

# Wichita Stamp Club Newsletter



Vol. 80, No. 3, March 2012

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Editor



*"Go Fly A Stamp"*



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This cover isn't much bigger than the stamp used to send it!

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A neat Wells Fargo cover

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## TRAVEL KANSAS—NORTH TO SOUTH—EAST TO WEST by Neal E. Danielson

**Travel Kansas—Lost Springs** located in Marion County, Kansas (Figures 1 & 2) named in honor of its namesake Marion County, Ohio which was named in memory of General Francis Marion of Revolutionary fame. Lost Springs on the other hand was named for the old lost spring near the city and was one of the favorite camping sites on the Santa Fe Trail as it generally had an ample supply of good water. It was located about a day's travel by wagon train west from Diamond Springs. The spring had a bad habit of periodically drying up, sometimes for a week, a month or even a couple years, thus when pioneers tried to find the spring on return trips they could not locate.



Figure 1--Marion Co. Railroad Map ca 1899

Marion County was founded in 1855 a few months after Kansas became a Territory. The land that became Kansas was inhabited by Native Americans for several millennia and then in 1803 the United States secured land through the Louisiana Purchase. As time passed migration of individuals and families from the east looked to the west and trade became the future. A stage station was opened near the spring in 1859 and was known as Lost Springs Station. From the 1820s through the 1870s the Santa Fe Trail was one of the most significant land routes in the United States and Lost Springs played a vital role in the Trail with its water supply.

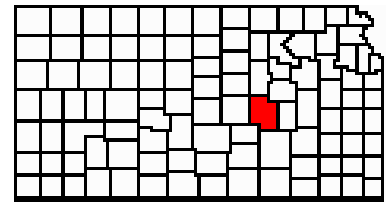


Figure 2--Marion County

The railroad played another vital role to the development of Marion County and with Lost Springs. In 1887 the Chicago, Kansas and Nebraska Railway built a branch line north-south from Herington through Lost Springs to Caldwell. That same year the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway built a branch line from Neva to Superior, Nebraska. This branch connected a number of communities in the state including Lost Springs. As with most early Railway Companies they eventually merged with other Railways and are currently operating under a new name, while others simply went belly up and eventually the tracks were removed and land when back to the original land owner in some cases.

One of the early pioneers of Lost Springs was Ezra Mowrer who became a life long resident of the small town and owned the General Store on the main intersection of Berry and Chicago in 1900's (Figure 3).



Figure 3- Ezra Mowrer General Store - Lost Springs

The Lost Springs Post Office opened on August 29, 1861, but would close by May 23, 1864. However, the Post Office opened again on September 9, 1879 and is open today, at least for the time being. A lady by the name of Jennie Withrouer sent a Happy Birthday Post Card (Figure 4) to a Mrs. Minnie Jones also of Lost Springs.

