

TRAGEDY ON A U.S. MAIL STAGECOACH

C.M. Davis, Special Agent Post Office Department

Smoot, Travis J
5-1-2022

HISTORY OF THE OVERLAND TRAIL MAIL ROUTE

The United States of America experienced some of the worst tragedies during the 1860s. The lingering effects of the Civil War significantly impacted Americans throughout the country. Explorers, prospectors, settlers, and homesteaders migrated west seeking new fortune or starting a new life. By 1865, various reports were made showing the hostilities of the Native American tribes. As a result, attacks were common on the plains during these years which caused devastation to both the Native Americans and the immigrants.¹

The United States and its Territories primarily used the U.S. Post Office Department to communicate messages from the West Coast to Washington D.C. The early 1860s saw the need of the Pony Express to deliver mail across the rugged and difficult terrain of the Rocky Mountains.

Many routes existed such as the Overland Trail, Mormon Trail, Oregon Trail, and Pony Express Trail. By 1864, Ben Holladay's Overland Stage Line "was one of the largest employers in the country and the largest overland transportation company".² The Overland Trail connected Sacramento, California to St. Joseph, Missouri. The U.S. Post Office Department relied heavily on stagecoaches to transport the U.S. Mail across the nation using the overland mail transportation services. The Post Office Department reported spending nearly one million dollars for mail transportation services on the overland route.³

Ben Holladay realized that the transcontinental railroad would be built and would drastically change his company. In 1866, Holladay sold the stage line to Wells Fargo for about \$1.5 million.⁴

By 1867, reports from the Colorado and Wyoming Territories told of attacks on the Overland Trail. "Without any military protection, the Indians began to attack the stage line west of Fort Sanders in May 1867. As a result, the stage company refused to carry passengers, stating that their stations had been attacked and burned, their men either killed or wounded and their stock was stolen. Altogether, there appeared to be reasons enough why the passenger coaches were not run."⁵

The risks to the stagecoaches transporting the U.S. Mail and its passengers became a major concern. In 1775, the Post Office Department established a need to regulate and bring officers to account of any depredations upon the mails. As a result, the position of Surveyor of the Post Office Department was created to establish routes and investigate depredations and irregularities within the Post Offices. In 1801, the title of Surveyor was changed to "Special Agent" and encompassed more duties to protect the Post Office Department and the U.S. Mail.

¹ The Montana Post, 10 Aug 1867, Indian Depredations-The Outrages Perpetrated in the Last Six Months

² Beard, J. (28 Feb 2018), In History: Stagecoach King, Ben Holladay

³ United States (1867). Annual Report of Postmaster General

⁴ Beard, J. (28 Feb 2018), In History: Stagecoach King, Ben Holladay

⁵ Weiser-Alexander, K. (2020). Overland Route Attacks, Wyoming

CHARLES M. DAVIS, SPECIAL AGENT

On May 14, 1867, Charles M. Davis received the appointment and commission as a Special Agent of the Post Office Department⁶. His role was to investigate the depredations upon the mails as well as establish and report on postal routes. The duties of a Special Agent were described in the Postal Laws and Regulations in 1866:

A special agent of the Post Office Department has a wide range of important and responsible duties, for the due performance of which a thorough knowledge of the laws and regulations of the department is indispensable...

The nature of the duties of special agents offers them an extended field of observation, and may enable them to point out cases where the transportation of the mail over particular routes may either be diminished or dispensed with...

The investigation of reported mail depredations, or losses by mail, will necessarily occupy a good deal of time, and will require the constant exercise of the utmost vigilance and skill...

Many agents hold themselves responsible for the safe transfer of such mails only as arrive in their charge...⁷

On May 31, 1867, a Wells Fargo stagecoach was transporting the U.S. Mail, nine passengers, two drivers, and one Special Agent of the Post Office Department from Julesburg, Colorado on the Overland route.

On the morning of June 2, the stagecoach headed to Riverside was attacked by twenty to thirty Native Americans near Moore's Ranch (located near American Rancho). The stagecoach driver, Andrew "Holderly" was killed and C.M. Davis was wounded in the lower part of his body. "The passengers fought the Indians bravely, and succeeded in keeping them off, killing two and wounding several others."⁸

A more detailed account explained the events which transpired that tragic morning:

The coach left North Platte on May 31, with nine passengers. They proceeded quietly to Riverside, when their suspicions were aroused by the fact that the down coach was twenty-four hours behind time. A majority of the passengers decided to go on, and being reinforced by two employees of the company, which, with the driver, made twelve persons on the coach, and they proceeded. When they left Riverside they had four breech-loading carbines and twelve revolvers. When within about three-fourths of a mile of Moore's ranch the driver gave the alarm that a band of Indians were charging for the coach. It had been agreed between the driver and passengers that if they were attacked the coach should stop and the passengers get out, which was immediately done. Of those who had carbines three were on the ground, and one on the top of the coach. The passengers at once advanced to meet the Indians, and firing became general on both sides. Disconcerted by the bold and determined action of the passengers, which was entirely unexpected, the Indians passed by

⁶ United States (1867-'68). *House Of Representatives – Special Agents Post Office Department*

⁷ United States (1 Mar 1866). *The Postal Laws and Regulations – Chapter XLIII*

⁸ Philadelphia Inquirer (28 Jun 1867)

for some distance and stopped, one of them have been fatally wounded. In this charge one of the passengers, Mr. Davis, was also severely wounded in the lower part of the body. At this point the horses became unmanageable, and began to run, and the passengers, one by one, made for the coach. The Indians presuming a retreat, rallied and made a second more furious charge on the coach, coming much near and shooting down the off wheel horse with an arrow, and wounding the nigh leader under the ear with a ball. Halderby, one of the employees, was killed at the door of the coach. The passengers again dismounted and renewed the fight, Halderby's gun being instantly put in use by Mr. Barrett. The passengers met the charge with the same determined bravery, but much more deliberately than before. One Indian was killed, several wounded and many dismounted, when the savages were finally repulsed. During the fight those who had no arms made themselves useful by attending to the horses. Mrs. Adams and her two children were in the coach, while her husband was outside fighting, and, together with Mr. Davis, who was lying in the coach wounded, loaded the revolvers for those outside. Mr. Adams prevented an Indian from killing the driver by holding an empty gun at him. The four horses were finally put to the coach, the wounded one was tied on behind, and the passengers covering the retreat, they arrived at the ranche. Mr. Remine was the only passenger who had a gun, the other three belonging to the driver and the two employees of the company.⁹

After the attack, Dr. Latham of Fort Sedgwick attended to Special Agent Davis. However, the wound was too grievous, and Dr. Latham pronounced the wound fatal¹⁰. Special Agent C.M. Davis died from the attack on June 5th, 1867¹¹.

