

THE TEXAS POSTAL HISTORY SOCIETY JOURNAL

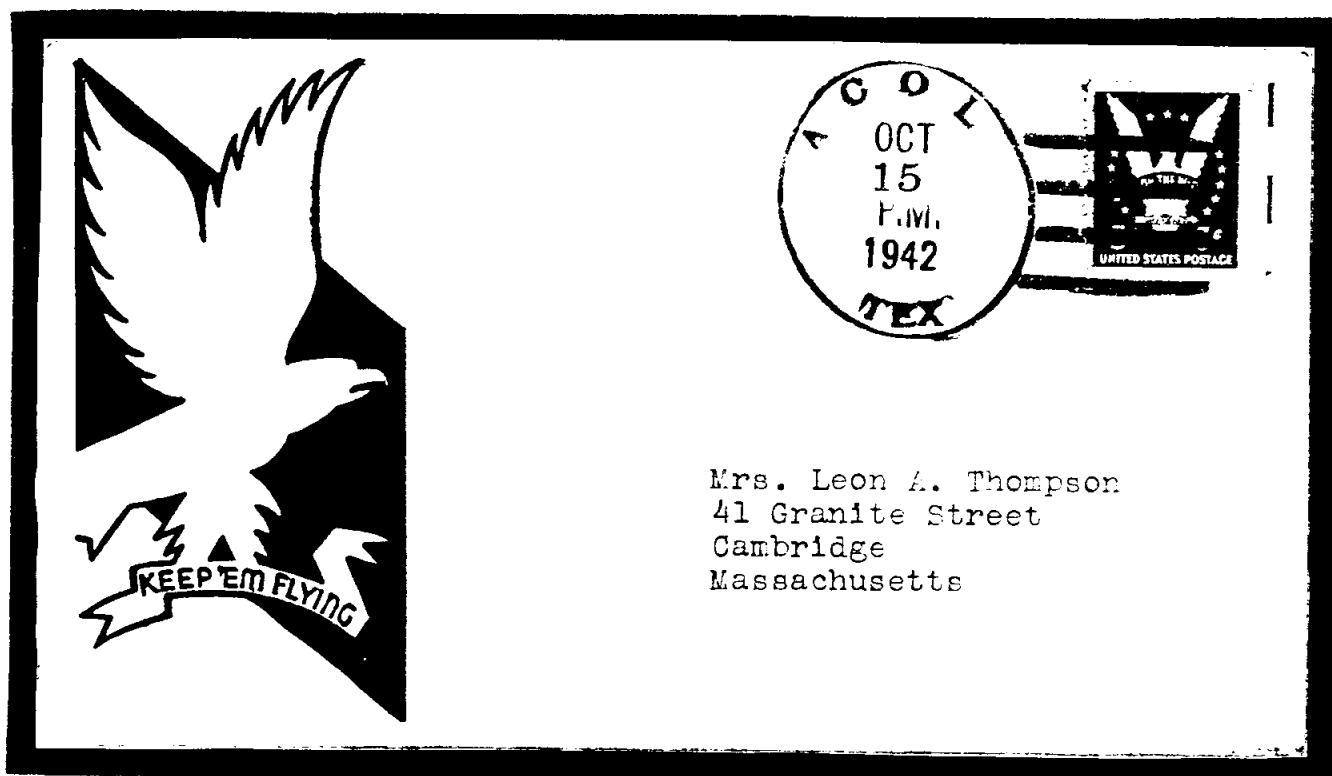


TABLE OF CONTENTS

The President's Page	1
Editor's Comments	1
Senator B	2
by Jim Stever	
Acol, Texas: The Wandering Post Office	4
by John A. Whitehead	
Four Names At The Same Place	6
by Thomas K. Todsen	
Texas Postal History Society	
1987 Membership	8

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Pictured on the cover of this issue is a last-day cover from Acol, Texas. For more information about this unique post office, see the article entitled "Acol, Texas: The Wandering Post Office", on page 4 of this issue.

