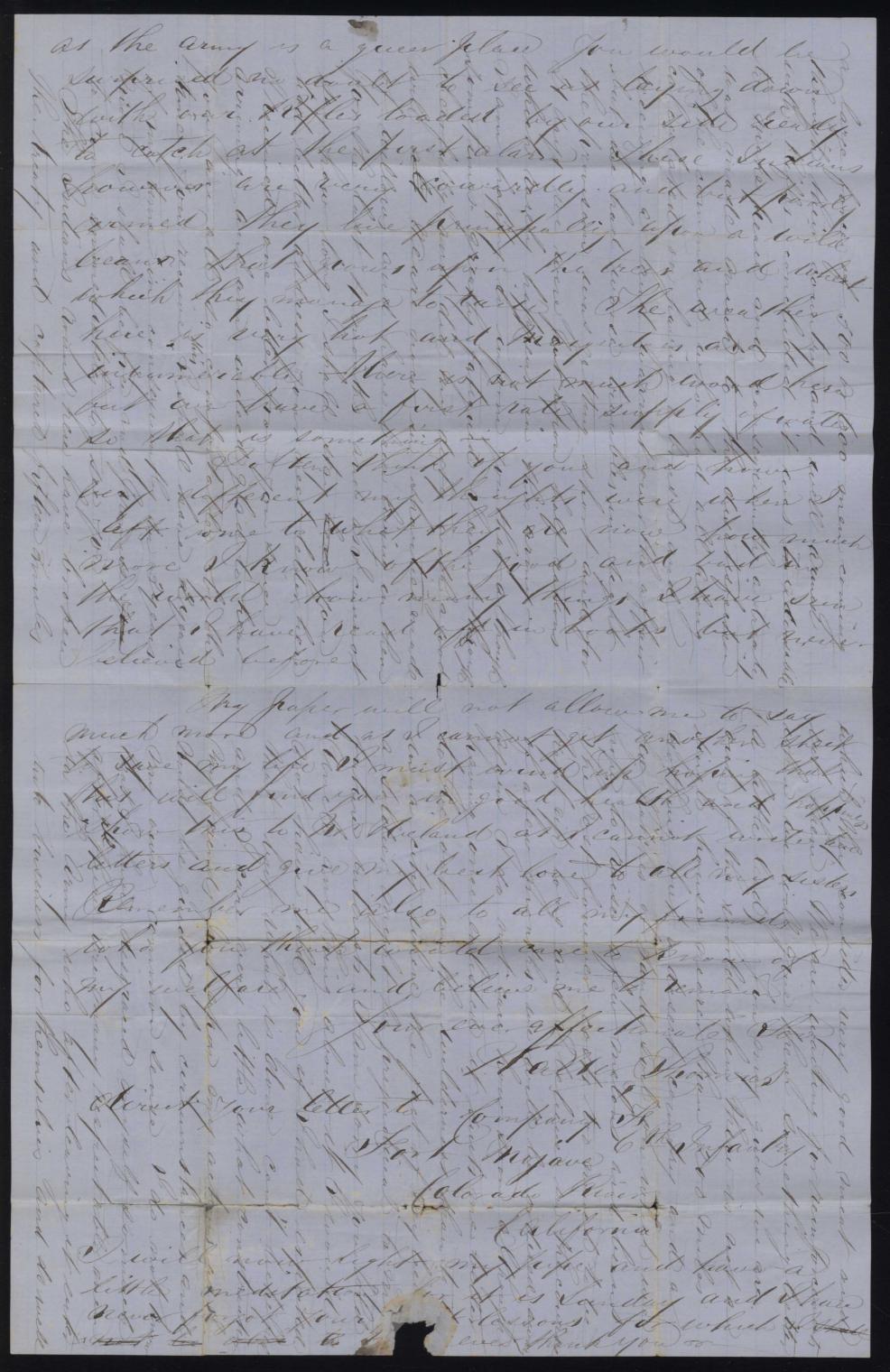




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NEW MEXICO TERRITORY

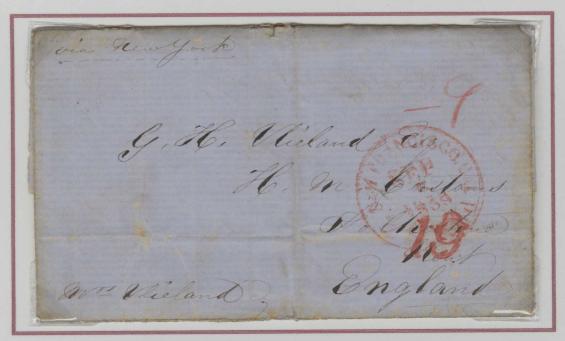
Fort Mohave

Fort Mohave, originally named Camp Colorado was established on April 19, 1859 by Lieutenant Colonel William Hoffman during the Mohave War. It was located on the east bank of the Colorado River, at Beale's Crossing by the recommendation of Lieutenant Edward Fitzgerald Beale. It was later renamed Fort Mohave nine days later by Captain Lewis A. Armistead.

