

LA POSTA



PLACER MINING



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LA POSTA is the research journal of the Mountain & Desert West Postal History Research Society. It is published on an irregular basis with six issues per volume. The subscription rate is \$5 per volume, and single copies are available at \$1 each. For additional information, or to place a subscription, write: RICHARD W. HELBOCK, Editor, 1635 Mariposa Drive, Las Cruces, New Mexico 88001.

POST OFFICES OF THE ALASKA GOLD RUSH

By Richard W. Helbock

"Gold! They've found gold!" These words were heard in many places at many times throughout the American West during the last half of the nineteenth century, and they always seemed to touch-off a series of events which led to the settlement of a new frontier. In 1896 the place was the Yukon River basin of Alaska and Canada, and the first excited shouts of discovery produced the same frantic, pell-mell stampede for instant wealth and fame which had populated California nearly 50 years earlier. The establishment of post offices and the communications which they represented in this vast untamed land of the Yukon mirrored much of the drama and excitement of the time. It is the object of this essay to recapture, through a narration of the region's postal history, some of the flavor of North America's last great gold rush.

The Juneau Strike. Alaska's potential for producing a rich gold strike had long been suspected. Under Russian control, the presence of gold was confirmed by at least one geologist, but the Russian-American Company was principally interested in the lucrative fur trade and lacked the capital necessary to undertake gold mining. The purchase of Alaska in 1867 brought American traders and soldiers to the far north, and shortly thereafter scattered reports of gold discoveries began turning up.

The first major Alaskan gold discovery was made by Joseph Juneau and Richard H. Harris on Gold Creek in 1880. Prospecting a mile and a half inland from the present capital of Alaska, the two miners had located a rich placer strike which soon touched-off a small rush of claim staking along the Gastineau Channel. Harris and Juneau staked out the beach at the mouth of Gold Creek as a townsite, and within a few months their townsite had turned into a bustling mining camp. Initially there was a good bit of disagreement and confusion about the name of the Gold Creek camp. Harrisburg was favored by some, and the first post office in the camp, established by the appointment of Nathaniel Hilton as postmaster April 8, 1881, offered official support by using that name. Others favored Rockwell in honor of Comander Charles H. Rockwell, who arrived at the camp with a detachment of troops in 1881 to keep order. Still others favored Pilzburg, after the German engineer Pilz who was an original partner of Juneau and Harris. And finally, there was a group which favored Juneau City, or Juneau Wharf, or some variation honoring Joe Juneau. In order to resolve the confusion, a meeting of the miners was held late in 1881 with the result that the community was officially named Juneau. The Post Office Department responded by changing the name of the post office to Juneau on January 10, 1882.

The growth of Juneau, which changed quickly from a placer mining camp to a quartz mining town with the construction of a stamp mill in 1882, is reflected in the increasing compensation of its postmasters (Table 1). By 1895, only 15

TABLE 1
COMPENSATION OF JUNEAU POSTMASTERS, 1881-1895

Fiscal Year	Postmaster	Compensation
1881	Nathaniel Hilton	None reported
1883	W. L. Minturn	\$86.08
1885	W. L. Minturn	\$149.21
1887	J. L. Stitt	\$427.51
1889	J. L. Stitt	\$347.28
1891	Charles E. Coon	\$821.05
1893	Joseph T. Field	\$726.37
1895	R. P. Nelson	\$1,000.00

years after the original gold strike, Juneau had overtaken Sitka as Alaska's largest population center. The Census of 1900 counted 1,864 residents of Juneau, and within a few years the boom town was to become the Territorial capital.

Known examples of postal markings from early Juneau are not numerous. Joseph J. Cavagnol, in his excellent study titled Postmarked Alaska, identifies only six Juneau covers with postmarks dated prior to 1890 (1). No postal markings are recorded from Harrisburg.

Juneau's earliest postmarks reflect the early confusion about the name of the camp. A postmark dated February 22, 1883, reads "JUNEAU CITY." It is the earliest Juneau marking recorded by Cavagnol. Two other examples made with the same postmark device are known, but both of them show an imprint produced by an altered die (Figure 1). Perhaps the word "City" sounded a bit pretentious to Postmaster Minturn, or perhaps he simply wished the name in his postmark to confirm to the official name of his community. In any event the first postmark device used at Juneau was apparently altered at the post office by the removal of the "CITY" portion of the die.

The excitement generated by the Juneau strike was not immediately followed by other major gold discoveries in Alaska, but it was enough to encourage a steady trickle of prospectors to try their luck in other parts of the Territory. Gradually, over a period of some 16 years, prospectors panned and sluiced their way through much of Alaska south of the Arctic Circle.

