Granite Vale Col Ty March 17

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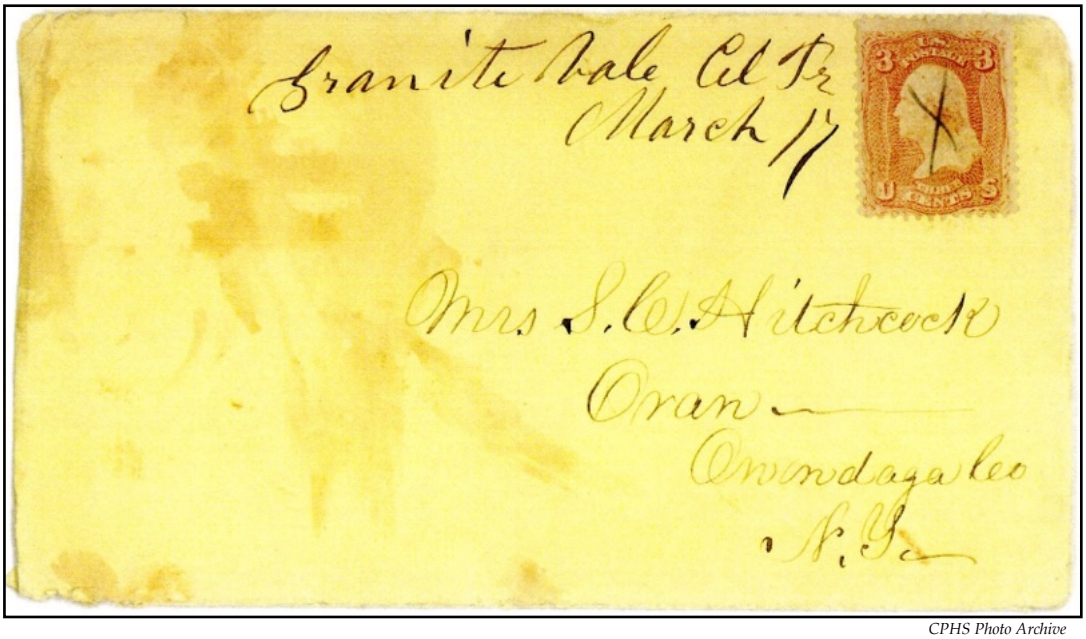

CPHS Photo Archive

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Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Colorado Postal History Society will be on Saturday, November 18, 2023 at 1:00 pm. at the Rocky Mountain Philatelic Library. Bring a Show and Tell item. We will see you there.

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COLORADO POSTAL HISTORIAN
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President's Message

By Tonny Van Loij

By the time you read this summer is almost over. Time goes by so fast, I'm having problems keeping up with news and messages, etc.

It was great so see some of the members at the ROMPEX stamp show. We had a great meeting on Saturday, a full room and a nice program. Steve Morehead handed out a flash drive with the CPHS Encyclopedia. If you like to have one, contact Joe Ditlow (address above). We also had "re-elections" and there was a unanimous vote to keep the present slate. Thanks.

Speaking of programs as you may know our long-time member and historian, Andy Murin, passed away a few weeks after the show. He will be very much missed. He was the man, doing it all, in the CPHS room, keeping track of everything, etc.

The family will have a Celebration of Life on August 29, 2023. Andy and his late wife Joyce had made arrangements to have a service for the both of them together. So hopefully many of the members will be present.

Hope to see you all at the next meeting, I will be back by that time from a trip to Belgium.

Have a great rest of the summer and stay healthy.

Colorado Wanderings

By Bill German

As many if not all of you know Andy Murin passed away June 15 after surgery. Andy was one of CPHS's hardest working members. During his tenure as president, he was diligent at guiding the direction of CPHS. For me, Andy was a strong connection for many of the articles you have had in the *Historian*, including the feature you see in this issue, which he sent to me. He was also able to obtain all the Kenneth Jessen pieces that have been found here the last several years. There are a few more to go. He encouraged members to send me their display pages and correspondence enclosures. Andy wanted these pages full and more of them. In order to continue to do so, please send me something that Andy had been seeking from you or something that he would have been urging you to send me for use in the *CPHS Historian*.

WANTED

Last Seen on eBay some years ago.

Embargo, Colo
Feb 14, 1904

If you have this cover or know where it is please let me know. I would like to buy.

Steve Morehead
520-241-2461
steveasc13@gmail.com

Keep Andy's guiding light going! Please send something for your fellow historians to review!
Correspondences ▫ Display Pages ▫ Research ▫ Fun Places

ANNUAL MEETING REPORT (MAY 27, 2023)

By Joe Ditlow

Tonny van Loij opened the meeting. Minutes of last meeting presented and treasurers report made. After expenses for the year we have $4,950.86 in the treasury. Major expenses for the year were printing and mailing of the *Historian* and the digital encyclopedia.

