



Entrepreneur **Henry Tefft Clarke**, an experienced steamboat man, railroad builder, and bridge builder, completed a bridge north of Sidney, Nebraska across the North Platte River on May 10, 1876. He established Camp Clarke at that site, where the toll bridge was located. Clarke had grocery and mining supply stores at Sidney and Camp Clarke, Nebraska, and at Deadwood, Dakota Territory.

The first advertisements for Clarke's express business and for the printed franks of "Clarke's Centennial Express" appeared in Nebraska newspapers on July 15, 1876. The Deadwood City, Dakota Territory *Black Hills Pioneer* recorded the first trip of his express from that city to Sidney (on the Union Pacific Railroad) as having left Deadwood July 19, 1876.

H. T. Clarke apparently printed his franked envelopes in small batches, as there are 13 types/subtypes known, for which he charged 10 cents each (which included the express fee and the price of the three-cent government stamped envelope for delivery once it entered the U. S. mail system). Three types of printed franks state (on verso) that Clarke charged 25 cents to the addressee for letters delivered in non-franked envelopes.

No advertisements for Clarke's Centennial Express could be found after June 7, 1877, likely indicating the end of his letter express business (although his express mail had been carried by the "Sidney & Black Hills U. S. Mail Coaches" since February 14, 1877, or earlier). Clarke continued his grocery and mining supply businesses for some time thereafter. And, he maintained his toll bridge over the North Platte River until at least 1880.

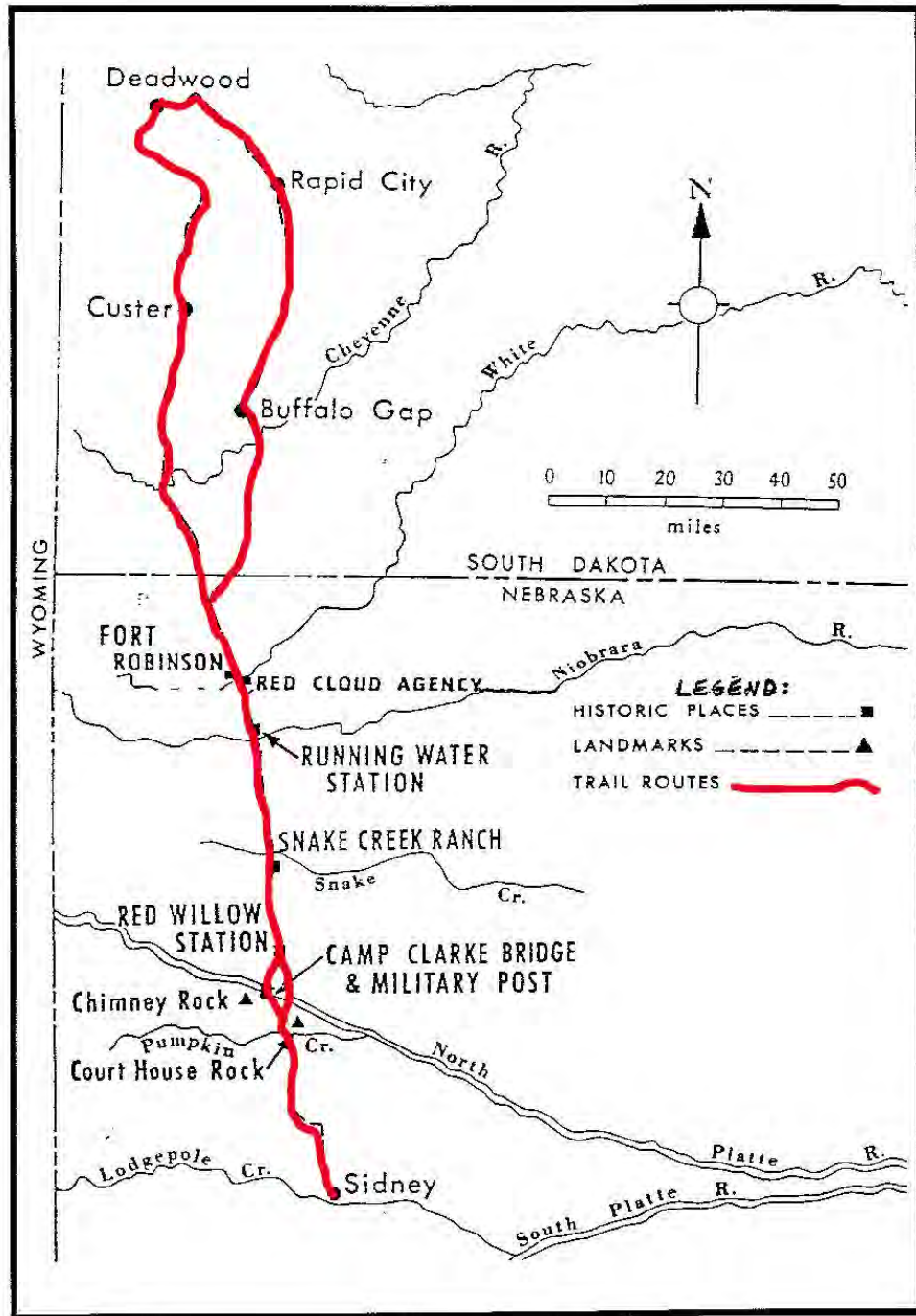
Clarke's decision to end the letter express business was a financial one, based on his own recollection nearly 25 years after the fact. The need for a letter express probably declined rapidly by late 1876 and into early 1877, as the telegraph was completed into Deadwood on December 1, 1876, and post offices were established at both Custer City and Deadwood on March 14, 1877.

The primary competitor to "Clarke's Centennial Express" (based out of Sidney, Nebraska) was from the "Cheyenne & Black Hills Stage & Express Co.," (based out of Cheyenne, Wyoming Territory) with Gilmer, Salisbury & Co., proprietors. On April 9, 1877, Gilmer, Salisbury & Co. owned what became known as the "Sidney, Cheyenne and Black Hills Stage & Express Co.," indicating their expansion to the Sidney Route (via acquisition of Jim Stephenson's interest in the Western Stage Line).

"Clarke's Centennial Express" (letter express) only operated for roughly one year, from mid-July, 1876 through early June, 1877.



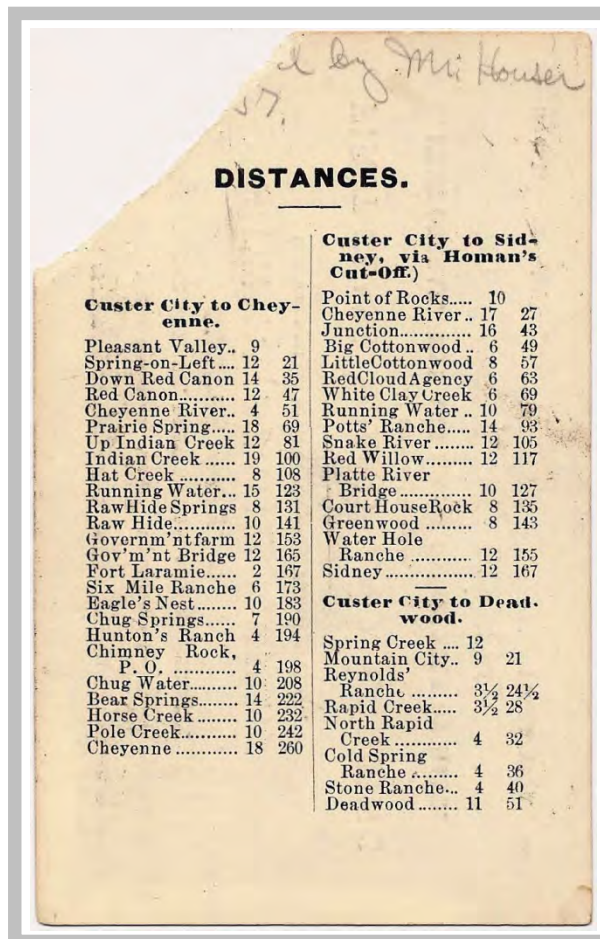
Postmarked “**Bellevue, N. T. Jun 28**” (1858). H. T. Clarke’s biography from *Illustrated History of Nebraska* notes that he was the steamboat agent at Bellevue, Nebraska Territory beginning in 1856.

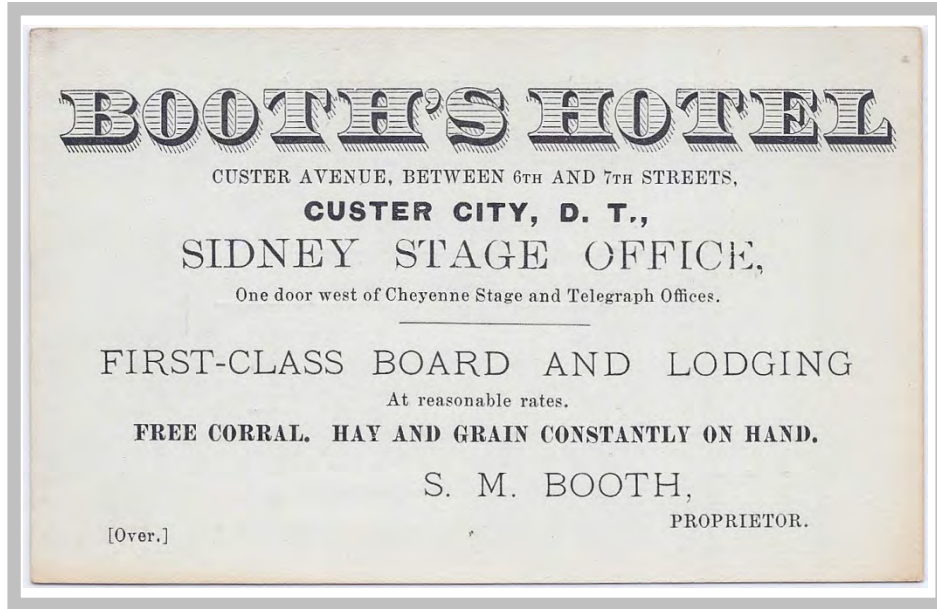


Map showing the route of Clarke's Centennial Express over the Sidney to Black Hills trail



Booth's Hotel business card for **Sidney Stage Office**, "one door west of Cheyenne Stage and Telegraph Office" in Custer City, D.T. with manuscript notation indicating **July, 1876**





Booth's Hotel business card for **Sidney Stage Office**, "one door west of Cheyenne Stage and Telegraph Office" in Custer City, D.T. *This pristine example was found during the 2011 renovation of the hotel under the original floor in the lobby.*

DISTANCES.

Custer City to Cheyenne.		Custer City to Sidney, via Homan's Cut-Off.)	
Pleasant Valley..	9	Point of Rocks....	10
Spring-on-Left....	12 21	Cheyenne River ..	17 27
Down Red Canon	14 35	Junction.....	16 43
Red Canon.....	12 47	Big Cottonwood ..	6 49
Cheyenne River..	4 51	Little Cottonwood	8 57
Prairie Spring....	18 69	Red Cloud Agency	6 63
Up Indian Creek	12 81	White Clay Creek	6 69
Indian Creek	19 100	Running Water ..	10 79
Hat Creek	8 108	Potts' Rancho....	14 93
Running Water..	15 123	Snake River	12 105
Raw Hide Springs	8 131	Red Willow.....	12 117
Raw Hide.....	10 141	Platte River	
Government farm	12 153	Bridge	10 127
Gov'm't Bridge	12 165	Court House Rock	8 135
Fort Laramie.....	2 167	Greenwood	8 143
Six Mile Rancho	6 173	Water Hole	
Eagle's Nest.....	10 183	Rancho	12 155
Chug Springs.....	7 190	Sidney.....	12 167
Hunton's Ranch	4 197		
Chimney Rock,		Custer City to Dead-	
P. O.	4 198	wood.	
Chug Water.....	10 208	Spring Creek ...	12
Bear Springs.....	14 222	Mountain City..	9 21
Horse Creek	10 232	Reynolds'	
Pole Creek.....	10 242	Rancho	3½ 24½
Cheyenne	18 260	Rapid Creek....	3½ 28
		North Rapid	
		Creek	4 32
		Cold Spring	
		Rancho	4 36
		Stone Rancho..	4 40
		Deadwood	11 51

Dakota Territorial Expresses

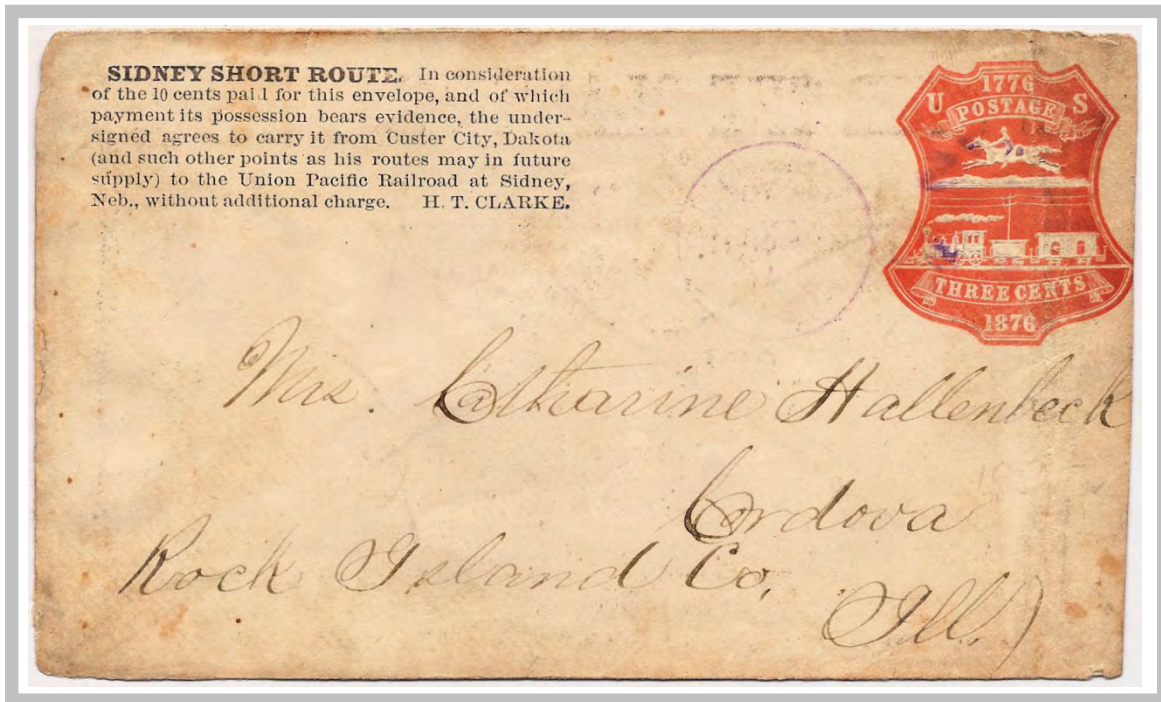


Clarke's Centennial Express (Sidney Short Route)

Three covers with letters from same correspondence carried into the Black Hills via the Sidney Pony Express:

- At left, Oct 24, 1876 to Deadwood City, Lawrence Co., D.T.
- Below, Oct 31, 1876 to Deadwood, Black Hills, D.T. with manuscript notation *via Sidney Pony Express*
- At bottom, Feb 11, 1877 to Crook City, Black Hills, D.T. *via Sidney*





Carried by **Clarke's Centennial Express (Persson Type 1 frank)** from the Black Hills to Sidney, Neb, where it entered the mails with their Aug 6 (1876) postmark for delivery to Cordova, Illinois.

HO! FOR THE BLACK HILLS!

THE

**New 61 Span Truss Bridge over the Platte River,
40 MILES NORTH OF SIDNEY,**

IS NOW OPEN FOR TRAVEL, AND IS

Guarded by the United States Troops.

ONLY 167 MILES

From the Union Pacific Railroad to Custer City.

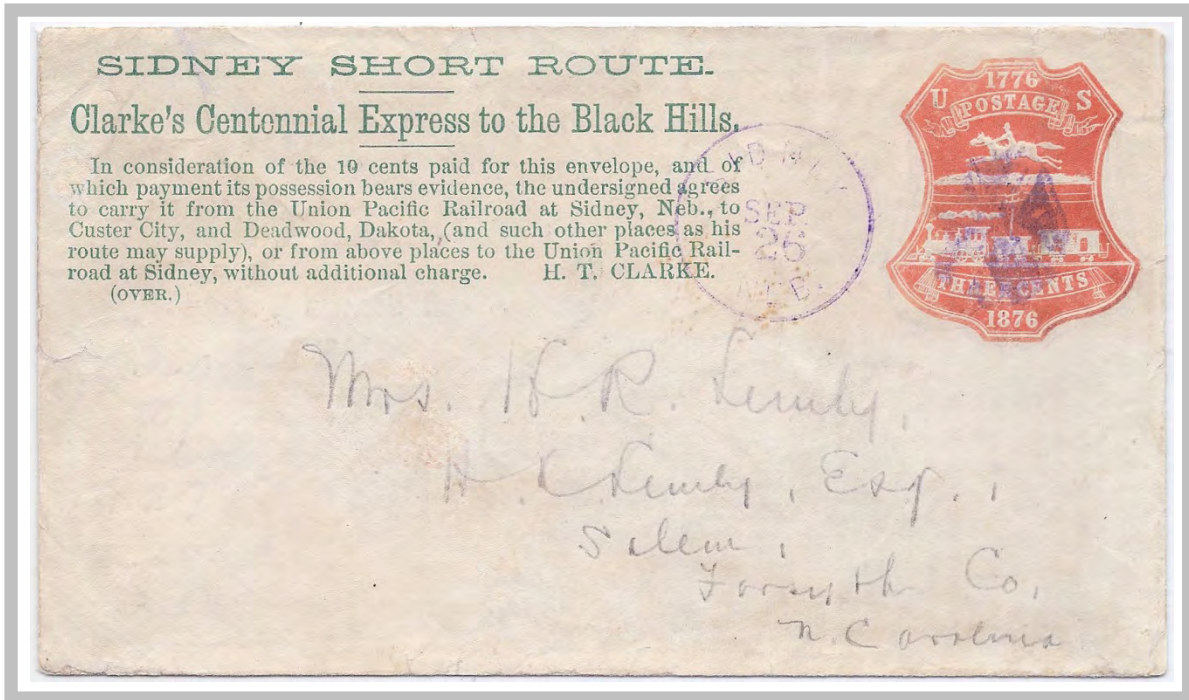
Wood and Water in Abundance, and the Finest Roads in the World by this Route. All Mail sent in care of H. T. CLARKE, SIDNEY AND CAMP CLARKE, PLATTE RIVER BRIDGE, will be forwarded as directed. Sidney is now a good out-fitting point. Large supply of Grain, Groceries, Hardware and Produce always on hand. Hotel accommodations good.

TOTAL DISTANCE FROM SIDNEY TO CUSTER CITY **167 MILES.** This distance is by the road now traveled between the two Agencies. Dear's Sidney and Black Hills Stage Line leaves this route at Snake River, running through to Red Cloud Indian Agency in **17** hours, and to Custer City in **36** hours. The distance by this route is **182** miles.

