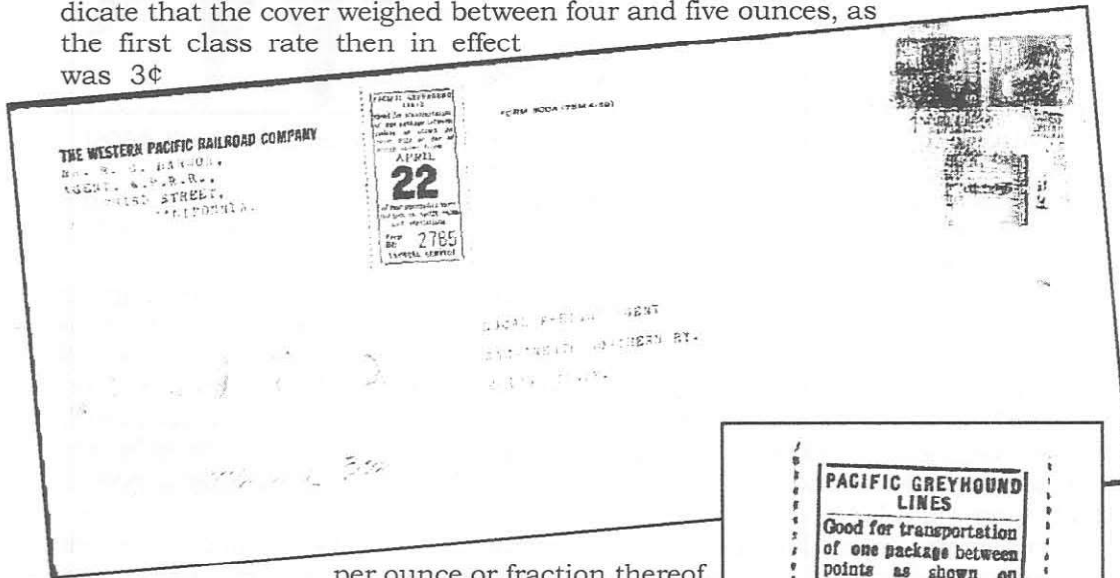


When the train was not fast enough!

Rudy Roy (#1124)

I wrote the headline above sort of tongue-in-cheek, as I am not sure if the reason the illustrated Western Pacific RR over-size cover was sent by the method selected had to do with quickness or just being the only one readily available.

The cover, measuring 11.5 by 5.0 inches, is franked with a vertical pair of Scott 811 and a single of Scott 901, all with W154 (WP). The franking would indicate that the cover weighed between four and five ounces, as the first class rate then in effect was 3¢



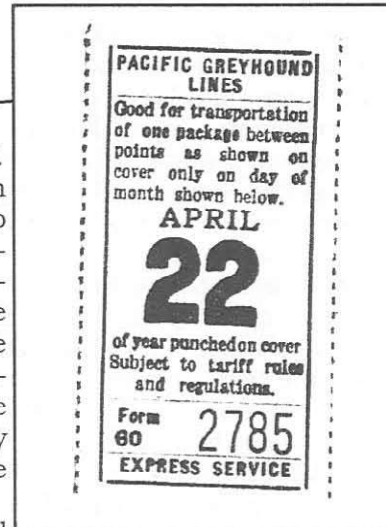
per ounce or fraction thereof.

Whatever the contents, the WPRR agent in Oakland decided that the letter needed to get to Chico, CA, as soon as possible. It is approximately 170 miles from Oakland to Chico. A decision was made to send the cover by BUS! One has to assume that in 1941, before Interstate highways and airplane departures every 10 minutes or so, and with the Railway Mail Service flourishing, in this instance sending the letter by private carrier—Pacific Greyhound—was the method of first choice.

Affixed to the cover is a Pacific Greyhound Lines frank stamp, as well as a Greyhound date stamp canceling the postage stamps, with date of April 22, 1941. Also, under the large red RUSH handstamp on the left side of the cover is (in red) "Bus Scheduled..." and then added in pencil "774 and 324", presumably referring to the bus routes the cover was to be transported on. Unfortunately there are no backstamps or enroute markings - probably practices the bus company did not employ.

Do we have a proper use of perfins postage?

Yes. The Postal Laws and Regulations in effect permitted first class mail to be transported "out-of-mail," *SO LONG AS THE POSTAGE WAS PAID* and the stamps canceled in some manner.



References:

Beecher, Henry W. and Anthony S. Wawrukiewicz.
U.S. Domestic Postal Rates, 1872-1999, Revised Second Edition.