

THE TEXAS POSTAL HISTORY SOCIETY JOURNAL

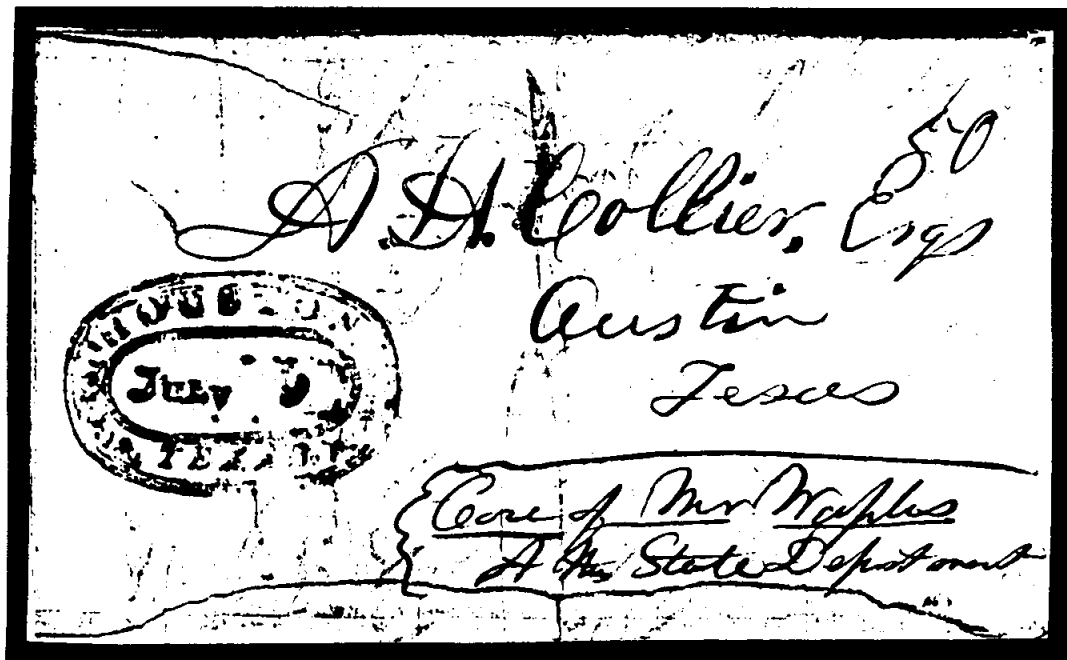


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On the front cover is an illustration of an 1840 Houston cover, addressed to Austin, and bearing the large Houston oval. It is the subject of the second article appearing in this issue.

THE TEXAS POSTAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Dues \$10 per year payable to Secretary-Treasurer

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PRESIDENT'S PAGE



As I wrote the two previous President's Pages, I had as my number one goal, the publication of our T.P.H.S. Journal on schedule. It now appears that Vol. 13, issue 2 of the Journal will be mailed in June, thus realizing this objective. Thanks in large measure to Jim Stever and two fine articles submitted by him, we are now able to meet our deadline. I feel that the material enclosed is both interesting and informative. If "glitches" do appear please forgive for we are trying our very best.

We do need additional articles so that we may vary the selection of reading material. Articles from the north, south, east and west of Texas. Articles that deal with heroes or villains, cattlemen or ranchers, Indians or immigrants, men or women, soldiers or diplomats, bankers or merchants; just about anything you have material or knowledge about. Remember, every cover, and certainly every letter in your collection holds a story. If you were interested enough in an item to pay a dealer or auctioneer your hard earned money for that item,--- why not triple your enjoyment of it by learning more about it and sharing you knowledge with fellow collectors. I assure you, the rewards derived from sharing your cover and your knowledge about it with fellow members will far exceed the mere satisfaction of ownership. We are pleased to have each of you as members of the Texas Postal History Society but we would be jubilant to have you as a participating writer in our Journal.

