

Mails of the Westward Expansion 1803 to 1861



Steven C. Walske
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Western Cover Society

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Table of Contents

<i>Preface</i>	<i>vii</i>
Chapter One: Westward Expansion, 1803-1848	1
1803 Louisiana Purchase	
The Fur Trade Opens Trails into the Louisiana Purchase	
The Fur Trade Moves Westward to the Rockies	
Further Westward Expansion, 1845 to 1848	
Settling the Western Territories	
Early Letter Communications with the West	
Evolution of Postal Communications	
Chapter Two: Santa Fe Trail Mail, 1821-1850	11
The Santa Fe Trail	
The Texan Santa Fe Expedition of 1841	
Kearny's Army of the West, 1846 to 1847	
The Army of the West Captures Santa Fe, 1846	
Kearny Divides the Army of the West, 1846	
The Occupation of Santa Fe	
Chapter Three: Oregon Mails, 1830-1848.	19
The Disputed Oregon Territory	
History of American Interests in the Pacific Northwest	
History of British Interests in the Pacific Northwest	
The Hudson's Bay Company Communication System	
Overview of Oregon Mail Routes before 1849	
Mail via Cape Horn, Direct	
Mail via Cape Horn and California	
Mail via Cape Horn and Hawaii	
Mail via the Mexico Route	
The HBC Overland Brigade Route	
Overland Mails between Missouri and Oregon	
Postal Service of the Provisional Government of Oregon	
The Start of the U.S. Postal Service in Oregon	
Chapter Four: California Mails, 1821-1849	49
Early American Settlement of California	
Early Overland Trips to California	
Emigration Begins to Build, 1843 to 1848	
California Becomes Part of the United States, 1846 to 1848	
Kearny's California Regional Mail Service	
Overview of Transcontinental Mail Routes before 1849	
Mail via Cape Horn, 1821 to 1835	
Mail via Mexico, 1824 to 1846	
Mail via Panama, 1846 to 1849	
Overland Transcontinental Mails	
Military Courier Overland Mail	
Gold Shipments from California	
Private Newspaper Overland Mails to Missouri, 1848	
Other Private Mails, 1848	

Chapter Five: Central Overland Mail, 1847-1850 81

- The Mormon Church Migrates West
- Mail between Salt Lake City and the Missouri River
- The Babbitt Special Contract Mails
- Estill Express
- Trail Mail on the Platte River Road
- Mail between Salt Lake City and California

Chapter Six: Mail Via Panama, 1848-1861 95

- United States Mail Steamship Company Contract
- Pacific Mail Steamship Company Contract
- Transit across the Isthmus of Panama
- Early Contract Period, 1848 to 1851
 - Contract Letters Carried via Panama, 1848 to 1851
 - Mail Agents on Steamships, 1849 to 1852
 - Communications between Europe and the West Coast, 1849 to 1851
 - Contract Mails to and from Oregon, 1849 to 1851
 - Post Office Mails carried by Opposition Steamships, 1849 to 1850
- Middle Contract Period, 1851 to 1855
 - Contract Letters Carried via Panama, 1851 to 1855
 - San Francisco Letter bag Operators, 1853 to 1858
- Late Contract Period, 1855 to 1861
 - Contract Letters Carried via Panama, 1855 to 1859
- End of the 1847 Ocean Mail Contracts in 1859
- Non-Contract Mail via Panama

Chapter Seven: Central Overland Mail, 1850-1861 121

- Contract Route between Salt Lake City and Missouri
 - Woodson Contract, 1850 to 1854
 - Magraw Contract, 1854 to 1856
 - Kimball Contract, 1857
 - Miles Contract, 1857 to 1858
 - Hockaday/COC&PPE Contract, 1858 to 1861
- Contract Route between Salt Lake City and California
 - First Chorpenning Contract, 1851 to 1854
 - Second Chorpenning Contract, 1854 to 1858
 - Third Chorpenning Contract, 1858 to 1860
 - COC&PPE Company Contract, 1860 to 1861
- Contract Route between Salt Lake City and Oregon
 - Brown & Torrence Contract, 1851 to 1854

Chapter Eight: Mail Via Nicaragua, 1851-1857 147

- The Vanderbilt Independent Line and the Accessory Transit Company
- The Walker Filibuster in Nicaragua, 1855 to 1857
- Mail Carried via the Nicaragua Route, 1851 to 1857

Chapter Nine: Southern Overland Mail, 1857-1861	157
Early Communications with Fort Yuma	
“Jackass Mail” Contract Route, 1857 to 1860	
Butterfield Contract Mail Route, 1858 to 1861	
Butterfield Mail Prior to the December 17 Overland Default Order	
Post Office Directive Handstamps Prior to the December 17 Default Order	
Butterfield Mail after the December 17 Overland Default Order	
Post Office Directive Handstamps after the December 17 Default Order	
The End of the Southern Butterfield Mail Route	
 Chapter Ten: Santa Fe Contract Mail, 1850-1861	 173
The First Mail Contract between Santa Fe and Independence, 1850 to 1854	
The Second Mail Contract between Santa Fe and Independence, 1854 to 1858	
The Third Mail Contract between Santa Fe and Independence, 1858 to 1862	
Contract Mail between Neosho and Albuquerque, 1858 to 1859	
Contract Mail between Kansas City and Stockton, 1858 to 1859	
 Chapter Eleven: Mail Via Tehuantepec, 1858-1859	 185
The Route via Tehuantepec	
Early Interest in the Isthmus of Tehuantepec	
The Louisiana Tehuantepec Company Sailing Schedule	
Mail Carried via the Tehuantepec Route, 1858 to 1859	
End of the Louisiana Tehuantepec Company Mail Contract	
 Chapter Twelve: Colorado Mail Routes, 1858-1861	 195
Opening the Pike's Peak Region	
The Leavenworth & Pike's Peak Company	
The Leavenworth & Pike's Peak Company Expands	
The “Phantom” U.S. Mail Contract	
Further Changes with the Leavenworth & Pike's Peak Company	
Further Efforts for a U.S. Contract Mail	
The Only Game in Town	
COC&PPE Takes Over	
Competition Enters the Market	
 Chapter Thirteen: Transcontinental Pony Express Mail, 1860-1861 . . .	 217
The First Rate Period – April to August 1860	
The Second Rate Period – August 1860 to April 1861	
The Third Rate Period – April to June 1861	
The Fourth Rate Period – July to October 1861	
 Appendix A: Rocky Mountain Trip List, 1804 to 1843	 235
 Appendix B: Oregon Ship Sailings, 1824 to 1848.	 241

Appendix C: Via Panama Sailings, 1849 to 1861	249
Appendix D: Central Overland Trip List, 1850 to 1861	275
Appendix E: Via Nicaragua Sailings, 1851 to 1856.	293
Appendix F: Southern Overland Trip List, 1858 to 1861	299
Appendix G: United States Postal Rates (simplified), 1816 to 1861	303
References:	308

Preface

This book was inspired by the research and collection of Floyd E. Risvold, whose extraordinary "American Expansion & the Journey West" postal history collection was sold by Spink Shreve Galleries in January 2010. Floyd epitomized the postal history collector. His collection was formed by the pieces of paper carried by long ago mail systems, but his real passion was the history behind those pieces of paper. In this way, for example, he could bring to life the travails of a pony express rider in 1860. In addition, his generous sharing of his discoveries with other collectors was legendary.

Postal history is the study of postal routes, rates, frankings and markings. The best postal history reference sources are official postal documents and contemporary newspaper reports. However, the official record is invariably incomplete, so the examination of surviving pieces of mail, or covers, from the period can fill in the gaps by showing patterns of postal use. The combination of surviving postal artifacts with postal documentation, historical events and geography can be used to accurately re-create the details of a mail delivery system. This is the approach employed in this book.

The transcontinental mail systems described in this book crossed or touched the Rocky Mountains, either over them or by route around them. As further described in this book, these systems evolved because the restless spirit of the 19th Century American created a series of westward emigrations that populated the West and raised the need for communications with those who remained back East.

The United States Post Office Department was slow to extend its services westward, so the first U.S. contract postal routes did not start until 1850. Prior to that, a combination of private and semi-official mail services inadequately addressed the need for communication. Accordingly, this book is organized by western destination prior to the commencement of post office service, and by transcontinental route after 1849.

The authors would like to thank the following individuals who have assisted with this book. Many generously supplied illustrations of covers in their collections and provided valuable insights. If any names are omitted, please accept our apology for the omission. In any event, all errors and omissions are the responsibility of the authors alone.

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from J.M. Wm. L. Sublette

Chapter One

Westward Expansion, 1803-1848

The September 3, 1783 Treaty of Paris with Great Britain set the western border of the newly-independent United States of America at the Mississippi River. Figure 1-1 shows the original territory and the changes to the borders that occurred prior to 1861. These border changes are overlaid on a map of current state boundaries. The map shows the significant westward territorial expansion beyond the Mississippi River that is described in this chapter.



Figure 1-1. Map of the United States showing acquired territories.

1803 Louisiana Purchase

In an effort to assure access along the entire length of the Mississippi River, President Thomas Jefferson initiated discussions with the French Empire of Napoleon Bonaparte in 1802 for the purchase of New Orleans. Faced with expensive hostilities in Europe, Napoleon offered to sell the entire Louisiana Territory, which included New Orleans, for \$15 million. The American delegates quickly agreed to the purchase on April 30, 1803. Over considerable domestic opposition, the acquisition was ratified by the U.S. Congress on October 31, 1803. The acquired territory labeled as "Louisiana Purchase" in Figure 1-1 was organized into the Territory of Orleans (today's Louisiana) and the vast District of Louisiana.

1 - WESTWARD EXPANSION, 1803-1848

Jefferson wasted little time in sending an exploration into the newly-acquired territory. On May 14, 1804, Lewis and Clark left St Louis, Missouri on their epic journey to the Pacific Ocean. The route they chose was by boat up the Missouri River, which took them on a far northerly track through the Dakotas, Montana and Idaho. Following the northerly route again, the expedition returned to St Louis on September 23, 1806. Figure 1-2 shows the route that they followed to Oregon and back.



Figure 1-2. Map of Lewis and Clark's Expedition to the Pacific Coast.

The boundaries of the United States in 1804 had Spanish Texas, New Mexico and California to the south and west. In the northwest, the Oregon Country was jointly contested by the United States and Great Britain, as was the small Red River Settlement region in the north. In addition, Spain held a small claim in the southeast with its Florida Territory. In 1819, the borders with the Spanish territories were ratified by treaty, and Florida was ceded to the United States. As a part of that agreement, the United States agreed to relinquish all claims to Spanish Texas.

The Fur Trade Opens Trails into the Louisiana Purchase

Lewis and Clark returned from their pioneering transcontinental journey to St Louis, and the accounts of their experiences, particularly of the wildlife, inspired a wave of fur trappers into the west. The early fur trade consisted of building forts in the wilderness to trade goods for pelts with Native Indians. St Louis-based Manuel Lisa was among the first Americans to penetrate the upper Missouri River and its tributaries for fur trading. His St Louis Missouri Fur Company (SLMFC) established Fort Raymond at the confluence of the Yellowstone and Big Horn Rivers (in today's Montana) in July 1807, and enjoyed considerable financial success.

That success attracted competition, and John Jacob Astor's mighty American Fur Company (AFC) decided to enter the western fur trade through a subsidiary called the Pacific Fur Company (PFC). In September 1810, Astor sent the ship *Tonquin* from New York to Oregon via Cape Horn, with a crew of thirty-four. Upon her arrival at the Columbia River in March 1811, the crew set about building Fort Astoria on the site of present-day Astoria, Oregon. Also in March 1811, the PFC sent an overland expedition up the Missouri River under the command of Wilson Price Hunt. Once up the river, Hunt's party moved overland in a westerly direction, crossing the Continental Divide at Teton Pass (in today's

western Wyoming), and continued on to Oregon via the Snake and Columbia Rivers. In February 1812, they reached Fort Astoria. The overland party, under the command of Robert Stuart, then left the fort in June 1812 and returned to St Louis in May 1813. Along the way, they discovered a crossing of the Continental Divide at South Pass (in today's southwestern Wyoming), which would become the main gateway for overland trips in later years. As a result of the War of 1812, the British acquired Fort Astoria in 1813, and it later became an important post of the Hudson's Bay Company.

Table 1-1 lists the earliest known fur trade trips, and shows their focus on the Upper Missouri and Yellowstone Rivers. These fur trade brigades traveled by keelboat up the Missouri River to its confluence with the Yellowstone River at the border between North Dakota and Montana. They then traveled southwest on the Yellowstone to the Big Horn River. Unfortunately, the Indian tribes of the Upper Missouri aligned with the British during the War of 1812, and hostilities curtailed all organized American fur trading activities from 1812 until 1821.

Table 1-1. Earliest Fur Trade Trips up the Missouri River

Party	Departed	Route	Arrived
Lewis & Clark Expedition	St. Louis May 14, 1804 Oregon Mar 23, 1806	Missouri River & Oregon Upper Missouri River	Oregon Dec 7, 1805 St. Louis Sep 23, 1806
Manuel Lisa (SLMFC)	St. Louis Apr 1807 Ft. Raymond Jul 1808	Missouri to Big Horn Yellowstone & Missouri Rivers	Ft. Raymond Jul 1807 St. Louis Aug 1808
Manuel Lisa (SLMFC)	St. Louis May 17, 1809 Ft. Raymond Jul 1809	Missouri & Yellowstone Rivers Yellowstone & Missouri Rivers	Ft. Raymond 1809 St. Louis Oct 1809
Wilson Hunt (PFC)	St. Louis Mar 11, 1811 Ft. Astoria Jun 29, 1812	Overland via Union Pass Overland via South Pass	Oregon Feb 15, 1812 St. Louis May 5, 1813
Manuel Lisa (SLMFC)	St. Louis Mar 30, 1811	Missouri & Yellowstone Rivers Yellowstone & Missouri Rivers	Ft. Raymond Jun 1811 St. Louis Oct 1811
Manuel Lisa (SLMFC)	St. Louis May 6, 1812	Upper Missouri River Missouri River	Mandan Villages St. Louis Jun 1, 1813
J. Pilcher (MFC)	St. Louis Spring 1821	Missouri & Yellowstone Rivers	Big Horn Summer 1821
Andrew Henry (Ashley)	St. Louis Apr 3, 1822	Missouri & Yellowstone Rivers	Ft. Henry Sep 1822
Louis Bompert (MFC)	St. Louis May 13, 1822	Missouri & Yellowstone Rivers	Ft. Benton

Note: the SLMFC was the St Louis Missouri Fur Company, which was succeeded by the Missouri Fur Company (MFC) in 1821. The PFC was Astor's Pacific Fur Company.

The Fur Trade Moves Westward to the Rockies

Another St Louis-based competitor, General William Ashley, entered the fur business in 1822, intending to capture a significant portion of the Missouri River business from Manuel Lisa's successor, the Missouri Fur Company. Ashley's plans were thwarted by a June 1823 battle with the Mandan Indians at the Arikara Villages (on the Missouri River in today's northern South Dakota), which stopped his progress up the river. Not to be deterred, Ashley sent an overland trapping expedition west into the Rockies under the command of Jedediah Smith and William Sublette, thus forming the foundation for what would become

1 - WESTWARD EXPANSION, 1803-1848



William Sublette, 1799-1848

- Led first trapping party to the Rockies, 1823-26
- Purchased Ashley's interests with Smith and Jackson, 1826
- Led supply caravan to 3rd rendezvous in 1827
- Sold fur trade interests to RMFC in 1830
- Trading expedition to Santa Fe in 1831
- Led supply train with Wyeth to rendezvous in 1832
- Built Fort William (Laramie) in 1834
- 1843 - Final trip to the Rockies

the Rocky Mountain Fur Company. This party crossed at South Pass and trapped for beaver in the Green River region until 1825. This was the first time that an organized party of American trappers had gone into the wilderness to hunt directly, and raised the logistical problems of re-supply and getting the furs back to market. Ashley solved these problems by sending a supply train to the first fur trade rendezvous at Henry Fork in June 1825. There, he sold supplies at attractive margins to the trappers and purchased their furs from them at low

prices. Ashley transported the furs back to St Louis where he could sell them at a significant profit, and the trappers stayed in the mountains for another year of trapping. This business model proved so profitable that annual fur trade rendezvous meetings continued until 1840.

Table 1-2 below details the earliest fur trade rendezvous trips.

Table 1-2. Earliest Fur Trade Rendezvous Trips

Party	Departed	Route	Arrived
Smith/Sublette (Ashley)	Ft. Kiowa Sep 1823 Green River Jun 1824	Overland via South Pass Platte River	Green River Mar 19, 1824 St. Louis Sep 1824
Supply Train (Ashley)	Council Bluffs Nov 3, 1824 Henry Fork Jul 7, 1825	Platte River & Bridger Pass Missouri & Yellowstone Rivers	Henry Fork Jun 29, 1825 St. Louis Oct 4, 1825
Jedediah Smith (Ashley)	St. Louis Oct 29, 1825 Willow Valley Aug 16, 1826	Colorado River	Willow Valley Jun 1826 California Nov 27, 1827
Supply Train (Ashley)	St. Louis Mar 8, 1826 Bear River Jul 18, 1826	Platte River Road & South Pass South Pass & Platte River Road	Ham's Fork May 25, 1826 St. Louis Sep 26, 1826
Ashley sold out to Smith, Jackson & Sublette (SJS) at the July 1826 rendezvous			
Supply Train (SJS)	St. Louis Mar 26, 1827 Bear Lake Aug 1, 1828	Platte River Road & South Pass South Pass & Platte River Road	Bear Lake Jul 1, 1827 St. Louis Oct 6, 1828

Table 1-2 shows that, initially, the Ashley supply caravans left St Louis in the fall of each year and wintered in the mountains. They then trapped until the following summer rendezvous and returned with the furs in the fall. Starting in 1826, the fur trade caravans left in the spring of each year and returned in the fall of that same year. They used the Platte River road from a jumping off point along the lower Missouri River (typically Independence, Missouri) to the Rocky Mountains. This route followed the banks of the Platte River and the North Fork of the Platte River to South Pass and then into the trapping areas, and became the foundation for both the later Oregon and California emigration trails. Figure 1-3 shows this trail, along with the locations of the 1825-1840 Fur Trade rendezvous meetings.

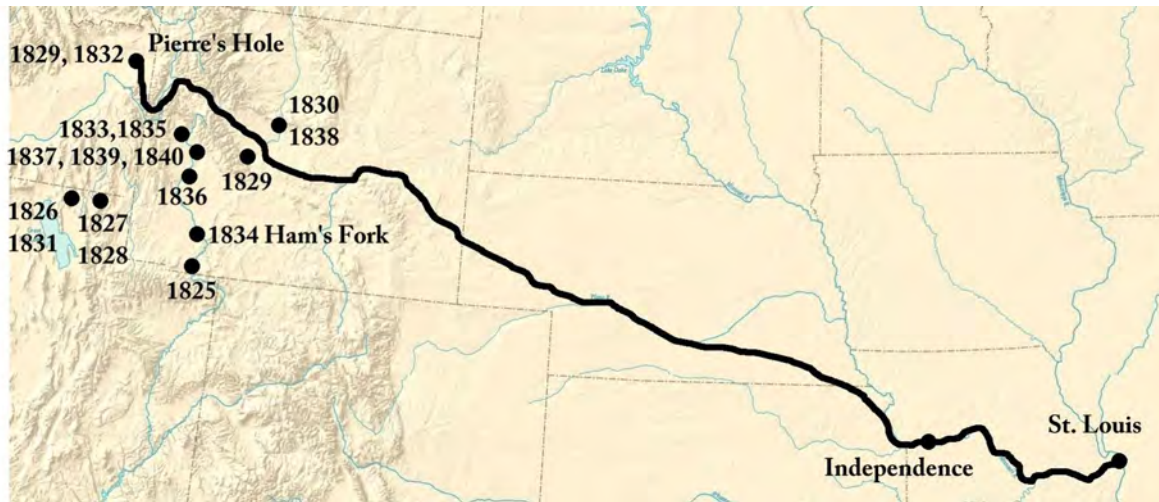


Figure 1-3. Map of the Platte River Road and Fur Trade Rendezvous.

Ashley's financial success was noted by other fur trade companies, who hurried to adopt the new business model of sending trappers into the wilderness, and using the annual rendezvous to re-supply and gather furs. By 1834, five competing fur trade companies were vying for business at the rendezvous: the Rocky Mountain Fur Company, the American Fur Company, the Hudson's Bay Company, Nathaniel Wyeth's Columbia River Fishing & Trading Company, and the Bonneville Fur Company.

Typically, only one to three caravans were sent each year (by competing fur trade companies), all departing from St. Louis in the March to May period. This was because the caravans travelled in large groups for safety from Indian attacks, and set out only after there was enough prairie grass to feed their horses. The two to three month trip from St. Louis also meant that most of the rendezvous meetings were held in June-August.

Early settlers and missionaries, particularly those going overland to Oregon, accompanied fur trade caravans to the annual rendezvous, and then continued with a returning Hudson's Bay Company fur trade caravan to Oregon from the rendezvous.

The fur trade experienced intense competition in 1834-36, followed in 1836-37 by a consolidation that left two major contestants: Astor's American Fur Company and the Hudson's Bay Company. However, a precipitous decline in demand for beaver pelts meant the effective end of the business by 1840. No further rendezvous were held after the June 1840 meeting at the Green River.

Further Westward Expansion, 1845 to 1848

Spain lost its Mexican colonies to independence in 1821, so the United States found itself with a new neighbor. In the 1820s, Mexico encouraged American immigration to Texas in an effort to populate its northern region. The Americans quickly became the majority, and seceded from Mexico in 1836. The new Republic of Texas favored annexation to the United States, but faced initial opposition from the U.S. Congress.

1 - WESTWARD EXPANSION, 1803-1848

In 1844, James Polk was elected President with a popular mandate to acquire both Texas and Oregon. Polk was also highly intrigued by Mexico's Alta California province, and was concerned that the Pacific coast might fall under the dominion of Great Britain. After failed negotiations to purchase Texas, New Mexico and California from Mexico in November 1845, Polk set a plan into action to forcefully acquire those territories.

Texas was admitted as a state on December 29, 1845, and this precipitated conflict with Mexico, which still claimed Texas as part of its sovereign territory. The United States sent troops to the Rio Grande River to protect its new state, and fighting soon broke out. Consequently, war was declared with Mexico on May 13, 1846. Polk had anticipated this in 1845 by sending naval forces to the coast of California and a small force under Colonel John Frémont overland to California.

The war was disastrous for Mexico. General Stephen Kearny's Army of the West captured Santa Fe, New Mexico on August 18, 1846 before proceeding to California, and the Mexican forces in California surrendered to Frémont on January 13, 1847. The final blow was the loss of Mexico City to General Winfield Scott on May 1, 1847. With few options left, Mexico signed the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo on February 2, 1848, which ended hostilities but ceded Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, Nevada and Alta California to the United States.

As shown in Figure 1-1, the United States and Great Britain also had a number of territorial disputes, some of which were resolved by the Treaty of 1818. That agreement established the joint occupation and settlement of the Oregon Territory, and traded British territory around the Red River Settlement for American claims above the 49th parallel in Canada's Alberta province.

The two countries then engaged in a race to control Oregon, with the United States sending numerous missionaries and settlers to the region in 1834-43, and Great Britain's Hudson's Bay Company establishing commercial dominance in the area. This rivalry culminated in the June 15, 1846 agreement to divide the disputed territory along the 49th parallel, with the United States gaining full control of the southern portion encompassing today's states of Oregon, Washington and Idaho.

In the span of just 45 years, the United States had more than tripled its territory. The major issue remaining was how to settle and incorporate the new territory. Postal communication would play a crucial enabling role in that consolidation.