It was decided to return to the meeting dates in November, February and May. They will be November 18, February 24 and May 25.

Steve Morehead reported on the progress of the Digital Encyclopedia, he expects it to take 12 to 18 months to finish the project.

An award – "William H Bauer" award for Contributions to Colorado Postal History Literature – was presented in absentia to David New.

Andy Murin presented the program – Colorado Cancels A to Z.

Meeting adjourned.

We also had five new members apply during the show: Rich Voninski, Aurora; Sean Steveson, Genoa; Steve Hesse, Leadville; Steve Bonowski, Lakewood and Marcus Blout, Canon City

~ Joe Ditlow, Sec/Treas.

Thank you for Surprise!

Greetings to my Friends and Fellow Collector's.

A great surprise parcel arrived from Joe Ditlow of Calhan, Colorado.

I am very touched at receiving this lovely award. The enclosed plaque in the memory of William H. Bauer, a collector that I never met. I know in the past years Mr. Bauer was a serious collector of Colorado Territory postal history. He put much effort in assembling and preserving so many fine covers, and useful information about the towns in territory and on in to the statehood period.

It was his large collection sold at the Rumsey auction in 2013 that truly gave a great start to rebuilding a collection like the one I had in 1953 to 1959.

I had much help in my youth from Dan Stone, a well known Denver dealer, and my friend Jack Willard who were both serious students of the great state of Colorado. Jack and I were members of the Collector's Club and appointed to serve on the Rompex show committee. I was chairman in 1954 & 1955 Jack and I helped to develop the show at the Shirley Savoy hotel from 1954 to 1958.

It was at that time in late 1959 I when I dropped away from postal history with a business venture that took me to Scottsdale, Arizona. This was good fortune as I took up the business of mineralogy, and selling fine minerals and meteorite specimens to collectors. It seems collecting is in one my genes, and the mineral business was my life's work lasted for 54 years.

The postal history hobby was still a subject that always interested to me. So in 2006 after I retired I came back to collecting Colorado and New Mexico covers once again. Thanks to the internet it was now possible to connect to other collectors and dealers as well as attend some great auctions.

This is when I started building my second collection. That was to be a great challenge and much enjoyment. Collecting this time around started me to begin publishing a few books on the subject both privately and featured in Western Express.

In a few weeks time you (CPHS) will receive a copy of a new book just completed the title is *Rocky Mountain Express Companies 1859 to 1867*.

I had thought about attending this year's show, but travel does not offer much pleasure these days. Thehen show this year was the time of my birthday where I was arriving at age 90 years. I hope to keep in good health stay well for ten more years to continue collecting when I am 100.

My sincere thanks to all of you for your kind thoughts and great gift.

Kindest regards,

David

Granite Vale, Colorado

Location and Identification of a Territorial Post Office

By Steve Morehead

Editor's Note: The text of this article originally appeared in La Posta *March 1992. All images have been added here. The stamp seen on the cover is not originally part of the cover, it was added later.*

I acquired the cover on the front page with manuscript postmark Granite Vale Col Tr, March 17 (tracing shown below). My primary interest is covers from Colorado ghost mining towns. Although there were no references in any standard ghost town book suggesting Granite Vale was a mining town I was sufficiently intrigued to acquire the cover in the hope of learning more about the town.

The cover is addressed to Mrs. S. C. Hitchcock, Oran, Onondaga Co, N. Y. and contains a chronologically mismatched enclosure in the same hand; the enclosure is datelined Fairplay, May 8th 1869 and reads:

Dear Sister

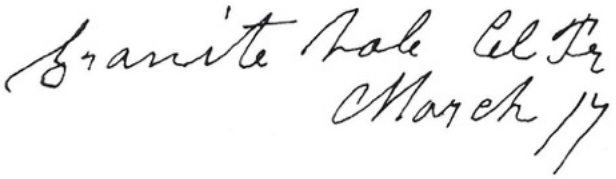
It has been quite a long time since I have heard from or written to you.

