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USA-India Air Mail to 1945

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COVER: Iconic images of the United States and India provide the background for a few selected covers illustrating efforts by people in those countries to stay in touch via air mail during World War II and earlier. Helbock's article in this issue tells the story of air accelerated mail between the US and India before 1945.

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Publisher's Page

The Future of La Posta

"The time has come," the Walrus said,
"To talk of many things:
Of shoes—and ships—and sealing-wax—
Of cabbages—and kings—
And why the sea is boiling hot—
And whether pigs have wings."
Lewis Carol, **The Walrus and the Carpenter**

This is a column I have dreaded writing for at least the last three years. It has been evident for most of the last decade that a drastic change in the character of our little journal was unavoidable. I've spoken in recent columns of the brutal economics and demographics faced by nearly all publications today, so I won't dwell on that point here other than to say how much Cath and I appreciate the support you readers have shown us over the years. Your encouraging letters and notes of appreciation have carried us on many days when the financial realities of publishing an 80-page bi-monthly magazine with an exceeding limited number of subscribers and a declining population base have raised dark, gloomy clouds about the future.

As you are undoubtedly aware, we began a new on-line publishing venture with the current volume and the last four numbers have been made available at no cost through the La Posta Publications Library on Yudu.com. We have seen the numbers of viewing of each of these issues increase substantially throughout the year, and, as it stands today, there have been 394 viewings of Volume 40, Number 3—the latest issue to experience a full period of on-line availability. Perhaps even more encouraging, there have been over 370 viewings of the new Stehle-DeRoest Non-standard Postmark catalog, and that has only been available on line for 3-4 weeks.

While we take heart that there is probably a growing market for a strictly on-line postal history publication, we are also keenly aware that many of you would be distressed, or at least perturbed, to see *La Posta* disappear as a paper journal.

There is another factor that has been playing on our decisions about La Posta's future. I will turn 72 in March 2010, and, despite the fact that I have been extremely lucky that my health remains reasonably sound, there is no question that the years are taking their toll. Cath and I love to travel, and there are many fascinating places to see and things to do both here in the South Pacific and elsewhere on this wonderful planet. I have lived with the bi-monthly rhythm of *La Posta* for the past 40 years, and I think it might be a good time to slow down

So Here is the Plan

We crunched the subscription and advertising revenue numbers and concluded that we would need a 50% increase above existing levels—and that includes the generous financial support of our Sustaining and Benefactor subscribers—in order to stop loosing money from our meager savings on each issue. Rather than call for a $12.50 increase in the cost of a basic subscription, and thereby probably scare away a large number of you during these tough financial times, we propose to continue operating on a quarterly basis at the same $25.00 per year. The $25 basic subscription will include *both our 80-page printed issue and access to an on-line edition at no additional cost.*

Furthermore, we will also make available to anyone wishing to forego the printed version an *on-line only subscription* at a price of $12.50 per year (four issues) on renewal. And so, dear readers, it is now up to you to decide whether or not you wish to stay with us in our new incarnation.

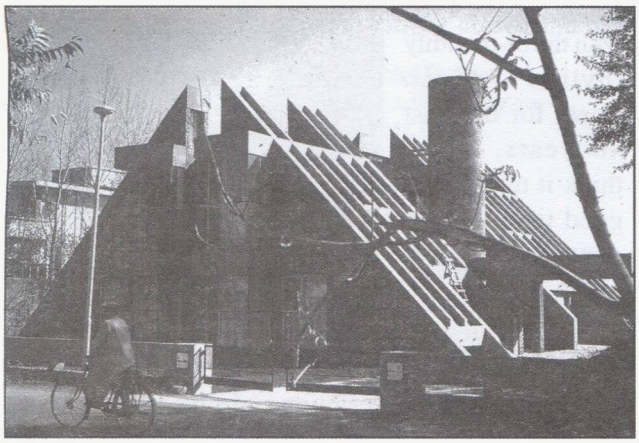
If you support the move to quarterly at $25/year, there is no action needed on your part. Your subscription will expire at the normal time you're accustomed to, but you will receive fewer issues. Thereafter, your billing cycle will be adjusted to the nearest quarter.

If you have already pre-paid your subscription into Volume 41, (2010) and choose to withdraw your support for *La Posta* because of our quarterly plan, you may contact Cath (lapostagal@hotmail.com) and she will arrange a pro-rata refund.

Regardless of how you decide, please know that we have given some very soul-searching thought to these changes. *La Posta* has been my life long project and I am not at all ready to see it abandoned, but the simple fact is that we can no longer afford to maintain its

current status. Cath and I hope that the majority of you will understand the reasons why these changes are necessary, and stay with us for the years ahead.

Out of India



Our family home in Islamabad in 1974-75 was this massive concrete A-frame. The water tower breaks the roof line at right.

The human mind is an amazing thing. The further one's memories receed into the past, the more selective they become in making experiences seem all warm and fuzzy. All the nasty, unpleasant bits are minimized and what remains has a surreal glow of constant happy times.

And so it is with my memories of the Sub-continent. Thirty-five years ago I lived and worked in Islamabad, Pakistan. My assignment was to work on demographic pattern changes as a research fellow at the University of Islamabad's Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE). Funding was by way of a US State Department program through the University of North Carolina so I was not considered an employee of the US goverment. That meant my family an I were not "official" Americans and we were not afforded the support provided to government personnel.

In a way that was a real adavantage. It meant that we lived outside the "glass bubble" occupied by most Americans living overseas. We had close day-to-day contact with Pakistanis in all aspects of life from professional interactions with my colleagues at PIDE to shopping at local markets and paying utility bills at government offices. It was an 18-month assignment so I leased the newly completed house shown in the photo above from its architect-builder.

Despite the fact that my compensation for this fellowship was paltry by US standards—as I recall around $1,000 a month—that was a princely amount in terms of Pakistani salaries. I was approached shortly after arrival in Islamabad by a well-spoken young man named Mohammed Sadiq. He showed me his letters of recommendation from a number of foreign families for whom he had worked and offered me his services as a person who would organize my household while I lived in Pakistan.

After conversations with PIDE colleagues where I was reassured that this was entirely normal and in fact necessary, I hired Sadiq. He remained my closest confidant and advisor on all dealings with the local ecomomy throughout my time in Islamabad. Sadiq lived in our house—it was very roomy and designed with accomodation for household help. He soon convinced me that my family should have a cook, and he happened to have an uncle from Azad Kashmir who was unemployed and an excellent cook. Before long, our household staff included a chokidar (a door minder or night time house guard), an ayah (to look after our two children), a gardener, a clothes washer, and a bathroom cleaner (must be a Christian as Muslims do not clean bathrooms). At one time, as I recall, we employed as many as eight Pakistanis on a full or part-time basis. Only three or four of them actually lived in the house. I was never quite sure of the exact number.

If I try hard enough I can recollect that I was shocked and horrified by some of the things I saw on a daily basis in Islamabad and throughout my travels in the country. The implications of a huge population living in poverty were staggering. Children who were forced by their families to beg in streets were a common sight. Open sewers created an overpowing stench in all but the most upscale districts of Islamabad and other cities. Crowds of angry men brandishing canes and shouting slogans were often seen on my daily ride to the university. So much anger and frustration!

And yet, as I said, these memories retreat, and what is left are images of an ancient land so very different than what we Americans know that it is impossible to avoid its intrigue. Lately I've been having thoughts of a return to the Sub-continent perhaps to stay for a week in a retreat at one of the Indian hill stations so that Cath can add that experience to her memories. At the very least, I thought that I might share with you dear readers some of my appreciation of the postal history associated with Americans attempting to stay in touch by air mail with the folks back home across the miles from India to the United States.

Richard W. Helbock

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Air Accelerated Mail between the United States and India, 1927-1945

Map 1 *India, as depicted on this 1930 Rand McNally atlas map was a gigantic territory stretching from Afghanistan to Siam.*

By Richard W. Helbock

India—a giant political entity often called "the Sub continent"—stretched across the map of south Asia from the mountainous Afghan border lands 3,000 miles east to the border with Siam during the 200 years of British colonial rule. As the British Empire neared its peak of economic power and political influence in the late 1920s, Imperial Airways established the first air mail and passenger service linking Europe with India. The British saw this technological improvement in transport and communications as "buckling the belt of Empire."

Americans were far more concerned with events at home and within the western hemisphere as the "Roaring 20s" gave way to economic depression, but India had long held a fascination for some in the United States. Missionaries pondered the millions of "heathen" souls represented within the indigenous population of India, and organized themselves to establish schools, churches and clinics to serve the masses. Businessmen contemplated ways and means that they might tap into the rich flow of raw materials from India to Europe, and at the same time create new markets for American products within the Sub-continent. Wealthy American travellers, and perhaps a few scholars, booked their own "Passage to India" on board one of the luxurious cruise ships to see for themselves the romantic lands described by Rudyard Kipling and E. M. Forster. But, for the most part, India was a British "show", and air mail covers surviving from the pre-World War II era are far more plentiful from British-Indian correspondences than those with American-Indian origins and destinations.

For both mail and passengers travelling from the United States to India, the most expeditious route was by sea from East coast ports—particularly New York. The 1933 *US Official Postal Guide* described the routing of mail to India as:

> New York to France, about three times a week. *Time, 5 to 8 days.* French Atlantic port, via Paris to Marseille, (R.R.). *Time, 2 days.* Marseille to Bombay, Friday p.m. *Time, 14 days.*

An alternate routing was described as:

> New York to Genoa, sea direct about twice a month, *Time, 7 to 8 days.* Genoa via Brindisi and Port Said to Bombay, weekly. *Time, 13 to 14 days.*

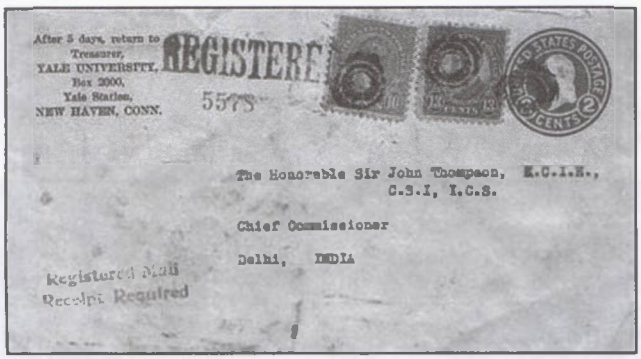


***Figure 1** A registered cover postmarked New Haven, Connecticut, January 26, 1932. Unfortunately it bears no arrival marking to indicate transit time. (Courtesy of Jim Forte)*

The minimum transit time from New York to Bombay was therefore 20-21 days, and that assumes perfect timing for the various connections.

Gradually, in the United States, economic rigors of the Great Depression began to give way to early war preparations and government spending to counteract what was seen as twin threats to world peace and stability. The Nazi government of Germany was involved in more and more threatening behaviour against its neighbors in Europe while the Japanese had seized Korea and were preparing to invade China. By the end of the 1930s it is fair to say that India had begun to occupy a place of greater interest by American government and military planners as well as corporations involved to supplying materials to the anticipated war effort. We see this interest reflected in the growing amount of surviving air mail pieces between the US and India dating from 1936 onward. By 1942, of course, American Army Air Corps troops were being stationed in India.

Initial Accelerated Air Mail Service

1927-1928

Imperial Airways (IA) assumed control of the Desert Air Mail service in January 1927 linking Cairo and Baghdad that had been launched by the Royal Air Force in June 1921. IA extended the eastern terminus to Basra. Imperial's intention at the time was to further extend the Cairo-Basra mail route through to Karachi using aircraft with greater range, but the plans were delayed when the Persian government refused permission for regular services to overfly and land in their territory. Two years of diplomatic negotiations finally resulted in an agreement that allowed the British landing rights at a limited number of Persian Gulf locations and an extension of airmail service to Karachi was inaugurated.

The United States *Postal Bulletin* 14290 dated January 24, 1927, carried the first announcement that U. S. postal patrons could take advantage of the Cairo to Bagdad air service of Imperial Airways to accelerate mail to Karachi and northwestern India. The February *Monthly Supplement* to the *United States Official Postal Guide* announced further clarification of how American postal patrons could accelerate mail delivery to Karachi and Northwest India by using the British Cairo to Basra air service. Identified as Change No. 122 to the 1926 *Guide* it modified the information appearing under the item "Mesopotamia (Iraq)" in the Foreign Mails section as follows:

> The Cairo, Egypt-Bagdad airmail service has been extended so as to reach Basra, Iraq, and a further extension to Karachi will be made later. The following facilities are made available:
>
> The airmail leaving London every second Thursday will be due to reach Bagdad late in the afternoon of the following Thursday (7 days from London), and Basra on Friday morning (7½ days from London). At Basra this mail will be due to connect with the fast Saturday mail steamer due at Karachi on the second Thursday (14 days from London) and also with the service for various Persian Gulf ports leaving Basra on alternate Sundays. Thus, in the week of dispatch, the airmail will offer, in comparison with transmission by the desert motor route, or by sea route, a saving in time of transit of about 2 and 17 days, respectively, to Bagdad, about 3 and 13 days, respectively, to Basra, approximately 7 days to Bushire and other Persian Gulf posts, and about 2 days to Karachi and Northwest India.
>
> The airmail rates have been increased from 6 to 7 cents per ounce, in addition to the international rate of postage of 5 cents for the first ounce and 3 cents for each additional ounce.

Figure 2 shows a cover postmarked San Jose, California March 19, 1927, addressed to George Tereiser, Karachi, India, and endorsed "VIA AIR MAIL / FROM Cairo, Egypt / TO Karachi, India." Franked with 22 cents US postage, the rates paid were:

- 10¢ domestic air mail ½ ounce rate from San Francisco to New York (this new trans-continental rate had gone into effect February 1, 1927);
- 5¢ international surface mail from New York to United Kingdom and beyond; and
- 7¢ surcharge for air transport by Imperial Airways from Cairo to Basra.

Figure 2 *Postmarked San Jose, California, March 19, 1927, this cover was properly franked and endorsed for air carriage on the Cairo to Basra(h) service of Imperial Airways.*

Backstamps provide us some details of the timing of the itinerary. A San Francisco transit marking dated March 19th indicates that the cover reached there the same date it was mailed and a New York receiving handstamp of March 22 shows that it took three days to be carried cross country by air mail. There are no UK or Cairo markings, but a Basrah date stamp of April 8th verifies that the cover arrived at this Iraqi city on the Persian Gulf on that date. There are a number of Karachi date stamps but the earliest appears to be 14 April suggesting that it took just under a month to reach India by plane and steamship. After Indian postal authorities were unable to locate the addressee—INCONNU / NOT KNOWN—the cover was sent on from Karachi to the Dead Letter Office in Bombay arriving May 28th and eventually returned to sender by steamer on or after May 26th. A pencil notation indicates that the cover arrived back in San Jose on June 25th.

An announcement in the May 10, 1927, *Postal Bulletin 14380* anticipated the extension of the IA route to Karachi by stating that the airmail surcharge would be 15 cents per ounce, but no flights were ever made in 1927 or 1928 and there was no service at this rate.

The air surcharge for Cairo to Basra service listed as 7 cents in January 1927 may have in fact been an error by US postal authorities in interpreting the offer by the British. When the Royal Air Force was flying the mail from Cairo to Baghdad, the air surcharge was initially established as one shilling per ounce. That amount was reduced to six pence per ounce in December 1921, and then three pence per ounce in November 1923. When Imperial Airways took over the route in 1927 the air surcharge was once again raised to six pence per ounce.

The prevailing exchange rate between pound sterling and the US dollar was two US cents for each British penny. A seven cent surcharge would have been equivalent to 3½ pence—rather close to the three pence rate in effect before the IA takeover in 1927—but well short of the six pence the British were required to pay. Interestingly, US *Postal Bulletin 14561* of December 12, 1927, announced that the air surcharge for mail from the US was raised to 12 cents per ounce. US covers displaying the surcharge for Cairo-Basra air service addressed to India in the 1927-1929 period are believed to be scarce.

It was also possible to accelerate mail destined for India by paying an additional four cents per ounce for air service from London to Marseilles. This was a summer-only service. The resultant total air surcharge for both links would have been 16 cents per ounce.

A note on Indian currency and exchange rates appears in order. The basic unit of Indian currency was the *pie*. Twelve *pies* made up one *anna*, and 16 *annas* made one *rupee*. In the late 1920s one Indian *anna* was equivalent to nearly two British pence or over

three US cents. So the prevailing letter rate to UPU countries from India of three annas was equivalent to six British pence or ten US cents. The exchange rates between the anna and the US cent declined after the late 1920s. In 1930 one anna was equivalent to two US cents, and by 1935 one anna was worth only one and one-third US cents.

Air accelerated mail from India to the US in the 1927-1929 period required 3 annas for the Basra-Cairo service and another 3 annas for the summer-only Marseilles to London service in addition to the normal surface rate of 3 annas to UPU countries. Since the time saved by using the Basra-Cairo service was estimated to have been up to a week, one would expect that some patrons of the Indian postal system would have found that an attractive option. Time saved by the Marseilles to London air service was only about one day.

Figure 3 illustrates a cover addressed to a doctor in Denver postmarked Kashmiri Gate, Delhi on February 8th, 1927. A four-anna King George V definitive is tied on the front of the cover and a block of six of the ½-anna value are tied on the reverse by four impressions of the same Kashmiri Gate postmark. The cover carries the endorsement "Air mail – Urgent / Basra – Cairo" written in the same hand as the address.

Franking required for a letter weighing up to 20 grams from India to the United States was three annas and the surcharge for air transport from Basra to Cairo was an additional three annas. This cover was therefore over-franked by one anna—probably a mere convenience overpayment by the sender. The six half-anna stamps added on the reverse may well have been an afterthought. Note the slight difference in ink that exists between the address and the endorsement with the "air mail – urgent / Basra-Cairo" being noticeably

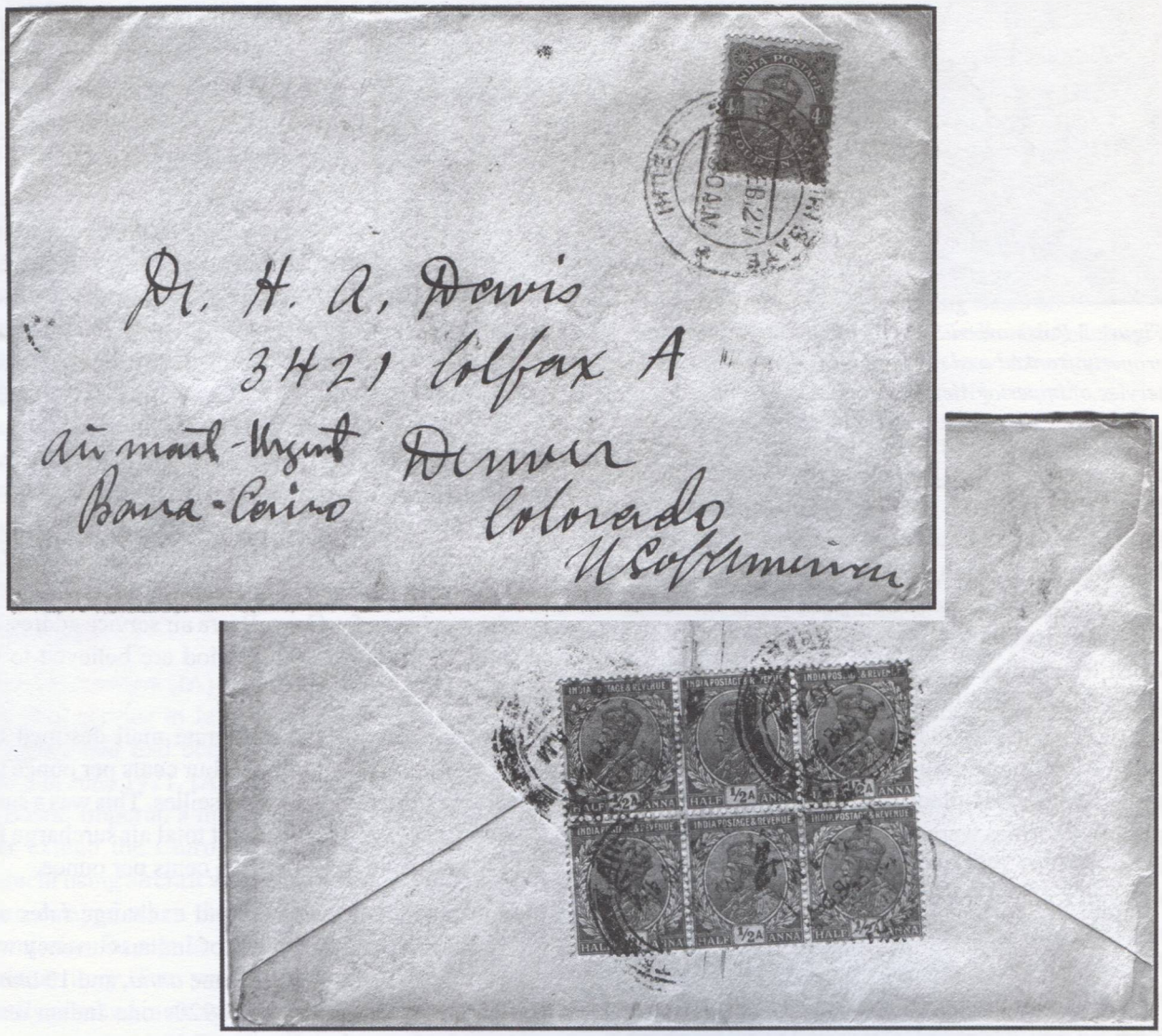


Figure 3 *Cover postmarked Kashmiri Gate, Delhi, February 8, 1927, to Denver and endorsed Air mail - Urgent Basra - Cairo with apparent one anna convenience over franking.*

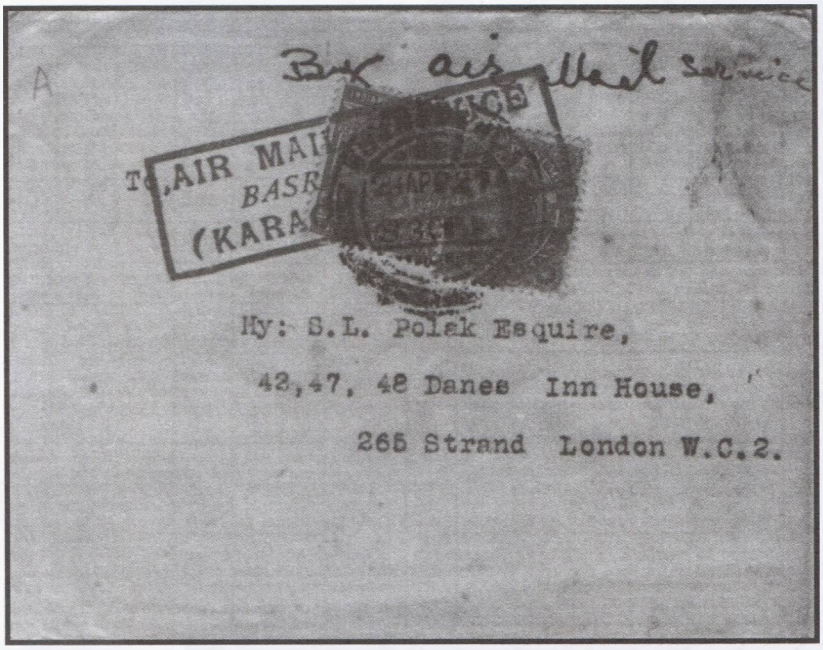


Figure 4 *Cover carried by Imperial Airways Basra-Cairo air service in April 1927 showing the boxed straight-line cachet applied at Karachi. This illustration appeared on page 118 of Edward B. Proud's* Intercontinental Airmail, Volume 2, Asia and Australasia. *It is reproduced here with the kind permission of Mr. Proud.*

lighter. Why the additional postage was six half anna stamps and not four to make the overall six anna franking is a mystery.

As Peter Wingent (1999) reports "most of the [air] mail from India until 8 September 1927' was handstamped in Karachi with a boxed three-line message reading "AIR MAIL SERVICE / Basra-Cairo / (KARACHI G. P.O.)" (*figure 4*). Such a cachet is missing on this cover, but that may have something to do with the fact that the letter was posted in Delhi rather than Karachi. The boxed three-line cachet was replaced on September 15, 1929, by a small double rim circle that read simply BY / AIR (*figure 5*).

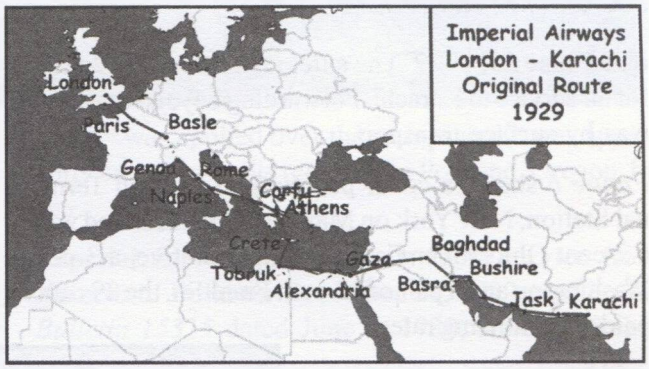
Figure 5 *Cachets were applied to most air mail originating in India during the early years. The circular cachet below replaced the upper rectangle on September 15, 1929, according to Peter Wingent (1999).*

Air mail Srvice between London and Karachi

1929-1933

The initial flight on Imperial Airways' London – Karachi service took place over a 7-day period starting March 30, 1929. The route included a flight from London to Basle, Switzerland, followed by rail service to Genoa, Italy. Mail was then loaded onboard a *Short Calcutta* flying boat and carried south along the Italian peninsula and across the Mediterranean to Alexandria, Egypt.

The route from Alexandria to Karachi proceeded by way of a DH66 Hercules first to Gaza and then on across the desert to Baghdad and Basra. Stops in Persia were all along the Gulf coast before turning east at Jask and flying over the desolate Baluchistan coast to Karachi (*map 2*). The first mail carried on the route arrived at Karachi on April 6, 1929. Service was planned to be weekly. Numerous changes were made to the route over ensuing years. In November 1929, for example, the Italian Government objected to British flights over Italy and so the London-Athens section was changed to Cologne, Vienna, Budapest, Belgrade, Skopje, and Salonica before Athens. Severe winter weather forced additional changes and often part of the route through Europe was carried by train



Map 2 *The original 1929 Imperial Airways route included rail serviuce between Basle, Switzerland, and Genoa, Italy, through the Alps.*

An airmail surcharge of six pence was added to the normal 1½ pence surface rate for a half ounce letter mailed from Britain to India. American postal patrons were invited to send mail addressed to India via the London – Karachi air service in *Postal Bulletin 15032*

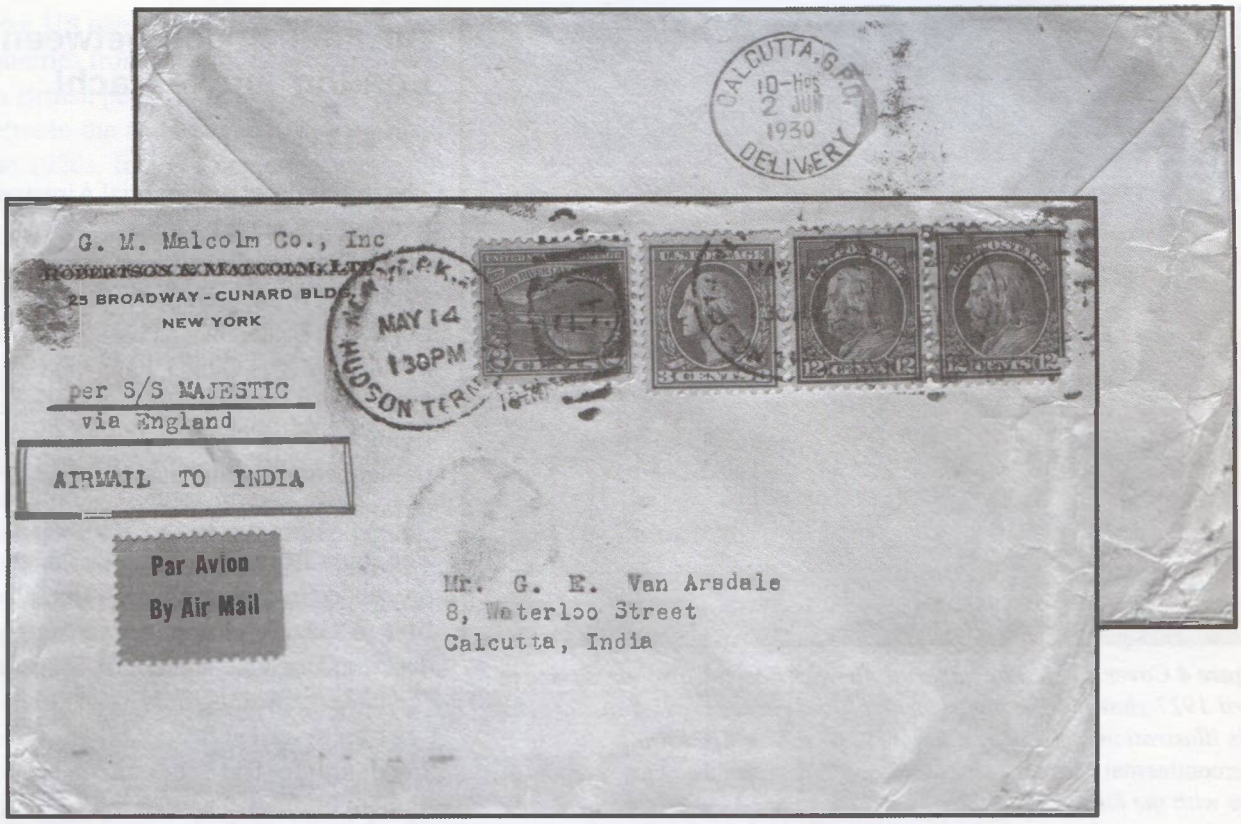


Figure 6 *This cover was postmarked in New York on May 14, 1930. Addressed to Calcutta, it was endorsed "per S/S Majestic and air mail from London to Karachi, India. Double the 12¢ per half ounce air surcharge is paid by a pair of 12-cent Franklins.*

dated June 29, 1929. The surcharge rate was 12 cents for air service to Karachi. Forwarding beyond that point was by surface transport.

Figure 6 shows a cover postmarked Hudson Terminal Station, New York on May 14, 1930. Franked with a 2-cent Ohio River Canal commemorative, a 3-cent Washington and a pair of 12-cent Franklin, the 29 cents paid the following rates:

5¢ international surface mail from New York to United Kingdom and beyond; and

12¢ double the surcharge for air transport by Imperial Airways from London to Karachi.

