

Butterfield Stage Challenge

In 1857, the United States Congress authorized the Postmaster to contract for the conveyance of mail from the Mississippi River to San Francisco. John Butterfield won the bid to provide twice weekly mail service from St. Louis to San Francisco in 25 days or less. Butterfield had one year to get the 2800-mile route operational. By 1859, there were almost 200 stations along the route. The Civil War brought troubles to the southern route. In March 1861, the contract was modified to use a more central route from St. Joseph to Sacramento. The last eastbound mail shipment arrived in California, Missouri, on March 21, 1861. The last westbound mail arrived in San Francisco in April 1861. The overland mail stages were discontinued after the completion of the Union Pacific railroad in 1869.



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Butterfield Stage Challenge ... Visit at least 5 sites. Remember: Missouri Explorers must be registered in the program, and they are responsible for checking hours and availability of sites. Upload your verification photographs using the online submission form at <https://missouri2021.org/missouri-explorers/> to receive your merit badge button.

Remember, Missouri Explorers, you are responsible for checking hours and availability of sites before arriving.

Sites are listed from east to west along the Butterfield Stage Route.

Tipton, Missouri

The Butterfield Overland Mail contract specified carrying the mail from the Mississippi River (St. Louis) to San Francisco, but the railroad was completed to Tipton by the summer of 1858 so Tipton became the eastern terminus of the 2800-mile Butterfield Stage route. Established by William Tipton Seely, the town grew up around the railroad. The Butterfield stables were located just across the street from the current City Hall. The stage station later became The Prairie House hotel. Today it is an empty lot. Waterman Ormsby, only through passenger on the first stage, described John Butterfield as walking across the dusty plaza to board the stagecoach with the mail. One of the earliest structures in town was a seminary for female students, fondly called Rose Hill Seminary. Located just one block north of the railroad, the 3-story brick structure served as headquarters

for the Union Army (and briefly for General John Fremont). It was converted into a private residence for the Gleim and Maclay families following the War. Today, the home is maintained as a National Registered Historic Landmark. Tours are available of its 17 rooms of original furnishings. A north-south railroad went through Tipton from 1880 to 1936 making it a commercial cross roads. The original road bed of the north-south OV & SK railroad can be seen from the state highway marker park – look for the raised berm with a flat top just to the west. Today, Highways 5 and 50 intersect in the town.

Tipton City Hall
101 E. Moniteau Street
Tipton, Missouri
660-433-2323

Snap your photograph with the stone marker leaning against the building on the east side.

Roadside Park

360 US Hwy 50 W.
Tipton, Missouri

Snap your photograph with the State Highway marker in the roadside park.

Maclay House Museum \$

209 W Howard Street
Tipton, Missouri
660-433-2068

Snap your photograph with the National Historic Site plaque near the front door.

<http://www.visitmo.com/the-maclay-home.aspx>

Syracuse, Missouri

When the railroad was completed as far west as Syracuse in the summer of 1859, the eastern terminus of the stage moved here. Passengers transferring from the train to the stage had to walk about a block south to Shackelford Station. The white frame house at this location today was built around the original station. The stone Drywood Threshers marker sits on the west edge of the lawn. The stables and blacksmith shop were located just to the west where the school building stands. In addition to the Butterfield Stage, Syracuse was also a stop on the Parker and Franklin stage route, which ran from the Missouri River at Boonville to Syracuse, on to Georgetown (near today's Sedalia) and on to parts West.

Syracuse Gift Depot

218 E. Front Street
Syracuse, Missouri
660-298-3337

Snap your photograph with the State Highway marker in front of the building.

<https://www.facebook.com/Syracuse-Gift-Depot-401949939975698/>

Private Residence

104 E. High Street
Syracuse, Missouri

Snap your photograph with the stone marker in the corner of the yard on the south side of the street.

