

# THE BUSY MISSOULA POSTOFFICE

No establishment shows the general progress in any business better than the postoffice. It, so to speak, tabulates the amount of business transacted from day to day, from year to year. Its tallings as constantly rise and fall with the fluctuations of business as does the barometer under a varying atmosphere. If trade is brisk, the postoffice readily verifies the fact; if, on the other hand, money is slack, it is equally as quick to show its shortage in business. It not alone shows the financial growth of the community, but it accurately records the increase in population in the volume of its business.

The annual reports of the Missoula office compare very favorably with those of other offices in the northwest. The year 1908 was the greatest in its history. For the above named year Salem, Oregon, has the honor of being first on the list; Missoula follows, with a 12.9 per cent increase to her credit. There are only four first-class postoffices in the state—Butte, Helena, Missoula and Billings—named in order of their importance. Great Falls has a greater population and more carriers than Missoula, but her receipts have never reached the \$10,000 mark. To all who have taken an interest in Missoula's welfare, the following figures may not come amiss:

Year	Am't.	Per cent increase over previous year.
1899	14,232.29	
1900	16,575.40	16
1901	18,158.20	9.6
1902	20,063.17	9
1903	21,254.91	5.9
1904	23,084.59	8.5
1905	26,335.97	14
1906	28,830.27	13
1907	37,241.46	21.5
1908	42,285.78	12.9

Number of domestic money orders issued in 1908, 26,735.  
 Number of international money orders issued in 1908, 3,133.  
 Number of registers received in 1908, 30,000.  
 Number of registers dispatched in 1908, 15,000.  
 Number of mails received per day 14.  
 Number of mails dispatched per day, 14.  
 Amount of mail received per day 1,300 pounds.  
 Amount of mail dispatched per day, 800 pounds.  
 Express pouch service has been granted Hamilton, Victor and Stevensville on extra freights \$3 and \$4. This gives these places two daily letter mails.

**Ten Million Letters.**  
 Ten million letters have passed through the electric cancelling machine since it was installed 27 months ago. Allowing 50 letters for a pound, this means 100 tons of letters.  
 The Missoula office was placed in the first-class list the first of last July. This, together with an act of congress passed two years ago, make it possible for all employees of the office to rise successively to a salary of \$1,200 per annum. This maximum salary is only reached after five years of regular service, service as substitute being taken into consideration.  
 Henceforth Lincoln's birthday will

be looked forward to as another day of rest for the postoffice force. Nine holidays and 15 days of vacation is the sum total of time granted with pay. The 15 days are exclusive of holidays and Sundays. Substitute employees are not granted vacation with pay; rather they have too much vacation without pay. They get 39 cents an hour for the time employed.

**Free Delivery.**  
 City free delivery was established April 1, 1899. Two carriers served the city at that time. Another carrier was appointed in 1901, and a fourth one September 1, 1903. On the latter date the first delivery was made in South Missoula. This section then included scarcely half as many people as at the present time. In March 1905, the fifth carrier was appointed, and the sixth was put to work the 15th of last July. These constitute the present delivery force of Missoula proper. Practically every person within the city limits receives mail at least once a day. In no part, even in the busiest sections, are there more than two deliveries per day. Owing to the extent of territory covered by the carriers, it is impossible for them to reach more than one-half their patrons on a second delivery within the time limit of eight hours. Those living in the remotest parts of the city are as much entitled to two daily mails as those next door to the postoffice. But the department says, "Not serve the nearest ones first; then, if you have time, go to the next." Special stress is laid on the fact that business sections should have the promptest service. The carrier force is inadequate to serve such a scattered population satisfactorily. Free delivery service has not been increased proportionately with the increase of business in the postoffice, nor yet with the growth in population of the city. Two additional carriers would greatly relieve the present needs of the service. Should the department have seen fit to allow the extra help asked for from time to time, the work of free delivery would have been quite efficient.

**Carrier Routes.**  
 The six carriers cover approximately 75 miles per day, or 22,500 miles per year of 300 delivery days; and over this intricate mileage, they distribute 150,000 pounds of mail, or 75 tons. This means that an average of about 20 pounds of mail is delivered to every man, woman, and child to whom mail is carried. And, still, the carrier's work is not fully realized. More than 600 registered letters and packages must be carefully delivered and receipts received for the same. A completed directory of the names and addresses of all persons on his route must be kept. All changes must be noted, and new names carefully entered daily.

