California Private Mails, 1849 to 1856

The California Private Mails, as defined here, were a group of privately owned firms that handled letter mail and newspapers to, from, or within California. They include the California expresses that transported mails to and within locales in California as well as local posts and the San Francisco letter bag operators who arranged transmission of mail by others.

This study deals with the mail systems and companies in operation prior to December 31, 1855. That date serves as a defined endpoint for the pioneer period as patterns of express activity changed significantly following the collapse of Adams Express, the dominant single express, in February 1855. The Pacific Express and other express companies arose from the collapse of Adams, and the age of Wells, Fargo & Co. domination began. Also, by 1856, the government postal system was able to provide reliable and inexpensive postal services to most areas of California.

This article will examine the different types of California private mail companies that operated in the period before the government post office was able to effectively serve California postal patrons. Although mail carrying was of minor importance to the vast majority of these companies who could make larger profits carrying gold and supplies, it was necessary as the communication component of the system. These express companies carried mail on ocean to ocean routes by steamship, on inland waterways by steamboats, and on mountain and landlocked division routes by stagecoach or on horseback. Working in conjunction when necessary, these diverse elements together formed a complex transportation system. It is this scheme, viewed as an integrated transportation and distribution system, that will be examined.

Background

Following the discovery of gold in California in 1848, massive immigration began when news of the discoveries reached the East. When William Van Voorhies, Special Post Office Agent for California and Oregon, arrived in the burgeoning city of San Francisco on February 28, 1849, he faced the impossible task of setting up postal facilities in a timely fashion. He had been instructed to set up coastal post offices in California which could be visited by the contract mail steamers.

Van Voorhies, as well as his successor R.T.P. Allen, faced a major problem; the cost of goods and services in California was vastly higher than in the East. Even though the agents were able to appoint postmasters in several towns, they were not able to secure contractors to carry the mail for the meager pay allowed. Congress, a distant 3500 miles away, had to approve mail transportation contracts for all routes that produced insufficient revenue. As a result, mails could not be transported within California until Congress could pass new legislation. Before any approved route contracts could be implemented, the contracts had to be advertised for bid, the contracts awarded and the news relayed back to California.

The mails that arrived by contract steamer at the San Francisco post office had to be distributed to patrons directly from their small office. Similarly, all mail destined for the East had to pass through the same post office in order to be placed on the next mail steamer out. It was not possible to serve that many postal patrons effectively from such a small office with the bulk of the demand concentrated on steamers' arrival or departure dates.

The residents of California located in San Francisco as well as over a vast interior area sought other solutions and were willing to pay for them. As a result, the postal needs of the population were met by private firms and individuals from an early date and the popular and efficient express services continued well beyond the establishment of the post offices.

The situation was well summarized in an article that appeared in the July 27, 1850 issue of the San Francisco newspaper *Daily Alta California*:

> *EXPRESS COMPANIES - We scarcely know what we should do if it were not for the various Express lines established, enabling us to hold communication with the Mines. With the present defective mail communication we should scarcely ever be able to hear from the towns throughout California, or the remote portions of the Placers, north and south. Our enterprising Express agents however supply the deficiency, and the promptitude with which they attend the transmission of letters and packages, and the fidelity with which they conduct all business entrusted to them, are justly entitled to the confidence and support of the community. Their expenses are necessarily very heavy and it requires a liberal patronage to remunerate them. Hawley & Co., Todd & Bryan and Berford & Co., are the three lines holding communication with different sections of the country. We commend them all to the liberal patronage of the public, and beg to acknowledge to all of them our indebtedness for numerous acts of kindness and courtesy.*

The Transportation Schema

In this pioneer period, the transportation system expanded geographically and evolved slowly but the primary routes and basic transportation methods remained constant. For westbound mail from the East addressed to a miner at one of the mining camps near Sacramento City, the first leg was the ocean to ocean service. This included transit from an eastern port, via steamship (defined here to include all ocean-going, steam powered vessels) operating on the Atlantic Ocean. Then came land transit across Panama or Nicaragua if needed, and finally by steamship operating on the Pacific Ocean to San Francisco. A distinct group of expresses, classified here as the *ocean to ocean expresses*, provided this service.

The second leg on the journey, after arrival of the mail at San Francisco, was the onward transmission by steamboat up the Sacramento River to one of the major distribution points along the waterway, in this example Sacramento City. A second group of expresses provided the requisite steamboat service and are classified as *trunk line expresses*. There were four early ports that served as divisional distribution points (see Figure 1): San Francisco, Stockton, Sacramento, and Marysville. Shasta developed into an additional division point and was reached by a combination of steamboat and stage routes.

The steamboat service from San Francisco to the Stockton division point traversed San Francisco Bay and Delta to the Sacramento River. Other division points were reached via the Sacramento River to Sacramento City and north past its confluence with the American River to Marysville where the

Figure 1. Map of rivers and division points

Yuba River joins the Feather River. Shasta was first reached by stagecoach route from Marysville and later by steamboat to Colusa and then by stage.

The third leg on the journey was from the division point to the addressee if he were located outside the distribution center. Mail was distributed by various means including on foot, by horse, by stage, or by a combination of these transportation modes. This group of expresses is classified here as *divisional expresses*. Each division point served a unique geographical area or division.

As the transportation network matured, some of the companies began operating on more than one of the three segments. The successful ocean to ocean expresses made substantially larger profits than the trunk line expresses which, in turn, made more money than the divisional expresses. This was usually in proportion to the amount of gold each bloc of expresses was handling, as well as the amount of financial services that they offered. In an effort to assure their continued supply line of gold from the mines, the ocean to ocean expresses made alliances, usually exclusive, with the trunk line expresses and even the divisional expresses. As the disparity in profits increased, the larger firms often purchased the feeder trunk line and divisional expresses. Usually, what was formerly the express firm became an agent for the larger company and continued as an integral part of the transportation scheme. As a result, the three-tier model still works well conceptually. Each of the three major components of the transportation system can now be described in more detail.

Summary

The private mail-handling companies provided a range of services that were vital to the growth of California in the period between 1849 and 1856. In addition to banking and the carriage of gold and express matter, this group of companies provided reliable letter mail communication to the residents in the period before efficient government postal service was available.

This schema combines different types companies with correspondingly different modes of service over extended routes. Three main categories of company type can be identified: companies that provided ocean to ocean service by steamship, companies that operated over the trunk line by steamboat to the division points, and a third group of companies that operated from one of the five division points to a regional service area. This overview of the interaction between the various types of private companies, as well as their interaction with the government postal service, helps to understand the disparate elements that combined to result in an effective commuinication system in the pioneer period.

This display is organized on the following plan:.

I. The Ocean to Ocean Expresses: This group of firms operated between California and the East using steamships. Many employed express agents onboard the vessels to accompany shipments.

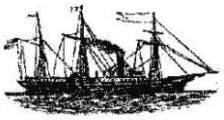
II. Trunk Route Expresses: This group operated by steamboat on the main waterway trunk route that connected the division points.

III. The Divisional Express: This group operated between the major division points and the mining areas and towns in their division. The division points were San Francisco, Stockton, Sacramento, Marysville and Shasta.

IV. California Local Posts: In the pioneer period before 1857 there were very few mail delivery services available to a physical address as most mail was picked up at express offices. A few expresses did provide this additional service as a local post.

V. San Francisco Letter Bag Operators: These copmanies, mostly operated by news agencies, received mail for carriage on the next available steamer. Mail was given to the ship pursers, or to the post office, for onward transmission.

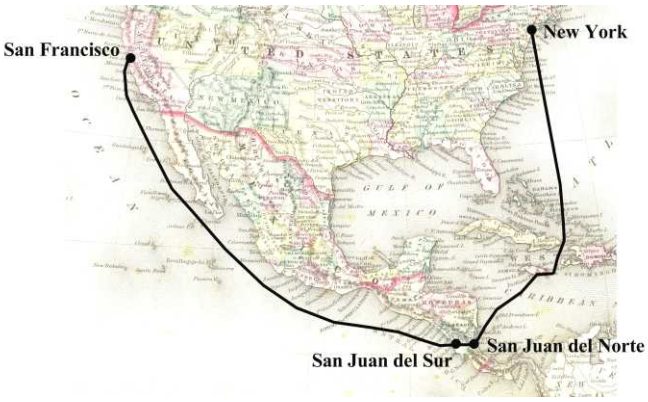
The Ocean to Ocean Expresses



This group of express companies includes those firms that operated between San Francisco and the East. Although this link in the transportation system was utilized primarily to transport gold from the California mines to New York, mail was also carried. These private firms (denoted by steamship icon) operated on all available steamships operating over the via Panama and via Nicaragua routes.

Some steamship lines received private mails directly for transmission in addition to mail carried by express agents. The via Nicaragua route was never used for contract mails, while the via Panama route was used both by the post office as a contract route and as a route for private express mail.

The Via Nicaragua Route - Cornelius Vanderbilt founded his Independent Line with the intent to operate a passenger and mail route across Nicaragua in opposition to the contract mail steamers operating via Panama to California. He chose the route because it was substantially faster than the longer contract route. The route was by steamer from New York to San Juan del Norte on the Mosquito Coast of Nicaragua, by river to Lake Nicaragua, across the lake to Rivas, by stage to San Juan del Sur and by steamer to San Francisco.



via Nicaragua route map

Use of the route decreased after filibuster William Walker's incursion into Nicaragua in 1855 and the route was abandoned in early 1857. Later, Vanderbilt extorted a monthly stipend from the companies that held the via Panama mail contracts and his Accessory Transit Company ceased to operate.

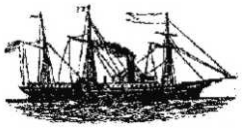
All mail carried over this route was carried privately and did not enter the government mails until an entry port was reached after the ocean to ocean transport was complete.

The Via Panama Route - The most important government mail contract route connecting California and the East was the route, via the Isthmus of Panama, between San Francisco and New York. This route carried the majority of government mail during the period between 1849 and the July 1, 1861. In addition to the contract mails carried on the via Panama route, some transcontinental private express companies used their own, or the same contract steamers to carry their agents, often accompanied by express mail bags, over the same route.

via Panama route map

There were three segments to the route. The United States Mail Steamship Company (USMSC) held the contract for mail on the Atlantic side with service from New York to Chagres commencing on October 1, 1848. With the opening of nearby Aspinwall the port was changed in March 1852. The Pacific Mail Steamship Company (PMSS) held the contract for mail on the Pacific Ocean. Their service on the Pacific commenced with January 17, 1849 departure of PMSS steamer *California* from Panama City with mail for San Francisco. The third section of the seventy mile trail across the Isthmus of Panama connected the two ocean mail routes. Original service was provided by the PMSS but on January 1, 1852 the transit contract was given to the Panama Railroad Company. The railway was completed in January 1855.

Adams & Co's Express (Nov 1849 - Feb 1855)



ocean to ocean

D.W. Haskell was sent by Adams & Co's Express to organize a California operation for banking and the safe transmission of gold between California and New York. He arrived in San Francisco on October 31, 1849. The new branch of the nationwide Adams Express company quickly became the leading express throughout California by expanding routes and purchasing smaller express companies. On February 23, 1855 Adams & Co's Express closed their California operations as a result of a financial and banking crisis.

ADAMS & CO.'S

NEXT WEEKLY EXPRESS,
FOR THE ATLANTIC STATES
AND EUROPE, will be despatched by the steamship **CALIFORNIA,**
R. L. WHITING, Esq., Commander.
From San Francisco, **Wednesday, June 1st, at 9 o'clock, A. M.**
In charge of our regular through messenger.
TREASURE received for shipment at this office, until 1 o'clock, P. M., on TUESDAY, the 31st inst.

Highest price paid for Gold Dust.
EXPRESS daily to San Francisco and all the principal towns in the State.
my25 ADAMS & CO., No. 7 J st.

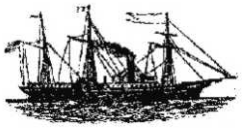
Adams & Co's Express advertisement
for this trip of PMSS *California*
May 25 1853 *Daily Alta*

per Str. "California" to Panama
thence via N. York
p Adams Co's Express
to be Mailed in N. York
Daniel Gift Esqr
care Messrs John Kean & Co
100 Queen St
Glasgow
24
NEW-YORK
PKT

1 June 1853 San Francisco carried out of the mails by Adams Express to New York, thence by mail to Glasgow endorsed by sender: *per Str 'California' to Panama, thence via N. York, p Adams Cos Express to be mailed in N. York*
2 July 1853 placed in mails in New York by Adams Express to Glasgow, Scotland, 4/- due

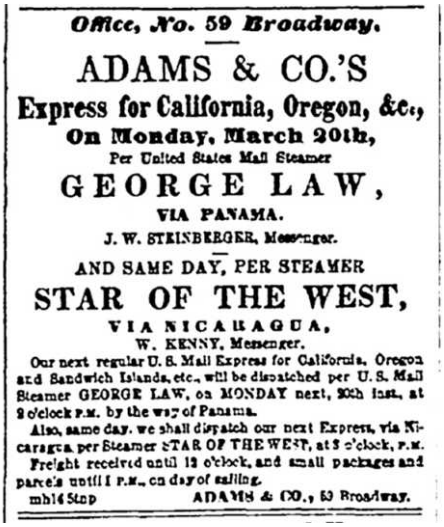
Waybill (via Panama)		
depart San Francisco Jun 1 1853	PMSS steamer *Columbus*	arrive Panama City Jun 16 1853
across Isthmus of Panama from Panama City to Aspinwall		
depart Aspinwall Jun 19 1853	USMSC steamer *Georgia*	arrive New York Jun 29 1853
placed in mail at New York by Adam's Express for carriage to Great Britain		
depart New York Jul 2 1853	Havre Line steamer *Humboldt*	arrive Southampton Jul 13 1853

Adams & Co's Express (Nov 1849 - Feb 1855)



ocean to ocean

For Adams & Co's Express main entry, see previous page. This cover was carried east to west via Nicaragua while previous was carried west to east via Panama. Advertisement below lists both options for Isthmus carriage from New York.



Office, No. 59 Broadway.

ADAMS & CO.'S

Express for California, Oregon, &c.,

On Monday, March 20th,

Per United States Mail Steamer

GEORGE LAW,

VIA PANAMA.

J. W. STEINBERGER, Messenger.

AND SAME DAY, PER STEAMER

STAR OF THE WEST,

VIA NICARAGUA,

W. KENNY, Messenger.

Our next regular U. S. Mail Express for California, Oregon and Sandwich Islands, etc., will be dispatched per U. S. Mail Steamer GEORGE LAW, on MONDAY next, 20th inst., at 2 o'clock P.M. by the way of Panama.

Also, same day, we shall dispatch our next Express, via Nicaragua, per Steamer STAR OF THE WEST, at 3 o'clock, P.M.

Freight received until 12 o'clock, and small packages and parcels until 1 P.M., on day of sailing.

mh16 5tsp ADAMS & CO., 59 Broadway.

Adams & Co's Express advertisement for this trip of *Star of the West* in Mar 17 1854 (New York) *Evening Post*

20 March 1854 New York to Stockton out of the mails by Adam's Express, 6¢ postage prepaid as required

"NICARAGUA LINE IN ADVANCE OF THE MAILS" handstamp applied at Adam's New York office

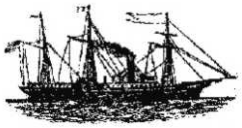
Adams' & Co's San Francisco transit datestamp and taken by them to Stockton

fewer than ten reported examples of this oval marking

Waybill (via Nicaragua)		
depart New York Mar 20 1854	Vanderbilt Line steamer *Star of the West*	arrive San Juan Del Norte Mar 30 1854
across Nicaragua from San Juan Del Norte to San Juan del Sur		
depart San Juan del Sur Apr 2 1854	Vanderbilt Line steamer *Cortes*	arrive San Francisco Apr 6 1854

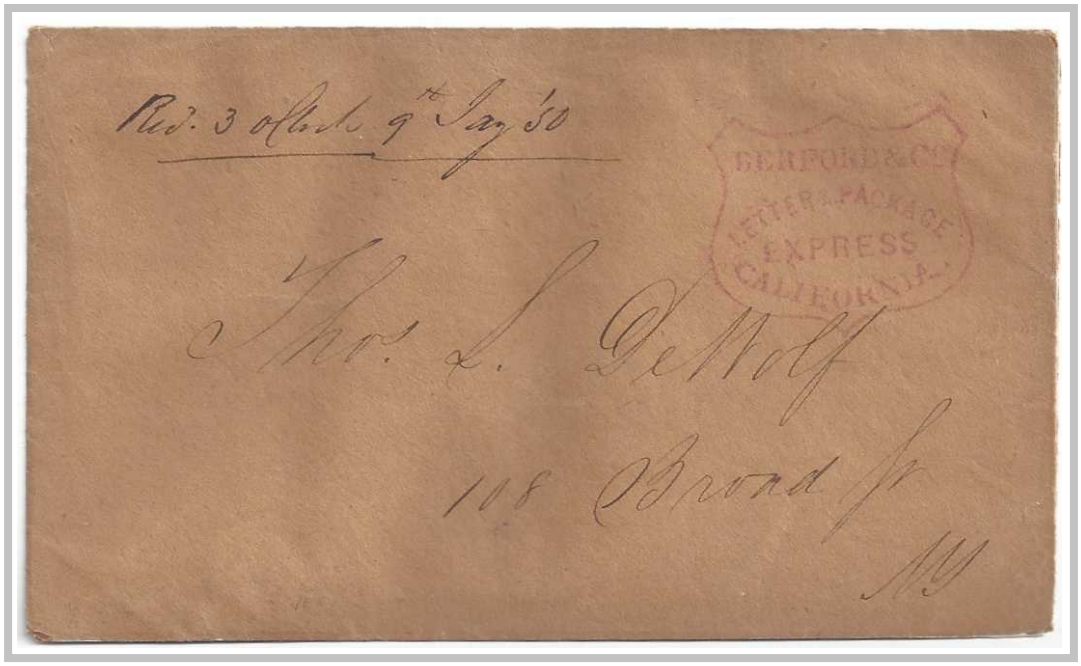
ex Haas and Walske

Berford & Co's Express (1849 - Feb 1855)



ocean to ocean

Berford & Co's Letter & Package Express was founded by Richard G. Berford in the fall of 1849 after his arrival in San Francisco on May 8. The express operated between coasts and advertised agents on all Pacific and Atlantic steamers. A December 1849 advertisement listed offices in San Francisco, Sacramento City (T. J. Bayless), San Jose (Plitt), and Stockton. In December 1850 they began advertising as the only express operating to San Jose. The last California advertisement for his ocean to ocean service appeared on February 26, 1855.



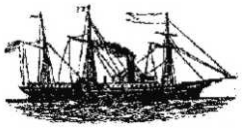
(November 2, 1849) San Francisco by Berford & Co's Letter & Package Express to New York company shield handstamp, docketed as received in New York January 9, 1850

the earliest of five reported covers bearing this first handstamp of the company

Waybill (via Panama)		
depart San Francisco Nov 2 1849	PMSS steamer *California*	arrive Panama City Nov 22 1849
across Isthmus of Panama from Panama City to Chagres		
depart Chagres Nov 27 1849	USMSC steamer *Falcon*	arrive Havana Jan 3 1850
depart Havana Jan 3 1850	USMSC steamer *Ohio*	arrive New York Jan 8 1850

ex Clifford, Vogel and Walske

Palmer & Co's Express (Mar 1850 - Dec 1851)



ocean to ocean

Palmer & Co's Express was founded by Cyrus S. Palmer in New York on March 7, 1850. The express operated between coasts and briefly advertised offices in Sacramento and Marysville. The last mention found appears in the New York *Weekly Herald* of December 6, 1851 thanking the company for papers received.

12 November 1850 from San Francisco to New York by Palmer & Co's Express
endorsed to be carried by a friend on the George Law's Pacific Line steamer *Antelope* (first return voyage)
instead, carried by Palmer's agent on the PMSS steamer *Tennessee* that departed November 15, 1850

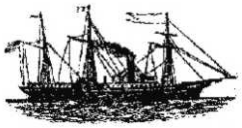
letter mentions: *I should not write before the 15th* (steamer day) *but a friend Mr. Henry B McIlvain .... is returning .. the steamer by which he goes, the* Antelope, *leaves this afternoon at 3 o'clock.*

three reported examples of the Palmer shield marking, two in black and one in red

Waybill (via Panama)		
depart San Francisco Nov 15 1850	PMSS steamer *Tennessee*	arrive Panama City Dec 1 1850
across Isthmus of Panama from Panama City to Chagres		
depart Chagres Dec 10 1850	USMSC steamer *Pacific*	arrive Havana Dec 15 1850
depart Havana Dec 18 1850	USMSC steamer *Ohio*	arrive New York Jan 5 1851

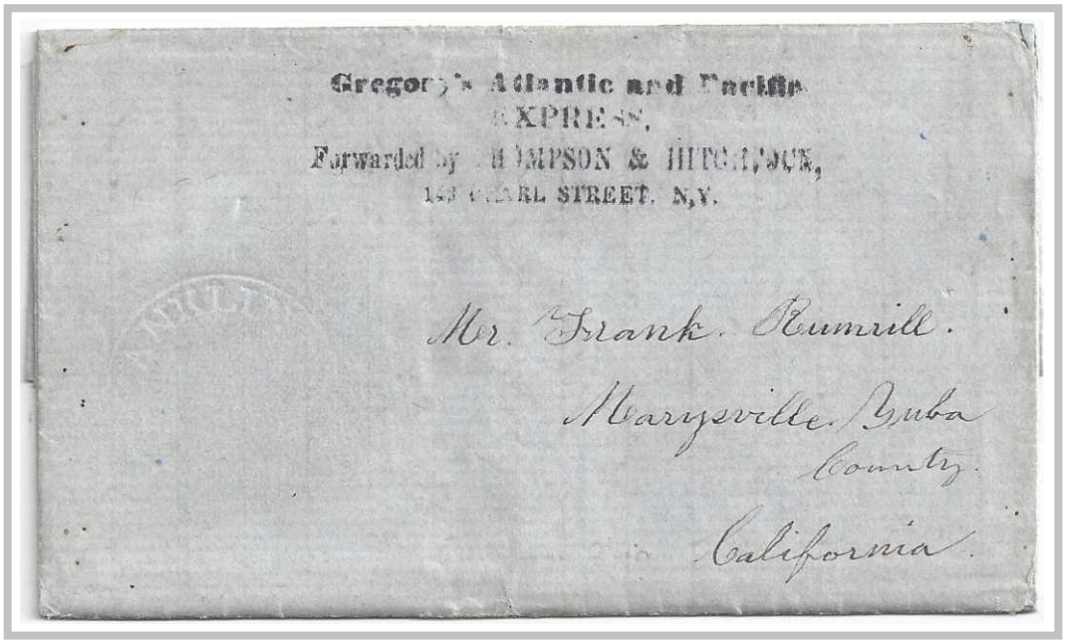
ex Pearce and Walske

Gregory's Atlantic & Pacific Express (Apr 1850 - Nov 1852)



ocean to ocean

Gregory's Atlantic & Pacific Express was founded by Joseph W. Gregory initially as an ocean to ocean express. His advertisement, under the name of "Gregory's New York Express" of April 18, 1850 in *Daily Alta California* mentions that he has secured W.S. Sloan to act as a messenger to New York. By August 1850, Hitchcock is listed as agent in New York City and on October 31, 1851 G. E. Clark is listed as an agent in Sacramento. His service eventually expanded within California to Marysville and his ocean service was advertised as the only express on the Nicaragua route. Gregory quietly sold his express business to Wells Fargo & Co. in 1852 and his last advertisement appeared in the November 20, 1852 *Daily Alta California*.



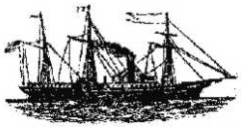
28 October 1851 Franklin, Ohio to Marysville by Gregory's Express
their four line handstamp with "Forwarded by THOMPSON & HITCHCOCK" and New York address
letter addressed to Frank Rumrill, Gregory's agent at Marysville and later an independent express operator

fewer than fifteen reported examples of this marking

Waybill (via Panama)		
depart New York Nov 6 1851	USMSC steamer *Cherokee*	arrive Chagres Nov 18 1851
across Isthmus of Panama from Chagres to Panama City		
depart Panama City Nov 26 1851	PMSS steamer *Columbus*	arrive San Francisco Dec 12 1851

ex Lichtenstein, Lowe, Vogel and Walske

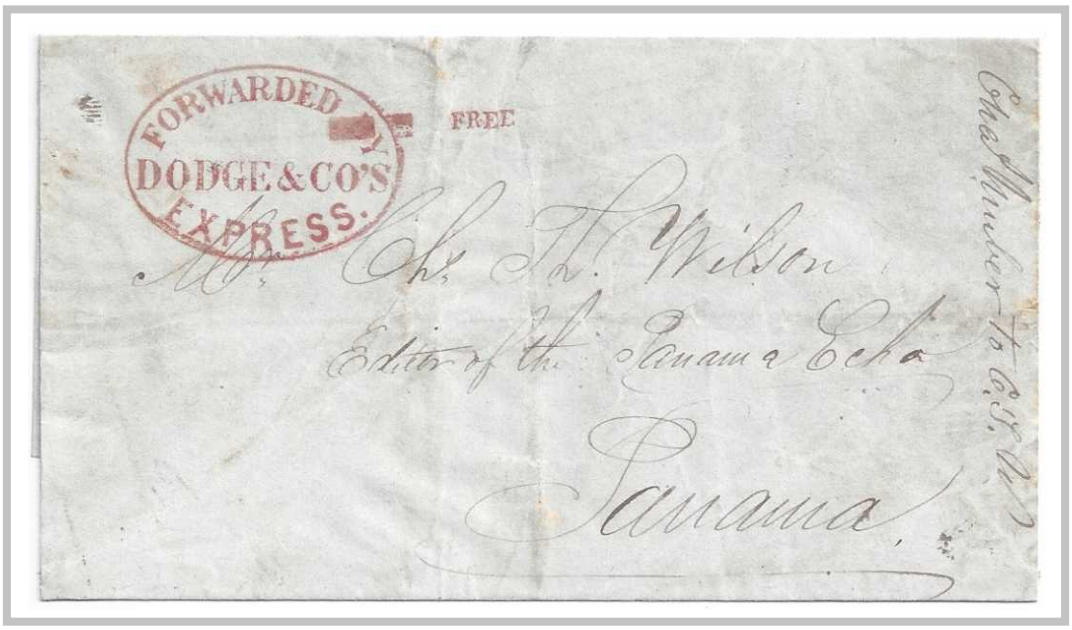
Dodge & Co's Express (Oct 1850 - Aug 1851)



ocean to ocean

Dodge & Co's Express first advertised their express service on the ocean to ocean route on October 14, 1850 and their last advertisement appeared on August 4, 1851. They served as agents for Mumby & Co's Express in San Francisco and arranged shipments of gold and letters, via Panama, to the East.

view of Panama City



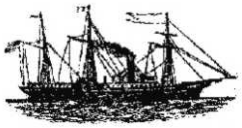
circa May 1851 San Francisco by Dodge & Co's Express to Panama
their company oval and "FREE" handstamp, addressed to the editor of the *Panama Echo*

Express companies often carried letters and newspapers free to editors of newspapers who in return were expected to thank the express company in print for supplying the current news.

two reported covers bear the company handstamp

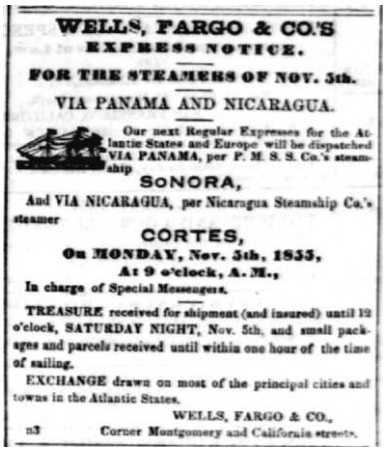
ex Haas, Edwards and Walske

Wells, Fargo & Co's Express (Jul 1852 - present)



ocean to ocean

The famous bank and nationwide express was formed by Henry Wells and William Fargo on March 18, 1852. Agents of the new firm arrived in California in July 1852. Service within California, as well as to the Atlantic, utilizing both via Panama and via Nicaragua routes, were important elements of their success. With the collapse of Adams & Company in February 1855, and after surviving the financial panic of that year, Wells Fargo emerged as the dominant banking force and leader in the express business.



WELLS, FARGO & CO.'S
EXPRESS NOTICE.

FOR THE STEAMERS OF NOV. 5th.

VIA PANAMA AND NICARAGUA.

Our next Regular Expresses for the Atlantic States and Europe will be dispatched VIA PANAMA, per P. M. S. S. Co.'s steamship

SONORA,

And VIA NICARAGUA, per Nicaragua Steamship Co.'s steamer

CORTES,

On MONDAY, Nov. 5th, 1855,
At 9 o'clock, A. M.,
In charge of Special Messengers.

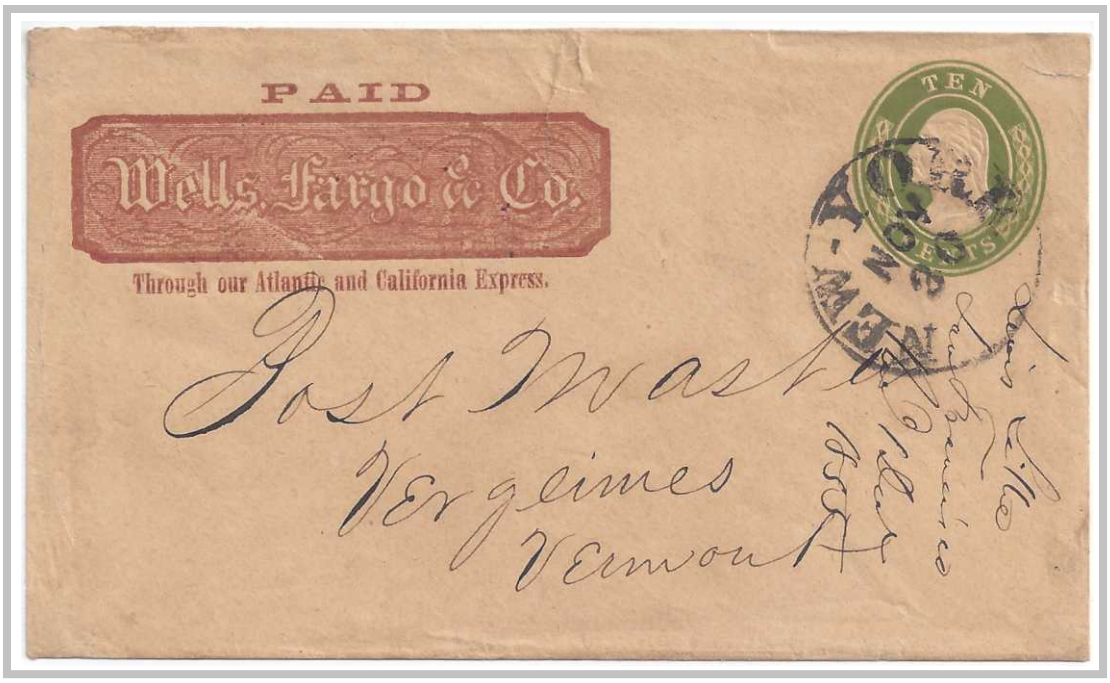
TREASURE received for shipment (and insured) until 12 o'clock, SATURDAY NIGHT, Nov. 5th, and small packages and parcels received until within one hour of the time of sailing.

