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RESEARCH JOURNAL OF EARLY WESTERN MAILES

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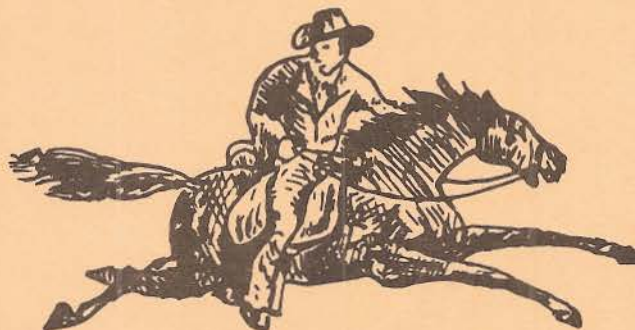
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JULY 1983

Express
Ocean Mail
Overland
Post Offices



Territorial
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Postal History

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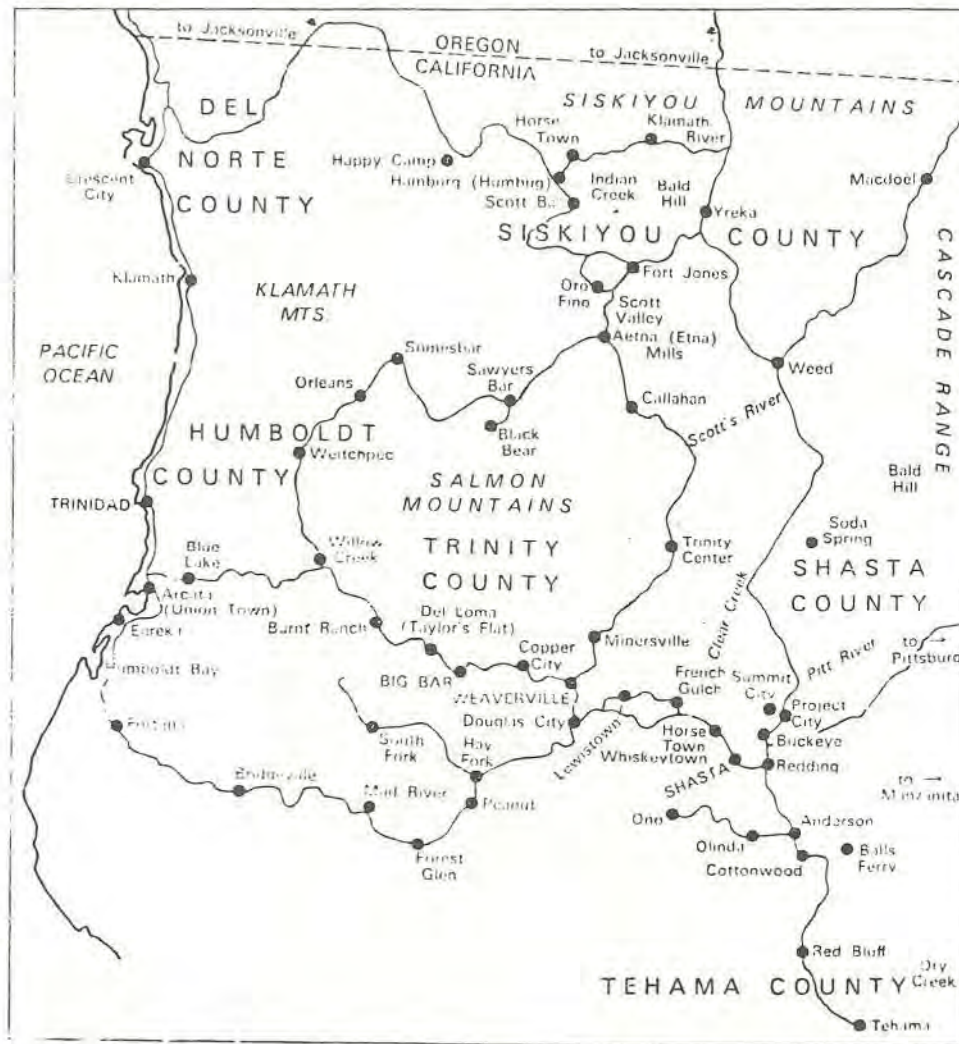
CLEARANCE SALE

CALIFORNIA EXPRESSES*

By Robson Lowe

The North Western Mines (Continued)

Before Del Norte County was formed (1857) with Crescent City as its county seat, it was part of Siskiyou County and lacked any postal service. The curiously named Yreka was the county seat of Siskiyou, whose mountains, running from west to east, form the natural frontier between California and Oregon.



There were two main lines of communication between San Francisco and Yreka, the center of the more northerly mines on the Klamath River. One up the Sacramento Valley through Redding, Shasta, Weaverville and Fort Jones, the other by steamer up the west coast to Crescent City with occasional calls at Arcata, Trinidad and Klamath.

*Reprinted from PHILATELIST, London (1972)

CALIFORNIA EXPRESSES (Continued)

There are some towns and camps which have not been located on maps of 1853, 1875 and 1865, either because the name has changed or because they are now "ghost" towns of which no record has been readily available. The following list locates the missing names to an area.

Shasta: Arbuckle (the only township of this name is located south west of Yuba City), Pitt (Pit), River Diggings, Pittsburg and Roaring River.

Weaverville: Canon City, Cox's Bar, Ridgeville.

Yreka: Loon Creek, Rough and Ready (it is unlikely that this had any connection with the large camp of this name in Nevada County).

There are a number of other small places mentioned in the routes of the express companies but these have an identified neighbor that was obviously within a few miles.

The Valley Expresses

The first group of express companies are those that brought the mail up the Sacramento Valley and whose bases were outside the area. These are best dealt with chronologically.

The first of these of which I have read started in 1851, **L. W. Taylor's Sacramento and Shasta Express**, but no details are known to me.

Adams & Co. opened an office at Shasta in 1852 with Captain I. N. Bruceland as their agent who continued in office until April 1853 when he was replaced by E. W. Tracy who had been the cashier. In December 1852 Adams' office at Shasta was destroyed, with most of the city, by fire. After the failure of Adams & Co. in 1855, the **Pacific Express Co.**, founded by the ex-employees of Adams, set up an office in Shasta with Felix Tracy in charge, his brother E. W. being promoted to the Sacramento office. This company charged ten cents over and above the postage for their service. They closed in April 1857.



Baxter's & Co.'s Express was started by two partners, Baxter and Monroe, in March 1852 and operated from Colusa to Shasta via Red Bluff, Cavertville and Cottonwood. In May 1853, one of their drivers made a record run covering the sixty miles between Tehama and Shasta in six and a quarter hours. In December 1853 they became partners with a number of other firms and formed the **California Stage Co.** which commenced its operations on New Years Day 1854. It had fourteen routes covering over seven hundred miles and 170 stations. At first its northern terminus was Shasta but later this was extended to Yreka. On a number of occasions their stages were attacked by Indians so in 1857 they built their own road over the Scott and Trinity Mountains. In 1859 they closed their routes south of Sacramento and continued their service to Portland, Oregon, selling out in 1865 to the Oregon Stage Co.

CALIFORNIA EXPRESSES (Continued)

In 1852, **Henkle & Co.'s Express** operated for a short time from Marysville to Shasta and Weaverville. In the same year, **Rhodes & Lusk's Shasta Express** was founded by James M. Rhodes and Hirma Lusk with their base at the office of Wells, Fargo & Co. in the Veranda Building, Marysville. Their run started at Sacramento and then went via Marysville, Tehama, Shasta to Yreka. Branch services ran to Weaverville, Scott River, Rogue River, French Gulch, Clear Creek and One Horse Town, Klamath and Salmon Rivers. They closed down before the end of 1843.



Five years elapsed before **Hanford & Co.'s Express** started a service in August 1857 from Marysville to Red Bluff and Shasta and later extended their route to Yreka. At Red Bluff their agent was George Amoureaux. They connected at Marysville with the **Alta Express Co.** which had been established a month earlier. This company had been formed by Alex. Badlam, C. L. Farrington and Joseph A. Frost and they ran their own service through the Counties of Butte, Tehama, Shasta, Trinity and Siskiyou. In Shasta, their agent was S. R. Merrill. Their main offices were at San Francisco and Sacramento and for a time they operated over a very large area by connecting with Nichols & Co., the Crescent City and Oregon Express. Freeman & Co., Langton's Pioneer Express, Everts, Wilson & Co., Berford's Express and Whiting's Express. In August 1858 Badlam sold out to Farrington but in November the business closed, Hanford's business ceasing at the same time.

Shasta County Expresses

Shasta County has the plains in central southern area with mountainous country to the west with peaks 5000 to nearly 7000 ft. To the north and east is the Cascade Range rising to 6500 ft. In the center is Shasta Lake through which runs the Sacramento River while from the north and east the lake is fed by the McCloud River, Squaw Creek and Pit River.

Shasta was then the county seat but today the population is about or even less than a thousand. At this time it was the center of a prosperous mining district.

There were four services based in this town which ran to the south. **E. W. Tracy's Shasta and San Francisco Express** was started early in 1855 by Edward Tracy who ran this while agent at Shasta for Adams & Co. When the latter was succeeded by the Pacific Express Co., Tracy merged his business with theirs and moved to the Sacramento office. After the failure of the Pacific Express, Tracy became the Wells, Fargo agent at Placerville.

From Shasta to Red Bluff

1865-66 **Watkin's Express & Passenger Line**

1870 **Baker's Shasta & Red Bluff Express**

1870-72 **Gilbert's Shasta & Red Bluff Express**

No details are known to me of these services.

CALIFORNIA EXPRESSES (Continued)**From Shasta to camps in the vicinity**

- 1853-60 **Harrill's Express** — ran to Pitt River
- 1853 **McGee's Pitt River and Shasta Express**
- 1858 **Brown & Maguire's Copper City Express**
- 1863 **Tracy & Harmon's Pittsburg & Copper City Express**
- 1863-65 **Schoch's Copper City Express**
- 1864-65 **Pittsburg & Copper City Express**
- 1864-65 **Green's Copper City Express**

Drury D. Harrill was Public Administrator of Shasta in 1853 and on 1st July of that year succeeded Isaac Roop as Postmaster, continuing in that office for seven years, running his express to Pitt River at the same time.

Joseph W. McGee ran his service for a few months leaving St. Charles Hotel, Shasta on Saturday evenings, arriving at Pitt River on Sunday evening. For a few weeks he ran a service from York Trading Post, leaving on Friday mornings and arriving at Shasta in the evening.

Felix Tracy and F. H. Harmon started their service in April 1863 while the former was Wells, Fargo's agent at Shasta but in October sold out to Chandler (see below).

