

# San Francisco Postal History: 1849 to 1869

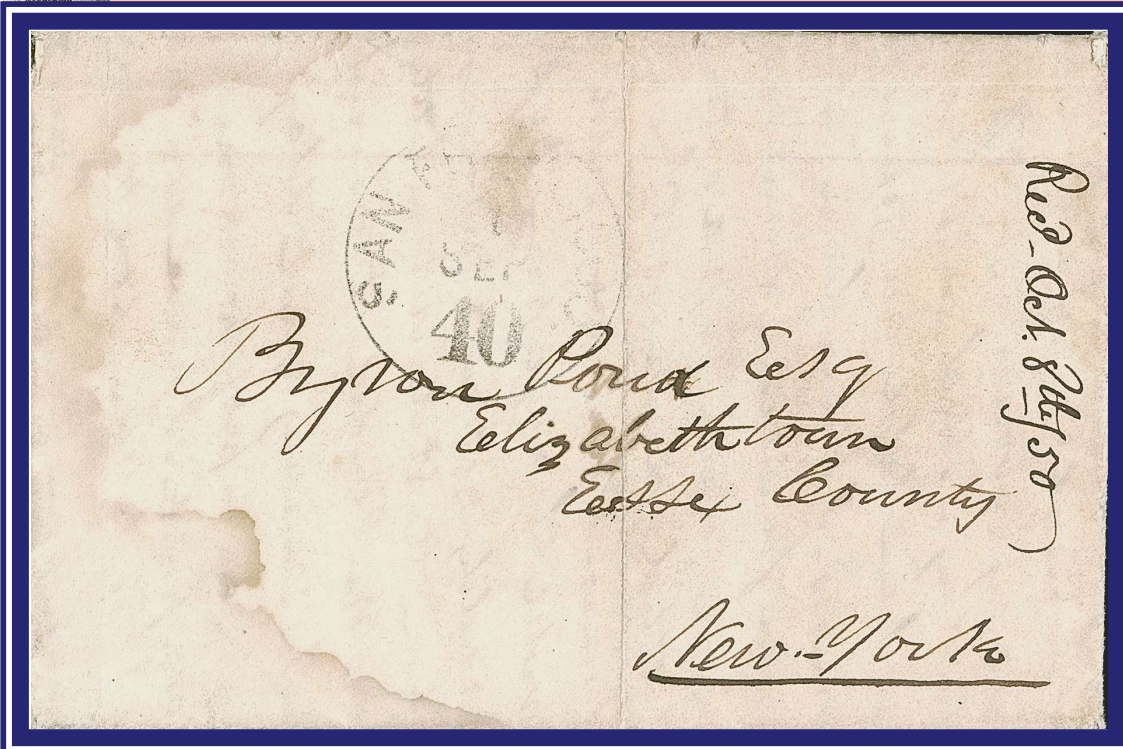
**PURPOSE & SCOPE** – This exhibit displays the postal history of San Francisco, CA in the period 1849 to 1869. This timeframe is from the establishment of the San Francisco Post Office (SFPO) in March 1849 through the completion of the transcontinental railroad at which time cross-country mail delivery time was greatly reduced to 7-8 days compared to an average 24 days prior to completion. Various cross-country, local and foreign uses (and rates) are displayed, including a wide variety of postal markings, to show the rich diversity of postal history at the height of the California gold rush. Incoming mail simply addressed to SF as a destination but not bearing any SF related postal markings is not included in the scope.

**ORGANIZATION** – The exhibit is organized roughly chronologically based on US government acts which set the domestic postage rates and periods applicable to the exhibit timeframe, with examples displayed covering each of six sections as shown in the table below. Period/Section data is shown at the top/left of each page, labeled and colored per the table below. Each new Period/Section has an obvious (larger) color highlight for ease in identifying section boundaries. Items of additional importance are framed in **red** instead of **dark blue**. A concise sentence is included at the top of each frame to identify the significance of the item to aid in quicker viewing. Items certified by expert committee are indicated with “c” near frame edge.

Domestic Rate Period:		Sections for Each Domestic Rate Period:					
1.	Mar 1849 (Exhibit Start) – Jun 1851	a.	b.	c.	d.	e.	f.
2.	Jul 1851 – Mar 1855	Cross-Country	West Coast Local	SF City Local	Special Rates, Markings	Inbound - Foreign Origin	Outbound - Foreign Destination
3.	Apr 1855 – Jun 1863						
4.	Jul 1863 – Oct 1869 (Exhibit End)						



Postally used lettersheets showing views of early (1849-50) SF are uncommon



Lettersheet view printed for display (slightly reduced from original)

Engraved printed lettersheet view of SF bay in 1850 (the influx of gold seekers would quickly change this). SF Sep 1 (1850) integral-rate CDS, 40¢ postage due, to NY.

**HISTORY/SIGNIFICANCE** – In February 1848 gold was discovered at Sutter’s Mill, near Sacramento, north of San Francisco (SF). At this time SF was a very small town of several hundred people and no government postal system had been established. By 1849 people from all over the globe converged upon the small town by the thousands, consumed with “gold fever.” Contract mail service from SF commenced right in the middle of this chaos when the SFPO began postal operations in March 1849 after special mail-agent William Van Voorhies arrived aboard PMSS *California* Feb 28 to setup the new PO system. The gold rush disrupted the original plans to establish Astoria, OR as a principal postal location on the Pacific Coast. SF was the first PO established in CA and emerged as the focal point for postal operations, playing a key role in the development of communications in the early American West.

**Common acronyms/abbreviations used:**

CDS – Circular Date Stamp  
PO – Post Office

PMSC – Pacific Mail Steamship Company  
SF – San Francisco

PMSS – Pacific Mail Steamship  
SFPO – San Francisco Post Office

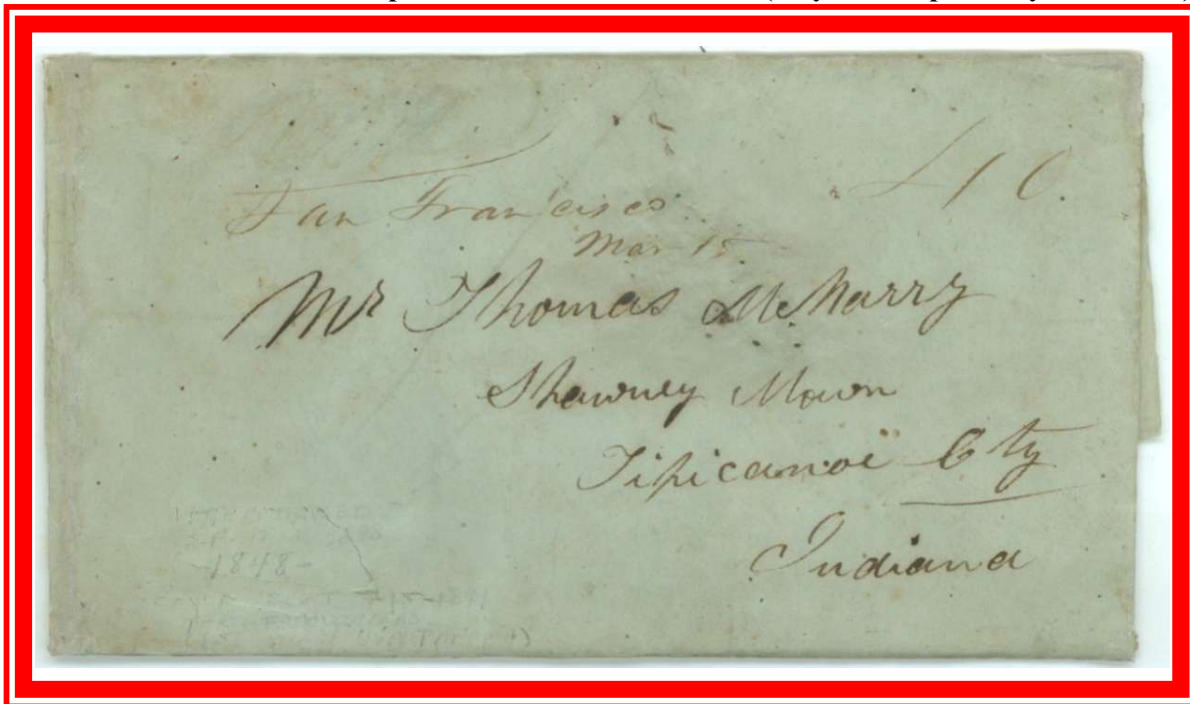
**1. Mar 1849 – Jun 1851**

**40¢ – “to Atlantic Coast”**

**a. Cross-Country**

The 1848 US Postal Act created a 40¢ per ½ ounce rate for mail “to the Atlantic Coast” from the West Coast. The Pacific Mail Steamship Company (PMSC) held the US contract mail route between San Francisco and Panama.

**First ever contract mail to depart SFPO – March 19, 1849 (only known privately held cover)**



Letter datelined “St. Frisco, California, December 11, 1848.” Unpaid 40¢ rate to Indiana. SF town, rate and March 15 (1849) manuscript postmarks, showing the expected departure of Peruvian bark *Callao* (actually departed March 19).

Contract steamer PMSS *California* was expected to carry the first mail, however nearly all her crew deserted to the gold fields upon arrival and it was in need of repairs from the long journey so it sat idle for weeks (PMSS *Oregon* and *Panama* had yet to arrive). Ironically, the very first contract mail out of SF, via Panama, actually left on a non-PMSC vessel.

**The earliest SF manuscript postmark - only privately held example  
(Twelve total SF manuscript covers known, March-June 1849, SFPO’s first postmark)**

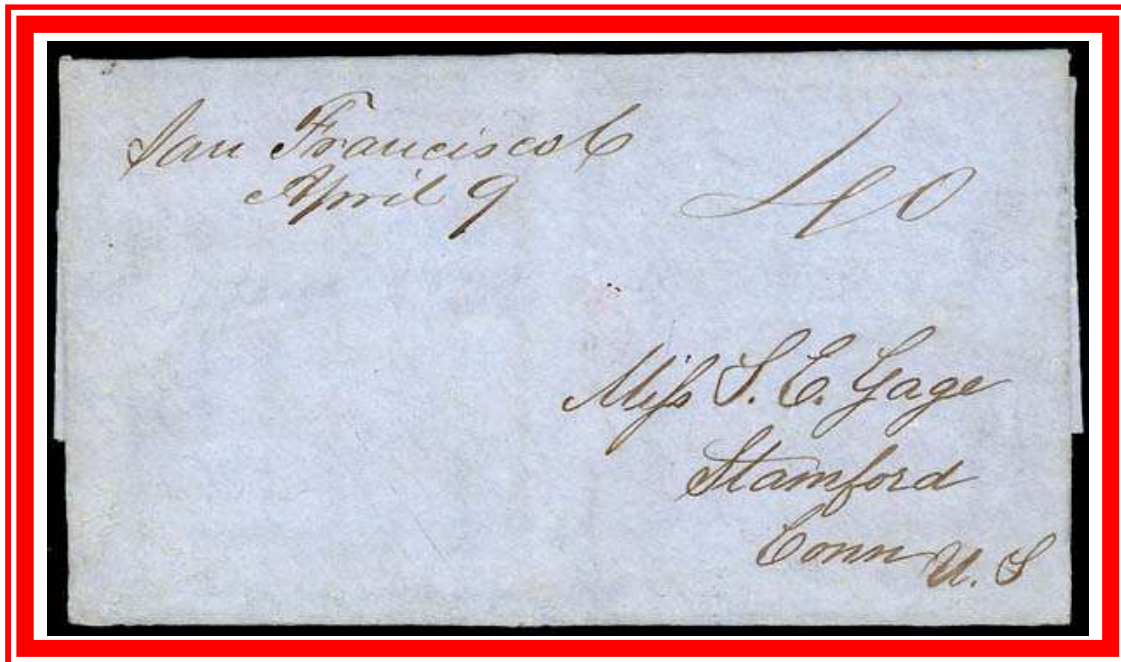
1. Mar 1849 – Jun 1851

40¢ – “to Atlantic Coast”

a. Cross-Country

From March to June 1849 the SFPO used manuscript markings, these were the first SF postmarks.

**First eastbound contract mail departure from SF by PMSC (one of five discovered)**



Unpaid 40¢ rate to Connecticut. The maiden voyage of the PMSS *Oregon* from SF, departing on April 12, 1849 (postmarked April 9, the original expected departure date).

**Finest reported example of the SF Manuscript postmark**

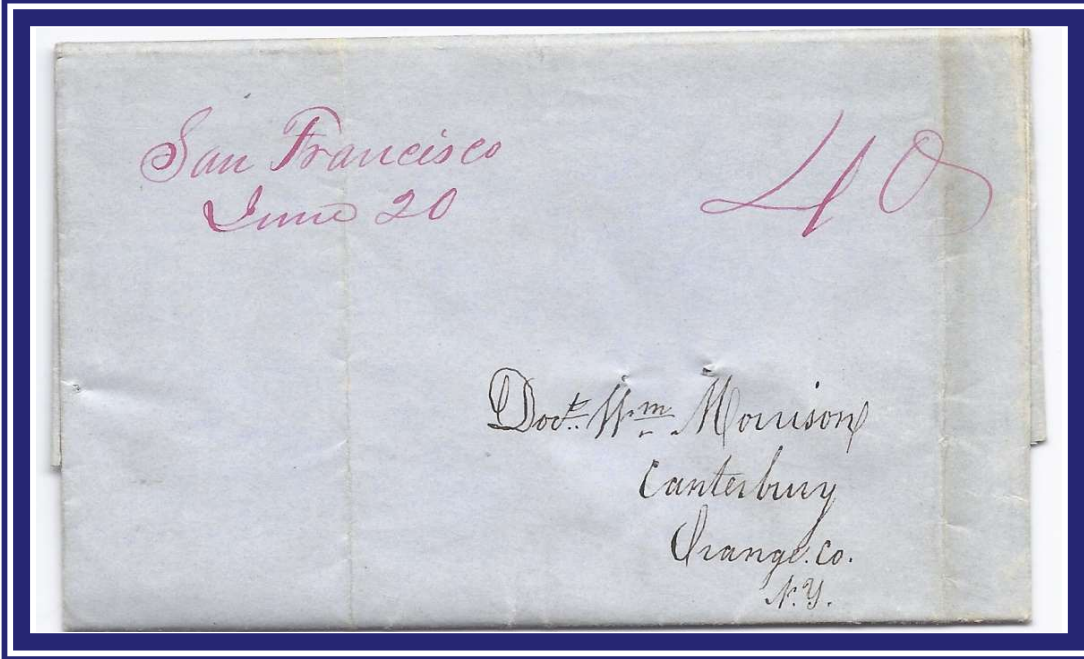
1. Mar 1849 – Jun 1851

40¢ – “to Atlantic Coast”

a. Cross-Country

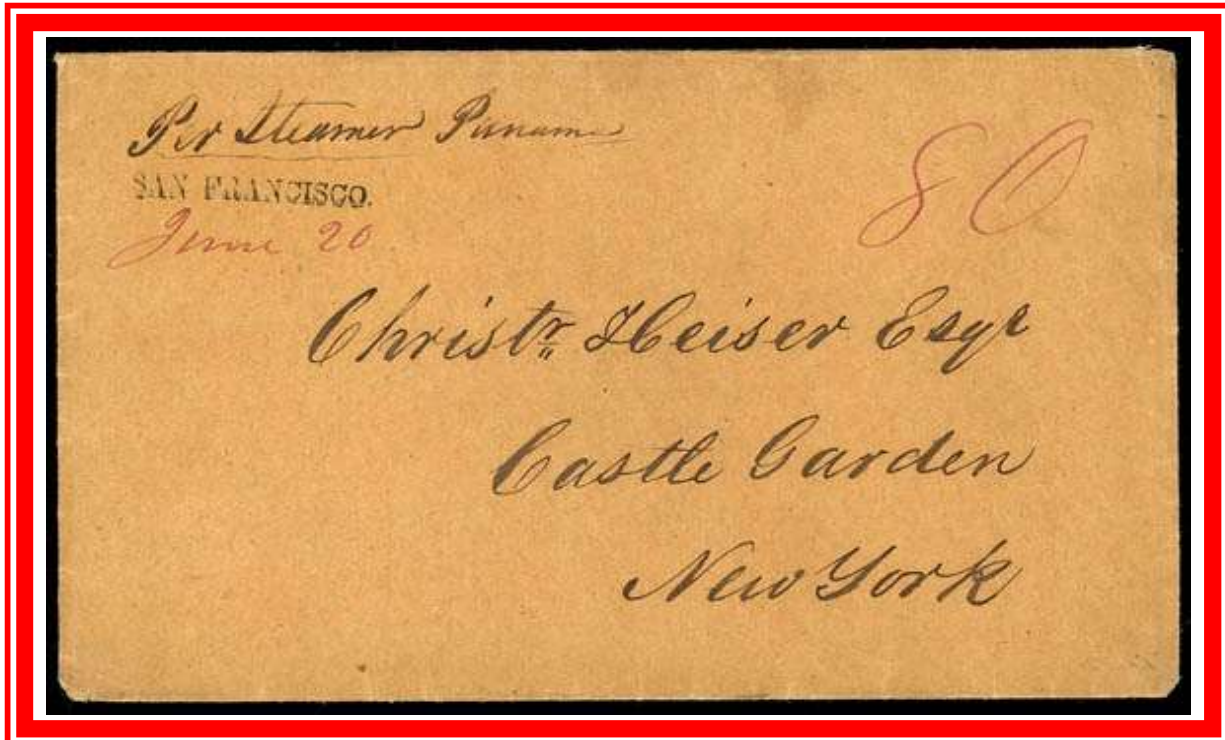
The SFPO transitioned to its first postmark device (from manuscript town markings) in June 1849. Straightline markings were used for three sailing dates, June, July and August 1849.

**Last use of SF manuscript town postmark**



Unpaid 40¢ rate to New York. Last use of the manuscript town marking which transitioned to the first SFPO device, the straightline marking, on this date. The maiden contract sailing by the PMSS *Panama* from SF, departing June 20, 1849.

**First day use of the first SFPO postmark device – the SF Straightline marking**



June 20 (1849) unpaid 80¢ double rate cover to New York. Endorsed for and carried by PMSS *Panama* on its maiden voyage the carrying mails from the SFPO.

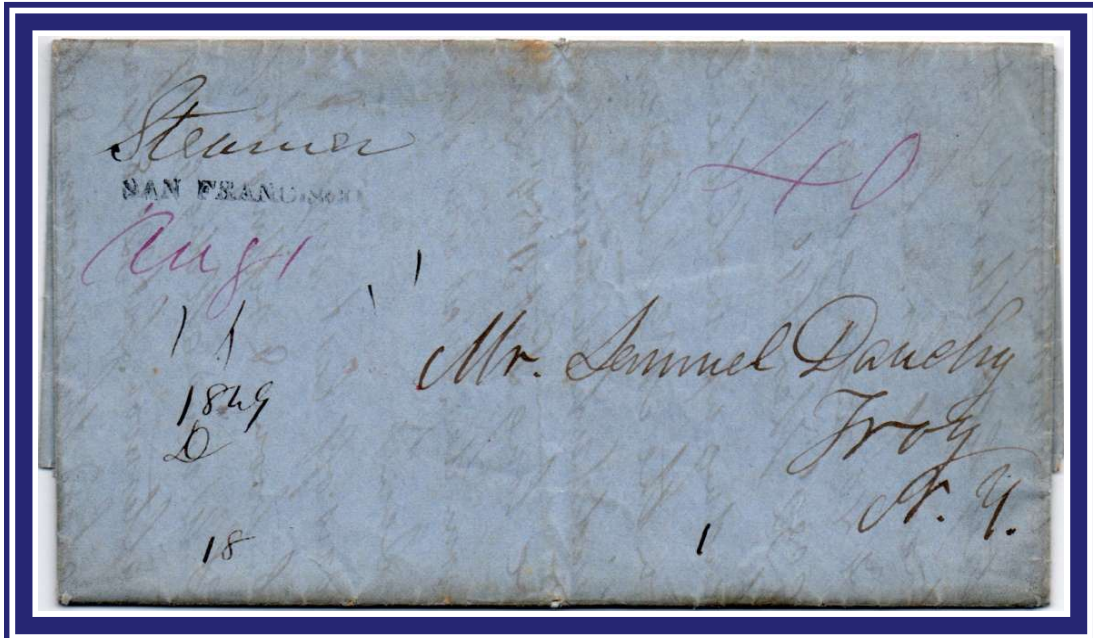
**Earliest recorded use of a double rate cover from the SFPO**

Second sailing using Straightline marking (1 of 4 discovered double rate Straightline covers)



July 2 (1849) unpaid 80¢ double rate cover to New Jersey. Second of three sailing dates using the SF straightline marking. Carried by PMSS Oregon.

Last use of SF Straightline device postmark



August 1 (1849) unpaid 40¢ rate to New York. Last usage of straightline device which transitioned to the first SF CDS on this date.

1. Mar 1849 – Jun 1851

40¢ – “to Atlantic Coast”

a. Cross-Country

The SFPO began using its first CDS on August 1, 1849. Box-40 (and Box-80) rate devices began service with the October 1, 1849 sailing date. Rate markings prior to this were all manuscript.

First day use of the first SFPO CDS (and PAID marking)



August 1 (1849) paid 40¢ rate to Massachusetts. Earliest use of the first CDS and straightline PAID marking by the SFPO.

Inaugural use of SFPO Box-40 rate marking



October 1 (1849) unpaid 40¢ rate cover, first day use of Box-40 marking, to PA. Boxed rate markings were in use for the remainder of the year (to February 1850, when the integral rate CDS replaced these).

Last month of use of Box-80 rate marking



February 5 (1850) CDS with Box-80 marking to New York. Unpaid double rate, 80¢ due. Boxed rate markings were in use to February 1850 then replaced by the integral rate CDS.

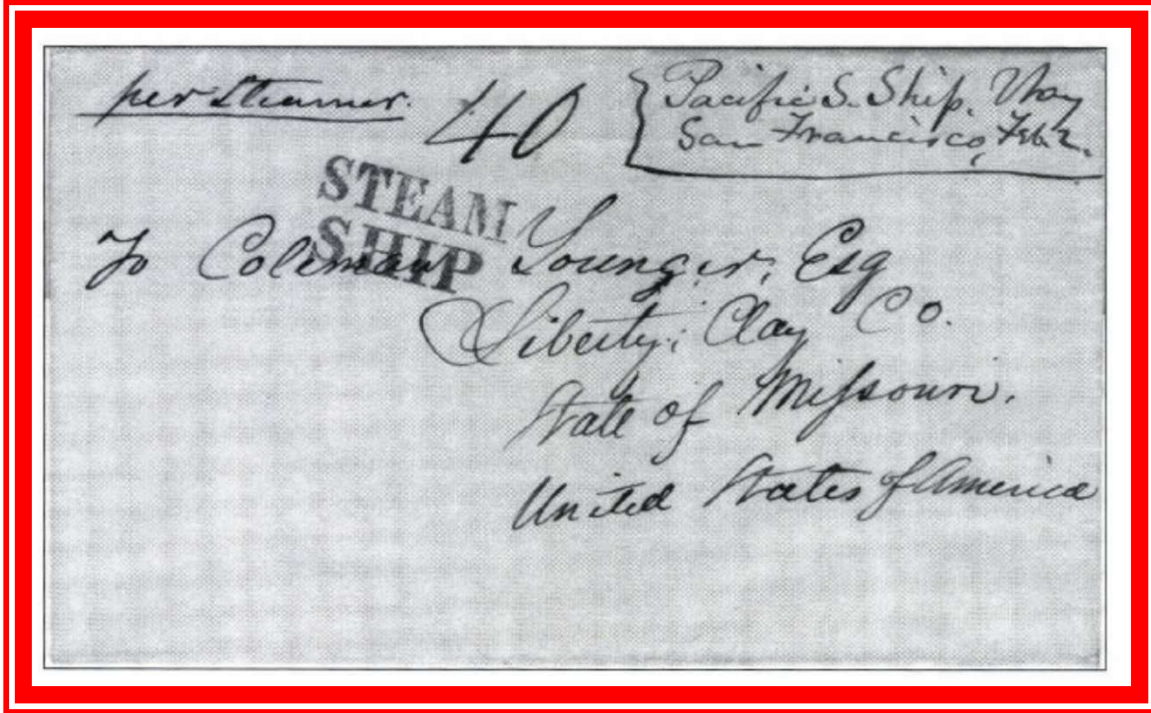
Inaugural use of the first SFPO integral rate CDS



February 28 (1850) integral rate CDS, unpaid 40¢ rate to Maine. Carried by PMSS *Oregon* on March 1. In February 1850 the first integral rate CDS devices were put in service at the SFPO.

The March 1847 US Postal Act specified contract ships were to accommodate a mail agent onboard in charge of mails carried via Panama. Agents were responsible for processing mail received onboard where special route agent markings were applied.

Earliest recorded mail agent marking on SF-Panama route



Manuscript “Pacific S. Ship, Way San Francisco, Feb 2.” and 40¢ due applied by mail agent on voyage to Panama. Dated Mazatlan, Feb 9, 1850, to Missouri, agent marked Feb 2 date regardless of when letter was processed onboard PMSS *Panama*. Cover arrived in New York with STEAM SHIP applied.

Special route agent CDS “Pan. & San. Fran. S.S.” applied onboard (approx. 25 reported)



December 23 (1850) “Pan & San Fran S.S.” route agent CDS applied during voyage to Panama. Cover handed to agent on PMSS *California* which departed SF December 15, cover arrived in New York with 40¢ due applied.

SFPO did not recognize Los Angeles as established PO and rejected paid postmark



February 22, 1850 Los Angeles manuscript postmark with Paid 40¢, sent via SF to Florida. SFPO did not recognize Los Angeles as a PO yet so crossed out paid marking and rated 40¢ due with red-orange rate and March 5 CDS (earliest reported LA postmark).

SFPO largest diameter integral rate CDS – less common 80 double rate



May 1 (1850) integral rate (double) large diameter SF CDS (sans serif font) to Massachusetts. Unpaid double rate, 80¢ due. This is the largest diameter (35 mm) SFPO CDS, the device began service in April 1850.

1. Mar 1849 – Jun 1851

a. Cross-Country

40¢ – “to Atlantic Coast”

Non-contract SFPO Mail Carriage –  
George Law's Pacific Line

During May to October 1850 the SFPO dispatched mails via non-contract steamers (George Law's Line and the Empire City Line) if letters were specifically endorsed for such. This was an attempt to appease the public who complained of poor and infrequent mail service. Ultimately this practice was disallowed late in 1850 by the PMG as it was a breach of the PMSC mail contract.

First conveyance of the SFPO mails by non-contract Law's Line vessel



Endorsed “S.B. Isthmus” (Steam Boat), unpaid 40¢ rate to Iowa. Maiden voyage of steamer *Isthmus* from SF on May 15, 1850 and first sailing with the SFPO mails via Law's Line non-contract steamer.

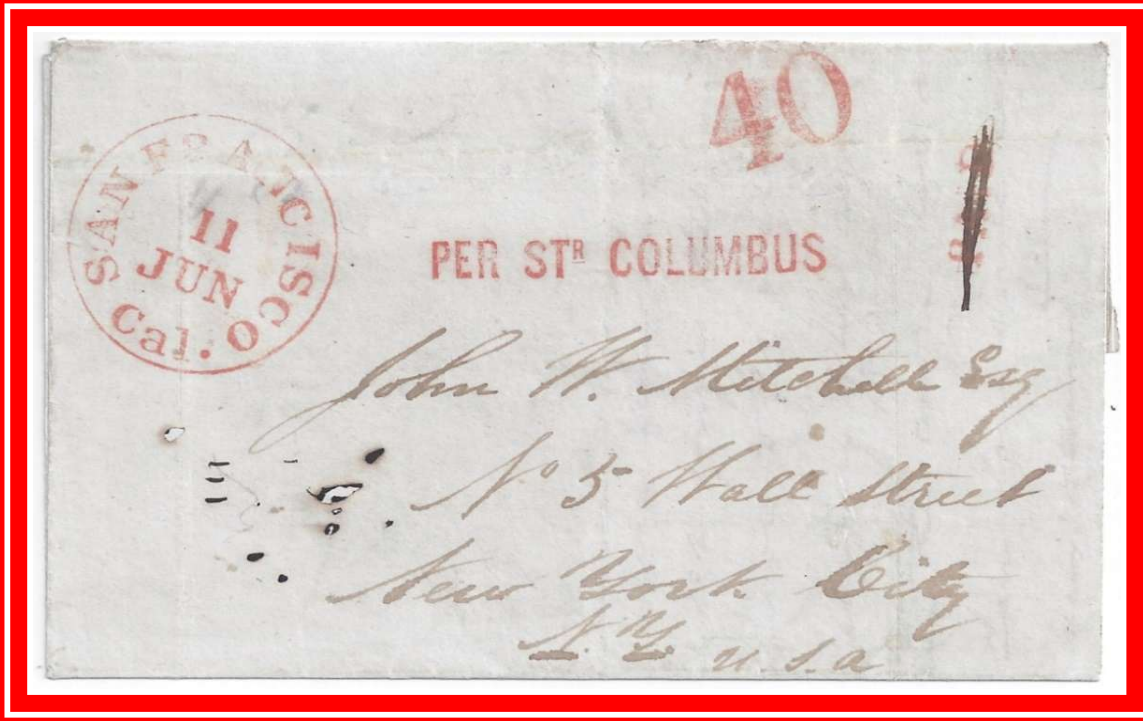
1. Mar 1849 – Jun 1851

a. Cross-Country

40¢ – “to Atlantic Coast”  
Non-contract SFPO Mail Carriage –  
George Law's Pacific Line

The *Columbus* was the second Law's Line steamer, arriving in SF June 6, 1850. Straightline marking devices with vessel name were created and put into service.

**Inaugural use of device marking showing non-contract vessel name**



PER STR COLUMBUS

Red straightline marking “PER STR<sup>R</sup> COLUMBUS” used on first trip this marking was applied. PAID crossed out, rated unpaid 40¢ to New York. Postmarked June 11 (1850) likely in error, as no advertised departure aligns, actual departure was June 18.

**Maiden voyage of non-contract Law's Line *Columbus* carrying the SFPO mails**



Manuscript “per Steamer Columbus”, unpaid 40¢ rate to Massachusetts. Maiden voyage from SF of non-contract steamer *Columbus* carrying the mails, departing June 18, 1850.

1. Mar 1849 – Jun 1851

a. Cross-Country

40¢ – “to Atlantic Coast”

Non-contract SFPO Mail Carriage –

George Law's Pacific Line

New straightline marking devices with the vessel name were created for the Law's Line sailings.

Inaugural use of steamer *Isthmus* device marking – only discovered double rate cover



PER STR<sup>R</sup> ISTHMUS

Red straightline marking device “PER STR<sup>R</sup> ISTHMUS” used on the first trip of two these device markings were applied. Paid 80¢ double rate cover to New York. Second voyage of the *Isthmus*, departed SF on July 17, 1850, postmarked July 16.

Second type of steamer *Isthmus* device marking used on last trip carrying SFPO mails

PER STMR ISTHMUS



New straightline marking device “PER STMR ISTHMUS” in red with additional manuscript endorsement, unpaid 40¢ rate to Massachusetts. The *Isthmus* departed SF on September 17, 1850, its last trip carrying the SFPO mails.

