

Galena's Lead Mining Era: An American "Boom to Bust" Story

1838 - 1869

Purpose

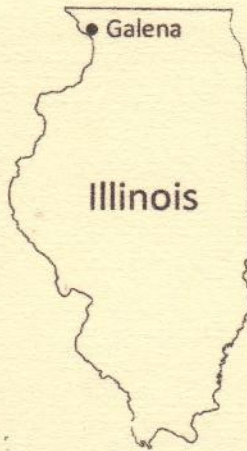
To illustrate the history of the lead mining town of Galena, Illinois as a proxy for boom and bust mining towns across America, as it can be shown through early mail.

Scope

The exhibit begins in 1838 when stagecoach mail service began in Galena and ends in 1869 with the Transcontinental Railroad was completed. Stampless and early stamped mail guide the story of Galena's lead mining era.

Background

Today an obscure town of 3,700, Galena, IL had its moment in history. Galena started with a Boom, and the reason was lead. The small town of four square miles was named for the mineral galena, a lead sulfide (PbS_2) found in lead ore. When news of its rich lead mines and cheap land spread in the 1830s, fortune seekers rushed in to Galena. Galena became the first and



largest supplier of lead in the world, and its population grew to 14,000 in the 1850s, making it larger than Chicago.

Galena's Bust

Galena lead supplied Union Civil War needs. After the war, demand for lead dropped. By 1869, the Transcontinental Railway was complete. Miners left seeking their fortunes to the west, and western ores could be easily brought to market. The boom town of Galena went bust. By 1870, Galena's main mine closed.

Key items:

- ◆ 1838 Land Registrars Mail & Land Grant document
- ◆ 1840s Transatlantic Mail, letters from Galena to Europe
- ◆ 1850s Sioux Indian Treaty letter and Miner's letter text
- ◆ 1860s Civil War Free Frank on Galena Mail

Exhibit Plan

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------|
| A. Finding Lead in Galena | 1 - 4 |
| B. Lead Mining Boom in Galena | 5 - 10 |
| C. Galena Growth & Connection | 11-14 |
| D. The Lead Used in the Civil War | 15 |
| E. Epilogue: Boom Goes Bust | 16 |

1838 Notice of Investment

Indianapolis investor's \$740.22 processed by Galena's bank.

Rate: 50¢ for distance of over 300 miles.

Significant items are bordered in red



CERTIFICATE

No. 1947

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

To all to whom these Presents shall come, Greeting:

WHEREAS

Bradstreet M. Hayes and John Reynolds of Illinois
has deposited in the GENERAL LAND OFFICE of the United States, a Certificate of the REGISTER OF THE LAND OFFICE at *Galena*
whereby it appears that full payment has been made by the said *Bradstreet M. Hayes and John Reynolds*
according to the provisions of the Act of Congress of the 24th of April, 1820, entitled "An act making further provision for the sale of the Public Lands," for *the West half of*
the North East quarter of Section thirteen, in Township thirty one, of Range two
West, in the District of Lands subject to sale at Galena, Illinois, containing
eighty acres

according to the official plat of the survey of the said Lands, returned to the General Land Office by the **SURVEYOR GENERAL**, which said tract has been purchased by the said
Bradstreet M. Hayes and John Reynolds **NOW KNOW YE**, That the
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, in consideration of the Premises, and in conformity with the several acts of Congress, in such case made and provided, HAVE GIVEN AND GRANTED,
and by these presents DO GIVE AND GRANT, unto the said *Bradstreet M. Hayes and John Reynolds*
and to *their* heirs, the said tract above described: TO HAVE AND TO HOLD the same, together with all the rights, privileges, immunities, and appurtenances of whatsoever nature, thereunto
belonging, unto the said *Bradstreet M. Hayes and John Reynolds* and to *their* heirs and assigns forever.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I, *Martin Van Buren*

STATES OF AMERICA, have caused these letters to be made PATENT, and the SEAL of the GENERAL

under my hand, at the CITY OF WASHINGTON, the *first* day of *August* in the Year of our
Lord one thousand eight hundred and *thirty eight* and of the INDEPENDENCE OF THE UNITED STATES
the *thirty third*

BY THE PRESIDENT:

Wm. Wilson

Martin Van Buren
By Martin Van Buren Secy
Acting RECORDER OF THE GENERAL LAND OFFICE.
ad interim



28
The Hon. C. C. Haines
Surveyor General
Lancaster Mo
Ohio



To: Harrisburg, PA , forwarded

October 26, 1840

Rate: Initially, 25 cent for over 400 miles manuscript rate marking in red with red PAID handstamp.

