

WESTERN EXPRESS

Research Journal of Early Western Mails

Vol. 70 No. 1 □ Whole No. 275 □ March 2020 □ Unit No. 14 , American Philatelic Society

Quarterly Publication of the
Western Cover Society

TABLE OF CONTENTS

President's Message, etc.....1

Langton's Humboldt Express
By Gordon L. Nelson, Ph.D.....5

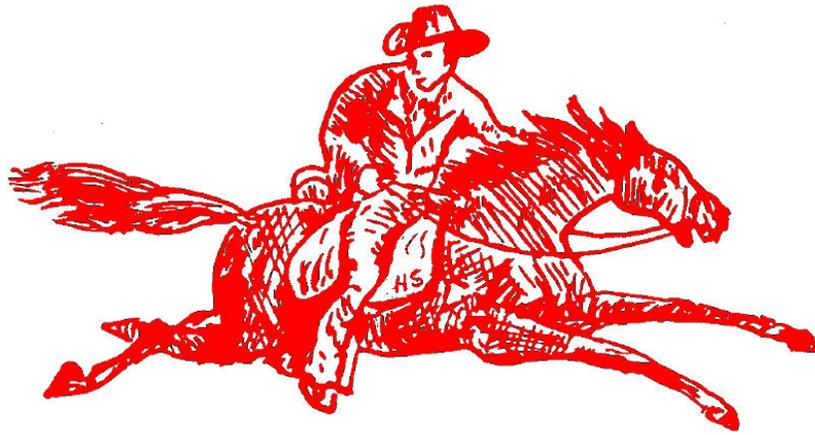
California Illustrated Lettersheet
Sent as a Stampless Cover
By James W. Milgram, M.D.....35

Contents of the Cover - Gregory's
Express Pocket Letter Book
By James W. Milgram, M.D.....39

Tales from the Trail - The Mexican
War
By David F. New.....43

Some New Express Hand Stamps
By Scott W. Prior.....51





Recent Awards

APS StampShow 2009 (Pittsburgh, PA) - GOLD
Chicagopex 2009, 2018 (Arlington Heights, IL) - GOLD

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

If you collect Western Express covers, Territorials, Town cancellations, or anything pertaining to the mails of the Old West, you are invited to join the Western Cover Society and enjoy meeting other collectors.

Western Express (ISSN 0510-2332) is published quarterly (March-June-September-December) by the Western Cover Society, which is a not-for-profit 501 (C-3) tax exempt organization. Western Cover Society seeks to fulfill its charitable and educational mission through the publication of books and journals. All contributions above the basic subscription rate are tax deductible and will go to support publication of material.

The annual membership in the society includes a subscription to *Western Express*. All who share an interest are invited to join. Annual membership is \$35.00 per year. Membership application and back issues can be obtained by contacting Scott Prior at our web site, www.westerncoversociety.com. Claims for missing issues made within six months will be serviced free of charge.

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Western Cover Society does not accept responsibility for views expressed in articles or advertisements that appear in the pages of *Western Express*. It provides opportunities for publication of material that may represent ideas, judgments and opinions. The publication of articles or advertisements should not be construed to promote collecting or establish pricing of material that is in private hands. Send manuscripts to the editor for publication consideration. All manuscripts are subject to peer review.

Lifetime Membership \$500.00 one time **Patron Membership \$75.00 per year**
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Foreign Memberships require an additional \$35.00 per year postage, in addition to any membership fee noted above

Send application with appropriate check to:

Western Cover Society
Ryan Baum, Treasurer
P.O. Box 4187
Davis, CA 95617-4187

Please state your collecting interests. Your application will be acted upon at the next meeting of the Board of Directors.

Advertising rates, per issue: Full page \$150.00, half page \$85.00, quarter page \$50.00
Four consecutive insertions, paid in advance: Full page \$550.00, half page \$300.00, quarter page \$175.00

Submit ads to the General Editor: Ken Stach, PO Box 6; Letcher, SD 57359 (kenstach@santel.net)

President's Message

Submitted by Michael Perlman

Well, it is that time of the year again, when we hold our annual meeting at WESTPEX. The show runs from April 24th to April 26th and will be held at the San Francisco Airport Marriott Waterfront Hotel. For those of you who don't attend many stamp shows, WESTPEX has clearly become one of the best shows in philately. Additional information can be found on their website: www.westpex.org.

