

THE TEXAS POSTAL HISTORY SOCIETY JOURNAL

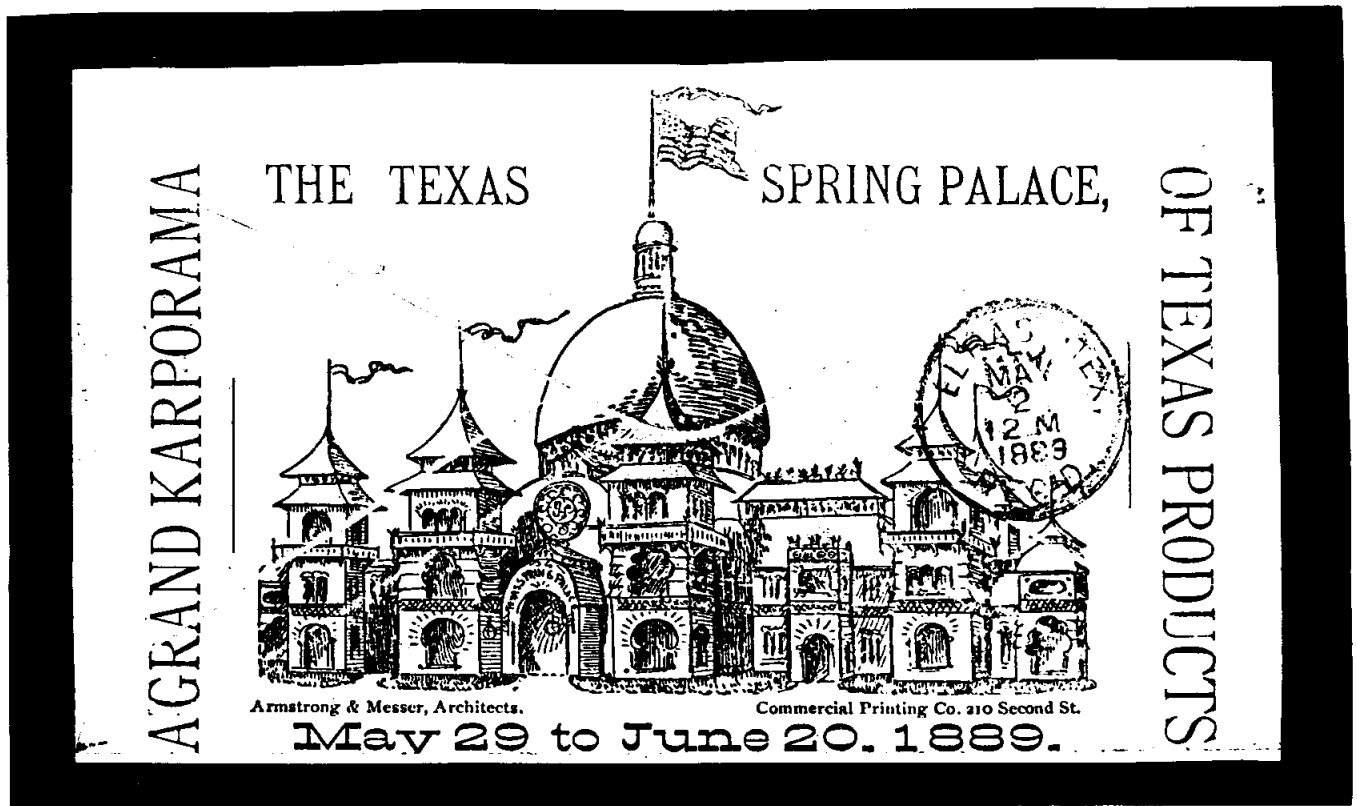


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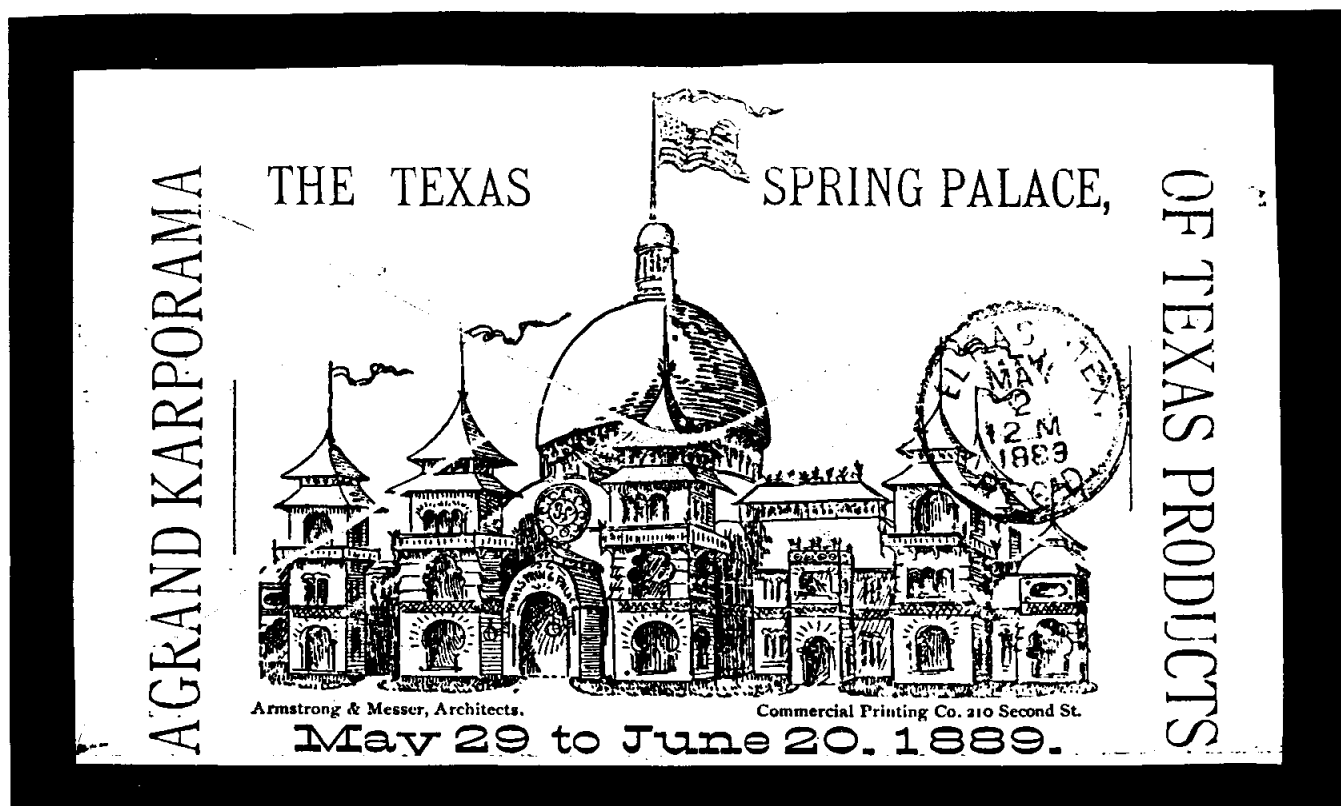


