

# THE TEXAS POSTAL HISTORY SOCIETY JOURNAL

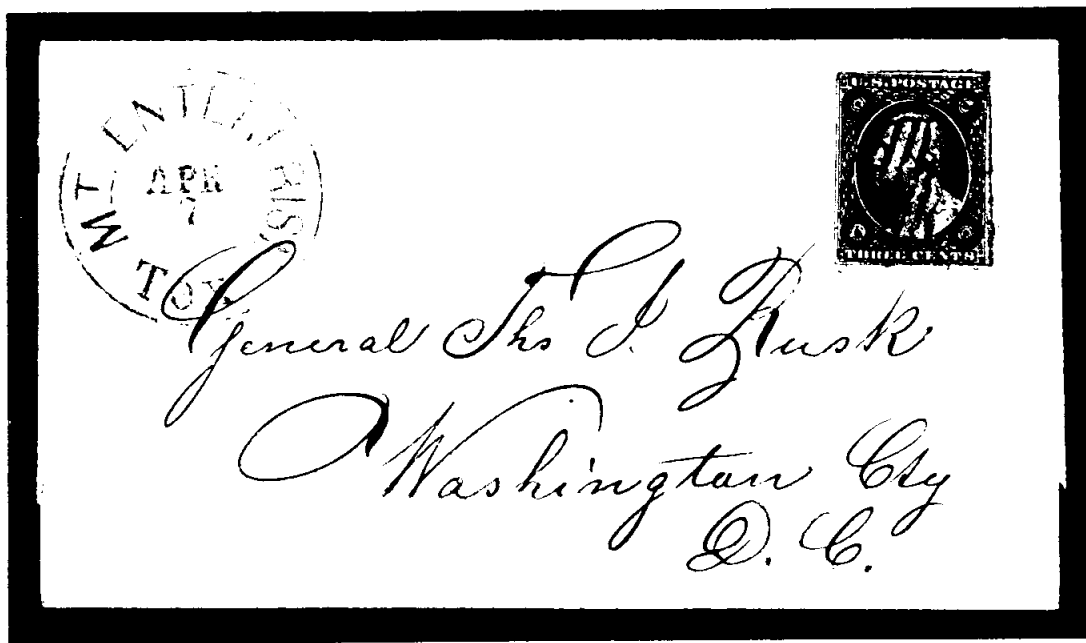


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On the cover is an 1857 folded letter from Mount Enterprise, Rusk  
County, Texas. It is addressed to General Thomas J. Rusk, for whom  
Rusk County was named.

# THE TEXAS POSTAL HISTORY SOCIETY

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

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2401 Colorado  
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John Whitehead  
P.O. Box 966  
Longview, TX 75606



## PRESIDENT'S PAGE

Our new editor, John A. Whitehead, produced a very nice issue for his first endeavor. Thanks John for your good work.

In order to continue producing good issues, John needs your help with news items, special information pertaining to Texas Postal History and articles. Dont let the knowledge you have be lost, commit it to print. This is terribly important as it helps others and records valuable information that may only be available through you. This is on of the reasons for our existence. Come on, get your pen out and give it a whirl.

Plans for our annual meeting are now finalized. There will be a short business meeting followed by a program given by John Germann and Mike Ludeman on Texas DPO's and the final period devoted to a trading session. The time for the meeting is 4:00 p.m. Friday, June 22nd in the Buccaneer Room 1 of the La Quinta Royale Hotel, Corpus Christi, Texas. We'll see you there! This promises to be a very good exhibition and an aution will be conducted by Charles Deaton on Saturday.

Sign up a new member for Texas Postal History Society today.

Nonie Green, President

## EDITOR'S COMMENT

Our thanks to Nonie Green for sending the great article on the San Antonio-El Paso stage lines. The first part of this article appears in this issue, and will be continued in the next issue of the Journal. Nonie has obviously done a great deal of research for this article, resulting in an interesting and informative piece. Hope to see you at the annual meeting, June 22-24!

John A. Whitehead, Editor

## SAN ANTONIO-EL PASO STAGE LINES AND OTHER LINES SERVING THE

SAME ROUTES AT LATER DATES: 1868 TO 1887

By Nonie Green

In the summer of 1867 Benjamin F. Ficklin was in Washington, D.C., and at that time secured a government contract for a weekly mail service from Fort Smith, Arkansas to San Antonio, Texas to begin operation early in 1868 with a branch line from San Antonio to El Paso to be established the first part of 1869. Frederick P. Sawyer of Georgetown, D.C. was a partner in the enterprise. The San Antonio-El Paso portion had previously been operated by Bethel Coopwood with T. G. Williams as the agent.

