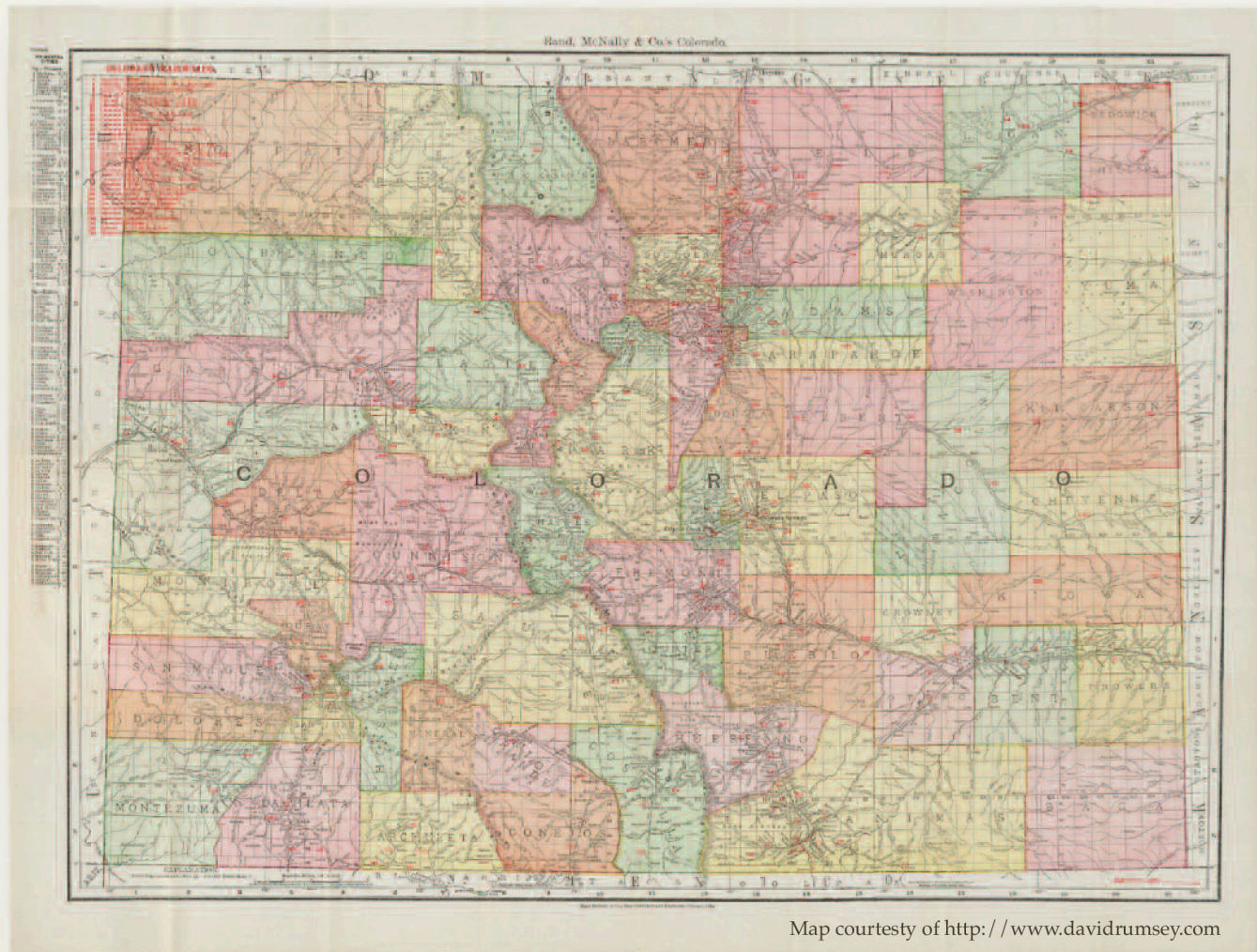


The
**Colorado Postal
Encyclopedia**



WILLIAM H. BAUER



Digital Edition Revised & Enlarged
by Steven R. Morehead | Roger D. Rydberg | Peter J. Ditlow

FOREWORD

I met Bill Bauer when I attended my first ROMPEX in 1977. A couple years earlier I had decided to bring some focus to my postal history collection and had chosen Colorado Postal History. I had bought the first edition of *Colorado Post Offices* by Bauer, Ozment and Willard. At the show I made a conscious effort to seek out these three doyens of Colorado postal history, asked them to autograph my book and point me in the right direction. Hours later I happened to sit down at a dealer's table next Bill. He turned to me with a postcard he had just retrieved from the dealer's box and asked, "Do you have a Bowerman yet?" I didn't and he handed it to me. I was happy to buy it and it was only recently I've learned the copy he'd found and brought to my attention was better than the one he owned himself! I'm sure the same would not have been true had it been a territorial cover!

