

# LA POSTA

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DONA ANA COUNTY, NEW MEXICO: A POSTAL HISTORY (Part III)

The Peaceful Years of the Early 1870's

The decade of the 1870's dawned quietly in the Mesilla Valley and sprawling Dona Ana County. It was almost as though the turmoil and chaos of the '60's had worn-out the residents of southern New Mexico, and a period of mutually needed quiet and peace had been decreed for the resuscitation of all. The peaceful pursuit of agricultural activity occupied the energies of most of the county's citizens during the early 1870's. Even in agriculture, the '70's saw more of a consolidation of land already held, than an expansion of the farming frontier. In the Mesilla Valley farmers introduced new types of orchard fruit crops such as pears, plums, peaches, and apples. These were grown in addition to the traditional cash crops of grapes and onions.

Across the Organ Mountains to the east, the little farm community of Tularosa occupied the small patch of green formed by the Rio Tularosa as it breaks from its canyon separating the Sacramento and White mountains to be swallowed up by the arid Tularosa Basin. The Tularosa post office, which had operated briefly during 1868-1869, was re-established on December 13, 1873, with Perfecta Armijo as postmaster. Aside from Tularosa, Dona Ana County saw no new post offices established during the first 5 years of the 1870's. In fact, the Leasburgh office, which had operated a few miles south of Fort Selden since 1866, was discontinued on May 7, 1873. The total number of post offices operating within the boundaries of Dona Ana County during 1875 was 5: Dona Ana, Las Cruces, Mesilla, Fort Selden, and Tularosa.

Some idea of the relative volume of business of these offices can be gained from the Civil Service Registry listing for the year ending September 30, 1871:

Post Office	Postmaster	Salary
Dona Ana	John D. Barncastle	\$12.00
Fort Selden	Benjamin E. Davies	\$340.00
Las Cruces	Jesus Armijo	\$100.00
Leasburgh	Adolph Lea	\$20.00
Mesilla	Frederick Burkner	\$120.00



Las Cruces 1871



Mesilla 1879

On May 9, 1876, Benjamin E. Davies, former postmaster at Fort Selden, was appointed postmaster of the newly created San Augustine post office. This

office was located along the main road between Mesilla and Tularosa on the east slope of the Organ Mountains. The locality, also known as Shedd's Ranch, boasted a fresh water spring, and was a popular stopping place for travelers along the road. In February, 1878, San Augustine was the scene of a dramatic confrontation between J. J. Dolan and J. H. Tunstall, principals in the famous Lincoln County War. No violence occurred at that meeting, but threats were made, and the feud eventually erupted into a bloody battle at Lincoln.

#### Epidemic and Some Overflow from the Neighboring Lincoln County War

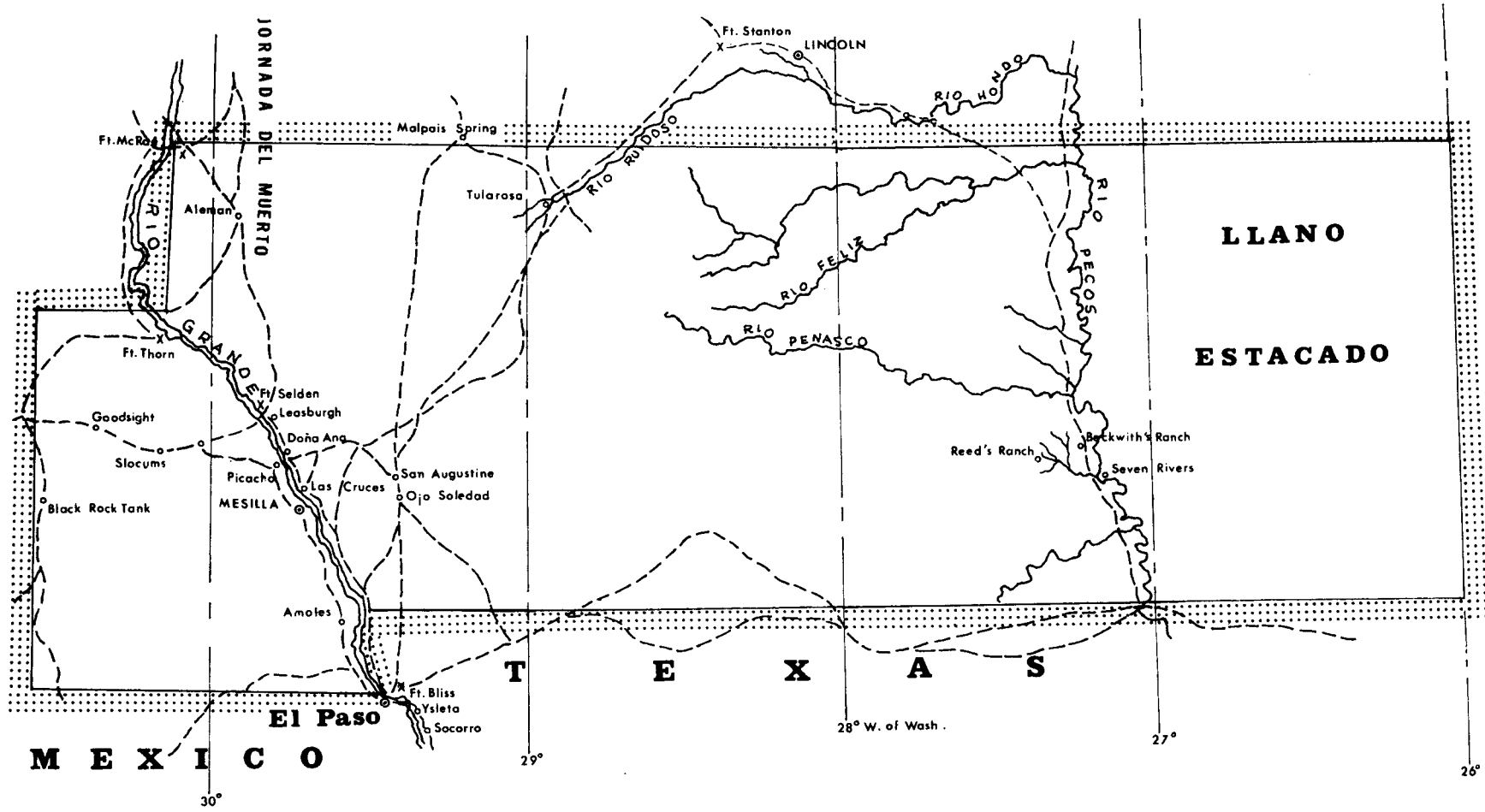
The summer of 1877 brought a new kind of disaster to the peaceful Mesilla Valley. Prior to that summer most residents of the valley had used the water of the Rio Grande exclusively for drinking and household purposes. There were few wells. The valley was well supplied with acequias, or irrigation canals, and those who did not live along the banks of the main stream generally had access to fresh water from one of the acequias near their front door. A few of the wealthier Mesilla Valley residents owned wells drawing water from depths of 30 to 40 feet, but the water of the Rio Grande was considered pure, and most people simply drew their needs from the stream.

