

HEART OF THE WEST: SAN FRANCISCO AS A POSTAL HUB FROM 1849 TO 1869

This exhibit examines the postal routes that connected San Francisco with the rest of the world in the 1849 to 1869 period. The 1848 California Gold Rush established San Francisco as the principal city on the American west coast, and San Francisco's large natural harbor made it an excellent terminus for Pacific Ocean steamships. These factors quickly solidified San Francisco as the central point for postal operations in the American West. The period covered by this exhibit begins when San Francisco began formal postal operations in March 1849, and concludes in June 1869, shortly after the completion of the transcontinental railroad.

Postal Routes Connecting With San Francisco



Transcontinental water routes connected the east and west coasts of North America by Atlantic coast steamships running between New York and Latin America, and by Pacific coast steamships running between San Francisco and Latin America. These were joined by short overland routes via Panama, Nicaragua and Mexico.



Transcontinental overland routes across the North American continent.



Pacific Ocean routes connected San Francisco with foreign ports in the Far East, Pacific Rim, Hawaii, British Columbia and South America.



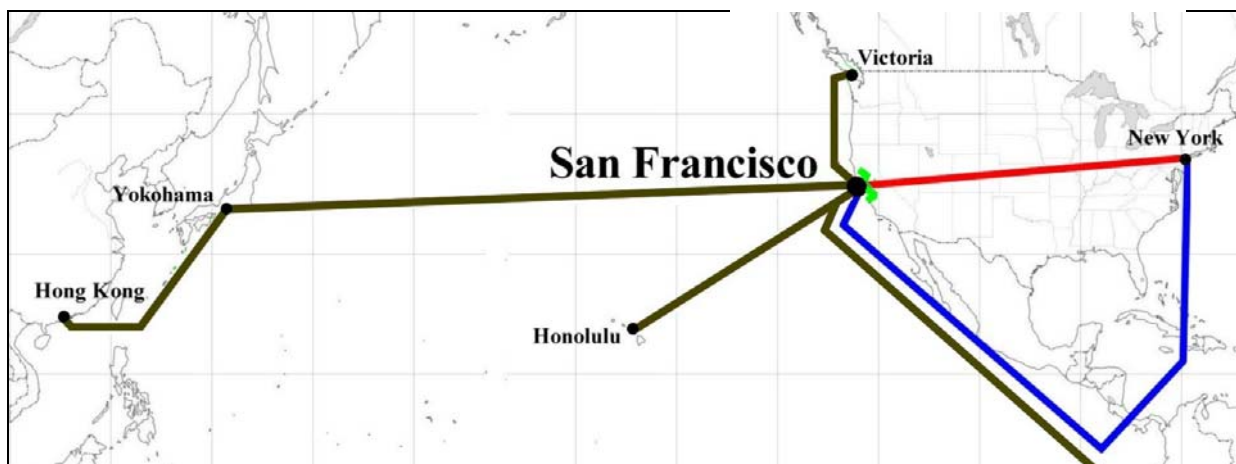
Regional West Coast routes connected San Francisco with nearby regions. Local mail within San Francisco is not included in the scope of this exhibit.

Pacific Ocean Routes

- *Far East & Hawaii
- *British Columbia
- *South America

Transcontinental Overland Routes

- *Chorpenning
- *Butterfield & OMC
- *Pony Express



Regional West Coast Routes

- *Post Office
- *Gold Miners' Expresses
- *Expresses to Nevada Territory

Transcontinental Water Routes

- *Via Panama
- *Via Nicaragua
- *Via Mexico

Presentation

The exhibit is organized by route. Eastbound and westbound mail is shown for each route, with chronological subdivisions within each route grouping reflecting changing rate structures.

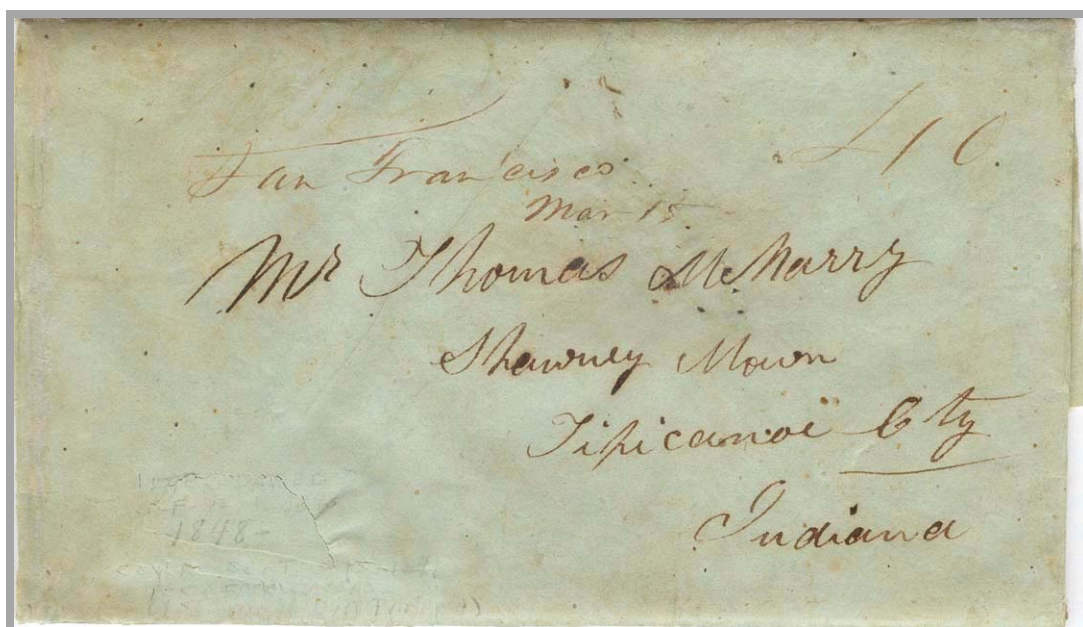
Transcontinental Water Routes

Via Panama: March 1849 - June 1851



The Pacific Mail Steamship Company (PMSC) was formed on April 12, 1848 to service the US contract mail route between Panama and San Francisco. The first contract mail left San Francisco on March 19, 1849.

The March 3, 1847 US Act set the rate to or from the Pacific Coast at 40¢ per ½ ounce, effective July 1. This rate was superseded on July 1, 1851.



Dated *St. Frisco California December 11, 1848* - mailed with 40¢ postage due

Manuscript San Francisco postmark was dated on March 15 expected departure

Peruvian bark *Callao* left March 19, 1849 with first US contract mail via Panama

USMSC *Falcon* carried letter from Chagres to New York on June 19, 1849

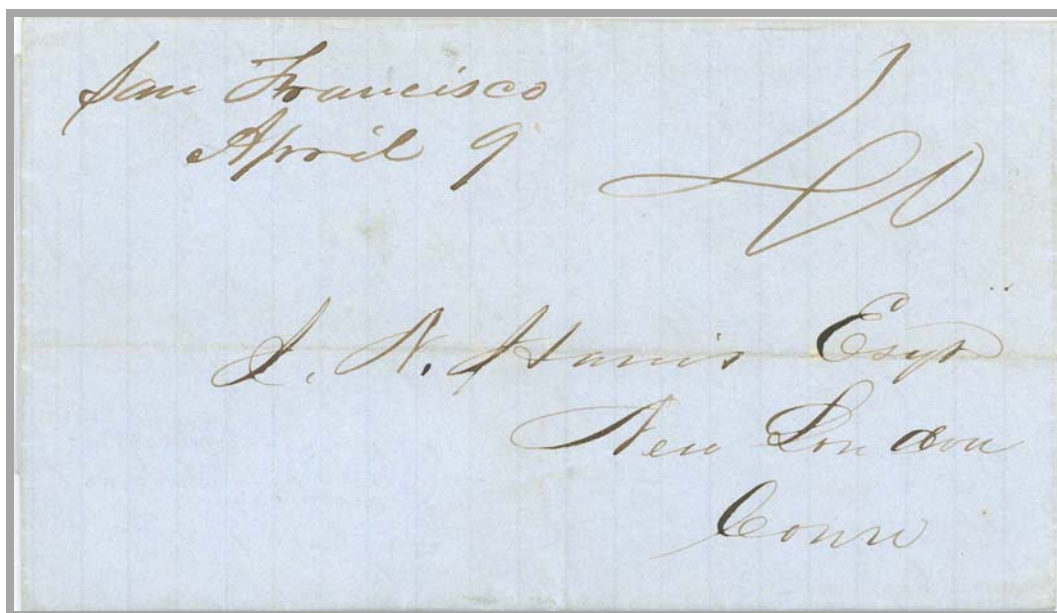
Only known example of San Francisco's earliest postmark

Transcontinental Water Routes

Via Panama: March 1849 - June 1851

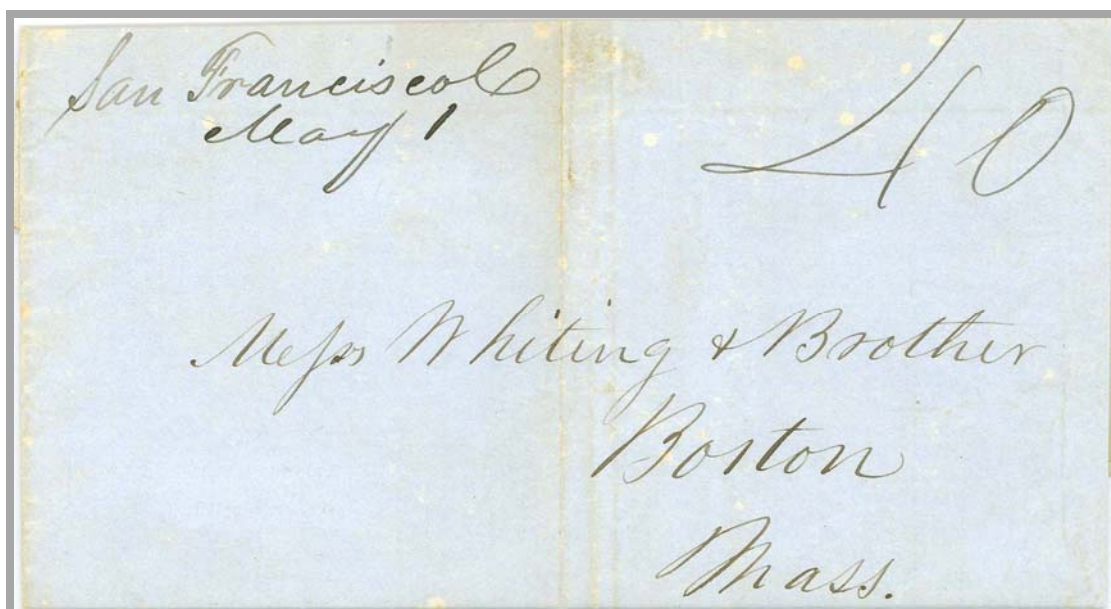


San Francisco's first postmarks were manuscript markings, and were used from March to June 1849.



San Francisco April 9, 1849 **manuscript postmark** - sent unpaid with 40¢ due

PMSC *Oregon* left April 12 - **first contract sailing by a PMSC steamship**



San Francisco May 1, 1849 **manuscript postmark** - sent unpaid with 40¢ due

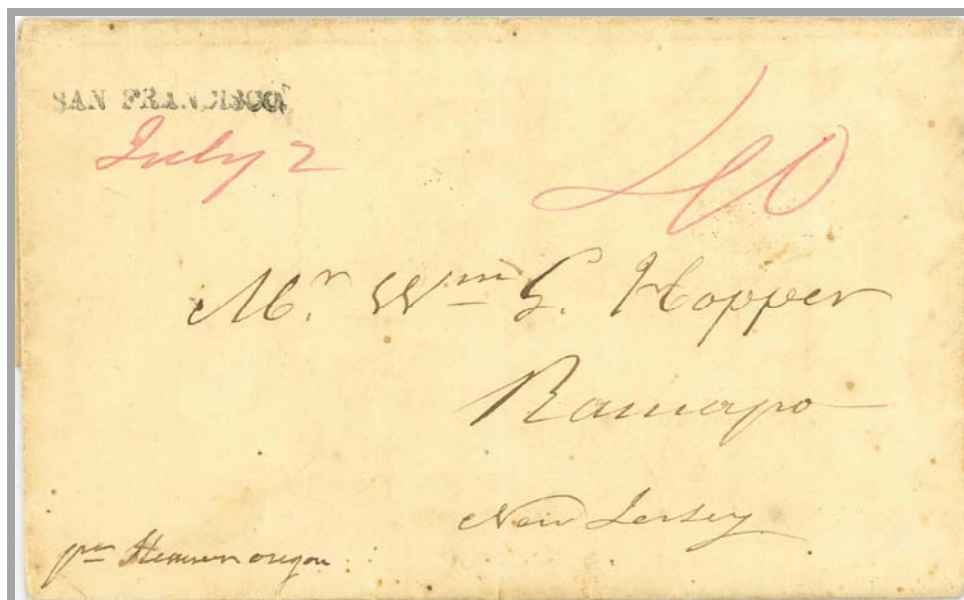
PMSC *California* left May 1 - USMSC *Isthmus* to New York on July 18

Transcontinental Water Routes

Via Panama: March 1849 - June 1851



San Francisco used straight-line postmarks from June to August 1849, when they were replaced by circular datestamps.



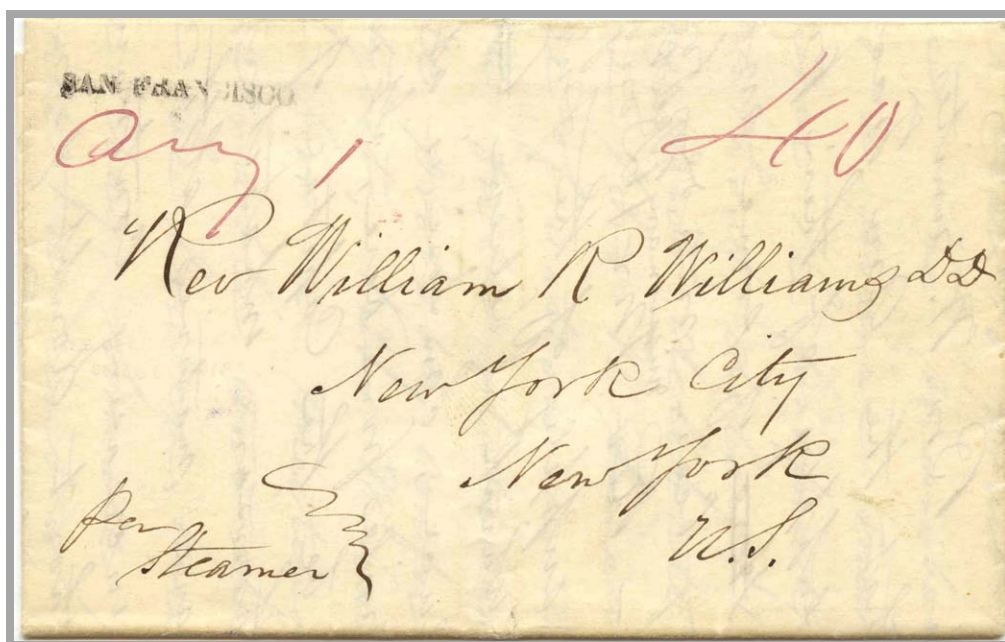
San Francisco July 2, 1849 **straight-line postmark** - sent unpaid with 40¢ due
PMSC *Oregon* left July 2 - USMSC *Falcon* from Chagres to New York August 17



San Francisco June 20, 1849 **straight-line postmark** - double-weight unpaid with 80¢ due
PMSC *Panama* left June 20 - USMSC *Falcon* from Chagres to New York on August 17

Transcontinental Water Routes

Via Panama: March 1849 - June 1851



San Francisco August 1, 1849 **straight-line postmark** - sent unpaid with 40¢ due
PMSC *California* left August 1 - USMSC *Empire City* to New York on September 13



San Francisco August 1, 1849 postmark - sent double-weight unpaid with 80¢ due
Earliest use of circular datestamp - earliest known letter to England from San Francisco
Cunard steamer *Niagara* left New York September 19 for England - 5 shillings 4d due

Straight-line postmark was replaced by circular datestamp in August 1849

Transcontinental Water Routes

Via Panama: March 1849 - June 1851



San Francisco used auxiliary black boxed '40' and '80' rate markings from October 1849 to February 1850. Mail given to route agents on steamships was often rated at the arrival port.



Dated September 15, 1849 in New York - **only known USMSC *Empire City* route agent mark**
USMSC and PMSC steamers to San Francisco on October 31 - San Francisco boxed 40¢ rate mark



Postmarked January 1, 1850 in San Francisco - paid to New York harbor per "PAID" and boxed 40
PMSC, USMSC and Cunard steamers to Europe via Panama and New York - **15 décimes due in France**

Transcontinental Water Routes

Via Panama: March 1849 - June 1851



The United States Mail Steamship Co. (USMSC) serviced the Atlantic Coast contract route between New York and Chagres. It connected to the Pacific Coast contract route by an overland route across Panama.



Posted October 1, 1849 in Philadelphia - **prepaid 40¢ in 1847 Issue 10¢ stamps**

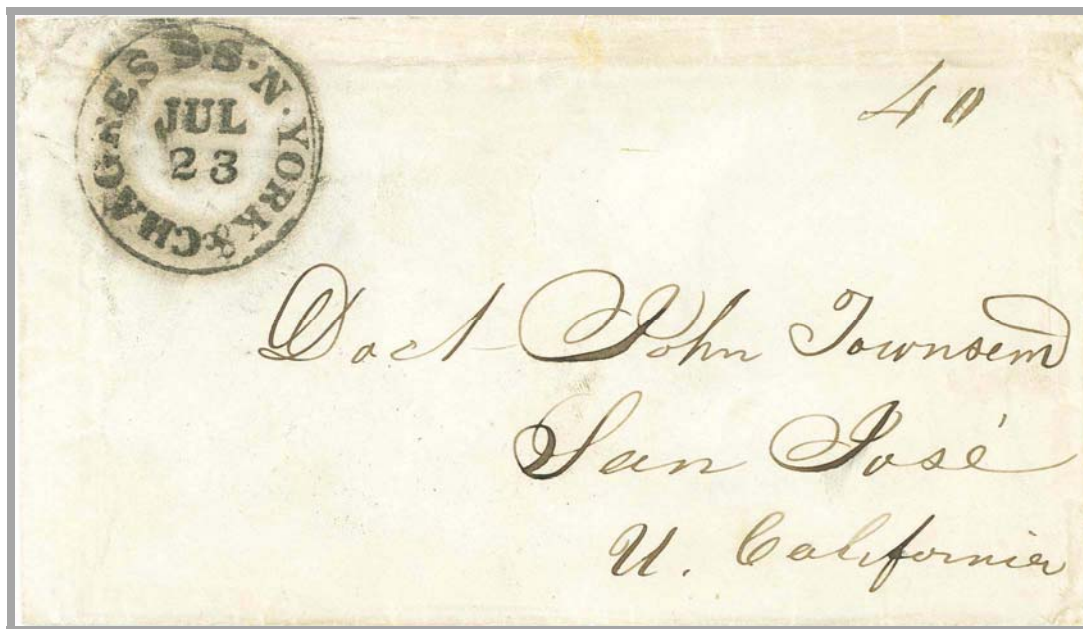
USMSC *Ohio* left New York on October 16 and arrived October 29 in Chagres

PMSC *Oregon* left Panama on November 10 and arrived in SF on December 1

Fewer than ten covers are known with 1847 10¢ stamps paying the 40¢ rate

Transcontinental Water Routes

Via Panama: March 1849 - June 1851



July 23, 1850 route agent postmark "N. York & Chagres S.S." - sent unpaid with 40¢ due USMSC *Georgia* from New York July 13 to Chagres - PMSC *California* to San Francisco

Only known example of the "N. York & Chagres S.S." route agent postmark



Dateline *Sacramento* July 24 1850 - hand-carried to route agent on board PMSC *California*

Left San Francisco on December 15 - "Pan & San Fran S.S." December 23 route agent postmark

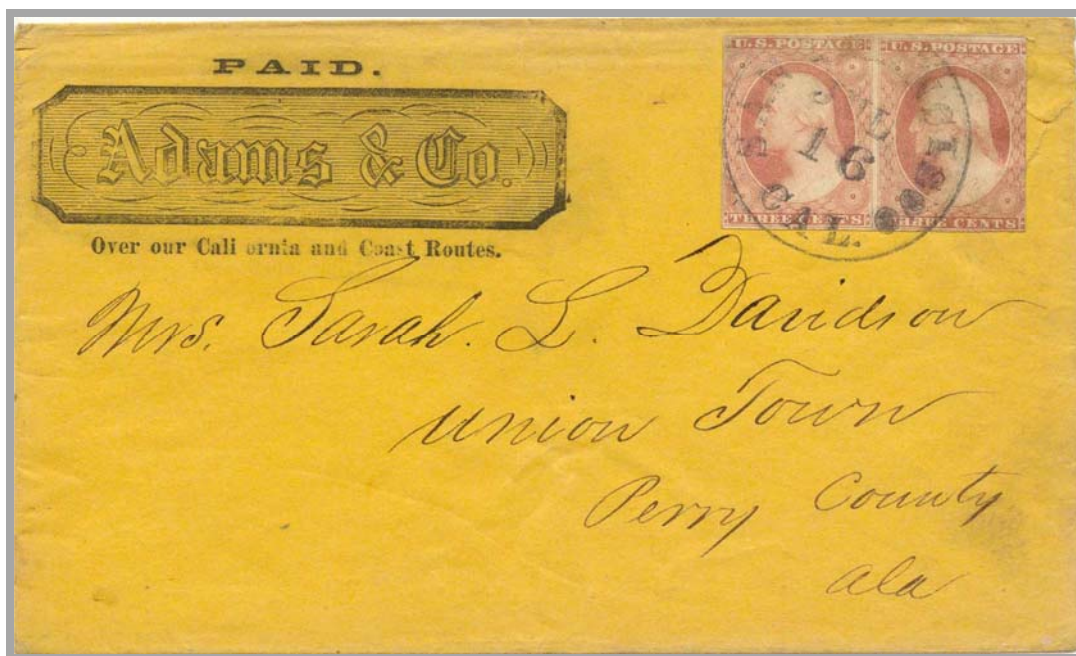
USMSC *Falcon* left Chagres January 12 and arrived January 24 in New York - NY applied 40¢ due

Transcontinental Water Routes

Via Panama: July 1851 - March 1855



The March 3, 1851 US Postal Act reduced the rate for over 3,000 miles to 6¢ per ½ oz. (10¢ if unpaid), effective July 1. The rate for less than 3,000 miles was reduced from 12½¢ to 3¢ on the West Coast.



Carried by Adams & Co. to San Francisco for 12½¢ express fee per “Woodblock” frank
Postmarked July 16, 1853 in San Francisco - franked 6¢ by 1851 Issue 3¢ dull red pair
PMSC *J. L. Stephens* left July 16 for Panama - USMSC *Illinois* to New York on August 10

Fewer than ten Adams Express “Woodblock” frank covers are known

Transcontinental Water Routes

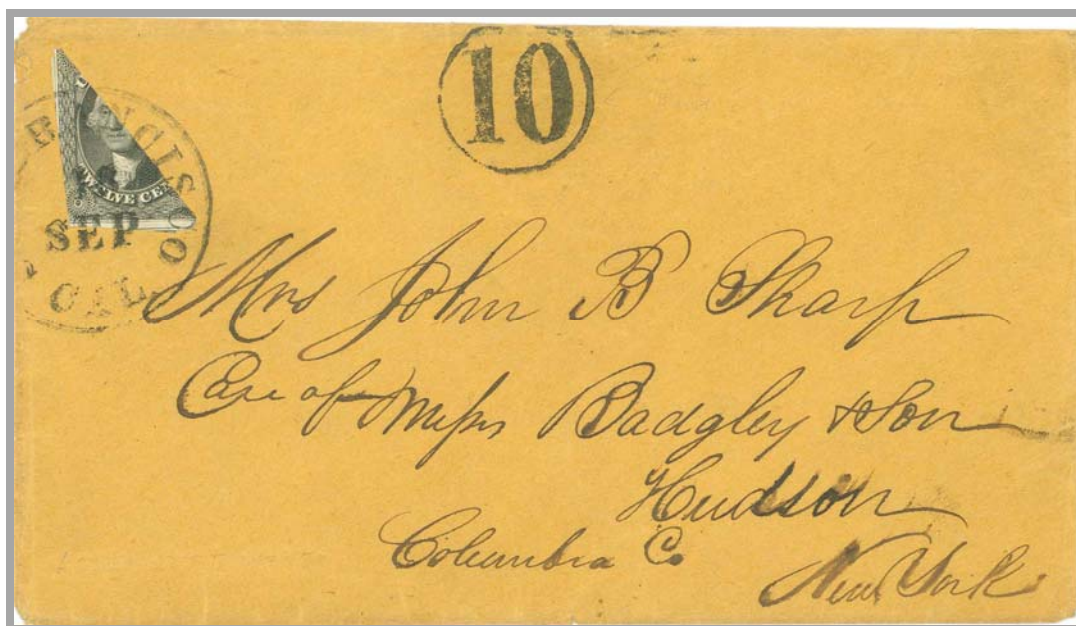
Via Panama: July 1851 - March 1855



A shortage of 3¢ stamps at San Francisco led to the use of bisected 12¢ stamps to pay the 6¢ rate in May-September 1853. In September 1853, bisects were prohibited in the East. This notice reached San Francisco in October.



