

Post Office Department

C. E. Zurnehly,
Inspector

OFFICE OF INSPECTOR

CASE No.

Shawnee, Oklahoma, August 16, 1936.

Subject:

Mr. W. L. Thurston,
Postmaster,
Wewoka, Oklahoma.

Dear Mr. Thurston:

Herewith find the original of the address delivered by Judge C. Guy Cutlip, at the dedication of your Federal building. Please return it to him.

I am sending you three copies for your files, and such disposition as you may see fit.

Sincerely yours,

C. E. Zurnehly
Post Office Inspector.

*Shawnee
Including copy to
Mr. Guy*

For file

W. L. Thurston

Address at Dedication of
United States Postoffice
Building, Wewoka, Aug. 15th, 1936

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We have met here on this day to dedicate the United States Government's post office building.

It is well that we stop for a moment and consider the progress that has been made in transportation and accomodation of personal correspondence, general communications, publications of every description and now today transportation of practically everything not of a destructive or dangerous character.

In the dim dawn of history the monarchs of Assyria and Persia had their messengers systems: fleet horses, surmounted by semi-naked riders were stationed at stated distances to carry the messages of the Kings to remote places within and without the kingdom. Rome applied practically the same system in its heyday while Greece sent its messengers who were fleet of foot.

In those early days and for many centuries thereafter the ordinary citizen was dependent upon the casual messenger for delivery of his communication. Commerce eventually demanded some practical means of communication and slaves were used exclusively for that purpose. The Great Charlemagne of the Franks was the first of the old monarchs to establish what might today be recognized as a general postal system for all of the people at given and stated payments for the privilege.

Since the very beginning the matter of carrying the mail and taking responsibility therefor has been with the different governments of the world for two principal reasons: first; to enable the government to practice espionage upon its subjects and second; to properly control and regulate its affairs.

The first attempt at a systematic postal service among the English speaking peoples was in old England. First, by individuals, who were attempting to make a private business of the carrying of the mails and next by the government when it saw the advantage to its spying upon its people.

A lawyer of York, England, by the name of John Hill, in 1653 first conceived the idea of carrying the mail as a business. He stationed men and horses at stated intervals throughout England offering to the people mail service at what was then thought a very low figure. His attempt might have been successful and as a consequence our postal service of a very different sort but his efforts were "tramped out" by Cromwell's soldiers. Thereafter the government took up the project.

The service in the United States dates from the very early date of 1639 in Massachusetts. Virginia had a service of sorts as early as 1657. There, by the law, it was requisite upon the planters to furnish transportation to the next plantation or forfeit a hogshead of tobacco.

The first regular post in what is now the United States was established between New York and Boston in 1672. The mail was delivered once each month and later, each fortnight.

There was established in the American Colonies in 1692 a Postmaster General for America by the English Government.

Benjamin Franklin is the father of the American postal system. He was made Postmaster General for the colonies in 1737 and served in that capacity for forty years. Through his ingenuity a capable system of carrying the mail was worked out.

In 1775 the American Congress assumed control and in 1789 upon the adoption of the Constitution of this nation, the central government came into complete control. At that time there were seventy five post offices in the United States, at the present time there are approximately seventy five thousand.

From a day in 1760 when Benjamin Franklin first instituted his weekly wagon service between Philadelphia and Boston some considerable change has taken place in the service. The world has seen its mail carried by messenger, by stage, the pony express by river boats, by Star mail routes purchased by individuals, and in France by carrier pigeon and balloon; and then came the railroad the automobile and the airplane.

Perhaps the most glamorous and thrilling of all of those was the Pony Express of the Western States commencing in 1860. The fleetest horses, with hardy riders, carrying nothing but the mail, not even the protection of knife or pistol was allowed; running the gauntlet of savage Indians and the gamut of desperate bandits; riding the wastes of the desert and the heights of the mountains, these riders dashed at break neck speed from one post to another where other ponies awaited them already saddled and prepared. The time was made between St Joseph, Missouri and San Francisco on the Golden Gate in the stipulated time of eight days and many times in five. The postage was five dollars between Washington and San Francisco and \$2.50 between St. Joe and the coast. The stamp was an adhesive one, similar to those in use today, with a picture of the rider and his horse going at top speed.

The use of the adhesive postage stamp was first authorized by the Congress of the United States on March 3rd, 1847, but the first stamps to be printed were in Scotland in 1837 and its use was adopted generally in England in 1840. The next nation of the world to adopt its use was Brazil, in South America.

In 1847 at the time of stamps adoption the postage rate was three cents for a letter to be delivered within three hundred miles and ten cents for a greater distance.

The first POSTCARD was authorized and used in the United States in May, 1873; although it had been in use in England for a considerable longer period of time.

FREE DELIVERY for cities was inaugurated in this nation in 1863. The SPECIAL DELIVERY, in 1885 and Rural FREE DELIVERY was granted as late as 1896.

However the REGISTRATION system was authorized in 1860 and MONEY ORDERS authorized through the post office in 1864.

- The first agreement on interchange of mail to be made with any European nation was made with GERMANY in October, 1899, although prior to that time agreements had been made between the United States and some of the dominions and nations of the Western world.

Today we have the AIRMAIL, winging its way from the Eastern to the Western ocean in as many hours as the fastest pony express and early day railroad could do in as many days. Great ships plow through the waters of the several seas bearing the mail of the nation to different parts of the world in but a few days, while the Hindenburg carries it across the Atlantic in a few hours and the Clipper across the Pacific in a slightly longer time.

Since our government was established under the constitution our mail service has approached a state of perfection. Today no citizen of this land hesitates to trust to the mail service of the nation either his secrets or his cash. He has the utmost confidence of its safe delivery when he places a five or a hundred dollar bill in an ordinary letter. There is no other agency that you trust with the same confidence. With the dead finger of old Benjamin Franklin pointing the way the nation gives us a postal system unequalled in the world.