In 1877 the Rio Grande was dry during the summer months. No water flowed in the acequias. The desperate residents of the valley dug shallow holes 10 to 12 feet deep to obtain their drinking water. Unfortunately, the water available at those depths was not of good quality. It was polluted with surface drainage and decayed vegetable matter, and its use made people ill.

The drought of 1877 combined with a particularly bad outbreak of world wide epidemics featuring yellow fever in the southern United States, malarial fevers in New England, cholera in Asia, and small pox in Europe. Most residents of the Mesilla Valley contracted some type of malarial fever. Many died. Those who were least affected were those who owned deep wells and had access to pure water. The disease continued to strike residents of the valley with gradually decreasing loss of life until about 1884 when it ceased to be a serious problem.

The summer of 1877 also brought into being the first Dona Ana County post office to operate along the Rio Pecos in the far eastern part of the county. On June 19, 1877, Robert W. Beckwith was appointed postmaster at Seven Rivers. The first settlers had come to the place along the Pecos where the seven branches of a major tributary join the river in 1867. Originally, they called their settlement Dogtown because of the large number of prairie dogs in the vicinity. A trading post operated by Dick Reed became a popular supply point for the increasingly large number of East Texas cattle drivers who brought their stock into the Pecos country during the early 1870's. By the time the post office was opened in 1877, a rather sizeable ranching community had grown-up around Seven Rivers.

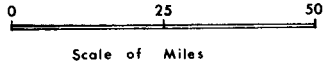
The Seven Rivers post office was probably first located at the Beckwith Ranch, about 6 miles north of the place Seven Rivers flow into the Pecos (see map). Henry M. Beckwith had founded the ranch, and in 1877 he was living there with his family which included sons Robert and John plus his son-in-law, William H. Johnson. The Beckwiths were mortal enemies of John S. Chisum, the largest of



MEXICO

# DONA ANA COUNTY: 1876

- MAIN ROADS
- ⊙ MAJOR TOWNS
- X MILITARY POSTS
- MINOR TOWNS



R. H. '71

the Pecos ranchers, who maintained his head-quarters on the river near present-day Roswell. It was probably this hatred for Chisum which led Henry Beckwith and his two sons to enter the feuding in Lincoln County on the side of Murphy and Dolan.

The principal battle of the Lincoln County War was fought in the dusty streets of Lincoln between July 16th and 19th, 1878. The Beckwiths were sided with Sheriff Peppin, James J. Dolan, Marion Turner and others numbering about 40. Collectively, they were known as the "Sheriff's Party." Opposing them were about an equal number of men under the leadership of Lawyer Alex A. McSween. Among McSween's men were William "Billy the Kid" Bonney.

Many of the McSween forces were barricaded in the McSween house throughout the battle. About dusk on the 19th, after a three day exchange of sniper fire between the opposing sides, the McSween house was set ablaze. As the fire began to spread, Seven River postmaster Robert Beckwith and Marion Turner, both of whom had been deputized by Sheriff Peppin, called on the men in the house to surrender. Details of what followed have become controversial. One report claims that the McSween men ran to the door of the house and fired on Beckwith. There is no dispute that Beckwith was struck with a ball in the corner of the left eye, and died almost immediately. Seeing Beckwith fall, the men of the Sheriff's Party called out, "Revenge Bob Beckwith," and began filling the house with gun-fire.

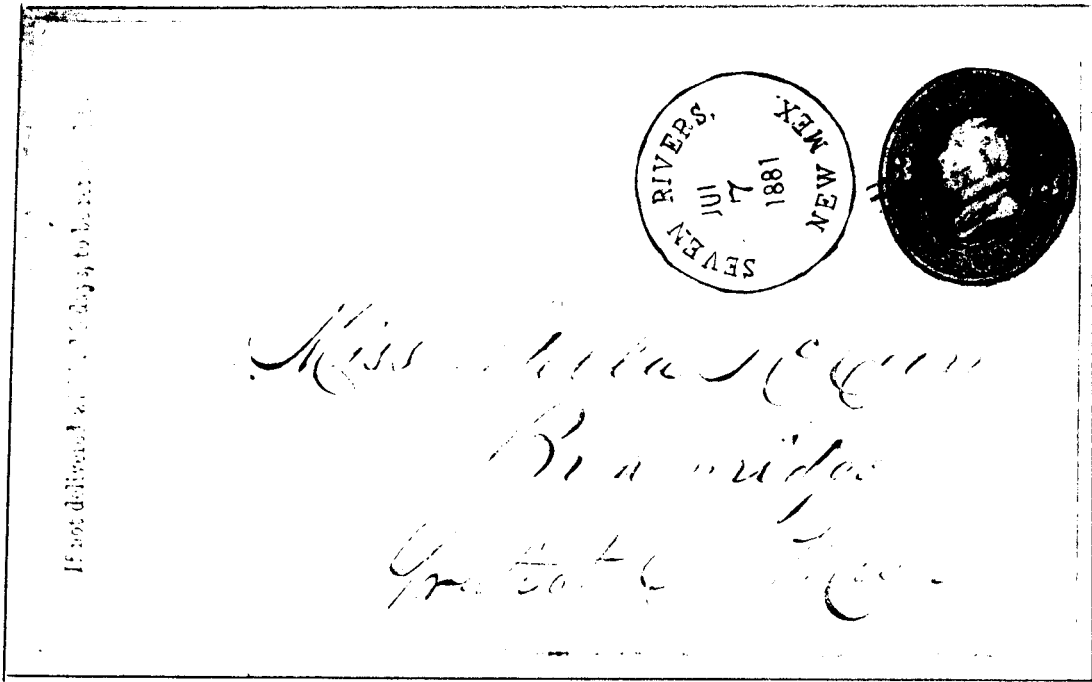
Robert Beckwith was buried at Fort Stanton with full military honors. Alex McSween was killed with three of his followers as the Sheriff's Party charged the burning house. Billy the Kid escaped into the growing darkness to claim his revenge on another day.

Postal records indicate that on August 13, 1878, William H. Johnson, Robert Beckwith's brother-in-law, was appointed to fill Beckwith's postmastership. On August 16th, three days after his appointment, Postmaster Johnson lay dead. Johnson had received both barrels of a double-barrel shotgun in his neck and chest. The fatal shot had been fired at close range on the Beckwith Ranch by none other than Henry Beckwith, Johnson's own father-in-law.

