

WESTERN EXPRESS

RESEARCH JOURNAL OF EARLY WESTERN MAILS

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Western Cover Society
Unit No. 14 — American Philatelic Society

OCTOBER, 1980

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

Express

Territorial

Ocean Mail

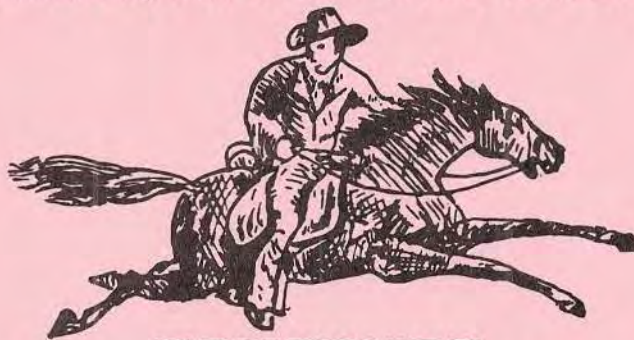
Statehood

Overland

Postal Rates

Post Offices

Postal History



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Address all communications to Editor, Everett Erle, 9877 Elmar Ave., Oakland CA 94603

EDITOR'S ARENA

RESPONSE

The plea for articles, anecdotes, or stories did not bring an overwhelming response. This October issue carries all of the new material, plus the regular standbys from Newburn, Schwimmer, and Murphy. Ray's phenomenal story of the Colorado San Juan combines a history of the area with a postal history of the times and will continue thru October 1982. Jerry has made no time commitment, only that he will continue so long as his current backlog lasts, plus distribution of new information that his articles may generate.

MUSINGS

Since our Society, like many others, exists because it does have a publication that keeps members informed, so far as is possible, on matters concerning "Western" covers - expresses, towns, R.F.D., R.P.O. etc. it is essential that members make some contribution to the publication. Of course one might theorize - does the Society exist for the publication, or the publication for the Society? - thus perpetuating the problem of the chicken and the egg.

RUMOURS

Rumours suggest with the paucity of the material, perhaps the Society would fare just as well if it merged with a larger group (such as the U.S. Classics Society) and was assigned a Section in their publication to disseminate "Western" information.

Your comments, criticism and suggestions concerning the above should be sent to our President, Basil Pearce, 108 Van Ripper Lane, Orinda CA 94563.

HELP NEEDED

The Santa Rosa (Calif.) Stamp Club is putting together a cachet for the 1981 NORBAPEX '81 stamp show, and plans to incorporate replicas of cancels of the DPOs which were absorbed by the Santa Rosa Post Office. Most of the examples of these cancels have been secured, but four have proved elusive. They are **Annadel**, **Bellevue**, **Melita** and **Youlupa**. If you have examples of these please send a XEROX of them to: J.H. Williams, 887 Litchfield Ave. Sebastopol, CA 95472.
Thank You.

**SESCAL '80
Los Angeles
Oct. 17-19**

There will be an informal luncheon-meeting of the Western Cover Society during the course of SESCAL '80. Please Consult the Bulletin Board or Program for the time and place.

**ATASCADERO
CALIFORNIA**

"Estab. 6/26/14. The writer has a postcard with a clear double circle cancel die 'Atascadero' dated 10/7/1910. Neither the PB's, PG's or the archives in Washington indicate operation of this P.O. before 1914".

That is the way Harold Salley, in his "**History of California Post Offices 1849-1976**" introduces us to this first class post office in San Luis Obispo County.

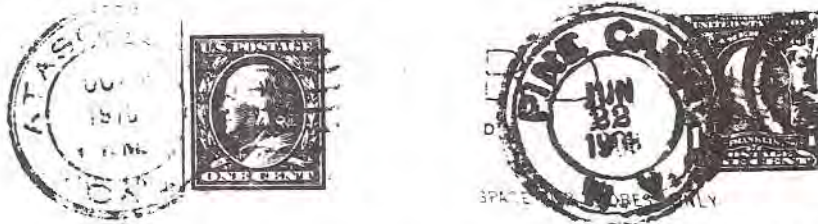
Your Editor happens to have four postcards with this particular date-stamp, one of which carries the earlier date of October 3. Other dates are October 7 (as in Harold's copy), October 11 and October 12. The two earlier cards are addressed to the same person, and show return address as "Co. A. 2nd Inf. N.G.C.". One of the other cards gives "Co. A. 7th Reg. N. G.C.", and the final one showing no return address.

Each card has a photo of the camp, two titled "On the Firing Line - Atascadero, Cal."; one merely "Atascadero, Cal" (with the men assembled in the Mess tent); and the final one is a colored photo of "Life in our Army. Around the Camp Fire".

EDITOR'S ARENA (Continued)

ATASCADERO (Continued)

Could it be that the Army maintained its own "postoffice" four years before the Post Office Department got around to providing mail service? And was this a practice in Army camps?



Some time ago we were attracted to a postcard in the collection of our friend Jack Elder, fellow member of the local Bear Flag Post of the War Cover Club. The card bore a double circle date-stamp similar to that of Atascadero. It was inscribed "PINE CAMP/N.Y." and was dated June 22, 1908. The photo on the card was of a field of Army tents, with the inscription "Pine Camp - Infantry". Maybe one of our Eastern members can tell us when the POST OFFICE established services at Pine Camp, New York?

INDISPENSABLE MAN

Sometimes, when you are feeling important
 Sometimes when your ego's in bloom
 Sometimes when you think you are the most important man in the room
 Sometime when you have a feeling that your passing would leave an unfillable hole
 Just follow these simple instructions and see how it humbles your soul:
 Take a bucket - a big bucket - a wash bucket, and fill it with water
 Put your hand into it, up to your wrist
 Take it out, and the hole that's remaining is a measure of how much you'll be missed.
 Splash all you want as your enter; stir up the water galore.
 Stop! In a moment you'll find it looks quite the same as before.
 There's a moral to this quaint example -
 "just do the best you can - be proud of yourself,"
 But, remember! There's no indispensable man.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

- New Members** #747 — Dennis Dahlin, 321 E. Fairmont, Modesto, CA 95354
 (Collects Territorials & Town Cancels; historically interesting letters)
 #748 - Joseph D. Schwartz, 3230 Fieldcrest Drive, Sacramento, CA 95821
 (Collects Montana 1864-1889)
- Roster** Add Terence Dodson - whose dues was received after compilation of the Roster.
- Change of Address** E. Murray Todd, P.O. Box 409, Holmdel, N.J. 07733
 Jack Wilcutt, P.O. Box 6983, Birmingham, AL 35210
 William Crowe, Box 214, Danbury, CT 06810
- Deceased** #472, Dr. James J. Finley

**The Governor Hunt Correspondence
(Selected Items)**

by Robert B. Bechtel, Ph. D.

George Wylie Paul Hunt was the first governor of the state of Arizona and elected governor a record seven times. His correspondence stretches over his career in Arizona from 1879 through 1938 and it provides a rich source of material for the collector of territorial postmarks. Several dozen covers (the exact figure is not known) have found their way into territorial collections and most collectors are probably not aware of the historical details connected with these items. For those interested in further pursuing the history of their covers, a comprehensive collection of the Hunt letters is in the Arizona Room of the Hayden Library at the Arizona State University, Tempe. Not every single cover can be matched with a letter, but a majority can be. Out of eight covers purchased at auction, the author was able to find letters for four and one already had the contents within. There are 1,809 letters in the collection.

The Hunt correspondence is so comprehensive that it covers the full range of Arizona's late territorial history. Three segments of the correspondence are of special interest in identifying covers for collectors. One large segment is what can be called the "romance" period from the 1890's to 1904. A second segment originated from the wide variety of friends and business associates, and a smaller segment from close relatives in Missouri.

The romance period tells one of the most unusual love stories in philatelic history. In September of 1890 George Hunt was campaigning for his first political office, County Recorder, and dropped in on the Ellison family at the Q Ranch, eighty miles from Globe. Jesse Ellison was the owner of the ranch and the proud father of no less than six beautiful daughters. The daughters were a source of free labor to Ellison, for when cowboys from a large surrounding area came to court the daughters, the resourceful father was there to hand out axes for chopping firewood and tools for doing other chores.

One of these visitors was G. W. P. Hunt and his calls became focussed on Helen Duett Ellison, called Duett by the family. Apparently, Hunt was unable to ride a horse, a decided disadvantage in territorial Arizona, but he made up for it by walking. Hayes (1968, pages 52 and 53) reports that Hunt would visit the Ellisons about every six months by riding a buckboard forty miles from Globe to a point where travel by buckboard was no longer possible and then walk the remaining forty miles to the ranch. These infrequent visits necessitated a lot of correspondence and letters originated from many of the territorial towns of Arizona because of Hunt's business and political interests which caused a fair amount of travel.

Figure 1



GOVERNOR HUNT CORRESPONDENCE (Continued)

Figure 1 shows a cover postmarked at Ellison on October 27, 1901 with Duett Ellison's address to George Hunt. Cancellation is Kriege Type 1 by the 1980 catalogue (3rd edition). Collector's should note the style of handwriting to compare with other covers addressed to Hunt. The contents of this cover were two poems clipped from a local newspaper with certain lines underlined or in quotes. Among these was the line "...lengthened breach is not the sweetest gift God sends his friend." One gets the distinct impression that Duett is telling George to keep faith. This was necessary for the exchange of letters lasted from 1897 until their marriage in February of 1904. George's patience wore thin and he finally wrote that he would be in Holbrook on February 24, 1904 and she had better be there for them to get married. She was there and the fourteen year romance period ended.

But this was not the end of separations! A letter from George dated October 21, 1904 to Duett from Payson expresses clear impatience with the fact that she is still at the ranch. George reminds her she is his "own sweet wife," and a separation of one month would be "unbearable," and not to make any "promises when to return to the ranch." He mentions that "if elected," they will move permanently to Globe and he will need her by his side. Lest the reader become too concerned about this marriage it should be added that the Hunts took a honeymoon trip to the St. Louis World's Fair after their marriage in Holbrook.