And today as we dedicate this new postoffice building we are but adding to the efficiency of the great national system.

- When the post office at Wewoka was authorized and instituted the buffalo roamed the western plains in countless thousands; the wolf and the coyote made their din on the site where the capitol building of the state now stands; no railroad had yet penetrated the wilds of the Indian country; the Seminole and the Creek were plodding, with tired feet, back to the reservations from a sojourn during the war in Kansas; the great treaty of 1866 between the Five Civilized tribes had just been concluded and the Indians' negroes had been freed and made members of the several tribes AND it took from three to five months to make the trip to Washington DC

This post office was first provided for and the first postmaster appointed in May of 1867; ^{Randall} ~~Bannett~~ was the postmaster general then, and Andrew Johnson had succeeded as president the murdered Lincoln; old Ft. Gibson was the Gateway to the territories and Ft. Sill had not yet been established. The government of the Seminoles had just been formed and John Chupco was the principal chief. John F. Brown for thirty years chief of the Seminoles was just a young man but represented the Southern Seminoles in the great treaty.

Wewoka had not been designated as the national capitol of the tribe and the trading store of E.J. Brown marked the spot of the present city. The Seminole MISSION, established by Captain Ross Ramsay and John Lille (the first Missionary to the Seminoles) was being built two and half miles north of the present Wewoka.

The little trading store of E.J.Brown, the first postmaster founded the city of Wewoka. That store rested on the south bank of Wewoka creek just south and east of the present bridge across it on Highway 56. Wewoka creek was crystal clear, abounded with fish and played over some rocky falls at the east edge of the present bridge and from that circumstance came the name, WEWOKA, "Barking Waters".

The mail was brought from Ft. Gibson, one hundred and twenty five miles away, in hacks and wagons and on horseback; and John Chupco made that distance on foot in twelve hours time, running a race against time that has become of world wide fame as an example of the firtitude and endurance of the American Indian.

This old postoffice of Wewoka has seen all the progress of the present state. Saw the woodlands and the rugged hills teaming with wild life and game; saw the feathered friends of the woods and the buffalo in countless thousands upon the plains; saw the rivers and the lakes unpolluted and alive with beaver and with fish; saw the river boats plowing upon and down the murky waters of the Arkansas before the need of the white man drained its channel of navigable waters; saw old Ft. Gibson in its heyday, with its soldiers in barracks and street; saw the Choctaw, the Cherokee, the Creek and the Chikasaw resettling the country after the war torn period of the civil war.

It saw the white man sift in in ones and twos and villages spring up at different points; Saw the Katy railroad stretch its glimmering lines of steel across the territory and witnessed the establishment of Judge Parker's famous court at Ft. Smith. *Saw the CRP*

This old postoffice saw the Buffalo vanish from the plains and the clouds of Blue Rock pigeons disappear over night; saw the deer and the antelope, the prairie chicken and the wild turkey driven from their ~~habitual~~ haunts; saw the white man come in every increasing numbers demanding homes and land. It saw the coming of the Dawes Commission, the enrollment and allotment of the tribesmen. Saw the establishment of the tribal government and the meeting of the tribal council; saw the laws enacted and also enforced at the WHIPPENG TREE there at the southwest corner of the court house and other executed at the foot of the EXECUTION tree, less than a block north of this Postoffice building. It saw the drawing for town lots in Wewoka and the foundation of a city government. Saw the struggle for Sequayah's state and the coming of statehood to the Territories; saw the meeting of the constitutional convention and heard the pleas of the candidates for office in the first election of the state.

It saw the hills and the valleys give up their great agricultural wealth; saw the mines give up their coal and lead and zinc; saw the cattle on every hill and the ponies grazing in every valley as the Indian master smoked his pipe in peace upon the stoop of his log cabin; saw derricks spring up on every side and deep wells belch forth their streams of golden wealth from a thousand locations. It saw the old men of the tribe pass in review to a happier hunting ground; saw the council fires of the nation in ashes and the arrows of the warriors broken and laid

aside. It saw the white man build his churches, his schools and his great cities and saw the white man and the red man come to live side by side in peace, contentment and brotherhood.

It has seen all the progress that has been made from a woodland waste to a thickly settled and progressive state.

I hold in my hand the first postmaster's commission ever issued to a postmaster of this city, the first to be issued to any postmaster in this section of Oklahoma. It recites that Elisha T. Brown was appointed postmaster at WE-WO-KA, Seminole Nation, State of Arkansas, on May 13th, 1867,. It contains at least two mistakes: it was Elisha J. Brown and not Elisha T, and the postoffice was not in the Seminole Nation but just over the Creek and Seminole National line in the Creek Nation.

Since that commission was issued Wewoka has prospered and grown from a pitifully small trading post to a community of some eleven thousand souls. But the spirit of adventure and try is still strong with its citizenship. The spirit that caused a wandering white man to cast his lot and take a chance in the wilderness yet dwells with the citizenship of Wewoka. The spirit of contention has never marred its happiness and factions and cliques have never existed in its midst,. The progressive energy and thrifty forethought of its people will continue the farward march.

The great edifice we dedicate today is just a small example of what perserverence and ingenuity of mind will accomplish. Let us never deviate from our original course. Let us live in peace and contentment, having consideration for our neighbor but working hard to better our condition.

Progress depends upon work and cooperation, an abundance of which we have possessed in the past. Progress in communities and in government should be slow and studied; we should take the experience of yesterday and profit by it and expect the future.

Keep your eyes turned forward; let the dedication of this building be but a small step in the march toward a greater and a better city, and REMEMBER: cities are build from within, not from without.

C. Guy Cutlip