

At the time of the great gold rush to California in 1849, Berford & Company, a co-partnership composed of Richard George Berford and Loring L. Lombard were in business at No. 2 Astor House, New York City, as news-dealers and book publishers; the partners saw an opportunity for the establishment of a good business in forwarding letters, news matter and express packages to the thousands of men going to the Pacific Coast.

In the Fall of 1849, Mr. Lombard left for the West by way of Panama, and established agencies in the West Indies, the Western Coast of South America, Panama, Ports on the Pacific Coast, Hawaii and the East; he returned to New York in the Spring of 1851 and then had prepared the stamps hereafter listed.

prepared

The routes of the Company were largely by water, they claiming that the United States had no exclusive jurisdiction, as such routes were not Post routes or routes within the meaning of the statute. The partners pushed their enterprise extensively but were badly hurt by the reduction of the Government Postal Rates in 1851; this regulation of the Post Office Department went into effect June 10, 1851, under an Act of Congress approved March 3rd of that year.

The original circular letter of the Company, issued under date of March, 1851, states that special messengers would leave New York by steamer on the 13th and 28th of each month; that letters would be delivered to various points in California at rates therein mentioned. In April, a month later, another circular was issued by the Company reducing rates. On June 16, 1851, they advertised new postage rates to meet the reduction made by the Government in its postal charges, as outlined in its circular of June 10, 1851. This last advertisement of the Company follows:

*The forwarding business of the Company continued until 1854.
H. C. Needham.
The business was taken over by Butterfield & Company Phil. Saffelle Oct. 1914.
which in turn was absorbed by the American Express Company*

The following advertisement appeared in a paper dated ^{Sacramento San Francisco} ^{Jan'y} Dec. 26, 1849: ⁵⁰

→ "BERFORD & CO. UNITED STATES AND CALIFORNIA EXPRESS;
AND INDEPENDENT MAIL CO. R.G.Berford of San Francisco;
T.J.Bayless & Co. of Sacramento; Chas Plitt & Co., San
Jose. Run to Atlantic States, Sacramento, Stockton,
San Jose, and Interior."

Owners: R.G.Berford and J.C.Hackett

According to another advertisement of Dec. 21, 1851, the name now drops "California" Express:

"BERFORD & CO'S EXPRESS
For the ATLANTIC STATES, November 1, 1851, by the splendid fast running
Steamer

TENNESSEE,

Geo.M. Totten, Commander.

A Special Messenger will be despatched as usual, who will take charge of our Express, Goode, Gold Dust, etc., and deliver to all parts of the States without delay, and on the most reasonable terms. We will also send

A SPECIAL MESSENGER

by the new route, via Nicaragua, Nov. 1st by the new and fast running Steamer

PACIFIC, Jarvis, Master,

who will take charge of our INDEPENDENT MAIL, and packages of every description.

Letters received till 3 o'clock, and parcels till 2 o'clock on day of sailing.

BERFORD & CO.

California Exchange

Corner of Clay and Kearny streets."

^{Vol x}
(THE STAMP COLLECTOR'S MAGAZINE, 1872, p.127, E.L.Pemberton)

San P. Directory 1854 Le Counte Strongs: Berford & Co's Exp. office 94 Merchant St near Montgomery, Resident Part

This company was bought out by Wells, Fargo & Co. in June, 1854.

T.J.C.