William S. Schok was a popular character who ran a tri-weekly service from Shasta to Pittsburg(?) and Copper City via Buckeye and Churntown.

Thomas Green started in May 1864 taking five hours to cover his journey. At Copper City his agent was T. F. Riggs.

From Shasta to Arbuckle

- 1854 **Murray & Armstrong's Shasta & Arbuckle Express**
This service ran via Horsetown and Dry Creek.

To Bald Hill

- 1855 **Bald Hill Express Co.**

To Callahans

- 1854-55 **Greathouse's Express**
- 1855-60 **Greathouse & Slicer's Express**

To Horsetown

- 1854-56 **Chandler & Co.'s Express**

To Roaring River

- 1869 **Baker's Western Shasta Express**
- 1859 **McDonald's Express**

To South Fork

- 1866-71 **Geldert's Express**

Bald Hill Express was founded by S. D. Johns in March 1855 and ran through Texas Springs, Middletown, Horsetown, Piety Hill, Prarie (?Prairie) Diggings, Bald Hill, Watson's Gulch, Duncan's, Arbuckle. At Horsetown this service connected with Chandler's and at Shasta with Adams Express until their failure, and from October with Wells, Fargo & Co.

CALIFORNIA EXPRESSES (Continued)

George L. Greathouse started his service connecting with McCombe & Co. at Callahan and at Shasta with the California Stage Co. Later he was joined by his brother Henry and the name of the company changed to **Greathouse Brothers' Express**, their agent at Shasta was William McTurk. Later Slicer became a partner, and the name changed again to Greathouse & Slicer's Shasta and Yreka Express, their agent at Yreka being William T. Hanford. In 1864 Greathouse was once more operating alone in Oregon but later in the year he sold out to Wells, Fargo & Co.

The partners in Chandler & Co.'s Express were first Woodward and H. Chandler. In 1856 the former retired and H. was joined by his brother F. B. to become **Chandler Brothers' Express**. In 1857 the name changed to **Bald Hills and Horsetown Express** running via Piety Hill, Dry Creek, Pomeroy's Ranch and Ball's Store. They connected with Chesman & Tracy's Express at Bald Hills. In October they operated the Horsetown & Shasta Express via Middletown. In 1863 F. B. Chandler ran **Chandler's Pittsburg Express** through Buckeye, Churntown, Copper City and Shasta.

The following notes on towns mentioned are of some interest.

Humbug — now Hamburg.

Pit River—so-called because of the pits in the banks. Should be spelled with one "t," but usually with two.

Pittsburg — now Pittsville.

Red Bluff — first called Leodocia, later Red Bluffs after the red Sacramento River bluffs, later the S was dropped.

Redding — originally Latona, changed to (Fort) Reading after the pioneer Pierson B. Reading. In 1872 the Central Pacific R.R. planned a nearby town of Redding in honor of its land agent B. B. Redding. The state changed the name to Reading but pressure from the railroad caused it to be changed to Redding.

Shasta — phonetic name of an Indian tribe. The Indians called the mountain "Wy-e-kah."

Siskiyou — from "Siskiyawatin" — spotted horse, named by Hudson Bay Co. expedition in 1828.

Trinidad — so named as it was discovered on Trinity Sunday.

Trinity — Pierson B. Reading named Trinity River in the mistaken belief that the river ran into Trinity Bay.

Yreka — from "Wy-e-kah" (see Shasta).

(To be continued)

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HOLY CITY, CALIFORNIA

by Warren Wagener

In his monumental *History of California Post Offices*, the late Harold E. Salley summarized the information on this Santa Clara County postoffice thus:

"Estab. 5/4/27. Founded and named by 'Father William E. Riker, leader of a religious community for people of the 'white race'. Located 5 miles south of Los Gatos. Arthur J. Landstrom, 1st PM."

Now there is a postscript to this. "Disc. 11/29/82. MT Redwood Estates". Yes, the United States Postal Service decided that the mail, if any, could be handled by the more active Redwood Estates office, a mile or so to the west. It too had been opened in 1927, but had grown and prospered.

Holy City

*The New and Only
Holy City of The World*
HOLY CITY. - - CALIFORNIA



Townsend Club

Maccabee Hall

5th & Clement Sts

San Francisco Cal.

William Riker, who was born in 1873, was the founder of a sect he labeled "The Perfect Christian Divine Way". It was in 1917 that he purchased considerable acreage some five miles south of Los Gatos, on the main highway between Los Gatos and Santa Cruz. By the following year he and his followers had built several cottages, a store and a garage. Not one to play down his achievements, real or imagined, large signs and gaudy billboards announced to the passer-by that this was the city founded by "The only true Masters of Religion and Philosophy on this Earth". One attention-getter was the row of huge Santa Clauses.

HOLY CITY, CALIFORNIA (Continued)

A museum was established, and it became the focus for tourists. A printing establishment was organized to take care of Riker's prolific writings. The corner card of this Holy City Press is a tri-color that is quite desirable.

The growth of the city was such that the United States Post Office finally acceded to the repeated requests and established the office on the 4th of May 1927.

In 1937 Riker felt that it was time for him to take over as Governor of the State and his hat was in the ring. He campaigned for several years, unsuccessfully.



HOLY CITY PRESS
Printers and Publishers
HOLY CITY, . . . CALIFORNIA



*Wadmore, Durling, Baker, Inc.
255 N. Market St.
San Jose, Calif.*

HOLY CITY, CALIFORNIA (Continued)

However the City enjoyed success—until the highway authorities bowed to modern times and straightened out the highway on this main stream from Los Gatos to Santa Cruz, and by-passed Holy City. This left the City to its own natural depreciation—no tourists, no profits! And a disastrous fire in 1959, which destroyed a number of the mostly derelict buildings, forecast the inevitable. But even so, the Post Office remained the tie that bound for another twenty years.

The postmark of Holy City is that typical of the era, but the corner cards to be found are a delight to the collector.

Riker died in his mid-nineties.

**California State Party
Holy City, California**



The Gazette,
Berkeley, Calif.

WILLIAM E. RIKER FOR GOVERNOR



Bibliography: *Los Gatos Times-Observer*; *San Jose Mercury Herald* and Paul Kagan's "New World Utopia".

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STALKING HORSE FOR THE PONY EXPRESS
 THE CHORPENNING MAIL CONTRACTS
 BETWEEN
 CALIFORNIA AND UTAH, 1851-1860
 by
 JOHN M. TOWNLEY*

IN 1850 the Post Office Department issued the first contracts for overland mail service between Independence, Missouri, and Salt Lake City, Utah. The following year, it extended postal delivery west to Sacramento, California. From 1851 to 1860 George W. Chorpenning, Jr., an energetic Pennsylvania entrepreneur, controlled the Utah-California segment of the overland route. For nine years, he surmounted successive disasters, only to fall prey to congressional squabbles, a skinflint postmaster general, the machinations of the Pony Express, and his own cupidity or inadequacy. Benignly ignored by Congress and the post office, Chorpenning nonetheless fulfilled his contracts and demonstrated the efficiency of a direct central overland route to and from California. Despite his ultimate failure, Chorpenning blazed a trail for the Pony Express, the Union Telegraph, and the Overland Stage Company.¹

Prior to 1850 argonauts to the California gold fields received their mail by steamer from the East Coast, via the Isthmus of Panama. In July of that year, the post office granted a contract to Samuel H. Woodson for monthly service between Independence and Salt Lake City. The following January, the department invited low bids on Mail Route 12,801, the second leg of the overland mail. In April of 1851, Postmaster General Nathan K. Hall awarded a contract to Absalom Woodward and George Chorpenning, Jr., partners in Woodward & Company, to carry mail across the seven hundred miles of mountains and desert between Salt Lake City and Sacramento, California.²

Little is known of Woodward and Chorpenning prior to their receiving the mail contract. Chorpenning was born on June 1, 1820, at Somerset, Pennsylvania, where he apparently managed a store in the 1840s. In 1849, he left Somerset with several relatives and a friend for the California gold fields. At Sacramento, Chorpenning joined Woodward in business, evidently as a junior partner.

*The author, a former Head of the Nevada Historical Society, is currently Director of the Great Basin Studies Center, Reno, Nevada.

¹LeRoy R. Hafen, *The Overland Mail 1849-1869: Promoter of Settlement, Precursor of Railroads* (Cleveland, Ohio: Arthur H. Clark Company, 1926), 57-63. Hafen's study is still the finest interpretation of overland mail service up to the completion of the transcontinental railroad.

²*Ibid.*, 37-49, 56-57, 63. San Francisco *Alta California*, April 13, 1851; San Francisco *Herald* (California), April 14, 1851. *The Case of George Chorpenning vs. the United States: A Brief History of the Facts by the Claimant, with Argument of Counsel* (Washington, D.C.: M'Gill and Witherow, 1874), 2, states that the contract was authorized by Congress on September 27, 1850 and went into effect in April of 1851.

Arguing Ch W. A. after 1942

CHORPENNING MAIL (Continued)

Woodward's antecedents are an almost complete mystery. He was also a native of Pennsylvania, and was approximately forty-nine years old in 1851.³

The terms of Woodward and Chorpenning's contract were simple. Mail would depart simultaneously from Sacramento and Salt Lake City at six a.m. on the first of each month and would arrive in the opposite city within thirty days. James M. Goggin, special agent for Pacific Coast mail service, expected the first mail to leave Sacramento for Salt Lake City on April 2. It was the first week in May, however, when Chorpenning, with a party of seven men, picked up some 200 pounds of sacked mail at the Sacramento post office and started east.⁴

CHORPENNING MAIL

The initial mail was delivered without incident. After two weeks' hard going through the snowbound Sierra Nevada, Chorpenning arrived in Carson Valley where, on May 22, he staked out 160 acres. Because of the ready availability of wood, water, and native hay, Carson Valley was an obvious choice for a station. Moreover, its proximity to the Sierra Nevada passes made it an ideal point for recruiting men and stock before crossing the deserts to the east. Chorpenning left the valley during the third week of May and, after forcing paths through deep snowfields in the Goose Creek Mountains, reached Salt Lake City on June 5. There he quickly arranged with Brigham Young for riders and assistance in transporting the mail, and returned almost immediately with the westbound post.⁵

³Biographical details, and overviews of the Chorpenning mail service, are in H. Hamlin, "Chorpenning's First Overland Pony Express," *The Pony Express* [PE], XXVII (February 1961), 3-5; LeRoy R. Hafen, "George Chorpenning," in Allen Johnson et al. (eds.), *The Dictionary of American Biography* [DAB] (27 vols., New York, 1946-1981), IV, 91-92; Albert M. Row, "Dogged Courage of Originator All That Saved Pony Express," *Los Angeles Times* (California), September 9, 1923; Doris R. Bradley, "For Services Rendered," *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly*, XX (Fall 1977), 184-92. See also advertisement for "A. Woodward, Trader, Winslow's Exchange," in J. Horace Culver (comp.), *The Sacramento City Directory* (Sacramento, California: Transcript Press, 1851), 41. The *San Francisco Herald*, June 5, 1852, stated that Woodward was from Pennsylvania and was fifty years old at the time of his death.

