



# Cancellation Club NEWS

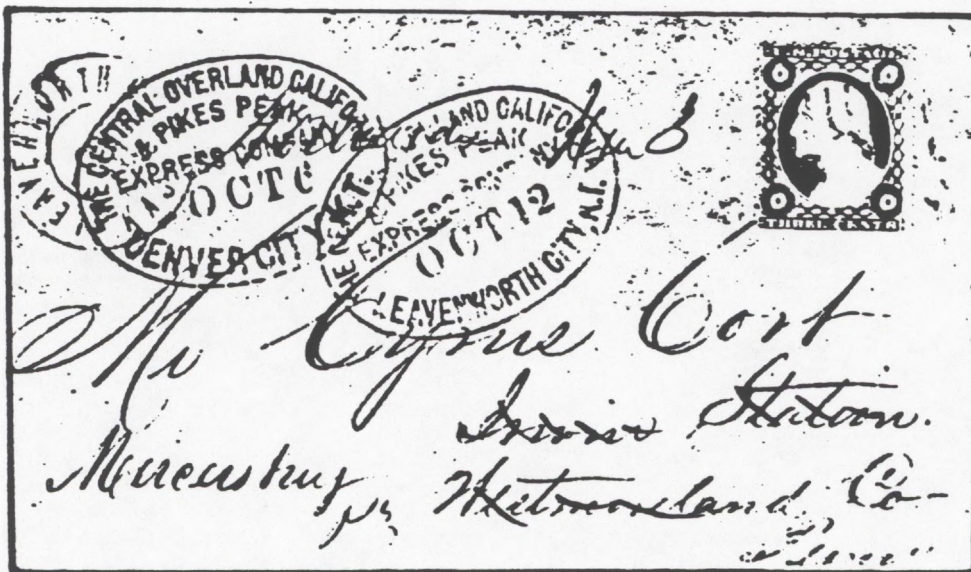
Volume 21, Number 1

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Winter 1992

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COC & PPE cover with the rare Leavenworth City oval to Pennsylvania.  
(From Jarrett, 1976). -- see page 3.

## THE U.S. CANCELLATION CLUB NEWS

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## A Report from the Secretary

Abe Boyarsky resigned the presidency of the Club in May. We are grateful for Abe's work with the Club and express our thanks for a well-spent tenure of office. At the same time, Bert Christian, our 1st Vice President, indicated that he is no longer interested in retaining his position.

I have asked Joe Crosby if he would be interested in being President. He responded affirmatively and will stand as a nominee for the position. At the same time, Ed Hines agreed to be nominated for the 1st Vice President's position and to relinquish the 2nd Vice Presidential office.

Other nominations are solicited from the membership for these positions as well as the open position of 2nd Vice President. As soon as the nominations are completed, the slate will be presented to the board for a vote.

Tom Stanton informs me that he will relinquish the Editorship of the NEWS at the end of this year. He has a number of other research projects which are competing for his time. We are grateful to him for the time he has spent and is spending on the NEWS. I will be happy for suggestions regarding a new editor. I can be contacted by mail or by phone (201) 808-8669. I will be calling a few people myself concerning this in the coming weeks.

The World Columbian Expo was a useful and interesting show. Our Club effort was a success in that a number of members met each other for the first time, we passed out material concerning the Club and our meeting went well. We had a congenial breakfast and get together and then a very fine presentation by Calvet Hahn on "Gems of New York State Philately." Gems indeed! The markings on the stampless covers he

Continued on page 16.



## PIKES PEAK MAILS 1859-1861

BY TOM STANTON

In the previous issue of the NEWS I discussed the role played by the Post Office Department in responding to the needs of the newly arriving miners to the regions around Denver and in the mountains to the west. In this segment of the article, I will consider the role played by the two major express companies in satisfying the wants of the miners to correspond with the east. The first of these was the express formed by William H. Russell and John S. Jones. Initially known as the Leavenworth and Pike's Peak Express, the name was changed to Jones & Russell Pike's Peak Express when the owners obtained the government mail contract and shifted the route northward into southern Nebraska Territory. Finally, the firm became the Central Overland, California and Pike's Peak Express (COC&PPE), when Alexander Majors and William Waddell were influenced to lend their financial backing to the money poor organization.

Hinckley & Co. Express, owned by C. S. Hinckley and John Sowers, was the second concern interested in addressing the desires of the miners. At first they merely carried the gold seekers correspondence from the mining regions along the mountain streams to the west of Denver to that city for eventual transmission to the east. But later in conjunction with the Western Stage Company they operated between Denver and Omaha or to St. Joseph via Fort Kearney.

### LEAVENWORTH & PIKE'S PEAK EXPRESS

At the onset of the Pike's Peak gold rush William Russell was engaged in the freighting business with his partners Alexander Majors and William Waddell. They were transporting sup-

plies to the army posts in Utah Territory. To say that Russell was a visionary would be an understatement, he saw the opportunity to provide a service to the gold seekers and proceeded to visit the legislators in Washington to attempt to obtain the Government's sanction and backing for this venture. The U.S. Government refused to back the venture, however, Russell proceeded to purchase sufficient mules and Concord stages to operate a daily line to and from the mines. Since Russell's two partners in the freighting (Majors and Waddell) declined to become part of this concern, he was obliged to secure these acquisitions with credit notes. From this point onward cash flow problems continued to plague the organization.

