

LINCOLN COUNTY CENTENNIAL: 1869 - 1969

On January 16, 1869, the New Mexico Territorial Legislature created a new county covering a large area in the sparsely populated southeastern part of the territory. Named for the recently assassinated president of the United States, Lincoln County was nearly doubled in size by the addition of a large piece of Doña Ana County land on February 15, 1878. With the addition of this new land, Lincoln County embraced about one-fifth of the total area of New Mexico. Containing some 27,000 square miles, Lincoln ranked as one of the largest counties in the United States.

The seat of county government was established at Lincoln, a sleepy cow-town, which had originated during the last years of Mexican control as a village known as La Placita del Rio Bonita. There was little to be found in the dusty street and scattered adobe buildings of La Placita which could suggest the violence and drama to be witnessed scarcely a decade in the future.

The terrain of old Lincoln County varied from the high and rugged Sierra Blancas and Sierra Capitans of the west to the arid, flat, and seemingly endless llano estacado east of the Pecos River. A number of small, robust streams - the Bonito, the Feliz, the Hondo, the Ruidoso and the Peñasco - head in the western mountains and cut deep valleys as they flow eastward in an attempt to join the Pecos. In the early days, cattle ranching was the dominant force in the county's economy and way of life. Ranches varied greatly both in size and character from the small holdings of settlers dispersed throughout the narrow stream valleys, to the larger spreads of the Pecos River Valley, and finally to the huge empire of the Chisum Ranch, which at its peak ran more than 80,000 head of cattle, and extended almost 200 miles north and south along the Pecos River.

The limitless expanse of wild country and rugged isolation of early day Lincoln County created a magnet which attracted a special breed of men. Men of power and wealth sought out the area as a new battleground of economic and political competition. Men of questionable background with the law on their trail or a price on their heads sought out the area as a refuge where few questions would be asked of a stranger minding his own affairs. Men of adventure and youth sought out the area as an environment in which they might "make their mark" quickly, and rise to early riches and fame. Finally, men and women of peaceful purpose, but restless spirit, sought out Lincoln County as a place to make their homes, to build their towns and to raise their children.

The first two decades of Lincoln County history dramatically reflect the crucible nature of this desolate and beautiful territory. The Lincoln County War of 1878, which resulted from the clash of two powerful factions employing men who were willing to bend the law to suit their purposes, stands as one of the most violent and famous cattle feuds in the history of the West.

In this centennial year, 1969, the editor of La Posta wishes to undertake through the pages of this bulletin to commemorate the early days of Lincoln County by recalling some of the county's postal history of the era. La Posta will run two articles, "Ghosts of Lincoln County," and "A Postal History of the Lincoln County War," as well as an original map of Lincoln County in 1880. It is hoped that this material will serve to introduce some of our readers to the colorful and romantic events and people of territorial Lincoln County.

## GHOSTS OF LINCOLN COUNTY

Throughout the course of history and settlement in an area there are usually a number of places that flourish briefly and then begin a long dying process which eventually leads to oblivion. To a postal historian, these boom-towns represent one type of a class of post offices which have come to be known as Discontinued Post Offices (DPOs). There are other types of post offices which are considered DPOs, such as the office whose name becomes obsolete due to a change in name, or the post office which becomes a branch or station of another office, but the boom-town type offers a special fascination and a cover from such a DPO represents an authentic bit of historic Americana.

In the United States boom-towns have typically been associated with some kind of extractive activity (mining, forestry, etc.), or with transportation (stage routes, railroads, etc.). The relative importance of these types of economic activity in New Mexico and the West is an important reason behind the frequency of boom-towns listed among the list of Lincoln County's discontinued post offices.

The following list contains information on post offices which operated within the present-day boundaries of Lincoln County (see locator map). Lincoln County's boundaries have been altered drastically during the past century, and it must be re-emphasized that this list records only those offices which were located in the area presently bounded by the county lines. Post offices are listed in alphabetical order.

ANALLA. Established April 27, 1903. The Analla post office was given the family name of its first postmaster, Isidio L. Analla. The community had been founded in 1876, by Jose Analla, and it was in his honor that the post office was named. Analla was located on the north bank of Rio Hondo, about 4 miles downstream from the point where the Bonito and the Ruidoso join to form the Hondo, and in the northeastern corner of range 16 east, township 11 south.

Postmasters and appointment dates: Isidio L. Analla - April 27, 1903; Pedro N. Analla - November 12, 1903; and, Sallie A. Murray - January 8, 1904.

Status: The name of this office was changed to Tinnie on April 5, 1909.

Postmarks Known: Two types of Analla postmark are known. The earliest is a single circle type measuring 28 mm. in diameter with August 11, 1904, the only known date. The other type is the standard 4-bar handstamp, and the only date recorded here is May 31, 1909, some 56 days after the name of the office was changed to Tinnie.

ANGUS. Established March 10, 1898. The Angus post office served a ranching community which had been founded in 1881 by Amos Eakers. The post office was named by Porter G. Peters, the first postmaster, in honor of the VV Ranch which was stocked with Polled Angus cattle. Angus was located on the old star route, state highway 37, between Capitan and Ruidoso. Being about 8 miles southwest of Capitan, Angus served as a place for the star route stages to change teams. The Angus post office was in the east-central part of range 13 east, township 10 south.

Postmasters and appointment dates: Porter G. Peters - March 10, 1898; James Burell - March 17, 1909; and, Mary A. Hagee - June 24, 1910.

Status: The Angus post office was discontinued May 15, 1913, mail to Alto.

Postmarks Known: Two types of Angus postmarks are known. The earliest is a single-circle measuring 28 mm. in diameter and employing a target killer as an integral part of the device. The earliest date for this type is Nov. 23, 1898; the latest known is April 11, 1903. The other known type is a single-circle (29 mm.) with integral grid. Earliest and latest dates are May 17, 1906, and July 11, 1910.

ARABELA. Established February 15, 1901. This community was founded by three Spanish-American families who moved from Walsenburg, Colorado, in the late 1870s. The families settled ranches at the southeast end of the Capitan Mountains and called their settlement Las Tablas (the boards, or planks). A second story contends that the community was first called Los Palos (the sticks), but the old name was never applied to the post office for Andrew M. Richardson, who opened a general store in 1886 and became the community's first postmaster, named it Arabela in honor of the daughter of one of the original settlers. The Arabela post office was located in the upper reaches of the Salt Creek drainage, about 16 miles north of Tinnie, and in the center of range 18 east, township 8 south.

Postmasters and appointment dates: Andrew M. Richardson - February 15, 1901; Thomas B. Meek - November 9, 1905; and, Leopoldo Pacheco - March 14, 1907.

Status: The Arabela post office was discontinued April 30, 1928, mail to Tinnie.

Postmarks Known: Only one type of postmark is recorded for Arabela during the territorial period. It is a single-circle mark measuring 28 mm. in diameter, and the only date known is October 11, 1910.