For those of you who regularly attend WESTPEX, please take note of a change to our normal schedule. In prior years our keynote presentation has been held on Saturday morning at 10 AM. Not the case this year! In an attempt to coordinate with the USPCS, we moved our presentation to FRIDAY at 3 PM. Hopefully this change will allow all interested parties to attend both presentations. This year's talk will be a joint presentation by two of our members: Dale Forster and Larry Maddux will discuss *Covers of the Pacific Northwest* in the Bayside I room. To my knowledge this is the first time we've ever had two people present a topic. I'm sure we will be doubly impressed. Following the presentation, all members are invited to attend our annual Board of Directors' Meeting. It will be held at 5 PM, Friday April 24, also in Bayside I.

Secretary's Report

Submitted by Scott Prior

I hope all of you had an enjoyable holiday season. I've already read four of the early California postal history books that my wife, kids and grandkids got me for Christmas.

Western Express Companies, 1850-1890:

The 3rd edition of Oscar M. Thomas' classic work has been completely updated with extensive revisions to almost all of the included express companies. The contributors were members James Blaine, Kenneth Stach and your Secretary. Several hundred new cover scans have been added bringing the total number of scans to 6694. By the time you read this, they should have been uploaded onto our website and will only be available there. I hope you all have pre-ordered your copy of the two-volume bound edition from the United Postal Stationary Society's website. \$20 is due at the time of order, plus \$110 when the books are ready to be shipped.

WESTPEX 2020: April 24-26. San Francisco Airport Marriott Waterfront.

I see that Dale Forster will be selling his Australia Colonies – US Mails collection as part of the WESTPEX Rumsey sale. I notified Schuyler Rumsey of our WCS show commitments on Friday and asked him to try and keep the western material portion of his auction away from those times. We'll see what happens.

New Members:

This is the largest quarterly membership increase in the two years that I have been secretary. Keep telling others about our society! I signed up my 10 year-old grandson, Paul. When he opened his first issue (December 2019), he shouted to his mom, "There's grandpa", when he saw my SESCAL presentation pic. I hope his enthusiasm continues to build (ours too). We really need to attract the younger set.

Charles Epting #1585
New York, NY 10111

Douglas Cass #1586
Rich Hill, MO 64779

Paul Chadwick #1587
Frisco, TX 75033

Arno Kolster #1588
San Francisco, CA 94107

Gene H. Russell #1589
Orland, CA 95963
Collecting interests: Glenn, Colusa and Tehama Counties

Member Resignation:

Richard Frajola #1373
Ranchos de Taos, NM

Our society is very sorry to lose Richard. He has always been helpful to me in answering my postal history questions.

Member Passing:

Since the last secretary's report we have learned that Bob Myerson, WCS member #227, passed away in November 2019. I only met Bob once. He had invited me to his home where we spent a most enjoyable afternoon showing California covers to each other. Our condolences go out to his family.



IN MEMORIAM. Sadly, we have to report the passing of Bob Myerson, WCS #227, who left us in November, 2019. Bob was the longest-standing member of the Western Cover Society. See also page 37.

Treasurer's Report

Submitted by Ryan Baum

We are on the downhill side of annual dues renewals. We have 85% of our members who have renewed already for the coming year, paid for multi-year, or upgraded to Life Membership. We are still waiting to hear from 35 of our members for their plans to renew. I always am looking for ways to improve and make your renewal easy. This year we started the communication around Thanksgiving via email. This saved us postage and printing for the first mailed notices sent just before the Holidays. We now are rounding up results from our second mailing of notices at the beginning of February. If you have any advice, please drop me a line at ccdollar@hotmail.com.

I also am looking forward to WESTPEX. Do you have your reservations for lodging yet? I look forward to seeing everyone at our membership meeting, presenting our financials at the annual Board meeting, and then walking the bourse for new items to add to my collection.

Thanks go out to Paul Harter for his generous contribution of \$350 to the WCS to defray the added cost of "perfect binding" for the 2020 issues!

Editor's Report

Submitted by Ken Stach

Firstly, you will notice that this mailing of *Western Express* contains a bonus issue! WCS director David New, one of our prolific authors and the 2015 winner of the Basil C. Pearce Award for most outstanding article of the year, has compiled an 80-page monograph entitled "Colorado Gold Rush Letters, 1858 - 1872".

