

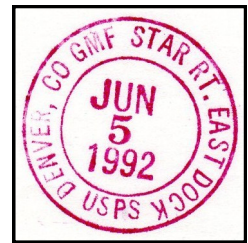
Did You Know...

...Star Routes got their name from stars, or rather, asterisks?

Post riders on horseback were the first contractors to carry mail between post offices. In 1773, post road surveyor Hugh Finlay noted that a stagecoach driver held a contract to carry semi-weekly mail between Portsmouth, New Hampshire, and Boston, Massachusetts. In 1785, the Continental Congress authorized the Postmaster General to award mail transportation contracts to stagecoach operators, in effect subsidizing public travel and commerce with postal funds. (Even then the government used postal funds.) Despite their higher costs and sometimes lower efficiency, stagecoach proposals were preferred over horseback.

An Act of Congress of March 3, 1845 took steps to reduce mail transportation costs. Congress abandoned its preference for stagecoaches, with contracts being awarded to the lowest bidder for what “may be necessary to provide for the due celerity, certainty and security of such transportation.” These were known as “celerity, certainty and security” bids. Postal clerks shortened the phrase to three asterisks or stars (***). The bids became known as star bids, and the routes became known as star routes.

Source: USPS.com



Bill German Collection