

THE TEXAS POSTAL HISTORY SOCIETY JOURNAL

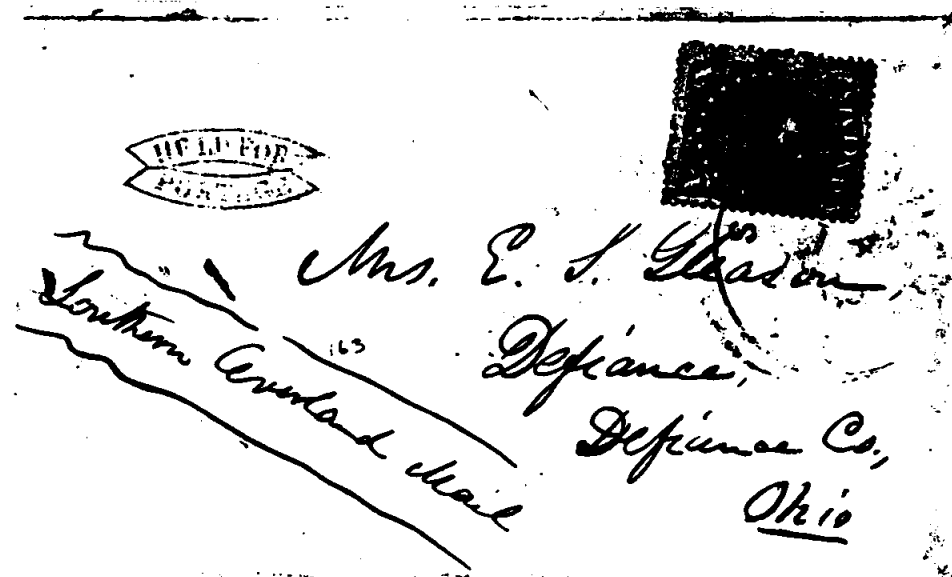


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THE TEXAS POSTAL HISTORY SOCIETY

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THE PRESIDENT'S PAGE

The annual meeting of the Texas Postal History Society was held at the Sheraton Inn in Waco, Texas, on March 21. The get-together was a most interesting and informative affair with members attending from the far corners of the state.

Mr. Clyde Hester from the Institute of Texian Culture spoke to our group on Saturday morning. He confirmed that the second major objective adopted by our society, i.e. the preservation and exhibition of an "old-time" Texas Post Office, is about to be realized. Since several hundred thousand visitors each year view the exhibits in the Institute of Texian Culture, it may be assumed that many will see not only an artifact of past postal service, but will be stimulated by the exhibit to think in terms of its postal history. Such exhibits carry the potential to reach expanded segments of society literally untouched by stamp exhibitions, research publications and other literary efforts. Mr. Gordon Hyatt is to be congratulated on his conception of the idea as well as for the contacts he made to help this idea become a reality.

Mr. Ed Glass, utilizing a series of cut-square-Texas-town-postmarks of the 1851-61 period, showed the great variety available. Despite the significant progress made in other regions of the country, the classification of Texas postmarks has languished to the detriment of our hobby. The opportunity for an important contribution to Texas postal history lies in the future classification of these cancellations. Certainly Ed's talk was a challenge to each member of our society. It should not go unanswered.

Mr. Ottis Bobbitt concluded the informal afternoon meeting with a few remarks about private carriers and forwarding agents during the period of Reconstruction.

Mr. Ed Leissner has relinquished his post as Secretary-Treasurer. Ed has assured me that he plans to remain active in our group. He leaves the job in the very capable hands of Jim Alexander, who has graciously accepted the post for the remainder of Ed's term. We hope that Jim will allow his name to be placed in nomination for the full term when elections are held next fall.

The primary goals of the Texas Postal History Society are to further the advancement and understanding of postal history via collection, research, publication and exhibition. I would like to advance the premise to our members that our efforts have been an unqualified success. The availability of classic Texas covers has declined drastically over the past few years. The prices of the remaining material have advanced significantly. Exhibitions

and research of Texas postal history are becoming more common than ever before. All these signs indicate to me that our goals are being achieved and that the fascinating field of Texas postal history is well and healthy.