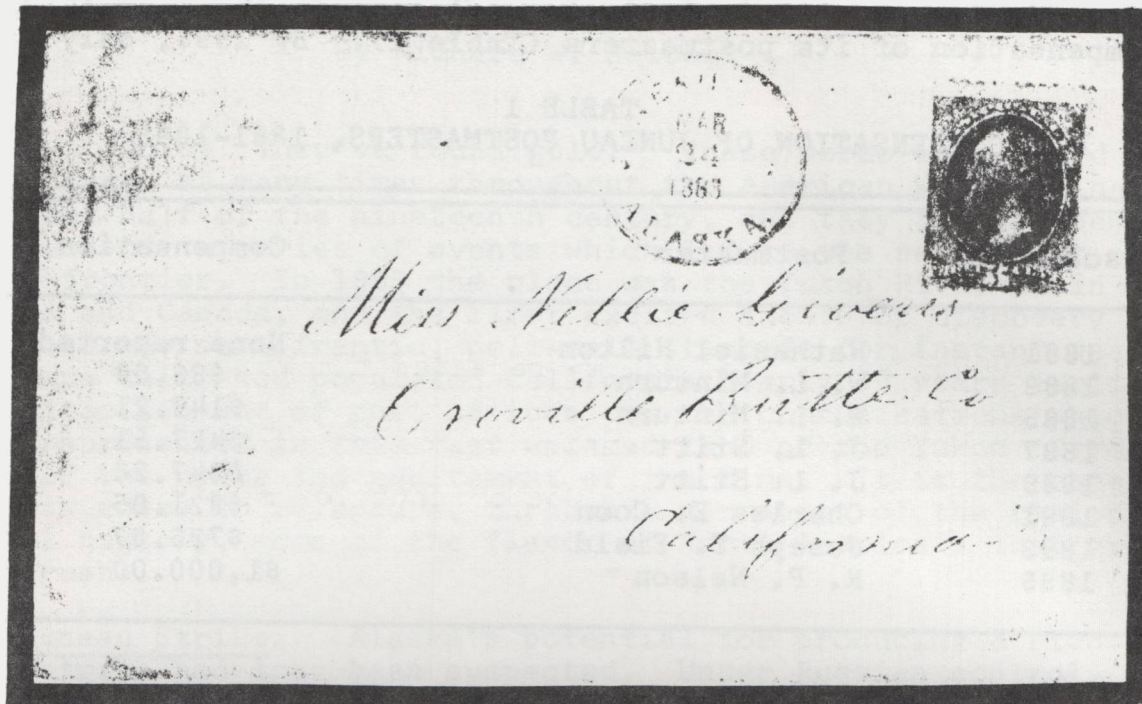


Figure 1. A cover postmarked Juneau, Alaska on the 24th of March, 1883. This is the second oldest Juneau cover known, and the earliest to show a modification of the postmark device by the removal of "CITY."

Some hardy souls had even ventured into the high Arctic. By 1896 there were a considerable number of miners working the mighty Yukon and its tributaries, and nearly everywhere some gold was found.

Leroy Napoleon McQuesten, Forty Mile, and Mitchell. The first American prospectors to enter the Yukon basin had been working their way north ever since the California gold rush began to die out. They worked streams in Oregon, Washington, and Idaho. They had panned gold in British Columbia. And in 1861 over 400 of them went up the Stikine River out of Wrangell to stampede into what was then Russian America. It has been argued that the presence of so many American miners in Russia's tenuously controlled American colony may have exerted a positive influence on the sale of Alaska to the United States some six years later.

Be that as it may, the first American prospectors arrived in the Yukon basin as early as 1873. Among this first handful of miners was one Leroy Napoleon "Jack" McQuesten. McQuesten first accepted employment with the Alaska Commercial Company, American successors to the fur trading Russian-American Company. In 1874, McQuesten, together with Captain Al Mayo, built Fort Reliance on a high bank of the Yukon. The site they chose was only a few miles downstream from the mouth of a tributary later to be known

