THE MEMPHIS DAILY APPEAL.

BY M'CLANAHAN, TROUSDALE & DILL. MEMPHIS, FRIDAY, JUNE 17, 1859. VOLUME X.--NUMBER 141.

Daily Appeal.

POST OFFICE MATTERS.

The Postmaster-General has ordered the discontinuance of the distributing offices at Abington, Chattanooga and Tuscumbia, after the first of July next. It seems to us that all distributing offices ought to be abolished. Why cannot postmasters mail letters and send papers direct to their destination as readily as to a distributing office, where they have to be delayed, and then remailed? We hope every one will be discontinued, and the mail matter be no longer delayed by them.

The above, from the Huntsville *Mercury*, has taken, we did not doubt, the correct view of the subject to which it relates; but finding from other sources that different, and as we believed erroneous, opinions were entertained in various sections of the country concerning it, we have sought from the Post Office Department the views which actuated it in discontinuing the distributing offices referred to in the recent order, and which will induce it to discontinue others as soon as time will permit; and we find the following to be the reasons which governed the Postmaster-General in his judgment, and which we think will be entirely satisfactory to the community at large:

The distributing system in connection with the postal establishment of the United States, existing in no other country as far as known, and was devised in the early years of the Republic, to insure certainty and regularity in the transmission of letters and packages between remote points. This was when the nation was emerging from the Revolution, and population spreading in vacant and unoccupied lands; when the names of many localities were necessarily either unknown or imperfectly known to the offices in the old States, and some shipping places short of remote points, and particularly of new settlements and offices were essential to the safe transit and delivery of correspondence. This was, also, before the era of steamboats and railways—when mails were conveyed on horses, in sulkies and stages, over rough and mountainous roads, and through almost trackless forests and prairies, subjecting letters and small packages to injury from friction and from wet, unless closely and securely enveloped. These facts rendered it necessary for some larger offices to be designated as receptacles for the correspondence of a district of Territory to which it could be addressed in aggregate packages, and from which it could be distributed to the more remote and obscure places of destination with facility and safety. The conveyances for the mails, offices for conveying passengers, allowed and required long pause at particular stations for their refreshment, during which there was sufficient time for examining, distributing, and despatching mails, without subjecting them to further delays; and it was one of the earliest instructions of the Department that "post-masters and distributing officers are to distribute and remail all letters *before the departure of the mail*, and on no account delay them a single post."

During that period, and in that state of things, many points were central and convenient for such distribution, which cannot be so, and in fact became mere obstructions to the rapid transit of correspondence, as improvements were made in the modes and speed of conveyance. Thus in Old Bennington, and Brattleboro', in Vermont; Portsmouth, in New Hampshire; Pittsfield, in Massachusetts; Sharon, Suffield and Stamford, in Connecticut; Wilmington, Delaware; Chambersburg and Easton, in Pennsylvania; Marietta, in Ohio; Salem, in North Carolina, etc., etc., were located with distributing offices, and at later periods Hanover and Walpole, New Hampshire; Windsor, Vermont; Oswego, New York; Hagerstown, Maryland; Zanesville, Ohio; etc., etc., are found on the list, and we doubt not do useful duty in their local sphere; but, as improvements advanced, they were severally discontinued—in every case, probably, acceptable to the citizens and the remonstrances of their respective incumbents, who found their emoluments sensibly diminished.

In reference to many of the offices mentioned, distribution was discontinued while the mails were yet carried to stages; the delays and uncertainty were then being found prejudicial to the public interest.

As railroads were constructed and the mails carried upon them, the evils of the system became more and more glaring; letters would be from twelve to twenty-four hours in correspondence, and causing very loud and just complaint. Since the completion of twenty-four thousand miles of railroad, now in operation and carrying the mails, many offices have been favorably located for distribution became nearly useless, the travel and mails having passed around them, and thus largely increasing the evils of detention.

It has long been apparent to the Department that the causes which induced distributing offices no longer have generally ceased to exist, and that the time was not distant when the system must be abolished, except, perhaps, in a few of the larger cities, where facilities always exist for a limited and rapid distribution without delaying correspondence.

The emoluments derived by postmasters at distributing offices consist of a commission on the letters distributed. The commission-system never contemplated such results. It was adopted, This was afterward increased by law to seven per cent., and then to five and a-half per cent., at which it now stands. It is obviously the interest of those having charge of such offices to increase business of the kind to the utmost, and, though expressly forbidden by the department to use their influence to divert its legitimate channel, it has often been done, and it is believed that the post office revenue has in this manner been largely defrauded. Letters have been subjected, in many instances, to the tax of from one to three additional postages, in order that the postmaster may receive his commission, and in some cases the distribution commission, which is 10 cents per hundred, or 1 cent on each letter, is paid to the postmaster at the place of mailing, and yet the letter is sent to the distributing office, which is well known, and so on along the next route, than to reach the ultimate distribution circle to which the office at which it belongs is nearer in avidity to swell the commission fund encourages the practice. But this is not the worst. On being detained to receive a distribution mailing, the letter, in nine cases out of a hundred, loses its connection with the outgoing mails, and serious unnecessary delays are thus occasioned.

"In a former report, I showed that 'distribution' is obsolete in other countries, and entirely unsuited to the present state of our mails."

Distribution duties confer no advantages whatever on the city or town where the office is located. Its mails are not expedited a moment, or its facilities increased in the slightest degree. In fact, the time required after the arrival of the mail, to do the necessary distribution delays by so much the opening of the office for the delivery of letters and papers to the citizens.