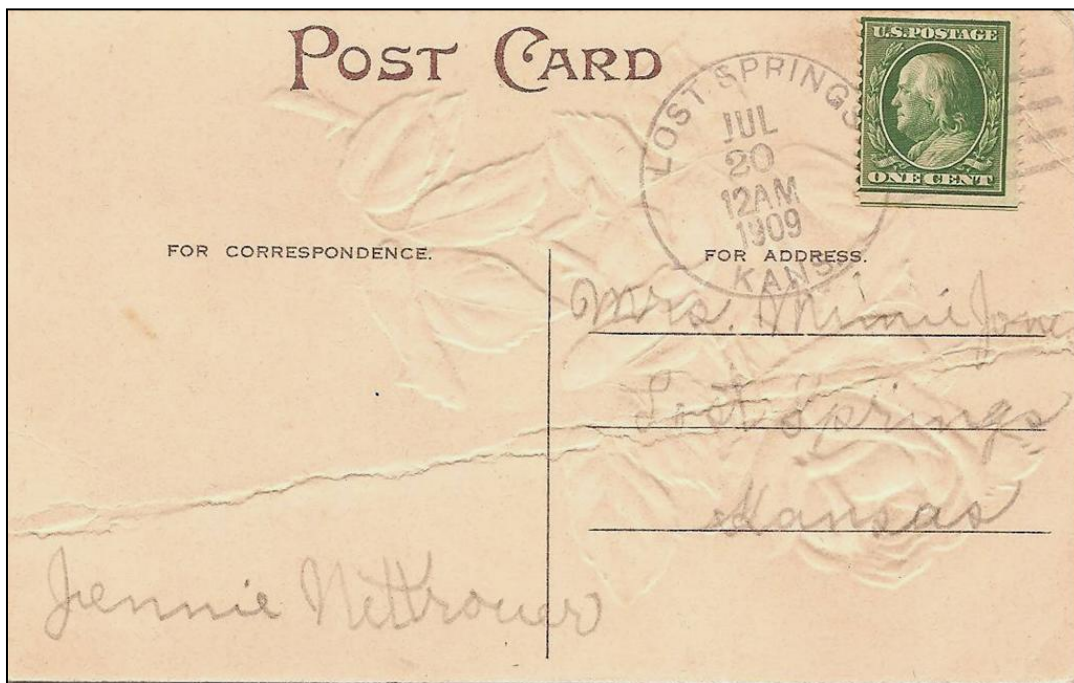


Figure 4--Post Card Postmarked from Lost Springs in 1909

The Post Card is franked with a 1¢ Benjamin Franklin Stamp (Scott #231) and tied to the card with a four-bar balloon cancel from Lost Springs on Jul 20 1909.



Figure 5-Lumber Yard-Lost Springs, Kansas

The Lost Springs Lumber Company (Figure 5), owned by the Kansas Lumber Company, did a booming business in the small town provided needed lumber and other material to erect numerous homes and businesses.

References

Blue Skyways website: <http://skyways.lib.ks.us/counties/MN>

Santa Fe Trail Research: [http://santafetrailresearch.com/trail-photo-02/lost\\_springs-kansas.html](http://santafetrailresearch.com/trail-photo-02/lost_springs-kansas.html)

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**DON'T SWEAT THE SMALL STUFF** by Neal E. Danielson & Louis Forster

This is the 33<sup>rd</sup> in a series of articles relating to small post cards and small covers so if you have any in your collection that you would like to share please let us know. This Small Stuff comes to you courtesy of Louois Forster.

Wow! This Small Stuff measures 71mm X 44mm (2 3/4 in. X 1 11/16 in.). The cover has two postmarks (Figure 1). The one to the left is a balloon cancel from Hot Springs, Alaska, postmarked Nov 18, 1942. The exact location of this Hot Springs is not determined as there are 169 Hot Springs in Alaska. However other evidence on the cover leads to the town of Tolovana. The balloon cancel to the right which ties the 3¢ Win the War stamp (Scott #905) is postmarked from Nenana, Alaska on May 27, 1942. The small cover has a hand written return address of "Hot Springs" (printed) and "Tolovana" (script). The cover was mailed to DOG-TEAM Ruth and Bob. 5106 Warwick Ave. Chicago, Ill. U. S. A

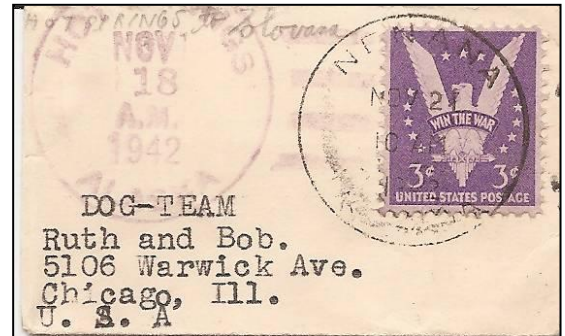


Figure 1-Dog-Team Small Cover

The small cover received a U.S. Censorship cancel on the back placed there by Postmaster Gus A. Benson 9812 (Figure 2). The censorship was required due to events taking place at the beginning of World War II The Post Office in Nenana was opened in 1908. The Hot Springs located at Tolovana is not accessible by roads.



Figure 2-Reverse side Small Cover

To reach the remote areas you must be well trained in wilderness journey and have backcountry experience. One of the trails is an eleven (11) mile with the trailhead 100 miles from Fairbanks on the Elliot Highway (Figure 3). Dog-musher's and skiers must be experience due to steep hills. The trail crosses over Tolovana Hot Springs Dome, from where travelers enjoy spectacular views of Minto Flats State Game Refuge, the White and Ray Mountain Ranges and even a glimpse of Mt. McKinley on a clear day, see map (Figure 3).