THE ANNUAL SPRING MEETING AND TRADING SESSION

The annual spring meeting of the Texas Postal History Society was held at the La Quinta Inn in Waco, Texas on May 28th. It was a great day. The weather was beautiful, the turnout substantial, and the trading was fast and furious. I believe everyone who attended acquired one or more covers for their collection. Certainly there was a large amount of new material for each of us to look at. As the day drew to a close, the opinion was expressed that this had been one of our better annual gatherings. It was proposed that we should have at least one get-together each year that is apart from formal business, program, or the scheduling difficulties associated with a stamp exhibition.

Our trading was suspended Saturday morning for a short discussion. Among the items discussed were the following; 1) Finding a new editor for the Journal, 2) A section on "prices-realized" for Texas covers, 3) Welcome and recognition of new members in the Journal, 4) Instituting a search for a secretary, and 5) Giving a T.P.H.S. award for the best Texas exhibit at TEXPEX-88 in Corpus Christi, June 10-12th.

THE MEXICAN CONNECTION

By Jim Stever

One of the most unusual of early Texas handstamps is the Corpus Christi straight line within the sawtooth box. Actually there are two varieties, each of which appears to be a frame with typeset letters. Type I is shorter and has the town name at top with month and manuscript day on a second line. (Figure 1). Type II is longer in order to accommodate "TEXAS" after the town name. This allows room for a manuscript year after the manuscript day.

Based on covers currently known to this writer, Type I was used from November, 1851 through January 1852. Type II is known used in the period March, 1852 to May, 1852. No covers are available for the months of February or June, 1852. By July, 1852 the Corpus Christi cancel was a slant letter straightline with no sawtooth border and in August a balloon circular date stamp came into use.

Depending on how complete the latest American Stampless Cover Catalogue might be, it appears that no other Texas community used a sawtooth box cancelling device. What is so fascinating about this is the fact that seven Mexican communities in the Saltillo postal district used similar sawtooth box devices, four of them during a time span overlapping the Corpus Christi devices, i.e. 1850-1856. Nowhere else in Mexico but the Saltillo district are sawtooth box handstamps found. Figure 2 shows examples of the four relevant Mexican markings as illustrated in The Pre-Stamp Postal Markings of Mexico by Otto Yag and John K. Bash. (The other three Mexican markings did not come into use until 1856). According to Dr. Karl Schimmer, an expert in Mexican postal history, none of the Saltillo markings were used before 1850 (personal communication). The similarities of sawtooth borders is so striking that one could surmise that the Corpus Christi Type I marking was traced from the Villa de Rosas, Villa de Nava or Cienegas markings or vice versa. Viewed on a light table, the Cienegas and Type I marking are practically a laydown - so close as to be more than a coincidence. Furthermore, the Villa de Musquiz cancel is very similar to the Corpus Christi Type II but slightly longer.

Figure 3 is a map of southern Texas and northeastern Mexico compiled by the U.S. Bureau of Topographic Engineers in 1857 for military purposes. Significantly, three of the four Mexican communities under discussion are located between Eagle Pass and Monclova while the fourth, Cienegas, is due west of Monclova. The first three are along the stage route from Piedras Negras (twin city to Eagle Pass) and the Saltillo-Monterrey area. Cienegas was a stage transfer point where the above stage met western stages out of Chihuahua. North of the Rio Grande, regular stage service had commenced between Eagle Pass and San Antonio and between San Antonio and Corpus Christi. Thus, one could say there was communication between Corpus Christi and the Mexican communities south of Eagle Pass whose postal people used a sawtooth box handstamp. In fact, there was substantial trade

between Corpus Christi and Mexico in the late 1840's and early 1850's. This was promoted by Corpus Christi founder Col. Henry L. Kinney who visualized the port community as an entry point and outlet for commerce to and from northern Mexico. Kinney organized a special wagon train led by Sen. William Cazneau in 1849 to Chihuahua for the purpose of developing trade with that area.