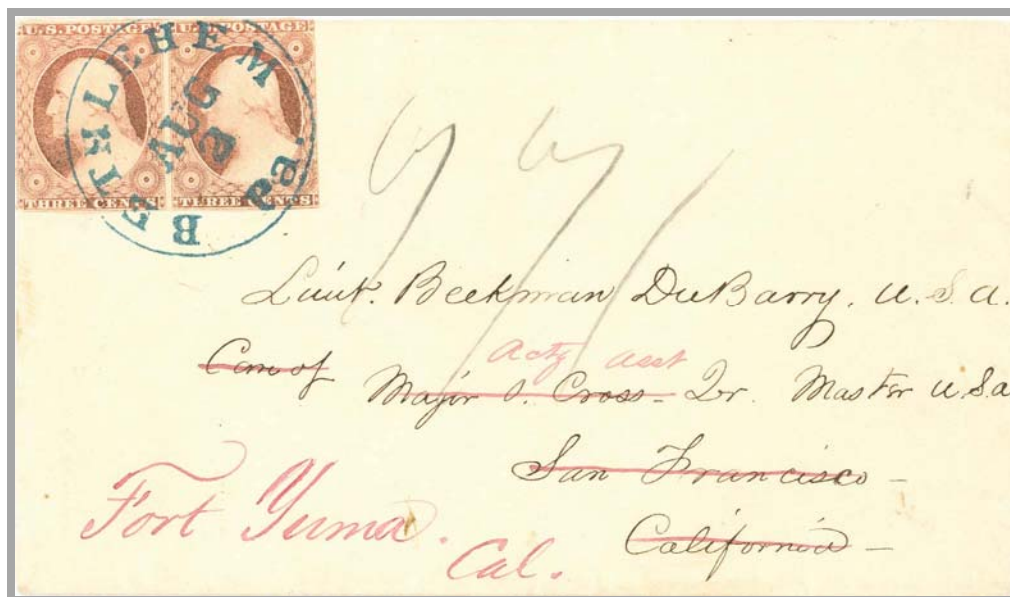
Postmarked August 16, 1853 in San Francisco - 6¢ postage prepaid by 1851 Issue 12¢ bisect
USMSC Illinois to New York on September 10 - **bisect accepted for postage**



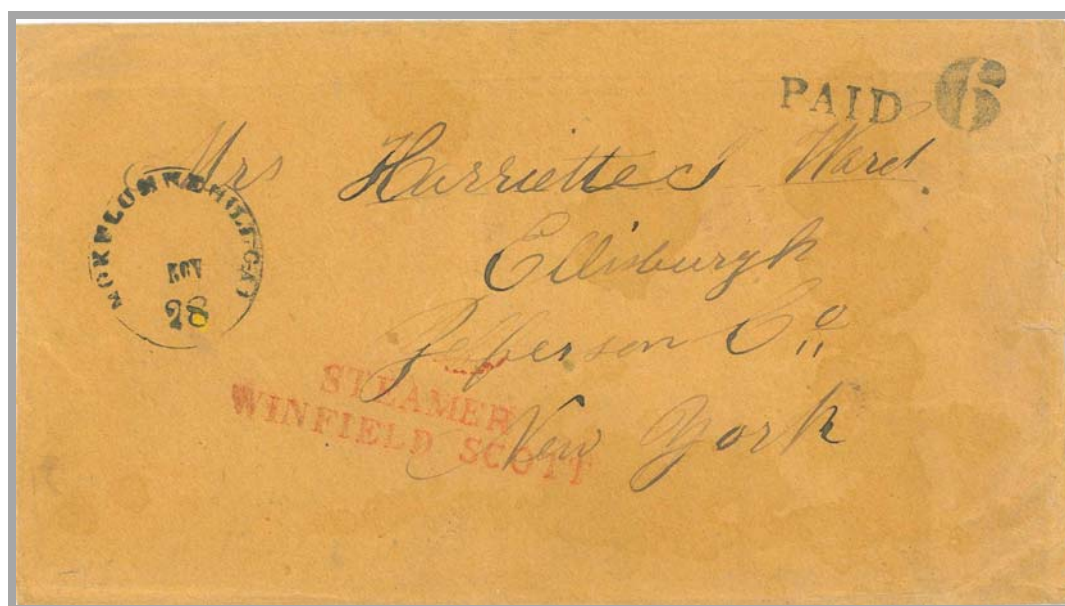
Postmarked September 16, 1853 in San Francisco - 6¢ postage prepaid by 1851 Issue 12¢ bisect
USMSC Illinois to New York on October 10 - **bisect not permitted so New York applied 10¢ due**

Transcontinental Water Routes

Via Panama: July 1851 - March 1855



Posted August 2, 1852 in Bethlehem, PA - 6¢ postage paid by 1851 Issue 3¢ brown carmine pair
USMSC *Ohio* and PMSC *Oregon* via Panama to San Francisco - addressed to military officer
Forwarded to Fort Yuma, California by military steamboat via the Colorado River



Posted November 28, 1853 in Mokolumne Hill, CA - prepaid 6¢ in cash and sent via San Francisco
Red handstamp for the PMSC *Winfield Scott* which left December 1 and sank near Los Angeles
Mail recovered and sent by PMSC *California* and USMSC *Illinois* to New York via Panama

Transcontinental Water Routes

Via Panama: July 1851 - March 1855



The Royal Mail Steam Packet Co. (RMSP) operated between Southampton and Aspinwall via St. Thomas. It connected to the PMSC steamers by an overland route across Panama. All French mail to California used this route until 1854.



Posted October 31, 1853 in Paris - 2 francs 50 centimes paid by **1852 25c and 1853 1franc pairs**
RMSP *La Plata* and PMSC *J.L. Stephens* to San Francisco - 20¢ due for rate from Panama



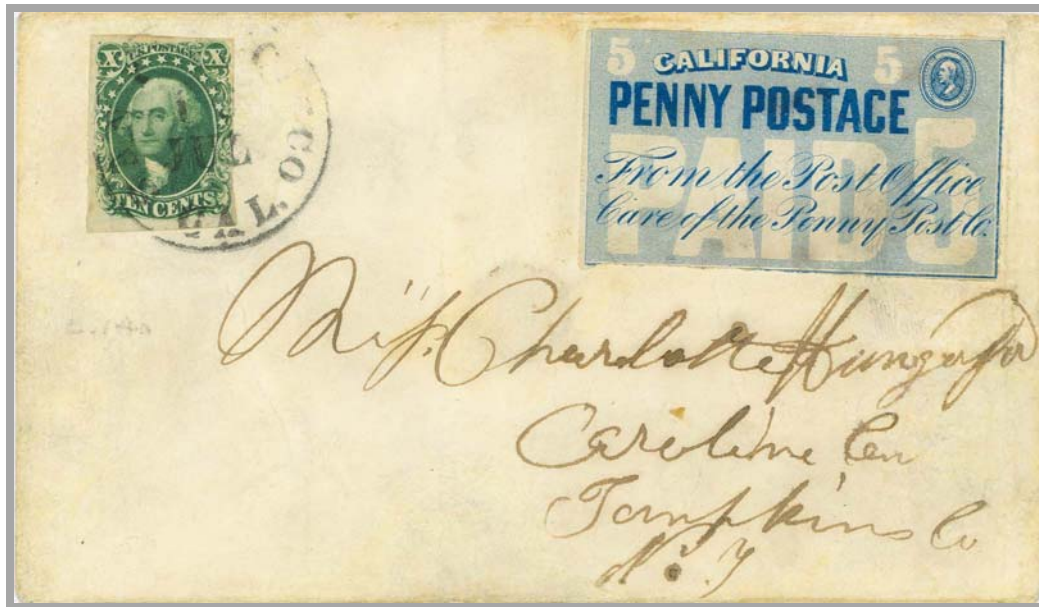
Posted May 15, 1852 in Paris - **franked by 1849 Issue 25 centimes pair and 1 franc pair**
RMSP *Magdalena* and PMSC *Tennessee* to San Francisco - 20¢ due per San Francisco "20"

Transcontinental Water Routes

Via Panama: April 1855 - June 1863



The March 3, 1855 US Postal Act increased the rate for over 3,000 miles to 10¢ per ½ oz., effective April 1. The rate for less than 3,000 miles remained at 3¢ per ½ ounce.



Delivered by California Penny Post to the San Francisco post office for 5¢ express fee
Penny Post 5¢ label was used for service which delivered letters to the next steamship
Postmarked July 16, 1855 in San Francisco - franked by 1855 Issue 10¢ type II stamp
PMSC *J. L. Stephens* left July 16 - USMSC *Empire City* to New York on August 11

Fewer than ten California Penny Post 5¢ labels are known on cover

Transcontinental Water Routes

Via Panama: April 1855 - June 1863



Noisy Carriers applied its scroll marking and delivered letter to San Francisco post office

Postmarked December 5, 1857 in San Francisco - 10¢ postage paid in 1851 Issue stamps

PMSC *Golden Age* and USMSC *Northern Light* via Panama to New York on December 27

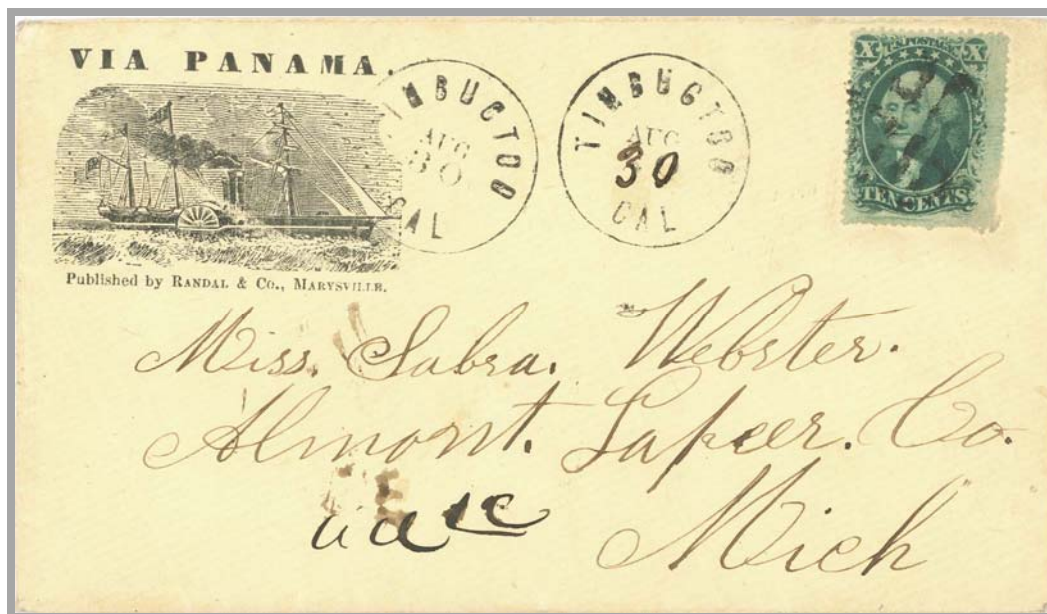


Noisy Carriers applied boxed handstamp and took letter to post office for PMSC *Golden Gate*

Postmarked May 1, 1855 in San Francisco - double-weight 20¢ postage overpaid by 1¢

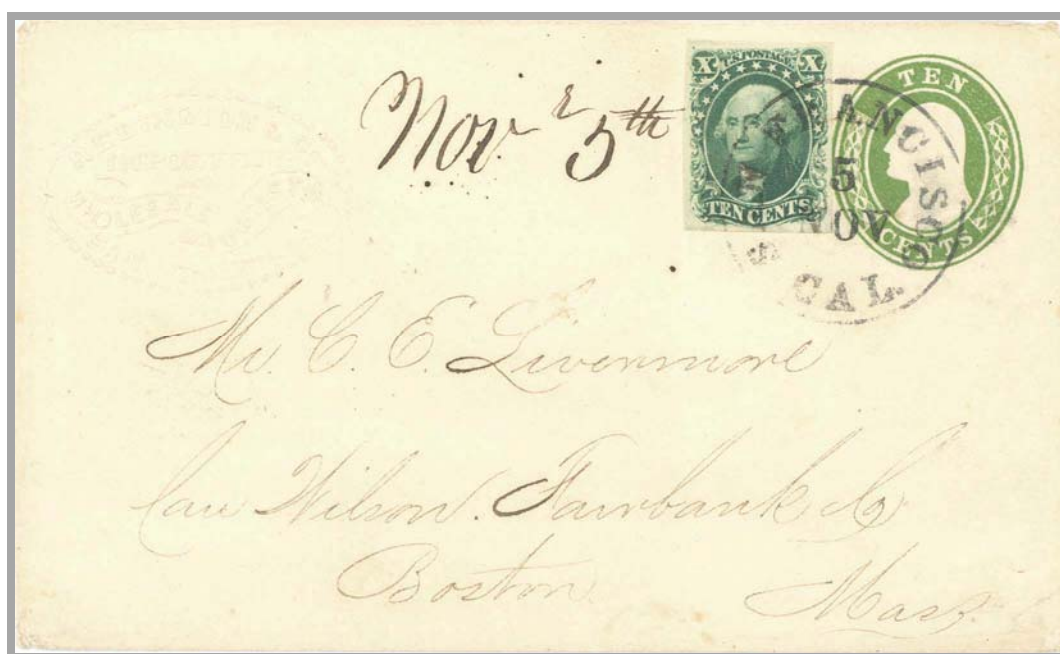
Transcontinental Water Routes

Via Panama: April 1855 - June 1863



Posted August 30, 1860 in Timbuctoo, CA - 1859 10¢ type V paid transcontinental postage

Printed endorsement "via Panama" - PMSC and USMSC steamers to New York



Posted November 5, 1857 in San Francisco - prepaid double-weight 20¢ with 1855 10c type II

PMSC *Golden Gate* to Panama and USMSC *Northern Light* to New York on November 29

Transcontinental Water Routes

Via Panama: April 1855 - June 1863



Posted February 5, 1856 in Three Rivers, Canada - 9d postage paid in 1852 3 pence stamps
9d rate included 5¢ transcontinental surcharge - **only known use of Pence Issue to California**
USMSC *George Law* and PMSC *Golden Age* via Panama to San Francisco on March 14



Posted February 9, 1861 in Naples - prepaid 47 grana French mail rate in 1858 Two Sicilies stamps
French packet *Cephise* to Marseille - Allan liner *Canadian II* to Portland - closed mail to Boston
The 1857 France-US Treaty had eliminated the US transcontinental 5¢ surcharge on French mails

Transcontinental Water Routes

Via Nicaragua: July 1851 - February 1856



On July 14, 1851, the Vanderbilt Independent Line (VIL) began a twice-monthly service between New York and San Francisco via the isthmus of Nicaragua. It had no mail contract, so letters carried by the line were posted in the arrival ports.

The Walker military expedition to Nicaragua closed all traffic across the isthmus in March 1856, and ended this steamship route via Nicaragua.



Dated *San Francisco Oct. 24th 1854* - prepaid 29¢ to England, including 5¢ West Coast surcharge

Marked **“Via Nicaragua in Advance of the Mails Sullivan”** - VIL *Sierra Nevada* left October 24
VIL *Northern Light* to New York on November 14 - New York canceled stamps with “19” credit mark
Cunard steamer *Arabia* from New York to Liverpool, England - arrived November 27 in London

Entire 1851 Issue used to make up 29¢ rate to England

Transcontinental Water Routes

Via Nicaragua: July 1851 - February 1856



“Via Nicaragua Ahead of the Mails” markings were used to advertise that the VIL mail service was faster than via Panama.



Entrusted March 1854 to **Adams & Co.** in New York - prepaid 6¢ by 1851 3¢ dull red pair
New York “In Advance of the Mails” marking - VIL steamers *Star of the West* and *Cortes*



Originated July 1854 in San Francisco - overpaid **26¢ rate to France by 1851 3¢ and 12¢ pair**
“Steamer Sierra Nevada” marking - VIL steamers *Sierra Nevada* and *Star of the West* to NY August 7
Ocean liner *Hermann* left August 12 and arrived in England on August 26 - 8 décimes due in France

Transcontinental Water Routes

Via Nicaragua: July 1851 - February 1856



For a small fee, private letter bag operators assured delivery of letters to the next steamship departure. Only a few of their “via Nicaragua” markings are known.



Originated August 1853 in San Francisco - prepaid 6¢ by 1851 3¢ dull red pair
“Leland” letter bag marking - VIL steamers *Brother Jonathan* and *Star of the West* to NY



Departed June 16, 1854 from San Francisco - prepaid 6¢ postage by 1853 Nesbitt entire
“Sullivan” letter bag marking - VIL steamers *Cortes* and *Star of the West* to New York

Transcontinental Water Routes

Via Tehuantepec: October 1858 - September 1859



The Louisiana Tehuantepec Company (LTC) obtained a twice-monthly mail contract between New Orleans and Acapulco via the Mexican isthmus between Minatitlan and Tehuantepec. PMSC steamers carried the mail between Acapulco and San Francisco.



Posted quadruple-weight on March 11, 1859 in New Orleans - four 1857 10¢ type III stamps
LTC *Quaker City* left March 12 and arrived March 15 in Minatitlan - overland to Tehuantepec
Steamer *Oregon* to Acapulco on March 21 - PMSC *Golden Age* to San Francisco on March 29
Only 35,000 letters were carried by this line during its 12-month existence

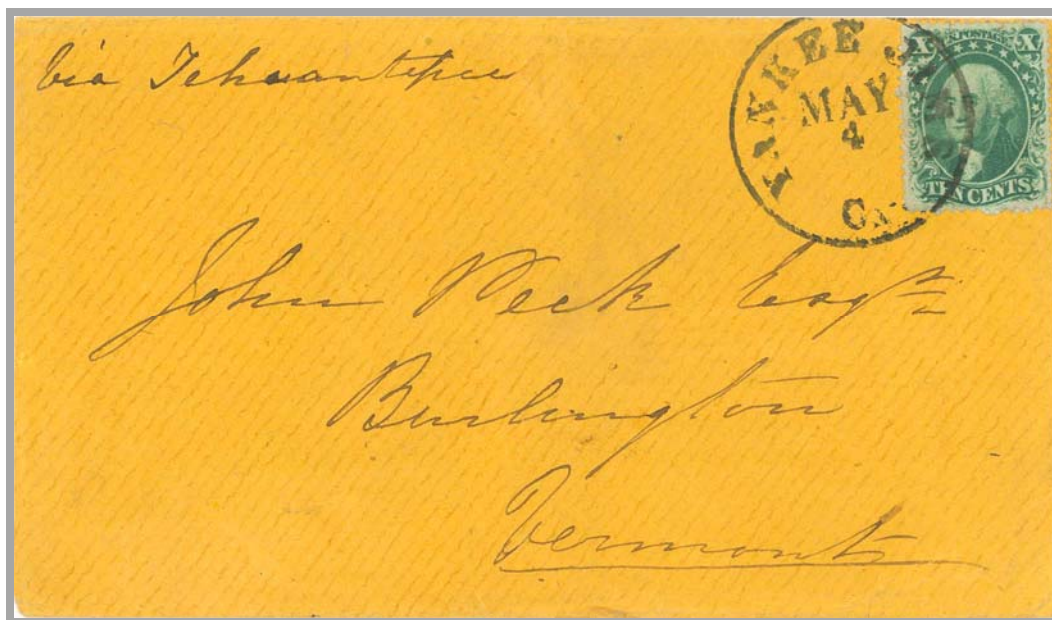
Fewer than ten westbound Tehuantepec covers are known

Transcontinental Water Routes

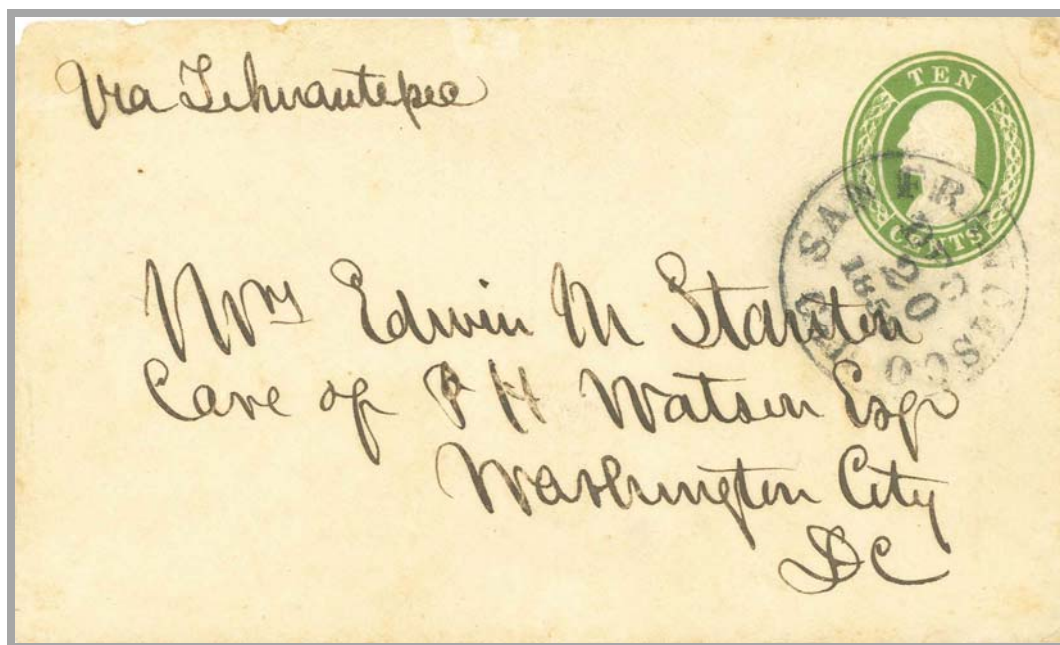
Via Tehuantepec: October 1858 - September 1859



Only letters endorsed "Via Tehuantepec" were carried on this route. The mail contract for this route was not renewed after the first year of operation.