On forwarding, 18¾ cent, Harrisburg, PA to Boston for 150 to 400 miles.

Route: After delivery to Charles L. Schlatter, Civil Engineer, Harrisburg, PA the letter was forwarded and re-rated with 18¾ marked "Charge C.L.S." for Charles L. Schlatter, recipient, for forwarding to Boston.

Domestic Postal Rates per Sheet

Effective Date March 3, 1825	
Charge by Distance	Amount
Under 30 miles	6 cents
30 to 80 miles	10 cents
80 to 150 miles	12 ½ cents
150 to 400 miles	18 ¾ cents
Over 400 miles	25 cents

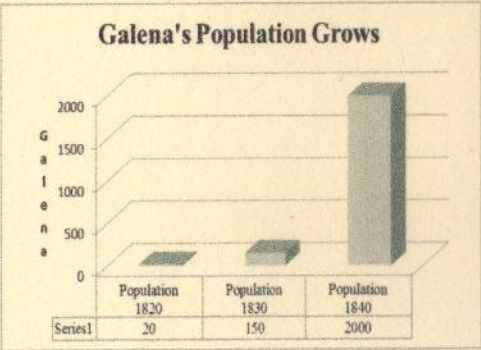


Harper's News Monthly Woodcut Illustration, May, 1866.

A. The 1840s

Land claims are the subject of many letters of the this time. Cheap prices and dreams of riches lead to great competition to get claims. Early mail shows the rush to source money and file paperwork required for establishing claims upon public or Government Lands.

Mail Volume increases to Government Offices & Investors



- Chicago population in 1830 45
- Galena population in 1830 150

By the mid-1840s, 27,000 tons of lead was mined annually from Galena, IL, making Galena the largest supplier of lead in the world. As the population boomed, mail volume increased along with the boom. Plans for a new Post Office were underway, rates for mail across the nation were dropping and added mail coach services served the state.



To: Registrar at the Land Office Dixon, IL
Rate: Prepaid 10 cent, notation, "Mail Single Paid" for single page letter.

January 13, 1843

Regarding the mail service:
"....regarding papers in proving up the claim... it would be well to copy some of those as they might be lost by mail."
—Sender's written concerns.



Land claims subject of this letter—
"Turner has failed in his businesses... his claim ...it could be got at a reasonable price."

Lead Mining Boom in Galena



To: Jackson, Tennessee
Rate: New rate applies: Manuscript 10 for postage over 300 miles. The letter's discoloration are likely Galena ore - lead dust.

October 8, 1846

if it should be impy to purchase land so that there would be no difficulty in entering the Land it could be got at a reasonable price, I think it will be