Another report from Kansas was able to describe Special Agent Davis:

Among those who fell victims...to the Indian attack on the overland coach west of Denver, a few days since, was Mr. Charles M. Davis, son of Gen. Davis, of Washington, D.C. Mr. Davis was a young man of talent, by profession, we believe, a surveyor and civil engineer, and was on his way to Montana in charge of the topographical instruments sent out by Government for the use of the Surveyor General of the Territory. Gen Meredith has received information that in the massacre which resulted in the death of Davis and the driver, and the wounding of several of the other passengers, young Davis made a gallant and desperate fight, and only yielded to the savage miscreants when the bullet laid him a corpse at the bottom of the coach.¹²

Washington D.C. began to receive reports regarding the incident later that month. Reports from the newspapers show that word made it to George W. McLellan, Second Assistant Postmaster-General that Special Agent Davis was killed alongside the two stagecoach drivers. The report states:

[A] large box, addressed to the Second Assistant Postmaster-General was received at the Post Office Department, containing a lot of mail pouches, ripped open, with about two

⁹ The Cincinnati Enquirer (26 Jun 1867) *The Attack At Moore's Ranch – Additional Details*

¹⁰ The Leavenworth Times (15 Jun 1867)

¹¹ North Star Vermont (29 Jun 1867)

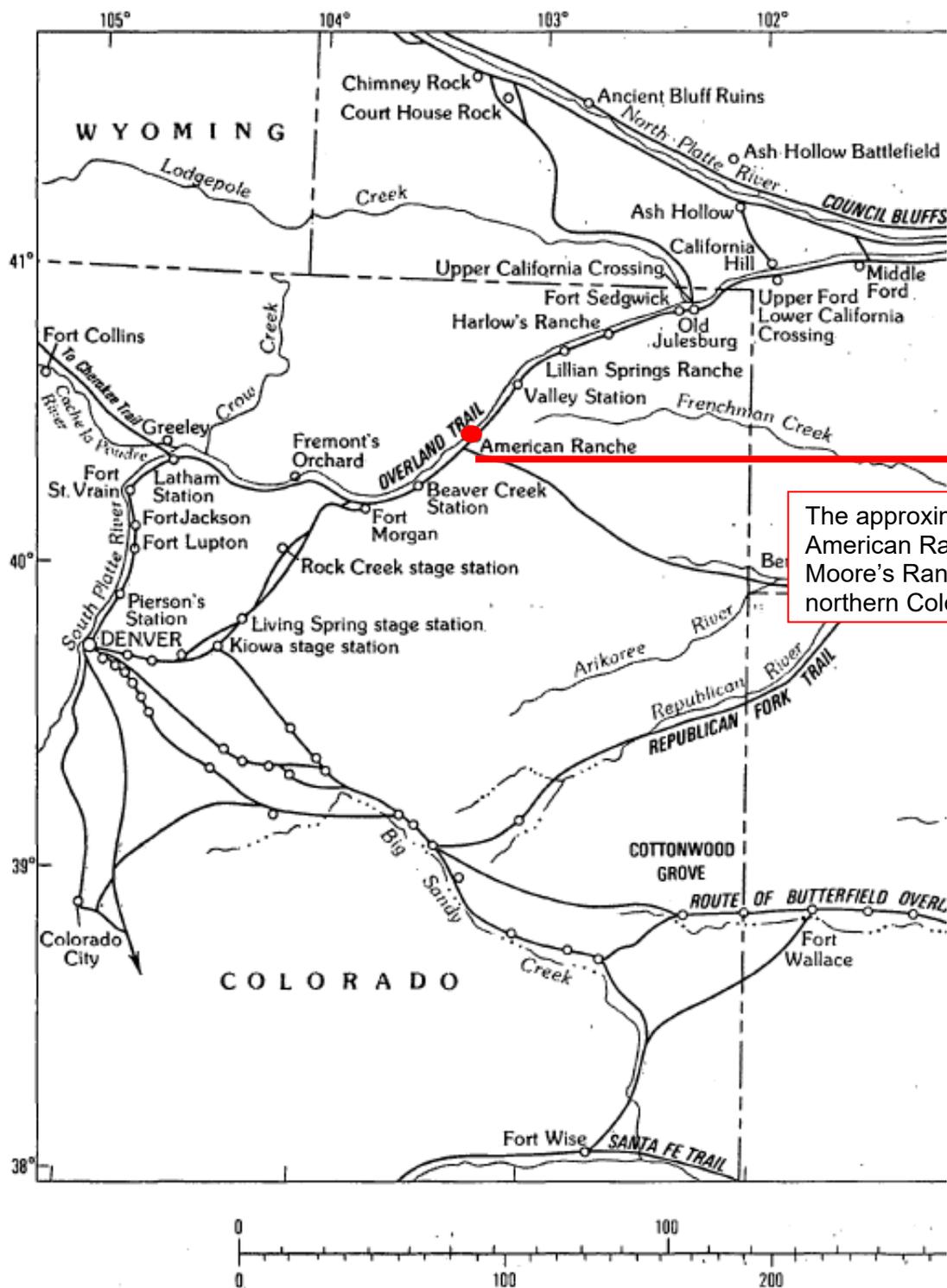
¹² The North Star Vermont (29 Jun 1867)

¹³ North Star Vermont (29 Jun 1867)¹⁴ Scott, G. R. (1989). *Historic Trail Maps of the Sterling 10 quadrangle ...* – USGS

*bushes of letters, most of them smeared with blood and clotted with coarse black hair. Subsequently a dispatch was received from North Platte, stating that on the 5th inst., C.M. Davis, special post office agent, and two drivers, having this mail matter in charge, had been killed by Indians at American Ranche, on the overland route from California. The letters are probably 1500 in number, destined for various States, Canada, and Europe. A large portion of the letters have apparently been robbed. Some of those for England look to be valuable, and all will in due time be forwarded to their proper addresses.*¹³

Since then, the area surrounding Moore's Ranch, American Ranch, and the other small outposts had been burned down or destroyed. Research conducted by the Department of the Interior, U.S. Geological Survey identified the proximity of these ranches in a map:

¹³ North Star Vermont (29 Jun 1867)¹⁴ Scott, G. R. (1989). Historic Trail Maps of the Sterling 1 o quadrangle ... – USGS



(Exhibit from the U.S. Geological Survey¹⁴)

¹⁴ Scott, G. R. (1989). Historic Trail Maps of the Sterling 10 quadrangle ... – USGS

The location of Special Agent Davis' grave, his family, and his personal identifiers have yet to be uncovered.

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**Indian Depredations—The Outrages
Perpetrated in the Last Six
Months.**

From the Centralia City Register.

We compile, for the benefit of unbelievers, an account of a few of the Indian atrocities and robberies committed within or near our borders within the last six months. To embrace them all would fill several issues of our paper.

On the 23d of last December the Indians attacked and murdered ninety-three enlisted men and officers at Fort Phil Kearney, and captured what stock was not killed, together with wagons, &c.

On the 2d of January the Indians killed one man at Sweetwater and several others were missing, supposed to be killed.

On April 15th, at Lookout Station, on the Smoky Hill, three men were killed, and a large quantity of stock stolen.

At the same date a little white girl who had been horribly violated and left in a dying condition was found in an abandoned camp of *friendly* Cheyennes near Fort Zara.

At the same time a mail party of five were killed between Laramie and Phil Kearney.

On May 12th the Rock Creek station was burned and all the stock stolen.

Willow Creek and Lake stations were burned almost at the same time, the stock driven off and one man killed.

On the same day the Indians stole about two hundred head of stock in sight of Fort Mitchell.

On the 6th of May, at the American Ranch, they made an attack and drove off four horses and four mules.

At Fairview they burnt the stable and corral and drove off six horses.

At the Wisconsin ranch four horses and four mules were stolen.

About this time a soldier was killed and scalped near Bridger's Ferry and a large number of stock in that vicinity was killed and stolen.

On the 16th of May they made an attack on the Commissioners sent to treat with them, but were repulsed, at Bridger's Ferry.

On the 17th they killed two men at Cottonwood.

On the 23d, Lake Ranch, west of here, was attacked. The Indians stole 25 horses.

The same day at Big Laramie they stole 100 head of oxen and 25 mules and horses.

The same day they ran off the stock from Fort Saunders and killed two men.

On the 24th they killed and scalped three men on Pole Creek, and stole four head of horses from a ranch near by.

Shortly prior to this time, five deserters from Fort Hayes were killed and scalped.

At Fairview, on June 1st, the coach going east was attacked; the driver was killed, also a man that was leading stock. Rev. Fuller, of Quincy, Massachusetts, escaped.

On the 4th two men were found killed and scalped at Goose Creek.

On the 5th they made an attack at Hanshaws, and got six head of stock.

On the 5th, at Pine Grove, in the Hills, two men were killed and one wounded.

Fifteen miles west of Bishop's ranch, on the same day, they killed two men and burned a ranch.

