LA POSTA

IN THIS ISSUE

DONA ANA COUNTY : A POSTAL HISTORY

The Early Period: 1852 - 1859

Dona Ana County was created by the Second Legislative Assembly of New Mexico
Territory on January 6, 1852. As originally constituted, the county was to
be bounded on the north by Socorro County; on the east by the Texas line; on
the south by the Texas and Mexico lines; and on the west by the Mexico line.
(See Map I). Three years later the area of Dona Ana County was significantly
enlarged as a result of the historic Gadsden Purchase. The United States
Congress annexed the purchased land to the Territory of New Mexico on August
4, 1854; and the Fifth Legislative Assembly of the territory made the region
a part of Dona Ana County on January 18, 1855.

Throughout the remaining years of the decade of the 1850s, Dona Ana was a
massive empire stretching across the southern portion of present-day Arizona
and New Mexico from the Texas border to the Colorado River. The county was
named for the village of Dona Ana, which was the principal settlement south
of Socorro in 1852. Dona Ana was selected as the first seat of county govern-
ment. In 1839, the Governor of Chihuahua had issued a land grant to Don Jose
Maria Costales and 116 colonists. The grant, known as El Ancon de Dona Ana
(The Dona Ana Bend Colony), formed the basis of Dona Ana's growth. By 1850
the settlement had a population estimated at over 500. The exact origin of
of the name "Dona Ana" is a matter of considerable historic debate. It is
known to have been applied to this portion of the Rio Grande Valley during
the 17th century. One theory holds that a woman named Dona Ana Robledo was
living in the area during the early 1600s. She earned a reputation for her
outstanding charitable works and good deeds, and the name is a tribute to
her memory. There are competing theories, but none apparently enjoys sound
documentation.

The first United States post office was not established at Dona Ana, the
county seat, but at Fort Fillmore, a military reservation located some 15
miles down the Rio Grande. On September 23, 1851, Colonel Edmond Vose Sumner,
Commander of the Military Department of New Mexico, established a fort on the
east bank of the Rio Grande about 6 miles south of the small Mexican village
of Mesilla. Named in honor of Millard Fillmore, who had become President of
the United States upon the death of Zachery Taylor in 1850, the fort was built
for the protection of travelers along the El Paso and Fort Yuma wagon road.
It has been said that Colonel Sumner selected the site of Fort Fillmore so
that the post would be far enough from the fleshpots of El Paso and the vine-
yards of the Mesilla Valley to protect the troops from the dual dangers of
wine and women. Be that as it may, Fort Fillmore was not particularly well
situated from a military standpoint, and the existence of menacing nearby
hills was later to play a part in the surrender of the installation.

The first U.S. post office in Dona Ana County was established at Fort Fillmore
on August 6, 1852. George A. Hayward was appointed the first postmaster. In
1854, Colonel J. K. F. Mansfield visited the newly established post as a part
of his inspection of military installations of the West. He filed a report
of his inspection tour which includes the following partial description of
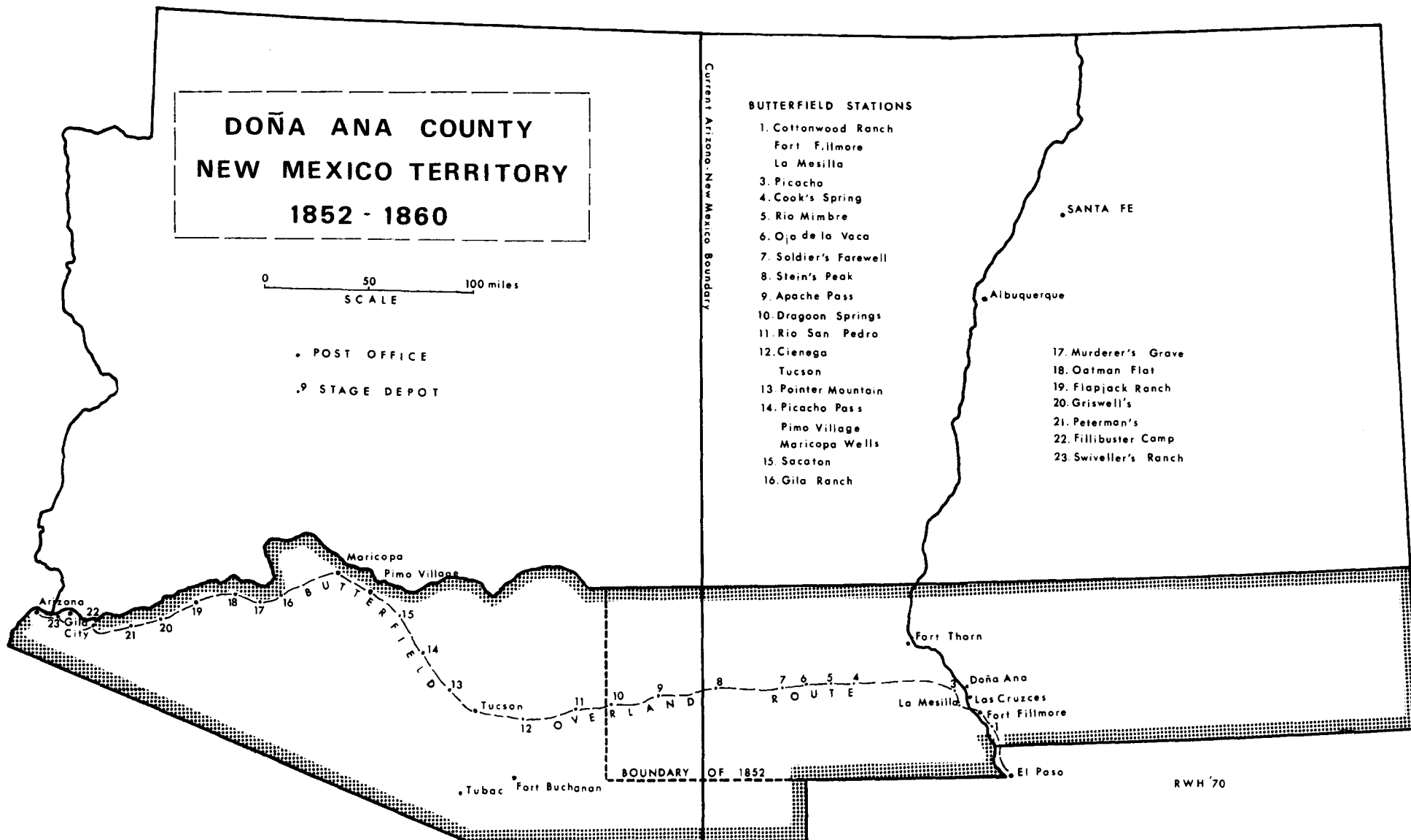Fort Fillmore:

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DOÑA ANA COUNTY
NEW MEXICO TERRITORY
1852 - 1860

0   50   100 miles
SCALE

- POST OFFICE

.9 STAGE DEPOT

BUTTERFIELD STATIONS

1. Cottonwood Ranch
   Fort Fillmore
   La Mesilla
3. Picacho
4. Cook's Spring
5. Rio Mimbre
6. Ojo de la Vaca
7. Soldier's Farewell
8. Stein's Peak
9. Apache Pass
10. Dragoon Springs
11. Rio San Pedro
12. Cienega
    Tucson
13. Pointer Mountain
14. Picacho Pass
    Pimo Village
    Maricopa Wells
15. Sacaton
16. Gila Ranch

17. Murderer's Grave
18. Oatman Flat
19. Flapjack Ranch
20. Griswell's
21. Peterman's
22. Fillibuster Camp
23. Swiveller's Ranch

Current Arizona-New Mexico Boundary

.SANTA FE

.Albuquerque

Maricopa
Pimo Village
Arizona
Gila City
BUTTERFIELD
OVERLAND ROUTE
Tucson
Fort Thorn
Doña Ana
La Mesilla Las Cruzces
Fort Fillmore
El Paso
Tubac Fort Buchanan
BOUNDARY OF 1852

RWH '70

3

The buildings and store houses are good. Grazing, hay and wood are abundant and the soil, where cultivated, good. The troops are in the old uniforms of course, no other having been furnished them. The arms and equipments are in excellant serviceable order. They are well instructed in view of the great labor they have performed in building this post.[1]

Postal markings are known from Fort Fillmore, but they are exceedingly rare. Dike records manuscript markings with dates ranging from November 20, 1852 to August 22, 1858. Only one example of a handstamp postmark is known from Fort Fillmore. It is a 32mm. single circle reading "FORT FILLMORE, N.M.", dated August 29. (See Figure la). This postmark appears on a 3-cent 1857 stamped envelope, and probably dates from 1858 or 1859.

Fort Fillmore did not enjoy a long or illustrious occupation. Situated as it was in the midst of an area which became a hotbed of Confederate sympathy in the years preceding the Civil War, its Union forces became the victims of a form of psychological defeat before any shots were fired. The post commander was convinced, for example, that his position could quickly be overrun by Confederate forces employing cannons mounted on the nearby hills. As a result, Fort Fillmore was surrendered with very little fighting in 1861 to Baylor's force of about 250 men on their way up the Rio Grande to secure Arizona for the Confederacy. The post was re-occupied later in the war by Union forces, but after a stay which lasted only about two months Fort Fillmore was permanently abandoned in October 1862.

A number of other post offices were established in Dona Ana County during the 1850s. The county's second postal facility was opened at Dona Ana when P. M. Thompson was appointed postmaster on January 5, 1854. Interestingly enough, the seat of county government had been transferred to Las Cruces in 1853, and by 1854 the village of Dona Ana had already begun to loose ground to the nearby communities of Las Cruces and Mesilla.

Benjamin F. Read, the first postmaster of Las Cruces, was appointed on the 10th day of January, 1854, only 5 days after the appointment of Mr. Thompson in Dona Ana. Earliest postal records, as well as the earliest known postal markings from the office, indicate that the post office was initially spelled "LAS CRUZCES" or in some cases "LAS CRUZEES." Postmaster Read was followed rather rapidly by H. J. Cuniffe, who received his appointment July 11, 1854. On March 31, 1855, James Lucas was appointed postmaster of Las Cruzees, and the Official Register of 1855 lists Lucas in that position, but reports no compensation for him and shows no returns from his post office. The earliest postal marking known from Las Cruces is a manuscript post mark dated March 26, 1864 – a full 10 years after the post office was established.

The next post office to be established in the Rio Grande Valley portion of Dona Ana County was located at Fort Thorn, a military post situated at the upper (northern) end of the Mesilla Valley on the swampy west bank of the river. Fort Thorn was a very short-lived post. Established in 1853 by Col. Sumner, it was named for 1st Lt. Herman Thorn, who had drowned in the Colorado River in 1849. Fort Thorn was plagued by sickness caused by its unfortunate site. It is said that the soldiers at Fort Thorn spent more time on sickcall than protecting the Camino Real against Apaches and outlaws. The post office at the fort was named FORT THORNE for some unknown reason, and it was estab-

lished June 17, 1855 with Alexander Duvall as its first postmaster. No postal
markings of any type are known from Fort Thorne. Duvall was apparently the
only postmaster at the fort, for he is listed in that position when the office
was discontinued on March 14, 1859.
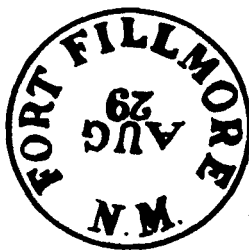
a
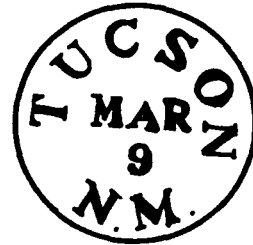
b

Figure 1

It was another 5 years before a fifth post office was established in the
Mesilla Valley portion of Dona Ana County. The new office, located in the
village of La Mesilla, was established January 21, 1858. Charles A. Hoppin
was appointed the first Mesilla postmaster. While the settlement is known
locally as La Mesilla, its post office has always been named Mesilla.

All the other post offices established in Dona Ana County during the 1850's
were located in territory which is now part of the State of Arizona. On
December 4, 1856, Elias Brevoort was appointed postmaster at Tucson. His
appointment was apparently intended to make him postmaster for the newly
constructed military post at Fort Buchanan. The confused situation was
corrected June 5, 1857, when Brevoort was appointed Fort Buchanan's post-
master by changing the name of the Tucson office to agree with the location
of the post office at the post. Five months later, on November 11th, a new
postal facility was established at Tucson. Mark Aldrich was its first post-
master.

On December 2, 1857, a post office was established with the name Colorado
City. John B. Dow was appointed the first postmaster. Dow was still serving
as postmaster when the office name was changed to Arizona on March 17, 1858.
This post office served a settlement located on the east bank of the Colorado
River opposite Fort Yuma, California. Later known as Arizona City, and now
Yuma, this far western outpost of settlement in Dona Ana County was the last
stop on the southern overland route before entering California.