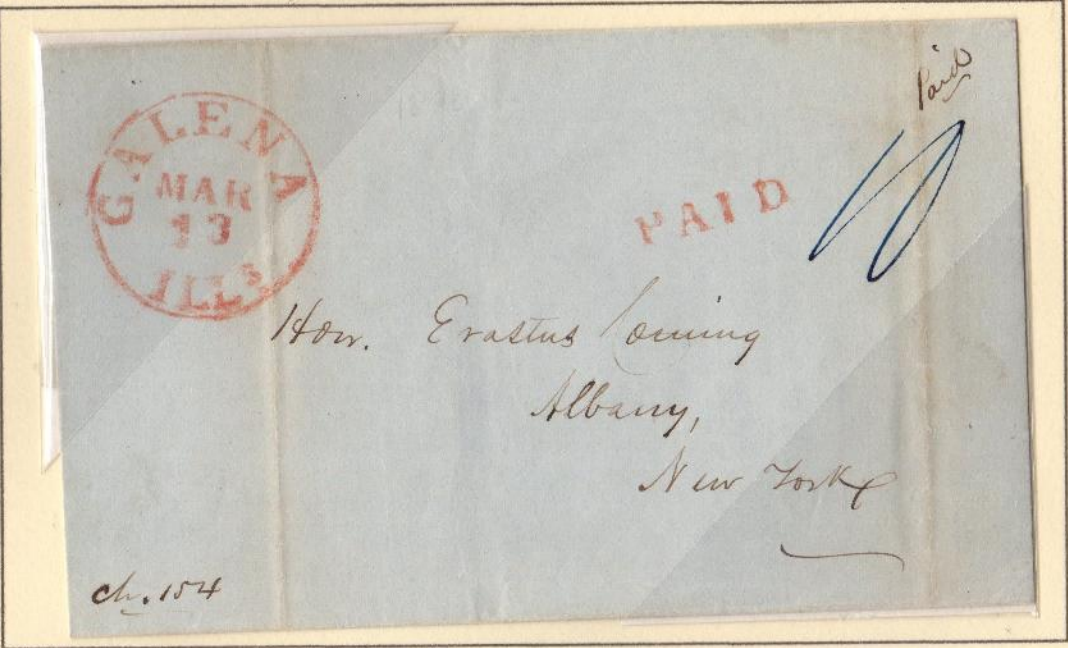


To: Register Land Office Dixon, IL
Rate: Prepaid 10 cent, notation "charge box 201" applied in Galena to charge send's account. Letter sent just prior to the rate reduction, which would halve the cost to send this letter.

June 12, 1845

Cost to Send Mail Reduced
Mail rates reduced, effective July 1, 1845.

Distance	Rate per Sheet
Under 300 miles	5 cents
Over 300 miles	10 cents



To: Albany, NY
Rate: Prepaid 10 cent for postage over 300 miles. Notation, "chg. 154" for charging local customer account for their outgoing mail.

March 13, 1848

B. 1840s - 1850s

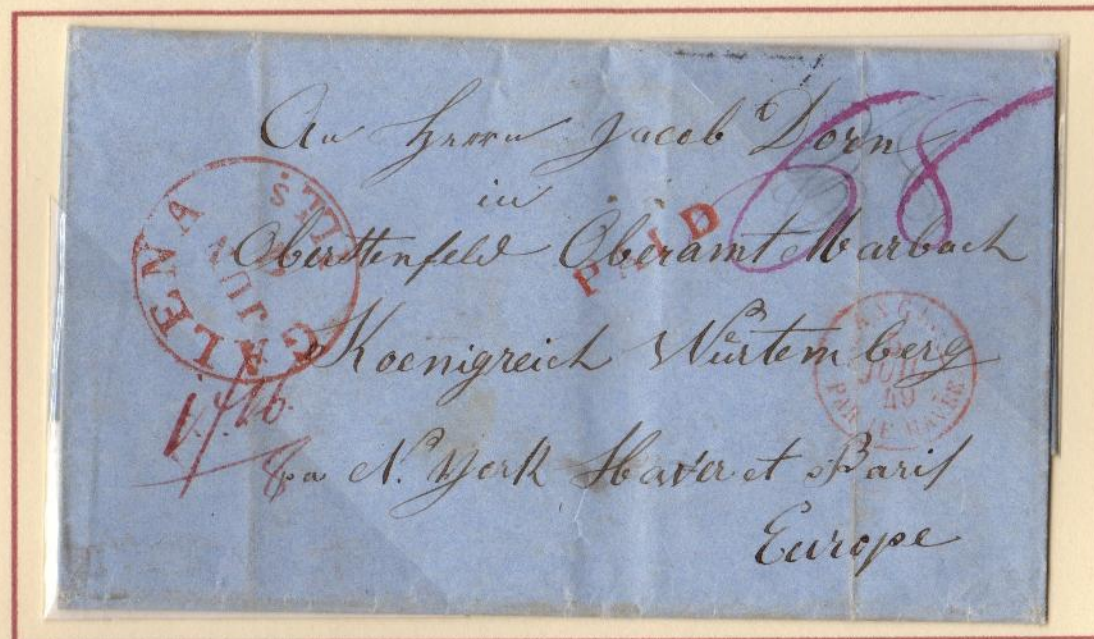
To Oberstenfeld, Wurttemberg

June 4, 1849

Rate: 68¢ paid, Double 34¢ Bremen treaty rate of March 1848 of 24¢ transatlantic + 10¢ inland.

New York June 12 transit, carried on Ocean Line's "Hermann" and taken off at Cowes, Isle of Wright, not Southampton, and sent directly to Le Harve to avoid the British discriminatory rate charge. Entry Angl./Par La Havre July 5. Due 1 gluden 16 kreuzer, plus 8 kreuzer local Wurttemberg on receipt (shown in fraction below Galena cds).

Pencil 68 re-marked 68 in magenta, PAID handstamp & 30 mm cds Galena.