EXCHANGE drawn on most of the principal cities and towns in the Atlantic States.

WELLS, FARGO & CO.,
n3 Corner Montgomery and California streets.

Wells, Fargo & Co's advertisement
for this trip of PMSS *Sonora*
in Nov 3 1855 *Daily Alta*

Note that this advertisement also includes
service via Nicaragua.

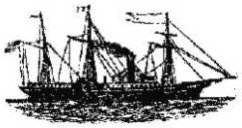


5 November 1855 San Francisco carried out of the mails by Wells, Fargo to New York
Wells, Fargo frank, first type with "PAID" above box, on 10¢ entire
30 November 1855 entered the mails in New York for mail service to Vergennes, Vermont

Waybill (via Panama)		
depart San Francisco Nov 5 1855	PMSS steamer *Sonora*	arrive Panama City Nov 18 1855
across Isthmus of Panama from Panama City to Aspinwall		
depart Aspinwall Nov 20 1855	USMSC steamer *George Law*	arrive New York Nov 30 1855

ex Parsons Todd

Wells, Fargo & Co's Express (Jul 1852 - present)



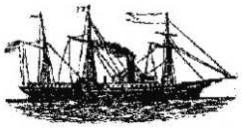
ocean to ocean

1856 San Francisco carried out of the mails by Wells, Fargo to New York and by mail "DEC 28" to Indiana
Wells, Fargo frank, second type with "PAID" inside box, on 10¢ entire

San Francisco carried out of the mails by Wells, Fargo to New York and by mail "JAN 30" (1857) to Ohio
Wells, Fargo frank, second type with "PAID" inside box, on 10¢ entire

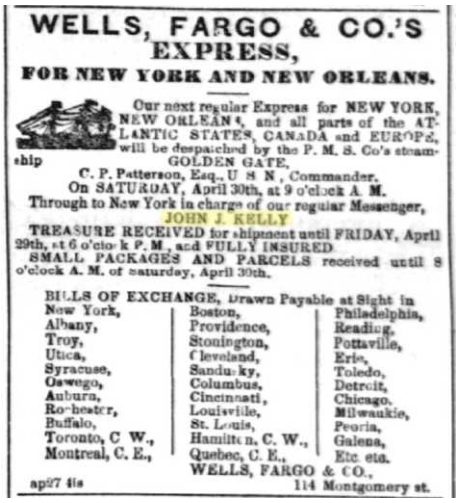
ex Whitington

Wells, Fargo & Co's Express (Jul 1852 - present)



ocean to ocean

John J. Kelly is listed in Wells, Fargo & Co. advertisements appearing in San Francisco between 1852 and 1853 as their "regular messenger" on Pacific Mail Company Steamship Company (PMSS) steamers operating between San Francisco and Panama. The steamship marking has previously been thought to have been applied aboard steamboats operating on the Sacramento River.



WELLS, FARGO & CO.'S
EXPRESS,
FOR NEW YORK AND NEW ORLEANS.

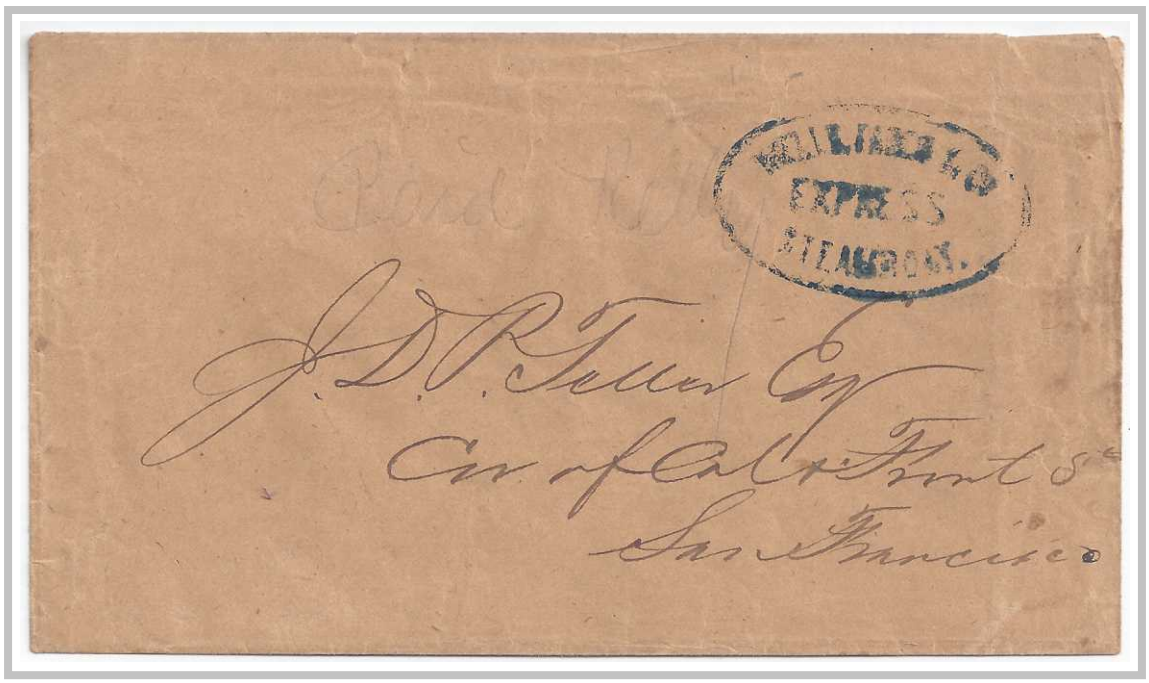
Our next regular Express for NEW YORK, NEW ORLEANS, and all parts of the ATLANTIC STATES, CANADA and EUROPE, will be despatched by the P. M. S. Co's steamship GOLDEN GATE,
C. P. Patterson, Esq., U S N, Commander,
On SATURDAY, April 30th, at 9 o'clock A. M.
Through to New York in charge of our regular Messenger,
JOHN J. KELLY
TREASURE RECEIVED for shipment until FRIDAY, April 29th, at 6 o'clock P. M., and FULLY INSURED
SMALL PACKAGES AND PARCELS received until 8 o'clock A. M. of Saturday, April 30th.

BILLS OF EXCHANGE, Drawn Payable at Sight in

New York,	Boston,	Philadelphia,
Albany,	Providence,	Reading,
Troy,	Stonington,	Pottsville,
Utica,	Cleveland,	Erie,
Syracuse,	Sandusky,	Toledo,
Oswego,	Columbus,	Detroit,
Auburn,	Cincinnati,	Chicago,
Rochester,	Louisville,	Milwaukie,
Buffalo,	St. Louis,	Peoria,
Toronto, C W.,	Hamilton, C. W.,	Galena,
Montreal, C. E.,	Quebec, C. E.,	Etc. etc.

WELLS, FARGO & CO.,
114 Montgomery st.
ap27 4is

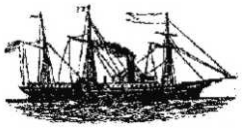
John J. Kelly listed as Wells, Fargo "regular messenger" on PMSS steamship in April 28, 1853 *Daily Alta* advertisement



circa 1853 (onboard PMSS steamship) to San Francisco by Wells Fargo & Co's Express endorsed "**Paid Kelly**" by the express agent traveling on the PMSS steamer to San Francisco "WELLS, FARGO EXPRESS STEAMBOAT" earliest style steamboat handstamp

ex Barkhausen, Clifford and Whitington

Vanderbilt Independent Line (Aug 1853 - Sep 1854)



ocean to ocean

The Vanderbilt's Independent Opposition Line operated steamships on both the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans between August 17, 1853 and September 1, 1854. This cover was carried on the last trip from San Francisco to Panama by the *Uncle Sam* as advertised. However, the *North Star* had been sold to the US Mail Steamship Co on September 5 in New York City. The private mails were taken to Nicaragua and then carried by Vanderbilt's Independent Line steamer *Prometheus* from Nicaragua to New York.

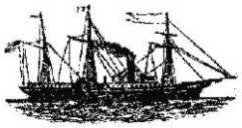
1 September 1854 San Francisco to New York out of the mails by Independent Line, 6¢ postage prepaid
"INDEPENDENT LINE AHEAD OF THE MAILS, UNCLE SAM AND NORTH STAR VIA PANAMA" handstamp
27 September 1854 entered mails in New York for carriage to Warren, Maine

carried on the last trip of the Independent Line from California

Waybill (via Panama and Nicaragua)		
depart San Francisco Sep 1, 1854	Vanderbilt Line steamer *Uncle Sam*	arrive Panama Sep 15, 1854
across Isthmus of Panama from Panama City to Aspinwall and to San Juan del Norte, Nicaragua		
depart San Juan del Norte Sep 18, 1854	Vanderbilt Line steamer *Prometheus*	arrive New York Sep 25, 1854

ex Meir

J. Hawes & Co's S.F. & N.Y. Express (Dec 1854 - Sep 1855)



ocean to ocean

J. Hawes and Co's San Francisco & New York Express was formed by Joseph Hawes and Charles Lumbard on December 13, 1854. They advertised for the Vanderbilt Independent Line steamer *Cortes* that departed on March 25, 1855 (cover below carried on this trip). Their last ad appeared on September 4, 1855.

J. HAWES & CO.'S
NEW YORK AND SAN FRANCISCO
EXPRESS.

OUR NEXT REGULAR EXPRESS will be dispatched via NICARAGUA, per
Steamship
CORTES,
T. B. CROPPER, Esq., Commander,
On SATURDAY, MARCH 24th,
At 9 o'clock A.M.,
In charge of T. GILES, regular messenger through to New York and back
Small Packages, Parcels and Letters received at our Office, (Nicaragua Steamship Co.'s Building,) corner of Sacramento and Leidesdorff streets, until within half an hour of the sailing of the steamer.
m22 J. HAWES & CO.

this trip ad Mar 22 1855 *Daily Alta*

backstamp

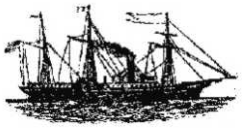
24 March 1855 San Francisco to New York out of the mails by Hawes & Co's Express, double 6¢ postage prepaid
15 April 1855 entered mails with "N. YORK STEAMSHIP" postmarks for carriage to West Brook, Connecticut

four reported examples of this express

Waybill (via Nicaragua)		
depart San Francisco Mar 24, 1855	Vanderbilt Line steamer *Cortes*	arrive San Juan del Sur Apr 6, 1855
across Nicaragua to San Juan del Norte		
depart San Juan del Norte Apr 8, 1855	Vanderbilt Line steamer *Northern Light*	arrive New York Apr 15, 1855

ex Vogel and Walske

J. Hawes & Co's S.F. & N.Y. Express (Dec 1854 - Sep 1855)



ocean to ocean

J. Hawes and Co's San Francisco & New York Express was formed by Joseph Hawes and Charles Lumbard on December 13, 1854. Although the express advertised to carry express matter on via Panama as well as via Nicaragua, the reported uses on cover were all carried via Nicaragua.

J. HAWES & CO.'S
NEW YORK AND SAN FRANCISCO EXPRESS.

OUR NEXT REGULAR EXPRESS will be dispatched via NICARAGUA, by the

Steamship
UNCLE SAM,
C. H. BALDWIN, Esq., Commander,
On MONDAY, APRIL 9th,
At 9 o'clock A.M.,

In charge of a regular messenger through to New York.
Small Packages, Parcels and Letters received at our Office, (Nicaragua Steamship Co.'s Building,) corner of Sacramento and Leidesdorff streets, until within half an hour of the sailing of the steamer.

ap4 J. HAWES & CO.

this trip advertised in April 7, 1855 *Daily Alta*

backstamp

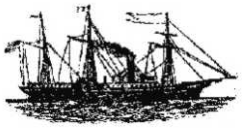
9 April 1855 San Francisco to New York out of the mails by Hawes & Co's Express, 6¢ postage prepaid
3 May 1855 entered mails with "NEW YORK SHIP" postmark for carriage to Boston

four reported examples of this express

Waybill (via Nicaragua)		
depart San Francisco Apr 9, 1855	Vanderbilt Line steamer *Uncle Sam*	arrive San Juan del Sur Apr 21, 1855
across Nicaragua to San Juan del Norte		
depart San Juan del Norte Apr 23, 1855	Vanderbilt Line steamer *Star of the West*	arrive New York May 2, 1855

ex Knapp, Barkhausen and Whitington

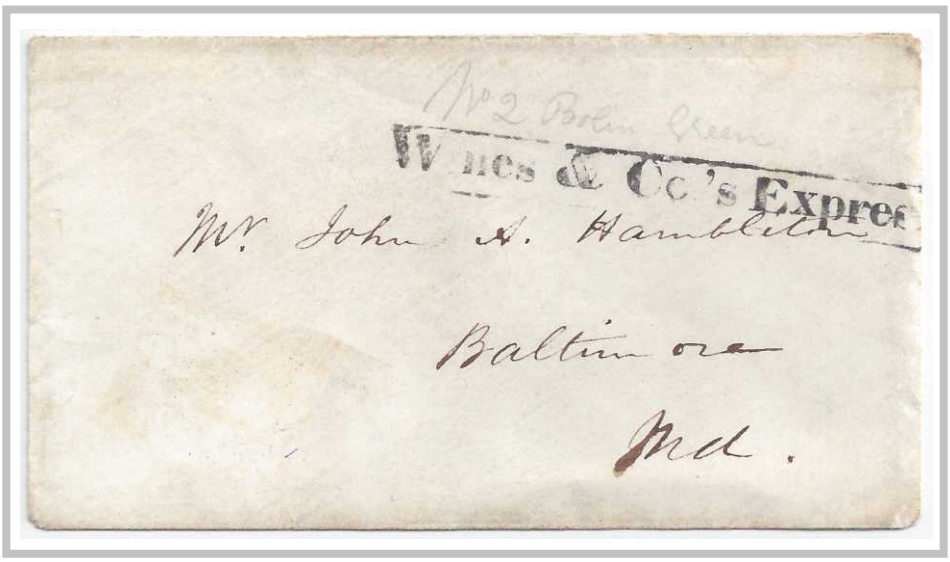
G.H. Wines & Co's Express (1855 - 1857)



ocean to ocean

G. H. Wines express was founded in 1855. In addition to service to mining areas from their office in San Francisco, the company developed a transatlantic service. They were the primary transport for Walker's filibuster troops to Nicaragua and evidently hoped to gain special access across Nicaragua had Walker been successful in his take-over attempt. They were out of business by mid 1857.

backstamp



31 January 1856 San Francisco to Baltimore, Maryland out of the mails by Wines & Co's Express
"G.H. WINES & CO'S, CALIFORNIA EXPRESS, No. 2 BOWLING GREEN, NEW-YORK" blue transit backstamp
28 February 1856 sent under cover from New York office to Baltimore for delivery

fewer than four reported examples of Wines New York Office handstamp

Waybill (via Nicaragua)		
depart San Francisco Feb 4, 1856	Vanderbilt Line steamer *Cortes*	arrive San Juan del Sur Feb 16, 1856
across Nicaragua to San Juan del Norte		
depart San Juan del Norte Feb 19, 1856	Vanderbilt Line steamer *Star of the West*	arrive New York Feb 28, 1856

ex Whitington

The Trunk Route Expresses

steamboat *Senator* at Sacramento City in 1849

This group of express companies (denoted by a steamboat icon) includes those firms that operated by steamboat connecting the four major division points. A minor division point, Shasta, required transportation by steamboat and stagecoach. The main routes are shown in map below in red.

The primary commercial route between San Francisco and the mining supply camps of the interior was by inland waterway. This main line included the San Francisco Bay and Delta, the San Joaquin River south to Stockton and the Sacramento River, north past Sacramento City, and up the Feather River to Marysville.

Commercial steamboat navigation on the trunk line can be dated to October 1849 when the first commercially successful steamer arrived on the Sacramento River. It was the 226-foot side-wheeler *Senator* that had arrived safely after a seven-month trip from New York. She was soon joined by others, including the *New World*, also operated by the People's Line. The People's Line dominated until the independently owned screw-propeller steamer *McKim* arrived on the river. In 1851, the Union Line inaugurated service with two steamboats, the *Confidence* and the *Wilson G. Hunt* and by year end there were at least thirty steamboats operating on the Sacramento River.

map of trunk route (shown in red)

Many of the early expresses operated only between division points by steamboat and only as far as another of the four primary division points, namely San Francisco, Stockton, Sacramento City, and Marysville. From the division points, express matter and mail was usually distributed by other modes of conveyance to a final destination by one of the divisional expresses. The Shasta division point was first served from Marysville by stagecoach and later by steamboat to Colusa and then stagecoach.

Gregory's Express (Nov 1849 - Feb 1855)

trunk route

In addition to Joseph W. Gregory's Atlantic & Pacific Express ocean to ocean express, he organized Gregory's Express to operate within California. His service began with offices in San Francisco and Stockton and soon expanded to Sacramento City and Marysville. Gregory quietly sold his express business to Wells, Fargo & Co. in 1852 and his last advertisement appeared in the November 20, 1852 *Daily Alta California*.

Offices of GREGORY'S EXPRESS
General Office 280 Montgomery St.
San Francisco
J.W. GREGORY, Proprietor & Manager
SACRAMENTO CITY to Stockton
G. E. CLARK, Agent
NEW YORK: Corner Ann and Pearl Sts.
THOMPSON & HITCHCOCK, Agents

the first handstamp marking used by Gregory's

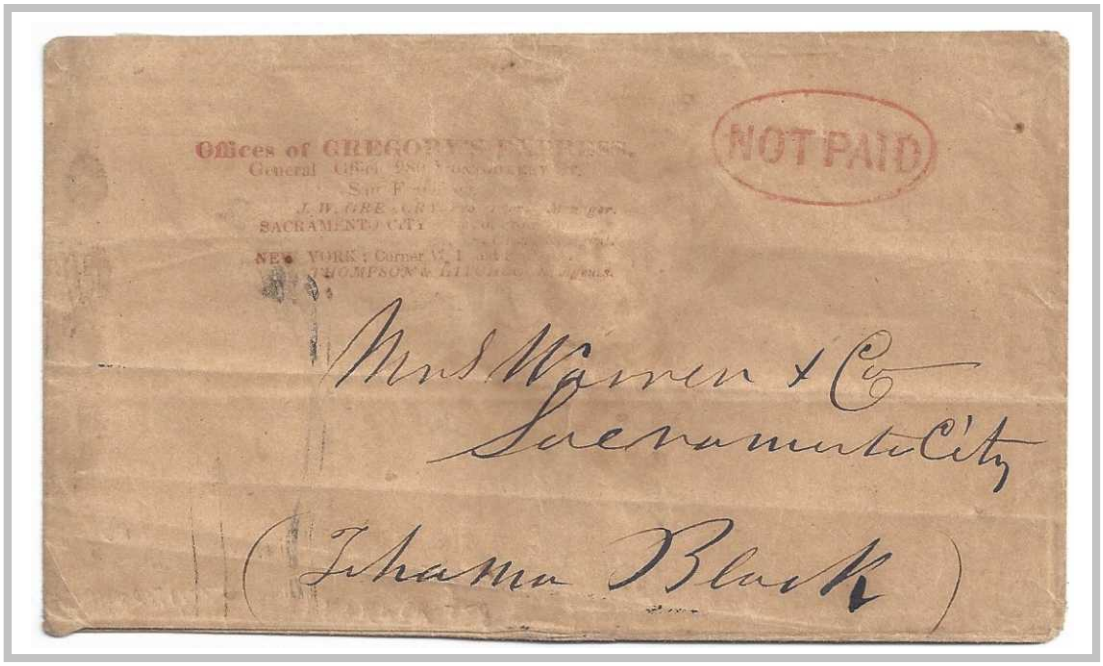
General Notices.

☞ Sacramento City and San Francisco—LETTERS EACH WAY 25 CENTS.—We send a daily express as above, and promptly deliver all matter so sent. Having had heavy damages awarded us in the honorble District Court against the steamers New World and Senator, we send our Express on those boats no longer than while the splendid boats CONFIDENCE and NEW ORLEANS are ready.

Information as to speed of the boats, treatment of passengers, &c., can be had at any of our offices.

dec28 JOSEPH W. GREGORY, Proprietor.

December 1850 notice listing Gregory's 25¢ rate



25 November 1850 San Francisco to Sacramento City by Gregory's Express, "NOT PAID" handstamp
Gregory's Express first handstamp with San Francisco and New York office addresses

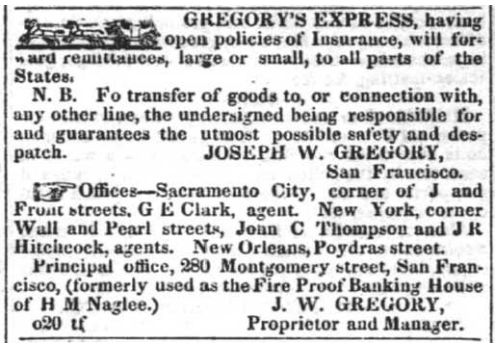
the only reported example of the first marking used by Gregory's Express

ex Berthoud, Parker, Haas, Edwards, Vogel and Walske

Gregory's Express (Nov 1849 - Feb 1855)

trunk route

When the express was organized, Gregory's Express office in Sacramento City was operated by G. E. Clark as agent. Clark received goods, packages, gold and letters to be transmitted by steamboats operating down the Sacramento River to San Francisco. Letters between Sacramento and San Francisco were charged twenty-five cents.



GREGORY'S EXPRESS, having open policies of Insurance, will forward remittances, large or small, to all parts of the States.

N. B. Fo transfer of goods to, or connection with, any other line, the undersigned being responsible for and guarantees the utmost possible safety and despatch. JOSEPH W. GREGORY, San Francisco.

☞ Offices—Sacramento City, corner of J and Front streets, G E Clark, agent. New York, corner Wall and Pearl streets, John C Thompson and J R Hitchcock, agents. New Orleans, Poydras street.

Principal office, 280 Montgomery street, San Francisco, (formerly used as the Fire Proof Banking House of H M Naglee.) J. W. GREGORY,

o20 tf Proprietor and Manager.

Oct 20 1850 *Sacramento Transcript*

27 November 1850 Sacramento City to San Francisco, Gregory's Express second style markings "GREGORY'S NEW YORK & CALIFORNIA EXPRESS" cogged oval and "NOT PAID" handstamps, rate was 25¢

letter of E.G. Baker mentions: *Please send … One Ton No 20 iron … don't send it by the* Senator *or* New World *they impose upon the people rascally - send it by the* Hartford *or some other small boat*

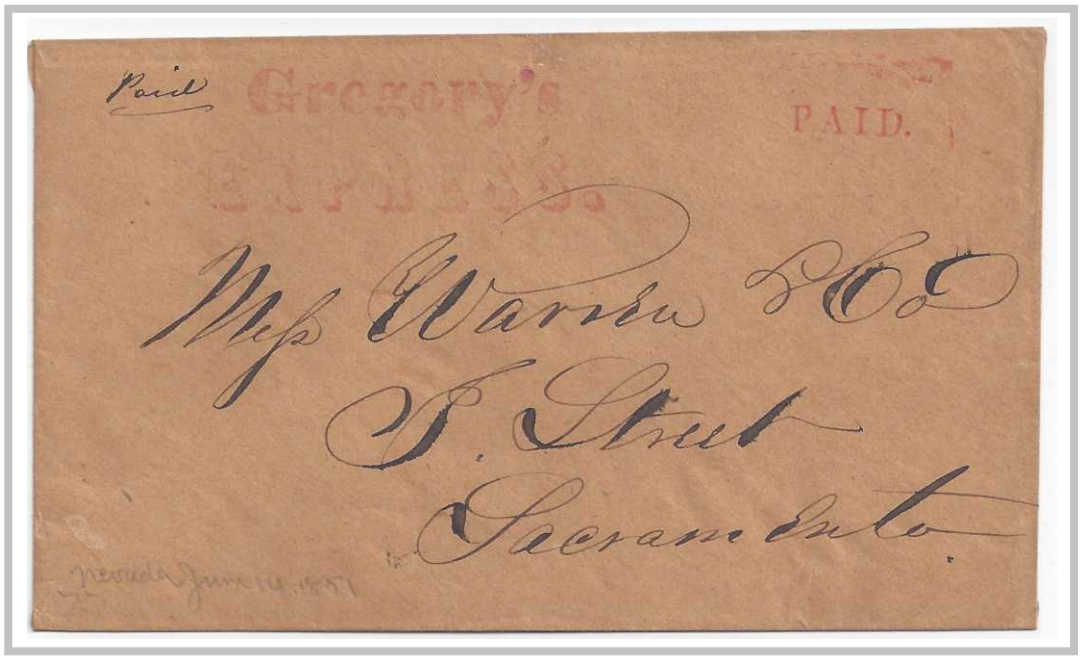
the earliest of five reported examples of this oval marking, the first marking used at Sacramento

ex Lichtenstein, Lowe, Vogel and Walske

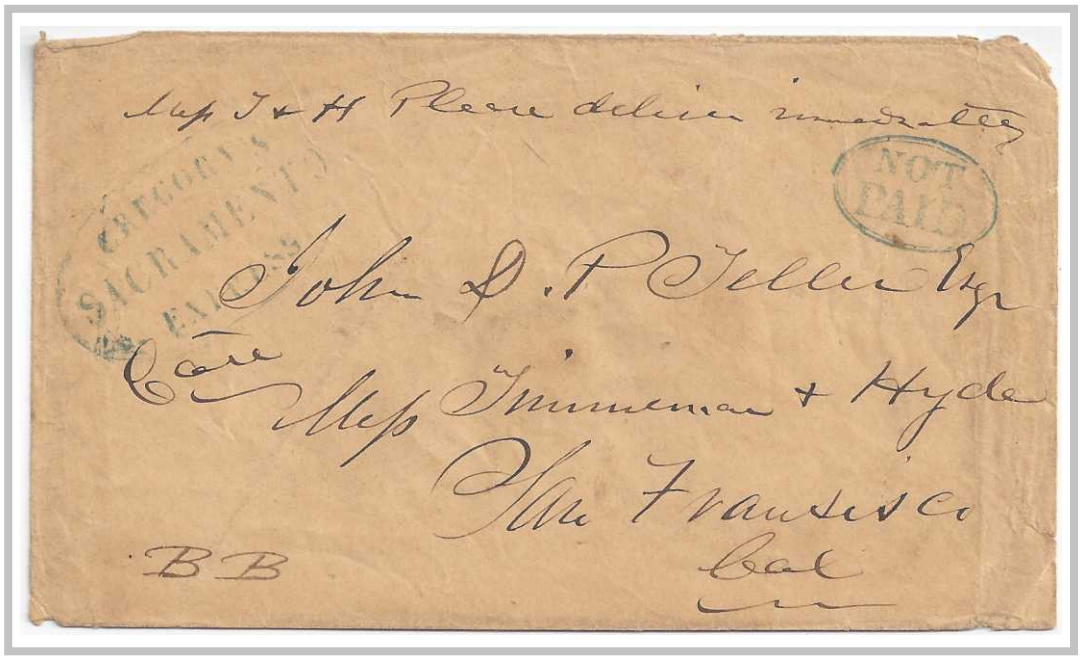
Gregory's Express (Nov 1849 - Feb 1855)

trunk route

When the express was organized, Gregory's Express in Sacramento City was operated by G. E. Clark as agent. A variety of different markings were used over the years the express was in operation.



14 June 1851 Nevada City, via Sacramento City, to San Francisco by Gregory's Express
"GREGORY'S EXPRESS" two-line "PAID" single-line handstamps applied at Sacramento office



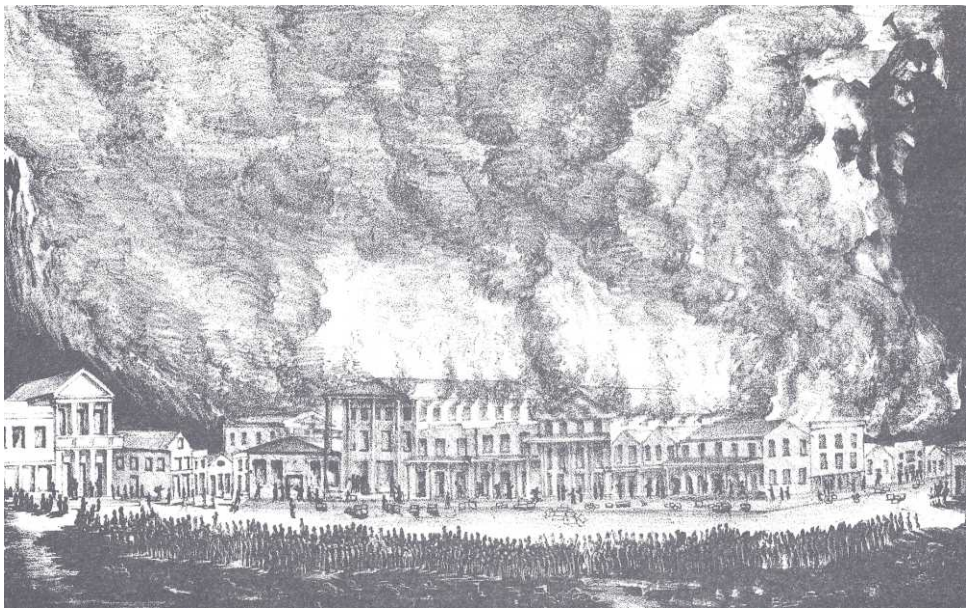
circa 1853 Sacramento City to San Francisco by Gregory's Express
"GREGORY'S SACRAMENTO EXPRESS" and "NOT PAID" oval handstamps
sender's "Please deliver immediately" at top authorizing the express to deliver for an additional fee

both ex Dale - Lichtenstein and Whitington

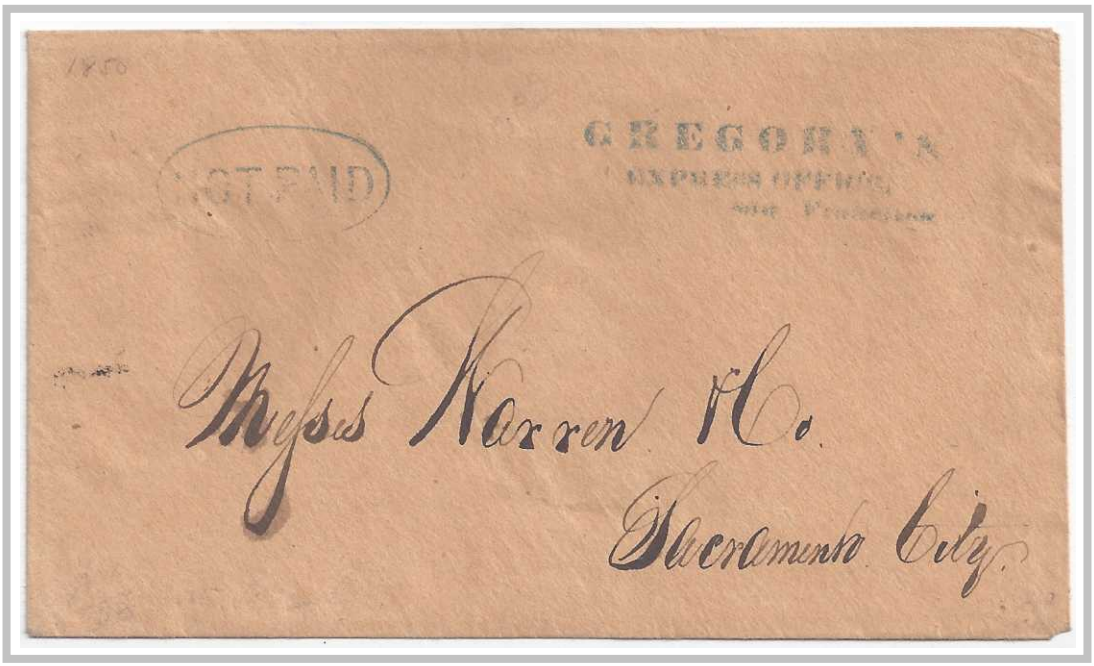
Gregory's Express (Nov 1849 - Feb 1855)

trunk route

Joseph W. Gregory was in charge of the company's San Francisco office. The office was located at Clark's Point in San Francisco prior to September 21, 1850 when it was moved to 280 Montgomery Street, a fire-proof building.



lithographed view "Great Fire in San Francisco, May 4th 1850"



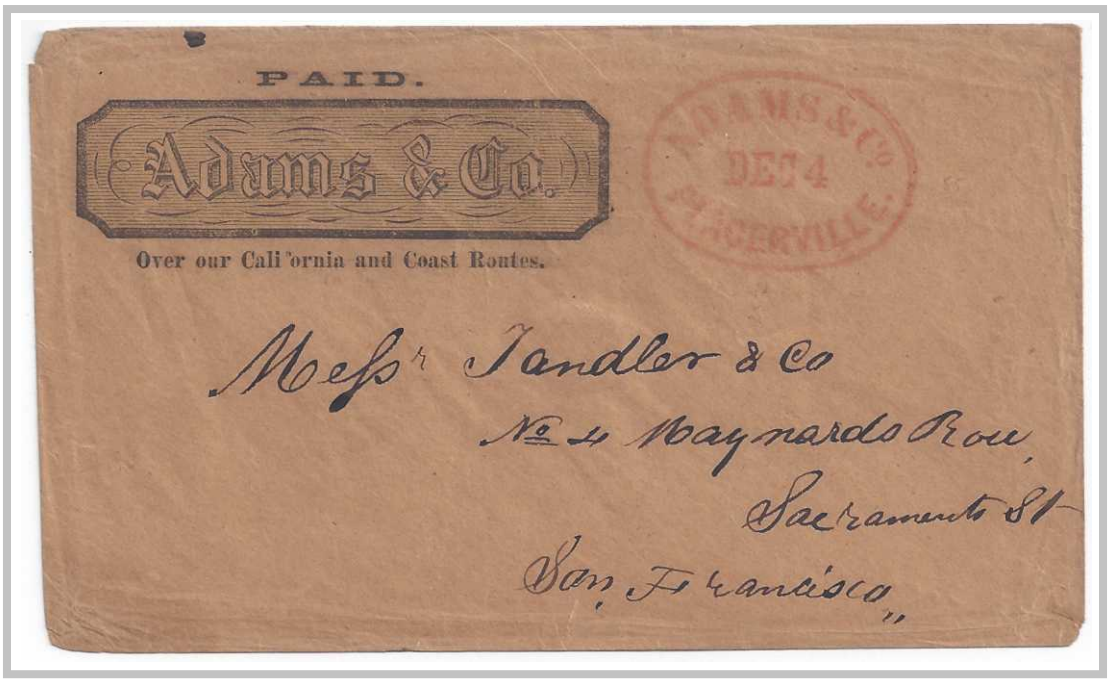
circa 1850 San Francisco to Sacramento City by Gregory's Express
"GREGORY'S EXPRESS OFFICE SAN FRANCISCO" three-line and "NOT PAID" oval handstamps

ex Dale - Lichtenstein and Whitington

Adams & Co. Express (Nov 1849 - Feb 1855)

trunk route

For Adams & Co's Express main entry see ocean to ocean section. Pair of covers show different ways of paying express fee and the transition to postal entires.