⁴James M. Goggin to Salt Lake City postmaster, April 1, 1851; and George Chorpenning, Jr., interview, both in Salt Lake City *Deseret News* (Utah), June 14, 1851. "Mail Contracts," *House Executive Document* 56, 32 Congress, 1 Session (Serial 643), 398. Hafen, *Overland Mail*, 63. While there is disagreement on the date of the mail's departure, Chorpenning himself stated that he left Sacramento on May 3. Salt Lake City *Deseret News*, June 14, 1851.

⁵Salt Lake City *Deseret News*, June 14, 1851. Ralph L. McBride, "Utah Mail Service before the Coming of the Railroad, 1869" (M. A. thesis, Brigham Young University, 1957), 39. Harold Schindler, "Utah's First Post Office and Postmaster," *Utah Historical Quarterly*, XXX (Fall 1962), 347-51. Chorpenning later falsely claimed that at Carson Valley he established "the first settlement ever made within the limits of what is now the state of Nevada," and that "he was the first white man who ventured within its [Nevada's] borders." Henry H. Clifford (comp.), *A Brief History of the Mail Service, Settlement of the Country, and the Indian Depredations Committed upon the Mail Trains of George Chorpenning on the Several Routes between Salt Lake and California from May 1st, 1850* [sic] to July [sic], 1860 (San Francisco, California: Grant Dahlstrom, 1972), 1-2; *Chorpenning vs. U. S.*, 4.

CHORPENNING MAIL (Continued)

Woodward & Company's unchallenged passage of the Great Basin was short-lived. Hostility between Indians and emigrating whites along the western half of the California Trail soon affected mail riders on the Humboldt Road and Salt Lake Cutoff. Mules and horses, seldom guarded by more than a half-dozen men, particularly attracted stock-poor Shoshonis and Paiutes. Skirmishes between Indians and mail company personnel began in July, when stock disappeared from the Carson Valley station and several mail carriers were wounded by long-range rifle fire as they crossed the Utah desert. A serious incident occurred in mid-July when a mail carrier, bearing the post from Salt Lake City, was compelled to fort up at Carson Valley until the arrival of California militia to escort him to Placerville.⁶

Also during July, Woodward made his first passage over the trail packing mail to Utah. On July 18 he was attacked in Thousand Spring Valley by two well-armed and mounted Indians. At the time of the ambush, Woodward was riding alone some ten miles ahead of the main party. Only a fast horse saved him from the warriors, who fired from less than thirty yards and pursued him to within sight of



GEORGE CHORPENNING, JR., blazed the mail route from California to Utah. — *California State Library.*

the escort. Following his narrow escape, Woodward arrived safely with the mail at Salt Lake City before the end of July.⁷

The return to Sacramento in August was even more hazardous. Woodward and a nine-man escort apparently left Salt Lake City on August 1, and followed the Salt Lake Cutoff, via Granite Pass and Goose Creek, to the Humboldt. On August 10, two of the escort were fired on by six or eight mounted Indians between Wells and Elko, Nevada. Two days later, near Carlin, Nevada, the party was awakened at dawn by rifle fire from the willows along the river, as Indians attempted to stampede the stock. One man and three ani-

⁶San Francisco *Herald*, August 8, 1851; San Francisco *Alta California*, August 8, 1851.

⁷Sacramento *Union* (California), September 1, 1851; San Francisco *Alta California*, September 2, 1851.

CHORPENNING MAIL (Continued)

mals were wounded when the carriers hitched up the mules and fought a slow retreat up Emigrant Pass. In the broken terrain at the summit of the pass, a second band of Indians ambushed the mail party but failed to prevent its escape southwest toward Gravelly Ford. On August 15, Woodward met a courier named Henderson with the August 1 mail from Sacramento. Henderson had also been the target of several long-range attacks on the previous day. Doubting that Henderson could fight through to Salt Lake City, Woodward ordered him to accompany the westbound mail to Carson Valley. Enroute, the combined mail parties were joined by six survivors of a fourteen-man emigrant train that had also been attacked by Indians. Woodward left Henderson at Carson Valley and brought the Utah mail into Sacramento on August 31. The July and August passages erased early hopes for peaceful relations with the Humboldt Valley tribes.⁸

Despite the Indian menace, Woodward & Company's initial trips to and from Utah indicated possible profit in express and coach service. Within a week of Woodward's return to Sacramento at the end of August, he and Chorpenning bought seventy-five pack animals and expanded their business to include freight and passengers. The *Sacramento Times and Transcript* announced on September 11 that the partners contemplated starting a train for Carson Valley on the thirteenth, and that they were prepared to accommodate fifty to seventy-five passengers, at seventy-five dollars each. Woodward & Company also planned to enlarge the Carson Valley station into a ranch and trading center, stocked with California merchandise. Although the proposed expansion apparently failed to materialize, a post office was authorized for Carson Valley at the end of September.⁹

Meanwhile, the passage to Utah became increasingly difficult. Indians attacked the eastbound September post near Goose Creek, killing two carriers. The survivors arrived safely in Salt Lake City with the mail sometime after October 1. The October mail left Sacramento on the first but, like the August delivery, was delayed at Carson Valley because there were not enough carriers to risk the trip farther east. The westbound October post, escorted by eight men, left Salt Lake City by wagon on the first. On October 7, several hundred warriors attacked the mail party just west of the Goose Creek headwaters, driving off the carriers and looting the wagon. Reduced to a ration of one cold biscuit per day, the men spurred their mules on to Carson Valley, where they arrived nine days later. By way of welcome, the Washos burned the pastures surrounding the station. The October party finally made its way to Sacramento, without the mail, by November 1.¹⁰

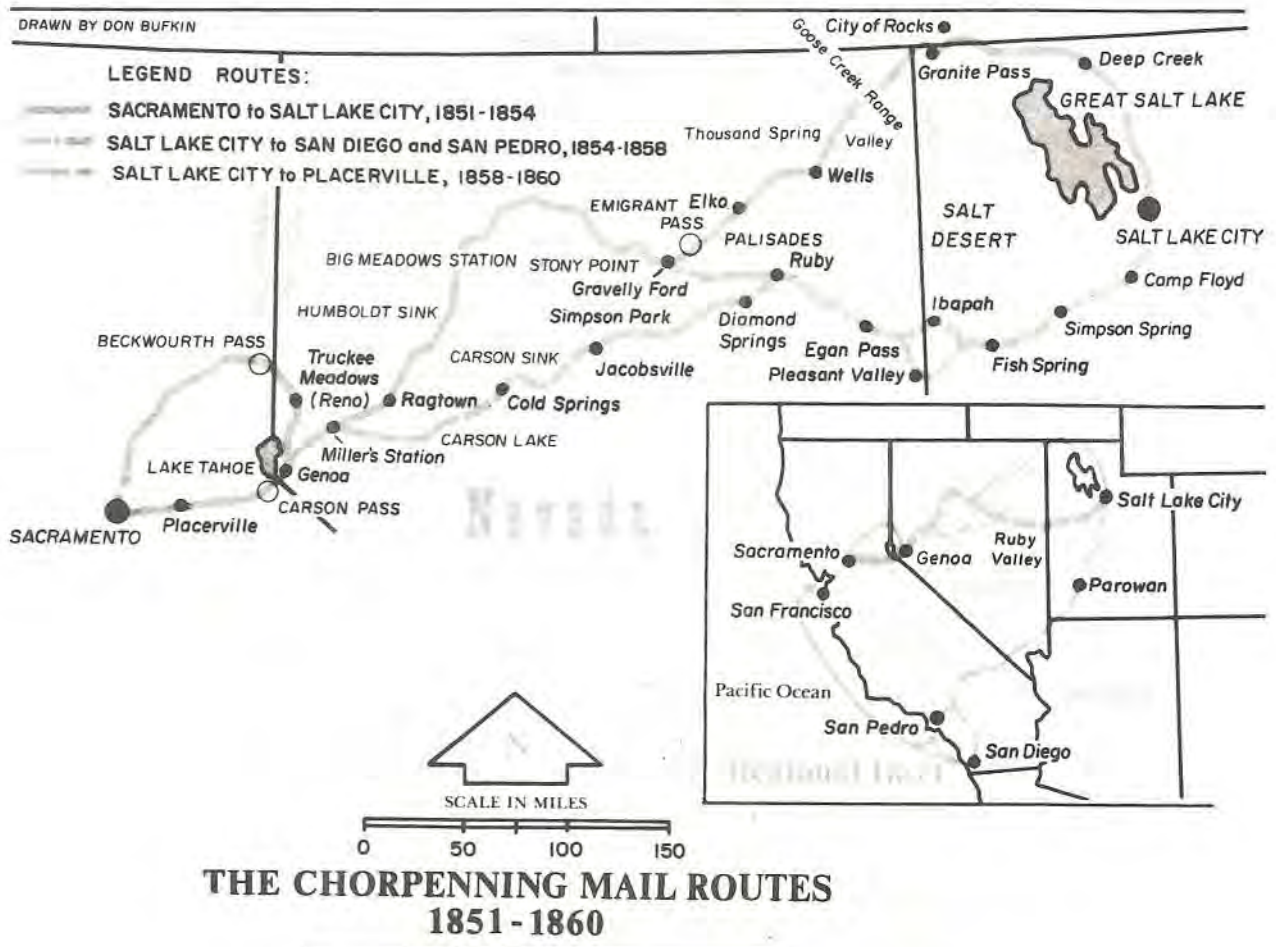
⁸*Sacramento Union*, September 1, 1851; *San Francisco Evening Picayune* (California), September 2, 1851; *San Francisco Alta California*, September 2, 1851.

⁹*San Francisco Alta California*, September 12, 1851; *San Francisco Evening Picayune*, September 10, 22, 1851.

¹⁰*Sacramento Union*, November 15, 1851; *San Francisco Alta California*, November 2, 1851.

