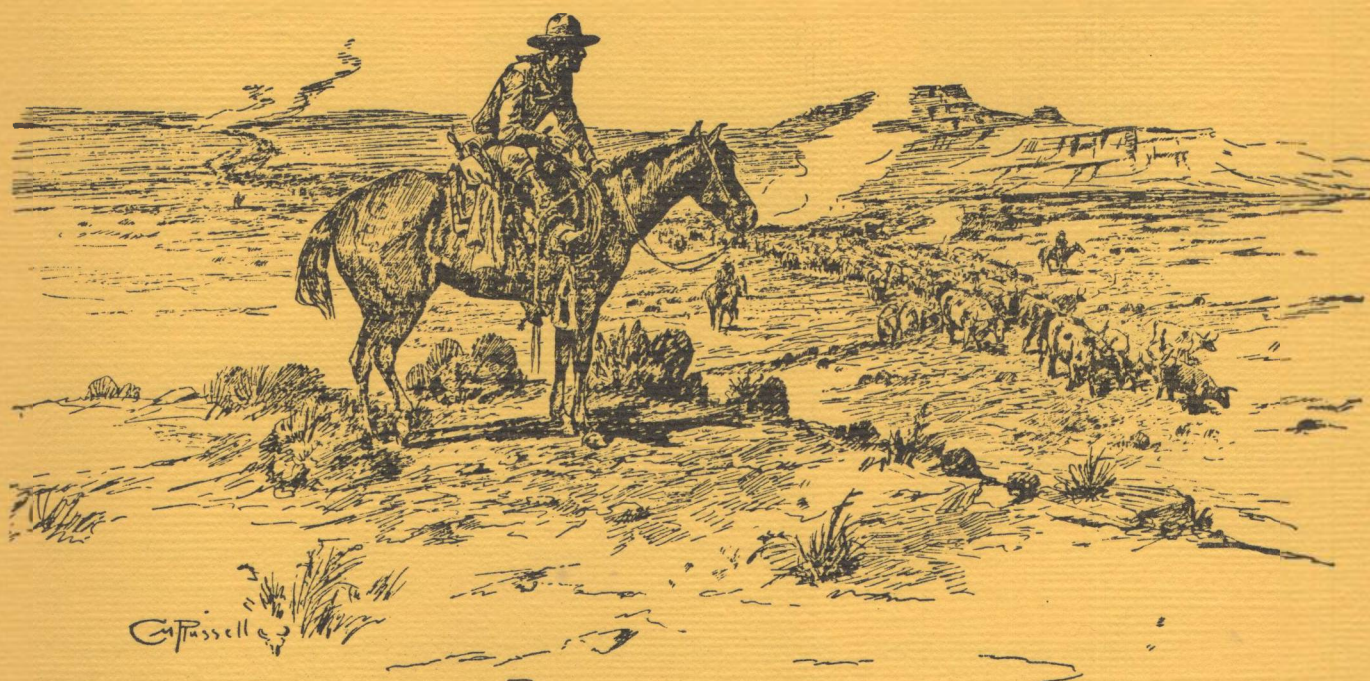


LA POSTA



VOL. XIII, NO. 1



LA POSTA

FEBRUARY, 1982

VOLUME 13, NUMBER 1 WHOLE NO. 73

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LA POSTA is not published for profit, and no advertising is solicited or accepted. All authors and the editor serve without compensation, and all receipts from subscriptions and sales of this journal serve to improve the publication and further the serious study of Western Postal History. LA POSTA is published with six numbers per volume. Subscription information is available from the Editor: RICHARD W. HELBOCK, P.O. Box 3557, LAS CRUCES, NM 88003.

POST OFFICES OF THE TRANS-PECOS AREA OF TEXAS

By Jack M. Smith, Sr.

The area of Texas lying west of Pecos River is a vast, arid region, which is, even today, sparsely populated and characterized by endless horizons of brown vegetation capped by a blazing blue cloudless sky. Bounded by the Rio Grande to the south and west, New Mexico to the north and the Pecos to the east, this region has been seen by all but a few hearty settlers as a place to cross quickly and be done with. Its emptiness and loneliness gave rise to the popular saying of the last century that "there is no law west of the Pecos."

