

WESTERN EXPRESS

RESEARCH JOURNAL OF EARLY WESTERN MAILS

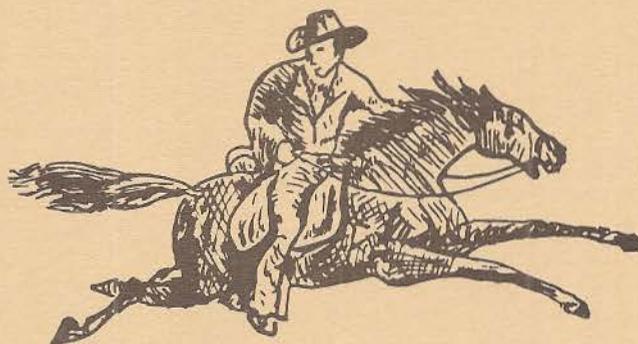
WHOLE NO. 118, VOL. XXIX, NO.3

Western Cover Society
Unit No. 14 — American Philatelic Society

JULY 1979

Winner of Large Silver Medals — ROCPEX '78 and CAPEX '78

Express
Ocean Mail
Overland
Post Offices



Territorial
Statehood
Postal Rates
Postal History

CONTENTS

	Page
Editor's Arena	1
Secretary's Report	2
Reviews	3
Postal History of the Colorado San Juan, Chapter VIII-Part 3 by Ray Newburn, Jr.	5
Ben Holladay - The Steamboat King by Jack Greenberg	17
Los Angeles - Rare and Unique by Jerome Schwimmer	25
Knight's Ferry, California by Everett C. Erle	29
Advertisements	16 24 28

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EDITOR'S ARENA**ANNUAL MEETING**

The Jack Tar Hotel, San Francisco was the venue for the annual meeting of our Society on Sunday, April 29. President Basil Pearce presided over forty members and guests as the brunch started promptly at 10:30 a.m. Daylight Savings Time. (DST is mentioned because it is believed that we lost a few who failed to put their clocks ahead an hour on this, the first day of DST)

President Pearce announced that the Board of Directors had voted Honorary Life Membership to Dr. W. Scott Polland for his valuable contributions, not only to our Society, but to philately in general, through his meticulous studies, reports and generous advise throughout the past many years.

Dr. Jesse Coburn, of Gaviota, reported on a special project he has undertaken. This will be a book on California Postal History (to 1869) replete with illustrations - many in color - of covers bearing Express markings, straight line and fancy cancels, pre-stamp covers - in fact the whole gamut of pioneer Western philately. Through the active support of our distinguished member, Marc Haas who has made his collection of some 1500 covers available, Dr. Coburn has been able to photograph these to be used where needed for illustration in the forthcoming book. While the script is practically completed, Dr. Coburn welcomes correspondence from those who have unusual covers, clear strikes of normally indistinct cancels or markings, for the purpose of making the book as complete as possible.

Jack Greenberg, of Half Moon Bay, spoke on the formation of a "Wells Fargo - Mexico" study group intent on searching out information on this neglected facet of Wells Fargo. Jack's stories in recent issues of Western Express show some of the results of his study. He asked that all those interested in Mexico's Wells Fargo or allied services, contact him so that information and illustrations of covers may be assembled for greater completeness. (See advertisement on page 14)

Jerome Schwimmer of South Pasadena, commenting on the successful annual meetings in conjunction with WESTPEX in San Francisco, asked if arrangements could be made for a conference or meeting, or get-to-gether for the Southern California area. He suggested that this might be accomplished in connection with SESCAL held annually at the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles. Interested members should contact Jerry or your Secretary so that this suggestion is kept alive and hopefully brought to a satisfying fruition.

(The S.F. Bay area Friday luncheons at the Sir Francis Drake Hotel, San Francisco have provided a weekly contact for members - local as well as those in the area on business or vacation - for many years. Perhaps a similar arrangement could be made for the southern California area. This might be worked out as a joint venture with our sister society, the Classics Group, which has many members in the southland.)

Editor Erle stressed the need for articles for WESTERN EXPRESS. He also noted that increased printing costs are straining the Society's budget.

The meeting concluded with the distribution of door prizes - early prints of California, glassware, trays and memorabilia - thru the courtesy of President Pearce and the Wells Fargo Bank.

APS ACCREDITED JUDGES

Lately the philatelic journals have carried many major articles on the judging at various shows around the country. These have covered the merits, or lack thereof, of some of the awards, and speculated on the probably methods which led to controversial conclusions by the judges.

Effective July 1, 1979 the American Philatelic Society will add a requirement for applicants to be selected as an APS accredited judge. The applicant must first have won a gold medal, or its equivalent, for his entry of an exhibit in a National show. The logic behind that requirement escapes me. Why would the receipt of a gold medal, for say, "plating the second issue of Slabovia" better qualify the applicant to judge an exhibit of "Western Covers", or the stamps of Nepal, or the Victoria Queens. And further, with professional help available - for write-up and decoration - who is to determine whether the gold award was won by the owner's stamps or the professional's write-up? And what is a "National" show?

EDITOR'S ARENA (Continued)**WESTERN
COVER
SOCIETY
DUES**

It seems to be inevitable in these inflationary times. Postponed for quite some time now, the increased cost of postage and printing have finally caused our Society to establish a new plateau of dues. Beginning January 1, 1980 annual dues will be increased by \$5.00 across the board: Regular Membership, \$15.00; Sustaining Membership \$20.00 and Patron Membership, a mere \$30.00

Notices will be mailed on December 1 in order to give members the opportunity of choosing whether their dues will be a 1979 or 1980 expense.

Last year in a small effort to save postage, dues notices were included with WESTERN EXPRESS. But any saving was obliterated when it was necessary to send out a second notice to almost half of the members, and a third notice in March for the really delinquent. Please assist by mailing your 1980 dues promptly on notification.

With this issue an application form is enclosed for your use. We need additional members - for a Society such as ours should attract twice as many as are now on our rolls. Each year new members added seem to no more than equal memberships lost thru death, resignation or non payment of dues. Will you do what you can to alter this trend for the better?

J. DAVID BAKER

The last issue of WESTERN EXPRESS carried member Baker's very complete INDEX of our publication. Little did we know that this would be Dave's Valedictory! For news came during our WESTPEX meeting that the compelling hand of Death had reached out to take Dave from us. He will be greatly missed. Our sympathy to his family.

**SECRETARY'S REPORT****New Members**

- #716 Steve Meier, c/o Harbor Pharmacy, Inc.
135 East Lomita Blvd., Carson, CA 90745
(Collects Nevada and California collateral)
- #717 - Earl J. La Vigne, 228 Chestnut St., Watertown N.Y. 13601
(Collects, Overland, Free Frank, Stampless)
- #718 - Stephen Vernon, 1371 Shattuck Ave., Apt. 2, Berkeley, CA 94709
(Collects Towns, Territorials, Wells Fargo. Naval Covers - ships named after California towns and places)
- #719 - A.L. Greene, P.O. Box 118, Sparks, Nevada 89431
(Collects, Nevada Postmarks, primarily)

**Change of
Address**

- S.M. Piller, 3351 Grand Ave., Oakland, CA 94610
Margaret Crete, 1338 Hunn Road #23, Yuba City, CA 95991

Resignations

- #692 - Gretchen Mitchell, #697 Sheri Clark, #698 Jerry Clark

**Dropped for
Non-Payment**

- #554 - John Edwards, #688 - Edward Gibbons, #585 - Donald Grantham,
#573 - Donald Meyers, #666 Brian Mullin, M.D., #701 - Dennis Rogers
#640 - William Steinmetz.

Deceased

- #175 - Elmer Tvedt (November 1978), #123 J. David Baker (April 1979)

REVIEWS

CENTENNIAL CATALOG OF ARIZONA RAILWAY POSTAL MARKINGS, BY Charles L. Towle.

As might be expected from the co-author of "Railroad Postmarkings of the United States, 1861-1886" and Editor of "U.S. Transit Markings Catalog, Vol. I" this history and catalogue is an authoritative approach to one state's contribution to railway philately.

After a chapter on the Railway Mail Service and its development in Arizona, the how and why of collecting these often elusive postmarks, and instructions on the use of the listings, member Towle launches into a detailed study of the routes and the date-stamps used. There are a baker's dozen of lines, main and branch. Each section carries accurate drawings of the mail clerk's date-stamps, and there are frequent time-charts of the routes. Finally there is the alphabetic listing to enable the reader to locate easily the information on route and postmark. An Arizona Railway Post Office fold-out map helps to visualize the written data.

The book is available from "Western Postal History Museum, P.O. Box 40725, Tucson, Arizona 85717.

**GOLDEN GATE
TO
GOLDEN HORN**

Sub-title, "Camp Fremont, California & The American Expedition to Siberia of 1918" - by Colonel William S. Strobridge, U.S.A."

