

The Historian

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Summer 2021

HISTORY OF FALLBROOK POST OFFICES

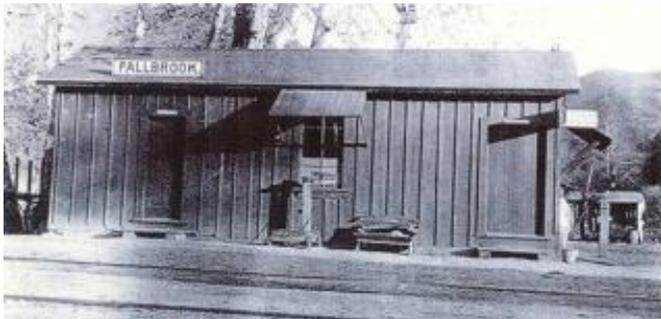
More than a few buildings in Fallbrook have sometimes been referred to as the 'old Post Office'. The founding of the town of Fallbrook in 1885 begins with the story of three different post offices with different names that for those first few years were all operating at the same time.



1882-1891. Picture about 1885. The Howe Post Office was located in the Santa Margarita Canyon next to the Fallbrook Railroad depot at the bottom of today's DeLuz Rd. This post office served the township of West Fall Brook for several years.



Before 1910 Two old post offices are visible in this photo. A woman in a dress is standing on porch in front of the Cromwell post office. The tall flag pole is on right. Notice the roof of the building 2 doors down, past the bushy tree. That is the 2 story Fallbrook/Tomlins hotel on NW corner of Alvarado & Main. You can see the hotel steps & veranda. The hotel was torn down in 1910. Next building back, with a canopy over porch, is the general store across Alvarado St. where the post office used to be during the years from **1885 to 1898**.



About 1890 The Fallbrook Train Depot in Santa Margarita Canyon. Notice that *Fallbrook* is just one word. At the same time, the town up on the hill behind the station was three words, *West Fall Brook*. The Howe Post Office was part of the train depot.

Note that all three of these post offices were operating at the same time between 1885 and 1888.

BACKGROUND

1878 - 1888

The first Post Office to be established was Fall Brook Post Office on June 28, 1878, with Vital Reche appointed as Postmaster. The post office was in Reche's store, where Live Oak Park is today. Reche would be the only postmaster of the Fall Brook Post office until it was discontinued ten years later on March 5, 1888.

1882 - 1891

When the California Southern Railroad was built along the Santa Margarita River, the Howe Post Office was established next to the Fallbrook depot on April 24, 1882. This became the second post office of the settlement. Asa Hebbard, the California Southern Railroad agent and Wells Fargo agent was appointed to be the Howe postmaster. This post office could not be named Fallbrook, as the train depot was known, because the name was too similar to Reche's existing Fall Brook Post Office. We do not know who or what the inspiration was for the name Howe. Oscar Nash took over as Howe postmaster in December of the same year. Nash remained in the position until Howe Post office was discontinued in 1891.

1885 - 1887

Flooding of the Santa Margarita River became a problem. Merchants and farmers along the river became eager to relocate to higher ground. Land speculators led by F. W. Bartlett laid out the township of West Fallbrook on the bluff just above the train depot in April 1885, and a building boom commenced. The West Fall Brook Post Office, the 3rd Post Office, was established on December 17, 1885, in the People's Store, one of the earliest buildings in West Fallbrook, at the SW corner of Main & Alvarado. Today, the Fallbrook Art Center at 103 S. Main Ave. is on this corner. The proprietor of the People's Store, Donald R. Stevenson, was appointed the first West Fall Brook Postmaster. Stevenson's business partner of The People's Store, Henry J. Jay succeeded him as postmaster a couple of years later in 1887.

1888 - 1891

Reche's Fall Brook post office was serving only a few households in Live Oak Canyon when it was discontinued in 1888. The closing of the Reche's Fall Brook post office allowed West Fall Brook to drop the West from its name and it became the Fall Brook Post Office, still at the SW corner of Alvarado and Main. The Howe Post Office was discontinued on June 15, 1891, after another disastrous flood. All mail was now being directed to the Fall Brook Post Office in the new town above the train station.

You're Invited !

Fallbrook Historical Society

Open House

June 26 1:00 to 4 pm

New displays! Free refreshments!

Explore Fallbrook's history at our museum,
interpretive barn, Historic Pittenger House,
Gem and Mineral Room and the Ford Room.



1730 South Hill St.
Fallbrook, Ca. 92028
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In 1898, the Fall Brook post office moved from the corner of Main & Alvarado, to just a few doors north on Main Ave. Robert Cromwell was the postmaster here. There were no street addresses in those days, but today this would be 118 N. Main Ave, one door north of Mimi's Boutique. Bert Woodbury took over as postmaster in 1910 and moved the post office across the street to his news stand. Bert Woodbury's wife Gladys had a dressmaking shop in the north alcove of their store. The Woodburys lived in their house behind the store/post office. Bert Woodbury became Fallbrook's longest serving postmaster with 24 years of service. Today, the Fig Leaf Boutique is at the old Woodbury location, 123 N. Main Ave.