Texanex - 81, held at San Antonio, Texas, June 5 - 7, was an unqualified success. TPHS members with exhibits in this show were Richard Spies and Bill Emery. Charles Deaton was recognized at the Awards Banquet with the Forcheimer Award for the best literature presentation in 1981.

EDITOR'S COMMENTS

We are pleased to present in this issue the third in a series of articles by Gordon Bleuler. This Texas Gem will, I am sure, interest every collector of postal history.

We now receive on a monthly basis a news release letter from the American Philatelic Society. I reprint one of the latest, as I think it will interest many of our members:

"APS PUBLISHES INFORMATION BROCHURE ON SELLING APPRAISING AND ESTATE ADVICE

"Thinking of selling part of your collection, or do you need advice on estate appraisals? The American Philatelic Society has published a new information brochure designed to answer questions concerning how to sell a collection or how to arrange for an appraisal. The brochure also outlines information available to heirs of APS members through the Society's Estate Advisory Service.

"A copy of the brochure may be obtained by sending a large stamped addressed envelope to: Selling and Appraising Flyer, P O Box 800, State College, Pa. 16801. Information about membership in the Society and numerous services offered to members may also be obtained from the same address.

"The brochure outlines the four basic methods of selling: outright purchase, private treaty, public auction, and through the sales divisions of numerous philatelic societies. It also describes how to arrange for an appraisal and what information may be expected from a formal appraisal.

"Preparation for selling begins with collecting. The brochure points out that next to scarcity and demand, the most important factors determining sale value are the quality of the material offered and the degree to which it is coherently organized. A course of action for preparing a collection and for readying material for sale makes the brochure important not only to individuals who wish to sell material but also to individuals who are collecting with a view to future sale."

We need manuscripts, lists, pictures, your ideas. How about a contribution this quarter?

THE BUTTERFIELD OVERLAND MAIL AND ITS ROUTE ACROSS TEXAS

1858 - 1861

by Bill Emery

The Butterfield Overland Mail Company operated across the southwestern United States from September 15, 1858, through March 1, 1861. In slightly over two years of operation, this line earned an enduring place in the saga of the "Old West".

Illustrated in Figure 1 is a cover carried on the Southern Overland Mail Route (Butterfield's Overland Mail Route) in January, 1860. This cover bears a large 33mm., circular, San Francisco postmark struck in black. The postmark ties a Scott #35, 10¢ green, 1857 issue stamp to the cover. In the upper left-hand corner, there is a strike of a "stock-style" HELD FOR POSTAGE applied in the San Francisco office prior to application of the stamp. The reverse side of the cover also bears a clear strike of the circular San Francisco postmark, dated January 16.

The Southern Overland Mail was the first transcontinental stage line to cross the United States and the longest route of a single stagecoach company in the nation's history.

The Butterfield Company was born of a need for more rapid cross-country communications. However, it quickly became the object of both national pride and swirling controversy. Many businessmen, together with political leaders, knew that successful opening of a stage route to California would be followed by the building of a railroad. They recognized the growing importance of the western territory and its rapidly increasing population.

In 1848, the lure of gold and the availability of cheap land had created a rush of settlers to the West Coast. The number increased so rapidly that by 1850 the Territory of California contained over 100,000 citizens and was admitted to the Union as the thirty-first state. By 1855, this flood of immigrants had swollen the population along the Pacific Coast to over 500,000 voters. There is substantial evidence that this body of new settlers along the western coastline exerted great pressure upon the United States Congress to lessen their isolation.

Early in 1854, Congress directed the United States Army Corps of Engineers to survey five transcontinental routes westward from the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean. These surveys were designed to provide Congress with the most feasible route for a railroad connecting the Eastern States with population centers along the Pacific Coast. In January, 1855, Senator Douglas, backed by the U.S. Army's report that several practical routes existed, introduced a bill providing for construction of three railroad lines to the Pacific: one northern, one central, and one southern. While the proposed bill gained approval in the Senate, it was voted down in the House of Representatives.