Five other post offices were established in southern Arizona while the region
was still part of Dona Ana County in 1858, 1859 and very early 1860. These
offices are listed below with the names of their first postmaster and their
dates of establishment. The offices are located on at their approximate sites
on Map I.

Post Office	Established	First Postmaster	Discontinued
Maricopa	April 13, 1858	Francis J. Mullen	March 16, 1859
Gila City	Dec. 24, 1858	Henry Burch	July 14, 1863
Tubac	Feb. 21, 1859	Frederick Hulseman	July 14, 1863
Pimo Village	June 21, 1859	Silas St. John	June 29, 1869*
Casa Blanca	Jan. 12, 1860	Ammi Mitchell White	Oct. 9, 1861

*Name changed to Pima Village

During the frenetic years which brought the decade of the 1850's to a close, Dona Ana County became the site of a portion of one of history's most famous mail routes. The route was known as the Butterfield Overland Mail. The first coach over the Butterfield Overland Route left St. Louis on September 16, 1858. After following the route through Missouri, Arkansas, Oklahoma and across Texas to present-day El Paso, the Butterfield stage stopped at Cottonwoods, the most eastern of the stations in vast Dona Ana County. The first run of the west-bound stage terminated in San Francisco on October 10, 1858. Travel time from St. Louis had been just 23 days and 23.5 hours. A new era in communications between East and West had been born, but voices of discord were already being heard across the land, and the Butterfield Overland Mail was soon to be a casualty of war.

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NEXT: The Civil War Period and the 1860's.

VOICES FROM THE MOUNTAINS AND DESERTS

Leroy L. Ross, 3995 Wolff Street, Denver, Colorado 80212, raises two interesting topics for further research by postal historians with an interest in Alaska. A collection of Alaska Dog Team Covers prompts the first of Mr. Ross' inquiries. The covers of interest are dated during the 1940's. Each cover bears a backstamp as well as a postmark from the office of origin. Mr. Ross has identified a list of mail routes from his collection. They are:

Route Number	From ___ to ___
78141	Tanana to Joe de Louis
78161	Barrow to Kotzebue
" "	" " to Point Hope
" "	" " to Wainwright
78184	Central to Circle
" "	Circle to Miller House
" "	" " to Circle Springs
78149	Golovin to Nulato
78115	Hot Springs to Rampart
" "	Rampart to Hot Springs
78161	Kotzebue to Barrow
" "	" " to Wainwright
" "	" " to Point Hope
" "	Point Hope to Wainwright
" "	" " " " to Kotzebue
" "	" " " " to Barrow
" "	Wainwright to Kotzebue
" "	" " to Point Hope
" "	" " to Barrow
78184	Miller House to Circle
78149	Solomon to Unalakeet
" "	" " to Nome
" "	" " to Nulato
78114	Tanana to Nenana
" "	" " to Hot Springs
78149	Unalakleet to Nome

If any reader has information on the establishment or duration of these routes, or data concerning other Alaska Dog Team routes, please contact Mr. Ross.

Alaskan Railway Post Offices are the second area of inquiry raised by member Ross. Mr. Ross forwards the following notes gleaned from The Transit Postmark:

From Vol. I, No. 1, (July, 1942) - "GOODNEWS BAY & UNALASKA R.P.O., Summer boat service by joint employee; effective May 1 to October 31, 1942." "NANANA & EAGLE R.P.O., Summer boat service by joint employee; final trip from Eagle not later than Sept. 15th." "NANANA & MICHAEL R.P.O., Summer boat service by joint employee; from about June 15th to Oct. 15th."

From Vol. 1, No. 2, (Nov., 1942) - "SEATTLE & SEWARD R.P.O. covers came back noted 'Service Suspended.'" "NANANA & EAGLE R.P.O. cover came back cancelled by Eagle P. O., and GOODNEWS BAY & UNALASKA R.P.O. sent in July is still out, according to Sponser Newcomer. All being in or around Alaska, I am not surprised."

From Vol. 4, No. 3, (June, 1948) - "... sent a cover to the JUNEAU, SITKA & SKAGWAY R.P.O. for a cancellation, it was returned to me with the note, 'BOAT DESTROYED BY FIRE, OPERATIONS TEMPORARILY DISCONTINUED,' and postmarked with the Juneau, Alaska cancel."

From Vol. 4, No. 4, (August, 1948) - "The Alaska Railroad sponsored a splendid cachet for the celebration of 25 years of Progress when on July 15, 1923, President Harding drove the golden spike completing the Alaska Railroad. The cachet shows an Eskimo near a Totem Pole as a streamliner rushes by. Failure of the sponsor to secrue railway post office cancel makes these good waste basket material. The FAIRBANKS & SEWARD R.P.O. carries mail once a week on the 470 mile mail route."

"NENANA & ST. MICHAEL R.P.O., not previously mentioned in the Transit Postmark, this is one of the few remaining boat R.P.O.s, one of the few RPOs of our Alaska frontier. Joint employee service by the Alaska RR, Steamboat 'Alice' operates 1028 miles with a frequency of once every two weeks during the season of navigation, from about June 15 to October 15. SEATTLE & SEWARD R.P.O., suspended for duration of War has not been resumed, and supposedly will not be in active service. JUNEAU, SITKA & SKAGWAY R.P.O. is temporarily out of service due to the fire damage of the steamer. FAIRBANKS & SEWARD R.P.O. is the other Alaska RPO. It is once a week train service, taking four days to make the round trip."

The editor thanks Mr. Ross for passing along the notes on Alaska R.P.O.s of the 1940's. Anyone who can elaborate on, or supplement, this information is invited to send it along to Mr. Ross. La Posta would be particularly keen to illustrate some postmarks of these northern railway post offices.

<center>***</center>

Sheldon "Doc" Dike sends along some information which supplements Bill Rapp's article on New Mexico R.P.O. routes (La Posta, Vol. 2, No. 2). Dr. Dike has recorded the following markings:

ALBUQUERQUE & LOS ANGELES R.P.O.
ALBUQUERQUE & MOHAVE R.P.O.
ALBUQUERQUE & ASHFORK R.P.O.
ALBUQUERQUE & WILLIAMS R.P.O.
ALBUQUERQUE & LOS ANGELES "SHORT RUN"
AMARILLO & PECOS R.P.O. (served Roswell, Texico, Carlsbad, etc.)
CAPITAN & EL PASO R.P.O.
AMARILLO & ALBUQUERQUE R.P.O.
ANTONITO & SANTA FE R.P.O.
CLIFTON & LORDSBURG R.P.O.
DEMING & LOS ANGELES R.P.O.
DEMING & LOS ANGELES AGT.
DEMING & SAN FRANCISCO R.P.O.
EL PASO & LOS ANGELES R.P.O. (served Deming, etc.)
KANSAS CITY & ALBUQUERQUE R.P.O.
KANSAS CITY & DEMING AGT.
KANSAS CITY & EL PASO R.P.O.
KANSAS CITY & TUCUMCARI R.P.O.

