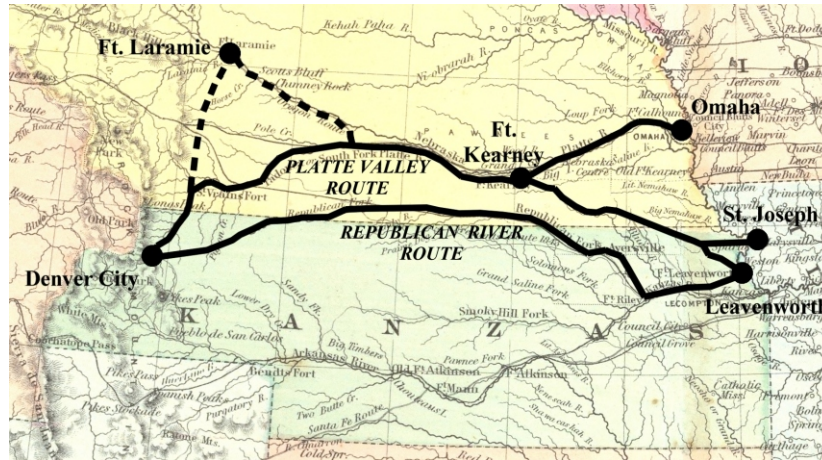


Colorado Private Express Mail Routes



The earliest mails from the Colorado Gold Regions were carried up the "Trapper's Trail" and entered the mails at Fort Laramie, Fort Kearney or elsewhere along the route to Missouri. Some mails went by subscription expresses while others were carried by favor.

The Leavenworth City & Pike's Peak Express Company was formed in February 1859 by William Russell and John Jones to operate an express to and from Denver City. At the time Russell was a partner in the freighting firm of Russell, Majors and Waddell but his partners did not share his enthusiasm for the project.

The express operated between Denver City and Leavenworth City, Kansas Territory with the inaugural trip over the Republican River Route from Independence, Missouri arriving in Denver on May 7, 1859. On May 11, 1859 Jones & Russell purchased the unexpired year and one-half mail contract for the Salt Lake City to Missouri route under the mistaken impression that the post office would allow him to alter the route to touch at Denver.

Between June 8 and June 25, 1859 three trips were made from the Coraville post office in Denver, over the Platte Valley route, as government contract mail matter in error. From June 26 to July 19, 1859 mails were again carried as express matter. On July 19, 1859 a new device with the "Jones & Russell's Pike's Peak Express Company" name arrived at Denver. This reflected a change in name only and the former gradually abandoned. The company assets were taken over by Russell, Majors and Waddell when the Central Overland California & Pikes Peak Express (COC&PP) was formed in October 28, 1859 and incorporated in February 1860. The eastern terminus of the route was changed from Leavenworth City, Kansas Territory to Saint Joseph, Missouri in April 1860. It was sold to Ben Holladay on March 21, 1862.

Hinckley & Co's. Express was formed on May 31, 1860 by C.S. Hinckley and John Sowers. Originally it operated to the mountain mining sites in conjunction with COC&PP for onward carriage. By August 15, 1860 it was in competition with the COC&PP using Western Stage Company stages for carriage east of Denver. The route was from the mining towns, via Denver City and Fort Kearney, to Omaha City, Nebraska Territory. The company was purchased by the COC&PP on May 11, 1861.