

# Wichita Stamp Club Newsletter



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Editor



*“Go Fly A Stamp”*



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A little number from Butte, Montana

## [Travel Kansas](#)

This time we visit Webster in Rooks County

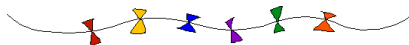
## [Extra Small Stuff](#)

A peek into a tiny post office in Ochopee, Florida

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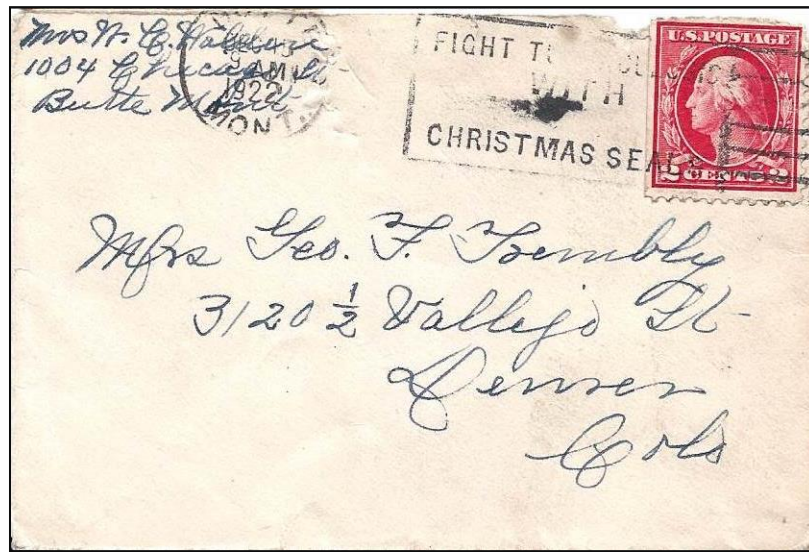
## **A KITES TALE**

***“The world is a book, and those who do not travel,  
read only a page” by St. Augustine***



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



**Figure 1**  
Small Stuff Cover Butte, Montana 1922

This Small Stuff comes to you from Butte, Montana by way of Denver, Colorado (Figure 1). It measures 4 ¼ inch by 2 ¾ inch and is franked with a 2¢ George Washington stamp (Scott #406) and tied to the cover with a slogan cancellation “Fight Tuberculosis with Christmas Seals” with the term ‘Red Cross’ excised from cancel that would normally be between ‘with’ and ‘Christmas’. This slogan cancellation was in use from early December 1922 to the later part of December 1922 in most states. A circular-date-stamp appears postmarked Butte Mont. Dec 15, 1922. Based on the size of the cover it may have been a birth announcement or an invitation to an event.

Butte Montana is the County Seat of Silver Bow County. As with most towns of early 19<sup>th</sup> Century and 20<sup>th</sup> Century mining communities; they experienced growth from a camp to a boom-town and eventually a very mature and prosperous city and Butte becoming the largest city west of the Mississippi River for many years. Between the late 1800’s to around 1920 Butte was a notorious copper boom-town. The landscape around Butte is a natural bowl that straddles the Rockies’ Continental Divide. The camp was gold and silver, but copper became the mineral when electricity became of age, which was plentiful in and around Butte that was often called “the Richest Hill on Earth”, (Figure 2).



**Figure 2**  
Panoramic view of Butte, Montana

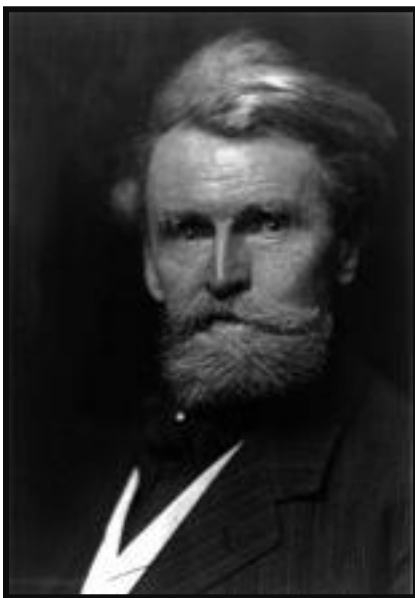
The town attracted workers from Ireland, Wales, Lebanon, Canada, Austria, Italy, Syria, Finland, China, Croatia, Montenegro, Mexico, Cornwall in England and all parts of the United States. The majority of the workers left a mark upon Butte in the form of food varieties, such as Cornish pastry, Slavic nut bread pastry, boneless pork chop sandwich, huckleberry products and Scandinavian lefse.

