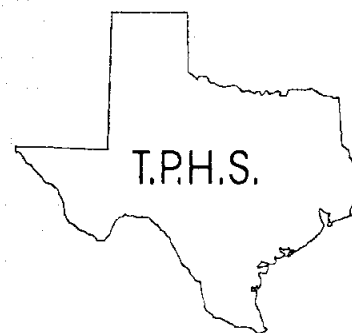


The Texas Postal History Society Journal



Volume 22, Number 3 - Autumn 1997

E.F. Christman, Jr., President

Martin Margulis, Editor

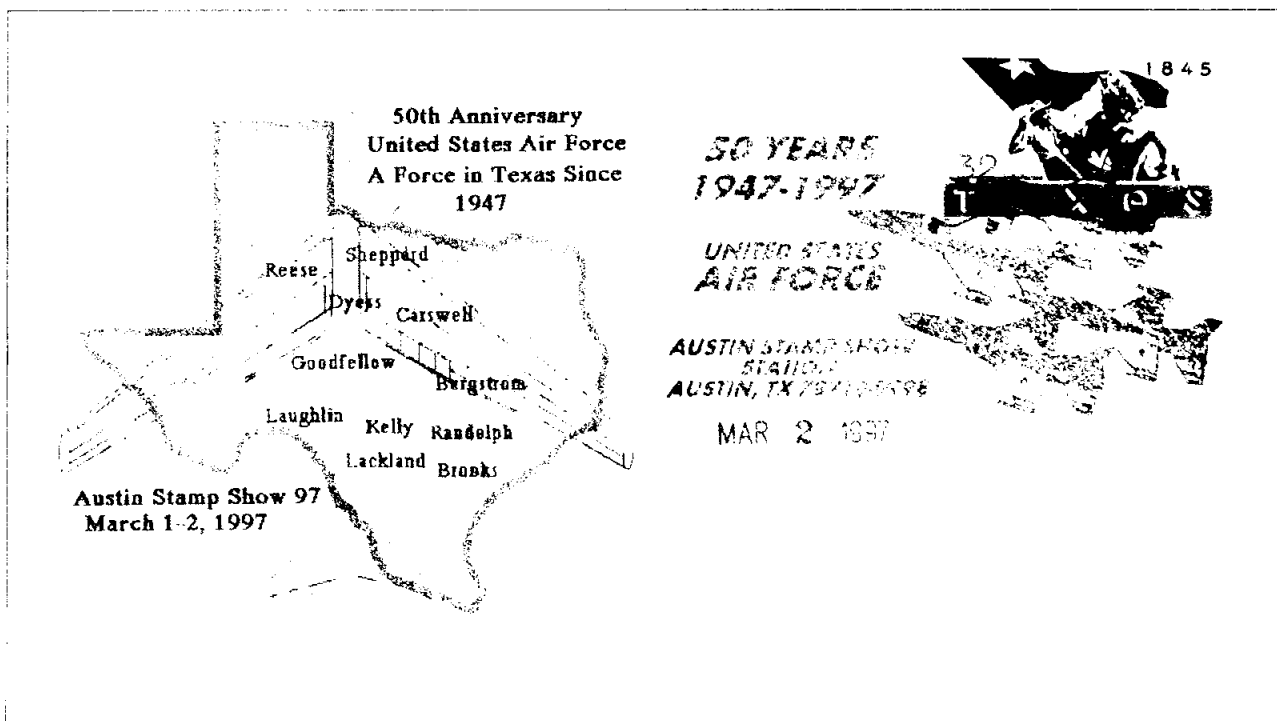


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History Society are \$10 per
year payable to the
Secretary-Treasurer.)*

Affiliated With:



From the President . . .

The Emery Memorial Exhibit Plan for Texas Postal History has been completed. The Dr. Bill Emery Award will be given each year at the annual **TEXPEX** State Show and will perpetuate the memory of the late Bill Emery. The award will be given for the first time at **TEXPEX '98**.

Many thanks to the committee who finalized the plan to honor Bill Emery—Jim Stever, chair, assisted by R.M. "Ford" Arndt and Nonie Green. All three deserves our thanks for creating this memorial award.