1910-1934 Picture about 1912. Bert & Gladys Woodbury lived behind their newsstand and town post office. This store was across the street from the previous post office operated by Cromwell and 2 doors south of next post office on corner of Hawthorne St. Woodbury was postmaster from 1910-1934.



1936-1947 127 N. Main Ave at corner of Main & Hawthorne. Picture taken in 1947. The first building on the left in this photo was the post office from 1936-1947. It is vacant here because this picture was taken soon after the post office moved to Alvarado St. Miss Frances L. Williams was postmaster from 1934 until 1940 when Gilbert R. Van Dyke became postmaster.

Miss Frances Williams took over as Postmaster in 1934. In January 1936, she moved the Fall Brook Post Office two doors north to the SE corner of Main and Hawthorne. Today the Fallbrook Art Association is at this 127 N. Main Ave location. Townspeople in the 1930s were questioning why Fall Brook was still written as two words. A lot of people had taken to writing it as one word and yet the mail still got through. In 1940, a new postmaster named Gilbert R. Van Dyke took over who wanted to change this.

In 1947, Postmaster Van Dyke moved the post office to a new building at 115 W. Alvarado. Today, the Village News is next door to this old post office. Van Dyke petitioned the D.C. Postmaster General in 1950 to change the name of the Post Office from Fall Brook to Fallbrook. The request was approved. The name change to Fallbrook Post Office, just one word with no space, was ordered to become effective on November 1, 1950.



1947-1956 115 W. Alvarado St. Gilbert Van Dyke was postmaster from 1940 to 1953. Today the Village News is next door to this building.



1956-1974 520 S. Main Ave. James & Leslie Sims and Richard Tomes were Postmasters here during this period.

This new location, behind today's Dulin Dentistry was an unpopular location. There were many petitions to move the post office somewhere more convenient. In April 1992 the Fallbrook Post Office moved into a new building at 747 S. Mission Rd, its present location.



1974-1992 1381 S. Mission Rd. Ray Demaret was Postmaster.

Acknowledgements:

- 1) Maie L. Ellis of Fallbrook Historical Society. Her research, including her correspondence with the National Archives, clarified the history of the Howe, Reche, and Stevenson Post Offices. The Maie Ellis Pictorial History was used for many of these photos.
- 2) Elizabeth Yamaguchi of Fallbrook Historical Society. Her handwritten notes from research summarize the post office locations and the postmasters from 1878 to 1973.
- 3) Fallbrook Enterprise newspaper digital files at the Fallbrook Historical Society were used to substantiate many details after the year 1911.

NEW IMPROVEMENTS
TO
HERITAGE CENTER

Thanks to a County of San Diego Neighborhood Reinvestment Grant, we were able to put a new roof on the entire museum building, including the Ford Room and the Gem & Mineral Room, and re-roof the Pittenger House as well.

In addition, we installed new lights in the parking area between the museum building and the Barn so that evening events can be safer.

NEW DISPLAYS

We've also created rotating displays in the museum, upgraded the displays that were previously existing, and added several new items. For our June Open House, there is a special featured exhibit of historic wedding gowns and related items of interest.

There are lots of new and improved displays in The Barn, and the Pittenger House has been refreshed with new Spring and Summer decors for your enjoyment.

BRING THE FAMILY AND
COME FOR A VISIT!

VISIT OUR WEBPAGE

www.fallbrookhistoricalsociety.org

NEW HISTORICAL ARTICLES
ARE POSTED FREQUENTLY!



THANKS TO OUR MEMBERS
FOR YOUR
CONTINUED SUPPORT

During the pandemic we have been closed for many months and fundraising events have been postponed or canceled.

Yet our loyal members have continued to support us with generous donations. These have allowed us to continue to pay for the building maintenance, groundskeeping, utilities, supplies and other ongoing expenses that are always needed. And your continued renewals of your membership dues are very important and appreciated!

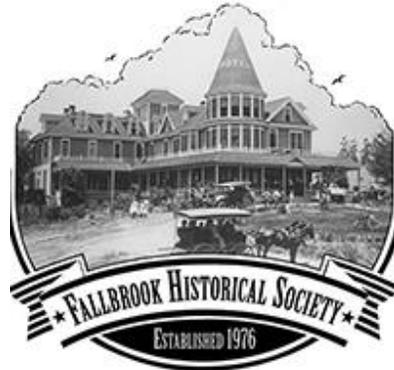
We continue to have enthusiastic supporters who have volunteered countless hours revamping the displays in all of our museum buildings so that the Fallbrook Historical Society can continue to provide meaningful historical experiences for the community.

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Amazon Smile
Fallbrook Garden Club
Fallbrook United Methodist Church.
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Sons of Union Veterans of Civil War
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THANK YOU ALL!

The Fallbrook Historical Society's mission is to bring history to life by educating the community and others about Fallbrook's rich heritage



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Fallbrook Historical Society

P.O. Box 1375
Fallbrook, CA 92088-1375
www.fallbrookhistoricalsociety.org

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