

WESTERN EXPRESS

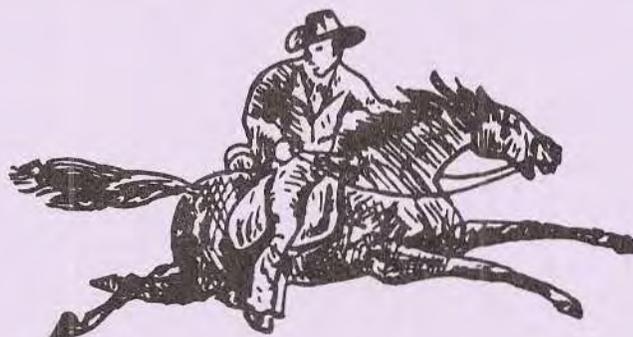
RESEARCH JOURNAL OF EARLY WESTERN MAILED

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WESTERN COVER SOCIETY
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JANUARY 1983

Express
Ocean Mail
Overland
Post Offices



Territorial
Statehood
Postal Rates
Postal History

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EDITOR'S ARENA

**MATERIAL
FOR W/E**

There is a continued (and urgent) need for stories and articles for your quarterly. This issue is a slim one because of the lack of original stories. Member Ray Newburn's story of the Colorado San Juan will continue in the April issue (Ray's mother's passing – and the Society's sympathy has been extended to Ray and his father – and the nature of his employment calling for trips to Europe, have taken all of his free time.)

Robson Lowe's story of the "California Expresses," as originally printed in his magazine THE PHILATELIST, continues to give us an insight to conditions as noted ten years ago.

With the permission of the Sonoma County Historical Society we are reprinting a story on Madam Preston. This is, in itself, an extract from a 64 page thesis entitled "Go Tell It To The Mountain," by Janice M. Payne. With so many "Preston" covers in the hands of our members, and others, we felt that this little background would add a bit of flavor for your collection.

And member Matt Hedley sent us the clip from the RAILROAD MAGAZINE, with its narration of name-calling. We agree with his comment that it would be acceptable for the pages of W/E, even though the New York & Ottawa Railroad or the Canadian Northern Railway stretch the "west" a bit.

**ANNUAL
BREAKFAST
MEETING**

Our 1983 meeting will be held Sunday, May 1, 1983, in connection with the annual WESTPEX show (which runs from April 29 thru May 1 at the Cathedral Hill Hotel, San Francisco). This year's WESTPEX show is introducing a beautiful new medal for the competitive exhibits – as per the illustration above. If you would like to enter your favorite collection, send for a prospectus. Address: Mrs. Jo Skinner, P.O. Box 4431, Mountain View, CA 94040. WESTPEX is one of the shows participating in the World Series of Philately, so your entry has a chance of receiving the grand award, which would place your entry in competition for the "Champion of Champions" at the APS 97th Annual Convention and Exhibition, at Pittsburgh, August 25-28.

1983 DUES Invoices for 1983 dues were mailed on December 1. If not paid by February 1, a second reminder will be mailed. Save your Society this extra expense, by paying promptly. (Dues unpaid at March 1 require that the member be dropped for non-payment. A fee of \$3.00 is charged for later re-instatement.)

SAN FRANCISCO MEETINGS Members in the San Francisco Bay area continue the traditional Friday luncheons (Marines Memorial Club, 609 Sutter St., 12th floor., San Francisco from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.). A roll call of attendees in the past two months found the following — Bilyeu, Casoli, Drew, Erle, Fiske, Gilbert, Greenberg, Harrison, Hotze, Jacobitz, Martin, Moss, Neary, Pearce, Salz, Spelman, Williams and Wolffers.

With this listing, and repeated mention of these Friday meetings, there is the thought that there might be an incentive for other areas where our membership is not too scattered, to have such regular get-togethers — not necessarily weekly, of course. The meeting during the annual SESCAL in Los Angeles is one step in that direction. And ARIPEX (this year in Tucson) is slowly becoming the venue for a gather of Western Cover Society members. Perhaps this type meeting across the nation would become an acceptable tradition.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

- New Members**
- #791 — Major Gary L. Starkey, P.O. Box 195, Pacific Grove, CA 93950
(Collects: Anything on Nesbit envelopes — U1-U73)
 - #792 — Dale E. Forster, 2041 Dogwood Drive, Eugene, OR 97405
(Collects Oregon — Express and Towns)
 - #793 — Mrs. Shirley Engel, P.O. Box 108, Arnold, CA 95223
(Collects Express and 19th Century pmks. of Sierra, Alpine and Calaveras Counties)
 - #794 — Robert Munshower, 1305A Bear Mountain Drive, Boulder, CO 80303
(Collects Colorado Town and R.R. markings; Western Steamboat Cvr.s.)
 - #795 — William A. Fox, 94 Toppin Drive, Hilton Head, SC 29928 (Dealer)
 - #796 — Richard S. Simpson, 6638 Banning Drive, Oakland, CA 94611
(Collects California DPO's, Oakland Stations and Branches)
- Re-Instated**
- #549 — James R. Blaine, 142 Kiowa Court, Vacaville, CA 95688
(Collects Wells Fargo Express Covers)
- Changes of Address**
- Mark Bacon, 541 E. Rose Dr., Mid West City, OK 73110
 - Emanuel G. Brooks, Box 62, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11229
 - Terence Dodson, 10010 Memorial Drive, #1214, Houston, TX 77002
 - Donald Grantham, P.O. Box 18450, Steamboat Branch, Reno, NV 89511
 - Dr. Owen H. Kriege, 221 Beauvoir Circle, Anderson, IN 46011
 - Robson Lowe, Flat 1, 23 Bodorgan Rd., Bournemouth, Dorset, BH2 6NQ, England
 - Patrick Murphy, P.O. Box 1522, Longmont, CO 80501
 - H. C. Perry, Jr., 553 Croyden Ct., Sunnyvale, CA 94087
 - Niles Searls, P.O. Box 2579, Murphys, CA 95247
 - Charles A. Waller, 6932 Wisteria St., San Ramon, CA 94583
- Deceased**
- #558 — Donald E. Forster, M.D.

FROM PADRES TO PADDLE WHEELS**By Jack Greenberg****PART III****DONDE ESTA EL CORREO? – California Mails During the Hide and Tallow Trade but Before the American Occupation**

When the first Constitution for the future State of California was ratified on November 13, 1849, the population of Alta California was estimated to be 120,000 whites; 80,000 Americans, 20,000 Foreigners, and 20,000 Native Californians.

Being a citizen of the Department of Alta California before the American occupation, was not an enviable status to enjoy. The powers in Mexico collected your taxes, and they sent you Governors, usually persons whom they were glad to be rid of, but that you were not happy to receive.

During the Spanish Colonial period, the VICE-ROYALTY sent you one ship per year to supply your needs, as they did Manila, and until 1815, when the ships ceased to arrive altogether, you were left without official communications until after Mexico achieved her Independence in 1821. After Independence, you were mostly ignored by a newly Independent mother country, weak, impoverished, and disorganized from her lengthy struggle for freedom from European domination.

Even though the Colonial government and later, that of the Republic did virtually nothing to supply the simple needs of the colony, they prohibited trade with foreign vessels who were not only able, but willing to do so. For these reasons alone, most native Californians must have been secretly, if not openly, relieved with the change of administration brought on by the war with the United States. From the outbreak of that war until the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, most of those 20,000 Native Californians virtually did without mail of any kind from Mexico.

Between 1835 and 1845, 216 vessels, mostly American, called California ports. Deducting the years 1841 and 1842, when Commodore Catsby Jones, and as he believed, the French and the British also, were busy occupying the port of Monterey, the Mexican Government sent out 20 ships in 10 years, hardly sufficient to convey the produce of the country to market or to trade it for the necessities of life ordered from the merchants of Mexico.

Fortunately the 196 foreign vessels, most American, that called California during that period were more than happy to exchange "Yankee Notions" for "California Dollars" (hides and tallow).

In reality, the California authorities were much more accommodating than the laws and Customs Officers of the mother country. From the late 1830s until the American occupation, vessels entering any California port other than Monterey were required to take on board, a guard, and to depart with the shortest possible delay for the Capital, Monterey, the only port of entry authorized in California. After visiting Monterey and paying duty on her cargo, vessels were free to trade up and down the coast of California under no restrictions as to landing places, this despite the Mexican laws absolutely prohibiting trading by foreigners.

During Mexican rule tariff was excessive; commonest cloth — 60-80¢ per yard; blankets — \$6 - \$8 each; chewing tobacco — 75¢ - \$1.00 per pound. Few farmers were able to purchase a plow and therefore used a forked stick to root up their land.

FROM PADRESS TO PADDLE WHEELS (continued)

As trade restrictions eased, during the early forties, it became the custom for foreign vessels bound for the mainland coast of Mexico, to clear their cargoes at Monterey and then pay the 5-10% transit duty between Mexican ports of entry. There was one additional benefit to clearing at Monterey. Cargoes cleared there could pay their duty 10% in specie and 90% in goods, rather than all in cash as was required on the mainland coast, thereby saving several thousands of dollars, a benefit not lost on the thrifty New Englanders.

"... Singular as it may seem, although this was the port of entry for the whole Coast of California where the Governor and his staff and Custom house officers resided, and, even important as the town was, the Custom House officers did not even own a boat to go aboard the ship and we had to send one of our own to bring (one) of the officers to examine our manifest and place seals on our hatches and on all places where the cargo was, to prevent smuggling, as smuggling I am sorry to say, was a very prevalent thing among American Whalers and merchantmen.

