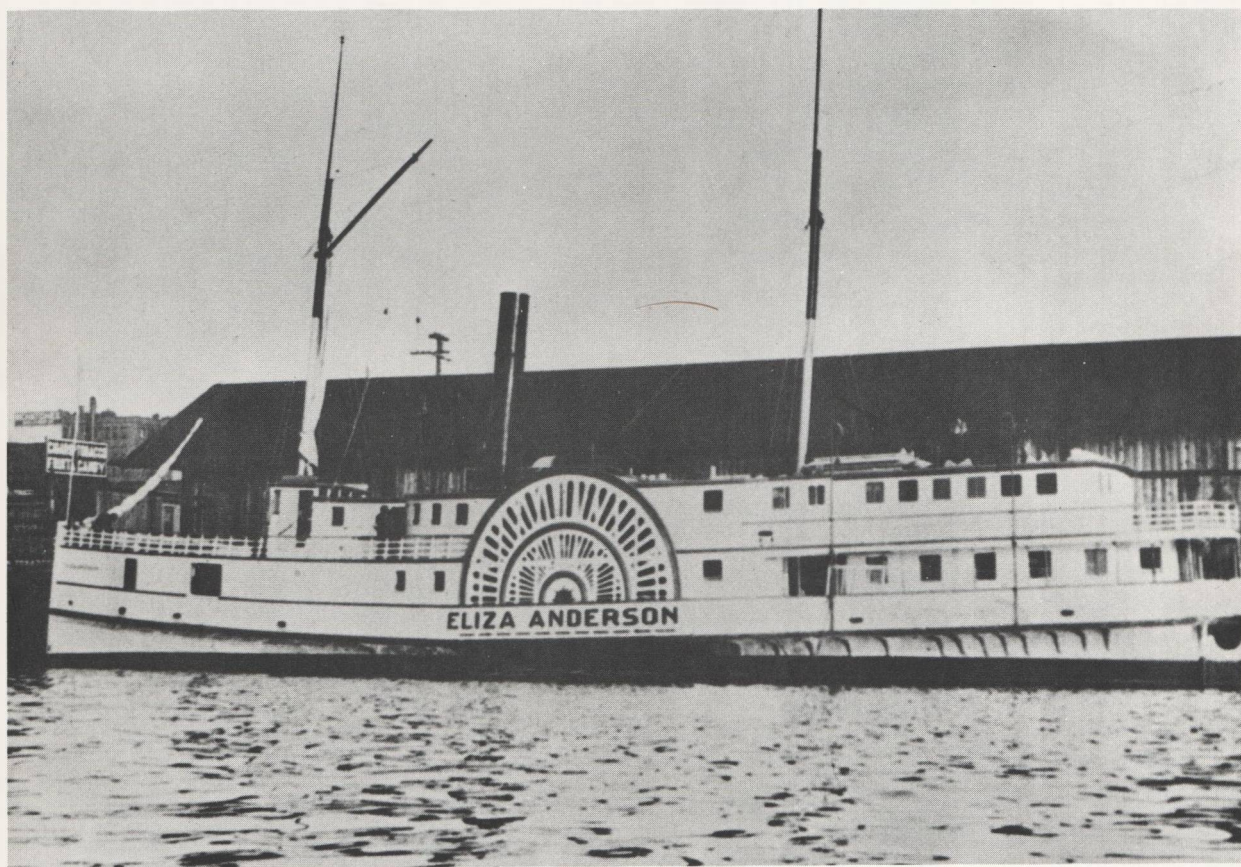


LA POSTA



STEAMER ELIZA ANDERSON

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PUGET SOUND'S FIRST CONTRACT MAIL ROUTE

By Jacque Houser

The Puget Sound Country comprises that vast region bordering on the shores of Puget Sound. Settlers first began to arrive in the second quarter of the 19th century while the area was part of Oregon Territory, but mail facilities lagged far behind settlement.

A measure of the deficiencies present in the postal service can be found in the lack of post offices in the region. In 1854, approximately when this story begins, there were only four post offices on the shores of Puget Sound. Of these, only Steilacoom was on a designated, funded postal route, being the northern terminus of the route from Rainier, Oregon. In fact, until 1855, this was the only contract mail route north of the Columbia River. Mail to any location north of Olympia and Steilacoom was picked up by the addressee at Olympia or Steilacoom, or was delivered to his local post office through the courtesy of accomodating boat people.

Finally, in 1854, the plight of the settlers was recognized in Washington, D.C., and announcements were placed in the Washington Territory newspapers that bids were to be accepted for carrying the mails between various population centers on the Sound.(1) The routes proposed were:

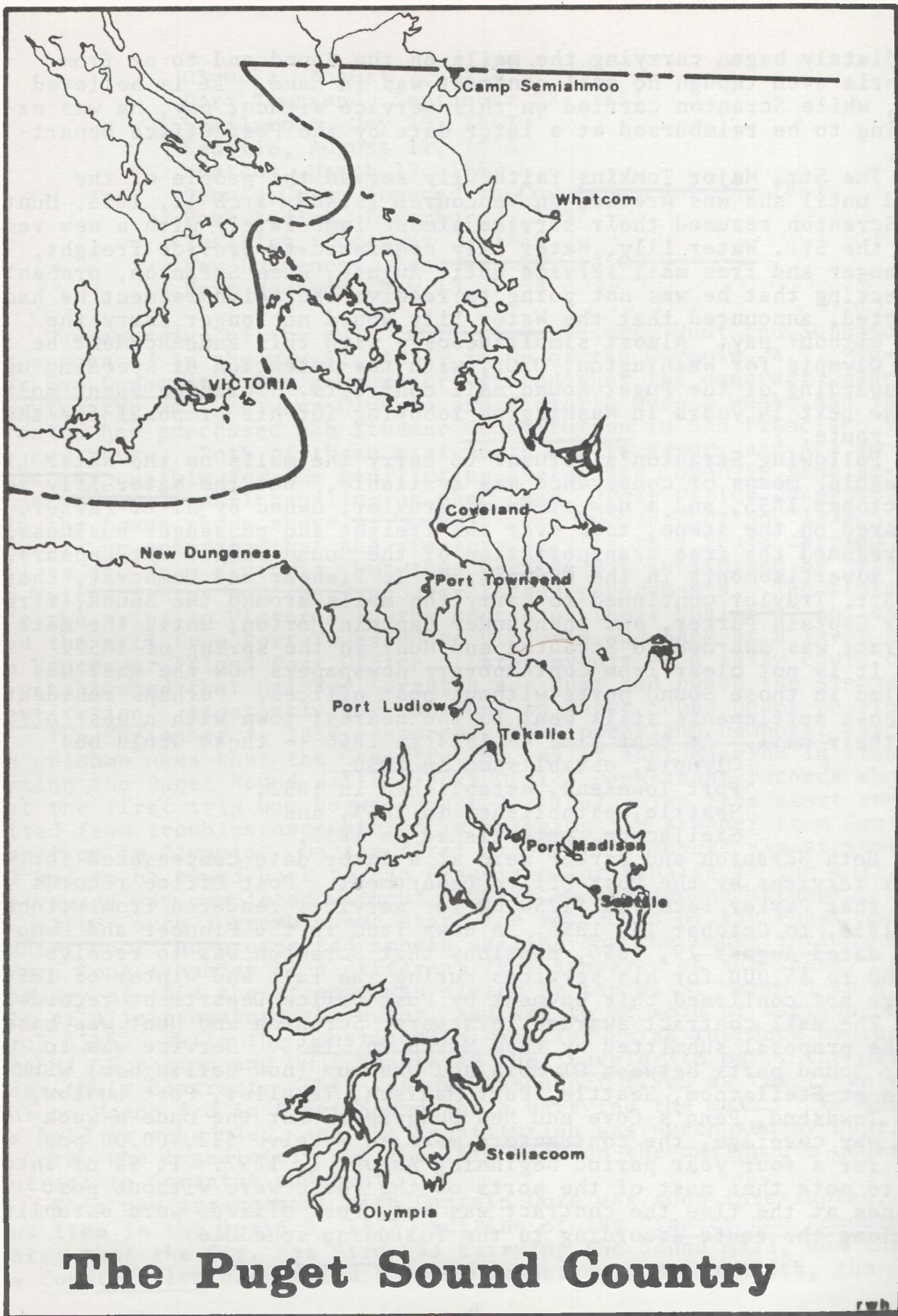
- No. 12730 - Olympia to Seattle
- No. 12732 - Port Townsend to New Dungeness
- No. 12733 - Seattle to Port Townsend
- No. 12734 - Seattle to De Wamish Mills
- No. 12736 - Steilacoom City to Seattle

