

# WESTERN EXPRESS

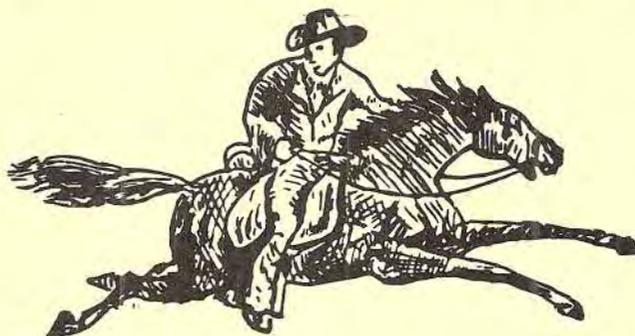
RESEARCH JOURNAL OF EARLY WESTERN MAILS

WHOLE NO. 124 VOL. XXXI, No. 1 Western Cover Society  
Unit No. 14 — American Philatelic Society

JANUARY 1981

AWARDS — Vermeil - PRENFIL '80; Large Silver - ROCPEX '78 - and CAPEX '78

Express  
Ocean Mail  
Overland  
Post Offices



Territorial  
Statehood  
Postal Rates  
Postal History

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PRENFIL '80



El Jurado de la Exposición Internacional de Literatura  
y Prensa Filatélica "PRENFIL '80" organizada por  
la Asociación de Cronistas Filatélicos de la Argentina,  
otorga a QUARTELY PUB WESTERN COVER SOCIETY

DIPLOMA DE MEDALLA DE VERMEIL

por "WESTERN EXPRESS", VOLUMEN XXIX

correspondiente a la Categoría III

Clase 2 Sección A

Buenos Aires, 27 de Septiembre de 1980

Secretario

Presidente

### EDITOR'S ARENA

#### SESCAL 1980

President Basil Pearce presided over an informal luncheon-meeting during SESCAL '80 - with several WCS members and other interested collectors in attendance. It is hoped that this meeting will have been the beginning of an annual regional gathering. Perhaps, also, it will inspire our members in other parts of the country to sponsor a similar gathering during their areas' annual shows - SEPAD - NOJEX -ARIPEX, etc.

The U.S. Classics Society held their regular seminar during SESCAL '80 and WCS member and author, Jerome Schwimmer showed his collection of slides of Los Angeles covers.

#### REVIEWS

While not a true "Western" item, we feel our members would like to know of a truly marvelous volume just published by the National Postal Museum of Canada. This book of over 400 pages is titled "ATLANTIC MAILS", being a "History of the mail service between Great Britain and Canada to 1889". It is written by Dr. J.C. Arnell, with additions and editorial collaboration of Dr. Kenneth S. Mackenzie (Acting head of Research, for the Museum). The first section of the book tells the story of the early carriage of mail to Canada, following this with a detailed study of the 1851-1889 period of trans-Atlantic mails to Canada. The third section is a veritable gold mine of information, with its lists of sail and steam packets, their sailing and arrival dates. A special bonus is the series of maps of the trans-atlantic routes through 1852.

Photos of covers - no less than 58 in color - dominate the illustrations, which include reproductions of the handstamps used during the several rate periods.

The book may be secured from NATIONAL POSTAL MUSEUM, 180 Wellington St., Ottawa, Ont. K1A 106, Canada. Price is \$40.00 (Canadian) for the regular edition and \$60.00 Canadian for the Deluxe edition. Prices are postpaid.

#### HONG KONG AUCTION

While this is even further removed from "Western" the mention of colored illustrations in the Canadian trans-Atlantic book above, recalls a real monument to color photos. This is the auction catalog of the Sotheby Park Bernet sale of the collection of stamps and covers of Hong Kong formed by Ryohei Ishikawa. With a few minimal exceptions, the over 600 lots are illustrated in full color. This hard-bound book sold for twenty British pounds, when it first appeared. Sale was to be held in London in early December.

#### "THE MOVING FINGER.."

There was a transposing of illustrations in Ray Newburn's story of the Colorado San Juan, in the October issue (Your Editor giving proof that he isn't a 100% proof-reader). So, if you will turn to page 31 of that issue, and picture in your mind the illustration opposite the text of Figure 93 as being exchanged with that opposite the text for Figure 95, you will see it as it should have been.

#### 1980 SOCIETY DUES

Notices of 1981 dues in our Society have been mailed by first class mail, as of December 1st. Please see that your check is not delayed. As mentioned in the notice, there will be *no follow-up* for delinquent members as in the past. As a reminder: regular dues are \$15.00; sustaining membership is \$20.00 and Patron Membership is \$30.00

#### INTER- NATIONAL AWARD

An international exposition of philatelic literature was held in Buenos Aires in June of 1980, under the acronym PRENFIL '80. (The official name - Exposicion Internacional de Literatura y Prensa Filatelica"). Your WESTERN EXPRESS was entered - and received quite favorable attention from the judges. So your Society now has a Vermeil award!

### EDITOR'S ARENA (Continued)

**HOW TO ESCAPE FROM THE JAWS OF INFLATION** This is a different "How to" book. The work of Jerry Airth and James Hughes, this covers a multitude of possible investments, which, chosen carefully, will carry you thru the inflationary period. Stamps and philatelic treasures are included in one of the ten Chapters on Investments-which run thru Gold, Silver, Bonds, Cars and Guns, among others. The book is published by the Hughes Publishing Co., 2031 East Glenn St., Tucson, AZ 85719, and may be secured with the remittance of \$10.00

**ATASCADERO and PINE CAMP** In our October story of the Atascadero "military" post office, and its seemingly counterpart, Pine Camp, N.Y. we asked if some Eastern reader could supply dates on Pine Camp. But response came from a collector just down the road. Len McCabe writes that the Pine Camp post office is in Jefferson County and was in operation from June 1, 1908 thru July 18, 1908 and again from June 24, 1910 thru April 30, 1914.

**THANK YOU** A sincere "thank you" to a couple of our dealer members who frequently give favorable mention of your Society in their auction catalogues. Henry Spelmann and Richard Wolffers, this publicity is appreciated.

**ARIZONA POSTOFFICES** In the July 1980 issue of WESTERN EXPRESS we noted that Dr. Owen Kriege had issued the Third Edition of his Territorial Postmark Catalogue, and we should have, soon, William Alexander's "History of Arizona Postoffices". The latter will give the dates of operation and the terms of office for Arizona postmasters for the statehood period.

Now, our new member Dr. Robert Bechtel, in conjunction with the Western Postal Museum, is starting a catalogue of postal cancellations for the Arizona statehood period, February 15, 1912 through 1979. This catalogue will classify all types of cancels used as postmarks, and will supplement Dr. Kriege's catalogue. The types of cancels will be coded, and listing will include the earliest and latest date of use for each. Where possible owners of the covers with the earliest and latest dates will be noted.

Collectors and owners of Arizona covers of the period, are urged to contact Dr. Bechtel, at the Western Postal Museum, Box 40725, Tucson, AZ 85717.

**JANUARY ISSUE LATE** Early in December your Editor went to the hospital for a few weeks (and lost his gall bladder in the interim) and work on the January issue of WESTERN EXPRESS came to a standstill. Work on assembling material, after a brief period of recuperating, was renewed, and hopefully you should receive your copy before the month of January passes into oblivion.



**Harold E. Salley** We are saddened to hear of the death of Harold on November 30. Our deepest sympathy to his family. Harold joined WCS some ten years ago and left collectors with a fine legacy - the remarkable "History of California Post Offices, 1849-1976".

