

# WILDERNESS POST OFFICES

A HISTORY OF POSTAL SERVICE IN THE  
WILDERNESS AREA OF THE SALMON  
RIVER MOUNTAINS OF CENTRAL IDAHO

BY  
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"SHEEPHERDER BILL" BORDEN, MAIL CARRIER, 1897  
WARREN, IDAHO

HERITAGE PROGRAM  
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# WILDERNESS POST OFFICES

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Peter Preston

"Neither snow nor rain  
Nor heat nor gloom of night  
Stays these couriers  
From the swift completion  
Of their appointed rounds"

PROLOGUE

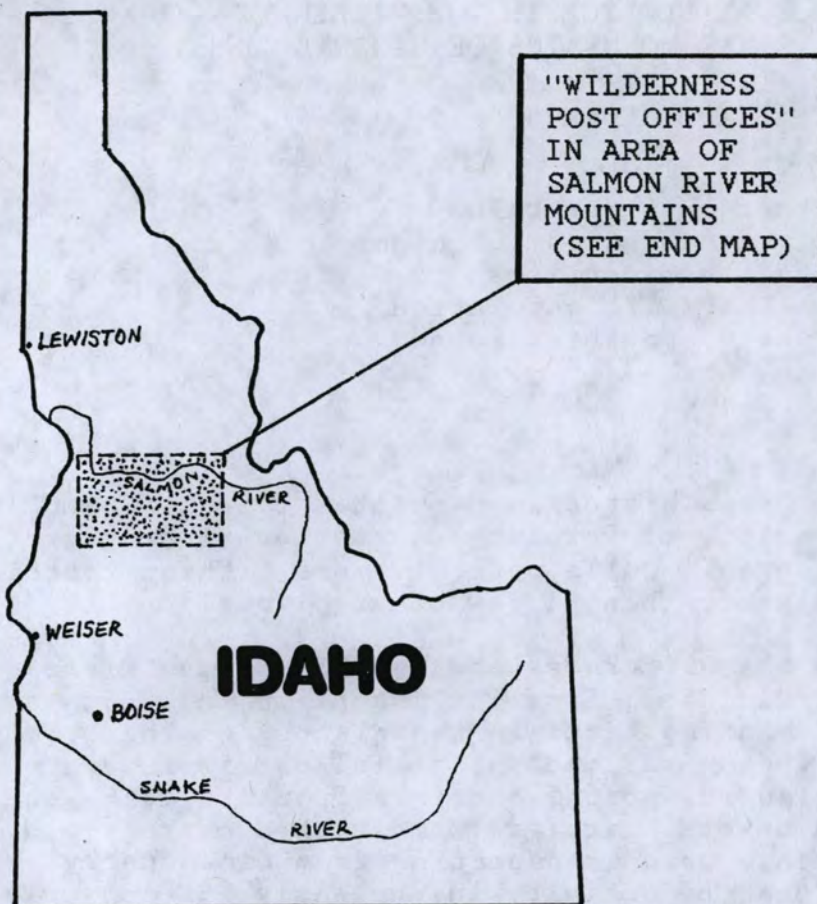
Attributed to the Greek historian Herodotus (circa 500 BCE), describing the fidelity of Persian mounted postal couriers, the inscription above is quite possibly more fitting to this regional postal history than to few other places.

Postal service in the wilderness area of the Salmon River Mountains in central Idaho, from its inception in 1863, was one of the most demanding tasks in the history of the U.S. Postal Service. In the early days, postal carriers were stymied by winter snows, postal carriers froze to death on their routes, and several carriers were robbed of the gold dust and bullion they were transporting from backcountry mines. Since the peak of activity in the early 1900's, only a few miners and ranchers remain living in the wilderness area; however, postal service is still provided by what may be one of the more unique combinations of automotive and aerial delivery in use today.

Geographically, this history covers the area of the north-eastern part of the Payette National Forest, south of the Salmon River, including the historic mining town of Warren and its environs, and the backcountry area now identified as the Frank Church - River of No Return Wilderness.

This history includes a chronological narrative and location map, and appendices including (1) a transcript of an 1879 newspaper article, (2) detailed locations of the post offices and identification of early postmasters, (3) detailed locations of the post offices on the South Fork of the Salmon River, (4) a chronology of known postal carriers, and (5) historic and current methods of mail delivery to Warren.





#### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Salmon River Mountains of central Idaho were uninhabited by Euro-Americans until 1861, when gold was discovered at Florence on the north side of the Salmon River. Prospectors ranging out of Florence in 1862 discovered gold on the high plateau on the south side of the Salmon River, at the current townsite of Warren, 50 miles northeast of McCall. As the gold camp of Warren (originally named Washington) was populated, postal service was provided at least by 1863. In a short time, prospectors ranged out of Warren to the backcountry of the South Fork of the Salmon River, the Big Creek drainage, and the high plateau of Chamberlain Basin. Isolated mines, homesteads, and tiny hamlets were established in this vast wilderness for which the U.S. Government was obligated to provide postal service, a most colorful and perhaps unique chapter in the history of the U.S. Postal Service and the Payette National Forest.



## EARLY SALMON RIVER CROSSINGS

The gold seekers finding their way to the Salmon River Mountains did so by traveling from the north, from Lewiston across the Camas Prairie, to establish the gold camp of Florence on the north side of the Salmon River in 1861. Mail and freight were brought to Florence from Walla Walla to Lewiston by river boat, then overland to Mt Idaho (Grangeville) on the Camas Prairie, then by pack animals on the Melnor Trail (for Mose Melnor who established the trail) to Florence. At this time period there was no communication or commercial connection with the Boise Valley communities to the south, due principally to the ruggedness of the intervening terrain. Striking out from Florence, prospectors ventured south, crossing the deep Salmon River canyon to climb the steep mountains on the south side to find rich "diggings" on the high plateau in 1862, at the current townsite of Warren. The mining camp was quickly populated and freight and mail service began in 1863 as an extension of the route from Lewiston to Florence.

Crossing the Salmon River between Florence and Warren was a major obstacle for men and pack animals, which was the mode of transport at that time. In 1863, Frederick and Susan Shearer established a homestead and ferry on the Salmon River at the mouth of Elk Creek, now identified as Elkhorn Creek. Shearer's Ferry was a major crossing point for almost 30 years. A hostel was established by the Shearer's to accommodate travelers and they raised vegetables and fruits to be sold to the residents of Warren. The postal route passed through this point for many years and it was here that mail was transferred from one carrier to another, and later from wagon transport from the north to human or pack animal for the tortuous climb up the trail to Warren. U.S. Post Office "Shearer's Ferry" existed here 1874-1888, tended by the Shearer's. The ferry was essentially put out of business when the State Road Bridge was completed in December 1892 at the mouth of French Creek.

A second Salmon River crossing of that era was the Wire Bridge, so named because it was a cable-supported suspension bridge, four feet wide, anchored into the rock on either side of the river. It was located at the bottom of the eastern trail from Florence near the mouth of Meadow Creek (the lower portion is now identified as Wind River). The bridge was built in 1864 by Stephen Fenn, Gus Woodward, and James Hunt, where Hunt had established by 1867 a hostel called the Meadow Creek Ferry House. By 1867 James Hunt and partner F.G. Hart were operating an express business on this route, carrying freight and mail between Warren and Lewiston. The bridge was taken down by high waters several times



in its life and immediately rebuilt. The bridge had a succession of owners, the last being brothers James and John Carey (not related to rancher-author John Carrey of Riggins). The wire bridge, like Shearer's Ferry, ceased to be of use when the State Road Bridge, at the mouth of French Creek, was completed in December 1892. The Wire Bridge was knocked down by high water in 1894 and not rebuilt.

#### MAIL ROUTES TO WARREN IN THE EARLY YEARS

When the gold mining camp at Warren was established in 1862 the isolated community had a hunger for news from "civilization", resulting in mail service beginning in 1863. Mail was carried by individuals contracted by the U.S. Government who made the trip from Lewiston, through Florence, across the Salmon River, and up the tortuous trail to Warren on horseback and on foot. The arduous trip took about nine days in one direction, a distance of 170 miles. The mail carriers did their task under the worst of conditions and their service was much appreciated by the Warren residents; however, their payment by the Government was irregular in the early years, causing the carriers to periodically quit.

On 28 January 1868 a U.S. post office, named Washington, was established at the Warren mining camp. This action provided security for items of value being sent from Warren by mail, especially gold dust and bullion which could be registered. The theft of registered mail was a federal offense and had some effect on deterring robberies, but not entirely. The post office name was officially changed to Warren on 14 August 1885, acknowledging the camp's discoverer James H Warren.

Warren was initially commercially tied to Lewiston by the transportation route through Florence that existed at that time. By 1872, with the establishment of the territorial capital at Boise City, in the southwestern part of Idaho Territory, some Warren residents began looking in that direction for commercial connection. It was noted, for example, that for Norman B Willey (who later became governor of Idaho) to attend the Legislative Council in Boise, required a 500-mile journey through Lewiston and Walla Walla, where the direct distance was about 120 miles. In 1872 a road from Boise through Long Valley was proposed but not pursued. Also in 1872, Dr Charles A Sears, physician and postmaster at Warren (Washington at that time), proposed to build a toll road from the Boise Valley up the Weiser River to Meadows Valley (current site of New Meadows; in early days known as Meadows, Salmon Meadows, or Little Salmon Meadows, the source of the Little Salmon River).



Supported by public interest for a mail route from Boise to Warren, the U.S. Post Office Department advertised on 14 October 1873 for a contract carrier for a mail route that would follow the Weiser River from Indian Valley (near Council) to Meadows, thence to Warren. The first four-year contract was won by Solon Hall, who had built the first toll bridge across the South Fork of the Salmon about 1872. In early 1874 Hall moved his family to Indian Valley, the southern terminus of the route. Hall, his son Edgar, William J Kelly, and Tommy Clay were the carriers, backpacking forty pound loads on the 125-mile route. Hall built a series of cabins at 18 to 20-mile intervals along the route and Kelly cleared a trail along the west side of Payette Lake. This route turned out to be a particularly difficult one, with the section between Payette Lake and Warren snowbound at least six months of the year. As a result, mail deliveries on the Weiser River route took as long as two weeks, much to the dissatisfaction of the Warren patrons. The northern route to Lewiston continued in operation with a nine to ten day transit time. In 1882 the contract carrier fee advertised by the U.S. Post Office Department was \$2780 per year from Lewiston to Mount Idaho (Grangeville) and \$1770 from Mount Idaho to Warren.

In 1878 the Weiser River route was taken over by Calvin R White, using his Meadows Valley homestead as his base of operations (he subsequently established and became postmaster of Meadows Post Office in 1882). In 1879, Norman B Wiley wrote a most descriptive newspaper article about the Weiser River mail route which is reprinted as Appendix 1. Mail carrier Tommy Clay moved his family from Warren to Meadows in 1880 and William Baird joined the ranks of mail carriers.

