

# The Post Offices of El Dorado County

by Doug Noble



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## Table of Contents

<i>Alabaster</i> ..... 6	<i>Grizzly Flats</i> ..... 17	<i>Pomins</i> ..... 26
<i>Al Tahoe</i> ..... 6	<i>Hitchcock Ranch</i> ..... 17	<i>Quintette</i> ..... 26
<i>Aukum</i> ..... 6	<i>Hulfish</i> ..... 17	<i>Randall</i> ..... 27
<i>Aurum City</i> ..... 6	<i>Indian Diggings</i> ..... 17	<i>Rescue</i> ..... 27
<i>Bijou</i> ..... 7	<i>Jay Hawk</i> ..... 18	<i>Ringgold</i> ..... 27
<i>Bottle Hill</i> ..... 7	<i>Job's Store</i> ..... 18	<i>Riverton</i> ..... 28
<i>Camino</i> ..... 7	<i>Josephine</i> ..... 18	<i>Rowland</i> ..... 28
<i>Camp Richardson</i> ..... 7	<i>Jurgens</i> ..... 18	<i>Rubicon</i> ..... 28
<i>Camp Sacramento</i> ..... 8	<i>Kelsey</i> ..... 19	<i>Rubicon Lodge</i> ..... 29
<i>Canyon</i> ..... 9	<i>Kyburz</i> ..... 19	<i>St. Lawrenceburgh</i> ..... 29
<i>Cedarville</i> ..... 9	<i>Lake Bigler</i> ..... 19	<i>Salmon Falls</i> ..... 29
<i>Clarksville</i> ..... 9	<i>Lake Kirkwood</i> ..... 20	<i>Shingle Spring</i> ..... 29
<i>Cold Spring</i> ..... 9	<i>Lake Valley</i> ..... 20	<i>Slatington</i> ..... 30
<i>Coloma</i> ..... 10	<i>Latrobe</i> ..... 20	<i>Sportsmans Hall</i> ..... 30
<i>Cool</i> ..... 11	<i>Lava</i> ..... 21	<i>Stateline</i> ..... 30
<i>Culloma</i> ..... 11	<i>Little Norway</i> ..... 21	<i>Sunbeam</i> ..... 30
<i>Diamond Spring(s)</i> ..... 11	<i>Lotus</i> ..... 21	<i>Taho</i> ..... 31
<i>Duroc</i> ..... 11	<i>Louisville</i> ..... 21	<i>Tahoe Keyes</i> ..... 31
<i>Echo</i> ..... 12	<i>Lover's Leap</i> ..... 21	<i>Tahoe Paradise</i> ..... 31
<i>El Dorado</i> ..... 12	<i>Macksville</i> ..... 22	<i>Tahoe Valley</i> ..... 31
<i>El Dorado Hills</i> ..... 12	<i>Meeks Bay</i> ..... 22	<i>Tallac</i> ..... 31
<i>El Dorado Mills</i> ..... 13	<i>Mendon</i> ..... 22	<i>Twin Bridges</i> ..... 32
<i>El Dorado Ranch</i> ..... 13	<i>Meyers</i> ..... 22	<i>Unionville</i> ..... 32
<i>Emerald Bay</i> ..... 13	<i>Mosquito</i> ..... 23	<i>Uno</i> ..... 32
<i>Fair Play</i> ..... 13	<i>Mt. Aukum</i> ..... 23	<i>Urban</i> ..... 33
<i>Fallen Leaf</i> ..... 14	<i>Mud Spring</i> ..... 23	<i>Vade</i> ..... 33
<i>Fiddletown</i> ..... 14	<i>Nashville</i> ..... 24	<i>Virner</i> ..... 33
<i>Fyffe</i> ..... 14	<i>Newtown</i> ..... 24	<i>Volcanoville</i> ..... 34
<i>Garden Valley</i> ..... 14	<i>Omo Ranch</i> ..... 24	<i>Yanks Station</i> ..... 34
<i>Georgetown</i> ..... 15	<i>Pacific (House)</i> ..... 24	<i>Yeomet</i> ..... 34
<i>Glen Alpine</i> ..... 15	<i>Park</i> ..... 25	<i>Youngs</i> ..... 35
<i>Golden</i> ..... 15	<i>Pilot Hill</i> ..... 25	<i>Zodok</i> ..... 35
<i>Granite Hill</i> ..... 16	<i>Pino Grande</i> ..... 25	<i>Sources</i> ..... 35
<i>Green Springs</i> ..... 16	<i>Placerville</i> ..... 25	<i>Doug Noble</i> ..... 35
<i>Green Valley</i> ..... 16	<i>Pleasant Valley</i> ..... 26	
<i>Greenwood</i> ..... 16	<i>Pollock Pines</i> ..... 26	

## **POST OFFICES OF EL DORADO COUNTY**

Prior to both the Gold Rush and the ceding of California to the United States by Mexico in early 1848, the mail system in California consisted of numerous "unofficial" post offices and a simple, but efficient, military mail delivery system. Following these two events, the Postmaster General of the United States realized the immediate need for an efficient system of government operated post offices in California and sent a special agent to establish them, wherever the agent might feel they were needed.

Special Agent William Van Voorhees was the first of these men and was instructed to proceed to California (San Francisco) and establish post offices at San Diego, San Pedro, Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo and Monterey enroute. Had the ship carrying him from Panama to San Francisco not run short of coal it probably would not have made any of the intermediate stops he needed, but it did make one - at Monterey. There, on February 23, 1849, the first official US Post Office on the west coast was established with Captain William G. Marcy serving as its first postmaster, his appointment having been confirmed by Washington in advance the previous November. Less than a week later, on February 28, 1849, Van Voorhees appointed Mr. C. L. Rose to open and distribute the mail in San Francisco, pending arrival of Mr. Stephen J. Dallas, who, like Captain Marcy, had been previously confirmed as postmaster. Mr. Dallas did not take the job, so on April 1, 1849, Van Voorhees appointed Colonel John W. Geary as postmaster. On June 4 of the same year, Geary was replaced by Jacob B. Moore.

For some unknown reason, on June 15, 1849 the Postmaster General replaced Van Voorhees with another special agent, R. T. P. Allen. Like Van Voorhees, he carried on the job of establishing the postal system in California, all the time attempting to overcome what it turned out was a list of serious problems faced by his predecessor. First of all, the post offices were ordered to pay expenses out of receipts, which often didn't work and the salaries offered postmasters and clerks was less than that earned by an unskilled laborer. Secondly, transportation for the mail was hard to find and, when found, very expensive. All in all, the process of establishing post offices and appointing postmasters was not the simple job the special agents thought it would be.

As an example, when the need for a new post office was established by the special agent, he would authorize it and try to find a postmaster, who, if he was successful, often turned out to be the owner of a business in the same building where the post office would be located - someone who knew the advantage of having the entire population of the area passing through his or her business to get the mail. The postmaster would be appointed and assume office, however, this was just the start of a long process. The agent would then request confirmation of the post office and postmaster from the Postmaster General in Washington D.C. That, including getting the message there and back by ship, could take many months or even longer, depending upon the route the message took and the amount of bureaucratic red tape involved. Because the population of a California community could grow and decline in just a few months a new post office could easily be established and discontinued before it was even officially open. Worse yet, postmasters were political appointees and, depending how the fickle winds of politics in the nation's capitol blew, the newly appointed postmaster might find that after nearly a year of working at the job, he or she was not confirmed at all and someone else was. Needless to say, this did not make the special agent's job any easier. Fortunately, in 1853 the Postmaster General had this changed so that a Post Office did not open and an appointed Postmaster did not take office until confirmed. However, as in most bureaucracies, the former practice continued for some time thereafter.

In El Dorado County alone there were, at one time or another, over 100 post offices with some 120 different names ranging through the alphabet from Alabaster to Zodok. Some had a very short life and some, like Coloma, the first post office in El Dorado County, continue to this day. Then there are a few, like Job's Store, Lake Bigler and Macksville, that apparently never even existed at all, although mentioned in history books from the period. Because of this confusing information, these are often referred to as phantom post offices. Other post offices, like Cedarville, El Dorado Ranch and El Dorado Mills, actually existed but have an uncertain location. These are often referred to as ghost post offices.

Because a majority of the early population of El Dorado County was made up of miners - a transient group if there ever was one - many post offices were established and then, moved, discontinued (closed) and even reestablished, all in a very short period of time. If someone found gold in a different place over the mountain or up or down the river, the whole town might move overnight to the new location, always believing that there they would finally strike it rich. In order to serve the miners, the local post office often just picked up and moved with them. If there was an existing post office at the new location, the two were combined. If none existed, the relocated post office simply reopened, sometimes changing its name and sometimes not. In fact, occasionally the name changed even when the post office didn't move.

