# La Posta: A Journal of American Postal History

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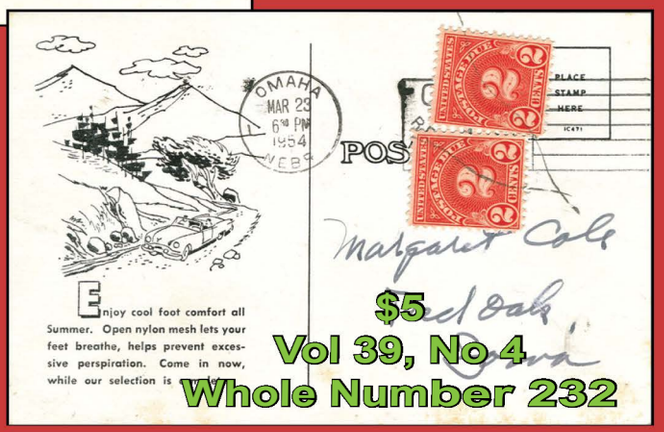

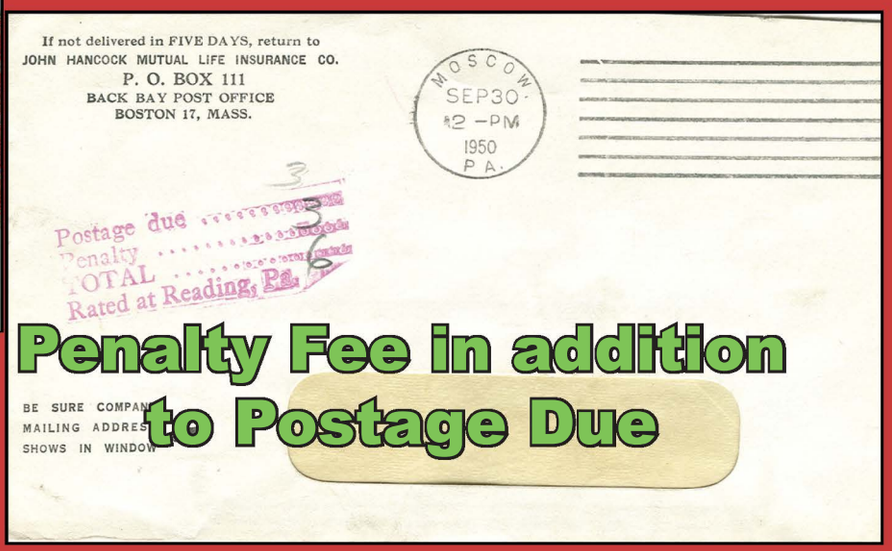


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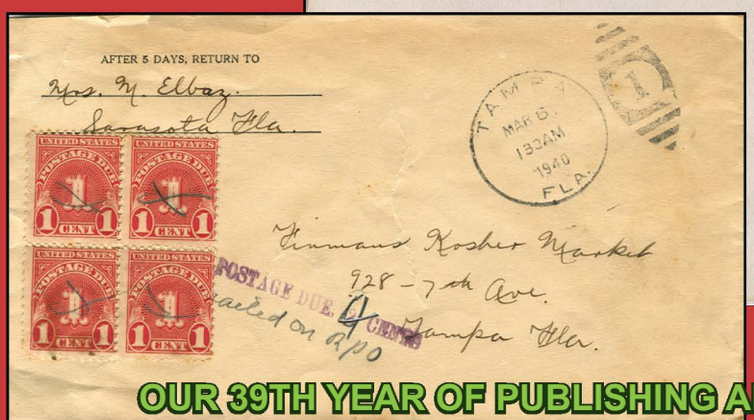


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*COVER: Our cover image illustrates a small selection of late 20th century postage due covers showing penalty fees in addition to the postage due. It is intended to call attention to Rich Martorelli's latest article discussing the subject of Penalty Fees in Addition to Postage Due.*

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# Harold E. Richow (1929-2008)

*Harold Richow with Cath Clark and Wilma Richow on our 2003 visit to Harold and Wilma's Sun City, CA, home in 2003.*

Our hobby lost another of its scholars and leading advocates. Harold E. Richow, originally of Racine, Wisconsin, but more recently a resident of Sun City, California, passed away May 21, 2008. Harold is survived by his wife Wilma, his former wife Rosemary, seven children, four step-children, 25 grandchildren and 18 great-grandchildren.

Harold was a life long postal history enthusiast, and will probably be most remembered in our hobby for his pioneering *Encyclopedia of R.F.D. Cancels*, originally published in 1982. He was an avid collector, and once he felt he had taken a subject to its logical conclusion, he would change course in order to pursue another new challenge. Such was the case with RFD cancels. After releasing his initial *Encyclopedia*, Harold became widely known as "Mr. RFD Cancel" and used his broad network of contacts nationwide to collect more data on the subject. Harold shared his new details in *La Posta* through the publication of a lengthy series of updates during the mid-80s and early 90s. In 1995 he published a revised and expanded second edition of the original work.

Once the new book was released, Harold surprised many in the postal history community by selling his entire RFD collection and turning his attention to a series of new subjects that included US military postal history of WWI and WWII, US POW mail, Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) mail and Fraternal Organization (Lodge) mail. Throughout his later years he built major collections in each of these specialties.

It has been my privilege to know and work with Harold in our hobby for over four decades. He was always a good friend who was eager to share advice and information. He had a warm friendly demeanor, a broad smile and high praise for virtually all those he had come in contact with during his many years in postal history. I know that I speak for many, when I say that we will all miss Harold's presence, his wisdom and his guidance in our hobby.

Richard W. Helbock

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# Penalty Fee in Addition to Postage Due

**By Richard D. Martorelli**

Whatever it was that attracted us to philately and postal history, that first collection always keeps a special place in our memory and holdings. For me, it is postage due stamps and usages; they were different, mostly uncommonly found, and had some story behind them. Even now, almost 40 years later, I still enjoy them and learn new things about their usage and application.

One of the more unusual, and probable the shortest lived, postage due regulations came into place in 1958. For one month, in addition to any deficient postage, a penalty of 5 cents was levied on all underpaid mail. After reviewing the relevant postal bulletins and laws, I still do not know why is has been described as "highly controversial" by Beecher and Wawrukiewicz. It should have been considered as no different as any special service for which an extra fee was charged. Yes, it was slightly different from special delivery or certified mail in that the postal patron did not "receive" a visible service. Instead, it was more akin to the Dead Letter Fee (1920-1985) in that the Post Office was changing for the cost of the added handling. The following narrative tells and illustrates how the system of penalties for underpaid mail occurred.

In the US postal history, it was not until 1855 that prepayment of letters by the sender was made compulsory. Despite its potentially misleading name, the Collect on Delivery (COD) system, started in 1913 in association with parcel post and insurances services, is for the payment of merchandise, not postal services. In 1863, the postage rates for letters were established based only on weight, as opposed to the previous system of distance and weight. This remains in effect today, with the exceptions of the Express Mail and parcel post categories, which do still charge based on the combination of pounds and miles.

The first regulations about the handling of short paid mail in the US stamp era were included in the 1866 Postal Laws and Regulations. Instructions were given that letters not prepaid at least one rate (3c per ½ ounce for regular 1st class or 2c per ½ ounce for local letters) should be marked "Held For Postage", and then sent to the Dead Letter Office in a week if the short paid postage was not received. Further instructions were provided in the Act of June 8, 1872, including that any mail that was stamped with at least one full rate would be delivered to its destination. If there were postage due for extra weight, only the amount of the postage deficiency would be collected from the addressee. The two covers in *figure 1*, a stamped letter from 1866 and a postal stationary envelope front from

***Figure 1*** *Examples of postage due collection according to regulations from the 1866 and 1872 laws. Both covers were prepaid with at least one full rate and the amount due for the next rate was marked on the front to be collected at the destination.*

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*May 29, 2008*

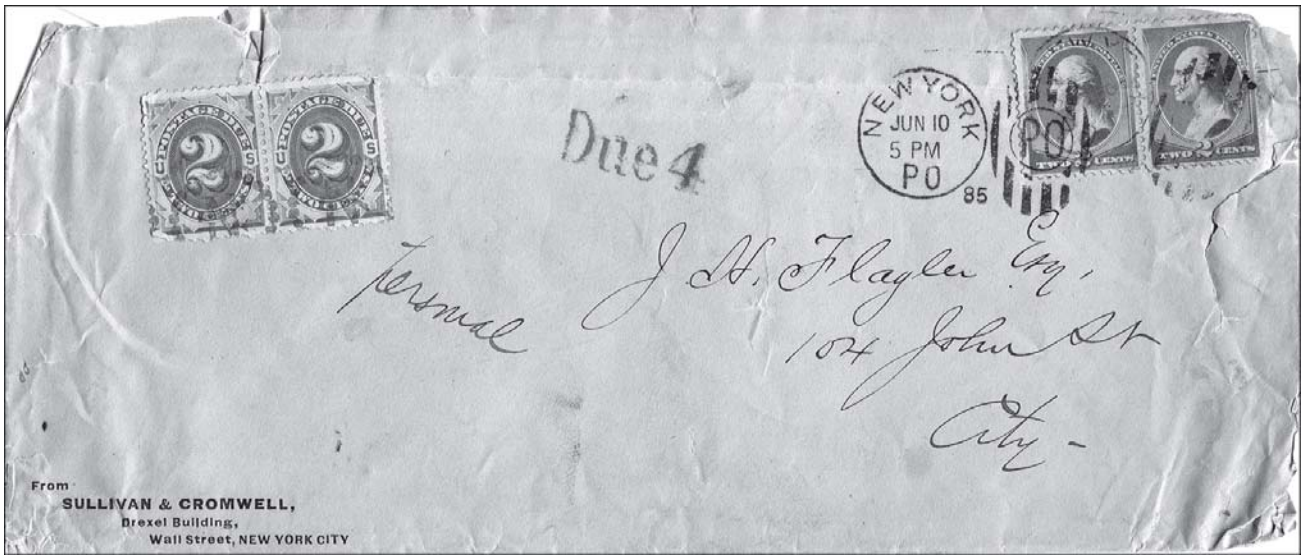


***Figure 2*** *Postage due markings from June 1885, just before the weight step increased from ½ to 1 ounce. The deficient postage was collected by use of two of the first issue Postage Due stamps, canceled with "New York Pearls".*

1873, illustrate the regulation from the 1866 and 1872 laws. Both covers were prepaid with at least one full rate; the deficiency for the next rate was marked on the front and then collected at the destination.

Until July 1885, letter postage was measured by the half-ounce. The cover in *figure 2* from June 1885 shows a prepayment for two rates (2c per ½ oz times 2 = $0.04) and short payment of $0.04 for the next two rates on a local New York City cover. At this time, the rates were the same for regular 1st class letter service as for 1st class carrier-PO local service. The deficient postage was collected by use of two of the first issue Postage Due stamps, issued in 1879. They were canceled before being used with a series of pearl-shaped filled dots encircling "NY" and are referred to as "New York Pearls" and are among the earliest US precancels. While there is not a definite starting date, sometime between the late 1870s and the mid-1880's, the practice began in a few scattered post offices, based on the finding of a number of printed precanceled stamps that have been identified by city of origin. Most precancelation was accomplished by simply applying inked lines or some other geometric pattern upon stamps while they were still in sheets or by drawing an inked brush across rows of stamps; by use of a pen and ruler. Sometime around 1898 or 1899, more standardized patterns in which the city and state of origin were spelled out began to appear as replacements for the random pattern of bars and lines seen on early issues, and postal regulations for use were issued in this same time period.

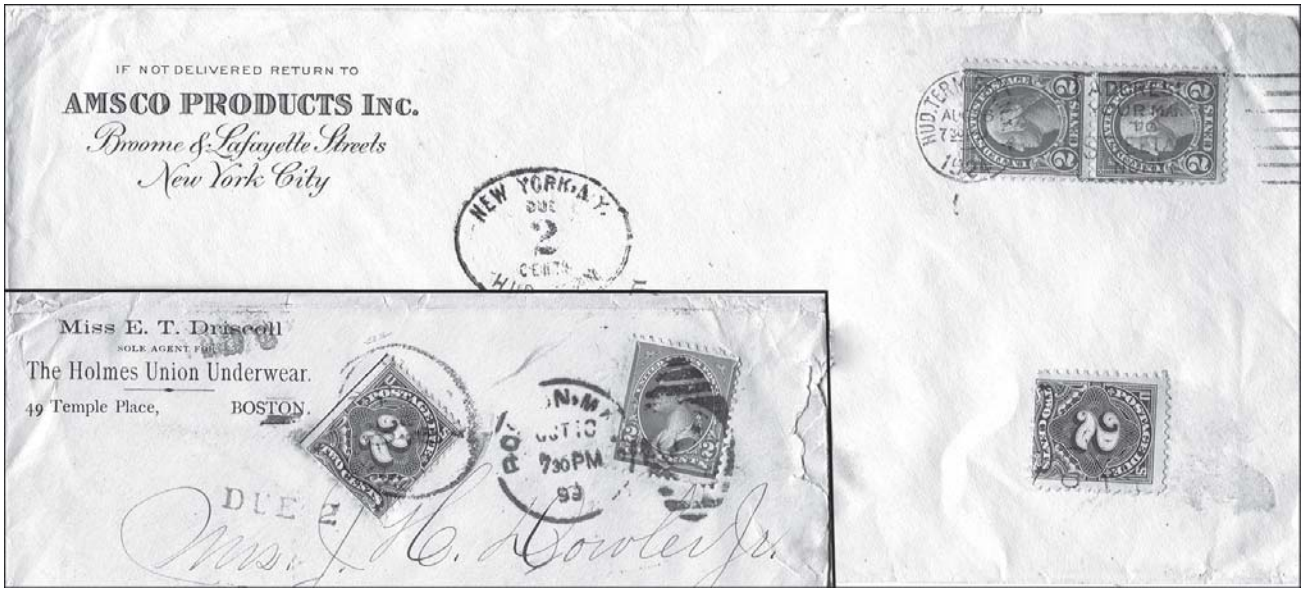


***Figure 3*** *A pair of covers with postage due for multiple ounces from the 56-year period of 1872-1928.*

***Figure 4*** *Delivery of the mail and the collection of a postage underpayment from the addressee when the basic letter or postcard rate was shortpaid. Note in particular the bisected 2c postage due stamp paying the additional 1 cent 1917-1918 War Tax postage.*

The regulations and instructions of the1872 law continued to be implemented throughout the 56-year period of 1872-1928, and numerous examples of their application can be found. *Figure 3* illustrates two examples of letters with postage due for multiple ounces. This practice would be changed with the creation of new regulations in July 1928, discussed below. *Figure 4* shows delivery of the mail and the collection of a postage underpayment from the addresses when the basic letter or postcard rate was shortpaid. The 2 cents postal stationary envelope illustrated was mailed in October 1918. This was during the 1917-1919 "War Tax" postage period when 1st class domestic mail rates were increased by one penny, from 2 cents to 3 cents per ounce for letters and 1 cent to 2 cents for postal/ post cards. The 1 cent postage due for this letter from Seattle, WA to Los Angeles, CA appears to have been collected by the use of a bisected 2 cents Los Angeles-precanceled postage due stamp, accompanied by a faded straight line "Postage Due 1 cents" handstamp. Neither the handstamp nor any other marking tie the postage due stamp to the envelope, so there is no absolute way of confirming if this is a true modern bisect use. The post card illustrated was mailed in August 1927. This was during the 1925-1928 period when Congress decided that they could increase revenue for postal salaries by charging one cent to mail government postal cards but two cents to mail private mailing cards or picture post cards. In this case, the post card was mailed with only one-cent payment, but the deficiency was paid for by the addressee when delivered and noted by a "ladder" precanceled postage due stamp.

As stated above, the 1866 *Postal Laws and Regulations*, described procedures for unpaid or short paid mail in which the mail matter was marked "Held for Postage". Based on updated procedures circulated in the 1886, either the sender (if known) or the addressee would be contacted by an official mail postcard and requested to provide the necessary postage to enable the delivery of the mail. One of the more fascinating side notes to this type of cover or card is the speed of communication and response. The top item in *figure 5* is a 1902 cover front mailed in Philadelphia, PA on Tuesday January 7 using a $0.01 pale blue "Battleship" revenue as partial postage and placed to cover return address. The illegal usage was caught and the cover was marked "HELD FOR/ POSTAGE". The local addressee (because the sender's return address was covered over) was requested to provide the additional $0.01 postage, which was supplied and the envelope was remailed the next day, January 8. Okay, with only a distance of 20 miles, and a developed system of train and streetcar RPOs, this may not seem to be an exceptionally quick turnaround.

Let us consider the bottom item, which is a postcard mailed in 1907 from Norfolk, VA to Philadelphia, PA, a distance of 275 miles. It is a "divided back" card, probably manufactured abroad; in the United States, it was not until March 1, 1907 that the address side of a post card could be used for writing a message. Prior to that, as with this card, such items were considered "letters" and therefore liable to the higher 1st class rate of $0.02 per ounce. This card had initially been mailed on Monday February 4, but since it was prepaid only

***Figure 5*** *Two examples of the "HELD FOR/ POSTAGE" auxiliary mark. Both reflect speedy delivery of the mail and response, with the postcard demonstrating a message and reply, completing a 550 mile round trip in only four days.*

1c, it was marked "HELD FOR POSTAGE". From auxiliary marks, the notice for additional postage was mailed to the addressee on Wednesday February 6. The supplemental postage was received; the card was marked with a "This is the mail/letter/package" handstamp and was remailed on Friday February 8. This was a total elapsed time of four days for the round trip communication. Pretty impressive!

The card itself is also interesting. Based on written messages, it was sent from US Navy sailor, who noted, "No one allowed ashore. I have not seen a girl since Philly". The sailor's ship was an early arrival of the fleet that assembled for the upcoming Jamestown Exposition, held from April 26 to December 1, 1907, at Sewell's Point on Hampton Roads, near Norfolk, Virginia. The event commemorated the 300th anniversary of the founding of Jamestown in the Virginia Colony, the first permanent English settlement in the present United States. The fleet included sixteen battleships, five cruisers, and six destroyers, and they remained in Hampton Roads after the exposition closed. It was from this place that President Theodore Roosevelt sent out the Great White Fleet to tour the globe as evidence of the nation's military might. The voyage from December 16 1907 to February 22 1909, involved 14,000 sailors traveling 43,000 miles and making twenty port calls on six continents. Starting in 1917, a naval base was created on the exposition site, known as Naval Station Norfolk. Also called the Norfolk Navy Base, it occupies about 4,300 acres (17 km²) of Hampton Roads real estate in a peninsula known as Sewell's Point. It is the world's largest Naval Station; in fact, based on supported military population, it is the largest naval installation/ base in the world, with 75 ships and 134 aircraft home ported here. Some of the buildings built by various US states as exposition display spaces which were taken over by the Navy remain in current use primarily as admirals' quarters.

The system for collecting postage due changed on July 1, 1928. The regulations now read that a letter, which was partially paid, should be forwarded and charged the shortpaid postage "<u>if only first rate short paid</u>". If, however, "<u>short paid more than one rate</u>", then a an additional penalty of 1 cent for each short paid rate was to be collected upon delivery, in addition to the deficient postage. There was no change in the procedures for unpaid 1st class letters held for postage or completely unpaid mail inadvertently reaching its destination. It was specifically noted, however, that this new penalty did not apply to airmail. This was consistent with 1925 directions that said if an airmail letter bore less than $0.08 postage (then the minimum), it should be marked for the deficiency and forwarded. The required minimum prepayment for acceptance for airmail service changed as the basic airmail rates changed during the next 10 years. When the airmail letter arrived at its destination, only the deficiency, and no penalty, was to be collected from the addressee. *Figure 6* shows three covers illustrating these practices. The small airmail PSE envelope was mailed in 1933, with $0.08 postage paying for the 1st ounce. The letter actually weighed 2 ounces, and so was marked and charged $0.13 for the 2nd ounce. The period August 1928 thru June 1934 was unique in US postal history. At least since the introduction of stamps in 1847, it was the only time in which the cost of a 2nd ounce of mail exceeded the cost of the 1st ounce.

***Figure 6*** *The USPOD collected only the deficiency and no penalty when an airmail letter was shortpaid. This regulation came into effect in 1925, and was adhered to all thru the 1928-1958 penalty period. Note the small airmail PSE envelope mailed in 1933, with $0.08 postage, and charged $0.13 postage due for the 2nd ounce. From August 1928 thru June 1934, it was the only time when a 2nd ounce of mail exceeded the cost of the 1st ounce.*

One common speculation about the "higher rates for higher weights" is that the Post Office did not want to encourage the frequent and routine airmailing of packages at this early stage of the development of the airmail system. After all, in 1928 it had only been 10 years since the first Jenny flights from New York to Washington. If so, why was the maximum letter weight of 50 pounds, established in 1924, increased to 70 pounds in 1928? This weight limit for airmail matter was not changed again until 1948, when mail matter over 8 ounces was separately categorized and rated as Air Parcel Post. The combination of air transport system advances of the WWII period and widespread locations of the US Post Office or military post offices for use by government and armed forces personnel around the world created a demand for this less expensive but timely service class. The middle cover was mailed in New Mexico in 1952, and was prepaid for 2 ounces and also shortpaid for the same weight, as evidenced by the $0.12 in postage due stamps (1949-1958, 6c/oz times 2 ounces). Note that, per the regulations, only the deficient postage was collected from the addressee even though it was "short paid more than one rate". Finally, the bottom cover illustrates the "required minimum prepayment" regulation. This is a $0.03 PSE that was mailed from Los Angeles CA to Philadelphia, PA in February 1934, approximately four months before the airmail rate decreased from 8c/1st and 13c >1oz to 6c/all ounces. Since the letter was not franked with the minimum $0.08, it was retuned to the sender

***Figure 7*** *Several 1st class items under the 1928 regulation which are short paid for only one rate, and so no penalty was assessed. This includes a 1933 letter trying to use a PSE cutout to pay part of the postage, which was rejected.*

for the additional $0.05. It appears that the sender actually paid the short postage twice, once for the postage due stamp and again for the additional stamps that were added and cancelled the next day when the letter resumed its journey.

*Figure 7* shows several 1st class items that are short paid for only one rate, and no penalty was assessed. This includes a 1933 business envelope on which the 1st oz was paid with a Postal Stationary Envelope cut-out. The cutout was rejected, notice was sent to the addressee and replacement postage obtained, and the letter was delivered. On arrival, the addressee was charged an additional $0.03 for postage due for a 2nd ounce. The other letter is from 1939, where the letter was marked at the destination as being short paid, and the postage due was collected from the addressee using a $0.03 Prexie.

But what happened when the basic rate of postage was unpaid? The 1928 regulations said that if the item was short postage for only one rate, then the charge levied would be 2c or the deficient postage. *Figure 8* shows three of these items where the initial rate was short paid. The first, from 1931, appears to have been a 3rd class local letter and it appears to have been assessed at the local letter carrier PO rate of $0.02, and so had only the deficiency of $0.01 charged. The next item, postmarked in 1949 from Atlantic City, from its size and addressee, appears to have carried a greeting card. It looks as if the sender was attempting to use the local letter non-carrier PO rate of 1c. The Post Office, on the other hand, decided that it should be rated at the 3rd class unsealed printed matter rate of 2c, and again only charged the deficiency of $0.01 postage.

Now let us review examples of the imposition of the 1928 penalty. As noted above, it was assessed only when more than one rate beyond the envelope franking was

***Figure 8*** *Three items where the initial rate was short paid. Under the 1928 regulations, the charge levied would be 2c or the deficient postage, but the 1 cent per shortpaid rate penalty would not apply.*

***Figure 9*** *Several covers that were assessed the penalty applied when more than one rate beyond the envelope franking was shortpaid. The penalty was 1 cent for each rate that was underpaid. This included matter that was re-rated if the postal class was changed because of contents or closed against inspection.*

shortpaid. *Figure 9* illustrates several examples. The first is a 1935 cover mailed in Philadelphia, prepaid $0.06 for 2 ounces, but actually weighing 4 ounces. The POD assessed $0.06 for the deficient postage and a penalty of $0.01 for each of the two shortpaid ounces, for a total amount due and collected of $0.08. The next 1st class cover was mailed in 1943 with $0.05 postage, for no obvious reason related to multiples of rates. The letter weighed 4 ounces, and so was deficient $0.07 in postage (4 ounces at 3c each = $0.12). Having only been prepaid completely for one rate, this cover was noted shortpaid for three rates, and charged the penalty of $0.01/rate for each of those three short rates. The last example is an attempted mailing of a 3rd class cover or package sent from Spokane, WA in 1940. It was franked with a $0.04½ Prexie to pay for six ounces at the rate of 1½c per 2-ounces. The package must have been sealed and not open for inspection by the POD. Accordingly, they rated it as 1st class mail, and up charged. To start, the postage went from $0.04½ to $0.18, for postage due of $0.13½. This represented a shortfall of five rate steps at $0.03 rate per ounce, for a total of $0.05 penalty. As indicated by the hand stamped marking and the postage due stamps, the POD collected $0.19 when delivered to the addressee.

In the summer of 1958, a great number of postal rates changed, including rates for surface 1st class letter and post/postal cards, airmail letters and post/postal cards, single piece 2nd and 3rd class mailings, the 4th class special rate for books, the Dead Letter Office (DLO) fee and a new 5 cents penalty fee for any insufficiently prepaid mail matter of any class. Of those listed above, all but the last two changes became effective August 1, 1958. The last two, both dealing with the "back office" handling of mail, were effective July 1, 1958.

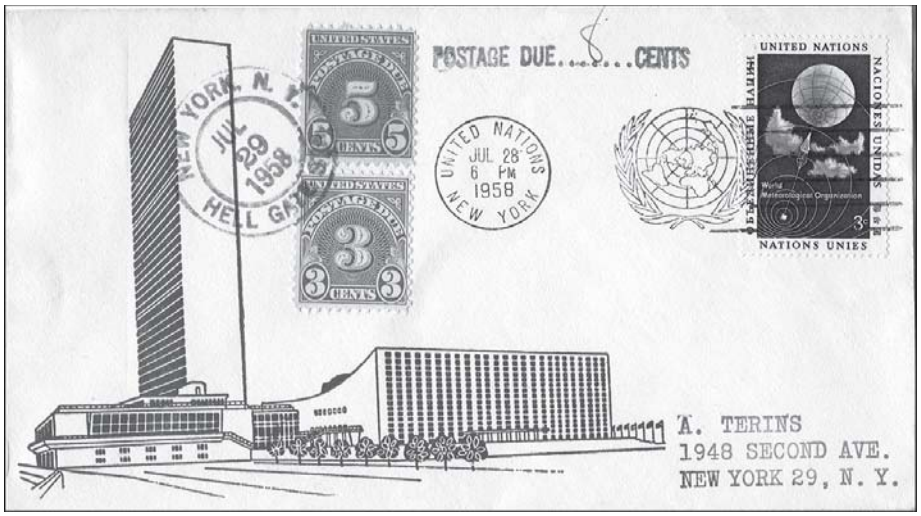


***Figure 10*** *One usage of the new July 1958 penalty that is probably philatelic, based on the origin, the stamp selection, the envelope design, and the use of a rubberstamped address.*

There was no controversy about the DLO fee, versions of which remained in effect until 1985. As noted above, it has been reported that there was consternation and controversy about the postage due penalty fee, as it remained in effect for only 1 month before being suspended beginning August 1, 1958. The only comment I have found is in the Postal Bulletin #20095, dated July 17,1958. This publication states "Beginning August 1, 1958 and continuing through October 31, 1958, the 5-cent shortpaid charge…is suspended…. Suspension of the 5-cent charge for this period is for the purpose of giving mailers time to become familiar with the new postage rates effective August 1, 1958."

Perhaps commercial mailers (utility companies, etc) lobbied for the reversal of the fee. For whatever reason, the POD never again attempted to collect it. It has been reported elsewhere that this penalty was repealed in September 1960, but the actual language of this law (*Public Law 86-682, 74 Stat 659*) makes no direct reference to it. The law just incorporated a number of prior individual laws into Title 39 of the US Code, "The Postal Service". With such a brief time of existence, there are

***Figure 11*** *A usage of the new July 1958 penalty that is probably authentic. It is a private advertising post card for high-end boxed beauty soap, sent locally to a hotel and dated on a Saturday. It could be an advertising/sales promotion follow-up, possibly after a shopping trip in a large department store.*

few examples of the proper application of this fee. *Figure 10* shows one usage that is likely philatelic and *figure 11* shows another that is probably authentic.

First, the July 28 1958 UN cover is probably philatelic. It was mailed near end of the 3 cents 1st class rate period; as noted above, rates changed to 4c on August 1. In addition to the date, the use of a stamp issued 18 months beforehand, the envelope design, and the presence of a rubberstamped address make it seem likely that this was a philatelic creation. Although marked "Postage Due 8 cents", presumably for $0.03 postage for a 2nd ounce and the $0.05 penalty fee, the undamaged condition of the envelope makes it seem unlikely that this envelope actually carried the extra weight. Lastly, it does not seem likely that UN postage on a letter mailed from the UN headquarters to a local NY address would not be accepted. By way of comparison, look at the August 1958 UN cover shown in *figure 12*.

Now, by way of contrast, examine *figure 11*, showing the front and back of an advertising post card for high-end boxed beauty soap. It is addressed to a woman at a local hotel; while the "City" is not explicitly identified; it is most likely located in Texas. From the late 1930's, a businessman named Jack White owned three hotels, one each in Dallas, San Antonio and Corpus Christi, and operated them under the name of the White Plaza Hotel. The handwriting on the front of the card appears to match the signature on back. In checking a calendar, the date marked by a straight-line hand stamp on the front was a Saturday. My theory is that the addressee was in town on holiday, went shopping on Saturday, and spoke with a saleswoman at the toiletries/perfume counter in a large department store. After the addressee left, the saleswoman followed up their conversation with an advertising/sales promotion postcard, possible receiving a commission on the sales of the item. The private post card was placed in the mailed inadvertently without postage, was received by post office and assessed 2 cents for the deficient postcard rate and the 5 cents penalty fee before being delivered. As the back of the postcard was not used to place an order, we may speculate that the addressee may have refused delivery of the postcard because of the $0.07 postage due, or she may simply have not been interested in the product. Whichever was the case, this usage of the short-lived July 1958 penalty seems authentic.