Russell opted for a shorter route to the mining region than the well-traversed Oregon Trail through southern Nebraska Territory. Thus in mid-March 1859 a survey team under the leadership of Colonel William Preston departed Leavenworth City to establish a route between the Republican and Solomon Rivers. (See Figure 13, on the next page.) Along this almost 470 mile route 27 stations were located, including the termini, for service to the passengers and the changing of equipment. The first passenger and possibly mail carrying stage departed Leavenworth City in mid-April and required almost three weeks to reach Denver, however, with experience the time of transit was shortly reduced to 7 to 10 days. The initial fees charged were \$125 per passenger and 25 cents per letter.

The usage of this route was short lived as in May 1859 Russell and Jones purchased the mail contract of John

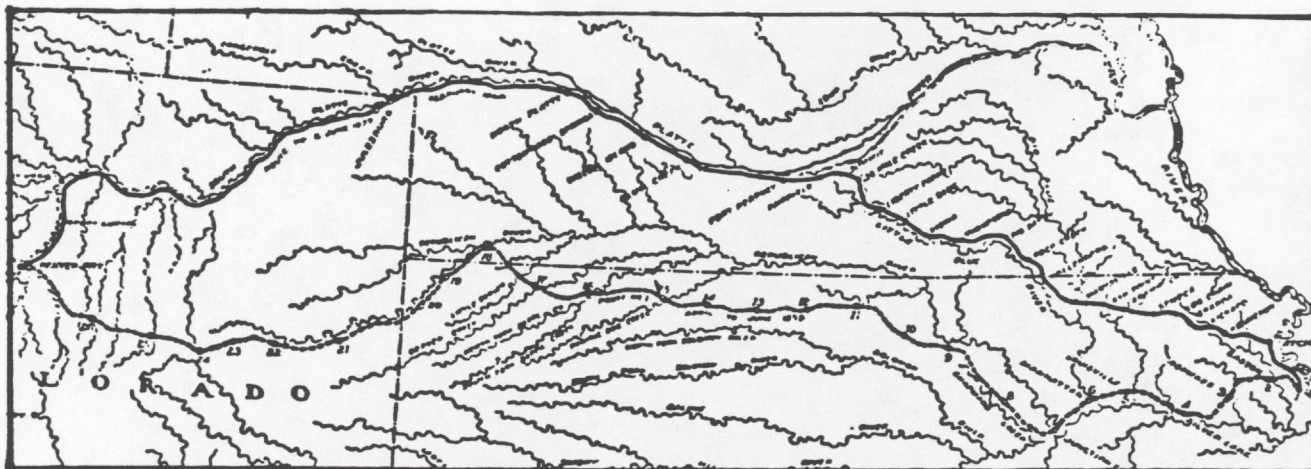


Figure 13. Map of the Express Routes in Kansas and Nebraska. (From Johnson, 1944)

Hockaday. This route ran from St. Joseph to Salt Lake City and necessitated the shifting of the express route to the one over the Oregon Trail. Only one postmark has been uncovered for the Leavenworth & Pike's Peak Express, it is the 35mm circular date stamp illustrated in figure 14. This marking, always struck in black, has been noted from late April until early July 1859. The cover illustrated in figure 15 shows the first recorded west bound missive. It was posted at Stouts, Ohio on April 15 and was turned over to



Figure 14. Leavenworth & Pike's Peak Express marking. (From Alexander).

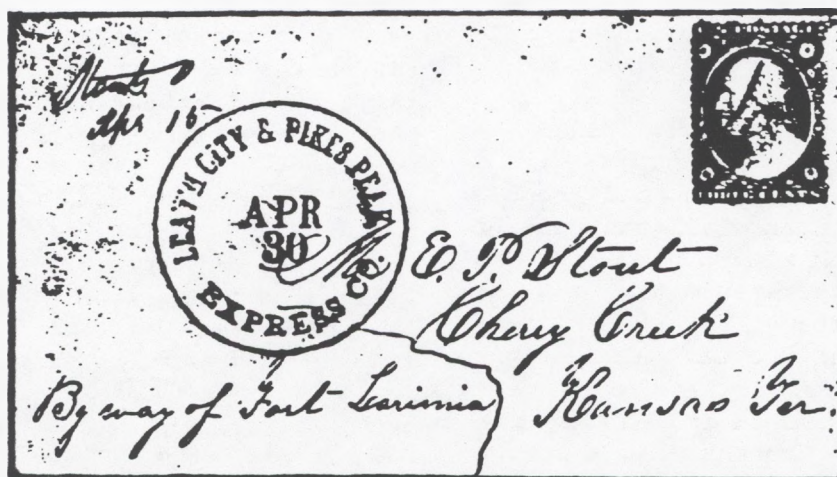


Figure 15. 1859 letter from Stouts, Ohio to Cherry Creek. (From Alexander)