"They (the Native Californians) used to cheat us by refusing to pay their debts and we retorted as far as possible in cheating the Mexicans in the quality of our goods and in price so that it was an even thing all around.

"We were six weeks in entering our cargo and having it examined at Monterey by the Custom House officers and in that time we were boarded by hundreds of Mexican gentlemen and ladies who came to trade, buy goods, get trusted and permission to pay when they killed their cattle. This was not confined alone to our own ship but to every ship on the Coast; they would get trusted in every ship. When the rancheros had a hundred hides to dispose of they would give it to the first ship that came into port whether it was ours or belonging to some rival firm."¹¹*

Here, in a nutshell you have a capsule report of the manner of entry and trade in and around Monterey, which was typical of trade up and down the coast. Correspondence between the supercargos and the Boston firms they represented are full of condemnation for the practice of giving credit in California, but as there was little or no hard money in the department, credit and barter had to do.

"There was no money in circulation with the exception of hides. Hides were the circulating medium, hides and tallow. If a man had a hundred hides, he would pay his debts; if he did not have a hundred hides he would wait until he did get them; it did not disturb him if it was six months or six years . . ."¹²*

Despite the rather slanted accounts of Mr. Thomes, the facts by and large are accurate. No one, however had course for complaint, as even with high duties, irritating delays, long-term credit and other difficulties, these vessels with their three and four year voyages, constantly earned their owners and investors 150 to 350% profit which is the reason more and more of them visited the coast each year. Millions of hides were shipped to the tanneries and shoe manufacturers of New England before the gold rush put an end to this trade.

"They had no knowledge of the outside world and they did not care for any. They had no ambition to read or write because there was nothing in books that they cared to learn. . . . The only ambition they had was to be able to write their names after a fashion and that was simply a matter of pride in the better class for the sake of signing marriage settlements. They felt ashamed to put a cross as their character."¹³*

FROM PADRESS TO PADDLE WHEELS (continued)

*So William Henry Thomas characterized the Native Californian and his literacy. He no doubt was rather hard on the poor Californio as it is a well known fact that many of the Gente de Razon (persons of reason, i.e. persons of quality) sent their children to Hawaii to be educated, but by and large, literacy was certainly not universal in the department, and that probably accounted for the lack of demand for any official mail service at all before the coming of the American Flag.

“If you wanted to send a letter to any part of the country, it was first necessary to write it and then send a vaquero on horseback 50 to 100 or 400 miles from one end of the country to the other and he would travel as fast as possible on horseback exchanging his horse at the various ranches for a fresh one and going on at full speed night and day sleeping but little and eating less. But they were faithful and always delivered their message and always brought back an answer if possible. That was the only communication in those days from San Diego to San Francisco, except once in a while by the ships which pass up and down the Coast trading from one port to another.”*

In the fall of 1845 Oliver Larkin, our U.S. Consul at Monterey, appointed William A. Leidesdorff to act as his vice-consul in Yerba Buena. As the rumor of war and impending occupation filled the air, Larkin instituted a courier service between himself and his vice-consul. It is certain that other mail than official correspondence was carried as “favor mail” and one could construe this to be the first official mail service in the department, even though not so intended.

A typical reference to this “official service” follows in excerpt:

Pueblo de San Jose, June 8, 1846

“when I spoke to you of your lending the boy (who is acting as courier) horses I alluded to the one you sent with the Officers. During the day I had to take the other (courier), and ought to have said to you not to lend him any (horses). But it all turned out right.

“Any courier coming to me I must hereafter make good the horse flesh to you, if the person who started the mail to you does not. I am purchasing 10 or 12 horses, and the next courier can leave your horse in M. (Monterey) and take one of mine. The second (courier) can return the animal again. The boy arrived here (San Jose) at 4 o'clock this afternoon, having left you this morning.

The need for “10 or 12” spare horses indicated a fairly frequent service.

THE INTER-CALIFORNIA MAILS

As can be seen, almost all of the mail received along the coast of California for transportation to the mainland of Mexico and was transported by vessels of all nationalities mostly American, and was deposited in the Mexican postal system at the port of Mazatlan. If you lived your life strictly by Mexican law, during this period, you had two chances per year to send and receive letters from your family and business associates in Mexico.

On arrival at Mazatlan, the mail destined to travel beyond Mexico was deposited with forwarding agents, mostly American, who were in operation during New England's profitable Hide and Tallow trade. These gentlemen acted as agents for the Eastern American manufacturers and shipping interests, providing provisions and credit to the ships engaged in this trade as well as acting as go betweens with the port

THE INTERCALIFORNIA MAILS (continued)

authorities as do modern freight forwarders of today. In addition to being merchants and commercial agents, many were consular and diplomatic agents as well.

Because of the great volume of American commercial activity existing in the Pacific, a United States Consulate was opened at Mazatlan in 1828. A partial list of U.S. Consuls and other forwarders of the port of Mazatlan follow:

B. Kennedy	1832- ?	
J. Lenox Kennedy	? -1835	Resigned as U.S. Conul February 23, 1835
Parrott & Talbot	1835-1837	Firm desolved when Talbot left Mexico and resigned as U.S. Consul in 1837
John H. Parrott Co.	1837-1846 1848-1850	Parrott became consul on Talbot's resignation. He left Mexico at the outbreak of the war and returned in 1848
W. W. Scarborough	1840-1845	
Mott & Talbot	1845-1846	Successors to W. W. Scarborough
Copmann & Lomer	1845-1850	

GUAYMAS

Juan Robinson	1838-1846	Appointed by Parrott shortly after his own appointment as temporary U.S. Consul at the port of Guaymas
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Juan Robinson and John Parrott shut down operations and resigned their Consularships during mid-1846 at the outbreak of hostilities between the United States and Mexico (Mott and Talbot probably followed suit), being American Citizens, they had little interest in sitting out the war in a Mexican prison. As a result, Copmann and Lomer, being German nationals and not endangered, were left to carry on the forwarding business by themselves.

It can be seen by the amount of commercial activity that Mazatlan was a very important shipping center. The town during the forties had a population of over 14,000 and shipped most of the gold and silver produced in the states of Durango and Sonora at the time, as well as supplying the needs of these mining centers.

How specifically was mail transmitted to and from California, Mexico and beyond? We are fortunately provided with two descriptions, one from the mid-1830s and the other from the mid-1840s.

William Heath Davis, in his classic volume "Seventy-five Years in California" states, regarding the mails of the thirties:

"The speediest mode of communication between the United States and the Pacific Islands was by vessel from New York, or other Atlantic ports, to Vera Cruz; thence across by mule conveyance to Mazatlan or San Blas; letters being addressed to the care of the United States Consuls at those seaports.

"Vessels were constantly going and coming between the Mexican coast and Honolulu, being owned in the latter place and employed in the China trade. They brought cargoes of goods to the islands; disposed of a portion of them there, and went thence to San Blas or Mazatlan with the remainder. The cargoes were purchased with special reference to the Mexican trade of the interior, wither they were sent from the coast. The Consuls forwarded by these vessels such letters and dispatches as they had received from the Atlantic side and frequent communication was thus had."

THE INTERCALIFORNIA MAILS (continued)

Thomas Larkin, appointed U.S. Consul at Monterey April 2, 1844, describes, in a letter to John Marsh, dated August 19, 1845, postal matters as they pertained at the time:

"I am bound to write to the department of State quarterly. Last year I forwarded 15 to 20 letters. My opportunities of sending letters home are by every vessel bound from this (place) to Mazatlan. There my correspondent forwards to Vera Cruz and receives all my dispatches and private letters from V. C., paying the post both ways. In this manner, under cover to me, the several supercargoes here receive these letters, their friends paying the U.S. postage and sending by U.S. mail their letters to N. Y. or N. O. for the Vera Cruz Packet, in this way, you can order your letters."

Not all mails destined for the States were sent there via Mexico. The cost was high, and seamen's wages low, and most crew members of Yankee merchantmen and Whalers adhered to the practice of sending their letters via Cape Horn on board of returning vessels and by favor of fellow seamen who would see the ports of New England months, or even years before the writer.

Mr. Bull, the first mate of the barque TASSO was on the Coast from 1845 until 1847. and the comments excerpted from his frequent correspondence will serve to illustrate the flavor of the service on this routing.

Barque Tasso at sea — February 2nd, 1845

"we are nearly six months from home and not arrived at our port of destination yet . . . I have written home two letters by Whale ships that we spoke which I presume you have received ere this and they will give you some idea of the first part of our long and tedious passage. The reason of my writing my letter at sea is this, the ship BARNSTABLE belonging to our employ, is now ready for sea, and only awaiting our arrival to sail for home . . ."*

Bull must have failed to make connections with the BARNSTABLE as this letter was directed "Messrs. Scarborough & Co. will please forward." It was handstamped on the rear "FORWARDED BY MOTT & TALBOT—MAZATLAN," W. W. Scarborough's successors.

Bull's next letter dated San Diego March 2nd, 1845 really tells it all:

"We arrived here safe on the 12th of February after a passage of 189 days. . . .The postage overland being so very extravagant about \$1.25 cts. per letter, probably the next letter you receive will be in about 18 months from date as the ship ADMITTANCE will not leave the coast till that time. Always allow five months for letters to reach me around the Cape, and two for those you may send overland."