David has had a long passion for Colorado postal history, dating back to his days as a young man interested in geology and the flood of fortune-seekers into what was considered Kansas Territory (or earlier yet, Jefferson Territory), prior to the establishment of Colorado Territory.

"Colorado Gold Rush Letters" contains fully 58 pages of cover/letter illustrations and transcriptions of the contents of their correspondence. These interesting letters provide great insight into the hardships the early miners/settlers incurred venturing into the Colorado frontier. David's monograph also contains detailed profiles for five of the most important early gold mining counties of what was to become Colorado, in addition to several appendices of supporting documentation. Such a compilation will likely never be equaled.

To cap things off, David graciously subsidized the publication of this monograph so that all our Western Cover Society members might receive a copy! As a result, the incremental cost per copy to our Society was roughly half what it costs to print and mail a regular issue. We can't thank David enough for his dedication in pulling all the information together into one monograph, and for his generosity in ensuring that WCS members would receive a copy. Thanks, David!!!

On another note, spring is getting ever closer, meaning that WESTPEX must be just around the corner. For me, this annual get-together in the Bay Area is the highlight of the philatelic year. I look forward to seeing you all at the show, at our meetings on Friday afternoon, and at Schuyler Rumsey's auction. I've not yet heard what all western covers he might have for WESTPEX, but no doubt he'll have some stuff we just can't live without. See you at the show!

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Langton's Humboldt Express

By Gordon L. Nelson, Ph.D.

Introduction

One of the few western express companies that issued an adhesive stamp was Langton's Humboldt Express. This article explores some of the issues of Samuel Langton's Pioneer Express as it applies to the Nevada Humboldt Mining District. When, where, and why? Of considerable interest is the ability to use online versions of the *Marysville Daily Appeal* (January 25, 1860 – December 31, 1876), the *Gold Hill Daily News* (October 12, 1863 – April 8, 1882), and the *Virginia Evening Bulletin* (July 5, 1863 – May 16, 1864). The newspapers were published daily and the sites I was able to access allow full text searching.

Samuel Langton

After Samuel Langton's death on August 24, 1864, a biography from the *Carson Independent* was reprinted in the *Marysville Daily Appeal*.

"Mr. Langton commenced his career in Washington City, in the printing business, which trade he pursued until the declaration of war with Mexico, when he early volunteered and served with credit in Capt. Degg's company, attached to Col. Hughes, regiment, District of Columbia volunteers. Returning from Mexico after peace was declared, he was imbued with the excitement consequent upon the discovery of gold in California, and left Washington City in February, 1849, arriving after an arduous journey in the succeeding July, and engaged in mining in the vicinity of Nevada city, which he pursued until February 1850, when he established himself in the Express business between San Francisco and Downieville, California. Subsequently discontinuing that portion of the route between Marysville and San Francisco, and forming connections at Marysville with other firms, he extended his routes throughout the counties of Yuba, Nevada and Sierra, and ultimately to all the principal business places of Nevada Territory."

Samuel W. Langton was born on February 14, 1830, in Washington D.C. Langton started as a one-man express. His initial route was from Marysville up the Yuba River to Downieville, via Grass Valley

and Nevada City. He also became agent for Adams and Co.'s Express at Downieville. He added partners in 1850 and 1851. In 1852, he added the Pioneer Banking House at Downieville. In 1853, the second of the first two partnerships was dissolved and he formed a new one with his brother A. T. Langton. In February 1855, he sold out to Adams and Co.'s Express, which lasted all of seven days due to the collapse of Adams & Co. on February 23, 1855. He took back his company and formed Langton's Pioneer Express, extending his express line to Sacramento and San Francisco. He formed a co-partnership with N. N. Wilkinson of Marysville and Charles P. Stone of San Francisco. Wilkinson withdrew from the partnership in May 1856, and Stone withdrew in September, but continued on as San Francisco correspondent.

In 1856, Langton gave up the routes from Marysville to Sacramento and San Francisco. From then on, the line connected with Wells Fargo & Co. at Marysville and Nevada City for those cities, as shown by a number of covers with Wells Fargo Marysville or Nevada City conjunctive handstamps on Langton franked envelopes.

