

## LETTER

FROM

## THE POSTMASTER GENERAL,

TRANSMITTING,

*In response to Senate resolution of December 21, 1882, information relating to the postal routes in Dakota, from Fort Niobrara to Rapid City, and from Chamberlain to said Rapid City.*

DECEMBER 27, 1882.—Referred to the Committee on Post-Offices and Post-Roads and ordered to be printed.

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT,  
OFFICE OF THE POSTMASTER-GENERAL,  
Washington, D. C., December 23, 1882.

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of the resolution adopted by the Senate on the 21st instant, in the following words:

*Resolved*, That the Postmaster-General be directed to inform the Senate why proposals have been invited for daily service from Fort Niobrara to Rapid City in Dakota; also daily service from Chamberlain to said Rapid City. Also, if both are new routes, and the distance of each. Also, if the proposed routes are not entirely through an Indian country, with no land open to settlement, and no whites residing therein, except those in the government service.

In reply, I have to state that proposals were invited for service on the two routes mentioned for two reasons: First, because it was represented by postmasters of the vicinage that the service was needed. Copies of such representations submitted herewith. And, second, because the department must know what the service would cost before it could properly decide whether or not to put it on.

Both routes are new, and were made post-routes by the act of August 7, 1882.

The distance from Fort Niobrara via Rosebud to Rapid City is 220 miles. From Chamberlain to Rapid City the distance is 186 miles.

I inclose with this a letter from the Hon. Secretary of the Interior, showing what portion of the two routes traverse Indian territory. This department has no knowledge of any white people residing within such Territory except those in the government service.

Very respectfully,

T. O. HOWE,  
Postmaster-General.

The Hon. the PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE,  
Washington, D. C.

## POSTAL ROUTES IN DAKOTA.

U. S. POST-OFFICE DEPARTMENT,  
OFFICE OF THE SECOND ASSISTANT POSTMASTER-GENERAL,  
Washington, 17 Aug., 1882.

SIR: By act of Congress approved Aug. 7, 1882, the following was established as a post-road in the State of Neb., viz: "From Fort Niobrara, Neb., to Deadwood, Dak." (*The words of the law; the department has no other knowledge of the route*)

The Postmaster-General requests you to ascertain from the most authentic sources within your reach, and *without expense to the department*, the length of this route, and such facts in relation to the country through which it passes, its rivers, mountains (if any), as may be useful in preparing the advertisement inviting proposals for mail service on it and in locating it on the maps of the department, and for this latter purpose a diagram should be furnished, if practicable, and without expense. You are at liberty to submit any suggestions which occur to you in relation to the kind of service required, number of trips per week, days and hours of departures and arrivals, &c. The *length* of the route is quite important; please give it as correctly as possible.

If the track of the route is by existing offices, you will give their official names. Also name any local points not post-offices by which the route should run, giving distances from point to point.

Make your answer on this sheet and RETURN IT WITHOUT DELAY, under envelope addressed to this office.

Respectfully, &c., &c.,

R. A. ELMER,  
Second Assistant Postmaster-General.

POSTMASTER, DEADWOOD,  
Lawrence Co, Dak.

DEADWOOD, DAK., August 28, 1882.

Length of the above route, 265 miles.

Name in proper order points by which route should run: Fort Niobrara, Rosebud Agency, Pine Ridge Agency, Gifford's Rancho, Cheyenne Crossing, Lame Johnny Creek, Rapid, Deadwood.

How many trips a week are required?

On what day should mail leave your office?

At what hour?

On what day should mail reach the other end of route?

At what hour?

On what day should mail leave the other end of route?

At what hour?

On what day should mail arrive at your office?

At what hour?

Is this route, in your judgment, necessary for postal purposes? As far as Rapid, Dak.

If put in operation, what existing service, if any, could be dispensed with? None.

Give here any further information which you may deem important to be in possession of the department.

I have the honor to report the following in regard to the Fort Niobrara route. The distances and points are as follows: From Fort Niobrara via Munkadora to Rosebud Agency is 42 miles; from Rosebud Agency via Gifford's Rancho, on the old telegraph road, to Pine Ridge Agency is 100 miles; from Pine Ridge, following the same, the next nearest point is the Cheyenne Crossing of the government trail, to the interception of the Sidney road at Lame Johnnie's Creek, which is 50 miles; from thence to Rapid City, which is 28 miles, and from Rapid to Deadwood 45 miles. As to the time of leaving there, I am unable to name the hour.