A review of the post offices provides an interesting view of the history of El Dorado County and the movement of its residents over the past century and a half.

**ALABASTER:** Named for the limestone in the area, this post office was established on March 23, 1883, having been moved to a location on the western edge of El Dorado County from Rattlesnake (Bar) in Placer County, where it was first established on November 1, 1854 with Thomas Woods as postmaster. The first postmaster at the Alabaster Post Office was William E. Donahoo. On July 10, 1888, the post office was closed and moved to Newcastle in Placer County. Most of the Alabaster area is under water and a part of Folsom Lake Recreation Area.

**AL TAHOE:** Located at the south end of Lake Tahoe, two miles west of Bijou, the name of this post office was derived from two things, the name of the lake and the diminutive of the first postmaster's given name - Almerin R. Sprague. It was first established on August 11, 1908 and changed to a branch of the Bijou Post Office on October 12, 1963. On August 10, 1964 it was made an Independent Branch of Bijou and on March 24, 1967, after the incorporation of the City of South Lake Tahoe, it became a Station of the South Lake Tahoe Post Office.

**AUKUM:** This post office in the southern part of El Dorado County was established on September 23, 1895 and discontinued on August 31, 1914, the mail then being directed to the post office in the town of Uno. On April 9, 1920 the Uno Post Office was discontinued and the mail moved back to Aukum. Because much of the mail destined for Aukum went instead to Auburn, the U.S. Post Office Department officially changed the name of this post office to its present Mt. Aukum on October 28, 1961. The location for this town named for the nearby peak is officially listed as five miles north of Oleta, the original name of the post office in Fiddletown, Amador County. Aukum, often spelled Aurum, Oakum or Orcum, is apparently derived from a Miwok word Ochum, one of the names they gave their dwellings. The first postmaster was Lydia A. Wrigglesworth (Wigglesworth?)

**AURUM CITY:** Named for the Latin word for "gold", Aurum City was not a city at all, but a gold camp two miles to the southeast of the townsite of El Dorado. The post office at this camp that was often spelled "Auram" on maps of the time was established on July 6, 1852 and discontinued on November 22, 1853 when it was moved to the town of El Dorado. The first postmaster at Aurum City was John S. Bostick.

**BIJOU:** This early post office was established at this town on the south end of Lake Tahoe on September 11, 1888, when it was moved here from Rowland, about one and one-half miles to the west. The Rowland Post Office had been established on June 26, 1874, and was named for Bernard F. Rowland who developed this vacation and recreation resort and it's first postmaster was Sophonia Rowland. Bijou was named for the French word for "jewel" and was originally a lumber center, before becoming a vacation resort. The Bijou Post Office was discontinued on March 24, 1967, when mail service was taken over by South Lake Tahoe Post Office. Bijou's first postmaster was Anthony W. Ransey.

**BOTTLE HILL:** There are three stories behind why this mining camp near Georgetown, where a post office was established on May 28, 1855, was named Bottle Hill or Bottle Hill Diggings. The first story contends that some miners paused here in 1849 while searching for gold and saw a bottle under a bush. Picking it up, they found it was full of whiskey, which they soon consumed. Believing it was an omen, they went to mining on the hill, starting this camp four miles north of Georgetown. The second story mentions some miners coming across a pile of bottles at this location. The third, and most likely story, says that the town was named after a nearby bottle shaped hill in the Hornblende Mountains. The Bottle Hill Post Office, where Samuel M. Jamison had been the first postmaster, was discontinued on August 17, 1859 and moved to Georgetown.

**CAMINO:** The Camino Post Office, named for the Spanish word for road, was established on June 22, 1904. The community, seven miles to the east of Placerville, was at one time was known as Seven Mile House, although there was no post office by that name. The Camino Post Office, which is still in operation, is listed as being four miles east of Smith's Flat and two miles west of Fyffe (believed to be Sportsman's Hall, although the distances are incorrect). The first postmaster for Camino was Margaret S. Hoff.

**CAMP RICHARDSON:** This summer or seasonal post office, located at the south end of Lake Tahoe, was named after the first postmaster, Alonzo L. Richardson and has a confusing history involving other post offices and name changes.

Originally, there was a post office called Lake Valley. It was officially established on September 17, 1861; however, the August 2, 1858 issue of the Sacramento Union reports a Lake Valley Post Office with Martin Smith serving as postmaster. It should be noted that this same issue of the Union listed another Tahoe basin post office, Job's Store, with Mosses Job as postmaster and there is no official record of such a post office ever existing. The "official" Lake Valley Post Office, which was at the location of the Pioneer Stage Line Company station known as "Yank's Station", was discontinued on December 26, 1863 when its name was changed to Taho, a corruption of the Washoe Indian word "tahooee" meaning "much water", with Underhill Van Wagner as its first postmaster.

The Taho Post Office was discontinued on December 20, 1870 when its name was changed to Tallac, an Indian word meaning "large mountain", and Ephraim Clement designated as the postmaster. A few months later, on February 15, 1871, the name of the post office was changed back to Lake Valley.

A Tallac Post Office was reestablished, apparently at a different location, on March 12, 1875 and on November 13, 1883, move one-half mile to the east. On March 10, 1888 the post office was moved back again, one-half mile to the west. Service at the Tallac Post Office ended on June 16, 1927 when its name was changed to Camp Richardson.

The Camp Richardson Post Office was discontinued on October 9, 1964. It was reestablished as an Independent Rural Station of Tahoe Valley on June 1, 1965 and became a Rural Branch of South Lake Tahoe on March 24, 1967. It was discontinued on January 15, 1973.

**CAMP SACRAMENTO:** This summer or seasonal post office was first established at this location in the American River Canyon, twelve miles east of Kyburz and three miles southwest of Vade (Phillips), on June 17, 1929 with Pearl Chapell as postmaster. Originally it was at Lover's Leap, one mile to the west, before being moved to this location.

The Lover's Leap Post Office, named for the legend of an Indian girl who plunged from the adjacent 1,285 foot high rock because here love was unrequited, was



established on October 30, 1919 with Annie M. Scherrer as the postmaster. As previously mentioned it was discontinued in mid-1929 and moved to Camp Sacramento.

The Camp Sacramento Post Office was discontinued on October 31, 1940 and the mail moved to Kyburz.

**CANYON:** The Canyon Post Office was located five miles to the southeast of Shingle Springs, and named for its location on Big Canyon Creek, once a trading center for the mines in the area. It was established on August 27, 1897 with William A. Green as postmaster. Less than nine years later, on May 14, 1906, the post office was discontinued and the mail moved to the Shingle Springs Post Office.

**CEDARVILLE:** The Cedarville Post Office was established on November 22, 1853, probably seven miles northwest of Indian Diggings where the road crosses Cedar Creek. The exact location is unknown as there is no record of that in the archives of the Post Office Department in Washington, D.C. It was discontinued on November 12, 1863 and the mail probably moved to Indian Diggings. Because of the lack of solid information, the Cedarville Post Office is often called a "ghost post office." The first postmaster was Joseph M. Hawley.

**CLARKSVILLE:** The post office at this early mining location on the main east-west immigrant road, near the western edge of El Dorado County (25 miles east of Sacramento and 7 miles west of Shingle Springs), was established on July 14, 1855. This post office was discontinued on August 30, 1924 and then reestablished a short time later on February 24, 1927. On May 31, 1934, service was discontinued and the mail moved to Folsom City. The first postmaster was David Cummings.

**COLD SPRING:** This early post office at a location six miles northwest of Placerville, which is now called Cold Springs, was established prior to January 21, 1852, that being the day that its first postmaster, John M. Goetschines, was finally confirmed by the Postmaster General in Washington, D.C. Like many early mining camps, this one soon became a ghost town and on June 11, 1874 the post office was moved to the southeast and renamed Granite Hill with William P. Vernon serving as the Granite Hill Post Office's first postmaster.

On February 29, 1908 service at the Granite Hill Post Office would be discontinued and the mail moved five miles north to the Coloma Post Office.