Settling the Western Territories

After the fur trade blazed the trails across the western wilderness from 1825 to 1833, four major waves of emigration from the United States populated the West from 1843 to 1860. Sporadic missionaries and settlers went west in the intervening decade of 1833 to 1843, but specific events spurred the greater movement westward in 1843 and afterwards.

The first major emigration was to Oregon, spurred by reports from returning missionaries and advocates for settlement such as Jason Lee, Hall Kelley and Marcus Whitman. In addition, Oregon passed the Organic Laws in July 1843, which allowed each settler a claim of up to 160 acres. Consequently, a growing number of emigrants in 1843 increased markedly in 1844 and beyond.

While large numbers of emigrants went to Oregon in 1843-45, a small number split off for California. In 1846, this number increased dramatically (and actually exceeded the number going to Oregon that year), but included the ill-fated Donner Party, whose fate was well publicized back east. Consequently, the

number of emigrants to California decreased markedly in 1847-48. However, news of the discovery of gold at Sutter's Mill in January 1848 reached New York in August 1848, and precipitated a massive emigration to California in 1849 and beyond.

Persecution of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (popularly known as the Mormon Church) drove its members from their homes in the East to Nauvoo, Illinois in 1838. Continued troubles and the after-effects of the murder of Joseph Smith in June 1844 led to the expulsion of the Mormons from Illinois in February 1846. Their new leader, Brigham Young, then led them to safety in Winter Quarters on the west bank of the Missouri River in today's Nebraska. Young decided that they should settle on land not wanted by anyone else, and identified the Great Salt Lake valley (owned by Mexico at that time) as the best location for permanent settlement. Accordingly, the first Mormon emigrant train left Winter Quarters on April 5, 1847 and followed the north bank of the Platte River to South Pass. It then proceeded via Fort Bridger to Salt Lake, where its advance elements arrived on July 21, 1847.

Table 1-3 shows the numbers of emigrants to California, Oregon and Utah from 1840 to 1860, as estimated by Unruh in *The Plains Across*. During the same period of time, the U.S. population grew from 17 million in 1840 to 31 million in 1860.

Table 1-3. Annual Overland Emigration to the West

Year	California	Oregon	Utah	Year	California	Oregon	Utah
1840	0	13	0	1851	1,100	3,600	1,500
1841	34	24	0	1852	50,000	10,000	10,000
1842	0	125	0	1853	20,000	7,500	8,000
1843	38	875	0	1854	12,000	6,000	3,200
1844	53	1,475	0	1855	1,500	500	4,700
1845	260	2,500	0	1856	8,000	1,000	2,400
1846	1,500	1,200	0	1857	4,000	1,500	1,300
1847	450	4,000	2,200	1858	6,000	1,500	150
1848	400	1,300	2,400	1859	17,000	2,000	1,400
1849	25,000	450	1,500	1860	9,000	1,500	1,600
1850	44,000	6,000	2,500	totals	200,300	53,000	42,900

The fourth wave of emigrants was to Colorado from 1858 to 1860, prompted by the discovery of gold in the Pike's Peak region. By the time of the 1860 census, there were nearly 35,000 settlers, mostly concentrated around the burgeoning town of Denver.

Early Letter Communications with the West

Communication with the new western territories was difficult before 1850. Regular routes were only just being established and opportunities to send mail were infrequent and unreliable. Correspondents had a

1 - WESTWARD EXPANSION, 1803-1848

choice of sending their letters by sea around Cape Horn, or overland. Of necessity, their communications relied on private parties travelling to or from the West. Chapters Two through Five describe the various options in detail.

From 1825 to 1840, the only possibility for mail to or from the mountains was by fur trade supply caravan. Figure 1-4 shows an extraordinary example carried back from the 1832 fur trade rendezvous.

The writer was Nathaniel Wyeth, a Boston ice merchant who was trying to get into the fur trade and salmon fishing businesses. His party, which was travelling to Oregon, had been escorted to the rendezvous

by William Sublette, who led the only fur trade supply caravan that year. They left Independence, Missouri on May 13, 1832 and arrived at the Pierre's Hole rendezvous (in today's eastern Idaho) on July 8. Wyeth stayed until July 24, and then left for Oregon.

Nathaniel J. Wyeth, 1802-1856

- May-July 1832 trip to 1832 fur trade rendezvous with Sublette
- Traveled to Fort Vancouver, Oregon, 1832
- Stayed with McLoughlin (HBC), October 1832-February 1833
- Traveled from Oregon to 1833 rendezvous, February-July 1833
- Returned to Massachusetts from July to November 1833
- Led supply caravan to 1834 rendezvous, April-June 1834
- Established Fort Hall trading post in July 1834
- Stayed in Oregon, September 1834 to June 1836
- Returned to Mass. via Taos, June-November 1836



Before leaving, he wrote this short July 14 note to his brother, complaining about desertions among his men, but expressing optimism that he could make money in the fur trade, "after learning the business." He endorsed it "fav(or) of Mr. Wm L. Sublette" and entrusted it to Sublette for the return journey to St Louis. Following a skirmish with Black Feet Indians, known as the Battle of Pierre's Hole, Sublette left the rendezvous with this letter on July 30 and arrived back in St Louis on October 3. He mailed it unpaid on October 5 in St Louis. It was

rated 25 cents due for the greater than 400 miles from St. Louis to Baltimore. This is the earliest known trans-Rocky Mountains letter.



Figure 1-4. Letter dated July 14, 1832 from Pierre's Hole rendezvous, and carried to St Louis by fur trader William Sublette.



Figure 1-5. John Clymer's painting of Sublette's supply train returning from the July 1832 Pierre's Hole rendezvous. Sublette's arm is in a sling from a wound incurred at the Battle of Pierre's Hole.

Wyeth spent the winter of 1832-33 as a guest of John McLoughlin, chief factor of the Hudson's Bay Company at Fort Vancouver, Oregon. While there, he wrote the January 1833 letter illustrated as Figure 3-17 in Chapter Three. He returned east with an HBC fur trade brigade, which left on February 3 and arrived at the 1833 Green River rendezvous (in today's western Wyoming) on July 16. While there, he contracted with the Rocky Mountain Fur Company to supply them at the 1834 rendezvous, and returned to St Louis on October 29, 1833 by boat trip along the Yellowstone and Missouri Rivers. The following year, Wyeth's supply train left Independence, Missouri on April 28, 1834, but arrived on June 17 - four days after the competition, so he was not able to profitably sell his goods or buy beaver pelts at the rendezvous. Figure 1-6 shows a letter that he wrote at the 1834 rendezvous.



Figure 1-6. Letter datelined June 21, 1834 from the Ham's Fork rendezvous, and carried to St Louis by fur trader Michael Cerré.

1 - WESTWARD EXPANSION, 1803-1848

This letter was datelined "Ham's Fork of the Colorado of the West Latt. 41°, 45' Long. 112°, 35' W. June 21st 1834" (near today's Granger, Wyoming). In this short letter to his wife, Wyeth expresses uncertainty that his fur business will succeed. He left the rendezvous on July 1 with his supplies, and established Fort Hall in Idaho to sell the goods and trade with the natives. Before leaving, he entrusted this letter to Michael Cerré of the Bonneville Fur Company, who left the rendezvous on July 10 and arrived in St Louis in late August. Cerré gave the letter to St Louis merchants and forwarders Von Phul and McGill, who posted the letter unpaid on September 1. It was rated 25 cents due for the greater than 400 miles to Cambridge, Massachusetts, where it arrived on September 16. It was then forwarded twice within Massachusetts for 12 cents in additional postal charges.

Figure 3-21 in Chapter Three also illustrates an 1839 letter carried by missionaries to Oregon, who were escorted there by fur trade brigades.

Evolution of Postal Communications

The growing numbers of settlers in the West demanded adequate letter communications with the United States. Initially, this need was met by private expresses and forwarders that charged a premium fee for the letters that they carried.

The U.S. post office was slow to move into the new western territories. In some cases, such as Astoria and Salt Lake City, official post offices were established, but routes connecting them to the rest of the United States were not put in place until much later. This led to an interesting situation, where postmasters entered into special mail contracts, typically with expressmen already carrying private mails, to carry post office mails on a trip by trip basis for the amount of U.S. postage carried. These "special contract mails" ended when the post office signed route contracts to carry the mails on a regular basis to one of these orphan post offices. The first western postal route contracts were signed in 1850 for the Salt Lake City and Santa Fe routes, as described more fully herein. Special contract mails are known as late as 1860 in Colorado.

Accordingly, this book is organized by pre-contract and post-contract periods for the major postal routes between the United States and the West. The pre-contract period is organized by major destination: southwest to Santa Fe, by sea or overland to Oregon, by sea or overland to California, and overland to Salt Lake City along the Central Route.

The contract period is organized by post office route contract: by sea via Panama, overland on the Central Route, overland on the Southern Route, overland to Santa Fe, and by sea via Tehuantepec, Mexico. Some topics are considered separately, such as Colorado mails and the Pony Express, which had intertwined private and contract mails.

Army of the West

Chapter Two

Santa Fe Trail Mail, 1821-1850

This chapter describes the mails that travelled on the Santa Fe Trail between New Mexico and Missouri from 1821 to 1850. The period began with Mexico's August 24, 1821 independence from Spain, and ended with the July 1, 1850 start of the first U.S. contract mail service between Santa Fe and Independence, Missouri. Unfortunately, prior to Stephen W. Kearny's military expedition to Santa Fe at the start of the Mexican War in 1846, there is a dearth of letter mail known in private or institutional collections.

The Santa Fe Trail

Captain William Becknell, a War of 1812 veteran from Arrow Rock, Missouri (just east of Independence) is considered to be the Father of the Santa Fe Trail. Following the announcement of Mexican independence, he departed from Missouri on a trading expedition, and arrived in Santa Fe in November 1821, after following the route which became known as the Santa Fe Trail. This route, originally touching at Bent's Fort (in today's Colorado) remained the primary mail, commercial and military route to the Southwest for decades. A shortcut over less mountainous terrain known as the Cimarron Cutoff (shown in green in Figure 2-1), was also used. At Santa Fe, the trail connected with a southbound trail to Chihuahua, Mexico known as the El Camino Real de la Tierra Adentro (Royal Road to the Interior Lands). This trail provided a conduit for trade with Chihuahua and central Mexico.



Figure 2-1. Santa Fe Trail (in red), Cimarron Cutoff (in green) and the alternate Taos route via Palo Flechado Pass (in blue).

Early mail from American residents in New Mexico was carried privately to Missouri by returning merchants or trappers, usually in the company of a trade caravan. One of the earliest reported examples of mail carried over the Santa Fe Trail is part of Turley Family Papers owned by the Missouri Historical Society, and is illustrated in Figure 2-2.

2 - SANTA FE TRAIL MAIL, 1821 - 1850

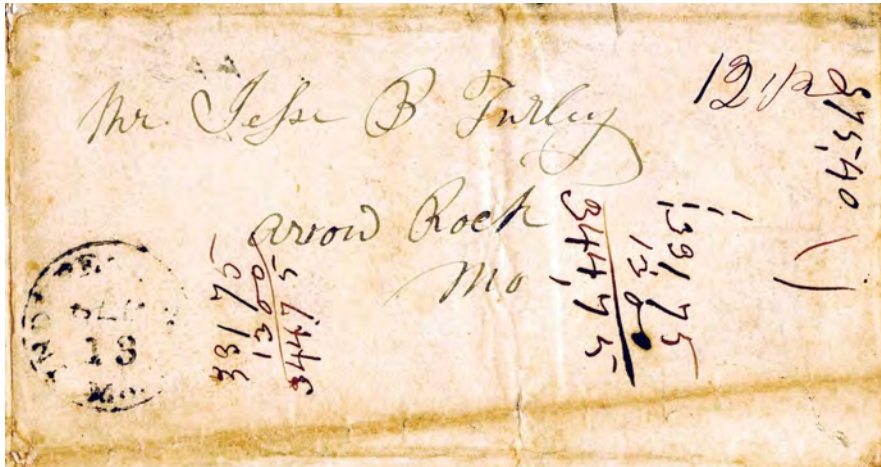


Figure 2-2. August 3, 1841 letter from Taos to Arrow Rock, Missouri that entered the mails at Independence on September 13.

This letter from Simeon Turley was dated at Taos on August 3, 1841 and addressed to his brother Jesse in Arrow Rock, Missouri. The letter mentions that he is sending it by Nick Gentry (a wagon-master who had first gone to Santa Fe with Charles Bent in 1829) and includes a reference to trade goods being sold, including buffalo robes and beaver pelts. The letter was carried over the Palo Flechado Pass

and on the main Santa Fe Trail via Bent's Fort to Independence, Missouri. It was postmarked there on September 13, 1841 and rated for 12½ cents postage due.

Simeon Turley came west from Boone's Lick, Kentucky to Taos in 1830. Like many Americans who wished to settle in the area, he became a Mexican citizen. He was soon engaged in the retail trade in Taos and Santa Fe, dealing in goods imported from the United States by his brother Jesse and others including the Bent brothers. Simeon's primary residence was a few miles north of Taos and his compound included a flour mill and a distillery where large quantities of whiskey ("Taos Lightening") were made. The Turley correspondence includes additional letters that were similarly carried and entered the mails at Independence or delivered directly to the addressee. One of these letters, also dated 1841, accompanied a shipment that included approximately fifty ounces of gold that he had taken from the stream that supplied water to run his flour mill. Simeon was later killed during the Taos Revolt in January 1847.

The Texan Santa Fe Expedition of 1841

In 1840, Texas President Mirabeau Lamar¹ attempted to gain control over the Santa Fe Trail trade and to exert territorial control over much of New Mexico by peaceful persuasion. Failing in that, he resorted to a military expedition in 1841. Lamar raised an invasion force of slightly over 300 men, including merchants carrying trade goods. This group, designated the "Santa Fe Pioneers," departed on June 19, 1841 from a point twenty miles north of Austin, Texas.

By early September the Texans, now split into two groups and worn out from difficult travel, began entering New Mexico near present-day Tucumcari. News of the incursion had previously reached New Mexico's Governor Manuel Armijo, and the Mexican militia was prepared. First, Colonel Cook's party of ninety men surrendered and then the larger body of 200 men under Colonel McCloud also surrendered on October 5 without any shots fired. The prisoners had their property, arms and shoes taken from them, and were marched some 2,000 miles to Mexico City. They were not released until April 1842.

News of the failed Texan Santa Fe expedition was carried to the United States by Manuel Alvarez, the U.S. Consul at Santa Fe. His departure from Santa Fe was delayed for twenty-four days by Governor Armijo, in what Alvarez considered to be an attempt to cause further risk from weather and the Comanches on the trail to Missouri. Alvarez finally left Santa Fe with his party of sixteen men on October 26, 1841. After five of

the party split off to return to Texas, the remaining group continued east on the Santa Fe Trail. During a severe snow storm near Council Bluffs, two men froze to death and 48 of their 67 animals perished. The remaining members of the party arrived at Independence on December 13, 1841.

A letter carried on this ill-fated journey, also owned by the Missouri Historical Society, is shown in Figure 2-3. This October 22, 1841 letter was written by James Magoffin, a well-known Santa Fe Trail trader recently arrived at Santa Fe with goods from Saint Louis. It is addressed to an attorney in Colombia, Missouri and endorsed to be carried by Mr. Manuel Alvarez at the lower left. It entered the mails with an Independence postmark of December 20 and postage due of 18³/₄ cents.

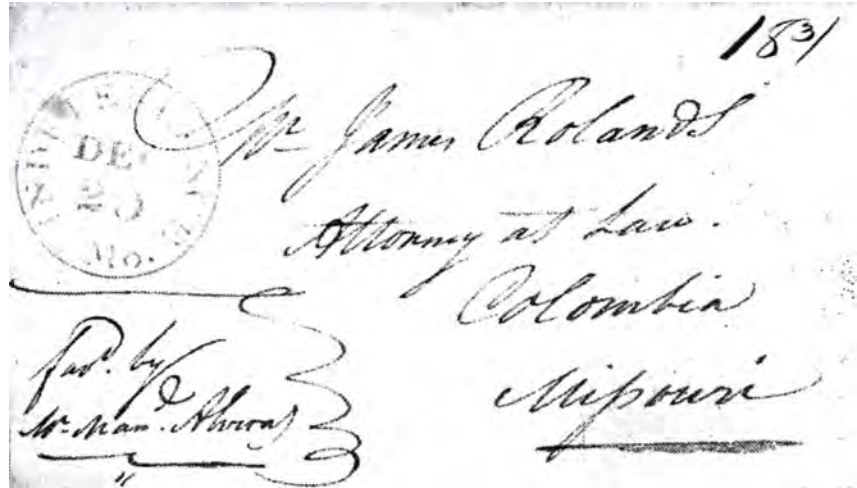


Figure 2-3. October 22, 1841 letter from Santa Fe to Colombia, Missouri that entered the mails at Independence on December 20.

Kearny's Army of The West, 1846 to 1847

Shortly after the outbreak of the Mexican-American War, General Stephen W. Kearny was assigned the task of capturing New Mexico with his newly-formed "Army of the West." His initial force consisted of approximately 1,800 men, including 600 men from Kearny's U.S. 1st Dragoons, and 800 men from the 1st Regiment of Missouri Mounted Volunteers under Colonel Alexander Doniphan. They began departing from Fort Leavenworth on June 26, 1846 and followed the Santa Fe Trail into Mexico.

The main portion of Kearny's forces arrived at Bent's Fort between July 18 and July 31, 1846. This post on the Arkansas River was considered to be the furthest point of the trail still in the United States. Newspapers reported that a military mail from forward positions passed through Bent's Fort on July 18, 1846 and arrived at Fort Leavenworth on August 18.

A small number of letters written by Kearny's soldiers, or by traders accompanying the army, have survived. These artifacts, coupled with newspaper reports, allow a reconstruction of the mail services employed. Three letters carried at the same time from the area around Bent's Fort show an interesting contrast between how private mail was handled and how mail from the army was handled.



Bent's Fort, 1833-1849

- Built as trading post by Bent Brothers and St Vrain
- Kit Carson employed as hunter in 1841
- Staging point for Army of the West in 1846
- Abandoned due to cholera epidemic in 1849

2 - SANTA FE TRAIL MAIL, 1821 - 1850

The earliest (Figure 2-4) was written by Ebenezer N. Pomeroy, a trader employed by Robert Aull who was traveling with the Army of the West.

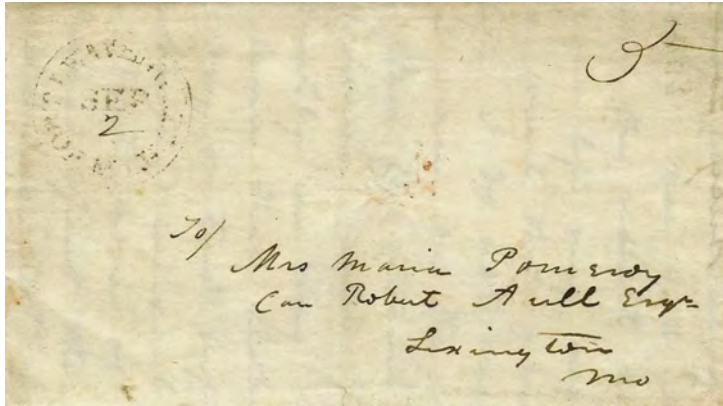


Figure 2-4. July 31, 1846 letter from Bent's Fort to Lexington, Missouri that entered the mails at Fort Leavenworth on September 2.

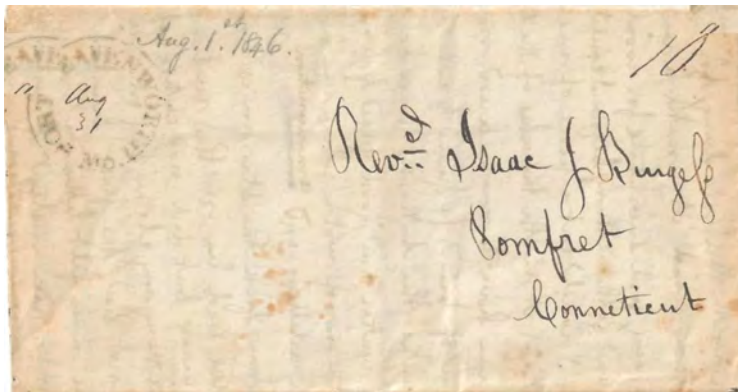


Figure 2-5. August 1, 1846 letter from Bent's Fort to Connecticut that entered the mails at Fort Leavenworth on August 31.

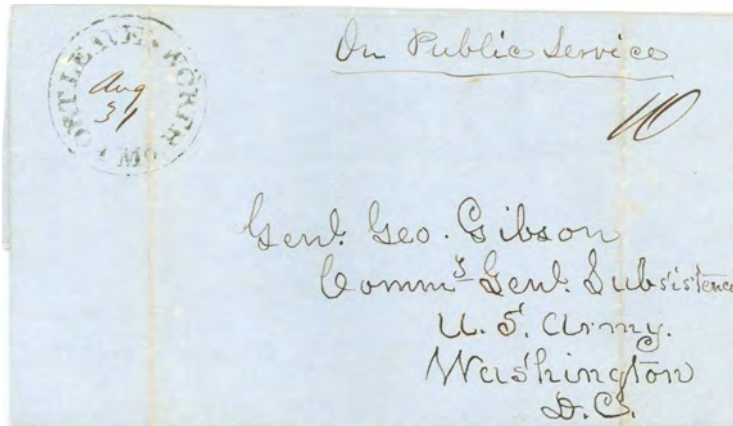


Figure 2-6. July 31, 1846 letter from Bent's Fort to Washington, D.C. that entered the mails at Fort Leavenworth on August 31.

This letter is datelined "Near Bent's Fort" on July 31, 1846 and is addressed to Pomeroy's wife, care of Robert Aull, at Lexington, Missouri. It was probably carried by a member of Aull's company who accompanied the military mail courier to Fort Leavenworth. It was postmarked there on September 2 and rated for five cents postage due. The second letter (Figure 2-5) was written by a member of Doniphan's Missouri volunteer cavalry. It was datelined August 1, 1846 "In camp on the banks of the Arkansas River five miles below Bents Fort in the Indian Country," and addressed to Pomfret, Connecticut.

This letter, rated for 10 cents postage due, was postmarked at Fort Leavenworth in manuscript on August 31, two days earlier than the civilian letter in Figure 2-4.

The third letter (Figure 2-6) was written by Lieutenant William N. Grier, a member of Kearny's 1st Dragoons. It was datelined, "Encampment of 'Army of the West' near 'Bent's Fort' Arkansas River" on July 31, 1846. This letter is addressed to General Gibson, Commissary General of Sustenance, US. Army, Washington, D.C. and endorsed "On Public Service" at the top. This public service endorsement did not relieve the letter of postage due, but did allow the recipient to claim the amount due as a reimbursable expense. Like Figure 2-5, this letter was postmarked on August 31 at Fort Leavenworth, and rated for postage due of 10 cents. It was docketed as received on September 14.

These three letters show that the military letters from Kearny's U.S. troops and Doniphan's volunteers were handled expeditiously together, but that civilian mail was either handled in separate bags or delivered privately to the post office.

The Army of the West Captures Santa Fe, 1846

On August 1, Kearny departed from Bent's Fort into Mexico and arrived with little opposition in Santa Fe on August 18, 1846. Surviving letters suggest that the military began a regular mail service between Fort Leavenworth and Santa Fe shortly after occupying Santa Fe. Table 2-1 shows the known eastbound trips undertaken in 1846.