On the same day Silverthorn's party were attacked sixty five miles east of Denver.

They also run off five head of stock from Fort McPherson.

On the 4th they had attacked Sulphur Springs and ran off nine head of stock.

About this time they attacked the coach and killed one man and wounded Mr. Davis, mail agent, who has since died.

On the 7th a man was killed and scalped at Plum Creek.

They also drove off a large lot of stock, and attacked Baker's ranch the same day.

On the 8th they burned Plum Creek station.

On the 12th they killed and scalped Chief Division Engineer Hill, of the U. P. R. R., at Crow creek.

On the 13th they attacked two coaches at Hugo Station, on the Smoky Hill route, wounded one man and stole seventy-five head of stock.

On the 16th they attacked a train near Bijou Station, wounded one man and stole forty-five head of horses and mules.

Near Laporte, on the 18th, they captured two wagons with their loads.

On the 19th, at Big Timbers, on the Smoky Hill route, one passenger and two soldiers were killed, two passengers, one driver and one soldier wounded, and the fight continued three days.

One man was killed at Walker Creek, and two at Gunnell Springs.

Also one wounded at Pond Creek, and one at Deering's Wells.

From the latter station and Russell's Springs all the stock had been driven off.

These are a few of the murders and obberies committed. There are many more which have been recorded, and still a vast number more which have not.

These things have been occurring for the last six months, over a country hundreds of miles in extent, in our own vicinity, and other like outrages in Montana, Idaho and Utah.

Nearly two million dollars worth of sock and property has been stolen and destroyed by them.

STYLE MAGAZINE

Around Town
Events and happenings around town

Historic Folsom District

Posted via facebook Yesterday

Sunday was a beautiful day in Folsom's Historic District. Over 200 artisans and small businesses were set up down Sutter Street along with g...

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In History: Stagecoach King, Ben Holladay

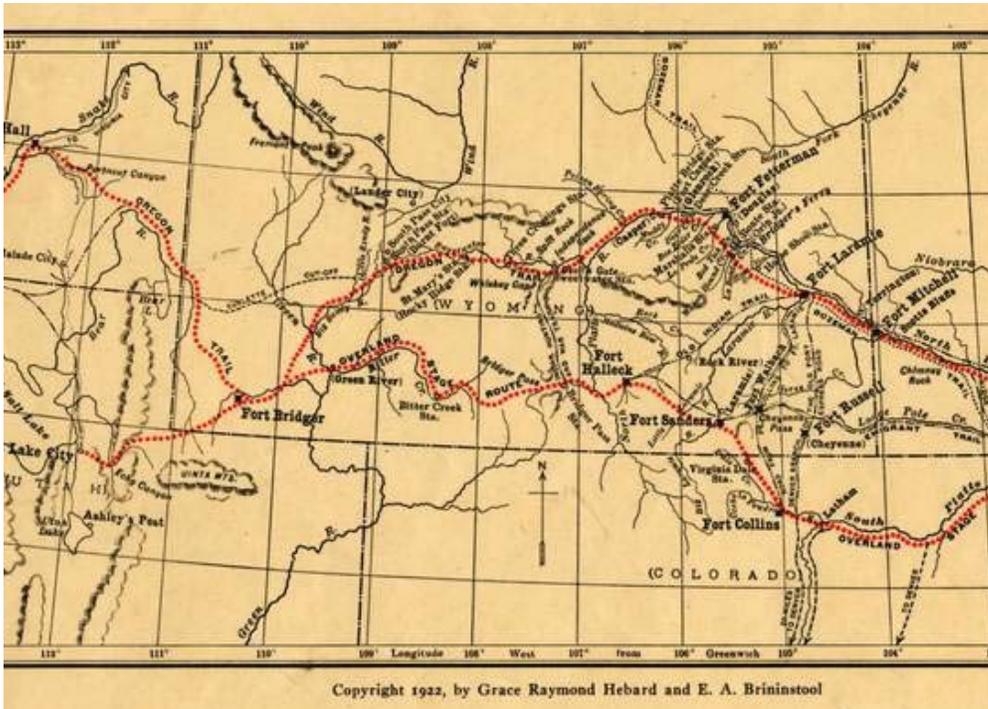


The discovery of gold in California opened the door for a mass migration of people from the East to the West Coast of the U.S. As the population in California grew, so did the need for goods manufactured back east.

Savvy entrepreneurs, such as Ben Holladay, saw this as an opportunity to line his pockets with gold without having to mine it. Stagecoach and freight companies sprang up overnight, and anyone with a seaworthy vessel opened a passenger line.

Holladay was born in Kentucky in 1819 and learned the transportation business helping his father lead wagons through the Cumberland Gap. In 1838, he served as a mail courier for Alexander Doniphan, the commander of the Missouri militia. Later Doniphan would provide a letter of introduction for Holladay to Brigham Young that helped Holladay build a lucrative relationship with the Mormon settlement in Utah.

As a young man, Holladay ran a hotel and tavern in Missouri. With the outset of the Mexican War, he opened a freighting business and secured a contract to supply General Kearny's army. After the war, he continued moving supplies west, purchasing army surplus items in Missouri and delivering them to the Mormon settlement in Salt Lake City where he sold them at a significant profit. When the Gold Rush began, Holladay seized on the opportunity to expand his freighting business.



As the demand to move goods, people, and mail grew, so did Holladay's empire. He secured government contracts to deliver mail to Salt Lake City and all over the frontier as the only government contractor. He also acquired competing express, stage, and freight companies, thus earning the moniker of "Stagecoach King."

By 1864, Holladay's Overland Stage Line was one of the largest employers in the country and the largest overland transportation company; Holladay controlled most of the overland traffic in mail, passengers, and freight from Missouri to California.

Periodically, Holladay traveled in his stage lines across the entire route, to ensure the stage was punctual and the fastest in the business. He realized, however, that the transcontinental railroad would impact the business, and in 1866 sold his stage line to Wells Fargo for \$1.5 million.

Holladay made many trips past Lake Tahoe on the route and admired its beauty. While exploring the lake in 1862, he stumbled upon Emerald Bay and soon after preempted the land around the bay. Here he built the first private estate on Lake Tahoe—a two-story, five-room villa he dubbed "the Cottage." In 1870, Holladay had a steamboat called "The Emerald" shipped by rail to Truckee and brought by wagon to Tahoe City to be launched in the lake. The boat was used to haul freight, passengers, and tow log booms until 1881.

Around Town

Events and happenings around town

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Folsom Chamber of Commerce

Posted via facebook 2 weeks ago

We are so excited to welcome our newest #FoothillWineFest Partners. We loved having Jose Wine Caves, PleinAir Vineyards and Bella Grace Vin...

Holladay eventually moved to Oregon and started a steamship business between Mexico and Alaska called the Northern Pacific Transportation Company. He also initiated the Oregon and California Railroad that was to connect to the transcontinental railroad in California. Holladay's vision included colonizing several land grants along the line he had secured from the state of Oregon. With loans from foreign investors, he sent ships to Europe to bring back immigrants to homestead the land.

Holladay's business interests included hotels and distilleries, gold and silver mines, sawmills, slaughterhouses, and a number of retail operations. He also maintained opulent houses in New York, Washington DC, and Oregon.

The financial crisis in 1873 bankrupted Holladay. He died in Portland, Oregon, in 1887 in relative obscurity.

By Jerrie Beard

Sources:

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Mountain Democrat: June 16, 2006

Sierra Stories, True Tales of Tahoe, Volume 2 by Mark McLaughlin. Copyright 1998.

Overland Stage Line Receipt image courtesy of frontierhomestead.org. Overland Stage Route map courtesy of wyomingplaces.pbworks.com.