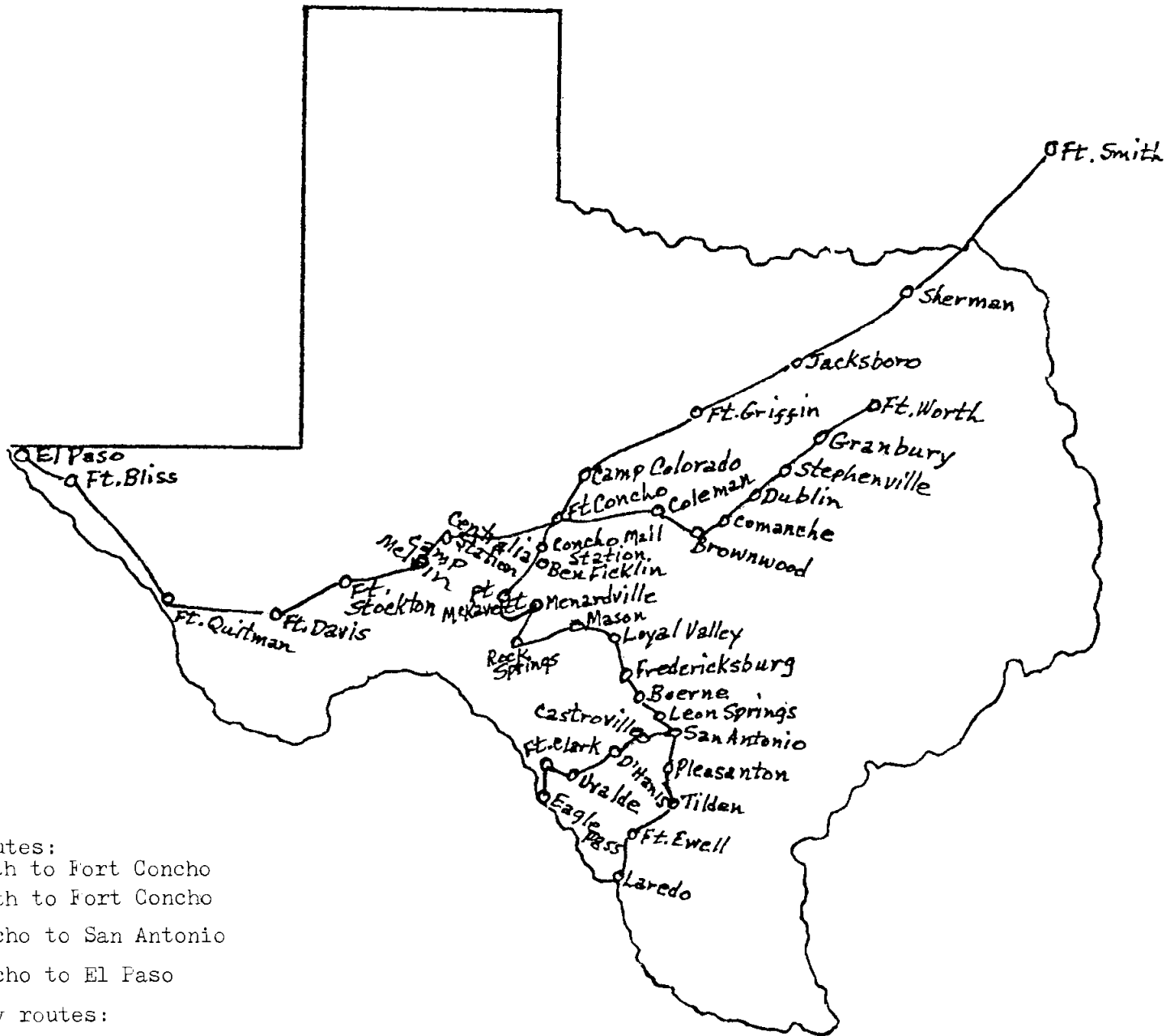
Ficklin was an experienced stage line operator, having been engaged in that business prior to the Civil War in Alabama and in the western part of the country with a former classmate, W. W. Finney, as well as being the superintendent of the famed Central Overland California & Pike's Peak Express when that line made the Pony Express run. Ben Ficklin has been given credit for that momentous event, although there is argument to the contrary. The matter has never been settled and remains a controversial issue.

