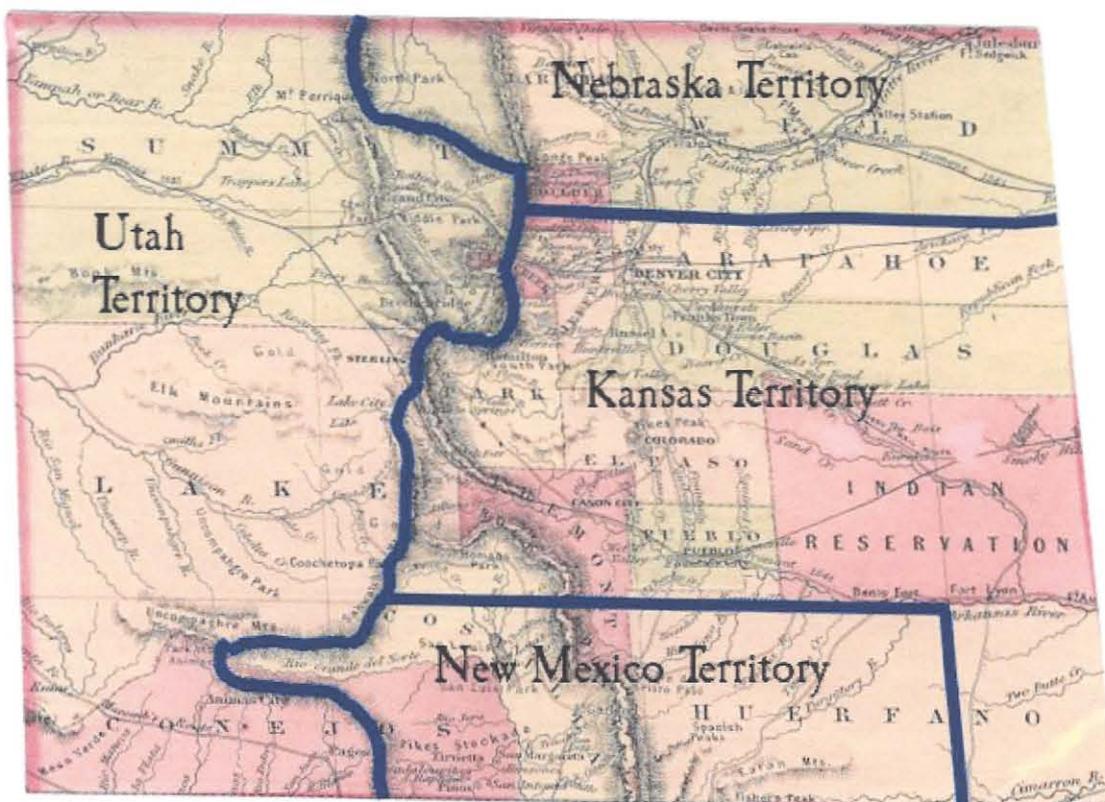


## Putting Together Colorado Territory Philatelically A Private Collection



Colorado became a state on August 1, 1876 with the same boundaries as Colorado Territory which had preceded it. Colorado Territory had in turn been formed on February 28, 1861 from portions of four different Territories (Kansas, Nebraska, Utah and New Mexico) as shown on the map above.

The purpose of this exhibit is to trace the development of mail-handling services in Colorado from the earliest period, while still part of the Unorganized Territory, through the period of four territories, and continuing through the early days of Colorado Territory.

The privately owned express companies, being an integral part of the mail-handling services during this period, are shown in the final frame. These companies invariably provided mail service prior to the establishment of post offices and the letting of government mail-carrying contracts.

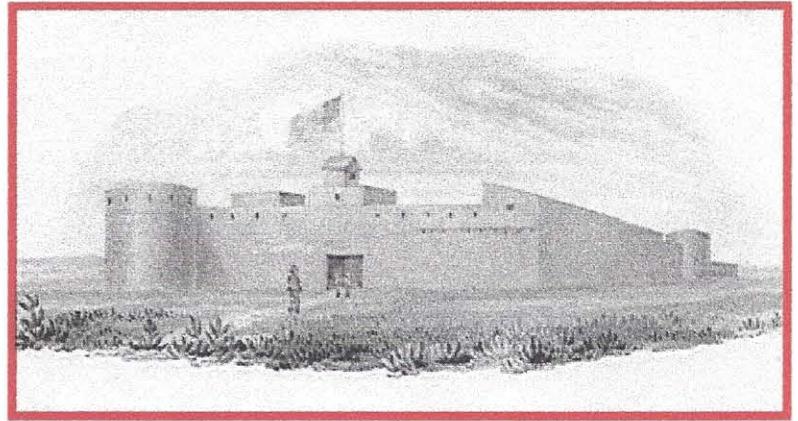
This exhibit has been prepared with the non-philatelist in mind. Historical background information is provided in blue and illustrations of relevant historical photographs has been included. Additional items may be found in the website presentation here: <http://www.coloradoterritory.org>

The owner would like to acknowledge the following individuals and firms for their assistance in creating this exhibit: Richard Frajola for acquisition, research and exhibit design, Denver Public Library and Colorado Historical Society for use of photographs, and Dry Creek Gold Leaf for the exhibit cases.

# UNORGANIZED TERRITORY

## Bent's Fort

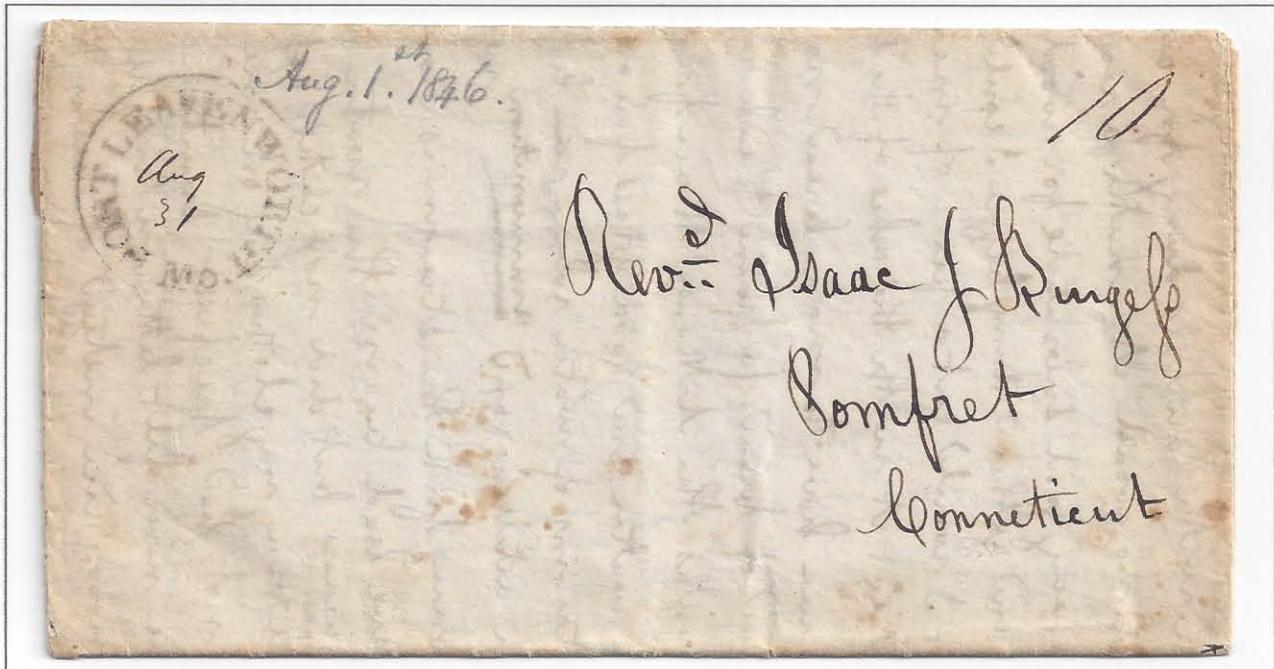
Bent's "Old" Fort was completed in 1833 by the four Bent brothers and their trading partner Ceran St. Vrain. It served as a trading post on the Sante Fe Trail and as the rendezvous point for Kearney's march on Sante Fe during the Mexican War. In 1852 William Bent destroyed the fortress which was replaced by the "New" Bent's Fort 30 miles to the east.



Bent's Fort in the 1840's

### The Earliest Reported Usage From What Is Now Colorado

*In camp on the banks of the Arkansas River five miles below Bent's Fort in the Indian country August 1<sup>st</sup> 1846.*



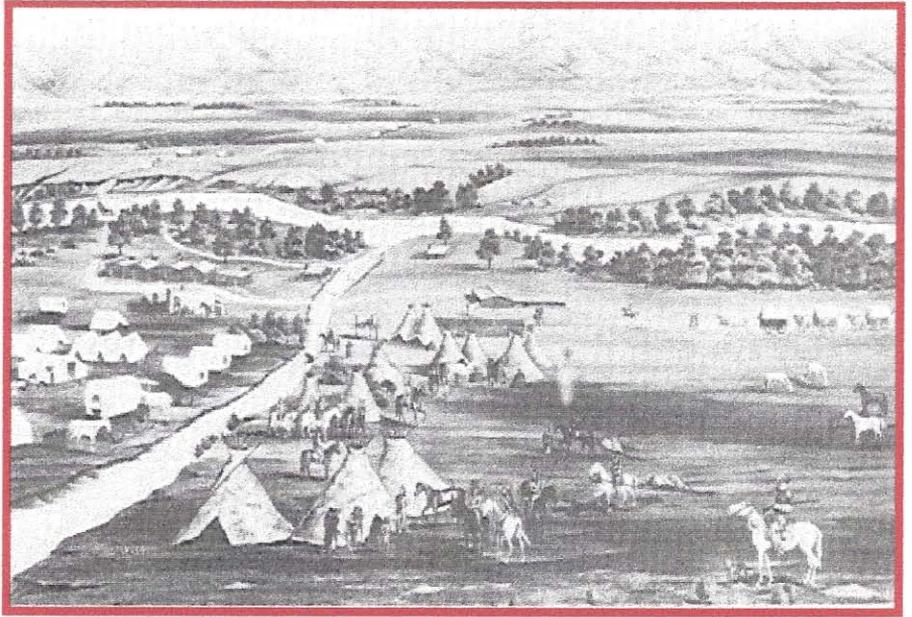
1 August 1846 Bent's Fort, Unorganized Territory (Missouri Country) to Connecticut by Military Express to Ft. Leavenworth, Missouri Country where in entered the mails on 31 August 1846

soldier's letter, from a member of the Doniphan and Kearney expedition on their way to Sante Fe, mentions: "It is very pleasant at the fort. It is on a rise about  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile from the river and was built to keep off the Indians. In all there are three block houses with holes so that you can fire at any position. In fact about all the buildings have port holes in case of need."

# KANSAS TERRITORY

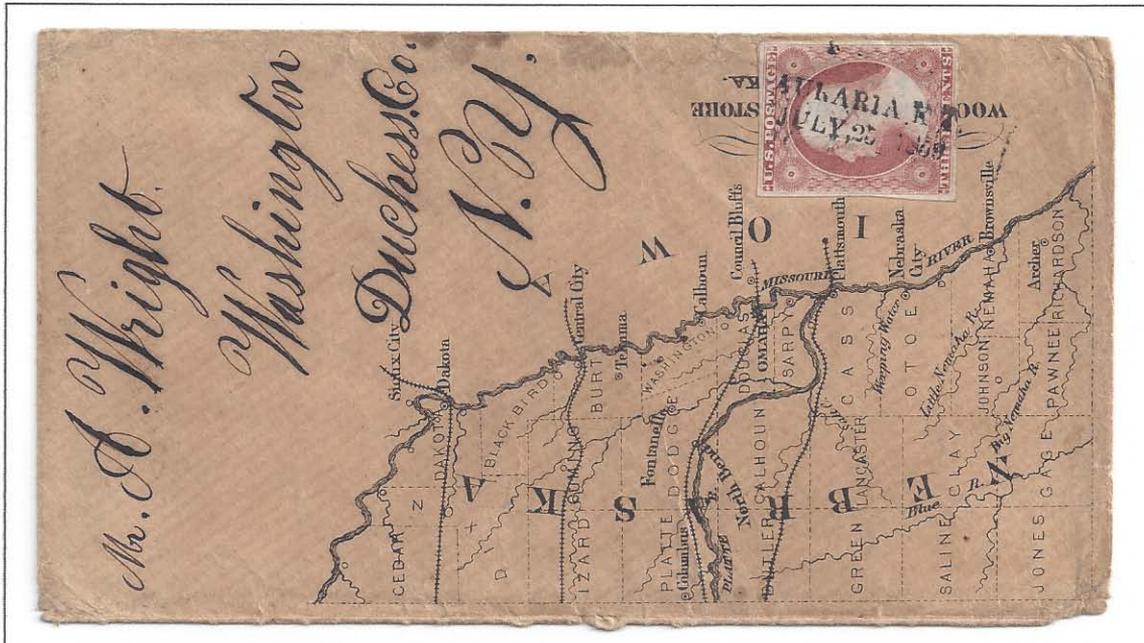
## Auraria

*Auraria was founded by the "Russell" party from Georgia in the fall of 1858 on the west bank of Cherry Creek opposite what was then the St. Charles townsite. A post office was established on January 18, 1859 although the first contract mails did not begin until July 11, 1859. Contract mails were carried by the United States Express Company until they failed after their August 26, 1859 trip. Auraria was unified with Denver City on April 5, 1860.*



Auraria is to the left of Cherry Creek and Denver City is to the right in this view looking towards the Platte River in 1859.

### The Earliest Reported Example Of This Postmark

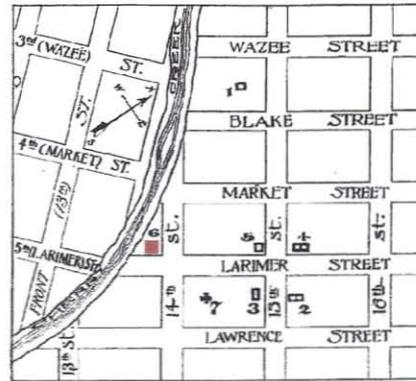


25 July 1859 Auraria, Kansas Territory to New York

# KANSAS TERRITORY

## Cherry Creek

*Cherry Creek was a location rather than a specific settlement. It referred to the area encompassed by the Denver City and Auraria town sites. .*



Letter and envelope from E.P. (Pinkie) Stout. Stout had arrived in Denver on October 26, 1858. He was one of the original stockholders in Auraria Town Company and the first President of the Denver City Town Company. A street in downtown Denver was named for him in 1859. The location of his home until 1861 is highlighted on map above.