The air surcharge on mail from Karachi to London was set at 6 annas in addition to the 2 annas regular surface rate to the UK. The cover shown in *figure 7* was postmarked in Bombay on February 15, 1930. Addressed to New York, it was franked with 3 and 6 annas denominations of India's first air post series depicting a De Havilland Hercules flying over a lake. The nine annas franking represents 6 annas air surcharge plus the international surface rate from India to the US of three annas. Note the double circle BY / AIR cachet that was applied in Karachi after the cover arrived there via surface transport from Bombay. The steamship company logo appearing on the reverse suggests

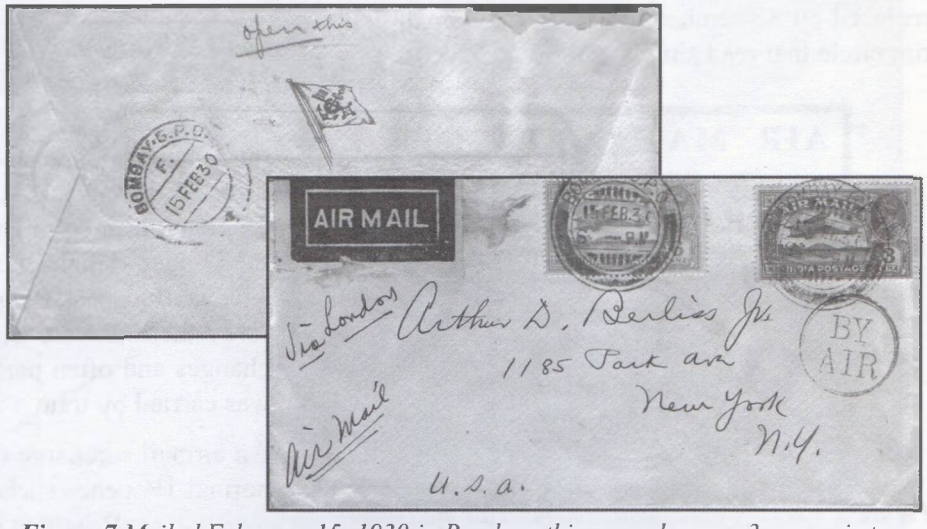


Figure 7 *Mailed February 15, 1930 in Bombay, this cover bears a 3-anna air to pay the UPU international rate to the USA and a 6-anna to pay the air mail surcharge from Karachi to London.*

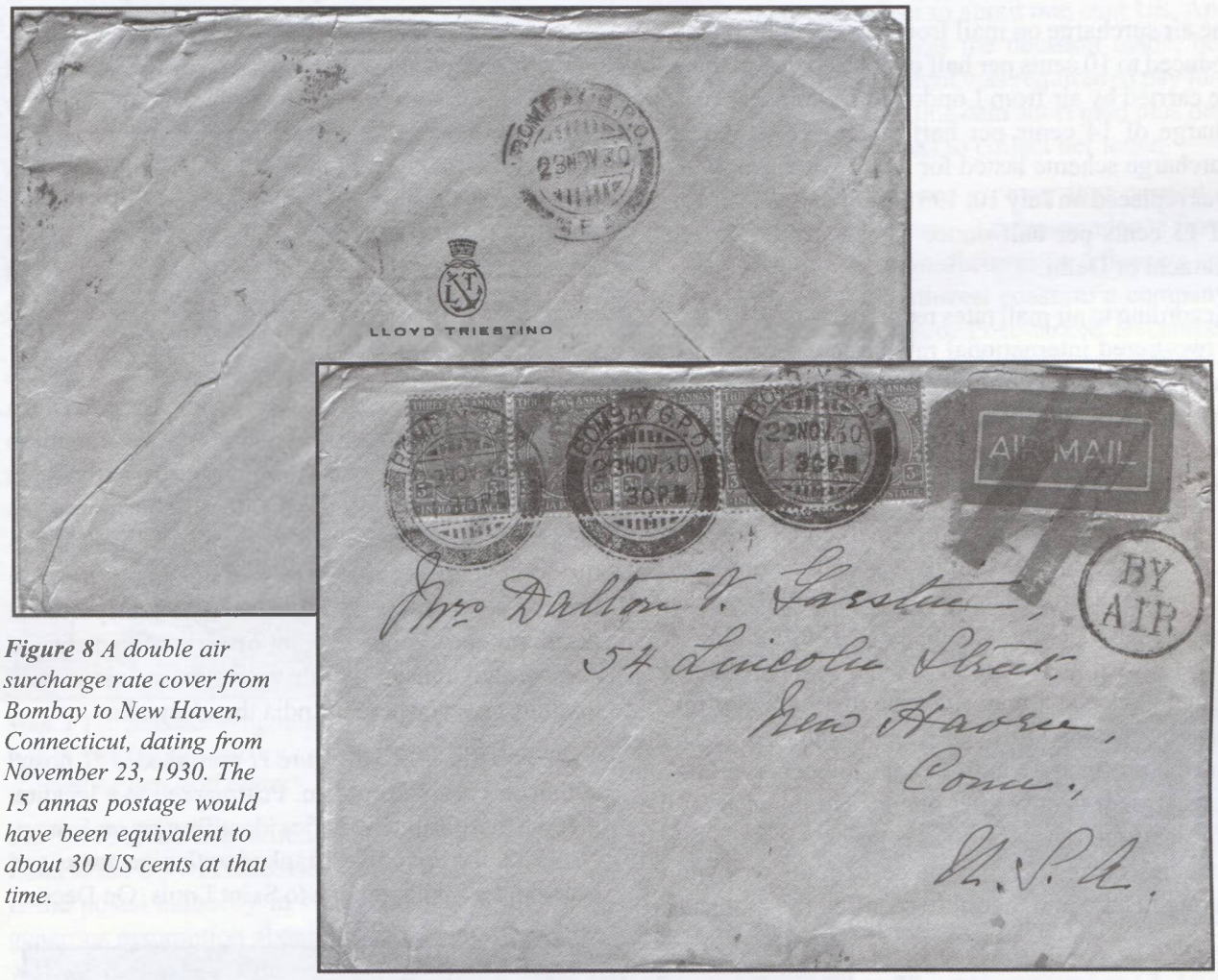


Figure 8 *A double air surcharge rate cover from Bombay to New Haven, Connecticut, dating from November 23, 1930. The 15 annas postage would have been equivalent to about 30 US cents at that time.*

that this cover was sent by a traveler. Bombay was the most popular point of entry for steamship travel to India.

Figure 8 illustrates a double air rate cover postmarked Bombay November 23, 1930. The air mail label has been given a bold red overstrike in London. It, too, was mailed in steamship company stationery; in this case, the Lloyd Triestino of Italy.

The cover shown in *figure 9* was postmarked at an indecipherable location in southern India on December 6th, 1929. It received a Bombay transit backstamp the next day and was forwarded on to Karachi for air transport as per the endorsement. The weight of the cover and its content apparently exceeded one-half ounce, for the boxed two-line cachet reading "INSUFFICIENTLY PAID / INDIA-LONDON AIR MAIL SERVICE" was applied over the stamps and it was apparently carried on to its recipient in Portland, Oregon, by sea.

Imperial Airways extended its India service from Karachi to Delhi on December 21, 1929, and *Postal Bulletin 15315* dated June 5, 1930, announced that

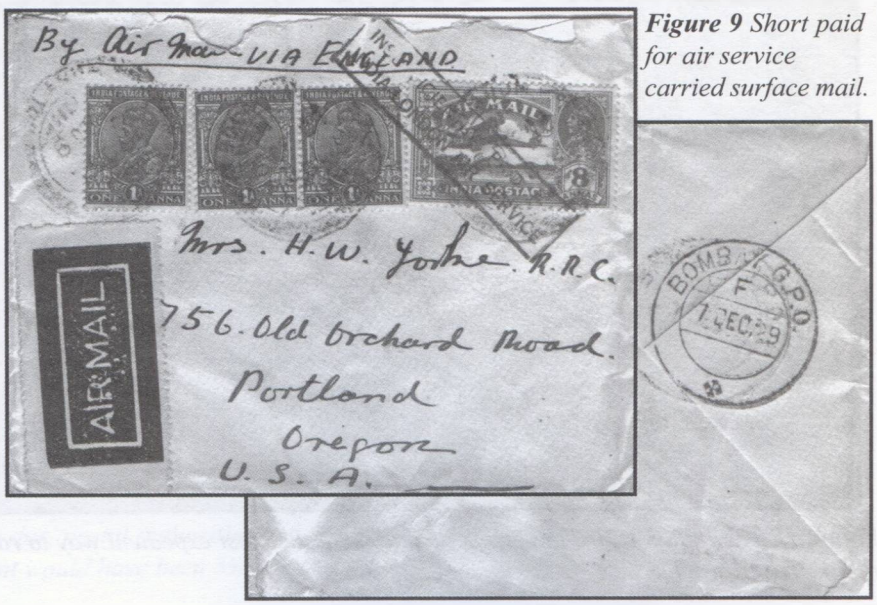


Figure 9 *Short paid for air service carried surface mail.*

the air surcharge on mail from the US to Karachi was reduced to 10 cents per half ounce and that mail could be carried by air from London to Delhi for an air surcharge of 14 cents per half ounce. This dual rated surcharge scheme lasted for a bit over a year when it was replaced on July 10, 1931, with a single surcharge of 15 cents per half ounce for air service to either Karachi or Delhi.

According to air mail rates reported by Edward Proud, a two-tiered international rate structure was inaugurated in India in February 1930.[1] The surcharge rate for one-half ounce letters to be flown from Karachi to London remained six annas, but carriage from New Delhi to London was set at eight annas per half ounce.

Figure 10 depicts a cover postmarked CHIRALA on September 25, 1931. Chirala was and continues to be a major textile manufacturing hub on India's southeast coast north of Madras (Chennai). The franking of 3 annas plus 8 annas might appear confusing since a casual glance at a map suggests that the letter might have been routed through Karachi rather than Delhi and thereby take advantage of the lower prevailing air surcharge. It is only after one takes into account the physical and transportation geography of India that it becomes clear why this piece of mail was routed through Delhi and therefore required the 8-anna surcharge. *Map 3* illustrates the railroad network of India as it existed about 1910. The overall pattern of rail lines exists to this day. Note that Karachi (labeled 1) is at the southern terminus of a line that follows closely the Indus River from Lahore. The latter city is connected to Delhi and the cities of the Ganges and southern India through an interlinking network. But Karachi is not otherwise connected to the greater rail net and the reason may be found reading the two words in the gap between the Indus rail line and the wider network: Great Desert. The Great Indian Desert, also known as the Thar Desert, straddles the boundary between modern day India and Pakistan all the way south to where it joins a vast marshy region known as the Rann of Kutch that reaches inland 150 miles or more from the Indian Ocean coast. Neither of these physical features has lent themselves to settlement and have, in fact, presents a substantial obstacle to transportation development. From the point of view of expeditious surface mail transport, Delhi was and remains "closer" to almost everywhere in India than Karachi.

The cover illustrated in *figure 11* presented U. S. postal authorities with a problem. Postmarked at a location in India that absolutely defies identification on January 28, 1932, the cover was franked with nine annas and bears an air mail etiquette to Saint Louis. On Decem-

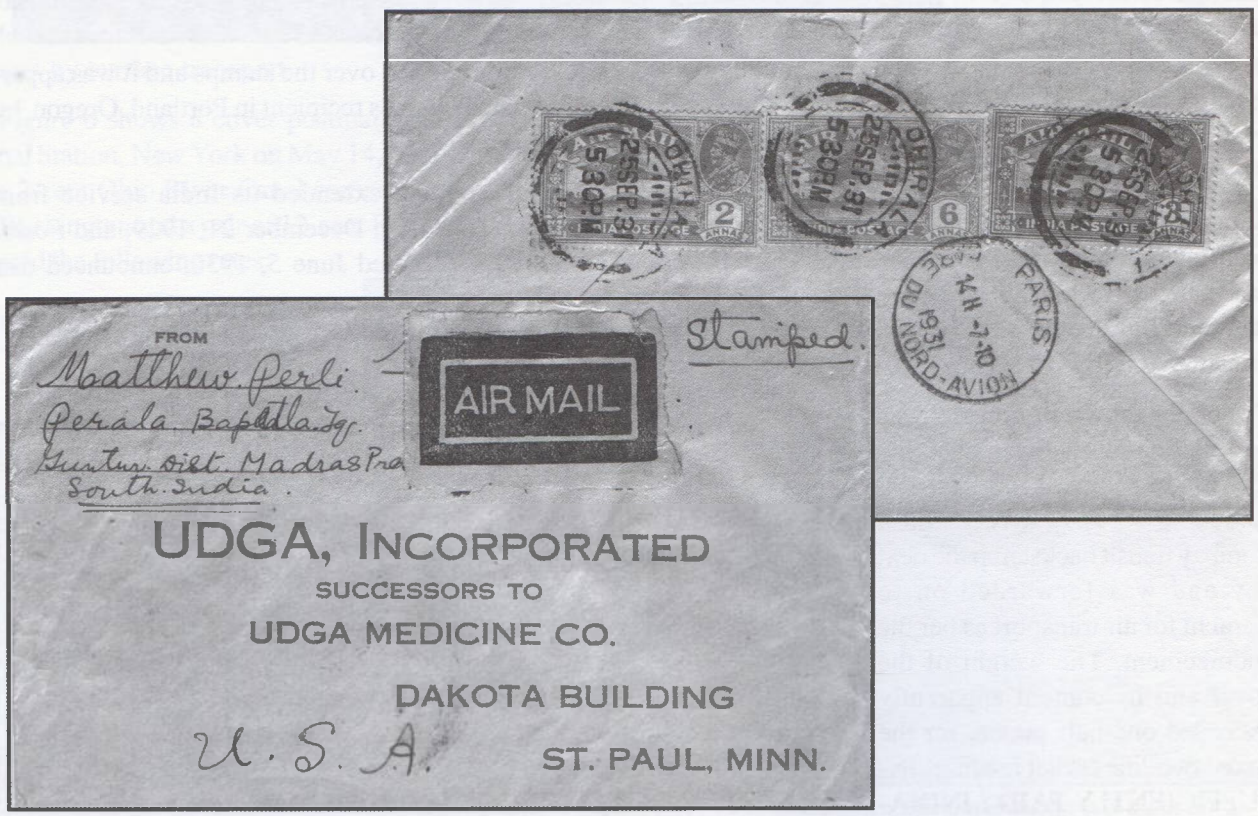
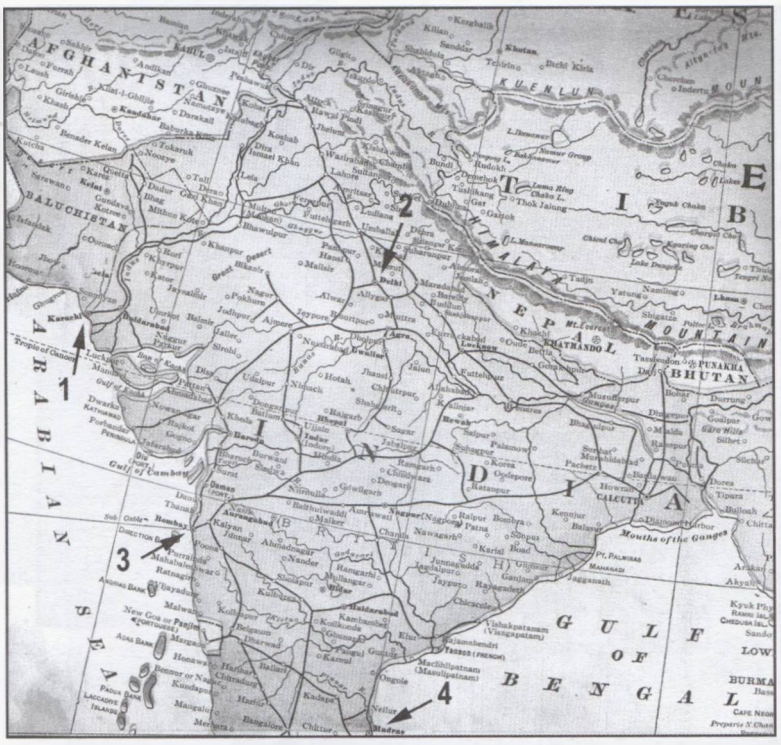


Figure 10 *The Indian railroad netwok dictated that the most expedient way to route this cover was through Delhi rather than Karachi.*



Map 3 *The physical geography of western India played an important role in shaping the country's rail network and determining the most efficient surface mail routes.*

ber 3, 1931, the international UPU surface rate from India to the US was increased from three to 3½ annas. If the postal authority in New York made the most generous assumption about whether or not the letter was routed through Karachi as opposed to Delhi for air service, then the underpayment was just ½ anna—then equivalent to about one cent US. Apparently that was the decision made, because the recipient was required to pay just two US cents (one cent short paid plus one cent penalty tax) to collect her letter.

Figure 12 shows a cover that carried a piece of commercial correspondence from a coir mat manufacturer in Alleppey, on India's far southwest coast, to a company in San Francisco. Postmarked December 11, 1932 and routed via Madras and then India / Paris / California, the cover bears a Paris / Gare du Nord-Avion forwarding mark of December 20th.

The first domestic airline in India—Tata Air Lines—was organized in 1932. A second—India National Airways (INA)—followed a year later. Both of these fledgling companies operated a limited number of routes until the late 1930s, but their advent apparently convinced Imperial to revise its air surcharge structure. *Postal Bulletin 16048* dated November 23, 1932, announced that henceforth the charge to US postal patrons would be 21 cents per half ounce for mail service from London to "beyond Delhi." This was revised on March 3, 1933, to apply to mail from London to Karachi and "air within India." The 21 cent surcharge for this service was increased to 22 cents on October 17, 1933. *Figure 13* illustrates a cover postmarked Hudson ter-

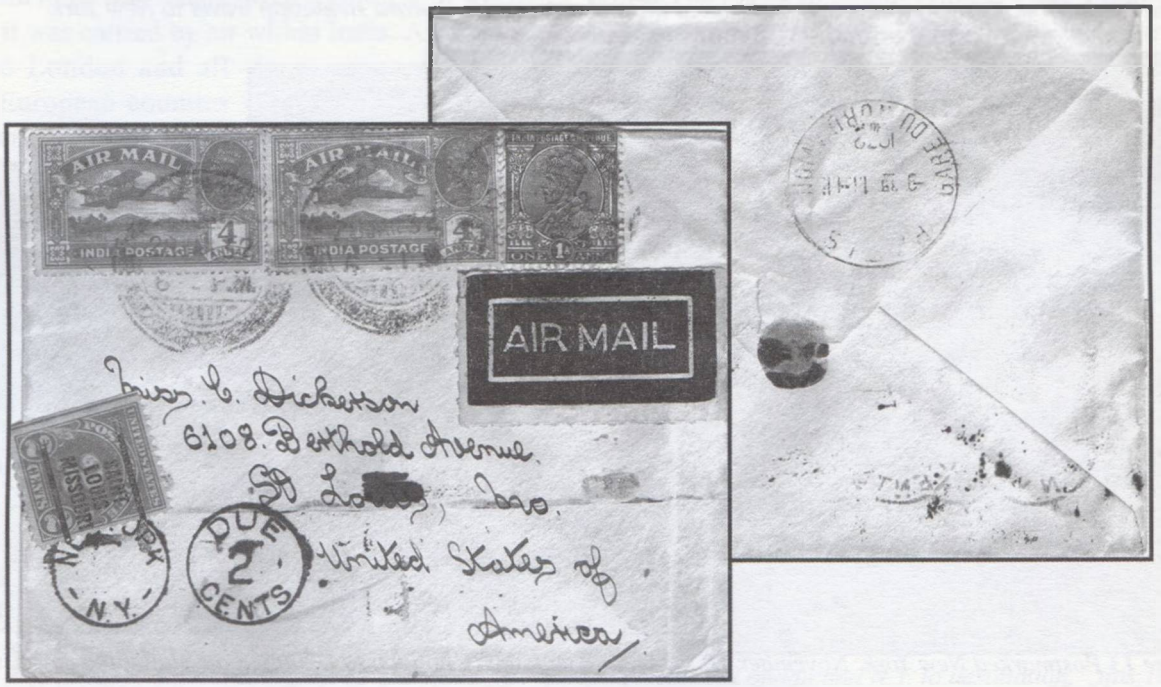


Figure 11 *Rated just 2 cents postage due, postal authorities apparently made the most lenient assumption about the origin of this cover. The short payment would have been 3½ annas if it had been carried by air from Delhi.*

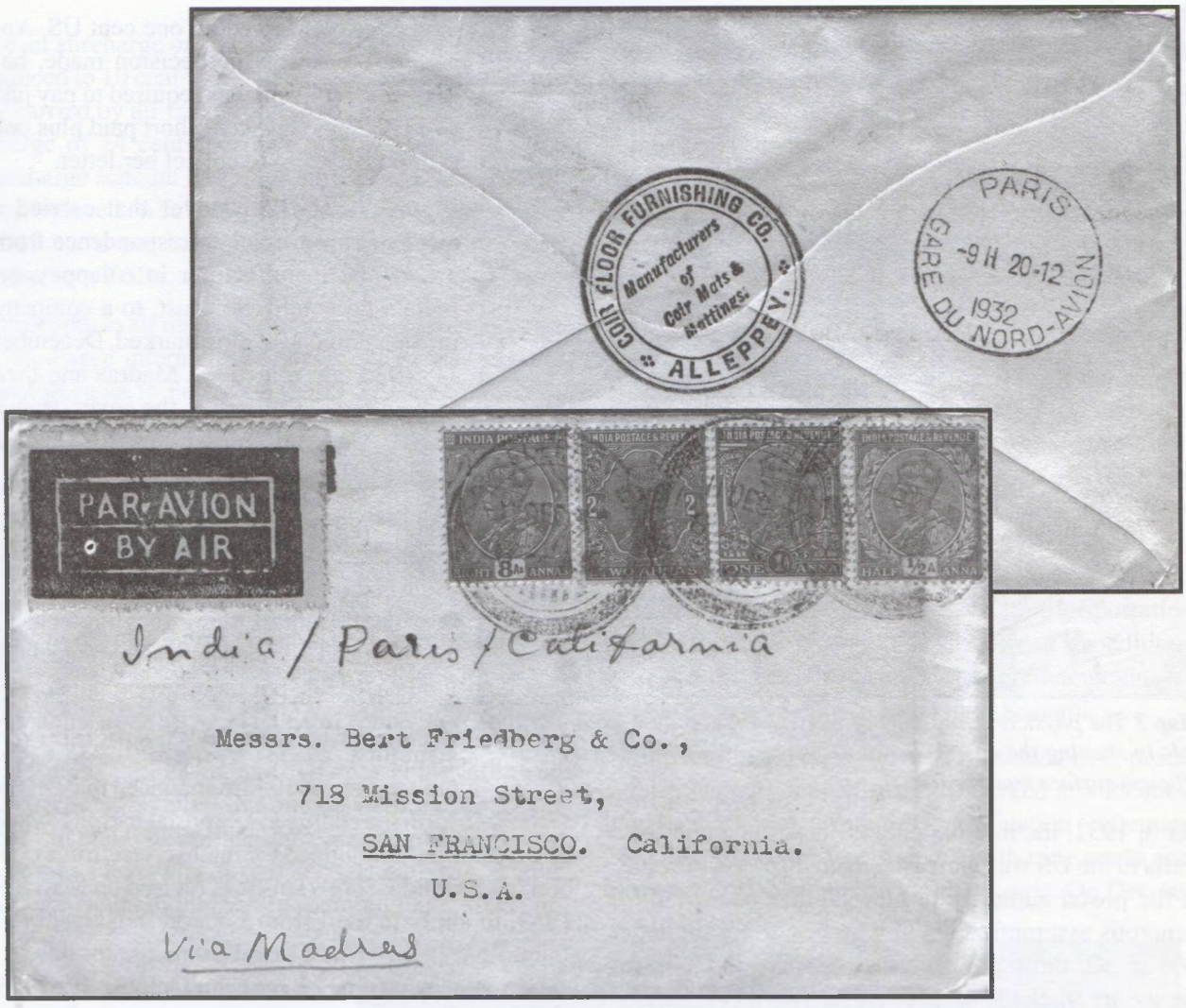


Figure 12 *A 1932 commercial correspondence from a coir mat manufacturer in southern India to San Francisco carried by air from Karachi to Europe and routed through Paris with onward steamship travel to New York.*

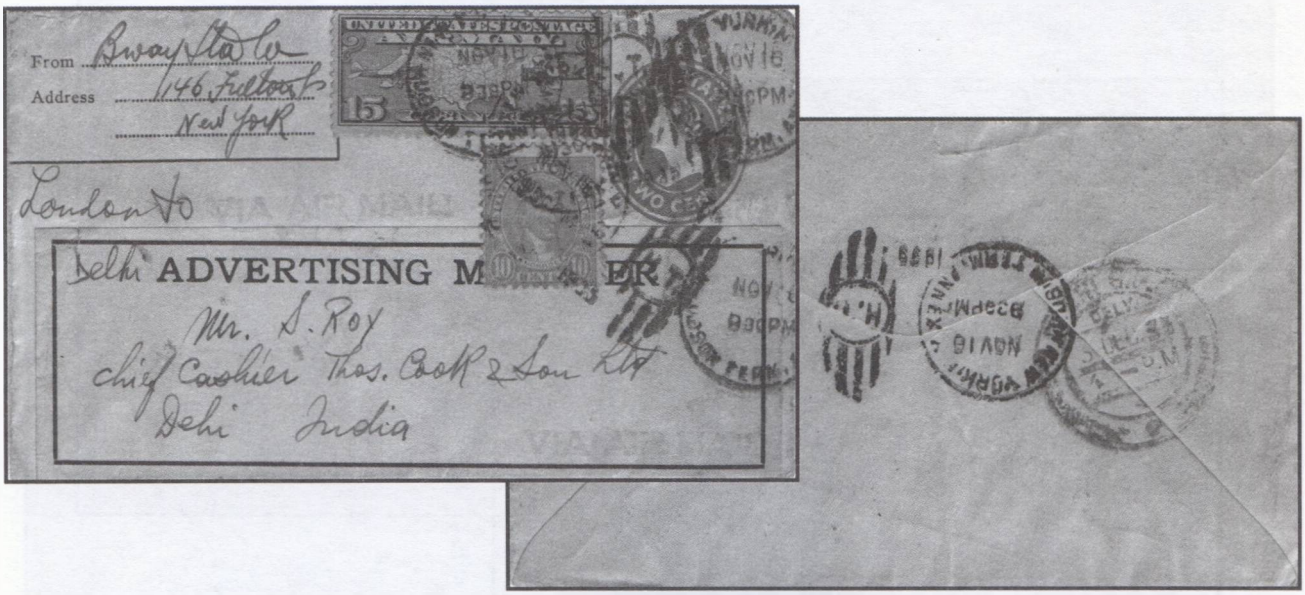


Figure 13 *Postmarked New York, November 16, 1933, and endorsed "London to Delhi via air mail", the cover is franked with 27 cents postage to pay (5¢ international rate plus 22¢ air sucharge). Total transit time for delivery was just under three weeks.*

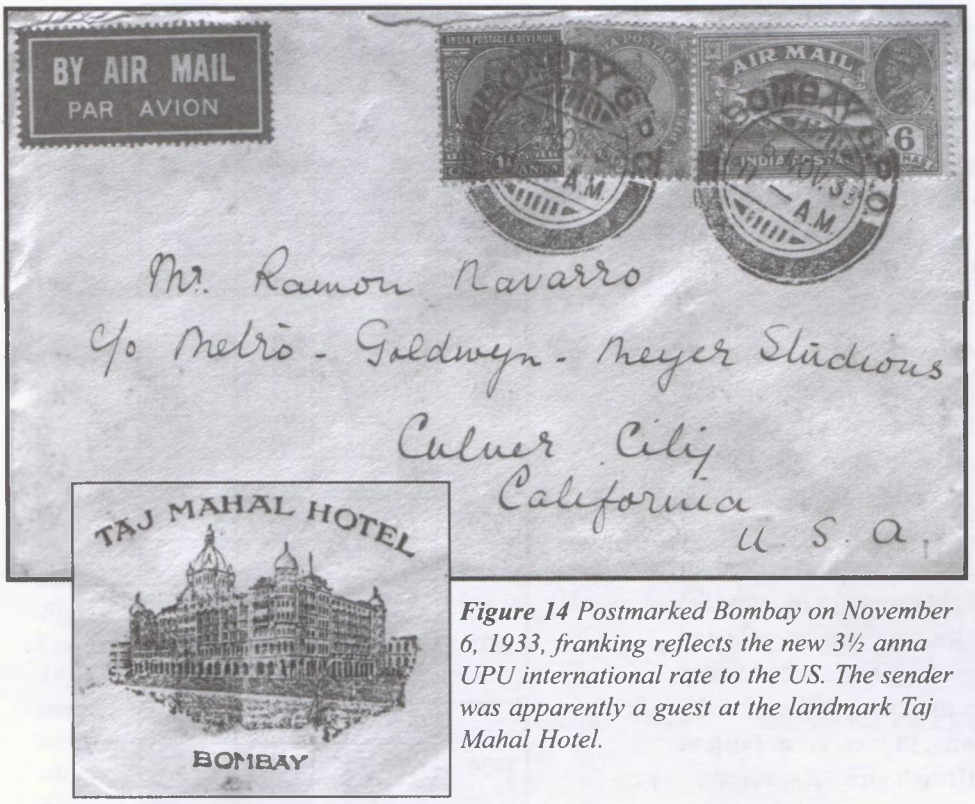


Figure 14 *Postmarked Bombay on November 6, 1933, franking reflects the new 3½ anna UPU international rate to the US. The sender was apparently a guest at the landmark Taj Mahal Hotel.*

minal Annex Station of New York dated November 16, 1933, addressed to Delhi. It bears the 22 cent airmail surcharge plus five cents regular surface rate to India. A Delhi delivery marking dated December 5th indicates a transit time of just under three weeks.

1933-1939

On July 7, 1933, the air surcharge applied to mail carried from India was standardized regardless of whether or not it was carried by air within India. Air mail service to London and all other European counties were set at 6 annas per half ounce in addition to the ordinary foreign surface mail fee. Three days later Imperial Airways extended its direct air service east to Calcutta.

Figure 14 depicts an air mail cover postmarked Bombay November 6, 1933. Mailed in an illustrated envelope from the Taj Mahal Hotel—recently the site of a horrendous terrorist raid—the cover is franked with 9½ annas to pay the 3½-anna UPU surface rate to the US and six annas air surcharge to London.

On November 28, 1934, the United Kingdom introduced a new system of flat rate air fees on Imperial Airways between London and colonies throughout Africa, Asia and Australasia. The new flat rate for air service on a letter weighting up to one-half ounce to India was six pence, and for a similar letter from India to London the fee was 7½ annas plus 7 annas for each additional half ounce. It would appear that the new flat rate fees had no effect on air mail carried from India to England for onward surface transport to the United States. The applicable fees remained 3½ annas UPU surface plus 6 annas air surcharge, or 9½ annas for a letter weighing one-half ounce or less.

Sometime in 1934 or 1935 it became possible for Indian postal patrons to elect to pay an additional surcharge for air mail service beyond New York within the United States. The cover shown in *figure 15* has a return address of the hill station town of Almora. It bears 13½

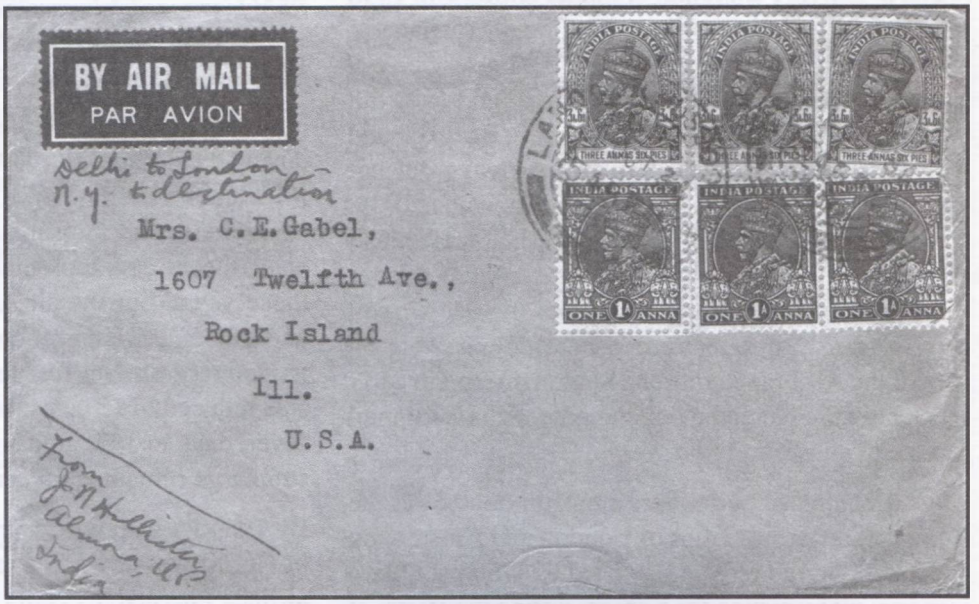


Figure 15 *Endorsed "By Air Mail Delhi to London and N.Y. to destination," this 1936 cover bears 13½ annas postage paying 3½ annas UPU international rate, 6 annas air surcharge to UK and 4 annas air within the US.*

annas postage tied by an indistinct postmark dated October 1, 1936, and the endorsement beneath the air mail etiquette "Delhi to London / N.Y. to destination". Since the fees required for UPU surface and air mail to London were 9½ annas, the additional four annas were apparently intended to pay domestic air mail in the U.S. from New York to Illinois. At the time, four annas was equivalent to just over five US cents. The US domestic air mail rate was then six cents per ounce.

The entry of the KLM into the market for carrying mail and passenger from Europe to Asia brought the Dutch airlines into direct competition with Britain's Imperial Airways. Throughout the 1930s—particularly during the first half of the decade—Dutch airlines fought hard with Imperial Airways to dominate the air routes into Asia. Since airmail service represented an important high value-low weight source of revenue for the fledgling airlines, we see this competition reflected in postal history artifacts of the day. The United States was not directly involved in the competition for the first half of the decade and was, in fact, an important consumer of the Dutch and British airmail services.

In order to attract postal patrons to use a particular airline there were basically three arguing points: reliability, speed of delivery and cost. Given the challenges, the reliability of both Imperial Airways and KLM were roughly equivalent. Both airlines suffered interrupted and delayed flights due to weather, mechanical failures and human error. But to the best of my knowledge, neither airline had a safety (reliability) record significantly worse than the other.

Speed of delivery was another matter entirely. In 1930 Imperial Airways was able to provide air carriage of mail only as far east as Karachi. KLM's service extended far beyond to Batavia on Java, and as it did their planes landed at Calcutta, Rangoon, Bangkok and Alor Star (near Penang). Imperial Airways did not extend air service to Singapore until December 1933, and during those crucial early years KLM was able to establish itself as the fastest service to mail a letter from Europe (or America) to Southeast Asia. Airmail service from China to Europe became available by way of the Air France route to Saigon opened in early 1933, but the French did not compete with IA for mail service to and from India.

Table 1 summarizes delivery times in days from the European departure cities of London and Amsterdam and air surcharge fees as specified by US Post Office Department by airline for Karachi during the 1930s. If we track down the appropriate columns we can see how delivery times and the air surcharge fees changed during the decade. In 1930 and 1931 it took five days for a letter travelling on KLM to reach Karachi from Amsterdam and the surcharge on mail from the US was 18 cents. IA took nine days to reach Karachi in those years, but the air surcharge was 10¢ in 1930 and 15¢ in 1931. In 1932 and 1933 KLM decreased its delivery time to just four days and the surcharge was reduced to 15 cents. IA reduced its travel time to seven days in 1932 and six days in 1933 and the air surcharge remained 15 cents.

By 1934 IA had reduced travel time to just five days, but KLM was down to a remarkable three days. Both airlines charged 15 cents to carry a one-half ounce

Year	Airline	Karachi	
		Days	Fee (¢)
1930	IA	9	10
	KLM	5	18
1931	IA	9	15
	KLM	5	18
1932	IA	7	15
	KLM	4	15
1933	IA	6	15
	KLM	4	15
	Air France		
1934	IA	5	15
	KLM	3	15
	Air France		
1935	IA	5	15
	KLM	2	15
	Air France		
1936	IA	5	
	KLM	3	15
	Air France		
1937	IA	4	
	KLM	3	15
	Air France		
1938	IA	4	
	KLM	3	15
	Air France		
1939	Europe	3-4	20[4]

Table 1 *Competition between Imperial Airways and KLM in terms of delivery time from Europe and air surcharges charged US postal patrons distinctly favored KLM.*

Figure 16 *Philadelphia to Calcutta in December 1936 with the 27 cents postage paying 5¢ international rate, 15¢ air surcharge from Europe to Karachi, and 7¢ additional air surcharge Karachi to Calcutta.*

letter. The trend continued throughout the remaining years with KLM remaining the significantly faster carrier.