After the suspension of the application of the penalty in August 1958, it appears that the pre-July 1958 rules again were effective. The UN $0.03 PSE shown in Figure 12 was mailed on August 29 from UN head-

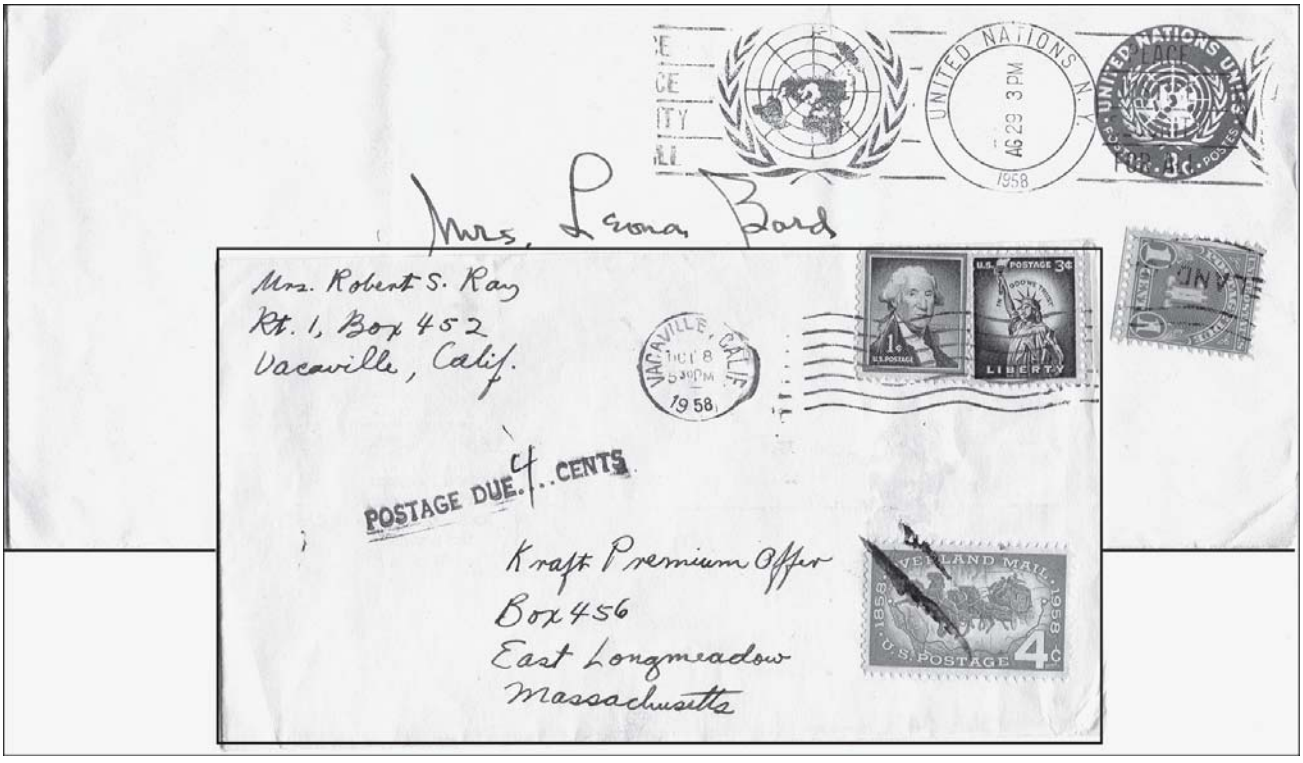


***Figure 12*** *Two covers demonstrating new regulations that were issued in October 1958. All shortpaid mail of any class was to be marked for the amount shortpaid and delivered to the addressee upon payment of the postage due. Note use of a recent commemorative stamp instead of a postage due stamp or a meter strip on the bottom cover.*

quarters in New York. As the US 1st class letter rate has increased to 4 cents on August 1, this envelope was properly assessed $0.01 for shortpaid postage, and only this amount was collected at the letter's destination. Effective October 8, 1958, new regulations were issued that stated that mail of any class sent without any postage or insufficient postage was to be marked for the amount shortpaid and delivered to the addressee upon payment of the postage due. The bottom cover of *figure 12*, mailed on October 8, 1958, illustrates this regulation. This 1st class cover weighed 2 ounces (from the destination address, it probably contained box-tops or some type of cardboard box panel) but only 1-ounce/ $0.04 was prepaid. The envelope was assessed $0.04 for the 2nd ounce and this was collected, as occasionally seen, by using a recent commemorative stamp instead of postage due stamp or a meter strip.

We'll close this discussion of postage due penalties with a final citation of the postal rules from 1974. In that year, postal clerks were advised that mail of any class received without postage should be marked "Returned for Postage" and sent back to the sender immediately and without any effort towards delivery to the addressee. But what happens if the sender is unknown, as in *figure 13*? This item from 1998 could have been forwarded to delivery or sent to the Dead Letter Office (DLO). There it would have been opened and examined to try to determine the sender, who would have been charged the unpaid postage due as well as the applicable DLO return fee (eliminated after February 1985). In this case, the USPS forwarded the item and collected the postage due from the addressee.

"History" is defined in the Merriam-Webster dictionary as a chronological record of events often including an explanation of their causes, being derived from the Greek word "knowing" and as having "tale" or "story" as synonyms. Every time I work with my collection, I touch a part of that past record of events, learn more about their tales, and make my own contribution to history through conservation and stewardship, research and writing. And I have a heck of a good time doing it!

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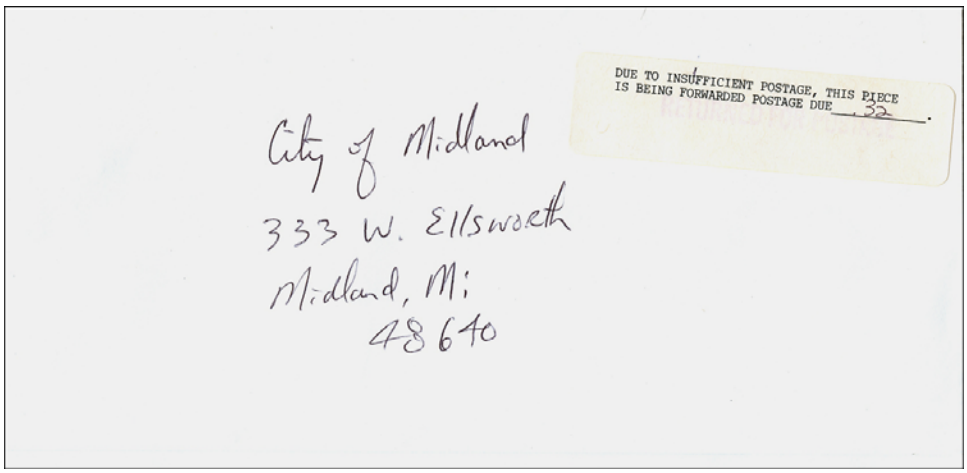


***Figure 13*** *The current treatment of shortpaid mail, based on 1974 regulations. Matter without postage is "Returned for Postage" to the sender immediately. If the sender is unknown, the item can be forwarded for delivery or sent to the Dead Letter Office (DLO).*

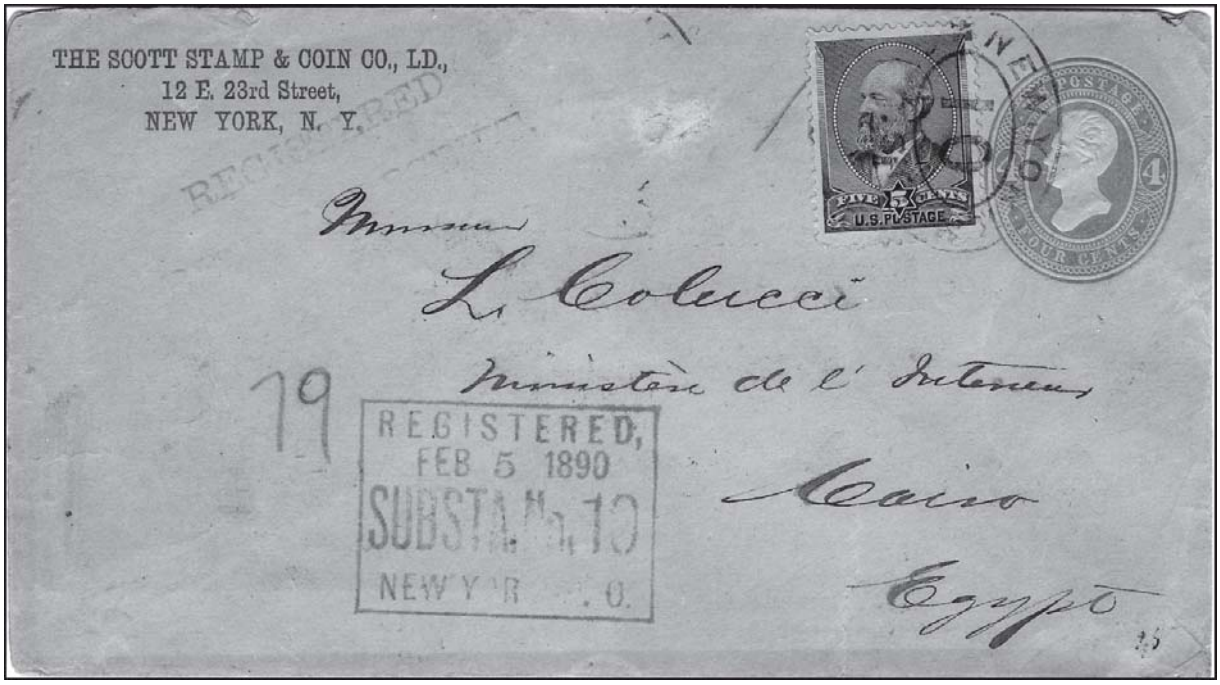


***Figure 1*** *The earliest reported sub-station postal marking is from New York Sub-Station No. 10, dated February 5, 1890, and addressed to Egypt. Unfortunately, a stamp has been removed.*

# New York City's Early Numbered Postal Sub-stations

**by Dennis H. Pack**

New York was the first city in the United States to establish postal sub-stations that were numbered. Previous sub-stations had been called by local names or letters of the alphabet. Postmaster General (PMG) John Wanamaker ordered the establishment of 20 numbered sub-stations in New York to take effect January 20, 1890. These new numbered sub-stations would be the first to include "sub-station" or "sub-sta" in their postal markings. Figure 1 shows the earliest reported sub-station postal marking, a registration handstamp dated February 5, 1890, from New York Sub-Station No. 10. The date is about two weeks after the sub-station opened for business.

I first saw references to sub-stations while researching the history and development of US branch post offices. A little digging revealed that sub-stations were neighborhood post offices operated by employees of the drug store or other business where they were located, and that from 1890 to 1902, *sub-station* was part of the name that appeared in their postal markings. Ten years would pass before I would see a sub-station postal marking.

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This article looks at some of New York's early sub-stations. First, it describes the author's search for information about New York's first 20 sub-stations. Then, it examines some special circumstances surrounding New York's Sub-Station No. 33.

## Researching NYC's First Numbered Sub-Stations

The image of the grizzled prospector setting out with his burro and gold pan might be a cliché, but it describes the feelings I have had as I search for the mother lode on a postal history topic. I am sure that the information is out there, but it is often necessary to sift through mountains of material to find that which sparkles, and, sometimes, the richest treasure is found in unexpected places.

I found that Post Office Department (POD) documents contain a lot of information about postal sub-stations. The *Daily Bulletin of Orders Affecting the Postal Service*[1] is the most helpful because it announces changes in POD policies and procedures, and lists dates when individual sub-stations were established, changed or discontinued. However, the first reference to sub-stations was in1894, and the information is sometimes incomplete or appears inconsistent. The first listing I found in the *Daily Bulletin* for a New York sub-station announced the establishment of Sub-Station No.

26 effective December 1, 1894. I would have to search elsewhere to learn about New York's earliest sub-stations.

I looked in the *Reports of the Postmaster General* to Congress, and *Postal Laws and Regulations.* These provided information about policies and statistics affecting sub-stations, and the laws and regulations governing them, but I found almost nothing about individual sub-stations.

An inquiry to the National Archives and Records Administration in Washington, DC, brought a description of the *Record Relating to Contract Stations and Sub-Stations*, previously maintained by the First Assistant PMG. The two large ledgers contain entries for each state that had contract postal stations. Contract stations were located in business or other non-POD locations and operated by employees of that business. The volumes cover the approximate periods 1860-1904 and 1902-06. Many sub-stations that are not found in the *Daily Bulletin* are listed in the *Record*. All of the sub-stations of the New York Post Office are listed there with their dates of establishment, changes in locations, and the amounts paid to those who operated them. The only difficulty is that the entries are sometimes difficult to read, and they do not always agree with what is printed in the *Daily Bulletin*. The *Record Relating to Contract Stations and Sub-Stations* entries for New York's first sub-stations appears in *figure 2*.[2] Even though journal entries were edited every time the location or status of a sub-station changed, the original entries are mostly readable. This was my first source about New York's first numbered sub-stations.

I also learned that the National Archives houses volumes of *Orders (Journals) of the Postmaster General*, six volumes of which cover the period 1884-1905. The orders cover many different topics, including sub-stations, and it was these orders about sub-stations that were published in the *Daily Bulletin* starting in 1894. I

| No. | LOCATION. | DATE OF ORDER. | WHEN ESTABLISHED. | ALLOWANCES. RENT. | C. H. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | 63 Division st. | Dec. 20. 1889. | Jany 15. 1890. | 400. | |
| 2. | 134th st. + 7th ave. | " " " | " " " | ~~500.~~ | 500 |
| 3. | 562 Grand st. | " " " | " " " | 400. | |
| 4. | 3 2d ave. | " " " | " " " | ~~500.~~ | 500 |
| 5. | King & Hudson sts. | " " " | " " " | ~~500.~~ | 500 |
| 6. | ~~Lenox ave. & 6th st.~~ 7th st. & Avenue C 4-21-03 | " " " | " " " | 600. | |
| 7. | ~~102~~ 106-108 6th ave; 5-13-03 | " " " | " " " | 900. | |
| 8. | 91-93 8th ave. | " " " | " " " | 600. | |
| 9. | (Riverdale R. R. Station) | May 17. 1890. | June 1. " | 400. | |
| 10. | ~~130th st. & Lenox ave.~~ 129 7th st. (Jany.) 7-24-03 | Dec. 20. 1889. | Jany 15. " | 300. | |
| 11. | ~~8th ave. & 23d st.~~ 262 8th ave. - 2-13-02 | " " " | " " " | ~~900.~~ | 900 |
| 12. | 53d st. & 6th ave. | " " " | " " " | 500. | |
| 13. | ~~42d st. & 8th ave.~~ 539th st. & 8th ave 10-3-02 | " " " | " " " | 800. | |
| 14. | ~~Park ave. & 42d st.~~ 40 East 42d st. - 6-14-01 | " " " | " " " | ~~900.~~ | 900. |
| 15. | 61st st. & Columbus ave. | " " " | " " " | ~~700.~~ | 700. |
| 16. | ~~9 E. 59th st.~~ cor. 59th st. & Madison ave. 4-16-1900 | " " " | " " " | ~~700.~~ | 700 |
| 17. | ~~3d ave. & 116th st.~~ Lexington ave. & 116th st. 5-8-02 | " " " | " " " | 600. | |
| 18. | Pleasant ave. & 121st st. | " " " | " " " | 200. | |
| 19. | ~~761 Kingsbridge Road~~ [redacted] E. 181st st. cor. Kingsbridge Road 9-1-04 | " " " | " " " | 300. | |
| 20. | Kings Bridge Road & Webster ave. | " " " | " " " | 300 | |

***Figure 2*** *Entries in the* Record Relating to Contract Stations and Sub-Stations *for New York sub-stations 1-20 were edited when a sub-station was moved or discontinued and reopened.*

assumed that information about sub-stations established before 1894 would be found in these volumes. During my first visit to the National Archives in 1999, I was delighted to find that this was true.

The first information I discovered about New York's earliest numbered sub-stations from the *Orders (Journals) of the Postmaster General* was Order No. 335, dated December 20, 1889, which read:

> Establish on January 15th, 1890, 20 stations of the New York, N.Y., Post Office with money order and registration facilities and for the sale of postal supplies and reception of 3rd and 4th class mail matter, to be under the control of the Postmaster. Said stations are to be designated as Sub-Stations" and by number from one to twenty inclusive and located as follows:-
>
> No. 1. Catharine and Cherry Sts.
> No. 2. North Moore and Hudson Sts.
> No. 3. No. 562 Grand St.
> No. 4. No. 3 Second Ave.
> No. 5. King and Hudson Sts.
> No. 6. Avenue C and 6th St.
> No. 7. No. 102 6th Ave.
> No. 8. 7th Ave & 14th St.
> No. 9. 5th Ave & 16th St.
> No. 10. 21st St. & 4th Ave.
> No. 11. 8th Ave & 23rd St.
> No. 12. 34th St. & Broadway.
> No. 13. 41st St. & 8th Ave.
> No. 14. Park Ave. & 42nd St.
> No. 15. 57th St. & 9th Ave.
> No. 16. 72nd St. & 2nd Ave.
> No. 17. 110th St. & 3rd Ave.
> No. 18. Pleasant Ave, cor. 121st St.
> No. 19. No. 3409 3rd Ave., Bet. 166 and 167 Sts.
> No. 20. Fordham 2511 West Vanderbilt Ave.
>
> Allow the postmaster at New York for compensation of clerks in charge of said stations, who are to furnish and maintain the same without other expense to the Department, as follows:-
>
> For Station No. 9, the sum of one dollar ($1.00) per annum. For Station No. 20 Fordham, the sum of $300 per annum, and for the other stations, the sum of $400 each, total allowance per annum $7501.[3]

This seems straight-forward, but PMG Order 192, dated May 17, 1890, established Sub-Station No, 9 in the Riverdale railway station effective June 1, 1890, with the clerk to provide the facilities and be paid $400 per year.[4] There was no indication of what happened to the first Sub-Station No. 9.

A comparison of the addresses of the sub-stations from the PMG's original order and the *Record Relating to Contract Stations and Sub-Stations* is shown in *table 1*.

| SS# | PMG Order | Record Relating to Sta & Sub-Sta |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Catharine & Cherry Sts | 63 Division St |
| 2 | North Moore & Hudson Sts | 134th St & 7th Ave |
| 3 | 562 Grand St | 562 Grand St |
| 4 | 3 2nd Ave | 3 2nd Ave |
| 5 | King & Hudson Sts | King & Hudson Sts |
| 6 | Avenue C & 6th St | Avenue C & 6th St |
| 7 | 102 6th Ave | 102 6th Ave |
| 8 | 7th Ave & 14th St | 91-93 8th Ave |
| 9 | 5th Ave & 16th St | Riverdale RR Station |
| 10 | 21st & 4th Ave | 130th St & Lenox Ave |
| 11 | 8th Ave & 23rd St | 8th Ave & 23rd St |
| 12 | 34th St & Broadway | 53rd St & 6th Ave |
| 13 | 41st St & 8th Ave | 41st St & 8th Ave |
| 14 | Park Ave & 42nd St | Park Ave & 42nd St |
| 15 | 57th St & 9th Ave | 61st St & Columbus Ave |
| 16 | 72nd St & 2nd Ave | 9 E 59th St |
| 17 | 110th St & 3rd Ave | 3rd Ave & 116th St |
| 18 | Pleasant Ave, corner 121st St | Pleasant Ave & 121st St |
| 19 | 3409 3rd Ave, betwn 166 & 167 Sts | 961 Kingsbridge Rd |
| 20 | Fordham 2511 West Vanderbilt Ave | Kingsbridge Road & Webster Ave |

***Table 1*** *Comparison of Sub-station addresses.*

| SS# | DB# | Original Address | New Address | Eff Date |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 5969 | Cathering *[sic]* & Cherry Sts | 63 Division St | 10/01/99 |
| 10 | 5160 | [not given] | 130th St & Lenox Ave | 02/01/97 |
| 17 | 5430 | [not given] | 3rd Ave & 116th St | 12/20/97 |
| 19 | 5940 | [not given] | 961 Kingsbury Rd near 183rd St | 09/01/99 |
| 20 | 5590 | 4262 3rd Ave | Kings Bridge Rd & Webster Ave | 07/01/98 |

***Table 2*** *Changes to Sub-Stations appearing in the* Daily Bulletin.

It is not known when the *Record Relating to Contract Stations and Sub-Stations* was created. Some of the differences between the two sources can be explained by looking at changes to the sub-stations in the *Daily Bulletin*. These are presented in *table 2* with the sub-station number, *Daily Bulletin* issue number and the effective date of the change.

This information leads me to the conclusion that the addresses recorded in the *Record Relating to Contract Stations and Sub-Stations* were probably correct when they were entered into the journal, but were not necessarily the original sub-station addresses. For several years, this was as far as I could go. There were discrepancies that I could not explain.

Leonard Piszkiewicz's excellent book *Chicago Postal Markings and Postal History* quotes from the Chicago *Tribune* concerning the establishment of new sub-stations in Chicago.[5] When I contacted him, he made me aware of his article, "Chicago's Earliest Sub-Stations," in the *Illinois Postal Historian*,[6] which contains the entire news story from the Chicago *Tribune*. This started me thinking; if the opening of sub-stations was news in Chicago, perhaps it was news other places, too.

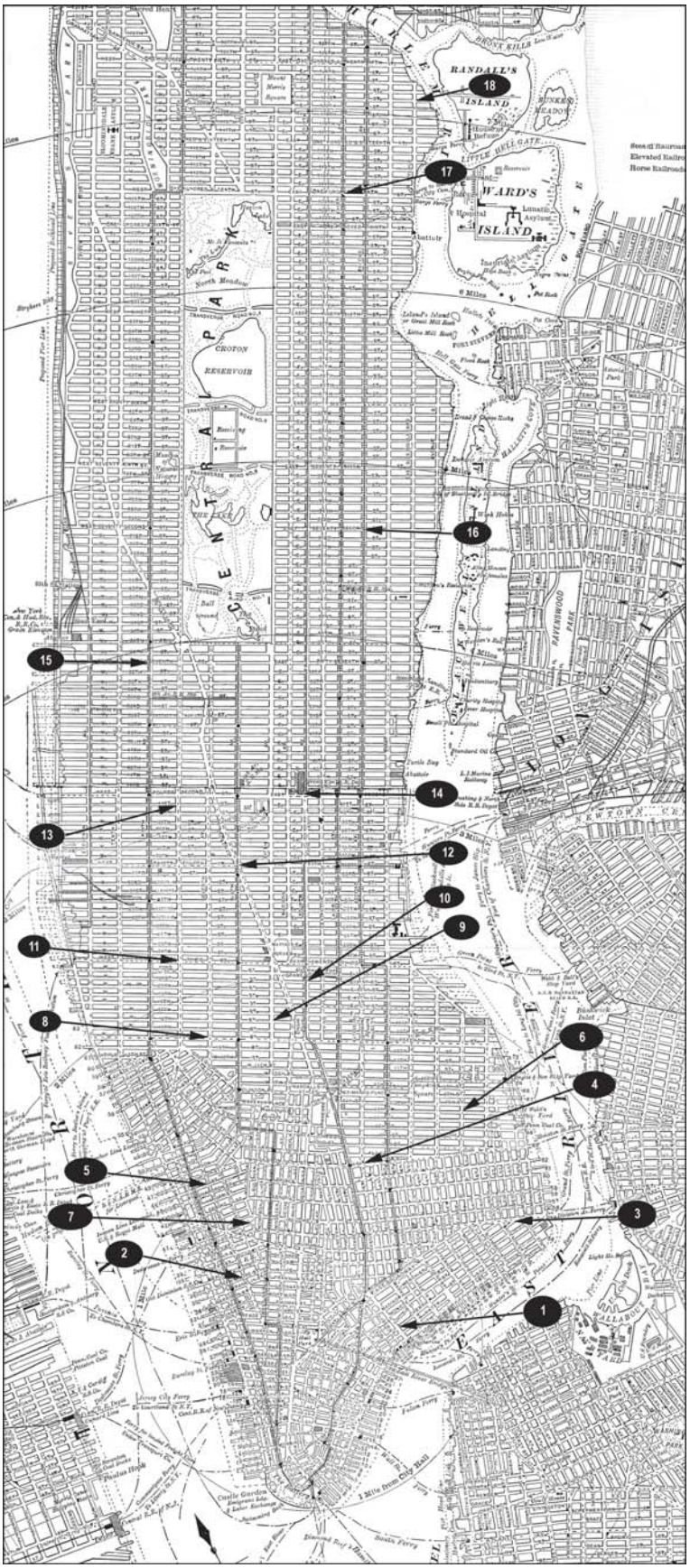
Through a university library, I was able to access ProQuest Historical Newspapers online which enabled me to search the New York *Times* by topic within dates I specified. When I searched, I was excited to find five articles published in 1890 about sub-stations in New York City. The first of these, dated January 21, 1890, reports the opening of the first numbered sub-stations in New York City. It clarifies some of the information from POD sources that seems inconsistent, but it raises a question of its own. Never-the-less, the New York *Times* articles contribute enormously to the understanding of local sub-stations. *Table 3* gives the addresses of New York's first sub-stations as printed in the New York *Times*. These locations are identified as shown on *map 1*.

I trust the addresses in the article since they were recorded at the time the sub-stations were opened. However, I believe the address of Sub-Station No. 6 contains a typographical error. Searches using *Google Maps* pinpointed Avenue C and 6th Street, but not an Avenue O, in New York City. *Google Maps* shows an Avenue O and 6th Street in Brooklyn, which had its own sub-stations, the first of which was established in 1894.

| SS# | New York Times |
|---|---|
| 1 | Catharine & Cherry Sts |
| 2 | North Moore & Hudson Sts |
| 3 | 562 Grand Ave |
| 4 | 3 2nd Ave |
| 5 | King & Hudson Sts |
| 6 | Ave O & 6th St |
| 7 | 102 6th Ave |
| 8 | 7th Ave & 14th St |
| 9 | 5th Ave & 16th St [Judge Building] |
| 10 | 21st St & 4th Ave |
| 11 | 8th Ave & 23rd St |
| 12 | 34th St & Broadway |
| 13 | 41st St & 8th Ave |
| 14 | Park Ave & 42nd St |
| 15 | 57th St & 9th Ave |
| 16 | 72nd St & 2nd Ave |
| 17 | 110th St & 3rd Ave |
| 18 | Pleasant Ave, corner 121st St |
| 19 | 3409 3rd Ave, betwn 161st & 162nd Sts |
| 20 | Fordham 2511 W Vanderbilt Ave |

***Table 3*** *Sub-Statuion locations as identified in the New York* Times.

The *Times* article reported that only 16 of the sub-stations opened as planned, and that sub-stations 2, 9, 10 and 15 were expected to open within a few days. A second article, dated February 18, 1890, stated that Sub-Station No. 15 would soon open at the previously announced address and quoted Superintendent Moore of the City Delivery Department as saying "that he thought that the es-




***Map 1** Location of New York Sub-Stations as indicated by the* New York Times *in 1890. Note: Sub-Stations 19 and 20 were located north of the area depicted in the map.*

tablishment of Station O in Thirteenth-street would make it unnecessary to have a sub-station [author: no. 9] in the *Judge* Building."[7] Another article, dated May 1, 1890, indicated that the Postmaster was looking at sites for a sub-station in Riverdale, and said that stamps were currently being sold at the railroad station, but the current facilities there were not adequate to house a sub-station. The PMG, as quoted above, ordered that Sub-Station No. 9 be established in the Riverdale railway station June 1, 1890. The mystery of the establishment of the second Sub-Station No. 9 was solved; the first one had never operated.

The January 21, 1890, New York *Times* article did much more than report on the opening of the sub-stations. It also advised that all but two of the sub-stations were located in drug stores—one, previously discussed, was in the Judge building, the other in a real estate office in Tremont—and the clerks were almost all young women.

The article went on to say that the sub-stations were created as a convenience to the public because of complaints that patrons had to travel too far to purchase money orders, mail packages and register mail. It says that each sub-station is under the supervision of a branch post office, and advises, "At the sub-stations is transacted just the same kind of business as is done at the branches except that mail is not delivered from them. Letters or postal packages are dropped in a box at the sub-station just as they would be in a street box, and are collected by the carriers from the branch to which the sub-station belongs."[8] Ordinary letters are postmarked at the supervising branch post office, so sub-station postal markings would be used for other services such as money orders and the registration of letters. I have only seen boxed straight-line registration markings and double-oval cancels with the sub-station number and "sub-sta" from New York's sub-stations 1-20. A cover registered at New York Sub-Station No. 7 and bearing both double-oval cancels and the boxed straight-line registration marking is illustrated in *figure 3*.

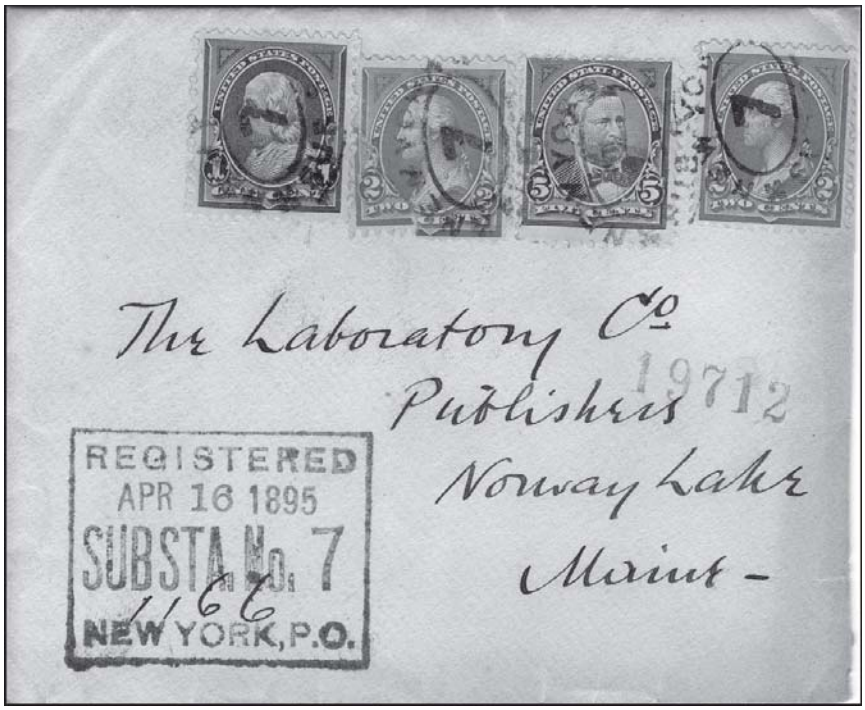



***Figure 3*** *A registered cover mailed at New York Sub-Station No. 7 shows the double-oval cancel used on the stamps and the boxed straight-line registration marking.*

The New York *Times* also says that the presence of a sub-station in a business is thought to increase the number of customers who visit the business and that will increase sales of their other products. The managers were required to sign the following agreement:

> I hereby propose to furnish space, heat, light, and all necessary clerical service for the transaction of money order, postal-note, and registration business, and the sale of postal supplies; also to fit up my premises at the corner of _____ _____ with the fixtures necessary for public accommodation in connection with above business, and to display such signs as may be required; also to furnish satisfactory bonds in the sum of $2,000 to the Postmaster, and to superintend and conduct such postal business as may be committed to me to the satisfaction and under the direction of the Postmaster for the sum of $400 per annum.