BOGLE. Established November 15, 1919. The Bogle post office was the second postal facility to be operated at the Coyote pump station on the Southern Pacific Railroad located 12 miles north of Carrizozo. The office was named for James L. Bogle, a pumper for the railroad, who became the first postmaster. The office was located in the northwest corner of range 11 east, township 6 south.

Postmasters and appointment dates: James L. Bogle - November 15, 1919; Charles Lester Williams - April 9, 1923; and, Mrs. Mattie Stewart - January 29, 1925.

Status: The Bogle post office was discontinued September 3, 1925, papers to Carrizozo.

Postmarks Known: No information available.

BONITO. Established August 24, 1882. Bonito post office served the silver mining town of Bonito City, which was located in the widest part of Bonito Canyon in the Sierra Blancas. The site of Bonito City is currently at the bottom of Bonito Lake, the water supply of the city of Alamogordo and a trout lake of local renown. Founded about 1880, the town had a population of around 500 when the post office was established. The Bonito (beautiful) post office was located in the central part of range 13 east, township 10 south.

Postmasters and appointment dates: Charles Metcalfe - August 24, 1882; Jacob G. Huber - May 29, 1884; Lewis W. Bourne - February 12, 1894; Jacob G. Huber - April 3, 1899; Herman Consbruck - April 18, 1901; Chauncey R. Booker - February 2, 1909; and, George Braune - January 8, 1910.

Status: The Bonito post office was discontinued January 31, 1911, mail to Parsons.

Postmarks Known: Three types of Bonito postmark are known. The earliest is a single-circle mark measuring 28 mm. in diameter. The only example of this type is a backstamp receiving mark dated November 8, 1887, using violet ink. The second Bonito type is also a single-circle, but measuring 27 mm. in diameter. Earliest and latest recorded dates for this type are January, 1888, and June 14, 1896. The third postmark type is a single-circle (28 mm.), which differs from Type 1 in both lettering style and territory abbreviation. Earliest and latest dates are November 28, 1898, and May 30, 1910. All Bonito postmark types should be considered scarce, and they are rated in the \$20-\$40 range by Dr. Dike in the New Mexico Territorial Postmark Catalog.

CAROLITA. Established January 14, 1922. The Carolita post office was an extremely short-lived affair which was apparently located somewhere in the general vicinity of Capitan. The first and only Carolita postmaster was Belle Norton, and it might be hypothesized that she named the office for a female friend or relative, but for the time being such a theory is pure speculation.

Status: The Carolita post office was discontinued October 31, 1923, mail to Capitan.

Postmarks Known: No information available.

COALORA. Established June 15, 1903. In about 1899, a tent-town grew-up around a coal mining operation owned by the Phelps Dodge Coal Company and located a mile and a half north and west of Capitan. Eventually, company-owned housing replaced the tents, and the railroad was built to connect Coalora and Capitan with Carrizozo. For a time Coalora was a bustling community with trains hauling out coal to Carrizozo both day and night. The boom was short-lived, however, for in 1905 the coal company decided to shut down operations in and around Coalora in favor of better mines in other areas. Once the mines were closed, most of the town's buildings were moved off to Dawson, another Phelps Dodge coal-town in the northeastern corner of New Mexico, and to nearby Capitan. The Coalora post office was located in the southwestern corner of range 14 east, township 8 south.

Postmasters and appointment dates: George F. Graves - June 15, 1903; Bernardo A. Romero - September 21, 1903; Tennessee C. Hill - March 24, 1904; and, Adolph Becker - April 24, 1905.

Status: The Coalora post office was discontinued July 31, 1905, mail to Capitan.

Postmarks Known: One type of Coalora postmark is known. It is a single-circle measuring 27.5 mm. in diameter, and the only date recorded for this type is December 24, 1904.

DESEO. Established July 25, 1916. Romantically named with the Spanish word for desire, the Deseo post office served about 50 families living in Paradise Valley about 12 miles north of Capitan. Walter H. Sellers made application for the post office, and became its first and only postmaster. Throughout the two years of its existence, the Deseo office was operated from a corner of Sellers' store, which was actually a part of his residence. The Deseo post office was located in the northern portion of range 14 east, township 7 south.

Status: The Deseo post office was discontinued November 15, 1918, mail to Encinosa.

Postmarks Known: No information available.

EICHEL. Established June 7, 1906. The Eichel post office was located on the Southern Pacific Railroad about 7 miles northeast of Ancho, and it is possible that the name of the office was chosen in connection with the railroad. Details, however, are lacking. This post office was in the northeast corner of range 12 east, township 4 south.

Postmasters and appointment dates: Roy McCurdy - June 7, 1906; Emil J. Schmidt - December 7, 1906; Percy Welch - August 1, 1907; William H. Cavanaugh - June 25, 1908.

Status: The Eichel post office was discontinued September 15, 1913, papers to Ancho.

Postmarks Known: Only one type of Eichel postmark is known. It is of a four bar style with solid bars and number enclosed. One example of this type is recorded, and it is dated November 26, 1906.

ENCINOSO. Established May 25, 1915. The Encinosa post office was so named because of a prominent stand of oak trees in the vicinity. The word is a form of the Spanish encina, meaning "evergreen oak." Encinosa post office was located in a general merchandise store built in 1915 by Samuel Farmer, who became the first postmaster. The store and postal facility were located about 13 road miles north of Capitan on state highway 48, and in the central part of range 15 east, township 7 south.

Postmasters and appointment dates: Samuel Farmer - May 25, 1915; Rumaldo A. Duran - April 23, 1917; and, Martiniano Lucero - February 1, 1919.

Status: The Encinosa post office was discontinued March 31, 1920.

Postmarks Known: No information available.

GALENA. Established November 4, 1880. Galena is a native lead sulfide ore which is the principal ore of lead, and also often contains silver. As might be expected, the Galena post office was situated amidst an area of highly active mining operations and was so named because of them. The original attraction to the locality was the discovery of gold at the mouth of Nogal Canyon in 1879. The community which quickly sprung up was first called Dry Gulch, but for some reason that was deemed an unsuitable name when the post office was established. The Galena post office was located about 10 miles southeast of Carrizozo, between Sierra Blanca and the Tucson Mountains, in the northwest corner of range 13 east, township 9 south.

Postmasters and appointment dates: George Welliford - November 4, 1880 and Harry George - September 12, 1881.

Status: The name of this post office was changed to Nogal on May 9, 1882.

Postmarks Known: None.

GRAY. Established August 20, 1894. The Gray post office was named for Seaborn T. Gray, who homesteaded on the Salado Flat in 1884. Gray built a small store, and as the number of settlers increased in the community, he applied for a post office, became the first postmaster, and named the office for himself. In January, 1900, a branch line of the railroad was built into the community from Carrizozo, and the name was changed to Capitan. Seaborn Gray remained postmaster until the name change went into effect. The Gray office was located in the north-central part of range 14 east, township 9 south.

Status: The name of this post office was changed to Capitan on October 11, 1900.

Postmarks Known: Only one type of Gray postmark is known. It is a single-circle which measures 27.5 mm. in diameter. The earliest date recorded is October 14, 1899; the latest is February 10, 1900.