CHORPENNING MAIL (Continued)

When word of these disasters reached Sacramento in late October, Woodward realized that his and Chorpenning's contract was in jeopardy. On November 1, he personally took charge of the eastbound Sacramento mail and arrived in Carson Valley a week later. There he found reason for optimism. A company of miners had left the station on October 10 and apparently had made their way safely east to the Wasatch. While his stock recuperated from the late fall crossing of the Sierra Nevada, Woodward on November 12 chaired a public meeting to create a "squatter" government for the lawless Eastern Slope until Congress could authorize territorial status. As a prominent property owner, he was elected to the executive committee which exercised judicial power over the proposed territory. Soon thereafter, Woodward and his carriers left for Ragtown and the Humboldt River. They were last seen midway up the Humboldt, before they vanished into a Great Basin winter.¹¹



¹¹Salt Lake City *Deseret News*, November 15, 1851. Myron Angel (ed.), *History of Nevada, with Illustrations and Biographical Sketches of its Prominent Men and Pioneers* (Oakland, California: Thompson & West, 1881), 32.

CHORPENNING MAIL (Continued)

Left in Sacramento to supervise winter mail crossings, George Chorpenning faced a cascade of calamity and unforeseen emergencies. November passed without word from Woodward and without mail from Utah. Mail left Sacramento on December 1, only to return when the riders failed to gain the mountain summits. By January 1, 1852, the situation seemed perilous. California mail had not reached Salt Lake City since November, and the last mail from Utah had arrived at Sacramento in August. Chorpenning himself set out for Salt Lake City with the January mail, but returned after a week, defeated by massive snowfalls blocking Carson Pass. Finally, about January 9, Samuel Hanson and five companions straggled into Sacramento with the November sacks from Zion. Hanson had been on the road over two months and had talked with Woodward in late November near Emigrant Pass. At Carson Valley on December 9, Hanson had found almost 100 men holed up for the winter. Failing to cross Carson Pass, his party had finally ridden north through Truckee Meadows, over Beckwourth Pass to Sierra Valley, and then followed Jamieson Creek west to Sacramento.¹²

The awesome hardships described by Hanson convinced Chorpenning to seek an alternate winter route over the Sierra Nevada and across the Great Basin. The December and January mails still at Sacramento were redirected to San Francisco and sent by ship to San Bernardino. From southern California, couriers followed the Mormon Trail to Salt Lake City, where the mail arrived on March 7. On February 2, Edson Cady and two riders left Sacramento, crossed the Sierra Nevada through Beckwourth Pass, and made a slow and brutal trip along the Humboldt River to the Goose Creek range. When the mules froze to death in blizzards, Cady divided mail sacks and slabs of frozen mule meat among himself and his companions, and continued east on foot. The mail party arrived without loss in Salt Lake City about March 25. A third mail reached Zion via San Francisco and San Bernardino on April 21.¹³

Although Chorpenning had demonstrated the feasibility of regular winter mail service, the April mails met with disaster. The Sacramento party took weeks in crossing the Sierra Nevada, while the Utah carriers were unable to surmount the glacial reaches of Granite Pass. Desperate for news of his partner and of affairs in Salt Lake City, Chorpenning set out in May with the Sacramento mail. Leaving Carson Pass, he overtook the April mail party near Carson Sink and pressed on along the Humboldt River. On the Humboldt, Chorpenning met Edson Cady westbound from Zion. From Cady, he learned that Woodward was dead.¹⁴

¹²San Francisco *Herald*, January 11, 1852.

¹³San Francisco *Alta California*, January 10, February 3, 1851; Salt Lake City *Deseret News*, April 3, 1852. *Journal History*, April 21, 1852, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints [LDS] Library Archives, Salt Lake City, Utah. Chorpenning erroneously credited himself with carrying the March mail to Utah. *Chorpenning vs. U. S.*, 7; Clifford (comp.), *Brief History*, 4-5.

¹⁴Salt Lake City *Deseret News*, June 26, 1852. Clifford (comp.), *Brief History*, 4-5.

CHORPENNING MAIL (Continued)

The discovery of Woodward's remains in early April of 1852 began one of the Great Basin's most durable and confused mysteries. Woodward and four men left Carson Valley on November 14, 1851, with the mail from Sacramento. Because he intended to winter in Utah and purchase fresh stock before returning with one of the spring mail parties, Woodward also carried a large amount in gold coin. Near Emigrant Pass on November 28, he met Samuel Hanson and informed him that the eastbound party had been fired upon the day before, a routine experience for the mail riders. That was the last time Woodward was seen alive.¹⁵

Woodward and his companions apparently were first attacked by Indians about November 20 near Stony Point. Possibly reduced by two wounded or dead, the party made its final stand somewhere between Stony Point and Goose Creek. Mounted on a large "American" horse borrowed from Chorpenning in the event that he might have to outrun smaller Indian ponies, Woodward escaped the ambush and fled east until he succumbed either to exposure or wounds at Deep Creek Ford, some 100 miles north-northwest of Salt Lake City and only a few miles from Snowville. Edson Cady and an escort of Ogden Saints, sent to recover bridles and harnesses from the mules abandoned in March, discovered Woodward's remains in early April. His horse's bridle was still tied to a scrub thicket, where he had secured the animal. Woodward's watch, letters, and other personal effects were undisturbed, but no saddle, weapon, or mail was found. The body had been dismembered by coyotes, and Cady apparently buried Woodward where he fell.¹⁶

With Woodward dead, Chorpenning faced alone the challenge of meeting the terms of their contract. Disheartened by the loss of his friend and associate, Chorpenning arrived at Salt Lake City on April 13. Woodward & Company's ready cash had been lost with Woodward, and it would take months to obtain advances on the contract's quarterly payments. Even the steadfast support of the LDS church faltered. When he was unable to find riders for the westbound journey, Chorpenning on July 1 loaded the mail and provisions on mules, and set out alone for Sacramento, where he

¹⁵San Francisco *Herald*, January 11, June 5, 1852; Salt Lake City *Deseret News*, April 3, 1852; Sacramento *Union*, June 4, 1852; San Francisco *Weekly Alta California*, June 5, 1852. Effie Mona Mack, *Nevada: A History of the State from Earliest Times through the Civil War* (Glendale, California: Arthur H. Clark Company, 1936), 336. *Chorpenning vs. U.S.*, 5, gives Willow Springs, midway along the Humboldt, as the scene of the Hanson-Woodward meeting. Chorpenning apparently refers to a site approximately ten miles north of Lassen Meadows, between present-day Lovelock and Winnemucca, Nevada. See James Woodworth, *Diary of James Woodworth: Across the Plains to California in 1853* (Eugene, Oregon: Lake County Historical Society, 1972), 47; and Harriet S. Ward, *Prairie Schooner Lady: The Diary of Harriet Sherrill Ward* (Los Angeles California: Westernlore Press, 1959), 107. This book was edited by Ward G. & Florence S. DeWitt.

¹⁶San Francisco *Herald*, June 5, 1852; Salt Lake City *Deseret News*, April 17, 1852. Brigham Young to Lorin Farr, March 27, 1852, Brigham Young Collection, LDS Library-Archives. McBride, "Utah Mail Service," 23. Dale Morgan, *The Humboldt, Highroad of the West* (New York, 1943), 270; Edna B. Patterson et al., *Nevada's Northeast Frontier* (Sparks, Nevada: Western Printing & Publishing Company, 1969), 133; Howard R. Driggs, *The Pony Express Goes Through* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1936), 20.

CHORPENNING MAIL (Continued)

arrived in about three weeks. He attempted to subcontract the mail service, only to find that no one believed that regular monthly deliveries were possible over the central route, particularly in winter. Moreover, the contract fee was miserably inadequate for the risks involved.¹⁷

Chorpenning's commitment to fulfilling the mail contract toughened as summer passed and carriers resumed monthly deliveries. On November 14 he wrote Special Agent Goggin for permission to again re-route winter service via San Bernardino and bypass the snowclad Sierra Nevada. By adroit jawboning and creative credit arrangements, Chorpenning rehired riders and replaced stock until the financial crisis appeared solved. Service, however, continued intermittent throughout the closing months of 1852. Only two mail deliveries were mentioned in the Salt Lake City *Deseret News* and none in the California press.¹⁸

Unbeknown to Chorpenning, on November 18, 1852, Postmaster General S. D. Hubbard cancelled Woodward & Company's contract and transferred the route to William L. Blanchard. Blanchard was a protégé, and perhaps silent partner, of freighting entrepreneur Ben Holladay. The new contract ran from March 15, 1853 to June 30, 1856, and included a fee of \$50,000, a considerable increase over the \$14,000 paid Woodward & Company. In addition to making monthly mail deliveries, Blanchard agreed to establish a fortified post in Carson Valley.¹⁹

When Chorpenning in January of 1853 learned of the cancellation of Woodward & Company's contract, he sailed immediately for Washington. Also on board was Special Agent Goggin, who had just completed his term of appointment. This happy circumstance simplified Chorpenning's task. In Washington, he learned that the post office had revoked the contract because of complaints from Utah over poor service. Goggin explained on Chorpenning's behalf that he had failed in his reports to differentiate between Woodward & Company's conscientious efforts and the abject failure of the Utah-Missouri contractor. Delays on the eastern leg of the overland route had compounded problems for the Utah to Sacramento carrier, causing still further interruptions of service along the western line. Once the misunderstanding had been explained, James Campbell, the new postmaster general, returned the mail contract to Chorpenning and increased the annual fee to \$30,000. Meanwhile, Blanchard operated the Salt Lake-Sacramento route—via the Mormon Trail and Humboldt River—from March 15, 1853 until Chorpenning's opera-

¹⁷San Francisco *Alta California*, July 27, 1852. *Chorpenning vs. U.S.*, 8–10, states that he made the trip in fifteen days. Mrs. Woodward apparently retained an interest in Woodward & Company following her husband's death. See "George Chorpenning and Elizabeth Woodward," *House Report 132*, 35 Cong., 1 Sess. (Serial 964).

¹⁸Salt Lake City *Deseret News*, September 4, October 2, 1852. *Chorpenning vs. U.S.*, 12.

¹⁹San Francisco *Herald*, January 21, 1853. McBride, "Utah Mail Service," 26–31. J. V. Frederick, *Ben Holladay, the Stagecoach King* (Glendale, California: Arthur H. Clark Company, 1940), 41; Hafen, *Overland Mail*, 65–66.