Posted May 4, 1859 in Yankee Jims, California - 10¢ postage paid by 1857 10¢ type II PMSC *Golden Gate* to Acapulco May 13 - LTC steamer *Coatzacoalcas* to New Orleans May 20



Postmarked December 20, 1858 in San Francisco - 10¢ postage paid by 1855 10¢ Nesbitt entire PMSC *J.L. Stephens* to Acapulco December 28 - LTC steamer *Quaker City* to New Orleans January 8

Transcontinental Water Routes

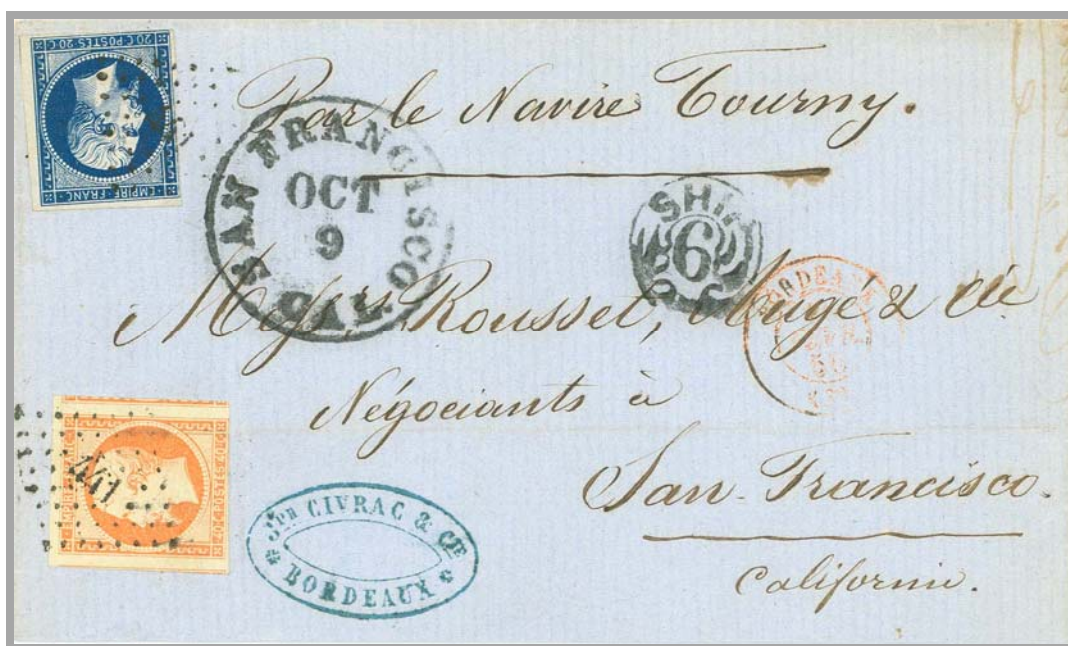
Around Cape Horn: March 1849 - June 1869



The only transcontinental route entirely by water was the five month trip around Cape Horn at the southern tip of South America.



Posted March 23, 1860 in Bordeaux, France - in-port private ship postage paid by 1853 10c and 20c
Private ship *Mozart* took 5½ month trip around Cape Horn to San Francisco - clamshell “Ship 6” due



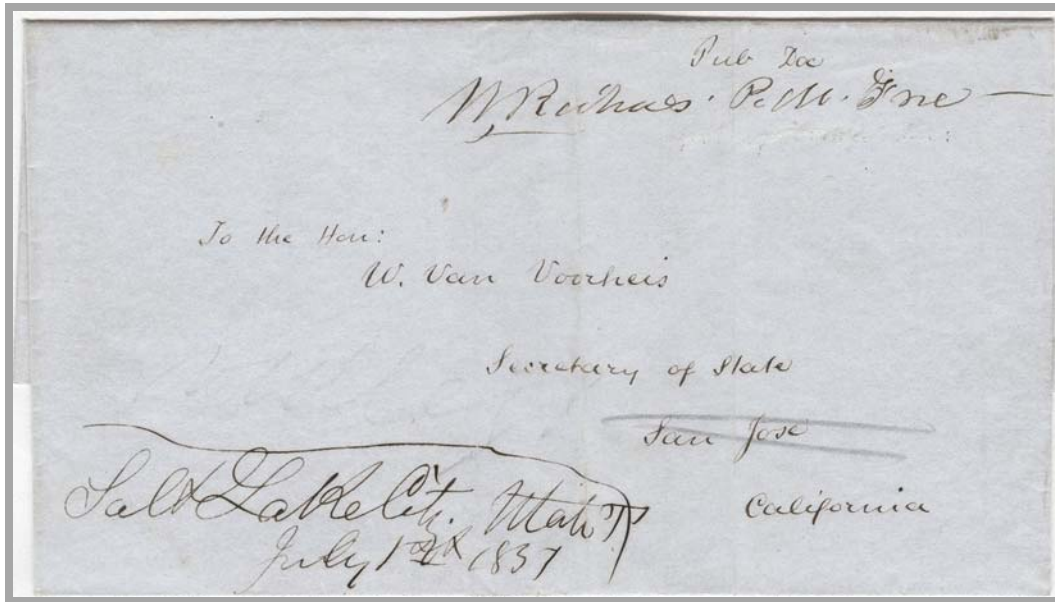
Posted February 16, 1856 in Bordeaux - non-port private ship postage paid by 1853 20c and 40c
Private ship *Tourmy* from Le Havre around Cape Horn to San Francisco - clamshell “Ship 6” due

Transcontinental Overland Routes

Chorpenning: May 1851 - May 1860



George Chorpenning operated the first contract mail service between Salt Lake City and California. The first eastbound trip left Sacramento on May 1, 1851, and the first westbound trip left Salt Lake City on July 1, 1851.



Manuscript July 1, 1851 Salt Lake City, Utah Territory postmark - postmaster's free frank
First westbound Chorpenning mail - left Salt Lake City July 1 - August 4 arrival docket



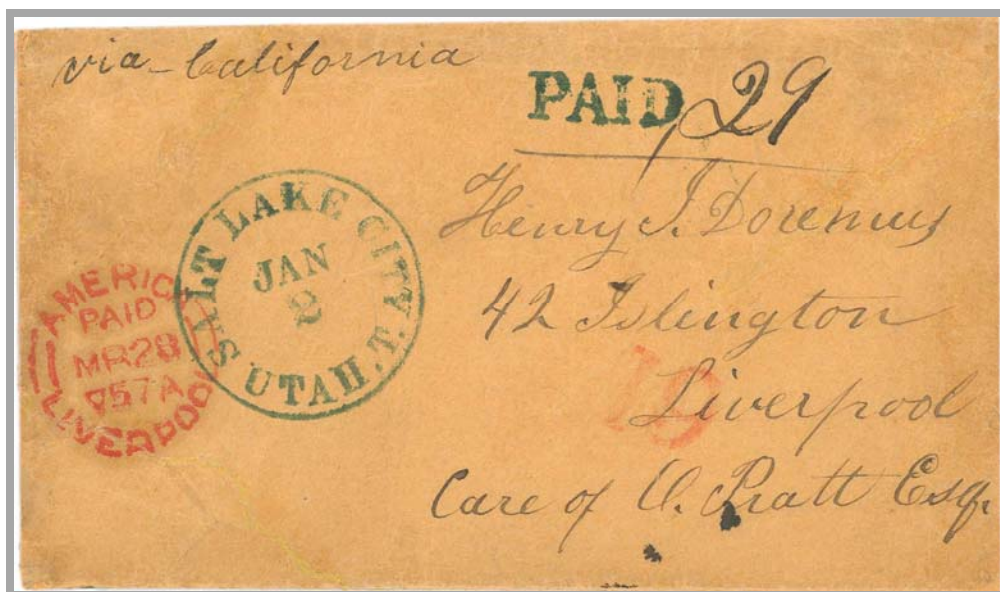
Posted March 25, 1854 in Morpeth, England - prepaid 2 shillings 4d rate to the West Coast via St Thomas
Marked MISSENT and PAID in SF - June 1 Chorpenning mail to Salt Lake City and Fort Laramie
Soldier addressee had died, so letter **“Sent back to England without a reason for non-delivery”**

Transcontinental Overland Routes

Chorpenning: May 1851 - May 1860



In July 1854, Chorpenning renewed his monthly mail contract between California and Utah, but moved to a Salt Lake City-San Diego route. This "Old Spanish Trail" route connected with San Francisco by steamship.



Postmarked in Salt Lake City, Utah Territory on January 2, 1857 - endorsed "via California"
Prepaid 29¢ rate to England - Chorpenning left January 2 - then sent via Panama and New York



Postmarked in Salt Lake City, Utah Territory on January 5, 1855 - endorsed "via California"
Erroneous 9¢ US postage prepaid - 3¢ to California plus 6¢ transcontinental to New Jersey
PMSC *Golden Age* to Panama and USMSC *Illinois* to New York on March 12

Transcontinental Overland Routes

Chorpenning: May 1851 - May 1860



Postmarked on November 3, 1855 departure of the *Yankee* from Honolulu, Hawaii
Hawaiian postage paid by 1853 Issue 5¢ stamp - 3¢ US postage plus 2¢ ship fee due
Chorpenning mail arrived in Salt Lake City on December 30



Postmarked in Salt Lake City, Utah Territory on February 1, 1856 - overpaid 6¢ US postage
Chorpenning arrived in San Diego on February 27 - carried by *Resolute* from SF to Honolulu

Transcontinental Overland Routes

Chorpenning: May 1851 - May 1860



In July 1858, Chorpenning renewed his contract for mail between California and Utah, but returned to the Salt Lake City-Placerville route across the Sierra Nevada Mountains. He lost his contract on May 10, 1860.



Posted February 7, 1859 at Camp Floyd, Utah Territory - held for postage until April 18
April 18 postmark is earliest known Camp Floyd handstamp - 20¢ postage to Panama
Directed "Via California" instead of via New York - PMSC steamer from SF to Panama

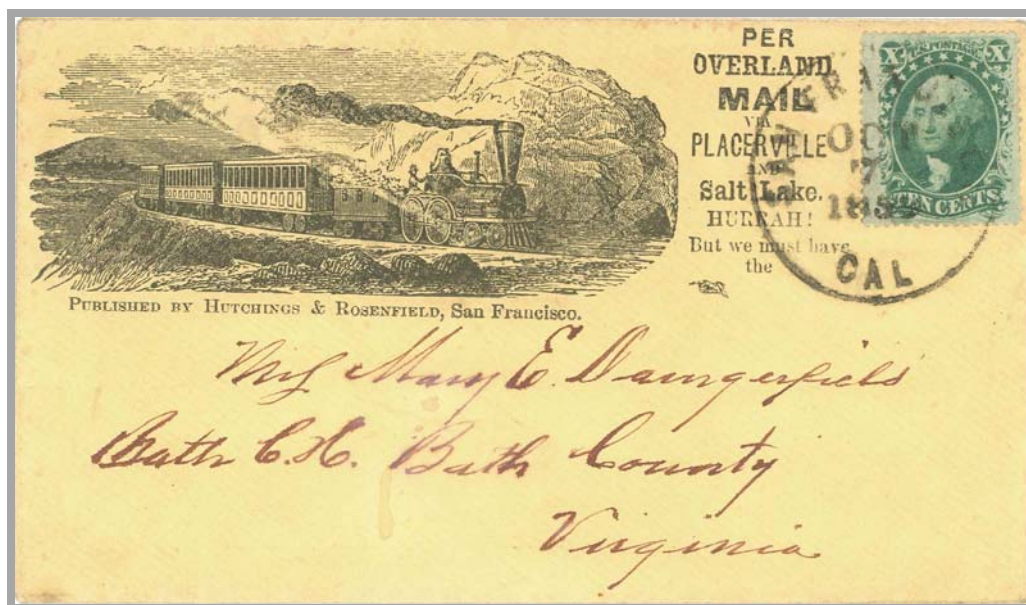
Weekly service between Placerville and Salt Lake City in 16 days

Transcontinental Overland Routes

Chorpenning: May 1851 - May 1860



By 1859, illustrated envelopes with directions to go overland via Placerville and/or Salt Lake were being used. Fewer than fifteen of these envelopes carried by Chorpenning are known.



Postmarked in San Francisco on October 7, 1859 - prepaid with 1859 10¢ stamp
Illustration is propaganda for the desired overland railroad completed in 1869



Posted in Oroville, California on December 21, 1859 - prepaid with 1859 10¢ stamp
Chorpenning connected at Salt Lake City with COCPP mail route to Missouri

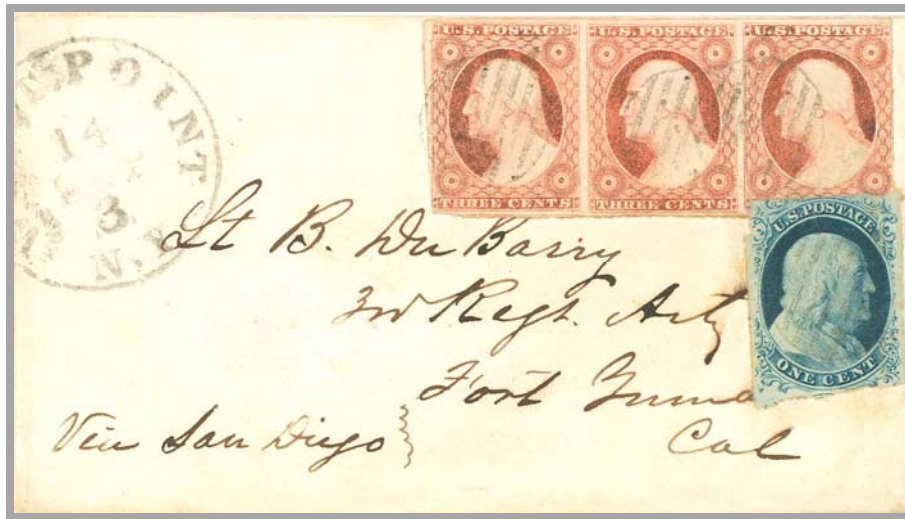
Transcontinental Overland Routes

“Jackass”: July 1857 - March 1860



On August 18, 1856, Congress authorized the first transcontinental overland mail route between San Antonio, Texas and San Diego, California via El Paso and Fort Yuma. Steamships connected San Diego with San Francisco.

John Birch won the twice-monthly overland mail contract; first departures were in July-August 1857. The route was largely obsoleted by the Butterfield route after the San Diego-Fort Yuma leg was dropped, effective April 1, 1860.



Posted September 14, 1857 at West Point, NY - franked 10¢ in 1851 Issue stamps
USMSC *Northern Light* and PMSC *California* from NY to San Francisco via Panama
California Steam Navigation Company steamship from San Francisco to San Diego
Finally carried over “Jackass” route from San Diego to Fort Yuma

Only ten covers carried on the “Jackass” Route are known

Transcontinental Overland Routes

Butterfield: September 1858 - March 1861



On March 3, 1857, Congress authorized a twice-weekly transcontinental overland mail between St. Louis and San Francisco via Texas and Los Angeles. On December 17, 1859 this route replaced the via Panama route as the default for transcontinental mails.

John Butterfield's Overland Mail Co. won the contract, and the first departures were on September 16, 1858. Civil War disruptions in Texas and Arkansas ended operations on the route in March 1861.



Postmarked on June 27, 1859 in San Francisco - franked 10¢ in 1857 Issue stamps
Butterfield stagecoach left San Francisco on June 27 - arrived in St. Louis on July 20
Illustrated stagecoach envelope was used to direct the letter overland via Los Angeles

23 day trip competed favorably with the transit time via Panama

Transcontinental Overland Routes

Butterfield: September 1858 - March 1861



“Via Los Angeles” endorsements were not necessary for the Butterfield service after December 17, 1859. Endorsements on foreign mail are rare.



Posted March 31, 1860 in Bordeaux, France - triple-weight postage paid by 1859 80c rose stamps
Havre Line steamer *Arago* - 27¢ credit to US - **“Via Los Angeles” endorsement from France**



Originated from HMS *Ganges* off San Juan Island, Washington Territory - 1859 10¢ type V
Posted September 27, 1860 in San Francisco - stagecoach arrived in St. Louis on October 20

Transcontinental Overland Routes

Butterfield: September 1858 - March 1861



In October 1859, San Francisco introduced a straight-line "OVERLAND" routing handstamp, primarily for use on transit mail. This "dropped R" type was used until April 1860.



Originated December 1859 in Victoria, V.I. - 5d colonial postage paid per oval frank
15¢ US postage to Canada unpaid - postmarked in San Francisco on December 30



Posted in California mining town in December 1859 - **15¢ postage to France** paid in cash
Routed to December 9 Butterfield stagecoach - left NY January 8 on Havre Line steamer *Arago*

Transcontinental Overland Routes

Butterfield: September 1858 - March 1861



Sacramento and Nevada City also used "OVERLAND" handstamps. San Francisco used a second "dropped L" type in September-October 1860.



Posted October 10, 1859 in Sacramento - transcontinental postage paid by 1857 10¢ type III
Straight-line "OVERLAND" Sacramento routing handstamp - **fewer than ten examples known**



Cover front posted September 1860 in Victoria, V.I. - 5d colonial and 15¢ US postage paid at Victoria
September 27 San Francisco postmark - **fewer than ten type 2 "OVERLAND" handstamps known**

Transcontinental Overland Routes

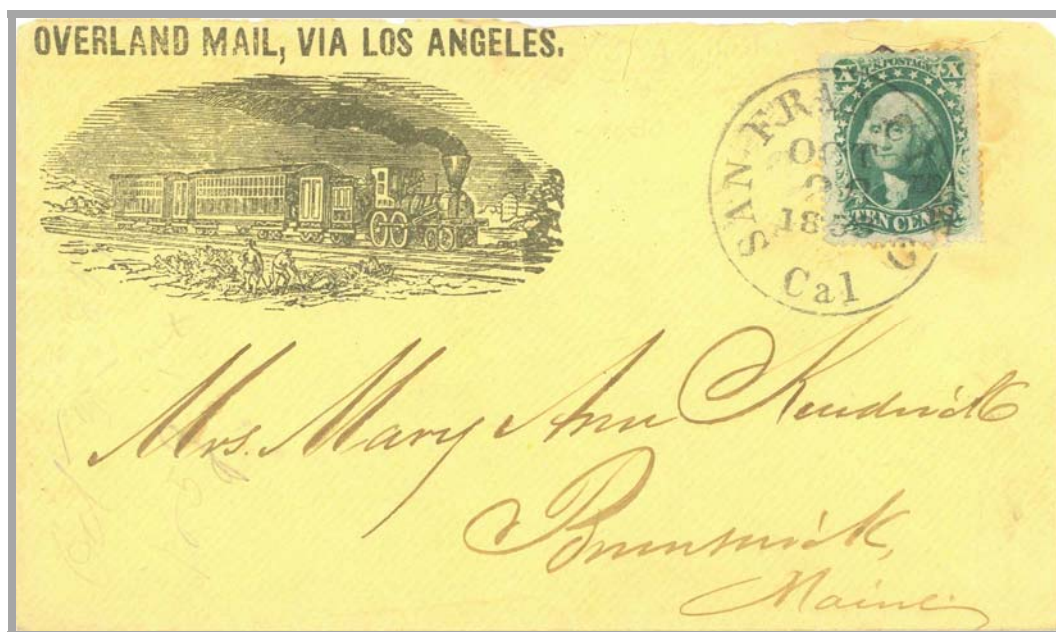
Butterfield: September 1858 - March 1861



Illustrated envelopes were used to direct mail overland via Los Angeles. Railroad designs were used as propaganda to promote the transcontinental railroad – which was not completed until 1869.



Posted September 23, 1859 in San Francisco - franked by 1859 10¢ type V



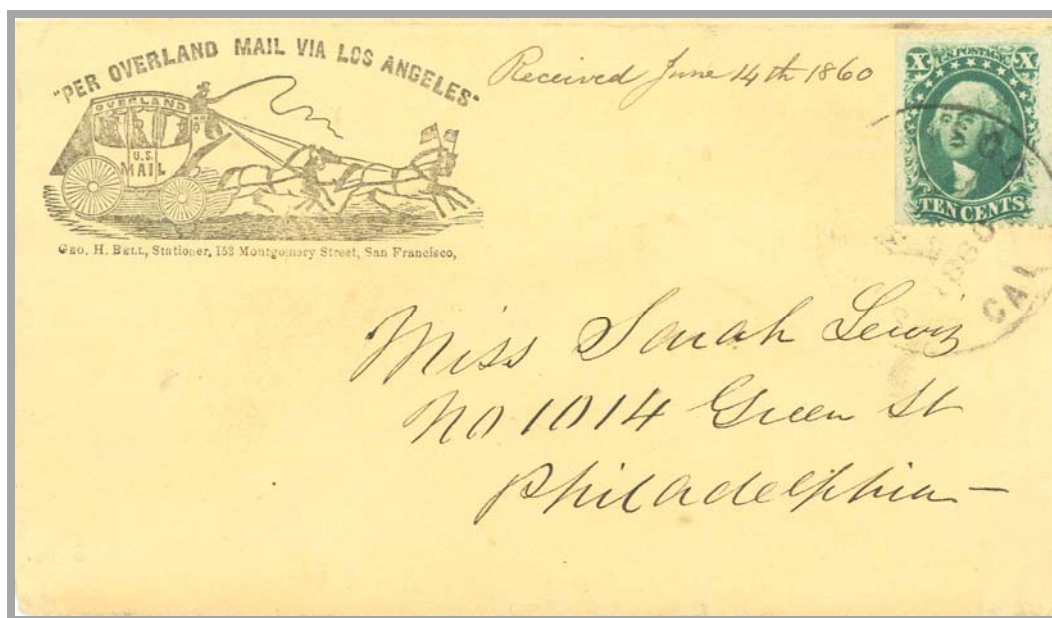
Posted October 28, 1859 in San Francisco - franked by 1859 10¢ type V

Transcontinental Overland Routes

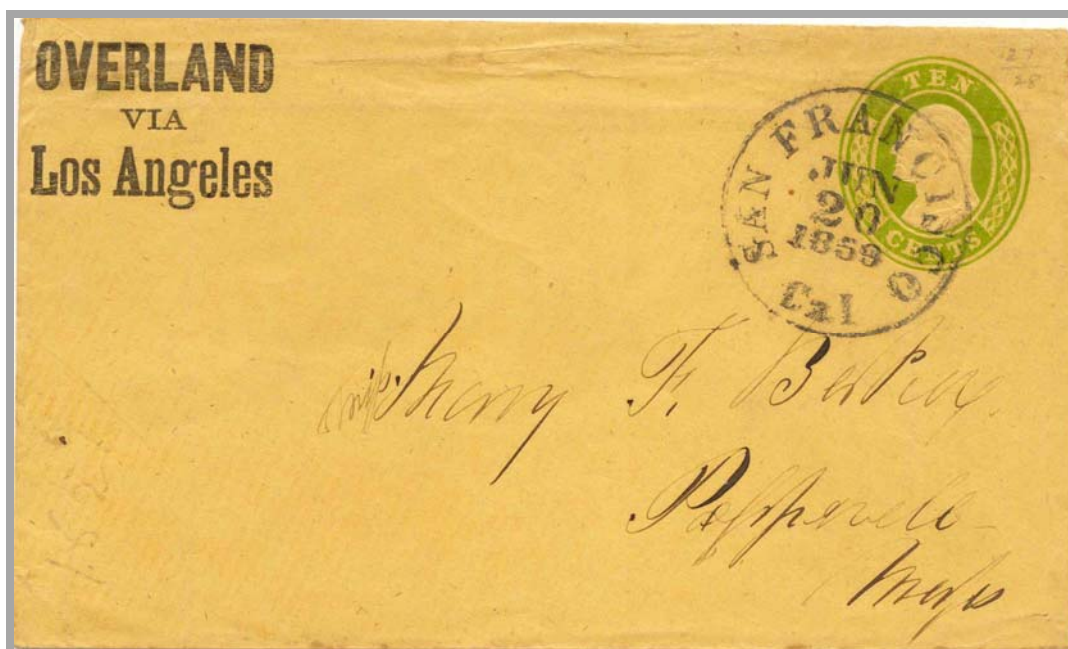
Butterfield: September 1858 - March 1861



In early 1861, Confederate raids along the southern portion of the Butterfield route disrupted operations. On March 12, the route was discontinued in favor of the central overland route.



Posted May 17, 1860 in San Francisco - stagecoach left May 18 - franked by 1859 10¢ type V
Illustrated stagecoach envelope for Butterfield route - stagecoach arrived in St. Louis on June 11



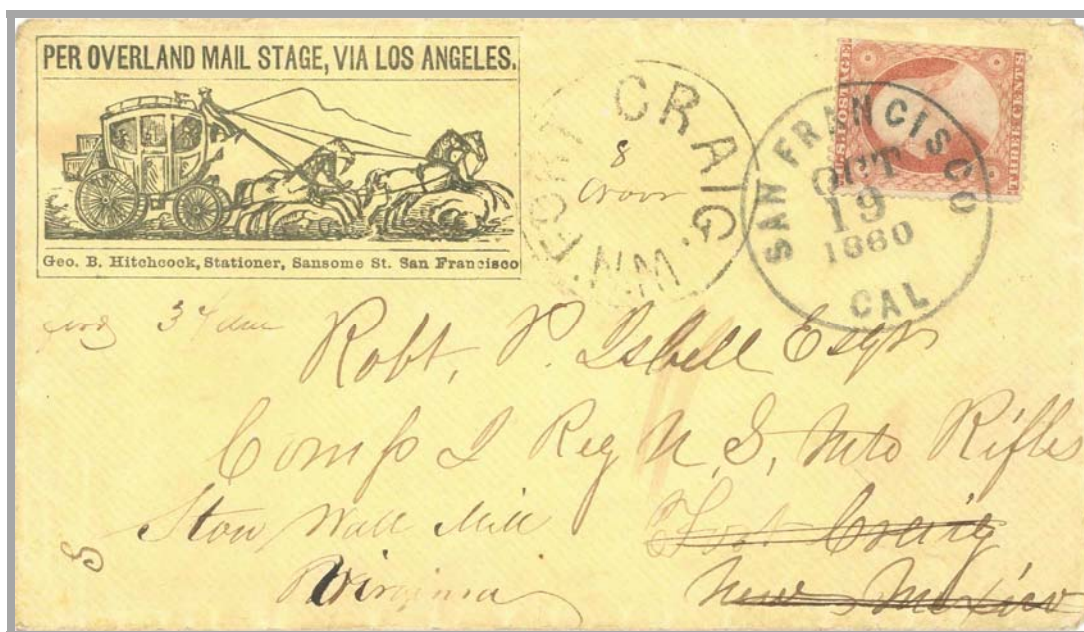
Posted June 20, 1859 in San Francisco - franked by 1855 10¢ entire - "OVERLAND" envelope

Transcontinental Overland Routes

Butterfield: September 1858 - March 1861



The April 1, 1855 rate of 3¢ per ½ ounce for less than 3,000 miles extended to St Louis from San Francisco along the Butterfield route. The rate for distances beyond that was 10¢ per ½ oz.