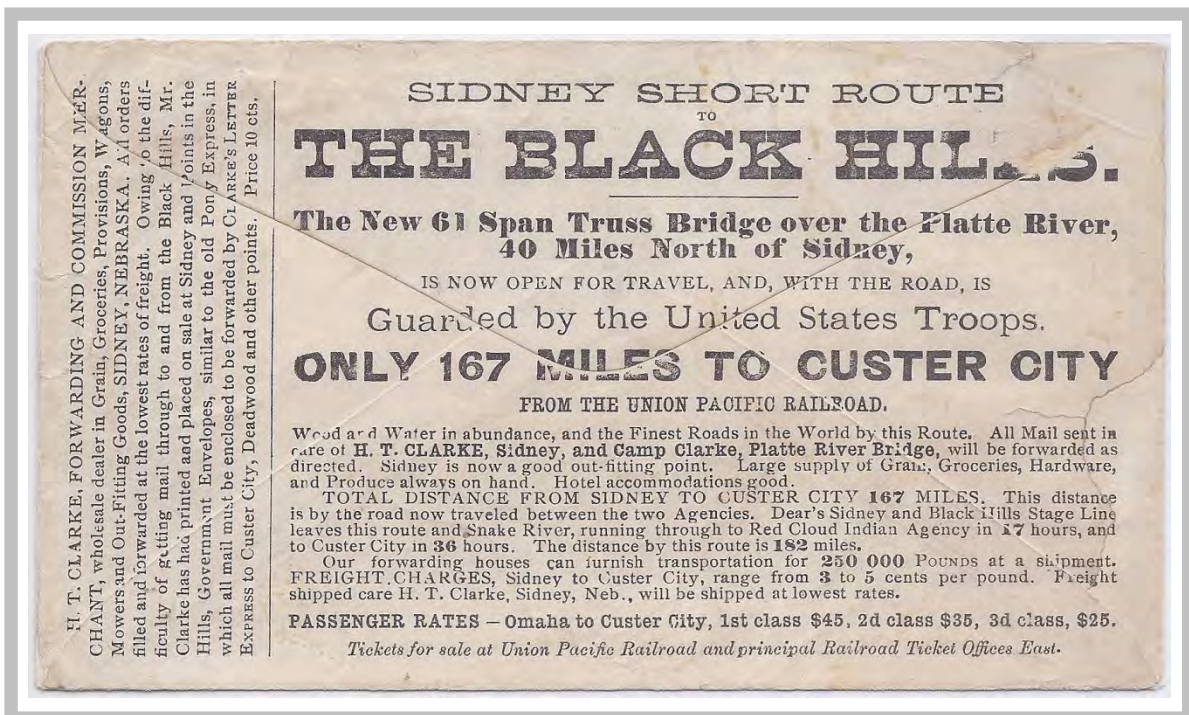
Our forwarding houses can furnish transportation for **250.000** Pounds at a shipment. FREIGHT CHARGES, Sidney to Custer City, range from **3** to **5** cents per pound. Freight shipped care H. T. Clarke, Sidney, Neb., will be shipped at lowest rates.

Passenger Rates—Omaha to Custer City, 1st class \$45.00, 2d class \$35.00, 3d class \$25.00

H. T. CLARKE, FORWARDING AND COMMISSION MERCHANT, wholesale dealer in Grain, Groceries, Provisions, Wagons, Mowers and out-fitting Goods, SIDNEY, NEBRASKA. All orders filled and forwarded at the lowest rates of freight. Owing to the difficulty of getting mail through toward from the Black Hills, Mr. Clarke has had printed and placed on sale at Sidney and Points in the Hills, Government Envelopes, similar to the old Pony Express, in which all mail must be enclosed to be forwarded by Clarke's Letter Express to Custer City, Deadwood and other points. Price 10cts.



Carried by **Clarke's Centennial Express (Persson Type 2 frank)** from the Black Hills to Sidney, Neb, where it entered the mails with their Sep 26 (1876) postmark for delivery to Salem, N. Carolina.





Carried by **Clarke's Centennial Express (Persson Type 2a frank)** from the Black Hills to Sidney, Neb, where it entered the mails with their Aug 31 (1876) postmark for delivery to Sing Sing, New York.

SIDNEY SHORT ROUTE
TO
THE BLACK HILLS.

**The New 61 Span Truss Bridge over the Platte River,
40 Miles North of Sidney,**
IS NOW OPEN FOR TRAVEL, AND, WITH THE ROAD, IS
Guarded by the United States Troops.
ONLY 167 MILES TO CUSTER CITY
FROM THE UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD.

Wood and Water in abundance, and the Finest Roads in the World by this Route. All Mail sent in care of **H. T. CLARKE, Sidney, and Camp Clarke, Platte River Bridge,** will be forwarded as directed. Sidney is now a good out fitting point. Large supply of Grain, Groceries, Hardware, and Produce always on hand. Hotel accommodations good.

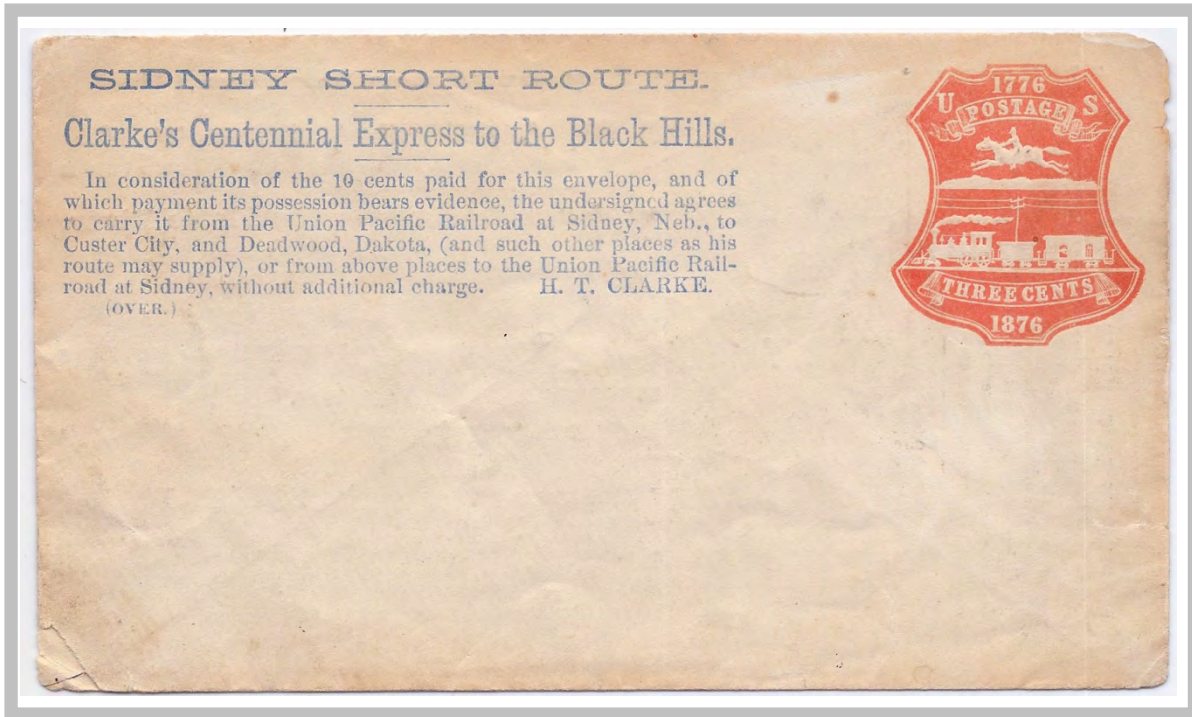
TOTAL DISTANCE FROM SIDNEY TO CUSTER CITY 167 MILES. This distance is by the road now traveled between the two Agencies. Dear's Sidney and Black Hills Stage Line leaves this route and Snake River, running through to Red Cloud Indian Agency in **17** hours, and to Custer City in **36** hours. The distance by this route is **182** miles.

Our forwarding houses can furnish transportation for **250 000 Pounds** at a shipment. **FREIGHT CHARGES, Sidney to Custer City, range from 3 to 5 cents per pound.** Freight shipped care **H. T. Clarke, Sidney, Neb.,** will be shipped at lowest rates.

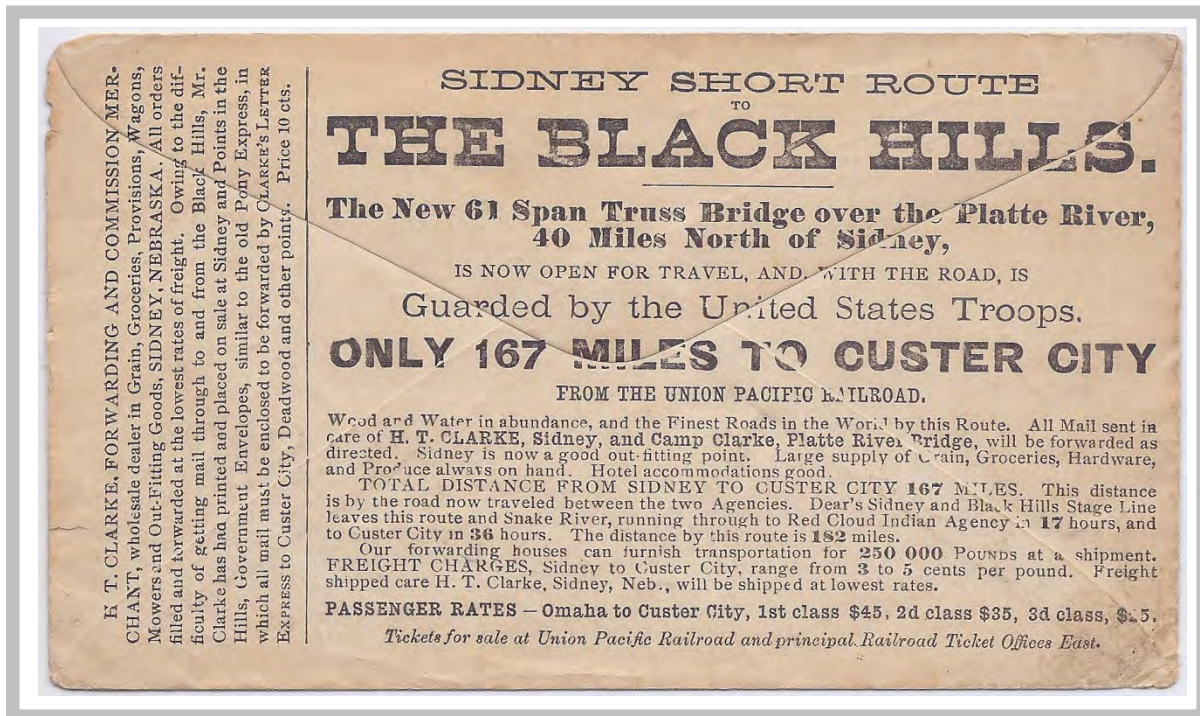
PASSENGER RATES — Omaha to Custer City, 1st class \$45, 2d class \$35, 3d class, \$25.

Tickets for sale at Union Pacific Railroad and principal Railroad Ticket Offices East.

WAGONS,
MOWERS and other fitting Goods, SIDNEY, NEBRASKA. All orders filled and forwarded at the lowest rates of freight. Owing to the difficulty of getting mail through to and from the Black Hills, Mr. Clarke has had printed and placed on sale at Sidney and Points in the Hills, Government Envelopes, similar to the old Pony Express, in which all mail must be endorsed to be forwarded by CLARKE'S LETTER EXPRESS to Custer City, Deadwood and other points. Price 10 cts.



Unused Clarke's Centennial Express (Persson Type 3 frank) . No used examples of this type frank have yet been reported.



H. T. CLARKE, FORWARDING AND COMMISSION MERCHANT, wholesale dealer in Grain, Groceries, Provisions, Wagons, Mowers and Out-Fitting Goods, SIDNEY, NEBRASKA. All orders filled and forwarded at the lowest rates of freight. Owing to the difficulty of getting mail through to and from the Black Hills, Mr. Clarke has had printed and placed on sale at Sidney and Points in the Hills, Government Envelopes, similar to the old Pony Express, in which all mail must be enclosed to be forwarded by CLARKE'S LETTER EXPRESS to Custer City, Deadwood and other points. Price 10 cts.

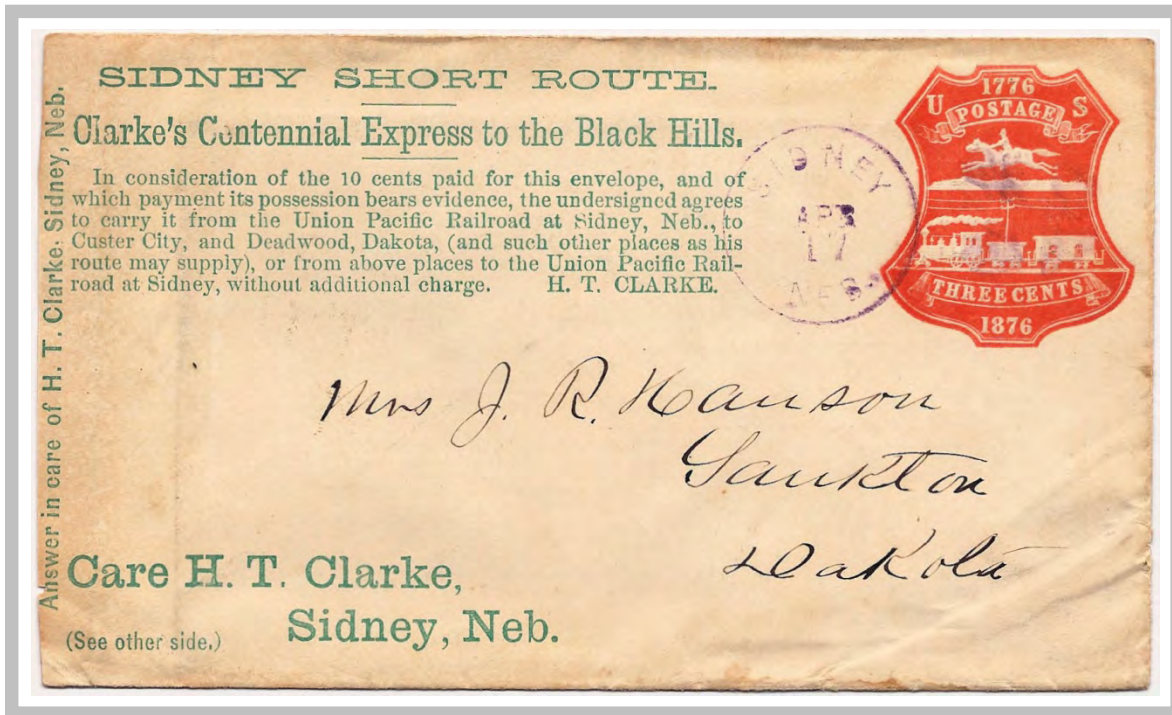
SIDNEY SHORT ROUTE
 TO
THE BLACK HILLS.
 The New 61 Span Truss Bridge over the Platte River,
 40 Miles North of Sidney,
 IS NOW OPEN FOR TRAVEL, AND, WITH THE ROAD, IS
 Guarded by the United States Troops.
ONLY 167 MILES TO CUSTER CITY
 FROM THE UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD.

Wood and Water in abundance, and the Finest Roads in the World by this Route. All Mail sent in care of H. T. CLARKE, Sidney, and Camp Clarke, Platte River Bridge, will be forwarded as directed. Sidney is now a good out-fitting point. Large supply of Grain, Groceries, Hardware, and Produce always on hand. Hotel accommodations good.

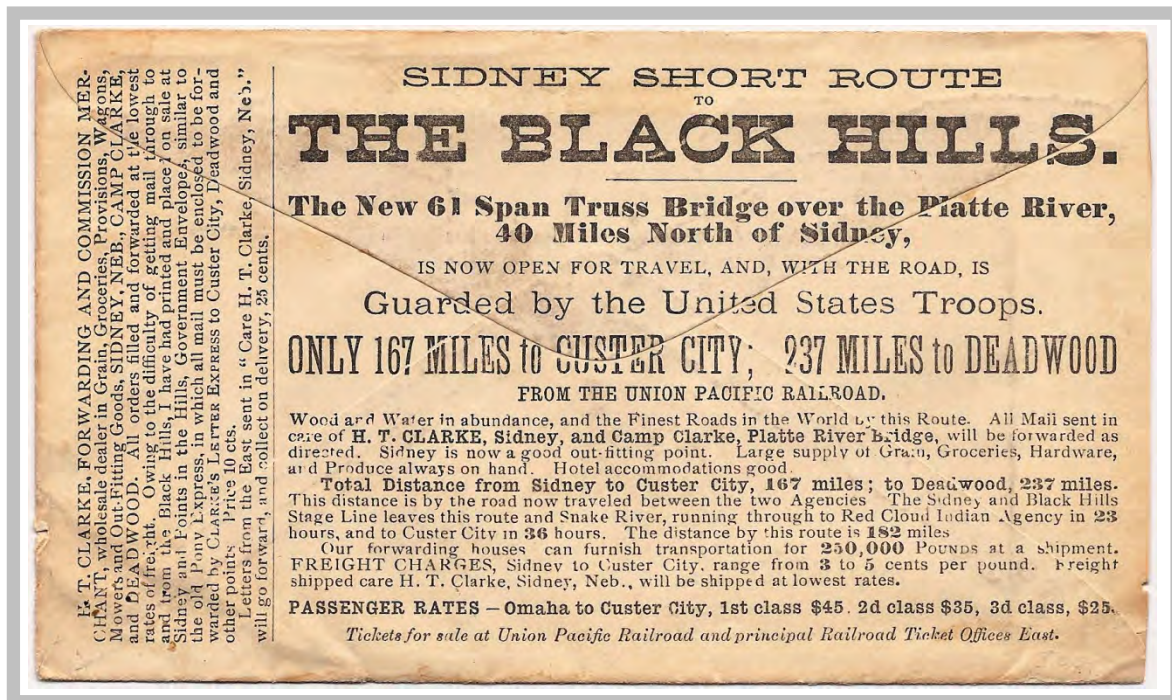
TOTAL DISTANCE FROM SIDNEY TO CUSTER CITY 167 MILES. This distance is by the road now traveled between the two Agencies. Dear's Sidney and Black Hills Stage Line leaves this route and Snake River, running through to Red Cloud Indian Agency in 17 hours, and to Custer City in 36 hours. The distance by this route is 182 miles.

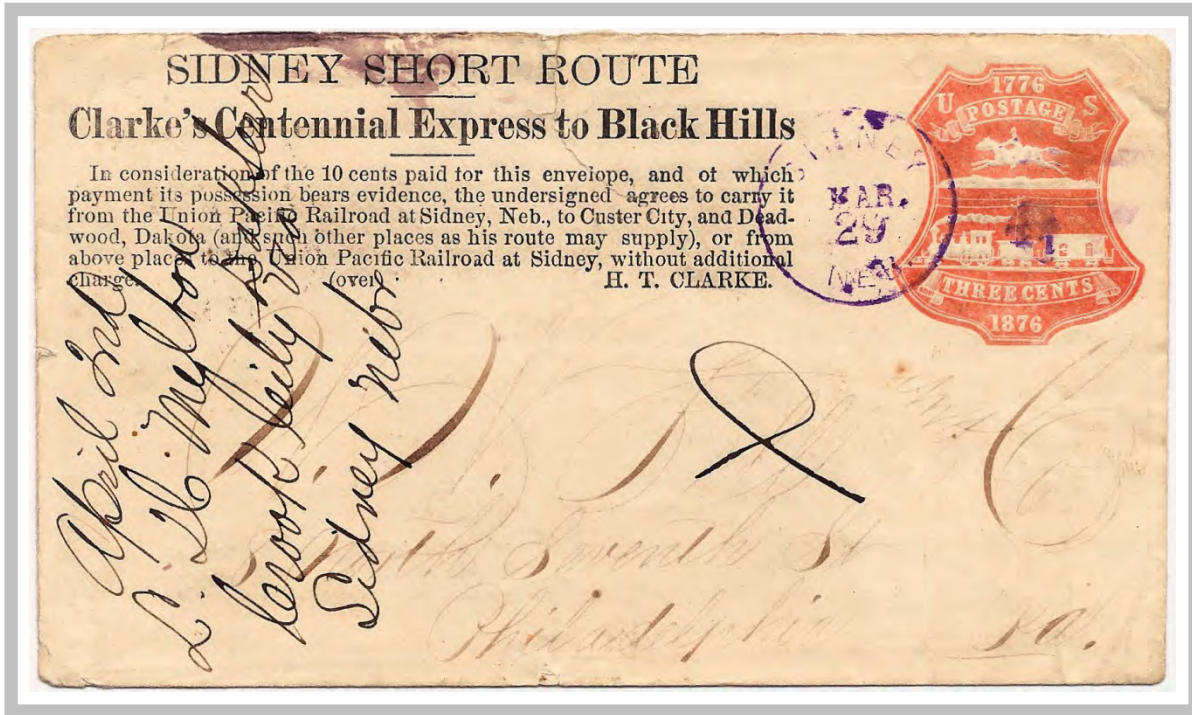
Our forwarding houses can furnish transportation for 250 000 POUNDS at a shipment. FREIGHT CHARGES, Sidney to Custer City, range from 3 to 5 cents per pound. Freight shipped care H. T. Clarke, Sidney, Neb., will be shipped at lowest rates.