Early in 1856, Congress received a petition signed by more than 75,000 Californians urging the lawmakers to improve their communications with the East. The result of this lengthy petition can be seen in the Congressional appropriations that followed. In July 1856, Congress voted \$50,000 for a road from Fort Ridgely, Minnesota Territory, to the South Pass. In February, 1857, \$300,000 was appropriated for a road from Fort

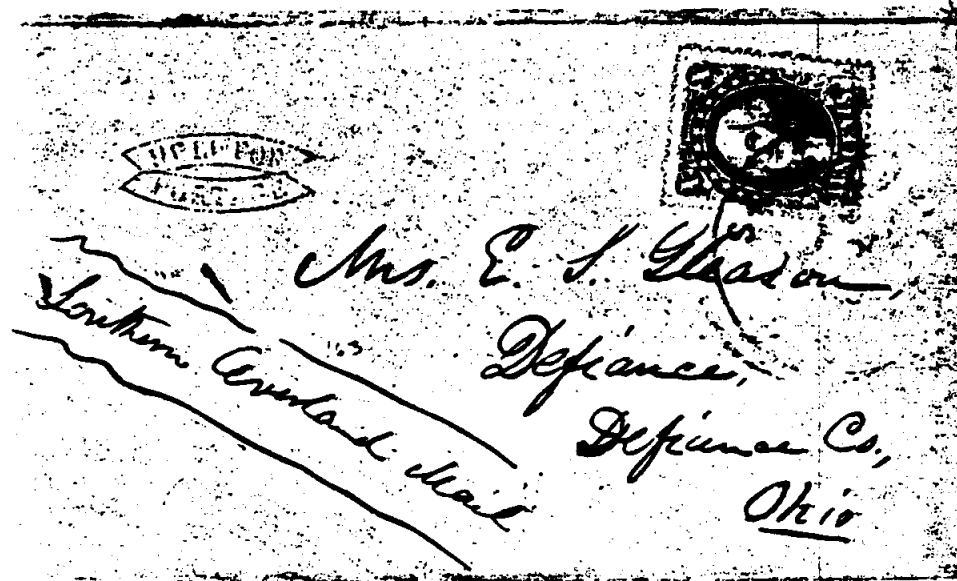
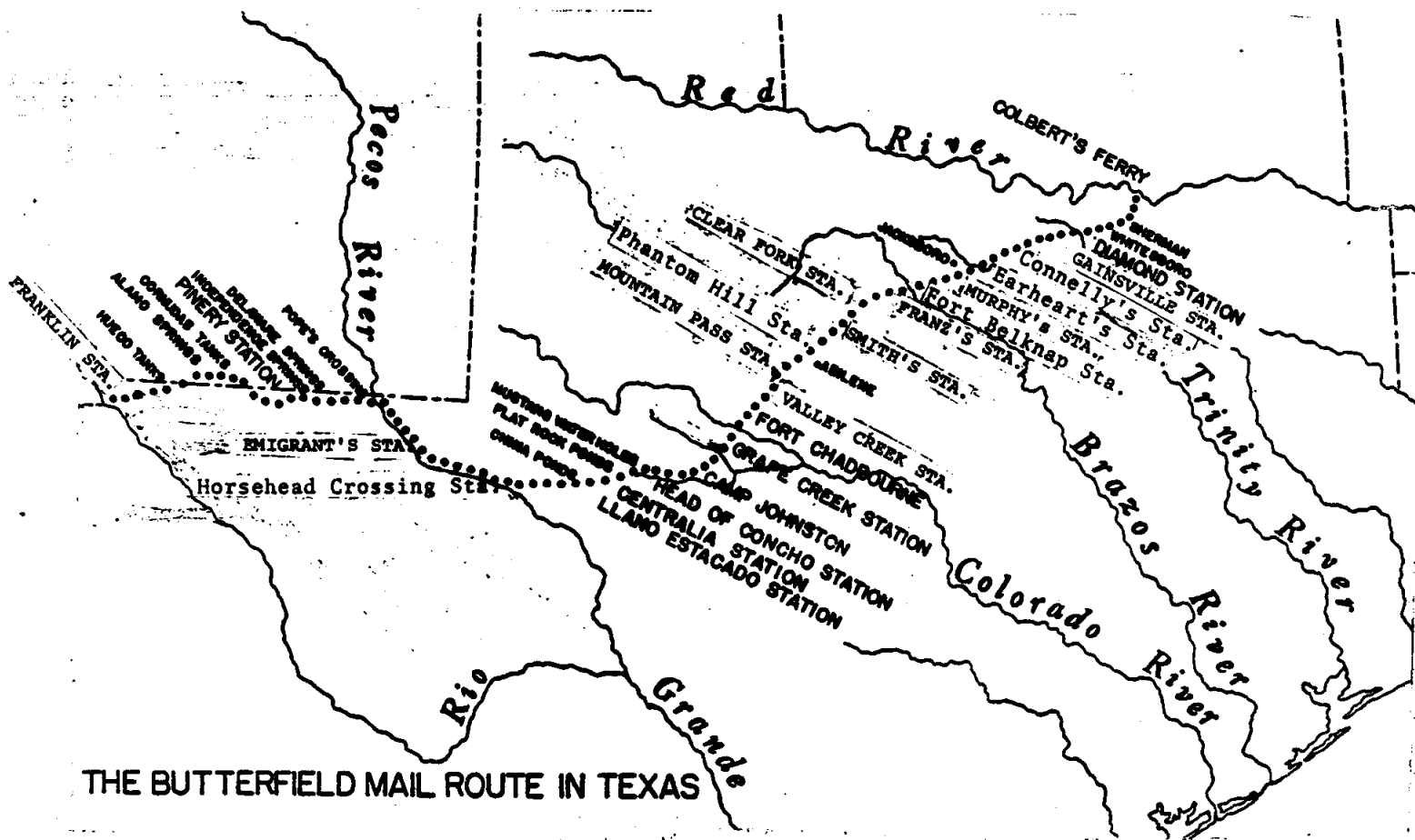


