator from the state of Missouri, informing me that I had been appointed to fill the vacancy occasioned by the non-acceptance of Bela. M. Hughes of the commission of Captain in the Regiment of Mounted Riflemen.

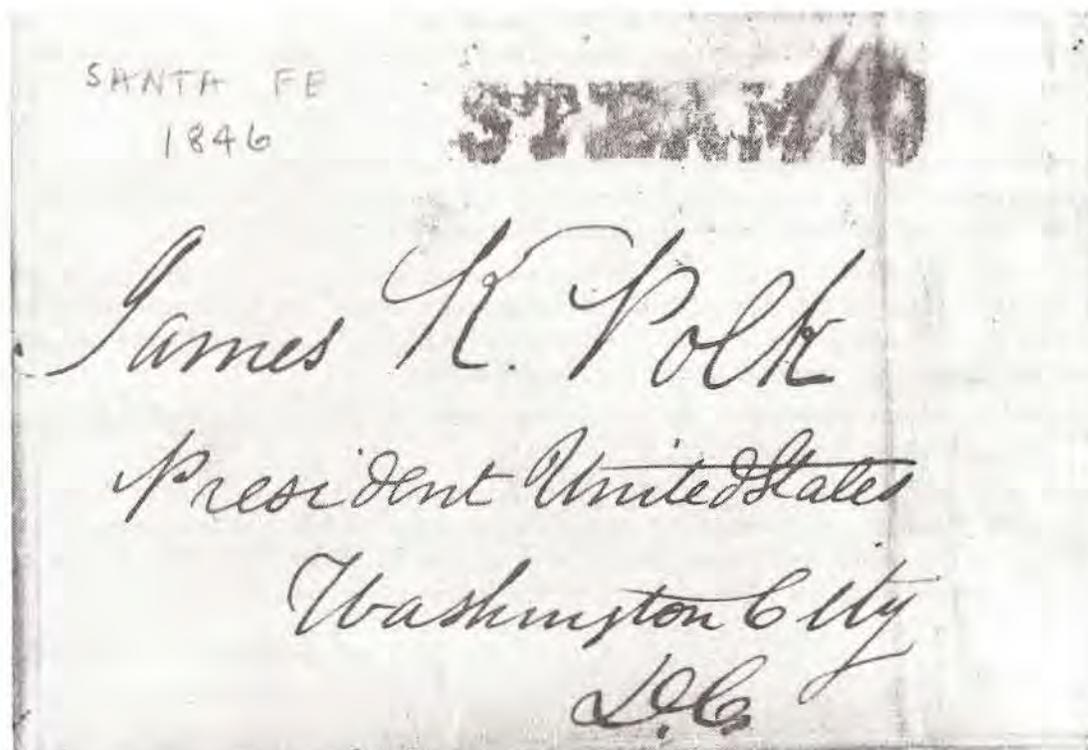
In
accepting this appointment I beg that I may be permitted to perform the military duties in which I am at present engaged in New Mexico as Lieutenant Colonel of the 1st Regt. of Missouri Mounted Volunteers.

Any
orders from the Adjutant General's office will reach me if directed to me at Santa Fe per express from Fort Leavenworth.

*I am yr. Excellency's
Obdt. & Obliged Servt.*

*C.F. Ruff
Lt. Col. 1st Regt. M.M.V.*

The letter was received at the Adjutant General's office in Washington, D.C. on October 3, 1846.



After General Kearney took possession of Santa Fe a regular military express was maintained between that place and Fort Leavenworth for the transmittal of military intelligence. This express also accommodated the general public because it was not until the Treaty of 1848 that Mexico ceded the territory of which New Mexico was a part to the United States and it was not until September 1850 that the Territory of New Mexico was created.

This folded letter is a military letter handled from Santa Fe by military express to Fort Leavenworth. At that point it was put in a packet and sent down the Missouri River to St. Louis. There the packet was placed in the St. Louis Post Office. Being free mail it was handstamped STEAM 10 in red straight line to indicate the source from which it was received and sent on its way to Washington. Much of this mail did not receive a town postmark. A month and a half from Santa Fe to Washington in 1846 was fast time.

For those readers wishing more in-depth reading on Kearney and his activities concerning New Mexico I commend you to Bancroft's Works, Vol. XVII, Arizona and New Mexico, 1530-1888. (The History Company, Publishers, San Francisco, 1889.) Accounts are given in great detail with frequent references to Lt. Col. Ruff.

The writer has borrowed heavily from Bancroft and from an article in Mekeels, September 8, 1950 and wishes to acknowledge these sources.

Letters to U.S. Presidents from the frontier are always interesting and especially so when tied to events such as the American Occupation of Santa Fe, New Mexico.

It is hoped that the reader, like the writer, will gain a renewed vision of the frontier from this little story.

*Reprinted from the Program for the 91st Annual Convention of the American Philatelic Society — Garvin Lahman, Editor

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