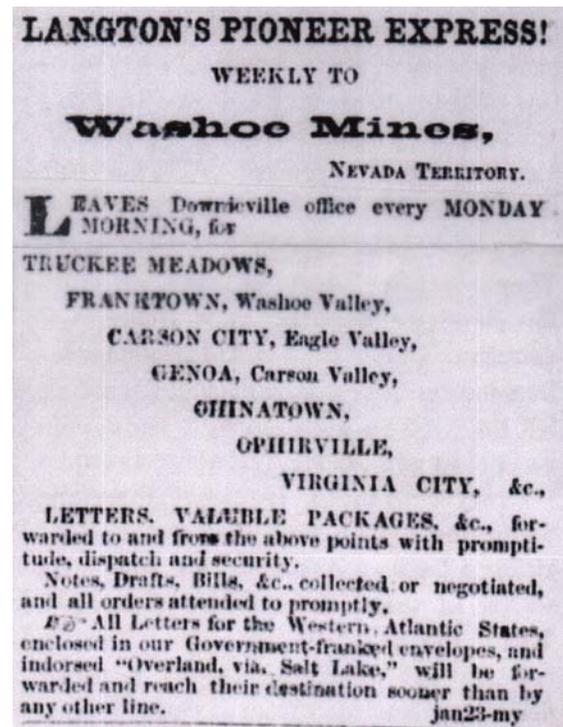


Figure 1. Initial ad in *Marysville Daily Appeal* announcing weekly service to the Washoe Mines (January 23, 1860). Langton's Pioneer Express first extended its lines to most of the sites named in this ad in December of 1858.

Beginning January 23, 1860, the *Marysville Daily Appeal* published special ads (Figure 1, prior page) for Langton's Pioneer Express weekly service to the Washoe Mines in Nevada Territory (Nevada Territory would not officially exist for another year). The service left Monday mornings from Downieville for the Truckee Meadows, Franktown (Washoe Valley), Carson City, Genoa (Carson Valley), Chinatown, Ophirville, and Virginia City, with letters, and valuable packages. etc., forwarded to and from the above points with "promptitude, dispatch, and security." "All letters for the Western Atlantic States, enclosed in our Government franked envelopes, and endorsed 'Overland, via Salt Lake,' will be forwarded and reach their destination sooner than by any other line."

A note in the *Appeal* on March 13th reported that "Sam Langton, accompanied by a number of companions, was to have left Downieville with the Express, for the Carson mines, on yesterday." In a note in the *Appeal* on April 4th it was opined that "Sam Langton is possessed of more energy than a forty horse-power steam engine." With the April 11th issue, the service was advertised as being semi-weekly, leaving Downieville every Monday and Saturday morning. Ads also continued to appear for the Downieville, Forest City, Camptonville, North San Juan service and other localities throughout the Yuba, Sierra and Nevada county region. The Washoe Mines ads continued through December 29, 1860.

Winter in the Sierras means snow. The December 28, 1860, *Marysville Daily Appeal* noted that there was no stage communication with Camptonville, Downieville or Forest City. From a Langton & Co. report, the snow at Camptonville was two feet deep, and four feet deep on the hill above. The express for Forest City from some adjoining places was being brought on "snow-skates."

Examples of "Washoe" covers are shown in Figures 2 through 11, below and on the pages that follow. Figures 2 through 4 show Carson City covers, Figures 5 through 8 show Virginia City covers, and Figures 9 through 11 show Washoe City covers. An early Langton "Nevada" cover is shown in Figure 12. Given the envelope stamp (U26), this latter cover is 1860-61, before the demonetization of postal stationery due to the Civil War.

The *California Farmer and Journal of Useful Sciences* issue of September 13, 1861 has a long article on Sam Langton and Langton & Co. "We do not wonder that throughout all this region 'Sam Langton,' the pioneer, is so well known, or that Langton Brothers, the pioneer Express Company of the mountains are so much in favor, for with the very little facilities afforded by Uncle Sam's Postoffices, they would be all out of the world but for 'Langton & Co.'" "As an evidence of the favor in which this pioneer is held, we saw a magnificent pair of gold spurs, - fine solid gold, of large and ample dimensions, with the chains and pointers all



Figure 2. Later type Langton franked cover addressed to Carson City.