THE TEXAS POSTAL HISTORY SOCIETY

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

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PRESIDENT'S PAGE



It's relaxing time and many of you will be heading to various places to enjoy a vacation. Give some thought to your plans for fall and mark your calendar on October 3, 1987 for attending Texas Postal History Society's annual meeting in Houston. This is 12:30 PM until 2:00 PM in Forum Room #4. The meeting and program will be followed by a trading session, so bring your covers along.

A nomination committee has been appointed to propose a slate of new officers. You may also make nominations by obtaining a member's written consent to be nominated and forward any such declarations to Secretary-Treasurer, Jim Alexander.

We need to see some more postal history exhibits on Texas. If you have material, please consider entering it in Texpex-Houpex.

See you in Houston !

EDITOR'S COMMENTS

Our thanks to Jim Stever, Thomas K. Todsen and John J. Germann for the three fine articles in this issue of The Journal. They cover some interesting topics, I think you will agree. Thanks also to Jim Alexander for updating our current membership listing. If you have any changes, corrections or additions, please let Jim know.

Now for the begging. Please get me some articles, folks! I'll make you a deal: If I get at least twelve pages of articles, be they short, long or medium, within the next three weeks, I will get the next issue out in August! Fair enough? Those of you who say you don't have anything to write about, take a look at the three articles in this issue. One is an interesting 1873 letter with a short but informative introductory paragraph by Mr. Todsen. Another article is an interesting explanation of a seemingly 'ordinary' Corpus Christi Cover, and shows how a little research can sometimes turn an ordinary cover into a highly desirable item. The third article is a condensation of an old newspaper article, with a little extra research thrown in, which explores a Texas postal history oddity: a mobile (or moveable) post office. See? Everybody has an interesting cover or letter, or knows some interesting fact about your area that the rest of us don't know. So put it down on paper and send it to me, okay?