LA JUNTA & ALBUQUERQUE R.P.O. (MOST COMMON N.M. R.P.O.- 22 different
                                          types recorded)
LA JUNTA & DEMING AGT.
LA JUNTA & SANTA FE AGT.
RINCON & DEMING R.P.O.
RINCON & SILVER CITY R.P.O.
SANTA FE & TORRANCE R.P.O.
TUCUMCARI & EL PASO R.P.O.

Thanks to "Doc" Dike for sharing this valuable information with us.

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The first weekend in May was celebrated by many different people for many varied
reasons around the world. In Denver, the cause for celebration was ROMPEX '70.
The M&DWPHRS was represented both in competition and in person by several members.
Bill Bauer came up from the bayous to carry off more silver than Denver has given
up since the mining boom. Bill displayed his fine collection of Colorado Postal
History to win a first place silver cup, and a silver tray donated by the Rocky
Mountain News for the Best U.S. exhibit, and a silver place awarded by the
Collector's Club for the Best exhibit on Western History. Bill was last seen
leaving Denver in a Brinks truck...

While Bill was carrying off the silver, there were other M&DWPHRS members busy
dividing up some of the remaining "loot." Jack Willard won two silver medals
and a silver tray for the best exhibit by a Coloradoan for his presentations
of Gunnison County Post Offices and Railway Mail in Colorado: Some Early Routes.
Jim Ozment displayed his The Mail West - West With the Mails. Bill Rapp of
Crete, Nebraska (or Bill Crete of Rapp, Nebraska) showed Mail on the Burlington.
Bill Helbock displayed Oregon Town Markings 1880-1889. All of these won medals.

Aside from the exhibiting there was a good deal of "rapping" about postal history.
Bill Aichele was serving as a judge for ROMPEX. Bill lives in Hollister, Calif.,
and a lively dialogue developed covering a wide variety of topics. Three items
of general interest emerged from the sessions:

> 1. A cover circuit has been initiated. The circuit is sponsored
>   by the Fourth Class Cancellation Club under the supervision
>   of Jack Willard, 1025 Monroe Street, Denver, Colorado 80206.
>   THIS CIRCUIT MAY BE USED BY M&DWPHRS MEMBERS FOR BOTH BUYING
>   AND SELLING. There are 30 books now filled, and more will
>   soon be available. Write Jack direct for details.
>
> 2. The Colorado Study Group (Bill Bauer, Jim Ozment, & Jack
>   Willard) conferred with Bill Rapp and decided to privately
>   publish a complete listing of Colorado post offices. The
>   tentative publication date is now set at January 1, 1971.
>   This will be an outstanding reference, comparable with
>   Frickstad's California and Landis' Oregon-Washington -Idaho.
>   More details will be forthcoming in La Posta.
>
> 3. It was decided that a concerted effort would be made to try
>   to make ROMPEX '71 a meeting place for M&DWPHRS members.
>   The city of Denver is really very pleasant in May, and its
>   central location makes it a logical meeting place.

<center>9</center>

A POSTAL HISTORY OF THE BLACK HILLS MINING CAMPS

by Richard W. Helbock

> The Wild West made its last glorious stand in the Black Hills
> mining camps. Deadwood was the riproaring center of frontier
> lawlessness. There the faro games were wilder, the hurdy-
> gurdy dance halls noiser, the street brawls more common, than
> in any other western town.
>
> R. A. Billington in Westward Expansion

Deadwood and Custer City became familiar place names to millions of people
throughout the world during the last quarter of the 19th century. These
towns were the centers of the Black Hills Dakota gold rush of 1875. More
importantly, however, Deadwood, Custer City and the other wild Black Hills
camps served as the stages on which such bigger-than-life characters as
Wild Bill Hickok, Calamity Jane, Jack McCall and Poker Alice Tubbs played
their violent and colorful roles. The history of postal operations in the
Black Hills mining camps is studded with delightful anecdotes and fascin-
ating personalities.

Background

To the trapper or explorer who slowly picked his way through the glaring
grey-brown wastes of the central Dakota Badlands, the forested mountains
lying to the west appeared in contrast as black hills. The name, therefore,
was purely descriptive. The Black Hills were considered sacred ground by
the Sioux and other Indians of the region. White men told stories of the
rich gold deposits to be found in the Hills, and over the years a consider-
able body of legend was developed. Little effort was made to actively
explore the Hills prior to the 1860's, for the Sioux Indians controlled the
region. In 1868, the U. S. government recognized the Indian's control by
designating the Black Hills as part of the "permanent" Sioux Reservation.

Increasing rumors about the wealth to be found in the Black Hills eventually
led to greater political pressure for reclaiming the land from the Sioux.
By 1872, speculation about the wealth of the Hills had reached nationwide
proportions with stories and articles appearing in the illustrated weeklies
of the day. It was becoming clear that an "invasion" of the Black Hills
would soon occur regardless of existing treaties or agreements. General
George Custer was dispatched to the Black Hills during the summer of 1874.
His expedition numbered some 1200 troops, and included a group of geologists.
The mission of Custer's expedition was to evaluate once-and-for-all the
mineral resources of the Hills. On August 22, 1874, General Custer announced
that the Black Hills did in fact contain gold resources of commercial value.
The rush was on.

One man who had anxiously awaited word from the Custer Expedition was Charles
Collins, editor of the Sioux City, Iowa, Times. Collins, an activist in the
Irish Fenian movement, had long dreamed of establishing an Irish colony in
Dakota Territory from which it would be possible to mount an invasion of
Canada when the time was right. When rumors of the gold wealth of the Black
Hills were confirmed, Collins began recruiting members for a private exped-
ition. The Black Hills gold would provide the capital base for his Irish
colony.

The United States Army eventually got wind of Collins' expedition, which had been recruiting members on the streets of Chicago. Since the Government was still actively opposed to any civilian adventures on the Black Hills portion of the Sioux Reservation, it became necessary for Collins to resort to more devious tactics.