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THE TEXAS POSTAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Dues \$ 7 per year, payable to Secretary-Treasurer

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PRESIDENT'S PAGE

If you have not already noticed by the time you reach the President's page, I would like to alert you to two important matters that need your immediate attention. These are the 1984 T.P.H.S. dues and the election of new society officers.

Stapled to the face of this issue of the Texas Postal History Society Journal is a pre-addressed dues envelope for your convenience in transmitting your 1984 dues to the Secretary-Treasurer. The dues are \$7.00 per year. Your prompt attention to this matter will be beneficial to both the society, and to yourself. For you, it assures uninterrupted delivery of your Journal; for your Secretary-Treasurer and President, it means less work and less expense when reminders to tardy members can be avoided.

Stapled to the face of your Journal there is also an election ballot. Our T.P.H.S. constitution provides that there will be an election of officers on odd numbered years. In compliance with this directive, a nominating committee was appointed during the spring by the President. The committee presented a slate of candidates who agreed to serve the society if elected. Would you please take a moment to mark your ballot and return it to the Secretary-Treasurer, Mr. Jim Alexander, at 5825 Caldwell Drive, Waco, TX 76710. You may find it convenient to enclose both your dues and the ballot in the same envelope.

ANNUAL T.P.H.S. MEETING:

This year the annual meeting of our group has been scheduled for June 22-24, in Corpus Christi, Texas. We have been invited by the Sea Gull Stamp Club, this year's host to TEXPEX, to have our get together in conjunction with their show. The site of our get together will be in the beautiful La Quinta Royal Hotel in downtown Corpus Christi, Texas. We look for a large turn out and sincerely hope that each of you will be there to enjoy the fun, renew old friendships, and find the missing collection items you have hunted for all year long.

OTHER MATTERS:

I would like to conclude this, my final President's Page, with a simple thanks to everyone in the T.P.H.S. I appreciate the honor of having served. Even more I appreciate the wonderful help I have received in carrying out the duties of the President's office.

I feel sure that the organization will elect new and highly qualified individuals who will lead the T.P.H.S. to new and important goals. I wish them every success, and pledge them my continued active support and participation in the Society.

NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

This issue of the TPH Journal will be the last of the series in which your editor has had the pleasure and honor of serving. I wish to thank all of our members who have so generously contributed articles to the Journal and urge them and all other members to support your new officers and editor.

SPRING PALACE, FORT WORTH, TEXAS

Nonie Green

This 1889 cover from Fort Worth, Texas bears an unusual overall back advertising. It shows "The Texas Spring Palace" of an architectural design difference from that usually seen in this country. The dates advertise the opening celebration of the building which was completed on May 10, 1889.

The building was in the form of a St. Andrew's Cross 225 x 375 ft. Architects were Armstrong and Messer with contract for construction let to Thomas J. Hurley, who was at that time engaged in the business of constructing buildings. E.D. Allen of Chicago was employed to superintend the decor. The massive dome of the structure was only surpassed in size by that of the U. S. Capitol. The building was entirely constructed of agricultural products with the exception of timber used in the flooring but even that was covered by Texas products artistically arranged in scenes. The whole building captured the viewer with the artistry and design that could be wrought using the plant varieties. It was truly an extraordinary and exceedingly beautiful work.

The city was caught up in highly publicizing the event of the Spring Palace's opening and sent a special committee traveling in special train cars to Washington, D.C. and Mexico City to personally invite presidents Harrison and Diaz to the ceremonies. The invitations themselves were opulent to the degree of representing the limit of the engraver's art and they were handsomely bound in silver. Everything concerned with the Palace from the beginning was representative of extravagant management.