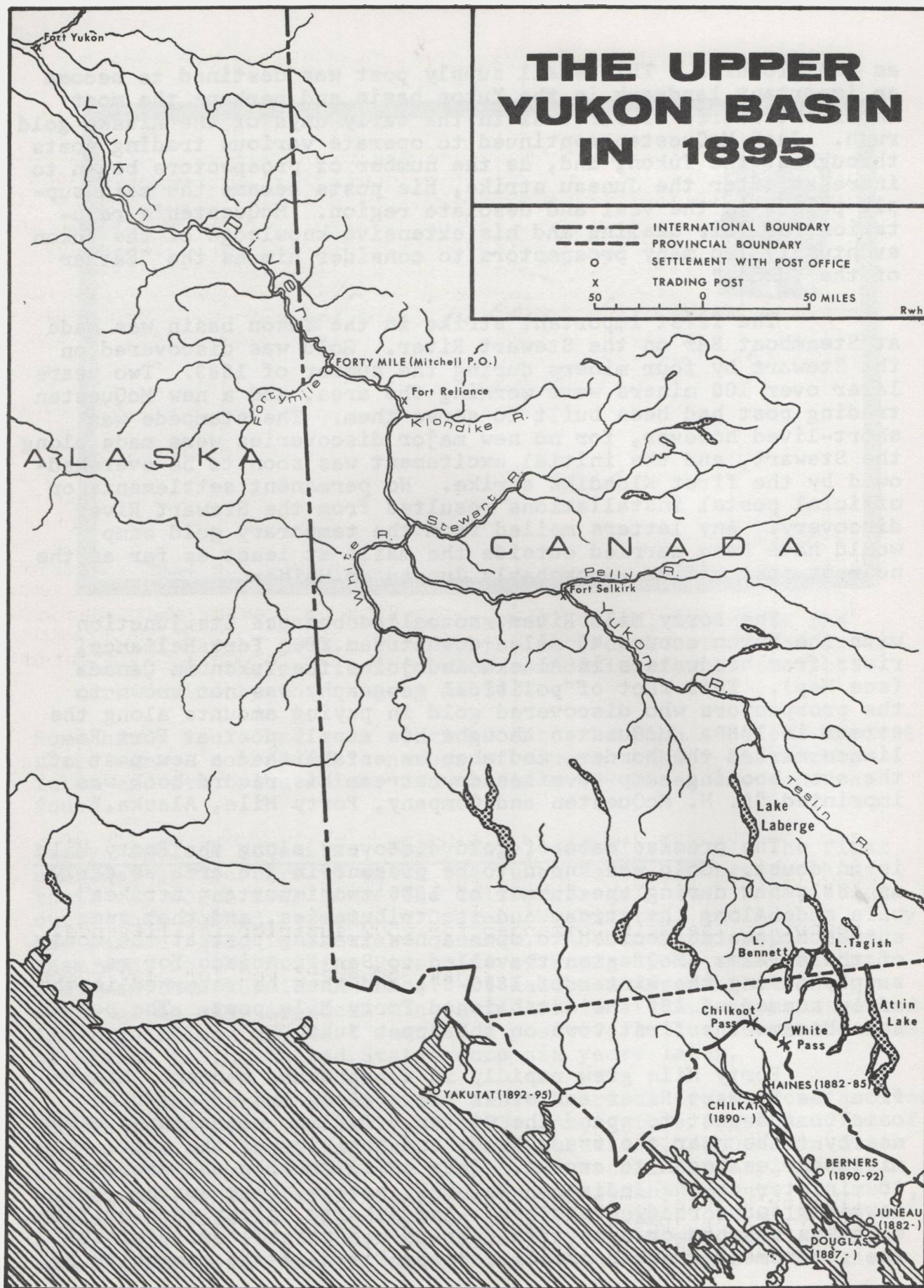
as the Klondike. This small supply post was destined to become an important landmark in the Yukon basin and perhaps the most important source of survival in the early days of the Alaska gold rush. Jack McQuesten continued to operate various trading posts throughout the Yukon, and, as the number of prospectors began to increase after the Juneau strike, his posts became the main supply points in the vast and desolate region. McQuesten's reputation for fair dealing and his extensive knowledge of the Yukon eventually led many prospectors to consider him as the "Father of the Yukon."

The first important strike in the Yukon basin was made at Steamboat Bar on the Stewart River. Gold was discovered on the Stewart by four miners during the summer of 1883. Two years later over 100 miners were working the area, and a new McQuesten trading post had been built to serve them. The stampede was short-lived however, for no new major discoveries were made along the Stewart, and the initial excitement was soon to be overshadowed by the first Klondike strike. No permanent settlements or official postal installations resulted from the Stewart River discovery. Any letters mailed from the temporary gold camp would have been carried outside the mails at least as far as the nearest post office -- probably Juneau or Haines.

The Forty Mile River, so called because its junction with the Yukon occurs 40 miles downstream from Fort Reliance, rises from headwaters in Alaska and joins the Yukon in Canada (see Map). This fact of political geography was not known to the prospectors who discovered gold in paying amounts along the stream in 1886. McQuesten thought his supply post at Fort Reliance marked the border, and when he established a new post at the soon booming camp 40 miles downstream his record book was imprinted "L. N. McQuesten and Company, Forty Mile, Alaska."

The precise date of gold discovery along the Forty Mile is in doubt. Gold was known to be present in the area as early as 1881, but during the summer of 1886 two important strikes were made along the stream and its tributaries, and that same summer McQuesten decided to open a new trading post at the mouth of the stream. McQuesten travelled to San Francisco for re-supply during the winter of 1886-87, and when he returned in the early summer of 1887 he established Forty Mile post. The post soon became the first town on the upper Yukon.

Forty Mile grew rapidly in a haphazard manner. Miners from the Stewart River and other spots along the upper Yukon came to the post to spend the winter. Indians established camps nearby to be near the trade goods and activity of the post. Soon missionaries began to arrive. They built schools and churches to minister to the Indians. Saloons, hotels, blacksmiths, and sawmills found ready customers. And finally, after some critical size was reached or some trial period had passed, officials of the government granted official recognition to the community by



establishment of postal facilities and law enforcement.

Government recognition of Forty Mile came first in the form of a post office authorized by the United States. Postal records indicate that on December 20, 1889, Leroy N. McQuestion (sic) was appointed the first postmaster at Mitchell, Alaska. An entry in the Official Register of July 1, 1891, confirms the existence of the office, and notes that it began operation on October 7, 1890. No compensation was paid the Mitchell postmaster for fiscal year 1890. The listing for fiscal year 1892 shows McQuestion (sic) received \$4.59 in compensation for his postmaster duties. According to Post Office Department records, Mitchell was discontinued April 17, 1895, with papers to San Francisco.

Mitchell was the first post office in the Yukon Basin. It was also, almost unquestionably, a United States post office operating in Canada. The fact that the post office was closed in the same year that the Canadian government established its first detachment of Northwest Mounted Police in the community seems to add further support to the idea that Mitchell was a mistake.

Postal markings from Mitchell must be considered among Alaska's rarest. Cavagnol reported no examples of Mitchell postmarks in his 1957 survey, but since then at least one example has come to light. It was described in the catalog for Herman Herst's 186th auction, May 12-13, 1971, as follows:

MITCHELL, ALASKA, V.F. postal card, #UX11, with 1¢ Col., #230, 1895, to London, two clear strikes, neatly tying stp., inscr. in MS on back "via St. Michaels-Unalaska and S.F."