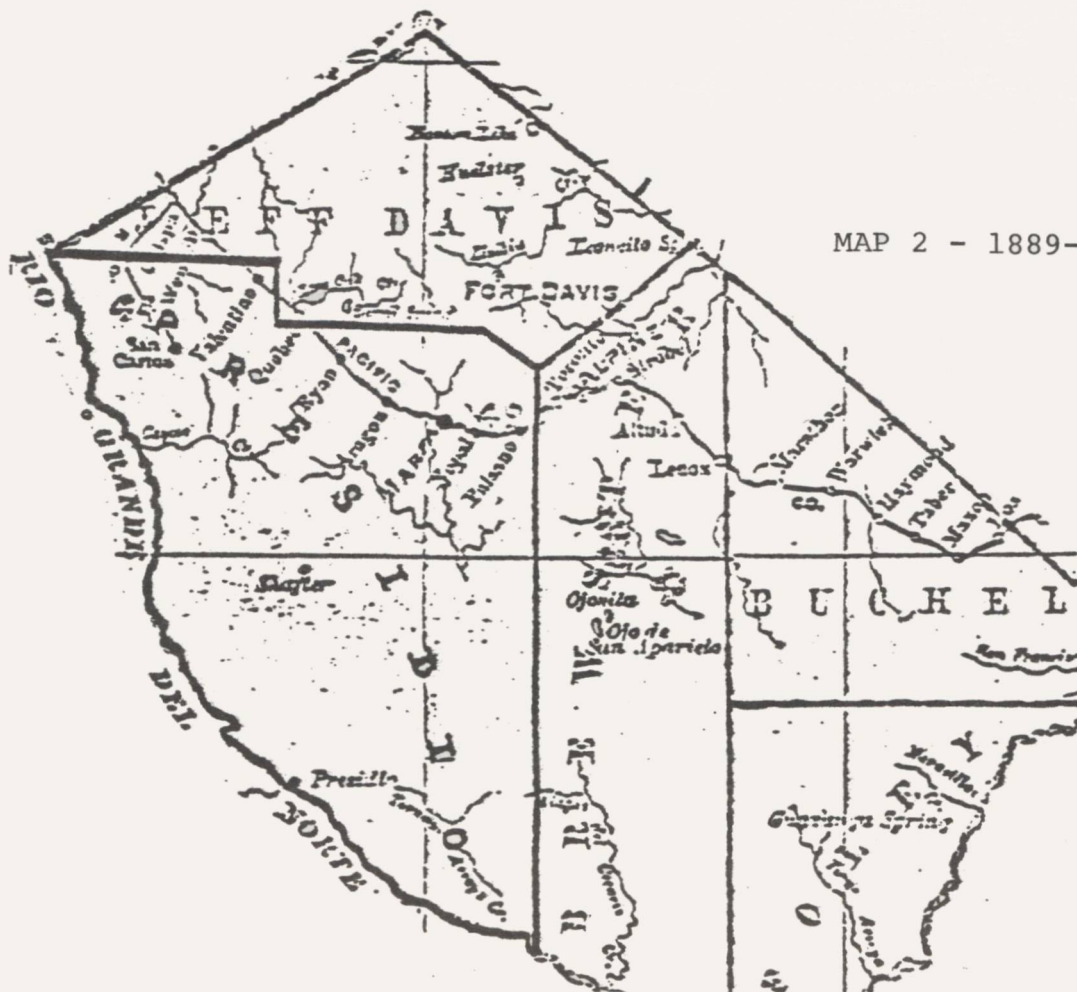
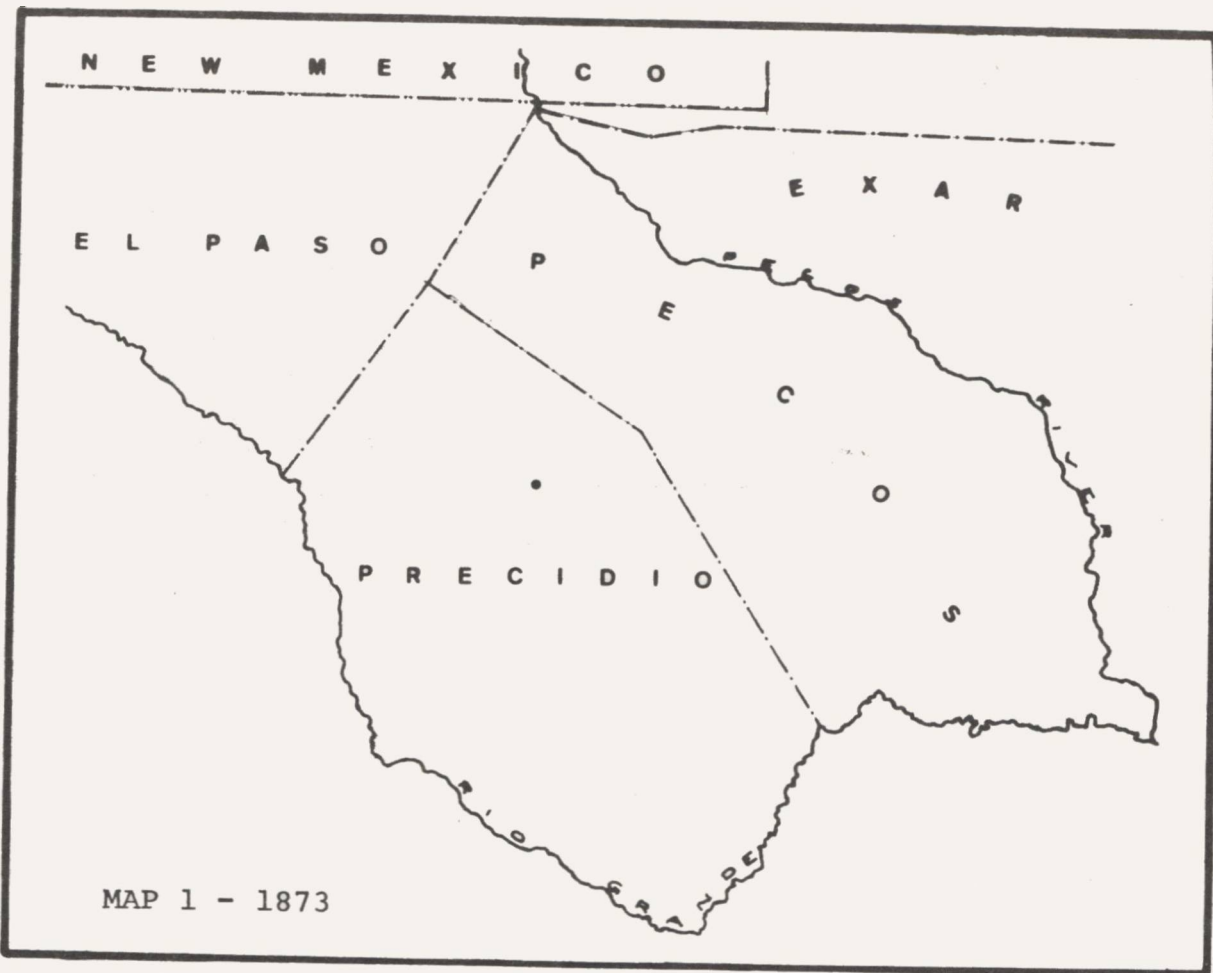
In this series of articles we will examine the post offices which have been established in the Trans-Pecos region of Texas, attempt to catalog their postmarks and note some of the history associated with the settlement of the area. El Paso and Presidio counties form the backbone of the region, and both have played important roles in its development. Since other articles in this journal have dealt with the postal history of El Paso County, the emphasis in this series will be on Presidio County.

PRESIDIO COUNTY, TEXAS

Presidio County was authorized January 3, 1850, from Bexar County, but the county was not organized until 1875, with Fort Davis as the county seat. The delay in organizing the county was due to the lack of population and continuing difficulties with the Apache, who had long ranged freely over the land. As initially constituted, Presidio County was to encompass the entire Trans-Pecos portion of Texas, less El Paso County (Map 1), but before the county was actually organized, a new county named Pecos was created wholly from Presidio. Thus, Presidio County was nearly halved in size before it effectively became a county.

In the early 1880's the Texas & New Orleans (now Southern Pacific) Railroad reached Presidio County. The railroad bypassed Fort Davis by a considerable distance. The railroad established a number of stations along its route. One of these, which came to be named Marfa, attracted a fair number of settlers, and in 1885 the county seat was moved to Marfa. This movement of the county seat became one of several reasons which led to the formation of four additional counties wholly from the territory of Presidio County. On February 2, 1887, the Texas Legislature erected Jeff Davis and Brewster counties. One month later, on March 15th, they erected Buchel and Foley counties (Map 2).

A total of 25 post offices have been authorized for the area which was at one time organized as Presidio County. Since that area extends over 12,300 square miles, the number of offices has obviously been quite small. Two of the 25 were never in operation, and only four of the total remain active today. The 25 post offices are described briefly in chronological order of their establishment. Examples of postmarks from these offices are not numerous, and the author seeks illustrations thereof for his records.