In May, the New York *Times* reported in "City and Suburban News" that the superintendent of Sub-Station No, 17 at 110th Street and 3rd Avenue submitted his resignation because he said that he was unable to operate the sub-station and profitably conduct his own business.[10] I find no changes to Sub-Station No, 17 at that time in either the *Orders (Journals) of the Postmaster General* or the *Record Relating to Contract Stations and Sub-Stations.* Perhaps, the superintendent was reminded of the agreement he signed.

New York's first numbered sub-stations were open and operating. An additional sub-station was added in 1891, two in 1892, one in 1893, seven in 1894, 12 in 1895, and 30 in 1896, until New York Sub-Station No. 161 was established in March, 1902.[11]

Sub-stations flourished nationwide, but questions arose as to the differences between sub-stations and stations. The PMG issued Order 595, dated November 12, 1897, to clarify this:

> The following classification of stations and sub-stations is hereby adopted:
>
> All stations or sub-stations, as now designated, that receive and dispatch mail, either by carriers or through boxes and general delivery, will be known as stations and will be designated by letters or local names.
>
> Sub-stations issue and pay money orders, register letters and parcels, sell postal supplies, but do not deliver mail, and will be designated by numbers.[12]

As a result of this order, some sub-stations were redesignated stations. One of these was New York's Sub-Station No. 33.

## Sub-Station No. 33

Sub-Station No. 33 was located at University Heights on the campus of the University of the City of New York. In a talk given to the North Side Board of Trade March 6, 1895, New York Postmaster Dayton announced, "There will be a sub-station at University Heights which will have full accommodations for the transaction of money order and registry business, with two carriers and two clerks."[13] The order of the PMG establishing the sub-station read a little differently:

"Establish on March 1, 1895, a sub-station of the post office at New York, N.Y., with facilities for the transaction of money-order and registry business and for the sale of postal supplies, to be located on the grounds of the University of the City of New York, to be known as Sub-station No. 33."[14] The Order of the PMG makes no mention of mail carriers operating from the station.

***Figure 4*** *Three covers mailed at New York Sub-Station No. 33 with stamps cancelled by New York duplex cancels and showing Sub-Station No. 33 double-oval cancels.*

PMG Order 595 stated that mail carriers are not supposed to deliver mail from sub-stations. We have seen that Sub-Station No. 33 was described by the Postmaster as housing carriers. In addition, the description of sub-stations from the New York *Times* given above includes the observation that letters are dropped in boxes at sub-stations and delivered to the supervising branches for handling. Another difference, then, is that first class mail is not postmarked at sub-stations, but is taken to branches for processing. An examination of how first class letter mail was postmarked at Sub-Station No. 33 gives additional insights into the sub-station. A gift by Lloyd Shaw of five covers cancelled at Sub-Station No. 33 provides an interesting study.

The three covers in *figure 4* bear partial impressions of New York duplex cancels plus impressions of a Sub-Station No. 33 double-oval cancel. The first of these is dated March 20, 1895, 19 days after the sub-station was established. The second is dated April 15, 1895, and the third April 18, 1895. They all appear to be mail originating at Sub-Station No. 33. The double-oval cancels do not appear to have been used as forwarding or receiving markings, but to identify the covers as having been mailed at Sub-Station No. 33.

The next cover, dated December 3, 1896, and shown in *figure 5*, appears to have been missent to University Heights. It is addressed to New York University at Washington Square. A hand-drawn pointing finger points to the address, and what appears to be the dial portion of a Sub-Station No. 33 duplex cancel has been stamped at right, presumably as a forwarding marking. This is assumed to be a duplex marking because of the year date at the lower-right of the dial. The back of the cover bears a Sub-Station No. 33 CDS marking. Both Sub-Station No. 33 markings are dated December 3, 1896, but the time in the CDS on the back is 9 AM, while the time in the duplex dial on the front is 11 AM. The earlier CDS would be the receiving marking.

The fifth cover from this group appears in *figure 6*. It originates at University Heights and is addressed to New York University at Washington Square. It shows a clear impression of a Sub-Station No. 33 duplex cancel dated December 2, 1897. I have other impressions of this duplex cancel dated June 1, 1896, and March 22, 1897. It is interesting that the dial of these duplex cancels measures 23 mm in diameter, while the dial appearing in *figure 5* measures 25.5 mm in diameter. I

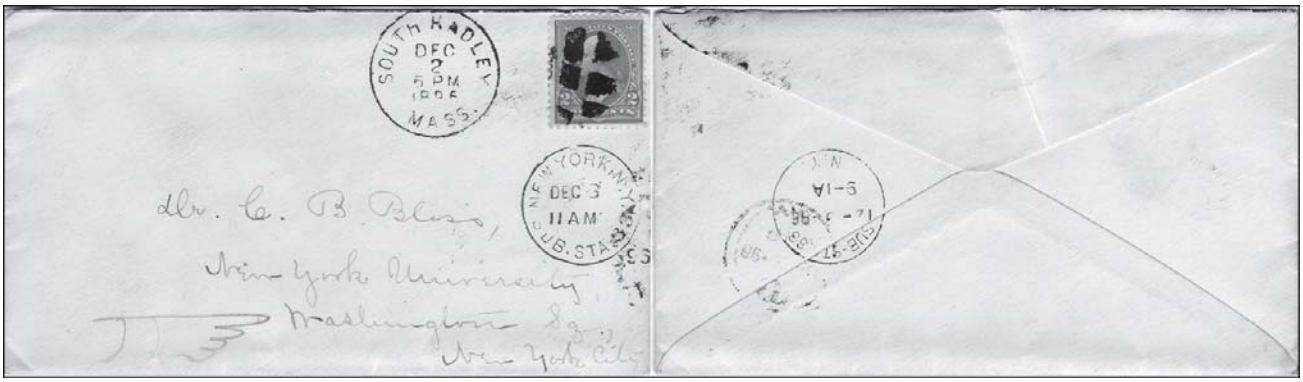


***Figure 5*** *Cover missent to New York Sub-Station No. 33, where it was forwarded. Cover bears Sub-Station duplex cancel dial on front and CDS on back. Dial measures 25.5 mm in diameter.*

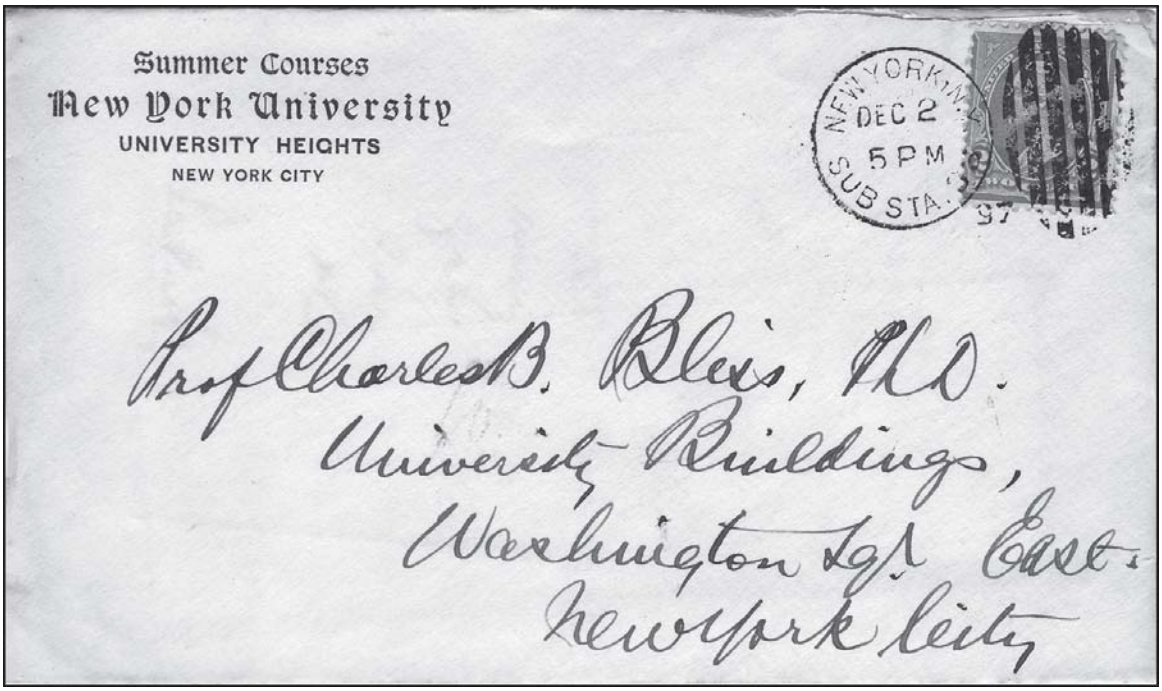



***Figure 6*** *Cover mailed from New York Sub-Station No. 33. Stamp is cancelled by a Sub-Station No. 33 duplex cancel. Dial measures 23 mm in diameter.*

would appreciate receiving photo copies or scans of complete duplex cancellations made with the larger dial since I do not know the appearance of the cancel that is with it.

In at least two regards, New York Sub-Station No. 33 behaved more like a station that a sub-station: letter carriers operated from it and first class letter mail was cancelled there. Three days after Order 595, quoted above, clarified the differences between sub-stations and stations, Order No. 617, Nov. 15, 1897, advised, "Under the new classification of stations and sub-stations embraced in Order No. 595, Sub-station No. 33 and High Bridge sub-station at New York, N.Y., become stations and will be designated as 'University Heights Station' and 'High Bridge Station,' respectively." This order was to take effect January 1, 1898.[15]

Sub-Station No. 33 is the only New York sub-station reported to have used a duplex cancel.

## Conclusion

PMG Order 349, Mar. 31, 1902, discontinued the designation *sub-station*. It modified Order 595 to read:

> All stations will issue and pay money-orders, register letters and parcels and sell postal supplies.
>
> Stations that receive and dispatch mails, either by carriers or through boxes and general delivery, will be designated by letters or local names, as 'Station A' or 'Austin Station.'
>
> Stations that are not provided with facilities for receiving and dispatching mails, will be designated by numbers, as 'Station No. 1.'.[16]

Sub-stations operated 12 years during which they made postal services and stamps more readily available to the public at limited expense to the POD. Sub-stations were the forerunners of the contract postal units currently found in many businesses.

Sub-stations are largely forgotten, but each one has a story. The biggest challenge is discovering where and in what form it is told. Government documents provide basic information about sub-stations' locations and dates of operation. Other sources, such as local newspapers, can be invaluable in helping to understand details and why some things happened as they did. Sub-station postmarks themselves can provide insights into the operation of sub-stations, especially as they become available in greater numbers.

Special thanks to all those who have sent me photocopies or e-mailed me scans of their sub-station markings. The sub-station postal marking census stands at 599 markings. If you have any you would like to add, please contact me: Dennis H. Pack, 1915 Gilmore Ave, Winona, MN 55987, or packd@hbci.com. You can also contact me if you are interested in purchasing a CD or printout of the census for a nominal fee.

***Figure 7*** *Boxed straight-line registration handstamp applied to the back of a cover mailed at New York Sub-Station No. 11.*

Additional thanks to Len Piszkiewicz for opening my eyes to new sources of information, to Lloyd Shaw for his on-going support of my collecting interests, and to Richard W, Helbock for publishing this article.

## END NOTES

[1] The *Daily Bulletin of Orders Affecting the Postal Service* was published by the Railway Mail Service 1880-1906, when it was taken over by the PMG. In 1918, it was renamed the *Postal Bulletin*. It is currently published bi-weekly, and is available on-line at http://www.usps.gov/cpim/ftp/bulletin/pb.htm

[2] *Record Relating to Contract Stations and Sub-Stations.* Vol. 1, p.182.

[3] *Orders (Journals) of the Postmaster General*, vol. 2, pp. 381-382.

[4] *Orders. (Journals) of the Postmaster General,* vol. 2, p. 431.

[5] Piszkiewicz , *Chicago Postal Markings and Postal History*, p. 294-295.

[6] *Illinois Postal Historian*, vol. 26, no. 4, pp. 12-16.

[7] New York *Times*, Feb. 18, 1890, p. 3

[8] New York *Times*, Jan 21, 1890, p. 9.

[9] New York *Times*, Jan 21, 1890, p. 9.

[10] New York *Times*, May 14, 1890, p. 3.

[11] Actually, there were more than 161 numbered sub-stations in New York since numbers were often re-used after a sub-station was discontinued.

[12] Order 595, Nov. 12, 1897, in *Daily Bulletin* 5401, Nov. 15, 1897.

[13] New York *Times*, March 7, 1895, p. 2

[14] Order 72, Feb. 25, 1895, in *Daily Bulletin* 4569, Feb. 26, 1895.

[15] Order 617, Nov. 15, 1897, in Daily Bulletin 5405, Nov. 20, 1897.

[16] Order 349, Mar. 31, 1902, in *Daily Bulletin* 6731, Apr. 2, 1902.

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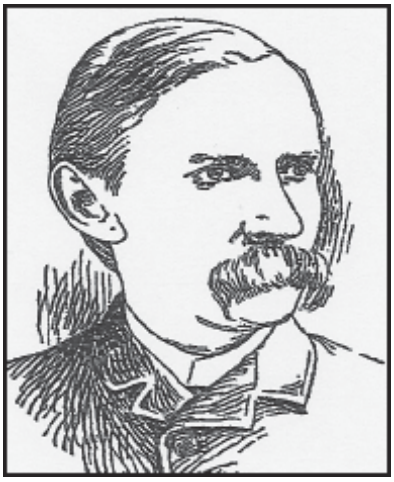
# The Postmasters General of the United States

**XXXVII. William L. Wilson, 1895-1897**

**by Daniel Y. Meschter**

The last two decades of the 19th century were turbulent times. Beginning with Garfield/Arthur, the two major parties traded presidencies until after the turn of the century. The economy took an uncertain road between boom and bust. It was the age of the moguls exercising unbounded power over an overworked, under employed labor force and an agricultural industry suppressed by inadequate capital, scarce money, and unregulated railroads. Where once the average voter could afford to pay scant attention to political issues, the laborer and farmer alike now began to realize that foreign trade and monetary policy were both economic and political issues that affected him personally. He knew them as "the tariff" and "free silver." The Republicans, generally, favored a high tariff to protect industry from the competition of cheap imports while the Democrats were near fatally divided on the issue of cheap, inflated money that would result from unlimited silver coinage and equivocal on the tariff issue.



**William Lyne Wilson**
**c. 1885**

Postal revenues tended to be cyclical, that is, following the ups and downs of the national economy while expenditures gradually continued their upward trend. Thus, revenues had a greater effect on deficits than expenditures. William Wilson, upon taking office as Postmaster General in April 1895, noted that the larger than estimated deficits during the first two years of Cleveland's second term (1893-94) extending into the first quarter of 1895 were due to declining postal revenue as the result of a financial and industrial recession, or "panic" as it would have been called then. The 1895 deficit improved by 1.7 million dollars in fy 1896 due more to an increase in revenues accompanying economic recovery than any policy of the Postmaster General.

More and more postmasters general were being appointed as political rewards. An increasing number were lawyers, many with a background of political activism and legislative experience, but little knowledge of the Post Office Department's organization and even less familiarity with the intricacies of the postal system. Even the few businessmen and other professions appointed from time to time seldom had the administrative experience required for hands on management of an undertaking as vast as the postal service had become. Thus, more and more it was falling to the permanent staff, generally recognized as the "middle managers" reporting to the deputies of the four assistant postmasters general for the Department's actual day-by-day management. For himself, William Wilson was a scholar, lawyer, and legislator with small experience as an administrator limited before he entered Congress to one year as President of West Virginia University[1].

William Lyne Wilson was born in early May 1843 near Charles Town (Charlestownn), Jefferson County, Virginia (now in the east end of West Virginia), the son of a farmer, scholar and teacher of some repute who died when his only son was four. Wilson was home-schooled by his mother and an aunt until he was old enough to enter the Charlestown Academy where he showed a talent for both ancient and modern languages and a penchant for mathematics. He entered Columbian College (now George Washington University) as junior and graduated in 1860 at the age of seventeen. He continued his education briefly at the University of Virginia until he enlisted in the Twentieth Virginia Confederate Cavalry on the outbreak of the Civil War. He saw action in the Shenandoah Valley and was with Lee at Appomattox before the end.

Wilson returned to Columbian College after the end of the War as an Assistant Professor of Ancient Languages. He took advantage of the opportunity to study law in the college's law school and received a law degree in 1867; but was prevented from practicing law by the post war Test Oath that disqualified anyone who had fought for or held office in the Confederacy from the practice of law, among other professions. Upon the abolishment of the Test Oath in 1871 he returned to Charlestown and established a law practice. He soon built a fine reputation as. an attorney. He took little interest in politics until he was named a delegate to the 1880 Democratic Convention in Cincinnati where he supported the nomination of Gen-

eral Hancock. Two years later he was elected a Representative to Congress where he took his seat on March 4, 1883. He was recognized during his first term as a loyal, hard-working member of Congress for which he was rewarded at the beginning of his second term by appointment to the prestigious Appropriations Committee. He was an advocate of tariff reform from the beginning.

Cleveland originally had limited interest in the tariff as a political issue, leaning toward a high, protective tariff for the benefit of large eastern manufacturers, if anything, Postmaster General William Vilas (1885-88) was able to persuade him to abandon his indifference in favor of lower tariff rates as an aid to agriculture, but not so far as Vilas's own free trade views. He made it the leading issue in the next year's presidential campaign in his message to the 50th Congress on December 6, 1887[2]. In response to the President's message, the Speaker of the House appointed Wilson as the administration's leading spokesman to the powerful Ways and Means Committee.

The tariff was the dominant issue in the 1888 campaign. Wilson represented Cleveland and the Democratic Party speaking on behalf of low tariff rates as beneficial for agriculture and small business while William McKinley, member of Congress from Ohio and the architect of the protective tariff, represented Benjamin Harrison on behalf of industry and labor. Despite Cleveland winning the popular vote by about a one percent plurality, Harrison won election by a substantial majority of the electoral vote by winning the industrial states with their large blocs of electoral votes. The Republicans also won majorities in both the House and Senate, albeit by slender margins. These majorities allowed the Fifty-first Congress to enact three monumental pieces of legislation, the Sherman Anti-trust Act, the Sherman Silver Purchase Act, and the McKinley Tariff Act.

The Sherman Anti-trust Act was intended to curb the abuses of corporate monopolies. While its effectiveness may well be questioned, it was a new step into social legislation and laid the foundation for anti-trust legislation yet to come.

The Sherman Silver Purchase Act also was sponsored by Senator John Sherman of Ohio. Poorly conceived, it was a payoff to the western states that supported passage of the McKinley tariff bill. It required the Treasury to purchase 4.5 million ounces of silver a month, essentially the entire national production at market prices. Its principal defect was that the silver purchases were paid for in currency redeemable in both gold and silver. Most silver producers chose to redeem their notes for gold, seriously depleting the federal gold reserve, thus depreciating the federal currency and causing the recession or Panic of 1893.

The McKinley Tariff Act was just as big a disaster as the Silver Purchase Act. It was intended to protect domestic industry from cheap, foreign imports; but flushed with their success in the 1888 election, the Republicans exceeded rationality by establishing rates averaging 48% that caused a marked increase in consumer prices. Between the recession induced by the Silver Purchase Act and rising prices resulting from the inflationary tariff rates, the voters returned Cleveland to the White House for a second, non-consecutive term in the election of 1892 and gave the Democrats control of both Houses of Congress.

Cleveland's first action was to call Congress into special session to repeal the Silver Purchase Act. William Wilson led the repeal faction, but it still took six weeks of bitter debate that deeply divided the Democrats and set the stage for an even more contentious division over monetary policy at their 1896 National Convention.

In what turned out to be one of his last efforts in the House, William Wilson sponsored a bill reducing the high rates of the McKinley Tariff Act. A bloc of protectionists in the Senate led by Arthur Gorman of Maryland, however, added duties on a variety of goods so that the rate reduction in the Wilson-Gorman Tariff Act of 1894 was only to an average of 41%. Cleveland was far from satisfied and let the Act become law without his signature.

The off-year election of 1894 was a blow to the Democrats due, it was said, to the Party's ineffectiveness in dealing with the Panic of 1893, its failure to make significant reductions in the tariff rates, and deep divisions on monetary policy, which was to say gold versus silver. The party lost five seats in the Senate and 113 in the House that gave the Republicans a clear majority and a step pup to the presidency in 1896. Incumbents in the House defeated for reelection included William Wilson of West Virginia.

Wilson Bissell's resignation as Postmaster General at the end of February 1895 gave Cleveland an opportunity to place at least one defeated congressman in a government position. He chose William Wilson, probably on the strength of his constant personal support and his leadership and influence during his six terms in the House (1883-1895). W.L. Wilson was sworn in

on April 3, 1895 by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court in a ceremony in the Postmaster General's private office.

W.L Wilson was considered a diligent but not particularly effective administrator during his two years in office. Without the mandates such as he had in the House, his proposals to improve postal operations were half-hearted and his commitment to smaller government discouraged his from supporting high profile projects such as rural free delivery and establishing a postal telegraph system such as his predecessors had advocated. His lethargy may have been due in some measure to the chronic illness that sapped his strength and eventually took his life.

With respect to rural free deliver he was aware that Congress had appropriated $10,000 at the beginning pf Bissell's term in March 1893 to conduct experimental free delivery in rural communities other than towns and villages[3]; but Bissell, objecting to the cost of rural free delivery he estimated would begin at $10,000,000 a year, took no action to begin these experiments. Congress appropriated another $20,000 in 1895 and $10,000 more in 1896. Although Wilson agreed with Bissell that rural free delivery was impractical, he construed Congress's repeated appropriations as direction and saw no reason not to carry out the experiments. He began experimental service on October 1, 1896 and it was no accident the first route was in his home town of Charles Town, West Virginia. The program was rapidly expanded within the year to 44 routes in 29 states[4]. Rural free delivery proved popular with the public although he had left office by that time. Wilson is sometimes credited with beginning the Rural Free Delivery system, but that is an exaggeration; he only began the Congressionally-dictated experimental program.

Wilson's annual reports were full of details of postal operations too voluminous to summarize here[5]. Many were of little consequence and few reflected any action on his part. Most of his recommendations were directed to the President and Congress for consideration. Unfortunately, so far as leadership and decision-making were concerned, his administration was lack-luster.

Like his predecessors extending back many years, Wilson complained of persistent deficits due to abuses of the second class postage rates, especially the one-cent per pound rate Congress established in 1885 for the benefit of publishers of periodical publications that mass-mailers succeeded in using to send advertising, book reprints, and all kinds of printed material that should have been entered in the mails as third and fourth class material at higher rates. He also estimated that the 15% of the total second class mail that was carried free under the "county free" privilege made a large contribution to the deficit[6]. His recommendations for amendments to the postal laws were largely ignored by Congress except for limitations on his authority to consolidate post offices.

Wilson, too, was a strong supporter of the Civil Service system and at his urging the President extended Civil Service protection to a variety of Post Office Department positions, increasing Civil Service coverage in the postal service by about 10%. He especially directed his attention to fourth class postmasters by ruling that fourth class postmaster could not be removed from office, presumably for political reasons, before four years in office. Even more important, but premature, was his proposal to extend Civil Service coverage to fourth class postmasters[7] Neither of these measures would have been popular among members of Congress and party leaders as assaults on what was left of the patronage system.

Grover Cleveland showed no inclination to run for a third term in the 1896 presidential election. Instead, he defected to the National Democrat Party, a pro-gold splinter group opposed to the free-silver platform of the regular Democratic Party. William Wilson supported him in this move and was suggested as the Gold Democrat's presidential nominee. He declined to run on the National ticket, being reluctant to oppose the regular party's nominee, Bryan, in the general election. There obviously was no place for Wilson in any future Democratic administration as long as the free-silver platform remained in place. Cleveland left office upon McKinley's inauguration on March 4, 1897. James A. Gary, McKinley's appointee, replaced him as Postmaster General the next day.

William Wilson's future, however, was already decided when the Board of Trustees of Washington and Lee University in Lexington, Virginia on February 11, 1897 chose him as its president effective July 1st[8]. At about the same time he left for Arizona on a sojourn of up to six months, almost certainly for his health. The clear, dry air and mild temperatures of the Southwest were widely regarded at that time as curative for respiratory diseases. He returned to Virginia at least in time for his formal installation at an elaborate ceremony on September 15th[9]. Unfortunately, three years and one month later he died of tuberculosis on October 17, 1900[10].

## Endnotes

Image of William L. Wilson courtesy *New York Times*, February 28, 1895

1 See Vexler; *Biographical Directory; New York Times*, October 18, 1900 [Obit.]; Atkinson, George W. and Gibbons, Alvaro F., *Prominent Men of West Virginia*, Wheeling, W. Va., 18909; and Calhoun, Charles W., "William Lyne Wilson" article in *American National Biography* for biographical sketches of W.L. Wilson. The standard biography of W. L. Wilson is Summers, Festus P. *William L. Wilson and Tariff Reform, a Biography*,, New Brunswick, NJ, 1953..

2 *New York Times*, December 7, 1887.

3 27 Stat 732.

4 U.S. Postal Service, *The United States Postal Service in American History, 1775-2002*, md, p. 24.

5 Annual Report of the Postmaster General, November 18, 1895, Serial 3389; November 20, 1896, Serial 3487.

6 1895 Report, p. 31; 1896 Report, pp. 5-10.

71895 Report, pp. 334-6, 1896 Report, pp. 50-4.

8 *New York Times*, February 12, 1897.

9 *Id*, September 16, 189).

10 *Id*, October 18, 1900.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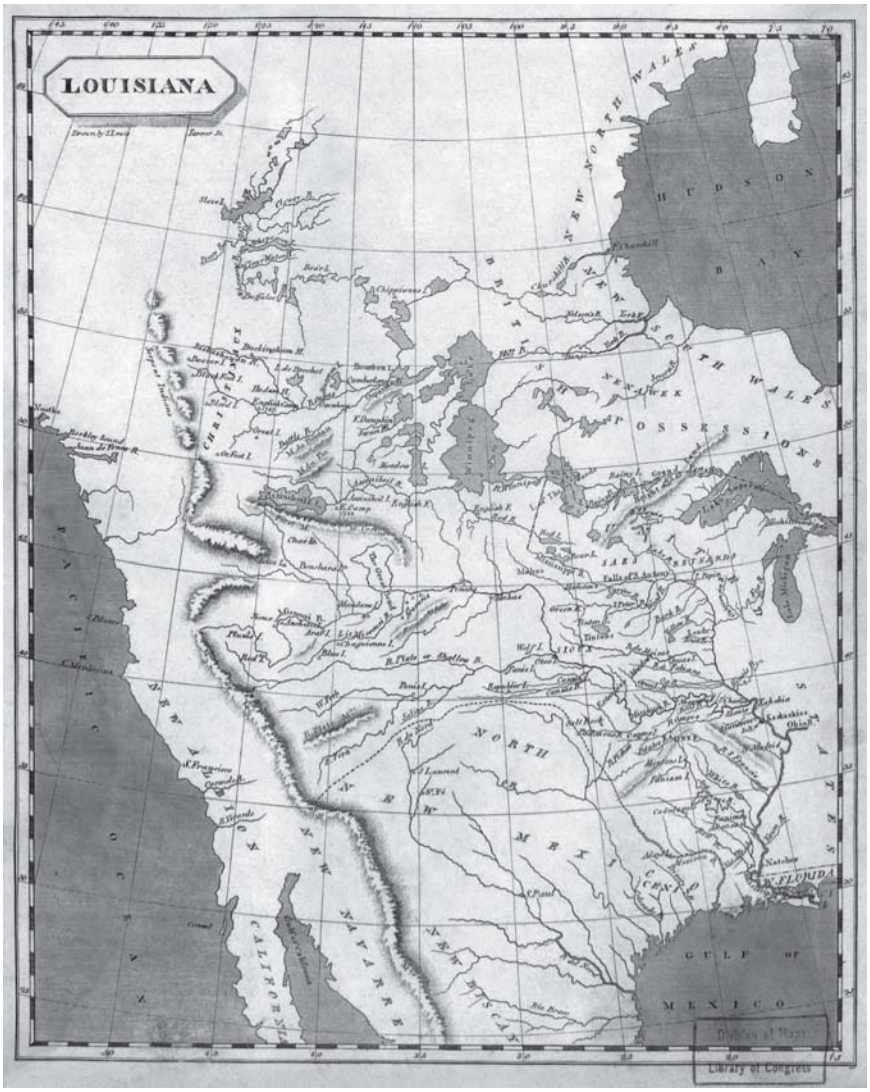
# Securing Manifest Destiny: Forts of the West, 1840-1890

**By Richard W. Helbock**

**Military Posts of Nebraska & Wyoming**
**(Part 2 continued)**

## Political Evolution of the Louisiana Purchase

The Louisiana Purchase was the acquisition by the United States of 828,000 square miles of the French territory known as *Louisiane* in 1803. The cost was $11,250,000 plus cancellation of debts worth nearly four million dollars. Including interest, the U.S. finally paid $23,213,568 for the Louisiana territory.

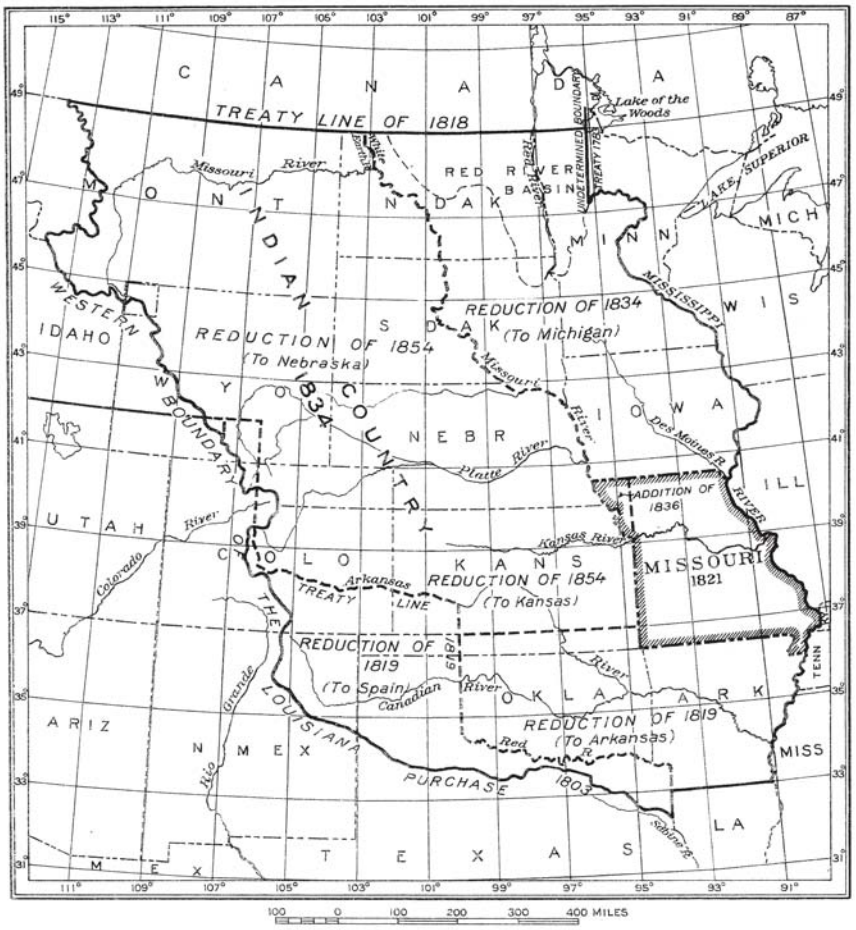



***Map 11*** *Contemporary mapmakers interpretation of the lands included within the Louisiana Purchase 1804. (Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Louisiana1804_loc_filename_ct000654.png)*

Territory within the Louisiana Purchase encompassed portions of 15 current U.S. states and two Canadian Provinces. The land purchased contained all of present-day Arkansas, Missouri, Iowa, Oklahoma, Kansas, Nebraska, parts of Minnesota that were south of the Mississippi River, most of North Dakota, nearly all of South Dakota, northeastern New Mexico, northern Texas, the portions of Montana, Wyoming, and Colorado east of the Continental Divide, and Louisiana west of the Mississippi River, including the city of New Orleans. In addition, the Purchase contained small portions of land that would eventually become part of the Canadian provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan. Lands from the Louisiana Purchase comprise nearly one-quarter of the territory of the United States today. *Map 11* shows a contemporary map makers concept of the Louisiana Purchase dating from 1804.