Table 2-1 – Trips between Santa Fe and Missouri in 1846

Departed from / Date	Arrived to / Date	Notes
Bent's Fort Jul 18, 1846	Fort Leavenworth Aug 18, 1846	Army of the West advance party
Bent's Fort Aug 1, 1846	Fort Leavenworth Aug 31, 1846	See Figures 2-4 to 2-6
Bent's Fort Aug 3, 1846	Independence Aug 28, 1846	Colburn
East of Bent's Fort ?	Fort Leavenworth Sep 9, 1846	
Santa Fe Aug 22, 1846	? Sep 19 or 20, 1846	October 1 news reports
Santa Fe Sep 9, 1846	Independence Oct 4, 1846	See Figure 2-7
Santa Fe Sep 17, 1846	Fort Leavenworth Oct 17, 1846	See Figure 2-8
Santa Fe Sep 27, 1846	Fort Leavenworth Oct 30, 1846	Lt.-Col. Ruff of MO Volunteers
Santa Fe Oct 9, 1846	Fort Leavenworth Nov 4, 1846	See Figure 2-10
Santa Fe Oct 14, 1846	St Louis Nov 15, 1846	Capt. Fitzpatrick from California
Santa Fe Oct 18, 1846	St Louis Nov 27, 1846	Major Sumner
Santa Fe Oct 20, 1846	Fort Leavenworth ?	Reported in St Louis on Dec. 5
Santa Fe Oct 21, 1846	Independence Nov 26, 1846	Reported in St Louis on Dec. 23
Santa Fe Oct 26, 1846	Independence Dec 1, 1846	Dr Vaughn
Santa Fe Nov 16, 1846	Fort Leavenworth Dec 25, 1846 ?	Reported in St Louis on Dec. 31
Santa Fe Dec 4, 1846	Fort Leavenworth Feb 12, 1847	Goff letter to Weston, MO
Santa Fe Dec 28, 1846	Independence Mar 2, 1847	Lt. Hinton letter to Virginia

The regular military mail service was apparently discontinued after General Kearny left Santa Fe in September 1846. Irregular mails continued to be carried after that by returning traders or military couriers.

Two letters from the trader Ebenezer Pomeroy are the earliest known from occupied Santa Fe to Independence. The earlier letter, dated August 30, 1846 from Santa Fe, reported that letters dated in July had been received by the hand of Captain Charles Bent in less than thirty days from the East. The second letter, datelined September 4 is shown in Figure 2-7. This letter was postmarked on October 5 in Independence and rated for five cents postage due. It was part of a mail carried by a group of traders who departed from Santa Fe on September 9, 1846. The October 9, 1846 *St Louis Republican* reported that the leader of the party of traders had arrived in Independence on October 3 and that the wagon with the mails was to arrive on the following day.

2 - SANTA FE TRAIL MAIL, 1821 - 1850



Figure 2-7. August 30, 1846 letter from Santa Fe to Missouri that entered the mails at Independence on October 5.

Mail from the Army of the West was carried by military couriers who typically travelled to Fort Leavenworth. However, as seen in Figure 2-7, the bulk of the letters from traders seems to have been carried by returning traders to Independence.

An example of military mail carried from occupied Santa Fe is shown in Figure 2-8. This letter was endorsed “Santa – Fé New Mexico, Sept 17th 1846” and addressed to the Adjutant General of the U.S. Army at Washington, D.C.. It was carried with the military mails to Fort Leavenworth where it was postmarked on October 17 and rated for 10 cents postage due.

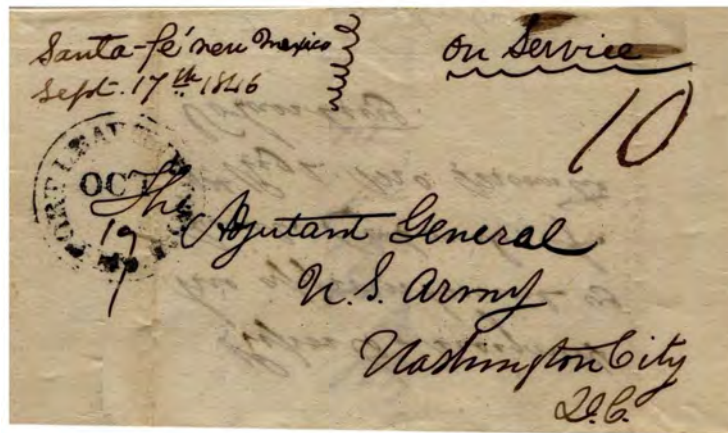


Figure 2-8. September 17, 1846 letter from Santa Fe to Washington, D.C. that entered the mails at Fort Leavenworth on October 17.

Kearny Divides the Army of the West, 1846

After installing Charles Bent as acting civil governor of New Mexico and appointing Colonel Sterling Price as military governor, Kearny divided his Army of the West into three separate forces. The main force under Price was to occupy New Mexico from Santa Fe. Price was on his way from Fort Leavenworth with the 2nd Regiment of Missouri Mounted Volunteers, so Doniphan's 1st Regiment was to wait at Santa Fe until their arrival. Price would then take over occupation duties and Doniphan would mount an expedition southward toward Chihuahua, Mexico.

Price arrived in October, and was soon faced with the Taos Revolt of January 1847. It was quickly suppressed by Price's forces, but not before the murder of several Americans, including Governor Bent at Taos.

Doniphan and his 1,200-man force were ordered to capture El Paso del Norte. After that, he was to join forces with General John Wool at Chihuahua, for further campaigning in northern Mexico. Doniphan

captured El Paso on December 25, 1846, but learned that Wool was not going to be at Chihuahua. Nonetheless, he set off in that direction in the midst of greatly superior enemy forces. He confronted an army four times his size at the Battle of the Sacramento River on February 28, 1847 and swept the field, capturing nearby Chihuahua in the process.

Figure 2-9 shows a letter written on captured stationery, datelined March 6, 1847 at Chihuahua. Lieutenant Hinton wrote that:

The army under Col Doniphans command made a triumphial entrie into this city on the evening of the 2nd of March after a hard and well fought battle on the 28th (Sunday) of Febry. We met the enemy in force at "Sacramento" a "rancho" about 25 miles north of this city. They had fortified themselves and mounted 12 pieces of cannon upon their works. Their full strength according to their adjutant's account (which we found upon the field) was four thousand one hundred. Ours was 1300 but we had but about 900 men engaged in the fight.



Figure 2-9. March 6, 1847 letter from Chihuahua, Mexico to Ohio that entered the mails at Independence on May 25.

This letter left with the March 7 military mail to Santa Fe, and it was carried from there to Independence on May 25. Doniphan's army left Chihuahua on April 23 for Saltillo and Buena Vista, where they finally joined up with General Wool's army.

Meanwhile, the third force, under the command of Kearny, was ordered to travel overland to California to assist in the capture of that strategic territory. Kearny and the 300 men of the 1st Dragoons departed from Santa Fe on September 25, 1846. The newly-raised Mormon Battalion was to follow him to California upon their arrival at Santa Fe.

The 550-man Mormon Battalion had departed from Fort Leavenworth in September 1846, and reached Santa Fe a month later. Under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Philip St. George Cooke, the Battalion immediately followed Kearny on foot, and was tasked with building a wagon road to San Diego. They reached San Diego on January 29, 1847 after a march of about 1,900 miles from the United States.



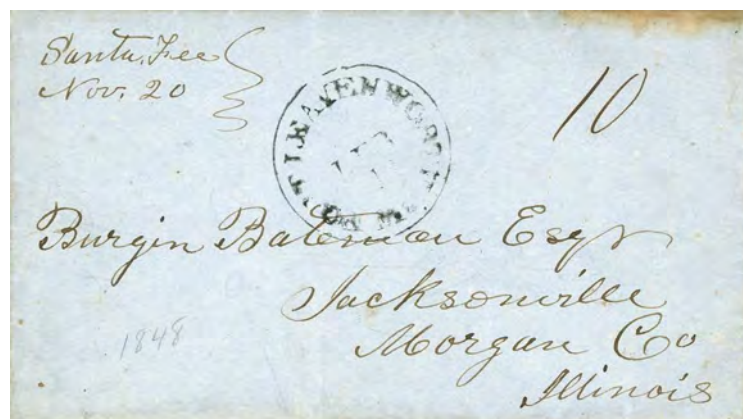
Figure 2-10. October 2, 1846 letter written "120 miles west of Santa Fe" to New York that entered the mails at Fort Leavenworth on November 4.

At least one mail is known from Kearny's column while it was travelling to California. A letter (Figure 2-10) carried in

2 - SANTA FE TRAIL MAIL, 1821 - 1850

that mail from a soldier in the 1st Dragoons was datelined October 2, 1846 “En Route to California, 120 miles from Santa Fe.”

Kearny encountered Kit Carson near Valverde, New Mexico on October 6. Carson was travelling east with dispatches announcing the capture of Los Angeles and the subjugation of California. Upon hearing



this news, Kearny decided to send 200 of his dragoons back to Santa Fe and ordered Carson to lead his remaining force to California. Carson's dispatches and the mail from Kearny's force (which included Figure 2-10) continued east with Lieutenant William S. Murphy, who passed through Santa Fe on October 9, and reached Fort Leavenworth on November 3. The letter in Figure 2-10 entered the mails at Fort Leavenworth where it was postmarked on November 4 and rated for 10 cents postage due to Canaan Center, New York.

Figure 2-11. November 20, 1848 letter from Santa Fe that entered the mails at Fort Leavenworth on February 1, 1849.

The Occupation of Santa Fe

After crushing the January 1847 Taos Rebellion, Price settled down to occupation duties in Santa Fe. Contracts for carrying mail were let by the Quartermaster General's office at Fort Leavenworth, and were very irregular. The military in Santa Fe also maintained a sporadic courier service. The letter in Figure 2-11 was carried in one of the military mails.

This letter was datelined “Santafee Sunday Nov. 19th 1848” by military surgeon E.B. Bateman. He gave it to the military quartermaster, who endorsed it “Santa Fee Nov. 20” in military red ink. It was carried by a military courier who left that day but had to return because of adverse weather. He left again on December 20 and reached Fort Leavenworth on February 1,² where the letter was postmarked and rated for 10 cents due to Illinois.

With the start of contract mail service by the Post Office Department on July 1, 1850, there was no further need for this military mail service.

Endnotes

1. Texas had seceded from Mexico in 1836. Lamar was elected as the second President of the Republic of Texas in December 1838.

2. Report from a St Louis newspaper on February 13, 1849.

*H. Bay Company
Express to Columbia River*

Chapter Three

Oregon Mails, 1830-1848

This chapter will trace the mail communications with the Oregon Country and the Pacific Northwest up to the implementation of contract mail routes and service by the United States post office. The history of British and American interests in the area is interwoven but the two principal threads are treated separately in dealing with the historical background of the area. However, mail communication systems were largely shared and will be examined together based on the mail routes utilized.

The Disputed Oregon Country

Although Spanish and Russian explorers visited the Pacific Northwest prior to 1778, the primary sovereign claimants to the area were Great Britain and the United States. The British explorer James Cook explored the coast of Oregon in 1778 and the American sea captain Robert Gray arrived in the area in 1791 aboard his ship *Columbia Rediviva*. After spending the winter on what is now Vancouver Island, Gray met the British naval Captain George Vancouver in command of the HMS *Discovery* on April 29, 1792. Following the meeting, Gray returned to the previously scouted Columbia River and sailed past the sand bars into the estuary and up to the point where Grays River joins the Columbia River. The river was navigated to a similar length by George Vancouver later that same year.

American claims were furthered as a result of the Lewis and Clark overland expedition of 1803 - 1806 which wintered near the mouth of the Columbia River. British claims were likewise advanced by David Thompson, who explored the river between 1807 and 1811 and reported widely on the numerous fur-bearing animals in the area. Following the War of 1812, an Anglo-American Treaty of October 1818 established the unusual arrangement of "joint occupancy" by the two countries for the area. This meant that either American or British subjects could freely settle there. By the 1840s, the preponderance of American settlers in the southern area of the region convinced the United States and Great Britain to resolve the Oregon Country question by dividing the region along the 49th parallel on June 15, 1846, as shown in Figure 3-1.

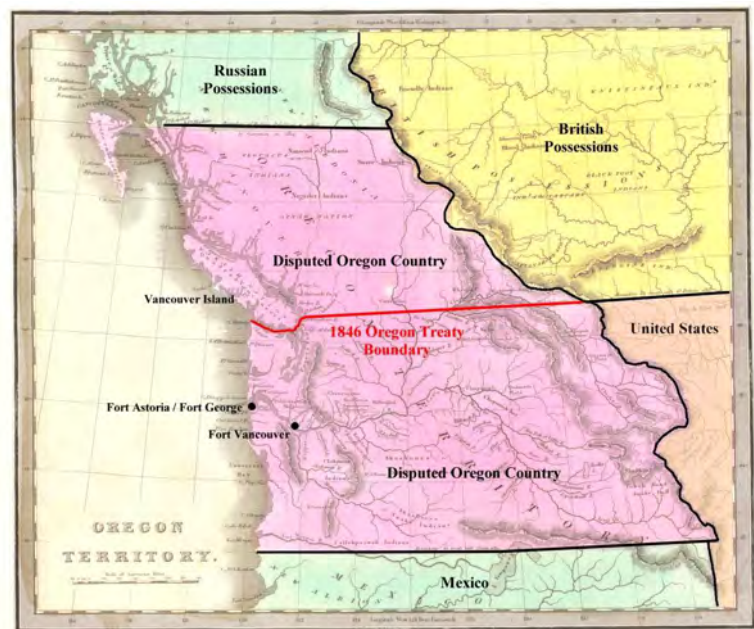


Figure 3-1. An 1840 map of the Oregon Country overlaid to show the disputed area and the final 1846 Treaty boundaries.

3 - OREGON MAILS, 1830-1848

The territory south of the 49th parallel (excepting Vancouver Island) was ceded to the United States, and that north of the parallel to Great Britain.

History of American Interests in the Pacific Northwest

The first permanent establishment in the area was Fort Astoria, located near the mouth of the Columbia River. The trading fort was raised in April-September 1811 as part of John Jacob Astor's scheme to purchase furs in Oregon Country and export them directly to China. His Pacific Fur Company (PFC) had dispatched two parties of men to the area. The first to arrive was on the ship *Tonquin*, whose officers and crew founded the fort. The second group of men (the Astorians) traveled by an overland route departing from St Louis in March 1811. Instead of following the trail of Lewis and Clark, the expedition took a more southerly route through present day Wyoming to Jackson Hole, across the Teton Mountain Range at Teton Pass and then down the Snake River. Finally they followed the Columbia River to Fort Astoria where they arrived in February 1812.

After the loss of the ship *Tonquin* during a trading trip to Puget Sound, a group of PFC men led by Robert Stuart departed from Fort Astoria in June 1812 for a return overland journey. The route taken was further south than that taken on the outbound trip and they thereby discovered the South Pass over the Continental Divide. The party then followed the Sweetwater, North Platte, and Platte Rivers to the Missouri River. They arrived in St. Louis in May 1813. A large portion of this route, well documented by Stuart at the time, was later to become the Oregon Trail, as illustrated in Figure 3-2.

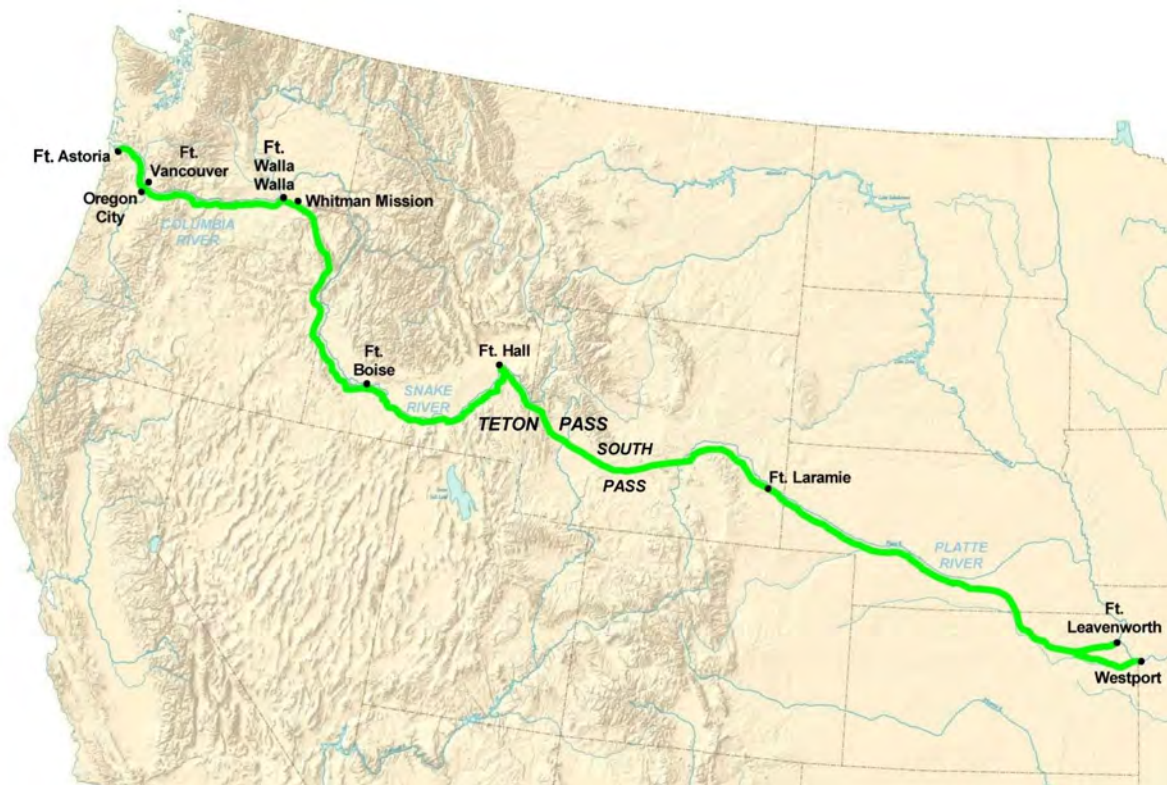


Figure 3-2. Map of the Platte River Road and the Oregon Trail.

Due to the risk of loss during the War of 1812, Astor sold Fort Astoria and his Oregon Country operations to the Montreal-based North West Company in October 1813. Following the Anglo-American Treaty of 1818 some Americans began to advocate the settlement of Oregon as a means to gain full control of the territory. Notable among these was Boston's Hall J. Kelley, who took this cause to the U.S. Congress repeatedly until 1832. Kelley lacked the finances to mount his own expedition to the Northwest, so one of his disciples, Nathaniel Wyeth, finally led an expedition in 1832 (described in Chapter One) to survey the commercial potential of the area. His trip to Oregon proved the feasibility of getting there, and his congenial reception there made the journey less forbidding.

Since the United States had no presence in the Oregon Country from 1813 to 1832, the North West Company (merged into the Hudson's Bay Company in 1821) was able to establish full commercial control of the area during that time. A few American fur trappers (notably Jedediah Smith in 1827-29) penetrated into the Northwest, but were driven away by competition from the Hudson's Bay Company.

Then, in June 1831, a delegation from two Northwest Native American tribes traveled with an American Fur Company supply caravan to St Louis. They arrived in October, and asked for help in learning the religion of the "black robes." When news of this reached the eastern United States, the Protestant missionary societies were galvanized into action. They precipitated a wave of missionaries to the Northwest that became the foundation for the re-settlement of Americans in that region. The Methodist Missionary Society and American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) were the first to respond, followed soon by the Catholic Church.

The earliest missionaries traveled overland to Oregon. They accompanied fur trade caravans from Missouri to the various summer rendezvous meetings (see Chapter One). Once there, they needed fur trapper guides to lead them from the rendezvous to Oregon. After 1834, the returning HBC fur brigades escorted travelers to the Northwest. The route taken was to Fort Hall (near today's Pocatello, Idaho) and then along the banks of the Snake River to Fort Walla Walla on the Columbia River. Once on the Columbia River, boats could be used to reach different points in Oregon.

The first missionary to Oregon was the Methodist minister Jason Lee, and he traveled overland with the second Wyeth expedition to the Ham's Fork fur trade rendezvous in June 1834. Wyeth then led him to Oregon, and he arrived at Fort Vancouver on September 16. Lee was followed in 1835 by ABCFM ministers Samuel Parker and Marcus Whitman, who traveled with the American Fur Company supply caravan led by Lucien Fontenelle. They left Missouri on June 22 and arrived at the Green River rendezvous on August 12. On August 21, Parker continued on to Oregon, escorted by fur trader Jim Bridger, and Whitman returned to Missouri to recruit more missionaries. Whitman took to the trail again the following year, bringing his wife overland to Oregon. Mrs. Whitman and Mrs. Spalding were the first non-native women to cross the Rocky Mountains.

In 1833, Hall J. Kelley finally set out for the West via New Orleans and Mexico, arriving penniless in southern California in early 1834. While there, he convinced Ewing Young and



Jason Lee, Pioneer Missionary to Oregon, 1833 - 1806

- With Wyeth Party to Oregon, April to September 1834
- Overland to Westport, Missouri, March-Sept. 1838
- Promoted Oregon Territory in the U.S., 1838-1839
- To Oregon on ship *Lausanne*, Oct. 1839 - June 1840
- To Hawaii on ship *Columbia*, January-February 1844
- Recalled to New York via Mexico, May 1844
- Died March 12, 1845, aged 41 years

3 - OREGON MAILS, 1830-1848

sixteen men to drive a herd of horses to Oregon. They arrived at Fort Vancouver on October 15, 1834, but HBC officials, thinking that they were horse thieves, gave them a chilly reception. Much offended, Kelley left in March 1835 and returned to the United States bringing stories of abuse by the British in the Northwest. This further inflamed the general desire to re-claim Oregon for the United States, so Lt. William Slacum was sent on the *Loriot* to investigate Kelley's claims and to survey the northwest coast, arriving in Oregon on December 22, 1836. This was the first in a series of U.S. military explorations into the region, and underscored the growing interest in Oregon by the U.S. government.

Meanwhile, the Methodist Missionary Society decided to reinforce Jason Lee in Oregon with additional missionaries. In 1836 and early 1837, they sent 25 people on two ships from Boston around Cape Horn and via Hawaii to Oregon, where they arrived in May and September 1837. From this point on, the Methodists sent reinforcements on ships around Cape Horn and via Hawaii, while the ABCFM continued to send their missionary reinforcements overland.

In March 1838, Jason Lee returned overland to petition the U. S. government to place Oregon under territorial protection, passing through Westport, Missouri on September 1. Continuing his trip to the East, he preached the virtues of Oregon settlement along the way, which generated much interest. After his lecture in Peoria, Illinois, a group of nineteen men formed the "Peoria Party" under the leadership of T.J. Farnham and Robert Shortess, with the intention to settle permanently in Oregon, and thus counter the influence of the English in that region. They left Independence, Missouri on May 30, 1839 and reached Fort Walla Walla on September 23. This was the first non-missionary party of Oregon settlers to arrive from the East.

In October 1839, Jason Lee returned to Oregon with the Methodist "Great Reinforcement" on a ship via Cape Horn and Hawaii. The *Lausanne* left New York City on October 9 with 52 people, and arrived in Hawaii on April 10, 1840. It subsequently reached Fort Vancouver, Oregon on June 1, 1840. Table 3-1 summarizes the early trips by missionaries and settlers to Oregon.