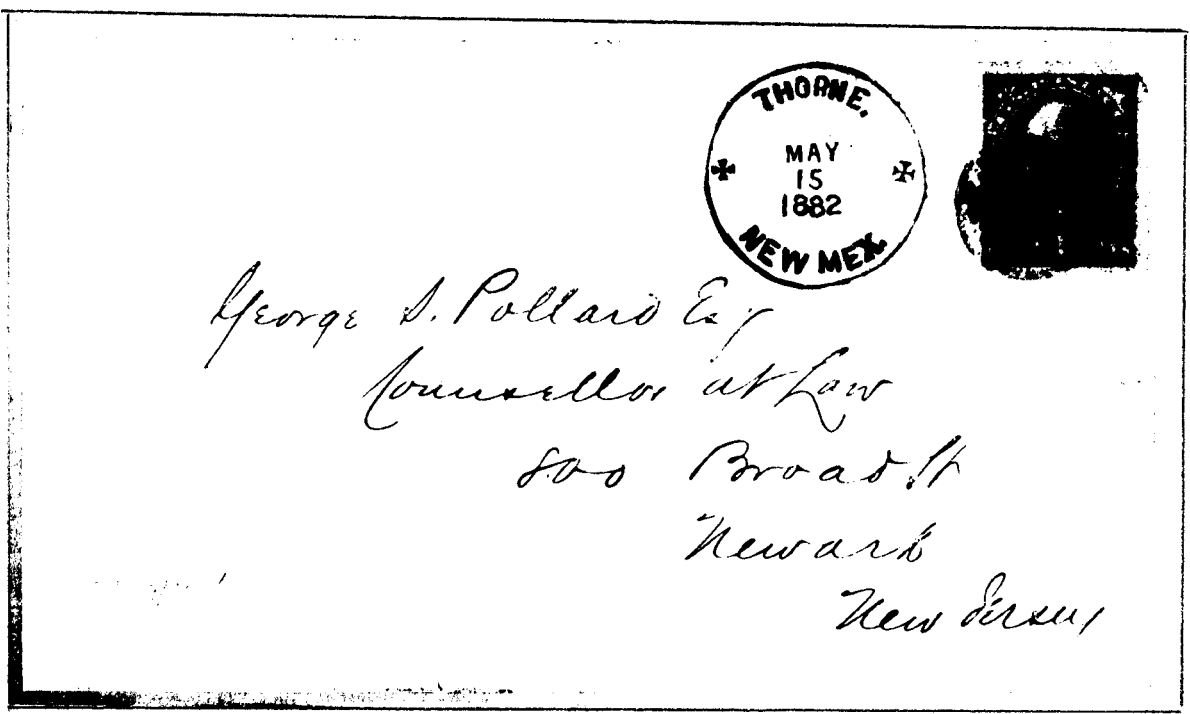
John Beckwith, brother of Robert and son of Henry, became Seven River's third postmaster by an order dated September 23, 1878. It was probably about this time that John's life had to be saved by onlookers who were watching a violent quarrel between John and his father. John Beckwith was not killed, although he gave up the job as postmaster and apparently moved from the Beckwith Ranch. On December 9, 1878, Seven Rivers had its fourth postmaster in its brief year and a half existence. This time it was Marion Turner. Turner held the Seven Rivers postmastership until 1880, and as far as is known no personal disaster befell him. Both John Beckwith and Marion Turner were among those indicted by a Lincoln County Grand Jury in May 1879 for their part in the killing of Alexander McSween, but neither received prison sentences.

#### Dona Ana County Looses Its Eastern Half

On February 15, 1878, the area of Dona Ana County was reduced by about 50%. The entire eastern half of the county, actually, that portion lying east of "the parallel of 28° 30' West of Washington" was added to Lincoln County. At



Seven Rivers, New Mexico July 7, 1881 Earliest recorded postmark.



Thorne, New Mexico May 15, 1882 Short-lived Dona Ana County office.

the time, Seven Rivers was the only settlement of size and the only post office located in the transferred territory. This eastern region was primarily used as range for cattle growing, and as such was economically tied to the ranches scattered along the Rio Pecos. The Pecos River ranchers conducted most of their business and private affairs in Lincoln as can be seen by the discussion of the postmasters of Seven Rivers.

Two new post offices were added to the Dona Ana County list during 1879. The first office, named Reed's Ranch, was extremely short-lived, and there may be some question as to whether it ever actually operated. Records indicate that C. S. Tibbetts was appointed postmaster on February 4, 1879. A second entry dated May 26, 1879, lists the Reed's Ranch office as discontinued. There is considerable doubt that this office should have appeared on the Dona Ana County list, for Reed's Ranch was located in the Pecos River country transferred to Lincoln County in 1878. Lt. C. C. Morrison's 1875 map of the District of New Mexico shows a Reed's Ranch located near the headwaters of one of the branches of Seven Rivers.

The second office established in 1879 was named Colorado to commemorate the reddish color of the nearby hills. Thomas B. Lynch was appointed the first postmaster at Colorado on September 29, 1879. Lynch and his family operated Lynch Brothers, the only business house in the small, predominantly Spanish-speaking agricultural community. Establishment of the Colorado post office marked the first postal facility to be located in the Hatch Valley of northern Dona Ana County, and served as an indication that the agricultural frontier was once again on the move. Fort Selden had previously been the county's most northerly post office on the Rio Grande, but that office was discontinued on April 24, 1877. It was re-established as Fort Seldon on May 16, 1881.



Colorado 1885



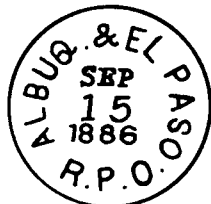
Ft. Selden 1882

#### Railroads Reach the Mesilla Valley

The railroad building era had reached New Mexico by the end of the decade of the 1870's. On December 7, 1878, the first railroad car passed into the Territory at a point 15.7 miles south of Trinidad, Colorado. The first train to arrive at Santa Fe reached the capital on February 9, 1880. Albuquerque was reached on April 10, 1880, and the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway pushed on southward through the Rio Grande Valley.

At the same time the Southern Pacific Railroad was approaching New Mexico from Tucson, Arizona, and would soon be laying track across southern Dona Ana County toward El Paso, Texas.

Dona Ana County's citizens must have watched with great interest as these two great railroads raced toward them from the north and west simultaneously. San Marcial, south of Socorro, was reached by the Santa Fe in November 1880, and the rails had already been spiked for another 39 miles down the valley. The Southern Pacific began rail service to Deming on December 15th, and, so anxious were the passengers for through rail service to the north, a stage line began carrying people between Deming and San Marcial at a cost of \$20.00 for the 120 mile trip.



