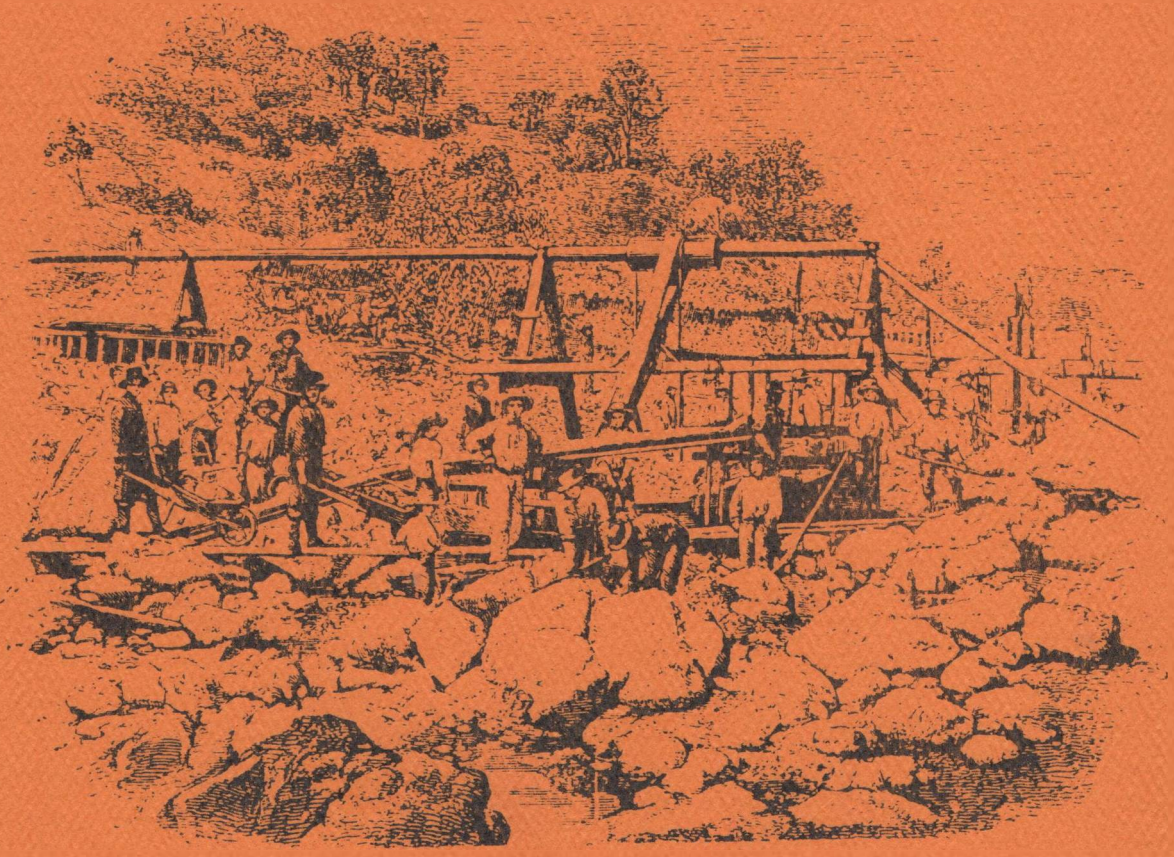
LA POSTA



Gold prospectors building a dam.

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CARRYING THE MAIL IN SOUTHERN OREGON, 1856-1858©

Edited by David A. Ramstead

The following account was written by William Henry Byars, who was born July 7, 1839, in Des Moines County, Iowa. He crossed the plains by wagon train in 1853 with his mother and step-father, John H. Mires, settling on a farm ten miles west of Oakland, then in Umpqua County, Oregon. In later years he was a school teacher and one of the first graduates of Umpqua Academy at Wilbur, Oregon. He was a sergeant in the Rogue River Indian Wars. He was Douglas County Surveyor, County School Superintendant, Editor of the "Roseburg Plaindealer", Oregon State Printer and Surveyor General for the State of Oregon under President Harrison. Oregon in 1856 was still a Territory, and became a State on February 14, 1859.

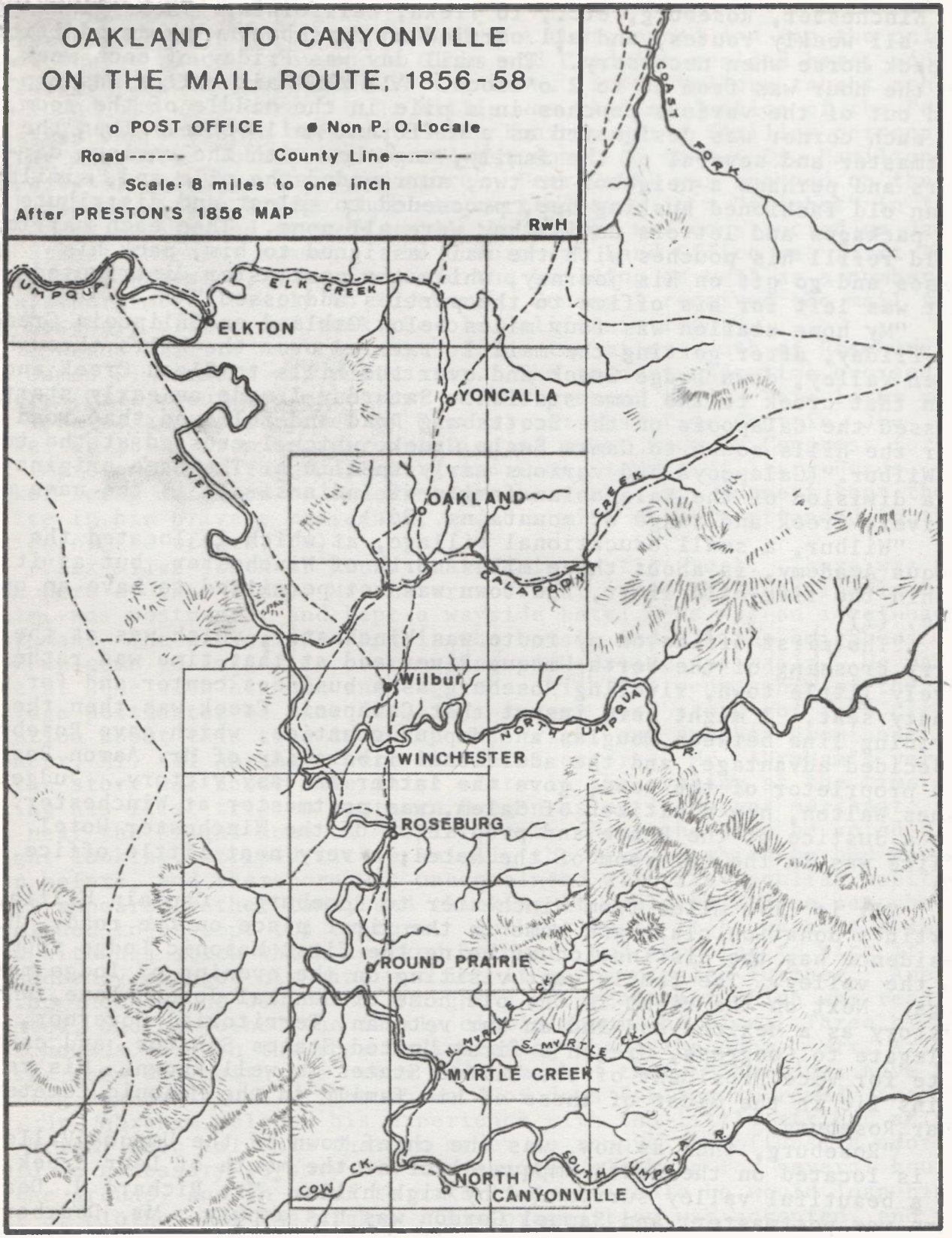
In the fall of 1856 Byars was employed by Richard Forrest, a mail contractor, to carry the U.S. Mail between Oakland, Oregon and Yreka, California. This was at a time of much Indian unrest, and mail was carried on horseback. He terminated his employment July 1, 1858.