SENATOR B

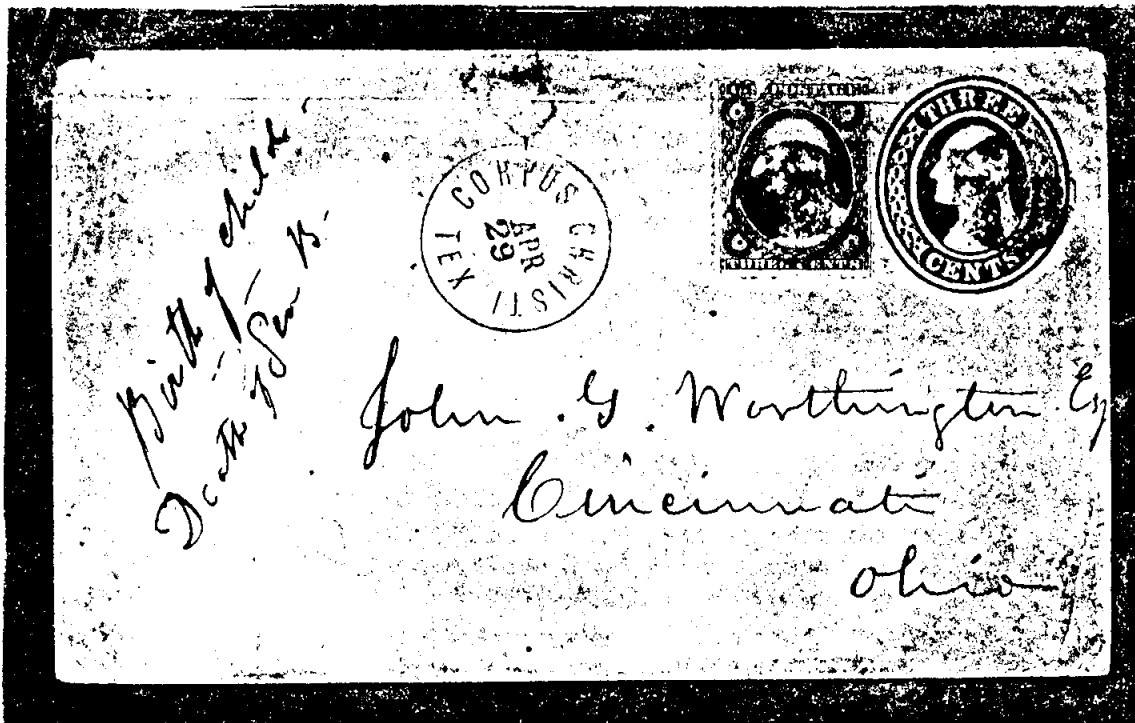
By: Jim Stever

Sometimes there is more to a cover than initially meets the eye. The illustrated cover is a case in point. It was posted at Corpus Christi on April 29, year not shown. The envelope is a 3-cent entire of the 1855 issue and bears a 3-cent 1857 adhesive, apparently to pay double weight postage. This would seem to be the full story.

While the enclosure has long since been lost, the recipient was kind enough to note a couple news items which the letter no doubt contained. One reads "Birth of Child" and the other "Death of Sen. B". Without knowing who wrote the letter it would be difficult to determine who was born. Senator B, however, is a different story. He was Forbes Britton, state senator from Corpus Christi.

Who was Forbes Britton? He was born in Virginia and attended the U.S. military academy at West Point, graduating 33rd in his class on July 1, 1830. He was breveted second lieutenant in the 7th Infantry on July 1, 1834 and appointed first lieutenant July 7, 1835. He came to Corpus Christi with Zachary Taylor's army in 1845 and participated in the Mexican war. On February 16, 1847, he was promoted to Captain. Captain Britton resigned his commission on July 16, 1850, and settled in Corpus Christi. He turned out to be one of the leading citizens in the community and, as such, was later elected to the Texas legislature.

Forbes Britton had been in the U.S. army for 20 years and his loyalty was to the flag he served. Talk of secession did not set well with him. He was an outspoken Union sympathizer. Although in poor health, Senator Britton went to Austin in late January, 1861, for the special session of the legislature



convened by a reluctant Governor Sam Houston. The first action was a vote to hold a secession convention. The die was cast. Forbes Britton, who voted with the minority, was upset. The convention met January 28th and three days later the delegates voted to secede. An ailing and distraught Forbes Britton died in Austin February 14, 1861. Texas subsequently joined the Confederacy on March 2nd. The "Death of Sen. B." docketing on the cover establishes the year as 1861.

The use of United States stamps in the southern states ceased June 1, 1861. Confederate stamps were not issued until October 16, 1861, although local provisions were used in the interim. Thus the illustrated cover, posted April 29, 1861, represents one of those scarce usages of U. S. postage during the Confederacy! Sometimes there is more to a cover than initially meets the eye.

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ACOL, TEXAS: THE WANDERING POST OFFICE

by John A. Whitehead
from information contributed by
John J. Germann

A while back John J. Germann sent me a newspaper clipping from The Houston Post dated July 7, 1941, headed "Acol Post Office Wanders About Piney Woods of East Texas". He also included some information not included in the article. Although I am a collector of East Texas Postal History, I must confess never to have heard about Acol, Texas prior to that time. After reading this article, I think you will agree with me that Acol is one of the most unusual post offices ever to have been established in Texas; or perhaps it would be better said, 'to have "wandered" Texas'.

The name 'Acol' is an Anronym for Angelina County Lumber Company. According to the corporation records of the Texas Secretary of State, the Angelina County Lumber Company was incorporated on January 5, 1916. The incorporators were S. W. Henderson, Eli Wiener and J. H. Kurth. The corporation was in existence until 1966. The Angelina County Lumber Company operated just as most other lumber companies of that era did; that is, the company set up its operations, along with a camp for the workers and workers families, in an area with a plentiful supply of timber. After several years, when that area had been depleted of available timber, the company would move the whole operation to another well-timbered area. The thing that made the Angelina County Lumber Company different was that it operated its own tram railway, complete with wood-burning locomotive. This was used to haul the logs from deep in the piney woods to a main railway, where the logs would be transported to the sawmill.