The election George refers to is the nomination he received from the Democratic party for state senator on September 5th of that year. He mentions a meeting the next day and sends Duett a short note that the meeting went well. That note was contained in the cover pictured in Figure 2. This postmark, dated October 23, 1904 is the earliest date from the newly discovered Kriege Type 5.



Figure 2

Theobald and Theobald (1960) record Duett Ellison as postmistress of Ellison from March 24, 1902 until April 17, 1904, almost three months after her marriage. She is recorded as postmistress Duett Ellison Hunt from April 18, 1904 until December 21, 1905, ten months after her marriage. It is not possible to reconstruct all the time Duett spent at the ranch after her marriage, but George's frustration is understandable.

More typical of Duett's letter to George is the Holbrook cover shown in Figure 3, postmarked October 11, 1897, showing she did some traveling herself. This postmark is not the clearest but it provides the latest date for Holbrook Type 9 and shows the cooler period in the romance when George was the "Hon." There are 120 letters from Duett to George in the collection at the library.

Governor HUNT CORRESPONDENCE (Continued)

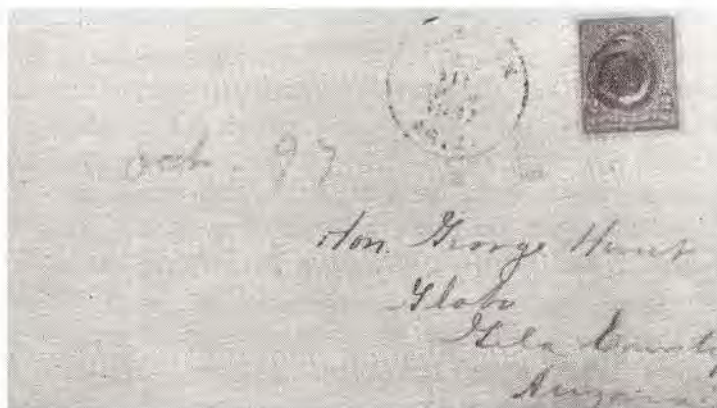


Figure 3

An example of a cover from the friends and business segment is provided in Figure 4. This is an excellent example of the newly discovered Kriege Type 3 from Jerome, the latest date of use reported, August 23, 1887. The letter is from J. P. Dillon, but note that he crossed out the corner card of F.A. Tritle, the sixth territorial governor of Arizona (1882-1885) and one of the original financiers of the mines at Jerome. Tritle's letterhead is on every sheet of the letter.

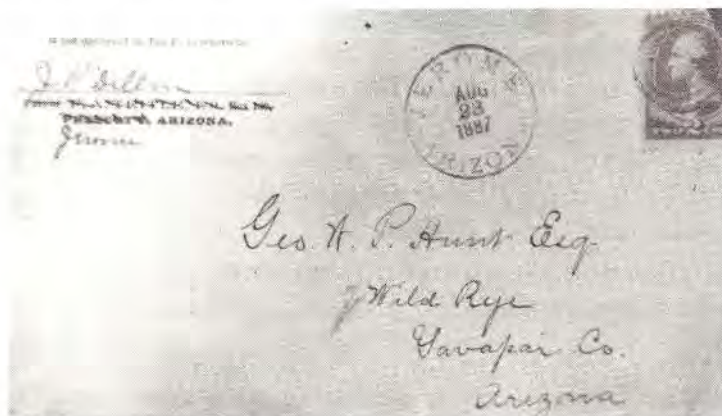


Figure 4

Dillon's letter is typical of a wide number of letters from friends made by Hunt during his period of struggle in Globe. These friends were the laborers, miners, waiters, and common people of the territory. The kinds of personal confessions in the letter show that Hunt was a confidant. There are fifteen letters from Dillon in the correspondence.

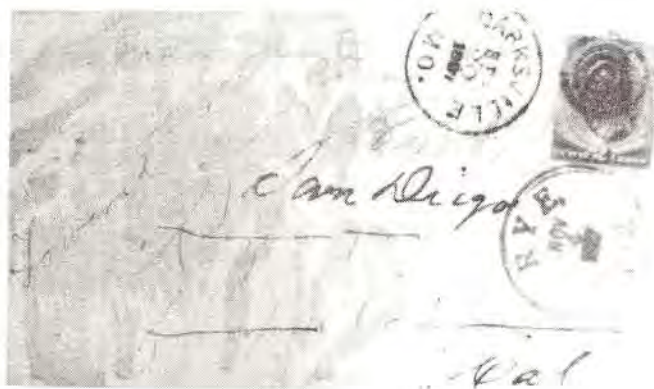


Figure 5

GOVERNOR HUNT CORRESPONDENCE (Continued)

The third segment of correspondence is from close relatives. Figure 5 shows a cover from his mother postmarked September 20, 1887 at Darksville, Missouri with a forwarding postmark at Rye, Arizona dated November 4, 1887. Stains go through the envelope into the letter. Hunt's mother, Sarah E. Hunt was remarkable woman in her own right, publishing her book of poetry in 1876 and contributing articles to newspapers and magazines. Her letters are postmarked from Darksville and other locations in Missouri until her death on August 31, 1904. Note the elongated slant of Sarah Hunt's writing in the faint address in Figure 5.

Sarah Hunt calls G. W. P. "pearl," a nickname given him in childhood and one that will be hard for her to forget as she mentions in her letter. In the earliest part of the Hunt correspondence there are forty seven letters addressed to Pearl Hunt. The name and significance of Pearl was never lost. In a letter to Duett, George sends her an engagement ring with a pearl as the stone.

The Rye cancellation is an excellent example of the newly discovered Type 1 and is the earliest recorded use of that type. The reason for the forwarding mark is that Hunt had a ranch near Rye but had to leave it to work at odd jobs in San Diego and other cities. Several forwarding postmarks from Rye are of this period.

These five covers illustrate the rich philatelic discoveries made from the Hunt correspondence and how they define the historic periods of his life. The entire correspondence was sold to a Scottsdale antique shop several years ago and after covers of philatelic value were sold at auction, the letters were sold to the Hayden Library.

The author encourages readers who have their own examples of **Hunt** covers to correspond with him so that a more complete record could be made of **cancel**s and **dates**. The statehood part of the correspondence contains only 186 letters and has **little** philatelic value but does contain many historic documents of early statehood..

We owe a debt to George Hunt and his relatives who preserved this correspondence for the enjoyment of historians and collectors alike.

NOTES

Thanks are due to the Hayden Library, Arizona Room, for quotations from the letters in the Hunt Collection, Dr. Charles Colley, Director.

REFERENCES:

Goff, John S. **George W. P. Hunt and His Arizona**, Socio-Technical Publications, Pasadena, 1973.

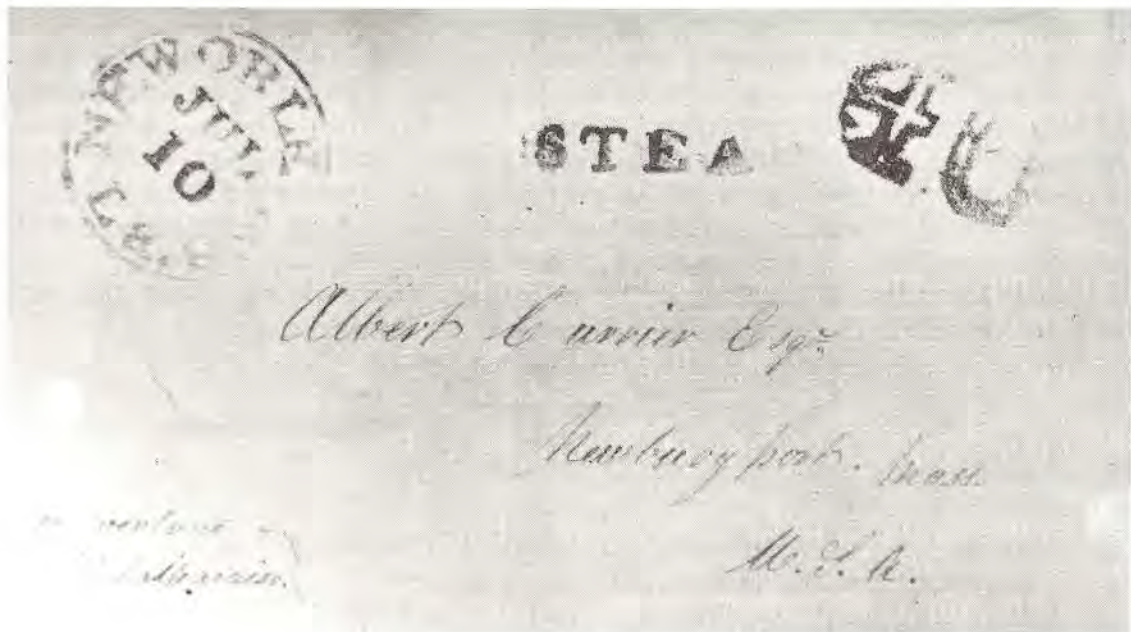
Hayes, Jesse G. **Sheriff Thompson's Day**, University of Arizona Press, Tucson, 1968.

Kriege, Owen, **Arizona Territorial Postmark Catalogue**, Published by Author, 1980 (third edition).

Theobold, John and Theobold, Lilian, **Arizona Territory Post Offices and Postmasters**, Arizona Historical Foundation, Phoenix, 1961.

The Steam 40 California Route from New Orleans
by James W. Milgram, M.D.

In the August 8, 1964 issue of STAMPS, I published an article entitled "The New Orleans Steam 40 Postmark." A cover in that article addressed "Mr. Simeon Leland Clinton Hotel New York U. S. America" bore postmarks "NEW ORLEANS La. JUL 10, "STEAM", and "40" in hollow letters. The letter is a fascinating description by a man on his way to California. It was written at "Taleanana Chilli So. Am. May 14, 1849 1500 Land Miles south C. L. Valiparaso." Another example of this combination of postmarks on a cover with contents from Callao in 1849 was located in a 1961 auction catalog. The same combination of markings is not listed in black in the **American Stampless Cover Catalog**; a listing in red is taken from a cover with a fancy "Steamer Tuscumbia" handstamp with origin Kaskaskia, Illinois, December 17, 1849 and destination California. The theory was presented in my previous article that forty cents was interpreted as the California forty cents rate by the postmaster at New Orleans. The rate from Panama at the same time in 1849 was thirty cents. Why the letters were marked "Steam" rather than "Ship" is uncertain because these West to East usages were certainly ship usages and not inland steamboat usages.