Postmarked on October 19, 1860 in San Francisco - franked by 1857 Issue 3¢ stamp
Butterfield stagecoach left on October 19 - **arrived in New Mexico around October 27**
Forwarded with 3¢ due from Fort Craig to Virginia - total is 4¢ less than 10¢ through rate

Earliest of the four known Fort Craig, New Mexico postmarks

Transcontinental Overland Routes

Stockton-Kansas City: October 1858 - June 1859



On March 3, 1855, Congress approved a monthly overland mail between Stockton, California and Kansas City, Missouri via Santa Fe in 60 days.

Service began on October 1, 1858, but only six through trips were successful. The contract was discontinued effective July 1, 1859.



Posted on January 31, 1859 in Dutch Flat, Cal. - Prepaid 10¢ to Wisconsin
Endorsed to go overland via Stockton for the February 1 trip to Kansas City

Only known cover carried on this route

Transcontinental Overland Routes

COCPP: June 1860 - June 1861



On June 1, 1860, the Central Overland California & Pikes Peak Express Company was granted the annulled Chorpensing contract between Placerville and Salt Lake City.

COCPP combined this with their existing Salt Lake City-Missouri contract, making this the first unified service by a single contractor over the Central Overland Route. It was superseded by the Overland Mail Company contract on this route, effective July 1, 1861.



Posted on February 3, 1861 in Georgetown, Cal. - prepaid double-weight 20¢ trans-Rockies rate

Endorsed to go overland via the Central Route to Denver City, Kansas Territory

Picked up in Denver on March 25 by Hinckley's Express for delivery to the gold region

Fewer than five letters known carried on this route

Transcontinental Overland Routes

Overland Mail Co.: July 1861 - May 1869



The Overland Mail Company (OMC) operated a daily mail contract over the Central Overland Route, starting July 1, 1861. It was superseded by the completion of the transcontinental railroad on May 10, 1869.



Dateline *London 19 Octr 1861* and posted on November 3, 1861 in New York by forwarder Franked 11¢ for overland postage plus 1¢ carrier fee by 1861 Issue 1¢ and **10¢ type I First Design** **Endorsed to Pony Express which ended in October, so re-endorsed “Overland via St Joseph”**

Arrived in San Francisco on December 5 per docket - slow 28 days transit time

Scheduled 20-day trip, or 23 days during four winter months

Transcontinental Overland Routes

Overland Mail Co.: July 1861 - May 1869



Illustrated envelopes were also used on the Central Route, and sometimes consisted of modified “Via Los Angeles” envelopes.



Posted on July 18, 1861 in Georgetown, California - franked by 1859 10¢ type V
Design modified for Central Route by removing “Via Los Angeles” from stage coach door



Posted December 16, 1861 in San Francisco - franked by 1859 10¢ type V
Old Butterfield illustrated envelope modified by scratching out “via Los Angeles”

Transcontinental Overland Routes

Overland Mail Co.: July 1861 - May 1869



Posted August 4, 1863 in Paris, France - franked by 1862 80c - Inman steamer *City of Washington*
Overland to Utah on September 3 - **forwarded overland to San Francisco with US 1861 3¢ stamp**



Carried by **Rockfellow's Express in July 1863 from Boise mines** to Wells Fargo at Walla Walla, WA
Expedited overland by Wells Fargo via San Francisco to New York - posted unpaid on September 1
Cunard steamer *Asia* from New York on September 1 - 3¢ debit to France - 8 décimes due

Transcontinental Overland Routes

Overland Mail Co.: July 1861 - May 1869



Posted January 31, 1866 in Nice, France - franked by 1862 Issue 40 centimes pair
MISSSENT TO SAN FRANCISCO on March 26 - returned to Massachusetts via New York



Posted May 1, 1866 in Mexico City - franked by 1866 Issue half reale and 2 reale stamps
10¢ non-contract steamship rate charged on May 18 in New York - routed overland from there

Transcontinental Overland Routes

Overland Mail Co.: July 1861 - May 1869



Posted June 12, 1863 in Prince Edward Island - franked by 1861 Issue 3d and 6d stamps
Fewer than five 9 pence frankings to California are known - rate included 5¢ surcharge



Civil War blockade runner *Kate* from Savannah on July 22, 1862 to Nassau, Bahamas
Saunders & Son added Bahamas 1861 4d stamp and San Francisco address - posted July 26
Cunard steamer *British Queen* to New York on August 2 - 5¢ due (3¢ US postage plus 2¢ ship)

Transcontinental Overland Routes

Overland Mail Co.: July 1861 - May 1869



The first Overland Mail Company trips left Placerville, California and Atchison, Kansas on July 1, 1861.



Posted prepaid in Buenos Ayres on April 27, 1861 - via Spain to London on June 14

Carried by Cunard steamer *Europa* - left Liverpool June 15 and arrived Boston June 26

First westbound OMC stagecoach from Atchison on July 1 - postmarked July 23 in San Francisco



Postmarked on June 29, 1861 in San Francisco - 30¢ double-weight postage to France unpaid

First eastbound OMC stagecoach from Placerville on July 1 - arrived in Atchison on July 20

Transcontinental Overland Routes

Overland Mail Co.: July 1861 - May 1869



The railheads of the transcontinental railroad met at Promontory Point, UT on May 10, 1869. Prior to that, OMC carried the mail between the railheads, and transit times gradually shortened.



Posted unpaid on May 6, 1869 in San Francisco - railhead gap was 9 miles - **nine days to New York**



Posted double-weight on April 27, 1869 in San Francisco - 1867 24¢ "F" grill and 1869 6¢
Railhead gap was 23 miles - 11 days to New York - **earliest use of 1869 Issue from California**

Transcontinental Overland Routes

Pony Express: April 1860 - August 1860



The Central Overland California & Pikes Peak Express Co. (COCPP) operated a transcontinental Pony Express between St Joseph, Missouri and San Francisco. Transit times ranged between 10 and 13 days, unless disrupted by Indian attacks.

The COCPP began operations on April 3, 1860 with simultaneous departures from San Francisco and St. Joseph. Initial express fees were \$5 per ½ ounce.



First trip departed from San Francisco on April 3, 1860 - arrived in St Joseph on April 13
\$5 per ½ oz. Pony Express fee paid per black April 3 San Francisco Running Pony marking
10¢ US postage paid - post office carried the letter from St Joseph to New York on April 17

One of two known covers carried on the first eastbound trip

Transcontinental Overland Routes

Pony Express: April 1860 - August 1860



The first westbound Pony Express trip left St Joseph on April 3, 1860 and arrived in San Francisco on April 14. Letters were sent under cover from the East to St Joseph and never directly entered the US mails.



Sent under cover from the East to St Joseph - pencil "Paid 5.00" express fee paid
First Pony Express left St Joseph on April 3, 1860 per black St Joseph COCPP mark
10¢ US transcontinental postage paid even though the post office did not handle this letter

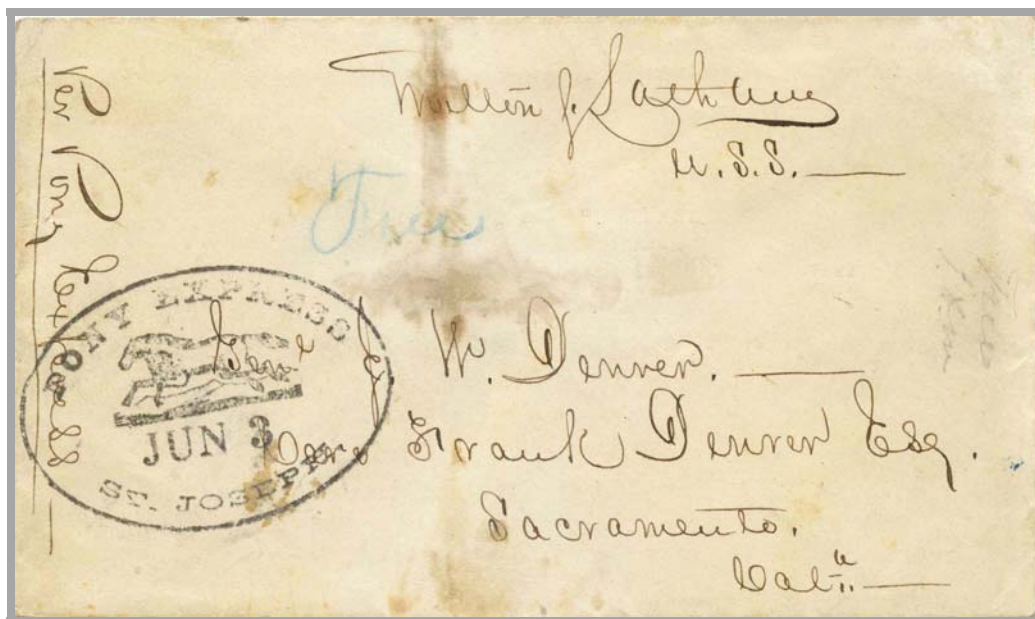
Only known cover carried on the first westbound trip

Transcontinental Overland Routes

Pony Express: April 1860 - August 1860



The St Joseph Running Pony marking was mainly used on westbound mail to indicate the date of departure from St Joseph.



Pony Express and US postage free frank for California Senator Latham in Washington, DC
June 3, 1860 St Joseph departure arrived in San Francisco on June 25 - waited for military escort



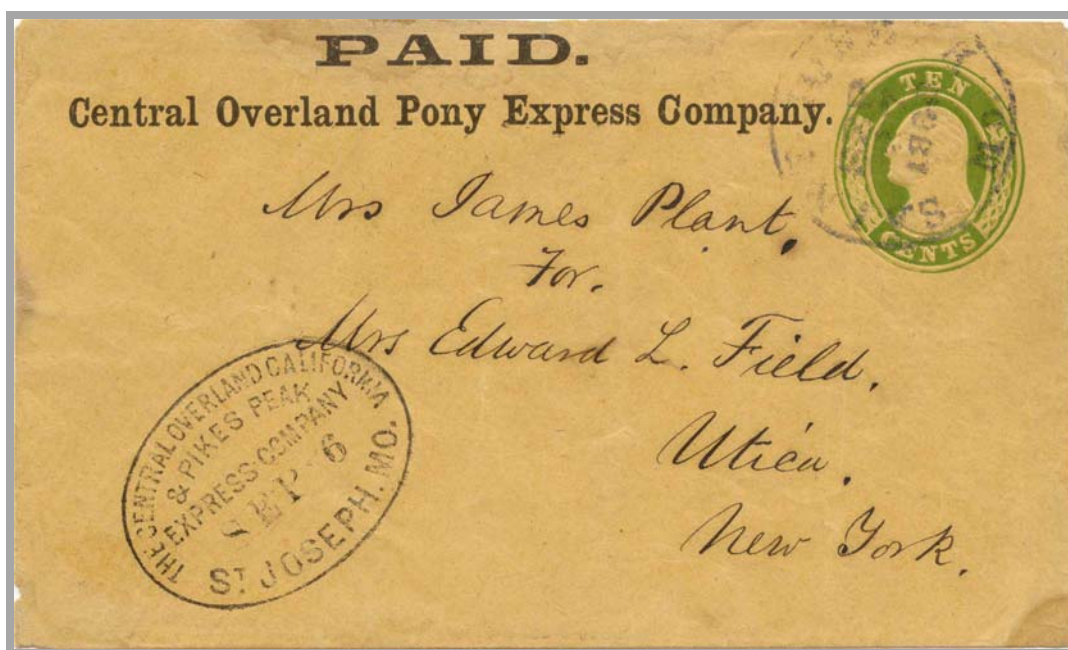
Red New York "California Pony Express Paid" marking - faint "5.00" express fee paid
Sent under cover to St Joseph - Running Pony datestamp shows June 10, 1860 departure

Transcontinental Overland Routes

Pony Express: August 1860 - April 1861



On July 31, 1860, a new \$2.50 rate per ¼ oz. was introduced, but was not applied in the West until August 15. It was superseded on March 31, 1861 in the East and on April 15, 1861 in the West.



The Central Overland Pony Express Company (COPEC) was a subsidiary of COCPP
COPEC frank indicates \$2.50 express fee paid at a way station along Pony Express route
September 15, 1860 trip from San Francisco arrived in St Joseph on September 26
10¢ US overland postage paid - posted on September 27 in St Joseph for Utica, NY

Fewer than ten letters with COPEC franks are known

Transcontinental Overland Routes

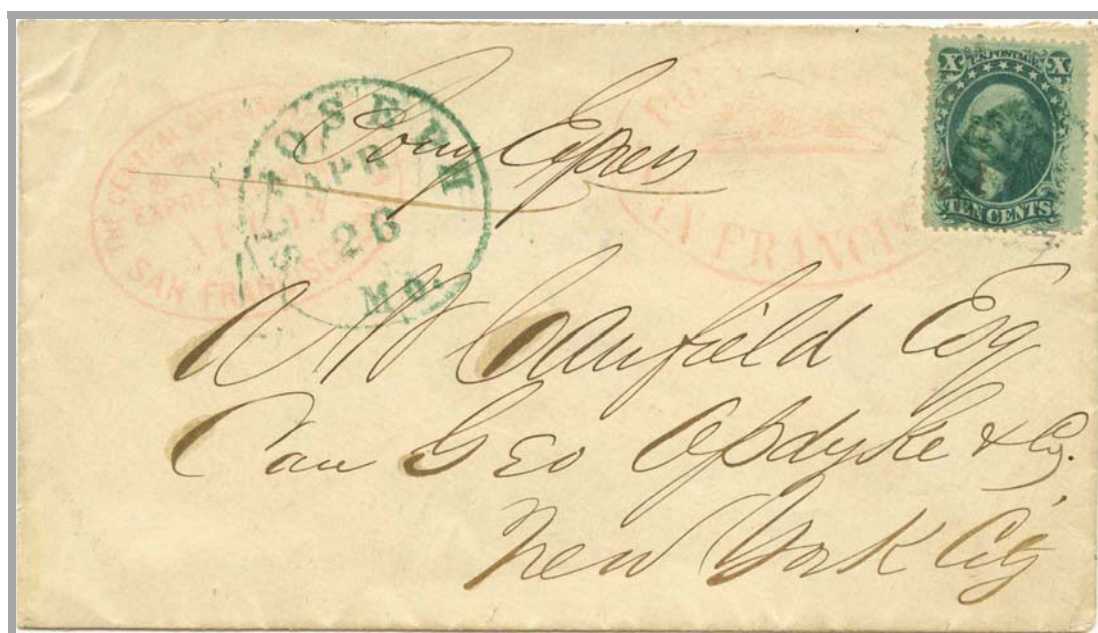
Pony Express: August 1860 - April 1861



The San Francisco Running Pony marking was used as a departure datestamp, and to indicate that the \$2.50 express fee was paid. It is known in black, red and blue.



Blue September 29, 1860 San Francisco Running Pony - franked by 1859 10¢ type V
Arrived October 10 in St Joseph per oval COCPP marking - sent in US mails from there



Dateless Red Running Pony used briefly in March-April 1861 - **only five examples known**
Red San Francisco COCPP mark shows April 13 departure - posted 13 days later in St Joseph

Transcontinental Overland Routes

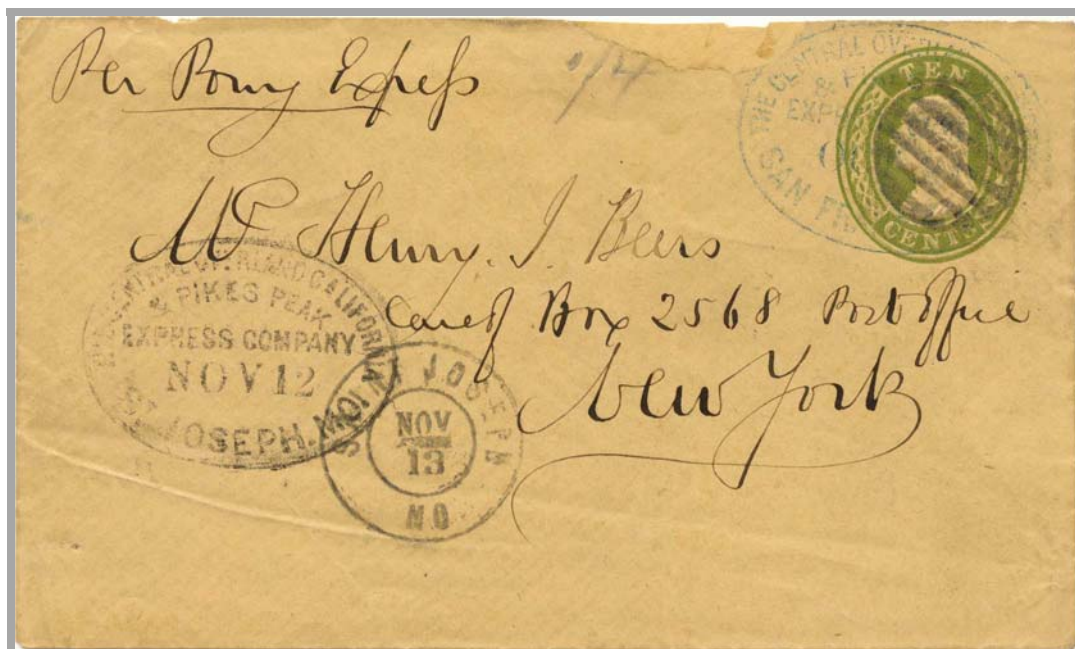
Pony Express: August 1860 - April 1861



San Francisco also used a "Central Overland California & Pikes Peak Express Company" (COCPP) mark, known both dated and undated.



Undated San Francisco COCPP mark used with blue January 12, 1861 Running Pony mark
Manuscript "¼" indicates weight for \$2.50 express fee - posted February 2 in St Joseph



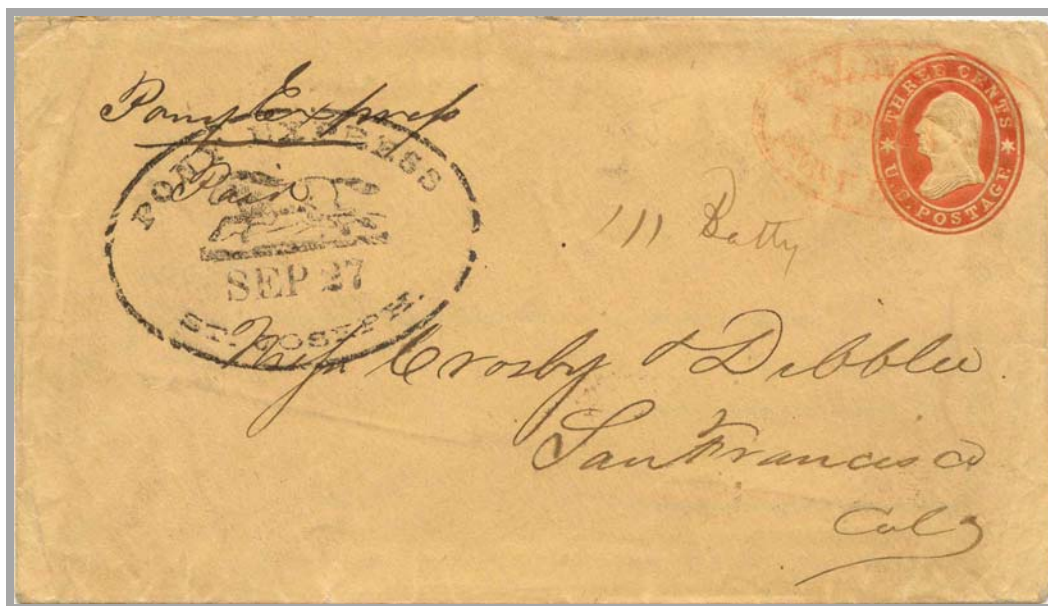
October 31, 1860 San Francisco COCPP mark - November 12 St Joseph COCPP arrival mark

Transcontinental Overland Routes

Pony Express: August 1860 - April 1861



From June to November 1860, New York used a red "California Pony Express Paid" (CPE) marking to indicate payment of the \$2.50 per ¼ oz. fee. Fewer than fifteen examples are known.



Red CPE marking applied in New York - 3¢ US postage for St Joseph-San Francisco distance
September 27, 1860 trip arrived on October 7 in San Francisco - carried outside of US mails



"5.00" indicates that double-weight express fee was paid - departed St Joseph on October 11, 1860

Transcontinental Overland Routes

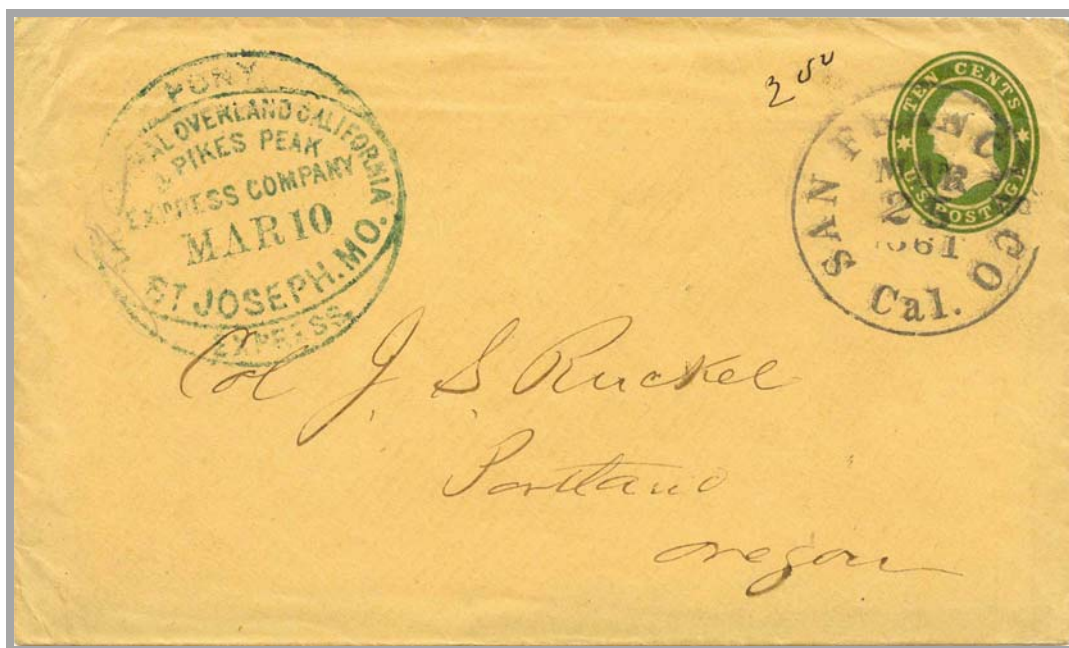
Pony Express: August 1860 - April 1861



St Joseph, Missouri replaced its Running Pony marking with a double oval COCPP marking in late December 1860.