And finally, in a letter datelined "St. Francisco, California, October 16th, 1845, we read:

". . . From here we go to Monterey which has been called the pride of California, but I do not think so, it is at this port the United States consul is established, a mean conniving cheat who thinks more selling out goods by the yard or measure than he does the honor and credit of his country and office . . ."*

One would think that Mr. Bull was unnecessarily harsh in his description, but the following letter may partially exonerate him:

THE INTERCALIFORNIA MAILS (continued)

Monterey May 29, 1846

William A. Leidesdorff Esq.

Sir:

Your letter with a mail bag for the "PORTSMOUTH" and another for several person(s) in and about Monterey, I received this morning at seven, forwarded by Mr. G. Thompson, for which I paid forty dollars. VERY HIGH. When you saw how well the mail was done up for the "PORTSMOUTH" I wonder you did not do up the other the same. Excepting three or four lines from Mr. H. Grimes, I found nothing for me. No mail, that you supposed of consequence, should leave you without being well done up, or (without) a sealed list of letters (that) you send. This bag had but a piece of twine round it. How many people have handled it, or letters taken out, I can not tell, tho' I suppose none. But hereafter be very carefull about putting up a Foreign Mail, and who brings it. For want of such care, correspondence of the utmost importance may fall into wrong hands . . .

I am &c in hast yrs

Thomas O. Larkin

(PS) As you saw but one letter to me, you should have given me more news, I know nothing. The PORTSMOUTH and BARNSTABLE leave here on the 1(st) or 2d for your port . . .

This fit of pique with poor Leidesdorff was obviously unleashed by the fact that Larkin had to pay for the mail for forwarding, the reimbursement for which, he was uncertain, as the Consulates at Mazatlan and Vera Cruz had closed by this time because of the war and the custom was to send mail unpaid. To receive such mail for distribution locally and pay the charges was acceptable as you could be reimbursed from the recipient. The mail bag for the PORTSMOUTH, of course was part of his responsibility as U.S. Consul, and the expenses incurred could be charged to the government with the other official expenses of running a Consulate.

This brings us to the payment of forwarded mail in general. A letter from the east coast of the United States to California would go prepaid to Vera Cruz, addressed to, or under cover to the U.S. Consul, or other forwarded. This gentleman, would place his handstamp on the envelope or folded letter and, along with other letters to the same destination, place them all under cover addressed to his correspondent or the U.S. Consul at Mazatlan. He would then DEBIT the account of the correspondent the amount of the advanced monies. The correspondent, or U.S. Consul in Mazatlan would then re-sort the letters separating the ones for various destinations on the Coast and enclose those in separate covers for each destination. He would then forward these parcels to another correspondent, say the U.S. Consul Mr. Larkin in Monterey, and debit Larkins account. Then Larkin upon receipt would distribute the letters collecting the postage due, say \$1.25 per letter according to Mr. Bull.

The transit of mail back and forth, along with other transactions would tend to balance accounts between these gentlemen eventually. The forwarders handstamp is therefore more of an accountancy marking than one for advertisement.

Sometimes as many as three or four forwarder's handstamps will be seen on one cover, but it is most common to see only one; that of the agent who first started the letter on its journey.

THE TRANS-MEXICO CARRIAGE OF MAIL

The journey from Mazatlan to Vera Cruz

How was mail transmitted from Mazatlan across the plateau of Mexico and then to the Port of Vera Cruz on the Atlantic Gulf Coast?

The route appears to have been from Mazatlan to Durango — and thence to Mexico City via Zacatecas. The "El Camino Real" from Mexico City to the Port of Vera Cruz was then utilized, as it had been in existence since the time of Cortez and was not replaced by the Ferrocarril Mexicano, the Mexican Railway, built by the British until it opened in 1872.

Ferol Egan in his book *THE EL DORADO TRAIL* leaves us this description of the first leg of the route, that from Mazatlan:

"The traffic between Durango and Mazatlan was conducted by a group of professional muleteers called *ARRIEROS*. They were a tough, self-reliant breed and they knew all there was to know about mules and the often dangerous trail to the Pacific. They had to be very alert because any traffic on this route was subject to attack by *ladrones* (bandits) who might kill you and steal your cargo, or Indians who *WOULD* kill you and take your animals leaving your cargo, but not your scalp.

"Pack trains of as many as 100 mules could be encountered bringing treasure and products to Mazatlan and returning with stores and equipment for the mines.

"It took about four days to climb the East side of the Sierra Madre mountains from the 6200 foot level at Durango to the 9200 foot level at the summit, an average of 26 miles per day. From the summit, it was all down hill and Mazatlan was reached in another three or four days.

"The *Arrieros* knew from experience that the more time spent on the trail, especially the Eastern slope of the Sierra Madre, the greater risk he ran of attack by Indians or *Ladrones*. After leaving Durango there were few places one could call a settlement and most of them were under the constant threat of Indian attack or were actually hang-outs for the *Ladrones*, themselves. Speed was of the essence!"

An article in *Sunset Magazine*, written in the late 1970s illustrates the ruggedness of this route over a century and a quarter later:

"The road from Mazatlan to Durango (Mexico Highway 40) . . . opened in 1960 after 19 years of construction. Leaving Mazatlan early in the day you can cover the 200 miles to Durango in five or six hours."

Not very fast by Interstate Highway standards, but quite an improvement over seven or eight days!

The next leg of our journey, that from Durango to the City of Mexico is over a relatively unbroken flat plain, the Mexican Plateau.

Diligencia service in Mexico was started about 1830 by three New Englanders. Their sturdy coaches were ordered from the coach-works in Troy, New York, and they were pulled by seven horses — two in front, three in the middle, and two in the rear. The energetic coachmen were for years, for the most part North Americans.

THE TRANS-MEXICO CARRIAGE OF MAIL (continued)

There was Diligencia service between Mexico and Zacatecas, in 1856 and probably much earlier, and it would be expected that coach service also existed between Zacatecas and Durango, the supply center for a large and very rich mining district. If this was not so, then muletrains must have served this route to the Capital. If the trip was accomplished by Coach, the almost 600 miles from Durango to Mexico City must have occupied six or seven days.

From Mexico City to Vera Cruz was really no problem as this highway was the busiest in the Nation. There was coach service as well as endless strings of mules carrying back and forth passengers, mail and cargo between these important centers of trade and commerce.

The British Legation in Mexico City employed a gentleman named Rafael Veraza to carry the mails between there and Vera Cruz, probably from 1842 until 1864. Veraza would meet the R.M.S. Packet and carry the mail for Mexico City on mules with frequent relays. Over one mule the union Jack was draped and in spite of the many civil wars, this service was never interrupted.

Mr. Veraza might also have conveyed the trans-Mexico mails forwarded from California. If not, it is certain that a similar gentleman did so convey it in a similar fashion.

The British opened a postal agency in the British Consulate in Vera Cruz when diplomatic relations were established in 1825. The function of the Consulate's agency from the earliest days was to dispatch, along with the Legation's official and diplomatic mail, any letters handed to it by the post office for overseas delivery. They and the U.S. Consulate, established a couple of years later, probably forwarded most of the mail to outward destinations. In January 1842 The ROYAL MAIL STEAM PACKET service was commenced. The packets whose route was the Gulf of Mexico District, both left Havana at 2:00 p.m. on the 26th of each month, one calling Vera Cruz on the 29th, Tampico on the 1st, New Orleans on the 4th, returning to Havana on the 7th. The second steamer would call New Orleans on the 29th, Tampico on the 2nd, Vera Cruz on the 3rd, and also return to Havana on the 7th.

Owing to the difficulty of navigation and frequent fogs in the Delta of the Mississippi, it is not known for sure if the R.M.S.P. steamers actually went up river to New Orleans. They ceased calling there altogether in September 1842 and when service was resumed in 1847, the steamers anchored off Cat Island, about 10 miles off the Mississippi coast.

In addition to the above route, there was a Havana-North American route. This packet left Havana at 2:00 p.m. on the 7th and after calling Nassau on the 9th, would call Savannah and Charleston on the 11th, New York on the 15th, and after delivering the Canadian mails, return via New York on the 25th, Charleston on the 29th, Savannah on the 30th, and arrive in Havana again on the 4th.

The two referenced routes were cancelled in September 1842, making covers with markings from this eight or nine month service exceedingly scarce.

In October 1842, a new contract was signed between the British Government and the contractor for a much abbreviated West Indian Service. New Orleans, New York, Charleston, and Savannah were dropped from service, this leaving the United States Ports without any direct service whatsoever until July 1847. Mail awaiting transportation to the states had to either wait at Vera Cruz for a vessel bound to the north, or be transported to Havana to await trans-shipment.

In July 1847, service to New Orleans (Cat Island) was re-instituted and remained beyond the period of our discussion.