Another example of this usage has been located and is shown in **Figure 1**. It is addressed "Albert Currier Esqr. Newburyport Mass. U.S.A." and marked "for overland mail, Valparaiso." The postmarks are "NEW ORLEANS La. JUL 10," "STEAM," and the fancy "40." This is the exact duplicate of the previously described cover even to the date July 10. The letter was also written in Chile during May of 1849 and thus was probably carried in the same mail as the other cover. However, the writer was on a different vessel.

THE STEAMER 40 CALIFORNIA RATE (Continued)

Brig Charlotte at Sea Latt 35° 5 Long. 72° West

May 3d 1849 200 miles from Valparaiso

Brother Currier.

Dear Sir.

I am this far on my way to San Francisco, our port of destination 99 days out, and all well on board. I intended on going in to Juan Fernandez but on account of the lateness of the Season and the liabelitys of head winds and gales, and also to procure some necessaties such as milasses and shigar, and some other small things that we are in nead of. I concluded on the hole It was best for me to stop at Valparaiso where I trust to forword this letter to you in two days from this. the Brig has proved herself everything I could wish, staunch, strong, and stiff, and sails fast, the two last qualities ar very grate in her. I have repeatedly past vessells under double reefs and eaven close reefs topsails, standing the same course, when at the same time I was under single reef top sails, and top galañt sails, and she is up right as a dish. She is also remarkable fast, haven spoken many vesels, wich we made a head and soon left a stern, among the number Brig Lady Adams, from Baltimore, bound to Valparaiso, 87 days out and we 75 days. Also the Barque Piola from Baltimore bound to San Francisco 96 days out to our 81 days. Our passages to the Line was but 22 days which we wer hove to 24 hours in the gulf, the rest of the time fair wind with Studding sails, set low and aloft. There we were becalmed 10 days, making but 17 miles, in that time, and yet we wer up with the Falkland Islands in 48 days out, that you know is the outer land of Cape Horn. From there I was 45 days bangin off the cape, once I got as far as 62 South, we had continual gales from West to S. W. the whole time with a head sea. We however got round with out loosing a sail or spar, or having to pump her more often then once in 24 hours, then what water we pump out went down the fore hatch, and as for my self I dont feal much the wors for ware as yet. I never felt beatter in my life then I do at the present time and I hope these fiew lines will find you & your Family enjoying the same blessing.

P.S. I am in hopes to be in San Francisco by the time you receive this letter then I shall be better able to inform you of the prospects of the voyage &c

Your no. obt svt.

In F.L. Truth

William G. Bartlett

May 9th 1849

Dear Albert

On receiving this letter you will perceive instead of being at Valparaiso, I am now at Talcahuana, Where I was oblidg to put in on accout of head winds &c

in hast Wm. G. Bartlett

A LETTER FROM FORT LYON, COLORADO

From the Collection of Len McCabe

A soldier took time out from his tour of inspection to write home in July of 1886. The envelope was addressed to a Miss Annie D. Beaver of Lewisburg and franked with 3¢ of the period. The postmark of "FORT LYON/COL" bears the date of July 31, two days after the letter was written.

For Lyon, Colorado
July 29th 1886

My Dearest Annie:

My last letter to you was written from Fort Dodge. Since then we have travelled 180 miles and are now at Fort Lyon, in Colorado. This Post is on the Arkansas River on the overland mail route to Santa Fe. I shall go into particulars when I have more time and give you, as far as possible, all I have seen and know of the never ending Western country. Their boundless prairies have given me very enlarged and liberal ideas.

Tomorrow we start across the country to Fort Wallace, distant 125 miles. There is a shorter route - but no water for a distance of 90 miles. We move the longer way on this account. There is no road, but a trail sufficiently well defined for our guidance. We shall make the march in three days and after inspection of Fort Wallace return to Ellsworth.

Fort Wallace is about 240 miles west of Ellsworth, Fort Lyon about 310. The former is on the Smoky Hill river. We have passed through the Indian and buffalo country. The Cheyennes, Kiowas, Camanches and Arrappahoes were all seen at Zarat, and from Larned to Dodge we saw buffalo and antelope, but had no opportunity for a chase. I apprehend no trouble from the Indians on our return, although the Smoky Hill is their hunting ground and they steadily persist in refusing to allow white settlers to appropriate any portion of it.

From Fort Wallace I hope to be able to reach Denver City among the Rocky Mts. We shall have a good view of them on the road to Wallace, but I want to see them from a nearer standpoint. We shall also pass the scene of Chevington's massacre of the Cheyenne Indians two years ago.

Now my dearest, it wont be long before I see you - but a few weeks and I shall be altogether happy and contented. Direct your letter to Ellsworth for I shall be there by the 10th or 15th of August. Think ever of me as your own and believe you are my only love. Ever thinking of you with all love,

Your own Harry.

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A TALE OF TWO "COVERS"
(THE STORY OF TWO SAN DIEGO EARLY PIONEERS)

by Norma L. McCumber

"Covers", to a Postal Historian, are envelopes that have been used to "cover" a letter. The "cover" tells a story in many ways. At the very least, it identifies the addressee and his place of residence or business, plus the post office from which it was mailed and the date of mailing. It may also provide such information as the name and address of the sender, the route it took on its way to its final destination, via intermediate post office stampings, and the date of its arrival at the post office of its final destination. Every marking and item on the "cover" is of importance, including the varying rates charged for carrying the mail and even those, sometimes stamped or affixed on the backs of the "covers."

Postal History is the study, not only of stamps, but of all postal markings, postal rates and postal routes. The study includes anything pertaining to the history and development of the postal service in this nation and in the rest of the world.

Examples of "covers" are shown below in letters to Thomas Whaley and Cave Coutts, early pioneers in San Diego, who's path crossed in the fledgeling days of that city. There is no indication they became friends, but certainly they met on many occasions both socially and in business.

A postmark is a distinct marking applied to any kind of postal matter by a competent authority. The term is most often applied to the impression which gives the date of posting and the office of origin. Postmarks designed to cancel stamps so that they cannot be used again for postage are usually referred to as cancellations. These cancellations are most often applied at the post office in the town or city where the "cover" is mailed. Prized and greatly treasured by postal historians are those "covers" bearing postmarks of towns that have disappeared from the postal maps.

In the early days of postal service development, letters were simply addressed to whom they were to be delivered and payment for delivery was, usually extracted from the sender.

A close examination of the Whaley "cover" (Figure 1) reveals it was mailed from Brooklyn, New York to San Diego, on August 24, but does not indicate the year. However, we do know that the cover bears the impression of the 10¢ rate. Scott's **UNITED STATES STAMP CATALOGUE, SPECIALIZED** informs us that the domestic rate for 10¢ per ½ oz. for mailing letters over 300 miles was in effect only from July 1, 1845 until 1847. As Thomas Whaley did not arrive in California until 1849, as historical records indicate, this postal rate could not apply.

Events in California made it necessary to establish some regular mail services without delay. Congress and Postal administration took steps to set some workable plan with the results that a 40¢ rate was established to and from Astoria (Oregon) or the Pacific Coast as of 1847. Again, an examination of the "cover" shows these rates were not used. On July 1, 1851, new rates were set at 3¢ per ½ oz., up to 3,000 miles and 6¢ per ½ oz. for over 3,000 miles for prepaid letters. Collect letters were at the 5¢ rate for up to 3,000 miles and 10¢ for over 3,000 miles. The Whaley "cover" shows the 10¢ rate, so this must have been a collect letter. Thomas Whaley must have received the letter shortly after he arrived in San Diego.

A TALE OF TWO COVERS (Continued)

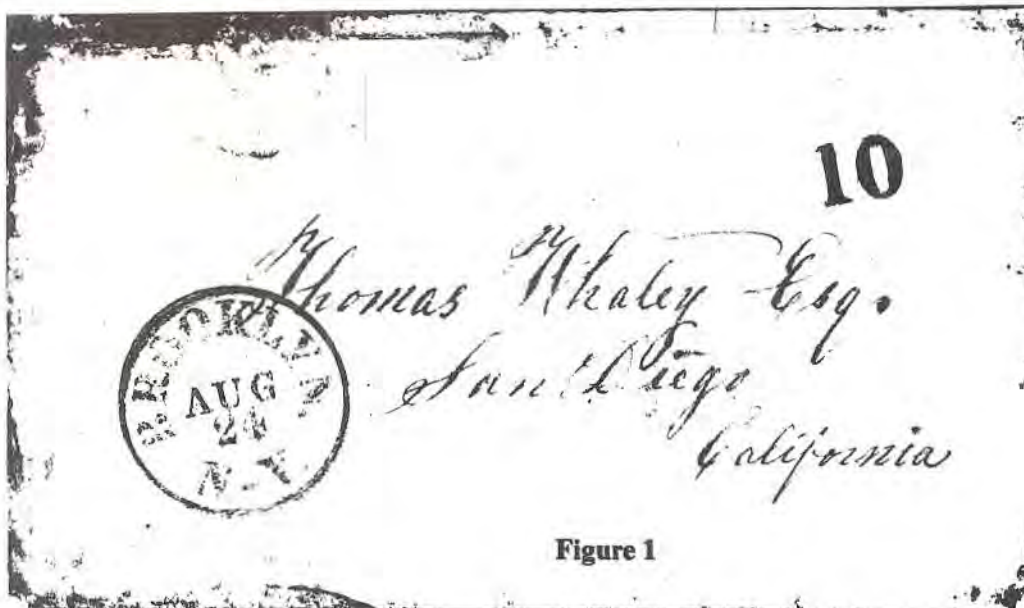


Figure 1

Stamped envelopes were first issued in the United States on July 1, 1853. They have always been made by private contractors, usually at four year intervals. Stamped envelopes have appeared in many sizes and shapes. Watermarked paper for the manufacture of envelopes has been mandatory since their first appearance in 1853. By the watermarks and the embossing, the manufacturer and the period of manufacture can be traced. A careful study of the Coats "cover," (Figure 2) indicates that it was sent to him at his ranch sometime during the 1870's. There are often other interesting tales and information to be gleaned from "covers" by distinctive stamps, markings or notations affixed to them. One of the most important tales told by these two "covers" is the identification of the men to whom they are addressed. Each man, in his own way played a significant part in the development of San Diego and contributed to the historical lore of California's first city.