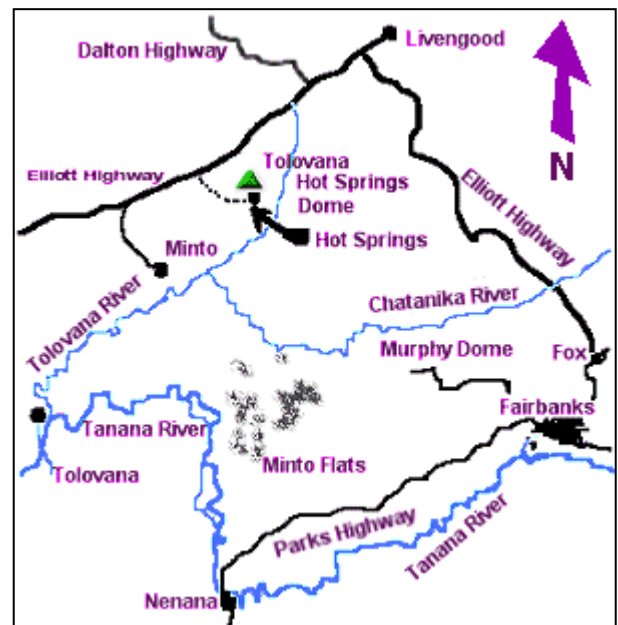


Figure 3-Map of Tolovana & Nenana

A band of hot springs and seeps emerge below the Tolovana Hot Springs Dome peak and above the floor of the Tolovana River Valley. The Hot Springs has a temperature range from 125 – 145 degrees Fahrenheit, a P.H. of 7.4 and is low in sulfates, so no sulfur odor (Figure 4).



Figure 4-Hot Springs Tolovana, Alaska

Another trail built in 1917 is referred to as the 26 Mile Trail that follows the long, straight flat stretches of the historic Livengood-Dunbar Sled Road down the Tolovana River Valley. The trail was initially established to support gold mining activity in Brooks (Livengood). The trail leads across lakes, open fields, creeks and narrow connecting cuts through the woods to the hot springs. Fur trappers have used parts of it over the years so it always a good idea to check with Alaska Trapping Association to acquire updates on activity along the trail. The trailhead is 75 miles from Fairbanks on the Elliot Highway at Livengood. There is a 50 Mile Trail that also uses part of the Livengood-Dunbar Sled Road with its trailhead 30 miles from Fairbanks on the top of Murphy Dome Road, elevation 2, 930'. The trail descends to the Chatanika River, then for most of its length follows the Livengood and requires crossing the very steep banked Tolovana River.



Figure 5-Trading Post (note the set of moose antlers above door to the left)



Figure 6-Tolovana, Alaska



Figure 7-Tolovana Roadhouse

The village of Tolovana has a Trading Post built around 1920 (Figure 5).

Construction of the Alaska Railroad in 1915 brought prosperity to the area (Figure 6) and it revived the Tolovana Roadhouse (Figure 7) established in 1903 as a roadhouse and trading point on the mail trail from Fairbanks and Nenana to Nome. The Roadhouse has maintained its historical features of a time when most of the travelers were by dog sled (Note the dog sled and team in front of the Roadhouse).

The Railroad Depot was completed in 1923 at Nenana when President Warren Harding drove the golden spike at the north end of the bridge that crossed the Tanana River. Nenana was the starting point for the 1925 serum run to Nome, where diphtheria antitoxin was transported by rail from Anchorage, and continued by dog sled to Nome. Nenana is a center of dog mushing; a number of world-class teams train in the area.

References:

Wikipedia Free Encyclopedia website: [http://en.wikipedia/wiki/Nenana\\_Alaska](http://en.wikipedia/wiki/Nenana_Alaska)

University of Alaska Anchorage, Archives: <http://vilda.alaska.edu>

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## Old Church at Lake Bennet by Neal E. Danielson

Located in northwestern Canada partly in the British Columbia Province and partly in the Yukon Province sits Lake Bennet. The White Pass narrow-gauge and Yukon Route Railroad connects Bennett, British Columbia at the south end of the lake with Skagway a little distance south and Whitehorse, Yukon on the north. The White Pass and Yukon Route tracks hug the mountainside between Skagway, Alaska, and Bennett Lake, British Columbia (Figure 1). The town of Bennett is currently abandoned was historically referred to as Lake Bennett or Bennett Lake and on the other shores of the Lake is the town of Carcross, Yukon.