**COLOMA:** Jacob (John) T. Little came to California (Coloma) in 1849 and established one of the first stores for general merchandise. The first post office was operated out of Mr. Little's store, with him serving as the first of twenty-five postmasters that would serve this post office over the next 150 years. It was officially registered with the Post Office Department in Washington, D.C. on November 8, 1849, however, the earliest known postmark from Coloma bears a manuscript marking of October 20, 1849, proof that Coloma had a post office established earlier than the official record (Special Agent Allen's letter of August 29, 1849 places him at the site in the latter part of June or first part of July of 1849 when he established the post office). The early postmarks spelled Coloma as "Culloma" and added "Alta Cal", for Alta California. After California was admitted as a state in 1850, the "Alta" was no longer used.

The *Placer Herald* for 1853 indicated that Coloma was then the principal post office in California. There were six pony expresses running between Coloma and surrounding mines to deliver semi-monthly arriving mail, charging one dollar per letter for delivery. The *Empire County Argus* also reported on April 15, 1854 that over 4000 letters and packages left the Coloma Post Office for the Atlantic States. The *Argus* periodically published a list of names of people who had letters waiting unclaimed at the post office. This list frequently numbered several hundred names. As a result wagon loads of unclaimed letters were sent to the Dead Letter Office in San Francisco.

Many of the post offices in gold rush towns discontinued service and were closed as the miners and prospectors moved on to new gold fields. They were reopened as people came back to the areas and the towns became viable again. The Coloma Post Office has never closed. The service has remained uninterrupted since 1849, when it was the first post office in what would become El Dorado County.

Mr. Little's store, and the first post office, was located on the north side of the river, across from the present town. Subsequently the office was located in various buildings around Coloma and is currently on Main Street (Highway 29) in the heart of Marshall Gold Discovery State Park.

A "First Day Cover" with a stamp celebrating the centennial of the discovery of gold was postmarked and issued at the Coloma Post Office on January 24, 1948. On November 8, 1999, a special cancellation was applied to letters to celebrate the sesquicentennial of this historic post office.

**COOL:** There are two schools of thought about how this community in Cave Valley, six miles south of Auburn and at the northern intersection of Highways 49 and 193, received its name. Some say it was named for P. Y. Cool, an early miner, while others insist it simply was a reference to the weather. The Cool Post Office was established on Oct. 20, 1885, with Henrietta Lewis serving as the first postmaster. It remains in operation to this day.

**CULLOMA:** This is the name first given the Coloma Post Office. The name is derived from the name of a group of Native Americans who had a village in the valley.

**DIAMOND SPRING / DIAMOND SPRINGS:** This early mining location is most likely named for the crystal clear spring at this important intersection of the Carson Immigrant Trail with the main north-south road through the Mother Lode (now Highway 49). However, some believe it was named for the diamond like, clear quartz crystals found there.

Four miles south of Placerville, the post office was established here on Oct. 17, 1853 with Chauncy N. Noteware as the first postmaster. Since the town was alternatively known as Diamond Spring and Diamond Springs over the years, on July 1, 1950, the Post Office Department officially changed the name to Diamond Springs, at least for post office purposes.

This post office has been in continuous operation since it was first opened and, during the short life of the Pony Express, served as a station for it.

**DUROC:** This post office was originally known as El Dorado Ranch. El Dorado Ranch post office was located half way between Mud Springs (El Dorado) and Clarksville, being eight miles from each on the main east-west immigrant road, according to the application filed in Washington, D.C., although the exact location is unknown (a "ghost" post office). The proposed name for the post office established at this location on June 19, 1857 was Deer Creek, although El Dorado Ranch ended up

being the actual name. Lyman A. Hoyt was the first postmaster and on Sept. 14, 1858 the name of the post office was changed to DuRoc.

The first postmaster at the DuRoc (later Duroc and even later Durock) Post Office was Theron Foster. The name most likely comes from the name of a French family who owned the Du Roc House, a stop on this famous immigrant trail. On Nov. 23, 1864, about same the time the railroad reached Shingle Springs and the traffic on the road decreased substantially, the post office closed. A portion of the old highway from Shingle Springs to Cameron Park still has the name Durock.

**ECHO:** This post office serving the vacation resort area at Echo Lake was reported as being ten miles west of Lake Valley and eleven miles east of Slippery Ford. It was established on Aug. 16, 1888 with Ollie Watson as the first postmaster, and discontinued on Dec. 15, 1910. Only a month later, on Jan. 28, 1911 it was reestablished. It was again discontinued on Oct. 31, 1913. On Dec. 11, 1926 it was reestablished and renamed Echo Lake Post Office. On Jan. 31, 1961 it became a rural station of the Vade (Phillips) Post Office. On Sept. 2, 1961 it was changed to a rural station of the Little Norway Post Office. It was again discontinued on Jan. 15, 1973, but reestablished on June 1 of that year, again as a rural station of the Little Norway Post Office. In 1974 it was dropped as a rural station by the Post Office Department.

**EL DORADO:** This early post office was originally known as Mud Spring, a name given this location because the thousands of immigrants traveling along this part of the immigrant trail watered their stock here, muddying the spring and the surrounding land.

The Mud Spring Post Office was established prior to Nov. 6, 1851, the date it was approved in Washington, D.C. Darwin Chase was the first postmaster. On Dec. 15, 1855, the name of the post office was changed to El Dorado with George W. Critchfield serving as its first postmaster. Named after the Spanish word for "The Gilded One", because of the number of rich gold mines in the area, the El Dorado Post Office has continuously operated since it was first established.

**EL DORADO HILLS:** The post office at this real estate development was established on Sept. 16, 1962 as an independent rural station of the Folsom Post

Office. As the population in the area increased, in 1966 it was upgraded to a branch of the Folsom Post Office and ultimately assigned its own zip code.

**EL DORADO MILLS:** This post office was established on May 6, 1891 at an unknown location, according to the Post Office Department archives. The postmaster refused the appointment and the post office was discontinued on Sept. 29 of the same year.

**EL DORADO RANCH:** This was the original name for the post office located eight miles west of the townsite of El Dorado and eight miles east of Clarksville. It was established on June 19, 1857, with Lyman A. Hoyt serving as the first postmaster. This post office was discontinued on Sept. 14, 1858, when its name was changed to DuRoc.

Service at the DuRoc, later Duroc and then Durock, Post Office, where Theron Foster was the first postmaster, was discontinued on Nov. 23, 1864. Service at the nearby Shingle Spring Post Office had been discontinued on Mar. 30, 1855, but it would be reestablished on October 10, 1865, with an "s" added to spring, and serve this area.

**EMERALD BAY:** This Lake Tahoe post office was named for the nearby bay in the lake and was established on Dec. 17, 1888 with Lucy N. Kirby as its first postmaster. On Aug. 28, 1899, it was moved one mile to the northeast, to a location reported as being seventeen miles south of Tahoe City. On Feb. 28, 1959, service at this post office was discontinued and the mail moved to the summer post office at Homewood, in Placer County.

**FAIR PLAY:** This post office was established on Apr. 13, 1860, with George Merkindollar as its first postmaster. The post office derived its name from the "play fair" rule of conduct of the miners who founded the town itself. Located eight miles south of Pleasant Valley and seven miles west of Mendon (also known as Brownsville), according to the archives of the Post Office Department, it was active until Feb. 15, 1944, when the mail was moved a few miles north to the post office at Young's.

The Young's Post Office was located one mile north of Somerset at a vacation resort on the North Fork of the Cosumnes River owned by Morgan W. Young. It was established on Mar. 7, 1924, with Morgan W. Young as postmaster, and discontinued

on Aug. 1, 1950 when it was moved one mile south and renamed the Somerset Post Office.

The Somerset Post Office was established on Aug. 1, 1950. Aimee Hicks was appointed as the first postmaster. It is still an operating post office.

**FALLEN LEAF:** Named for the lake by that name, which resembles a leaf which has fallen to the ground, this summer post office was established on May 13, 1908 to serve a vacation and recreational community, which has since become a year-round, residential area in the Lake Tahoe basin. William W. Price was the first postmaster. On May 19, 1967, it was changed to a rural branch of the South Lake Tahoe Post Office.

**FIDDLETOWN:** This post office, at an 1849 mining camp, was established on Dec. 13, 1853 with Dennis Townsend as its first postmaster. The name, which is memorialized in Bret Harte's "An Episode of Fiddletown", was named for the founding Missouri miners who were addicted to fiddling. Located six and one-half miles northeast of the City of Plymouth, it became a part of the new county of Amador when the boundary was moved from Dry Creek to the South Fork of the Cosumnes River in 1855, a fact that the Post Office Department did not find out about until Feb. 6, 1864. On May 24, 1878 the name of the post office was changed to Oleta, and then changed back to Fiddletown on July 1, 1932. It is still an operating post office.