The connection between the contents of this book, and "Western Covers" is a very tenuous one. Maybe the fact that this Camp is not listed in member Salley's "History of California Post Offices 1849-1976" had something to do with the selection by your Editor - or maybe it is good background for a collection of AEF covers. There is nothing philatelic about the contents -but how many collectors knew that the AEF to Siberia had its beginning in Camp Fremont, San Mateo County? The soldiers had, initially, been trained for warfare in France under Pershing only to find themselves in practical isolation in Siberia for two years - military men with no military aim.

The book is available at \$3.75 from your Editor, or from the San Mateo County County Historical Association, San Mateo, California.



REVIEWS (Continued)

DUBLIN REFLECTIONS

Here is another non-philatelic book (90 pages) with "bits of valley history" as the author, Virginia Smith Bennett has sub-titled it. The interesting content is a reproduction of various news-columns Mrs. Bennett wrote over the years before the late 1970's, which the "Friends of the Dublin Library" (and we concur) thought worthwhile for publication in book form. The "valley" is the Livermore Valley, in California (or Amador-Livermore Valley) and the accounts are personal reminiscences, replete with period photos. You may obtain your copy by sending \$4.95 to Friends of Dublin Library, 7700 Bonniswod Ct., Dublin, CA 94566.

Standard Handbook of Stamp Collecting

We move from non-philatelic to pure philatelic. The book is the new and revised edition of Richard McP.Cabeen's Standard Handbook. More than 600 pages are devoted to everything from Forming a Collection, Classification and Identification, through an interpretation of Oriental Cyrillic alphabets. If you are technically inclined, there are eleven chapters devoted to paper, printing processes, color, gum, overprints, grills, essays, proofs, errors and many more. One chapter is devoted to monetary units of stamp issuing countries, where you'll find everything from Abasi to Zloty. There is a section devoted to an alphabetic listing of countries, with tabulation of dates of issue of various categories, political entity and other pertinent information.

Truly a handbook, it was first issued in 1965. This 1979 up-date by the publication committee of the Collectors Club of Chicago, is published by Thomas Y. Crowell Company and may be obtained for \$13.95 from them at 10 East 53rd St., New York, NY 10022.

**Washington Territory Expresses**

Member Jacque Houser of Seahurst, Washington has been scanning microfilm files of the Olympia, Washington Territory, PIONEER & DEMOCRAT for the six years from 1855 thru 1861 for material pertinent to his own main topic. In passing he noted many entries concerning EXPRESSES. He jotted some of

them down for possible interest to our members - and we thank him for this. Here are the notes:

April 28, 1858 says that news was brought to Olympia by Stuart's Express.

May 19, 1855 - "Stuart's Express to and from Olympia, W.T. to Portland, O.T., connecting with Pacific Co's. Express for the Atlantic States and Europe. Connect with PMSS Co. Steamer at Astoria office at J.E. William's Store, Olympia."

August 24, 1855 - "Stuart's Express for Colville will leave Olympia on the arrival of the first mail steamer from the States."

February 22, 1856 - News story says information was brought by Williams Express.

February 22, 1856 - Advertisement for Wells Fargo Agency at Olympia.

June 10, 1858 - "Mr. Charles E. Williams, the indefatigable express man arrived here on Friday last from Portland, Oregon, bringing files of papers from that city".

September 3, 1858 - quoting the Victoria GAZETTE "Kent & Smith's Express brought down 100 oz. of dust from sluice claims on Texas Bar" and, "J. Homer Kent of Kent & Smith's Express is missing and assumed drowned between Ft. Hope and Ft. Vale. His coat and bag have been recovered from the River above Emory Bar."

August 8, 1859 - "We have learned that Freeman & Co. have opened an Express office at the Puget Sound Book Store of Mr. Whitworth. Mr. Whitworth is the resident agent here".

November 18, 1859 - "Freeman & Co. have discontinued their Express business in this Territory and Oregon. Cause; 'Don't pay'".

POSTAL HISTORY OF THE COLORADO SAN JUAN

Chapter VIII, La Plata County

Part Three

by Ray L. Newburn, Jr.

Photography by James Young

GROMMET

Established May 3, 1904

Name changed Jan. 13, 1908

Grommet appears to have received the name of its first postmaster, Margaret A. Grommet. Dawson says the name was changed because Oxford "sounded better."¹³³ Whatever the name, Grommet was another Ute Strip farming community. It was located at 6600 feet elevation, 10 miles southeast of Durango "as the crow flies," on the east bank of Salt Creek. (Ignacio Quadrangle, 1908; Gem Village Quadrangle, 1968) Established right on the railroad, the mail came via the Denver and Rio Grande.

No Grommet postmarks have been reported as yet.

HERMOSA

Established July 27, 1876

Discontinued Dec. 21, 1895

Re-established Mar. 10, 1896

Discontinued Nov. 10, 1896

Re-established Dec. 23, 1896

Discontinued Sep. 29, 1900

Hermosa, Spanish (fem.) for beautiful, was the center of a farming community at 6640 feet elevation on the north side of Hermosa Creek at its confluence with the Animas River (Durango Quadrangle, 1907; Hermosa Quadrangle, 1963). Pioneer Charles Tripp built a store there in territorial days, and only lack of interest kept Hermosa from being the first county seat of La Plata County.²¹

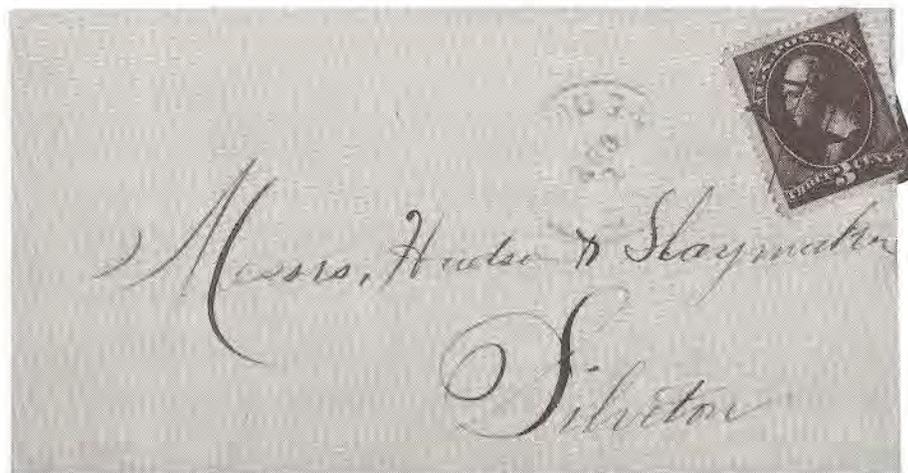


Figure 73

The most "common" type of strike from Hermosa, three of these have been reported. One is year dated from contents as 1879.

POSTAL HISTORY OF THE COLORADO SAN JUAN (Continued)**HERMOSA (Continued)**

With construction of the Wrightman Toll Road, access to both Silverton and Durango was good most of the year. An 1877 map (Map 2, Chapter II) gives Hermosa a population of 60, while Crofutt estimated the 1880 population at 200.³² In 1881 Hermosa briefly became a construction camp for the railroad, which reached there from Durango in October.³³⁶ The 1885 special census gave Hermosa a population of 102.¹⁰⁵ By 1900 the population had dropped to 20,¹⁴⁹ and the post office was lost for the last time that year. Thereafter the local farmers were served by the Durango post office.

Tradition says the Hermosa post office was established in 1874 and received its first mail via Howardsville in 1875.⁵⁴ The postmaster appointment records very clearly show Arthur N. Fuller appointed the first postmaster on July 27, 1876.¹¹¹ It may very well be the case that mail was brought from Howardsville in 1875 on a somewhat informal basis. The first Colorado Postal Route Map with complete markings, that of 1879, shows Hermosa a stop on the regular Silverton to Animas City Route.³³⁸ The mail came by train following completion of the Denver and Rio Grande Railway.