The following are the offices embraced in the order to which reference has been made: Portland, Me.; Providence, R. I.; Hartford, Conn.; Troy, N. Y.; Erie, Penn.; Abingdon, Va.; Asheville, N. C.; Maysville, Ky.; Chattanooga, Tenn.; Tuscumbia, Ala.; Natchez, Miss., and Independence, Mo.

It is the intention of the Department to issue very shortly new instructions as to the mode of putting up and despatching mail matter, which has heretofore passed through distributing offices, with the design of giving more celerity to correspondence. We doubt not it will also give more satisfaction to the community than the present distributing system. To accomplish this end, however, it will be indispensably necessary for all postmasters, route-agents, special-agents, etc., of the Department to render their hearty and efficient aid in carrying out the new plan. This, the Postmaster-General will require, and a failure on their part to do so, will not be excused.—*Washington Constitution.*

SOME OLD TEXANS.

Among the recent visitors at the city of San Antonio was Col. Horton, a planter in Wharton county, Texas. He was one of the pioneer settlers of the colony of Texas, and was in command of the detachment of mounted men, attached to Col. Fannin's ill-fated command. A San Antonio paper says of this feature of his career:

He had arrived from Matagorda on the 19th, and on the 20th was ordered to reconnoitre the enemy who was advancing, and make a charge upon the enemy at the Mission, who retreated to the infantry, encamped among the timber. Col. Horton then fell back on good order, Fannin having determined upon a retrograde movement. Col. Horton, with his mounted men, proceeded on the Victoria road; the fort was dismantled, the buildings burnt, and the Texas force, consisting of about 300 men, moved forward. Col. Horton was sent in advance to examine the Colorado crossing. Soon the enemy made their appearance, consisting of 350 cavalry. Soon after this, Col. Horton's men heard the firing of the enemy's infantry in the rear. They then turned back, after giving the 350 cavalry a warm reception, and arrived in sight of Fannin and his men in time to see them surrounded by the enemy, consisting of some 1200. Moore, Col. Horton's Lieutenant, believed that any attempt to cut through the enemy and reach their comrades was utterly hopeless. He dashed off, taking with him nearly all of the men. Horton, being almost entirely alone, was compelled to retreat to Victoria.

Col. Horton served as Lieut. Governor of Texas, when Gen. Henderson was Governor. He has led a quiet, useful life since his retirement from public life, but the modest, reserved manners habitual to him, as to many of the our Texan leaders, covers qualities that command, as they deserve, esteem.

A recent number of the Goliad *Messenger*, noticing the presence, in that section of country, of the Rev. W. P. Smith, of Fayette county, says of him:

The Doctor is an old Texan, having been twenty-four years in the country. Coming just on the eve of the Texan revolution, he was a prominent actor in that arduous struggle which made Texas an independent Republic.

Being both a doctor and preacher, he received the appointment of surgeon and chaplain to the Texan army; was in the first engagement, which took place near Gonzales. At about 11 o'clock on the night previous to the battle, the enemy approached the camp under a hollow square. Dr. Smith, seated on his horse, made them a very patriotic address—urging each soldier to go into the field of strife with the words of his commander, Patrick Henry as graven on his soul, and falling from his lips—

"Give me liberty, or give me death!"

Dr. John T. Forney, oldest son of the late David S. Forney, of Carlisle, Pa., died in Liberia on the 9th of February last. The Frederick (Md.) *Examiner*, speaking of his death, says:

The deceased led a life of considerable adventure and vicissitude. Once he taught a school as a young man in Emmettsburg District; afterward he graduated as a physician, and as a surgeon. In the Texan army he was present at the battle of San Jacinto, and in other engagements during that war. Upon the breaking out of the war with Mexico, Dr. Forney, as assistant surgeon, was on board the ship of the American squadron at the investment and capture of Vera Cruz, and subsequently served three years on the coast of Africa, as commodore's secretary, until after the Administration of President Pierce, he received the appointment of U. S. Commercial Agent for Liberia, which he held until his death.

The Eufaula (Ala.) *Spirit of the South* records the death of Mr. McDougald McLean, who served as a volunteer in the Texan war of independence. It says:

"He was present at the battle of San Jacinto, and for many years past, on each 21st April, the anniversary of that action, he was in the habit of firing the cannon in honor of the day. On its last return, he was confined to his bed, but some thoughtful friends performed the obsequious duty for him, and we gave the old soldier were greeted with the accustomed sound. He was buried by the Masonic fraternity and the Eufaula Rifles.

"NO ARBITRICK WITH DOUGLAS."

From the Nashville Union, June 9.

So says a regular, steady-going, old-fashioned, Federal, Whig, Know-Nothing paper of Georgia. "No arbitrick with Douglas." Senator Brown and his friends, Democrats, have the same reason to exclaim. "No arbitrick with Douglas," will all certain who desire to see the Democratic party defeated in 1860. "No arbitrick" with Douglas," is shouted by many honest, but we think most mistaken, voices at the South. There had been no occasion for the cry in this latitude, and there been a more conscientious adherence to bargains, fairly made and fully understood at the time, and a clearer recollection of the political history of the last ten years, than it would be the bargain was duly ratified by the votes of the people in every southern State.

We said the other day, and we say it with a conscientious belief in the absolute truth to the argument, that no public man has ever been so misunderstood and so misrepresented as Judge Douglas at the South, and we pretty first that his growing prominence as a Presidential candidate has had not a little to do with the attempts to injure him. Some men, and that of the way of other aspirants of smaller calibre and statesmanship. The effect upon a man of less steadfastness of purpose than Judge Douglas would have been most unfortunate. Throw him