The following individuals, or partnerships, expressed interest by submitting proposals on some or all of the routes:

Henry C. Wilson
Joseph S. Ruckel
J. M. Hunt and J. H. Scranton
Henry Winser
John A. Chase
William N. Horton

Bids of the last two individuals named were received too late to qualify. Three of the remaining four bidders submitted proposals for servicing only the routes as defined by the Post Office Department, but the fourth bidder proposed, in addition, servicing a combination of the various routes which would cover all of the Sound settlements. This alternate proposal, submitted by John H. Scranton and Captain James M. Hunt, was finally accepted as Route No. 12730A, but not until March 14, 1857.

Fortunately, the settlers had not been completely without mail service on the Sound while Congress and the Post Office Department were haggling over the need for the service. In September of 1854, John H. Scranton and Capt. James M. Hunt brought the steamer Major Tomkins to the Sound and began a weekly passenger and freight service touching the Sound ports, and frequently extended the route across the Straits of Juan de Fuca to Victoria on Vancouver Island. The steamer



immediately began carrying the mails on the Sound and to or from Victoria even though no mail contract was in hand. It is believed that, while Scranton carried on this service without pay, he was expecting to be reimbursed at a later date by the Post Office Department.

The Str. Major Tomkins faithfully served the people of the Sound until she was wrecked on Vancouver Island March 11, 1855. Hunt and Scranton resumed their service almost immediately with a new vessel, the Str. Water Lily. Water Lily continued to provide freight, passenger and free mail service until August, when Scranton, probably suspecting that he was not going to receive the reimbursement he had expected, announced that the Water Lily would no longer carry the mail without pay. Almost simultaneously with this announcement he left Olympia for Washington, D.C., with the intention of speeding up the awarding of the Puget Sound mail contracts. Scranton spent most of the next 1½ years in Washington lobbying for his proposal for the mail route.

Following Scranton's refusal to carry the mails on the Water Lily, no regular means of conveyance was available. But the Water Lily sank in October 1855, and a new steamer, Travler, owned by J. C. Parker, appeared on the scene, took over the freight and passenger business, and resumed the free transportation of the Sound mails. It appears, from advertisements in the Olympia, W. T. Pioneer and Democrat, that the Str. Travler continued to carry the mails around the Sound, first under Captain Parker, and then under Captain Horton, until the mail contract was awarded to Scranton and Hunt in the spring of 1857.

It is not clear from contemporary newspapers how the mail was handled in those Sound ports without post offices. Perhaps residents of those settlements still went to the nearest town with a post office for their mail. At that time -- 1854 to 1856 -- these would be:

Olympia, established in 1850,
Port Townsend, established in 1852,
Seattle, established in 1853, and
Steilacoom, established in 1853.

Both Scranton and Parker were at a later date compensated for their services by the Post Office Department. Post Office records show that Parker received \$1250.00 for services rendered from October 15, 1855, to October 15, 1856. A news item in the Pioneer and Democrat dated August 29, 1856, mentions that Scranton was to receive \$5,000 to \$6,000 for his services during the fall and winter of 1854. I have not confirmed this payment by Post Office Department records.

The mail contract awarded to Messrs. Scranton and Hunt was based on the proposal submitted by them March 26, 1855. Service was to cover Sound ports between Olympia and Whatcom (now Bellingham) with stops at Steilacoom, Seattle, Port Madison, Tekallet, Port Ludlow, Port Townsend, Penn's Cove and New Dungeness. For the once-a-week-each way coverage, the contractors were to receive \$22,400.00 per year for a four year period beginning August 1, 1857. It is of interest to note that most of the ports on the route were without post offices at the time the contract was let. Post offices were established along the route according to the following schedule:

Olympia, August 2, 1850
Port Townsend, September 28, 1852
Steilacoom, May 19, 1853
Seattle, August 11, 1853
Whatcom, March 19, 1857
Penn's Cove, (opened as Coveland) July 7, 1857
Port Ludlow, December 2, 1857
Tekallet, December 2, 1857
New Dungeness, February 19, 1858
Port Madison, May 13, 1858

The awarding of the mail contract to Messrs. Hunt and Scranton was announced in the May 22, 1857, issue of the Olympia, W.T. Pioneer and Democrat. The news report stated that the contract covered carrying the mail between Olympia and Victoria once a week, and that Scranton had purchased the steamer Constitution in San Francisco for the new route. Both of these statements are in error, and are no doubt responsible for the conflicting statements found in some accounts of early mail handling on the Sound. Post Office records list only the towns shown above as being served by Contract No. 12730A. There is no question that the steamers serving this route carried mail to and from Victoria, but this service was subsidized by neither the United States nor the Vancouver Island governments. The steamers made the trips to Victoria in the course of their business, and carried the mail from Port Townsend to Victoria and back as a favor to the Vancouver Island Post Office. Later events -- a messy court case -- established that neither Scranton nor Hunt had owned the steamer Constitution. Apparently she had come to Puget Sound under charter.

The September 4, 1857, issue of the Pioneer and Democrat carried the welcome news that the Constitution was at last engaged in transporting the Puget Sound mails. Post Office Department records show that the first trip was begun August 28, 1857. The late start resulted from troubles encountered in bringing the steamer from San Francisco to Olympia. On the first attempt the vessel almost sank, and had to be towed back to San Francisco for repairs to the hull. The voyage was completed without a hitch on the second attempt.