The expeditionary party consisted of only 26 men, one woman and one boy. Known as the Gordon Party, for John Gordon, its guide and captain, the group set out from Covington, Iowa on October 6, 1874. The canvas wagon covers were brightly painted with the legend, "O'Neill's Colony." It was hoped that any passing soldiers would believe that the wagon train was destined for the new Nebraska settlement. The Gordon Party reached the Black Hills in early December, 1874. They proceeded to the site on French Creek which had been used as a camp by Custer's expedition. There the party built an 80 foot square stockade of heavy logs. Inside the stockade were built several cabins and a shallow well. Construction was completed by January 16, 1875.[1]

After a winter spent in exploring, laying out townsites[2], and trying a little mining, the Gordon Party broke up in the early spring of 1875. Some of the men returned to Sioux City to report their discoveries to Collins, and recruit new members for the group. Others went to Fort Laramie to obtain supplies and spread the word. In early April the Army arrived to evict the settlers from their stockade. At that time there were only 16 men and the woman and her son remaining. The remaining members of the Gordon Party were escorted from the Hills, and the group bring recruits from Sioux City were intercepted and turned back, but by simply living in the Hills the expedition did much to fire the imagination and ambition of other gold seekers.

Spurred by the stories of the Gordon Party, the rush to the Black Hills began in earnest during the spring of 1875. Government policy still opposed white settlers on the Sioux Reservation, and many miners were captured and removed from the area by the U.S. cavalry. The tide of miners proved too great for the cavalry, however, and by August 15, 1875, a newspaper reporter covering the mining activity along French Creek reported that no less than 1500 men had entered the Hills.[3]

In Washington, talks got under way with Sioux Indians to try to negotiate a treaty of sale for the Black Hills. The Sioux delegation, not totally unaware of the value of their property, asked for more money than the United States was willing to pay. The talks continued on into autumn. Meanwhile, more and more miners were staking claims, and the Government dispatched a second geologic expedition to obtain a more accurate estimate of the value of the Black Hills mineral wealth. Following a change in strategy, the U.S. Army sent General George Crook to deal with the miners. General Crook was somewhat in sympathy with the miners, and he managed to work out a gentleman's agreement during the summer of 1875. In return for a cessation of harassment by the troops, all miners would leave the Hills by August 15th to await a settlement of the ownership question.

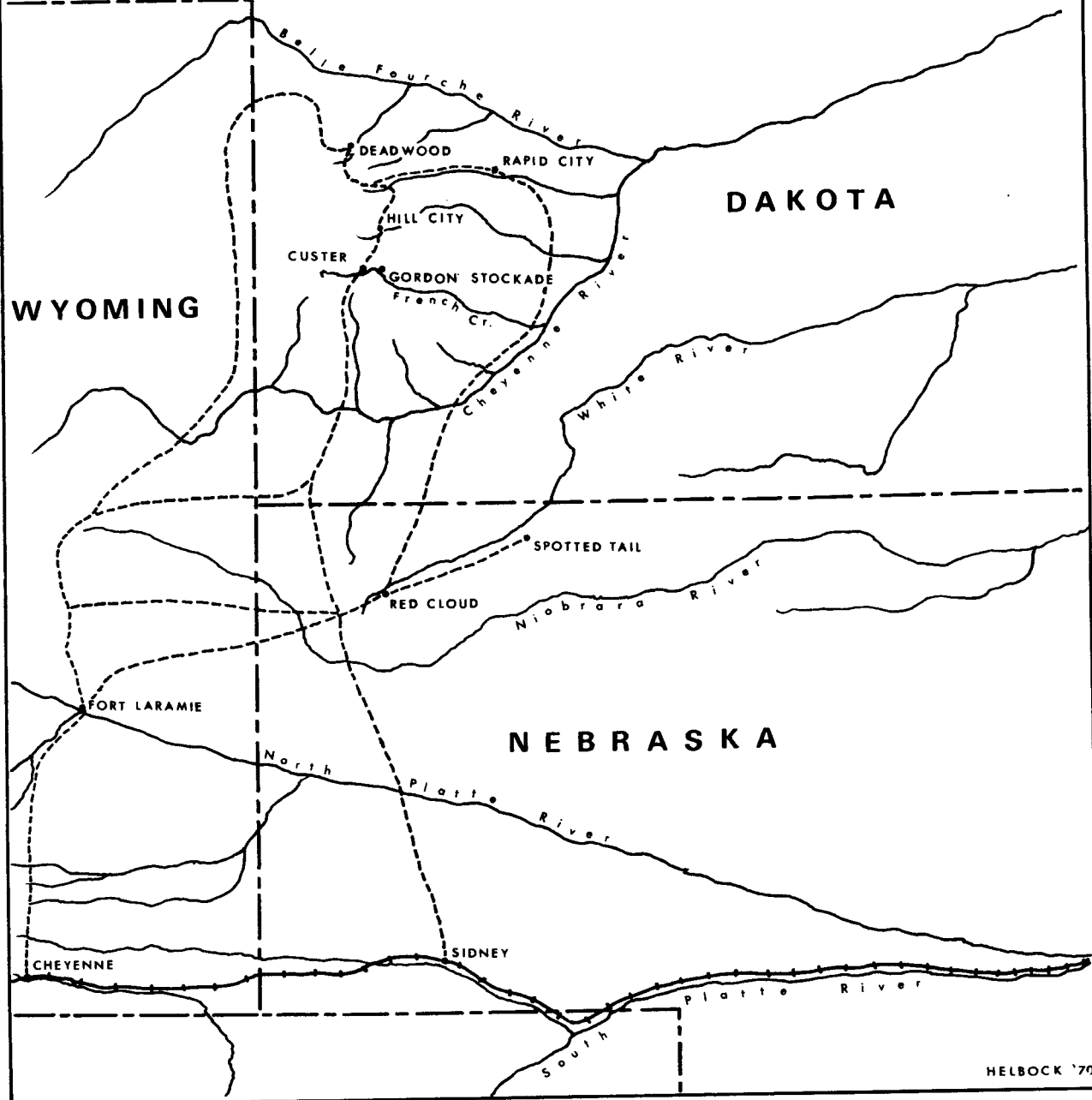[1] Watson Parker, Gold in the Black Hills (Norman, Oklahoma: 1966), p. 121.

[2] The Gordon Party is reported to have laid out two townsites. Harney City was the name given to a townsite located just outside the walls of the stockade. A second townsite located some three miles to the east was very near the site which was later platted as Custer City.