I hope you have our annual "get together" on your philatelic activities calendar. Saturday, September 6th will be here before you know it. As I reported in the last issue of the Journal, T.P.H.S. members and guests will meet this fall at the Greater Houston Stamp Show on that date at 1:00 p.m. The program will feature a presentation by Rick Rodgers on Harris County Postal History and a computer web site demonstration by Mike Ludeman.

There doesn't seem to be a lot of TEXAS philatelic activity this summer but I did receive a catalogue from Abraham Siegel, Long Island, New York which contained over three pages of TEXAS material. That is the most "TEXAS lottings" I've seen in one catalogue since the CAMINA sale.

Hope you are having an excellent philatelic summer.

And as always . . .

Good Collectin',
Ed

A CONFEDERATE LETTER FROM WATERVILLE, TEXAS

by Norma Watz

The town of Waterville came into existence around 1858, and was so named for nearby Will's Water Hole and Water Hole Creek. A letter written by D. B. Anderson (August 7, 1847) expressed his interest in purchasing one or two hundred acres "including the situation at the water-hole." This letter was postmarked at Preston and was addressed to William Aldrich, Columbia, Brazoria, Texas, owner of the sought-after property.

The sale of lots for establishing the town of Preston had been advertised in The Matagorda Bulletin newspaper on February 5, 1838. By December 1839, records indicate at least a dozen families had settled there. Among them was Isham Thompson, later appointed Postmaster of Preston, as well as Gabriele Eagan, who later served as Postmaster, County Clerk, and Justice of the Peace in City of Wharton.

The newspaper ad mentioned that Preston was about 40 miles from Matagorda and on the direct road from Matagorda to Bastrop. This placed Preston on the weekly mail route contracted by Joseph P. Adison "Matagorda to Columbus - 93 miles." Preston was also listed as being on Route No. 16 "from Matagorda to Egypt, via Preston and Peach Creek" on February 6, 1840.

A modern map of Wharton County shows the location of the two ghost towns, Preston and Waterville. Since the old Preston Cemetery remains, Preston is still identified on the map. A close look will show Alligator Slough adjacent to Present, which probably contributed to its decline, since the very rich land was seldom dry. Water Hole Creek offered drainage and so it was that the settlement moved in that direction and became known as "Waterville" with Nehemiah H. Goss being appointed as the first postmaster January 18, 1859.

Both the cover from Waterville (August 8, 1859) and the Confederate letter were to North Carolina. It is not known if the two are from the same writer, although the handwriting appears somewhat similar. The Confederate letter was acquired by the author in December 1990 from a Confederate postal researcher and no cover was available, nor has one surfaced since. The letter is being shared with the readers to enjoy as to its contents with references to the blockade at Galveston, the Steamer, mail delays, hard times, etc.

Harbin states in this letter that he would go home to North Carolina and go to the war from there. However, records show he answered the call to arms in Wharton County. He served as a private with the "Wharton Rangers"—a company "of the first class" belonging to the cavalry arm of the service." He is not listed as having been wounded or died in the Civil War Records of Wharton County, so we can hope he survived the war and lived a long and happy life thereafter.

(Readers having additional information about Jim Harbin, Waterville or Preston are asked to contact the author. Thank you!)

References:

The History of Wharton County by Annie Lee Williams

The Matagorda Bulletin newspaper 1838

Commissioners Court Minutes (1861-1863) Wharton County

Texas Republic Postal System by Konwiser

Personal files and collections

Preston
August 7th, 1847

Dear Sir:

I learn that you own the tract of land in this neighborhood upon which the place known as Will's water-hole is. I write to know if you will sell me 1 or 2 hundred acres from it, including the situation at the water-hole, and if so, what are the lowest and best terms upon which you will sell it to me. My means are but small, yet the practice of my profession - viz medicine - alone I expect would enable me to be punctual if you could make the terms favorable to me.

Be pleased to answer this by the return mail, and let me know positively what are your lowest and most favorable terms.

With much respect, Sir.