HERMOSA COL. (3½) 1877/03/09-1879/10/03 (Figure 73)

CI: P,1,0:245:T;M,D;S;G;R: pen

Hermosa Colo 2/11/81

manuscript and pen cancel in dark blue ink

HERMOSA COLO (2½) 1899/10/01

CI:P,1,0:270:T;M,D,Y;S;G;G:target

HESPERUS

Established Oct. 10, 1891

Still Operating

Hesperus took its name from Hesperus Peak (or Mountain) some 12 miles north of town.¹⁷⁷ Hesperus is Latin for western or evening star, and Hesperus Peak is one of the westernmost high peaks (13,232 ft.) in the state. The Porter Fuel Co. of J.A. Porter lay claim to several hundred acres immediately north of the Fort Lewis military reservation in the early 80's.^{54 177} With the arrival of the Rio Grande Southern Railroad in 1891, coal mining began in earnest, and the post office from Fort Lewis was moved to Hesperus when the fort was closed in the fall.^{116 178}

Hesperus is located on the east bank of the La Plata River at an elevation of 8110 feet (La Plata Quadrangle, 1895; Hesperus Quadrangle, 1963;). There by 1892 lived 40 or 50 families plus as many single men in a large boarding house. Most worked in the coal mines or were merchants of some sort.¹⁷⁹ The 1910 census gave the town 210 people,⁴⁴ and it is claimed the community had 325 voters at its peak.¹⁸¹ In 1910 and 1911 it had a newspaper, the Hesperus Harpoon.⁶⁰ And it had the usual mix of saloons and churches, stores and a school.¹⁸¹ Carrying Hesperus coal to the mines and smelters at Rico and Durango was a major item of business for the Rio Grande Southern Railroad. With a decrease in mining, both town and railroad suffered. The last RGS rail was removed by the dismantlers at Hesperus on June 17, 1953.¹¹⁶ Thereafter small amounts of coal were taken out by truck. The post office remains to serve the upper La Plata Valley, including a few homes in Hesperus.

POSTAL HISTORY OF THE COLORADO SAN JUAN (Continued)**HESPERUS (Continued)**

Mail came to Hesperus via the Rio Grande Southern Railroad. Postmarks are among the most common from La Plata County except for Durango.

HESPERUS COLO. (2½ -) 1896/11/14-1898/12/30 (Fig. 74)

CI:P,1,0:275:T;M,D,Y;S;G;G:

HESPERUS COLO. (3) 1900/04/13-1904/09/09

CI:P,1,0:295:T;M,D,Y;S;G;G:grid

HESPERUS, COLO. (3) 1906/01/18

CI:P,1,0:280:T;M,D,H,Y;S;G;G:hollow 4-bar
(Doane type 2 with numeral 1)

HESPERUS, COLO REC'D (2+) 1907/10/17

CI:P,1,0:290:(T,S);M,D,Y,H;REC'D:G;G:

HESPERUS, COLO. (2½) 1911/05/25

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

HESPERUS, COLO. (3) 1917/12/18-1918/08/21

CI:P,1,0:320:T;M,D,H,Y;S;G;G:wide 4-bar

HESPERUS COLO. (3) 1926/11/28

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



Figure 74

This is the earliest cover reported from Hesperus, a part of the massive Gavitt correspondence of the mid to late 90's. Strikes from about 1898 on are quite common.

HEWIT

Established July 14, 1882

Re-established June 25, 1883

Discontinued Jan. 5, 1883

Discontinued July 9, 1885

The postal route map of 1883 shows Hewit on the east side of the Rio Florida at the end of a 23 mile route from Durango. ⁶⁹ This is well up into the mountains. Burchard reported mining activity in that area (Needle Mtn. or Florida district) in 1881, 2, and 3. ⁸⁹ I have found no other information.

No postmarks have been reported.

POSTAL HISTORY OF THE COLORADO SAN JUAN (Continued)

IGNACIO

Established Jan. 31, 1882

Still Operating

Following the treaty of 1868 which removed the Ute Indians from the San Luis Valley, an agency was established for the Tabeguache band at Los Pinos (see Chapter I). In theory this was supposed to serve the Southern Utes as well, but in fact it was so far away that they got their treaty supplies from Taos, N.M. instead. Finally a Southern Ute Agency was started on the banks of the Los Pinos River in 1877. It was named for Ignacio, Chief of the Weeminuche bands of Southern Utes, later known as the Ute Mountain Utes.¹² The post office established in 1882 served only the agency and its trading posts for many years, and no postmarks are known from the first 15 years of the office.

Finally in 1899 the Ute strip was opened to homesteading, as discussed in the introduction to this chapter. There remain 5,291 acres of individually owned land and 298,277 acres of common tribal land around Ignacio held by the 563 members of the Capote and Mouache bands of Utes as of 1955.¹² In 1908 H.L. Hall, who had run a trading post most of the time since 1896 and Hans Aspaas, who ran another beginning in 1907, bought tracts of land south of the agency, and combined them into a townsite. A plat was first filed on June 26, 1909, and the town was incorporated in 1913.¹⁸⁰

The modern townsite at 6450 feet lies on the west bank of the Los Pinos River (Ignacio Quadrangle, 1968) and was originally called Ignacio Station, being the location of the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad station (Ignacio Quadrangle, 1908). The agency buildings were a mile and a half north where they remain today (Gem Village Quadrangle, 1968). The town soon had Catholic and Protestant churches, a bank, a hotel, and several stores. Since 1910 there has even been a newspaper, the Ignacio Chieftan.^{60 180}



Figure 75

The second earliest cover reported from Ignacio is this lovely Spanish-American War patriotic. Appropriately, the flag bearer looks Indian to me. Admiral Sampson was in command of the fleet blockading Cuba.

WESTERN EXPRESS — JULY 1979

POSTAL HISTORY OF THE COLORADO SAN JUAN (Continued)**IGNACIO (Continued)**

Mail came to Ignacio via the Denver and Rio Grande. Postmarks are quite common after the turn of the century as settlers moved into the area. By 1910 the population was 131⁴⁴ rising to 555 in 1940 and over 600 today.

IGNACIO COLO. (3) 1897/11/19-1899/11/05 (Fig. 75)

CI:P,1,0:275:T;M,D,Y;S:G,G:target

IGNACIO COLO (3) 1902/08/23-1902/11/22

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

IGNACIO, COLO. (3) 1904/10/10

CI:P,1,0:280:T;M,D,H,Y;S:R;R:hollow 4-bar

(Doane type 2 with numeral 3)

IGNACIO COLO 1907/12/12

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

IGNACIO, COLO. (3) 1908/09/24-1909/01/08

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

hour slug blank in 1909 example, which could be Doane type 3

IGNACIO, COLO. (3) 1910/12/12

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

IGNACIO, COLO. (2½ +) 1914/11/13

CI:P,1,0:320:T;M,D,H,Y;S:G;G:narrow 4-bar

KLINE

Established April 22, 1904

Name changed March 31, 1953

When "the strip" was opened to settlement a small Mormon colony was established in the middle of Red Mesa about seven miles southwest of Fort Lewis and given the name Kline (Red Mesa Quadrangle, 1913). In January 1906 one Hanford Miller opened a store on his homestead a mile to the south of the Mormon Church and schoolhouse which defined the town center, and the post office was soon moved into the store with Hanford as postmaster. Later others of the Miller family bought Hanford's store, and when a larger building was needed, John Henry Miller built it a mile west and south on his own homestead. There the post office soon moved, with his son Ray becoming postmaster in November 1910. John Henry subdivided the rest of his land to form a new townsite in 1915. The new town took the name Marvel after the Marvel Midget mill at the local co-op. So the Kline post office was now located in Marvel, while the people living in the original settlement of Kline got their mail by star route out of Hesperus!^{169 182} This glorious bit of nonsense continued until 1953 when the post office name in Marvel was finally changed to Marvel. A Miller was postmaster at Kline-Marvel for over 50 years.¹⁸²

Both Kline and Marvel are shown on modern maps. The original Kline is at 6875 feet elevation on the east side of state highway 140 (Kline Quadrangle, 1968). Marvel is a mile east of the highway and 2½ miles southwest of Kline at 6730 feet elevation (Red Mesa Quadrangle, 1968). Marvel still has an operating post office. Mail came to Kline initially by a short route from Breen.⁷³ Later a route from Red Mesa to Hesperus served Kline.^{74 75}

KLINE COLO 1910/07/20

CI:P,1,0:280:T;M,D,H,Y;S:G;G:4-bar

POSTAL HISTORY OF THE COLORADO SAN JUAN (Continued)
LA BOCA (Laboca)

Established March 2, 1895
 Moved from N.M. February 23, 1909?

Discontinued March 16, 1896
 Discontinued October, 1937?

La Boca, Spanish for "the mouth", is near the mouth of the Los Pinos River Canyon. The name was spelled as one word in the first incarnation, according to the postmaster appointment records.¹¹¹ Since no postmarks have been reported from this period, it is impossible to say whether the town and the post office actually used the single word. In 1902 the office was reestablished about one mile across the state line in New Mexico, and in 1909 it was moved two miles north to La Boca Station on the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad (Ignacio Quadrangle, 1908)¹³² More recent maps simply show this 6160 foot site on the west bank of the Los Pinos River as La Boca (Tiffany Quadrangle, 1968). The February date given above is that of the first listing in the Colorado post office records and does not necessarily indicate exactly when the office began operating in the state, although the Ignacio postmaster in 1940 stated that the shift did occur in 1909.¹³²

La Boca was never of much importance. The 1910 population was 11.⁴⁴ In 1930 it was 14.¹³² In 1905 the mail came 12 miles by road from Ignacio.⁷³ The La Boca station was completed some time during or before 1908, and thereafter served as the mail drop. The earliest postmark reported is a wide 4-bar of 1931.