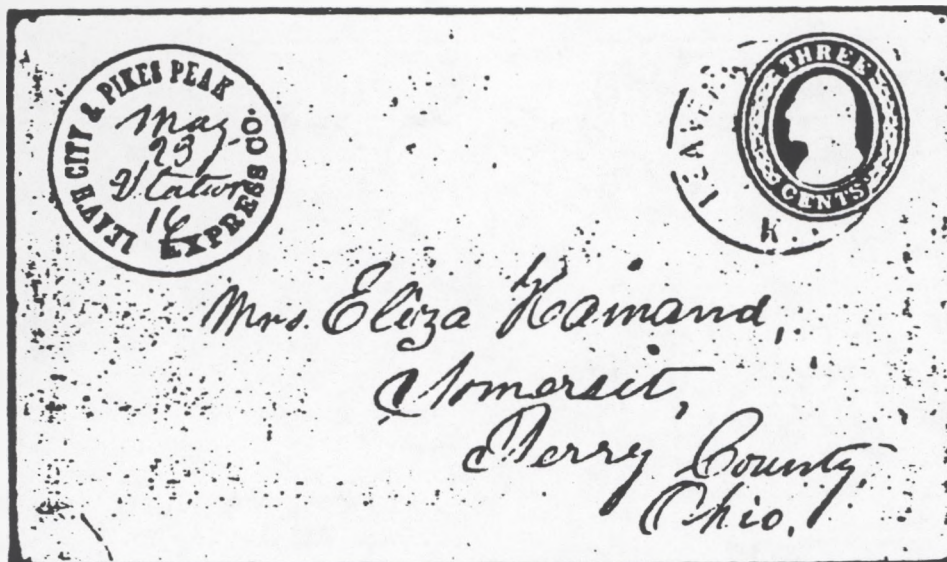


Figure 16. 1859 letter posted at station 16 on the Kansas route. (From Harmer.)

the express company at its Kansas terminus. An east bound letter was shown in figure 8 of the Fall 1991 NEWS, both of these letters depict a certain cooperation between the USPOD and the express company in transporting the mails to and from the gold seekers. Figure 16 portrays the more normal handling of the eastward correspondence, in which the missive was carried from the mining region or in this case from Station 16 in northwest Kansas to Leavenworth City. Here it was turned over to the USPOD for continued movement to its destination. Covers with this marking are very scarce and only about a dozen legitimate usages have been recorded.

#### JONES & RUSSELL PIKE'S PEAK EXPRESS

In May 1859 Jones and Russell purchased the overland mail contract of Hockaday & Co. for almost \$240,000. As stated this necessitated a movement of the route northward to the Oregon Trail or Platte River route. Since this route was well travelled and was being used by Majors, Russell and Waddell for their freighting enterprise, a survey was not needed. However, the express firm did have to relocate their stock and equipment, plus erect way stations

for the convenience of the travellers.

The new route was first traversed (by the express company) in early July when the seven day trip reached Denver on the ninth day of the month. As Jones and Russell were now transporting the Government mails to Salt Lake City and the express mails to Denver City, of necessity the two paths diverged at Julesburg in the northeast corner of the present State of Colorado. To the chagrin of the mining community the firm retained their 25 cent fee for letters carried to and from Denver.

Two postmarks are known from this express. The first (see figure 17) was used at Leavenworth City and is extremely rare, possibly unique. The



Figure 17. The Leavenworth City mark, from Alexander.

second was struck by the Denver City agents of the express firm and can be classified as scarce or moderately so. (See figure 18.) Both of these markings are about 35mm in diameter and are struck in black ink.

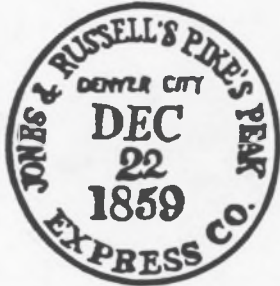


Figure 18. The Denver City marking, from Alexander.

A manuscript marking of the Jones and Russell express was shown as figure 9 of the last issue of the NEWS. This again illustrates the needed cooperation between government and private mail carriers. Figure 19 depicts the Denver City marking on a cover to Somerset, Ohio. On the reverse is another Jones & Russell hand stamp, but this one is dated July 29, 1859. It is assumed that the undated marking on the

front represents a frank, which indicates that the 25 cent express fee has been paid. The cover reached the Leavenworth City post office on August the 8th.

Financial difficulties continued to embarrass the establishment and in February 1860 Russell's freighting business partners, Majors and Waddell, finally entered the fray and formed a new company. It is interesting to note, that although the last run of a Jones & Russell stage was in late February, the postmark continued in service until June.

#### CENTRAL OVERLAND, CALIFORNIA AND PIKE'S PEAK EXPRESS COMPANY

When Majors and Waddell added their financial support to the beleaguered express company in early 1860 a new firm was established and incorporated in Kansas Territory in February. This was the noted Central Overland, California and Pike's Peak Express (COC & PPE) company. William Russell remained as president of the firm, however, Benjamin Ficklin replaced John Jones as the superintendent of the Denver operation. The conduct of the