THOMAS WHALEY

Thomas Whaley was born in New York, October 5, 1823, into a family which had a blacksmith and gunsmith business. The Whaleys were comfortably fixed financially, hardworkers, intelligent and public spirited.

The Whaley background can be traced back 800 years to England, Scotland and Ireland. The first Whaley came to America in 1660. Another branch of the family came from Ireland to Plymouth in 1722. They were Presbyterians, Whigs and free and stubborn who helped win American independence from England.

Thomas Whaley was 26 when he sailed for California. He was described as an explorer, gambler, artist, architect, merchant and civic leader. It was as a gambler, mixed with a merchant in the making that caused him to sail aboard the *Sutton* from New York, on January 1, 1849, for a 204 day voyage to San Francisco.

His status was established as an independent merchant because he took with him aboard the *Sutton* an odd assortment of goods and stock of general merchandise. The ship made a voyage around the Horn and arrived in San Francisco in the summer of 1849. Also, aboard the *Sutton* were two friends of Whaley's George Puffer and George Wardle.

A TALE OF TWO COVERS (Continued)



Figure 2

In San Francisco, Whaley found the cost of unloading his goods and merchandise beyond his means because of inflation resulting from the discovery of gold in California. For the same reason, accommodations for the storing and selling of his merchandise were almost impossible to find. Faced with these difficulties, Whaley was rescued by his friend Wardle who loaned Whaley the money to get his goods offloaded and who also rented him space in his store to sell the goods. Whaley was engaged in the mercantile business in San Francisco with George Puffer.

Despite the lure of the gold fields, Whaley left the panning of gold to others and by July of 1849 was attempting to dispose of the merchandise he had brought from New York. All sorts of goods were in demand and merchants were making money in the busy streets of San Francisco, but for some reason, Whaley was not among them. His goods did not move and he was soon in difficulties. Finally, the Sheriff seized part of stock for debt and the rest was destroyed in one of the frequent fires that plagued San Francisco in its early days.

With his place of business and merchandise destroyed, Whaley, at the suggestion of a Lewis Franklin whom he met in San Francisco, decided to move to San Diego. The population of San Diego was about seven hundred when Whaley arrived, two thirds were native and the rest a mixture of all nationalities. There were seven shops. The harbor was not exactly a beehive of activity. New Town development had been undertaken by William Heath Davis and Andrew Gray.

After a short period of orientation, Whaley decided his future was to be in San Diego and entered into a business partnership with Franklin. They opened the "Tienda California" at the corner of Mason and Juan Streets in Old Town. However, San Diego seemed dull after the bustle of San Francisco—there was not much in the way of excitement.

The store did well until the Indian War of 1851 in San Diego County. At the start of this war, Martial Law was declared and the most able bodied men went off to fight the Indians. There were only 35 men left to protect the city and Whaley, although single, remained in San Diego to defend the town. During this period, he stood guard duty and gave money and supplies. He was armed with a six shooter and always had a horse saddled. The Indian uprising was finally put down and the Indian trouble ended with the capture and execution of Antonio Garra.

A TALE OF TWO COVERS (Continued)

Whaley and Franklin dissolved their partnership, by mutual agreement, in the spring of 1852. Whaley then bought the "Tienda General," considered to be the best store in San Diego. Whaley, on the trip to San Francisco for supplies in the summer of 1852, found that the city did not appeal to him any longer. San Diego had been far kinder to Thomas Whaley than San Francisco.

About this time, talk of San Diego becoming the Pacific Railroad Terminus was on everyone's lips and San Diegans had great hopes that this would become a reality. Whaley believed that when the railroad came he would be wealthy and continued to acquire property.

By this time, he had begun a partnership with Ephriam Morse. This allowed him to keep the store open seven days a week. In addition to the store, he entered into a partnership with a George Tibbets to make bricks. The partnership flourished and he prospered.

In 1853, Whaley returned to New York. There he married Anna Lannay, in the Church of the Ascension, on 14th Street and brought her back with him to San Diego. They arrived in San Diego on December 7, 1853, moved into the Gila house and set up housekeeping. It was in this house that their first child was born on December 28, 1854.

Now, a substantial citizen, a successful merchant with a family and believing in the future of San Diego, Whaley planned to spend the rest of his years in this little city that had been kind to him. He felt that he might as well be comfortable during those years and began to build his house.

The large, brick, two story Whaley house was completed in the spring of 1857. It was built with clay from the banks of the San Diego River. The bricks were fired in a kiln located west of the house on eight acres of land belonging to Whaley. The Whaley house, a residence and store, became the center of social life in Old Town. Over the years it was to serve as a County Court house, a Protestant church, a Public school, a polling place, a theater and a post office.

Misfortunes that had plagued Whaley during his stay in San Francisco struck him again in San Diego. On August 16, 1858, fire broke out in his store and all efforts to save the merchandise were halted because of the knowledge that there was a stock of powder in the store. Once again his experiences was repeated, his business destroyed he ended up a failure in San Diego.

He returned to San Francisco and for a brief period tried again to engage in the retail business. But with little or no capital, and faced with the keen competition of established merchants he was forced to give up. He then applied for, and was granted, a commission as commissary officer in the United States Army and served in this capacity during the Civil War and for some time thereafter. Shortly after the purchase of Alaska, Whaley was sent to Sitka, where he served with the Army in the newly acquired territory.

He returned to San Diego in 1867 and found it had undergone considerable growth in the years he had been away. Alonzo Horton had moved most of the activity from Old Town to what was then called South San Diego. Shortly after his return, he entered into a partnership with a Phillip Crosthwaite in a general store where they sold merchandise at low prices.

The Whaley House on San Diego Ave. was in a sad state, neglected and run down. He had the house fixed and remodeled. As soon as it was finished, he sent for his family and they returned to San Diego.

A TALE OF TWO COVERS (Continued)

In 1870, Whaley cast his lot with Alonzo Horton. In that year, Whaley and Crosthwaite moved their business from Old Town to New Town. Whaley remained active in the business, but in 1888, he was obliged to retire because of ill health and his son Francis took over in his place.

Whaley died on December 14, 1890 and is buried in Mt. Hope Cemetery beside his wife, his mother-in-law, Victoria Lannay and all but two of his children.

This is a very brief and compressed view of one of the men to whom a letter was sent many years ago. He came to live and work in California, a land where men carved empires. In his case, fortune failed to smile upon him and he was unable to realize his dreams. A "cover" led to an account of a man who helped shape San Diego.

CAVE JOHNSON COUTS

Cave Johnson Coutts was born in Springfield, Tennessee on November 11, 1821. He was the third of twelve children born to William and Nancy Johnson Coutts. The Coutts were early settlers in Tennessee, owned much land and many slaves. Cave J. Coutts was named after his politically prominent maternal uncle who served under President James Polk as Postmaster General.

Young Coutts was typical Southern gentleman; honorable, socially graceful, devoted to family and friends, and especially fond of his uncle, who took him to Washington D.C. Through his uncle, he was introduced to many of the great men of his time and even to the President of the United States.

Through his political contacts, Cave Coutts entered the United States Military Academy at West Point. He was not a great student, graduating thirty-seventh in a class of thirty-nine. On July 1, 1843, he received the rank of Army Brevet Second Lieutenant in the dismounted 2nd Dragoons. From 1844 to 1845, Coutts served on frontier duty in Louisiana and received a promotion. He later became Company Commander at Fort Gibson. Later he saw duty in the Mexican War.

Coutts came West in 1848 with Major Lawrence P. Graham's battalion. This battalion received orders in that year to march to the Pacific Coast to strengthen the forces of the United States in Alta California. Major Graham moved five hundred officers, soldiers and teamsters from Monterrey, Mexico to Los Angeles, California. The battalion drove across sixteen hundred miles of trackless and inhospitable desert. The battalion was composed of two companies of the 1st Dragoons and two of the 2nd Dragoons. One of the lieutenants with the 1st Dragoons was Cave Coutts, leading his first command. Coutts and his company stayed at Los Angeles for three months and from there moved to San Luis Rey Mission with companies A and E, on May 27, 1849. Shortly thereafter, Lieutenant Coutts received orders to march to San Diego to escort the United States Boundary Commission to the confluence of the Gila and Rio Colorado, along with Company H of the 2nd Infantry.

While in San Diego and awaiting the outfitting of the expedition by the Quartermaster, Coutts was invited to be a house guest of Don Juan Lorenzo Bandini. He was soon paying court to Ysidora, the youngest Bandini daughter, reputed to be one of the most beautiful young ladies in California.

It was, also during this period that he was given a commission by the Ayuntamiento (town council), the governing body of the Pueblo of San Diego, to survey and map the Pueblo. They were desperately in need of an official map of the city that would enable them to designate lots by number and sell them.

A TALE OF TWO COVERS (Continued)

During this time, Coutts attempted to become elected delegate to the State Constitutional Convention. He did not succeed in becoming an official delegate. His name was listed on the ballot but he was not elected.

On September 11, 1849, everything was ready for the expedition and Lieutenant Coutts rode out in Charge of the escort for the Commission led by Lieutenant Amiel Whipple, who was to survey the boundary, locate the mouth of the Gila River and establish the eastern end of the straight line from that point to a point on the coast of the Pacific, one marine league south of the southernmost point of the post of San Diego.

After the boundary survey was completed on December 1, 1849, Coutts wasted no time in getting back to more interesting pursuits in San Diego. He finished the much needed map of the city on December 16th and assigned names to the streets, as they are known today.

Coutts was well liked by Bandini and the two were soon engaged in a business venture. They sold horses and mules to desperate emigrants. Coutts bought the boat used by the Whipple party and for a short time ferried emigrants across the Colorado river.