26 February 1859 Cherry Creek, **Kansas Territory** to Cherry Fork, Ohio  
carried privately to Council Bluffs, Iowa where it entered the mails more than a month later

Original letter of E.P. (Pinkie) Stout mentions: “Miners are making from 3 to 10 dol per day and speculators like myself are making two or three times that amount....”

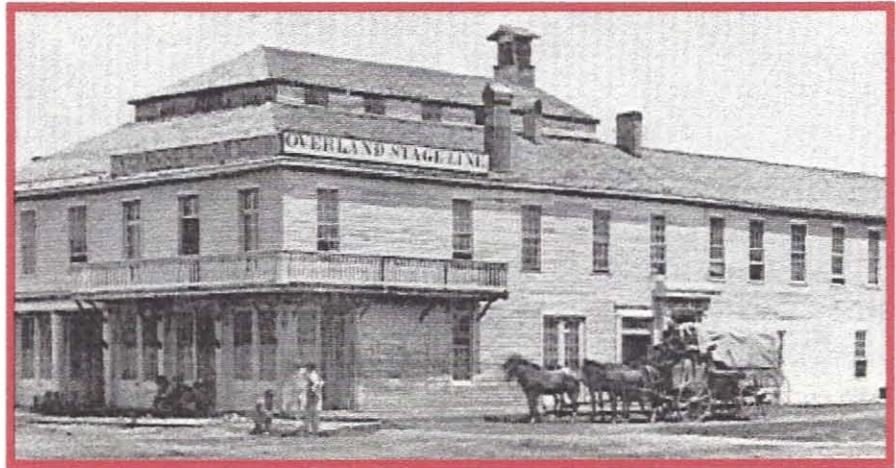
*The emigration is coming in continually and our town is building almost like a San Francisco. It already contains one church building, one theater, an opera or ball room, any amount of liquor and gambling saloons and one or two HHs (whore houses) or assignation houses which are to be supplied from Mexico and St. Louis and Cincin(nati).*

*Enclosed please find a specimen of (gold) dust which I give to sweet little Cora and tell her Pinkie sent it. There is about enough to make her a ring - just one dol worth I took from a few pans of dirt a few days ago while trying my hand washing.”*

# KANSAS TERRITORY

## Coraville

*Coraville was never a town or locale, it was simply the name of a Post Office. It was established on March 22, 1859 and began to function in June. The office was located in the Leavenworth & Pike's Peak Express Company office on Blake Street in Denver City. However, no mails could be sent until a mail carrying contract was in place. The contract for mails between Salt Lake City and Leavenworth City did not include Coraville. In error, three mails were dispatched from Coraville as contract mails before the Express agent realized that they were not being paid for the service.*



Planter's Hotel on Blake Street in the 1860's

### The Only Reported Example With Error Of Spelling

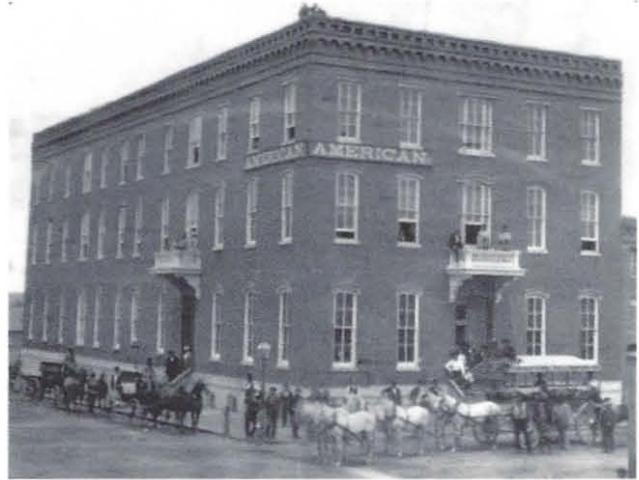


17 June 1859 Coraville, Kansas Territory to Pennsylvania  
error of spelling, final "E" of postmark missing, "Paid 3" rate handstamp

# KANSAS TERRITORY

## Coraville

The cover below bears an advertising corner card of Kiskadden & Trowbridge, Commission Merchants of Leavenworth City, Kansas. A "J. Kiskadden" is listed as having been one of the merchants who was burned out in the Denver "great fire" of 1863. The fire burnt an area bounded by Sixteenth, Market and Wazee Streets and Cherry Creek.



American Hotel at 16th and Blake Streets in the 1860's  
built after the "great fire" of 1863

### Two Reported Examples Of Postmark With Correct Spelling



17 June 1859 Coraville, **Kansas Territory** to Rock City Mills, New York

# KANSAS TERRITORY

## Denver City

Two styles of Denver City “tombstone” postmarks. The variant shown on top cover has short, squat “K.T.” at foot. The type shown on the lower cover has taller, thinner letters.



20 September 1860  
Denver City,  
Kansas Territory to  
New York

first day contract  
mails (carried by  
Western Stage  
Company)

see next page for  
letter



7 January 1861 Denver City,  
Kansas Territory to Mass.



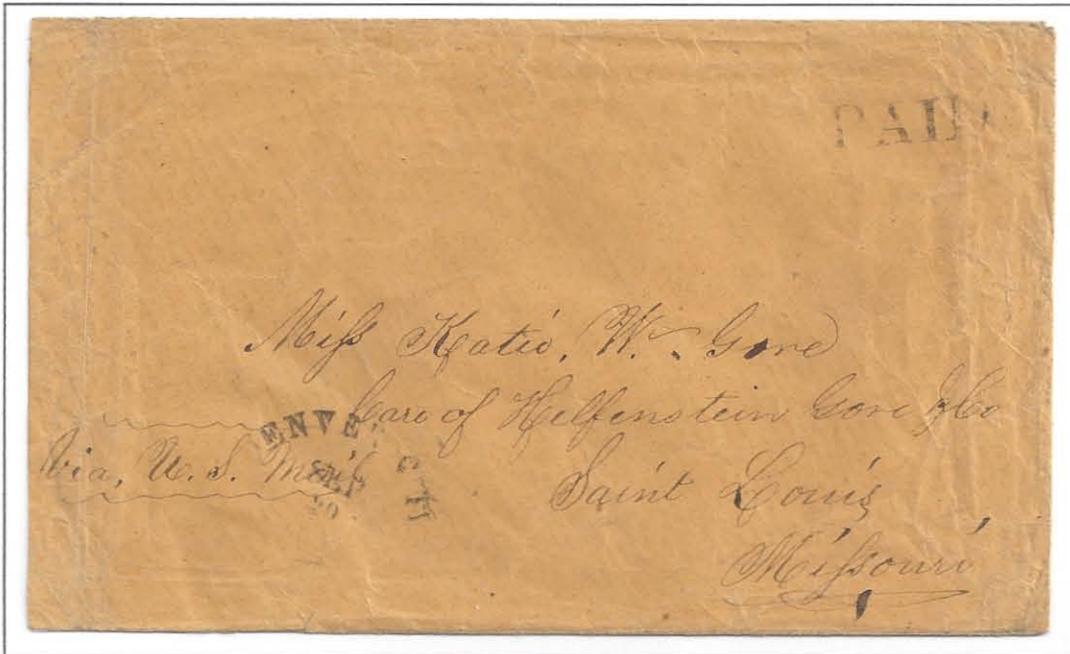
# KANSAS TERRITORY

## Denver City

*Denver City was founded in November, 1858 on the St. Charles townsite on the east bank of Cherry Creek across from Auraria. General Larimer and his followers "jumped" the site that had been founded by the "Lawrence" group the previous summer. On April 5, 1860 the two communities of Auraria and Denver City were unified as Denver City.*



The Denver City post office on Larimer Street in the fall of 1860



20 September 1860  
Denver City,  
Kansas Territory to  
Missouri

first day contract  
mails (carried by  
Western Stage  
Company)

11 February 1861  
Denver City, Kansas  
to Virginia

used during brief  
period after Kansas  
Statehood (Jan. 31)  
and before Colorado  
Territory formed on  
February 28, 1861



# KANSAS TERRITORY

## Denver City Vigilance Committee

On September 1, 1860 a horse thief named "Black Hawk" was captured and brought to Denver. After a speedy trial by a secret meeting of the "Committee of Safety" he was hanged. During his trial, he confessed to being a member of a ring of horse thieves and named A.C. Ford, a Denver lawyer, as being in charge of the Denver district operations.



"Hands Up"

John Shear, an additional horse thief mentioned by Black Hawk was located and executed. When A.C. Ford learned of this, he departed town by stage coach. The stage coach was stopped a short distance from Denver by Vigilantes and Ford was summarily executed.

A.C. Ford, mentioned in the letter below, was generally regarded as a habitual professional defender and counselor to the group of thieves that were causing problems in Denver in 1860.

regard to the country and he in the Herald you probably have noticed something in regard to the hanging of thieves there has been some of that going on one A.C. Ford was taken out of the coach on his way to the states he has not been found yet no body knows what has become of him he lived one door from me he is a lawyer from Council Bluffs I will send a paper that

September 18, 1860 letter of Mark Avery to his brother. Letter mentions:

"You probably have noticed something in regard to the hanging of thieves - there has been some of that going on. One, A.C. Ford, was taken out of a coach on his way to the states. He has not been found yet - nobody knows what has become of him he lived one door from me - he is a lawyer from Council Bluffs. I will send a paper that has a little account of him .."

## A. C. FORD.

Having so often heard inquiries respecting the fate of A. C. Ford, we publish the following extract from the Leavenworth correspondence of the *St. Louis Republican*, of a recent date. It is the only circumstantial account of the affair we have seen, and our readers must judge as to its truth or falsity. Who this correspondent may be, and where he obtained his information, is a mystery to us:

"Ford, at the time of his death, was a passenger in the Express coach, on his way to this place, either to assist in defending young Gordon or to appear as a witness for the defense. When about six miles from Denver, the coach was stopped by a number of men in disguise, and Ford was ordered to get out. He complied, and the coach drove on. After it was out of sight, his captors told him their purpose, and started with him away from the road, towards the bank of the river.

"Ford resisted them and showed fight; when the leader ordered his men to present guns, and in a moment, several guns were bearing point blank on his body, when he concluded to submit and proceed. They carried him a few miles to the bank of the river, when he was told to prepare to be shot. Ford, seeing they were in earnest, requested one of them to attend to some directions concerning the disposition of his property; and also to take his watch and leave it in the hands of a certain person in Denver. The reply to these requests was that they would attend to no business for him. That they would leave his body with everything upon it, but would pin a paper to his clothing containing any directions he might wish to leave. In a few moments after this conversation, he was shot, and the party mounting their horses disappeared in the direction of Denver. When Ford was found, his watch was untouched, and upon his coat was pinned a slip of paper, with the words, "Executed by the Vigilance Committee." His body was perforated by six buckshot and one large bullet. The Vigilance Committee had indubitable evidence that he was connected with a large band of horse thieves and murderers, who invested the country. He hailed from Council Bluffs, Iowa, where he had considerable property. In that place he bore a very fair character. He is buried on the left bank of the Platte about six and a half miles below Denver. His grave is known to but few, and the grass of another season will obliterate all traces of recognition which that few may possess—the sod being carefully cut and replaced over his last resting place.

# KANSAS TERRITORY

## Montana City

*Two main groups of gold-seekers came to Colorado in the summer of 1858. The "Russell" group from Georgia founded Auraria while the "Lawrence" group from Lawrence, Kansas laid out Montana City near where present West Evans Avenue crosses the Platte River in Denver. The "City" was abandoned by the winter and the group laid out the St. Charles townsite on the East bank of Cherry Creek. This letter was sent by a member of the Lawrence group.*



Pike's Peaker in full regalia. The first illustration to appear in the *Rocky Mountain News*.

### The Earliest Reported Cover From The Colorado Gold Region



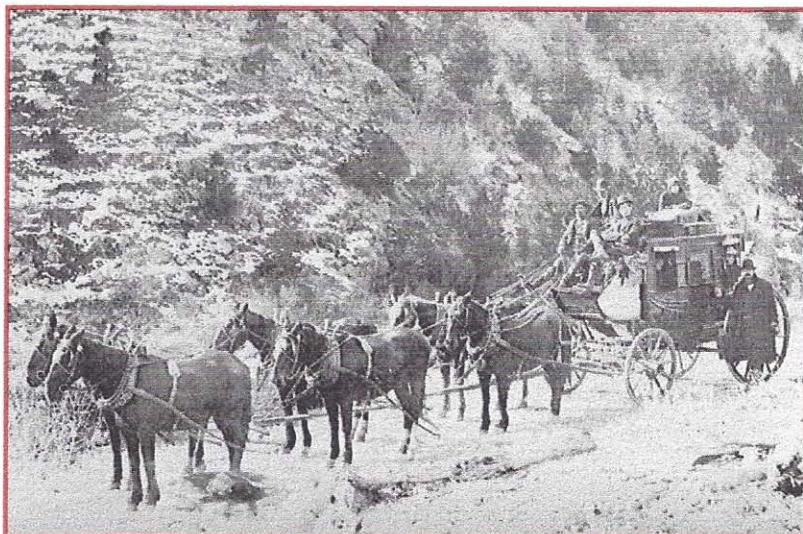
30 November 1858 Montana, Cherry Creek Gold Mines, **Kansas Territory** to Michigan carried privately to Fort Kearney, Nebraska Territory where it entered the mails a month later

miner's letter mentions: "*Here I am in the Gold Mines (so called) & I guess it is properly named, for I have seen the gold ... There is quite a rush here to the mines, as there are within a few miles of this place & in this place over 500 persons. There were only about 30 or 40 when we arrived.*"

# NEBRASKA TERRITORY

## Boulder

*The first prospectors arrived in the area that is now Boulder late in 1858. The town they established was first called Boulder City but this was shortened to Boulder by the time the Post Office was established on April 22, 1859. This area was part of Nebraska Territory until the formation of Colorado Territory on February 28, 1861.*



The mail stage in Boulder Canyon in the late 1860's.