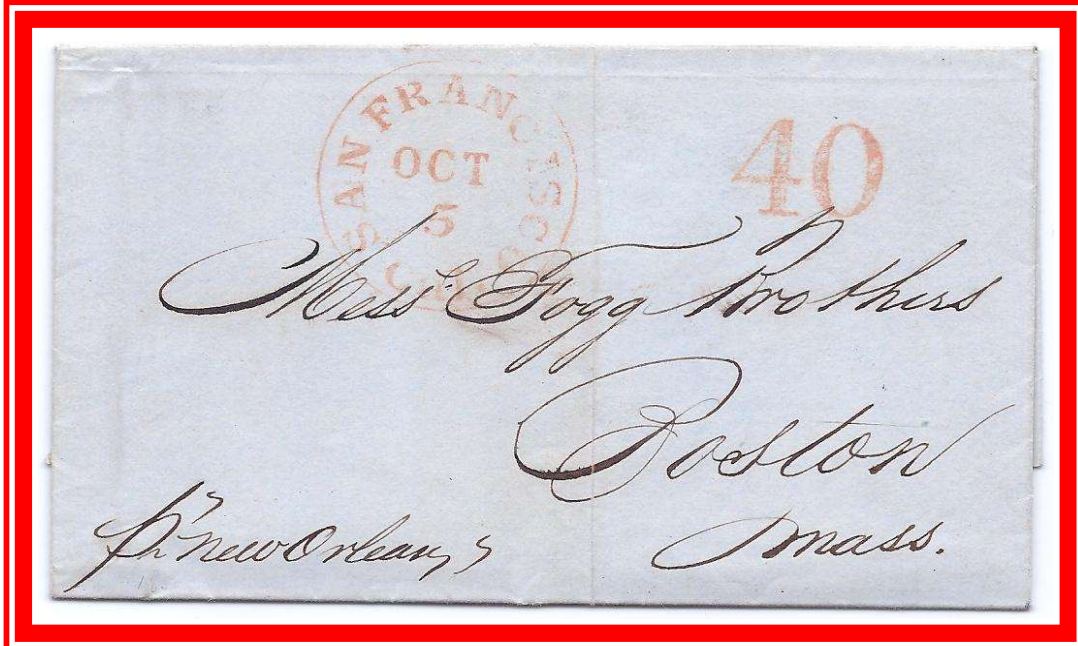
1. Mar 1849 – Jun 1851

a. Cross-Country

40¢ – “to Atlantic Coast”  
Non-contract SFPO Mail Carriage –  
Empire City Line (Pacific)

The non-contract Empire City Line (ECL) was also used to convey the SFPO mails. No vessel device markings are known to have been used for this line. ECL endorsements are far less common than those found on George Law’s Pacific Line.

**Maiden and only departure of non-contract ECL *New Orleans* carrying the SFPO mails**



Manuscript “per New Orleans” on letter datelined September 30, 1850. Unpaid 40¢ rate to Massachusetts. ECL *New Orleans* departed October 5 on its maiden voyage to Panama.

**One of two discovered outbound covers with this vessel endorsement**

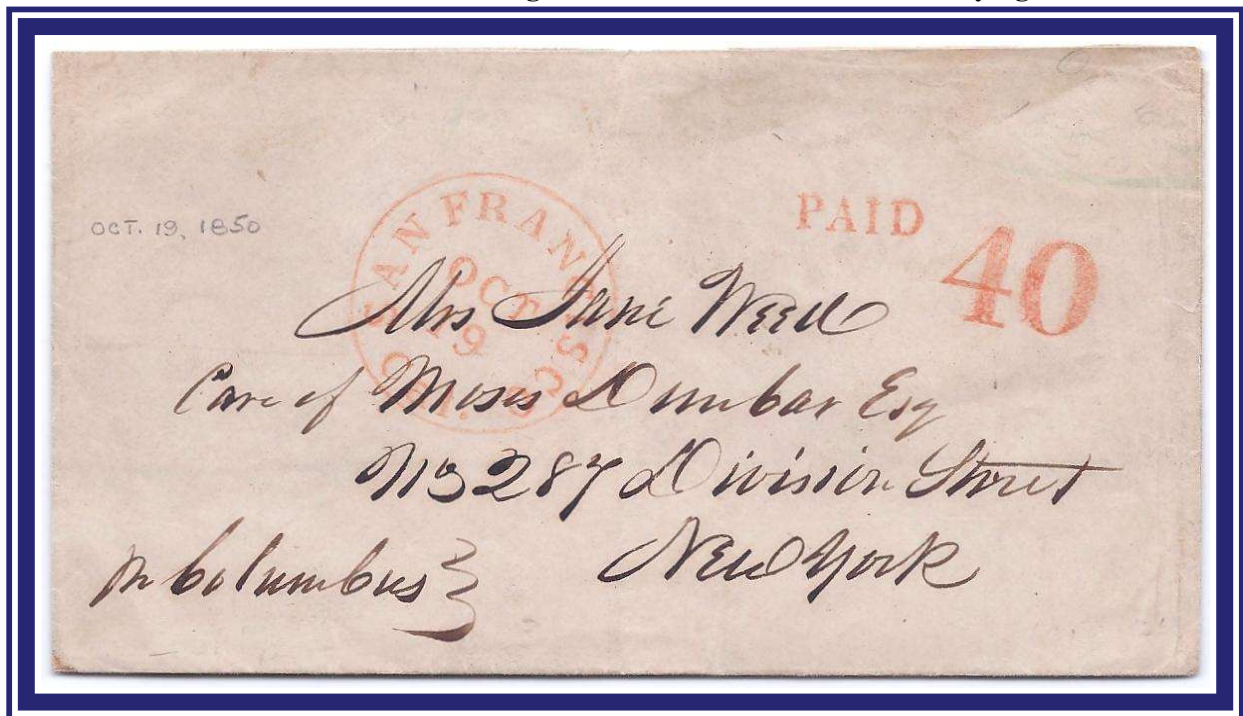
1. Mar 1849 – Jun 1851

a. Cross-Country

40¢ – “to Atlantic Coast”  
Non-contract SFPO Mail Carriage –  
George Law's Pacific Line

POD directive of October 10, 1850 banned all future non-contract sailings with the mails as it was a breach on the government contract. October 19, 1850 was the final non-contract sailing carrying the mails from the SFPO. The directive was received in SF just after this departure and from this date forward all sailings carrying the SFPO mails were via PMSC contract steamers.

**Final sailing date for non-contract vessels carrying the SFPO mails**



Manuscript “per Columbus” on paid 40¢ rate cover to New York. The *Columbus* departed SF October 19, 1850, the final non-contract sailing date carrying the mails from the SFPO.

1. Mar 1849 – Jun 1851

40¢ – “to Atlantic Coast”

a. Cross-Country

Uncommon TOO LATE marking applied by SFPO - letter missed steamer sailing



TOO LATE.

June 1 (1850) Sacramento CDS, unpaid 40¢ rate to Massachusetts. SFPO applied red “TOO LATE” straightline marking indicating letter arrived in SF after contract mail steamer *Oregon* departed earlier on June 1. The next contract mail sailing was one month later on July 1, hence application of marking which is not commonly found.

Seldom seen “Via New Orleans” routing directive from SF



June 1 (1850) SF CDS, unpaid 40¢ rate to Tennessee, uncommon “Via New Orleans” routing directive. Cover transited Panama and was dropped at New Orleans instead of continuing to New York with bulk of the mails (then carried up Mississippi River) per standard route of US Mail Steamship Co. *Georgia*.

# 1. Mar 1849 – Jun 1851

12.5¢ – “to/from the Pacific”

## b. West Coast Local

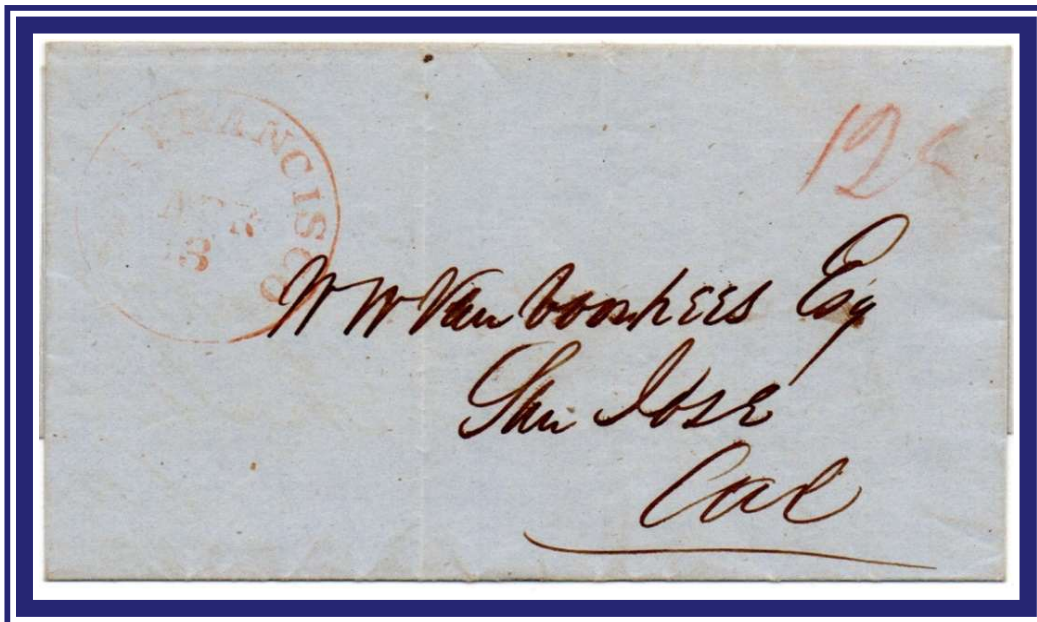
The 1848 US Postal Act created a 12½¢ per ½ ounce rate for mail conveyed “from one to any other place on the coast of the Pacific”

Double 12.5¢ rate for carriage along Pacific Coast – SF to San Jose, CA

April 19 (1850) SF CDS, prepaid double weight 25¢ manuscript rate to San Jose, California. Addressed to Peter Burnett, California's first governor.



12.5¢ rate for carriage along Pacific Coast – SF to San Jose, CA



April 3 (1850) CDS, unpaid 12.5¢ manuscript rate to San Jose, California. Addressed to William Van Voorhies, who was now Secretary of State and no longer special mail agent for the POD.

1. Mar 1849 – Jun 1851

b. West Coast Local

12.5¢ – “to/from the Pacific”

Double 12.5¢ rate sent outside US to Mexico, literally interpreted as “to the Pacific” by SFPO



Letter datelined June 20, 1849 from SF. Addressed to Mazatlan, Mexico and carried by PMSS *Panama* the same day, stopping at San Blas where mail was offloaded then carried to destination (2 reales due handstamp). Paid 25 in distinctive magenta ink used at the SFPO at this time. Double 12.5 cent rate, sent outside US to Mexico, apparently made up by the SFPO clerk assuming “to the Pacific” rate, a unique cover.

**Earliest reported usage of the 12.5 cent rate from the SFPO**  
**Earliest reported usage of mail from the SFPO to Mexico**

1. Mar 1849 – Jun 1851

b. West Coast Local

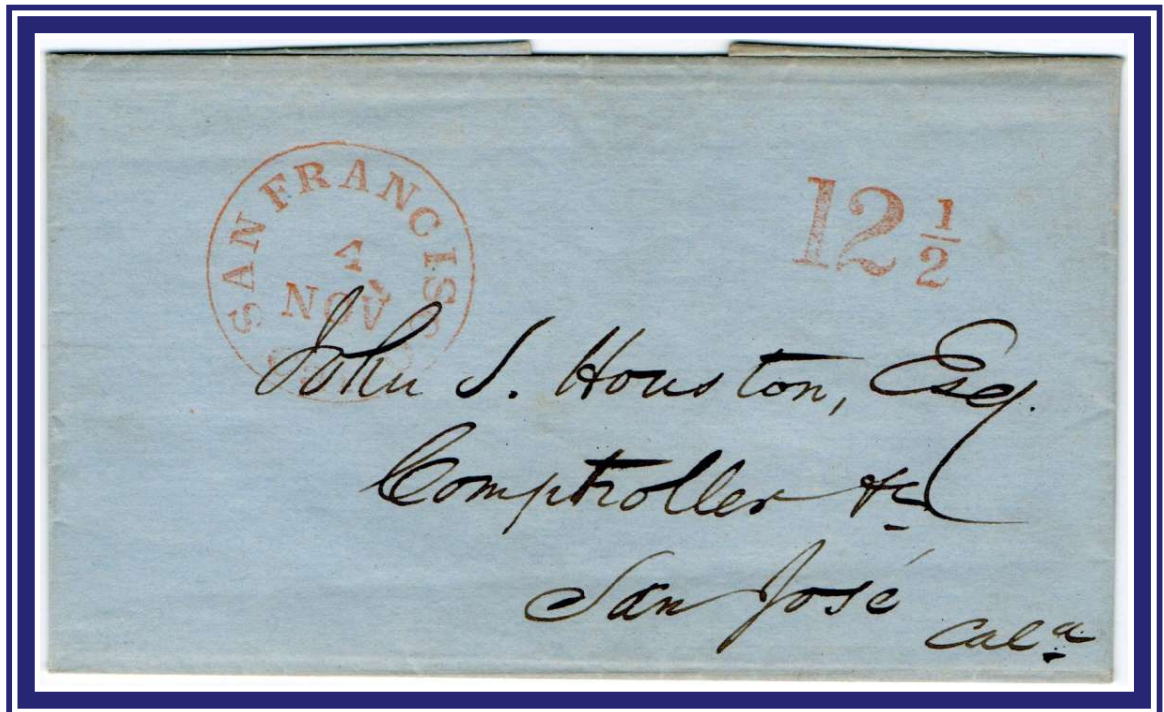
12.5¢ – “to/from the Pacific”

12.5¢ integral rate CDS for carriage along Pacific Coast – SF to San Jose, CA



June 17 (1850) with SF integral 12.5¢ rate CDS, paid to San Jose, California. Addressed to William Van Voorhies, who was now Secretary of State and no longer special mail agent for the POD.

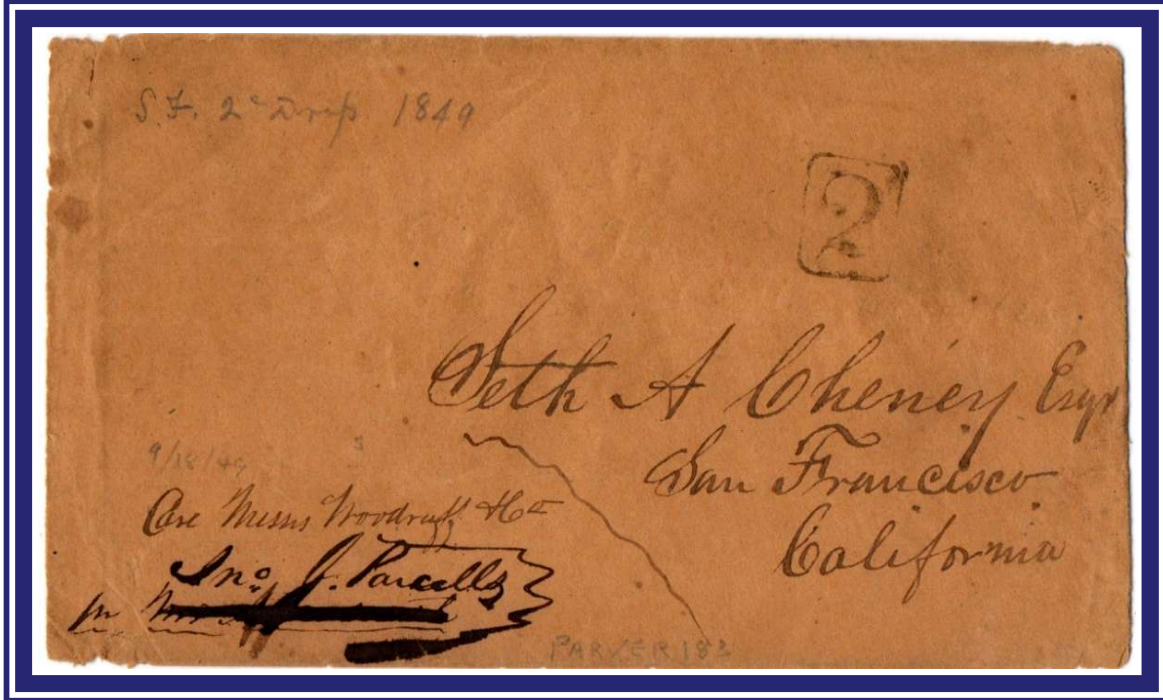
12.5¢ separate rate due handstamp for carriage along Pacific Coast – SF to San Jose, CA



November 4 (1850) SF CDS, unpaid single weight 12.5¢ rate with separate rate handstamp, to San Jose, California.

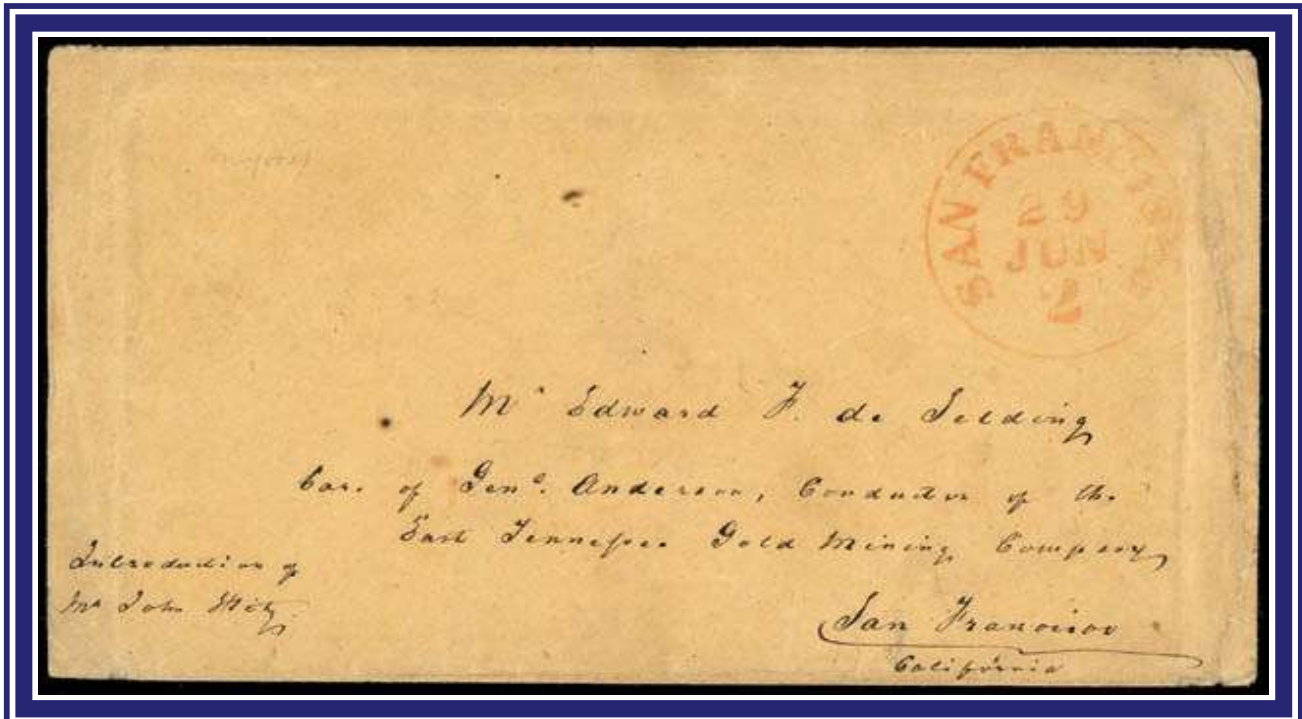
The 1845 US Postal Act created a 2¢ per ½ ounce rate for letters not transmitted by mail but placed in the PO for local pickup.

Earliest reported use of the SFPO Box-2 drop rate marking



September 18 (1849) local 2¢ SFPO drop use. Box-2 rate device was also used along with the Box-40 and Box-80 devices which arrived at the SFPO in September 1849.

Earliest reported use of the SFPO 2¢ integral rate CDS



June 29 (1850) SF CDS, integral rate CDS with “2” for unpaid 2¢ drop rate. This CDS rate version is not common, with less than 10 discovered.

1. Mar 1849 – Jun 1851

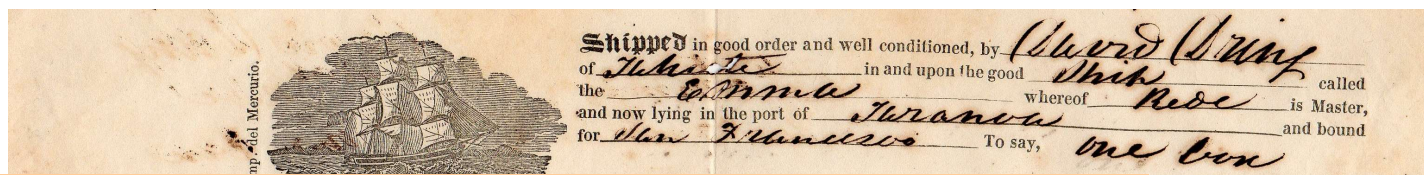
c. SF City Local

2¢ – Drop

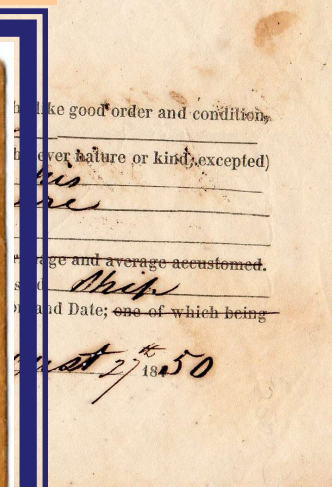
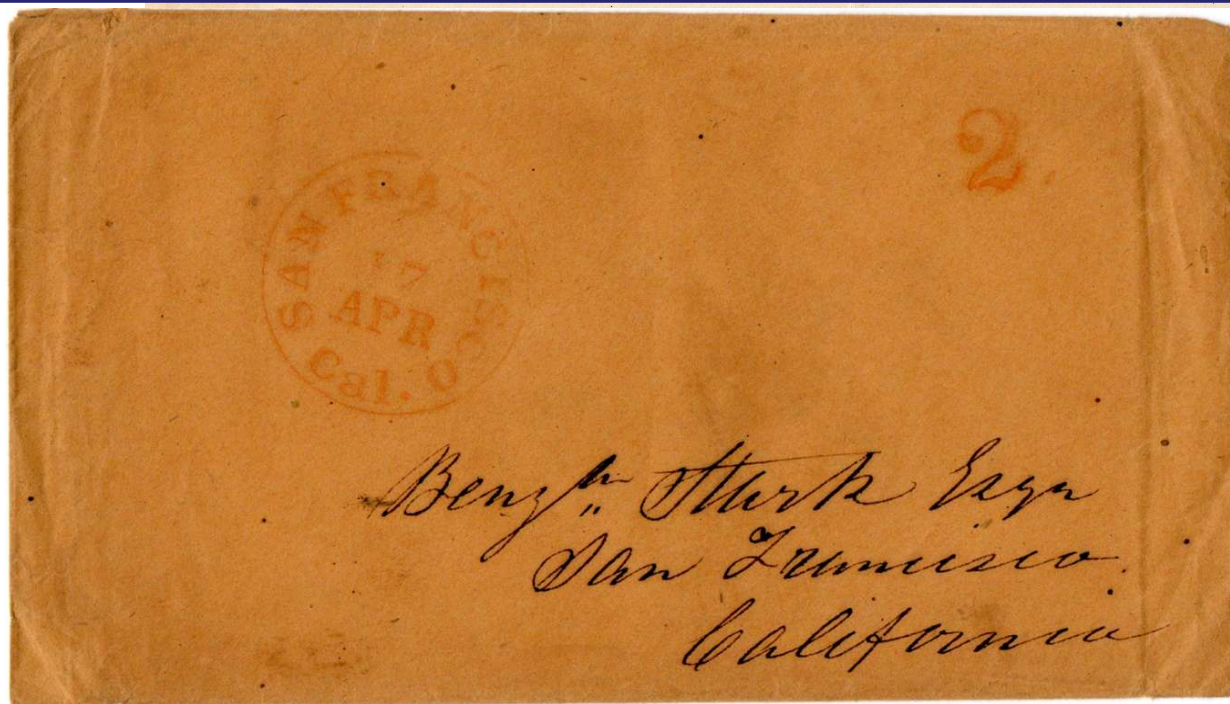
Red ink version of the SFPO Box-2 drop rate marking



July 3 (1850) SF CDS, local SFPO drop use, unpaid 2¢ rate, red Box-2 device.



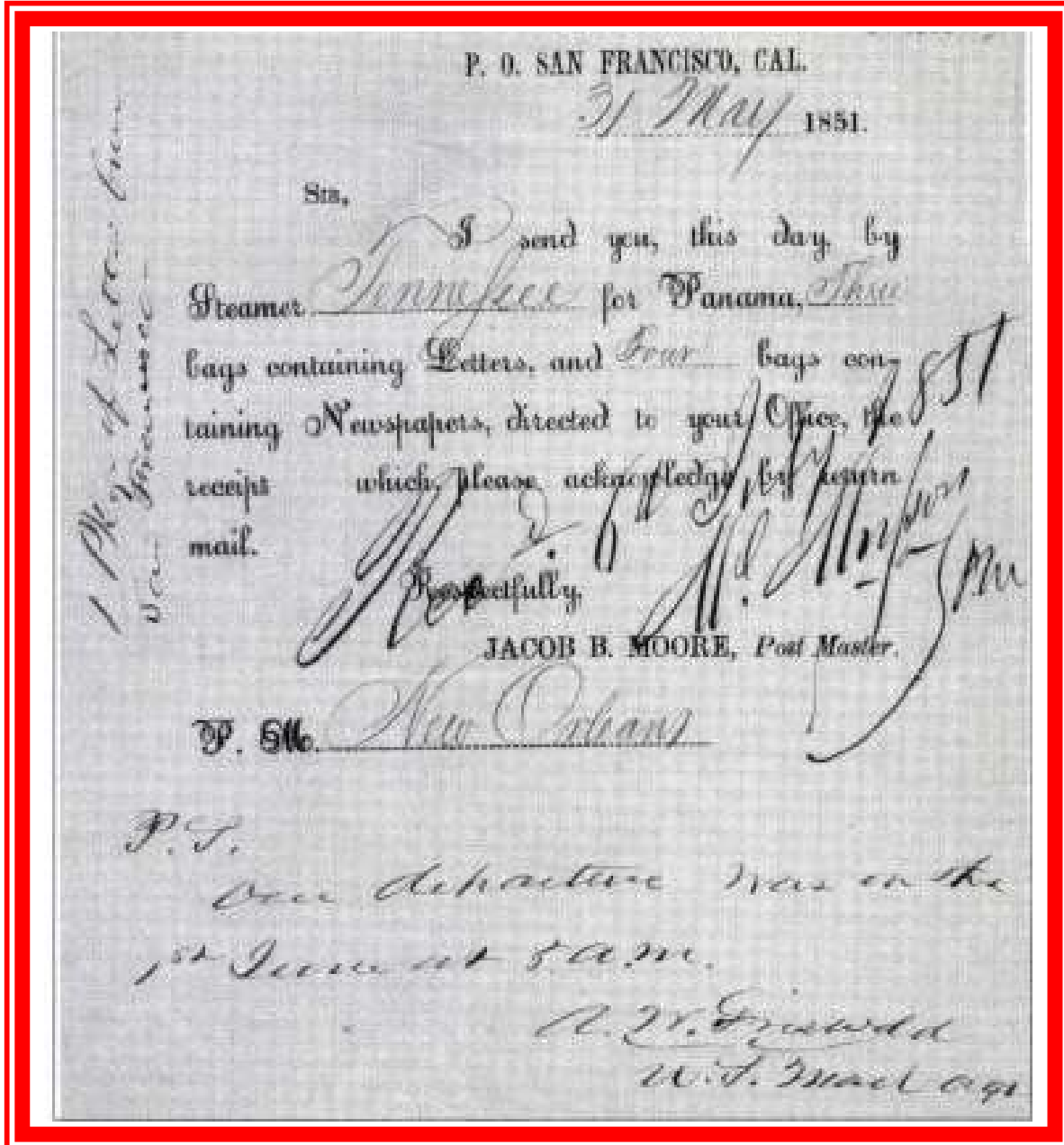
August 1850 Bill of Lading from Papiete Tahiti, privately carried and dropped at SFPO



Bill of Lading cover contents from Tahiti (reduced from original)

Privately carried from Tahiti and deposited locally at the SFPO where red April 17 (1851) CDS and separate "2" drop rate due handstamp were applied. Carried on the brig *Frederick* which arrived in SF April 16 after a 66 day journey.

Very rare 1851 surviving way bill from the SFPO accompanying mails to New Orleans



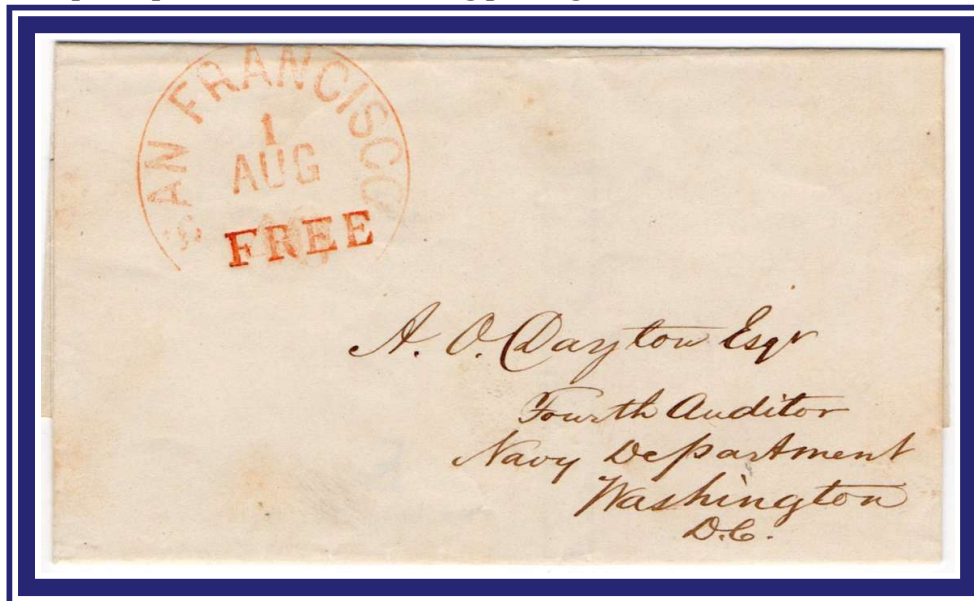
Dated May 31, 1851 by SF postmaster Jacob B. Moore and carried by PMSS *Tennessee*, sent to the postmaster of New Orleans, free of charge given official PO business. Way bill accompanying three bags of mail and four bags of newspapers which were transferred at Havana to SS *Cherokee* for delivery to New Orleans.