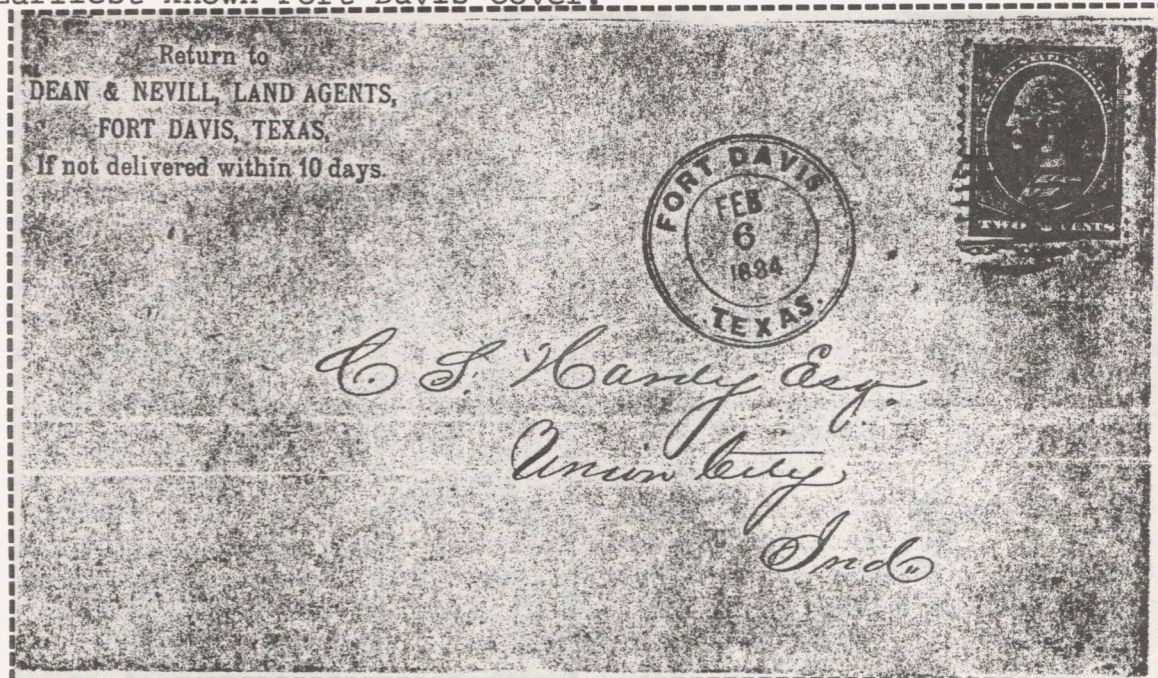


FORT DAVIS

Transferred from Bexar County on 30 July 1866, this was the first post office listed on record for Presidio County. Located in present-day Jeff Davis County. Was the first county seat for Presidio County in 1875. In 1887, when Jeff Davis County was organized, Fort Davis became its county seat. (to be continued)



Fort Davis, Tex cover dating from late 1870's or early 1880's.
Earliest known Fort Davis cover.



Fort Davis, Texas cover dating from 1884.

NINETEENTH CENTURY OREGON POSTMARKS: CROOK, JEFFERSON AND WHEELER COUNTIES

By Charles A. Whittlesey

Crook, Jefferson and Wheeler counties, along with Deschutes County, make up most of what is generally known as Central Oregon. The country is predominantly a high lava plateau, dissected by a number of rivers and creeks. It lies for the most part in the rain shadow of the Cascade Ranges, and is therefore an arid region with vegetation varying from sage brush at lower elevations to juniper and pine in the mountains. Settlement of Central Oregon was quite limited during the 19th century, and it was not until 1882 that Crook, the earliest of the counties considered here, was organized from Wasco County.

Crook County was named for Major-General George Crook, who had earned a reputation as an Indian fighter in south-central Oregon campaigns. The first permanent settlements were founded along Ochoco Creek in the early 1870's at Prineville and Upper Ochoco, but subsequent settlement expansion was slow to come. By the end of the 19th century, Crook County had been authorized only 15 post offices, and that number includes name changes. Postmarks are known from only 6 of those offices, but due to the brevity of service and small volume of business for most of them the absence of documented service is not surprising.

Jefferson County was not organized until 1914. It was carved from territory which had formerly been part of Crook County, and it too was very sparsely settled during the 19th century. Perhaps the most important early settlement in what was to become Jefferson County was at Warm Springs, the agency for Warm Springs Indian Reservation. The post office was established there in 1873. Hay Creek, Cross Keys, Cherry Creek and Grizzly were basically small ranching centers located along the early day wagon roads. A total of 15 post offices were authorized for Jefferson County prior to 1900. Almost all were small, and many were short-lived. We have examples of postmarks from only 5 of these offices.

Wheeler County was organized in 1899 from Wasco and Grant counties. It was named for Henry H. Wheeler, an Oregon pioneer of 1857 who became a prominent stockman in the vicinity of Mitchell some years later. The pioneer post office in Wheeler County was Camp Watson, established in 1867, but the most important office in the county was Mitchell, established in 1873. Fossil, Lost Valley, Wagner, Waldron and Winlock were other relatively important places during the late 19th century. A total of 25 post office names, including name changes, were authorized for Wheeler County during the 19th century. Of that number, postmarks have been recorded from 9 offices. Only 8 offices are listed below, but Camp Watson postmarks were listed with Grant County (LA POSTA, Vol. 9, No. 2).

CROOK COUNTY NINETEENTH CENTURY POSTMARKS

TOWN TYPE NO.	POSTMARK CODE	EARLIEST DATE	LATEST DATE	EXAMPLES KNOWN	KILLER TYPE
HOWARD (1877-1890 & 1896-1918)					
1.	C1J1,11N1B28	2FEB80		1	STAR
2.	C1EN1B27.5	13AUG97		1	TARGET
PAULINA (1882-DATE)					
1.	FANCY REG	16OCT92P		1	TARGET
2.	C1EN1BBR26.5	20OCT93		1	TARGET
POST (1889-DATE)					
1.	C1EN1BBR27	10FEB94		1	TARGET
PRICE (1886-1902)					
1.	C1EN1BBR27	15FEB98	15DEC99	2	
PRINEVILLE (1872-DATE)					
1.	C1EA1BBR25	18FEB78	22DEC87	2	TARGET
2.	C1J1N1B28.5	28NOV78P	82	8	STAR
3.	C21J1N1B26	1DEC83	1MAY88	7	TARGET
4.	OC1EN1BBR24	8FEB87	30NOV88	3	TARGET
5.	C1JT1B28	7DEC93	25JUN99	6	CORK
6.	REG	16OCT99P		1	
UPPER OCHOCO (1871-1880)					
1.	C1EA1BBR25	5FEB77	20AUG78	10	TARGET

JEFFERSON COUNTY NINETEENTH CENTURY POSTMARKS

CHERRY CREEK (1884-1886)					
1.	OC1JN1RRB26	27JUL85		1	TARGET
CROSS KEYS (1879-1902)					
1.	C41JN1B28	25OCT86	10AUG87	2	MALTESE CROSS
2.	C1EN1B27.5	6MAY98	26DEC99	2	TARGET
GRIZZLY (1890-1894 & 1900-1948)					
1.	C1EN1BBR27	10NOV92		1	MSS.
HAY CREEK (1875-1876 & 1879-1920)					
1.	C21EN1RRB27.5	25JUL84		1	TARGET
2.	C1EN1BBR28	20AUG88	15NOV91	2	
3.	C1JN1BBR28	19OCT94		1	
4.	C1EN1B27.5	23OCT98		1	TARGET

JEFFERSON COUNTY



1



1



2



3



2



1

Warm Springs
10-19-88

2



3



4

JEFFERSON COUNTY NINETEENTH CENTURY POSTMARKS

TOWN TYPE NO.	POSTMARK CODE	EARLIEST DATE	LATEST DATE	EXAMPLES KNOWN	KILLER TYPE
WARM SPRINGS (1873-DATE)					
1.	C1CM1B23*	16JAN74		1	MSS.
2.	MSS.	25JAN79	23MAY85	4	MSS.
3.	C1JN1B27	27MAR87	22NOV89	2	TARGET
4.	C1EN1BBR27.5	2OCT90	23OCT90	5	TARGET

*A CRUDE HAND-CARVED DEVICE

CROOK COUNTY



PRINEVILLE, ORE.

OCT 16 1899

REG. BUS.