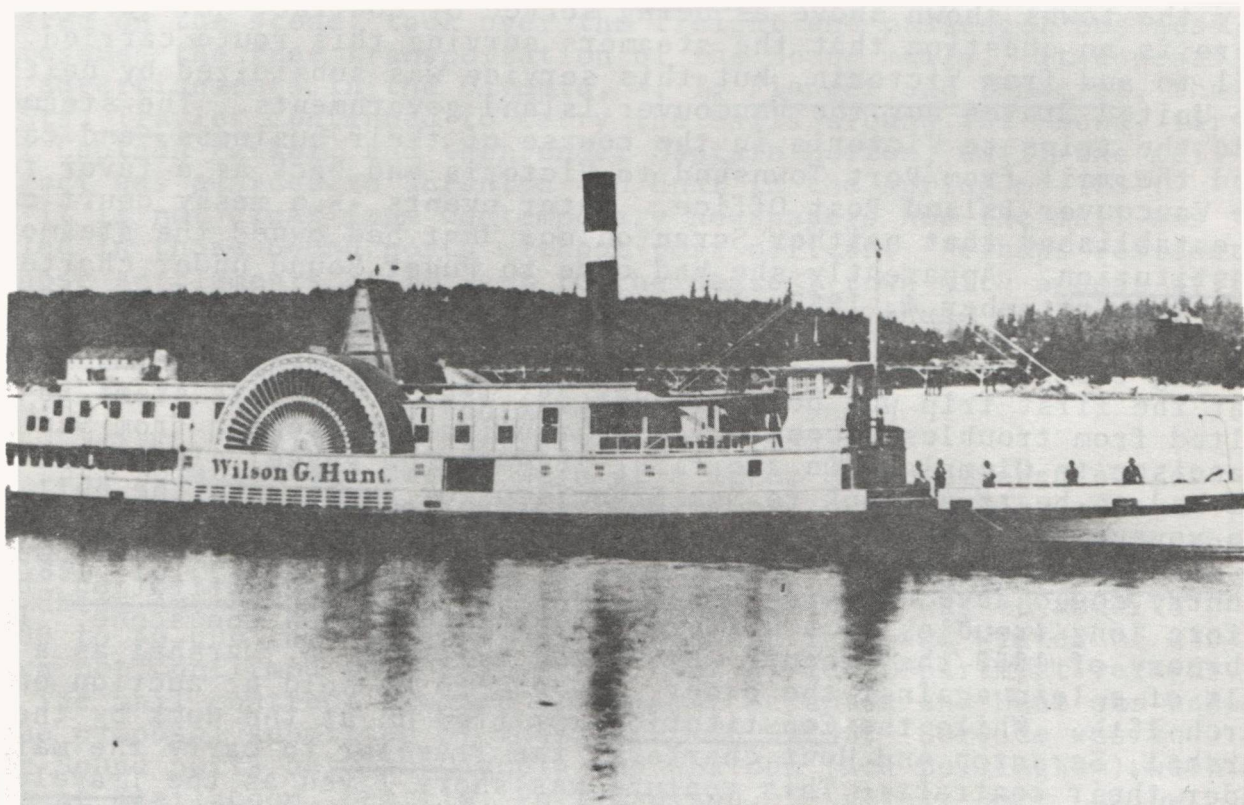
After such a troublesome start the residents of the Puget Sound country could have expected smooth sailing for the Constitution, but before long troubles of a different type appeared on the scene. In February of 1858 the steamer was seized by the U. S. Marshal as a result of a lien against the owner, and was to be sold at auction on March 15th. While the Constitution was tied up at the dock by the Marshal, Scranton and Hunt chartered the Traveler to carry the mails under their contract. This venture was short lived as the Traveler sank on March 3rd in Puget Sound while carrying the mail. The auction was held as scheduled, and the Constitution was purchased by Capt. A. B. Gore, who immediately put the ship back on the mail route under contract to Scranton and Hunt.

This new arrangement with Captain Gore was soon interrupted. A news item in the April 9, 1858, edition of the Pioneer and Democrat states that the Str. Sea Bird was carrying the Sound mail, and that the Constitution had sailed for San Francisco. By May 28th, the

Constitution had returned and was carrying the mail again. The following week the newspaper disclosed that the Sea Bird had departed for Bellingham Bay and the Fraser River. The Sea Bird would have been better off had she stayed on Puget Sound waters. On the return from Fort Hope on the Fraser River, the Sea Bird went aground on an island located 12 miles below Fort Hope and spent the rest of the summer there. After being released from the sand bar, she was taken to Victoria for repairs. Upon her return to service she made for New Westminster, but burned and sank on her first trip.

The Constitution now settled down and, except for running up on a spit at the entrance to Victoria's harbor which laid her up for repairs while the Str. Resolute took on a pinch-hitter role, carried the mails on the contract route until June of the following year.

About June 6, 1859, three new steamers entered the game of musical chairs. First, we note in the Pioneer and Democrat that the Str. Wilson G. Hunt is carrying the mails while the Str. Constitution is



Steamer Wilson G. Hunt (photo courtesy of Historical Society of Seattle and King County)

laid up for repairs. Then in the July 22nd issue of that paper we are informed that the Str. Wilson G. Hunt "is running in opposition to the Str. Julia which is now carrying the mails". The November 11, 1859, issue reveals that the Str. Julia has been laid up for the

winter, the Str. Eliza Anderson will carry the mail as soon as she returns from the Fraser River, and in the meantime the Str. Wilson G. Hunt will again carry the mail. By December 9th the Eliza Anderson was carrying the Sound mail, the Hunt and the Julia had both been withdrawn from the Sound for the winter, and the Julia was expected to return to the mail route the following spring. All of the manipulations having been carried out by the partners Scranton and Hunt, who owned no ship of their own, to comply with the conditions of their contract with the Post Office Department. Incidentally, by this time the route had been extended to Camp Semiahmoo, the location of the Border Commission.

The Str. Eliza Anderson carried the mail, apparently without incident, throughout the winter, and by mid-April of 1860 the Str. Julia was back on the mail route. But not for long, for she suffered damage while crossing the Strait from Victoria to Port Townsend, and the owners decided to take her back to the safer waters of the Columbia River. The Str. Wilson G. Hunt was pressed into service to fill the gap left by the departing Julia, but by May 4, 1860, the Str. Eliza Anderson was back again on the route with Capt. Fleming as Master.

Captain Fleming and the Eliza Anderson remained on the mail route, sub-contracting to Messers Scranton and Hunt until the termination of their contract July 31, 1861. Scranton worked hard to obtain the new four-year contract for mail delivery on the Sound, but when the award was announced, Mr. Scranton was a distant second, but that is another story.

Notes: (1) Guy Reed Ramsey gives the date as January 7, 1854.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: Basic facts upon which this narrative is based were gathered from microfilmed files of the Olympia, W.T. Pioneer and Democrat, and the Victoria, Vancouver Island, Daily British Colonist for the years 1855 through 1861. The story of the Major Tomkins was pieced together from Lewis and Dryden, Maritime History of the Pacific Northwest and Roland Carey's The Sound of Steamers. Any errors in the interpretation of these facts are, of course, the responsibility of this author.

Details of the mail contract known as No. 12730A were obtained from the National Archives, whose help is gratefully acknowledged.

Post Office opening dates have been taken from Post Office Department records, Guy Reed Ramsey's Postmarked Washington, and Robert L. Landis' Post Offices of Oregon, Washington and Idaho.

Photographs of the steamers Wilson G. Hunt and Eliza Anderson were made available by the Historical Society of Seattle and King County, Museum of History and Industry, whose co-operation is greatly appreciated.

APPENDIX: THE SHIPS IN THE PHOTOS.

Eliza Anderson (cover) was built in Portland, Oregon, and launched there in November 1858. She was 140 feet long, and named in honor of the daughter of Alexander Caulfield Anderson, veteran Hudson's Bay Co. official and the first Collector of Customs at Victoria.

Eliza Anderson was almost immediately brought to Puget Sound, and from 1859 to 1870 essentially monopolized traffic on the Olympia to Victoria route. By the late 1870's, she began to show her age and saw a period of interrupted service featured by a sinking at the dock. Finally, in 1889, she was consigned to the "bone yard" in Snohomish Slough near Seattle.