1. Mar 1849 – Jun 1851

d. Special Rates, Markings

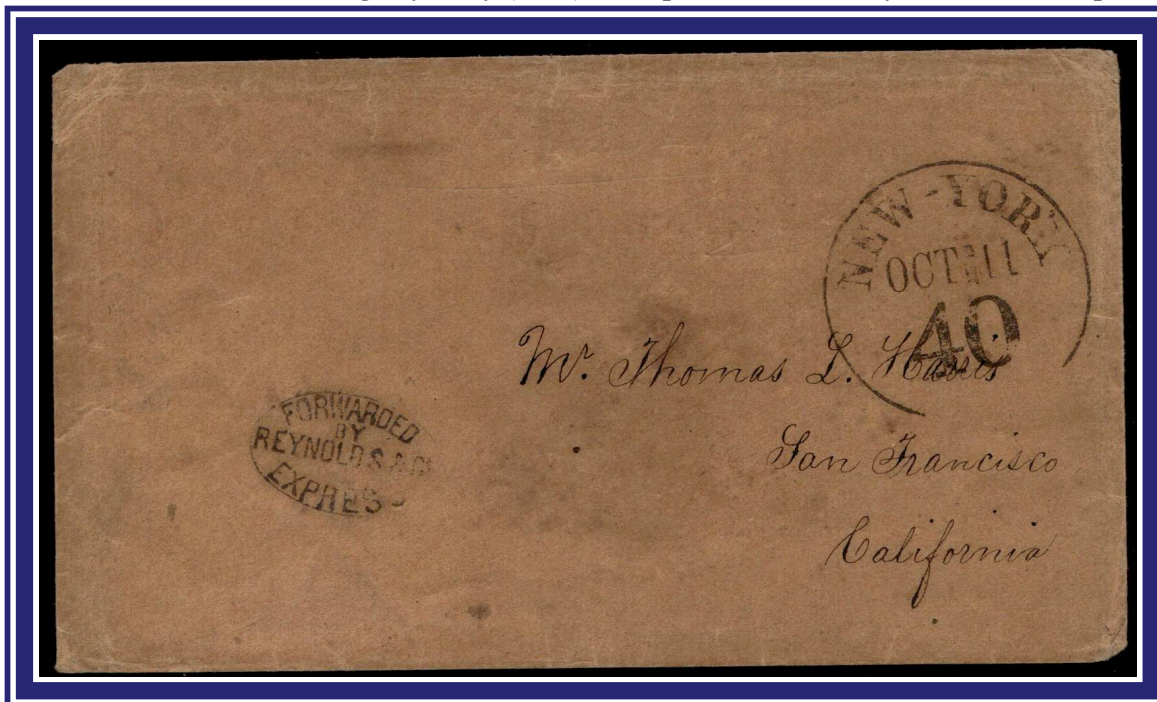
FREE (Not Requiring Payment)  
Early Express Company Carriage

Recipient qualified for free franking privileges, FREE overstrike of 40¢ rate



August 1 (1850) SF CDS to Washington DC. Navy Department recipient qualified for free franking privileges, but this was not recognized by the SFPO. Integral 40 rate obliterated with “FREE” at destination, no payment due.

Carriage by early (1850) SF express service - Reynolds & Co. Express



From New York, October 11 (1850) 40¢ integral rate CDS, cross-country rate to SF. Retrieved at the SFPO and forwarded by Reynolds & Co. Express (oval handstamp), likely taken to the gold mining region.

# 1. Mar 1849 – Jun 1851

## e. Inbound - Foreign Origin

6¢ – Private Ship Mail, to Port of Entry

The 1825 US Act set the private ship letter rate to the port of entry at 6¢ per ½ oz. Letters were marked with “SHIP” to identify the additional postage due.

Early (1850) use of red “clamshell” Ship-6 private ship 6¢ due marking



Sep 24 (1850) SF CDS with red Ship-6 “clamshell” 6¢ due on incoming private ship rate letter to port of entry, from Valparaiso, Chile. Manuscript “pr Str New Orleans” the inaugural arrival of the Empire City Line to compete with the PMSC.

Uncommon “RECD” CDS marking, private ship 6¢ due from Tasmania



Oct 21 (1850) SF CDS with “RECD” marking, Ship-6 due marking on incoming cover from Hobart, Tasmania, datelined July 12, 1850. Carried by private ship Rebecca departing July 16.

1. Mar 1849 – Jun 1851

e. Inbound - Foreign Origin

30¢ – Contract Ship Mail, from Panama

The contract ship rate for mail to/from Panama was set at 30¢ per ½ ounce by the 1847 US Act. This rate began service at the SFPO in March 1849.

Only recorded westbound straightline “PANAMA” handstamp usage



Panama City US mail agency applied straightline “PANAMA” marking when cover entered mails. Carried by PMSS *Panama* to SF, arriving September 21 (1850). Mail offload delayed, postmarked September 30 at SFPO with red Box-30 due marking. CDS “RECd” marking is rare, found on very few SF incoming steamship letters.

1. Mar 1849 – Jun 1851

e. Inbound - Foreign Origin

40¢ Domestic + 2¢ Ship Fee – Private Ship Mail,  
Outside Port of Entry (“to Atlantic Coast”)

The 1825 US Act set the private ship letter rate for destinations outside the port of entry at 2¢ (Ship Fee) plus ordinary domestic rates of postage.

Scarce Honolulu straightline postmark on private ship letter to New Hampshire via SF



“Honolulu, Hawaiian Is. Jan 29, 1851” straightline handstamp on cover to New Hampshire via SF, carried by private ship *Corsair*. SF March 1 CDS with red crayon “42” rate (40¢ transcontinental plus 2¢ ship fee) carried by PMSS *California* to Panama. Forwarded in New Hampshire April 10 with “For’d” and “5” (forwarding fee) in manuscript, total due of 47¢. Hawaiian postage of 10¢ paid in cash.

**34 recorded examples of the Honolulu straightline postmark (8 blue, 26 black) used from November 2, 1850 to June 14, 1851**

1. Mar 1849 – Jun 1851

f. Outbound - Foreign Destination

30¢ per ½ ounce (American Packet)  
– via Panama, to Great Britain

# SAN FRANCISCO LETTER SHEET PRICE CURRENT AND REVIEW OF THE MARKET.

VOL. I. SAN FRANCISCO, AUGUST 30, 1840. NO. I.

WILLIAM W. GALLAER, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR. OFFICE CORNER MONTGOMERY AND WASHINGTON STREETS.

<b>ASHES.</b> Saleratus, per lb. .... 55 a 65c Pots and Pearls, none. . . . . a ..	<b>FISH, cont'd.</b> Salmon, ..... 10 a 12 Mackerel, no. 1, per bbl, 15 a .. " " 2, " " 10 a .. " " 3, " " no sale. Sardines, ½ boxes per doz. 11 a 12	<b>METALS, cont'd.</b> Nails, Cut, assorted pr keg. 5½ a 7 Patent Shot, pr lb. .... 11 a ..c Hollow Ware, " ..... 4 a 6c Steel, per lb. .... 20 a 25c Spades, per doz. .... 3½ a 6½ Shovels. .... 4 a 7 Safes—Salamander, pr lb.. 35 a 40c	
<b>BEESWAX.</b> Boots, men's light peg'd doz. \$30 a .. " " heavy " " 22 a 25 Brogans, fine per doz. .... 25 a 28 " heavy " " 22 a 24	<b>FRUIT.</b> Raisins, ..... " Loring's" bunch per box, 6 a 6½ Muscatel " " 5 a .. Bloom, " " 5 a .. Currants, per lb. .... 15 a 18c Almonds, " " 10 a 11c " soft shell, per lb. 18 a 25c Figs, Turkey, " " 25 a 30c Walnuts, " " 10 a 11c Prunes, " " 25 a 35c Lemons, per box, ..... Oranges, " " ..... Dried apples, per lb. .... Peaches, with stones, ..... " clear, ..... Brandy fruits, none.	<b>NAVAL STORES.</b> Spirits turpentine, per gal. \$1.25 a .. Varnish ..... 1.75 a 2 Oakum ..... 7c a .. Tar ..... a .. Pitch ..... a .. Rosin bbl. .... 3.00 a .. Oars and sweeps pr foot... 15 a 20c	
<b>BOOTS AND SHOES.</b> Boots, men's light peg'd doz. \$30 a .. " " heavy " " 22 a 25 Brogans, fine per doz. .... 25 a 28 " heavy " " 22 a 24	<b>COALS, on board,</b> Liverpool, per chal. .... \$30 a 40 Lehigh, " " do do 12½ a 16c Cocoa, per lb. .... 35 a 40c American Sweet, per lb. .... 45 a 50c Spanish, " " do do 45 a 50c	<b>OILS &amp; PAINTS.</b> Lard ..... 1.00 a 1.10 Cotton Seed Oil ..... 1.25 a 1.30 Lard ..... 1.00 a 1.10 Cotton Seed Oil ..... 1.25 a 1.30	
<b>CANDLES.</b> Sperm, per lb. .... 60 a 70c Searine, " " 22 a 28c Hull's Patent. .... 22 a 27c	<b>CORDAGE.</b> American tarred, per lb. . 12 a 14c Manilla Rope, " " 17 a 20c	<b>DRUGS AND MEDICINES.</b> Alum, per lb. .... 16 a 20c Aloes, Cape, " " \$2 a 24 Balsam Copaiva, " " 2 a 2½ Brimstone, " " 40 a 50c Camphor, " " \$2½ a 3 Copperas, " " ..... Cream Tartar, " " 75 a 100c Gum Arabic, " " \$1½ a 2 Ipecac, " " 3 a 3½ Jalap, " " 3 a 3½ Oil Lemon, " " 15 a 20 " Vitriol, " " 75 a 100c Castor Oil, per doz qts. . \$11 a 12 Quicksilver, per lb. .... 1 75 a 4 Soda, S. C., per lb. .... 75 a 100c Quinine, per oz., ..... \$2½ a 3 Leaches, doz. .... 24 a 26	<b>DOMESTIC GOODS.</b> Sheetings, brown, per yd. . 8 a 11c " bleach'd, " " 8 a 14c Osnaburgs, cotton, " " 8 a 10c Cotton Drills, twill d " " 10 a 12½c Cotton Bed Ticking, " " 20 a 25c Calicoes, blue, " " 7 a 12½c " fancy bright col's. 7 a 10c " French. .... 16 a 22 Flannel Shirts, blue and red, per doz. .... \$24 a .. Cotton velvets, black, per yd. .... 40 a 55c Satinets, per yd. .... 45 a 75c Cloths, blue and scarlet, per yd. .... \$3 a 4 Blankets, blue Mackinaw, per pair, 5 a 8 do. red, do do 10 a 13 do. white, do do 4 a 8 do. whitney, do do 5 a 20
<b>COFFEE.</b> Brazil, per lb. .... 7 a 9c Laguira, " " ..... Java, " " 8 a 10c	<b>LIQUORS.</b> Brandy, J. J. Dupuy ..... " Otard ..... " Seignette ..... " Cases, pr doz ..... Rum, Jamaica, no sale Gin, Swan, per gal. .... " Cases, pr doz ..... Cider Spirits, pr gal. .... Whiskey, " ..... Ale, Byas's London, ..... " Philad, ..... Cider Champ, pr doz ..... Wines, Madeira, pr g ..... Champ. "Heidsick" p ..... Anchor, ..... Sherry, pr gal. .... Marseilles Madeira, ..... Pure Port, ..... Imitation Port, ..... Muscatel, ..... Dry Malaga, ..... Sweet " ..... Claret pr hlf pipe. .... " St. Julien, pr do ..... " Medoc, " ..... " Chateau Margau ..... Lemon Syrup, pr doz ..... Soda Water, " .....	<b>IRON.</b> Old Copper, pr lb. .... New Sheathing, " ..... Sheet Iron, Am. " ..... " Russia, p ..... Sheet Zinc, pr lb. .... Pig Lead, " ..... Bar " " ..... Banca Tin, " ..... Tin Plates, 1X pr bx ..... Bar Iron, American, ..... English, .....	

Early (Sep 1849) SF mail to Great Britain, first SF prices current sheet



First ever SF prices current sheet with incorrect 1840 (typo) for year. Sent to London, via Panama, c/o forwarders Smith & Lewis. SFPO improperly rated at 40¢ (assuming to catch British Packet at NY), the proper rate was 30¢ to Panama. September 1 (1849) SF CDS, carried by the PMSS Panama. Forwarded via British mails, November 3 London receiving CDS with manuscript 1sh due, the West Indies packet fee.

1. Mar 1849 – Jun 1851

f. Outbound - Foreign Destination

64¢ per ½ ounce (Bremen Mails from West Coast)  
– to Holland

Rare prepaid 64¢ Bremen Mails rate to Holland from the West Coast



October 30 (1850) SF CDS to Rotterdam, Holland. Straightline PAID and red “64” cents prepaid rating for Bremen Mails (40¢ transcontinental + 24¢ trans-Atlantic). Bremen service was unavailable during the winter, New York sent letter via Great Britain open mails (40¢ + 16¢) on Collins Line *Arctic* departing December 21. Red “U.S. PK. T.” handstamp applied in London to indicate American packet carriage. Manuscript “8” pence debit to Holland and “70” Dutch Cents due.

## 2. Jul 1851 – Mar 1855

6¢ Prepaid / 10¢ Unpaid – Over 3000 Miles

### a. Cross-Country

Effective July 1, 1851 the US reduced the cross-country rate (over 3,000 miles) to 6¢ per ½ oz. prepaid and 10¢ unpaid.

First day use of new July 1, 1851 prepaid 6¢ rate



July 1 (1851) SF CDS with straightline PAID, 6¢ prepaid transcontinental rate to Philadelphia. Unique style "6" inserted into existing large diameter 40/80 integral rate CDS device for the new prepaid transcontinental rate. Endorsed for PMSS *Panama*.

First day use of new July 1, 1851 unpaid 10¢ rate



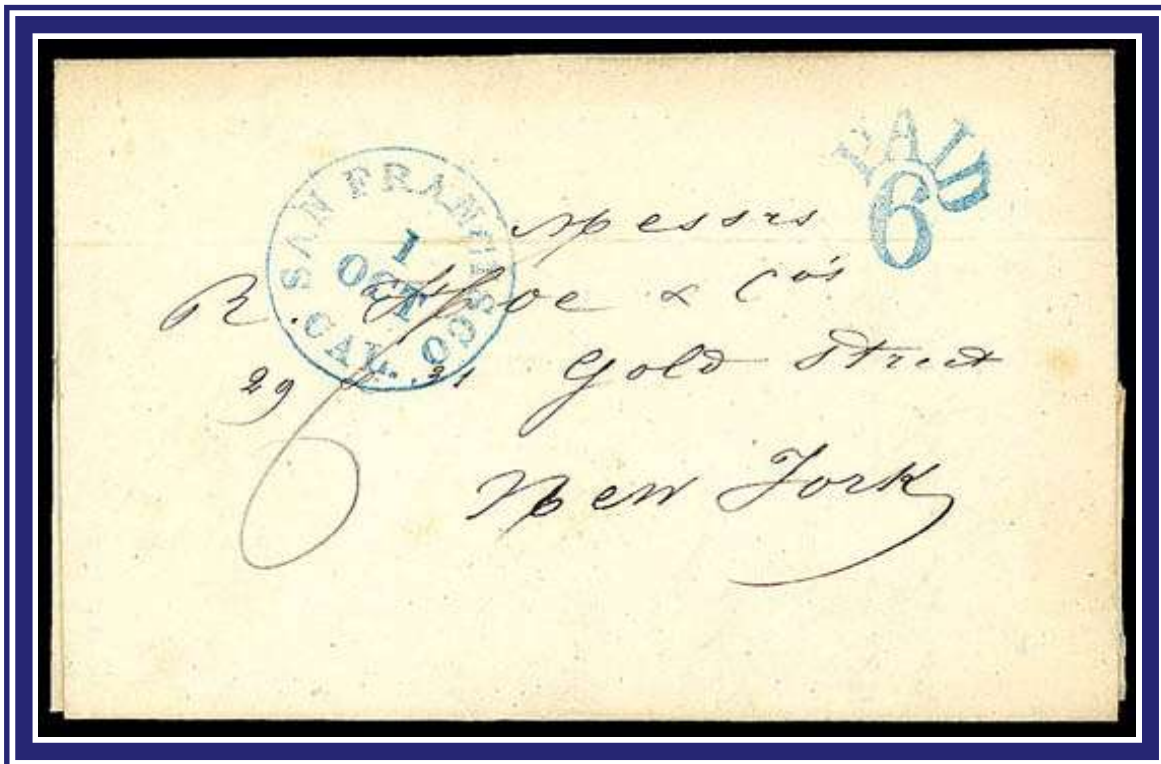
July 1 (1851) SF CDS, 10¢ unpaid transcontinental rate to New York. Separate rate handstamp with italic font style, this particular marking was only used from July to October 1851, likely created for this new rate period.

10¢ integral rate CDS created from the original 40¢ era device in use prior to this rate change



December 16 (1851) SF CDS to Massachusetts. Integral rate CDS shows unpaid 10¢ transcontinental rate. 10¢ rate slug was incorporated into original CDS used in the 40/80 era.

Blue ink used at the SFPO during 1852, unique style arc PAID-6 handstamp



October 1 (1852) blue SF CDS with unique style "Paid 6" handstamp on prepaid 6¢ transcontinental rate to New York.

Double rate prepaid via 1851 Issue 12¢ stamp, not commonly used to pay this rate



July 15 (1852) SF CDS with manuscript endorsement “p *Northerner*” of the PMSC. 12¢ (double) transcontinental rate to Massachusetts prepaid via 1851 Issue stamp, not commonly used (typically four 3¢ stamps are used).

Unique style integral rate CDS used for 10¢ unpaid cross-country rate



March 31 (circa 1854) SF unique style CDS with integral “10” on cover to Vermont. Due 10¢ for over 3000 miles unpaid rate.

Unique style PAID-6 SF CDS used for prepaid 6¢ cross-country rate



March 1 (1853) to New York. SF “PAID 6” integral rate CDS indicating prepaid 6¢ rate. Endorsed for and carried by PMSS Oregon.

Scarce small font Noisy Carriers Publishing Hall handstamp



NOISY CARRIER'S PUBLISHING HALL  
77 LONG WHARF SAN FRANCISCO  
CHARLES F. KIMBALL PROPRIETOR

Enlargement of slogan handstamp on cover (applied by Noisy Carriers, SF)

January 16 (1854) SF CDS, 10¢ unpaid transcontinental rate to Maine, blue small font “Noisy Carriers Publishing Hall” (letterbag operator) handstamp.

**One of eleven discovered covers recovered from wreck of PMSS *Winfield Scott***



San Jose November 22 (1853) CDS, via SF to Illinois. PAID handstamp with manuscript 6¢ rate. Red purser marking “STEAMER WINFIELD SCOTT” which departed SF December 1, 1853. Wrecked in the Santa Barbara Channel December 2 and lost, but mails, passengers and cargo were saved. Mail eventually sent by PMSS *California* to Panama.

**STEAMER  
WINFIELD SCOTT.**

*Purser marking applied  
to front of cover.*

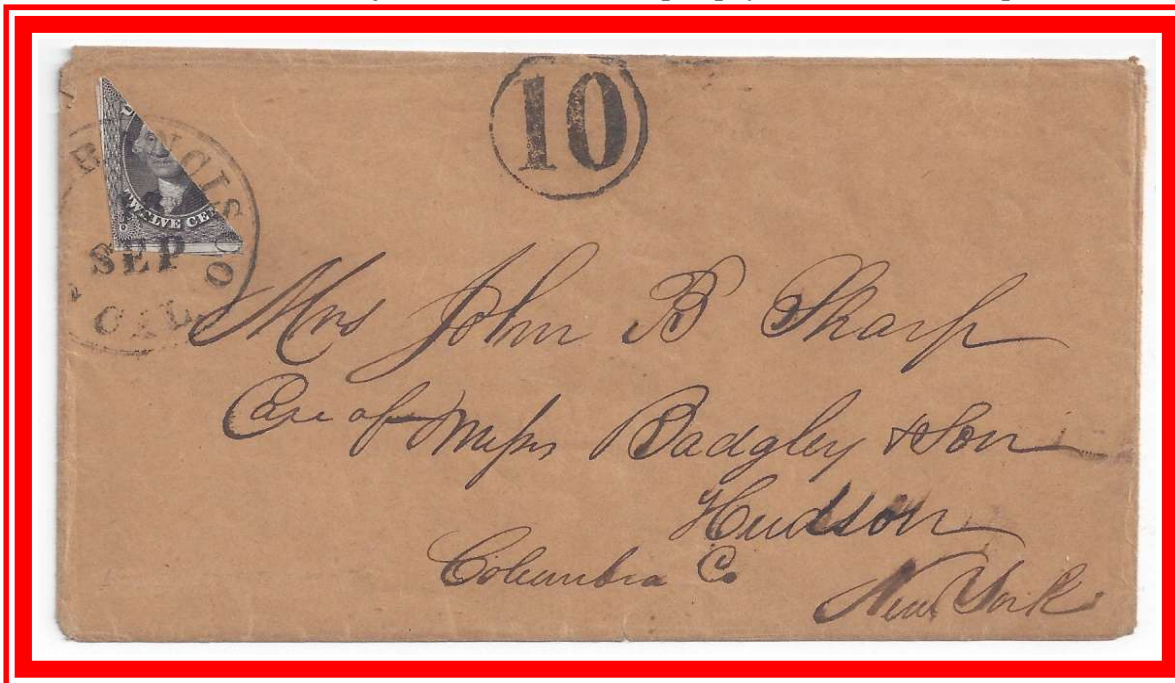
The SFPO ran out of 3¢ 1851 Issue stamps and used bisected 12¢ stamps to pay the 6¢ rate during May-September 1853. A PMG notice was sent to SF stating this was illegal but did not reach the SFPO until October 1853. By September 1853 bisects as pre-payment were prohibited in the East.

**Bisected 12¢ 1851 Issue accepted for pre-payment - prior to PMG prohibiting use**



July 16 (1853) SF CDS, 6¢ prepaid transcontinental rate to New York using bisected 12¢ 1851 Issue. As there is no due marking, this was accepted in the East as valid prepaid postage. From May through September these bisected stamps were accepted for payment in New York.

**Bisected 12¢ 1851 Issue rejected in New York as pre-payment – after PMG prohibited use**



c

September 16 (1853) SF CDS, 6¢ prepaid rate to New York using bisected 12¢ 1851 Issue. While the SFPO allowed usage of the bisect, it was rejected in New York where the 10¢ due marking was applied for the unpaid transcontinental rate.

**Bisected 12¢ 1851 Issue rejected by SFPO – after PMG notice received in SF**



c

December 16 (1853) SF CDS, attempted prepayment of the 6¢ rate to New York using bisected 12¢ 1851 Issue. SFPO rejected it and marked it “10” due, the unpaid letter rate.

## 2. Jul 1851 – Mar 1855

### a. Cross-Country

6¢ Prepaid / 10¢ Unpaid – Over 3000 Miles  
Independent Mail Lines – Via Nicaragua

The first official PMG notice stating bisected stamps were invalid was published on September 12, 1853. Bisects received in the East after this date were not accepted as prepayment. This notice did not reach the SFPO until October.

#### Rare use of bisected 12¢ 1851 Issue stamp on the Nicaragua route



Red boxed “Via Nicaragua Ahead of the Mails” applied at SF, to New York with September 25 (1853) arrival CDS. 6¢ prepayment attempted using bisected 12¢ 1851 Issue. The SFPO allowed the bisect usage but it was rejected in New York and treated as a private (non-contract) ship letter with 7¢ due per “SHIP 7 cts” in the CDS. This rate is based on the 1825 US Act which set the private ship letter rate for destinations outside port of entry to 2¢ (Ship Fee) plus ordinary domestic rates of postage (5¢ unpaid rate, under 3000 miles). NSC *Brother Jonathan* departed SF September 1 connecting to *Northern Light* arriving in New York September 25.

2. Jul 1851 – Mar 1855

a. Cross-Country

6¢ Prepaid / 10¢ Unpaid – Over 3000 Miles  
Independent Mail Lines – Via Nicaragua

Carried on Nicaragua route via Nicaragua Steamship Co. (NSC) *Cortez*



Endorsed “pr Cortez” prepaid 6¢ rate to New York, departing SF on February 1, 1854. “Via Nicaragua Ahead of the Mails” blue boxed marking applied at SF. Letter entered the mails at New York with “New York SHIP FEB 24” CDS.

Noisy Carriers Publishing Hall handstamp on Nicaragua route cover



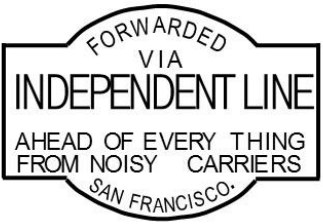
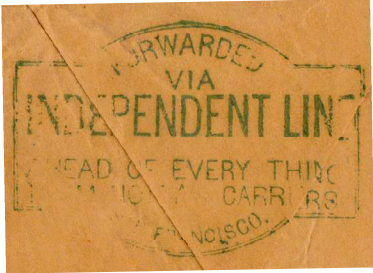
Blue framed “Forwarded Via Nicaragua, from Noisy Carriers Publishing Hall, San Francisco” handstamp on half-paid (Due 6) double rate letter. Cancelled in New York with two line STEAM SHIP marking. January 1854 receipt docketing, carried on NSC *Cortez* departing SF on December 16, 1853.

2. Jul 1851 – Mar 1855

a. Cross-Country

6¢ Prepaid / 10¢ Unpaid – Over 3000 Miles  
Independent Mail Lines – Via Nicaragua

Noisy Carriers Independent Line handstamp on reverse, “Via Nicaragua” cover directive



Slogan handstamp on cover reverse “Forwarded via Independent Line, Ahead of Every Thing” (applied by Noisy Carriers, SF)

Endorsed “Via Nicaragua, Stmr Yankee Blade” prepaid 6¢ rate to Connecticut. Vanderbilt Independent Line *Yankee Blade* departed SF June 1, 1854, letter entered mails in New York June 24. By this time Vanderbilt steamers went via Panama, sender endorsement reflecting original route before NSC take-over in 1853. Many people continued to associate Vanderbilt steamers with the Nicaragua route. The *Yankee Blade* was lost at sea two months later on October 1, 1854 near Pt. Conception.

Manuscript “Via Nicaragua” directive on March 1854 cover to Maine



Endorsed “via Nicaragua” prepaid 6¢ rate to Maine which entered the mails at New York March 14 (1854). Carried on NSC *Brother Jonathan* departing SF on February 15, 1854.

2. Jul 1851 – Mar 1855

a. Cross-Country

6¢ Prepaid / 10¢ Unpaid – Over 3000 Miles  
Independent Mail Lines – Via Panama

In early 1853 Cornelius Vanderbilt lost his Nicaragua shipping business when he lost stock control of the company while vacationing in Europe. It became the Nicaragua Steamship Company (NSC). As a result, Vanderbilt began the new competing Independent Opposition Line from SF to Panama (not Nicaragua) in September 1853.

**Finest reported strike of scarce Vanderbilt “Independent Line” handstamp, final voyage of line**



“Independent Line, Ahead of the Mails, Uncle Sam and North Star, Via Panama.” oval handstamp, carried by *Uncle Sam* of the Vanderbilt Independent Opposition Line departing SF September 1, 1854 for connection to the *North Star* at Panama. However, the *North Star* was sold to the US Mail Steamship Co. on September 5 (four days after this departed SF) so mails were taken to Nicaragua and carried via Vanderbilt Independent Line steamer *Prometheus* to New York where letter entered mails September 27.

a. Cross-Country

G.B. Post & Co. was a prominent forwarding agent in SF in the mid-1850's and business partner for the Regular Dispatch Line (RDL) which operated a fleet of vessels between SF and Hawaii until he sold his interest in mid-1856.

Only discovered example of G.B. Post's "VIA PANAMA." directive, used from SF

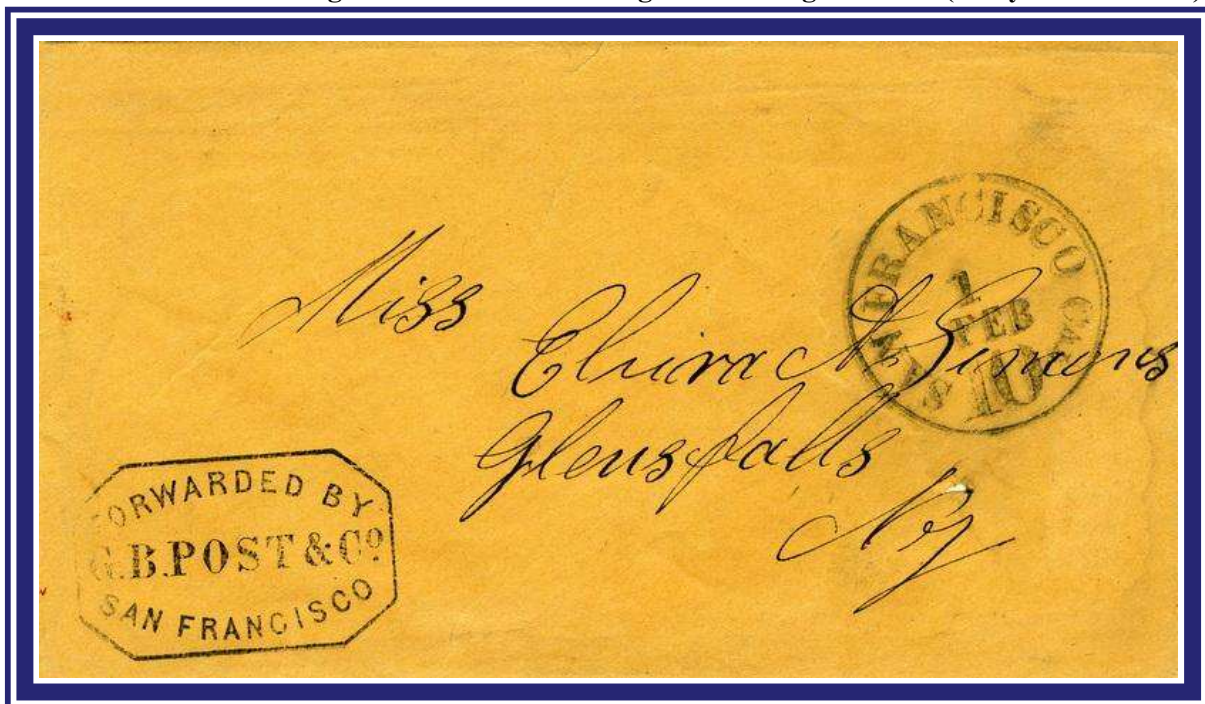


Printed cachet on reverse  
"G.B. Post & Co.,  
Commission Merchants,  
San Francisco"



Manuscript "U.S. Mail Packet Sonora Sept 30, 1854" applied by route agent on prepaid 6¢ cover to Massachusetts. Carried on PMSS *Sonora* September 30, 1854 from SF.

G.B. Post octagonal forwarder marking on incoming SF cover (likely from Hawaii)



"Forwarded By, G.B. Post & Co., San Francisco" octagonal handstamp on unpaid 10¢ cross country cover to New York. February 1 (c1854) SF CDS with integral "10" rate.

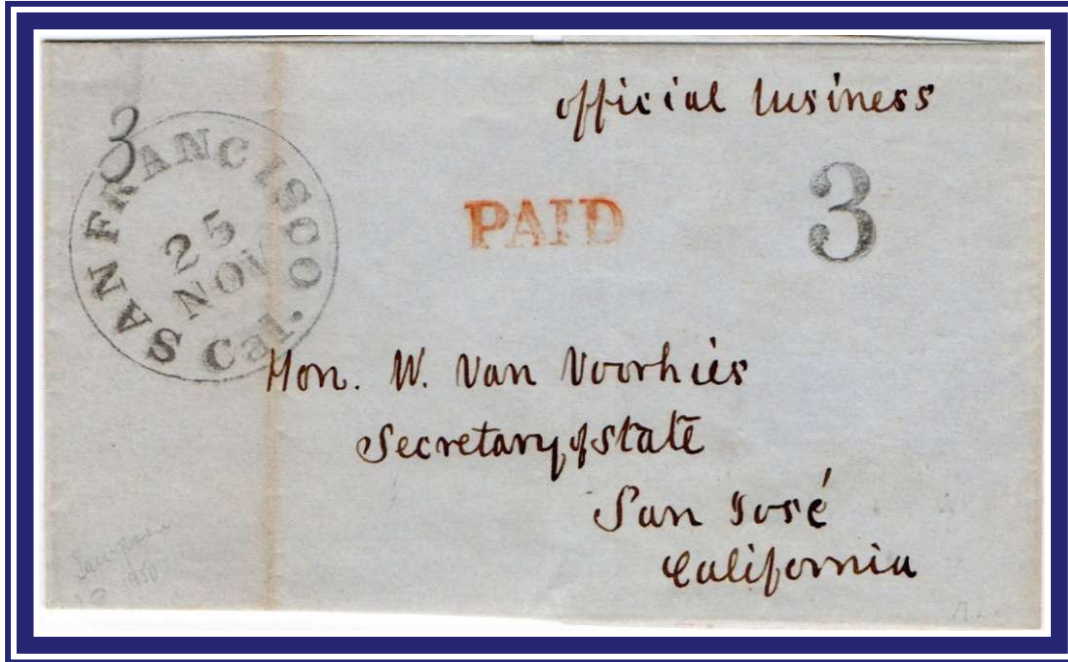
## 2. Jul 1851 – Mar 1855

3¢ Prepaid / 5¢ Unpaid – Under 3000 Miles

### b. West Coast Local

Effective July 1 1851 the US reduced the rate for under 3,000 miles to 3¢ per ½ oz. if prepaid and 5¢ if unpaid.