The catalog estimated valuation was "C" (\$20-\$30). The lot sold for \$100. It was probably a steal. [The author would like to obtain a photocopy of the Mitchell postal card. If any reader knows its whereabouts, please contact the author]

TO BE CONTINUED:

MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY: STATUS REPORT

Three M&DWPHRS members -- Ruth Dolezal, Dr. Joseph Rorke, and Jeff Guide-- have volunteered to help out with the construction of a membership directory. In the near future one of them will be contacting you to determine your collecting and research interests. When the job is done, we will send out the directory as a supplement to La Posta.

ARIZONA TERRITORIAL POSTMARKS [Continued from 5/1]

By Dr. Sheldon H. Dike

Town	type	Val.	Earliest	Latest					
No.	No.	Postmark Code	Date	Owner	Date	Owner	Killer	Notes	
JEROME (Cont'd.)									
9.	3	C1bT1B28	26 July 99	SHD	6 May 02	?	Grid		1
10.	3	C1bT1B28 $\frac{1}{2}$	27 Jan 01	NLP	5 Mar 01	SHD	Grid		
11.	3	C1bT1B29	6 May 03	NLP	20 Dec 04	HHL	Grid		
12.	2	C1bT1B29 $\frac{1}{2}$	6 Apr 06	SHD	27 Nov 06	?	Grid		
13.	2	C1bT1B29 $\frac{1}{2}$	28 Oct 07	SHD	28 Oct 08	?	Grid		
14.	2	C1bT1B29	22 Mar 09	HRF	21 Dec 11	?	Grid		
JERSEY									
1.	7	C1bN1B27	29 Sept 98	SHD					
JOHNSON									
1.	4	C	2 Nov (08?)	HHL	13 Sept 09	?			
JUNCTION									
1.	4	C1bN1B27	11 Aug 01	HHL					
2.	4	C1bT1B30	16 Feb 05	?	19 Nov 08	SHD	Grid		
3.	4	C	17 Sept 09	?	7 Apr 11	HHL			
JUNIPER									
1.	6	C21bN1B32 $\frac{1}{2}$	22 May 85	NLP	30 Mar 88	HHL	Maltese cross		
2.	5	M	8 Sept 91	HHL					
3.	5	C1bN1BBR27	8 Dec 96	?					
4.	5	C1bN1B27 $\frac{1}{2}$? Mar 02	SHD	29 Dec 03	JOT			
5.	5	C1bN1B26	1 Feb 04	?					
6.	5	A	10 Mar 05	HHL					
7.	5	C	5 July 10	HRF					
KEAM'S CANON									
1.	6	C21bN1B27	14 Dec 83b	SHD					
2.	5	C1bS1RBB28 $\frac{1}{2}$	3 Jan 95g	?	26 Sept 95g	HHL	Grid		
3.	4	C1bN1B27 $\frac{1}{2}$	15 May 98	NLP	23 July 00	NLP			
4.	5	C1bS1B29	23 June 98	HHL	27 Oct 98v	SHD	Target		
5.	4	C	4 Aug 08	HHL	15 Aug 09	NLP			
KELVIN									
1.	4	C1bN1b29	26 July 00	?	16 Dec 00	HHL	Grid		
2.	3	C	22 May 08	NLP	18 Nov 10	NLP			
KENILWORTH									
1.	5	C21e13S1B33	22 Nov 93	?	16 Sept 94	JOT	Target		2
KINGMAN									
1.	5	M	22 May 83	SHD	2 June 83	SHD			
2.	5	C41bN1B27	2 June 84b	NLP	23 Jan 85b	SHD	Round grid		
3.	5	C41bN1b29 $\frac{1}{2}$	18 Feb 86p	SHD					
4.	5	C1bS1B32	25 Feb. 88v	?					
5.	4-3	C1bN1B27	4 Oct 88	?	12 Feb 90	SHD			
6.	3	C21eN1B29 $\frac{1}{2}$	23 May 90v	?	19 May 92p	?	Target		
7.	3	C1bT1B27 $\frac{1}{2}$	27 Sept 93	?	5 June 94	JOT			
8.	4	C1bN1B29 $\frac{1}{2}$	24 Dec 97	?			Waving flag		
9.	4	C1bN1B35 $\frac{1}{2}$	31 Mar 98	NLP			Waving flag		
10.	4	C1bT1B27 $\frac{1}{2}$	31 Dec 98	HHL	1 Nov 99	JOT			

Notes:

1. Earliest listed is on piece.
2. All known examples are on post cards.

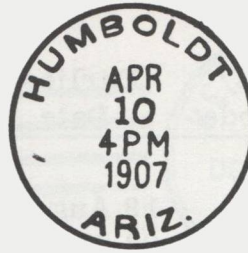
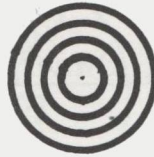
ARIZONA TERRITORIAL POSTMARKS



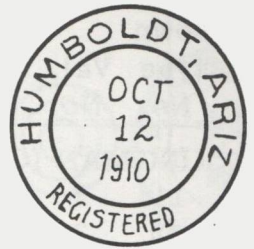
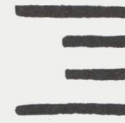
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Humboldt, Arizona