To St. Louis

January 1, 1840s

Rate: 10 cents due for over 300 miles handstamped red "10" – earlier marking xx mm

Dating the Early Mail

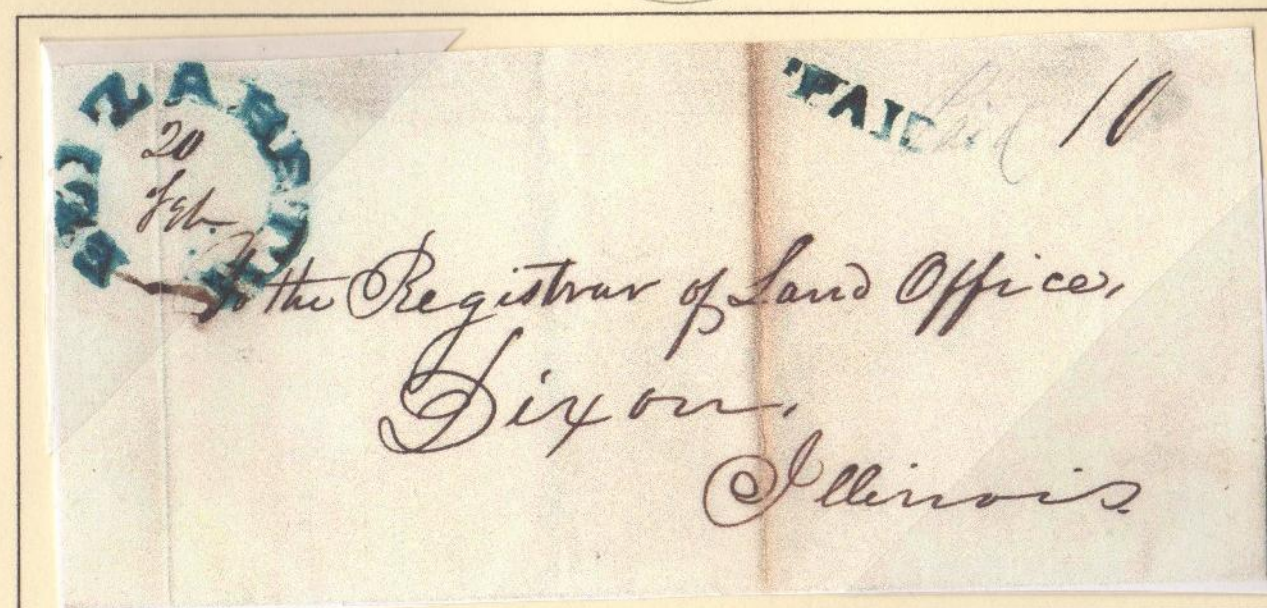
Cancel types and notations suggest year dates.

1830s-40s

Smaller 30 mm Illinois as ILLs Manuscript rates

1850s

Larger Balloon Cancel 35 mm, Illinois as ILL 5¢ and 10¢ handstamps



To: Dixon, IL February 20, 184_

Registrar of Land Office Rate: Prepaid 10 cents

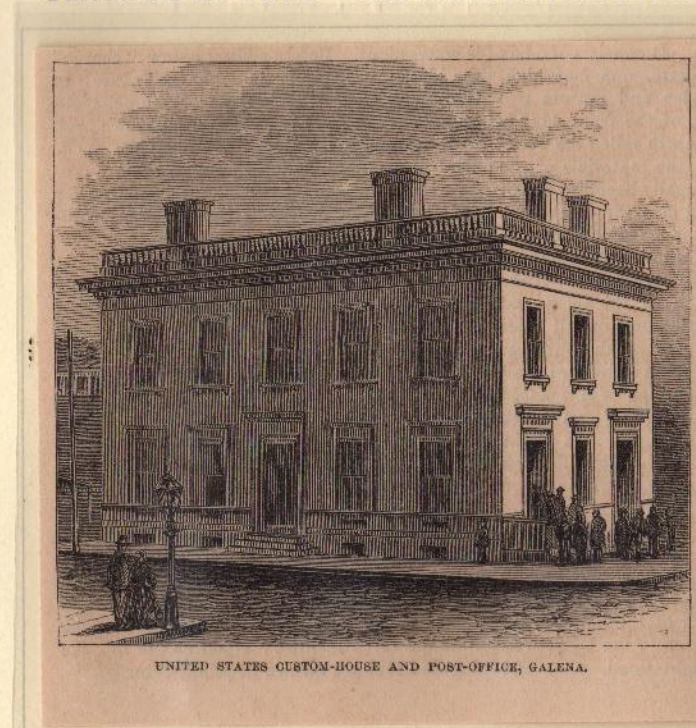
Elizabeth early woodcut 35 mm canceller, no outer rim. Struck in blue with script and blue paid.

