Wichita Stamp Club Newsletter
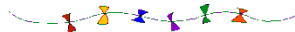
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Editor

"Go Fly A Stamp"

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# TRAVEL KANSAS—NORTH TO SOUTH—EAST TO WEST by Neal E. Danielson
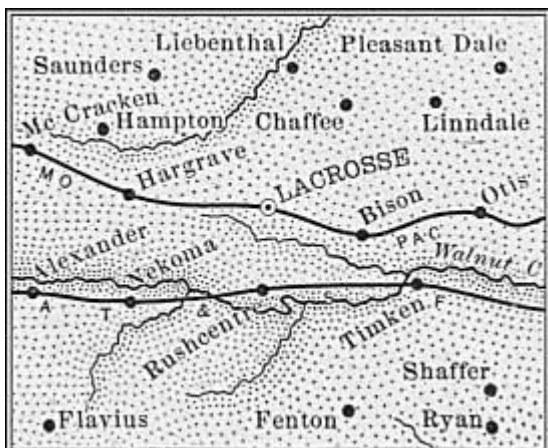
Figure 1
Rush Co. Railroad Map ca1899
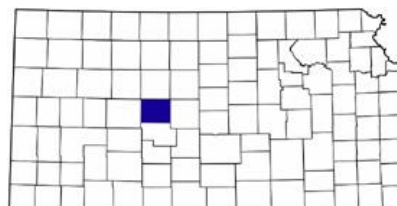
Figure 2
Rush County

    Travel Kansas—Otis located in Rush County, Kansas (Figures 1 & 2). The settlement was founded in 1886 by Major E/. C. Moderwell, an investor in the Missouri Pacific Railroad, from Salina, Kansas. The railroad had previously indicated that their plans for a westward railroad would travel through the territory that would become Otis. The settlement became known as Otis, named after Mr. Moderwell son. When the streets were laid out names were given to them of the founder's children.

    The Missouri Pacific Railroad constructed a depot and station house. Mr. Moderwell donated land where the new grade school was built and remains so today. The post office opened in Otis, Kansas August 12, 1887 and William Stelter was appointed operating officer and then appointed postmaster on November 30, 1887 and would serve until March 3, 1894 when his wife Mary Stelter became postmaster. The post office and is still operating today but was converted to a remotely operated post office under the postmaster in Lacrosse effective May 3, 2014.. Our Kansas cover from Otis (Figure 3) is franked with a 1 ½ ¢ stamp (Scott #805) of Martha Washington and tied to the cover with a killer #1 cancel postmarked from Otis, Kans. Dec. 19, 1939 and sent to an individual in Viola, Kansas. The postmaster in Otis at the time was Edison Brack who was appointed postmaster June 23, 1938 and served until July 31, 1953.
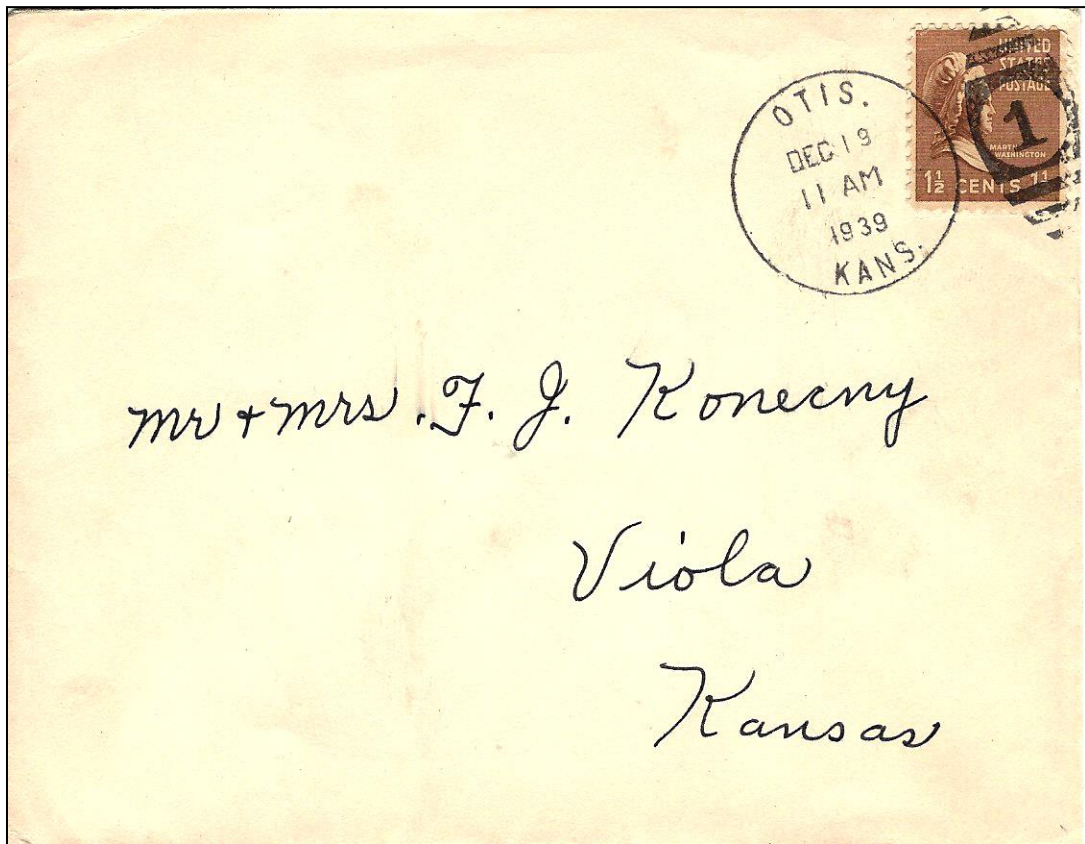
Figure 3
Otis, Kansas Cover 1939

