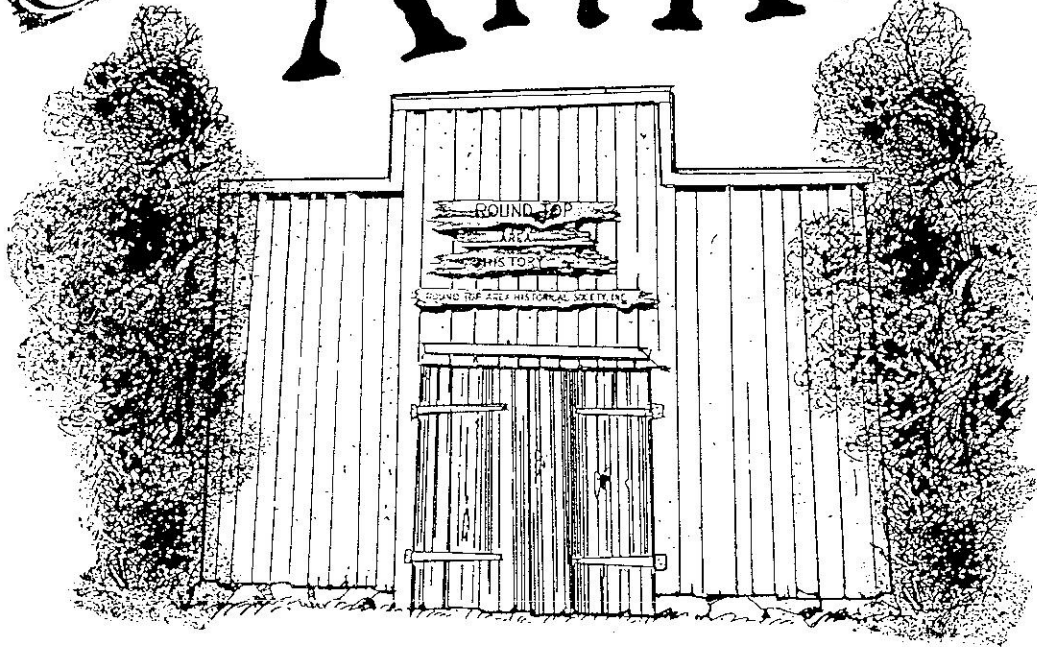




Artifacts



ROUND TOP
Historical
Cultural
Quaint
Unique
Patriotic

Fall/Winter
1998



ROUND TOP AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.



THE POST OFFICES AND POSTMASTERS OF ROUND TOP

The Round Top we know today became a town after a post office was located here in 1848. The first land grants in this area (Austin's "Old 300") were being awarded by the State of Coahuila & Texas (Mexican Government) in the 1830s. Round Top is situated on the James Winn League granted 8-31-1831. The league was sold in two parcels on 7-10-1835. Samuel M. Williams and Horatio Chrisman bought the Upper Two-Thirds of the league. Myers F. Jones, brother of Republic of Texas' first Postmaster General, came to live on the league soon after he arrived from Missouri in 1838. He was appointed postmaster in the area by his brother on 1-15-1840 with the post office designated as Jones' Post Office. Research has not been able to pinpoint the post office location, but it

was most probably in Jones' house situated in the middle of the league on the La Bahia Road.

Texas was annexed as a state on December 29, 1845, when President Polk signed the act making Texas the 28th state to join the Union. The population was approximately 125,000. United States post offices began operating in Texas in May of 1846. Henry A. Robertson was appointed postmaster of "a place called Round Top" on December 28, 1846. His home was on 50 acres adjacent to a stage stop that was beginning to be called "Round Top" due to an octagonal top on the building. It is not known whether Mr. Robertson located the post office in his home or in the stage stop. It was common for the post office to be in the

postmaster's home in those early days due to the fact there were very few buildings and, of course, very few people. Mr. Robertson's home and the stage stop were situated about a mile and a half east of present-day RoundTop.

L.H.W. Johnston was appointed postmaster on 6-15-1848. A month later on 7-19-1848 John Shults was appointed postmaster. He immediately moved the post office onto land he and his father owned which was on the east side of Cummins Creek. Postal records indicate he changed the name to Shults Store that same date. The location would be recognized today at or near the intersection of W. Live Oak and E. Mill Streets in Round Top. Postal records do not give a reason, but the name was changed back to "Round Top" on 11-30-1848 with John Shults continuing as postmaster.