On the same lead vein, Galena's eastern mining area opened as the Elizabeth post office in 1842.

Evidence of Prosperity →

Elegant Valentine with embossed envelope, mailed locally.

Galena's Post Office—Oldest in Continuous Use



Harper's New Monthly, early woodcut illustration.

Built 1851 - 1858 of Navoo limestone, Galena's Post Office in Renaissance Revival style architecture was a statement of the times.

Lead Mining Boom in Galena



Valentine inside, Galena. February 14, 1850s 35 mm balloon cancel.



Hand Carried Mail: Regarding Sioux Indian treaties

Letter content:
"I am about to leave for Washington on important business with the Indian Department... Every word written is true and can easily be proven by the records of the department."



To: Keokuk, Iowa
June 30, 1852
Rate: 5 cent due black handstamp large format. Letter posted in Galena.
Route: Private Carry from St. Paul, Minnesota Territory June 26, 1852 to Galena, IL by William Hollinshead.
Describes the meeting in St. Paul about the congressional delay in ratifying the Sioux treaties. Letter's author, William Hollinshead, accused politicians of working to defeat the Indian treaties.

Harsh conditions, low wages, Indians with their claims to this land—life was not easy, yet mining attracted fortune seekers from far and wide. Galena was growing!



To Warren, IL
July 1, 185_
Rate: 5 cents due for under 300 miles. Mines opened in nearby Warren following the Galena lead vein..

American Packet to England



To: South Molton, England
February 12, 1855
Rate: Prepaid 24 cent foreign, crediting three cent inland transportation to Great Britain.
Markings: Manuscript 24 lower left and two black paid handstamps applied in Galena for paid packet rate to England. Galena Ill. 30 mm balloon date stamp and London receiving marking. Red "3" handstamp applied in the New York exchange office. Sent to England by American Packet, circular red "America Paid Mar 4 1855 Liverpool" receiving.
Carrier: Collins Line steamship "Atlantic" Nine days at sea: NY Feb 21 to Liverpool Mar 4.
Mail to foreign destinations from Galena, IL infrequently found.



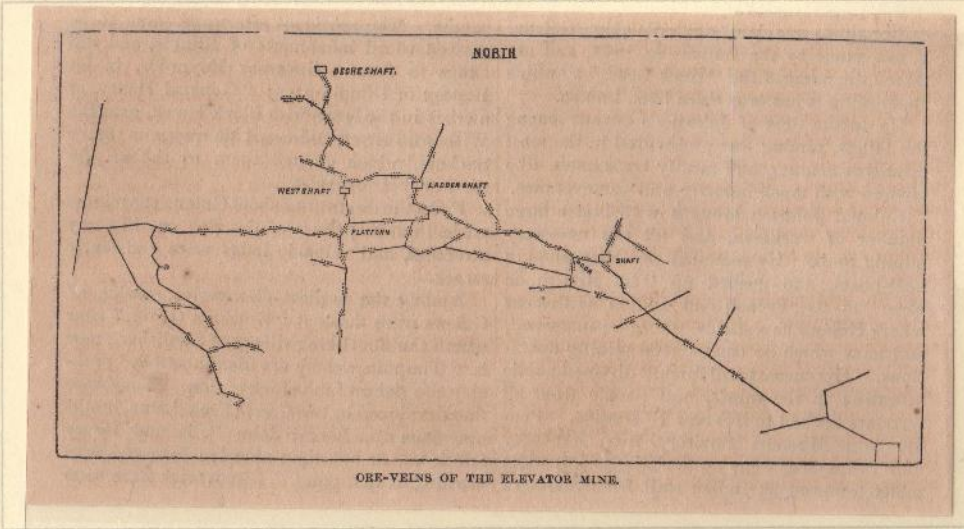
To: Baraboo, Sauk County, Wisconsin
August 20, 1854
Rate: 5 cent due handstamp small format
Route: Galena to Madison, WI on established mail coach route.
Letter content:
"I take my pen in hand to let you know...the trials and troubles I've been through. I went Wisconsin (sic), hired out on a fleet of lumber to run to St. Louis. The whole crew lost out of their wages and I am here in Galena, sick and out of money. I've got the fever and jaundice."
- writer Elihu Rathburn.