Table 3-1. Immigrant Trips to Oregon from 1834 to 1840

Travelers	Affiliation	Departed	Arrived in Oregon
Jason Lee	Methodists	April 28, 1834 overland with Wyeth party	Ft Vancouver Sep. 16, 1834
Hall Kelley-Young	Settlers	Summer 1834 overland from California	Ft Vancouver Oct. 15, 1834
Samuel Parker	ABCFM	June 22, 1835 overland with fur traders	Ft Walla Walla Oct. 6, 1835
Whitman-Spalding	ABCFM	May 14, 1836 overland with fur traders	Ft Walla Walla Sep. 1836
Elijah White et al	Methodists	<i>Hamilton</i> from Boston July 27, 1836	Ft Vancouver May 28, 1837
Leslie-Perkins	Methodists	<i>Peru</i> from Boston January 27, 1837	Ft Vancouver Sep. 7, 1837
Blanchet-Demers	Catholics	HBC canoe brigade from Montreal	Ft Walla Walla Nov. 18, 1838
Walker-Gray-Eells	ABCFM	April 23, 1838 overland with fur traders	Whitman Mission Aug. 29, 1838
Munger-Griffin	ABCFM	May 4, 1839 overland with fur traders	Ft Walla Walla Sep. 4, 1839
Farnham-Shortess	Settlers	May 30, 1839 overland via Bent's Fort	Ft Walla Walla Sep. 23, 1839
Jason Lee	Methodists	<i>Lausanne</i> from NY October 9, 1839	Ft Vancouver June 1, 1840
Walker-Clark	Independent	April 30, 1840 overland with fur traders	Willamette Sep. 13, 1840

A Hudson's Bay Company census in late 1839 counted only 51 non-native adult males in the Oregon Country. By the following year, there were 200 non-native settlers and missionaries, of whom 137 were Americans.¹ This clearly showed that the U.S. settlement of Oregon was proceeding at a fast pace, and the HBC became alarmed that they might lose control of the region. In response, they formed a subsidiary called the Puget Sound Agricultural Company and transported 121 Canadians by canoe brigade from the Red River Settlement to a spot near today's Tacoma, Washington in October 1841.

In 1841, half of the Bidwell - Bartleson Party to California (described in Chapter Four) separated from the group at Soda Springs (in present day southeast Idaho) and proceeded to Oregon under the guidance of Thomas Fitzgerald. The next major non-missionary emigrant train of about 120 people was led by Dr. Elijah White and Lansford Hastings in 1842. They left the Independence, Missouri area on May 16 and arrived in Oregon's Willamette River valley on October 5.

More American emigrants to Oregon traveled on the overland trail in 1843 than in all previous years combined. This was the beginning of a flood of American immigrants to Oregon which continued well into the 1850's.

History of British Interests in the Pacific Northwest

Great Britain's Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) was the major force in the early development of Canada as well as the Pacific Northwest. The HBC received its royal charter in 1670 as "The Governor and Company of Adventurers of England trading into Hudson's Bay," and its operations were initially focused on central Canada. When the HBC attempted to expand westward they ran into competition from the North West Company (NWC) which had a strong foothold in the Pacific Northwest. To resolve the bitter feud that developed, the NWC was merged into the much larger HBC in 1821.

After the merger, the HBC held a virtual monopoly over the lucrative fur trade business in British North America. Their territory now extended west to the Pacific Ocean and north to the Arctic Ocean. Managed by Sir George Simpson from 1826 to 1860, the HBC employed 25 chief factors, a further 28 chief traders who shared in profits, as well as some 1,500 additional employees. The primary HBC headquarters in Canada were at Lachine (now part of western Montreal) and at York Factory on Hudson's Bay. These two facilities operated a series of smaller posts ("factories") to the west to collect furs and pelts. After collection at these smaller factories, the most valuable peltry goods were transported to York Factory, or to Moose Factory on James Bay at the southern end of Hudson's Bay, while the less important goods were sent to the HBC offices in Lachine. From those points, goods were shipped to England. In the reverse direction, supplies and goods for trade were shipped from England to the factories on Hudson's Bay or to Lachine for distribution to the smaller factories.



John McLoughlin, HBC Chief Factor, 1823 - 1846

- Appointed Chief Factor of HBC's Columbia Department, 1824
- Built HBC Fort Vancouver, 1825
- Returned to London to promote trade with Japan, 1834-35
- Returned east by Canoe Brigade to NY, March-Sept. 1838
- In London 1838-39; returned by Canoe Brigade, April-Oct. 1839
- Supported an independent nation of Oregon, 1842
- Resigned from HBC and settled in Oregon City, 1846

3 - OREGON MAILS, 1830-1848

After the 1821 merger, the HBC established the Caledonia and Columbia fur districts, which became part of their larger Columbia Department (shown on map in Figure 3-1 as the area shaded pink west of the Continental Divide). In 1825, the newly appointed Chief Factor, John McLoughlin, opened Fort Vancouver on the Columbia River (across the river from present day Portland, Oregon) to serve as the headquarters for the Columbia Department. The 1845 view of the fort shown in Figure 3-3 portrays McLoughlin's headquarters, designated by the flag, from which point he directed 34 outposts and 600 employees engaged in the fur trade throughout the Pacific Northwest. In addition, he inaugurated salmon and timber trade with California and Hawaii and introduced farming. The food-stuff production was enough to supply both local needs and provide a surplus for export to Alaska.



Figure 3-3. Lithograph of Fort Vancouver in 1845 from a watercolor by James Warre.

The dominance of the HBC in the Oregon County began to diminish when the market demand for fur dropped significantly in the early 1840s. At the same time, the great number of American immigrants to the southern portion of the department shifted even more power away from Great Britain and the HBC. Following the 1846 Treaty, HBC abandoned all operations in Oregon, including Fort Vancouver.

The Hudson's Bay Company Communication System

From the HBC base of operations for the Columbia Department at Fort Vancouver, Chief Factor John McLoughlin utilized two primary schemes in his system to communicate with other HBC factories and offices in Canada as well as with the HBC home office in London, England.

The two major routes used by the HBC to communicate between the Columbia River and London are shown in Figure 3-4.



Figure 3-4. Map showing primary HBC routes to England. The York Factory Express route in blue and the Cape Horn route in red.

The overland route, shown in blue, ran from the Columbia River over the Rocky Mountains to Norway House and then onward to York Factory. From York Factory, ships traveled across Hudson's Bay into the North Atlantic and eastward to England. The major water route, shown in red, operated via the Pacific Ocean, around Cape Horn, and across the Atlantic to London.

These two primary communication routes, as well as their subsidiary and variant routes, were coordinated in relation to arrival and departure dates. This resulted in a very efficient system that got supplies to the factories, and peltry goods to market, in a timely and economical manner. These routes also formed the basis for communication between the Pacific Northwest and intermediate points east.

The HBC supply ships sent westward from England departed London each May or June and arrived at York Factory in late August or early September (see Appendix B). Eastbound overland expresses departed from the Columbia River each spring and arrived at York Factory to coincide with the ship departures each September. These ships departed before ice became a problem on Hudson's Bay and arrived back in London in October or November. Westbound mail from the United States left each April on the overland route from Lachine via Norway House, and arrived in the Columbia Department in October.

The "via Cape Horn" supply ships sent westward from England departed London mostly in the late fall and arrived at the Columbia River the following spring (Appendix B). The return trips usually departed the Columbia River between October and December and arrived home in London in May or June of the following year. These supply ships often stopped in Honolulu in both directions.

No charge was made by HBC for mail carriage on their routes and the company actually paid postal charges on mail that required prepayment for onward transmission. Although free mail service was provided to persons not employed by HBC, there was a stipulation that such letters could not communicate matters pertaining to their own business or to HBC business. The vast majority of the surviving mail carried by the various HBC expresses originated in, or was addressed to, the interior of Canada and is therefore outside the scope of this book.

Overview of Oregon Mail Routes before 1849

While the HBC employees stationed in Oregon used their own communication systems to correspond with Great Britain, the American residents of Oregon Country had limited channels available for mail communication with the eastern United States. The transcontinental routes outlined below were in use concurrently, and correspondents often chose the route based on the next available departure. All of these routes were slow, with mail usually taking five to six months or more. The brief summaries are ordered by the routes that entailed ocean conveyance followed by the land routes.

Via Cape Horn: This route, comprised of three variations, includes all mails that traveled by ship around the Horn to the United States and England.

Direct: The HBC annual supply ships carried mail in addition to trade goods between England and the Columbia River.

Via California: A few ships, mostly American, carried mail to and from Oregon with intermediate stops along the California coast.

Via Hawaii: In addition to their annual supply ships which occasionally stopped in Hawaii, the HBC ran trading ships between Oregon and Hawaii. The less numerous American trading vessels also traveled on this route. Mail from the eastern United States could be transferred at Honolulu to connect with one of these trading vessels bound to Oregon or in the opposite direction to a ship departing for an American port on the east coast.

Via Mexico and Hawaii: This route, eastbound from Oregon, was by ship to a forwarder in Hawaii, by ship to a forwarder in Mazatlan, Mexico, overland to a forwarder in Vera Cruz, and then by ship to the destination. Westbound mail could be carried on the route in reverse order. The route did not develop until a reliable network of forwarders was established in 1835 and was interrupted by the May 1846 start of the Mexican-American War.

Hudson's Bay Company Overland Brigade: The HBC ran annual "canoe brigades" between their eastern factories and the Oregon Country. American correspondents could utilize this system for their mail with minor restrictions.

Overland between Missouri and Oregon: Travelers on the Oregon Trail also provided opportunities to send mail in both directions.

Mail via Cape Horn, Direct

The first HBC vessel to reach the Columbia River was the *William and Ann* which departed London on July 27, 1824 and arrived, after a stop at the Galapagos Islands, on April 8, 1825. It departed from the Columbia River on October 25, 1825 and arrived back in London on April 13, 1826. Over the next twenty years prior to the Oregon Treaty, the authors record 28 additional trips that departed from London and landed at the Columbia River. A chart of sailing dates and information derived from HBC archives and period newspaper notices is included in Appendix B. Although the 1846 London departures are included in the table, those HBC ships landed at Fort Victoria on Vancouver Island rather than at the Columbia River due to the abandonment of Fort Vancouver after the partition of Oregon. In the summer interval between arrival at the Columbia River and departure back to England, many of these vessels made coastal trading voyages to California, Hawaii or Alaska.

The earliest reported letter carried by one of the HBC annual supply ships is shown in Figure 3-5. It was written by an HBC sailor who had recently arrived on the HBC ship *Dryad*. Addressed to London,



Figure 3-5. October 9, 1830 letter from Fort Vancouver to England carried around Cape Horn by the HBC annual supply ship *Eagle*.

the letter was datelined October 9, 1830 at Fort Vancouver and describes the sailor's trip from the Falkland Islands, via Magellan Strait, Easter Island and Hawaii to Fort Vancouver. The letter was carried on the return voyage of the HBC ship *Eagle* that departed the Columbia River on October 29, 1830 and arrived in London on April 17, 1831. It entered the mails at Deal, England where it received a "Deal Ship Letter" handstamp and manuscript "1N4" (1 shilling 4 pence) postal rate due. It was postmarked upon arrival at London with their April 18, 1831 backstamp.

3 - OREGON MAILS, 1830-1848

A letter carried by an annual HBC supply ship on an outbound voyage to the Columbia River is shown in Figure 3-6. It was datelined at London on December 9, 1834 and addressed to W. Fraser Tolmie at Fort Vancouver, Columbia River. Fresh out of Glasgow University, Tolmie had arrived in Vancouver the previous spring as surgeon and clerk for the post. After delivery of the letter to the HBC office in London, it was endorsed "Col" for "Columbia District" at top left to signify the location of the employee. Other HBC abbreviations are reported for mail directed to York Factory (YF) and Red River Settlement (RRS) but these are outside the scope of this work. Additional 1836 and 1837 examples from the Tolmie correspondence do not show the HBC endorsement. This letter was transmitted on the HBC ship *Ganymede* which departed London on December 10, 1834 and arrived at the Columbia River on July 27, 1835.

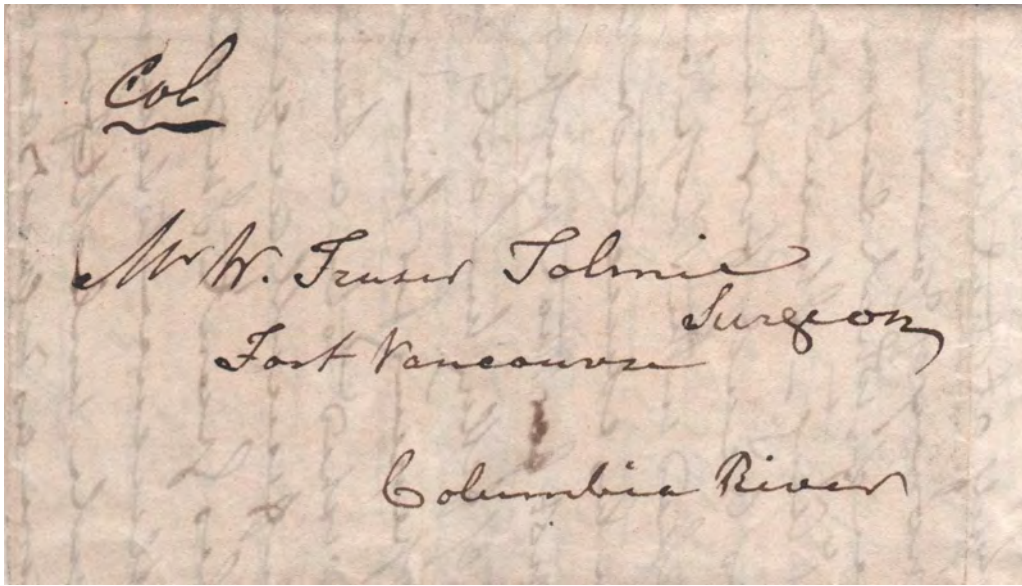


Figure 3-6. December 9, 1834 letter from England to Fort Vancouver, Oregon carried by the HBC annual supply ship *Ganymede*.

A final example of mail carried by an annual HBC supply ship is the letter shown in Figure 3-7, which originated in Western Australia and traveled around the Horn twice before being delivered to Fort Vancouver.

This exceptional letter was sent from Swan River, Western Australia on November 10, 1845 and was addressed to Henry Sewell, an early immigrant to Oregon from Great Britain. It was endorsed "to the care of the Gentlemen of the Hudsons Bay Company." It was also prepaid 6 pence in cash for the outgoing ship letter charge and bears Guildford and Perth Ship Letter transits. It was then carried on the coastal ship *Union* to Sydney, New South Wales and onward around Cape Horn to London on a private ship. A further 8 pence postage due was paid upon arrival in London by the HBC, and the letter was then placed on a supply ship bound for the Columbia Department. It cannot be determined which of the two supply ships that departed in the fall of 1846 carried this letter. The HBC ship *Cowlitz* departed London on October 8, 1846 and arrived at Victoria, Vancouver Island on March 21, 1847 while the HBC ship *Mary Dove* departed November 3 and arrived at Victoria on April 14, 1847. Both of these vessels landed at Fort Victoria, Vancouver Island rather than at Fort Vancouver, Oregon as the Oregon Treaty had been signed prior to their departures, and the HBC had evacuated Fort Vancouver.



Figure 3-7. November 10, 1845 letter from Western Australia to Fort Vancouver. After arriving in England via Cape Horn it was carried by HBC annual supply ship via Cape Horn to Fort Victoria.

Mail via Cape Horn and California

This route was rarely used, and then only towards the end of the 1840s. An example of a letter that traveled south along the coast to San Francisco and then around the Horn to the eastern United States is shown in Figure 3-8.



Figure 3-8. July 11, 1847 letter written in Salem, Oregon and sent to Connecticut via San Francisco and Cape Horn.

3 - OREGON MAILS, 1830-1848

This letter was written at Salem, Oregon on July 11, 1847 and hand-carried to Astoria, where it was entrusted to the newly-installed U.S. postmaster at that place, John Shively. Shively added his manuscript "Astoria Oregon" postmark but had no contract carriers to actually forward the mail. Accordingly, he arranged to have it transported on the bark *Whiton*, leaving Oregon around November 2. The *Whiton* arrived at San Francisco on November 10 and, after a stay of about a month, proceeded to Baja California. While there, it participated in two raids on Mexican ports on behalf of the U.S. Navy in its prosecution of the Mexican-American War. The *Whiton* finally left Mazatlan, Mexico on March 27, 1848 and arrived in New York City on August 4, after a four-month trip around Cape Horn. The letter was postmarked as a ship letter in New York on August 6 with seven cents postage due for the two cents ship fee plus five cents postage.

This letter, consisting of personal news, was written by missionary Orpha Lankton Carter to her parents back east. She had arrived in Oregon aboard the *Lausanne* in June 1840.

Mail via Cape Horn and Hawaii

Trading voyages by HBC ships and American ships between the Columbia River and Hawaii carried the bulk of the mail between the eastern United States and Oregon prior to the inauguration of contract mail service by steamers. A chart of sailing dates that includes a majority of these trips appears in Appendix B. Forwarders in Honolulu, often the British or U.S. consul, would arrange to trans-ship eastbound mail to a ship returning to the United States, or westbound mail to one of these trading vessels plying between Hawaii and the Columbia River.

The Figure 3-9 map illustrates the routes around Cape Horn between Oregon and the United States. Prevailing trade winds made it faster to send ships via Hawaii than directly up the coast of California to Oregon. Eastbound ships almost invariably stopped at Valparaiso before heading around the Cape, or through the Strait of Magellan, and westbound ships similarly stopped at Rio de Janeiro.



Figure 3-9. Map of the three routes between Oregon and the East which converged at Valparaiso. The direct route is shown in green, the via Honolulu route in blue and the via California route in red.

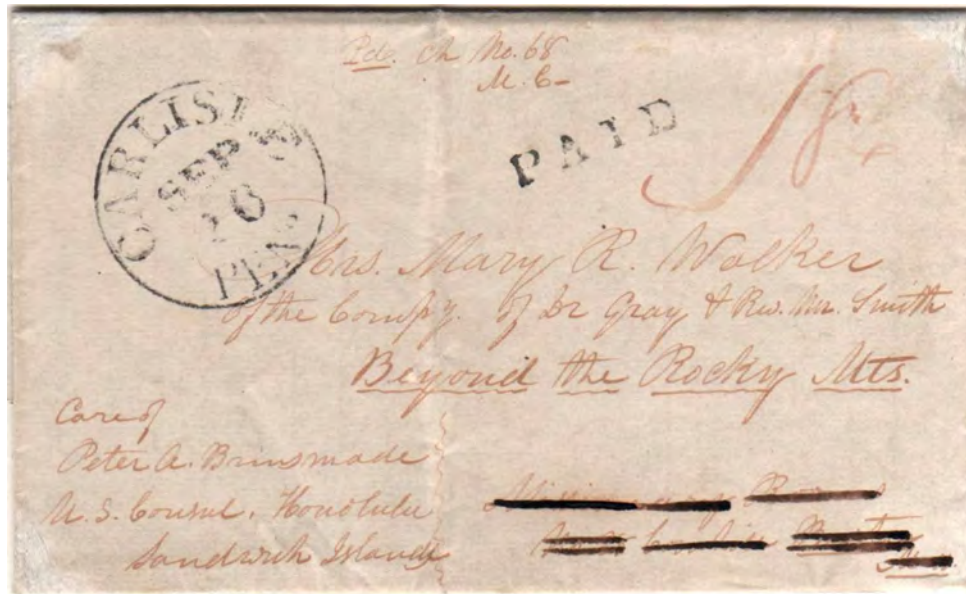


Figure 3-10. September 26, 1838 letter from Carlisle, Pennsylvania to Oregon sent via Cape Horn and Hawaii.

An exceptional 1838 westbound letter sent via Cape Horn and Hawaii to Oregon is shown in Figure 3-10. This letter is addressed to Mary Walker who, along with her husband Elkanah and Reverends Gray and Eells, came overland to Oregon in 1838 (see Table 3-1). It was posted in Carlisle, Pennsylvania on September 26, 1838 and prepaid $18\frac{3}{4}$ cents for the postal rate to Boston. It was initially addressed to the Missionary Rooms (of the ABCFM) in Boston, and was also directed to the care of Peter A. Brinsmade, U.S. consul in Honolulu. The Missionary Society in Boston crossed out the Boston portion of the address, and placed the letter on the *Fama* which left on October 19, carrying Brinsmade back to Hawaii. It arrived in Honolulu on April 6, 1839, where Brinsmade transferred the letter to the brig *Thomas Perkins* which departed on June 23, 1839 and arrived at the mouth of the Columbia River on August 19. The letter was then carried by canoe to the Tshimakain Mission near today's Spokane, Washington. It probably arrived at the mission on September 16, along with the overland letter illustrated in Figure 3-21.

Another westbound letter to Mary Walker is shown in Figure 3-11. This example was datelined on August 27, 1839 in Portland, Maine and endorsed to the care of Reverend Jason Lee for the recipient at the Oregon Mission.

It was apparently sent under cover to Mr. G. Brown at the Boston missionary rooms, who transmitted the letter to Lee at New York. As previously mentioned, Lee led the Methodist "Great Reinforcement" to Oregon aboard the *Lausanne*, and he hand-carried this letter to Mary Walker in Oregon. The *Lausanne* left New York on October 9, 1839 and, after a stop at Honolulu from April 11 to April 28, arrived at Fort Vancouver, Oregon on June 1, 1840.

An eastbound letter written by Reverend Henry Spalding from the Lapwai Mission (in present day Idaho) on August 17, 1842 is shown in Figure 3-12. Spalding had come to Oregon in 1836 with Marcus Whitman as previously described. His eleven-page letter was carried by canoe on the Clearwater, Snake and Columbia Rivers to Fort Vancouver, where it caught the American ship *Nerius*, which arrived in Hawaii on

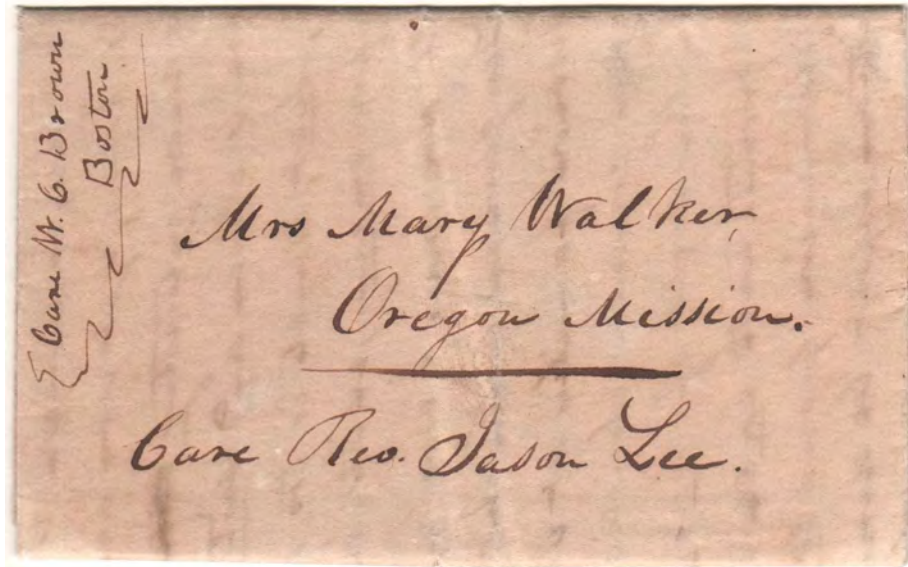


Figure 3-11. August 27, 1839 letter from Portland, Maine hand-carried to Oregon via Cape Horn and Hawaii.

October 28. The letter was transferred to the whaling ship *George* that departed Oahu on December 8 and arrived in New Bedford on May 2, 1843. The letter entered the mails with the New Bedford postmark of May 4, 1843 and was rated for 52 cents due, consisting of the two cents ship fee plus quadruple 12½ cents postage to Connecticut.



Figure 3-12. Letter written August 17, 1842 in the Northwest and sent to Connecticut via Hawaii and Cape Horn.

Another eastbound letter is shown in Figure 3-13. This letter to New York reported on the distribution of bibles in Oregon Territory and was written at Oregon City on July 8, 1848.

It left Astoria on August 1 aboard the brig *Eveline*, which arrived in Hawaii on August 14. A forwarder in Honolulu transferred it to the whaling ship *California*, which left Hawaii on September 4 and arrived in New Bedford, Massachusetts on January 13, 1849. The letter was postmarked at New Bedford on January 15 with seven cents postage due, consisting of two cents ship fee plus 5 cents postage.