Effective on October 1, 1804, the purchased territory was organized into the Orleans Territory (most of which became the state of Louisiana) and the District of Louisiana, which was temporarily under the control of the governor and judges of the Indiana Territory. The District was renamed the Territory of Louisiana on March 3, 1805. In 1812 the Territory of Orleans was admitted to the Union as the State of Louisiana, and in order to avoid confusion, name of the Territory of Louisiana was changed to Missouri Territory (*map 12*).

Missouri was declared a state on August 10, 1821. Nevertheless, the lands of Missouri Territory remaining outside the State continued to be known as Missouri for many years. In 1834 land lying north of the Missouri State border and east of the Missouri River were annexed to the Territory of Michigan. The remaining lands of old Missouri Territory were designated "Indian Country," but for purposes of judicial control Indian Territory was limited to the area bounded on the north by the lands assigned to the Osage tribe of Indians, following east to the State of




***Map 12*** *Historical diagram showing Missouri Territory and its reductions to 1854. (Source: Van Zandt, Franklin K., "Boundaries of the United States and the Several States," (1966), page 189)*

Missouri; on the west by the Mexican possessions (100th meridian); on the south by the Red River; and on the east by the line of the Territory of Arkansas and the State of Missouri.[1]

The remainder of Indian Country was classified as "unorganized" until 1854 when the territories of Kansas and Nebraska were created and absorbed the remaining lands of the Louisiana Purchase.

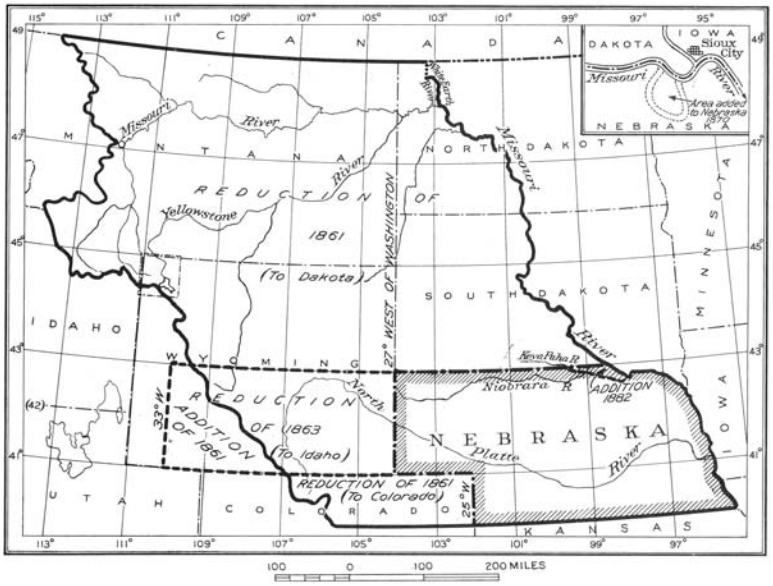
## Nebraska Forts

The Territory of Nebraska was formed on May 30, 1854, from the northwestern part of Missouri Territory. *Map 13* displays the original territorial boundaries and subsequent reductions to Dakota, Colorado and Idaho. Nebraska was admitted to the Union by a proclamation signed by President Andrew Johnson on March 1, 1867, after Congress had overridden his veto of their enabling legislation.

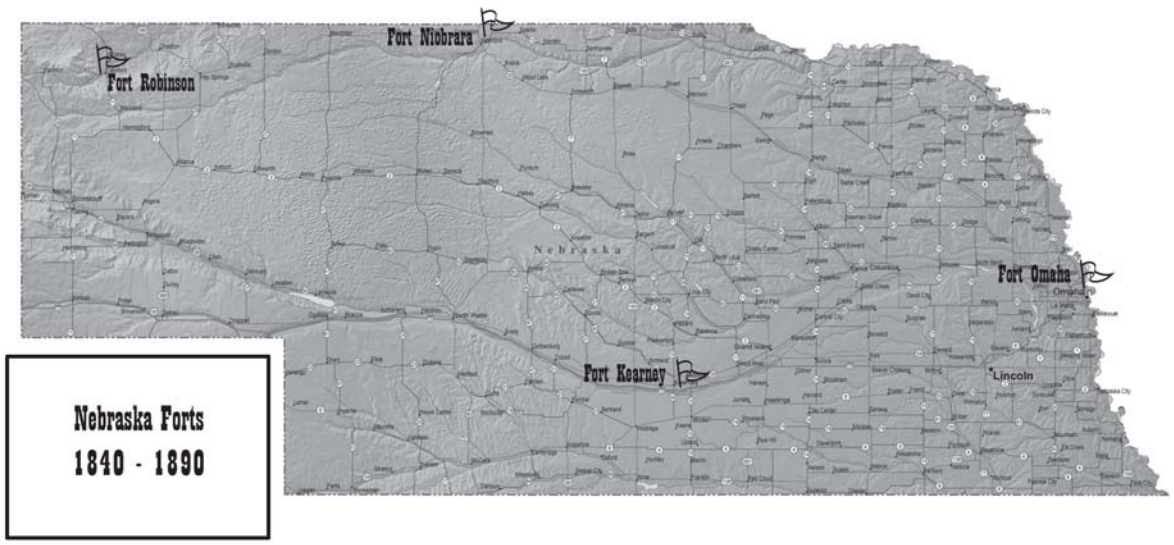
### Fort Kearney

The enormous growth of overland emigration to Oregon after 1842 led the Government to establishment of a chain of military posts along the Oregon Trail to protect travelers in their westward journey. Early in 1846 the War Department decided to locate the first such post on the Missouri River near the mouth of Table Creek, later the site of Nebraska City. This region had been explored by Colonel Stephen W. Kearny in 1838 and the site had been recommended for an Army post.

In 1846 Colonel Kearny proceeded up the Missouri from Fort Leavenworth with a detachment of troops to lay out the site of the fort and begin construction. The name Camp Kearny was applied to the post and somewhat later it was called Fort Kearny. A two-story blockhouse was completed before the Army realized a fort intended to protect emigrants would be better suited to the job if it were located further west along the Oregon Trail route. No further construction was carried on except for the erection of a number of log huts for temporary quarters for a battalion of troops




***Map 13*** *Nebraska Territory historical diagram (Source: Van Zandt, Franklin K., "Boundaries of the United states and the Several States," 1966, page 220)*




***Map 14*** *US Army forts in Nebraska with their own post offices, 1840-1890*

who wintered there in 1847-48. On September 23, 1847, topographical engineer Lt. Daniel P. Woodbury left Fort Kearny at Table Creek with about seventy men, under orders to select a site for a military post at a suitable location along the Platte River. After examining the country, Lieutenant Woodbury chose a site described in his official report as "opposite a group of wooded islands in the Platte River . . . three hundred seventeen miles from Independence, Missouri, one hundred seventeen miles from Fort Kearny on the Missouri and three miles from the head of the group of islands called Grand Island.

By Christmas of 1847, Lt. Woodbury was in Washington, D.C., on orders from the battalion commander Col. L. E. Powell to secure organization of the new post. In a series of communiqués to General Totten, Chief Engineer, he requested an appropriation of $15,000 for materials and labor, advocating the employment of Mormon farmers at Council Bluffs to supply the new post and urging the transfer of a large stockpile of lumber and millwork from Fort Kearny. Although he failed to attain all of these objectives, Woodbury did secure orders to construct a fort which was built "from scratch", using local materials and "volunteer" soldier labor.

In the spring of 1848 construction began on the Platte River post. Colonel Powell and Lt. Woodbury marched out of Fort Kearny at Table Creek with an advance guard. By May 1, Table Creek was abandoned, and by June all officers and men of the Missouri volunteers had arrived at the "head of Grand Island" to erect the "first military station on the route to Oregon".

Lieutenant Woodbury put all available troops to work, having at one time 175 men employed in brick making, molding adobes, getting out timber, working at the sawmill, carpentering, and cutting and laying sod. The fort was laid out in a regular square, the buildings surrounding a four acre parade ground with a flagstaff in the center. A number of cottonwood trees were planted around the parade ground.

Lt. Daniel P. Woodbury had given the name Fort Childs, in honor of Col. Thomas Childs of Mexican War fame (and Woodbury's father-in-law), to the new post and headed his reports accordingly. But a general order from the War Department under date of December 30, 1848 stipulated that "the new post established at Grand Island, Platte River, will be known as Fort Kearny." Thus, the name of the illustrious soldier, Stephen W. Kearny, was transferred to the Platte River post.

Fort Kearny rapidly developed into one of the most important stops on the Oregon Trail. On June 2, 1849 Lieutenant Woodbury wrote:

> Four thousand four hundred wagons have already passed by this post nearly all destined for California. There are four men and ten draft animals to each wagon-very nearly. Many, not included above, have traveled on the other side of the Platte and many more are still to come on this side. The post is at present very poorly prepared to give to the emigrants the assistance which very many have required even at this point so near the beginning of their journey.[2]

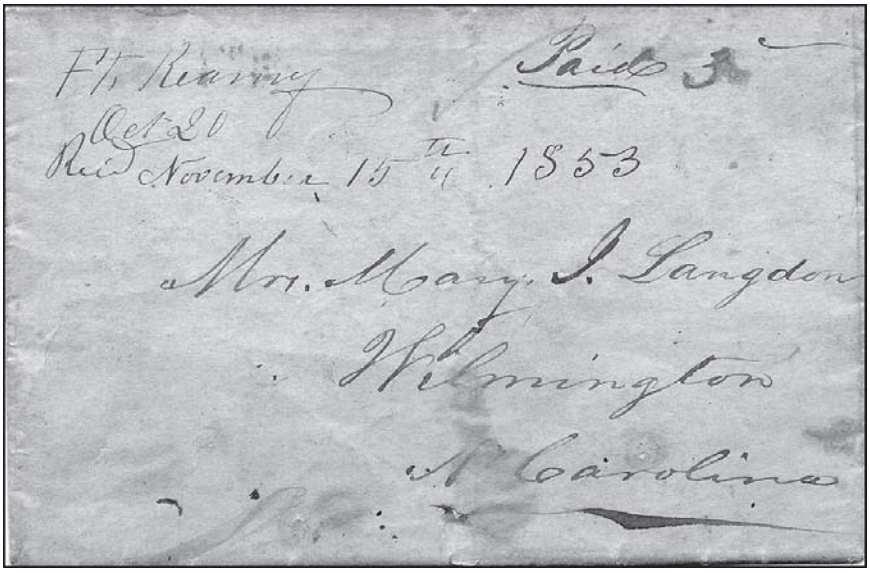



***Figure 26*** *Fort Kearny manuscript dating from October 20, 1853, while the post was still in unorgnized Indian Country. Addressed to North Carolina and docketed as received November 15, 1853. (Courtesy of Ken Stach)*

As the fort grew in the years following, better facilities were developed for the benefit of the overland travelers. Large stores were accumulated, primarily for the supply of the posts further west, but the commanding officer at Fort Kearny was authorized to sell supplies at cost to emigrants needing them. Often stores were given outright in emergencies to indigent travelers.

In July 1849 Louis B. Dougherty was appointed the first postmaster a Fort Kearney. At the time the fort was located in an area of Indian Country for which no organized government existed so the post office was listed by the post office department in "Nebraska Territory not yet organized."[3]

Winter describes the early years of the Fort Kearney post office as rather chaotic since none of the early postmasters were actually qualified to fill their positions:

From the beginning and prior to June 1852 … mail was placed in mail bags and carried to the nearest post office in Missouri. It appears that the first postmaster, who was the son of the sutler, John Dougherty, tended more to the business of the store than to the matter of the mails. Either because of the unorganized civil government in the territory or lacking specific instructions from Washington, we do know that there are no recorded covers of letters originating at the fort that were posted by the postmaster at Fort Kearney during this period.

Moses H. Snydenham who was appointed and commissioned postmaster in 1858 stated that the post office once established in 1849 was "kept going for a long time without a regular commissioned postmaster."[4]

In 1850 the first contract to carry the mail between Independence, Missouri and Salt Lake City was awarded to Samuel H. Woodson, Woodson's contract called for monthly service to begin July 1, 1850. Fort Kearny was a regular station on this route and for the first time the emigrants could trust their letters to the US Post Office and not have to depend on an Army courier or fellow emigrants. This service to the great overland emigration was one of the most important functions that Fort Kearny performed. The fort later served also as an important stop on the Pony Express route in 1860-61.

As the great overland migration flowed through and past Fort Kearny many a traveler wrote a description of the fort. One of these was a correspondent for the New York *Herald* (perhaps Capt. Jesse A. Grove) who passed through in 1857 and 1858 as a member of the Utah Expedition. He wrote a detailed description of the physical features of the frontier post:

> Fort Kearny, like most of the forts in the West, has no fortifications but is merely a station for troops. It stands on a slight elevation a few miles from the Platte River. The fort consists of five unpainted wooden houses, two dozen long, low mud [sod or adobe] buildings. The houses are built around a large open square or parade ground, while the mud buildings extend in any and every direction out from the roads that run along the sides of this square. Trees have been set out along the borders of the parade ground, and they are the only bushes that can be seen in any direction except a few straggling ones on the banks of the Platte a few miles distant. Intermixed between these immature trees on the sides of the square are sixteen blockhouse guns, two field pieces, two mountain howitzers and one prairie piece. These constitute the artillery defences of the post against the Indians.
>
> On the west side of the parade ground stands the house of the commanding officer. It is a large, ill-shaped, unpainted structure, two stories high,

***Figure 27*** *A cleanly struck example of the small Fort Kearney cds dating from about 1862 on a Civil War patriotic cover to Illinois. (Courtesy of Ken Stach)*

> with piazzas along its entire front on both floors. Within, however, the building is much more respectable being commodious, comfortable, well finished and neatly finished. Directly opposite the commanding officer's house, on the other side of the square, is the soldier's barracks, seventy feet by thirty feet, and two stories high. The barracks has never been finished and now is in bad order. It can accommodate very well eighty-four men. There are in it now between ninety and one hundred men. The other wooden buildings are the officers' quarters, the hospital, and the sutler's store. These structures do not present a very inviting appearance to the eye, but they are charming places compared to the spectacle of twenty-four long, winding, broken-backed, falling down mud buildings. These are of all sizes, the largest one being about one hundred forty feet long, forty feet wide and twelve feet high.[5]

Ten years later, the appearance of Fort Kearny had changed greatly, and for the better, according to the report of Acting Assistant Surgeon General W. H. Bradley in 1869. The large sod and adobe buildings, except the post bakery, were gone, having been replaced by reasonably adequate frame structures. The older frame buildings were reported in good repair with exception of the hospital, which is described as being old and dilapidated, and generally unfit for its purpose. This report of Surgeon Bradley presents a picture of the historic fort less than two years before its abandonment as a military post.

Although in the heart of the Indian Country and exposed to great potential danger from any hostile outbreak on the part of the Indians, the garrison at Fort Kearny was usually not large, often not more than two companies. No direct attack was ever made on the post, however, nor were there any major Indian fights in the immediate vicinity as there were at some of the posts further west and at the Bozeman Trail forts to the northwest.

After 1854, hostility among the Plains tribes—particularly the Cheyenne and Sioux—gradually mounted and become more wide-spread until, in the late summer of 1864 it broke in a wave of violence all along the Platte and Little Blue Rivers in Nebraska. Wagon trains were attacked, members of the trains killed and scalped, and the wagons plundered and burned. Ranches and stage stations were attacked and in many cases burned. Terror spread through the scattered settlements and people left their homes and fled eastward seeking safety. The alarm spread even as far as the Missouri River and plans were made to repel a possible attack.

At Fort Kearny freighting and emigrant trains were held at the fort until a sufficient number accumulated so they would be able to defend themselves. Soldier guards were sent with stage coaches, refugee settlers were cared for at the fort, and earthwork fortifications thrown up in anticipation of an attempted attack on the post. In spite of urgent need for troops on the Civil War front the War Department ordered the First Nebraska Cavalry and the Seventh Iowa Cavalry to the Nebraska frontier.

By the end of 1865 the principal Indian troubles shifted farther west and north, but Fort Kearny continued to be an important point in the interior of the Plains until the Union Pacific Railroad was built through in 1866-67. As settlement pushed westward the Army felt that Fort Kearny could safely be abandoned. Accordingly, on May 22, 1871, a special order was issued directing that Fort Kearny be discontinued as a military post, its garrison be transferred to Omaha Barracks and its stores to Fort McPherson seventy miles west. The Fort

Kearney post office continued to operate for a couple years after the military post was closed and was finally discontinued in 1873. In 1875 the buildings were torn down and the materials removed to the North Platte and Sidney Barracks. In December 1876 the military reservation was relinquished to the Department of Interior for disposal to settlers under the homestead laws.

### Fort Omaha

Fort Omaha was first known as Sherman Barracks when the federal government established a military reservation in 1868, but the name was soon changed to Omaha Barracks. The post was later renamed Fort Omaha and in 1878 became the Headquarters for the Department of the Platte, covering a huge territory that stretched from the Missouri River into Montana and from Canada to Texas.

Fort Omaha was a supply fort, as opposed to a defense fort, and consisted primarily of a two-story barracks building flanked by a row of four two-story houses for officers and their families. A post office was established to serve Fort Omaha on July 23, 1879. The Fort was abandoned in 1896, when it was no longer needed to organize supplies for more western posts involved in the Indian Wars. The Fort Omaha post office was discontinued September 5, 1896.

***Figure 28*** *Fort Omaha in the Winter of 1895. (Douglas County Nebraska Historical Society)*

***Figure 29*** *Fort Omaha, Nebraska, November 22, 1894. This post was a supply garrison for forts located further west on the frontier.*

### Fort Robinson

On February 9, 1874, a detail under Lieutenant Levi H. Robinson escorting a wood train carrying fuel wood bound for Fort Laramie was attacked by Indians from the Red Cloud Agency. Lt. Robinson was killed. In response, units were dispatched from Fort Laramie to northeast Nebraska. An encampment named after Lt. Robinson was established near present-day Crawford, Nebraska. When the soldiers arrived the rebellious Indians withdrew from the Pine Ridge Agency and moved westward into the Big Horn Mountains and to Powder River. Later that year, Colonel George Armstrong Custer, acting in violation of the 1868 Treaty of Fort Laramie, led an expedition into the Black Hills. On July 30, 1874, a member of the expedition discovered gold in French Creek near present-day Custer, South Dakota. A scout was dispatched by Custer to Fort Laramie to deliver word of the discovery by telegraph to the remainder of the world. The result was a sudden gold rush to the Black Hills—lands considered sacred to the Sioux and guaranteed for their exclusive use under the treaty that Custer had so wantonly violated. The Black Hills Gold rush created a demand for further military expeditions northward in an effort to bring the Indians back onto their reservations.

For the first four years, the post provided security for nearby Red Cloud Agency. The soldiers also guarded the Sidney-Deadwood Trail to the Black Hills and the surrounding region. Although the agency was moved in 1877, Camp Robinson remained. As an indication of its permanent status, the designation “Camp” was changed to “Fort” in 1878.

The mid-1880s brought a critical change to the history of Fort Robinson. The Fremont, Elkhorn & Missouri Valley Railroad had arrived, and the army decided to expand the post.

The first African-American soldiers of the Ninth Cavalry arrived in 1885, and from that date on into the early 20th century, the majority of the troops stationed at Fort Robinson were African-American. Fort Robinson was regimental headquarters for the Ninth Cavalry from 1887 to 1898.

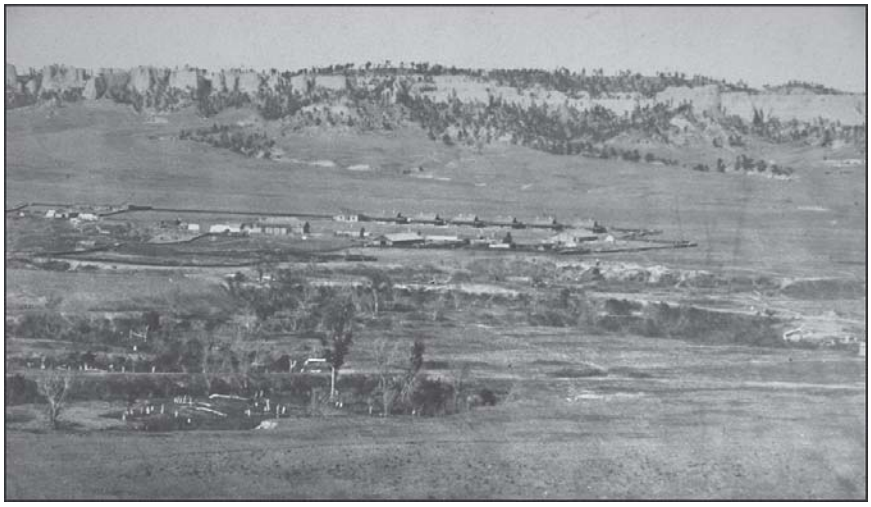


***Figure 30*** *Fort Robinson about 1880. (Source: http://picasaweb.google.com/timshel40/FortRobinsonNebraskaOctober22232007/photo#5125381423459982706)*

In 1886, the Fremont, Elkhorn & Missouri Valley Railroad reached Fort Robinson as it pushed its way westward toward Wyoming. In 1889, the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy also reached the area. The railroad gave Fort Robinson a new strategic importance: Soldiers from the post could quickly be transported to trouble spots. In the late 1880s the fort was greatly enlarged and replaced Fort Laramie, Wyoming, as the most important military post in the region. The railroad guaranteed Fort Robinson's importance and prolonged its military occupation.

In 1919, Fort Robinson became the world's largest quartermaster remount depot; during World War II, it was the site of a K-9 corps training center and a German prisoner-of-war camp. After 74 years of military use, Fort Robinson was transferred to the United States Department of Agriculture in 1948 for use as a beef research station. In 1955 it was turned over to the State of Nebraska and is currently a state park.

## Fort Niobrara

In the fall of 1876 the United States government sent commissioners to the Sioux headquarters in western Nebraska to ratify a treaty that was subsequently signed by Chief Red Cloud of the Oglalas and Chief Spotted Tail of the Brule Sioux. The Indians agreed, according to the treaty, to remove to land reserved for them in South Dakota. Each Indian was given a small sum of money, beef and other supplies every month and heads of families were given free title to one hundred sixty acres of land. The Brules were located on what is now called the Rosebud reservation; the Oglalas farther west at Pine Ridge. The construction of the agency buildings was begun in 1878. Removal of the Indians brought white homesteaders to north central Nebraska.

As an additional safeguard for settlers in the area, the United States Army ordered the Department of the Platte to select a suitable place for a new fort to guard against Indian attacks from the reservations. A point on the Niobrara River south of the Rosebud agency was recommended, and Fort Niobrara was established April 22, 1880, with Major John J. Upham of the 5th U. S. Cavalry commanding three companies of his regiment and one company of the 9th Infantry.

The buildings were mostly of adobe brick. Other materials used in their construction and supplies for the soldiers were brought by large freighting outfits from Neligh, Nebraska, then the western end of the railroad. These outfits consisted of ten to twenty heavy freight wagons with twelve yoke of oxen on each wagon with trailer. Some smaller freighting outfits did a thriving business hauling supplies for the new military post, and for ranchers who established themselves nearby. They in turn did a good business selling their cattle on hoof to the government to feed the soldiers and for the monthly beef issue to the Indians.

Fort Niobrara post office was established May 17, 1880, and a government mail stage made regular trips twice each week. John and George Berry had the contract for this stage line.

***Figure 31*** *Fort Niobrara as photographed by John A. Anderson in 1886 (Source: https://eee.uci.edu/clients/tcthorne/wintercount/images_wintercount/fortniobrara.jpg*

Routine life at Fort Niobrara was relatively peaceful. Soldiers drilled, worked at construction and maintenance of the fort itself and shipped beef and supplies to the Rosebud Reservation. The fort served as an embarkation point for troops responding to the Pine Ridge outbreak, culminating in the Wounded Knee massacre of 1890. The fort was closed in 1906, but served as a remount station until 1911. The post office operated until August 31, 1906.

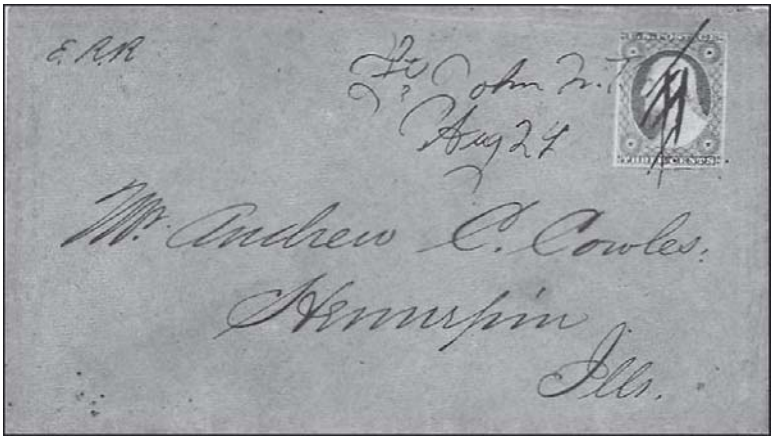



***Figure 32*** *This manuscript postmark reading "Ft. John N. T. / Aug 29" and pen cancel ties Scott's #11 on this cover to Hennepin, Illinois. is a fake. (Courtesy of Ken Stach)*

## FORT JOHN

Fort John was the name of a post office that was established on the Nebraska Territory list with the appointment of John P. B. Gratiot as postmaster on January 24, 1854. The office was discontinued December 22, 1854. Gallagher and Patera (1980) listed the site of this office in Goshen County, Wyoming, on the basis of a statement in Brown (1948) that Fort John "…was located a mile below Fort Laramie (on the North Platte), and that the fort "… was acquired and demolished by the American Fur Company in the early 1850s."[6]

Chase and Cabeen (1950) provide the following opinion with regard to the Fort John post office:

When the United States Army bought Fort Laramie from the American Fur Company in 1849, the latter looked about for a place to locate a new trading post. As early as June, 1850, a post had been established within a few miles of Scotts Bluff in Helvas Canyon. This appears to be the Fort John which is listed as a Nebraska post office in 1854[7].

The current brochure produced by the U.S. National Parks Service for Scotts Bluff National Monument appears to support the Chase and Cabeen opinion about the Fort John post office:

> Modern research has revealed another fact long lost sight of. Robidoux's trading post was not the only one in this neighborhood during the gold rush. It has now been definitely established that, in the summer of 1849, after they sold adobe-walled Fort John (Fort Laramie) to the U. S. Government officials of the American Fur Company removed to Scotts Bluff. Contrary to a long-held erroneous impression, their new post was not located near Mitchell Pass (there never was a trading post near there); it was first located tentatively in Robidoux Pass, within a few hundred yards of Robidoux's blacksmith shop. Then, for reasons which can only be surmised, it was moved to a point 6 miles below Robidoux's and 8 miles south of Mitchell Pass, in present Helvas Canyon. In correspondence of the fur company it was identified as "Fort John, Scott's Bluffs."
>
> This post, being off the main trail, did not rate much notice by travelers, compared with the attention given to Robidoux, but there are occasional references. In 1850 James Bennett states that about 7 miles below Robidoux's there was a trading post "3 miles to our left, where we could see a herd of cattle grazing." Sgt. Percival G. Lowe of the Dragoons, in 1850, reports that "we turned south and camped near a trading post belonging to Major Dripps."
>
> Andrew Drips, the "mountain man" who had guided De Smet up this way in 1840, was later replaced by Joseph Papin of St. Louis, who died and was buried here. His grave and the outlines of the second "Fort John" have been identified. It is not known just when this place was abandoned. However, when the main artery of traffic definitely moved from Robidoux to Mitchell Pass, in 1852, "Fort John" and Robidoux's post both doubtless "withered on the vine," in the manner of a modern-day filling station which is by-passed by a new highway[8].

A fake Fort John, N.T. manuscript postmark has been reported, and is shown in *figure 32* for reference.

Regardless of whether Fort John post office was located near Scotts Bluff, Nebraska, or about a mile down river from Fort Laramie, it was not a fort associated with the U.S. Army, and therefore lies beyond the scope of this series.

## FORT CALHOUN

Fort Calhoun post office was established in Nebraska Territory in 1854, and is sometimes considered to have

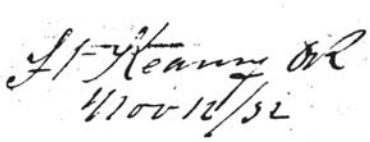
a military significance. In fact, there is no military connection to this community beyond the fact that it was located near the site of an early outpost known as Camp Missouri in 1819 that was eventually expanded to become Fort Atkinson—the first United States Army post to be established west of the Missouri River. Fort Atkinson was abandoned in 1827. When new settlers came to this area in 1854, the used some of the stone and brick from old Fort Atkinson to build their own structures and named their community Fort Calhoun in honor of the then Secretary of War.