### One Of The Three Reported Examples From Colorado While Nebraska Territory

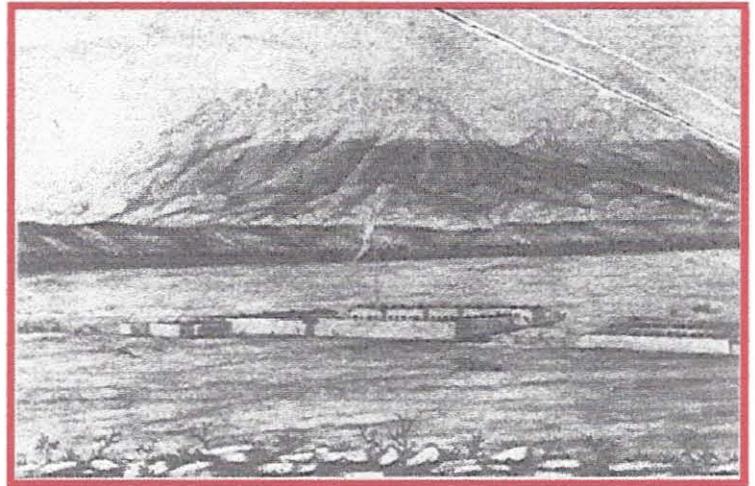


30 January 1861 Boulder, Nebraska Territory to Illinois

# NEW MEXICO TERRITORY

## Fort Garland

*Fort Garland was established in June, 1858 just west of La Veta Pass. It was intended to protect nearby settlers from Utes and Jicarilla Apaches. Originally a part of New Mexico Territory it became a part of Colorado Territory in 1861. A Post Office was first established on February 25, 1862.*



Fort Garland in the 1860's

### Fewer Than Five Reported Examples From Colorado While New Mexico Territory



25 October 1860 Fort Garland, while **New Mexico Territory**, to Rhode Island  
by **Military Express** to Fernando de Taos, New Mexico Territory  
25 October 1860 entered the mails at Fernando de Taos for carriage to Rhode Island

# UTAH TERRITORY

## Breckinridge

*Prospectors crossed the mountains into the Breckinridge area in the summer of 1859 and soon built a fort and town. It was named for Vice President John C. Breckinridge. A Post Office was established on January 18, 1860 in what was then Utah Territory. The name was changed to Breckenridge when it's namesake supported the Confederate States in 1861.*



Breckinridge in the 1860's

### The Only Reported Cover With A Postmark From Colorado While Utah Territory



11 October 1860 Breckinridge, Utah Territory to New York

miner's letter mentions: "I never want any of my friends to go to a Gold Country to get a fortune. The hardest, slowest most uncertain way of making cash that ever was known is in the Gold region."

# COLORADO TERRITORY

## Bassett's Mills

*Bassett's Mills was established by Alden Bassett in El Paso County just to the southeast of Monument. The town namesake and postmaster operated a sawmill at the site. A post office was first established on June 15, 1869 and it was discontinued on September 13, 1872. For the fiscal year ending in 1871, the total postmaster compensation was only \$26.00*

*Alden Bassett had previously built a sawmill at Elizabeth, Elbert County and helped found that town as well.*



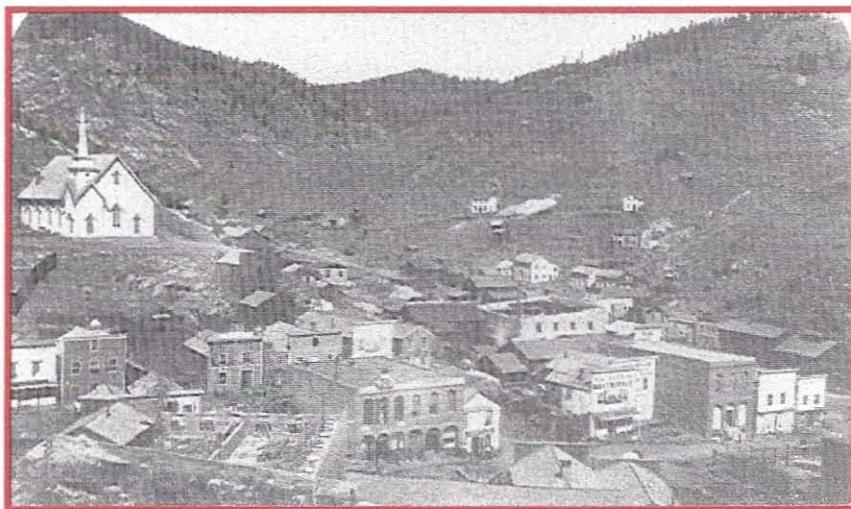
August, 1871 Bassett's Mills, **Colorado Territory** to Switzerland  
15c rate prepaid with pair 6c 1870 issue and 3c postal stationery

**The Only Reported Cover From Bassett's Mills**

# COLORADO TERRITORY

## Black Hawk Point

*Black Hawk Point was a mining and milling center that grew up at the point of the original Gregory Diggings in Gilpin County. A Post Office was established on December 6, 1862 and the name was shortened to Black Hawk in 1871.*



View of Black Hawk Point in 1864.



20 September 1865 Black Hawk Point to Altenburg, Germany

New York and Hamburg transits, correct 15c rate via German Mails paid with 5c 1861 issue

20 October 1865 arrival backstamp

# COLORADO TERRITORY

## Boonville

*Boonville was established near Pueblo in 1860 and served as a stage station on the Santa Fe Trail. The town was named for Col. Albert G. Boone, grandson of Daniel Boone, and noted frontiersman in his own right. A Post Office was established on January 2, 1863 with Albert Boone serving as Postmaster. The name was shortened to Boone on December 5, 1891.*



A Stage Station on the Santa Fe Trail.

LETTERS from Boonville, Col. Ter. 1863  
To *Empire City C T*

Rates.	Unpaid.			PAID HERE.						Free.
				By Stamps.			In Money.			
Cents.	No.	Dolls.	Cents.	No.	Dolls.	Cents.	No.	Dolls.	Cents.	No.
3				1		3				

BOONEVILLE COLO. APR 18 1863

Albert G. Boone, P. M.

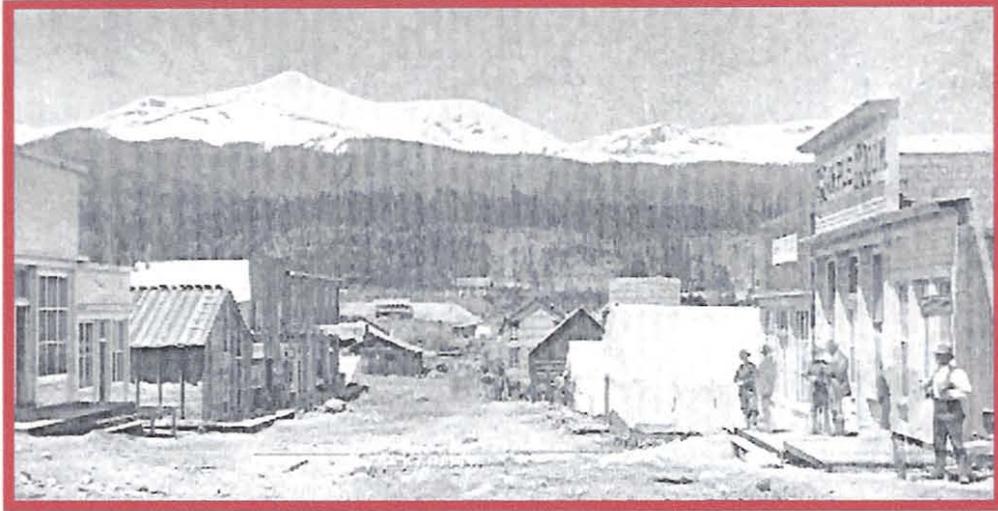
18 April 1863 P.O. letter-routing slip from Boonville to Empire City signed in type by Albert G. Boone as Postmaster note error of spelling of Booneville in postmark

**This Boonville Postmark Is Unreported On Cover**

# COLORADO TERRITORY

## Breckenridge

*The post office name was changed from Breckinridge to Breckenridge in early 1861 when its namesake, John Breckenridge, supported the Confederacy after losing the election to Lincoln.*



View of Breckenridge in 1864.



1 May 1861 Breckenridge to Hazardville, Connecticut  
manuscript postmark with name correctly spelled

# COLORADO TERRITORY

## Breckenridge

*The name change from Breckinridge to Breckenridge in early 1861 caused some problems for the Post Office Department as this pair of covers shows. Evidently a postmarking device had been ordered prior to the name change and when it arrived it had two errors of spelling. This device was altered by removing the extra "B" but still had the "T" instead of the correct "E".*



12 October 1861 Breckenridge to Hazardville, Connecticut  
error postmarking device which was lettered Breckinbridge



27 February (1862) Breckenridge to Hazardville, Connecticut  
error postmarking device which was lettered Breckin Ridge (as above but second "B" removed)

# COLORADO TERRITORY

## Breckenridge

*The patriotic response to the Civil War resulted in the production of thousands of different patriotic envelope designs. Most were printed and used by citizens and soldiers in the East. Although this cover does not bear any identification of the printer, it was most likely printed in the West as the design is not found used east of the Mississippi.*



12 July 1862 Breckenridge, **Colorado Territory** to Connecticut  
liberty bell design **patriotic cover**  
error postmarking device which was lettered **Breckinbridge**

# COLORADO TERRITORY

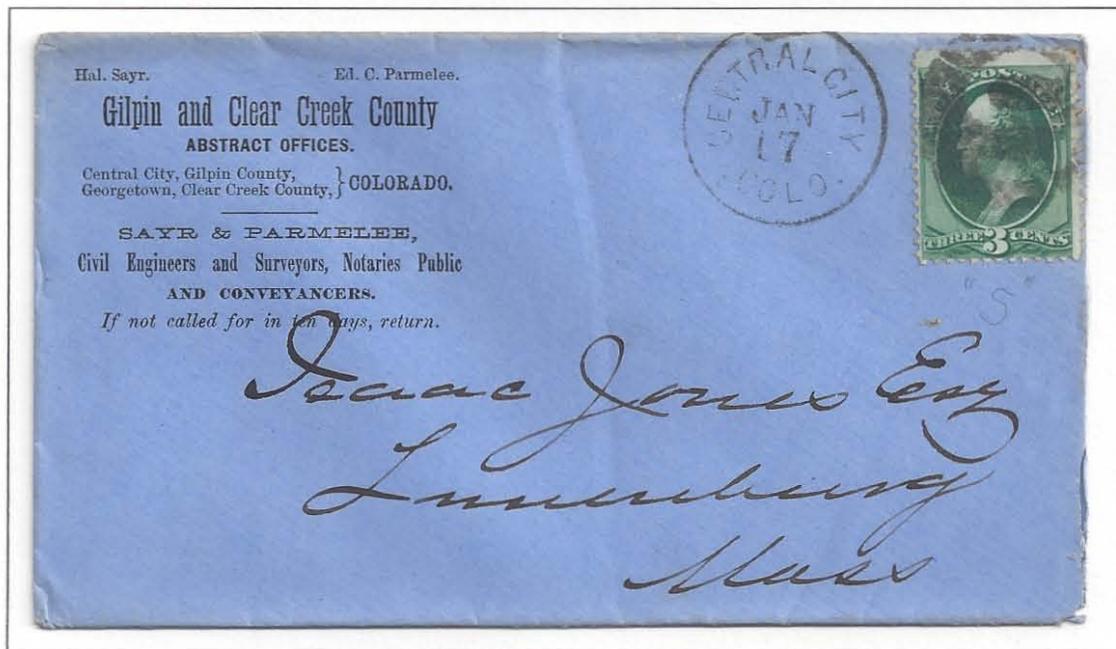
## Central City

Central City is located in Gilpin County above Black Hawk. A Post Office was moved from Mountain to Central City on October 8, 1869 and has continued operating since.

The Teller House, built by attorney William Teller, is one of the few buildings that survived the fire of 1874.



Central City ca. 1876 (Teller House at left center)



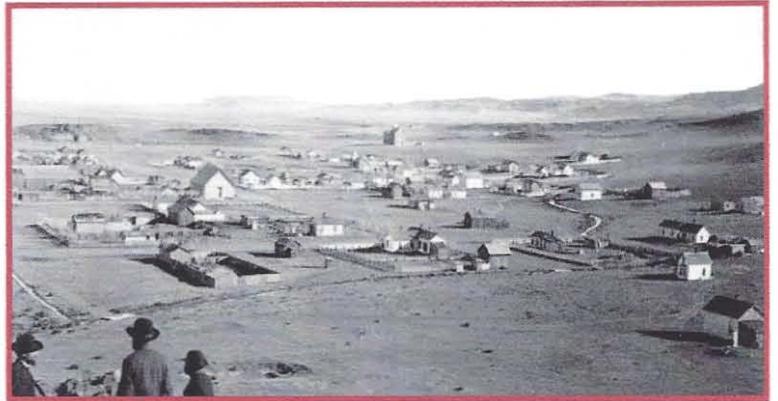
17 January 1876 Central City, Colorado Territory to Massachusetts  
negative "S" cancel of Ebenezer Smith, Postmaster, 1876 letter enclosed receipt signed by William Teller

Rec'd of Cal Esq Two Hundred  
and Fifty Dollars in full for a  
retainer in general for the hire  
of the estate of Isaac A. Jones  
Oct 19th 1875  
Wm Weller

# COLORADO TERRITORY

## Del Norte

*Del Norte served as a supply point and gateway to the San Juans and was never a mining town. A post office was established on January 28, 1873. Del Norte became a major transportation center after the arrival of the railroad.*



Del Norte in 1875.

### The Only Reported Usage From Colorado Territory To Japan



1 September 1875 Del Norte, Colorado Territory to **Yokohama, Japan**

30c rate paid with 24c and 3c 1870 issue and 3c postal entire

11 October 1875 Yokohama arrival backstamp

# COLORADO TERRITORY

## Denver City

*Denver City was threatened in late 1863 and early 1864 by Indian depredations along the stage routes that connected Denver with the East. A Peace council, shown at right, was attempted in September, 1864 without any tangible results. The perceived Indian threat was ended when Colonel Chivington massacred the Black Kettle band of Cheyennes in November, 1864 at Sand Creek.*



The Camp Weld council held September, 1864  
Whitely believed to be man standing second from left.  
Black Kettle is seated at far left.

Envelope is from Simeon Whitely (see recipient docket at right) who was the United States Indian Agent who came to Colorado Territory to resolve the Indian troubles.



