



# POSTAL NEWS

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

## BROOMFIELD POSTAL HISTORY

Our first post office was established 104 years ago on September 26, 1884 along a now-abandoned railroad line not far from our present location. One legend has it that railroad officials stopping here saw a crop of broom corn growing in a field and gave the place "Broomfield" as a name.

Much of the immediate area was owned by Philip Zang of Philip Zang Brewing Company. He lived in Denver but spent his summers overseeing his farmlands and breeding horses in the Broomfield area. Upon his death, some land was given for community use with the remainder divided into tenant farms.

During this time of Broomfield's beginnings, the local businesses included two grocery stores, a blacksmith shop, a grain elevator and an alfalfa mill which ground meal and shipped by rail car. The railroads played an important role in forming Broomfield, as many different rail lines passed through here bringing people and goods in and taking local products out to the rest of the fast-growing state. One of those rail lines ran trains between Denver, Erie and Lyons. It hauled coal from Erie to Denver and to its surrounding areas, and also carried flagstone from Lyons to be used in Denver for building. Some lines passed through here connecting Boulder and Golden, and eventually electric rail service every hour between Boulder and Denver became the "only way to go." Also, rail provided the primary transportation for the mail until 1951 when trucking began a new era.

In the early days of our post office, mail service was limited to lock boxes (post office boxes) and call boxes (glass-covered boxes with assigned patrons -- when a patron saw mail in his box, he would "call" for it). A charge of 10¢ for three months was standard for boxes.

The main event that established the Broomfield Post Office as a central core for mail service was to come from the efforts of the local Crescent Grange Organization which petitioned postal officials to establish "Rural Free Delivery" (RFD). The Grange's work was completed in August, 1900 with two rural routes authorized with a budget of \$500 each, including horse hire. The ability of the Grange to influence postal officials to commit this much money to Broomfield was herculean since this office had only sold \$18.88 worth of stamps during December, usually the busiest month, just three years prior, and spoke loudly of the Grange's belief in the future of Broomfield.

The early rural routes served at least three local coal mines: the Monarch, the Highway and the Lily. The oldest mine, the Monarch, had a grocery, school and some permanent residential housing. One of the rural carriers would take the Erie train to