With all the influx of workers the town gained a reputation of being wide-open where vice soon became second nature. The saloon and red-light districts became famous, such as the “Line” or “The Copper Block” and where women did their trade in “Venus Alley.”



**Figure 3**  
Uptown Butte, Montana

There were often dedicated men that fought to control the Butte mining wealth, such as William A. Clark, a Senator from Montana (1899-1907) (Figure 4), Marcus Daly, an Irish-born American businessman associated with the Anaconda Copper Mine (Figure 5), and F. Augustus Heinze, an intelligent, charismatic and devious character, educated in Germany United Copper (Figure 6); becoming known as the “Copper Kings”.



**Figure 4**  
William A. Clark



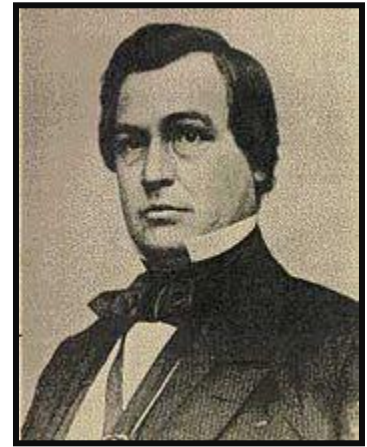
**Figure 5**  
Marcus Daly



**Figure 6**  
Fritz Augustus Heinze

Denver the City and County of Denver acquiring its name from James W. Denver (Figure 7) of the Kansas Territorial era. Denver was initially part of the Kansas Territory established in 1854. James W. Denver became a Kansas Territorial Governor in December 1857. When Kansas became a state in 1861 the

western border of the State was established east of the Denver area as it is today. Denver was also a mining town, just as Butte was and founded in 1858 during the Pike's Peak Gold Rush when it was still a part of Kansas Territory. The town site was initially set by General William Larimer from the eastern part of Kansas Territory along a bluff at the confluence of Cherry Creek and the South Platte River. This site was often the seasonal encampments of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Native Americans. In May 1859 residents of Denver donated 53 lots to the Leavenworth and Pike's Peak Express establishing the first regional overland wagon route. When Kansas became a State on January 29, 1861 this left Denver to be a part of the Colorado Territory and finally on August 1, 1876 Colorado became a State of the Union.



**Figure 7**  
James W. Denver

Denver's frontier town days achieved economic growth in servicing local miners with gambling, saloons, livestock and goods trading. When the transcontinental railroad passed through Cheyenne the citizens stepped forward and eventually on June 24, 1870 the Denver Pacific debut as the link with the transcontinental railroad and a new age was ushered in to Denver. Denver's prosperity brought in millionaires and the mansions which also brought about some poverty and crime as with most growing cities.

Denver was initially part of Arapahoe County, but in 1901 the Colorado General Assembly decided to split up the large County and thus created a new Adams County and a new consolidated City and County of Denver with the remainder being designated South Arapahoe County. Due to a delay by the Colorado Supreme Court the City and County of Denver and was finally created on November 15, 1902.

Denver became known as the mile high city based on the elevation being 5,280- feet above sea level. James W. Denver traveled to his Namesake City in 1875 and again in 1882. He would be commissioned Brigadier General in the Union Army on August 14, 1861 and resigned his commission on March 5, 1863 and returned to his practice in Ohio. We would be a delegate to the Democratic Convention in three separate years prior to his death

This was the 58<sup>th</sup> in a series of articles relating to small post cards and small covers so if you have any in your collection that you would like to share please let us know.