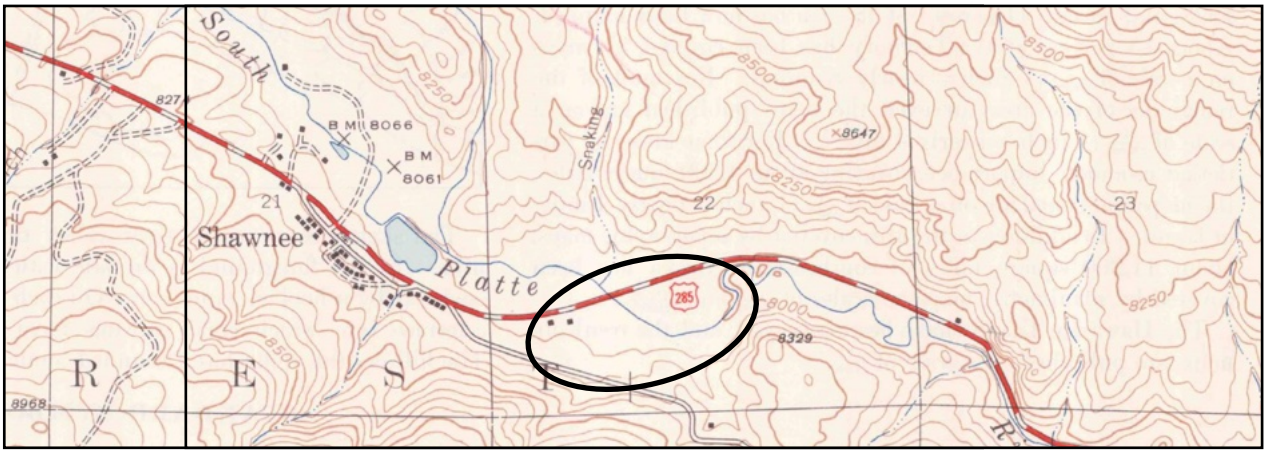
I have been well and very busy since I last wrote you, as I generally am. Although many people especially miners do but little here during the winter, I seldome[sic] find much leisure time.

I received a letter from Frank from New York a short time ago--from which I should judge that he is doing well. He also sent me his likeness from which every one recognises[sic] that it is of a relative of mine. Most people ask me if it is a younger brother--as I am a well established and recognized bacheler[sic] in this community--who ever heard of a Safford of my age being a bacheler[sic] before. In reviewing the past history of my life I think it resembles most the White branch of our family, as they are somewhat noted for wandering from home, but my judgement is that those [?] who have settled down in life are much the wisest, as settling in a new country, is like making a world to live in, before one is prepared to commence living[sic]. But the hardy Pioneer & Frontiersmen are the enterprise of our country, is all very fine on paper, and for the country--but death to the Pioneer--but such is life--We are all seeking for something that we will never find in this life--perfect contentment and happiness--but that such a disirable[sic] state, may eshist[sic] hereafter--I have no doubt. The Denver branch of the Pacific RR will probably be completed to Denver, this coming fall. Then <u>you</u> <u>can</u> come to Fairplay in five or six days and see the Rocky Mountains, with all their beautiful scenery-It would be like a new world to you, I know about what your ideas of such a trip are. Indians and danger at every step--but thousands think nothing of it--our country will be full of pleasure seekers and adventurers the coming summer. I must close . Give my love to all relatives and friends,

Your Brother

S. A. Safford





Although the mismatched letter offers an interesting insight into one man's view of 19th century pioneering philosophy, not surprisingly, it reveals nothing about Granite Vale.

The only other cover involving Granite Vale known to the author is one inbound and addressed to Mrs. Augusta Chase at Kenosha House, Granite Vale, Park Co, Col Ter.

Colorado postal history sources barely mention Granite Vale. Bauer, Ozment and Willard in their book *Colorado Post Offices*, 1990, list the Park County post office as opened Dec 19, 1861 and closed Jan 31, 1870– an eight year territorial post office. Jarrett, *Colorado Territorial and Pre-Territorial Postmarks,* lists two postmasters and their governmental reimbursements. This data was published biennially so the first listing for Granite Vale was not until 1863. In 1863 John A. Pollock is listed as the postmaster (and presumably was from the opening of the office in 1861) with reimbursement of $3.66 for the first three quarters of 1863. The second and final postmaster was Angel (Azel in following entries) Slaight [sic] from the final quarter of 1863 until the post office closed in 1870. His reimbursements were: $1.21 for the last quarter of 1863, $1.12 for fiscal 1865, no return listed in 1867 and $50.00 for 1869. Total listed compensation was $55.99 with ninety percent of it in the last year of operation.

Where was Granite Vale located? If the town was not a mining town what was its reason for existence at this early stage of Colorado settlement? What became of the town? Did it become a ghost town or was it renamed and become prosperous? Why was it not mentioned in modem sources? Answers to these questions were found by examining both primary and secondary historical sources at the Denver Public Library's Western History Department (DPL) and the Colorado State Historical Society (CSHS).