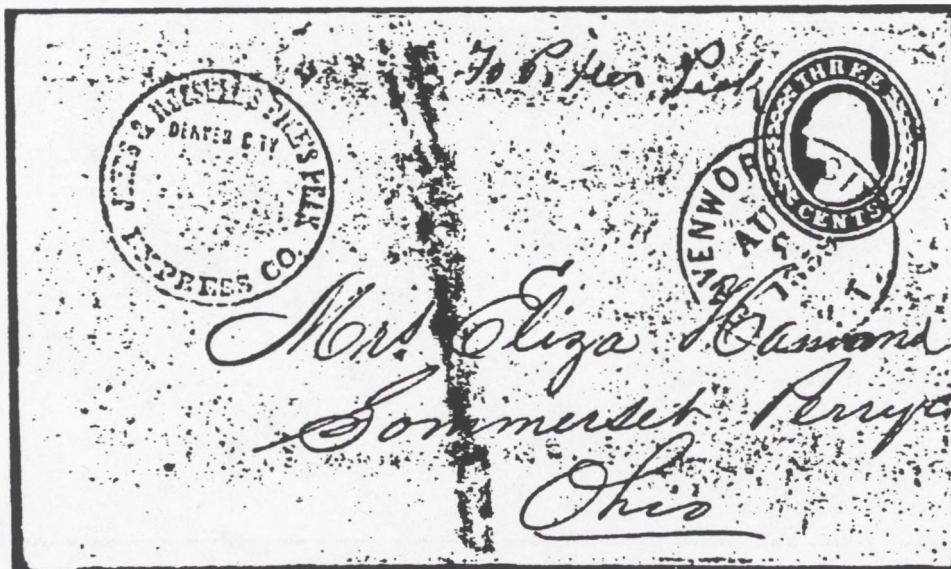


Figure 19. Jones & Russell frank on a August 1859 letter to Ohio. (From Harmer.)

express remained unchanged during the early months, but by the spring the entrance of Hinckley & Co. into the field complicated the picture.

The earliest marking used by the newly named company was a crude five line device illustrated in figure 20.

**DENVER.  
CENTRAL.  
OVER P. CAL. &  
PIKESPEAK  
EXPRESS**

Figure 20. From Alexander.

This marking was employed during the spring of 1860 and used in conjunction with the old Jones & Russell frank as shown in figure 18. Figure 21 shows such a usage in May 1860 to Manchester, N.H. The April Jones & Russell marking probably denotes the day the envelope was purchased (Jarrett, p183).

By June the familiar oval markings were introduced. These were pro-

duced for three cities. The ones for St. Joseph (figure 22) and Denver City (figure 23) can be classified as common, however, because of the firms association with the transcontinental Pony Express they bring a few hundred dollars at auction. The general color



Figure 22. The St. Joseph oval device, from Alexander.



Figure 23. The Denver City oval hand stamp, from Alexander.

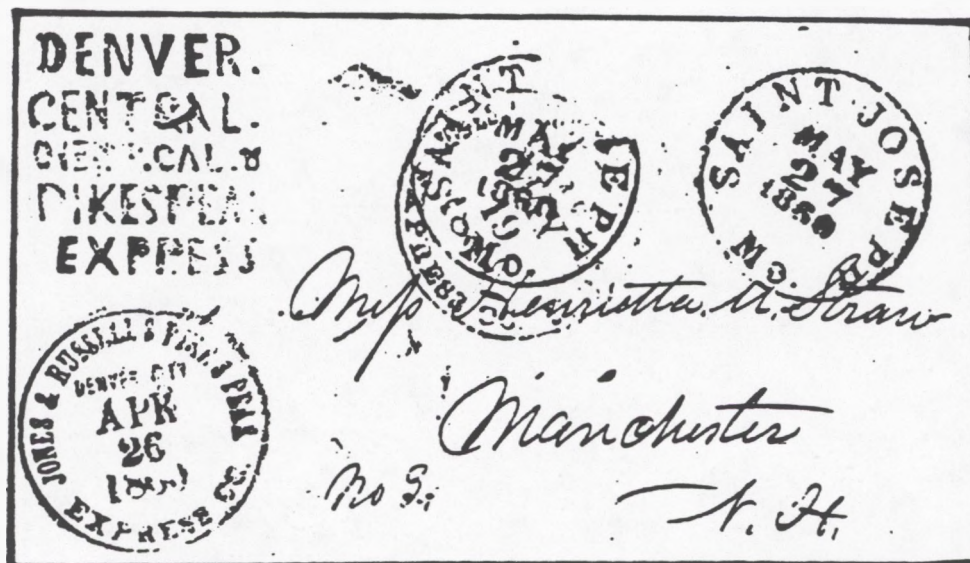


Figure 21. The crude COC & PPE marking on a May 1860 cover (From Jarrett).

is black, but the Denver City device is also known in green and this is very rare. The Leavenworth City impression (figure 24) is extremely rare with only a couple of examples known.



Figure 24. The Leavenworth City stamp, from Alexander.

The summer of 1860 witnesses various changes in the operation of the express. In July they took over the government mail contract between Denver City and Julesburg from the failing bidder. However, in mid-September this route was awarded to the Western Stage Co. Hinckley allied himself with the Western Stage Co., thus providing competition to the COC & PPE. As a result the latter had to reduce their fees to \$75 per passenger and 10 cents per letter. Note, the company had not

lowered these fees during the previous months when they held the mail contract from Denver City to St. Joseph.

The cover in figure 25 was posted during the changeover period of the Denver City to Julesburg route. The COC & PPE markings of both Denver City and St. Joseph indicate a relatively short transit time of six to seven days. The USPOD then forwarded the cover from St. Joseph to its eventual destination in Maine.