Yours, respectfully,

J. A. HARDING, P. M.

[Indorsement.]

Sep. 29, '82.—That portion of route from Rosebud to Pine Ridge Agency has heretofore been found (Route 35102) impracticable. Advertise from Fort Niobrara direct to Rapid City via Rosebud. Topographer to estimate distance.

LYMAN.

U. S. POST-OFFICE DEPARTMENT,  
OFFICE OF THE SECOND ASSISTANT POSTMASTER-GENERAL,  
Washington, 17 Aug., 1882.

SIR: By act of Congress approved Aug. 7, 1882, the following was established as a post road in the State of Neb., viz: "From Fort Niobrara, Neb., to Deadwood, Dak." (*The words of the law; the department has no other knowledge of the route.*)

The Postmaster-General requests you to ascertain from the most authentic sources

within your reach, and *without expense to the department*, the length of this route, and such facts in relation to the country through which it passes, its rivers, mountains (if any), as may be useful in preparing the advertisement inviting proposals for mail service on it and in locating it on the maps of the department, and for this latter purpose a diagram should be furnished, if practicable, and without expense. You are at liberty to submit any suggestions which occur to you in relation to the kind of service required, number of trips per week, days and hours of departures and arrivals, &c. The *length* of the route is quite important; please give it as correctly as possible.

If the track of the route is by existing offices, you will give their official names. Also name any local points not post-offices by which the route should run, giving distances from point to point.

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Respectfully, &c., &c.,

R. A. ELMER,

Second Assistant Postmaster-General.

POSTMASTER, FORT NIOBRARA,  
Sioux Co., Neb.

FORT NIOBRARA,  
Sioux County, Nebraska, Aug. 26, 1882.

Length of the above route, 250 miles.

Name in proper order points by which route should run: Sharp's Ranch, Pine Ridge Indian Agency, Buffalo Gap, Rapid City, Fort Meade, Deadwood.

How many trips a week are required? Six.

On what day should mail leave your office? Daily, except Sunday.

At what hour? 7 a. m.

On what day should mail reach the other end of route? Daily, except Sunday.

At what hour? 7 a. m.

On what day should mail leave the other end of route? Daily, except Sunday.

At what hour? 7 a. m.

On what day should mail arrive at your office? Daily, except Sunday.

At what hour? 7 a. m.

Is this route, in your judgment, necessary for postal purposes? Yes.

If put in operation, what existing service, if any, could be dispensed with? Mail route, Fort Robinson to Deadwood; mail route, Fort Robinson to Pine Ridge Indian Agency; mail route, Fort Niobrara to Boiling Spring, could be cut down in distance about 25 miles, making a saving of about half.

Give here any further information which you may deem important to be in possession of the department.

This route runs from terminus of Sioux City and Pacific R. R. northwest, through settlements of Minicadusa Valley to Sharp's Ranch; thence west, crossing south fork of White River three times, also Wounded Knee Creek, to Pine Ridge Indian Agency; thence west and northwest, crossing White River and south fork Cheyenne River, to Buffalo Gap; thence north (east of range of Black Hills) via Rapid City and Fort Meade to Deadwood City. This route is particularly needed, because points like Omaha, St. Louis, and the South generally, can be more quickly and cheaply supplied with mail service to and from the Black Hills. Rapid service is also needed between this military post (Ft. Niobrara) and Pine Ridge Agency. I will add that the road itself is considered a good hard one, open at all seasons of the year, excepting when unusually stormy. If service could be shortened to 36 hours, it is believed that the entire mail service from the Black Hills eastward would go by this route. Lt. Nickles, 5th Cav., lately made a military survey over most of this route. I have written him to send you a copy of his report.

J. M. THACHER, P. M.

U. S. POST-OFFICE DEPARTMENT,  
OFFICE OF THE SECOND ASSISTANT POSTMASTER-GENERAL,  
Washington, 17 Aug., 1882.

SIR: By act of Congress approved 7 Aug., 1882, the following was established as a post-road in the Ter. of Dak., viz: "From Chamberlain to Rapid City."  
(The words of the law; the department has no other knowledge of the route.)