Bandini was glad to welcome Coutts as a son-in-law and gave his approval for the marriage to his youngest daughter, Ysidora. They were married in the Casa de Bandini, on April 5, 1851. Abel Stearns, married to another Bandini daughter, presented them with a wedding present of the 2219 acre Rancho Guajome. Coutts, to spare his new wife the rigors of military life, resigned his commission and took up an active life in business and politics.

During the Garra Indian uprising in San Diego, in 1851, a company of California Volunteers was organized under Major E.F. Fitzgerald and Coutts was called into service. He was made a Captain and served until the uprising was put down.

Coutts was something of an enigma, as a southern gentleman and West Pointer married to the daughter of a California Don. In his civilian life, Coutts was always hot tempered and impetuous and was obliged to face the courts on an assortment of charges ranging from assault and manslaughter to murder. He was indicted by the grand jury for assault on two occasions. He resented any invasion of his holdings and took strong measures against trespassers. He was a man with a dynamic character who ruled his land and an iron hand. There was a number of occasions when he took the law into his own hands.

Eager to increase his holdings, he purchased, over the years, Rancho Buena Vista, 1184 acres; and Rancho Los Vallecitos in San Marcos, a land grant of 8877 acres.

After the Governor's Inauguration, on January 8, 1852, Governor John Bigler appointed Coutts an aide-de-camp. Later, in 1854, he was appointed Judge of the County Court. He also served in the positions of Judge of the Plains, Justice of the Peace and other official posts.

Finally, he retired from political life and devoted the remainder of his years rearing his ten children and enlarging his land holdings. He is credited with the installation of an early irrigation project in San Diego County.

As a direct result of the no fence law, which was to so severely hurt so many cattlemen, and the great droughts of the 1860's and 1870's, Coutts was shorn of much of the wealth he had accumulated over the years.

A TALE OF TWO COVERS (Continued)

On June 10, 1874, he died at age 53. He was buried in San Diego and received an obituary of but a few inches in the newspaper. Cave Johnson Coutts, the other man identified by one of our "covers" is also revealed to us through historical records as a highly colorful personality in early San Diego. Military man, politician, judge and rancher. He accomplished much during his lifetime and passed into history as a colorful Californian.

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LOS ANGELES COVERS

By Jerome Schwimmer

THE EXPRESS COMPANIES—EARLY HISTORY

Express company Los Angeles markings are known only for **Adams & Co.**, **Pacific Express Co.**, **Freeman & Co.**, **Wells, Fargo & Co.** and **Pacific Union Express Co.**

Gregory's Atlantic and Pacific Express offered Los Angeles and residents express service to the Atlantic States by semi-monthly steamers as early as 1851. Gregory withdrew from the express business in November 1852. No Los Angeles markings are known for this express company, and there is no known evidence of any Los Angeles office opened by Gregory's.

Adams & Co. was the first express company to employ a Los Angeles handstamp. It opened an office in Los Angeles in 1853 and continued its operations in this city until its financial failure and collapse in 1855. Adams conducted its express, banking and exchange business at its office in the Stearns Building on Calle Principal in Los Angeles. At the time of its collapse, Adams was doing twice the volume of business being done by Wells, Fargo & Co. Two distinct types of Los Angeles handstamps are known—one a single oval and the other a double handstamp. Examples are shown respectively as Figures 1 and 2.

It would appear that the single oval is the earlier and the double oval the later of the Adams handstamps used in Los Angeles. The Figure 2 cover, lacking U.S. franking, would appear to be an example of express company disregard of the requirement that government stamped envelopes be used in such cases.

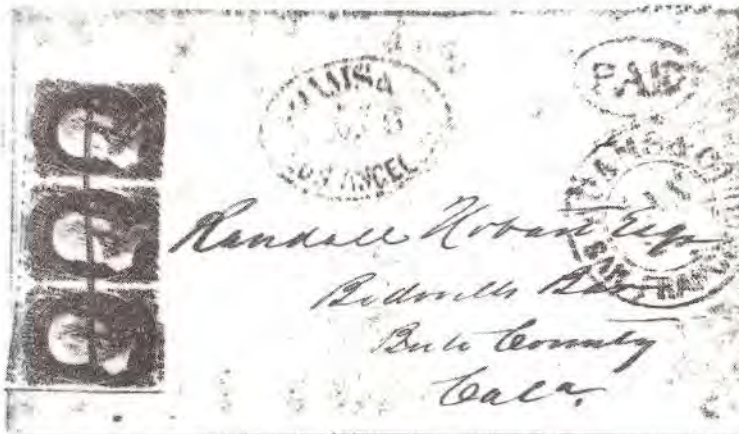


Figure 1



Figure 2

LOS ANGELES COVERS (Continued)

As was earlier reported in this series (W.E. Jan '80), Wells, Fargo & Co. first advertised its express service to Los Angeles citizens on April 22, 1854 (in conjunction with Leland & McCombe's Express). The April 30 (1854) cover, combining Wells, Fargo, & Co. Express Los Angeles manuscript with Leland & McCombe's Express San Francisco handstamp is again reproduced here, as Figure 3. The Los Angeles Star for January 4, 1855 reported that Wells Fargo had purchased the entire interest of Leland & McCombe in their express business in California. For some unknown reason, Wells, Fargo & Co. withdrew from the express business in Los Angeles in October 1856 and did not re-establish its Los Angeles office until April 1857. Wells, Fargo went on, of course, to capture control of the express business in Los Angeles as elsewhere in California. Subsequent articles will deal with various aspects of Wells Fargo related Los Angeles covers.

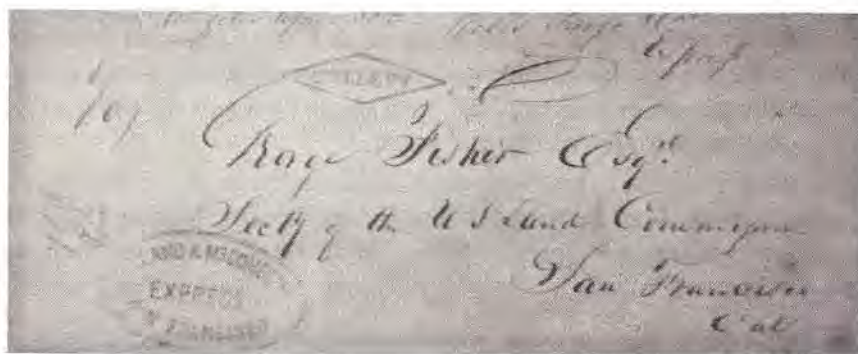


Figure 3

In early March, 1855, the employees of the defunct Adams & Co. organized the Pacific Express Company. The Los Angeles Star reported on March 10, 1855 that R. Hereford would continue as messenger on the southern coast and that Charles Johnson would act as Los Angeles agent for Pacific Express Co. A ten cents envelope entire addressed to New York with Pacific Express Co. Los Angeles oval handstamp frank and C.O.D. marking is shown as Figure 4. Control of the express business in Los Angeles seems to have fallen exclusively into the hands of Pacific Express Co. between November 1856, when Wells, Fargo & Co. temporarily withdrew from Los Angeles, and April 1857, when Pacific Express Co. ceased its operations owing to financial difficulties. A February 1857 Los Angeles invoice of Pacific Express Co., with printed letterhead

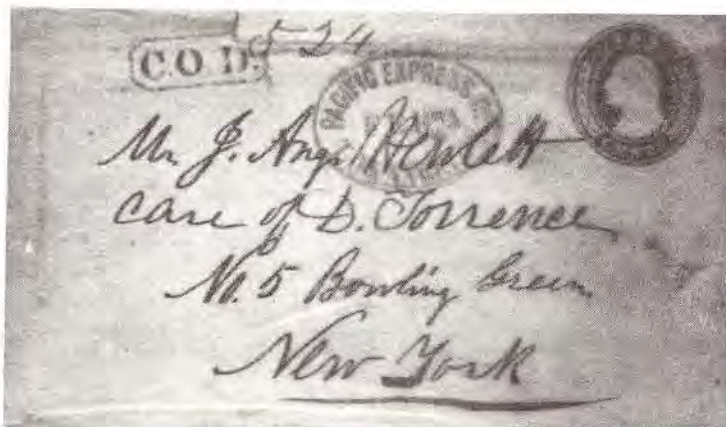


Figure 4

LOS ANGELES COVERS (Continued)

referring to “Pacific Express Co.’s Southern Coast Express” from Los Angeles, is shown as Figure 5. Early collateral express company items of any kind and from any company from Los Angeles are extremely hard to come by.

John M. Freeman was an early California expressman active in the express business in 1850 and until he sold out to Adams & Co., in November, 1851. Freeman worked for Adams until its failure in 1855. Following the Adams’ failure, Freeman again organized Freeman & Co.’s Express, extending its business throughout the mining regions of California and to the Atlantic States and to Europe. In 1859, Freeman & Co. advertised that it had agencies on the north and south coast of California and Mexico. In that year, its express messengers travelled both by the Tehantepec Route and overland via the San Antonio and San Diego (Jackass) Mail Stages. A



Figure 5

Freeman & Co.’s Express franked envelope with the Company’s Los Angeles oval handstamp cancelling the three cents envelope stamp is shown as Figure 6. This handstamp exists in both blue and black colored inks. By 1860, Freeman was absorbed by Wells, Fargo & Co.