A search for information about the first postmaster, John A. Pollack, did not help. He is listed only once in the newspaper file indexes at DPL, in the Denver *Rocky Mountain News (RMN)* of Jan 12, 1873 a decade after he had been postmaster at Granite Vale. Apparently Mr. John A. Pollock (no address given) was a sore loser since he filed a complaint in court against two men to whom he had lost his team and wagon in a wager. The *Fiftyniners' Directory* lists him as a Fifty-niner (one who came to Colorado in the first wave of immigration in 1859). The *Directory* states that Arapahoe County land records show he was owner of Lot 9, Block 40 of Auraria Town Company as of Dec. 28, 1859. How and why he became the first postmaster of Granite Vale is unknown.

Information about Granite Vale itself was also scarce. The James Grafton Rogers manuscript *Colorado Geographic Place Names* at CSHS gave the following under the heading Granite Vale:

> Former settlement Park Co.
>
> Once a P. O. not listed in Colo. Gazetteer 1906. Not shown—Maps & Index of Colo Rand 1955. "Granite Vale" was post office 1863-1869 (Not 1861 or 1871-1877). John A. Pollack first P.M 1863, then Axel Slaight (or Azel) [sic].
>
> U.S. Official Register 1861–1877

CSHS maintains an index file of place names with information from a variety of primary sources. The citation for Granite Vale was brief:

> Place Name Granitevale (Grant) (Olava)
> County ParkT.S.7S. R74W
> no elevation no pop date

The implication that Grant and Granite Vale were the same location was interesting. This hypothesis might seem plausible since both post offices were in Park County and Bauer, Ozment and Willard report the Granite Vale PO closed in 1870 and the Grant PO opened the next year. Perhaps only a name change occurred with Grant supplanting Granite Vale.

The earliest reference to Granite Vale in the newspaper files also mentioned the second postmaster Mr. Slaght and his wife. The *RMN* of Feb. 28, 1866 contained a testimonial by the Slaghts:

> Cure of Dropsy
>
> I hereby certify that Dr. Cunningham cured me of Dropsy, which was of eighteen months standing, and called by many a bad case. Am now well, and have remained so nearly one year, with no symptoms of its returning.
>
> MRS. A. SLAGHT,
> Granite Vale , C.T., Feb. 10, 1866
>
> The above signature belongs to my wife, the statement is true; and too much credit cannot be ascribed to Dr. Cunningham.
>
> SLAGHT

The only other indexed newspaper reference to Granite Vale was in the Georgetown *Colorado Miner* of October 28, 1869. Granite Vale is listed as one of the stops on a mail contract up for bid:

> MAIL CONTRACTS
> UNITED STATES MAILS COLORADO
> EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT.
> Washington September 30, 1869.
>
> PROPOSALS will be received at the Contract Office of this Department at until 3 p.m. of March l, 1870 for conveying the mails of the United States from July 1, 1870 to June 30, 1874 in the Territory of Colorado, on the routes and by the schedules of departures and arrivals herein specified ...
>
> No. 1703 From Denver by Bradford,

(local), Hutchinson, Granite Vale, Hamilton, and Fairplay to Buckskin 100 [?] miles and back twice a week.

Leave Denver Monday and Thursday at 7a.m; Arrive at Buckskin Wednesday and Saturday by 11 a.m; Leave Buckskin Monday and Thursday at 7a.m; Arrive at Denver Tuesday and Friday by 12 night.

The bid request indicates the Granite Vale Post Office was on the mail road from Denver to Fairplay but the exact location was unclear. The stage road followed the North Fork of the South Platte and was the major route to the gold camps in South Park.

The request describes the trip as taking two days each way, which implies an overnight stop enroute.

In the absence of other references to Granite Vale research was directed toward Azel Slaght. One early reference to Azel Slaght was as a hotel guest. [The newspapers routinely printed the guest registers of the various hotels.] In the *RMN* of April 5, 1867:

HOTEL REGISTER
Pacific House.
NOBLE & MARLOW Proprietors
A. Slaght. .....Grantville

This citation is significant since it lists Azel Slaght's address as Grantville. If Mr. Slaght was postmaster of Granite Vale at this time and presumably canceled the cover shown on the front page why would he list his address as Grantville? Most likely he did not. Pronunciation of Granite VALE and GrantVILLE sound similar, the two names might even look somewhat alike if scrawled. It is my hypothesis that Grantville was a misinterpretation of Granite Vale. This error may have occurred in a couple of ways. Mr. Slaght may not have been understood when he told the hotel clerk he was from Granite VALE. If he signed the register his handwriting may have been illegible. Or when the register was reported to the newspaper an error in transcription may have occurred. This 130 year old error may be the explanation for confusing Grant with Granitevale [sic] in the CSHS place name index cited above. No other listing was found at either DPL or CSHS for Grantville; it may or may not have been an alternate name for Grant. Evidence presented here however will show Granite Vale was not Grant.