60th Annual Stamp Show

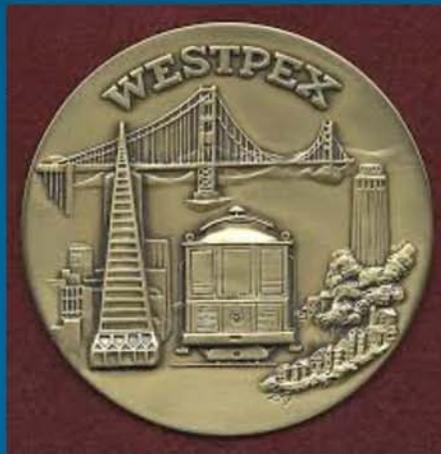
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Contents of the Cover - Gregory's Express Pocket Letter Book

By James W. Milgram, M.D.

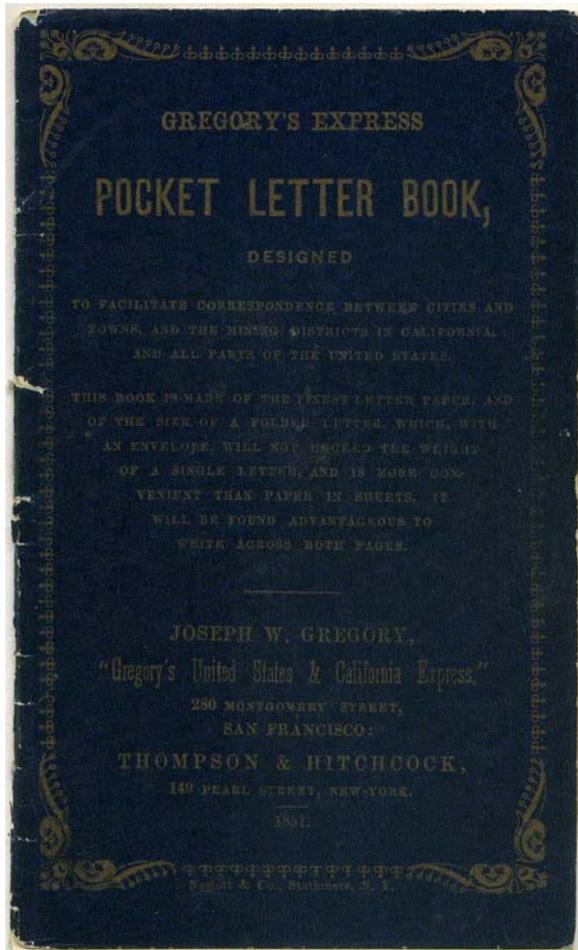


Figure 1. A Gregory's Express Pocket Letter Book, in blue. While not particularly scarce in un-used condition, finding these little books filled out is much more challenging.

They are not uncommon, these navy blue covered little books (Figure 1) with many pages that are titled on the front:

“GREGORY’S EXPRESS POCKET LETTER BOOK designed to facilitate correspondence between cities and towns, and the mining districts in California, and all parts of the United States. This book is made of the finest letter paper, and of the size of a folded letter, which, with an envelope, will not exceed the weight of a single letter, and is more convenient than paper in sheets. It will found advantageous to write across both pages.”

Below this is the printed information “Joseph W Gregory, “Gregory’s United States and California Express”, 280 Montgomery Street, San Francisco. Thompson & Hitchcock 149 Pearl St., New-York, 1851/ Nesbitt & Co. Stationers, N.Y.”

On the inside cover shown in Figure 2 (following page) is advertising about the services of the express and how to address an envelope to a mercantile address or well-known residents in San Francisco from Thompson & Hitchcock, who are the New York agents for J.W. Gregory. On the inside of the back cover is an 1851 calendar. On the outside of the back cover is information about the express company with a list of offices and agents.

This example of the letter book contains a letter utilizing all pages with signature on the calendar page. The transcription of the letter follows (with spelling in kind, and some paragraph breaks added to facilitate ease of reading).

Sacramento May 11, 1851

My Dear Nancy

I embrace this favorable opportunity of informing you that I am well thanks be to the grate Creator whoos flour in such abundance upon us all and hoping this Silent Messenger will find you and our dear children enjoying the same blessing and by the arrival of the last mail, I rec your kind letter dated March 12, 51 which gave me much pleasure to larn that you ware all well and believe Nancy it afords me now [no] little satisfaction to larn that you have gathered as much fortitude as it appears you have and that time is passing off easier than it has formerly with you. I have now doubt that you are lonesome but Nancy remember I have the same room to speak of lonliness or perhaps more than you having no relatives and but few intimate acquaintances in the Land.