**FYFFE:** This post office was established on either July 24, 1882 or Aug. 16, 1882, depending on the source of the information. It was named after the operator of this summer resort located six miles south of Pacific (House) and nine and one-half miles east of Smith's Flat. Oswald Hardie was appointed as its first postmaster. Service was discontinued on Oct. 31, 1913 and the mail moved to Camino. Some records indicate that a Fyffe owned Sportsman's Hall at one time and confuse this post office with the one at famous Sportsman's Hall, which only existed for a short period during the 1860's.

**GARDEN VALLEY:** The Garden Valley Post Office was established on Dec. 16, 1852, with Thomas McConnell serving as the first postmaster. The town was often called Johnstown, but the Post Office Department decided to use the name Garden Valley because of the number of truck farms that had been established in this fertile valley four miles south of Georgetown and ten miles north of Placerville. On Dec. 20,

1853, the post office at Garden Valley was discontinued, but then reestablished less than one year later on Dec. 4, 1854. It was then discontinued on June 4, 1862 and reestablished again one decade later, on Jan. 22, 1872. It was again discontinued on Oct. 31, 1895 and reestablished just a few months later, on Jan. 27, 1896. The post office was then moved one-quarter mile to the northwest on Feb. 1, 1940. In spite of its open and closed history, it is still in operation.

**GEORGETOWN:** Unlike the opening and closing Garden Valley Post Office four miles to the south, the Georgetown Post Office opened prior to Oct. 17, 1851, the date its first postmaster, William T. Gibbs, was confirmed by the Post Office Department in Washington D.C., and has simply remained open ever since. Georgetown, which is located some twenty miles east of Auburn and fourteen miles north of Placerville, was named after either George Ehrenhaft or George Phipps, both of whom settled here in 1849. The town, which was at the western end of an alternate immigration route that connected with the main route in the American River Canyon, burned down more than once and was even moved to its present location on high ground from a canyon to the south as a protection against fire.

**GLEN ALPINE:** This post office was named for a vacation resort at the south end of Fallen Leaf Lake, six miles to the southwest of Camp Richardson. It was established on June 23, 1904 with Susan G. Pierce serving as the first postmaster. On Sep. 14, 1918, service was discontinued and then reestablished on Sept. 13, 1929, with the post office becoming a summer post office. The Glen Alpine Post Office did not open during the 1938, 1943, 1944 and 1945 seasons and service was ultimately discontinued on Sept. 10, 1947, with the mail being moved to the Camp Richardson Summer Post Office.

**GOLDEN:** This aptly named but short-lived post office was located sixteen miles to the northeast of Placerville. It was established on Oct. 13, 1923 with Miss Callie L. Golden, after whom the post office was named, serving as its first postmaster. The post office was discontinued on Apr. 30, 1926 and the mail moved to Placerville. For

the benefit of the geographers amongst you, the Golden Post Office was located in the SE 1/4 of Section 31, Township 12 North, Range 12 East, M.D.M.

**GRANITE HILL:** As mining waned and the population of the gold rush town of Cold Spring left, the post office was moved to the southeast, near a landmark known as Granite Hill and given that name. This event occurred on June 11, 1874 and William P. Vernon became the first postmaster of the renamed post office.

On February 29, 1908 service at the Granite Hill Post Office was discontinued and the mail moved five miles north to the Coloma Post Office.

**GREEN SPRINGS:** This post office, believed to be named for the lush green growth around the local spring, was established prior to July 28, 1851, the date the first postmaster, James C. Parks, was confirmed in Washington, D.C. Located on Weber Creek, eight miles southwest of Coloma and fifteen miles northeast of Mormon Island, the town was an important way station on the road to Coloma. Service at the Green Springs Post Office was discontinued on January 21, 1852 and the mail moved to the Mormon Island Post Office in Sacramento County.

**GREEN VALLEY:** This early post office was located on the Green Valley Ranch, a supply center for the local mines and also on the main route from Sacramento to Coloma, seven miles southeast of Salmon Falls and ten miles south of Lotus. Nelson Van Tassel was named the first postmaster when the post office opened on Feb. 4, 1854. On Mar. 30, 1855, this still young post office was discontinued, probably because of downturn in mining. On Sep. 12, 1865 the Green Valley Post Office was reestablished by renaming the Hitchcock Ranch Post Office, which was located on the Hitchcock Ranch, a short distance away from the Green Valley Ranch. On Dec. 12, 1908, the post office was moved one and one-half miles to the east. Then, on Oct. 14, 1911, it was discontinued and the mail moved to the post office in Rescue.

**GREENWOOD:** The Greenwood Post Office was originally the Louisville Post Office, which was established prior to July 28, 1851, the date when the first postmaster, George C. Blodgett, was confirmed by Washington, D.C. The name, Louisville, had been given to this 1848 mining town, thirteen miles east of Auburn, by the miners working here, who were from the city by that name. On Oct. 9, 1852, just a short time



after being established, the Louisville Post Office was moved and its name changed to Greenwood.

The Greenwood Post Office, like the town, was named for Caleb Greenwood and his two sons, Britain and John, who had established an early trading post at this location. C.C. Brady was the first postmaster at Greenwood. The Greenwood Post Office is still in operation.

**GRIZZLY FLATS:** This post office was established on Aug. 31, 1855 and took its colorful name from a legend of an encounter between an early prospector's pack mule and a California Grizzly Bear on a flat area eleven miles east of Somerset. James Burgess was named to serve as the first postmaster. Although the post office is officially named Grizzly Flats, the town more often shows up on early maps as Grizzly Flat, without the added "s". Unlike the California Grizzly Bear, which is now extinct, the post office is still in operation.

**HITCHCOCK RANCH:** This post office was established on Oct.9, 1860, with William Dormody serving as its first postmaster. The Hitchcock Ranch was settled in 1848 and had become a supply center for the local miners. Service at the Hitchcock Ranch Post Office was discontinued on Sep. 12, 1865 when its name was changed to the Green Valley Post Office.

**HULFISH:** This post office, with a name of unknown origin, was established on Mar. 5, 1901, at a location forty-two miles east of Georgetown. John Darrington would serve as its first, and possibly only, postmaster. On July 30, 1904 it was discontinued and the mail moved to Georgetown.

**INDIAN DIGGINGS:** This post office, four miles south of the town of Omo Ranch, in the southern portion of El Dorado County, was established on Nov. 22, 1853 with Jacob Wolf as the first postmaster. The name came from miners finding a group of Indians mining along the creek. Service at the post office was discontinued on June 15, 1869 when it was moved one and one-half miles to the northeast and the name changed to Mendon.

The Mendon Post Office had been first established on Dec. 2, 1857 with J. Edmondson as postmaster. The community was generally known as Brownsville, but Mr. Edmondson wanted to name the post office after himself. The Post Office

Department would not allow him to do that, so he rearranged some letters from his name and came up with Mendon. The Mendon Post Office was discontinued on Feb. 15, 1869 and then reestablished on June 15, 1869 when the Indian Diggings Post Office was closed and moved there. On Mar. 23, 1888, the post office was again closed and moved back to Indian Diggings. With the closing of the post office, the name Mendon was dropped and the town was again called Brownsville.

When the post office was moved back to Indian Diggings, the last "g" was dropped renaming it Indian Diggin's. The Indian Diggin's Post Office was discontinued on Nov. 30, 1935 and the mail moved to the post office at Omo Ranch.

**JAY HAWK:** This short-lived post office was named for the area which had been first settled by members of the ill-fated "Jayhawkers Party", a group of 1848 gold seekers (not from Kansas, but from Missouri, since Kansas wasn't a state yet). It was established on Aug. 29, 1860 with John S. Tipton as the first postmaster. There is no specific location for the post office in the federal archives (ghost post office), but it is known that it was about ten miles southwest of Coloma and twelve miles northeast of Folsom City. On Dec. 26, 1863 the post office was discontinued and the mail moved to Folsom City.

**JOB'S STORE:** This was a phantom post office, for which there are no official records. The Aug. 2, 1858 issue of the *Sacramento Union* erroneously reported that the Postmaster General had appointed Mosses Job as the postmaster of a post office by this name near Lake Tahoe.

**JOSEPHINE:** Located fifteen miles northeast of Georgetown, the Josephine Post Office was named for the Josephine Gold Mine, which was nearby. It was established on Aug. 12, 1895 with Jerome C. Akley serving as the first postmaster. On Oct. 31, 1917, the post office was discontinued and the mail moved to Georgetown.

**JURGENS:** Named for its first postmaster, Annie G. Jurgens, this post office was located six miles southeast of Rescue. It was established on July 1, 1903 and discontinued on the last day of December in 1914. The mail was moved to the post office at Rescue.