The *RMN* of July 17, 1868 [while Slaght was postmaster at Granite Vale] contains the following travel item:

---Slaght's Ranch, on the Platte, Denver and Buckskin road is a pretty place, the comfortable home of the weary and hungry traveler, *the home station also of the Buckskin coach both ways.* Mr. S. cultivates some two hundred acres, cuts all the hay he wants near home, and seldom has to feed his flocks and herds, which are numerous and slick, winter and summer . He is now building a sawmill with which to cut his own lumber. Mrs. S. is one of those ladies spoken of by Sam Bowles, in his "Across the Continent." We will not quote it, because it is so very complimentary.

Once when we were making a tour of that romantic and delightful part of Colorado, travelling horse-back fifty miles a day, and writing a long descriptive letter every evening, she treated us and our friend to aguadente in a milk pan, which we considered the full measure of hospitality, and since which we have entertained the most chivalrous and affectionate respect for her. [Talk about revenge, my dear!]

The italics are the author's and reveal where the mail coach stopped overnight between Denver and Buckskin on Route 1703.

A week later in the same paper (July 25, 1868) a traveler discussed the Bradford Road (as it was sometimes called) and a trip to Fairplay:

...Mr. Slaght has seventy (70) acres under cultivation, and informs me that oats and barley will yield from thirty (30) to thirty-five (35) bushels to the acre. Last year he raised about one hundred and fifty (150) bushels of potatoes to the acre...Mr. Slaght is trying some winter wheat and rye this year, and believes it will do *finely ...Ifound the stopping places, among the best to be found on any route in Colorado. At Danforth's, the Omaha Ranch, Slaght's, the Kenosha House, and Dr. Dickinson's* I was most kindly entertained and found good beds, and most excellent meals.

Although these contemporary accounts differ in how much land Mr. Slaght farmed they prove that at the time Azel Slaght was postmaster of Granite Vale he and his wife had a ranch and stage stop on the Denver to Fairplay route and were well known for maintaining travelers' accommodations. His place was known as Slaght's Ranch or simply Slaghts.

The Granite Vale Post Office was closed Jan. 31, 1870. The closure must have been rather sudden since the mail bid proposal quoted above was reprinted in the Georgetown paper in October 1869 and specifically lists Granite Vale as one of the stops on the route up for bid starting July 1, 1870. The closure was noted and lamented in contemporary accounts. The *RMN* remarks on May 27, 1870:

---When the post office at Granite Vale was discontinued it left the whole route from Denver to Hamilton ninety miles without any

> office at all. Efforts are being made to have it restored, and we trust they may prove successful.

The area obviously needed mail service and it was re-established shortly, but not at Azel Slaght's ranch. On July 8, 1870 the following news item appears in the *RMN:*

> ---A post office has been established at *Charley Hepburn's,* on the South Park road, *called Grant.* This office is intended to supply the place of the *Granite Vale office (Slaght's)* which has been discontinued. Charley Hepburn is P.M. at the new office.

These contemporary accounts prove that Granite Vale was at Slaght's ranch and Grant was a new post office at a different location. The opening of the Grant PO in 1870 as the last newspaper item indicates is a year earlier than May 16, 1871 listed by Bauer, Ozment and Willard as the establishment date for Grant.

No explanation has been found for the closure of the Granite Vale office. The new post office at Grant was opened in time for the July 1 renewal of the mail contract. Perhaps the change in post offices was related to the new mail contract although the stage continued to stop overnight at Slaght's ranch as we shall see. Could the closure have involved politics? It is only conjecture but there is an interesting story in the Jan. 17, 1868 *RMN.* The story is lengthy and describes the attempt of Acting Governor Hall to fill a vacant Park County Commissioner's seat. Azel Slaght and James Luttrell (both Park County Commissioners) refused to recognize the appointment because they were Democrats and the appointee was a Republican! The article states "...We presume they intend to institute a small rebellion and run Park County on the most approved style of Jeff Davis…" After the Civil War the Republican Party had become very strong and Democrats were often thought of as Secessionists. Perhaps Mr. Slaght's politics in a strongly Republican state only three years after the Civil War influenced the closure of his post office.

More likely being a postmaster took more time away from his ranch, sawmill and hostelry than he wished to give.