Albuquerque & El Paso R.P.O.

It is difficult to determine which of the two railroads actually reached Dona Ana County first. The Southern Pacific built southeast from Deming, by-passing the county's population centers along the Rio Grande. Service was initiated through to El Paso on May 19, 1881. The Santa Fe, on the other hand, not only built into many of the existing valley settlements, but added a few new communities to the string of towns along the Rio Grande.

The A. T. & S. F. entered the Rio Grande Valley near San Diego Mountain after a 70 miles trek south through the Jornada del Muerto. Upon entering the valley, the line split; one branch proceeding southwestward to link up with the Southern Pacific at Deming; and the other following on down the course of the Rio Grande to El Paso. The place where the line split became a logical site for a small railroad junction town. A post office named Thorne, in memory of a Civil War fort whose ruins were located nearby, was established at the rail junction on June 15, 1881. James M. Hoy was appointed to be the first postmaster. Hoy did not serve long as postmaster, however, and he was replaced by Hugo B. Kohl, who favored the name Rincon for the post office. Rincon means "corner" in Spanish, and the post office rests in a natural corner formed by the surrounding hills. Kohl petitioned for a name change, and on February 20, 1883, Thorne became known as Rincon as it is to this day.



Rincon 1883



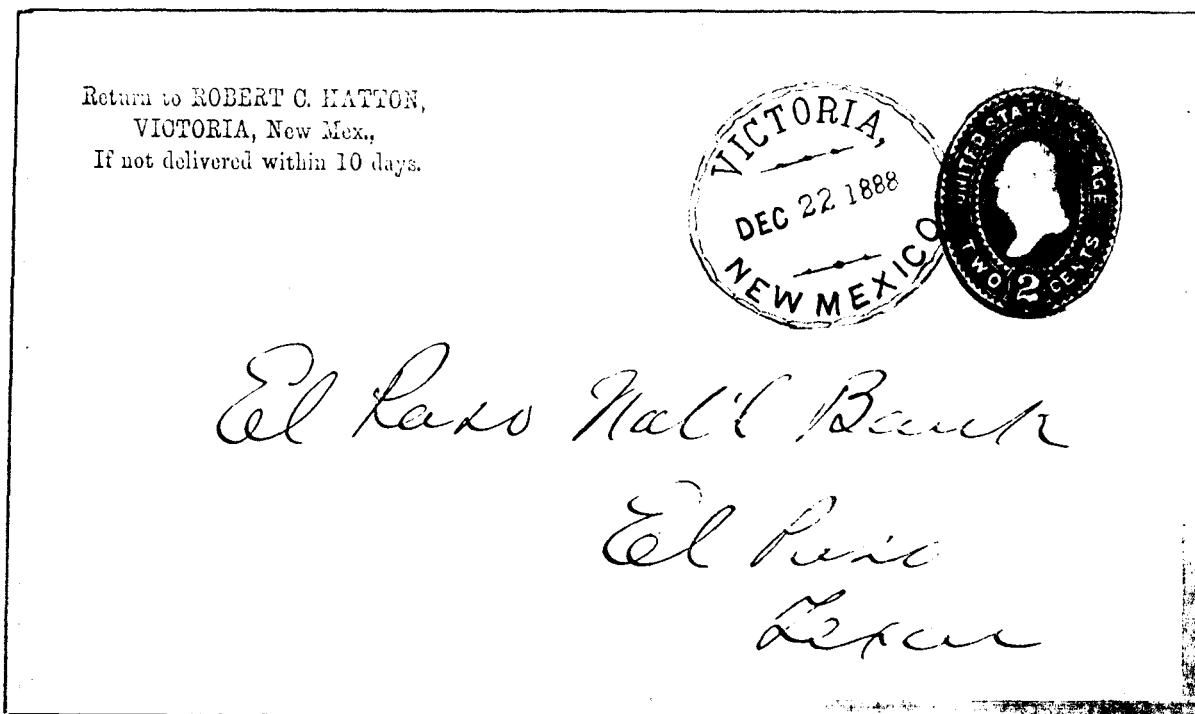
The railroads now seemed to streak across Dona Ana County. Deming was tied to Rincon, linking the Santa Fe and Southern Pacific, on March 8, 1881. The construction train reached the village of Dona Ana on April 19, 1881, and by early May Las Cruces was brought into the system. On June 11, 1881, the Santa Fe reached El Paso, and once isolated Dona Ana County was tied to both the East and West by bands of steel. There were to be important changes in the character and way of life of the county.

Three "New" Towns for the Southern Mesilla Valley

It is perhaps misleading to equate the establishment of three new post offices in the southern Mesilla Valley with the formation of new towns. The settlements had already been in existence for many years before they received their post offices in 1880, but, in a sense, the new post offices represented "official" recognition, and as such map-makers now began to recognize them as towns. The three new post offices were all created on the same day, November 8, 1880. Post offices and their first postmasters were:

Chamberino ..... Marcus Estabrook,  
 La Mesa ..... P. Moreno,  
 Victoria ..... Eugenio Moreno.

The new offices were all within 10 miles of each other on the west side of the Rio Grande, and all served small, predominantly Spanish-speaking communities. Survival of the three new offices was a mixed affair. The La Mesa office was discontinued after less than 2 years of service on March 20, 1882. The Victoria had its name changed to La Mesa on May 4, 1908, and continues to serve under that name. The Chamberino post office was closed July 13, 1882, but was later re-established on April 18, 1893, and continues to serve a portion of the southern Mesilla Valley.



Victoria - 1888

## Mining in the Organ Mountains

Mining activity began in the Organ Mountains some 15 miles east of Las Cruces as early as 1851. In that year, prospectors from El Paso employed by the Hon. Hugh Stephenson, discovered a silver deposit which soon became known as the Stephenson Mine. The mine was sold by its original owner in 1858 after it had produced some \$70,000 worth of silver. In 1861, the Memphis Mine was discovered and worked for a time by one Colonel O'Bannon. The Memphis became an important copper producer during the heyday of Organ Mountains mining in the 1880's.

The decade of the 1870's brought no new major mineral finds in the Organs, but the first few years of the '80's witnessed a number of new mining ventures and the birth of a new mining town named Organ. James Rynerson's Modoc Mines and Col. J. F. Bennett's Bennett Mines were both opened in 1880. Both mines produced a relatively high grade lead ore in combination with silver. The ore was known as argentiferous galena. The Bennett Mines eventually shipped over 50,000 tons of this ore to smelters in El Paso, Texas, and Pueblo, Colorado. The Excelsior Mine, located about the same time, produced high grade copper ore, and the Little Buck Mine, discovered in 1881, produced copper, gold and silver in combination.