Figure 1



THE BUTTERFIELD MAIL ROUTE IN TEXAS

Figure 2

Kearney, Nebraska Territory, to the eastern boundary of California, and \$200,000 more for improvements on the road west from El Paso to Fort Yuma. Less than a month later, on March 3, 1857, the Congress again responded to the "communication problem" by accepting a Post Office Departments Appropriation Bill that called for a transcontinental mail route. The bill included a provision for the conveyance of letter mail from some point on the Mississippi River to San Francisco. It further specified that the mail should be transported twice weekly, both directions, in four-horse coaches or spring wagons suitable for carrying passengers. Finally, the bill stipulated that each trip should be completed within twenty-five days.

Since mail to California before 1855 could take from four to six weeks by packet boat from New York via the Panamanian Isthmus, this new proposal was hailed as revolutionary, and as a major step toward solution of the communication problem.

On April 20, 1857, the Post Office Department advertised for bids to perform the overland mail service. In response, several contractors applied during the spring and summer of 1857, citing the route they would utilize if they were awarded the contract. It had been clearly stated in Section 10 of the amendments to the Post Office Appropriations Bill that a contractor would select the route of his choice. Since there were at least nine bids received, and several chose different routes, the ultimate selection of contractor and of the route, became a decision of the Postmaster General.

Postmaster General Brown was from Tennessee and had strong Southern ties. It became known that he consulted with various Southern leaders regarding the overland mail route. Thus, even before a contract was awarded, loud and vitriolic protest erupted in Northern newspapers and from Northern politicians. The New York Press termed it the "Horseshoe Route" and also the "Ox-bow Route". The Chicago Tribune labeled it "one of the greatest swindles ever perpetrated upon the country by the slave-holders". The Buchanan Administration, including Postmaster General Brown, ignored the protests. On September 16, 1857, a contract was signed with the company of John Butterfield, William B. Dinsmore, William G. Fargo, James V. P. Gardner, Marcus L. Kinyon, Alexander Holland and Hamilton Spencer. It provided for semi-weekly mail service both ways. The contract was to begin on September 15, 1858. It paid an annual compensation of \$600,000.