THE INTERCALIFORNIA MAILS (continued)

The transit time from Mazatlan to Washington, D.C. during our period can be illustrated by a series of letters from John Parrott, U.S. Consulate at Mazatlan to the State Department. Fortunately the recipient faithfully docketed the dates of arrival:

Date Sent	Date Received	Written From	Written To
May 8, 1838	July 4, 1838	Mazatlan	Washington City
July 1, 1838	September 1, 1838	Mazatlan	Washington City
October 10, 1838	January 29, 1839	Mazatlan	Washington City
November 5, 1838	January 30, 1839	Mazatlan	Washington City
December 31, 1838	March 9, 1839	Mazatlan	Washington City
February 26, 1839	April 28, 1839	Mazatlan	Washington City
January 23, 1839	February 3, 1839	Oahu (H.I.)	Mazatlan
June 1, 1841	August 30, 1841	Mazatlan	Washington City
April 9, 1849	May 31, 1849	Mazatlan	Washington City

As can be seen, the average transit time from Mazatlan to Washington, D.C. was about 60 days, except during the rainy season when the time averaged two weeks to a month longer. As most of Parrott's correspondence was of an official nature it was probably forwarded to the U.S. Consul in Vera Cruz, a Mr. Borrough at this time, through our Embassy in Mexico City, The Texas situation had the Mexicans very nervous, and a great deal of this correspondence must have been of a "sensitive" nature. The California mail, of course, took a much greater length of time. Because of the prevailing winds from the north, most vessels found it easier to call Hawaii after leaving Mazatlan rather than beating into the wind up the coast, a lengthy and exhaustive process.

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BOOTH & COMPANY

By Kenneth Harrison



The above photo appeared in a recent auction catalogue, suggesting the "frank" on the left was that of I Bamberger & Co., but noting that "this company was not listed by Wiltsee or Nathan."

The illustration below, furnished by Kenneth Harrison, shows why neither Wiltsee or Nathan listed this logo as an Express frank. The invoice of Booth & Co. wholesale grocers of Sacramento (with offices in San Francisco) shows the six-horse wagon as a delightful letter-head logo, with "B & Co" inscribed on one of the items in the cargo.



Sacramento, *July 18th* 1860.

Mr. H. A. Raudlett

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<i>1</i>	<i>Req</i>	<i>H. G. Syrup</i>	<i>8.</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>800</i>

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MADAM EMILY PRESTON*

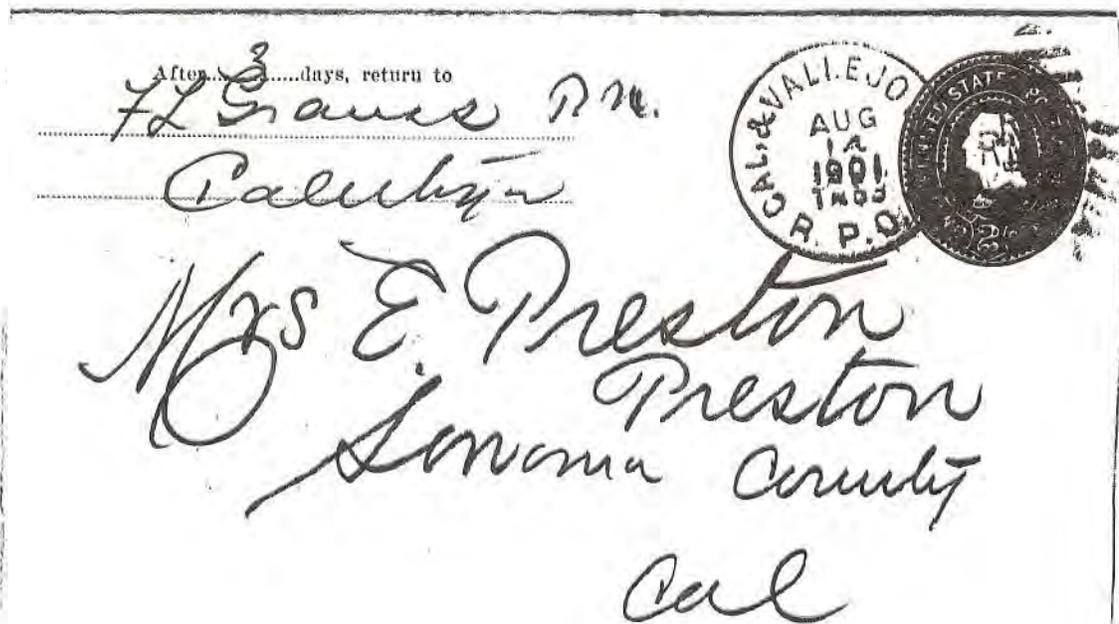
By Janice M. Payne

Part of the history of Sonoma County, California still is visible in the remnants of its three 19th century utopian colonies. Written histories of this place and period speak of Altruria and the French at Icaria Speranza, and focus particular attention on Thomas Lake Harris' Fountaingrove. Yet the historians virtually ignore the existence of Preston, the fourth colony of the same era. Their generally accepted and misguided impression that Preston was little more than a religious cult or sect until recently led to total neglect of a collection of primary documents relating to Madam Emily Preston and her colony. Now, the documents comprising the Preston Papers are finally receiving their deserved attention.

Emily Preston established herself as a medical practitioner sans degree in San Francisco during the early 1870's. At the same time she experienced a religious conversion which supposedly enabled her to read "Messages" from God and to describe and diagnose cases of physical ailment by her actual sense of sight.

In 1875 she married Colonel Hartwell Preston and left an active life in the city for their home on Oak Mountain outside of Cloverdale. People continued to seek her medical care both through written correspondence and by visiting at Oak Mountain. Their faith in Madam Preston's inspired "intelligence" and privately manufactured medicines resulted in the establishment of a medical clinic and eventually a complete community on the Preston Ranch. It also resulted in a series of conflicts between the Madam and the regular physicians of Sonoma County.

In 1886 Madam Preston formalized a covenant with God by establishing the Free Pilgrims Covenant Church. She thus became the founder and leader of the Preston colony. The unknown number of "Volunteers" who constituted the church and colony membership committed themselves to a Christian life and adhered to certain regulations and rites delineated by the Madam. Teachings contained in the heavenly "Messages" received by Madam Preston provided the basic tenets of the Covenant religion. The colony remained an active enterprise until the time of the Madam's death in 1909.



MADAM EMILY PRESTON* (continued)

In 1909, when Madam Preston died, her ranch on Oak Mountain north of Cloverdale remained in the care of her foreman, Joseph Zahner. Joseph's method of caring for the ranch buildings simply consisted of locking their doors and putting away the keys. Thus in 1943 when Fred and Eugenia Oster purchased the old Preston mansion, they discovered themselves surrounded by nearly all the relics of a life which ended 34 years earlier.

Among the Preston's effects, Mrs. Oster found several thousand letters and other documents. Thinking they might be of historical value, she loaned them to the history department at the University of California at Los Angeles. The department subsequently boxed the letters according to yearly dates and placed the entire collection in its archives where it seemed doomed to oblivion. Mrs. Oster eventually retrieved the papers, and in the 1950's she sold the Preston ranch to Dr. Russell V. Lee of Palo Alto. She then moved to Santa Rosa and stored the papers in her garage . . . in October of 1975 they were transported to Sonoma State University.

The collection comprised over 10,000 letters and around 650 handwritten sermons. The majority of the letters were written to Madam Preston by people seeking her medical advice and care, and the sermons constituted the "Messages" she delivered to her church congregation. Altogether, the papers cover a 74 period beginning in 1869.

Nearly a century past the time of its local renown, the village of Preston, California, still remains in the Russian River Valley of Sonoma County. Today the village consists of nothing more than the Preston mansion, the old meeting-house, and a few small homes scattered on the mountainside beyond Cloverdale. Gone are the railroad depot and general store. Gone is the white schoolhouse and some of the cottages and villa-type homes in which its children lived. And above all, gone is Madam Emily Preston.

*From "The Journal of the Sonoma County Historical Society — 1982"



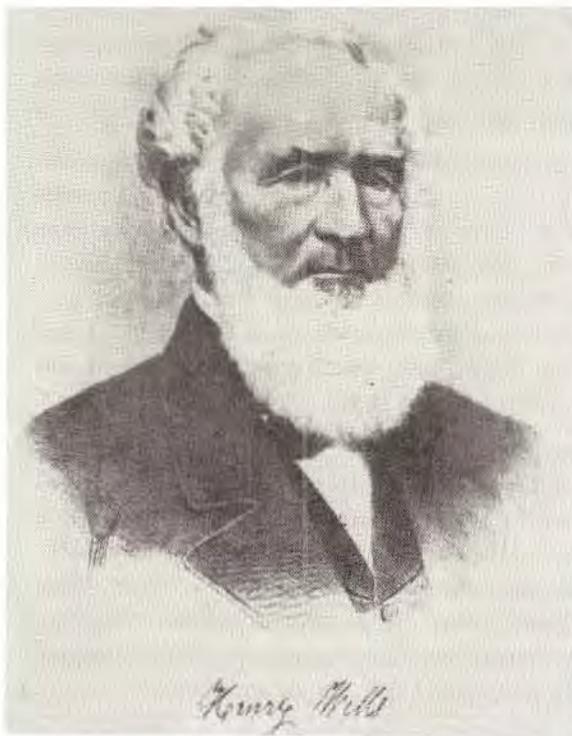
WELLS AND FARGO: WESTERN TRAVELERS

By Robert D. Livingston

Were Henry Wells and William G. Fargo really western travelers? Not according to popular accounts which indicate that they were strangers to the West.

In **The Expressmen**, an excellent volume in the respected series of Time-Life books entitled **The Old West**, there occurs an undeserved censure of these two individuals whose names are so closely linked to western express history. It reads: "Henry Wells made only one brief inspection visit to the West Coast, and William G. Fargo seems never to have ventured beyond the Mississippi at all. Apparently neither partner felt the need to know the West as intimately as their pioneer predecessors had known it."¹ Actually, not only did Wells come to California more than once but Fargo also made a trip to the Golden State. The editors also failed to note that Wells, Fargo & Co. at that time was a joint stock association and not a partnership.