It will probably never be known just which person or persons provided the connecting link for handstamps used in the two areas. In all probability, the sawtooth box idea originated in Mexico about 1850 and was "brought" to Corpus Christi or copied by someone in Corpus Christi in 1851. Corpus Christi was a small village at that time whose postal receipts did not warrant a government issued canceling device. Thus, postmaster D. W. Brewster had to use a makeshift device and may well have been attracted to handstamps on incoming Mexican mail, especially since the Mexican markings were in red and undoubtedly quite handsome. A Mr. C. Cahill became Corpus Christi postmaster in January, 1852. He may well have been the one to add "TEXAS" to the Type I handstamp which resulted in the Type II marking as his tenure commenced about the time the marking was changed.

The above speculations are just that -- speculations. Nevertheless, the Mexican and Corpus Christi markings are so close in size and design and with concurrent usage as to be more than a mere coincidence. The writer would welcome any new information that might help to establish a definite connection.

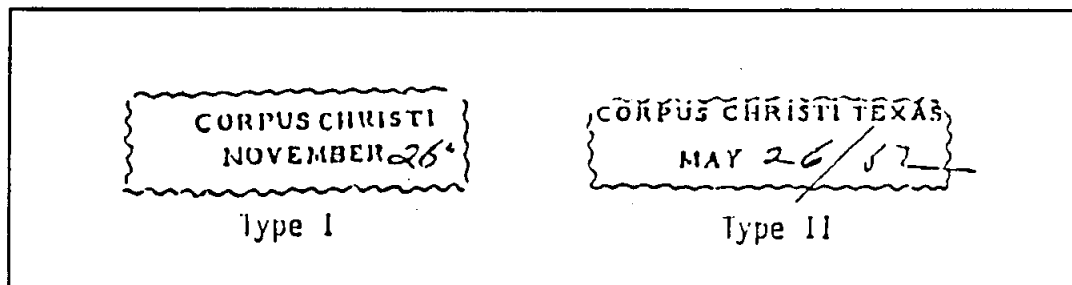


Figure 1. Corpus Christi handstamps. Type I currently known November, 1851 to January, 1852. Type II currently known March, 1852 to May, 1852. Both handstamps black.