The impressive opening ceremonies had virtually the whole city's population in attendance. Governor Thurston of Nebraska made the opening address and music was furnished by the band of Elgin Watch Factory of Elgin, Illinois. During the opening season the National Band of Mexico City and other bands from different parts of the country played at the Spring Palace. Advertising was done nationwide and brought visitors from near and far. Its primary function was to be a tourist attraction and a place for meetings and conventions. In spite of the generous support of citizens and businesses who financially sponsored it, it lost \$23,000.00 in a short time. Its doors were closed on June 10, 1889 because of the deficit, but president Paddock and board of directors raised the amount in one hour. In 1890 additional funds were sought and 100 feet were added to the east and west wings with even more elaborate decor than the first part of the building. Women's groups helped with these new plans and cities and towns all over the State were assigned places or certain areas in the new sections with each vying for prizes in decorating them.

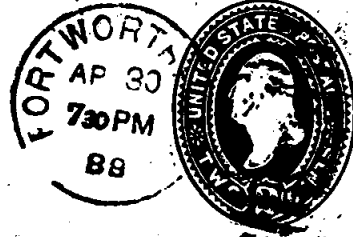
The second season of Spring Palace exceeded the first in every respect and was considered a successful operation. The night before the end of the season a grand fancy dress ball was held in the 16,000 square foot ballroom. Special trains were run to nearby cities for the event. Just at the time visitors were arriving and entering a cry of "Fire, Fire, Fire" rang through the building. In less time than it takes to mention the incident in writing, the whole building was in flames. The fire is reported to have started on the north side at the center. There were 7,000 persons inside when the fire erupted. Officers of the company who were present on the scene directed people to the exits, saving lives. In eleven minutes the Spring Palace was not more than a mass of ashes on the ground. Firemen who arrived did not have time to hook up the hoses and turn on the water before it was all over. Al Haynes, a civil engineer, perished in the fire and another person by the name of Mahoney, a workman, died from burns the following day after assisting people to escape the inferno. A memorial is erected to him at the foot of Main Street. This is an interesting advertising cover of the times when the story is known. The writer has observed a different cover from the one shown with the drawing of the Spring Palace showing slight variations. No note was taken of the firm sending it but undoubtedly it was from another one. Since this architectural feat was so highly publicized, there is a possibility that there are several types of these covers

in existence, although from observations the ones known are considered to be extremely scarce items.

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Return to CASEY & SWASEY,
400 & 402 Houston St., FORT WORTH, Tex.,
If not delivered within 10 days.



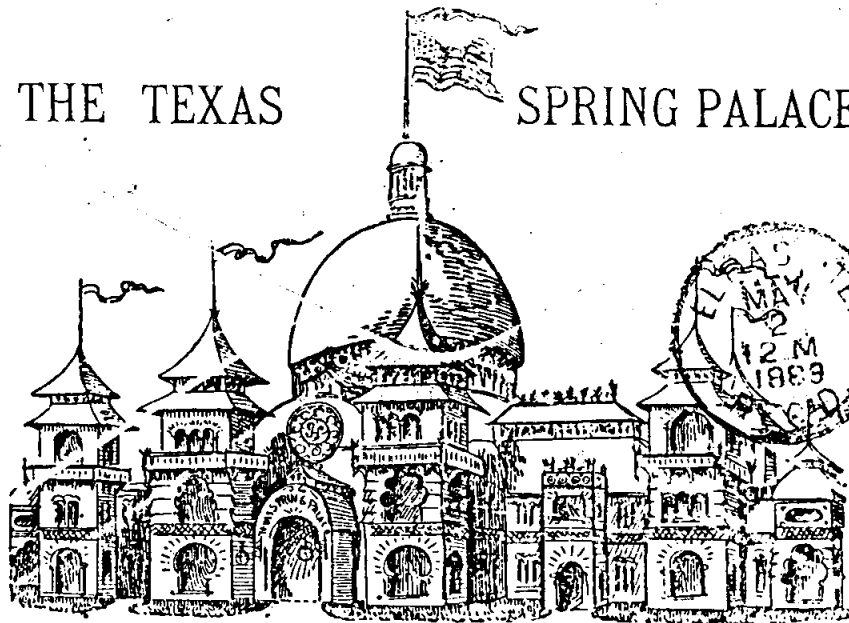
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AGRANDKARPORAMA

THE TEXAS

SPRING PALACE,

OF TEXAS PRODUCTS



Armstrong & Messer, Architects.

Commercial Printing Co. 210 Second St.

May 29 to June 20. 1889.

THE POST OFFICES OF GRAY COUNTY, TEXAS

Michael M. Ludeman

Gray County is located in the northeastern portion of the Texas Panhandle region. The County was created from the Bexar District in 1876, and organized in 1902. It was named for Peter W. Gray, a member of the first Texas Legislature. The County seat is located in Pampa.

There was a mail station of some type established in Gray County by the time of the 1880 census, as Robert Truby, with his wife and three children, was listed as "keeping mail station" in that census. Another mail station was operated that year by Travis Leach, who also served as the census enumerator for a district that included Gray County. This stage stand, a house made of vertically placed logs with a dirt roof, was located in the valley of the North Fork of the Red River near present Lefors. Leach had a pre-emption claim of 160 acres on which he established his stand for the passenger and mail coaches which ran from Mobeetie (Fort Elliot) to Tascosa, and stopped at the Leach house for dinner.

In the following years, there were at least 14 different post offices operating within the boundaries of Gray County. By 1983, there were only four: Alanreed, Lefors, McLean and Pampa.