Misconceptions appearing in one learned source sometimes show up later in other publications. Syndicated columnist L. M. Boyd subsequently printed an entertaining paragraph in *The Grab Bag* which appeared in the *San Francisco Chronicle*.² It stated: "Henry Wells and William Fargo of Wells-Fargo lived in New York. Henry went out west only once. William never did." So, now it is time to set the record straight.



WELLS AND FARGO: WESTERN TRAVELERS (continued)

As a joint stock association, the officers and directors of Wells, Fargo & Co. selected individuals they considered capable to perform in management positions where the action was. Henry Wells and William G. Fargo devoted a great deal of their time to serving as directors of the American Express Company. Wells was president for the first 17 years of its existence and Fargo succeeded him as president in 1867.³ When circumstances required them to make the long trip to California in behalf of Wells, Fargo & Co., they responded.

An early day traveler to the West Coast, Henry Wells represented Wells, Fargo & Co., in his capacity as a director in making the journey. Concern regarding business affairs of the new express and banking firm prompted his voyage to San Francisco where operations had started only seven months earlier. Wells landed in San Francisco on February 5, 1853 and remained in California nearly a month. In a letter dated February 14 to President E. B. Morgan in New York, he wrote: "I have spent one day in Sacramento — the balance of the time here (San Francisco) in looking over and trying to understand our true position, the wants of the business, etc., etc."⁴ The trip proved beneficial for Wells convinced his fellow directors to increase the capital stock from \$300,000 to \$500,000 to meet the growing needs of the company. Apparently, the situation called for some personnel changes also, as Colonel William Pardee arrived in San Francisco on July 8, 1853 to become general manager in California. He replaced Samuel P. Carter and Reuben W. Washburn, who headed the express and banking departments from inception. Following the Financial Crisis of 1855, Louis McLane succeeded Pardee and confidence in his management eliminated the necessity of inspection trips by officers in New York who were involved in other corporate activities.

As the 1860s progressed, Wells Fargo expanded into new areas and emerged as the leading express and banking firm in the West. Those in control in the East needed to gain a better knowledge of the organization. The minutes of the April 15, 1863 meeting show that the board of directors authorized directors Fargo, Danford N. Barney and Benjamin P. Cheney to go to California "in the best interests of the company."⁵ To make the arduous trip by stagecoach required Fargo to take time away from his official duties as mayor of Buffalo, New York. The three did not intend to make a hasty check on affairs for they spent several months in their travels — fully justifying the long overland journey.

The party traveled as comfortably as could be expected, considering the hardships normally experienced in covering any great distance by stagecoach. "Two extra Overland coaches arrived here yesterday," declared the **Rocky Mountain News** published on May 19 in Denver. Who were the passengers who deserved the luxury of extra coaches? None other than some of the greatest stagecoach kings and expressmen in the country — Ben Holladay, owner of the Central Overland California & Pike's Peak Express, accompanied by his son and a servant; William G. Fargo, secretary of American Express Company, as well as a director of Wells Fargo; Benjamin P. Cheney, another Wells Fargo director and organizer of several express companies; and Danford B. Barney, president of Wells, Fargo & Co.

An aura of mystery surrounded the journey, according to the **News**: "It is rumored that the trip of these gentlemen across the continent is made with a view to important changes in the express business between the Atlantic and Pacific." The newspaper recognized that the two extra coaches brought those who controlled overland staging and carried the United States Mail from Kansas to California. Holladay ran the line to Salt Lake City, while the Overland Mail Company continued to Virginia City. Wells, Fargo & Co. dominated the Overland Mail Company, and Fargo, Barney, and Cheney were on its board of directors.⁶ No wonder Wells Fargo picked the three to make the journey by bouncing stagecoach rather than comfortable steamer. The Fargo party gained knowledge which anticipated the "important changes" by several years. In 1864 the Wells Fargo board authorized the purchase of the Pioneer Stage Company which operated between Virginia City and Placerville. In 1866 the Grand Consolidation brought Wells, Fargo & Co., under the presidency of Louis McLane, operation of all overland staging and mail delivery west of the Missouri River.

WELLS AND FARGO: WESTERN TRAVELERS (continued)

On June 8, 1863 the distinguished travelers reached Sacramento where they stayed several days before continuing.⁷ When they returned to Sacramento on July 2, the party had grown to include Louis McLane, general agent of Wells, Fargo & Co. in the West, and his brother, Charles E. McLane, superintendent of the Pioneer Stage Company.⁸ The latter also served as president of the Placerville and Sacramento Valley Railroad with Louis McLane and Danford Barney as trustees. They were struggling to complete the railroad line from Folsom to Placerville in order to protect the lucrative express and passenger business with the silver mines of the Comstock Lode. Approval of the Pacific Railroad Bill in 1862 had given the Central Pacific Railroad Company the right to construct the western segment of the transcontinental railroad. Its progress posed a threat to the Placerville route which had benefited so greatly from the Comstock trade. Each side was anxious to become the recipient of an expected subsidy from the newly-admitted state of Nevada but the legislature never did appropriate the funds. During his sojourn in California, Barney undoubtedly signed the Placerville and Sacramento Valley Railroad bonds which were issued early in 1864 to provide additional construction funds.⁹

The expanded party remained overnight in Sacramento prior to leaving for Mokelumne Hill the next day when an unfortunate mishap occurred. The unique accident which marred their departure from Sacramento on July 3 happened between five and six o'clock in the morning. The locomotive **George F. Bragg** had just started from the depot, pulling the one passenger car reserved for the express officials. Another locomotive, the **C. K. Garrison**, was backing up to connect with the morning passenger cars for Folsom. When its engineer noticed the shadow of the **Bragg**, he immediately reversed steam but not soon enough to avert a collision. The impact threw him from the cab and disconnected the tender. As the **Garrison** then moved forward, a reporter described its plight: "Without waiting for the engineer, fireman or passengers, she started from Folsom. On reaching Brighton, a distance of five miles, by force of habit, or to take in wood, or from exhaustion of steam, or scarcity of water, or some other potent reason, she came to a halt and did not start again until overtaken by two men on a hand car, who had been dispatched after her from the city."¹⁰ The express officials were not injured and they continued on their historic journey. William G. Fargo soon completed his only trip to California — a memorable one for him, even if it did escape the notice of many latter-day writers.

Also overlooked too frequently are the subsequent trips that Henry Wells made to the West Coast. With advancing age, failing health required him to avoid the harsh winters of the East in favor of a warmer climate. So, on February 20, 1871 he sailed from New York enroute to California via the Isthmus of Panama, a journey he had made 18 years earlier. It was to be a leisurely trip for "after spending a few days in San Francisco, seeing Stockton and Sacramento, I propose to visit Salt Lake and see Brigham Young and his famous city; then gradually wending my way homeward by easy journeys, arrive there about the last of April."¹¹ He arrived in San Francisco on March 20 aboard the steamer **Colorado**, 16 days out of Panama.¹² This trip was devoted mainly to relaxation but there may have been another purpose. Just three years previous he had realized the dream of his life by establishing Wells College. He contributed his magnificent home and considerable money to open a school of higher learning for young women in Aurora, New York. Edwin B. Morgan, first president of Wells, Fargo & Co., joined him in financing the endeavor. While on the West Coast in 1871, Wells directed a message to Wells Fargo agents and employees as "the friends of higher education for women."¹³ To assist in developing a collection of natural curiosities, he asked that they contribute specimens of gold, silver, quicksilver, petrifications, agates, crystals and similar items, all to be designated as "Wells, Fargo & Co.'s Express Contributions." Even on vacation, he devoted his talents and energy in behalf of an institution which continues today to fulfill his educational dream.

Wells' next trip to California occurred four years later. He landed at San Diego on January 9, 1875 and soon took a prominent part in establishing another express company.¹⁴ On March 11 he presided at a meeting called to form a "company to carry on an express business between San Diego and Tucson, Arizona, with a view, we believe (noted the local paper), of ultimate extension through New Mexico."¹⁵ The follow-

WELLS AND FARGO: WESTERN TRAVELERS (continued)

ing week he was one of the incorporators of the Arizona & New Mexico Express Company, serving as its president.¹⁶ Early in 1876 the new firm commenced operations with Wells' son, Charles H. Wells, as general superintendent.

Problems in connection with the Arizona venture probably caused Henry Wells to return to California in 1876. An expressmen's magazine reported that he passed the winter in various "cities of the Pacific Coast. Mr. Wells spent most of the time in San Diego."¹⁷ Directors of the Arizona & New Mexico Express Company held a meeting in March. By July the company was not paying its bills and the enterprise folded.¹⁸ In spite of the embarrassment caused him by his son, Henry Wells continued to busy himself in other activities which quite naturally often involved Wells, Fargo & Co. At a banquet held in San Francisco on May 10 honoring the popular express messenger Pillsbury Hodgkins ("Chips"), a journalist recorded that "Henry Wells, Esq., the venerable Father of the Express, was present and delivered an eloquent address."¹⁹ A short time later, he returned to his home in Aurora, completing his fourth and final trip to California.