PASSENGER RATES - Omaha to Custer City, 1st class \$45, 2d class \$35, 3d class, \$25.
Tickets for sale at Union Pacific Railroad and principal Railroad Ticket Offices East.

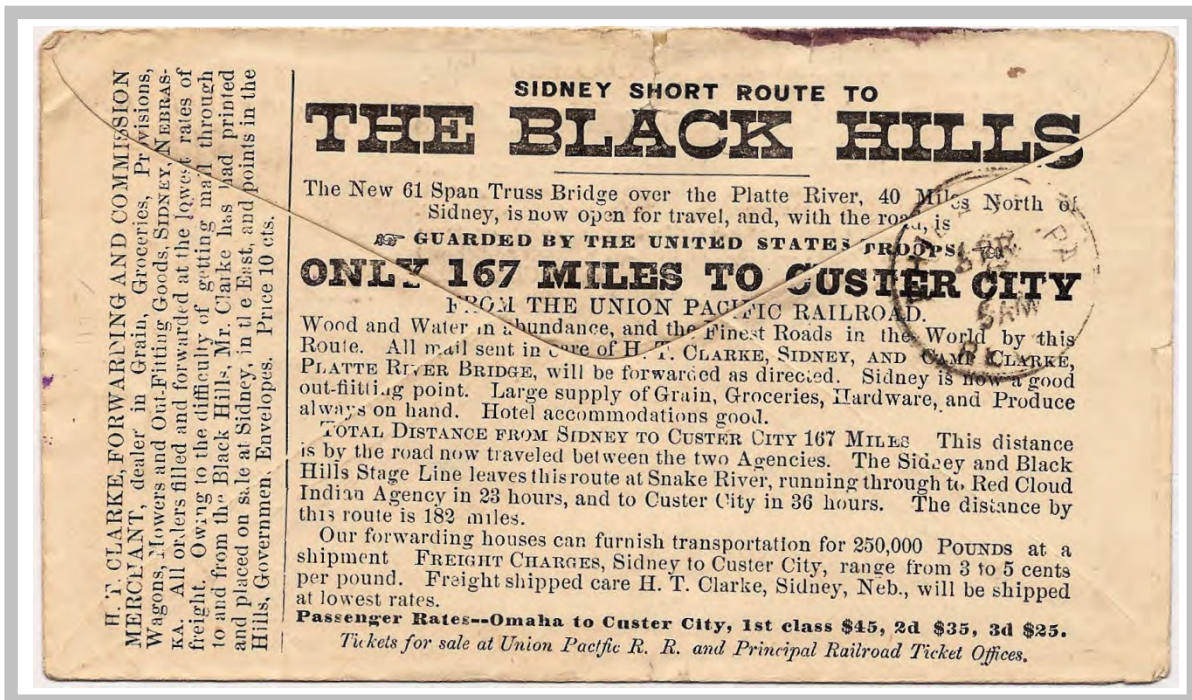


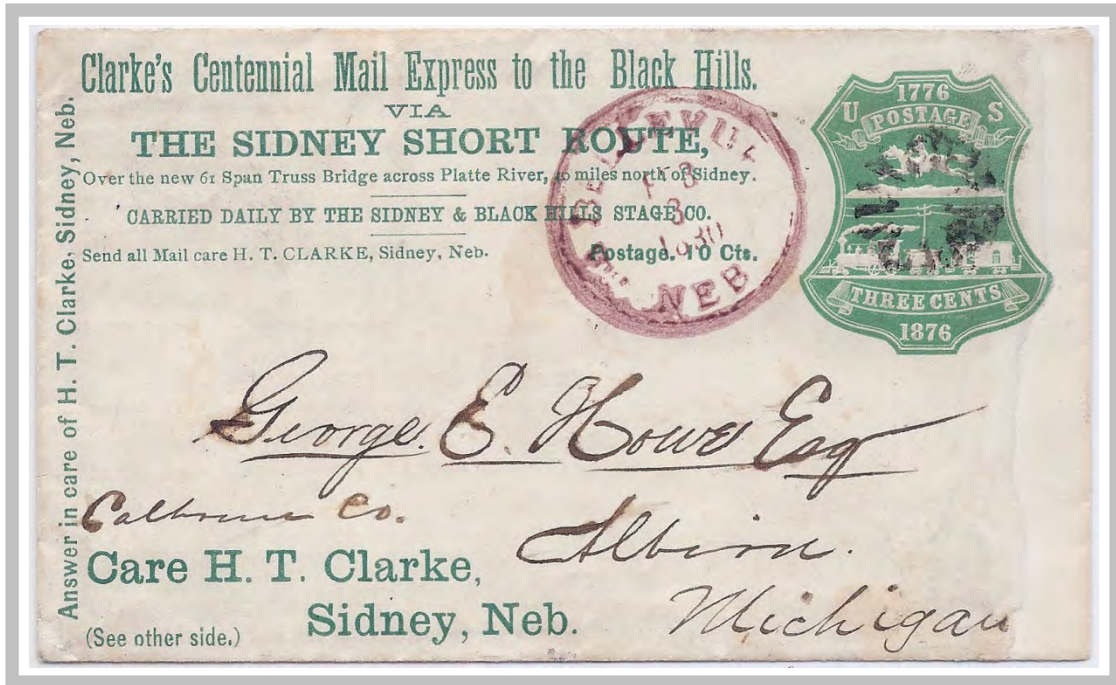
Carried by **Clarke's Centennial Express (Persson Type 4 frank)** from the Black Hills to Sidney, Neb, where it entered the mails with their Apr 17 (1877) postmark for delivery to Yankton, Dakota.



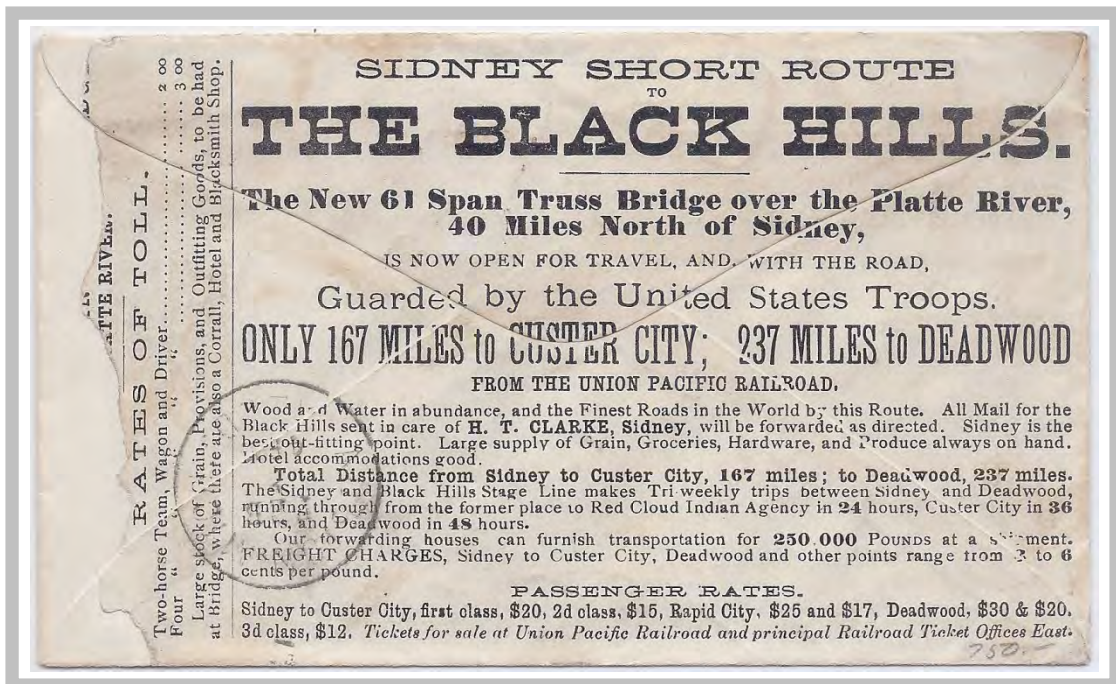


Carried by **Clarke's Centennial Express (Persson Type 5 frank)** from the Black Hills to Sidney, Neb, where it entered the mails with their Mar 29 (1877) postmark for delivery to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Docketing at left indicates the sender was at Crook City.



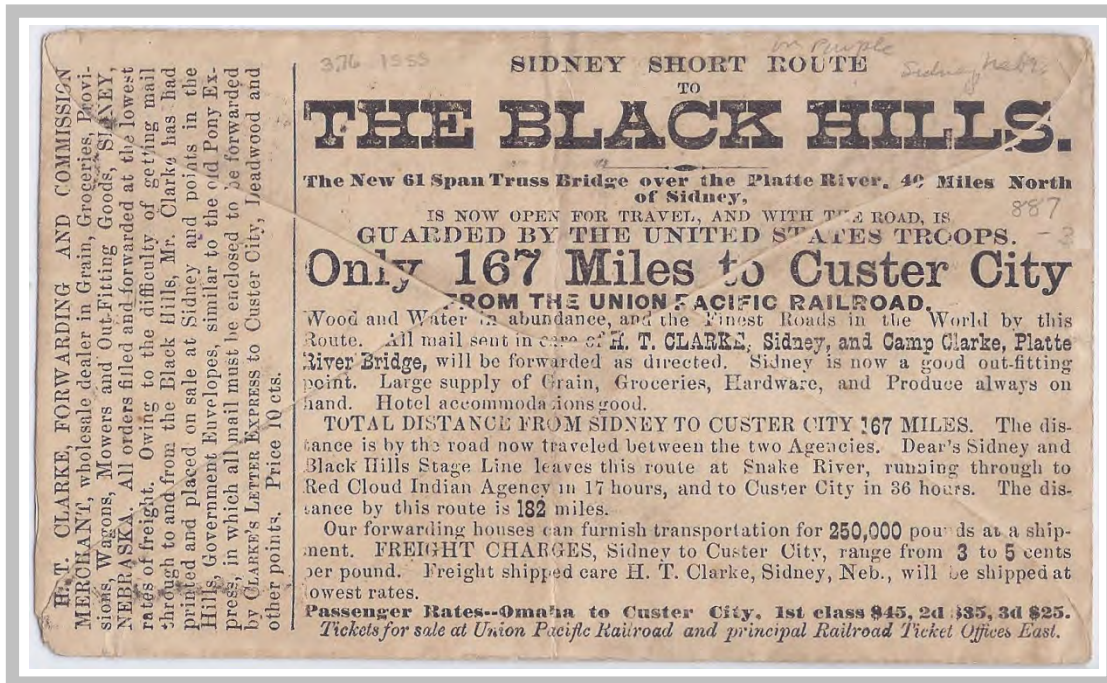


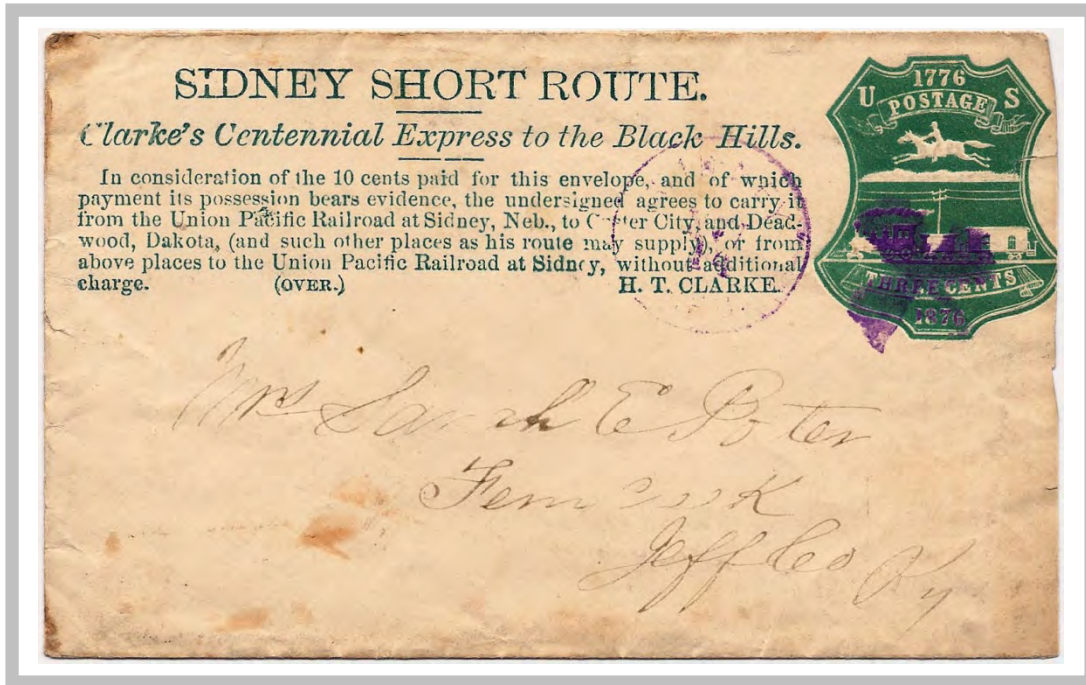
Clarke's Centennial Express (Persson Type 6 frank). Apparently an unused leftover printed frank used from **Bellevue, Neb. Feb 8, 1880** to Albion, Michigan. Bellevue was H. T. Clarke's "hometown", so it is possible he gave some of the leftover envelopes to friends and relatives for use there.



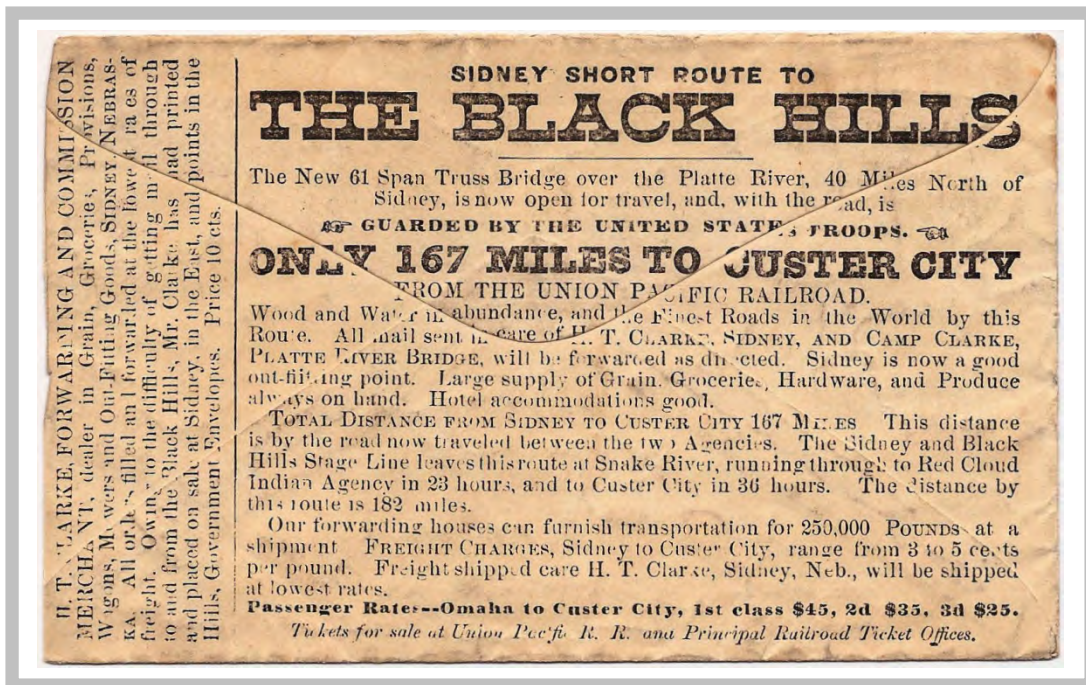


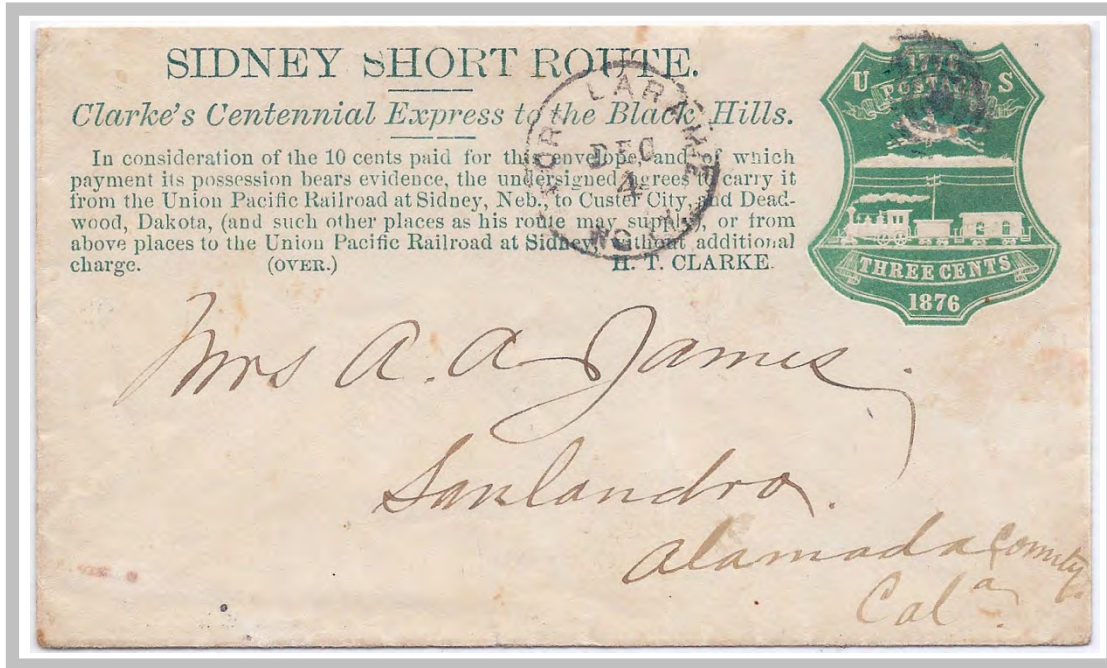
Carried by **Clarke's Centennial Express (Persson Type 7 frank)** from the Black Hills to Sidney, Neb, where it entered the mails with their Nov 7 (1876) postmark for delivery to Cicero, N. Y.





Carried by **Clarke's Centennial Express (Persson Type 8 frank)** from the Black Hills to Sidney, Neb, where it entered the mails with their (Nov?) 14, (1876) postmark for delivery to Fern Creek, Kentucky.





By post office from **Fort Laramie Wg. Ty. Dec 4 (1876)** for delivery to "Sanlandro" (San Leandro), California. Fort Laramie was not on Clarke's Express route; thus, this **Clarke's Centennial Express (Persson Type 8 frank)** may have simply been dropped in the mail at Fort Laramie or been carried there from the Black Hills by the Cheyenne & Black Hills Stage & Express Company.

SIDNEY SHORT ROUTE TO THE BLACK HILLS

The New 61 Span Truss Bridge over the Platte River, 40 Miles North of Sidney, is now open for travel, and, with the road, is **GUARDED BY THE UNITED STATES TROOPS.**

ONLY 167 MILES TO CUSTER CITY FROM THE UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD.