4 Dec 1854 Placerville to San Francisco by Adams & Co. Express, Paid frank on non postal entire

fewer than five reported examples of frank on plain envelope

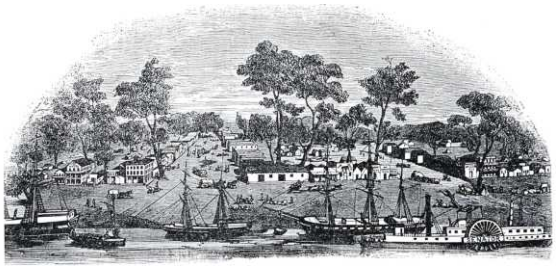
circa 1854 Vallejo to San Francisco by Adams & Co's Express, "PAID" handstamp on unfranked 3¢ entire

both ex Dale-Lichtenstein and Whitington

Hawley & Co's Express (Jan 1850 - Nov 1850)

trunk route

Hawley & Co's Express was founded by T.R. Hawley after buying out his partners in Weld & Company Express in January 1850. At the same time he acquired the exclusive right to carry gold, letters and express matter on the steamer *Senator* operating on the Sacramento River. This express operated between the main office in Sacramento to San Francisco utilizing People's Line steamboats. Adams Express operated as Hawley's agent in San Francisco. After John M. Freeman purchased one-half interest in Hawley's Express in June 1850, operations were expanded to include steamboat service to offices along the Yuba River north to Marysville. Freeman bought out Hawley's interest in the express on November 11, 1850.



steamer *Senator* at Sacramento City

14 February 1850 New York carried "By Mr Huff" via Panama to San Francisco
USMSC steamer *Ohio* to Chagres, by rail to Panama, by PMSS steamer *Tennessee* arrived San Francisco April 14, 1850
circa 15 April 1850 by Hawley &Co Express from San Francisco to Sacramento City by steamboat

letter mentions: *Mr Huff .. takes the steamer tomorrow for Chagres & California he will take this with others to you. I told him he could hand them to TR Hawley Express. … I was much pleased to hear from you that you was well and had not gone to the mines. I am very much obliged to you for the Gold. I will send the letter and the Gold to your Brother …*

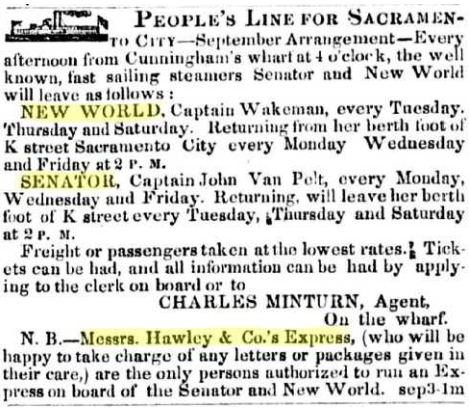
only reported example of oval marking in black, three reported in red

ex Mader and Walske

Hawley & Co's Express (Jan 1850 - Nov 1850)

trunk route

By the end of November 1849 regular steamboat service connected San Francisco and Sacramento City. Service soon was extended north to Marysville. This major steamboat trunk line was dominated by two primary operators, the People's Line and the Union Line. Hawley & Co. had exclusive rights to carry express matter on People's Line while Mumby & Co. used Union Line steamboats.



PEOPLE'S LINE FOR SACRAMENTO CITY—September Arrangement—Every afternoon from Cunningham's wharf at 4 o'clock, the well known, fast sailing steamers Senator and New World will leave as follows:

NEW WORLD, Captain Wakeman, every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. Returning from her berth foot of K street Sacramento City every Monday Wednesday and Friday at 2 P. M.

SENATOR, Captain John Van Pelt, every Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Returning, will leave her berth foot of K street every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday at 2 P. M.

Freight or passengers taken at the lowest rates. Tickets can be had, and all information can be had by applying to the clerk on board or to

CHARLES MINTURN, Agent,
On the wharf.

N. B.—Messrs. Hawley & Co.'s Express, (who will be happy to take charge of any letters or packages given in their care,) are the only persons authorized to run an Express on board of the Senator and New World. sep3-1m

Sep 11 1850 *Alta California*

11 September 1850 San Francisco to Sacramento by City Hawley & Co's Express
carried by People's Line steamer *Senator* that departed same day or *New World* that departed the next day

five reported examples of shield marking, two with "From San Francisco" handstamp

ex Dale-Lichtenstein and Walske

Hawley & Co's Express (Jan 1850 - Nov 1850)

trunk route

A late use by Hawley's Express to Marysville shortly after he sold out to Freeman on November 11, 1850 but before abandoned he his office on November 28 (see advertisement below right). The letter is an assessment of real estate values that was filed with assessor by recipient on November 21, 1850.

HAWLEY & CO.'S EXPRESS,

FROM the Mines and Sacramento city to San Francisco, and through to the United States, in connection with Adams & Co.

Gold Dust received on deposit and bought.

Gold Dust, coin, and parcels forwarded—notes, drafts, bills, and accounts collected—bills of exchange sold—and all business transacted with care and promptness.

H. & Co. run a daily express between Marysville, Sacramento city, and San Francisco.

Offices—Sacramento city, on Front street, between L and M; San Francisco, at Adams and Co., Montgomery street.

Nov 21 1850 *Sacramento Transcript*
Hawley still advertises in his name

NOTICE.

THE Subscriber hereby gives notice that he intends to leave California for the Atlantic States per steamship of the 30th instant, and has appointed Mr J M Freeman his attorney, to whom all persons indebted will make payment.

The subscriber, late of the firm of Hawley & Co, having disposed of his interest in that house, to Mr J M Freeman, his partner, the business, on and after the 1st proximo, will be continued under the name of Freeman & Co.

Orders received at the old stand of Hawley & Co's Express by the subscriber in person up to the 28th inst, after which time they can be left with Freeman & Co, on Second street, between J and K streets, who will forward semi-monthly through Adams & Co.

T R HAWLEY.

Sacramento City, Nov. 11, 1850. nov11.tfst1t

Nov 29 1850 *Sacramento Transcript*
Hawley's notice of sale to Freeman
dated November 11, 1850

19 November 1850 San Francisco to Marysville by Hawley & Co's Express
"FROM SAN FRANCISCO" and "PAID" handstamps with manuscript "through"

five reported examples of shield marking, two with "From San Francisco" handstamp

ex Parker, Haas and Vogel

Freeman & Co's Express (Nov 1850 - Nov 1851)

trunk route

John M Freeman bought out T.R. Hawley's interest in Hawley's Express on November 11, 1850. The route was between Sacramento City and San Francisco by steamboat with further steamboat service to river offices north to Marysville. Adams Express operated as Freeman's agent and expediter in San Francisco. The express served as a trunk line connecting at Sacramento with Bower's Express for service to Nevada City and with Langton's Express for service to Downieville. After his purchase of Mumby's Express in June 1851, Freeman sold out to Adams & Co on November 8, 1851. After serving as an agent for Adams & Co for several years, he started a new Freeman's Express after Adam's failure in February 1855.

FREEMAN & CO'S EXPRESS, DAILY TO SACRAMENTO CITY, MARYSVILLE AND NEVADA CITY. F. & CO. have safes in their express rooms on board the fast steamers Senator, New World and Gov. Dana, for the security of treasure entrusted to them, which is always accompanied by faithful messengers. Orders, bills, packages, &c. forwarded, and all business pertaining to an Express promptly attended to. F. & CO. is the only firm in the Valley of the Sacramento connecting with Messrs. ADAMS & CO., on whom they are authorized to draw Bills of Exchange for any amount, payable in New Orleans, New York and all the principal cities of the Atlantic States.

Offices—San Francisco, in Adams & Co's new fire-proof building.

Sacramento City, at 42 Second street.

Marysville, at Snow & Lunt's, on the Plaza.

☞ Bowers & Co. connect with us at Sacramento from Nevada City.

☞ Langton & Co. connect with us at Sacramento from Downsville. je20

☞ San Francisco papers copy.

Jul 3 1851
Alta California

3 January 1851 San Francisco to Sacramento City by Freeman & Cos Express
carried on the steamboat *New World* that departed same day
merchant's letter mentions: *One of my friends has a lot of 40 cases of Clicquot Champagne* .

fewer than six reported examples of this oval marking

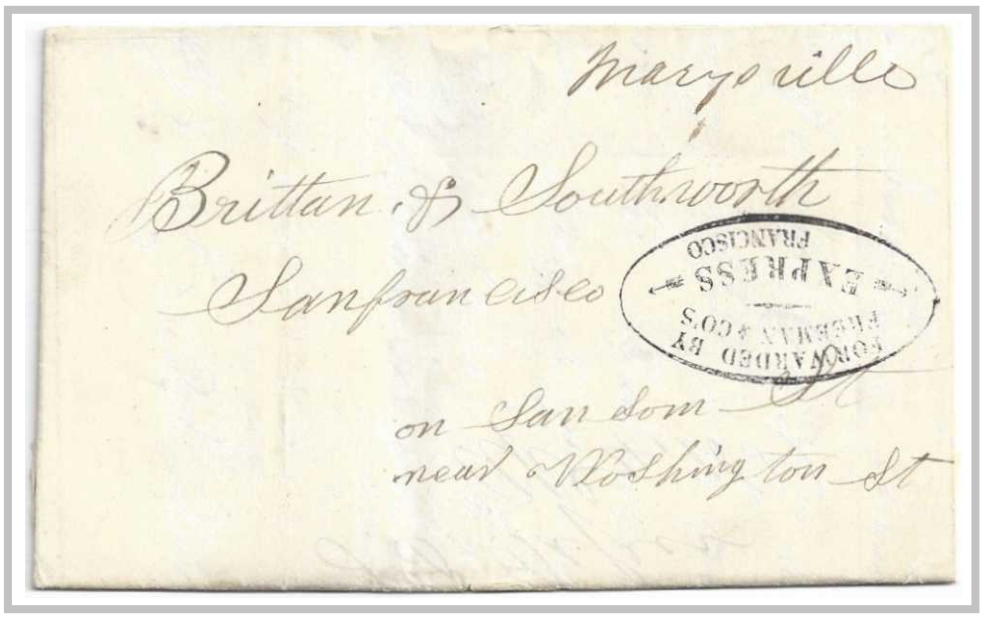
ex Ferrari, Dale-Lichtenstein and Walske

Freeman & Co's Express (Nov 1850 - Nov 1851)

trunk route

For Freeman & Co's Express main entry, see previous.

view of plaza at Marysville



4 January 1851 Marysville to San Francisco by Freeman & Cos Express, endorsed "Marysville" at origin
"FORWARDED BY FREEMAN & COS EXPRESS (SAN) FRANCISCO" handstamp
docket indicates "4/-" (50 cents) express charge paid by recipient
merchant's letter mentions: *Please send the balance due me by Freeman's Express as soon as you can.*

fewer than six reported examples of this oval marking, the only example in black

ex Knapp, Dale-Lichtenstein and Walske

Freeman & Co's Express (Nov 1850 - Nov 1851)

trunk route

For Freeman & Co's Express main entry, see previous.

Freeman & Cos Express offices (1850-1851)

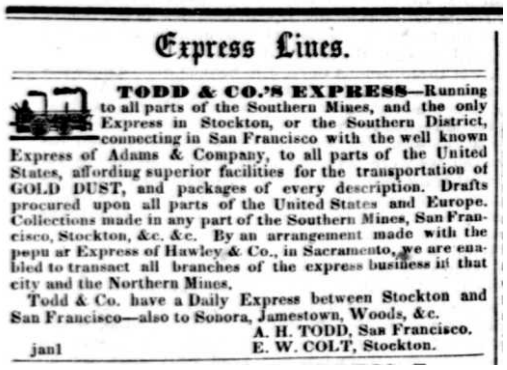
11 April 1851 San Francisco to Sacramento City by Freeman & Cos Express
"FORWARDED BY FREEMAN & COS EXPRESS SAN FRANCISCO" handstamp

ex Dale-Lichtenstein and Whitington

Todd & Co's Express (May 1850 - Oct 1851)

trunk route

Alexander Todd was one of the first express men in California. In May 1850 he took E. W. Colt as a partner under the Todd & Co's Express name (sometimes styled Todd & Colt). They operated between San Francisco and Stockton mines until Todd joined with Reynolds to form Reynolds, Todd & Co's Express in October 1851.



Express Lines.

TODD & CO.'S EXPRESS—Running to all parts of the Southern Mines, and the only Express in Stockton, or the Southern District, connecting in San Francisco with the well known Express of Adams & Company, to all parts of the United States, affording superior facilities for the transportation of GOLD DUST, and packages of every description. Drafts procured upon all parts of the United States and Europe. Collections made in any part of the Southern Mines, San Francisco, Stockton, &c. &c. By an arrangement made with the pepu ar Express of Hawley & Co., in Sacramento, we are enabled to transact all branches of the express business in that city and the Northern Mines.

Todd & Co. have a Daily Express between Stockton and San Francisco—also to Sonora, Jamestown, Woods, &c.

A. H. TODD, San Francisco.
E. W. COLT, Stockton.

jan1

Jan 29, 1851 *Daily Alta California*

Adams Express letter delivery

Letter bears a pencil "Sansome between Pacific & Jackson (Streets)" delivery instruction. Todd's agent in San Francisco was Adams Express who employed agents to deliver letters directly to street addresses when requested, and for an additional fee.

Per Todd & Co's Express.
Paid.
TODD & CO. STOCKTON EXPRESS
PAID
1851
Sansome between Pacific & Jackson
Messrs Ellis & Crosby
San Francisco
Isaac Washburn.

30 January 1851 Stockton to San Francisco by Todd & Co's Express with their "PAID" handstamp
letter mentions: .. *on the way down to the Isthmus of all his coin in his trunk about $500 . It was broke open and robbed*

three reported examples of this marking

ex Knapp

Mumby & Co's Express (Apr 1851 - Jun 1851)

trunk route

Joseph M. Mumby formed Mumby & Co's Express in partnership with Henry P. Reed and their first advertisement appeared on April 30, 1851. Prior to that date Mumby had been a messenger for Palmer & Co's Express. The route was between Sacramento City and San Francisco by steamboats of the Union Line (steamers *Confidence* and *William G. Hunt*) and utilized Dodge & Co Express in San Francisco for connection to the East. The line also operated north to Marysville serving the Nevada City mines. Mumby & Co's Express sale to Freeman & Co's Express was announced on June 12, 1851.

EXPRESS LINES.

MUMBY & CO.'S EXPRESS,

To and from San Francisco, and all the Mining Districts. Our Express leaves San Francisco daily, at four o'clock, P. M., by the Union Line of Steamboats, "Confidence" and "Wilson G. Hunt," in charge of faithful messengers, for Benicia and Sacramento City, thence to Fremont, Vernon, Nicolaus, Plumas, Eliza, Yuba City, Marysville, Nevada City, and all the Mining Districts.

Leaves Sacramento City daily at two o'clock, P. M., for Benicia and San Francisco, connecting with DODGE & CO.'S great Atlantic semi-monthly Express, to all parts of the United States and territories, Europe, Sandwich Islands and China.

Treasure and all other Express matter, forwarded at the lowest rates, daily to and from San Francisco, and all our offices in California; and by Dodge & Co., on every steamer from San Francisco to all parts of the Atlantic States. Drafts at sight, or on time, on all the principal cities in the Union, for sale on the most reasonable terms.

Offices—San Francisco, at Dodge & Co.'s, Montgomery street, near Clay street; Henry Reed Sacramento City, at Hensley & Merrill's, 2d street between J and K; Joseph H. Mumby. Nicolaus, G C. Johnson. Marysville, B. F. Henderson.

Proprietors—Henry Reed, Joseph H. Mumby.
ap29

May 14 1851
Sacramento Transcript

12 May 1851 Sacramento to San Francisco by Mumby & Co's Express, "with Bottle" endorsement, pencil "2/-" rate cover originally endorsed to Palmer & Co's Express but carried after Mumby took over the route
merchant's letter mentions: *With this you will receive sample of Primo Martell Brandy.*

three reported covers

ex Dale-Lichtenstein and Walske

Wells, Fargo & Co's Express (Jul 1852 - present)

trunk route

The famous bank and nationwide express was formed by Henry Wells and William Fargo on March 18, 1852 when other directors of American Express did not wish to open offices in California. Agents of the new firm arrived in California in July 1852 and after a long series of acquisitions, including Gregory's Express, Todd's Express, and Hunter's Express, they had 24 branch offices in operation by January 1855. With the collapse of Adams & Company in February 1855, and after surviving the financial panic of that year, Wells Fargo emerged as the dominant banking force and leader in the express business.

15 September 1852 Sacramento to San Francisco by Wells Fargo & Co's Express, an early use
attorney J.B. Mitchell's letter regarding a suit against Brannan with Brannan's integral signature in docket

letter addressed to Samuel Brannan, the first publicist of the California Gold Rush and its first millionaire

Image of Samuel Brannan, center, with Thomas Larkin and William Howard.

Brannan brought 238 Mormons to California by ship in 1846 and started publishing *The California Star* in 1847. This newspaper first proclaimed the discovery of gold on May 12, 1848.

Brannan became the wealthiest man in California supplying the needs of the gold rush from his store at Sutter's Mill and from his real estate dealings in San Francisco that followed.

ex Clifford, Kramer and Walske

Wells, Fargo & Co's Express (Jul 1852 - present)

trunk route

For Wells, Fargo & Co's Express main entry, see previous page.

Expresses.

WELLS, FARGO & CO.'S ATLANTIC AND PACIFIC EXPRESS.—A Joint Stock Company.

CAPITAL $300,000.

Office in S. Brannan's new fire-proof block, Montgomery st., between California and Sacramento.

DIRECTORS:

Henry Wells,	Wm. G. Fargo,
Johnston Livingston,	James McKay,
Elijah P. Williams,	Alpheus Reynolds,
Edwin B. Morgan,	Alex. M. C. Smith,

Henry D. Rice.

EDWIN B. MORGAN, President.

JAMES MCKAY, Secretary.

This Company, having completed its organization as above, is now ready to undertake a general Express Forwarding Agency and Commission Business; the purchase and sale of Gold Dust, Bullion and Bills of Exchange: the payment and collection of Notes, Bills and Accounts; the Forwarding of Gold Dust, Bullion and Specie, also Packages, Parcels and Freight of all descriptions, in and between the city of New York and the city of San Francisco, and the principal cities and towns in California; connecting at New York with the lines of the American Express Company: the Harnden Express; Pullen, Virgil & Co.'s Northern and Canada Express, and Livingston, Wells & Co.'s European Express.

They have established Offices and faithful Agents in all the principal cities and towns throughout the Eastern, Middle and Western States; energetic and faithful messengers, furnished with iron chests for the security of treasure and other valuable packages, accompanying each Express upon all their lines, as well in California as in the Atlantic States.

They will immediately establish offices at all the principal towns in California, and run messengers on their own account for the purpose of doing a general Express business. As soon as such arrangements are completed, notice will be given. jy1

first advertisement for Wells, Fargo & Co's Express, July 1, 1852 *Daily Alta California*

circa June 1854 Sacramento to San Francisco by Wells Fargo & Co's Express, 3¢ Wells Fargo & Co precancel

in January 1854 the U.S. postal agent ordered the expresses to comply with the Act requiring stamps on letters

fewer than ten reported examples of this precancel on cover

ex Vogel and Walske

Wells, Fargo & Co's Express (Jul 1852 - present)

trunk route

Following the January 1854 order requiring stamps on express letters, regular as well as precanceled 3¢ stamps were used. In August 1855 Wells Fargo advertised printed franks on postal entires.

18 December 1854 Marysville to San Francisco by Wells Fargo & Co Express, 3¢ stamp with their company cancel

from Aug 16, 1855 advertisement: *WELLS, FARGO & CO.'S EXPRESS - LETTER NOTICE - We will furnish Government Three Cent Envelopes with our "Frank" upon them, at the rate of $12.50 per hundred, which will convey single Letters enclosed therein over our California or Coast Routes free of charge.*

late 1855 Marysville to San Francisco by Wells, Fargo & Co, first type frank with "PAID" above box, on 3¢ entire

Wells, Fargo & Co's Express (Jul 1852 - present)

trunk route

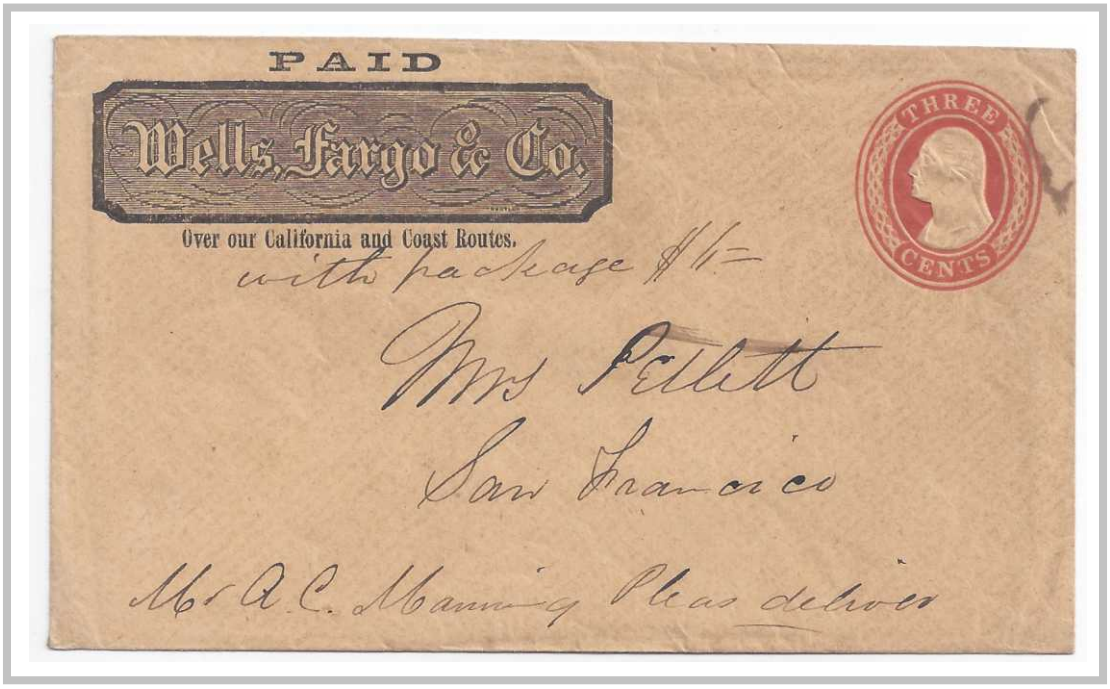
Following the January 1854 order requiring stamps on express letters, 3¢ stamps were used. In August 1855 Wells Fargo advertised printed franks on postal entires.

Wells, Fargo & Co.'s Express.—Letter
NOTICE—We will furnish Government 3-cent Envelopes, with our "frank" upon them, at the rate of **$12 50** PER HUNDRED, which will carry single letters enclosed therein over any of our California or Coast Routes free of charge.

The 10-cent Government Envelopes, with our "frank," will be furnished at **$20** PER HUNDRED, which will carry single letters enclosed therein, free of further charge, through our Atlantic Express.

Letters not covered by these Envelopes will be charged at old rates. [au17-1m] WELLS, FARGO & CO.

from Aug 17, 1855 announcement with text similar to the advertisement transcribed on previous page



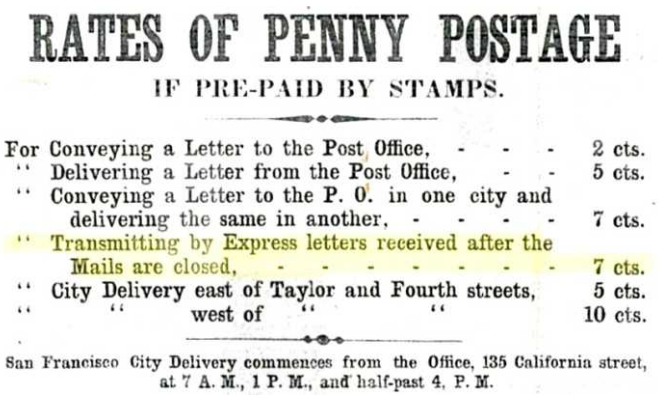
late 1855 to San Francisco by Wells Fargo & Co Express, first type frank with "PAID" above box, on 3¢ entire endorsed "with package $4" and "Mr. C.C. Manning Please deliver" authorizing delivery for additional fee

ex Whitington

California Penny Post Co. (Jun 1855 - Oct 1855)

trunk route

The California Penny Post was established by Henry L. Goodwin in San Francisco on June 25, 1855. The latest advertisement found appeared in the October 4, 1855 issue of *Prices Current & Shipping List*. Exceptionally, this company operated only as a letter express and did not carry express matter. They provided city delivery via their local post. Goodwin ran afoul of the San Francisco postmaster as he usually used government mails for carriage between cities.



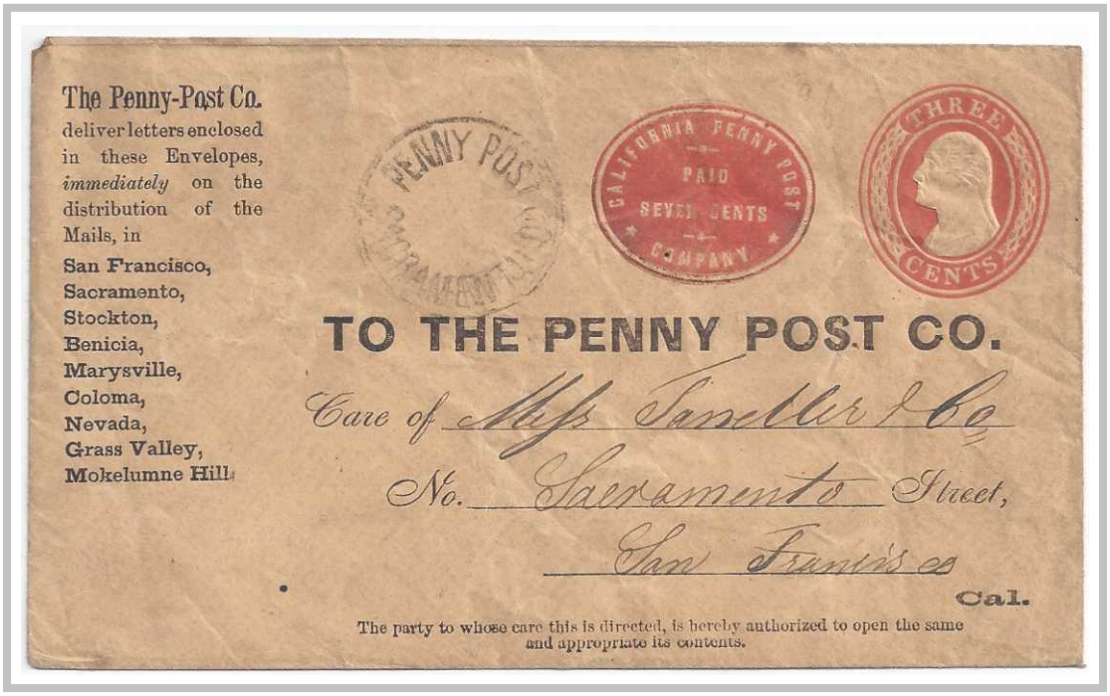
RATES OF PENNY POSTAGE

IF PRE-PAID BY STAMPS.

For Conveying a Letter to the Post Office, - - -	2 cts.
" Delivering a Letter from the Post Office, - -	5 cts.
" Conveying a Letter to the P. O. in one city and delivering the same in another, - - - -	7 cts.
" Transmitting by Express letters received after the Mails are closed, - - - - - - - -	7 cts.
" City Delivery east of Taylor and Fourth streets,	5 cts.
" " west of " "	10 cts.