LA PLATA (Laplata)

Established July 24, 1882
 Reestablished April 21, 1894
 Reestablished December 9, 1918

Discontinued December 23, 1885
 Discontinued August 31, 1918
 Discontinued August 1936

La Plata lay along the west side of the upper La Plata River near the 9200 foot level (La Plata Quadrangles, 1895 and 1963). The name is held in common by the county, the river, the mountains on both sides of the river, and the town, and is, of course, Spanish for silver. The river and mountains hold priority to the name, having received it from the Spanish explorers of the 18th century.¹⁶⁹



Figure 76

This registered cover to Switzerland has the bold magenta straight-line cancellation as well as the standard cds and targets. The 23¢ paid the 8¢ overseas registry fee plus the triple half ounce rate of 15¢ to a UPU member country.

POSTAL HISTORY OF THE COLORADO SAN JUAN (Continued)

LA PLATA (Continued)

The Moss party began placer operations along the upper La Plata in 1873 (see Chapter II and Parrott City in Chapter VIII Part Four). Some lodes were discovered in 1875 and by 1878 the Cumberland vein was opened five miles above the site of La Plata City at the very head of the river. By 1881 a number of mines were active. ⁶⁶ ⁸⁹ La Plata increased in population to about 200 by 1882 only to fall back to 26 in 1885. ⁶⁶ ¹⁰⁵ Output was not large, however, peaking at \$26,000 in silver and \$10,000 in lode gold in 1882. ⁸⁹ This is the period of the first post office, when the name was properly two words, La Plata.

Production began to rise again in 1891 reaching a peak in 1894, the year the post office reopened. The town even acquired a weekly newspaper that year, the La Plata Miner, which continued publication until 1907. ⁶⁰ Mrs. Wolle quotes old timers claims that the town reached a population of 500 in 1897. ⁴⁹ Old photographs make this seem conceivable but unlikely. The official census gives 36 in 1900 and 157 in 1910. ⁴⁴ ¹⁴⁹ The next real surge of activity in the area came with the large production at the May Day a few miles to the south beginning in 1904. ⁸⁹ La Plata or Laplata, as it was spelled in its second and third establishments, was the only long-lived, pure, hardrock mining camp in the history of La Plata County.



Figure 77

A bit of a surprise to see a fancy corner card from a small town livery stable.

During the first period La Plata was served by a five mile route to Parrott, which in turn was served out of Durango. ⁶⁹ ⁷⁰ The Rio Grande Southern Railroad had been built by the time Laplata returned to active status and the mail came from Hesperus. ⁷² The Curtet brothers ran a regular delivery service as well, summer and winter, from Hesperus in parallel with the U.S. mails. ¹⁸¹ By 1930 the population was back down to 21, and during the depression the post office finally closed for the last time.

LA PLATA, COLO. (3) 1883/09/09-1883/09/15

CI:P,2,0:275,265:T;M,D,Y;S;R;G:target

LAPLATA COLO. (3) 1899/06/09-1899/11/02 (Fig.77)

CI:P,1,0:275:T;M,D,Y;S;G;R:target

POSTAL HISTORY OF THE COLORADO SAN JUAN (Continued)

LA PLATA (Continued)

LA PLATA, COLO. (4½) 1899/09/07 (Fig. 76)

SL:2:610;265:(T,S);(M,D,Y):R;G:

in magenta, for registry use

LAPLATA (3) 1901/09/16

CI:P,1,0:290:T;M,D,Y;S;G;G:grid

LAPLATA (2½) 1908/06/17-1911/05/03

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

This could be a Doane type 3, but most of the bars are off the edges of both examples

LA PLATA (3½) 1929/08/23

CI:P,1,0:320:T;M,D,H,Y;S;G;G:wide 4-bar

LOS PINOS

Established January 18, 1889

Moved to Bayfield February 25, 1899

Los Pinos, for the river on whose banks it stood, third office of that name (each in different counties), appears to have been on virtually the same site as the modern town of Bayfield (see Bayfield). The move was less than a mile, there being no change in distances on the Postal Route Maps. Earlier the distance from Los Pinos to Pine River changed from 3½ to 5 miles on the maps, significance unknown. Los Pinos was a typical village serving the needs of the surrounding farmers.

Mail came from the railroad at Ignacio nine miles to the south via a route that extended on to Pine River until that office closed in 1894.

LOS PINOS COLO. (3) 1890/03/26-1897/05/03 (Fig. 78)

CI:P,1,0:275:T;M,D,Y;S;G;R:target



Figure 78

I can see no change in this strike over the seven year span from 1890 to 1897. Either someone made a very careful duplicate or it wasn't used much.

POSTAL HISTORY OF THE COLORADO SAN JUAN (Continued)**MARVEL**

Name changed to April 1, 1953

Still Operating

The story of Kline-Marvel has been told under the Kline heading.

MAYDAY

Established September 4, 1913

Discontinued December 31, 1914

Mayday was located on the west side of the La Plata River midway between Hesperus and La Plata at an elevation of 8725 ft. (La Plata Quadrangle, 1895; Hesperus Quadrangle, 1963). From 1904 through 1907 the May Day Mine just southeast of town was the most important producer in La Plata County. The May Day and nearby Idaho mines produced over \$3,000,000 in ore between 1900 and 1937. ²⁸⁹ A 1.87 mile branch line was built from the Rio Grande Southern main line into Mayday in 1906 and operated until 1926. ¹¹⁶ The only real mystery is why a post office operated for just a little over one year at such an active place.

One Mayday postmark has been reported by a reliable source but without details.

MESEROLE

Established September 12, 1882

Discontinued July 28, 1884

Meserole was a stage stop on Meserole and Blake's stage line from Rockwood to Rico. It lay at about 8850 feet in Hermosa Park, near the upper end of Hermosa Creek, and only about one mile from the San Juan County line (Engineer Mountain Quadrangle, 1898; Hermosa Peak Quadrangle, 1960), just halfway from Rockwood to Rico. ⁶⁹ The railroad brought the mail to Rockwood, and Meserole and Blake took it to Rico, with stops at Young (while it operated), Murnane, and Meserole.

Not surprisingly, no postmarks have been reported.

MURNAME

Established November 10, 1882

Discontinued July 8, 1886

Murnane was a stage stop duplicate of Meserole, located midway between Meserole and Rockwood. It appears to have been located at the base of the Hermosa Cliffs one to two miles north-west of Electra Lake. Near this point the 800 foot climb began to the East Fork of Hermosa Creek (Engineer Mountain Quadrangle, 1898; Electra Lake Quadrangle, 1960). ⁶⁹ Origin of the name is unknown.

Again no postmarks have been reported.

NEEDLETON

Established may 26, 1882

Discontinued March 18, 1892

Reestablished May 5, 1892

Discontinued January 22, 1896

Reestablished October 20, 1896

Discontinued January 31, 1910

Needleton lay along the Animas River at 8150 feet, where Needle Creek enters from the east. Town and creek took their names from the spectacular and appropriately named Needle Mountains immediately to the east which rise to over 14,000 feet (Needle Mountains Quadrangle, 1900; Snowdon Peak Quadrangle, 1964).

POSTAL HISTORY OF THE COLORADO SAN JUAN (Continued)**NEEDLETON (Continued)**

I have no evidence that Needleton existed during the early staging days over the Wrightman Toll Road to Silverton. By 1881 there was considerable prospecting in Chicago Basin at the head of Needle Creek, however, and the easiest access was up said creek.⁸⁹ Also grading was under way on the Denver and Rio Grande Railway's Silverton Line. Track reached Cascade Hill about four miles below Needleton the day after the post office opened.³³⁶ Needleton presumably served as a construction camp. By 1887 there was a good wagon road from Needleton into Chicago Basin, and sporadic mining continued in that area well into the 20th century. Forty-nine tons of ore were removed as recently as 1934.^{336, 50} The railroad had a siding at Needleton, but this was washed out in 1927. It was rebuilt two miles further north, just into San Juan County, so neither this siding nor Needleton (water) tank (another half mile up the track) should be confused with the site of the town.³³⁶

Needleton was primarily a transfer point from rail to stage. Since no post office existed up in Chicago Basin, Needleton had to serve. Even mail from Vallecito Basin, over 12,700 foot Columbine Pass to the east of Chicago Basin, came out through Needleton. I have a letter in the Pingrey correspondence headed Vallecito Basin and posted in Needleton. Mail to Needleton came by rail, needless to say.

NEEDLETON, La Plata Co., Colo. (2½) 1883/04/17-1883/07/20 (Fig. 79)

OV:T,2,0:360 x 225, 350 x 215:T;(M,D,Y);(C,S):R;G:circular grid

NEEDLETON, La Plata Co., Colo. 1884/08/15

OV:T,1,1:400 X 260,?:T;(M,D,Y);(C,S):R;G:circular grid

NEEDLETON COL. (3+) 1885/07/12-1885/07/25

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



Figure 79

This is among the more handsome fancy cancellations used in the San Juan country.