GREEN TREE. Established January 16, 1947. It was originally intended to name this office Palo Verde, but postal officials objected on the grounds that there were already a number of offices of that name in the country. Green Tree was simply the English equivalent. The Green Tree post office was located on U.S. highway 70, about 5 miles east of Ruidoso, and in the central portion of range 14 east, township 11 south.

Postmasters and appointment dates: Mrs. Dorothy R. Parnell - January 16, 1947.

Status: The name of this office was changed to Ruidoso Downs on October 1, 1958.

Postmarks Known: Since this office functioned as a fourth class post office until July 1, 1950, and a third class office after that date, it undoubtedly employed a standard four-bar hand stamp. A machine cancel is also a possibility, but no details are known.

HOLLOWAY. Established May 9, 1908. The Holloway post office was named for its first postmaster, James M. Holloway. This office was located in the extreme northern part of Lincoln County, about 6 miles south of Corona on the Southern Pacific Railroad, and in the southwestern corner of range 13 east, township 1 south.

Postmasters and appointment dates: James M. Holloway - May 9, 1908, and Rebecca Slack - July 28, 1913.

Status: The Holloway post office was discontinued February 27, 1915, mail to Corona.

Postmarks Known: None are known from the territorial period (1908-1912), and no information is available for the statehood period.

HURLBURT. Established October 6, 1908. Hurlburt was the first of two post offices to be established at the Coyote pump station about 12 miles north of Carrizozo on the Southern Pacific Railroad. The office was named for F. Hurlburt, the agent of the railroad, who had his office in a box car. Hurlburt served as the first postmaster. This office was located in the northwest corner of range 11 east, township 6 south.

Postmasters and appointment dates: F. Hurlburt - October 6, 1908, and Martin G. Lyons - October 24, 1913.

Status: The Hurlburt post office was discontinued March 31, 1915, papers to Carrizozo.

Postmarks Known: Only one type of postmark is known for Hurlburt in the territorial period. It is the standard 4-bar type, and the only territorial date known is Jan. 18, 1910. This postmark type was probably used during the statehood period as well, but no information is currently available.

JICARILLA. Established December 21, 1892. The Jicarilla post office served a small mining and ranching community located some 27 miles northeast of Carrizozo. The post office name was taken from the surrounding mountains, and the mountains bore the name of the Jicarilla Apaches who formerly inhabited them. Jicarilla means "little basket cup" in Spanish, and the Apaches were so named because of their skill in basket making. The Jicarilla post office was located in the central part of range 12 east, township 5 south.

Postmasters and appointment dates: Jacob Weisher - December 21, 1892; Emilia S. Ozane - August 10, 1894; William Frost - May 13, 1898; William S. Ross - June 20, 1898; J. Phillips - June 6, 1900; William Frost - October 25, 1900; George G. Thorp - May 5, 1910; Maximismo de Guebaro - July 8, 1911; George J. Weishar - June 11, 1914; and, Edward J. Weishar - May 14, 1927. The office was temporarily discontinued on Nov. 12, 1927, but re-established a short time thereafter and continued in service until 1942. The following were postmasters in the post-1927 period: R. W. Bilbo, Mrs. Thompson, Fanny Sherrill and Callie Roselle. Their appointment dates are not known.

Status: After only one interruption in service during the late 1920s, the Jicarilla post office was finally discontinued in 1942.

Postmarks Known: Two types of Jicarilla postmark are recorded for the territorial period. The earliest type is a single-circle measuring 27 mm. in diameter. Known dates range from March 7, 1902 to December 15, 1906. The second type Jicarilla postmark is the standard 4-bar style, which has been recorded during the territorial period from August 26, 1907 to August 1, 1911. It may be expected that the 4-bar style was used into the statehood period, and quite possibly other statehood types may exist. At this time, information is not available for the statehood period.

JONETA. December 8, 1922. The Joneta post office served a small trading center in the northeast corner of Lincoln County. Named for Mrs. Joneta Bagley, a local resident, the office was located along state highway 42, about 30 miles southeast of Corona, and in the central part of range 17 east, township 2 south.

Postmasters and appointment dates: Andrew P. Alexander - December 8, 1922, and John M. Wicks - October 19, 1925.

Status: The Joneta post office was discontinued November 30, 1926, mail to Vaughn.

Postmarks Known: No information available.

LON. Established in 1934. In 1931, Benjamin Moseley built a general store in the trade center formerly served by the Joneta post office. He applied for and got authorization to establish a new post office, which he named for his son, Lonnie Moseley. The Lon post office was at approximately the same location as the Joneta office in the central portion of range 17 east, township 2 south.

Postmaster: Benjamin Moseley. Date of appointment: 1934.

Status: The Lon post office was discontinued in 1942.

Postmarks Known: No information available.

MANCHESTER. Established June 10, 1881. The Manchester post office was an extremely short-lived venture, lasting only from June to October in 1881. Manchester was reportedly settled as an alternative site to nearby White Oaks. Supporters of the rival site managed to secure a post office, and had hopes of opening a bank. The story is told that when the wouldbe bankers gathered together to inspect their first shipment of cash they found the keg filled with nails with only a few silver dollars scattered on top. Whether or not this story is true, the bank apparently never opened, and the post office was closed four months after it was established. The exact location of the Manchester post office is not known, but it was undoubtedly located very near White Oaks in the southwest corner of range 12 east, township 6 south.

Postmasters and appointment dates: William L. Cornwell - June 10, 1881, and Iris W. Blood - July 13, 1881.

Status: The Manchester post office was discontinued October 18, 1881.

Postmarks Known: None.

MEEK. Established June 5, 1904. This postal facility operated during the first two decades of the 20th century in the remote Salt Creek area 15 miles northeast of Lincoln. The Meek post office was given the family name of its first postmaster, Thomas B. Meek. Meek was located on state highway 48 in the southeast corner of range 17 east, township 7 south.

Postmasters and appointment dates: Thomas B. Meek - June 5, 1904; Mary L. Meek - Oct. 20, 1905; Frank S. Elliott - June 3, 1908; Samuel W. Clove - July 7, 1911; Roy H. Walworth - May 13, 1913; and, Ruth Meadows - May 22, 1922.

Status: The Meek post office was discontinued November 29, 1922, mail to Tinnie.

Postmarks Known: Only one type of Meek postmark is known for the territorial period. It is the 4-bar type with open bars and number enclosed, and the only known example of this postmark is dated August 4, 1908. No information is available concerning postmarks of the statehood period.

OSCURA. Established in 1947. The establishment of the Oscura post office was actually the re-establishment of the old Oscuro office with a slight name change. (See OSCURO for details of naming and location). The locality is now generally known as Oscura, and the postal name change was apparently in response to local custom.

Postmaster: Mrs. Vena Stoneman. Appointment date: 1947.

Status: The Oscura post office was discontinued in 1951.

Postmarks Known: No information available, but undoubtedly the standard 4-bar can be expected.