In 1868 the main line from Fort Smith ran to Sherman, Jacksboro, Fort Griffin, Camp Colorado and to Fort Concho. The service ran three times a week. Starting from San Antonio, the line went to Leon Springs, Boerne, Comfort, Fredericksburg, Chipman's Ranch, Fort Mason, Fort McKavett, Fort Concho, Fort Stockton, Fort Quitman and the terminus of El Paso. A supplementary line left San Antonio and ran to Eagle Pass and Fort Clark via Castroville, New Fountain, D'Hanis and Uvalde.

The hub of the operations was a spot chosen by Ben Ficklin on the South Concho River located about three miles southwest of the newly constructed Fort Concho. It was called Concho Mail Station and in a short time was outfitted with corrals, repair shops, sheds for coaches, harness and parts shops, picket houses for employees and a commissary. This place was an ideal location from a comfort standpoint and was strategically situated for good performance on the routes as they seemed to converge there.

Ben Ficklin was successful in getting the contracts renewed when they expired. However, in 1871 when he was in Washington, D.C. on company business he choked on a fish bone and in an effort to remove it an artery was severed and he bled to death. Upon Ficklin's death, Francis Corbett Taylor, manager of San Antonio and El Paso mail routes with headquarters at Concho Mail Station, became the general manager of all operations. Taylor and Ficklin had been in the stage line business in Alabama together before the Civil War and Ficklin persuaded his friend to come to Texas to help operate the enterprise there early in 1869.

In 1871 and 1872 the proprietors of El Paso Mail Line were listed as Sawyer & Ficklin with A. A. Muncey as agent of the line. On Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays it left San Antonio for Fort Concho via Borne, Comfort, Fredericksburg, Mason, Taylor's, Fort McKavett, Kickapoo Springs and Concho Mail Station. A branch line left Fort Concho on Mondays and Thursdays for Centralia Station,



Stage Routes:

- Fort Worth to Fort Concho
- Fort Smith to Fort Concho
- Fort Concho to San Antonio
- Fort Concho to El Paso

Auxiliary routes:

- San Antonio to Laredo
- San Antonio to Eagle Pass

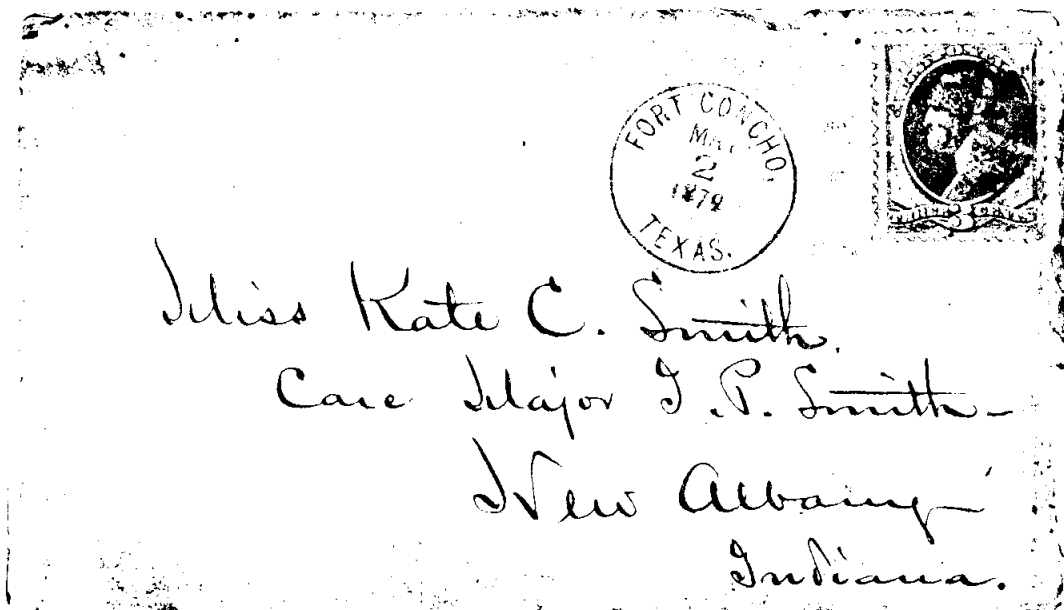
Fort Stockton, Fort Davis, Fort Quitman, San Elizario and El Paso. Another line left San Antonio on Tuesdays and Fridays to Castroville, D'Hanis, Uvalde, Fort Clark and Eagle Pass.