16 February 1864 Denver City, Colorado Territory to **England**

New York transit, 24c rate prepaid with 24c 1861 issue stamp

forwarded from Rochdale with boxed **Redirected-Postage Unpaid** handstamp and 1p due

15 March 1864 Midhurst arrival backstamp

# COLORADO TERRITORY

## Denver Fancy Cancel

*Some post offices employed unusual cancels hand carved from cork or wood. Denver used a fancy, negative "M" cancel briefly in 1875. The meaning of the initial is unknown but is possibly the first letter of the last name of a postal clerk. The postmaster of Denver at the time was Hiram P. Bennett.*



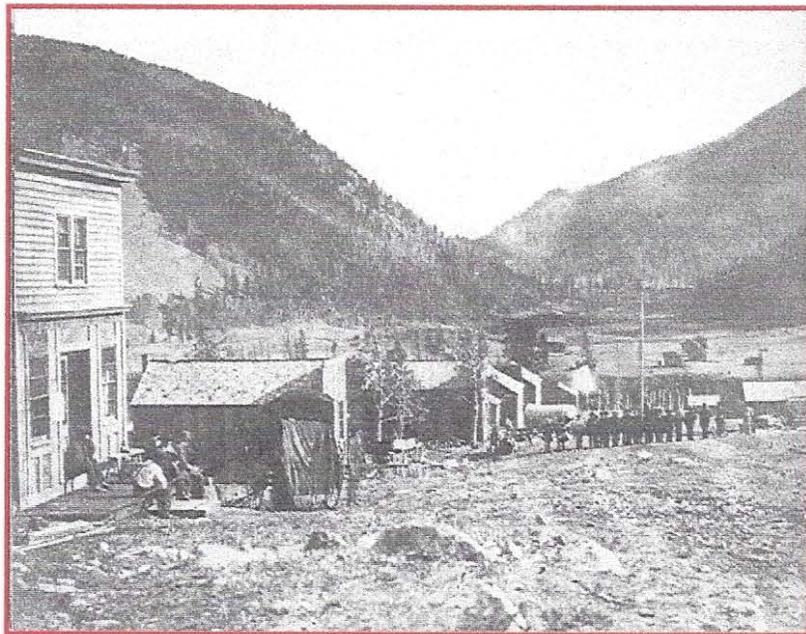
3 March 1875 Denver, Colorado Territory to Mantova, Italy  
fancy negative "M" cancel

10c Italian closed mail rate prepaid with 10c 1870 issue  
New York Exchange office datestamp and arrival backstamp

# COLORADO TERRITORY

## Empire City

Empire City was founded as a mining and transportation town in upper Clear Creek County. The Post Office was established on June 28, 1861. The name was shortened to Empire on May 7, 1866. The city survived even though the narrow gauge railway bypassed the town.



Union troops drilling at Empire City during 1861 or 1862.



24 August 1863 Empire City to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

# COLORADO TERRITORY

## Fort Garland



19 September 1862 Fort Garland, Colorado Territory to New Middleton, Illinois

LETTERS from *Fort Garland June 1 1863*  
 To *Empire City Co. T.C.*

Rates.	Unpaid.			PAID HERE.						Free.		
				By Stamps.			In Money.					
	Cents.	No.	Dolls.	Cents.	No.	Dolls.	Cents.	No.	Dolls.		Cents.	No.
<i>3</i>				<i>1</i>			<i>3</i>					

*Jno M Francisco*

P. M.



*La Veta Pass, just east of Fort Garland, was first traversed by the Denver & Rio Grande Railway in 1877.*

1 June 1863 P.O. letter-routing slip from Fort Garland to Empire City signed by Jno. M. Francisco as Post Master

# COLORADO TERRITORY

## Fort Wise / Fort Lyon



Fort Wise was founded as a military fort on August 29, 1860 near the present day town of La Junta. The Post Office was established on September 5, 1860 and discontinued on August 2, 1862 when name was changed to Fort Lyon.

15 September 1861 Fort Wise, Colorado Territory to North Bloomfield, Ohio

### The Earlier Of The Two Reported Examples Of This Postmark

original letter dated "Camp on the Cimeron River" from an officer's wife mentions the route up from Fort Union.

24 April 1863 P.O. letter-routing slip from Fort Lyon to Empire City handstamp of E.C. Gould as Postmaster

LETTERS from 186

To *Empire C.T.*

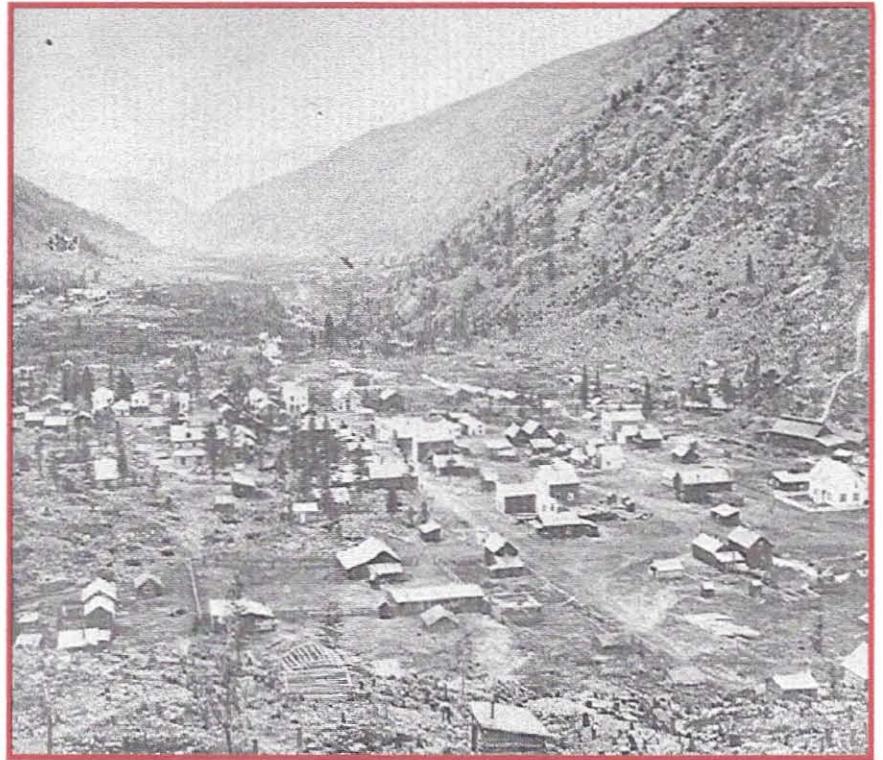
Rates	Unpaid.			PAID HERE.				Free.
				By Stamps.		In Money.		
Cents.	No.	Dolls.	Cents.	No.	Dolls.	Cents.	No.	Dolls.
3				1		3		

E.C. GOULD P.M. P.M.

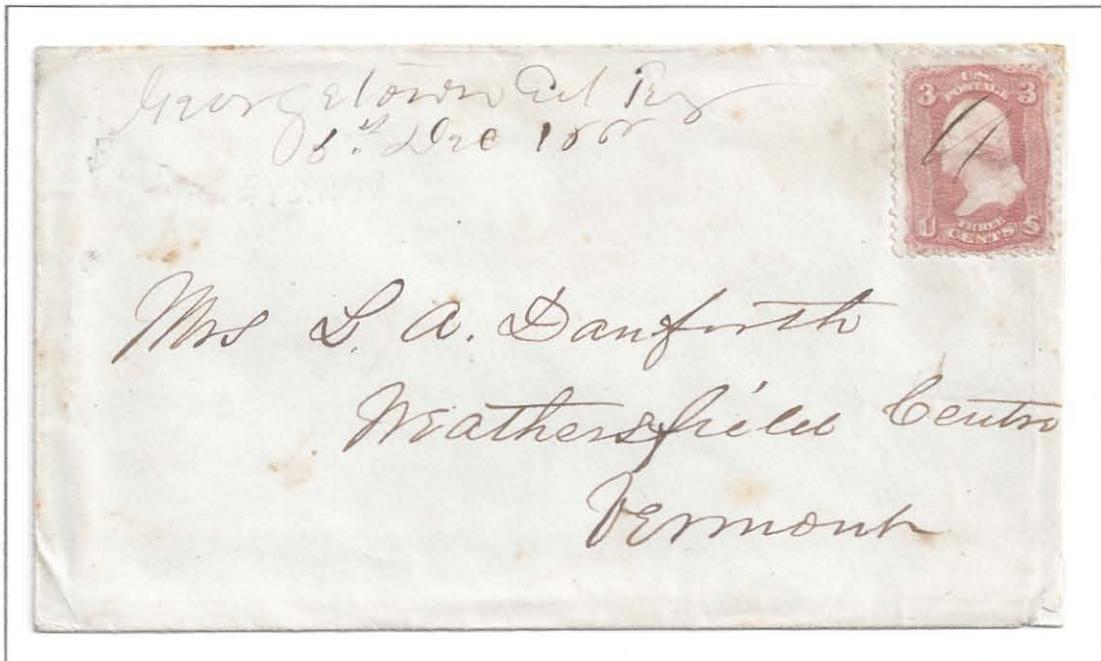
# COLORADO TERRITORY

## Georgetown

*Georgetown was one of the later mining camps to develop in Clear Creek County. There was little gold in the area and it wasn't until rich silver strikes were made that the town prospered. The Post Office was established on June 19, 1866.*



View of Georgetown in 1867.

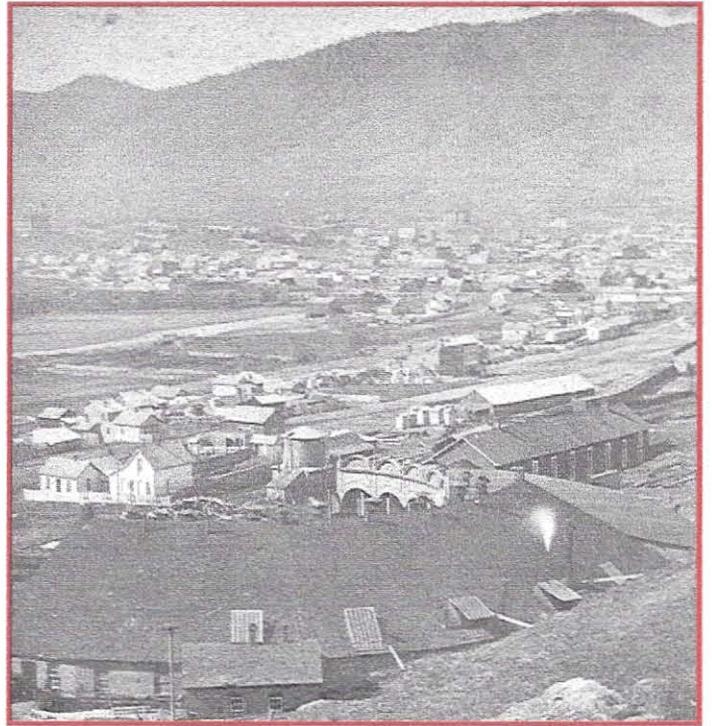


5 December 1866 Georgetown to Weathersfield Centre, Vermont

# COLORADO TERRITORY

## Golden City

*Golden City, the present day Golden, was the capital of Colorado Territory from 1862 until 1867. The post office was established on April 6, 1860 and the name changed to Golden in 1876. The town was named for Tom Golden who first camped at the site in 1858.*



The Colorado Central Railway's Roundhouse in Golden City.



26 July (1865) Golden City to Vergennes, Vermont

# COLORADO TERRITORY

## Gold Dirt

*Gold Dirt was a small mining camp on the Boulder County/Gilpin County line that thrived in the early 1860's. A Post Office was established on August 13, 1861 and was discontinued on October 11, 1867.*



crew of Gold Dirt Mine, ca. 1865



27 April 1862 Gold Dirt, **Colorado Territory** to Wisconsin  
3c 1857 issue stamp no longer valid for postage  
“Old Stamp Not Taken” endorsement and “Due 3” notation

### **The Only Reported Example**

*After the Civil War started a new series of postage stamps was issued starting in August, 1861 and stamps of the preceding 1857 issue were demonitized. The above cover shows an attempted illegal usage of the 1857 issue stamps.*

# COLORADO TERRITORY

## Gold Dirt

*Gold Dirt Col. Ly. Apr. 1<sup>st</sup> 1863*

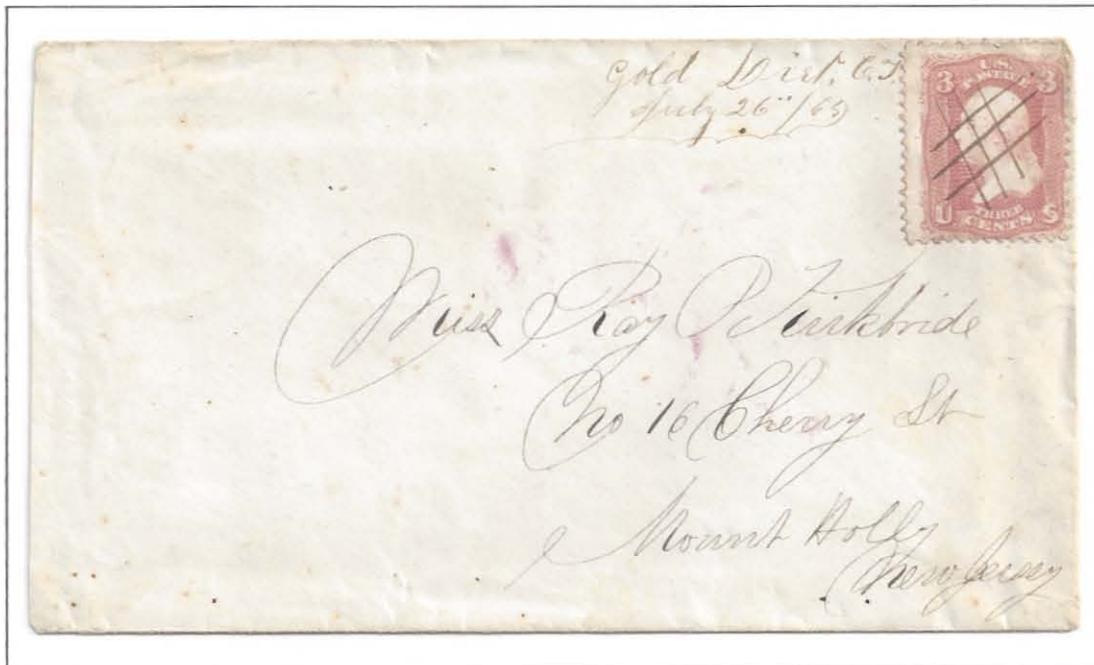
LETTERS from ~~Mountain City, Kansas,~~ 1863

To *Empire City Col. Ly.*

Rates.	Unpaid.			PAID HERE.						Free.
				By Stamps.			In Money.			
Cents.	No.	Dolls.	Cents.	No.	Dolls.	Cents.	No.	Dolls.	Cents.	No.
				1		3				
<i>A Missent</i>										
<i>T. W. Sterling Post Master Assist.</i>										
<i>J. P. Hickman, P. M.</i>										

*Gold Dirt was a small mining camp on the Boulder County / Gilpin County line that thrived in the early 1860's. A Post Office was established on August 13, 1861 and was discontinued on October 11, 1867.*