OSCURO. Established March 28, 1901. The Oscuro post office served a community which was developed in response to the establishment of a pumping station on the El Paso and North Eastern Railroad (now part of the Southern Pacific system). Named for the Oscura Mts. lying to the west, Oscuro was located about 17 miles southwest of Carrizozo on the railroad and what is now U.S. highway 54. Oscuro is a Spanish word meaning dark or heavily shaded. The post office was in the southwestern corner of range 9 east, township 9 south.

Postmasters and appointment dates: George A. Galucia - March 28, 1901; Eliza J. Galucia - September 6, 1901; John C. Marquez - June 12, 1903; Charles G. Rafferty - November 1, 1907; Joseph Ashford - July 20, 1908; John H. Boyd - May 17, 1913; Robert W. Burn - July 29, 1915; Charles G. Grey - February 3, 1919; Marguerite L. Gray - April 19, 1921; Charles G. Grey - September 25, 1923; Lillie M. Brown - September 21, 1927; Maggie M. Brazil - June 5, 1929; Ollie E. Kimmons - November 13, 1930; William W. Wettstein - November 24, 1931.

Status: The Oscuro post office was not in service from March 15th to November 1st, 1907. The facility was discontinued in 1932.

Postmarks Known: Two types of Oscuro postmarks are known for the territorial period. The earliest type is a standard 4-bar hand cancel with open bars and number enclosed, and the only example of this type is dated June 23, 1906. The second postmark type is also a standard 4-bar, but with solid bars and no enclosed number. The earliest date for this type is August 23, 1908, and the latest known date of the territorial period is June 30, 1911. No information is available for statehood types, but the 4-bar cancel is to be expected.

PARSONS. Established January 24, 1888. In 1886, R. C. Parsons was prospecting along the Rio Bonito about 5 miles above Bonito City (now Bonito Lake) when he struck "pay dirt." The discovery of gold in this locality touched off a minor boom and resulted in the rapid founding of the town of Parsons. Parsons was at its zenith in the 1890s when John M. Rice, a Chicago building contractor, moved to the community and built the three story Parsons Inn. Rice became postmaster in 1901, and for two decades operated the post office from one corner of the long dining room of the Inn. High operating costs forced the closing of Parsons' mines during the 1920s, and today the old Parsons Inn building is about all that remains of the once bustling little town. The Parsons post office was located in the south-central part of range 11 east, township 9 south.

Postmasters and appointment dates: Miss Sophia S. Dillard - January 24, 1888; James H. Collard - August 8, 1888; Mary E. Baird - June 27, 1891; Hattie E. Parsons - Nov. 28, 1892; John M. Rice - September 23, 1901; and, Lizzie A. Grafton - August 26, 1923.

Status: The Parsons post office was discontinued March 31, 1926, mail to Nogal.

Postmarks Known: Only one type of postmark is known from Parsons during the territorial period. It is a single-circle measuring 26.5 mm. in diameter, and the only recorded example is dated January 25, 1889. No information is available on statehood types.



PINE LODGE. Established August 14, 1923. The Pine Lodge post office was a descriptively named facility which served a small resort community located on the north side of the Capitan Mountains near the head waters of Salt Creek. In 1909 the site was leased from the federal government by a group of businessmen from Roswell, New Mexico. The businessmen were interested in establishing a summer resort, and while the idea was certainly valid, Pine Lodge never became a resort of great magnitude. This office was located in the northeast corner of range 17 east, township 8 south.

Postmaster: Edward M. Spencer. Appointment date: August 14, 1923.

Status: The Pine Lodge post office was discontinued September 5, 1924, mail to Arabela.

Postmarks Known: No information available.

RABENTON. Established June 28, 1910. The establishment of this post office was in effect the re-establishment of the old RAVENTON post office with a name change which amounted to an Americanization of the Spanish name. The Rabenton post office was located in the same general locality as the Raventon office in the northeast corner of range 13 east, township 6 south.

Postmasters and appointment dates: Augustine Chavez - June 28, 1910; Bonnie Richardson - December 19, 1914; Sarah L. Corn - July 15, 1915; Adelina de Martinez - March 2, 1921; Augustine Chavez - December 7, 1922; and, Eluticia Chavez - May 16, 1928.

Status: The Rabenton post office was discontinued on September 29, 1928.

Postmarks Known: No Rabenton postmarks are known from the territorial period, and no information is available for the statehood period.

RAMON. Established November 13, 1925. The name of this post office was reported to have been chosen in Washington, D.C., from a list of names submitted in 1924. The word is one Spanish form of the name Raymond, but it apparently has little or no local significance. The Ramon post office served a ranching community on U.S. highway 285, about 32 miles south of Vaughn, and in the extreme northeastern corner of Lincoln County. This office was located in the east-central part of range 19 east, township 1 south.

Postmasters and appointment dates: Edna Mae Kelso - November 13, 1925, and Lewis Johnson - March 15, 1928.

Status: The Ramon post office was discontinued October 1, 1945, mail to Yeso.

Postmarks Known: No information available.

RAVENTON. Established February 26, 1896. The Raventon post office served a small farm and ranch community located about 7 miles northeast of White Oaks. Details of the naming of the community are not known, but it is known that the name was of Spanish origin for the "v" was pronounced as a "b" in English. It also seems apparent that Raventon's economy was closely tied to that of White Oaks, for as the mining town faded so did the farm town. The Raventon post office was located in the northeast corner of range 13 east, township 6 south.

Postmasters and appointment dates: David H. Lueras - February 26, 1896, and Ramon Ulibarri - April 16, 1898.

Status: The Raventon post office was discontinued March 15, 1900.

Postmarks Known: None.

RED CLOUD. Established March 30, 1882. The Red Cloud post office functioned for a little over 8 years very near the present-day boundary between Lincoln and Torrance counties. The office was apparently named for the great war chief of the Sioux Indians, who had driven settlers from the Bozeman Trail in 1868, but had become a pacified reservation Indian by the late 1870s. No local connection between the chief and the post office is known. One interesting tale relates that the Red Cloud post office was closed because the regular mail carrier was killed by outlaws before he reached the stage station where the office was located, and that after that the mail was sent through Pinos Wells. The Red Cloud post office was probably located in the northern portion of range 13 east, township 1 south, although its exact location is not known.

Postmasters and appointment dates: Maggie Thompson - March 30, 1882.

Status: The Red Cloud post office was discontinued December 11, 1890.

Postmarks Known: The only postmark known from the Red Cloud office is a manuscript mark dated May 12, 1883.

RICHARDSON. Established April 3, 1895. This post office served a stock-raising community located north of the Capitan Mountains about 20 miles north of Lincoln, and near the route of state highway 48. Andrew M. Richardson was the first postmaster, and the office was given his family name. The Richardson post office was located in the central part of range 16 east, township 6 south.

Postmasters and appointment dates: Andrew M. Richardson - April 3, 1895; Joshua H. Steele - February 6, 1900; Henry A. Scott - March 26, 1904; Oliver B. McKissick - May 6, 1905; Lloyd Taylor - April 23, 1909; and, Samuel G. Beard - March 31, 1911.