CHORPENNING MAIL (Continued)

tives resumed mail service on July 1.²⁰

The final year of Woodward & Company's contract (July 1853–July 1854) was anticlimactic. Utah carriers assumed more direct responsibility for operating their section of the route, and increasingly directed mail over the Mormon Trail between Salt Lake City and San Bernardino. After returning to the Humboldt during the summer of 1853, Chorpenning in November received permission to move south to San Diego. Both he and the Utah legislature had requested the change to the southern route.²¹

During the winter of 1853, postal authorities invited bids on a four-year contract for monthly mail service between Salt Lake City and San Diego, beginning upon the expiration of Woodward & Company's contract the following July. Chorpenning won the award with a low bid of \$12,500 per year—the bare cost of service. As soon as he had secured the contract, Chorpenning moved to New York. Back East, he successfully lobbied the Post Office Department in Washington to increase the annual fee to \$30,000 and grant a lump settlement for earlier losses. During his absence, actual operation of the mail line fell to subcontractors, among them General Jefferson Hunt who was in charge of the LDS mission at San Bernardino. Confident of his subcontractors' abilities, Chorpenning interjected few changes in procedure as the contract service ran—or more probably limped—through its effective life.²²

Although deliveries on the second contract were far more regular than those under the 1851–54 charter, they were still far from routine. Relations with Indians, particularly between Mountain Meadows and Cajon Pass, fluctuated between grudging truculence and open warfare. On perhaps the first trip from San Diego, Leonard S. Conger and party arrived at Resting Springs, just south of Death Valley, in a flurry of arrows. Two men and three mules sustained wounds in the ambush, and one of two mail sacks was lost during the subsequent chase. Only Conger's heroism and leadership saved the small group from certain death. Similar skirmishes occurred frequently during the next four years.²³

More than losses from Indians, Utah residents complained of theft, mainly of magazines and newspapers, by postal employees. At the heart of Utah's difficulty was the transport of mail by coastal

²⁰*Chorpenning vs. U.S.*, 11. McBride, "Utah Mail Service," 26–31. Hafen, *Overland Mail*, 65–66.

²¹*Chorpenning vs. U.S.*, 12. Ray M. Reeder, "The Mormon Trail: A History of the Salt Lake to Los Angeles Route to 1869" (Ph.D. dissertation, Brigham Young University, 1966), 299. Hafen, *Overland Mail*, 66.

²²*Sacramento Union*, June 25, 1858. Hafen, *Overland Mail*, 66–67; George W. & Helen P. Beattie, *Heritage of the Valley: San Bernardino's First Century* (Pasadena, California: San Pasqual Press, 1939), 312.

²³*Journal History*, August 14, 1854. LDS Library-Archives. *San Diego Herald* (California), September 20, 1854. Reeder, "Mormon Trail," 313–14.

CHORPENNING MAIL (Continued)

vessels from San Francisco to San Diego or San Pedro (after October 1854). Steamer schedules varied according to the weather and trading opportunities in ports between Monterey and southern California. Mail carriers, on the other hand, could not delay their departures and still reach Salt Lake City within contractual limits. Mail not on the beach by the first of each month was stranded until the following pickup. Despite efforts to better coordinate mail transfers, frequent losses plagued Utah throughout the mid-1850s.²⁴

Because of the uncertainties of the southern mail, Utah businessmen and church officials continued to prefer the shorter Humboldt route to Carson Valley. Within months after transfer of the line to San Diego, California's two competing express companies opened offices in Salt Lake City. Felix Tracy, agent for Adams & Company, and Howard Egan of the Pacific Express Company advertised fast and guaranteed delivery of shipments between Utah and California. Both companies opened new routes as they searched for the quickest possible passage across the Great Basin. Although correspondents enjoyed the speed of express mails, neither company survived the Mormon War of 1857-58.²⁵

Chorpenning's subcontractors likewise agonized over a direct, geographically pristine track between Salt Lake City and Sacramento. His mail service expired in 1858, and on April 2 Chorpenning signed a new and lucrative contract to run from July 1, 1858 to June 30, 1862. The new charter called for weekly deliveries over the old Salt Lake City-Sacramento axis to Placerville, California. Designed by the Buchanan Administration as a side-show in the great battle for mail subsidies between 1858 and 1860, the return of overland mail service to the central route arose out of the same reasoning that had prevailed in 1851—to provide communication for Utah citizens and for the U.S. army stationed in Utah to impose federal authority. Chorpenning had proposed weekly deliveries between Salt Lake City and Placerville for \$190,000 yearly. The new contract, however, specified semi-monthly trips on a twenty-day schedule at \$34,400 per year. Probably at the War Department's insistence, the postmaster general later revised the

²⁴Salt Lake City *Deseret News*, November 30, 1854; January 26, March 5, 1856; January 28, April 1, 1857. Journal History, October 31, 1855; June 24, 1856, LDS Library-Archives. Reeder, "Mormon Trail," 303.

²⁵Salt Lake City *Deseret News*, January 4, 25, 1855; Sacramento *Union*, February 9, 1855; Placerville *Mountain-Democrat* (California), February 10, 1855. Egan was born in Ireland on June 15, 1815, and emigrated to Canada at the age of eight. A captain in the Nauvoo Legion, he arrived at Salt Lake City in 1848. Egan accompanied Chorpenning's mail party to Utah in August of 1851, and the following year was acquitted in Salt Lake City's first murder trial. Biographical information is in Journal History, September 21, 1851; and Ora Simmons, "Life Sketch of Howard Egan," typescript, both in LDS Library-Archives. Also see J. Raman Drake, "Howard Egan: Frontiersman, Pioneer and Pony Express Rider" (M.A. thesis, Brigham Young University, 1956); William M. Egan (comp. & ed.), *Pioneering the West, 1846-1878*. . . (Richmond, Utah: Howard R. Egan Estate, 1917); and Hosea Stout, *On the Mormon Frontier: The Diary of Hosea Stout, 1844-1861* (U. of Utah Press, 1964), 404, 407. This book was edited by Juanita Brooks.

CHORPENNING MAIL (Continued)

agreement to provide for weekly trips between Utah and California at \$130,000 annually.²⁶

Chorpenning began in April to marshal men and equipment for the unprecedented weekly passage of the Sierra Nevada and Great Basin. After ordering some twenty Concord coaches from New Hampshire, he persuaded his brother Frank to abandon a humdrum Pennsylvania medical practice for the post of general agent in California. He next authorized A. D. Rightmire, a prominent Sacramento livestock dealer with whom he had had previous business dealings, to purchase mules and other animals to stock a line of remount stations between Placerville and Great Salt Lake. Finally, Chorpenning approached Jared B. Crandall, another business associate and reputable transportation professional, to supervise actual operation of the line.²⁷

Frank Chorpenning arrived in San Francisco on June 29 and, with Crandall and Rightmire, began extending stations toward Salt Lake City. Already in early June, Crandall had left Carson Valley for Big Meadows with some twenty men and a herd of horses, mules, and cattle. Rightmire followed on June 26 with sixty well-broken mules and a coach. The mules were stationed in teams at remount points twenty-five miles apart, while the coach tested the roadbed along the emigrant trail from Carson Valley to Ragtown and Humboldt Sink. By July, primitive mail camps were interspersed among the usual summer trading posts stretching from Placerville to Lassen Meadows. Chorpenning's associates in the old Utah-Southern California contract, meanwhile, hustled their gear north and built a similar line of stations from Salt Lake City to Wells, Nevada. Jefferson Hunt in San Diego promptly transferred men and equipment to the Salt Lake Cutoff and Thousand Spring Valley, and Frank Chorpenning notified the post office that mail service would begin in July, a month earlier than planned.²⁸

²⁶*Chorpenning vs. U.S.*, 23. Hafén, *Overland Mail*, 110; Ralph Moody, *Stagecoach West* (New York, 1967), 90.

²⁷*Chorpenning vs. U.S.*, 23. Sacramento *Bee* (California), August 12, 1858; San Francisco *Herald*, June 26, 1858. William Banning and George Hugh Banning, *Six Horses* (New York, 1930), 177, 179. Crandall owned the Pioneer Stage Line and may have been a competitor for the 1858 contract. Crandall sold the Pioneer Line to Lewis Brady and joined Chorpenning. San Francisco *Herald*, February 1, April 18, 1858. A description of the 1858-60 Placerville-Genoa route is in Victor Goodwin, "Historic Land and Resource-Use Patterns in the Lake Tahoe Basin and their Effect upon its Present Milieu," unpublished manuscript, author's files.

²⁸San Francisco *Herald*, July 16, 1858; San Francisco *Alta California*, August 11, 1858.

(To be concluded in October issue)

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We have our Franks of the various denominations required.

WELLS, FARGO & CO.

CONTENTS OF A LETTER

(Lower Springs, California)

Submitted by
John R. Green II

Shastaly
July 19th

10
Mr Crastus Post
Fee Free P^o
Saint Louis Co
Mo

July the 8th 1852

Lower Springs

Shasty-county California

Dear Old Friend

I the present opportunity
of writing you a few lines to let
you know that I have not forgot
you if you have me I wrote to you
before but ~~the~~ perhaps you never got
it I owe you some money and I got this
that was the reason of it I think that I
shal beable to pay you some day altho

CONTENTS OF A LETTER (Continued)

I ow you some money and I got thinking that was the reason of it. I think that I shall beable to pay you some day althoug I have bin hear some time I have not made muche yet. I still have hops of making somthing yet.

The fourth has gon by. I stayed in my cabin half of the day and as I had wrote a letter I thought that I would walk up to town and put it in the office. When I got their some men had brought about 40 Indians their to have a kind of a show. They were a going to have a war dance of it and that ended very bad. they had such hand fights then they tuned the Indians out and started them off that ended that. then about 11 oclock at night their was a nother row kicked up that ended very bad. there was man cut another very bad. the oficers arrested him and took him off in about an hour after them was a mob of the miners raised to take him and hung him but they could not find that night next morning the oficers brought him in. they him endited and he was to have his trial in monthe. the day foloing the man died. the mob again ris and took him. the gave him trial by twelve of the miners, and they hung him on a lim about sun set. the one that was cut died about threeclock and the other hung at sun set. the man that was murdered was a very fine man. the other was as grand a vilian as ever was in californy. He has killed severil men before and got off. at last he is stoped. I never experience such a fourth before in my life and I hope I never shal again.

*I hope I never shal again
 this leaves us all enjoying tolerable
 good health and I hopes it may find
 you & your family enjoying the sun
 the wether is very hot here at present
 provision is rising very fast I suppose
 it is on account of such a large emigr-
 ation to this cuntry you must excuse
 all mistakes & Your humble
 To E Post Server R. Caith*

BOOK, BOOKS, BOOKS

by Henry M. Spelman III

This is the first of a series of columns on philatelic literature, new and old, which I want you to know about. Many will be books which you might not know are of interest to collectors of western covers, since the titles in many cases don't indicate all of the contents. Some of the books I write about may have been previously reviewed in Western Express, but our newer members may not be aware of them, and some of the long term members may have new interests.