# Nebraska Territorial Fort Postmarks, 1840-1890

| | Earliest | Latest | Abbreviation | Notes |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Fort Kearney (1849-1873)** | | | | |
| 1 Fancy Eagle | 5 Jun 1852 | 22 Jun 1852 | O.R. | 4 known |
| 2 MSS | 12 Nov 1852 | | O.R. | |
| 3 MSS | 20 Oct 1853 | 1859 | N.T. or none | 9 known |
| 4 CDS 32.5 | 17 May 1859 | 13 Dec 1860 | N.T | |
| 5 CDS 26 | 28 Mar 1861 | 19 Jul 1865 | N.T. | |
| | 1870 | 28 Nov 1870 | N.T. | 2nd period of use |
| 6 CDS 25.5 | 18 Aug 1865 | 1870 | Neb. | |
| **Fort Niobrara (1880-1906)*** | | | | |
| 1 CDS 27 | | 14 Mar 188? | | Neb. |
| **Fort Omaha (1879-1896)*** | | | | |
| 1 CDS | | | | |
| **Camp Robinson (1877-1879) & Fort Robinson (1879-1951)*** | | | | |
| 1 CDS 25 | | 7 May 1878 | | Neb. |

**Insufficient data is currently available to the author to attempt tocatalog Nebraska fort postmarks during the Statehood era.*

1



2

3

4

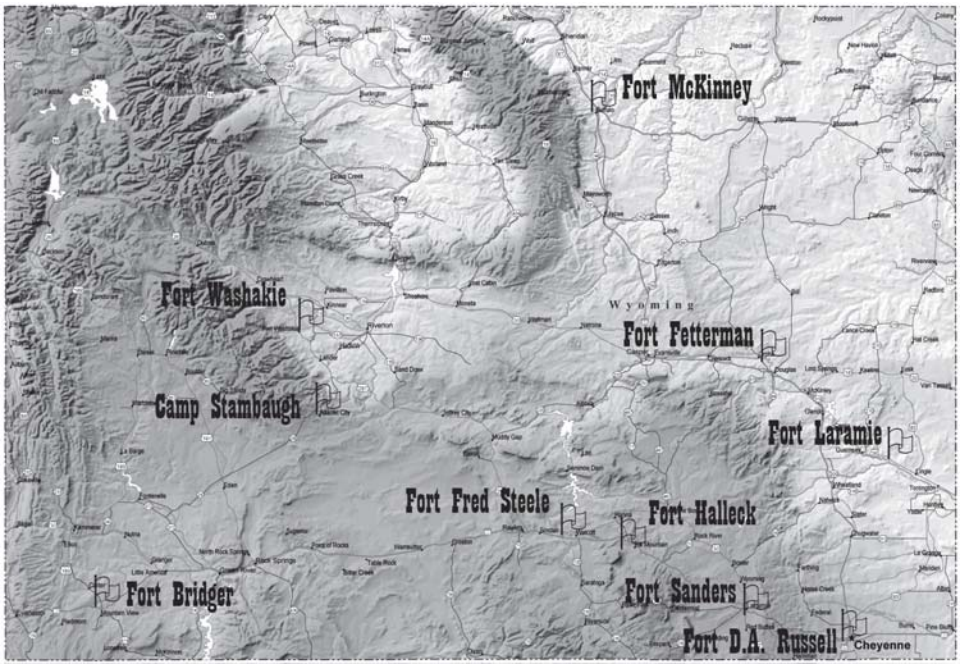
5

6

## Wyoming Forts

### Fort Laramie

Fort Laramie has always struck me as the quintessential frontier fort of the American West. Established by fur trappers in the 1830s, it was purchased by the US Government in 1849 to provide a sense of security for the increasing number of emigrants following wagon roads west to the Pacific Coast. Although the fort was never walled so as to match the Hollywood image we all share of cavalry troops riding through the gate to save the distressed wagon train or homestead, it did dispatch patrols along the Oregon Trail and there were occasional clashes between US Army troops and some of the Plains Indians. For the most part however, Fort Laramie was a symbolic presence throughout its half century of active occupation by the Army. Initially it offered travellers a place to rest and send home mail. Plains Indians found a place to camp peacefully and conduct trade. Beginning in 1861, the fort provided service and maintenance for the transcontinental telegraph line. And finally, Fort Laramie provided the Army with a command and supply center to support more troubled areas such as the Bozeman Trail and the Black Hills.




***Map 15*** *US Army forts in Wyoming served by their own post offices, 1840-1890*

Perhaps the most important confrontation with the Sioux occurred in 1854 and became known as the Grattan Massacre. *Wikipedia* describes what happened as follows:

> In the late summer of 1854, about 4,000 Brulé and Oglala were camped near Fort Laramie in accordance with the terms of an earlier peace treaty. On August 17, a cow belonging to a Mormon traveling on the nearby Oregon Trail was killed by a Minneconjou named High Forehead.
>
> Second Lieutenant John Lawrence Grattan, of the U.S. 6th Infantry Regiment, a recent graduate of West Point, was ordered to bring in the guilty Lakota cow-killer. Grattan was an inexperienced, short-tempered young man, openly contemptuous of the Lakotas' ability as warriors and who was looking to prove himself. A commander at Laramie later recalled, "There is no doubt that Lt. Grattan left this post with a desire to have a fight with the Indians, and that he had determined to take the man at all hazards." Grattan took with him a sergeant, a corporal, 27 privates and a French-American interpreter.
>
> In front of the Brulé chief Conquering Bear, Grattan insisted on taking the guilty

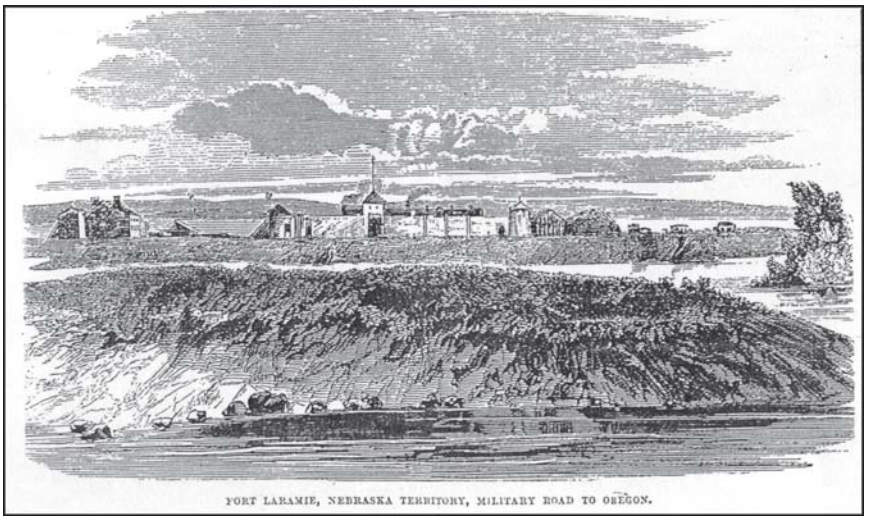



***Figure 33*** *Fort Laramie as depicted by a travelling artist circa 1850s.*

party into custody. Conquering Bear understood the nature of the situation and tried to negotiate, but Grattan continued to escalate tensions. The problem was undoubtedly made worse by the interpreter, who had been drinking heavily and was heard to taunt the Sioux. When Conquering Bear stood up, he was shot in the back and killed by a soldier. This started a volley of fire from both sides; Grattan and the 30 men with him were killed. Conquering Bear was the only Lakota who was killed. This event was called the "Grattan Massacre" by the U.S. press as part of a campaign to stir up anti-Indian sentiment.

News of the fight reached the War Department and plans were put into motion for retaliation. William S. Harney was recalled from Paris and sent to Fort Kearny, where he was put in command of elements of his own 2nd Mounted Dragoons. They set out on August 24, 1855 to find and exact retribution on the Sioux.

The beginning of the Civil War saw most regular army troops withdrawn to the East to participate in that conflict. Fort Laramie was garrisoned by state volunteer regiments, such as the Seventh Iowa and the Eleventh Ohio. The stream of emigrants along the Oregon Trail began to diminish, but the completion of the transcontinental telegraph line in 1861 meant that soldiers were charged with inspecting, defending, and repairing the "talking wire."

Gold strikes in Montana during the early 1860s touched off a new rush for riches, and prospectors began following what became known as the Bozeman Trail. This route departed the Oregon Trail west of Fort Laramie and proceeded northwesterly through land that had been promised by treaty to the Sioux. Indian attacks followed and once again pressure grew for the Government to provide protection. The Army established a string of forts along the Bozeman that included Fort Reno, Fort Phil Kearny and Fort C. F. Smith. The first two were in what was to become Wyoming, and the latter was in Montana. Troops from Fort Laramie were involved in supplying and reinforcing the forts along the Bozeman Trail. The Bozeman Trail forts were under an almost constant state of siege and the defeat of a detachment led by William J. Fetterman in 1866 caused the Government to reconsider its use of the route. Improved access by way of Idaho provided a safe alternative and in 1868 the Treaty of Fort Laramie gave the Lakota Sioux control of the Powder River Country, and for a time shut down travel by white settlers on the Bozeman Trail.

Unfortunately, the Treaty of 1868 did not end the conflict between the United States and the Plains Indians. By the 1870s, major campaigns were being mounted against the plains tribes when the discovery of gold in the Black Hills in 1874 resulted in a rush to the gold fields that violated terms of the treaty and antagonized the Sioux who regarded the Hills as sacred ground. Under leaders such as Crazy Horse and Sitting Bull, they and their allies chose to fight to keep their land. In campaigns such as the ones in 1876, Fort Laramie served as a staging area for troops, a communications and logistical center, and a command post.

Conflicts with the Indians on the Northern Plains had abated by the 1880s, and Fort Laramie began to fade into a period of obsolescence. An aura of relative Victorian comfort began to emerge as boardwalks were built in front of officers' houses and trees were planted to soften the stark landscape.

By the end of the 1880s, the Army recognized that Fort Laramie had served its purpose. Many important events on the Northern Plains had involved the Fort, and many arteries of transport and communication had passed through it. Perhaps the most important artery, however, the Union Pacific Railroad, had bypassed it to the South. In March of 1890, troops marched out of Fort Laramie for the last time. The land and buildings that comprised the Fort were sold at auction to civilians.

**Postal History**

First known as Fort William, and later as Fort John on the Laramie, a wooden fortification was built in 1834 by fur trader William Sublette in order to conduct trade with local Indian tribes offering alcohol and tobacco in return for buffalo robes. In 1841 Sublette sold the fort to the American Fur Company, and they rebuilt it as an adobe structure. Fur trade declined in the area during the 1840s, so when the Army approached the American Fur Company in 1849 with an offer to purchase the fort they found a receptive seller. At the time, the post was known as both Fort John and Fort Laramie. *Figure 34* illustrates a folded letter datelined Fort John, July 1, 1849, addressed to Byron, Ogle County, Illinois. The cover was apparently carried privately to Saint Louis and placed in the mails there where it received a red handstamp STEAM 10.

At the time of its transfer, Fort Laramie was located in lands that had been designated Indian Country in 1834. For judicial purposes however, Indian Territory was restricted to a much smaller area lying south of the northern boundary of lands assigned to the Osage

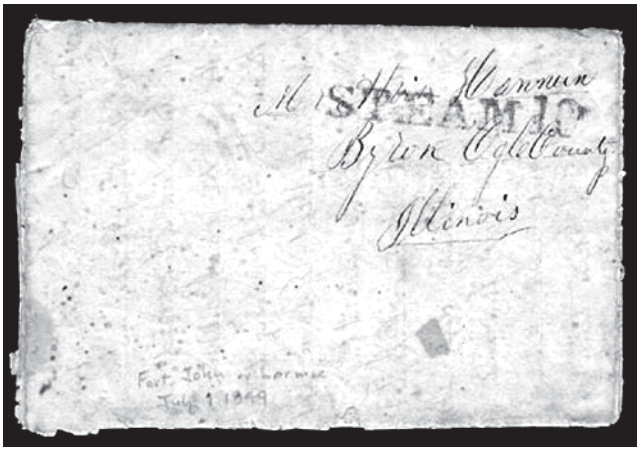



***Figure 34*** *Folded letter datelined Fort John, July 1, 1849, carried privately to Saint Louis. (Courtesy of Ken Stach)*

master in the 1852-1853 *Register*, but the listing indicated no returns for the Fort Laramie post office.

The earliest pieces of mail originating from Fort Laramie after the post office was established bear manuscript postmarks reading "Fort Laramie O.R." with the initials presumed to stand for Oregon Route. Postmaster Tutt began using a distinctive hand carved postmark reading FT. LARAMIE / O.R. in mid-1851 (*figure 35*). The handstamp was probably carved from a wood block and surviving examples suggest that it began to wear out after about a year. Sampson (1950) illustrates a second handstamp in the C.C. Wagner Collection dating from the early 1850s (*figure 36)*. Here the lettering has a more standard, "manufactured" appearance, but there is no indication of a territorial

tribe. So when a United States post office was established at Fort Laramie with the appointment of Leodegar Schuyder as the first postmaster on March 14, 1850, the office was listed for administrative purposes with the post offices of Clackamas County, Oregon Territory.

Schuyder was succeeded as postmaster by John S. Tutt, the post trader, on January 1, 1851. The *Official Register* listed Postmaster Tutt's compensation as $55.30 and the office's net proceeds as $72.40 for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1851. Tutt was still listed as post-

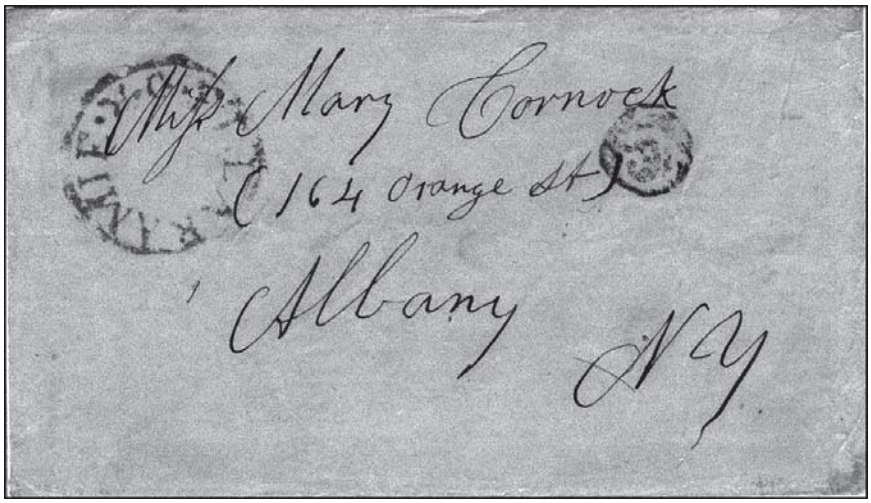



***Figure 35*** *This distinctive hard-carved FT. LARAMIE / O.R. postmark was introduced in mid-1851 by Postmaster John S. Tutt. (Courtesy of Ken Stach).*

***Figure 36*** *This cover from the C. C. Wagner collection displays a postmark from Fort Laramie that probably dates from 1853 or early 1854. It is the sole example of this type seen by the author.*

identification. No other references to examples of this marking have been discovered by the author, but it was probably used in 1853 or early 1854.

Nebraska Territory was created May 30, 1854, and the site of Fort Laramie fell within the jurisdiction of the new territory. In the weeks that followed Fort Laramie post office began using a new hand-stamp reading FORT LARAMIE / N.T. The earliest verified date of use is June 15, 1854, but since the hand-stamp contained no year date it is difficult to ascertain the year from many surviving examples (*figure 37*).

***Figure 37*** *This 32mm balloon cds was used at Fort Laramie formost of the 10-year period that the fort was in Nebraska Territory. This example was applied to a cover addressed to Brigham Young in Salt Lake City. (Courtesy of Ken Stach).*

The large—32 millimeter—datestamp remained in use until the summer of 1862 when it was replaced by a smaller—26 millimeter—circular date stamp (cds). This postmark had a much shorter lifespan for reasons unknown to the author and was replaced in the spring of 1864 by the old 32 mm. cds, which was used throughout the summer of that year. Interestingly, as of March 1863 the site of Fort Laramie was no longer in Nebraska Territory but in the newly created Territory of Idaho. In May 1864 the fort became part of Dakota Territory.

***Figure 38*** *A wonderful inter-fort cover posted at Fort Laramie in December 1864 addressed to Fort Kearney and redirected from there to Cottonwood Springs. (Courtesy of Ken Stach).*

Although never within Montana Territory, the Fort Laramie post office was apparently assigned to Montana for administrative purposes in 1864 or 1865, and had begun using a double ring date stamp with the initials "M.T." as early as November 1864 (*figure 38*). This postmark was in use less than a year and was replaced by another single circle dater used for a few months in the summer of 1865. Examples of both of these Montana Territory postmarks are quite scarce.

By August 1865 Fort Laramie post office began postmarking mail with a handstamp identifying its territorial location as "DAK$^{A}$". Examples of the Dakota Territorial handstamp are known with dates as late as September 24, 1868, although Wyoming Territory was organized in July 1868.

All known Fort Laramie postmarks from late 1868 onward identify the location of the fort as Wyoming. But the fact remains that between 1851 and 1868 Fort Laramie postmarks displayed a total of five different political jurisdictions in which the post office was located. A summary listing known recorded dates of use for the 14 different Fort Laramie postmarks types used from 1851 to 1890 appears on page 54, and these postmarks are illustrated in *plate 2*.

## Fort Bridger

This fort's rich history spans practically all phases of western development except the fur trade. The first Fort Bridger was a mud and pole trading post, founded about 1842 on Black's Fork of the Green River by the mountain men Jim Bridger and Luis Vasquez to trade with Indians and emigrants. A significant landmark on the Oregon-California Trail, it was the second major stopping place on one of the two major routes west of Fort Laramie, and second only to Laramie as a supply point.

***Figure 39*** *Fort Bridger, New York* Daily Graphic, *June 16, 1873.*

With the arrival of the Mormon pioneers in 1847, disputes arose between Bridger and the new settlers. By 1853, a militia of Mormons was sent to arrest Bridger for selling alcohol and firearms to the Indians. Bridger escaped capture, and temporarily returned to the East. The Mormons established their Fort Supply nearby the same year. In 1855, Mormons took over Fort Bridger reportedly buying it from Bridger for $8,000 in gold. They constructed several buidings within a huge stone wall. In 1857—just before U.S. troops arrived en route to the Utah (Mormon) War (1857-58)—the Mormons put the torch to both forts Bridger and Supply. The troops wintered nearby at a temporary camp of mud and skin lean-tos. In the spring, most of them proceeded to Salt Lake City, but some remained to begin rebuilding a permanent fort of log and stone.

***Figure 40*** *Fort Bridger, U.T., bold 34 mm circular dater with fancy negative star in circle killer on 3-cent entire to New York dating from the early 1860s. (from the collection of LaMar E. Peterson)*

The Fort Bridger post office was established August 6, 1850, and listed by the Post office Department as being in Nebraska Territory in their January 1, 1851 listing. Louis Vasquez was appointed the first postmaster. The listing was obviously in error since Nebraska Territory was not yet organized. The office was discontinued July 9, 1851. POD records indicate that the Fort Bridger office was re-established August 6, 1858. Although there are no known postal markings dating from the brief early period of operation, postmarks from 1858 do exist and all postmarks dating from before 1870 indicate that Fort Bridger was located in Utah Territory, a jurisdiction that had been organized September 9, 1850.

The Fort Bridger garrison dwindled in numbers during the Civil War with troops sent to fight in the East, but Regular Army troops returned in 1866. It became the principal military base of operations for southwestern Wyoming and northeastern Utah. The post guarded stage routes and the transcontinental telegraph line, accommodated a Pony Express station, patrolled emigrant trails, took action against Indian raids, and guarded the miners who moved into the South Pass and Sweetwater region. It also protected and supplied workers building the Union Pacific Railroad not far to the north. Treaties were signed at the fort with the friendly Shoshonis in 1863 and 1868, the second creating a reservation east of the Wind River Mountains. Although strategically located, the fort never served as a base for any of the major military expeditions against the Indians of the 1870s, but some of the garrison was reassigned for fighting purposes. Fort Bridger was temporarily abandoned in 1878. It was reactivated two years later and finally closed in 1890.

### Fort Halleck

Fort Halleck was established July 20, 1862 to protect the Overland Trail from continuing "Indian problems." The site chosen was in a gap on the north side of Elk Mountain at an elevation of about 7300 feet. The fort was located near a spring with plenty of wood for cooking and heating in the midst of tall grass meadows abounding with large herds of elk, deer and antelope. The fort complex was quite substantial, consisting of

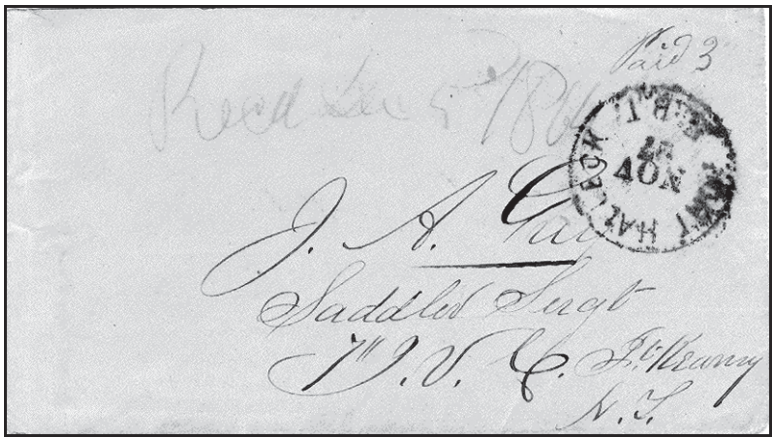


***Figure 41*** *Fort Halleck NEB. T., an 1864 cover with "Paid 3" in manuscript to a Saddler Seargent at Fort Kearney, Nebraska Territory. (Courtesy of Ken Stach)*

staggering number of 17,584 emigrants and an even more astonishing total of over 50,000 animals traveling the Overland Trail.

Franklin E. Adams, who kept quite a thorough diary of his trip on the Overland Trail in 1865, notes that soldiers from the Ohio Volunteers were stationed at Fort Halleck, and were paid $16.00 per month to fight the Indians. This stretch of the trail, from Fort Halleck to Sulpher Springs in the west, was considered to be one of the most dangerous, with regards to the Indian attacks.

Fort Halleck was abandoned by the Army July 4, 1866, just four years after being established. The post office was transferred to Fort John Buford on October 4, 1866 according to the *Daily Journal*[9], and its name was changed accordingly.

stables large enough to hold 200 horses, storehouses, two sets of company quarters, officers' quarters, a store, bake house, jail and hospital.

A popular early anecdote recounts the story of a wagon train moving through the area in mid-summer 1862 that was well supplied with "frontier" whiskey. The stationmaster proceeded to sell canteens full of the whiskey to the soldiers for $5.00. It wasn't long before many of the soldiers, including the entire night guard, were totally drunk. The commanding officer—Major O'Farrell—gave orders to search every wagon in the train, find the whiskey, and destroy it. The barrel was found, and the remaining contents were spilled out onto the ground. Unfortunately, this spot was right above the spring, and the whiskey went directly into the water supply for the fort. The soldiers wasted no time in saving all the whiskey they could, using whatever cup, canteen or camp kettle they could find. Some just lay and the ground and lapped it up! The gap in the mountains was called after that incident Whiskey Gap—a name which remains to this day.

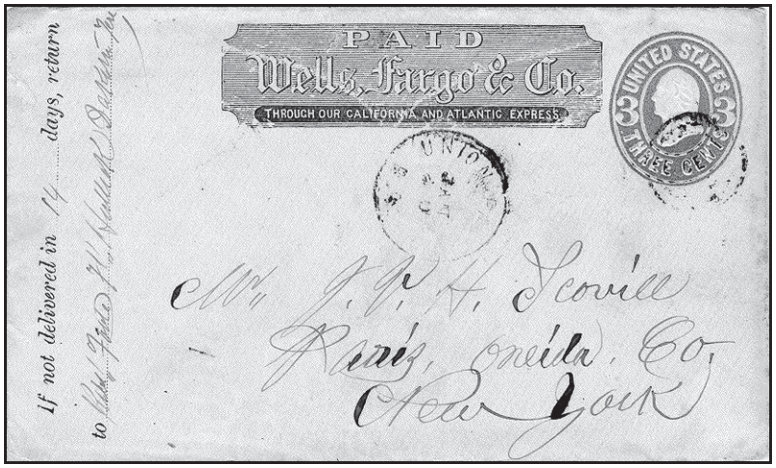



***Figure 42*** *A Wells Fargo franked entire with Fort Halleck, Dakota Territory, return address postmarked UNION PACIFIC / R. R., January 20, 1868. (Courtesy of Ken Stach)*

Fort Halleck post office was established with the appointment of J. H. Jones as postmaster on January 2, 1863.

The post surgeon at the time—Dr. J. H. Finfrock,—kept very detailed records of the emigrants passing through the Fort Halleck station. In 1864 he recorded that there were over 4200 emigrant wagons, with a

## Fort Sanders (Fort John Buford)

Fort Sanders was a wooden fort constructed in 1866 on the Laramie Plains in southern Wyoming, near the city of Laramie. Originally named Fort John Buford, it was renamed Fort Sanders after General William P. Sanders who died at the Siege of Knoxville during the American Civil War. The fort was laid out in an area measuring 223 feet by 400 feet including a parade ground. Originally built to house four companies (about 500 men); Fort Sanders was later expanded to accommodate six. Nearly all of the buildings were constructed of wood except for the stone guardhouse that was built in 1869.

The fort was originally intended to protect travelers on the nearby Overland Trail from Indian attacks, but later the garrison was tasked with protecting the workers of the Union Pacific railroad when it arrived in the spring of 1868. In 1869 the town of Laramie (originally called "Laramie City") was created about 3 miles (4.8 km) north of the fort. Fort Sanders became less important following the construction of Fort D. A. Russell in Cheyenne in 1868, but the War Department maintained it until 1882 when the buildings were sold.

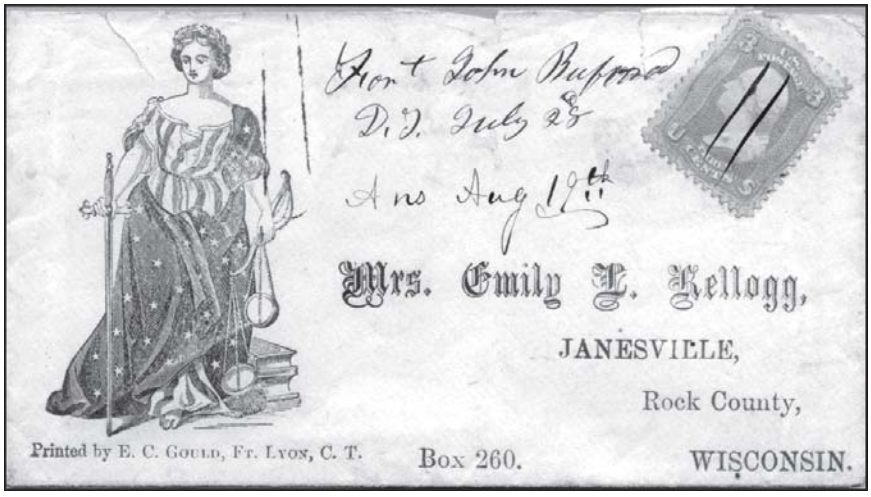



***Figure 43*** *A Civil War patriotic with manuscript Fort John Buford, D. T., postmark and pen-cancelled Scott's #65 addressed to Wisconsin. (Courtesy of Ken Stach)*

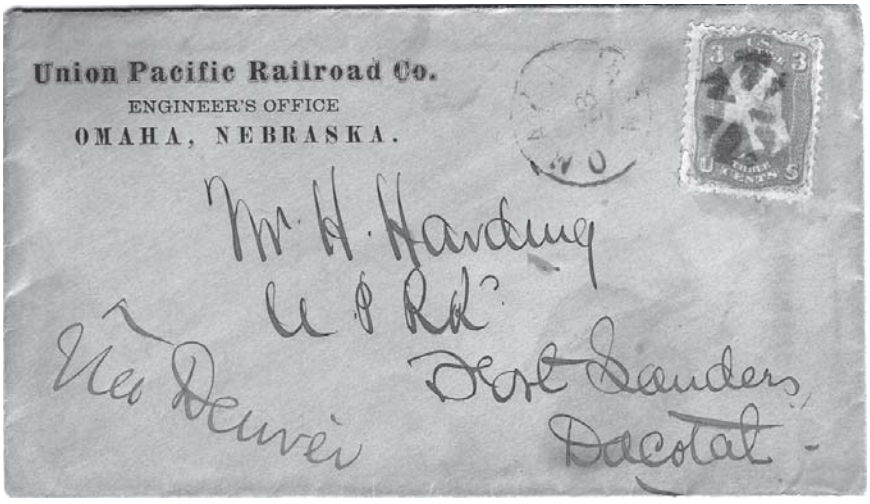



***Figure 44*** *A Union Pacific Railroad cover postmarked Omaha and addressed to Fort Sanders, Dakotah, via Denver, about 1868.*

The post office was first named Fort John Buford when it was transferred from Fort Halleck on October 4, 1866, but it was renamed Fort Sanders on November 12, 1866. George Wilson, Jr. was the first Fort John Buford postmaster, and he remained in charge of the office after the name change. The office was listed in Dakota Territory. On May 18, 1868, the post office was relocated to the rapidly growing rail camp of Laramie, a few miles north of the fort and its name was changed accordingly.

A second Fort Sanders post office was created June 21, 1880, with the appointment of Edwin T. Lane as postmaster, but this office was closed June 2, 1882, after the Army decided to close the military post in May 1882.

## Fort Fred Steele

Fort Fred Steele was established on the west bank of the North Platte River near the present day city of Rawlins June 15, 1868, to protect workers building the Union Pacific Railroad. The fort also partially filled the void created north of the North Platte River by the abandonment of Forts Phil Kearny, Reno, and C. F. Smith in the summer of 1868. The fort was named for Civil War Brevet Major General Frederick Steele and, was one of the three great forts established to protect the Union Pacific and its workers. The buildings were made of wood cut from the slopes of Elk Mountain and were constructed to standard Army plans.

The Fort Fred Steele post office was established July 10, 1868. Lewis Lowry was appointed the first postmaster.

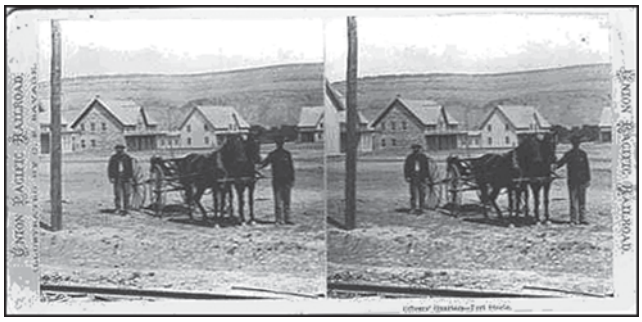


***Figure 45*** *Union Pacific Railroad stereograph showing Officers' Quarters Fort Fred Steele in 1870 by C. R. Savage.*

***Figure 46*** *Postmarked Fort Fred Steele, November 9, 1880, this cover was addressed to Weston, Vermont.*

Once the construction crews moved westward, the troops forwarded rail supplies and guarded part of the Wyoming stretch of track, maintained law and order among the settlers, chased cattle rustlers and outlaws, watched over the nearby Oregon-California Trail, and supported military operations against the Indians in the region.