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Around Town

Events and happenings around town

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Steamship service between San Francisco, Japan, and China.....	\$500,000	
Steamship service between the United States and Brazil.....	150,000	
Steamship service between San Francisco and the Sandwich Islands.....	75,000	
To supply a deficiency in service between the United States and Brazil in the fiscal year ended June 30, 1866.....	12,500	
		<u>\$1,637,500</u>
Making the total estimated expenditures ..		22,837,500
The ordinary receipts, including the standing appropriation of \$700,000 for carrying free mail matter, are estimated at.....	16,700,000	
Add amounts of special appropriation for California, China, and Brazil mails, and for the deficiency above named.....	1,562,500	
		<u>18,262,500</u>
Showing an excess of expenditures of.....		4,575,000
Deducting the undrawn balances of appropriations for the department, amounting to.....		2,000,000
Leaves the deficiency to be provided for from the general treasury.....		<u>2,575,000</u>

APPROPRIATIONS FOR SPECIAL SERVICE.

It will also be necessary to make the usual *special* appropriations as follows:

For overland mail transportation and marine service between New York and California.....	\$900,000
Mail steamship service between San Francisco, Japan, and China.....	500,000
Mail steamship service between the United States and Brazil...	150,000
And for deficiency on account of service between the United States and Brazil during the fiscal year ended June 30, 1866.	12,500
Mail steamship service between San Francisco and the Sandwich Islands.....	75,000

POSTAGE STAMPS AND STAMPED ENVELOPES.

During the year 371,599,605 postage stamps, of the value of \$11,578,607; 44,566,150 plain stamped envelopes, representing \$1,290,588 50; 16,662,750 stamped envelopes bearing printed cards and requests, representing \$494,712 50; and 1,857,750 newspaper wrappers, valued at \$37,155, were issued. An aggregate value of \$13,401,063.

The issue of postage stamps, compared with the previous year, shows an increase



Overland Route Attacks, Wyoming



Attack on the Overland Trail

As a result of the many skirmishes between the whites and the [natives](#) in [Wyoming](#), the U.S. Government sent large reinforcements into the territory during the spring and summer of 1867. The plan was to send an expedition against the combined [Sioux tribes](#) under [Chief Red Cloud](#) but, for whatever reasons, nothing of this kind was attempted. Instead, the troops were stationed at various forts and summer camps while Indian attacks were made on the stage lines and along the North Platte River.

While the [soldiers](#) were garrisoned in these various [Wyoming forts](#), they chose to save the trouble of escorting emigrants, instead, stopping the travelers at different points and holding them until a sufficient number arrived to be organized into companies that could defend themselves against any attacks.

During this time, the Indians did not disturb the troops who were in garrisons to any extent.

Without any military protection, the Indians began to attack the stage line west of [Fort Sanders](#) in May 1867. As a result, the stage company refused to carry passengers, stating that their stations had been attacked and burned, their men either killed or wounded and their stock was stolen. Altogether, there appeared to be reasons enough why the passenger coaches were not run.

Go to:

[Old West Main Page](#)

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Though there were no great gatherings of Indians along the travel routes, small bands of warriors, who came to the [stage line](#), ran off the stock and if it did not incur too much risk, white men were killed and scalped. The depredations were systematic, relentless and were intended to wear out the patience of the stage company, freighters, and emigrants. Those who kept a sharp lookout and traveled in large bodies had little to fear. However, those who lagged in the rear or ventured too far in advance were vulnerable to attack.

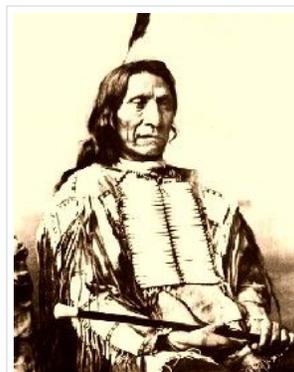
Surveying parties on the [Union Pacific Railroad](#), in spite of the precautions taken, often suffered severely. A party under a man named Hills was straightening the line in June 1867, 13 miles east of present-day [Cheyenne](#) when he and his crew were attacked on Crow Creek by 75 [Sioux](#) warriors. Hills was killed at the first onslaught and one of his assistants, named Archer, was badly wounded. The town of Hillsdale was named in honor of this murdered surveyor.

It would be impossible to give a detailed account of the numerous attacks on surveying parties, graders, passenger coaches and emigrant outfits that occurred that year. The Indians were satisfied with the running off of the stock and the killing of any white man who exposed himself beyond the limit of protection. This was the condition of things on the main lines of travel east and west and along the route of the railroad under construction.

The [Bozeman Trail](#) and the entire country through which it passed was filled with danger seen and unseen. Chief Red Cloud kept his headquarters near [Fort Phil Kearny](#) and it was there he intended to fight it out with the soldiers.

By Kathy Weiser-Alexander, updated February 2020.

Also See:



Makh-pi-ah-lu-tah, Oglala
Sioux Chief Red Cloud

B.—List of persons receiving special agents' commissions, &c.—Continued.

Date of appointment.	Name of agent.	Time of service.	How employed.
1867.			
April 2	H. F. Nettleton	June 30, 1867.	
5	Capt. Samuel Lauffer	15 days	
6	Hon. W. A. Burleigh	6 months	To look after post office matters in Montana.
11	T. C. Peters	90 days	For Commissioner of Agriculture.
12	Robert A. Crawford	30 days	For Hon. D. T. Patterson.
12	Thos. M. Cook	do	
13	S. V. Boyd	60 days	Clerk in Sixth Auditor's office.
15	Ward H. Lamon	90 days	
15	Clinton Rice	do	
23	James Lawrenson	60 days	Postmaster General's office, journal clerk.
23	Hon. Green Adams	30 days	
23	Hon. Alex. Ramsey	Dec. 2, 1867	
29	C. Wendell	90 days	
29	J. W. Bell	do	
May 1	Hon. W. E. Robinson	do	
2	Geo. W. Kessler	10 days	Route agent to reach his route.
2	Thomas Harland	90 days	Internal revenue office.
2	Isaac Harvey	do	Do.
2	F. P. Cuppy	30 days	Clerk appointment office.
4	J. Zeigler	Dec. 1, 1867	
7	K. W. Sheed	10 days	Route agent to reach his route.
8	H. H. Doubleday	60 days	Clerk in city post office.
9	R. S. Chilton	90 days	State Department.
14	W. L. Burt	do	Postmaster at Boston, Mass.
14	C. M. Davis	30 days	
15	Lucien O'Brien	do	
15	Horace Anderson	60 days	For chief clerk Sixth Auditor's office.
18	Henry D. Barron	Dec. 1, 1867	
18	William Stowe	Postmaster Springfield, Mass.
23	James Freeborn	For Hon. Charles O'Neil.
23	A. E. McDaniels	6 days	Route agent to reach his route.
24	David Lennox	Clerk in finance office.
27	G. W. Clarke	Jan. 1, 1867	U. S. marshal Iowa, for Hon. J. T. Wilson.
27	D. W. C. Wheeler	
27	Benj. E. McGrew	July 5, 1867	For Sixth Auditor.
29	Geo. C. Whiting	60 days	Interior Department.
29	E. D. Webster	Deputy surveyor port of New York.
June 1	R. T. McLain	90 days	For Hon. J. Dixon.
4	C. Hazlet	July 1, 1867	For Sixth Auditor.
4	Gen. Thos. Kilby Smith	14 days	By First Assistant Postmaster Gen'l.
10	A. B. Mullett	Dec. 31, 1867	Supervising architect of Treasury Department.
10	John Wanless	Sept. 10, 1867	For Hon. A. C. Hunt.
13	Chauncy Smith	July 4, 1867	Clerk in appointment office.
14	Thos. C. Nisbet	30 days	
14	H. C. Edminson	5 days	Route agent to reach his route.
17	J. B. Hutchinson	90 days	
19	Doct. Wheeler	30 days	For Third Assistant Postmaster Gen'l.
20	William P. Dole	60 days	
20	J. A. Ware	Dec. 31, 1867	Solicitor of Post Office Department.
July 1	Edwin Higgins	3 months	Clerk in contract office.
3	B. Rixford	20 days	Interior Department.
6	James H. Moe	10 days	Route agent to reach his route.
9	James M. Turner	do	Do.
10	Chas. H. Branscomb	6 months	Late special agent Missouri.
17	Joseph H. Manley	90 days	For Senator Morrill, of Maine.
18	C. G. Wilson	30 days	
18	Robert Murphy	do	Clerk in appointment office.