1 April 1863 P.O. letter-routing slip for missent letter from Gold Dirt to Empire City signed by T. W. Sterling as Post Master Assistant



26 July 1865 Gold Dirt to Mount Holly, New Jersey

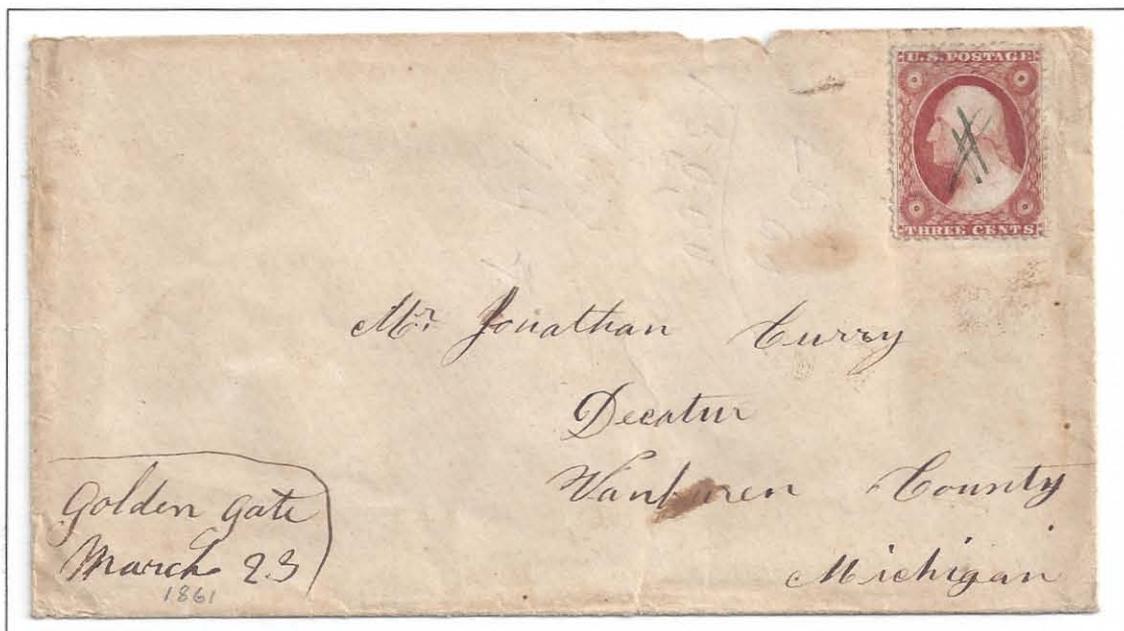
# COLORADO TERRITORY

## Golden Gate

Golden Gate was a small settlement west of present day Golden where the main road to the Gilpin County mines entered the foothills. A post office was established on September 6, 1860 with Thomas Golden postmaster. It was discontinued on August 18, 1863.



26 January 1861 Golden Gate, **Kansas Territory** to Michigan  
**Two Reported Examples From Kansas Territory Period**

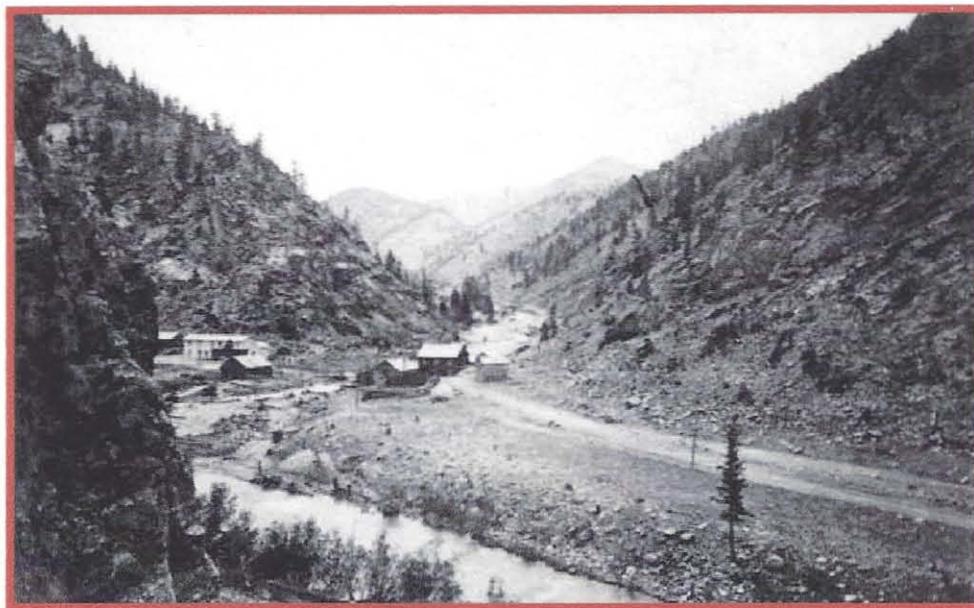


23 March 1861 Golden Gate, **Colorado Territory** to Michigan

# COLORADO TERRITORY

## Grant

*Grant is located in Park County. A post office was first established there on May 16, 1871. It served as a supply camp for many of the early mining areas nearby. Hall Valley was located just west of Grant and was a particularly rich area. The cover below is from a prominent mining operation in the area.*



Hall Valley ca. 1875



21 September 1875 Grant, Colorado Territory to Cleveland, Ohio  
advertising corner card of Hall Valley Silver-Lead Mining and Smelting Co.

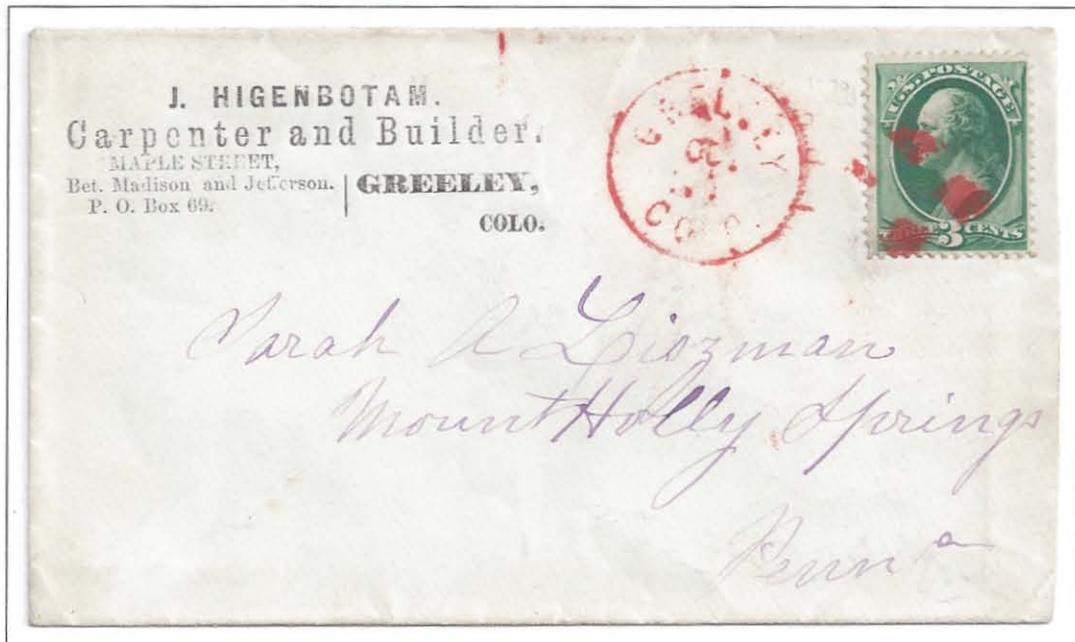
# COLORADO TERRITORY

## Greeley

*Greeley was established by Nathan Meeker as a utopian, agricultural colony in Weld County in 1870. It was named for Horace Greeley, the famous newspaper editor. A post office was established on April 21, 1870.*



Maple Street, Greeley, ca. 1872  
sender of cover below was located on this street



31 October 1872 Greeley, **Colorado Territory** to Pennsylvania  
corner card of J. Higenbotham, Carpenter and Builder

# COLORADO TERRITORY

## Hamilton

*Hamilton was an important mining camp briefly in the early 1860's. It was located across from Tarryall on the road to Fairplay in Park County. A post office was established on July 26, 1860 while part of Kansas Territory and operated only until November, 1861.*



Hamilton Colorado



6 June 1861 Hamilton, **Colorado Territory** to Iowa

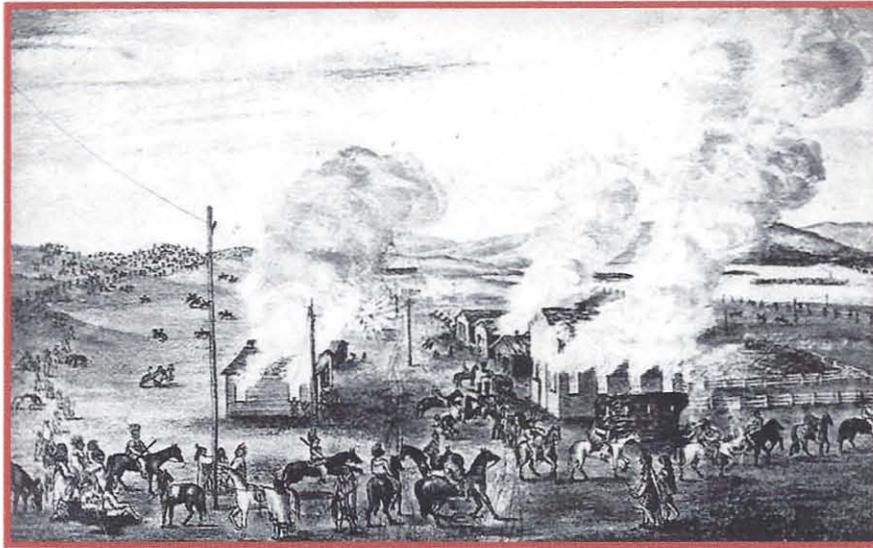
Hamilton post office continued to use their Kansas Territory postmarking device for a period after the establishment of Colorado Territory on February 28, 1861.

**Fewer Than Ten Reported Examples**

# COLORADO TERRITORY

## Julesburgh

Julesburgh began as a staging stop in northeastern Colorado. The stage lines from Denver City connected there to the main trans-continental arteries. The post office was established and discontinued three times between 1860 and 1868. In the winter of 1864/1865 Indian attacks on the stage stations resulted in six weeks without mail connections. After a military contingent was sent to the area in February, 1865, communications were re-established.



Indian attack at Julesburgh.

### Provisional "JUL" Postmark Possibly Applied At Camp Rankin (Fort Sedgwick)



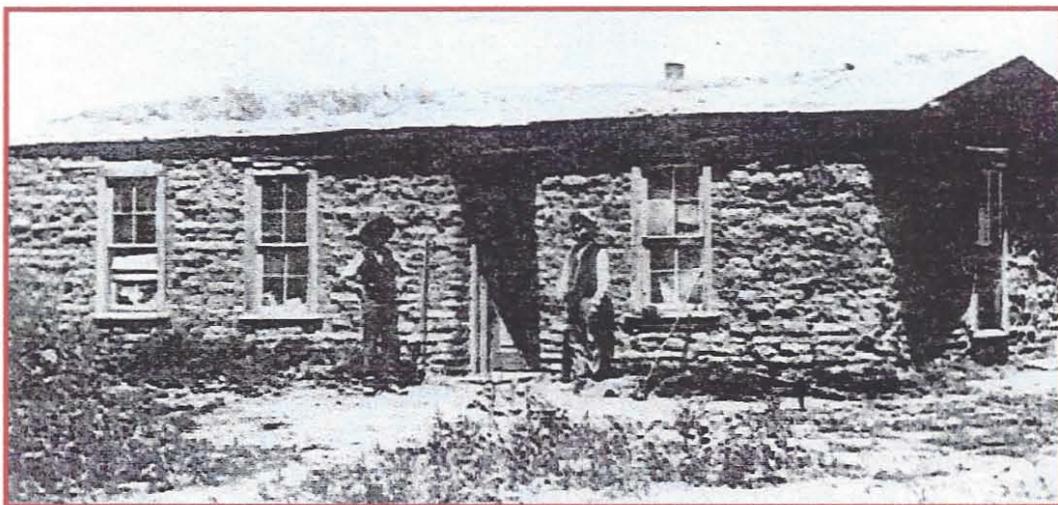
25 January 1865 Julesburgh to Marion, Connecticut

9 April 1865 Omaha, Nebraska transit reflecting a long delay in mail transport  
*delayed mail such as this was postmarked in transit to show where the delay occurred*

# COLORADO TERRITORY

## Julesburgh

The Julesburgh post office was originally established on May 29, 1860 and discontinued September 10, 1862. It was established a second time on January 20, 1864 and discontinued May 3, 1866 only to be established a third time on August 2, 1866 and discontinued on August 21, 1868. Due to frequent Indian attacks that occurred during periods that the post office was operating, it appears that mail must frequently have been handled at Camp Rankin (designated Fort Sedgwick in September, 1865) which was located a very short distance away.



The stage station at Julesburgh.

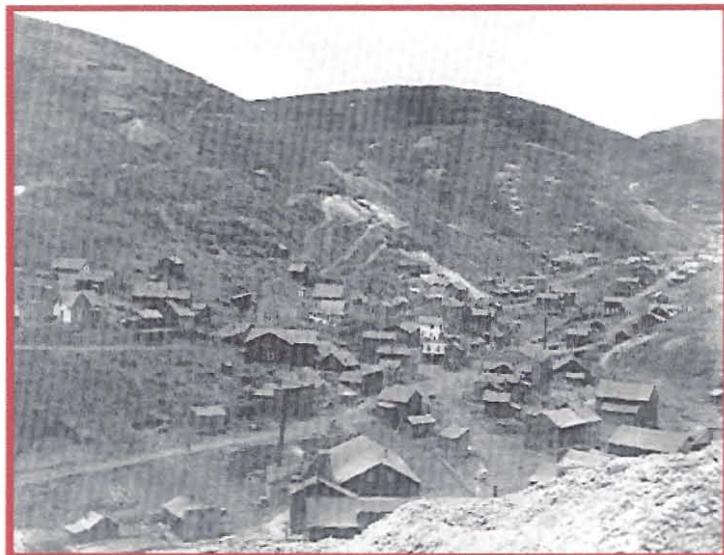


19 June 1865 Julesburgh to Cape Girardeau, Missouri  
manuscript "Due 6c" for penalty due on single unpaid rate

# COLORADO TERRITORY

## Mountain City

*Mountain City was located in the gulch above Black Hawk Point and was an important early mining camp. A Post Office was established on January 17, 1860 while still Kansas Territory. The office was moved and the name changed to Central City on October 8, 1869.*



Mountain City in the early 1860's.