The approaching construction of the railroads in 1880 undoubtedly spurred the interest of mining operations in the Organs. It had been known for almost 30 years that ore of commercial quality was available in the Organ Mountains, but difficulty in reaching smelters, or markets for the refined minerals, presented barriers to full-scale exploitation until the railroads came.

On September 14, 1881, Orlanda F. Guthrie was appointed the first postmaster of the Organ post office. The mining town grew rapidly during the first years of the decade, and by 1885 there were reported to be some 400 residents. At that time, Organ boasted a small smelter with a capacity of 40 tons per day, but the bulk of the ore from surrounding mine was shipped by freight wagon to the Santa Fe depot in Las Cruces at rates varying from \$2.50 to \$4 per ton. From Las Cruces the ore moved by rail to either El Paso, at \$1.50 per ton in carload lots, or Pueblo, at \$5 and up per ton.

Mining booms have a tendency to be short-lived, and the boom in the Organs was no exception. By the late 1880's, many of the major mines began to fill with water as mining had penetrated below the water table. Pumping sustained some mining in the region for several years into the 1890's, but the boom was clearly at an end. The population census reported only 101 residents in Organ in 1890, and in 1895 the post office was closed. It re-opened the following year and has continued to operate until this day, but Organ has never regained the boom and excitement of its early days.

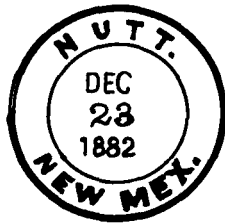


Organ - 1883

## The Hillsborough Mining District

Construction of the railroad between Rincon and Deming during 1881 provided a stimulus to mining in another part of Dona Ana County. In the extreme northeast corner of the county as it was defined between 1870 and 1880, mining of rich silver deposits in the Hillsborough and Lake Valley districts had begun as early as 1877. The Hillsborough post office was established March 7, 1879, when Nicholas Galles was appointed postmaster. Early in 1880 boundary revisions were made between Dona Ana, Grant, and Socorro counties to define the position of Hillsborough. The result was an interesting boundary between Grant and Dona Ana counties which consisted of a straight north-south line between Ranges 7 and 8 West, except that the area within a radius of 5 miles of Hillsborough was included in Dona Ana County (see map).

The community of Nutt was a direct result of railroad construction. Named in honor of Colonel H. C. Nutt, an original stockholder and president of the A.T. & S. F. Railway Company, the site was chosen as a logical point to extend a spur line into the Lake Valley mining area from the Rincon-Deming line. Nutt post office was established May 26, 1881. John Bennett became the first postmaster. Nutt was a busy place for the first three years of its existence. Supplies for the mining districts were unloaded from freight trains to be reloaded on bulky freight wagons and driven north to the mines. Silver ore made the reverse trip, being loaded on rail cars at Nutt for shipment to the smelters.



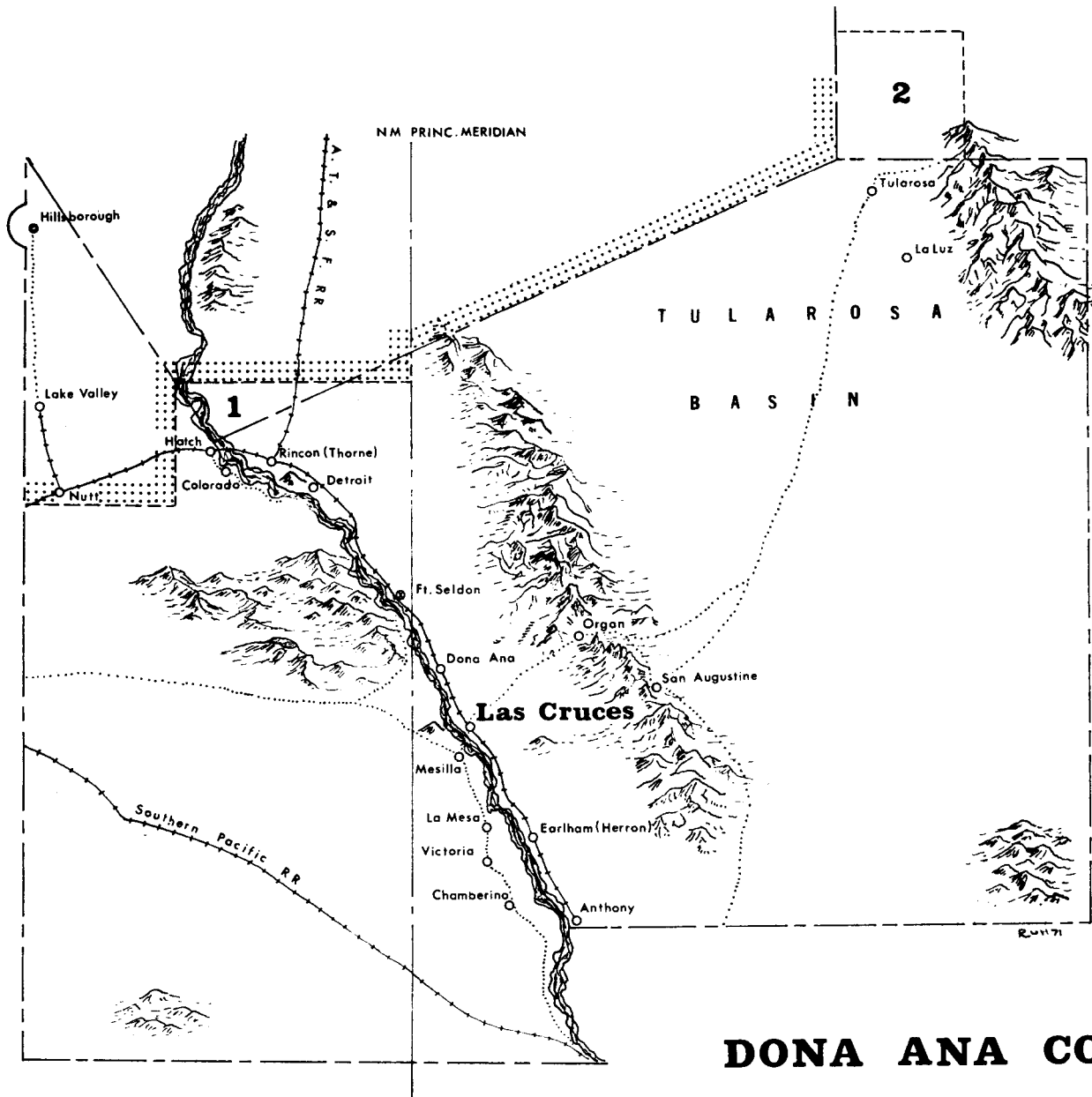
Nutt 1882



Nutt 1883

Nutt's vital function was to be short-lived however. On November 1, 1881, a post office named Daly was established in the main mining camp of the Lake Valley district. George Daly, general manager of the Bridal Chamber Mine, had recently been killed by Apaches not far from the camp, and the post office name honored him. William B. Jones was appointed the first Daly postmaster, but he was succeeded in 1882 by Lafayette Clapp, Jr. Clapp had the post office name changed to Lake Valley: a name which was at the time descriptive of the location of the mining district.