Azel Slaght continued to ranch and run a hotel at the same location throughout the 1860s and 1870s , and prospered. He was both industrious and well known as the following traveler's account attests:

> [August 16, 1870 *RMN:]*
>
> ...I have found the ranch hotels on the road very good. Bailey's and Hepburn's are quiet and home like, and every attention is given to guests. *At Slaght's the coaches meet and stop over night and he is always busy; he runs a saw mill besides, has a fine mountain farm, and is evidently getting rich.* Without disparaging the many excellencies of these mountain hotels, I may be allowed to hint that what has answered very well for miners and mountain men in former years, will not quite satisfy pleasure travelers from the states, and they will do well to prepare for this class of visitors by adding something to the conveniences and comforts, (not to say decencies) of their establishments. The cost will be trifling, and it will pay. The travel from

CPHS archive photo

abroad is small this year, but it will be constantly increasing and those who are best prepared will reap the advantages. The time is not distant when first class hotels will be required on all the principal routes among the mountains.

Note that the Grant Post Office was at the same Hepburn's described above as one of the other mountain hotels along the road. Grant became a small but well known supply depot for the nearby mines up Geneva Creek.

Mr. Slaght apparently took the comments of the traveling reporter to heart and improved his hotel services:

[August 1, 1876 *RMN:]*

In the Mountains.

SLAGHT'S RANCH , July 31, 1876

Tourists are now in the height of enjoyment trouting it along the road leading from Denver to the South Park…

...Those who come up this far in the coach will find Slaght's a comfortable place to stop at. He has during the past year finished his new house, making it altogether the best hotel between the Junction and Fairplay. Slaght is so well known to old settlers that it is superfluous to mention his qualifications for keeping a public house. Suffice it to say, that his table is good, his rooms and beds comfortable, *the stage stops to change horses at his place both ways, so that with a daily mail to and from Denver* , it is one of the best places on the road for the tourist and Denver businessman, getting away from work.

This description of Slaght's Ranch in 1876, was six years after the closure of the Granite Vale PO. Yet Slaght's Ranch continued to be a stop for the Denver to Fairplay stage and was now an excellent hotel. I have underlined the comment about providing mail service. It would be interesting to know what type of postal service was supplied without an official post office.

Together these various accounts detailing the presence of a sawmill, the continually expanding agricultural effort and the building or remodeling of accommodations confirm continuous occupation of one site by Azel Slaght from early in the 1860s through the 1870s. The author concludes that Granite Vale was the name of the first post office at Azel Slaght's ranch and stage stop (Slaghts Ranche). For unknown reasons the post office closed was in 1870.

What became of Slaght's Ranch and where on the Denver to Buckskin stage road was it located? We know that it must have been close to Grant if that post office was meant to supplant Granite Vale. Slaght is an uncommon name and the existence of a discontinued post office in Park County named Slaghts (1882-1900) was noted. Despite the fact that this office was not opened until 12 years after Granite Vale's closure, the coincidence of names was suggestive. The place name index at CSHS had the following citation for Slaghts:

Data--(Miss) Alice Corbin
Place Name Slaghts
Teacher of Shawnee School
Town Park County
Jan 16, 1936 (letter)
(Historical facts--W.H. Price)

CPHS archive photo

About 1860, Azel Slaght and wife, settled along the Platte River about one mile below the present town of Shawnee. Mr. Slaght was made postmaster and the town was named Slaghts.

In 1878, Mr. James W. Price moved to Slaghts where he was postmaster. After the railroad was built through this section, he moved one mile further west and built a hotel in 1886. In 1899 Shawnee Lodge was erected. The heads of the railroad Co. were responsible for naming the village Shawnee. In 1900 Mr. Price's son, W.H. Price built a store near Shawnee Lodge, and the post office was moved from Slaghts and was known thereafter as Shawnee.

The ghost town file at CSHS gave additional details on the location of Slaghts and Shawnee:

> "Named for Azel Slaght, who settled there with his wife about 1860, and opened a post office. Located about a mile below SHAWNEE, it was the first over-night stop for the Denver-Leadville stage coach line."
>
> "In 1878 the property was bought by Ezra Fairchild, who laid out a village plat on the site and gave it the name FAIRFIELD. It was expected to become a terminus of the South Park railroad but was evidently disappointed , and abandoned shortly."

The printed reminisces of W. H. Price (mentioned in the first citation), the son of James W. Price, the postmaster at Fairville (Slaghts) give further details. In 1939 the younger Price had completed 61 years of postal service, first as an assistant to his father and then as postmaster of Shawnee himself. In an article in the *Denver Post* of Dec. 6, 1939 W. H. Price states that Azel Slaght sold his 640 acre ranch, which included a hotel, sawmill and numerous buildings, in 1878 to Ezra Fairchild who platted the town of Fairville [Price mistakenly calls it Fairview in the interview], which was never developed. The post office name was changed again to Slaghts (and may or may not have been moved a short distance on the same property), a stop on the South Park Division of the Union Pacific RR. Finally, William H. Price moved the post office about one mile west to his store near the Shawnee lodge and the name was changed to Shawnee. The present day community of Shawnee developed at this location.