San Francisco City Delivery commences from the Office, 135 California street, at 7 A. M., 1 P. M., and half-past 4, P. M.

California Penny Post rate schedule



The Penny-Post Co. deliver letters enclosed in these Envelopes, *immediately* on the distribution of the Mails, in
San Francisco,
Sacramento,
Stockton,
Benicia,
Marysville,
Coloma,
Nevada,
Grass Valley,
Mokelumne Hill.

PENNY POST SACRAMENTO CITY

CALIFORNIA PENNY POST PAID SEVEN CENTS COMPANY

THREE CENTS

TO THE PENNY POST CO.

Care of Mess Sandler & Co

No. Sacramento Street,

San Francisco

Cal.

The party to whose care this is directed, is hereby authorized to open the same and appropriate its contents.

1855 Sacramento to San Francisco by California Penny Post, 7¢ printed frank on 3¢ entire "PENNY POST SACRAMENTO CITY" handstamp, delivered to street address after carriage to San Francisco

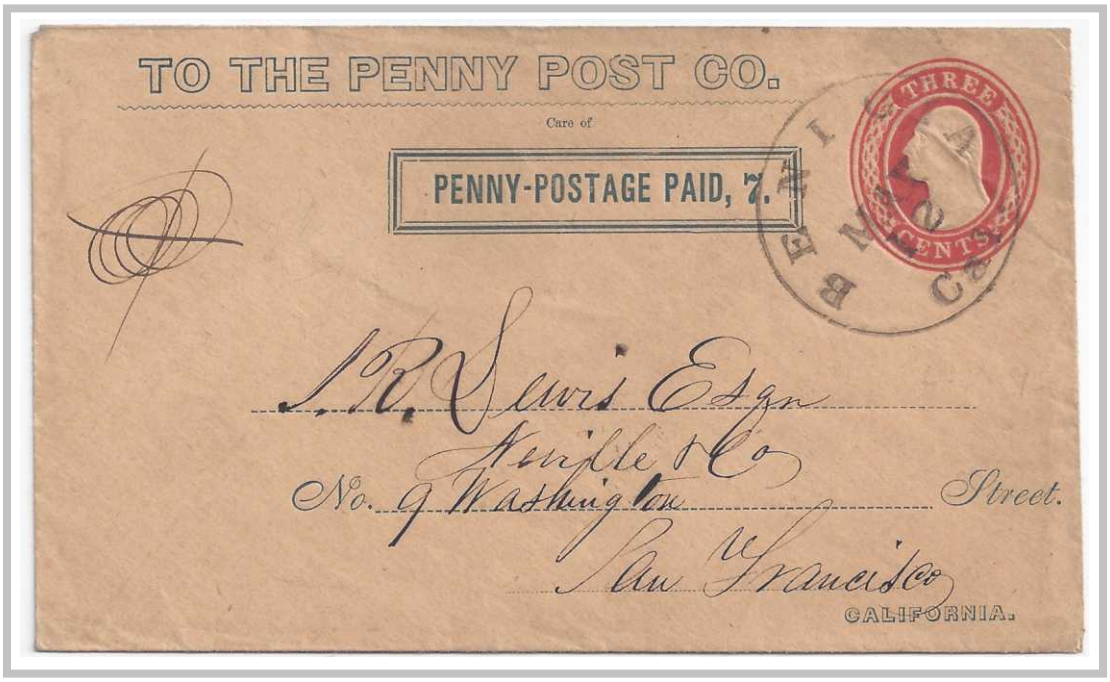
fewer than ten reported examples of frank, this one of two carried completely outside the mails

ex Dale-Lichtenstein and Walske

California Penny Post Co. (Jun 1855 - Oct 1855)

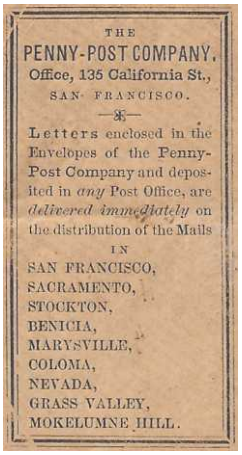
trunk route

See previous for company history. Different style imprints, one in blue.



12 May 1855 Benicia to San Francisco by California Penny Post Paid 7¢ printed frank, in blue on 3¢ entire

three reported examples of frank printed in blue

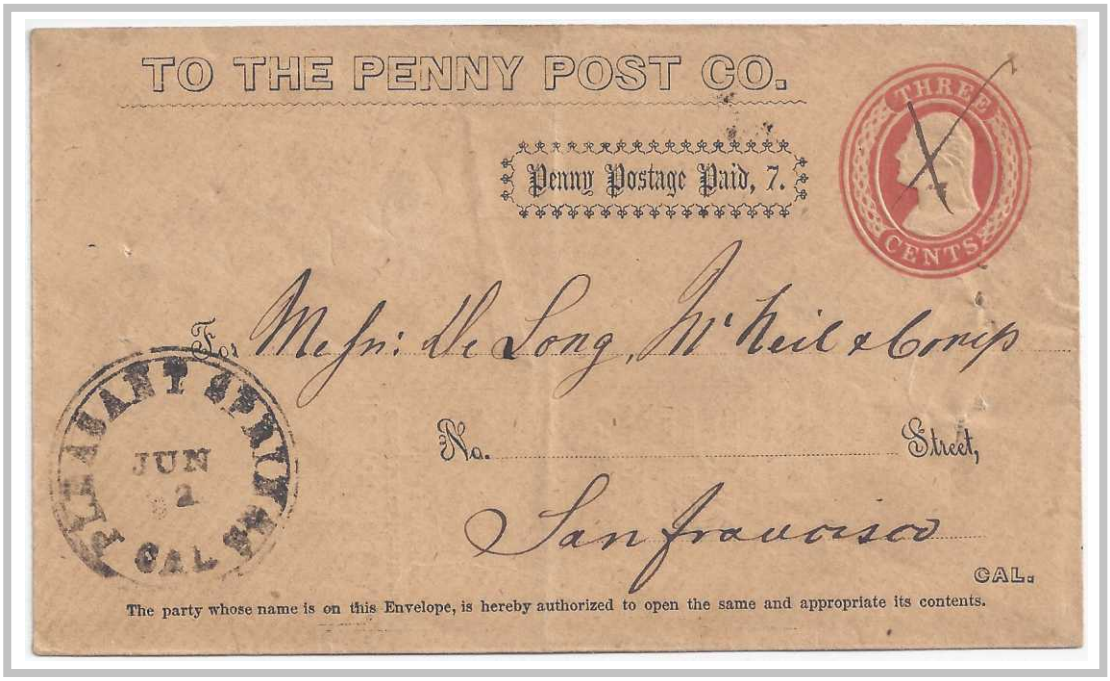

THE
PENNY-POST COMPANY,
Office, 135 California St.,
SAN FRANCISCO.

Letters enclosed in the Envelopes of the Penny-Post Company and deposited in *any* Post Office, are *delivered immediately* on the distribution of the Mails

IN

SAN FRANCISCO,
SACRAMENTO,
STOCKTON,
BENICIA,
MARYSVILLE,
COLOMA,
NEVADA,
GRASS VALLEY,
MOKELUMNE HILL.

(reverse)



2 June 1856 Pleasant Springs to San Francisco, California Penny Post Paid 7¢ printed frank on 3¢ entire

both ex Dale-Lichtenstein and Whitington

California Penny Post Co. (Jun 1855 - Oct 1855)

trunk route

See previous for company history.

THE PENNY POST COMPANY

OFFICES:

SAN FRANCISCO—135 California street, one door below Montgomery.

SACRAMENTO—Next door to the Post Office.

STOCKTON—At Post Office Building.

MARYSVILLE—At Messrs. Force & Co.'s.

THE PENNY POST COMPANY TRANSMIT LETTERS, PAPERS, and other Mailable matter, Daguerreotypes, Small Parcels, etc. between SAN FRANCISCO, SACRAMENTO and MARYSVILLE and between SAN FRANCISCO AND STOCKTON, at the rate of FIVE CENTS, if pre-paid, and TEN CENTS if not prepaid, for each single letter weighing not more than half an ounce.

Letters for San Francisco, Stockton and Marysville, enclosed in the envelopes of the Penny Post Company, and deposited in any Post Office, including the one at Sacramento, will be DELIVERED PROMPTLY on the arrival of the mails.

Letters for Sacramento, if warted before 9 o'clock should not be deposited in the Post Office, but will be transmitted from our offices outside the mails.

Letters for Sacramento from the interior, must be enclosed in the new envelopes, which can be obtained at our offices after Monday.

By authority of the Agent of the Post Office Department, the Penny Post Company have a BOX on board the Sacramento and Stockton Boats.

Letters can be deposited in those Boxes up to the time of departure, and will be delivered at the earliest business hours.

City Delivery commences from the office at 6½ A. M. and one P. M.

Letters received at the Boxes till 6 A. M. and 12½ P. M.

jy2

Penny Post advertisement dated July 2 (1855)

1855 Sacramento to San Francisco by California Penny Post, 5¢ printed frank on 3¢ entire "PENNY POST SACRAMENTO CITY" handstamp, delivered to street address after carriage to San Francisco pencil note on verso "Please ask your correspondent to give the number of your store" applied by the company

ex Dale-Lichtenstein and Whitington

Pacific Express (Mar 1855 - Apr 1857)

trunk route

Russell G. Noyes and other employees of Adams & Company formed the Pacific Express Company, following Adams' failure in February 1855, with many of the old Adams' offices becoming Pacific Express offices. The company failed after about two years and several members re-formed into Alta Express.

29 January 1856 Sonora to Sacramento by Pacific Express, first type Paid frank on 3¢ entire

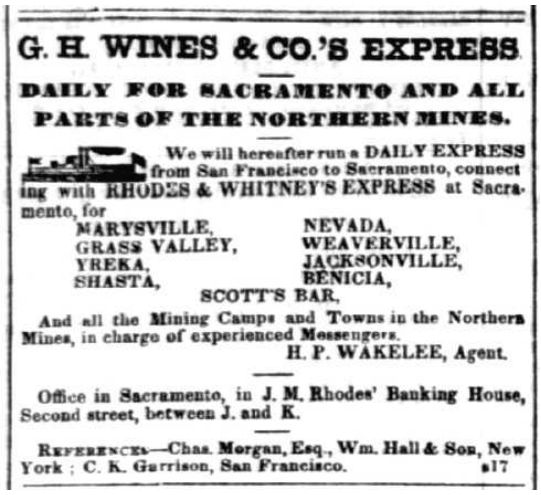
19 Feb 1856 Sacramento to Todd's Valley by Freeman & Co's Express, second type Paid frank on 3¢ entire

both ex Whitington

G.H. Wines & Co's Express (Jun 1855 - Mar 1857)

trunk route

G. H. Wines express was founded in 1855 by G.H. Wines. They provided service from San Francisco to Sacramento where they connected with Rhodes & Whitney's Express to serve the mines. In addition to service to mining areas, the company developed a transatlantic service (see ocen to ocean section). Their last ads appeared in February 1857 and they were out of business by mid 1857.



G. H. WINES & CO.'S EXPRESS

DAILY FOR SACRAMENTO AND ALL PARTS OF THE NORTHERN MINES.

We will hereafter run a DAILY EXPRESS from San Francisco to Sacramento, connecting with RHODES & WHITNEY'S EXPRESS at Sacramento, for

MARYSVILLE, NEVADA,
GRASS VALLEY, WEAVERVILLE,
YREKA, JACKSONVILLE,
SHASTA, BENICIA,
SCOTT'S BAR,

And all the Mining Camps and Towns in the Northern Mines, in charge of experienced Messengers.

H. P. WAKELEE, Agent.

Office in Sacramento, in J. M. Rhodes' Banking House, Second street, between J. and K.

REFERENCES—Chas. Morgan, Esq., Wm. Hall & Son, New York; C. K. Garrison, San Francisco. s17

October 15, 1855 advertisement in *Daily Alta*

circa 1855 San Francisco to Sacramento, paid frank of G. H. Wines & Co's California Express on 3¢ entire

ex Walske and Whitington

Freeman & Co Express (Jun 1855 - Apr 1860)

trunk route

A June 15, 1855 newspaper notice announced that John M. Freeman, J. K. Stimson, J. Hoey and Josiah Hedden had purchased all Adams & Co interests in the California express business under the name Freeman & Co. The firm was sold to Wells, Fargo in April 1860. Covers below show trunk route office markings of the Marysville and Shasta division points.

circa 1856 Marysville to San Francisco by Freeman & Co's Express, Paid frank on 3¢ entire

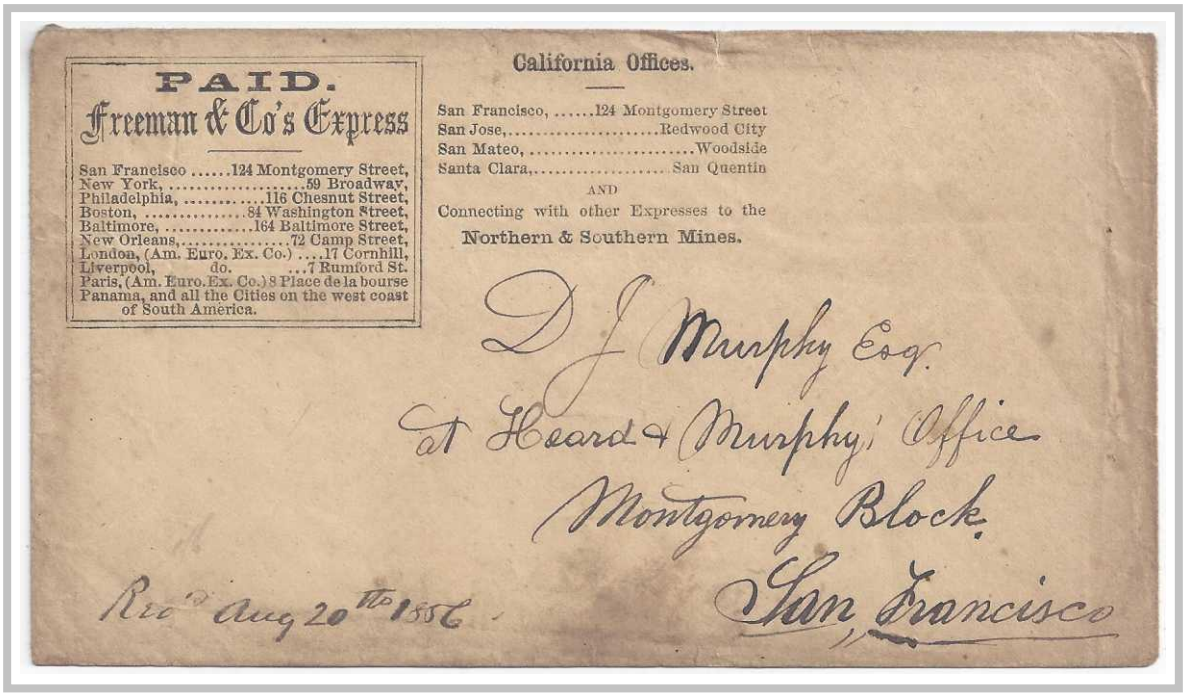
circa 1856 Shasta to San Francisco by Freeman & Co's Express, Paid frank on 3¢ entire

both ex Whitington

Freeman & Co Express (Jun 1855 - Apr 1860)

trunk route

Covers below, with paid franks, include imprint listing of Freeman office locations. Top cover was on company business and did not require U.S. postage, bottom cover from a different sender did, and is on a 3c franked entire.



PAID.
Freeman & Co's Express

San Francisco .....124 Montgomery Street,
New York, ...59 Broadway,
Philadelphia, ...116 Chesnut Street,
Boston, ...84 Washington Street,
Baltimore, ...164 Baltimore Street,
New Orleans,.....72 Camp Street,
London, (Am. Euro. Ex. Co.) ....17 Cornhill,
Liverpool, do. ...7 Rumford St.
Paris, (Am. Euro. Ex. Co.) 8 Place de la bourse
Panama, and all the Cities on the west coast of South America.

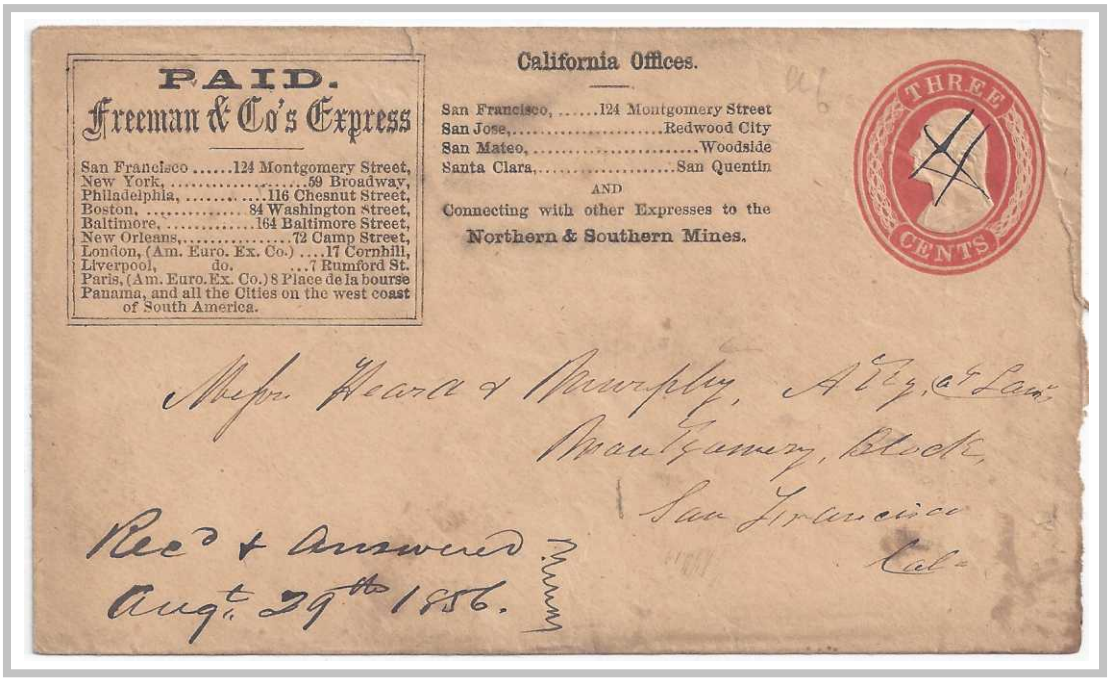
California Offices.

San Francisco, ...124 Montgomery Street
San Jose,.....Redwood City
San Mateo, ...Woodside
Santa Clara,..... San Quentin
AND
Connecting with other Expresses to the
Northern & Southern Mines.

D. J. Murphy Esq.
at Heard & Murphy's Office
Montgomery Block.
San Francisco

Recd Aug 20th 1856.

August 1856 to San Francisco by Freeman & Co's Express, Paid frank (free on company business)



PAID.
Freeman & Co's Express

San Francisco .....124 Montgomery Street,
New York, ...59 Broadway,
Philadelphia, ...116 Chesnut Street,
Boston, ... 84 Washington Street,
Baltimore, ...164 Baltimore Street,
New Orleans,.....72 Camp Street,
London, (Am. Euro. Ex. Co.) ....17 Cornhill,
Liverpool, do. ...7 Rumford St.
Paris, (Am. Euro. Ex. Co.) 8 Place de la bourse
Panama, and all the Cities on the west coast of South America.

California Offices.

San Francisco, ...124 Montgomery Street
San Jose,.....Redwood City
San Mateo, ...Woodside
Santa Clara,.....San Quentin
AND
Connecting with other Expresses to the
Northern & Southern Mines.

THREE CENTS

Messrs Heard & Murphy, Atty. at Law
Montgomery Block,
San Francisco
Cal.

Recd & answered
Augt. 29th 1856.

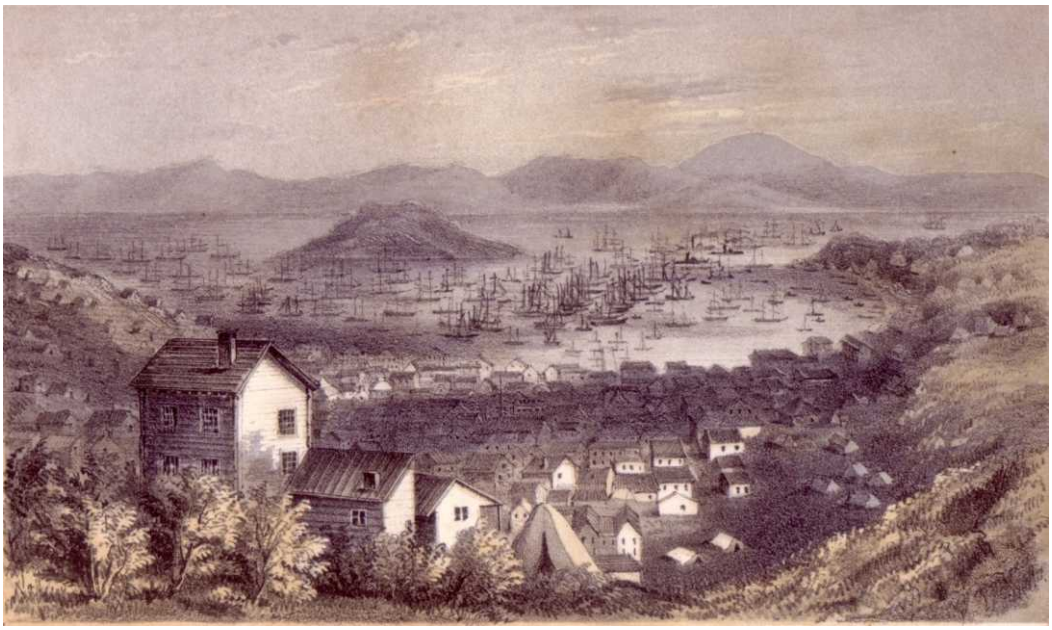
August 1856 to San Francisco by Freeman & Co's Express, Paid frank on 3¢ entire

the only reported examples of this frank

both ex Whitington

The San Francisco Division Expresses

San Francisco division

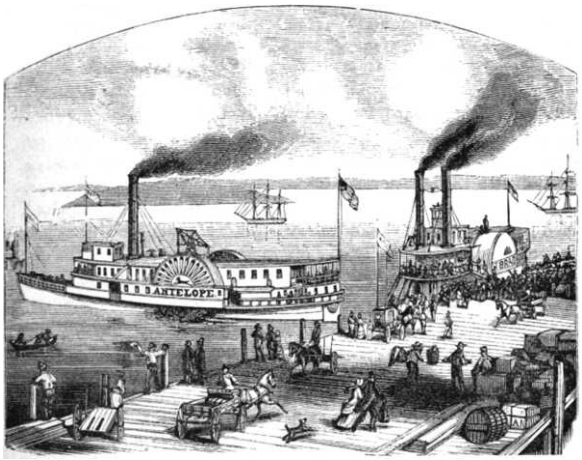


San Francisco in November 1849, view by Bayard Taylor

The San Francisco division express companies (denoted by horseback rider with "San Francisco division" beneath) did not have to operate over rough mountain terrain to mining camps. Instead, their service area included business and commercial centers around the Bay and Delta as well as coastal California ports.

Many of the areas, such as San Jose, could be easily reached by steamboat or over well developed stage coach roads. Reaching additional coastal California ports required the use of sailing vessels or steamers over longer routes.

As a result, the companies servicing this division were a much more diverse group than their counterparts elsewhere. The companies serving the coastal towns or inland towns situated on stage roads generally carried mail completely outside of the government mails. Express matter and letters could be dropped off and collected directly at the express offices with no government mail service involved.

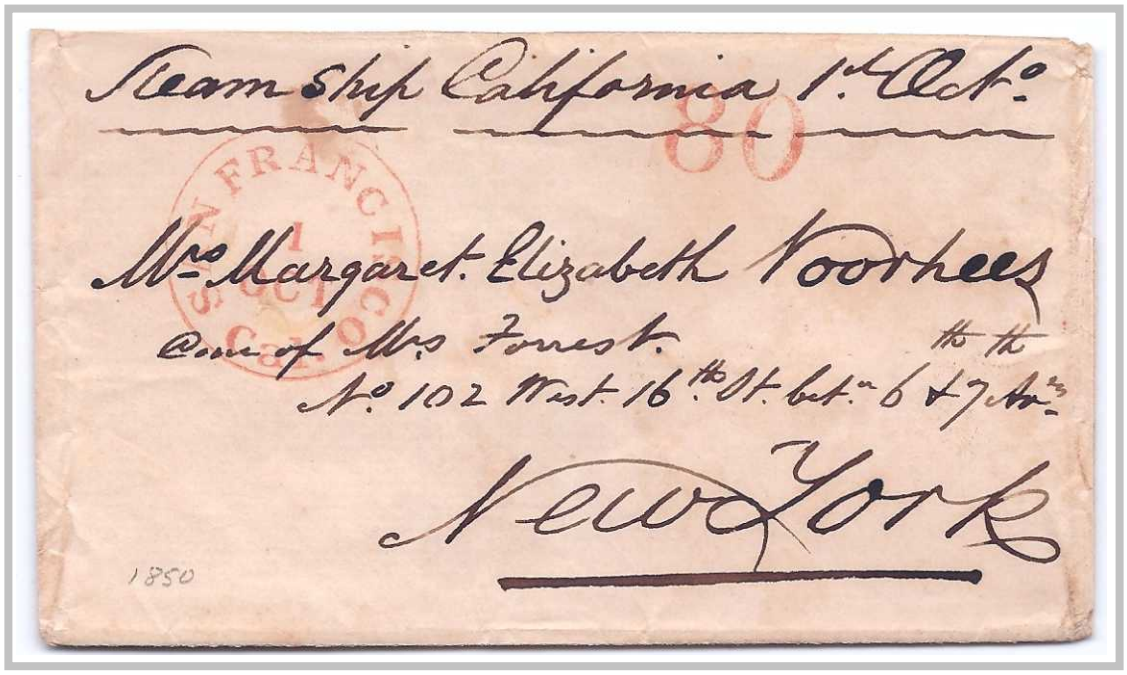


San Francisco wharf in 1852 with steamboats *Antelope* and *Bragdon* departing

San Francisco Post Office

The first post office in San Francisco was established by special Post Office Agent William Van Voorhees on Februray 28, 1849.

31 March 1849 Exeter, New York to San Francisco, postal rate corrected to 40¢ due on arrival
addressed to Augustine Hale of the New England Mining & Trading Co.
the second earliest reported inbound cover by post office mail

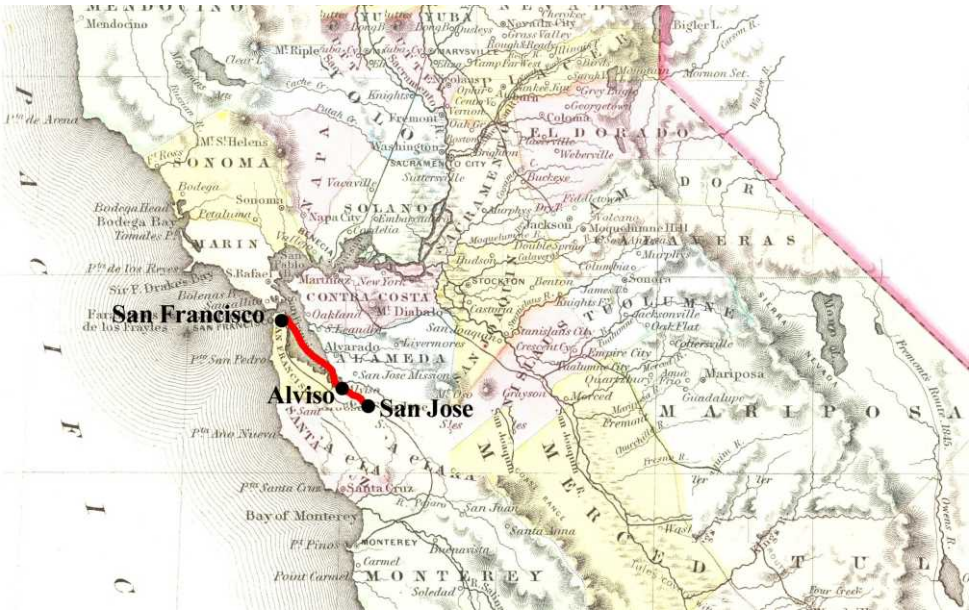


1 October 1850 San Francisco to New York City, double rate 80¢ postage due handstamp
sent by William Van Vorhees, special post office agent, to his mother
endorsed and carried on PMSS steamer *California*, the first contract mail steamer in service

Palmer & Co's Express (Mar 1850 - Dec 1851)

San Francisco division

Palmer & Co's Express was founded by Cyrus S. Palmer in New York on March 7, 1850. Primarily an ocean to ocean express, Palmer briefly operated between San Francisco and San Jose by steamboat.



Palmer & Co's Express route to San Jose by steamer and land

circa February 1851 San Francisco to San Jose by Palmer & Cos Express company oval and "FREE" handstamp as a courtesy to addressee Governor McDougal

two reported examples of the Palmer oval marking

ex Kleman, Dale-Lichtenstein and Walske

Todd & Co's Express (Jul 1850 - Oct 1851)

San Francisco division

Alexander Todd was one of the first expressmen in California. In July 1850 he took E. W. Colt as a partner under the Todd & Co's Express name. They operated between San Francisco and Stockton mines until Todd joined with Reynolds to form Reynolds, Todd & Co's Express in October 1851.