Florence, Missouri

The next stop on the Butterfield Stage route was just west of the present town of Florence. A post office was established in Florence about 1840. The state highway Butterfield marker was moved to the current post office in recent years. The actual Mulholland (sometimes Munholland or Munhollen) station was located about 2.7 miles on southwest from Florence on a gravel road, 20 miles from the Tipton terminus. The Drywood Threshers monument is maintained in a landscaped area between a family home and the Baughman Feed company office. The Butterfield stables were located across the gravel road to the north.

United States Post Office

Highway JJ
Florence, Missouri

Snap your photograph with the State Highway marker in front of the post office building.

Baughman Feed Services Inc

2482 Butterfield Trail
Florence, Missouri

Snap your photograph with the Mulholland Station stone marker in the yard.

Cole Camp, Missouri

Cole Camp was laid out in 1857 but had a post office as early as 1839. A state Butterfield highway marker is located in the City Park along Butterfield Trail, also Highway F. A Drywood Threshers stone marker for the Burns Station is located about 5 ½ miles southwest of the town along Highway F. That station was 50 miles from Tipton. There are various road signs marking the road as Butterfield Trail road, also

referred to as Military Road and The Old Wire Road.

City Park

Hickory and Elm
Cole Camp, Missouri

Snap your photograph with the Highway marker in City Park

Private Residence

20173 Highway F
Cole Camp, Missouri

Snap your photograph with the concrete marker in the corner of the west yard, on north side of the road and easily visible from the public highway.

Warsaw, Missouri

The area around Warsaw was settled around 1820, although white explorers had visited the area as early as 1719. The area became a crossroads for commerce, including stagecoaches. Much of the original route for the Butterfield Stage in this area is now under the waters of Truman Reservoir, created in 1979. There are two Butterfield markers on opposite sides of the Courthouse square. The relay station was located across the street from the Drywood Threshers stone marker. The Reser's Funeral Home building incorporates part of the Nicholas Tavern. The tavern was built in the 1840s and served as the Butterfield Stage Station. Nothing still exists to show the location of the next stop, Bailey Station near Fairfield.

Highway K

Intersection

Snap your photograph with the Butterfield Trail sign.

Benton County Courthouse

316 Van Buren Street
Warsaw, Missouri

Snap your photograph with the State Highway marker on the southwest corner of the courthouse lawn.

Benton County Courthouse

316 Van Buren Street
Warsaw, Missouri

Snap your photograph with the State Highway marker on the southeast corner of the courthouse lawn.

Reser Funeral Home

101 Main Street
Warsaw, Missouri
660-438-5151

Snap your photo in front of the building – the original Butterfield Stage station.

<http://www.reserfuneralhome.com/location/373>

Quincy, Missouri

Now just a small settlement marks the location of the Quincy Station, which served as a meal and change station 76 miles from Tipton. There were no overnight stops for the Overland Mail stage, passengers slept (or not) on the moving stage. Meal stops were a welcome respite from the constant rocking of the stage but lasted only 20 minutes. The highway marker was moved in recent years to its current location in front of Quincy Hall. The exact location of the station is not known, but the Butterfield route abutted the current Post Office land.

Quincy Public Hall

14349 MO-83
Quincy, Missouri

Snap your photograph with the highway marker in front of the building.

Wheatland, Missouri

The small town of Wheatland was platted in 1869. The stage route ran close to today's Highway 83. Today the town features a Settlers Village of replica log structures, including a Butterfield Overland Mail Station.

Settler's Village

18544 Main Steet N.
Wheatland, Missouri

Snap your photograph by the replica Butterfield Relay Station in Settler's Village located on the square in Wheatland.

Elkton, Missouri

The next station was 92 miles from the Tipton terminus, about ½ mile south of the hamlet of Elkton on the old Yoast homestead.

NW Corner of HWY 83 and H

Elkton, Missouri

Snap your photograph by the State Highway marker for Yoast Relay Station.

Bolivar, Missouri

Founded in 1835, Bolivar served as a relay and meal station along the Butterfield Stage route, 108 miles from the Tipton terminus. Because the streets of the town were laid out according to the stage route, they run do not run a true north and south, but are offset about 22 degrees to the west. A few books about the Butterfield Stage claim the Library building was the site of the Franklin Hotel that served as the stage stop here, but local historians place it just up the block where a retail business, The Peddler's Post, is currently located. The stables were located "behind" the Franklin Hotel and just west of the highway marker.