## SECRETARY'S REPORT

- New Members**
- #749 Glenn "Ray" Ward, 7490 E. Herndon, Clovis, CA 93612  
(Collects anything pertaining to NEVADA Postal History)
- #750 Richard Blake, The Mardens, Tupwood Lane, Caterham, Surrey-England, CRS 6ET.  
(Collects material tracing expansion of the U.S.)
- #751 Dick Long, P.O. Box 472, Bandon, OR 97411  
(Dealer in Western Town Cancels, especially DPO's)
- #752 S.R. Sheppard, 919 So. Pine St., Port Angeles, WA 98362  
(collects Idaho DPO's, Mont, Wash. DPO's & Territorials)
- Change of Address**
- Jesse L. Austin, Box 526, Casa Grande, AZ 85222
- Raymond Dopmeyer, P.O. Box 228, Willmar, MN 56201
- Raymond Epple, 415 N. Tucker, #116, St. Louis, MO 63101
- Martin Fogel, 11374 Kelowna Rd., San Diego, CA 92126
- Stephen Hackett, 1195 - 3rd St., Napa, CA 94558
- Donald F. Katona, Sr., 1915 E. Washington, Pasadena, CA 91104
- Richard Meyer, 5100 N. Prospect Rd., Peoria Heights, IL 61614
- Stephen Miles, 2400 Terry Lake Rd., Fort Collins, CO 80524
- E.S. Peyton, P.O. Drawer T, Scottsdale, AZ 85252
- Anthony Pollizzi, c/o Philatelic Mart, International, P.O. Box 2537, Marysville, CA 95901
- William Tatham, P.O. Box 651, Downey, CA 90608
- Samuel Wagonfeld, M.D., 4398 So. Alton St., Englewood, CO 80111
- Mrs. Frederica Warren, 58 Plumb Point Loop, Aberdeen PG, MD 21005
- Resigned**
- #670, Lt., Col. Gerald M. Breen, USAF (Ret), #329, Ruth Chaloner, #65, Daniel Stone
- Deceased**
- #561 Harold E. Salley

A-14 THE MOUNTAIN DEMOCRAT-TIMES--PLACERVILLE, CA. FRIDAY, JULY 25, 1980

## As we were 50 YEARS AGO

JULY 25, 1930

W. R. Parker, of Oroville, a collector of pioneer letters and pony express data, was in Placerville Thursday en route to Lake Tahoe and called at The Democrat office. Parker reported among his recent "finds" a letter from San Francisco to Diamond Springs which bears the hand stamp "Joy Butts, Diamond Springs, 1853." I presume," said Parker, "that Joy Butts had some sort of arrangement for carrying mail between Placerville and Diamond Springs during 1853. I understand that there were a number of men who carried mail between Placerville and various camps hereabouts."

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## A GROUP OF WESTERN EXPRESSES

By the late Dr. A.J. Hertz

### WEST & CO.'S NORTH AND SOUTH AMERICAN EXPRESS. (1850)

From *Alta California* of Sept. 1, 1850 we find the following:

“West & Co.’s North and South American Express.

Will receive gold dust, packages, letters, etc., forwarded and insure the same to all parts of North and South America. Having partners instead of agents and superior arrangements on the Isthmus, we are prepared to forward all freight placed in our charge, with the utmost dispatch and safety. Goods sent through from and to New York in 40 days. Particular attention paid to the purchase of goods, collection of bills, notes, drafts, etc., and all unusual business of an express.

Ward & Co.,  
Office, 9 Whitehall Building,  
Central Wharf.

W.R. West, Sacramento City; C.F. Miller, San Francisco and A. Pollia,  
P a n a m a .

### WILSON'S STAGE LINE. (1866)

From *Nye County News*, Ione, Nye County of Sept. 15, 1866 we read the following:

“Wilson’s Stage Line

from Austin to Ione. Through in 9 hours. John Wilson, having purchased the Wellington Stage Route from Austin to Ione, will run a stage in connection with Wellington Stage from Ione to Genoa.

Leaving Austin every Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 6 o’clock, A.M. and arriving in Ione by 3 P.M. to connect with the Wellington Stage for Elsworth, Wellington and Genoa. Will leave Ione every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday at 2 o’clock, P.M.

Passengers booked at Austin for any point between there and Genoa. Packages delivered and carefully attended to.

J.M. Bellrude.”

### WILSON'S TELEGRAPH LINE OF STAGES. (1857)

From *Nevada Journal* of July 24, 1857 we find the following facts:

“Telegraph Line of Stages,  
Between Nevada and San Juan.

The subscribers respectfully inform the traveling public that they have purchased the above line of stages of Abe Wagner and will run to San Juan and return the same day.

Leaving the National Exchange, Nevada, every morning at 8 o’clock, passing the Montezuma and Oak Tree Ranch, arriving at San Juan at 11 o’clock, connecting with T.G. Smith’s Saddle Horses for Camptonville, the same day.

Returning, leave San Juan every day at 10 o’clock.

Express matters promptly attended to.

W.S. McRoberts,  
Agent.

Wm. F. Wilson & Co.,  
Proprietors.

**A GROUP OF WESTERN EXPRESSES (Continued)****WILLIS' PIONEER STAGE LINE . (1860)**

From *Nevada Journal* of June 22, 1860 we find the following:

“Pioneer Stage Line

to Iowa Hill, Red Dog and Dutch Flat. On and after Monday, the 28th of May, the Pioneer Stage Coach will leave the National Exchange in Nevada at 12½ o'clock, P.M. daily arriving in Red Dog at 3 o'clock, P.M. of the same day, where a connection with William Bennett's Stage Line to Iowa Hill and Dutch Flat is effected.

By this arrangement, passengers from Nevada will arrive at Iowa Hill and Dutch Flat, simultaneously, at 8 o'clock in the evening. Returning stages leave Iowa Hill and Dutch Flat at 1½ o'clock, A.M. arriving in Nevada at 10½ A.M.

William J. Willis.”

**WILLIAMS & JACKMAN'S SALT LAKE AND CAMP FLOYD STAGE. (1859)**

From *The Deseret News* of May 11, 1859 we also find the following:

“To the traveling public,

Stage delivery and express notice. On and after the 9th day of May, 1859, we, the undersigned will commence running a daily line of stages from Great Salt Lake City, to Camp Floyd and from Camp Floyd to Great Salt Lake City, leaving punctually at 8 A.M. and arriving at 2 P.M....

We will run an express in connection with our stage line, between Camp Floyd and Great Salt Lake City.

No letters will be received or carried by us, except the postage is paid on each letter, twenty-five cents....

Office in Great Salt Lake City next door to the post-office.

Frank D. Gilbert, Agent at Gt. S.L. City,

J.W. McFadden, Agent at Camp Floyd.

William & Jackman, Proprietors.”

**WINNEMUCCA AND BOISE CITY EXPRESS. (1873)**

Little is known of A.H. Boomer, founder of the Winnemucca and Boise City Express. The route of travel, lay between the town in Nevada and the town in Idaho. The only news we have, is from an article in the *Yreka Union* of May 7, 1873 which reads:

News. “A.H. Boomer of the Winnemucca and Boise City Stage Line passed through here last week from Oregon on his way to Winnemucca. The Indians along the route of the stage line between Winnemucca and Boise City and thence to the Dalles, Oregon, are very saucy and impudent, creating some alarm to the Stage company, which has altogether some 1400 miles of stage route, 1000 of which being run daily. The principal route is north of Winnemucca to Boise City, thence west to Dalles and south and west of their line, not far from Camp McDermit, is Stein Mountain section, which is the neutral hunting ground for the Snakes, piutes and other tribes, and where they congregate about this season of the year to hunt game. In the Northern part of Oregon and in Washington Territory, the Spokane and the Yakima tribes, are also reported as saucy and threatening.”

## PACK MULES TO STAGE COACHES

### Early Postal History in California and San Diego

By Norma L. McCumber

In the very early days of the Mission system in California there was no such thing as a postal service or even a regular and organized messenger service between the missions. Instead, as need arose, pack mules moved slowly between the Missions, carrying messages and supplies from one Padre to another. Also, slow moving carretas, pulled by oxen, were used by the Spaniards in Alta California for moving people, supplies and written communications from Mission to Mission. Only on special occasions of great importance would written message between Missions be sent by an Indian courier on horseback. The only regular messenger service in existence during this period was that conducted by military couriers, mostly traveling by ship, between Alta California and New Spain.