I am, Yours Sincerely,

D.B. ANDERSON

Letter
D.B. Anderson
Aug 7. 1847

Preston Texas
August 6th

Filed 5

Mr William Adrich
Colombia
Brazoria
Texas

Mar 1847

REPORT ON PACIFIC '97

by Lyle Boardman

By now you have had plenty of opportunity to read about Pacific '97, the show of the decade. I was able to attend the first week of the show and had a great time. One thing that I will remember at the show was "lines." The Post Office booth for selling stamps and the booth for getting cancellations were both set up like rides at theme parks. You entered the line at a break in the ropes, and then wound your way past displays of stamps for sale until you got to the front of the line. On the first day of the show, I stood in the stamp line for over an hour, and in the cancellation line for nearly as long. There were also lines at some of the country booths, primarily the Asian countries.

On the other hand, the exhibits were incredible. I saw more copies of US #1 and 2 than I thought existed! It was sometimes difficult to find a particular exhibit, since the frame numbers didn't seem to be continuous. But, you couldn't go wrong. Every row of frames included spectacular material, with frequently described "only known cover" or "largest known multiple."

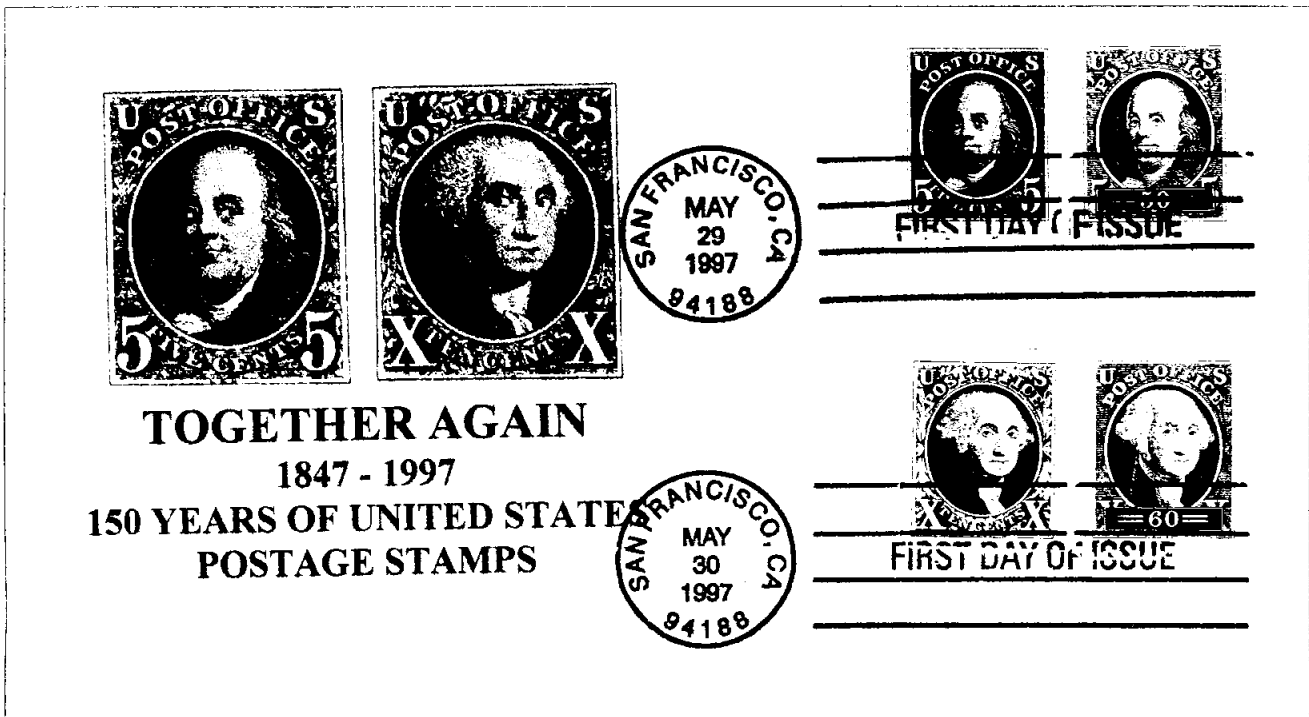
The dealers also had lots of rarities on display. I saw full sheets of Columbians and other early issues, as well as rare revenues, proofs, and covers.