According to the National Archives in Washington, D.C., an early mail route, No. 12721, was established from Canyonville, Oregon to Yreka, California, a distance of 140 miles (via Middle Ferry on the Rogue River, Manson, Galesville, Leland, Dardanelles, Jacksonville, Phoenix and Ashland Mills in Oregon). Records indicate that the contract was let to John H. Forest of Dayton, Yamhill County, Oregon, on April 22, 1854, with a round trip to be taken once every two weeks, for $2,600 per annum.

In 1858 a new and much longer mail route was established. This route, No. 12591A, was let to the California Stage Company, and was 659 miles in length from Sacramento City to Portland. It required the use of 4-horse stages, and was for "seven times each week". For this service the contractors were paid $90,000 perannum. The contract was from 1858 to include 1862. It required 13 days for each trip.

"The mail route from Oakland to North Canyonville, and from North Canyonville to Yreka was established in 1850, but who the contractors or riders were prior to 1854 I do not know. Richard Forrest was the contractor and rider for 1854, and he employed a young man by the name of John Goodrich who was on the line in 1855. Another young man named William Hickenbottom was on the road until I went on in 1856. Forrest's contract expired July 1, 1858, and a man named Monnahon got the contract but sold out soon afterward to the O. & C. Stage Company who put on a daily stage line and had the mail service increased to a daily line. The O. & C. Railroad, as fast as it was built, relieved the stage line and took over the mail line. This was not fully completed until about 1885."

"The post office at Oakland, Oregon, in 1856 was located on a high prairie surrounded by oak-covered hills about three miles north of the present town of Oakland.(1) The postmaster was Rev. Tower, and the office was in his private residence which consisted of two rooms (the kitchen-dining room-parlor-living room and a bedroom). The office was in the first room. Oakland was the terminus of four mail routes. One went to Scottsburg on the coast; one north by Yoncalla to Corvallis; one northerly over the Coast Fork to Eugene; and the other southerly


OAKLAND TO CANYONVILLE
ON THE MAIL ROUTE, 1856-58
o POST OFFICE
● Non P. O. Locale
Road------
County Line—·—·—
Scale: 8 miles to one inch
After PRESTON'S 1856 MAP
RwH
COAST FORK
UMPQUA
ELK CREEK
ELKTON
YONCALLA
RIVER
OAKLAND
CREEK
CALAPOOIA
Wilbur
NORTH UMPQUA R.
WINCHESTER
ROSEBURG
ROUND PRAIRIE
N. MYRTLE CK.
S. MYRTLE CK.
MYRTLE CREEK
COW CK.
SOUTH UMPQUA R.
NORTH CANYONVILLE

via Winchester, Roseburg, etc., to Yreka, California. These lines were all weekly routes, and all carried on horseback with an additional pack horse when necessary. The mail day was Friday of each week, and the hour was from 10 to 2 o'clock. All the mail matter was emptied out of the various pouches in a pile in the middle of the room, and each corner was designated as a different mail route. Then the postmaster and several of the family, together with the various carriers and perhaps a neighbor or two, surrounded the pile and, similar to an old fashioned husking bee, proceeded to select and distribute the packages and letters until they were all gone. Then each carrier would refill his pouches with the mail assigned to him, pack his horses and go off on his journey, while the postmaster distributed what was left for his office to the parties addressed."

"My home station was four miles below Oakland on Calipooia Creek. So, Friday, after getting the mail I traveled over the hills through Green Valley, down Dodge Creek and over the hills to Sloan Creek and down that creek to the home station. Saturday I made an early start, crossed the Calapooia on the Scottsburg Road and followed that road over the hills south to Camas Swale Creek, which I crossed at the town of Wilbur."(Calapooya had various early spellings. The name originated as a division of the Kalapooian family of Indians. It is the name of a river, creek and range of mountains. Ed.)

"Wilbur, a small educational village, at which is located the Umpqua Academy, is about three miles north of Winchester, but as it was within the five-mile limit, the town was not permitted to have an office."(2)

"The first office on my route was Winchester, which was at the ferry crossing of the North Umpqua River and at that time was rather a lively little town, rivaling Roseburg as a business center and for the county seat. I might here insert that Calapooia Creek was then the dividing line between Douglas and Umpqua counties, which gave Roseburg a decided advantage, and the additional liberality of Mr. Aaron Rose, the proprietor of the town, gove the latter an easy victory. Judge James Walton, now a citizen of Salem, was postmaster at Winchester. He was a Justice of the Peace and proprietor of the Winchester Hotel. The office was in the bar room of the hotel, a very neat little office." (3)

"It is five miles from Winchester to Roseburg. Captain William Martin's donation claim and home is the first place on the road. His residence has the distinction of being the first Masonic Lodge room in the valley. The family went visiting on the evening of lodge meetings. Next on the right is the old home of General Joseph Lane, whose history as a Mexican and Indian War veteran, Territorial Governor, Delegate to Congress, Oregon's first United States Senator, and candidate for Vice President of the United States is well known. His remains lie in the midst of those of his family in the Masonic Cemetery near Roseburg."