The Postmaster-General requests you to ascertain from the most authentic sources within your reach, and *without expense to the department*, the length of this route, and such facts in relation to the country through which it passes, its rivers, mountains (if any), as may be useful in preparing the advertisement inviting proposals for mail service on it and in locating it on the maps of the department, and for this latter pur-

pose a diagram should be furnished, if practicable, and without expense. You are at liberty to submit any suggestions which occur to you in relation to the kind of service required, number of trips per week, days and hours of departures and arrivals, &c. The *length* of the route is quite important; please give it as correctly as possible.

If the track of the route is by existing offices, you will give their official names. Also name any local points not post-offices by which the route should run, giving distances from point to point.

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Respectfully, &c., &c.,

R. A. ELMER,

*Second Assistant Postmaster-General.*

POSTMASTER, RAPID CITY,  
*Pennington Co., Dak.*

Length of the above route, 213 miles, wagon road.

Name in proper order points by which routes should run: Rapid, Dak., down Rapid Valley to Cheyenne River, thence to Chamberlain.

How many trips a week are required? Seven trips a week.

On what day should mail leave your office? Every day.

At what hour? 7 a. m.

On what day should mail reach the other end of route? Every day, making trip in 48 hours.

At what hour? 7 a. m.

On what day should mail leave the other end of route? Every day in the week.

At what hour? 7 a. m., or on arrival Mil. & St. Paul R. R. train.

On what day should mail arrive at your office? Every day in the week.

At what hour? 7 a. m., making trip in 48 hours.

Is this route, in your judgment, necessary for postal purposes? It is.

If put in operation, what existing service, if any, could be dispensed with? None.

Give here any further information which you may deem important to be in possession of the department.

Enclosed please find diagram of the Chamberlain and Rapid City post-road. Three new offices should be established on this route along the Rapid Valley, at points marked in blue on diagram. This valley is 42 miles long via wagon from Rapid to Cheyenne River, and is thickly settled from the mouth to its head, Rapid being their nearest P. O.; Box Elder, Spring Creek, and Battle Creek, scattering settlements from the mountain to the Cheyenne River; country fast settling in all directions. Proposed post-offices on the Rapid 14 miles apart. Distance from Fort Niobrara to Rapid City, 155 miles; distance from Pine Ridge to Rapid City, 95 miles. Would recommend the establishment of a post-road from Fort Niobrara (present terminus of Sioux City and Pacific R. R.) to Rapid City, with branch to Pine Ridge.

Yours, respectfully,

JNO. R. BRENNON, P. M.

U. S. POST-OFFICE DEPARTMENT,  
OFFICE OF THE SECOND ASSISTANT POSTMASTER-GENERAL,  
*Washington, 17 Aug., 1882.*

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Respectfully, &c., &c.,

R. A. ELMER,  
Second Assistant Postmaster-General.

POSTMASTER, CHAMBERLAIN,  
Brule Co., Dak.

CHAMBERLAIN,  
Brule County, Ter. of Dak., Sept. 20, 1882.

Length of the above route, 226 miles.

Name in proper order points by which route should run: Chamberlain, Bull Creek, Cheyenne Crossing, Box Elder, Rapid Creek, Rapid City. You go by Brule City Agency.

How many trips a week are required? It ought to be daily.

On what day should mail leave your office? Every day.

At what hour? 8 a. m.

On what day should mail reach the other end of route? Each day.

At what hour? Evening, 6 o'clock.

On what day should mail leave the other end of route? Same.

At what hour? Same.

On what day should mail arrive at your office?

At what hour?

Is this route, in your judgment, necessary for postal purposes? Yes, sir; it is needed very much.

If put in operation, what existing service, if any, could be dispensed with? None, without the route to Lower Brule and that to Fort Hale could be taken across the river, and taken with but little cost to the post and agency.

Give here any further information which you may deem important to be in possession of the department.

I submit herewith a letter as to the route, written by the engineer of the Mil. R. R., Kimball, who has been over the line.

There would be a large mail and express business spring up at once on this line. It would be a great thoroughfare, and the mail would mostly go that way, it being more direct from Chicago and the nearest route.

The Secretary of the Interior has now appointed the commission to treat with the Indians, and they will soon act, and their action will open a great country, and this route will be needed still more.

Yours,

JOHN H. KING, P. M.

Letter from Kimball, referred to above, does not appear on dep't files.