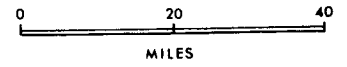
The New Mexico Territorial Legislature created Sierra County on April 3, 1884, and Hillsborough and Lake Valley mining districts became the most important parts of the new county. Two days later Lake Valley welcomed the first train over the new 13 mile spur line from Nutt. In a very short time most of the business activity and residents of Nutt had moved to Lake Valley, and on May 19, 1884, the Nutt post office was discontinued. It was to be re-estab-



### LEGEND

- BOUNDARY OF 1880
- ⋯ TO SIERRA COUNTY APRIL 3, 1884
- RAILROAD
- ⋯ ROAD
- POST OFFICE

- 1** TO DONA ANA FROM SOCORRO COUNTY FEBRUARY 24, 1887
- 2** TO DONA ANA FROM LINCOLN COUNTY FEBRUARY 12, 1889



## DONA ANA COUNTY: THE 1880's

lished some 15 years later to serve for a time during the early 20th century, but that is another story.



#### Lake Valley - 1883

Other Dona Ana County Post Offices: Two South, Two East, and Two North

A number of other new post offices were established in Dona Ana County during the late 1880's. On May 16, 1881, the Fort Seldon post office was established. This office served the same military facility as the Fort Seldon post office which had operated from November 9, 1866 to April 24, 1877. The fort had been named for Henry R. Selden. No reason for the change in spelling is known, although errors in spelling were common in 19th century postal matters. Postmarks from the Fort Seldon office are known with both "en" and "on" spelling.

The extreme southern part of Dona Ana County's Mesilla Valley saw two new post offices established during the mid-1880's. On May 2, 1884, the Anthony post office was established with Alden McIlvaine as postmaster. Anthony is a town divided by the New Mexico-Texas state line. The Santa Fe Railroad station was located on the Texas side of the line and named La Tuna. Families living on the New Mexico side of the line preferred the name Anthony for their town. The name reportedly commemorates a local family chapel dedicated to San Antonio.

The second office in the southern Mesilla Valley was located about 10 miles north of Anthony on the A. T. & S. F. Railroad. Named Herron in honor of the family of its first postmaster, C. M. Herron, this office is first listed in Post Office Department records as of January 26, 1886. The name of the office did not prevail, however, and on July 31, 1888, the post office became known as Earlham. Chauncey West was the first Earlham postmaster. The Earlham post office was eventually closed June 15, 1911. Anthony continues to serve the postal requirements of its community divided by the state line.

Two new post offices were also added to the far eastern portion of Dona Ana County during the late years of the decade. On January 27, 1886, Jonathan H. Stuart was appointed the first postmaster of the La Luz post office. La Luz was probably the earliest settlement in the Tularosa Basin. Two Spanish missionaries bapitized a number of Indians and built the first chapel in 1719. The chapel was named "Our Lady of Light," and the name for the post office is the Spanish word meaning "light."

Hilton was the name of a post office established March 22, 1887 in eastern Dona Ana County. Enoch B. George was the first postmaster. The name of the

office was probably descriptive, as Hilton was located in the Sacramento Mountains somewhere west of present-day Weed. George remained Hilton's postmaster until January 31, 1894, when Ben H. Allen took over. Allen held the position for only a short time for Hilton was closed on May 17, 1894. So far, no postal marking have been recorded from the Hilton post office.

Northern Dona Ana County saw the establishment of post offices named Hatch and Detroit during the last half of the decade. John B. Huntington was appointed the first postmaster of Hatch on February 2, 1887. Hatch, a farming center, was named in honor of General Edward Hatch, who was military commander in the northern Mesilla Valley from 1880 to 1895.



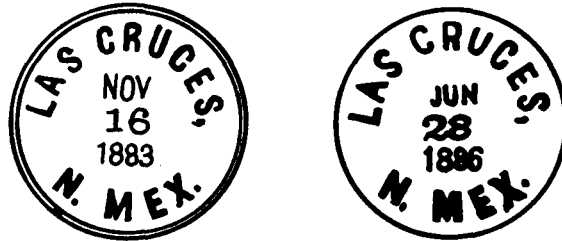
Hatch 1890

The Detroit post office was established July 15, 1889. Adam Telfer was the first Detroit postmaster. The office was located on or near the Santa Fe Railroad tracks about 5 miles southeast of Rincon. After only two and one half years of existence, the Detroit office was discontinued February 23, 1892.

#### Las Cruces and Mesilla

The arrival of the railroad in Dona Ana County not only brought increased ease of communication with the rest of the nation and "created" new centers of population, it reorganized the importance of the county's existing towns. Mesilla, the historic center of population and commerce, was by-passed by the A.T. & S. F. Railroad which built its station in Las Cruces two miles to the east. Shortly thereafter, much of the business and population of Mesilla relocated in Las Cruces. This relocation is reflected dramatically in the postmaster salaries of the two towns during the 1880's. In fiscal year 1883 (July 1, 1882 - June 30, 1883), the Las Cruces postmaster, M. J. Cuniffe was paid \$823.80, while the Mesilla postmaster, I. M. Jones, was paid \$539.23. At that time, the effects of the railroad had only been felt for a little over a year. By fiscal year 1889, however, the Las Cruces postmaster received a salary of \$1,000, while Mesilla's postmaster was paid only \$215.30. An important impact of the coming of the railroad was the transfer of the county seat from Mesilla to Las Cruces. One of the last of Mesilla's "days of glory" resulted from the fact that the county seat had not yet been transferred in April 1881. In that month the town hosted the famous trial of William "Billy the Kid" Bonney.

A pamphlet titled "Dona Ana County, Her Resources and People," by A. J. Fountain describes Las Cruces in 1885 as: "The most important town in Dona Ana County... the business center and seat of government, a town of 3000 inhabitants..." Las Cruces possessed "several large mercantile establishments..., several hotels, two flouring mills, two churches, a Masonic Lodge, and a full assortment of Lawyers, Doctors, drugstores, bakeries, butcher shops, blacksmith and carpenter shops."