6



WHEELER COUNTY



Lost Valley Ore
6-8 to
1



WHEELER COUNTY NINETEENTH CENTURY POSTMARKS

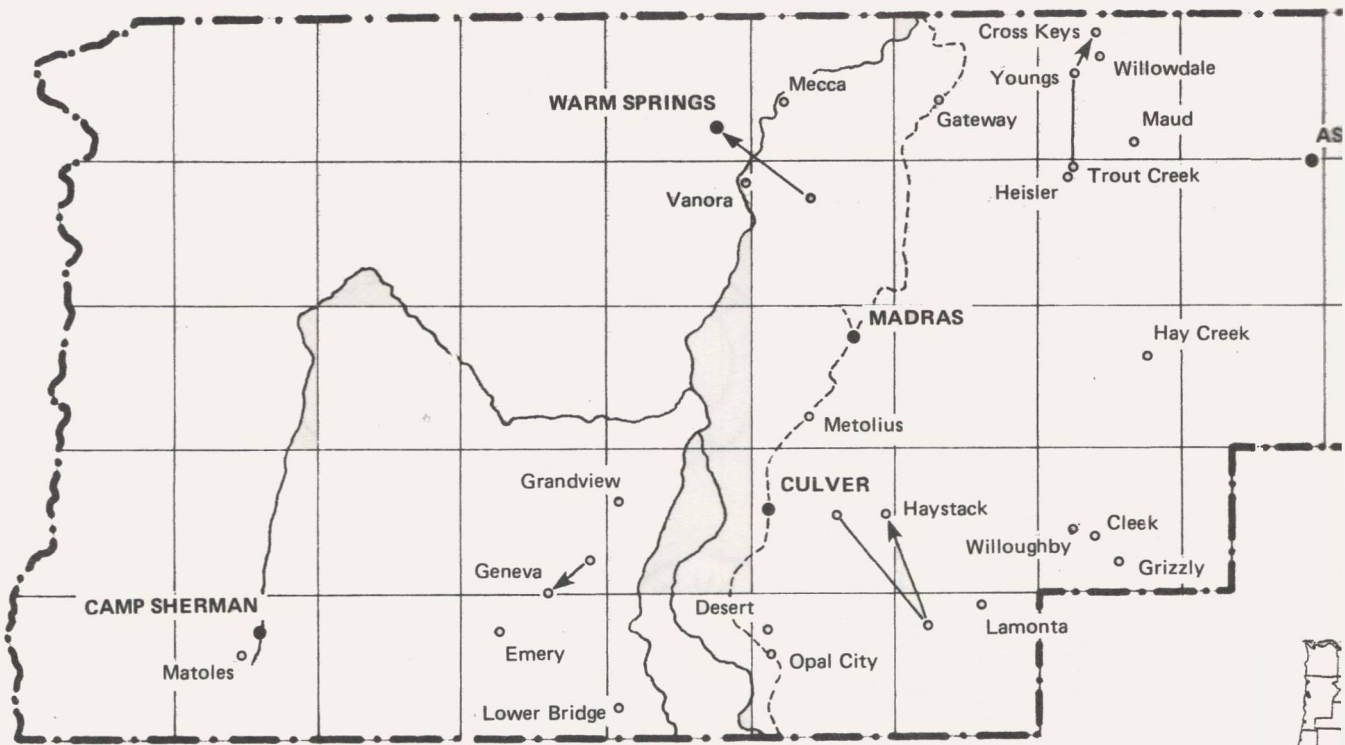
TOWN TYPE NO.	POSTMARK CODE	EARLIEST DATE	LATEST DATE	KILLER TYPE	EXAMPLES KNOWN
ANTONE (1894-1907 & 1910-1948)					
1.	C1JS1RRB30	30OCT95	19JUL97		2
2.	C1EN1B28	10DEC98			1
BRIDGE CREEK (1868-1882)					
1.	MSS.	22SEP73		MSS.	3
FOSSIL (1876-DATE)					
1.	C1JN1RRB28	16MAR79R	9JUL85R	MSS.	4
2.	MSS.	20AUG82	16APR83	MSS.	2
3.	C31JN1B26.5	20SEP87	2APR89	GRID	5
4.	C31JS1B30	13JUL92		WHL/FORTUNE	1
LOST VALLEY (1879-1890, 1892-1909 & 1916-1926)					
1.	MSS.	8JUN80		MSS.	1
2.	C1EN1BBR28	28JAN89	8OCT94	TARGET	2
3.	C1EN1B28	28JAN99		TARGET	1
MITCHELL (1873-DATE)					
1.	MSS.	5MAR79		MSS.	1
2.	C21EN1RRB27.5	10MAR82	25OCT86	TARGET	5
WAGNER (1882-1901)					
1.	C21JN1B28	22JAN89		MSS.	1
2.	C1EN1BBR27	20JAN90		TARGET	1
WALDRON (1879-1902)					
1.	C1EN1B27	5SEP84	23JUN94	TARGET	2
2.	C1EN1BBR25.5	16MAR87	14NOV88	TARGET	2
WINLOCK (1888-1937)					
1.	C1EN1BBR27	24JUN90			1
2.	C1ES1B28.5	22FEB97P		GRID	1

The postmarks listed in this article form part of the 19TH CENTURY OREGON POSTMARK CATALOG. Persons who are able to add new information in the form of date extensions or unlisted types are respectfully requested to contact either the author or the Editor of LA POSTA.