Status: The Richardson post office was discontinued October 31, 1912, mail to Capitan.

Postmarks Known: Only one type of Richardson postmark is known. It is a single-circle type measuring 27.5 mm. in diameter. The earliest known date for this type is Jan. 23, 1896; and the latest territorial date is October 13, 1899. Statehood postmarks are a possibility.

SPINDLE. Established February 13, 1917. The Spindle post office was named for the Spindle family who homesteaded in locality. The office served a ranching and farming community located north of the Capitan Mountains some 22 miles northeast of Capitan on state highway 48. The Spindle post office was located in the central portion of range 17 east, township 7 south.

Postmaster and appointment dates: Eliza M. Spindle - February 13, 1917; David E. Spindle - January 12, 1918; John J. Mills - December 9, 1918; and, J. P. Pendergrass - March 1, 1920.

Status: The Spindle post office was discontinued April 15, 1920, mail to Capitan.

Postmarks Known: No information available.

VERA CRUZ. Established July 5, 1881. The fortunes of this post office were tied to the Vera Cruz gold mine located on the west slope of the Tucson Mountains about 10 miles east of Carrizozo. The post office was named for the mine, and was located in the northwestern portion of range 13 east, township 8 south.

Postmaster: Fletcher A. Blake. Appointment date: July 5, 1881.

Status: The Vera Cruz post office was closed June 25, 1883, papers to Nogal.

Postmarks Known: None.

WHITE OAKS. Established June 4, 1880. The story of the gold strike which fostered the boom-town of White Oaks became so famous that it was passed on from miner to miner all over the mountain and desert west. In 1879, a traveler named Wilson rode into the camp of a group of placer miners working the dry washes around White Oak Spring. For some reason, which has been lost in the telling and re-telling of the tale, Wilson climbed nearby Baxter Mountain where he chanced upon some surface rocks bearing wire gold. He brought the rocks down to the placer camp, and promptly sold out his interest in the find. A flurry of claim-staking followed and the North Homestake Mine was born. This mine alone was eventually to yield over half-a-million dollars in flour, free and wire gold. More important, however, the discovery touched-off a New Mexico gold rush which promptly saw Baxter Mountain and the surrounding hills covered with mining claims with names like White Swan, Little Nell, Hoosier Boy, Smuggler, Queen of God and Old Abe. By August 15, 1879, the lowlands beneath Baxter Mountain had been transformed from casual Apache camp sites into a rough and ready, lusty mining town which was officially founded as White Oaks on that date.

White Oaks grew rapidly as more and more miners struck "pay dirt" in the surrounding mountains. White Oaks Avenue, the town's main street, grew to a thoroughfare 100 feet wide and half a mile long. It was lined with hitching rails, wooden falsefronts and even buildings of brick and native stone. An impressive two-story school house, and several grandiose mansions of the Victorian style attested to the new found wealth of the young community. An estimated 4000 people lived in White Oaks during the 1890s, and many hundreds more camped in the surrounding hills to work their mines. Between 1880 and 1905, White Oaks was the home of four different newspapers, although there were never more than three publishing at any given time.

The fatal blow to White Oaks was actually struck before the town had reached its peak in the early 1890s. In 1888 there was considerable speculation as to when and which railroad would reach the town. Land prices were bid up unrealistically, as it seemed almost impossible that one of the proposed railways would bypass the booming White Oaks. The speculation proved a costly mistake, for the railroad builders elected to run through Carrizozo, a smaller town some ten miles to the southwest. By the turn of the century, the signs of White Oak's decline were evident to the casual observer. Mining machinery lay rusting on the sides of the hills, businesses had begun closing down along White Oaks Avenue, and the Saturday night crowds at Mme. Varnish's Little Casino and the Star Saloon were well below the numbers of the booming '90s.

The White Oaks post office, which was established less than a year after the town was founded, was named for the white oak trees which lent their name to the old spring. John M. McCutcheon was the first postmaster, and during the hey-day of the town mail was brought in daily by a stage which operated between San Antonio, New Mexico and Roswell. The stage was operated by the Ozane Stage line. On May 30, 1954, the closing of the White Oaks post office made official a fact that had been known for the past two or three decades; White Oaks was a ghost town.

Your editor was in White Oaks on Easter Sunday, 1969, and can report that there are still people living in the old town. Two or three of the old Victorian mansions are in a fair state of repair, although White Oaks is not a commercial "ghost town" in the sense of a Virginia City. The old school house is boarded-up and a tree has blown down in the overgrown school yard, but it seems well preserved and in better repair than some now used in this part of the country. White Oaks Avenue is still wide, but partially overgrown with tumbleweed and mesquite. The hitching rails are long gone, and only one two-story wooden frame building remains of "down-town" section. Stone and brick foundations line both sides of the broad dirt street bearing mute testimony to the former days of glory.

White Oaks post office was located about 10 miles northeast of Carrizozo, and in the southwestern corner of range 12 east, township 6 south.

Postmasters and appointment dates: John M. McCutcheon - June 4, 1880; Adna Lawson - August 10, 1880; Abner W. Kempton - June 25, 1881; Henry Billoney - January 20, 1883; Joseph Collier - January 11, 1886; Ella G. Timoney - June 24, 1889; Charles Bull - April 5, 1893; John A. Brown - November 10, 1897; Miss Sarah De Aguayo - June 3, 1907; Lee H. Rudiselle - August 25, 1908; Robert N. Taylor - August 6, 1914; William H. Walker - December 29, 1919; Edith S. Van Schoyck - March 14, 1922; Lillian Littleton - 1943. Dates of appointment are not available for the following postmasters who served during the 1943-54 period: Bulah Hartley, Helen Hobbs, Evelyn Whitwell and Orene K. Crenshaw.

Status: The White Oaks post office was discontinued May 30, 1954, mail to Carrizozo.

Postmarks Known: There are 13 types of postmarks recorded from White Oaks during the territorial period. They are listed below.