Obviously, Henry Wells and William G. Fargo were more personally familiar with the West than generally recognized. It is factual that Wells made the long trip to California in 1853, 1871, 1875 and 1876 while Fargo came in 1863. Perhaps readers of *Western Express* will bring to light additional journeys the two New Yorkers made to Pacific shores where they enhanced the role of Wells, Fargo & Co., in developing the West.

FOOTNOTES

- ¹ **The Old West – The Expressmen** (New York: Time Life Books, 1974), pp. 191-192.
- ² *San Francisco Chronicle*, July 11, 1982.
- ³ W. Turrentine Jackson, "A New Look at Wells Fargo, Stagecoaches and the Pony Express" *California Historical Society Quarterly* 45 (December 1966), p. 296.
- ⁴ Henry Wells to E. B. Morgan, San Francisco, February 14, 1853, in **Truly Yours, Henry Wells** (Aurora, New York: Wells College Press, 1945) pp. 6-7.
- ⁵ Minutes cited in Noel M. Loomis, **Wells Fargo: An Illustrated History** (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, Inc., 1968), p. 166.
- ⁶ Jackson, *op. cit.*, 298-300.
- ⁷ *Sacramento Union*, June 9, 1863.
- ⁸ *Ibid.*, July 3, 1863.
- ⁹ Bonds dated March 16, 1864 in Wells Fargo History Department.
- ¹⁰ *Sacramento Union*, July 4, 1863.
- ¹¹ Letter dated January 31, 1971 to the Rochester **Democrat and Chronicle**. Newspaper clippings in Wells Fargo History Department.
- ¹² *San Francisco Alta California*, March 21, 1871.
- ¹³ Circular in Wells Fargo History Department.
- ¹⁴ *San Diego Union*, January 10, 1875.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, March 12, 1875.
- ¹⁶ John and Lillian Theobald, **Wells Fargo in Arizona** (Tempe, Arizona: Arizona Historical Foundation, 1978), pp. 30-31.
- ¹⁷ **The Expressman's Monthly** 1 (July 1876), p. 197.
- ¹⁸ Theobald, *op. cit.*, p. 38.
- ¹⁹ **The Expressman's Monthly** 1 (July 1876), p. 199.

CALIFORNIAN EXPRESSES

By Robson Lowe

(Continued)

THE NORTHERN MINES

This area has to be considered differently from the Southern Mines as the country is mountainous, sharply divided by the rivers Bear Creek, the three forks of the Yuba River and the Feather River into which both the others run.

In the south east is Nevada County with Nevada City as the county seat and Rough and Ready as the only other postal station in 1851. The northern boundary is the middle fork of the Yuba River and Sierra County.

Yuba County lies west and north of Nevada with postal stations at Dobbin's Ranch, Downieville, Foster's Bar, Goodyears Bar, Marysville (the county seat), Park's Bar and Yuba City.

East of Yuba County lies Sierra County which since the times of the gold rush has shifted the boundary so that today Downieville is the county seat; in those days there were no postal stations, the only places of any size being Sierra City, Sierraville, Gibsonville and the pleasantly named neighboring communities, Port Wine and Whiskey.

Butte County lay north of Yuba and had postal stations at Chico, Hamilton (county seat) and Lassen (do not confuse with Lassen County).

North of Butte lay Tehama County with no postal stations and only Red Bluff (county seat) and Payne's Creek to mention. To the east of Butte and north of Sierra county lay Plumas County with Greenville, Keddie, Quincy (county seat) and Rich Bar but no postal stations.

At the north east is Lassen County with no postal stations but an express service which ran through Chester, Susanville (county seat) and Jamesville.

In short, the base town Marysville, which lay on the muddy banks of the river opposite Yuba City in Sutter County was the centre through which all mail from the south must pass if it was going to the mines. On leaving Marysville for the east one crossed the foothills before one had travelled 10 miles and the canyons restricted the trails into the majestic Sierra Nevada.

The Yuba River Expresses

The first section of the country whose services have to be described was the richest in the gold belt and comprised Nevada County and the western part of Sierra County through which ran the Yuba river. The mountains are magnificent and the road that led from Marysville to Nevada City continued with little deviation to Downieville.

Although not the first expressman operating out of Marysville by far the most prominent was **Samuel W. Langton** who founded **Langton's Yuba River Express** in 1850 and ran his service in 1850. Next year additional partners were taken in and the name of the business changed to **Langton & Co.'s Express**. Late in 1853 he took his brother, W. T. Langton, into the business and it became "**Langton & Brother's Treasure, Package and Letter Express.**" Two days before Adams & Co. failed they bought Langton's business so Langton took his business back and ran **Langton's Pioneer Express** until he was accidentally killed on the trail in 1864.

Langton also ran two other services, **Langton's California and Nevada Express** which continued on through the Yuba Pass through Sierraville and Truckee to Carson City, and in 1860 **Langton's Humboldt**

CALIFORNIAN EXPRESSES (continued)

Express for which a stamp was issued. Langton's franks are not rare but the stamp is of great rarity on a cover. One of Langton's handstamps had an error of spelling **Downeville**. After Langton's death his heirs sold the business to **Lamping & Co.** who ran it for about a year before selling out to Wells, Fargo.

There are many stories about Langton's Express. At one time Langton was charging \$1 to either mail or deliver a letter and his messengers complained that the postmaster of Marysville was charging them 25¢ for each letter taken — 25% commission was too much.

Langton's letter service was carried on horseback in the summer months but in the winter his messengers travelled on foot wearing snowshoes. In January 1860, one of Langton's carriers, Joe Blodgett, was attacked by eight wolves who chewed up the letter bag. On another occasion, a dancing girl travelling on the stage coach near Camptonville, fainted from the cold, fell off and, when found, was frozen to death.



Langton's Pioneer Express, franked envelope with the Downeville handstamp of the service, handed to Wells, Fargo & Co. in Marysville for delivery at Sacramento.



Lamping & Co.'s Express — envelope with the printed frank used from Downeville after the company had been bought by Wells, Fargo & Co.

CALIFORNIAN EXPRESSES (continued)

All other services over this route were insignificant in comparison with Langton's but there are some early ones to record.

One early pioneer to cover this route was **Daniel Dancer** who organized the first pack mule train from Marysville to Downieville in 1849. Someone who travelled on the first trip left an account of how the 50 mules were loaded up between two and three in the morning and took off for the east at daybreak.

Each mule carried around 300 pounds and the days work finished at noon with 12 to 15 mules with luck they got to Rough and Ready, the first of the diggin's on the fourth day. On the fifth they got to Dear Creek Dry Diggin's (now Nevada City) where the first load is dropped for Caldwell's store.

From then on the pack train climbed the real heights where the timber was so thick that it shut out the sun. For some way the trail ran along the top of a ridge and then descended into the canyons of Middle Fork to Bullard's Bar where Cut-eye Foster's store was the supply depot for the local mines. Then up over Middle Fork Ridge and down to Goodyear's Bar on the North Fork — a drop of 4,000 feet in six miles. From hereon the trail just clung to the mountainside, one mule slipped and fell a 1,000 feet before it exploded into fragments. Downieville in the gorge below Piety Hill was reached in three weeks—for 80 miles.

When rough roads had been made the underslung Concord coaches were used to carry passengers, mail and treasure, and a summer-time schedule was operated at seven miles an hour. With the winter months, snow often blocked the roads about 3,000 feet and the weather brought down across the road, then schedules were abandoned and the drivers took their stages through when they could.

From Marysville to Downieville1851 **Hubbs & Co.'s Express**1852 **Hughes & Co.'s Express****From Marysville to French Corral**1852-53 **Becker & Co.'s Daily Express**

Becker & Co. connected with Gregory's Express at Marysville and operated three times a week to the lower bars on the Yuba River following the route Oarsley Bar, Empire Ranch, Deer Creek Crossing, Bridge Porte and French Corral. After Gregory's company closed Becker's allegiance was transferred to Wells, Fargo & Co.

From Marysville to Foster's Bar1852-53 **Rollins & Co.'s Express****From Marysville to Comptonville**1856-57 **Washburn's Express**

Other centers in Yuba County from which services started were —

From Comptonville**to Howland Flat: 1855-57 Farley's Express****to Rail Road Hill: 1858-60 J. C. Fuller's Daily Express****From Downieville****to Marysville: 1853-55 F. Rumrill & Co.'s Express****to Sacramento: 1851 Wood's Yuba Express****to Howland Flat: 1865 Zack's Snowshoe Express**

From 1850-52 Frank Rumrill was agent at Marysville for Gregory's Express but in the following year he was operating his own express line between Marysville and Downieville via Foster's Bar where he may have had his headquarters. He was financed by Wells, Fargo & Co. and subsequently operated along the

CALIFORNIAN EXPRESSES (continued)

upper reaches of the Feather River (q.v.), travelling from Marysville through the towns to the north and so to the camps of the Sierra Nevadas.

In the Yuba River area he ran his service from Marysville, Foster's Bar, Camptonville, Goodyear's Bar to Downieville. Rumrill's base was generally at Marysville but toward the end of his career as an expressman he moved to Downieville. In late 1854 or early 1855 he sold out to Langton & Co. His franks are rare, one being shield shaped and incorporating his name over Foster's Bar. Fortunately, he was a devoted lover and his letter written to his sweetheart in Ohio, whom he married on his return east, have survived and are now in collector's hands.

Granville Zacharian operated Zack's Express between Downieville and the camps on Gibsonville Ridge in 1865. Normally letters had to go via Marysville but Zacharian took the mail directly north to La Porte and Howland Flat, travelling on horse during the summer and on snowshoes in the winter. He used envelopes with a printed frank "Zack's Snowshoe Express" and used three handstamps each of which shows a man on skis.