I only saw Bill a half dozen times thereafter, always at ROMPEX and although I never spent any appreciable time visiting with him, he was always convivial and happy to talk Colorado postal history. His knowledge of the subject was enormous. Later we corresponded via email. When he began serial publication of *The Colorado Postal Encyclopedia* in 1998 I was overjoyed. Now at last I would have an idea of what ghost mining towns had surviving covers and when the earliest and latest dates were. In addition, his profession as a geologist allowed him to write knowledgably of the mining towns and I learned which were "true mining towns" and which were not.

It's been nearly six years since I decided to attempt to update *The Encyclopedia* and convert it into a searchable version. At the time, I had no idea what a huge task it would be. With the help of my co-editors Roger Rydberg and Joe Ditlow, we began delving into the voluminous files and tracings Bill left as part of his legacy. It is only now that we are offering the first quarter of the Colorado Counties in this format. My hope is that what we do in some way preserves and expands what Bill wrote.

It is with great admiration and respect that the editors dedicate this revision to the late Bill Bauer who did it in so much detail the first time and his close friend and fellow explorer the late Jim Ozment.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My thanks to all who have helped and encouraged us, especially my friends and co-editors, Joe Ditlow and Roger Rydberg, who through the years has given so much of his time and effort to make postal history collecting enjoyable. Thanks also for the friendship and support of Andrew Murin, Joe Ditlow, Don Beuthel, J. Robert Hamill and many others in the field. Grateful acknowledgements to all those who have submitted covers for illustration, new postmark dates and listings including Don Beuthel, Bob Chow, Joe Coston, Joe Ditlow, the late Erwin Engert, Erik Hendrickson, Tom Knapp, Andrew Murin, David New, Ray Newburn, Steve Pacetti, Roger Rydberg, Duane Spidle and others who if I have not mentioned them, it's by oversight not intention. Thanks also to H.R. Harmer Inc., Schuyler J. Rumsey Philatelic Auctions, Inc. and the many fine Ebay sellers for images for inclusion and for our files.

For additions to cancel types and earliest/latest dates of usage please contact Joe Ditlow at ditlowpj@elpasotel.net or PO Box 13, Calhan, CO 80808.

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Photo by James L. Ozment

Interior of the Party Town Community Post Office location. Oxbow Crossing Shopping Center, on US Highway 555, south edge of Montrose. Bill Bauer is at the counter with the postal clerk.



Lunch Break, near the site of Bowerman. Jim Ozment finds a comfortable seat for a repast of leftover Chinese food.

INTRODUCTION

By William H. Bauer

GENESIS OF THE PROJECT

In the 1960s, when I first began to collect Colorado Postal History I quickly learned that there was a near void in literature relative to the postal history of the state. It became my goal to alleviate that situation. Since 1970, much has been accomplished. In cooperation with James Ozment and John Willard two editions of the listing of Colorado Post Offices have been published. It is considerable gratification to often find those books cited in other published historical studies of Colorado. Also, in the 1970s David L. Jarrett's book, *Colorado Territorial and Pre-territorial Postmarks* was an important addition to the literature. The pages of the *Colorado Postal Historian* and *La Posta*, have also added to the published knowledge of Colorado Postal History.

However, none of this accomplished the ultimate purpose that I hoped to achieve. My interest in Colorado goes beyond the markings and the covers to the history of the places that at one time had, or still have, Post Offices. Where were these places? What was the reason for their existence? What was the origin of the Post Office or settlement name? And of course, the second part of the effort would be to list the postmasters, and the known postal makings from each office. Certainly a monumental task and one that can never be absolutely complete.

Beginning in 1998, I believed that I had gone about as far as I could in collecting information, and it was time to put what I had on paper and to let others add to the database. In the twelve years since then, the text for each county has been written and published as a part of *The Colorado Postal Historian*, the publication of the Colorado Postal History Society.