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



Figure 1  
Rooks Co. Railroad Map ca 1899

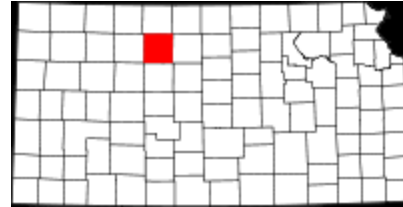


Figure 2  
Rooks County

**Travel Kansas—Webster** located in Rooks County (Figure 1 & 2) with Stockton serving as the County Seat. A patent for 48 acres was issued to Webster in June 1885 and surveyed on June 23 and the plat filed two days later. Another patent for 120 acres was issued September 15, 1885 to Belmont. Both settlements shared the main street that ran north and south with Broadway Street going east and west separating the two settlements. The area was surveyed again on November 10, 1885 and platted with Webster being listed, but no mention of Belmont. The two settlements never incorporated. An application was made for a Belmont Post Office but was rejected as a town already existed in Kansas by the name of Belmont, so Webster obtained the go ahead for their Post Office. A Belmont Post Office was issued in 1857 for a town in Woodson County but it closed in 1878 and one was issued in 1879 for a town in Kingman County which would be the one referenced as it stayed open until 1971. Webster was approved for a Post Office that opened December 8, 1879 and would remain open until June 30, 1953.

A Happy Birthday Post Card (Figure 3) was mailed from Webster with a one cent George Washington Stamp (Scott #405) and tied to the card with a four-bar Balloon cancel postmarked on Dec. 7, 1912. The Post Card was sent to the senders sister located in Clifton, Kansas.

Webster was nestled in a grove of trees, which was a rarity in this part of Kansas which was practically treeless. The location of Webster in the valley among the grove of trees kept the Kansas winds to a minimum and provided ample shelter for numerous birds; cicadas were periodically numerous in the Village; and Mourning Doves were plentiful providing cooing back and forth.

Webster had a very good year in 1885 when they thought the railroad being built at nearby Downs, Kansas following the Solomon River into Rooks County. In 1886 approximately 36 new buildings were constructed with lumber being hauled in from Hays that was 60 miles away. *Webster Enterprise* reported in their newspaper that the town provided residents with two doctors, two churches, a school, three grocery stores, a local real estate office, hardware store, drugstore, furniture store, the Webster House Hotel, and Filkerson House. Webster would end up having four newspapers: *Webster Eagle*, *Webster Enterprise*, *Merchants Journal* and *Webster Blade*. As for a railroad the Missouri Pacific Railroad stopped west of Stockton and in 1907 the Gulf Plainville and Northern Railroad was caught up in the organized depression and never finished even though the rail bed had been built.

The Solomon River was a key factor for the residents of Webster, for watering livestock, baptisms, boating, swimming, fishing, ice skating, and even cutting ice blocks and stored them for use in the summer months. The first bridge built to ford the Solomon was one of a wooden structure and eventually a steel bridge following the destruction of the wooden one that was washed out in August 1888. The town blacksmith made use of the iron piling of the old bridge and constructed about four hundred plow lays.

The first school was constructed of old logs with a dirt floor and school was taught for three months in the summer of 1882. This was replaced with a one room limestone rock the fall of 1882. In 1886 a two-story frame grade school was constructed and would serve the community until 1911 when it consolidated with the Belmont and Rush townships. Eventually a two-story brick school was built with lower grades using the first level and high school on the second floor.

As early as 1932 residents were corresponding with government agents in order to secure a dam over the South Solomon River in an effort to control flooding. Eventually sites were surveyed by the Bureau of Reclamation; the Webster townsite was one of the recommended sites. This meant that the residents of Webster would have to move. The foundation for the dam was completed by December 2, 1953 and finally Congress allocated six million dollars and work began in March 1954 and the dam was completed. By July 23, 1956 water covered 700 acres making the end of old Webster.



**Figure 4**  
Rooks Co. Courthouse-Stockton, KS

A new townsite was designated two miles southwest with a new school constructed; the Methodist Church along with several residents moved to the new site. But only five resident families and two seasoned homes resided in the New Webster. The church used the community building. Fire destroyed the convenience store and bait shop resulting in it closing in 1997. The last high school graduation was in 1963, with the grade school transferring to Stockton in 1969. Rooks County is named in honor of Private John C. Rooks of the 11<sup>th</sup> Kansas Infantry who died at the Battle of Prairie Grove during the Civil War near Fayetteville, Arkansas. The Rooks County Courthouse (Figure 4) is located in Stockton, the County Seat.