After Mexico won her independence from Spain in 1822, the Governor of Alta California sought faster ways of moving mail and messages between California and Mexico City, the seat of government. A more direct overland route was desired and was uppermost in the mind of the governor. As Mexico removed the restrictions on shipping, the *Yankee Trader* was able to pick up the mail and deliver it to the many ports controlled by the Mexicans. At times the soldier couriers carried the Military mail along the El Camino Real and would also deliver letters for the people.

When gold was discovered in 1848, mass movements of the people and supplies began which taxed the facilities of the ships to the utmost. By March 1849, 17,000 persons had sailed from the Atlantic coast cities for California. At the same time, the many tortuous overland trails were being used to bring the people to California. With such a mushroom of growth and people came the need for mail service.

In the early transition period, after the so called "Battle of California", the Military government in California, under General S.W. Kearny, established regular mail service between San Diego and San Francisco. The first mail left San Francisco April 19, 1847, and was scheduled to arrive in Monterey the 21st, Santa Barbara the 27th, Los Angeles the 30th and San Diego May 2nd. Each week, a courier left San Diego carrying civilian, (free) as well as military mail, stopping to pick up other mail along the way. This courier would travel until he was met by the courier from the North and they would exchange mail and each would proceed back again. Even though the military was moving some of the mail, and ships some more of the mail, no real service was in effect. This was not sufficient to serve the many people who had migrated to California.

Certainly a regular mail service was needed and requests had poured into the offices of the President of the United States, James Polk, and the office of the Postmaster General Cave Johnson. The President presented this message before Congress. The Post Office Department was then directed by Congress to take action and appoint an agent to make arrangements for the establishment of post offices and for the transmission of the mails in California.

William Van Voorhees was appointed agent on November 1, 1849. His duty was for the conveyance of letters in California, where he was to embrace whatever appertained to the operation of the contract, appointment and fiscal bureau of the department of California.

A route was created and put into operation by the employment of the steamships who services extended along the whole coast of California. Van Voorhees' first duty was to proceed in the selection of suitable persons for Postmasters at San Diego, San Pedro, Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo and Monterey and other points on the Pacific at which the United States steam packets could touch.

**PACK MULES TO STAGE COACHES (Continued)**

The Pacific Mail Steamship Company quickly built a number of ships that could carry people, supplies and mail. The primary sea routes to California were by the way of Cape Horn and the Isthmus of Panama. Cape Horn required six to nine months and was fraught with danger and hardships. The other, the Panama route was more of a test of physical endurance and patience. The ships sailed from New York stopping at Charleston, South Carolina, Savannah, Georgia and Havana, Cuba sailing on to Chagres at the Caribbean side of the Isthmus. From Chagres, the first stage of the journey across the Isthmus was made by native canoe to the head of the Chagres River. The canoes held but few passengers. Tropical storms, heat, bad drinking water and voracious insects added to the discomfort of the voyage. Then the passengers had to disembark and finish the rest of the trip by pack mule or even make the journey on foot.

What of the mail? In Panama, it was noted that the Steamer *Falcon* could not keep up with the communications and no regularity could be attained in the transmission of the Pacific mail until additional steamers were put on the line. Also, the Captains of the ships give little thought to the mails, even failing to wait for mail that was to be delivered from either side of the Isthmus. The mail was of secondary nature to the Captains and the passengers were given priority. No care was taken of the mails which was stowed anywhere and often forgotten in some dark corner. The bags were thrown ashore, exposed to topical storms or broken open. The mail could not be left to the natives as they put absolutely no importance to the bags. There was definite need for steps to see that responsible persons would oversee the unloading and transmitting of the mails at the Isthmus of Panama.

The first Pacific Mail Steamship Company's ship *California* arrived in San Francisco on February 28, 1849. Aboard was the long awaited mail to be dispersed throughout California. The New Agent was also aboard. It was a protracted voyage of twenty-eight days from Panama. Owing to the diminished supplies of coal on board, which was found to be insufficient to take the ship to San Francisco if it was delayed at San Diego and Santa Barbara, the ship did not stop and the mail on board was carried on to San Francisco.

No one, in California, was disposed to take upon himself the trouble of public office. Eight to ten dollars per day was paid for common services during the mining season. During the off season, salaries declined. The compensations afforded postmasters under the existing system in the states was found to be wholly inadequate in California. If the office was conducted separately from other types of business the office suffered. Postmasters at San Diego, Santa Barbara, Sonoma, Benicia, San Jose and Puebla de Los Angeles were difficult to secure. As of March 14th, the mails for San Diego and Santa Barbara were still in San Francisco, in addition, there had been no office established or postmaster appointed. Van Voorhees was fully occupied in the upper portion of the territory. He dispatched J. Ross Brown, Esq. with a commission as special agent and instructions to proceed southward as far as San Diego to establish Post Offices. (Note 1)

The Postmaster General told Van Voorhees; "The appointment specified that it was to be your first duty to see that Post Offices were established, and suitable persons selected for Postmaster at San Diego, San Pedro, San Luis Obispo, Monterey and San Francisco and other such points in ports at which steam packets shall touch". It appears that such appointments have been greatly needed at San Diego but does not appear that any have as yet been made. (Note 2)

**PACK MULES TO STAGE COACHES (Continued)**

Van Voorhees reply to the Postmaster General was "I have not been able to select any persons to take charge of the mail at either of those points owing to the failure of the steamships to touch there. The official mail could be sent to Monterey and there dispatched by military express". (Note 2)

By March 30, 1849, by the order of the New Postmaster General J. Collamer, Mr. Van Voorhees was superseded by R.T.P. Allen, Esq. (Note 3) He was instructed that his first duty was to establish Post Offices at San Diego, San Pedro, Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo, Monterey and San Francisco and select suitable persons for postmasters.

The new Postmaster General told R.T.P. Allen, "As no route to the interior of California has been established by the act of Congress, you will extend the mail service into the interior by regard to strict economy. The postage for California will be set at 40 cents on each single letter between any place in California and any place on the Atlantic and 12½ cents between places on the Pacific Coast."

Agent Allen's reply to the Postmaster General was "Each mail from the east has brought about 6,000 letters to San Francisco. It will be necessary for a permanent building and a full time postmaster, as he will not be able to engage in any other business. As an example, August 2, 1849 brought 18,000 letters to this office. If correspondence increases at this rate, the extra ordinary state of things here render firm support for this office." (Note 4)

The establishment of the long awaited San Diego Post Office was the date of April 9, 1850, even though it was clear that mail was being processed some six months before that date. Richard Rust was appointed the first postmaster. Rust at the time was City Recorder. Most of the mail were letters and newspapers. Horseback riders were to bring the mail from the north on a fairly regular basis.

The first Post Office was located in the area known today as "Old Town" and was located on the Plaza at the north east corner of Mason and Calhoun Streets. It was a frame and adobe structure opposite the Bandini house.

The establishment of the San Diego Post Office and appointment of the first Postmaster was reported in the Official Post Office Department Bulletins, and held the same date as April 9, 1850, along with Santa Barbara, Los Angeles, Junction, Fremont, Mission San Jose, Nappa, Placerville, Santa Cruz, and Weaverville. (Note 5 and 6)

By June there were only 34 post offices in all of California. With gold or high wages beckoning, no one would carry the mail at government pay, hence the rise of the express men, who would carry the mail independently. Everywhere they were charging fantastic prices for letters. If the rider was shrewd, he also became a treasure carrier. Within a year the business of carrying gold had attracted a number of easterners. The Adams Express Co. established itself and later, in May 1852, Wells Fargo and Company announced, "We are now prepared to forward gold dust, bullion, packages and freight to and from New York and all principal towns in California." Thus, the stage coaches came to California. The express men were known to carry those precious letters to and from the miners and other residents in California.