Figure 3-13. A July 8, 1848 letter from Oregon City, Oregon sent via Hawaii and Cape Horn to New York.

Mail via Mexico

This route is described more fully in Chapter Four as it relates to California mail. Unlike correspondents in California, however, Oregon correspondents did not use this route very much, perhaps because the transit through both Hawaii and Mexico was overly cumbersome and slow. Figure 3-14 illustrates an unusual eastbound example from 1841.

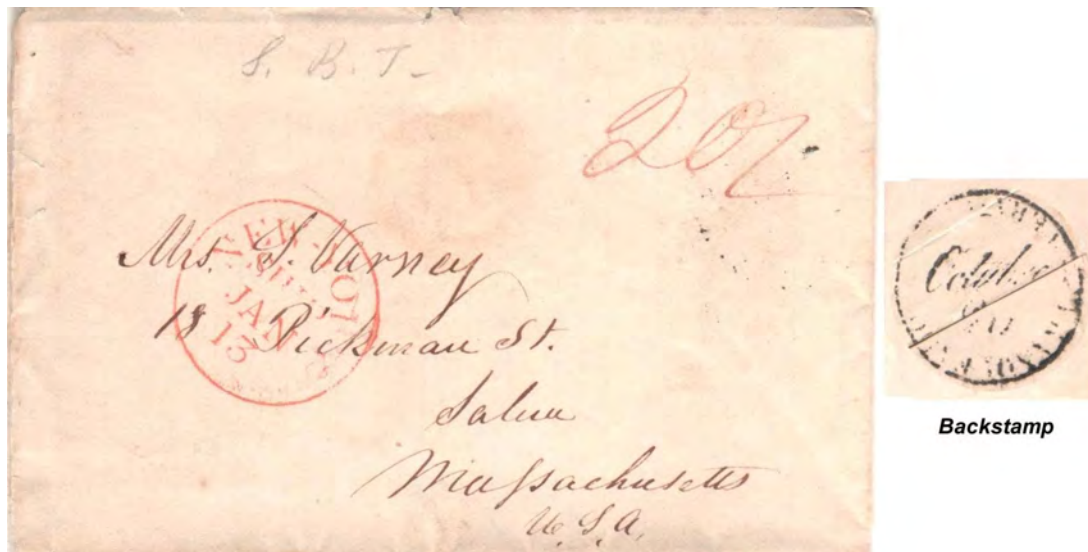


Figure 3-14. Letter datelined June 9, 1841 in Fort Vancouver, Oregon and sent via Honolulu, Mazatlan and Vera Cruz to Massachusetts.

3 - OREGON MAILS, 1830-1848

This letter, from American trader and ship captain Samuel Varney, was written at Fort Vancouver on June 9, 1841. He placed it on the HBC chartered ship *Wave*, which arrived in Honolulu on July 20, 1841. A Honolulu forwarder arranged for payment of Mexican postage and sent it on August 5 by the *Joseph Peabody* to Mazatlan, Mexico. A Mazatlan forwarder arranged to transport it to Vera Cruz, where it received a "Franqueado Vera Cruz" paid backstamp on October 30, reflecting the payment of two reales Mexican postage. It was then carried by the bark *Eugenia* to New York, where it received a January 13, 1842 "New York Ship" postmark, six months after it was written. It was rated for 20¾ cents postage due for two cents ship fee plus 18¾ cents postage to Massachusetts.

A second example, but carried westbound, is shown in Figure 3-15. This letter is addressed to Mary Walker (see Figures 3-10 and 3-11 for earlier examples of mail to her) and was datelined at Carlisle, Pennsylvania on December 16, 1844. It was sent under cover to 200 Mulberry Street in New York City, where the American Board of Missionary Societies had offices. The missionary society then took this letter in a bundle to the New York post office to prepay postage to Vera Cruz. It was postmarked there on December 21, the date of departure for the ship *Genius* to Jamaica. The Royal Mail Steamship Co. ship *Tay* then left Kingston, Jamaica with this letter on January 3 and arrived in Vera Cruz on January 16. At Vera Cruz a forwarder arranged to have it sent under cover to Mazatlan, where it was placed on a ship for Oregon. This letter, along with others, was probably delivered to Tshimakain Mission on October 4, 1845 by Reverend Eels, who had collected them at the Wailatpu Mission.²

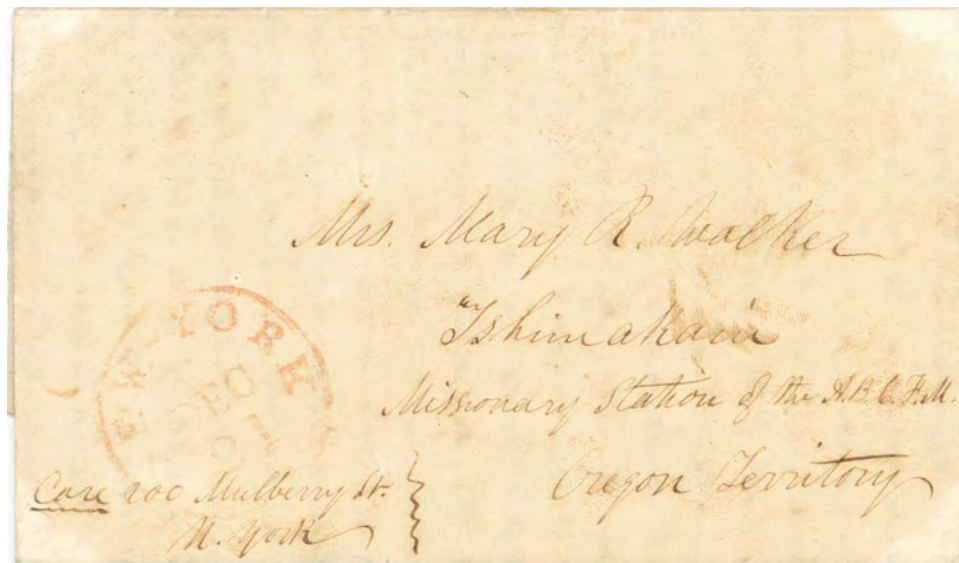


Figure 3-15. Letter datelined December 16, 1844 in Carlisle, Pennsylvania and sent via New York and Mexico to Tshimakain Mission in Oregon.

The HBC Overland Brigade Route

The HBC named their various overland expresses in British America by the primary destination served. Thus, the eastbound express from Oregon to York Factory was termed the "York Factory Express" while the express that traveled in opposite direction on the same route from York Factory to the Columbia River was termed the "Columbia Express." The use of canoes on several legs of these trips has given rise to the description of the expresses as "HBC canoe brigades." These expresses connected with ships on Hudson's Bay, so London was the ultimate terminus of these annual HBC overland expresses. However, most

Oregon Country mail sent via these expresses was not carried on the full extent of the route to or from London. Instead, the Oregon mails were usually handled through Lachine.

Commencing in 1825, the eastbound York Factory overland express was scheduled to depart each spring from Fort Vancouver to York Factory with intermediate stops. At Norway House a connecting express continued to Lachine. The express carried fur and peltry goods as well as mail, and arrived in the late summer. The yearly westbound Columbia Express was scheduled to depart from Lachine and York Factory in the spring and arrive in Oregon six months later. The routes connecting York Factory, Moose Factory and Lachine with Fort Vancouver are shown in Figure 3-16.

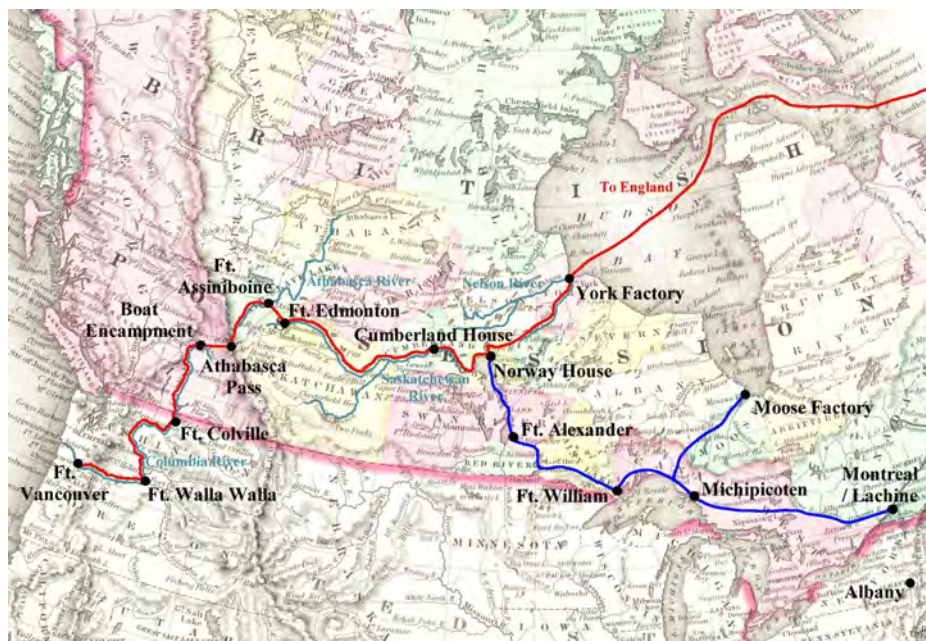


Figure 3-16. Map showing the HBC route from Fort Vancouver, via York Factory, to England in red and principal routes connecting Norway House with Lachine and Moose Factory in blue.

An article³ entitled "Autobiography of Roderick Finlayson" gives an account of the spring 1839 westbound Columbia Express by an HBC apprentice clerk:

Having received our equipment for the western journey at this place, we parted with our friends at the [York] Factory, and left under the command of Dr. John McLoughlin, then the chief factor in charge of the Columbia district, with many hearty cheers from our friends at the Factory, and proceeded up the Nelson River to Norway House again. Here we exchanged our birch bark canoes for batteaux, for navigating Lake Winnipeg and the Saskatchewan River. From Norway House we coasted along the northwest end of the lake to the mouth of the Saskatchewan River, up which we proceeded, calling at the stations of Fort Carleton, Fort Pitt and Edmonton, on the river. At the last place, the chief station of the Saskatchewan district, we left our bateaux and took horses across the plains to the Athabasca river, to Fort Assiniboine, where we again took birch bark canoes and paddled up the Athabasca River to Jasper's House, in the Rocky Mountains, from this place again took horses and crossed the Rocky Mountains to the head waters of the Columbia river, where we found bateaux again waiting for us, and paddled down the Columbia river, calling at Fort Colville, Okanogan, Walla Walla, stations belonging to the company, and reached Fort Vancouver on the Columbia, the head station of the Columbia district, which we reached almost the middle of November, being six months since I left Fort William on the Ottawa.

3 - OREGON MAILS, 1830-1848

The batteaux mentioned were pine or cedar vessels, "made from quarter-inch pine board, and are thirty-two feet long, and six and a half feet wide in midships, with both ends sharp, and without a keel - worked, according to the circumstances of the navigation, with paddles, or with oars."

Typically one of these brigades consisted of 50 to 75 men and was supplemented by Native Americans recruited enroute. From Fort Vancouver, the brigade traveled up the Columbia River via Forts Walla Walla and Colville to the Boat Encampment. From that point, the brigade traveled by land across Athabasca Pass to the Assiniboine River and Fort Assiniboine. The rest of the trip was overland to Fort Edmonton, via the Saskatchewan River to Cumberland House, then via Lake Winnipeg, Norway House, and Nelson River to York Factory.

Once the eastbound York Factory Express reached Norway House, mail matter directed to eastern Canada and the United States was diverted southward, via Fort Alexander and Michipicoten to Lachine (Montreal). Mail directed beyond Montreal was placed in the Canadian mail system for distribution to Canada or the United States.

The earliest reported example in private hands of a letter carried by the York Factory Express from the Oregon Country is shown in Figure 3-17. It is one of three surviving letters written at Fort Vancouver, Oregon on January 16, 1833 by Nathaniel Wyeth (see Chapter One) that were carried by the same express. All were addressed to Cambridge, Massachusetts. The example illustrated was sent to his wife, a second was sent to his brother Jacob, and the third to James Brown.

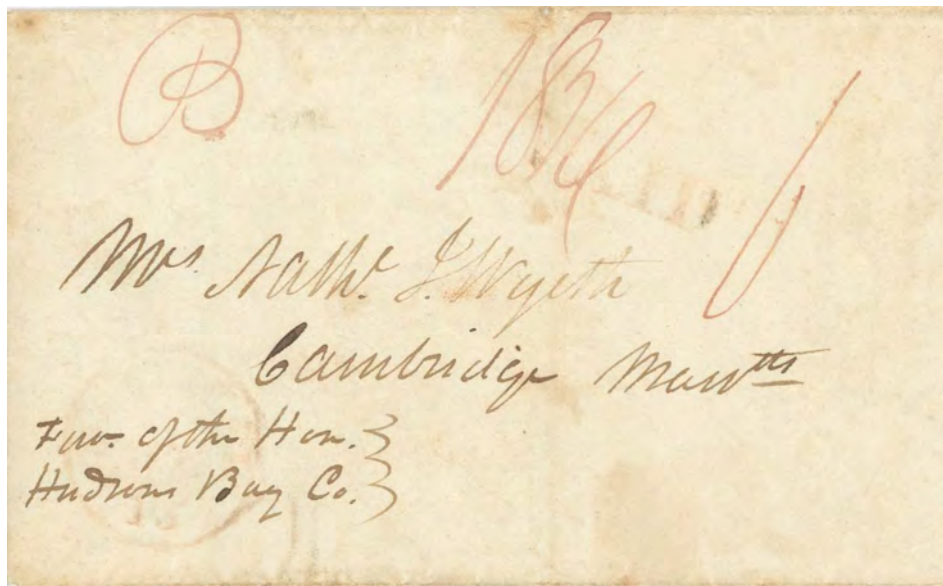


Figure 3-17. January 16, 1833 letter from Nathaniel Wyeth at Fort Vancouver carried by York Factory Express to Montreal and mailed to the United States.

The letter was endorsed by "Fav. of the Hon. Hudsons Bay Co." and departed with the York Factory overland express shortly after being written. As the letter was addressed to the United States, it would have been included in the bag for the HBC headquarters at Lachine on Montreal Island rather than to York Factory. Upon arrival at Norway House, it was diverted south and carried onward to Lachine. The letter was then placed in the mails at Montreal on August 13 and the Canadian postage of six pence was prepaid

by HBC, since mail from Canada to the United States required prepayment of postage to the border. The letter then entered the U.S. mails from a steamboat that crossed from St. Johns, Canada to Whitehall, New York via Lake Champlain. The distinctive red manuscript "B" applied at Whitehall signifies that it was received from a steamboat. The 18¾ cents U.S. postage due was applied at Whitehall for postage to Cambridge, Massachusetts.

The June 1846 Oregon Partition Treaty meant the end of the HBC overland mail service to and from Fort Vancouver. An 1846 letter carried on the last eastbound HBC overland trip is shown in Figure 3-18.



Figure 3-18. February 9, 1846 letter from Fort Colville, Oregon to Massachusetts carried eastward on the last HBC York Factory Express before the Oregon Treaty.

The letter was datelined "Tshimakain, Near Fort Colville, Oregon Mission 9th Feby 1846" (northwest of present day Spokane, Washington) and was addressed to Blandford, Massachusetts. It was given to the HBC York Factory Express at Fort Colville, and entered the mails at Lachine, Canada on October 27, 1846. It was apparently not prepaid with the required postage, since it was endorsed "Postage to the lines not paid" and struck with Montreal's "Returned for Postage" handstamp. After payment of the required 4½ pence postage to the U.S. border by the HBC (as a favor to the sender), the letter was transmitted onward from Montreal on November 18, 1846. This letter entered the U. S. mails at Rouses Point, Vermont at the north end of Lake Champlain rather than at Whitehall as with the 1833 letter in Figure 3-17. Rouse's Point marked it 10 cents postage due for the rate to Blandford. Interestingly, the HBC express leg of this journey took well over a month longer than the 1833 journey, no doubt attributable to the better weather conditions of that earlier year.

This letter was written by Reverend Cushing Eells to one of his benefactors back east. Eells had come to Oregon with his wife and the Elkanah Walkers in 1838. They had been escorted from Westport, Missouri on April 23 by an American Fur Company supply train to the Wind River fur trade rendezvous of that year. They then accompanied an HBC fur trade brigade from the rendezvous to Oregon on August 29. Soon after, the Eells and Walkers established a mission among the Spokane Indians at Tshimakain.

3 - OREGON MAILS, 1830-1848

An 1839 letter atypically carried from Oregon by the York Factory Express to England is shown in Figure 3-19.



Figure 3-19. February 1, 1839 letter from Fort Colville to London carried by York Factory Express and then via HBC supply ship from the Hudson's Bay to England.

This letter, written by an HBC employee at their Fort Colville post, was dated February 1, 1839 and was addressed to John Stuart at the Hudson's Bay House in London. It was later re-directed, probably at an HBC sorting office, to Forres, Scotland. The letter was given to the York Factory Express enroute at Fort Colville, and was carried over the "canoe brigade" route as previously described. Unlike the 1833 Wyeth letter in Figure 3-17, it was not diverted to Lachine at Norway House but instead carried to York Factory. It was then placed on the HBC ship *Prince Rupert* which departed on September 11, 1839 from Hudson's Bay. Her first port in England was Brighton, where the mails were off-loaded. This letter entered the English mails for Scotland with a "Ship Letter Brighton" stepped handstamp and manuscript two shilling eight pence due postal rating. The letter was postmarked in transit at London on October 15. Interestingly, the mails arrived in London in advance of the HBC ship which did not arrive at London until the following day (Appendix B).

An extraordinary example of an 1844 westbound letter carried by the Columbia Express is shown in Figure 3-20. It is addressed to the well-known Methodist missionary, Henry Bridgman Brewer, who had immigrated to Oregon on the ship *Lausanne* in June 1840. The letter bears a detailed address and handling directive, "care of James Keith, Lachine L.C., H. Bay Company Express to Columbia River, Columbia River, Dallas Station." It was prepaid 25 cents at Wilbraham, Massachusetts on April 6 for the United States postage to the Canadian border. It bears an April 13 Lachine, Lower Canada arrival backstamp, as well as the correct "4½" pence due notation for postage from the border point of Rouse's Point, Vermont to Lachine.

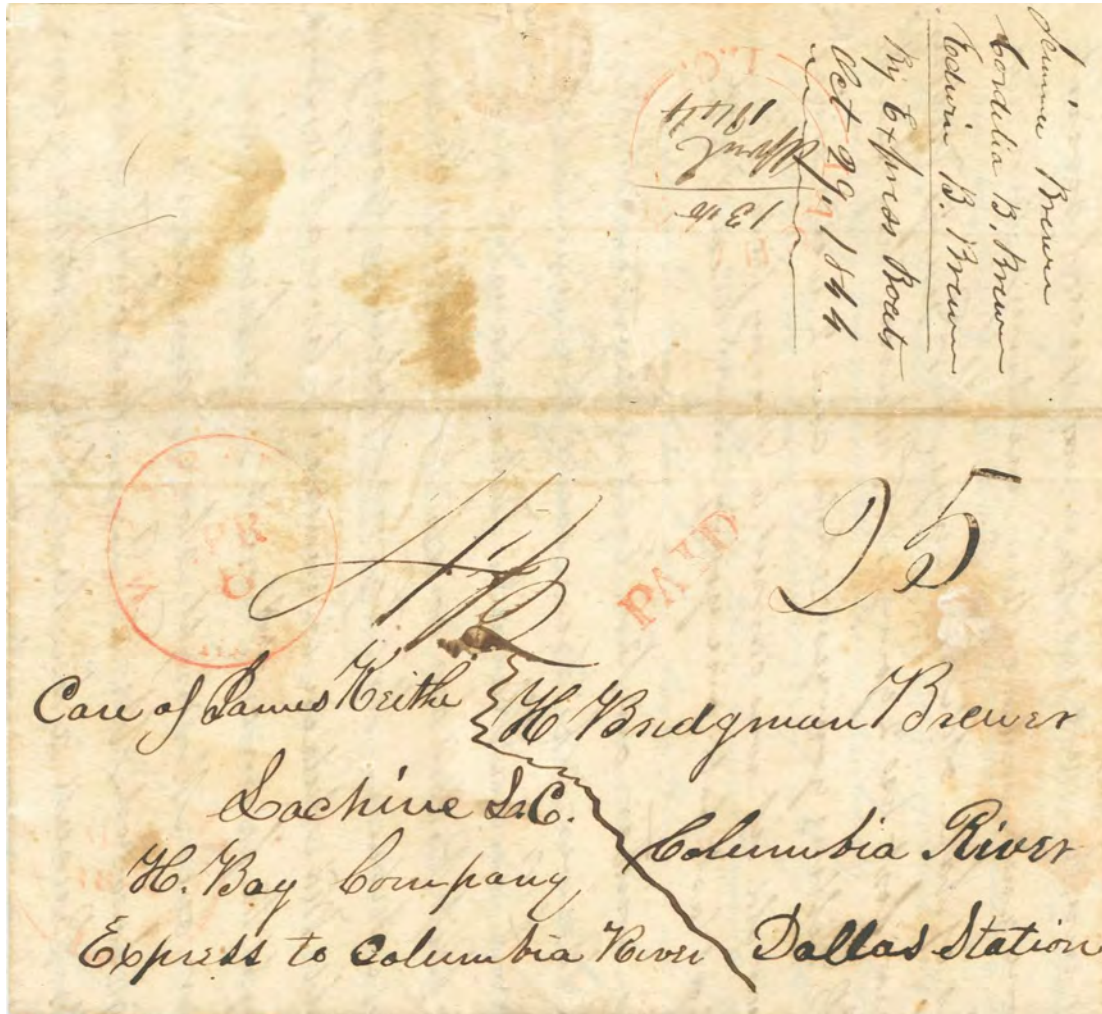


Figure 3-20. April 6, 1844 letter carried westbound on the HBC Columbia Express to Dalles Station, Columbia River.

The HBC paid the 4½ pence Canadian postage, included the letter in the mail bag carried on their 1844 Columbia Express overland trip and dropped it off at The Dalles, just up the river from Fort Vancouver. Reverend Brewer docketed the letter on reverse with his notation of senders' names as well as "(received) By Express Boat, Oct 29, 1844."

Overland Mails between Missouri and Oregon

There were few opportunities to send mail overland along the Oregon Trail from 1835 to 1840. A single annual westbound overland party could only leave in the spring of each year. There were even fewer opportunities to send eastbound mail, since very few travelers returned east overland until the mid-1840's. After 1843, there were numerous travelers going in each direction, and overland mail volumes picked up significantly. An exceptional 1839 westbound letter carried overland to Oregon is shown in Figure 3-21. This letter was mailed in East Baldwin, Maine on March 20, 1839 and was prepaid 25 cents for the rate to Missouri.



Figure 3-21. Letter posted March 20, 1839 in East Baldwin, Maine, and sent to Oregon via Westport, Missouri.

It is addressed to Reverend Elkanah Walker (see Figure 3-10 for an example of a letter to his wife Mary) to the care of Jason Lee at Westport, Missouri. Lee had passed through Westport on September 1, 1838 during his overland journey from Oregon to the East, and the writer of this letter expected him to return that way. As described previously, though, Lee returned by ship to Oregon, so this letter was held at Westport. Since there were no post roads to Oregon, the postmaster was authorized to forward the mail by any means available. In this case, he entrusted the letter to the Griffin - Munger missionary party leaving Westport on May 4, 1839 with an American Fur Company supply caravan led by Moses Harris. They arrived at the Green River rendezvous on July 5. On July 10, the Griffin - Munger party was escorted from the rendezvous to Oregon by an HBC fur trade brigade led by Francis Ermatinger. This letter from Mary's family was finally delivered to the Walkers at the Tshimakain Mission in Oregon on September 16.

An 1842 missionary letter carried overland in the opposite direction to Connecticut via Missouri is shown in Figure 3-22.