No. 1 is entirely too heavy for one carrier. It covers 144 blocks in a well-settled section, and serves fully 2,000 people.

**Rural Delivery.**  
 The first rural free delivery out of Missoula was granted in July 1904. Since then two other routes have been established.

R. F. D. No. 1 covers Low's addition adjoining South Missoula, the Orchard Homes, parallel to the River Root river four miles southward, and ends in the suburbs of South Missoula. Originally it included the university, but this portion now has city delivery. This route is 24 miles in length, and has a daily average of 75 pounds of mail. For the past two years it has been served, faithfully and very efficiently, by a lady carrier. It pays \$75 per month.

R. F. D. No. 2 includes the outskirts of West Missoula and the farming section of Grass Valley. Although it is a thirty-two mile route, the mail is light. Salary \$75.

R. F. D. No. 3 supplies the settlement on the Rattlesnake north of Missoula. This neighborhood is well-settled, and receives a good average mail. Being a short route, 16 miles in length, it pays only \$52.50 per month.

Pioneer customs of delivering the mails to the scattered settlements are fast vanishing, even from the Rocky mountain states. Modern Missoula

supplies only one forlorn Star route. This one accommodates Bonner, Sunset, Potomac and Clearwater on the Blackfoot.

Mail for Fort Missoula is also distributed from the Missoula office. They make the trip twice a day for their supply.

One hundred and fifty special delivery letters are mailed at the office per month, and more than two hundred are received. These require immediate delivery by special messenger, but the office has experienced much difficulty in obtaining prompt response to calls for messenger service. Eight cents is allowed for each letter delivered; yet it means a good saunter and a case of hawk to say Nor can parents afford to deprive their boys of proper schooling for the sake of earning such paltry sums as the messenger service commands. Herein through the better sense of the parents and the school management, lies the chief difficulty in securing the best results in the special delivery service.

**The Office Force.**  
 Twelve clerks constitute the working force of the office. While the postmaster is not counted among the 12, still he is the busiest one in the office. Besides tending to his official duties, and looking after the affairs of the office, he fills a clerk's place at the money order window. Certain duties devolve upon each clerk. The proper disposition of 5,000 letters and 1,200 pounds of other mail matter every 24 hours is a greater task than most people imagine.

The demand for a sub-post office in South Missoula is constantly increasing. The population of that portion of the city is sufficiently large to warrant the request. Here are located Missoula's principal schools of learning. Here are people from all parts of the state locating, building up homes, that their children may have access to these institutions. The university, the county high school the Garden City Commercial college, and the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul railroad can justly claim their right to a more accessible postoffice. Besides being of great benefit to the people of South Missoula, a sub-station would supply the routes to the Orchard Homes and Fort Missoula, thereby shortening the trips. Further, it would relieve the main office, and prevent the carrying of the many heavy loads across the bridge, thus aiding to expedite the delivery of the mail in this section.

January 1st, 1906, the present quarters were occupied. They were then overly commodious, but the business of the office has already outgrown its allotted space.

The term "crowded" is scarcely sufficiently expressive to describe the condition of the office at times.