It has been stated that in the year of 1896 gold was discovered on Bonanza Creek, a tributary of the Klondike River, about 11 miles from Dawson City. By 1897 word had got on, the Klondike Gold Rush was on. A stampede of people from all walks of life headed for the gold fields. The most notable route was over the Chilkoot Pass from Alaska through British Columbia and into the Yukon. This Pass was a frequent trail used by the First Nations people who lived in this region. If you were one of the stampedeers your trip would include aboard ship from Seattle, Washington to the town of Skagway in Alaska. From this point it was overland by way of the Chilkoot Pass to the headwaters of the Yukon River at Lindeman Lake or onto Bennett Lake, both being located in British Columbia. From Lake Bennett or Lindeman Lake the prospectors and miners built boats and rafts that were put into the water at either Lindeman or Bennett to continue the rest of the way to Dawson City by water.

During the Klondike Gold Rush, Bennett Lake was where the gold-seekers who had crossed the Coast Mountains from Skagway or Dyea, carrying their goods over the Chilkoot Trail or the White Pass, purchased or built rafts to float down the Yukon River to the gold fields at Dawson City, Yukon, Canada. A large tent city sprang up on its shores, numbering in the thousands and offering all the services of a major city. Stampedeers' tents lined every inch of available space along the shores of Lake Bennett in the winter of 1897/1898 (Figure 2). In late May 1898, the North West Mounted Police counted 778 boats under construction at Lindeman Lake, 850 in Bennett and the surrounding area, and another 198 at Caribou Crossing (now Carcross) and Tagish Lake to help transport thousands of goldfield-bound travelers. It was further estimated that another 1,200 boats were built in these areas over the next few weeks.



Figure 6-White Pass & Yukon Route



Figure 7-Stampeder's shores of Lake Bennett



Figure 8-Old Church at Lake Bennett

The weather and terrain of the area made the trip extremely harsh for the stampeder's, and adding to these harsh conditions was a law established by Canada that whoever entered Canada could only do so, if they

brought their own food supplies that would last a full year. Enforcing this law was up to the North West Mounted Police Station located at the summit of the pass. This law meant that every miner had to haul almost a ton of food over the border. This extra burden would take each person close to three months to haul gear from storage location to another storage location. The trip down the Yukon was no picnic with many rapids that had to be traversed.

Lake Bennett ended up having a church built along the shores of the lake (Figure 3) and from the looks of it a lot of different pieces of lumber were used in the construction, as can be seen in the post card. The Church still stands along the shore even though the town of Bennett is basically abandoned as was photographed in the year 2001 (Figure 4).

The town of Bennett was named in 1883 by Frederick Schwatka, a U. S. Army officer and explorer, after James Gordon Bennett Jr. (1841-1918), editor of the *New York Herald*, who was sponsor of Schwatka's search for the remains of the Franklin Expedition, 1878-1881.

The towns of Dyea and Skagway being trail heads for the two most popular routes over the mountains, White Pass and Chilkoot Pass were out to compete for the stampeder's dollars. Both towns could be reached by ship and were less than 10 miles apart. The town of Skagway had docking facilities for cargo to be unloaded, but the town of Dyea had no docking facilities and when ships came in it required unloading the cargo onto the beach. The stampeder's would have to hire people to move their cargo off the beach before high tide and people charged high dollar (\$20 an hour) to perform the task and even more (around \$50 an hour) if it was close to high tide.

The number of stampeder's, that flooded the town of Dyea, resulting in muddy streets, eating and sleeping in quickly-built restaurants and hotels. When the White Pass and Yukon Railroad came into operations it brought an end to Dyea, as they could not compete with the railroad. The post office closed down in 1902.