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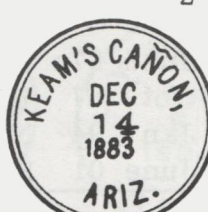
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3



1



ARIZONA TERRITORIAL POSTMARKS

Town	type	Val.		Earliest		Latest			
No.	No.	Postmark	Code	Date	Owner	Date	Owner	Killer	Notes
KINGMAN (Cont'd.)									
11.	2	C1bT1B28 $\frac{1}{2}$		19 Aug 00	?	31 Oct 06	?	Grid	
12.	3	C1b'T1B28 $\frac{1}{2}$		26 Jan 07	?				
13.	2	C1bT1B29		2 Jan 08	?	7 Oct 10	?	Grid	
14.	2	C1bT1B29 $\frac{1}{2}$		16 Mar 11	SHD	20 Jan 12	HHL	Grid	
KIRKLAND									
1.	5	C1bN1B27 $\frac{1}{2}$		10 Jan 96	SHD	18 Apr 98	HHL		
2.	4	C1bN1B28 $\frac{1}{2}$		30 Mar 04	HHL	19 Oct 04	?	Grid	
3.	3	C		4 Apr 08	HHL	23 Sept 11	SHD		
KIRKLAND VALLEY									
1.	8	M		3 Oct 75	SHD	10 Dec 76	HHL		
KLONDYKE									
1.	5	C		9 Oct 08	HHL				
KOFA									
1.	5	B		20 Dec 06	NLP				
LANGHORNE									
1.	6	B?		8 Nov 10	HHL				
LA OSA									
1.	6	C1bN1B27 $\frac{1}{2}$		18 Jan 04	?				
LA PAZ									
1.	7	M		30 Mar 66	HHL	28 June 66	?		
2.	7	C1pA1BBR25 $\frac{1}{2}$		4 Aug 67	NLP				
3.	7	C1eA1BBR25		4 Dec 67	JOT				
LEE'S FERRY									
1.	5	B		26 Mar 06	HHL				
2.	5	C		8 Nov 11	?				
LEHI									
1.	6	C1bN1B27 $\frac{1}{2}$		25 Oct 01	SHD				
2.	6	C1bN1B28 $\frac{1}{2}$		2 Oct 03	HHL				
LEUPP									
1.	5	B		29 Apr 08	HHL	20 Dec 09	SHD		
LIBERTY									
1.	4	C1bN1B27 $\frac{1}{2}$		31 Dec 01	NLP	14 June 05	?		
2.	4	C		21 Feb 10	?	11 May 11	JOT		
LIGHT									
1.	5	C		21 Mar 11	*	19 Oct 11	HHL		
LITTLEFIELD									
1.	6	C1bN1BBR27		26 Apr 06	HHL				
LIVINGSTONE									
1.	5	C1bN1B27		5 Jan 04	HHL				
2.	5	A		13 Nov 05	*				
LOCHIEL									
1.	7	C1bN1B26 $\frac{1}{2}$		29 June 87p	NLP				
2.	7	C1bN1BBR27 $\frac{1}{2}$		24 Oct 87	HHL				
3.	4	C1bN1BBR26 $\frac{1}{2}$		2 Jan 94	NLP	13 Oct 97	*		
4.	5	C1bN1B28 $\frac{1}{2}$		6 June 01	SHD				

Note:

1. Earliest listed is on piece.

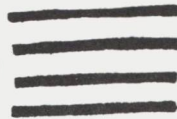
ARIZONA TERRITORIAL POSTMARKS



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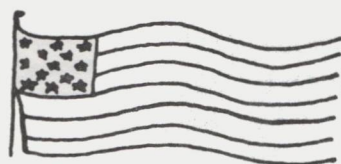
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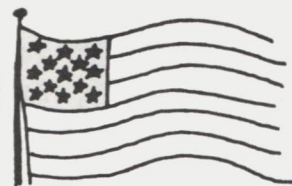
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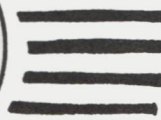
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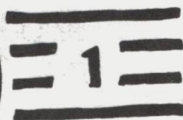
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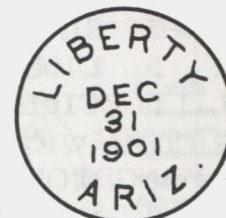
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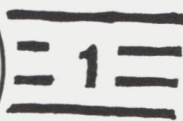
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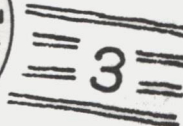
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ARIZONA TERRITORIAL POSTMARKS