Viola, Kansas is located in Sedgwick County. The town was founded by the Englewood branch of the Santa Fe Railroad that was extended to this point. The first post office was established as Peotone in 1877 but was changed to Viola in 1899.

The town of Otis began to expand as new businesses established themselves and by 1910 the town had a bank, telegraph and express office, along with a couple of churches; the Methodists constructed their sanctuary in 1895 after having church services in the school house and this was followed by the Trinity Lutheran Church that was constructed by families that immigrated to the territory from Russia. A cigar factory maintained production facility for several years.

When the oil and natural gas were drilled in 1928 the town boomed with around 50 oil and gas wells that brought the economy of the town up and the townspeople prospered from the wells. The natural gas found in the area was such that the Otis Helium Plant became a reality in 1943 constructed by the United States Government and before long an entire community was built around the plant to house the plants employees (Figure 4). Unfortunately the plant failed to meet expectation and the plant closed resulting in the dismantling of the facility and the homes sold and moved elsewhere. This didn't stop George Angle from constructing the Kansas Refined Helium plant in 1962. A contract was let to a Sultzer Swiss Company and Messer-Grieshiem of Germany who built the world's first helium liquefier in Otis. The facility was sold to Linde Cryogenics in 1981 and has expanded to twice the size of the original plant.

Figure 4
Otis Helium Plant

A drive around the old town of Otis reveals several building that have not seen any activity for many years. The downtown main street (Figure 5) still has some activity and has been maintained in fair condition, even though some businesses has been long gone. An old service station appears to not have had any automobiles fill up for many years as most of it is boarded up (Figure 6).

Figure 5
Otis Main Street

Figure 6
Otis Service Station

TRANSPACIFIC AIRWAYS-POSTAL HISTORY by Neal E. Danielson

Figure 1
#C20 AirMail

Figure 2
Martin M-130 Seaplane

The U. S. Post Office Department made postal history along with Glenn L. Martin Company of Baltimore, Maryland and Pan American Airways with the inauguration of the first airmail across the Pacific Ocean on November 22, 1935. The U. S. Post Office issued a 25¢ stamp on the same day (Scott #C20) to mark the event (Figure 1). The stamp depicts a four-engine Martin M-130 seaplane (Figure 2) that would be used for this first ever event. Air mail and air travel was in its infant stage and the stamp as well as the event was amazing. This stamp design was the first to ever include the issue date as part of the stamp "November 1935". The stamp design also includes the rising sun over the ocean with a Chinese Junk and an Ocean Liner. The flight would depart from San Francisco then to Hawaii, Guam and Manila Philippines, thus the stamp depicts the U. S. Shield and the Philippines Shield. The 25¢ airmail stamp satisfied the rate for mail sent on one leg of the Trans-Pacific flight, thus San Francisco to Hawaii (25¢); Hawaii to Guam (25¢); and Guam to Manila, Philippines (25¢) or three 25¢ stamps or 75¢ for the entire flight. There were approximately 110,000 covers that were carried aboard the first ever flight.

Two years later the air mail service was expanded to Hang Kong and China. The U. S. Post Office issued two additional stamps on February 15, 1937 for the Transpacific issues, a 20¢ green stamp (Scott #C21) that depicts the same design minus the "November 1935" date (Figure 3) and a carmine 50¢ stamp (Scott #C22) with the same design minus the date (Figure 4). The series of stamps ended up being nicknamed the "China Clippers" as well as the Martin M-130 given the nickname "China Clipper".

Figure 3
#C21 AirMail

Figure 4
#C22 AirMail

The first Transpacific commercial passenger airliner operated by Pan American Airways' a Martin M-130, nicknamed the "China Clipper" departed San Francisco Bay, California area carrying seven paying passengers on 21 April 1937 and proceeded westward across the Pacific Ocean by way of Hawaii, Midway Island, Guam, Manila, Macau and finally Hong Kong. An Event Cover (Figure 5) is a Transpacific Air Mail cover that was carried on this inaugural flight. The Event Cover is franked with a block of four Scott #C21 AirMail stamps to cover the rate to Hong Kong and is tied to the cover with a four-bar circular-date-of from San Francisco. Calif. on Apr 21, 1937. The cover carries a cachet denoting 'Frist Flight'—San Francisco to Hong Kong'. The cover is addressed to an individual in Aldan, Delaware County, Pennsylvania. A back circular date stamp (Figure 6) denoting the arrival of the cover from Victoria Hong Kong dated April 28, 1937 a seven day trip by the "China Clipper".