ALANREED 4/24/1902 - present

Located in southern Gray County, Alanreed was settled in the early 1880's by farmers who cleared timber in the basin of McClelland's creek. The townsite was laid out on land adjacent to the Chicago, Rock Island and Gulf Railroad, and named for the contracting firm of Allen & Reed. The post office was moved there from Eldridge on April 24, 1902, and remains in operation today, with zip code 79002.

BOYDSTON 4/18/1891 - 1/31/1940

The town of Boydston was founded in 1890, and named after Henry Boydston. It was located on the Chicago, Rock Island & Gulf Railroad in the southern edge of Gray County. Although there was never a townsite surveyed or a move made for incorporation, an application for a post office was made to Washington, which was granted on April 18, 1891. The town name on the application in Washington was "Boydstown". The first postmaster appointed was John Fraser. The post office was a division post office, and was located in Fraser's home. Fraser held the office until January 31, 1940, and with his death, the post office was discontinued.

Mail was delivered by carrier from Clarendon (in Donnelly County) to Boydston and then by another carrier to Eldridge. Groom residents also picked up their mail in Boydston.

After closing in 1940, mail for Boydston was sent to Groom.

CROSSLAND 7/21/1888 - 12/2/1889

Upon closing, mail was sent to Eldridge.

No other information found.

DENWORTH 9/7/1932 - 3/31/1946

Denworth was one of several small settlements in central Gray County which served to house workers for various oil and gas refineries. When it closed, mail was sent thereafter to McLean.

ELCA 4/4/1916 - 5/18/1922

Located at the current site of Kingsmill, Texas, this town was established by promoters of the Panhandle and Santa Fe Railroad in 1887. The name was changed in 1922.

ELDRIDGE 3/20/1886 - 4/24/1902

The earliest post office in Gray County according to postal records was that of Eldridge, established March 20, 1886. John W. McClarran was the first appointed postmaster. A mail station had been operated at Eldridge several years before the post office application was made. This station, an old stage stand, was located on the Concord stage route. The mail and stage route began at Wichita Falls and ran to Dodge City by way of Doan's Store (a frontier trading post on the Red River in Walbarger County near the present day town of Vernon), Lelia Lake, old Clarendon (seven miles north of new Clarendon), through Eldridge (six miles north of the present town of Alanreed), to Mobeetie, then west by Lefors to Spring and Dixon creeks, to Tascosa, and finally north to Dodge City, Kansas.

The post office was moved to Alanreed on April 24, 1902.

HOOVER 1/31/1910 -

The town of Hoover was established on a switch of the Panhandle and Santa Fe Railroad, 8 miles northeast of Pampa, near the Roberts County border. Because of its closeness to Pampa, it was destined to never grow, and its primary function was as a shipping point for cattle raised by local ranchers. The switch was established in 1887 when the railroad was built, and a townsite prepared in 1908.

The post office was established on January 31, 1910, with Joseph L. Heare as the first postmaster. In 1915, the post office was transferred to Daughtery's Store. There it was operated by a railroad employee, E. D. McLain, until Marvin Daughtery, owner of the store, completed the Civil Service examination.

While no longer in operation in 1983, the post office was known to be operating in 1959.

KINGS MILL 5/18/1922 - still operating in 1959

The post office at Kings Mill, Texas was originally that of Elca. It is listed in the National Archives in Washington as King's Mill. The town of Kings Mill is located 7 miles southwest of Pampa on the Panhandle and Santa Fe Railroad line, and was the location of the worlds largest oil tank farm for a number of years. The original postmaster was Ida Barbee. In 1956, it was one of the few remaining fourth class post offices in Texas, and was housed in a combination filling station and grocery store. From 1935 until at least 1956, L. R. Franks was the postmaster.

The post office is currently closed, but the date of closing uncertain.

LAKETON 7/29/1907 - 10/15/1910 and 2/11/1929 - 6/30/1954

Laketon is located about 15 miles east of Pampa, and served as a shipping point on the Panhandle & Santa Fe Railroad. The town was named because of several small lakes in the area. The original post office was established there on July 29, 1907, with Minnie Jones as the first postmaster. This post office was then discontinued on October 15, 1910. It was re-established in 1929, and located in several places before finally being housed in a small building located just north of state highway 152 and east of the Laketon Co-Op store and filling station. This post office was again discontinued in 1954. A cafe is now operated in the old post office building.

Before the establishment of the post office, mail was delivered by rural carrier from Miami (in adjacent Roberts County). The postman rode in a horse drawn buggy and delivered mail only three times a week. In 1956, Laketon was on a star route operating out of Pampa.

LEFORS 10/12/1892 - present

In 1889, Perry LeFors made an application for a post office to be located on his land in central Gray County. The application was accepted only after the capital "F" in his name was changed to a small letter "f" to avoid confusion with another Texas post office, that of La Porte. The Post Office was officially approved on 10/12/1892, although Perry LeFors is reported to have operated the mail service for the area at his own expense until the government approved the service.

The current post office at Lefors operates with zip code 79054.

MC LEAN 8/4/1902 - present

The town of McLean is located in the south east corner of Gray County on the Chicago, Rock Island and Gulf Railroad. The town had its beginning when the railroad dug a water well, and built a switch on its line 3 miles north and west of the county line. The Rowe brothers, who had a ranch at that location, donated 80 tracts of land, and cattle chutes were built to enable the shipment of cattle from their ranch and neighboring ranches.

This shipping center was named after a secretary of the Texas Railroad Commission, W.P. McLean. The first post office was established on August 4, 1902, and the first postmaster was William E. McLaughlin.

The post office in McLean operates with zip code 79057.