It apparently occured to the company management that if you could build a temporary railway to a new lumbering location, you could also move your whole operation by that same railway. Plus, it would be a lot easier to move the location if it was designed to be mobile in the first place. Therefore, all the buildings in Acol, as this mobile lumbering camp was christened, were perched on railway wheels.

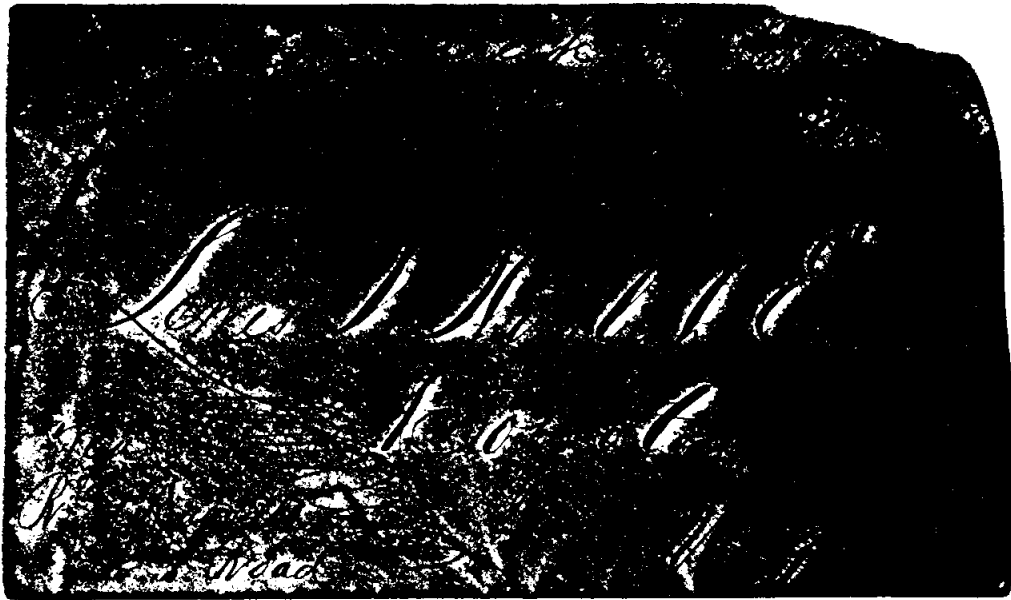


Acol's Wandering Post Office

The Acol post office itself was made out of a box car, with such alterations made as were necessary to make it suitable for use as a post office. The picture accompanying the 1941 article in the Post (which is reproduced in this article and which I hope is clear enough to see some detail) shows a long building with a railed full-length front porch, and several windows, apparently barred. The houses occupied by the loggers and their families were also mounted on rail wheels, but they did not resemble railway cars, and you would not know that they were built for travel on a tram railway if you could not see the wheels under them.

The Acol post office and the other mobile buildings making up the lumbering camp were not just parked on a siding; rather, they were spaced neatly among pine trees, each sitting on its short length of track. When the time came to move, a temporary track was built to each house before it was pulled away.

The Acol post office was officially opened on December 7, 1934, and was in existence until October 15, 1942. During that period of time, the Acol post office operated in three different counties: In Tyler County from December 7, 1934 to early 1938; in Angelina County from early 1938 until August 31, 1938; and in Polk County from September 1, 1938 to October 15, 1942. A picture of a last-day cover is shown on the front of this issue of the Journal. When the Acol post office was discontinued its mail was directed to Corrigan. The first postmaster was Thomas W. McMullen.



FOUR NAMES AT THE SAME PLACE
BY THOMAS K. TODSEN

Irish Creek postoffice in DeWitt County was authorized in 1851 and discontinued in 1854. Later in 1854, the postoffice was reopened as Price's Creek, though the location was still called Irish Creek as well as Burn's Station on the railroad from Cuero to Victoria. Finally, in 1874, the postoffice name was changed to Thomaston, which is still there on US 87, 11 miles southeast of Cuero. The cover above indicates the Price's Creek postoffice didn't have much business in 1873, since it is a stampless "Paid 3" cover. The "lack of business" problem is at least partly explained in the letter that was enclosed as quoted below.