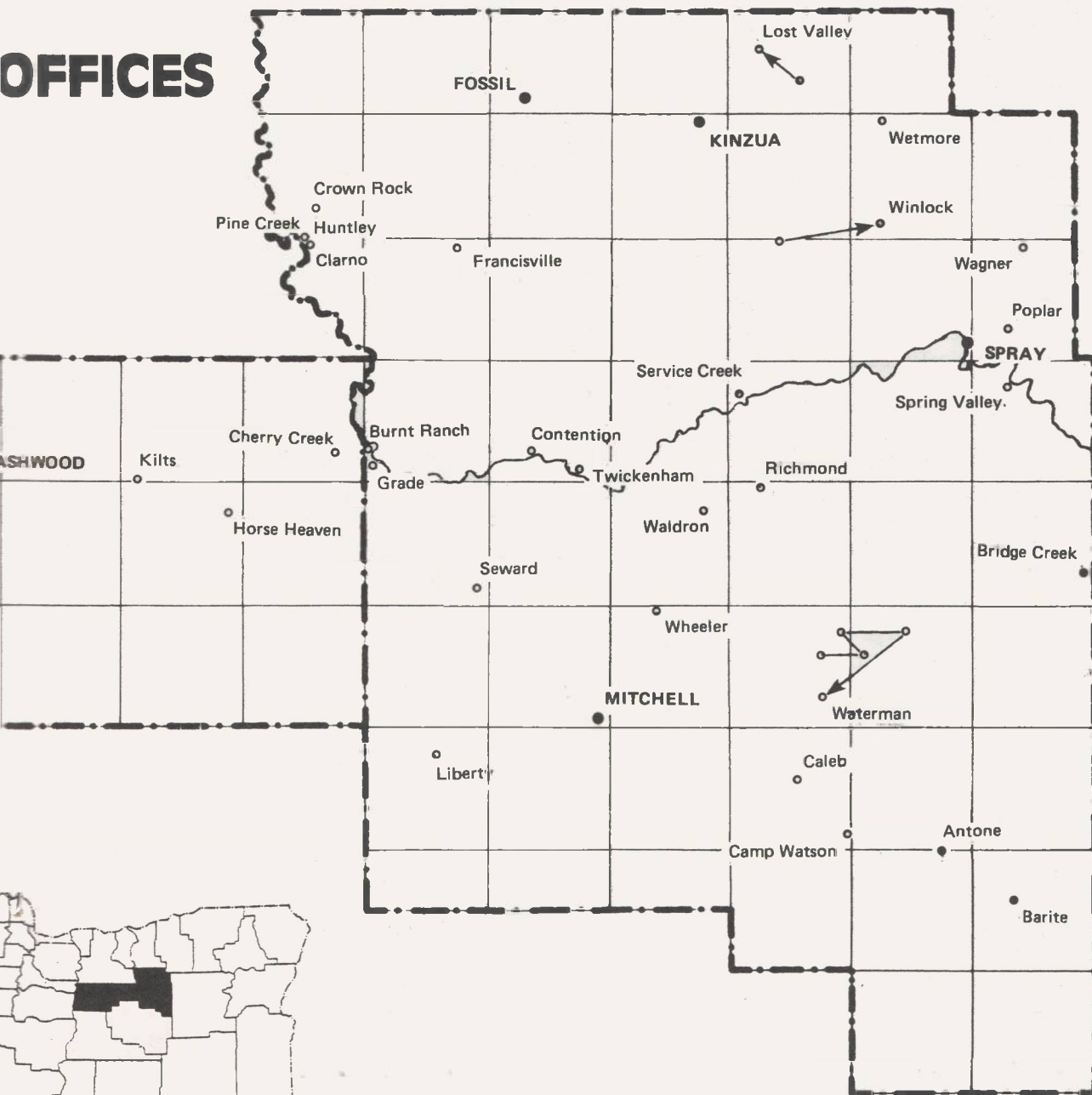
JEFFERSON & WHEELER COUNTY POST C

● OPERATING

○ Discontinued



OFFICES



R.P.O's Through the Vineyards: Railroad Mail Service in the
Napa Valley of California.

By Rod Crossley.

"The Napa Valley is one of the loveliest, best improved, and the most fruitful sections of the state. Enclosed between the two ridges of the Coast Range, one of which separates it from the Sacramento and the other from the Sonoma Valley, and above Calistoga, Mount Saint Helena stands like a great sentinel across the head of the valley. The soil is among the best in the state, and fruit growing extensively and successfully practiced. The climate is well tempered, and the season rare when crops fail." (1)

The valley is about 50 miles long, narrowing to less than a mile wide at its upper end. It is drained by the Napa River, which in earlier days was navigable to Napa City, about 12 miles upstream from Vallejo. The area around Calistoga has numerous natural steam vents, mud baths and mineral springs. Rolling hills and connecting alluvial plains form the valley floor, and the rich soil combined with a moderate climate produce near ideal conditions for the growing of fruit. Today, the valley is known world wide for its vineyards, which are producing some of the finest wines in the world.

Spanish explorers first came to the Napa Valley in 1823, while searching for a location for Mission San Francisco Solano. The Mission was eventually sited in the Sonoma Valley, the valley just west of Napa, and Napa Valley became a large cattle raising area for the Mission.

Americans began to arrive in the Napa Valley during the 1830's, and among them was George Yount, for whom Yountville would later be named. The majority of these Americans were farmers, not merchants such as those who located further south at Monterey. As California passed from Mexican to American rule, Napa City was founded in 1848, and it soon became the principal entry port for the valley. In 1850 passenger and freight service was inaugurated between San Francisco and Napa City via paddlewheel steamer, and the community of Vallejo was founded that same year. Across the Napa River channel from Vallejo was a barren tidal flat called Mare Island. Here Captain David Farragut established the West Coast Naval Repair Base in 1854, an installation that remains the largest such naval base to this day.

The upper valley centered on Calistoga (PO established 1865) began to attract wealthy San Franciscans to the fashionable resorts, which were developed around the mud baths and mineral springs. So popular did the area become, that many bought land on which they built summer homes. This building boom gave rise to a demand for better transportation.

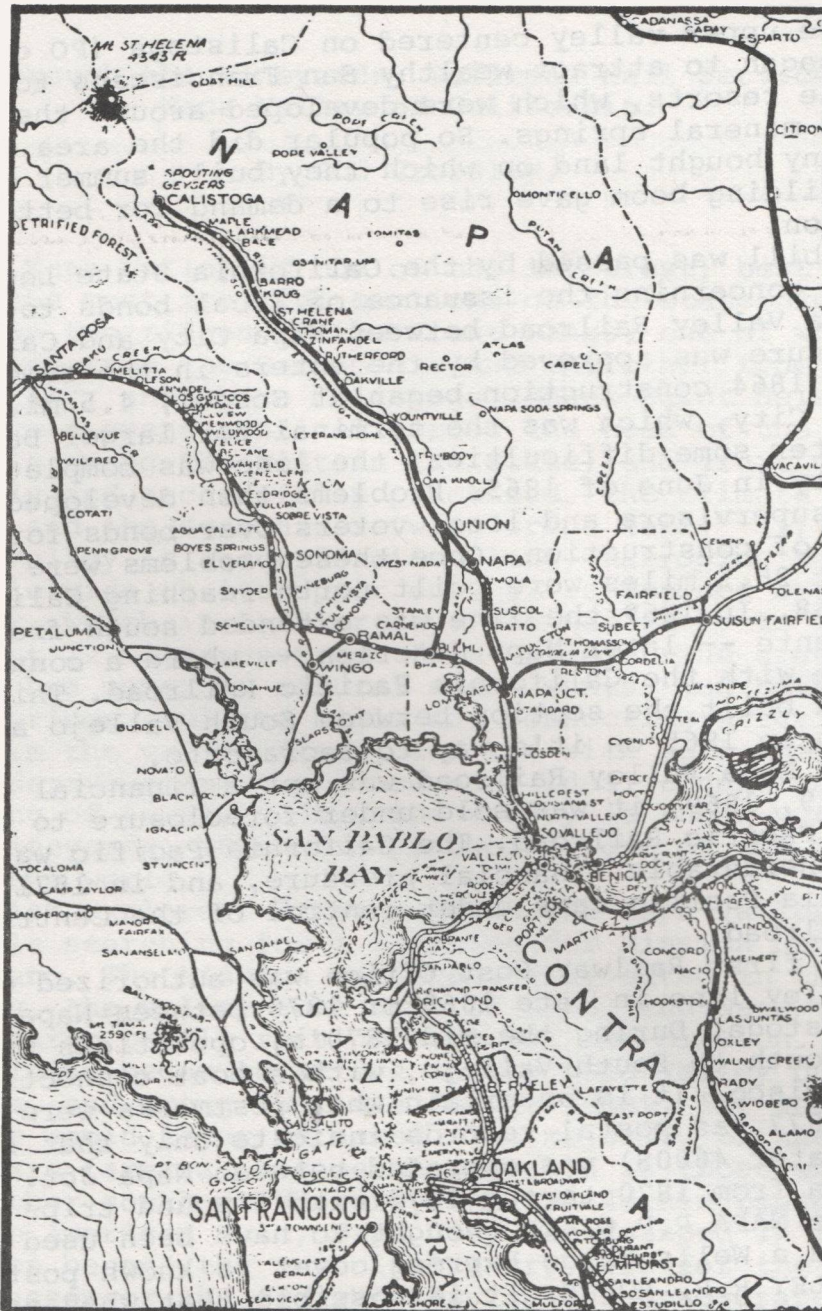
A bill was passed by the California State Legislature in 1864 concerning the issuance of local bonds to construct the Napa Valley Railroad between Napa City and Calistoga. The measure was approved by the voters in the same year.