Las Cruces Postmarks of the 1880's

Mesilla was described by the same report as "a town of about 1500 inhabitants.." It was said to be "laid out in regular streets which are shaded by large cottonwood and other trees." "A catholic (sic) church and convent of the Sisters of Mercy" were reported to comprise the public buildings. In addition, Mesilla was said to boast "some of the finest residences in the Mesilla Valley."

The railroads had changed the pattern of life in the Mesilla Valley in many ways. A new era had come with the rails of steel. The days of dusty stage rides, marauding Apaches, and wandering outlaws were drawing to a close in the late 1880's. As the railroads brought an end to the geographic isolation of the Mesilla Valley, the region's economic and social orders began to adjust to a broader national pattern. This is not to suggest that the Valley lost its individuality during the 1880's. Much of that which is unique to southern New Mexico has remained to this day, but the character of Dona Ana County had been changed by 1890. Still, statehood was some 22 years in the future, and there was to be many events of color and interest during those 22 years.



Mesilla 1880

Next: The Last Years of the Territorial Era - 1890 to 1912.

## WYOMING STATE RURAL BRANCHES AND STATIONS

By Arthur E. Rupert

Rural stations and branches were first established in Wyoming in 1956. Home on the Range rural of Lander was the first to be so designated in the state. Three of Wyoming's rurals can trace their history as postal facilities back to territorial days. Both Carlile and Point of Rocks were converted directly from post offices into rural branches. South Pass City, the third territorial post office, was discontinued May 15, 1957, only to be re-established as a rural branch of Lander on June 1, 1968.

Wyoming has seen a total of 32 different rural stations and branches since 1956. Of that total, all but 5 are still listed in the current Directory of Post Offices. Completion of a collection of cancellations from Wyoming rurals should be challenging, but none of the individual postmarks should be considered rare. There are three rurals which might prove somewhat elusive. They are, in probable order of difficulty, Home on the Range, Calpet, and Jeffrey City of Lander.

Postmark types used by the rurals of Wyoming include Types 2 - 6 as described in LA POSTA, Vol. 3, No. 2. Type 1 was in use prior to 1950, and is therefore not seen from Wyoming rurals. In addition to the five types already described, there are two new postmark types used by Wyoming rurals:

- Type 7 - a box killer
- Type 8 - a machine killer

No single rural branch or station is believed to have been issued all seven of these postmark types, but many rurals have used more than one type. The following list illustrates the variety of postmark types recorded from some selected rurals:

Rural Name	Postmark Types Recorded
Home on the Range	2
Gas Hills	2, 4, 5
Sand Draw	3, 5, 6
Jeffrey City under Lander	2
Jeffrey City under Rawlins	3, 4, 6
Calpet	2
Colter Bay	6, 7, 8
Teton Village	3, 6, 7, 8

The following list offers complete up-to-date information on the rural branches and stations of Wyoming. A locator map is provided to show the location of Wyoming's rurals with respect to their parent offices and the major highways in the state. Comments on this listing of Wyoming rurals will be appreciated by the author, and may be addressed to him at: P. O. Box 645, Prosser, Washington 99350.