Congress had long sought an Overland route and in 1858, it gave the Butterfield Overland Mail an annual subsidy of \$6,000,000. This was to establish an overland route across the continent at the southernmost part of the United States from St. Joseph, Missouri to Yuma in San Diego County, north to Warner's Ranch and then up the coast from Los Angeles.

**PACK MULES TO STAGE COACHES (Continued)**

The dissension increased between the North and South over the issue of slavery and it became imperative that the lines of communications between the military posts in the west coast and Washington D.C. be maintained on schedule. A military mail service was started from San Diego to Yuma. The route proceeded through the natural corridors in the mountain passes to connect with the Kearny route east to Coyote Wells. Thus began an eastern line from San Diego.

The story of San Diego mail service, which spanned the time of the Spanish Colonialization and establishment of the Chain of Missions with the pack mules to the lusty days of the stage coaches has posed a few questions in a long list that the author seeks to find the answers in the quest for Postal History and especially San Diego Postal History.

**Footnotes:**

- #1. J. Ross Brown did receive his appoint and commission as special agent and left for Monterey. There he became ill, temporarily, but being an enterprising young man, he saw many more opportunities by attending the California Constitutional Convention.
- #2. It is obvious from the official correspondance between the Post Master General and the Special Agents that someone from San Diego area was lodging complaints and carried enough weight to be heard. From all indications it seems to be the Military. Perhaps, General Riley with his 2nd Infantry?
- #3. The change of agents from Van Voorhees to R. Allen was because on March 4, 1849, Zachary Taylor was inaugurated as President of the United States and chose J. Collamar as Postmaster General. As is usual, in a change of Administrations, new appointments are made.
- #4. Obviously the post office he was discussing must have been the San Francisco Post office.
- #5. Does not one question how the agent for California could be attending to the establishments of post offices in the Northern California area and establishment of those in Southern California at the same time?
- #6. Another question comes to mind, why, when San Pedro was repeatedly mentioned in the Post Master Generals letters, was the appointment omitted on the officer April 9th, 1850 date?

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- Author's many notes, researched over the years, from many sources.



**POSTAL HISTORY OF THE COLORADO SAN JUAN**

Chapter X, Mineral County

by Ray L. Newburn, Jr.

**ANTELOPE SPRINGS**

Established May 5, 1876

Discontinued May 30, 1903

Antelope Springs started as a stage station a half mile north of the Rio Grande River a bit west of the point where Lime Creek enters it (San Cristobal Quadrangle, 1907). There in Antelope Park at an elevation of about 8900 feet were built a hotel, bar, and post office along with the station. The location was more important than many because the roads to Lake City and Silverton separated there.<sup>32 65</sup> The name is said to have come from the fact that the site was that of an old salt lick once used by many deer and antelope.<sup>188</sup>

After having a number of different postmasters over a few years, the stage station and post office were taken over by the Soward family, Daniel W. Soward becoming postmaster on June 3, 1879. After the railroad reached Silverton in 1882 freighting over Stony Pass stopped, but traffic to Lake City continued nearly to the time the railroad also reached there in 1889. By that time the Sowards and some of their neighbors up and down the Rio Grande Valley had become successful ranchers. The Sowards moved the post office south and west across the river to their ranch house. Thus there is really a second location of the office not shown on the map.<sup>65</sup>

All of the lesser mail routes were contract routes in this period. Don Soward took a four year contract for the Antelope Springs to Del Norte route. One man took the mail 38 miles from Del Norte to Deep Creek (a few miles south of where Creede would soon grow) with one change of horses midway for the one horse buckboard. This took most of the day. A second man carried the mail from Deep Creek to Antelope Springs and back, a 26 mile round trip, during the night. Then the other man, having slept all night, returned to Del Norte. They made three trips a week this way, each round trip requiring two days and two men. In the winter the route was covered on horseback, which was no joke in deep snow. The route the other way, to Lake City, ran there one day and back the next, and another Soward (Frank) had that contract. In the winter it was split into two segments at the top of Spring Creek Pass where Frank Soward had a cabin and stable stocked for the duration. Carl LaFont, brother of Don whose book is the source of all this information, had the winter segment into Lake City from Spring Creek Pass for awhile. In the winter it had to be done on skis or snow-shoes part of the time.<sup>65</sup>

By 1889 the route from Del Norte to Wagon Wheel Gap was split from that going through Antelope Springs and on to Lake City. This was even before the train began regular runs to the Gap. By 1892 the route through Antelope Springs ended at San Juan, and soon it came from Amethyst rather than Wagon Wheel Gap, though the route was only one mile shorter. Presumably the post office in Amethyst also was more able to cope with the mail than the "cracker box" at Wagon Wheel Gap. In the mid-90s Jack Ridenhour of Creede, a livery stable operator, held the Amethyst to San Juan via Antelope Springs contract. It called for leaving Creede at 1 p.m. for San Juan, a distance of 20 miles, and returning the next day, leaving San Juan at 1 p.m. also. When the weather was bad, it was sometimes difficult (or impossible) to make the run before the post office staff went home in Creede, according to author Don LaFont who was Ridenhour's carrier for a time. When the San Juan office was closed in the late 90s three 32 mile round trips a week were made, from Creede to Antelope Springs and back, on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. After San Juan was reopened in 1900 a round trip there from Antelope Springs was made on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays.<sup>65 70 71 72 557 119</sup>



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

## CREEDE

Moved from Willow July 1, 1891

Moved to North Creede Nov. 28, 1908

The original town of Creede grew for about a mile along (or in) East Willow Creek upstream from its junction with the West Fork. The floor of the canyon was only about 500 feet wide, leaving room for a road, buildings on either side, a railroad, and the creek (at low water). The elevation was near 9000 feet. The location was adequate for a few hundred people (as long as it didn't rain too hard) but not for several thousand. Creede grew downstream below the forks into Stringtown and then Jimtown (see Amethyst), reaching a length of two miles by March 1892. The town was incorporated on Feb. 12, 1892, but that was in a sense temporary since on March 19 Creede (including Stringtown) joined with Jimtown and South Creede in forming a single town of Creede. <sup>191</sup>

All of this activity left us with the interesting phenomenon of a single incorporated town with two different U.S. Post Offices, Creede and Amethyst. They continued this way for 16 years! Eventually the post office recognized that there wasn't much left of Creede near their Creede post office, and they changed its name to North Creede, allowing at last, the main part of the incorporated city to use its name on the mail. I haven't been able to discover whether North Creede was still a part of incorporated Creede at this time or not.

Nineteenth century Creede postmarks are not as common as those of Amethyst, since many more people lived in Jimtown, and of course the post-1908 markings are much more common than the earlier ones, though none are terribly scarce. All Creede postmarks are listed here for *both* locations of the office.