As a result of continuing difficulties with the Weiser River route, it was discontinued in 1886. Mail service to Warren was continued to be provided from Lewiston. George Shearer, Warren miner and son of Fred Shearer (Shearer's Ferry), became the sub-contract mail carrier on this route in 1886 and moved his family and base of operations to Mount Idaho. At this time mail service to Warren was provided twice weekly. The Weiser River route was reinstated in 1893 and the northern route from Lewiston was permanently discontinued in 1894; however, a direct mail route from Meadows to Grangeville was established in 1902, following the Little Salmon and Salmon Rivers. The route from Meadows to Warren was improved, which followed steep Goose Creek to Payette Lake at Lardo, then followed the west side of the lake to a stopover spot at the upper end of the lake called "State House", another stopover at Little Lake (now Upper Payette Lake), then Warm Springs (Burgdorf), and on to Warren.



## HARDSHIPS ENDURED BY EARLY MAIL CARRIERS

For a 1940 newspaper feature, former mail carrier Edward I. Osborn of Meadows, provided some handed-down family stories about the hardships experienced by Tommy Clay, whose son Henry Clay, also a mail carrier, was Ed Osborn's stepfather.

One of the incidents involved the provisioning of the line cabins in 1875. When Tommy Clay's pack string reached a ford on the upper Weiser River (at the current location of the Evergreen sawmill at Tamarack), a pack of twelve wolves was feasting on a dead horse. One bold wolf leaped on the saddle of one of the pack horses, ripped the canvas with its claws, and consumed a chunk of bacon. Wild animals often gave trouble in the winter, but Tommy Clay never carried a gun, relying on a knife.

Each cabin along the mail carrier route had a supply of beeswax, tallow, and sperm oil for dressing the skis essential to winter travel. The scents of these dressings attracted wolves, wolverines, and bears. On a winter mail run the carrier found that the first cabin had been ransacked by a wolverine, with all foodstuffs eaten and flour scattered on the floor. The mail carrier went hungry that night, with the thought that he would eat at the next cabin the following day. At the end of the next day, he found that cabin also ransacked. The carrier bravely endured his hunger, believing he would find food at the next cabin. The third cabin had also been robbed of food, so the carrier finally stumbled into a Council Valley homestead, faint from hunger, at the end of his fourth day without food.

In another winter incident, the mail carrier prepared extra food at one of the line cabins, so that it would be ready for him when he stopped there on his return trip. Although the carrier was unaware of what had happened, the weather warmed and some the food he had prepared became tainted. He ate the food, went to sleep and, during the night, awakened with great pain from food poisoning. By morning most of his illness had passed and he went on to the next cabin.

Tommy Clay's daughter, Minnie Clay Dryden, told the story that her father did not show up in Warren on the planned date in February 1879 for his wedding to widow Elizabeth Osborne. There was much anxiety and a search party was sent to look for him; on the third day after the planned wedding date Tommy arrived in Warren, having been delayed by winter snows; the wedding took place and everyone celebrated. (The Clay's moved from Warren to Meadows in 1880, taking up residence in Goose Creek House [Packer John's Cabin]).



In an interview for a newspaper article in the September 25, 1941, issue of the Lewiston Tribune, William E Warden, mail carrier on the Mount Idaho-Warren route in 1886-1888, told the following story, "I carried the mail to Warren for three years, winter and summer and would doubtless have been on the job longer if I had not sustained critical injury (in the spring of 1888). My horse stumbled on a bridge crossing Secesh Creek when it was at flood stage. He fell with me and I struck in such a manner that I was paralyzed from the hips down. My dog always accompanied me on the mail route. The dog sensed trouble and ran back down the trail about two miles to the pack camp operated by Jim Welch. He mounted a mule, followed the dog and found me paralyzed. Other men followed him, they built a stretcher and carried me to their camp. A doctor who had turned prospector was called (Dr. J.O.M. Ford). All he could do was fill me up on morphine. They carried me on the stretcher all the way to Grangeville. After undergoing treatment for two years at Portland I finally regained use of my limbs."

A story is told by John Carrey about Joe Davis who carried mail on the Warren-Edwardsburg-Big Creek route beginning in 1918. On one mail run Joe "had the horses tailed together and no halters, just ropes around their necks. When he was coming around the grade from Elk Creek, which used to be high on the hillside, one horse pulled back. That started the whole string to pulling back. Finally the third horse from the rear broke loose and went over the bank end-over-end. All three horses were rolling at once until they came to a tree and wrapped around that. Joe came running to our house (Tom Carrey Ranch, now USFS South Fork Guard Station) for help. You should have seen the U.S. Post Office scattered all over the hillside and one horse dead - choked. When we could not gather it all up (the mail), Joe said, 'the Post Office Department in Washington, D.C., could come and get it!'"

#### INTO THE WILDERNESS

By 1872 several ranches had been established in the lower altitude of the South Fork of the Salmon River, about twelve miles by trail southeast of Warren. These ranches produced foodstuffs for the residents of Warren and became stopover spots for prospectors working their way east into the Big Creek drainage and Chamberlain Basin. New mineral discoveries led to a minor boom beginning in 1891, with hundreds of miners transiting the South Fork. The volume of traffic and backcountry activity first led to the establishment of a mail carrier route then the Hall Post Office on the South Fork in 1894. The Thunder Mining boom in 1901 led to the establishment of the Roosevelt Post Office there in 1902, followed by Edwardsburg (Big Creek) in 1904. The Hall Post Office was discontinued in 1899, but two other South Fork post offices followed, Comfort and Brewer. See Appendix 3 for a description of the South Fork post offices.



The backcountry route went easterly from Warren, descending over 4000 feet to a stopover on the South Fork, ascending 5000 feet on the Elk Creek trail to Elk Summit, down to Edwardsburg for a stopover, then down Big Creek and up Monumental Creek to terminate at Roosevelt. When the town of Roosevelt was abandoned, the mail route was reterminated on lower Big Creek, at the Clover Post Office, established in 1914.

During the winter of 1901-1902, mail carrier Crosby "Curley" Brewer received \$100 per month for twice-monthly mail delivery to Thunder Mountain, paid collectively by the independent miners and the Dewey Mining Company. Brewer built several small cabins along this route, one on the Elk Creek trail known as "Smokehouse" because its fireplace always smoked. This was a difficult route, especially the tortuous Elk Creek section. The winter hazards on this route are reflected in the deaths of at least three mail carriers in the early years. It was on the Elk Creek trail that "Three Finger" Smith's 14-year old son Bobby froze to death carrying the mail in February 1890. In December 1902, mail carrier Frank Payne was killed in a snowslide on the Edwardsburg side of Elk Summit, and in January 1914 mail carrier Perry Watson was killed in a snowslide on the Roosevelt trail.

#### STAGECOACH ROBBERIES

With the general knowledge that the mail in and out of Warren carried gold dust, gold bullion, and other registered valuables, the mail was occasionally robbed in transit, but not often as everyone knew everyone and it was very difficult for a robber to exit the area without being caught. As illustrations, the following newspaper accounts document two of the robberies.

Idaho County (Grangeville) Free Press, November 12, 1897:  
"Mail Robbed - On November 2, the mail was robbed about 4:30 up Steamboat Creek at the Big Corduroy (about 7 miles west of Warren) by one man. He took all the registered mail and letters on the incoming mail to Warrens. It is estimated that the robber got away with at least \$4000. A sheriff's posse of eight men are out but it is raining and doubtful if they will catch him tonight. He had about an hour's start. He wore a grain sack for a mask and one on each foot up to above his knees. He had a fire by the side of the road and no horse in sight. He was armed with a Winchester rifle and made the mail carrier cut the (mail) sack....Later, all letters and registered mail was found at the scene of the robbery, all opened. No trace of the robber yet."



Weiser City Leader, July 8, 1905:

"Stage Is Robbed By Lone Highwayman - On Friday morning, July 7th, at about 8:30 a.m. the outgoing Warren-Meadows stage was held up by a lone highwayman about three miles this side of Resort (Burgdorf). The robber stopped the coach and at the point of a gun forced passenger George Patterson to cut open the mail sacks and he took out all the registered mail. The stage contained three passengers, one of them M.B. Graye, Warren postmaster, and it followed there was a rapid collection of valuables from the passengers. The robber was unknown to the driver and passengers. As soon as he had finished his purpose, the robber rode off into the mountains in the direction of Warrens. He was unmasked and made no attempt to hid his features. The postal authorities have been notified and efforts will be made to capture him. It is not known how much money he secured from the mail sacks. A messenger brought the news to Lardo from whence it was telephoned to Meadows."

Idaho County (Grangeville) Free Press, October 5, 1905:

"Stage Robber Caught, Bullion Recovered - A dispatch from Boise reports the capture of the stage robber who in July held up the stage between Warren and Meadows. Postal Inspector Thomas J. Clark and Special Inspector Fullenwider have recovered sixty ounces of gold bullion worth about \$1200 stolen from the Warren stage. The bullion was found buried near the government fish hatchery in the vicinity of Ontario (Oregon). It was discovered that the box had been sent from Meadows by express to Frank Pope at Ontario and the inspectors suspected that this contained the stolen gold and placed Pope under arrest, put him in the 'sweatbox' and he finally confessed and led the officers to the spot where it was buried. John Gideon was arrested for the holdup and is held in the state penitentiary in Boise awaiting trial before the federal court. It is understood that Pope will not be prosecuted. The bullion is the property of the Golden Rule Mining Co. operating near Warren."

#### ROAD IMPROVEMENTS, 1890-1906

In 1890, the year that Idaho Territory achieved statehood, a road improvement plan began which called for building a wagon road from Mount Idaho to Meadows by way of Warm Springs (Burgdorf). The wagon road route was generally to follow the existing pack trail through Florence, down to the Salmon River on the western route from Florence, cross the Salmon at a bridge to be constucted at the mouth of French Creek, up the steep grade by the Knott ranch on French Creek to the head of Lake Creek, and down Lake Creek to Warm Springs. From Warm Springs the wagon road route followed the trail south to Payette Lake, to Lardo, then down Goose Creek to Meadows.



Constuction of the wagon road, in four sections, began in September 1890. Turning the existing trail into a wagon road from Warm Springs to Warren, a distance of about twenty miles, was not part of the State Road appropriation, so the miners and merchants of Warren collected \$2000 to have the road built with local labor. The route was completed with the opening of the steel State Bridge, crossing the Salmon River at the mouth of French Creek, in December 1892. The road work cost \$32,240 and the steel bridge cost \$9009. Due to neglect of maintenance the steel bridge collapsed in November 1901 and crossing the Salmon River reverted to a ferry at the bridge site, operated by A.T. Reynolds.