The fort was established to protect emigrants to California traveling through the northern route in the New Mexico Territory on the Beale Wagon Road, and across the Mojave Desert on the old Mojave Road. It was also used as a base of operations against the warring Mohave Indian tribe.

Map of courier route to San Francisco





Soldiers Letter from Fort Mohave ~ July 31, 1859

Sent via New York to Folkstone, England carried by military courier to San Francisco arriving entering the mail on Sept. 5, 1859 as prepaid 59 cent rate, with Oct. 9, 1859 arrival postmark at Folkstone on obverse.

Walter Thomas member of Company F 6th Infantry writes to his mother about the very hot weather and life at the newly formed camp. The letter traveled many miles to reach San Francisco over a long and dangerous route in the southern desert and up the central valley of California.

"I am writing this now on a bunch of willows so you must make all excuses for it and remember I have little convenience. We will soon have an express running so that I shall be enable to write you regularly and let you how know I am getting on. The Indians here have broken the treaty and captured 15 mules which they consider very good meat and eat them. I will now light my pipe and have a little meditation for it is Sunday and I have never forgot your lessons for which I ever thank you."

Your ever affectionate Son, Walter Thomas

San Francisco, Sept. 5th, 1859. Folkestone, Oct. 9th, 1859. via New York. G.H. Vlieland Esq., H.M. Customs, Folkestone, Kent, England. Mrs. Vlieland.

Fort Mojave, Colorado River, California. July 31st, 1859.

My dearest Mother,

No doubt you have been very anxious not having heard from me for 7 months but this is the first opportunity I have had to write you and it is only on account of a soldier being discharged and returning to San Francisco that I am enabled to let you know of my existence. I am happy to inform you that I am in good health and getting along as well as I could expect. About a month after writing my last letter to you we were ordered off toxx on am expedition against the Mojave Indians on the Colorado River. Here and after 2 or 3 weeks steam boat travelling we arrived at Fort Juma about 200 miles from here and one of the chief stations of the California Overland Mail. We started from Fort Juma with pack mules and were in full marching order with knapsack on our backs and all a soldiers accoutrements and this through a country which the newspapers describe as being much worse than the burning Sands of Arabia, that was exagerated however the ground is decidedly the worst I have ever seen though comprising Sand and rocks. The Indians seeing a large force of 500 or 600 men coming through their country and well armed with Rifles, concluded it was advisable to make peace and consequently a treaty was made much to the dissatisfaction of the command who had all along calculated on having a brush and receiving a land warrant over the affair but we had worse troubles in sight the provision was getting short and for 21 days we were put on half rations which rarely happens in this army. I am happy to inform you that although sometimes greatly fatigued I went through cheerfully and did my duty with a good will. We are now in shanties made of willows and have been living in them for the last 4 months and as I cannot say how long I shall stay you had better address your next letter here. I received one letter from you since arriving and am indeed glad to hear you are all so comfortable by the time you receive this I shall have 2 years of my time in so consequently in 3 more I shall be free and promise to come immediately to see you. The Indians here have broken the treaty and captured 15 mules which they consider very good meat and eat them. We are waiting for reinforcements when we will give them something better (a little lead). You may guess we are out of the world when there is not a single house nearer than 200 miles nothing but a desert country and a few patches of sandy soil om which we hope to raise a few melons and beans. The Post however costs too much to be kept up long and I believe in the course of a few months we will be or ered away again I do not care how soon although having once enlisted it suits me better to be out in the wilderness than to be in a city where the fact of my being a soldier might be prejudicial to my future interests. I am sorry you told Uncle anything about it. I would not have told you if I had expected that but what is done cant be helped and I care very little what construction my friends put upon my action as I must be guided by circumstances and my own common sence. I do not know that I have disgraced myself so much after all there are many respectable men in the Army who after leaving it enter into business for themselves and do well. Their friends do not look down upon them as long as they are doing well and when they are not they are better amongst strangers. You may depend as I ong as I could have got on amongst citizens I should never have enlisted, but as I have made my own bed I must lay upon it and I cannot say I regret it much, it has made a man of me. Before entering the Army I was afraid to fire a gun off, could not stand by a cannon, was no shot. Now I do not fear most things and will have more to tell you off when I return. I am writing this now on a bunch of willows so you must make all excuses for it and remember I have no convenience. We will soon have an express running

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Direct your letter to Company?
6th Infantry,
Fort Mojave,
Colorado River,
California.

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Typed 30.8.70.

Arizona Mail

Fort Mojave Soldier's Letter



July 31st,1859.

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