3 March 1862 Mountain City to Montreal, Canada  
10c rate paid with strip of three 3c and single 1c 1861 issue  
US Paid 10 exchange handstamp of Detroit, arrival backstamp

# COLORADO TERRITORY

## Mountain City



3 July 1866 Mountain City, **Colorado Territory** to Wallace, Nova Scotia  
15c rate overpaid with single 10c and pair 3c 1861 issue, arrival backstamps



13 May 1866 Mountain City, **Colorado Territory** to Weathersfield Center, Vermont

# COLORADO TERRITORY

## Nevada

*Nevada, or Nevadaville, was located above Central City. Rich gold deposits were found in 1860. A Post Office was established at Nevada on January 12, 1861. The post office name was changed to Bald Mountain on December 16, 1869.*



view of Nevada in the early 1860's

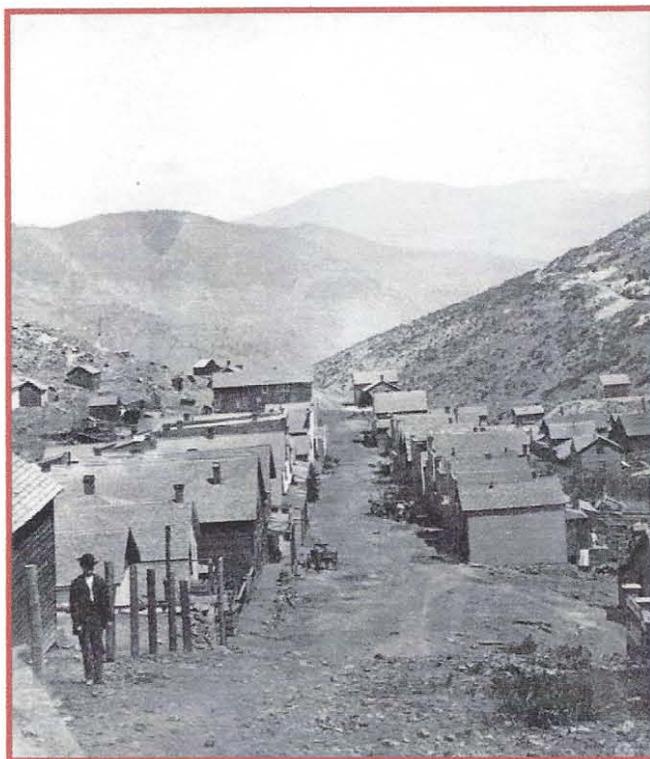


10 March 1862 Nevada, Colorado Territory to Illinois

# COLORADO TERRITORY

## Nevada

*Nevada, also known as Nevadaville and Nevada City, was located in the gulch above Central City and was an important early mining camp. It was named for the Nevada City gold camp in California. A Post Office was established as Nevada on January 12, 1861 and the name was changed to Bald Mountain on December 16, 1869.*



Nevada in 1865.



12 June 1868 Nevada, Colorado Territory to **England**

Liverpool transit, 12c rate prepaid with 10c 1861 issue and 2c 1863 issue stamps

2 July 1868 arrival backstamp

# COLORADO TERRITORY

## Saguache

*Saguache was established in 1867 on the site of a Ute campground. The Indian name for the spring with blue clay was shortened to the town name. The town served as a supply post for the Los Pinos Ute Indian Agency. A post office was established on April 1, 1867.*



the first house in Saguache



5 November 1874 Saguache, **Colorado Territory** to Golden City  
double rate prepaid with pair 3c 1870 issue

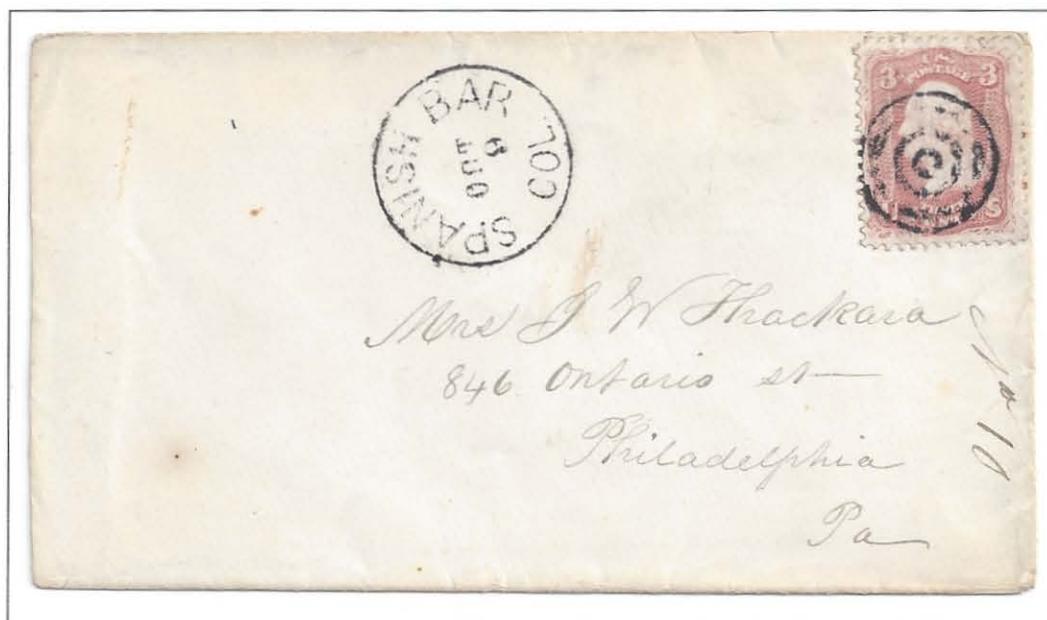
# COLORADO TERRITORY

## Spanish Bar

*Spanish Bar was located just west of Idaho Springs and was named for the Mexican workers who worked the gold filled "bar" in Clear Creek. Nearly 30 arastras were used along Clear creek to mill the ore in the earliest period. A Post Office was established at Spanish Bar on December 30, 1860 while still Kansas Territory. The office was moved and the name changed to Fall River on July 9, 1885.*



water powered arastra on Clear Creek in the early 1860's

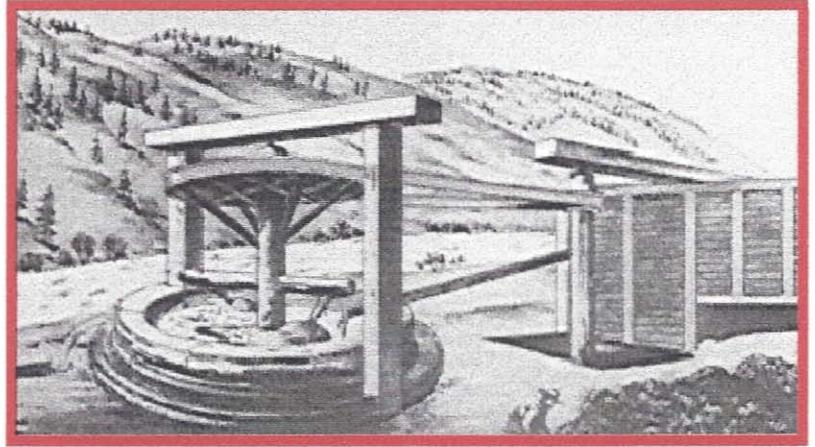


9 October 1864 Spanish Bar, **Colorado Territory** to Pennsylvania

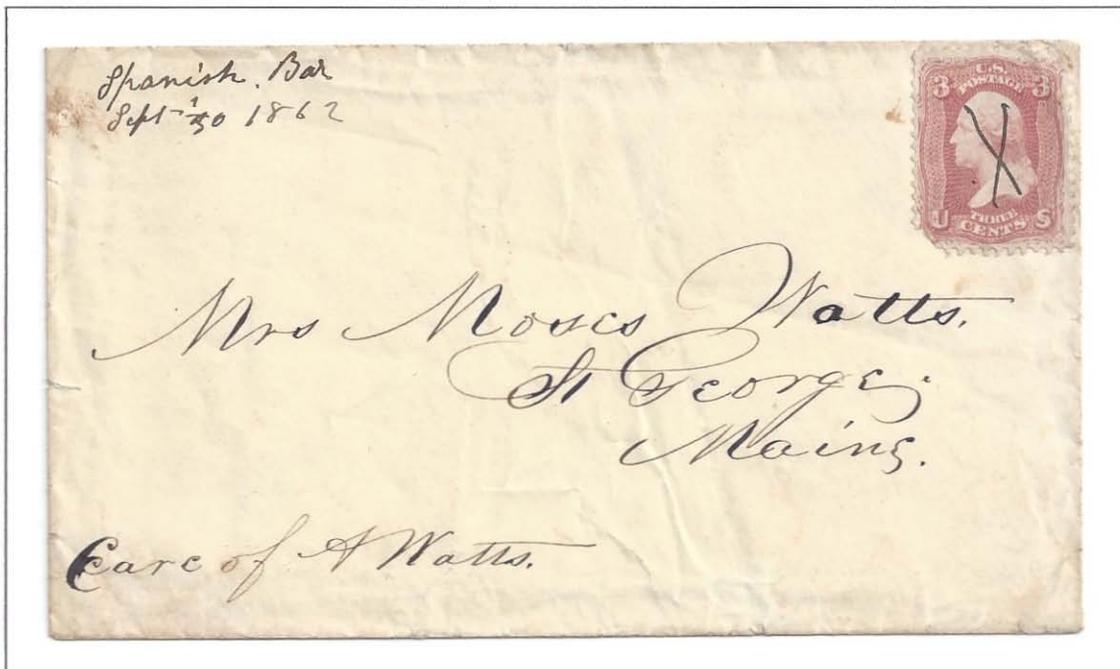
# COLORADO TERRITORY

## Spanish Bar

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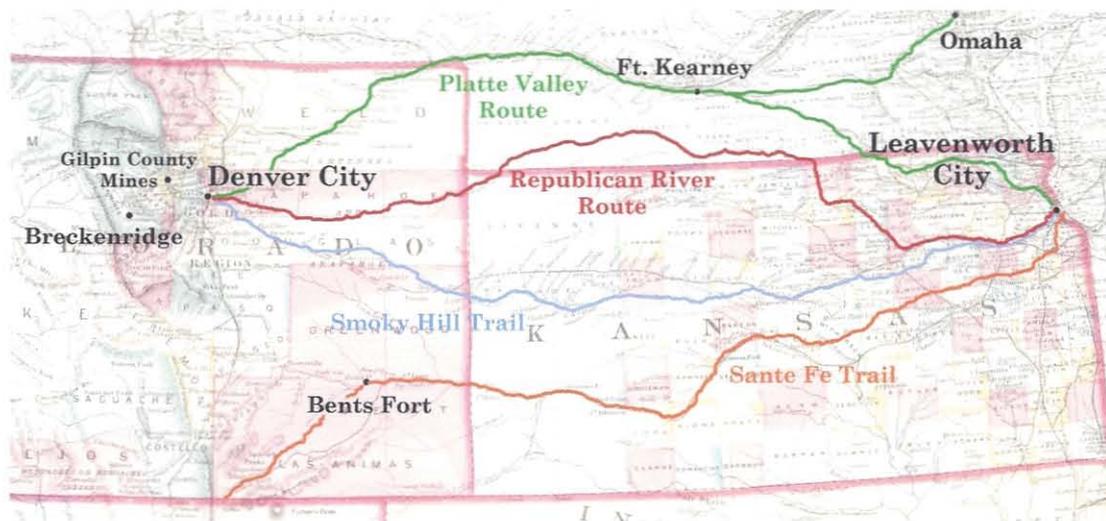


Water powered arastra on Clear Creek in the early 1860's.



30 September 1862 Spanish Bar to St. George, Maine

# COLORADO EXPRESSES



An understanding of the mails of the Colorado gold regions is dependent on an understanding of the stage coach companies that first served the area. Prior to the discovery of gold, some military mail was carried on the Santa Fe Trail. The earliest mails from the gold region and Denver were carried by trappers or returning merchants via the old trapper trails to Fort Laramie or to Fort Kearney. The stage coach era began when the first Leavenworth & Pike's Peak Express Company coach rolled in Denver on May 7, 1859.

This portion of exhibit is organized by date and company including the stage companies below:

1. Leavenworth & Pike's Peak Express Company carried mails over the Republican River route between Denver City and Leavenworth City between May 7, 1859 and June 7, 1859. On that date, service was changed to the Platte Valley route and continued until their handstamp was replaced by Jones & Russel, the proprietor, on July 19, 1859.
2. Jones & Russells Pike's Peak Express Company is the name used after July 19, 1859. Service was continued until the company was taken over by Central Overland California & Pike's Peak Express Company in October 1859.
3. Central Overland California & Pike's Peak Express Company operated from February 1860 until it was sold to Ben Holladau in March 1862.
4. Hinckley's Express was founded in 1860 and operated between the mining regions west of Denver, via Denver and thenm to Omaha on the Platte valley route.
5. Well's Fargo & Company did not operate in Colorado until 1866 and only continued until 1869.