Wood and Water in abundance, and the Finest Roads in the World by this Route. All mail sent in care of H. T. CLARKE, SIDNEY, AND CAMP CLARKE, PLATTE RIVER BRIDGE, will be forwarded as directed. Sidney is now a good outfitting point. Large supply of Grain, Groceries, Hardware, and Produce always on hand. Hotel accommodations good.

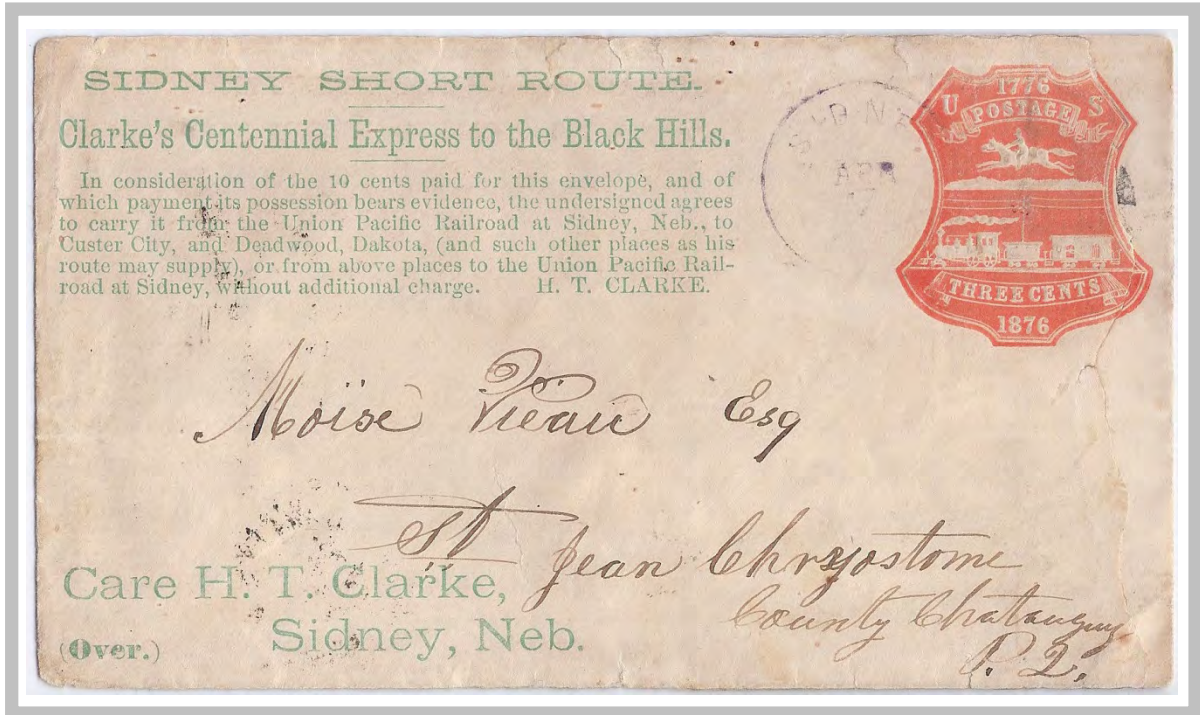
TOTAL DISTANCE FROM SIDNEY TO CUSTER CITY 167 MILES. This distance is by the road now traveled between the two Agencies. The Sidney and Black Hills Stage Line leaves this route at Snake River, running through to Red Cloud Indian Agency in 23 hours, and to Custer City in 36 hours. The distance by this route is 182 miles.

Our forwarding houses can furnish transportation for 250,000 POUNDS at a shipment. **FREIGHT CHARGES, Sidney to Custer City, range from 3 to 5 cents per pound.** Freight shipped care H. T. Clarke, Sidney, Neb., will be shipped at lowest rates.

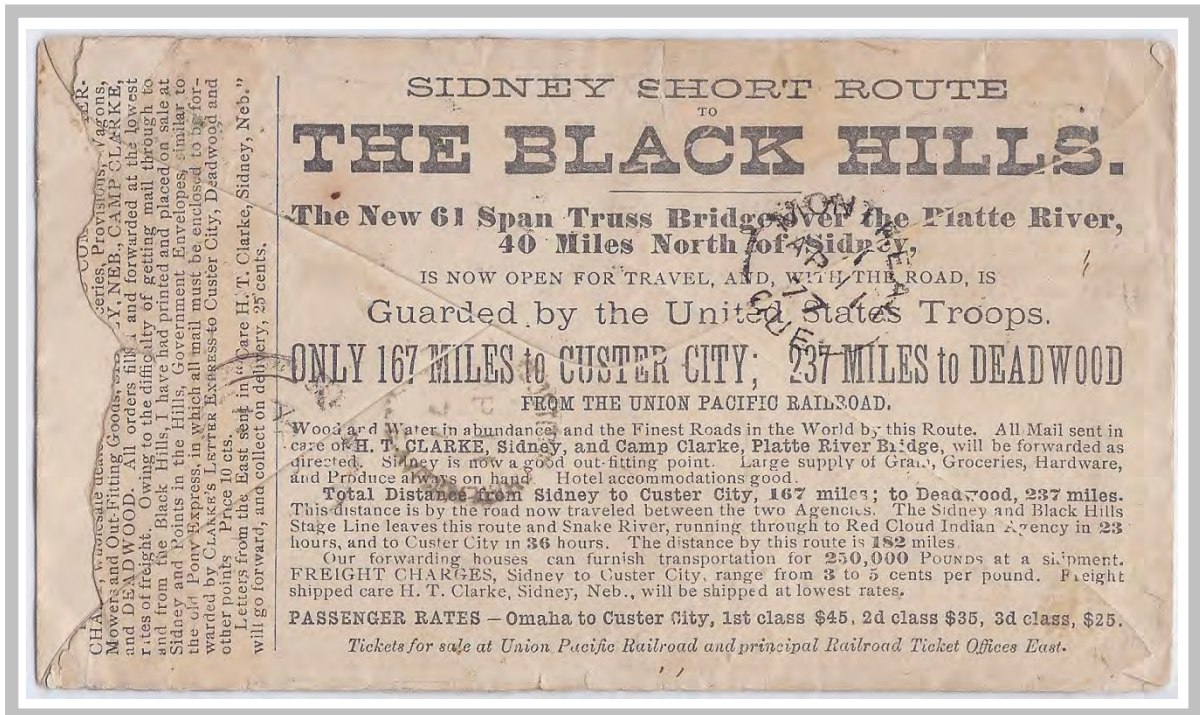
Passenger Rates--Omaha to Custer City, 1st class \$45, 2d \$35, 3d \$25.

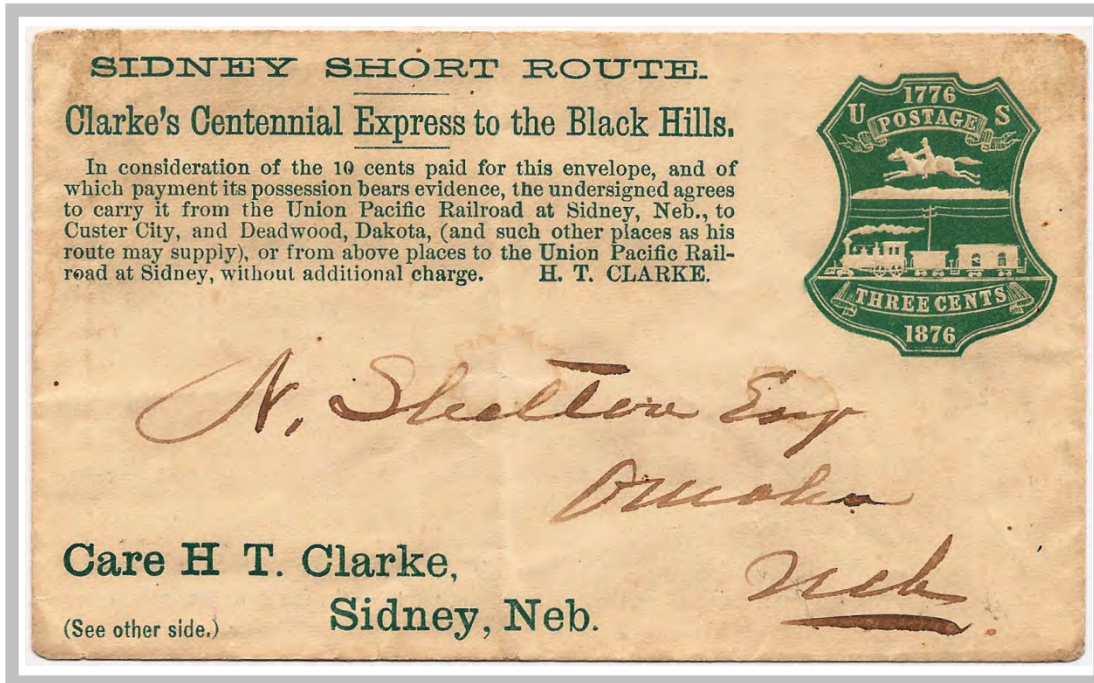
Tickets for sale at Union Pacific R. R. and Principal Railroad Ticket Offices.

H. T. CLARKE, FORWARDING AND COMMISSION MERCHANT, dealer in Grain, Groceries, Provisions, Wagons, Mowers and Outfitting Goods, SIDNEY, NEBRASKA. All orders filled and forwarded at the lowest rates of freight. Owing to the difficulty of getting mail through to and from the Black Hills, Mr. Clarke has had printed and placed on sale at Sidney, in the East, and points in the Hills, Government Envelopes. Price 10 cts.

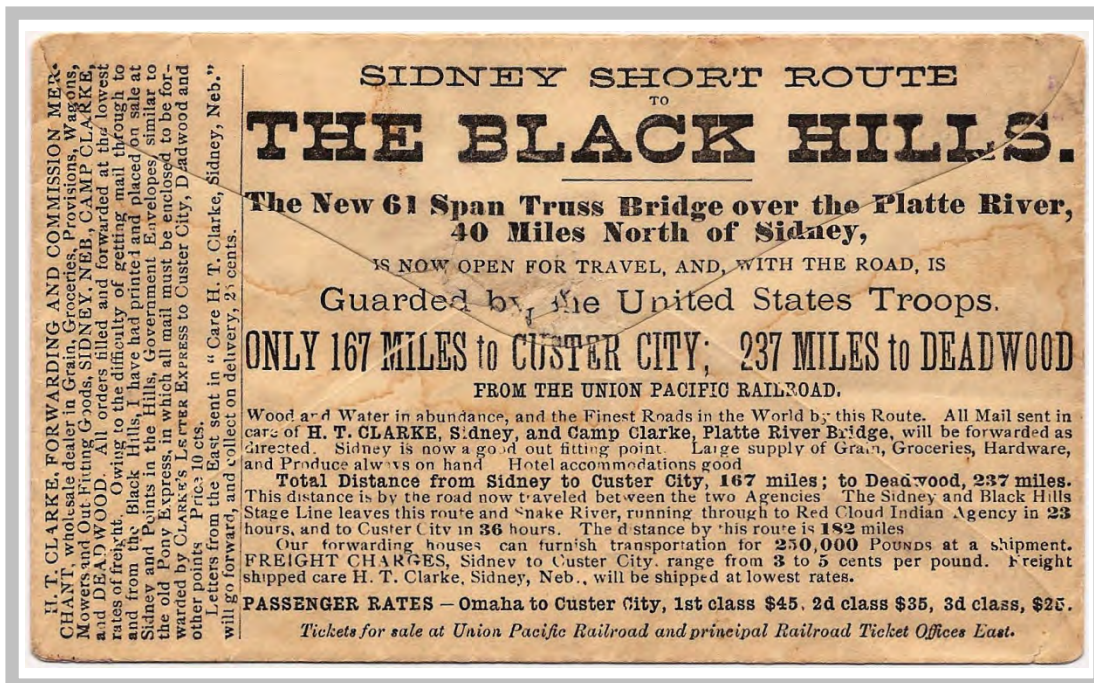


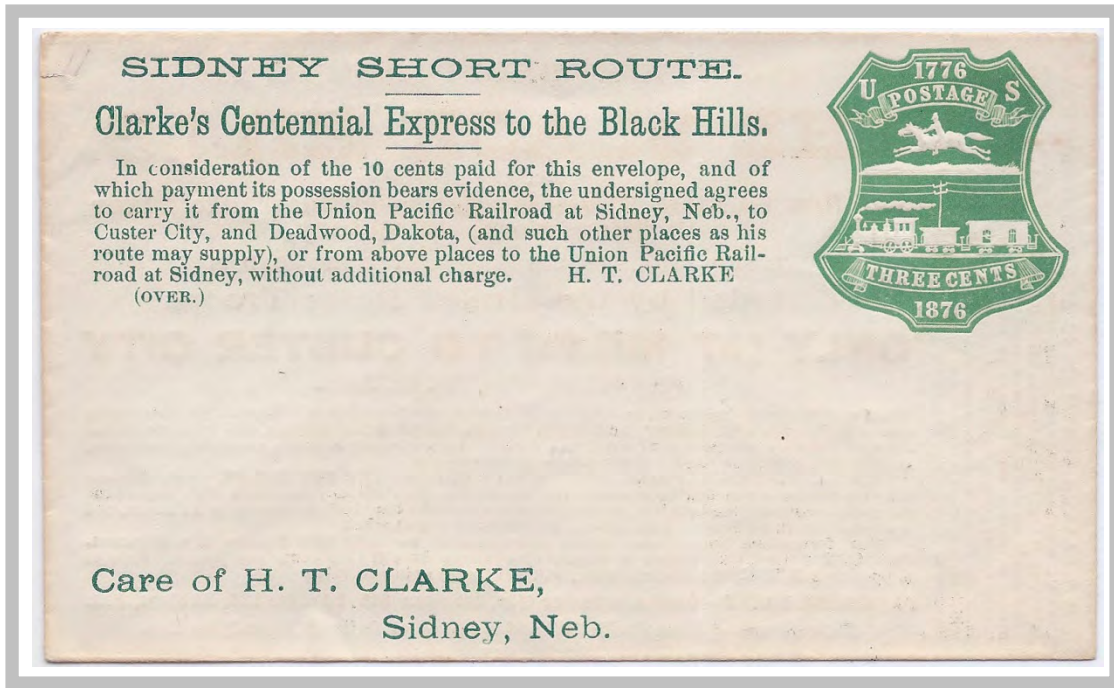
Carried by **Clarke's Centennial Express (Persson Type 9 frank)** from the Black Hills to Sidney, Neb, where it entered the mails with their Apr 7 (1877) postmark for delivery to St. Jean Chryostome, Levis, Quebec (Canada); year-dated based on backstamp.



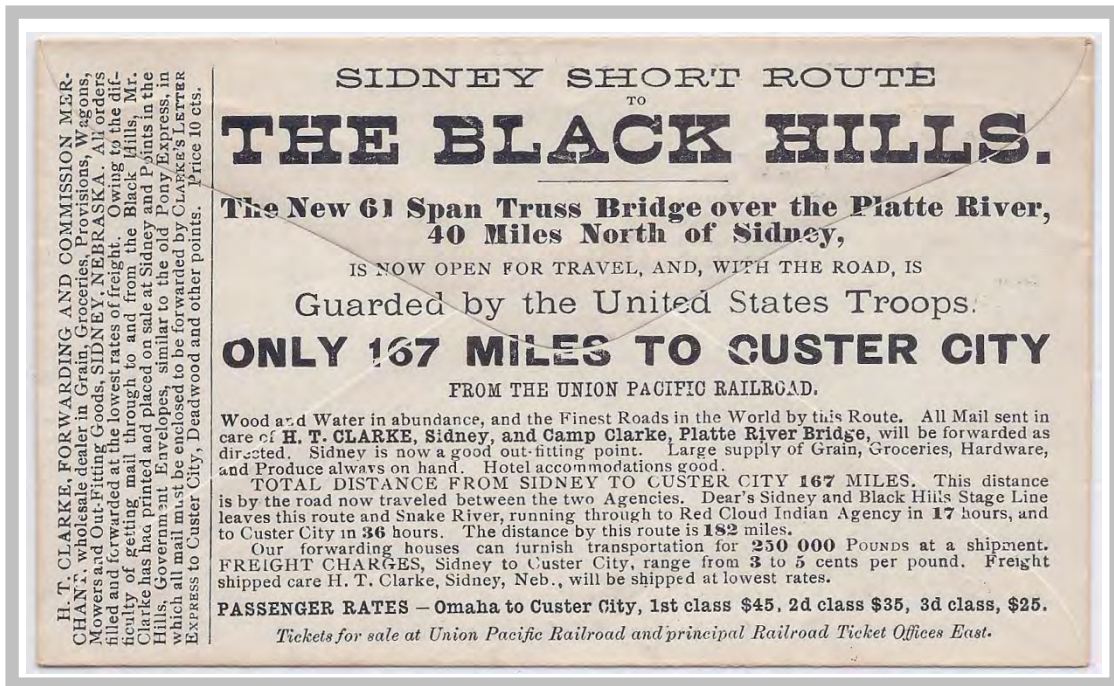


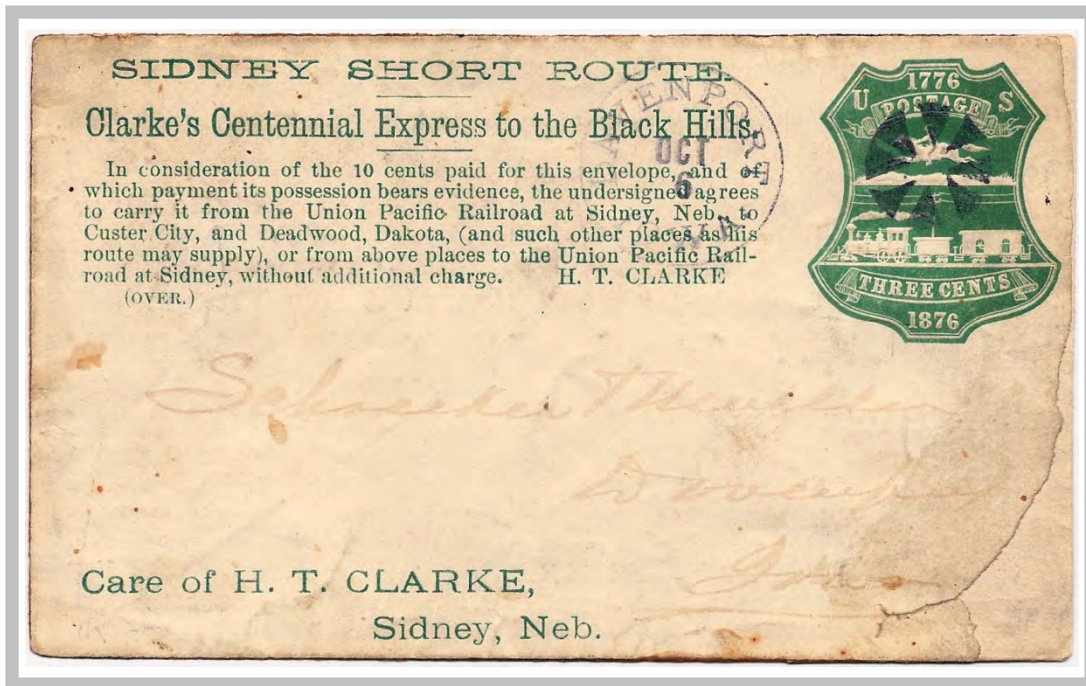
Clarke's Centennial Express (Persson Type 10 frank) . This cover may or may not have been carried by Clarke's Express, as it does not have the typical Sidney, Nebraska postmark. Clarke is known to have sold his printed franked envelopes at Omaha, to where this cover is addressed. Only two Type 10 printed frank envelopes are known, both used in this fashion, without any postmark.



