



# HOW PORTLAND'S MAIL IS HANDLED

THE RECEIVING, DELIVERING, COLLECTING AND DISPATCHING OF EACH DAY'S LETTERS



IN A LETTERCARRIERS' ALLEY.



CARRIERS SORTING LETTERS.

**A**LTHOUGH kept in constant touch with it, very few people understand the character and amount of the work done by the Portland Postoffice, and the impressions which exist as to its purposes and duties are frequently vague and grotesque. Inasmuch as the Postoffice is essentially an enterprise, of, by and for the people it is of considerable interest to know something about what Postmaster Bancroft and his force do and how they do it.

To begin with, the work of the office is divided between Mr. Bancroft's private office, the city delivery, mailing, money-order and registry departments. In the Postmaster's office proper are besides the Postmaster, Assistant Postmaster C. A. Burckhardt, Charles A. Straus, cashier; Miss Bloude Gilliland, stenographer; E. W. Godfrey, stamp clerk, and Frank Ross, his assistant. In this department the general conduct of the office is directed, salaries and running expenses disbursed and stamps sold.

Including railway mail clerks and rural free delivery carriers, who are paid from this office, Portland's Postmaster has under him 206 employees, who receive salaries amounting to \$240,000 annually. Of this number 75 are city delivery carriers, 66 are clerks stationed at this office, 85 are railway postal clerks, who have their headquarters here, and 80 rural free delivery carriers who report to this office. The Portland office was established in 1849, when the work was done by the postmaster and a clerk, and has developed with the growth of the city and the postal system until a small army is required.

The Postmaster occupies a position similar to that of the general manager of a great manufacturing establishment or department store. Working with him are a number of superintendents of divisions and each person connected with the business, from his assistant to the boys who carry special delivery letters, are under his immediate direction. All official communications and reports to the department at Washington must pass his approval and for the successful management of the business he is held personally responsible.

**Smooth Working System.**

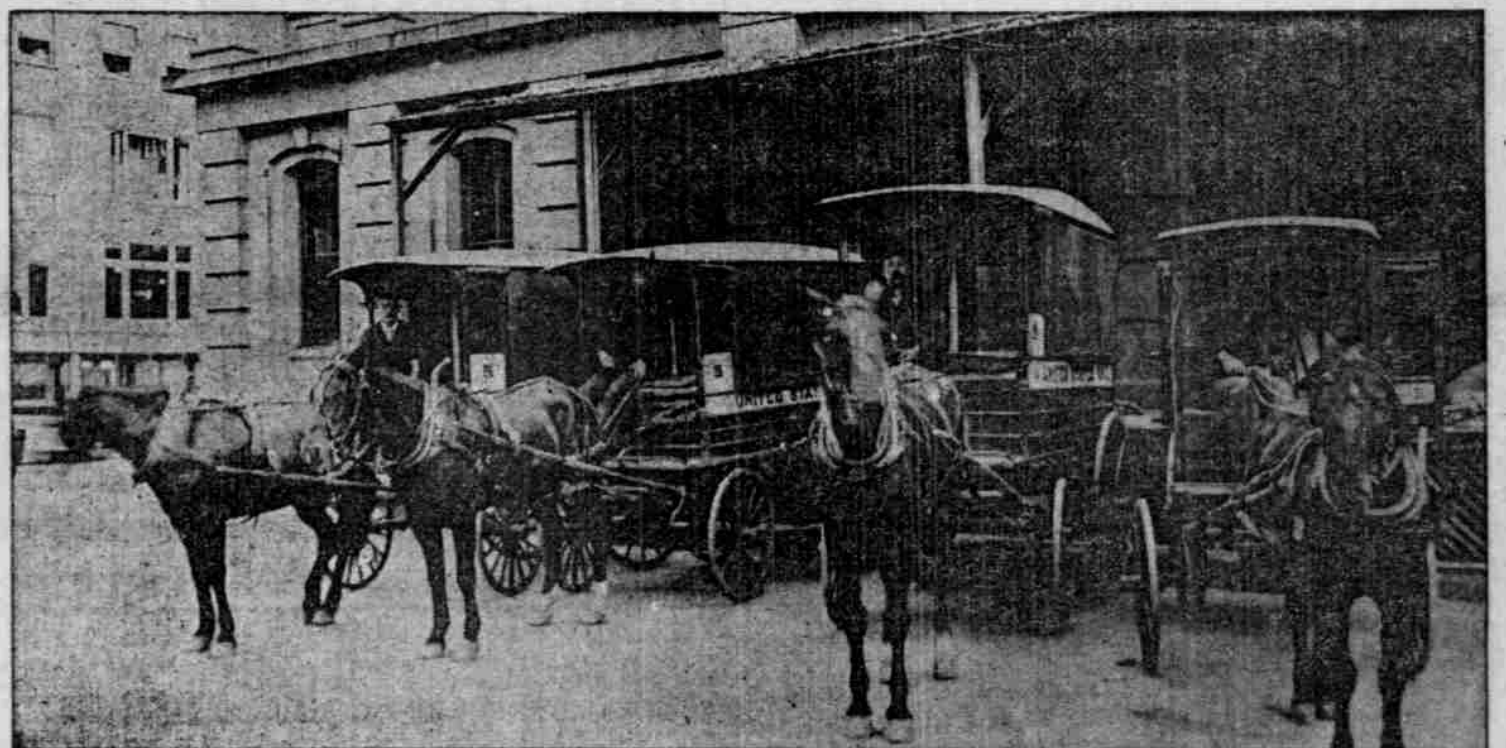
The Government has made an unqualified success of its postal system and the secret of it is method.