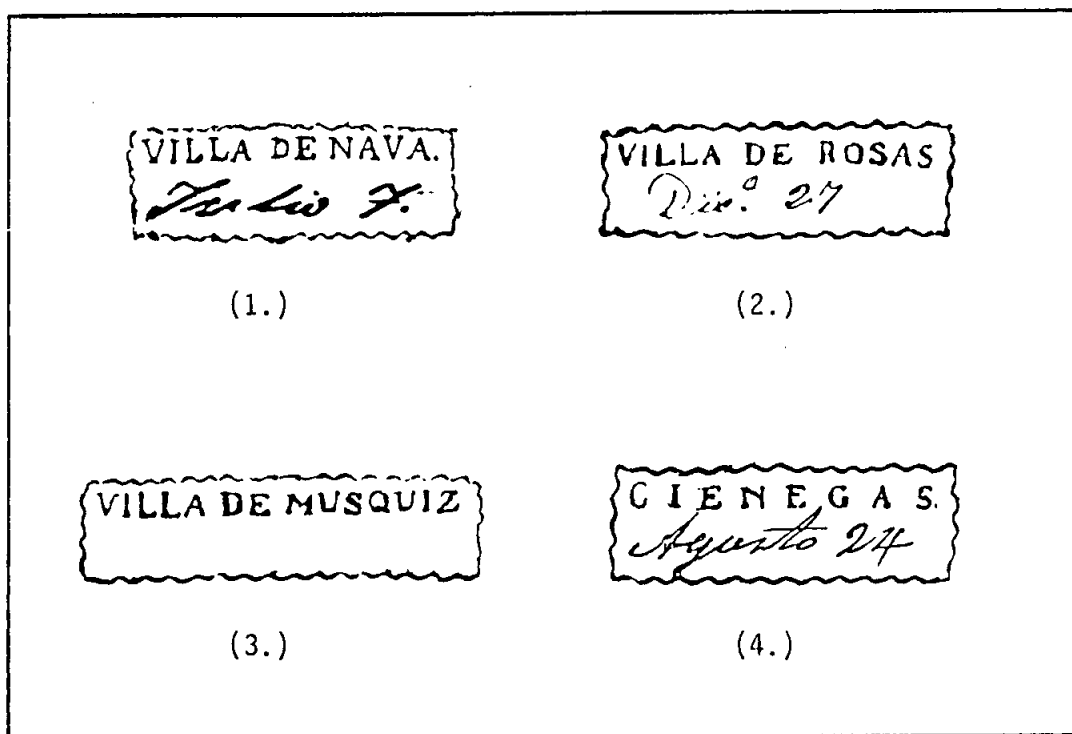


Figure 2. Mexican sawtooth handstamps, 1850-56. All were stamped in red during this period. Post 1856 markings were in other colors. (Reproduced from Yag and Bash.)