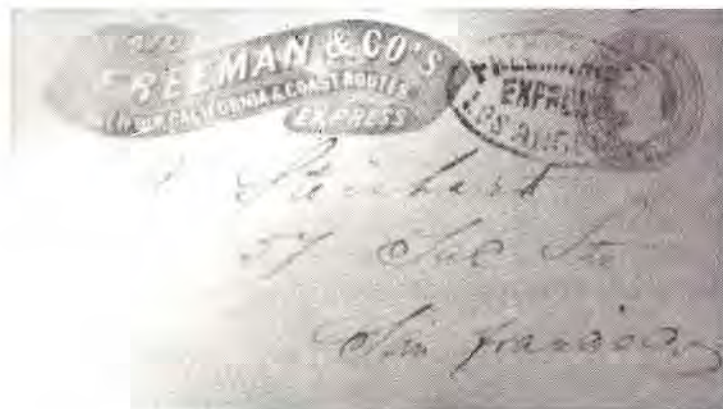


Figure 6

In 1868, “out of a comparatively clear sky” (Wiltsee, P. 68) came the notice of the organization of the Pacific Union Express Company. It immediately began to extend throughout California in opposition to Wells, Fargo & Co., whose “very life was threatened” (Wiltsee, P. 69) by this new Company holding the exclusive contract for transportation of express matter on the only

LOS ANGELES COVERS (Continued)

existing transcontinental railroad. Wells, Fargo & Co. was required to, in effect, turn over to the owners of the new express company a one-third ownership in its total assets to absorb this competitor along with its vital contract rights to move express matter across the country by rail, thus resulting in a virtual monopoly of the express business in the West. A Pacific Union Express Co. franked three cents government envelope with double circle Pacific Union Ex. Co. Los Angeles handstamp cancel is shown as Figure 7 and a like cover with the envelope stamp cancelled by a Wells, Fargo & Co. Los Angeles oval handstamp is shown as Figure 8, thus showing the transition.

Figure 7

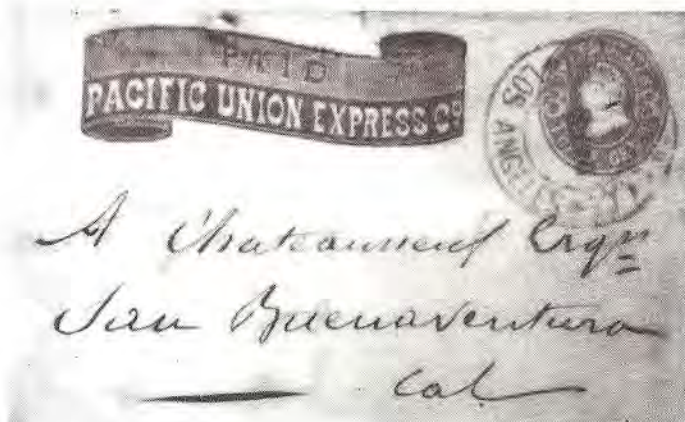
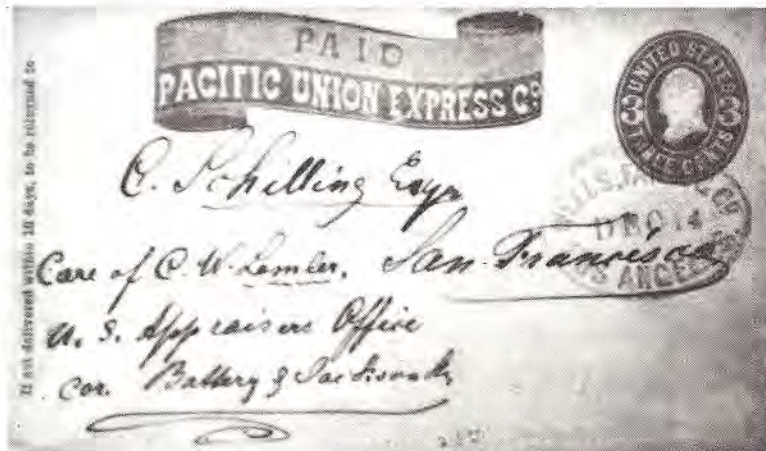


Figure 8

This, then, is a history of early express company operations in Los Angeles, based upon the covers in my collection and with reference to the hereinafter cited authorities. Once again, all and sundry are invited to come forward with additions or corrections.

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AUCTION REPORT

by Patrick H. Murphy

An error appeared in the last report. The correct listing should be: POST OFFICE/PAID/VICTORIA VANCOUVER ISLAND blue oval h.s. to Scotland with #78 tied by S.F. cogwheel. The correct price should be \$625.00. My apologies to Al Zimmerman for this matter.

The major sale of express covers this quarter was the John A. Fox sale at the Jack Tar on 20 July. Some of the results were quite remarkable.

BUCHANAN & Co.'s/Canyon City Express/PAID in red brown and black w/3c tied by Portland Ore.	\$1500.00
Buchanan & Co.'s/Canon City/Express/PAID w/3c tied by W.F. oval in blue VF	900.00
California City Letter Express Co. 10c blue adhesive w/ ms. canc (33L2), cover stained	2000.00
ENGLISH & WELLS/MOORE'S FLAT AND EUREKA w/blue W.F. oval Nevada (1869) & blue Graniteville Cal. XF	1000.00
HOPKINSON'S EXPRESS fancy w/blue W.F. oval Dutch Flat	900.00
MANN'S/INLAND EXPRESS/Crescent City/PAID. w/blue Waldo pmk XF	1300.00
McCANN & MORISON'S/EXPRESS/PLACERVILLE in large oval, Placerville cds, XF, only example known	3250.00
Oroville & Quincy Express Co./and/W.F. & Co's routes w/ blue W.F. Greenville Cal. oval, cc of Banker XF	2100.00
PACIFIC STAGE & EXPRESS CO. w/ stagecoach in oval w/ blue P.S. & E. Co. Nevada in small circle (1864) VF	2100.00
PATTEN & BUNKER'S/HUMBOLDT EXPRESS w/ 3c 1861 tied by blue Carson City VF	1550.00
PONY EXPRESS blue oval 'running pony' h.s & Central Overland California & Pikes Peak oval & St. Joseph double circle on cover to N.Y. VF	10500.00
Pony Express 25c red (143L9 4 mgn) on U35 both tied w/ blue oval Silver City Utah & W.F. frank, bit shortened (Va. Pony Express)	3500.00
Pony Express 25c red (143L9 close L & B) on U35 both tied w/ blue oval Virginia City N.T. & W.F. frank, cover torn away at right (Va Pony Express)	2200.00
ROCKFELLOW & CO'S/EXPRESS/PAID 75c. w/blue oval W.F. Walla Walla XF	2100.00
TELEGRAPH STAGE LINE + W.F. franks on U82; canc on back Telegraph Stage Co. Los Angeles 1873 superb	1700.00
THOMES & SKADEN'S/EXPRESS w/ canc. of T. & S. Susanville Cal. (1870) VF	1600.00
Per "Uncle Sam" in ms. on U10 tied w/blue double circle Wells Fargo & Co's Express S. Fr. Co. and a block of seven #7s on reverse w/ same canc. for 10c rate XF	2600.00
W.F./Victoria, Vancouver Island frank & 3c British Columbia single (tiny tear) & strip of three tied w/ blue Co. oval Victoria, VF paste up cover	1000.00

ACTION REPORT (Continued)

W.F. frank on U38 with pair 2c 1869 tied w/ blue W.F. oval Victoria; also 5c British Columbia (#9) tied w/ blue grid 35; VF \$14000.00
 W.F. frank on U41 tied w/blue W.F. oval Victoria; also British Columbia 5c (#9) tied w/ blue grid 35 superb 3500.00
 W.F. Victoria, Vancouver Island frank w/ single and block of 4 6c Canada (#39); blue Co. oval Victoria on XF Paste up cover 900.00
 WHEELER, RUTHERFORD & CO.'S/EXPRESS/PAID on U35 w/ double circle Co. La Porte canc & oval W.F. Marysville (1865). CC of local drug store XF 1100.00
 WHITING & CO.'S FEATHER RIVER/EXPRESS on U58 w/blue oval La Porte Express Co. & W.F. oval Marysville XF 900.00

Harmers of New York in their sale of 4 June also included several covers worthy of note.

Central Overland California & Pikes Peak Express Company, Denver oval and Hinkley & Coins Express, Denver City on env. (small stains) to Conn. w/3c type II (#26) tied by blue Saint Louis 1860 pmk, fine and rare 1400.00
 "PER OVERLAND MAIL VIA LOS ANGELES" 4 horse stage on orange env. w/ 10c type V (#35) tied by S.F. 1860 1750.00
 Pony Express: W.F. \$2.00 red (143L1 4 mgns but T creases) tied by S.F. 'running pony' and St. Joseph pmk; also blue paid all on U33 5250.00



POSTAL HISTORY OF THE COLORADO SAN JUAN

Chapter X, Mineral County

Part I

by Ray L. Newburn, Jr.

Map by William Bauer

Photography by James Young

Mineral County was the last to be created in the San Juan. It came into being on March 27, 1894 a product of the silver rush to Creede, and was given a name appropriate to the mineral resources of the region.¹⁹ Its 880 square miles were carved from the counties of Hinsdale, Saguache, and Rio Grande. It is third smallest of the nine counties of the San Juan and only about half the average size for the state.⁵⁶ About three-fourths of Mineral County is east of the continental divide and drained by the Rio Grande River. The remainder west of the divide contains the headwaters of the San Juan River and the Piedra River, a major tributary of the San Juan. The lowest point in the county has an elevation of 7689 feet and is located where the West Fork of the San Juan River flows south into Archuleta County. The high point is an unnamed point at 13,895 ft. in the La Garita Mountains on the boundary with Saguache County between La Garita Peak and the continental divide.

Many early explorers including Fremont (see Chapter I) traveled through what was to become Mineral County. Thomas Boggs is said to have taken up land in Wagon Wheel Gap in 1840, but if so, he didn't stay long since he began pioneering in the Arkansas Valley near Las Animas that same year.^{190 191} M.V.B. Wason began ranching on the Rio Grande in 1871, the first well known permanent resident (see Wason). With the signing of the Brunot Treaty the Valley of the Rio Grande became one of the principal staging routes into the San Juan (see Chapter II). Stations were set up about every 10 miles.¹⁹¹ Two of these, Wagon Wheel Gap and Antelope Springs, acquired post offices during the territorial period, the only offices for more than a decade in what was to become Mineral County. The earliest history of the area then was just that of a place to get through, a place that also contained a few ranches supporting the getting through.