In 1875 when the contracts were up for bids again, Taylor lost the San Antonio to El Paso portion of the lines to D. B. Grant who was to take up the service on July 1, 1875. Service was not rendered under that contract, so the Post Office Department let the balance of the contract term to David Coffin. At the same time, Matthew Draper was successful in securing the run from Fort Concho to Jacksboro. Additionally, James C. Kimzey received the service from Fredericksburg to Fort Concho. At this time Taylor became associated with Charles Bain, a friend and former employee. They operated lines together under contracts for other parts of the State.

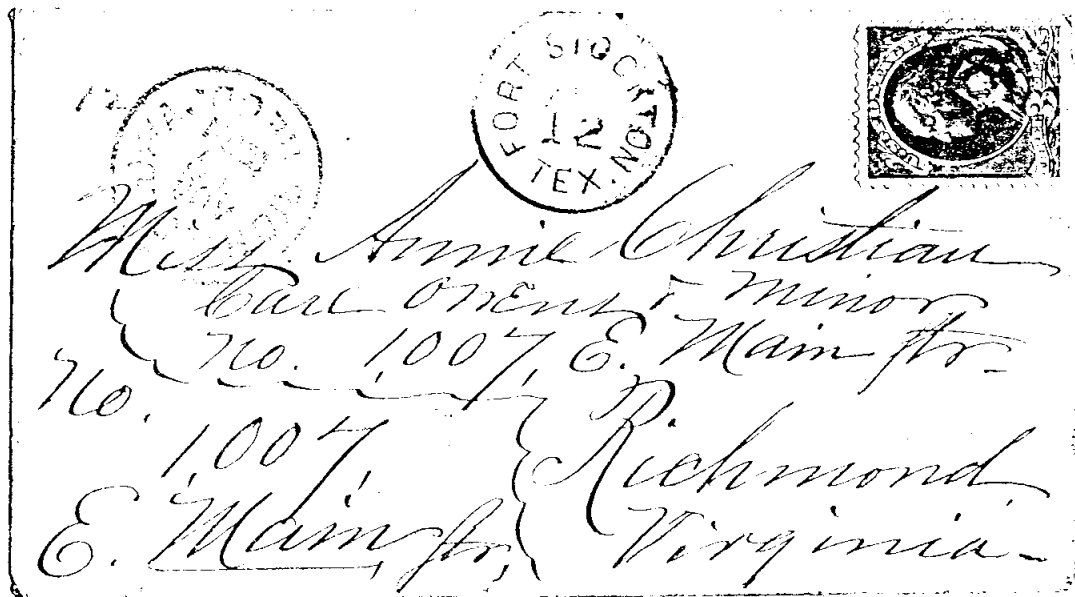
After Ficklin's death, F. C. Taylor and friends laid out a town across the South Concho River on a bluff and called it "Ben Ficklin" in memory of their close associate. On August 27, 1873, the town of Ben Ficklin obtained a post office. The first postmaster was Henry M. Taylor and records show his annual compensation was \$12.00. The following year he received \$18.99. On January 1, 1875 W. S. Kelly was appointed with compensation of \$31.57 through September 30, 1875. Other postmasters and their terms of office were: John B. Vinck, December 17, 1875 - July 8, 1877; Anthony O'Doherty, July 9, 1877 - September 4, 1881; William H. Wahrmond, September 5, 1881 - September 5, 1882; Samuel Pollock, September 6 1882. Post office records show official date of closing as May 25, 1883.

In 1876, Bain & Company announced a new line of coaches operating between San Antonio and Fort Concho. They operated on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays and went via Borne, Fredericksburg, Loyal Valley, Menardville, Coglan's, Fort McKavett, Kickapoo Springs and Ben Ficklin. A. A. Muncey was agent in San Antonio and F. C. Taylor superintendent.