During the remaining months of 1857 and into the first half of 1858, the contracting group worked feverishly. They purchased more than one hundred Concord coaches, thousands of horses and mules, tools, harnesses and other equipment. Dozens of stations, corrals and barns were built along the route. In locations where surface water was unavailable, the company dug wells. They hired hundreds of workers, including drivers, guards, station keepers, stock tenders, ticket agents and road workers. It has been estimated that the company outlay was well in excess of a million dollars before the first Butterfield stage rolled over the route.

On September 15, 1858, the first Butterfield coach rolled east from San Francisco. The next day a second coach headed west from St. Louis, culminating a dramatic year-long feat of preparation and planning.

History records the fact that on October 7th, the east-bound Butterfield Stage rolled into St. Louis with six passengers and the mail from San Francisco. Total elapsed time in transit was twenty-three days and four hours. The first west-bound stage out of St. Louis was only slightly slower, reaching San Francisco in twenty-four days, eighteen hours and twenty-six minutes.

Mr. Butterfield was so elated at the success of this great enterprise that he telegraphed the President to report the news. President Buchanan replied, "I cordially congratulate you upon the results. It is a glorious triumph for civilization and the Union. Settlements will soon follow the course of the road and East and West will be bound together by a chain of living Americans which can never be broken." One hundred twenty-one years later, we can now fully appreciate President Buchanan's prophecy. We also see the tremendous impact this overland postal route had upon the Union.

The Texas portion of the Butterfield Overland Mail Route passed from Colbert's Ferry on the Red River, six hundred forty miles westward to Franklin on the Rio Grande. Stations to supply mule teams, called "swing stations" were located every ten to twenty miles along the trail. Larger stations known as "home stations" were located at convenient points and provided meals of hard tack, dried beef, black coffee, and dried beans for the modest sum of fifty cents each. Since the stages travelled continuously, there was little need for sleeping accommodations along the route.

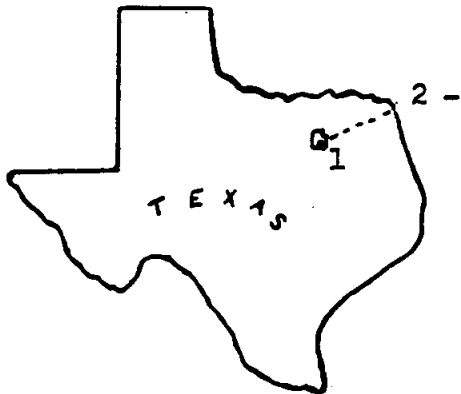
For scheduling purposes, the Butterfield Route was divided into a total of nine divisions, with the fifth and sixth divisions covering the Texas portion of the trail. The fifth division extended from Franklin to Fort Chadbourne, a total of four hundred fifty-eight miles, and was scheduled to take one hundred twenty-six and a half hours of travel time. Fort Chadbourne to Colbert's Ferry, a distance of two hundred eighty-two and a half miles, required sixty-five and a half hours of travel time and was designated as Division Six. The course taken by the Butterfield Overland Stages in their passage through Texas is shown in Figure 2.

Travelling at an average rate of 4.5 miles per hour, the trip through Texas from Colbert's Ferry on the Red River to Franklin on the Rio Grande required a total of eight days of continuous travel. It may be assumed that few if any of the through passengers on the Butterfield Stage of January, 1860, came through in as pristine condition as the cover shown at the beginning of this article.

TEXAS GEMS

Third of Series
Page 1 of Series

by Gordon Bleuler
Dallas, Texas

Map Illustration:

1. Location of McKinney, Texas, in Collin County.
2. Destination: Russelville, East Tennessee (out of State).

Cover Description:

U. S. 3¢ Star Die entire in red on buff postmarked McKinney, Texas, Feb. 20 (1861) with star-in-star killer, all in black. Reverse has an additional strike of the town postmark along with thirteen strikes of the star killer.