NICCORA

Established July 16, 1877

Discontinued November 26, 1877

The postmaster appointment records list Niccora incorrectly in San Juan County. Nell's map of 1880 and the Postal Route Maps clearly show it to be in La Plata County and very near the site later occupied by Cascade (see same). The 1881 map shows both Cascade and Niccora, the latter immediately on the northeast side of the former.¹¹⁴ Probably both were stopping points at the top of "gut-busting" Cascade Hill on the road to Silverton. I have been able to find no further information of any sort.

POSTAL HISTORY OF THE COLORADO SAN JUAN (Continued)

OXFORD

Name change to January 13, 1908

Discontinued November 30, 1954

In 1908 Grommet (see same) became Oxford. Eicher suggests, without real conviction, that it is "commemorative of British toponymy." ⁶⁹ This small farming community had 105 people in 1910, ⁴⁴ but maps of the past 40 years generally indicate its location without even bothering to index it. mail came via the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad. Today it is only two miles from the La Plata County Airport served by Frontier Airlines!

OXFORD COLO (3) 1910?/07/14

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

magenta ink on 1¢ of 1908, mark badly obscured by adhering paper

OXFORD, COLO. (2½ +) 1912/05/12

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

letters much more widely spaced than previous type

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BEN HOLLADAY — THE STEAMBOAT KING

by

Jack Greenberg

On February 25, 1861, there appeared on the front page of the San Francisco Daily Alta California, the following article;

“Sale Of a Portion of the P. M. S. S. Co's Steamrs
to Messrs Holladay & Co.

When the property passes you will know in San Francisco whether the reported sale of the Oregon Steamers, owned by the Pacific Mail Steamship Company has been consummated. The decline in the stock in New York continues, but the report that the vessels have been sold to the California Steam Navigation Company is denied and the sale has been alleged to have been made to Mr. Benj. Holladay & Edward Flint of New York. The report in regard to the sale to Messrs. Flint & Holladay is that the latter have purchased six steamers for \$250,000, payable in installments of \$10,000 per month. The boats are the Cortes, Fremont, Sierra Nevada, Oregon, Republic, and Panama, which were estimated in the report of the company last November to be valued at \$593,000. The purchase has been made for \$343,000 less than that sum. Mr. Flint sailed on the 1st to superintend the business, on the Pacific, and having been once connected with the Pacific Mail Steamship Company, will be thoroughly posted in regard to the management of affairs. Mr. Flint has been for some time past, Vice President of the Eastern Division of the Ohio & Mississippi Railroad, of which J. W. Alsop is president and recorder. It is difficult amidst so many conflicting statements to tell whether there has been a sale or not.”

There indeed had been a sale.



Figure 1

At the beginning of 1861 the Pacific Mail Steamship Company lost its mail contracts for Oregon to surface transportation, and thus had a surfeit of aging side-wheel steamers and a profitless Northern and Southern Coast route. On February 25, 1861 she retired from the coastwise traffic and concentrated her efforts on the business of transporting passengers and freight to and from Panama.

BEN HOLLADAY (Continued)

The story in the Daily Alta California proved to be all too true, and this new company, the final link in a vast transportation network, provided Ben Holladay's stagecoach lines with an ocean going outlet from Wallulla on the Columbia River to the entire Pacific Coast.

It did not take Ed Flint long to master the details of management as the Northern Coast Route continued to operate without interruption. The vessels purchased were more than adequate to meet the demand for the Oregon traffic, and within thirty days of the purchase of these vessels, he conceived the idea of establishing service to Mexico.

In the Alta for April, 12, 1861 we find the first ad for the Mexican Route;

OCEAN-STEAMSHIPS

FOR SAN BLAS, MAZATLAN,
AND GUAYMAS
touching at Cape St. Lucas.

The Steamship
PANAMA

Will Leave Folsom Street Wharf
for the above ports
on Wednesday....May 1st, 1861
at 4 o'clock P.M.

for freight or passage apply to

HOLLADAY & FLINT
Office P.M.S.S. Co's Building

corner of Sacramento and Leidersdorf Streets
Bills of Lading furnished to shippers.
no others will be signed. Ap-11-m

It is interesting to note that in this same issue there are six "A-1 Clipper Ships" advertising regular service to the Mexican Coast: by the first of September there are none.

On July 15, 1861 we find the *PANAMA*, (fig. 2) now referred to as "The Favorite Steamship" and Captained by R.H. Horner, prepared to leave on her second trip.

On August 24th, the *PANAMA* made her third trip with Capt. Horner as Commander, and on November 9, 1861 we find an ad indicating an expansion of service, with the Steamer Republic. The *REPUBLIC* (fig. 1) could not have made many trips on the Mexican Route as it was replaced by the *PANAMA* in the summer of 1863. It was then moved to the Northern route for a year when her engines were removed and placed in the *DEL NORTE*, and in May 1866, the patched and caulked hull of the *REPUBLIC* was towed to Acapulco to serve as a coal hulk and supply ship to support the expanded service of the Mexican Coast Route.

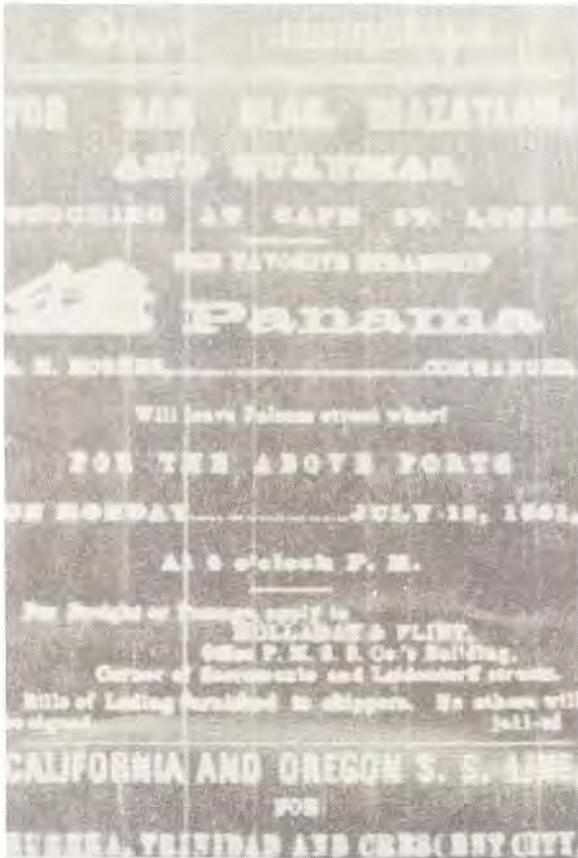
Ben Holladay (figure 3) was a large and energetic man, typical of that breed of nineteenth century capitalist, who lived and acted in a grand way. He was the type of person toward whom, no one could harbor neutral feelings: he was universally hated and revered.

Ben was born in Kentucky, in 1819, or 1820. By the outbreak of the war with Mexico, he had entered the field of western transportation with a freighting contract from the War Department, to supply General Stephen Watts Kearny's Army of the West.

The California Gold Rush offered further opportunities and Holladay was to be found hauling goods to Salt Lake in the early fifties, selling them to west-bound immigrants at a good profit. In Utah Holladay invested his profits in Mormon cattle, which he drove over the mountains to California, and sold them to the miners at tremendously inflated prices.

BEN HOLLADAY (Continued)

After the Mormon War of 1857, Holladay became associated with Russell, Majors, and Waddell and in this connection helped to capitalize the Central Overland, California and Pike's Peak Express Company, at the end of the decade. Thus, with the outbreak of the Civil War, and the disruption of the Butterfield Overland Mail, it was Ben Holladay who was in a position, from the standpoint of financial resources and person-



Ben Holladay in his prime

When, in 1861, the C.O.C. & P.P. EX. ran into financial trouble, it was good old Ben who advanced the sorely needed funds, on November 22nd, in return for which he was given a chattel mortgage for the entire line and all of its equipment. This lien was secured by a bond executed in Holladay's name for \$400,000.00

On December 6, 1861, Holladay declared the bond forfeit and published notice that the sale of the assets of the company would take place in Atchison, Kansas on December 31, 1861. After delays fostered by the company's many creditors, the sale took place, under shady circumstances, on March 21, 1862. The total assets of the company were knocked down to the highest, and only bidder Ben Holladay for \$100,000.00. By this transaction Holladay found himself in possession of over 1,200 miles of stage lines. Holladay then proceeded to extend his newly acquired stage lines into Idaho, Washington, and Oregon territories.