How did KLM manage to outpace IA in mail delivery time to India, as well as other Asian cities? The answer is quite simple; they chose to fly aircraft with superior range and speed. The consequence of Imperial Airways' decision to continue flying aircraft with inferior performance capabilities on their Eastern Route led directly to the eventual victory of KLM in the competition to carry airmail from Europe to Asia. By 1936 the US Post Office Department had ceased listing onward airmail service from London as an option to accelerate delivery to most Asian destinations in the *Official Postal Guide*.

Figure 16 illustrates a cover postmarked Philadelphia, December 2, 1936. The cover is franked with 22 cents postage that paid

> 5¢ international surface mail from Philadelphia to Europe and beyond;
>
> 15¢ surcharge for air transport from Europe to Karachi; and
>
> 7¢ surcharge for additional air transport from Karachi to Calcutta.

A Calcutta receiving mark dated December 18th indicates that the entire trip took just 16 days.

Imperial Airways certainly recognized its aircraft disadvantage when compared to the KLM fleet and acted to correct the problem. In September 1936 IA took delivery of *Canopus*, the first in a line of new Short Flying Boats. With greater range, speed and cargo capacity, the Flying Boats placed IA on equal footing with other European and American carriers. The following year Imperial Airways announced a three-phase plan called the Empire Air Mail Scheme. Certainly a radical departure for the times, the new scheme was to allow all first-class mail originating throughout the British Commonwealth to be flow via Imperial without an air mail surcharge. India was brought into the Scheme—popularly called the All-Up program—on February 23, 1938. *Figure 17* shows a cover postmarked in India on May 10, 1939, addressed to Cardiff, Wales. The 1st class surface franking of just 2 annas, 6 pies was sufficient to pay for air mail transport to Great Britain.

Air mail addressed to countries that were not members of the Commonwealth was not affected by the All-Up scheme even if the mail was routed through the UK for onward delivery as was the case for mail to the US. Evidence suggests that this must have cre-

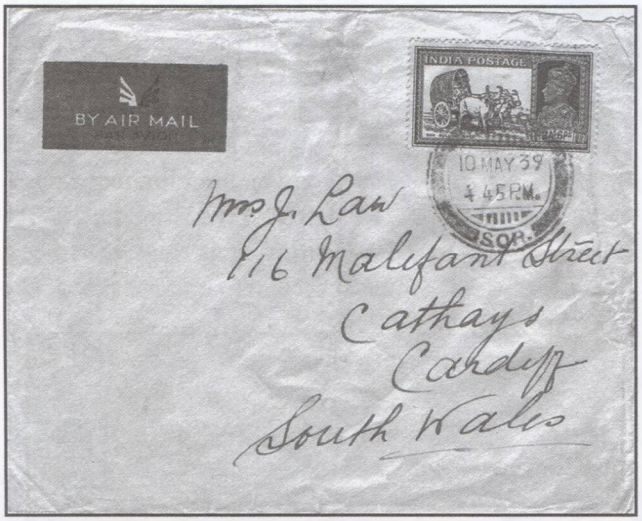


Figure 17 *Under Britain's All-Up air scheme, all first class mail between Commonwealth counties was carried by air with no additional air surcharge,*

ated some confusion for patrons of the Indian postal service for one finds an increase in the number of air mail covers addressed to the US that have been short paid and targeted for postage due. The cover shown in *figure 18* is fairly typical. Franked with a total of nine annas postage and tied June 23, 1939, the cover is addressed to Philadelphia and endorsed "By Air Mail." The proper rate for air service to London and steamer carriage to New York was 9½ annas, but the letter has been charged seven cents postage due which would appear to be far more than necessary to make up the ½ anna short payment plus penalty. Perhaps it was assumed that the letter was to travel by air from New York to its destination and the short payment failed to account for US domestic air charges.

Whatever the source of confusion over air surcharges, the situation was about to change dramatically and the next few years were to turn the entire subject of international air mail on its head.

World War II Mail Routes & Rates

1939-1941

Pan American Airways (PANAM) began regularly scheduled mail service over two trans-Atlantic routes early in 1939. On May 23rd the US POD announce that air mail letters weighing up to one-half ounce could be mailed by Atlantic FAM route 18 connecting with European carriers to India and within that country for fifty cents. *Figure 19* shows a cover postmarked Youngstown, Ohio, November 22, 1939. Addressed to Jamshedpur, India, and franked with postage totaling 80 cents, the cover was endorsed VIA AIR MAIL "Via Atl, Clip."

The July 1939 US *Postal Guide* listed three options for sending an air mail letter to India:

> United States trans-Pacific service. From San Francisco, weekly. Time, 10 to 12 days. Postage rate, 70 cents ½ ounce.
>
> Through trans-Atlantic twice weekly. Time, 5 to 8 days. Total postage, 50 cents ½ ounce.
>
> From Europe only to India, 6 times weekly, Time, 3 to 4 days. Fee, 20 cents ½ ounce plus ordinary postage.

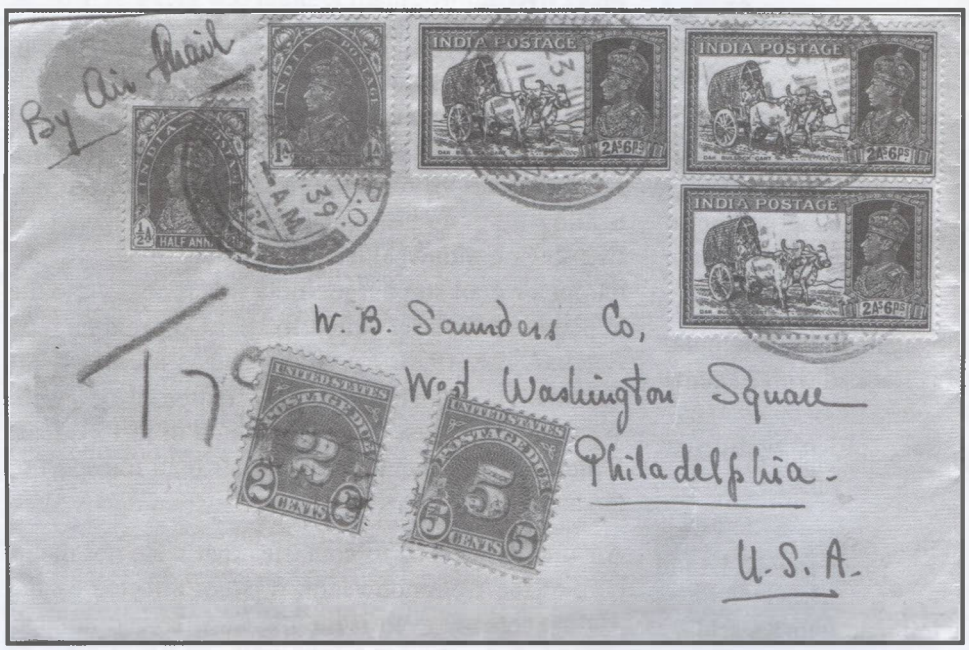


Figure 18 *Franked with nine annas total postage, this 1939 cover to Philadelphia was apparently judged to be 3½ annas short paid and taxed seven US cents.*

The 80 cents postage on this cover doesn't conform to any of the listed rates, nor does it match a double rate. My original thought was that this item was probably carried on the trans-Pacific Clipper and simply over paid by ten cents, but upon re-examination I have become convinced that it really travelled via Atlantic Clipper as indicated in the endorsement. The clue is in the Indian markings.

Jamshedpur is an urban center about 200 kilometers west of Calcutta (now Kolkata). The cover bears

Figure 19 *Evidence from arrival postmarks and a censor mark suggests that this cover traveled via Atlantic Clipper and onward via European airline to Karachi. The franking of eighty cents represents either a 30 cent overpayment for a ½-ounce rate or a 20-cent shortpay for a double rate, but the rate could have been misinterpreted as being twice the 30-cent trans-Atlantic Clipper plus 20 cents onward from Europe.*

a Calcutta backstamp dated October 6th and a Jamshedpur receiving dater of October 7th suggesting that it was carried by air to Calcutta and then onward by truck or train to Jamshedpur. This would certainly have been consistent with PANAM Clipper service to Singapore and BOAC onward to Calcutta. But, there is a triangular PASSED CENSOR / KARACHI marking on the front of the cover that could only have been applied in Karachi. This means that the cover must have entered India by way of Karachi—over 2,000 miles west of Calcutta, and therefore must have been carried by a European airline.

On September 3, 1939, Great Britain went to war with Germany. The Empire Air Mail Scheme was concluded the same. Imperial Airways—soon to be British Overseas Airways (BOAC) after its merger with British Airways on November 24—determined that military requirements for air cargo space far outweighed the need for inexpensive air mail service.

On September 4th the air mail surcharge on first class letters up to one ounce addressed to the US was tripled to 1 rupee, 2 annas but this new rate included air service via Imperial to Athens, air transport by European carrier to Lisbon, and then PANAM FAM-18 service

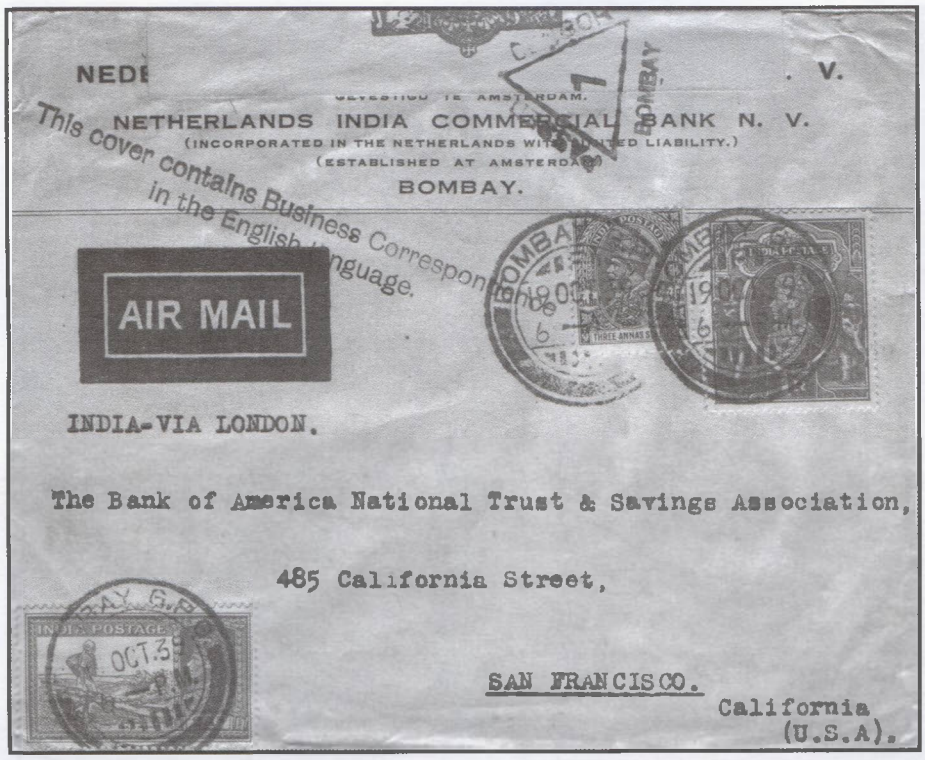


Figure 20 *This inter-bank cover was franked at the 1 rupee, 2 anns per half-ounce air surcharge rate that came into effect as Britain entered the war. It paid for air carriage from India to Lisbon plus PANAM Clipper service to New York.*

to New York. *Figure 20* illustrates a Bombay bank cover postmarked October 19, 1939, franked at the new rate. Note the declaration of contents and the civil censor tape along the top edge. Postal censorship was initiated on international mails entering or leaving India on August 26, 1939. The BOAC service operated only until June 10, 1940, when Italy entered the war and forced its termination. The last through westbound flight departed Calcutta June 5th and arrived in England on June 9th.

BOAC had anticipated that their flights through the Mediterranean could be curtailed by Italy's entry into the war, and immediately began to implement plans to patch together a new route that would maintain air accelerated communications between the UK and its Asia colonies. The result was known as the Horseshoe Route and it was cobbled together from the African operations linking Durban with Cairo and the unaffected portion of the Australia route from Cairo through India to Sydney. Unfortunately, the link between London and Durban was limited to steamer transport.

Service on the Horseshoe Route was inaugurated June 19th with flights leaving Durban and Sydney on the same day. Although the route was of necessity shortened to Durban-Calcutta in early 1942 after Japan's entry into the war, it continued to operate throughout the war.

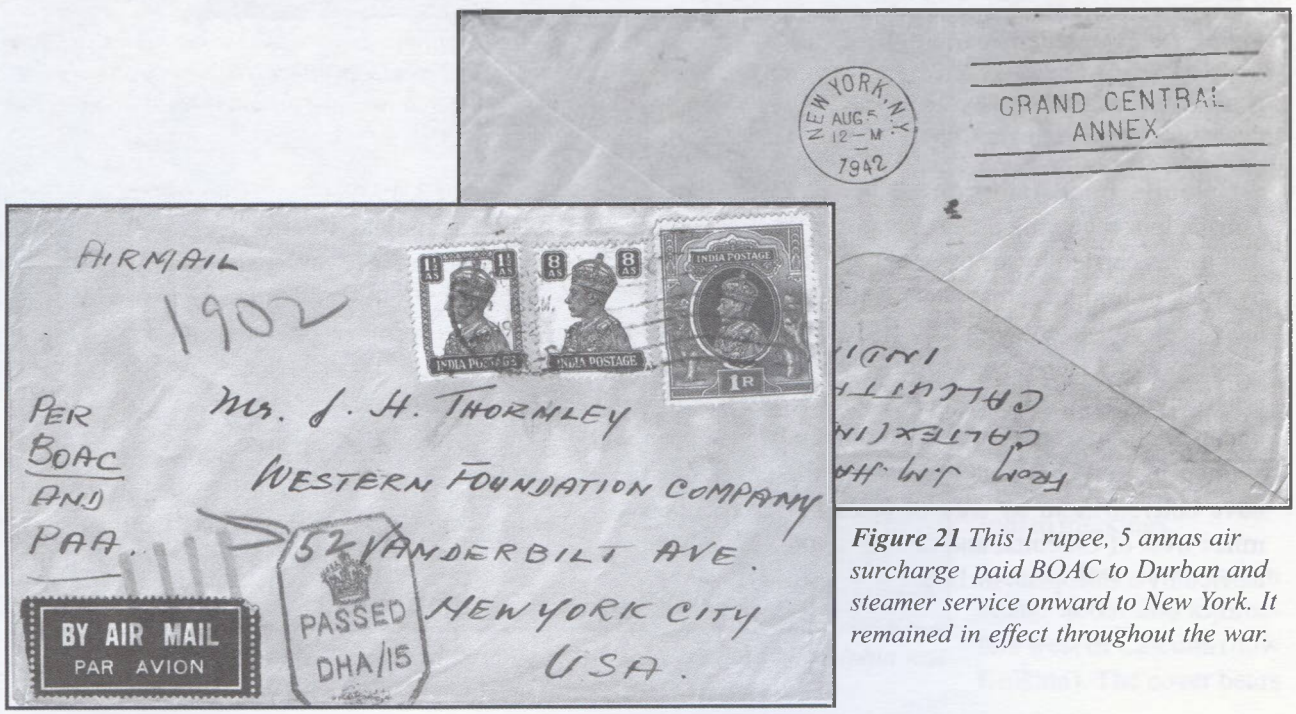


Figure 21 *This 1 rupee, 5 annas air surcharge paid BOAC to Durban and steamer service onward to New York. It remained in effect throughout the war.*

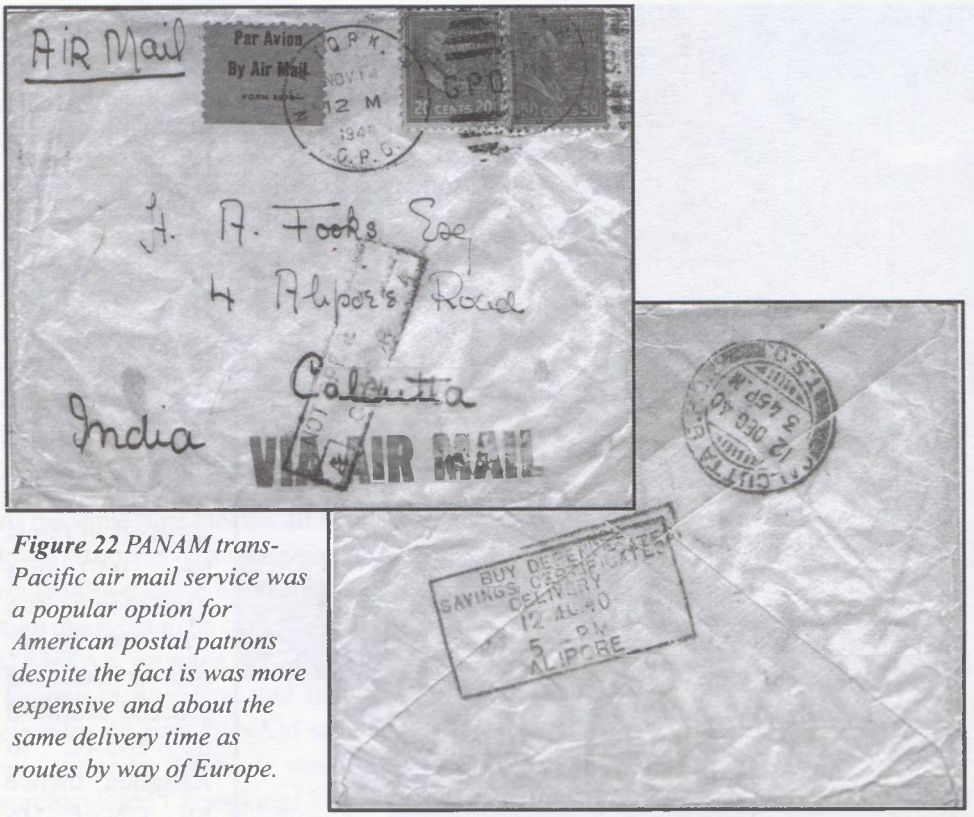
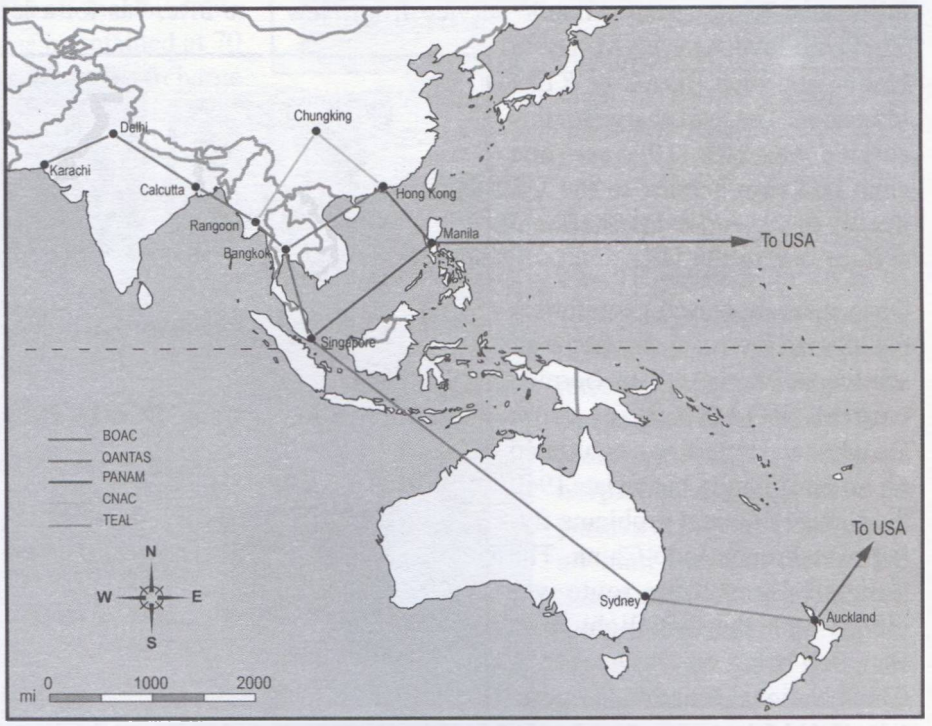


Figure 22 *PANAM trans-Pacific air mail service was a popular option for American postal patrons despite the fact is was more expensive and about the same delivery time as routes by way of Europe.*

BOAC offered air accelerated service to England for Indian postal patrons on the Horseshoe Route beginning in September 1939 with carriage by air to Durban and onward by steamer. This same service was available for mail addressed to the US at a rate of 1 rupee, 9½ annas for the first half ounce (*figure 21*). This remained the least expensive way to mail an air accelerated letter from India to the US throughout the war years. Interestingly, the US POD did not list this routing in the *Postal Guide* as beginning available for Americans to achieve air accelerated delivery to India.

The US *Postal Bulletin* of March 10, 1937 announced that a new air mail service to India was to become available on April 21, 1937. The service, which incorporated PANAM flights from San Francisco to Hong Kong and Singapore with onward BOAC air transport to Calcutta and within India, was to cost 70 cents per half ounce. This was, of course, the same service referred to in the quote listed earlier from the 1939 *Postal Guide*. It was a very popular option among Americans wishing to send air mail to the subcontinent despite the relatively high cost and roughly equivalent delivery time with mail sent by way of Europe. *Figure 22* illustrates a cover postmarked New York on November 14, 1940. Franked at the 70-cent rate, it bears a Calcutta backstamp dated December 12, 1940.

Indian postal patrons were advised that they could take advantage of the trans-Pacific service in June 1940 after the curtailment of the BOAC service direct to London. The trans-Pacific service was to involve BOAC flights to Hong Kong linking there with PANAM service onward to San Francisco (*map 4*). The total rate for the first half ounce was 2 rupees, 11½ annas (3½ annas + 2Re, 8 as air surcharge) for mail addressed to the United States (*figure 23*). In-



Map 4 *Trans-Pacific air mail service became an attractive option after Italy's entry into the war cut off direct BOAC flights to Britain in June 1940. Changing political realities required several route and rate changes in 1940 and 1941.*

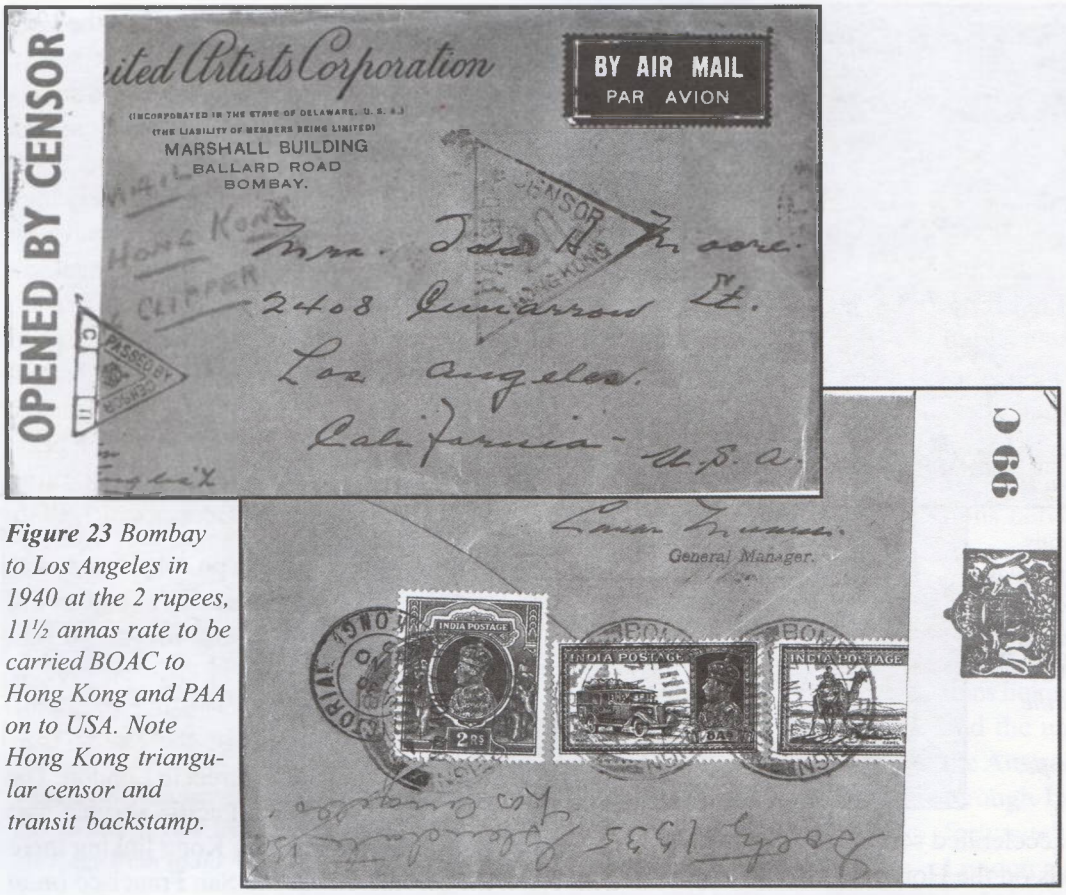


Figure 23 *Bombay to Los Angeles in 1940 at the 2 rupees, 11½ annas rate to be carried BOAC to Hong Kong and PAA on to USA. Note Hong Kong triangular censor and transit backstamp.*

dian patrons were also advised that this service could be used to send air mail to the United Kingdom with transport as described above plus air service across the United States, trans-Atlantic service from New York on PANAM FAM-18 to Lisbon and then BOAC or KLM to London. The total charge for this service was 2Re, 10½ as—one anna less than service to the US due to the cheaper international surface rate to the UK.

Once again, however, geopolitical realities intervened to disrupt the air service as France fell to German control. BOAC service from Bangkok to Hong Kong continued for several months, but by late 1940 there were political problems flying over French Indo-China. The Bangkok-Hong Kong route was closed with the last flight from Bangkok being on 14 October. A China National Aviation Corporation (CNAC) service had begun regular flights in October 1939 from Rangoon to Chungking. It connected with the earlier Chungking-Hong Kong service launched in December 1937. From October 25, 1940, the only connection between Hong Kong and Imperial's Eastern Route was via this service.

Indian postal authorities announced in October 1940 that henceforth the trans-Pacific air mail service would proceed eastward by BOAC to Rangoon, thence by CNAC to Chungking and onward to Hong Kong before linking with PANAM's trans-Pacific flights. The air surcharge was initially unchanged from the previous 2Re, 8as, but in April 1941 it was increased to 3Re, 7as for a letter weighing one-half ounce on

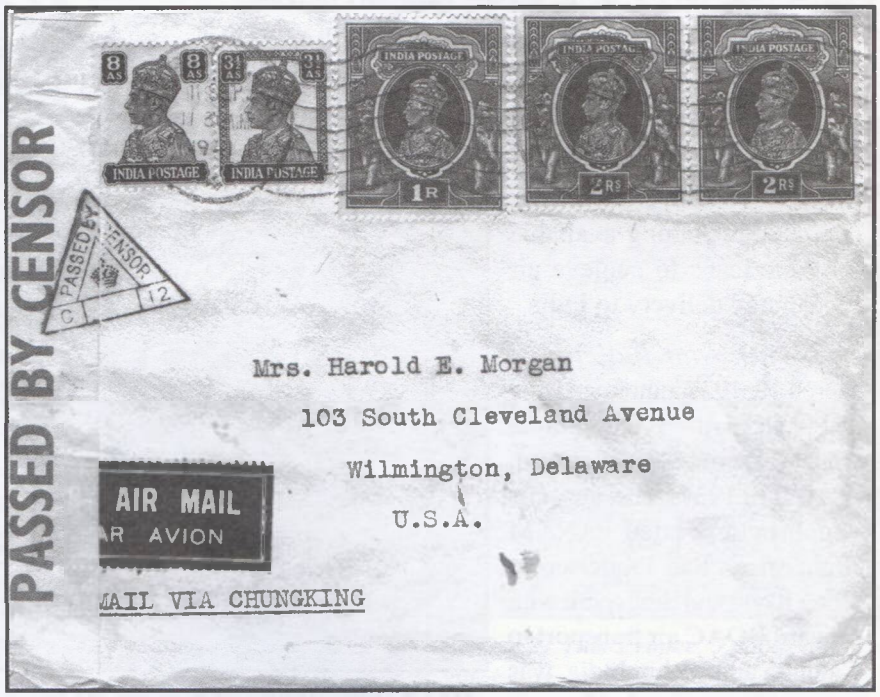


Figure 24 *After the Bangkok to Hong Kong BOAC link was closed in late 1940, CNAC began flying Indian air mail from Rangoon over the hump to Chungking for onward transit to Hong Kong and the USA.*

less to the United States. In mid-July this was reduced to 2Re, 12as and it remained at that level until December 8, 1941, when the PANAM service was terminated.

Figure 24 illustrates an air mail cover postmarked Bombay on September 11, 1941, with a total postage of 5 rupees, 11½ annas. Addressed to Wilmington, Delaware, the cover is endorsed "AIR MAIL VIA CHUNGKING". The postage pays twice the air surcharge of 2Re, 10as plus the 3½-anna UPU international surface rate to the US.

Figure 26 *Japan's occupation of Hong Kong on December 8, 1941, brought an end to Pacific air service between India and the US. This March 1942 air cover travelled via Miami to Lagos via PANAM and onward via BOAC to India from Africa.*

At the same time that the air surcharge was lowered on the via Chungking route, a new route option came into effect whereby Indian mails could be carried by BOAC to Singapore, by QANTAS onward to Sydney, TEAL across the Tasman to Auckland and then onward to San Francisco by the new PANAM service. The surcharge for air service on this route was the same as the revised surcharge via Chungking: 2Re, 12as (*figure 25*).

Japan's December 8th 1941 invasion brought an immediate end to all trans-Pacific civilian air mail services. PANAM began regularly scheduled service on its Miami-Lagos route on December 2, 1941, and that became the primary conduit for air mail communications between the US and India. The all-inclusive rate from the United States to India was maintained at 70 cents per half ounce (*figure 26*). The air surcharge on a letter from India to the US was 2 rupees, 8 annas, and the international surface rate remained 3½ annas (*figure 27*).

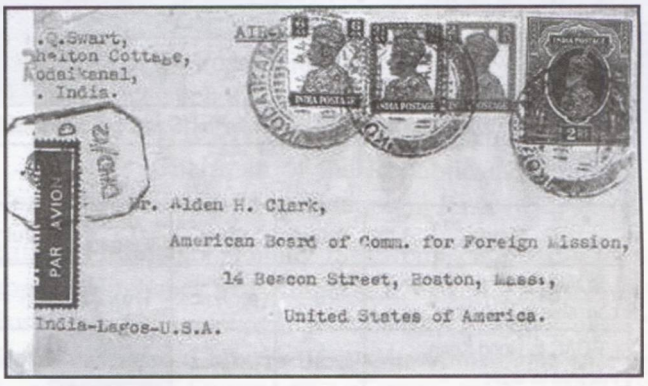


Figure 27 *This 1944 air cover was routed through Lagos, Nigeria, and on to the US via PANAM.*

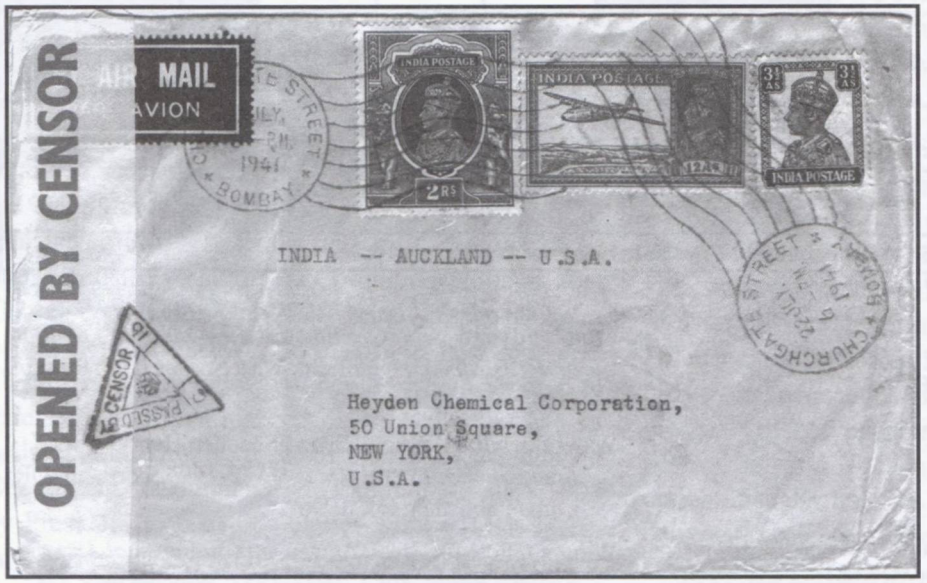


Figure 25 *The option to send air mail from India to the US via Australia and New Zealand became available in July 1941. The rate was 2 rupees, 12 annas per half ounce plus the 3½ annas international rate.*

Summary

The 18 years from 1927 to 1945 saw numerous changes in routes and air surcharge rates as transport technology and political upheaval redefined India's place in the world. It is not particularly difficult or expensive to procure examples of air mail between the United States and India from this era, but the very nature the changing rate and route structure presents at challenge to building a collection that tells the whole story.

Wawrukiewicz and Beecher (1996) contains very detailed air route and rate tables summarizing mail from the US to India for the 1927 to 1946 period so there is no necessity to republish that information here.[2] The comparable set of tables summarizing air routes and rates from India to the United States have not previously been published, and this information is presented in *tables 2* and *3* below.