In 1864 construction began at Soscol, 4.5 miles south of Napa City, which was the terminal for larger Bay steamers. After some difficulties, the line was completed to Napa City in June of 1865. Problems then developed between county supervisors and local voters over bonds for the next section of construction. Once these problems were resolved, the next 26.5 miles were built north reaching Calistoga in June 1868. In 1869 the line was extended south from Soscol to Adelante -- later Napa Junction -- where a connection was made with the California Pacific Railroad. This railroad had built the section between South Vallejo and the junction in 1865 on it's way to Sacramento.

The Napa Valley Railroad was not a financial success. On May 29, 1869, it was sold under foreclosure to the California Pacific Railroad. The California Pacific was itself under considerable financial pressure, and in 1871 the California Pacific came under control of the Central Pacific Railroad.

The first Railway Post Office was authorized over the Napa Valley line in late 1869 or 1870 between Napa Junction and Calistoga. During the mid-1870's, operations were extended south to South Vallejo, with a boat connection to San Francisco. It is uncertain what postmarks were in use before 1877, as postal records indicate only that Route No. 14708 (later 46008) was operated between Napa Jct. and Calistoga from 1870 through 1877 with 6 round trips per week. The NAPA R.P.O. is thought to have been used at this time, and a Wells Fargo Express cover is known postmarked NAPA VALLEY R.R. ROUTE. It is possible that when service was extended to South Vallejo, the CALESTOGA & VAL./AGT. (983-B-1)(2) was used. This would have been in the mid-1870's.

The section between Napa Jct. and Vallejo was part of Route No. 14707 (later 46006) between San Francisco and Sacramento, operated by the California Pacific Railroad. Postal records show 14 round trips per week in 1870, being reduced to 6 per week in 1877. It is assumed that the



Map of Napa Valley showing Southern Pacific and San Francisco, Napa & Calistoga Rwy. Routes.



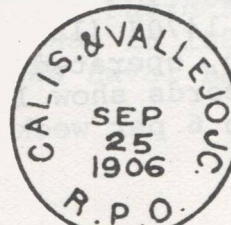
983-C-1



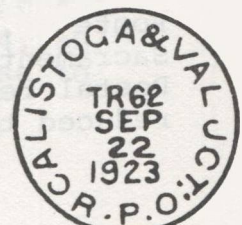
983-B-1



983-E-1



983-F-1



983-G-1

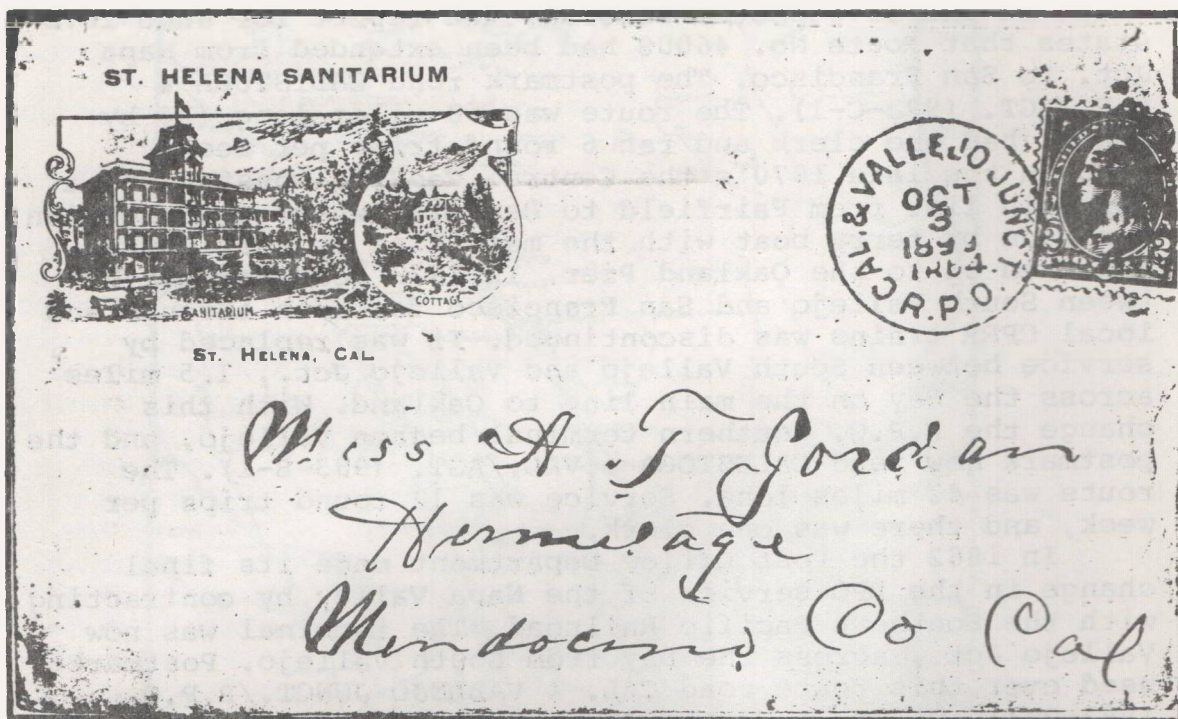
postmark used read SACRAMENTO & SAN FRANCISCO R.P.O., as is shown in the 1878 postal records. The report for June 1878 states that Route No. 46008 had been extended from Napa Jct. to San Francisco. The postmark read CALISTOGA & S.F./AGT. (983-C-1). The route was 68 miles long (24 by boat), had one clerk and ran 6 round trips per week.

In the late 1870's the Central Pacific constructed a new main line from Fairfield to Benicia, where a connection was made by ferry boat with the main line at Port Costa, and then on to the Oakland Pier. In 1879 boat service between South Vallejo and San Francisco for both through and local CPRR trains was discontinued. It was replaced by service between South Vallejo and Vallejo Jct., 1.5 miles across the Bay on the main line to Oakland. With this change the R.P.O. southern terminal became Vallejo, and the postmark now read CALESTOGA & VAL./AGT. (983-B-1). The route was 42 miles long. Service was 12 round trips per week, and there was one clerk.