**KELSEY:** The Kelsey Post Office was established on Mar. 3, 1856 with John P. White as its first postmaster. It was named for two brothers, Benjamin and Samuel Kelsey, who discovered gold here in 1848. It was discontinued on Jan. 15, 1872 and then reestablished on Feb. 1, 1875. On Oct. 2, 1895, the post office was moved one-half mile to the west and, on Nov. 16, 1896, moved one-half mile to the southeast. On Mar. 3, 1903, the post office was again moved and the name changed to Slatington.

The Slatington Post Office, which was located at the top of Chili Bar Grade, six miles north of Placerville, was named for the hand-split, slate roofing shingles that were produced nearby. James McGraw was the first postmaster at Slatington. Service was discontinued on Oct. 31, 1912 and then reestablished on July 3, 1916. On Sep. 23, 1920, the post office was discontinued, moved one and one-half miles to the northeast and renamed Kelsey. The Kelsey Post Office, officially still located six miles north of Placerville, is still in operation.

**KYBURZ:** The Kyburz Post Office was established on Jan. 13, 1911 and named in honor of Samuel E. Kyburz, an 1846 pioneer. His son, Albert Kyburz, was the first postmaster. Previously, this post office had been known as Slippery Ford and Slipperyford.

The Slippery Ford Post Office was established on Nov. 21, 1861 with Powell Crosley as the first postmaster. The name came from a large flat slippery rock that made the stream crossing dangerous on this part of the road through the canyon of the South Fork of the American River (there are a couple of slippery fords along this route). Nearby was the Slippery Ford House, a popular stopping place for stages and freighters. In 1896 the name of the post office was officially changed to one word: Slipperyford. On Jan. 3, 1911, the name was changed to Kyburz. The Kyburz Post Office is still in operation.

**LAKE BIGLER:** There is no official record of a post office by this name, although there are manuscript - hand written - postmarks dated in the 1860's that read, "Lake Bigler, Calif". Lake Bigler was the controversial name given to Lake Tahoe in 1870 by the California State Legislature, although it had been unofficially in use since 1854. The name was not rescinded by the legislature until 1945, when it was discovered that the

lake was not really named Lake Tahoe. John Bigler was governor of California from 1852-1856.

**LAKE KIRKWOOD:** Located nine miles east of Silver Lake and thirty miles south of Meyers, this post office was established on Oct. 11, 1940 to serve the area around this vacation and recreational resort. Mrs. Joe Herlyn was named the first postmaster. On May 19, 1967, the Lake Kirkwood Post Office became a rural branch of the Pioneer (Amador County) Post Office.

This was not the first post office at this location, the first being established on January 25, 1887 and called the Roundtop Post Office with Zachariah (Zack) S. Kirkwood, a local cattleman, inn and ex-stagecoach operator during the 1860's, as its postmaster. The name for the post office came from the nearby Roundtop peak that stood some 10,380 feet high. On August 31, 1907, the post office was closed and moved to Jackson.

**LAKE VALLEY:** Named Lake Valley for the valley at the south end of Lake Tahoe (previously Lake Bigler), this post office was officially established on Sep. 17, 1861 at a Pioneer Stage Line station known as "Yank's Station." Curiously, the Sacramento Union dated Aug. 2, 1858, reports this post office established three years earlier, with Martin Smith as postmaster. This may a result of the confusion over the Job's Store (phantom) Post Office which was reportedly also in the Lake Tahoe Valley, but possibly in what was then Utah Territory and later the State of Nevada. Service at the Lake Valley Post Office was discontinued on Dec. 26, 1863 when the name was changed to Taho (with no "e"). The Lake Valley Post Office was reestablished on Feb. 16, 1871 a few months after the Taho Post Office had its name changed to Tallac. Then on Nov. 15, 1895 the Lake Valley Post Office was again discontinued and the mail moved to Bijou.

**LATROBE:** This post office was established on Oct. 11, 1864, when this small town, thirty-seven miles east of Sacramento City, was created as the eastern terminus of the Placerville & Sacramento Valley Railroad. A. George Davis was the first postmaster. The Chief Engineer for the railroad, F. A. Bishop surveyed and platted the town into small lots and, while doing so, suggested the name of Latrobe for the new

town, in honor of Benjamin H. Latrobe, the civil engineer for the first railroad in the United States (there is some question whether Latrobe, Pennsylvania is named after him or his father a famous architect of the same name who designed the Bank of Pennsylvania and rebuilt the U.S. Capitol after the British burned it in 1814). Service at the Latrobe Post Office was discontinued on May 31, 1921 and the mail moved to what was then known as the Shingle (later Shingle Springs) Post Office.

**LAVA:** The Lava Post Office, located thirty miles north of Placerville, near the present site of Volcanoville, was established on Sep. 9, 1880 with Jeremiah Saucerman serving as the first postmaster. The name came from the type of soil in the area. It was discontinued only a short time later, on Oct. 11, 1881, and the mail moved to Placerville.

**LITTLE NORWAY:** This high mountain post office, sixteen miles east of Kyburz and five miles west of Meyers, was established on Sep. 2, 1961, when the mail was moved here from the Vade Post Office (Phillips), three miles to the west. Don Peterson was the first postmaster. The Little Norway Post Office is now closed.

**LOTUS:** This post office, located two miles west of Coloma and ten miles northeast of Green Valley, was established on Jan. 6, 1871 with George W. Gallanar serving as the first postmaster. An early mining town, Lotus was formerly known as Marshall and Uniontown, although it never had a post office by either of those names. The present name of the town, according to some historians, was chosen because "the inhabitants of the community were as easy-going as the lotus eaters of the Odyssey." The Lotus Post Office is still in operation.

**LOUISVILLE:** This early post office was established prior to July 28, 1851, the date when the first postmaster, George C. Blodgett, was confirmed by Washington, D.C. The name, Louisville, had been given to this 1848 mining town, thirteen miles east of Auburn, by the miners working here, who were from the city by that name. On Oct. 9, 1852, just a short time after being established, the Louisville Post Office was moved and its name changed to Greenwood.

**LOVER'S LEAP:** The Lover's Leap Post Office was established on Oct. 30, 1919 with Annie M. Scherrer serving as the first postmaster. It was located between

Strawberry Valley and Camp Sacramento as was named for the rock that rises a sheer 1,285 feet above the South Fork of the American River. There is a legend that an Indian girl plunged from that height because her love was unrequited, thus, Lover's Leap. Service at this post office was discontinued on July 31, 1929 when the mail was moved one mile to the east to Camp Sacramento.

**MACKSVILLE:** This is a phantom post office at an unknown location. Some historical books mention a post office by this name but there is no supportive evidence in the archives of the Post Office Department in Washington, D.C. There may have been a post office at a location commonly known as Macksville with a different name.

**MEEKS BAY:** This seasonal post office was established on May 9, 1929 with Oswald Kehlet as its first postmaster. Its name comes from Stephen H. L. Meeks, a mountainman, who operated in the area of this present resort site on the west side of Lake Tahoe in the 1850's. On Apr. 30, 1967 it became a rural branch of the Tahoe City (Placer County) Post Office. Service was discontinued on Nov. 14, 1972 and the name dropped from the Directory of Post Offices in 1974.

**MENDON:** This early post office was established on Dec. 2, 1867 at a location 28 miles southeast of Placerville and 27 miles northeast of Sutter Creek (Amador County). Also known as Brownsville, although there was no post office by this name, the first postmaster, J. Edmondson tried to name it after himself and, when prohibited from doing that, simply rearranged some of the letters in his name to make up the community's name of Mendon. The post office was discontinued on Feb. 15, 1869 and reestablished just a few months later on June 15, 1869. On Mar. 23, 1888, service was discontinued and the post office moved to Indian Diggins.

**MEYERS:** This seasonal post office was established on Oct. 6, 1904 at the southwest end of the Lake Tahoe basin with Charles G. Celio as the first postmaster. Originally a stage stop on the American River route across the Sierra Nevada (also known as Yank's Station), it was named for Dudley Meyer, an 1850 homesteader. On May 31, 1957, it was discontinued and, one year later, on May 1, 1958, reestablished as a rural station of the Tahoe Valley Post Office. The Meyers Post Office was

discontinued on July 31, 1962 and its name changed to Tahoe Paradise, the name of a very large residential subdivision in the area.