NORTHFORK 10/29/1892 - 10/31/1928

The mail station at Northfork was established on October 11, 1899, with John J. Simpkins as first postmaster. This post office was located approximately 9 miles north of Mc Lean, near the present site of Denworth, and was probably named for the North Fork branch of the Red River which runs through central Gray County. The post office was discontinued on October 31, 1928.

PAMPA 10/29/1892 - present

Postal service began in Pampa in 1888, when Thomas Lane sorted the few papers and letters that were brought to Pampa in his old dugout. Then in 1892, Pampa was approved as a post office by John Wanamaker, and Lane was authorized as the first Postmaster of Pampa. The dugout served as the "official" post office until 1902, when it was moved to the Johnson Mercantile Building. In 1903, Dr. V. E. VonBrunow was named Postmaster and moved the office into his frame building at the corner of Cuyler and Foster Streets.

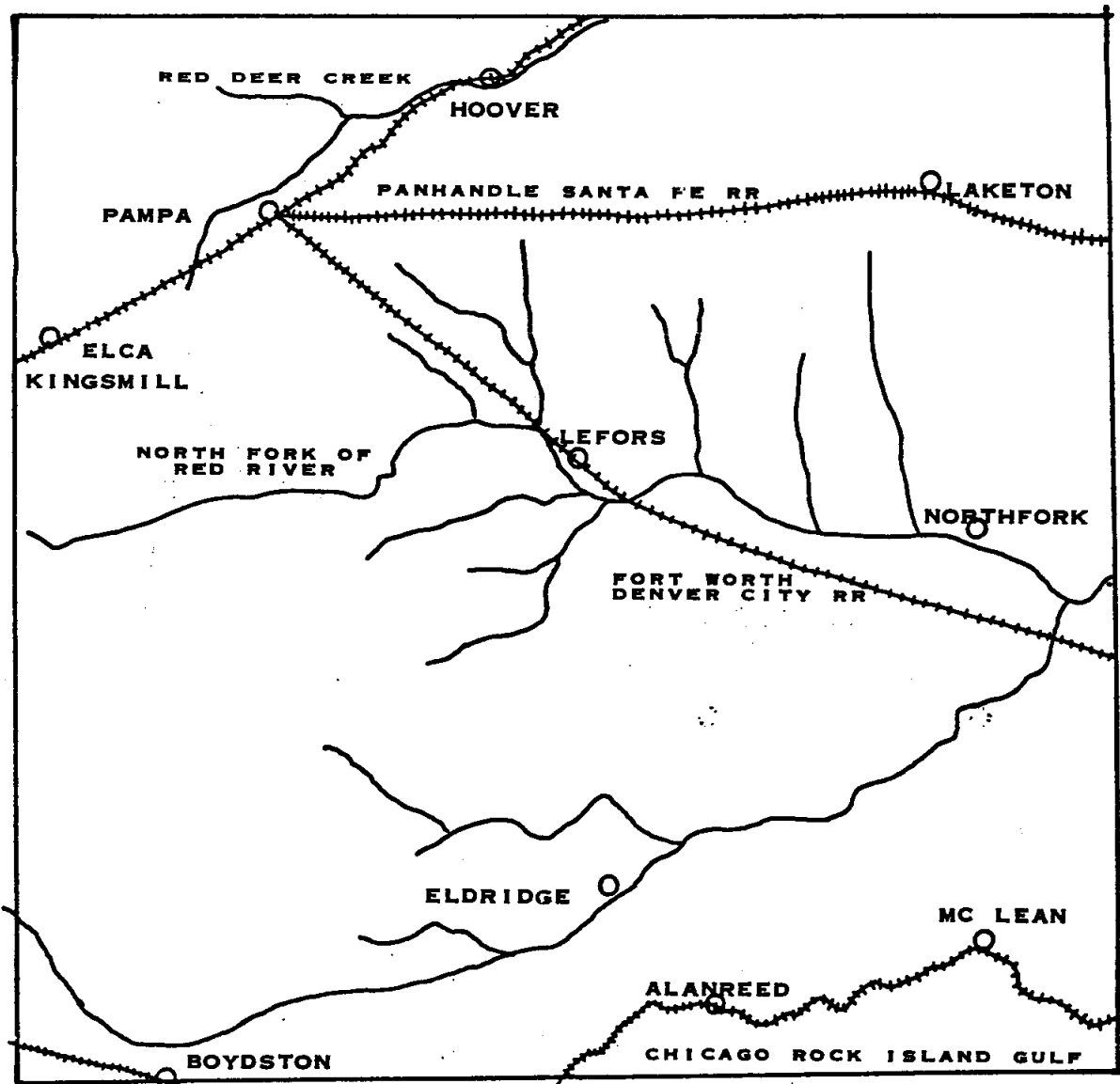
In 1916, the post office moved first to the Brown and Wise Barber Shop, and then to the White Deer Lands Company Offices. In 1927, it was moved to the Duncan Building on West Kingsmill and in 1928 received a first class rating. The present building was completed in 1934 at a cost of \$106,000. Pampa's first carrier service began on October 1, 1929, and free parcel delivery began on November 11, 1929.

The current post office in Pampa operates with zip code 79065.

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THE POST OFFICES OF GRAY COUNTY



THE STORY OF A TEXAS COVER

R. H. Stever

The cover in Figure 1 was Lot 23 in the September 11-12, 1981 sale of Gala Stamp Auctions, Richmond, Virginia. It is one of those orange-yellow envelopes typical of many used domestically during the 1869 period. Bearing only a 3-cent locomotive, it might appear to a casual observer to be just that - a simple domestic cover. Nothing could be further from the truth.

