

NAUGHTON FARMS

Copied from "The Wagon Master" by Cecil Burton

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Naughton Farms, a large mail order nursery, was located in Waxahachie. They did a very large business. Many of their orders were the results of radio advertising throughout the USA.

They told the public, "To call the radio station to order and they would receive a shipment of roses, trees, or other nursery stock." In turn the radio station would type up the orders and mail to Naughton. The orders would be filled. Since there were so many bundles being shipped out, the Post Office sent about forty temporary employees to Naughton's warehouse. They sacked, bundled and loaded three freight cars with these mailings daily.

Since no money had been sent to Naughtons, most of their parcels were sent C.O.D. That meant they were sold at their destination. The Post Office would send a money order back to Naughtons. They listed and took them to the bank for deposit. The next day, the orders were brought to the Post Office. I took the bank's adding machine tape and wrote a check on the U.S. Treasurer. This check usually ran about \$55,000 to \$60,000 for about 10,000 money orders. Our work began. We had ten temporary men assigned to the money order division, under my supervision.

Step 1: 600 to 800 money orders were listed on each adding machine tape. Several clerks would each take a bundle, check the amount of the order that was intended for Naughton Farms and payable in Waxahachie. If any error was discovered that order was withdrawn and notations made on the adding machine tape. Sometimes we discovered money orders made payable to National Bellas Hess Co. or Sears Roebuck. These orders had been sent to Naughtons, through the error of a postal clerk, in some far away city or town.

Step 2: Since Naughtons had many orders for the same deals, many money orders coming back had the same amount, i.e. \$5.67; \$5.70, \$4.98, \$4.84. As the boys checked everything, they placed all orders for the same amount into various stacks.

Step 3: We had three old electric adding machines that would take sheets of paper 10 inches wide. A clerk would count and place sixty-one money orders (same amount) with a rubber band. The adding machine clerk would list each money order by the five digit Post Office number, reset the column and place the serial number for the 61 orders. After clearing the machine, he could set his machine on repeat and list sixty-one amounts.

Step 4: Each form we used for the above would take four columns of sixty-one orders. There were 244 on each page. Each page was totaled to see if it agreed with the bank's figures. If not, adjustments were noted for the next day's business. All orders were torn apart. One half to be filed here. The other half kept in bundles and labeled as to page and

column number. They were sent along with one copy of our listings to the accounting office in Asheville, North Carolina.

Step 5: One clerk was kept busy tearing and filling. Our part was filed thus. If it originated in another state, we filed it under that state. If it originated in Texas it was filed under the first letter of the town from where it came. Like d – for Dallas.

Step 6: At the end of the postal quarter all reports, including a copy of the paid orders, went to the accounting office. It always took one or two large cardboard boxes to transmit our report.

I had other duties besides supervising these ten men. I made daily reports of the manpower hours used in delivery of mail, finance section, mail handling section and over all supervision. I handled all postal saving accounts, both deposits and withdrawals; sold US Bonds and Savings Stamps. I made bank deposits, checked the employee time cards and kept postal manual changes recorded. It was a lot of work, but Naughton Farms was a seasonal business. They started mailing in late December or early January. They used three Pitney-Bowes postage machines. One for their letter mail and the other two to affix postage for their parcel post. At first, they would normally bring a check for \$1500. We would set each machine for \$500. By the middle of January, the check would be for \$3,000, setting each for \$1,000. By the middle of February, they were in full operation. They would be bringing a check for \$10,000. Their office machine would be set for \$2,000 and the other machines would be set for \$4,000.

Naughton Farms gave us a great big percentage of our postal revenue. Back in their big years, it cost three cents to mail a letter and most parcels could be mailed for under a dollar. An air mail letter cost six cents to be sent anywhere in the USA, Canada or Mexico. Our postal receipts, for the year 1950 was just under half million dollars. (Money taken in for postage, rent of post office boxes and other small items, not any money order, postal savings or US Bond sales) Of that amount, we could show Mr. Naughton had spent better than \$400,000 with us. Naughton's business rapidly declined after the Taft-Hartley laws became effective. Having to pay a minimum salary, about 1965, finally caused the demise of the firm.

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THE TAFT HARTLEY ACT

The Taft-Hartley Act (also known as the Labor-Management Relations Act) was passed over the veto of Harry S. Truman on 23rd June, 1947. When it was passed by Congress Truman denounced it as a "slave-labor bill".

The act declared the closed shop illegal and permitted the union shop only after a vote of a majority of the employees. It also forbade jurisdictional strikes and secondary boycotts. Other aspects of the legislation included the right of employers to be exempted from bargaining with unions unless they wished to.

The act forbade unions from contributing to political campaigns and required union leaders to affirm they were not supporters of the Communist Party. This aspect of the act was upheld by the Supreme Court on 8th May, 1950.

The Taft-Hartley Act also gave the United States Attorney General the power to obtain an 80 day injunction when a threatened or actual strike that he/she believed "imperiled the national health or safety".