BEN HOLLADAY (Continued)

Ben must have left Atchison for New York immediately following the auction as he and his partner Ed Flint are found in mid July on board the P.M.S.S. (figure 5) *Golden Gate* on her return voyage from Panama and bound for San Francisco. Late on the afternoon of July 27th, a fire was discovered on board (figure 6) which could not be controlled and Holladay's partner, Edward Rust Flint lost his life. Holladay was also thought to be lost, but as some maintained, was too mean to die, and was rescued by a passing boat south of Manzanillo.

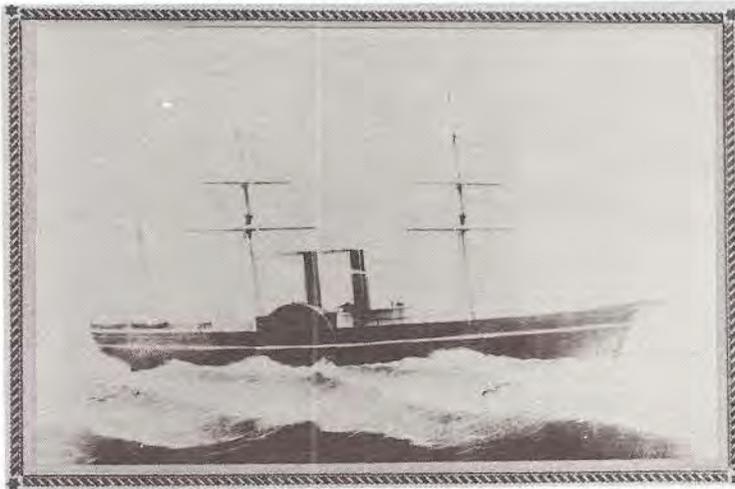
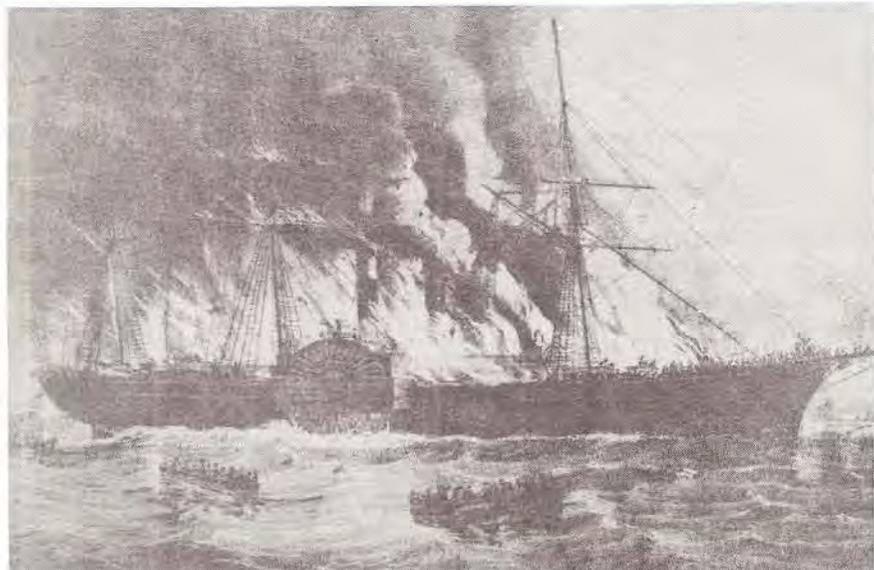


Figure 5
PMSS - Golden Gate

Figure 6
The burning of the Golden Gate



BEN HOLLADAY (Continued)

In the fall of 1863, we find an entirely new advertisement for the company;

CALIFORNIA, OREGON & MEXICAN STEAMSHIP LINE

STEAMER OREGON - for Cape St. Lucas,
Mazatlan, Guaymas and La Paz, monthly.

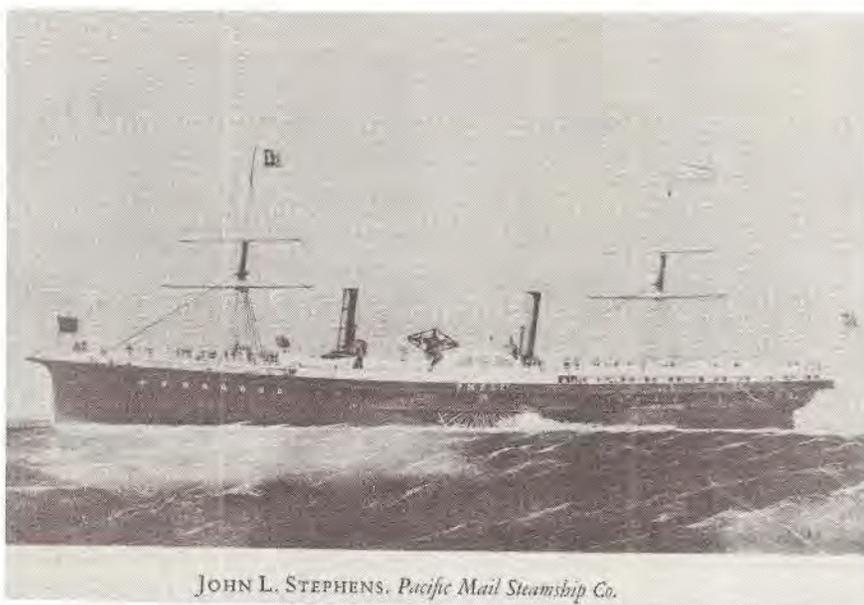
Ben Holladay, Proprietor
S.W. corner of Front and Jackson Streets

As can be seen, we have a new name, a new address, and no partner. The Steamer *Oregon* (figure 7) has also begun to call at La Paz for the first time, due to the acquisition, by Wells, Fargo, of Peterson's Lower California Express.

In 1862 Holladay chartered out the Steamer *Cortes* for use in the China trade, sailing from San Francisco to Shanghai on April 14, 1862. She served in this capacity for a couple of years when in 1865 she burned to the waterline in Shanghai Harbor. It had been gossiped about that that vessel along with the *Columbia* were sold to a Japanese firm in 1863, which may have been true as neither appeared on the coast again.

The Mexican Route was undoubtedly an afterthought for Holladay as his primary objective in entering the coastwise trade was to provide his stage lines with an outlet to the Pacific. After his acquisition of the C.O.C. & P.P. EX. he extended his lines to include the new gold discoveries in Montana, and initiated tri-weekly service to Salt Lake and the Boise Valley, Walla Walla, Umatilla, and The Dalles. At any of these last three points the mail and passengers could be transferred to steamers for delivery to Portland, or other points on the Pacific coast, - and why deliver them into the hands of strangers.

In the 1864 Directory we find substantially the same ad except that the Steamer *Oregon* has been replaced by the *John L. Stephens* (figure 7) which Holladay had acquired from P.M.S.S. Co. during that year, along with the *S.S. Orizaba*.



JOHN L. STEPHENS. *Pacific Mail Steamship Co.*

BEN HOLLADAY (Continued)

At the close of 1865 Holladay sent the Steamer *Oriflamme*, (figure 10) under command of Captain Lane, across the Pacific to Yokohama. The vessel made port on February 5, 1866. She was the first American civilian steamer to do so, but she never repeated the voyage.



STEAMSHIP "ORIFLAMME"



BEN HOLLADAY (Continued)

The *John L. Stephens'* service on the Mexican route was suddenly curtailed by an event which is chronicled below by a Mexican Source;

On April 6, 1866, a dramatic historical incident occurred in Cape St. Lucas which was the capture of the North American merchant ship "John L. Stephens", which sailed under the flag of the Empire of Maximilian.

General Ramon Corona, having learned that this ship was carrying a cargo of arms and ammunition from San Francisco for the French at Mazatlan, in anticipation sent orders to the North American Dana, chief of a guerrilla force of volunteers from that country who fought at his side, to take a position with ten of his men in the aforementioned place, with orders to take possession of the ship through an astute and bold attack. When the boat came into port the men went aboard as passengers, and immediately Dana, pistol in hand, reduced the Captain to impotence, demanding his surrender, at the time the others were carrying out the same procedure with the crew and passengers, among whom was the Frenchman Chavon, in charge of the cargo. The "Stephens" was taken to La Paz, and there the arms were transferred to a Mexican Schooner, which left immediately for the coast of Sinaloa. It arrived at Playa Colorada on April 24, whence Dana reported to Corona that the mission that had been entrusted to him had been satisfactorily accomplished. This action aroused great admiration and enthusiasm among the republicans who fought against the French in Sinaloa."

"The republicans may have had a great admiration aroused in their hearts" for one North American, but there was another whom they held in somewhat lower esteem: Mr. Holladay. The "Stephens" was not returned to him for a couple of years and thereafter plied the route to Portland from San Francisco as it was no longer welcome on the Mexican Coast. His troubles with the forces opposing Maximilian were not at an end with this incident as we shall see later in our narrative.