Figure 3-22. Letter dated February 23, 1842 from Waskopam Mission in Oregon, and sent to Connecticut via Westport, Missouri on December 7.

This letter was datelined "Oregon Territory Waskopam Mission Jan. 21 1842" by Henry Bridgman Brewer (see Figure 3-20 for a letter addressed to Brewer). It was initially endorsed to be carried by the Hudson Bay express per the manuscript "Per H.B. Co. Express" at the lower left. This endorsement was crossed out, and Brewer's journal explains that the letter was carried overland by William Fowler, who was returning east to get his family. He mailed Brewer's letter at Westport, Missouri on December 7, 1842, where it was postmarked and rated 25 cents due for the postage to Connecticut.

Fowler had originally come to Oregon with part of the Bidwell - Bartleson party in 1841. Under the leadership of former fur trader Thomas Fitzpatrick, the so-called Western Emigration Society from Illinois set out from Independence, Missouri on May 12, 1841. Fowler was part of the group that continued on to The Dalles, Oregon with Fitzpatrick, while the rest of the party went to California with Bidwell and Bartleson.

Brewer's letter to his father-in-law consisted mainly of a family update, and a description of the various Methodist Missions in Oregon. He closed with an appeal for return letters:

Please write every year by the way of Canada. Send letters to Lachine U.C. by the first of March (post paid) to the care of the agent of the H.(udson's) B.(ay) Co. and in October following we shall receive them. The express passes hereabout the 20th of Oct. You can send letters or packages to the S.(andwich) Islands almost every month in the year I think. Vessels come from the Islands here very frequently...This will leave in March by the express boats.

A postscript dated February 23, 1842 explained that, "I have an unexpected opportunity of sending this direct to the States" indicating Brewer's intention to send the letter overland with William Fowler, rather than by the HBC overland express via Canada.

3 - OREGON MAILS, 1830-1848

As the immigrant population of Oregon grew, the number of people returning overland to the eastern United States grew as well. These were men returning to collect their families, as Fowler did when he returned east in 1842, people returning to buy essential supplies, or people who had simply become disillusioned with their prospects in the Pacific Northwest. As a consequence, there were more opportunities to send mail back east, since these travelers were willing to carry mail to a post office in Missouri. Depending on the route taken by the traveler, the mail could enter a number of different Missouri post offices.

A letter written by Henry Bridgman Brewer to his mother in Massachusetts on May 1, 1845 is shown in Figure 3-23. This letter was endorsed "Pr Mr Shively" at the lower left. John M. Shively had immigrated to Oregon in 1843 with the Burnett-Gantt Oregon Emigration Company. This large party left Independence, Missouri on May 3, 1843 and arrived at Fort Vancouver, Oregon on October 24. Shively stayed in Oregon until May 1845, when he left to lobby in Washington, D.C. for a U.S. mail service to Oregon. During his return, he passed through Independence where he mailed this letter unpaid. It was postmarked August 16 and rated for 10 cents postage due.



Figure 3-23. Letter dated May 1, 1845 from Waskopam, Oregon and sent to Massachusetts via Independence, Missouri on August 16. (Courtesy of Washington State Historical Society).

The letter was datelined "Wascopam O.T. April 24, 1845," and was a reply to the letter illustrated in Figure 3-20. Brewer wrote:

One year ago you was writing the letter that now lies before me. I rec'd it by the express boats last Oct. I should have answered it before but I am waiting to send it by land as letters by land I think usually reach you sooner than by ship.

An 1848 overland letter with important content is shown in Figure 3-24. This letter was datelined "Tualatin Plains Oregon Ter. April 8 48" by Reverend Harvey Clark. The letter was carried privately to



Figure 3-24. Letter dated April 8, 1848 from Tualatin Plains, Oregon, and sent to New York via Savannah, Missouri on July 27.

Missouri, even though U.S. post offices had been established at Astoria, Oregon and Oregon City a year earlier. The U.S. mail facilities would handle the vast majority of Oregon's mail from 1849 onwards.

Clark had come to Oregon in 1840 with the last supply caravan to a fur trade rendezvous. He had departed from Westport, Missouri on April 30, 1840 under the guidance of Andrew Drips, and was then was guided by Joe Meek from the 1840 Green River rendezvous to Oregon, where he arrived on December 15. He taught at various missions in the succeeding eighteen years.

In his letter Clark referred to the 1847 Whitman Massacre:

For a few weeks past our otherwise bright prospects have been darkened by savage cruelty and superstition. On the 29th Nov. Dr. Whitman and his wife and 12 white men americans including two lads nearly grown were murdered at the Whitman station. It is utterly impossible to ascertain the whole truth on this melancholy subject...The Indians were sick and many dying perhaps 30 in a few weeks including young and old. The Doctor was all attention night and day. The Indians were told (as all accounts prove) that the Doctor was giving poison or bad medicine consequently they decided to kill Dr and Mrs Whitman.

He then described the growing competition between the Roman Catholic and Protestant missionaries in Oregon. The letter was carried overland and posted unpaid in Savannah, Missouri on July 27, 1848, where it was rated 10 cents due for the postage to New York.

Postal Service of the Provisional Government of Oregon

From May 2, 1843 until the March 3, 1849 establishment of the Oregon Territory, the Provisional Government of Oregon served the Oregon Country as an independent government with elected representatives. Among other actions, they addressed mail services, underscoring the importance of reliable communication to the Oregon settlers.

A June 28, 1845 letter from the provisional government's Executive Committee to the Legislative Committee recommended: "That a public mail be established, to arrive and depart monthly from Oregon City and Independence [Missouri], and such other local mail routes be established as are essential to the Willamette country and other settlements."

Then, in December 1845, the provisional government enacted a law establishing a general post office at the capital city of Oregon City with William G. T'Vault as postmaster-general. The law also set postal rates for a single sheet conveyed for a distance not exceeding 30 miles at 15 cents; over and not exceeding 80 miles, 25 cents; over and not exceeding 200 miles, 30 cents; over 200 miles 50 cents. Newspapers were to be charged four cents each.

The earliest record of a mail was reported by postmaster and editor T'Vault in the *Oregon Spectator's* first issue of February 5, 1846 which included the following notice:

The Postmaster General has contracted with Mr. H(ugh) Burns to carry the mail from Oregon City to Weston, in Missouri [present day Kansas City], for one trip only. Letters mailed at any of the offices, post paid, will be forwarded to any part of the United States. As the mail sent East by Mr. Burns will reach Weston early in the season, it would be advisable for those wishing to correspond with their friends in the East, to avail themselves of the opportunity. Postage only fifty cents on single sheets.

It appears from newspaper accounts that Hugh Burns did not physically carry this mail for the 25 percent commission that he was allowed. Rather, it was almost certainly carried east by J. Bond, W. Parkinson, W. Delany and two others. A report of their arrival in Independence, Missouri was published in the July 4, 1846 *Independence Expositor*. It mentioned that the party left Oregon City direct for the States on March 1 and arrived in Independence on June 30, 1846. The article also explained that their trip had been delayed by snow storms in the Rockies and that they were at Fort Laramie on June 10. Although no specific mention was made of mail having been carried, reports in the *St. Louis Reveille* of slightly later date mentioned receipt of the first issue of the *Oregon Spectator* in St. Louis. Interestingly, copies of the first three issues of the *Oregon Spectator* also arrived in Montreal via the HBC "canoe brigade" express and were reported in August 1846 newspaper accounts.

Unfortunately there are no provisional post office letters that can be positively identified as having been carried by this express, although there is one letter that has been described that way. There are, however, surviving letters that were carried privately by members of the larger party of men that joined the five "Burns" men at Whitman's station before crossing the mountains. This larger "Spring Party" of 18 men departed on March 18, 1846 and traveled together beyond Fort Laramie which they reached on June 8. The party split up in mid June near the forks of the Platte River (in present-day western Nebraska) and traveled by divergent paths to Missouri. One such letter is shown in Figure 3-25.



Figure 3-25. Letter dated January 1, 1846 from Oregon City, Oregon and sent to Connecticut via St Joseph, Missouri on July 8.

This letter was datelined from Oregon City (Figure 3-26) on January 1, 1846 and was written by Benjamin Stark to his father. It was also endorsed at the lower left, “Ford By Yo(ur) Mo(st) Ob(edient) S(ervant) I.B. Wall.” In the letter, Stark explained that:

I send this letter by the party crossing the mountains in the Spring. It may or may not anticipate letters which I shall forward immediately on my arrival at the Sandwich Islands. As I have a communication to make to you, of considerable importance should it be the last you have, I have availed myself of this way and by Hudson’s Bay Co’s express to Montreal, to ensure its safe delivery.

Starks’s communication of considerable importance was in reference to a large plot of land that he had just purchased north of Oregon City in the center of today’s Portland, Oregon. He entrusted it to his friend Isaac B. Wall, who arranged to have it carried by the Spring Party to St. Joseph Missouri, where it was postmarked on July 8, 1846 and rated for 10 cents postage due.



Figure 3-26. View of Oregon City, Oregon in 1846.

3 - OREGON MAILS, 1830-1848

Another Spring Party overland letter is shown in Figure 3-27. This letter was datelined “Yam Hill, Oregon Territory 7th February 1846,” addressed to East Chester, New York, and endorsed “Via Platte City Mo.” The writer of the letter, William Dawson, had traveled overland to Oregon in May 1845 with Joel Palmer in a party led by Joe Meek.

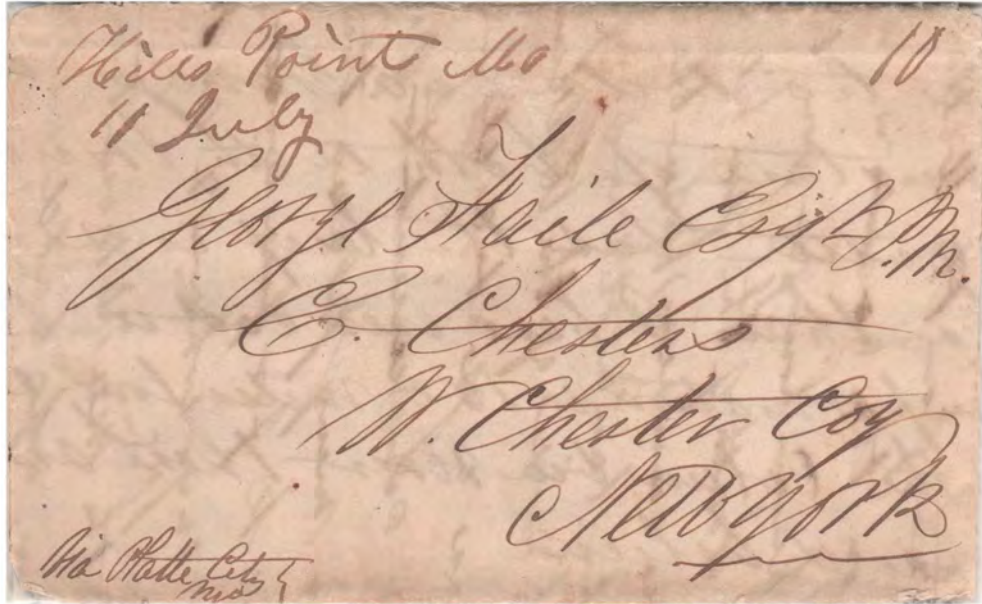



Figure 3-27. Letter dated February 7, 1846 from Yam Hill, Oregon and sent to Connecticut via Hills Point, Missouri on July 11.

While there is no specific reference to the letter carrier, it can be deduced that Joel Palmer carried it on his return trip to the East to collect his family. Palmer left Oregon City four days after the Burns party, but caught up with them at the Whitman station and accompanied the Spring Party east.



Joel Palmer, Oregon Pioneer (1810-1881)

- Traveled to Oregon, May 1845
- First man to climb Mt Hood, October 1845
- Arrived in Oregon City, November 1845
- Left Oregon City for the U.S., March 5, 1846
- Arrived at St Joseph, Missouri, July 7, 1846
- Returned to Oregon with family, 1847

According to his published journal, Palmer arrived in St Joseph, Missouri on July 7. He continued south on the Platte River and mailed the letter at Hills Point, Missouri (southeast of St. Joseph on the Platte River) where it was postmarked on July 11 with 10 cents postage collect.

In December 1846, the Oregon Provisional Government Postmaster General William T’Vault reported:

The law establishing the post office department needs altering materially. It was

found after being in operation but a short time, that the rates of postage were altogether too high, amounting indeed to a prohibition; the revenue arose almost entirely from postage on newspapers, but fell so far short of the expenses, that the Postmaster General, at the close of the third quarter [September 30, 1846] stopped sending the mail. I would recommend that the rates of postage be reduced to five cents on each letter; double letters and packages in proportion, and one cent on

each newspaper. A mail route should be kept up between the principal sections of our territory, and I have no doubt, if the postage is reduced, the revenue arising from receipts of the office, would very nearly or quite pay expenses.

Although the post office of the Oregon Provisional Government remained technically lawful, postal operations in Oregon effectively ceased until the United States established postal facilities in 1847.

The Start of the U.S. Postal Service in Oregon

After the Oregon boundary dispute with Great Britain was resolved on June 15, 1846 the U.S. Congress authorized postal facilities, routes and special postal rates for the newly-acquired region on March 3, 1847. A post office was established at Astoria, and rates between Oregon and the United States were set at 40 cents per half ounce.

The Postmaster General acted quickly on this legislation, and appointed John M. Shively postmaster of Astoria on March 9, 1847. Shively had to travel from Washington, D.C. to assume his new post, so the Postmaster General also contracted with him to carry the first post office mail from Independence, Missouri to Astoria, Oregon. Shively's compensation for this was the postage on the letters carried by him to Oregon.

Shively was already very familiar with Oregon. For his first trip to Oregon, he had joined the 700-person Burnett - Gantt overland party (also called the Oregon Emigration Company), which left Independence on May 3, 1843 and traveled via South Pass and Fort Hall to Fort Vancouver, Oregon on October 24, 1843. Shively made a land claim at Astoria in 1844, but the HBC disputed the claim and he was forced to leave Oregon in May 1845. Accordingly, he returned overland (see Figure 3-23) to Washington, D.C. where he began lobbying for a mail service to Oregon.

With his postmaster appointment and contract mail in hand, Shively left Independence once again on April 28, 1847 and traveled overland to Astoria, Oregon on September 7. One letter carried by him in this first contract mail across the Rocky Mountains is known, and is illustrated in Figure 3-28.

This letter was posted in Lawrenceville, Pennsylvania on August 17, 1846, prepaid 10 cents postage to Independence, Missouri. The letter was endorsed at lower left, "To the care of the Post Master at Independence Jackson County Mo to be forwarded the first opportunity." It arrived at Independence too late for the annual emigrant wagon trains, so it was held there. In the meantime, the Independence postmaster received the following March 25, 1847 instructions from the 1st Assistant Postmaster General:



**John Shively, Oregon Postmaster
(1803 - 1893)**

- Travelled overland to Oregon, May-October 1843
- Tried to claim land in Astoria, 1844
- Returned overland to U.S., May-August 1845
- Lobbied in Washington, DC, October 1845-March 1847
- Named first postmaster west of the Rockies, March 1847
- Returned overland to Astoria, April-September 1847
- Postmaster at Astoria, September 1847-1849
- 1849 joined the California gold rush

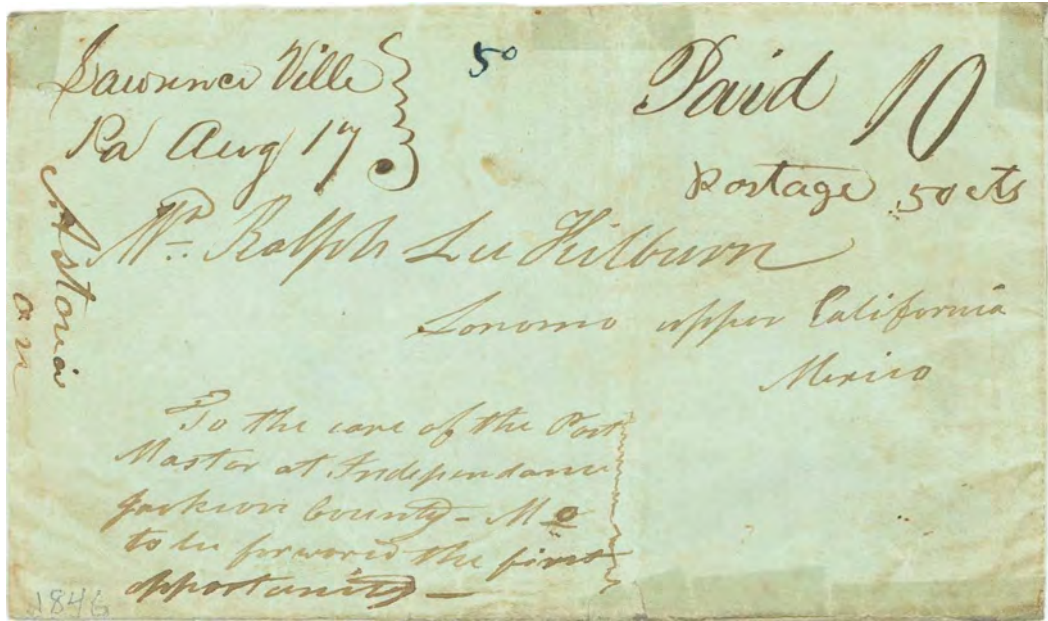


Figure 3-28. Letter posted August 17, 1846 in Lawrenceville, Pennsylvania and sent via Missouri and Oregon to Sonoma, California.

Sir:

You are hereby instructed...to deliver all mail matter which may reach your Office on or before the 15th of April 1847 to J.M. Shively, who will present this communication. You will be pleased to report to this Office the amount of postages upon all prepaid letters delivered to Mr. Shively under the foregoing instructions.

In April, the Independence postmaster complied with these instructions and delivered the letter to Shively, who carried it overland to Astoria on September 7, 1847. Once in Astoria, Shively assumed his postmaster duties, and postmarked the letter with a manuscript "Astoria Ore" postmark. This is one of two known manuscript Astoria postmarks, and the other is illustrated in Figure 3-8. Unsure of the correct rates, Shively rated this letter as 50 cents due, possibly thinking of 40 cents for the overland trip to Oregon plus 10 cents from Oregon to Sonoma, California. Just as with Figure 3-8, Shively contracted with the ship *Whiton* to carry this letter. It left Astoria around November 2, 1847 and arrived in San Francisco on November 10. It was probably hand-carried to nearby Sonoma from San Francisco.

The addressee, Ralph Lee Kilburn, had been a member of the Peoria Party which had been so influenced by Jason Lee's lecture about Oregon in 1838. He set out from Missouri in May 1839 and reached Fort Walla Walla, Oregon in May 1840. He was not satisfied with the conditions in Oregon, so he helped construct the *Oregon Star*, which was the first ship built in Oregon. Along with a group of men, he set sail on August 29, 1842 and reached San Francisco on September 17. He later settled in Napa Valley, and planted orchards and grapes.

Endnotes

1. Holman, Dr. John McLoughlin, *the Father of Oregon*, page 61
2. *On to Oregon: The Diaries of Mary Walker and Myra Eells*, page 286
3. "Autobiography of Roderick Finlayson" in *The Washington Historian*, page 30

Chapter Four

California Mails, 1821-1849

This chapter describes the mail systems that connected California with the East prior to the March 1849 establishment of the U.S. Post Office contract mail routes and service between New York and San Francisco via Panama.

Early American Settlement of California

While Mexico was under the control of the Spanish Crown, all settlement and trading by foreigners was prohibited in the province of Alta California. As a result, when Mexico gained its independence with the signing of the Treaty of Cordoba on August 24, 1821, there were only about twenty foreigners living in the portion of the province that is now California.

Upon the establishment of a republican government in Mexico in 1823, Alta California was not granted status as a constituent state because of its small population, and instead was designated as a territory, with Monterey as the capital.

Mexico soon recognized the revenue-generating potential of a regulated and taxed trade, and relaxed the previous prohibitions against foreign trade and settlement. This effectively opened the California coast and ports to foreign ships and the lucrative hide and tallow trade. Stories about the natural wealth of California also drew some adventuresome settlers to the region, most arriving by ship, and the foreign population of California grew to an estimated 120 persons by 1830. This number grew slowly to about 240 by 1835, 380 in 1840 and 680 in 1845.¹ This growth was fueled in part by November 1828 Mexican regulations which allowed settlement in California by foreigners. However, substantive settlement had to wait for the August 1834 decree by Alta California Governor Figueroa that secularized the Franciscan Missions, and opened up large portions of the desirable coastline property to settlement. This availability of prime land drew ranchers and farmers to the region, and the increase in trade along the coast greatly improved their prospects of economic success. In 1836, Alta California was recognized as a department of Mexico and was granted additional autonomy.

While there is no known mail sent from Mexican post offices in Alta California to the United States, the regional postal routes established in the Spanish period continued to operate. Figure 4-1 shows an 1834 example of mail sent within Alta California during the Mexican period.

This letter was written in Monterey on June 17, 1834 by California Governor Jose Figueroa to Ferdinand Deppe in San Diego. Figueroa was governor of Alta California from January 1833 until his death in September 1835. In his additional capacity as commander of the California military forces, he handstamped the letter with his administrative "Comandancia General de la alta California" cachet and entrusted it to the Mexican post. It was postmarked "FRANCO ALTA CALIFORNIA" and sent to San Diego. This is the earliest handstamped postmark known applied in present day California. Other reported uses handled by the Mexican post office in California bear only handstamped or manuscript rate markings.



Figure 4-1. June 17, 1834 letter from Monterey to San Diego.

Ferdinand Deppe, the addressee, was a German naturalist working as a supercargo (owner's agent) for a fleet of ships engaged in trading between Mexico and the California coast. In his spare time, he collected horticultural specimens and sketched the California countryside. Figure 4-2 shows an oil painting that he did in 1832 of the San Gabriel Mission (near Los Angeles).



Figure 4-2. San Gabriel Mission painting by Ferdinand Deppe in 1832. (Santa Barbara Mission Archive Library)

Early Overland Trips to California

The first recorded overland trips from the United States to California were by Jedediah Smith and his company of fur traders, who took two trips to California in 1826-1827. Smith's westbound route was via the Colorado River and the Mojave Desert to southern California, but he returned east by crossing the Sierra Nevada range and following the Humboldt River to the Great Salt Lake. His return route later became known as the California Trail and is shown in Figure 4-3. The next American explorer to reach California overland was Joseph Reddeford Walker, who followed the Humboldt River to Yosemite Valley and Monterey in July-October 1833. Walker made another trip to California in 1838, but there was very little overland emigration to California until 1841.



Jedediah Smith's Expeditions to California, 1826-1827

- Left 1826 fur trade rendezvous on August 16
- Traveled via Colorado River to San Gabriel, California
- Arrived November 27; escorted to San Diego
- Expedition ordered out of California
- 1st crossing of Sierra Nevadas in May 1827
- Arrived at 1827 fur trade rendezvous on July 3
- Left again for California on July 13, 1827
- Reached San Bernadino Valley on August 28
- Arrested in Monterey on October 8
- Left for Oregon on December 30, 1827

On May 12, 1841, the 64-person Bidwell - Bartleson party (also known as the Western Emigration Society) left Independence, Missouri with the stated aim of reaching California under the guidance of former fur trapper Thomas Fitzpatrick. This was the first overland emigration party to designate California as its destination. The party reached Soda Springs (in present day southeast Idaho, near Fort Hall) on September 24, where half of the party headed toward



Figure 4-3. Map showing the California Trail (green) and the Old Spanish Trail (red).

Oregon under the leadership of Fitzpatrick, and half continued on to California under the leadership of Bidwell and Bartleson. The California group followed the Humboldt River to the San Joaquin Valley via Sonora Pass. They first viewed San Francisco Bay on November 5, 1841. Another 24-person group, led by

4 - CALIFORNIA MAILS, 1821-1849

Rowland and Workman, left Santa Fe on September 6, 1841 and took the Old Spanish Trail via the Colorado River to Los Angeles, where they arrived on November 5.