There she sat in the mud until news of the Klondike gold rush of 1897 brought an immediate demand for steamers. The owner resurrected her from the mud flats, rejuvenated the hull with liberal amounts of paint, and sent her to Alaska in August of 1897 with 100 passengers and 400 tons of freight. Sadly, the old ship was not capable of completing the trip, and she sank off Unalaska. Fortunately, there was no loss of life.

Wilson G. Hunt was built on the east coast in 1849 for the Coney Island excursion trade. Only a few months after she was completed, she sailed for California to participate in the Sacramento River trade. She was larger than the Eliza Anderson, being 185½ feet long.

In 1858 she was brought to Vancouver Island to participate in the Fraser River gold rush. She continued to serve in Puget Sound, Fraser River, Columbia River and the waters of British Columbia until broken up in 1890.

and now, a brief word from your Editor:

LA POSTA succeeds only as well as you support it. It is a great pleasure to welcome new authors to our pages, and we have all been enriched as of late by the contributions of several people who have joined in our efforts for the first time.

There is still a dire need for new articles to light up our pages. Why not follow through on one of those ideas you've been considering? Join our team of publishing postal historians.

Thank you.

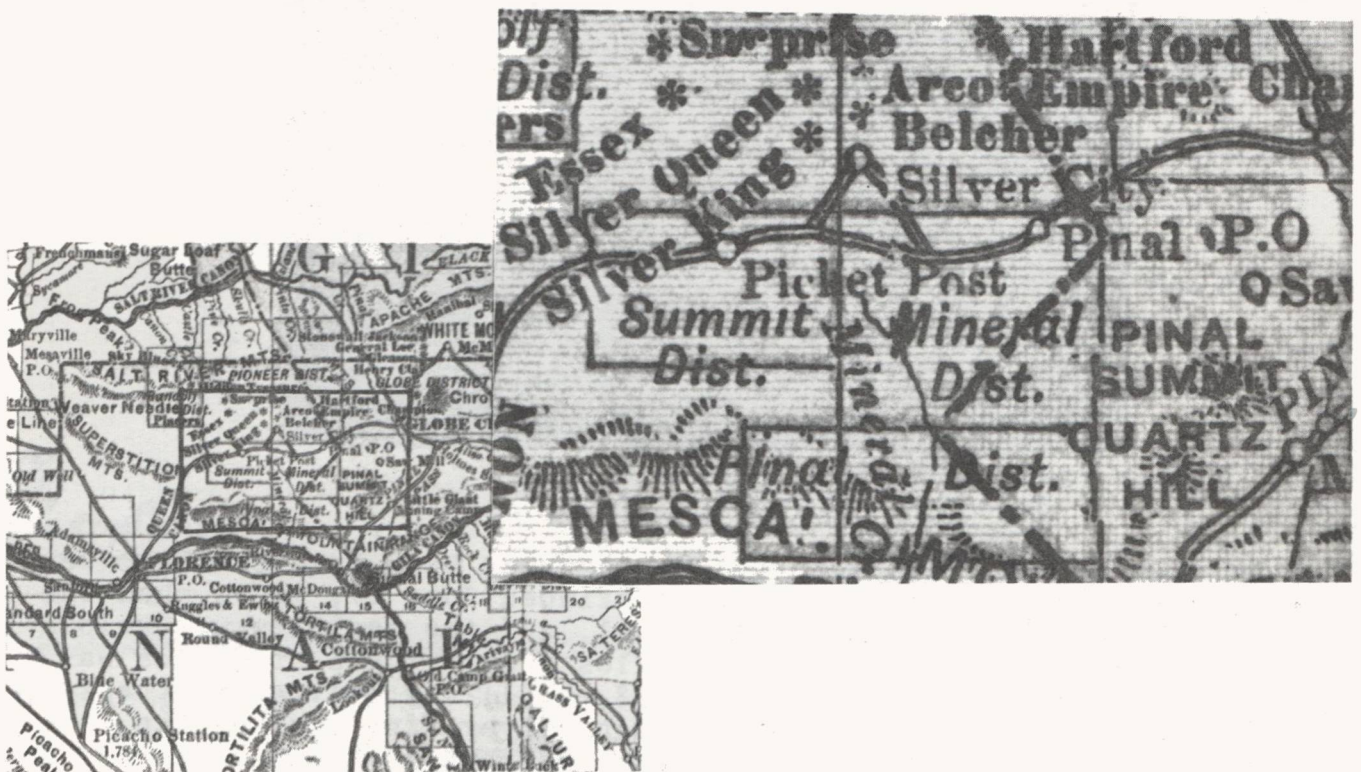


PICKET POST, ARIZONA TERRITORY

By Joseph F. Rorke, M.D.

The neighborhood of Florence, Arizona Territory, was for a long time the scene of Apache Indian troubles until a decision was made by the United States Government which forever broke their power in that region. On November 28, 1870, a military post was established in the Pinal Mountains. It was named Infantry Camp, and General George Stoneman was appointed the first commanding officer. Situated some 30 miles north of Florence in the Superstition Mountains, the Camp was in Mason's Valley at the headwaters of Mineral and Pinto creeks. A nearby butte was known as Picket Post, probably because soldiers were placed on picket duty there to watch for Indians. The Apache had established a rancheria on a high plateau ledge of Tordilio Peak, a mountain overlooking the military post.

On April 4, 1871, the name of the post was changed to Camp Pinal. The Stoneman Grade was built by the troops at this time. The road began at Picket Post Creek (now Queen Creek), and, although it was only five miles long, it became an important trail to the residents of the Globe area. General Stoneman had planned to make Camp Pinal a permanent post, but when he was relieved of his command by General George Crook in August 1871, the project was abandoned. The Arizona

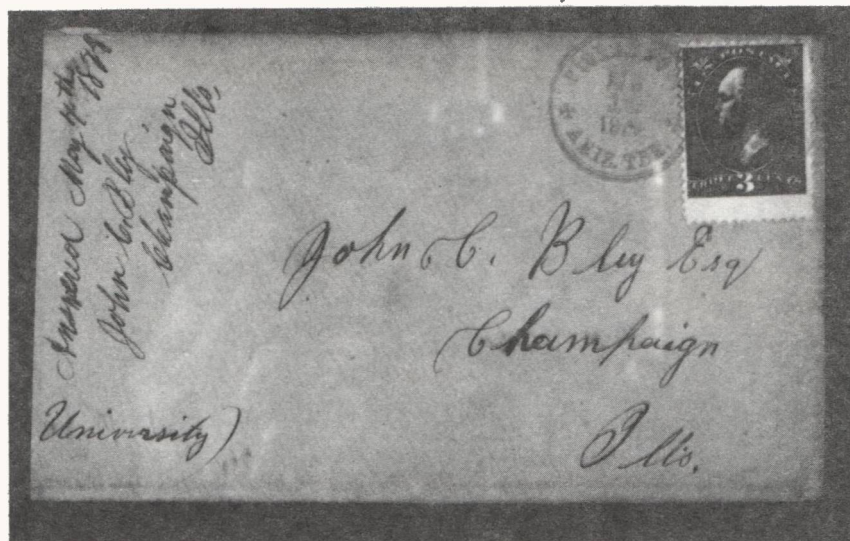


Map of the Florence-Globe area with enlargement (left) of the Pinal and Picket Post vicinity (Rand, McNally & Co., 1883)

Minor for April 6, 1872, mentioned an Indian raid at Pinal City; however, permanent settlement did not take place until 1877, when Robert A. Irion founded his Pinal Ranch at the site of Old Camp Pinal.