Route	Terms	Unit	Jan 1927	Mar 1929	Feb 1930	Jul 7 1933	1934 or 1935	Sep 4 1939	Jun 5 1940
a. From Basra to Cairo	S	per ½ oz.	3 as						
b. From Basra to Cairo & Marseille to London	S	per ½ oz.	6 as						
c. From Karachi to London	S	per ½ oz.		6 as	⇨				
d. From Delhi to London	S	per ½ oz.			8 as				
e. From anywhere in India to London	S	per ½ oz.				6 as	⇨		
f. From India to London ship to US & air within the US	S	per ½ oz.					10 as		
g. From India to Lisbon and PANAM FAM-18 to NYC	S	per ½ oz.						1Re, 2as	
h. Italy's war declaration ends direct BOAC service to London									
i. BOAC from India to Durban, ship to New York	S	per ½ oz.							1Re, 6as
International surface UPU letter rate to US was 3 annas until Dec 3, 1931, and 3½ annas thereafter for 1st 20 grams.									

Table 2

Route	Terms	Unit	Jun 5 1940	Jul 1940	Oct 16 1940	Apr 1941	Jul 1941	Dec 8 1941	Mar 1942	1945
i. BOAC from India to Durban, ship to New York	S	per ½ oz.	1Re, 6as	⇨	⇨	⇨	⇨	⇨	⇨	⇨
j. BOAC to Hong Kong, PANAM to USA	S	per ½ oz.		2Re, 8as						
k. BOAC to Rangoon, CNAC to Chungking and Hong Kong, PANAM to USA	S	per ½ oz.			2Re, 8as	3Re, 7as	2Re, 12as			
l. BOAC to Singapore, QANTAS to Sydney, TEAL to Auckland, PANAM to USA	S	per ½ oz.					2Re, 12as			
m. Japan's Invasion ends all trans-Pacific civil air service	S	per ½ oz.								
n. BOAC to Lagos, Nigeria & PANAM to Miami	S	per ½ oz.							2Re, 8as	⇨
International surface UPU letter rate to US was 3½ annas for 1st 20 grams and 2as for each additional 20 grams										

Table 3

Endnotes:

Proud, Edward B. (2009), pp. 630-631

Wawrukiewicz and Beecher (1996), pp.151-152.

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The Postmasters General of the United States

XLIV. Frank H. Hitchcock, 1909-1913

by Daniel Y. Meschter

Few Postmasters General were better prepared at the time of their appointment to accept the responsibilities of the position and the vision to grasp what the future might hold for the processing and transportation of the mails than Frank Harris Hitchcock.

Frank Harris Hitchcock was born on October 5, 1867 at Amherst, Ohio on the shore of Lake Erie, the son of a Congregational minister. He received his primary and secondary education in public schools, but the sources are inconsistent as to whether it was in Amherst or Boston where his family had deep roots, so that we have very little insight into his formative years before he entered Harvard College in 1887[1]. The "Young Republican Movement" and boxing took up most of his free time during his undergraduate years at both of which he was an active, accomplished participant. Both also proved useful following his entry into the rough and tumble scene of Boston's precinct politics and recognition as a precinct committeeman. A classmate was quoted in later years as saying he learned the art of persuasion of the leading spirits in a caucus and the use of more drastic measures if necessary. As a result of his taste for these activities he settled on politics and the management of the business of government as his career objective.

Frank Hitchcock

Hitchcock finished his studies in Boston with a year in law. He then moved to Washington D.C. where he entered government service beginning briefly as a clerk in the Treasury Department and then as a biologist in the Department of Agriculture. A year later he was transferred to the statistics division. Meanwhile, he completed his law studies at Columbian College, now George Washington University, receiving the bachelor of law degree in 1894 and master of law degree in 1895. He was on his way when he was promoted to chief of the foreign markets division in 1897 and finally appointed chief clerk of the newly established Department of Commerce and Labor in February 1903 by President Roosevelt's choice for the first Secretary of the new department, George B. Cortelyou.

It no doubt was through Cortelyou's influence that Hitchcock resigned his position in Commerce to accept appointment as Assistant Secretary of the Republican National Committee with supervision over the important eastern headquarters in New York City. He thus added high standing in the Republican hierarchy to his escalating rank in the bureaucracy. It also brought him into direct personal contact with the President. Roosevelt took advantage of the opportunity to name Hitchcock to several important commissions dealing with government organization and modernization. When Roosevelt appointed George Cortelyou Postmaster General on March 5, 1905, Cortelyou took Hitchcock with him as his First Assistant. This assignment lasted until 1908. His reputation for efficiency in the discharge of his official duties during this time was of the highest. He left the Post Office Department in early 1908 when Roosevelt named him manager of Taft's presidential campaign and then Chairman of the Republican National Committee after Taft's nomination in June.

Taft had little choice under the circumstances but to appoint Hitchcock to a cabinet seat. Nothing less than Postmaster General would do. After all, Hitchcock was the man who put him in the White House and who came with experience in four departments, including three years as First Assistant Postmaster General and high standing in the Party. Moreover, he had the esteem of the outgoing President, which was not to be ignored. He obviously was a man who could accomplish things no one else had been able to do.

Hitchcock was in office only a couple of months before he was faced with the same problem that had bedeviled Postmasters General for years – chronic deficits. On June 30th he inherited what the *New York Times* correspondent called the largest annual deficit in Post Office Department history - $17,479,770[2]. Hitchcock quite correctly ascribed this deficit to that old bug-a-boo, second class mail in which he reported the Post Office Department lost eight cents per pound processing and transporting newspapers and especially—usually heavier—magazines and to the rural delivery service which exploded in its first ten years beyond the most generous estimates of its proponents. It was, of course, a service offered to it's rural patrons without charge. Incredibly, Hitchcock succeeded

in not only eliminating this deficit in two years, but in showing a profit of $219,000 through, it was said, by reorganizing the Department and by good business practice and management.[3]

He was always ever after recognized as an exceptional administrator, not counting his three outstanding accomplishments – installing the postal savings system first proposed by Postmaster General John Creswell in 1872 and strongly supported by Postmaster General John Wanamaker (1889-1893), establishing domestic parcel post, and, most of all, starting the airmail service. Parcel post also was proposed by Postmaster General John Wanamaker, although his ideas with respect to both the savings bank and parcel post were roundly criticized as ploys in support of his retail mail order business. Airmail service was Hitchcock's own idea, borrowed from the British.

Postal Savings Bank

The major criticism of the proposed postal savings bank was that it had no relationship to the collection, processing, or transportation of mail. It was opposed by the established banks that feared, without cause as it turned out, that the postal bank could develop into a government owned bank to their disadvantage. It did have the enormous advantage of reaching almost every household in the nation no matter how remote through branch post offices and carriers in the cities and the rural delivery service in the country. The personal contact between mailmen and individual citizens implied in the postal savings bank system was a means of communication the government eagerly developed in the following years as a service to the public.

Hitchcock's personal enthusiasm for the establishment of the postal savings bank is not entirely clear, although he supported the Department's recommendations. Congress enacted it as a service to the people. The moving force in the government, however, was the Treasury which advocated the Postal Savings Bank as a way to return to circulation the $850 million in specie and currency it estimated was "squirreled" away in a multitude of hiding places beginning with the ubiquitous cookie jar by especially rural residents who had limited access to banks in any case and had small trust in them if they did. The idea of a savings bank secured by the credit of the United States, managed by their familiar mailman, and paying interest was irresistible.

After almost twenty years of debate, Congress finally passed a bill establishing the Postal Savings Bank on June 25, 1910, effective January 1, 1911[4]. It authorized post office clerks and carriers to accept deposits in a minimum of one dollar in cash or ten- cent postal savings stamps sold separately. They then issued a certificate of deposit or receipt for the amount of the deposit. Accounts were limited to a maximum of $500 plus interest.

Post Offices would then deposit accumulated receipts in bank accounts on which the Post Office Department credited depositors' accounts with two percent interest. It was both convenient and safe and earned the confidence of its depositors. Best of all, it was an outstanding success. It significantly increased the capital resources of the nation and did much to finance World War I. From a slow start, total deposits reached $150 million by 1929, slumped by about 20% during the 1930s, and peaked at almost $3.5 billion in 1947[5]. Due to important changes in the American banking system, incentives to deposit in the Postal Savings Bank diminished and withdrawals far exceeded deposits in the following years until the Post Office accepted the last deposits on April 27, 1966 and money on hand was gradually dispersed.

Parcel Post Service

While the founding of the postal savings bank was advocated chiefly by the Treasury to increase the money in circulation to stimulate growth of the national economy without inflating the dollar, the establishment of the parcel post service was in response to a long-standing public demand. For more than a hundred years the express companies enjoyed a monopoly on carrying parcels and succeeded in preventing Congress from authorizing the Post Office to carry parcels heavier than what the long time postage rates allowed - that was three pounds (1799-1879), later four pounds (1879-1913). But at last it was the patrons of the rural delivery system who saw the convenience and economy in having their mail carrier deliver groceries, ranch and farm supplies, clothing, and other merchandise, to their mail boxes.

Frank Hitchcock was instrumental in pushing the Act of August 24, 1912 through Congress that first, among other things, revised second class postage rates to a level he hoped would erase the Department's chronic deficits and, second, established the domestic parcel post service beginning with a weight limit of eleven pounds at a minimum of five cents per pound for local delivery. The Act took effect on January 1, 1913[6]. John Wanamaker, who first proposed it, was given the honor of mailing the first parcel from the Philadelphia Post Office.

With rapidly increasing weight limits and low rates of postage, the Parcel Post Service was an immediate sensation the public eagerly took advantage of. An important innovation still in effect was the creation of parcel post zones by distance so that postage rates would reflect both the weight and distance carried.

A provision of special interest to collectors was the issuance of special stamps to be used on parcels. Hitchcock directed the preparation of a set of 12 denominations from one cent to one dollar printed in red depicting the methods of transportation and handling of the mails. Accompanying them was a set of five "Parcel Post Postage Due" stamps from one to twenty-five cents printed in green. However, by a General Order in June 1913, the Postmaster General (Burleson) discontinued the printing of parcel post and parcel post postage due stamps and authorized the use of ordinary postage stamps on parcels effective July 1, 1913. Thus, the use of these stamps was effectively limited to the first six months of 1913, although they were still valid to pay ordinary postage.

The Birth of the Airmail Service

There is a saying that once somebody has done something seemingly impossible for the first time, such as running the four-minute mile, everybody can do it. Such was the case with the Wright Brothers achievement of powered or heavier-than-air-flight on December 17, 1903. Armed with this proof of their aeronautical principles, within six years inventors and engineers like Oscar Chanute, Glen Curtis, and Samuel Langley, among others, redesigned the Wright's basic box kite configuration and built single wing aircraft with long fuselages ending in a tail assembly consisting of a rudder and elevator flaps balancing the the engine in the nose. The rudder and flaps were controlled from the cockpit by wires connected to the 'stick' and foot pedals. Most important were more powerful engines for their weight. For his part, Glen Curtis seemed to favor biplanes with two wings reminiscent of the Wrights' "Flyer". Louis Bleriot was especially noted for the "state of the art" airplanes he built in his factory outside of Paris and the flight school he opened at Pau to train pilots to fly them, possibly the first of its kind in an age when many pilots learned to fly by trial-and-error, too frequently with disastrous results.

The public was ecstatic about these developments opening what would soon become the Century of Progress. Still, neither the public nor industry was prepared to consider the aeroplane as anything more than a novelty and a source of entertainment beginning in the U.S. with an air show at Dominguez Field just south of Los Angeles in January 1910, modeled after an air meet held in France the previous August. Only the Army was beginning to grasp the strategic value of airborne surveillance of ground operations. It organized the Aeronautical Division of the U.S. Signal Corps in August 1907 and allowed officers to take flight training.

Two more major air shows were held in the United States in 1910. One was the First Annual Harvard-Boston Airmeet in September at Squantum on a spit into Boston Harbor from North Quincy. It offered $90,000 in prizes and appearance fees of which Claude Grahame-White won $22,000. The last was the Belmont International Aviation Tournament at Belmont Park on Long Island. Grahame-White again was a major winner.

Numerous air shows sponsored by communities and the few aviation-related businesses were held across the country in 1911. Those at New York and Boston attracted crowds approaching 100,000 to see the latest machines and the dare-devils, so they thought, who flew them. Among the main attractions were competitions for speed, distance, and time in the air with worthwhile monetary prizes.

A number of speed, distance, and altitude records set at these events did much to demonstrate the practicality of the airplane; but Postmaster General Hitchcock was one of the few who visualized the potential of the airplane in commerce, that is, carrying the mail faster than by any method then in use. It was too soon, of course, to think of airplanes crossing the oceans; but that would come in due time.

It was one thing to conceive of using the airplane to transport packages and mail, it was quite another to do it; but once the idea took hold there was no shortage of pilots and flying machines to demonstrate its practicality. The earliest report found of carrying mail and parcels by air was by the famous British aviator, Claude Graham-White (1879-1959) in England in the summer of 1910 before he left for the United States to compete in airplane competitions in which he was eminently successful. It was said he earned more than $200,000.

In November of that year the Wright Brothers hired Phil Parmalee to fly a quantity of silk cloth from Dayton to Columbus, Ohio, thus initiating the air delivery industry. On February 17, 1911, Fred Wiseman of Petaluma, California flew a bundle of newspapers and, unofficially, three letters to Santa Rosa, taking two days

for the eighteen-mile flight due to a crash en route. He may have been the first American to carry mail by air under any circumstances. The next day, on February 18th, in India, a French pilot, Henri Pequet, delivered 6,500 cards and letters without landing five miles before returning to his takeoff point in 13 minutes in what is considered the world's first official airmail flight.

Frank Hitchcock, hoping to beat the British government sponsoring an official airmail flight, was disappointed when Gustav Hamel few 24 pounds of mail 20 miles from London to Windsor Castle on September 9, 1911.

The managers of the Nassau Aviation Meet—scheduled for Saturday, September 23rd to, September 30, 1911 on Nassau Boulevard outside Garden City, Long Island—were ahead of him. The *New York Times* on September 1st reported that the managers of the Meet were negotiating with a French flyer, Pierre Vedrines, "winner of the flight from Paris to Madrid," to have him give a series of demonstrations with an aeroplane tending to prove its practical use for the rapid transportation of mail matter." However, nothing more was heard of any arrangements for Vedrine's appearance.

Hitchcock took this opportunity to sponsor daily U.S. Post Office test flights at the Nassau Meet. On the 15th Hitchcock ordered daily airmail service between Nassau Boulevard and what turned out to be Mineola and instructed New York City Postmaster Edward Morgan to establish a special temporary field post office during the Nassau Meet to sell stamps and receive letters and cards to be carried on these experimental flights[7].

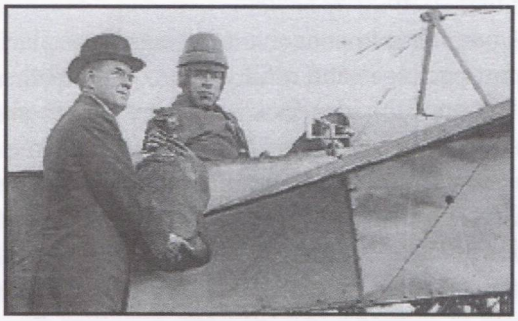


***Figure 2** Postmaster General Hitchcock hands mail sack to pilot Earle Ovington in cockpit of "Dragonfly," September 23, 1911.*

It was said that at the beginning Hitchcock asked if the first flight could be put off a day as it was inconvenient for him to arrive on Saturday. This was not the only time he had to change his mind. He arrived at Nassau Boulevard on the 23rd where he ran into another problem. In meeting with the two British flyers he appointed to pilot the demonstration flights, they declined the assignment when he informed them they would not be paid.

Hitchcock was in a quandary. He had hoped the first airmail flight would help open the Meet, but without the British flyers this seemed impossible until, hearing of his problem, a tall, thin, youthful-looking man of 31 wearing a French-style flying helmet, Earle Ovington, volunteered to make the flight as Hitchcock planned without pay. Hitchcock was disappointed again when he saw that the plane Ovington brought to the Meet was a Bleriot "Queen," a single-seat monoplane he called "Dragonfly" with a bold number "13" painted on its rudder. Hitchcock originally planned to accompany the flight carrying the mail bag himself in a second seat. His choices now were either to allow Ovington to make the inaugural flight alone or to put the flight off until the next day in the hope of finding a pilot with a two-seater.

Hitchcock swallowed his pride. He swore Ovington in as the first official airmail pilot in the Post Office Department and handed him the mail bag containing 640 letters and 1,280 post cards posted at the special post office. With the mail bag patted down on his lap, he took off late in the afternoon on a nonstop round trip six miles to Mineola and six miles back. Locating the field where the Mineola postmaster waited for him, he banked over the field, kicked the mail bag out, and headed back to Nassau Boulevard. Unfortunately, the bag burst on impact, but the postmaster and several spectators gathered it up to be forwarded to their addresses by regular mail. During the week, Ovington made daily round trips carrying the mail to Mineola[8].

Hitchcock realized his ambition to personally carry mail by air the following Tuesday. It was announced a few minutes before five o'clock that Ovington was ready to leave on his daily flight. As it happened the load was fifteen pounds heavier than Ovington was willing to carry. It all may have been by some prearrangement because when Hitchcock volunteered to take the excess fifteen pounds on a separate flight, Mrs. Timothy Woodruff, apparently the clerk-in-charge of the field post office, appeared with a hundred postal cards she had held back for just such an eventuality. At this point U.S. Army Captain Beck brought out his two-seat Curtis biplane, loaded Hitchcock and the excess mail in the passenger's seat and followed Ovington around the twelve-mile circuit, making Hitchcock the first Postmaster General to personally deliver mail by air.

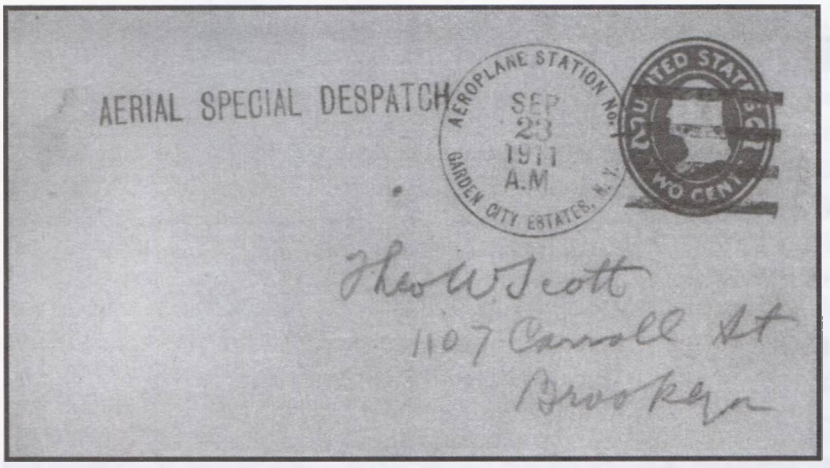


Figure 3 *Postal stationery entire carried on the September 23, 1911, flight by the "Dragonfly."*

Before taking off, he joked with U.S. Attorney General George W. Wickersham of New York that there was no second-class mail on this aeroplane because it cost too much to carry it this way, a snide remark about what he thought was the excessive cost of transporting second-class mail

The Post Office Department did not officially authorize intercity airmail service until seven years later in 1918. By that time airplanes had become capable of the range (distance), ceiling (altitude), and load factor (weight of pilot and cargo) needed to make transcontinental transportation of airmail feasible. These developments were largely the result of the use of aviation during World War I. Of course, by that time the Airmail Service was under the direction of a new Postmaster General.

Afterward

Frank Hitchcock's term of office as Postmaster General ended on March 4, 1913, the day President Taft left office, and since Woodrow Wilson, a Democrat was elected President in the 1912 election, Hitchcock had no reasonable expectation of an appointment to a position in the new government, no matter how highly qualified he might have been. It was the first time the Democrats controlled the government in sixteen years and there was a multitude of Democratic loyalists hungry for government jobs.

Fortunately, Hitchcock had traveled extensively to all corners of the United States during his twenty years in government service and had many influential friends in both industry and government. At only 45, he was far too young to think of retiring, as if he ever would. After considering his assets, he moved to New York City where he drew upon his legal training to open a law practice. Nevertheless, he remained active in Republican Party affairs. He supported Charles Evans Hughes for President in 1916 and General Leonard Wood in 1920.

While still in New York City, Hitchcock bought a half interest in the *Tucson* (Arizona) *Daily Citizen* from the estate of the former co-owner. He moved to Tucson in 1928 and assumed the duties of publisher and editor.

He never lost his interest in aviation in all these years. He maintained an inflexible policy in his management of the *Daily Citizen* that no mention of airplane accidents or injuries or deaths do to airplane crashes would appear in the *Citizen.* This policy proved so cumbersome to the *Citizen's* reporters they had difficulty learning the cause and time of his own death due to an uncorroborated report his death was caused by an injury incurred in an airplane accident.

In fact, he died in the pre-dawn hours on August 5, 1935 after two weeks illness in Tucson's Desert Sanatorium. His two sisters were with him at the end. His remains were cremated and his ashes taken back to Massachusetts for interment at Cambridge. He never married and left no direct heirs.

Endnotes

Images courtesy of the Library of Congress.

1 See Vexler; La Foote, Robert S., "Frank Hitchcock," article in *American National Biography;* and *New York Times* obituary, August 6, 1935 for biographical sketches of Frank H. Hitchcock.

2 *NYT*, December 27, 1909.

3 *NYT,* February 23, 1912.

4 36 Stat. 814..

5 U.S. Post Office Department, *U.S. Postal Service, An American History, 1775-2002.* Washington, D.C., n.d., p. 27.

6 37 Stat. 550.

7 *NYT,* 10, 16, 22, and 27.

8 The best descriptions of this epic flight are in numerous articles based on contemporary accounts, subsequent interviews, and Ovington biographies.

Utah's Great Salt Lake Desert

By Dennis H. Pack

Utah's Great Salt Lake Desert was a barrier. Wise travelers went around it, and those who didn't often wished they had. Few plants and animals survive there, and there is no drinkable water. In spite of its inhospitality, the Great Salt Lake Desert has a fascinating human history that has been most active along its fringes. This article looks at that rich history and the postal history that is part of it.

Introduction

The Great Salt Lake Desert was formed when ancient Lake Bonneville receded leaving a large, flat basin called a playa. It has no outlet to the ocean, so salts and sediments in runoff from the mountains are deposited there. It is rimmed by mountain ranges, and surrounds mountains that appear as islands, as seen in *map 1*, which was drawn in 1878.

The desert is unbearably hot in the summer. Most precipitation is blocked by high mountain ranges to the west. The ground is covered with alkaline sand and crystalline salt ranging from ten to 75 centimeters in thickness that is so hard in some places that cars can race on it, and so mushy in others that a bicycle cannot ride through it. Sunlight reflecting from the bright salt can cause the equivalent of snow blindness.

Indigenous Inhabitants

Human habitation along the edges of the Great Salt Lake Desert has been traced back 11,000 years. Artifacts found in Danger Cave, located two miles east of Wendover, Utah, support arguments for an ancient Desert Culture of wanderers who searched for food in family groups of no more than 25-30.[1] Traces of several culture groups are found at various locations around the desert. *Figure 1* shows pre-Columbian artifacts found at Fish Springs at the southwestern edge of the desert.

The Goshute Indians, who refer to themselves as the *Kusiutta*,[2] inhabited the area starting in about 800 BP. They lived a subsistence existence in which they, too, wandered to find food. The Goshutes used available

Map 1 *Part of a 1878 Utah map showing the Great Salt Lake Desert.*

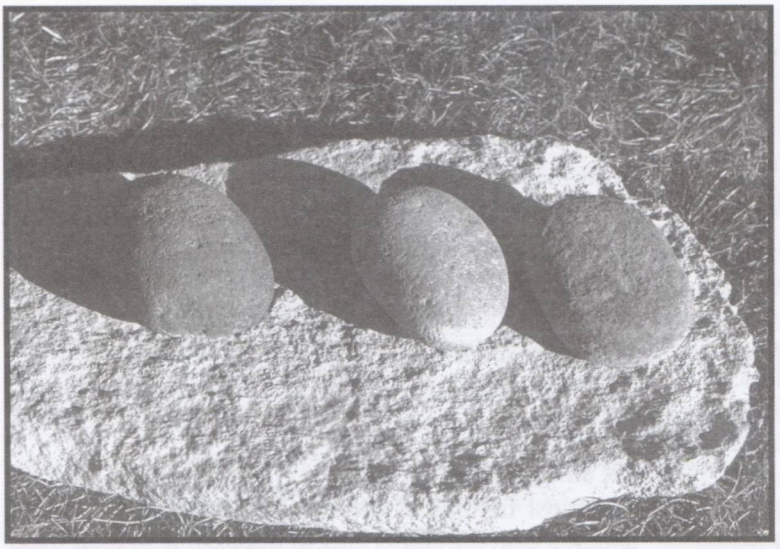


Figure 1 *Pre-Columbian artifacts found at Fish Springs, photographed in 1969.*

resources very efficiently. Their diet consisted of plants, antelopes, rabbits, small animals, lizards, and insects, with pine nuts as their food staple.

After decades of being ignored by the Federal Government, the Goshutes had two Indian reservations in a portion of their homeland set aside by Presidential order: the Skull Valley reservation in 1912, and the Ibapah or Deep Creek reservation, located along the Utah-Nevada border, in 1914. Cattle brought to graze further crowded the Goshutes off the land they had roamed for centuries. Farms were built to teach the Goshutes to raise food, with some success, but it became more and more difficult for them to survive. Treaties negotiated with the Goshute brought little support from the Federal Government because the US Senate refused to ratify treaties negotiated with them and other Indian peoples. Attempts were made to move the Goshutes to an Indian reservation in eastern Utah, but they refused to move because of cultural differences with other Indians, some of whom had previously captured Goshutes and sold them into slavery in Mexico.

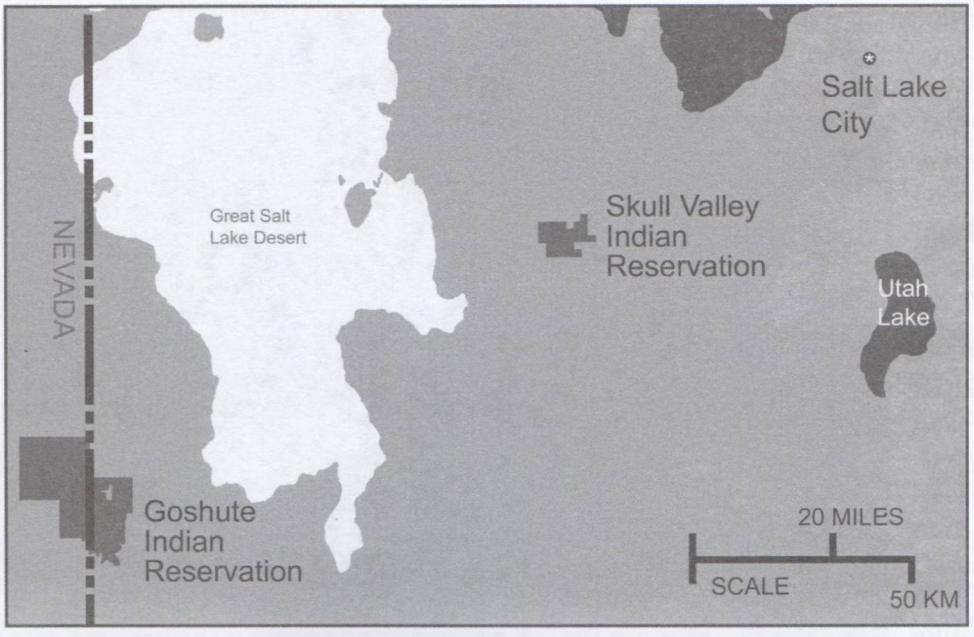
The Ibapah or Deep Creek reservation was combined with other Goshute Indian lands to became the Goshute Reservation. The reservations were enlarged to cover the areas shown in *map 2*. Much of the Skull Valley reservation is suitable for grazing. Less than one percent is irrigable.[3]

Non-indigenous before 1847

Fur trapper Jedediah S. Smith and two companions, Robert Evans and Silas Gobel, made the first recorded crossing of the Salt Lake Desert by white men in June 1827. They started on horseback from California to join a fur trappers' rendevous at Bear Lake, Utah. Their trek across the desert was almost fatal after they ran out of water and their horses died. Smith's journal describes his dreams:

> My dreams were not of Gold or ambitious honors but of my distant quiet home of murmuring brooks of cooling cascades. After a short rest we continued our march and traveled all night. The murmur of falling waters still sounding in our ears and the apprehension that we might never live to hear that sound in reality weighed heavily uppon [sic] us.[4]

A government survey party under the direction of Joseph R. Walker attempted to cross the northern end of the Great Salt Lake Desert in 1831, but turned north because of the lack of water and the desert's forbidding appearance.[5]



Map 2 *Goshute Indian Reservations located on the edge of the Great Salt Lake Desert. Maps of this design in this article are based on a Google satellite image.*

In 1841 Col. John Bartleson led a party of emigrant wagons on the second recorded crossing of the Great Salt Lake Desert. They traveled along the northern edge of the desert where they could occasionally find water. John Bidwell's diary of the trip recorded the party's reaching salt flats north of Great Salt Lake on August 19:

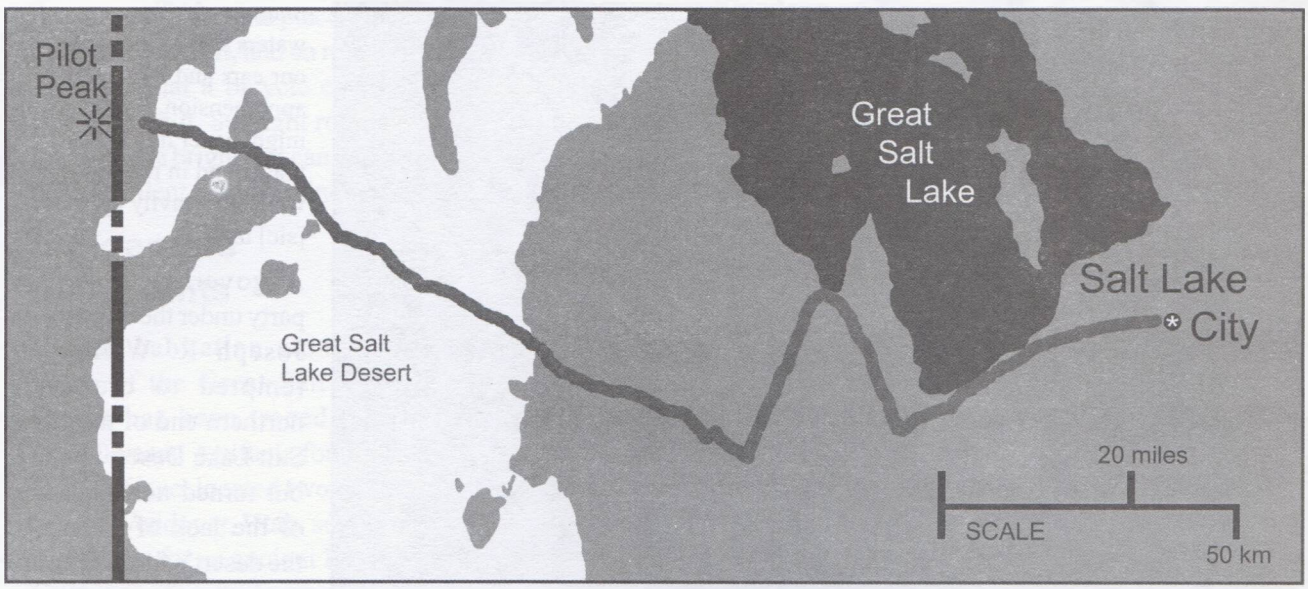
> Started early, hoping soon to find fresh water, when we could refresh ourselves and animals, but alas! The sun beamed heavy on our heads as the day advanced, and we could see nothing before us but extensive arid plains, glimmering with heat and salt, at length the plains became so impregnated with salt, that vegetation entirely ceased; the ground was in many places white as snow with salt and perfectly smooth. The midday sun, beaming with uncommon splendor upon these shining plains, made us fancy we could see timber upon the plains, and wherever timber is found there is water always. We marched forward with unremitted pace till we discovered it was an illusion, and lest our teams should give out we returned from S. to E. and hastened to the river which we reached in about 5 miles.[6]

Those who crossed the Great Salt Lake Desert warned of its harshness. Yet, in 1845, Lansford Hastings published *The Emigrants' Guide to Oregon and California,* in which he wrote, "The most direct route for the California emigrants, would be to leave the Oregon route, about two hundred miles east from Fort Hall; thence bearing west southwest, to the Salt lake; and thence continuing down to the bay of St. Francisco. . . ."[7] Hastings told emigrants that his cutoff would shorten the trip by two hundred miles. The Hastings Cutoff appears in *map 3* with Salt Lake City shown only as a reference point since it was not settled until 1847. The cutoff is also visible in *map 1.*

Unfortunately, Hastings had not traveled the cutoff before he wrote his book. After he learned that John C. Fremont crossed the Great Salt Lake Desert in 1845, almost along the route he proposed, Hastings personally tried to persuade companies of emigrants to use his cutoff. He led a group across the cutoff in 1846. Neither he, nor Fremont had crossed the cutoff with the heavy wagons and oxen commonly used by emigrants.