A record exists of one dishonest expressman, William Slater of Downieville, who in 1850 started a service carrying the miners gold and letters and with \$25,000 worth of dust and nuggets never returned from his first journey to Marysville.

Then following the express companies based in Nevada County,

From Nevada County

to surrounding camps: 1850-53 Green's Express

to Sacramento: 1851 Hoffman and Little's Express

to Iowa Hill: 1855 H. R. Stiles Express

to Dutch Flat: 1863 Colby's Nevada and Dutch Flat Express

to You Bet: 1864 Hopkinson's Express

to Meadow Lake: ??? Nevada & Meadow Lake Express

to Washington and Omega: ??? Nevada, Washington & Omega Express

to Red Dog, Little York and Gouge Eye: . ??? Stolp's Express

J. A. Green first operated his express in 1850 in the camps around Nevada City, his charge for letters varying from 50¢ to \$1.00. Later as Green's Express he used a handstamped frank. His route was to Camden, You Bet, Red Dog, Walloupa, Little York, Lowell Hill and Remington, later covering Omega, Alpha and Washington and to Moore's Flat and Eureka South. His service probably ceased in the winter of 1853-54.

F. J. Hoffman operated an express in 1849 and after a temporary partnership with Page went into business with Robert H. Little in Hoffman & Little's Express. In 1851 they operated from Rough and Ready via Nevada, Grass Valley, Newton, Bridgeport to Sacramento and San Francisco and were the only agents for Adams & Co. in Nevada County. Their agents were Freeman & Co. at Sacramento, Hubbard & Hodge at Nevada and Warren Banks & Co. at Grass Valley.

From North San Juan

to Columbia Hill: 1861 Angel's Daily Express

1860-61 Smith's Express

to French Corral: 1858 Sam Abbey's Daily Express

to Humbug: 1861 Angier's Express

1858-59 North San Juan & Humbug City Daily Express

1861 Dornin's Express

to Minnesota: ??? George Theall's Daily Express

In the later 60s and 70s there were other small express companies operating —

CALIFORNIAN EXPRESSES (continued)

Although no services started from Grass Valley it was the terminus or an important junction for communication with many mining camps.

Frank D. Everts must be mentioned here although in 1851 his route from Sacramento via Marysville was restricted to the mines on the Feather River and more details will be given in the next chapter. However, in 1853, **Everts, Snell & Co.'s Express** was operating a regular service into Grass Valley and Strawberry Valley.

Another service which extended from the Feather River area to the Yuba River was **Annan Fargo's Feather River Express** of which more later. In 1853 he was carrying mail to and from Grass Valley.

Alonzo Delano was the agent of Wells, Fargo & Co. in Grass Valley and a writer and artist in his spare time. He described an expressman:

“Who is that man descending the hill towards the Bar, on that jaded mule? . . . His blankets are spread across the saddle, and under them, are a large pair of saddlebags puffed out too much to contain bags of gold, while the self-possession with which he urges his weary mule over the broken rocks, along the precipitous hillside, proves him to be familiar with riding on dangerous mountain passes. Why, it is the Expressman, on his return from San Francisco, Sacramento and Marysville, with letters and newspapers for the mines . . . The Express has arrived! Every pick and shovel is dropped, every pan is laid aside . . . ‘Have they got a letter for me? . . . Yes, yes, good news . . . all well . . . thank God . . . Home and friends are before him; the rest of the world is all a blank.”

In September 1855 when Grass Valley was destroyed by fire, “Old Block,” as Delano was affectionately called, found a wooden hut some distance from the town, shifted it down to the still warm ashes of the Wells, Fargo Office, and opened for business.

Sierra County only had one local express of which a record survives when in 1871 the **Mohawk Valley and Sierraville Weekly Express** operated between those two townships.

The Wells Fargo Bank give the following explanation of names in this area:

Chico: = “Little” derived from Rancho del Arroya Chico (Ranch of the Little Creek).

Feather River: The explorer who discovered this river found quantities of wild pigeon feathers floating on its surface.

Grass Valley: The first official name was Centreville although the district was called Grass Valley by the early miners.

Marysville: Named in 1850 to honor Mary Murphy Covilland, wife of Charles Covilland, who had helped miners who were in trouble or ill.

Nevada City: Named after the Sierra Nevada.

Oroville: “Oro” = gold, “ville” town, so called because it was in the heart of the gold mines.

Plumas: = “Feathers.”

Quincy: Called after his home town Quincy, Ill. by H. J. Bradley who laid out the town in 1854.

Red Bluff: First called Leodocia, later Red Bluffs, the “s” was subsequently dropped.

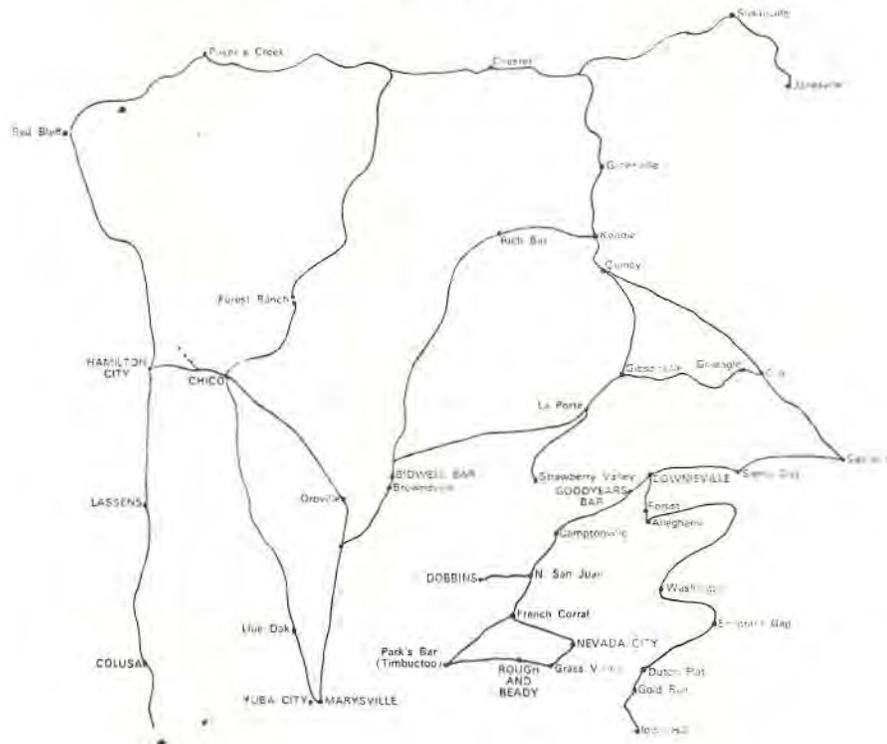
Sierra: = A saw-toothed mountain range. “Nevada” = “Snowy.”

Tehama: = “High Water.”

Yuba: Originally named “Yubu” by John A. Sutter after a Maidu Indian village near the junction of the Yuba and Feather rivers.

CALIFORNIAN EXPRESSES (continued)

THE FEATHER RIVER EXPRESSES



Many of the mining camps have become ghost towns and to place them on the map has not been possible. The places on the map in capital letters were postal stations in 1852.

The following places are not shown on the map but may be located by reference to the names given in bold type.

Greenville: To the south-east ran a trail through Crescent Mills, Taylorville and Genesee. Between Greenville and Janesville lies Indian Valley, bordered on the east by the Diamond Mountains.

Clio: The road to Reno runs east through Beckwourth and Beckwourth Pass. North of this road runs Poor-man's Creek.

Bidwell Bar: Another trail ran north-east through Bucks Ranch, Meadow Valley, Spanish Ranch and Mountain House, the last being just south of and between Rich Bar and Keddie.

Gibsonville: Port Wine lay north on the trail to Quincy; Pine Grove and Howland's Flat lay east on the trail to Graeagle; Whiskey and St. Louis lay south west, Half Way House lay north west, Onion Valley lay south of the Gibsonville-Clio trail.

Marysville-Brownsville: South of the last lay Bangor from which a trail ran north east through Enterprise, Forbestown, Strawberry Valley, Diamond Springs and La Porte (Rabbit Creek). South east of Brownsville lay Hansonville.

Marysville-Downieville: The trail ran through Oregon House, Dobbins (Ranch), Foster's Bar (Camptonville), Slate Ridge and Goodyear's Bar.

Chico: Paradise lay to the east, Nelson to the south east.

CALIFORNIAN EXPRESSES (continued)

The Feather River meets with Yuba and joins the Sacramento River at Yuba City and Marysville. There are three main forks of the Feather and it was in these canyons that much of the gold mining was situated. These rivers ran up to the permanent snow line, 7000 feet above sea level. Bidwell Bar, now commonly called Bidwell's Bar, is 3000 feet above sea level.

The North Fork runs by Oroville, Cherokee, Rich Bar, Keddie. To the east of Keddie lies Taylorsville at the Southern end of Indian Valley, all in Plumas County. Further north there were a number of smaller diggings which eventually extended to the three towns in Lassen County, Chester, Susanville and Janesville.

The Middle Fork joins the North five miles west of Bidwell's Bar and ran north east to its source which is around half way between Quincy and Clio. To the east of the last township lies Beckwourth.