The competition between the two firms continued through the arduous winter that followed. In the spring of 1861 Bela M. Hughes replaced Russell as president of the firm. Hughes was the cousin of Ben Holliday, who has been speculated as a silent partner and financial backer of the organization. Under Hughes' (or Holliday's) leadership the competitor was eliminated when the COC & PPE purchased Hinckley & Co. in May.

Figure 26 depicts a solitary Denver City marking on a missive to Wisconsin. This in all likelihood was posted in 1861, since the earliest recorded usage of the 3-cent star die

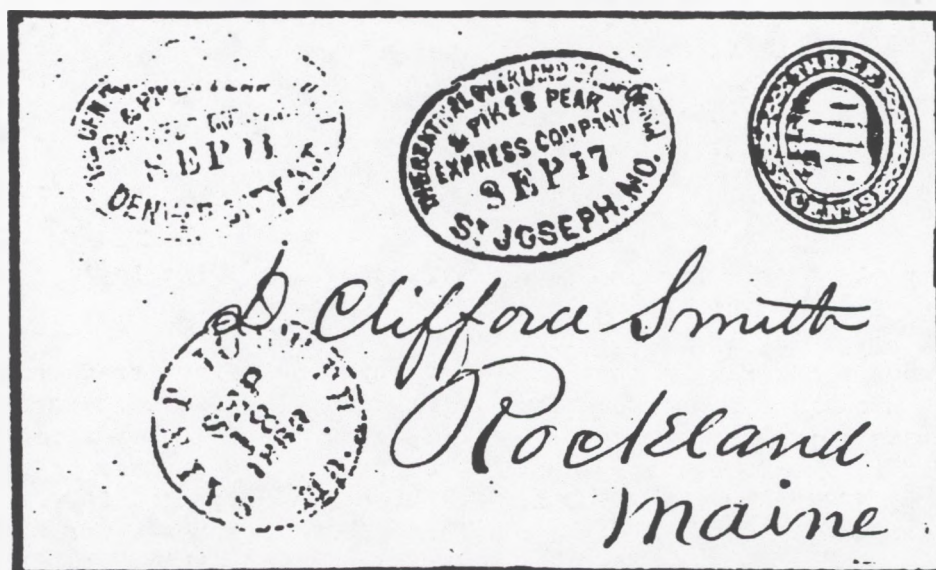


Figure 25. 1860 cover with both Denver City and St. Joseph COC & PPE markings, forwarded in U.S. mails to Maine (From Harmer).

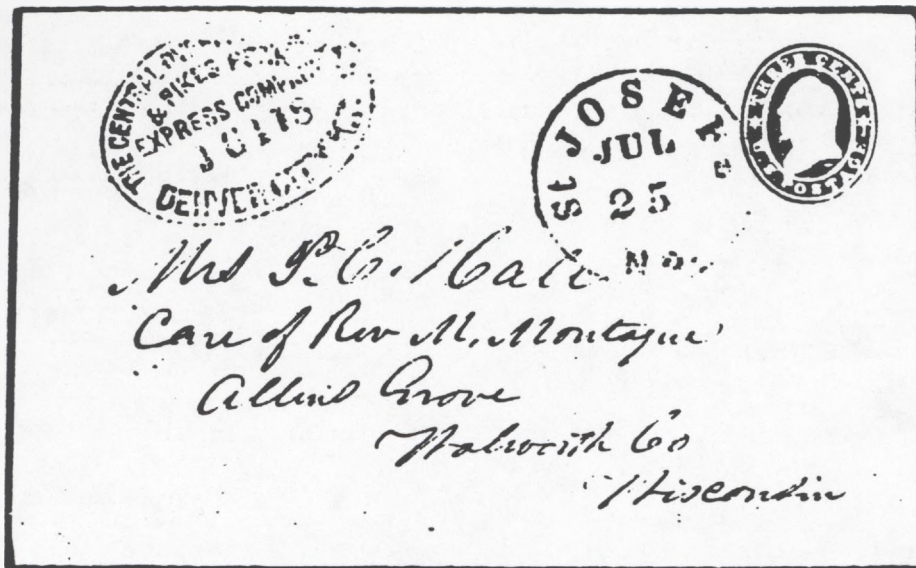


Figure 26. Cover from Denver via St. Joseph to Wisconsin, 1861? (From Harmer).

envelope is in late August 1860 or about one and one-half months after the letter departed Denver City. Here again we observe a seven day transit time from Denver City to St. Joseph.

In September the eastern terminus was moved to Atchison, Kansas as the Hannibal & St. Joseph RR was extended to that point. The succeeding severe winter portended the doom for the COC & PPE. In April 1862 the assets of the company were purchased by Ben Holliday for \$100,000 and with it he assumed a half million dollar debt. He reorganized the line and continued its operation as the Overland Stage Co.

#### HINCKLEY & CO.'S EXPRESS

Hinckley & Co's Express was formed by C. S. Hinckley and John S. Sowers in the Spring of 1860. Initially they operated principally from the mountainous mining regions to Denver City. From this point the correspondence entrusted to them was transshipped by the COC & PPE or by the USPOD for further delivery.

As stated earlier the COC & PPE took over the U.S. mail contract from

Denver to Julesburg in the summer of 1860. However, in September the Western Stage Co. was awarded this route by the USPOD and thereafter Hinckley's mails were carried eastward by this firm.

