

HISTORY CENTER

SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY

Rural Mail in San Luis Obispo County

(No. 1047.)

SERIES OF MAY 1, 1879.

Post Office Department,

OFFICE OF THE FIRST ASSISTANT POSTMASTER GENERAL,

Washington, D. C., *29th March*, 188*2*

Sir: The Postmaster General has appointed you Postmaster at Musick, County of San Luis Obispo, State of California, in which capacity you will be authorized to act upon complying with the following requirements:

1st. To execute the inclosed bond, and cause it to be executed by two or more sufficient sureties, in the presence of suitable witnesses; the sufficiency of the sureties, and their oath or affirmation, to be certified by a duly qualified magistrate.

2d. To take and subscribe the oath or affirmation of office inclosed, before a duly qualified magistrate, who will certify the same; also to appoint an assistant, who must also take the oath; and deposit these papers in the mail in an envelope addressed to me.

After the receipt at this Department of your bond and qualification, duly executed and certified, and the approval of the same by the Postmaster General, a commission will, in due course of business, be sent to you. Until this commission shall have been received, you will not be justified in incurring any expense or performing any act as postmaster.

On the receipt of your commission you will be entitled to enter upon the duties of the office and take charge of the public property belonging to the Post Office aforesaid, such as desks, cases, boxes, tables of the Post Office, laws and instructions, mail-keys, blanks, letters, and papers on hand, and stationery, a list of which articles you will send to the First Assistant Postmaster General.

If you accept the appointment, the bond and oath must be executed and returned without delay. If you decline, notice thereof should be immediately given to this Office.

It will be your duty to continue in charge of the office, either personally or by an assistant, until you are relieved from it by consent of the Department, which will be signified by the discontinuance of your office or the appointment of your successor.

Very respectfully,

James William
First Assistant Postmaster General.

Abram A. Hasbrouck, Esq.

N. B.—The quarters expire on the 31st March, 30th June, 30th September, and 31st December. Accounts must be rendered for each quarter within two days after its close.

Postmasters are not authorized to give credit for postage. Want of funds is, therefore, no excuse for failure of payment. A postmaster must not change the name by which his office is designated on the books of the Department without the order of the Postmaster General.

Be careful in mailing letters and transient newspapers to postmark each one, in all cases, with the name of your office and State. In stamping letters, great care should be observed to render the impression distinct and legible.

The Postmaster will notify the Department whenever a change occurs in the office of the Principal Assistant P. M., and send the name of the person so appointed to the First Assistant Postmaster General, with the required oath of office.

In all communications to this Department be careful to give the name of your Office, County, and State.

You are directed to inform the First Ass't P. M. General of the date you take possession of the office.

Musick Post Office

Most post offices today are in cities or towns. Outside of organized communities, rural free delivery serves isolated ranches and farms.

During the 19th century, many people in the United States lived far from cities. To serve such citizens, the post office department allowed for the creation of rural or ranch post offices. These were often located in a country store, or an outbuilding on a ranch.

One such ranch post office was Musick. Located on the St. Remy Ranch of Abram Hasbrouck, it served the residents of upper Lopez Canyon and the surrounding areas. It was established on December 14, 1880, and operated until March 15, 1921.

The first postmaster was Alexander C. McLeod, one of the men from whom Hasbrouck bought property when building his St. Remy Ranch. McLeod operated the post office for a little more than a year, being replaced by Hasbrouck on January 31, 1882. The position of postmaster then stayed in the Hasbrouck family.



Madge Ditmas (left) was the last postmistress of the Musick Post Office. Here she is seen volunteering at the History Center museum with Elsie Price Muzio in 1983

The last postmistress was noted local historian Madge Ditmas. She was Hasbrouck's granddaughter, and held the office until delivery by rural carrier was assured for all the patrons of the small post office.

The post office was named for the Musick family. Lanson Trigg Musick and his wife Irene had settled on the land which later became part of the St. Remy. Lanson was born in 1809 in Missouri. He married Irene Wells Middleton and started a family before deciding to come west.