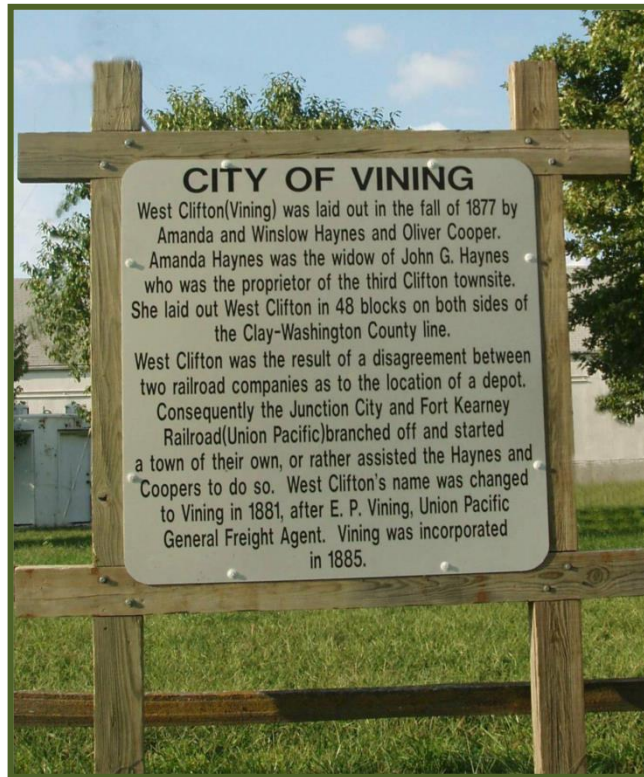
Figure 3  
Post Card Webster, Kans. 1912

The post card in Figure 3 was sent to Clifton, Kansas located in Washington and Clay Counties, founded in 1870. The original plat of land for Clifton was in 1859 and named for the surveyor "Clifton". The 1870 site was laid out by Rufus Berry in anticipation of the railroad passing through, which did arrive at the site in December 1877. There was a dispute about the town sites as West Clifton was called Vining and had been laid out in the fall of 1877 by Amanda and Winslow Haynes along with Oliver Cooper. West Clifton was a result of a disagreement between the railroad companies for a railroad depot. That is when the Jefferson City and Fort Kearney (Union Pacific) branched off creating a town of their own and assisted the Haynes and Coopers. What was known as West Clifton eventually changed to Vining in 1881 named after a Union Pacific Freight Agent, E. P. Vining. A historical type marked is located in Vining outlining the development of the two towns.

The Post Office in Clifton, Washington County was opened August 26, 1862 and is still open. No Vining Post Office issued in Washington County. The Vining Post Office was in Clay County and started out as Mulberry on April 24, 1869 and changed to Riverdale November 30, 1869 and to Lookout September 27, 1875 and from Lookout to Riverdale again April 23, 1877 and then to Vining March 21, 1881 and closed August 31, 1955. Today both towns have their own City Council. The dividing line is called Parallel Street, North Parallel is in Washington County and South Parallel is in Clay County. If you were to visit Vining you can locate a memorial stone identifying where the Vining Post Office was located.

The town of Clifton was a shipping point between the three railroads as well as the benefit of providing transportation for the community.





**Figure 5**  
Vining Marker

References:

Blue Skyways website

[www.skyways.org/towns/Clifton/index.html](http://www.skyways.org/towns/Clifton/index.html)