CREEDE COLO (2½) 1893/08/15 See Fig. 98

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

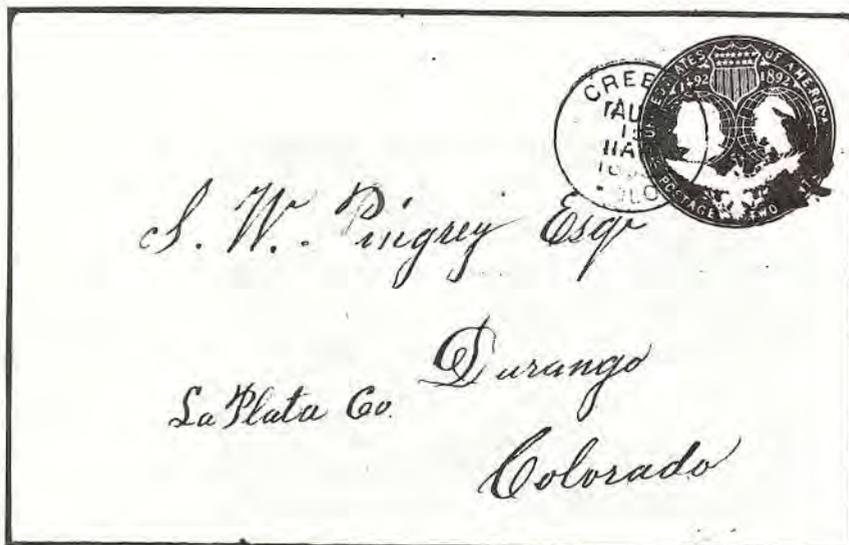
CREEDE COLO. (2½) 1899/04/24-1900/01/08 See Fig. 99

CI:P,1,0:280:T;M,D,Y;S:G:various cork blobs

CREEDE COLO (2½) 1909/12/27-1913/07/05

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

Figure 98  
The earliest postmark reported from Creede is well into the boom period, more than two years after the office opened. There must be earlier strikes unreported somewhere.



POSTAL HISTORY OF THE COLORADO SAN JUAN (Continued)

**Figure 99**  
This later variety of strike is more common and generally better struck.



**NORTH CREEDE**

Moved from Creede Nov. 28, 1908

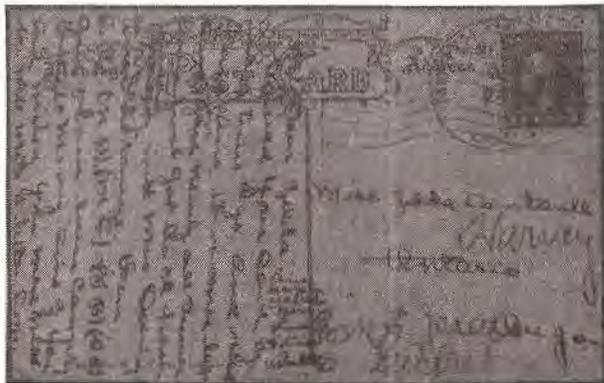
Discontinued Apr. 15, 1919

There is a two month gap between the time Creede became North Creede and the time Amethyst became Creede. The reason for the change after 16 years, whether the post office actually physically moved in November, and the two month gap are all mysteries at this writing. The reason North Creede finally closed can be guessed with some confidence. The 1917 flood made a mess of the place, and not for the first time. The Cliff Hotel and Holy Moses Saloon were washed away, the depot was dumped in the middle of the creek, and rocks and driftwood covered everything. There was really no point in rebuilding, since there was now plenty of room down in Creede, which was somewhat safer.

North Creede postmarks are quite scarce.

NORTH CREEDE, COLO. (3) 1910/01/28-1915/09/04 See Fig. 100

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



**Figure 100**  
The year date 1915 can be read from the overstruck flag of Onatrio, Oregon. North Creede is not common in any time or condition.

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

## SPAR (Spar City)

Established Aug. 16, 1892

Discontinued Aug. 23, 1895

In early June of 1892 prospector John Fisher found float (mineral separated from the main ore body) rich in silver scattered on the mountain sides south of Lime Creek. Prospectors rushed in from nearby Creede, starting a tent city along the creek. Initially called Fisher City after the discoverer, the town was soon named Spar City after the spar quartz boulders which made up the silver-rich float. <sup>65 124</sup> Lying at 9450 feet elevation along the east-west bearing valley of Lime Creek, Spar City was just over four miles from the Rio Grande River and about 14 miles by road from Creede (Spar City Quadrangle, 1957).

Don La Font, whose book (65) is a primary reference on Spar City, was just 14 when his family arrived in town that first summer. Town lots were being staked out as soon as they were surveyed. La Font's parents soon offered food and lodging, the latter in a lodb cabin with a canvas roof. A good toll road was completed into town in mid-summer, soon to be bought out by the county. The U.S. mail contract went to Ridenhour and Shellhammer of Creede who ran a daily stage to Spar City for passengers and express as well as mail. On September 24 the "Spar City Spark" began weekly publication and in October a town council began meeting. There were soon six grocery stores, (and only) four saloons, two restaurants, two dance halls, three livery stables, and an assay office, and the population soon exceeded 500. Tents were being replaced rapidly by good log buildings and even a few houses of sawed lumber. <sup>65 124</sup>

The problems of mail service in the west and of attempting to discuss that service a century later are well illustrated by Spar City (which the post office apparently called Spar). The first postmaster was Frank Soward, whose family ran the Antelope Springs office for years and a number of the Rio Grande Valley mail routes as well. Post office records show Frank Soward turning the office over to Alexander La Font (author Don La Font's father) on Nov. 13, 1894, La Font running it until it closed Aug. 23, 1895. Don La Font is quite explicit about his father being Spar City postmaster *during* the summer of 1894 and *resigning* Oct. 1, 1894, before the post office records show him being appointed! Since the La Font's spent the winter of 1894-5 in Missouri and appear to have family records confirming this, what actually happened? Many times the postmaster or the carrier responsible for a job would simply ask a trustworthy friend to take over while he was out of town for days, weeks, or even months. In some cases he would write to Washington recommending a permanent change and then leave without waiting for an answer. The remarkable fact is that most of these "informal" arrangements worked very well, with all parties taking their jobs very seriously. <sup>65</sup>

The post office department was apparently quite pragmatic in those days about dealing with situations in being. When Dan Soward's carrier on the Antelope Springs to Wagon Wheel Gap route wanted to quit Dec. 1, 1893, Soward asked 15 year old Don La Font to carry the mail. On Jan. 1, 1894 the route was changed to Antelope Springs to Creede. When La Font arrived in Creede the postmaster said he had to be sworn in, and how old was he? You had to be 16 to carry the mail, which he had already been doing for a month. The Creede postmaster finally agreed he was a few days nearer 16 than 15 and swore him in! <sup>65</sup>

Back in Spar City the mail service shifted from Ridenhour and Shellhammer to Pemberton and Overstreet a few weeks after the office opened. The new operators almost immediately had their stage help up in classic western fashion, losing both the U.S. mail and the payroll for the Emma mine. An informal "posse" lead by the *postmaster*, Frank Soward, started after the miscreant immediately, and a few days later they actually caught him! <sup>65</sup>

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

Although the float near Spar City was very rich, running up to 2500 ounces of silver to the ton, none of the local mines even approached this. With the repeal of the Sherman silver purchase act Nov. 1, 1893, their operation did not pay. Spar City continued for a time. A log school house was built in the spring of 1894 and opened for a three month summer term, but by the fall everyone began to leave. The population was down to 20 by 1895.<sup>49 65 124</sup> Yet, Spar City did not really die. On November 20, 1899 prospector Charles Brandt filed a homestead on the townsite of Spar City. Later, backed by Charles King of Hutchinson, Kansas he even opened a new mine there. This didn't pay, so in 1913 King and friends, all from Kansas, took over the site as a club for summer outings and hired a caretaker to maintain it. In 1955 Spar City became a corporation with 35 shares of stock, one share for each existing cabin and member. No new buildings are permitted.<sup>124</sup> When I visited Spar City in September 1960, members showed me a beautifully preserved small mining camp of which they were obviously quite proud. The only two story building in town was once a hotel "with girls upstairs." It is now the town community hall. And so Spar City lives on. In spite of a population which may have reached nearly 1000 in 1893, no postmarks have yet been reported from Spar post office.

**SUNNYSIDE**

Established Apr. 7, 1886

Discontinued Jan. 3, 1891

Sunnyside built up along the west side of Rat Creek immediately below the Alpha Mine, the pioneer mine of the Rio Grande Valley. Its 8900 foot site is two miles west of Creede and two miles north of the Rio Grande River (Creede Quadrangle, 1959). The Irwin brothers, R.S. and J.N.H., bought the Alpha in August 1885 and proceeded with its development. Richard Irwin became the first and only postmaster of Sunnyside when that office was established eight months later.