Six emigrant groups used the Hastings Cutoff in 1846. The most famous of these is the Donner-Reed Party, which found the cutoff almost impassible to their oxen and wagons. They spent 16 days hacking a road into the Salt Lake valley along the route Hastings advised them to take.[8] During their three-day traverse of the Great Salt Lake Desert, their heavy wagons become mired in the muddy salt and their oxen died or became too weak to continue, causing the travelers to abandon many of their belongings. The time, energy and resources the Donner-Reed party lost while taking Hastings Cutoff across Utah resulted in their being trapped by snow in the Sierra-Nevada Mountains with well-known tragic results.[9]

News of the Donner-Reed party discouraged many travelers from using the Hastings Cutoff until the discovery of gold in California, after which some gold seekers used the cutoff to save time.



***Map 3** Hastings Cutoff across the Great Salt Lake Desert.*

1847-1859

Before the Mormon Pioneers settled what is now Utah and colonized much of the surrounding areas, non-native people who entered Utah were on their way somewhere else or remained only temporarily. LDS Church President Brigham Young led the first group of Mormon pioneers to the Salt Lake Valley, arriving July 24, 1847. Within six years, their numbers swelled to 25,000, many of whom settled outside of the Salt Lake Valley. This new population wanted to receive and send mail.

The US Government acted to provide mail service to Salt Lake City in 1849. Congress and the POD recognized Salt Lake City as a constituent city of the United States and established the Great Salt Lake City Post Office. Since Great Salt Lake City was located in the unorganized Spanish Cession of 1848, the POD placed the post office in the California District. Congress also approved, but didn't fund, a government-sponsored express to carry mail between Salt Lake City and Kanesville (now Council Bluffs), Iowa.[10] The Postmaster General (PMG) reported to Congress in 1849:

> In a territory recently denominated Deseret is a post office, at Salt lake, supplied with mail from the western borders of Iowa, a distance of about 1,030 miles, the expense of which is defrayed out of the proceeds of said office . . .[11]

Figure 2 shows Salt Lake City in a 1869 US Geological Survey photograph by William Henry Jackson.

One of the key responsibilities of the Post Office Department (POD) has been the transportation of mail between post offices. In 1845, Congress ordered that the mails should be carried by contractors for the lowest bid for that provides for "the due celerity, certainty and security of such transportation."[12] These were referred to as *celerity, certainty and security* bids, which postal clerks abbreviated by three asterisks or stars (***). The routes served by them were called star routes.[13] The first regular mail activity in the vicinity of the Great Salt Lake Desert involved contractors who carried mail between Salt Lake City and northern California.

Postal reforms of 1845-47 established mail service between the eastern states and California by ship. Private individuals infrequently carried mail overland to Great Salt Lake City and less frequently to California before the first star contracts were approved.[14]

On September 9, 1850, Utah became a Territory and California was made a state. The Great Salt Lake City Post Office became the Salt Lake City Post Office. The Utah Territory extended from the summit of the Rocky Mountains in Colorado west to the eastern boundary of the State of California.

The first contract to carry mail between Salt Lake City and Sacramento, California, was awarded to Absalom Woodward and George Chorpenning, Jr., in May 1851, "To take the mail and every part of it from, and deliver it and every part of it, at each post office along the way."[15] Mail was to leave Sacramento on the first of each month and reach Salt Lake City by the 30th. Mail was also to leave Salt Lake City on the first of each month and reach Sacramento by the 30th.[16] It was called the "Jackass Mail" because mail and freight were carried by wagons pulled by teams of mules. The route lay around the north end of Great Salt Lake to the Emigrant Trail. J. Roderic Korns wrote "The wagon road north around the lake came into existence, rather, as a direct consequence of the shortcomings of the Hastings Cutoff as a means of access to the California Trail from the valley of the Great Salt Lake."[17]

Figure 2 *Salt Lake City as photographed by William Henry Jackson in 1869. (Photo courtesy of US Geological Survey)*

Exploration of the Great Salt Lake Desert continued. In 1854, Army Lieutenant Edward G. Beckwith crossed the southern part of the Great Salt Lake Desert as he searched along the 41st parallel for a central railroad route to California. The next year, Howard Egan crossed the

Figure 3 *The south end of the Great Salt Lake Desert from southwest of the Simpson Range as photographed by C.D. Walcott in 1903. (Courtesy of US Geological Survey)*

desert on a route that was close to the one later followed by Army Captain James H. Simpson. In 1859, Simpson surveyed a route along the southern edge of the Great Salt Lake Desert. This route became extremely important for transporting mail, passengers and freight from the East to California. *Figure 3* shows the south end of the Great Salt Lake Desert from the southwest of the Simpson Range photographed by C.D. Walcott for the U.S. Geological Survey in 1903.

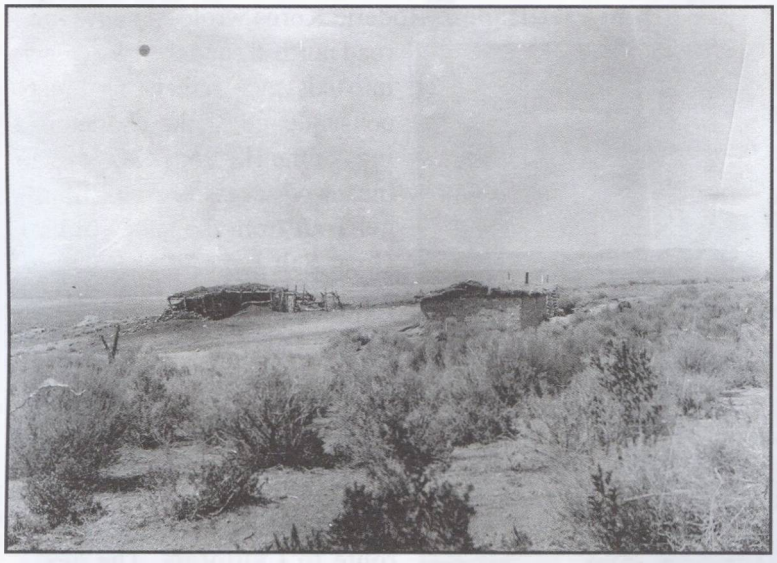


Figure 4 *The Simpson Springs stage station, photographed by G. K. Gilbert in 1901. (Courtesy of US Geological Survey)*

George Chorpenning signed another mail contract in 1854, but traveled a more southern route to San Diego to avoid severe winter weather. Starting in 1858, Chorpenning transported passengers and mail along the southern edge of the Great Salt Lake Desert, following the route used by Eagan and surveyed by Simpson. Chorpenning established stations about every 20 miles. Those in the area covered by this article were located at Simpson's Springs, Fish Springs, and Deep Creek, and are shown in Map 4 by black dots with white centers.[18] The Simpson Springs stage station photographed in 1901 is seen in *figure 4*.

1860-1869

During the 1860s, settlers seeped into the fringes of the Great Salt Lake Desert, but the demand for mail to be transported through the area was still greater than the need for post offices. This decade brought enormous changes in the ways mail and other messages were transported, and much of the change was visible along the southern edge of the Great Salt Lake Desert. One of the best known changes was the Pony Express.

The Pony Express was a private express mail service that used riders and horses traveling at seven or eight miles per hour to carry mail from St. Joseph, Missouri, to Sacramento, California.[19] William H. Russell, Alexander Majors and William B. Waddell, as the firm of Russell, Majors & Waddell, established the Pony Express to provide fast mail service along the central route across the country. At this time, most mail that didn't go by ship was carried along the southern route by the Butterfield Stage Line. Russell, Majors & Waddell formed the Central Overland, California & Pike's Peak Express Company in 1859 to carry mail from Missouri to Salt Lake City. A cover carried by the Pony Express and bearing other express markings appears as *figure 5*.

Figure 5 *Cover carried by the Pony Express from New York to San Francisco and bearing markings of the Central Overland, California & Pike's Peak Express Company and Wells Fargo. The cover has been repaired along its left edge after it was opened unevenly. (Source: Nevin, David,* The Expressmen, *Time-Life Books, 1974, page 111. Originally from Wiltsee Collection, Wells Fargo Bank Histiory Room, San Francisco)*

Riders left San Francisco and St. Joseph for the first time April 3, 1860, both reaching their destinations within the scheduled ten and a half days. Between November 1860 and April 1861, an average of 41 letters per trip was carried to San Francisco.[20] The fastest run carried President Lincoln's inaugural message west in a little over seven and a half days.[21]

Chorpenning's stations across the desert were too far apart for Pony Express riders who changed horses about every fifteen miles. Home stations for the Pony Express were established 40-60 miles apart with swing stations in between. Between Salt Lake City and the California border, stations averaged 11-3/4 miles apart.[22] Howard Egan, who first traveled the route along the southern edge of the desert, supervised the Pony Express stations between Salt Lake City and Robert's Creek, now in Nevada.

Richard E. Pike and John W. Healey of the US Bureau of Land Management performed extensive on-site research of the Pony Express and Overland Mail stations in Utah. *Map 4* shows the trail and stations across the Great Salt Desert as described by them. A brief description of each station is taken from their published research.[23]

Point Lookout Station, which is also referred to as Lookout Pass and General Johnston's Pass, overlooks the desert. A family settled there about 1876.

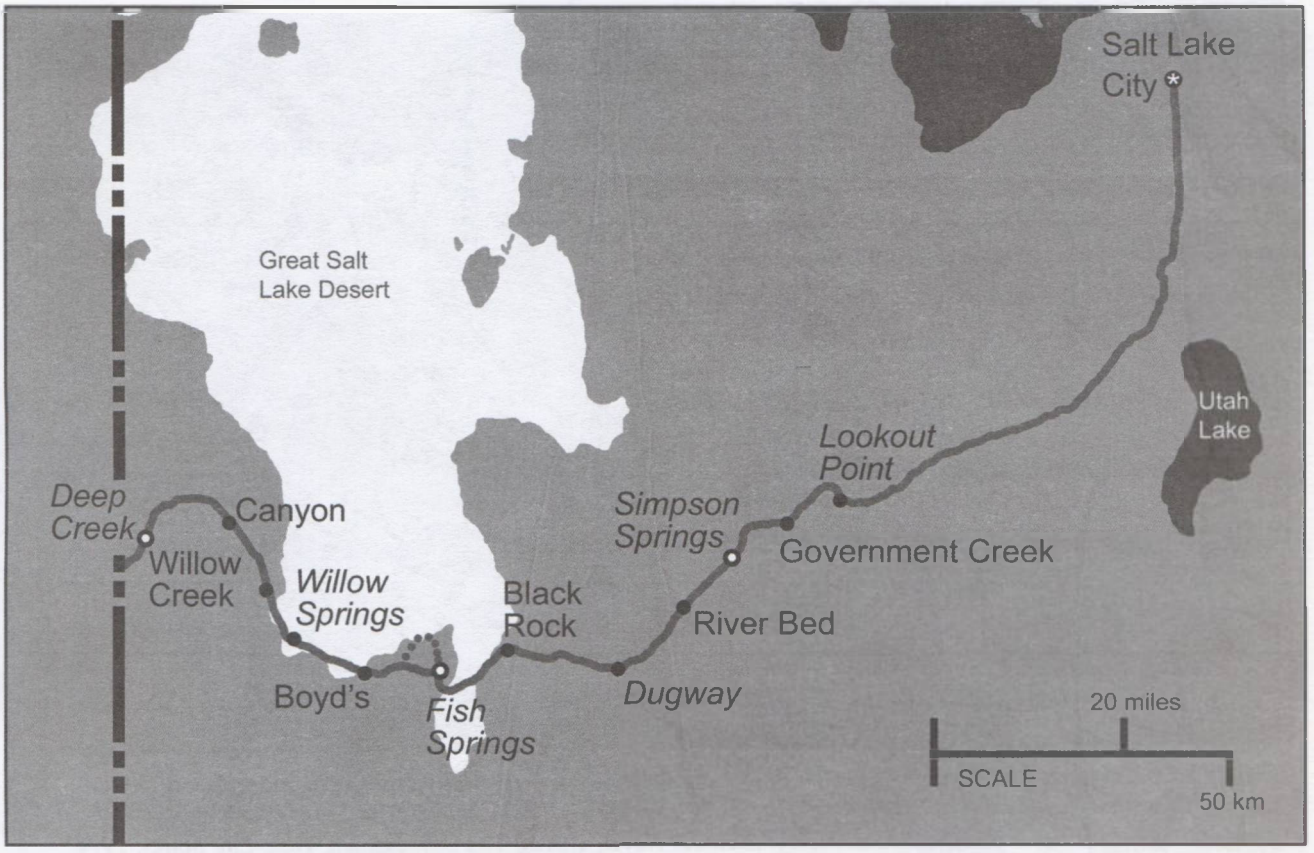
Government Creek Station, also known as Davis Station and Government Well, was the site of a telegraph station in 1861, but it might not have been used by the Pony Express.

Simpson Springs Station, also known as Pleasant Springs, Egan's Springs and Lost Springs, was important because of the availability of good water. The first buildings were constructed by Chorpenning and used by the Pony Express and Overland Mail. The Simpson Springs Station has been reconstructed by the BLM.

Riverbed Station was located in an old riverbed left by Lake Bonneville. Little evidence remains of it today.

Dugway Station, also known as Dugout, had simply built structures that were not permanent. Water was hauled from Simpson Springs.

Blockrock Station, also known as Butte and Desert Station, has not been precisely located. The historical marker in *figure 6* is at its general location.



Map 4 *The route surveyed by James H. Simpson and followed by the Pony Express and Overland Mail. All locations marked by a dot are described by Fike & Headley. Those previously used by Chorpenning have white centers. Those later used by the Overland Stage are labeled in* italics.

Fish Springs Station, also known as Smith Springs and Fresh Springs, is reported to have had two mail stations. One at Fish Springs; the other at Warm Springs about three and a fourth miles north. The original road went north around the end of the mountains, as shown by the dotted line in *map 4*. Fish Springs was important because of the availability of water and its location about halfway between Rush Valley and Deep Creek. Bad water at Warm Springs could have been the reason for its abandonment.

Boyd Station, also referred to as Butte and Desert, was a small, stone structure that continued to be occupied after the express stopped operating. Chorpenning's route went south around the end of the Deep Creek Mountains from the Boyd Station. The express traveled west.

Willow Springs Station has not been positively located. Fike and Headley favor a site three-fourths of a mile east of what is currently referred to as the Station House. Willow Springs was later renamed Callao.

Willow Creek Station, also called Six-Mile, is controversial. A contemporary account argues for the station, but Fike and Headley do not necessarily agree that a station was at this location.

Figure 6 *Historical marker for the Blackrock Pony Express Station located in its general vicinity, looking west, photographed 1969.*

Canyon Station, originally known as Round Station, was moved in 1863 because the original located was indefensible. The earlier station, located two or three miles away, was attacked and burned by Indians.

Deep Creek Station, also know as Egan's Station, was Egan's home. It was the most westerly station within the current boundaries of Utah, and saw considerable activity. Later, Deep Creek was renamed Ibapah.

The Pony Express was the fastest means of communicating between the eastern states and California, but it was not a financial success even though it was expensive to use. Letters sent by Pony Express initially cost $5 per half ounce. This was reduced to $2 per half ounce in April 1861, and the Overland Mail Act reduced the express fee to $1 per half ounce July 1, 1861.[24] Russell, Majors & Waddell collected only $91,404 from operating the Pony Express, but they spent half a million dollars on its operation.[25]

The Pony Express was only a temporary solution in the quest for rapid cross-country communication. Riders started at the western end of the telegraph at St. Joseph, Missouri. Telegraph lines were built from the east and from the west, meeting at Salt Lake City October 26, 1861. The stump of one of the original telegraph poles, photographed at Fish Springs, appears in *figure 7*.

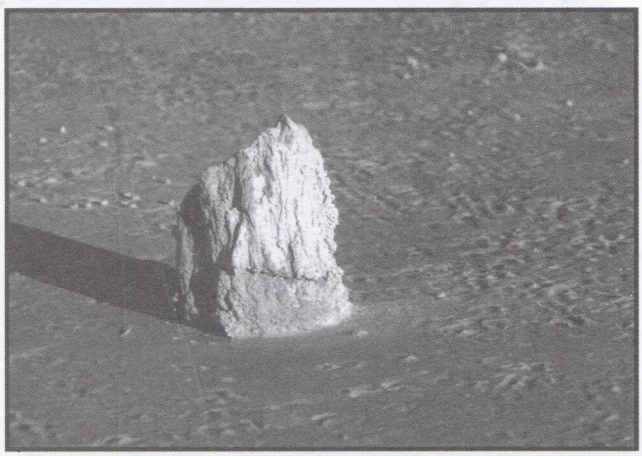


***Figure** 7 Stump of a pole from the first transcontinental telegraph line, photographed at Fish Springs in 1969.*

Fike and Headley conclude,

> The Pony Express, an important and colorful contributor to the service of the Central Overland, California & Pike's Peak Express Company, was established in 1860 and had succumbed by late 1861. It lasted only about 19 months and basically was a financial failure, but the associated glamour—both fact and fiction—has assured it a large and lasting chapter in the history of the West[26]

Changes were made in the Overland Mail at the beginning of the Civil War. In 1861, Congress ordered the PMG to replace stage service on the Butterfield route between St. Louis, Memphis and San Francisco with stage service on the central route between St. Louis, Missouri, (or Atchison, Kansas), Salt Lake City and Placerville, California. Only 600 pounds of mail were to be carried on each trip.[27] The Postmaster General Reported to Congress the next year that service had not been entirely satisfactory because of the difficulty in finding transportation of heavier mail, such as periodicals, to California, and because of mail losses caused by floods and interruptions by Indians. He informed Congress that the route had been made safer and concluded, "Every day brings intelligence of the discovery of new mines of gold and silver in the region traversed by this mail route, which gives assurance that it will not be many years before it will be protected and supported about the greater part of the route by a civilized population."[28] It seems unlikely that the Great Salt Lake Desert could achieve that.

The Overland Mail route along the south edge of the Great Salt Desert was almost identical to that of the Pony Express. Stations for the Overland Mail were located at Point Lookout, Simpson's Springs, Dugway, Fish Springs, Willow Springs and Deep Creek.[29] The names of these stations are *italicized* on *map 4*.

The first post office along this route in Utah was Deep Creek, which was established August 27, 1868, with J.C. Ferguson as postmaster. It was discontinued April 24, 1869.

The completion of the transcontinental railroad was destined to have even greater impact on postal activities along the Great Salt Lake Desert than the Pony Express or Overland Mail. Union Pacific Railroad surveyors determined in 1864 that the transcontinental railroad would be built to Ogden, Utah, south to Salt Lake City, and west around the south end of the Great Salt Lake. In 1868, the route was changed to go northwest from Ogden and around the northern end of Great Salt Lake. It was argued that the route was shorter and that water and timber were more readily available.[30]

After the completion of the transcontinental railroad at Promontory, Utah, May 10, 1869, route agents were assigned on some trains to sort and pouch mail for local post offices along the route. One of these oper-

ated on the Central Pacific Railroad across the northern part of the Great Salt Lake Desert. The Promontory, Utah Territory, & Sacramento, California, Agent operated from June 19, 1869, to November 1869, on the Central Pacific line across the northern part of the Great Salt Lake Desert. The Ogden and San Francisco Railway Post Office (RPO) was established August 20, 1869.[31]

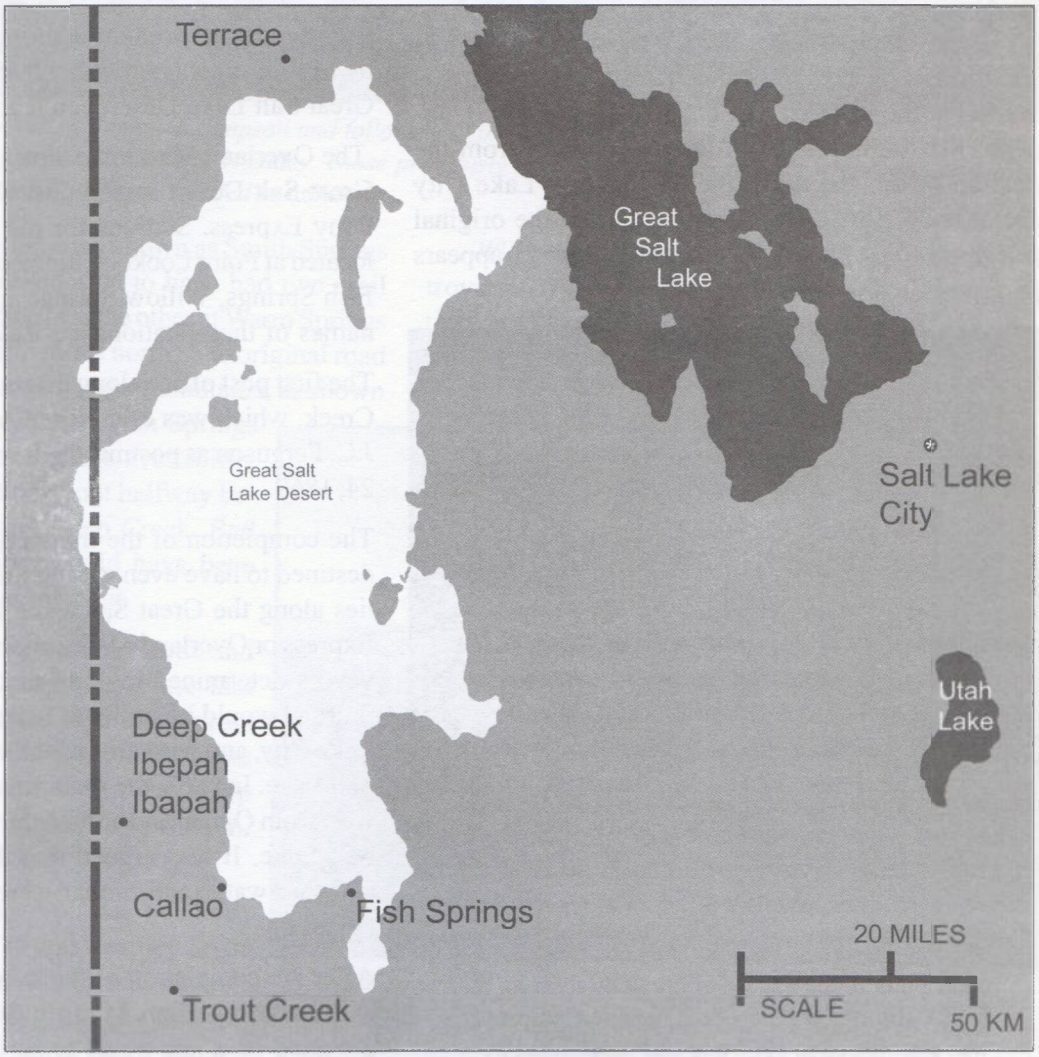
Figure 8 *A postmark of the Ogden & San Francisco RPO. (Courtesy of Jim Forte)*

Carrying mail by train and sorting it en route greatly speeded the transport of mail across the country. In November 1869, the PMG told Congress that it took an average of seven days, two hours and 23 minutes to carry through mail from San Francisco to New York, and that the fastest time was six days, 15 hours and 20 minutes.[32] *Figure 8* shows a postmark from the Ogden & San Francisco RPO.

1870-1900

Between 1870 and 1900, the population of Utah grew from 86,786 to 276,749,[33] and the number of post offices from 38 to 339. During the same period, only seven post offices were established in the vicinity of the Great Salt Lake Desert. Three of the post offices were at the same general location, but had different names. *Map 5* shows the location of post offices established in the vicinity of the Great Salt Lake Desert before 1900.

A number of communities sprang up along the Central Pacific Railroad, which merged with the Southern Pacific Railway. Terrace, which was named for nearby terraces of Lake Bonneville, was a railroad construction camp that grew into a division point and a major railroad repair center. It had an estimated population of 300 in 1877. Terrace was the only town on the part of the line covered by this article that had a post office. The Terrace Post Office was established February 28, 1872, with John H. Smith as postmaster. *Figure 9* shows an Advice of Money Order form prepared at Terrace.



Map 5 *Post offices established in or along the edges of the Great Salt Lake Desert before 1900.*

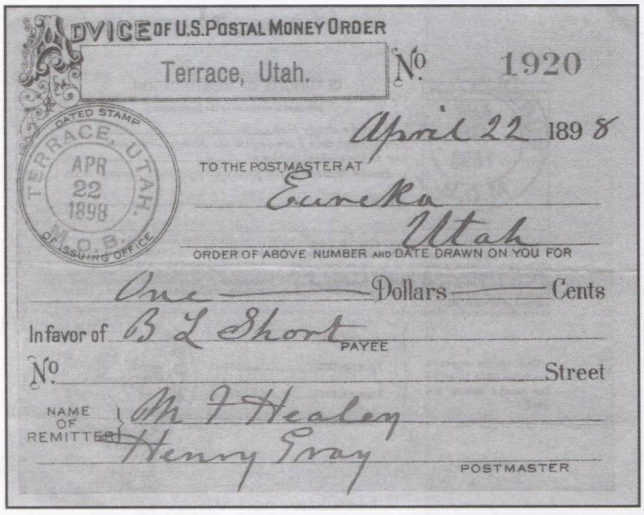

ADVICE OF U.S. POSTAL MONEY ORDER
Terrace, Utah. No. 1920
DATED STAMP TERRACE, UTAH. APR 22 1898 M.O.B. OF ISSUING OFFICE
April 22 1898
TO THE POSTMASTER AT
Eureka Utah
ORDER OF ABOVE NUMBER AND DATE DRAWN ON YOU FOR
One Dollars Cents
In favor of B L Short PAYEE
No. Street
NAME OF REMITTER M J Healey
Henry Gray POSTMASTER

Figure 9 *Advice of Money Order from Terrace for a money order to be paid at Eureka, Utah. (Courtesy of Lloyd Shaw)*

The other six post offices established during this period were along or near the trail followed by the Pony Express and Overland Mail.

The Deep Creek Post Office was re-established March 11, 1873, discontinued July 7, 1874, re-established September 11, 1874, and discontinued May 6, 1875. The Ibepah Post Office was established at the same general location October 6, 1880, with Edward R. Ferguson as postmaster, and discontinued May 9, 1881. Special mail service to Ibepah was provided from Quincy, Utah, 80 miles to the east.

The Ibapah Post Office was established at the same general location as Deep Creek and Ibepah April 12, 1883. John C. Devins was the first postmaster. Special mail service was provided from Aurum, Nevada, 55 miles west of Ibapah.

Figure 10 shows a cover canceled at Ibapah.

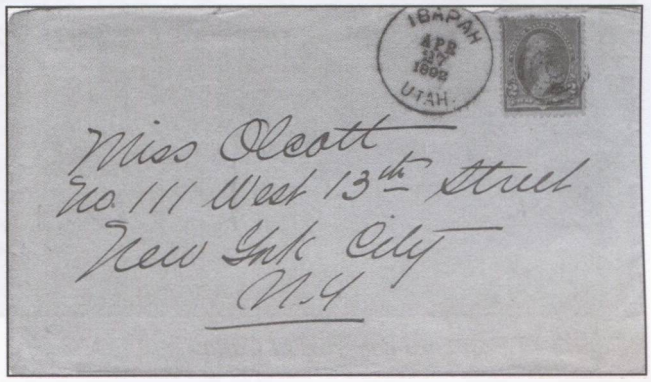


Figure 10 *Cover canceled at Ibapah. (Courtesy of Lloyd Shaw)*

Trout Creek was settled by ranchers who wanted a place to graze sheep during the winter. The Trout Creek Post Office was established May 23, 1890, with Joseph T. Parker as postmaster. When the writer visited Trout Creek in 1967, the post office was located in a log building. Unfortunately, he didn't photograph it.

The post office at Fish Springs, an important stop on the Pony Express and Overland Mail, was established October 18, 1892, with Walter S. Reid as postmaster.

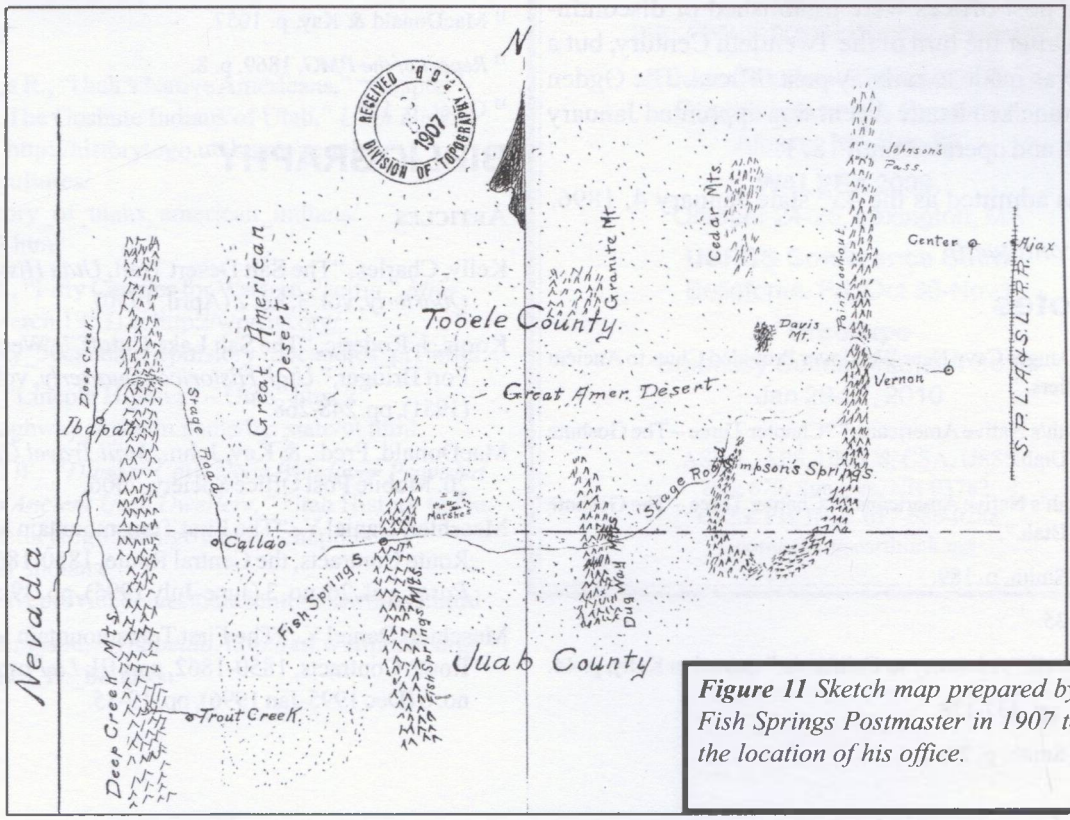


Figure 11 *Sketch map prepared by the Fish Springs Postmaster in 1907 to show the location of his office.*

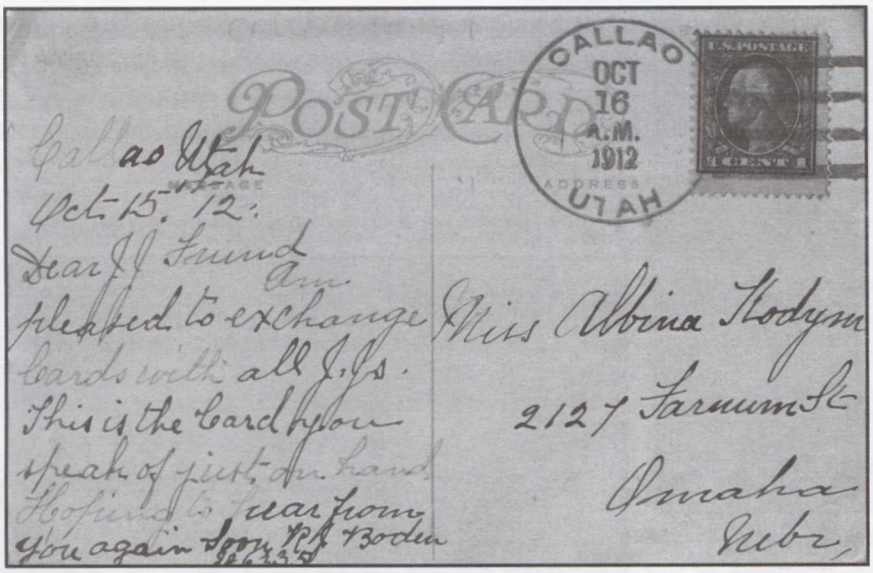


Figure 12 *Post card canceled at Callao.*

Figure 11 shows a wonderful map prepared by the Fish Springs Postmaster for the POD Topographer to show the location of his office in relation to other offices and physical features.

Willow Springs is well known from the Pony Express and Overland Mail days. Its name was changed to Callao because the POD wanted a less common name for a post office. The Callao Post Office was established February 1, 1893. Geo. C. Tripp was the first postmaster. *Figure 12* shows a Callao cancel on a post card.

No other post offices were established or discontinued until after the turn of the Twentieth Century, but a change was made to railway post offices. The Ogden & San Francisco Route Agent was appointed January 19, 1870, and operated until 1871.

Utah was admitted as the 45th state January 4, 1896.

(To be continued)

Endnotes

[1] Reeve, "Danger Cave Near Wendover Provided Clues to Ancient Utah Dwellers."

[2] Defa, "Utah's Native Americans," "Chapter Three – The Goshute Indians of Utah."

[3] Defa, "Utah's Native Americans," "Chapter Three – The Goshute Indians of Utah.".

[4] Jedediah Smith, p. 189.

[5] Kelly, p. 35.

[6] John Bidwell, "A Journey to California," quoted in Kelly, p. 44.

[7] Hastings, pp. 137-138.

[8] Linda H. Smith, p. 28.

[9] For more information about the Donner-Reed party, see George R. Stewart, *Ordeal by Hunger* (New York: H. Holt & Co., 1936).

[10] Whall, p. 33.

[11] *Report of PMG*, 1849, p. 797.

[12] USPS, "Star Routes."