Todd's Express route from San Franciso, via Stockton to Sutter's Mines

11 November 1850 from Boston by mail to San Francisco, postage of 40¢ due
by Todd & Co's Express from San Francisco post office addressed to Sutter's Mines, Calavaras County
encircled "$2.00" pencil notation of express fee

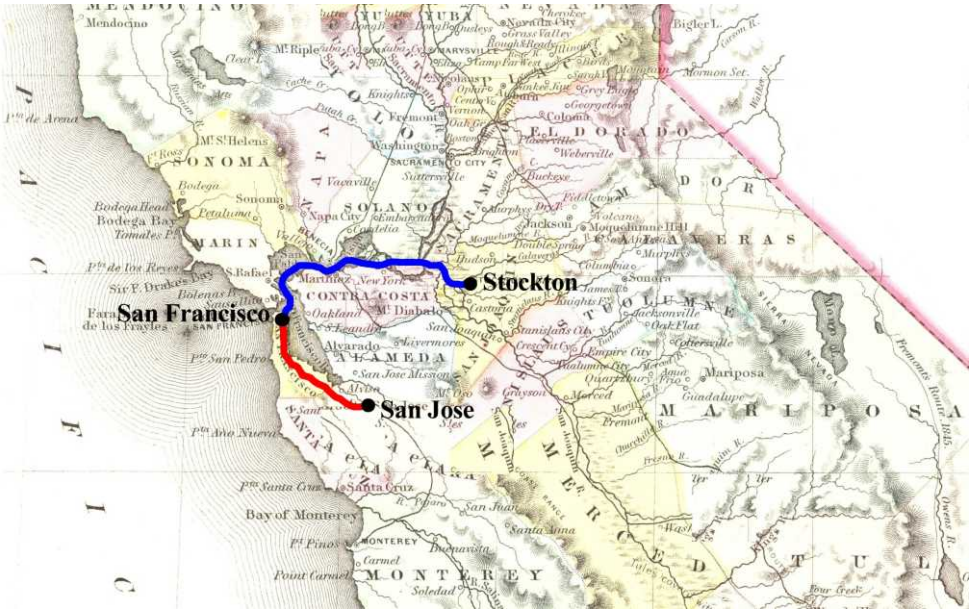
ex Jessup, Pearce, Walske and Whitington

Berford & Co's Express (1849 - Feb 1855)
Todd & Co's Express (Jul 1850 - Oct 1851)

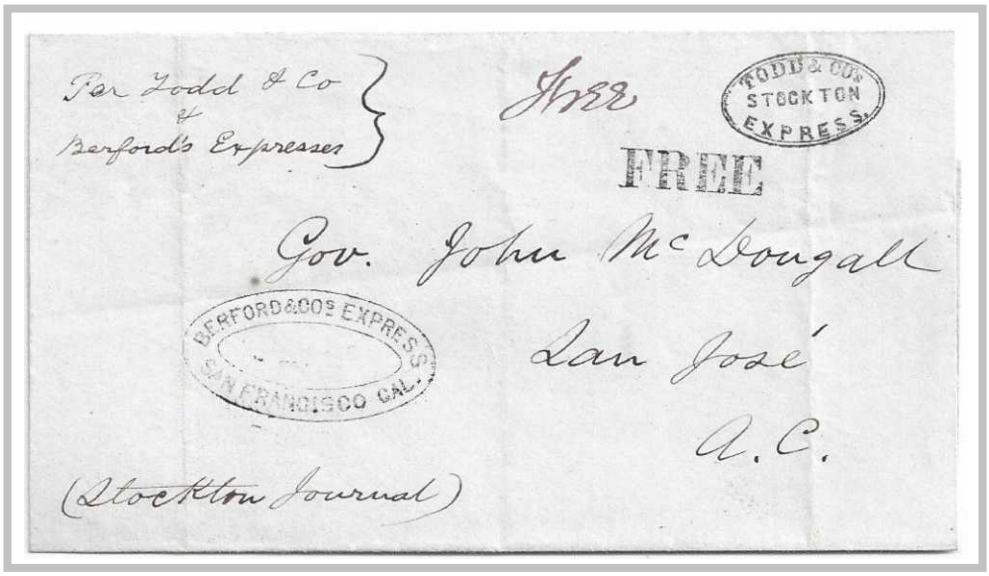
San Francisco division

Berford & Co's Letter & Package Express was founded by Richard G. Berford in the fall of 1849. A December 1849 advertisement listed offices in San Francisco, Sacramento City, San Jose, and Stockton. In December 1850 they began advertising as the only express operating to San Jose. Last ad was February 1855.

For Todd & Co's Express see previous.



Berford & Co's Express land route in red, Todd & Co's Express route in blue



January 1851 Stockton to San Francisco by Todd & Co's Express, "FREE" handstamp by Berford & Co's Express from San Francisco to San Jose, addressed to Gov. McDougall

three reported examples of this Todd's Stockton handstamp, this the only conjunctive use

ex Vogel and Walske

Wells, Fargo & Co's Express (Jul 1852 - present)

San Francisco division

The famous bank and nationwide express was formed by Henry Wells and William Fargo on March 18, 1852 when other directors of American Express did not wish to open offices in California. Agents of the new firm arrived in California in July 1852 and after a long series of acquisitions, including Gregory's Express, Todd's Express, and Hunter's Express, they had 24 branch offices in operation by January 1855. With the collapse of Adams & Company in February 1855, and after surviving the financial panic of that year, Wells Fargo emerged as the dominant banking force and leader in the express business.

circa December 1853 Benicia to San Francisco by Wells,Fargo & Cos Express, endorsed "Hubert Assembly" company oval and "FREE" handstamp as a courtesy to state assemblyman Henry Hubert

California state capitol building at Benicia, February 11, 1853 until February 25, 1854

ex Mader

Wells, Fargo & Co's Express (Jul 1852 - present)

San Francisco division

WELLS, FARGO & CO'S
CALIFORNIA EXPRESS,
BANKING AND COMMERCIAL HOUSE,
MONTGOMERY ST. SAN FRANCISCO, California.

AND SHIPPING LIST.

EBRUARY 28, 1855. NO. 9.

BUNKER, CALOTT & CO.,
ENERAL COMMISSION MERCHANTS,
SHIP CHANDLERS,
AND DEALERS IN PRODUCE,
LAY STREET WHARF,
SAN FRANCISCO, CAL.

H. S. BUNKER, late Auditor of the San rancisco Custom House.
OLIVER S. CALOTT, late master of whale-ip Hobomok.

REFERENCES
SAN FRANCISCO—Messrs. Adams & Co.; ilmer, Cook & Co., Sanders & Brenham, acondray & Co., Hon. C. K. Garrison, ayor.
BOSTON, Henry Lincoln, Esq.
NEW BEDFORD, D. R. Greene, Esq.
FALMOUTH, Messrs. O. C. Swift & Bro.
NANTUCKET, T. Macy, Esq., Matthew Cross, Esq.
EDGARTOWN, Capt. Benjamin Worth, Capt. lex. Ray, of whaleship Revello.

WHALERS can now be supplied with ces, Provisions, Vegetables, and Whaling ear at San Francisco, on as reasonable rms and at as low rates, as from any port the Pacific. The exemption from the rt charges and Consuls fees of Foreign orts, renders this a desirable place to re-uit, &c. Oil can always be shipped from reet to the Atlantic States at low rates of reight. 25

To the Ladies of San Francisco.
AND BUYERS OF
DRY GOODS IN GENERAL,
A. AUSTIN & CO.,
TAKE GREAT PLEASURE IN announcing to the public that (by the latest arrivals) they are enabled to offer, for the inspection of their customers, the choicest and best selected assortment of FANCY, STAPLE and DOMESTIC DRY GOODS ever imported into this city, and at prices less than have ever been offered in San Francisco.
A. A. & CO. invite special attention to their large stock of SILKS, SHAWLS, LACES, EMBROIDERIES, Handkerchiefs, Hosiery, Ladies', Gents' and Children's Underclothes, Gloves, etc. Also, to their unrivalled assortment of Mantillas, Cloaks, Talmas, OPERA CLOAKS, etc., including every variety of the latest and most popular styles of the present PARIS FASHIONS.
Their supply of Housekeeping Goods embrace every desirable article in that line, Linen Shirtings and Sheetings, single and Double Damask in Table Cloths and per yard. Napkins, Tray Cloths, Fruit Napkins, Doyles, Royal Turkish Bath'ng Towels, etc., all from the most celebrated manufactories and of the most desirable makes; together with an endless variety of French, English, and American Printed De Laines, Cashmeres, Prints, etc., Lace and Embroidered Mohair Quilts, Blankets, etc.
The MOURNING [illegible] plete with every [illegible]

Banking Houses.
DAN'L D. PAGE, | D. CHAMBERS, | FRAN'S W. PAGE.
H. D. BACON, | HEN'Y HAIGHT. | Sac. City.
St. Louis, | San Francisco |
PAGE, BACON & CO.,
BANKERS.
MONTGOMERY, COR. CALIFORNIA STREET.
SAN FRANCISCO.
Draw at sight or on time, in sums to suit, on
F. Huth & Co.....London,
Duncan, Sherman & Co.....New York,
Atlantic Bank.....Boston,
Philadelphia Bank.....Philadelphia,
McKim, Greenway & Co.....Baltimore,
Louisiana State Bank.....New Orleans,
Page & Bacon.....St. Louis,
Hutchings & Co.....Louisville,
Ohio Life Ins. and Trust Co.....Cincinnati,
S. Jones & Co.....Pittsburg.
Gold Dust and Exchange purchased at current rates. 38

BANKING HOUSE OF
DREXEL, SATHER & CHURCH
DRAW AT SIGHT ON
Ocean Bank, - - New York;
Bank of North America, Boston;
Drexel & Co. - - Philadelphia.

MACONDRAY & CO. OFFER FOR SALE—
FLOUR—Haxall and other Brands; Tatnall's Brandywine Corn Meal, in bbls and halves; Buckwheat in tins.
PROVISIONS—Mess and Clear Pork; Mess and Family Beef; Bacon Sides; Hams; Butter, in firkins and kegs; Lard, in kegs and tins; Cheese, in tins.
SUGAR—China No. 1 and 2, in 25-lb mats.
GRAINS—Oats; Carolina, China and Bally Rice; Pearl Barley.
TEAS—Cases of 1 and 2lb canisters; Imperial, Gunpowder, Hyson and Young Hyson; boxes of Hyson, Young Hyson and Gunpowder; half chests and boxes of Oolong, Pouchong, Souchong, Pekoe and Congo; cases of canisters Pouchong.
PRESERVES—Pie Fruits; Brandy Fruits; Fresh Apples; Apple Sauce; Ginger; Citron; Chur Chun; Kum Guat; Olives; Pickles; Capers; Mustard; Lemon Syrup; Honey; Oysters; Lobsters and Clams.
LIQUORS AND WINES—Brandy in pipes, half pipes, quarters and octaves; Cherry Brandy in kegs; Hock Wine.
TOBACCO—Diadem, Eclipse and Mills' brand.
CIGARS—Regalia and Lenores Cigars.
SPICES—Cassia; Lignea; Nutmegs; whole Pepper.
FURNITURE—Painted Cottage Sets; cane and wood seat Chairs; Carpeting; Rugs and Mats; China Matting;
HARDWARE—Collins Co.'s Tools, assorted; Ames', Fields' and other brands long and short handled Shovels; [illegible]

Adams & Co. to their Creditors.

Comments which have been made on the closing of our House, seem to require that before presenting to our creditors the proposition which is below, I should acquaint the public, as our friends are already acquainted, with the facts which demonstrate that the real causes of our suspension were not of our own making.

The stoppage of a well known and popular House is misfortune and humiliation enough, without having to bear responsibility for the faults of others. Had our purposes and efforts been seconded as they should have been, in quarters where we had a right to expect it, the calamity which has just overtaken the community would never have happened.

Adams & Co to their Creditors

Second page article includes statement of I. C. Woods describing the causes of the collapse of Adams Express two weeks prior.

28 February 1855 issue of San Francisco *Prices Current and Shipping List* newspaper
large style Wells, Fargo & Co's California Express handstamp of style found only on newspapers

Leland & McComb's Southern Express (Aug 1854 - Oct 1855)

San Francisco division

Leland and David McComb formed a new partnership in August 1854 connecting San Francisco, Monterey, Santa Barbara, San Pedro, Los Angeles and San Diego by steamers and was termed "Leland & McComb's Southern Express" to differentiate it from their Crescent City Express between San Francisco, Humboldt Bay and Crescent City. The firm was out of business in October 1855.

Leland & McComb's Southern Express route to Santa Barbara

23 November 1854 (Santa Barbara) to San Francisco by Leland & McComb's Southern Express with "Paid" entered post office for Walden, New York, red "Paid 6" post office marking partially beneath adhesive the 3¢ partial payment of 6¢ rate recognized at San Francisco, "Due 5" marking to left for remaining unpaid 3¢

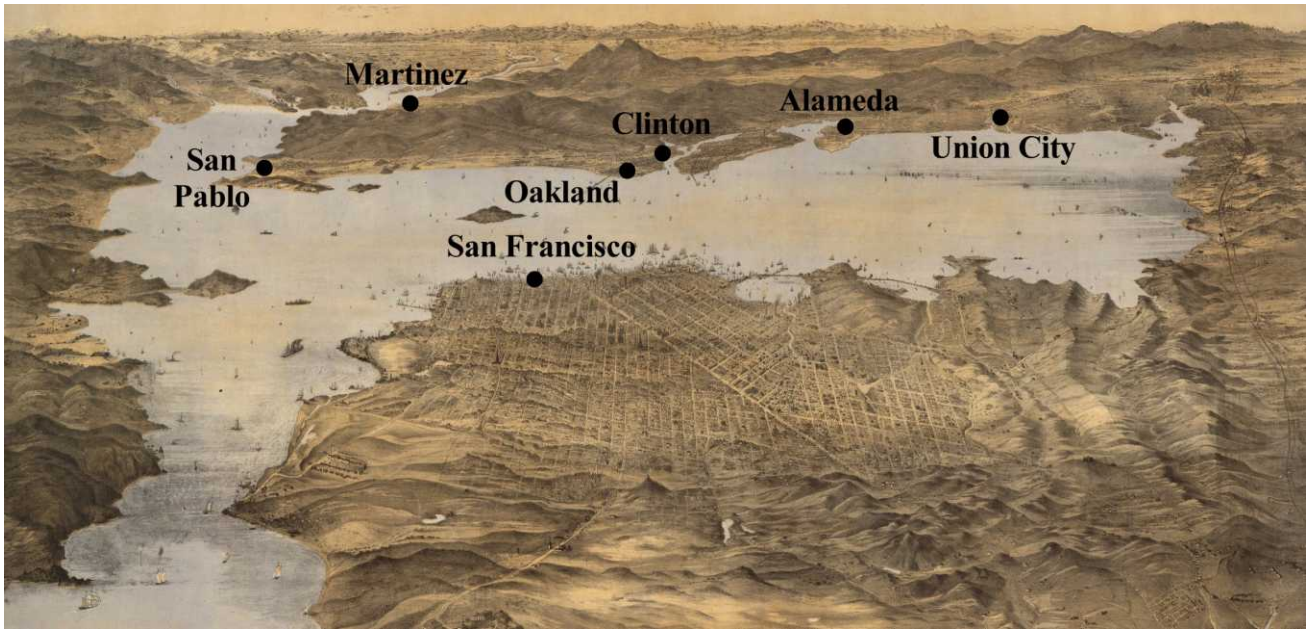
two reported examples of the Southern Express marking

ex Emerson, Knapp, Haas, Vogel and Walske

Swart & Co's Express (Aug 1854 - Dec 1854)

San Francisco division

Swart & Co's Express advertised briefly in 1854. Their route was by steamer from San Francisco to Oakland, Clinton, Alameda, Union City, San Pablo and Martinez.



bird's-eye view of Swart & Co's offices

SWART & CO.'S EXPRESS
(LATE ALMY & CO.)
DAILY LINES to and from San Francisco, Oakland, Clinton, Alameda, Union City, San Jose, San Pablo, and Martinez.
Letters, packages, &c., promptly forwarded and delivered. Notes, drafts, and bills collected, and all express business attended to with promptness and dispatch.
☞ Express matter from San Francisco for the above places left at Adams & Co.'s Express Building, will be promptly forwarded.
☞ Office in Oakland, on Broadway, above First st.
my25

August 3, 1854 *Daily Placer Times and Transcript*

28 November 1854 Union City to San Francisco by Swart & Co's Express, Oakland office handstamp
3¢ stamp as required, manuscript "please delivery immediately" endorsement

two reported examples of this express

ex Dale-Lichtenstein and Walske

Swift & Co Express (1855 - 1859)
Wells, Fargo & Co Express (Jul 1852 - present)

San Francisco division

Swift & Co's Express operated from a base in San Francisco to Bodega, Petaluma and Santa Rosa. Swift connected with Wells Fargo for additional service.

circa 1855 (Petaluma) to Bodega by Swift & Co's Express, first style frank on 3¢ entire conjunctive use with Wells, Fargo steamboat service to San Francisco

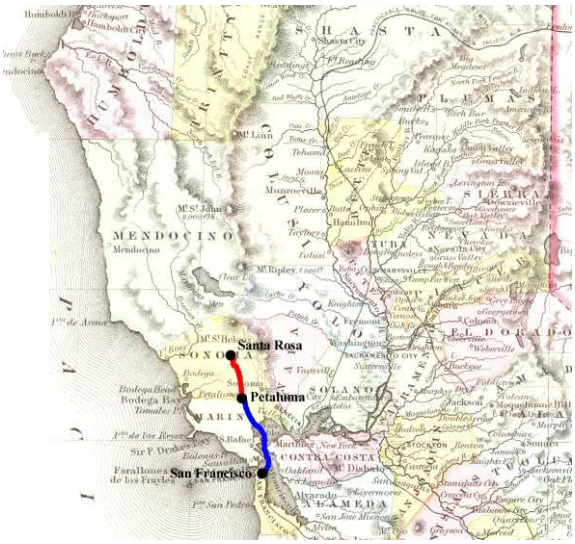
two reported examples of this frank

illustrated in Nathan and Coburn; ex Barkhausen, Lichtenstein, Haas, Edwards and Whitington

Swift & Co Express (Dec 1854 - 1859)
Wells, Fargo & Co Express (Jul 1852 - present)

San Francisco division

Swift & Co's Express operated from a base in San Francisco to Bodega, Petaluma and Santa Rosa. Swift connected with Wells Fargo for additional service.

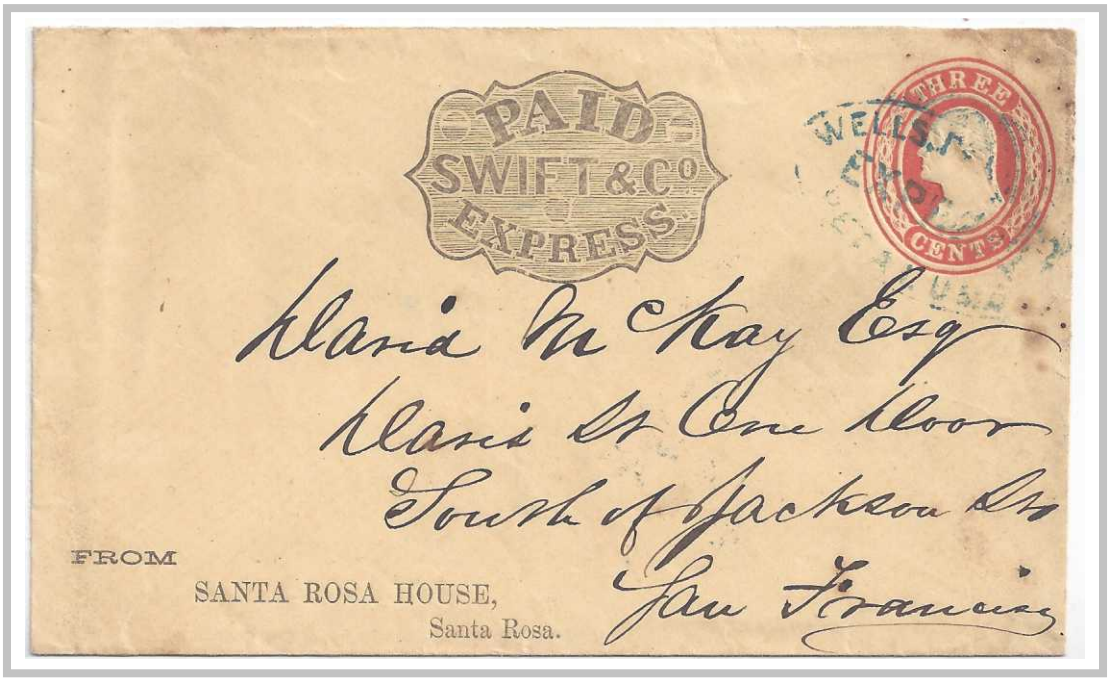


Swift & Co route in red, Wells, Fargo in blue

SWIFT & CO.'S EXPRESS,
CONNECTING WITH WELLS, FARGO & CO.,

LEAVES San Francisco for PETALUMA, at 10 A. M., DAILY, per steamers E. CORNING and REINDEER, connecting with Brown & Richardson's Express to Santa Rosa and Russian River, and with Richardson's Express to Sonoma and Bodega.
de23 SWIFT & CO.

Swift & Co's advertisement in February 12, 1855 *Daily Placer Times and Transcript*



circa 1856 Santa Rosa to Petaluma by Swift & Co's Express, second style frank on 3¢ entire conjunctive use with Wells, Fargo service from Petaluma

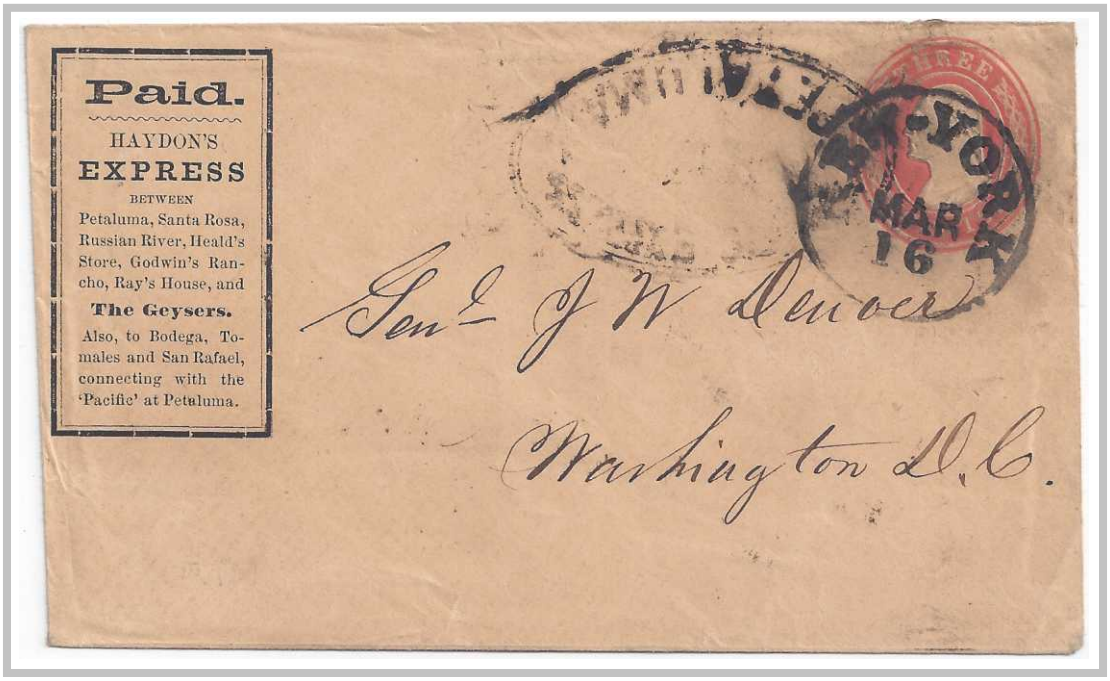
ex Whitington

Haydon's Express (1856)
Pacific Express (Mar 1855 - Apr 1857)

San Francisco division

S. C. Haydon, a merchant in Petaluma, established his express to handle mail in Sonoma and Marin County towns north of San Francisco. The text on his frank reads: "Between Petaluma, Santa Rosa, Russian River, Heald's Store, Godwin's Rancho, Ray's House, and The Geysers. Also, to Bodega, Tomales and San Rafael, connecting with the 'Pacific' (express) at Petaluma."

Haydon's Express primary offices in relation to San Francisco



February 1856 origin north of Petaluma to Petaluma by Haydon's Express, printed frank on 3¢ entire
February 1856 by Pacific Express Petaluma to San Francisco and via Nicaragua to New York
16 March 1856 entered mails at New York for carriage to Washington, D.C.

only reported example of Haydon's frank

Waybill (via Nicaragua)		
depart San Francisco Feb 20, 1856	Vanderbilt Line steamer *Uncle Sam*	arrive San Juan del Sur Mar 2, 1856
across Nicaragua to San Juan del Norte		
depart San Juan del Norte Mar 5, 1856	Vanderbilt Line steamer *Northern Light*	arrive New York Mar 13, 1856

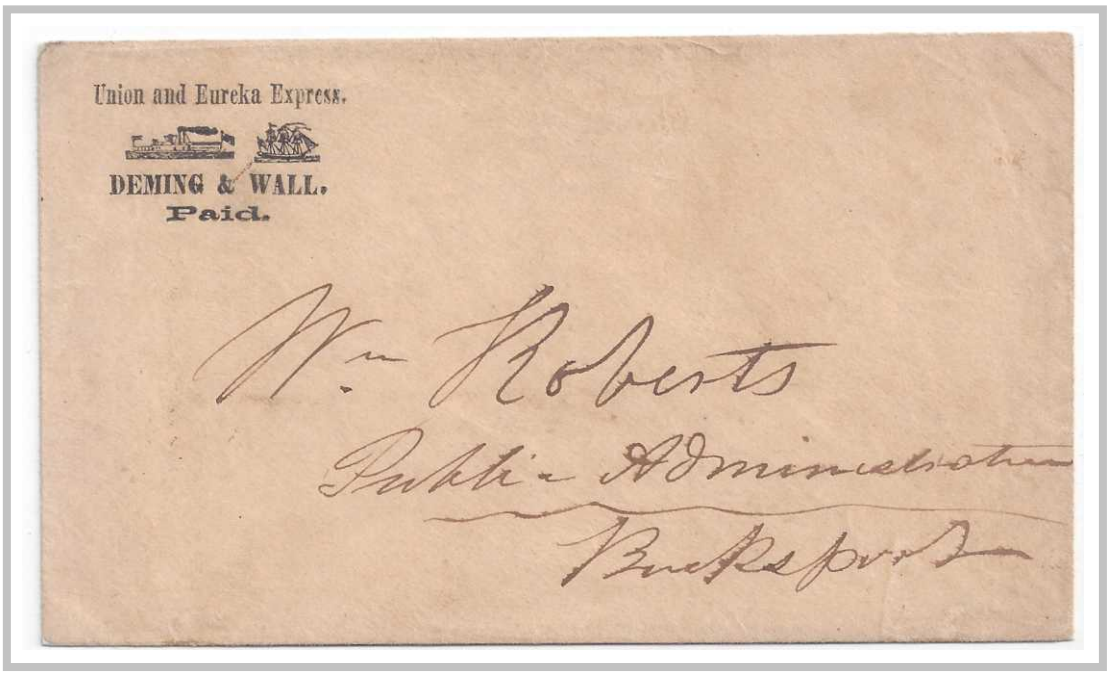
illustrated in Nathan and Coburn; ex Jessup, Pearce, Haas, Edwards and Whitington

Deming & Wall Express (circa 1856 - 1857)

San Francisco division

Deming & Wall's Union and Eureka Express was founded by Byron Deming and William H. Wall and operated in Humboldt County, California between Union (Uniontown, now Arcata) and Eureka by ship. In 1860 Byron Deming is listed in "Stimson's Express Directory" as an agent for Wells, Fargo in Uniontown.

map of towns served by Deming and Wall on Humboldt Bay



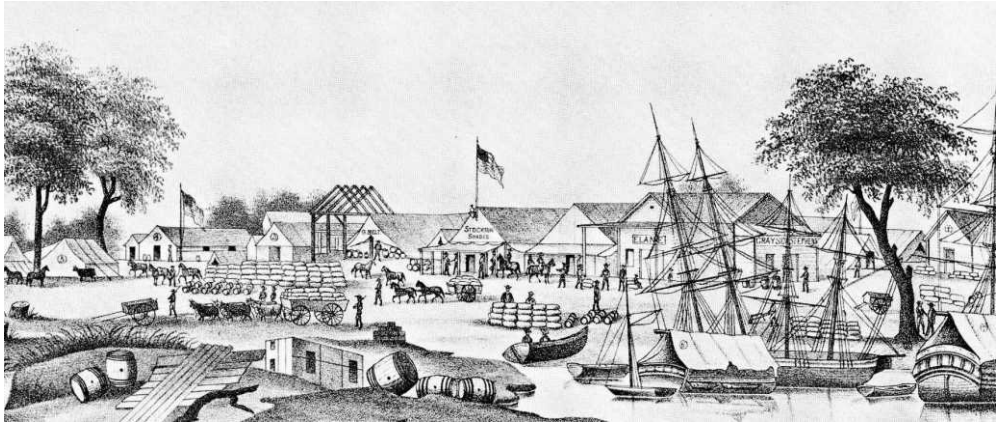
circa 1856 Union to Bucksport by Deming & Wall's Union and Eureka Express steamship and sailing vessel illustrated frank as carriage was on the Pacific Ocean

the only reported example of a use from this company

illustrated in Coburn; ex Haas, Edwards and Whitington

The Stockton Division Expresses

Stockton division



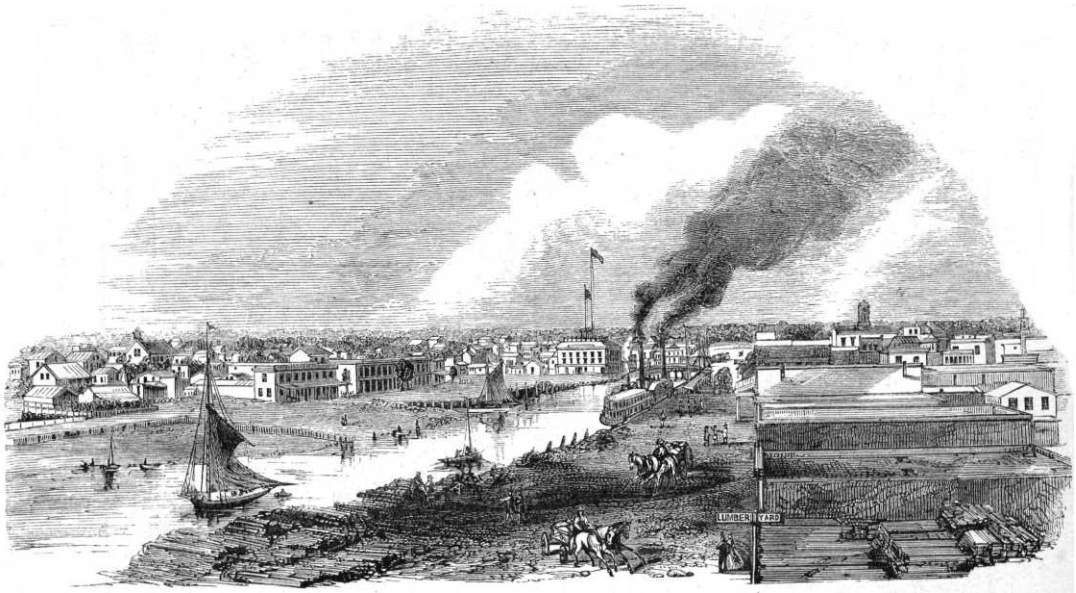
The Stockton division expresses (denoted by horseback rider with "Stockton division" beneath) primarily served the Southern Mines and the smaller supply towns in the area as shown in the shaded area on the map. Mail was received from steamboats operating from San Francisco or points up the Sacramento River. Like the other mountain express companies, the portion of service beyond Stockton was handled by stage and horse.

During the Pioneer period, Todd & Company and Newell & Co. expresses operated between Stockton and San Francisco by steamer. Although they also operated by coach to Sonora as well, the leading divisional express serving the mountain mining camps was Brown's Express.

The map below shows approximate Stockton Division service areas shaded in brown.

Stockton Division service area (shaded)

Stockton Post Office



The first post office in Stockton was established by special Agent Allen on his visit in June 1849. Mail service did not commence for some months as a contractor could not be found to provide service. On November 8, 1849 the postmaster appointment was confirmed in Washington.