The opening of the Silver King Mine and the construction of a smelter to work the ore below Picket Post, the high butte where abundant water had been found, made for rapid growth of a town. By March 1878, the community boasted permanent stone and adobe buildings. The Picket Post post office was established April 10, 1878, with the appointment of William W. Benson (possibly William H.) as the first postmaster. The town bustled with hundreds of prospectors and miners, and became an important Wells Fargo Stage station on the road to Globe. The first school was established in 1879, a newspaper called The Pinal Drill was the local spokesman, and the town attained a population of 2,000 by the mid-1880's. Some \$17 million worth of almost pure silver was taken from the mine before the ore ran out and the Silver King Mine was closed down in 1888. The community disappeared quickly once the mine was closed, and today only the Thompson Southwest Arboretum, founded by William Boice Thompson as an experimental station for plant research, remains on the site of the old mining town.

Shown below is a cover from Picket Post, Ariz. Ter., postmarked Apr. 15, 1879, and addressed to John C. Bley, Esq., Champaign, Ills. (University). The double line circular date stamp measures 25mm. in diameter, and is struck in red ink on a yellow cover. The target kil-



Picket Post, Ariz. Ter., Apr. 15, 1879

ler is also in red, and both tie the 3¢ green Bank Note to the cover. The Picket Post post office was discontinued June 27, 1879, when the name of the office was changed to Pinal, and the facility was relocated to a more permanent site a few miles away. The post office was discontinued completely on November 28, 1891, and service to the remaining residents was conducted through Silver King post office.

Only one example of a Picket Post postmark is known on cover, but another example is known on piece with a date of Oct. 8, 1878. Even though the Pinal post office lasted just 12 years, the Arizona Territorial Postmark Catalog (2nd Ed.) reports six different Pinal postmark types with dates ranging from December 1879 to March 1888.

Shown here are four of the six reported Pinal postmark types.



Acknowledgements: Dike, Sheldon H. The Territorial Post Offices of Arizona.
Dike, S. H. and Kriege, Owen H. Arizona Territorial Postmark Catalog (2nd Ed.)
Theobald, John and Lillian Wells Fargo in Arizona Territory
Western Postal History Museum, Tucson, Arizona

A METHOD FOR EVALUATING THE SCARCITY OF POSTMARKS FROM AN EL PASO COUNTY, TEXAS POST OFFICE

By Richard Wadsworth

This is the second in a series of articles written about the post offices of El Paso County, Texas. The earlier article presented the names of post offices which have existed in the county, and also provided a brief historical background where such information was known. Information of this type is the best place to begin a postal history for a county for it defines the "universe" of offices from which postmarks are sought. There is, however, a critical element missing, and it has to do with the scarcity, or conversely, the "value" of postal markings from the various offices. A collector would always like to know the degree of scarcity of a particular postmark in his collection, and also the probability of locating a postmark from an office which he does not have. In the case of postal history, such an evaluation becomes very subjective due to the general lack of information or a set of criteria by which to make an evaluation. The purpose of this article is to present a simple rule of thumb developed to establish a scarcity rating for the postmarks of El Paso County post offices. An additional purpose, it is hoped, may be to begin a dialogue among collectors, dealers and other students of postal history into the whole question of establishing scarcity or value indices.

A logical place to begin a study of the question of establishing value indices is with the value indices already in use in the field of state/territory postal history. Two works which have incorporated such indices are the New Mexico Territorial Postmark Catalog by Sheldon H. Dike, Ph.D. and Postmarks of Territorial Alaska by Richard W. Helbock, Ph.D., and these two were selected to be subjected to statistical analysis in order to see if any correlations and conclusions could be drawn which could help the rest of us determine scarcity of a postmark in our own state areas of interest. The evaluation was prefaced with a series of assumptions and conditions:

1. The analysis seeks to determine a scarcity rating which applies to any or all postmarks from a particular post office, rather than the scarcity of a particular postmark from that office, i.e., what is the scarcity of a postmark from Plateau, Texas, compared with postmarks from any other El Paso County office?
2. Only offices for which there was a single scarcity or value index number in the New Mexico and Alaska studies were considered. Offices for which there were several postmarks known in different time periods and with different scarcity numbers associated with each postmark have not been considered.
3. Only post offices from which markings are known prior to 1930 have been considered.

The analysis seeks to identify common characteristics or unifying themes which are associated with each "Grade" in the value/scarcity

indices of Dike and Helbock. These characteristics or themes might then be used as a "rule of thumb" to determine scarcity for El Paso County offices.

The following analysis results from applying these assumptions and conditions to a statistical evaluation of the New Mexico and Alaska studies. Particular emphasis was placed on the New Mexico study, with Alaska representing supplementary data. Dike's New Mexico study used nine value numbers, or as they shall be referred to here "Grades", to note the relative scarcity of a postmark. Arduous effort was obviously required to determine the rating or grade of a particular postmark in his study. It required the input of many fellow collectors, and certainly demanded a significant period of time to complete. The Dike system has provided collectors of New Mexico territorial postmarks an excellent guide, and the hypothesis upon which this article is based is that the Dike system has utility for those of us who collect postmarks from areas other than New Mexico.

Before proceeding to the results of the analysis, it seems appropriate to say that this is not an attempt to establish a guide to monetary value. The dollar and cents value of a particular postmark is a function of demand, and given the present state of the market for postal history material demand varies greatly from state to state. It does not necessarily follow, therefore, that a cover postmarked from Plateau, Texas, will ever achieve the same monetary value as a cover postmarked from a New Mexico territorial office, even though the two post offices may have had quite similar histories. The postmarks may be similar in terms of their relative scarcity, but the value of each postmark reflects factors beyond theoretical supply.

What follows is a grade by grade analysis of postmarks from offices reported in the New Mexico and Alaska studies.

Grade 1

A Grade 1 post office of New Mexico Territory was rather easy to characterize, and little time was spent in attempting a rigorous analysis. The Grade 1 offices from New Mexico were Albuquerque, Artesia, Santa Fe, Las Vegas, and so forth. In other words, Grade 1 comprises the set of offices serving the largest communities in the state. If a collector seeks only a representative postmark from one of these offices, these are the easy ones to find.