Emigration Begins to Build, 1843 to 1848

Even after the success of the two 1841 overland parties, very few settlers came to California. Then, in 1843, Frémont's much publicized second expedition passed through California on its return to the East from Oregon, and Joseph Chiles (who had been with the 1841 Bidwell - Bartleson party) led the third emigrant train to California. Chiles was followed by a growing number of emigrant parties in the next few years, including the ill-fated Donner party in the peak year of 1846.

Even though the overland trip took up to five months, most emigration from the United States was overland, since the alternative routes via Cape Horn, Mexico or Panama were even less attractive. The tedious trip by sailing ship around Cape Horn took up to six months, while the shorter transcontinental routes crossing Mexico or Panama held dangers from disease and attack by bandits. The table below presents the number of yearly overland emigrants to California from 1840 to 1848² and the reported population of foreigners in California in 1840 and 1845.³ In addition to those Americans classified as overland emigrants, there were many who were employed on vessels operating along the California coast. Much of the surviving mail from this period is from Americans on vessels trading along the California coast.

<u>Number of Overland Emigrants to California</u>		
<u>Year</u>	<u>Overland Emigrants</u>	<u>Foreign Population</u>
1840	0	380
1841	34	
1842	0	
1843	38	
1844	53	
1845	260	680
1846	1,500	
1847	450	
1848	400	

The number of overland travelers to California dropped precipitously after 1846, in part attributable to the negative reports surrounding the fate of the Donner party.

The numbers in the table above do not include the U.S. military units sent to capture California: Frémont's 1845 Expedition arrived at Sutter's Fort on December 9, 1845 with 60 men; the Pacific Naval squadron brought 2,210 men, including 400 marines, to the coast in 1845 and 1846; Kearney and a portion of the Army of the West arrived in San Diego on December 15, 1846 with 80 men; the USS *Lexington* arrived at Monterey on January 27, 1847 with 118 soldiers of the 3rd U.S. Artillery; the 500 man Mormon Battalion arrived at San Diego from Santa Fe on January 29, 1847 and 770 soldiers of the 1st NY Volunteers arrived

by ship at San Francisco in March and April 1847. Many of these additional 3,758 sailors and soldiers settled in California after the end of the war in 1848.

California Becomes Part of the United States, 1846 to 1848

Prior to the outbreak of the Mexican War, the United States sent John C. Frémont on overland expeditions in 1843 and 1845 to gather intelligence about the region. The Navy's Pacific Squadron, under Commodore John D. Sloat, was instructed in 1845 to land in Alta California and to claim it for the United States in the event of war.

Following the United States' declaration of war with Mexico on May 13, 1846, Secretary of the Navy George Bancroft sent copies of his formal instructions to take California to Commodore Sloat by at least five separate conveyances. An envelope that likely carried one of these missives is shown in Figure 4-4 and illustrates the long delay and unreliability of communication. It was carried by Henry Lindsey on his trip from Boston around the Horn to the Pacific Ocean. Lindsey departed on June 22, 1846 carrying official dispatches but did not reach Panama until July 23, 1846. By this time Sloat had already claimed Alta California for the United States by raising the American flag at Monterey on July 7 and had turned over command of US Naval forces to Commodore Robert F. Stockton on July 23. While on station off Mazatlan, Sloat had previously received news of fighting on the Texas border and was able to beat the British Navy, also anxious to gain control of California, to Monterey.

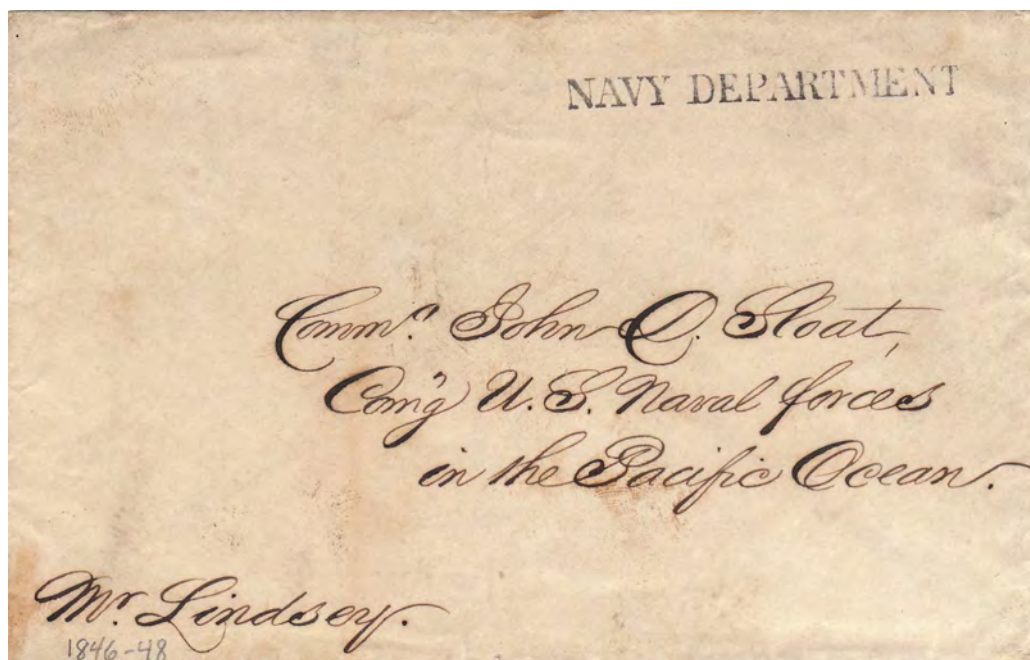


Figure 4-4. June 1846 Navy Department handstamped cover addressed to Commodore Sloat and carried by Henry Lindsey.

John C. Frémont's 1845 expedition, which included Lieutenant C.H. (Kit) Carson in its ranks, was also on the West Coast at the outbreak of hostilities and played a crucial role in wresting control of California from Mexican rule. On June 14, 1846 settlers at Sonoma, with the tacit support of Frémont, had revolted against Mexican authority, raised the Bear Flag, and proclaimed the Bear Flag Republic by declaring California to

4 - CALIFORNIA MAILS, 1821-1849

be free and independent. One month later, Frémont and the rebels were mustered into United States service as the California Battalion.

Kearny's California Regional Mail Service

The United States also sent a military force under General Stephen W. Kearny overland from Santa Fe to California, where Kearny arrived in December 1846. After some initial disagreements between Stockton, Frémont and Kearny, Kearny became military governor. Governor Kearny soon established a regional military mail service that carried the first official U.S. mail on the West Coast.

Kearny's twice-monthly mail system within California was designed to facilitate communication between the various military forces distributed throughout the region. Although operated by the military, letters from civilians were authorized to be carried and all mail was carried free of charge.⁴ The Saturday, April 17, 1847 *California Star* announced that:

REGULAR MAIL. Our readers will be pleased to learn that Gov. Kearny has established a semi-monthly mail, to run regularly between San Francisco and San Diego. This mail is to be carried on horseback, by a party consisting of two soldiers; and is to commence on the 19th inst. Starting every other Monday from San Diego, and San Francisco, the parties to meet at Captain Dana's Ranch, the next Saturday to exchange Mails; and start back on their respective routes the next morning, and arrive at San Diego and San Francisco, on the Sunday following, and so continuing.

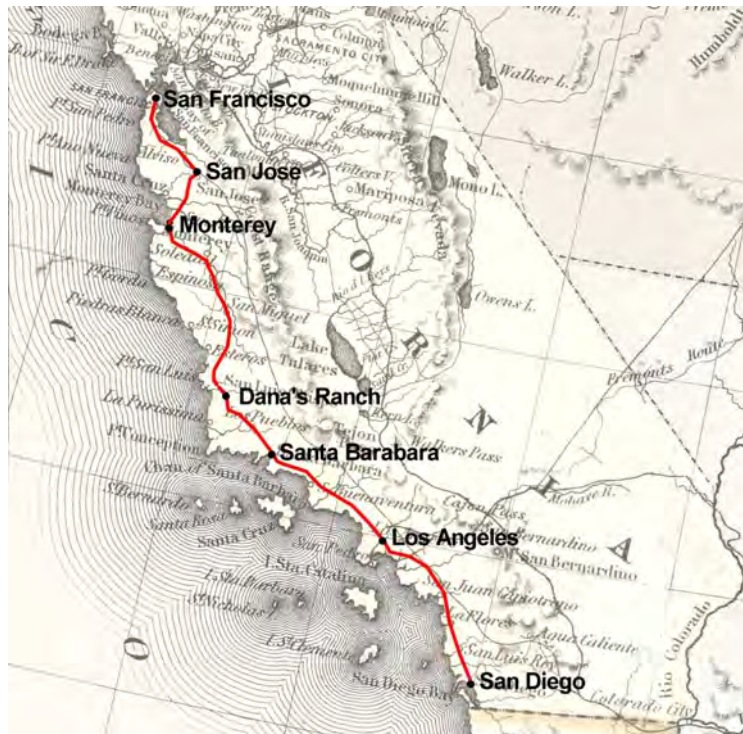


Figure 4-5. Map of the 1847 mail route between San Francisco and San Diego, California.

The route, shown in Figure 4-5, followed a portion of the old Spanish Royal Road (“Camino Real”) which had been used since the colonial period to connect the California Missions with Mexico City.

An example of a letter carried on this route is shown in Figure 4-6.

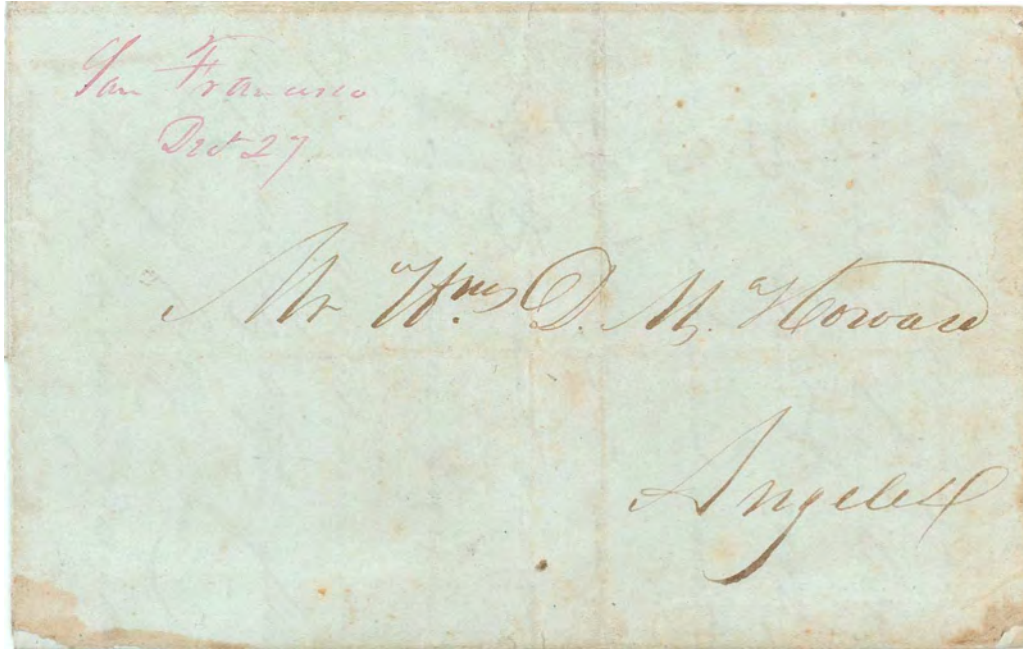


Figure 4-6. December 27, 1847 letter from San Francisco to Los Angeles.

This folded letter was datelined December 26, 1847 at San Francisco, and addressed to William Howard at Los Angeles. It was endorsed "San Francisco Dec 27" at top in red ink, typical of military endorsements of the time. This endorsement was probably written by Captain Joseph L. Folsom who was acting military postmaster at the time. December 27 was a Monday that corresponds with a scheduled departure. The writer of this letter, Henry Mellus, came to California in 1835 as a sailor before the mast in the ship *Pilgrim* along with the well-known author, Richard Henry Dana. Mellus served as agent for Appleton & Co. in the hide and tallow trade before partnering with William Howard in purchasing the Hudson Bay Co. property in San Francisco in 1846.

Lieutenant William T. Sherman curtailed this service on August 11, 1848^s by restricting it to the route between San Francisco and Monterey. Shortly thereafter, the establishment of the U.S. postal service in California during the first half of 1849 eliminated any further need for this military courier service.

Overview of Transcontinental Mail Routes before 1849

Visiting American traders and the few foreign residents of Alta California had few channels available for mail communication with their primarily eastern correspondents. This portion of the chapter will examine those available channels. As new routes and systems became available that provided more rapid transmission of news and mail, they quickly became the primary channel. Although there is some overlap with continuing use of a route after faster routes became operational, the primary mail routes followed a linear progression over time. Overland routes which served as alternatives to the ocean routes were rarely used.

This succession of primary routes follows the following outline, which includes a brief summary, and corresponds to the order in which the routes will be presented.

4 - CALIFORNIA MAILS, 1821-1849

Via Cape Horn (to 1835): By ship around Cape Horn, a voyage of five to six months. Although this route took the longest time, there were frequent opportunities to send letters by whalers or trading ships leaving for California or returning home.

Via Mexico (1824-1846): By ship to the coast of Mexico, overland between Mazatlan and Vera Cruz, and then by ship to the destination. This system utilized forwarders to direct mail across Mexico and mail transmission usually took only two to four months. This route was slow to develop, and became the primary route in 1835 after a reliable network of forwarders was established. It was interrupted by the May 1846 start of the Mexican War and rarely used after.

Via Panama (1846-1849): By ship to the coast of Panama, overland between Panama City and Chagres, and then by ship to the destination. This route, at two to three months, was a faster alternative and was chosen in 1849 for the first contract mail service to and from California.

Overland (alternate route after 1846): After California was claimed by the United States in 1846, a few transcontinental overland mails were sent by the military or private couriers between Missouri or New Mexico and California. These alternate overland routes took from three to five months.

Mail via Cape Horn, 1821 to 1835

The earliest mails between Alta California and the East were carried by ship around Cape Horn at the southern tip of South America on long voyages that frequently included numerous intermediate stops for trading and supplies. Figure 4-7 illustrates the route around Cape Horn. It also suggests the appeal of the shorter routes via Mexico or Central America.



Figure 4-7. Map of the via Cape Horn Route, dotted line represents alternate route.

The route around Cape Horn had been in use by the New England whaling fleets since the late 18th century. However, the Pacific Ocean center for the whaling fleet was Honolulu. As trade in foodstuffs, peltry and tallow developed along the California coast after Mexican independence, new trade centers were established. The principal trading ports were at Astoria, Oregon and the California port cities of Monterey, San Francisco and San Diego.

The trading system employed by the New England merchants was usually to send a fleet of ships to the Pacific coast and have them stay there, often for a period of years. The vessels would collect goods along the coast and then transfer them to a single ship heading home. A fleet-owner representative for business matters (the supercargo) would be in charge of receiving goods, making payments, and directing all commercial affairs while at sea. These fleets operated up and down the coast of California and Oregon, often with additional trips to Hawaii. The return ships carried mail from the fleet back to New England and outbound ships carried mail to the Pacific fleet.

The earliest reported letter carried eastward from Alta California via the Cape Horn route is shown in Figure 4-8. It is an 1826 letter from Catalina Island to Ipswich, Massachusetts, and was written only five years after newly independent Mexico had opened its ports to foreign trade. It is from a crew member on the trading brig *Barrian*, John Richards, who wrote to his sister:

Island of Catalina Coast of California Dec. 28 1826

...as I have an excellent opportunity (to send a letter) I shall not omit it. We arrived at this Island about the 25th of last month...we shall go in a day or two and that is to a place called St Diego to get the supercargo of the ship (Thomas Shaw) and he will order us where he chooses for Hides...I expect to cruise up and down the coast of California collecting Hides and fetch them to this Island and cure them and when we have got enough to fill the Brig then start for home...

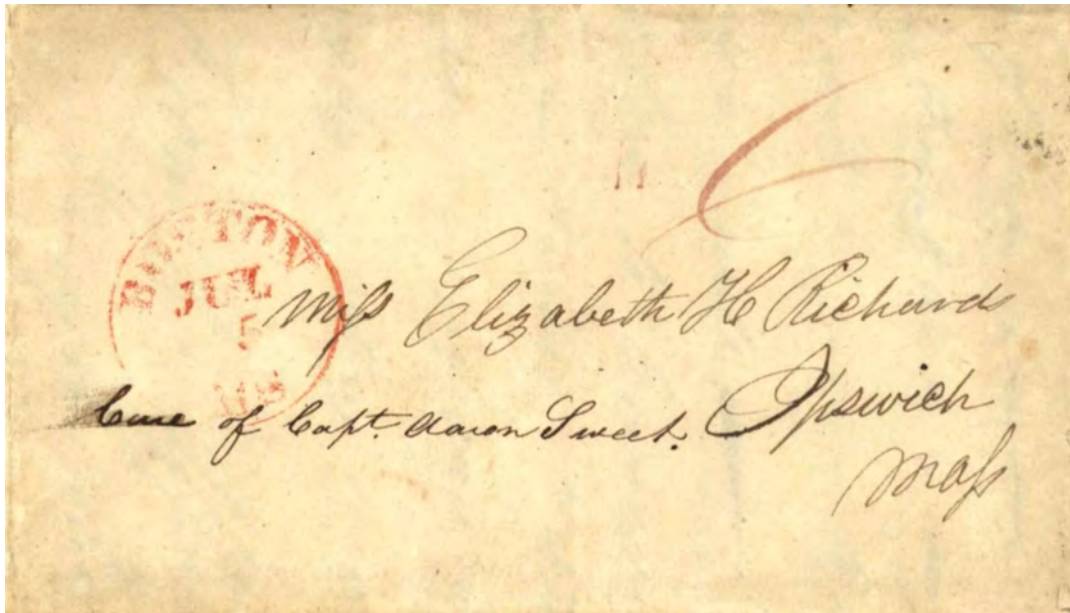


Figure 4-8. December 28, 1826 letter from the Island of Catalina and carried via Cape Horn to Boston.

There is also a recipient's docket which reads, "Mr. Manning of Brigg *Harbinger* brought this, A.S." This note was added by Captain Aaron Sweet, to whose care the letter is addressed. The *Harbinger* brought the letter around Cape Horn to Boston where it was placed in the mail and postmarked on July 5, 1827, a little

4 - CALIFORNIA MAILS, 1821-1849

over five months after the letter was written. Six cents postage from Ipswich to Boston was charged to the recipient.

The brig *Barrian* and her sister-ship *Franklin* later got into a problem over duties with the Mexican officials in Alta California, a not uncommon occurrence. In May 1828, the two ships were banned from further trading until their entire cargoes were landed at San Diego. Declining to do this, they proceeded to Catalina Island to land and cure hides. The next day the vessels escaped under fire from the Mexican fort and were forced to abandon their goods placed in surety in Alta California.

A pair of letters, original and duplicate, are illustrated in Figures 4-9 and 4-14. They show the concurrent use of two different mail routes in 1830, in an effort to ensure that at least one copy of the letter reached the addressee. This practice was not uncommon in the sending of important business correspondence. Both are from the Frederick Huth correspondence addressed to London. The letter shown in Figure 4-9 was written by Scottish trader Stephen Anderson, the supercargo of brig *Funchal*, and is dated “off the coast of California 27 Jany 1830” and endorsed “Duplicate.” It was carried around Cape Horn by the *Funchal*.



Figure 4-9. January 27, 1830 letter dated off the coast of California and carried around Cape Horn to London on August 5.

Anderson, who remained in California from 1828 to 1832, was writing about a shipment of 16,400 hides that he was sending to London on the *Funchal*, and asked Huth & Co. to obtain insurance for the shipment. The ship's captain, John Hart, added a note upon his June 4 arrival at Rio de Janeiro:

I have to inform you of the *Funchal* putting into this port after a fine passage of 121 days from California. The hides are in excellent condition as far as can be seen under the deck where they have settled. We shall leave this in 8 days for London and hope to have a quick passage.

Hart then sent the letter on a different ship to England, so that it would arrive ahead of the *Funchal*. It was carried by the Falmouth packet *Calypto* from Rio de Janeiro that departed June 18, 1830 and was postmarked at London's Foreign Post Office on August 5 (six months after it was written in California). It

was marked three shillings, six pence total postage due, which includes the single rate packet letter postage of two shillings seven pence plus 11 pence inland postage from Falmouth to London.

A letter carried from San Diego to Boston around Cape Horn in 1842 is shown in Figure 4-10.



Figure 4-10. October 1, 1842 letter from San Diego and carried via Cape Horn to Boston.

This largely personal letter was written by James Hastings, captain of the bark *Tasso* at San Diego, on October 1, 1842. He endorsed it to the ship *Alert*, which was returning to the United States around Cape Horn. The *Alert* left in December 1842, and arrived five months later in Boston on May 5, 1843. In Boston, the letter was rated for 12 cents due, consisting of a two cents ship fee plus 10 cents for postage to Sandwich. Interestingly, the *Alert* continued her long career until she was captured and burned by the CSS *Alabama* on September 9, 1862.

Hastings letter includes directions on how to send a return letter to California utilizing the via Mexico route:

Write to me direct Capt SJH Barque Tasso, Coast of Alta California
Care of Don Frederico Becker (at) Mazatlan. Send it to Cozzens in New York (and) get him to pay
25cts postage and put it on board the Vera Cruz packet.

A letter from California carried first to Hawaii and then around the Horn is shown in Figure 4-11. It is an Appleton & Company correspondence letter to Boston from Capt. James Hatch of the Appleton-owned ship *Barnstable* at "St. Francisco" (San Francisco) and is dated July 30, 1844. The letter mentions that the *Barnstable* had collected 25,000 hides, the probability of war with Mexico and, as a portent of things to come, "We have also ... some Pueblo Gold."



Figure 4-11. July 30, 1844 letter dated at “St. Francisco” sent via Hawaii and around Cape Horn to Boston.

The letter was endorsed “Favored by Capt Flere Barque Brothers” at top and to “the care of Hiram Grimes Esq., Honolulu, Sandwich Islands” at bottom. The letter was carried by the British bark *Brothers* that departed from San Francisco on August 1 and arrived at Honolulu on August 18, 1844. After receipt, Hiram Grimes placed the letter on the American whaling ship *Corvo* that departed Honolulu on September 7, 1844 and arrived at Stonington, Connecticut on February 26, 1845. The letter was postmarked at Stonington the following day as a ship letter with 14½ cents postage due which includes the two cents ship fee.

A westbound example from the period during which the United States was gaining control of California in 1846 is shown in Figure 4-12. The August 11, 1846 letter from East Boston was addressed to a sailor on the Appleton-owned trading bark *Tasso* on the coast of California. The addressee, Henry F. Teschemacher, later became Mayor of San Francisco in 1859. The letter, from the sailor’s mother mentions:

I had almost despaired of a chance occurring this summer of sending you out letters (that is with any reasonable likelihood of your obtaining them) but your Father has just apprized me that he proposes writing by the ‘Independence’ a vessel of war about to proceed immediately to your coast.

The letter was endorsed at the top to be carried by the USS *Independence*. It bears an oval handstamp of the “NAVAL LIBRARY & INSTITUTE, U.S. NAVY YARD, BOSTON” on the reverse to indicate the Naval Library’s handling as mail forwarder to a navy ship, an unusual occurrence for mail not addressed to navy personnel. The USS *Independence* departed from Boston on August 29, 1846 and stopped at Rio de Janeiro on its way around Cape Horn. She entered Monterey Bay on January 22, 1847, slightly more than five months after the letter was written.