You can obtain many of the books I write about from your favorite dealer in philatelic literature, or from the authors or publishers. Some may be advertised in Western Express. I can often supply both new and old books from my own stock. If all else fails, drop me a line with a self-addressed stamped envelope and I'll try to suggest a source.

And now to work! This month I will write about two new books, each the product of years of collecting, research and correspondence, each thorough, well illustrated and up to date, but totally different in style.

The Fresno and San Francisco Bicycle Mail of 1894, by Lowell S. Cooper. Hartmann, Louisville, 1982 [released in 1983], \$35.00. Edition of 500, 134 pp, illustrated. Deluxe edition available.

Lowell S. Cooper is a long-time collector and student of philatelic firsts. For many years he has been interested in the Bicycle Mail of 1894 between Fresno and San Francisco, during the Pullman strike. The book reflects his enthusiasm for the subject. The style is delightful; the book readable and enjoyable. I read it straight through at one sitting. Cooper tells about the service, about its stamps and postal stationery, and how Arthur Banta, a philatelically naive bicycle dealer, who conceived a bicycle mail service to fill a very definite need (and to advertise his business), was inducted into the world of philately by Eugene Donze, who designed and procured the stamps.

The book gives a great deal of information about the stamps and their printing history which has never been published before. With the aid of the catalog section you can tell the originals from the reprints, spot the "forged" die, and have some idea of relative scarcity. Many covers are illustrated and full information given about the markings to be expected, the route followed and the schedule.

As a bonus there is a three page appendix on the activities of Wells, Fargo & Company during the strike, and the provisional franks used in Los Angeles and Santa Barbara. Most of the information in this section comes from a 1994 article in Philatelic Facts and Fallacies by H. B. Phillips. This should be expanded into a full dress article or book by a specialist in Wells, Fargo material.

There is also an interesting chapter on the 1935 memorial rerun of the Bicycle Mail, with in which stamps from the defaced plate were used. The real scarcity of these covers is shown, along with historical information about the rerun.

Cooper obtained information from several philatelists who had the opportunity to interview people who were involved with the bicycle mail service and from the contemporary press both philatelic and non-philatelic. He found that a careful reading of the ads offering the stamps for sale gave information on the various printings. He corresponded with everyone he could locate who had any connection with the service, and with many collectors who had pertinent material. No stone is left unturned, and the material has been carefully analyzed and set forth in a chronological manner.

More information will certainly come to light as a result of this publication. But I doubt that enough will turn up to require a new edition in the near future. Cooper has just been so persistent and thorough that little was missed. Perhaps if Banta's ledger listing the covers carried in the original service were to be located . . .

United States Incoming Steamship Mail 1847-1875, by Theron Wierenga. published by the author, Muskegon, Michigan, 1983, 242 pp, illustrated, indexed, \$30.00. Deluxe edition available.

Theron Wierenga is a high school teacher and administrator, and is quite knowledgeable on microcomputers. He is a collector of what I call the non-treaty ocean mails of the United States, and is also interested in coastal and inland waterways mail. He uses his computer expertise to sort the data he gathers on his collecting interests, and to write, edit, rewrite and polish his manuscripts.

Wierenga started his research studies with what he then thought was the small field of steamship mail to and from our neighbors to the south. As I have long been interested in stampless mails between Cuba and the United States, Theron and I have been in communication on the subject from the start. He has produced a thorough study of what has turned out to be a very large and complex field. It is unusual in that it is a well documented philatelic study. He gives citations to the original documents for most statements of fact. This makes it easy for the reader to refer back to the sources if he questions an interpretation. And Theron's earlier publishing ventures have made the sources readily available to the collector.

The book starts out with a general discussion of all ocean mail services and rates, defines the area to be covered in the present book, and then goes on with a thorough discussion of rates, routes, ships and markings. It includes what might seem to be extraneous material, but since steamship mail was never really defined by the postal authorities, was often a sort of catch-all for mails that didn't fit elsewhere in the official scheme of things, and changed greatly over the years, a good deal of information about what are not steamship services and markings must be included to outline the field under consideration. Rather like defining it by telling what it isn't!

A highlight of the book is the catalog of postal markings used in the United States on incoming Steamship mail. There are excellent tracings, early and late dates and brief comments on colors and usages. A first listing of new dates has already been published in Wierenga's column in Stamps Magazine, and more will undoubtedly come in as collectors compare their collections with the catalog.

The western interest is in a section on the Steamboat markings of San Francisco and in a fine chapter on the route agent and despatch agent markings used on mails between New York and California via Panama. This updates DeVoss's work on the subject and includes previously unpublished material.

The book is liberally illustrated with excellent photos of full covers, each discussed in detail. It includes a comprehensive bibliography, 40+ pages of reprints of pertinent documents, 222 footnotes, and a four page index.

There are very few errors in the book. The only important one that I have spotted is in the discussion of the two cent ship fee. The law stated that captains of "foreign packets" were not entitled to the fee. On page 12 Wierenga states (mistakenly) that no foreign-owned vessel qualified for the payment. In fact, all foreign vessels except those holding mail contracts were entitled to the fee. This is corrected by inference on page 19, but should be corrected and clarified in the next edition. Captains of foreign warships normally did not accept the ship fee.

A few of the covers illustrated and discussed are open to alternate explanations, but in many cases no one will ever be sure which of several possible explanations are correct. For instance, is the cover in figure 23 an overpaid ship letter or a properly rated letter from California arriving in New York City as way mail?

Much has been written about the North Atlantic mail services, but very little about the mail services in the Caribbean. Most of what we have is about the British, French, Spanish and Danish mails. Wierenga has blazed a new trail in the study of the United States ocean mails.

AUCTION ACTION

by William T. Crowe

On March 15, 1983 the Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries sold the covers from the Marc Haas collection which had not been sold by Stanley Gibbons, Ltd. The following is a selected listing of prices realized for this sale.

In the "Buyer" column "A" means bought by an agent, "B" sold to the book, "C" bought by a collector, "D" a dealer, "T" a telephone bidder.

Lot	Description	Open	Close	Buyer
2	Sam Houston free frank	\$3,250.00	\$3,500.00	T
5	M.S. Latham M.C. free frank	425.00	425.00	B
6	Milton S. Latham U.S.S. frank	80.00	80.00	B
21	Belmont, Nev. s/l	625.00	650.00	A
22	Black Hawk Point C.T., 1863	325.00	350.00	A
23	Boise City Idaho double circle	130.00	130.00	B
24	Camp Floyd U.T. rimless	260.00	260.00	B
26	Camp Floyd U.T. ms	325.00	400.00	D
28	Carson City U.T. tying #68	150.00	150.00	B
29	Cowlitz W.T., 1857	240.00	325.00	D
30	Denver City C.T. blue pmk tying #63	210.00	260.00	A
31	Esmeralda Nev, 3 x #68 to G.B.	300.00	300.00	B
32	Eugene City O.T.	170.00	350.00	D
33	Fort Laramie N.T., #69	260.00	260.00	B
35	Kaufman Texas #11	475.00	475.00	B
36	Lawrence K.T. #26	140.00	140.00	B
37	Leavenworth Kans. negative shield	350.00	350.00	B
38	Lower Sioux Agency 1860 ms	525.00	525.00	B
39	Osawatamee K.T.	220.00	220.00	B
40	Quindaro Kan. 1858	200.00	200.00	B
41	Salt Lake City U.T. s/l	1,050.00	1,350.00	A
43	Salt Lake City Utah rimless	425.00	475.00	B
45	Sioux Agency ms	300.00	300.00	B
46	Virginia City Montana, #69 to Canada	550.00	900.00	D
47	Wabashaw M.T., #11	210.00	210.00	B
49	Auburn Cal., PAID and 6	80.00	105.00	C
53	Benicia Cal. stampless	35.00	80.00	C
55	Benicia Cal., #32 on U16	160.00	200.00	D
58	Bidwells Bar Cal, #14	210.00	270.00	A
59	California State Telegraph illust. c/c	50.00	67.50	D
60	Camptonville Cal. stampless	70.00	70.00	B
61	Centreville Cal. ms stampless	70.00	70.00	B
63	Coloma Cal ms stampless	75.00	100.00	A
64	Columbia Cal. s/l, 2 x #11	150.00	180.00	D
68	Columbia Cal., #65, Valentine	210.00	210.00	B
69	Crescent City Cal. ms	52.50	57.50	A
70	Culloma Cal., PAID 3C	62.50	75.00	B
71	Downieville Cal., #11	120.00	130.00	B
72	Downieville Cal., 1859, #33	625.00	625.00	B
74	Empire Ranch, #15	220.00	250.00	D
75	Folsom City Cal, #32	230.00	260.00	D
77	Forth Crossing Cal., 3 x #24	260.00	260.00	B
79	Gibsonville Cal, #33	160.00	210.00	D
80	Gold Run Cal., #65	150.00	200.00	D
83	Jackson Cal., 3 x #24	260.00	300.00	B
88	Los Angeles Cal., to Canada	800.00	950.00	D
90	McDermott's Bridge Cal., U18a	160.00	230.00	A
97	Marysville Cal. Paid by Stamps	260.00	350.00	D
99	Michigan Bar Cal, 3 x #7	325.00	375.00	B
104	Mokelumne Hill Cal, 2 x #75	210.00	240.00	D
105	Monterey Cal 1843 dateline	400.00	525.00	A
112	North Branch Cal., 1854	115.00	115.00	B
115	Overland Stage Coact c/c to New Brunswick	1,550.00	2,000.00	D
116	Patterson Cal., #14	140.00	170.00	D