Grade 2

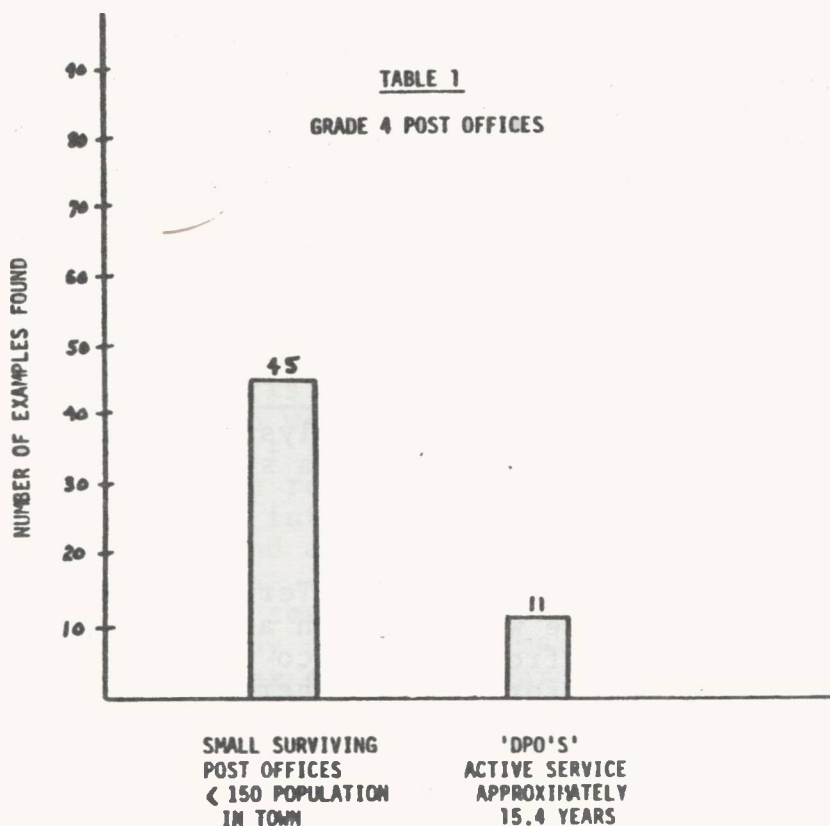
Grade 2 post offices were very similar to Grade 1 offices, differing mainly as a matter of degree. Once again, little effort was made on a rigorous analysis, due in part to the small sample size, but it may be said that in general a Grade 2 office served a small town with a population usually larger than 600, and that the town and its post office normally survived through the territorial era and, most often, up to the present day.

Grade 3

The Grade 3 post office of New Mexico Territory was chiefly characterized by the small size of the community it served (average population 200 - 600), and by the fact that most of these small towns and their post offices survived. A small sample of 30 offices were examined including such such places as: CORONA (pop. 262), GIBSON (175), BUCHANON (210), WEED (262), WILLARD (421), RODEO (?), PUERTO DE LUNA (235) and OSCURO (257). The typical Grade 3 post office was associated with a community of this size, at least as recently as 1930.

Grade 4

Larger and more detailed samples were made in analyzing offices from Grades 4 through 7. Table 1 presents a bar chart of the sample taken in Grade 4. Of the total sample of 64 offices studied, 45 ser-



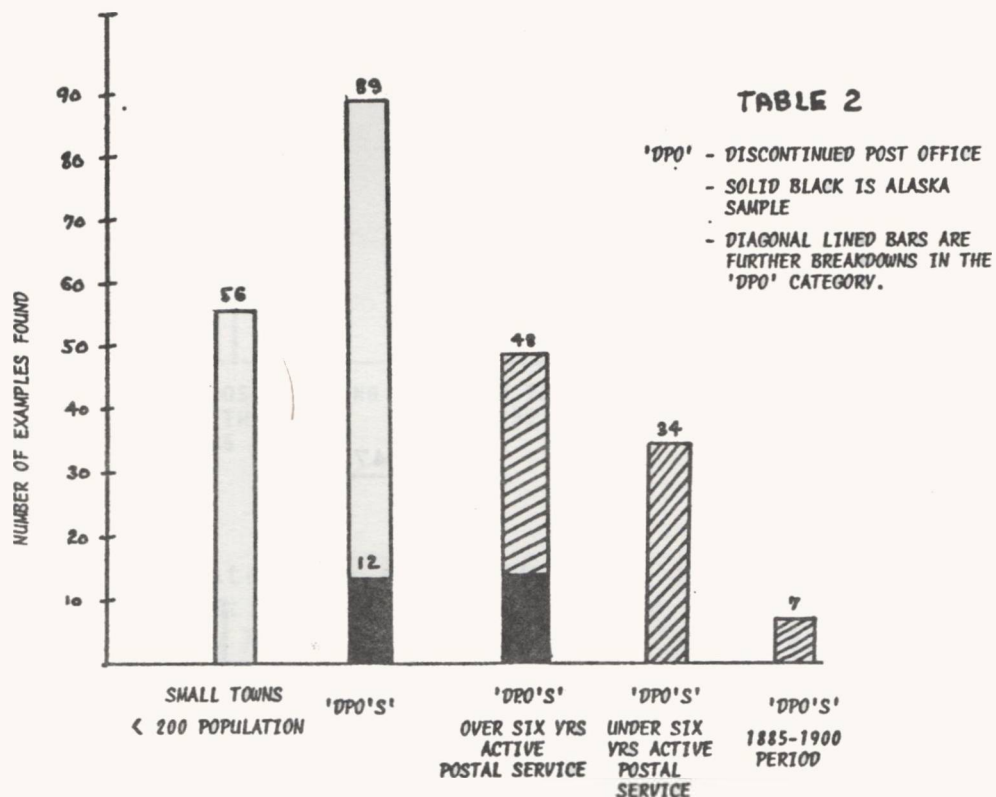
ved very small communities with populations less than 150. There were 8 offices in the sample (not shown on the graph) that served towns with populations in the Grade 3 size range, i.e., 200-600. In addition to these offices from surviving communities, a new type of office made its first appearance -- the discontinued post office, or DPO. The Grade 4 offices included 11 DPOs with an average life-span of 15.4 years.

The typical Grade 4 post office was associated with a very tiny community, which, for some reason, survived through the territorial

period and on to the present. Offices serving towns with populations of Grade 3 size should either be re-classed as Grade 3, or considered at the lower level of Grade 4. On the other hand, those offices that became DPOs should either be in the next higher Grade, or considered at the top level of Grade 4.

Grade 5

A total of 145 offices were examined in the sample of Grade 5. This time Alaskan offices were also included, and Table 2 depicts the results of the sample. The dominating feature of the Grade 5 offices was that the majority of New Mexico offices (77 out of 133), and all of the Alaska offices were DPOs. In the New Mexico portion of the sample there were 56 offices which served small towns with less than 200 population, but no offices which served larger towns.



The 89 DPOs were further subdivided into three categories as shown in the right-hand, or crosshatched, portion of Table 2. A bit less half of the New Mexico offices and all of the Alaska offices were DPOs which existed as post offices for more than six years. The New Mexico DPOs included nearly an equal number which survived as post offices for less than six years. Both of these groups were distinguished by the fact that all were 20th century post offices. They typically began as post offices about 1900, or somewhat later, and were generally discontinued before 1930.