CHAPTER XLII.

LETTER BOXES.

SEC. 473. The Post Office Department neither owns, erects, nor repairs letter boxes in post offices, except where the building is owned by the United States. Letter boxes are the property of those postmasters who choose to put them up.

SEC. 474. The salaries of postmasters are established upon the basis of ALL THE REVENUES of their post offices during the two years preceding the passage of the law—*i. e.*, 1863 and 1864. Box-rents are included in these revenues. Every postmaster receives in the form of salary as much compensation as he formerly received from commissions and box-rents.

SEC. 475. Any postmaster may put up boxes in his office. These boxes are his private property, but the revenues thereof must be paid over to the department. Under the system of salaries, the postmaster receives the benefit of those revenues as effectually as he could under the system of commissions and emoluments.

SEC. 476. Where the justice of the case demands, the Postmaster General has authority to readjust salaries oftener than once in two years; and under this provision of law all inaccuracies and inadequate or excessive allowances of salary can be readily corrected; so that where there is an extraordinary increase or decrease of box-rents within the two years, the salary may be readjusted so as to meet the requirements contemplated by the law.

SEC. 477. Box-rents in all post offices must be paid for at least one quarter in advance.

SEC. 478. Each postmaster must keep a list of all box-holders, with the number of the box assigned to each, and the time during which he has used it. This list will be examined by special agents, and be delivered to his successor in office. The postmaster must state in his quarterly returns the amount of box-rents accrued in each quarter, and whether he has collected them or not.

CHAPTER XLIII.

INSTRUCTIONS TO SPECIAL AGENTS.

SEC. 479. A special agent of the Post Office Department has a wide range of important and responsible duties, for the due performance of which a thorough knowledge of the laws and regulations of the department is indispensable. When they are not familiar with those in force, they should inform themselves as rapidly as possible, so that they may not only conform their official conduct thereto, but may be qualified to instruct postmasters, and all others in the employment of the department as to their several duties, and properly decide cases of doubt or question.

SEC. 480. It is the duty of each officer and employé of the department, in his own sphere of observation, to see that no unnecessary expense is either made, or suffered to remain, chargeable upon its revenues, without being brought to the special notice of the Postmaster General. The nature of the duties of special agents offers them an extended field of observation, and may enable them to point out cases where the transportation of the mail over particular routes may either be diminished or dispensed with altogether without material injury to the public interest.

SEC. 481. The investigation of reported mail depredations, or losses by mail, will necessarily occupy a good deal of time, and will require the constant exercise of the utmost vigilance and skill; but as in the performance of this duty it will frequently be necessary to pass

over long lines of mail transportation, and to visit numerous post offices, a special agent will at the same time be enabled to give more or less attention to the general condition of the postal service on his line of travel, and to such particular matters as are hereinafter enumerated.

SEC. 482. The commission of a special agent of this department will pass him free over all mail routes where conveyance of passengers is provided for by the contractors; but if, in the performance of pressing duties, a special agent should at any time find it necessary or clearly expedient to procure private conveyance, or to pay fare on a passenger route, he will charge the expense of such conveyance in his next monthly or quarterly account, and accompany it with proper explanations and vouchers. If in any case the contractor on any mail route (whether by railroad or otherwise) refuses him a free passage over the same after the exhibition of his commission, he will pay the fare demanded, taking a receipt therefor if possible, and will charge the same in his account. If no such voucher can be obtained, the charge must be verified by his certificate on honor as to the correctness of these charges, in which he will, when the fare has been paid to a railroad company, clearly describe such company by its proper corporate title, instead of giving merely the termini of the route passed over.

SEC. 483. Special agents are intrusted with keys to the several mail locks now in use, and are, by virtue of their commissions and these instructions, authorized to open and examine the mails whenever and wherever, in the pursuit of their investigations, they may find it necessary to do so. They are also empowered to enter and examine any post office when, in their judgment, the success of their investigations, the safety of the mails, or the general interests of the service demand such examination. They will carefully investigate every case of alleged mail depredation referred to them from this department, acknowledging to the Second Assistant Postmaster General the receipt of the papers in each by its number, and will return the papers to him after investigation, with a separate report in each case. They will also investigate and report upon such cases of mail depredation as may be made known to them by postmasters, or by parties interested, when such cases are within the ordinary geographical range of their duties; and when they are not, they will see that such cases are duly referred to the special agent who, from his locality, can most conveniently investigate them. In every case of successful investigation they will communicate the result to the person who originally reported the case—whether to themselves or to the department.

SEC. 484. It is not possible for the department to instruct special agents as to the particular means to be used in discovering the exact locality of an ascertained theft from the mail, or in ferreting out and arresting the perpetrator. These must be as various as the circumstances which surround each case, and must be left to the intelligence, vigilance, ingenuity, and acuteness of the agent charged with each investigation. There are, however, certain qualities and habits which are absolutely indispensable to a proper and successful discharge of this class of his official duties. Foremost among these are self-control, perseverance, caution, and *silence* on the subject of his employment and operations. A special agent of this department should, when travelling, attract as little notice as possible, and should conceal his official character whenever and wherever such concealment can be practised, and should, of course, refrain from announcing it on hotel books and other public registers. He should, as well after as before a successful investigation, prevent, as far as he can, publicity being given to the means by which his success was achieved; for by this publicity the same means may become inoperative and valueless in another case.

SEC. 485. When an arrest is made for an offence against the postal laws, the prisoner should be put in charge of the regular law officers of the United States government as early as possible. If his examination cannot conveniently be had before a judge or commissioner of the United States, he should be taken before the nearest justice of the peace or other State authority competent to examine and bind him over for trial. As justices of the peace have in many cases declined to issue warrants, or to enter upon such examination, from a doubt as to their jurisdiction, the special agent should be prepared to remove such doubt by referring them to the provisions on this subject contained in the 33d section of the act of Sep-

tember 24, 1789, and in the 37th section of the act of March 3, 1825. When, in the judgment of a special agent, it is absolutely necessary that he should employ counsel for the protection of the interests of the United States at such preliminary examination, such counsel should be engaged to prosecute the case for a stipulated fee, which should not exceed that usually paid for like services rendered in cases arising in the same vicinage under the State laws. A report of the result of such examination should be promptly made to the Second Assistant Postmaster General, and should especially show whether the proceedings were completed in one day, or were continued from day to day, and how long.

SEC. 486. A special agent who is without experience in the performance of his duties should, as soon as possible after his appointment, spend sufficient time in a well-regulated and considerable post office to acquaint himself fully with the routine duties of such office in respect to the reception, separation, and distribution of mails, the boxing and delivery of letters, and the making up, billing, and despatching of mails. He should also improve the first opportunity afforded him of conferring and advising with some more experienced agent of the department as to the best means of performing the duties required of him, especially those which relate to the tracing of depredations on the mails.

SEC. 487. Every special agent will, of course, be at all times ready to impart freely to other special agents any assistance in his power in the way of information, suggestion, or advice on this subject. Any novel and successful device for the detection of depredators upon the mails which may occur to one agent will thus be made available for the use of others, and for the benefit of the service.