THE SCOPE AND PROCEDURE

The production of this "encyclopedia" has been county by county, in no particular order.

Within each present-day county all of the post offices are treated in alphabetical order. It was planned to be presented in a consistent format. However, time and experience suggested some changes in the approach to the format. None of those changes were major. Perhaps the most obvious was the change from publishing the sections as an integral part of *The Colorado Postal Historian* to producing them as "supplements" to that society journal.

For each office the information is in the following sequence:

1. A brief discussion of the history, the location, and the source of the name of the office
2. A chronology of the post office: dates of establishment, discontinuance, reported locations, postmasters to approximately 1980, and other events
3. A descriptive listing of the recorded postmarks for the office
4. Tracings of the postmarks
5. Selected photographs of post offices, remnant buildings, and interesting covers from the place.

HISTORY

During the past 50 years, my reading of Colorado history has been extensive. A short list of references provided the bulk of the information; however, some key facts were uncovered in some rather esoteric publications. Often historical information is repeated, and in many cases it is possible to follow the trail of a statement from one author through several subsequent authors.

The reason a settlement (post office) existed is often well understood. Various authors usually agree on who were the founders and the reported dates of founding of the settlement, at least within reason.

The location of a settlement, particularly the tiny and short-lived ones, is in some instances a point of contention. On the eastern plains, the post offices were often at the ranch of a person willing to be the postmaster. For such post offices, if the postmaster changed, so did the location of the post office and in a few instances the move was across a county or even a state boundary. Therefore, depending on the time under discussion, different authors will report the office at different locations with different postmasters. In several instances, I have found references to "postmasters" and even to a few "post offices" which are absent from the official records. Such names are not reported in this encyclopedia.

In connection with the Site Location Reports described below, I have also studied a number of published maps, and have integrated that information into the locations I report. Together with James Ozment and others, I undertook the task of actually visiting every site which we could physically reach. A few are no longer on or close to public roads, or they lie beneath reservoirs.

Surprisingly, when reaching the indicated spot, there has often been some remnant or evidence that there was indeed human habitation at the location. As time passes, the evidence becomes less. More and more locations are "empty fields." A photographic record has been made at each site visited, and I include comments on what was found when I visited the location. From those visits I have attempted to provide a description of how to find that site today.

A word of caution is necessary about the directions to the long discontinued post office sites. The road names and numbers I report are what they were when I made my visit. As the metropolitan areas expand road names do change. Also, in the developing areas there are often new roads that can confuse the issue. In the remote areas, the reverse is true. Little used roads have been closed to the public. Therefore, good, contemporary road maps are essential if you wish to visit these sites.

Ever since reading *Names on the Land* by George R. Stewart, I have had a fascination with the source of town names. Therefore, in my reading I have paid particular attention to whence came the settlement names on the Colorado landscape. Many are obvious and well known. For many others a reasonable assumption can be made, but for many others the reason for the name is lost in antiquity. Local legends, often fanciful, abound. But from reading the postal records, a more prosaic explanation often seems appropriate. Very often the post office name is the family name of the person who filed the original application for a post office, or who was the first postmaster. Derivation of the names will be reported where a logical explanation exists or, if it is a speculative version, it will be so noted.

POST OFFICE CHRONOLOGY

OPENINGS AND CLOSINGS -- Included in this section will be the dates of establishment and discontinuance that were listed in *Colorado Post Offices 1859-1989*. That information has been updated to reflect recent closings and the correction of a few typographical errors. The information was originally extracted from The Records of Postmaster Appointments, maintained by the Post Office Department, and preserved on microfilm available from the National Archives. In addition, in 1980, I was given access to a card file containing recent information on the active post offices. Some of that information was subsequently added to the microfilm records.

Since 1980, learning of changes in post offices has become increasingly difficult. For a time, the weekly *Post Office Department Bulletin* frequently reported openings and closings; and with a fair degree of accuracy. Since 1990, the Postal service has been most casual in their reporting. Fortunately, since the establishment of the Vail Post Office in 1963 there has not been a single new, independent post office established in Colorado - just numerous branches and stations. There are a number of post offices that have closed, but in many instances they had ceased operation months, and even years, before an official announcement was made. Because of this, any post-1990 closing date should be considered speculative.