I have not for the last five months saw a sole that I was intimate with at home except Gipe. I saw him a few days since he was well and is going into the hay buisness and if helth

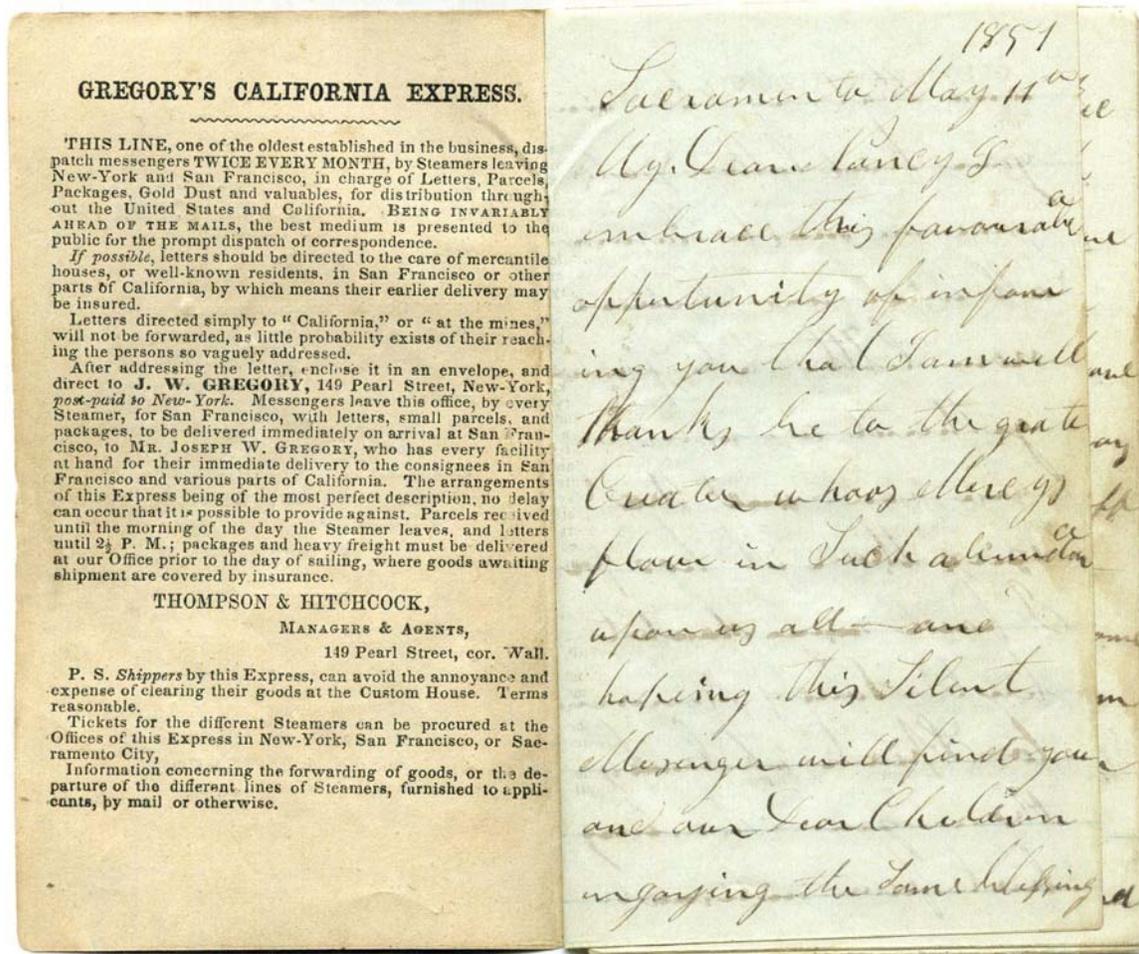


Figure 2. Inside front cover of the Gregory's Pocket Letter Book shown in Figure 1, with letter datelined "Sacramento 1851 May 11th". The full transcription of the letter is contained in this article.

permits there is now doubt but that he will make money. He declares that he never will go home with less than two or three thousand Dolls if it should take him ten years to make it

I have no account of Egan since he left and now not what to think of it if he is alive he is bound to come back here the most of his cloths are here and I think that the man we worked for last fall ows Billy 65 Dolls I think it strange that I don't get some account from him I have not herd anything either on Larkin for some time

I continue at smithing and the partnership with the man I spoke of in my last letter tho business has been very slack all the month of April. But now the rainy season is entirely over and work in our line is gradually increasing. I think that in a few weeks we will

have as much work as we will be able to attend to. We have two first rate sets of tools and if the work is to be done we are prepared to do a grate deal of it.