“Paid JTC” indicates \$2.50 fee paid - **US fee frank for California Senator Gwin** in Washington, DC
December 13, 1860 trip arrived on December 29 in San Francisco - carried outside of US mails



“2.50” indicates that the express fee was paid - departed St Joseph on March 10, 1861
10¢ US overland postage paid - **posted March 25 in San Francisco for transmittal to Oregon**

Transcontinental Overland Routes

Pony Express: August 1860 - April 1861



Only six Pony Express letters sent to foreign destinations are known: two to Great Britain, one to France, one to Germany, one to Switzerland, and one to Prince Edward Island.



Red April 13, 1861 San Francisco COCPP marking - **only four examples known**

Posted unpaid April 26 at St Joseph - 24¢ rate to England did not require prepayment

April 30 New York debit to England for 5¢ inland postage - one shilling due from recipient

Only two letters to foreign destinations are known from the \$2.50 rate period

Transcontinental Overland Routes

Pony Express: August 1860 - April 1861



The carmine St Joseph Running Pony datestamp is known used in both directions from August 12 to September 13, 1860. 10 examples are known.



"Pd \$5.00" indicates double-weight express fee - sent under cover from the East to St Joseph
Pony left September 6, 1860 - only 3¢ US postage was necessary from St Joseph to California

Only four westbound carmine Running Pony markings are known

Transcontinental Overland Routes

Pony Express: April 1861 - June 1861



On April 1, 1861 (April 15 in the West), a reduced \$2 per ½ oz. Pony Express rate was introduced. Special adhesives for this were printed by Wells Fargo & Company, which had begun to administer the service.



\$2 Wells Fargo Pony Express stamp paid express fee on May 11, 1861 in San Francisco
US transcontinental postage paid by 10¢ Nesbitt entire - posted on May 24 in St Joseph



May 1, 1861 San Francisco to **Confederate Virginia** via St Joseph on May 14 - 3¢ US postage

Transcontinental Overland Routes

Pony Express: April 1861 - June 1861



Wells Fargo prepared special franked envelopes for the April 1861 \$2 rate. These type I franks were for westbound mail, and only two are known.



Franked envelope paid \$2 express fee - US postage paid by restored 10¢ Nesbitt entire
May 7, 1861 “New-York California Pony Express” mark - left St Joseph on May 12



\$2 express fee was paid in Washington, DC per “2.00” - left St Joseph on April 18, 1861
Sent under cover to St Joseph - only 3¢ US postage needed from St Joseph to San Francisco

Transcontinental Overland Routes

Pony Express: July 1861 - October 1861



Wells Fargo introduced a new \$1 per ½ ounce rate on July 1, 1861, and issued new adhesives. Wells Fargo also offered a 10¢ express service between San Francisco and Placerville, connecting with the Pony Express.



10¢ star die entire with red frank sold for 20¢ - express to Placerville plus US postage
August 3, 1861 San Francisco datestamp - \$1 stamp for Placerville-St Joseph segment
Pony Express arrived August 14 in St Joseph - postmarked August 18 in New York
Forwarded August 20 from Westfield, MA with additional 1857 3¢ dull red stamp

Fewer than ten Pony Express covers are known with 3¢ stamps

Transcontinental Overland Routes

Pony Express: July 1861 - October 1861



The eastern terminus for the Pony Express was changed from St Joseph, Missouri to Atchison, Kansas on September 23, 1861.



\$1 stamp on **Wells Fargo over Freeman & Co. frank** - July 17, 1861 Marysville datestamp
Routed to Pony Express at Sacramento - posted July 29 in St Joseph - envelope restored



Originated October 3, 1861 outside of San Francisco - October 5 San Francisco Running Pony
\$1 stamp on 10¢ star die entire with Wells Fargo red frank - posted October 19 in Atchison

Transcontinental Overland Routes

Pony Express: July 1861 - October 1861



Only five Pony Express letters which originated in foreign countries are known: one from Cuba, two from England and two from Hawaii. All were sent under cover to forwarders in the US.



Dateline *London 3rd July 1861* - sent under cover to forwarder in New York City
Given to Pony Express agent who applied July 20 “California Pony Express” marking
10¢ postage added - sent in express package to St Joseph - postmarked there on July 28
Pony Express left St Joseph on July 28 and arrived on August 8 in San Francisco

“California Pony Express New-York” mark was used December 1860-August 1861

Transcontinental Overland Routes

Pony Express: July 1861 - October 1861



Wells Fargo prepared special franked envelopes for the July 1861 \$1 rate. These type 2 franks were used to send letters to St Joseph in the US mails.



Franked envelope paid \$1 express fee - US postage paid by 10¢ “Watermelon” entire
Posted August 15, 1861 in New York - Pony Express left St Joseph on August 18



Posted in New York on October 5, 1861 for the Pony Express Agent at St Joseph
October 10 St Joseph “oval in circle” marking - arrived October 22 in Sacramento



Pacific Ocean Routes

Hawaii: March 1849 – December 1850

Starting in March 1849, virtually all mail to or from Hawaii traveled between San Francisco and Honolulu. Until the December 21, 1850 start of the Hawaiian post office, the mail was handled privately.

Between November 6 and December 21, 1850, the government-owned Polynesian newspaper maintained an open letter bag for mail via San Francisco. The first Honolulu postmark was created for this service.



Dateline *Honolulu November 20th 1850* - **blue straight-line postmark dated December 7**
 Ship *Governor Davis* left Honolulu on December 12 and arrived in San Francisco on January 5
 PMSC *Unicorn* left San Francisco January 15 - USMSC *Ohio* to New York on February 22
 No Hawaiian postage was collected - 42¢ (40¢ transcontinental plus 2¢ ship) US postage due

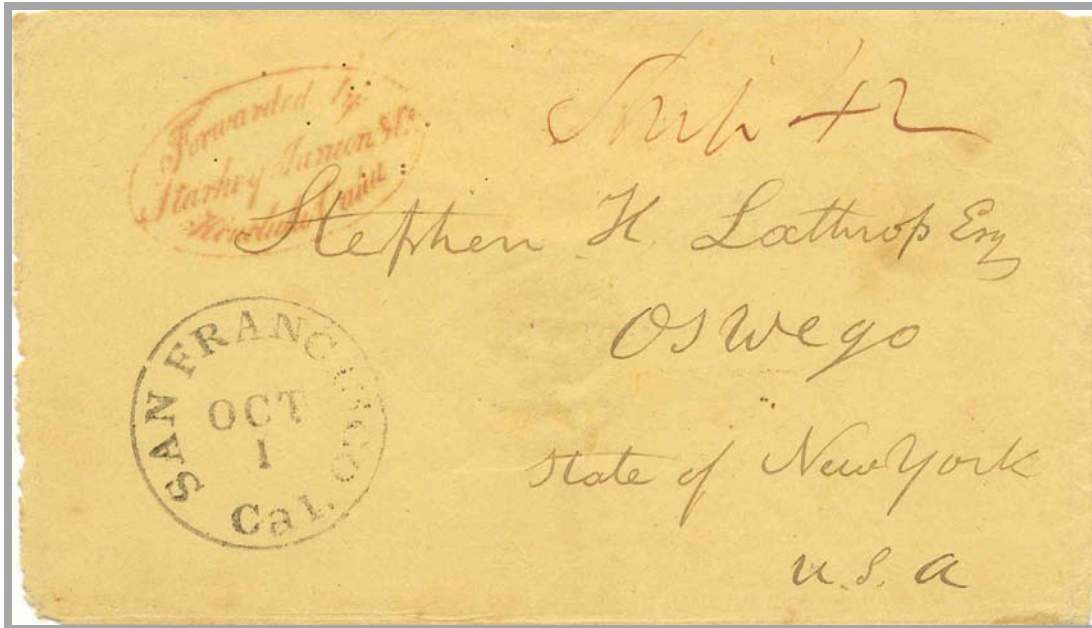
Fewer than ten blue Honolulu straight-line postmarks are known



Pacific Ocean Routes

Hawaii: March 1849 – December 1850

Before the December 21, 1850 establishment of the Honolulu post office, forwarders in Honolulu and San Francisco were used to ensure the safe delivery of letters to departing ships.



Dated *Honolulu August 10th 1849* - **forwarded to San Francisco by Starkey Janion & Co.**

Caroline left Honolulu August 18 - PMSC *Oregon* and USMSC *Ohio* to NY via Panama - 42¢ due



Sent April 13, 1850 from Boston to **San Francisco forwarder Cross Hobson & Co.** - 40¢ due

PMSC and USMSC steamers to SF - forwarded to Honolulu in July 1850 - Hawaii paid 2¢ ship fee

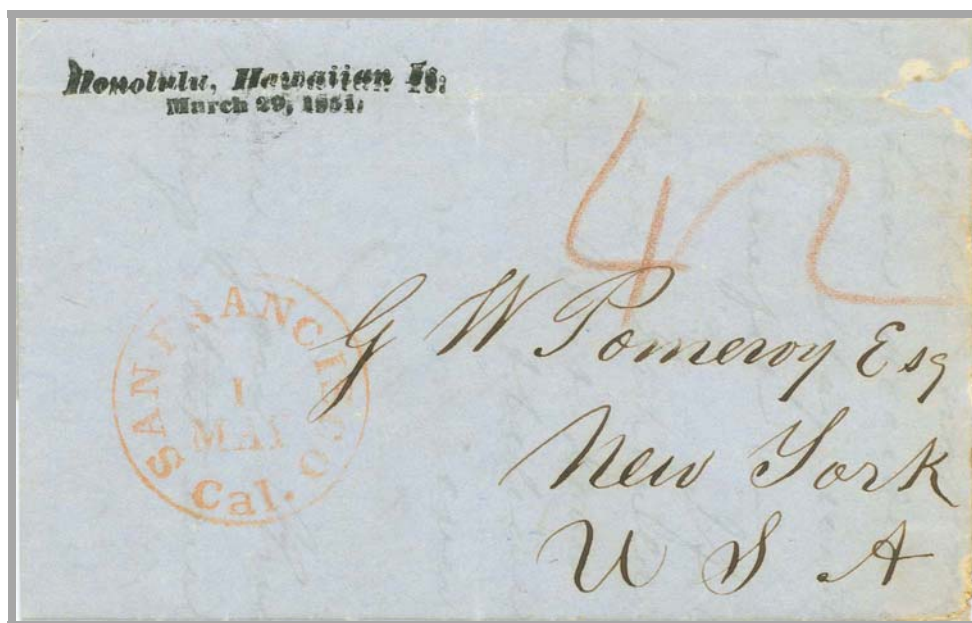


Pacific Ocean Routes

Hawaii: December 1850 – June 1851

On December 21, 1850, the Hawaiian post office began operations. Hawaiian postage on foreign mail was 10¢ per ½ ounce. US rates were 40¢ per ½ oz. transcontinental postage plus a 2¢ ship fee.

Hawaii never indicated the amount of Hawaiian postage paid on outgoing letters, except when a Hawaiian postage stamp was used.



Datelined *Honolulu Mch 29/51* - **black March 29 Honolulu straight-line postmark**

Ship *Columbus* left Honolulu on April 1 and arrived in San Francisco on April 20

PMSC *Oregon* left San Francisco May 1 - USMSC *Empire City* to New York on June 3

42¢ (40¢ transcontinental plus 2¢ ship) US postage due assessed in San Francisco

Honolulu used the black straight-line postmark from December 1850 to June 1851

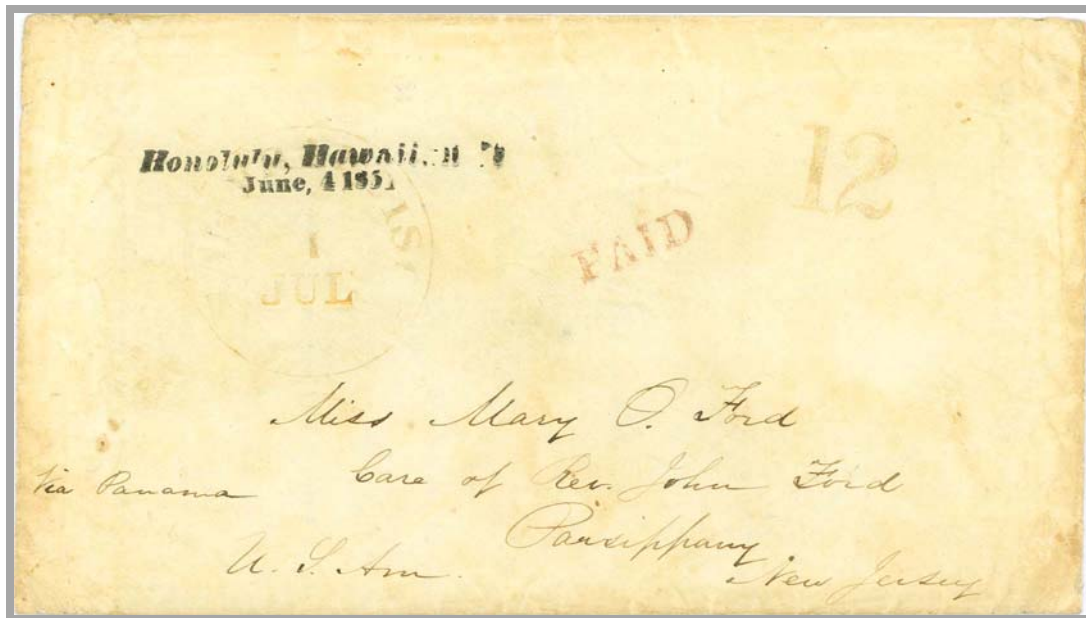


Pacific Ocean Routes

Hawaii: July 1851 – May 1855

US rates were decreased to 6¢ (10¢ if unpaid) per ½ oz. for over 3,000 miles, effective July 1, 1851. Hawaii's foreign mail rate was reduced from 10¢ to 5¢ per ½ oz. on September 13, 1851, with prepayment required.

Starting in January 1851, US and ship postage could be prepaid in Hawaii. Prepaid amounts were credited to the US on a way bill and settled quarterly.



Datelined *Honolulu June 1st 1851* - black June 4 **Honolulu straight-line postmark**

Double-weight 32¢ prepaid in Honolulu - 20¢ Hawaiian (includes 2¢ ship fee) plus 12¢ US

Ship *Joseph Butler* left Honolulu on June 4 and arrived in San Francisco on July 1

PMSC *Panama* left San Francisco July 1 - USMSC *Georgia* to New York on August 7

US rate marks did not include ship fee on February 1851-April 1852 prepaid mail

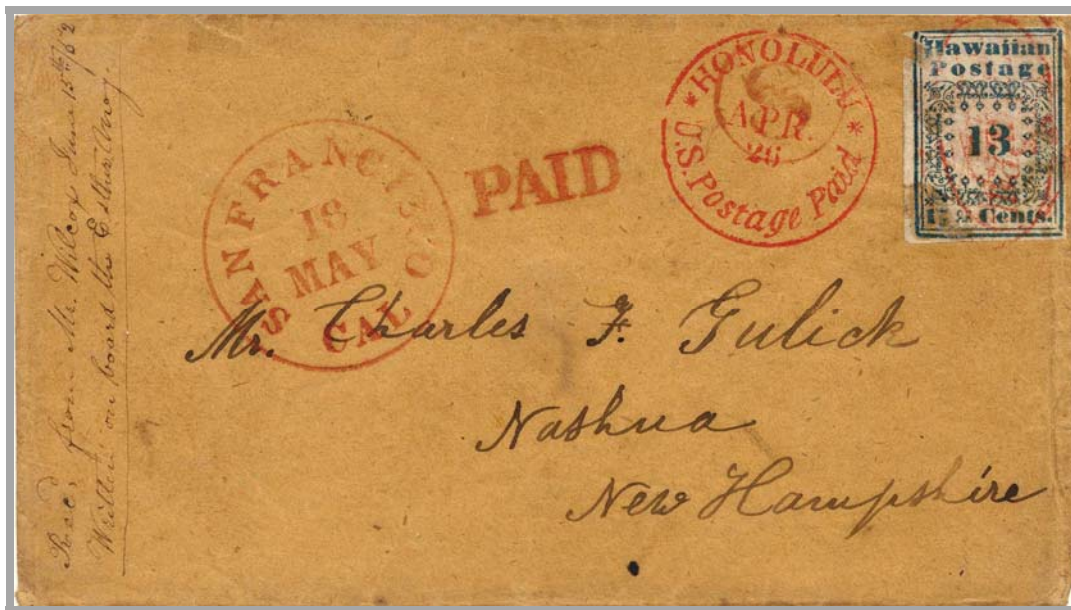


Pacific Ocean Routes

Hawaii: July 1851 – May 1855

Hawaii's first postage stamps were issued on October 4, 1851. The 13¢ value paid 5¢ Hawaiian plus 6¢ US plus 2¢ ship postage.

In February 1852, Honolulu introduced new circular postmarks. The "U.S. Postage Paid" variety was used when US postage was prepaid in Hawaii, and confirmed the 8¢ credit to the US on the way bill.



Postmarked April 26, 1852 in Honolulu - **prepaid by 1851 13¢ Missionary stamp**
 Red oval "U.S. Postage Paid" cancels the stamp - only known example used as a cancel
Noble arrived in San Francisco on May 15 - marked "PAID 8" for 6¢ US plus 2¢ ship
PMSC Oregon left San Francisco on May 16 - *USMSC Illinois* to New York on June 12

Fewer than ten intact 13¢ Type I Missionary covers are known



Pacific Ocean Routes

Hawaii: July 1851 – May 1855

The second type of 13¢ Missionary stamp was issued in early 1852. It had a “H.I. & U.S. Postage” legend, and paid 5¢ Hawaiian plus 6¢ US plus 2¢ ship postage.



Postmarked April 23, 1852 in Honolulu - **prepaid by 1852 13¢ “H.I. & U.S.” Missionary Noble** left April 27 and arrived in San Francisco on May 15 - “PAID 8” for 6¢ US plus 2¢ ship PMSC and USMSC steamers via Panama to New York - the stamp has been repaired at bottom

Fewer than ten intact 13¢ Type II Missionary covers are known



Pacific Ocean Routes

Hawaii: July 1851 – May 1855

Hawaii's 1851 5¢ Missionary stamp was issued to prepay the Hawaiian postage on foreign mail, typically when the US postage was not prepaid.

In February 1852, Honolulu introduced the "Hawaiian Islands" postmark, used when US postage was not prepaid.



Forwarded from Lahaina by forwarder G.D. Gilman - posted October 4, 1852 in Honolulu

Franked by **5¢ Missionary** - US postage unpaid - Honolulu "Hawaiian Islands" postmark

Mary A. Jones to San Francisco on October 26 - rated due 12 for 10¢ US (unpaid) plus 2¢ ship

PMSC *California* left San Francisco November 1 - USMSC *Georgia* to New York November 28

Only ten intact 5¢ Missionary covers are known



Pacific Ocean Routes

Hawaii: July 1851 – May 1855

Hawaii's 5¢ domestic postage was collected on all incoming mail, although the amount due was generally not marked on the letters. This 5¢ Hawaiian postage was very rarely prepaid.



Posted December 21, 1854 in Auburn, MA - prepaid by 1851 3¢ dull red pair
 USMSC *George Law* left New York on January 5 - PMSC *Sonora* to San Francisco
 Honolulu postmaster added **5¢ Missionary** to pay foreign mail postage for his sister

Only two incoming covers with Missionary stamps are known



Pacific Ocean Routes

Hawaii: July 1851 – May 1855

From January 1854 to March 1855, Honolulu occasionally pasted 6¢ US postage over Hawaiian 13¢ stamps to indicate the prepayment of US postage. These letters were then treated like domestic mail in the US.

Paste-overs of US stamps precluded the need to record prepaid US postage on the way bill, and simplified the quarterly settlement of accounts.



Docketed Lahainaluna November 15, 1854 - posted prepaid on November 29 in Honolulu
Franked by 13¢ “H.I. & U.S.” Missionary - moved from original position beneath 3¢ pair
T.H. Allen arrived in San Francisco December 23 - PMSC and USMSC steamers to New York
 Sent under cover from Boston to missionary in Oroomiah, Persia - arrived in September 1855

Fewer than ten Missionary mixed franking covers are known

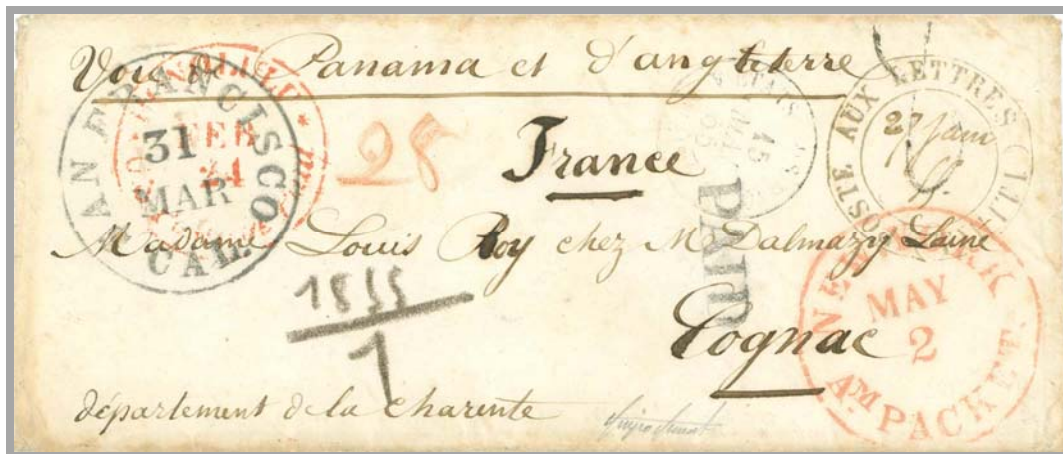


Pacific Ocean Routes

Hawaii: July 1851 – May 1855

The November 24, 1853 Hawaii-Tahiti Postal Treaty set Tahitian postage at 5¢ per ½ oz. and Hawaii postage at 5¢ per ½ oz. The full rate could be prepaid, with the other country's postage credited on a way bill.

Starting in January 1851, Hawaii credited US and ship postage to the US on a way bill. Credits were also reflected in red crayon on the letter front.



Postmarked *Poste Aux Lettres (Tahiti)* on January 27, 1855 - **fewer than five examples known**

February 24 Honolulu postmark - 28¢ credit to US (2¢ ship fee plus 26¢ US postage to France)

Carried by steamer *City of Norfolk* from Tahiti on January 28 and from Honolulu on February 24

PMSC *J.L. Stephens* left San Francisco March 31 - USMSC *George Law* to New York on April 24

Collins liner *Pacific* left New York on May 2 and arrived in Liverpool on May 13 - 8 décimes due

Very little mail was handled under this treaty



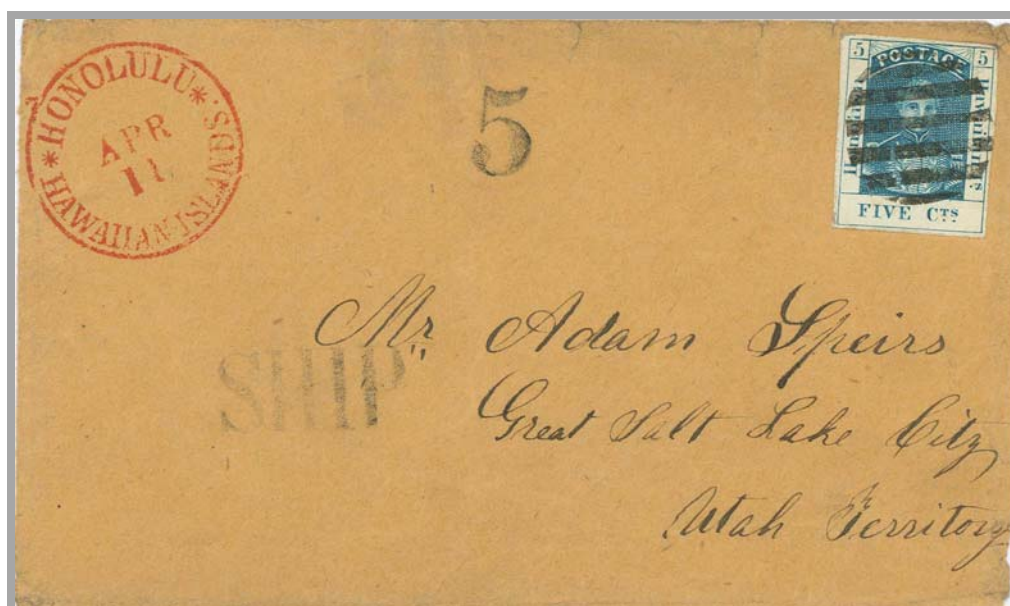
Pacific Ocean Routes

Hawaii: July 1851 – May 1855

In May 1853, Hawaii issued the 5¢ Kamehameha III stamp to prepay the Hawaiian postage on foreign mail.