"Roseburg, then as now, was the chief town of the Umpqua Valley. It is located on the South Umpqua River at the mouth of Deer Creek, in a beautiful valley surrounded by high hills. Mr. Richard H. Dearborn was postmaster, and Samuel Gordon was his deputy. Mr. Dearborn had a general merchandise store, and the office was partitioned off on Main Street. The building was a one-story box house and extended from Main to Jackson Street on the ground now occupied by the "Wilson"

block. Mr. Rose, the proprietor of the town, owned and ran the only hotel in the place. Governors Gibbs and Chadwick resided here, and Judge Deady had a law office in the town. Rufus Mallory taught school and found his wife here. W.R. Willis was elected Justice of the Peace and read law while in office. Smith Kearney was a familiar personage on the streets. John Kelly lived just south of town. Dr. Hamilton had a little six-by-nine drug store. Deer Creek was spanned on the main street with a bridge that was carried away in a "freshet" in 1857. The creek was forded or swum until the bridge was constructed on Jackson Street the next summer. The Government Land Office was first located at Winchester, but afterward the building as well as a number of others were moved bodily to Roseburg. Sunday I received the mail from the Roseburg office and took the old California road."

"Round Prairie was the next office ten miles south of Roseburg, and James D. Burnett was postmaster. The road at that time crossed Roberts Hill about one mile east of the present road. This later road was located and constructed by General, at that time Captain, Joe Hooker in 1858, from an appropriation of money made by Congress for the improvement of the Scottsburg and Camp Stewart Military Roads, Hooker being detailed to superintent the work. Mr. Burnett kept the office in his private residence, and his wife chiefly attended to the duties of the office."(4)

"Six miles south of Round Prairie is Myrtle Creek. There was no town here at that time. Mr. Lazarus Wright owned the donation land claim, was postmaster and kept a wayside hotel. He was an ideal backwoodsman. The office was kept in the hotel, and all the neighbors were welcome to assist in overhauling and sorting the mails. He was more at home with his gun and dogs than with the penmanship of the average postmaster of that day. (5) A very good story got into circulation about this time in which Mr. Wright and another prominent pioneer, Mr. Sol Abraham, were the chief actors. Mr. Abraham's version of the story was about like this: Late in the evening at the time of making his first trip to southern Oregon as an itinerant merchant, he was near the Wright home on Myrtle Creek. Near the road he spied a bright looking, striped little animal, the like of which he had never seen before, and therefore was unacquainted with its peculiar habits. As it appeared rather tame, and thinking it would be a nice pet, he concluded to attempt its capture. Rushing up to it he gave it a smart blow with his stick which knocked it over, and stooping to pick it up, he suddenly changed his mind and let it go unmolested further. Approaching the home he asked for a night's entertainment which was readily granted, and he joined the family circle about the fire. Three or four lank hounds were in the room or loitering about the door. Mrs. Wright chased them away with the broom and remarked that, "Them dogs have been killing another skunk." The absence of dogs failing to remedy the matter, Mr. Abraham related his experience with the little striped animal. Mr. Wright then told him that in order to remove the offensive odor it would be necessary to bury his impregnated clothing for several hours in the ground, and in order to make it practicable he would loan him a suit of clothes for the night. This proposition was accepted, and the clothing was soon covered in a small grave not far from the house. Mr. Abraham presented the appearance of a small boy in his big father's

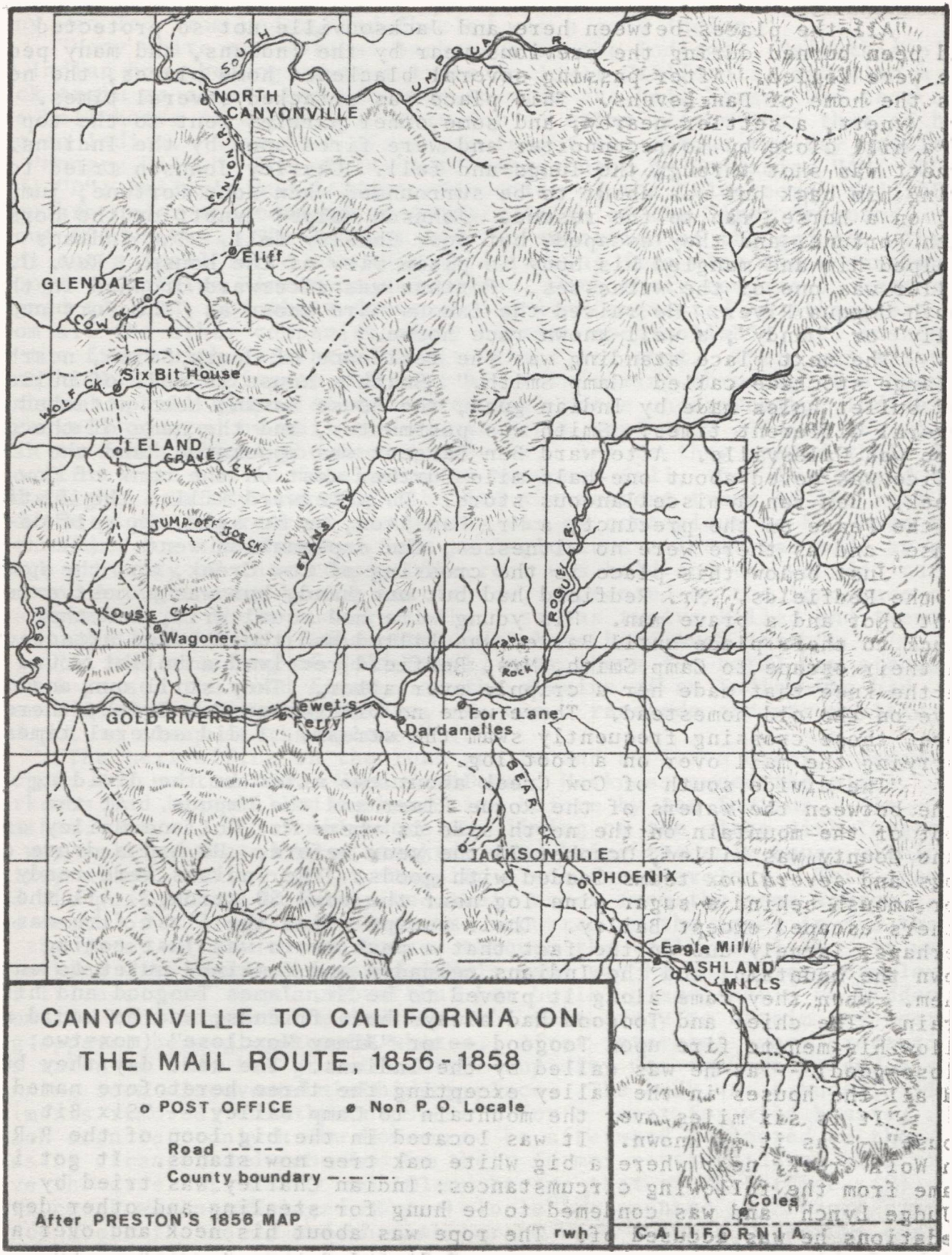
clothes and occasioned much merriment for the rest of the evening. Sometime during the night while the household were all asleep the cattle came down from the hills, and finding a mound of new turned earth apparently determined to destroy it. At least when Mr. Abraham arose next morning and went out to secure his clothing, he found the grave all horned and torn to pieces and his clothing scattered in fragments, no piece large enough to indicate from whence it came. The nearest point south where he could secure others was Jacksonville, 85 miles away. He therefore was compelled to negotiate with Mr. Wright for the loan of the borrowed suit to enable him to continue his journey. In his rig he went on his way rejoicing and was the funniest looking Jew that ever traveled that road."