An interesting bit of history is the fact that Stephen Townsend was stabbed to death on 9-28-1850 as he emerged from the post office and was talking to Edward Henkel. Stephen Townsend operated a stage stop on the west side of Cummins Creek and it is his

namesake that references the area prior to it being called Jones' Post Office or Round Top. It was suspected that Stephen was murdered by a conspiracy of local plantation owners who were embroiled in a court case about slaves stolen from a Mr. Shields. Stephen was championing the side of Mr. Shields most likely due to the rigid moral principles by which he lived.

Joseph Shults, brother of John Shults, was appointed postmaster on 5-1-1850. Following him was Calvin P. Rankin appointed 8-20-1852 and Edward Henkel appointed next on 1-24-1859. Edward Henkel purchased 25 acres of land from John Shults on 11-2-1852. This 25 acres encompassed all the area that is on the south side of FM 1457 today where Henkel Square is situated. It was on this same land that the Shults Store was situated. We don't know if the post office were moved in this interim, but it can be assumed that it wasn't since Edward Henkel became one of the postmasters.

In this photograph, circa 1900, it is shown that the post office was in the Alex Von Rosenberg Store. Written



histories indicate that one had to enter the post office through the store. Actually, the building was built in approximately 1856. It quite possibly housed the post office from the time of Edward Henkel's appointment. Postmasters succeeding Henkel were:

Aurelius G. Ledbetter7-7-1860
William Hodge1-31-1861
Hamilton Ledbetter	...12-22-1864
Herman Hellmuth	...12-26-1865
Emile Kellner5-29-1867
Louis Schlottman7-2-1869

Robert Zapp purchased the store building on 5-18-1868 and operated a general mercantile there. His daughter, Hannah Zapp, was appointed postmaster on 4-8-1873. Robert Zapp was appointed postmaster on 7-23-1873.

Alexander E. Von Rosenberg bought the store building on 12-18-1883. He was appointed postmaster on 4-8-1884 and served until 8-1-1889 when Walter R. Schulze became postmaster. Alex Von Rosenberg was again appointed postmaster on 8-1-1893.

Ernest Fricke became the next postmaster on 8-21-1897 serving 30 years until April, 1927. He located the post office in his store which was in the same block. Today, this would be approximately where the apothecary is situated in Henkel Square. Ernest Fricke's store building burned in 1924. The fire also destroyed the town hall which was adjacent to it. The new town hall was then built where it is today. The post office was moved to a building which today would be in the middle of the 100 block of E. Mill Street on the west side.

Edgar L. Fricke became the next postmaster on 5-18-1927. He worked in the Round Top State Bank. Soon after his appointment the post office was

located in the bank building which still remains at 109 Main Street.

After Edgar Fricke, Lee A. Krause, Jr. was the acting postmaster from 10-25-1948 and he was appointed postmaster on 4-18-1950. During this time the post office was moved from the bank building into a small tin building on land owned by Lydia Fricke. This building still exists today at 203 N. Washington.

Through the 1950s Albert Blume was made acting postmaster on 4-15-1951; Mildred L.M. Smith was made acting postmaster on 4-15-1952 until appointed postmaster on 5-22-1952; Dorothy S. Etzel was acting postmaster as of 1-4-1955; Clarence W. Wagner was appointed postmaster on 8-6-1957.

It was during Clarence Wagner's tenure that plans were made for a new post office building to be located facing the town square. The post office business was moved into the new location at 107 Main Street on 9-9-1967 and the facility was dedicated on 5-19-1968.

Roughly thirty years later another new post office facility will be dedicated. It will be situated at 395 E. Mill Street and dedicated in 1999.

Clarence W. Wagner served as postmaster for 31 years followed by Ruby Clinard made officer-in-charge on 1-27-1989; Alice Finn made officer-in-charge on 2-24-1989; Doris F. Georges appointed postmaster on 5-20-1989; Dorothy F. Orsak made officer-in-charge on 9-29-1992; Carol Ortiz made officer-in-charge on 11-9-1992 and appointed postmaster on 1-23-1993; Linda D. Kossa made officer-in-charge on 3-26-1998; Shirley Gross made officer-in-charge on 7-23-1998.