Postmarked February 10, 1855 in Honolulu - 5¢ Hawaiian postage prepaid - 12¢ due in US
Red Honolulu “Hawaiian Islands” postmark indicated that US postage was not prepaid



Postmarked April 11, 1855 in Honolulu - prepaid by 1853 5¢ Kamehameha III
Sent overland by **Chorpenning route via San Diego** - 5¢ due (3¢ inland plus 2¢ ship)



Pacific Ocean Routes

Hawaii: July 1851 – May 1855

In May 1853, Hawaii issued the 13¢ Kamehameha III stamp to prepay 5¢ Hawaiian, 6¢ US, and 2¢ ship postage.

On April 1, 1855, the US increased the over 3,000 miles rate to 10¢, and obsoleted the Hawaiian 13¢ stamps.



Posted September 6, 1854 in Honolulu - prepaid by 1853 13¢ Kamehameha III
Peytona left Honolulu on September 7 - arrived in San Francisco September 25
 Rated "Paid 8 Ship" in San Francisco for 6¢ transcontinental and 2¢ ship postage
 PMSC *Sonora* left September 30 - USMSC *George Law* to New York October 27

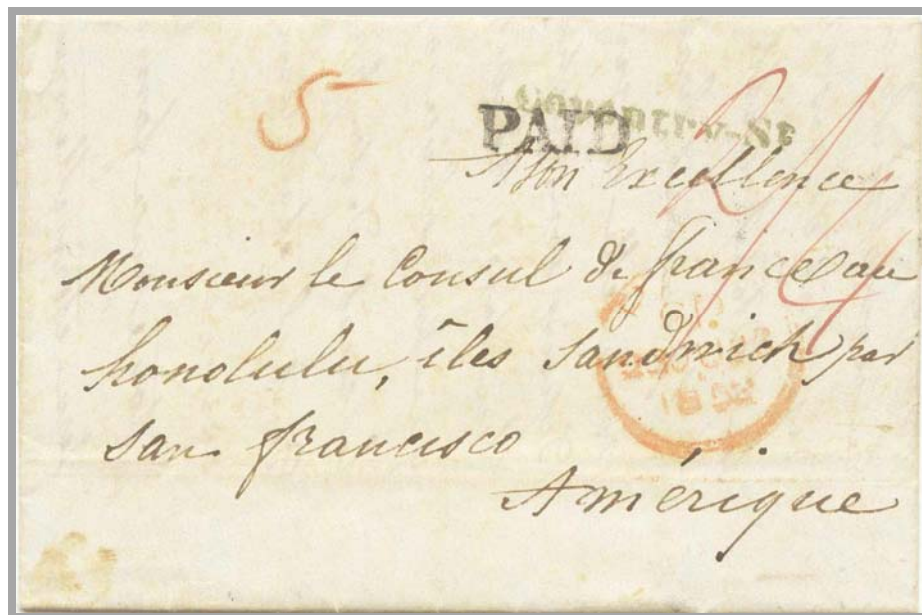
13¢ Kamehameha stamps valid for composite rate for only two years



Pacific Ocean Routes

Hawaii: July 1851 – May 1855

Mail to Hawaii was required to have US postage prepaid to San Francisco. Hawaiian 5¢ postage (including the 2¢ ship fee) was collected, but was rarely marked on the cover.



Posted June 23, 1852 in London, England - prepaid 2 shillings 4d for RMSP route
 RMSP *Magdalena* to St Thomas - PMSC *Golden Gate* to San Francisco on August 18
 SF “PAID” marking - **5¢ Hawaiian postage due per manuscript “5”**

Fewer than ten inbound covers known with Hawaiian postage marked

Hawaii: May 1855 – August 1863

U.S. POSTAGE
12 CENTS
HAWAIIAN IS.

U.S. POSTAGE
5 CENTS
HAWAIIAN IS.

JUN 20 1862
CAL.

Mr. Lally Boston
Care of Boston.
Wm. H. Frost
No. 67 1/2 Market St. Mass.





Forwarded
3

JAN 21 1861
 NEW YORK

W R Post Esq
Long Island
Southampton Long Island
New York

Dateline *Hilo December 7, 1855* - 1853 13¢ Kamehameha sold provisionally for 17¢ composite postage
Postmarked December 28, 1855 in Honolulu - US 1851 12¢ stamp added there for US and ship postage



Pacific Ocean Routes

Hawaii: May 1855 – August 1863

Shortages of 5¢ stamps led to a provisional overprint of the obsolete 13¢ stamp in January 1857. New 5¢ stamps were issued in June 1857.



Postmarked January 19, 1858 in Honolulu - 5¢ Hawaiian postage prepaid by surcharged 13¢ stamp
US and ship postage paid by 1851 12¢ stamp added by sender - new practice was to use mixed frankings



Postmarked August 31, 1857 in Honolulu - 1857 5¢ Kamehameha III stamp prepaid Hawaiian postage
US and ship postage paid by 1851 12¢ stamp which was sold by Hawaiian post office for this purpose



Pacific Ocean Routes

Hawaii: May 1855 – August 1863

Honolulu forwarders were occasionally used to transmit letters to San Francisco. G.B. Post in San Francisco was the Hawaiian mail agent.



Docketed July 18, 1855 in Samoa - forwarded to San Francisco by Honolulu firm H.T. Fitch
“BARK FRANCIS PALMER” marking - left Honolulu on December 1, 1855 - 12¢ due in US



Forwarded to G.B. Post & Co. in San Francisco on January 17, 1856 - 10¢ US postage paid
 No ship fee was paid on this letter since it was sent under cover to San Francisco agent



Pacific Ocean Routes

Hawaii: May 1855 – August 1863

Some of the mail in this period had Hawaiian and US postage prepaid in mixed frankings. On mail that was fully prepaid in cash, Hawaii credited US and ship postage to the US through way bills.



Postmarked May 16, 1863 in Honolulu - Hawaiian postage paid by 1861 5¢ Kamehameha III
US and ship postage prepaid in Honolulu by US 1861 Issue 12¢ stamp - sent overland to Ohio



Dated *Hana Sept 7 1859* - postmarked October 3 in Honolulu - 17¢ postage prepaid in cash
“12 Paid” in October 24 San Francisco postmark - straight-line **OVERLAND routing handstamp**



Pacific Ocean Routes

Hawaii: August 1863 – June 1869

The US adopted a uniform 3¢ per ½ oz. domestic postal rate, effective July 1, 1863. This new rate was implemented in Hawaii on August 30. US postage was sometimes paid by US stamps applied in Hawaii.



Postmarked August 27, 1864 in Honolulu - Hawaiian postage prepaid by 1861 5¢ stamp
 Two 1861 3¢ stamps overpaid 3¢ US postage plus 2¢ ship - sent to Federal blockade squadron
 San Francisco mistakenly applied 10¢ blanket steamship rate - **DUE 4 and FOREIGN** marks
Young Hector arrived in San Francisco September 22 - sent overland via New Orleans

“FOREIGN” marks for 10¢ steamship rate used August-November 1864



Pacific Ocean Routes

Hawaii: August 1863 – June 1869

The 1865 5¢ Hawaiian Numeral stamps (“Hawaiian Postage” and “Inter-Island”) were typically used to prepay Hawaiian postage, but could also be used to prepay US postage.



Posted May 19, 1866 in Honolulu - total postage prepaid by **1865 “Inter-Island” 5¢ pair**
5¢ US stamp added in SF since US postage (3¢ plus 2¢ ship fee) had been prepaid



Posted April 4, 1866 in Honolulu - double-weight postage prepaid by two 5¢ 1865 “Hawaiian Postage”
8¢ US postage prepaid in Hawaii (6¢ double-weight inland plus 2¢ ship) - 1861 3¢ and 1863 5¢ stamps



Pacific Ocean Routes

Hawaii: September 1867 – June 1869

The California, Oregon and Mexico Steamship Co. (COMSC) began a contract steamship mail service between Honolulu and San Francisco on September 5, 1867. Special "Hawaiian Steam Service marks were used.



Posted October 24, 1868 in Honolulu - prepaid 5¢ Hawaiian and 10¢ US contract postage
Incorrect Honolulu unpaid postmark used - COMSC *Montana* to San Francisco November 8



Posted October 5, 1868 in Honolulu - prepaid by Hawaiian 1866 5¢ and two US 1863 5¢ stamps
US contract steamship rate was 10¢ per ½ oz. - COMSC *Idaho* to San Francisco on October 18



Pacific Ocean Routes

Far East: March 1849 – December 1866

The March 31, 1854 Japan-US Treaty opened mail exchanges between the two countries. Some American consuls in the Treaty ports provided private mail forwarding services.



Dateline Yokohama Japan Jan. 5th 1866 and expedited by US Consul, George Fisher
Fisher forwarded letter to *Oriflamme* of the California, Oregon & Mexico Steamship Co.

Oriflamme left Japan on January 6 and arrived in San Francisco on February 5

San Francisco charged 6¢ ship postage and sent the letter overland to Virginia

Fewer than ten covers with Kanagawa consul markings are known



Pacific Ocean Routes

Far East: March 1849 - December 1866

Before the January 1, 1867 start of the PMSC contract mail service between San Francisco and Hong Kong, the only option for trans-Pacific mail was by private ship.



Posted May 18, 1859 in Clarence-Town, New South Wales - prepaid 21d for route via England
Three 1854 NSW 6d stamps and 1856 NSW 3d stamp - 5¢ US postage due (3¢ inland plus 2¢ ship)



Posted May 16, 1864 in Sydney, NSW - 6d ship postage paid by three 1863 2d stamps
Carried by private ship *Uruguay* to San Francisco on October 16 - 10¢ steamship rate due
10¢ rate was mistakenly applied - **“FOREIGN”** marking used August-November 1864



Pacific Ocean Routes

Far East: January 1867 – June 1869

On January 1, 1867, the Pacific Mail Steamship Co. (PMSC) began a monthly contract mail service between San Francisco and Hong Kong, with an intermediate stop at Yokohama, Japan.



Posted February 16, 1867 in Hong Kong, China - prepaid 8¢ by 1865 Issue stamp
Red “4” re-states 8¢ rate in pence - PMSC *Colorado* to San Francisco on March 20
San Francisco rated letter for 10¢ due per ½ ounce blanket steamship rate



From Yokohama, Japan in February 1867 - prepaid with two 1861 3¢ stamps - additional 4¢ due
PMSC *Colorado* left Yokohama February 28 - **first voyage of the trans-Pacific PMSC service**
San Francisco used red and black “STEAM CHINA” markings to indicate reason for 10¢ rate



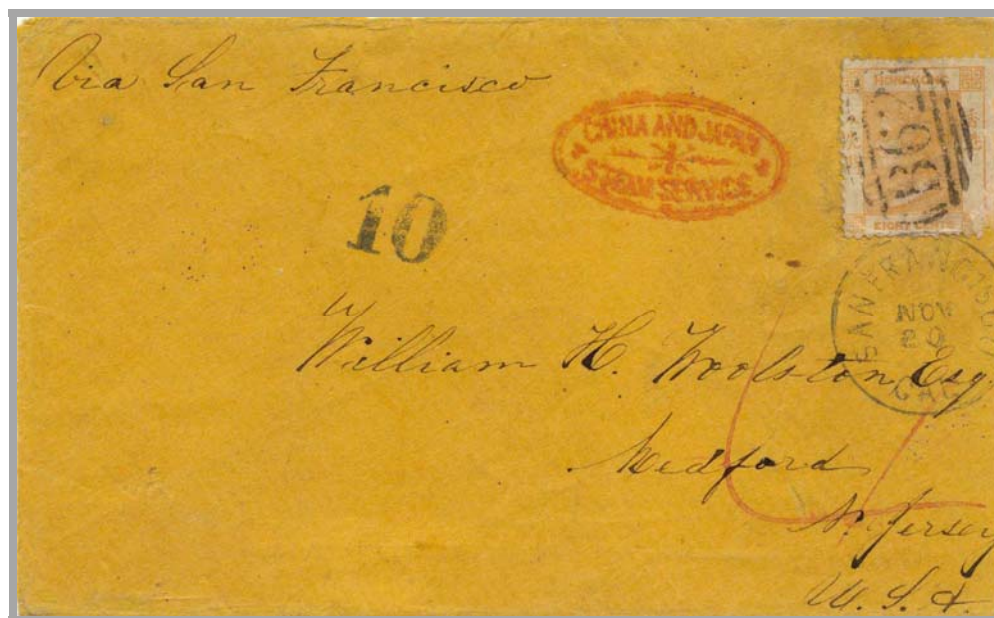
Pacific Ocean Routes

Far East: January 1867 – June 1869

In November 1867, San Francisco introduced an oval “China and Japan Steam Service” (CJSS) marking for arriving PMSC mail.



Posted November 15, 1868 at Shanghai, China US Consulate - fully prepaid with 1861 10¢ stamp
PMSC steamers *Costa Rica* and *Great Republic* via Yokohama to San Francisco on December 22



Posted October 15, 1867 in Hong Kong - prepaid 8¢ ship postage with 1865 Issue stamp
PMSC *Great Republic* arrived in San Francisco on November 19 - letter rated for 10¢ due

Earliest usage of the magenta “China and Japan Steam Service” oval mark



Pacific Ocean Routes

Far East: January 1867 - June 1869

The July 1, 1864 US Act established a 10¢ per ½ ounce blanket steamship rate for mail to or from countries with which the US had no postal conventions, but transported by regularly-scheduled vessels.



Posted January 10, 1867 in Martinsburg, West Virginia - prepaid with 1861 Issue 10¢ stamp
4d ship postage due in Hong Kong - 2nd trip by PMSC *Colorado* left San Francisco April 3



Originated May 1867 in Yokohama, Japan - 2nd trip by PMSC *Colorado* to San Francisco on June 13
10¢ US steamship postage fully prepaid by 1863 5¢ pair - no need for "STEAM CHINA" marking



Pacific Ocean Routes

Far East: January 1867 – June 1869

The US-Hong Kong postal treaty set fully-paid rates per ½ ounce of 8¢ from Hong Kong and 10¢ from the US, effective November 1, 1867. The treaty also mandated special “Paid All” postmarks.



Posted July 15, 1868 in Hong Kong - prepaid double-weight 16¢ in 1863 Issue stamps
PMSC *Colorado* left Hong Kong on July 15 and arrived in San Francisco on August 16



Posted December 17, 1867 in Montreal, Canada - prepaid 10¢ with 1859 Issue stamp
Sent to forwarder in San Francisco - re-mailed to Yokohama with 10¢ US postage paid

Earliest known use of the San Francisco “Paid All” marking



Pacific Ocean Routes

Far East: January 1867 – June 1869

The American consul in Yokohama was provided with postage stamps, but not postmarks or cancelling devices. Some distinctive cancellers were fabricated locally, and are known as “bamboo chops.”



Posted June 1869 in Yokohama, Japan - overpaid ½ - ¾ oz. 65¢ composite rate to France
 Franked by 10¢ and 30¢ pairs of the 1869 Issue and 1861 10¢ entire - bamboo “chop” cancels
 PMSC *Japan* left Yokohama on June 30, 1869 and arrived in San Francisco on July 20
 Transcontinental railroad to New York on July 29 - NGL *Rhein* to England on August 8

Earliest known use of 1869 Issue stamps from Japan



Pacific Ocean Routes

Far East: June 1866 – December 1868

On June 15, 1866, the Panama New Zealand & Australian Royal Mail Co. (PNZA) began a packet service between New South Wales and Panama, connecting with PMSC steamers to San Francisco.



Posted December 2, 1868 in Sydney, NSW - packet postage prepaid with 1860 1 shilling rose
 PNZA *Rakaia* left Sydney December 2 and arrived in Panama January 5 - **last sailing of the line**
 PMSC *Arizona* left Panama on January 14, 1869 and arrived in San Francisco on January 22
 San Francisco rated letter per ½ ounce blanket steamship rate - charged 10¢ postage due

Fewer than five covers to the United States by this route are known



Pacific Ocean Routes

British Columbia: January 1849 – October 1858

The separate Crown Colonies of Vancouver Island (VI) and British Columbia (BC) were established in January 1849 and November 1858. They merged into a united British Columbia on November 17, 1866.

Their geographic isolation meant that virtually all mail to or from the colonies had to pass through San Francisco until 1869. Both colonial and U.S. postage was paid separately on the mail via San Francisco.



Posted July 17, 1857 in London, England - prepaid 1 shilling 2½d in cash

Prepayment (equivalent to 29¢) paid postage to the US West Coast via New York
 Cunard, USMSC and PMSC steamers to San Francisco on August 30 - marked "PAID"
 Sent up the coast to Steilacoom - carried at no charge by Hudson's Bay Co. to Victoria

Very little mail is known before the November 1858 start of post office operations



Pacific Ocean Routes

British Columbia: November 1858 – July 1862

Formal post office operations began in British Columbia and Vancouver Island (BC & VI) with the November 24, 1858 Victoria Postal Notice. It set colonial postage on mail leaving the colonies at 2½d, or 5¢.

The April 1, 1855 US Postal Act set domestic rates at 3¢ or 10¢ per ½ oz., according to distance. This meant that rates to Canada and Great Britain from San Francisco were 15¢ and 29¢, respectively.



Posted April 1861 in New Westminster, BC - colonial postage prepaid by BC&VI 1860 2½d

15¢ prepaid in cash for the postage to Nova Scotia from San Francisco per "15 Cents PP"

Transmitted to San Francisco on May 1 - 1857 Issue 5¢ brown and 10¢ Type V added there

Carried overland to Detroit - red "U. STATES" marking applied - arrived in Halifax on May 29

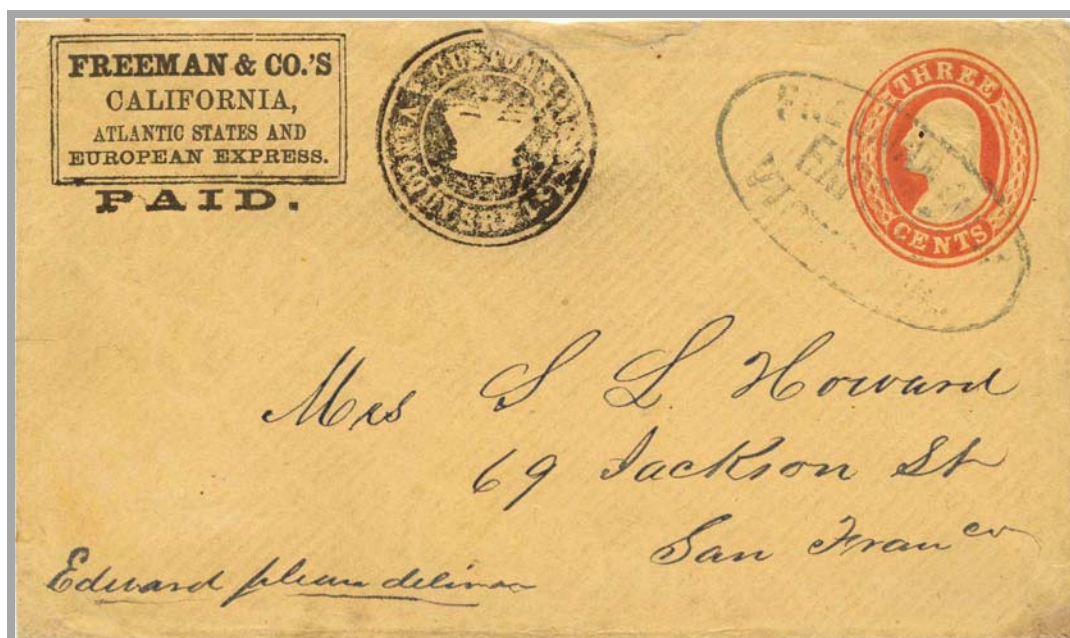
2½d stamp issued March 1860 to pay colonial postage in both BC and VI



Pacific Ocean Routes

British Columbia: November 1858 – July 1862

Express companies were required to prepay 2½d colonial postage. The “Customs Vancouver’s Island” seal was used as a frank from July 1858 to June 1859, and the “Paid V.I.” from July 1859 to June 1862.



Carried by **Freeman & Co.** from Victoria in May 1859 - 3¢ US postage to San Francisco
Freeman paid 2½d at Victoria post office per customs frank applied to its franked envelope



Carried by **Wells Fargo & Co.** from Victoria to San Francisco - prepaid 2½d per “Victoria Paid V.I.” frank
Red Wells Fargo franked envelope - posted in San Francisco on January 23, 1860 - 29¢ rate to England



Pacific Ocean Routes

British Columbia: November 1858 – July 1862

The 2½d rose was issued jointly in British Columbia and Vancouver Island in March 1860. It was used to prepay colonial postage on letters leaving the colonies.



Posted double-weight in June 1861 in New Westminster - BC & VI 1860 2½d pair
New Westminster numeral 1 cancel - 30¢ double-weight US postage to Canada due



Posted May 1862 in New Westminster - prepaid by BC & VI 1860 2½d and US 1861 10¢
Red numeral 1 cancel on US stamp proves that US stamps were affixed in BC & VI



Pacific Ocean Routes

British Columbia: November 1858 – July 1862

BC & VI purchased a supply of US 1857 Issue stamps to prepay US postage on mail leaving the colonies. 1¢, 3¢, 5¢, 10¢, 12¢ and 24¢ denominations were available.



Posted November 1860 in Victoria - “**Victoria Post Office**” and Coat of Arms franks applied

April 1855 transcontinental 10¢ US rate to Massachusetts paid by 1857 Issue 1¢ and 3¢ stamps



Posted August 1861 in New Westminster - 2½d postage paid per blue oval “PAID” (under stamps)

US 1857 Issue 5¢ and 24¢ stamps pay 29¢ US rate to England - **only known use of 1857 24¢ stamp**



Pacific Ocean Routes

British Columbia: November 1858 – July 1862

The “Post Office Victoria” Coat of Arms frank was used to prepay VI colonial postage from September 1860 to February 1863. Franked envelopes could be purchased at the Victoria post office.



Posted March 1862 in Hope, BC - 1860 2½d rose paid BC colonial postage - **numeral 3 cancel**
 5¢ Coat of Arms frank was presold on envelope in Victoria - not valid for postage in BC



Dated *San Juan Feb. 20th 1861* - sent to Victoria with 8¢ cash - 5¢ for Coat of Arms frank
 Red “3” indicates prepayment of 3¢ US rate to West Coast - 1857 3¢ stamp affixed at Victoria
 San Juan Island was jointly occupied by the US and England after the 1859 “Pig War”



Pacific Ocean Routes

British Columbia: July 1862 – August 1863

BC introduced new domestic rates with its July 1862 Postal Notice. Colonial postage on mail leaving BC ranged from 2½d to 24d per ½ oz., according to distance. VI colonial postage remained at 2½d.

The April 1855 US rates remained in force until August 1863, when BC & VI implemented new US rates set by the July 1863 Postal Act.



Posted June 1863 in Yale, BC - 5d postage from Yale paid by BC&VI 1860 2½d pair

Numeral 4 cancel of Yale - July 4 New Westminster General Post Office transit (reverse)

3¢ US postage to San Francisco prepaid per red "3c" - 1861 3¢ added at New Westminster

Fewer than ten covers showing the 5d rate are known



Pacific Ocean Routes

British Columbia: July 1862 – August 1863

The April 1, 1855 US rate between San Francisco and eastern Canada was 15¢ per ½ ounce. This rate continued until July 1864.



Posted March 4, 1863 in New Westminster, BC - 1860 2½d rose paid colonial postage
Numeral 1 cancel of New Westminster - five 1861 3¢ stamps paid 15¢ US rate to Canada



Posted January 16, 1863 in Brockville, Canada - prepaid 25¢ by two 1859 12½¢ stamps
Canada's January 1, 1862 25¢ rate to BC & VI included 10¢ US transcontinental postage



Pacific Ocean Routes

British Columbia: August 1863 - June 1864

The July 1, 1863 US Act reduced the US domestic rate to a uniform 3¢ per ½ ounce. This rate was implemented in BC & VI in August. The July 1862 BC Postal Notice rates continued in effect.