With the important discoveries of Nicholas Creede beginning in 1889 the major activity in the Rio Grande Valley moved one canyon east to Willow Creek, although it is not at all clear why Sunnyside lost its post office months before Willow was established. Post office or not, substantial mining activity continued in Sunnyside. The town even had a weekly newspaper, the Sentinel, from 1892 into 1894.<sup>60</sup> With the repeal of the silver purchase act Sunnyside went into decline with all the other silver camps, but there was activity in the area well into the 20th century, and the site is shown on modern topographic maps.

The mail was delivered to Sunnyside from Wagon Wheel Gap.<sup>71</sup> No postmarks have been reported.

**TELLER (Batchelor)**

Established Apr. 29, 1892

Discontinued Mar. 15, 1912

Prospector John C. McKenzie located the Batchelor Mine, perhaps as early as 1878 or as late as 1885 and only a year or two after his discovery of the Alpha Mine at Sunnyside. The Amethyst and Last Chance Mines, by far the most important mines of the Creede boom, were located in 1891 a half mile north of the Batchelor on what had become known as Batchelor Hill.<sup>191</sup> A town began growing almost immediately on the nearest fairly level ground at an altitude of 10,525 feet (Creede Quadrangle, 1959). Once again California already had a town named Batchelor, so the post office department picked Teller as the post office name, presumably after Henry M. Teller, Colorado's first senator (who was still in office).

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

Caroline Bancroft (124) quotes the "Creede Candle" of Jan. 21, 1892 as follows: "The latest townite excitement is in a park on Batchelor Hill, around the Last Chance boarding house. Two saloons and a female seminary are already in operation and other business houses are expected soon. It is to be called Batchelor." By June the town was incorporated, and July saw publication of the first of three weekly newspapers which succeeded one another until 1903. There were the usual businesses, a number even in two story buildings. Benefits were held to raise funds for a Catholic church, final outcome unknown. This was always a rough camp. Ms. Bancroft says the town reached a peak population of 1200, 200 of them prostitutes! After the silver crash the town declined to 800 in 1896, 175 in 1900, and either 315 (census) or 150 (business directory) in 1910. Because of the harsh weather and difficulty of transport in the winter, Batchelor's citizens finally all moved down to Creede. <sup>44 49 60 85 124</sup>

The road from Amethyst (Creede) to Teller was only two miles in length but climbed 1700 feet in that distance. This was the route followed by the daily mail service between the two points.

TELLER, COLO. M.O.B. (2½) 1904/04/12 See Fig. 101

CI:P,1,1:300,185:(T,S);M,D,Y;MOB:G;G:

This money order date-stamp, struck in magenta, has been seen on this and other registered letters, used as a postal marking and killer.

TELLER, COLO. (3) 1910/05/04

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

### THORNTON

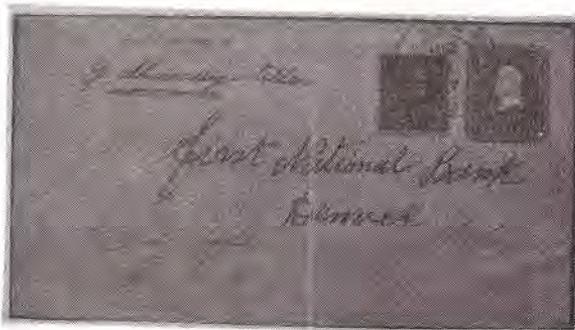
Established June 24, 1895

Name changed May 26, 1901

On February 2, 1895 the post office at Wagon Wheel Gap closed from some reason, only to be reopened a few months later under the name Thornton, origin unknown. Six years later the name was changed back to Wagon Wheel Gap. Its history is told under that name.

THORNTON, COLO. (3-2½) 1898/09/19-1899/07/10 See Fig. 102

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



**Figure 101**  
The use of a money order device for a cancellation has been seen on more than one piece of mail from Teller.



**Figure 102**  
Unless a guest at the hotel brought it along, the Trans-Mississippi commemoratives got to some pretty small fourth-class offices.

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

### WAGON WHEEL GAP

Established Aug. 27, 1875

Name chg. to: May 26, 1901

Discontinued Feb. 2, 1895

Discontinued Sept. 30, 1957

Wagon Wheel Gap is a natural pass in the mountains through which pours the Rio Grande River on its way from the San Juan Mtns. to the San Luis Valley. There are natural hot springs on Goose Creek just a mile above its confluence with the Rio Grande near the Gap. Habitation came to the area when a stage station was built there in 1874 (see Chap. X Part 1). J.C. McClelland built the Hot Springs hotel there in 1877, opened in 1878 for hunters, fishermen, and those wishing to "take-the-waters."<sup>34</sup> Crofutt spoke highly of the place in 1880 and even illustrated it with a woodcut.<sup>32</sup> The name originated with early prospectors who found a number of wagon wheels strewn along the river bank in the Gap. Their most probably origin was one or more wagons of the Baker party of 1861 (see Chap. I).<sup>34</sup>

The post office apparently resided in the stage station where one would expect it to be. The postmaster was Charles D. Peck from May 1876 until March 1881 and Hall notes that C.D. Peck kept the *old "hotel" at the stage station.*<sup>34</sup> This must have been located near the river, while the new hotel was near the springs, a mile up the side creek. In his 1885 edition Crofutt shows a two page woodcut with a few buildings on the main highway on the northeast side of the river and the hotel at the springs a mile away. The former location was at 8500 feet elevation and a bit west of the site shown on Map 10.

In 1883 the Denver and Rio Grande Railway reached Wagon Wheel Gap and began boosting its recreational and medicinal advantages with publicity and tourists specials. By 1888 traffic was down and trains to the Gap were discontinued for two years. Needless to say the situation changed in 1890 with the boom building in Creede. The people from the San Luis Valley and Creede often toured to the Gap on summer Sundays. By 1903 none other than General William Jackson Palmer, founder of the Denver & Rio Grande, had bought the hotel and spent \$100,000 on improvements, even installing electric lights. It was soon revealed that Palmer had quietly bought up most of the land in the area and was making a real resort out of it. It did well until about 1914 when all resort hotels began to decline.<sup>192</sup>



Figure 103  
The known manuscript postmarks  
of Wagon Wheel Gap are all  
abbreviated W W Gap.

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

The Creede Quadrangle of 1959 shows a Wagon Wheel Ranch at the site of the old resort. Whether this is a dude ranch I cannot say. The "town" of Wagon Wheel Gap is now shown about 1½ miles east of the original site as shown on the Creede Quadrangle of 1914. Site one was west of the actual Gap, site two east of it. The spot on Map 10 is the Gap itself.

Mail service to Wagon Wheel Gap was discussed in the introduction to this chapter. The only common postmarks are the 4-bars from the heyday of Gen. Palmer's ownership of the hotel. During the last days of the post office it was run as a rural station out of Creede.

W W GAP 1877/07/09

manuscript in black (year date from bank receiving mark)

W W Gap Col ?/09/15 See Fig. 103

manuscript and pen cancel in black, different hand from above

There is evidence that manuscript cancellations were used as late as 1882.

WAGON WHEEL GAP COLO. (2½) ?/07/10 See Fig. 104

CI:P,1,0:255:T;M,D:S:G,R:in magenta ink with no killer

WAGON WHEEL GAP, COLO. (3) 1908/01/11-1910/07/12 See Fig. 105

CI:P,I,D:305:T;M,D,Y,H;S:G:narrow 4-bar



**Figure 104**  
It's a bit ragged, but it's the only 19th century handstamp reported to date from Wagon Wheel Gap.

**Figure 105**  
This 4-bar comes from the period when the Hot Springs hotel was doing very well under the ownership of General Palmer.