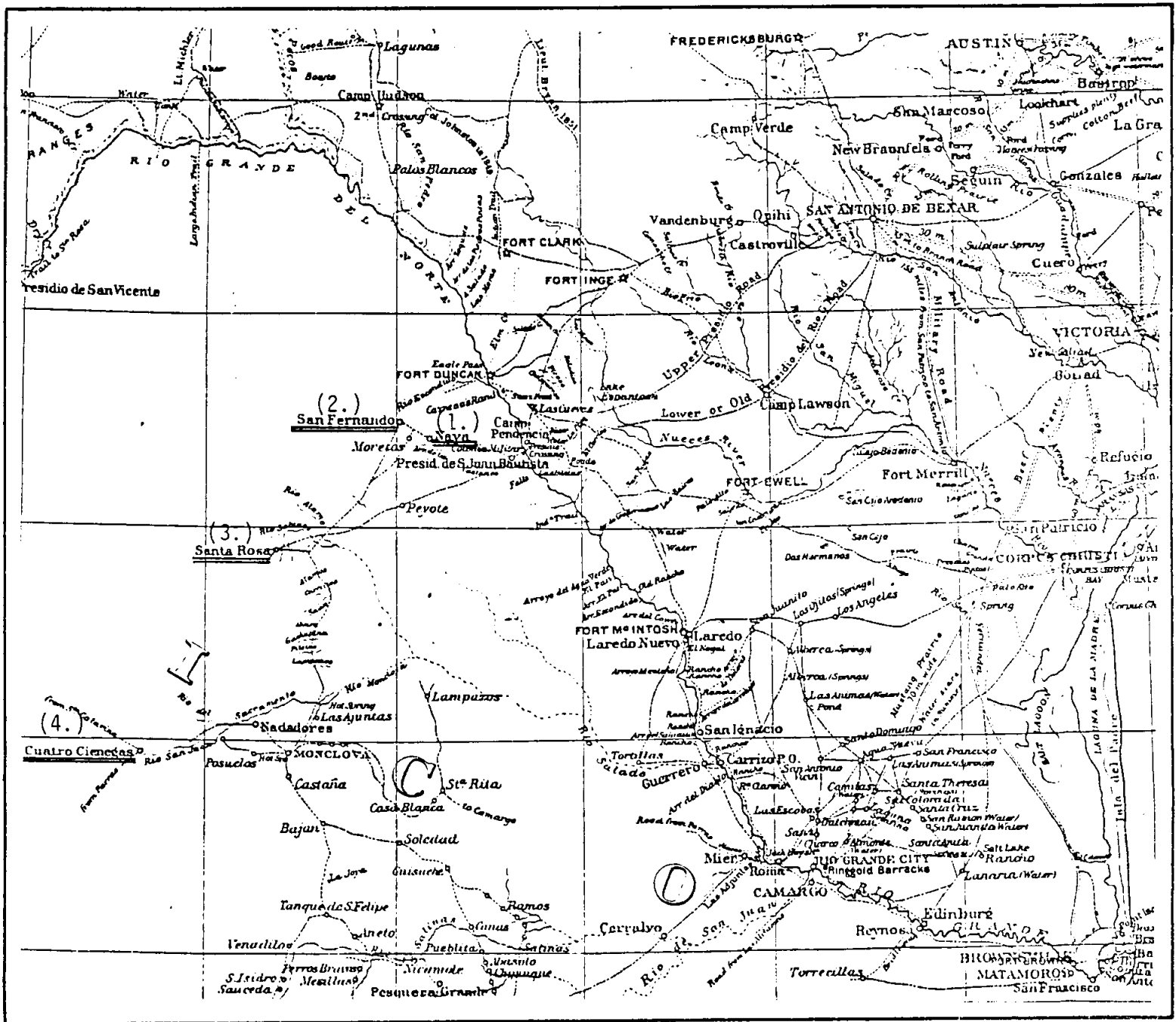


Figure 3. Map showing location of Mexican post offices which used sawtooth box handstamps during the period 1850-56: (1.) Villa de Nava; (2.) Villa de Rosas, early name San Fernando de Rosas; (3.) Villa de Musquiz, early name Villa de Santa Rosa; and (4.) Cienegas (or Cuatro Cienegas).

THE MESSAGE - "SEND MY TRUNK"

By William H.P. Emery

Sometimes what is written in a folded letter can be as interesting as the postal markings which are applied to it's face. Such is the case with the letter shown in figure 1.

However, since this article pretends to be a postal history article, it is appropriate to first "highlight" the postal markings that are found on this cover.

Shown on the face of this cover is a large (45 x 30mm.) double oval, in black, dated July 8, (1840) from Houston, Texas. The 1840 Republic rate, for a single sheet traveling more than 150miles, either prepaid or postpaid, was 50¢. This is what appears in the upper left hand corner of the cover. This particular series of rates was in effect for only eleven months, from Feb. 6th, 1840 to Jan. 28, 1841. The Houston oval appearing on this cover was used approximately three years, from Oct. 1838, to Sept. 1841. Clear strikes of this device are extremely rare, and the example shown in figure 1, is well above the average known to this writer.

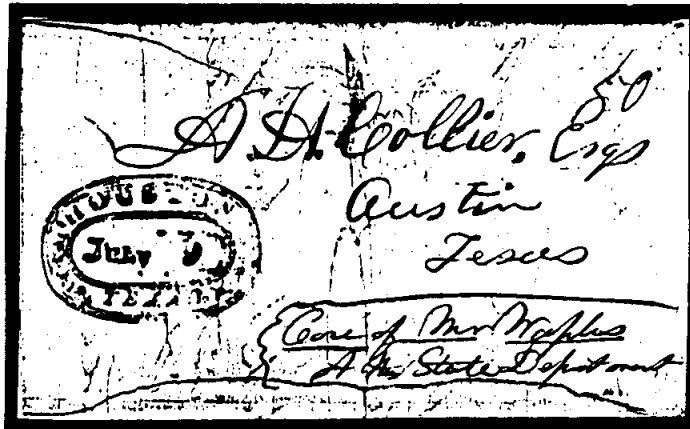


Figure 1

Transport of this cover was by mule, over route #36, passing via San Felipe, La Grange, Primm's, Bastrop, and Comanche, to Austin. The post office records show that the 1840 route (#36) over which this cover was carried, had been awarded to John Green, for the annual sum of \$12,000 for twice weekly service.

Communications to the interior of Texas in 1840 were uncertain, and this applied to mail, as well as to personal travel. The Austin City Gazette for Jan. 29, 1840 reported, "that there had been no mail from Houston in four weeks." On another occasion in 1840 the Telegraph and Texas Register of Houston reported that, "the mule carrying the Houston to Austin mail this week escaped from the carrier and those who sent letters in this mail must write again."

William Ranson Hogan, in his book, "The Texas Republic", notes that in the fall of 1839, stage service was established from Houston to Austin via Washington. He also cites the remembrances of one man who told, "that the coaches were old and rickety, and that the passenger who travelled in these had to work his way by carrying a fence rail on his shoulder for long distances and helping to pry the vehicle out of mudholes in order to reach his destination at all."

When one considers the difficulties of travel, combined with the problems of protective-storage, the wonder is that any of these early letters have survived nearly 150 years.