It is in fact a lovely example of the overland rate to Mexico. 1869 covers to Mexico are far from common. Most show the 10¢ direct rate by sea departing U.S. ports and entering Mexico at such port cities as Vera Cruz, Tampico or Tuxpan. There was no authorized "paid all" rate to Mexican destinations, only postage paid to the frontier irregardless of whether transit was by sea or overland. Hargest(1971) gives the overland rate to Mexico as three cents to the border. Apparently each country agreed to charge its domestic inland postage to the frontier and to collect due postage from the recipient on letters originating in the other country. Thus, Figure 1 bears only the three cents U.S. domestic postage.

It was posted at San Antonio, Texas on April 8. The year is not definite but is very likely 1870. Earliest known use of the 3-cent 1869 is March 27, 1869. April 8 would likely be too early for the San Antonio post office to be supplied with these stamps. Also, the same circular date stamp and geometric killer were used on the cover in Figure 2 docketed May 1, 1870, only about three weeks after the Mexico cover. Evidently the San Antonio postal clerks were using these devices at that time.

Figure 1 was addressed to Saltillo and directed "via Eagle Pass". It entered Mexican mails at Piedras Negras, sister city to Eagle Pass, where it received a stylized Mexican "2" signifying two reales due from the recipient. According to Schatzkes (1964) Mexican postal tariffs were based on both the distance carried and the weight of the letter. As this was no doubt a single weight letter and the distance from Piedras Negras to Saltillo (see map, Figure 3) is over 16 leagues (a league is about three miles), it was stamped two reales due. A distance less than 16 leagues would have required only one real due.

San Antonio was essentially a frontier community in 1870. There were a few small settlements in the area to the southwest towards Eagle Pass. Marauding band of wild Indians (Comanches, Caranchuas, Apaches, Lipans, Kickapoos and Navajos) harassed settlers along the mail routes. These tribes also roamed south of the Rio Grande in northern Mexico. The railroad had not yet come to this area and travel was by horseback or stagecoach, a dangerous journey because of the Indian menace. This is probably one reason so few overland covers to Mexico from this era have survived. No doubt most letters went by the safer sea route and many that went overland were destroyed during Indian raids. Many interesting tales of Indian skirmishes on the San Antonio-Eagle Pass-Monterrey stage run were told by August Santleben, an early stage line operator, in his autobiography, "A Texas Pioneer".

Santleben was awarded a mail contract in January, 1866 to carry the mail from San Antonio to Eagle Pass and Fort Clark. He also carried mail, cargo and passengers to Monterrey. He had a good working relationship with the Mexican customs officials at Piedras Negras but when the Mexican government replaced these individuals, Santleben was unhappy and allowed his mail contract to expire at the end of 1868. Actually, his trips to Monterrey continued to August, 1869.

There were other stage lines which ran between San Antonio and Eagle Pass after 1868, but no U.S. stage line operators ran routes into Mexico. According to Thonhoff (1971), B.F. Ficklin's U.S. Mail Stage Line had stages leaving San Antonio for Eagle Pass at 7 AM every Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Figure 4 shows his ad in the San Antonio Express of May 25, 1869. The cover in Figure 1 could have been carried to Eagle Pass by a Ficklin stage as April 8, 1870 was a Friday.

However, Ficklin did not operate into Mexico, and letters addressed to Mexico had to wait at the Piedras Negras post office for a stage of the Diligencias Generales, the Mexican Postal system. One of the staggers in the system was Felix Maceyra, a Mexican citizen from the city of Chihuahua. He owned an international stage line running between San Antonio and Chihuahua with connecting coaches at Cienegas to Monterrey, Saltillo and other Mexican cities. Figure 5 shows his ad in the San Antonio Express of July 25, 1867. It refers to a "once a month" run but gives no indication of when during the month his stage departed San Antonio.

Thus the evidence is inconclusive as to which line carried Figure 1 to Eagle Pass. It no doubt travelled on a Maceyra stage to Cienegas but Maceyra's ad is unclear as to whether he also operated the connecting stage to Saltillo or whether this portion of the Diligencias was run by another stage operator. There are no backstamps or other notations to indicate when this letter arrived at Saltillo.

The addressee on Figure 1 is yet another story, albeit historical rather than philatelic. His name, abbreviated on the covers, is Senior Don Ignacio Maria de Arizpe, a very important rancher and businessman in the Saltillo area. Readers who have travelled to Saltillo will recall the Arizpe Hotel. The family ranch was located some 14 kilometers northeast of Saltillo. Today this is the site of the small town of Arizpe, named for one of Don Ignacio's relatives, Miguel Ramos Arizpe, who presided over the constitutional convention of 1823 after Mexico got its independence from Spain.

There is one intriguing speculation about this cover which will no doubt never be fully reconciled. That is the possibility of a German connection. Many of the early settlers of South Texas and northern Mexico were German immigrants. For example, Santleben years later recalled the names of 77 passengers on his trips to Monterrey, 32 of which were Germans or German immigrants. The handwriting, especially the double "s" of Eagle Pass, suggests a German hand may have addressed this envelope. There are no collector or dealer markings on the cover, thus indicating minimal, if any, exposure to the philatelic marketplace. And Gala Auctions reports the cover was consigned by a gentleman from Sweden who purchased the cover in Germany! Could a German immigrant in the employ of Don Ignacio have carried it back to Germany? Unless this is part of a correspondence which one day turns up, I doubt if we'll ever know.