Barker Progressive Insurers

213 S. Springfield
Bolivar, Missouri

Snap your photograph with the State Highway marker.

Polk County Genealogical Society

120 E. Jackson Street
Bolivar, Missouri

Snap your photograph by the Polk County Genealogical Society.

Peddler's Post

112 S. Springfield Avenue
Bolivar, Missouri

Snap a photograph in front of the building.

Polkward Northward Museum \$

201 W. Locust Street
Bolivar, Missouri
417-326-6850

Snap your photograph in front of the museum.

Springfield, Missouri

In Springfield, the Butterfield Stage stopped near the public square at the tavern owned by General Nicholas Smith. A stone marking the location of the tavern is embedded at sidewalk level in the side of the building that currently houses the Springfield Historical Museum on Park Central Square. The original stables for the Butterfield Stage were probably located in the area of the parking lot at the corner of Olive and Park Central North. Springfield was called a time-table station with the westbound stage due to arrive on Wednesday and Saturday at 7:45 p.m.

Springfield History Museum on the Square \$

154 Park Central Square
Springfield, Missouri
417-831-1976

Snap your photograph with the sign outside of the museum.

Park Central Lofts

222 Park Central North
Springfield, Missouri

Snap your photograph with the marker set into the building.

Battlefield, Missouri

Just outside Springfield there is a small city park in Battlefield, Missouri, named Butterfield Stage Park. It is located on Old Wire Road, so named because the road followed the telegraph line from Fort Smith, Arkansas, north to the railroad

at Syracuse and on to St. Louis. The Butterfield Stage followed Old Wire Road, also known as Military Road, on to the southwest.

Butterfield Stage Park

Old Wire Road
Battlefield, Missouri

Snap your photograph with the park sign.

Republic, Missouri

Wilson's Creek Battlefield Park commemorates a fierce Civil War battle fought on August 10, 1861. Although the Butterfield Stage route goes through the Park, there are no signs or markers that indicate the stage travelled there. The John A. Ray House served as a flag/mail stop for the Butterfield Stage along Old Wire Road. There are said to be ruts from the stage route still visible in the Park so ask at the Visitor's Center for more information.

Wilson's Creek Battlefield \$

6424 W. Farm Road
Republic, Missouri

Snap your photograph at the entrance to the Visitor's Center or by the Ray House.

<https://www.nps.gov/wicr/planyourvisit/basicinfo.htm>

Clever, Missouri

The State Highway Butterfield stage marker and Drywood Threshers stone monument near Clever are the only indications the route travelled through this area. They are located on the highway right of way beside a private drive. It takes a sharp eye to spot the marker located 1 mile north of the intersection of Highway ZZ and Honeysuckle Road.

HWY ZZ and Honeysuckle Road

Clever, Missouri

Snap your photograph at the highway and stone markers for Ashmore Station on the west side of the road.

Cassville, Missouri

Platted in 1845, Cassville was the last town in Missouri along the Butterfield Stage Route, although the Washburn station was located another mile south along what is now Highway 57. The last known state highway Butterfield marker in Missouri is on the corner of the Courthouse Square. Washburn was a mail stop, not a relay station.

Courthouse Square

Business Hwy 37 and W. 7th Street
Cassville, Missouri

Snap your photograph with the highway marker on the corner of the square.

Barry County Museum

15858 Highway 76
Cassville, Missouri
417-847-1640

Snap your photograph by the museum entrance or one of the cannons.

<https://www.barrycomuseum.org>

Final Notes

The last stage station in Missouri was Harbin Station in Barry County, located in the home of John G. Harbin, but no marker is known to exist. From there, the Butterfield Stage route crossed into Arkansas at Potts Hill.

A few stations are not listed in this challenge – Smith, Molloy, Evans and Crouch – as they are not easily accessible or no markers exist today.