In addition, there were seven DPOs in the New Mexico portion of the sample whose period of active service was in the 1885-1900 era. This earlier existence seems to put them into a slightly different

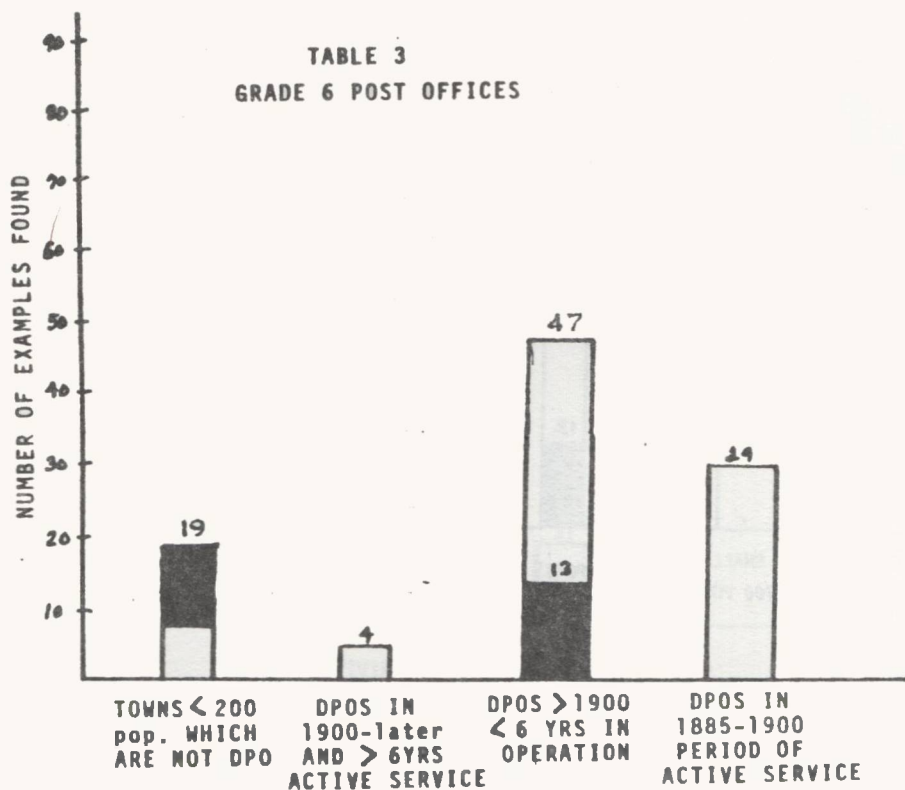
category, and might suggest that they deserve a higher Grade level.

The most common characteristic of Grade 5 post offices appears to be that they are DPOs, which existed as operating offices during the 20th century. That portion of the sample consisting of offices which serve existing small towns, might better be assigned to Grade 4, or at the lower end of Grade 5.

Grade 6

The most frequently occurring characteristic of a Grade 6 post office was that the office was a DPO, which survived less than six years and operated during the 20th century. A total of 34 New Mexico and 13 Alaska offices were of this type. The second most frequent type of post office in this Grade was the DPO in which the period of service was during the last 15 years of the 19th century. There were 29 offices of this type; all were from the New Mexico study.

In addition, 19 post offices with a Grade 6 rating were existing offices serving small communities, and four were DPOs of the 20th century which had active service longer than 6 years. Table 3 pre-

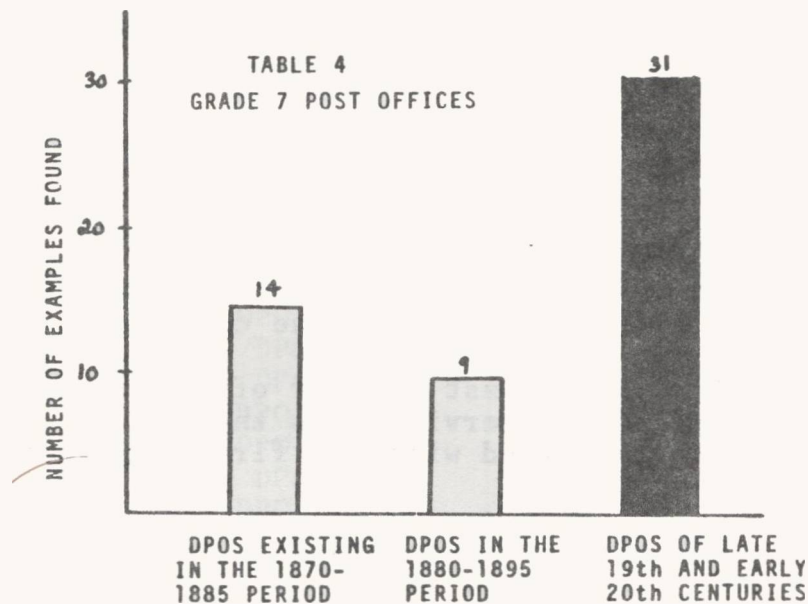


sents a graphic display of the Grade 6 sample of offices.

Grade 7

A total of 54 offices from New Mexico and Alaska made up the Grade 7 sample. All were DPOs, and they fell into three categories as shown in Table 4. We find 9 offices with characteristics similar

to the 29 which made up what might be called the "high Grade 6" component, and 14 offices from New Mexico which had active lives during the 1870-1885 period. Both of these categories of New Mexico offices appear to be suitable for this grade. It might be said that a Grade 7 post office is a DPO which was active during a period in which the state/territory had a very limited postal service which is in flux as the population begins to grow. The evidence from Alaska seems to offer support. The 31 Alaskan offices represented in Grade 7 exhibit characteristics very similar to the New Mexico offices; only the period from which they date is later. These Alaskan DPOs date from the



Gold rush era of the late 19th and early 20th century, a time when that Territory's population and postal service were in a condition somewhat similar to New Mexico's thirty years earlier.

We find therefore that the Grade 7 post offices were those DPOs which existed during the first real surge of population growth in both areas. Higher grades might be expected to be associated with offices dating from periods of history preceeding this early surge of growth. The first era of growth appears to be a critical time demarcation, and, of course, that initial growth reached different states at different times. For California, a Grade 7 DPO might date from 1849 to about 1865, but for Ohio the dates might be 1803 to 1830.

Conclusion

The objective was to postulate a rule of thumb for determining the relative scarcity of postmarks from El Paso County post offices with respect to each other. Based upon the fore-going statistical analysis of the New Mexico and Alaska studies, the Grades as applied to El Paso County should be as follows:

- Grade 1: an office serving a community with a large population, say in excess of 2,000.
- Grade 2: an office serving a typical American small town with a population of roughly 600 to 2,000.
- Grade 3: an office, still in service, operating in a very small settlement with about 150 to 600 residents.
- Grade 4: an operating office serving "a wide spot in the road" with a population under 150.
- Grade 5: a DPO which was begun in the 20th century, and in operation for a period longer than six years.
- Grade 6: a DPO which lasted less than 6 years, and was established in the 20th century, or a DPO of the last quarter of the 19th century being discontinued before the turn of the century.
- Grade 7: a DPO of the last quarter of the 19th century which was in service less than 6 years, or a DPO which coincided with the first years of growth in the area.
- Grade 8: a DPO whose period of active service occurred before effective civilization came into being in the area.

These definitions appear valid for the post offices of El Paso County. Applicability beyond Grade 5 may not hold for other areas of interest, and further consideration should be given to the nature and degree of settlement during its history. In some cases the transition from "unsettled" to "settled" occurred quite rapidly, as in the case with the arrival of the railroad in El Paso County.

The population figures cited above are approximations based upon the New Mexico study. They are merely given as examples, and are not meant to have general applicability to all regions.

The El Paso County Grading

Using this simple scheme of establishing Grades for postmarks of El Paso County offices results in the following classification of post offices. The designation "DPO-EP" is used to identify an office which was transferred to Hudspeth or Culberson counties. As far as El Paso County is concerned, the office became a "DPO" after the transfer. For offices of this type, I have listed an additional Grade which applies if the office were considered through its tenure in the new county. A similar treatment is given post offices which have been absorbed by El Paso as branches. They are evaluated first as independents, and then as part of the city.