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

### WASON

Established Dec. 26, 1891

Discontinued Apr. 30, 1904

M.V.B. (Martin VanBuren) Wason was born in Vermont in 1823, mined in South and Central America, and traveled all over Europe and Asia before trying ranching in Montana in 1850. He made trips to Colorado in 1870 and 1871 and finally established a large ranch on the east side of Willow Creek just above the Rio Grande River, perhaps as early as 1871. By 1890 he owned 2000 acres of land right next to Creede. He then proceeded to incorporate "The Wason Toll Road Company" on Dec. 30, 1890, to extend from the county road south of the Rio Grande right through the heart of Jimtown and Creede to the Holy Moses mine, a distance of about five miles. The resulting furor has been discussed in Part 1 of this chapter. Wason also platted the townsite of Wason alongside the toll road just on the Creede side (northwest) of his ranch. This 8600 foot site lies largely in section 5 of township 41N range 1E and is just north of the Rio Grande River. <sup>191</sup>

The town of Wason became the first county seat of Mineral County in March 1893, retaining same until the citizens of Creede could hold an election in November, but it is not clear whether the town ever amounted to much. When there was talk of legal delays over moving the county seat, a large group of men and wagons simply visited Wason one night and removed everything, even the furniture, before midnight. <sup>49</sup> The town was inconveniently far from the mines and from the centers of business, though certainly a more level and safe location. In any event the 1900 population was only 30. <sup>85</sup>

The town retained its post office, with Wason himself as postmaster after July 15, 1895, until his death on Dec. 27, 1903. Wason left an estate of \$300,000, quite sizable for those days. <sup>191</sup> The post office was probably operated informally by his wife or other family member, if operated at all, until its formal discontinuance four months later.

The mail came to Wason by train. The scarcity of postmarks (one reported) is another indication the town was never too important.

WASON COLO. (3½) 1893/04/30      See Fig. 106  
CI:P,1,0:275:T;M,D,Y;S;G;R:

**Figure 106**  
The postal card requests a poultry catalog. Not very exciting, but it's the only postmark reported from Wason.



### WILLOW

Established May 12, 1891

Moved to Creede July 1, 1891

When Nicholas C. Creede and George L. Smith discovered the Holy Moses Mine in May 1889 they kept rather quiet about it until considerable development work was done. After the word got out, the camp of Willow began to grow on East Willow Creek below the mine in October 1890. As other more important mines such as the Amethyst and Last Chance were discovered on West Willow Creek, the center of town rapidly moved downstream toward the junction of the two creek forks. In 1891 the name of the camp was changed to Creede and the post office itself apparently moved down the canyon. <sup>191</sup>

No postmarks have been reported from the short lived Willow post office.

## LOS ANGELES COVERS

By Jerome Schwimmer

### EARLY FOREIGN USAGE

Transatlantic stampless covers used from Los Angeles to France are illustrated in Figures 1 and 2. They represent the only known uses of a stampless cover from Los Angeles to a foreign country. The 1857 cover shown as Figure 1 has the early 32mm. double circle type of Los Angeles postmark used in the 1856 - 1858 period. Routed to go via Panama to Bordeaux the cover bears the New York/Am. Pkt. marking and the Havre transit date stamp. Sixteen decimes are to be collected from the addressee.

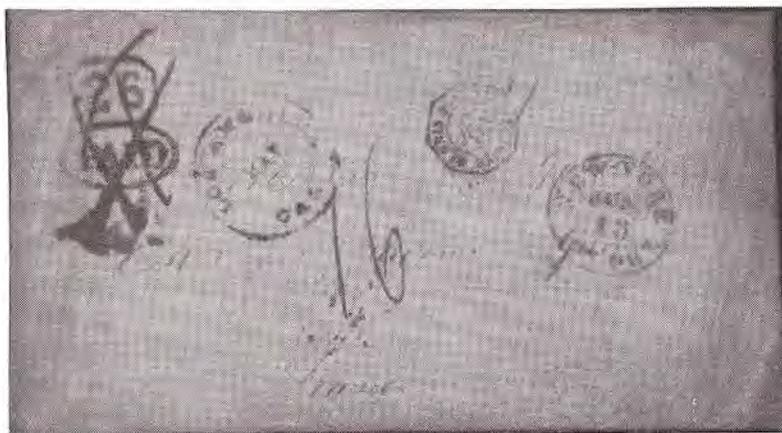


Figure 1

The 1859 cover shown as Figure 2 illustrates the 30¢ paid rate to France. It is also routed via Panama and addressed to Bordeaux. In addition to the New York and French transit markings, this cover also received the San Francisco Paid 30 circular transit postmark. The Los Angeles postmark on this cover is the balloon 38mm. circular postmark, first used in Los Angeles in 1858.

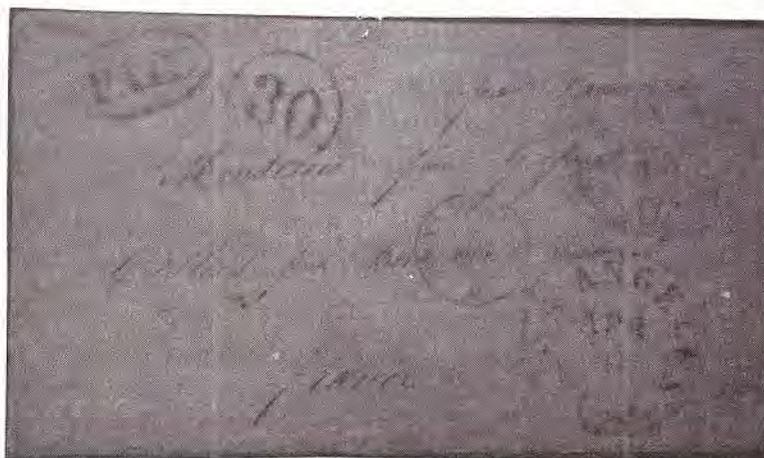


Figure 2

Early use of postage stamps from Los Angeles to a foreign country is illustrated in Figure 3. The fifteen cent West Coast to Canada rate is paid by the four adhesives of the 1857-60 issues. They frank this pre-Civil War use of the cannon and flag patriotic cover from Los Angeles to Markham, Canada West. The stamps are tied by the two balloon Los Angeles postmarks. The small circle marking shows exchange at Chicago, suggesting that the cover went via the central overland route, although the cover bears no routing instruction.

## LOS ANGELES (Continued)



Figure 3

The Civil War issues used on covers from Los Angeles to foreign countries are illustrated in Figures 4, 5 and 6.

The fifteen cent rate to Canada is again illustrated in Figure 4, this time paid by stamps of the 1861 issue and again with the 38 mm. circular Los Angeles postmark.

An 1863 Los Angeles to Italy cover is depicted in Figure 5. The 42¢ franking represents double treaty rate to France and 12¢ beyond France to Italy, thus fully paid to destination. All markings are in red, except for the black large circle Los Angeles postmark and grids cancelling the stamps. This cover represents the highest postage rate I know of on any early Los Angeles cover.



Figure 4

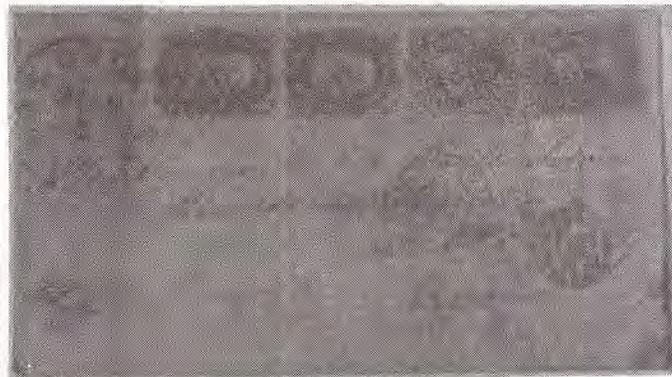


Figure 5

Los Angeles' first small circle postmark is shown on the Figure 6 cover addressed to "Old England." The 12¢ rate to England is paid by the tied adhesive. The cover is from the Workman correspondence.