Red PAID likely applied after 3 due recognizing free franking for Secretary of State



Local use from SF November 25 (1851) to San Jose, California. Paid 3¢ rate. Uncommon red/black two-color usage for the rate/CDS and PAID markings.

3¢ local rate prepaid by strip of three of 1-cent 1851 Issue



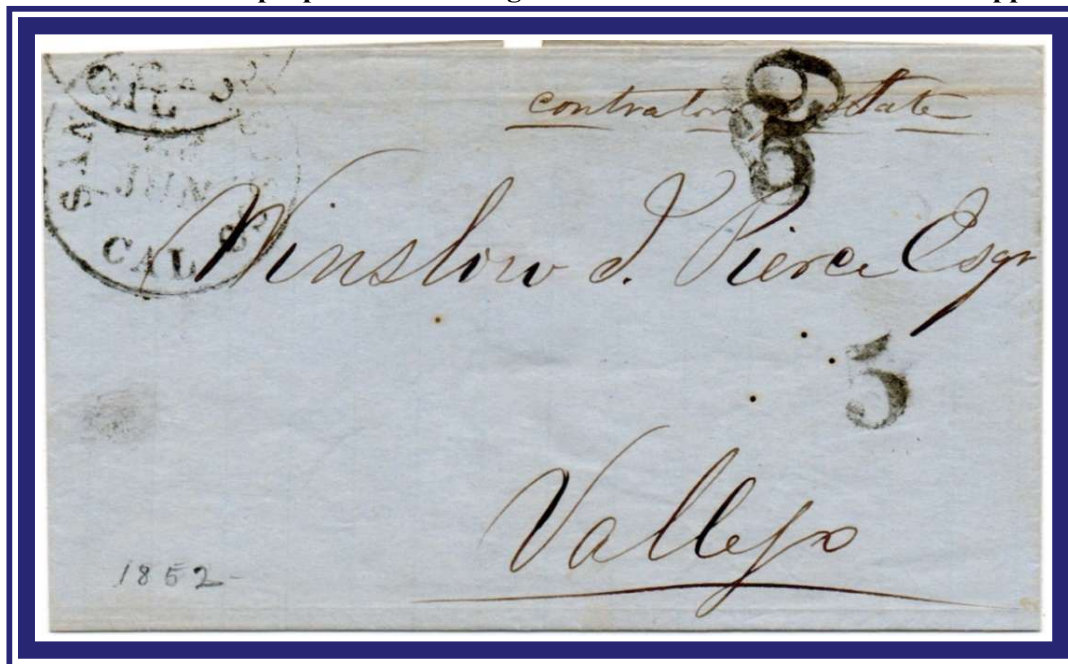
February 25 (c.1853) SF CDS to Nevada City, CA prepaid by 1851 strip of three 1-cent issue.

2. Jul 1851 – Mar 1855

3¢ Prepaid / 5¢ Unpaid – Under 3000 Miles

b. West Coast Local

Improper rate markings obliterated and correct 5 due rate applied



Local usage from SF to Vallejo, CA, June 22 (1852), unpaid 5¢ rate. Incorrectly struck with a “3” handstamp for the prepaid rate, rate obliterated by “5” and “6” handstamps, “5” due rate applied.

US Mail carriage to Ophir PO, picked up by Wells Fargo Express for delivery to addressee



Feb 24 (c.1854) unpaid 5¢ under 3000 mile rate per SF “5” integral rate CDS. Picked up by Wells Fargo at Ophir (closest PO to addressee) for delivery to Gold Hill.

## 2. Jul 1851 – Mar 1855

### c. SF City Local

1¢ – Drop

Effective July 1 1851 the US reduced the drop rate for local pickup at the post office to 1¢.

The SFPO “1” drop rate marking is not common



August 21 (1852) local SFPO drop use, unpaid 1¢ due marking, reflecting new drop rate as of July 1851. Addressed to J. L. Folsom for whom the town of Folsom, CA (near Sacramento) is named after.

## 2. Jul 1851 – Mar 1855

5¢ Unsealed Circular (Over 3500 Miles)

### d. Special Rates, Markings

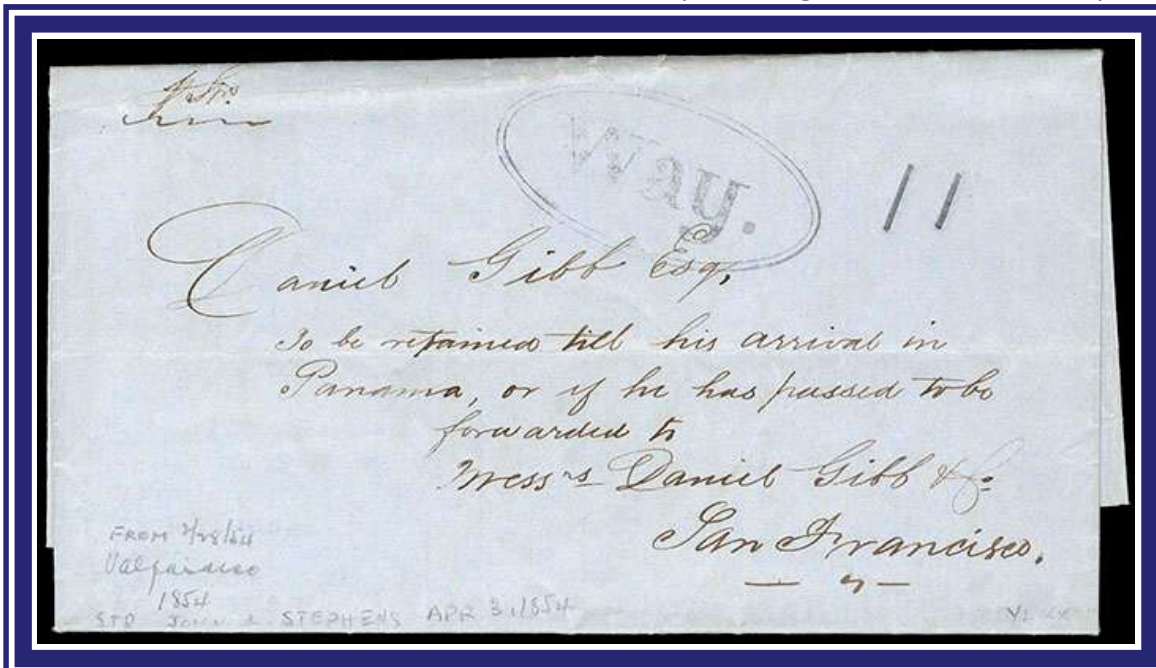
1¢ Additional – Way Mail

Scarce 5¢ circular rate (in excess of 3500 miles) from SF, five examples reported



September 1 (1852) SF blue CDS with matching PAID and “5” handstamps on printed circular to Massachusetts. The last month of this 5¢ circular rate (in excess of 3500 miles) as it changed to 1¢ (up to 3 ounces) October 1852. Blue ink was used at the SFPO from August 1852 until January 1853.

Uncommon oval Way marking with additional 1¢ way fee



February 28, 1854 Valparaiso, Chile dateline on letter connecting at Panama and carried by PMSS John L. Stephens, arriving SF April 2. Entered mails with oval Way marking and rated 11 cents due, the 10¢ steamship rate plus 1¢ way fee.

Carried entirely out of the mails by express company, no government postage collected



Forwarded by Freeman & Co., Express, San Francisco, blue oval handstamp on August 18, 1851 letter to Sacramento, carried during the initial phase of operations of this company.

Combination carriage outside of the mails by two express companies, Adams and Wells Fargo



From Adams & Co., Express, San Francisco, blue oval handstamp on February 1, 1853 letter to Sacramento. Letter forwarded back to SF by Wells Fargo & Co. the entire round trip carried outside the mails by two different express companies.

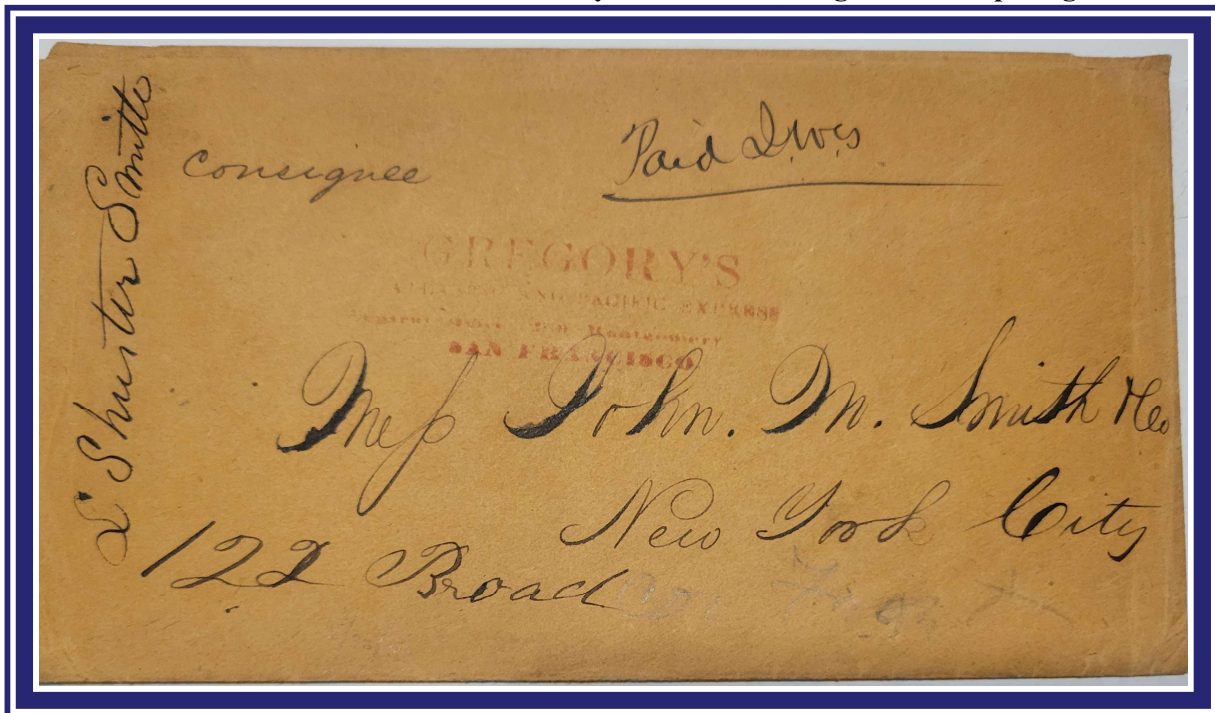
Gregory's Express was founded early in the gold rush in April 1850 and lasted until November 1852 when it sold out to Wells Fargo & Co.

Carried entirely out of the mails by Gregory's, no government postage collected



From Gregory's Express., San Francisco, blue three-line handstamp and matching "Not Paid" oval handstamp on March 8, 1852 letter to Sacramento, carried outside the mails.

Carried outside the mails all the way to New York, no government postage collected



Red small font Gregory's Atlantic and Pacific Express, Montgomery St, San Francisco four-line handstamp. Circa 1852, carried entirely outside of the mails to New York.

Rare mail route via England and St. Thomas to Panama, charged incoming contract ship 20¢ rate



From Bordeaux, France May 21, 1853, via England, St. Thomas and Chagres to Panama. Transferred to PMSC for final leg to SF where 20¢ due marking was applied. Rate was fully paid through to California, but mail bags were opened in Panama to separate out local mail and arrived in SF in unlocked bags, letter charged incoming contract rate.

Double rate incoming contract ship 40¢ charged for final Panama-SF leg, part-paid from France



From Paris, France February 28, 1855, via England and Panama to SF. Letter not paid to destination so marked "P.P." (partial payment) in France. SF applied 40¢ due marking for the Panama-SF leg, a double rate letter.

2. Jul 1851 – Mar 1855  
e. Inbound - Foreign Origin

5¢ Domestic + 2¢ Ship Fee – Private Ship Mail,  
Outside Port of Entry (Under 3000 Miles)

Scarce 7¢ private ship rate as most mail was directed to SF (6¢) or to the East (12¢)



July 21 (circa 1851) SF CDS on cover addressed to Sacramento, forwarded to Mormon Island (gold mines). Due 12¢ total for under 3000 miles unpaid 5¢ rate, 2¢ ship fee and 5¢ forwarding fee.

Rare 7 due handstamp, letter addressed outside of SF port, less than 3000 miles



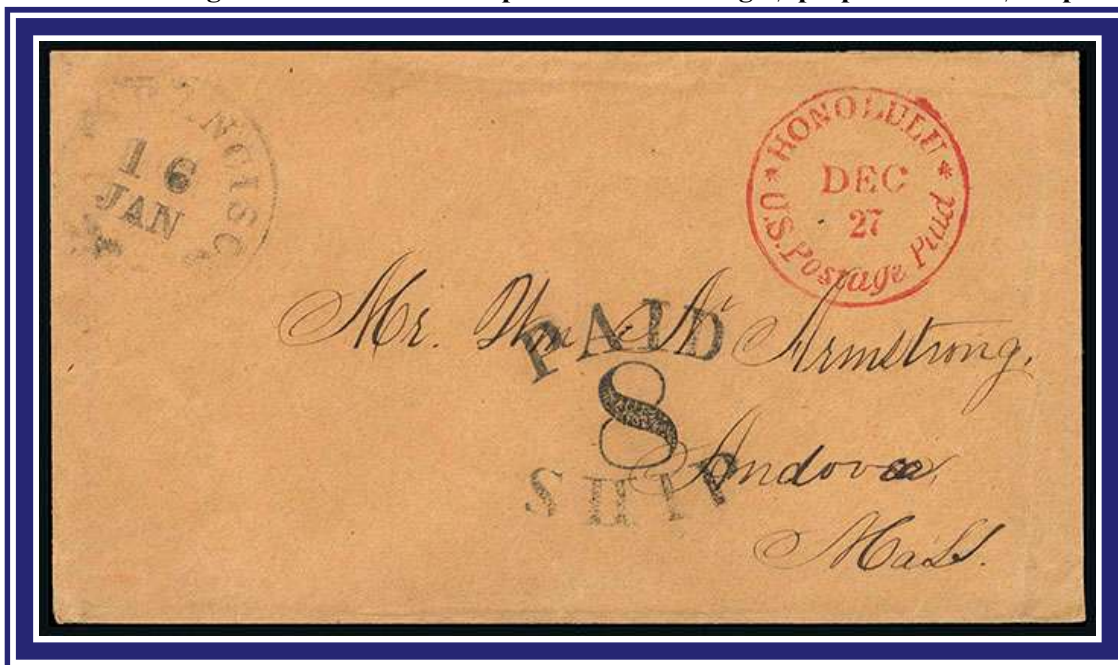
June 15, 1853 CDS from Sofala, NSW, franked with 5d postage for ship letter rate from a country town (to Sydney). Carried by private ship *Speed* (76 days from Sydney) to SF where September 14 CDS, SHIP and "7" markings applied. Delivered to Mokolunne Hill by stagecoach. Due 7¢ for under 3000 miles unpaid 5¢ rate plus 2¢ ship fee.

2. Jul 1851 – Mar 1855

e. Inbound - Foreign Origin

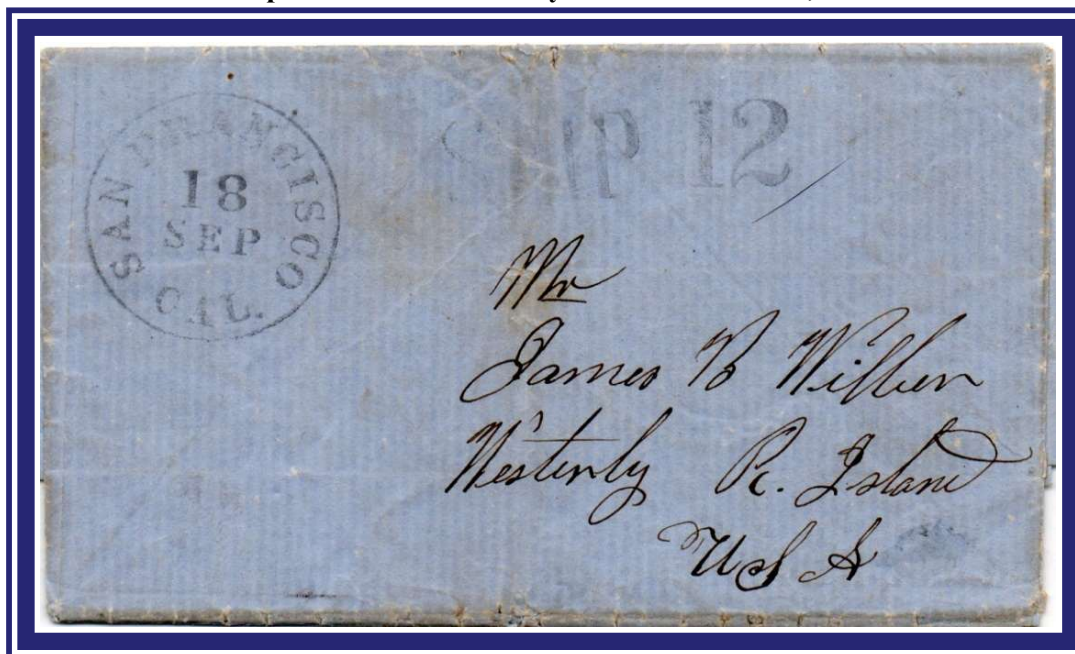
6¢ Prepaid / 10¢ Unpaid Domestic + 2¢ Ship Fee –  
Private Ship Mail, Outside Port of Entry (Over 3000 Miles)

SF “rocking horse” PAID SHIP 8 postmark reflecting 6¢ prepaid rate + 2¢ ship fee



January 16 (1854) SF CDS, incoming from Honolulu, Hawaii carried by brig *Zoe* with SF PAID SHIP 8 marking. Prepaid 6¢ transcontinental rate to Massachusetts plus 2¢ ship fee. US postage could be prepaid in Hawaii, avoiding the higher 10¢ unpaid rate.

Private ship letter carried directly from Siberia to SF, sent to Rhode Island



Dated July 30, 1854 “at Shanter Bay in the Oshotsk Sea” (Siberia) from a whaling boat captain. Letter transferred to the Schooner *Eudorus* and carried direct to SF. Entered the mails in SF September 18 (1854) where SHIP and 12 were applied. 10¢ rate (over 3000 miles to Rhode Island) plus 2¢ ship fee.

The 1825 US Act set the private ship letter rate to the port of entry at 6¢ per ½ oz. and for destinations outside the port of entry, 2¢ (Ship Fee) plus ordinary domestic rates of postage. This rate remained in effect until amended by the Act of 1861. Letters were marked with “SHIP” to identify the additional postage due.

One of fifteen reported STEAMER WINFIELD SCOTT purser markings



Endorsed “via Panama pr Vapor Winfield Scott” with red purser marking “STEAMER WINFIELD SCOTT” on incoming SF letter postmarked April 29 (1852). 6¢ due, private ship rate to port of entry. Maiden voyage of NY & SF Steamship Co. *Winfield Scott* to SF.

## 2. Jul 1851 – Mar 1855

### f. Outbound - Foreign Destination

21¢ per ½ ounce + 5¢ West Coast Surcharge (French Mail)  
– to France

24¢ per ½ ounce + 5¢ West Coast Surcharge (British Packet)  
– to Great Britain

Only five recorded examples of this 22¢ rate error to France



July 15 (1851) SF CDS to Le Havre, France with “PAID” and “22” handstamps. The SFPO incorrectly calculated the July 1851 rate change as 6¢ prepaid cross-country plus 16¢ transatlantic. 22¢ handstamp created for unauthorized rate and used July/August 1851 before correcting to 26¢ rate.

Only three recorded examples of this 25¢ rate error to Great Britain



August 1 (1851) SF CDS to England with “PAID” and “25” handstamps, “19” credit to GB and September 22 arrival CDS. The SFPO incorrectly calculated the July 1851 rate change as 6¢ prepaid cross-country plus 19¢ transatlantic. 25¢ handstamp created for unauthorized rate, used July/August before correcting to 29¢.

2. Jul 1851 – Mar 1855  
f. Outbound - Foreign Destination

21¢ per ½ ounce + 5¢ West Coast Surcharge (French Mail)  
– to France

24¢ per ½ ounce + 5¢ West Coast Surcharge (British Packet)  
– to Great Britain

Only four discovered examples of this style PAID 26 marking



July 1 (1853) SF CDS to Bordeaux, France. Prepaid 26¢ rate via American Packet from New York. This crude style “PAID 26” marking was used for only 3 weeks in the Summer of 1853.

Only reported example of this 29¢ rate marking in blue



June 8, 1852 dated letter from Tahiti to England, sent privately to SF agent where 29¢ rate was paid and blue September 16 (1852) CDS, “PAID” and large “29” rate handstamps were applied at SFPO. New York red “3” credit to GB and October 28 arrival CDS. Scarce origin and routing via SF to England.

### 3. Apr 1855 – Jun 1863

10¢ Prepaid – Over 3000 Miles (to Feb 1861)

#### a. Cross-Country

Effective April 1 1855 the US set the rate for over 3,000 miles at 10¢ per ½ oz. and prepayment was mandatory. This was modified in Feb 1861 using the Rocky Mountains as the distance discriminator, with no change in rates.

Strip of four 1¢ 1851 Issue and 6¢ postal stationary used to make up cross-country postage



June 16 (1855) SF CDS, prepaid 10¢ cross-country rate to New York. The prepaid rate along with 16<sup>th</sup> sailing date confirms 1855 as the year, as steamer departure dates changed to the 5<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> soon after.

Plate II orange-brown stamps produced in July 1851, used four years after printing



June 16 (1855) SF CDS, prepaid 10¢ transcontinental rate to South Carolina via strip of three 3¢ and single 1¢ 1851 Issue. Orange-brown stamps privately carried to SF and used nearly four years after printing.

Penny Post local-issued 5¢ adhesive on cover is rare, 6 others known



June 30 (1855) SF CDS to NY, carried on PMSS *Sonora* via the SFPO as letter was too late to catch earlier sailing of the *Cortes* via Nicaragua. The Penny Post Co. issued their own adhesive to pay for special messenger conveyance directly to the Nicaragua steamer for New York. Local adhesive tied by ink, 10¢ stamp replaced to restore look of cover, the original stamp missing since prior to 1941 (as shown in the Knapp auction). [repaired].

The first SFPO CDS with a year date incorporated



November 5, 1855 SF CDS with integral "10 Paid" and year. Prepaid 10¢ rate to Massachusetts. This CDS was used for only a few months in late 1855.

Rare use of block of ten of the 1¢ 1851 Issue paying 10¢ cross-country rate



Cover front with address and "Due 10" marking for double weight letter, half paid by block of ten stamps.

c

Block of ten of the 1¢ 1851 Issue on cover (reverse) prepays the 10¢ transcontinental rate to Pennsylvania. February 5 (1856 or 1857) SF CDS, cover front with "Due 10" handstamp indicates a double weight letter, half paid.

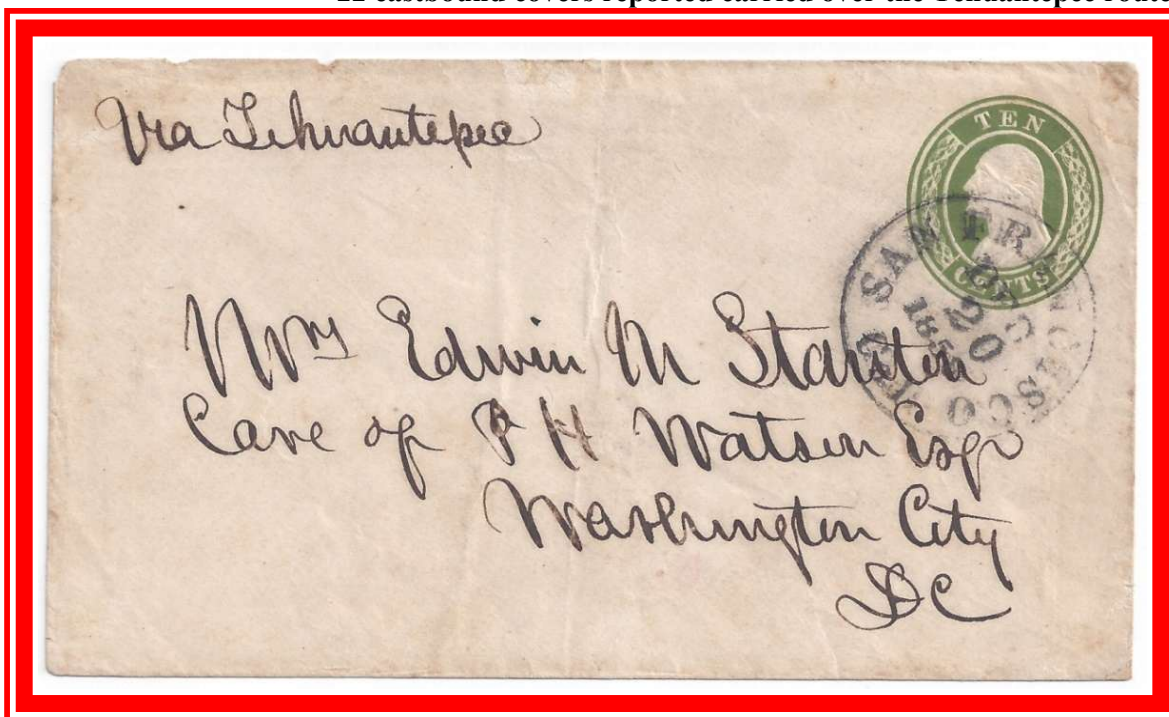
Uncommon oval handstamp of Noisy Carriers, who conveyed letter to the SFPO



December 20 (c.1856) 10¢ prepaid transcontinental rate to New York, handled by Noisy Carriers in SF.

A twice-monthly mail contract via the Isthmus of Tehuantepec was awarded to the Louisiana Tehuantepec Company and commenced service from SF on November 5, 1858. This was a faster route (to reach New Orleans) than via Panama but lasted only one year as the contract was not renewed given low revenues. PMSC steamers carried mail from SF to Acapulco for transit across the Mexican Isthmus. Letters had to be endorsed “Via Tehuantepec” for carriage over this route.

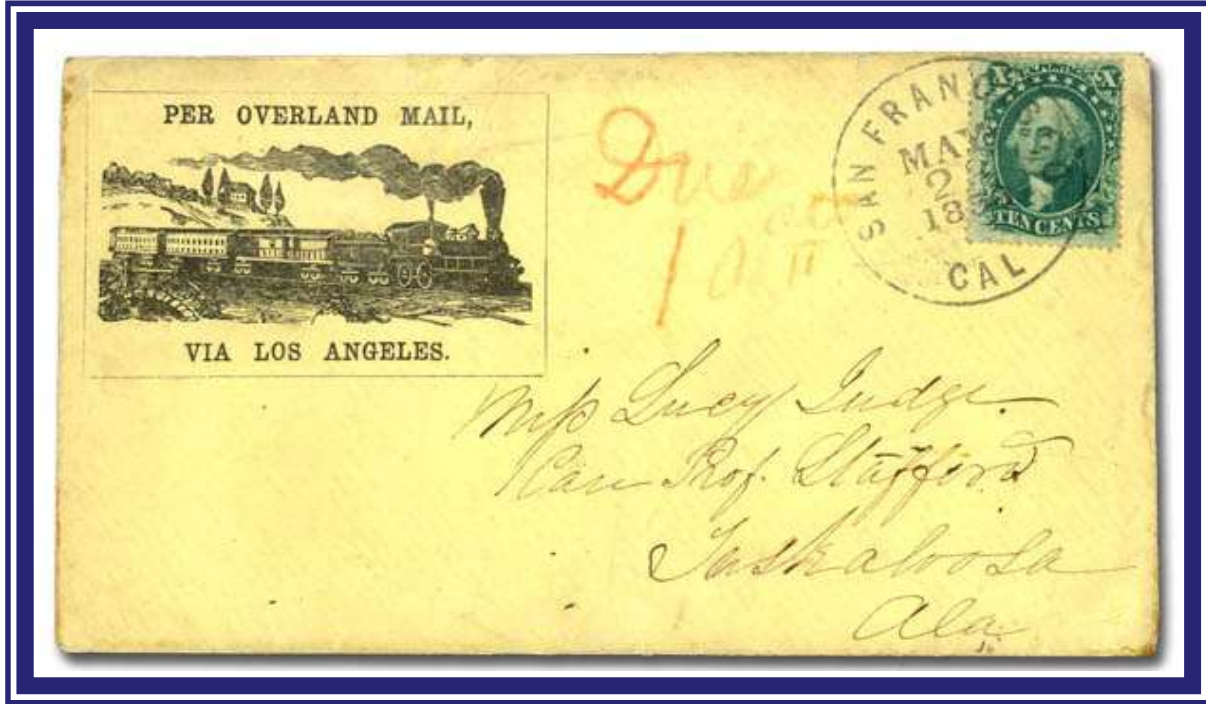
22 eastbound covers reported carried over the Tehuantepec route



Manuscript “Via Tehuantepec” endorsement on cover with December 20, 1858 SF CDS. Transcontinental postage to Washington, D.C. prepaid by 10¢ postal stationary.

Illustrated railroad design envelopes were used to direct mail overland via Los Angeles and served as propaganda to promote the transcontinental railroad more than a decade before its completion in May 1869.

“Per Overland Mail Via Los Angeles” illustrated railroad cover



May 23, 1859 SF CDS, to Alabama, 10¢ transcontinental rate prepaid by 1857 Issue, rated as double weight with “Due 10 cts” marking.

Uncommon design of overland railroad propaganda cover



October 22, 1859 SF CDS, to Maine, prepaid 10¢ transcontinental rate on “Overland Mail, Via Los Angeles” illustrated railroad propaganda cover.

3. Apr 1855 – Jun 1863

10¢ Prepaid – Over 3000 Miles (to Feb 1861)

a. Cross-Country

This OVERLAND marking was used at the SFPO to indicate a letter was received too early/late for the SF mail steamer departure (at this period departing the 5th & 20th of each month) and was being sent by overland mail instead. In these cases the SFPO determined the fastest service was via the Butterfield Southern route (departing SF each Monday and Friday).