In this particular folded letter, one William Clark of Houston is writing to H.H. Collier, Esq. of Austin, Texas. He sends his letter in "Care of Mr. Waples at the State Department". The contents of Mr. Clark's letter follow:

Houston, July 8, 1840

Old Friend,

Having some little business to transact with thee, me thinks I will do it at your own expense - not, however, entirely wishing to put you to the heavy expense of fifty cents, for in that case you would loose enough to pay for four good big pieces of "ginger bread."

Wing arrived here on Sunday evening, and has since been some sick with a slight fever, but is now nearly well again. It was in consequence of exposure to "the sun coming down".

Cruger and Moore will soon go up to Austin. Cruger will in the meantime route Bonnell - "horse foot and dragoon" from his office and from there to remain forever. Wing will probably go back and take charge of the office.

I wish you to have my trunk sent down the first chance. Wing says, you said that I did not say anything about it to you. If I did not, I meant you should. I have hardly cloths enough with me to look decent.

Don't write any more about your debt to me, for it was liquidated "on the instant" of my arrival here. The way I am making money here is a sin to Davy Crockett. We get good money prices, and I shall make about 25 or 30 dollars per week in good money. Today I have made five dollars in good money. I can make easy 400 dollars per month in Texas money. And send my trunk down the first chance you can possibly get.

We all board at Hitchcock's, and better living I never could care for. He lately received a stock of anything that is good from his father in N. York. O, send my trunk. You wrote Hitch that I had used myself up there in Austin. Explain yourself or I will hold you personally responsible. I shall appoint Archer to superintend the whole matter for me, and you know as well as I do that he is a man of a great deal of courage. Send my trunk down the first good, expeditious and safe chance you can get.

I was seven days coming down here. Houston is healthy, you may say what you are a mind to, to the contrary.

Business here in the office is pretty brisk. All are in excellent health and spirits, and have any quantity of fun. My trunk is now the only trouble I have. Will you send it.

Tell Hyde, the postmaster, to send my letters and papers down here to me. He put nine of the papers in the Sentinel box, and the gentlemen of that office have gentility to open them without putting them into the mail again. God damn them, I never heard of such rascalous conduct before. Wing said one was from "Sal B., no mistake". I wish you would see to this in particular. I want all that is sent to me, either by letter or paper.

The postmaster here stopped a paper for me the other day. It was from Charley. He wrote on the margin this, "All well, politics hot, religion-cooling, weather fine, boys lazy, and girls frolicksome."

I want to write you a good long letter, but I must close. The mail is almost shut.

Good bye-

Write me immediately, tell all about the trunk, etc. My respects to all-

Signed Clark

H.H.C. Esq.

P.S. Hitch has been buying 300 acres of land within 10 miles of Houston, or trading for it - Great trade!

When the names (Cruger, Moore, Bonnell, Wing, Archer, Hyde, Waples, and Clark) mentioned in this early Texas letter are subjected to a little research, it becomes quickly apparent that all have a common bond. They had all come to Texas in search of fame and fortune, and they were all associated with either printing or the newspaper business.

The "Cruger" and "Moore" mentioned in William Clark's letter were Jacob W. Cruger and Dr. Francis Moore, Jr.

Jacob W. Cruger was a New Yorker who came to Texas early in life. At the age of 17 he became the first postmaster of Houston, in April 1837. Apparently Cruger was a most efficient businessman because he was able to secure enough capital to buy Gail Borden's interest in a newspaper called, "The Telegraph and Texas Register", in June of 1837. He subsequently hired Dr. Francis Moore, Jr. as editor of his new paper. Cruger entertained the idea of monopolizing the newspaper business in and around Houston. In November 1839, he acquired controlling interest in a second Houston newspaper known as the "Morning Star". When the capital of Texas was moved to Austin, Cruger's firm moved quickly to establish at the seat of government, a new paper called the "Texas Sentinel", in January 1840.