19 December 1849 Stockton, California to Steuben, Maine, manuscript postmark and 40¢ postage due

letter of William P Shaw, dated at Stockton mentions: *I arrived here some time in Sept. I have enjoyed good health ever since I left the States. It was rather late in the season when I arrived but I have done tolerable well and have a good prospect of making money in the Spring.*

a very early use as PM appointment confirmed in Washington in November 1849

ex Haas, Vogel and Walske

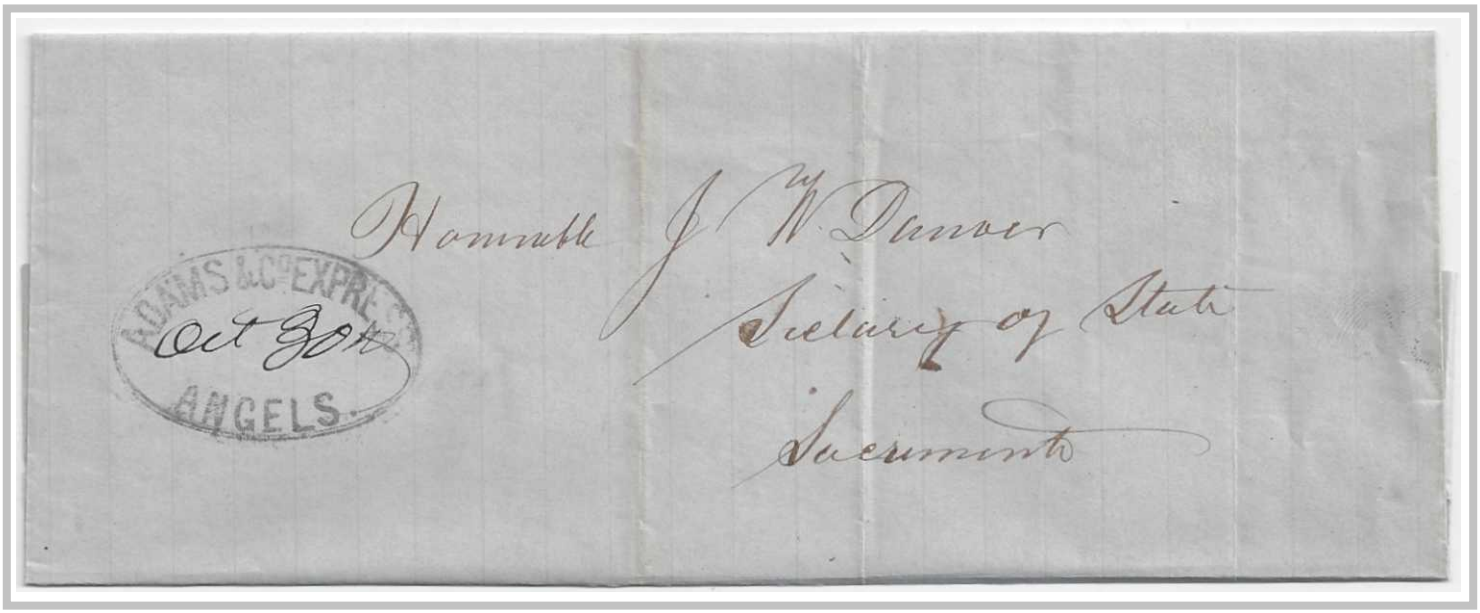
Adams & Co's Express (Nov 1849 - Feb 1855)

Stockton division

For primary Adams entry, see Ocean to Ocean section. By 1854 Adams Express used Brown as their agent to handle letters from the mining camps to Stockton but still maintained an office under their own name in Angels, also known as Angels Camp. The camp was later made famous by Samuel Clemens (Mark Twain).

Angels Hotel - cited by Mark Twain as the place a bartender first related to him the story of "The Celebrated Bullfrog of Calavaras County"

Adams & Co's Express route from Angels, via Stocton, to Sacramento



30 October 1854 from Angels to Sacramento by Adams & Co's Express addressed to John Denver, Secretary of State of California

the only reported example of the Adams Express Angels office marking

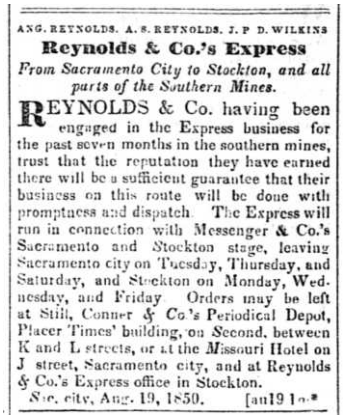
ex Haas and Kramer

Reynolds & Co's Express (Jan 1850 - Oct 1851)
Brown's Express (Jun 1850 - Apr 1853)

Stockton division

Reynolds & Co's Express was founded by two Reynolds brothers and J. P. D. Wilkins in January 1850. They operated on steamboats and stages to Stockton. The first notice in the Sacramento papers mentions their service will use stage coaches of Messenger & Co between Sacramento and Stockton. Reynolds added Todd as a partner in October 1851 and the new company continued on the routes.

For Brown's Express, see following.



ANG. REYNOLDS. A. S. REYNOLDS. J. P D. WILKINS

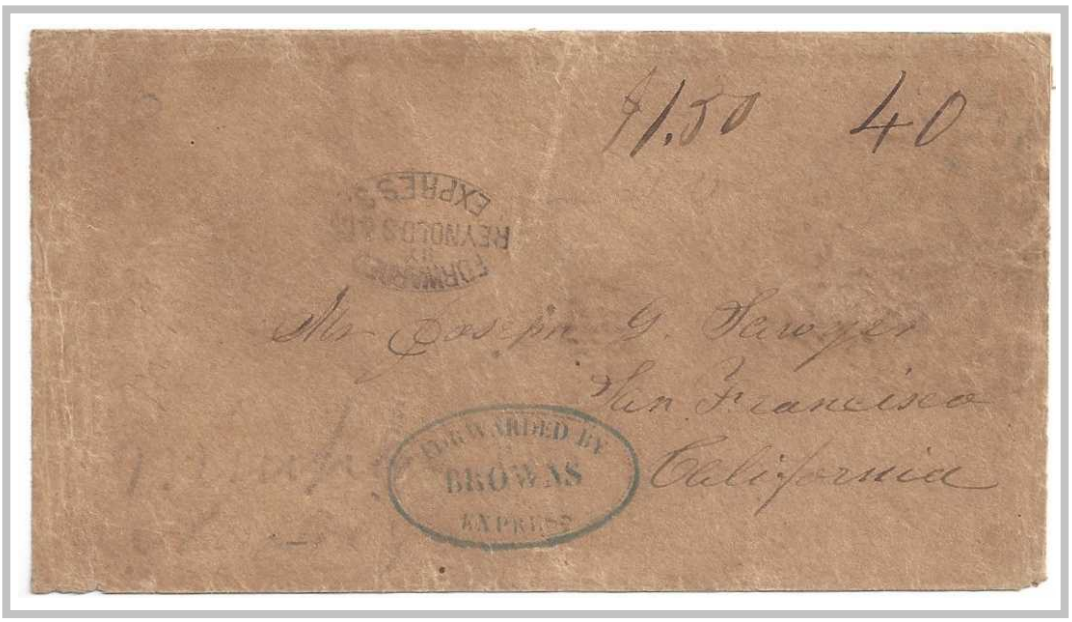
Reynolds & Co.'s Express

From Sacramento City to Stockton, and all parts of the Southern Mines.

REYNOLDS & Co. having been engaged in the Express business for the past seven months in the southern mines, trust that the reputation they have earned there will be a sufficient guarantee that their business on this route will be done with promptness and dispatch. The Express will run in connection with Messenger & Co.'s Sacramento and Stockton stage, leaving Sacramento city on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday, and Stockton on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Orders may be left at Still, Conner & Co.'s Periodical Depot, Placer Times' building, on Second, between K and L streets, or at the Missouri Hotel on J street, Sacramento city, and at Reynolds & Co.'s Express office in Stockton.

Sac. city, Aug. 19, 1850. [au19 1m*

Reynolds & Co's advertisement in August 19, 1850 *Sacramento Transcript*



backstamp

circa September 1850 from the East to San Francisco by government mails, 40¢ postage due
by Reynolds Express to Stockton and when not found it was returned with post office due 40¢ backstamp
taken out of post office and carried by Brown's to Murphys with endorsement and $1.50 due

the only reported use of Reynolds oval marking on cover that was also carried by another express

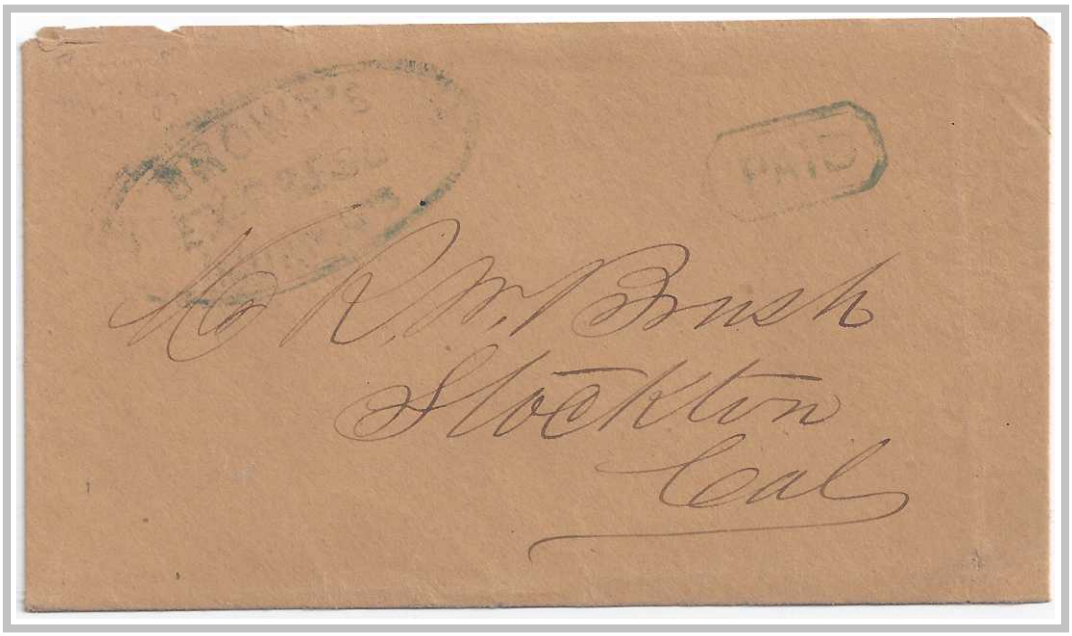
ex Vogel and Walske

Browns Express (Jun 1850 - Apr 1853)

Stockton division

Brown's Express was one of the principal express operators to the southern mines. Founded by W. A. Brown in June 1850, he connected with both Todd & Co. and Newell & Co. operating between Stockton and San Francisco and they, in turn connected at San Francisco with Adam's Express for ocean to ocean service. Brown was murdered on April 2, 1853 and the express continued under his name even though it was then operated by Adams Express.

Brown's Express route between Stockton and Murphy's



circa 1851 Murphy's to Stockton by Brown's Express
"BROWN'S EXPRESS MURPHYS" double oval and boxed "PAID" handstamps

fewer than four reported examples of the Brown's Express Murphy's handstamp

ex Whitington

Todd's Express (Jul 1850 - Oct 1851)
Freeman & Co's Express (Nov 1850 - Nov 1851)

Stockton division

Alexander Todd was one of the first express men in California. In July 1850 he took E. W. Colt as a partner under the Todd & Co's Express name. They operated between San Francisco and Stockton mines until Todd joined with Reynolds to form Reynolds, Todd & Co's Express in October 1851.

Summer 1851 Stockton to San Francisco by Todd's Express, their faint oval and manuscript "50 cts" due conjunctive use with Freeman & Co's Express for carriage from San Francisco to Vallejo

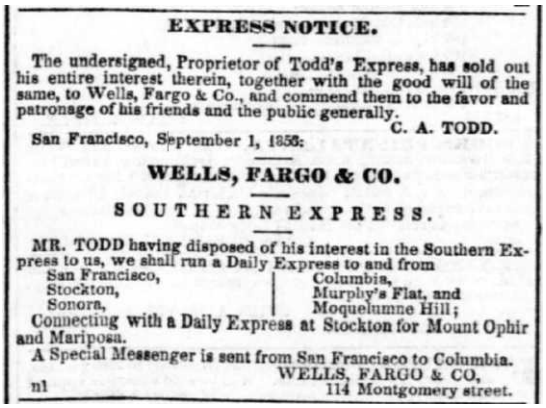
ex Whitington

C. A. Todd's Express (Apr 1853 - Sep 1853)

Stockton division

C. A. Todd, no relation to Alexander Todd, purchased Reynolds, Todd & Co's Express on April 22, 1853. He operated his express between San Francisco and Stockton by steamer and ran daily stages from Stockton to the mines along the Moquelumne and Stanislaus Rivers. He sold the company to Wells, Fargo & Co on September 1, 1853.

Todd's Express route from Sonora to San Franciso



EXPRESS NOTICE.

The undersigned, Proprietor of Todd's Express, has sold out his entire interest therein, together with the good will of the same, to Wells, Fargo & Co., and commend them to the favor and patronage of his friends and the public generally.

C. A. TODD.

San Francisco, September 1, 1853.

WELLS, FARGO & CO.

SOUTHERN EXPRESS.

MR. TODD having disposed of his interest in the Southern Express to us, we shall run a Daily Express to and from

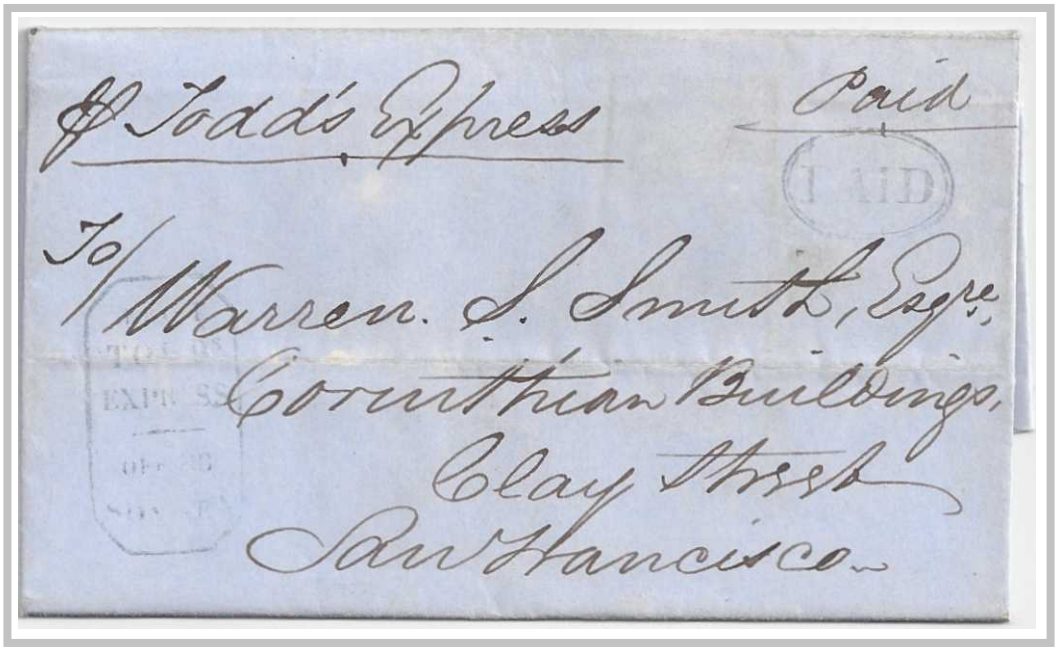
San Francisco,	Columbia,
Stockton,	Murphy's Flat, and
Sonora,	Moquelumne Hill;

Connecting with a Daily Express at Stockton for Mount Ophir and Mariposa.

A Special Messenger is sent from San Francisco to Columbia.

WELLS, FARGO & CO,
114 Montgomery street.

n1



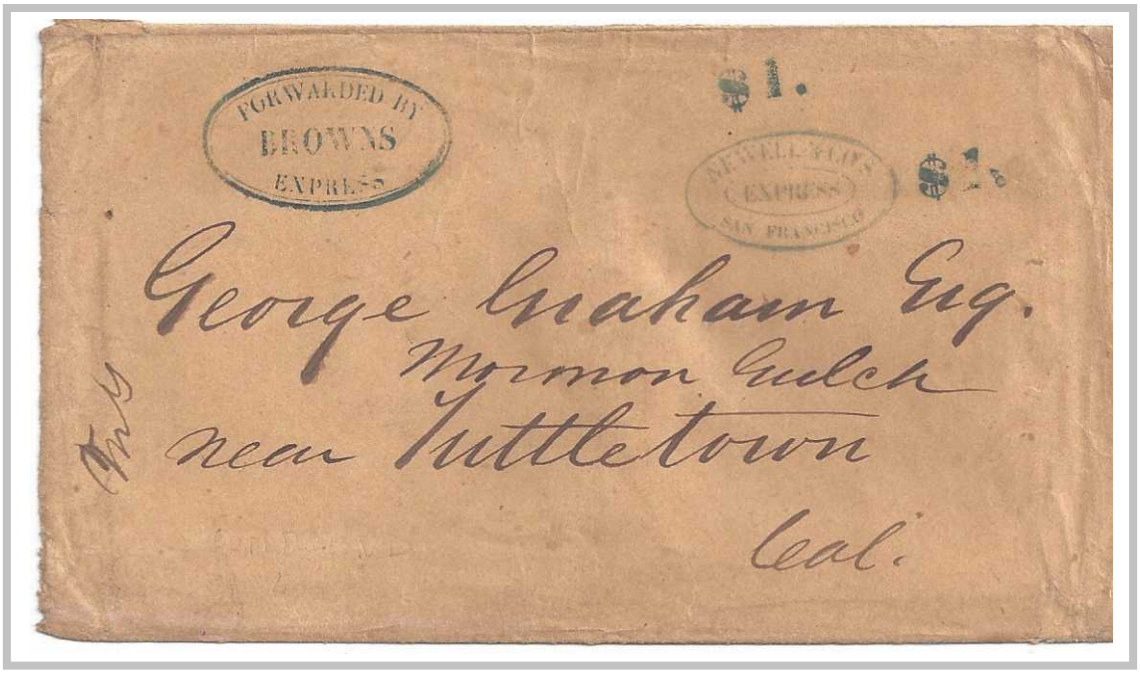
7 March 1853 Sonora to San Francisco by Todd's Express, their boxed handstamp and "PAID" oval letter of W. Walton is a recommendation of Richard Hoey to replace a Robert Carter who is leaving their employ to go to Sydney (New South Wales): *he has been working in the mines since the fall of 1850 and is well known as sharp, active and proper man.*

Newell & Co's Express (Oct 1851 - Jul 1853)
Browns Express (Jun 1850 - Apr 1853)

Stockton division

L. W. Newell and E. W. Colt, both formerly partners in Todd & Co, announced Newell & Co's Express on October 22, 1851. The express operated between San Francisco and Stockton by steamboat as well as by steamer to Oregon. They connected with Browns for service to the southern mines near Stockton.

Newell & Co's Express route in blue, Brown's Express route in red



circa October 1851 from San Francisco addressed to "Mormon Gulch, near Tuttletown"
by Newell & Co's Express to Stockton, conjunctive use for Browns Express service Stockton to Mormon Gulch
Brown collected twice the $1 fee, one-half was paid to Newell

the only reported example of the Newell San Francisco office marking

ex Vogel and Walske

C. A. Todd's Express (Apr 1853 - Sep 1853)

Stockton division

C. A. Todd, no relation to Alexander Todd, purchased Reynolds, Todd & Co's Express on April 22, 1853. He operated his express between San Francisco and Stockton by steamer and ran daily stages from Stockton to the mines along the Moquelumne and Stanislaus Rivers. He he sold the company to Wells, Fargo & Co on September 1, 1853.

Todd's Express route from San Franciso to Tuttletown, "near Sonora"

1853 San Francisco to Tuttletown by C.A. Todd's Express, their oval and boxed "NOT PAID" handstamps

illustrated in Coburn;xe Haas, Edwards and Whitington

The Sacramento Division Expresses

Sacramento division

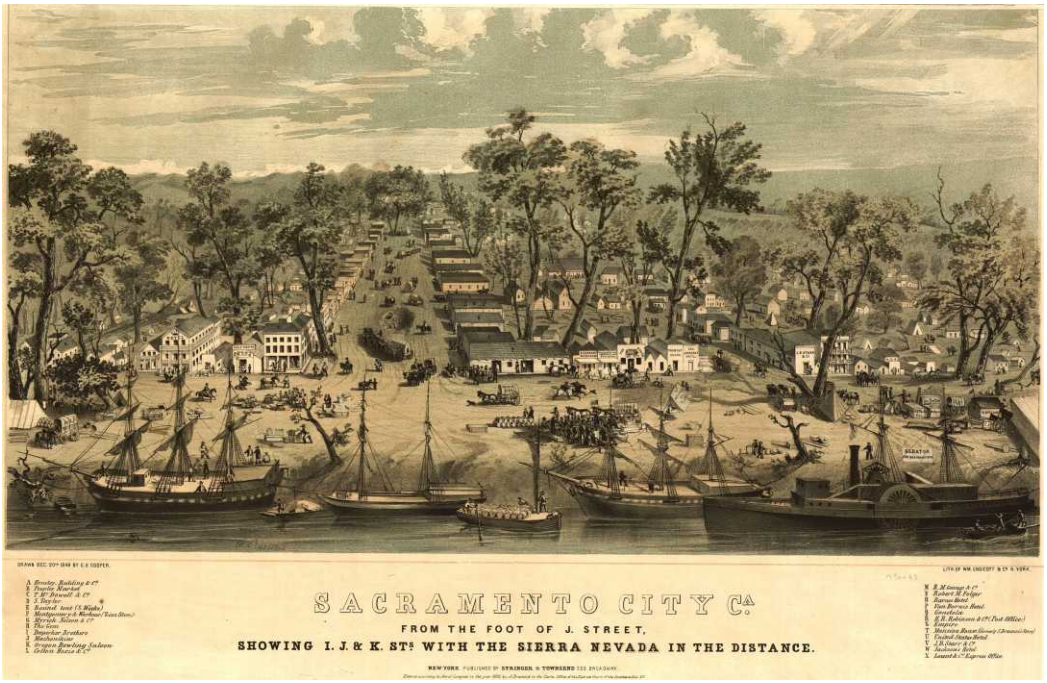
The Sacramento division express companies (denoted by horseback rider icon with "Sacramento division" beneath) operated from the primary hub of gold mining activities in California. Sacramento City was located at the point where the American River joined the Sacramento River. The American River watershed area was home to the first gold discovery at Sutter's Fort in 1848 and also many of the earliest producing placer mines.

The influx of a large number of gold miners to the area in 1849 brought with it an enormous load on the transportation and banking systems. The miners working in the isolated mining camps up the Feather River and its branches required foodstuffs, mining equipment, a way to transport their gold to buyers and a way to communicate with the outside world.

Typically, the Sacramento Division express companies carried supplies, newspapers and mail from Sacramento City to the miners and returned with gold to be shipped, via brokers and banking centers, to the East. In the Sacramento City Division, the express companies initially transported their cargo on foot, horseback or in small carts. The Sacramento Valley Railroad was not completed until 1856.

The map shows approximate Sacramento service area.

Sacramento Division service area (shaded)

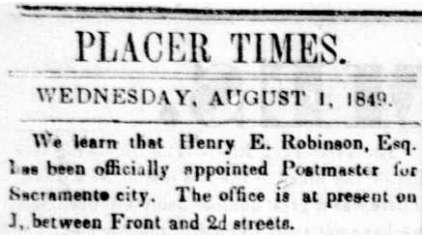


view of Sacramento City, December 1849, steamer *Senator* at right

Sutter's Fort Privately to Sacramento City Post Office

Sacramento division

The first post office in Sacramento City was announced in the *Placer Times* on August 1, 1849 with Henry E. Robinson as postmaster. Mail service was erratic as no reliable contractor was willing to provide regular service for the payment authorized.



PLACER TIMES.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 1, 1849.

We learn that Henry E. Robinson, Esq. has been officially appointed Postmaster for Sacramento city. The office is at present on J, between Front and 2d streets.

August 1, 1849 *Placer Times*

location of the first Sacramento post office on "J" St. in 1849

by steamboat to San Francisco

PMSS steamer *Panama*
dep San Francisco Sep 2 1849
arv Panama Sep 22 1849

across Isthmus to Chagres

USMSC steamer *Falcon*
dep Chagres Sep 27 1849
arv New Orleans Oct 4 1849

carried up Mississippi River
with regular contract mails

19 August 1849, Sutter's Mills, California to Yellow Springs, Iowa (contents on following page)
1 September 1849 entered mails at Sacramento City post office, manuscript postmark and "Paid 40"

important content letter (partial transcript on following page) from one of the first overland 49'ers, JH Blair, writing from the site of Sutter's original gold discovery includes description of the journey to California, method of using rocker to extract gold, and his success: *I have worked 14 days and averaged an ounce per day*

carried in the first transcontinental through mail bags from Sacramento City, via Panama, to the East

ex Straley and Walske

Sutter's Fort Privately to Sacramento City Post Office

Sacramento division

On January 28, 1848 James Marshall met privately with Sutter and showed him the gold nuggets that Marshall had found during the construction of Sutter's mill, along the American River only four days earlier. The site is within today's downtown Sacramento.

Sutter's Fort in 1849

Sutters Mills August 19th 49

Letter of J(ohn) H(ervey) Blair includes: *We arrived here the last of July in good health without the loss of much property or any of our Company. Our trip was a short one considering the distance, to me a pleasant one, to many I fear it is the reverse. Our success depended upon our early start out and cracking ahead which gave us the advantage of pasture and that of being out of the dust, from Green River to Ft Hall we broke the ways after which a few mule teams overtook us and then there was racing and chasing ..... Our Company, which left St Jo(seph) together stuck together till the end of the journey .....*

Well I have not time nor paper to give you any detailed account of the journey you want to hear what we are doing and what California is. We have been digging on Weaver Creek 6 miles from the Mills in Company with 6 of our company. I have worked 14 days and averaged an ounce per day, which is considered good for one who has no experience in mining. We work for it and (make) no mistake the gold is found in bands along the streams and in the Channel of the same where we have been the gold is very fine. I will send you a sample, the first thing to be done is to clear off the earth and loose stones then dig it up with a pick, carry it to your machine and shovel it into a hopper which has a shot iron bottom which has holes punched through to let the gold and dirt through and prevent the rocks from going in. One rocks it and another pours on water, two small bars stop the gold and emery the water carries the dirt over, after a sufficient quantity is gathered it is taken in a pan and cleaned. Now then you have the process of obtaining the precious metal and if any one doubts my assertion that it makes ones back ache worse than hauling rails let him try it that(s) all. …

miners working the sluice (long tom) as described in letter

We expect to leave here on account of the water drying. The Middle Fork of (the) American Fork is the place we expect to locate on, the prospect for making a fortune here depends very much upon the exertion one makes, with health, perseverance, proper management very few fail of success. Our provision will last about 2 months longer, to you prices will appear very high but when you take into consideration the wages that are paid they will not appear out of the way. At the City provisions sell for ....

I don't advise any one to come, nor do I regret coming by any means. I would not take $500 for what I have seen and learned but if any one comes tell them to start with good teams and light loads and early in the Spring... Now give my love to all my acquaintances and tell them to write direct to California Sacramento City (Sutters Fort) ..

Adams & Co's Expresss (Nov 1849 - Feb 1855)

Sacramento division

Adam's & Co's Express evidently took over many of the Hunter & Co's Express routes in Eldorado and Yuba counties. By late 1854 Adams' agents probably utilized California Stage Company for service on the routes (see advertisement below).

CALIFORNIA STAGE COMPANY.

OFFICE AT THE OR-LEANS HOTEL, Sacramento.

STAGES leave regularly for the following places: Nevada, Ophir, Auburn, Yankee Jim's, Georgetown, Placerville, Mormon Island, Coloma, Drytown, Jackson, Mokelumne Hill, Stockton, Sonora, Marysville and Shasta, and all parts of the Northern and Southern mines, every morning, as follows:

Nevada and intermediate places, at 5½ o'clock A. M.
Georgetown " " 6 " "
All other places, 6½ " "
Accommodation line for Mormon Island, 1½ o'clk P.M.

All passengers will be called for at their residences, and the utmost attention and care paid to them and their baggage.

Stages arrive in time every day for the San Francisco boats. J. BIRCH, President C. S. Co.

J. P. DEIGHAN, Secretary. o1

California Stage Co. advertisement
Oct 17, 1854 *Sacramento Daily Union*

Concord coach of the California Stage Co.

18 September 1854 Boston, Massachusetts to Sacramento City by government mails, 6¢ postage prepaid
"ADAMS & CO's EXPRESS MORMON ISLAND" handstamp applied to direct item to the nearest office
and taken by them to Auburn, manuscript $1.00 due

ex Dale-Lichtenstein and Walske

Grammer & Co's Express (1849 - 1851)

Sacramento division

Joseph Grammer, a recent arrival from Pike County, Illinois, formed his small express in late 1849 to operate from a base in Sacramento City to and from the nearby mining areas along the American River and camps as far east as Georgetown. His name appears in delinquent Sacramento City tax lists published in early 1852 and is presumed to have stopped operating, or sold out.

map showing Grammer & Co's Express route between Sacramento and Georgetown

October 1850 from the mines north of Sacramento to Ashburnham, Massachusetts
by Grammer & Co's Express from the mines to Sacramento post office
10 October 1850 Sacramento, via San Francisco, to New York and destination by mail, postage 40¢ due

fewer than five reported examples

ex Jessup, Haas and Edwards

Bowers Express (1850 - 1852)

Sacramento division

Bowers operated between Nevada City and San Francisco via Grass Valley and Rough and Ready when they started in the express business in 1850. After June 1851, the express worked in concert with Freeman & Cos Express for carriage between Sacramento and San Francisco.

map showing Bowers Express route between Sacramento and Marysville

October 1850 (Nevada City area mines) to Richmond, Virginia
by Bowers Express from Nevada City to San Francisco post office
19 October San Francisco to New York and destination by mail, postage of 40¢ due

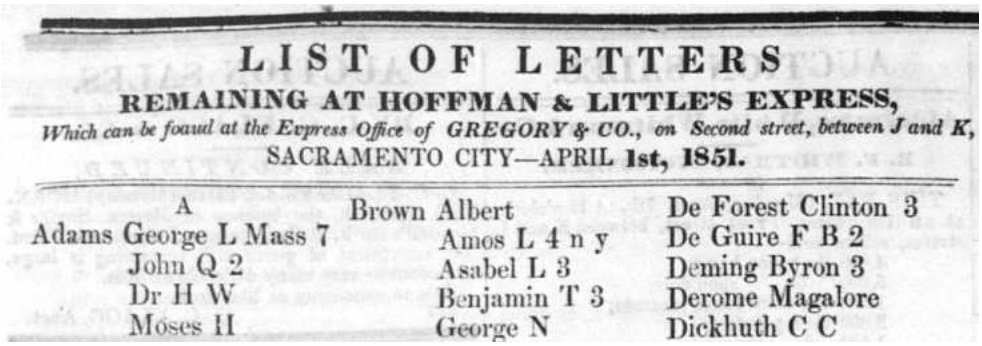
the earliest of seven reported examples

ex Dale-Lichtenstein and Walske

Hoffman & Co's Express (Feb 1850 - Apr 1851)

Sacramento division

Hoffman & Co's express was founded by William M. Hoffman who first advertised a single express messenger returning from San Francisco to New York in February 1850. Apparently he operated briefly carrying mail from Sacramento the mines. In December 1850 he advertised with his brother as merchants in Sacramento selling miner's supplies. The notice shown below lists over 500 letters remaining at Hoffman & Little's Express, which can be found at Gregory's Express office. By May 17, 1851 Hoffman and Little are listed as Gregory's agents in Nevada City.