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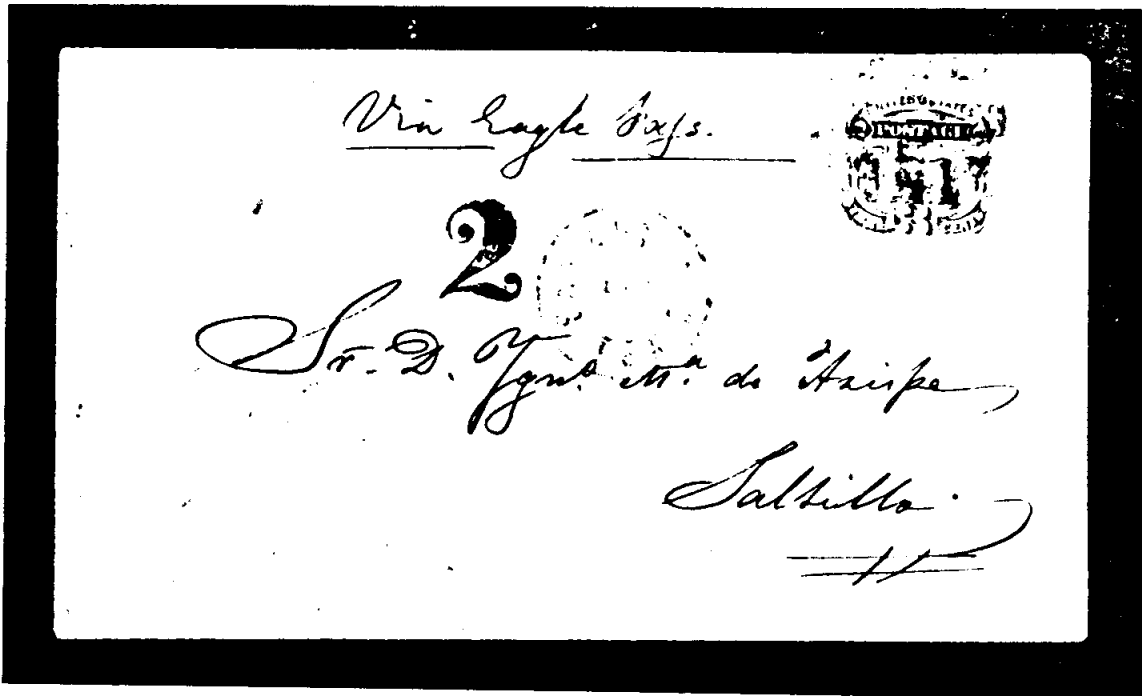


Figure 1. Cover posted at San Antonio on April 8, probably 1870. Addressed to Saltillo, Mexico, it was routed "via Eagle Pass". Stamp is 3-cent 1869 cancelled by same geometric killer as on Figure 2.

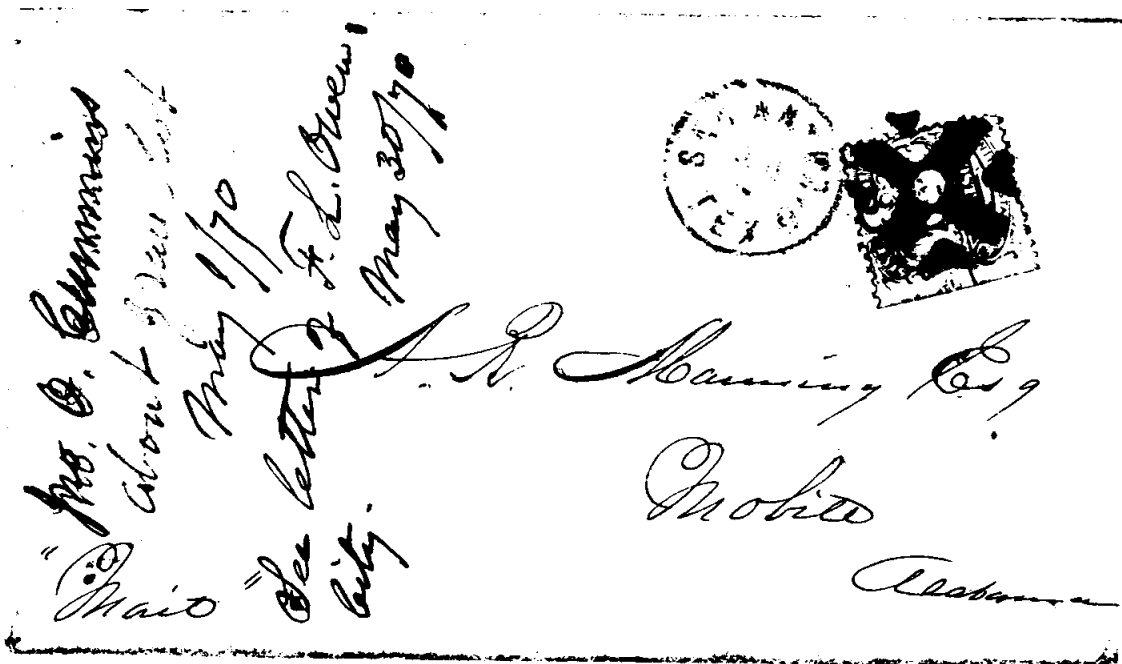


Figure 2. Cover posted at San Antonio on May 2, 1870 showing unlisted geometric killer.