Town	type	Val.	No.	No.	Postmark Code	Earliest	Date	Owner	Latest	Date	Owner	Killer	Notes
LOWELL													
	1.	5	A			12 Feb	05	HHL	26 Jan	07	SHD		
LUTTRELL													
	1.	7	M			21 Sept	80	JOT					
McCABE													
	1.	6	C1bN1B28			22 Sept	98	?	22 May	99	HHL		
	2.	4	C1bN1B28			28 Jan	02b	NLP	15 Feb	02b	?	Target	
	3.	3	C31bN1B30			16 Apr	02	NLP	4 Nov	02p	?	Target	
	4.	4	B			11 Sept	04	*	12 July	05	?	5 bars	
	5.	3	C			31 Aug	07	?	30 Aug	09	HHL		
	6.	3	C			26 Sept	10	HHL	30 Oct	11r	HRF		
McDOWELL													
	1.	6	M			18 Oct	72	HHL	6 Dec	72	SHD		
	2.	5	C31eA1BBR24			24 Feb	77	SHD	5 Oct	(78?)	?		
	3.	5	C41fN1B30			31 Dec	81p	?	18 Oct	83p	?	Star	
	4.	5	C41fN1B32 $\frac{1}{2}$			16 June	85	?	15 May	88	HHL	Star	
	5.	5	C1bN1BBR27 $\frac{1}{2}$			15 Mar	88	NLP	19 July	88	HHL		
McMILLEN													
	1.	7	C1dN1BBR23 $\frac{1}{2}$			18 Aug	79v	HHL	15 Nov	80b	*		1
MACDONALD													
	1.	6	A			6 Apr	05	HHL					
MAINE													
	1.	5	C			17 June	08	HHL	5 May	11	HHL		
MAMMOTH													
	1.	7	C1bN1BBR27			31 Mar	(88?)	JOT					
	2.	5	C1bN1BBR27 $\frac{1}{2}$			28 Nov	91	?	31 Aug	(93?)	HHL		
	3.	4	C1bN1BBR27 $\frac{1}{2}$			29 May	94	?	26 Sept	97	JOT		
	4.	4	C1bN1B28			9 Feb	02	?	21 Jan	06	HHL	Grid	
	5.	4	C			27 Nov	10	SHD					
MANLYVILLE													
	1.	7	C1bN1B26 $\frac{1}{2}$			18 Feb	84	NLP	1 July	84b	SHD		2
MARICOPA													
	1.	7	C31e3N1R41			26 May	79m	NLP	22 Nov	79m	JOT		
	2.	5	OC1e3N1RRB26 $\frac{1}{2}$			5 July	81b	HHL	3 May	85m	JOT		
	3.	5	SL			30 Dec	91	HHL					
	4.	5	C1bN1BBR27 $\frac{1}{2}$			15 June	93	SHD	16 Sept	94	HHL		
	5.	5	C1bN1B27 $\frac{1}{2}$			10 Jan	98	SHD	4 Dec	08	?		
MARICOPA WELLS													
	1.	8	M			30 May	66	HHL					
	2.	7	C1a13S121 $\frac{1}{2}$? May	68b	NLP	8 Dec	(69?)	HHL		
	3.	6	C1bA1BBR23 $\frac{1}{2}$			4 Jan	?g	JOT	28 Nov	?	*		
MARTINEZ													
	1.	5	C1bN1B27			9 Sept	(98?)	HHL	30 July	00	NLP		
	2.	4	C1bN1B29			14 Aug	01	?	29 Dec	05	HHL	Grid	

Notes:

1. The letters "VILLE" have been removed (formerly McMillenville)
2. Earliest has circular killer: "Manlyville, ARZ."

ARIZONA TERRITORIAL POSTMARKS



1



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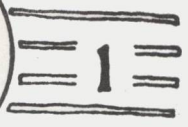
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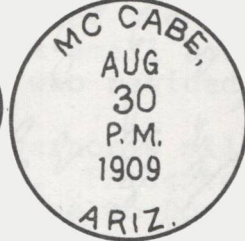
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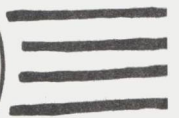
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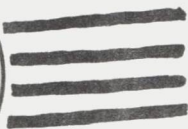
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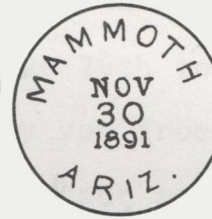
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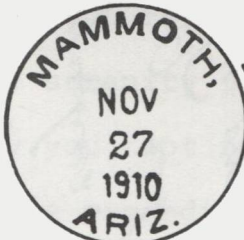
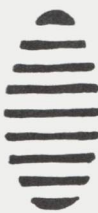
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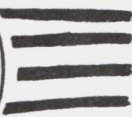
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MARICOPA, ARIZONA.

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17/30/91



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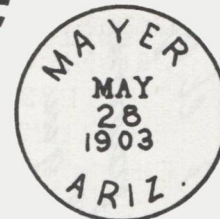
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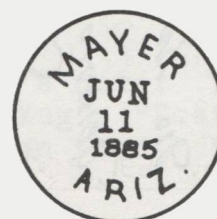
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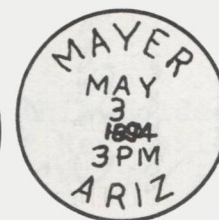
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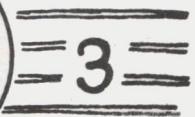
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3



5



En el oficio de Vm^{do} fho 24
 Al presente he recibid el Vm^{do}
 Vm^{do} que compendial los acci-
 os que ocasionan de contrabanderos
 para de Individos en era (Po.
 lencia con que se pascos a la
 Nacion Chavapora por mms
 Vm^{do} el dho 20. Al mps en
 el Dho Cañon, como asi mps
 el Diario formado por Vm^{do}
 desde el dia en que empezaron
 dio la marcha para aque
 destino hacia su regreso.

Doy a Vm^{do} las gracias por
 el buen desempeño, con que se
 manifi en aquella Nacion
 y la amistad que se deja bien
 manifi Vm^{do} para con

En aquella Nacion, y que tal
 Vm^{do} presen las pmbuion
 catas, que le he a Vm^{do}
 en era Villa sobre el pascien-
 las, y de todo lo ocurrido
 dar cuenta al Sr. Com-
 Dncc Real, para su impa.
 Indigencia.