I have a particular interest in the engraved stamps, and one of the world's most famous engravers, Czeslaw Slania, was there, engraving a stamp design, and signing anything sent his way (as long as he had engraved it.)

The Bureau of Engraving and Printing was represented by two of the engravers of the Ben Franklin stamp issued on the first day of the show. They were demonstrating their work and of course, the Spider Press was there too, producing ten prints a day for sale as a raffle. I didn't get one.

But I got quite a few other great souvenirs; enough to bore all my non-stamp collecting friends and my family.

Here is a copy of the cover I prepared and stood in line to stamp and cancel.



END OF AN ERA

R.H. Stever

I met Josephine Bird at a 1996 Fourth of July party. She was one of three people there who knew how to correctly pronounce the word "philatelist" and one of only a handful who knew what it meant. But then Josephine Bird should have known because she was postmaster at Sanco, Texas for sixteen years. In fact, she shut it down. Figure 1 shows a Sanco last day cancel, October 15, 1971 on a postcard signed by postmaster Josephine Bird.

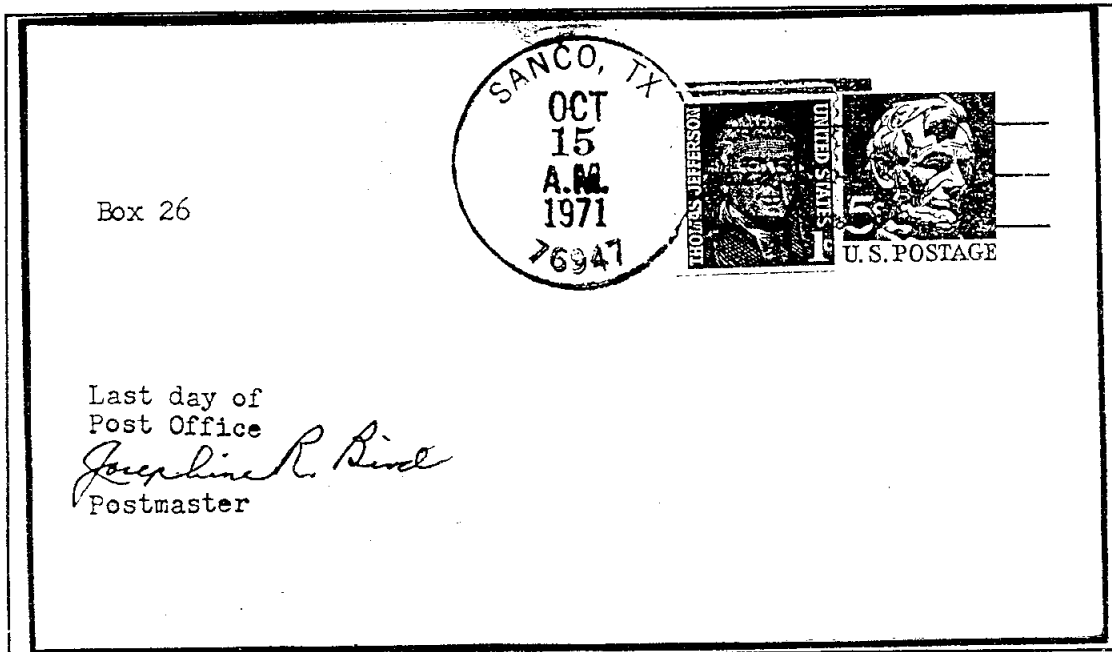


Figure 1. Last day cancel at the Sanco, Texas post office.

Texas postal history is not only the story of covers and the people who wrote or received them, or postmarks, or postage rates and routes. It is also the story of hundreds, or perhaps thousands, of discontinued post offices (DPOs) at small communities throughout the state. Some of them are completely gone (ghost towns); others exhibit only vestiges of their past glory, remnants of Texas' pioneer spirit.

Sanco is such a place. It was named for Comanche Chief Sanaco whose tribe camped there in the Yellow Wolf Valley in early Tom Green County. A post office opened for business July 1, 1888 to serve settlers of the small frontier community. That was approximately eight months before the Texas legislature created Coke County out of Tom Green County on March 13, 1889.