The fort figured prominently in the Ute uprising of 1879 in Colorado, when Indians at the White River Agency went on a rampage. In response to Agent Nathan C. Meeker's request for aid, Maj. Thomas T. Thornburgh organized an expedition from Fort Fred Steele but met disaster in the Battle of Milk Creek, Colorado. A relief expedition under Col. Wesley Merritt proceeded from Fort D. A. Russell via Fort Fred Steele to the White River Agency to put down the rebellion and remained over the winter. In January 1880 General Crook used the fort to direct logistical support of the operations at the agency. After its abandonment in 1886, local residents occupied it.

The fort was abandoned by the military on November 3, 1886. Eight years after abandonment, the fort and its buildings were purchased by the Cosgriff Brothers and became a center of the wool industry. The Fort Fred Steele post office continued to operate serving local commercial interests and residents until April 7, 1967.

### Camp Stambaugh

Camp Stambaugh was established on June 20, 1870, as a sub post of Fort Bridger to provide protection for gold miners in the Sweetwater District. It soon became an independent military post. Camp Stambaugh received its own post office on July 20, 1871, when Noyes Baldwin was appointed the first postmaster. The Army closed Camp Stambaugh on May 16, 1878, and the post office was discontinued December 23rd that same year.

### Fort Fetterman

Fort Fetterman was founded in July 19, 1867 on the North Platte River at the mouth of La Prele Creek about 80 miles northwest of Fort Laramie. It figured notably in the campaigns of the late 1860s and 1870s against the northern Plains tribes. The fort was an intermediate base between Fort Laramie and Forts Reno, Phil Kearny, and C. F. Smith on the Bozeman Trail. The latter three forts had been established the previous summer to guard the trail but had been under continual siege. In fact, the post was named Fort Fetterman in honor of Captain William J. Fetterman who was killed in a fight with Indians near Fort Phil Kearny, December 21, 1866. By the time Fort Fetterman was activated, the Sioux and Cheyennes had halted traffic over the trail.

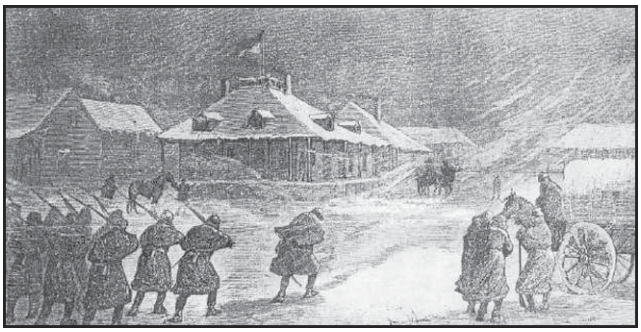


***Figure 47*** *Fort Fetterman, from Fort Fetterman,* Leslie's Illustrated News, *1876*

On July 31, 1867, Major William McEnery Dye, with Companies A, C, H, and I, 4th Infantry, was assigned to build the post. In a letter to the Adjutant General, Major Dye described the post and surrounding country as "...situated on a plateau...above the valley of the Platte, being neither so low as to be seriously affected by the rains or snow; nor so high and unprotected as to suffer from the winter winds."

Unfortunately, Major Dye's optimistic view of the site did not hold true for winter months. In November of 1867, Brigadier General H.W. Wessells became commanding officer at the fort. According to his report to the Department of the Platte, ..."officers and men, were found under canvas exposed on a bleak plain to vio-

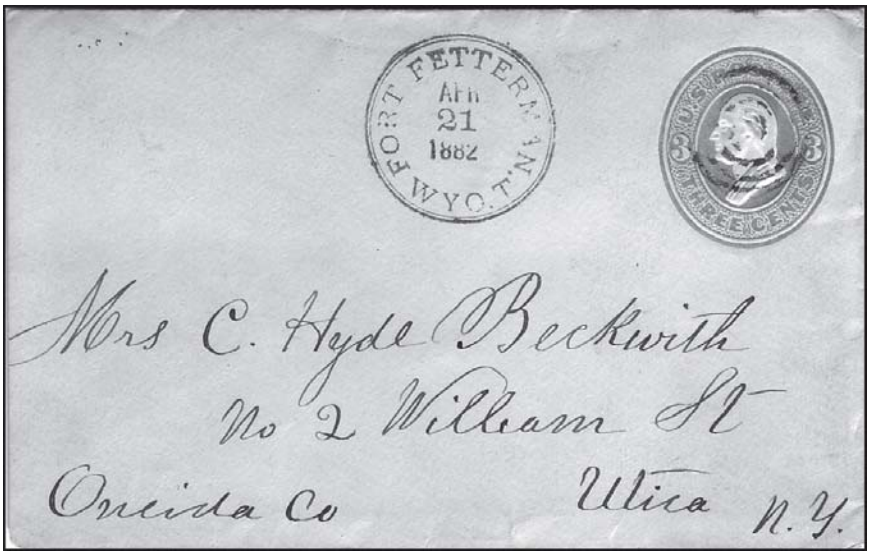



***Figure 48*** *This 3-cent entire bears a Fort Fetterman postmark of August 21, 1882, and is addressed to Utica, New York*

lent and almost constant gales and very uncomfortable...” the garrison managed to get through the winter and the fort continued to grow and develop. By 1870, it was well established, and destined to play a conspicuous part in the Indians wars for the next few years. Jim Bridger, Wild Bill Hickock, Calamity Jane and “Buffalo Bill” Cody were among the colorful personalities of the time whose activities and travels took them frequently to Fort Fetterman.

In accordance with the Treaty of 1868, Forts Reno, Phil Kearny, and C.F. Smith, along the Bozeman Trail were abandoned. Fort Fetterman, alone, remained on the fringe of the disputed area. As an outpost of civilization on the Western frontier, the fort represented protection and a haven to travelers. Fort Fetterman was always considered a hardship post by officers and men who were stationed there. On May 18, 1874, Captain F. Van Vliet, of Company C, 3rd Cavalry, felt so strongly about the hardships on his men that he wrote to the Adjutant General requesting his company be transferred because there was “...no opportunity for procuring fresh vegetables, and gardens are a failure. There is no female society for enlisted men...the enlisted men of the company are leaving very much dissatisfied, as they look upon being held so long at this post as an unmerited punishment...whenever men get to the railroad there are some desertions caused by dread of returning to this post...”

Fort Fetterman post office was established with the appointment of Ephrain Tillotson as first postmaster on January 28, 1873. The office was closed November 26, 1873, but reopened March 22, 1875. It was closed briefly again for a few weeks in September-October 1879, but reopened once more and continued to operate until January 31, 1889. The Army had long since departed when the post office was discontinued.

During the mid-1870s, Fort Fetterman reached its pinnacle of importance when it became the jumping-off place for several major military expeditions. It was the base for three of General George Crook’s Powder River Expeditions and Colonel Randall Mackenzie’s campaign against Dull Knife and the Cheyenne Indians. These events contributed to the end of the resistance by the Plains Indians who shortly after were confined to reservations. With the passing of Indians from the scene, the fort had outlived its usefulness.

When the military abandoned the fort in 1882, it did not die immediately. A community known as Fetterman City grew up at the post after 1882. It was an outfitting point for area ranchers and for wagon trains. The boom was short-lived, however, and in 1886, the town of Douglas was founded a short distance to the south. The old fort, in a state of decay, lost out as a town and declined rapidly. Most of the buildings were sold, dismantled or moved to other locations.

### Fort Washakie (Camp Brown)

The history of Fort Washakie provides a rare example of amicable Indian-white relations on the frontier. It is one of the few named for an Indian. The distinguished Shoshoni leader Washakie was a friend of the white man and kept his tribe at peace throughout the Indian Wars. He and many of his people served with distinction as Army scouts, joining cause with the Crows against the Sioux, Cheyennes, and Arapahos. Still on the Army rolls at the time of his death in 1900, apparently at the age of 102, he was the only full-blooded Indian ever to have been buried with military honors. A Christian, he had been baptized in 1897.

Fort Washakie was first known as Camp Augur, but renamed Camp Brown in March 1870. It was built in 1869 as a sub post to Fort Bridger as a typical 19th century frontier post on the Shoshone Indian Reservation created by Fort Bridger Treaty of 1868. From1869 to 1871 the post was located at a site along the Popo Agie River (now downtown Lander). Its mission was to guard miners in the nearby Sweetwater

region until Camp Stambaugh (1870-78) was established. The fort was relocated to the junction of the north and south forks of the Little Wind River, and in 1878 its name was changed to Fort Washakie, honoring the chief of the Eastern Shoshone people. This was the first and only fort to be named after an American Indian chief.

Camp Brown post office was established March 18, 1875 with James K. Moore as postmaster. The name of the office was changed to Fort Washakie on May 7, 1879, with Moore still serving as postmaster.

***Figure 50*** *A Fort McKinney postmark design with double outer ring and inner ring of December 12, 1888. The ornate design also featured a solid five-point star killer.*

Once relocated, Fort Wasahakie's major mission was protecting the Shoshonis on the Wind River Reservation from their wandering enemies in the northern tribes. During the 1870s and 1880s, Fort Washakie also served as a supply base and springboard for expeditions entering Yellowstone National Park—established in 1872—and for gold seekers and others headed into the Bighorn country.

Since the Army departed, the fort has been the agency headquarters for the Wind River Indian Reservation, occupied since 1877 by Arapahos as well as Shoshonis. Many of the old fort buildings constructed of adobe, frame, and stone and including the old barracks and adobe guardhouse, are still used by the agency and are intermingled with modern structures. The Fort Washakie post office continues to operate. Chief Washakie's grave is in the former military cemetery about 4 miles south of the fort.

### Fort McKinney

On October 12, 1876, a post known as Cantonment Reno was established on the north bank of Powder River about three miles above the site of the abandoned Fort Reno. On August 30, 1877 the name was changed to honor Lieutenant J.A. McKinney of the 4th Cavalry, who was killed in the Red Fork Fight, on November 25, 1876. The post was relocated to a new site on the north bank of the Clear Fork not far from the present day town of Buffalo in July 1878. Congress appropriated $40,000 to enhance the post and it eventually grew into an impressive center including quarters for officers and men, barns, warehouses, and mess halls. At first, two companies of the 9th Infantry were quartered at this post, but later these were withdrawn, and four troops of the 9th Cavalry, together with their headquarters and band, were billeted there for a considerable time, followed by three companies of the 8th Infantry and three troops of the 6th Cavalry.

***Figure 49*** *Fort McKinney early photograph. (Source: http://www.legendsofamerica.com/photos-wyoming/fort%20mckinney%20wyoming.jpg*

George F. King was appointed the first Fort McKinney postmaster on November 26, 1878. On July 6, 1879, the name of his post office was changed to Rochester, but it went back to Fort McKinney on October 14, 1879, and remained that way until the post office finally closed December 15, 1894.

In 1892, Fort McKinney came into national prominence. A force of stockmen raided the country to the south of Buffalo in a desperate effort to stop wholesale cattle rustling. This episode was known as the Johnson County Invasion, and papers throughout the country headlined the spectacular effort. Out numbered, the ranchers and their gunmen were surrounded at the TA Ranch, south of Buffalo, and there they would have been massacred except for the timely arrival of troops from the fort. Troops were withdrawn from this post in 1894, and in the following year all the buildings and two sections of land were donated to the State of Wyoming by the United States Government to be used permanently as Soldiers' Home.

### Fort D. A. Russell

Fort D. A. Russell was named in honor of David Allen Russell, a Civil War general killed at the Battle of Opequon in Virginia. The post was situated on the line of the Union Pacific Railroad at a point where that line was to cross Crow Creek. It was first established July 21, 1867 and simply called the Post on Crow Creek. The name was changed to Fort D. A. Russell on July 31, 1867.

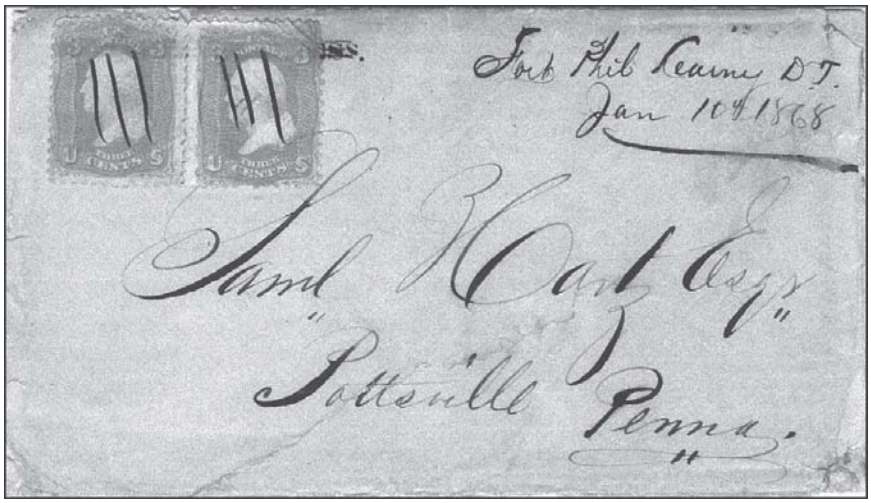



***Figure 51*** *Despite the fact that Fort Phil Kearny had no official post office, this cover bears a manuscript postmark of the fort datedJanuary 16, 1868. (Courtesy of Ken Stach)*

Fort Russell—the post office took the shorter name of the fort—was established with the appointment of Charles A. Weidman as its first postmaster on April 23, 1883. The office was closed only a year later on January 4, 1884, but was re-established January 13, 1888. Fort Russell was made a permanent post in 1884 due to its strategic location and the following year, the War Department ordered the post be rebuilt to serve eight infantry companies. The troops then built 27 red brick buildings to replace the older wood frame structures.

In 1919, the airfield became active and soon served as the home field for over 100 military aircraft. The last cavalry units on the post were deactivated in 1927. In 1930, the base was renamed Fort Francis E. Warren, in honor of the Medal of Honor recipient who served as Governor of Wyoming. The post office followed suit and changed its name to Fort Warren on February 1, 1930.

### Fort Phil Kearny

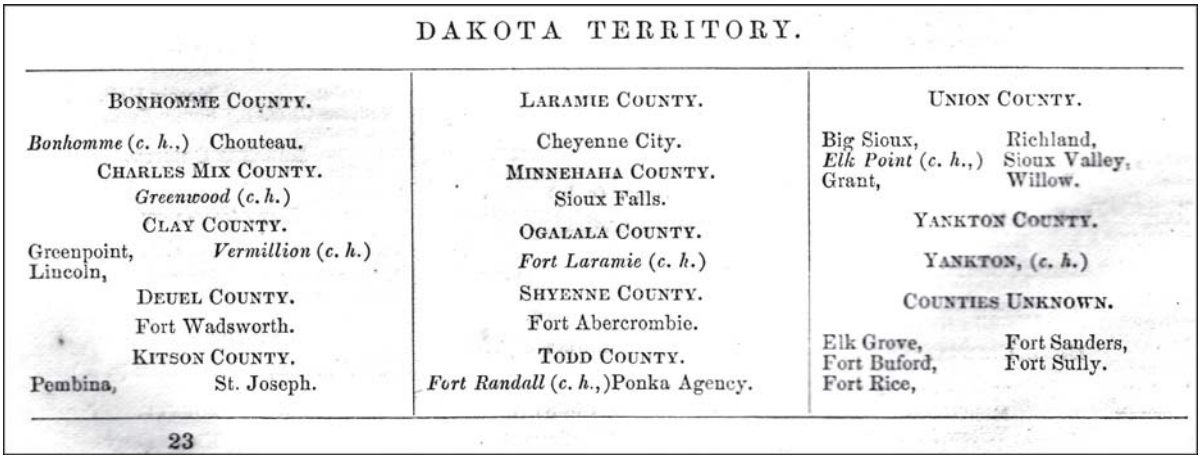
Fort Phil Kearney was the principal military post on the Bozeman Trail. Construction began July 13, 1866 by Companies A, C, E and H of the 2nd Battalion, 18th Infantry, under the direction of Col. Henry B. Carrington. The post was named for Maj. Gen. Philip Kearny, a popular figure in the American Civil War. The fort should be distinguished from the similarly-named Fort Kearny in Nebraska, which was named for Kearny's uncle Stephen W. Kearny.

The fort was located along the east side of the Bighorn Mountains in present-day northern Johnson County, approximately 15 miles north of Buffalo. Along with Fort Reno and Fort C. F. Smith, the fort was established along the Bozeman Trail in the Powder River Country at the height of the Indian Wars to protect prospective miners travelling the trail north from the Oregon Trail to present-day Montana.

Fort Phil Kearny was the largest of the three stockade fortifications along the trail. Its eight foot high log walls enclosed an area of 17 acres. The walls measured 1,496 feet in length, tapering in width from 600 feet on the north to 240 feet on the south. Construction of the stockade required more than 4,000 logs.

The fort was under continuous construction and was nearing completion in December 1866, when its garrison was due to be re-designated the 27th Infantry. At its peak strength the garrison numbered 400 troops and 150 civilians: 9 officers, a surgeon, and 329 enlisted men of five infantry companies of the 18th/27th Infantry, including the newly-recruited Company K, 27th; one officer and 60 men of Company C, 2nd Cavalry, and 150 civilian quartermaster and contractor employees.

The fort, known to the Indians as the "hated post on the Little Piney", played an important role in Red Cloud's War. The area around the fort was the site of the Fetterman massacre and the Wagon Box Fight. By 1868, the Union Pacific Railroad had reached far enough west that emigrants could reach the Montana gold fields through present-day Idaho, rendering the dangerous Bozeman Trail obsolete. Fort Kearny was abandoned on July 31, 1868 as part of the Treaty of Fort Laramie. Shortly after, it was burned by Cheyenne Indians.



DAKOTA TERRITORY.

BONHOMME COUNTY.
*Bonhomme* (*c. h.*,) Chouteau.
CHARLES MIX COUNTY.
*Greenwood* (*c. h.*)
CLAY COUNTY.
Greenpoint, *Vermillion* (*c. h.*)
Lincoln,
DEUEL COUNTY.
Fort Wadsworth.
KITSON COUNTY.
Pembina, St. Joseph.

LARAMIE COUNTY.
Cheyenne City.
MINNEHAHA COUNTY.
Sioux Falls.
OGALALA COUNTY.
*Fort Laramie* (*c. h.*)
SHYENNE COUNTY.
Fort Abercrombie.
TODD COUNTY.
*Fort Randall* (*c. h.*,)Ponka Agency.

UNION COUNTY.
Big Sioux, Richland,
*Elk Point* (*c. h.*,) Sioux Valley,
Grant, Willow.
YANKTON COUNTY.
YANKTON, (*c. h.*)
COUNTIES UNKNOWN.
Elk Grove, Fort Sanders,
Fort Buford, Fort Sully.
Fort Rice,

23

***Figure 52*** *A portion of the* List of Post Offices of the United States *revised to October 20, 1867 showing the Dakota Territory listing. There is no listing of a post office at Fort Phil Kearny.*

No post office was ever authorized for Fort Phil Kearny. Mail service—along with overall supply—was provided from Fort Laramie, but a few covers bearing manuscript Fort Phil Kearny postmarks dating from 1868 are known to exist (*figure 52*).

# Wyoming Territorial Fort Postmarks, 1840-1890

| | Earliest | Latest | STATE | Notes |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Fort Bridger (1850-1851 & 1858-1906)** | | | | |
| 1 MSS | 2 Feb 1858 | | UT | |
| 2 Straight Line | 1 Mar 1858 | | U.T. | 4-5 known |
| 3 CDS 34 | 9 Jun 1861 | 9 Dec 1865 | U.T. | |
| 4 DCDS | 28 Mar 1866 | | UTAH | Beals 3656 |
| 5 CDS 24 | 26 Oct 1868? | 10 May 1869 | UTA | |
| 6 CDS 26 | 2 Apr 1873 | 19 Sep 1873 | WYO. | |
| 7 CDS 26 | 24 Sep 1873 | 17 Oct 1874 | WYO. | |
| 8 CDS 23 | 13 May 1876 | 7 Aug 1877 | WYOMING | |
| 9 OC 24.5 | 23 Jul 187? | 16 Jan 1877 | WYOMING | |
| 10 CDS 23 | 24 Mar 1877 | 28 Jun 1877 | WYOMING | |
| 11 DCDS 32 | 3 Sep 1880 | 7 Dec 1882 | WYOMING | 6-bars |
| 12 DCDS 32.5 | 21 May 1884 | | WYOMING | Shield |
| 13 DCDS 28.5 | 5 Oct 1886 | 14 Oct 1887 | WYOMING | Indian Head |
| 14 CDS 27 | 3 May 1890 | 13 May 1890 | WYO. | Cut cork |
| **Camp Brown (1875-1879)** | | | | |
| None known | | | | |
| **Fort Fetterman (1873/1889)** | | | | |
| 1 CDS 25.5 | | 3 Jul 1878 | 17 Aug 1879 | |
| 2 DCDS 27 | | 19 Aug 1880 | 18 Sep 1880 | |
| 3 DCDS 28 | | 6 Mar 1882 | 29 Aug 1882 | |
| 4 DCDS 30 | | 24 Apr 1885 | 13 Sep 1885 | |
| 5 CDS 29 | | 23 May 1886 | 10 Jun 1886 | |
| 6 CDS 26 | | 30 Jul 1888 | | |
| **Fort Fred Steele (1868-1967)** | | | | |
| 1 CDS 28 | | 3 Apr 1881 | 11 Nov 1886 | |

# Wyoming Territorial Fort Postmarks, 1840-1890

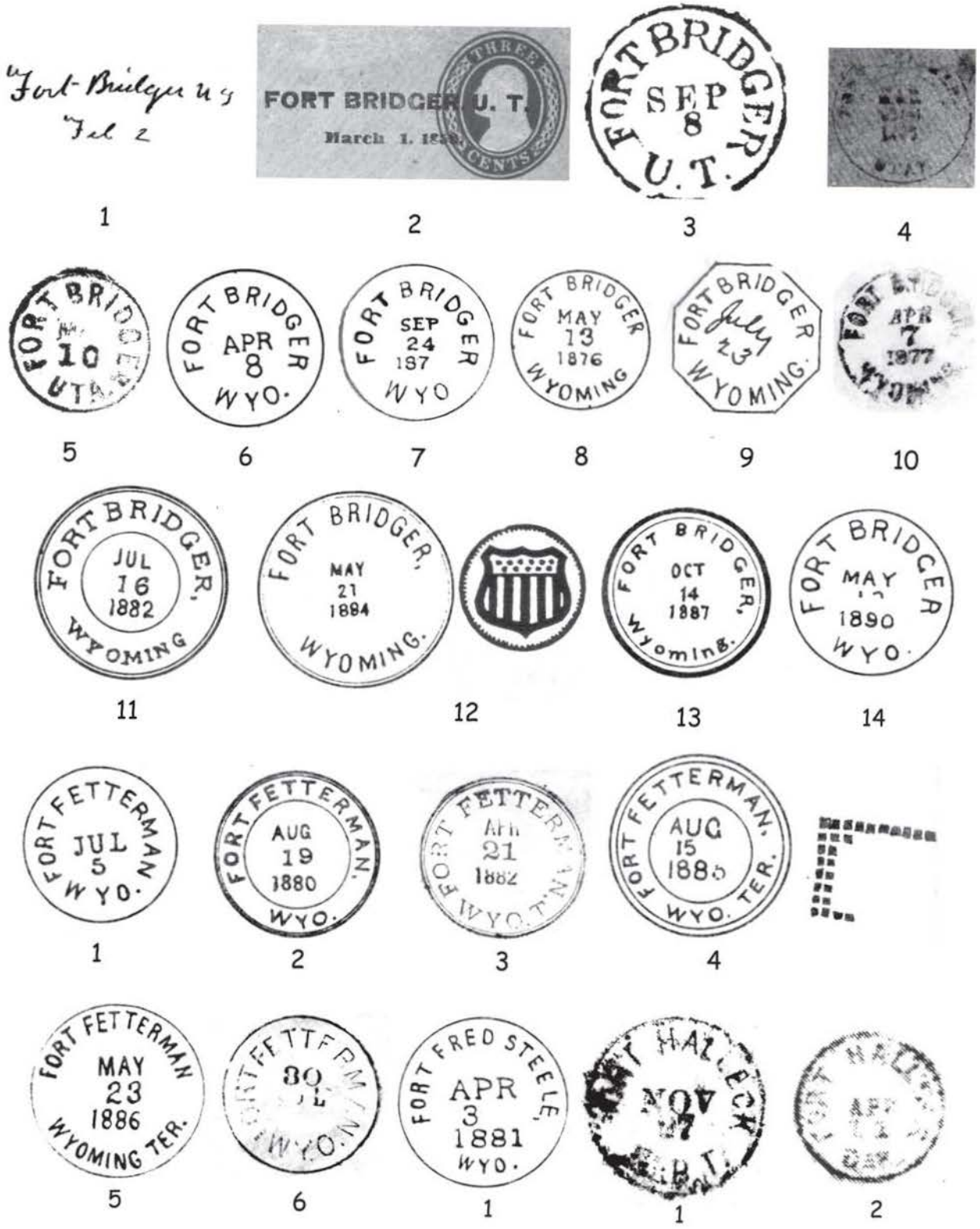



*Plate 1*

| | Earliest | Latest | STATE | Notes |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Fort Halleck (1863-1866)** | | | | |
| 1 CDS | 1 Feb 1864 | 23 Sep 1865 | NEB. T. | |
| 2 CDS 25 | 11 Apr 1866 | 24 May 1866 | DAK | |
| **Fort John Buford (Oct-Nov 1866)** | | | | |
| 1 MSS | 28 Jul 1866 | | | |
| **Fort Laramie (1850-Date)** | | | | |
| 1 MSS | 13 Jul 1850 | 15 May 1853 | | |
| 2 CDS 31 | 1 Jul 1851 | 5 Jul 1852 | O.R | |
| 3 CDS 31 | 15 Jun 185? | | | ASCC Report |
| 4 CDS 32 | 15 Jul 1854 | 21 Jun 1862 | N.T. | |
| | 13 Apr 1864 | 2 Sep 1864 | | 2nd period of use |
| 5 CDS 26 | 29 Sep 1862 | 13 Apr 1864 | N.T. | |
| 6 DCDS 31 | 10 Nov 1864 | 27 Jan 1865 | M.T. | |
| 7 CDS 26 | 26 Jun 1865 | 18 Jul 1865 | M.T, | |
| 8 CDS 26 | 1 Aug 1865 | 24 Sep 1868 | DAKA | |
| 9 CDS 26.5 | 23 Oct 1867 | 4 Dec 1868 | WG. TY. | |
| 10 CDS 25 | 14 Sep 1871 | | WYO | |
| 11 CDS 24? | 1 Jun 1876 | 8 Aug 1876 | WYO | |
| 12 CDS 27.5 | 15 Apr 1886 | | WYO | |
| 13 DCDS 32.5 | 11 Jun 1886 | | WYO | MOB |
| 14 CDS 27 | 13 Nov 1886 | 3 Nov 1888 | WYO | |
| **Fort McKinney (1878/1894)** | | | | |
| 1 Straight line | 1879 | | | McKinney W. T. |
| 2 Straight line | 1879 | | | Fort McKinney Wy.T. |
| 3 CDS 28.5 | 8 Sep 1879 | 15 Jul 1881 | W.T. | |
| 4 CDS 25.5 | 30 Jun 1883 | 3 Mar 1885 | WYO.T. | Ovate bar |
| 5 DCDS 30.5 | 5 Jun 1888 | 18 Feb 1890 | WYO. | Star |
| **Fort Russell (1883-1884 & 1888-1930)** | | | | |
| 1 DCDS 29.5 | 3 Jul 1883 | | WYO. | Italic Lettering |
| 2 DCDS 32 | 9 Feb 1888 | | WYO | |
| 3 CDS 27 | 7 Apr 1888 | | WYO. | |
| **Fort Sanders (1866-1868 & 1880-1882)** | | | | |
| 1 CDS 27 | 3 Mar 1868 | | DAKOTA | |
| 2 DCDS 28 | 1 Sep 1880 | | WYO. | |
| **Camp Stambaugh (1871-1878)** | | | | |
| 1 CDS 24 | 2 Mar 1875 | 24 Oct 1877 | WYO. | Negative Star |
| **Fort Washakie (1879-Date)** | | | | |
| 1 DCDS 28 | 6 Jun 1880 | 7 May 1882 | WYO. | |
| 2 CDS 25 | 11 Dec 1885 | | WYO. | |
| 3 DCDS 30 | 18 Nov 1887 | | WYO. | |
| 4 DCDS 30 | 22 Apr 1889 | | WYOMING | |

# Wyoming Territorial Fort Postmarks, 1840-1890

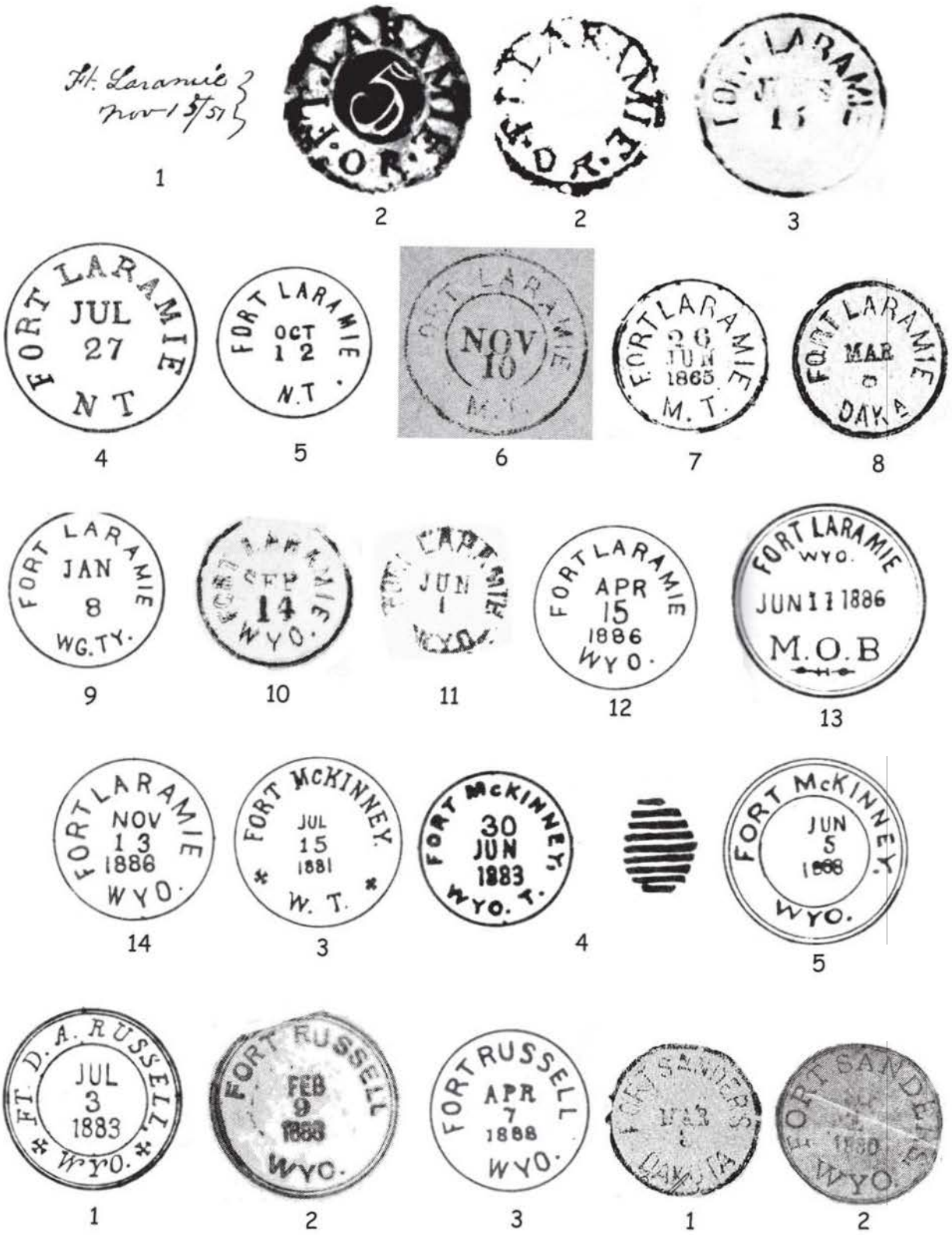



*Plate 2*

1

1 2 3 4

## Endnotes

1Van Zandt (1966), p. 78

2 http://www2.sandi.net/kearny/history/swk/fk.html

3 Chase & Cabeen, *The First Hundred Years of United States Territorial Postmarks, 1787/1887*, page 233

4 Winter, *La Posta* 1992 page 35 quoting Root & Conneley The Overland Stage to California, 1901.

*5 The Utah Expedition, 1857-1858*, New Hampshire Historical Society Collections, Vol. 12, p. 233.