POSTMASTERS – For each Post Office, I will list the names and dates of appointment of the postmasters, as I have extracted them from the Records of Postmaster Appointments. For the most part these documents are handwritten, and in some instances poorly. I have done my best to copy the names correctly, but I offer no guarantee that all of the spellings are correct.

Prior to the time when all postmasters were placed under Civil Service, postmaster in the second, third and fourth-class post offices were reappointed following each Presidential election. These reappointments have been included in the listings. If there was a change in the governing party, there was often a change in the postmaster.

From approximately 1930 onwards the Post Department Records include one or more dates indicating when a new postmaster was nominated, approved, confirmed, and commissioned. I have chosen to include those dates as they may have significance to others doing research about local history or family genealogy.

1980, has been chosen as an approximate cut-off date for postmasters. That is the extent of the information available to me, and since then the Postal Service more frequently appoints an "Officer in Charge." Such persons serve until a postmaster is appointed, and they change frequently as the Postal Service employees are moved to other assignments or locations. Therefore, I feel that attempting to bring the postmaster name records to a current status is not worth the effort, and in addition would be a task without end.

LOCATIONS – The location information reported in this section is based primarily on the Geographic Site Location Reports of the Post Office Department, which are also available on microfilm from the National Archives. These documents were submitted prior to the approval of the application for a new post office, when there was a change in the location of the post office, and occasionally when a survey of all post offices was conducted. This later event leads me to believe that many changes in location were not reported, and that eventually the Post Office Department decided it was time to find out where everything was situated. The last such survey appears to have been in the late fall of 1941. Subsequent to that time, there are very few documents, and none dated later than 1948.

The Site Location Reports are most helpful if they were prepared after the Federal Land Survey Grid (Section-Township-Range) had been established. Prior to that time, the descriptions rely on estimated distances to other towns, or to geographic features.

On the plains, the roads largely follow section lines. That fact, combined with fence lines that also define section, or partial section lines, aids the search for a location given by Section-Township-Range. In the mountains, those aids are not available and it is more difficult to locate a given site. It becomes necessary to plot the location on topographical maps and conduct the search based on stream crossings and other physical features.

In a small percentage of the reports there are obvious errors in the description and I am left wondering if the postmaster really knew where he was. Hopefully, I have recognized most such errors and what I record here will be accurate.

OTHER EVENTS -- On occasion, the Records of Postmaster Appointment and the Geographic Site Location Reports provide a comment on some other historical event that affected the post office. Such items, when found, will be included in the chronology for the office. All of these facts will be listed in order as determined from the dates present on the documents. This should provide some additional guidance to the history of the individual post office.

POSTAL MARKINGS

A key section of this encyclopedia is the record of the postal markings used at each post office. Often only a single type of marking is known, or early markings have not been reported. And for many post offices I have yet to record any markings.

I will make no attempt to assign a "rarity or value factor" to neither the towns, nor the specific marking. There are too many factors that influence the desirability and value of a given postal marking, not the least of which is individual collector interest and desire. I recall that it was not many years ago that I found my first MONON postmark. Today, nearly every auction offers one for sale - times change.

Nearly all of the markings here recorded have been seen by me, or by someone in whom I have confidence. Nearly all will be shown as tracings; traced from examples in my collection or that of friends and acquaintances.

For manuscript markings, I have chosen to show only one example, unless there are distinctly separate periods of manuscript use or unusual formats. [SM: The author reported receiving many questions over the years from collectors thinking they had a new or different manuscript cancel.]

I also chose to illustrate the associated killers, unless they are common cork smudges. In the case of 4-bar and wavy line machine killers, only a portion, enough to be distinctive, may be shown.

I have done my best to prepare an accurate tracing, however, I am not an artist, and at times my hand is a bit shaky. I feel that I do present a true representation of the diameters and of the size, style, and spacing of the lettering. Irregularities in shape of the letters are my fault, unless otherwise noted. These tracings should be satisfactory for matching to actual examples.

During the last half of the nineteenth century, and the early twentieth century the great majority of steel handstamps, provided by the Post Office Department, were manufactured by a single firm. These handstamps were all hand engraved. Thus, even if two devices were made at the same time for a town, there will be minor differences between them.