LIST OF LETTERS

REMAINING AT HOFFMAN & LITTLE'S EXPRESS,

Which can be found at the Express Office of GREGORY & CO., on Second street, between J and K,

SACRAMENTO CITY—APRIL 1st, 1851.

A

Adams George L Mass 7
John Q 2
Dr H W
Moses H

Brown Albert
Amos L 4 n y
Asabel L 3
Benjamin T 3
George N

De Forest Clinton 3
De Guire F B 2
Deming Byron 3
Derome Magalore
Dickhuth C C

April 1 1851 list of letters remaining at Hoffman & Little's Express to be collected at Gregory & Co. office

28 November 1850 Quincy, Illinois to Sacramento City by government mails, 40¢ postage due picked up by Hoffman & Co Express for delivery to the mines

four reported examples of this oval marking

ex Dale-Lichtenstein and Walske

Ford & Co's Express (Aug 1850 - Sep 1851)

Sacramento division

Little is known about Ford & Co's Express and no advertisements have been found. The few known covers are addressed to, or from, Sacramento and Mormon Gulch and date between August 1850 and September 1851. It has been suggested that the express operated between Sacramento City and Greenwood.

map of probable mining sites served by Ford & Co's Express

25 August 1851 Fairfield, Connecticut to Sacramento City by government mails, 10¢ postage due
Ford & Co's Express to the mines, manuscript $1.35 due includes the postage due

three reported examples of this oval marking

ex Dale-Lichtenstein and Walske

Hunter & Co's Express (Mar 1851 - Jul 1854)

Sacramento division

Alexander Hunter launched his express service with a small newspaper notice in the March 27, 1851 *Sacramento Transcript* stating "will leave for Coloma, Placerville and towns in that vicinity." In April he appears listed by Palmer's Express as their conjunctive express serving the area. By May he advertised as serving all forks of the American River. He later allied with Gregory's and Adams expresses before selling to Wells Fargo & Co. in July 1854 and becoming their agent in Placerville.

HUNTER & CO.'S
SEMI-WEEKLY EXPRESS,

TO all parts of El Dorado County, and the whole of the bars on the South, Middle and North Forks of the American river, including

Placerville	Coloma
Weberville	Georgetown
Diamond Springs	Greenwood Valley
Mud Spring	Kelsey's Diggings
Cold Spring	Columbia
Kingsville	Peru
Mormon Tavern	Murderer's Bar
Rocky Flat	Kelsey's Bar
Grey Eagle City	Big Bar
Bird's Valley	Volcano Bar
Antoine	Horse Shoe Bend
El Dorado Canon	Yankee Jim's Dry Dig'ns
Todd's Rancho	Spanish Bar
Baker's Rancho	Spanish Bar Dry Diggings

and every other point in El Dorado county.

A semi-weekly stage leaves the Crescent City Hotel for Placerville, every Wednesday and Saturday morning, at 7 o'clock, and returning leaves Placerville every Monday and Thursday morning, at the same hour. Office on Second street, between J and K. [my21] HUNTER & CO.

list of mining camps served by Hunter & Co's Express in May 1851

route from Sacramento to Humbug

21 July 1851 Griggsville, Illinois to Sacramento City by government mails, 10¢ postage due picked up there by Hunter & Co's Express, endorsed and delivered to Humbug with $2. due

fewer than ten reported examples of this oval marking

ex Haas, Kutz, Vincent and Walske

Hunter & Co's Express (Mar 1851 - Jul 1854)

Sacramento division

For primary listing of Hunter & Co's Express, see previous.

route from Sacramento City, via Beal's Bar to Spanish Bar

1 April 1851 Spencersburg, Missouri to Sacramento City by government mails, 40¢ postage due advertised at Sacramento City with their postmark and red "Adv" (advertised handstamp) picked up there by Hunter & Co's Express for delivery to Spanish Bar, $1.70 due
the first style Hunter's Express marking

fewer than five reported examples

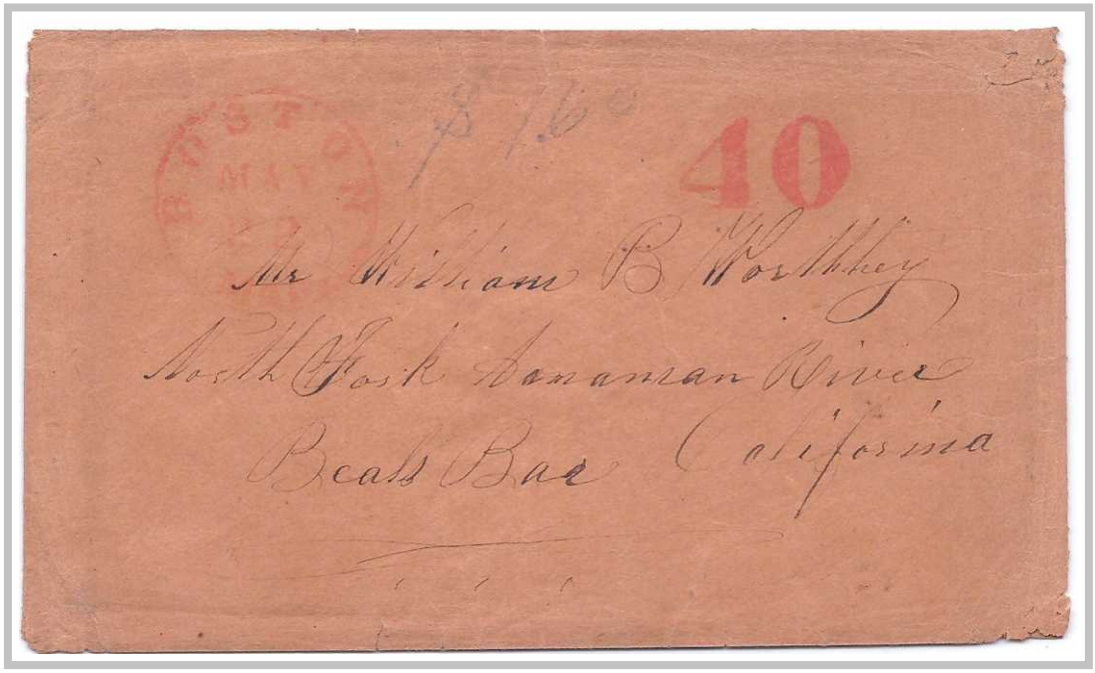
ex Whitington

Hunter & Co's Express (Mar 1851 - Jul 1854)

Sacramento division

For primary listing of Hunter & Co's Express, see previous.

route from Sacramento City to Beal's Bar



pencil due rate applied by Hunter's

22 May 1851 Boston, Massachusetts to Sacramento City by government mails, 40¢ postage due
picked up there by Hunter & Co's Express for delivery to Beals Bar, $1.60 due
although not marked, Hunter's Express served Beal's Bar and the handwritten "$" sign matches other Hunter covers

ex Kutz

Hunter & Co's Express (Mar 1851 - Jul 1854)

Sacramento division

For primary listing of Hunter & Co's Express, see previous.

route from Sacramento City to Murderer's Bar

view of Mormon Island

23 February 1852 Boston, Massachusetts to San Francisco and forwarded to Mormon Island by government mails
6¢ postage to California prepaid at Boston, "Fd" (forwarded) and postage 5¢ due
picked up at Mormon Island by Hunter & Co's Express, endorsed and delivered to Murderer's Bar with $1.25 due

three reported examples of this oval marking

ex Dale-Lichtenstein and Walske

Hunter & Co's Express (Mar 1851 - Jul 1854)

Sacramento division

For primary listing of Hunter & Co's Express, see previous.

map of route from Sacramento City to Secret Diggins

21 March 1852 Avon, Maine to Sacramento City by government mails, Postmaster free of EM Towle
picked up there by Hunter & Co's Express with the Auburn Office handstamp
endorsed for delivery to New Castle with $1.25 due, docketed as received at Secret Diggins Ravine May 5 1852

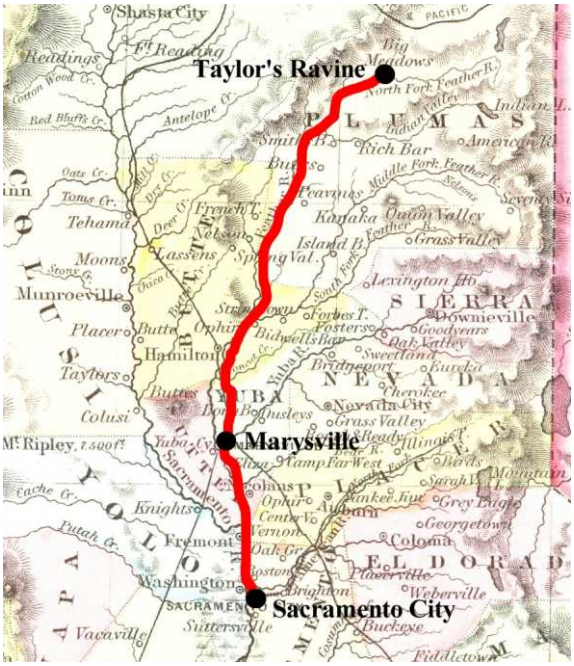
two reported examples of the Auburn shield marking

ex Kutz and Walske

Hunter & Co's Express (Mar 1851 - Jul 1854)

Sacramento division

Alexander Hunter launched his express service with a small newspaper notice in the March 27, 1851 *Sacramento Transcript* stating "will leave for Coloma, Placerville and towns in that vicinity." In April he appears listed by Palmer's Express as their conjunctive express serving the area. By May he advertised as serving all forks of the American River. He later allied with Gregory's and Adams expresses before selling to Wells Fargo & Co. in July 1854 and becoming their agent in Placerville.



Hunter's Express route to Taylor's Ravine

mining at Taylor's Ravine

7 September 1852 Farmington, Maine to Sacramento City by post office mails, prepaid 6¢ postage by Hunter & Co's Express to the miner who endorsed "Received at Taylor's Ravine by express"

ex Hazelton and Schaefer

W. H. Robinson Express Agent (1852-1853)

Sacramento division

Little is known of W. H. Robinson Express. It is reported that he operated between Sacramento and Murphy's in 1852 and 1853. No advertisements have been found and the only artifacts are two covers from the same correspondence.

image of Murphy's Camp circa 1853

2 April 1853 Schenectady, New York to Sacramento by post office mails, prepaid 6¢
by W. H. Robinson Express to the mines

two reported examples of this express agent

ex Straley and Walske

Stanton & Co Express (circa 1855-1856)

Sacramento division

Nothing is known of this express actually operating. The railroad design of frank may suggest a planned or actual connection with the Sacramento Valley Railroad which was completed between Sacramento and Folsom February 3, 1856. Both reported uses entered the mails in the East. The railroad eventually extended to Placerville and Pony Express mail was carried on the road in 1861.

map showing route of Sacramento Valley R.R. including later connection to Placerville

circa 1856 printed Stanton & Co. Sacramento & Folsom Express Paid frank on 3¢ entire posted in mails at Fall River, Massachusetts with additional 3¢ adhesive

two reported examples of this frank, both mailed in the East

ex Barkhausen and Whitington

Chase's Express (1856-1863)

Sacramento division

George W. Chase operated his one man express by wagon from Yreka to Deadwood and Indian Creek along the Klamath River in northern California. He operated from the Wells, Fargo office at Yreka. The express was sold to Charles Prindle in 1863.

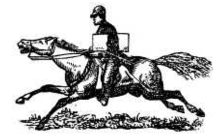
view of Yreka mines

circa 1856 carried by Chase's Express to Sacramento and by post office mails to San Francisco
Chase's Express albino embossed frank on 3¢ entire

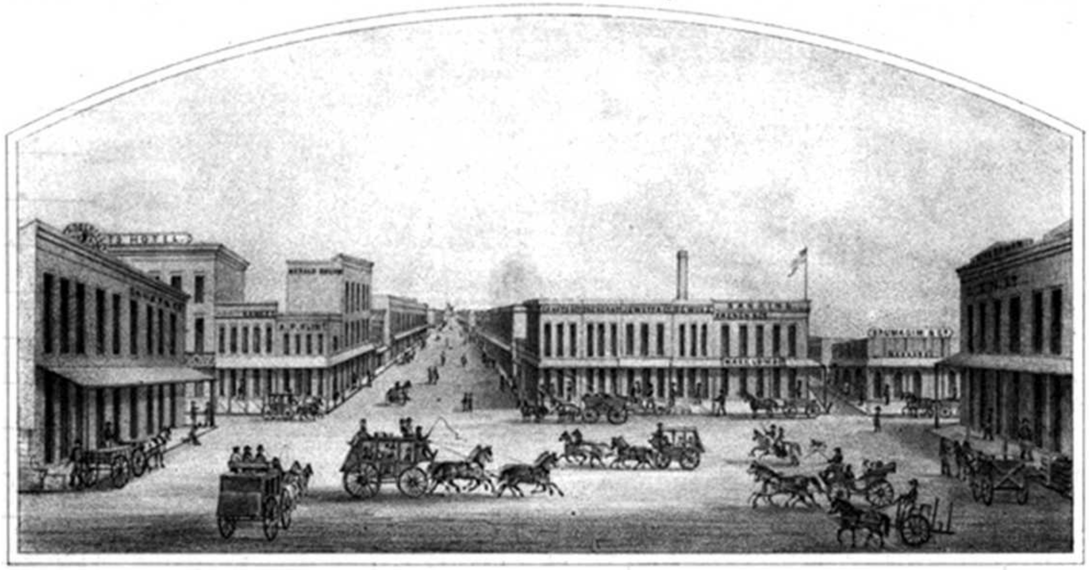
two reported examples of this express agent

ex Barkhausen and Whitington

The Marysville Division Expresses



Marysville division

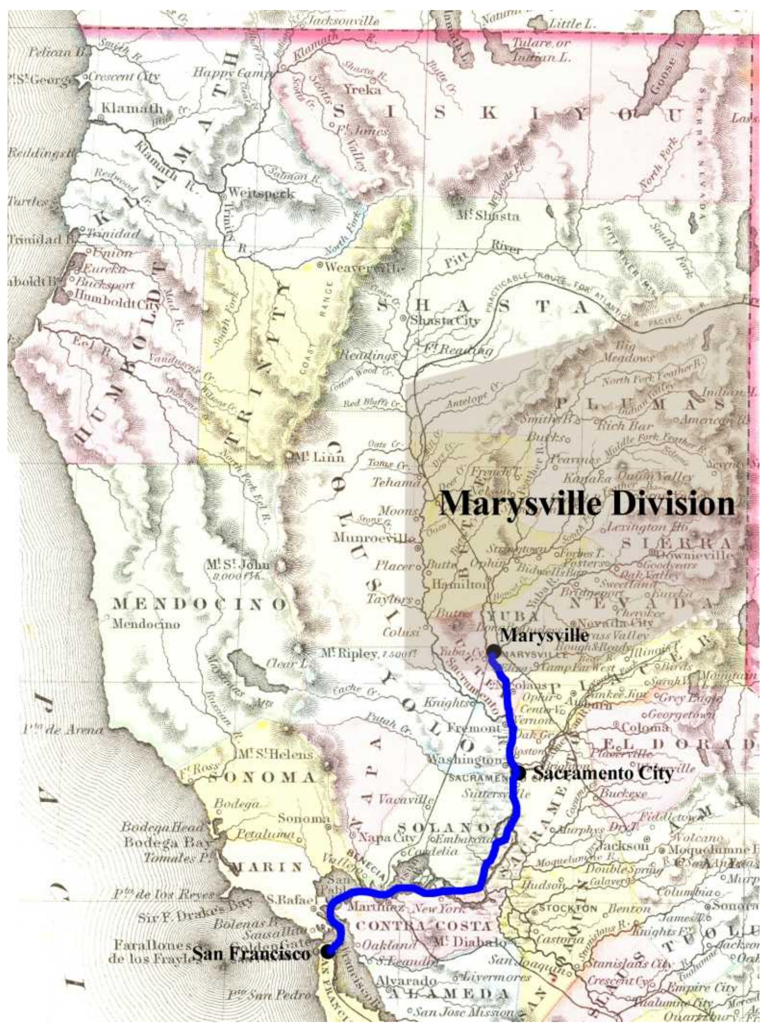


View of the Plaza at Marysville, circa 1854

The Marysville division express companies (denoted by horseback rider with "Marysville Division" beneath)gained prominence after gold mining activities on the upper Feather and Yuba Rivers reached significant levels. It developed into a primary transportation hub and river port as steamboat routes were extended from Sacramento northward on the Sacramento River to Marysville.

In general, the mining camps in northern California that were served from Marysville were less concentrated than those in the Sacramento division. They also generally required longer transportation lines.

The map at right the approximate Marysville service shaded brown. The blue line shows the steamboat service route that connected Marysville and San Francisco.



Marysville Division service area shaded

Davis & Brother's Express (1852 - 1854)

Marysville division

Virtually nothing is known of this express. An E. G. Davis appears as the master of a steamboat operating between Sacramento and Marysville after August 1854. He may have previously been involved with the express.

route from Marysville to Onion Valley

Onion Valley with view of Pilot Knob

6 July 1852 Blomingville, New York, via New York City to Marysville by government mails, 10¢ postage due cover was endorsed to be delivered to Evert's & Co's Express but carried by Davis & Brothers Express from Marysville to Onion Valley, manuscript endorsement and $1.50 due

two reported examples of Davis & Brother's Express marking

ex Pearce and Walske

Everts & Co's Feather River Express (fall 1851 - Jan 1853)

Marysville division

In mid 1851 Frank D. Everts began operating a one man express from Marysville to mining camps on the Yuba River and Feather Rivers. He connected with Adams Express at Marysville for steamboat service to Sacramento and San Francisco. In the winter of 1852-1853 the firm was superseded by Everts, Snell & Co's Express.

Aug 30, 1851 conflagration at Marysville, Everts & Co's lost 1300 letters and $400,000

Everts & Co's from Sacramento to Marysville and Brownsville

8 June 1852 Albion, Michigan, via New York City to Sacramento by government mails, 10¢ postage due picked up by Everts & Co's Feather River Express for delivery to Brownsville pencil "BrV" and $1.25 express fee due which includes the 10c postage

fewer than ten recorded examples of the handstamp

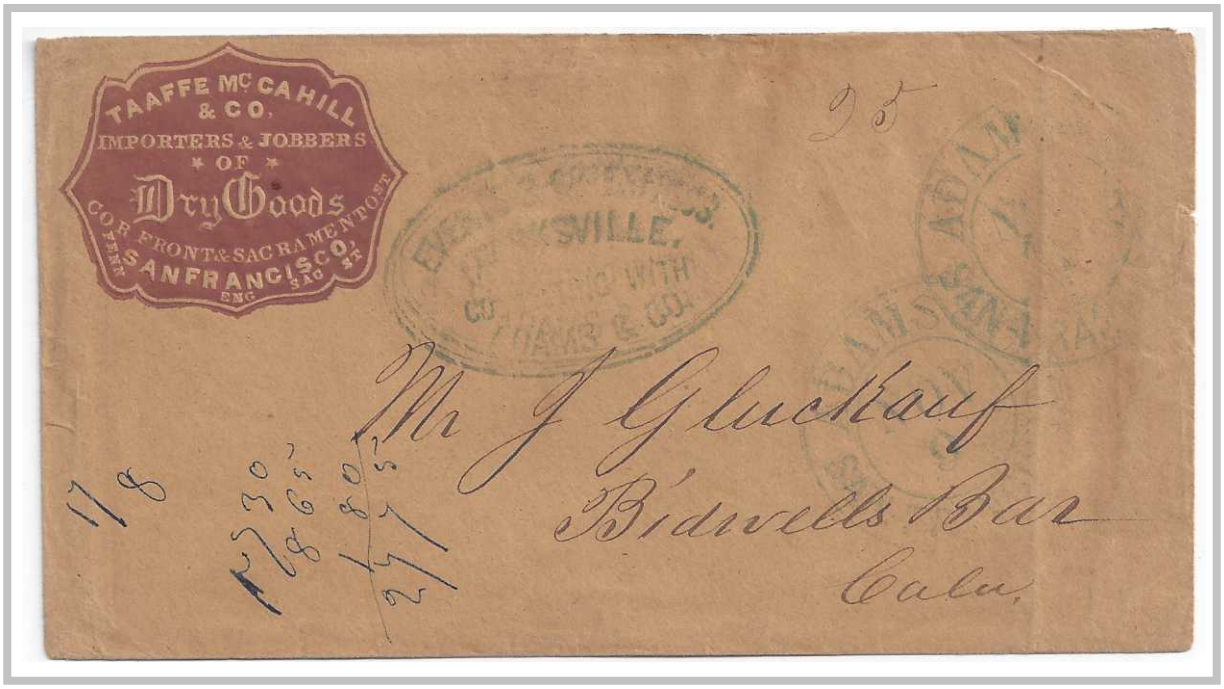
ex Phillips and Stach

Everts & Co's Feather River Express (fall 1851 - Jan 1853)
Adams & Co. Express (Nov 1849 - Feb 1855)

Marysville division

In mid 1851 Frank D. Everts began operating a one man express from Marysville to mining camps on the Yuba River and Feather Rivers. He connected with Adams Express at Marysville for steamboat service to Sacramento and San Francisco. In the winter of 1852-1853 the firm was superseded by Everts, Snell & Co's Express.

Adams route to Marysville in blue and Everts & Co's route to Bidwell's Bar in red



9 November 1852 San Francisco advertising cover of Taaffe McCahill & Co to Marysville by Adams & Co Express, conjunctive use and picked up by Everts & Co's Feather River Express for delivery to Bidwells Bar, 25¢ rate their "EVERTS & COS EXPRESS, MARYSVILLE, CONNECTING WITH ADAMS & CO" handstamp

three recorded examples of the handstamp

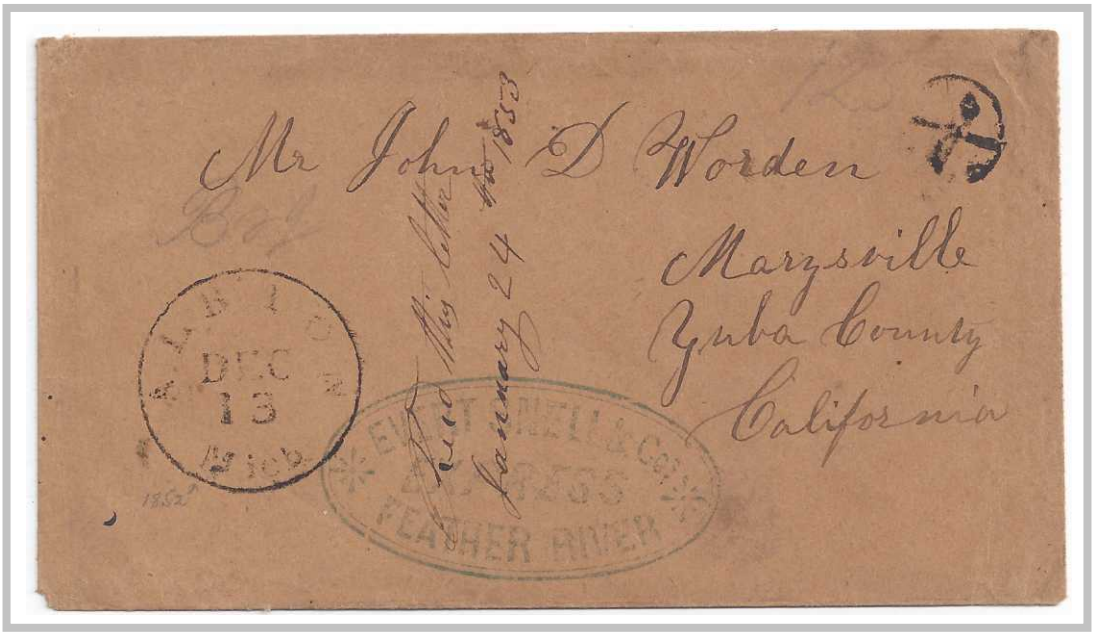
ex Dale - Lichtenstein, Walske and Whitington

Everts, Snell & Co's Feather River Express (1853 - Jul 1854)

Marysville division

In winter 1852-1853 Frank Darwin Everts, after operating his Everts & Co's Express since 1851 formed a partnership with John Adam Snell to better serve the mines of the Feather River area. They connected with Adams Express at Marysville for steamboat service to Sacramento and San Francisco. On July 25, 1854 the partnership was dissolved and Everts continued with his brother Henry from new headquarters in LaPorte.

Everts Snell & Co's Express route from Marysville to Brownsville



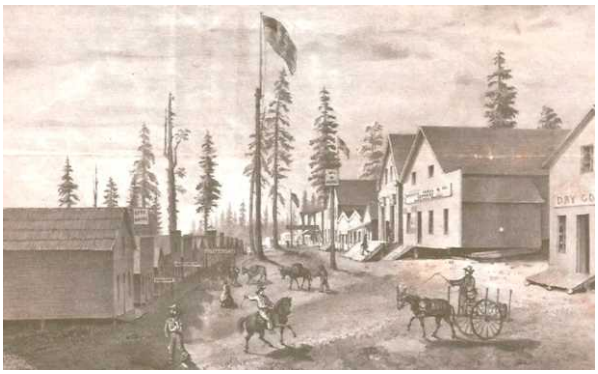
13 December 1852 Albion, Michigan, via New York City to Marysville by government mails, 10¢ postage due picked up by Everts, Snell & Co's Feather River Express for delivery to Brownsville pencil "BrV" at foot and $1.25 express fee due which includes the 10¢ postage

ex Edwards and Whitington

Everts, Snell & Co's Feather River Express (1852 - Jul 1854)

Marysville division

For company information, see previous.



Everts, Snell & Co's Express office

Everts, Snell & Co's Express route from Marysville up the Feather River to Lexington House

19 January 1853 Dalton, Ohio, via New York City to Sacramento by government mails, 10¢ postage due picked up by Everts, Snell & Co's Feather River Express for delivery to Lexington House (near Downieville) pencil "Lex" at foot and $1.50 express fee due which includes the 10¢ postage

about twenty recorded of the handstamp, this the only example used to Lexington House

ex Vogel and Walske

Everts, Hannon, Wilson & Co Express (Jul 1856 - Oct 1856)
Pacific Express (Mar 1855 - Apr 1857)

Marysville division

Everts sold out to Adams Express shortly before their collapse in February 1855 and re-entered the express business. On May 19, 1855 the firm of Everts, Davis & Co. was organized and used Pacific Express Company for additional service.

In July 1856 new advertisements began to appear that announce that the company had recently purchased important new routes. Postal evidence suggests, with the appearance of new franked envelopes that include the name "Hannon," that Hannon actually joined the firm in July at the time of these purchases.

The "Davis" was dropped from the firm name in October 1856 and the last advertisement for Everts, Davis & Co. appeared on August 11. The August 19, 1856 advertisement was for the newly formed Everts, Hannon, Wilson & Co. Express. On October 8, 1856 the firm name began to appear in advertisements as only Everts, Wilson & Co.

full map next page

Everts, Hannon, Wilson & Co. Daily Express frank on 3¢ entire to San Francisco shortly after firm name change
22 July 1856 "EVERTS, DAVIS & CO'S EXPRESS, ST. LOUIS" datestamp of precursor firm
conjunctive use with "Pacific Express Marysville Jul 24" datestamp for Marysville to San Francisco carriage

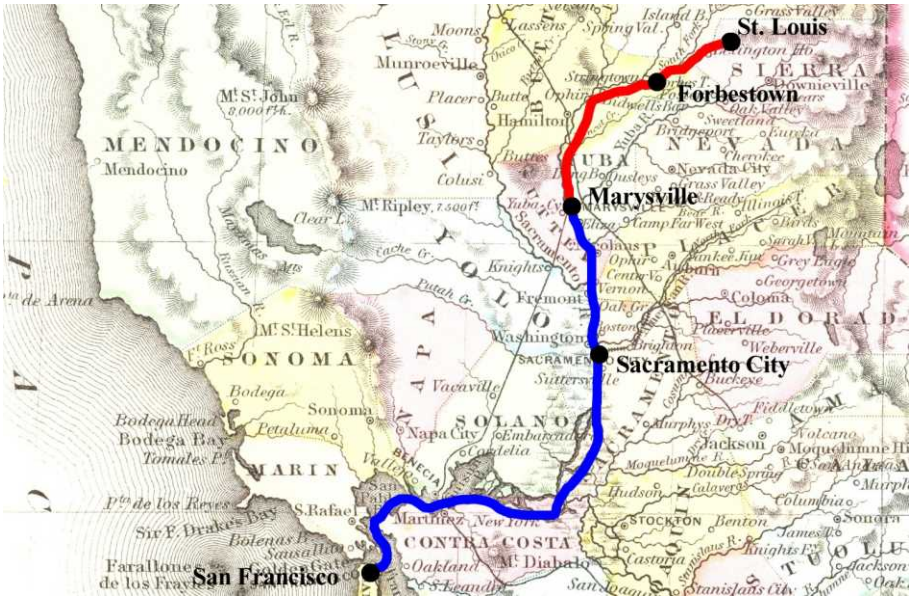
four reported uses of this frank

ex Whitington

Everts, Wilson & Co Express (Oct 1856 - Aug 1862)
Wells, Fargo & Co Express (Jul 1852 - present)

Marysville division

The first advertisement with the new Everts, Wilson & Co. Express firm name appeared on October 8, 1856. From their principal offices at Marysville they served regions near North Fork and Yuba Rivers. The express connected at Marysville with Pacific Express and with Wells Fargo. On September 1, 1862 the express business was sold to Holland, Morley & Company.



Evert's route to Marysville in red and Wells Fargo route to San Francisco in blue

Everts, Wilson & Co. Express frank on 3¢ entire to San Francisco after firm name change 13 April "EVERTS, DAVIS & CO'S EXPRESS, FORBESTOWN" datestamp of an old precursor firm conjunctive use with "Wells Fargo Marysville Apr 14" datestamp for Marysville to San Francisco carriage

ex Dale - Lichtenstein and Whitington

Fargo & Co's Feather River Express (1852 - 1853)

Marysville division

Annon Fargo and W. E. Singer were in an express partnership for few months in 1852, known as Singer and Fargo's Express. Annon Fargo decided to go out on his own in later 1852 when W. S. Dean was brought into the company. Fargo & Co's Express operated from 1852 to 1853, using Marysville as a base to serve the mines along the North Fork of the Feather River.

Fargo & Co's route to Meeker's Flat

9 March 1853 Farmington, Iowa to Sacramento City by post office mails, 10¢ postage due
by Fargo & Co's Feather River Express to the miner who was at Meeker's Flat on North Fork Feather River
pencil $1.50 express charge due

five reported examples of this handstamp

ex Stach

F. Rumrill & Co's Northern Express (Aug 1852 - 1855)

Marysville division

In 1852 Frank Rumrill began operating an express from Marysville up the North Fork of the Yuba River to Fosters Bar. In 1853 routes were extended as far as Downieville. He connected with Well Fargo at Marysville and likely served as their agent at Marysville. He was also an agent for Gregory's Express at Marysville for a short period in 1853. Rumrill bought out Beck's Express in July 1854, which extended his line north from Downieville into the Gibsonville Ridge area. He sold his express business to Langton's Express in 1855.

RUMRILL & CO.'S NORTHERN EXPRESS — Connecting with WELLS, FARGO & CO., Daily—To and from the principal places in the NORTHERN MINES.