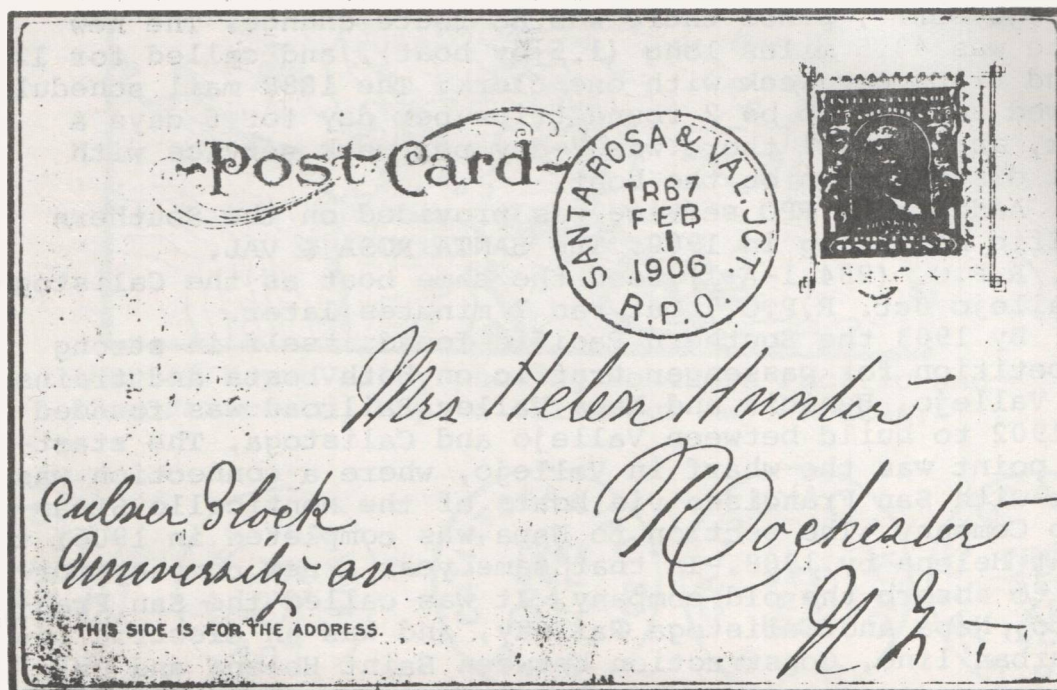
In 1882 the Post Office Department made its final change in the RPO service of the Napa Valley by contracting with the Southern Pacific Railroad. The terminal was now Vallejo Jct., across the Bay from South Vallejo. Postmarks used over this route read CAL. & VALLEJO JUNCT./R.P.O. (983-?-1), CALIS. & VALLEJOJC./R.P.O. (983-F-1) and CALISTOGA & VAL JCT./R.P.O.. In addition, the U.S. TRANSIT MARKINGS CATALOG, Volume 2, illustrates a postmark reading CALISTOGA & VALLEJO/R.P.O. (983-E-1) dated Jul 24 1911. From all indications this should have read "Calistoga & Vallejo Jct.", since there was no route change. The new route was 43.5 miles long (1.5 by boat), and called for 12 round trips per week with one clerk. The 1888 mail schedule showed service to be 2 round trips per day for 6 days a week, and by 1901 there was 7-day per week service with mail distribution on the boat.

Additional RPO service was provided on the Southern Pacific beginning in 1900. The SANTA ROSA & VAL. JCT./R.P.O. (984.1-A-1) used the same boat as the Calistoga & Vallejo Jct. R.P.O., but ran 7 minutes later.

By 1903 the Southern Pacific found itself in strong competition for passenger traffic on both boats and trains. The Vallejo, Benicia and Napa Valley Railroad was founded in 1902 to build between Vallejo and Calistoga. The starting point was the wharf in Vallejo, where a connection was made with San Francisco via boats of the Monticello Steamship Company. The section to Napa was completed in 1905; to Saint Helena by 1908. In that same year a new company formed to absorb the old company. It was called the San Francisco, Napa and Calistoga Railway, and was an electric interurban line. Construction between Saint Helena and Cal-



Illustrated cover from the St. Helena Sanitarium postmarked CAL. & VALLEJO JUNCT./R.P.O. (983-?-1), October 3, 1899.



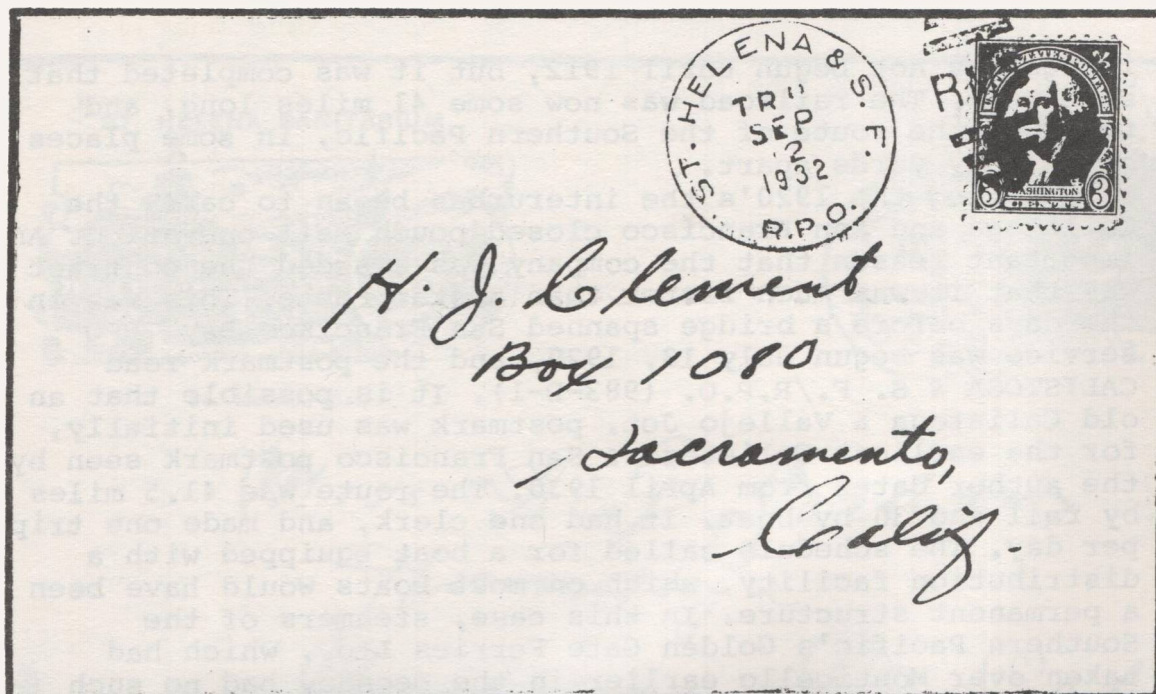
Postcard postmarked SANTA ROSA & VAL. JCT./R.P.O. (984.1-A-1), February 1, 1906.

istoga was not begun until 1912, but it was completed that same year. The railroad was now some 41 miles long, and followed the route of the Southern Pacific, in some places being only yards apart.

