

# U.S. Mail Rural Delivery Service Enters 60th Year

The Post Office Department's rural delivery service today serves more Americans than ever before in history.

This observation was made by Postmaster General Arthur E. Summerfield in calling the nation's attention to the 60th birthday of the Service.

Experimental rural delivery service began October 1, 1896 with three routes at Charles Town, W. Va., and two routes at Halltown and Uvilla, near Charles Town.

These sites for the initial experimental routes were picked by Postmaster General William L. Wilson, a native of West Virginia.

Old records show that in its first week the three Charles Town routes provided for surprised farmers delivery of 214 letters, 290 papers, 33 postal cards and 2 packages. Previously, they would not have received this mail until they went into town to pick it up, often a matter of weeks or even months.

That was a far cry from today's mail load handled by rural delivery carriers. For example, in a recent 12-month period, nearly 8 billion pieces of mail were handled for rural patrons.

Today, there are 31,888 routes serving 34,930,000 mail patrons over more than 1 1/2 million miles of routes that extend into virtually all the counties of the United States, as well as into territories and possessions of the United States. And, during the fiscal year ended last June 30 alone there were 594,900 patrons added to rural delivery routes, while a total of

11,798 extensions of rural routes were made to provide more and better service.

Rural delivery was first officially suggested by Postmaster General John Wanamaker in 1891.

The first bill authorizing rural delivery service was introduced in the House of Representatives on January 5, 1892, by James O'Donnell of Michigan, but it failed to pass.

A bill by Congressman Thomas E. Watson of Georgia became law March 3, 1893, appropriating \$10,000 for experimental rural delivery. This, together with \$20,000 appropriated for the same purpose on July 16, 1894, was not immediately used, the Postmaster General deeming the amount insufficient.

On June 9, 1896, another \$10,000, together with the prior \$30,000, was made available and the first experimental rural delivery service was established the following October 1.

Many events in postal history have been marked by big ceremonies, such as when the Pony Express began between Saint Joseph, Missouri and Sacramento, California, on April 3, 1860. But the West Virginia experiment was launched with little fanfare, and under a cloud of criticism. Critics said it would be impractical and expensive.

"They were certainly proved wrong," Mr. Summerfield noted.

"The effect the Post Office Department's rural delivery has produced upon the American scene in 60 years can scarcely be exagger-

ated," he said. "It stimulated development of the parcel post, and it aided greatly in the establishment of the American system of roads and highways.

"Moreover, its effect on commerce, as a vital link between industry and the American farm family has been tremendous, and it has a great cultural and social effect on American life, providing new vistas of communication for the rural family.

More than two-thirds of Arizona is owned by the federal government in national parks and forests, Indian reservations and military installations.

## The Bradleys Have Four Sons In Armed Forces

By MRS. C. L. BRADLEY  
Community Reporter

Mr. and Mrs. Ray Bradley of Maggie have four sons in the U. S. Armed Forces.

Chief Warrant Officer Richard Bradley enlisted in the Army in 1944. He served in the European Theatre during World War II and is now stationed at Fort Bliss, Texas where he is attached to a Guided Missile Battalion. Mr. and

Mrs. Bradley and their children, Kathy and Karen, recently visited here.

SFC Odell Bradley enlisted in the Army in 1944 and also served in the European Theatre during World War II. He was recruitment officer for several counties in Western North Carolina before being sent to Tokyo, Japan in 1952. He is married to the former Reiko Shimigo of Tokyo and they have a son, Mickie. SFC Bradley is expected to return to the States with his family in January.

Pvt. Frank Bradley enlisted in the Army in December, 1955. He received basic training at Fort Jackson and was then sent to Fort

Knox, Ky. Recently he was sent to Anchorage, Alaska where he is serving in the 23rd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division.

Kenneth Edward Bradley enlisted in the Navy in August, 1956 and was inducted at Columbia, S. C. He is now at the Naval Training Center, Great Lakes, Ill., where he is attached to Battalion 103, Regiment 10.

Pvt. Paul Mehaffey, son of Mr. and Mrs. Connelly Mehaffey, enlisted in the Army in July. He was inducted at Fort Jackson, S. C. and was sent to Fort Lewis, Wash. for training. Recently he has been sent to Anchorage, Alaska where he is

serving with the 23rd Infantry. He is expected to be in Alaska until next August.

Wayne Finger, son of Mr. and Mrs. Oliver Finger has returned to the USS Asbury in Brooklyn, N. Y., after spending a fourteen-day leave with his parents. He enlisted in the Navy in July and had nine weeks' training at the Naval Center, Bainbridge, Md.

Furman Emory, son of Mr. and Mrs. Fred Emory is spending a fourteen-day leave with his parents after completing nine weeks of training at the Naval Training Center, Great Lakes, Ill.

Pvt. William Moody, son of Mr. and Mrs. Ben Moody, was inducted in the Army in July. He received training at Fort Jackson and at Fort Lewis, Wash. and is now assigned to the 23rd Infantry Regiment, Anchorage, Alaska.

Billy Bradley, son of Mr. and Mrs. Jack Bradley, enlisted in the Navy in December, 1955 and had boot training at Great Lakes, Ill. After a fourteen-day leave with his parents, he was sent to San Diego, Calif. where he served aboard the USS Destroyer Brown. He is now stationed in New Zealand.

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