[3] Parker, op. cit., p. 54.

BLACK HILLS & VICINITY

MAIN SETTLEMENTS AND TRANSPORT ROUTES CIRCA 1875

------ Stage & Freight Routes
+-+-+- Railroad

Belle Fourche River

DEADWOOD
RAPID CITY

DAKOTA

HILL CITY

CUSTER
GORDON STOCKADE
French Cr.

Cheyenne River

White River

WYOMING

SPOTTED TAIL

RED CLOUD
Niobrara River

FORT LARAMIE

NEBRASKA

North Platte River

CHEYENNE
SIDNEY
South Platte River

HELBOCK '79

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On August 10, 1875, the miners laid out what was to become the first boomtown of the Black Hills. Situated in a grassy basin on French Creek, the community which had previously been called Stonewall, was officially re-named Custer City. The townsite was platted on a piece of birch bark under the approval of General Crook. Lots were distributed to the miners before they left the Hills in mid-August. The only requirement for retaining ownership was the completion of $150 worth of improvements by May 1, 1876. All of this happened before any agreement was reached with the Sioux, but it was assumed by all that the negotiations would certainly be concluded by spring.

Several hundred miners accompanied General Crook out of the Hills on August 15th. Remaining behind were a handful of men who had been elected to stand guard in Custer City over the departed miners' property. Also remaining behind were an undetermined number of miners who had decided to hide out in the Hills rather than leave for the winter. While technically in violation of the law, the miners who accompanied Crook out of the Black Hills were released after being made to promise they would not again trespass on the Sioux Reservation. News of this gentle wrist slap spread among the mining communities, and many men who had previously stayed away to avoid prosecution began the head for the Hills. After the departure of General Crook, the Army established Camp Collins at the site of Custer City. Commanded by Captain Edwin Pollock, this post quickly gained a reputation for having a most disagreeable "bull pen" which was used to confine illegal miners until they could be shipped to Fort Laramie.

As winter approached the task of keeping miners out of the Hills became more and more difficult. Recently arriving miners had learned to avoid Pollock's troops, often assisted by the "legal" residents of Custer City. Many of the troops had themselves deserted to take up a pick and shovel in search of their fortunes. To make life even worse, the severe weather was requiring more time and energy to simply survive. It was finally decided at the highest level of government in Washington that the troops would be withdrawn from the Black Hills. Miners were still forbidden to enter the region, but the soldiers were to be removed from the Hills and no further military opposition would be made. On November 17, 1875, Captain Pollock and his troops departed Camp Collins for Fort Laramie. On that date effective Government opposition to the settlement of the Black Hills came to an end. It would be a full 16 months before the Hills were legally opened to settlement.

The Pre-Post Office Period

Five hundred miners had entered the Hills by Christmas, 1875. By mid-January, 1876, there were an estimated 4000 men in and around the region, and Custer had boomed to a town of 1000. Settlement and the founding of towns and camps was very rapid during 1876, but the first United States post office was not established in the Black Hills until March, 1877. As a matter of fact, once Pollock's troops had withdrawn in November, 1875, the U.S. Government refused to appoint any Federal officials for the region until a treaty agreement had been negotiated. This undoubtedly explains some of the roudiness of the Black Hills gold camps.

Postal service in the Hills prior to the establishment of Government service was very much an informal arrangement. An express service of sorts was worked out as early as November, 1875. Perhaps "express service" is too strong a term

for the postal system was really a series of informal agreements whereby
teamsters and other private individuals would agree to carry the mail from
Custer City to the post office at Spotted Tail Agency. The Spotted Tail post
office had been established on July 30, 1872, and was the closest facility
to Custer City in the early days. This office was located about 70 straight
line miles southeast of Custer, in what is now the northwest corner of
Nebraska. Since there were a number of informal arrangements worked out to
carry the mail during this early period, there were undoubtedly a variety of
systems for payment or non-payment. Some men, such as James W. Allen and
Judge William Kuykendall, are known to have carried large quantities of mail
to and from the Hills as an act of human kindness.[4] Others are known to
have made a charge for the service. Twenty-five cents per letter has been
reported as a typical charge for carrying letters from Custer City to the
outside, but for letters coming into Custer City the arrangement was more
interesting. In some cases, individuals bringing in mail to the Hillers
would sell the letters at 10¢ each to self-appointed "postmasters" in the
mining camp. These "postmasters" would then sort the mail and retail the
letters at 25¢ each to miners working in the vicinity.[5]

Sporadic attempts to establish a more normal type of express service to the
Black Hills were made during the early months of 1876. On February 10th,
Ben Arnold carried 60 letters from Custer to Red Cloud agency at the rate
of one dollar per letter.[6] Arnold's service has been referred to as the
"first pony express in the Hills," but he apparently made no attempt to
follow up his initial trip. In April, a man named C. T. Clippinger began
carrying mail and light express from Fort Laramie and the Black Hills camps.
Few details are known about this service, but it was apparently intermittent
and rather short-lived.

Two somewhat more substantial express services were organized in July, 1876.
As the U.S. Post Office Department still refused to grant mail route contracts
to serve the Black Hills mining camps, both of the new express services were
extra-legal insofar as they operated on the Sioux Reservation. The Seymour
and Utter Pioneer Pony Express was the name given to a service operating
between Fort Laramie and Deadwood. "Bloody Dick" Seymour and "Colorado Charlie"
Utter were both friends of Wild Bill Hickok. It was Utter who took charge of
Wild Bill's burial in August of 1876, and inscribed the headboard over his
grave with:
> "Pard, we will meet again in the Happy Hunting Grounds
> to part no more. Good bye, Colorado Charlie C. H. Utter"

Carriers of the Seymour and Utter Pioneer Pony Express made the trip between Ft.
Laramie and Deadwood in 48 hours. They often carried 3000 to 4500 letters
per trip at a charge of 25¢ per letter.

Henry T. Clarke, a freighter in Sidney, Nebraska, on the Union Pacific Rail-
road, also began operating a pony express service into the Black Hills in
July, 1876. This service, called "Clarke's Centennial Express to the Black
Hills," was initially established between Sidney and Custer City. Service

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[4]Agnes Spring, The Cheyenne and Black Hills Stage and Express Routes (Lincoln,
Neb.: 1948), p. 154.

[5]Parker, op. cit., p. 121.