Dijo que asi m. a.
 La fe 26 de Mayo 1787.

Joseph Maruquez

TWO LETTERS FROM NEW MEXICO

By Otto Yag

In 1811 Joseph Manrique was the Governor of the Spanish province of New Mexico. Military control of this frontier province was tenuous at best, and was undoubtedly one of the Governor's primary concerns. His forces consisted of a small body of troops garrisoned at Santa Fe and three officers who resided at Rio Grande settlements outside of the capital.

Don Lorenzo Gutierrez was one of the Governor's military representatives, and in 1811 he lived at Pajarito. Presented below are two letters written from Governor Manrique to Don Lorenzo in 1811. Their historical significance is obvious. It is hoped that their contents convey some of the flavor of the times.

TRANSLATION OF THE MARCH 26th LETTER:

With the official note sent by you dated the 24th of this month I have received the general statement of the amounts graciously given by individuals of this province to the Navajo Nation, given by your hand on the 20th to them at the Cabezon Hill, and also the diary made by you from the date you started your journey to that place until your return.

I thank you for the good behavior you had with that Nation, and the serenity that you displayed at that meeting, and for the way you kept in mind my verbal orders that I gave you at this ville regarding such matters, and I shall give a report to the Main Commander for your superior intelligence.

May God guard you for many years.

Santa Fe, March 26, 1811

Joseph Manrique

To
Don Lorenzo Gutierrez

[Editor's note: The cover of this folded letter is Figure 1 in Mr. Yag's "Postal History of New Mexico During the Spanish & Mexican Eras," La Posta, Vol. 4, No. 5, p. 5]

N. 12.

Con el oficio de Vniversidad fha 9. cal^{ta}.
En Puerto el Diaño, e Informes,
formado por Vn. a fin de celebraci-
on que se confiri a Vniversidad para
el Pueblo de Puerto, sobre desabrimien-
tos q.^e han tenido los Naturales
de dho Pueblo, como el dho
may.^r de él D. Joaquín Pina, de
cuyo abun^{ta} tiene el Vn. que
concepciona, y doy a Vniversidad
las gracias por el acierto con q.^e
desempeña dha comision.

Yo J. que avn m. n. l. de
El 11. de mayo de 1811.

José Marangué

or
S. D. Lorenzo Suarez

TRANSLATION OF THE MAY 11th LETTER:

With the official letter of the 9th of this month I have received the daily reports made by you on the commission I gave to you for the Pueblo of Zuni, about the disagreement that has happended between the natives of that Pueblo and the Alcalde Mayor of it, Don Joaquin Pino. I will make use of this document and I give you my repeated thanks for the exactness with which you carried out said commission.

May God protect you many years.

Santa Fe, May 11, 1811

Joseph Manrique

To
Don Lorenzo Gutierrez

[Figure 2, La Posta, Vol. 4, No. 5, p. 5]

BOOK NOTES

From time to time we have tried to pass along tips concerning worthwhile Western postal history literature. Since so much of the literature is published in small quantities by private individuals, it is hard to keep abreast of new developments. Readers are encouraged to share their knowledge of new books, pamphlets, and journals of interest to Western postal history enthusiasts. Here are three recent items.

Railroad Postal Routes. By Herbert H. Harrington, Sr., 404 Asbury Lane, Niles, Ohio 44446. Available from the author for \$5.00. This is really a large check-list --about 120 mimeographed pages-- which lists all RPOs in the United States, their dates of operation, and the length of the route in miles.

Franks of the Western Expresses. By M. C. Nathan. Published by the Collector's Club of Chicago, 1029 N. Dearborn, Chicago, Ill., 60610. Price \$17.50 postpaid. Considerable publicity has been given this important study. It is certain to become one of the classics of Western Postal History literature.

"Philatelic Enquirer." Edited by Hal Lopes. Published in conjunction with Greater Oregon, 122-124 S. Ferry St., Albany, OR 97321. Subscription rate \$3.50 for 7 months. Here is an excellent new philatelic newspaper sandwiched inside of a small town weekly.

TERRITORIAL POSTMASTERS OF NEW MEXICO, Part V: BENNO ROSENFELD

By Thomas K. Todsén

It was said by General Nathan Bedford Forrest that the way to win a battle was to "git thar fustest with the mostest." While this may not have been characteristic of Benno Rosenfeld, in a contest to be "mostest with the Fustest" he is surely New Mexico's candidate. He was first postmaster of four different territorial post offices, all in Grant County, New Mexico. His tenure as postmaster and his place in the postmaster listings for all locations are as follows:

Georgetown	21 May 1875 - 11 November 1879	1st p.m.
Santa Rita	6 December 1881 - 20 March 1883	1st p.m.
Mimbres	10 June 1886 - 4 January 1890	1st p.m.
Santa Rita	6 July 1900 - 11 January 1902	7th p.m.
Gold Gulch	28 October 1903 - ?	1st p.m.
Hanover	27 May 1909 - 18 October 1918	6th p.m.

It is evident that, among the group of pioneering merchants who were often the postmasters in new towns throughout the Territory, Rosenfeld was more pioneering than most - or had an itchier foot - or less patience with numbers of people - or greater problems keeping a good thing going once he started it.