At the beginning of the Thunder Mountain boom, the area was accessed by the existing trail from Edwardsburg down Big Creek then up Monumental Creek; this was the early mail route. In 1900-1901 the Three-Blaze Trail (so called because of the tree markings) was established to shorten the distance to Thunder Mountain for prospectors and suppliers coming from the north. This trail came through Dixie on the north side of the Salmon River, crossed the Salmon at Campbell's Ferry, through Chamberlain Basin to Big Creek, then up the existing trail on Monumental Creek. The portion of this trail from Campbell's Ferry to the Big Creek trail is identified on current USFS maps as the Chamberlain Trail. This trail was not used as a mail route, except possibly for privately-carried mail.

A State-funded wagon road was built in 1904 to Thunder Mountain (Roosevelt Post Office) on a southern approach from Long Valley through Knox, generally following the old Caswell trail. Mail service to Roosevelt by the southern route was discontinued in January 1904 because the carriers, underestimating conditions, were not able to maintain the supply stations along the route. As a result, mail service to Roosevelt reverted to privately-contracted carriers from Warren by way of the South Fork.

In 1905 a State-funded wagon road was begun to take the place of the long-used trail from Warren to Edwardsburg by way of the South Fork. The 35-mile route was completed in late 1906, including a substantial log bridge at the current bridge crossing at the South Fork Guard Station (the 1906 bridge, as well as several others that followed, were periodically washed away by high water until the current steel bridge was built in 1936). This new wagon road expedited mail and freight delivery to Edwardsburg and beyond, however, Elk Summit remained a formidable obstacle for mail carriers for the many months of deep winter snow.



At an unrecorded time, a wagon road was extended from Edwardsburg down Big Creek to the mouth of Monumental Creek, then up Crooked Creek about three miles to reach the Snowshoe Mine. During its time of use, probably until the early 1930's, this wagon road facilitated delivery of mail to Clover Post Office (also Cabin Creek) on lower Big Creek. This Big Creek wagon road reverted to a trail with the establishment of the Idaho Primitive Area in 1931, which has since become the Frank Church - River of No Return Wilderness, a designated roadless area.

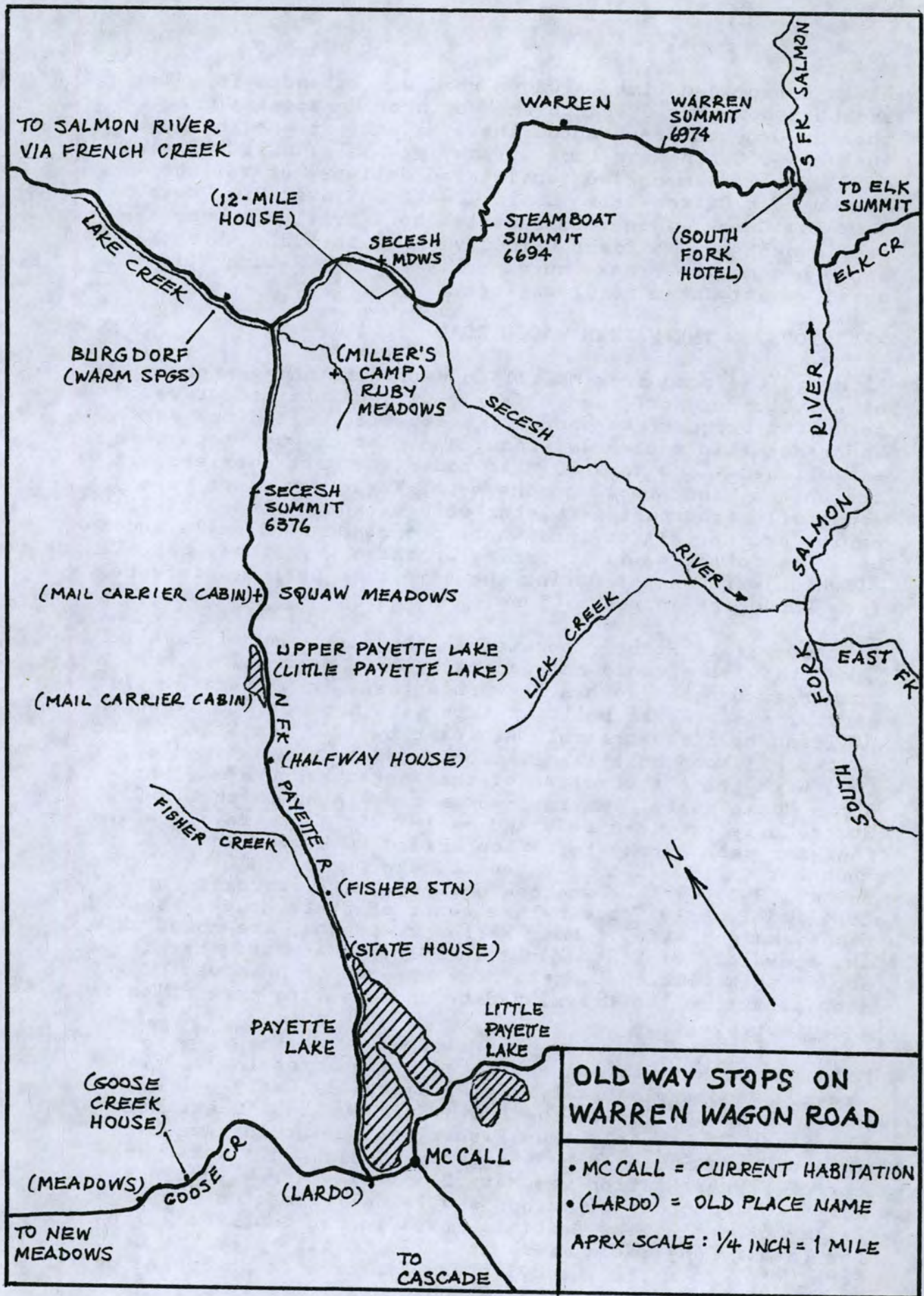
#### WAY STOPS ON THE WARREN WAGON ROAD

Although the road from McCall to Warren is today a paved highway to Burgdorf, and a fairly-well maintained gravel road from Burgdorf to Warren, it is still called the Warren Wagon Road. In the early years, a number of way stops were established along this 50-mile route for mail carriers, freighters, and people on the move. These way stops were especially important as winter refuges and included small cabins and hostels or inns where one could find meals and a bed. The following is a listing of those way stops, not all of which were in use during the same time period. Distances from Lardo are approximations.

Mile 10: State House - Located at the north end of Payette Lake, this site could be reached by boat or trail in the summer/autumn, or across the frozen lake in winter. A mail carrier's cabin was built at this site around 1876 by Solon Hall and/or his carriers. At least by 1888 the State House hostel had been built and was operated by a man named St Cyr. With the construction of the Warren Wagon Road, the State House hostel was an important way stop in the 1890's. State House provided beds and meals (25c) for travelers and feed for pack stock. Ezra "Lou" Baird took over the mail contract in 1906 and is noted to have purchased State House in May 1906. Carl Brown took over the mail contract for 1910-1914 and 1916-1917 and became owner of State House. Frank Hendricks and wife, former Warren residents, are noted as the operators of State House in 1918. It appears that it was around this time that State House ceased to be a useful way stop as automobile travel had begun, covering more miles in a day's travel.

Mile 13: Fisher Station - Located at the crossing of Fisher Creek. Reportedly built by William (Bill) Cadby who was known to have moved to the South Fork by 1905 to establish the South Fork Hotel, thus Fisher Station would have been in operation at least by the early 1900's. The last operator of Fisher Station was Mary Blackwell Carrey Dustin (great grandmother of author's wife Sally Preston), wife of Bailey O Dustin. The Dustin's moved to the South Fork, to the former Pony Smead Ranch in 1912, to take over the South Fork Hotel from Bill Cadby; thus, Fisher Station ceased operation by 1912 and the building subsequently fell down.







Mile 16: Halfway House - So named as it was half way between McCall and Burgdorf. This way stop appears to have replaced Fisher Station. It was in operation at least by 1916, as it was here that Charles C Zumwalt based his McCall to Warren mail carrier contract, subsequently taken again by Carl Brown, including Halfway House. Jasper Harp and wife were noted as operating Halfway House in 1932, with Jasper carrying the mail for contractor Esten Freeman. During winter operations, at least by 1933, a caboose-style sled was drawn by a caterpillar tractor (see Appendix 5), driven by Ennis Johnson from McCall to Halfway, then Jasper Harp on to Warren. This way stop was used at least to the late 1930's.

Mile 19: Mail carrier's cabin at Upper Payette Lake - In use in the late 1870's, but quite probably fell in to disuse by the early 1890's when the Warren Wagon Road was completed.

Mile 22: Squaw Meadows - A mail carrier's line cabin, probably in use from the late 1870's to the 1890's. The cabin was still standing in 1932. May be the same as the Upper Payette Lake cabin but identified by a different name.

Mile 32: Warm Springs/Burgdorf - Acquired by Fred Burgdorf as a homestead about 1871, Warm Springs was used as a casual way stop on the Salmon River-Warren route. In 1881 Burgdorf opened a large hotel and spa complex, taking advantage of the hot springs at this site. At the junction of both the northern and southern access routes to Warren, Warm Springs became a significant resort for many years; hence the name "Resort" for the post office established at this place in 1898, changed to "Burgdorf" in 1915. Fred Burgdorf sold the property to James Harris in 1923 and is currently owned by Jim's grandson, Dr Scott Harris of McCall. Burgdorf was an important way stop for the mail carrier, especially in the winter, until the post office here was discontinued in 1945.

Mile 39: Twelve-Mile House - Located at Secesh Meadows, about twelve miles west of Warren, hence the name. A boarding house and saloon was built by a Hubbard (perhaps Millard Hubbard) to accommodate the miners digging a placer ditch through Secesh Meadows. Clem and Fanny Blackwell (parents of Herman Blackwell) arrived in Warren in 1903 with a band of sheep for slaughter. Fanny stayed to operate the dining room at Twelve-Mile House from 1903 until 1905. In the early spring of 1905, Clem's younger sister, Mary Blackwell Carrey Dustin, arrived from Oregon with her family to take over the operation of the dining room from sister-in-law Fanny. How long Mary Dustin stayed at Twelve-Mile House is undetermined but it is known that Mary subsequently was the final operator of Fisher Station. Prior to 1918 Alex Beaton became owner/operator of Twelve-Mile House, and remained so for a number of years. At some point in time, long-term mail carrier Jack Fernan and wife Ethyl established a homestead at Secesh Meadows which became the way stop until the early 1940's.