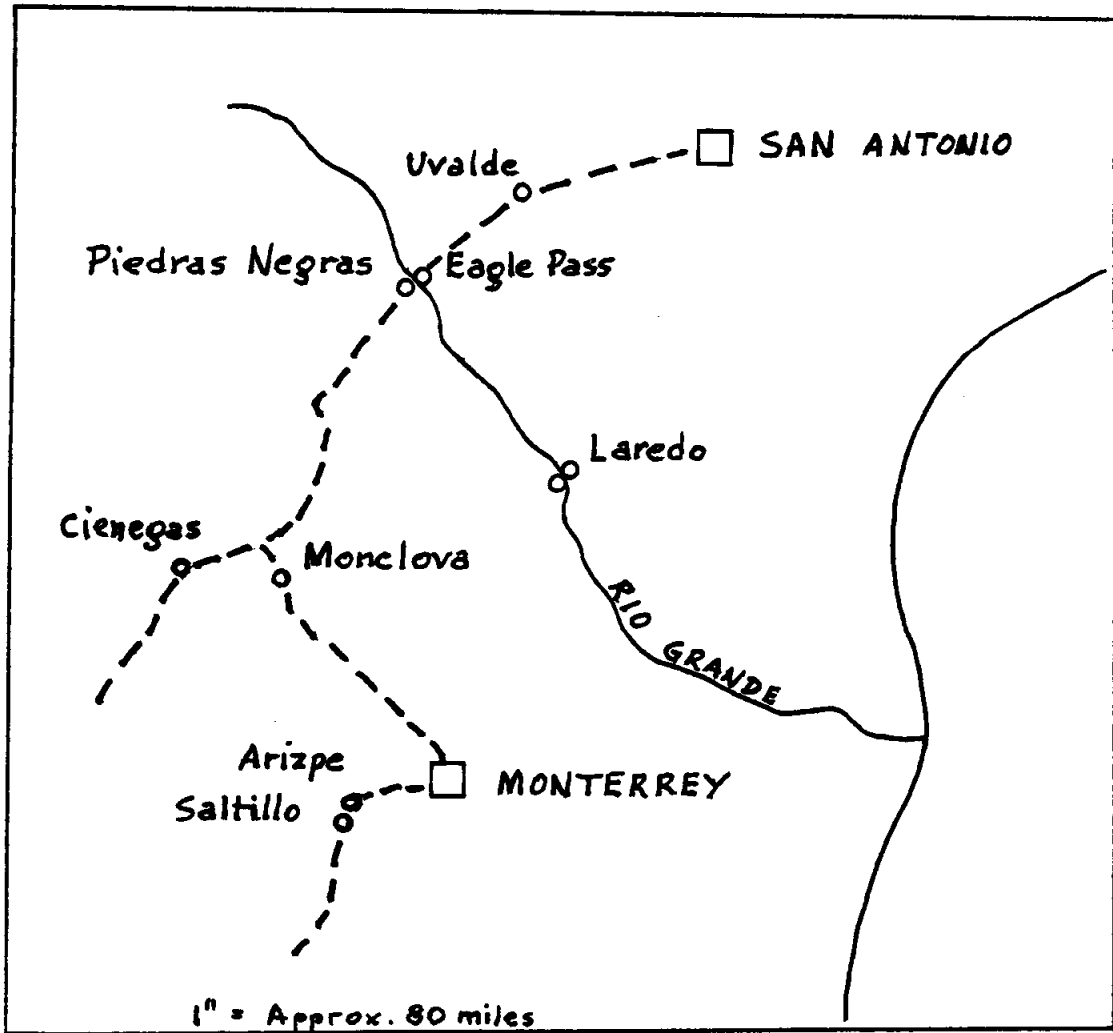


Figure 3. Map showing pertinent stagecoach routes of southwest Texas and northern Mexico.

WESTWARD, HO!!!

EL PASO.

Passengers leave San Antonio on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, at 8 o'clock A. M., for EL PASO, via Buena Vista, Comfort, Fredericksburg, Chipmunk Ranch, Fort Mason, Fort McKavitt, Fort Omecho, Fort Stockton and Fort Quitman.

FOR CHIHUAHUA

Passengers leaving on Mondays connect at Fort Stockton with the Stage for

PRESIDIO DEL NORTE.

Passengers leave San Antonio on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at 7 o'clock A. M. by

Eagle Pass and Fort Clark.

Via. Castroville, New Fountain, Dhanis and Uvalde.

Fare Reduced.

These routes have been newly stocked and the FARE REDUCED to the unprecedented low price of 16 cents Currency, per mile.

B. F. FICKLIN.

(dawn)

Figure 4. B.F. Ficklin's ad in San Antonio Express, May 25, 1869 giving departure times for stages to Eagle Pass via Castroville, New Fountain, Dhanis and Uvalde.

STAGE LINE

Between Chihuahua, Mexico, and San Antonio, Texas.

Two commodious Stages and one baggage wagon run regularly once a month by way of Pedras Neigras (Eagle Pass) to Chihuahua.

This line connects at Cienegas with the stage that runs to Monterey and thence to Matamoros or Saltillo, San Luis Potosi, Zacatecas or the City of Mexico.

It also connects at Sta Rosalia, San Pablo and Chihuahua with the stage line to Paso del Norte.

The Stages are well protected by a strong armed escort.

For rates of passage, specie shipments and freights, apply to

FELIX MACEYRA,

Figure 5. Felix Maceyra's ad in San Antonio Express, July 25, 1867. Monthly stage to Chihuahua connects at Cienegas with a stage to Saltillo via Monterey.