OVERLAND marking with “short R” primarily used October 1859 to April 1860

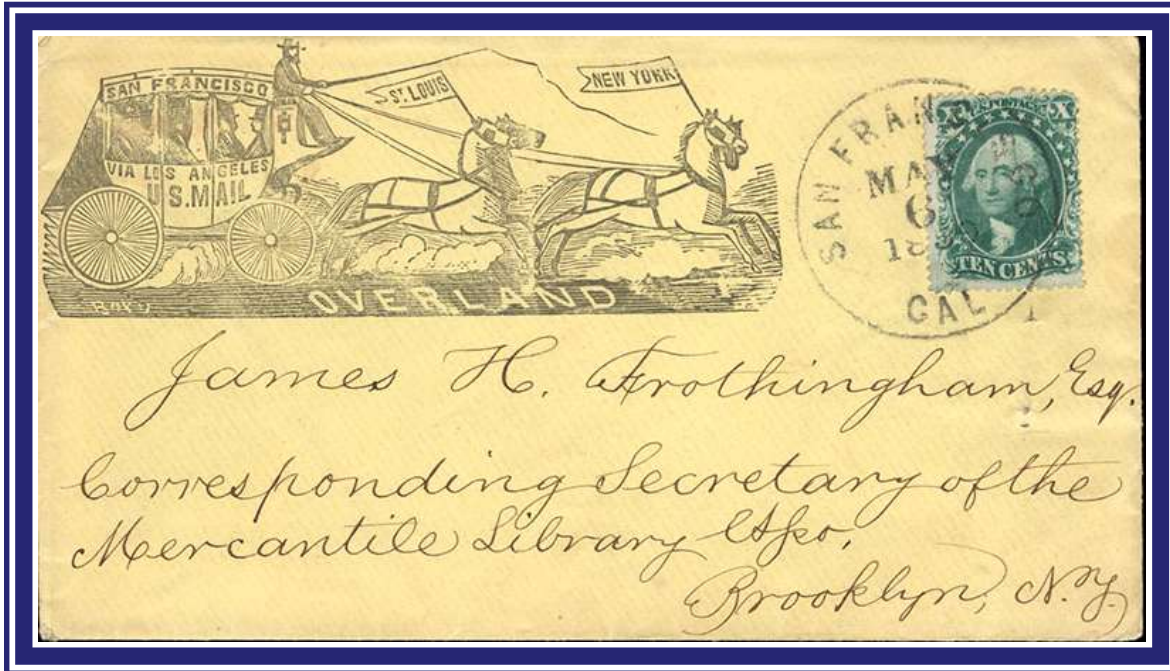


OVERLAND

December 20, 1859 SF CDS, prepaid 20¢ double rate to Massachusetts and then forwarded to New York with additional double 3¢ postage. 3¢ pair moved from original location to show the “Overland” handstamp.

Beginning in September 1858 a twice-weekly transcontinental overland mail via stagecoach commenced between St. Louis and SF via Los Angeles, known as the Southern, or Butterfield, route (named after the contractor). Illustrated stagecoach envelopes were used to direct the letter overland.

**Overland Via Los Angeles, St. Louis and New York, four-horse illustrated stagecoach cover**



May 6, 1859 SF CDS, 10¢ prepaid transcontinental rate to New York.  
Large fancy overland illustrated four-horse (with St. Louis and New York flags) stagecoach woodblock design (23 examples recorded via census).

**“Per Overland Mail Via Los Angeles” illustrated stagecoach cover**



May 1860 SF CDS, 10¢ prepaid transcontinental rate to Pennsylvania, four-horse stagecoach illustrated envelope.

The most famous of the expresses was the Pony Express service which ran from April 1860 to October 1861 encompassing four different rate periods. Initial service commenced on April 3, 1860, run by the Central Overland California & Pikes Peak Express Company (COC&PPE). In April 1861 Wells, Fargo & Co. took over private management of the route.

Fees were high but transit times were fast, taking only 10 to 15 days from SF to Saint Joseph, MO. US postal rates were 10¢ per ½ oz. for over 3,000 miles, pre-payment was required.

59 eastbound Pony Express covers known from the second rate period



Oct 13 (1860) SF blue Running Pony oval with Oct 25 St. Joseph, MO COC&PPE oval handstamp and Oct 26 St. Joseph PO CDS. Pony Express \$2.50 per ¼ ounce second rate period express fee. 10¢ US postage to NY paid via 1857 Issue.

c

Commencing July 1, 1861, the Pony Express was authorized by Congress to carry mail at the rate of \$1.00 per half ounce and stamps were issued under terms of the government mail contract by Wells, Fargo & Co. who operated the route at this time. The contract also stipulated the mandatory US postage charge of 10¢ per half ounce. When the overland telegraph was completed, the Pony Express was discontinued on October 26, 1861.

**75 eastbound Pony Express covers known from the fourth/final rate period**



July 31 (1861) SF blue Running Pony oval, \$1 postage (Placerville western terminus to St. Joseph, MO express route) paid via Wells Fargo Pony Express stamp. 10¢ US postage paid via postal stationary. Additional 10¢ fee to carry mail from SF to Placerville included in Wells Fargo PAID frank. Grid cancel of New York City. Eastbound Pony trip departed SF July 31, 1861 and arrived at St. Joseph, MO August 12.

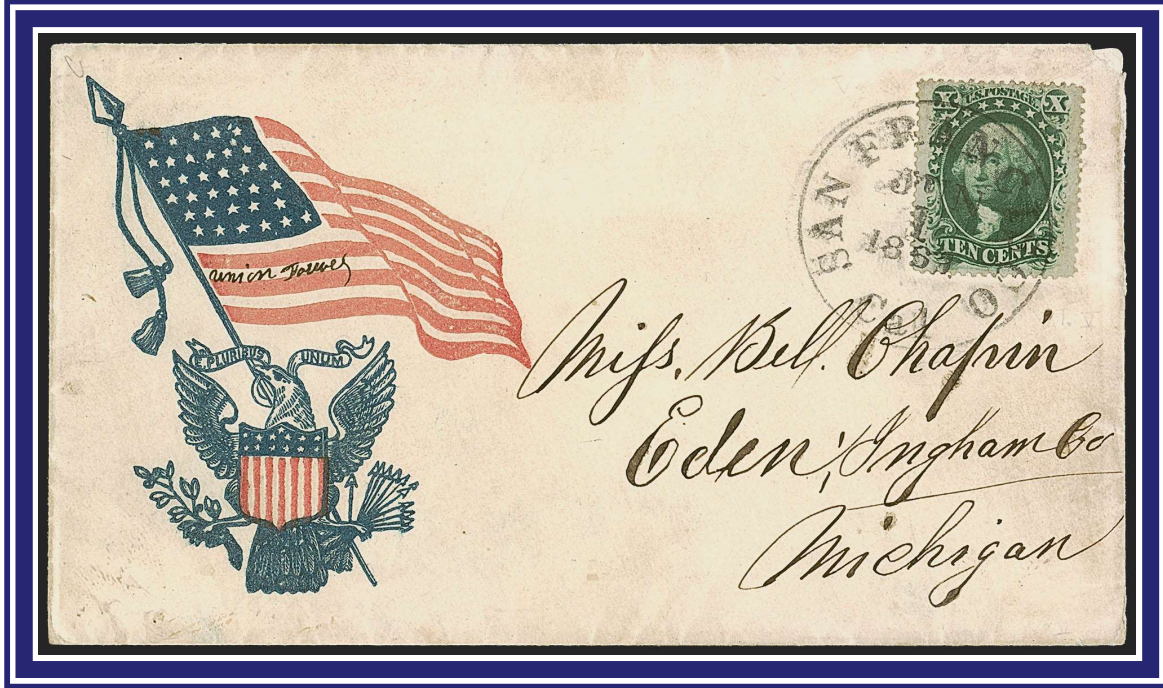
3. Apr 1855 – Jun 1863

10¢ Prepaid – East of the Rockies (from Feb 1861)

a. Cross-Country

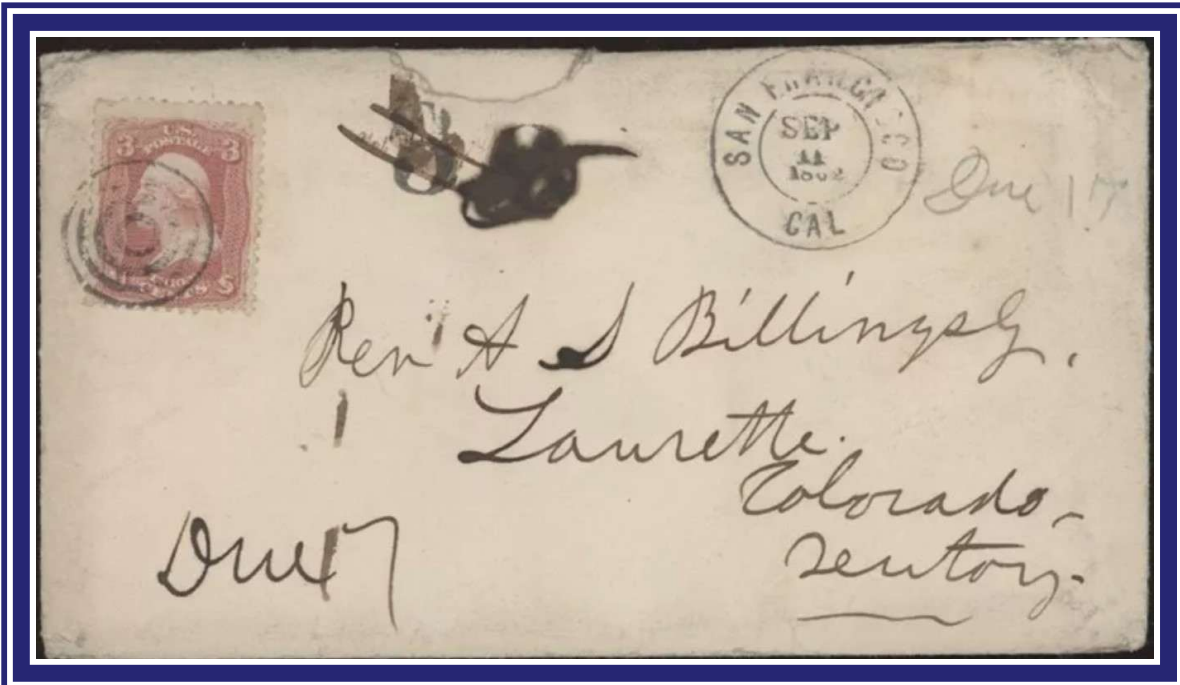
The US Postal Act of February 1861 modified the over 3000 mile rate by using the Rocky Mountains as the distance discriminator. Postage (per ½ ounce) was 10¢ if delivered east of the Rockies. While this did not affect the existing cost to the East Coast, it did increase the rate to towns east of the Rockies but less than 3000 miles from SF.

Scarce patriotic cover used from SF paying the 10¢ transcontinental rate



June 1, 1861 SF CDS, to Michigan. 10¢ rate prepaid by 1857 Issue. Civil War patriotic Eagle/Flag design.

New distance discriminator of Rocky Mountains increased this postage to 10¢ (originally 3¢)



September 11, 1862 SF CDS to Laurette, Colorado Territory. This mining town was JUST EAST of the Rocky Mountains. Franked with one 3¢ 1861 Issue stamp this was once the correct postage, prior to the distance discriminator change in February 1861 using the Rockies as the transition point. Once a 3¢ rate, now short paid and marked "Due 7" for this new distance 10¢ rate.

3. Apr 1855 – Jun 1863

a. Cross-Country

10¢ Prepaid – East of the Rockies (from Feb 1861)

Express Company Carriage

Freeman & Co. Express envelope used for cross-country delivery to NY via SFPO



February 11, 1861 SF CDS to New York. 1¢ horizontal strip of four along with 3¢ 1857 Issue stamps and postal stationary make up the 10¢ cross country rate. 3¢ stamp relocated to show Freeman & Co. printed frank, this used after they had sold out to Wells Fargo.

Transcontinental carriage, SF to NY, by Wells, Fargo & Co., Express



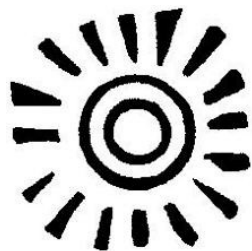
Express carriage from SF to the New York and deposited in the PO for delivery to Massachusetts. 10¢ postal stationary pays cross-country rate (printed frank pays express fee). Wells Fargo January 21 CDS, 1862 or 1863 given rate and envelope style. Steamer departures changed to the 21<sup>st</sup> in July 1860, carried by PMSS but not via SFPO mail.

In January 1862 the SFPO began using a fancy cogwheel design to cancel stamps as they entered the mails. This was not the only cancellation device in use by the SFPO at the time. However, it was the only fancy style and it is unique to this PO. During its lifetime three different types of the cogwheel cancel were used (Types 1, 2 & 3). The main period of use was 1862-1867, however the Type 2 design had sporadic usage after this in the 1880's, but it is not understood why this "re-surfaced" after a long hiatus.

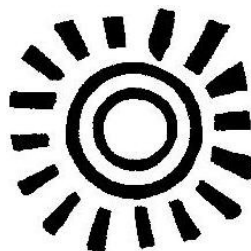
#### Early use of the SF cogwheel (Type 2) to cancel stamps



February 26, 1862 SF CDS, 10¢ 1861 Issue stamps cancelled by Type 2 cogwheel (the first two months of cancel use). Double rate 20¢ cover to Massachusetts.



*Cogwheels Enlarged to Show Detail*



#### Type 1 Cogwheel:

9-9.5 mm outer circle  
5-5.5 mm inner circle  
16 cogs, many with pointy-tips  
(wedge-shaped)  
Separate from date stamp device

#### Type 2 Cogwheel:

10-10.5 mm outer circle  
5.5-6 mm inner circle  
16 cogs, most are blunt/squared  
(not wedge-shaped)  
Separate from date stamp device

#### Type 3 Cogwheel:

12-12.5 mm outer circle  
7 mm inner circle  
14 cogs, all are blunt/squared  
Integral part of a duplex date  
stamp device

3. Apr 1855 – Jun 1863

10¢ Prepaid – East of the Rockies (from Feb 1861)

a. Cross-Country

All-over illustrated SF Russ House cover design



October 1, 1862 SF CDS to Ohio. Unpaid and marked 10¢ due for cross-country rate.

Attempted use of demonetized 1857 Issue stamp to pay postage



December 15, 1862 SF CDS to New Jersey. Rated "10" due as demonetized stamp was not accepted. The 1857 issue was no longer valid after January 1862 at the SFPO.

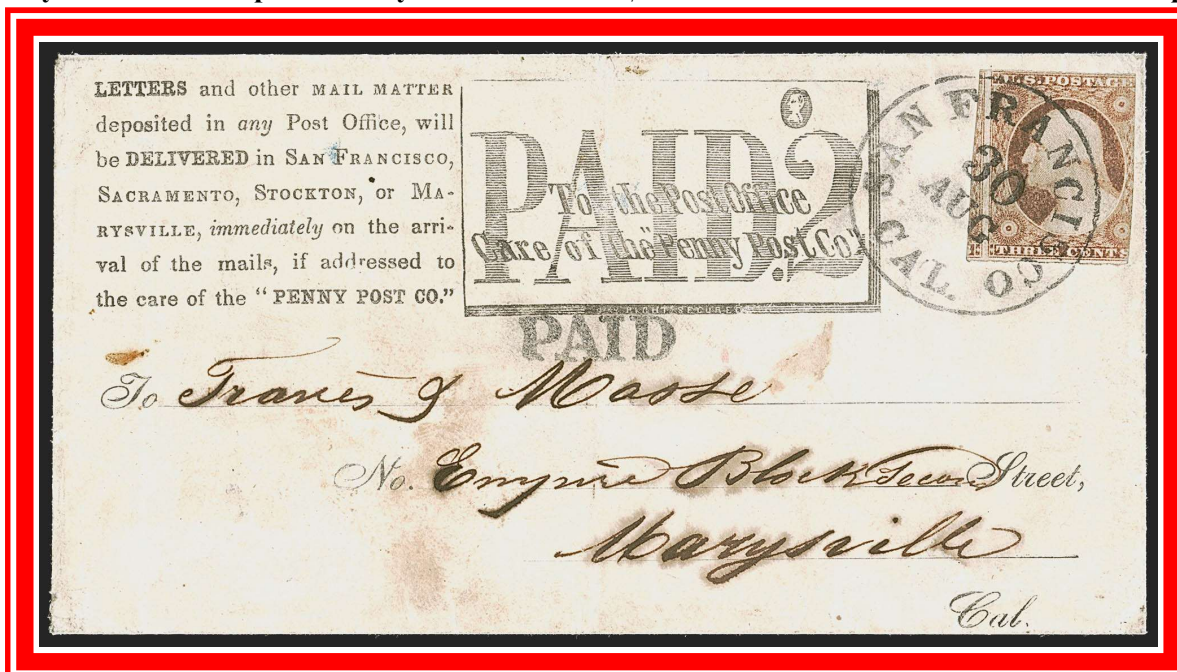
### 3. Apr 1855 – Jun 1863

3¢ Prepaid – Under 3000 Miles (to Feb 1861)

#### b. West Coast Local

The Penny Post Company was a SF local post which offered mail pickup/delivery services (to city recipients, or to the PO) for various fees, although the basic task of transporting the mail between cities was still performed by the PO. The Penny Post Company was opposed by the SFPO and only operated from June 1855 to July 1856.

Only recorded example of Penny Post Co. PAID 2¢ frank with DETAINED SFPO handstamp



August 30 (1855), SF CDS to nearby Marysville. 3¢ 1857 Issue used to pay under 3000 miles local rate. Carried by the Penny Post Company to the SFPO for 2¢ (per envelope franking, only 6 known with this rate). SFPO applied “DETAINED FOR POSTAGE” on reverse, either due to lack of stamp originally, or stamp was not recognized by SFPO (which had an ongoing feud with the company over operations). Reverse CDS with "3 Paid" implies payment received in cash to address the issue.



Cover reverse with “DETAINED FOR POSTAGE” handstamp and 3-PAID CDS dated August 30.

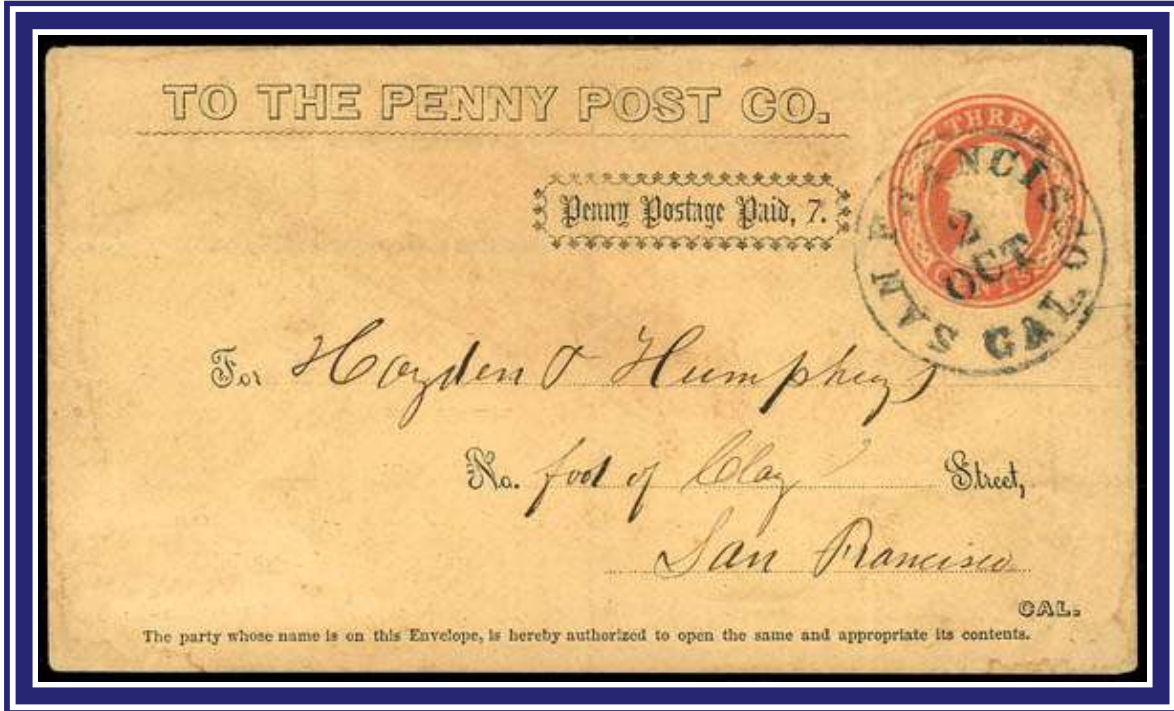
3. Apr 1855 – Jun 1863

3¢ Prepaid – Under 3000 Miles (to Feb 1861)

b. West Coast Local

The Penny Post Company “Paid 7” franked envelopes paid the service for delivery to the local PO as well as PO pickup at the destination and delivery to the recipient by company messenger.

**Penny Post Co. 7¢ frank paid service for delivery to PO and from destination PO to recipient**

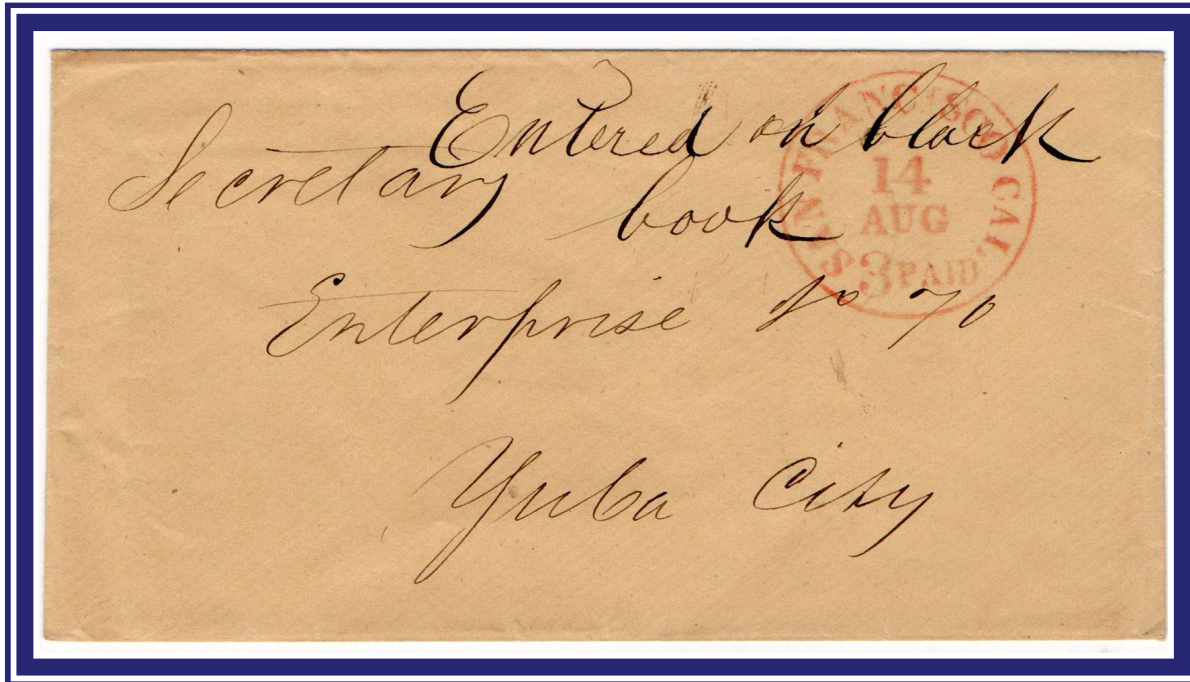


3¢ postal stationary pays the under 3000 mile postage rate, sent to the SFPO by the Penny Post Company. Postmarked October 2 (1855) by the SFPO, however cover originated outside SF based on the “Paid 7” Penny Post rate, likely from Sacramento, but not marked until arrival in SF. Carried by the Penny Post to the local PO for the trip to SF, and delivered from the SFPO to addressee for the 7¢ total fee.

**Approximately 125 Penny Post covers are reported**

Effective April 1 1855 the US retained the rate for under 3,000 miles of 3¢ per ½ oz. however prepayment was mandatory.

New “3 PAID” SFPO CDS created for the 1855 mandatory prepaid rate (under 3000 miles)



August 14 (1855) SF CDS to Yuba City, CA. Integral rate CDS indicates prepaid 3¢ local rate.

Prepaid 3¢ rate via strip of three of 1851 1¢ Issue



August 21 SF CDS (1856 letter date) local use to Yuba City, CA.

3. Apr 1855 – Jun 1863

b. West Coast Local

3¢ Prepaid – Under 3000 Miles (to Feb 1861)

Express Company Carriage

Fancy horse and rider printed frank (includes the express fee) for Pacific Express Co.



Carried by Pacific Express Co. from SF to Coloma, CA, November 20 CDS (circa 1855). PAID envelope frank for the express fee, 3¢ postage pays US rate as required, letter carried out of the mails.

Uncommon Wells, Fargo & Co., Express shield style handstamp



Carried by Wells, Fargo & Co., Express, SF to Sacramento, undated but circa 1855 given blue shield marking and usage prior to printed frank envelopes. Blue oval PAID express fee, 3¢ postage pays US rate as required, letter carried out of the mails.

3. Apr 1855 – Jun 1863

b. West Coast Local

3¢ Prepaid – Under 3000 Miles (to Feb 1861)  
Express Company Carriage

Privately carried by Pacific Express Co. out of the mails, SF to Volcano, CA



Endorsed for and carried by Pacific Express Co. from SF to Volcano, CA, April 2 CDS (circa 1856). Blue oval PAID express fee, 3¢ postage pays US rate as required, letter carried out of the mails.

Double rate letter carried by Wells, Fargo & Co. Express out of the mails



September 10 Wells, Fargo & Co. SF CDS (circa 1857), carried by them to Folsom, CA. The printed frank paid the express fee, 6¢ postage pays US double rate as required.

3. Apr 1855 – Jun 1863

b. West Coast Local

3¢ Prepaid – West of the Rockies (from Feb 1861)

The US Postal Act of February 1861 modified the under 3000 mile rate by using the Rocky Mountains as the distance discriminator. Postage (per ½ ounce) was 3¢ if delivered west of the Rockies.

Prepaid 3¢ rate via 1861 1¢ Issue



October 21, 1861 SF CDS to Red Bluff, CA, local rate paid by pair and single US 1¢ 1861 Issue.

Civil War patriotic designs are not commonly used within CA



December 30, 1861 SF CDS to Stockton. 3¢ local rate paid by US 1861 Issue, on Union patriotic cover.

3. Apr 1855 – Jun 1863

b. West Coast Local

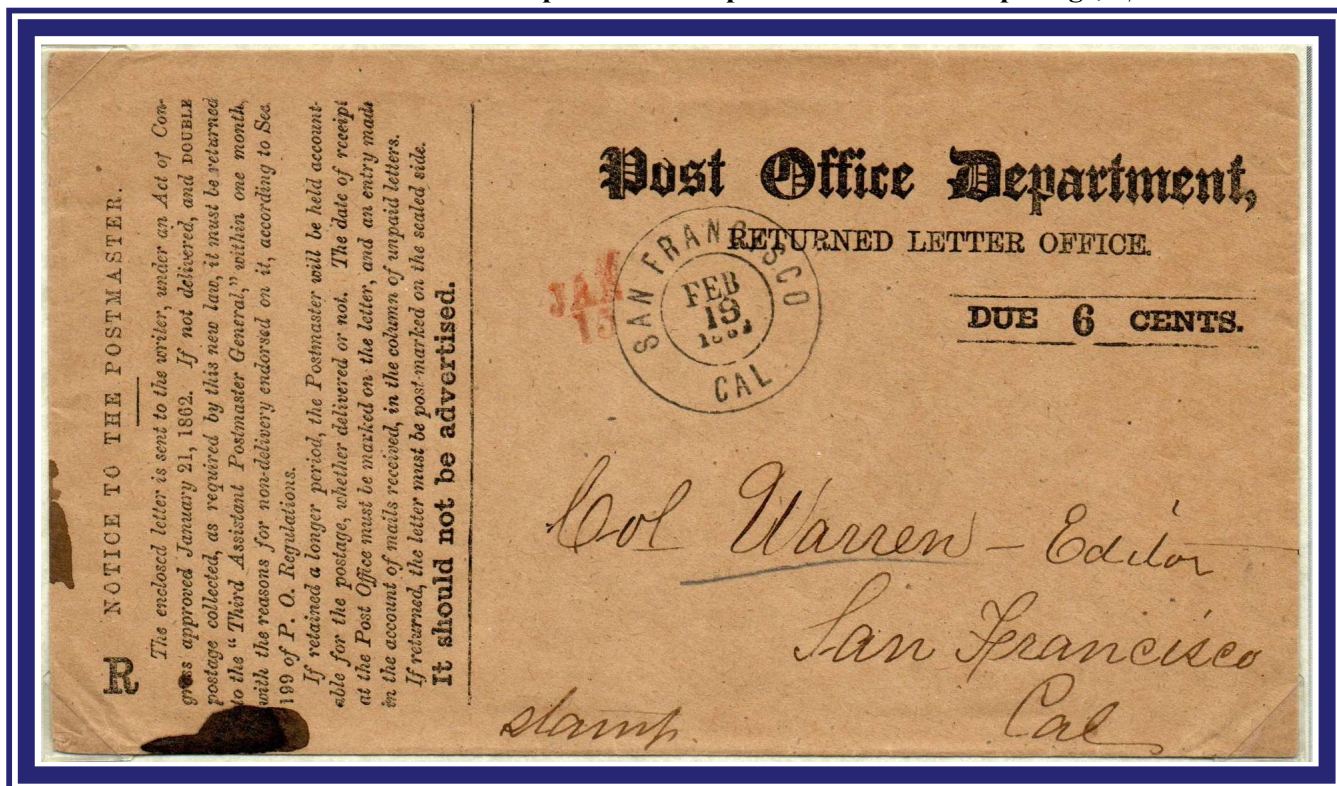
3¢ Prepaid – West of the Rockies (from Feb 1861)

Triple wight letter short paid and rated 6¢ additional due



November 2, 1861 SF CDS to San Jose, CA. Part-paid by 3¢ postal stationary, marked 6¢ due.

Letter returned via POD imprinted envelope due to insufficient postage, 6¢ additional due



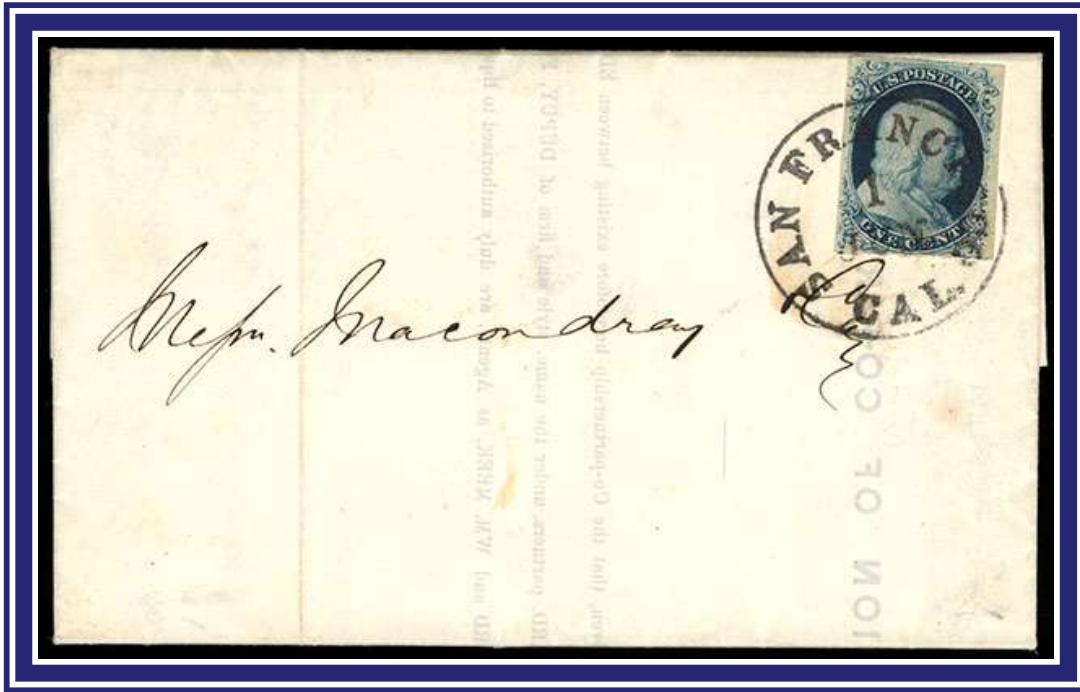
February 19, 1863 SF CDS on POD Returned Letter Office imprint cover that was used to return original letter to sender for failure to properly prepay. Rated 6¢ due, double the 3¢ rate of missing postage, charged as a penalty per the Act of 1863.