## NOTABLE MAIL CARRIERS

The mail carriers, identified in Appendix 4, were an especially resourceful and hardy lot to deliver the mail under the most extremes of conditions. Notable among them were:

William "Shepherd Bill" Borden - Bill Borden was one of the most colorful mail carriers of the mountain region. The sketch of him on the cover of this history, taken from an 1897 photograph, illustrates the size of the load that he carried; also note the length of the skis that were used in that era. Bill is believed to have been born around 1864, a descendant of Gale Borden famed for canned milk. Bill was well educated, with a divinity degree from the University of Michigan. He could converse on any subject, but seemed to be content as a reclusive bachelor. He was primarily a prospector who found a number of rich claims in the Big Creek-Thunder Mountain area; but he never developed his claims, always selling them to large mining interests. He lived on the South Fork of the Salmon, and from that location he carried the mail, at least as early as 1897 to and from Warren. He became a lifelong friend of Carl and Ida Brown in 1908 when Bill blew a hole in his chest with a too-short dynamite fuse and Ida nursed him back to health. In 1909 he is noted as mail carrier for Ezra Baird, the contractor, for the winter run from Lardo to Warren. How long "Shepherd Bill" carried the mail is not known, but it was many years. Bill retired to a small cabin on the lower South Fork, about ten miles downriver from the Dustin Ranch, where he had a small garden and a whiskey still (Bill was a hard drinker!). In February 1932 Lavelle Thompson and three friends passed by Bill's cabin heading downriver. On his return, Lavelle found the cabin burned and Bill and his dog dead, victims of an exploded still. So ended the life of one of the more interesting mail carriers of the Salmon River Mountains.

Carl Brown - After a year or two of mining work for William Edwards, postmaster at Logan/Edwardsburg, Carl Brown took the Warren-Edwardsburg mail contract in 1909, using the current site of the USFS South Fork Guard Station as his base of operations, which he and wife Ida also operated as a traveler's way stop. He was paid \$75 per month for a weekly round trip in the winter, and \$150 per month for two round trips in the summer. Carl used his own feet, often with skis or snowshoes; dogsled; packstring of horses; horse-drawn wagon; and later, on the McCall-Warren route, a motor launch on Payette Lake, and a 1917 Oakland touring car. In the spring of 1910, he and his family moved to McCall, where he secured the McCall-Warren mail contract from 1910 to 1914, and 1916-1917. In 1914 Carl Brown became business partner of Theodore Hoff (great uncle of author's wife) in the operation of the logging and sawmill business in McCall. In 1933



Carl Brown became the patriarch of McCall, taking over the sawmill that was the lifeblood of McCall until the late 1960's. Carl was also a state senator, representing Valley County in the Idaho State Legislature.

Carrey-Dustin Family - The mail carrier role of the Carrey-Dustin family spanned three generations. Bailey O. Dustin and wife Mary Blackwell Carrey Dustin arrived in Warren in the spring of 1905, along with her children by a first marriage to "French John" Carrey. In 1912 the Dustin's acquired the former Pony Smead Ranch (now known as McClain Ranch) on the South Fork which was used as the base of operations for Bailey Dustin's mail carrier contract from Warren to Edwardsburg for the years 1912 to 1916. Working for Bailey were his Carrey stepsons Raymond (Rame), Bob, and Tom (great uncles of author's wife) and Bailey's son-in-law John Wolliston. Mary Dustin's granddaughter, Marjorie McCall Deasy, states that "Uncle Bob (Robert H Carrey) did all the work, Bailey Dustin didn't do any hard work." In 1924, Mary Dustin's youngest Carrey son, Brad, took over the Warren-Edwardsburg mail contact, then added the McCall Warren route in 1934, operating both routes until 1946. Brad Carrey's driver-assistants included his wife Margaret, daughter Mary (Mende), and son-in-law Willard Gribble. Mary Dustin's nephew Herman Blackwell was also a stage driver-mail carrier in 1906-1907 between Meadows and Warren.

#### THE PARCEL POST PROBLEM

On 1 January 1913 the parcel post handling methods and rate structure was radically changed. The new rate of 5c for the first pound, then 1c per pound thereafter up to 50 pounds, was a boon to the backcountry mail patrons, but at the same time, an almost disastrous problem to the contract mail carriers. The mail carriers doubled as freight haulers, receiving most of their income by that means. The freight rate for a 50-pound sack of flour, for example, was \$2.50 prior to parcel post. The same 50-pound sack of flour cost 54c postage and had to be carried as mail for which the contractor, at least in his mind, didn't receive adequate compensation. In another example, in 1914 Arthur "Kid" Garden at the Clover Post Office on Big Creek, had 1000 pounds of wheat and oats seed mailed to him by parcel post.

It is probable that the parcel post situation was the cause of Bailey Dustin's problem with federal authorities, as reported in the Idaho County Free Press, dated May 13, 1915: "Mail Carrier Indicted - Because he attempted to defraud the Post Office Department in manipulating parcel post tonnage on the route on which he holds a contract, B.O. Dustin of Warren was under investigation before federal grand jury Tuesday at Moscow (in northern Idaho) and a true bill was



found against him. Judge Detrich ordered a bench warrant issued for his arrest and fixed his bond at \$300. Postmaster Patterson of Warren traveled over a thousand miles to offer testimony, going via Weiser. Dustin has the route between Warren and Edwardsburg, a distance of 40 miles. It is alleged that he received parcel post matter addressed to himself sent from Boise and other points and because his residence is 15 miles from Warren (at the former Pony Smead Ranch on the South Fork), he received the matter at the Warren post office and stored it in a warehouse within the village. Dustin was paid per the hundred pounds he carried on his route and this illicit practice defrauded the government without having carried the mail."

By whatever means, Bailey Dustin beat the rap and continued as the contract carrier, as indicated in a following article in the Idaho County Free Press, dated December 16, 1915: "The mail contract between Edwardsburg and Warren remains as it was with Bailey Dustin on the job. This line is significant as it seems to handle over 100,000 pounds of incoming and outgoing parcel post this year and much more stored at Warren, having reached here after the trails closed over Elk Summit. Supplies from Boise early in September never reached Edwardsburg and has caused considerable inconvenience to men who depend upon the (mail) service for their winter's grub."

#### GOLD SHIPMENTS BY MAIL - 1933

As an illustration of the use of U.S. Postal Service for the transportation of gold, the Warren Creek Dredging Company, in the month of February 1933, sent \$44,000 in gold bullion by parcel post from Warren to the San Francisco mint. The bullion was sent as gold bars, eight inches long, four inches wide, and an inch and a half thick. Such a bar of gold was valued at \$10,000, the postage for which was \$11.50.

#### RIDING WITH THE MAIL SACKS IN THE 1940'S

Sally Preston, as great granddaughter of Mary Blackwell Carrey Dustin, was born into the mail carrier family. Sally was born in McCall in 1938 and, as a child, had numerous experiences of "riding with the mail sacks" in the 1940's. During this period Brad Carrey was the contract mail carrier from McCall to Warren and Big Creek (old Edwardsburg). Sally was very close to her great uncle and knew him as "Daddy Brad", and to Brad's daughter Mary (Mimi) Mende.

During the summers in the early 1940's, Sally would ride with Mimi in a pickup truck from McCall to Warren with the mail and supplies for the Carrey mining activity. Brad was reworking the tailings in Warren Meadows, dredging for monazite and other heavy metals during the early part of WW II.



Mimi and Sally would stay overnight in Warren, and would often make the mail run to Big Creek and return, stopping at mail drops along the way. The Lou Thompson family, and other ranchers on the lower South Fork, picked up their mail from a box nailed to a tree where the road reached the South Fork at the old Smead/Dustin Ranch.

During winter mail runs, Sally would ride with mail and supplies in the sled-mounted covered "caboose" drawn by a caterpillar tractor over the deep snow. On those trips when Sally was a passenger, "Daddy Brad" Carrey was always the tractor driver. The caboose had benches for passengers and a small stove provided heat. Sally remembers one of the frequent passengers being George "Curley" Moser, married to Sim Willey's daughter Argie, and that Curley operated the dredge for Brad Carrey. The winter sled trip to Warren, starting at the west side of Payette Lake, took two to three days, depending on weather and surface conditions. The primary stopover was Burgdorf, which was still an active post office at that time. A hot meal and a warm bed was always available from the Jim Harris family at Burgdorf, a welcomed respite from the winter cold. From Burgdorf to Warren was the second day's run, stopping at Jack Fernan's place at Secesh Meadows if necessary.

Beginning in the mid-1940's, mail would be delivered by air, along with other supplies, to the Forest Service backcountry outposts. On one occasion Sally made this trip with her father Don Park, a career USFS employee, to the Chamberlain Ranger Station. The trip to Chamberlain would be made in and out the same day in an antique Ford tri-motor aircraft, but well-suited to the backcountry job, piloted by the late Bob Fogg and Jim Larkin for Johnson Flying Service.

#### ONE OF THE LAST HORSEBACK MAIL ROUTES IN AMERICA

The Cabin Creek Star Route is the next-to-the-last mail route in the United States to have been served by a mail carrier on horseback (there currently remains a mule train route serving Supai, Arizona, on the Havasupai Indian Reservation in the bottom of the Grand Canyon). The Cabin Creek route, which had its origins with the Thunder Mountain gold rush of 1901, began at Big Creek (old Edwardsburg) and followed Big Creek downstream (east) about 30 miles, serving individual mail boxes of miners and ranchers along the way, terminating initially at the Clover Post Office at the mouth of Garden Creek, and subsequently at the Flying W Ranch at Cabin Creek. As late as 1950, mail carrier L.E. "Les" Curtis was plying this route on horseback, a two-day trip in each direction, with the turn-around point at Cabin Creek. In recent years the former privately-owned properties, in what is now the Frank Church - River of No Return Wilderness, have



been purchased by the USFS to be consistent with the wilderness designation. Only one seasonally-occupied property remains on this route: the former "Cougar Dave" Lewis/Jess Taylor Ranch, now the University of Idaho Wilderness Field Station, which has a landing strip and is provided mail service by aerial delivery on an as-needed basis.

#### THE MODERN AGE - AERIAL MAIL DELIVERY

Delivery of mail by air to snowbound backcountry hamlets began in 1931. An airstrip was created at Warren Meadows in November 1931 by A.A. Bennett, Bennett Air Transportation Company of Boise, assisted by the Warren residents. Christmas mail was taken by rail to Cascade where it was then loaded on a ski-equipped plane for delivery to Stibnite and Warren.

By the mid-1930's, Missoula-based Johnson Flying Service began occasional winter delivery of mail to Big Creek and Warren, as a supplement to the primary task of hauling cargo to backcountry locations. In 1945 Johnson Flying Service established operations at McCall Airport, with the late Bob Fogg as principal pilot and operations manager. The aircraft employed were antique Ford tri-motors and Travelairs, but well-suited to operations on the short backcountry airstrips.