Actually, Sanco was not the first post office in what is now Coke County. That honor belongs to Fort Chadbourne, a military post established January 28, 1859 that was served by the famous Butterfield Overland Mail. But that is another story.

John L. Durham was Sanco's first postmaster. He served from July 10, 1888 to August 23, 1889. Following Durham were Sanco postmasters Miller Bird, Lucratus C. Bullion, Fannie E. Durham, William O. Tubb, Loransa C. Clevenger and William H. Campbell whose term ended February 28, 1920 when the Sanco post office was first closed. The office was reopened June 11, 1924 with Hiram J. Gartman as postmaster. He was succeeded by Mrs. Lennie D. Allen, Mrs. Alta M. Gartman, Ulmer S. Bird and finally by Josephine R. Bird.

Figure 2 shows a side view of the Sanco country store which included the post office (note the United States flag flying out front). Mrs. Bird managed both the store and post office until her retirement at the closure of Sanco's post office. On that day, October 15, 1971, Mrs. Bird turned over the post office to Hugh Lewis, postmaster at Robert Lee. Figure 3 shows Mrs. Bird handing the Sanco cancellation

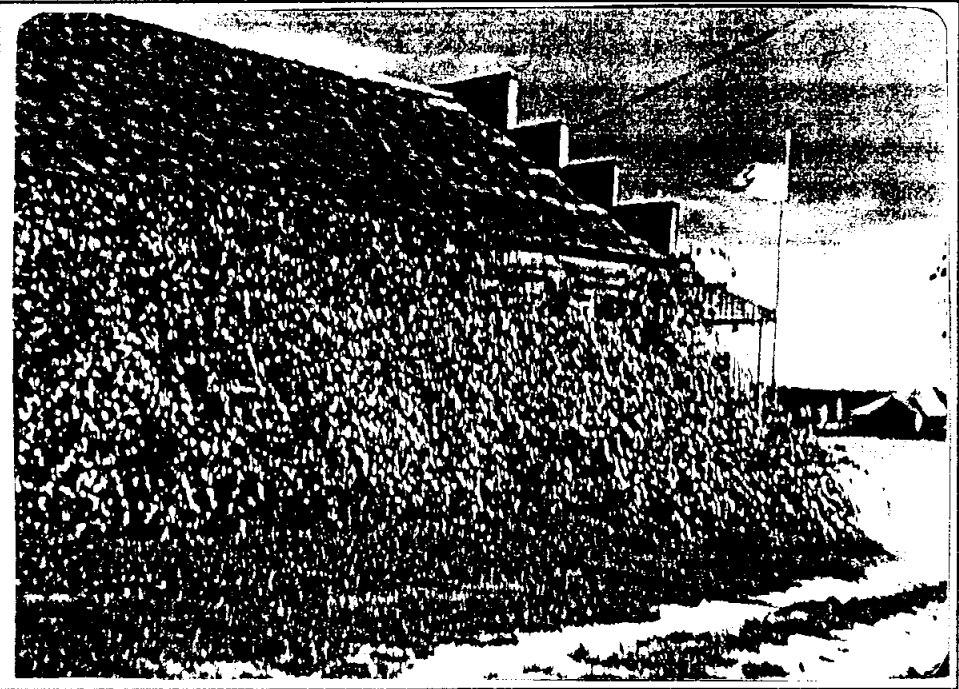


Figure 2. Side view of the small fram Sanco general store and post office.

handstamp to Hugh Lewis. After 83 years, Coke County's oldest post office closed its doors. Sam Williams, who had carried the mail to the Sanco community for 24 years, continued his route but instead of making one stop at the post office he had to begin depositing mail in rural mail boxes.

How many times across the country do you suppose the above scenario has been repeated as America's village post offices pass into history?



Figure 3. Mrs. Josephine Bird turning over the Sanco handstamp to Hugh Lewis, October 15, 1971. (From the Robert Lee Observer, October 21, 1971.)

References:

San Angelo Standard-Times, October 15, 1971, p. 1B

Robert Lee Observer, June 1, 1967 marker dedication ceremony program, and October 21, 1971.

Abilene Reporter-News, June 7, 1986.