Lot	Description	Open	Close	Buyer
118	Rough & Ready Cal., #32	140.00	170.00	D
123	St. Louis Cal., #32, 33 on U16	600.00	675.00	D
124	San Diego, 1850 ms 40 rate	230.00	350.00	A
129	San Francisco News-Letter	950.00	950.00	B
130	San Francisco Cal, 3 x #9	425.00	625.00	C
136	San Francisco, 1859, via Tehuantepec	550.00	550.00	B
138	San Francisco, 1863, 4 x #63, 2 x #65	525.00	950.00	D
141	San Rafael ms	50.00	170.00	A
147	Sonora Cal ms	65.00	75.00	A
158	Strington P.O., U16a	350.00	425.00	A
161	Vallejo Cal, red balloon, #14	300.00	300.00	B
163	Yankee Jims Cal, #15	210.00	270.00	D
171	NEW-YORK 40, 1850	75.00	80.00	A
176	Adams & Co., Express to Australia, 1853	210.00	250.00	B
177	Adams & Co., Columbia	115.00	115.00	B
179	Adams & Co., Mormon Island	105.00	135.00	C
182	Alta Express, San Francisco, paste-up	105.00	120.00	D
185	Baldwin South La, Express	550.00	550.00	B
188	Becker & Co., Roses Bar	240.00	240.00	B
191	Central Overland & Pikes Peak	375.00	425.00	B
194	Bowers Express	450.00	500.00	B
197	Freeman & Co., Marysville	300.00	300.00	B
200	Hinckley & Co., Denver City	325.00	325.00	B
203	Ben Holladay Overland Mail	210.00	290.00	B
204	Holland, Morley & Co., La Porte	125.00	160.00	B
205	Holland & Wheeler, La Porte	105.00	130.00	A
207	Jones & Russell's Pikes Peak Express	600.00	600.00	B
210	Langton's, Carson City	150.00	210.00	D
217	Nicaragua Line in advane of the Mail	105.00	270.00	D
219	Noisy Carrier Label	280.00	280.00	B
224	Pony Express San Francisco h/s on paper	475.00	600.00	D
225	Pony Express ms routing on cover to GB	800.00	800.00	B
226	F, Rumrill & Co., Fosters Bar	75.00	95.00	A
227	San Francisco Letter Express	260.00	375.00	A
228	Via Nicaragua ahead of the mails, 4 x #11	650.00	750.00	B
229	Wellington's Express	240.00	325.00	A
232	Wells Fargo, New York	210.00	350.00	C
233	Wells Fargo, Pioche, Nev.	30.00	30.00	B
239	Wells Fargo, San Francisco, U67a 9c entire	350.00	350.00	B
241	Wells Fargo, San Francisco, U68 12c entire	375.00	375.00	B
242	Wells Fargo, San Francisco, U70 18 entire	500.00	575.00	C
244	Wells Fargo, San Francisco, #62B	350.00	500.00	D
245	Wells Fargo, San Francisco, illust. ad cover	130.00	270.00	C
246	Wells Fargo Steamboat, #11	750.00	750.00	B
247	Wells Fargo Virginia City, U71 24c entire	600.00	600.00	B
248	Wheeler's Express, La Porte on 1864 deed	95.00	130.00	D
249	*W.P.P.R.R.* Ellis, 1870, U59	325.00	450.00	C
250	California Penny Post 5c blue [34L2]	1,900.00	1,900.00	B
251	Carnes City Letter Express [35L1]	8,500.00	8,500.00	B
252	California Penny Post, 7c black [34LU4]	1,050.00	1,050.00	B
253	California Penny Post, Seven Cents [34LU7]	2,000.00	2,000.00	B
254	Humboldt Express, Nevada, 25c brown [86L2]	6,250.00	6,250.00	B
255	Wells Fargo Pony Express \$1 red [143L3] on U118a	3,500.00	4,750.00	D
654	Barnard's Cariboo Express label, US #68, British Columbia #2	850.00	1,050.00	A
655	Barnard's Cariboo Express label, pair British Columbia #7	950.00	1,200.00	A
656	Barnard's Express, Idaho pmk	230.00	230.00	B
657	Barnard's Express frank, Post Office Victoria V.I. h/s	400.00	1,300.00	A
658	Customs Vancouver Island on 10c entire with Wells Fargo printed frank	900.00	1,000.00	B
663	Post Office Victoria V.I. with coat of arms on 3c entire	325.00	475.00	A
664	Post Office Victoria V.I. with coat of arms, to Pa., #68 tied San Francisco	700.00	700.00	B

CONTENTS OF A LETTER

(Culloma, Alta California)

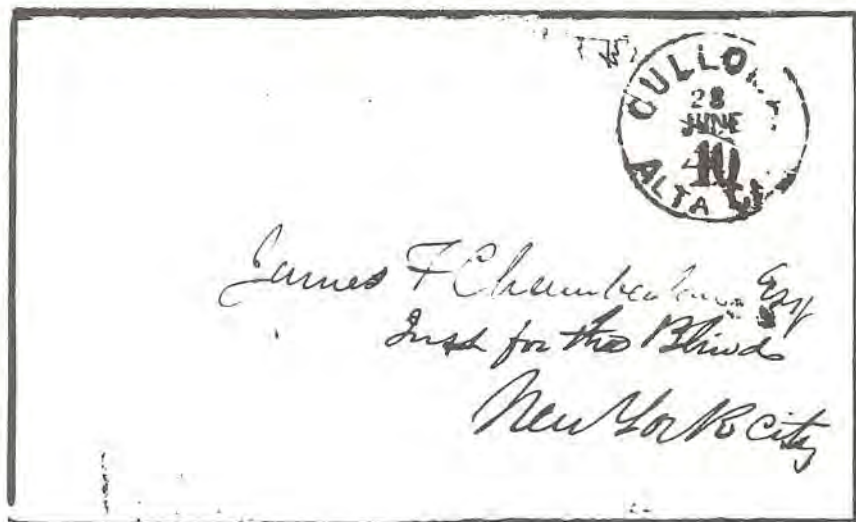
Submitted by Jack Greenberg & Clifford E. Moss

Columa, June 16, 1850

My Dear C

Still am I here. It is uncertain when I can get away. Business confines me. I find I have more to do than I expected—you know the law is so full of mazes that when you are once in it, with difficulty you can get out of it. I have made more clear money the last month than in the three before. I am fearful that I shall be entirely kept from the "diggings." I enjoy myself very much here. My health never was better. The fine bracing mountain air is invigorating & the fresh, cool and sparkling waters are really a luxury to the disciples of Father Matthew's school. He can indulge without stint and be enlivened thereby. During the term, several young men were admitted to practice in our high and dignified tribunals (among them was your old scholar French). Of course several suppers were given. I never saw more wit & sentiment at any table. I found I could enjoy the scene full as well upon the clear sparkling beverage of nature & feel as much exhilarated as the *bibbers* of the ruby wine.

When not engaged in business I have a thousand sources of amusement around me. Read a little, talk a good deal with the thousands of rare characters I meet with. Had I the skill of a Cruickshank I could fill a volume with sketches from life that would be invaluable to the future delineator. I board at the principal hotel (pay only \$25 per week)—it is policy to do so. The bar-room is filled with *Monte* banks and Faro Tables. Gambling here is the most respectable & profitable business. It is carried on openly & publicly—no concealment; it is no disgrace *not* to gamble. Nor is one any less respected by the gentlemen of the long table if he does nothing in their line. I am on good terms with several of the fraternity & am treated with much politeness. There are not the sneaks we see around the halls in the old states. Their long tables are arranged around the bar room & are open for customers from 3 PM till midnight. The bets range from a quarter to hundreds of dollars. The high playing is chiefly among the fraternity. The excitement during the progress of the game is not so great as represented. All the players seem to be perfectly cool. Losing or winning seems all the same to them. They will stake thousand upon a single cast & when lost will rise from the table as if nothing had happened. One told me he, the past winter had lost at a few sittings \$30,000. Everything he had & \$2,000 more. He borrowed a small sum to start again & is now fast recovering his lost fortune. They make their money off the green horns who foolishly imagine that they shall be so fortunate as to win the large piles so temptingly displayed before them. That vain hope constantly tempts a large portion of the miners & results in stripping them of all of their hard earnings.



CONTENTS OF A LETTER (Continued)

Then the rare characters that throng the streets—men of all nations fresh from their home, bringing with them manners and costumes quaint and curious. Digger Indians—Chinese—East Indians—Sandwich Islanders, Chileans, Mexicans, Africans. Such a medley as were never thrown together in the world before. To say nothing of other European nations, each of whom has their representative. It is easy to see that the Anglo-Americans are the Lords paramount. All the others quietly & obtrusively acknowledge them masters. I would like to know what the denizens of the Islands & the Great West think of us and our movements. Their destiny is sealed—the rolling tide must soon overwhelm them.

The whole scene here must seem to them the work of enchantment. Cities spring up in a night—with their splendid Hotels, Saloons, Exchange offices, accustomed to tinsel, perfectly astonishing. They must carry back to their respective countries astonishing reports & awaken in the minds of their plodding brethren a desire to imitate the customs & manners of a people that produce such wonderful results. I must say a word as to the growth of prosperity of our city. Although in the mountains it is rapidly improving & presents the appearance of a thriving & growing town. It now boasts a theatre & a *school* house—would you believe it? Yes, the schoolmaster is a broad & rare character too. He is the ideal of that poor profession. His locks are whitened with many a winter's toil & his long and attenuated figure has shivered from many a blast of misfortune. His height is upwards of six feet. He wears a broad-brimmed white wool hat turned up at the sides so as to resemble a military chapeau. He wears a long tailed blue & a long-waisted woolen vest after the fashion of '76, with lean & slippered pantaloons. He has not an unpleasant countenance, betokening much complacency as well as some intelligence, plainly indicating that the wearer can endure the whips and scars of fortune quietly & uncomplainingly and has done so many a time & oft. He has a pedigogical shambling in his gait—a mere looker on.

I have heard nothing of your brother. I suppose he has gone into the diggings by this time. Great reports are being circulated in relation to a gold strike in the vicinity of Marysville. I however give them no credit. Hundreds will be gulled by them. Few of the miners are yet making anything. There is snow yet in the mountains & the streams keep up. I am apprehensive that the yield of gold will not be so great as last year on that account, altho the labourers are two to one. We are not looking anxiously for the mail in the hopes that it will bring tidings of our admission & the settlement of many questions. French & Read wish to be remembered to you.

June 25. News of the steamer is in—the mail steamer as now arrived but no prospect of admission. The mail closes tomorrow & I must conclude this short epistle for I have several others to get ready. I enclose a news paper that you may see some of the doings in relation to Titles, etc. Give my love to Nancy & believe me, as ever,

A.J. McCall

EDITOR'S ARENA

**MAY 1
1983**

Fifty-two members were welcomed by President Pearce at our annual Breakfast-Meeting at the Cathedral Hill Hotel in San Francisco on Sunday May first. Aside from the Californians present, seven other states were represented; Arizona (Art Springer), Connecticut (William Crowe), Illinois (Hugh Gore), Nevada (Ronald Drotnam), New Jersey (George Kramer), Oregon (Dale Forster, Richard Helbock, Howard Mader), and Washington (John Leutzinger, Ray Radford).

At the conclusion of the breakfast, President Pearce, after introducing some of our out-of-state members, brought us up to date on the coming book *Letters of Gold* (see below). John Williams announced the scheduled meeting for the discussion of a proposed California Post Office publication (see next page) and Richard Jordan warned us not to delay our acquisition of Cooper's book on the Banta Bicycle Mail (see REVIEWS—next page) since bicycle enthusiasts were competing in its purchase. Richard Helbock, Editor of *La Posta* spoke of the additional "Second Section" to be added to that publication.