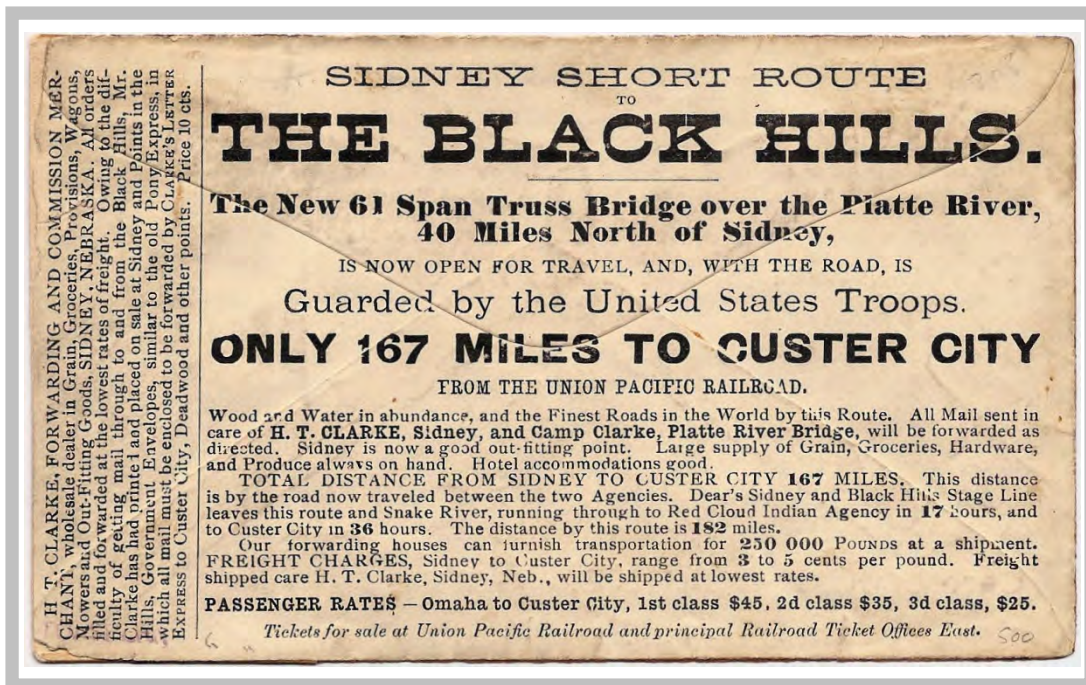


Unused Clarke's Centennial Express (Persson Type 11 frank) . No used examples of this type frank have yet been reported.





Clarke's Centennial Express (Persson Type 11a frank). Another cover that may or may not have been carried by Clarke's Express, as it entered the mails in Davenport, Iowa with their Oct 6 postmark and is addressed to Davenport. Clarke sold printed franked envelopes at various larger cities (e.g., Omaha and Chicago), thus, this could have simply been a leftover unused cover.





Deadwood, Dak. Dec 11 (1877) to Rose, New York with corner card of “Pratt & Ferris, Freight, Contractors and Merchants, Sidney, Neb.” The sender of this letter crossed out the reference to Pratt & Ferris and wrote in “H. D. Deadwood DT Box 544” as a return address. Pratt & Ferris were competitors to Clarke in the freighting business out of Sidney. Note the words, “Whoop Up” within the whip of the driver of the freight wagons.



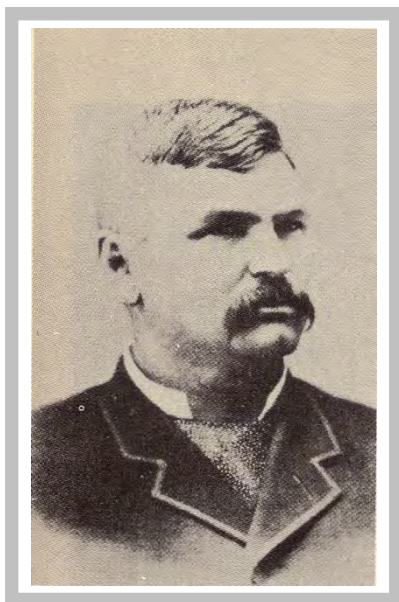
The Sidney Stage in an 1880 photo taken in the Flormann Block of Rapid City, Dakota Territory.



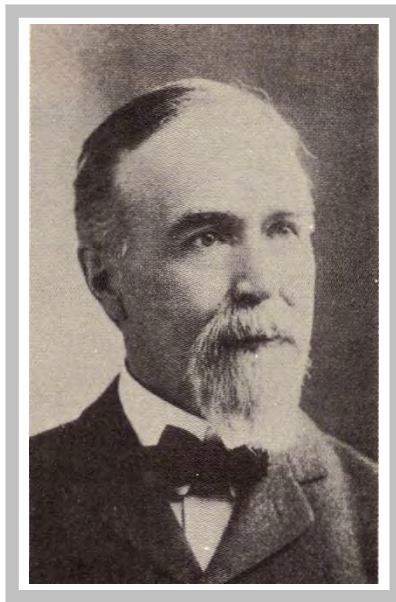
Postmarked Camp Clark, Neb. May 24, 1880 with letter enclosed headed **North Plat or Clark Camp 45 miles north of Sidney May 23rd, 1880** and reads in part: ...S says to tell that we have come 500 miles and we have not quite 250 yet to go before we get to the Black Hills. We loaded 1570 lbs of frait [freight] at Sidney for the black hills which will bring \$4710. We have pulled through 18 miles of sand in places it would go most to the hub and lugged all the way some places whare it was steep down it would be all they 4 horses could pull. We average our load at 3000 weight. Freighters say we have seen the worst road. The Plat [Platte] is quite high. We have to pay \$3.00 for 4 horse team and 50 cents for each extra man to cross the bridge. ...

H. T. Clarke maintained a toll bridge across the Platte River at Camp Clark, where he also served as postmaster when the post office opened June 16, 1876. His express to the Black Hills had ceased by the time this cover was posted.





John "Jack" T. Gilmer



Monroe Salisbury



Mathewson T. Patrick

Gilmer, Salisbury & Patrick – first owners of the Cheyenne & Black Hills Stage & Express Co.

Frank D. Yates and Captain M. H. Brown (F. D. Yates & Co.) began what was initially called the Pioneer Stage Line from Cheyenne to Custer City by way of Red Cloud and Spotted Tail Agencies and Red Canyon. That company made three trips (February 3, February 7, and February 10, 1876) before being purchased on February 12, 1876, by H. E. "Stuttering" Brown, on behalf of Gilmer, Salisbury, and Patrick. Luke Voorhees acted as Superintendent of the Cheyenne and Black Hills Stage Company's Express (C&BHSCE) for the new owners from February, 1876, until May, 1883.

The first stage bound for Deadwood supposedly left Cheyenne June 24, 1876; however, the documented first arrival into Deadwood was not until September 25, 1876. Initially, mail was carried to and from the Black Hills free of charge by the C&BHSCE, as indicated by several newspaper articles and advertisements, dating from August 12, 1876, through October 21, 1876. Free mail carriage ended on or before November 2, 1876, when the *Cheyenne Weekly Leader* wrote "The Black Hills stage company carries letters from Cheyenne to Deadwood for ten cents each. Stamped envelopes can be obtained at the stage office." **The C&BHSCE probably carried express letter mail (printed franks) predominantly from November, 1876 through May, 1877...and may have continued to do so until as late as December, 1880.**

The C&BHSCE acquired the interests of James Stephenson in the Western Stage Line on April 10, 1877, thus expanding their routes to include one from Sidney, Nebraska to the Black Hills. The earliest joint "Cheyenne and Sidney" advertisement dates to May 12, 1877.

Col. Mathewson T. Patrick left the company on October 1, 1878, forming a new stage partnership with his brother over different routes than those served by the C&BHSCE. By March of 1879, things were beginning to wind down for the company, with destocking of the Cheyenne line, and carriage of mail to the Black Hills in a buckboard.

Gilmer and Salisbury sold their interest in the company to Russell Thorp on May 15, 1883, with Luke Voorhees staying on perhaps a few days longer to settle open accounts. Less than two weeks later, on May 29, 1883, the final advertisement for the "Cheyenne & Black Hills Stage Company" was printed in the *Cheyenne Daily Leader*. The stage and freighting operation continued thereafter, but was in decline. The last stage out of Cheyenne, bound for the Black Hills, departed the morning of February 19, 1887, as reported by the *Cheyenne Daily Tribune*.

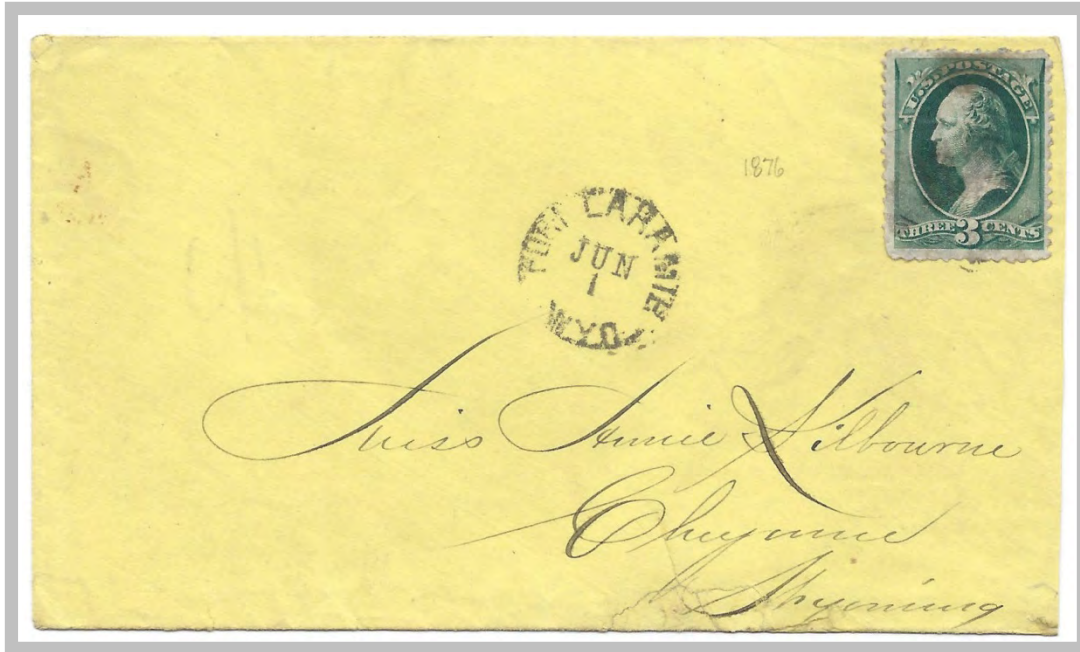
Office of **Gilmer & Salisbury,**
STAGE LINE,

S. Lake Utah, July 28 1869

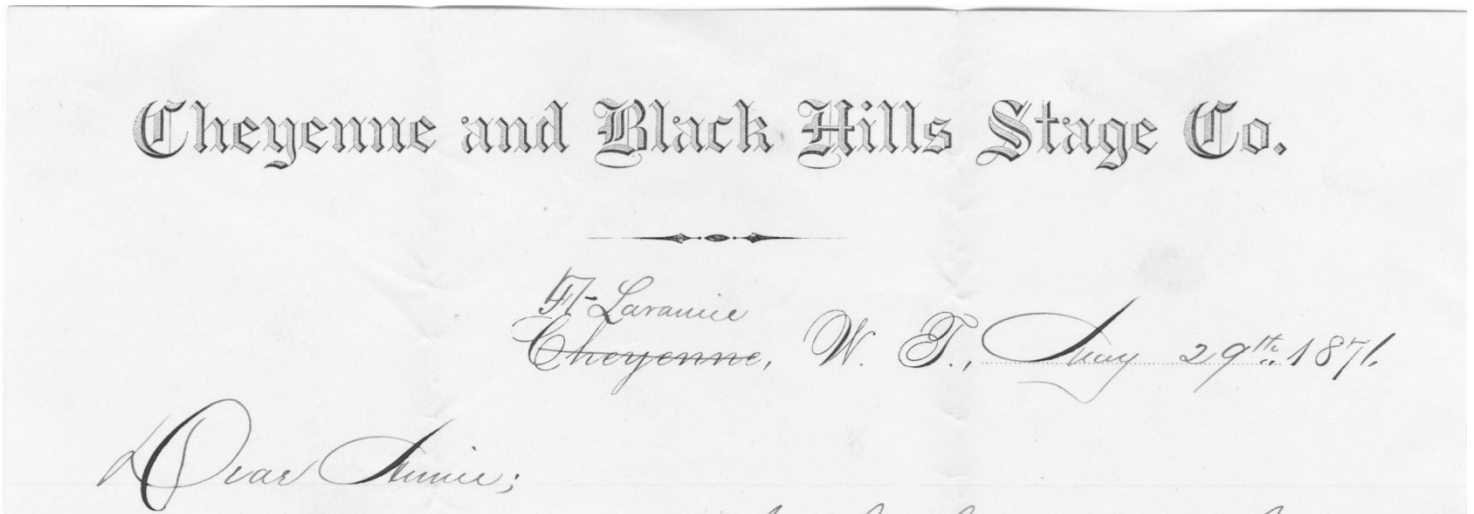
*Received of Gen. G. M. Dodge One hundred
and Ninety Dollars in full for 2 coaches from
Utah to S. Lake and return*

*Gilmer & Salisbury
C. F. Smith Apt.*

Receipt from the **Gilmer & Salisbury Stage Line** dated July 28, 1869 for \$190 payment “for 2 coaches from Uintah to S. Lake and return”; seven years later Gilmer and Salisbury would join with Mathewson Patrick to form the Cheyenne & Black Hills Stage and Express Company



Postmarked **Fort Laramie Jun 1** (1876) and carried by the Cheyenne & Black Hills Stage & Express Company as part of their contract to carry the US Mail to Cheyenne, Wyoming. Dateline of the May 29, 1876 letter written by A. J. Parshall to his future wife reproduced below (original now in the American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming).





Likely carried by the Cheyenne & Black Hills Stage & Express Company from the Black Hills (enclosed letter datelined **Crook City, D.T. Dec 13, 1876**) to Fort Laramie where it entered the mails with their Dec 29 (1876) postmark for delivery to Sloan Station, Iowa. A known correspondence out of the Black Hills, with many routed via Sidney and carried by Clarke’s Centennial Express.

The first advertisement for the “Cheyenne and Black Hills Stage Co.” appeared in the April 11, 1876, *Cheyenne Daily Leader*, also listing the new management of Gilmer, Salisbury, and Patrick...as well as Superintendent Voorhees.

CHEYENNE
And
BLACK HILLS

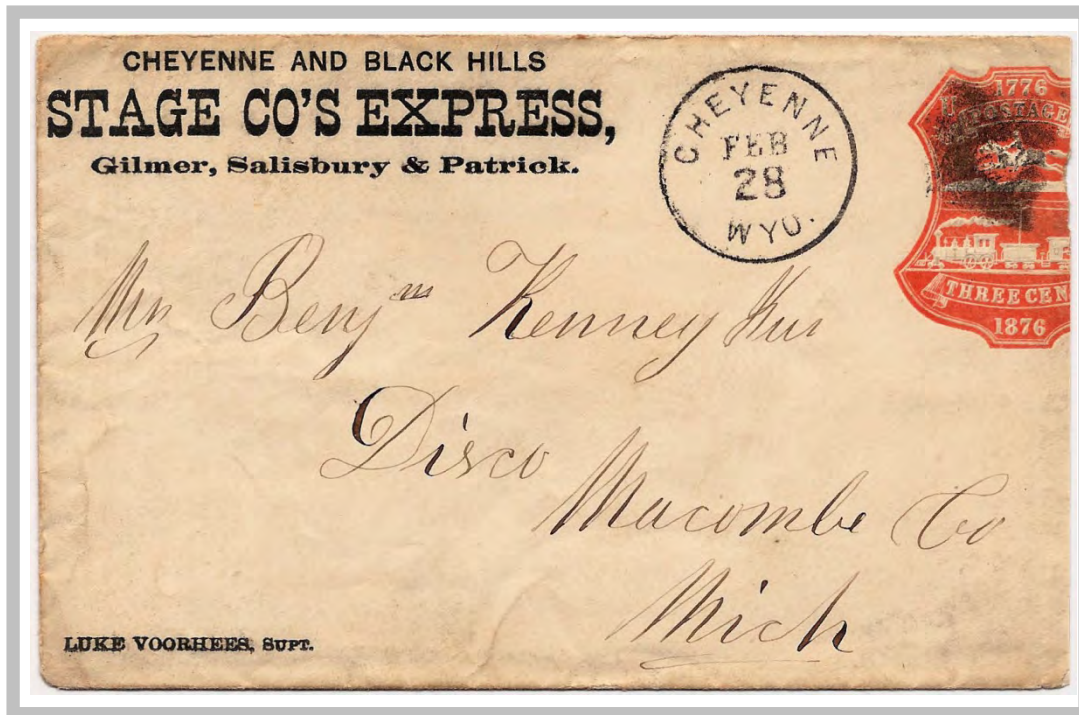
STAGE CO.

Stages leave our Office every other Day at present. We are READY to put on Daily Coaches at any time the travel demands it. We are running Six-horse Stages through to

CUSTER CITY,

Taking every pains to make Passengers as Comfortable and Time as fleet as possible.

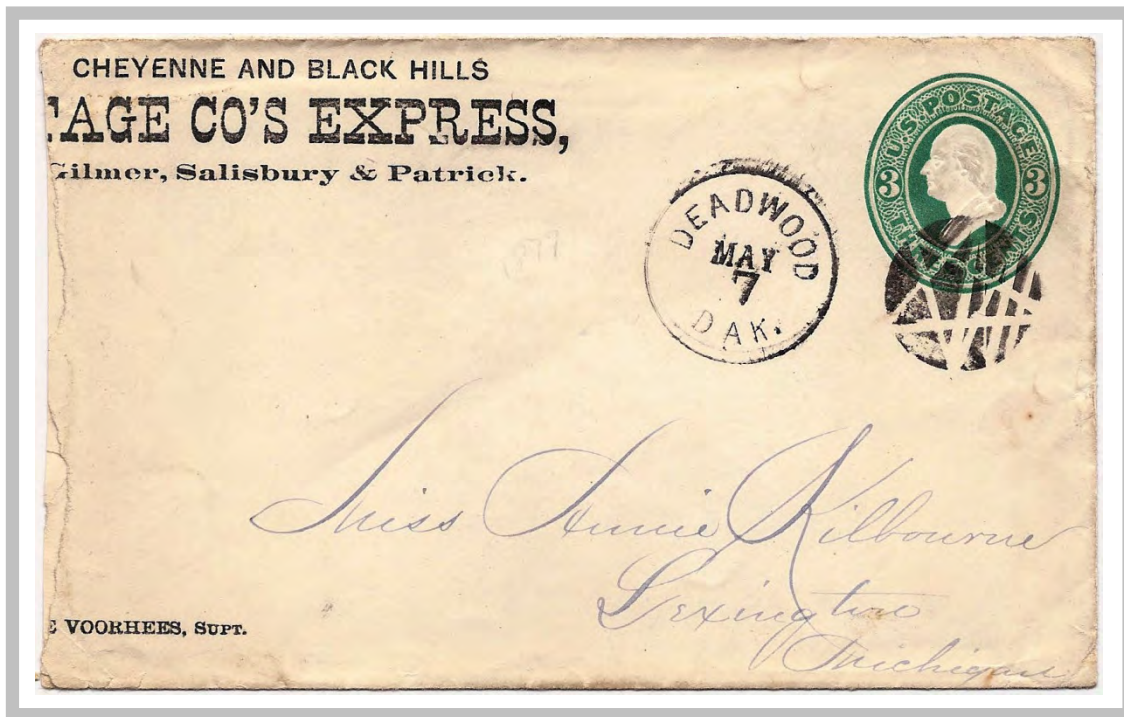
**J. T. GILMER, M. L. PATRICK,
M. SALISBURY, L. VOORHEES.**
(all-5m)



By Cheyenne and Black Hills Stage Co's Express in their **Type 1** printed frank envelope from the Black Hills to Cheyenne, Wyoming where it entered the mails with their Feb 28 (likely 1877) postmark for delivery to Disco, Michigan.