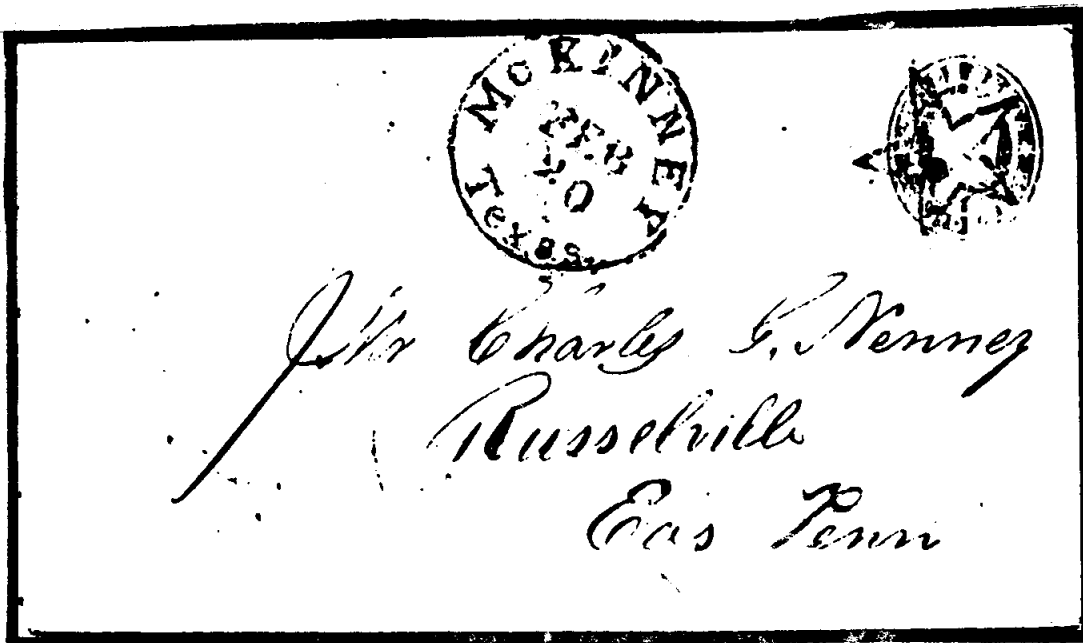
The Texas Ordinance of Secession was adopted on February 1, 1861, at which time Texas declared itself to be an Independent State. The popular vote to secede from the Union was taken on February 23, 1861, to become effective March 2, 1861. Texas was formally admitted to the Confederacy on March 7, 1861, as the seventh State to join the C.S.A.

The U.S. 3¢ Star Die entires were prepared and issued during the last half of 1860, around July or August. The Confederate Postal System went into operation effective June 1, 1861. Thus, the 3¢ Star Dies with southern town postmarks showing dates of January through May must be 1861 regardless of whether a year date is shown in the cancellor. Their historical postal status is governed by the dates and actions taken by the particular southern state in which they were used. After June 1, 1861, the U.S. 3¢ Star Die was no longer valid in the South and the Confederate postal rates of 5¢ and 10¢ were in effect. The McKinney, Texas, entire postmarked Feb. 20 (1861) thus reflects Independent State use just over two weeks before Texas was admitted to the Confederate States of America.