6 Brown, Ralph H., *Historical Geography of the United States,* New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1948.

7 Chase & Cabeen, page 239.

8 Scotts Bluff National Monument, Historical Handbook Number Twenty-Eight, 1958 available online at http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online_books/hh/28/hh28l.htm

9 Gallagher & Patera, *Wyoming Post Offices, 1850-1990*, page28.

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*References Available on Request*

# Philadelphia's Postal Stations

***Figure 1*** *This cover is properly used and marked. Collected in Frankford and back stamped, then forwarded to the Main Office for canceling and dispatch. Since Frankford wasn't absorbed by the Main office till 1867, its old county markers were still useable. Norm Shachat has a cover which bears the same Frankford back stamp. His is of September 28, 1867, whereas Frankford's county post office was officially dissolved on August 15. The presumption is that new cancel devices had not yet arrived -–after 6 weeks!*

## Part 1

**by Tom Clarke**

There is so much data to digest in order to present a reasonably complete story of the many dozens of Philadelphia Stations that were in business across the last 150 years. Names changed as did the locations of the same office from time to time, and the same name (or letter or number) were used by quite different locations. Most have come and gone and their markings are very many.

Unfortunately, so much clarifying information is lacking. Desirable local and postal sources are no longer available, or never existed in written form. To mine the meager data that does exist in government archives, or just the APRL in State College PA, would require weeks or months of patching together a thousand data bits to paint a respectable stations history.

No doubt this is true for any city's stations. Despite the problems of vastness and practical difficulty, collectors have located information over time including stations' births, locations, varying functions, personnel, especially their postal markings, and (in most cases) their final demise as a DPO.

Since an inductive approach therefore isn't exactly feasible, we deduce as much as we can from the spotty evidence that covers give and the scattered announcement lists in the *Postal Guide*, etc. What we are left with in the broader sense, and in this article, is a satisfactory overview of Philadelphia stations and a rough chronology of cancels and associated markings. The results can then be a platform that Philadelphia specialists can build upon with greater precision.

## Main, County, and Stations

Philadelphia began as the largest and most influential postal facility in the new country. It was surpassed by rival cities by 1850 for that influence, and has become today a very ordinary, though gargantuan, communication resource.

Over the years, *La Posta* has helped trace its existence by presenting readers with a family tree of cancel types, with marking illustrations, and EKU and LKU dates. We've covered the principle markings of the City of Philadelphia's main post office, and equally, the pre-1867 County post office markings. But noth-

ing has appeared on the stations, which account for maybe a third to a half of the mail business of Philadelphia County.

The rural county markings that took life between about 1800 and 1867 were covered in *La Posta's* in detail in March and July 2005. Philadelphia City and Philadelphia County were ceremoniously combined into one political unit in 1854, but county markings persisted. Philadelphia Stations 'transitioned' out of those county post offices and would be joined by many similar junior offices in the 1870's to '90's. Eventually stations will be greatly assisted in their work by the addition of 136 citizen-friendly, local postal counters, scattered here and there, at the very end of the 19th century.

In 2006, *La Posta* presented an important piece of research: Dennis Pack's painstaking investigation into the then newly created class of mini-offices called substations. As the population multiplied beyond normal limits, particularly thanks to heightened immigration, stations and main offices alike felt the crunch, and relief from the onslaught was sought. Pack's listing covered all of the nation's large cities, not the least of which was Philadelphia. More on this data later.

## Slowly at first

When Philadelphia City officially took ownership of the 30+ towns, townships, villages and districts of Philadelphia County in 1854, postal affairs went on undisturbed. The Post Office, after all, was a jealously guarded federal matter even in those primitive days. Philadelphia had no say in the matter. It was the Federal Congress's responsibility to create post offices and determine post roads (Article III, Section 8). The Executive Branch, too, through the Postmaster General and his USPO staff, chose the names of the offices, at times to the chagrin of the locals to whom the post office 'belonged'.

In Philadelphia's case, by 1863, most of the locally named, old county offices had been consolidated into the Philadelphia Main Office chain of command, and by 1867, the last vestige of local post office naming had been eclipsed.

## The Start

West Philadelphia was a growing village destined to absorb the overflow of Philadelphia City, further to the east. It lay across the Schuylkill River, but Blockley Township (going back to William Penn) had had a local county post office since 1825, at the Blockley village crossroad. Along the river, and adjacent to new built, 'wonder' bridge, 'West Philadelphia' was taking shape as a separate entity. By 1829, it had taken the post office reins when the Jackson Administration chose it, not the Village of Blockley, as the new seat of postal affairs. (The new West Philadelphia inn keeper-postmaster Jacob Lenter, Jr., undoubtedly was a keen Jackson supporter, of course.)

In 1852, one generation and many hundreds of new villagers later, a second area office was allowed for the township, none other than a reborn Blockley Post Office. But that would bring the locals a few brief years of postal-identity happiness.

Overall Philadelphia was booming, like all American cities. In 1854 city fathers petitioned the Pennsylvania Legislature, and they conceded, to expanded the Philadelphia city limits to coincide with the county boundaries. Thus, the City (and County) of Philadelphia was born. Quickly, postal officials also saw their opportunity to expand. In 1855 they announced that West Philadelphia would be the first official Main Office station: Station B.

This is peculiar in one sense because there is no record of a Station 'A' previous to this. Are we missing yet more data? In all probability the authorities recog-

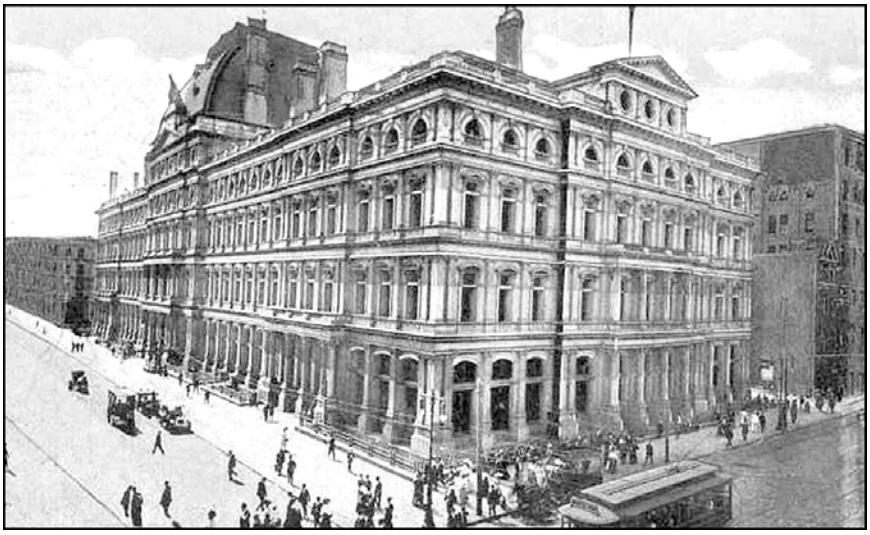


***Figure 2*** *An Idyllic picture postcard from the 1920s showing the 9th and Chestnut Street Main Post. Department stores, trolley lines, bus routes and cars plus shoppers and office personnel were making this edifice the wrong choice for the Main Office for Philadelphia.*

nized that everyone universally knew that the Main Office was the prime and undisputed postal establishment. It was 'A' to the world. Since a junior organization was required, it would take second place, 'B' place.

The choice of West Philadelphia was prescient, and genuine foresight, or dumb good luck, is evident. Eighty years later, in 1935, what had been officially West Philadelphia (Station B) in the old days had come to be thoroughly surrounded and absorbed for many miles around into the burgeoning city. The previous Main Office at 9th and Chestnut, was suffocating by a glut of traffic and population, and was in an increasingly rundown center city.

A new suburban location was essential, accessible to motor, rail, water and air traffic. They found it at 30th and Market Streets, in the heart of what everyone still calls 'West Philly' today. (Just ask *Men in Black's* and *Fresh Prince's* Will Smith).

## Why not the Northeast?

Authorities could have chosen much larger populated areas in the outlying regions for the 'B' slot. There was wealthy, if somewhat aloof, Germantown, rich in Revolutionary War history. And there was fast growing Frankford, a large and convenient town, expanding on the happenstance that it was on the rail route between center city Philadelphia and Trenton NJ and New York City.

However, Germantown was still quite German and in a way was pointed in the least favorable direction, 'George Washington slept here' notwithstanding. Shouldn't Frankford be the logical choice for Station B? Beside the favorable railroad connection, it was a quick trip up the Delaware River and up a navigable (in those days) Frankford Creek. Plus, there was the 100+ year old Frankford Road, a straight-ish earthen stage route that headed northeast toward the competition, the Big Apple. It had recently overtaken Philadelphia in commerce, population and wealth. Unfortunately, like Germantown, Frankford and beyond was still the outback and facing the wrong way. American was headed WEST. As a result of the Post Office's choice, Philadelphia's 'Great Northeast' beyond Frankford was still largely farmland well into the mid-20th century.

Despite consolidation, West Philadelphia physically touched Philadelphia's boundary, whereas Germantown and Frankford were about six miles distant –a good hour's buggy ride. Too much of a leap of faith to see what the united city would one day become.

West Philadelphia shared continuous, if primitive, streets with the city, had acquired not one, but two famous, architecturally-inspired bridges over the Schuylkill connecting the two towns, and it very presence westward mirrored the westward thrust of the country. In the 1840's and 1850's, Manifest Destiny toward the Pacific was the hue and cry of all (non-Native!) Americans. West Philadelphia's post office was a no-brainer to become second banana to the Main Office.

## Stations for the Growing Masses

Just prior to the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861, preparations had been underway to expand the Post Office via sub-offices, stations. It is not well understood just what the authorities envisioned by the name 'station'. Perhaps warmed over county post offices doing what they'd already had been doing?

Or were they to be a true outgrowth of the Main Office, managing Main Office mail carriers, adjusting their collections and deliveries to the tune of Main Office schedules, etc. Would they cancel mail at all?

Would they handle funds by selling postage and be responsible for registered letters? Would they col-

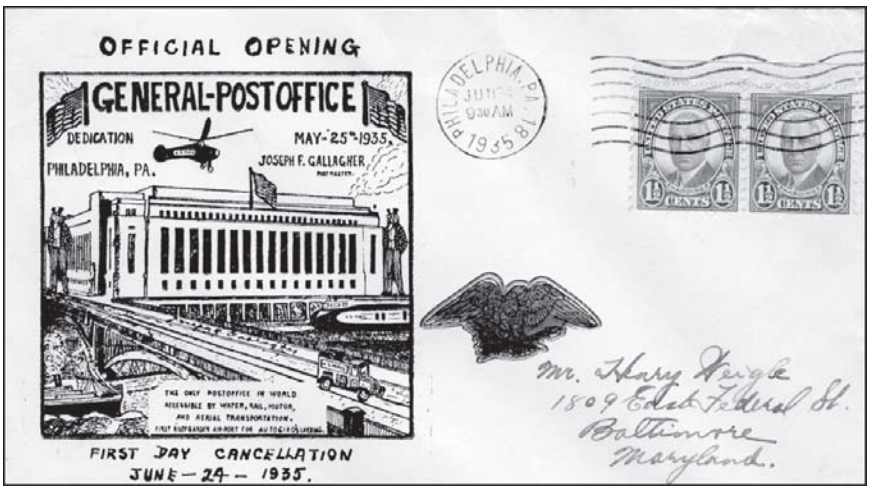



***Figure 3*** *A puff piece private cachet proclaiming the wonders of the new Main PO on its first day, in former West Philadelphia; the only PO in the world that was car, truck, train, air, and water accessible (and free of the run-down center city).*

lect, mark, and deliver letters and packages? Or maybe they would only be simply drop off points for mail sacks for an expanding cadre of carriers to divide up and distribute. We don't as yet know the answers.

## What We Do Know

But we know there would be four letter designations, A through D. Station A was subtitled "Western". It is tempting to identify this with 1855's Station B, West Philadelphia. But not so. West Philadelphia was to remain Station B. We know the locations of these four geographic stations, 'A' was approximately midway between West Philadelphia's Station B and the Main Office. Station C was called 'Northwest', in the post and growing Spring Garden section just beyond the old city line, and Station D, called 'Northeast', was a few miles only from the Main Office, in the Northern Liberties section.

The designations Western (hand in hand with West Philadelphia), Northeast, and Northwest indicate the direction of Philadelphia's physical growth. Note that there is no South Philadelphia included. The land of cheese steaks, old Veteran's Stadium, and the haunts of Joey Bishop, Eddie Fisher, Chubby Checker, and Sylvester 'Rocky' Stallone were undreamed of since the region was mostly open land for farms, and further south (where Philadelphia International Airport would be, and today's sports stadiums), just plain swamp.

A look at the Bob Stets map shows all station positions through 1882. Letters A-D are the inaugural stations just mentioned. The others scattered all across the upper reaches of the county coincide fairly well with the hamlets that used to have their own offices in pre-consolidation days. The gradual absorption of the entire county territory is indicated by the hatched grid lines.

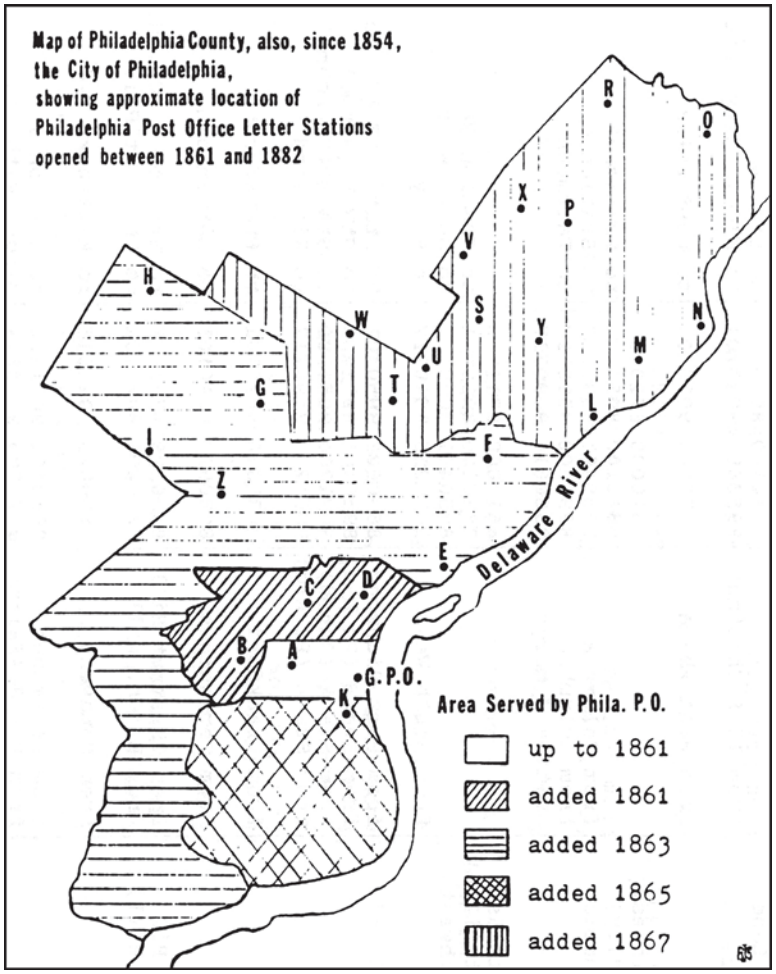



***Figure 4*** *The Stets map shows all station positions through 1882, A-Z. The scattered picture coincides with the county offices before 1854. The hatched grid lines show gradual absorption of the entire territory between 1861 and 1867. NOTE the relation between distant, though essential G(ermantown), F(rankford) and nearby West Philadelphia (B).*

## Letters, Not Names

When the changeover from locally-named county postal marking devices to Main Office station letter-names began was in 1863/4 through 1867. Additional letters eventually extended the Station list to letter 'Z'. Many letter-stations were emblematic of the office they replaced: Station 'F', for instance, had been Frankford Post Office, Station 'G', Germantown, etc.

The initial four Letter Station letters were redistributed in 1871 (except Station B-West Philadelphia). These letters were reassigned to other offices so whatever the original intent of these initial stations, they became true junior post offices with all the duties and responsibilities of a main office. The list of 26 Letter-Stations remained more or less standardized for the next 30 years.

## The Times They Are a-Changing

The 26 stations worked jointly with the Main Office by collecting and dispatching mail and acquiring their own sets of carriers (hired and deployed by the Main Office, of course) after home delivery and street addresses became standard and mandatory in the 1860's and 1870s. Station markings as we find them are varied. It is

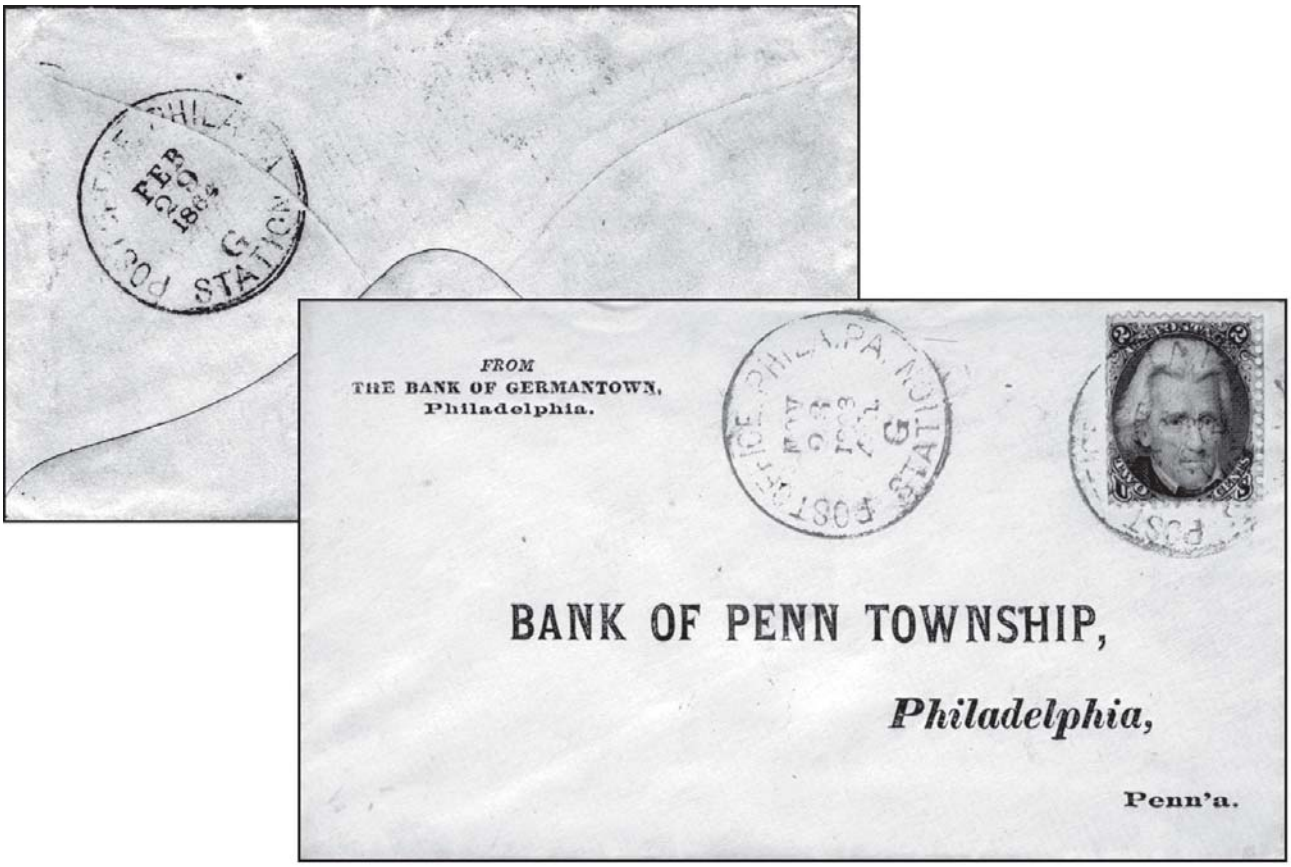



***Figure 5*** *Two Germantown station letters - Stations at first handled local mail independently as 'drop' letters, which were canceled on the stamp side. Out-of-town letters were the responsibility of the Main Office, so stations backstamped them and the Main Office canceled the postage and dispatched them. In 1867, after the last stage of absorption of the old county offices (Aug 15), this rule was abandoned.*

difficult to explain the rationale for the changes we see in marker design and distribution amongst the many the stations. They had the discretion to employ their choice of designs.

But a blizzard of mail was swamping the Main Office as the 19th century drew to a close. The glut impeded handling the main within the stations and also the quick appointed rounds that had to be accomplished by carriers several times each day.

Exacerbating the increase of first and second class mail was the adoption by the Post Office of the mail order business in 1872, and the rapid growth of package mail sent by Aunt Jane, but especially entrepreneurial firms like Marshall Fields and Sear & Roebuck. This, thanks to the new Fourth Class mail (1879) at the astounding cheap fare of one cent per pound. The explosion of Second Class (soon to be Third Class) junk mail in the roaring post-war economy of the 1870's and '80's is fascinating to collect but was part of the nightmare for the post office personnel.

At least the Main Office had the wherewithal to think in terms of an ally, to help speed things along: the harnessing of new-found electricity in the late 1870's. Still, it would take more than a dozen years for manufacturers to develop consistency, and postal officials to gain faith in the new mechanics.

Examples of these station markings are not easy to come by. Through the offices of forums like eBay, dealers and especially collector-dealers have become sensitive to station markings in the last dozen years. This is particularly true for Philadelphia, though it seems to be several furlongs ahead of other cities in the race to gather material for reasonably complete collections.

Philadelphia exhibitor Norm Shachat has been showing a comprehensive collection of 19th century Philadelphia stations in the last ten years. Anyone collecting their city's postal history must be equally dogged in their search for and making heads and tails out of their 19th century station finds. It's not the sexiest pursuit in postal history, but it is immensely satisfying and broadening.

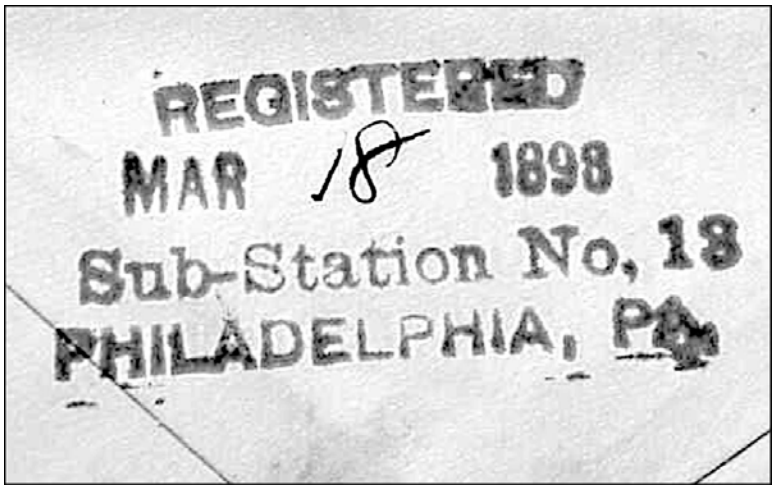



***Figure 6*** *Registered letters are one of the few ways to find sub-station markings; Station 13 on March 18, 1898 security-backstamped this letter, possibly in between fitting a gentleman's new shoes or selling a ream of paper.*

## Why stop with stations?

Postal expansion at its peak at the turn of the 20th century, and stations along with Main Offices feeling the whip during the feverish 1895-1902 growth period. Authorities looked for a new mechanism to facilitate perturbed postal customers tired of queuing in lines. The result was store-front postal facilities, sub-stations. For clarity they were assigned numbers as opposed to names or letters, so in a slightly misleading way they are sometimes referred to as 'number-stations'.

They were a fresh slant on bringing service to the people where they were, an example of bringing the mountain to Mohammed. In many cases sub-stations were be a small postal counter, probably in a retail store, where a clerk had added duties (reimbursed) to sell stamps, and receive, mark, and prepare mail matter for pick up later in the day by a mail wagon heading to the main office or nearest station.

***Figure 7*** *An average Columbian 30 cent stamp with an enigmatic double oval '29' cancel from Philadelphia. It tells us that it was marked-up at the 18th and Vine sub-station (inaugurated on March 1, 1899). Thus a late use for the stamp. (Thanks to Dennis Pack for the data search!)*

Dennis Pack, mentioned previously, generously passed along a 251-line (!!) table transcribed of Philadelphia-only number-stations gleaned from *Postal Bulletins* (and possibly elsewhere). He listed their beginning dates of operation, addresses in some cases, etc.

While the double-circle counter stamps bearing these numbers are rarely found, the double oval package markers are less so. Their numbers tell us of customer convenience, the increasing crush of humanity in 1900s cities, and of a postal establishment willing to be creative and willing to experiment with changed procedure,

Some postal estimates of sub-station needs were on target, others not. Dennis' research shows flip-flopping of sub-stations up to full station status, and quick demotions at other locations from station level back down to sub-station classification. This free-wheeling adaptation to necessity is refreshing to see from today's perspective, and applied to all cities, not only Philadelphia.

Though the number of Philadelphia's stations began with one in 1855, grew to four by 1861, and by 1867 and into the 1870s encompassed all 26 letters. But beginning in 1895 and through 1902, sub-stations, using numbers, numbered from 'one' through 136!

Eventually consolidation and the dreaded bottom line, the purse strings would call a halt to such wanton growth of postal outlets, but happily, just in time, mechanization will have enabled postal staffs to do the job more efficiently with less facilities as we moved into the 20th century.