Type	Description and Outer Diameter (mm.)	Earliest Date	Latest Date
1.	Double-circle outline plus inner circle- 3 1/4 mm.	12 Nov. 1880	19 Oct. 1881
2.	Double-circle outline - 29 mm. Target	30 Mar. 1882	7 Sep. 1883
3.	Single-circle outline - 26 mm.	22 Oct. 1883	(only example)
4.	Double-circle outline - 32 mm. Wheel of Fortune	21 Mar. 1884	13 May 1886
5.	Single-circle outline - 25.5 mm.	30 May 1884	(only example)
6.	Single-circle outline - 31 mm.	15 July 1884	1 Feb. 1886
7.	Single-circle outline - 29 mm.	1 Oct. 1886	(only example)
8.	Single-circle outline - 33 mm. Star in Star	27 Dec. 1887	21 Mar. 1888
9.	Single-circle outline - 27 mm.	13 Apr. 1888	16 Sep. 1890
10.	Single-circle outline - 27.5 mm.	13 Oct. 1890	31 Dec. 1892
11.	Single-circle outline - 28.5 mm.	9 Dec. 1893	21 Aug. 1902
12.	Single-circle outline - 28 mm.	16 Feb. 1899	27 Feb. 1905
13.	Four-bar hand cancel solid bars no numeral	31 Dec. 1907	11 Nov. 1911

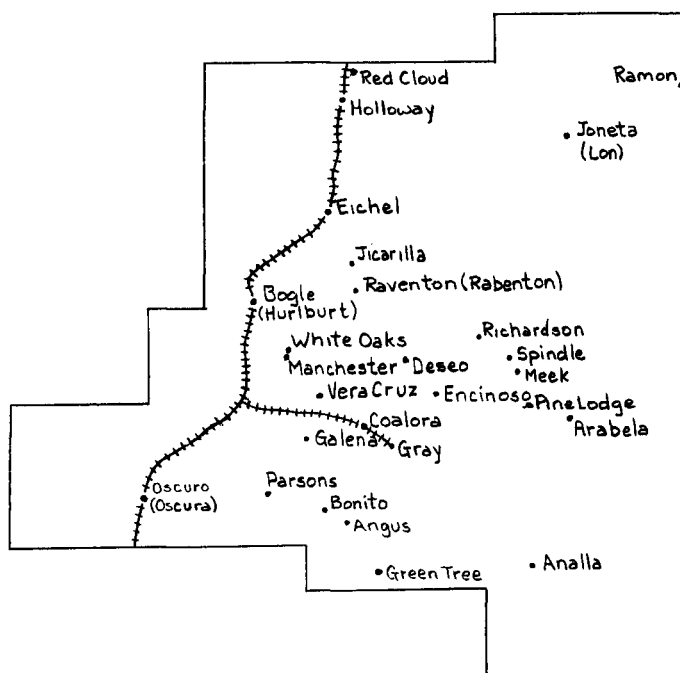
No information is available on White Oaks postmarks of the statehood period.

In addition to the above listed office, the following were authorized but never actually placed in operation:

BURSUM - January 12, 1922  
CHURCHVILLE - September 13, 1889

COLE - June 25, 1890  
DOSO - May 21, 1926

rwh.



LINCOLN COUNTY GHOST LOCATOR MAP

Data Sources: Records and Documents of the United States Government.

The record archives of the United States government which are relevant to the pursuit of postal history research are truly a labyrinthian wonderland. This author can hope to do little more than nudge open the door a crack to shed a wee glimmer of light on those few dusty sources which have personally been found to be of value. It is sincerely hoped that readers of this column will add bits and pieces to its wee glimmer of light, and thereby benefit us all in our search for the most worthwhile government documents and publications.

Records of Appointments of Postmasters. This particular series would seem a logical place to start the discussion, for it offers the advantages of being 1) an almost complete file of all post offices and postmasters, and 2) available to everyone at a reasonable cost. The Records of Appointments of Postmasters before 1930 are stored in the National Archives, and are available on microfilm from the General Services Administration, National Archives and Records Service, Washington, D.C. 20408. This series, which is actually a microfilm copy of the original handwritten records of the Post Office Department, contains the following pieces of information about every post office: date of establishment (actually the date on which its first postmaster was appointed, and rarely if ever the date the post office began actual operations); date each succeeding postmaster was appointed up to about 1930; changes in the name of the office (usually, but not always with the date of name change); date office was discontinued and re-established if applicable; and, finally, the name of the office to which the business of the discontinued office was transferred.

There is obviously a wealth of valuable information in this record series, but there are some cautions and limitations which should be mentioned. First, as described above, the series is available only as microfilmed copies of the original hand written records. This means reading very, very tiny manuscript, and unless there is a microfilm viewer in your home or office, it will probably require several long hours spent in the public library pouring over the records and transcribing the information of interest. Second, the records themselves are not only difficult to read - handwriting styles have changed drastically over the past century, but they are replete with a variety of errors, both of omission and commission. This author recalls vividly the many hours of howling frustration occasioned by the discovery that the Parkersville post office of Baker County, Oregon, was suddenly discontinued on June 29, 1876, with no record of it ever having been established. Postmasters' names are frequently misspelled, dates are omitted or listed in a contradictory manner, and post offices sometimes disappear from the records without warning or explanation.

Third, the records are organized by county for each state, and chronologically by periods which are generally 10 years duration or longer. For example, to find information about Lincoln County, New Mexico, which was formed in 1869, it is first necessary to turn to the records covering the 1864-1877 period of New Mexico Territory. Quite frequently, post offices were established before the county in which they were eventually located became organized. So, in the case of Fort Stanton, Lincoln County, it is necessary to work backward from the period in which Lincoln County was established to the period prior to 1864, and with the county which previously controlled the area around the post office. If it sounds complicated, its not really, but it does take a little getting used to, and the understanding that county boundaries have changed radically with the passage of time.

Fourth, there is no specific information contained in the series which indicates the location of a post office beyond the county designation (remember, a county designation can be misleading). It is, however, sometimes possible to infer locational information in an indirect and highly unreliable way. Discontinued offices are usually "closed out" to another office. As a general rule, with numerous exceptions, the office to which business is transferred is relatively near the discontinued office, so it becomes possible to make statements such as, "somewhere in the vicinity of ...," and "in the

same general area as ...." This is unfortunate, and often phrases such as these can be avoided with good maps of the period, but some post offices just never seem to have been mapped. At this point, it would seem appropriate to interject the fact that most 19th century post offices in the West were to some degree migratory. Offices were typically located in the postmasters' home or place of business, and when the postmaster ended his term, the office often moved to the home or store of the new postmaster. The distance moved varied greatly from office to office, and change to change, but it has been this author's experience that moves of 2 to 4 miles were not uncommon. Perhaps the wildest example of a migratory post office encountered by this author to date was the Joppa office (1874-76) of Washington County, Oregon. A contemporary newspaper, the Pacific Monthly and Official Gazette, reported that the Joppa office had been discontinued because a migratory peddler, who was the postmaster, carried the post office around the hills in his pocket. The Post Office Department, learning of this practice, decided that Joppa was not being properly served, and closed the office.

A second and even riskier means of inferring locations from this series is the use of postmasters' names. While it is obviously true that postmasters could and did move from place to place to become postmaster of a new office, it was also sometimes true that a new post office would be operated in the homestead or store of an individual who had once been postmaster of another office at the same place. The latter case applies best to the short-term smaller post offices, which were established one year and closed the next, but those are precisely the type that are most difficult to locate on maps. Extreme caution must be used with this type of inference, and if possible any theories so derived should be either correlated with other information, or tempered by an acknowledgement of the weakness of the source information.

The Records of Appointments of Postmasters is without-a-doubt a highly useful tool, but it must be used with caution and a full understanding of its limitations. There may well be some helpful hints which have been omitted from this report, and readers are encouraged to point these out.