Figure 5
Trans-Pacific Air Mail Cover 1937

Figure 6
Back Cancel 28 Ap 37

The "China Clipper" received a coat of Olive Drab paint with a large American Flag stenciled just below the cockpit windows. Although the seaplane was nicknamed the "China Clipper" the aircraft Pan American crew nicknamed it "Sweet Sixteen" to go along with the seaplane's registration number NC14716. Figure 7 is a photograph taken by the media depicting the "Martin M-130 China Clipper over Macau in 1937. The interior of the M-130 Martin would not pass in this day an age as can be seen in a couple of photos in Figure 8.

Figure 7
Martin M-130 China Cliver over Macau

Figure 8
Interior of an M-130 Martin seaplane

Aldan, Delaware County, Pennsylvania has a vivid history dating back several years. The borough was originally named Adamsford because of John Adams, a Philadelphia Lawyer and Developer at the time settled the land in 1892. When the borough decided to become an incorporated community they named it Aldan after a town in Russia. Even the railroad station's Post Office Box remained Adamsford until the borough was firmly established. The residents that migrated to the community would have to build a strong foundation to survive in those days. They were not look for a viable community but rather a place to call a home away from home, thus castles were cropping up all over the place that had servants to run the place. Women were not allowed to vote nor hold public office but they undoubtable have a major impact on the borough as most of the high dollar property was owned by women. The African-Americans were usually in the business of being servants, but they had a great relationship with the property owners and lived in harmony which was unusual in those times.

Schools were constructed and formally opened in 1895 with numerous students ranging from the age of six to thirteen. Junior High School became popular and one opened in Aldan in the early 1930s. The residents of the borough considered the community an oasis and as businesses began to move into the area the residents petitioned to limit industrial and commercial properties to the fringes of the borough.. In July 1915 the Aldan Union Church was established giving the borough residents the spiritual guidance and the much needed support to the community with its various organizations, this can still be seen today in the community, with Nativity during Christmas season and help with programs that assist the unemployed and destitute. Live theater became a reality in the borough in 1910. Early on most of the plays were those that engaged the audience for fun activities, called the "Funsters". Serious theater would follow when they joined with the Colonial Playhouse in the 1940.

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

This is the 62nd 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.

Figure 1
Small Stuff Fayetteville, Ark.

This Small Stuff cover comes to you from Fayetteville, Arkansas by way of Tulsa, Oklahoma (Figure 1). The cover measures 3 9/16 inches by 2 5/16 inches and is franked with a 3¢ Statue of Liberty stamp (Scott #1035) and tied to the cover with a seven-wavy line circular date stamp postmarked from Fayetteville, Ark on Sep 24 1956. Based on the small size of the cover; it more than likely contained a birth announcement or an invitation to a birthday part of other special event.

Fayetteville is the County Seat of Washington County located in the northwestern part of the State of Arkansas. It is home to the University of Arkansas founded in 1871 and their notorious football team "The Arkansas Razorbacks" (Figure 2) as well as their basketball and baseball teams. In 1834 the Cane Hill College was established in Fayetville and remained in operation until 1891; the Arkansas College was established after the Cane Hill College. Fayetteville was named after a city in Tennessee with the same name and where many of the early settlers came from. The city was incorporated on November 3, 1836 and was re-chartered in 1867.

Figure 2
Arkansas Razorbacks Stadium

Fayetteville initially began as Washington in 1828 by George McGareah and he began constructing a courthouse and later in that same year Washington County was established. Washington County was part of a treaty signed in 1817 with the Cherokee Territory. When the courthouse was completed in 1829 it also contained the post office. The Postmaster, Larkin Newton decided to name the town Fayetteville in order not to be confused with a town in Hempstead County with the same name. The town began to grow with the first store opening by John Nye. The Chief Justice of the Arkansas Supreme Court, David Walker built a double log cabin in 1832. Even the second Governor of Arkansas, Archibald Yell constructed a home in 1822 and called it "Waxhow".   Burnside House and the Onstott House were the first hotels built in Fayetteville. In 1858 the Butterfield Overland Mail route was established through Washington County along with other parts of the State.

During the Civil War the town government was suspended and not restarted until 1867. One of the homes in Fayetteville served as Union Headquarters when action took place in Fayetteville and is now a museum. The Battle of Pea Ridge, under the command of Union General Samuel Ryan Curtis on Feb. 18, 1862 in the northeast of Fayetteville. Wounded soldiers from the Battle of Prairie Grove were housed in Fayetteville in December of 1862. Other Civil War Battles fought in Fayetteville area were the Battle of Fayetteville and the Battle of Cane Hill. Fayetteville was besieged by the Confederate Army in April 1863 and held the city against cannon fire and Calvary attacks. The headquarters building sustained damage but was eventually restored.

Fayetteville is well known for its large number of historic buildings and places. One such struicture is located in the Mount Nord Historic District, the Pritchard House built in 1900 (Figure 3).

Figure 3
Pritchard House