On Saturday, April 21, 1866, the following article appeared in the pages of the Daily Alta California;

"A NEW STEAMER LINE. We understand that Holladay & Co., will, about the 12th of May, dispatch the OREGON to the mouth the the Colorado, with freight, and thereafter the steamer will make regular trips, carrying Government stores, provisions and supplies for the miners, and goods for the Arizona, Salt Lake, and Montana trade - and returning, with copper and copper ores and such other freight as may offer. There is said to be a pressing need of greater steamboat facilities on the river to transport goods and ore to and from the mines along its course; but this want will doubtless be soon supplied, and a fresh impetus given to a rapidly increasing trade."

In the section reserved for advertisements we find the following;

"STEAM COMMUNICATION WITH THE MOUTH OF THE COLORADO RIVER. The CALIFORNIA, OREGON and MEXICAN STEAMSHIP COMPANY will dispatch their Steamship OREGON, C.C. Dall Commander, from Folsom Street Wharf, for Port Isabel, Saturday, May 12, 1866, at 10 o'clock A.M. Connecting with river steamers for FORT YUMA, LA PAZ, and FORT MAJAVE. Through tickets and bills of lading will be issued for said ports. This route offers great inducements to parties visiting Arizona, being the cheapest, shortest and most pleasant, avoiding the hardships and dangers of the desert. Bills of lading will be furnished to shippers and no others will be signed. For freight or passage apply at the office of the company, Southwest corner of Front and Jackson Streets up stairs. JESSE HOLLADAY, Agent."

This New Steamer Line, however did not pan out. The trip here advertised was actually the second for the Oregon, the first having been in February, and a third was advertised, but did not materialize; perhaps occasioned by the shortage of vessels caused by the capture of the Stephens by the Mexicans.

For whatever reason, the third steamer to supply the Colorado River settlements from its mouth, and the second to try and establish regular service, had given up the idea.

TO BE CONTINUED



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- (3) Articles will be solicited and published.
- (4) Covers or photos of covers may be submitted for opinion.
- (5) Lists of Offices, Agents, Steamship Lines, Frank and Handstamps will be compiled and published.
- (6) A sales or exchange circuit will be established.

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LOS ANGELES - RARE AND UNIQUE

BY Jerome Schwimmer

Throughout the California Gold Rush Period, Los Angeles served mainly as a center for the supply of cattle and grapes to the cities of Sacramento, Stockton and San Francisco, the commercial centers serving the explosively expanding population of the mother lode mining towns. Compared to San Francisco, queen of the Cities, Los Angeles was a slumbering cow county town. San Francisco had some twenty-five times the population of Los Angeles and generated hundreds of times more mail than did Los Angeles in the 1850's. Frickstad lists Auditor's Report figures for 1855 post office net proceeds for Los Angeles at approximately \$200, while San Francisco net proceeds for the same period are shown to be over \$90,000. Further, mail service to Los Angeles in the 50's was infrequent and uncertain. The population of Los Angeles in 1850 was approximately 1,600.

The first published sketch of Los Angeles is shown as Figure 1. The sketch is from the official report of the railroad survey made on order of Secretary of War Jefferson Davis and shows Los Angeles in 1853.



Letters from Los Angeles in the 50's are relatively scarce, as can readily be predicted based upon the foregoing statistics. Two such letters with their integral covers and the content of each are shown below. An 1855 Los Angeles stampless folded letter from Stockton cattle buyer is shown as Figure 2. The cover is postmarked with the earliest type Los Angeles handstamp and is franked by a handstamped paid 3 covering the California local rate. (Early postmarks and rates will be discussed further in subsequent installments in the series.) The letter describes the trip from Stockton south through the San Joaquin Valley, discusses the price and availability of cattle and tells us of the infrequency of mail departures from Los Angeles. The full content of the letter is set forth below.

Los Angelos Sept 8th, 1855

Dear Wallace:

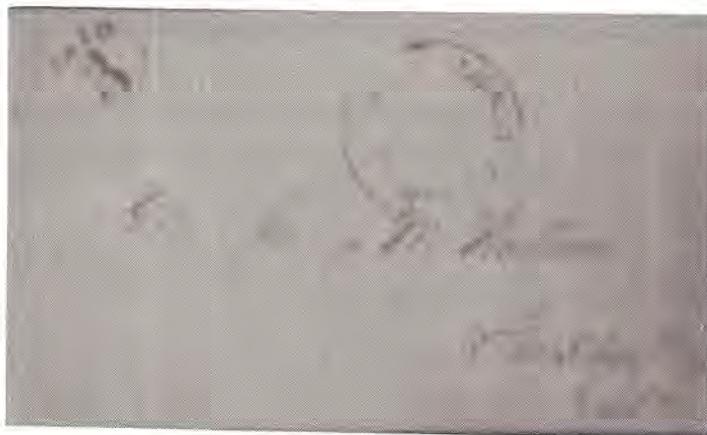
We arrived here yesterday about 10 o'clock, making the trip in little over nine days. We met with no accident or mishap on the road save that in watering the animals at a slough the first night they took a notion to cross. The mule was nearly drowned in the attempt, but finally got over safe. Everything in the pack was drenched except the coffee which somehow escaped. We had in consequence to put up with very poor fare. The horses are looking tolerably well considering the poor feed. From Hildereths to the Tejon we had good grass at two camps, but mosquitoes were so bad that the horses could not feed well. I mean today to make a camp somewhere near town where I can herd and feed them.

LOS ANGELES - RARE AND UNIQUE (Continued)

There appears to be a little rise in stock in consequence of the presence of four or five other parties who are buying. I think that cows and calves may however still be bought at 15 @ 16. Heifers are seldom sold here in large bands, and I don't know whether they can be bought at all. Roland, I understand, wishes to sell one or two hundred steers but wants the money down. He is hard up. I don't think there is much chance to make any arrangement with him. I will see the Reads today or tomorrow and sound them as to the chances in that quarter. It will be difficult to get more cattle than my money will pay for. I will, of course, be on the lookout for snaps of that kind. I met one of the Mores near S Francisco Rancho with 1,700 poor steers which I was told he had bought of Stearns at eighteen and a half dollars, but don't think it can be true. Horses are low, ordinary cow ponies will probably cost forty to fifty dollars. Taos is here and has been quite attentive. He offers to assist me in any way in his power. He told me that Cattle left on the 18th July with a very pretty band of two hundred head of cows and calves and was to receive another hundred on the Sa Clara whence he would continue up the coast road and must have got to the S Joaquin soon after we left. I have seen Shore, Dick Jones, and some few other acquaintances. One wrote yesterday to Jack Bridger to make inquiries respecting stock out in his County. I have heard that it was low out there, but would have to be picked up in small bands.

By the next mail which leaves in about ten days I shall be able to give you some better idea of the markets. I have written this for today's mail merely to announce our arrival about which you of course must feel some concern. I have not yet been here long enough to form an opinion of my own in regard to any kind of stock. There is some little Am. around and rates from thirty to forty dollars for mixed lots cows and steers.

Your sincerely,
Blair



An 1856 Los Angeles stampless folded letter pessimistically evaluating Los Angeles' future chance for growth is shown as Figure 3. The cover is postmarked with the second type of handstamp and is franked by a handstamp Paid 10 covering the over 3,000 mile rate. The Cajon Pass, where our rider spent a cold and lonely night, is about 75 miles east of Los Angeles and is best known today for its traversing freeway that speeds Las Vegas bound Angelenos to their destination—modern day seekers after Nevada silver. The full content of the letter is set forth below:

Los Angeles Jan. 5th, 1856

Dear Brother:

Your kind letter of Nov. 5th is at hand, again informing me that all's well. What else could be more welcome.

I arrived in town the night of 3d. inst. direct from the "mohave country", leaving Hancock and party still out there. They will all be in by the 25th ins. The cold is intense out there, owing to great elevation and proximity of snow mountains. Since the 15th Oct. last, I have been engaged furnishing supplies to H's camp (with the exception of an occasional hunt for game). Was in here about two weeks ago. Only a flying trip. Reached camp on the 26th Dec. Left camp again on the 1st New Year's day. Rode 35 miles and camped at night in the Cajon Pass. Twas fearfully cold. Equals to New York winter. I thought of you as I sat shivering over a campfire. No companion except my horse. The wind blew piercing from off the snowy sierras. I slept but little that night. At day dawn I saddled up and dashing down the "pass" in an hour, left cold winter far behind. And that's the way I spent New Years. Here in town, the orange trees are loaded down with ripening fruit.