Mr. George W. Bonnell was hired by Cruger to manage the new enterprise in Austin. Apparently Bonnell did not last long in the newspaper business. In June, 1841 he set out with the Texan Santa Fe Expedition, the purpose of which was to establish a trade route to Santa Fe and to offer the New Mexicans the opportunity of participating in the Texas government. Instead of being welcomed, the expedition was forced to surrender to Mexican authorities. The men were taken to Mexico City. There they were imprisoned. After much diplomatic discussion between the United States and Mexico, the prisoners were released in April, 1842. Bonnell returned to Texas in time to join the ill-fated Mier Expedition. On this occasion, he was not so fortunate. At Mier, he was captured again, and this time the Mexican soldiers executed him on December 26, 1842.

When Bonnell was fired as manager of the "Texas Sentinel" he was replaced by another of Cruger's employees, one Martin Carrol Wing. Wing had started for Texas in the hope of participating in the Texas Revolution. However, by the time he arrived, the battle of San Jacinto was already over with. A printer by trade, Wing joined the Cruger organization, first in Houston, and later in Austin as manager of the "Texas Sentinel". Wing, like Bonnell, was quick to join the troops headed for the border in 1842. When the Somervell Expedition turned back, and the Mier Expedition split off from it, Wing was one who elected to continue on to Mier. Captured on December 26th, he along with nearly three hundred other Texan troops, were marched toward the interior. Near Salado a large number of the prisoners attempted an escape. One hundred seventy-six were recaptured, and forced to participate in what came to be known as "The Black Bean Episode". Seventeen men, who drew the black beans, were executed. Unfortunately Martin Carrol Wing was one who drew a black bean and died March 25, 1843.

In his letter, William Clark, believing his honor may have been tarnished by his friend Henry Collier says, "Explain yourself or I will hold you personally responsible. I shall appoint Archer to superintend the whole matter for me, --." His reference is to Branch T. Archer. Archer had been a member of the first Texas Congress (1836) and served as Speaker of the House of Representatives during its second session (1837). He was well known as an authority on the

rules of dueling, and in 1841 he was the individual who carried Burnet's challenge for a duel to Sam Houston. It was reputed, that in the campaign of 1841, Burnet called Houston a "half-Indian". Houston heard of Burnet's remark and returned the compliment by calling Burnet a "hog thief". The Houston-Burnet duel never took place but Archer's reputation as an advocate for duels to settle disputes was widely publicized.

Toward the end of his letter Mr. Clark complained to his friend that the Austin postmaster, (A. C.) Hyde had put nine newspapers to him in the "Texas Sentinel" box and that these had been removed by persons hanging around the post office. He asks his friend Collier to see that in the future his mail is handled better.

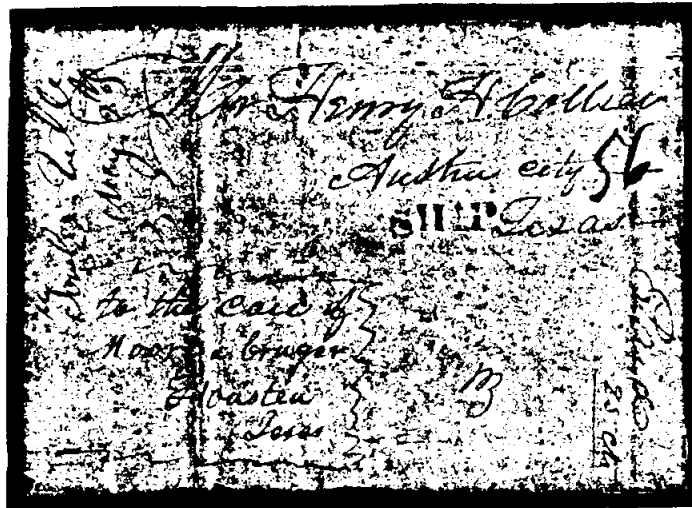
A. C. Hyde was Austins first postmaster, taking office in January 1840. The post office was then located in the Hyde and McKinstry store, on the northeast corner of Congress Ave. and Pecan Street.

On the face of the cover illustrated in figure 1 are directions for the postmaster, that Mr. H.H. Collier maybe located through Mr. Waples at the State Department.