[13] Quoted in "Star Routes".

[14] Whall, p. 46.

[15] Meschter, part III, p. 32.

[16] Meschter, part III, p. 33

[17] Korns, p. 248.

[18] Meschter, part VII(a), pp. 28, 34.

[19] Fike & Headley, p. 4.

[20] Scheele, p. 85.

[21] Fike & Headley, p. 4.

[22] Fike & Headley, p. 3.

[23] Fike & Headley, pp. 54-99.

[24] Scheele, p. 85.

[25] Scheele, p. 86.

[26] Fike & Headley, p. 5.

[27] *Report of the PMG*, 1861, p. 560.

[28] *Report of the PMG*, 1862, pp. 126-127.

[29] Meschter, part VII(a), p. 34.

[30] Carr & Edwards, pp. 8-9.

[31] MacDonald & Kay, p. 1057.

[32] *Report of the PMG*, 1869, p. 8.

[33] Greer, p. 110.

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Figure 1 *In 1973-4, the USPS honored the citizens of Rural America in three aspects: cattle, Chatauqua lectures, and wheat and train connections.*

Life in Johnsonsburgh NY, 1846

by **Tom Clarke**

Fishing around for a business to pursue at age 20 is an onerous, at least pesky, task, let alone search for one at age 50. If you live in a large city the chances will afford greater success, whether in 1846 or today. But living on the fringes of civilization, would it be possible?

Competition for a position or for a workable business niche would present difficulties in either period. Each era had / has its particular problems, and men and women in each naturally would have to be aware of the demands, limitations, the specific economics, and social expectations. Today's hurdles to success can be confusing and difficult, especially crowded and success-conscious as we are.

But 160 years ago would they intimidate a strong willed character such as our George must have been? Perhaps, but simply out of a need to survive. He wouldn't feel the social pressure as much as we would, but we don't experience the raw need to survive that plagued his century.

How to go about business? Like today, you networked through friends, family and co-workers, just quite a bit slower than today.

The Protagonist

In the case presented, our closely-written, three-page hero is George M. Dixon, aged 50-plus, lived with his presumed son out in the wilds of western New York. A rural area in America today would have much the same feel as it did to George in 1846, except that today there would be the added sense of loss—of being away from modern conveniences. But such feelings could never cross George Dixon's mind, or any other 1846er. They couldn't feel loss in that sense. You were a part of Nature then, it was *not* an 'it-us' proposition. Except for the handful of early American plutocrats by the 1840's, everyone

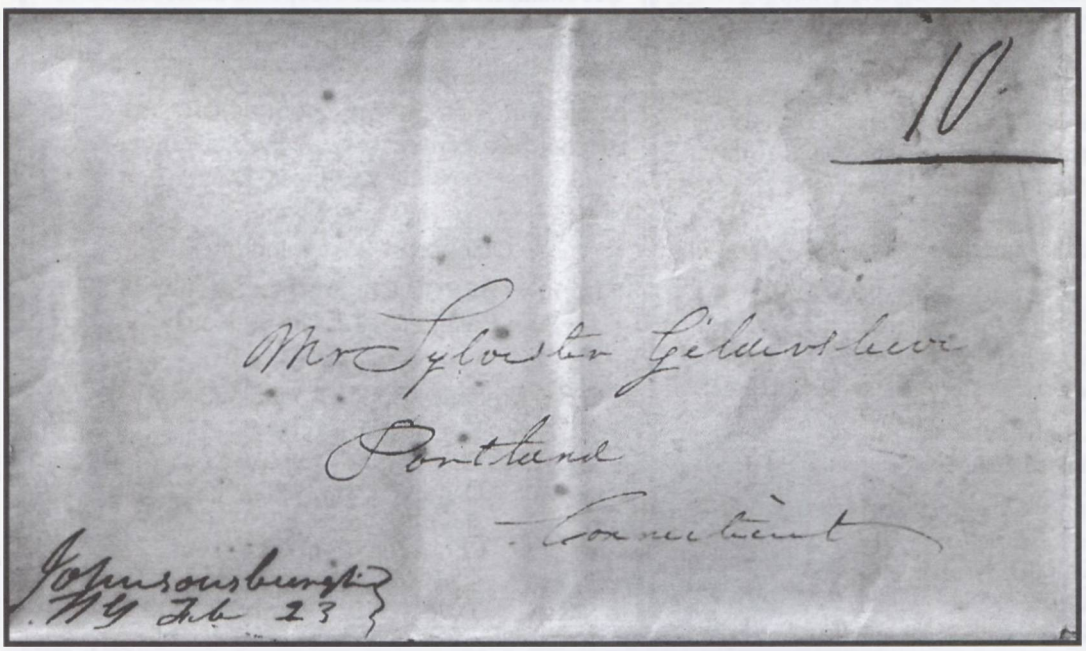


Figure 2 *Stampless folded letter bearing Johnsonsburgh, N. Y., manuscript postmark of 1846, and manuscript "10" addressed to Connecticut.*

would feel the same towards the earth and growing things as big as trees, even the many city dwellers nonetheless had a farm outside of town where they grew staples, or at least a stock for trading or retailing.

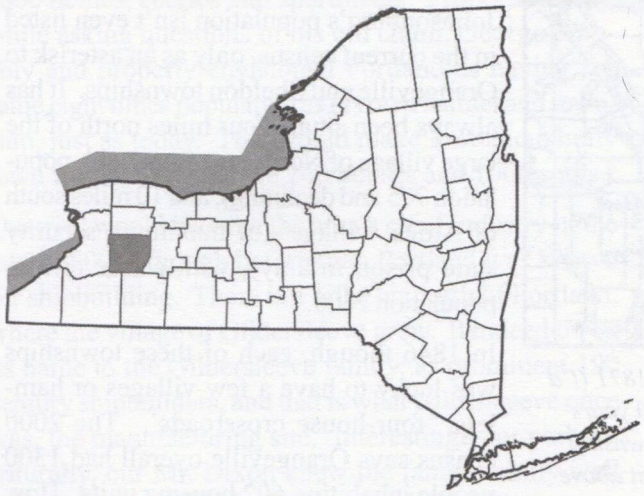


Figure 3 *A locator map for Wyoming County, still an out-of-the way, if beautifully natural, region.*

On weekends we drive to the 'boondocks' now called recreational areas, enjoy gorgeous scenery, fish, swim, and absorbing the mystique as the 'Laws of Nature and Nature's God' intend, then speed 70 miles an hour to get away from those backwaters, home to the TV, fridge, our gadgets, traffic and incessant noise. We call it 'safe'.

Of today's 3000+ American counties, there are 1300 strictly rural ones like New York's Wyoming County. Those together with 700 more make up about 83 percent of the Nation's territory, though they only represent 21 percent of the population. The 79% of us who live in the urban/suburban crush probably can't understand George Dixon. While he was writing his letter in 1846 and for the next half century, a vast percentage of Americans lived the rural farm life.

The birth of Railroads and American mechanical inventiveness began to undo Thomas Jefferson's dream of a lasting agrarian society for the new nation. In his day 90% were farmers. He felt its values were overwhelmingly good and America could not help but prosper if we maintained them. He died just years before the first railroad began service.

Quickly mechanization began to change the farm, first with horse-drawn reapers, etc., and then engine powered combines, tractors, etc. Rural people paid the price and flocked to the cities for factory jobs.

George Dixon was witnessing the first few chapters of this conversion to urbanized existence; his friend Sylvester was living amongst it. Fifty years later, by 1890, industry and technology were victorious. Railroad monopolies became the enemy of farmers (the Populist movement) and only 50% of the population was required to produce our Nation's food and fiber.

George's lifestyle and environment were ebbing while electricity and engine power became king. Today, more than 50 million rural Americans continue this revolutionary, mechanized lifestyle into the 21st century, and the rugged, quieter life which Jefferson valued still contributes heavily to American culture:

> At the beginning of the 20th century, rural America was the center of American life. It was home to most of the population and was the source of food and fiber for the Nation's sustenance and commerce. The typical rural community in 1900 consisted of a small town or village with numerous small farms within a few miles. Most people lived their lives and fulfilled most of their needs, economic and otherwise, within this community. They had little contact with areas beyond the community...it continues to provide most of the Nation's food and fiber.
> —USDA, Economic Research Bureau

There have always been certain preconceptions about the nature of rural America by urban folk, just as rural citizens have had certain views of city folk (and still do, given recent warring between the 'red' (rural) and 'blue' (urban) sections.

As with (apparently well-to-do) George Dixon, so also with many rural Americans today, whether they choose to chew on a straw or not: according to Andrew Isserman, an economist at the University of Illinois in 2007:

> There are 289 rural counties [of about 2000] that have better housing, a more educated population, less poverty and more jobs than the national average....They can be found in Georgia and Wisconsin, Kentucky and North Dakota [etc.]. These prosperous places aren't vacation havens or golf course retirement compounds. They are everyday places, most of them, where people live, work and learn. They are examples of the kind of communities every rural county can become...

Twenty-first century 'rurals' have many of the same accouterments that city folk have, but that George Dixon, living on the edge of wilderness, or rather within the wilderness, in the 1840s, could never justify. So that aspect has entirely changed. Significant portions

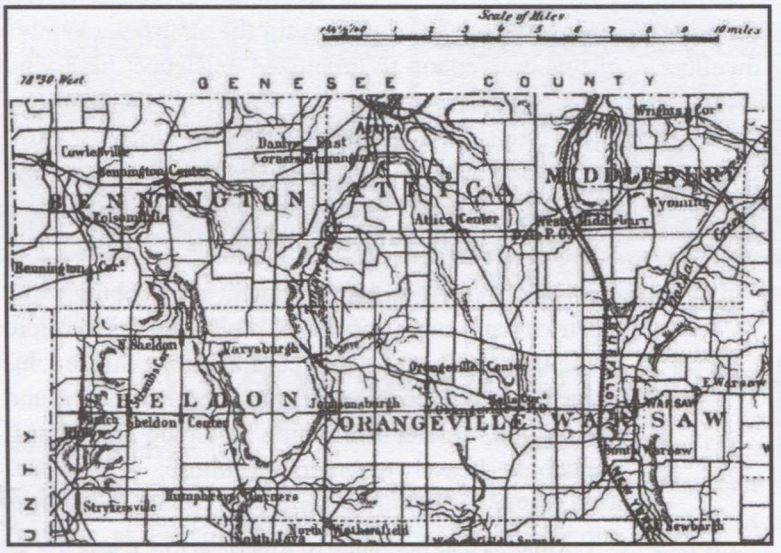


Figure 4 *A map from the Child's Gazetteer and Directory, 1871 (I'd bet for public school use). It shows Johnsonsburgh after 40 years still with the original spelling (above the ORANG of the township name. But it has no "PO" accompanying. Orangeville (just above the bold town name) and West Middlebury to the northeast are labeled as POs. A printer's error?*

of rural America as a result ought to be called 'further suburban', or to use some new academic jargon: *exurban*. One of these mod exurbanites helped generate a humorous report regarding today's definition of rural. The woman's viewpoint, to counter a comment that she and her friends weren't rural anymore, was, "Oh, come on. We have to drive 23 miles just to get to a Wal-Mart".

On the news worthy side, see a rural American web site *The Daily Yonder – keep it rural* at http://www.dailyyonder.com/ .

Johnson(s)burg(h) NY

George's hamlet of Johnsonsburgh (rendered Johnsonburg 14167, today) was no too far off of the lucrative Erie Canal track. It is located about two-thirds the distance from Rochester to Buffalo, and about 30 mile south of that line. There were trail, logging 'roads', and trading crossroads established in the previous hundred years, not the least of which was by Native Americans and the military.

The Wyoming County George proudly datelines in his letter was a recent creation only five years before. Today's county is broken into sixteen large "towns" or townships with a total population of 41,600. Johnsonburg proper is split between the 'towns' of Orangeville and Sheldon, and overall is about midway between Pennsylvania and Lake Ontario / Canada, and one county east of Lake Erie. Not a bad area if you had boats and timber supply in mind. The county, like most of New York State, is elevated and hilly with Johnsonsburgh lying in one of Wyoming County's two north-south valleys, all in all standing about 1200 feet above sea level, cool and good for woodlands.

Johnsonburg's population isn't even listed in the current census, only as an asterisk to Orangeville and Sheldon townships. It has always been small, four miles north of the large village of North Java ('jay-vuh', population 775 and declining), and 10 miles south of Attica 'village' (of maximum security state prison infamy), with a free citizen population 2600.

In 1846 though, each of these townships was lucky to have a few villages or hamlets, 'four-house crossroads'. The 2000 census says Orangeville overall had 1300 people inhabiting 602 housing units. How many housing units existed there in the 1840s? One hundred? How many in

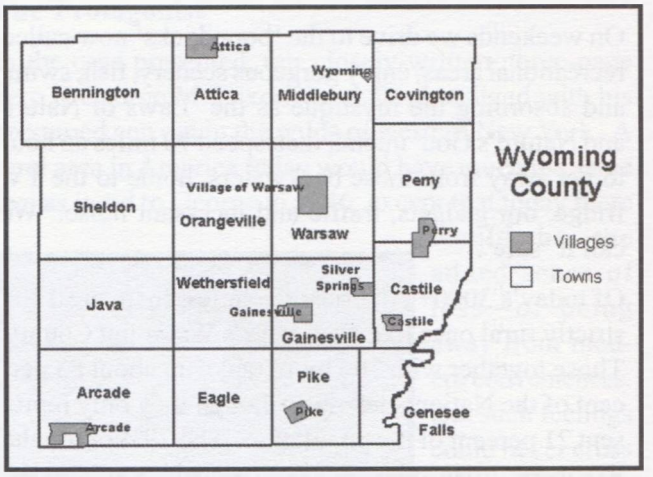


Figure 5 *A county planning map showing relative distribution of the villages, leaving out the many hamlets such as Johnsonsburg (to the left of the 'V' in Village of Warsaw.*

Johnsonsburgh alone? Five or ten? How many cabins contained 2-4+ people who lived in a 20 mile radius of the place? Regardless of how few lived nearby to Johnsonsburgh, it was able to successfully petition for a post office in 1836 (DPO in 1972).

Manuscript mail from any small town, so early in its history, and so early in the life of the country, with so few to patronize it, is very rare. George Dixon, living his life and pursuing business interests, had no ability to think in these terms as he rode to the general store (?) to mail his missive. You did what had to be done.

Portland CT

Where did George emigrate from sometime during the previous 26 years (he states he was very ill there in 1820)? Portland CT today contains 8700 persons and 3500 homes, condos and apartments. Proportionately, while asking questions of his old chum, George probably and properly envisioned Portland as having the same eight times population as his own hamlet and township, just as today. This would make Portland a hefty town for the time, maybe 240 houses and 1000 souls.

Quarries would become the area's chief industry in the latter 1800's, though before that, Portland was known for shipbuilding. There is a hill a bit north of Portland, where the village of Gildersleeve grew. It indeed owed its name to the Gildersleeve family, as prominent 19th century shipbuilders, and that is what Gildersleeve once was, the manufacturing site. Interestingly, or perhaps naturally, our Mr. Dixon knew the famed family well and wrote on a personal basis to and about them.

Genealogical Aid

Genealogy as an avocation recently has grown rapidly with the increase of so many retiring baby boomers, and one of the many hundreds of existing internet sites contains an 81-page Gildersleeve family history, written by Willard Harvey Gildersleeve in 1914.

As these things go, writers are almost always descendants and tend to lose objectivity when describing their antecedents' claims to fame. A prime site says Philip Gildersleeve, about eight generations after the family first came to America, became a Revolutionary. His exploits during the Revolution, however mundane, are accounted for with aplomb.

Fourteen years after the War's end, he would father Sylvester, thus adding another mouth to the growing family. He lists Phillip's requisite 'begats' in typical order:

> Philip Gildersleeve died in 1822, aged 65. His will was probated in Middletown. Temperance, his wife, died in 1831, aged 75, and in her will left her personal effects to [her daughters] Betsy Abbey [and] Cynthia Lewis, and Temperance Gildersleeve, her granddaughter. . .
>
> Children (Gildersleeve):
>
> XI. Jeremiah, b. 24 Aug., 1781; d. 16 Mar., 1857.
>
> X2. Betsy, b. 23 Apr., 1783; d. 17 Oct., 1863.
>
> X3. Henry, b. 8 Nov., 1785; d. 1 Oct., 1851.
>
> X4. Lathrop, b. 16 Dec, 1787; d. 11 Jan., 1861.
>
> X5. Sylvester, b. 25 Feb., 1795; d. 15 Mar., 1886.
>
> X6. Cynthia, b. 28 Mar., 1797; d. 16 Feb., 1860.

The Sylvester of our letter and the one listed as the youngest boy are one and the same. His older brother Lathrop and his family are likewise greeted in this Dixon letter.

It is very gratifying to see bits from an old letter given credence and authority via an outside source, especially if they can lend added depth to the brief tale the writer during his hour of penmanship confided to us. However, in a way we uncomfortably play the role of Peeping Tom, previewing how their story will eventually play out. We are complete strangers, yet the key players in this 1846 drama are completely ignorant of what we know.

We learn as a result of the genealogy that Sylvester will go on to local fame and riches and die in 1886 at the ripe old age of 91. He had developed into a very wealthy shipbuilding magnate, local politico and philanthropist. Brother Lathrop, on the other hand, was content to live out his life farming and would have 15 more years of life, dying at 74.

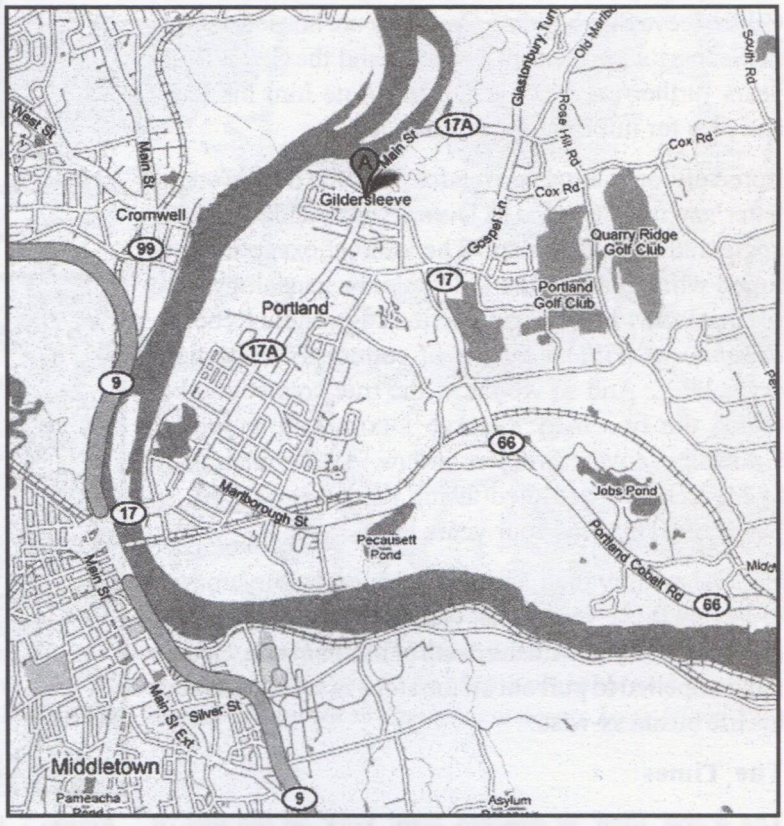


Figure 6 *A short distance above Portland the Gildersleeve family plied their shipbuilding trade, which soon became the name of the village there. (Google Maps)*

There is also a postal history connection with Sylvester aside from his receiving letters. He gained experience during the War of 1812 building several ships for the government at his father's shipwright establishment. Because he previously attended the district school until *eighteen*, a very uncommon thing to do in that day, he exhibits the drive to make something uncommon of himself. Having a decent family fund behind him (his father's shipyard) did not hurt. This way he didn't have to leave school to go out to earn his bread at, say, twelve.

He rose in the shipyard to be a 'boss' by 1820, the year he built his first 100-ton vessel, the *Boston Packet*, which was also the year of George Dixon's "great sickness". With a fine start, Sylvester supervised the construction of more than 100 vessels, one of which, the schooner *William Bryan* (1836), was used for the first regular packet line between New York and the Republic of Texas at Galveston. Five later Texas route packets followed and were named for Texian patriots: *Stephen F. Austin, B.R. Bilan, William B. Travis, J.W. Fanning,* and the *William H. Wharton*. (Who has annotated covers from any of these?)

Sylvester acquired area shipyards including those from his father's successors, and crowned these ventures with the family name, which in turn gave its name to the village, etc. (The company records of the Gildersleeve Shipbuilding Company are housed at Mystic Seaport's Museum of America and the Sea.) Eight years further on, George Dixon wrote him his letter and plea for information and advice.

Ironically, an internet search for personal details on the letter's writer, "George M Dixon", has yielded *nothing* compared to its recipient. The indirect exception was found while reading the Gildersleeve genealogy. We see that in 1814, Sylvester married 20-year old Rebecca, *daughter of William Dixon,* of course, a Revolutionary soldier. And so we know the true connection between the two men: George Dixon and Sylvester Gildersleeve were brothers-in-law. Unfortunately, in 1824, Rebecca had died at the tender age of 30, so Sylvester remarried four years later.

Understandably then, in writing his erstwhile brother-in-law all those years later, George was out on an ethical limb. And yet, with the death of his own wife, George felt compelled to pull out all the stops in trying to restart his life business-wise.

The Times

The scene, then, is western New York on the eve of the Mexican War (1846-7). The president was Democrat James K. Polk, nearing the end of his term, but continuing to pursue his westward expansionist plans. His platform had won with a landslide 62% of the vote nationally. Wyoming County in recent times, though, has been uncompromisingly Republican in spite of the general trend statewide. Would George have been for Polk?

The losing, dying Whig Party was about 10 years away from morphing into the Republican Party. It was twenty years since the Erie Canal had helped foster a boom in the region and in the extreme east and west, namely in New York City and Chicago (and onto St. Louis and New Orleans). Their economies were exploding since the barriers of distance and time had evaporated by the simple expedient of floating goods to market.

The year 1846 also marked 22 years since semi-illiterate farmer Joseph Smith found what he called 'golden tablets' hidden in a hill near Palmyra NY, just two days coach ride away from Johnsonsburgh, southeast of Rochester. No doubt a few of his neighbors remembered the uproar surrounding the man who founded the Mormon religion and the subsequent harassment which forced him to move his followers to safety in Illinois.

The Donner Party was about to assemble for their terrible misadventure beginning in September while crossing the Sierra Nevada near Lake Tahoe. And to those same neighbors who would read about this horror a year later, the new, year-old postage stamps were no doubt a bit of a muddle too (that is, if they'd seen them yet in the NY wilderness). They were so used to sending mail postage due. Meanwhile the Post Office

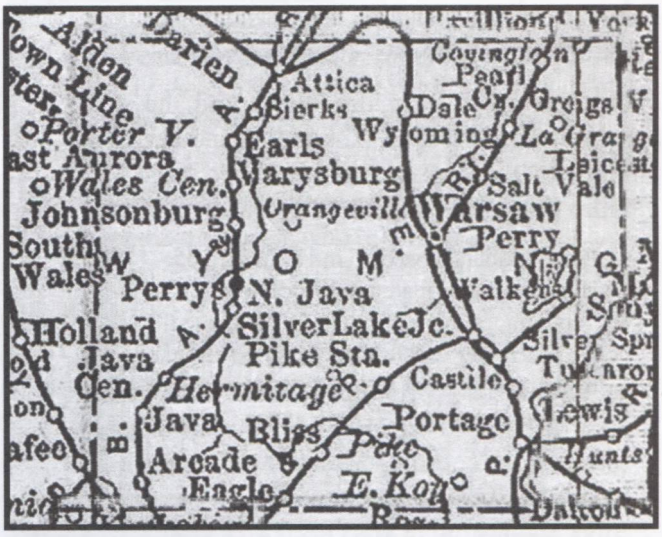


***Figure 7** Wyoming County from Rand McNally's 1895 Atlas. "Johnsonburg" has been re-spelled since 1871; dirt roadways, and some railroads, are clearly shown.*

Department was continuing to investigate a further drop in the letter rate from five cents to three cents five years in the future.

George Dixon's Economy

The village of Johnsonsburgh continues to be an area surrounded by woods which supplied timber for boats and buildings. A specialty was the maple trees which yielded syrup tapped in the spring. Otherwise, there still are family dairy farms and a few of the apple orchards which once flourished.

The late 20th century spawned recreational fishing and hunting, a concept that would be incomprehensible to George Dixon. Making sport of the life-giving necessity of feeding the family? Regardless of his theoretical views, availability of game and fish for food, and timber to continue a livelihood must have been a magnet that attracted George's young family to the NY 'boonies' somewhere in the late '20s or '30's.

Mr. Dixon talks in his letter in earnest about the possibilities of a fishing business. Was he considering returning to the Connecticut River for this, to Long Island Sound, 30 miles to the south of Portland? Or would he fish Lake Erie? He inquires about nets, boats, and particularly and very frankly about the financial and legal aspects. He asks his old friend to do a considerable amount of legwork on his behalf. But in those truly horse and buggy days, that's how networking was done —a favor would always be returned.

He mentions several hundred acre wood tracts he owns, and whether the taxes which presumably were due on them had been paid. Who owns the adjoining lots? It may be that he hoped to expand his natural resource base following the principle that you can never lose money buying land. Timber seems to have been the basis of his, or his inherited, worth.

Dear Eliza

The most troubling aspect of the letter is his mournful reference about his departed Eliza. "The vacant chair she occupied but two hours before her exit..." means what? Had they only lived there those brief 120 minutes before the travails of travel silenced her? But if he was as melancholy over her loss as his images of his deceased partner's paper possessions suggest, could he have been any more abrupt in ceasing thoughts of her to get back to discussing the potash business?

The *NCIS* TV murder mystery lover in me wants to allow room for him laying groundwork through his old chum for a possible legal defense since he had a few days before he ingloriously dumped poor Eliza's body into the ravine behind the cabin. This way he could add full title of her family timber holdings to his own.

On the other hand, is he so distraught over her natural loss through illness that he sends out feelers to influential old friends about fishing, boats, potash, and timber, anything to get his mind off his departed heart of hearts. This may help explain the slightly disjointed flow of thoughts throughout his letter. He was truly distressed and despondent, yet trying to put on a proper face out of the necessity to survive, the core of the rural sensibility.

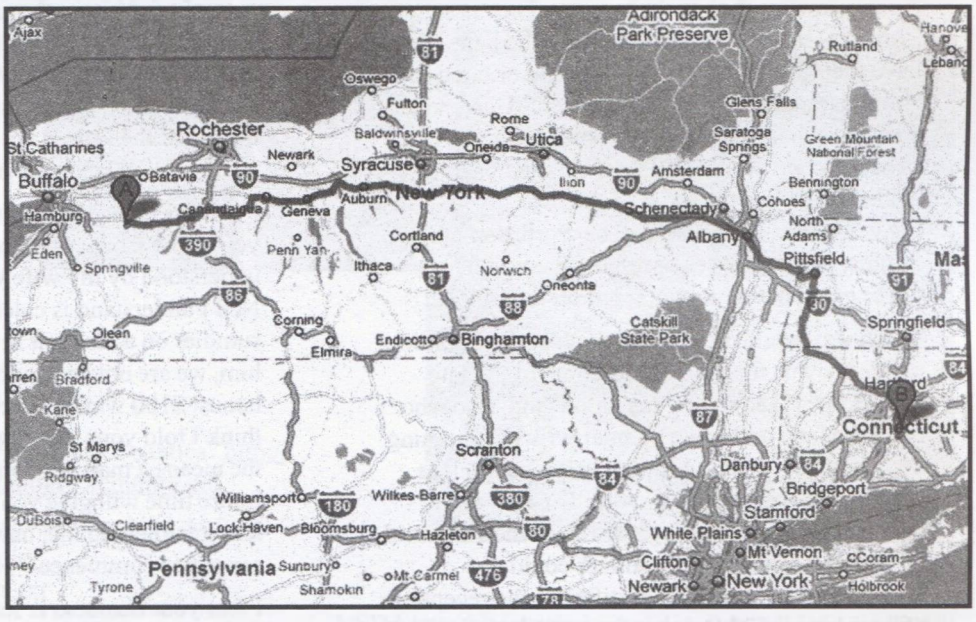


Figure 9 *A rendition of the quickest path from Johnsburgh NY to Portland CT today. It's a guess how the modern USPS would route it. In 1846 it probably took the Erie Canal to Albany, to NYC, then by steamboat to Connecticut across Long Island Sound. (Google Maps)*

The Letter

Johnsonsburg County of Wyoming Feb 22-46

Dear Sir

It is a long time since I have ben anxious to learn something in relation to my interest in the deep hole fishing, about 12 months ago I wrote to James W White requesting him to rent it upon some terms if possible but I have never recived a word from him nor no account in any way how it is managed or what bank[?] or whether it is worth one Cent or not — I have ben told that Goodrich & Case have both sold out but do not know to whom or who are the present occupants.

I suppos my right has not ben built upon or improovd since they abandoned the use of the nets — will you be good enough to write me on the subject tell me whoare occupying & improoving it & in what way & also what has been the luck these 2 or 3 years past & whether it can be considered as worth any thing or not for this reason, it was expected to service him against the Administration bord, that suit was commenced at the instigation of Foot or the Old brigadier (the quintesence of intrigue & perfidy) for the sole purpose of getting some six dollars out of me, while at the same time Foot declared that the title of land sold to satisfy the last order of sale was void, on the ground that the order was of much greater amount than it ought to have been — I learned at that time from Foote that the heirs could have their [?] either upon the land or upon the Administration – how Comstock could have made such a gross mistake was unknown to me — I believe however there was not charged back against me when the order of sale was given — the wood land I suppose will be worth something in time, has it ever ben assesed & taxed I have never heard or enquired a word on this subject

I wish you would inform me which of the Conkling children owns the land of the estate of the late Noah Laye [?] adjoining my wood land, also who owns the land of the late Samuel Willcox adjoining my wood land east, I wish too you would tell as soon as you can what it is worth Is Col Daniel White in the land of living, Mr Laye when him said he was in a low state of health & could not continue long I was most gratified in the reception of your letter of 27 Oct past for a number of reasons, the amount of deaths were all new to me, I confess I was sorry to learn that your Phillip had embarked to take up his abode in Texas It is highly probable his business there may be very lumination but it is a men grave yard for our northern constitutions, I shall never expect to hear of his return

My leisure moments are veiled in sorrow & gloom by reason of a great void cautioned by the fate of my favorite Eliza who slumbers in the silent grave — The vacant chair she occupied but two hours before her exit, her cuts of poetry from various newspapers. Her numbers of Grahams Magazine standing in the same place she placed them during her sickness her plants & evergreens reared & nourished by her care all conspire to rent the heart & sink the soul to wo, "gone is my pride among women"

I am truly unfortunate in undertaking to carry on the potash business on account of the general reduction of the price of the article in market soon after I commenced, It would seem impossible to make it profitable at the price it has commanded the last year if others could be had gratis & yet the manufacturers pay 10 Cts per bushel, I quit the business more than a year ago

I am calculating the work anew next Spring, have rented a favor of one hundred acres caled good for this County mostly under improvement Edward is still with me is smart for business & anxious to beg to do something at farming, I can do considerable yet by way of labor though I still find the effects of my old nervous difficulty brought on by my great sickness in 1820, I begin to feel too a decline of strength by age, very common to men after they get to be the wrong side of fifty I have thought ever thus I should visit my native place to see faces to face those of my friends & relations with whom I spent my youthful and happiest days, & I still cherish a hope that the time is not far distant when I shall again see the land that gave me birth

I confess I have been disappointed in not seeing you in the County before this, because I have understood by my wife you promised us a visit, Ned I understand is calculating to go to Ct next summer on a visit but he does not visit me nor I him, we are not on speaking terms, he owes me honest $100 which he never intended to pay— I think I told your Henry when at Bethany he was the meanest man in all western New York, at some future time will give you a history of his fraudulent treatment to me, have not room on this sheet severly to commence—

I fear your business is such you will hardly find time to answer my enquires,

Please give my best respects to L Cole & wife tell him I think of him with as much esteem as any of my quondam [former] friends

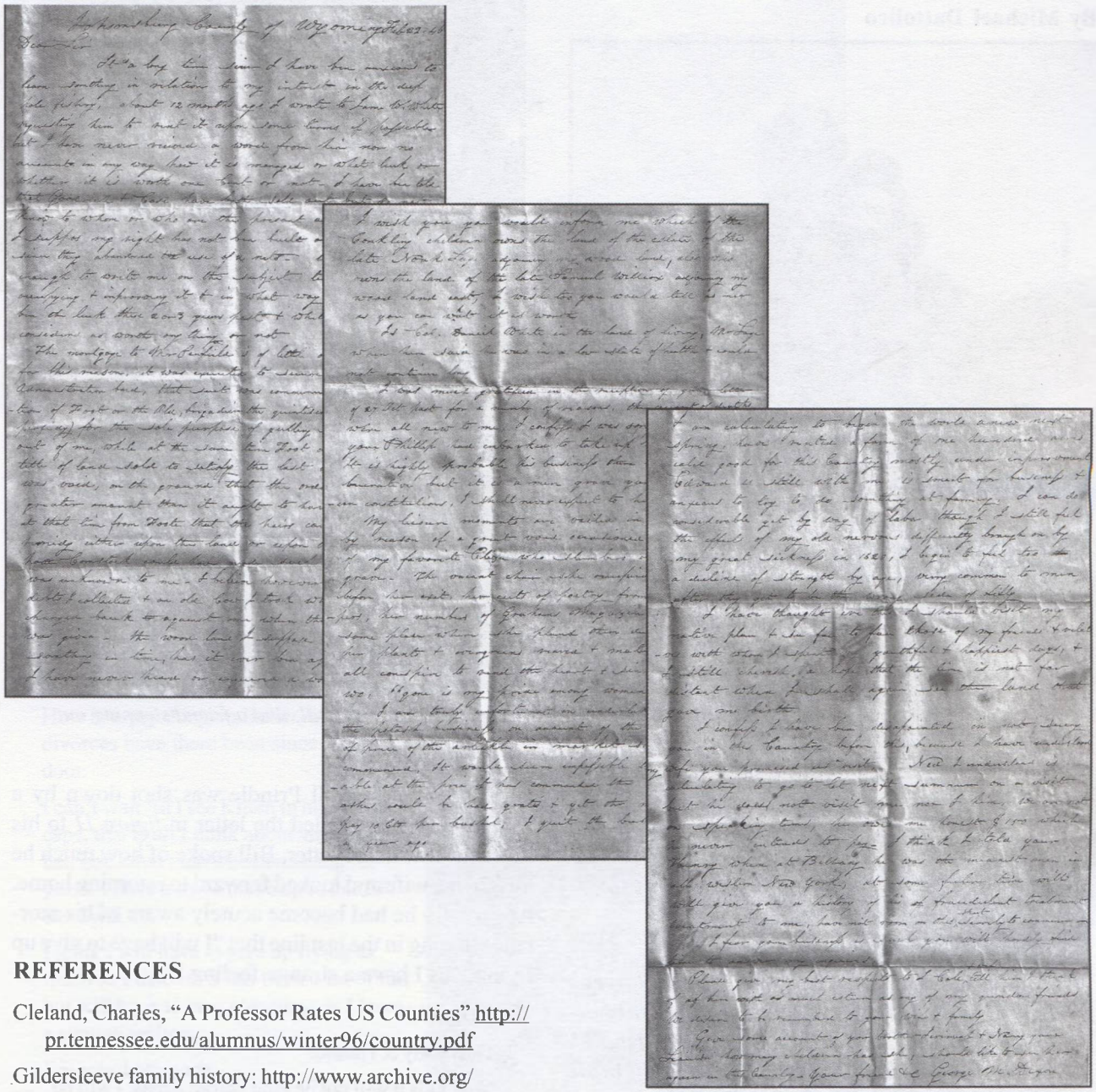
We desire to be remembered to your wife and family

Give some account of your brother Lathrop & Nancy your Louela how many children has she,

should like to see them again in the County—

Your friend &c George M Dixon

Today there are six Dixon's living in Wyoming County, three in one household live four miles down the road from Johnsonburg in North Java, two in the nearby village of Perry, and one in the Wyoming County Seat of Warsaw. Are they all George's descendants who never flew far from the nest? Would they care to know that their antecedent's letter even exists?