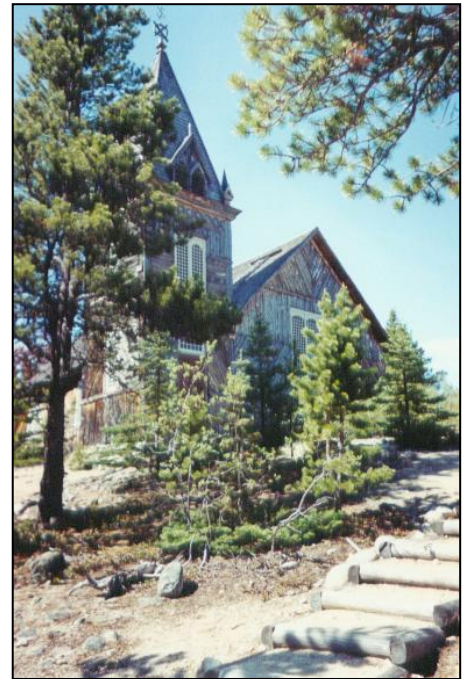


Figure 9-Bennett Church 2001

References:

Skagway, Alaska and Dyea, Alaska during the Gold Rush: <http://www.postalmuseum.si.edu/gold/skagdyea.html>.

Chilkoot Trail website: <http://www.beadventure.com/adventure/explore/north/trails/chilkoot.htm>

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**MOUNTAIN HIGH MAIL** by Neal E. Danielson

Most of us understand that the Continental Divide, Great Divide or Rocky Mountains is the name given to the mountain range that transverses this continent from the North Country to the South (Figure 1). This Great Divide is the watershed that sends the water from the western slopes to the Pacific Ocean from those river systems that sends the water into the Atlantic Ocean, the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea. In the northernmost reaches of this Great Divide the river systems sends its water into the Arctic Ocean. The Continental Divide begins at Cape Prince of Wales, Alaska then zigzags across country all the way to Mexico and then on into South America where it becomes the Andes Mountains all the way to the end.

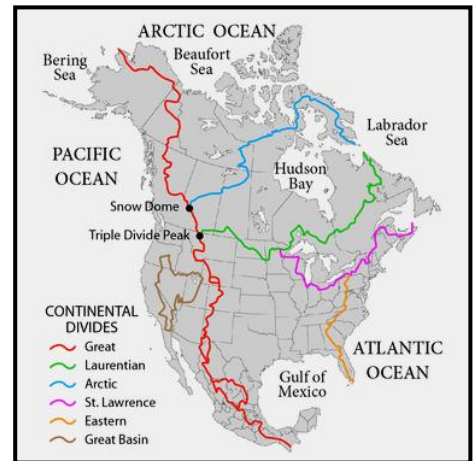


Figure 10-Continental Divide Mountain Range

But did you know that there was a Post Office in a place called Continental Divide, New Mexico located in McKinley County. A post card (Figure 2) was postmarked from Continental Divide N Mex. on Jul 24, 1967. The card is franked with a 5¢ George Washington Stamp (Scott #1283B) and tied to the card with a four-bar balloon cancel. The card was sent to a family that lived in Ellis, Kansas

The town of Continental Divide is located along Interstate 40 and to welcome visitors they have used a covered wagon (Figure 3) and the Post Office is considered the main attraction (Figure 4). However in this day and age of the U. S. Postal Service and their plans to close numerous Post Offices across the Country this one may not survive in the cost cutting effort.