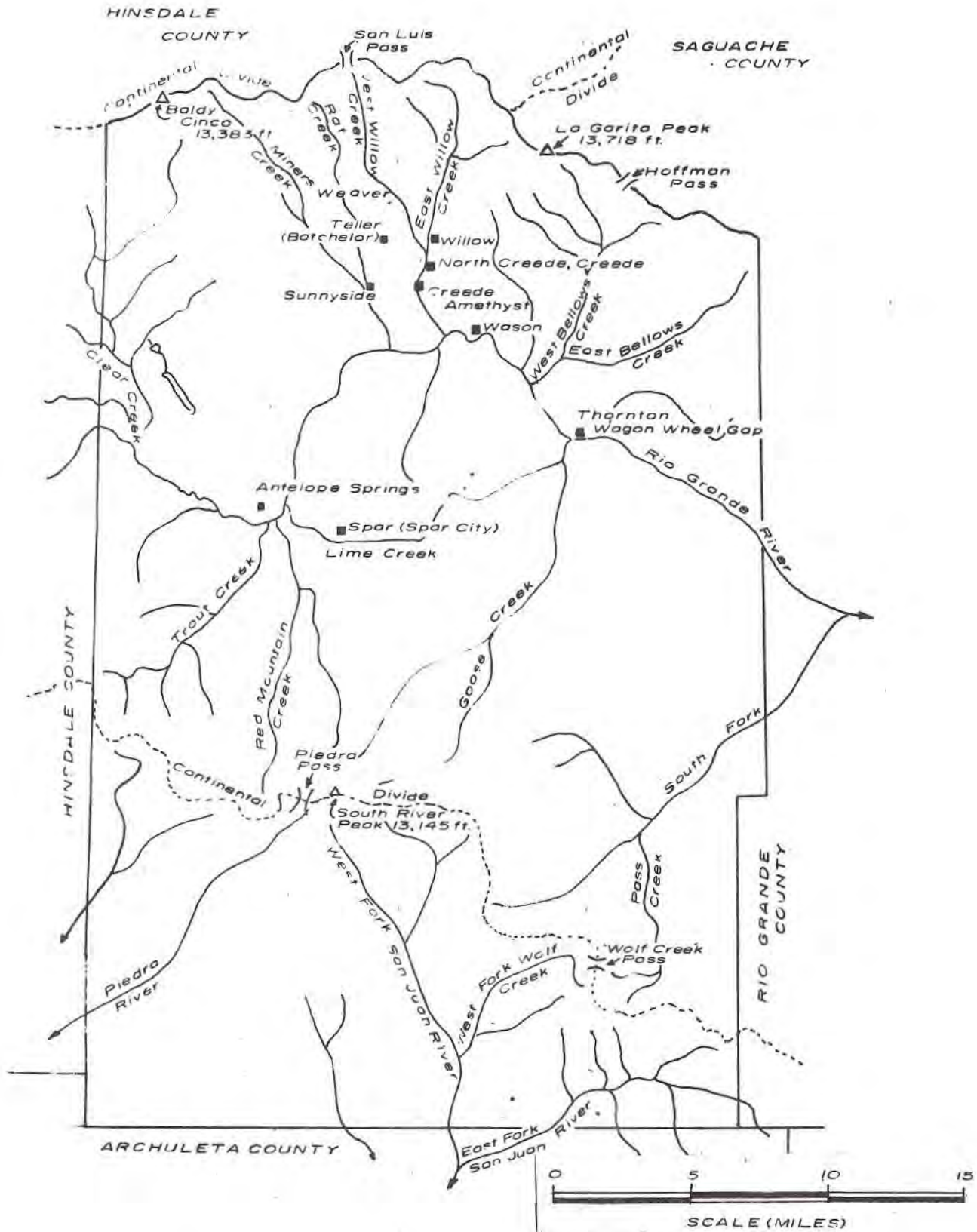
As usual there are conflicting dates given for the earliest mining activity in Mineral County. Mrs. Wolle suggests the first locations were made near Sunnyside in 1872 or 73.⁴⁹ Mumey references early issues of "The Creede Cande," the most successful Creed newspaper, giving August 1876 as the date John C. McKenzie located the Alpha Mine at (later) Sunnyside and 1878 for his location of the Batchelor Mine between Batchelor and Creede.¹⁹¹ Henderson states these discoveries were made in 1883 and 1884 respectively.⁸⁹ Certainly Sunnyside was the first mining camp in the area and in 1886 it acquired the first new post office since Antelope Springs a decade earlier.

Real mining development in Mineral County began with the discovery of the Holy Moses Mine high above East Willow Creek by Nicholas C. Creede and George L. Smith in mid-1889. This property was sold to David Moffat (of railroad and tunnel fame) and others for \$70,000. When word of this got out, prospectors came swarming in to the "King Solomon's Mining District," as it became known.^{49 191}

The first town in the area was called Willow and was located in East Willow Creek a short distance above its junction with West Willow Creek. Later the miners voted to change the name of their town to Creede, the town by this time having grown down to the stream junction and beyond. A second larger town began growing a half mile south where there was more and flatter land. This was generally called Jimtown or occasional Gintown, but was also called Creedmoor or Amethyst (the post office name). Batchelor (Teller P.O.) grew up on top of the canyon to the west and Weaver sprouted up West Willow Creek. In 1908 Amethyst became Creede and Creede became North Creede. Details of all this development will be found under the individual towns.^{49 191}

MINERAL COUNTY

MAP 10



POSTAL HISTORY OF THE COLORADO SAN JUAN (Continued)

It was an unfortunate accident that the towns making up the Creede complex just happened to lie where three counties, Hinsdale, Saguache, and Rio Grande, came together, and further that none of the county lines were accurately surveyed. Cautious people filed papers in all three counties, a great nuisance and expense. M.V.B. Wason, for example, incorporated a toll road from his ranch into the heart of the Creede mining area on Dec. 30, 1890, filing in all three counties. Rio Grande County granted him a rate structure, Hinsdale County granted one and then rescinded it because of misrepresentations, and Saguache County never granted one. When Wason's agents tried to collect tolls from individuals as well as ore wagons on what was the main public thoroughfare between the various parts of Creede, all sorts of trouble began, with suits, countersuits, injunction, and arrests. Much of the legal case against Wason hinged on the fact that he hadn't been granted rates by all three counties.^{191 192}

The multiple county confusion was one of the major reasons there was soon pressure to create a new county, although with Creede's rapid growth, a new county was probably inevitable. Then when Mineral County was created in March 1893, Wason was made the county seat! Pioneer Wason had called in a few political debts in Denver, to the dismay of Creede's citizens. In November 1893 the county voted to move the county seat to Creede. Wason retaliated by reestablishing his toll gates, which had been abandoned after the new county was created. In 1894 the Mineral County courts found that Wason had no legal right to collect anything in Mineral County, but five years later after much additional battle in court the state of Colorado paid him \$10,000 for his road anyway.^{191 192}

The population around Creede grew rapidly during 1891 and 1892. One booster type booklet claimed 6,000 by January 1892, and at that time the railroad was bringing in 150-300 people per day. Many claim the population reached a maximum of 10,000 in 1893.^{191 195} Following the 1893 repeal of the Silver Purchase Act, relative decline set in as silver dropped in value from \$1.29 to about 50¢ per ounce.^{191 192} By 1900 the population had fallen to 1,913 and by 1910 to only 1,239.⁵⁶ The boom was definitely over.

Mineral County produced just under \$50,000,000 worth of gold, silver, copper, lead, and zinc from 1891 through 1945. This places it well ahead of Dolores County but considerably behind San Juan, Ouray, and, of course, San Miguel County. The biggest year was 1893 with \$4,150,946 in values recovered. 1900 was the last \$2,000,000 year and 1910 the last \$1,000,000 year in the pre World War II period.^{50 89} Production today would once again exceed \$2,000,000 even at 1910 prices.

Heavy staging up the Rio Grande over Stony Pass to the Silverton area and over Spring Creek and Slumgullion Passes to Lake City in the 70's was described in Chapter II, III, and IV. The Denver and Rio Grande Railway reached Alamosa in the San Luis Valley on June 26, 1878, tapping a growing agricultural area. The period from 1876 to 1880 was one of continual fights between the Rio Grande and the Santa Fe (Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad Co.), whose subsidiary companies fought the Rio Grande over control of Raton Pass and the Royal Gorge. The Santa Fe even leased the Rio Grande from Dec. 1878 until April 1880, and there was no construction during that period.¹⁹³

Once the Rio Grande regained control of itself it raced toward the San Juan, arriving in Durango in July 1881 (see Chapter VIII). Meanwhile, almost incidentally, they built west from Alamosa during 1881, reaching Del Norte in July and South Fork in November. Del Norte was the center of San Luis Valley activity, an agricultural and ranching center and the jumping off place for mines at Summitville and many parts of the San Juan. The reason for the 15 mile extension to South Fork is not obvious, although it was easy trackage to lay and South Fork did start shipping lumber. Even more surprising, the Rio Grande soon extended the tracks another

POSTAL HISTORY OF THE COLORADO SAN JUAN (Continued)

14 miles to Wagon Wheel Gap, opening the line July 13, 1883. Hauck suggests that they wanted to be sure they controlled the Gap for possible future use, not relishing the thought of another Royal Gorge or Raton Pass fight. To generate some traffic, the railroad built a resort and began promoting Wagon Wheel Gap as a vacation spa (see Wagon Wheel Gap).¹⁹²

With the big silver discoveries at Creede in 1889 and 1890 one would think the Rio Grande would have been eagerly building track to close the 10 mile gap between Wagon Wheel Gap and Creede. David Moffat was president of BOTH the Rio Grande and the Holy Moses Mining Co. in Creede, and he couldn't convince the Rio Grande directors to lay the track! So in August 1891 Moffat resigned as Rio Grande president, and on September 12 he incorporated the Rio Grande Gunnison Railway Co. to close the gap and ostensibly to connect with the Rio Grande near Parlin and also near Cebolla, both to the north in Gunnison County. Within a few days an agreement was concluded where the Holy Moses Mining Co. furnished the money to build the Rio Grande Gunnison as far as Creede, the line then to be operated by the Denver & Rio Grande under lease, with the Holy Moses paid back from part of the freight receipts. Whatever the complications, a railroad reached North Creede on December 2, 1891. The Rio Grande Gunnison formally became a part of the Denver & Rio Grande in September, 1908.¹⁹²