The Black Hills stage company carries letters from Cheyenne to Deadwood for ten cents each. Stamped envelopes can be obtained at the stage office.

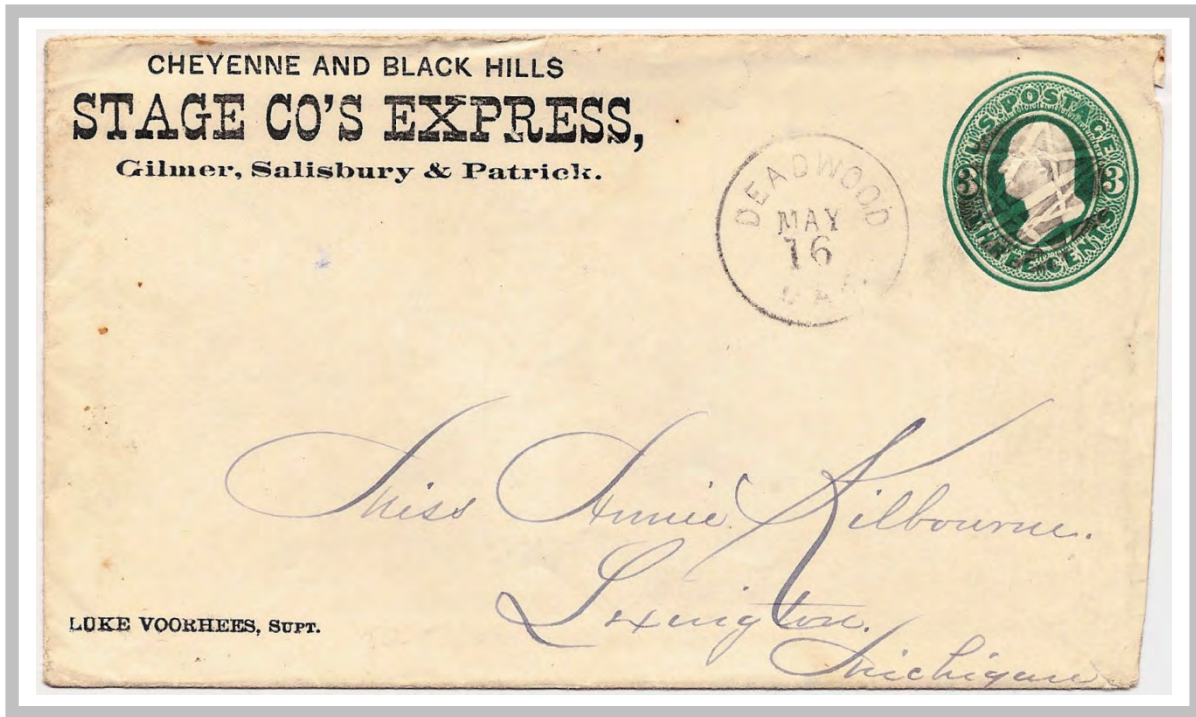
Article from the November 2, 1876, *Cheyenne Weekly Leader* announcing that "Stamped envelopes" (printed franks) "can be obtained at the stage office" and carriage to Deadwood "for ten cents each."



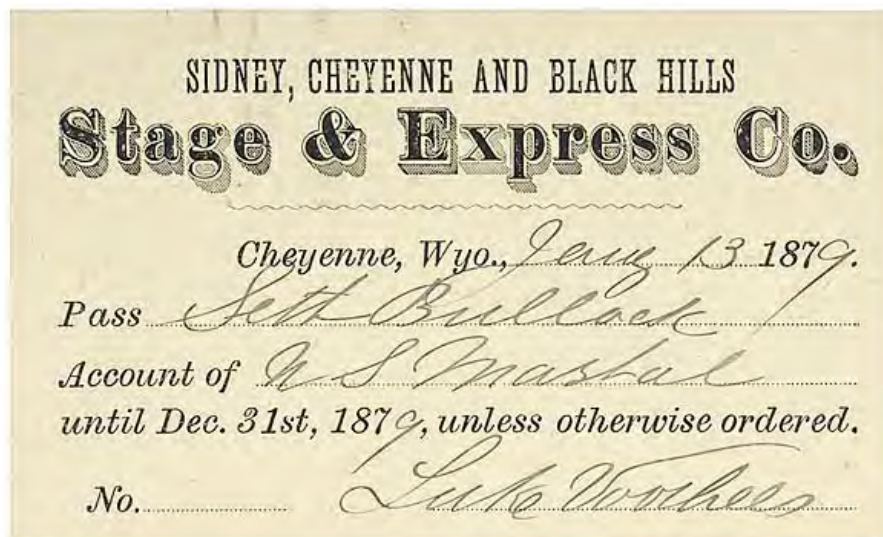
By Cheyenne and Black Hills Stage Co's Express in their **Type 1** printed frank envelope from somewhere in the Black Hills to Deadwood, Dakota where it entered the mails with their May 7 (likely 1877) postmark for delivery to Lexington, Michigan.



Advertisement from the March 1, 1879, Deadwood newspaper *The Western Enterprise* noting "Express Envelopes for Sale."



By Cheyenne and Black Hills Stage Co's Express in their **Type 1** printed frank envelope from somewhere in the Black Hills to Deadwood, Dakota where it entered the mails with their May 16 (likely 1877) postmark for delivery to Lexington, Michigan.



Copy of a pass for the "Sidney, Cheyenne, and Black Hills Stage & Express Co." to one Seth Bullock (marshal of Deadwood). Note that by this time the Sidney Route was also incorporated, as Clarke's Centennial Express had folded sometime in 1878



By Cheyenne and Black Hills Stage Co's Express in their **Type 2c** printed frank envelope from the Black Hills to Cheyenne, Wyoming where it entered the mails with their Feb 19 (likely 1877) postmark for delivery to Lexington, Michigan.

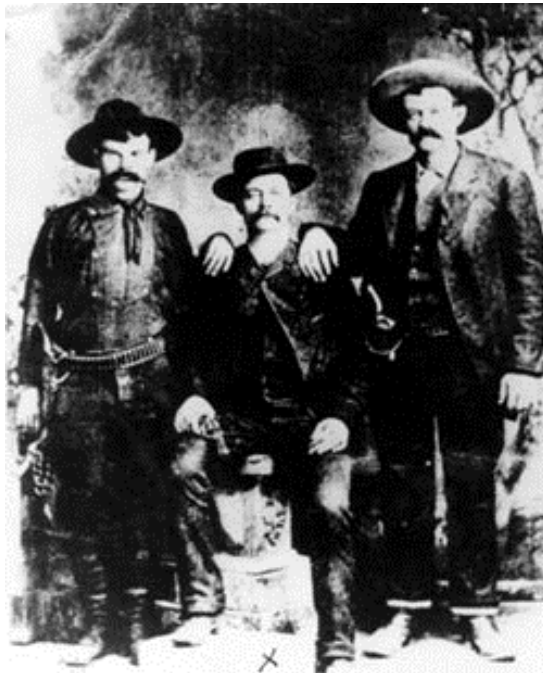


The "Deadwood Stage" (as the Cheyenne and Black Hills was called) en route through the Black Hills



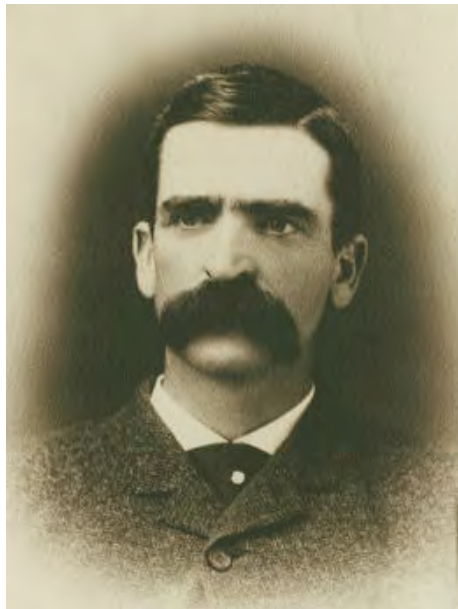
Postmarked “**Rochford, Dak. Nov 5**” (circa 1880) for delivery to Custer City. The “Gilmer, Salisbury & Co.’s Black Hills Express, Sidney, Neb.” corner card may be just that...a corner card, or could be a very simple printed frank (Type 3). E. E. Corbin was superintendent of the Sidney portion of the company’s operation with Luke Voorhees over the Cheyenne route.

The Bass Gang held up the Deadwood stage four times in a period of two months in 1877. Sam Bass (at left) died in Round Rock, Texas on July 27, 1878 (on his 27th birthday) from a gunshot wound suffered at the hands of the Texas Rangers.





By **Cheyenne & Black Hills Stage Company's Express** in their **Unlisted Type** printed frank envelope from Cheyenne City to Seth Bullock, who was sheriff at Deadwood, Dakota. Apparently dropped into the mails at **Cheyenne City, Wyo. Jan 13** (likely 1879) and then turned over to the C&BH Stage Express.



Seth Bullock arrived to Deadwood, Dakota in August, 1876 where he and Sol Star opened a hardware store to serve the miners. He was shortly thereafter named the first sheriff of Deadwood and, in 1884, became Deputy U.S. Marshal in western Dakota Territory. He remained in the Black Hills area until his death Sep 23, 1919 and is buried in Mt. Moriah Cemetery in Deadwood.



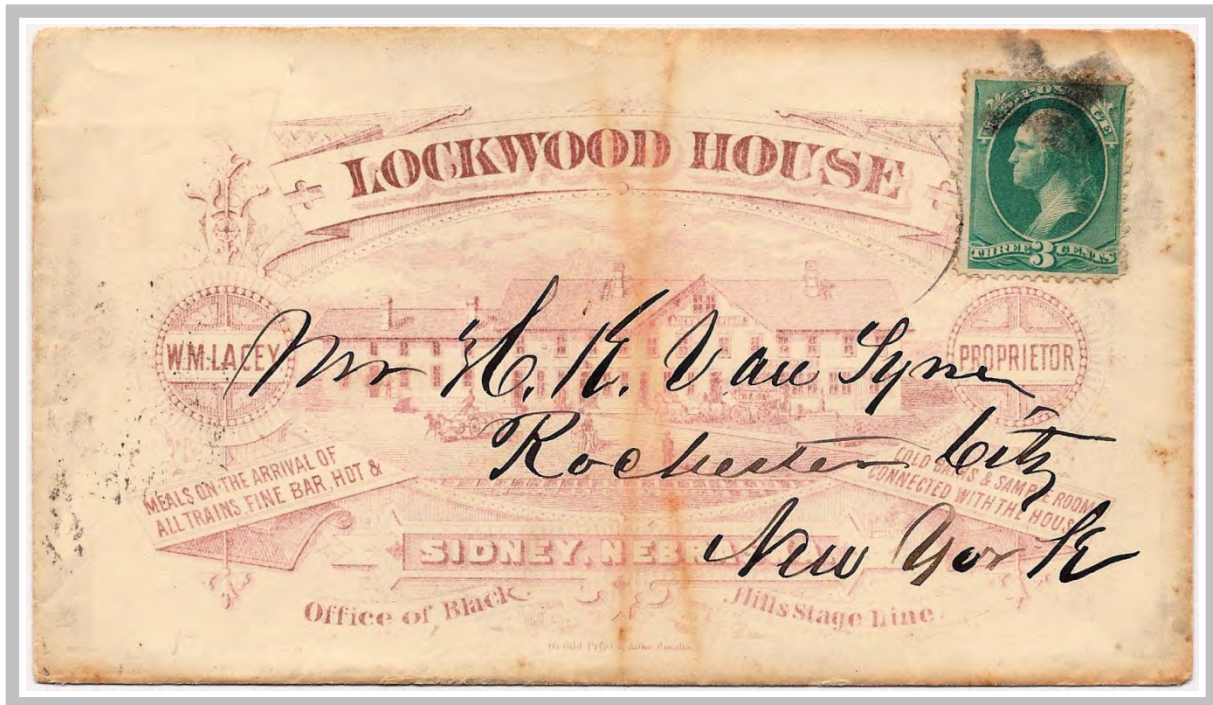
Carried by Cheyenne & Black Hills Stage and Express Company from the Cheyenne River (Dakota Territory) to Hat Creek Station (Wyoming Territory) where it entered the mails with their **Hat Creek 9-19-77** manuscript postmark.

Enclosed letter datelined **Cheyenne River [Station] Sep 15th 1877** in which William Scott (who was abandoning his mining venture in the Black Hills) writes to his wife in Maryland: *"I left Deadwood Sunday and we are laying over at a point where the road agents have been the worst...we watch our stock all night...I am taking all the stock [cattle and horses] with me to Colorado. There is nine of us in the party...I will hand this to a stage driver I hope it reaches you...William"*

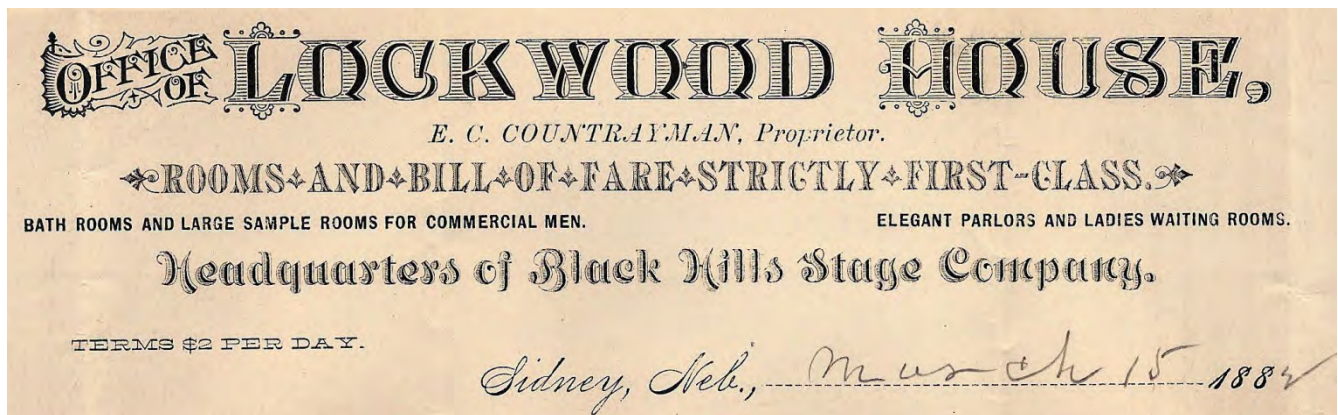


HAT CREEK STATION ON SAGE CREEK

A reproduction of an original water color by William H. Jackson for the Russell Thorp collection; now in Denver public library, Western collection.



Advertising cover for the Lockwood House (hotel), Sidney, Nebraska, “Office of Black Hills Stage Line”. Indistinct Sidney, Nebraska postmark March, 1882 for delivery by post office to Rochester, New York. The Sidney Route had been incorporated into the Cheyenne and Black Hills Stage Line by this time.



Dear Bro & Sister,

I just arrived from my trip from the Hills 6 days in the heaviest storm I have seen for many a day was lost 2 nites in a heavy wind & snow thanks I am fine feel not much like a big sun flower, will go down to Denver then back to Cheyenne then to S Lake am to fatigued to give you any more at this time. Love to all

Your Bro,

R.P. Wheelock

OFFICE OF LOCKWOOD HOUSE,

E. C. COUNTRYMAN, Proprietor.

ROOMS AND BILL OF FARE STRICTLY FIRST-CLASS.

BATH ROOMS AND LARGE SAMPLE ROOMS FOR COMMERCIAL MEN.

ELEGANT PARLORS AND LADIES WAITING ROOMS.

Headquarters of Black Hills Stage Company.

TERMS \$2 PER DAY.

Sidney, Neb., March 15 1884

Dear Bro & Sister

I just arrived here from my trip from the Hills 6 days in the heaviest storm I have seen for many a day was lost 12 miles in a heavy wind & snow thanks I am thankful not mitch like a big Sam flower. will go down to evening then back to Cheyenne then to St. Luke am too fatigued to give you any more at this time. Love to all

Your Bro
R P Wheelock

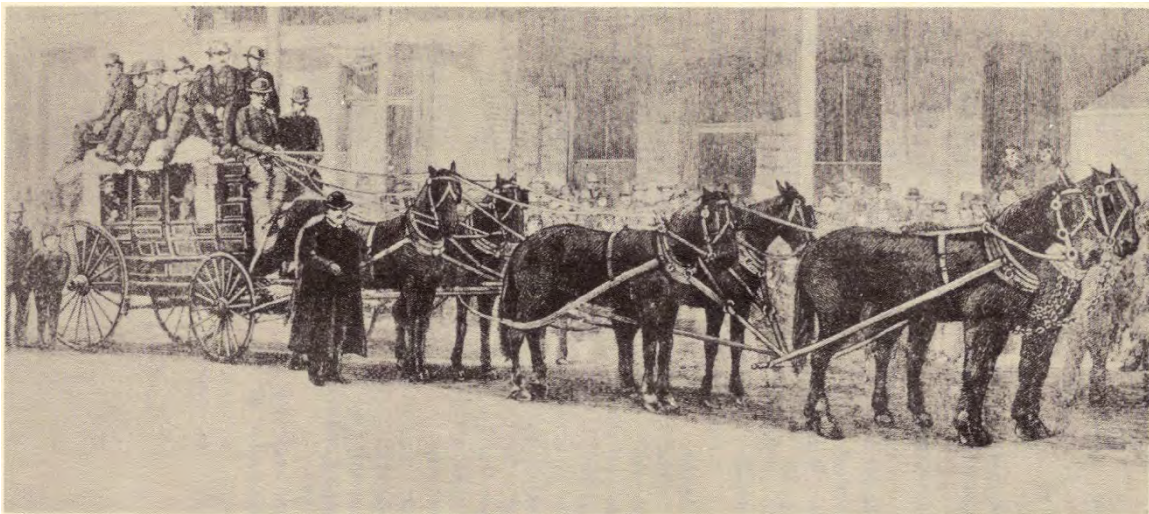
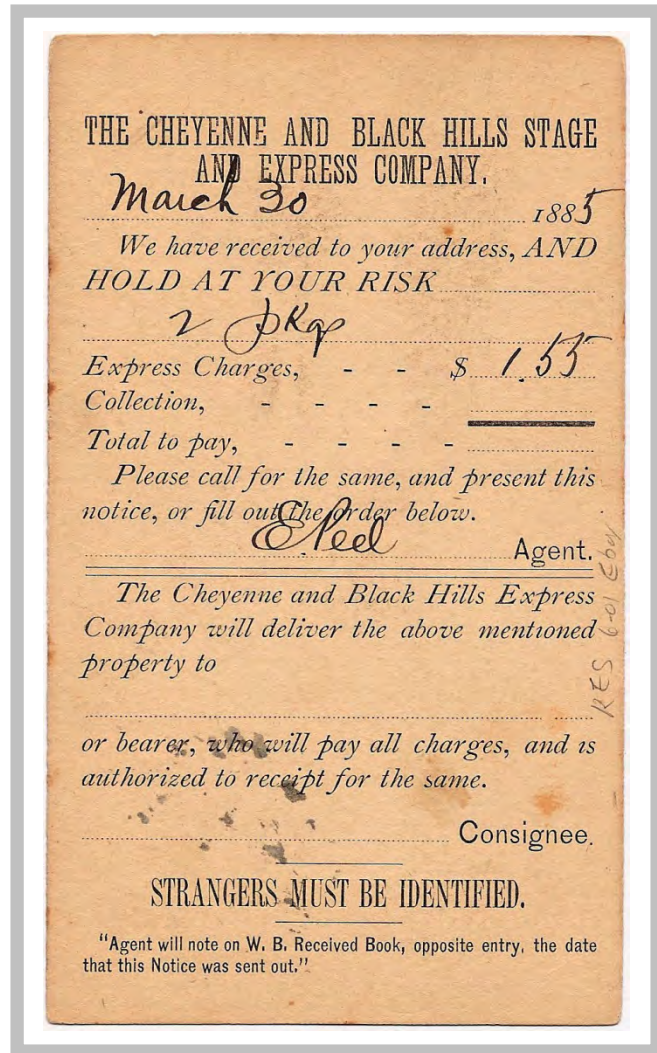


Chugwater, Wyoming Feb 2, 1884 to Great Neck, New York.