**MOSQUITO:** The Mosquito Post Office was established on Sep. 9, 1880 with Jane Dickinson serving as the first postmaster. It was named for the nearby Mosquito Creek and located nine miles to the northeast of Placerville and 21 miles southeast of a place called Lava. The Mosquito area, which was a major mining location in early California, is often referred to as Swansboro, the name of a large land development which itself was named for an early family in the area. Service at the Mosquito Post Office was discontinued on Oct. 11, 1881 and reestablished on Nov. 12, 1892. Service was again discontinued on Oct. 31, 1895 and the mail moved to Placerville.

**MT. AUKUM:** This post office in the southern part of El Dorado County was first established on September 23, 1895 as the Aukum Post Office. Service was discontinued on August 31, 1914, with the mail then directed to the post office in the town of Uno. On April 9, 1920 the Uno Post Office was discontinued and the mail moved back to Aukum. Because much of the mail destined for Aukum went instead to Auburn, the U. S. Post Office Department officially changed the name of this post office to its present Mt. Aukum on October 28, 1961. The location for this town named for the nearby peak is officially listed as five miles north of Oleta, the original name of the post office in Fiddletown (Amador County). Aukum, often spelled Aurum, Oakum or Orcum, is apparently derived from a Miwok word Ochum, one of the names they gave their dwellings. The first postmaster was Lydia A. Wrigglesworth (Wigglesworth?)

**MUD SPRING:** The Mud Spring Post Office was established prior to Nov. 6, 1851, the date the first postmaster, Darwin Chase, was confirmed by the Post Office Department in Washington, D.C. This post office was so named because the thousands of immigrants traveling along this part of the immigrant trail, between Diamond Springs and Shingle Springs, watered their stock here, muddying the spring and the surrounding land. The Mud Spring Post Office was established prior to Nov. 6, 1851, the date it was approved in Washington, D.C. Darwin Chase was the first postmaster. On Dec. 15, 1855, the name of the post office was changed to El Dorado with George W. Critchfield serving as its first postmaster. Named after the Spanish

word for "The Gilded One", because of the number of rich gold mines in the area, the El Dorado Post Office has continuously operated since it was first established.

**NASHVILLE:** This early post office, located a short distance north of what is now the crossing of the North Fork of the Cosumnes River by Highway 49, was established prior to Mar. 5, 1852, the date the first postmaster, Elias DeYoung, was confirmed by the Post Office Department in Washington, D.C. The area and the post office were named by the miners who had come from the town of that name in Tennessee. In fact, the area was also known as Tennessee Bar and Quartzite, but there was not a post office at this location with either of those names. Service at the Nashville Post Office was discontinued on June 20, 1854 and reestablished again on May 25, 1870. It was again discontinued on Mar. 15, 1907 and the mail moved north to the El Dorado Post Office.

**NEWTOWN:** This post office was established on June 17, 1854 with Wilber Fisher serving as the first postmaster. This town, which was located on the South Fork of Weber Creek, was originally named Dogtown by the miners in 1849. Believing that to be an inelegant name, the Post Office Department and the local citizens changed it to Newtown, which is often spelled Newton. For some reason, service was discontinued on Sept. 23, 1875 and reestablished less than a month later on Oct. 18, 1875. On Dec. 31, 1912, service was again discontinued and the mail moved to the Smithflat (Smith's Flat, Smith Flat) Post Office.

**OMO RANCH:** Located five and one-half miles east of Fair Play and six miles northwest of Indian Diggins, this post office was established on May 9, 1888 with William H. Frye serving as the first postmaster. The name for the post office and the town came from the name of a local Miwok Indian village. Service was discontinued on Mar. 15, 1974 and the mail moved to the Somerset Post Office.

**PACIFIC (PACIFIC HOUSE):** This post office, located 13 miles west of Slippery Fork (Kyburz) and 16 miles east of Smith's Flat, was established on Mar. 10, 1880 with Adam Kessebring, Jr. serving as the first postmaster. The name commemorates the Pacific House, an inn on the American River immigrant route. It was also a relay post for the Pony Express. Service was discontinued on Nov. 15, 1893 and reestablished



less than one year later on Sep. 15, 1894. On June 1, 1958, the word "House" was added, making the name of the post office Pacific House.

**PARK:** This relatively unknown post office was located eight miles east of Pleasant Valley. It was established on Oct. 15, 1891, with John T. Wallin serving as the first postmaster. The name probably came from the same source that named Park Creek. On Jan. 13, 1900 the post office was moved one mile to the east, and on Oct. 31, 1907 moved two and one-half miles to the northwest. Service was discontinued on Dec. 15, 1919 and the mail moved to Placerville.

**PILOT HILL:** The post office at this location was established at this 1849 gold mining site on Apr. 18, 1854 with Silas Hayes serving as the first postmaster. The post office and the community get their name from the hill by that name on which fires were lit to guide early explorers and miners. Located nine miles south of Auburn, the Pilot Hill Post Office is still in existence. It should be noted that this area was also known as Centreville, but no post office of record had that name.

**PINO GRANDE:** Pino Grande a lumbering site on the north side of the South Fork of the American River, almost directly across from Camino (although the Post Office Department showed the location as eleven miles north of Pacific House). The name is derived from the Spanish word for "big pine". Lumber cut at Pino Grande was sent to mill in Camino by way of a cable which terminated on the south side at Cable Road.

The post office at this location was established on Oct. 20, 1892 with George W. Cummings serving as the first postmaster. On Aug. 22, 1893, the post office was moved five and one-half miles to the south and on Sep. 30, 1899, service was discontinued. On Oct 14, 1902 the post office was re-established and then, on May 31, 1909, service was discontinued for the final time and the mail moved to Fyffe (often believed to be near or at Sportsman's Hall).

**PLACERVILLE:** This Gold Rush post office was established some time prior to Apr. 9, 1850, the date that the first postmaster, Thomas C. Nugent, was appointed by the Post Office Department in Washington, D.C. The name comes from the gravel (placer) mining that took place in the area. The town was also known as Old Dry

Diggin's and the infamous Hangtown, but no records show a post office by either of those names. The location of this post office is "officially" forty-four miles northeast of Sacramento. The Placerville Post Office, although it has moved several times, is still in operation.

**PLEASANT VALLEY:** The Pleasant Valley Post Office was established on Mar. 23, 1864 with John B. Hass serving as the first postmaster. The discovery of the area called Pleasant Valley is attributed to Henry W. Bigler who, on June 18, 1848 arrived in this area with two companies of the Mormon Battalion trying to find a new route to Salt Lake City, since the Truckee Route was impassable due to snow. On Dec. 31, 1917, the post office was discontinued and the mail moved to Placerville

**POLLOCK PINES:** This post office was established on Apr. 28, 1936 with Mrs. Alice P. Grout serving as the first postmaster. The name stems from an early land developer, Hiram Robert Pollock, who arrived here with his wife Anna and son Claude Earl, around 1909. A lumberman by trade, he borrowed money and built a saw mill. When the mill was destroyed by fire in the early 1930's Hiram and Anna Pollock started selling lots in a subdivision they created out of a piece of land that lay along the ridge, on both sides of Cedar Grove School. They called it Pollock Pines. The Pollock Pines Post Office is still in operation.

**POMINS:** This Lake Tahoe Basin post office was established on July 23, 1915 (local historians say 1914) with Frank J. Pomin serving as the first postmaster. It was a vacation resort located one and one-quarter miles south of McKinney (Placer County) and nine miles north of Emerald Bay. The post office was discontinued on Nov. 30, 1942 and the mail moved to Chambers Lodge (formerly McKinney) in Placer County.

**QUINTETTE:** The Quintette Post Office was established on Aug. 7, 1903 with Frederick H. Douglas serving as the first postmaster. Located twelve miles to the east of Georgetown, on Wentworth Springs Road, Quintette it was named for John J. Quinn who had received the original land grant for this piece of forest land in 1889. Almost immediately he sold the land to the Barklage brothers who actually started the community of Quintette, which was supported by a logging camp and the Blue Bird

Mine. The post office was discontinued on May 31, 1912, and the mail moved four miles northwest to the town of Virner.

**RANDALL:** The post office at Randall was established on Mar. 27, 1917 at this site on the South Fork of the American River, seven miles east of Pacific (House). The first postmaster and operator of a resort at this location was Albert B. Randall, thus the name. Service at the Randall Post Office was discontinued on Aug. 14, 1937 and the mail moved to Pacific. Randall's resort was known as Whitehall, although there was no post office by that name.

**RESCUE:** The Rescue Post Office was established on June 12, 1895 with Merritt A. Hunter serving as the first postmaster. The history of the establishment of a post office at this important way station on the wagon road from Sacramento to the "diggings" is quite interesting.