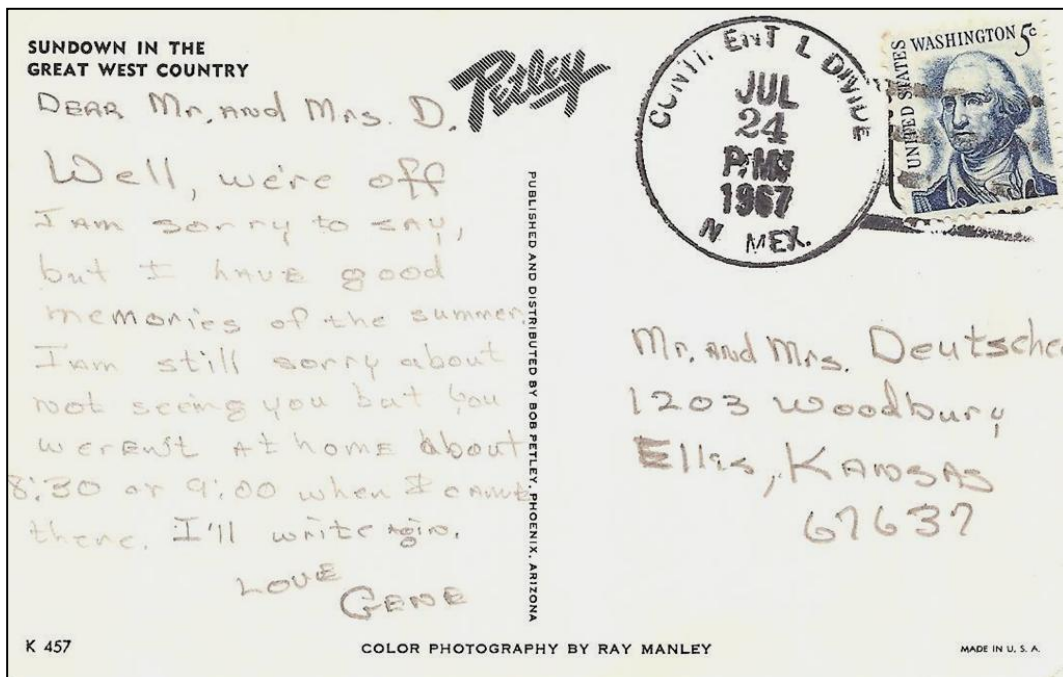


Figure 11 - Continental Divide Post Card



Figure 3-Welcome Wagon Continental Divide

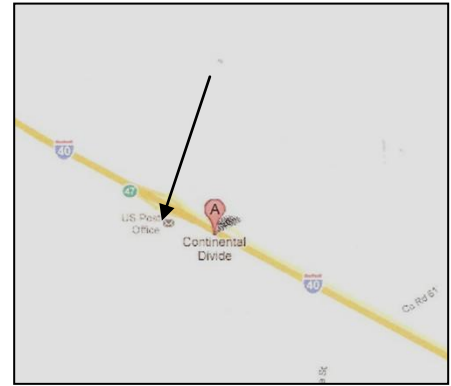


Figure 12-Google Map Continental Divide

References:

Wikipedia Free Encyclopedia: Continental Divide website.  
Google – Map of Continental Divide.

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## FOURTY-NINERS GOLD & WELLS FARGO by Ted Eshelman

The discovery of gold at Sutter's Mill in California was the beginning of a new era in western United States. Even the Postal Service felt the surge and set up post offices in California. However, the service they provided to the community and prospectors were not reliable, thus leaving the area without any semblance of mail service. The Adams Mail Service was going broke and didn't give good service, starting in April 1862 and went for four years.

Enter Wells Fargo a California Freight and Banking Company picking up the service previously serviced by Adams Mail Service. Wells Fargo started an Express Mail Service that lasted almost 40 years. In connecting with the East they bought Regular mail stamped covers from the Postal Service. In 1863 alone they bought two million stamped covers to which they attached their own logo "Paid Wells Fargo & Co. over our California and Coast Routes" and cancellation. This cancellation was paid for, depending on distance and accessibility. This cancellation was oval and the words "Paid Wells Fargo & Co." at the top of the oval and the way station at the bottom.