Recently stated prices of Records of Appointments of Postmasters before 1930 for some of the western states are quoted in the following table. Prices are apparently subject to change, and perhaps the best strategy for an interested individual is to contact the General Services Administration directly in order to obtain a specifically quoted price on the material desired.

Alaska .....	\$2.00
Arizona .....	\$6.25
California .....	\$25.30
Colorado .....	\$17.75
Idaho .....	\$2.50
Montana .....	\$3.00
Nevada .....	\$2.00
New Mexico .....	\$16.00
Oregon .....	\$4.75
Washington .....	\$4.00
Wyoming .....	\$5.45

Post Office Geographical Site Location Reports. Brief mention should also be made of this series which is available from the same source, e.g., General Services Administration. This author has never worked with this particular series, because of its extremely high cost, but Elmer Binker, the editor of the Postal Historian from White City, Oregon, has this series for a few counties in southern Oregon. The Site Location Reports are reported to be highly detailed and precise in the location of post offices. The series is also available on microfilm, and apparently arranged by county areas. Information contained in this series would undoubtedly be of extreme value in doing a detailed postal history of a particular post office or group of offices. The following table presents some recently

quoted prices for Geographical Site Location Reports covering some of the western United States.

California .....	\$1312.50
Alaska .....	\$125.00
Idaho .....	\$500.00
Montana .....	\$500.00
Nevada .....	\$125.00
Washington .....	\$562.50
Wyoming .....	\$312.50

Anyone for the complete set?

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Next Issue: RECORDS AND DOCUMENTS OF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT (continued).

#### POST OFFICE CENTENNIALS OF THE MOUNTAIN AND DESERT WEST.

One hundred years ago the mountain and desert west was in the early stages of settlement by migrants from the eastern United States. To be sure, the West had been settled at a much earlier time by American Indians and the colonists from old Spain, but the United States post office, with which we are here concerned, came West as an extension of federal interest in the area.

This year, 1969, coincident with the 100th anniversary of the driving of the golden spike at Promontory Point, Utah, there are a number of post offices scattered throughout the mountain and desert west which will record their 100th year of operation. With the idea of publicizing some of these anniversaries, this column will present the names and dates of establishment for those offices reaching the 100 year mark this year. The dates that are used are the dates of appointment for the first postmaster. There is little chance that any given office actually began operating on the date listed, but at least the post office began its official existence on that date.

Only offices which are currently still in operation will be listed.

#### ARIZONA

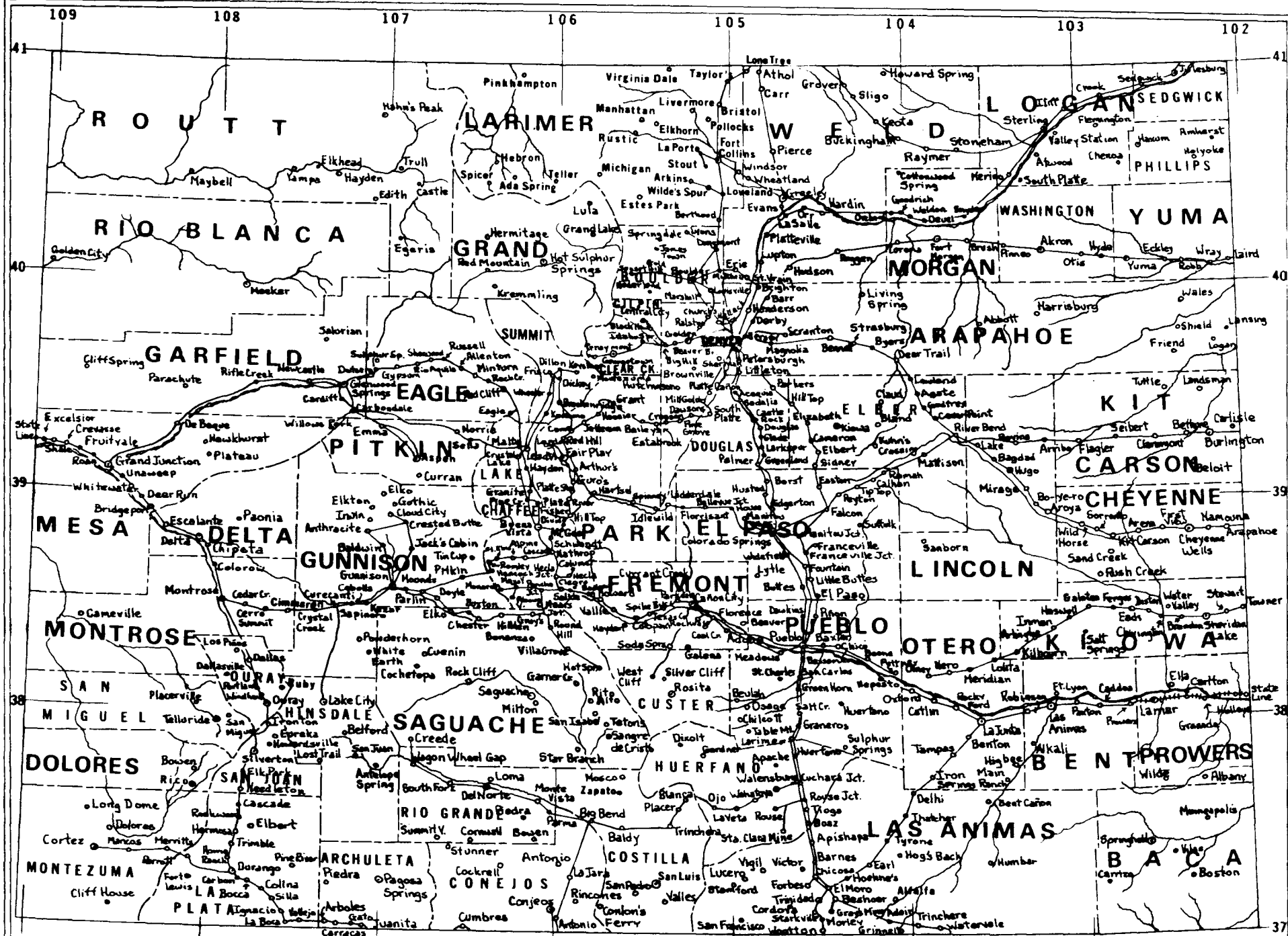
Ehrenberg, Yuma County.	Established September 20, 1869.	Zip code - 85334.
Florence, Pinal County.	Established August 19, 1869.	Zip code - 85232.
McDowell, Maricopa County.	Established August 19, 1869.	Zip code - 850 (Phoenix Sta.)
Phoenix, Maricopa County.	Established June 15, 1869.	Zip code - 850
Skull Valley, Yavapai Co.	Established April 26, 1869.	Zip code - 86338.

#### COLORADO

Central City, Gilpin Co.	Established October 8, 1869, name changed from Mountain City.	
Fort Lupton, Weld County	Established January 18, 1869.	Zip code - 80621.
Kit Carson, Cheyenne Co.	Established December 29, 1869.	Zip code - 80825.
Littleton, Arapahoe Co.	Established April 8, 1869.	Zip code - 80120.
Monument, El Paso County	Established April 6, 1869.	Zip code - 80132.