Docketed December 6, 1863 - sent under cover with 15¢ in cash to New Westminster, BC
 New Westminster added BC&VI 1860 2½d stamp and US 3¢ stamp on January 20, 1864
 Old 1855 rate to the US paid at origin per red "10" - New Westminster added proper amount

Fewer than five mixed frankings known from this period



Pacific Ocean Routes

British Columbia: August 1863 - June 1864

Express companies carried much of the foreign mail into and out of the colonies. BC & VI required their colonial postage to be paid on such mail, even when they did not handle it.

Express companies in BC connected with each other, creating conjunctive usages. Express fees were often paid by franked envelopes, some of which carry the franks of multiple companies.



Carried from the Cariboo gold region by **Barnard's Cariboo Express** to Yale, BC in April 1864

Connected with **Dietz & Nelson** for Yale to Victoria - franked envelope paid their express fees

Connected with **Wells Fargo** for Victoria to San Francisco - added BC&VI 1860 2½d postage

3¢ US postage and **Barnard "PAID" label** canceled by Wells Fargo "North Coast Messenger"

Triple conjunctive express usage from the Cariboo to San Francisco



Pacific Ocean Routes

British Columbia: August 1863 – June 1864

Mail from BC & VI could be fully prepaid to destination, but colonial postage had to be collected on all incoming letters.



Posted November 25, 1863 in Boulogne, France - 1862 80c stamp paid rate to California
 "P.P." indicates postage partially paid to destination - 2½d due in BC (not marked on cover)



Posted January 1864 in Victoria - prepaid 5¢ colonial postage by blue "long oval" frank
 US 1861 Issue 3¢ and 12¢ stamps applied in Victoria paid US overland rate to Canada



Pacific Ocean Routes

British Columbia: July 1864 – March 1867

The June 20, 1864 BC Postal Ordinance set colonial postage at 3d per ½ oz. from New Westminster and at 9d from the rest of BC. Starting July 1864, the US applied the 10¢ steamship rate, except for mail to foreign destinations.



Posted November 1865 in Douglas, BC - 1865 BC 3d stamps paid 9d postage from interior of BC

Numeral 2 cancel of Douglas - 24¢ US rate to England prepaid per red "24" (under stamp)



Posted August 26, 1866 in New Westminster - 1865 BC 3d stamp paid BC 3d rate

US rate to England prepaid by 1861 Issue 24¢ stamp added at New Westminster



Pacific Ocean Routes

British Columbia: July 1864 – March 1867

The Cariboo region's Williams Creek post office began operation in June 1864. It used the numeral "10" cancel.



Posted June 1864 in Williams Creek - 1860 2½d pair underpaid 9d rate from the Cariboo
Prepaid old 15¢ US rate to Canada - correct 10¢ US postage added in New Westminster



Posted April 1865 in Williams Creek - no BC & VI stamps, so "10" as provisional frank for 9d postage
Also prepaid 5d (10¢ equivalent) in cash for US postage - 1861 10¢ stamp paid the US rate to Canada



Pacific Ocean Routes

British Columbia: July 1864 – March 1867

In July 1864, the US began to apply the 10¢ blanket steamship rate on mail from BC to US addresses. San Francisco used a “FOREIGN” mark to explain the reason for additional postage due.



Posted August 1864 in Victoria - 5¢ colonial postage paid per “long oval” frank
Prepaid old 3¢ rate to the US - rated “DUE 7” and “FOREIGN” in San Francisco



Posted July 1864 in Williams Creek - 1860 2½d strip of three paid the 9d rate from Cariboo
Also prepaid 3¢ in cash for US postage per “3c” - rated “DUE 7” and “FOREIGN” on arrival



Pacific Ocean Routes

British Columbia: July 1864 – March 1867



Carried June 1866 by **Barnard's Express** to Yale - all express fees paid by **triple franked envelope**

Carried by **Dietz & Nelson's Express** from Yale to Victoria - added 2½d pair for postage to Victoria

Carried by **Wells Fargo** from Victoria on July 11 - 1865 BC 3d for colonial postage - 3¢ US postage



Carried September 26, 1865 from San Francisco to Victoria by **Wells Fargo** - paid by frank

Forwarded from Victoria to the Cariboo by **Dietz & Nelson's Express** - \$1 express fee collect

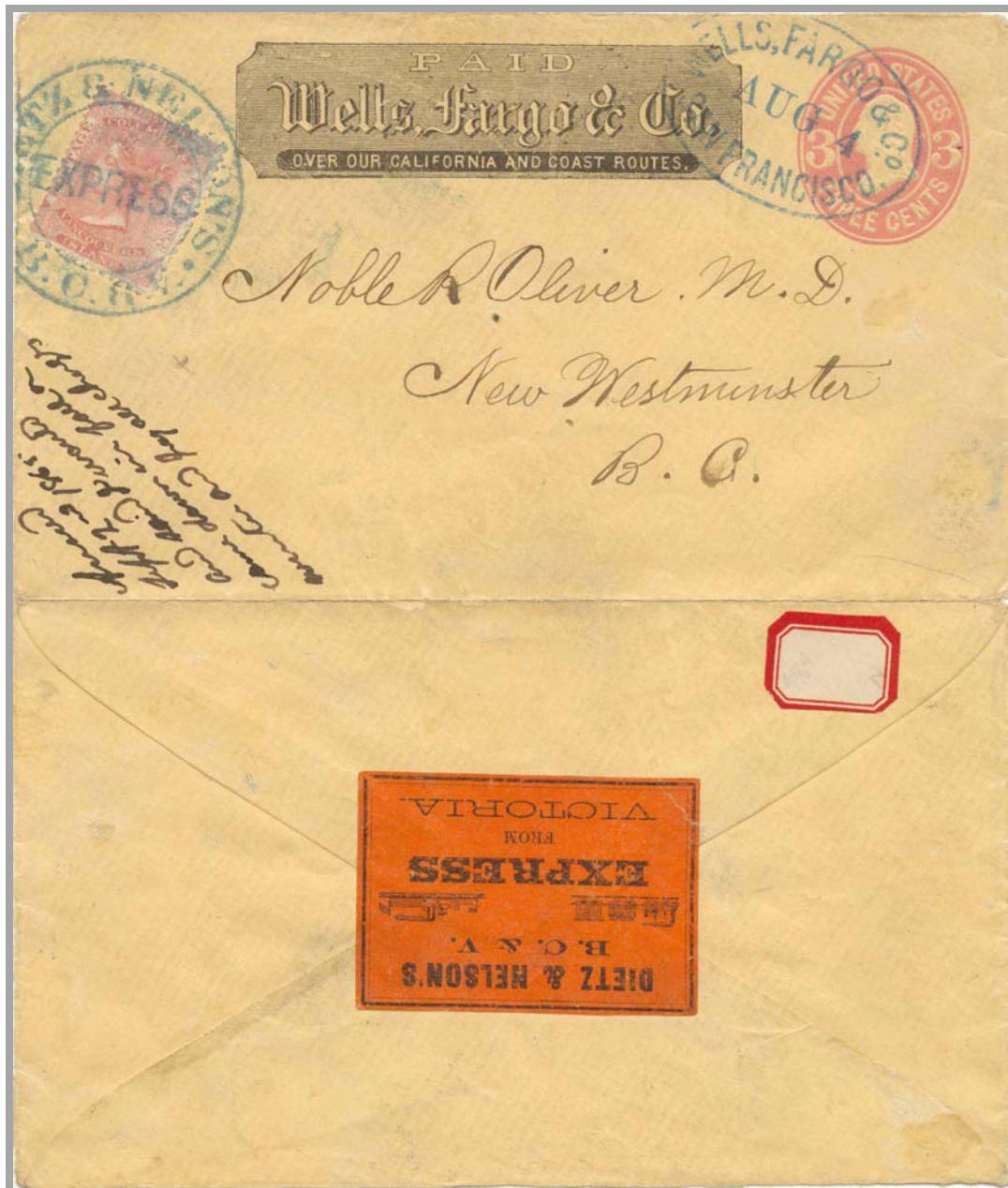
2½d strip of 3 paid BC postage - "Dietz & Nelson's B.C. & V. Express" cancel - 3¢ entire repaired



Pacific Ocean Routes

British Columbia: July 1864 - March 1867

Express companies created labels to indicate whether express fees had been paid by the sender or another express company. All are uncommon.



Carried August 4, 1865 from San Francisco to Victoria, VI by **Wells Fargo & Co.**

Black franked envelope paid Wells Fargo express fees - 3¢ US postage paid by entire

Dietz & Nelson from Victoria to Westminster - added required BC&VI 1860 2½d postage



Pacific Ocean Routes

British Columbia: April 1867 - January 1868

The united colonies of BC & VI introduced new domestic rates in their April 2, 1867 Postal Ordinance. Colonial postage on mail leaving the colony varied from 5¢ to 25¢, depending on distance.



Dated *Victoria Sept 6th 1867* - **VI 1865 imperforate 5¢** paid colonial postage
 Victoria “Long oval” cancel - VI 1865 5¢ and 10¢ stamps issued September 1865
 US 1861 10¢ stamp paid blanket steamship rate to California per July 1864 Act

Only known mixed franking with the VI 1865 imperforate 5¢ stamp



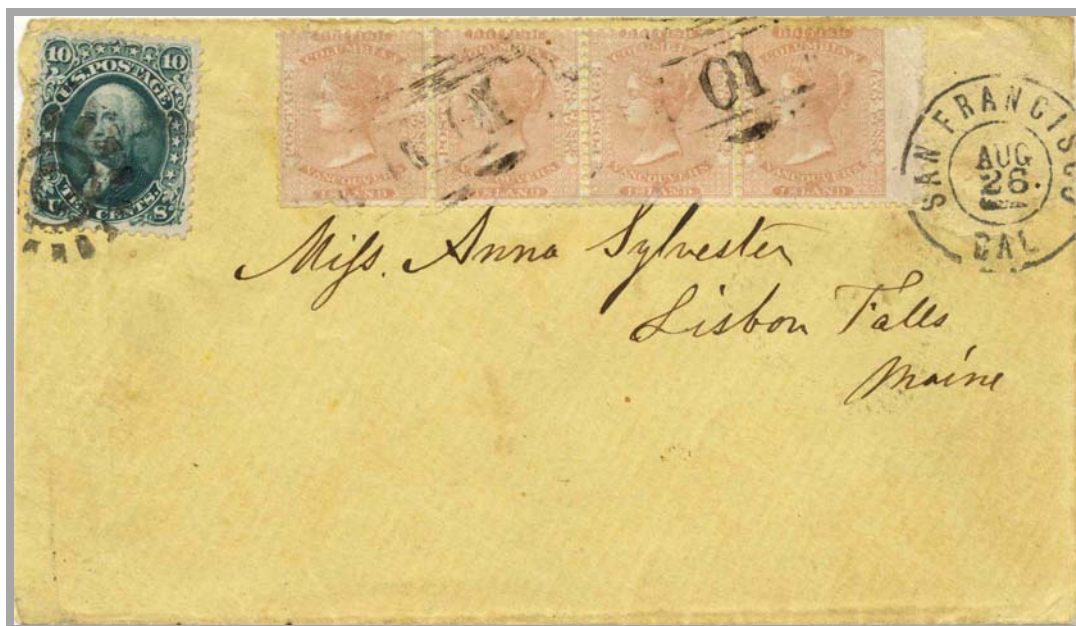
Pacific Ocean Routes

British Columbia: April 1867 – January 1868

The 1867 Postal Ordinance set colonial postage from the Cariboo at 25¢ per ½ ounce. This was typically paid by 1865 VI stamps, or by the April 1867 re-issue of the 1860 BC & VI 2½d stamps at 6¼¢ each.



Posted July 1867 in Williams Creek, BC - 1865 VI 5¢ and 10¢ pair paid the 25¢ Cariboo rate
VI transferred its stock of 5¢ and 10¢ VI stamps to BC in April 1867 - 10¢ US rate to Canada



Posted July 1867 in Williams Creek, BC - BC & VI 2½d strip of four paid the 25¢ rate
2½d stamps re-issued provisionally for 6¼¢ from April to July 1867 - 10¢ US rate to Maine



Pacific Ocean Routes

British Columbia: February 1868 - June 1869

Only 73,375 1867 “TWO CENTS” overprint stamps were distributed to post offices, starting in January 1868. The stamps were issued to pay the newspaper rate within BC.



Posted January 25, 1869 in Victoria - colonial postage paid by 1867 2¢ pair sold for 5¢

Sent via San Francisco and Panama - arrived March 15 in Vermont - 10¢ US postage

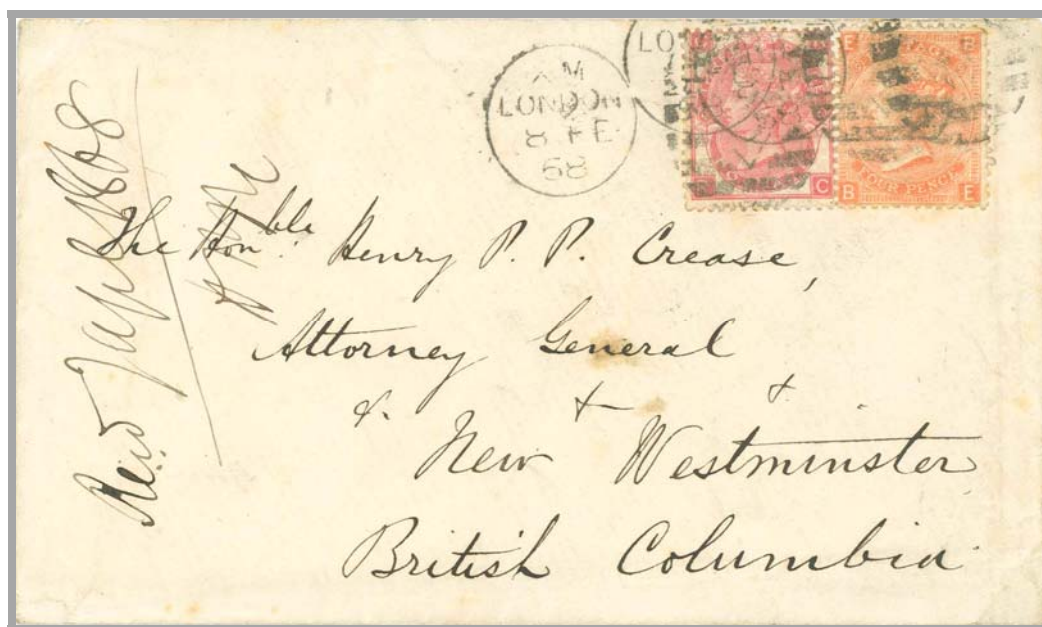
Only known mixed franking with the BC 1867 “TWO CENTS” overprint stamp



Pacific Ocean Routes

British Columbia: February 1868 – June 1869

The rate from Great Britain to BC was set at 7d per ½ oz., effective January 1, 1868. BC implemented a fully-paid 25¢ rate to Great Britain in February 1868, but some letters were incorrectly charged 7d due.



Posted February 8, 1868 in London - 1865 3d and 4d stamps paid the 7d rate - received April 7



Posted July 30, 1868 in Victoria - **1865 BC 3d (2nd printing) strip of 4** fully paid the 25¢ rate

Sent via San Francisco, Panama and New York to Scotland - incorrect 7d due assessed



Pacific Ocean Routes

South America: March 1849 - June 1851



Dateline Valparaiso, Chile March 26 1851 - posted on board Pacific Steam Navigation Co. steamer PSNC *New Granada* arrived April 19 at Panama - **straight-line “VAPOR N. GRANADA” marking** PMSC *Tennessee* arrived May 20 at San Francisco from Panama - San Francisco boxed 30¢ due



Postmarked September 1, 1849 in San Francisco - double-weight 40¢ due to Panama forwarder PMSC *Panama* to Panama - PSNC *New Granada* to Chile - **numeral “10” mark applied on board**



Pacific Ocean Routes

South America: March 1849 - June 1851

The March 3, 1847 US Act set the rate to or from Panama at 30¢ per ½ ounce, effective July 1. This was replaced by a 20¢ per ½ ounce rate on July 1, 1851.



Entered the mails at the Panama City US mail agency in September 1850 - 30¢ due
Straight-line “PANAMA” marking - PMSC *Panama* to San Francisco September 21
 Mail was delayed on steamship - rare September 30 “San Francisco Rec’d” postmark

Fewer than five known “PANAMA” straight-lines to San Francisco



Pacific Ocean Routes

South America: July 1851 - March 1855



Dated October 31, 1852 in San Francisco - prepaid 50¢ rate to Chile via Panama and English mails

Red ms. 1/- credit to GB - PMSC *California* - rated **"Paid at Panama"** in English mails on November 23

PSNC *Quito* left Panama November 24 and arrived December 12 at Valparaiso - fully paid rate



Dated Valparaiso, Chile March 20 1852 - carried under cover by private ship to Panama

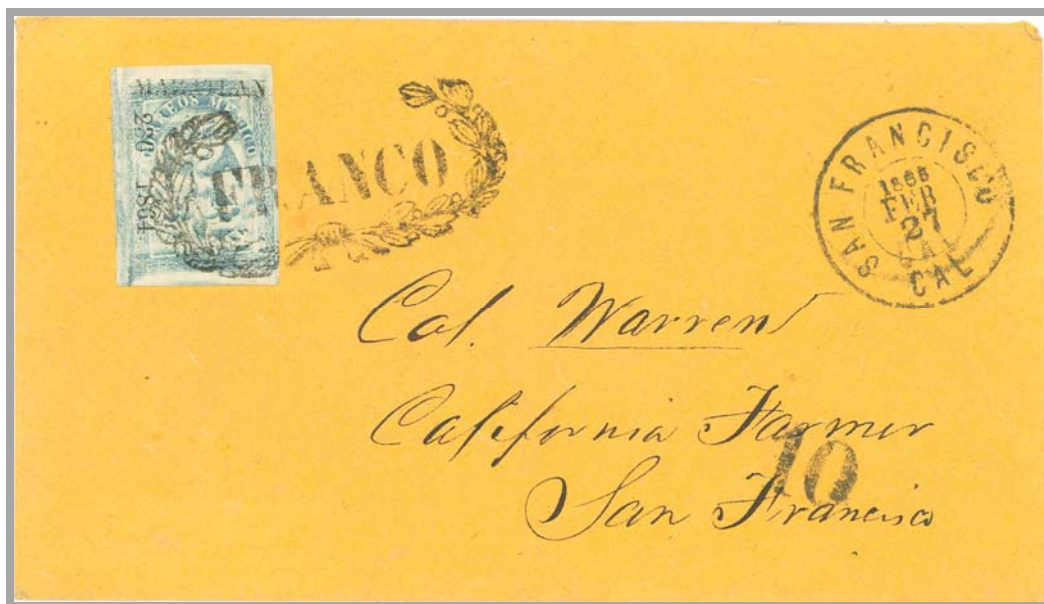
First sailing of NY & SF Steamship Co. *Winfield Scott* - 6¢ ship fee due April 29 at San Francisco



Pacific Ocean Routes

South America: July 1863 - June 1869

The PMSC carried mail to San Francisco from South and Central America, often connecting at Panama with the PSNC.



Posted February 1865 in Mazatlan, Mexico - prepaid 1 reale with 1864 Eagle Issue stamp
Carried by PMSC steamship from Mazatlan to San Francisco - 10¢ blanket steamship rate due



Posted May 1863 in Chile - prepaid by strip of 1861 5 centavos stamps - PSNC steamer to Panama
Only known example of "Steam Panama" in red - PMSC steamship carried letter from Panama

Regional West Coast Routes

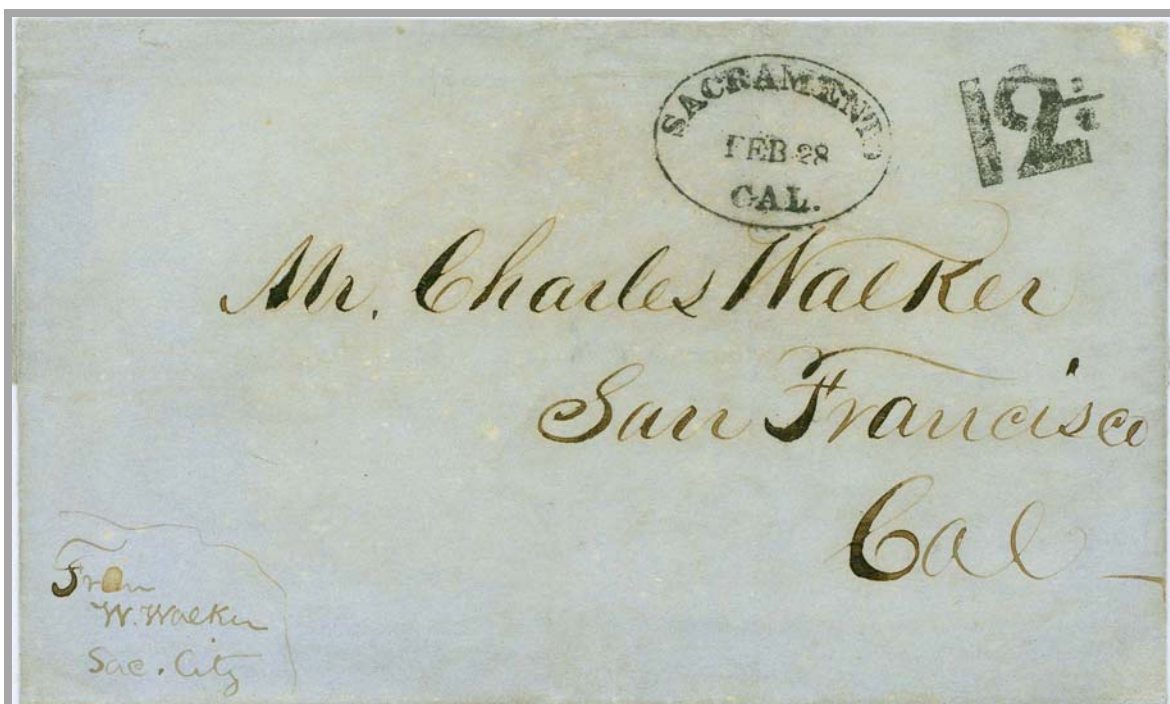
Post Office: March 1849 – June 1851



The August 14, 1848 US Postal Act established a 12½¢ per ½ ounce rate for mail between points on the West Coast.