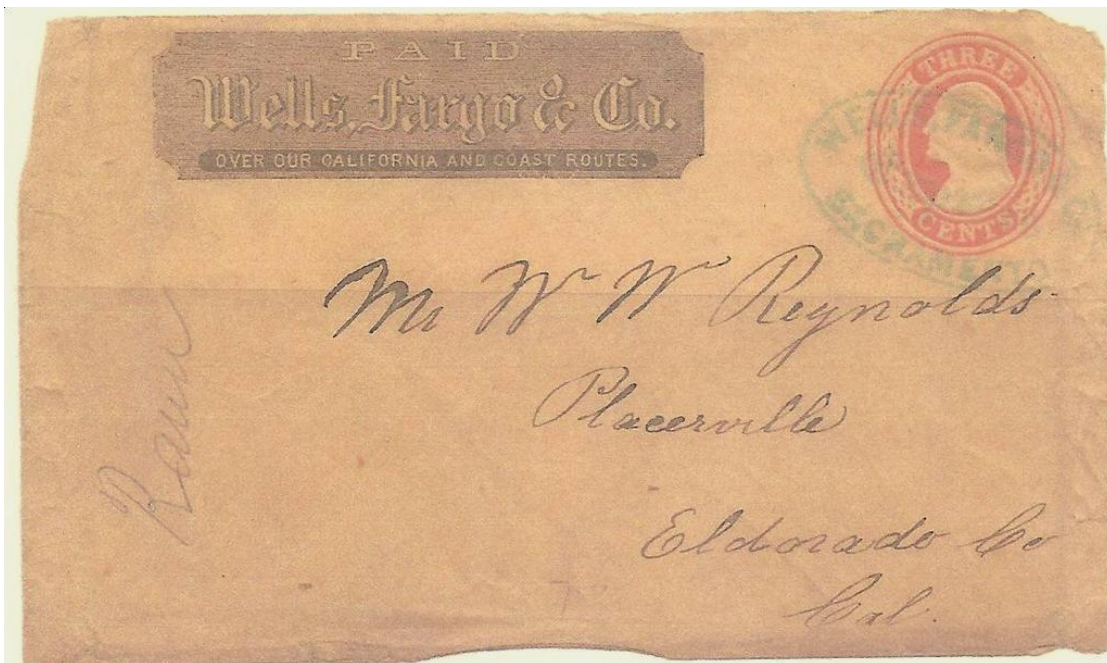


Figure 13-Wells Fargo Cover Sacramento to Placerville

A number of Wells Fargo Covers traveled short distances, some even by messengers. A Wells Fargo Cover, that traveled from the way station in Sacramento to Placerville, California in about 1855 (Figure 1) was sent to a Mr. W. W. Reynolds, Placerville, Eldorado County, California which was located near Carson City in Northern California. The cover is a 3¢ embossed stamp (Scott #U10) one of some 20 varieties issued in 1954. The cover is cancelled with an oval cancel with "Wells Fargo & Co." along the upper curve and the way station in the lower curve, thus "Sacramento" with the date across the center of the oval cancel.



When gold was discovered in nearby Coloma, California by James W. Marshall in 1848 it became part of the California Gold Rush. At that time Placerville was known as Dry Diggin's after the manner in which the miners moved dry dirt to the running water to separate the gold from the soil. Most of the gold was small nuggets, but one in particular found near Placerville was quite large (Figure 2). In 1849 the town was renamed Hangtown, due to the number of hangings that occurred in the area, but in 1850 the temperance movement and local churches resulted in the town name change to Placerville in 1854 to reflect a friendlier name.

Wells Fargo & Co., set up way stations with tough efficient Station Masters, who often brought their wives, usually white or Indian. These freight lines were protected by tough rifleman guards with the latest lever action Henry rifles with ball and center fire cartridge and the new rifled barrel.

Even the railroad didn't stop this express mail service. They picked up mail at the rail hubs and delivered to out lying post offices. Their service went through the Gold Rush, the Civil War and the Indian Wars.

With the treaties with the Indians the Postal Service was able to take control of the mail service. And Wells Fargo was forced out and all their offices were closed except their base office in California. Even with government subsidies they couldn't compete with the efficiency of Wells Fargo in their days of delivery.

Another California Gold Rush era cover was posted from a "Wells Fargo & Co.", way station in "Forest", California and sent to a Williment Merchant located in Auburn, California which is located in Placer County in the northern part of California also near Carson City. The 3¢ embossed cover (Scott #U26) is cancelled with an oval cancellation from Wells Fargo & Co. way station in Forest with the date across the center. The U26 was issued in October 1860 and recalled in the summer of 1861 with the start of the Civil War. Except for specials, according to Scott Specialty Catalog, these were probably covers purchased by Wells Fargo for their express mail. These were covers using the U12 plate type, one of 9 designs using that type.



Figure 15-Wells Fargo cover Forest to Auburn

In 1849 a group of French gold miners arrived and camped in what would later be known as Auburn Ravine. At first the area was called North Fork Dry Digging's, but was later changed to Woods Dry Diggings', after John S. Wood who settled in the area and started mining in the ravine. The name Auburn became a permanent name in August 1849. The Wells Fargo way station was located in Forest, Sierra County, in the northeastern part of California. The town became a thriving mining town during the California Gold Rush, but is mostly abandoned today.

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