**3. Apr 1855 – Jun 1863**

**c. SF City Local**

1¢ – Drop

Prepaid 1¢ drop rate via 1851 1¢ Issue



June 1 (1856) SF CDS, locally addressed prepaid 1¢ drop rate on printed matter notice.

Prepaid 1¢ drop rate via 1857 1¢ Issue



June 29, 1858 SF CDS, prepaid 1¢ drop rate, locally addressed to SF.

3. Apr 1855 – Jun 1863

c. SF City Local

1¢ – Drop

Unpaid 1¢ drop rate, the circular due marking is uncommon



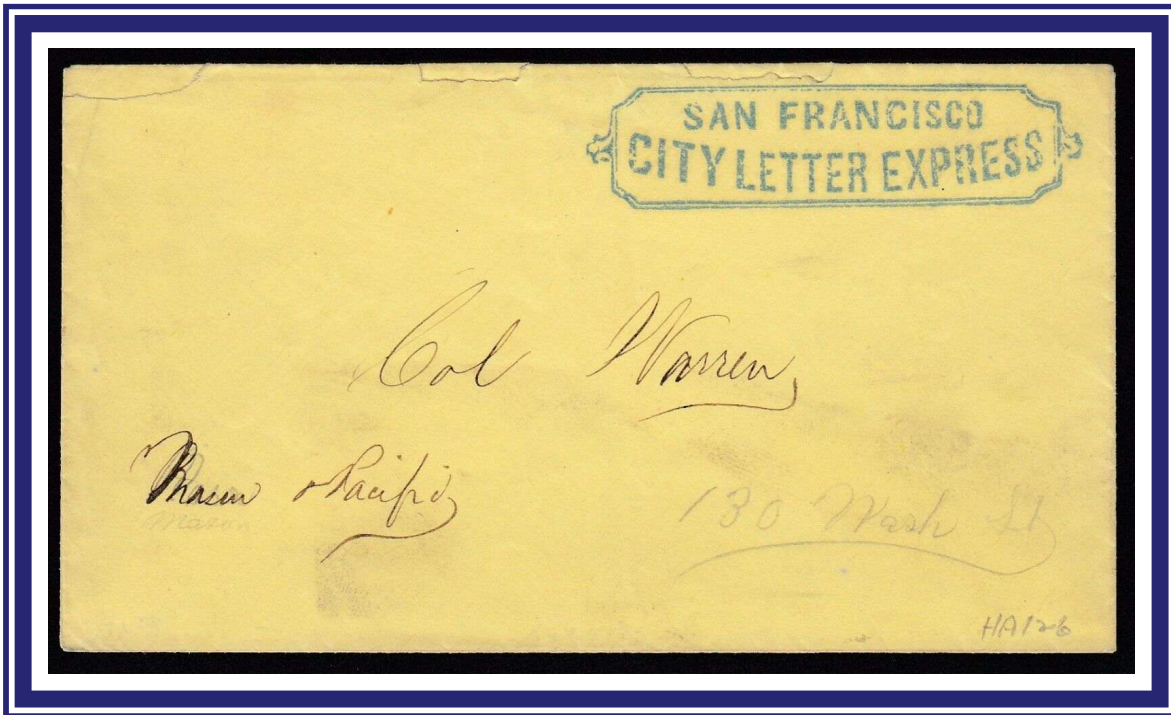
December 19, 1860 SF integral year CDS with “DROP 1 ct” in circle marking on local SFPO drop rate cover, 1¢ due.

“Tremont House” hotel illustrated advertiser on local drop rate cover



June 28, 1862 SF CDS, prepaid 1¢ local drop rate on Tremont House illustrated cover.

Fewer than ten examples of SF City Letter Express blue rectangular handstamp recorded



c

Circa 1860, local city mail carried by SF City Letter Express, ornate blue rectangular handstamp. Addressed to “Col., Warren, Mason & Pacific” This local post was operated by William E. Loomis (who later purchased Carnes City Letter Express) from 1860-61.

Scarce SF Letter Express blue oval handstamp, privately delivered letter within SF



c

Circa 1861, local city mail, SF Letter Express with blue horse & rider oval handstamp.

### 3. Apr 1855 – Jun 1863

Express Company Carriage

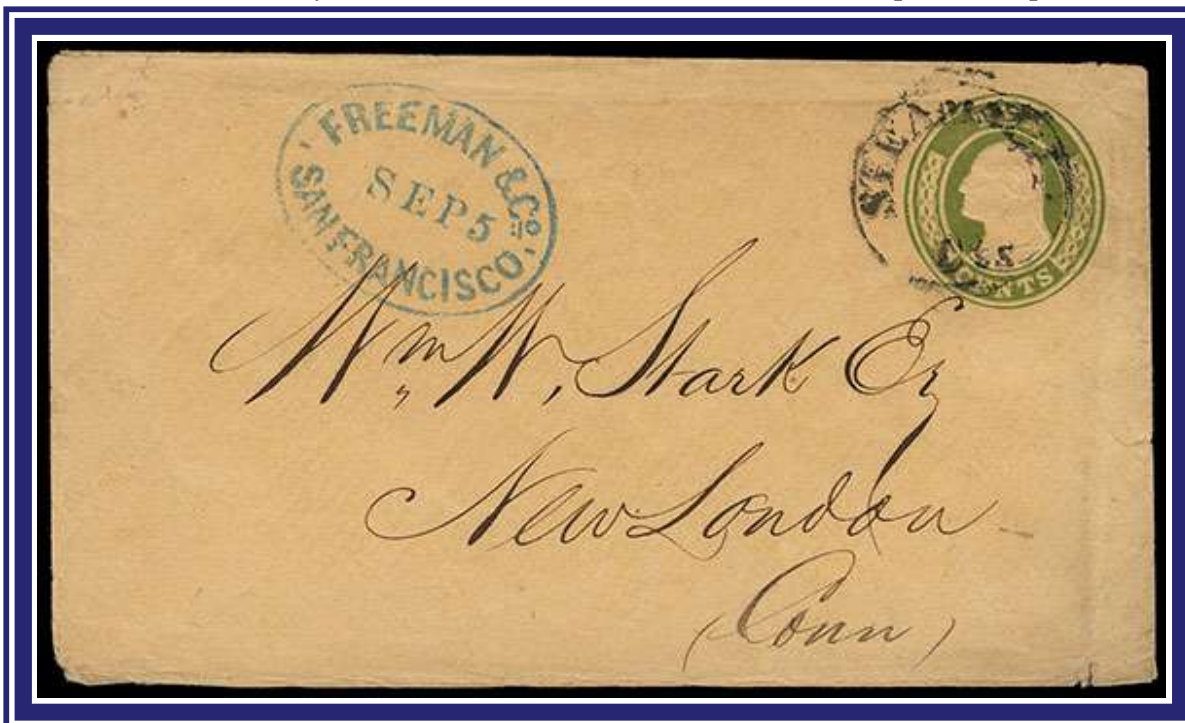
#### d. Special Rates, Markings

Carried by Freeman & Co. to NY entirely outside of the mails and privately delivered



November 19, 1855, from Freeman & Co., Express, San Francisco, red oval handstamp, prepaid and carried during the second phase of operations of this company.

Carried by Freeman & Co., entered the mails in NY as private ship mail to CT



*New York Steamship  
CDS style, rate removed  
on this cover*

Freeman & Co., San Francisco, Sep 5. blue oval handstamp on prepaid 10¢ postal stationary. NY steamship CDS, carried on a non-contract vessel and treated as private ship mail. September 5, 1855 departure of the *Sierra Nevada* via Nicaragua is the likely sailing. Final destination in CT, 3¢ under 3000 mile rate plus 2¢ ship fee, overpaid by 10¢ entire.

FREE rating in CDS on official PO business letter



November 20 (1855) SF to Washington D.C. with integral FREE CDS. Official PO business letter regarding the Volcano, CA PO and addressed to J.W. Denver, rated free.

Fancy scroll "P.O. Business Free" marking on official PO business letter



August 1, 1859 SF CDS with "P.O. Business Free" marking to San Diego, CA on official PO business. Addressed to CJ (Cave Johnson) Coutts, nephew of Cave Johnson, Postmaster General during President James Polk's term in office, and a prominent San Diego resident.

3. Apr 1855 – Jun 1863

d. Special Rates, Markings

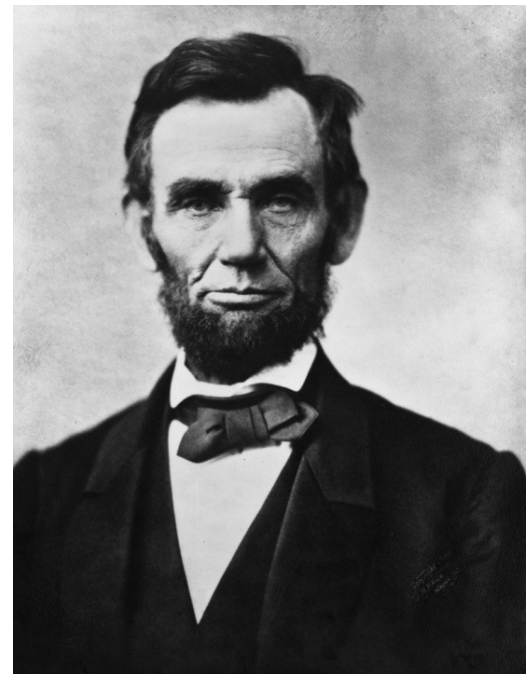
FREE (Not Requiring Payment)

Letter addressed to "His Excellency,  
Abraham Lincoln, Pres. U.S"

April 14, 1862 SF CDS to  
Washington D.C. Manuscript  
and straightline FREE  
markings. Letter regarding  
West Point Cadetship for  
James Stephens of Oregon.



Letter addressed to  
President Abraham Lincoln



Courtesy of Intercollegiate Studies Institute

3. Apr 1855 – Jun 1863

d. Special Rates, Markings

Dead Letter  
Uncalled For

The SF DLO marking is scarce, this being the finest reported

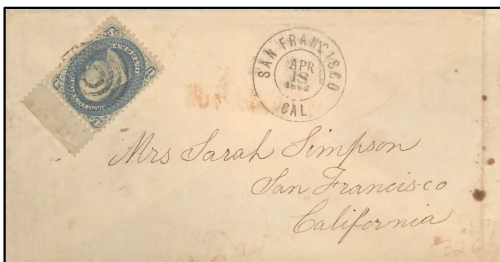


1859 letter addressed to Tahiti but failed to reach destination. Marked for the SF Dead Letter Office (DLO).

SFPO UNCALLED FOR marking is not common



April 18, 1862 SF CDS on front of local drop letter. Never claimed and marked UNCALLED FOR on reverse and postmarked May 31.



Cover front with 1c drop rate (reduced from original size)

3. Apr 1855 – Jun 1863

e. Inbound - Foreign Origin

3¢ Domestic + 2¢ Ship Fee – Private Ship Mail,  
Outside Port of Entry (Under 3000 Miles – to Feb 1861)

Carried on the Chorpenning mil route from SF to Salt Lake City



c

December 1 (1855) SF CDS, incoming from Honolulu, Hawaii, postmarked November 3 (departure of *Yankee*) Hawaiian postage paid by 1853 Issue 5¢ stamp. Straightline SHIP and 5 due rating (3¢ US postage plus 2¢ ship fee). Delivered outside port of entry to Salt Lake City, Utah Territory.

3. Apr 1855 – Jun 1863

e. Inbound - Foreign Origin

3¢ Domestic + 2¢ Ship Fee – Private Ship Mail,  
Outside Port of Entry (Under 3000 Miles – to Feb 1861)

**Incorrect clamshell Ship-6 rating over-struck to correct 5¢ due**



Manuscript “per Frowning Beauty” with September 28, 1858 SF CDS, incoming from Hong Kong. Straightline SHIP applied in SF, incorrect 6¢ due rating corrected to 5¢ due as destination was outside port of entry less than 3000 miles.

**Prepaid via England to US, but instead carried on private ship direct to SF**



May 18, 1859 from Clarence-Town, NSW, franked 21d for the 1s/8½d rate via Southampton to CA, instead finding a sailing opportunity across the Pacific on a private ship. September 8, 1859 SF CDS with SHIP and 5 due (3¢ inland plus 2¢ ship fee), prepayment of postage ignored. Delivered outside port of entry to Sacramento City.

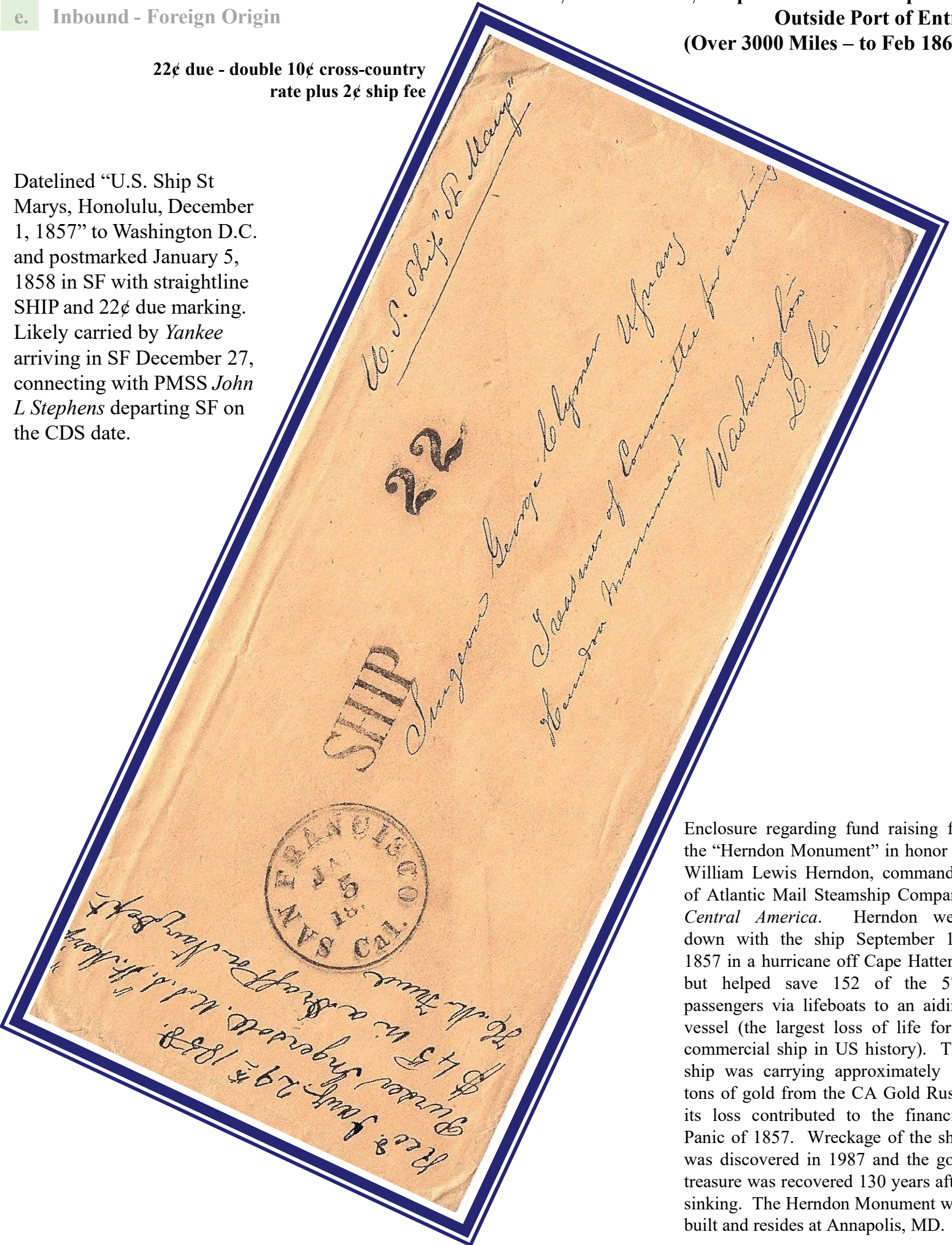
3. Apr 1855 – Jun 1863

e. Inbound - Foreign Origin

10¢ Domestic + 2¢ Ship Fee – Private Ship Mail,  
Outside Port of Entry  
(Over 3000 Miles – to Feb 1861)

22¢ due - double 10¢ cross-country  
rate plus 2¢ ship fee

Dated "U.S. Ship St  
Marys, Honolulu, December  
1, 1857" to Washington D.C.  
and postmarked January 5,  
1858 in SF with straightline  
SHIP and 22¢ due marking.  
Likely carried by *Yankee*  
arriving in SF December 27,  
connecting with PMSS *John  
L Stephens* departing SF on  
the CDS date.



Enclosure regarding fund raising for the "Herndon Monument" in honor of William Lewis Herndon, commander of Atlantic Mail Steamship Company *Central America*. Herndon went down with the ship September 12, 1857 in a hurricane off Cape Hatteras but helped save 152 of the 575 passengers via lifeboats to an aiding vessel (the largest loss of life for a commercial ship in US history). The ship was carrying approximately 15 tons of gold from the CA Gold Rush, its loss contributed to the financial Panic of 1857. Wreckage of the ship was discovered in 1987 and the gold treasure was recovered 130 years after sinking. The Herndon Monument was built and resides at Annapolis, MD.

3. Apr 1855 – Jun 1863

e. Inbound - Foreign Origin

10¢ – Contract Ship Mail, Under 2500 Miles

20¢ – Contract Ship Mail, Over 2500 Miles

The 1851 US Act changed inbound contract ship rates to 20¢ per ½ oz. for distances over 2500 miles and 10¢ under 2500 miles, effective July 1, 1851.

US Consulate handstamp of Valparaiso, likely connecting in Mexico to PMSS contract ship



From the US Consulate in Valparaiso, rated for under 2500 miles, likely connecting at Acapulco (Oct 23) or Manzanillo (Oct 25) transferring to PMSS *Sonora* which arrived in SF on October 31, 1858, where “10” due handstamp was applied.

Letter delayed in transit and received very late, scarce MISSENT marking of SFPO



From Iquique, Peru via Panama to SF. Postmarked in SF June 27, 1860, 35 days after the May 22 Panama transit CDS, twice as long as normal (delayed). Rated 40¢ due, double rate letter.

3. Apr 1855 – Jun 1863

e. Inbound - Foreign Origin

6¢ – Private Ship Mail, to Port of Entry  
(to Feb 1861)

Private ship *Bangkok* took 5½ months via Cape Horn to reach SF



Posted October 4, 1858 in Bordeaux, France, triple weight private ship (*Bangkok*) letter mailed from departure port, postage paid by 90 centimes in stamps (30c x 3). Clamshell Ship-6 due, there is no weight progression on US 6¢ ship rate, even though this was an overweight letter.

Ship-6 device in very late state with ornamental clamshell portion removed



Postmarked Melbourne, Victoria, March 18, 1861, to SF per private ship *Iconium* arriving from Melbourne via Honolulu on June 7. 6d postage pays Victoria inland and ship letter rate. June 7, 1861 SF arrival CDS and Ship-6 due, for delivery to port of entry. Even though rate changed to 5¢ via the act of February 1861, the SFPO did not charge the new rate until July.

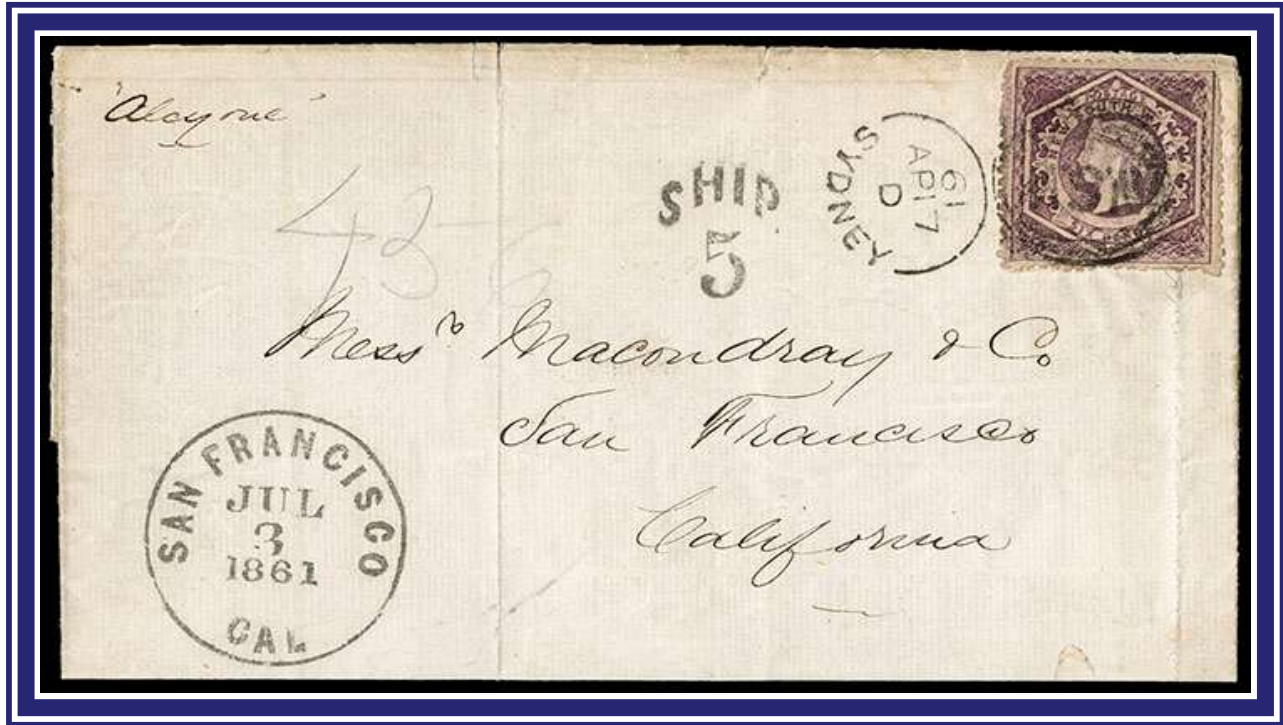
3. Apr 1855 – Jun 1863

e. Inbound - Foreign Origin

5¢ – Private Ship Mail, to Port of Entry  
(from Feb 1861)

The April 1855 rate structure created an anomaly as mail delivered outside the port of entry (less than 3000 miles) actually cost less (5¢) than to the port of entry (6¢). This was corrected by the Act of February 1861 which lowered the rate to 5¢ for delivery to port of entry (no change for outside of port).

**Earliest recorded example of SFPO arced SHIP-5 marking**



Sydney, NSW April 17, 1861 CDS per private ship *Alyone* arriving SF the day prior to July 3, 1861 CDS. 6d postage pays NSW ship letter rate. Arced SHIP-5 marking, 5¢ due, to port of entry.

**Bisected Mexican stamps to foreign destinations are scarce**



December 3, 1861, SF CDS incoming from Sinaloa (via Mazatlan) Mexico. Arced SHIP-5 marking for 5¢ due for private ship letter to port of entry. 4 reales stamp bisected for 2 reales rate for Mexican postage.

3. Apr 1855 – Jun 1863

e. Inbound - Foreign Origin

10¢ Domestic + 2¢ Ship Fee – Private Ship Mail,  
Outside Port of Entry (East of the Rockies – from Feb 1861)

Earliest date observed for Type 1 cogwheel



Honolulu January 14 (1862) CDS with February 3, 1862 SF CDS. 12¢ US postage cancelled by Type 1 cogwheel paying 10¢ rate to Iowa plus 2¢ ship fee. Hawaiian postage paid via 1861 Kamehameha 5¢ Issue. Late use of 1859 12¢ Issue which was demonetized in the US but still recognized as prepayment on Hawaiian mail passing through SF as late as February 1862.

Prepaid 10+2¢ rate via strip of four of US 1861 3¢ Issue



May 9 (1862) Honolulu U.S. Postage Paid CDS. May 31, 1862 SF CDS, cogwheel cancels applied at SFPO upon receipt. 12¢ US postage (applied to reverse side of envelope) pays 10¢ domestic rate to Massachusetts plus 2¢ ship fee. Hawaiian postage paid in cash in Honolulu.



Reverse side of cover showing 12¢ US postage, cancelled by cogwheels (reduced to 90% and rotated 90 degrees)

3. Apr 1855 – Jun 1863

e. Inbound - Foreign Origin

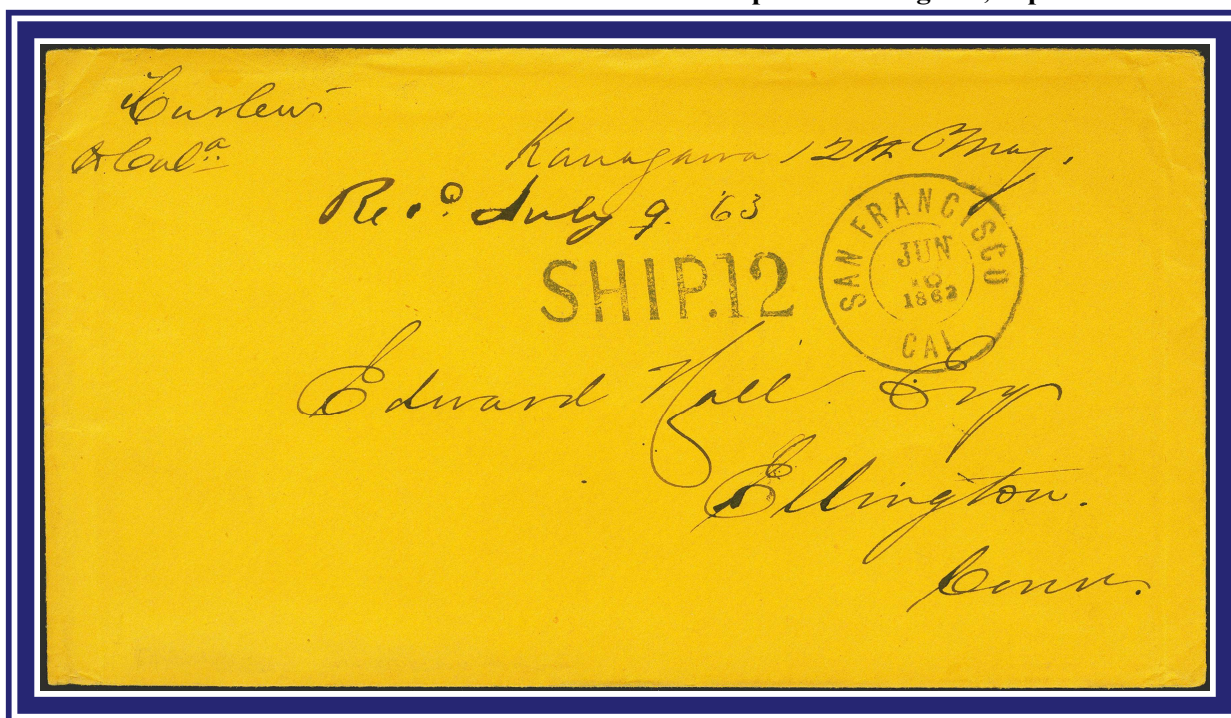
10¢ Domestic + 2¢ Ship Fee – Private Ship Mail,  
Outside Port of Entry (East of the Rockies – from Feb 1861)

Scarce use of non-DCDS with a cogwheel cancel, one of two discovered



Honolulu February 11 (1863) CDS with March 6, 1863 SF CDS. 12¢ US postage cancelled by Type 2 cogwheel pays 10¢ rate to Iowa plus 2¢ ship fee. Hawaiian postage paid in cash.

Private ship from Kanagawa, Japan direct to SF



June 16, 1863 SF CDS with SHIP.12 rating handstamp (10¢ rate plus 2¢ ship fee) on incoming cover from Kanagawa, Japan for Ellington, CT. Manuscript “Curlew to Cala” marking, the *Curlew* arrived June 15.

### 3. Apr 1855 – Jun 1863

#### f. Outbound - Foreign Destination

30¢ per ½ ounce (Prussian Closed Mail)

– to Germany

1¢ Port City Outbound Private Ship (Prepaid)

– to Australia

Prussian Closed Mail rate paid via 1851 Issue 1¢, 3¢ and 10¢ stamps plus postal stationary



May 5 (1856) SF CDS, to Braunschweig, Germany (Duchy of Brunswick). Prussian Closed Mail 30¢ prepaid rate. “N. YORK AM PKT May 31 PAID” exchange CDS, with 7¢ credit rating. Carried by The Havre line *Fulton* from NY.

Rare 1¢ ship rate from a port city, scarce destination from SFPO in mid 1850’s



August 1 (1856) SF CDS to Melbourne, Australia. Backstamped December 18, 1856 “Ship Letter” in Sydney, 4.5 months transit. No mail contract existed at this time between the SFPO and Australia. The “1” in pencil represents a 1¢ outbound prepaid ship rate from a port city (1792 US Postal Act). The SFPO accepted the letter August 1, marking it PAID. The next vessel for Australia left August 4.

3. Apr 1855 – Jun 1863  
f. Outbound - Foreign Destination

15¢ per ½ ounce (French Mail)  
– to France

24¢ per ½ ounce + 5¢ West Coast Surcharge (British Packet)  
– to Great Britain

Double rate to France, American packet from NY via *Ocean Queen* of the Vanderbilt Line



July 20, 1859 SF CDS with integral “30 Paid” rate to La Rochelle, France. 30¢ double weight French Mails rate. NY August 13 exchange CDS with 6¢ credit, and August 26 arrival CDS.

Rare Fort Mohave, CA military express carriage to SFPO, sent to England



Dated “Fort Mohave, Colorado River, California, July 31, 1859” to Folkstone, England. SF September 5, 1859 “29 Paid” CDS single weight letter rate. NY 19 credit handstamp. Carried by military express from scarce origin to SFPO. Carried by Cunard Line *Persia* from NY September 28 to Liverpool, arriving October 8.

Manuscript directive “Overland Via Los Angeles” on cover to Canada



August 1, 1859 SF CDS, 15¢ over 3000 mile treaty rate to Canada West paid by 1857 Issue 1¢, 3¢ and 10¢ stamps (bottom stamp wraps around to reverse). “U STATES” in arc exchange office marking, carried on the southern overland route.