[6]Spring, op. cit., p. 154.

was expanded to include a branch line running to Rapid City via Red Cloud agency the following month. Clarke charged 10¢ per letter in addition to the 3¢ required for U.S. postage for carrying the mail between Sidney and the Hills. To collect his fee Clarke sold stamped envelopes of the United States Centennial Issue of 1876, which bore the printed frank, "Clarke's Centennial Express to The Black Hills" in green. In addition, the express envelopes read:

> In consideration of the ten cents paid for this envelope, and of which payment its possession bears evidence, the under-signed agrees to carry it from the Union Pacific railroad at Sidney, Nebraska, to Custer City and Deadwood, Dakota Territory (and such other places as his route may supply) or from above places to the Union Pacific railroad at Sidney without additional charge. . . . H. T. Clarke.[7]

Clarke's express differed from the other early day Black Hills expresses because of an agreement he had worked out with the army. Realizing that the only acceptable excuse for sending letter carriers into the Indian country was army business, Clarke was in theory operating a group of dispatch riders and government personnel carriers between Fort Sidney, the military detachment at Red Cloud, Fort Robinson, and so on.

The pony expresses of both Seymour & Utter and Clarke were both rather short-lived. Seymour and Utter sold out to Clippinger not long after the death of Wild Bill Hickok, and Clippinger failed to maintain a satisfactory service. For Clarke, the pony express was only an interim operation, which was meant to pave the way for his Sidney Short Route to The Black Hills. The Sidney Short line was billed by Clarke as the fastest and cheapest stage line to the Black Hills. To make good his claim Clarke built a 61 span bridge over the North Platte, which at the time was the biggest engineering project in the entire region. The bridge made Clarke's Sidney Short line some ten or eleven hours shorter by stagecoach than the Cheyenne Trail. Unfortunately for Clarke, the Sidney Short line did not become fully operational until April, 1877, and by that time the opportunity for success had passed.

As early as March, 1876, Luke Voorhees and other Cheyenne entrepreneurs began promoting the Cheyenne and Black Hills Stage Company.[8] On April 3rd the first Concord coaches rolled north from Cheyenne bound for Custer City by way of Fort Laramie. After months of hasassment by Indians, a weekly coach began carrying passengers between Fort Laramie and Custer City on June 24, 1876. The Cheyenne and Black Hills Stage concentrated on passengers and freight. Letter mail was carried out of the Hills without charge, but on October 1, 1876, the company began selling stamped envelopes at Cheyenne at 10¢ each for mail carried into the Hills.[9] The stage company began to operate a weekly pony express line from Fort Laramie to Red Cloud and Spotted Tail agencies on November 1, 1876. Entry into the mail business brought a

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[7]Robert J. Casey, The Black Hills (New York: 1949), p. 235. An example of an express cover carried by Clarke's Centennial Express was sold with the Paul Berner Collection in 1965. Four examples were sold with the Henry H. Clifford Collection in 1969. The covers from these collections showed that Clarke used a variety of inscriptions on both the front and back of his envelopes.

[8]Agnes Spring's The Cheyenne and Black Hills Stage and Express Routes is a

renewed effort by the citizens of Custer City to obtain an official mail
contract to serve their community. A petition signed by 400 residents of
Custer City and Hill City had been submitted to Washington in February, but
the only result was an advertisement which had appeared in June:

> This bid called for no. 37112 "from Fort Laramie by Cheyenne
> river (N.O.), to Custer City (N.O.), 184 miles and back, once
> a week. Leave Fort Laramie, wednesday at 8 A.M.; arrive at
> Rapid Creek, saturday by 6 P.M.; Leave Rapid Creek, monday at
> 8 P.M.; arrive at Fort Laramie, thursday by 6 P.M. Bond re-
> quired with bid, $3,000." [10]

The Custer City citizens complained that their mail was being "diverted"
through Sidney, Nebraska. A Sidney coach had broken down recently, and
their mail had been 9 days on the road from the railway. Coincidentally,
a group of men making up the United States postal commission passed through
Cheyenne on their way to the Pacific coast. The men were travelling aboard
a "special car" on the Union Pacific, and as the train stopped in Cheyenne
a delegation from that town boarded the car. The Cheyenne delegation rode
as far as Laramie City with the postal commission members. In that short
time they convinced the commissioners of the logic of sending Black Hills
mail through Cheyenne. No contracts were awarded, but mail for the Hills
began to arrive in Cheyenne a few days after the conference. In March, 1877,
after the U.S. Government resumed official contact with the Black Hills, the
Cheyenne and Black Hills Stage Company was awarded a temporary contract to
carry the mail to Deadwood.

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highly detailed and fascinating account of the growth and development of
this pioneer company. While no claim of expert opinion is intended, this
author has found Agnes Spring's work to be by far the most reliable second-
ary source consulted. The book has been reprinted recently as one of the
University of Nebraska Press' Bison paperback series. It is available at
$1.50 in that edition.

[9]Spring, op. cit., p. 162.

[10]Ibid., p. 165.

A HISTORY OF THE FOREST GROVE, OREGON POST OFFICE

By M. Pire Builder

Many of the covered wagons which crossed the plains and mountains of the West during the 1840's carried settlers bound for the fertile Willamette Valley of Oregon Country. As early as July 5, 1843, the Provisional Legislature met to divide Oregon Country into four huge districts. The northwestern district was named Twality, an Indian word meaning "slow or sluggish." The name was applied to one of the Willamette's major tributaries, a leisurely winding stream which drained much of the settled portion of Twality District. On August 14, 1848, Oregon became a territory of the United States, and Twality District became a county. One year later, the Oregon Territorial Legislature changed the name of the county to Washington.

The earliest communities in Washington County were known as East and West Tualatin Plains. These pioneer settlements were located at or near the sites of present-day Hillsboro and Forest Grove respectively. The first post office established in the county was named Tualatin. David Hill, the first postmaster, was appointed on February 1, 1850. During Hill's term as postmaster, which ran until January 6, 1852, the Tualatin post office was probably located near East Tualatin Plains. It is known that Hill's land grant was situated near present-day Hillsboro, and it is Hill who is honored by the name of that town. On January 6, 1852, the Tualatin post office was discontinued.

A post office named Twality Plains was established on March 14, 1851. Alvin T. Smith was its first postmaster. This office was apparently intended to serve the West Tualatin Plains community. The office was in operation for only 21 months, but when it was discontinued on January 6, 1853, Post Office Department records show that Alvin T. Smith immediately became postmaster of the re-established Tualatin post office. It seems highly likely that the Tualatin office was relocated several miles west of its original site when Smith became postmaster. Smith remained postmaster of the Tualatin office until December 31, 1858. On that date, Joseph C. Rafferty became postmaster, and the name of the office was changed to Forest Grove.