"Myrtle Creek was spanned by a plain wooden bridge which was carried away in 1861 by the high water, and in replacing it a very exemplary young man, Mr. Roadman, was killed by the accidental falling of some of the timbers."

"To reach Canyonville, the next office, nine miles south of Myrtle Creek, it was necessary to cross the South Umpqua River three times. A trail, however, crossed over a spur of the mountains, and two crossings were saved when the stream was high. Mr. Yocum kept the ferry at the upper crossing. His daughter, Miss Ruby, was quite a popular belle, for whom Smith Kearney, then a successful cattle drover, had a great admiration. Father Yocum objected to Kearney's attentions to his daughter, and Kearney frequently rewarded me liberally for delivering letters and packages into the young lady's hands."

"The proper name of the post office at that time was North Canyonville. It was the terminus of the Oakland mail route, which was weekly. James G. Clark was postmaster and his office was kept in a small store room of general merchandise, including liquors, etc. His home was also a wayside inn, and his wife -- "Aunt Rachell" -- as she was usually called, was well known as the kindest, most motherly woman and best cook on the whole road. Clark's place was about one-half mile north of the present town, which then consisted of only three or four houses. It was a universal camping ground, as immediately south of this place the road entered the "Big" or "Umpqua" Canyon. Mail day was generally a holiday for the settlers for miles around the office, and as the mail was due at Canyonville on Sunday evening, a big crowd always awaited its arrival." (6)

"On emerging from the canyon at the south end, you enter the Upper Cow Creek Valley about 10 miles east of Glendale. Here at the time I write was Camp Eliff -- Hardy Eliff's home -- a log house in a nice opening surrounded by a palisade. These fortifications were generally constructed on the same plan and were as follows: a ditch two or three feet deep was dug on the line of fortifications. Into this ditch were placed logs 10 to 12 inches in diameter on end and as close together as they could be placed. Two smaller timbers were then set, one on each side, to break the joint, and the ground was well rammed back in place to hold the timbers solid. Port holes were then cut at proper heights and sufficiently close together to accomodate the beseiged. These were usually stopped up unless in use. A bastion was constructed at each angle in order to protect the sides. This property was first located by A.J. Knott, who afterward located near Oakland, and still later became the proprietor of the Stark Street Ferry at Portland."


SOUTH UMPQUA R.
NORTH CANYONVILLE
CANYON CR.
Eliff
GLENDALE
COW CK.
Six Bit House
WOLF CK.
LELAND
GRAVE CK.
JUMP-OFF JOE CK.
EVANS CK.
ROGUE R.
ROGUE R.
LOUSE CK.
Wagoner
Cable Rock
GOLD RIVER
Jewet's Ferry
Fort Lane
Dardanelles
BEAR CK.
JACKSONVILLE
PHOENIX
Eagle Mill
ASHLAND MILLS
Coles
CALIFORNIA
CANYONVILLE TO CALIFORNIA ON THE MAIL ROUTE, 1856-1858
o POST OFFICE
ø Non P. O. Locale
Road ------
County boundary —·—·—
After PRESTON'S 1856 MAP
rwh

"All the places between here and Jacksonville not so protected had been burned during the previous year by the Indians, and many people were killed. After passing several blackened home places, the next was the home of Dan Levens. This place was attacked several times. Mr. Mynett, a settler nearby, and some other parties went to the top of a hill close by to reconnoiter and were fired upon by the Indians. Mynett was shot through the lungs and fell. Charley Johnson tried to bring him back but was about to be surrounded when John Fortune, jumping on a horse, ran to the rescue. Johnson helped Mynett on the horse with Fortune, and they escaped, but poor Chraley fell. The Indians scalped him and mangled his body in plain view of the house. Rev. J.W. Miller was one of the witnesses. Fortune was afterward drowned in the South Umpqua River. He raised the famous mare known as "The Fortune Filly" or "Mandy"; a well-known race horse."

"The next place standing was the residence of Henry Smith, nearby a large stockade called "Camp Smith." Smith's house is full of bullets and bullet holes made by Indian guns, the house having been attacked several different times. Smith was postmaster, and the name of the office was Galesville. Afterward Ben Sargent was appointed, and the office was moved about one-half mile further west on the bank of Cow Creek. Ben ran a miscellaneous store. He afterward killed the Justice of the Peace of the precinct, a Mr. Hamilton, as he said, in self defense, and as there were no witnesses, the explanation went." (7)

"Just below this place is the crossing of Cow Creek, and the home of the Redfields. Mr. Redfield had but one hand, but was a most excellent shot and a brave man. His young wife had equal grit, and they stuck to their place until Bailey was killed and their house attacked. In their escape to Camp Smith, Mrs. Redfield received a bullet wound in the knee that made her a cripple ever after. They still own and live on the old homestead. There were no bridges on Cow Creek; therefore, those crossing frequently swam the stream. I did several times, carrying the mail over on a foot log."

"The divide south of Cow Creek about two miles is the dividing line between the waters of the Rogue River and the Umpqua. At the foot of the mountain on the north side is where Mr. Holland Bailey of Lane County was killed, October 23 the year before. He had a drove of hogs and several ox teams loaded with goods. The Indians were ready for ambush behind a sugar pine log near the road 50 strong. All the others escaped except Bailey. Their escape after the first fire was, perhaps, largely due to the fact that a pack train was just coming down the mountain, and the Indians reloaded and remained quiet to entrap them. When they came along it proved to be Mr. James Toogood and his train. The chief and Toogood had always been friends, and he would not allow his men to fire upon Toogood -- or "Jimmy Moxclose" (mox=two; close=good) -- as he was called by the Indians. The same day they burned all the houses in the valley excepting the three heretofore named."

"It is six miles over the mountain to Camp Bailey -- "Six Bit House" -- as it is known. It was located in the big loop of the R.R. on Wolf Creek, near where a big white oak tree now stands. It got its name from the following circumstances: Indian Charley was tried by "Judge Lynch" and was condemed to be hung for stealing and other depredations he was accused of. The rope was about his neck and over a limb of this tree when the proprietor of the place, a party named Turner, demanded of Charley that he pay him the "six bits" due for his dinner. Charley replied, "Nika halo chicksman, wake mamaluse nika potlatch." (I have not the money, you don't kill, I'll pay you.) The

pony was led from under, and Charley was a good Indian."