On Reverse: receiving mark



Exchange office marking



Late 1850s line drawing of location veins of lead mines throughout the Galena area. →

The growing nation demanded lead, and Galena rich lead mines lured more miners seeking fortunes. While mail coaches brought most mail, rail lines connected Galena to Chicago by 1856 and steamer mail service was growing in the Midwest. The volume of mail increased as **letter rates dropped to 3¢ for under 3,000 miles**. The US Post Office had issued its first stamps in 1847, but, like many smaller post offices, these issues were not sent to or sold by the Galena Post Office.



To: Lexington, VA April 10, 1854
Rate: Three cents paid with 1853 dull rose imperf. The first adhesive type stamp sold by the Galena Post Office were imperforates. Letter sent by stagecoach, onward by rail service.

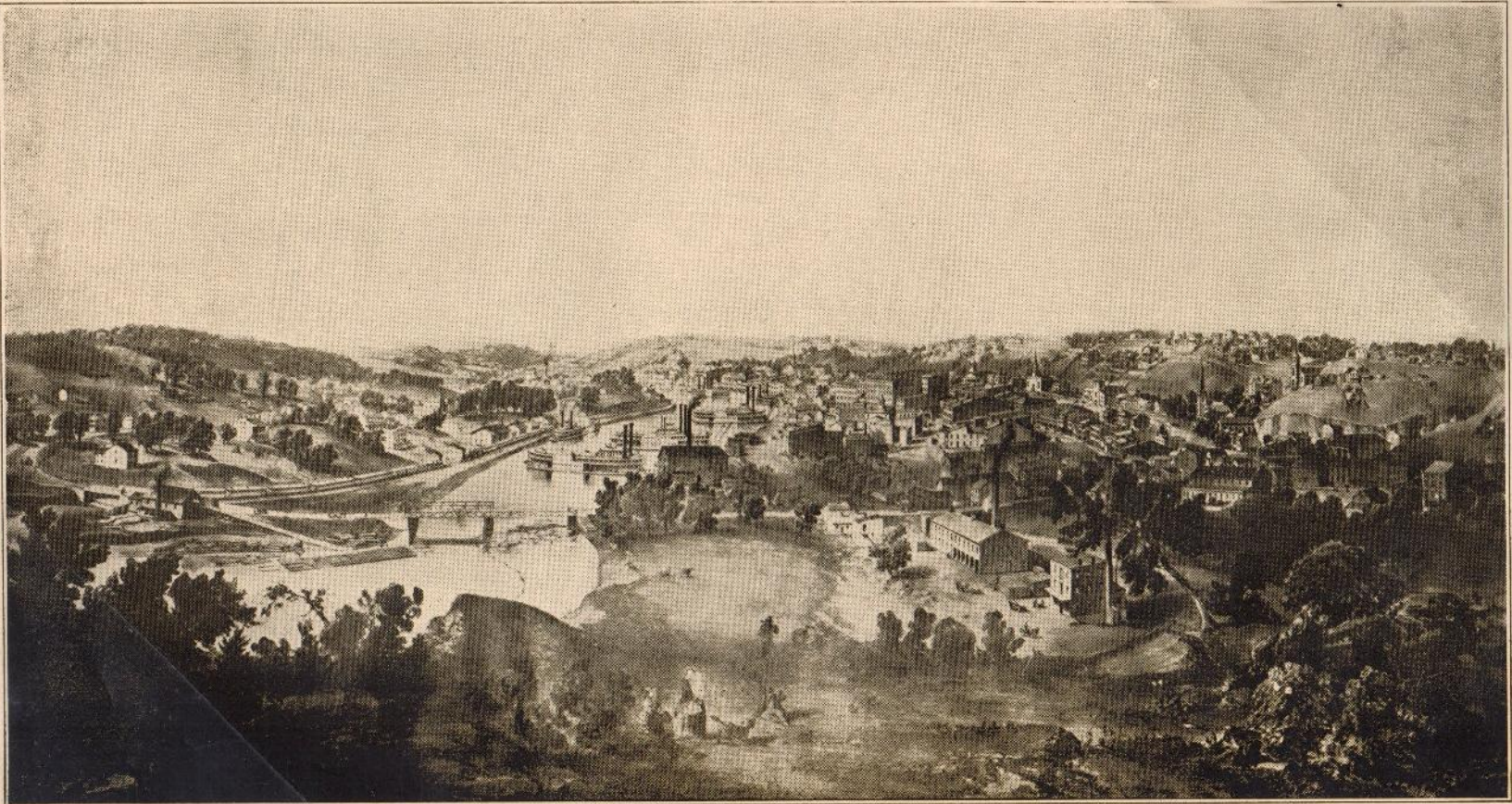
To: Bridgeton, Maine October 20, 185_
Rate: Three cents paid postal stationery.
Nesbitt & Co. envelope on diagonally laid paper. Issue from the 1853-1855 series, die type five, buff issued in 1854.