Posted April 19, 1850 in San Francisco - prepaid double-weight 25¢ rate to San Jose



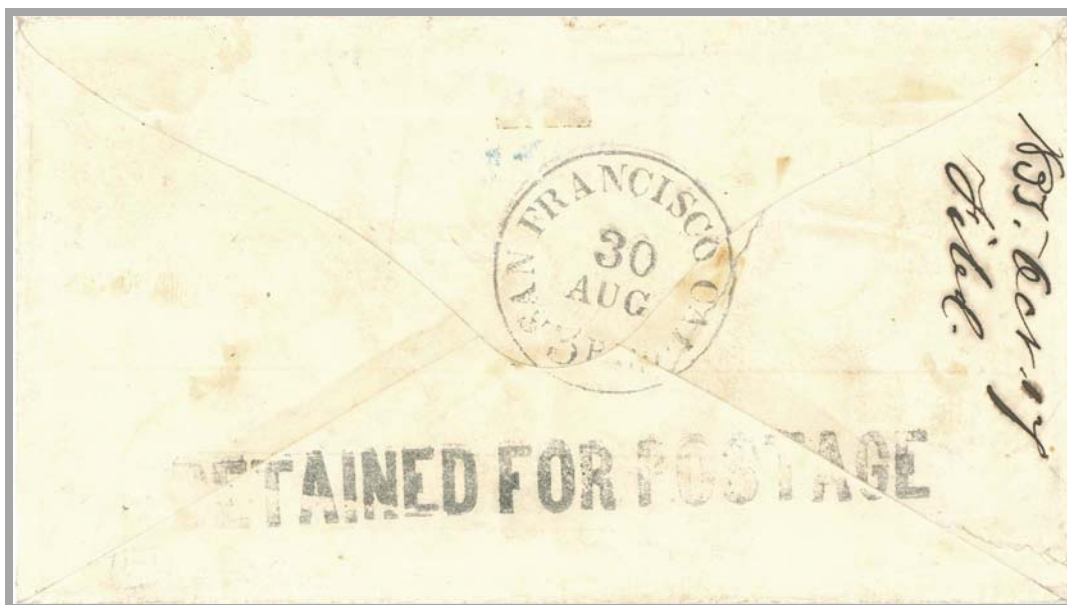
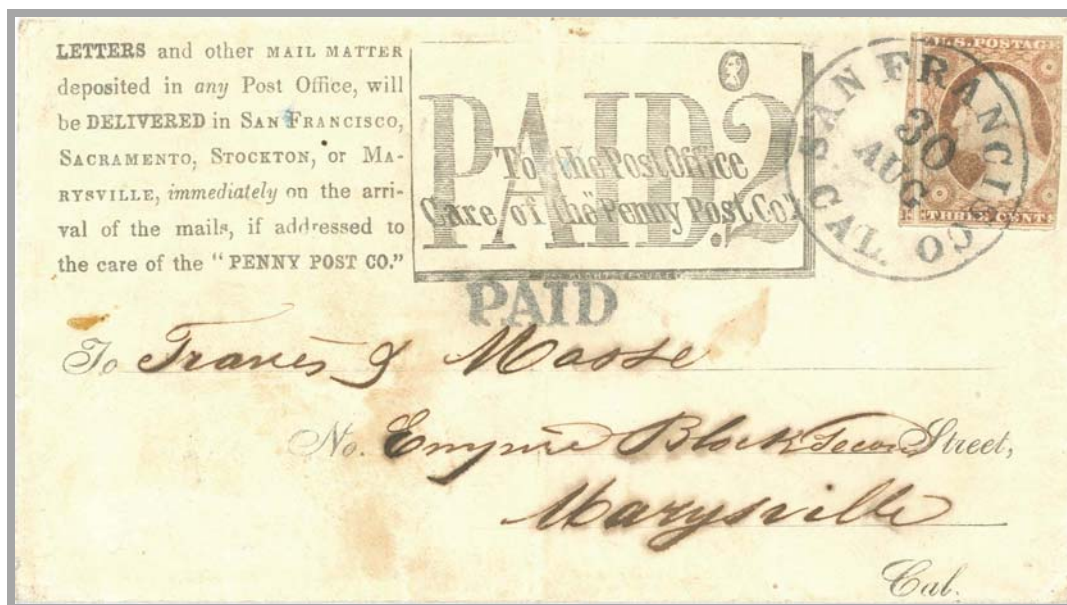
Posted February 28, 1850 in Sacramento - 12½¢ due for postage to San Francisco

Regional West Coast Routes

Post Office: July 1851 - June 1869



The March 3, 1851 Postal Act reduced the rate between points in California to 3¢ per ½ oz., effective July 1. The Penny Post offered city delivery services, but was opposed by the post office, and only operated June 1855 to mid-1856.



Franked 3¢ and carried to San Francisco post office by the Penny Post Company for 2¢ express fee
Posted August 30, 1855 - post office rejected 1851 3¢ franking - "DETAINED FOR POSTAGE"
Penny Post paid additional 3¢ in cash - post office carried it to Marysville - reverse is a photocopy

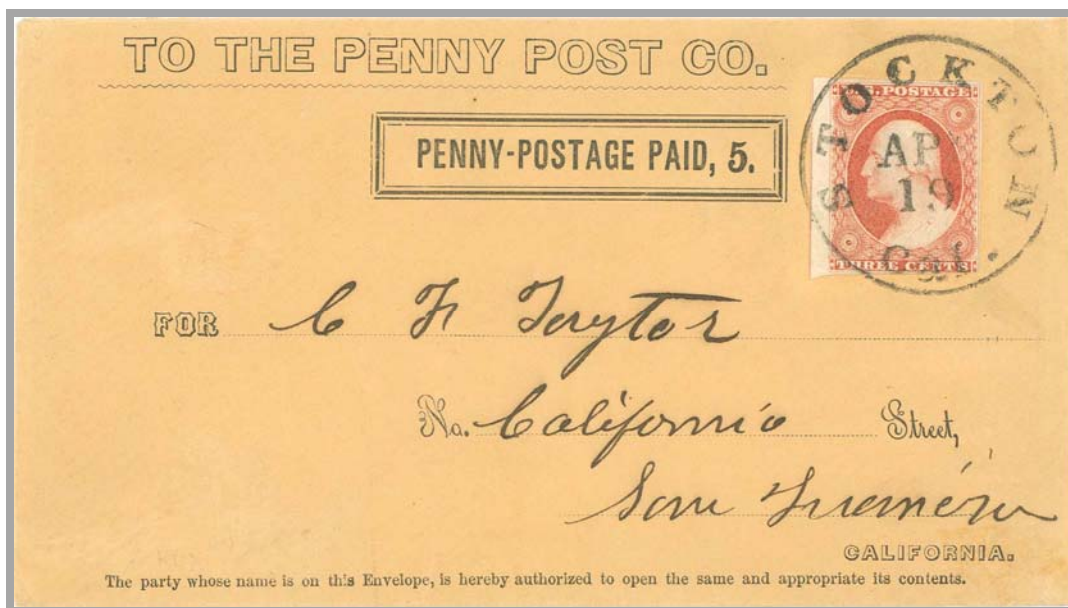
Fewer than ten 2¢ Penny Post envelopes are known

Regional West Coast Routes

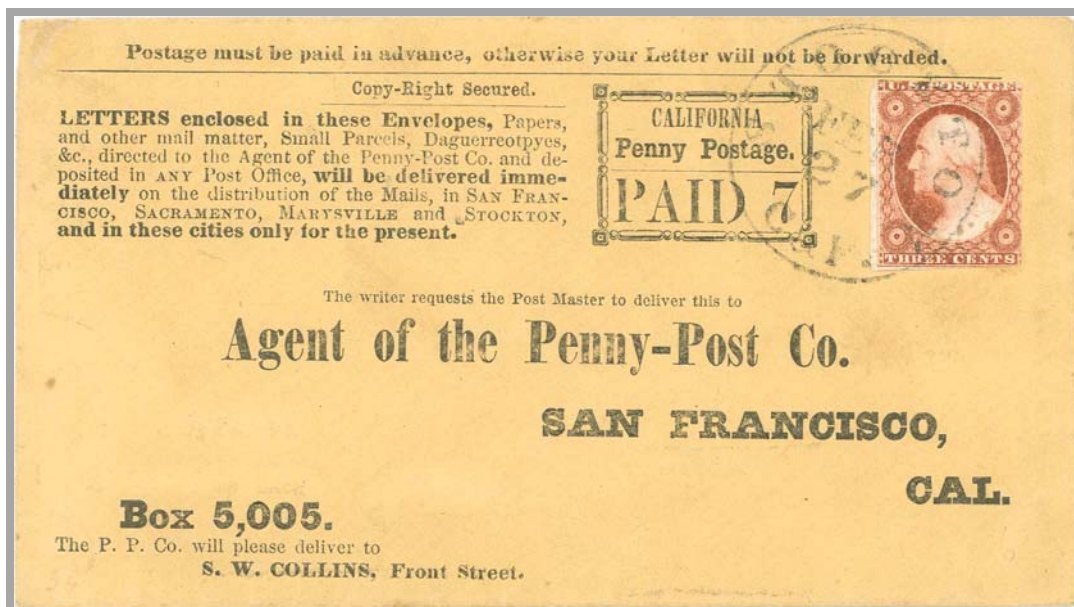
Post Office: July 1851 - June 1869



The Penny Post provided a number of ancillary mail services for various fees, but the basic task of transporting the mail between cities was performed by the post office.



Posted April 19, 1856 in Stockton - franked by 1851 3¢ for postal rate to San Francisco
Penny Post Co. delivered letter to recipient from San Francisco post office for 5¢ fee



Carried by Penny Post to Stockton post office and delivered from San Francisco post office for 7¢ fee
Posted February 27, 1856 in Stockton - transported to San Francisco by the post office for 3¢ postage

Regional West Coast Routes

Regional Expresses: July 1849 – June 1869



Post office service between San Francisco and the California gold mining regions was ineffective to non-existent, so private express companies filled the void. They serviced the following regions:

1. The major northeast route between San Francisco and Sacramento
2. The Southern Mines east of San Francisco via Stockton
3. The American and Cosumnes Rivers region northeast of Sacramento
4. The Northern Mines north-northeast of Sacramento via Marysville
5. The California coast between San Diego and San Francisco
6. The Nevada Territory northeast across the Sierra Nevada mountains

Some larger express companies covered the entire region and provided transcontinental service. Express companies would also connect with each other to reach remote areas, creating conjunctive express covers.



Wells Fargo franked entire was sold for 10¢ - included 3¢ to post office from 1854 3¢ Nesbitt
Used at San Francisco on March 26, 1857 - double-weight, so 1851 3¢ orange red stamp added

Additional 10¢ express fee due from recipient per **Wells Fargo blue “COLLECT” cancel**
Double-weight 6¢ US postage paid even though post office did not handle this letter to San Jose

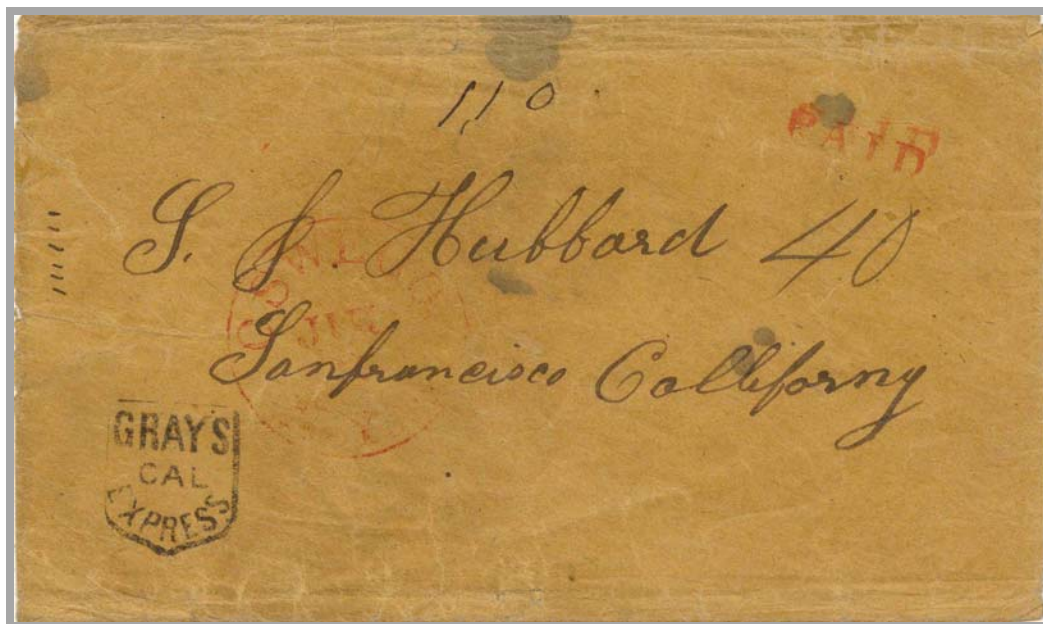
Basic express fee was paid by the purchase of a Wells Fargo franked envelope

Regional West Coast Routes



San Francisco-Sacramento Expresses: July 1849 – June 1869

Sacramento was an important transit point for mail and supplies to the American River region and the Northern Mines. Some of the earliest expresses operated over the route between San Francisco and Sacramento.



Posted July 2, 1850 in Oswego, NY - prepaid 40¢ transcontinental postage

Carried by PMSC and USMSC steamships via Panama to San Francisco on August 23

Carried by **Gray's Express** from San Francisco to Sacramento for \$1.10 express fee

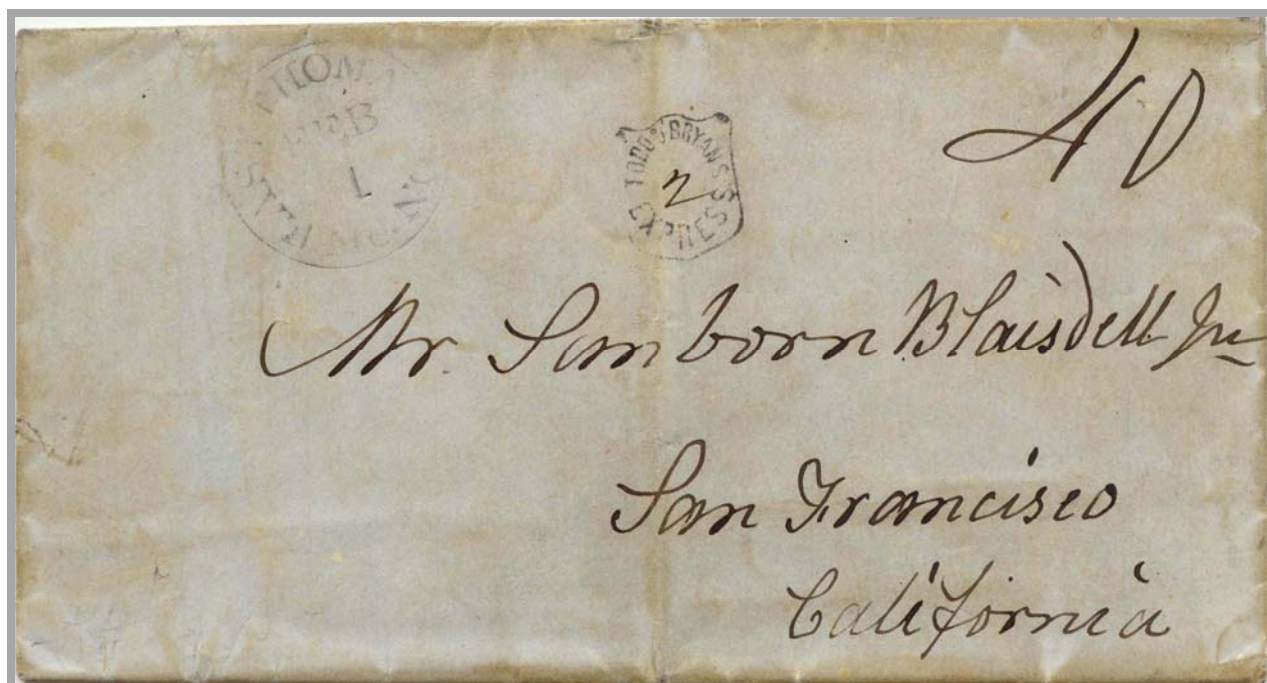
Gray operated only during late 1850 - fewer than 5 examples known

Regional West Coast Routes

Southern Mines Expresses: July 1849 – June 1869



The Southern Mines were east-southeast of San Francisco, and were reached via Stockton and Sonora. Alexander Todd started the earliest known express company on this route in July 1849.



Posted February 1, 1850 in East Thomaston, ME - 40¢ US postage due from recipient

Carried by USMSC and PMSC steamships via Panama to San Francisco on April 14

Carried by **Todd & Bryan's Express** from San Francisco via Stockton for \$2 express fee

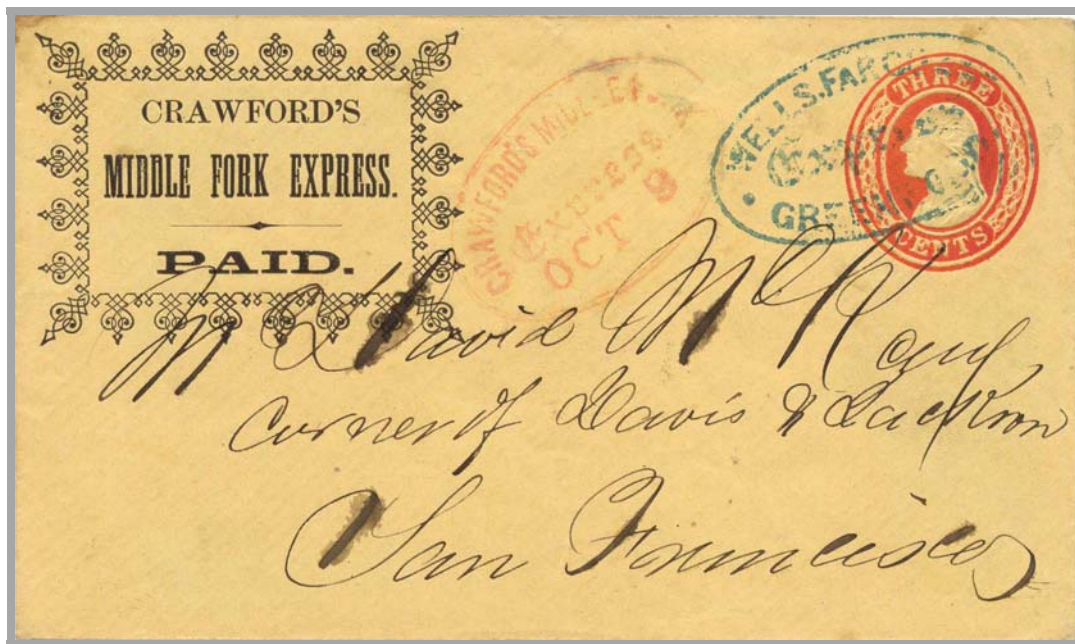
Todd & Bryan operated from 1849 to July 1850 - fewer than 5 examples known

Regional West Coast Routes

American River Region Expresses: July 1849 – June 1869



The American River mining region was northeast of San Francisco, and was reached via Sacramento. Mines were located on all three forks of the American river, with some along the Cosumnes River.



Carried down the Middle Fork to Greenwood by **Crawford** on October 9, 1855

Small express company active in 1855 between Sacramento, Placerville and Greenwood

Connected at Greenwood with **Wells Fargo**, which completed the trip to San Francisco

Fewer than five examples of Crawford's Middle Fork Express are known

Regional West Coast Routes

American River Region Expresses: July 1849 - June 1869



Dated *California Mountains May 14/50* and entrusted to **Grammer & Co.'s Express**

Carried down the Middle Fork to San Francisco on July 1, 1850 - 40¢ postage prepaid

Grammer active between San Francisco and Middle Fork via Sacramento from 1849 to 1851



Sent July 13, 1850 from New York to Mormon Island, CA - 40¢ postage prepaid

Carried by **Ford & Co.** to Pollock Pines ("PP") on the South Fork - \$1.50 express fee

Ford operated between Sacramento and the American River region from 1850 to 1852

Regional West Coast Routes

Northern Mines Expresses: July 1849 – June 1869



The Northern Mines region was northeast of San Francisco, and was reached via Sacramento and Marysville. Mines were located along the Yuba and Feather Rivers, Deer Creek, and far north in the Shasta region.



Carried from Downieville to Marysville by **Langton's Pioneer Express** on April 25, 1855
Langton was active along the Yuba River North Fork from February 1855 to December 1859
Connected at Marysville with **Pacific Express Co.**, which completed the trip to San Francisco
Pacific Express was a larger regional express company active from March 1855 to April 1857

Illustrated "Long Tom" envelope sold at Downieville

Regional West Coast Routes

Coastal Expresses: July 1849 – June 1869



Express companies carried mail by water along the California coast between Oregon and Baja California, Mexico.



Docketed *Cape St Lucas Apl 11 1863* - sent from Baja California to San Francisco

Carried by **Peterson's Lower California Express** up the coast via San Diego

Peterson active from the Spring of 1861 to mid-1863 - US postage "Free"

Fewer than five covers with Peterson labels are known

Regional West Coast Routes

Nevada Expresses: August 1862 – March 1865



Wells Fargo introduced a daily pony express service between San Francisco and Virginia City on August 8, 1862. Extra fees were paid by special adhesive stamps on Wells Fargo 10¢ franked envelopes (which included 3¢ US postage).



Entrusted to **Wells Fargo** in Virginia City, Nevada Territory on September 7, 1862
10¢ pony express stamp added to 10¢ Wells Fargo franked envelope with 3¢ US postage
The 10¢ stamp was used from August 1862 until February 1863, when rates increased

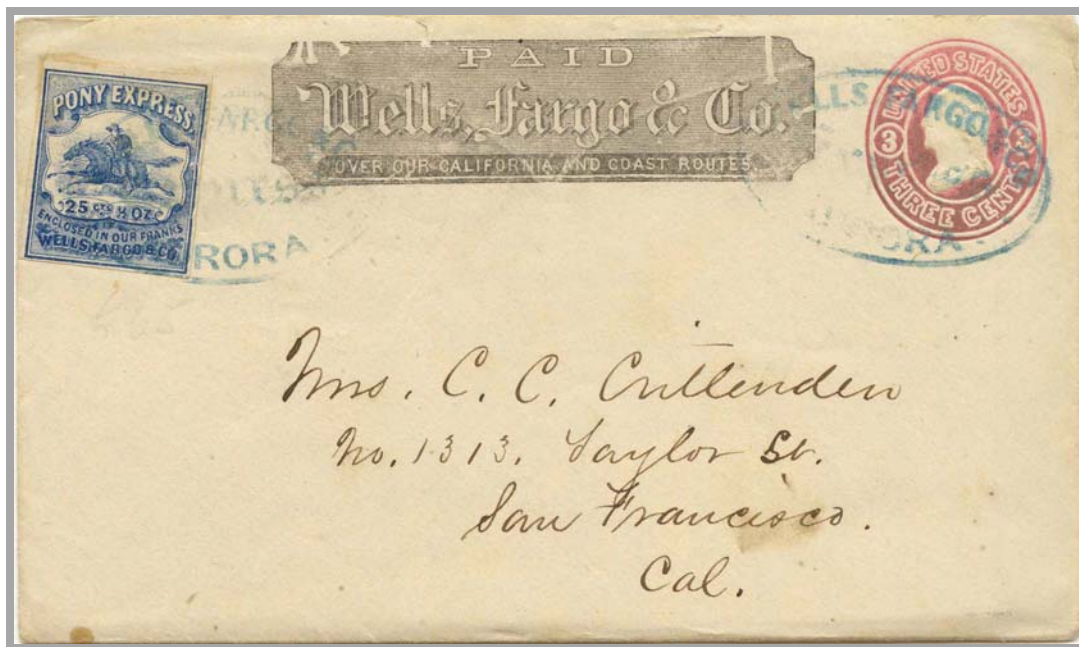
10¢ brown is the rarest of the Virginia City Pony Express stamps

Regional West Coast Routes

Nevada Expresses: August 1862 - March 1865



In February 1863, the Virginia City Pony Express rates were increased to 25¢, in addition to normal 10¢ Wells Fargo express fees.



Dated *Aurora (Nevada Territory)* April 24th (1863) and entrusted to Wells Fargo pony express
25¢ blue pony express stamp used from February 1863 to February 1864 - replaced by 25¢ red



Carried by Wells Fargo pony express from San Francisco to Gold Hill on June 1, 1863
10¢ Wells Fargo entire included 3¢ US postage, even though post office did not handle the mail

Regional West Coast Routes

Nevada Expresses: August 1862 - March 1865



The Virginia City Pony Express 25¢ red stamp was used from March 1864 to March 1865. There was no service August-December 1864.



Carried by Wells Fargo pony express from Virginia City to San Francisco on February 9, 1865



Dated *San Francisco Jan 25 1865* and entrusted to Wells Fargo pony express to Carson City
Wells Fargo sold franked all-over advertising envelopes for an extra penny, or 11¢ each

Regional West Coast Routes

Nevada Expresses: August 1862 – March 1865



Wells Fargo's Virginia City Pony Express was intended for mail between San Francisco and Nevada Territory. It could also be used as the first leg of an overland trip to the East.



Entrusted to Wells Fargo in San Francisco on February 3, 1865 - **addressed to Philadelphia**

By Pony Express to Virginia City - forwarded overland via Austin, N.T. on February 6

The 25¢ stamp paid for expedited delivery over the western leg of the trip to the East

Only known transcontinental Virginia City Pony Express cover

Regional West Coast Routes

Nevada Expresses: August 1862 - March 1865



The Virginia City Pony Express used 10¢ imprinted envelopes as paste-backs for over-sized mail from San Francisco. Fewer than 10 are known.



10¢ blue imprint used as paste-back from San Francisco on March 29, 1863



10¢ red imprint used as paste-back from San Francisco on April 21, 1863

Regional West Coast Routes

Nevada Expresses: July-August 1864



Langton's Pioneer Express operated a pony express service into the Humboldt district from July 5 to August 13, 1864. The extra fee was paid by a 25¢ adhesive stamp on a Langton franked envelope incorporating 3¢ US postage.



Carried by **Langton's Pioneer Express** from Unionville, Nevada Territory to Bidwell's Bar, CA
25¢ brown Humboldt Express stamp added to Langton's franked envelope with 3¢ US postage
Langton operated between Marysville and Nevada Territory from December 1858 to August 1864

Fewer than ten 25¢ Humboldt Express stamps are known on cover