#### OREGON

Monitor, Marion County	Established November 16, 1869.	Zip code - 97072 (Ind. Rural)
Newberg, Yamhill County	Established November 5, 1869.	Zip code - 97132.
Pendleton, Umatilla Co.	Established October 8, 1869.	Zip code - 97801.



# COLORADO: 1880



- LEDGEND
- COUNTY SEAT ○
  - TOWN ●
  - RAILROAD —+—
  - STREAM ———



Postal history enthusiasts of the mountain and desert west received a particular treat at the recently completed spring meeting of the American Philatelic Society held in Tucson in conjunction with ARPEX - the annual exhibit of the Arizona Philatelic Rangers. In addition to the dedication of the Western Postal History Museum with its outstanding collection of western territorial covers, there were a number of exceptional territorial exhibits by private collectors, a non-commercial bourse in which the Western Postal History Museum sold a number of its duplicate Arizona and New Mexico territorials, an a seminar conducted by Alex L. ter Braake whose fine postal history project, "Texas: The Drama of Its Postal Past," is currently appearing serially in The American Philatelist.

The Western Postal History Museum has come about largely through the efforts of the Arizona Philatelic Rangers. Working in conjunction with the Arizona Pioneers Historical Society, the Rangers have assembled an outstanding collection of western postal markings. While the collection is particularly strong in Arizona and New Mexico territorial markings, it is not limited to these areas, and the goal is to establish a comprehensive collection of postal markings from all of the eleven western states. The museum is located at 949 East Second Street in Tucson, and is certainly a worthwhile point of interest for any postal historian visiting the Southwest.

The museum provided what was certainly one of the high points of the show for this author by choosing ARPEX as a vehicle for selling a large number of its duplicate Arizona and New Mexico territorial covers in a non-commercial bourse. There were perhaps 300-400 New Mexico covers and cards, and about 100 Arizona covers which ranged in price from 50¢ to \$50. The vast majority were offered for less than \$10. Business, as might be expected, was brisk, and it was extremely worthwhile to be allowed to thumb-through that many items for sale at one sitting.

As this column is being written, I am riding via modern motor coach through the Apache Pass region of eastern Arizona. The boulders and rock out-croppings with grotesque forms seem to leap out of the landscape passing by the roadside. It is still possible to see wagon ruts carved by the old Butterfield Overland Mail stages in this part of Arizona, and it takes but little imagination to visualize a fierce band of whooping Apaches charging out from behind one or another of these rock strewn desert hills. One of the recently completed dioramas at the Western Postal History Museum depicts just such an attack in this strange and eerie setting.

On Sunday morning, April 20th, Alex L. ter Braake presented a seminar titled, "Researching for Postal History Writings." It was an interesting presentation which ran about one hour. Mr. ter Braake related a number of his experiences in doing the research for his series of articles on the postal history of Texas. Beginning with the four requirements he believes a serious student of postal history must have - time, luck, good friends, and an indulgent wife; ter Braake then emphasized the difference between researching postal history in the pre-envelope period as compared with the envelope period of the past.

The Texas study encompasses a very long period of history dating from the early Spanish and Mexican era. In describing research activities for the early periods which preceeded the introduction of the envelope, ter Braake found that libraries and archives proved to be exceedingly valuable sources of postal history data. His procedure was to begin with a list of well known historic personages who had been instrumental in the early history of the area, e.g., Stephen F. Austin in Texas. By searching card catalogs and files in libraries and archives, it was possible to discover letter collection written to or by the various personages. Since the letters were mailed prior to the introduction of the envelope, the postal markings were frequently found on the same piece of paper as the letter - the typical stampless cover of the pre-Civil War era. This discovery, plus the availability of Xerox and photocopiers, allowed ter Braake to build an extensive file of early postal history data.

Libraries and archives, then, are very valuable sources of pre-envelope postal history information, but the invention of the envelope has generally negated their value in doing research in later periods - at least from this aspect. In letter collections of people who lived from about the Civil War period to date, there is usually little if any postal history information. Librarians and archive attendants, not aware that envelopes might have a value, have typically discarded them as unimportant to the letter collections.

Alex ter Braake compensated for this lack of easily obtained data in the later periods by turning to his fellow collectors and other friends. He related several delightful anecdotes which illustrated the importance of making and keeping contacts with collectors and postal historians who can provide invaluable assistance during a postal history research project.

One additional tip interjected by Alex ter Braake struck on a theme which has been emphasized by a few other noted students of postal history. In order to do good postal history research it is first necessary to become versed in the political and geographic history of the study area.

There were of course a great many other attractions at the Tucson show, and undoubtedly you will read of these in other publications. The objective here has been simply to give a bit of publicity to the Western Postal History Museum, and to pass on some of the ideas expressed by Alex ter Braake in his postal history research seminar.

rwh

#### EDITOR'S COMMENTS AND MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Response to Number 2 was highly encouraging. Membership in MDWPHRS has more than doubled since the last writing, and La Posta Number 4 is largely composed at this early date. It will contain Part II of Bill Rapp's San Juan County study, an excellent article on the "Lost County of Pah-Ute (Arizona)" by Don Bufkin, and a piece on the postal history of the Lincoln County War. Number 4 will also see a slight modification in the format of La Posta consisting of a widening of the left margin to allow punching for notebook storage.

#### New Member/Subscribers:

9. Charles M. Sweeting, 212 E. Seventh Street, Oswego, NY 13126
10. John H. Willard, 1025 Monroe Street, Denver, Colorado
11. Elmer J. Binker, Jr., P.O. Box 2534, White City, OR 97501
12. J. H. Van Alsbury, 131 Rio Vista Place, Santa Fe, NM 87501
13. Philip T. Manly, P.O. Box 1221, Santa Fe, NM 87501
14. David L. Jarrett, P.O. Box 1486, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10017
15. Dr. Walter Jacobus, 15 West Palisade Ave., Englewood, NJ 07631
16. N. Leonard Persson, 1105 Landwehr Road, Northbrook, Ill. 60062
17. Charles A. Whittlesey, 6531 S.E. Ivon Street, Portland, OR 97206
18. Arthur E. Rupert, Box 645, Prosser, Washington 99350

Growth, progress, improvement, happiness; still much is needed and much can be done. Take a moment to jot down those postal history research questions and send them along to me. I promise to distribute them as widely as I can to see if we can get some feed-back and lead to a little new knowledge. So far, La Posta has been top-heavy with New Mexico material. It would be my great pleasure to publish studies on Wyoming, Utah, Idaho, Colorado, Montana, or any of the other states in the Mountain and Desert West. Your knowledge and expertise is needed to bring such studies to life.

New member/subscribers are still welcome - \$5 per annum '69, but in all honesty I think we probably have just about enough people to do some effective postal history research now!

EDITOR: RICHARD W. HELBOCK, 930 LEES DRIVE, LAS CRUCES, NEW MEXICO 88001.