With the termination of the Cabin Creek Star Route as a horseback route about 1950, Johnson Flying Service won the contract for delivery of mail by air to the few remaining ranches on that route, including Dewey Moore, John Vines, and Jess Taylor. By 1954 the USFS Chamberlain Ranger Station and Cold Meadows Guard Station had been added to the route for mail delivery while those posts were occupied from late spring to late autumn. In the 1950's other aerial delivery locations were added and eliminated on the Cabin Creek route, depending upon activity at the site. These sites included Crofoot Ranch, Campbell's Ferry, Mackay Bar, White-water, Allison Ranch, Shepp Ranch, James Ranch, Wilson Ranch, and the Golden Anchor Mine.

At the Golden Anchor were caretakers Nolan and Margie Deasy, Sally Preston's aunt and uncle. During the winter, weekly supply deliveries would be made up for the Deasy's in the McCall stores from a radio-called shopping list. As the Golden Anchor Mine does not have a landing strip, the supplies would be bundled for a parachute drop of a bit over 100 pounds. The supplies included their mail and foodstuffs, which included breakables such as shell eggs and milk in bottles, but they always survived the air drop. However, Sally remembers that their Christmas presents from her family would all be non-breakable, just to be sure.



In 1975 the 30-year domination of the backcountry air mail service by Johnson Flying Service came to an end. Arnold Aviation, based in Cascade, with Ray and Carol Arnold as owner/operators, took over the mail contract in May 1975 and remain the current contractor. The summer route now has few stops: the University of Idaho Wilderness Field Station at the Taylor Ranch, Big Creek, and USFS Chamberlain Guard Station. Two regular stops remain on the winter route: Big Creek and Warren. Burgdorf is an occasional winter stop.

#### EPILOGUE

This history came to be written as an offshoot of a yet-to-be-completed history of the Blackwell-Carrey-Hoff-Park family, of which Sally Preston is a member. While researching the family history, it was found that the family's involvement in the area's postal history, covering three generations, would be of general historical interest. The real truth is that the author became fascinated and captivated by the bits and pieces of recorded postal history and the recollections of Sally Preston and others which added personal flavor to this unique account.



APPENDIX 1

# The Idaho Statesman

BOISE CITY, IDAHO TERRITORY

MAY 3, 1879

## ROUTE FROM INDIAN VALLEY TO WARRENS

April 15, 1879 Warrens, I.T.

The mail route from Indian Valley to Warrens, after leaving the former place, generally follows the valley of the Weiser River to Council Valley. About 8 miles above Council Valley the wagon road practically ends. The trail most traveled goes over the mountains west of the river, in and out among the gulches and descends to the Weiser again at Fort Price (now Price Valley/Tamarack). From there, there is a good natural road into Little Salmon Valley (now Meadows Valley).

This valley is one of the prettiest tracts of agricultural land yet unsettled. Open prairie with excellent grass and no sagebrush. The surrounding hilly country is heavily covered with pine, spruce and tamarack. There is hope that a couple of townships will be surveyed this summer, so long as authorities are surveying tracts of land in the canyon of the Salmon River. Snow fell here about 18 inches the past winter, but ground is nearly bare now and plowing will soon commence. Wild geese, swans, ducks and cranes abound and make the air vocal with their discords. Salmon do not come up into the valley but trout are abundant. Towards the northern end of the valley is a hot springs (now a privately-owned recreational site, known for many years previously as Zim's) that a large volume of hot water flows out of the ground sufficient to keep the stream (Little Salmon) open in winter for a mile or two below.

Mr. Calvin White (later contract mail carrier and postmaster at Meadows) commenced work here on the first of last June. He built a fine double house, fenced and broke about ten acres and raised a crop of wheat and barley, some potatoes and other vegetables. His wife (Lydia, died 1891 at age 45), the only woman in the valley, with their seven children lived here during the entire Indian troubles of last summer, not wholly unconcerned it is true, and fortunately without molestation. Other settlers establishing themselves here, with stock, etc, are Messrs. Jennings, Jolly, Cooper, Williams and Smith, and more are expected.



APPENDIX 1 (Continued)

In the early days perhaps thousands passed through (Meadows Valley); it is on the direct road from Lewiston to Boise Basin. The Goose Creek House at the foot of the mountain, a mile (east) from White's was a noted hostelry, and abounded in good cheer in those days. Here some of the earliest political conventions of the (Idaho) Territory were held. It has not been inhabited for many years and is now in ruin. (Goose Creek House was at or very near Packer John's Cabin Historical Site).

At daybreak on Friday morning, April 11, Thomas Clay, the mail carrier and myself, struck out from Cal White's hospitable mansion for the Payette Lake. The only occupant of the Goose Creek House was a gray owl. A couple of miles up the mountain the snow grew deep and thenceforward snowshoes were our only practical means of locomotion. The trail just skirts the northern end of Long Valley which stretches southward farther than the eye can reach. Back in the hills on the east side (of Long Valley) are the mining camps of Lake City, Copelands, etc, and a dozen or more men make good wages there during the summer.

The lake was still frozen, but the last rains have raised its surface so as to leave a rim of open water. Once upon the ice, however, we had about 10 miles of fine traveling. In every direction now a bleak wilderness of snowy mountains surrounds the lake. Salmon swarm up the Payette (River) as far as the lake in vast number, but do not pass it. Redfish are scarcely seen below it. The redfish spawn in August and September along the sandy shores and up all the creeks of any size and have been taken in large quantities. Those who have occasion to pass over the lake when the first sheet of ice form in the winter tell marvelous tales of the abundance of piscatorial life in the clear and silent depths.

At the head of the lake the mail carrier has a comfortable cabin where he stops overnight (later this was the site of the "State House" hostel). Then another day's tramp brings us to a similar lodging place at the Little Lake (now Upper Payette Lake). Here snow has increased to 7 feet in depth. All this region is now completely silent.

The bears and eagles live upon the redfish, and the deer and elk upon the very luxuriant grass and in early winter some very fine pine-martins and fishers may be taken, but now they are all gone, there is not even a rabbit track. In these mountains mountain sheep are said to dwell. I have yet to meet the individual who has killed or even seen one, yet shreds of what is claimed to be their white wool are often found.



APPENDIX 1 (Continued)

From the Little Lake the route winds over the mountains, crossing the divide (Secesh Summit) that separates the waters flowing into the Payette from those flowing into the Salmon River, to Warm Springs (now Burgdorf Hot Springs) on the principal road from Florence to Warren (it was at this point that the trail from Meadows Valley intersected the more well-used trail from the Salmon River to Warren).

Here our host, Fred Burgdorf, never fails to furnish the weary traveler a square meal and we find ourselves in the presence of a man who can mix a cocktail to some purpose. During this summer Fred plans to get a fine hotel built.

Another day's snowshoeing of 20 miles brought us to Warrens, where you must either stay or turn around and go back again. There is no place to go unless you strike out into the unknown mountains.

The mail has been carried by Thomas Clay this past winter without a break or failure. The snow in Warrens basin is nearly gone, and placer mining has commenced. There has been nothing doing in quartz (shaft mining) the past winter.

An old pioneer of this camp, Chas. McKay, was found dead lately near his cabin on the South Fork of Salmon, 14 miles east of here (Warren), under circumstances which indicated that his clothes caught fire while in bed and that in making for the river nearby or returning from it he fell and died.

N.B.W.  
(Norman B Willey)

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Author's note: Norman B Willey was a Warren miner with political capabilities, later becoming governor of Idaho. He was a frequent contributor of news about Warren and descriptive articles to the Grangeville and Boise newspapers. His style of writing was poetic, capturing the imagination of the reader, as illustrated above. The parenthetical notes were added for clarity and identification with current place names.



## APPENDIX 2

### HISTORICAL POST OFFICES AND POSTMASTERS IN THE SALMON RIVER MOUNTAINS OF CENTRAL IDAHO

The following is a list of U.S. Post Offices that have existed in the area of the northeastern part of the Payette National Forest, in the Salmon River Mountains. Bits of historical and locational information are noted where significant. The listing of Postmasters is not complete for all locations.

#### WARREN (formerly WASHINGTON) P.O. (1868-present)

Located at the current townsite of Warren. Mail service began in 1863 with gold strike. U.S. Post Office established as Washington on 28 January 1868. Name changed to Warren on 14 August 1885. The post office at Warren was discontinued for a short period (27 April 1868 - 27 July 1870) for reasons unknown, but has been in continuous operation since that time.

28 Jan 1868	James Cronan
27 Jul 1872	C.A. Sears
19 Dec 1873	Aaron Friedenrich
06 Dec 1874	Benjamin F. Morris
17 Aug 1880	Hermann Segall
28 Mar 1881	Victor Hexter; assistant Martin Collins
06 Dec 1888	Edwin F. Robinson
10 Oct 1889	Walter L. Brown
28 Apr 1893	Fred T. Morris
28 Nov 1893	George L. Patterson
11 Feb 1898	M.B. Graye
05 Ayr 1916	Marjorie B. Woody
15 Sep 1917	Walter V. Martin
29 Jul 1920	Jesse Root
06 Apr 1926	Otis Morris
27 Jul 1931	William Newman
15 Jun 1938	Claude Hinkley
31 Jul 1943	Juanita J. Oberst
01 Jun 1944	William Newman
15 Aug 1944	Otis Morris
01 Nov 1955	Jack W. Pickell
01 Aug 1983	Janet Monson

#### KNOTT P.O. (1903-1909)

Located on the French Creek trail to Warren (NW 1/4, Sec 36, T24N, R3E), three miles upstream from the mouth of French Creek on the Salmon River. Established 14 March 1903, discontinued 31 January 1909. Appears to have been a transfer station on the route from the Salmon River to Warren.

14 Mar 1903	Alice C. Wiley
05 Mar 1904	A.F. Reynolds
06 Aug 1904	Charles Waldron
29 Nov 1907	Merril C. Post



APPENDIX 2 (Continued)

BRADY P.O. (1909-1911)

Established 4 June 1909 to take the place of discontinued Knott Post Office, sole postmaster Dave Rea; discontinued 28 February 1911. Incomplete information in postal archives shows location of this post office on the north side of the Salmon River on the west side of the mouth of "Fulerton Creek", a name no longer extant. Site may have been at current Allison Ranch or Spring Bar.