According to "The Handbook of Texas", Joseph Waples was an early resident of Austin who had charge of moving the archives from Houston to Austin in 1839. He later became chief clerk in the Department of State. In 1843 he left the department to join the Snively Expedition. This was an attempt to capture the rich Mexican caravans going from St. Louis, Missouri, across North Texas, to Santa Fe, New Mexico.

As for the recipient of this letter (Henry H. Collier) and the writer (William Clark) very little information has been found. Old copies of the "Telegraph and Texas Register" did reveal that of the men captured by Gen. Pedro Ampudia at Mier, there was one Texan private who identified himself only as "W. Clark". Whether this was the same young man who two years earlier had written his friend H.H. Collier with The Message - Send My Trunk, we can only speculate.

The only information this writer was able to glean from his research pertaining to Mr. H.H. Collier was obtained from a second folded letter of May 28, 1840 written by Mr. Collier's sister. This letter is shown in figure 2.



It is from his sisters letter that we learn his full name was Henry H. Collier. At the time this letter was posted Mr. Collier had been in Texas but a short time, probably the fall of 1839. Since his sister and family resided in a small village near Batavia, New York, we may assume that he was a New Yorker. Remarks from the letter indicate that Henry had left home because of difficulties he was having with the family. He had come to Texas to find fame and fortune. Letters from Henry to his sister had apparently been recieved, telling of his good fortune in finding almost immediate employment with the Cruger and Moore newspaper enterprises.

This early success in finding a job must not have lasted, for the record ends almost as abruptly as it started. Except for the two Republic covers shown in this article, and one advertisement by the Austin postmaster that a letter was being held at the post office, no other record of Henry H. Collier could be found.

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REPUBLIC OF TEXAS PERFORMANCE BOND

(Reproduced with permission of the Texas State Archives and provided to the editor by John Germann)

Shown on the back page of this issue ia an interesting copy of a Republic of Texas "Performance Bond" issued in Travis Co. in the amount of \$2,500, guaranting proper performance of the mail contract on the 1841 postal route #14. This route passed between Pattillo's (in present day Orange Co.) and Hamilton (Shelby Co.).

As far as could be determined, the bonding of postmasters and contractors was not required by the initial ordinance creating the general post office department on December 13,1835. Section 1 of that ordinance provided only, that the Postmaster-General would give bond in the amount of \$5,000, but says nothing of contractors or postmasters.

REPUBLIC OF TEXAS,

COUNTY OF Travis

KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS, That we, John A. Berry
Joseph H. Mason, N. S. Anderson and Samuel Van Zandt
citizens of the said Republic, are held and firmly bound unto Samuel A. Roberts
Secretary of State of said Republic,
or his successor in office, in the penal sum of Two thousand
Four Hundred Dollars, good and lawful money of said Republic, to be
paid to the said Samuel A. Roberts or his successors in
office: Which payment well and truly to be made, we bind ourselves, our heirs, executors,
administrators and assigns.

THE CONDITION OF THE ABOVE OBLIGATION IS SUCH, That if the
said John A. Berry, Joseph H. Mason
from the 1st day of January 1848 to 1st day of January 1850
shall well and truly perform the duties of MAIL CONTRACTOR, on Route No. Fourteen
between Patullo and Hamilton in conformity with an act
to regulate the post office and the several laws regulating
the post office of the United States, and all laws and
such other instructions as may be given by the Secretary of State.
Then this Obligation to be void and of none effect: Otherwise, to be and remain in full
force and virtue.

GIVEN UNDER OUR HANDS AND SEALS, at Aust. Tex. this
Sixteenth day of November 1848.

WITNESS,

J. W. Long
J. H. ...

Berry & Mason [L. S.]
N. S. Anderson [L. S.]
S. Van Zandt [L. S.]

REPUBLIC OF TEXAS,
COUNTY OF _____

I DO HEREBY SOLEMNLY SWEAR, That I will faithfully perform all the
duties required of me, and abstain from every thing forbidden by the laws, in relation to
the establishing of the General Post Office and Post Roads.

SWORN TO and subscribed before me, this
Sixteenth day of November
A. D. 1848.

Joseph Mason
TX

Samuel A. Roberts
Secy of State