The South Fork joins the Middle, eight miles east of Bidwell's Bar and north of La Porte (once called Rabbit Creek).

The famous and fabulous Gibsonville Ridge was served by two roads, both starting from Marysville and passing through Oregon House, the northern route passing through Strawberry Valley before turning south to Gibsonville. The southern trail ran by Dobbins Ranch, Foster's Bar, Slate Ridge, Oak Valley to Downieville from which there was a northerly trail to Gibsonville.

The winter of 1849-50 savagely underlined the ignorance of local conditions by the forty-niners who had got into Sierra and Plumas Counties. The canyons were mostly so sheer and deep that no road could run along their banks for any useful distance. The mountain trails were buried under 15 feet of snow and those unfortunates who were there during the first winter mostly froze or starved to death.

The richness of this part of Californis is demonstrated in that the gold produced during the years of the tragic Civil War more than replaced the costs of that human conflict.

The Californian Civil War

Before starting on a record of the express companes, it is worth while recording how Lassen County, north of Plumas, came to be founded. It was named after Peter Lassen, a Danish trail blazer who had travelled over this territory in 1839.

On the north-east border of Plumas County are the Diamond Mountains running diagonally from Thompson's Peak (7792 ft.) a few miles west of Janesville, down to Adams Peak (8300 ft.), below which runs the Beckwourth Pass some 25 miles east of Clio and providing the link with Reno.

East of the Diamond Mountains lies Honey Lake Valley and in the early 50s, one Isaac Roop, erected a log cabin which became a store and finally the center of the village of Susanville, which Roop named after one of his daughters. The only other nearby dwellings were Toadtown and Janesville, then no more than hamlets. The 200 inhabitants of the valley were dubbed "Never Sweats" by those who lived in Plumas County across the mountains.

Plumas County tried to tax the Never Sweats but the latter maintained that they were not in the State of California. On 4th August 1857 Plumas County made Honey Lake a township but four days later the Never Sweats held a convention and formed the Territory of Sierra Nevada. On 29th August the citizens held a mass meeting and ruled "**we consider the action of Plumas County an unwarrantable assumption of power.**"

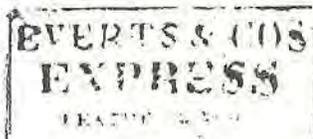
CALIFORNIAN EXPRESSES (continued)

In 1859 Isaac Roop called a second convention for the "Declaration of Cause of Separation" and the Territory of Nevada was formed. On 7th September the constitution was ratified and Roop elected governor of the Nevada Provisional Government. This might have succeeded but an amazing gold strike brought miners pouring through the pass and almost overnight, Virginia City was born.

In March 1861 President Lincoln appointed a governor to the Territory of Nevada but he was either rejected or did not arrive to replace Roop.

In 1863, Plumas County sent a posse of 93 men (and one brass cannon) under Sheriff Pierce to invade Honey Lake Valley and bring the secessionists to heel. The cannot got bogged down in the snow but eventually the invading force arrived at Susanville where fighting continued for two days. Thousands of shots were fired and one of each party was wounded. An armistice was declared and the Plumas County force retired over the mountains to Quincy. Subsequently representatives of Nevada and California met and decided that Honey Lake Valley was in California. The Never Sweats refused to recognize Plumas County and formed Lassen County of California.

Covers from this area written at appropriate times might be classified as "campaign covers."



F. D. Everts was an early expressman but the earliest record known to me mentions the destruction of his premises at Central House in August 1851. This building lay between Marysville and Oroville and Everts lost his express list and some 1300 letters. At this time he was operating to La Porte and mining camps on the Gibsonville Ridge.

One battered envelope is known to me containing a letter written from Brookville, Indiana on 13th April 1851 and bears the handstamps of Everts & Co.'s Express, Feather River. 20¢ postage was charged to Marysville. The writer offered the addressee the following advice:

"According to the tenor of your letter you had better quit — let the women alone in California. Caroline Bassett weighs 196 lbs. troy. I suppose you heard about the Dutchman being cuckolded out of his sacred rights by old McKlefresh, the nefarious old hypocrite. The best breeding women are in this vicinity, all that have men have two at a birth while those that have no men have one a piece."

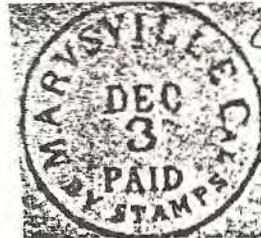
A letter from Montgomery, N. Y. is addressed "Jesse Stuart of New York at Marysville P.O., Yuba County" and is endorsed "To be forwarded by Everts & Co.'s Express to Onion Valley" (which lay south of the trail from Gibsonville to Clio). A charge of \$1.50 was made on delivery. The same charge was made in 1852, written in Columbus, Ohio and on which 6¢ postage had been prepaid. The last cover has the blue handstamp of Evert Snell & Co.'s Express, Feather River.

Evert's name appeared in 1852 as one of the partners in Mott, Everts & Co. who owned the Express Hotel at Marysville and this house was the terminus of the Everts express business and was the starting point for Becker's Express along the Yuba River and Gregory's Express to Sacramento and San Francisco.

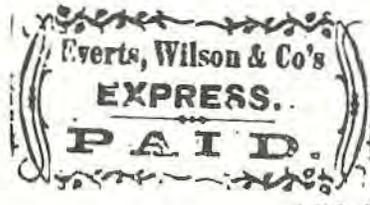
In the same year the name of the express company was changed to Everts, Snell & Co. and ran weekly to all parts of the Feather River and its tributaries. The company advertised that they had the names and location of 8,000 persons who worked in the Northern Mines.

CALIFORNIAN EXPRESSES (continued)

By 1854 Snell had retired and his name was omitted. Everts sold out to Adams & Co. just before that company failed, so he took the business back and started up as Everts, Davis & Co. here is one cover with the printed PAID frank on the envelope and at Marysville the letter was put in the U.S.P.O. for New York, receiving the unusual date-stamp "Paid/By Stamps."



Later the company became Everts, Hannon, Wilson & Co. and finally Everts, Wilson & Co. until 1862 when the business was sold to Holland, Morley & Co.



The reader is reminded that Everts, Snell & Co. also operated a Yuba River Express. For nearly the whole of his expressman's career, Everts made La Porte his northern base.



Another company that was closely allied to Everts was Whiting & Co.'s Express which was founded in 1857 by Fenton B. Whiting and H. D. Everts, the latter probably being a relation of F. D. This company operated along the North Fork from Rich Bar to Quincy where they turned their freight and mail over to Everts, Wilson & Co. to take to Marysville.



Whiting lived at Rich Bar and was the first man to introduce dog sleds to carry the mails through the winter snows which isolated so many camps along the North Fork. Whiting had remarkable success in training any sort of mongrel dog to run in harness and during the winter months took the mails as far as Bidwell's Bar, returning with mail and supplies for the mines.

(To be continued)

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NAMING TOWNS ON THE RAILROAD

(Excerpted from *Railroad Magazine*, February 1948)

Naming of towns during the westward march of the Union Pacific in the late 1860s was done in hit-or-miss fashion, according to Ralph Emerson Woods, 106 Miller Avenue, San Jose, CA. One such incident involves Patrick Walsh, section foreman at the switch 172 miles west of Omaha, who was also postmaster with a boxcar for a temporary postoffice. Pat was irked at the name Wood River Center given to his station. It was too much like the name Wood River, a village six miles east of him. Pat did not like to play second fiddle to anyone. So he decided to call his station Shelton, in honor of a UP auditor, he admired, and wrote as follows to the postmaster general, Washington, D.C.:

"You are hereby notified that the place heretofore known as Wood River Center has this day been changed to Shelton, Nebraska, and govern yourself accordingly. Respectfully, Patrick Walsh, Postmaster."

Instead of resenting this action, the Post Office Department accepted it at face value, confirmed the new name, and forwarded Pat a new hand-cancellation stamp. Today Shelton is the center of a rich farming community. Streamliners and mile-long freights roar through it, near an old cemetery in which one of the names carved on a headstone is Patrick Walsh.

John M. Haggerty, Box 2331, Boston, MA, tells us about other station names. Two are located on the old New York & Ottawa Railroad, which in 1908 ran between Ottawa, Canada, and Tupper Lake, N. Y., but is now part of the New York Central system operating only between Ottawa and Helena, N. Y. One is Uscan, an abbreviation of U.S.-Canada. The other was Nyando, from the road's initials, but has since been changed to Rooseveltown in honor of Franklin D. Roosevelt.

In Saskatchewan the Canadian National has a station Canora, designated from the first two letters of what used to be the Canadian Northern Railway. The B&M station of Tewksbury, MA, has been renamed Baldwin, presumably in honor of an old station agent who served there many years. At one time, according to Mr. Haggerty, Tewksbury had eight stations on that road; today not one of them remains, and where five of them used to stand, the rails have been torn up. Near Clinton, MA, the name of a B&M station was changed to Thayer, evidently after a socially prominent family.

On the New Haven branch which runs between Lowell and New Bedford, MA, which can boast of only one freight train each way daily except Sunday, the South Chelmsford station has been renamed Byams, possibly after a former station agent, Lyman Byams. A similar case occurred on the old Connecticut & Passumpsic Division, B&M, which runs between White River Jct. and Wells River, VT, where Passumpsic was renamed Kendall in honor of a station agent.

The name Caribou Crossing was a bit too much for the Canadian Post Office, so the postmark reads Carcross.