I am truly glad to larn that Bill Eliot is comeing to California and shall be much better placed to give him a job of work when he comes. I shall look for him about the first of next month....There are a grate many people comeing to California by water by the way of New York and New Orleans and several of them have told me that they came threw to San Francisco in 35 days and unless Wiley [Sullivan] has taken a sailor [sail vessel] and gone around Cape Horn he is certainly a long time on the way.

California has ben recently visited by a destroyer which has laid three of her principle

Some New Express Hand Stamps

By Scott W. Prior

Several undescribed express company hand stamps, or images of previously described hand stamps lacking an illustration in Thomas (2013, 2017), have been identified during the past year at auctions, on eBay, from other collectors and at dealer's bourses. Additionally, two corner card usages were found. The companies represented include: **Adams & Co.; Everts, Snell; Everts, Wilson; Freeman; Hoag; Barlow, Sanderson; Langton; Sullivan; Swift; Wharton; Wheeler; and Wells, Fargo.** They are presented in alphabetical order. The already described, but not previously illustrated examples, use the existing Thomas number as found in his 2nd edition (2017). The new hand stamps are assigned new Thomas numbers that fit within his existing nomenclature. They will appear in any future edition of this work.

Adams & Co.'s Express: ADA-119. A 50 mm x 32 mm blue, double line oval with two lines of printed text and a manuscript date in the center; ADAMS & CO'S EXPRESS./MS date/COLUMBIA. This hand stamp, used as a frank, was described in Thomas (2013, 2017), but no illustration was provided. A cover with this marking was offered in Rumsey's 2019 Westpex sale as lot 809 (Figure 1).

During the late 1890's, Georges Carion is known to have added fraudulent hand stamps to many otherwise good express covers addressed to the firm of Tandler & Co., San Francisco. His *modus operandi* was to generate conjunctive usages with his added hand stamp being the counterfeit marking, thereby "improving" the desirability of the cover. As the cover in Figure 1 was only carried by Adams & Co., it is thought to be a genuine usage.

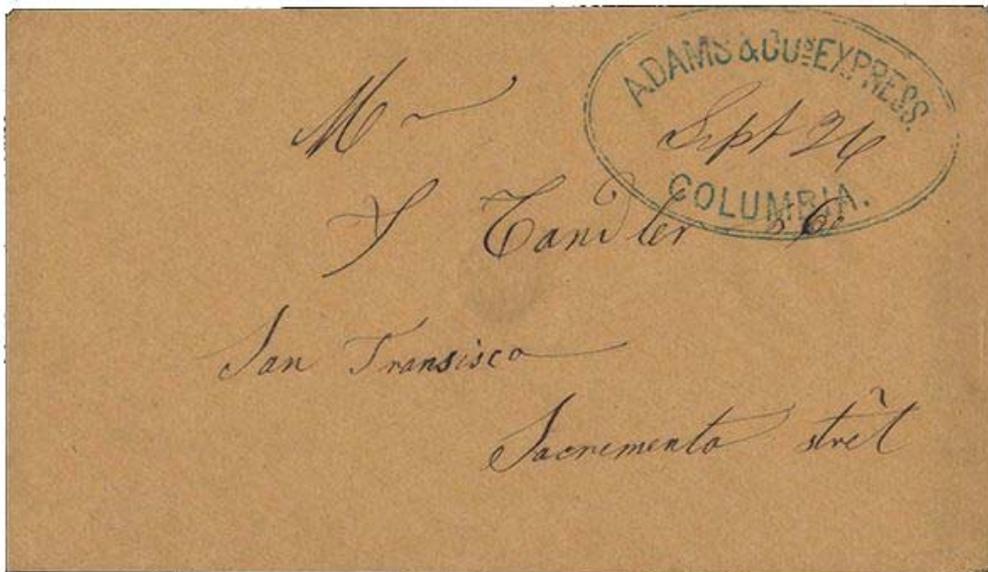


Figure 1. Adams & Co. Express, Columbia. Listed as ADA-119 in Thomas (2017), but not illustrated.