The town was originally called Green Valley, but the U.S. Post Office Department decided that there were already too many towns with that name in California. The Department requested the owner of the building that housed the post office, one Dr. Hunter, to submit a list of new, one-word names for the town from which the Department would choose the one they liked. One proposed name on the list was given to Dr. Hunter by Andrew Hare, who had a nearby mining claim called the Rescue Claim. His claim had "rescued" him from poverty and he thought it would be a fine name for the town. Apparently the Post Office Department agreed with Mr. Hare.

On July 1, 1962, the post office changed its location to the Rose Springs Literary Society Meeting Hall, with Mrs. Ila Wing Brazil as acting Postmaster (she was officially appointed Postmaster on October 23, 1963). The entire upstairs of this historic structure, dated 1896, has a magnificent dance floor where once great celebrations were held. Downstairs contains the Post Office and areas that could be used meeting rooms. The building is being caringly restored to its original magnificence by the Rescue Volunteer Fire Association, using private funds. The Rescue Post Office is still in existence at this location.

**RINGGOLD:** This post office about two miles east of Diamond Springs was established prior to Feb. 20, 1852, the date the postmaster, Jacob L. Sargent, was

appointed by the Post Office Department in Washington, D.C. The community and a local gold mine were both named for an early explorer of the Sacramento Valley and foothills named Lieutenant Commander Cadwalader Ringgold. He is also partially responsible for the naming of many of other landmarks such as the American River. Service at the Ringgold Post Office was discontinued on Nov. 22, 1853 and the mail moved to Placerville.

**RIVERTON:** This post office on the South Fork of the American River five miles east of Pacific (House) and eleven miles west of Slippery Ford (Kyburz) was established on Aug. 2, 1893 with Charles Sandfoss serving as the first postmaster. As early as 1864 there was a respectable inn at this "River Side" location which was also the first station east of Sportsman's Hall to service the Central Overland Express and was the first Pony Express remount station east of Sportsman's Hall. Prior to being called Riverton, the location was known as Moore's Station, however there was no post office by that name at this location. The post office was discontinued on May 31, 1898 and the mail moved to Slippery Ford (Kyburz). Just west of the present Highway 50 Bridge is a plaque designating Moore's (Riverton) as a California State Historic Landmark (#705).

**ROWLAND:** This post office at the southern end of Lake Tahoe was established on June 26, 1864 with Sophonia Rowland at the first postmaster according to one list and Thomas B. Rowland according to another list. The post office was named for another Rowland, Bernard F. Rowland, the developer of the vacation and recreational resort at this site. On Sep. 11, 1888 the post office was moved one and one-quarter miles to the east and the name changed to Bijou.

**RUBICON:** This post office, located four and one-half miles north of Emerald Bay, was established on May 4, 1901 with Amos L. Frost as postmaster. This site, along with the Bay, Park, Peak and Lake by this name, is named for the Rubicon River which the pioneers found difficult to cross. The post office was discontinued on Apr. 30, 1906 and reestablished on Mar. 8, 1909. On Sep. 30, 1913, service was again discontinued and the mail moved to the Emerald Bay seasonal post office.

**RUBICON LODGE:** This post office, two and one-half miles south of Meeks Bay was established on Dec. 15, 1921 with Hans Hansen serving as the first postmaster. The name was derived from the summer resort community by this name. On Aug. 15, 1924 the post office was discontinued and then reestablished on July 9, 1925. On Oct. 31, 1931, service was again discontinued and the mail moved to Meeks Bay.

**SAINT LAWRENCEBURGH:** This post office located four miles north of Kelsey and four miles south of Garden Valley was first established on June 20, 1872 with Kate H. Anderson serving as the first postmaster. Named for the nearby Saint Lawrence Mine (gold), service at this post office on the main road from Placerville to Georgetown continued until Feb. 1, 1875. On Apr. 15, 1880 service was reestablished and the "burgh" dropped from the name. On Aug. 23, 1882 the post office was discontinued and the mail moved to Placerville.

**SALMON FALLS:** The post office at this 1848 mining camp located on the South Fork of the American River a few miles northeast of Folsom City was established prior to Oct. 7, 1851, the date the first postmaster, George Coon, was confirmed by the Post Office Department in Washington, D.C. The name of the mining camp and the post office came from the display of salmon spawning below the falls near this camp. Service was discontinued on Jan. 18, 1875 and reestablished less than a month later on Feb. 15, 1875. It was again discontinued on Nov. 15, 1893 and reestablished two days later on Nov. 17. On Nov. 30, 1912 the post office was discontinued and the mail moved to Folsom City in Sacramento County.

**SHINGLE SPRING:** The post office at this early mining town and shingle mill site along the main immigration road from the east to Sacramento was established on Feb. 3, 1853 with D. Thomkins serving as the first postmaster. Service at this post office, located ten miles southwest of Placerville, was discontinued on Mar. 30, 1855 and then reestablished on Oct. 10, 1865 with an "s" added to the name making it Shingle Springs. On May 11, 1895 the name of the post office was again changed, this time to simply Shingle. On Mar. 1, 1955, the post office changed the name for the last time, making it officially Shingle Springs. This post office is still in operation.

**SLATINGTON:** This post office, on the top of Chili Bar Grade, six miles north of Placerville, was established on Mr. 3, 1903 with James McGraw as its first postmaster. Its name is derived from the hand split slate shingles that were made at a mine nearby. On Oct. 31, 1912 service was discontinued and then reestablished on Jul. 3, 1916. On Sep. 23, 1920 the post office was moved one and one-half miles to the northeast and the name changed to Kelsey.

**SPORTSMANS HALL:** This post office was established on Oct. 10, 1865 with James Blair serving as postmaster. Sportsman's Hall, which has a controversial history and at times called the Eleven Mile House and Fyffe, was originally owned by a D. C. Dealy, who claimed one hundred and sixty acres at this location along the Placerville-Carson Valley Road and established a ranch. The following year he sold his land and Sportsman's Hall to John Blair, one of four brothers that had immigrated to America from Scotland and become lumbermen. John's brother, James Blair, came west to join him about the time that silver was discovered in the Comstock Lode of Nevada. Because of this discovery, the road that ran by Sportsman's Hall soon became crowded with freight and passenger traffic to and from the mines, so the Blairs enlarged the place to hold 150 travelers, also adding stables for 500 horses and corrals that would hold even more.

Service at this post office, which the confusing records of the Post Office Department show as being three miles further west of Kyburz than Placerville and, at the same time, eleven miles east of Placerville, was discontinued on May 28, 1867.

**STATELINE:** Located nearly on the California-Nevada border at the south end of Lake Tahoe, this post office was established on June 12, 1901 with Arthur M. Hill serving as the first postmaster. On March 24, 1967, when the South Lake Tahoe Post Office was established, the Stateline Post Office became a station of it.

**SUNBEAM:** This post office was established on Apr. 6, 1888 at a location on the west side of Lake Tahoe, some two and one-half miles south of McKinney (Placer County) and nine miles north of Tallac. It is known that the first postmaster was Dietrich Kaiser, but there is no record of the origin of the name. On Oct. 14, 1893

service at this post office was discontinued and the mail moved to the post office at McKinney.

**TAHO:** This post office, originally named Lake Valley for its location at the southern end of Lake Tahoe, was established on Dec. 26, 1863 with Underhill Van Wagner serving as the first postmaster. The name is believed to be a corruption of the Washo(e) Indian word "Tahooee", meaning "much water." Service was discontinued on Dec. 20, 1870 when the name of the post office was changed to Tallac.

**TAHOE KEYES:** The Tahoe Keyes Post Office, named for what was originally a vacation and recreation marina on the south end of Lake Tahoe, was established on Aug. 17, 1959 as a branch of the Tahoe Valley Post Office. Since it was a branch of another post office, it had no postmaster. On July 1, 1962 service at this branch was discontinued.

**TAHOE PARADISE:** Formerly known as the Meyers Post Office, the Tahoe Paradise Post Office was established on Aug. 1, 1962 as a rural branch of the Tahoe Valley Post Office. Like the Tahoe Keyes Post Office it was named for a vacation resort that would become a subdivision. Also like the Tahoe Keyes Post Office, and for the same reason, it had no postmaster. On Mar. 24, 1967, it became a rural branch of the South Lake Tahoe Post Office.

**TAHOE VALLEY:** This post office was established on June 12, 1940 with Alvan W. Lampson serving as its first postmaster. A Lake Tahoe vacation resort, it was located three and one-half miles southwest of Al Tahoe and five miles southeast of Camp Richardson. On Mar. 24, 1967, it became a station of the South Lake Tahoe Post Office.

