

# OREGON TERRITORY MAIL

## 1848 TO 1859

### COVERS

**Purpose:** This Exhibit shows some of the Post Offices in existences during the Territory period of Oregon (1848 to 1859). The Oregon Territory was created on August 14, 1848, and included what would become the states of Oregon, Washington, Idaho, as well as parts of Montana and Wyoming. The first post offices were at Astoria and Oregon City and were authorized by the United States Government in 1847, but the earliest known mail dates from 1848. Additional post offices were established in 1849 at Portland and Salem. By the end of February 1853 there were 174 post offices, but on March 2, 1853 the northern portion of the Territory (north of the Columbia River) became Washington Territory which subtracted 14 post offices. Just before Oregon achieved statehood on February 14, 1859, there were 129 post offices in the Oregon Territory.

**Scope:** This exhibit is arranged in chronological order by the date the post office was opened. The current county location is shown in parenthesis. Several post offices, are shown where the post offices were established prior to the formation of the Washington Territory in 1853. It is not always possible to represent these post offices with pre-1853 covers.

Harder to acquire  
items framed in red

Abbreviations  
USMSC – US Mail Steamship Co.  
PMSS – Pacific Mail Steamship Co.

### POSTAL RATES

#### Until June 30, 1851

Transcontinental letter rate ½ oz. 40 cents  
West-coast rate ½ oz. 12 ½ cents  
Unsealed circulars to 1 oz. 3 cents

#### July 1, 1851 – March 30, 1855

Transcontinental rate prepaid ½ oz. 6 cents  
Transcontinental rate unpaid ½ oz. 10 cents  
West – coast rate prepaid ½ oz. 3 cents  
West – coast rate unpaid ½ oz. 5 cents

#### September 30, 1852

Unsealed circulars, prepaid up to 3 oz. 1 cent  
Unsealed circulars, unpaid up to 3 oz. 3 cents

#### April 1, 1855 to Statehood

(All Mail Prepaid)  
Transcontinental rate ½ oz. 10 cents  
West – coast rate ½ oz. 3 cents