Your Treasurer and Editor reported on the sound financial condition of the Society and on the continued need for articles for *Western Express*. He also, on behalf of the Chairman of the WESTPEX Awards Committee, presented Dr. Fred Dunn with the WESTPEX Silver-Bronze medal which he had merited for his (non-Western) entry, "The Postmarks of Sandakan."

The meeting was then turned over to Irwin Vogel for his slide presentation of selected covers from his collection. This turned out to be a most delightful and imposing selection, running the gamut of the early mining towns thru the Wells Fargo, Pony and other expresses. In the latter group were enlightening examples of covers which required the services of a multiple of express companies to get them to their destination, as indicated by the array of different handstamps. The joy of seeing this exceptional display was enhanced by Irwin's running comments and stories as the show progressed, and one and all joined in the deserved applause at the conclusion.

NEW BOOKS

Here is a listing of some items that have come to the attention of your Editor—*The Plains & the Rockies (A Critical Bibliography of Exploration, Adventure and Travel in the American West, 1800-1865.)* It is by Henry R. Wagner and Charles

L. Camp, and published by John Howell-Books, S.F. It is labeled as the "4th Edition-1982" and is a volume of 745 pages, priced at \$150.00.

Nevada Lost Mines and Treasure, by Douglas McDonald. Available from Nevada Publications, Box 15444, Las Vegas, Nevada 89114. (\$5.95 paper). Includes some 74 legends, including Los Padre Mine, Swede Pete's Lost Mine and the Star City Treasure Cache.

Mammoth Gold: Ghost Towns of Lake District by Gary Coldwell. From Alan Hensher Books, 5456½ Village Green, Los Angeles, CA 90016. (\$3.50 paper). A story of the deserted towns near Bishop, Laws and Mammoth Lakes.

Borax Pioneer: Frances Marion Smith by George H. Hildebrand. From Howell-North Books, at \$15.00.

United States Incoming Steamship Mail 1847-1875 by Theron Wierenga. From the author at P.O. Box 595, Muskegon, Michigan 49443. Hard cover \$27.50.

The Fresno and San Francisco Bicycle Mail of 1894 by Lowell B. Cooper. Leonard H. Hartmann, Publisher, P.O. Box 36006, Louisville, Kentucky 40233. Hard cover \$35.00.

**UP-UP
AND
AWAY!**

The Marketing Program Manager of the U.S.P.S. inaugurated the 1983 promotional campaign with the advise "Get Carried Away With Philately." In keeping with this the colorful se-tenant blocks of four of the balloon stamps appeared. And with further emphasis, the first of these stamps were "sold" on board Forbes' famous Chateau hot air balloon. Inspired by all of this the East Bay Collectors Club of Oakland, California is projecting a balloon flight over Lake Merritt as the opening feature of its annual stamp show—this year to be held at the Scottish Rite Temple, on Lake Merritt August 6 and 7. Their specially cacheted covers will not be sold on board during the flight, but the covers will be cancelled and carried across the lake. So for an small investment of around \$2.00, philatelists and balloon enthusiasts will have a fine souvenir. For more information contact Bruce Marsden, 407 Orange St. Suite 408, Oakland, CA 94610.

EDITOR'S ARENA (Continued)**REPRINTS**

In this issue of *Western Express*, we began the story STALKING HORSE FOR THE PONY EXPRESS, by John M. Townley. This story first appeared in the Autumn 1982 issue of *ARIZONA AND THE WEST*, the quarterly journal of the University of Arizona Press, Tucson. And it is with the permission of the author and the publisher that we are privileged to present it to our readers. The story will conclude in the October 1983 issue of *W/E*.

LETTERS OF GOLD

A few years ago, our member Marc Haas commissioned WCS member Dr. Jesse Colburn, to write the story of the covers of the West, based primarily on the many outstanding covers in his collection. Several of our other members participated by furnishing photos of prizes from their own collection, and the stories relating to them.

Then Marc sold his collection to Stanley Gibbons, and the incentive for the book gave way to other priorities. But the material that Dr. Colburn had gathered was too good to be just filed away and forgotten. After considerable discussion with many groups, the U.S. Classics Society said that they would sponsor the project. Ms. Susan McDonald, vice-president of the Classics Society and Editor-in-Chief of their quarterly *The Chronicle* will coordinate the material for publication as a milestone book.

But printing costs being what they are, there is need for considerable promise of cash. Leon Hyzen, Treasurer of the Classics Society is accepting pledges from individuals and Societies for a guarantee fund, so that the Committee will be in a "go ahead" position. Your Western Cover Society, thru our President Basil C. Pearce has made a substantial contribution, along with Marc Haas, so that the project may come to a fruitful conclusion.

If you too would like to help, send your pledge to Leon at P.O. Box 250, San Clemente, CA 92672.

The book is projected to be 8½ X 11 in size, with approximately 1,500 black and white photos.

WESTPEX 1984

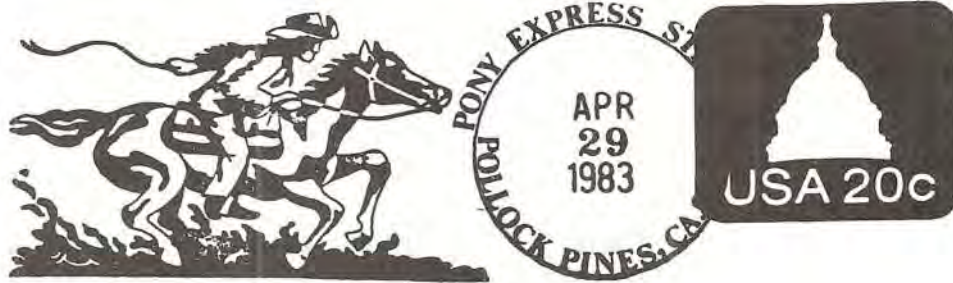
Next year WESTPEX celebrates its silver anniversary when it holds its annual show at the Cathedral Hill Hotel, San Francisco, May 11-13. It is unfortunate that our Society did not make some formal plans for participation, since the Western Cover Society was so intimately involved in providing support and exhibits in the formative years of WESTPEX. Our late Editor Mel Nathan was the liaison for the annual Court of Honor exhibits, which of course were "western" in content. Mel was the recipient of the Council of Northern California Philatelic Societies' *Chaloner Award* (The Council is the "parent" of WESTPEX)

There is no reason tho, why the lack of formal program should deter our members from exhibiting in 1984. Our new member George Kramer, winner of the Reserve Grand at ARIPEX '83 and at Portland (APS Spring meeting) will be exhibiting his "Wells, Fargo & Co., 1852-1895." It has been augmented since these showings, particularly with the acquisition of the unique Wells, Fargo cover with the strip of four of the \$1.00 "garter" stamp, at the recent Hackett sale. For the "bounty" hunter the new WESTPEX medal (illustrated in the January 1983 issue of *Western Express*) will make a wonderful addition in your display of awards. So why not send now, for a Prospectus? Write Mrs. Jo Skinner, P.O. Box 4431, Mountain View, CA 94040.

PHILATELIC LITERATURE

On the previous page mention was made of some specific literature that had come to your Editor's attention. Leonard Hartmann has just published his latest (#8) *Catalog Of Philatelic Literature*. This listing of over seventy-five pages of books available for sale to collectors is nicely indexed so that if your interests are Colonial History, Territorial, World Wide— or Postal rates, Postal Markings, or whatever, you are sure to be accommodated. This is a must—so why not peruse its pages yourself. Send \$2.00 to Leonard Hartmann, Post Office Box 36006, Louisville, KY 40233 for a copy.

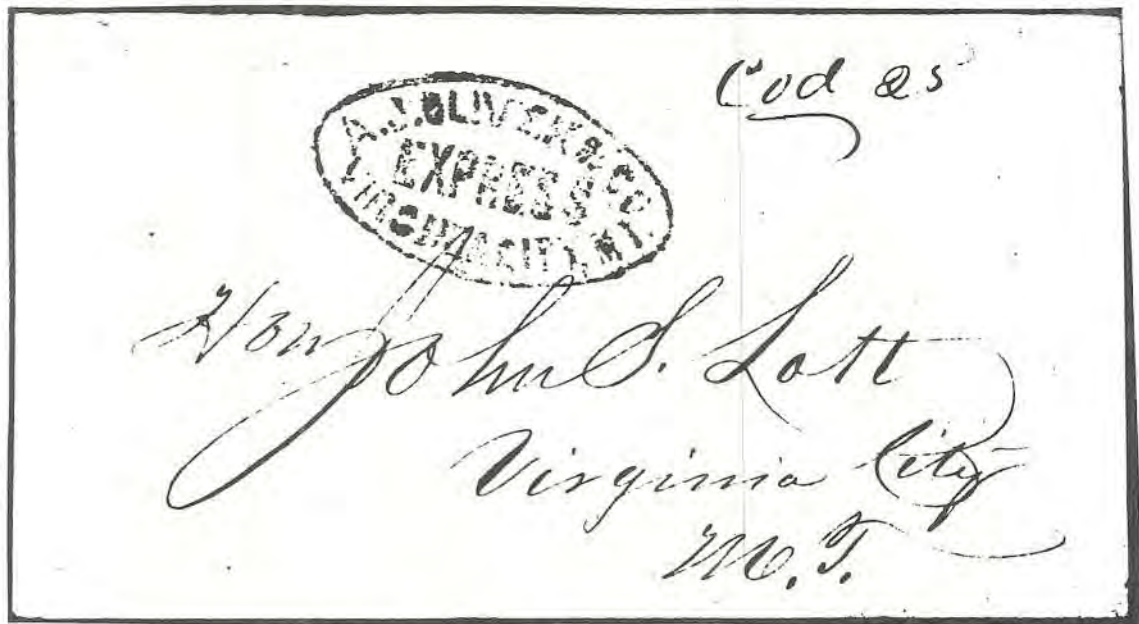
EDITOR'S ARENA (Continued)



20th CENTURY PONY The press, philatelic and otherwise, has adequately covered the California rains and slides—particularly the mudslide that closed the Interstate Hiway just above the Pollack Pines. So we will use this space merely to record the pictorial postmark supplied by the USPS for use on mail carried by the volunteers from the National Pony Express Association.



Discovery copy of A.J. Oliver & Company Express
Virginia City, Montana Territory. C.O.D. 25¢ rate



Submitted by David L. Jarrett