SEC. 488. The efficiency and usefulness of a special agent in the performance of his duties in any branch of the service of the department must greatly depend on the extent of his general knowledge of the mail service of the country, and his minute and particular knowledge of that in the district or region of country to which his duties are principally confined. He should know accurately the connexion of routes and the grade of service required on each. To this end, if he has not them already in his possession, he should apply to the Contract Office for and obtain pamphlet copies of the last advertisement of mail lettings in the sections where he is principally employed, and should keep them with him for constant reference, noting upon them from time to time such changes as may come to his knowledge.

SEC. 489. In passing to and over railroad routes special agents will carefully observe what arrangements are made for the safety of the mails while being conveyed between the several post offices and the railroad stations or mail cars; and also while passing from one route to another, and how they are disposed of in the cars. On roads where there are route agents, they will see if suitable accommodations are provided for the safe and convenient assorting and bagging of the mails.

SEC. 490. When there are no such agents on the route, notice closely who is charged with the custody of the mails; whether they are placed under lock, beyond the reach of any but duly authorized persons, and, generally, whether proper provision is made for their safety in all respects. Especially see that all persons employed by the railroad companies in the transfer or custody of the mails are qualified by oath as carriers. It is known that several, and it is believed that many entire mails have been stolen while the contents of one mail car were being transferred to another. This has been done during the confusion of such transfer even where two roads were connected by a continuous track, and the danger of theft is greatly increased where there is a considerable portage between the two trains. Such transfer should, therefore, always be made with the utmost care and watchfulness, and, when occurring in the night, should not be attempted until abundant light shall have been furnished and properly distributed or stationed. Special agents are earnestly desired to give heed to this matter, and to see that ample and certain provision is made for such light beforehand. They will, if possible, effect arrangements for keeping all the letter mails under the view of a route agent or local agent during such transfer. Such arrangements are supposed now to exist in respect to all mails arriving in charge of a route agent, or where a local agent is stationed, but provision must be made for the safety of the mails under all ordinary circumstances, and they will make it their special duty to see whether route agents, who consider

themselves "off duty" at the ends of their respective routes, may not properly be required to superintend the transfer of all mails which arrive by railroad at their locality during their vacation.

SEC. 491. Many agents hold themselves responsible for the safe transfer of such mails only as arrive in their charge, and consider themselves exempt from all public duty during the whole interval of time (whether long or short) when they are not actually passing over their routes. In such cases, if it will impose on them no hardship, special agents are authorized to require their performance of this slight additional service, and will promptly report any refusal on their part. It is believed that in many cases the safety of the mails may thus be materially promoted, without exacting anything unreasonable from these agents. Where no such arrangement is practicable, it should be carefully seen that the messengers of the railroad company are every way reliable and competent.

SEC. 492. It should be seen that the mails on steamboats are locked up in a suitable apartment, under the exclusive control of the route agent, when one is on board, and otherwise under the control of some person designated for the purpose by the contractors, and duly qualified by oath. Such person should be made clearly to understand that he is in no case to allow the mails to pass from his charge into that of any unauthorized person. Prompt and special report must be made of every case in which mails are exposed on the deck of a steamer during her passage.

SEC. 493. At post offices terminating routes, examine the prescribed schedules and modes of conveyance; compare them with the actual arrivals, departures, and grades of service, and note any irregularities discovered. Observe whether any errors have been inadvertently embraced in schedules, or whether any other defective arrangements exist in the transportation service, causing delays or failures of connexion, and suggest promptly and intelligently the proper changes and remedies. Visit frequently, and without previous notice, the distributing offices, to ascertain whether letters are so mailed as to be subject to two or more distributions, *in violation of the regulations and of special instructions by circulars.*

SEC. 494. At each principal post office, observe whether the postmaster gives his personal attention to its business; and if not, whether such watchful supervision is exercised over it by anybody as to secure subordination, method, and personal accountability among the force employed in it. Without this there can be no security to the correspondence passing through a post office.

SEC. 495. Impress upon postmasters the importance and necessity of a thorough acquaintance with, and a strict adherence to the regulations of the department with regard to registered letters, and the exercise of special care in their forwarding, custody, and delivery.

SEC. 496. Admonish postmasters, when necessary, against suffering any persons not employed in their offices to have access to the mails when in process of opening, separating, distributing, or otherwise; and against allowing any person not duly qualified and authorized, to have access to the tables and cases where letters are deposited.

SEC. 497. These prohibitions include route agents, mail-carriers, letter-carriers, and all other persons who may have been sworn for the performance of other service to the department.

SEC. 498. Observe at all offices whether incapable or otherwise unreliable and unsafe persons are employed in them, whether as postmasters or in a subordinate capacity. In the former case, report the result of your observation to the Appointment Office; in the latter, bring the matter to the attention of the postmaster at the office where such objectionable person or persons are employed, and recommend such action as will be calculated to remedy the evil.

SEC. 499. Prevent as far as possible, by admonition and advice, the exposure of the mails at small road-side offices, by the opening and separating them in public rooms, and in the presence of the neighbors, and report every flagrant abuse of this sort which you cannot cure. Ascertain, by observation and inquiry at distributing offices, and by such other means as may occur to you, whether the registered packages of postage stamps are sent from any post offices, or by any route agents, in the unlocked bags or newspaper sacks, and report every case in which you find that either such packages or letter packages are so sent.

SEC. 500. Observe also whether postmasters and route agents, through whose hands such packages pass, keep (as they are required to do) a record of the registered numbers, addresses, and dates of receipt of such packages, when and to whom delivered, &c.

SEC. 501. Special agents will be particularly careful to investigate, without delay, all cases of lost or missing registered packages of stamps, or envelopes, referred to them by postmasters of distributing offices. Reports must be made in a separate letter to the Third Assistant Postmaster General.

SEC. 502. Notice at post offices the mode practised of cancelling postage stamps, and report every case in which the instructions of the department in that regard are violated.

SEC. 503. Examine, at all offices visited, the "complaint book," which all postmasters are required to keep, and in which they are required to enter all reports of missing letters, mailed to or from their offices, which may be made to them, with full particulars of each case. At any office where such a book is not kept, direct that it be procured and put in use.

SEC. 504. Route agents should be men of strict integrity, business capacity, and correct habits. If any fail to meet these requirements, report them, with the particulars of their several cases, to the Appointment Office.

SEC. 505. When the place of a regular route agent is filled by a substitute, ascertain whether the substitution has been made conformably with the regulations of the department; and if not, do not hesitate or fail to report the case without delay. It is not allowable for a route agent to leave his duties in charge of a substitute, except under the most urgent circumstances, without permission being first granted by the Postmaster General, on a written application through his Second Assistant, and such permission will be in writing for a specified time, the limitation of which must be strictly observed.

SEC. 506. When a sudden and urgent necessity arises for the temporary absence of a route agent from his duties, allowing no sufficient time for a reference of his application to the department, a postmaster at the end of his route may grant leave for such absence, but only on a written application, which he will refer to the department for approval by the first mail thereafter; and the leave thus granted must be limited to the shortest time in which such application can reach; and be returned from, the department by mail.

SEC. 507. As there are reasons for believing that this rule is sometimes violated by route agents without proper notice being taken of the matter by postmasters, make special inquiry respecting such violations at offices at and from which route agents arrive and depart.

SEC. 508. See that route agents, who are instructed to do so, keep a regular daily record of all the mail bags conveyed on their routes. Blank forms for this purpose have been furnished to many of them, with instructions for their use; and this system of accountability for mail bags extends to all important railroad routes. Special attention must be given to the working of this system, and to perfecting it, by instructions to, and influence with, the route agents, and by making such suggestions respecting it to the department as from observation and experience may be deemed important. Route agents are forbidden to admit into the mail cars in their charge any persons who are not agents of this department. This rule must be strictly enforced, and special agents will report, without exception, every instance that may come to their knowledge of its violation.