Hinckley used only one postmark during his operation. This 34mm Denver City device is known from early May 1860 until April 1861 (see figure 27). A1-

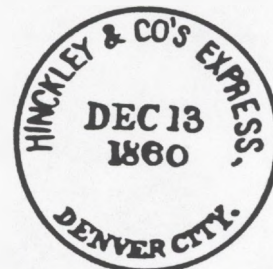


Figure 27. Hinckley's postmark, from Alexander

though the firm used only one hand stamp, They produced numerous printed franks. Many exist for the Denver office of the express and a sampling is shown in figures 28, 29 and 30. One has also been noted for the St. Joseph office and this is illustrated in figure 31. Note the difference in the frank of the Denver office are



Figure 28. Hinckley scroll, re-Jarrett.



Figure 30. Hinckley scroll, re-Jarrett.



Figure 29. Hinckley scroll, re-Jarrett.

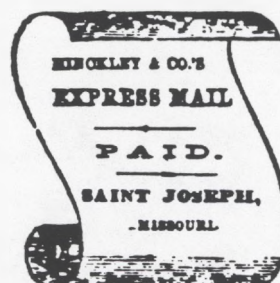


Figure 31. Hinckley scroll, re-Jarrett.

primarily in the typesetting used in the scroll, but there also exist differences in the printed instructions which occur above and below the scroll.

As mentioned above the early

Hinckley covers show the firms reliance on the COC & PPE for eastward transport from Denver. Figure 32 depicts such a cover, postmarked on June 14, 1860 by both the Hinckley and COC & PPE express companies. The latter carried it to

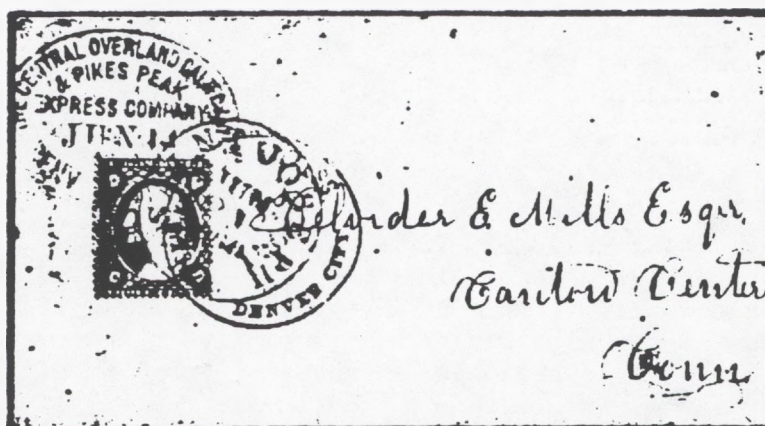


Figure 32. Both Hinckley and COC & PPE June 14, 1860 franks on a cover to Connecticut. It entered the mails at St. Joseph, MO (From Wolffers, January 1992).

St. Joseph where it was postmarked on June 21 (possibly 24) and entered the U.S. mails for further travel to its destination.

The next two covers illustrate Hinckley's independence of the COC & PPE. The cover in figure 33 shows a December 10, 1860 Denver City Hinckley marking. From there it was carried by the Western Stage Co. through Omaha to Council Bluffs, Iowa, where it entered the U.S. mails on December 18 and proceeded on its journey. Figure 34 is a cover from Denver on March 18, 1861, which entered the mails on March 25 at St. Joseph. In all likelihood it traversed the Platte River route to Fort Kearney, Nebraska Territory and then moved southeastward to St. Joseph. These two portray Hinckley's use of both cities as his eastern terminus.

In May 1861 the firm was purchased by the COC & PPE, thus they ceased operation.

#### SUMMARY

The discovery of gold during the fall of 1858 in the Cherry Creek region of Kansas Territory led to an influx of

miners seeking their fortunes from the find. Although the initial lode was not of sufficient quantity to sustain a large scale rush, eventual gold finds located in the mountain streams to the west of present day Denver were able to maintain the boom.

Of course the gold seekers wished to correspond with their friends and relatives in the east to relay their successes, trials and tribulations. To satisfy these desires both government and private enterprises entered the region.

In December of 1858, the USPOD established the first post office in the region at Auroria. This office was in existence for only slightly over two years and its location has not been firmly documented. In 1859 the POD initiated six more post offices and in 1860 another 17 were instituted. In all by the end of 1861, 36 distinct post offices were established and of these 32 continued into 1862. Of these offices well over one-half were located in Kansas Territory and about one-third in Colorado Territory after it was formed in February 1861. Six were in Nebraska Terr. and the other in Utah.