## EXPRESS USAGES

### Leavenworth City & Pikes Peak Express Co.

*The Leavenworth City & Pike's Peak Express Company was formed in February, 1859 by William Russell and John Jones. The express operated between Denver City and Leavenworth City, Kansas Territory with the inaugural trip arriving in Denver on May 7, 1859. Prior to the inaugural trip, Beverly D. Williams had sent out expeditions to set up stations along the route. The cover below is the earliest reported example of their express handstamp and was probably used from one of these newly established stations.*



two handstamps were used  
with no year date was used at Leavenworth  
with year date was used on mail at Denver City



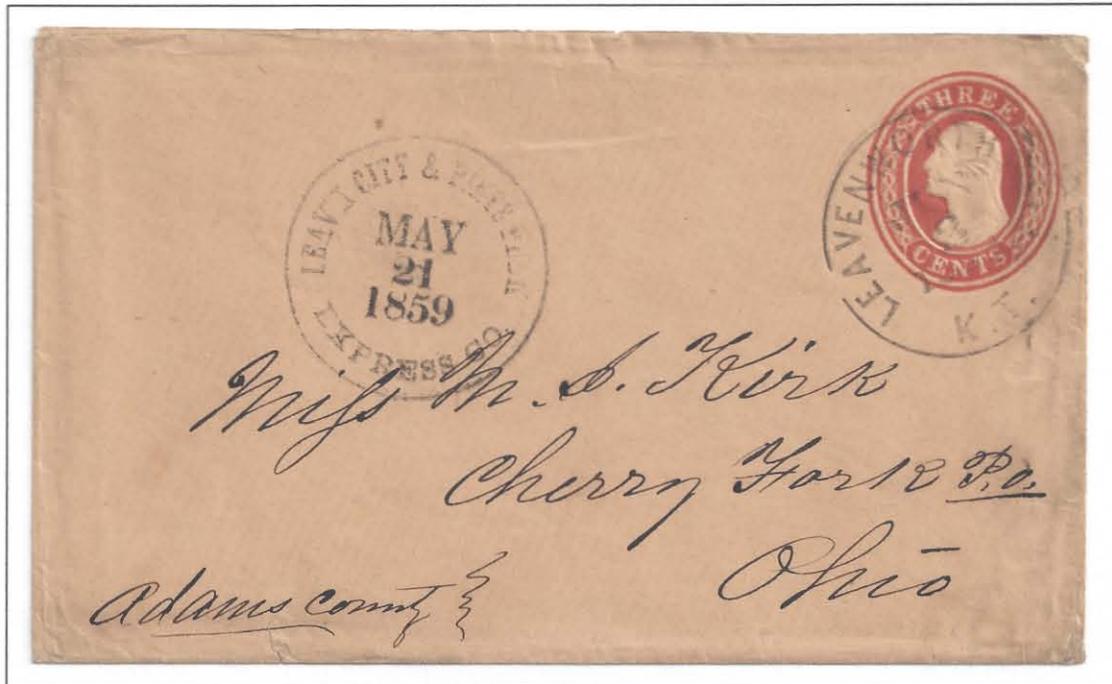
26 April 1859 a Leavenworth City & Pikes Peak Express station to Liberty, Virginia  
27 April 1859 entered the U.S. mails at Leavenworth City, **Kansas Territory**

**The Earliest Reported Example Of This Marking**

# EXPRESS USAGES

## Leavenworth City & Pikes Peak Express Co.

*The Leavenworth City & Pike's Peak Express Company operated between Denver City and Leavenworth City, Kansas Territory with the inaugural trip arriving in Denver on May 7, 1859. From that date until July 9, 1859 mail was carried over the Republican river route. The pair of covers below, two of only four reported, show mail carried both directions from the same correspondence during this brief period.*



21 May 1859 Denver City by Leavenworth City & Pikes Peak Express to Leavenworth City, Kansas Territory  
3 June 1859 entered the U.S. mails at Leavenworth City for Ohio



14 May 1859 Fincastle, Ohio to Leavenworth City, Kansas Territory by mail  
27 May Leavenworth City & Pikes Peak Express to Denver City, Kansas Territory

# EXPRESS USAGES

## Jones & Russell's Pike's Peak Express

*Jones & Russell's Express was formed by William Russell and John Jones in May 1859. The express operated between the mining towns, via Denver City, to Leavenworth City, Kansas Territory. The Company assets were taken over by Russell, Majors and Wadell when the C.O.C.&P.P. Express Company was formed in October, 1859.*



17 July 1859 Gregory Diggings (Gilpin County), **Kansas Territory** to Charlotte Centre, New York  
29 July 1859 Jones & Russell's Pike's Peak Express, Denver City datestamp, express charges prepaid in cash  
8 August 1859 entered the U.S. mails at Leavenworth City, **Kansas Territory**



9 December 1859 Denver City, **Kansas Territory** to Leavenworth City, **Kansas Territory**  
Jones & Russell's Pike's Peak Express handstamp and **Free R.B.B.** endorsement of R. Bradford their Denver agent  
addressed to W.B. Wadell one of the owners of the express, carried entirely out of the U.S. mails

# EXPRESS USAGES

## Jones & Russell's Pike's Peak Express

*Jones & Russell's Express was formed by William Russell and John Jones in May 1859. The express operated between the mining towns, via Denver City, to Leavenworth City, Kansas Territory. The company assets were taken over by Russell, Majors and Wadell when the C.O.C&P.P. Express Company was formed in October, 1859. The example below shows usage as a prepaid frank that was used some time after payment of express charges unlike most known examples that were paid for and used at the time of purchase.*



backstamp on cover below



undated Jones & Russell's Pike's Peak Express handstamp used as prepaid frank

29 July 1859 Denver City, **Kansas Territory** to Springfield, Illinois

Jones & Russell's Pike's Peak Express handstamp

8 August 1859 entered US mails with Leavenworth City, Kansas Territory postmark

## EXPRESS USAGES

### Jones & Russell's Pike's Peak Express

*Jones & Russell's Express was taken over by Russell, Majors and Wadell when the C.O.C.&P.P. Express Company was formed in October, 1859. The eastern terminus of the route was changed from Leavenworth City, Kansas Territory to Saint Joseph, Missouri at the beginning of May, 1860 as shown by the cover below.*



22 May 1860 Denver City, **Kansas Territory** to Stouts Office, Ohio  
Jones & Russell's Pike's Peak Express handstamp **usage after C.O.P. & P.P. Express take over**  
29 May 1860 entered US mails with Saint Joseph, Missouri postmark

Enclosed letter from E.P. "Pinky" Stout includes:

*I should receive your letters inside of ten days instead of from 15 to 20 as they go to St. Joseph in 6 days.*

*We have just just come in from a stroll among the gambling saloons. Sunday night is the popular evening for them. We very often hear preaching in the second and gambling in the first stories of the same building at the same time neither congregation ever seem to be disturbed with the noise of the other although there is but a single floor separating them and common conversation could be distinctly heard from one room to the other.*

*The emigration is coming at the rate of from 500 to 1000 per day - you will never have any idea of the excitement until you once see a country like this.*

# EXPRESS USAGES

## The Central Overland California & Pike's Peak Express Company

*Jefferson Territory was formed by a group of citizens of the Colorado gold regions in 1859. Without any official sanction, the self proclaimed Jefferson Territory had no status as far as the United States Government was concerned. It dissolved with the formation of Colorado Territory in 1861.*



The first home of the Rocky Mountain News before being washed away in the flood of 1864.



5 April 1860 Denver, **Jefferson (Territory)** to Leavenworth, Kansas  
corner card of William N. Byers and his *Rocky Mountain News*  
carried by the C.O.C. & P.P. Express free of charge as Byers had arranged news letters to go free  
the 3c stamp was required to satisfy U.S. postal regulations for privately carried mail

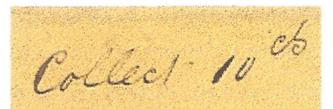
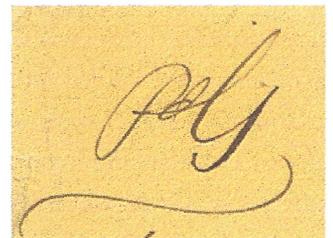
# EXPRESS USAGES

## The Central Overland California & Pike's Peak Express Company

*The C.O.C. & P.P. Express was formed by Russell, Majors and Wadell in February, 1860. The express operated between the mining towns, via Denver City, to Leavenworth City, Kansas Territory or to Saint Joseph, Missouri. It was sold to Ben Holladay in March, 1862.*



19 June 1860 Blue River Diggings, Utah Territory (near Breckenridge) to Fort Dodge, Iowa  
28 June C.O.C. & P.P. Express, Denver City K.T. datestamp, express charges prepaid in cash  
5 July 1860 entered the U.S. mails at Saint Joseph, Missouri



markings on verso

25 June 1860 Leavenworth City, Kansas Territory inbound to Hamilton, Kansas Territory (Park County)  
25 June C.O.C. & P.P. Express, Leavenworth City K.T. datestamp, one of three reported manuscript "Pd G" and "Collect 10 cts" for delivery charge from Denver City to Hamilton

# EXPRESS USAGES

## The Central Overland California & Pike's Peak Express Company



24 November 1860 C.O.C. & P.P. Express Denver City K.T. datestamp and magenta label used to New York  
30 November 1860 C.O.C. & P.P. Express, St. Joseph, Missouri datestamp for express arrival  
1 December 1860 entered the U.S. mails at Saint Joseph, Missouri

**Fewer Than Five Reported Examples Of This Label In Magenta**

## EXPRESS USAGES

### The Central Overland California & Pike's Peak Express Company

*The C.O.C. & P.P. Express was formed by Russell, Majors and Wadell in February, 1860. The express operated between the mining towns, via Denver City, to Leavenworth City, Kansas Territory or to Saint Joseph, Missouri. It was sold to Ben Holladay in March, 1862.*



15 July 1861 letter dated from French Gulch (above Breckenridge, west of the divide)  
pencil "paid 30" express rate (10c from mountains to Denver, 20c Denver to St. Joseph)  
23 July **C.O.C. & P.P. Express, Denver City K.T.** datestamp, after Colorado Territory formed  
30 July 1861 entered US mails at St. Joseph, Missouri for Picatowica, Illinois

letter mentions:

*address to Breckenridge, Care of C.O.C. & P.P. Express, St. Joseph, Mo.*

# EXPRESS USAGES

## The Central Overland California & Pike's Peak Express Company

*The C.O.C. & P.P. Express briefly used green ink at their St. Joseph office to mark mail. The examples below show usages to and from Denver.*



17 December 1860 Frederick, Maryland to Denver City, Idaho, Pikes Peak  
turned over to Express company by Post Office in St. Joseph  
25 December St. Joseph, Missouri **C.O.C. & P.P. Express** green departure datestamp



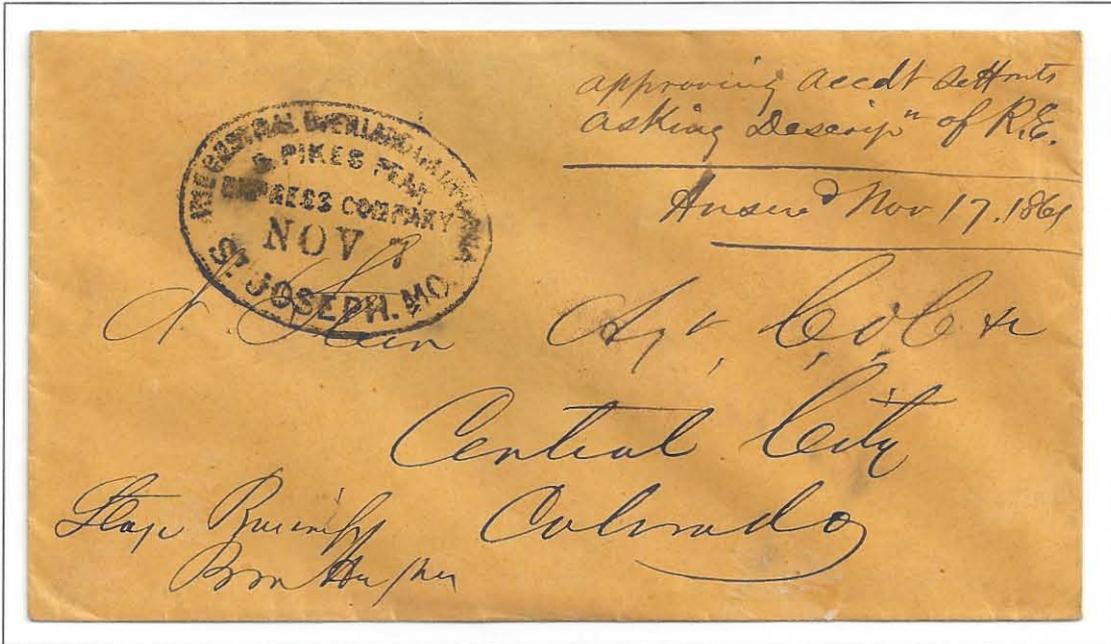
1 January 1861 Denver City to Wisconsin, **C.O.C. & P.P. Express, Denver City K.T.** datestamp  
7 January St. Joseph, Missouri **C.O.C. & P.P. Express** green datestamp  
9 January 1861 entered US mails at St. Joseph for Superior, Wisconsin

# The Pony Express

## Bela Hughes Endorsement



The famous "Pony Express" ran from Saint Joseph, Missouri to San Francisco between April 1860 and November 1861. The route only touched Colorado Territory at Julesburg.



7 November 1861 St. Joseph, Missouri to Central City, Colorado Territory  
endorsed **Stage Business Bela Hughes** at lower left to go free  
addressed to the Central Overland California & Pikes Peak Express agent Nate Stein

### The Only Reported Example

Carried by the Central Overland express rider from St. Joseph to Denver, and onward to Central City by stage. Recipient has endorsed this as "approving account settlements asking description of R(oute) E(quipment)." The Pony Express was in the process of closing the line when this cover was carried. The last trip arrived in San Francisco on November 20, 1861.

The sender, Bela Hughes, was an attorney for the Central Overland California & Pikes Peak Express Company that operated the Pony Express. He moved to Denver in 1862. He later was in charge of the Holladay Overland Mail & Express Company and became president of the Denver Pacific Railroad. Hughes was Denver's first and only rail baron. He ran for Governor in 1876.