It is necessary to emphasize that slight variations will occur in the impressions of the postal marking depending on, the nature of the device, the age of the device, the precision of the strike, and whether it was recently, if ever cleaned.

DESCRIPTION OF THE POSTAL MARKINGS – The purpose of this section is to provide specifics and additional information about each of the postal markings. Included will be a description of an occasional marking, which I have seen and recorded, but which is not available for illustration. [SM: Colored font will be used sparingly in the digital revision. **Red Bold** will be used to describe new reported cancels which are not available for illustration. **Blue Bold** will be used for data that needs clarification either through examination of original sources or further research. The hope here is that calling out these items will spur collectors to assist in completing the story.]

The descriptions are a modification of a system I proposed in 1972, and have personally used ever since. The original system was conceived for computer storage and was thus complicated. With time I learned that the complexity was not necessary, and even less so when I decided that the planned publication would illustrate all the markings that I recorded. In addition, anyone who builds computer databases learns that there is a residual percentage of data that is better presented in narrative form instead of "code".

The description will consist of the following items, as appropriate, in two lines for each marking. A third line will occasionally be used to describe unusual markings.

Line 1:

Type Number: Initially, this number has been assigned to markings, in chronological order, depending upon the earliest date I have recorded. It is my intention that any additions will be inserted in a decimal format (1.1, 1.1.1, etc.), or if appropriate added at the end.

Wording: The wording of the device will be from top to bottom. A "/" will separate lines and the clockwise reading portion from that reading counter-clockwise; a "/" will separate or wording above or before the post office name. Words enclosed in "()" are in the central portion of the date stamp, and words following ":" are outside the date stamp. The use of upper and lower case letters reflects that used in the date stamp. Manuscript markings will be listed in upper and lower case letters.

Punctuation is a problem. I have tried to record it accurately, for at times it can be the distinguishing characteristic between two identical appearing markings. However, periods and commas are fragile. They wear quickly, break off or fail to imprint, thus there may be some variations from what I report. [SM: In cases where the listing is punctuated differently than the tracing I chose to defer to the tracing. However, I discovered several instances where the tracing was inaccurate and the listing was punctuated correctly. *Caveat emptor!*]

Dates of use: Either one or two dates are given. They are the extremes of the range of dates that I have recorded. If only a single example has been seen, then it is given as the initial date. For most of the markings I feel certain that there are in collections, markings with dates that are either earlier or later than the ones listed.

Line 2 - Here I will use some codes. Hopefully they are simple, easily understood, and remembered.

Shape: A two letter "code" that describes the simple geometric shape of the postal marking.

AC - Arcuate

OC - Octagonal

CI - Circular

OV - Oval

IR - Irregular, (non-geometric)

RC - Rectangular

MS - Manuscript

SL - Straightline (rimless)

Framing: A three character "code" (two numbers and a letter) that describes the number, the position, and the character of the lines that frame the marking.

1st character The number of exterior frame lines

2nd character The number of interior frame lines

3rd character The nature of the outermost frame line

C - Cogged

H - Heavy, (thick)

D - Dashed or dotted

P - Plain, (thin)

F - Fancy

R - Rimless (no exterior frame)

T - Toothed

By far the most commonly encountered combination of these codes will be "CI 10P" - A circular marking with one plain outer frame line and no inner frame line.

Size: The diameter, or width by height of the marking. A size will be given for each frame line, separated by "/". For straightline, irregular, pictorial, and rimless markings the extreme dimensions will be reported. Measurements are to the nearest half-millimeter. For an obviously distorted circular marking, an average diameter will be reported. Measuring diameters can be complicated by the care, or lack thereof, with which the marking was struck.

Type of Device: A four or five character abbreviation to describe the type of device used to create the postal marking.

Aux

Auxiliary, instructional handstamps of many types

Doane

Doane style postmarks

Dplx

Duplex (commonly with an oval, grid killer)

Flag

Machine Flag cancels

Hstp

Handstamp

Ijet

Ink Jet (spray) markings

Mach	Machine
Mscp	Manuscript
Pict	Pictorial postmarks of recent years
Rolr	Continuous, roller applied postmark
4bars	4-bar handstamps of various types

Killers and Comments: A narrative description of the killer(s) used with the marking, and other comments about the marking.

Slogan postmarks will be described and the wording reported along with a description of any illustration included in the postal marking.