In 1852 he led a wagon train to California. Three of his brothers, Thomas, Ephraim, and John, accompanied the family, settling first in Lake County.

About 1869, Lanson moved to our county. He bought land from J.P. Andrews in the upper Arroyo Grande Valley. His neighbors included Alexander McLeod, and later the Meacham and Ransome families. Hasbrouck eventually bought all of these holdings to form his St. Remy Ranch.

Lanson never knew about the post office which was to bear his name, but a story about the mails and Mr. Musick appeared in the San Luis Obispo Tribune of August 21, 1875. Under the heading "A Good Joke," the Tribune reported:

"That jolly old man, L.T. Musick, who is canvassing for Mr. N. King for County Clerk, early this week was starting out on a trip east of the mountains, when Postmaster Simmler requested him to deliver some letters to people living on the line of his travels, and gave him a hundred, more or less.

"Mr. Musick, upon meeting a friend, after salutations were over, would take out and deliver a postal missive. Upon opening, in every instance, they were found to contain an autograph letter from Mr. Simmler, announcing his candidacy for the Clerkship and asking for the gentleman's support. This was stealing the thunder of Jove with a vengeance." Perhaps our politicians of today could learn a trick from the cagey politicians of the past.

The Musicks only lived in the area which was later to be associated with their name for a few years. Irene Musick died in 1874, and Lanson Trigg Musick in 1876. In his obituary he was noted as a well-known character in the community, being of so kindly a disposition that he was endeared to every one who knew him.



Cecil Ditmas, father of Madge, Hasbrouck's son-in-law, on horseback at the entrance to the St Remy Ranch in 1894.



Mail Carrier Warren C. Day, with his son Cecil, standing with his delivery cart c. 1920



Warren Day's mail cart in the Dallidet Gardens, 2020

Mindfulness in the Gardens

We are very excited to announce the return of guided meditation to the Dallidet Gardens. Engage your senses - sound, sight, touch - by sitting, walking and exploring in silent contemplation

Starting August 18th and continuing weekly through the end of September, your skilled guides will help you to enjoy this 1½ hour fresh, yet timeless, approach.

Safety protocols for Covid will be observed, which includes a limited number of spaces.

To learn more or to register, [please visit our website.](#)



The Dallidet Family enjoy their garden with some, ahem, minor alterations

Dallidet Gardens Open

Have you ever seen a Mongolian Sunflower? Or a 130-year old Avocado tree? Are you looking for some outdoor tranquility? Then you should visit the Dallidet Gardens.

Every Sunday through Labor Day, the gardens will be open from 11 am to 3 pm. The State's [guidelines for Outdoor Museums](#) will be strictly followed, so please bring your mask.

1185 Pacific Street, San Luis Obispo

Tour the Dallidet Adobe

Even as we open the Gardens, the house is still closed for now. That doesn't mean you can't tour the Adobe: we're giving virtual tours every Thursday at 1:00 pm.

The Dallidet family lived in San Luis Obispo from the 1850s through the 1950s. Hear their stories while visiting the family home.

Please register by noon on Thursday, and we will email you a Zoom invitation to join that week's tour.

[Click here for more information or to register](#)



Walk with an expert

Have you ever wanted to walk through the Musée d'Orsay with Degas, or Fallingwater with Wright? You can get a taste of that experience with our latest video of Professor Dave Hannings walking through the Dallidet Gardens.

[Check it out here.](#)

Looking for more to do?

- Follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), or [Instagram](#). With posts like Mystery Monday and Throwback Thursday, we'll be sharing photos from our collection.
- Take a [virtual walking tour](#) of historic San Luis Obispo. These video series feature short

vignettes about significant local landmarks.

If you have any ideas of content you'd like to see, share it with us! And if you enjoy what we share with you, and if you are able to, would you please consider [supporting us](#)?

Thank you for being a part of our community. Everybody stay healthy and safe.

Sincerely,



Thomas Kessler
Executive Director

History Center of San Luis Obispo County

696 Monterey Street, SLO | (805) 543-0638 | historycenterslo.org

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