## 20th Century Stations

Much more mail, less and less local treatment and less hands-on contact with mail matter. Station mail mark-up after roughly the 1920s was fundamentally changed. The Main Office took over machine cancellation wholesale from most of the outlying stations. Exceptions were the few large, commercially-connected stations that had acquired a certain independency with

***Figure 8*** *West Phialdelphia's (Station B's) special relationship with the Main Office is emphasized here: a faulty Main Office double oval-14 marker was cut down to fit the killer portion of a duplex Station B device and used in 1882-3. This is the only recognized instance of this happening at Philadelphia.*

***Figure 9*** *Of the couple dozen station markers, fancy killers account for maybe 1 in 7. Here a large cork B was crafted, stamped and sent to Germantown sometime in 1877-83.*

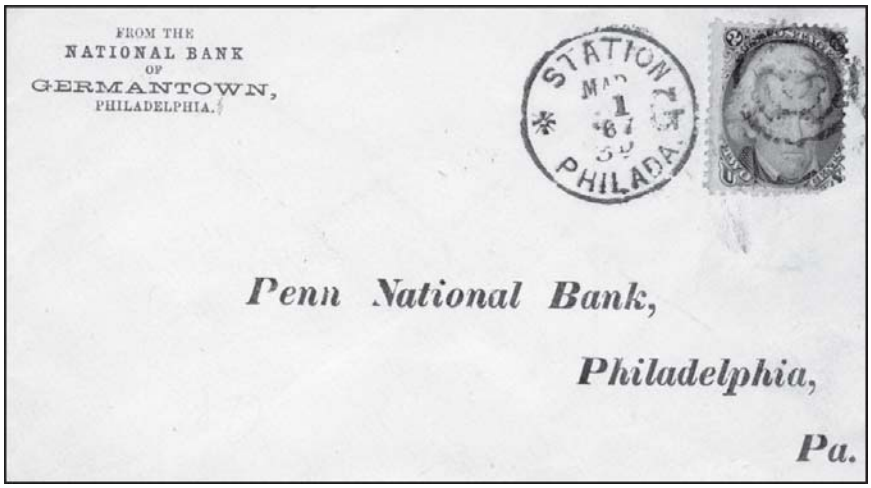



***Figure 10*** *Germantown shared, with an even dozen (so far) other stations, the interesting starred dial and bullseye cancel shown here, in 1867. This marker series was used from 1864.*

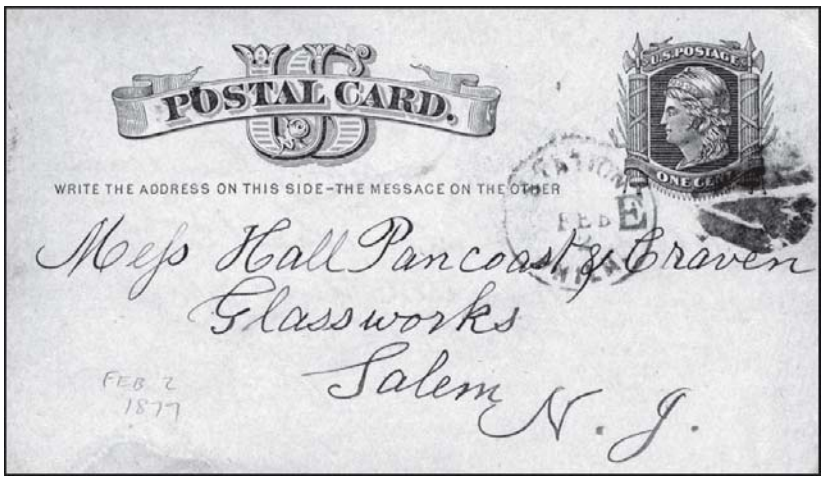



***Figure 11*** *Station E is the former Port Richmond, on the Delaware waterfront. This fancy shows an arrowhead pointing toward the E in the dial on a postal from February 1, 1877.*

***Figure 12*** *Frankford had a penchant for star killers, voided or solid. This small style dial dates to probably 1873.*

***Figure 13*** *This Station K (Southwark), the furthest <u>south</u> of any station into the 1870's, is dated as Feb 19, 1870, very shortly before Station K momentarily ceased operation. Station K reappeared as Sandiford Station in 1876 (then later descends to sub-station 27, at 49th and Woodland Ave., in southern West Philadelphia. Go figure.*

***Figure 14*** *There was NO Station J in Philadelphia, probably because it would easily be confused with Station "I". Nonetheless, here is a Dial prominently displaying a "J" – no doubt a fanciful rendition of an "I" after 18th century fashion. The date is Sep 6, 1866.*

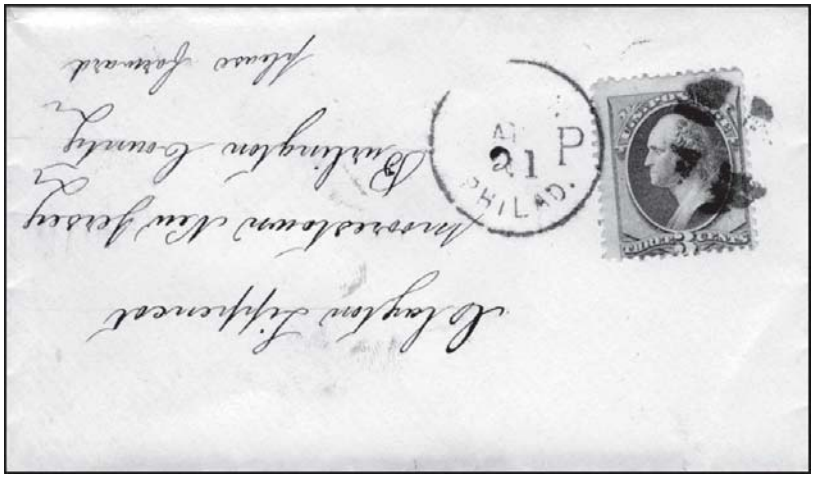



***Figure 15*** *Station P is hard to come by. It is the former Bustleton in the far Northeast of Philadelphia, and though in existence as "P" between 1867 and 1895, will be relegated to sub-station 28 for three years, only to be reborn as Bustleton Station in 1898, and it is still active.*

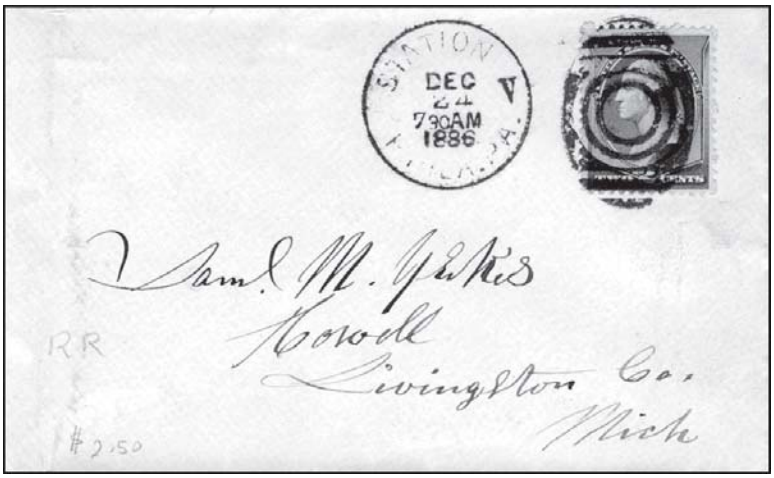
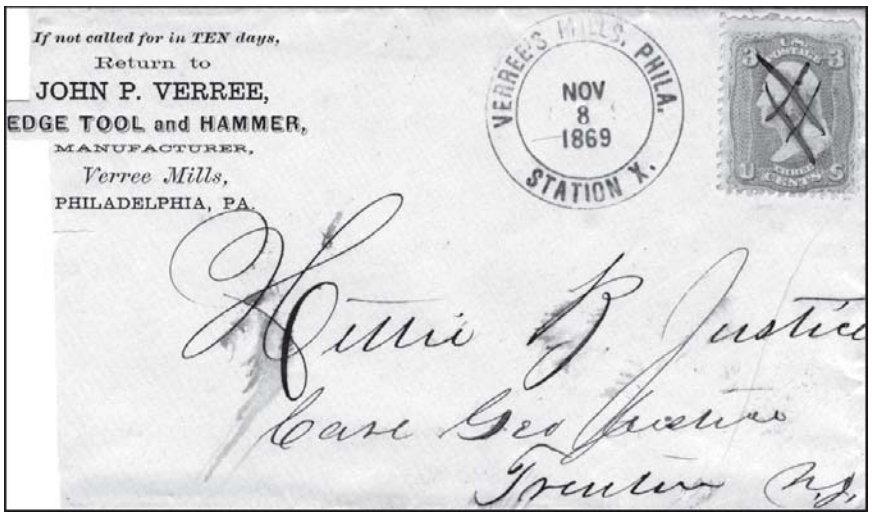



***Figure 16*** *Station V was Fox Chase Post Office under the County system, and in 1902 reverted back to Fox Chase again. This rare item, coming from a very small village, is dated 1886, and bears a striking double bullseye killer.*

←

***Figure 17*** *Near Fox Chase was Verree's Mills, a water powered tool factory long gone. This very distinctive double circle dial in blue perhaps reflects the dreams of John Verree, who hoped for wealth no doubt and lasting notoriety. Today he is remembered for a four-lane feeder road in a congested suburban section of suburban Philadelphia.*

→




their own machines and killer designs. They continued to use them, no doubt till they wore out, at which point the Main Office impatient knocked on the door....

The 20th century's electronic routine had set in and it still exists in today's 21st century, in spades. Beloved localization, demanded by postal patrons, and for a while acceded to by Washington officials, has been abandoned. Few hometown, station names appear on mail matter; whole cities seem to have disappeared in favor of regional postmarking and 18-wheeler shipments. We all know the story of, say, Fort Lauderdale mail taking a 400 mile trip to Jacksonville just to be dispatched south again to get to Palm Beach. But it does so in 2 days. Such is progress, and we will reserve to next time coverage of the 20th century's station experience.

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mmdattol@aol.com

# History of the Fort Custer, Michigan, Post Office

**By Paul Petosky**

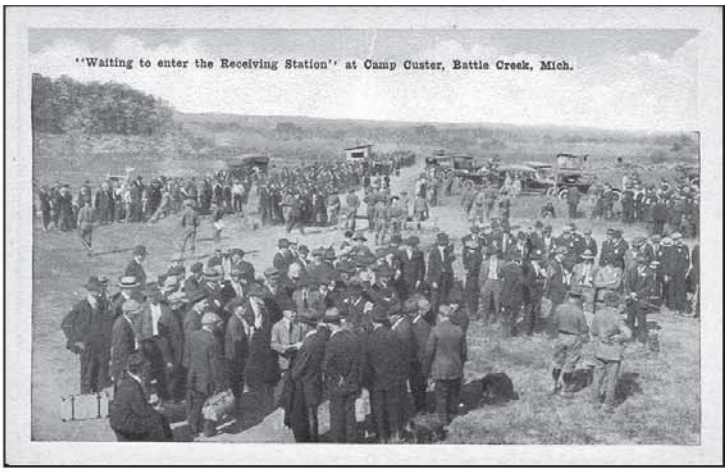
Fort Custer is named in honor of General George A. Custer, a graduate of West Point in 1861, who fought in the Civil War but is better known for his exploits in the Indian fighting that occured during the settlement of the great western plains. During World War I, 40,000 troops were trained on the site of the present fort—then known as Camp Custer—a temporary Army post noted for its 85th Michigan Division. Following World War I, most of the buildings at Camp Custer were dismantled, but the site was continued in use as a summer training camp for the Reserve Officers Training Corps and the Citizens Military Training Corps.

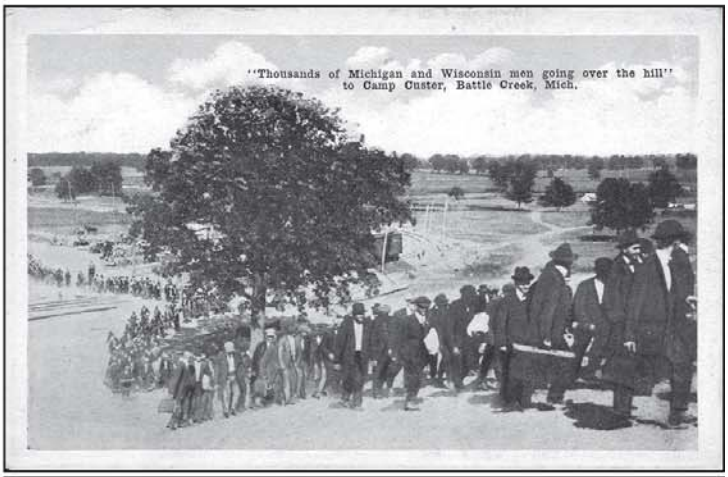
Desiginated as a permanent Army post in August 1940, Camp Custer was renamed Fort Custer and a contract was let for its construction. The first barracks completed were occupied by troops on November 20, 1940. The major units of the fort include the Provost Marshal General Training Center, the Recruit Reception Center, and the Post Compliement.

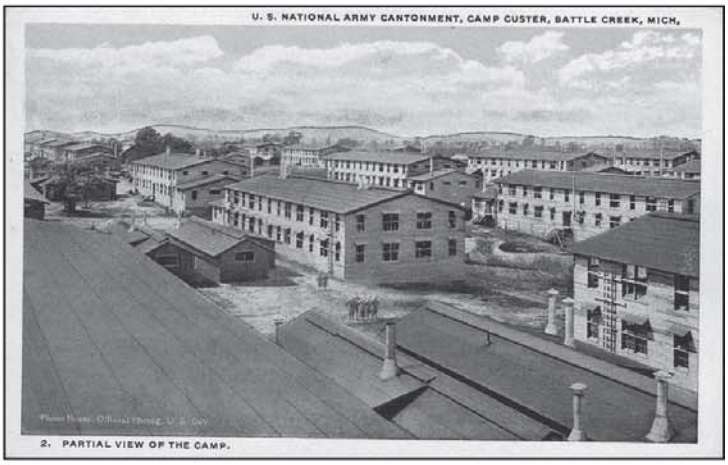
During World War II, more than 300,000 troops trained there, including the famed 5th Infantry Division (also known as the "Red Diamond Division") which left for combat in Normandy, France, June 1944. Fort Custer also served as a prisoner of war camp for 5,000 German soldiers until 1945.

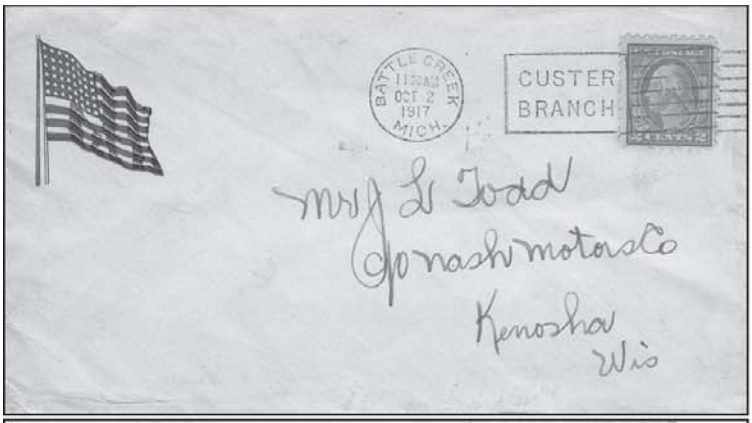
The Camp Custer Post Office was established as Custer on August 6, 1917, and was a contract branch of the Battle Creek Post Office. It discontinued operation on December 16, 1920. It was reestablished as Camp Custer on June 15, 1922.The named changed to Fort Custer on August 15, 1940. It discontinued operation on December 31, 1947 with mail service to Battle Creek.

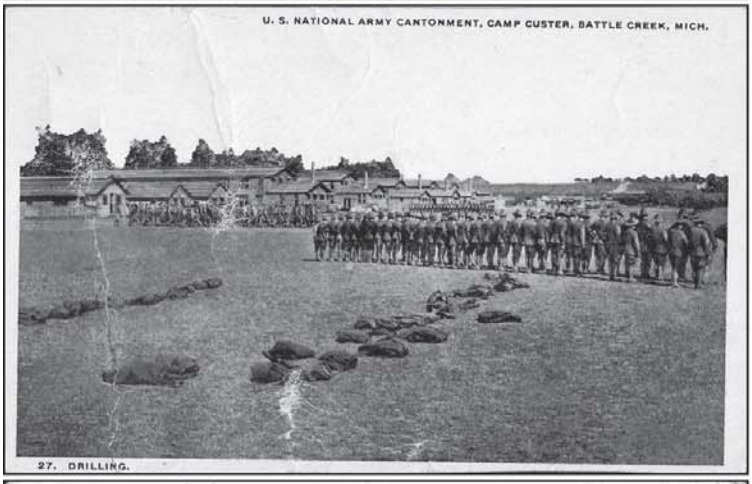
During the duration of postal service operations at Camp Custer/Fort Custer it remained as a contract branch of the Battle Creek Post Office. It is noted through *Postal Bulletins* that the Camp Custer Post Office may have operated on a part time basis from time-to-time during the period

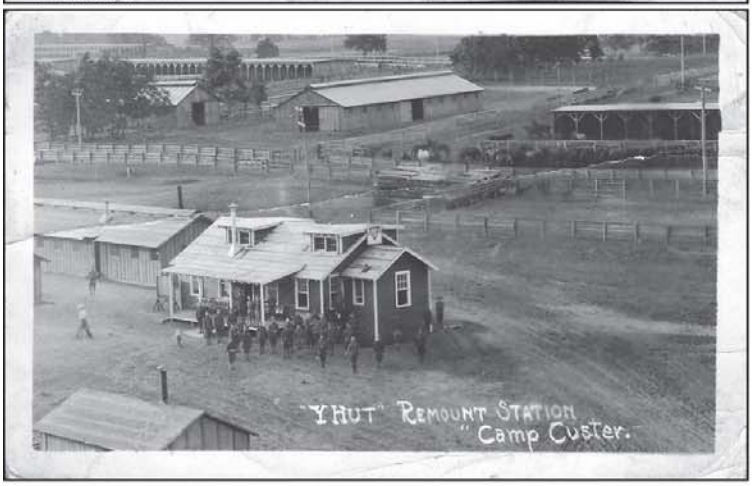









between World War I & II. The *Bulletins* make reference to a "Temporary Station" having been established at Camp Custer on at least two occasions: May 1, 1923 to October 1, 1923 and May 1, 1924 to (no closing date given).

In 1968, the Michigan Department of Military and Veterans Affairs assumed control of Fort Custer. Today, the facility is federally-owned and state-operated, and is the home to the 177th Regiment Regional Training Institute, and the Regional Maintenance Training Site. In addition, the new Augusta Armory is located within Fort Custer's boundaries.

Fort Custer's training facilities are used by the Michigan National Guard and other branches of the armed forces, primarily from Ohio, Illinois, and Indiana. Many Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) students from colleges in Michigan, Ohio, Illinois, and Indiana also train at this facility, as well as the FBI, the Michigan State Police, various law enforcement agencies, and the Lansing Community College Truck Driver Training School.

Fort Custer offers a state-of-the-art distance learning center, barracks and dining facilities for visiting units, and plenty of training areas. Fort Custer is located in Calhoun County and is six miles west of Battle Creek.

**Acknowledgements:** United States Postal Service; *Michigan Postal History The Post Offices* by David M. Ellis (1993); Michigan Army National Guard; Fort Custer Training Center; WWII Camp Custer phone-booklet map (Bell Telephone)

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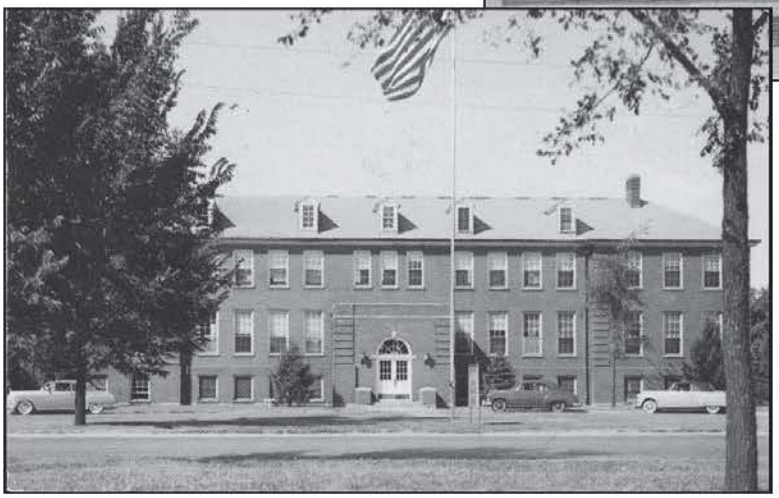

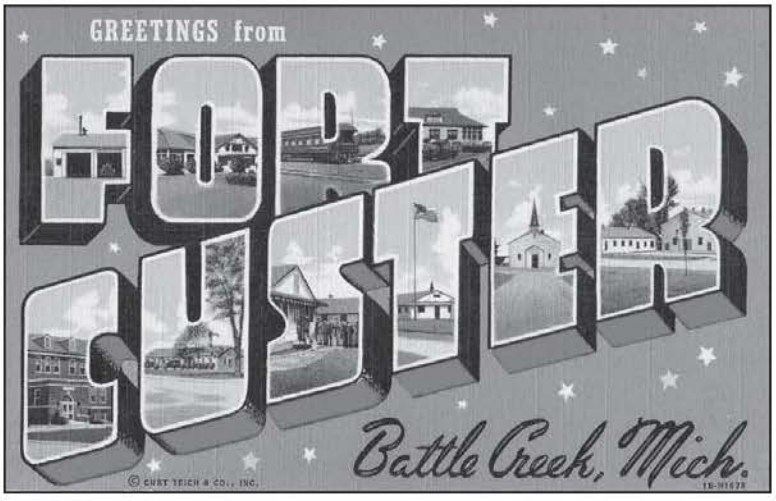
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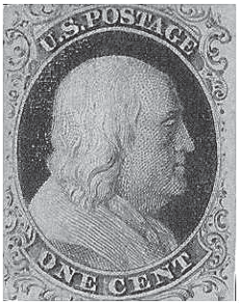


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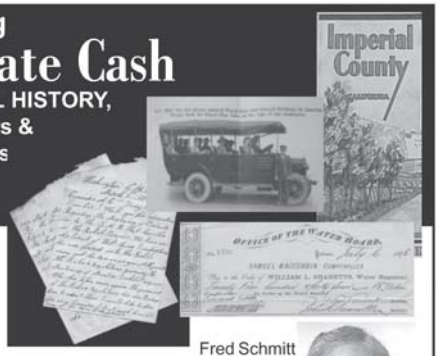


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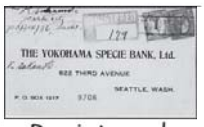

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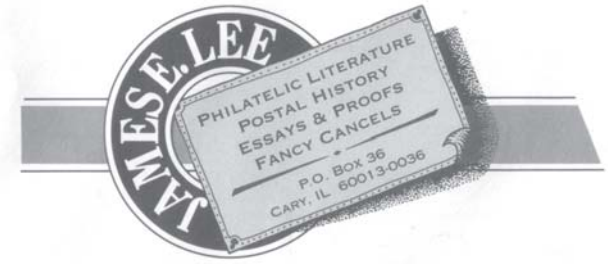


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| 26-30 | $1.50 | $3.75 | $7.14 |
| 31-35 | $1.75 | $4.35 | $8.28 |
| 36-40 | $2.00 | $4.98 | $9.48 |
| 41-45 | $2.25 | $5.61 | $10.68 |
| 46-50 | $2.50 | $6.24 | $11.88 |
| 51-55 | $2.75 | $6.84 | $13.02 |
| 56-60 | $3.00 | $7.47 | $14.22 |
| 61-65 | $3.25 | $8.10 | $15.42 |
| 66-70 | $3.50 | $8.73 | $16.62 |
| 71-75 | $3.75 | $9.33 | $17.76 |
| 76-80 | $4.00 | $9.96 | $18.96 |
| 81-85 | $4.25 | $10.59 | $20.16 |
| 86-90 | $4.50 | $11.22 | $21.36 |
| 91-95 | $4.75 | $11.82 | $22.50 |
| 96-100 | $5.00 | $12.45 | $23.70 |

## SOCIETIES

COLLECT CANADA/B.N.A.? Consider BNAPS! The society offers study groups; publications; annual exhibitions; and online library bnapstopics.org! View: www.bnaps.org. Contact: P. Jacobi, Secretary, #6-2168 150 A Street, Surrey, BC Canada V4A 9W4 [40-1]

## FOR SALE: COVERS

POSTAL HISTORY featured in our mail bid sales. Free catalogs. Juno Stamps, 2180 Hartford Ave., St. Paul, MN 55116-1010. junostamps@aol.com [40-1]

DO YOU COLLECT State Postal History, Doane Cancels or cancels of any kind? Now 38 States online plus Dakota Territory and more coming. Over 9000 covers online with1500 of them pictured. Website: http://www.towncancel.com/ Gary Anderson, P.O. Box 600039, St. Paul, MN. 55106. Email: garyndak@ix.netcom.com. [39-5]

COVER AUCTIONS, NAVY/MILITARY; Classics; Submarines; Surface Ships; Locations; APO;s; POSTCARDS; MEMORABILIA. Mixture of commercial; philatelic; wartime covers. Free illustrated catalogues. Jim Smith (USCS, MPHS), Box 512, Oshtemo, Michigan 49077 [39-4]

## FOR SALE: COVERS

DPO's, RPO's, ships, Doanes, Expos, machines, military, advertising, auxiliaries, and more! My Mail Bid Sales offer thousands of postal history lots. Write/ call for sample catalog. Jim Mehrer, 2405-30th Street, Rock Island, IL 61201. Phone: (309) 786-6539. Email: mehrer@postal-history.com. Internet *website:http://www.postal-history.com*.[39-4]

## TOWNS:WANTED

CALIFORNIA - KERN & IMPERIAL County covers and cards. Especially interested in Bakersfield corner cards. Send description or photocopies and prices to John Williams, 887 Litchfield Ave., Sebastopol, CA 95472 [39-5]

COLES COUNTY IL covers and post cards wanted, especially before 1920. List avaialble. Michael Zolno, 2855 West Pratt, Chicago, IL 60645, email mzolno@aol.com [39-5]

MASSACHUSETTS: FRANKLIN County Postal History: stampless to modern. Especially need illustrated mail, usages with revenue stamps (checks, deeds, etc.) and precancels. Send photocopies or scans with asking price. Request town list post free. Jim Kotanchik, PO Box 684, West Acton, MA 01720-0684, email: jimko@verizon.net [39-4]

## TOWNS: WANTED

PHILLIPS COUNTY, MONTANA. I am developing a personal collection of postal history of the post offices which have existed in Phillips County, MT. (This is the county in which I was born and grew to adulthood). I hope to acquire postal covers and postcards (especially PPAs) from all these post offices. The collection dates will span from approximately 1900 to 1970. Among the postmarks/ post offices for which I am still looking are: Alkali, Bellealta, CeeKay, Cole, Cowan, Freewater, Greve, Leedy, Legg, Lonesome, Lost Lake, Strater, Waleston, Whitcomb, Ynot and Zenon...and others. Please send descriptions or photocopies/scans with asking price, by e-mail or postal mail to: Evert Bruckner, 1724 Morning Dove Lane, Redlands, CA 92373. e-mail: ebruckner@earthlink.net [39-4]

NORTH DAKOTA: all postal history wanted from territorial to modern. Send photocopies or on approval. Gary Anderson, P.O. Box 600039, St. Paul, MN 55106 [39-5]

SPOKANE FALLS / SPOKANE, WA. 1872-date wanted: Territorial, registered, postage due, certified, commercial airmail, foreign destinations, unusual station cancels, usages, and postal markings. Send description or photocopies/scans to Larry Mann, 655 Washington PL SW, Mukilteo, WA 98275 Larrymann02@aol.com [39-5]

WESTPORT WA Collector seeking older advertising covers and pre-1950 postcards from Westport, WA. Contact: Douglas Olson, PO Box 2177, Westport, WA 98595 [39-5]

**NOTE:**

**EXPIRATION DATE SHOWN AT END OF EACH AD, i.e., [39-4], MEANS AD WILL EXPIRE WITH THIS ISSUE. AD DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE:**

**September 5, 2008**

## MILITARY: WANTED

ALASKA & WESTERN CANADA APOs, interesting Pan American (Scott 294-299) issues on cover and Pittsburgh/Allegheny County covers from 1851-1861. Send Xeroxes or scans and pricing to Bob McKain, 2337 Giant Oaks Drive, Pittsburgh, PA 15241 (57-vette@adelphia.net) [39-6]

WANTED ON APPROVAL: KOREAN WAR COVERS, 1950-1953 with U.S. MARINES return addresses & postmarks that read U.S. NAVY/12867 Br./Unit No., also 14009, 14011, 14012, 14021. Also, ship covers sent by Marines while on active Korean war duty; also collect stamped mail & Registered (not free-franked) from any service branch in Korea from June 27 1950 – Dec 31, 1950. Please send scans and prices to Cath Clark, lapostagal@hotmail.com

## COLUMBIAN COVERS: WANTED

1¢ COLUMBIAN (Scott US #230) COVERS for eventual exhibit. Early/late uses, multiples on cover, unusual destinations, fancy cancels, etc. Also collecting 1893 Columbian Expo covers & paper ephemera. Send scans, photocopies, or on approval to: Doug Merenda, PO Box 20069, Ferndale, MI 48220-0069 or ddm_50@yahoo.com [40-3]

## DOANE CANCELS: WANTED

Buy, sell and trade Doane Cancels of all states. Send photocopies or on approval. Gary Anderson, P.O. Box 600039, St. Paul, MN 55106 [39-5]

## PREXIES: WANTED

URGENTLY NEED 4½¢ Prexies for collection. Looking for covers, proofs, printing varieties. Anything that fits into a specialized collection. Describe with asking price. Howard Lee, Box 2912, Delmar, CA 92014. Tel: 858-350-7462. Email: gimpo@adnc.com [39-3]

## SUB-STATION POSTAL MARKINGS: WANTED

SUB-STATION postal markings containg "sub" dated between 1889 and 1912 from any US city. Send photocopies to Dennis Pack, 1915 Gilmore Ave., Winona, MN 55987 [39-4]

## FOREIGN: WANTED

COMMERCIAL AIR air covers, 1945 or earlier, any intercontinental mail, i.e, Europe to Asia, North America to Africa, Australia to Europe, etc. Send scans or photocopies for my offer, or on approval to Richard Helbock, PO Box 100, Chatsworth Island, NSW 2469, Australia or helbock@la-posta.com

## WANTED: MISCELANY

US & POSSESSIONS POST OFFICE SEALS: on/off cover, Scott listed and unlisted. Especially need Ryukyu and Philippine material. Also want worldwide official seals on cover. Send photocopies or scans with asking price. Jim Kotanchik, PO Box 684, West Acton, MA 01720-0684, email: jimko@speakeasy.net [39-4]

## LITERATURE: FOR SALE

*www.pacificpioneers.com* - Check out this 700 page Book on Pan Am's flight covers in the Pacific - 1935 to 1946. I sell, trade or exchange information on new cover finds. Also want to purchase similar material. Jon E. Krupnick, 700 Southeast 3rd Ave., Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33316 [39-6]

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We hope that you have enjoyed our journal and I wish to cordially invite you to become a subscriber.

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Sincerely yours,

Richard W. Helbock,

Publisher

---

**La Posta Publications**
**33470 Chinook Plaza, #216**
**Scappoose, OR 97056**

Hello Richard & Cath:

Yes, I'll give *La Posta* a try. You may begin my subscription with the Volume 39, Number 5 (Oct-Nov 2008) issue. Enclosed is my check in the amount of $25.00.*

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*The $25 per volume rate applies to US domestic addresses only. Please consult page 1 of this issue for current overseas & Canadian rates. Pay via credit card through Pay Pal at *www.la-posta.com/journal.htm*

## ADVERTISING IN LA POSTA

DISPLAY ADS are available on a contract basis as shown below. Ad contents may be changed from issue-to-issue, provided changes are received by the posted deadlines.

**INSIDE PAGES**

| Ad Size | One Issue | Three Issues | Six Issues |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1/8-page | $15.00 | $33.00 | $60.00 |
| 1/4-page | $33.00 | $76.00 | $130.00 |
| 1/2-page | $60.00 | $139.00 | $254.00 |
| 1-page | $110.00 | $253.00 | $462.00 |

**INSIDE COVER***
**(FULL-PAGE, BLACK & WHITE)**

| | |
|---|---|
| One Issue | $192.00 |
| Two issues | $302.00 |
| Four issus | $638.00 |
| Six issues | $880.00 |

**BACK COVER***
**(1/2 PAGE, COLOR)**

| | |
|---|---|
| One Issues | $300.00 |
| Two issues | $522.00 |
| Four issus | $880.00 |
| Six issues | $1,320.00 |

*We normally ask that back cover and inside cover ads be taken out for a minimum of two issues due to our advance printing schedule for covers.

**All charges include Type setting & Layout**

AD DEADLINES FOR INSIDE PAGES are as follows: Dec/Jan issue - **Nov 15**; Feb/Mar issue - **Jan 15**; Apr/May issue - **Mar 15**; Jun/Jul issue - **May 15**; Aug/Sep issue - **July 15**; Oct/Nov issue - **Sep 15**.

AD DEADLINES FOR **BACK COVER COLOR AD & INSIDE COVER AD**S are: Dec/Jan & Feb/Mar issue – **Oct 31**; Ap/May & Jun/July issue – **Feb 28**; Aug/Sep & Oct/Nov issue – **June 30.**

**E-mail your ad to Cath Clark at: lapostagal@hotmail.com**

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VOLUME 30 NO. 4 WHOLE NUMBER 224