The descriptions, combined with the tracings, should make it possible to identify examples of each reported marking.

[SM: additional comments:

At this point a few examples of postmarks and their descriptions might help illustrate the conventions used.

MELVIN / COLO.
CI 10P 28.0

The most common postmark. A slash / separates text at top and bottom (clockwise vs. counter-clockwise reading). CI for circular, 10P for 1 plain (P) outer line and no inner line
Dimensions in millimeters.



MONTVILLE, / COLORADO
CI 20P 33.0/31.5 Hstp Fancy, shield in circle

A circular cancel, CI, with 2 outer plain lines and no inner line, 20P. Dimensions of the two outer lines are given and the fancy killer is described.



ENGLEWOOD, CO CONTRACT 2 / USPS
CI 11P 28.0/18.0

CI for circular, 11P for 1 outer and 1 inner thin, plain lines. Dimensions of outer and inner line given in mm.



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PUNCHO SPRINGS / COL.

CI 00R 25.0 Fancy, Positive star in circle

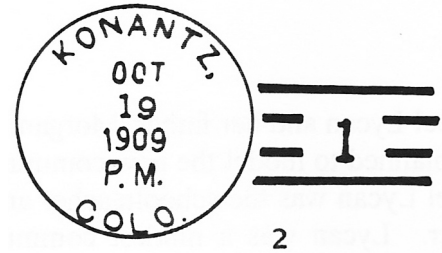
CI for circular, 00R for neither outer or inner lines and R for rimless. Dimensions given in mm.



KONANTZ, / COLO.

CI 10P 31.0 Doane Type 3 with 1; S-22x13mm

A Doane Type 3 cancel. Single outer line with 1 in the bars and the dimensions of the bars given. Doane cancels are described as one of three major types and the number in the bars is listed when known. Please refer to discussions of Doane cancels in the philatelic literature if not familiar with them.



SUNSHINE, / Boulder Co., Colo.

OV 20T 38.0x23.0/35.5x20.5

OV for oval, 20T indicates two outer lines, no inner line and T for toothed. Dimensions given in mm.



**LITTLETON, CO / 80126 :: WAL*MART / STATION
CI 10P 25.0**

Cancel is CI, circular, with a single thin line 10P. Littleton, CO at top and 80126 at bottom. Wal*Mart / Station on two lines and both are outside :: the cds. In some cases the script outside the cds is considered part of a pictorial or text cancel and is described separately, as such. The choice of when to do this is somewhat arbitrary and I have tried to follow the author's conventions.

DEER TRAIL, CO 80105 // RODEO STATION

**SL 00P 32.0x10.0 Pict Scene - Bronc rider on emblem; Text -
DEER TRAIL COLORADO / HOME
OF THE WORLD'S FIRST RODEO /
July 4, 1869**



The cancel is SL, a straight line. Deer Trail, CO 80105 is not the first line. Rodeo Station is the first line and is separated by //. Cancel dimensions are given in mm. The pictorial is described.

Octagonal, oval, rectangular and irregular cancel shapes should be self-explanatory and will not be illustrated here. The same is the case with killers described as barred ovals, wavy machine lines and roller cancels.]

CONCLUSION

I am certain that each and every one of you possess postmarks from towns for which none have been reported, additional markings to those listed, or earlier and later for the listed markings. PLEASE SEND ME PHOTOCOPIES OF ANY SUCH POSTMARKS THAT YOU MAY HAVE!!! [SM: Please send to Roger Rydberg].

Photocopies are essential so that I can trace or reproduce the marking to true scale. [SM: 300dpi scans are preferred].

I would also appreciate any additional historical data or any suggestions and comments you might have for this project.

With the completion of publication of the individual county chapters in *The Colorado Postal Historian*, addenda will be published in the same sequence of counties as the original publication.

Since 1998, many new postmarks have been recorded and traced, particularly for the mid and late Twentieth Century. Those will be included in the addendum as published.

When the addendum effort is completed, then it is my intention, and hope, to compile the whole project as a set of CD's. That would permit showing the illustrations in color.

The greater purpose [of] this project is to record this information and to make it available to the collector and to other interested parties. At some point in time, the collected data, photocopies, maps, and other notes will be placed in the Rocky Mountain Philatelic Library in Denver.