"Many white men were as barbarous as the Indians. Near this place an Indian boy, belonging to a tribe in lower California, and with a pack train as a bell boy, the boy to ride the bell horse, was shot off the bell horse of a passing train for no other reason than that of being an Indian. Near this place was fought the famous two-day battle of "Hungry Hill." The whites were represented by Companies "A", "B", "C", "D"; Bailey's and Gordon's Companies of the Volunteers; and 105 regulars under the command of Captain Smith of the First Dragoons, about 500 whites. The Indians had the selection of the ground. They sent out a small force who kept up a running fire with the advancing troops. Captains Rinearson and Welton, with their companies, were assigned to lead, but their forces being soon augmented by stragglers from all the other companies, they became uncontrollable, all rushing to the front with eagerness to fire the first shot. There was a long, open hillside sloping to the west and terminating abruptly at a heavily timbered uphill slope, also covered with dense undergrowth. Indians were well covered by this timber and brush, and they allowed the wild rush to reach almost the foot of the hill before they opened their fire. The first fire was so fatal, and so many men fell, that it stopped the mad flight. Safety was sought behind the nearest trees to the rear, and the panic for retreat among many was as contagious as had been the enthusiasm for the charge. Soon an inglorious retreat was made by a large majority of the troops. The rear was held and the wounded cared for and brought away by the heroic few, augmented by the ignorance of the enemy as to their numbers. The loss was twelve killed and twenty-seven wounded. That of the enemy must have been much less."

"At the crossing of Wolf Creek, near where the hotel now stands, when I passed the road first, lay the remains of an Indian who had been killed a short time before. He was a renegade and was waylaid and put to sleep at that place." (8)

"The next office on the road was Leland at Grave Creek. James Toogood was postmaster. He and McDonald Harkness owned the place. Harkness had been killed a short time before by the Indians. His brother, Samuel, and family were now living on the place with Toogood. It was well protected by a stockade, and being the only house within thirty miles, was a popular stopping place for travelers. This creek and the post office both derived their names from the same source -- the death of a young lady which had occurred on the creek in the train of the first emigrants who passed through the valley in 1846. It was something like this: The young lady's name was Martha Leland Crowley. Her friends were very anxious that her burial place should be hidden from the knowledge of the Indians, who were crazy to obtain any wearing apparel belonging to the whites. After interment every precaution was taken to hide her grave. Savage cupidity was too great, and his cunning soon discovered the hiding place. The body was exhumed, all raiments removed, and the corpse left for a feast for wild beasts, which soon left only a few bones, to be afterward collected by the passing stranger and reburied in their former resting place. The grave gave the creek its name, and Leland became that of the office. (9) This creek was not bridged, but a single log spanned it a short distance above the ford, and when the creek was "swimming" deep we coaxed

our horses and mules to walk the log. I knew one contrary fellow who turned around once on the log but in turning back lost his balance and went to the bottom. He was loaded with four kegs, 400 pounds, of nails."

"Here I became acquainted with the first Chinamen I ever knew -- two rollicking boys who were anxious to learn English and were ready to make a speech or sing a China song or do an errand for a white man. I thought I had a fine joke on the boys, but I doubt whether they ever saw it or not. One of the men at the station killed a deer a short distance up the creek and told the boys if they would bring him in the hind quarters they might have the rest. The boys took a toting pole and a couple of bags and went for the deer. After a time they returned, one with the hind quarters balanced with a stone and the other with the fore quarters balanced with another stone."

"The road passes over another range of mountains south of Grave Creek. Just after passing the top of the ridge the road formerly crossed a little creek that came down from the mountains to the left, and then followed down the left bank of the same for quite a distance. Just below the crossing is a log that holds a secret that never will be told. A young man was found by its slide frozen to death in the winter of 1855-56. He had apparently given out and laid down and died. Before doing so he had knocked the cock off his gun and thrown it away so the gun would be of no use to the Indians if it should be found by them. Who he was, where he came from and whither going that log might tell. A little further down the creek is a rivulet that is dry in summer but quite a little stream in winter. Where it passes a maple tree it cut quite a hole just below it which made quite a pool of water during the winter months. In the hole in 1858 were discovered the remains of a white man. From the appearance of his teeth he was supposed to be about thirty years old. His hair was rather long, of reddish hue and very curly. The same mystery surrounds this man as the one by the log. I was told by a party that a young man of that description, riding a black horse and coming from Northern California, and on his way to Oregon to buy cattle had never been heard from after he crossed Rogue River on his way north. The matter was never investigated. The Widow Saxon's place was just on the west side of Jump Off Joe Valley. The road crossed that stream at a ford about the present bridge. It was seldom "swimming" but often deep fording. I killed two beaver on the flat just below the ford in the winter of '56. They were out on an inspecting tour, and I caught them too far from the creek to escape."

"The road at that time turned to the left and went entirely different to the present road to a point near Grants Pass. Able George located the Pass toward Louse Creek. The pioneer owner of the place was in the woods making rails on the day of the "outbreak," and hearing the shooting at the Harris place, ran through the woods all the way to Grave Creek and thus saved his life. Just through the gap was the home of George W. Harris, who had settled there only a short time before, coming from Damascus in Clackamas County. He was at home on the eventful 9th day of October, 1855. The Indians called him to the door and before he could retreat shot him through the breast. He only lived long enough to warn his wife about loading the gun, and that heroic mother and wife defended her home, dead husband and little girl until, night coming on, she silently stole away, taking her child with her, and hid in a dense thicket of willows nearby and waited until relief

came next day. The little girl, looking through a crack in the cabin, saw an Indian with whom the family were well acquainted and who had always expressed great friendship, exposed herself and called the Indian by name saying, "You wouldn't shoot me, would you?" Before she could dodge he sent a bullet through her arm. The little brother sent earlier on an errand to the neighbor's was never heard of afterward. A neighbor and friend of the family who had accompanied them from the valley, Frank A. Reed, a school teacher, was also killed at his home nearby."

"The mail carrier, William Hickenbottom, and another young man escaped in the following manner: They had just passed; in fact, the place was in sight when they met the Indians. They appeared very glad to see the boys and tried to pull them from their horses. After some consultation among themselves, they allowed the mailman and companion to proceed. They hurried forward, but when they approached the Wagoner place, at the crossing of Louse Creek, they saw the house in flames and a large number of Indians just starting on North along the road. The Indians, seeing the boys, called out for them to come on, but the boys, fearful of the worst, hesitated. That hesitation was their salvation. Someone of the band began shooting and soon the bullets were flying too close to be comfortable. The boys retraced their steps more hurriedly than they went, and in approaching the Harris house they bore to the right and passed near the foot of the hill when again they heard the bullets sing, as the Indians had discovered their flight and were attempting to cut them off or stop them with leaden messengers. They soon gained the summit of the spur and passed out of range on the other side and thus made good their escape. Fortunately they were able to warn many settlers and travelers, who huddled together at Grave Creek, prepared to make the best defense possible."