The USPOD Records of Postmaster Appointments corroborates Mr. Price's story with slight differences. Interestingly, Azel Slaght is listed as the first postmaster at Fairville from Sept. 13 1878 until the office was closed in January 1879. Was the Fairville office opened before the sale of his ranch or did he stay on as a postmaster after the property sold? Fairville reopened in November 1879 but James Price was not listed as postmaster until April 1880. William P. Herrick was the last postmaster at Fairville from June 20, 1881 until closure in February 1882 and was the first postmaster of Slaghts. Not until October 1884 is a Price mentioned, and then William H. is listed as postmaster of Slaghts (this is probably an error in the records since William H. makes it is clear in his reminisces that his father was postmaster first and he became a postmaster only after 21 years as his father's assistant). The father, James W. (the records list him initially as John W.) is not listed as postmaster at Slaghts until June 1886. He remained postmaster until the office was moved by his son to Shawnee in 1900.

Only Shawnee has a post office today, Grant was closed in 1990 and reopened as a branch of Shawnee; Granite Vale, Fairville and Slaghts have disappeared. The Grant Post Office closed once before and was reopened as Olava in 1936 and then reverted to Grant again in 1948. The Park County Historical Society in Bailey, CO supplied locations for Slaghts and Shawnee. Slaghts, Fairville and hence Granite Vale have no visible remains. Slaghts was located in the SE¼ SW¼ Section 22, T7S, R73W described as south of U.S. 285 and the river and east of Shawnee in a meadow at 8,000 feet elevation. Without examining Park County land records the size of Slaght's ranch in the 1860s is not certain; whether Granite Vale and Fairville were in the same 160 acres as the Slaghts townsite is not known. Obviously the sites were close, topographic maps show that this is the only area flat enough to have been farmed and have hay meadows. Shawnee is located on U.S. 285 in the NW¼ SE¼

parkcoarchives.org

Maud and William H. Price in front of their home in August 1893.

parkcoarchives.org

William H. Price store in Shawnee.

Section 21, T7S, R73W. Grant is approximately six miles west of Shawnee on U.S. 285 in Section 9, T7S, R74W where Geneva Creek enters the North Fork of the South Platte.

Granite Vale was an early post office serving the needs of travelers to the gold mines of Hamilton, Buckskin and Fairplay. Despite several name changes, discontinuances and relocations the need for a post office in this location has been constant for the past 130 years. The chronology of name changes and locations is shown in the box on the next page.

In closing, a few comments about scarcity might be made. Postmasters' reimbursements can be used as a rough guide to post office size since postmasters were paid a percentage of revenue collected. A small office open for a short time would be expected to generate small revenues and hence small reimbursements. Jarrett points out that reimbursement data is often inaccurate and should be interpreted cautiously, but as a rough guide to rarity of Colorado territorial covers, consider two ghost towns from which covers were recently auctioned: Whitney, (Boulder Cty, 1868 to 1871) and Cache Creek, (Lake Cty, 1862 to 1871). Total postmaster reimbursements for the former were $11.80 and $19.36 for the latter. I do not know if the Whitney cover is unique, but the Cache Creek is described as such. Based on these reimbursements Granite Vale (total of $55.99 for eight years) was probably a more active post office than either of the examples cited: Demographically this seems logical since Granite Vale was located at an overnight stop on a major stage route in territorial Colorado. Yet Granite Vale is unlisted in Jarrett and Richard Frajola (personal communication) indicates he has no other listing for it in "Colorado Postal Markings to 1900" (this journal). Discussions with several other Colorado collectors indicate they are unaware of other covers from Granite Vale. Are there other Granite Vale covers out there?

Acknowledgements

The author wishes to thank all those who helped in solving this puzzle in Colorado postal history: the respective staffs at the Denver Public Library's Western History Department, the Colorado State Historical Society and the Park County Historical Society; fellow collectors Richard Frajola, Ray Newburn, and Ernie Peyton; special thanks to Bill Bauer for permission to illustrate his cover and for information that helped; and to Richard Helbock for a critical and thoughtful review of this manuscript.

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Note: This work was the main source for Bill Bauer in his listing of Granite Vale in the Colorado Postal Encyclopedia.

The author would be pleased to learn more concerning Granite Vale, Azel Slaght or John A. Pollock. If anyone can help, please contact him at steveasc13@gmail.com.