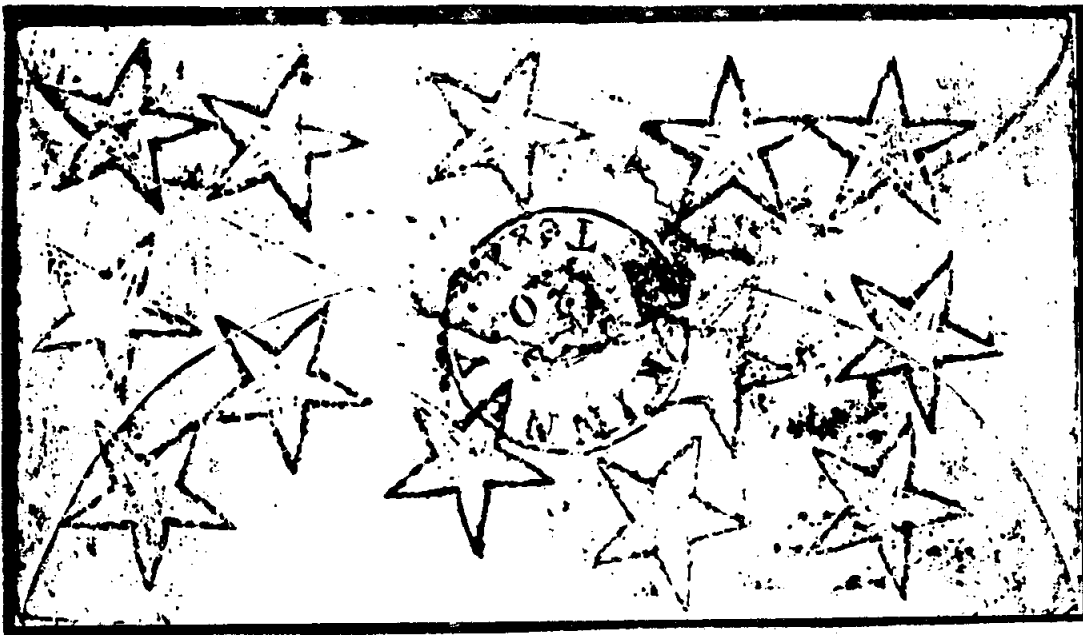
At this point, I would like to make several observations with regard to the unusual number of star-in-star killer cancels applied on this entire. I believe this killer was specifically prepared either by or for the McKinney Postmaster at the time Texas adopted the Ordinance of Secession on February 1, 1861, and that he started using the killer to show that Texas (the Lone Star State) was once again independent. Further, I believe the usage of the town marking and killers on the reverse was contrary to post office regulations at that time. In my opinion, the McKinney Postmaster applied the thirteen stars to indicate those thirteen southern states which either had already joined or were potential joiners of the Confederacy. Actually, eleven states finally joined and two (Kentucky and Missouri) never made it, though they were admitted, Missouri on November 28, 1861, and Kentucky on December 9, 1861. Heavy fighting in these two states

"Texas Gems"

McKinney, Texas
(Independent State Usage)



A. Cover Illustration (front)



B. Cover Illustration (reverse)

Points of Interest:

- A. 1. U.S. 3¢ Star Die entire postmarked McKinney, Texas, Feb. 20, (1861).
2. Fancy "star-in-star" killer.
- B. 4. McKinney, Texas, town postmark on reverse of entire with thirteen individual strikes of the star-in-star killer.



prevented them from physically joining the Confederacy. It would have been most interesting to know what was said in the enclosure with this entire. I believe it would have verified my conjectures.

In a sense, the reverse of this entire becomes a "hand stamped" Independent State Patriotic, which reflects the thirteen potential states comprising the Confederate States of America.

McKinney, Collin County, Texas (town notes):

The town of McKinney was founded in 1845 and named for Collin McKinney, who came to this area (Republic Period) in 1844. A Post Office was established in 1848, and the town replaced Buckner as the County Seat. The town was incorporated in 1859. Prior to the Civil War, a newspaper called the McKinney Messenger was published by J. W. Thomas. The Houston and Texas Central Railroad (later called the Texas & New Orleans Railroad) reached McKinney in 1872, and the Louisiana, Arkansas & Texas Railroad was built west from Jefferson, Texas, in 1881. By the late 1800's, the town of McKinney had three weekly newspapers, two banks, grist mills, an opera house and six churches. The population reached around 4,000 by 1900.

Collin McKinney (born April 17, 1766; died September 8, 1861) moved from the East to Arkansas in 1824, and to what is now Bowie County, Texas, in 1831. He was active in the early movement to gain independence for Texas from Mexico.

Post Office under the Confederacy:

Established August 5, 1861, with G. W. Pegues appointed Postmaster;
J. K. Thomas became Postmaster on October 2, 1862; James B. Carty on
February 10, 1863; Wolf Estricher on August 19, 1864.

Comments:

This is a most unusual and interesting Texas Postal History entire which reflects Texas Independent State usage at the time when it was in transition from the Union to the Confederate States of America. How does one explain the unusual actions of the McKinney postmaster in the preparation and utilization of a star killer? My conjecture is that he was trying to show Texas once again as the Lone Star State and Texas as one of the thirteen potential stars in the flag of the Confederacy. I do believe that it was more than just coincidence! Truly, another Texas Gem.

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