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## **Roseville Postmaster William R. Stephens, and the Railway Mail Service Chief Clerk John J. Burke**

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California State Railroad Museum Library and Archives

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### **Descriptive Summary**

**Title:** Roseville Postmaster William R. Stephens, and the Railway Mail Service Chief Clerk John J. Burke

**Dates:** 1922-1935

**Collection Number:** MS 698

**Creator/Collector:** Stephens, William R. Burke, John J.

**Extent:** 1 half-box

**Repository:** California State Railroad Museum Library and Archives  
Sacramento, California 95814

**Abstract:** This collection consists primarily of correspondence between William R. Stephens, the Roseville postmaster of the United States Post Office and John J. Burke, Chief Clerk of Railway Mail Service District No. 8, from 1922 to 1934.

**Language of Material:** English

#### **Access**

This collection is open for research at our off-site storage facility with one week's notice. Contact Library & Archives staff to arrange for access.

#### **Publication Rights**

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#### **Preferred Citation**

Roseville Postmaster William R. Stephens, and the Railway Mail Service Chief Clerk John J. Burke. California State Railroad Museum Library and Archives

#### **Acquisition Information**

Gift of Lawrence Dietz, 2008

#### **Biography/Administrative History**

The Railway Mail Service (RMS), a Department of the United States Post Office, and its successor the Postal Transportation Service (PTS), carried most of the mail in the United States from the 1890s until the 1960s. Established in 1869, the Railway Mail Service provided for the movement of U.S. mail by train. Highly trained RMS postal clerks staffed the Railway Post Office (RPO), a special car on a passenger train. Mail sorted en route, received a cancellation just as if it had been mailed at a local post office. On October 1, 1948, the Railway Mail Service was renamed the Postal Transportation Service. The last railway post office car operated between New York and Washington, D.C. on June 30, 1977. In 1869 the RMS was organized into six divisions, under a single general superintendent. By the 1920s, there were fifteen divisions. Each division was headed by a Chief Clerk, who was responsible for ensuring that all mail originating from or traveling on a RPO car was delivered in a timely manner. RMS postal clerks were under the Chief Clerk's jurisdiction. The Chief Clerk also worked with the postmasters, employees of the U.S. Post Office, at the post offices in his division.

#### **Scope and Content of Collection**

This collection consists primarily of correspondence between William R. Stephens, the Roseville postmaster of the United States Post Office and John J. Burke, Chief Clerk of Railway Mail Service District No. 8, from 1922 to 1934. There are also reports about temporary workers, notices to the postmaster from the United States Post Office, and handwritten notes about irregular pouches. Subjects include complaints about improper delivery, loss of the mail, its poor condition upon arrival, failure to follow procedures, irregular pouches, mail service provided by temporary contractors, the timing of delivery and pickup, the use of contractors to deliver mail, and postal clerks examinations. Arranged chronologically.

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