Mixed Franking with US and British Columbia stamps paying colonial and US rates

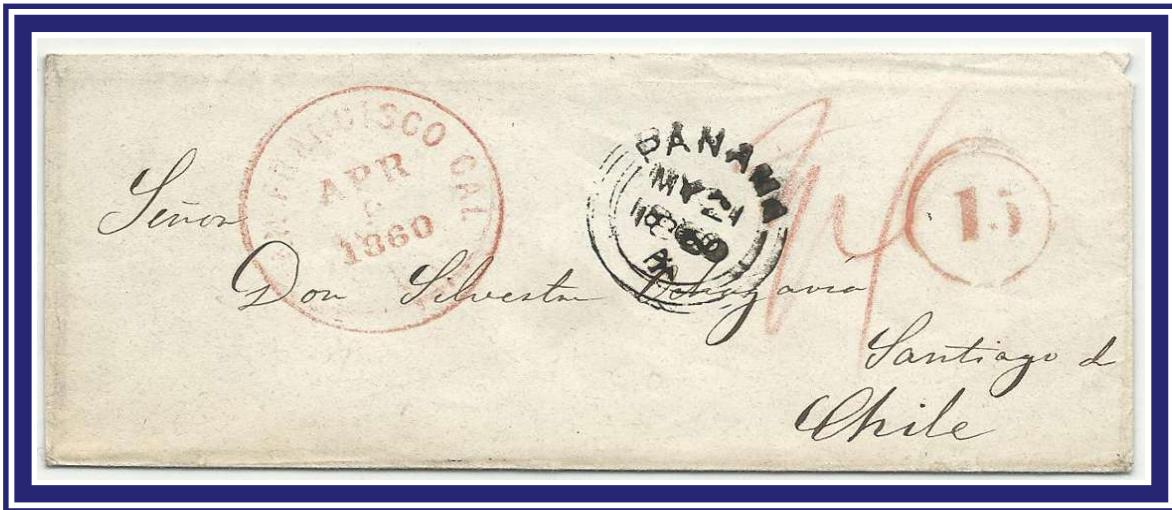


From New Westminster, British Columbia via SF to Canada West. Postmarked March 10, 1863 in SF where Type 2 cogwheels were applied to cancel five 1861 Issue 3¢ stamps paying the 15¢ over 3000 mile treaty rate to Canada West. US postage pays domestic service to border, while 2½d British Columbia stamp pays colonial inland postage.

3. Apr 1855 – Jun 1863  
f. Outbound - Foreign Destination

34¢ per ½ ounce (American & British Packet)  
– to Chile  
10¢ per ½ ounce (American Packet)  
– to Mexico

34¢ rate to Chile, exchanged in Panama for British packet delivery



April 9, 1860 SF Paid CDS with matching 15 in circle credit marking. Manuscript 34¢ prepaid American Packet rate. Exchanged at Panama May 21 for British packet delivery to Santiago, Chile.

Double 10¢ rate to Mexico, fancy receiving handstamp of Colima with 4 reales due



May 20, 1861 SF CDS to Colima, Mexico. Prepaid by two 1857 Issue 10¢ stamps, a double rate cover via American Packet. Marked 4 reales due for Mexico internal postage.

3. Apr 1855 – Jun 1863  
f. Outbound - Foreign Destination

35¢ per ½ ounce (Prussian Closed Mail)  
– to Denmark  
– to Switzerland

Denmark is an uncommon destination for mail from the SFPO



December 21, 1860 SF CDS to Copenhagen, Denmark. Overpaid by 1¢ via three 1857 Issue 10¢ and two 3¢ stamps. Prussian Closed Mail January 29 red boxed Aachen Franco handstamp. Red 12 credit handstamp, carried from NY to Queenstown on *Australasian*, February 1 Copenhagen arrival CDS.

Prussian Closed Mail carriage to Switzerland, 35¢ rate reduced to 33¢ the following month



May 6, 1863 SF CDS to Locarno, Switzerland. Prepaid via three 1861 Issue 10¢ and single 5¢ 1863 Issue stamps. Prussian Closed Mail June 13 red boxed Aachen Franco handstamp. Manuscript magenta 12 credit.

## 4. Jul 1863 – Oct 1869

3¢ Prepaid – Distance Discriminator Eliminated

### a. Cross-Country

Effective July 1, 1863 the US implemented a uniform 3¢ per ½ oz. domestic rate. Distance differential rates were eliminated. Prepayment of postage was required.

One of two discovered covers from the SFPO rejecting use of demonetized 3¢ 1857 Issue



August 18, 1863 SF CDS to Flint, Michigan. Attempted prepayment via demonetized 3¢ 1857 Issue, cancelled by Type 2 cogwheel, which was rejected and marked 6¢ due (double rate charged as a penalty per the Act of 1863).

Rare 1857 & 1861 Issues mixed franking, successfully used 2.5 years after demonetization



July 4, 1864 SF CDS to Maine. Double rate letter prepaid by 3¢ 1861 Issue as well as a demonetized 3¢ 1857 Issue, not detected and accepted for payment. Cancelled by Type 3 cogwheel and treated as fully paid. A rare combination of stamps given the 1857 Issue was demonetized by January 1862 at the SFPO.

Prepaid 3¢ cross-country rate via 1861 1¢ Issue



October 12, 1863 SF CDS to Minnesota, cross-country rate paid by three US 1¢ 1861 Issue stamps.

Prepaid double 3¢ rate via strip of three of the 1863 2¢ Issue



April 21, 1864 SF CDS with manuscript directive "Per St Louis Via Panama" (PMSC steamer). 6¢ double rate letter.

## Attempted use of revenue stamp to pay postage, rejected by SFPO



January 4, 1865 SF CDS to Michigan. Illegal use of 3¢ revenue stamp in an attempt to pay postage. Cancelled by Type 3 cogwheel, rated 6¢ due, double the 3¢ rate of postage, charged as a penalty per the Act of 1863. This penalty charge ceased March 3, 1865 and such letters were directed to the Dead Letter Office.

## “Via Panama” steamer illustrated cover directive



January 4, 1865 SF CDS on illustrated “Via Panama” cover, prepaid 3¢ rate to Massachusetts, cancelled by Type 3 cogwheel.

4.

Jul 1863 – Oct 1869

3¢ Prepaid – Distance Discriminator Eliminated

a.

Cross-Country

Scarce and unique cogwheel design on all-over illustrated commission merchants advertiser



June 30 SF CDS (1868 docketing) to MA. Double 3¢ rate paid by pair of 1861 Issue. Unique and very scarce woodcut style cogwheel, different from the three types typically found on SF mail in this era, design limited to 1868 use (based on research).

Endorsed “per Overland” (lower left), double rate cross-country cover



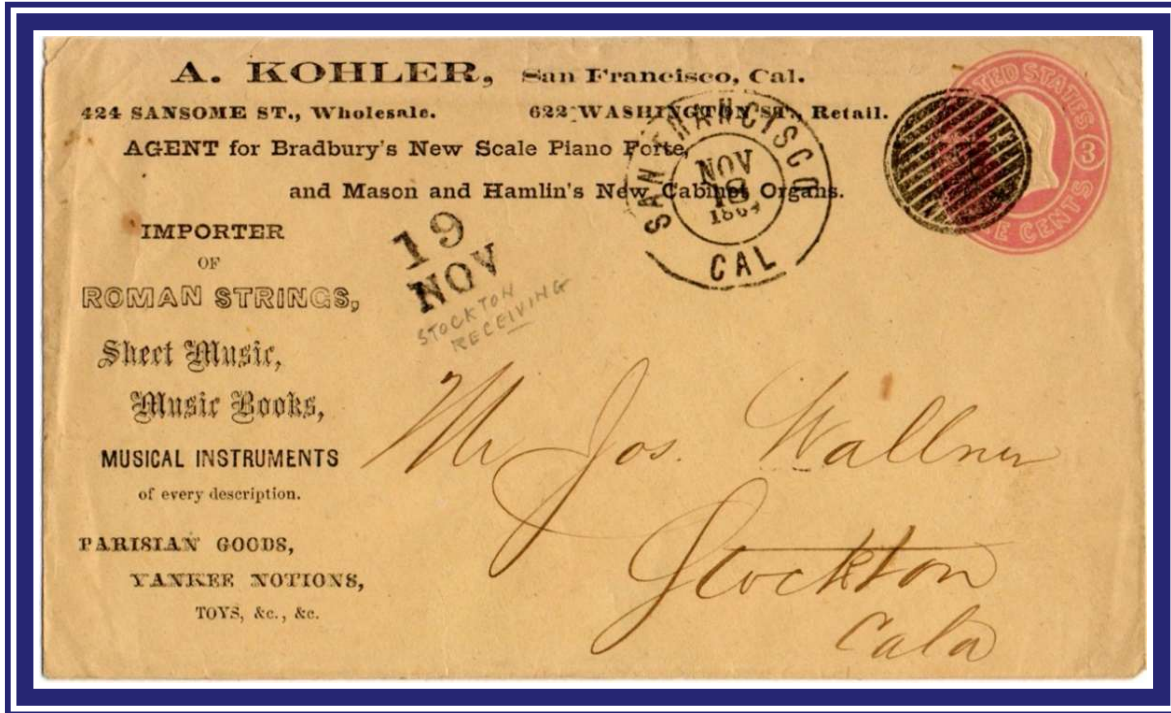
July 27 SF CDS with pinwheel cancel (circa 1868 given style) to Massachusetts. 6¢ double rate paid by pair of the 3¢ 1861 Issue.

#### 4. Jul 1863 – Oct 1869

3¢ Prepaid – Distance Discriminator Eliminated

#### b. West Coast Local

#### Early musical instrument advertising cover



Local use from SF to Stockton, CA. November 18, 1864 SF CDS duplex device with “11 barred circle” to cancel 3¢ postal stationary.

#### Fancy scroll “FORWARDED” is an uncommon SFPO marking



March 28, 1864 CDS of Virginia City, N.T. to SF, prepaid 3¢ rate. Forwarded to Long Bar, CA with May 7 SF CDS and “FORWARDED” applied by the SFPO. Advertised before forwarding (April 6 CDS reverse) with manuscript “adv 1” added to 3¢ forwarding fee, 4¢ total due.

Wells, Fargo and Co. established the Virginia City Pony Express in August 1862 between Virginia City, Nevada Territory and SF (advertised as 24-hours). The express was driven by discovery of the Comstock Lode, a rich deposit of silver.

The express fee was originally 10¢ per half ounce in addition to the cost of the franked envelope. In February 1863 the rate was increased to 25¢. Service was discontinued by March 1865 when roads were improved to allow standard delivery.

Carried by Virginia City Pony Express – 25¢ second (and final) express rate period



March 13 (1864) blue Wells Fargo SF CDS to Virginia City, NT with 25¢ express fee paid via blue Wells Fargo Pony Express stamp and 3¢ US postage paid via postal stationary.

Prepaid 3¢ local rate via 1861 1¢ Issue



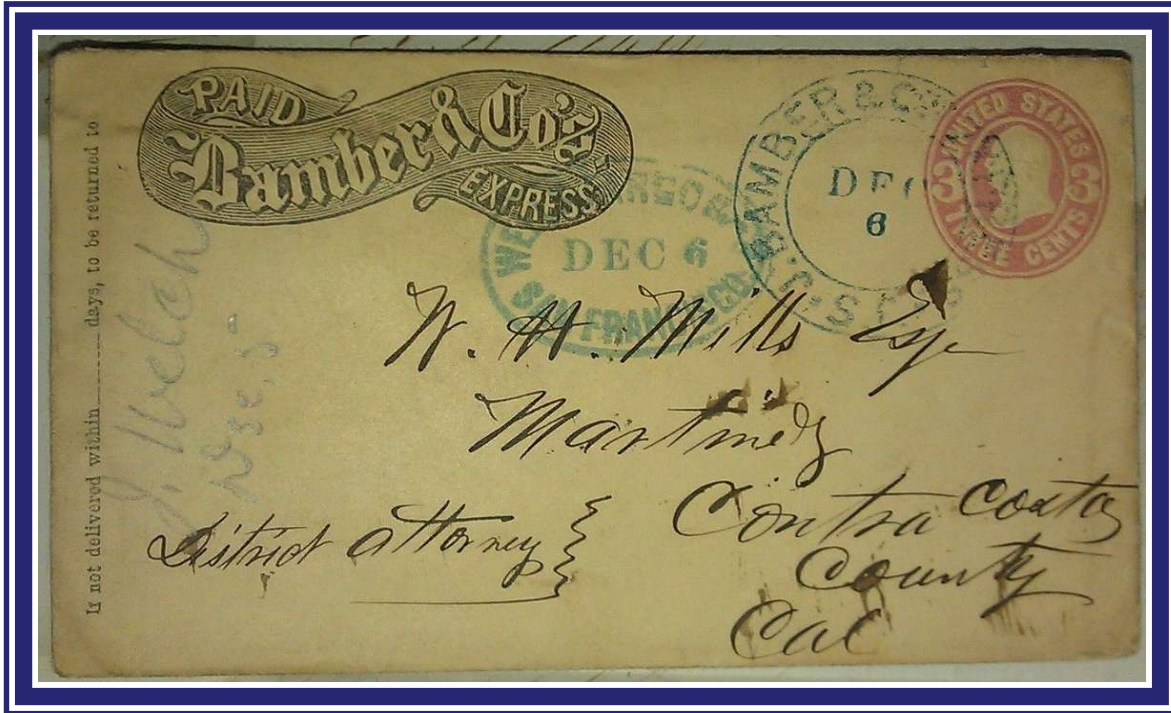
February 13, 1864 SF CDS with barred circle cancellation, prepaid 3¢ rate to Salt Lake City, Utah Territory to agent of the Overland Mail Co.

All-over illustrated commission merchants advertiser cover



March 23 SF CDS with target cancel (circa 1865) to El Dorado, CA. 3¢ rate paid by 1861 Issue.

Conjunctive express company carriage, Bamber and Wells Fargo



Conjunctive use, Bamber & Co's Express carriage from San Jose, CA connecting with Wells, Fargo & Co. Express in SF for delivery across the SF Bay to Martinez. December 6 (circa 1865) CDS of each express company. 3¢ US postage paid via postal stationary.

Pacific Union Express frank on oranges & lemons dealer advertising cover



Blue Pacific Union Express Co. May 29 (circa 1867) CDS from SF to Los Angeles. Red printed frank scroll indicates payment of express fee, 3¢ US postage paid via postal stationary.

## 4. Jul 1863 – Oct 1869

c. SF City Local

2¢ – Drop  
Private Local Carrier

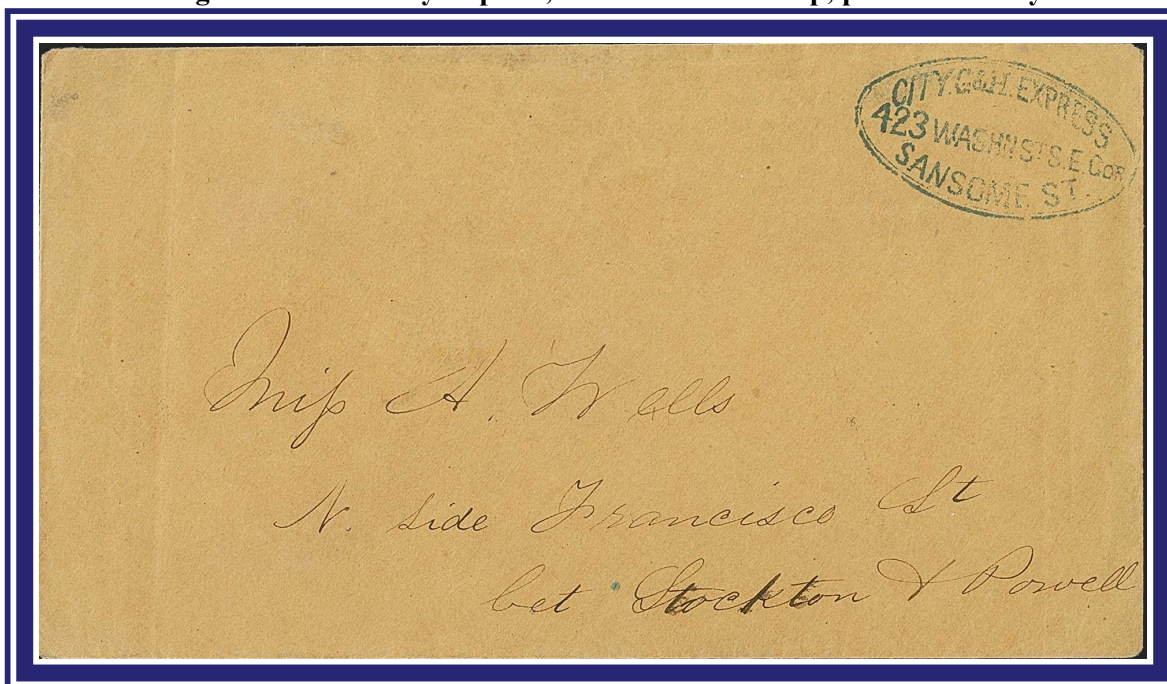
In July 1863 the local drop rate was changed from 1¢ to 2¢. Prepayment was mandatory or a penalty of double the rate was applied.

**Local drop rate cover, double 2¢ penalty applied since letter was not prepaid**



September 27, 1864 SF CDS, 4¢ due for double the 2¢ drop rate since letter was not prepaid. The Act of March 1865 eliminated this double rate penalty and instead required letters be sent to the Dead Letter Office.

**Scarce Gahagan & Howe's City Express, blue oval handstamp, private delivery within SF**



City G. & H. Express/423 Washn St. S.E. Cor/Sansome St. blue oval handstamp of Gahagan & Howe's City Express, c1864 letter locally addressed within SF. A scarce SF local post handstamp.

4. Jul 1863 – Oct 1869

d. Special Rates, Markings

Held For Postage  
Advertised

Uncommon “HELD FOR POSTAGE” SFPO marking on unpaid letter, eventually paid in cash



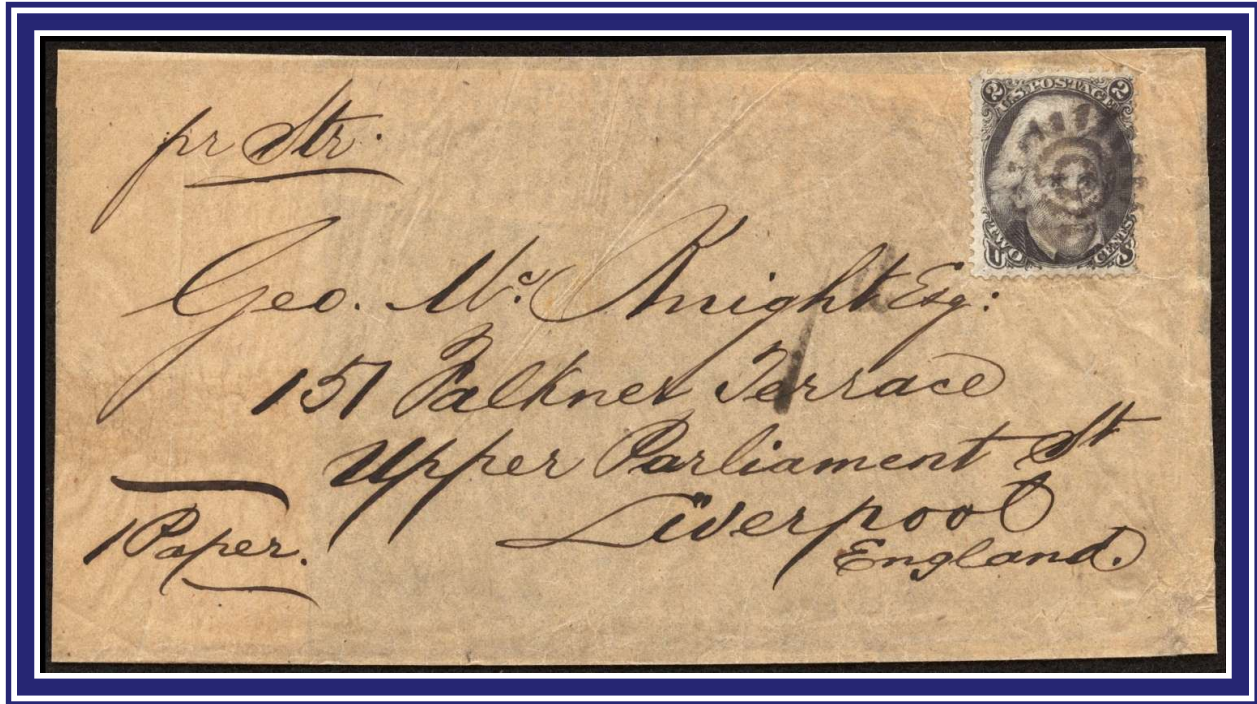
Dated February 17, 1866, blue “Steamer” applied by sender, attempting to catch sailing on the 21<sup>st</sup>. SFPO applied fancy “HELD FOR POSTAGE” marking as letter was not prepaid. Backstamped Feb 19, 1866 with SF CDS and target cancel, apparently cash payment of 3¢, then sent to MA.

Advertised, then “PERSON ADDRESSED CANNOT BE FOUND” applied by SFPO



May 22 Nevada City, CAL CDS (circa 1867) to SF, 3¢ US postage paid via postal stationary. Advertised and eventually marked by SFPO with uncommon framed "Person Addressed Cannot be Found" after advertising.

Scarce newspaper wrapper to England, 2¢ newspaper rate



No SF CDS (circa 1864) on newspaper wrapper to Liverpool, England, cancelled by Type 2 cogwheel, unique to the SFPO. "1d" due marking. Scarce usage of 1863 2¢ Issue paying the newspaper rate from SF to England.

Early registered letter use from the SFPO



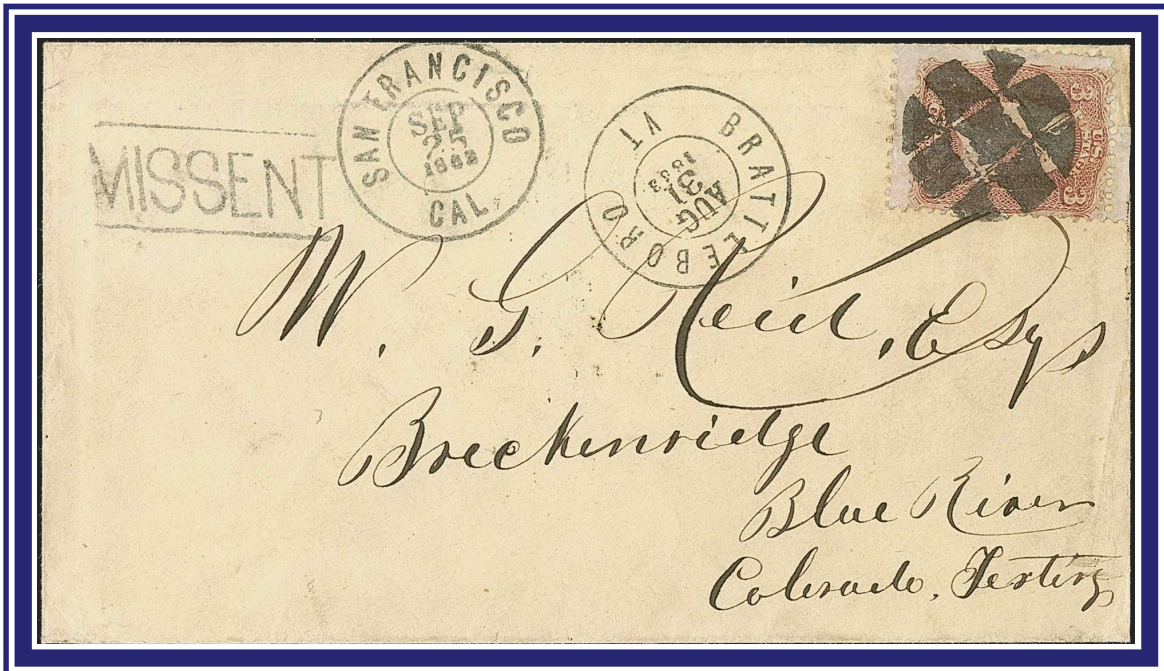
November 28 SF CDS (circa 1864) double rate cover to Lowell, MA, paid by pair of the 3¢ 1861 Issue, cancelled by target cancels. REGISTERED straight line handstamp, the registration fee of 5¢ was paid in cash and not marked on the letter.

Scarce MISSENT TO SAN FRANCISCO marking, cover routed from NY to CT via SF



June 7 (circa 1865) SF CDS and straightline “MISSENT TO SAN FRANCISCO” on poorly sorted letter inadvertently sent from New York to Connecticut via SF. Standard 3¢ postage was proper as this was a PO error.

Different style MISSENT marking (from above), cover routed to Colorado Territory via SF



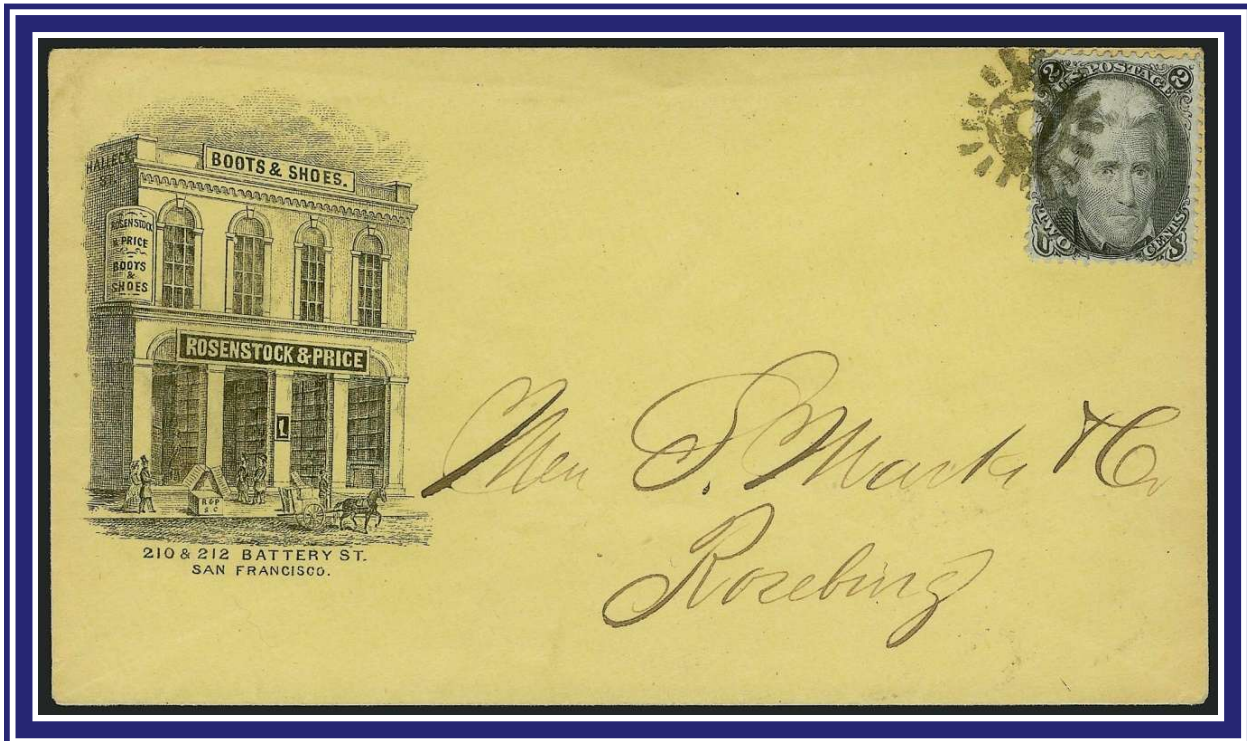
From Brattleboro, VT Aug 13, 1863, intended for Breckenridge, CO Territory but mistakenly routed to SF. September 25, 1863 SF CDS with MISSENT handstamp, forwarded to destination.

Unsealed Circular 2¢ rate plus 2¢ ship fee on cover to Hawaii



SF June 14 (1864) CDS on cover to Honolulu, Hawaii, a rare unsealed circular printed matter rate use comprised of 2¢ circular rate plus 2¢ ship fee.

Unsealed Circular 2¢ rate on Boots & Shoes advertising cover



No SF CDS (circa 1865), 2¢ unsealed circular rate, Boots & Shoes advertiser, cancelled by Type 2 cogwheel.

## 4. Jul 1863 – Oct 1869

### e. Inbound - Foreign Origin

4¢ – Private Ship Mail, to Port of Entry

The July 1, 1863 US Act changed the unpaid private ship letter rate to double the amount of US regular postage but now included the ship fee. The new rate was 4¢ to the port of entry and 6¢ for destinations outside the port of entry.

4¢ private ship rate, incoming from New South Wales



From Sydney NSW per private ship *Humboldt*. December 19, 1863 SF CDS and straightline SHIP4, indicating 4¢ due.

4¢ private ship rate, incoming from New South Wales



January 18, 1864, Sydney NSW per private ship *Fury*, 6d postage pays NSW ship letter rate. May 19 SF CDS and straightline SHIP4, indicating 4¢ due, per the new rate for ship letters to port of entry as of July 1, 1863.

The July 1864 “Blanket Steamship Rate” regulations were misinterpreted by the SFPO resulting in improper rating of incoming private ship mail from foreign countries. In late August 1864 the SFPO erroneously charged the 10¢ Contract steamship rate on private ship mail from foreign countries and used a “FOREIGN” handstamp to indicate reason for additional postage due. This error was corrected by November.

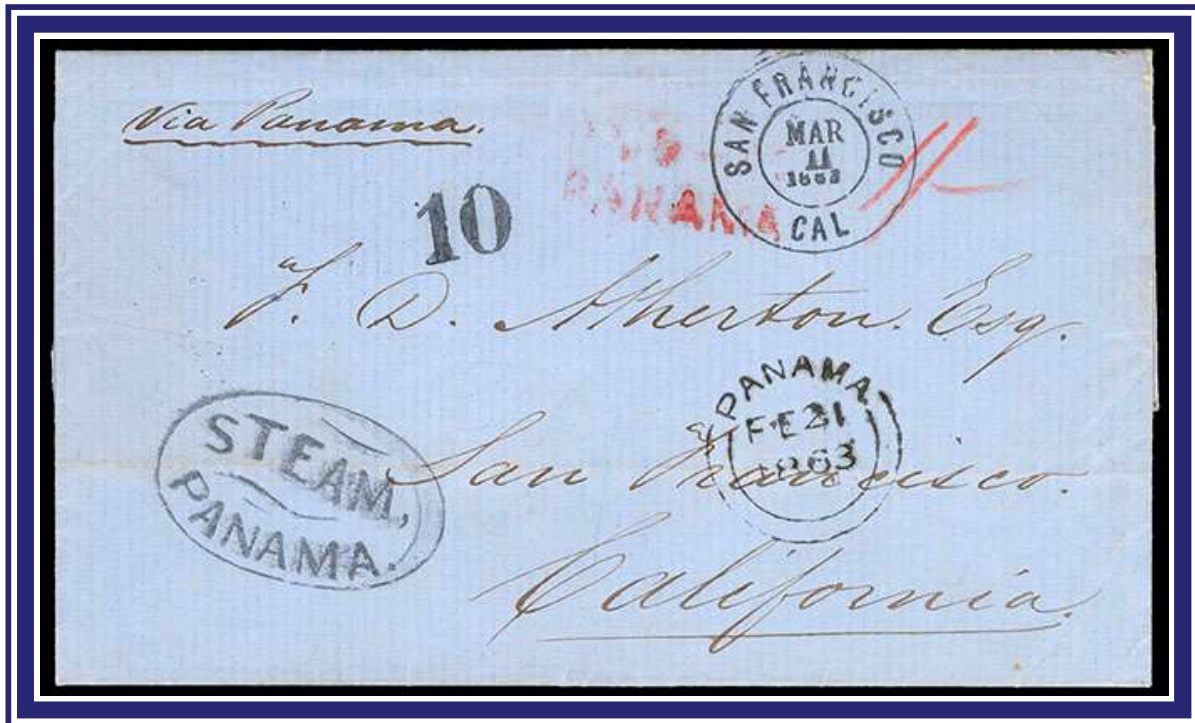
**FOREIGN and 10 markings applied in error Aug-Nov 1864 on foreign private ship letters**



Sydney, NSW May 16, 1864 CDS, 6d postage pays NSW ship letter rate. Private ship *Uruguay* to SF. October 16, 1864 SF CDS. Incorrect “FOREIGN” and “10” markings applied by SFPO (should have been 4¢ due), improperly rated with the 10¢ blanket contract steamship rate.