**TALLAC:** This post office was established on Dec. 20, 1870 as a result of the change of the name of the Taho Post Office. Ephraim Clement was its first postmaster. Located on the south end of Lake Tahoe, five and one-half miles west of South Lake Tahoe, it obtained its name from an Indian word meaning "large mountain". On Feb. 15, 1871 service was discontinued and the name changed to Lake Valley. On Mar. 12, 1875 it was reestablished. On Nov. 13, 1883, it was moved one-half mile east and on

Mar. 10, 1888, moved one-half mile west. Service was discontinued on June 16, 1927 and the name changed to Camp Richardson.

**TWIN BRIDGES:** This post office eleven miles east of Kyburz was established on Oct. 1, 1947, with Mrs. Lesta H. King as its first postmaster. It was closed temporarily on Jan. 15, 1952 and reopened on Mar. 15, 1952. The full name of the post office at this vacation and recreational resort was Twin Bridges Hotel, the name coming from the two highway bridges over Pyramid Creek, one for eastbound traffic and one for westbound traffic. Several years ago the building at this location was destroyed and the post office closed.

**UNIONVILLE:** The post office at this location was established on Mar. 6, 1861 with Gaston D'Artois serving as the first postmaster. The changing of town names to various "Union" names was popular on the eve of the Civil War, and this place was no exception. The Post Office Department lists no location for this post office, yet notes the town was once called Marshall and that it was on the South Fork of the American River. Marshall, we do know, was the original name for a town that would become later known as Uniontown and then Lotus. Neither Marshall or Uniontown had a post office, according to the same records of the Post Office Department, however, there could be some confusion between the names Unionville and Uniontown. The Unionville Post Office would last less than a year and be discontinued on Feb. 2, 1862.

**UNO:** The Uno Post Office was established on Feb. 12, 1892 with Leander C. Morris serving as the first of only three postmasters: Morris (1892), Sarah Farnsworth (1892-1914) and Nancy Giles (1914-1920). Uno was located about two miles to the southeast of Mt. Aukum on Cedar Creek, but rarely shows up on early maps, and never on those made after the 1880's. It is believed by some that the reason there is so little information on Uno is that it may also have been known as Coyoteville. The name is believed to have come from the Spanish word for "one", although that too is questioned by some. Apparently the only business in town was the Farnsworth store, in which the Post Office was conveniently located. Nothing remains of Uno, or for that matter, Coyoteville.



The Uno Post Office was closed on April 9, 1920 when its name was changed to Aukum, and later Mt. Aukum. The Mt. Aukum Post Office is still in operation.

**URBAN:** The Urban Post Office was established on Aug. 28, 1909 with Eva L. Urban serving as the first postmaster. It was located five miles southwest of Pleasant Valley and seven miles northwest of Fair Play. The interesting name for such a rural post office obviously came from the name of the first postmaster, a practice that the Post Office Department sometimes allowed, but usually frowned upon. On Feb. 29, 1912, the Urban Post Office became known as the Pleasant Valley Post Office.

**VADE:** This post office at Phillips Station, located seven miles southwest of Meyers, was established on Sep. 3, 1912 with Sierra Nevada Phillips Bryson serving as the first postmaster. This stop on the main freight and passenger road between Sacramento and the Comstock Lode (Virginia City), later known as Highway 50, was first settled by the Phillips family in 1862. The Phillips' daughter, appropriately named Sierra Nevada, who was six years old at the time the family settled here, grew up and became a well known businesswoman, establishing the Rubicon Mineral Springs Hotel and Resort and managing resorts at Tahoe City and Meeks Bay. When she tried to get a post office in Phillips she was told that name was taken. Consequently, when the post office was established it was named Vade - her nickname. On September 2, 1961, the post office was moved three miles east and renamed Little Norway, a post office that has now closed. Phillips, also casually known as Pow Wow, after the restaurant and gas station located there ("Eat at Pow Wow and get gas" the sign said for years), is the location of Sierra at Tahoe (formerly Sierra Ski Ranch).

**VIRNER:** This post office eight miles northeast of Georgetown was established on Sep. 11, 1897 with Janny L. Tuttle serving as the first postmaster. The name was derived from Virner or Camp Virner, a mining camp and then a vacation resort at this location between Georgetown and Quintette, on what is now known as Wentworth Springs Road. The Virner Post Office was discontinued on Mar. 31, 1913 and the mail moved to Georgetown.

In the 1800's, James W. Marshall, the discoverer of gold at Coloma, built a cabin near here in Marshall Ravine.

**VOLCANOVILLE:** The post office at this mining camp from the 1850's was not established until July 8, 1930, when Mrs. Clara P. Fraser was appointed as the first postmaster. Located a few miles to the north of Kentucky Flat, on a point overlooking the Middle Fork of the American River, the town of Volcanoville was so named because a nearby mountain seemed to be an extinct volcano and the miners had to work through lava cement (a hardened ash/mud deposit) to get to the gold. When an 1879 forest fire destroyed most of the buildings in town, a majority of the mines closed. But, two years later the Dore (Maurice Dore) Mine was reopened as the Josephine Mine, taking its name from its new owner, Joseph Nougues. By the 1890's the mine was so successful that the town itself was actually renamed Josephine. The Josephine post office was established on August 12, 1895 with store owner Jerome C. Akley as postmaster. The post office would be discontinued on October 20, 1915 and reestablished on July 11 of the next year. It would be closed for good on October 31, 1917.

It wasn't until after the name of the town was changed back to Volcanoville that this new post office was opened. Postal service was discontinued on January 31, 1953 and the mail moved to Georgetown.

By the 1960's most everything had shut down and a sign at the entrance to the town read: "Volcanoville. Pop. 4. Elev. 3036. At that time, Vera Frazier and her son Jim owned the town and operated a museum in a building that has once been a dance hall, general store and saloon. The museum burned in 1969, leaving only a few residences and a beer parlor.

**YANKS STATION:** This location on the main road through the Lake Tahoe Valley never had an official post office. However, it was an important Pioneer Stage Line Company stop and cancellations with this name have been reported. The official post office at this location was named Lake Valley.

**YEOMET:** This early post office, more often known as Yornet and even sometimes as Saratoga, was established on July 14, 1854 with Eustace P. Bowman serving as the first postmaster. The name of this 1850 gold mining camp, located at the junction of the North and South Forks of the Cosumnes River, is derived from

"Yomet" an Indian word for some nearby falls. In 1855 the southern boundary of El Dorado County was shifted and the post office found itself in Amador County. On June 8, 1861 the post office was closed and the mail moved to Jackson (Amador County).

**YOUNGS:** This post office, located at a vacation resort called Youngs, on the North Fork of the Cosumnes River one mile north of Somerset, was established on Mar. 7, 1924 with Morgan W. Young serving as the first postmaster. On Aug. 1, 1950 the post office was closed and moved one mile south and renamed Somerset. The Somerset Post Office is still in operation.

**ZODOK:** This post office was established on Aug. 6, 1887 with Jasper M. Bell serving as the first postmaster. The Postal Route Map shows the location of this post office as being five miles south of Placerville, but gives no origin for its unique name. Less than one year after it opened, on June 30, 1888, service was discontinued and the mail moved to Placerville.

**SOURCES FOR THIS STORY:** include, "History of California Post Offices, 1849-1976", researched by H. E. Salley (1976); "The Gold Rush Mail Agents to California and Their Postal Markings", by Theron Wierenga (1987); "California Town Postmarks, 1849-1935", by John H. Williams (1997); "Short Stories Regarding The History of South El Dorado County", by D. A. Wright (undated); the "History of El Dorado County", by Paolo Sioli (1883), reprinted and indexed by the El Dorado Friends of the Library (1998); and the archives of the Mountain Democrat, Empire County Argus and Placer Times (on microfilm at the El Dorado County Main Library).

**ABOUT DOUG NOBLE:** Doug is a third generation Californian and has lived in El Dorado County for over half his life. He is a biologist by education, but spent most of his time as a land use planner and a paralegal before retiring a couple of years ago. Much of his spare time is now spent writing about the things he loves most, food, wine and especially history. His columns and articles are a regular in the Mountain Democrat, California's oldest newspaper. He recently completed a two-year series of articles on John C. Fremont's Second Expedition (his first expedition into California) and is working on Fremont's involvement in the creation of the State of California. He has a son and a daughter who he brags are "both happy and gainfully employed." Doug can be reached by e-mail at [dnoble@innercite.com](mailto:dnoble@innercite.com).