

Synopsis

Title: Butterfield's Overland Mail Company

Purpose To show covers carried by Butterfield's Overland Mail Company between September 1858 and March 1861 on the Southern Ox Bow Route, and beginning in July of 1861 on the Central Route. Also, to include additional information and artifacts from US transcontinental mail carried immediately before and immediately after the existence of Butterfield's Overland Mail Co.

References:

- "POSTAL HISTORY of John Butterfield's Overland Mail Co. on the Southern and Central Routes including Butterfield's Pony Express 1858-1864" by Bob Crossman
- "I Lived on The Butterfield Mail Route for Decades and Didn't Know It," by Bob Crossman The American Philatelist, Jan. 2023, p. 17-31. - *recipient of the 2024 Mueller Award*
- Mails of the Westward Expansion, 1803 - 1861, by Steve Walske and Richard Frajola <https://www.rfrajola.com/MWE/MWE.pdf>
- Overland Mail to California in the 1850s, by the USPS <https://about.usps.com/who/profile/history/overland-mail.htm>

Reference Exhibits:

- "Butterfield Overland Route" by George Kramer
- The Story of Mail Communications West of the Mississippi River in the 19th Century, Illustrated with Unique Artifacts of the Period, A Philatelic Exhibit by Thomas J. Alexander, pages 165-170

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Memberships:

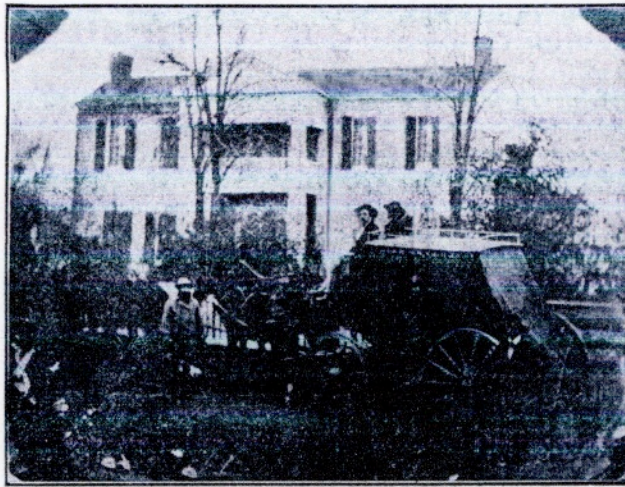
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| American Philatelic Society #198665 | U.S. Stamp Society #16332 |
| American Assoc. of Philatelic Exhibitors | Civil War Philatelic Society #3655 |
| Butterfield National Historic Trail Association | U.S. Cancellation Club |
| Southern Trails Chapter, OCTA | Western Cover Society |
| Oregon California Trails Association | The Postal History Foundation of Tucson |
| American Revenue Association #5792 | Arkansas Historical Association |
| State Revenue Society #1430 | Faulkner County Historical Society |
| Pinnacle Stamp Club of Little Rock | Shiloh Museum of Ozark History |
| Carriers and Locals Society #33 | Fort Smith Museum of History |
| U.S. Philatelic Classics Society #4186 | |

Additional Butterfield Books by Bob Crossman:

- Butterfield's Overland Mail Co. STAGECOACH Trail Across Arkansas, 1858-1861 (revised March 2025)
- Butterfield's Overland Mail Co. use of STEAMBOATS to Deliver Mail and Passengers Across Arkansas 1858-1861
- Butterfield's Overland Mail Co. as REPORTED in Arkansas Newspapers of 1858-1861
- Butterfield National Historic Trail PASSENGER DIARIES & STORIES Across Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Missouri
- Butterfield National Historic Trail Across FAULKNER COUNTY, Arkansas
- Butterfield National Historic Trail Across Arkansas' POPE & CONWAY COUNTIES

Additional Butterfield Journal Articles by Bob Crossman:

- "The Butterfield Overland Mail Company: Faulkner County Connection," Faulkner County Facts & Fiddlings, Fall 2021, p. 24-32.
- "Fort Smith's Connection to the Butterfield's Overland Mail Co.: Stations Between Memphis and Fort Smith," Fort Smith Historical Society Journal, Fall 2021, p. 25-43.
- "Faulkner County and Butterfield's Overland Mail Co. Stagecoach Route," Faulkner County Facts & Fiddlings, Spring 2024.
- "Retracing the Butterfield Route," Western Express, June 2025 - *projected publication date*
- "I Lived on The Butterfield Mail Route for Decades and Didn't Know It," The American Philatelist, January 4, 2023 - *recipient of the United States Stamp Society - Barbara R. Mueller Award*



*The only existing photo
of a Butterfield used
traditional
Mail Stagecoach,
as seen in front of
Charles Butterfield's
home in Fayetteville,
Arkansas on
September of 1858 -
the first day of
operation.*

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Exhibit Purpose

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Background

The population of California tripled in size in less than a decade in large part due to the discovery of gold and the Gold Rush that resulted. In response to that growth, on March 3, 1857, Congress authorized Aaron V. Brown, U.S. Postmaster General, to contract for delivery of the U.S. mail overland to California. The mail was to be carried overland in four-horse stagecoaches from St. Louis and Memphis to San Francisco in twenty-five days or less. The contract was awarded to the Overland Mail Company, John Butterfield, president.

Butterfield's Overland Mail Company stagecoach service operated on the Southern Ox Bow Route from mid September 1858 to mid March 1861, carrying U.S. Mail and passengers between the Mississippi River and California to fulfill the U.S. postal contract number 12518.

Major Dates

SEPTEMBER 1858 TO MARCH 1861

The period the Overland Mail Co. operated on southern route
JANUARY 1860

Overland Mail Co. becomes the default Transcontinental Carrier
JULY 1861 TO SEPTEMBER 1864

The period the Overland Mail Co. operated on northern route

3 YouTube QR codes

"Butterfield Postal History"
"Overland Mail Co. Route Across Arkansas"
"Dardanelle Ferry & Butterfield"