EL PASO COUNTY POST OFFICES BY SCARCITY GRADE

Post Office	Status	Active Dates(EP Co.)	Grade
ABLES	DPO-EP	1909 - 1917	5 (5)
ACME	DPO	1884 - 1886	7
ALLAMOORE	DPO-EP	1888 - 1917	5 (5)
ALTURA	DPO	1908 - 1915	5+
ANTHONY	DPO	1884 - 1884	7+
BELEN (1)	DPO	1890 - 1892	7
BELEN (2)	DPO	1909 - 1918	5
BIRCHVILLE	DPO	1858 - 1859	8
CAMP RICE	DPO	1884 - 1886	7+
CANUTILLO	ACTIVE	1911 - date	3
CLINT	ACTIVE	1886 - date	2
EAST EL PASO	DPO	1889 - 1891	6+
ELIZARIO	DPO	1881 - 1886	6+
EL PASO	ACTIVE	1852 - date	1
FABENS	ACTIVE	1906 - date	2
FINLAY	DPO-EP	1890 - 1917	5 (5)
FORT BLISS	DPO	1907 - 1916	5 (2)
FORT HANCOCK	DPO-EP	1886 - 1917	5 (3)
FORT QUITMAN	DPO	1858 - 1876	7+
HARDWICKE	DPO	1908 - 1911	6
HOT WELLS	DPO-EP	1912 - 1917	6 (6)
ISER	DPO-EP	1910 - 1917	5 (5)
ISLETA	DPO	1857 - 1868	7+
KENT	DPO-EP	1892 - 1912	5 (3)
LAVALLEY	DPO	1909 - 1911	6
LOBO	DPO-EP	1907 - 1912	6 (5)
NEWMAN	DPO	1922 - 1971	5
PLATEAU	DPO-EP	1907 - 1912	6 (5)
RALSTON	DPO	1889 - 1891	6+
SAN ELIZARIO	ACTIVE	1852 - date	3
SAN JOSE	DPO	1894 - 1899	6
SEVEN RIVERS	DPO	1879 - 1879	8
SIERRA BLANCA	DPO-EP	1882 - 1917	5 (2)
SOCORRO (1)	DPO	1869 - 1874	7
SOCORRO (2)	DPO	1892 - 1915	5
SOLITUDE	DPO	1903 - 1903	7+
TARVER	DPO	1908 - 1910	6
TOBIN	DPO	1908 - 1912	6
TORNILLO	ACTIVE	1909 - date	3
VAN HORN	DPO-EP	1886 - 1912	5 (3)
VINTON	DPO	1892 - 1930?	5
YSLETA	DPO	1874 - 1968?	5 (1)

An additional note regarding how the grading system has worked in my case. In two years of avidly collecting El Paso County from as many sources as I could, I have located examples of postmarks from 16 of the 45 listed offices. I have found all of the Grade 1 and 2 post offices, seven of the 15 Grade 5 offices and one of the Grade 6 offices. Comments concerning this article would be appreciated.

EDITOR'S COMMENTS

WORD HAS BEEN RECEIVED FROM DAVID RAMSTEAD AND GIL HULIN OF THE FORMATION OF A NEW POSTAL HISTORY STUDY GROUP. CALLED THE OREGON POSTAL HISTORY SOCIETY, THE INITIAL DIRECTORS WILL BE CHUCK WHITTLESEY, DAVE RAMSTEAD AND LEN LUKENS. BERNARD GRIFFIN, 201 LOWELL STREET, KLAMATH FALLS, OR 97601, WILL BE THE TREASURER AND JOURNAL EDITOR. DUES WILL BE \$5, AND THE FIRST PUBLICATION OF THE GROUP'S JOURNAL IS SCHEDULED FOR THE FALL OF 1980.

ALSO FROM THE STATE OF OREGON WE HAVE PUBLICATION OF A NEW MONOGRAPH TITLED, "LANE COUNTY OREGON POST OFFICES." THIS BOOK HAS BEEN COMPILED BY DAVID RAMSTEAD AND CLARIN A. LEWIS, AND, WHILE IT HAS NOT BEEN REVIEWED HERE AS YET, IT IS REPORTED TO CONTAIN A POST OFFICE LIST, MAP, LIST OF TERRITORIAL POST OFFICES, DOANE POSTMARKS, LANE COUNTY RPO'S AND A SCARCITY RATING. THE PUBLICATION IS AVAILABLE FROM DAVID RAMSTEAD, 915 OAK STREET, SUITE 201, EUGENE, OR 97401, FOR \$4.50 POSTPAID.

DICK WADSWORTH'S ARTICLE ON POSTMARK SCARCITY IS QUITE A DEPARTURE FROM OUR NORMAL FARE, AND, WHILE IT IS NOT INTENDED THAT HIS VIEW REFLECTS THE VIEW OF LA POSTA, IT IS WELCOMED AS A STATEMENT ON A SUBJECT WHICH NEEDS MORE EXPOSURE. NO MATTER HOW MUCH WE MAY SEEK TO MINIMIZE THE FINANCIAL ASPECT OF OUR HOBBY, WE ARE ALL FACED AS COLLECTORS WITH THE "REALITIES" OF THE MARKET PLACE. TO SOMEONE JUST BEGINNING TO FORM A COLLECTION OF POSTAL HISTORY THOSE REALITIES MUST APPEAR RATHER ABSURD. PRICES APPEAR TO VARY WITHOUT RHYME OR REASON. A COVER WHICH ONE DEALER ASKS \$25 FOR APPEARS IDENTICAL TO ONE THAT ANOTHER SELLER ASKS \$1.50 FOR. THE MARKET REFLECTS PERCEPTIONS OF SUPPLY AND DEMAND BASED UPON FADS, HUNCHES AND IMPERFECT KNOWLEDGE. IT CAN LEAD SOME SOME REALLY "FUNNY" SITUATIONS SUCH AS THE ONE ENCOUNTERED RECENTLY AT A MAJOR WEST COAST SHOW WHERE AN ESTABLISHED DEALER WAS AFRAID TO PUT A PRICE ON A COVER FOR FEAR THAT HE MIGHT BE UNDERPRICING THE PIECE.

IT IS CERTAINLY NOT THE OBJECTIVE OF THIS JOURNAL TO TRY TO INSTRUCT BUYERS AND SELLERS ABOUT WHAT THEY "OUGHT" TO PAY OR CHARGE FOR POSTAL HISTORY, BUT IT DOES SEEM HEALTHY AND DESIRABLE FOR THOUGHTFUL BUYERS AND SELLERS TO MAKE KNOWN THEIR PHILOSOPHIES ON THE MATTER. LA POSTA WILL THEREFORE WELCOME COMMENTS FROM READERS ON THE SUBJECT OF SCARCITY INDICES, POSTAL HISTORY VALUES AND THE MARKET. LET US AIR THIS SUBJECT.

WE HAVE SOME OUTSTANDING ARTICLES SCHEDULED FOR FORTHCOMING ISSUES. SOME ARE LONG AWAITED SUCH AS CHARLIE TOWLE'S COMPENDIUM OF NEW MEXICO RPO'S AND EDITH DOANE'S RESUMED SERIES. BUT OTHERS ARE NEWLY ARRIVED, AND WILL REMAIN A SURPRISE FOR THE MOMENT. TO THOSE OF YOU CONTEMPLATING AN ARTICLE, FEAR NOT, LA POSTA IS NOT "OVER-BOOKED". WE HAVE ROOM FOR YOUR WORK, AND WILL EAGERLY OFFER ANY ASSISTANCE YOU DESIRE.

RICHARD W. HELBOCK, 424 MC CLURE ROAD, LAS CRUCES, NM 88001