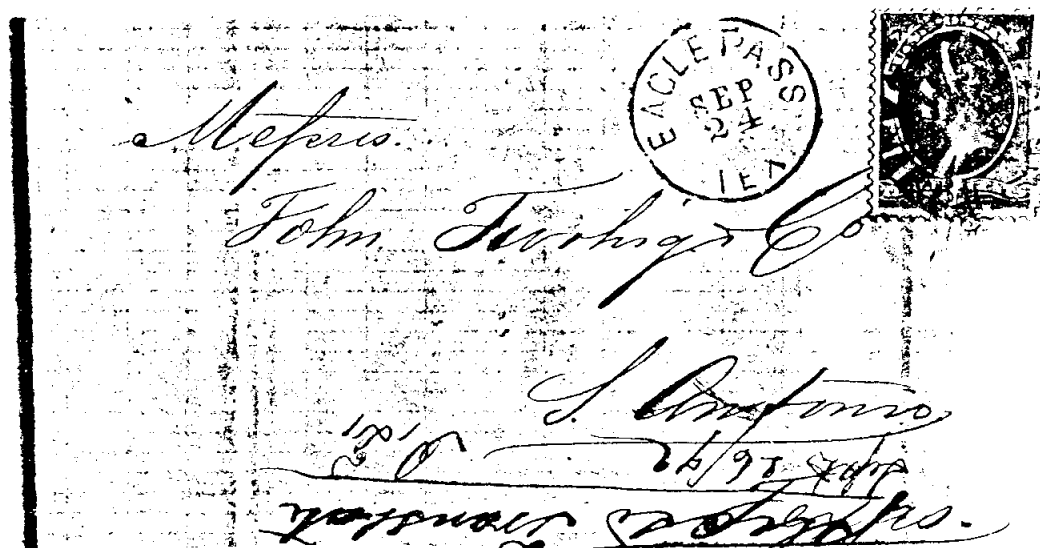
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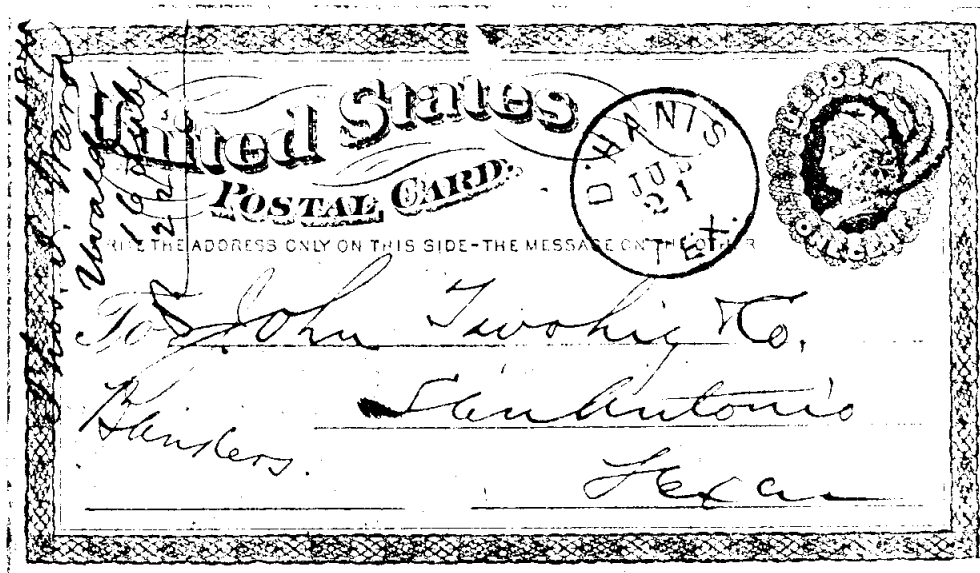
Cover from Fort Concho in 1879 on the route between there and Ft..Worth. It traveled by train for the balance of its journey..



On the route El Paso to Fort Concho and points further on, an 1882 Fort Stockton, Texas cover.



Auxiliary line folded letter of Eagle Pass to San Antonio in September, 1872.



D Hanis 1875 postal card, one of the stops on the auxiliary line between Eagle Pass and San Antonio.

79-A

Copy

Post Office  
Fort Concho Tex  
April 20<sup>th</sup> 1878

Col F W Schauro  
Special Agent  
P O Department,  
Saint Louis, Mo;

I Sir

I have  
been informed from Fort Stockton Tex  
that the Mail that left here on the 14<sup>th</sup>  
Inst was captured by Indians 21 Miles  
East of Fort Stockton on the 15<sup>th</sup> & thought  
it well to inform you of the fact as  
the Records in my office show that A R P  
Post marked Austin Tex April 9<sup>th</sup> 1878  
Registered Envelope No 56 Directed to Camp Stockton Tex  
Received at this office Apr 13 & delivered to  
Stockton Mail Carrier on Apr 14<sup>th</sup> & is very likely  
lost as the horse & Mail Bag was taken by the  
Indians

Y<sup>r</sup> Respectful Servant  
J L Millspaugh P M

Archives Fort Concho Museum



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