By the mid-1850s Galena was at its largest population, 14,000. Chicago now 29,900.



To: Waukesha County, Wis May 1, 1855
Rate: Paid three cent using the 1851 Washington imperforate.



GALENA IN 1856

Artist rendering, "Galena in 1856"
Note: 11 steamers docked at the levee Galena River wharf



To: Grand De Tour, Illinois December 10, 1856
Rate: Three cents paid with late 1850s perforated Washington issue. Routed by stage coach downstate towards Springfield, Illinois. "10" date slug inverted, showing as "01" Stamp issuance set date 1856- on.

The Illinois Central Railroad came from Chicago into Jo Daviess County arriving at Galena in 1856 with service continuing into Iowa. The This stage coach lines were virtually eliminated. As Chicago rail service network grew, Chicago became the prominent Illinois city.

OFFICE OF THE
Galena & Chicago Union R. R. Co.

Chicago, June 10th, 1863.

NOTICE, TO STOCKHOLDERS.

At a Meeting of the Board of Directors of this
Company, held this day, the following Resolution was
adopted:

"RESOLVED, That a Dividend of three per cent. upon the Capital Stock of this Company be, and the same is hereby declared, payable at the Office of the Company in Chicago, on the Fifteenth day of July next, to holders of said Stock, at the close of business on the 30th inst. in Exchange on New York at par. The three per cent. tax to the United States will be paid by the Company."

Stockholders who desire their Dividends remitted, will please fill up and sign the annexed order, and forward it to the undersigned.

Yours Respectfully,

W. M. LARRABEE,
Secretary.

Scan at 75% of contents of letter at left.

Galena & Chicago Union Railroad was the first rail in Illinois.

U.S. POSTAGE
THREE CENTS
SEP 21 1874
Galesburg.
Ill.

To: Galesburg, IL September 24, 1860

Rate: Three cent domestic letter rate, downstate service.

Rail served by the Illinois Central Rail line.

To: Chicago, IL

July, 1863

Rate: Two cents drop letter rate paid with pair of 1861 Franklin issues, drop letter rate in effect July 1, 1863.

Marking: Galena & Chicago Union Railroad used to cancel postage.

Content: *Galena Chicago Union Railroad notice to stockholders.*

To: Darlington, Wisconsin

June 21, 186

Rate: Three cent Washington, canceled with new double ring cds and four ring cork killer obliteration.

Route: via steamer on the Galena River to mail coach route north and west to Darlington, Wisconsin.

Galena Lead — 1861 Lead used in the Civil War

If Galena, Ill. is famous for something it's the Civil War. Galena lead made up 10% of the ammunition used in a dozen high ranking military leaders' last days. Galena. Its most famous mine became the Union's financial and Civil War hero and later US President.

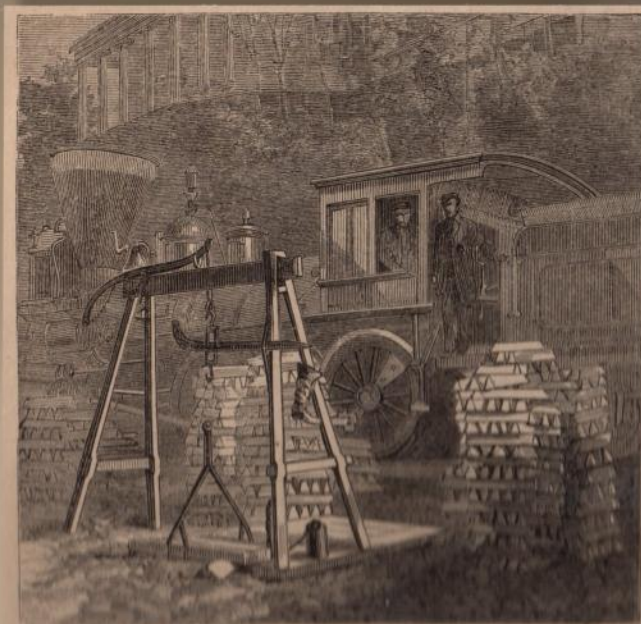
Ulysses S. Grant



Repla CDV (carte de visite) General Grant in Army uniform, Galena, Ill.