Times here are very dull and "gold" scarce. Los Angeles has no channels for trade and never can become of much importance except as for wine and dried fruits. I hope to be able to close up my affairs here in two months at the farthest, perhaps less. With the exception of a severe cold, of which I have now entirely recovered, I have been very well in health. My last to you was on the 1st of Dec. My love to mother, Fanny and all the rest. I am glad to hear Sidney is getting on so well. Please remember me to him, and excuse this short epistle. I remain, dear brother,

Respectfully yours,
T.G. Hewlett



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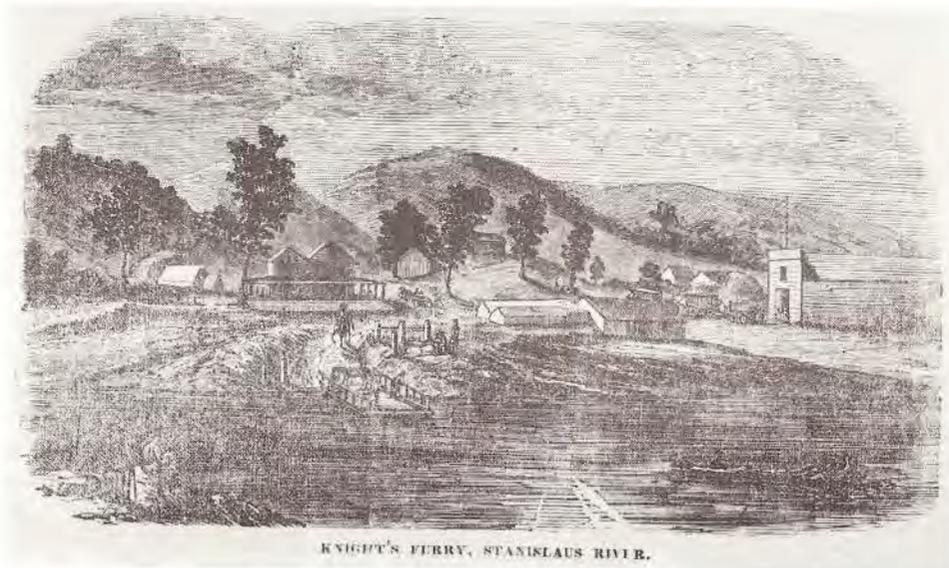
KNIGHT'S FERRY, CALIFORNIA

by Everett C. Erle

Several months ago, when David Jarrett submitted the photo of an unlisted straight-line KNIGHT'S FERRY (figure 1) it seemed to call for a little background data for this town.



Knight's Ferry was founded in the spring of 1849, by Dr. William Knight ² (or Captain William Knight ³), scout and fur trader. He had come to California with the Workman Howland ⁴ (or Rowland ²) party in 1849. In 1845 he brought his family from New Mexico and settled at what became Knight's Landing ². An earlier attempt had been made to establish a town under the name Baltimore, but it was unsuccessful.



KNIGHT'S FERRY (Continued)

The ferry which gave the townsite its name, was the first ferry established on the Stanislaus River, on the old Sonora Road from Stockton to the Southern mines. One writer ² said, "As early as 1850 thousands of miners passed this way, when ferry receipts could scarcely have been less than \$500 per day." Knight has also been credited with establishing, earlier, a ferry across the Sacramento River, at Knight's Landing.

After Knight's death November 9, 1849, the ferry was operated by John and Lewis Dent, brothers-in-law of General Ulysses S. Grant. (The site was temporarily re-named Dentville). The covered bridge, built in 1854 to replace the ferry, is reputed to have been designed by Grant, while on a visit. This bridge was swept away by the flood of 1862, but was later replaced by the present covered wooden bridge. (Lewis Dent became Grant's aide-de-camp during the Civil War, and Minister to Chile during Grant's Presidency).

My impression was that this was the only vehicular covered bridge in California, but fortunately, before rushing into print with this, I checked with the California State Automobile Association. ¹⁰ It happens to be one of five covered bridges used for vehicle traffic - the others being at Berta's Ranch and Shower's Pass, both on the Elk River in Humboldt County, Paradise Masonic Park on the San Lorenzo River in Santa Cruz County, and at Junction Moonshine Road on State Route 49, in Yuba County. (There would have been two more if the floods of 1964 had not washed away one near Sawyer's Bar across the Little North Fork of the Salmon River in Siskiyou County, and one near Loleta on Mossley Slough in Humboldt County).

The one at Shower's Pass was constructed in 1937 - and oddly enough there had been a postoffice at Shower's Pass for twelve years until it was closed in 1937. Maybe there is a story here for an Humboldt County fan.



Salley's entry for Knight's Ferry reads, "Estab. prior to 7/28/1851 date PM appointment was confirmed in Washington..Into Stanislaus Co. by annexation 3/3/1860. Fr. 4th C1.PO to Ind.Rur.Sta. of Oakdale 9/1/1962. To Rur.Br.1966. Named for William Knight, operator of the ferry across the Stanislaus River. Operated by John and Lewis Dent after Knight's death in November 1850. AKA Vantine's Crossing (no P.O.). Located 16 mi NE of Oakdale.Lewis Dent 1st PM" ⁸

KNIGHT'S FERRY (Continued)

A monument, set up across the street from the Post Office and General Store carries this information:

1849 - 1930
 KNIGHT'S FERRY WAS FOUNDED BY CAPT.
 WILLIAM KNIGHT, A MEMBER OF FREMONT'S
 EXPEDITION OF 1844. THIS TOWN WAS
 THE CENTER OF GREAT
 MINING ACTIVITY AND A
 DISTRIBUTION POINT FOR
 THE MOTHER LODE COUNTRY
 IN 1854 THE FIRST SAWMILL
 AND FLOUR MILL FOR THE TERRITORY
 WAS ERECTED HERE BY LOCKE & DENT

The Oak Grove Cemetary, on the outskirts of the town has understandably many old graves, with ravages of wind and weather evident on a good many of the wood headstones. It would seem that children had a hard time surviving - for there are many infants there. Isaac Watson 3 yrs 6 mo., James and Johny Englehart 5 mo. 4 da. and 2 yrs. 5 mo. respectively. And a very small grave surrounded by a cast iron fence has "A. Klein, born in Sonora Jan. 2, 1867, died at K.F. Oct. 29, 1868." But the Randall family seems to have suffered most, for in the brick enclosed grave are Randall, 1 yr. 10 mo., Perry, 2 yrs. 6 mo., Byron 5 yrs. 5 da., Benny 8 yrs. 6 mo., Parneion 10 yrs. 2 mo. This was not the result of an epidemic, for the years of death range from 1861 to 1881.

One headstone bears this interesting bi-lingual message:

JOHANN HARLOFF
 GEBORDEN KAPPELN HERT
 OCTHUM SCHLESWIG 29 MAY 1837
 GETODTED IN EJNER MIENE A M
 GOATHILL DEN 11 FEBRUARY 1867

JOHN HARLOFF
 BORN IN KAPPELND U KIN
 GDOM OF SCHLESWIG ON
 MAY 29, 1837 WHO WAS
 KILLED IN A MINING
 CLAIM ON GOATHILL ON
 THE 11 DAY OF FEB 1867



KNIGHT'S FERRY (Continued)

Supplementing the scarce straight line shown in figure 1, are illustrations of later and contemporary postmarks. You'll note that there is really little difference between the 1912 and the 1979 types. And in answer to a query of the young lady in charge, as to its age - "we've had it forever".



An oval type was used in 1887. The one in the writer's collection has been used as a receiving backstamp, and is in purple - a color not conducive to reproduction here. It is similar to the Mesa Grand, Cal. postmark illustrated in Dr. Thompson's "U.S. County and Postmaster Postmarks" in Volume X and Miss Edith Doane's updated reprint, in Volume 31 of Billig's philatelic handbooks.



KNIGHT'S FERRY (Continued)

Another receiving date-stamp, is also in purple. It read KNIGHT'S FERRY at top of the circular marking, with RECEIVED at the base. CAL and the date are in two horizontal lines within the circle. This was used in 1892.

In 1956, the Stanislaus Stamp Club provided a cachet for their 6th Annual Stamp Show (figure 3). However, there is considerable "poetic license" in the title STANISLAUS COUNTY POSTOFFICES A CENTURY AGO, for of the 38 or so names listed only eleven had a postoffice, and four of these lack the necessary time lapse to make them one hundred years old!



The large photo of the bridge (figure 4) is taken from a Roberts Wesco Color Card of the World War II era - with its "let's go! U.S.A. - Keep them flying" slogan on the reverse. Currently the bridge bears the scars of vandals who have taken sections of the wood for their campfires!

The smaller photo (figure 5) of the entrance of the bridge, I took in 1960 in connection with my own "photo-mark" hobby - which was gathering photos of California postoffices to mount with the cover bearing its postmark (figure 6). The postoffice then appeared as in figure 7. A current photo would show the "1852" removed from above the GENERAL STORE sign, and replaced with the notation, under General Store, "Since 1852". And between the two windows at the left is a three-line sign "KNIGHT'S FERRY/FIRE DEPT/POST OFFICE".

The postmark doesn't seem to be wearing out from use, for in answer to the query of the young lady in charge as to its age - "we have had it forever".

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