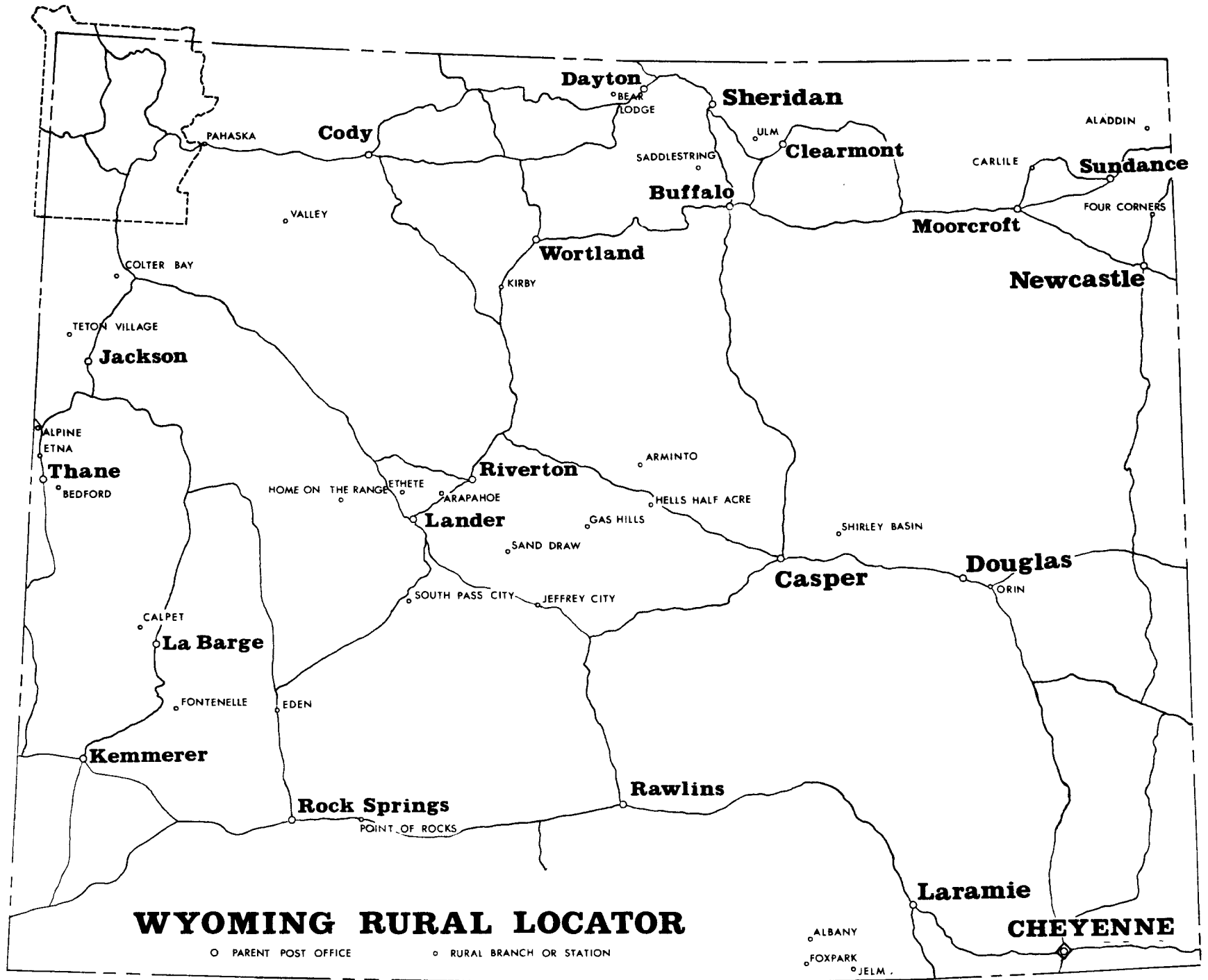


WYOMING RURAL STATIONS AND RURAL BRANCHES

Rural Name		Post Office	Established	Discontinued
1. Home on the Range		Lander	1 Oct 1956	31 Oct 1959
2. Gas Hills	RB	Riverton 82501	16 Feb 1959	
3. Sand Draw	RB	Riverton 82501	19 May 1959	
4. Valley	RB	Cody 82414	1 Jul 1959	
5. Hells Half Acre	RB	Casper 82601	1 Jul 1959	
6. Alpine	RB	Thayne 83127	1 Sep 1959	
SPO eff. 1 May 1964 (operates 1 May to 30 Nov)				
7. Jeffrey City		Lander 82520	1 Nov 1959	31 Aug 1964
Transferred to:				
Jeffrey City	RB 82310	Rawlins	1 Sep 1964	
8. Calpet Ind		La Barge	1 Apr 1960	29 Apr 1961
9. Ethete	RB	Lander 82520	16 Apr 1960	
10. Ulm Ind	RB	Clearmont 82835	20 Aug 1960	
11. Shirley Basin Ind	RB	Casper 82601	1 Jan 1961	
12. Albany		Laramie 82070	24 Jun 1961	1 Jun 1965
SPO (operates 1 May to 31 Oct)				
13. Fontenelle	RB	Kemmerer 83101	1 Jun 1962	
14. Orin RI	RB 82652	Douglas (82633)	7 Aug 1962	
(on 15 Aug 1965 changed ZIP code from parent's 82633 to own of 82652)				
15. Pahaska	RB	Cody 82414	3 Feb 1963	
16. Colter Bay	RB	Jackson 83001	1 Jun 1963	
SPO (operates 1 Jun to 30 Sep)				
17. Four Corners Ind	RB 82715	Newcastle	23 Nov 1963	
18. Arminto RI	RB 82630	Casper	17 Jul 1964	
19. Aladdin RI	RB 82710	Sundance	30 Dec 1964	
20. Carlile RI	RB 82713	Moorcroft	9 Apr 1965	
21. Jelm RI	RB 82063	Laramie	23 Apr 1965	
22. Teton Village RI	RB 83025	Jackson	1 Dec 1965	
23. Eden RI	RB 82926	Rock Springs	3 Dec 1965	
24. Foxpark	RB 82057	Laramie	11 Feb 1966	
25. Arapahoe	RB 82510	Riverton	11 Mar 1966	
26. Bedford	RB 83112	Thayne	22 Apr 1966	
27. Saddlestring	RB 82840	Buffalo	30 Apr 1966	
SPO (operates 1 Jun to 30 Sep)				
28. Point of Rocks	RB 82942	Rock Springs	26 Aug 1966	
29. Kirby	RB 82430	Worland	2 Dec 1966	
30. Etna	RB 83118	Thayne	30 Dec 1966	
31. South Pass City	RB	Lander 82520	1 Jun 1968	
32. Bear Lodge	RB	Dayton 82836	15 Jul 1968	

Additions: Pahaska is a SPO operating from 1 Jun to 1 Oct.

Notes: SPO means Summer Post Office  
 RI means Independent Rural, an obsolete designation  
 RB means Rural Branch



TERRITORIAL POSTMASTERS OF NEW MEXICO By Thomas Todsen

Part II: John Becker

Numbers of territorial postmasters served more than twenty years. A few exceeded the thirty year mark. However, New Mexico's candidate for "Postmaster of Longest Territorial Tenure" is John Becker of Belen, who was appointed 22 September 1873, and was still serving when New Mexico became a state. His territorial service is thus 38 years, 3 months, and 14 days.

John Becker, the son of Johannes and Lucie (Kroehnke) Becker, was born 28 May 1850 in Hanover, Germany, near Assel, where his father was a minor government official. He was early apprenticed to a merchant and qualified as a clerk by the time he was 19. Since he did not want to serve the mandatory period in the Hanoverian Army, he determined to seek his fortune in America. Leaving Bremen on the steamship "Frankfurt", he arrived in New Orleans late in 1869. There he was first employed in a restaurant. Over the next two years, he slowly moved north working at various jobs. En route he met his future wife, Anna Vielstich, in Minneapolis, and apparently kept up correspondence with her as he wandered further. In Winona, Minnesota, young Becker worked as a stevedore, and in the fields harvesting grain. At this time, he visited an uncle (a clergyman) in Illinois and learned that his cousin, E. D. Franz, had set up a mercantile establishment in New Mexico. Becker decided to join him. The trip to New Mexico was made by travelling via the Missouri Pacific Railroad to Kansas City, thence by the old Kansas Pacific Railroad to Kit Carson, Colorado, and finally 600 miles overland with a freighting wagon to Los Lunas where he arrived in August 1871. For two years he worked in the Los Lunas store of L. and H. Huning, who had succeeded Becker's cousin. In 1873, he was placed in charge of their Belen branch store, and, having been admitted to partnership, operated it under the name of L. and H. Huning and Becker.

In 1877, two notable events occurred in Becker's life; he married Anna Vielstich in Santa Fe on 2 November, and he resigned from partnership with the Hunings to begin his own store in Belen. Continual expansion of the business required a new building in 1885, a two-store brick building in 1898, and a modern department store building in 1917, the latter still to be seen in central Belen. The business was incorporated in 1902 as the John Becker Company, and Becker instituted the then enlightened procedure of making all employees stockholders.

In addition to the general mercantile business, Becker built the first grist mill in Belen in 1884. This was continually improved and expanded over the years to a 100 barrel per day operation, at one time the largest such in New Mexico.

Becker was one of the founders of the First National Bank of Belen, which opened for business 8 January 1903. He was its president for many years, being succeeded by his son, Louis. He was vice president of the Bank of Magdalena, and a founder and president of the Becker-Mactavish Company of Magdalena. He was also president of the Willard Mercantile Company.



As president of the Belen Town and Improvement Company, which owned the town site of Belen, he played his most vital role in shaping Belen's future. At that time he donated \$8400 plus personally owned lands so that the A.T. & S.F. Railroad would build its southern by-pass directly into Belen instead of going further south as originally planned.

With all his business activities, Becker did not neglect his civic duties. As an example, he was appointed a delegate to the New Mexico Constitutional Convention and returned early from a visit to Germany to serve as a member of the Judicial and Financial Committees to that body. In addition, he furnished the grounds for several of Belen's schools and donated a park to the city. He was a staunch member of the Lutheran Church, and contri-

buted a great deal of time and money to its support.

John Becker died 21 April 1932, full of years, wealth, and service. He is buried at Belen.

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