Civil War & Lead
Galena mines shipped over 11 million pigs (800 million lbs.) of lead for Civil War bullets.

Pig Lead: 30+ pounds of soft lead cast into 20" x 3" x 4" bars.



WEIGHING THE LEAD.



Free frank of Elihu B. Washburne, Secretary of State under President Grant during the Civil War, October 26, 1864.

Galena Goes Bust

The End of the Civil War

Galena's mines were depleted of easy to reach lead and with the end of the Civil War the price of lead dropped.

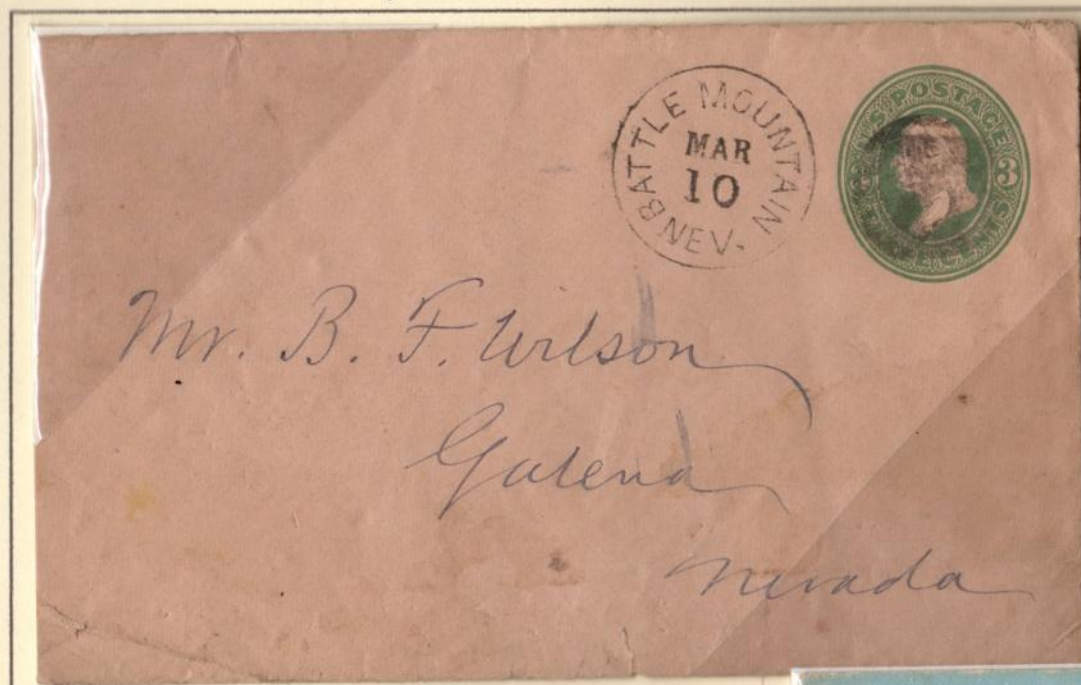
By the 1870s Galena's mining of lead had all but ended.

The Transcontinental Rail

Completed in 1869, goods from the western mines came east by rail. Lead was a byproduct from silver mines in Nevada and California gold mines. Rail service, which connected Galena, was also its final undoing.

The next Boom Town—Galena, Nevada

Miners again headed west in search of fortunes.



To: Galena, Nevada
March 10, 1870
Another Boom to Bust town, tiny Galena, NV post office closed in 1907 after its mining operations terminated.

← E. B. Washburne, US House of Representatives.

Appoint by US President Grant as the 25th

US Secretary of State

Civil War era Commander General under US General Grant

E.W. Kempter, Publisher, divided back lithographed post card →

Epilogue: Boom Town Goes Bust



To: Chicago, IL
October 28, 1869
Rate: Three cents paid with the US 1869 locomotive issue.
Double circle date stamp with four ring target obliterator.

Galena's Bust:

From a proud town of 14,000, larger than Chicago by 1858, Galena's population dropped to around 3,000 in the 1870s.

Today, still in the shadows of its past, Galena is a tourist destination.



DATE	GALENA POPULATION	CHICAGO POPULATION
1830	150	45
1840	1800	4200
1850s	14000	29,900
1870	7000	299,000
TODAY	3,400	2.7 MILLION

The abandoned **Blackjack Mine**, Galena approx. 1910.



The Blackjack Mine, Galena, Ill.