Irish Creek
Feby 1st 1873

Dear Sir:

I reckon you are somewhat surprised that you have not heard from me long ago, but your last letter dated about the middle of December 72 was only received a few days ago. The reason assigned by me for the long duration between dates was the postponement of mail matter caused by the "Epozooty" a disease both prevelent with animals and mankind in this our midst. Would have answered ere this late but just yesterday was our first mail and such being the case take advantage of the opportunity to remit a few uninteresting lines to inform you of my-self and whereabouts etc etc

I wrote you soon after (or just before I forget) my arrival at this junction know as Price's Creek by the P.M. General but here as above or Burn's Station. Just whichever you call it but the P.Office is Price's Creek. I rec'd a short tho interesting letter from Timmie a few days ago telling me of his being in the Clerk's office, the very place for him. I know will suit him to a "T"; for 'tis indeed a good situation - I was up to see Aunt Tenn and Uncle James on Saturday last. Spent Sunday with them which was indeed a recreation to me. Think I shall go up again in short - P. and W. permitting.

I have been here a month now and like first rate as I have charge of a large stock of goods and a good trade.

You spoke of selling out. Do it if you can and come here for I know that with a few hundred dollars here a man with discretion can double his money every six months no matter the size of the investment. For right a Cuero is the place to make an investment now. Why? Simply for two and various reasons. in the first place it is the junction of this railroad and will undoubtedly be for some time probably forever. If not in the second place it will always command a good stand and paying trade. The country on every side is being settled up by industrious hard working men, men of influence and means. And then in the next place it is not the terminus. Is it not an easy matter to follow with goods? Why Sir there are men here now that have made independent fortunes within a short time just in that way - I would not want a better or more easy task to become rich than to go to theafore-said place "Cuero". Buy a few lots on reasonable terms, start a small store, trade in hides and barter generally than now presents itself to me 'tis plane. But people view things in a different light; but if I could command a few hundred dollars, I should let it go in just that way - there is as little risk as any-thing can be. Of course there is risk in all branches of business and professions. If you sell out to Thomas Boyd, go somewhere is my advice. Don't stay in that old wornout broken down country where you have to work from early morn 'til dewey(?) night, and then never achieve any object. Upon the other hand, even here a man can work only half of his time and in winter do nothing and in the course of a few years with proper care and judgement grow big rich. Why sir, emigration ever since the foundation of the world has been west, simply for the reason that the further you go the more productive are the lands. And where the vegetation is plentiful there abounds wealth - I never expect to make Va. my home again because I can do far better at other places - and where my chance is best there will I be also - let me know if you have any idea of coming here in your next. If you have, the sooner the better - Now a man in this little settlement left here not long since (was here yesterday). Is making ninety \$90.00 dollars per week skinning cows - No body here don't work. They don't know the meaning of the term "work", yet all have money, plenty of money, no greenbacks either all good hard cash something a dog can't chew.

I wrote Timmie soon after moving down here but doubt whether he got it or not.

Do you ever hear from Aunt Linnie or any of the family? If so, let me know the P. Office.

I got a letter from home a few days ago - said that they had had heavy snows but nary snow here - some little cold weather - tell Uncle Wm to send me his paper certain to Price's Creek P.O., DeWitt Co. Texas. Give my love, dear Lewis, to one and all of my relations and tell Timmie to write often that I shall never fail to write to him. Bet that Katy H. was mightily disappointed. All the preparation I know was made for the nuptials that the company to a great extent was invited dress all made, in fact all things ready, the time of the "moon" was right etc etc

I would write more but 'tis late. I have not said half I want to say but if you can discipher this you will reach my most sanguine expectation - the chicks are crowing and sound like they had the up-your-snootie, too. Love to Grandpa and tell him I want to write to him soon - write soon

As ever Your aff. cousin

T. B. Wimbish

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