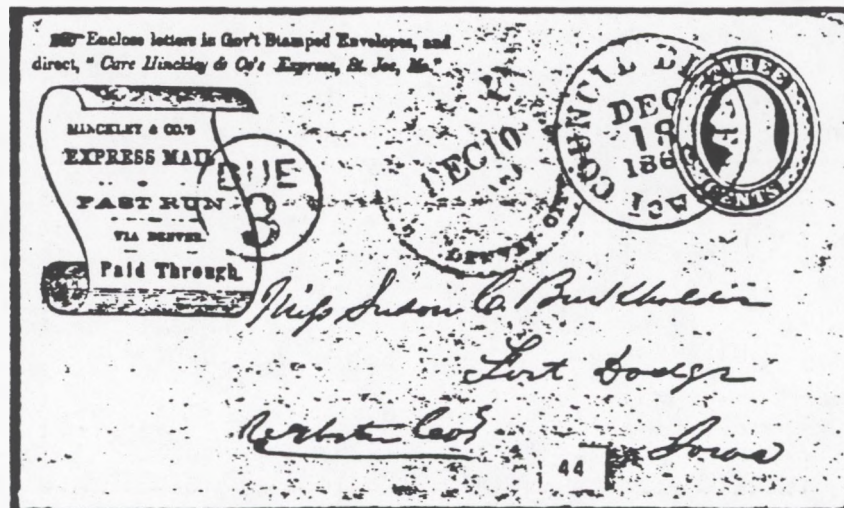


Figure 33. Hinckley frank of December 10, 1860 on a cover to Fort Dodge, Iowa. It entered the mails at Council Bluffs, Iowa on December 18th. (From Harmer.)

transmit their letters through either purchased by the COC & PPE in May 1861  
Omaha or St. Joseph. The firm was and thereby ceased to function.

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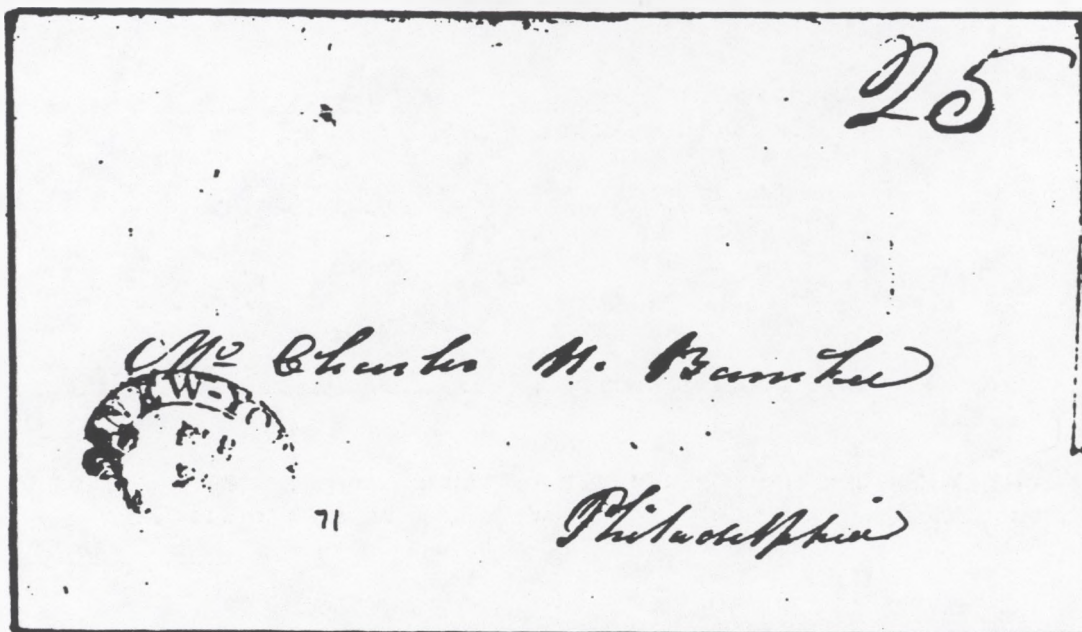
National Archives and Records Administration, Record Group 28, Mail Route Registers, Kansas and Nebraska.

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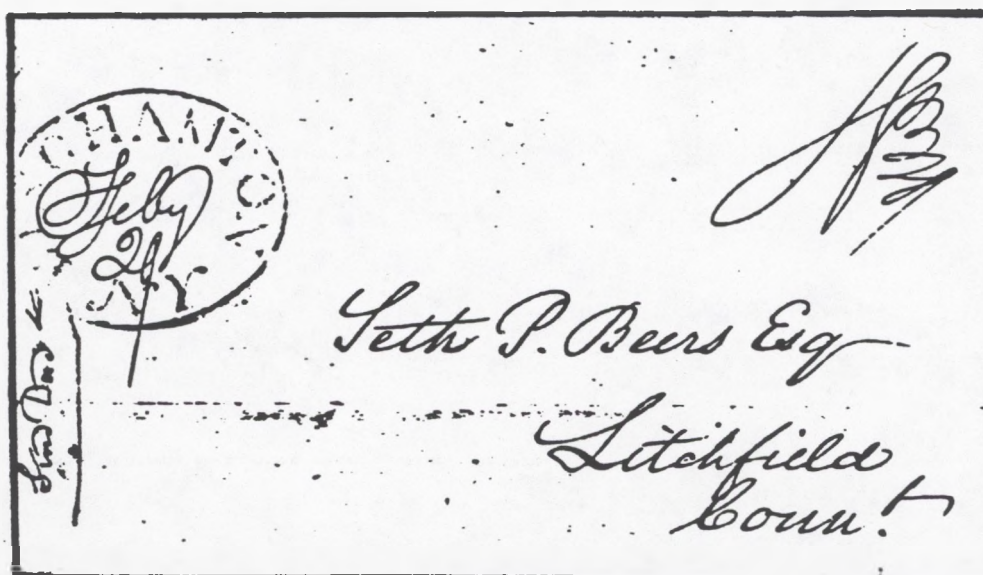
## February 29th Leap Year Postmarks