<http://skyways.lib.ks.us/orgs/svha/history/towns/webster.htm>

Wikipedia Free Encyclopedia website

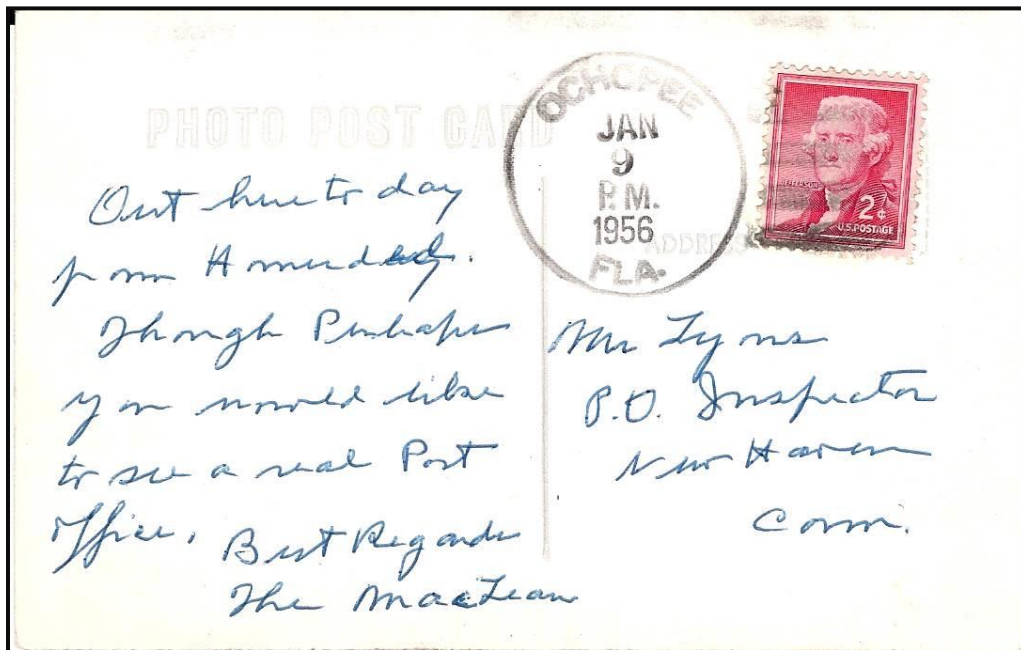
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rooks\\_County,\\_Kansas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rooks_County,_Kansas)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clifton,\\_Kansas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clifton,_Kansas)

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**Figure 1**  
Post Card postmarked Ochopee, Fl.

This Small Stuff does not relate to a small cover or some post card but rather a **small building**, better known as the Ochopee, Florida Post Office (Figures 1 & 2). Ochopee is an unincorporated community in Collier County. The community began as a small one family tomato farming area in the early 1920s. The Gaunt family started out in an Army tent and had a general store. When a visitor to the community asked what the name of the place was the owner asked what the Seminole word for farm is and he replied “O-Chopp-ee”. When the community Post Office burned down residents of the community used an old storage shed to house the mail.



**Figure 2**  
Real Photo Post Card of the Ochopee, Fla. Post Card

The Post Office is considered the smallest in the United States. It measure approximately 7 feet in front and 8 feet deep. It was formerly used to house irrigation pipes for the tomato farm, but was converted to the Post Office in 1953 and is fully staffed and functional providing service to the surrounding populations of Miccosukee and Seminole Indians. To top this off it also served as the Trailways Bus Stop. A couple of residents built shelves and cubby holes to hold the mail. When the Tamiami Trail was widened, a wheel barrow was used to move the office back to its current location.

Should the postal clerk need to use a restroom they have to close the post office for a short time and go about three miles west to find a Subway or a mile east to the Skunk Ape Research Headquarters.

The Clerk also closes the office when going to lunch. The Post Office has a delivery route that stretches across three Counties covering a trip that is 132 miles long.

Tourists that stop by always ask for a special cancellation from the small Post Office so they keep some picture post cards that are cancelled for what would serve to be mailed within the States and some that would fall in the International category.

It is interesting to note that the sender of the post card has addressed it to the Post Office Inspector in New Haven, Connecticut, commenting that he might like to see a real Post Office. The recipient may be a relative or friend of the sender. Also please note the Trailways Bus Depot sign to the left of the Post Office.

As some of you may recall back in the *Wichita Stamp Club Newsletter*, 75(7), p. 12, July 2007 an article titled "Now That's Interesting!! No. 1" was about a California Post Office located in De Luz, San Diego County who laid claim as the "Smallest Complete Post Office In The World". The cover was postmarked Aug. 29, 1940. Since then in 1953 the Ochopee, Florida now lays claim to that honor. One individual commented that you take one step inside and you are at the counter and across the counter is Postmaster Watson whose workspace is not much bigger than her chair. One customer inside is comfortable, but if another person went in they'd certainly be cramped. And, forget three or more!!!

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