

horses. One passenger, Mr. W. Clifford of New Orleans, was killed, one of the guards was killed, and Big Foot Wallace was wounded. The white men fought the Indians for about two hours but the Indians were too numerous for them. They took stage coach, horses, mules, saddles, mail bags, and in fact everything the mail party possessed.

Five of the mail party escaped, and walked back to Camp Hudson, which was sixteen miles from the scene of action. In September, Woods sold out to George Giddings of San Antonio, and R. E. Doyle of San Diego, California. These men reorganized the line, gave it better financial backing and equipped it with good stock and improved coaches, which were fine ten passenger affairs, drawn by five mules, two a wheel and three abreast.

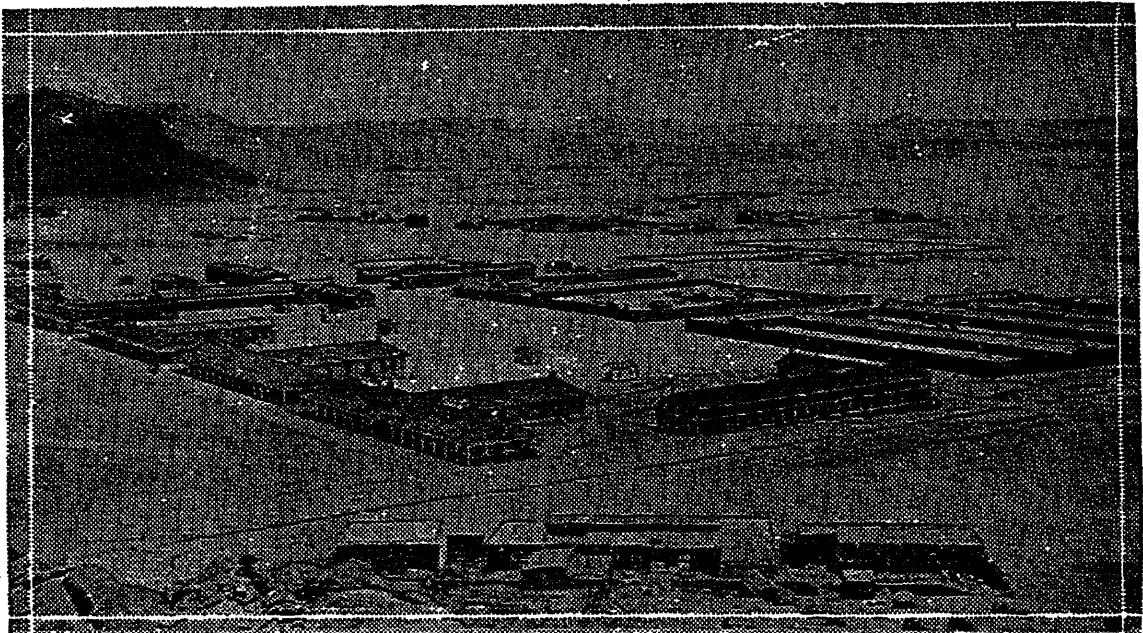
The Post Office department, in 1857, opened bids for an overland mail route to leave some place on the Mississippi, and take the southern route through Texas to San Francisco, California. One of the requirements was that the coaches for carrying the mail should also be suitable for passenger transportation. The trip was to be made within twenty-five days and the service to be semi-monthly, weekly or semi-weekly. The contract was awarded to John Butterfield, of Utica, New York, and, as signed, he was to furnish a semi-weekly stage service across the continent and to receive from the government six hundred thousand dollars a year for a period of four years. He agreed to begin operations by September 1st, 1858. The route decided upon was from St. Louis to Colbert's Ferry on Red River, a few miles east of the present Denison, Texas, through the unsettled part of the state west of Fort Worth

to El Paso.

The original outlay to put this line in operation was nearly \$100,000. As stated, the company had nearly a hundred fine coaches, 250 drivers, and nearly 1,000 other employes. Service began on the new route about a month before the time specified in the contract, and the exact road ran as follows: from Colbert's Ferry it turned sharply westward through Sherman, to Gainesville, Denison, Jacksboro, Fort Belknap, Clear Fork Station, Fort Phantom Hill, Mountain Pass, Fort Chadbourne, Grape Creek, Coughlin Station, Horse Head Crossing on the Pecos, up the east bank of that river to a point near the New Mexico line at Pope's Camp; from here the road turned due west up the south bank of Delaware Creek to Pine Springs Station, the same route used by General Bartlett in 1850.

Just east of the mouth of Delaware Creek, where it emptied into the Pecos river, Captain John Pope, United States Army, acting under order from the War Department, commenced the boring of a deep well. He sunk the hole to 1,140 feet and secured plenty of water. It caved in so badly, however, that, after spending over a hundred thousand dollars on it, the attempt was abandoned. For a long time it was considered the most expensive water well on earth. On the account of the failure of the water supply, the route was changed in September, 1859, to join the San Antonio-San Diego route at the Horse Head Crossing on the Pecos River to follow it to El Paso.

The San Antonio and San Diego mail line was the first overland mail route let by the Post Office Department. It went into opera-



FORT DAVIS BARRACKS FIFTY YEARS AGO