# EXPRESS USAGES

## Hinckley & Co's. Express

*Hinckley & Co's. Express was founded in 1860 by C.S. Hinckley and John Sowers. The express operated between the mining towns, via Denver City and Fort Kearney, to Omaha City, Nebraska Territory. The Company was purchased by the Central Overland, California & Pike's Peak Express Company on May 11, 1861.*



24 December 1860 Denver City, **Kansas Territory** to Fort Atkinson, Iowa

Hinckley & Cos. Express franked envelope, 1 January 1861 entered the U.S. mails at Omaha, **Nebraska Territory**



17 March 1861 Georgia Gulch (below present day Leadville) to Fort Dodge, Iowa

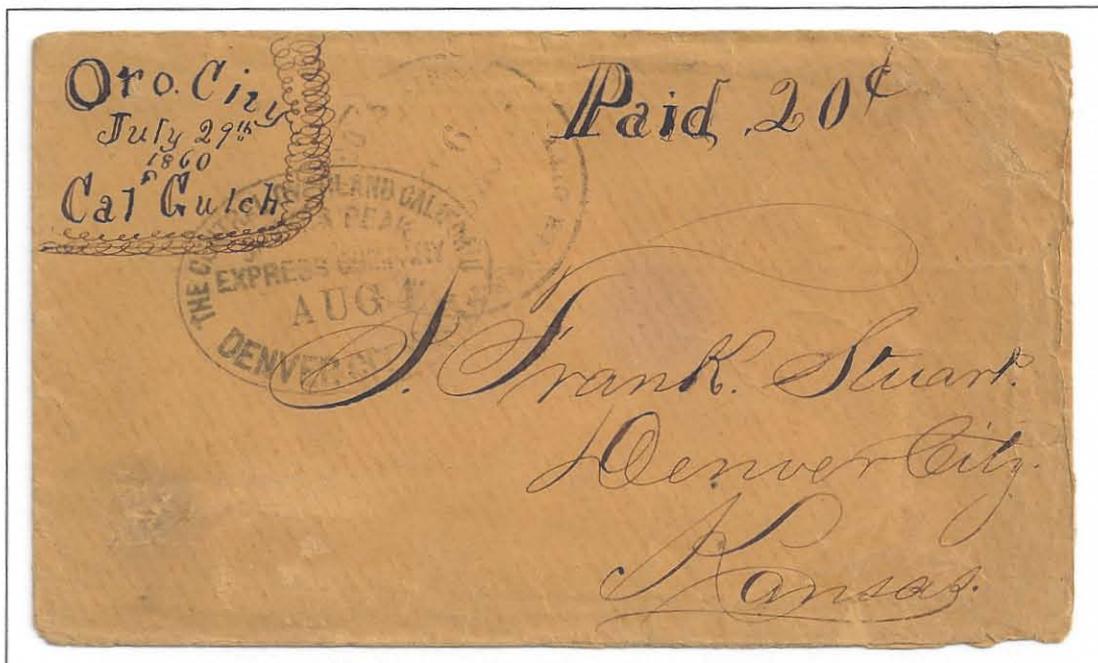
25 March 1861 Denver City, **Colorado Territory** to Fort Dodge, Iowa

Hinckley & Cos. Express franked envelope, 30 March 1861 entered the U.S. mails at Omaha, **Nebraska Territory**

# EXPRESS USAGES

## Conjunctive Express Usages

*Hinckley & Co's. Express and Central Overland California & Pike's Peak Express Company frequently worked together to handle mails. The two covers below were each handled by both companies.*



27 July 1860 Oro City, California Gulch to Denver, paid 20c express fees  
**C.O.C. & P.P. Express** from the mines and delivered by **Hinckley & Cos. Express**



July 1860 Gilpin County mines to Michigan, paid 25c express fees  
**Hinckley & Cos. Express** to Denver and then by the **C.O.C. & P.P. Express** to St. Joseph  
21 July 1860 entered the mails, forwarded from Ann Arbor, Michigan to Detroit

# EXPRESS USAGES

Hinckley & Co's. Express

The Central Overland California & Pike's Peak Express Company



map of the gold region illustrated cover

June 1860 from the mines by **Hinckley & Co's Express** to Denver City

14 June 1860 **C.O.C. & P.P. Express, Denver City K.T.** datestamp, express charges prepaid in cash

24 June 1860 entered the U.S. mails at Saint Joseph, Missouri for delivery to Ohio

**Conjunctive Usage Of Two Different Expresses**

# EXPRESS USAGES

## Wells, Fargo & Co.

*The Wells, Fargo & Co. operations in Colorado Territory were not nearly as extensive, or profitable, as their operations in most of the other areas of the West. In fact, Wells, Fargo & Co. stage coaches only operated in Colorado from late in 1866 until 1869. They operated during this time frame on two major divisions. A line from the Denver office at the corner of F and Holladay Streets along various overland routes to Wyoming or Kansas as well as a Mountain division that operated from Denver to Georgetown, via Black Hawk.*



Wells, Fargo & Co. Denver office in 1868



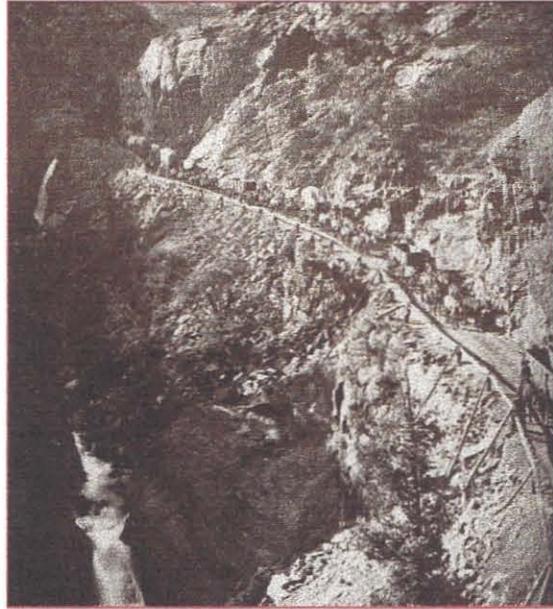
12 January 1868 Denver City, Colorado Territory to Central City  
carried entirely outside of the United States mails by Wells, Fargo & Co.

**Fewer Than Five Reported Examples**

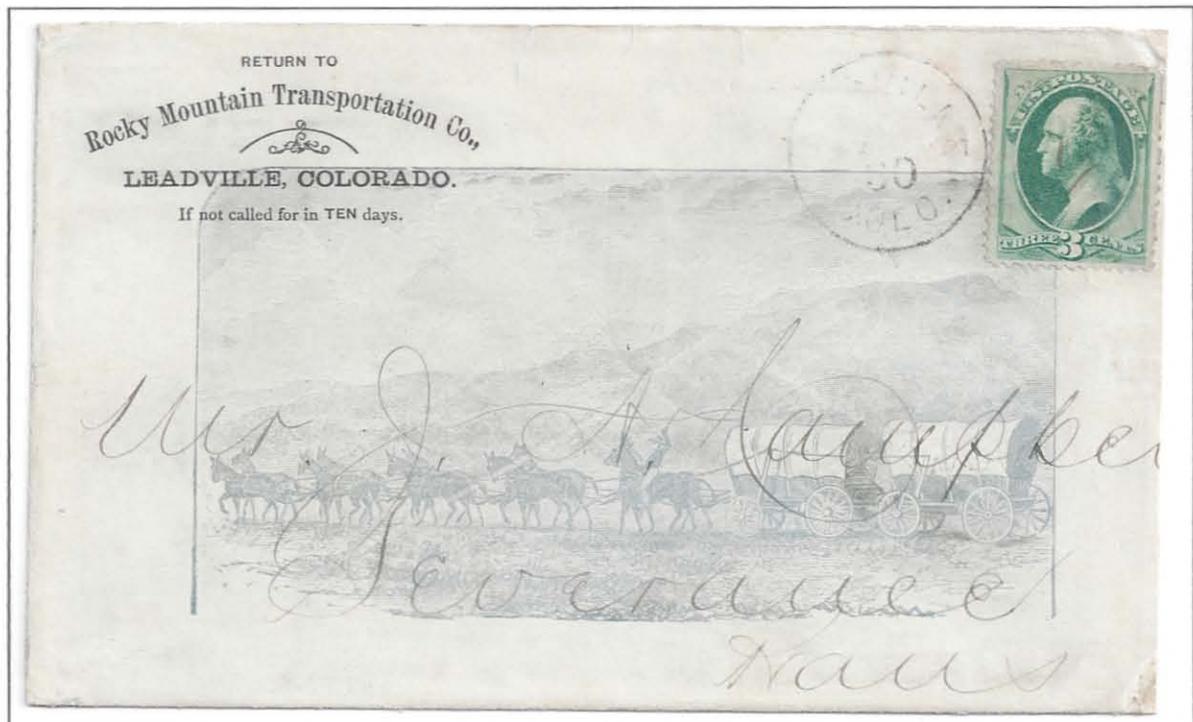
# EXPRESS

## Rocky Mountain Transportation Company

*The Rocky Mountain Transportation Company operated mule teams across Ute pass between Leadville and Colorado Springs in the 1870's. The pass was designated as one way downhill in the afternoons to accommodate the traffic and at one time the Rocky Mountain Transportation Company had over 2,000 animals engaged in moving their freight wagons. The pass later served as a railroad route for the Colorado Midland.*



Rocky Mountain Transportation Company wagons on Ute pass is 1878



Rocky Mountain Transportation Co. illustrated cover, ca. 1876  
Leadville, Colorado to Severance, Kansas

# COLORADO TERRITORY

## A Miner Celebrates The Fourth Of July Near Golden City



7 August 1866 Golden City, **Colorado Territory** to Maine

Enclosed letter from Walter Dunbar includes:

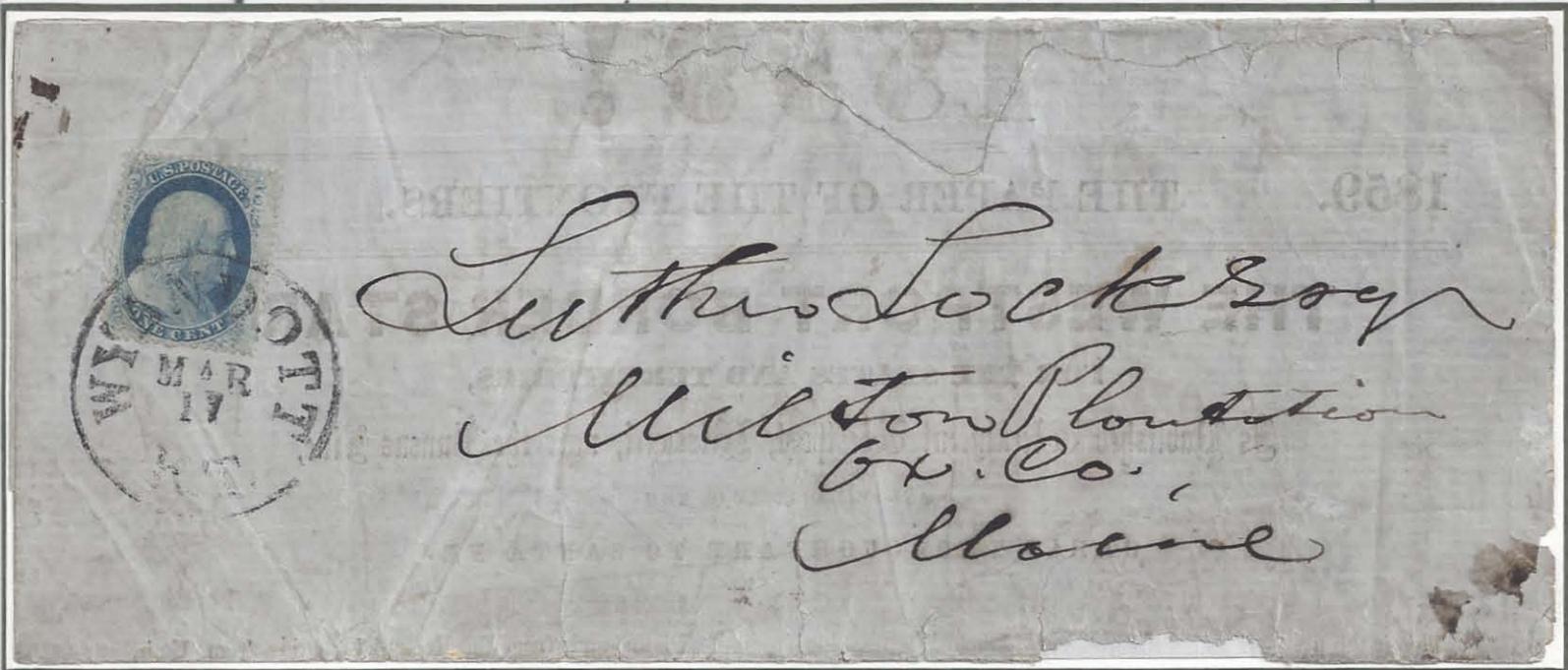
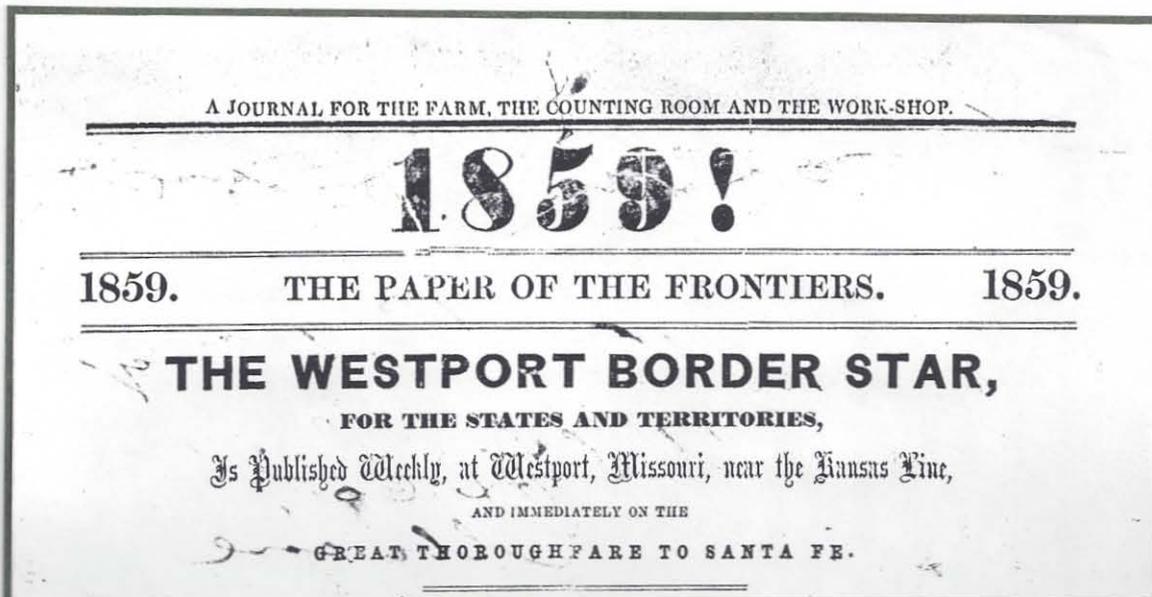
*Henry and myself are prospecting for gold. ... I shall spend most of my life in the West, when I come East I shall only come for a short time.*

*I would have liked to have been there and celebrate the fourth but I did not have a chance to celebrate this fourth as we was in the wilderness. We did have a little celebration - we had no guns but we had a bottle of Drakes plantation bitters which we made suffice - we jammed the neck so hard that we broke it so we felt pretty lively and chased some deer and sheep also we caught some trout and came home quite tired and hungry.*

# COLORADO TERRITORY

## Publicizing The Gold Rush

*The Colorado gold rush of 1859 was stimulated by a barrage of print articles that appeared in Newspaper in the East. The earliest reports, often exaggerated, appeared in papers such as the Westport Border Star published in Westport, Missouri.*



THE BORDER STAR IS THE BEST ADVERTISING MEDIUM ON THE FRONTIERS.

*Please stick this up in some conspicuous place.*

17 March 1859 Wyandott, **Kansas Territory** to Maine  
1c 1857 issue on printed circular for the Westport Border Star  
advertising news **From The Newly-Found Gold Mines!**

**The Only Reported Example Of A Circular Rate Usage From Kansas Territory**