

Terlingua postmaster Daisy Adams retires

By ROBERTA CHRISTENSEN

A colorful mail route era draws to a close. Daisy Adams, Terlingua Postmaster, retired on Aug. 31. Ms. Mary Wright, resident of Study Butte, has assumed charge of the post office.

The adobe post office, located at Study Butte, and Daisy Adams are part of life along the border of yesteryear. Things will not be the same without the old post office and Daisy behind the window.

Memories of past events are faulty, but post office department archives do not err. Their records tell the following:

"A Study Butte post office was established and discontinued twice in years 1917 through 1919, with postmasters William D. Burcham; and Paul M. Hitchcock. In years 1941 through 1944, James C. Johnson and Joe L. Martinez presided.

"The wooden ruins of 1944 Study Butte Post Office may be seen at present, toppling into caving east bank of Terlingua Creek, within eyesight of 1976 Terlingua Post Office on opposite west bank.

"In years 1899 through 1976, 20 postmasters served Terlingua post office: William E. Bell, 1899; William L. Study, 1901, John J. Dawson, James Lowree and Wilbur Humphreys, 1905; Charles A. Hawley, 1907."

Hawley noted that there was one rancher between Terlingua and Alpine, named William Pulliam and son Roselle, who traveled to Terlingua for their mail.

"In 1919, postmasters were George E. Scott and Charles Hawley; Wayne R. Cartledge, 1914; Arthur W. Ekdall, 1923; George E. Babb, 1929; Arthur Ekdall, 1940; Mrs. Edith K. Salyer, Otho C. Keller, and Thos. V. Skaggs, 1942; Wm. D. Burcham, 1943; Mrs. Ruby N. Dunnington, 1946; and Wilner M. Patterson, 1947.

"On Sept. 30, 1950, Mrs. Evelyn Fulcher assumed charge of the Terlingua Post Office which had relocated to Study Butte, and Aug. 18, 1961, Daisy Fulcher Adams replaced her."

The Terlingua Post Office had three locations: first at Marfa and Mariposa Mining Camp in 1899; second in 1909, moved five miles east to Chisos Mine (Terlingua); and third in 1950, the present location at Study Butte.

The first two post offices were built of rock, adjoining the main store. The third post office stands alone, composed of adobe, the same earth that surrounds it in mountains, desert, and creek bottoms.

The first section of the building is very worn adobe, one room, the second addition is better preserved adobe, and the third section is a screened porch.

As one enters on the aged wooden floor, he sees glass cases of a former grocery store; in the second room is a cubicle for post office business, and the adjoining screened porch has



TERLINGUA POST OFFICE. Charles Fulcher, son of Clinton and Evelyn Fulcher, pioneer family in the Big Bend, stands in front of the Terlingua Post Office at Study Butte. Daisy Fulcher Adams retired from postmaster there Aug. 31. She had been postmaster there since 1961.

potted plants.

There is an intangible atmosphere of history pervading this gathering place, where a wide-spread community received their mail and companions. Former owner of the first section of this adobe store was Balentine Rodriguez, who lived there from late 1800 until 1924.

Carl Thane said Balentine raised watermelons, corn, cattle feed, and sun dried chilis. Thane used to buy watermelons for \$1 each, a big price in those days.

In 1944, Guadalupe Hernandez purchased the property. His father was Cipriano Hernandez, mule freighter of the Castolon farming area, known best for his trading and delivery service along the border.

Guadalupe grew farm produce, raised goats, horses, and cattle, and traded with miners at the Terlingua mine.

In 1948, Clinton Fulcher purchased the property from Guadalupe Hernandez; added the second room for ice storage; and added the porch for sleeping.

Joe Moss said that in early days, mail was carried by buggy, pulled by two mules, and at Butcher Knife, 40 miles south of Alpine, was a stage station where the mailman picked up mail from the carrier from Study Butte and Terlingua. He stayed overnight Monday and returned Tuesday with the mail. He made three trips per week.

C. A. Hawley, postmaster in 1907, said three round trips per week were made, and that it must have required 50 to 60 good mules and labor of ten or a dozen men in addition to the drivers.

The Terlingua Post Office has served mine workers, geologists, engineers, winter visitors, ranchers, the Great Western Land Development migration, cowboys, and prospectors.

Daisy Adams has seen them come and go.

There will be other post offices, but the exciting kaleidoscope of the past can never be the same.

So, goodbye Daisy, welcome Mary Wright, and buena suerte.

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