The only postal marking known from either the Tualatin or Twality Plains post offices is a manuscript marking from the Tualatin office. This marking is reported in Edward R. Payne's 1959 listing published by the Oregon Historical Society.[1] The date or dates of the Tualatin manuscript marking is not known to the author. Neither Chase and Cabeen nor Sampson report such a marking.

Forest Grove is identified at its present-day location on Preston's Map of Oregon and Washington West of the Cascades published in 1856. The name of the community was adopted on January 10, 1851, by a meeting of the trustees of Tualatin Academy (now Pacific University). J. Quinn Thornton, a trustee of the academy, suggested the name. It was the same descriptive name he had applied to his land claim when he homesteaded in the area in November, 1846.

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[1] Edward R. Payne, "Oregon Territorial Post Offices and Handstamped Postal Markings," Oregon Historical Quarterly, Vol. LX, No. 4, (Dec. 1959).

When the post office name was changed from Tualatin to Forest Grove, the office was moved a short distance to the north in order to be more central to the community. It has remained in the same general locality to the present day. Postal records indicate that an attempt was made in 1894 to change the name of the office to the form "Forestgrove." The Post Office Department underwent an epidemic of word parsimony during the 1890's. This particular change was rescinded before it became effective, but many towns were not so fortunate.

The following is a list of Forest Grove postmasters beginning with the name change and Joseph C. Rafferty on December 31, 1858. This list has been compiled from the P.O.D.'s manuscript records, and the accuracy of names can not be totally guaranteed.

Postmaster	Term
Joseph C. Rafferty	Dec. 31, 1858 - Dec. 16, 1859
Ashba L. Johnson	Dec. 16, 1859 - May 28, 1861
Darius Smith	May 28, 1861 - Sept. 3, 1867
Charles A. Reynolds	Sept. 3, 1867 - March 30, 1870
N. Edward Goodell	March 30, 1870 - Dec. 23, 1873
W. D. Hoxter	Dec. 23, 1873 - June 5, 1874
Mrs. Minerva W. McCready	June 5, 1874 - Sept. 24, 1875
William H. Saylor	Sept. 24, 1875 - June 28, 1876
Arvid Hinman	June 28, 1876 - May 25, 1881
Amos H. Hampton	May 25, 1881 - Jan. 9, 1884
Thomas Fruzer	Jan. 9, 1884 - May 28, 1885
John R. Griffin	May 28, 1885 - March 26, 1889
William H. Crosley	March 26, 1889 - Feb. 19, 1896
J. Wheelock Marsh	Feb. 19, 1896 through 1900

A number of factors should be considered in determining the scarcity, or commonness of an office's postmarks. Factors such as length of time a particular cancelling device was used, number of examples of the postmark surviving, age of the postmark and unusual features of the postmark are but a few of the desirability of a postmark. Some of these factors can be determined, but others can not. In the absence of better information, it is sometimes useful to consider the salary of the postmaster as a proxy for the volume of business done by his office. This measure provides at least a crude indication of the number of postmarks which are likely to have originated from the office in a given year. Annual salaries for Forest Grove postmasters are listed below for selected fiscal years between 1859 and 1899.

1859 - $85.71*	1861 - $64.28	1863 - $73.32	1865 - $79.79	1867 - $100.00
1871 - 190.00	1873 - 270.00	1875 - 326.55	1877 - 347.13	1879 - 364.12
1881 - 431.22	1883 - 638.64	1875 - 617.20	1887 - 680.70	1889 - 859.30
1891 - 1000.00	1893 - 1100.00	1895 - 1200.00	1899 - 1200.00	

*Listed as Tualatin.

Ten different nineteenth century Forest Grove postmark types have been identified by the author and his trusty consultant, Charles Whittlesey. Surely other types exist, and our range of earliest and latest dates can be extended. In the hope of eliciting some interest in the Oregon Postmark Classification Project, our information is herewith presented in less than complete form. If anyone can contribute information to the following typology please contact the editor of La Posta. The typology which follows is coded according to the system devised by Sheldon Dike. It differs only in its use of a new set of state abbreviations for Oregon.

TYPE	CODE	EARLIEST DATE	LATEST DATE	INTEGRAL KLR.
1	M	1861	21 May 71	
2	C31JA1BBR26	18 June 68	26 Nov 70?	
3	C1EA1BBR25	8 July 74	12 Mar 75	
4	C1EA1BBR26	28 Feb 75?	16 Aug 76	
5	C1JA1B29	15 May 78		
6	C1EN1B27	9 Feb 85		
7	C1EN1B27	29 July 87		
8	C31JN1B30	7 Sept 87B	24 Mar 90M	Wheel-of-fort.
9	C1JN1B27.5	26 Sept 92	9 Oct 93	
10	C1ET1B30		26 Aug 04	Oval grid

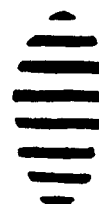Several of these types are illustrated below.

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6
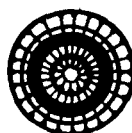

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EDITOR'S COMMENTS

The report of new M&DWPHRS members will be delayed until next issue. At that time a revised listing of all members will be published. There have been a number of address changes and a few 1969 members did not renew their memberships.

A number of people have inquired about the availability of back issues of La Posta. Numbers 3 and 4 of volume I are completely gone. Only 40 copies of each was printed and the masters were destroyed. Recent subscribers who have requested complete sets have been supplied with xerox copies. There are less than 5 copies remaining of Vol. I, No. 5; and less than 10 copies of Vol. I, No. 2. All other numbers are on hand in quantities greater than 15. At the present time, we are printing 100 copies of each issue.

This column is being written in late May. While I have not published deadlines for material to appear in a particular issue of La Posta, it seems to be working out that an issue goes to press about 5 weeks before the date appearing on the masthead. For example, if someone wished to present material for the September-October number, it should be in my hands by the end of July. Please let me say again that if you can contribute material for La Posta, it will be greatly appreciated by both the editor and the membership at large.

The academic year is quickly coming to a close for me here at New Mexico State. It will soon be time to do other things. This summer I will be working for the Four Corners Regional Commission in Farmington, New Mexico. Anyone wishing to contact me quickly should address me in care of the Commission office at 3535 East 30th Street, Farmington, NM 87401. For those who are not in much of a hurry, I will still receive mail addressed to me in Las Cruces.

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