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In Memoriam - William F. Prindle, Korean War Pilot

"The Telegram that Changed my Life"
William F. Prindle, Korean War Pilot - Part 2
By Michael Dattolico

Figure 9 *Bill Prindle and his wife, Ardeth (ca 1950) courtesy Mrs. Ardeth Prindle Distelhorst.*

"And now, for the rest of the story." (Paul Harvey's famous radio tagline). After part one of this article was written about pilot William F. Prindle's Korea service, his widow, Ardeth Prindle Distelhorst, discovered additional correspondence that truly completes the lieutenant's story. But no tale of love, nor a life taken too soon, is a one-sided affair. This article tells of the manner that Ardeth and his mother learned of William Prindle's death. It is a tribute to her choice to continue on to live a full, happy life "after Korea." Ardeth, now 92 years young, is still sharp as a tack and a delightful conversationalist. Here, now, is a glimpse into her life." - ed.

Figure 10 *Ardeth, Bill, and a friend stepping out on the town.*

Four days before Bill Prindle was shot down by a Russian MIG, he mailed the letter in *figure 11* to his sister-in-law. In the letter, Bill spoke of how much he missed his wife and looked forward to returning home. Apparently he had become acutely aware of his mortality, stating in the last line that "I will have to give up flying…as I have a strange feeling."

8 Dec 1951

Dear Katy & Harold:

Well kids it will not be long before Xmas, I will be glad to see it come as it will mean I will be home soon after that.

Things are still about the same here as they have been in the past. I wish the hell it would [end] so these guys could come home.

I flew my 71st mission today so I have only 24 more to go then go home. I fly every mission I can get on as it puts me closer to Ardeth, and that is my desire from now on.

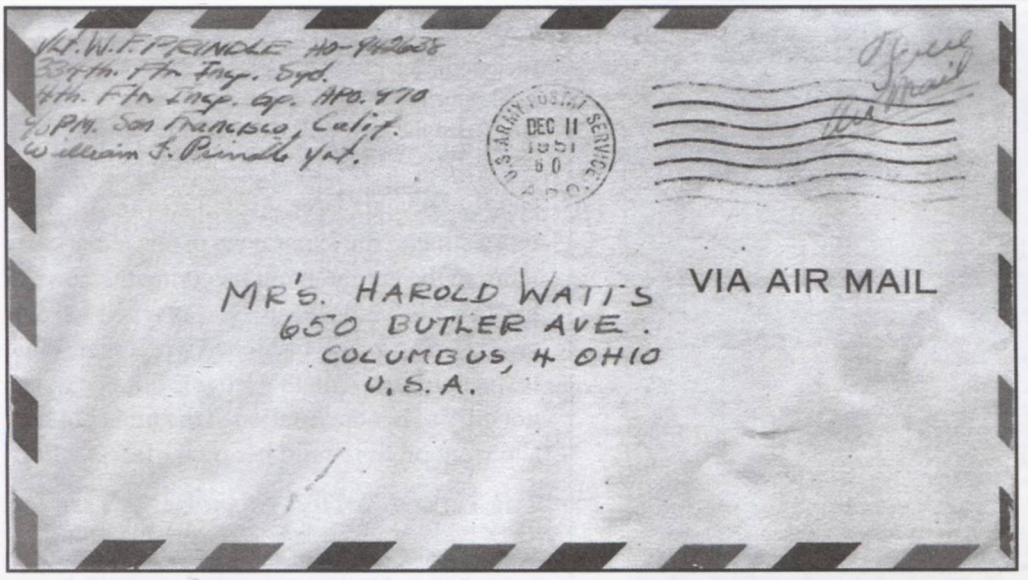


Figure 11 *This cover carried the last letter home from Lt. Bill Prindle.*

It is about time I am to go back to Japan. I will try very hard to get your little tea set like the one I sent Ardeth.

Damn near had me a Mig 15 yesterday, but couldn't get my sight on him long enough to fire at him. They had their turn today as they got on my tail and he did get me in his sights, and the next thing I saw were nice big cannon balls going by my wing. I shook him off my tail by diving straight down at about 700 m.p.h. Sometimes the little s—s come at you out of the sun and you can't see them until they are on top of you firing, that is why we never put our tail into the sun unless we have to.

How is every thing on Butler Ave? How many divorces have there been since the one next door.

I can't wait 'til I see Kitten in her mink cape, that is all I think about anymore is her, boy what I have been missing for 7 years. I have a lot to make up to her for. But I will try.

I think I will have to give up flying as much as I hate to. It has been a lot of fun but will have to stop sometime as I have a strange feeling.

See you both soon.

Bill

Bill Prindle's fear was confirmed on 15 December in the telegram no one ever wants to receive. It was sent to Frances Prindle, the Lieutenant's mother (*figure 12*).

The telegram was followed-up with an elegant letter of regret written by John McCormick, USAF Major General (*figure 13*).

Ardeth also kept the newspaper notice which read:

Death Overtook Local Flier As He Neared Safety in Korea (n.d.)

WITH U.S. 5TH AIR FORCE, KOREA, DEC. 15—(DELAYED IN CENSORSHIP)—(AP)—He almost made it back to base.

Lt. William F. Prindle, 30, Sabre jet pilot, had flown more than 70 missions in the Korean war before death overtook him a quarter-miles from the end of a combat flight over MIG Alley in North Korea.

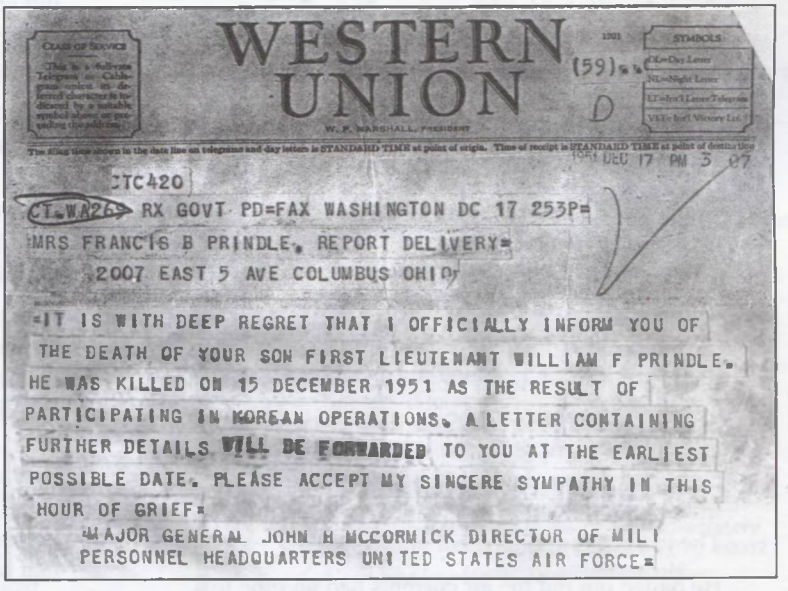
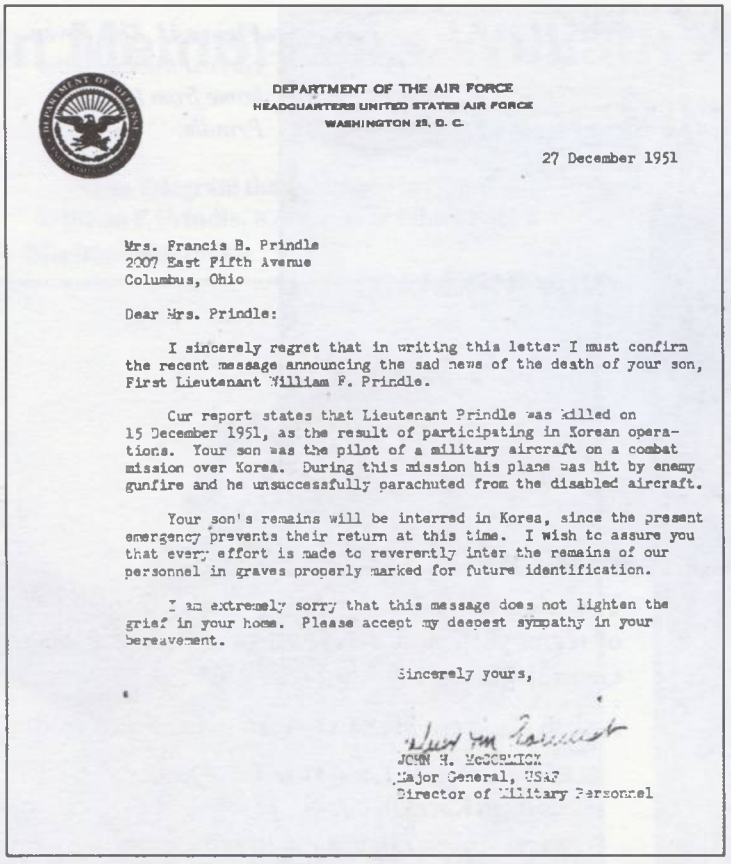


Figure 12 *Telegram notifying Bill's mother of his death.*



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

27 December 1951

Mrs. Francis B. Prindle
2007 East Fifth Avenue
Columbus, Ohio

Dear Mrs. Prindle:

I sincerely regret that in writing this letter I must confirm the recent message announcing the sad news of the death of your son, First Lieutenant William F. Prindle.

Our report states that Lieutenant Prindle was killed on 15 December 1951, as the result of participating in Korean operations. Your son was the pilot of a military aircraft on a combat mission over Korea. During this mission his plane was hit by enemy gunfire and he unsuccessfully parachuted from the disabled aircraft.

Your son's remains will be interred in Korea, since the present emergency prevents their return at this time. I wish to assure you that every effort is made to reverently inter the remains of our personnel in graves properly marked for future identification.

I am extremely sorry that this message does not lighten the grief in your home. Please accept my deepest sympathy in your bereavement.

Sincerely yours,

JOHN H. McCORMICK
Major General, USAF
Director of Military Personnel

Figure 13 *Letter of regret written by John McCormick, USAF Major General*

Prindle, whose wife, Ardeth, 636 Butler Av, and parents, the Francis B. Prindles, 2007 E. 5th Av, live in Columbus, was flying wing man for the world's greatest jet ace, Maj. George A. Davis, Jr., of Lubbock, Tex.

Davis has destroyed 12 enemy planes in air-to-air combat, nine of them MIG 15s. Prindle, assigned to protect the ace from surprise attack while Davis concentrated on offensive action, had not knocked down or damaged an enemy aircraft.

But his worth was realized, and appreciated. Davis, when congratulated after downing four MIGs in a single day, Dec. 13, pointed out it was teamwork that paid off, and urged that credit be given his wingmen.

In his last flight Prindle's plane was damaged. He told Davis by intercom he believed he could nurse it home. Approaching an air base, Prindle's plane had dropped down to 800 feet altitude. He tried to put down the nosewheel for a landing. The jet went out of control into a dive.

He bailed out but the air currents had no time to fill his chute before he struck the ground—at the edge of the runway.

The family received official announcement of the death earlier this month.

Lt. Prindle's widow is employed at Lockbourne Air Force Base. She formerly worked at the Veteran's Administration office here.

Nearly 60 years later, Ardeth still recalled the bitter sting of the experience in this remarkable letter to the author about receiving the news of her first husband's death. It was typed in "cursive" font on an old fashioned typewriter. What is special about Ardeth's letter is that she writes not only of her devastation at the time, but how she went on to rebuild her own life.

The Telegram That Changed My Life

When I was 21 years of age, my father became ill and it was necessary for me to quit my employment with the Federal Govt. and manage the restaurant we owned. This is where I met 1st Lt. William F. Prindle. We married Nov. 7, 1944, and I traveled around the United states with him, until he was ordered to Korea. I thought I would be an air force wife for the rest of my life. Bill was a Sabre jet pilot. He was wing man to Major George A. Davis Jr. the world's greatest Jet Ace. Bill had flown 70 missions when his plane was hit. He brought the plane back to the base, as that was important to the Military. He was sent up the very next day, and his plane was hit again. He tried to nurse the plane home. It had dropped to 800 feet altitude, then went out of control, and Bill had to jump. His parachute did not open and he fell to his death in front of his buddies. He had brought the plane back to his home base!

The telegram telling me of his death came to my mother's home where I was staying. When I came home from work at Lockbourne Air Base, my mother and sister were waiting to tell me the tragic news. What a shock! I thought my life had ended.

After a year of being a widow, my father and I built and opened a small grocery store and this is where I met my second husband, Elwood Distelhorst. His family owned and operated a dairy, and he came to sell his dairy products. Elwood was married to his first wife for seven years; I was married to Bill for seven years before his death. Do you suppose it was destiny that we meet? The telegram that changed my life was a tragedy, but the good Lord had something in store for me—a new life of happiness. I am a widow now for the second time. I am alone except for my little canine friend, Biscuit. I sit and

reflect on my life and thank God HE was with me all the time. The Lord gave me a second chance to enjoy the great blessings of life.

The final gem to conclude this story is another beautifully typed letter that Ardeth wrote on January 31, 2009, titled "SPRING IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER."

Michael,

I found some additional information you may be interested in. O.K. so you're not supposed to end a sentence with a preposition!!!!

Bill was also stationed in Denver, Colorado at Lowry Field. I was with him and worked at the B-29 Plant there. And in Texas. I have wracked my brain and just plain cannot remember the city in which we were stationed. I worked for the Government there. I am calling Ted, his brother, and no doubt he will remember.

I think I said before, if I had not re-married, I probably would remember more. But that chapter of my life was closed, and I moved on after a period of grieving.

The Purple Heart that he received is long gone. (If I had not re-married I know I would still have it.) But I fell in love again and I praise the Lord for that.

The flag that was presented to me at the cemetery, when I remarried I gave it to my dear friend, Carole Ratcliff. At that time her name was Carole Ervin and she did my housework for me. We became dear friends, and she cherishes the flag.

I enclosed the articles by Dear Abby and Ann Landers, which led me to apply for DIC/ELIG pension because of Bill's death. I could have … been receiving the pension from 1984 when my second husband died, but was unaware that I was eligible until I read these articles. I applied and the pension started in February 2000. I am not complaining as it is a God-Send. This information is not applicable I suppose but thought you might be interested.

We were also stationed in Amarillo, Texas. Can't remember the name of the base. I worked in a Govt. office there.

This is your laugh for the day. I received a letter from my sister, Kathryn. She was with her husband stationed somewhere in the west. She got a job (and she hated to work) in an egg candling plant. On the third day on the job, she candled the eggs, broke them and dropped many into the bucket down below. LO AND BEHOLD! NO BUCKET. She was fired!

Figure 14 *Ardeth Prindle Distelhorst, ca. 1960*

Respectfully,

ARDETH LEE STEWARD PRINDLE
DISTELHORST PERIOD.

The author and *La Posta* editors wish to express our thanks to Mrs. Ardeth Prindle Distelhorst for sharing so graciously and eloquently her side of the story. It is rare to have a glimpse of both life on the front and life at home that is so well documented through postal history.

Reading Other People's Mail

By Michael Nickel

St. Louis, Mo. *Mar. 16, 1849 – St. Louis cancel #9 (Wagner and Semsrott) in red addressed to Winchester, Va.*

St. Louis Mo, March 15th 1849

Dear Uncle,

I now set down to drop a few lines. I have attempted to write several times and my attention was soon called off to something else. We all enjoy excellent health in fine spirits & so we had a delightful time on the Ohio & Mississippi River. We staid over in Pittsburgh three days and there embarked on the fine steamer Niagara for St. Louis. When we left Uniontown we brought with us a small cannon, with the intention of saluting the cities along the River and taking it to California with us. On leaving Pittsburgh I over loaded it and on arriving in sight of Wheeling it exploded and like to have killed our Black Man Servant – who was standing some short distance off. I fired it with a tow mat and made good my retreat, which caused great Rejoicing among our men. Our next principal stopping place was Cincinnatti which is a splendid City. We stopped two days and took on board fifty two Passengers for California, all from one County in Ohio. In one and a half days we arrived at Louisville Kentuckey, which is a fine City, but a very bad place, a murder or knock down most every night – our next stopping place was Cairo, a town at the junction of the Ohio and Mississippi. The houses are principally built on flat boats. Some five years ago the whole town was swept over and washed away by the Great freshet. Since then no houses have been built, only on Boats. On arriving at these Cities Geo E Boston and myself were the first two to jump on shore, and we would wander through every street and alley in the place before going on board the Boat – which we allways found waiting for us. In two days we Landed at St. Louis with two hundred passengers most of whom were for California. St. Louis is a large City most as large as Baltimore and the dirtiest place I ever saw. The streets are very narrow and a foot deep in mud. The Levy is a mile and a half long and more than a hundred Steam Boats. Along side the Gold Fever rages here to high water mark. Muskets, Bowey Knives & Pistols are all that's hung up in front of store doors. The Cholera is pretty Bad yet. Nine cases reported yesterday. One man died next door our stopping place. His Bed and clothes are hanging on our back fence to Air! Another man passed the door in a furniture Wagon for the Hospital. I stopt the wagon to look at him. He set on the middle seat like an old chicken on his roost. Another man died on a steam Boat this morning that came from new orleans. Mules are very scarce in St. Louis and selling for one hundred

dollars apiece. This morning we bought two wagons, and are going to put five mules in each. The Spring is rather backward this season and we cannot get off as soon as we expected. We intend starting from St. Joseph about five hundred & fifty from here up the Missouri River. We intend leaving there about the tenth or fifteenth of April. We will leave St. Louis about the 23rd for Independence where we will stop a few days, and I will look for a letter there from Winchester. A person form the least remote Idia of the Trouble & so of getting ready for a California expedition untile they have some experiance on the subject – I would advise all Parties going, to go in small units of about ten or twelve. They will find plenty of company on the road also in California. Our Baggage and Provisions weigh about four thousand, our wagons are suficient to carry twenty five hundred apiece. Some of us are going to have a mule between two of us, and when we get to the mormon settlement we are going to buy Indian Ponys. The news today is somewhat unfavourable, but we do not beleeve any thing untile we get there and see for our selves. We have procured every thing that can posibly make us comfortable. You may all consider this a family letter for I cannot write to all of you. I wrote to Pap afew days ago, and have been looking for a letter by every Steam Boat since I arrived in St. Louis and have not received one since Boston arrived in Uniontown. When we get to Independence we will have more time to write. The reason we start from St. Joseph, it is further north and the Road croses nearer the head waters of the Rivers & so which are of course more fordable in the spring of the year. Excuse haste & pleas make my Regards to all the neighbors.

With due Regard

Rob Sharp Esq
R.R. Brown
Winchester
Va.

The Post Offices of Wayne County, Kentucky

Part 2

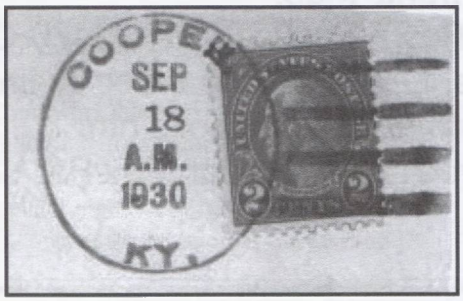
By Robert M. Rennick

Fleeing his native Scotland for a new life in America James Craig McKechnie, a millwright and carpenter, brought his wife Annie (nee Rankin) and their family to the mouth of Elk Spring Creek (of Beaver). Here, with Job Kerns, he built a grain mill and soon (ca. early 1880s) founded a community he named **Paisley** for his home town seven miles west of Glasgow. On April 17, 1886 his son James, Jr. (ne 1851) established the **Paisley** [pays/lee, payz/lee] post office to serve his family's mill and nearby Jock Rankin's mill on Beaver.

Sometime later the office was moved south to a site on Isbell Branch of Elk Spring Creek, half a mile east of Beaver and two miles southwest of Monticello, where, by 1909, it was serving a community also known as **Needmore.** When the office closed in March 1918 the community it served assumed the name of its school, **Number One,** which it still bears interchangeably with **Ellers Chapel** for a nearby Methodist church on Ky 167, just south of the southwest edge of Monticello. The school was on the west side of Ky 200, 200 yards west of the junction of Ky 167 (between Isbell Branch and Missouri Hollow). According to the county's early school numbering system, it was the first to be established in Wayne, sometime before 1840. It closed with consolidation in 1958 and its building was sold to the Jesus Name Church.

Sometime before the Civil War a Beaver Creek oxbow nearly five miles south of Monticello was settled as **Pleasant Bend** for the attractive view from that point. By the early 1890s the surrounding area was being drilled for oil and the locality at the neck was called **Rhoda**.

At least that name was given by Fountain Fox Cooper (1870-1955) in his Site Location Report for the post office established on May 2, 1892 on (the present) Ky 167, just north of the neck. But as **Rhoda** was then an Edmonson County post office, it was named **Cooper** [koop/uhr] by the Miller Brothers, in whose store it would be located, for their nephews Fount and Clem. For much of the twentieth century the post office served several stores. When it closed on December 31, 1975 it was in last postmaster Estil Fairchild's grocery.

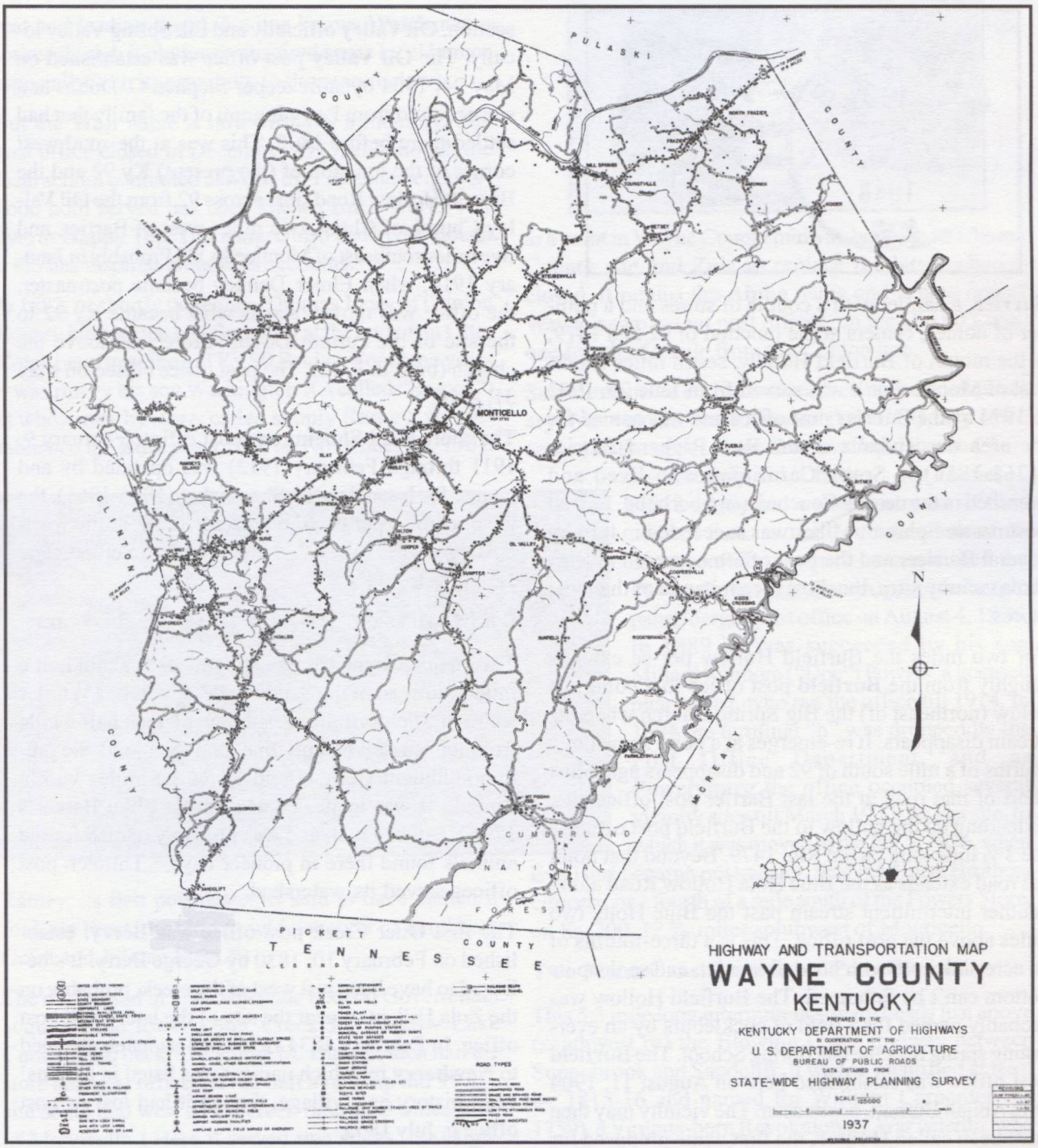


To accommodate the influx of oil drillers and their families for the so-called "Cooper Pool" boom, the **Oilton** post office was established on July 22, 1903 by Robert Edward Vickery. It was at the mouth of Beaver Creek's Cooper Hollow (between Bertram and Sulphur Springs Mountains), one mile below (wnw of) Cooper. In 1907 storekeeper William Charles Horton may have moved it less than one mile down the creek where it closed in mid August 1910. Residents of both sides don't identify with **Oilton** now but say they live at Cooper where, till recently, they got their mail.

On the ridge[25] between Beaver and Otter Creeks were the several sites of the **Cabell** [kaeb/uhl] post office. It was established by Charles A. Shelton on April 14, 1888 just off (the present) Rte. 1546, at or near the site of the Wild Kitchen School, less than a mile south of the Lake Cumberland Boys Camp and a mile north of the Cabell Grove Methodist Church. In 1937 the office was moved to a site just south of the church, and a little later it was moved again, a short distance up the road. In 1948 Christopher Columbus Rhoades moved it three fourths of a mile to his store 0.4 miles west of Stockton Road and just south of the head of Beaver's Shelton Branch, where it closed in 1954.

Whence the **Cabell** name has long been a mystery. None of the county's historians know of any possible source. In the absence of any such area families they assume it was imported. One suggestion is that it honored the Confederate General William Lewis Cabell (1827-1911), a Danville, Virginia native and West Point graduate, who, after the war, practiced law in Dallas, Texas and served as that city's mayor from 1874 to 1882.

On April 10, 1901 William A. Cooper, Jr. established the **Gar** post office, named for a species of fish found in the Cumberland waters. The office was first located in the vicinity of Vaughn's water-powered mill on Beaver Creek, half a mile above its Otter confluence, and four miles south of the river. It was later moved by Preston B. ("Pet") Cooper a short distance east to his home where he maintained it through August 1925. Its sites are now in the Beaver embayment.



Post Offices in the Elk Spring Valley (of Beaver Creek)

There's long been a lack of agreement on the eastern limits of this valley.Some place it at the spring at the mouth of Burnett Hollow, only six miles southeast of its Beaver Creek confluence (at Monticello's southwest corner); others extend it two miles east to the mouth of Burfield Hollow (at Barrier). In any event, no stream courses through most of it; it's characterized by a number of springs including those at the site of Monticello which influenced that town's initial settlement and founding. The valley is said to have been named by its earliest settlers, perhaps by James Ingram (1761-1854), for the many springs to which elk would come to drink. One spring in particular, considered by some to be the valley's source, was just west of Ingram's old home, half a mile south of Ky 92 (the road extending through most of the valley to Monticello where the valley is joined by the Elk Spring Creek for its passage to the Beaver confluence.)

Barrier, a hamlet with a couple of stores and a number of homes, centers at the junction of 92 and 1479, at the mouth of Burfield Hollow, seven miles southeast of Monticello. It was served from June 25, 1902 to 1974 by the **Barrier** post office and was named for the area descendants of the Rev. Richard Barrier (1768-1854), a South Carolinian who lived and preached in the nearby Concord neighborhood. Its first postmaster Ephraim Miller was succeeded in turn by several Barriers and the post office occupied at least three vicinity sites, the most recent in one of the local stores.

For two miles the Burfield Hollow per se extends roughly from the **Burfield** post office to a point just below (northeast of) the Big Spring Church where its stream disappears. It re-emerges at a point some three fourths of a mile south of 92 and disappears again just short of that road at the last Barrier post office site. Extending up the hollow to the Burfield post office is the 3 ½ mile long paved Rte. 1479. Beyond that point the road extends as the Blue Hole Hollow Road along another intermittent stream past the Blue Hole, two miles above the post office. This is a three-fourths of an acre sink hole with no visible inlet, and so deep its bottom can't be fathomed. The Burfield Hollow was probably named for a field of cockleburs by an everlasting spring near the Big Spring School. The **Burfield** post office was established here on August 11, 1904 with Abijah Burnett, postmaster. The vicinity may then have been called **Hunter**, the first name proposed for the post office. After several short moves the office closed in mid February 1955, half a mile south of its original site and just west of the head of Johnson Fork of Kennedys Creek.

After the discovery of oil in Elk Spring Valley around 1900 a 2 ½ mile section of the valley came to be known as **Oil Valley.** Even though oil production is a thing of the past the two names still interchangeably identify that section, **Oil Valley** officially and Elk Spring Valley locally. The **Oil Valley** post office was established on May 24, 1904 by storekeeper Stephen C. Dobbs at a site acquired from Perry Ingram of the family that had settled there before 1800. This was at the southwest corner of the junction of (the present) Ky 92 and the Burnett Hollow Road (just across 92 from the Oil Valley Church of Christ, two miles west of Barrier, and five miles southeast of Monticello.)26 Probably in January 1910, when Elmer Denney became postmaster, the office was moved across what became Ky 92 to the site of the current Dobbs' Store just above the church (built in 1912). The post office closed on May 31, 1914.

The short-lived **Shoemaker** post office (February 9, 1911 through February 1912) was operated by and named for Isaac Preston Shoemaker (1866-1961), the local storekeeper on (the present) 1258, at the western edge of the valley, 2 ½ miles north of Sumpter and 1.3 miles from Ky 92.

Post Offices on Otter Creek and its Branches

This major Wayne County stream heads about half a mile southwest of the Sandy Valley Church, 2 ½ miles south of Slickford. It meets Beaver Creek half a mile from the Russell County line, and then joins the pre-impoundment Cumberland River 1.8 miles within Russell. It was identified as such on Elihu Barker's 1795 Kentucky map and was probably named for the animals found there in pioneer days.[27] Thirteen post offices served its watershed.

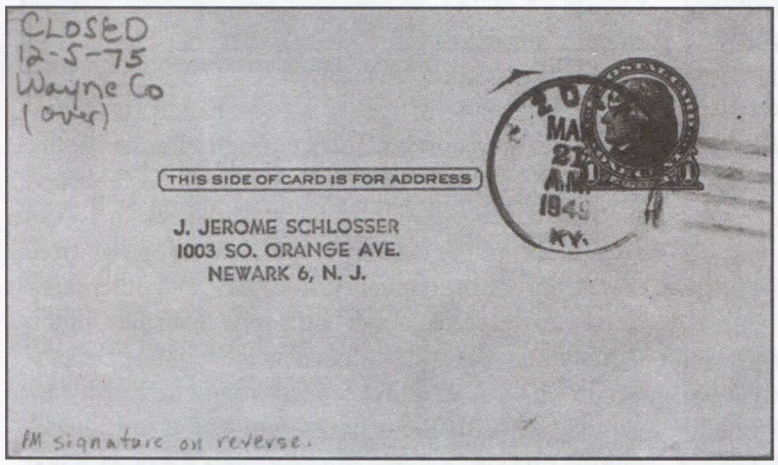
The first Otter Creek post office was **Berry**, established on February 10, 1830 by George Berry. It's believed to have been just west of the creek, probably on the Zula Hill, at or near the site of the later **Wait** post office. In February 1834 Berry had its name changed to **Newberry** by which name it was listed in Collins' 1874 history as a village, though it had lost its post office in July 1863.