As Creede boomed, a second railroad, the Creede & Gunnison Short Line Railway, was planned, incorporated, and surveyed in 1893. The company planned to build to Batchelor (see Teller) and through two new Gunnison County mining camps (Spencer and Du Bois) to Gunnison, connecting with the Denver, Leadville & Gunnison (the old South Park line) for a short route to Denver. Money couldn't be raised for the construction, and no work was ever done.¹⁹²

The eastern mail for Wagon Wheel Gap and Antelope Springs all came from Del Norte from the time these offices were opened until the Creede boom. Even after the railroad reached Wagon Wheel Gap in 1883, service was apparently sufficiently irregular that mail still came by animal power.^{33a 70 71 114} After the Creede boom started, the railroad brought the mail to Wagon Wheel Gap. "After its arrival it was placed on the floor in a corner of a rough board shanty, about ten feet square, (the post office) to be sorted. There were about a dozen private letter boxes and a counter loosely nailed together; behind this the postmaster, knee-deep in mail,"¹⁹¹ Creede finally got a post office in 1891, followed shortly by the railroad, which delivered the mail to Mineral County until sometime after 1937.^{72 75 94 117 119}

During 1899 the Denver & Rio Grande built a new standard gauge over La Veta Pass to Alamosa. In 1902 the standard gauge reached Creede. That line is still in existence, although there have been no revenue trips since 1972. Passenger service was replaced by a bus in 1932. Several mines are still active in the Creede area, with the Homestake Mining Co. Bulldog Mountain operation alone producing over 100,000 tons of lead and silver ore per year.¹⁹²

Railway Post Office cars ran into the Creede area from 1892 until 1917. From 1892 into 1893 these ran from Pueblo into Creede and then just from Alamosa into Creede until 1903. This was the original Creede, later North Creede. In 1903 Amethyst became the western terminus, the Alamosa & Amethyst R.P.O. continuing until 1909 when they recognized the name change from Amethyst to Creede by changing the name to Alamosa & Creede R.P.O. Later in 1909 Pueblo once again became the eastern terminus and the Pueblo & Creede R.P.O. continued into 1917. At that time the western terminus was pulled back to Alamosa, and no more railway post office cars made their way to Creede.⁴¹

In general, postmarks of Amethyst and both sites of Creede are moderately common, though perhaps not quite so common as most of the other San Juan area County seats. Wagon Wheel Gap is fairly common in the 20th century. Antelope Springs and Wagon Wheel Gap have a number of strikes known from the 19th century as do Teller and North Creede in the 20th, but

all must be considered scarce. Two strikes and one repectively have been reported from Thornton and Wason, while Spar, Sunnyside, and Willow are completely unknown at this writing.

AMETHYST (Jimtown)

Established Jan 25, 1892

Name changed to Creede Feb. 2, 1909

Amethyst was the largest of the Creede family of towns, growing up on both sides of Willow Creek and centered at an elevation of 8850 ft. (Creede and Vicinity, 1910; Creede Quadrangle, 1959). The popular name of Jimtown was unacceptable to the post office because there was already Jamestown in Boulder County. Gintown was either a corruption of Jimtown or recognition of the ubiquitous cheap drink common in saloons, hardly acceptable to the post office in either case. (In fact some say Jimtown was a corruption of Gin Town, which came first!) New Town and Creedmoor were apparently in less common use. Amethyst was the name of one of the most important mines in the area, located by N.C. Creede, which began shipping large amounts of ore late in 1891.¹⁹¹

Amethyst came into being simply because there wasn't room for all the people and businesses in the narrow canyons near the mines. People moved below the junction of the creek forks into an area that became known as Stringtown and then yet further south into Jimtown. Some of this was state land leased to M.V.B. Wason. The state took possession again and ordered the state engineer to survey and plat the town. The state then sold the lots at auction. Most of these lots were south of the area commonly called Jimtown in the area called South Creede, but it was all Amethyst to the post office.⁵⁴ ¹⁹¹ When the county seat was returned from Wason late in 1893, everyone says it was moved to Creede, but the site of the court house was in Jimtown-Amethyst.¹⁹⁵ Creede was in official use by all but the postal service as the name of the entire area after mid-1892. The town on East Willow Creek locally was called Upper Creede. Even the mining district was usually called the Creede District, although officially it was the King Solomon Mining District.

Within a few months during 1891 Jimtown turned from tents on wooden slabs to a real city of one and two story frame buildings of planed lumber, some of it even painted. The business directory for January, 1892 included The Creedmoor Hotel, a lumber company, feed and livery stable, harness shop, drug store, doctor, barber shop, bakery, meat market, and one of many saloons. An electric plant was planned on February 1 and went into operation 11:15 p.m. on February 6, illuminating the town with 23 arc lamps. Telephones also began to go into operation in February. The First National Bank opened on April 4 and the first school on April 18. On April 4 the voters of Upper Creede, Jimtown, and South Creede all agreed to incorporate as one town under the name of Creede. On July 5 Creede held its first election for city officers. On July 7, at the first city council meeting, the city clerk was told to buy a corporation seal, a crossed pick and shovel.¹⁹¹

Many newspapers operated briefly in Creede during the boom days. The most famous was the "Creede Candle" which began publishing Jan. 7, 1892 and continued until Dec. 27, 1930. Cy Warman, the Post of the Rockies, was publisher and editor of "The Chronicle," later just editor after financial difficulties. It was Warman who wrote a famous poem about Creede, each verse of which ended "It's day all day, in the daytime / And there is no night in Creede."⁶⁰ ¹⁹¹ "The Big Fire" hit Creede on June 5, 1892. Basically it wiped out Jimtown, reaching south to first street in South Creede and north to Stringtown. In August 1894 a fire destroyed all the Amethyst Mine's surface buildings including pumps. It took four months to unwater the mine and get back into production. In October 1895 South Creede and Jimtown had another big fire and in 1902 two hotels and 20 houses burned in North Creede. In January 1936 a third of the Creede business district burned. Being built on a canyon outflow, Creede also had problems with water in 1892, 1903, 1911, 1917, and 1942. The 1917 flood dumped the old North Creede

depot right in the middle of the creek bed.¹⁹² In the early days some settlers deliberately built shacks on timbers laid from bank to bank across the creek in order to avoid paying the high price asked for lots.¹⁹⁵

During its first year of operation in Amethyst the post office occupied three different buildings, the first of them destroyed by the June 5 fire. It sold \$5002 worth of stamps collected \$1057 in box rents. ¹⁹¹ Patrons included the infamous "Soapy" Smith, previously of Denver and Leadville. Saloon owner Soapy pretty much ran the town for a time, but with improved government and decreased silver prices in 1893 he moved on, eventually to be shot to death in Skagway, Alaska in 1898. Bob Ford, who killed Jesse James in 1882, was another Jimtown saloon owner. Burned out in the June 5 fire, he immediately set up business in a large tent. On June 8 he was put out of business permanently by a shotgun blast in the face and neck fired by one Edward O'Kelly, who therefore spent the next 10 years in the state penitentiary. There were many such incidents during the boom days of 1892 and early 1893. Following the silver crash the serious business of making a living became more dominant, and law and order pretty well took over in Creede. ^{191 196}

The population of Creede had dropped to 938 by 1900 and to 741 in 1910.³⁶ In 1970 it was 653, many of them still miners.

Postmarks from Amethyst are quite common during 1892 and 1893, but many of these are very poorly struck. The later strikes are as good as those from any town.

AMETHYST, COLORADO.(3, 2½) 1892/03/29-1897/05/19 (see Fig. 93)

CI:P,2,0:305#, 290:T;M,D,Y*:S:R,G,G;target

*year not always included #size varied as cancellor wore

AMETHYST COLORADO 1897/05/27

CI:P,2,0,:360, 345:T;M,D;Y:R,G:

AMETHYST COLO. (2½) 1892/12/19-1893/12/08 (see Fig. 94)

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

AMETHYST COLO (2½) 1899/04/17-1900/12/21 (see Fig. 95)

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

AMETHYST COLO (3) 1905/07/23-1909/01/03

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

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Fig. 93

The earliest type strike reported from Amethyst, these are rarely if ever seen sharply struck.

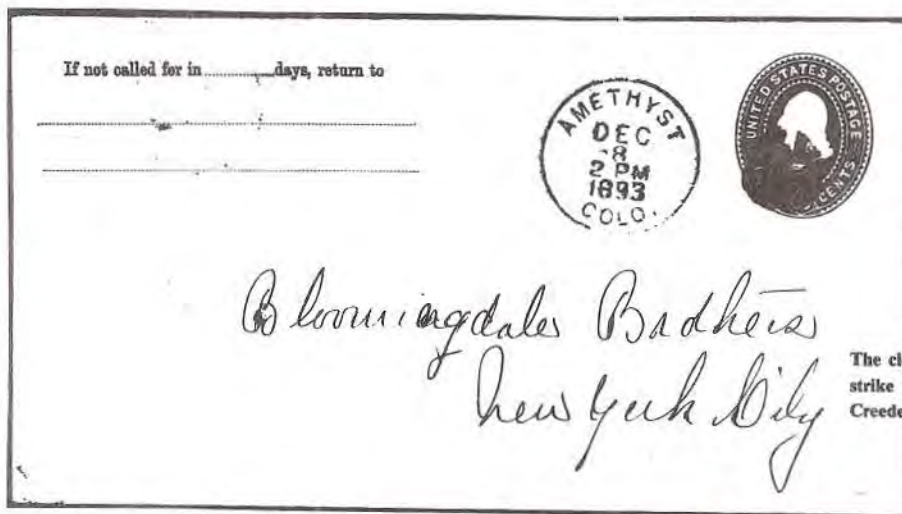


Fig. 94

The cleanest of many example of this type strike which was used at the peak of the Creede boom.

Fig. 95

This type strike is very similar to the previous one, but it is a bit larger and there are minor differences in the shape and spacing of the letters. The Revenue Mining, Milling and Tunnel Co. was not one of the major producers.