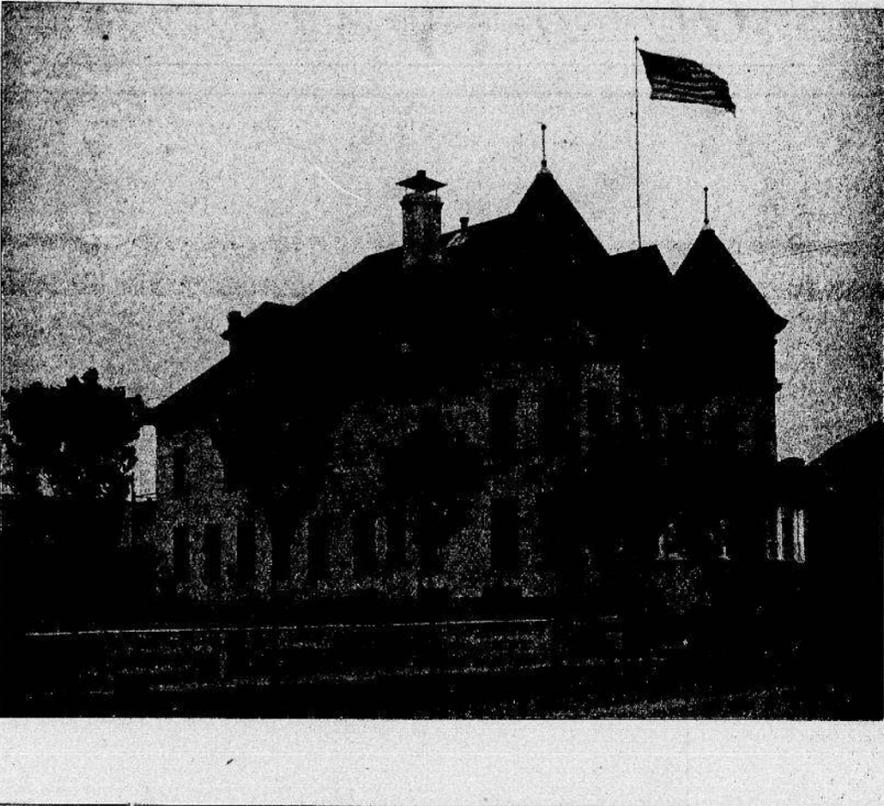
Work at the general delivery window has increased to such an extent that it requires almost the constant attention of two clerks.

Before the holidays, the stamp department was removed to one corner of the lobby; here it will doubtless remain until the building is deserted. Since early in the fall, the mailing department has occupied the three of two clerks, whereas, previous to that time, one clerk did all the work, except during the holiday rush. This year, in time of the rush, they were literally swamped with packages. Up in the registry office a thousand receipts were written in a single day. For several days the sales in stamps exceeded \$500.

The office is never entirely deserted. Clerks have their regular shift of eight hours, some working all night.

By the recent establishment of District No. 1 of the forestry department in Missoula, considerable work has been added to the postoffice. The daily mail for this new recruit, alone, fills two large bags, to say nothing of the registered sacks direct from Washington. One floor of the new federal building, which will be erected soon, will be occupied by the local division of the forestry. The time it takes the department to prepare a new home for the Missoula office may seem long to wait but Uncle Sam has promised; he will "make good."

# A MODEL COMMERCIAL COLLEGE



At the south end of the new Higginson avenue bridge stands one of the best appearing, best arranged school buildings in the west, the home of the Garden City Commercial college. This school, recognized as being thorough and up-to-date, was organized almost 16 years ago and is now a strong institution. E. C. Reitz, proprietor and business manager of the college, says, "Since this institution was established it has been a building, not of brick and mortar and stone alone, but of reputation. Results achieved after years of strenuous effort make what we call reputation, which is simply the concentrated

opinions of thousands of people regarding a definite object or person. Reputation is for this reason valuable; it is not the creation of a day, it takes years to secure. It can, however, be spoiled in a day and only incessant vigilance and fixed integrity will retain it. Reputation is therefore a safe index and a certain indicator which can be relied upon with explicit confidence. This is particularly true of this school."

The heads of departments in Mr. Reitz's school are: H. K. Rousser, principal of the commercial department, and Mrs. Laura B. Reitz, dean of the shorthand department.

The purposes, the aims, the "platform" of the Garden City Commercial

college are set forth in the following paragraphs:

To give to both sexes technical and practical education for business pursuits.

To offer persons of neglected education such opportunities as will enable them to amend their deficiencies.

To afford to the students of academies, colleges and universities, as well as to pupils of district, public and high schools, finishing courses of study to immediate use in business life.

To impart such a mastery of book-keeping, shorthand, typewriting and related studies as shall give its graduates an occupation, whereby money and a living may be earned.

To give in talks and lectures valuable hints and general information as to subjects which are too extensive to be thoroughly taught in the allotted time.

To do the work in the shortest time and at the least expense consistent with thoroughness.

To provide eligible situations for those who properly prepare themselves. Satisfied that vigorous action wins, we propose energetic and persistent work for and with all pupils entrusted to our care. We are thoroughly convinced that the best claim a school for business can have to consideration, is the fact that it educates not drones, but live business men.