SEC. 509. Observe the condition of mail bags, and enforce, as far as possible, that regulation of the department which requires postmasters at the ends of routes to withdraw from the service all that are too much worn, or from any other cause are unsafe. Endeavor to enforce also the regulation which requires the return of canvas sacks sent out from the principal cities with newspapers and other printed matter, and correct any careless habits in regard to the security of mails in the several post offices.

SEC. 510. Ascertain as far as possible, and report violations of law by private expresses, or by other persons, in sending or carrying mailable matter over established routes out of the mail, and suggest any improvements in the service calculated to remedy or abate this evil.

SEC. 511. In respect to all the foregoing instructions special agents will, in every case where a flagrant abuse or imperfection in the service is discovered, make immediate report

thereof to the department, and in urgent and important cases use the telegraph if necessary; but when the cause of complaint is slight, and can be corrected by advice or admonition, no special report of the case need be made. **Special agents are required to keep from day to day a brief but accurate journal, in which they will enter their observation or other knowledge of any neglect of duty, or violation of the regulations of the department, in any branch of the service—**by postmasters, mail contractors, route agents, or any other persons—so that a transcript of this journal will exhibit all the reports required by these several articles of instruction, and all notices of irregularities or imperfections in the service, with suggestions for their improvement, which may have been observed or otherwise become known from day to day. These journals must also show the locality and manner of employment of each agent on the several days of each month, and must indicate the deprecation cases, in the investigation of which he is engaged and the progress of his investigation. Each agent will forward to the department with his monthly account, or as soon after the beginning of each month as practicable, a transcript of so much of this journal as may not have been previously communicated in special reports. These transcripts should be addressed to the Second Assistant Postmaster General, to be filed subject to the inspection of the proper officers of the department; and when matters relating to several branches of the service are to be treated of at the same time, separate reports should be made, each to its proper bureau.

SEC. 512. When a special agent is assigned for duty to a particular district or section of country, he will not, except in a case of absolute necessity, or in the pursuit of some special investigation in the line of his duty, withdraw himself from his district to visit the seat of government, or otherwise, without instructions or leave from this department. When he has no special and urgent duties to perform under the particular instructions of the department, as can rarely happen, he should still avoid remaining unnecessarily long at his place of residence, but should keep moving over the several routes in his district, especially those which, from their importance, or otherwise, require the most strict surveillance. His salary and expense account may be forwarded for settlement at the end of each month or quarter, as he may elect, addressed to the Second Assistant Postmaster General.

SEC. 513. **Special agents will endeavor to give security to the mails, to prevent unnecessary delays and detentions in their transportation, to elevate the character of the Post Office Department for faithfulness, efficiency, and punctuality in the several branches of its service, and thus to secure a more perfect accomplishment of the extended and beneficent objects for which it was established.**

CHAPTER XLIV.

MONEY-ORDER OFFICE.

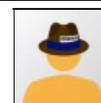
SEC. 514. The money-order system is intended to promote public convenience and to insure safety in the transfer through the mails of *small sums* of money. The mode by which safety is secured consists in leaving out of the order the name of the payee or party for whom the money is intended. In this respect a money order differs from an ordinary bank draft or check. An advice or notification, containing full particulars of the order, is transmitted by the issuing postmaster to the postmaster at the office of payment. The latter is thus furnished, before the order itself can be presented, with the necessary information to detect fraud, if any should be attempted. It is expected of postmasters that they will use a legitimate influence in recommending the money-order system, and, by courteous attention to the inquiries of applicants, exhibit its superiority as a safe method of transmitting small sums of money through the mails.

SEC. 515. Money-order offices are divided into two classes. Offices of the first class are

From the Denver Tribune, June 5.

Mr. Ed. Conway, division superintendent of the telegraph line, left Julesburg Sunday afternoon on the coach, and reached Moore's ranch yesterday morning. He reports having found the telegraph cut by Indians near Moore's, and the wire dragged to the bluffs; also, that thirty Indians attacked the coach that left North Platte May 30, for Denver, about ten o'clock in the forenoon, Sunday, June 2, near Moore's, killing one man, named And. Holderly, a stage employee, and seriously wounding another, named C. M. Davis. The passengers fought the Indians bravely, and succeeded in keeping them off, killing two and wounding several others. The following is a list of the passengers on this coach, who are now at Moore's ranch, waiting for an opportunity to get to Denver:—Mr. Adams and wife and two children; John W. Remaine, E. B. Barrett, John P. Marshall, A. T. Goldsmith, H. Goldsmith, H. Paschall, L. Warner and R. W. Steele. The Indians are reported all along the road as far east as Cottonwood. Two out of a party of five men were killed yesterday at Sturgess', fifteen miles east of Cottonwood.

C.M. Davis, SA POD



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tjsmoot19

Mon, Apr 25, 2022

THE ATTACK AT MOORE'S RANCH—ADDITIONAL DETAILS.

The coach left North Platte on May 31, with nine passengers. They proceeded quietly to Riverside, when their suspicions were aroused by the fact that the down coach was twenty-four hours behind time. A majority of the passengers decided to go on, and being reinforced with two employees of the company, which, with the driver, made twelve persons on the coach, and they proceeded. When they left Riverside they had four breech-loading carbines and twelve revolvers. When within about three-fourths of a mile of Moore's ranch the driver gave the alarm that a band of Indians were charging for the coach. It had been agreed between the driver and passengers, that if they were attacked, the coach should stop and the passengers get out, which was immediately done. Of those who had carbines three were on the ground and one on the top of the coach. The passengers at once advanced to meet the Indians, and firing became general on both sides. Disconcerted by the bold and determined action of the passengers, which was entirely unexpected, the Indians passed by for some distance and stopped, one of them having been fatally wounded. In this charge one of the passengers, Mr. Davis, was also severely wounded in the lower part of his body. At this point the horses became unmanageable, and began to run, and the passengers, one by one, made for the coach.

The Indians presuming a retreat, rallied and made a second and more furious charge on the coach, coming much nearer and shooting down the off wheel horse with an arrow, and wounding the nigh leader under the ear with a ball. Halderby, one of the employees, was killed at the door of the coach. The passengers again dismounted and renewed the fight, Halderby's gun being instantly put in use by Mr. Barrett. The passengers met the charge with the same determined bravery, but much more deliberately than before. One Indian was killed, several wounded and several dismounted, when the savages were finally repulsed. During the fight, those who had no arms made themselves useful by attending to the horses. Mrs. Adams and her two children were in the coach, while her husband was outside fighting, and, together with Mr. Davis, who was lying in the coach wounded, loaded the revolvers for those outside. Mr. Adams prevented an Indian from killing the driver, by holding an empty gun at him. The four horses were finally put to the coach, the wounded one was tied on behind, and the passengers covering the retreat, they arrived at the ranche. Mr. Remine was the only passenger who had a gun, the other three belonging to the driver, and the two employees of the company.

C.M. Davis, SA POD



Clipped By:

tjsmoot19

Tue, Apr 26, 2022

We are deprived, by the high waters, of our Colorado mail, and news from the Indian country. Omaha Republican says a gentleman just arrived from the North Platte informed them he was one of the five passengers who had a brush with the Indians at Moore's Fort. The Indians pursued them, killed one passenger instantly and wounded a son of General Davis. Dr. Latham of Fort Sedgwick, pronounced the wound fatal. The passengers then got out of the coach and firing rapidly and with such good aim that two Indians were killed at the first volley. Others were severely wounded. Gov. Steele and another passenger went on to Denver, per ox train, but the other passenger returned to Omaha.

C.M. Davis, SA POD



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Tue, Apr 26, 2022

THE INDIAN TROUBLES.

OMAHA, June 9.—Gen. Sherman has issued general orders, stating that the Union Pacific Railroad shall be well guarded in the future, and that no Indian will dare to interfere with it.