Benno (Ben or Benito, the Spanish influence) Rosenfeld was born in Prussia in April or May 1846, according to the Territorial censuses of 1870 and 1880. How and when he came to the United States is not recorded, but by 1870 he was a naturalized citizen living in the settlement of Las Mimbres and a clerk in the store of either Robert Newsham or Marshall St. John. By 1880 "Benito Rosenfeldt" is listed by the census as a clerk in the establishment of John Brockman, farmer and stockraiser. At that time Benno was listed as living only with his two year old son, Leopold (Leo followed his father as postmaster of Santa Rita from 11 January 1902 to 26 February 1903. He later moved to El Paso where he was associated with the White House Department Store until his death in 1942).

There is nothing in the records concerning Mr. Rosenfeld's first wife. However, the Grant County Marriage Register shows that on 30 January 1881 Simon Eby, Justice of the Peace in Precinct #4, united Benito Rosenfeld and Carmelita Parra, both of Rio Mimbres, in marriage in the presence of witnesses John and Eusebia Brockman. Carmelita, who appears in later records as Carrie, was only 14 years old at the time. The marriage was blessed with six children, Edward R. born in 1882, Arnold A. born in 1885, Henrietta R. born in 1888, Gertrude born in 1890, George W. born in 1892, and Fred W. born in 1895 (Fred is a retired lawyer living in Phoenix as of this writing).

The next reference to B. Rosenfeld is found in the journals of Adolph F. Bandelier, a man memorialized by Bandelier National Monument. Bandelier mentions that on his arrival at

Mimbres on 26 December 1883, "Mr. B. Rosenfeld was exceedingly kind." Again on 14 January 1884, he states that Mr. Rosenfeld gave him a short history of the copper mines at Santa Rita that evening. In his recording of 20-23 January 1884 Bandelier quotes Mr. Rosenfeld telling him that Indian ruins extended along the Mimbres River to his (Rosenfeld's) ranch. Finally on 12, 14, and 15 February 1884, while he was at Fort Huachuca, Arizona,



Mrs. B. Rosenfeld and Benno Rosenfeld with child in his arms in 1889.

Bandwlier mentions writing letters to Mr. Rosenfeld.

Our next view of Mr. Ben Rosenfeld is in a photo in the possession of Mrs. Earl Allen of Mimbres, N.M. Stated to have been taken in 1889, the author believes it to date from late 1890 or early 1891. If that were so, the baby girl in Mr. Rosenfeld's arms could have been his younger daughter Gertrude, the other young girl in a dress of the same cloth and sitting by Mrs. Rosenfeld could be their daughter Henrietta, and the two young boys elsewhere in the picture (not shown above) could be their sons Edward and Arnold. It is said Mr. Rosenfeld was in charge of the Mimbres Company store at this time.

On November 1, 1899, B. Rosenfeld and his wife Carrie mortgaged Lots 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16 of Block 11,

Black's Addition to Silver City, to Frances Price for \$600. On 28 September 1900, Benno Rosenfeld and wife Carrie mortgaged the same property to Southwestern Savings, Loan and Building Assn. of Las Vegas, New Mexico for \$1500 plus stock in the Association.

Benno Rosenfeld died in Silver City on 16 November 1919, and his estate being less than \$3000 was probated on 20 December 1919 with his son George W. as administrator.

- References: 1) U.S., General Services Admin., Records of Appointments of Postmasters - New Mexico.
2) U.S., Bureau of Census, Censuses of 1870 & 1880, NM.
3) Marriage, Mortgage, and Probate Records, Grant Co., NM.
4) The Southwestern Journals of Adolph F. Bandelier, 1883-1884, C.H. Lange & C.L. Bailey, 1970.
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EDITOR'S COMMENTS

Fall is in the air! Crisp breezes, leaves beginning to turn, and footballs filling the TV screens. Unmistakeable signs of autumn. Soon, the evenings will become longer and you'll find yourself spending fewer and fewer hours in the garden, or on the golf course, or other outdoor places. May I make a small suggestion?

Make this the season you carve your niche in immortality. Now, I'll admit that sounds a bit pretentious, but it's really not as outlandish as it sounds. One of the surest ways of gaining a little immortality is by putting down your ideas and interests in the written word. If your thoughts are preserved in published form, they may be read by people years, decades, and perhaps generations from now. "All right," you say, "so writing can make me a little bit immortal. What do I write about?" May I make another small suggestion?

Write about your interests. Now, your interests may be wine-making, or bee-keeping, or dog-sledding, or any of a myriad of things. It actually matters little what your interests be. There is sure to be an outlet for putting them in print. In the unlikely event that no outlet currently exists, start your own publication. "But," you protest, "the things which interest me are of no interest to others, either that, or I have nothing to contribute." Balderdash and horse-feathers! May I make a third suggestion?

Begin a postal history project. Now we both know you are somewhat interested in postal history, or you wouldn't be reading La Posta. We also know that there is much open ground in postal history, so you won't feel crowded. Postal history research is fun. It is easy to get involved through the simple exercise of asking a question. It is of interest to others who also seek answers. And last but not least, we both know where there is a journal which will be happy to publish the findings of your project. Don't we?

RICHARD W. HELBOCK, 1635 MARIPOSA DRIVE, LAS CRUCES, NM 88001