## "R. F. D., NO. 1"

R. F. D. No. 1 is an unusually hard route to carry. Since its establishment less than five years ago, five different carriers have attempted handling it, four of these, sooner or later, throwing it up in disgust. Each resignation, however, of the same sentiment; each ended with the same conclusion, in effect, if not literally, "too much of a good thing for the money."

Originally this route included the university, University avenue, and a part of Central avenue. Last July this portion was given city delivery, which shortened the trip three miles, and relieved the rural carrier of a heavy bunch of mail. But the route is still too heavy to be served with perfect satisfaction.

For the past two years Mrs. Anna Buckhouse has been the faithful carrier. During this period she has handled more than 25 tons of mail, and traveled four times the distance from Seattle to Boston. To accomplish this task has certainly meant greater sacrifice on the part of the carrier than many of her patrons are aware of. Two horses are needed for the work; each making three trips per week, or 72 miles. The land through which the route lies being of a deep, heavy soil, makes the trip very burdensome in bad weather. Regardless of the condition of road or weather the work must be done. She has made the trip in zero weather, when a lighted lantern only prevented from freezing in drifts of snow. In summer heat, through muddy roads, when her horse was all but exhausted at the end of the journey. Modestly, courteously, uncomplainingly, attending strictly to business, this unassuming lady carrier patiently performs her duty day after day. Sanguine, beyond a moderate degree, of success in her work, and diligent to maintain a good record for punctuality and exactness of service, she naturally feels, with some degree of despondency, the sting of injustice now and then received in exchange for her many favors.

At 6 o'clock in the morning her horse must be fed, then her own breakfast prepared, and a lunch put up for her trip; at 7:30, she must be at the postoffice. Here she has almost an hour's task, besides arranging her mail delivery, she must keep an exact account of every piece of mail carried from the office. Twenty-four miles then lies before her. Every box on the route must be visited. Wherever signals are displayed it means something. Her time-limit is eight hours, but scarcely ever can she return on time, because of the many details to look after on the trip. In this box, for instance, is an order for two stamped envelopes; in the next, five two-cent stamps, or five postal cards, are wanted. This patron has a package to be mailed; when weighed at the office, it requires 15 cents postage, instead of 10, the amount supplied. The next patron needs just what a "Dime" brings me a money order

for 55 cents tomorrow." So, before the trip is completed, she has a dozen requests for this and that, each deterring her progress.

Montana, like all her sister states in the west, is noted for her cosmopolitan population. In every locality types of various nationalities are more or less conspicuous. The settlement covered by R. F. D. No. 1 is not an exception. Among its inhabitants are men from all parts of the civilized world, differing in ideas, in vocations, and, therefore, to a greater or lesser degree, in interests.

Comparatively, a very small part of the public have a proper conception of the rules and regulations governing postal employees, therefore, although the carrier labors day after day among the people, yet, the extent of his or her work is not fully understood nor appreciated.

Mrs. Buckhouse must carry a supply of stamps, stamped envelopes, postal cards, a registry receipt book, and change or address cards. She is allowed to do errands for patrons, so

long as it does not delay the delivery of the mail. As is the case with all postal employees, she is under bond to insure a faithful performance of her duties.

On returning to the postoffice she must fill out a trip report, a record must be kept of every piece of mail collected, and all new names or changes of addresses entered in her route directory. Besides these, there are many other minor details to look after, including the purchasing of supplies for the next day, and, as per order, doing the will of her patrons.

Silently, day after day, her task is accomplished; silently she moves within her little sphere, secluded, as it were, from the world at large. Daily her watch-care in withdrawal from her true-self—the one for whom she lives, on whom her thoughts are ever stayed. Luckily, her two children are fast nearing the age of maturity. Denying, economizing, sacrificing, the true mother is laboring with hand and brain in their support, keeping them in school against odds. Her reliability easily surpasses every responsibility allied to her position. An example of her keen sense of duty is found in the unrelenting fulfillment of her work.

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## The Government Is to Open the Flathead Reservation

Which will afford thousands of homesteads on the finest, richest and most productive land in the United States, to the general public. All persons in possession of their homestead rights will have the privilege of registering for a tract of this valuable land. The President's proclamation has been issued and registration will open July 15, 1909. You have no time to lose. Write at once for our free literature and information.

**Flathead Reservation Information Agency**  
**Box Q** **Missoula, Montana**

A. W. McKeown B. F. Thraikill

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