History Colorado

Fairview Hotel

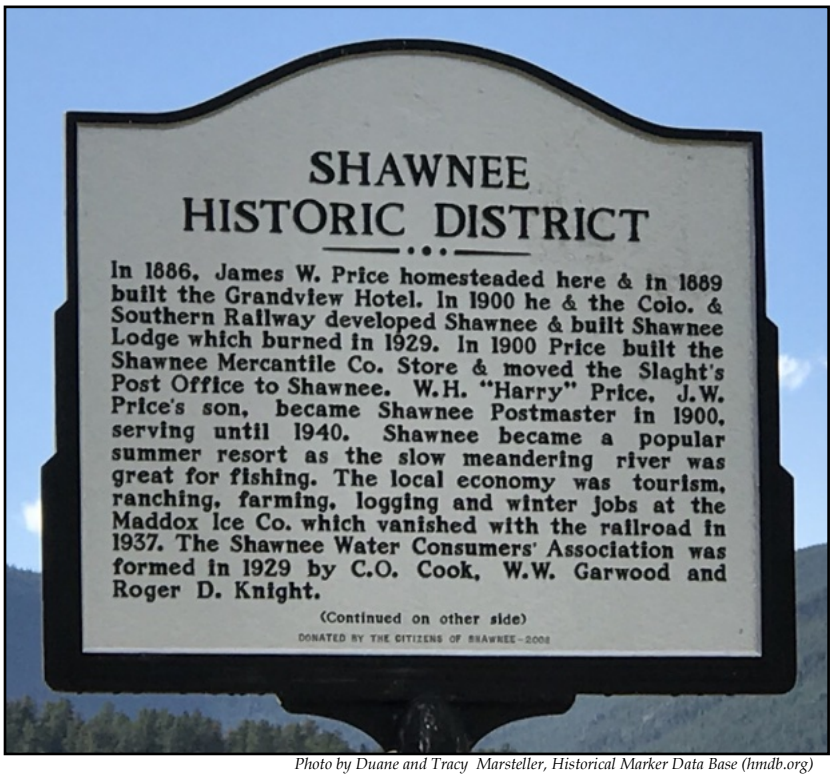

Photo by Duane and Tracy Marsteller, Historical Marker Data Base (hmdb.org)

There is no photo for the reverse side of the plaque. Here is the text:

The Shawnee Cemetery is 350 feet to the east. Since 1895 settler families of Tyler, Bonnifield, and Price have been interred. Civil War Union veteran, Private W. A. Bonnifield rests there. Prior valley history includes: Ute hunting ground, a route to South Park's 1859-60s gold rush and route of the 1878 Denver, South Park and Pacific narrow-gauge R.R. Homesteaders Azel & Alice Slaght arrived in 1859-61. Long known as "Slaght's Valley", Slaght's Ranch, located 1/2 mile to the SE, was called: Granite Vale Post Office, 1861-70; Slaght's Stagestop, 1862-78, Fairville Post Office & Townsite, 1878-82, Slaght's P.O., 1882-1900.

Erected 2008 by Citizens of Shawnee

Chronology of Post Office Name Changes and Locations

1861-1870	**Granite Vale.** Located on Denver – Buckskin Road at Azel Slaght's mountain ranch and stage stop.
1870-1918	**Grant.** Located approx. six miles west of Slaght's ranch at Charley Hepburn's ranch and hotel. Became a town in its own right.
1878-1882	**Fairville.** Post office for a new town platted on Slaght's ranch (after sale of ranch?) The town never developed beyond planning stage.
1882-1900	**Slaghts.** A railroad station. Same location as Fairville and Granite Vale.
1900-	**Shawnee.** Post office near Shawnee Lodge approx 1 mile west of Slaghts. Grew into a small town.
1936-1948	Grant reopened as **Olava**.
1948-1990	Olava return to original name of **Grant**.
1990-	**Grant** closed and reopened as branch of Shawnee.

parkcoarchives.org

Left labeled as Grant, Colorado Post Office late 1930s, but that was during the time as Olava (above). Instead, likely taken in the late 1940s.

THE DISPLAY PAGE

Page Created by Andy Murin

BALFOUR PARK COUNTY

Established: February 6 1894 Discontinued January 31 1907

Balfour was one of those strange mining towns in Colorado, it was on a flat plain in the middle of South Park, no mountains of any significance for miles around. Gold was discovered and the miners tried to make a go of it, it never produced much and the town was abandoned. What was unique about Balfour is that the Italian and Chinese miners from the nearby towns of Como were forbidden to even enter the town. After the town was abandoned, it was fair game for ranchers in the area to use what was left over for scrap. That,along with the severe winters in South Park had taken its toll on the townsite. Right now there is nothing to show the Balfour ever existed. Of the two photographs below, one was taken when Balfour was only 10 days old, which shows you how fast buildings,tents and structures were erected. The other photo is what the Balfour site is today