Chug - Water Ranch,
John Phillips, Prop'r.
*Situated on the Mail and Stage Route
from Cheyenne to Fort Laramie and
the Black Hills.*
52 MILES FROM CHEYENNE CITY.
Best of Board and Good and Comfortable Rooms
**THE BAR SUPPLIED WITH THE CHOICEST
WINES, LIQUORS AND CIGARS.**
**A Good Barn Connected to the stanch
and Stalls for 50 head of Horses.**
Mar22-dawtf

Continuing north on the line from Cheyenne to Fort Laramie was the Chug-Water Ranch, as advertised in the August 12, 1876, issue of the *Cheyenne Weekly Leader*.

Cheyenne and Black Hills Stage and Express Company postcard (March 30, 1885) addressed to Capt Coolidge in Fort Laramie informing him of express goods to be picked up at their offices. The company ceased operations less than two years after this card was mailed (Feb, 1887).



THE LAST COACH OUT
Departure from Cheyenne of the last trip by stagecoach.
From a contemporary woodcut.

Blank No. 1.

CHEYENNE AND BLACK HILLS TELEGRAPH LINE
CONNECTING WITH
The Western Union Telegraph Company.

This Company TRANSMITS and DELIVERS messages only on conditions, limiting its liability, which have been assented to by the sender of the following message.
Errors can be guarded against only by repeating the message back to the sending station for comparison, and the Company will not hold itself liable for errors or delays in transmission or delivery of Unrepeated Messages.
This message is an UNREPEATED MESSAGE and is delivered by request of the sender under the conditions named above.

W. H. HIBBARD, Gen'l Manager.

¹² Dated Broadhead Wis May 27 1881
Received at Deadwood May " 9 21/p
To F M Stahl

Care Merchants Bank

If time is granted examination
will be made June fifteenth

R Broughton

10 Paid Half
G

Cheyenne and Black Hills Telegraph

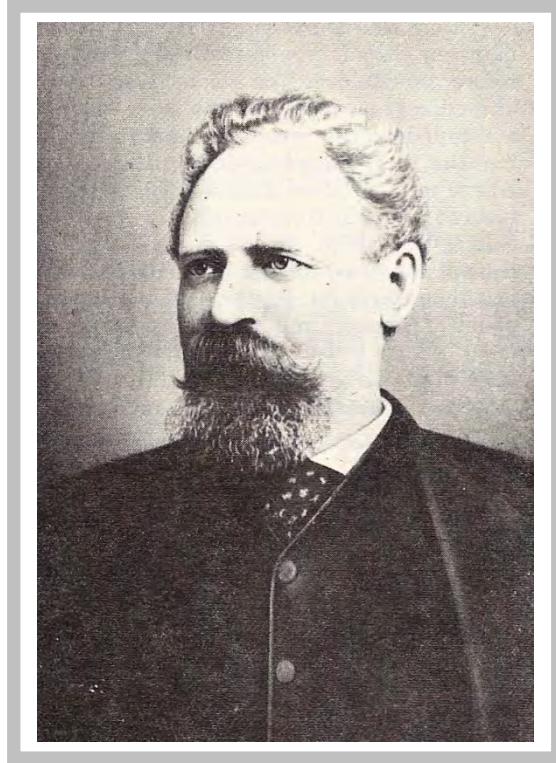
W. H. HIBBARD, Gen'l Manager.

F. M. Stahl
Altamine



No. _____
Charges, Paid.

Cheyenne and Black Hills
Telegraph Line telegram in
cover from Deadwood, Dak.
Jul 14, 1881 to Altamine, D.T.

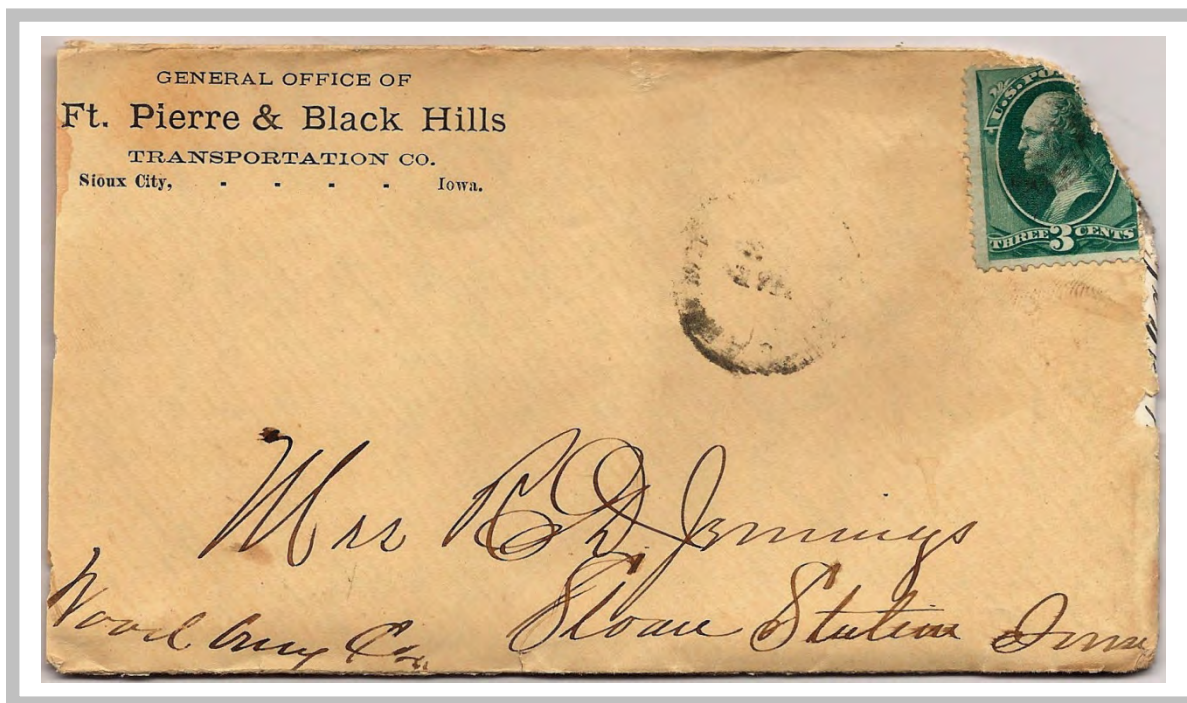


Fred T. Evans formed the “Sioux City and Black Hills Transportation Company” in 1875, in partnership with Judge Hubbard, John H. Clarke, and John Hornick. The company started its first freight train for the Black Hills in the spring of 1876; however, the shipment was intercepted by soldiers who destroyed the property, as the Black Hills were not yet legally open to non-Indians.

Evans and Hornick bought out their other partners in August, 1876 and changed the name of the freighting operation to “Evans and Hornick”. The company shipped its merchandise from Sioux City to Fort Pierre by steamboat and then to the Black Hills by wagon.

Evans had apparently bought out Hornick by 1878, as it was known as the “**Evans Transportation Line**” by that time. For a while, in 1880, the company changed its freighting point from Fort Pierre to Chamberlain, taking advantage of the recently completed connection with the Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Paul Railroad at that point. This arrangement apparently did not work out well, as Evans quickly changed his departure point for the Black Hills back to Fort Pierre. In the spring of 1884, he purchased and placed into service two steamboats to ply the Missouri River between Sioux City and Fort Pierre for the company.

The first railroad train arrived into Rapid City on July 4, 1886 with the rails extending to other points into the Hills shortly thereafter. As a result, the freight companies began to abandon their prairie routes. The Evans Line was the first to dissolve, in January 1887, selling many of its wagons to the Northwestern Company, which continued to operate a few years longer.



General Office of **Ft. Pierre & Black Hills Transportation Company** corner card, with enclosed letter datelined *Deadwood D.T. Mch 13th 77* and reads in part: *...it is bad stormy weather but **I would start out anyway but for Fred Evans...** . if the stage don't bring in what I am looking for tomorrow, so I can start right back, I don't know what I will do...*

Likely carried by the Cheyenne and Black Hills Stage and Express Company from Deadwood to Fort Laramie, where it entered the mails with their indistinct postmark for delivery to Sloan Station, Iowa.

Current Funds Only Received. Freight and Charges Payable on Delivery of Goods.

1879

Homestake Mining Co.
Deadwood, D. T.,
Nov 20

To FRED T. EVANS, Dr.,

The Fort Pierre Short Line.

For Transportation and Charges on Freight from Rousseau to Deadwood

No. Pkgs.	ARTICLES	Weight.	Rate.	TOTAL.
1	Ed. Hubby			
1	Hubby Red Mt.			
	Ed. P. Roberts			

737 3/4 \$ 832

Freight bill dated Nov 20, 1879 to the Homestake Mining Company, from Fred T. Evans, Driver, of The Fort Pierre Short Line for freight charges from Rousseau (near Fort Pierre) to Deadwood, Dakota.



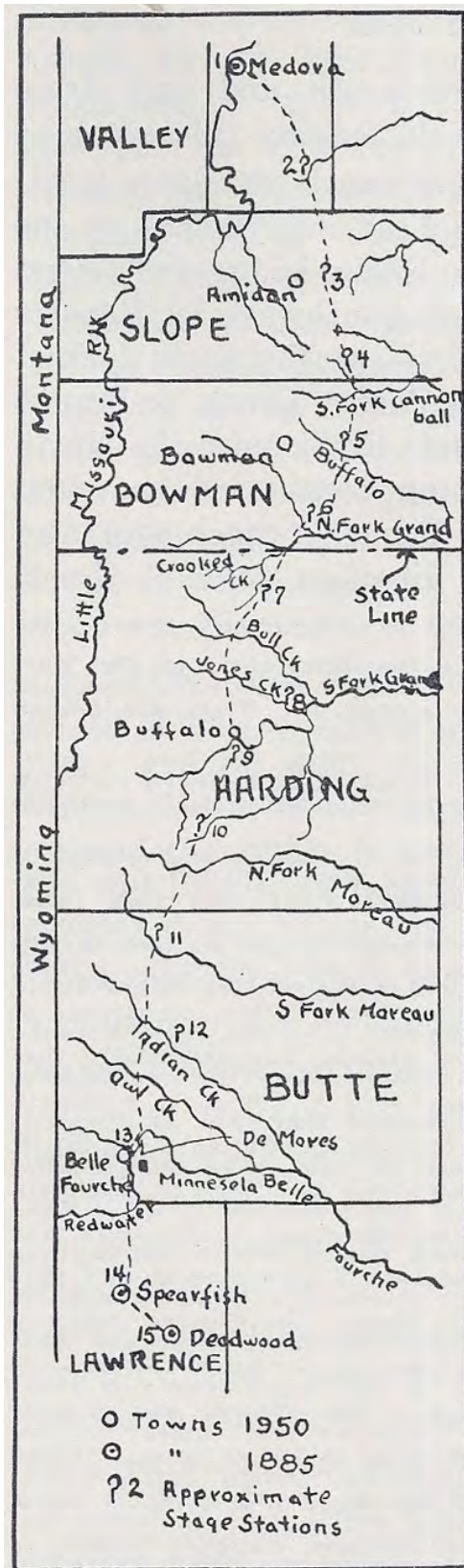
Marquis de Morès (June 14, 1858 – June 9, 1896) born in France, was a famous duelist and frontier ranchman in the Badlands of Dakota Territory. In 1882 he married Medora von Hoffman, sometimes called the Marquise, and soon thereafter moved to the North Dakota badlands to begin ranching, purchasing 44,500 acres. He tried to revolutionize the ranching industry by shipping refrigerated meat to Chicago by railroad, thus bypassing the Chicago stockyards. He built a meat-packing plant for this purpose in Medora, North Dakota, the town he founded in 1883 and named for his wife.

To bring his town of Medora further advantages, the Marquis built a wagon road from Deadwood to Medora, running scheduled stage coaches of the **Medora and Black Hills Stage and Forwarding Company**, hauling passengers and freight. The Medora and Black Hills Stage Line operated from October 6, 1884, to around May 14, 1885. Unfortunately, no postal history artifacts are known to exist from this operation and it is extremely doubtful they carried express mail (no articles or advertisements indicate such). The stage line collapsed as a result of not obtaining a mail contract for the route, employee corruption, and lack of sufficient management oversight.

The Marquis de Morès freight line operated over the stage route beginning as early as May, 1884, and continued for an undetermined time thereafter, but probably ended sometime later in 1885, after the stage business ended. His meatpacking business closed for good in the fall of 1886, and the remainder of his Dakota Territorial business ventures failed as his father-in-law (Louis Von Hoffman) withdrew financial support, but not until he had lost roughly \$1.5 million.

The Marquis de Morès died five days before his 38th birthday when he was assassinated by his Toureg native “guides” in the Sahara Desert on June 9, 1896.



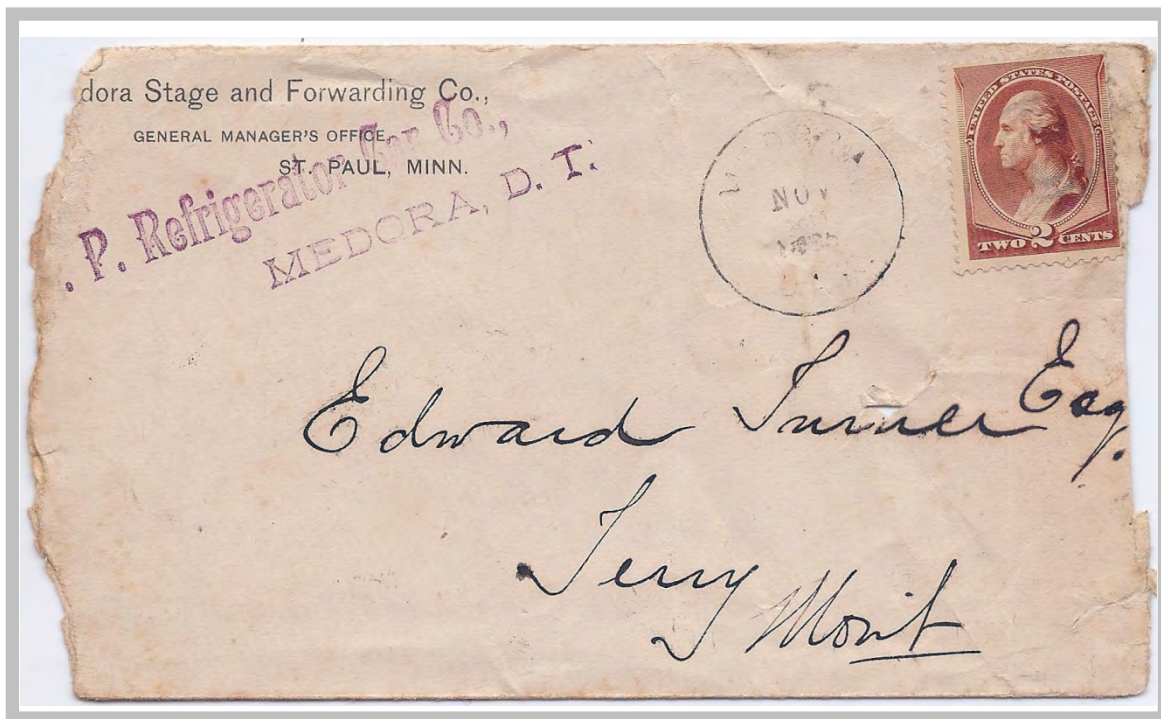


The Medora-Deadwood Stage Line

CRAWFORD	THE COWBOY
2 Davis Creek	2 Davis Creek
3 Rocky Ridge	3 Rocky Ridge
4 Roberts Springs	4 Springdale
South Fork Cedar Creek	
5 Cold Turkey Creek	5 Buffalo Creek
North Grand	
6 Crooked Creek	6 North Grand
7 O'Dells	7 Cave Hills
8 Bull Creek	8 Gallups
9 Macey's	9 Middle Grand
	10 South Grand
	11 Macey's
Antelope	
Indian Creek	12 Indian Creek
10 Belle Fourche	13 DeMores
11 Spearfish	14 Spearfish
12 Deadwood	15 Deadwood

Two very good descriptions, altho they differ as to names of stations, have come down to us as regards the Medora-Deadwood Stage Lines. One by Crawford is contained in the "Career of Marquis de Mores, Vol. 13, Nos. 1 and 2, North Dakota History. The other in the Bad Lands Cowboy for October 2nd, 1884. Their stations are listed above.

Route of the short-lived Medora to Deadwood Stage Line in what is now southwestern North Dakota and northwestern South Dakota (reproduced from the *South Dakota Department of History Collections*, Volume XXV, page 244.



Medora, Dak. Nov 24, 1886 to Terry, Montana on corner card cover of the **Medora Stage and Forwarding Co.** By this time, the Medora to Deadwood stage had ceased to run, and Marquis de Morès' Dakota empire was in its last days. Enclosed letter written by **J. Alden Eaton** (copied on next page) inquiring on the whereabouts of his [horse] bit and congratulating the addressee on his recent marriage.



J. Alden Eaton bridling a horse at Custer Trail Ranch near Medora, Dakota. Alden's brother, Howard Eaton, left Pittsburgh, PA and moved west to the Dakota Badlands, first to hunt, and then to ranch. Howard Eaton founded the Custer Trail Ranch four miles south of Medora, so named because George Armstrong Custer had camped nearby on his way to the Battle of the Little Bighorn. Eaton's brothers Alden and Howard arrived in 1881 and 1882. In addition to cattle, the Eatons maintained sheep and horses. A severe winter in 1886-87 culled the cattle operation. Friends of the Eatons had long stayed at the ranch for hunting, and in 1882 they began charging for a dude ranch experience. In 1904 the Eatons moved their ranching operations to Wolf, Wyoming. Parts of the ranch were sold to Bill McCarty and other individuals from the Medora area.

FORWARDING FREIGHT AND OPERATING STAGE LINE BETWEEN MEDORA, DAK., AND DEADWOOD, DAK. DISTANCE, 192 MILES.

MEDORA STAGE AND FORWARDING CO.,

GENERAL MANAGER'S OFFICE.

W. D. SIMPSON,
General Manager.

Medora Nov. 24th 1886
St. Paul, Minn.

Ed. Turner Esq.
Jerry
Worrit.

Dear Sir,

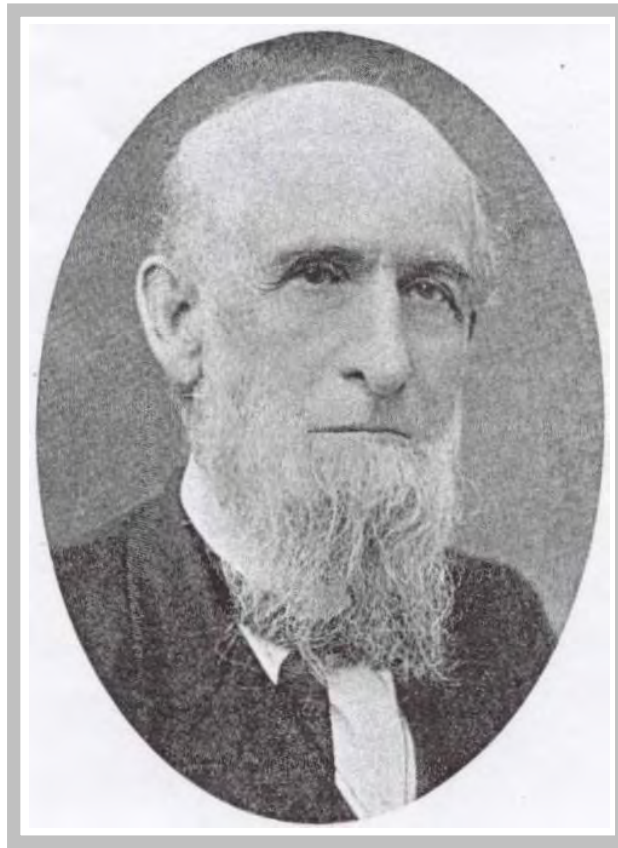
Will you please tell me, who you left that bit of mine with as I have not heard any thing of it. I know you have left it with some one for me or I should not bother you.