SHEARER'S FERRY P.O. (1874-1888)

A ferry was established in 1863 by Frederick A. and Susan Shearer near the mouth of Elk Creek (now Elkhorn Creek), crossing the Salmon River on the trail from Florence to Warren. The mail route passed through this place beginning in 1863 and was the place where mail was transferred from one carrier to another. U.S. Post Office "Shearer's Ferry" was established here 19 June 1874 with Fred Shearer as postmaster. The property was sold to Arthur H. Warden who, along with his brother Will, had the mail carrier contract on the northern route. Arthur Warden became postmaster on 4 May 1888 but the post office was discontinued on 21 May 1888. The property was sold in 1889 to Orvil and Flora Howard. Fred Shearer repossessed the ranch and ferry in 1891, but the establishment of the State Road Bridge in 1892 at the French Creek crossing essentially put the ferry out of business. The property was later acquired by Jack Howard, hence the current map name Howard Ranch.

BURGDORF (formerly RESORT) P.O. (1898-1945)

Located at the current site of Burgdorf Hot Springs. Known from earliest times as Warm Springs, on the trail from the Salmon River to Warren. Taken in 1871 by Fred C. Burgdorf as a summer dairy farm, a thriving hotel and spa resort was established there by 1881. Post Office "Resort" established 1 June 1898, name changed to Burgdorf 16 November 1915, post office discontinued 31 Jul 1945. Post Office was located in the hotel building.

01 Jun 1898	Fred C Burgdorf
16 Nov 1915	Jeanette Townsend Burgdorf (Fred's wife)
06 Mar 1917	Grace Exum (subsequently wife of Henry Hoff, grandfather of Sally Preston, author's wife)
07 Jan 1920	Helen Luzadder (Mrs Edward Luzadder, fondly remembered as school teacher for many years in McCall)
20 Sep 1922	unrecorded
09 Aug 1923	James Harris (purchased property from Burgdorf, currently owned by grandson Dr Scott Harris)



APPENDIX 2 (Continued)

MC CALL (formerly ELO) P.O. (1905-present)

Located at the townsite of McCall. Established 31 March 1905; first postmaster Jacob Kaanta; name changed from Elo to McCall 13 July 1909, for early pioneer Thomas McCall.

LARDO P.O. (1889-1917)

Located at old Lardo townsite, where Payette River exits Payette Lake, across the highway from Shore Lodge. It is from this location that the Warren Wagon Road departed for Warren, following the west side of Payette Lake. Post Office established 30 November 1889, discontinued 15 October 1917, with McCall Post Office taking over the former Lardo service.

30 Nov 1889 John Lane  
19 Sep 1894 Thomas McCall (for whom town is named)  
12 Jan 1903 William B Boydston (P.O. was in his store)

FRENCH CREEK P.O. (1914-1915, 1937-1944)

Located at the mouth of French Creek on the Salmon River. Established 8 May 1914, Elinor A Harrington postmistress, discontinued 30 September 1915. Post office re-established 1 May 1937; postmasters Clifford Hinkley for the first year, followed by his mother Edna Hinkley; discontinued 31 July 1944. Incomplete information indicates there was at least an informal post office here 1933-1937 to serve the large Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camp at French Creek.

ROOSEVELT P.O. (1902-1915)

Located about 25 miles east of Yellow Pine, on Monumental Creek. The townsite of Roosevelt was established in 1901 at the beginning of the Thunder Mountain mining boom. Post Office established 19 February 1902, discontinued 30 September 1915. The mining boom ended in 1907 and a mud slide in 1909 dammed Monumental Creek, inundating the town, but the post office remained in operation until 1915.

19 Feb 1902 William L Cuddy  
06 Sep 1906 Joseph B Randall  
09 Jun 1905 Warren M Dutton  
15 Dec 1906 Harry S Austin  
27 Sep 1907 Gertrude P Wayland  
01 Jul 1908 Tirza J Wayland  
21 Dec 1911 Ester H Busby

EDWARDSBURG (formerly LOGAN) P.O. (1904-1918)

Located at the former William Edwards ranch, near the confluence of Logan Creek and Government Creek, about a mile south of the Big Creek landing field. This was the terminus of the early trail, and subsequent wagon road, from Warren via the South Fork of the Salmon River and Elk Summit. Established 17 August 1904, name changed from Logan to Edwardsburg 25 February 1909, discontinued 14 January 1918; William Edwards was the sole postmaster.



## APPENDIX 2 (Continued)

### CLOVER P.O. (1914-1929)

This was the terminus of the Big Creek mail carrier's route. Located on lower Big Creek at three locations:

1. Established 5 June 1914, with Viola M "Auntie" Garden as postmistress until 16 October 1920. Located on ranch of Arthur "Kid" Garden on a small flat at the mouth of Garden Creek. Detailed maps show "Vines Airstrip" at this location, named for later owner John Vines. The property has been repurchased by the U.S. Forest Service.
2. The second location of Clover P.O. was at the ranch of the Elliot brothers, on a bald knob between Garden Creek and Coxey Creek, about three miles by steep trail from the mouth of Garden Creek. The Elliot brothers were nephews of "Auntie" Garden. Joseph B Elliot became postmaster on 16 October 1920; upon Joe's death, brother Ernest E "Hardrock" Elliot became postmaster on 31 August 1926 until the official post office was discontinued 15 March 1929. A hillside airstrip named "Mile High" was established here by Lafe Cox for big game hunting, but the airstrip is abandoned and the property was purchased by the Idaho Fish and Game Department for big game winter range.
3. The third location, but not as an official U.S. post office, was about four miles down Big Creek on Cabin Creek, a mile up from its mouth. This location is the original site of the Caswell brothers' ranch, dating from the 1890's. A succession of ownerships led to Merle "Blackie" Wallace, during whose tenure a post office building was built to serve as the terminus of the Big Creek carrier route. At that time, in the 1930's, there were still several active ranches on lower Big Creek. After Blackie Wallace the property was acquired by Rex Lanham and was operated as the Flying W Hunting Lodge, served by the currently operational Cabin Creek landing strip. The property was repurchased in recent years by the U.S. Forest Service. The post office building, more commonly known as the Cabin Creek Post Office, was still standing in good repair when visited by the author in July 1994.

### BIG CREEK P.O. (1936-1951)

Located at the former Big Creek store (now Big Creek Lodge), immediately south of the USFS Guard Station at the Big Creek landing field. The Big Creek Post Office took the place of the former Edwardsburg Post Office. Established 13 May 1936, discontinued 31 December 1951. While the post office has been discontinued, regular mail service is provided by aerial delivery.



APPENDIX 2 (Continued)

YELLOW PINE P.O. (1906-present)

Located at townsite of Yellow Pine, on the East Fork of the South Fork of the Salmon River at Johnson Creek. Established 5 October 1906 with Albert C Behne as first postmaster.

PROFILE P.O. (1914-1921)

Located at the Willson Mine at Profile Gap, about half way on the road between Yellow Pine and Big Creek. Established 11 July 1914, discontinued 31 January 1921; Earl Willson was postmaster.

STIBNITE P.O. (1929-1957)

Located at Meadow Creek Mine, on the road to Roosevelt, about 12 miles east of Yellow Pine. The mine was a major producer of antimony (derived from stibnite ore) until the end of WW II, at which time over 600 people were living at the mine. Established 29 May 1929, with Harold D Bailey postmaster; discontinued 7 July 1957.

CZIZEK P.O. (1940-1942)

Located at the Golden Anchor Mine in the Marshall Lake Mining District. Named for Jay A Czizek (1864-1938), Idaho's first State Mine Inspector and developer of the Golden Anchor Mine and other Warren-area mines. Established 27 September 1940, with Helen Caldwell as postmistress; discontinued 30 May 1942, with termination of mining activities as result of WW II restrictions.

RIGGINS P.O. (1901-Present)

Located on the Salmon River, on US Hwy 95, near the mouth of the Little Salmon River; first postmaster was Richard L Riggins, believed to be brother of John T Riggins, founder of the town.

MEADOWS P.O. (1883-1966)

Located on the east side of Meadows Valley, at the foot of the Goose Creek grade on State Hwy 15, about two miles east of the junction with US Hwy 95 at New Meadows; established 7 September 1883, first postmaster was Calvin White, who used his homestead as the postoffice. Meadows was unique in its day as the meeting point of three mail routes: north to Grangeville, south to Weiser, and up Goose Creek to Lardo (McCall) and Warren. With the establishment of the rail head at New Meadows, a new post office was established at that location which supplanted Meadows Post Office on 30 Dec 1966.

EAKIN (c1908-1911)

Not an official U.S. Post Office, but a so-called "pigeon-hole" post office at Mackay Bar on the Salmon River, at the Eakin ranch; "postmistress" Ellen Eakin.