"Wagoner was gone from home that day. He had gone to escort a lady temperance lecturer, a Miss Pellet, to some of the mining camps at Sailors Diggings in Josephine County. His wife and four-year old baby girl and an Indian trusy were there alone. The Indian trusty proved treacherous or was compelled to be so. The Indians were very anxious to secure her as a prisoner and may have done so. A hopeful legend runs: That after securing the house and intimidating any from trying to enter, she arranged herself in her best apparel, and seating herself in the middle of the room with her child in her arms, she sang until her voice was drowned by the crackling flames -- her home being her funeral pyre. Another more horrible story is that she and child were prisoners for many months. The child was killed on account of its annoyance, and the mother refused to eat and died from excessive grief, starvation and torture."

"Just south from Louse Creek was a long, grassy glade through which the road ran toward the summit between Louse Creek and the small stream running through Grants Pass. The Knott and Ladd brothers were on their way to Jacksonville with a stock of goods, conveyed by a pack train and four or five wagons. They were in this glade when attacked, and the Indians, having secured the road in front and rear, imagined they had the boys corralled. With due judgement they cut the packs from the animals and the horses from the wagons, and leaving the oxen to care for themselves, mounted and road away, but not in the direction the Indians had anticipated. The boys were well acquainted with the country

and escaped by way of an old trail not used in recent years. They made their way to Evans Ferry and there joined a small company who had defended the house and themselves from an attack earlier in the day. In the wagons and packs were found, among other things, some liquors with which many of the Indians soon became too demoralized to continue their hellish work, and through this circumstance, in all probability, many settlers escaped. Quite a number of Indians were found here early the next day when a company of troops from Fort Lane and volunteer citizens arrived, and several were killed before they could escape to the nearby brush and mountains. On top of the divide is where young James W. Cartwright and Given were killed. They had a two-horse wagon loaded with apples from the Willamette Valley and were on their road to Jacksonville."

"Some eight or ten people were killed along the road at "Bloody Run", "Dry Diggings" and the Jones' place between this summit and Evans Ferry. This was the next post office on the route. Mr. David "Coyote" Evans was postmaster. The name of the office was Gold River (10). I usually crossed Rogue River at this ferry. Jewet's Ferry was three miles above near the mouth of Evans Creek and the west boundary of the Indian Reservation. At this place two packers were killed on the night of the 8th or the morning of the 9th of October, 1855 -- the first of that memorable massacre. At the same time, Jewet's house was fired upon from across the river, but no one was injured. Early in the morning of the 9th the Gold River Post Office was attacked, and Isaac Shelton was mortally wounded. The post office at Evans Ferry of Gold River was in a stockade on the north side of the river and had withstood several sieges."

"Evans Ferry was the old crossing and a favorite camping ground for the Indians who were always on the alert to steal, rob or kill the careless or non-vigilant traveler. These rocks and river and hills might reveal the sequel as to why so many travelers never returned. There was no settlement north of the river above Evans Ferry. Birdseye, Dr. Miller and Rosenstock were the chief settlers along the south side up to the Wm. G. T'Vault place which was across the river from the present town of Gold Hill. There was a post office at the T'Vault place, but as he had moved to Jacksonville to publish the "Table Rock Sentinel", the office was discontinued about the time I went on the road. Its name was Dardanelles. (11)"

"Just south of the Dardanelles Post Office was or is the location of the famous Gold Hill -- the richest quartz lead ever discovered in the state, located in 1858. Across the Rogue River is Table Rock, and at the mouth of Bear Creek was old Fort Lane. At the date of which I am speaking the land between the Rogue River and Evans Creek was an Indian Reservation. J. B. White was making his home at Rosenstock's, my night station. He had a mining claim across the river and afterward located a homestead, started a small trading post and laid out the town of Rock Point. This was after the Reservation was thrown open to settlement, and the stage road was changed to that side of the river. (12) The road leaves the river at Dardanelles, runs up a small stream for two or three miles, crosses a low ridge to Willow Springs and then runs along the south slope of a range of oak hills to Jacksonville."

"Jacksonville, at that time a live and prosperous mining town, is located on Jackson Creek in a cove of the mountains where the creek leaves the hills and enters the valley proper. All the hillsides and

gulches were dotted with miners' cabins, and they were securing the precious metal with the "pan", the "cradle", the "Tom" and the "sluice box". Some were even carrying their dirt for some distance before it could be washed. Mr. Siphers was postmaster, but afterward Mr. Hoffman, the father-in-law of C. C. Beekman, was appointed to the place. The crowds about the office on mail day were immense, and the postmaster, after sorting the mail, usually got upon a goods box and read off the names. If the party was in the crowd, his hand went up and the letter was passed to him. To get to the delivery window each party was compelled to take his turn, and a string of men for half a block away was not an uncommon sight. C. C. Beekman had a newsstand and carried an express to Yreka, 60 miles over the mountains, a business frought with many dangers. Beekman rode his horse that distance in one day. Jacksonville was a "wide open" town. Everything that was wicked was permitted anywhere in the town that space could be secured. Nearly every man carried a revolver and knife, and it was considered a greater crime to steal a horse than to kill a man. Early in 1858 a daily stage line was established between Jacksonville and Yreka." (13)

"The next office south of here was Phoenix, familiarly called "Gasburg", and also Camp Stewart. The office here was in a small saddlery shop, postmaster's name forgotten. (14) Camp Stewart was named for Lieutenant Stewart who was wounded near Bear Creek and afterward died near Phoenix. A few years afterward Camp Baker was located a mile south of here on Stewart Creek. A mile below Ashland was the Eagle Mill and Distillery. They are located on Bear Creek."

"Ashland Mills was the last post office in Oregon, going south. It was located on Ashland Creek, the present location of the City of Ashland. At that time there was but one small house at the place, other than the mill. The man and wife who owned the house kept a small wayside stopping place. Travelers in those days generally carried their own beds, and all they generally received were meals. The office in the mill was the post office, and Ad Helman was postmaster. The mill was owned by him and a group of other farmers who lived near about. He operated the mill." (15)

"Eight miles past Ashland Mills was a soda spring along a small stream called Emigrant Creek. Near this place is where the old immigrant road entered the valley. Near here the Mountain House, kept by a family by the name of White, was at the foot of the mountain on the north side. Here is where I first met Hiner (Joaquin) Miller (16) in the spring of 1858. He was walking the floor and trying to conjugate a Latin verb. Nobody knew what he was talking about."

"From the valley, up the canyon to the summit was a lonesome piece of road and along which many crimes had been committed."

"Just a short time before I went on the road, the Modoc Indians had attacked three teamsters, one of which they killed. They also killed the nine yoke of oxen and burned the wagons after taking all they could get away with from them. The teams were loaded chiefly with flour, bacon and other eatables. The remnants were all over the grade and in the creek, and it was not a pleasant place to pass."