All passengers and freight must be forwarded to the end of the track, and from there it will be guarded by sufficient escorts and specially provided by him for that purpose. A sufficient force of cavalry is already on the post. Sherman is sanguine that he will clear Platte Valley of Indians within two weeks.

A fight occurred between nine passengers and twenty Indians, within five miles of Moon's Fort. One passenger was killed instantly, and Gen. Davies's son was mortally wounded in the groin. Two Indians were killed and five severely wounded. Five of the passengers returned to Omaha this evening. Governor Steele of Colorado, had a narrow escape, but subsequently reached Denver in safety.

THE FALL OF OVERHILL

C.M. Davis, SA POD



Clipped By:

tjsmoot19

Wed, Apr 27, 2022

Among those who fell victims, says a Montana paper, to the Indian attack on the overland coach west of Denver, a few days since, was Mr. Charles M. Davis, son of Gen. Davis, of Washington, D. C. Mr. Davis was a young man of talent, by profession, we believe, a surveyor and civil engineer, and was on his way to Montana in charge of the topographical instruments sent out by Government for the use of the Surveyor General of the Territory. Gen Meredith has received information that in the massacre which resulted in the death of Davis and the driver, and the wounding of several of the other passengers, young Davis made a gallant and desperate fight, and only yielded to the savage miscreants when the bullet laid him a corpse at the bottom of the coach.

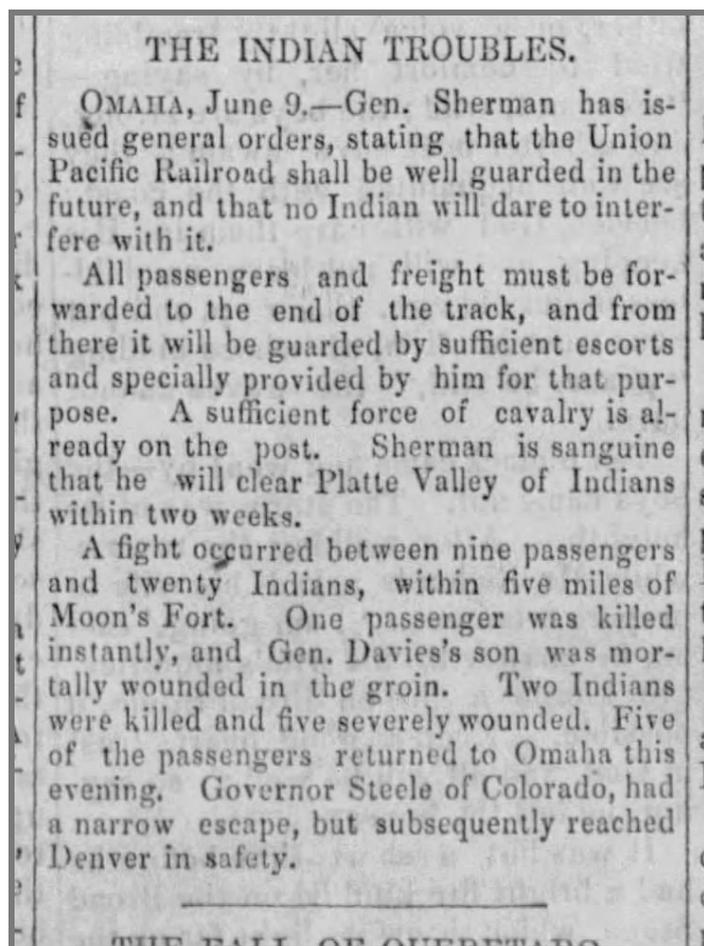
C.M. Davis, SA POD



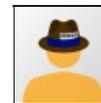
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Mon, Apr 25, 2022



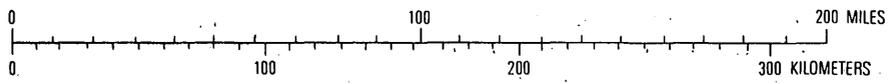
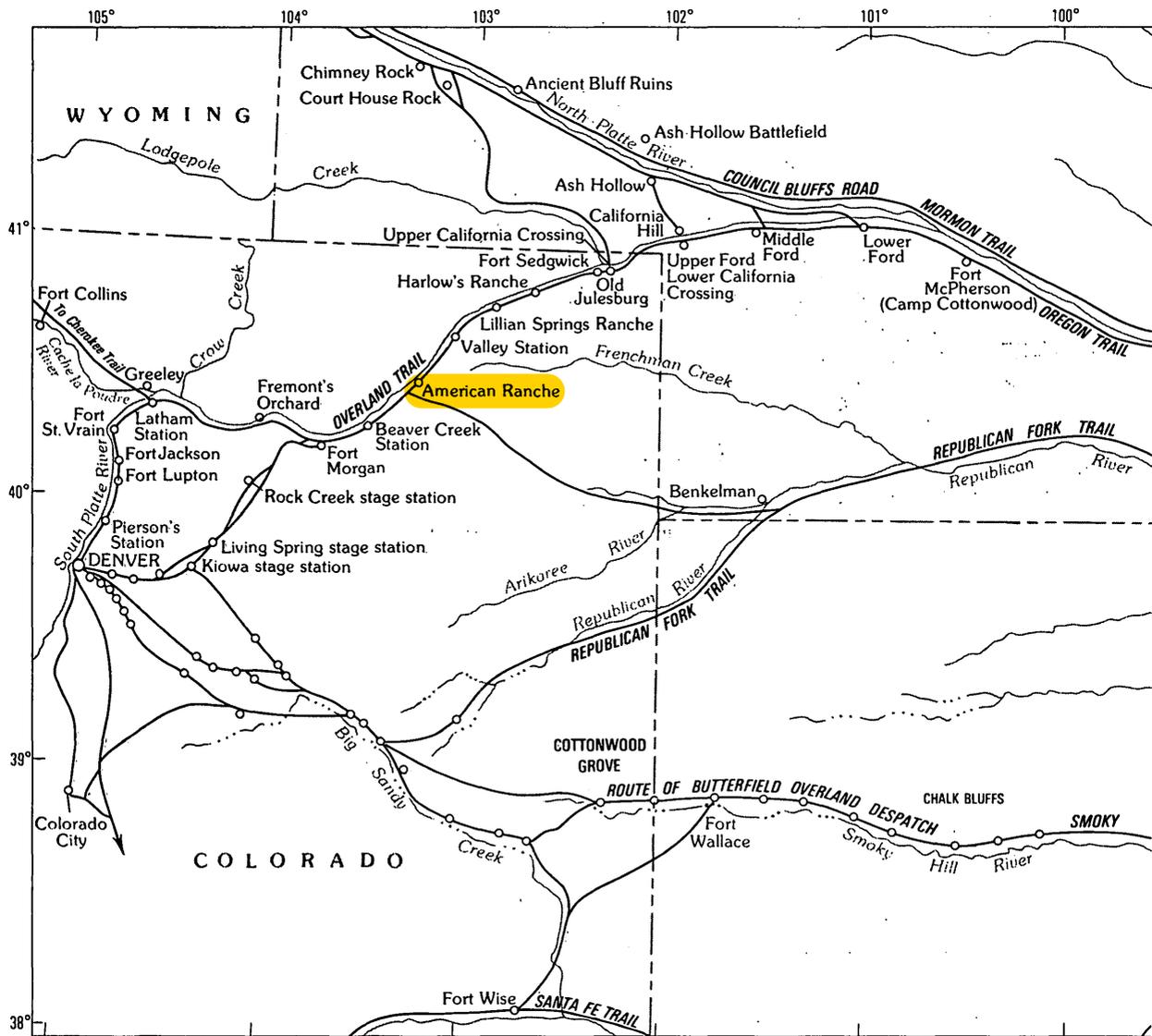
C.M. Davis, SA POD



Clipped By:

tjsmoot19

Wed, Apr 27, 2022



Approximate location of American Ranche and Moore's Ranche on the Overland Route