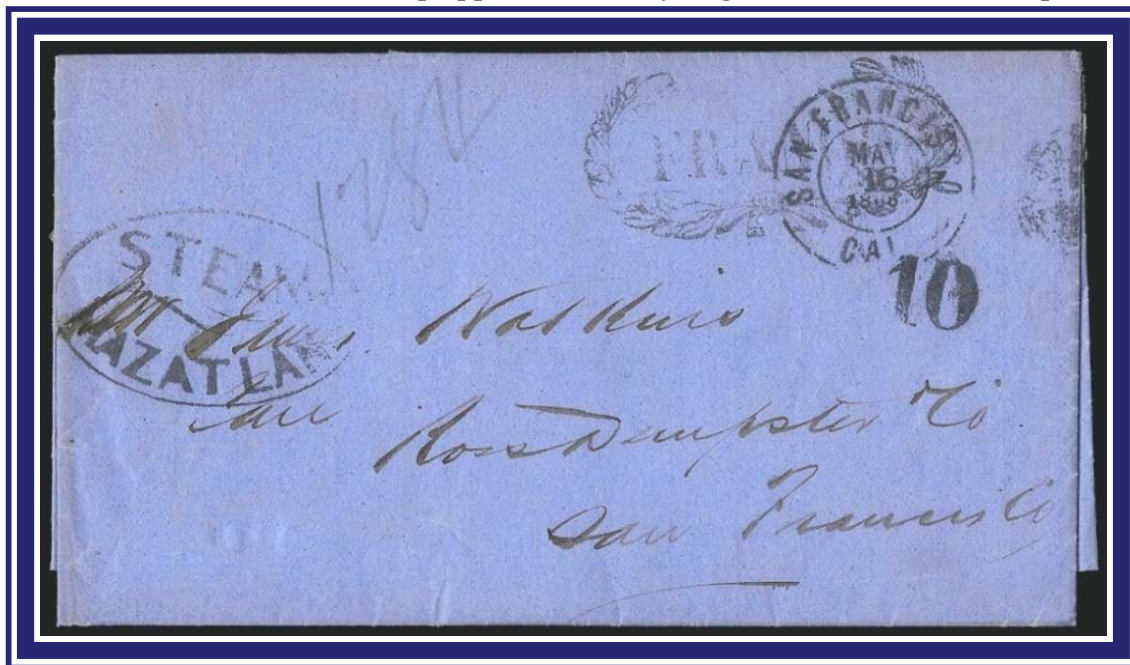
Oval “Steam” markings (Panama, Acapulco, Mazatlan and Manzanillo) were used beginning in 1865 and were a form of Way marking (Way fees were abolished after the Act of March 3, 1863) to identify where the loose letter was picked up along the contract route from Panama.

Oval “Steam Panama” handstamp applied to identify origin of PMSC contract ship letter



From Conception, Chile, February 2 (1863), red Paid-To Panama handstamp with February 21 Panama transit CDS and SF oval “STEAM PANAMA” marking. Red manuscript “1/-” one shilling rating via British Mails for carriage to Panama, arriving in SF March 11. Blanket 10¢ steamship rate due via “10” handstamp, carried onboard PMSS *Sonora*.

Oval “Steam Mazatlan” handstamp applied to identify origin of PMSC contract ship letter



From Mazatlan, Mexico, May 9, 1865, FRANCO (paid) handstamp and oval “STEAM MAZATLAN” markings. Carried by PMSS *John L Stephens* direct, arriving in SF May 16 and rated “10” due.

Oval “Steam Acapulco” handstamp applied to identify origin of PMSC contract ship letter



Oval “STEAM ACAPULCO” on letter arriving in SF December 13, 1866 via PMSS *Constitution*. 10¢ blanket rate short paid by three US 1861 Issue 3¢ stamps, correctly rated “Due 1” for the balance [repaired].

4. Jul 1863 – Oct 1869

e. Inbound - Foreign Origin

10¢ – Contract Ship Mail,  
“Blanket Rate” (Distance Eliminated)

Beginning July 1, 1864 a 10¢ per ½ ounce blanket (no distance differential) rate was established for contract steamship mail received from foreign countries with which the US had no postal conventions.

Scarce use of Mexican stamp on inbound cover to SF (almost always sent stampless)



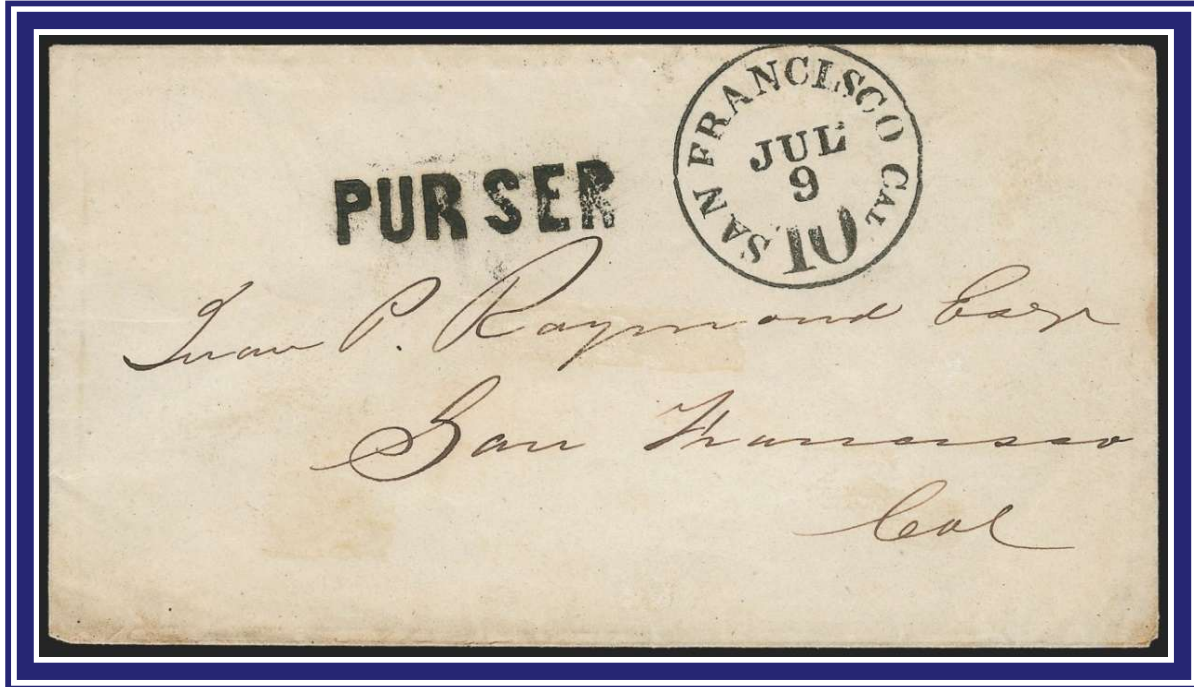
From Mazatlan, Mexico, February 1865, prepaid 1 reale for Mexico internal postage. Carried by PMSS *John L Stephens*. February 27, 1865 SF CDS with “10” due for the blanket steamship rate.

From Vancouver Island, via SF, to Michigan, 10¢ steamship blanket (double) rate



“Post Office Paid Victoria, Vancouver Island” blue oval frank on cover to Michigan. Manuscript “20” rate underneath stamps. February 3, 1865 SF CDS. US 1861 Issue 10¢ pair paid the blanket steamship rate from Victoria, via SF, to Michigan, a double rate cover.

Incoming 10¢ steamship blanket rate, handled by purser onboard PMSS *Golden City*



Straightline PURSER handstamp on cover arriving in SF July 9 (1865) aligning with the arrival of PMSS *Golden City*. 10¢ (due) blanket rate indicated via integral rate CDS. Purser marking applied by SFPO for letters collected onboard vessels incoming to SF, the marking is known used from 1865-1867.

Scarce Carriage via California, Oregon & Mexico Steamship Co. *John L Stephens*



March 22 (1866) SF CDS with integral rate “10” from Mazatlan, Mexico with fancy FRANCO (paid). Endorsed for and carried by *John L Stephens* to SF. No longer owned by the PMSC, vessel was sold to the Holladay-owned California, Oregon & Mexico Steamship Company (which had a mail contract). Blanket 10¢ steamship rate due via CDS marking.

The Panama, New Zealand & Australian Royal Mail Co. (PNZA) commenced a packet service in June 1866 between NSW and Panama which connected with PMSC steamers to SF.

**Sydney to Panama City PNZA sailing, connecting to PMSS *Golden Age* for SF**



Postmarked July 1, 1867 in Sydney, NSW with manuscript “pr R M S Ruahine.” PNZA *Ruahine* arrived in Panama City August 6 connecting with PMSS *Golden Age* which arrived in SF August 23. PNZA packet postage prepaid by 6d stamp. Blanket 10¢ steamship rate due via integral rate “10” CDS. This CDS was repurposed from the mid-1850’s for this steamship rate.

**Final sailing of the PNZA line, Sydney to Panama, connecting with PMSC for SF**



Postmarked December 2, 1868 in Sydney, NSW with manuscript “per R M S Rakaia.” PNZA *Rakaia* arrived in Panama City January 5, 1869 connecting with PMSS *Arizona* which arrived in SF January 22. Double rate PNZA packet postage prepaid by 1s stamp. Rated at single ½ ounce blanket steamship rate of 10¢ due per integral “10” CDS. This was the last sailing of the PNZA line.

4. Jul 1863 – Oct 1869

e. Inbound - Foreign Origin

3¢ Domestic + 2¢ Ship Fee – Private Ship Mail,  
Outside Port of Entry (Prepaid, Distance Eliminated)

The July 1, 1863 US Act mandated double regular US postage for unpaid private ship letters, but prepaid letters were rated regular US postage plus 2¢ ship fee (5¢ total). Most private ship mail could not be prepaid however mail from Hawaii was often prepaid with US stamps.

**Scarce combination of Hawaiian Numeral and US 1863 5¢ Issue to pay Hawaiian/US postage**



c

Honolulu November 13 (1865) CDS to Massachusetts. December 1, 1865 transit SF CDS. 5¢ US postage prepaid in Hawaii (3¢ domestic rate plus 2¢ ship fee). Hawaiian postage paid via 5¢ Hawaiian numeral stamp cancelled by Honolulu square grid and later by a SF cogwheel.

**Scarce use of US 1863 2¢ Issue from Hawaii to pay ship fee rate**



c

October 6 (1866) Honolulu CDS to New York. October 25 (1866) transit SF CDS. 5¢ US postage pays 3¢ domestic rate plus 2¢ ship fee. 5¢ Hawaiian postage pays Hawaiian inter-island rate.

Beginning September 1867, the California, Oregon and Mexico Steamship Co. (COMSC) began a contract steamship mail service between Honolulu and SF. An oval “Hawaiian Steam Service” postmark was applied at the SFPO for this service. The rate was 10¢ per ½ ounce to the US.



Hawaiian Steam Service postmark on incoming COMSC contract ship, 10¢ rate



Honolulu December 10 (1867) CDS (enclosure datelined Koloa, Nov 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1867) with December 24 SF CDS. Red crayon “10” rating, US 1861 Issue 10¢ stamp pays COMSC contract rate from Hawaii to Rhode Island. 5¢ Hawaiian postage paid in cash. COMSC *Idaho* arrived in SF December 24. Red “Hawaiian Steam Service” transit postmark applied at SFPO.

On January 1, 1867, the PMSC began a monthly contract mail service between SF and the US post offices in Hong Kong and Yokohama. Prior to this the only mail options with the Far East were by private ship. In November 1867 the SFPO introduced an oval “China and Japan Steam Service” postmark for this service. The rate for this service was 10¢ per ½ ounce.



China And Japan Steam Service postmark on incoming contract ship, 20¢ double rate



May 22 (1868) SF CDS, 20¢ US postage paid by pair of 10¢ 1861 Issue for transpacific contract double rate to New York. Origin “P. O.D. U.S. Con. Genl. Shanghai Apr 17” CDS. Carried on PMSS *Costa Rica* which departed Shanghai Apr. 17, 1868, arriving Yokohama Apr 24, then by PMSS *New York*, departing Yokohama Apr 28, arriving in SF May 18, with mail postmarked four days later. Oval “China And Japan Steam Service” handstamp applied at SFPO (indicating cover originated outside the US, in lieu of “steamship” postmark).

4. Jul 1863 – Oct 1869

f. Outbound - Foreign Destination

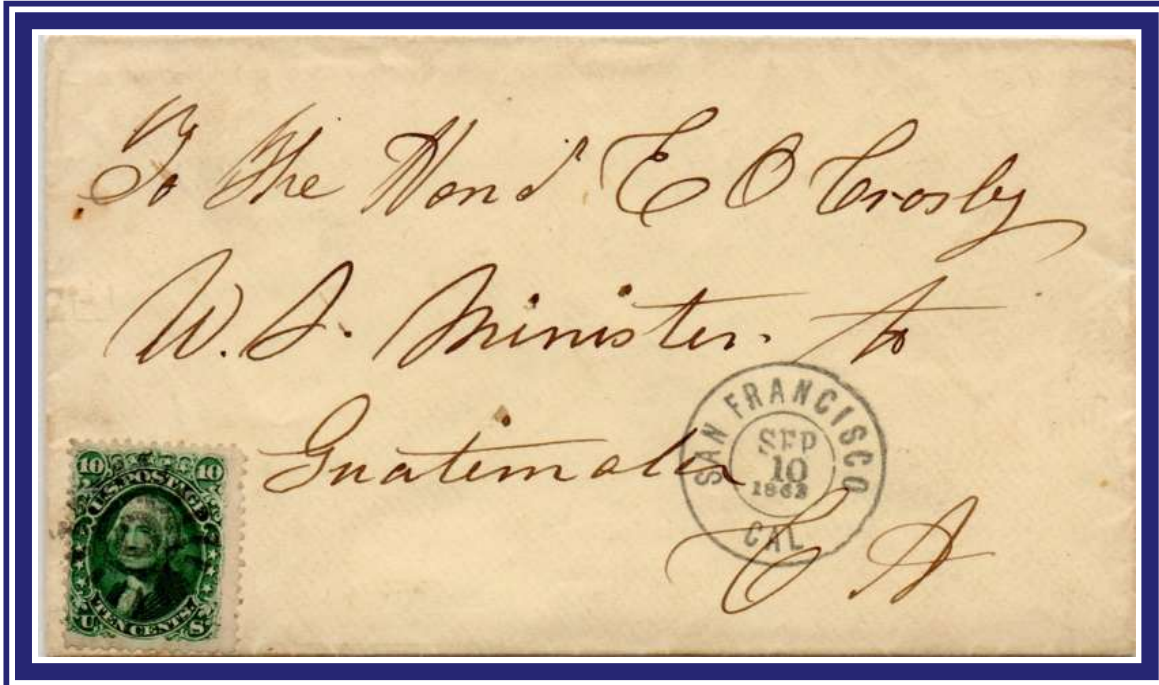
10¢ per ½ ounce (American Packet)

– to Guatemala

42¢ per ½ ounce (French Mail)

– to Spain

Scarce destination of Guatemala from SFPO, 10¢ American Packet rate



September 10, 1863 SF CDS to Guatemala via 10¢ American Packet rate. Prepaid by 10¢ 1861 Issue, Type 2 cogwheel cancel.

Only discovered SF cogwheel cover addressed to Spain



November 2, 1863 SF CDS to Barcelona, Spain. 42¢ French Mails double rate, prepaid via 1861 Issue 12¢ and 30¢ stamps. New York November 28 transit CDS with “24” credit (12x2). Calais Dec 10 receiving CDS. Carried by British Packet via Inman *City of London*. 4 R(eales) due for local postage.

Three-color franking with 1861 Issue to Italy via French Mail



November 26, 1863 SF CDS to Chiavari, Italy (Kingdom of Sardinia). 42¢ French Mails double rate, overpaid by 2¢ via 1861 Issue 3¢, 10¢ and 12¢ stamps. New York Dec 26 "24" credit (12x2) to France in red CDS. January 11, 1864 Chiavari backstamp.

Double 21¢ French Mail rate, paid via 1861 Issue 3¢ and 30¢ stamps



November 19, 1864 SF CDS to Bergamo, Italy (Lombardy Region). 42¢ French Mails double rate, with New York "12" credit (6x2) to France in red CDS and carried by American Packet via Britain, leaving New York on December 1, 1864.

4. Jul 1863 – Oct 1869  
f. Outbound - Foreign Destination

15¢ per ½ ounce (Treaty, Over 3000 Miles, before Mar 1864)  
10¢ per ½ ounce (Treaty, after Mar 1864)  
– to Canada

Vancouver Island, via SF, to Canada West with US postage applied in Victoria



c

March 31, 1864 SF CDS, to Canada West from Victoria via SF. Overpaid for the over 3000 mile 15¢ treaty rate by 1¢. US postage paid by stamps applied in Victoria, colonial inland postage paid in cash per blue oval “Post Office, Victoria Vancouver Island, PAID” handstamp. Although the rate was lowered to 10¢ starting this month, the SFPO had yet to acknowledge the rate change.

10¢ rate to Canada West paid via strip of three 3¢ plus 1¢ 1861 Issue stamps



November 10, 1865 SF CDS, stamps cancelled by target obliterator, 10¢ treaty rate to Myrtle, Canada West. Oval “U.S. 10 cts PAID” border exchange marking.

4. Jul 1863 – Oct 1869  
f. Outbound - Foreign Destination

24¢ per ½ ounce (British Packet)  
– to Great Britain

90¢ 1861 Issue is scarce from the SFPO, five covers known. Earliest Known Use of Type III Cogwheel

Rates to Great Britain included a 5¢ surcharge on mail from the West Coast (total of 29¢) up to June 1863. Rate eliminated 5¢ surcharge on July 1, 1863, and reduced to 24¢.



September 18, 1863 SF CDS to England. Franked \$1.20 including 90¢ 1861 Issue [damaged corner] attempting to pay a five-times 24¢ rate. As odd-number rates were not allowed, six-times (\$1.44) was the proper pre-payment. Manuscript “Due 24” in blue crayon noting US payment shortfall. Part payment was not recognized, rated 6 shillings due in London (6 shillings = 6 x 24¢ = \$1.44).

An expensive underpayment, total \$2.64 paid in 1863, approximately \$70 today.

4. Jul 1863 – Oct 1869  
f. Outbound - Foreign Destination

24¢ per ½ ounce (British Packet)  
– to Great Britain

Double 24¢ British Mail rate, paid via 1861 Issue 3¢, 5¢ and 10¢ stamps



January 13, 1865 SF CDS to England, double 24¢ rate via British packet. "N. YORK BR. PKT FEB 4" exchange CDS, with 38¢ (double) credit to GB. Carried from New York on February 4, 1865 via Inman Line *Glasgow*.

24¢ British Mail rate, paid via pair of 1861 Issue 12¢ stamps



June 29, 1867 SF CDS to Scotland, 24¢ rate via British packet. "N. YORK BR. PKT JUL 24" exchange CDS, with 19¢ credit to GB. Manuscript sender directive "per Str Montana June 29<sup>th</sup>" from SF.

4. Jul 1863 – Oct 1869  
f. Outbound - Foreign Destination

33¢ per ½ ounce (Prussian Closed Mail, prepaid)  
– to Switzerland

31¢ per ½ ounce (Prussian Closed Mail, prepaid)  
– to Denmark

Franked for original 1863 35¢ PCM rate, paid via 1861 Issue 1¢, 2¢ and 10¢ stamps



March 30, 1867 SF CDS to Bern, Switzerland. Franked for 35¢ Prussian Closed Mail rate which ended May 1863 and changed to 33¢, two cent overpay. NY APR 25 exchange CDS.

Uncommon destination of Denmark from SFPO, via Bremen Mails

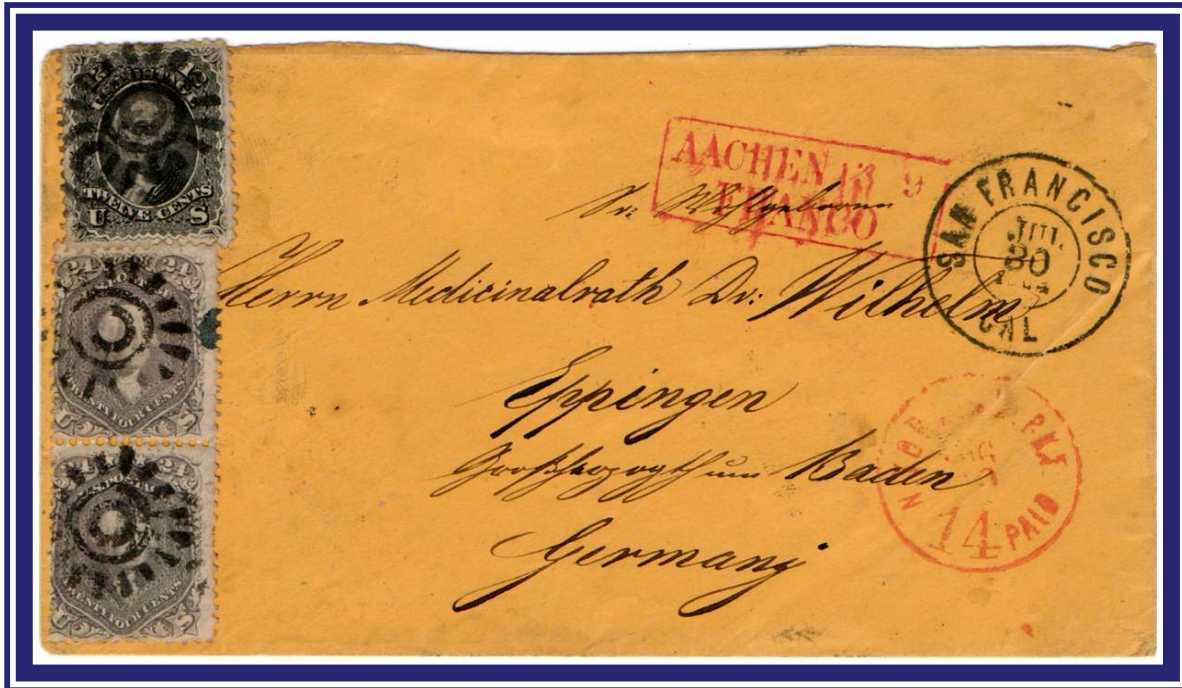


April 10, 1867 SF CDS, to Denmark. Franked for old 1863 35¢ Prussian Closed Mail rate (blue boxed June 16 Aachen Franco) the correct rate was 31¢. Red "N. York Paid Brem. Pkt. May 2" exchange CDS and circle 10¢ credit handstamp. Carried by NGL Line *Bremen* to Bremerhaven, arriving May 16. Blue crayon "fr 1" credit, Hamburg June 16 arrival backstamp.

4. Jul 1863 – Oct 1869  
f. Outbound - Foreign Destination

28¢ per ½ ounce (Prussian Closed Mail, prepaid)  
– to Germany

Double 28¢ PCM rate overpaid 4¢, reflecting old April 1863 30¢ rate



c

July 30, 1864 SF CDS to Baden, Germany. Prussian Closed Mail September 13 red boxed Aachen Franco, 60¢ franking overpays double 28¢ prepaid PCM rate by 4¢ (30¢ PCM prepaid rate expired April 1863). “N. York Am. Pkt.” exchange office CDS with red “14” (double) credit.

28¢ PCM rate, 2¢ overpaid via 1861 Issue 3¢, 5¢ and 10¢ stamps plus postal stationary



March 19 (1867) SF CDS to Herford, Germany (Kingdom of Prussia). Blue boxed Apr 29 Aachen Franco, the 30¢ franking overpays 28¢ prepaid Prussian Closed Mail rate by 2¢. “N. YORK BR. PKT.” exchange office CDS and red “7” credit. Carried from NY April 17, 1867 on Cunard Line *Java*.

4. Jul 1863 – Oct 1869  
f. Outbound - Foreign Destination

22¢ per ½ ounce (American & British Packet, before Oct 1867)  
34¢ per ½ ounce (American & British Packet, after Oct 1867)  
– to Peru

22¢ American packet rate to Peru, exchanged in Panama for British packet delivery



February 19 (1866) SF CDS to Lima, Peru, prepaid 22¢ American Packet rate via 1861 Issue 10¢ and 12¢ stamps. Carried from SF by PMSS *Golden City* and then British Packet from Panama to destination. Red crayon 12¢ credit to Great Britain.

34¢ American packet rate paid by three 10¢ 1861 Issue and two 2¢ 1867 Grilled Issue stamps



May 30 (1868) magenta SF integral Paid CDS, to Lima, Peru, 34¢ rate via American Packet. Matching magenta 24 cents credit marking for British packet service from Panama (June 13 CDS) to Peru.

4. Jul 1863 – Oct 1869  
f. Outbound - Foreign Destination

10¢ per ½ ounce (American Packet)  
– to Mexico

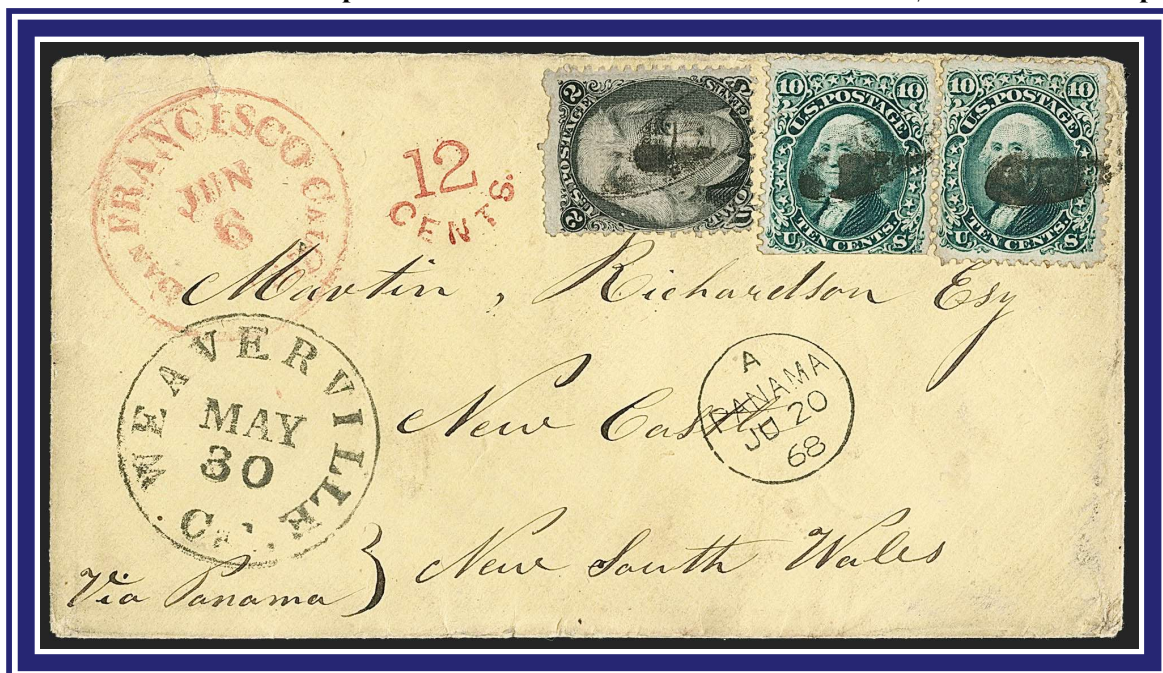
22¢ per ½ ounce (American & British Packet)  
– to Australia

Scarce quadruple 10¢ American packet rate to Mexico



August 31 (circa 1866) SF CDS to San Blas, Mexico. Prepaid quadruple 10¢ American Packet rate via 1861 Issue 10¢ and 30¢ stamps, 7 reales due handstamp for local delivery.

One of three reported covers from SFPO to Australia with 2¢ 1861 Issue stamp



June 6 (1868) SF CDS, from Weaverville, CA May 30, to Newcastle, NSW. Prepaid 22¢ American Packet rate to Panama then British Packet to Australia, 12¢ credit to Great Britain. Backstamped July 29 Newcastle. PMSC *Constitution* departed SF June 6, arriving Panama June 20, then by British steamer *Mataura* June 21 to Sydney.

4. Jul 1863 – Oct 1869  
f. Outbound - Foreign Destination

10¢ per ½ ounce (American Packet)  
– to China  
– to Japan

On January 1, 1867, the PMSC began a monthly trans-Pacific contract mail service between SF and Hong Kong, with a stop at Yokohama, Japan. This was the first steamship line to operate across the Pacific. The rate was set at 10¢ per ½ ounce.

The SFPO magenta large circular PAID ALL transit marking is not common



July 28, 1869 Stratham, NH CDS, “via California” to US Consul at Swatow, China. 10¢ blanket steamship rate prepaid by 1861 Issue. Carried by PMSC *Japan* from SF Sep 4 arriving in Hong Kong Oct 5.

SFPO direct to Japan, 10¢ prepaid trans-Pacific steamship rate



March 5 (1869) magenta SF CDS with “PAID ALL” to the US Post Office in Yokohama, prepaid by 10¢ 1867 Grilled Issue for the trans-Pacific blanket steamship rate to Japan. Carried by PMSC *China* (manuscript endorsement top-left) from SF the day postmarked, arriving in Yokohama March 31.

15¢ French Mails rate, paid via three color franking of 1861 Issue 1¢, 2¢ and 10¢ stamps



January 30 (1866) SF CDS to Paris. 15¢ French Mails rate prepaid via 1861 Issue 1¢, 2¢ and 10¢ stamps. NY, February 24 red CDS with “6” credit to France. Carried from NY by Inman Line *City of Baltimore*, red French receiving handstamp March 9, Etats-Unis Serv Am Calais.

The 15¢ 1866 Issue is not commonly seen with cogwheels given SFPO usage period



March 9 (1867) SF CDS to Bordeaux, France. 30¢ French Mails double rate prepaid with two 1866 Issue 15¢ stamps. Carried by PMSS *Sacramento* from SF to Panama (manuscript “per Steamer Sacramento” upper left). New York “24” credit (12x2) to France in red CDS and carried by British Packet via Cunard steamer *Australasian*.

On May 10, 1869, the railheads of the transcontinental railroad met at Promontory Summit, Utah six years after work began. Mails dispatched overland by the SFPO after this route was established traversed the continent in a very fast 7-8 days compared to an average 24 days prior to railway completion.

May 4, 1869 SF CDS, six days prior to completion of railroad, 11 days cross-country to NY



May 4 (1869) SF CDS with manuscript “Per Overland” endorsement, postmarked just 6 days before completion of the transcontinental railroad when the railhead gap was approximately 9 miles. 30¢ unpaid French Mails double rate (blue manuscript 2). NY May 15 exchange CDS, 11 days cross-country transit (including railhead gap traversed by the Overland Mail Company stagecoach), compared to an average of 24 days prior to railway completion. French packet direct to Havre, May 15 red octagonal “Paq Fr H No 2” Ligne H postmark (applied in NY). Carried via *Lafayette*, 16 décimes (double) postage due.

**Nearing Completion of the Transcontinental Railroad, May 1869**

After completion of the transcontinental railroad in May 1869, and once the route was well-established, the default mail carriage was overland via the railroad. Cross-country transit time reduced on average from 24 days to 7-8 days.

Oct 6, 1869 SF CDS, five months after completion of railroad, 7 days cross-country to NY



October 9 (1869) SF CDS, postmarked 5 months after completion of the transcontinental railroad. 30¢ unpaid double rate (red 2 in manuscript). NY October 16 CDS, only 7 days cross-country transit, compared to an average of 24 days prior to railway completion. French packet direct to Havre, Oct 16 red octagonal “Paq Fr H No 2” Ligne H postmark (applied in NY), carried via *Lafayette*. Manuscript “16” décimes postage due.

**The Transcontinental Railroad would forever change cross-country mail delivery speed in the US**