The **Wait** post office was established on January 25, 1898 by James J. Lorton who had a store in the vicinity of the Wait School on the south side of the old Albany Road, half a mile north of the current Ky 90, and one fourth of a mile west of Otter Creek. This is believed to have been the first site of the post office though for some reason Lorton declined to assume the postmastership and, on April 7, it was filled by Hiram H. Guffey.[28] In 1905 William A. Dabney had the office moved 650 yards south to a site one mile west of the creek to serve a thickly settled area on the direct route between Monticello and Albany (Clinton County's

seat and leading town). No one knows **Wait's** name source though it obviously inspired some local humor especially with its proximity to Stop (see below).

But the **Wait** name is now virtually a memory. The post office closed in December 1913, and though the local school continued as **Wait** till 1964, the neighborhood both served has been known since World War Two as **Happy Top.** This name is also underived though it too has inspired humorous accounts.[29]

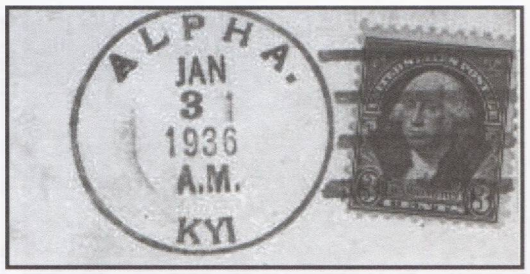
In 1882, or shortly thereafter, Thomas Jones of Clinton County built a grist and flour mill at the end of an Otter Creek bend near the old Ky 90 Bridge. For some years it was run by his son Washington R. (called "Ramey") at whose nearby store, called simply **Ramey**, was established the **Zula** post office on November 16, 1901.



Ramey, its first postmaster, is said to have named it for Zula Frost, the ten year old daughter of neighbors Grant and Juliane Frost.[30]

The mill closed in 1948 when the Federal Government acquired the lower Otter Creek for its new Lake Cumberland backfill. George M. Duncan then had the store and post office moved half a mile up old 90 to a site south and west of the creek (and 10.3 miles wsw of Monticello.) Here it served two stores, the Highway Holiness Church, and a number of homes till it closed in December 1975 with its papers sent to the Alpha post office, then in Clinton County, 2 ½ miles west.[31]

Alpha was less than half a mile within Clinton County, 0.2 miles south of new 90. It was established on January 28, 1852 and named by its first postmaster John M. Davis for his wife Alpha Caroline Brooks 1822-1890). After an intermittent operation the office was moved in December 1975 by its then postmaster Mrs. Thelma Ragan from the late Marion Perdue's grocery



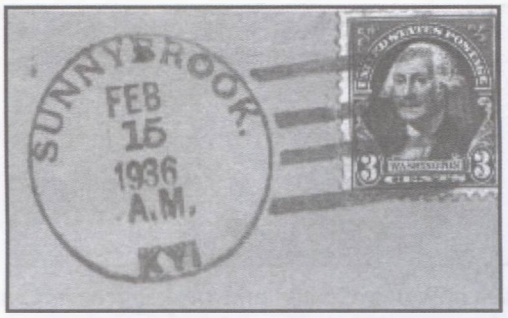
to a point in Wayne County midway between its Clinton County site and Zula to replace the latter when it closed. It retains the **Alpha** name and is now one of Wayne's two extant post offices, on the Old 90 Loop, one fourth of a mile from the Clinton line.

Sometime in the early nineteenth century Revolutionary War veteran Jesse Powers (ne 1759) may have settled in the upper Otter Creek valley. His son Charley certainly did. Charley's son Daniel L. (1818-1899) had a store just west of Carpenters Fork and half a mile south of its Otter confluence where he established the **Powersburg** [paerz/bergh, paer/uhs/bergh, pahrz/bergh] post office on August 4, 1876. In 1889 he was succeeded by his son Millard Fillmore ("Doc") Powers, a licensed pharmacist, who ran the office till 1914. In 1894 the terminal "h" was dropped by the Post Office Department, and as **Powersburg** the office occupied several vicinity sites till March 1972. Its last site, to which it was moved in the fall of 1956, when Eva Hurt became postmaster, was the Hurts Brothers Grocery, one fourth of a mile south of the Powers Store, on Ky 200, 12 ¾ miles southwest of Monticello.

Two More Carpenters Fork Post Offices

This 5.3 mile long intermittent stream heads just above (southwest of) the Blowing Cave, midway between Sunnybrook and Sandclift. It was so identified at least by 1815-16 and named for William Carpenter (ne 1759), a Virginia-born Revolutionary War veteran, who is said to have settled on it around 1800.

At the mouth of Carpenter Fork's Bertram Hollow, four miles above south of) Powersburg and one mile north of the Blowing Cave, was Carter D. "Dee" Dalton's store. Here Dalton established a post office on July 21, 1887 he would name for his daughter **Dora** (**Dory** was then in use in Clay County). Instead he called it **Sunnybrook** for the perceived sunshine on the stream's waters. In 1914 "Dee" was succeeded by Dora's husband Omar D. Bertram, a descendant of William Bertram (ne North Carolina in 1748), the area's first settler and the hollow's name source. For



years, till it closed in September 1983, the office was in the Bertram store on (the present) Ky 200, 15 ¼ miles ssw of Monticello. From March 31, 1952 till it closed the office was maintained by Omar and Dora's daughter Flora Bertram while the store was operated by her brother Robert till his death in January 1983.[32]

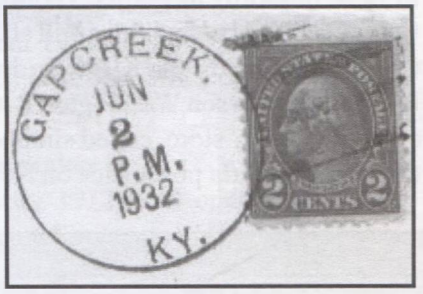
On Ky 200, a little over a mile south of Powersburg (and 100 yards south of the mouth of Tuggle Hollow) was storekeeper Wesley Denney's short-lived (June 24, 1904 through August 1907) **Lonerock** post office. It referred to the lone sandstone boulder, 1620 feet high, at the southwest end of Ben's Cliff, three fourths of a mile northeast.[33]

Back to Otter Creek

On June 23, 1892 Carter T. Denney established the **Slickford** post office at the mouth of Hog Hollow, two miles up Otter from its Carpenters confluence. The large flat rocks in the creek there were so slick that horses and pedestrians alike would slip on them as they forded the creek. Soon the office was serving a couple of stores, Brown's saw and flour mill, some oil drillings, and other businesses. Around 1896 Denney moved the office 0.6 miles up the creek, to the mouth of Dry Hollow (about fifteen miles ssw of Monticello) where it served Thomas Powers and the Kennedy's store. Ewing Kennedy and Osby Davis were its next postmasters. In July 1932 Osby's widow Ina (later Mrs. Stearns) took over the post office and store, running the former till it closed in 1956 and maintaining the store for at least another twenty years. The original **Slickford** post office was in the vicinity of the local school and the Slickford Pump Station, now gone, which for years has been known as **Old Slickford.**

John H. Dalton, a local storekeeper serving an area east(of Otter Creek and just north of its Harmon Hollow, sought a unique name for his new post office. Consulting his dictionary he came across the word **Hidalgo** [heye/dael/ghohl, meaning a Spanish nobleman, and opened this post office on January 24, 1895. From 1929 till it closed in July 1975 the office was in Allen B. Shearer's store on (the present) Ky 200, 0.2 miles southwest of its junction with Ky 834, 0.3 miles east of Otter Creek, 2.4 miles north of Powersburg, and 10.4 miles southwest of Monticello. Shearer's wife LaDona was its last regular postmaster from August 10, 1929 till her retirement in November 1974.

Gap Creek, one of Otter's main branches, had its own post office, in this name. This intermittent stream heads in a pond on Clinton County's Poplar Mountain, two miles northeast of Savage and extends seven miles roughly northeast to Otter, just north of the Zula post office. It was so-called for somewhere near its source it flows through a Poplar Mountain gap. On May 9, 1879 John H. Shearer established the **Gap Creek** (which became **Gapcreek** in 1893.) By the turn of the century it was serving one or more stores, a flour mill, tannery, livestock, and other businesses on the creek, about half a mile from the Clinton County line. Several postmasters later, in late December 1913, another storekeeper William R. Kelsay assumed charge of the office and moved it to his store on (the present) Ky 696 (that parallels the creek), just above the mouth of Tanyard Hollow. On his retirement in November 1952 he was succeeded by his wife Alice who herself retired in November 1967 when the post office closed.



Then there was the aptly named but virtually unrecalled **Elmwood** post office maintained from November 2, 1889 through April 1896 by John S. Vaughn at an uncertain site. It was either on the west side of Beaver Creek, three miles up from the river, or on the west bank of Otter, just south of the Russell County line and 14 miles ene of the Wayne-Clinton-Russell Counties convergence. In either case the site is probably now under water. According to Vaughn's Site Location Report his first proposed name for the office was **Cora.**

The equally unrecalled and inexplicably named **Dryden** post office may have occupied three sites in (the present) Otter Creek embayment, in the vicinity of the mouth of Bell Branch, one mile southeast of the convergence. It was maintained, in turn, by Samuel H. Anderson, Elihue Graham, and Nona A. Bell from April 14, 1888 through June 1916.

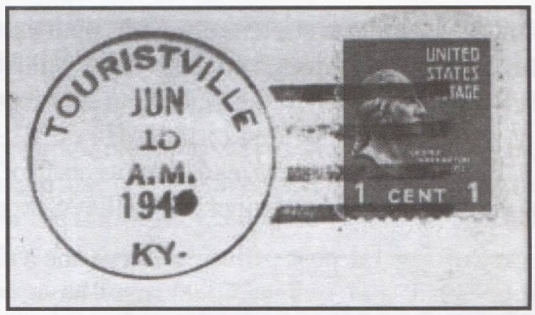
Post Offices on Old and New Ky 90

The 136 mile long (new) Ky 90 extends between US 25W in Whitley County (eleven miles southwest of Corbin) and 1-65 at Cave City in Barren County. Nine Wayne County post offices served both its new and old routes. The old 90 route, at least between the Cumberland River and Monticello, followed an old Indian and wagon trail through the aptly named, 14 mile long, Gap of the Ridge.

Just south of the Gap on the old road was the **Oak Forest** post office established on July 16, 1842 by the Rev. Stephen Scott. On December 19, 1851 Charles H. Buster moved the office about a mile southwest to serve a community settled before 1800 by Revolutionary War veterans and named for Baron Friedrich von Steuben (1730-1794), the Prussian trainer of George Washington's troops. The post office name was then changed to **Steubenville**. It closed on February 13, 1854 but was re-established on May 29, 1871 by Joseph A. Bohan. The community may then have been called **Pleasant Grove** for the local church till 1894 when the church became Steubenville Baptist. Some time in the 1890s the post office was moved to its third site in the Richardson Grocery across old 90 from the church just south of (the present) 90/ 1808 junction, 300 yards east of new 90, and 4 ½ miles northeast of Monticello, where it was suspended in October 1992.

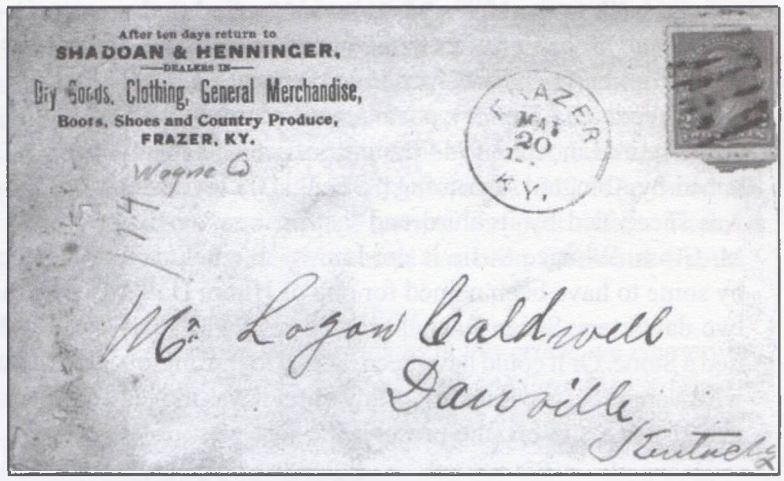
Somewhere on old 90 (following the old route between Monticello and Somerset), one mile north of Meadow Creek and nearly ten miles northeast of Monticello, Stephen A. Weaver established the **Weaverton** post office on December 3, 1859. It operated intermittently in at least two locations until it closed in mid January 1887. Sometime before it closed it's said to have been moved nearly 1 ½ miles southwest to what has been called "The Red Brick Building" at what was later called "The Crossroads".[34]

It was not, however, till July 20, 1929 that another post office was established to serve this area. John R. Wright, a builder and cabinet maker, opened a post office on old 90, half a mile northeast of the Crossroads, just below the junction of 90 and Carr Road. Three names were submitted by his son Alfred: **Wrightsville, Green Valley** (his preference), and **Touristville,** and the third was selected. In retrospect, that name was aptly applied for it was Wright's intention to capitalize on the developing tourist trade in nearby Mill Springs (1 ½ miles northwest, up the pre rerouted old 90). On January 15, 1939 then



postmaster Luid Estil Brown moved the office to his store in the Red Brick Building (8 ½ miles northeast of Monticello). In 1956 Grace (Mrs. Orville) Poore moved it 0.4 miles back up old 90 to another store where it closed in 1983.

Some three to four miles northeast (up new 90) from the Crossroads were the several sites of the **Frazer** post office. It was established by storekeeper Samuel H. Frazer on February 10, 1880 near the site of the New Salem Baptist Church, just north of the road. Though the first proposed name was **Otis**, the office was named for James K. Polk Frazer (ne July 22, 1948), a resident who practiced law in Monticello (twelve miles southwest) and had just been appointed Wayne County Attorney. The office closed in May 1883 but was re-opened the following April by another storekeeper Joseph L. Shadoan and moved to his **Dry Springs** store a few hundred yards south. By 1912 it may have been moved again to a site by the old Frazer School (marked **Frazer** on the 1920s and early 30s maps). In 1935 Mrs. Ninie Cowan had it moved to what, for some years, had been known as **North Frazer** where it remained, as **Frazer,** till its suspension in October 1992. The distinction between **Frazer** and **North Frazer** has since disappeared and the whole one mile long stretch from the Tuttles Chapel Methodist Church northeast to the several stores on old and new 90,at the junction of 90 and Rte. 1568, is now simply **Frazer.**[35]



For some four miles a stretch of Ky 90 southwest of Monticello extends through what's long been called **Halls Valley**. For much of the nineteenth century this valley was owned by its first resident Hiram T. Hall (1811-1878) whose spacious mansion was north of 90, in the vicinity of the now extinct Hall Valley School.

The first of several post offices to serve the valley between Susie and Beaver Creek may have been **North Hill.** Unknown to county historians it's believed to have been operated by John McBeath from February 7, 1854 through July 1863 somewhere in the **Slat** area.

A second post office was established by storekeeper Joshua Berry on July 14, 1864 as **Berryville**. Joshua (ne 1834) was the son of George B. Berry who had the old Berry-Newberry post office on Beaver Creek (see above).[36] From February 1866 through November 1877 Hiram Hall was postmaster. On April 21, 1879 then postmaster Samuel L. Brammer had it renamed **North Hill** and may have moved it 24 miles southwest to a point one mile north of Otter Creek. But it closed in mid November.

After Hiram's death in 1878 his heirs sold the family store to the Rev. Will Alex Hopkins, a Baptist preacher, who, on May 17, 1882, reopened the local post office as **Alex.** In 1887 Hopkins sold out to Abraham (Buck) Owens and moved to Missouri. Owens maintained the office till 1902 and then Thomas M. Shearer operated it through August 1915. The post office-store was on (the present) Ky 858 (the so-called Bethesda-Hall Valley Road), half a mile east of Ky 90 and about six miles southwest of Monticello.

The **Susie** post office was established, probably by storekeeper Wilhite I. Denney, to serve the **Mullentown Neighborhood** centering on a school and church of that name on (the present) Ky 834, a little over a mile north of 90. The **Mullentown** name may go back to the 1840s when it was applied to the school and probably refers to the plants growing wild in area fields. The office opened on January 12, 1892 with Theodore H. Denney, postmaster. From July 1906 till he retired in April 1944 the post office was maintained-by Abington Armstrong ("Strongie") Lloyd who was succeeded by its third and last postmaster Eva M. Cross. Whence Susie is not known. It's believed by some to have been named for one of Hiram Hall's two daughters, Susan Rachel (1863-1952) who married a Stone. Or it could have been named for Strongie's wife Nannie S. (nee Rankin). In any event it was moved in 1914 to a site on (the present) 90, just west of its 834 junction and east of the Old Glory School and Church where, several vicinity moves later, it closed in November 1954. Since the move, the **Mullentown** vicinity has been referred to as **Old Susie.**

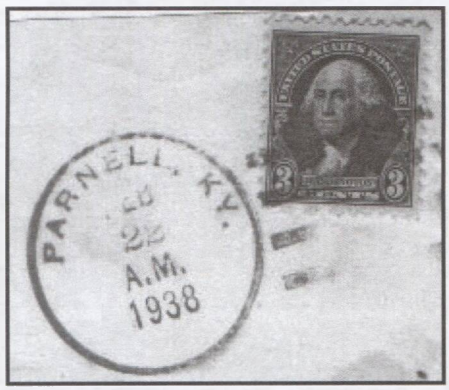
Another little recalled post office was **Danohue**. At least this was its Post Office Department spelling though, in retrospect, its preferred pronunciation has been dahn/uh/hoh or, sometimes, dahn/uh/yu suggesting the preferred local spelling **Donahoe** or **Donahue**. Anyhow, it no longer has any relevance to area residents. And its name derivation is not known. We're not even sure where it was. Its only postmaster Barton C. Huffaker first lived at the head of Otter Creek's Simpson Branch. Thus, when it was established on April 19, 1911, it would serve a rural neighborhood a mile or so south of what would become Highway.[90] In December 1914, according to his Site Location Report, Huffaker moved the office three air miles north to a site 1 ½ miles northwest of Bethesda, four miles east of Murl, and five miles south of Monticello. Several early twentieth century maps show it at the junction of 90 and 834 where we know Susie had been moved to in 1914. After Danohue closed in mid March 1918 Huffaker moved to Betsy where he became its postmaster in December 1927.

The many paling (or picket) fences along the road, in the northwestern end of Halls Valley, gave the name to the post office of **Slat** when it was established on February 26, 1907 by storekeeper Leander (Lee) Brake. Till it closed in mid December 1913 it was at the junction of 90 and (the present) Rte. 1546, just southwest of the (later) New Charity Church. On October 1, 1929 Mrs. Lurtie Brammer had the office re-opened 0.7 miles up 90, a site about four miles southwest of Monticello, and here it closed for good on November 26, 1954 (the same day as Susie, 3 ½ miles southwest.)

Three Post Offices on Ky 92

Kentucky 92 extends through several counties from a point on US 27, about one mile south of Whitley City, to Ky 55, 3 ½ miles south of Columbia. It meets Ky 90 at the square in Monticello. Three Wayne County post offices were on its route.

The little recalled **Coffey's Spring** was operated by John W. Cook from September 29, 1879 through January 1884 on a road that may have become 92, at a site just short of the Russell County line and 5 ½ miles northwest of Parnell. It was named for a good drinking water source just yards from the road on land owned by one of the county's several Coffey families. Isaac Frealy's **Clyde** post office (see Russell County) would later serve this vicinity.



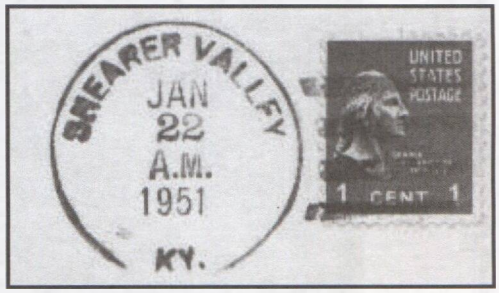
The **Parnell** post office, named for Riley Parnell or his local family, occupied two stores at a single site on (the present) Ky 92, 0.4 miles east of its junction with (the present) Ky 674. It was established on May 12, 1881 with Henry F. Lee, its first postmaster, to serve a small village around **Kelsay's Mills,** the first name proposed for it. Though the office closed on September 30, 1959, **Parnell** is still applied to the community centered at the junction (about seven miles northeast of Monticello), with two stores (opened since 1959) and three churches catering to visitors at the nearby Beaver Lodge and Boat Dock.[37]

Two miles east of the Parnell post office site was John Henderson Twyford's **Swifton** post office. According to his family's tradition, Civil War veteran William Twyford returned to Wayne County from a Union prison camp near Chicago, married the wife of a deceased relative and later, with his brother John, opened a store several miles south of Eadsville and the Cumberland River. After two years William sold his share to John who, on June 25, 1902, established the post office said to have been named for the Arkansas home town of one of William's army or prison buddies. The post office and store closed in mid May 1911, but John later reopened the store, running it till the late 1920s. There's nothing at the site now and area residents don't even know the **Swifton** name.[38]

Post Offices on or Just Off Ky 200

In addition to Paisley, Bethesda, Hidalgo, Powersburg, and Sunnybrook, already discussed, two other post offices served residents of this eighteen mile long highway between Ky 167 (1 ½ miles southwest of Monticello) and the Tennessee line, one mile south of Sandclift.

For about five miles the road extends through the non-stream drained **Shearer Valley** from Taylor Mountain to Halls Valley, north of Bethesda, and between Taylor Ridge and Koontz Mountain (west) and Criswell and Pilot Mountains (east).



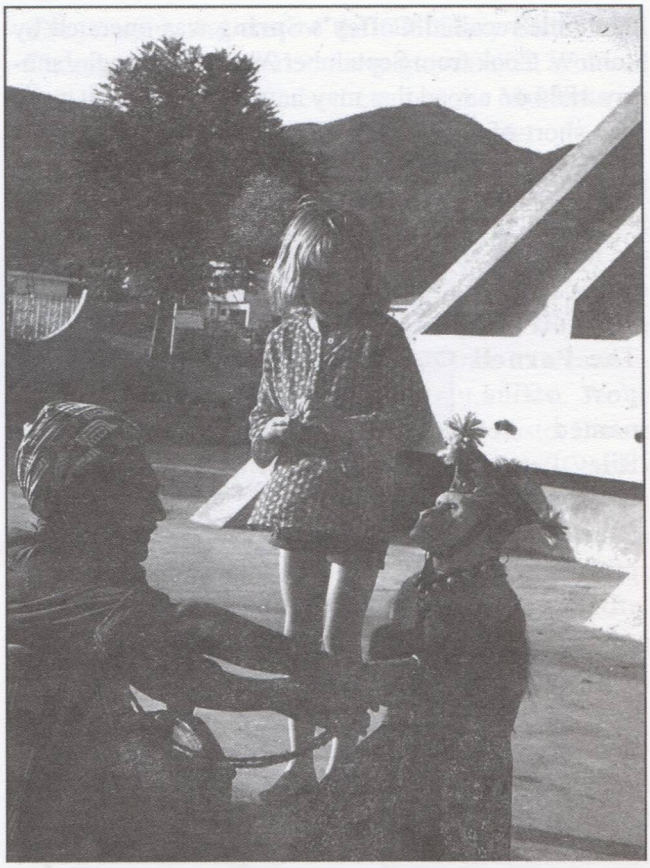
This valley was first settled around 1812 by William Christian Shearer, Jr. (1760-184?) and his family from Ashe County, North Carolina. One of his seventeen children Daniel (1791-1865) was later to own the entire valley.[39] On August 4, 1876 Daniel's daughter Cassandra Huffaker established the **Shearer Valley** [sheer, shee/uhr, shehr/uh, shehr/uhr] post office in her father's home on the road that became 200, about 500 yards south of the Shearer Valley Church of Christ, six miles southwest of Monticello. The post office closed on May 31, 1908, but another **Shearer Valley** post office operated between June 19, 1937 and March 11, 1955 in a store a little over a mile south (2 ¾ mile north of) Hidalgo. Chester W. Upchurch was the second **Shearer Valley's** first postmaster. Though the offices are no more the valley and neighborhood are still populated and centered at the extant church.

Serving the aptly named **Chestnut Grove Neighborhood**, now centered at the C.R. Bertram store on 200, was the **Sandclift** post office.[40] The post office, however, was 1 ½ miles south of the store and the Chestnut Grove Church sites, in a small grocery by the John Lester home, at the end of a dirt road half a mile east of 200 and half a mile north of Bald Rock. It was named for the large sandstone cliff just south of Lester's where, by the 1970s, construction rock was still being quarried. With John and his son Willie its only postmasters the office operated between December 21, 1921 and mid October 1953. The **Sandclift** name was applied only to the post office. Then, as now, the neighborhood has been **Chestnut Grove.**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

All postmark illustrations in this article are courtesy of the Postmark Collectors Club and their Margie Pfund Memorial Postmark Museum & Research Center.

TO BE CONTINUED



Islamabad monkey walla delights Shan Helbock, 1975

POSTAL HISTORIANS ON LINE

(continued from page 8)

Richard F. Winter [transatlantic mail] — rfwinter@bellsouth.net
Kirk Wolford [Dealer. Collects US pcs & stationery, military postal History (all services), US p.h., possessions, & airmail] — krkstpco@dishmail.net
Johb Wright [Dealer] — vwr6712105@aol.com
Ken Wukasch [Columbian Expo postal history] — kenwukasch@yahoo.com
Robert J. Zamen [Machine cancels & IL] — bzame@aol.com
Nicholas Zevos [Postal history of Northern New York] — zevosn@potsdam.edu
POSTAL HISTORY SOCIETIES (Listed by request)
(For a Listing of ALL U.S. State Postal History Societies see the Empire State Postal History Society)— http://www.esphs.org/usphsoc.html
Machine Cancel Society—http://www.machinecancel.org
Michigan [Peninsular State Philatelic Society, Michagan's Postal History Society] — http://www.home.earthlink.net/~efisherco/
Military Postal History Society—http://www.militaryphs.org
Mobile Post Office Society — http://www.eskimo.com/~rkunz/mposhome.html
Postal History Society — http://www.stampclubs.com/phs/index.htm
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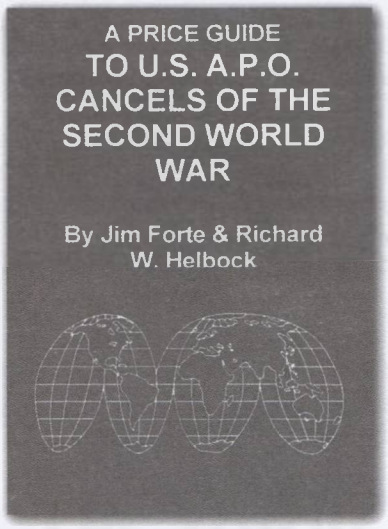

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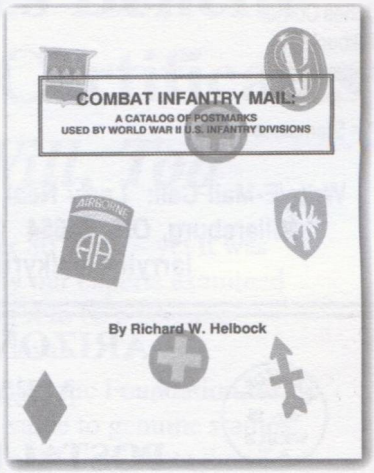
By Richard W. Helbock $24.00



1991, 152p, Sftbound. Covers each of the 72 combat divisions, five Airborne divisions and the Mountain Infantry division. Illustrates postmarks, location movements, APO numbers and much more. A great companion volume to the Forte and Helbock APO Priced Guide shown above.

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THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL ON-LINE PHILATELIC EXHIBITION

EXPONET (http://www.exponet.info) is a virtual, non-competitive international philatelic exhibit with more than 380 entries. With EXPONET, collectors can present their postal history and stamp collections on-line. EXPONET was started in 2004, and is now an integral part of the philatelic web site JAPHILA. It is written in English, and also translated into several other languages. It has been viewed by 2 million visitors so far!

The aim of EXPONET is to provide a permanent presentation of high quality philatelic exhibits, and to facilitate on-line study for visitors throughout the world. Our intention is to make exhibit-viewing available to everybody, regardless of distance, and to promote the philatelic hobby.

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3. Open Class for exhibits having achieved Bronze, new exhibits, youth exhibits, etc.

EXPONET was founded by private individuals:

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2. **Bretislav Janik**, webmaster-Japhila daily magazine www.japhila.cz; Secretary-World Stamp Exhibit Committee, Prague-1988.

3. **Vit Vanicek**, vice-president of the Union of Czech Philatelists and President-World Stamp Exhibit Committee-Prague-2008.

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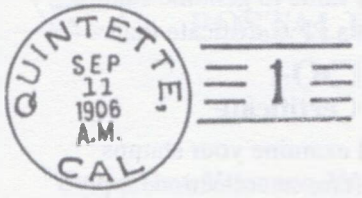

I will execute to your exact specifications accurate tracings of plain or fancy postmarks, cancels and maps. My work has appeared in *La Posta* in both the Washington Territorial postmark series by Richard A. Long and the 19th Century Colorado postmark series by Richard Frajola.

If you've been thinking of a postmark catalog project, or any research which requires well-executed postmarks or maps for illustrations, but do not have the time required to accomplish the tracings, drop me a line or give me a call with the particulars, and I will give you a quote.

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Backnumbers of ***La Posta*** may be purchased from:

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An index of all backnumbers through Volume 28 has been completed by Daniel Y. Meschter and is available on the *La Posta* website at *www.la-posta.com.*

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1-25	$1.25	$3.12	$5.94
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36-40	$2.00	$4.98	$9.48
41-45	$2.25	$5.61	$10.68
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81-85	$4.25	$10.59	$20.16
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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 [41-1]

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 [40-6]

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@comcast.net. [41-1]

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 [40-5]

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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 web site: http://www.postal-history.com. [40-6]

TOWNS:WANTED

All States and categories wanted! Better consignment material always needed for my bi-monthly Mail Bid Sales. Write/ call for consignment details. Jim Mehrer, 2405-30th Street, Rock Island, IL 61201. Phone: (309) 786-6539. Email: mehrer@postal-history.com. Internet web site: http://www.postal-history.com. [40-6]

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 [40-6]

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 [40-5]

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 41-1]

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 [40-5]

WESTPORT WA Collector seeking older advertising covers and pre-1950 postcards from Westport, WA. Contact: Douglas Olson, PO Box 2177, Westport, WA 98595 [40-5]

NOTE:

EXPIRATION DATE SHOWN AT END OF EACH AD, i.e., [40-5], MEANS AD WILL EXPIRE WITH THIS ISSUE.

AD DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE:

November 5, 2009

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) [40-6]

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 [40-5]

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 [41-6]

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 [40-5]

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 [40-6]

FOREIGN: WANTED

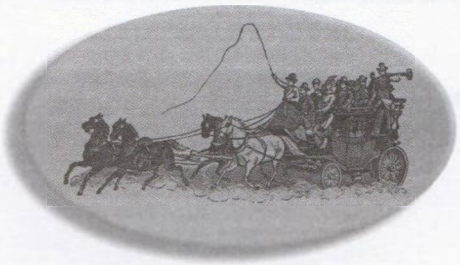
COMMERCIAL AIR air covers, 1945 or earlier, any intercontinental mail, i.e, Europe to Asia, North America to Africa, Australia to Europe, etc. Send scans or photocopies for my offer, or on approval to Richard Helbock, PO Box 100, Chatsworth Island, NSW 2469, Australia or helbock@la-posta.com

WANTED: MISCELLANY

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 40-5]

LITERATURE: FOR SALE

19th Century Cleveland, Ohio Postal Markings by Thomas F. Allen, a 122-page book packed with information helpful to all postal historians, only $8.00 postpaid for *La Posta* subscribers G-P Stamp Club, 7280 Hudson Road, Kent, OH 44240 [40-5]



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Publisher

* Beginning with Volume 41, No 1, our publication schedule will become quarterly with four numbers per volume. The subscription price will remain $25 per volume but will include a bonus on-line version with color images at no additional cost.

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Hello Richard & Cath:

Yes, I'll give *La Posta* a try. You may begin my subscription with the Volume 40, Number 6 (Dec 2009-Jan 2010) 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*

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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.

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Ad Size	One Issue	Three Issues	Six Issues
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1/2-page	$60.00	$139.00	$254.00
1-page	$110.00	$253.00	$462.00

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*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.

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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 ADS** are: Dec/Jan & Feb/Mar issue – **Oct 31**; Ap/May & Jun/July issue – **Feb 28**; Aug/Sep & Oct/Nov issue – **June 30.**

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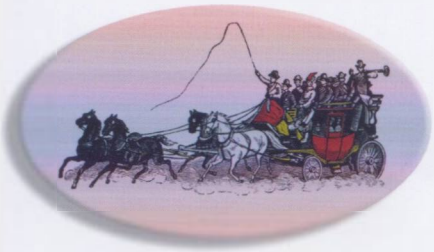

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