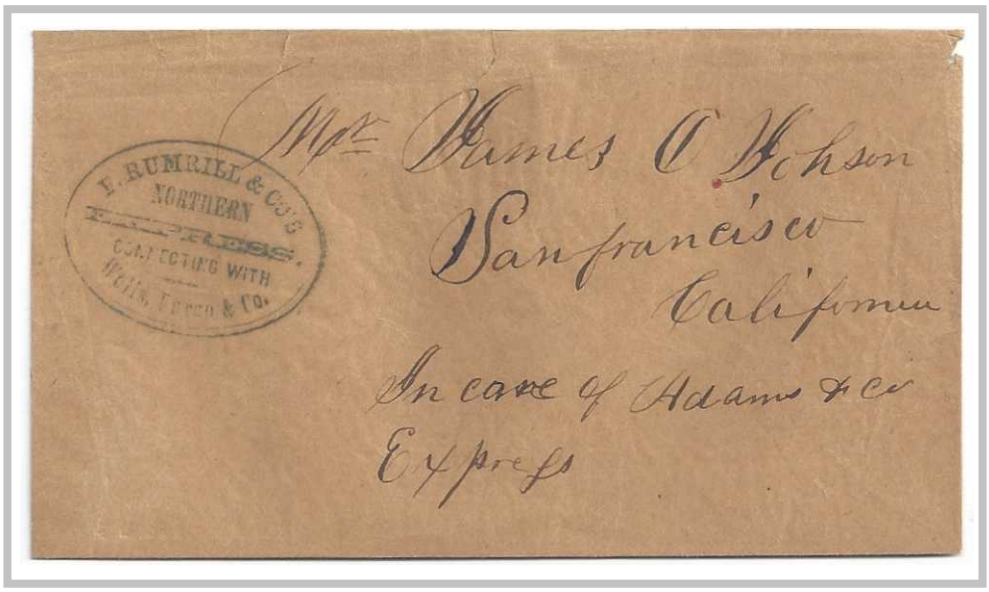
MARYSVILLE, HANSONVILLE,
FOSTER'S BAR, GIBSONVILLE,
CAMPTONVILLE, CHANDLERVILLE,
GOODYEAR'S BAR, PINE GROVE,
DOWNIEVILLE, ST. LOUIS,

And all other points in their vicinity.

TREASURE, Parcels and Letters forwarded to any part of California, Oregon, Atlantic States, Canada or Europe.

GOLD DUST BOUGHT, Collections made, and all business pertaining to an Express and Exchange Office promptly attended to. All matters of business left with either of the offices of Wells, Fargo & Co. will receive immediate attention. [je28] RUMRILL & CO.

advertisement in September 9, 1854 *Sacramento Daily Union*



circa May 1854 Marysville to San Francisco by F. Rumrill & Co's Northern Express delivered from the Adams Express office

fewer than five reported examples of this handstamp

ex Pearce and Walske

Langton & Brother's Express (Nov 1853 - Feb 1855)

Marysville division

Samuel W. Langton operated as an express man, either alone or in various partnerships from 1850 until 1864. He formed Langton & Brother's Express with his brother in November 1853. They operated from Marysville up the Yuba River to Nevada City and Downieville. The brothers sold out to Adams Express on February 21, 1855, just two days before Adams collapsed.

route from Nevada City post office to New Orleans Flat

FORWARDED BY
Langton & Bro's Express
NEVADA.

20 July 1854 Rocky Hill, Kentucky to Nevada City by government mails, 6¢ postage prepaid picked up by Langton & Brother's Express with the Nevada Office handstamp for delivery to New Orleans Flat

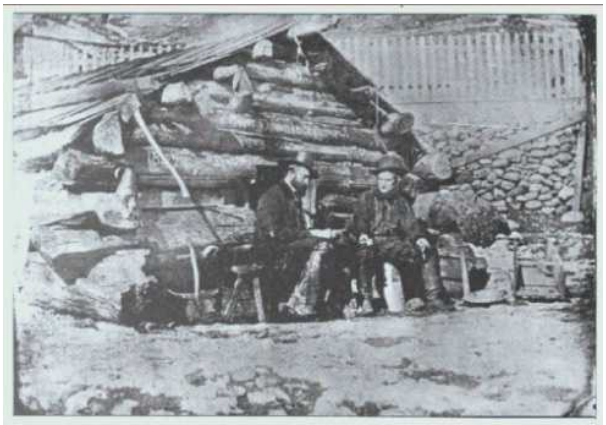
the only reported example of their Nevada office marking

ex Haas, Vogel and Walske

Langton's Pioneer Express (Mar 1855 - 1865)

Marysville division

Samuel W. Langton and N. W. Williams formed Langton's Pioneer Express in March 1855 following the collapse of Adams Express in February. Langton had already been in the express business on his own or with partners since 1850. Later in 1855 he purchased Frank Rumrill's lines from Marysville up the North Fork of the Yuba River to Fosters Bar and to Gibsonville Ridge. He began connecting with the post office at Marysville in 1856 and quit the steamboat portion of route. He began connecting with Wells, Fargo at Marysville in 1857. In early 1865, after the death of Sam Langton in 1864, the firm was sold to Lamping & Co's Express.



Sam Langton's "office" circa 1853

by Langton's Pioneer Express to the Marysville post office, Paid frank on 10¢ entire
4 June 1856 Marysville "Paid By Stamps" postmark for carriage, via San Francisco and Panama, to Alton, Illinois

ex Whitington

W. E. Singer & Co's Express (May 1855 - Nov 1855)

Marysville division

Formed in early 1855, W. E. Singer's Feather River Express served the Feather River mining camps. Singer partnered with Morrow to form a new company late in 1855. In late 1857 Morrow withdrew. Following page shows successor firm frank.

view of Bidwell's Bar circa 1853

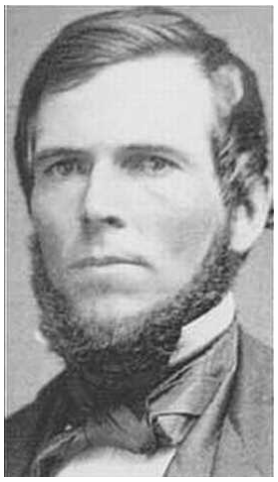
circa 1855 by W. E. Singer & Co's Feather Express to Bidwells Bar, 3¢ entire

ex Parker, Haas, Jarrett and Whitington

Singer & Morrow Express (fall 1855 - fall 1857)

Marysville division

Formed in early 1855, W. E. Singer's Feather River Express served the Feather River mining camps. Singer partnered with Morrow to form a new company late in 1855. In late 1857 Morrow withdrew. Previous page shows previous firm.



John Bidwell founder of Bidwell's Bar

May 1856 by W. E. Singer & Morrow Express to the mails at Bidwells Bar, franked 10¢ entire to Massachusetts

four reported examples

illustrated in Coburn; ex Haas, Edwards and Whitington

W. E. Singer & Co's Express (May 1855 - Nov 1855)
Wells Fargo & Co. Express (Jul 1852 - present)

Marysville division

Formed in early 1855, W. E. Singer's Feather River Express connected with Wells Fargo & Co. at Marysville to serve the Feather River mining camps. The express replaced Singer's previous partnership and he partnered with Morrow to form a new company late in 1855.

Singer's Express route in red, Wells, Fargo steamboat route in blue

circa June 1855 San Francisco to Marysville by Wells, Fargo, their "WELLS, FARGO EXPRESS STEAMBOAT" handstamp Wells, Fargo franked 3¢ entire, by W. E. Singer Feather Express to Bidwells Bar, frank crossed through and 25¢ due

two reported examples of conjunctive use on franked entire

ex Lichtenstein, Barkhausen, Vogel and Walske

Copley & Co's Miners' Express (1855 - 1856)

Marysville division

This express operated from Marysville to the Gibsonville Ridge and the Feather River mines. It operated only in 1855 and 1856.

"River Mining" on the Feather River

December 1855 Feather Ridge area mines to Marysville by Copley & Co's Miners' Express, 10¢ entire
4 December 1855 post office at Marysville "Paid By Stamps" postmark
carried by mail via San Francisco, Panama and New York to Sempronius, New York

six reported examples

ex Kapiloff, Salzer and Whitington

Vera's Express (1855 - 1857)
Wells Fargo & Co. Express (Jul 1852 - present)

Marysville division

After working with Meek serving the Feather River mines, J.N. Vera became a partner in Meek & Power's Express. Meek sold out to Vera in 1855 and became a partner in Singer, Meek & Co's Feather River Express. Vera operated to Oroville where he connected with Wells, Fargo and evidently quit the business circa 1857.

Vera's Express route in red, Wells, Fargo route in blue

circa 1855 Feather River mines by Vera's Express to Oroville, "Paid Pollard 4/-" rate paid agent for valuable letter double Wells, Fargo and Vera's franked 3¢ entire folded over at right and sealed with red wax seal (now unfolded) conjunctive use by Wells, Fargo for carriage from Oroville to Marysville, their label for a valuable letter

five reported examples of Vera's Express frank

illustrated on Coburn; ex Clifford, Haas, Edwards and Whitington

Greenhood & Neubauer Express (1856 - Aug 1867)

Marysville division

Herman Greenhood and Joseph Newbauer began their express, based in Weaverville, in late 1856. After the purchase W. F. Rowe Express in 1858, the company connected with Wells Fargo at Marysville. The company's banking and express business failed in August 1867. The staging routes were taken over by G. I. Taggart's after that date.

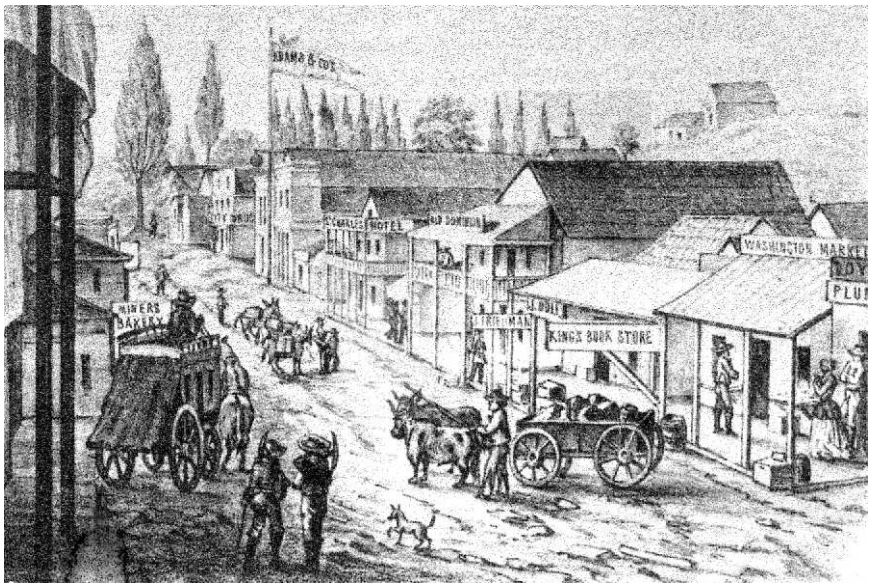
Weaverville to San Francisco by Greenhood & Neubauer, 3¢ entire frank with "Neubaner" spelling error

Weaverville to San Francisco by Greenhood & Neubauer, 3¢ entire frank with spelling error corrected

lower cover, illustrated in Nathan,is ex Jessup, and Pearce, both ex Whitington

The Shasta Division Expresses

Shasta division

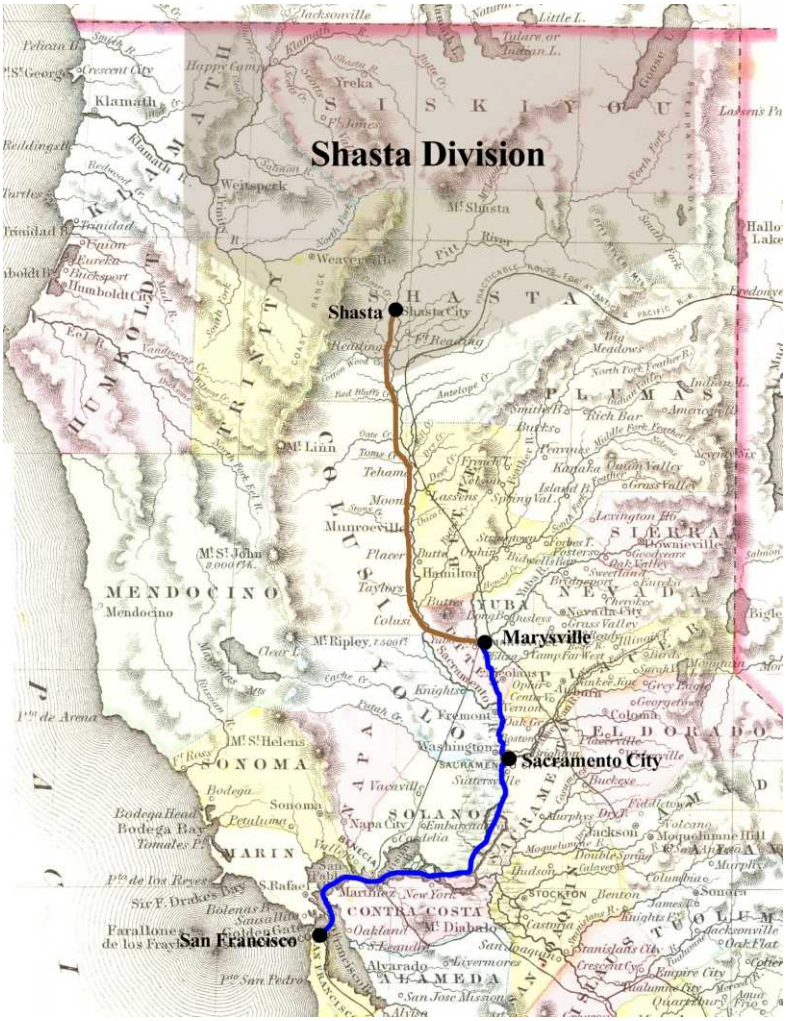


View of the Shasta, circa 1854, showing Adam's Express office

The Shasta division express companies (denoted by horseback rider with "Shasta Division" beneath)gained prominence well after after the intial discovers of gold near Mount Shasta in 1849. Because of the remote location of the mines, and difficult access via the Siskiyou trail, it was the last major division point to become transportation hub in the pioneer period before 1856. Steamboats did not reach Shasta until the 1860's. However, good stage coach roads connected Shasta and Marysville by the early 1850's which allowed the town grow rapidly as a hub.

The mining camps in northern California and southern Oregon that were served from Shasta were spread over a very large area and most required difficult transportation routes beyond Shasta.

The map at right the approximate Shasta service shaded brown. The brown solid line shows the obverland route between Shasta and Marysville. The blue line shows the steamboat route between Marysville and San Francisco.



Shasta Division service area shaded, overland route to Shasta in brown

Taylor's Express (Apr 1851 - Apr 1852)

Shasta division

L. W. Taylor operated a semi-monthly express from Shasta, via Hamilton City, Yuba City and Marysville to Sacramento. He operated prior to the date of his advertisement of June 1851. His last ad appeared on April 28, 1852. He connected at Sacramento with Gregory's Express for onward service to San Francisco.

Taylor's Sacramento and Shasta

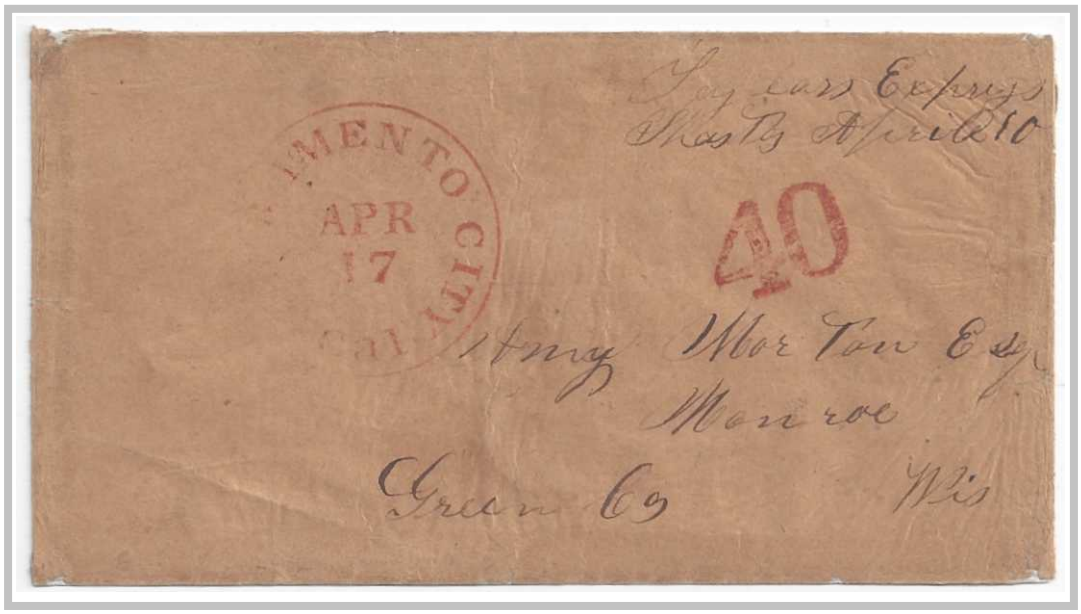
SEMI-MONTHLY EXPRESS.

Leaving Sacramento about the 1st and 15th of every month, via Marysville Yuba City, and Hamilton City, and intermediate points, en route for Shasta, connecting at Shasta with branch Express trains for all the north and north-western mines. All business usually done by Expressmen will be attended to by the undersigned with promptness and dispatch. Particular attention paid to the forwarding of gold dust to the Atlantic States through Messrs Gregory & Co 's well known and unrivalled Express. Also, to obtaining letters for miners and others, from the San Francisco, Sacramento, and Marysville Post Offices.

L. W. TAYLOR.

N. B.—Letters and packages for Shasta and the north-western mines, may be left at Gregory & Co.'s Express Office, on 2d street, between J and K.

advertisement in Nov 4, 1851 *Sacramento Daily Union*



10 April 1851 Shasta to Sacramento City by Taylor's Express
17 April 1851 Sacramento City to Monroe, Wisconsin by post office mail, 40¢ due

three reported examples of this express, no handstamp markings known

ex Pearce and Walske

Cram Rogers & Co's Express (1851 - Mar 1855)
Gregory's Express (Apr 1850 - Nov 1852)

Shasta division

Cram Rogers & Co's Express operated to the mines in the Shasta area and extending into mining areas in Oregon. Over the period of operation, from 1851 until March 27, 1855, they connected with Gregory's, Adams, and Newell & Co. expresses.

See Gregory's Express primary listing in Ocean to Ocean section.

map showing Cram Roger's route to Marysville (red) and Gregory's route from Marysville (blue)

25 February 1851 Ridgeway, Wisconsin to the Northern mines near Shasta
carried in post office mails to Sacramento City, unclaimed and advertised by post office (red "Adv'd" handstamp)
by Gregory's Express from Sacramento to Marysville and by Cram Rogers onward to Shasta mines
"CRAM ROGERS & CO's EXPRESS SAN FRANCISCO & SHASTA" oval
manuscript "$3.00" due, including 40¢ US postage, 2¢ advertised letter fee, and express charges

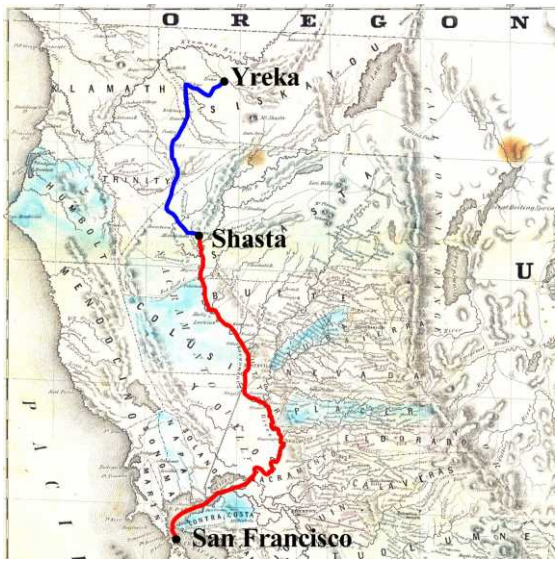
three reported examples of this oval marking

ex Vogel and Walske

Cram, Rogers & Co Express (1851 - Mar 1855)
Adams & Co. Express (Nov 1849 - Feb 1855)

Shasta division

Cram, Rogers & Co's Express operated to the mines in the Shasta area and extending into mining areas in Oregon. Over the period of operation, from 1851 until March 27, 1855, they connected with Gregory's, Adams, and Newell & Co. expresses.



Cram, Rogers Express route in blue, Adams Express route in red

circa Jan 1854 Yreka to Shasta by Cram, Roger's & Co Express
conjunctive use with Adams & Co's Express from Shasta to San Francisco
18 Jan 1854 Shasta and Jan 20 Marysville datestamps

the only reported example with this combination of markings

ex Dale - Lichtenstein and Whitington

Rhodes & Lusk's Express (1852 - 1853)
Gregory's Express (Apr 1850 - Nov 1852)

Shasta division

Formed in 1852, Rhodes & Lusk's Express made daily runs between Marysville, Weaverville and the southern Oregon mines. The partnership was dissolved in 1853 and Rhodes continued as Rhodes & Co's Express.

Gregory's Express primary listing in Ocean to Ocean section.

Gregory's route from San Francisco to Weaverville in blue, Rhodes & Lusk's in red

1852 San Francisco to Marysville by Gregory's Express, "NOT PAID" handstamp by Rhodes & Lusk's Express from Marysville via Shasta to Weaverville, $1.00 due

two reported examples of this handstamp, this the only conjunctive use

ex Kutz and Walske

San Francisco Letter Bag Operators

The phrase "letter bag operators" has a specific meaning that is uniquely applied to a group of private individuals and news rooms that operated in San Francisco. In the long tradition of coffee houses and news rooms on the East coast, these firms maintained bags for the deposit of outbound mail. The need for this service arose because many of the steamers available for carrying mail were without government contracts and usually did not receive mail for carriage directly from the post office. The bags of mail were delivered to the San Francisco post office, a steamship agent, or directly to a non contract steamship departing San Francisco. Often the letters were handstamped by the letter bag operator or the steamship agent to publicize their service.

Edward E. Dunbar first announced his Merchants' Exchange and News Room in San Francisco in an advertisement, dated November 15, 1849, that appeared in the *Placer Times* and elsewhere. The Merchant's Exchange also received mention in a *Weekly Pacific News* article that commented:

> (it) *is about the most comfortable place to spend an evening that there is in town. The room is well lighted and warmed, and has papers of the latest dates from the United States and Europe. Some place, other than the drinking houses, where strangers and citizens could spend an evening, has long been needed.*

The advertisement specifically mentions that "letter Bags for the various mails are kept at the Office" and that "half-yearly subscriptions are being received from merchants" and others" while "Parties from the mines can for a small sum avail themselves … by the day, week, or month."

The most widely known of the San Francisco letter bag operators was Charles Kimball, San Francisco's "Noisy Carrier." After his attempts in 1849 to operate an express between Sacramento and San Francisco, and his failed attempt to establish a city delivery post in February 1850, Kimball started his newspaper "crier" career in April. By the end of 1850 Kimball was publishing a directory from his publishing hall at 77 Long Wharf. By 1853, Kimball was also serving as a letter bag operator. His "Noisy Carrier" handstamps exist on eastbound mail in a wide variety of styles. Although his handstamps are known on mail delivered to contract steamers, most were used on mail that was sent by non contract steamers via Nicaragua and these often include the language "Via Nicaragua, Ahead of the Mails."

In July 1850 Still & Conner's Bookstore and newspaper depot advertised prices current prepared for the steamers. Later, while operated as John N. Still's bookstore, a handstamp was briefly used.

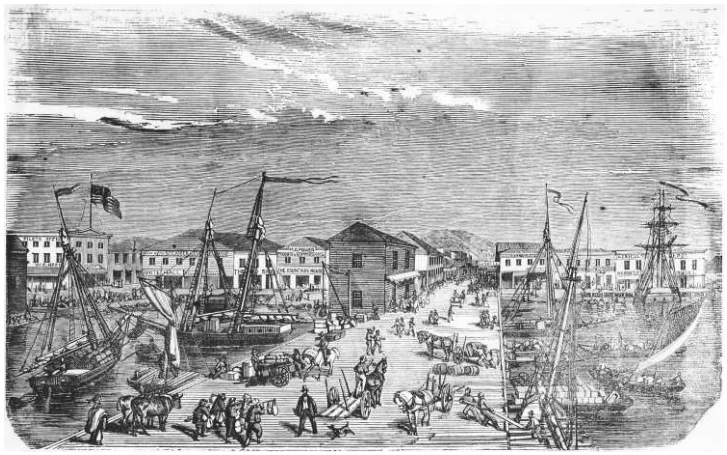
By January 1852, Leland & Sullivan were advertising their news room located at the "Post Office Arcade." Their May 31, 1852 advertisement in the *Daily Alta California* mentions that a letter mail bag "will be kept open all night" for mail to be sent on the contract steamer departing the next day. The advertisement also mentions that postage stamps and letter paper are available for sale. By June 30, 1853, J. W. Sulivan and George H. Leland had separated ways and were operating in competition. Both of their advertisements appear on that date above a third notice of a mail bag being kept at Lecount & Strong opposite the General Delivery entrance to the post office. No markings associated with Lecount & Strong have been identified.

As the importance of mail by steamship lines running in opposition to the post office contract steamers diminished after the close of the via Nicaragua route in 1856, the need for letter bag operators also ended.

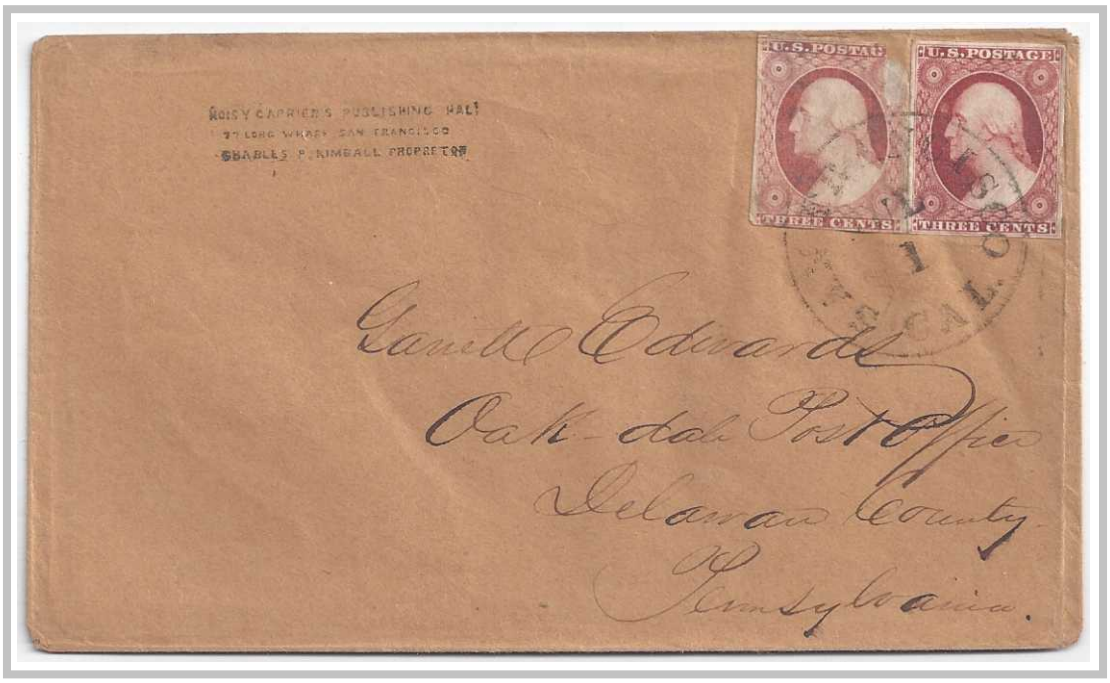
Noisy Carrier (1850 - 1856)

letter bag operator

Charles P. Kimball briefly operated an express between San Francisco and Sacramento in October 1849, advertised a short-lived city letter delivery service in February 1850, and by March was "crying" newspapers. Kimball began publishing in September 1850. He was soon handling mail as the premier letter bag operator. From his location on Long Wharf he sold stamps at par and offered free delivery of mail to either the post office or the next non-contract steamer.



View of Kimball's Noisy Carrier Publishing Hall at 77 Long Wharf (the awned building just to left of the dock).



1 July 1853 San Francisco to Oakdale, Pennsylvania
deposited in Noisy Carrier's letter bag and delivered by them to San Francisco Post Office

fewer than five reported examples of this three line handstamp

Waybill (via Panama)		
depart San Francisco Jul 1 1853	PMSS steamer *Oregon*	arrive Panama City Jul 17 1853
across Isthmus of Panama from Panama City to Aspinwall		
depart Aspinwall Jul 19 1853	USMSC steamer *Georgia*	arrive New York Jul 29 1853

ex Haas, Vogel and Walske

California Local Posts, 1849-1856

Emigrants to San Francisco arriving from major eastern cities before 1856 were already familiar with a group of privately owned mail companies, called local posts, that operated within a single city. Typical services offered by these posts included delivery from letter reception boxes to the post office, delivery from a post office to a street address, and the delivery from a box or company's office directly to a street address carried completely outside the U.S. mails. In many cases these posts were one-man operations. With time, the post offices established carrier service by government employees obviating the need for private local posts. However, in San Francisco, no government provided carrier service was available prior to 1868.

This class of private mail-handling company was slow to arrive in San Francisco. The earliest reported mail delivery service was briefly advertised in February 1850 by Charles Kimball, later famous as the "Noisy Carrier." As the express companies dominated mail service within California, it devolved upon that class of company to provide local delivery service at an early date. Henry Reed is known to have been employed by Adams Express as a letter and parcel delivery person prior to February 1851.

Notice of a city dispatch post organized by Berford & Co. Express appeared in the October 12, 1851 *Daily Alta California*:

> *CITY EXPRESS - We are happy to notice that an enterprise has been undertaken which will prove of great convenience to our citizens. Messrs Berford & Co. intend to establish a city dispatch post. Arrangements have been entered into with the Post Master, by which the concern will have it in their power to procure letters from the post office at the earliest possible moment. Three deliveries will take place during the day, the first at eight o'clock in the morning, the second at noon, and the third at four o'clock in the afternoon. Parcels also can be left at the Express office for any part of the city, as a wagon will make the round of the city daily. Boxes for the city post will be placed in the hotels and other public houses, and letters will be promptly and faithfully delivered. The charge on each letter has been fixed at ten cents. …*

This City Dispatch Post appears again in October 1851 newspaper accounts as being in operation. No postal artifacts have been identified as having been handled by this post.

The previously mentioned Henry Reed began advertising on his own, styled as Reed & Co. City Despatch Post, on December 7, 1853 with his address listed as the Adams Express office. He continued in operation beyond the February 1855 collapse of the Adams firm.

Henry L. Goodwin established his California Penny Post Company on June 25, 1855. In addition to other services, he operated a local post in several California cities until supressed by the San Francisco postmaster in October 1855. His published rate schedule for San Francisco lists three city deliveries daily. Fees listed include 2 cents for conveying a letter to the post office and five cents for delivering a letter from the post office.

Although additional express companies may have hired delivery people to handle local mail, no other independent local post companies have been identified in the period prior to 1856.