Figure 2. Barlow, Sanderson & Co. New illustrated corner card, OVM-408.

CLASSIC STAMPS AND COVERS

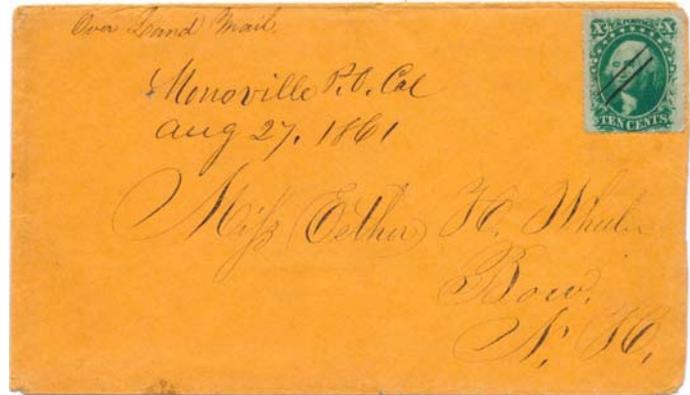
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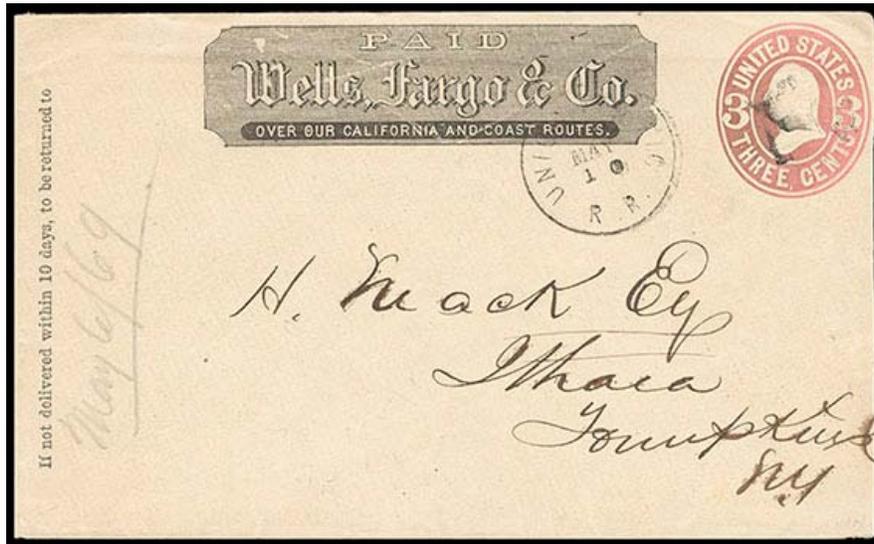
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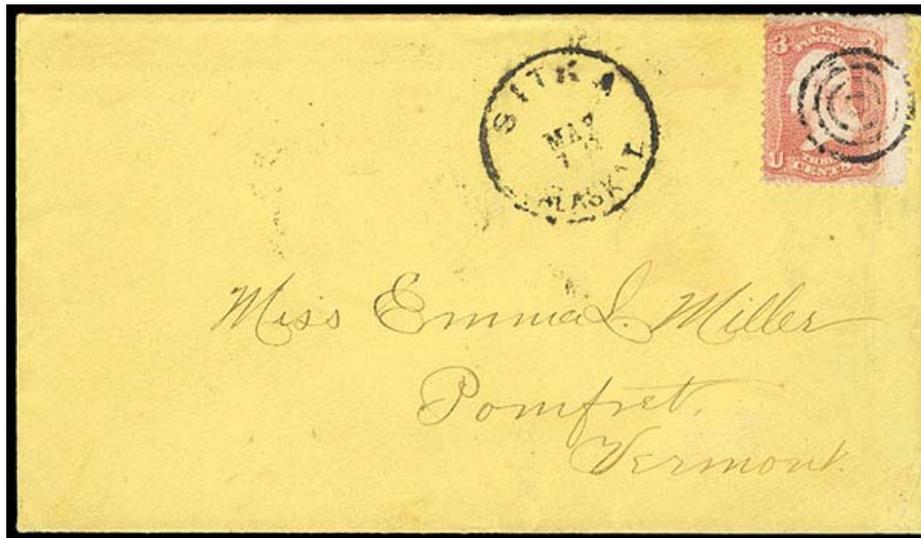
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