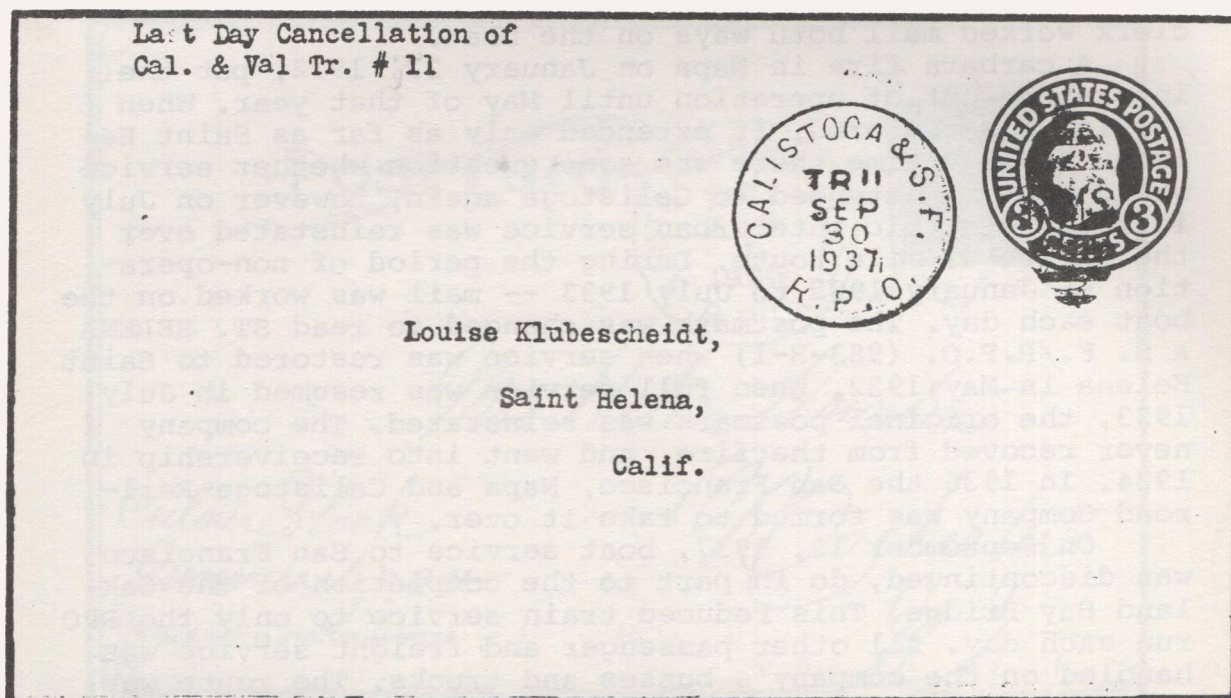
During the 1920's the interurban began to carry the Calistoga and San Francisco closed pouch mail operation. An important reason that the company was awarded the contract was that it was much faster than a star route. This was in the days before a bridge spanned San Francisco Bay. RPO service was begun July 13, 1929, and the postmark read CALISTOGA & S. F./R.P.O. (983-D-1). It is possible that an old Calistoga & Vallejo Jct. postmark was used initially, for the earliest Calistoga & San Francisco postmark seen by the author dates from April 1930. The route was 41.5 miles by rail and 30 by boat. It had one clerk, and made one trip per day. The schedule called for a boat equipped with a distribution facility, which on most boats would have been a permanent structure. In this case, steamers of the Southern Pacific's Golden Gate Ferries Ltd., which had taken over Monticello earlier in the decade, had no such permanent facilities. The problem was solved by using a 15-foot portable apartment mounted on a baggage truck. The truck was loaded each morning in San Francisco, and unloaded at Vallejo where it remained all day on the wharf while the RPO was operating on the train. When the interurban returned to Vallejo in the evening, the apartment was reloaded on the boat for the return to San Francisco. The clerk worked mail both ways on the boat.

A carbarn fire in Napa on January 22, 1932, put the interurban out of operation until May of that year. When service was restored, it extended only as far as Saint Helena. At that time there was some question whether service would ever be extended to Calistoga again, however on July 1, 1933, electric interurban service was reinstated over the entire 41-mile route. During the period of non-operation -- January 1932 to July 1933 -- mail was worked on the boat each day. The postmark was changed to read ST. HELENA & S. F./R.P.O. (983-H-1) when service was restored to Saint Helena in May 1932. When full service was resumed in July 1933, the original postmark was reinstated. The company never recovered from the fire, and went into receivership in 1934. In 1936 the San Francisco, Napa and Calistoga Railroad Company was formed to take it over.

On September 12, 1937, boat service to San Francisco was discontinued, do in part to the completion of the Oakland Bay Bridge. This reduced train service to only the RPO run each day. All other passenger and freight service was handled on the company's busses and trucks. The route was modified to Calistoga and Vallejo, and mail for the RPO now moved via Southern Pacific train to Crockett, where it was



Cover postmarked ST. HELENA & S. F./R.P.O. (983-H-1), September 2, 1932.



Philatelic cover postmarked last day CALISTOGA & S. F./R.P.O. (983-D-1), September 30, 1937.

placed on board a Greyhound bus for movement to Vallejo and the train. This operational change was to last only 17 days, for on September 30, 1937, the railroad ran its last passenger train. The postmark still read CALISTOGA & S. F./R.P.O.

On October 1, 1937, there was no passenger train operation in the Napa Valley for the first time in 72 years. The mail was now handled via a star route operated by B.D. Carpenter, or on the closed pouch Calistoga and Crockett. This closed pouch was carried on the busses and trucks of the interurban company.

-
- (1) THE PACIFIC TOURIST, page 316.
 - (2) Numbers used refer to the U.S. TRANSIT MARKINGS CATALOG numbers.

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★CALISTOGA & VALLEJO R. P. O.

San Francisco and Napa Valley R. R. (Electric). Rt. 308112. Calistago to North Vallejo W'arf (no) 41.69 m's. (Dist. 3.)

O J	Q	11a	Sept 18, 1937	4a	O J T J
7 30	4 35	lv.....	Calistoga, Cal.	ar 11 05	10 00
7 45	4 55	St. Helena, Cal.	10-45	9 35
11 40	8 25	5 40	Napa, Cal.	10 00	8 00 7 40
12 20	8 55	6 15	ar.....lv. 9 25	7 00	7 05
(N. Vallejo W'arf)					

*Bus Service. Class A. (7)Truck Service 15'
 (1)Calistoga to Napa (j); Napa to Vallejo (a).

TRAIN 4.

Eldridge, Calif.j Napa Santa Rosa, Calif.a Napa
 Glen Ellen, Calif.j Napa Sonoma, Calif.j Napa

TRAIN 11.

Og & S. F. WD 10.....a Vallejo } Port. & S. F. SD 20.....a Vallejo
 via Sacto. via Martinez
 Og & S. F. WD 210.....b Vallejo } S. F. & L. A. 26.....a Vallejo
 via Sacto. via Crockett.
 (Og & S. F. WD 21.....a Vallejo
 via Crockett.

The Final Timetable.

THE POSTMARKS OF JARILLA, NEW MEXICO

By Thomas K. Todsén

Jarilla was a small mining community in the foothills of the Jarilla Mountains in southwestern Otero County, New Mexico. It sprang up after gold nuggets were found in the arroyos and washes of the mountains in the 1890's. The post office was authorized on 17 March 1899, with Harry S. Church as postmaster. He was followed on 29 October 1900, by Edwin Kurmeier, who was replaced by Franklyne B. Schermerhorn on 23 February 1901. Mrs. Schermerhorn continued in the position after the name of the office was changed to Brice effective 3 May 1904.

A correspondence was found which covered most of the period of the existence of the post office under the name Jarilla. The earliest letter was from El Paso to Jarilla, and was postmarked El Paso on 13 July 1899. Neither it nor six others to Jarilla postmarked as late as 26 September 1899 show any receiving markings. Next comes a cover postmarked in El Paso on 28 September 1899. It is backstamped the same date with the El Paso & Northeastern Railway Company's Jarilla station agent stamp. (Figure 1) Similar markings appear as backstamps on covers with dates of 6 October and 10 October. Beginning on 11 October, all receiving marks are the Jarilla Type 1 (Figure 2) as illustrated in Doc Dike's latest edition of "THE NEW MEXICO TERRITORIAL POSTMARK CATALOG." As Doc reports, the earliest known use of a Jarilla Type 1 postmark as a dispatching postmark is 4 December 1899, and the latest is 20 May 1904, 17 days after the name of the office became Brice.

From these data we should expect the following: first, letters prior to 27 September 1899 (i.e., while no backstamp was used on incoming mail) should bear a manuscript cancel; second, letters from 27 or 28 September to 10 October probably will show the E.P. & N.E. Ry. agent marking; and third, letters from 11 October onward should have the Type 1 postmark.