I hope you are doing well. As I did not see you after your marriage allow me to congratulate you on your ~~new~~ ^{new} ~~acceptance~~ ^{acceptance} and may you both enjoy long life, and a happy one.

Yours truly
J. Alden Eaton.

Medora D. S.

Enclosed letter from J. Alden Eaton (cropped slightly to fit page)



Russell Blakely was president and one of the founding partners of the **Northwestern Express, Stage & Transportation Company** in February, 1877. He brought to the partnership a wealth of transportation experience from his days as steamboat captain, stage line operator, and freighter on the frontier of Minnesota and Dakota Territory in the 1850s and 1860s.

The NWES&TC's first coach left Bismarck on April 11, 1877, bound for Deadwood. The first arrival into Bismarck from Deadwood was not until more than three weeks later, on May 6, 1877 (meaning a Deadwood departure on either May 3 or May 4). The Cheyenne & Black Hills Stage and Express Company initially won the mail contract for the Bismarck-Deadwood route and had planned to establish their own stage operation over it. However, they found the NWES&TC well entrenched and thus "turned over their mail contract" to the incumbent on May 16, 1877.

The NWES&TC dominated trade over the Bismarck route for the coming three-plus years. And, the Bismarck route was a formidable competitor to the other routes to the Black Hills until the Chicago & Northwestern Railroad reached Pierre in October, 1880. At that time, the NWES&TC moved their eastern terminus from Bismarck to Pierre and their western terminus to Rapid City. The days of overland stages and freighting to the Black Hills came to a sudden end when the Fremont, Elkhorn & Missouri Valley Railroad reached Rapid City on July 4, 1886. The NWES&TC continued running two coaches from Rapid City to Deadwood until the railroad was completed into Whitewood in 1887.

No record can be found to indicate that the NWES&TC carried express letters. They did, however, have the contract to carry the U.S. mail over the Bismarck-Deadwood route for the duration of its life. The only postal history artifacts that survive from the NWES&TC are corner card covers.

Russell Blakely, founder of the NWES&TC, died in St. Paul, Minnesota, on February 5, 1901, at the age of 85.



Corner card of the **Northwestern Express Stage and Transportation Company, Bismarck and the Black Hills**. While the cover has no postal markings and someone tried to erase the address (“J. C. Hart, Jamestown, D. T.”), it is one of very few postal history artifacts from this little-known company. The cover was probably carried privately on company business from either Deadwood or Bismarck to Jamestown.

IMPORTANT CHANGE.

40 Hours Deadwood to Bismarck

The Northwestern Express, Stage and Transportation Co's splendid four-horse Concord coaches will leave Deadwood **EVERY AFTERNOON** at 4 o'clock, carrying a Daily U. S. Mail, making the run from **DEADWOOD** to **BISMARCK** in about

40 HOURS.

The Bismarck Line is the **CHEAPEST** and most **DIRECT** to all points on the Upper Missouri and in Montana. It is also the **QUICKEST** and **SHORTEST** route to St. Paul, Milwaukee, Chicago, St. Louis, Kansas City, and all other Eastern and Southern cities.

Tickets on sale at Deadwood Office to principal Eastern and Southern cities and principal points on Missouri.

Every coach is accompanied by experienced and accommodating messengers, who will take special pains to see that ladies and children are properly cared for. Write for your friends to come by this first-class and popular line, and be sure to go via **BISMARCK** when you go to the States. For tickets and full information call at the Company's Office, Lower Main Street.

DEADWOOD, D. T., July 5, 1878.

M'LEAN & MACNIDER,
 General Dealers in
GROCERIES, PROVISIONS,
 Dry Goods, Crockery,
Hats and Caps, Boots and Shoes,
FURNITURE, WAGONS, ETC.
Miners Goods a Specialty.
 FRONT STREET, - - - - - BISMARCK, D. T.
BISMARCK TRIBUNE PRINT. (over.)

Merchants card from Bismarck, D.T. with freighting distances to the Black Hills from Bismarck on verso.

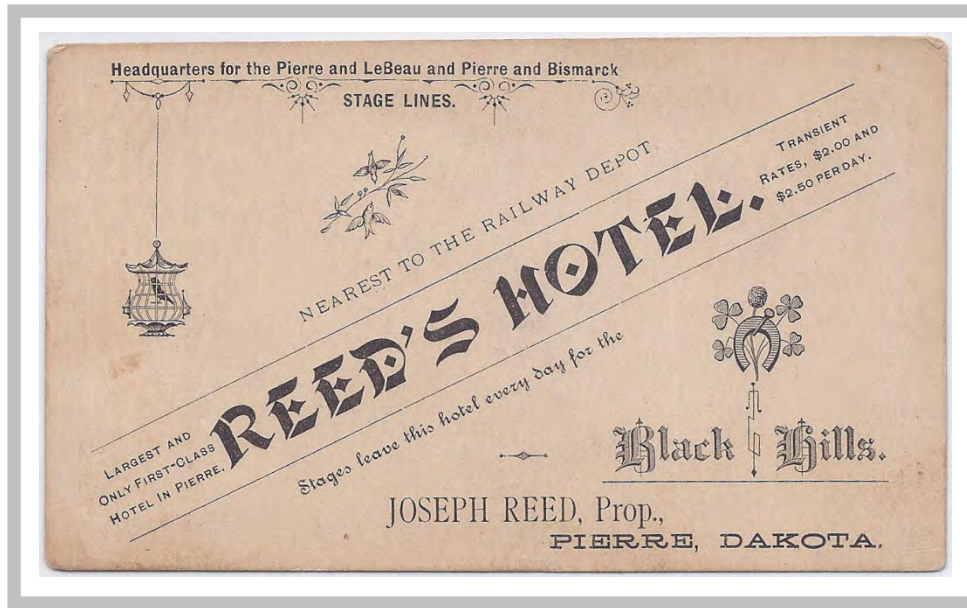
Black Hills Distances
 AS GIVEN BY
E. GRIMSHAW, FREIGHTER,
 BETWEEN
BISMARCK
 AND THE
BLACK HILLS:

From Bismarck to	Miles.
Little Heart.....	10
Little Heart to Shantepede.....	16 26
Shantepede to Cannon Ball....	22 48
Cannon Ball to Cedar River.....	12 52
Cedar River to Antelope Creek....	13 65
Antelope Creek to Grand River....	10 75
Grand River to Rabbit Springs....	6 81
Rabbit Springs to Whitney Springs	12 93
Whitney Springs to Big Meadow..	8 101
Big Meadow to North Moro.....	8 109
North Moro to Cottonwood.....	6 115
Cottonwood to South Moro.....	12 127
South Moro to Elm Creek.....	6 133
Elm Creek to Centennial.....	9 142
Centennial to Dry Fork.....	8 150
Dry Fork to Rattlesnake Creek....	3 153
Rattlesnake Creek to Dead Horse..	12 165
Dead Horse to Crow Creek.....	10 175
Crow Creek to Belle Fourche.....	2 177
Belle Fourche to Crook City.....	18 195
Crook City to Deadwood.....	8 203

1035 E. G. St. P. 100



Corner card of the “North Western Express, Stage, and Transportation Co.” St. Paul, Minn. Possibly carried over the Bismarck to Deadwood route, where it entered the mails in Deadwood with their Oct 3 (1880) handstamp for delivery to Governor Neill in Boise City, Idaho Territory. Neill was governor from 1880-1883 and this Deadwood handstamp was used from Jul, 1877 to late Oct, 1880, dating this cover to 1880.



Circa 1879 merchants card of **Reed's Hotel** (Pierre, Dakota) "Headquarters for the Pierre and LeBeau and Pierre and Bismarck Stage Lines" with freighting distances from Pierre to points West and East on verso.

1879 into Eighties

Distances from Pierre.

WEST.		EAST.	
Willow Creek.....	11	Lake Benton.....	220
Lance Creek.....	27	Tyler.....	228
Plum Creek.....	44	Balaton.....	242
Mitchell Creek.....	58	Tracy.....	255
Medicine Creek.....	74	Walnut Grove.....	263
Bad River.....	90	Lamberton.....	273
Lakes.....	104	Burns.....	288
Cheyenne River.....	116	Sleepy Eye Lake.....	302
Shoun's.....	132	New Ulm.....	316
Box Elder.....	146	Courtland.....	323
Rapid City.....	160	Nicollet.....	331
Spring Valley.....	174	Oshawa.....	335
Fort Meade.....	190	St. Peter.....	345
Sturgis City.....	192	Kasota.....	348
Deadwood.....	203	Mankato.....	350
		Mankato Junction.....	354
		Eagle Lake.....	359
		Smith's Mill.....	366
		Janesville.....	369
		Waseca.....	379
		Meriden.....	385
		Owatonna.....	394
		Havana.....	399
		Claremont.....	406
		Dodge Center.....	413
		Kasson.....	419
		Byron.....	425
		Olmstead.....	429
		Rochester.....	434
		Chester.....	440
		Eyota.....	447
		Dover.....	452
		St. Charles.....	456
		Utica.....	462
		Lewiston.....	465
		Stockton.....	473
		Minnesota City.....	478
		St. Paul Junction.....	483
		Winona.....	484
		Chicago.....	781

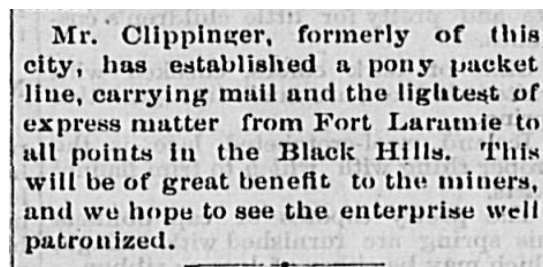
C. T. Clippinger began a “pony packet express” from Fort Laramie to the Black Hills in the spring of 1876, with the earliest reference to his express being April 11, 1876. Clippinger was an experienced expressman, having operated Clippinger's Express in California, during the early 1850s gold rush.

Richard Seymour and Charley Utter established Seymour & Utter's pony express from Fort Laramie to Deadwood several months later, with the earliest reference July 8, 1876. Professor A. O. Ingalls joined their ranks a few weeks thereafter, at which time the moniker of the “**Pioneer Pony Express Company**” was adopted, based on an article and advertisement of August 6, 1876. That same article proclaimed, “Envelopes are being printed for use on this line, and will soon be placed on sale here [Cheyenne], in the Hills, and in the east.” However, no such envelopes have ever been discovered and it is unlikely they were ever printed.

Some sources indicate Clippinger bought out the proprietors of the Pioneer Pony Express Company (Seymour, Utter & Ingalls) sometime in the August-September, 1876 timeframe, although that has not been confirmed.

The Deadwood *Black Hills Pioneer*, remained very positive in their coverage of the Pioneer Pony Express Company through mid-September, 1876, even though service appears to have slipped markedly from the promised three days transit time from Fort Laramie to Deadwood. By late-September and into October, 1876, coverage by the *Black Hills Pioneer* had turned very negative: accusing Clippinger of running ponies over only the last few miles of the route, using slow freight wagons over the rest of the route, still charging a twenty-five cents express fee for letters two weeks or more in transit, accusing him of paying off the Fort Laramie postmaster to ensure all the Black Hills mails were placed in his hands, and withholding newspapers so he could retain his monopoly on newspaper sales in the Black Hills. Utter and Ingalls refuted their involvement in such a scheme in the final article found on the Pioneer Pony Express Company, in the October 14, 1876 *Black Hills Pioneer*, claiming that Clippinger withheld mail from them at Fort Laramie, counter to an agreement they supposedly had with him.

The Clippinger/Pioneer Pony Express operated from April, 1876 through perhaps early October, 1876, at which time the Cheyenne and Black Hills Stage Company's Express began carrying the mail to/from the Black Hills.



Mr. Clippinger, formerly of this city, has established a pony packet line, carrying mail and the lightest of express matter from Fort Laramie to all points in the Black Hills. This will be of great benefit to the miners, and we hope to see the enterprise well patronized.

Article from the *Wyoming Weekly Leader* (Cheyenne) April 15, 1876 issue noting that Clippinger has established a “pony packet line” carrying mail from Fort Laramie to “all points in the Black Hills.” .



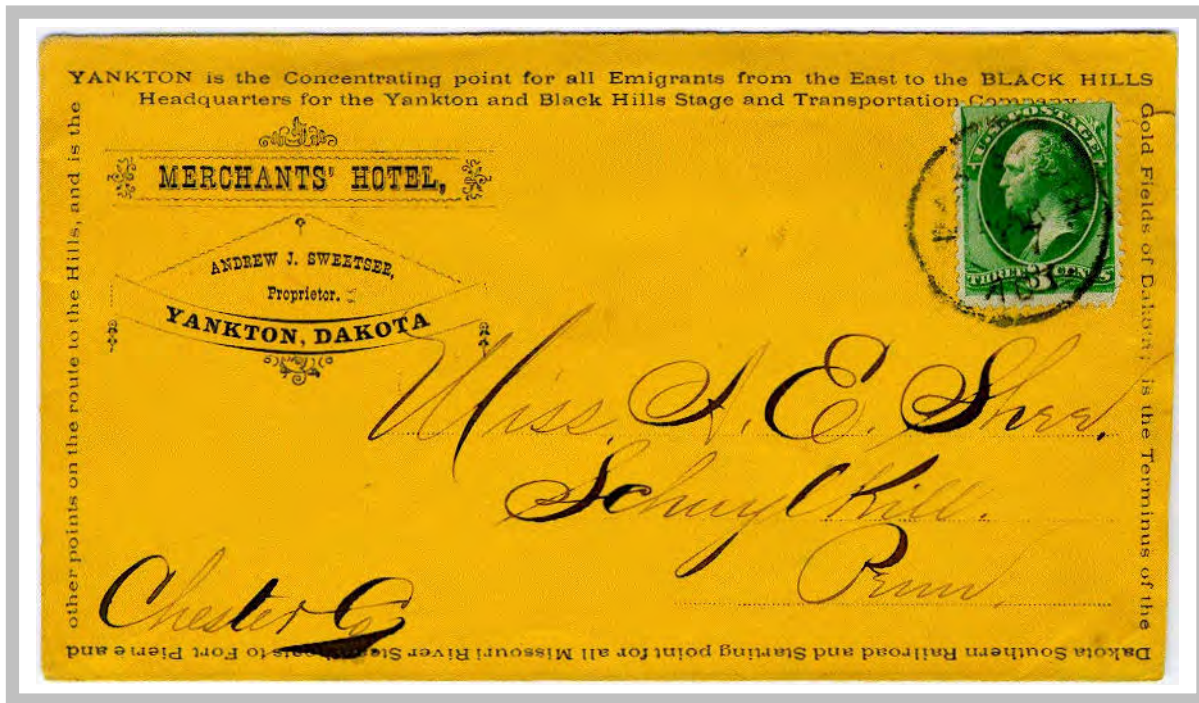
Fort Laramie, Wg. Ty. Aug 8 (1876) addressed to Cheyenne, Wyoming, docketed on verso *Custer City, D. T. July 29, 1876* in reference to the contents (original from A. J. Parshall to his future wife now in the American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming). This cover was most likely carried by the Clippinger/Pioneer Pony Express on the August 5, 1876 departure from Deadwood, arriving at Fort Laramie on August 8, 1876 where it entered the mails for delivery to Cheyenne.

PIONEER PONY EXPRESS CO.
Through MAIL & EXPRESS LINE to
DEADWOOD
and the
MINING CAMPS
The only line that is fully prepared to deliver Mail and Express matter to all the Mining camps in the Black Hills.
Direct all Mail matter care
"PIONEER PONY EXPRESS CO."
Express leaves Fort Laramie every Wednesday.
BY E. O. UH, UTTER & INGALLS.
aug08awt1

The *Cheyenne Daily Leader* ran this advertisement for the Pioneer Pony Express from August 6, 1876 through October 1, 1876.

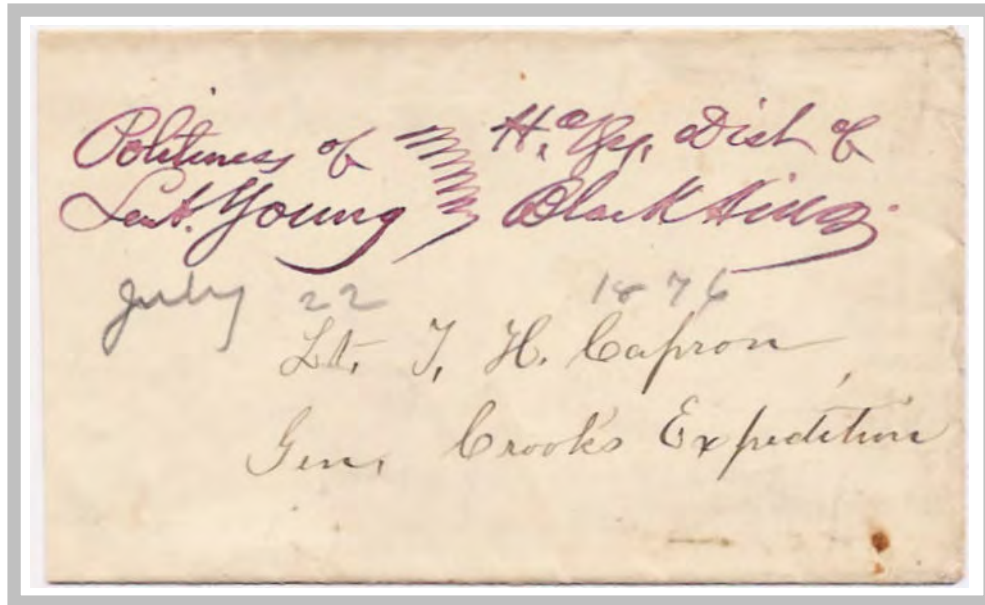


Rapid City, Dakota Territory via **Wells, Fargo & Co. Express** with their **Rapid City** label to Clerk of District Court in Pueblo County, Colorado. Notation at left indicates that this letter contained depositions relative to a case against the Massachusetts Smelting Company ; carried privately by Wells, Fargo & Co. **ca1880**.



Merchants' Hotel advertising cover from Yankton, Dakota with notation that “Yankton is the concentrating point for all Emigrants from the East to the Black Hills. **Headquarters for the Yankton and Black Hills Stage and Transportation Company.**” Postmarked Dak South Agt [Dakota Southern Railroad Company Agent marking] Mar 17 (1877 or 1878) for delivery to Schuylkill, Pennsylvania.

Commercial travel from Fort Pierre to the Black Hills began in 1877 by a Yankton firm called the Merchants Transportation Company, which ran a weekly freight train to Deadwood. By 1878, Fort Pierre, 180 miles from Rapid City, had become the principle terminal for boats carrying freight bound for the Black Hills, as it was closer than any of the other three shipping points: Sidney, Cheyenne or Bismarck



Carried by private military courier (Lt. George S. Young, Company E, 7th Infantry) from Fort Laramie to Goose Creek camp of General Crook's Expedition in pursuit of the Indians after the Battle of Little Big Horn. The original letter (now missing) was written by Lt. Thaddeus Hurlbut Capron's wife, Cynthia, at Fort Laramie. Per Capron's diary, he received this letter Jul 21, 1876.