SOUTH FORK POST OFFICES: See Appendix 3



### APPENDIX 3

#### POST OFFICES ON THE SOUTH FORK OF THE SALMON RIVER

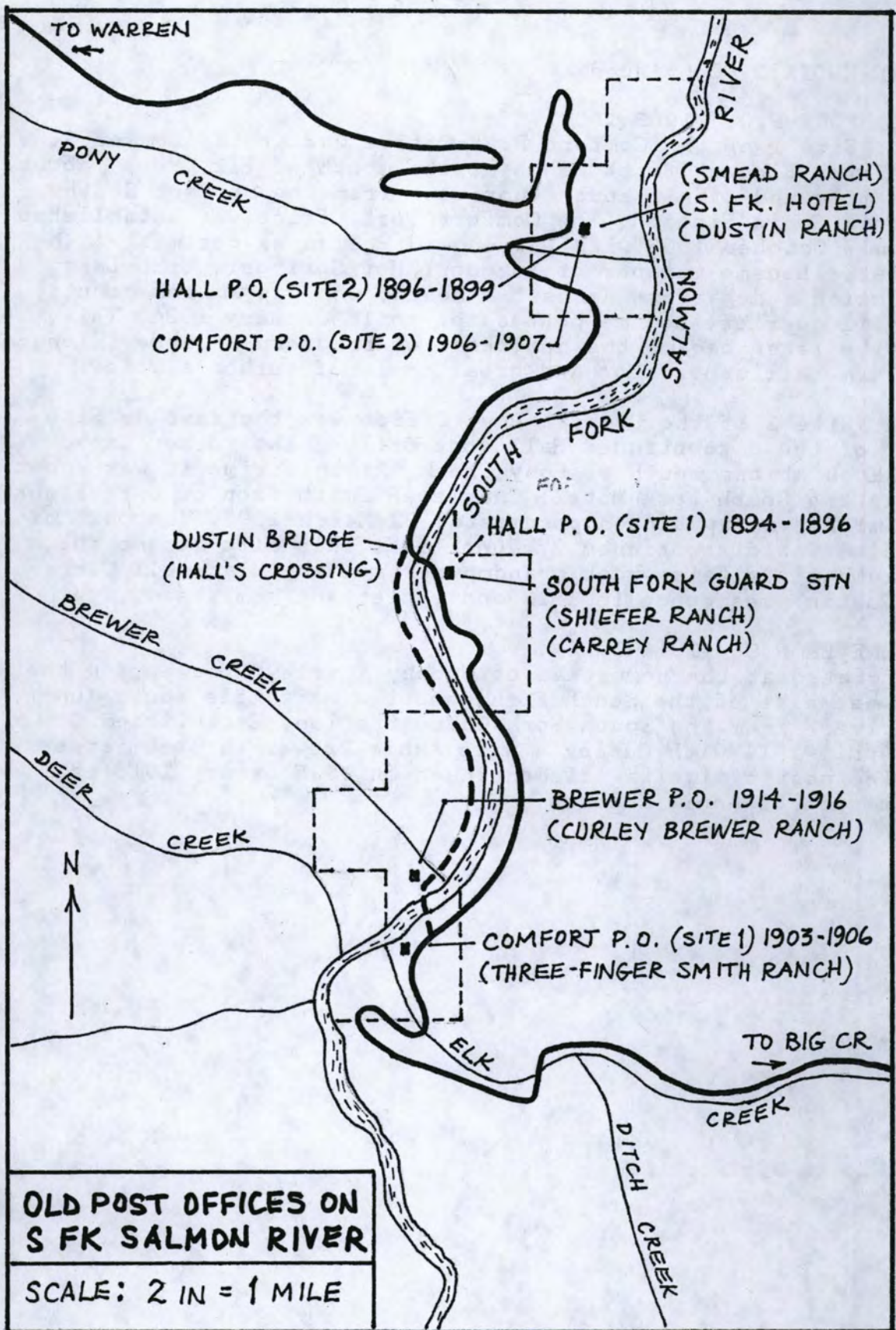
Beginning in the 1860's, a trail extended eastward from Warren into the backcountry that is now, for the most part, the Frank Church - River of No Return Wilderness. The trail dropped into the canyon of the South Fork of the Salmon River then climbed out over Elk Summit into the Big Creek drainage. The trail became a wagon road, then an automobile road as it exists currently. Since earliest times, the crossing point on the South Fork was of strategic significance as a rest stop for prospectors, freighters, and mail carriers. During the 1890's and early 1900's there were three U.S. Post Offices on the South Fork at five different locations, as shown on the accompanying map, and described below.

#### HALL P.O. (1894-1899)

1. Site 1 for Hall Post Office was at the current location of the USFS South Fork Guard Station. Solon Hall established a ranch at this location prior to 1872, and subsequently a toll bridge known as Hall's Crossing, hence the name Hall Post Office. The Hall Post Office was established 12 March 1894, with Minnie A Day (wife of Ben B Day) as postmistress. Herbert M King was named postmaster at this site 16 September 1895, followed by Simeon A (Sim) Willey on 22 January 1896. Upon Sim Willey's departure for a new homestead farther up the South Fork, the Hall Post Office was moved to Site 2. In 1909 this site was the residence of Carl Brown and his base of operations for his mail carrier contract between Warren and Edwardsburg (Big Creek). This site was also the 1910 residence of the author's wife's grandmother, Mary (Mamie) Carrey McCall, followed by her older brother Thomas J Carrey who arranged a land exchange such that the property was returned to USFS administration in 1925.

2. Site 2 for Hall Post Office was the former Smead Ranch at the mouth of Pony Creek, now known as the McClain Ranch, about a mile and a half north (downriver) from the South Fork Guard station. When Sim Willey departed, Amasa D "Pony" Smead was named postmaster on 26 August 1896. Pony Smead died in early 1899 and the Hall Post Office was discontinued on 14 June 1899. This site was later the second location of Comfort Post Office, noted below.







APPENDIX 3 (Continued)

COMFORT P.O. (1903-1907)

1. Site 1 of the Comfort Post Office was at the former S.S. "Three Finger" Smith Ranch at the mouth of Elk Creek, about a mile and a half south (upriver) from the current South Fork Guard Station. The Comfort Post Office was established on 7 October 1903 with Lawrence J Phelan as postmaster (he later became manager of Burgdorf Hot Springs). Upon Larry Phelan's departure Earnest W Heath, who was a back country mail carrier, became postmaster on 15 January 1904. This site later became the homestead of Bradford J Carrey, long-term mail contractor and great uncle of author's wife.

2. Site 2 of the Comfort Post Office was the same as Site 2 of the discontinued Hall Post Office, the former Smead Ranch at the mouth of Pony Creek. At this time it was known as the South Fork Hotel. Charles S Smith, son of C F "Frank" Smith, was appointed postmaster 22 March 1906. The post office was discontinued 27 June 1907. This site became the author's wife's great grandmother's (Mary Blackwell Carrey Dustin) residence in 1912 and subsequent homestead.

BREWER P.O. (1914-1916)

Located at the homestead of Crosby "Curley" Brewer, on the west side of the South Fork, about a half mile south (upriver) from the South Fork Guard Station. Established 9 April 1914 with Curley's wife Annie Brewer as postmistress. The post office was discontinued on 15 February 1916 as a result of Annie's death.



#### APPENDIX 4

#### MAIL CARRIERS TO WARREN, IDAHO, AND OTHER POSTAL ROUTES IN THE SALMON RIVER MOUNTAINS

Beginning with the establishment of the town of Washington, which later became Warren, in Idaho County, Idaho, a postal route was authorized to serve the community. As mining activity increased in the area, other routes were added. The following is an incomplete listing of postal carriers on the several routes, which are coded as follows:

- MTI - Mt Idaho (Grangeville) to Warren via Florence; from Mt Idaho mail went to Lewiston, thence to Walla Walla.
- INV - Indian Valley (Council area) to Warren via Meadows Valley and Payette Lake; Indian Valley route connected to Boise via Weiser.
- EDW - Warren to Edwardsburg (now Big Creek); route via South Fork of Salmon and Elk Creek.
- MCL - Meadows to McCall (and earlier Lardo) to Warren via Burgdorf
- BIG - Edwardsburg down Big Creek to Clover (Cabin Creek); Early route began on South Fork of Salmon; early route included Thunder Mountain (Roosevelt); route later known as Cabin Creek route.

#### POSTAL CARRIERS

- 1862-72 MTI James Hunt (also W P Hunt, possibly brother)
- 1866 MTI Franklin Shissler, apparent subcontract to Hunt
- 1867 MTI Hunt and Hart
- 1873-76 MTI Theodore Schwartz
- 1874 INV Wm J Kelly
- 1874-78 INV Solon Hall
- INV Thomas Clay (apparent subcontract from Meadows)
- 1878-82 INV Calvin R White, contractor
- INV Thomas Clay (Meadows to Warren)
- INV Edgar Hall (Solon's son, Indian Valley to Mdws)
- 1882 MTI Campherson, of San Francisco, contractor
- 1886 MTI V H Pease, of Carson City, contractor
- MTI George M Shearer, subcontract
- MTI William E and Arthur Warden, 1886-89 subcontract
- MTI Harry Shissler, 1889 subcontract, assisted by Russell Hogan
- MTI W D Yandell, 1890
- MTI Harry Shissler, 1890 Shearer's Ferry to Mt Idaho
- MTI Wm Hutton, 1890 Shearer's Ferry to Warren
- 1890 BIG Bob Smith, froze on Elk Creek trail Feb 1890
- 1897 BIG Earnest Heath, later postmaster at Comfort
- 1892-93 MTI Gordon Bros, Shearer's Ferry to Warren
- 1894 MTI N V Jackson, French Creek to Warren
- 1894 MTI route discontinued September
- 1897 EDW William "Shepherd Bill" Borden



APPENDIX 4 (Continued)

1901-02 BIG Crosby "Curley" Brewer, \$100 per month private contract by miners to Thunder Mountain.

1902 BIG Frank Payne, killed in snowslide 19 December

1902 INV John Esten Freeman and Calvin White (they also had contract for Meadows to Grangeville)

1906 EDW G E Ritter

1906 MCL Ezra "Lou" Baird, primary contract

1906 MCL D A Long, Burgdorf to Warren

1906? MCL Herman Blackwell, stage driver Lardo to Warren

1907? MCL Herman Blackwell, stage driver for Ross Krigbaum from Meadows to Lardo

1907 MCL + EDW Blair and Son; carriers include Bert Ailport, Chester "Chet" Stephens, William "Shepherdherder Bill" Borden

1909 EDW Carl Brown, lived on South Fork of Salmon River

1910-14 MCL Carl Brown, owned State House, lived in McCall

1911 EDW Carl Brown

1912-16 EDW Bailey O Dustin family, incl stepsons Robert H (Bob) Carrey, Raymond M (Rame) Carrey, Thomas J (Tom) Carrey; son-in-law John Wolliston, plus Freeman Nethkin; Dustin family lived at "South Fork Hotel", former Smead Ranch, on South Fork

1916 MCL Charles C Zumwalt (lived at Halfway House)

1917 MCL Carl Brown

1918 MCL Michael "Frenchy" Yriberry, principal contract; driver Clyde Fulton, in Cadillac automobile; Bill Borden, Warren-Burgdorf in winter

1918 BIG Joseph Elliot (subsequently Clover postmaster)

1918 EDW Joe Davis

1919 EDW Art Fernan

1919-20 MCL Ed Kesson, stage driver Fred Stiles, R L Page

1920 BIG John Routson

1923 MCL George Shiefer

1924-46 EDW Bradford J (Brad) Carrey

1926-30 MCL Michael Yriberry and J Esten Freeman contract

1932-34 MCL Esten Freeman purchased Yriberry interest, drivers Jasper Harp, Faye Johnson, Jack Fernan, Ennis Johnson, Tom Parks, Floyd Gordon, Ward Fry

1934-46 MCL + EDW Bradford J (Brad) Carrey contract; drivers wife Margaret, daughter Mary (Mende), son-in-law Willard Gribble; 1937 drivers included Douglas Kerr, Floyd Gordon, Carl Krigbaum

19??-50 BIG L E "Les" Curtis, last horseback mail carrier

1945-75 BIG Johnson Flying Service, pilots Bob Fogg, Jim Larkin

1975-95 BIG Arnold Aviation, owner/pilot Ray Arnold



## APPENDIX 5

### METHODS OF POSTAL DELIVERY AT WARREN, IDAHO

Beginning with the first mail delivery in 1863, to the present time, Warren, Idaho, has had probably the most varied and unique methods of delivery in U.S. postal history. The varied delivery methods were/are a result of the remoteness of Warren and deep winter snow there. The following have been or are current methods of mail delivery to Warren:

1. Man on foot, with backpack; in winter the postal carrier would use snowshoes and/or skis, depending upon conditions.
2. Man mounted on horse or mule, with saddlebags; in winter the horse or mule would sometimes be fitted with snowshoes. The snowshoes were pieces of wood about twice the size of the animal's hoof, with nails in the bottom for traction. In the early 1900's an iron snowshoe was developed and used.
3. Man leading one or more pack animals loaded with freight and mail.
4. Wagon loaded with freight and mail, usually drawn by mules because of their strength, sometimes horses.
5. Cable-secured ferry or barge, crossing Salmon River.
6. Cable-suspended tram, crossing South Fork of Salmon.
7. Motor launch, on Payette Lake between Lardo and State House at the upper end of the lake.
8. In winter, an open sled drawn by mules, sometimes fitted with snowshoes.
9. Sled, pulled by dog teams.
10. With the advent of dependable automotive vehicles around 1918, automobiles and trucks were used as conditions permitted; in later years the pickup truck became the standard mail carrier during summer months and remains so currently.
11. Beginning in 1933, winter transport was by means of a covered sled, or caboose, drawn by a caterpillar tractor at about 7 mph. The caboose carried freight and mail and passengers on benches, warmed by a stove. The trip from Lardo (McCall) to Warren took two to three days, depending upon conditions. This means of transport was in use up to the early 1940's.
12. In 1939 an automobile-type vehicle, called a snowmobile, was introduced for winter use; it had a pickup truck body, skis in front for steering, caterpillar-type tracks at rear for driving at up to 40 mph.
13. In 1931 aerial delivery began on an irregular basis during winter months and is now the regular means of winter delivery. Ski-equipped light aircraft will sometimes land at the Warren airstrip, sometimes the aircraft will drop the mail on a low pass. In the past, mail and supplies were sometimes dropped by parachute. Currently, during summer months, aerial delivery is employed for remote locations on the "Cabin Creek Star Route".



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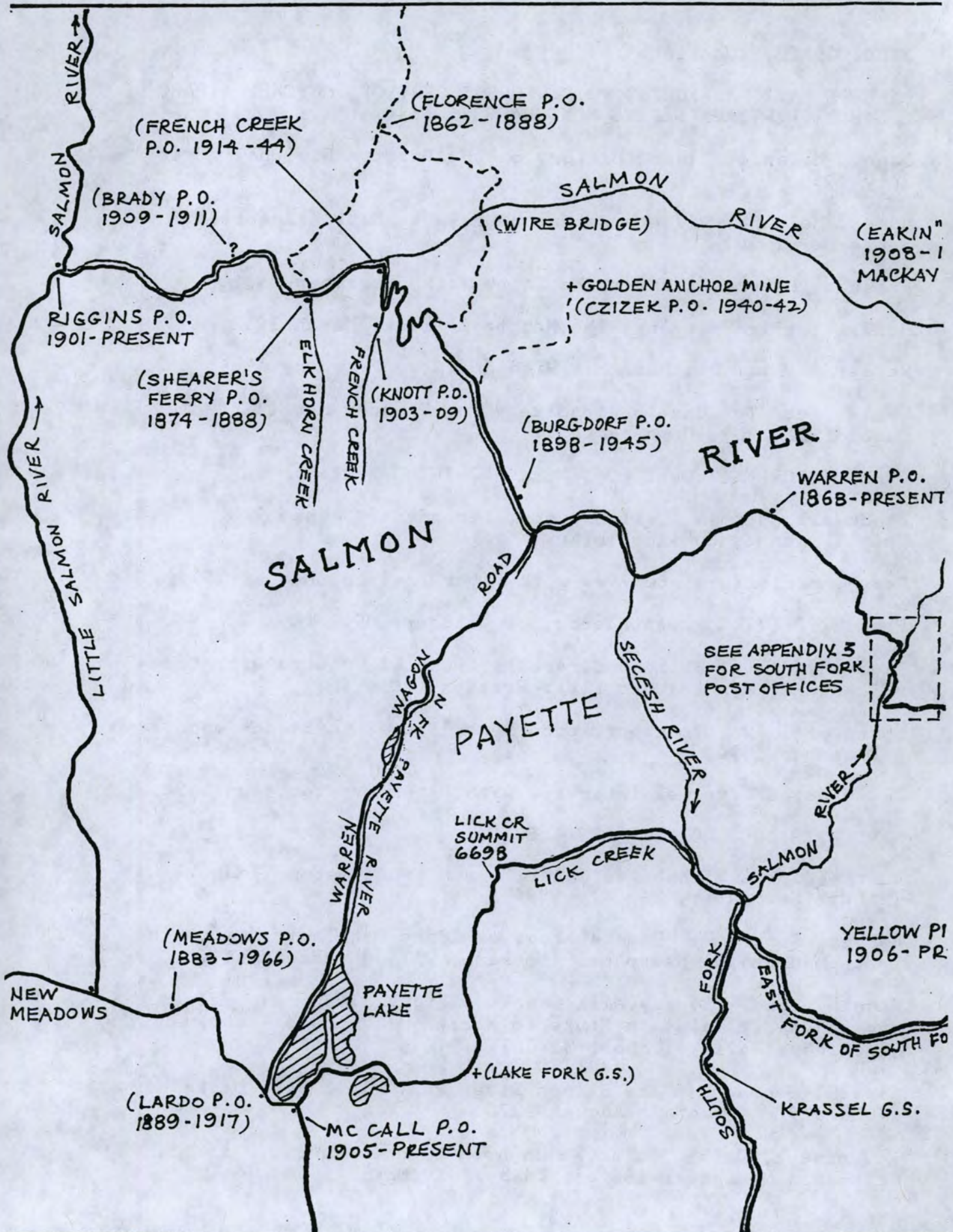
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(FRENCH CREEK P.O. 1914-44)

(FLORENCE P.O. 1862-1888)

(BRADY P.O. 1909-1911)

SALMON RIVER  
(WIRE BRIDGE)

(EAKIN<sup>11</sup> 1908-1 MACKAY)

+ GOLDEN ANCHOR MINE (CZIZEK P.O. 1940-42)

RIGGINS P.O. 1901-PRESENT

(SHEARER'S FERRY P.O. 1874-1888)

ELK HORN CREEK

FRENCH CREEK

(KNOTT P.O. 1903-09)

(BURGDORF P.O. 1898-1945)

RIVER

WARREN P.O. 1868-PRESENT

SALMON ROAD

SEE APPENDIX 3 FOR SOUTH FORK POST OFFICES

PAYETTE

LICK CR SUMMIT 6698

LICK CREEK

SALMON RIVER

(MEADOWS P.O. 1883-1966)

YELLOW PI 1906-PR

NEW MEADOWS

PAYETTE LAKE

+(LAKE FORK G.S.)

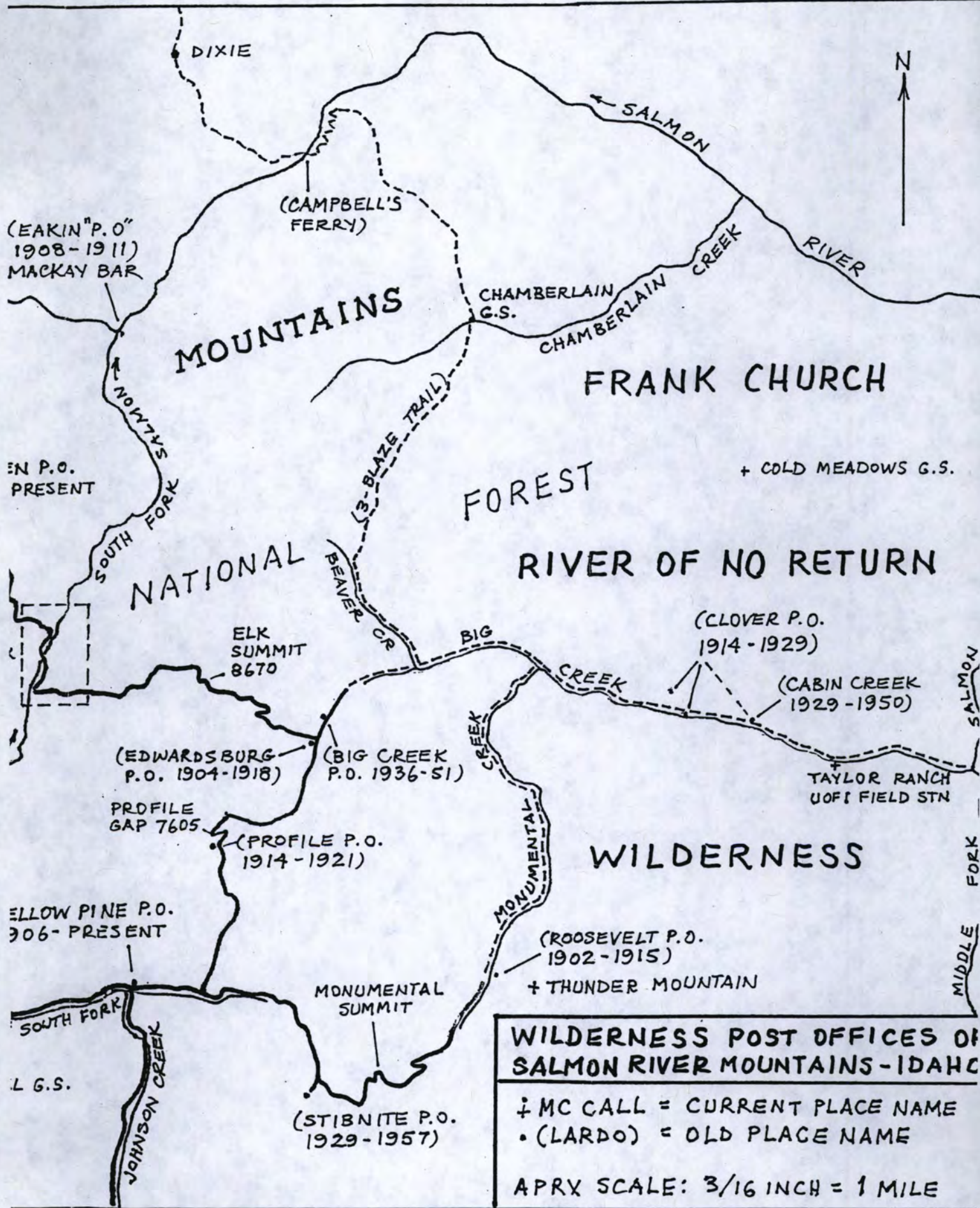
(LARDO P.O. 1889-1917)

MC CALL P.O. 1905-PRESENT

KRASSEL G.S.

SOUTH FORK EAST FORK OF SOUTH FO





**WILDERNESS POST OFFICES OF SALMON RIVER MOUNTAINS-IDAHO**

‡ MC CALL = CURRENT PLACE NAME  
 • (LARDO) = OLD PLACE NAME

APRX SCALE: 3/16 INCH = 1 MILE