"Sometimes the road across the mountains was considered unsafe on account of Indians or "Road Agents", and I sometimes crossed after night. I recollect crossing one night coming north, and the night was

dark as Egypt. It was about ten o'clock when I got to the summit. I had two horses -- a pack horse and a riding horse. The pack horse was loose in the road ahead, and at the summit I got off to lead my riding horse down the steep part of the hill. He refused to be led very fast, and I turned him loose with the other horse and got in behind with a stick to encoursage him to go faster. When we got opposite the old debris, where the man and oxen were killed and the wagons burned, there was a terrible racket in the brush and a big "snort". The horses also gave a snort and broke on down the road as fast as they could run. I felt the hair raise the hat on my head. I never waited to investigate, but nearly kept up with the horses which I overtook about a mile down the road and road on to my station, the Mountain House. I never knew what was the cause of the rumpus but always thought it was a bear. Expect it was about as badly scared as I was."

"Another time I crossed in the early evening and saw two horsemen hide behind a clump of bushes. I could not go back so had to ride upon them. I put my horses to their utmost speed and with my revolver in hand rushed right past them. They immediately fell in behind and chased me for two miles uphill and down, right up to the station, but before I could get off and around to face them, they dashed by and were gone. I inquired all along the road next morning but got no information."

"I crossed this mountain one day with two other men in a big snow storm. The old snow on the mountain was from four to six feet deep with a well-beaten trail, but the wind and new snow in many places covered up this old trail, and whenever we got off of it we got in the snow so deep that it was impossible to travel. We had stopped overnight with Mr. Rockafellow, and it was eight miles over the mountain to the Mountain House. We had worked hard all day and were all about given out, as well as the horses."

"One of the men's names was Thompson, a brother of David Thompson of Portland. The other man's name I did not know. Thompson was not in good health. The other fellow was a big, rugged-looking man weighing two hundred or more pounds. About four o'clock p.m. we came out into an opening and lost the trail. The horses refused to go farther. Thompson could not, and I had worked until I could hardly stand up. The big man sat down and cried and said it was no use to try more as we would never get out. His action so disgusted me that I was stimulated with new vigor, and I took the lead off to the right, down a steep mountain into a canyon and got into lighter snow. We almost slid down the mountain for a quarter of a mile or more, which revived our courage and got us to the hotel about eight or nine o'clock."

"Another exciting time I had on the mountain was with a grizzly bear. He crossed the road a short distance ahead of me, and I ran my horse up close to get a shot with my revolver. There was a deep canyon just close to the road which the bear had to cross, and it was just starting up the opposite bank when I rode up and delivered the shot. The horse saw or smelled the bear and was about scared to death, while the bear, feeling the lead stinging his back, nearly tore the mountain down trying to get away and grunting like a wild hog badly scared."

"Beginning at the South Boundary of the state, the state line is just beyond Coles'. The Coles, two brothers, located claims at that place and built a very neat house which was a roadhouse or hotel, and when I was on the road it was one of the best-kept houses on the whole route. About three miles from Coles' and near the foot of the mountain

was another well-kept house owned and kept by a man named Rockafellow. From his place to the summit of the Siskiyou Mountains was a steep climb for about three miles and then a steep descent down into a canyon and over some spurs and on down to the Mountain House eight miles from Rockafellow's place."

FOOTNOTES

(1) Oakland Post Office had been established February 21, 1852, in Oregon Territory.
(2) A post office at Wilbur was opened December 14, 1860.
(3) The post office had been established November 3, 1851.
(4) The post office was established November 22, 1853, with Burnett first postmaster.
(5) This post office was opened February 18, 1854, with Wright as first postmaster.
(6) North Canyonville Post Office was established July 6, 1852.
(7) Galesville Post Office was established October 14, 1854.
(8) Wolf Creek Inn was built about 1882.
(9) Leland Post Office was opened March 28, 1855, with McDonald Harkness first postmaster.
(10) This post office was established April 18, 1855.
(11) This post office was established October 19, 1852. T'Vault was the former Oregon Territorial Postmaster General.
(12) Rock Point Post Office was opened November 17, 1859, with John B. White first postmaster.
(13) Jacksonville Post Office was established February 18, 1854, with R. Dugan first postmaster.
(14) This office was opened January 3, 1857, with Sam Miller first postmaster.
(15) This post office was established May 17, 1855, with A. Helman first postmaster.
(16) The "Poet of the Sierras."

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AN ALTERNATE VIEW ON THE SUBJECT OF SCARCITY RATINGS By Alan H. Patera

The following is in response to the article by Richard Wadsworth concerning scarcity ratings for post offices.(LA POSTA 11/4) I have two criticisms of his system, one regarding its general applicability and the other on the focus of the system itself.

Concerning the general applicability, I find it awkward to think in terms of dates when "effective civilization came into being in the area" because of the varying stages of settlement throughout the country and the necessity to have a sliding scale of dates to account for this. Of course, I tend to think in terms of the whole country, but even talking about the western states you will range from 1849+ in California to the 1880s and later for parts of Montana and Wyoming. This is not to say that there is not merit in his contention that the period of early growth is of special concern; covers from these periods command premium prices for any state though not necessarily because of scarcity.

What really bothers me about the Wadsworth system is that grades 1-4 are all operating offices. I think to be a real scarcity rating one should define the rating as the likelihood of coming up with any type cancel from an office of that name, throughout the span of time during which the office operated. To divide operating offices into four categories of seperate ratings is in effect to introduce into the system a desirability rating. While the covers for smaller offices are certainly more desirable, especially in the early years of operation, I don't think it is proper to say that a postmark from San Elizario is more scarce than a postmark from El Paso when one can simply mail off to both offices and obtain a current postmark from there. I realize, of course, that most collectors don't consider what is happening now as being of much interest, but I think if there still is a postal system operating 100 years from now there will still be collectors, and many of them will be interested in what is happening now, and a post office that closed in 1979 might be as elusive to locate as some of the offices that closed in 1900 are to locate now.

A true scarcity rating of course depends upon the number of examples known to exist, but to prepare this type of rating would involve collecting an enormous amount of data. Although desirable, I don't think anyone is prepared to do this at this time. In his booklet on Massachusetts post offices, Elwyn Doubleday offers a scarcity rating from 1 to 10 based on his experience in collecting, buying and selling such material. In his system, 1 stands for an operating office, and 10 for an office for which he knows of no existing cover.