A second cover from the Workman correspondence (Figure 7) shows the rate to England overpaid by five of the 3¢ stamps from the 1869 issue. The stamps are beautifully tied by four strikes of the double circle Pacific Union Express Co.'s Los Angeles cancel, with a fifth strike thrown in for good measure. We can only speculate as to why a printed franked envelope of this express company was not used. It is certainly unlikely that any high value franked government entires were available for use. In fact, I know of no early use of a government entire from Los Angeles to carry foreign mail, although I know of no reason to discount such use.

LOS ANGELES (Continued)

Figure 6

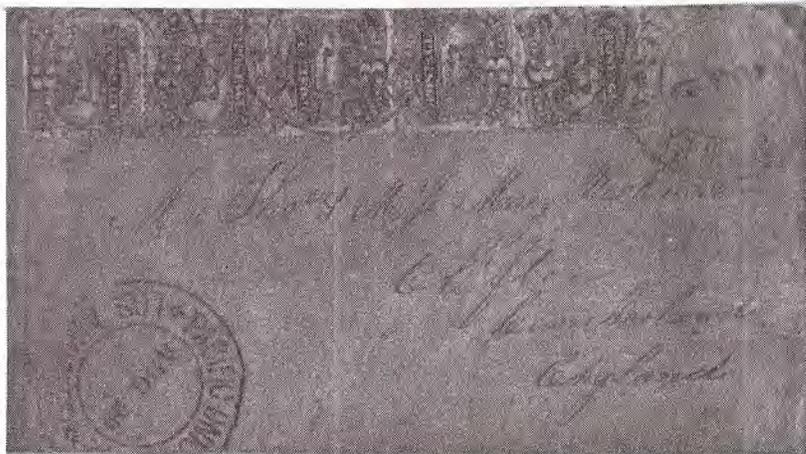


Figure 7

A purist would argue that the covers shown as Figures 8 and 9 do not belong in an article depicting Los Angeles covers. On the other hand, others have stretched the Los Angeles city limits far beyond the geographic locations of the towns of Havilah and San Buenaventura, and I trust I will be forgiven, since these covers illustrate so nicely two additional uses of the 1869 issue stamps on foreign mail from Southern California. Both are mailed to Germany, each by different means and each exemplifying a different rate.

San Buenaventura, known to all today as Ventura, is the home of one of the chain of missions founded by the Spaniards along El Camino Real. It was one of the ports-of-call for the coastal shipping. A pair of the 10¢ 1869's pays the applicable double rate for the Figure 8 cover bearing "New York Paid/Direct" postal marking.

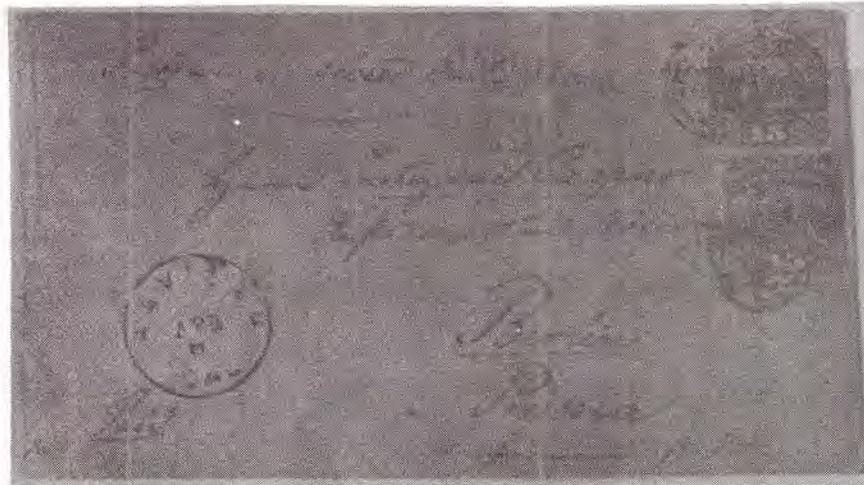
Figure 8



## LOS ANGELES (Continued)

The cover in Figure 9 originates from the Kern County mining town of Havilah. It had a spectacular boom and bust and was at one time the county seat of Kern County. It is currently undergoing something of a revival. The Havilah gold strike was of economic significance to Los Angeles in the early 1870's, and Havilah was of considerable significance in both the stagecoach and railroad history of the period as the rail connection between San Francisco and Los Angeles was being forged. The double rate cover routed via Prussian closed mail to Berlin is franked by two singles of the 15¢ stamp of the 1869 issue.

Figure 9



This coverage of early Los Angeles foreign mail is concluded with an example of the Banknote issues used on a cover (Figure 10) to Italy routed "Per closed mail via England." This registered letter is franked with a 6¢ Lincoln and a 12¢ Henry Clay stamp of the Banknote period. The cover bears the small circle Los Angeles postmark. This unusual spelling was employed by the postoffice for just a short period in the 1870's.

Figure 10



## A MUCH-TRAVELLED COVER

By Paul J. Wolf

The interesting Trans-Mississippi cover shown herewith is possibly a little late for the classic period of Western covers, but it is such a little gem that it well repays study. The many markings, in pale blue, blue, red, revolting Post Office purple and black all add to its' charm, and considerable time can be, and in fact, has been spent in trying to sort out and interpret the numerous notations. It is too bad that it cannot be reproduced in color so that the reader might fully enjoy it in all its' splendor as well.

First mailed in San Francisco on March 27, 1899, it carried the correct 13¢ franking for a Registered Letter in the form of 5¢ and an 8¢ Trans/Mississippi issue, for letters leaving the USA. (5¢ postage, 8¢ registry). It carries a Registry serial number, 10715, in blue, but is lacking the usual Registration etiquette label.

Addressed to Dawson, Alaska (the first mistake) a pen notation indicates NWT (North West Territory), and it passed through the Post Office at Skagway, Alaska (then called Skaguay) in April 1899, where it received the pale blue handstamp of that town. Probably at Dawson, NWT, it received the marking "Not Called For" and a pencil date 17-6-99. Next in time is a red Dead Letter Office marking of Oct. 17, 1899 in oval, at Victoria, British Columbia. There is another red Dead Letter Office handstamp at Victoria, B.C. dated Nov. 15, 1899.

Then back to the United States, where it was marked "Registry Division, Dead Letter Office, Dec 9, 1899" in purple. Another "Registry Branch/Correct/Dead Letter Office/ P.O. Dept." on Jan 17, 1900, again purple.



At some place in time the return address of the sender was crossed out, and a new return address added: 4 Impasse Mazagran Hotel, Paris. There are five French handstamps (all in black) with dates of 3, 4 and 5 February 1900, showing where the Paris Post Office made futile attempts to deliver it. But to no avail. It was returned to the United States, where it went to the Dead Letter Office once again. There are two DLO Record handstamps with reference numbers but no dates.

It appears that this much-travelled communication never did reach its' original addressee, nor was it ever actually returned to the sender, who, obviously, was a drifter and had moved on.

How it ever got to the philatelic marketplace remains yet another unsolved mystery. Of all the many covers that this writer has seen and owned, it bears the greatest number of markings. Of all the many covers that this writer has seen and owned, it bears the greatest number of markings. Even now, after many examinations, it is likely that some of the markings have have been overlooked. For instance, there is no explanation of the number in the upper left corner, "73." In any event, here it is. Enjoy it.

Addendum:

After completing the above, as might be expected, two more notations came to notice. First, a manuscript "Absent." This may have been applied at Dawson, since the cover was addressed to the Post Office, Dawson, and probably was held for pickup, and possibly listed on a bulletin board of unclaimed letters.

Second a handstamp, "Request." Where this was applied is anybody's guess. It doesn't match the "Not Called For," either in type or color of ink.