There is nothing of a careless or slipshod nature permitted and all departments are run as parts of a great machine, each cog working in unison with the others. It may be readily seen that there is no chance for the idler and no opportunity for "soldiering." Everyone has his task assigned him and for it he is responsible to his chief.

The stamp sales are made from the Postmaster's office and are in charge of E. W. Godfrey and Frank Ross. The average daily sales are in the neighborhood of \$100, none being sold on Sun-



ASSORTING NEWSPAPERS.



WAITING FOR OUTGOING MAIL.

days or legal holidays. The stamps vary in value from 1 cent to \$5, the latter being used on certain foreign packages, are seldom sold except to collectors. The stamps come to the local office by requisition on the department at Washington, the smaller denominations being in packages containing 50,000 each. Quarterly reports as to sales are made to Washington, and each stamp or piece of stamped paper must be accounted for.

**The City Delivery.**

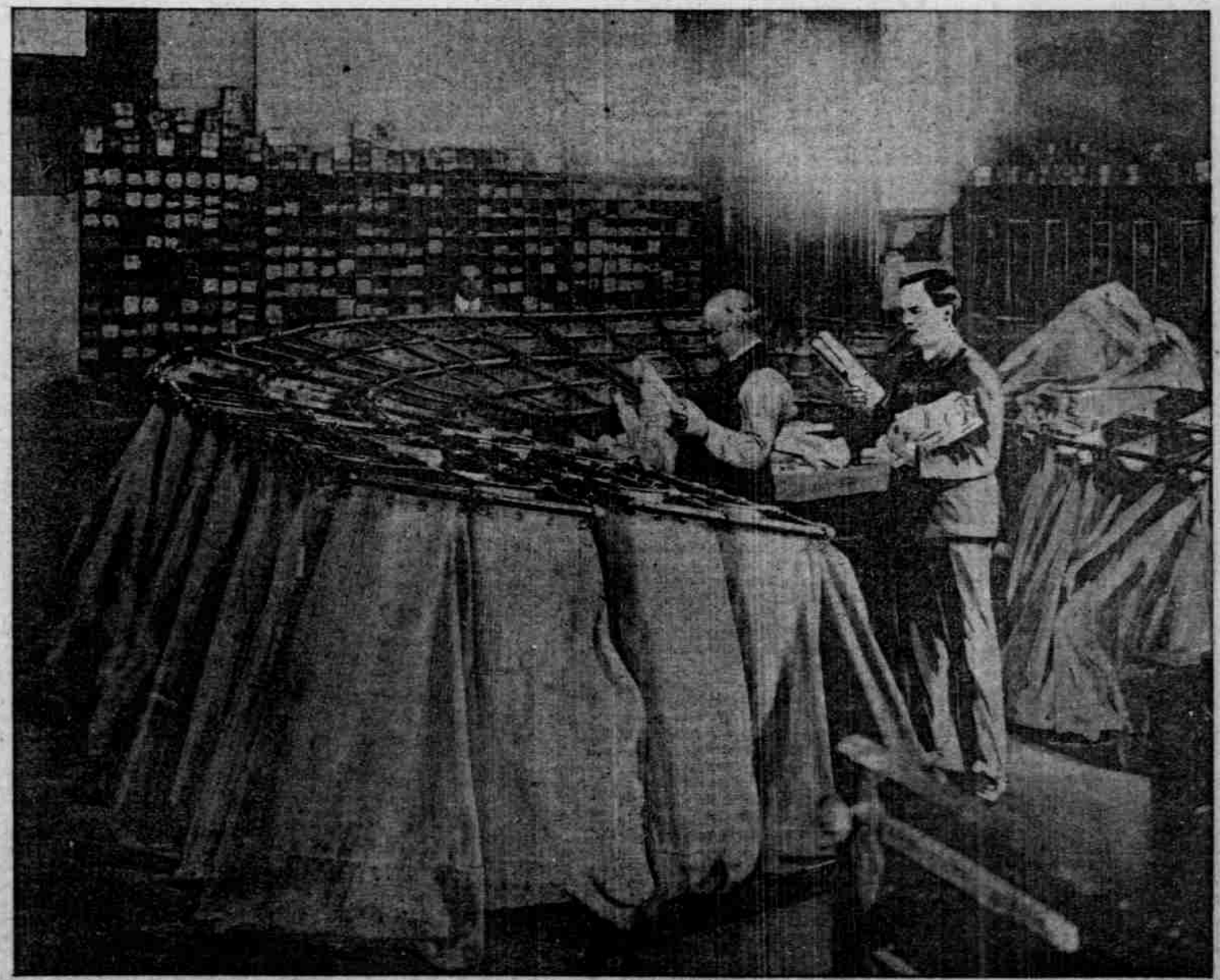
Perhaps of greatest local interest is the City Delivery Department, of which Harry M. Barrett is superintendent. It is here that the mail which is distributed by the carriers, general delivery and lock-boxes and brought in by carriers is handled. It is here that the love missives of the amorous, the terse epistles of business and the black bordered notes of sorrow are sorted, and whence they reach at last the hands and eyes for whom they are intended. It is to this department also that the designing unsophisticated come for information which will aid them in locating lost friends or evasive creditors. Superintendent Barrett has caustic of grief stored up in his heart because of this, and will

hall the day when it is understood that the rules strictly forbid him giving out information as to race, color, previous condition of servitude or present whereabouts of his patrons. The mail comes to this department at all hours of the day and night. The regular carriers report in and out in eight-hour shifts, from 7 A. M. until 11 P. M. Of the 90 regular carriers who are attached to the Portland office, 29 work directly from the main office, 8 each from Stations A and B, 2 at Station C, and 1 each from Montavilla, Sellwood and Mt. Tabor. Of this number 11 are mounted and 8 work exclusively as collectors. These faithful greycoated public servants are all in the classified service, as are almost all the employees, and draw salaries ranging from \$300 to \$1000 per annum. When the work expected of them is considered, they are probably the poorest paid men in the Government employ. They work in heat and cold, sun or rain, exposed to the elements under conditions at times the most unfavorable. The combined personal acquaintance of these men exceeds that of any similar number of men in the city, for they visit practically every

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IN THE CARRIERS' ROOM.



MAKING UP NEWSPAPER MAIL.