Keeping the Doubleday and Wadsworth systems in mind, and pondering over the many complexities of what is scarce and what is desirable while driving down to our cabin in the Virginia mountains, I distilled out what now seems to me to be fairly obvious in constructing a scarcity rating. I think a generalized scarcity rating depends on two factors: WHEN and HOW LONG. I played around with these two factors, and ended up by devising the two-step system for determining a scarcity rating which I have tabulated below. My divisions of time and my divisions of length of operation are of course quite arbitrary and I will not defend tem with any great passion, but if one will accept my contention that when talking about scarcity all currently operating offices are equal, then I think that the illustrated system becomes quite workable for

determining a rating for the discontinued offices.

First the WHEN:

RATING	DATE DISCONTINUED	(Why I chose this date range)
1	after 1950	A good many collector-generated cards and covers exist starting about 1950.
2	1920-1950	Some collector-generated items exist,but most of what is found is postally used
3	1900-1920	The age of the post card.
4	1880-1900	4 & 5 have a truly arbitrary division, and could perhaps be combined.
5	1865-1880	
6	before 1865	Harder to find. It's quite possible that another arbitrary division could or should be made.

Secondly, the length of operation: (HOW LONG). Division purely arbitrary.

RATING	LENGTH OF OPERATION
1	over 50 years
2	20-50 years
3	5-20 years
4	2-5 years
5	less than 2 years

The scarcity rating then would be obtained by adding the rating for the date discontinued to the rating for the number of years operating. An operating office would always be given a rating of 1. The lowest rating for a discontinued office would be for one that operated for over 50 years and closed after 1950, thereby gaining a rating of 2. The top rating would be an 11 for an office which operated for less than two years and closed before 1865. If people are uncomfortable with a scale that goes from 1 to 11, it could be made a more conventional 1-10 system by altering one of the date discontinued divisions.

I think scarcity should be very high on the list of considerations for pricing an item, but it is by no means the only consideration. I have no ideas at this point on how to establish guidelines for the evaluation of desirability factors, but since I was pondering them at the same time I was thinking about scarcity I feel inclined to list them as well.

1) The type of item. Covers seem to be the most popular. I have affinity for view cards. Postal cards seem to be acceptable, but many people seem to shun legal-sized envelopes. 3x5's and smaller cuts I view as an insult, but I suffer their presence if its the only example I have from an office.

2) The condition of an item. I have seen some standards about deducting so much for a rounded corner, so much for a jagged edge, etc. I generally judge by the overall appearance and don't really have any conclusive thoughts on the matter.

3) The boldness of the strike. How clear the name, state and date show up.

4) The type of cancel. Lots of people collect fancy cancels, postmaster cancels, flag cancels, etc. Manuscript cancels seem to have less favor. For my own collecting I don't care, as long as it's legible.

5) The stamp. Valuable stamps increase the price of covers.

6) The date. This will tell you if it's a territorial, or the earliest known cancel.

7) Other postal markings. Don't know much about them, but some people place premiums on them.

8) Address or return address. Gets into advertising covers and autographs of famous people.

Whether its possible to establish guidelines for these factors or not I don't know. There may be others I have over-looked. But there is a 9th factor which throws everything into disarray, which is collector preference. Whereas two Texas cancels may be equal to me by scarcity rating and all other factors, the fact that one is from El Paso County and the other is not would be an extreme factor to Mr. Wadsworth, and I presume he would be willing to pay more for the one that is. Some people collect by specific geographic location (I like Madison County Virginia because I own a cabin on a trout stream there and spend many a summer weekend there). I know one collector that collects names with a "Store", "Mill" or "Iron Works" in the name. At a show once I observed one collector who collected only Utica, New York covers. I rather like mining towns, and could get enthused about lumber camps. Others might seek fishing villages or Indian reservations.

Finally, I want to commend Mr. Wadsworth for doing anything in this complex area. The fact that I have made a counter proposal of a scarcity rating system does not detract from his efforts, and before any quibbling begins I think a few definitions are in order. What I am looking for is a generalized scarcity rating that can be applied to any office in the country as a first indicator of the liklihood of locating any type of cancel from that office from any period, a rating that could then be adjusted up or down as additional information is obtained. I think Mr. Wadsworth is looking for a slightly different animal, such as the scarcity rating of finding a pre-1930 cancel from an office, and there will be a big difference in the availability of cancels from still-operating offices which is reflected in his rating system. It may look as though I have summarily dismissed this concept, but in actuality I think there is indeed a need to get a handle on this problem, and the statistical approach he used is certainly one way to begin. I would suggest that in addition to using population as a criteria, that information regarding the annual net receipts of the office be used to gauge the amount of mail eminating from the office.

EDITOR'S COMMENTS

We are indebted to David Ramstead for allowing us to publish the rather remarkable account of William Henry Byars' years as a mail carrier is southern Oregon. While certain portions of this account sound offensive by today's standards, there can be little doubt that the tone and comments of Mr. Byars accurately reflect the prevailing attitudes of his times. It is sincerely hoped that no LA POSTA readers are offended by the religious, ethnic or racial attitudes of the chronicler. History, even postal history, is not always pretty.

A number of new books of interest to postal history buffs have recently been published and republished. The Chase and Cabeen classic, The First Hundred Years of United States Territorial Postmarks, 1787-1887, has recently appeared as a Quarterman reprint, thus continuing the admirable record of this firm in making important classics available at a reasonable price. The Alexander edition of Simpson's U. S. Postal Markings, 1851-1861 is a splendid piece of work which greatly expands the original to over 430 pages of well-executed illustrations and text. The U. S. Philatelic Classics Society deserves a vote of thanks for publishing this excellant guide. Both of these works have been extensively reviewed in the philatelic press, and are available from most well-known philatelic literature supply houses.

A work of a slightly different character and scope is Civil Censorship in the United States During World War II by Wilfrid N. Broderick and Dann Mayo. I found this a fascinating little study covering a phase of postal history which has received only limited attention. Soft-covered, plastic spiral bound and offset printed, this 110-page research effort lists, illustrates and catalogues a great variety of those odd censorship markings which were applied to covers entering and leaving the country during WW II. The book is available from Dann Mayo, 5443 Paseo, Kansas City, MO 64110. The price is $8 for War Cover Club members or Civil Censorship Study Group members, and slightly more for non members. Write Dann for price and further information.

The editor is most pleased to welcome the comments of Alan Patera regarding the establishment of a scarcity index for postmarks. It is hoped that this piece, along with Dick Wadsworth's earlier article will spur some additional discussion of this matter which touches us all to some degree. For example, it would be most welcome if one of you who are full or part-time dealers would set down your thoughts on scarcity, pricing and value. The object of all this discussion is to lead us eventually toward a concensus, or possibly even a universally accepted standard for evaluating the "worth" of a postal history item. Please send us your thoughts.

With these words we conclude our eleventh volume of LA POSTA. A 12th volume has been promised, and subscriptions are coming in at a healthy rate. Quite a few works are already on hand for upcoming issues, but we are no means over-booked so if you've been harboring a pet project why not consider breaking into print with it in Volume 12?

Happy holidays to all, and on to our third decade.....

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