by John Shue

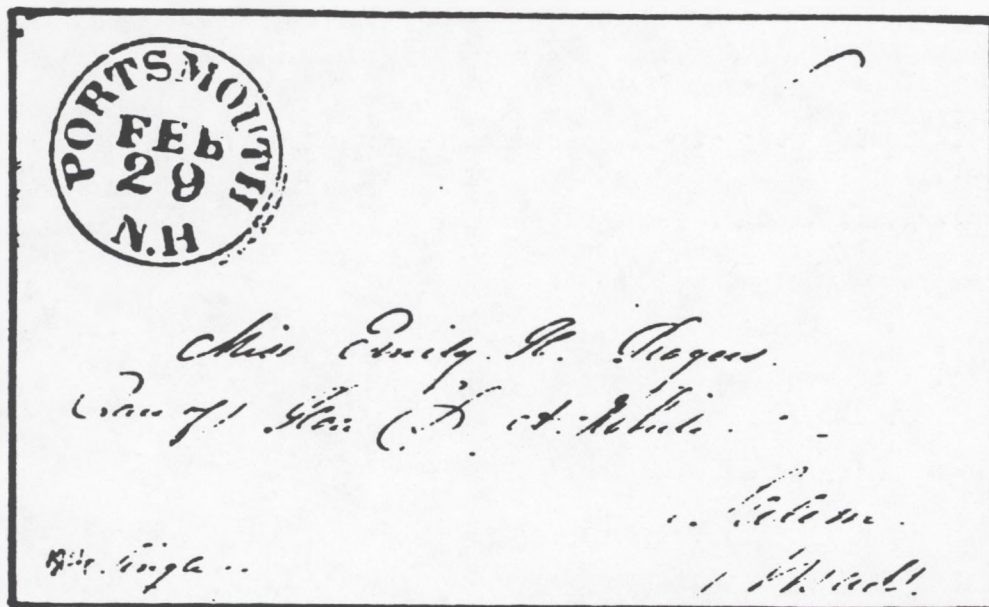
The following are selected covers from a collection of February 29th leap year postmarks.



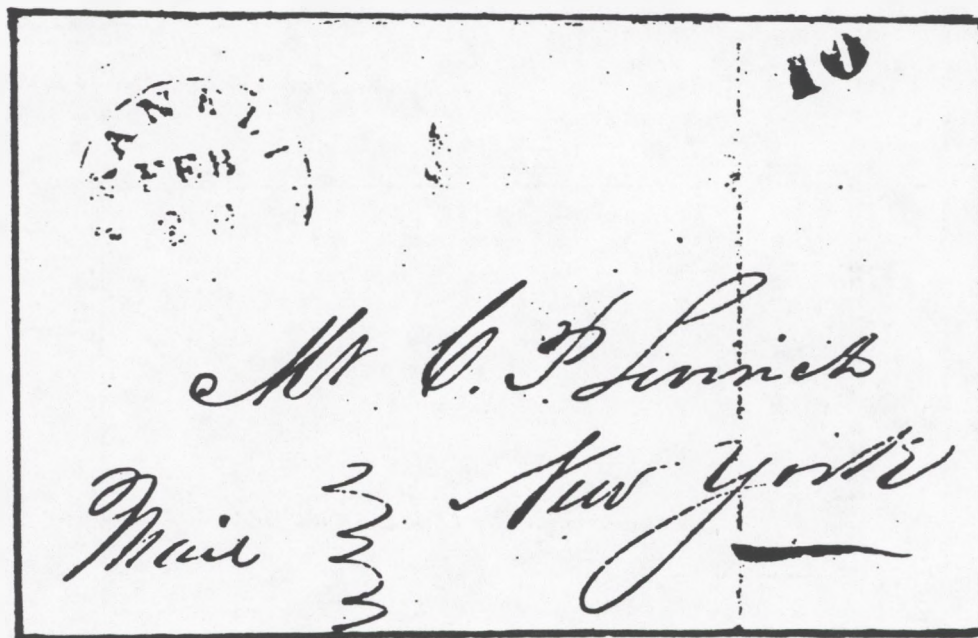
1804 red New York "clam shell" postmark on a double (12½¢) rate to Philadelphia (90 to 150 mile rate).



1832 red oval Binghamton, New York postmark on cover rated 18 3/4¢ for 150 to 400 miles to Litchfield, Connecticut.



1840 bold red Portsmouth/N.H. postmark on a cover rated 6¢ to Salem, Massachusetts. This represents the under 30 mile single rate.



1848 cover from Franklin, Louisiana, but datelined Attakapas, to New York City. Red postmark and matching "10" handstamp, the latter denotes the single rate for over 300 miles.

From page 2.

showed were unusual (in some cases unique) and very exciting. I would also like to thank Al Parsons, John Grabowski, Henry Chlanda and my wife, Manola Schrier for sitting at the Club table at various times during the show. We passed out information and signed up a few new members. The Club and its work move on.

Gene Schrier, Secretary-Treasurer.

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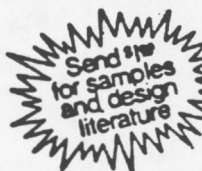
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