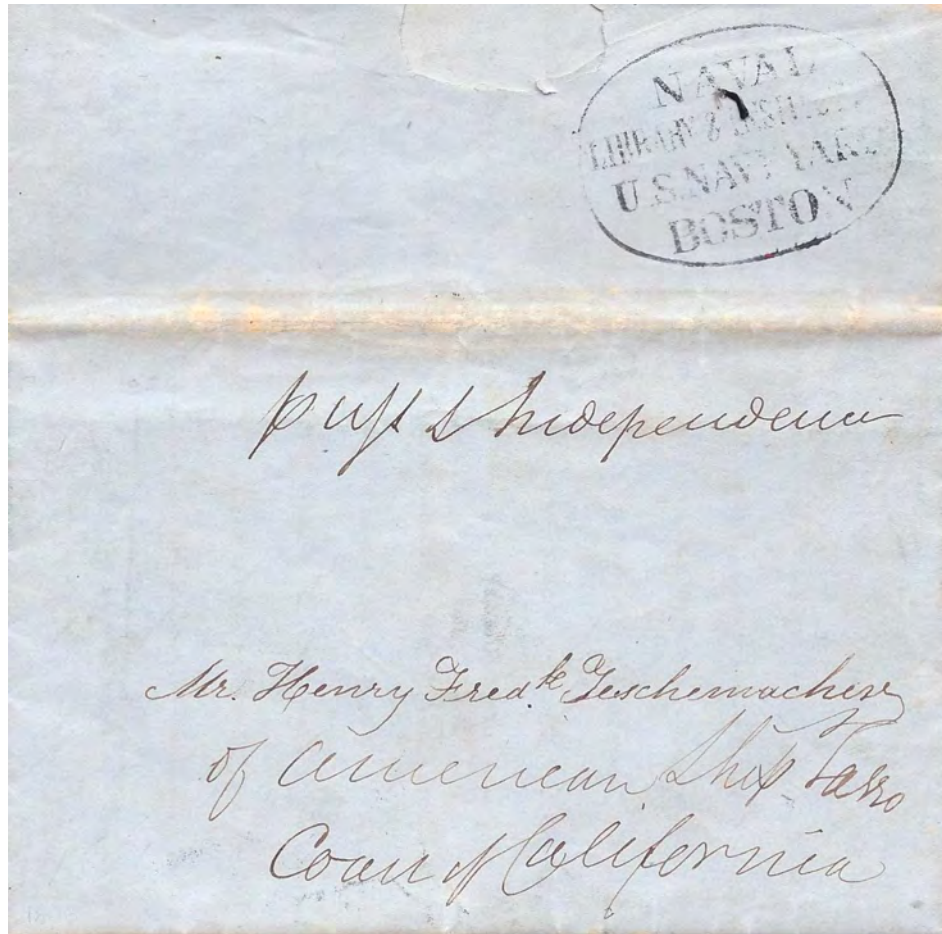


Figure 4-12. August 11, 1846 letter from East Boston carried by USS *Independence* around the Horn to the coast of California.

Mail via Mexico, 1824 to 1846

In his 1842 letter (Figure 4-10), James Hastings instructed his eastern correspondent to send letters via Vera Cruz and overland to Mazatlan on the west coast of Mexico. The map in Figure 4-13 shows that the route between these two points passed through Mexico City.

On the Atlantic side, this route relied on the British mail packets operating to Vera Cruz and on American ships operating directly between New Orleans and Vera Cruz. In 1825, Great Britain established full diplomatic relations with Mexico and British postal agencies were established at Vera Cruz and Mexico City. The British already had an extensive system of packet service to their colonies in the West Indies and a monthly service between Vera Cruz and Kingston, Jamaica with onward service to Falmouth, England was inaugurated in 1825. After January 1, 1842 these monthly packets were replaced by a twice-monthly contract service provided by the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company (RMSP), and the new scheme included provisions for a more direct service from Havana, Cuba to Vera Cruz. This improved service, coupled with the many American trading vessels stopping at Havana, propelled this route into supremacy for mails to and from the Pacific Ocean. This primacy lasted until mid-1846 when the route was abandoned due to the outbreak of the Mexican-American War.



Figure 4-13. Map of the via Mexico route.

American forwarding agents at Havana and New York played an important role in expediting mail transfer to the RMSP steamers. At Vera Cruz, the U.S. Consul acted as forwarder, and other private forwarders also handled mails.

Mail was carried across Mexico between Vera Cruz and Mazatlan by private means, by diplomatic pouch, or by the Mexican post office. Packages which included multiple letters were frequently transmitted by the Mexican mails to save postage.

On the Pacific Ocean side, there were many American ships operating between Mazatlan and the California ports. At Mazatlan, the American Consul and private forwarding agents were available to perform mail handling services. Westbound mail could be given to one of the ship captains heading up the coast of California and mail was often directed to Thomas A. Larkin at Monterey. Larkin was appointed to be U.S. Consul in Monterey in 1843 and although President Tyler signed the appointment in January 1844, Larkin did not receive his official papers until April 2, 1844.⁶

A letter from the U.S. Consul John Parrott at Mazatlan to Larkin⁷ advised him that the rate to be charged for letters, forwarded through his office, to eastern points was “fifty cents a single sheet and more according to weight.”

The earliest reported letter to have taken the route via Mexico is shown in Figure 4-14. It was datelined “California Sa. Barbara 24 Jany 1830” and endorsed “p. Via Mexico” in the dateline. This is the original to the duplicate letter illustrated in Figure 4-9, written by Scottish trader Stephen Anderson three days earlier. He wrote:

I have no doubt ere now your Lima house has advised you of my intention of shipping by the London Brig “Funchal” John Hart master a cargo of Hides for your market and to your consignment. I have now to inform you she has just finished loading in this port and will sail in a few days with sixteen thousand four hundred fine dry salted hides consisting of Ox, Cow and a few Bulls, all in superior order of which I beg to enclose you the Bill of Lading.

He then requested that Huth & Co. obtain insurance on the cargo, valued at 12 shillings per hide.

The letter was carried by ship from Santa Barbara to Mazatlan, Mexico, and then overland to Vera Cruz, where it caught the British ship *Princess Elisabeth* on June 14. It then travelled via Kingston, Jamaica to Falmouth, England. It was postmarked at the London Foreign Post Office on August 2 (a little over six months after the letter was written) and charged six shillings, representing double two shillings one pence packet postage from Vera Cruz plus double 11 pence inland postage from Falmouth to London.

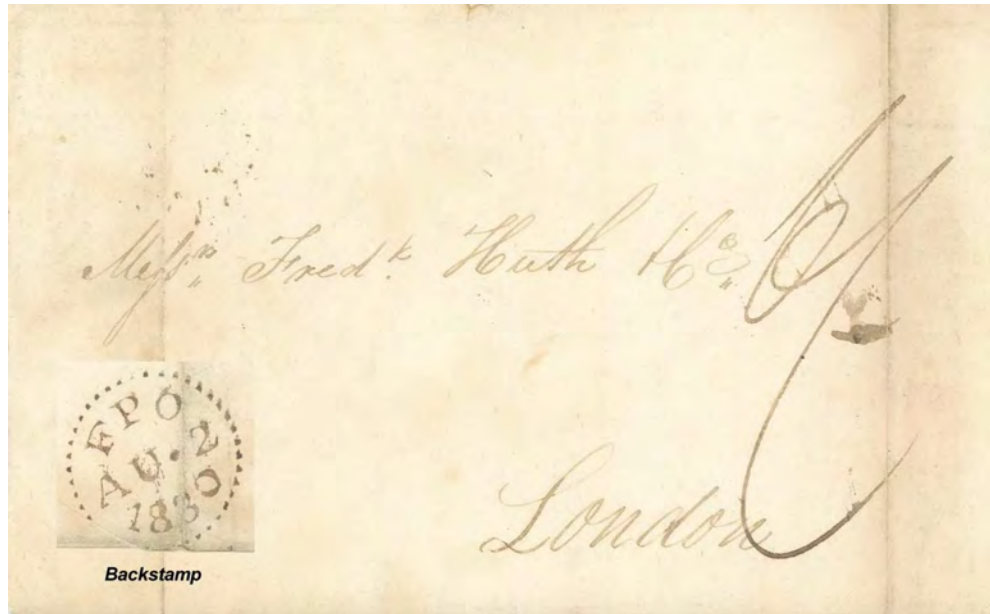


Figure 4-14. January 24, 1830 letter from Santa Barbara, California carried via Mexico to London.

Another eastbound example, but addressed to the United States, is shown in Figure 4-15.



Figure 4-15. December 3, 1843 letter from Monterey sent via Mazatlan and New York on March 18.

4 - CALIFORNIA MAILS, 1821-1849

This letter was written by Captain Peterson of the ship *Admittance* at Monterey, on December 3, 1843. He wrote to the owners of the *Admittance* that, "By Mr. Larkin a resident of Monterey and going to the city of Mexico I forward this." Larkin, the U.S. consul in Monterey, carried it to Mazatlan, and placed it in the Mexican mails, prepaid 4 reales. Accordingly, it was marked "FRANCO PUERTO DE MAZATLAN" (prepaid at the port of Mazatlan) with a black "4" on the reverse, representing four reales postage paid. At Vera Cruz, it was placed on the bark *Eugenia* that departed February 27, 1844 for New York. It arrived on March 18, just three and a half months after it was written. New York rated it for 27 cents due, consisting of double postage to Boston, plus a two cents ship fee.

The *Admittance* was a sister ship to the *Tasso* and *Barnstable* (all owned by Appleton & Co. of Boston), and engaged in the hide and tallow trade on the California coast from October 1843 to May 1845.

While the letter in Figure 4-15 entered the Mexican mails at Mazatlan the eastbound letter shown in Figure 4-16 entered the Mexican mails at Vera Cruz.



Figure 4-16. March 2, 1845 letter from San Diego sent via Mazatlan, Vera Cruz and New Orleans.

This letter was begun at sea on February 2, 1845 by John C. Bull, first officer on the ship *Tasso*, and completed at San Diego on March 2. He indicated in his letter that he expected the *Tasso*'s sister ship *Barnstable* to carry it on its return trip to the U.S., but as that ship had left San Diego over two months earlier, Bull routed the letter to Mazatlan instead. He commented about the Mexico "overland" route that,

...the postage overland being so very Extravagant about \$1 25cts per letter probably the next letter you receive will be in about 18 months from Date as the ship Admittance will not leave the coast til that time...

The letter was endorsed to Mazatlan forwarder Scarborough & Co., but the successor firm of Mott Talbot & Co. (per their forwarder handstamp) arranged to get it to Vera Cruz, where it was postmarked "Franquedo Veracruz" on April 14. It was then carried by the schooner *Creole* that departed on April 22 and arrived at New Orleans on May 6 (only two months after being written). It was postmarked and rated for 52 cents double rate due, which included a 2 cents ship fee.

The *Tasso* (see Figure 4-25 for another letter from Bull) first arrived in San Diego on February 12, 1845 after a six-month voyage from Boston around Cape Horn. It was active in trading for Appleton & Co. along the California coast until it was sold at San Francisco on August 27, 1848.

Figure 4-17 shows an 1844 eastbound letter forwarded by the U.S. consul at Vera Cruz.



Figure 4-17. June 24, 1844 letter from Monterey sent via Mazatlan, Vera Cruz and New Orleans.

4 - CALIFORNIA MAILS, 1821-1849

This letter was written on June 24, 1844 by Thomas Larkin, U.S. consul at Monterey, and directed that return mail was to be sent to the “care of John Parrot, Esq. Mazatlan via Vera Cruz y Mexico & post pd. in Boston will reach.”

Larkin’s letter was sent under cover via Mazatlan and then by private courier to Vera Cruz, where the U.S. consul, Francis M. Dimond, noted on the reverse, “Re’d Vera Cruz Aug 3d 1844 and forwarded by your Ob St.” He placed the letter on the Mexican schooner *Rosetta* that departed on August 4 for New Orleans, and which arrived late on August 20, only two months after the letter left California. It was postmarked as a ship letter on August 21 and rated 27 cents postage due, consisting of the two cents ship fee plus the 25 cents rate to Boston.

The letter shown in Figure 4-18 is another letter written by Henry Mellus (see also Figure 4-6) in 1845. At that time, he was supercargo of the Appleton-owned ship *Admittance* at Monterey.



Figure 4-18. January 20, 1845 letter from Monterey sent via Mexico and New Orleans.

This letter was a commercial report datelined at Monterey on January 20, 1845 and sent to Appleton & Co. in Boston. Mellus entrusted it to the American consul in Monterey, Thomas Larkin, who put his forwarding mark on the reverse and arranged to have it forwarded under cover to Mazatlan. It was likely carried by the American bark *Quixote* from Monterey to Mazatlan. In Mazatlan, it was forwarded without

directly entering the Mexican mails, via the British Consuls at Mexico City and Vera Cruz. At Vera Cruz, it was placed onboard the HMS *Eurydice*, a most unusual circumstance of carriage by a British Navy vessel which was the result of British diplomats shuttling between Vera Cruz and New Orleans during the unrest over Texas. The *Eurydice* arrived at Balize, off New Orleans, on May 31, 1845 and newspapers report that private letters as well as official dispatches were off-loaded. This letter was postmarked at New Orleans on June 1 as a ship letter and was rated for 27 cents postage due being the two cent ship fee plus the 25 cent rate to Boston.

In his letter Mellus gave some insight into the instability of the via Mexico route when he wrote, "We cannot expect letters from Mazatlan, as the only vessel to have come from there was a schooner now probably seized by the revolutionaries in that quarter."

While previous examples of mail carried via Mexico have all been eastbound, a westbound use is shown in Figure 4-19.



Figure 4-19. August 29, 1843 letter from Boston to Monterey via Mexico.

The letter, dated August 29, 1843 at Boston was written by Benjamin Reed, owner of the trading ship *California*, which was collecting otter pelts on the California coast. It is addressed to William D.M. Howard at Monterey, California who at the time was supercargo for Reed's ship (see Figure 4-6 for another example of a letter addressed to Howard). The letter is endorsed to the care of John Parrott, U.S. Consul at

4 - CALIFORNIA MAILS, 1821-1849

Mazatlan. Before entering the Mexican mails, the letter was possibly handled by a New York forwarder who sent it under cover to Havana, where it caught the RMSP monthly mail packet *Thames* that departed from Havana on October 18 and arrived at Vera Cruz on October 23, 1843. It entered the mails at Vera Cruz on October 28 with their postmark and four reales due handstamp. Consul John Parrott in Mazatlan then forwarded the letter to Thomas O. Larkin on the brig *Juanita* bound for the Columbia River after a stop in Monterey. Larkin stamped his forwarding agent handstamp on the reverse and added a note to Howard, “Rec’d from a passenger of the *Juanita* day after you sailed. T.O.L. – Postage chgd to me by Mr. P.” Howard apparently did not return to Monterey on the *California* and likely received this letter while at the port of Yerba Buena (San Francisco) in December 1843.

Figure 4-20 shows a letter that, although dated from Honolulu, was carried via California and Mexico immediately following the U.S. – Mexican War and is a very late use of the route.

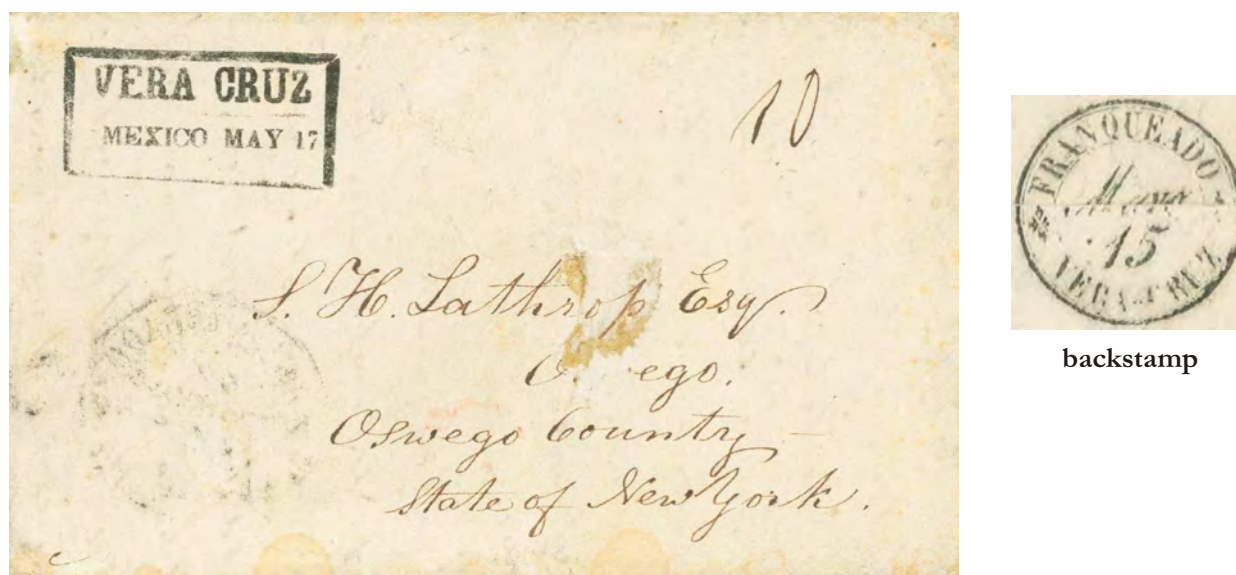


Figure 4-20. February 2, 1848 letter from Hawaii sent via California and Mexico after the end of the war.

The letter from the U.S. Consul Joel Turrill at Hawaii is addressed to Oswego, New York and dated Honolulu February 2, 1848, the same day that the treaty ending the war was signed at the Basilica of Guadalupe at Villa Hidalgo, Mexico. The letter begins “Mr. Jarves leaves in the morning for San Francisco & Mazatlan, & thence across the country for home.” Mr. James Jarves, the retiring editor of the newspaper *Polynesian*, departed Honolulu on the schooner *Starling* on February 4, 1848.

After reaching Mazatlan, this letter was carried overland to Vera Cruz where it entered the Mexican mails on May 15. It was then placed into the U.S. military post office at Vera Cruz where it received the “VERA CRUZ MEXICO MAY 17” boxed datestamp and was rated ten cents postage due as a domestic letter. It was then carried by the propeller steamship *McKim* that departed Vera Cruz on May 17 and arrived at New Orleans on May 24, 1848. The *McKim* was not a contract mail steamer but rather a vessel that served as a mail, supply and troop transport steamer.

Mail via Panama, 1846 to 1849

The map in Figure 4-21 illustrates the transcontinental route via Panama. On the Pacific side, private trading ships carried mail between California and Panama City. A short overland route across the Isthmus

of Panama connected Panama City and Chagres. On the Atlantic side, British steamers operated on a regular schedule from Chagres to Kingston, Jamaica and then to Havana, Cuba. At Havana, mails could be transferred to ships going to New York or New Orleans. In addition, occasional American ships operated directly between Chagres and New Orleans.



Figure 4-13. Map of the via Panama route.

This route, which was faster than those previously discussed, was slow to develop because the Isthmian port cities were not major commercial centers or destinations for American vessels. In 1846, several factors contributed to the rise in importance of the mail route across the Isthmus of Panama. First, the outbreak of the Mexican War in mid-1846 shut down the via Mexico route. A second reason was the improved regular service provided by British steamers on the Atlantic side. Although service between Chagres and Jamaica had been initiated in 1842 by Royal Mail steamers, service was increased after May 1845 to twice-monthly. A third factor was the rise in importance of Panama City as a commercial center. British mail steamers of the Pacific Steam Navigation Company began a regular service on the Pacific slope of South America utilizing the via Panama mail route instead of sending English mails around the Horn. Accordingly, the infrastructure that could support increased mail traffic across Panama, including mail forwarders at Chagres and Panama City, was in place by 1846.

Once the United States commenced mail service by steamship on the Atlantic and Pacific sides in 1849, and facilitated the trans-Isthmus transport of mail, this became the default transcontinental mail route for more than a decade (see Chapter Six).

Still, letter mail sent via Panama before 1849 is uncommon. Figure 4-22 shows an example carried from California, via Panama, in January 1847.

This letter was docketed “Harbor of Monterey California January 27 1847,” and was written by Captain Christopher Tompkins of the 3rd Artillery. He wrote to General Roger Jones, Adjutant General of the U.S. Army in Washington, D.C., that he had arrived in Monterey and intended to report to General Kearny at

4 - CALIFORNIA MAILS, 1821-1849

Los Angeles. He also complained about the length of his voyage from New York on the USS *Lexington* – he left on July 14, 1846 and arrived in Monterey six months later. Other passengers on the *Lexington* included Lieutenants Henry Halleck, Edward Ord and William Tecumseh Sherman, all of whom were destined to achieve fame in the Civil War.



Figure 4-22. January 27, 1847 letter from Monterey sent via Panama and New York.

The letter left Monterey on January 28 aboard the sloop-of-war USS *Dale*, which was taking its captain, Commander McKean, to Panama so that he could return to the United States because of ill health. It arrived at Panama City on March 15, where McKean joined forces with Lt. Gray and Major Emory, who were carrying dispatches to the United States from Commodore Stockton and General Kearny, respectively. The three crossed the Isthmus to Chagres on the east coast, carrying this letter. The HMS *Clyde* then carried them from Chagres (departed March 28) to Jamaica on April 1, where they transferred to the HMS *Dee* (departed Jamaica on April 3 and arrived in Havana on April 10). The ship *Globe* then took the letter to New York, where it arrived on April 21, 1847 and was rated for seven cents postage due including a two cents ship fee. Upon arrival at Washington it was recognized that the recipient was entitled to receive mail free of postage and the seven cents postage due was crossed out.

Overland Transcontinental Mails

After northern California came under U.S. control in July 1846, military and private overland mail routes connecting California and Missouri soon formed an important communication link. Mail was carried over two primary overland routes. A central route along the California Trail (Figure 4-3) connected San Francisco, via the Humboldt and Platte Rivers, with Missouri. A southern route along the Old Spanish Trail connected southern California with Missouri, via Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Each of the primary routes had hazards and limitations. Westbound departures on the California Trail from Missouri were only feasible in the April-June timeframe. That window ensured that there was enough grass on the prairies for their horses, and got them over the Sierra Nevada range before the October snows. The route via the Old Spanish Trail from Santa Fe to southern California took two to three

months, but there was another month's travel between Santa Fe and Missouri. This southern route was open throughout the year, but involved a hazardous crossing of the Mojave Desert.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, a regional military mail system which also carried private mail was the first to be established in California. This system linked the two termini of San Francisco and San Diego with the earliest military overland mail routes. Private mails were also carried on these military overland routes.

Military Courier Overland Mail

Lieutenant Kit Carson, in his capacity as military courier, made five overland crossings with dispatches between 1846 and 1848, as shown in the table below. Carson also carried some private mail, which can be identified by an endorsement to Carson, or by correlation with the dates in the table.



Kit Carson's Overland Expeditions, 1842-1848

- 1st Frémont Expedition to South Pass, May-September 1842
- 2nd Frémont Expedition to Oregon & California, July 1843 to July 1844
- 3rd Frémont Expedition to California, August 1845 to December 1845
- Carried dispatches to the East, September to October 1846 - returned to California with General Kearny
- Carried dispatches to the East, February-May 1847
- Carried dispatches to Los Angeles, June-October 1847

<u>Depart</u>	<u>Route</u>	<u>Arrival</u>
Los Angeles September 5, 1846	Mojave Desert	New Mexico October 6, 1846
New Mexico October 6, 1846	Mojave Desert	San Diego December 12, 1846
Los Angeles February 25, 1847	Santa Fe and Bent's Fort	St Louis May 16, 1847
Fort Leavenworth June 1847	Santa Fe and Mojave Desert	Los Angeles October 1847
Los Angeles May 4, 1848	Old Spanish Trail to Taos	St Louis July 25, 1848

Figure 4-23 illustrates a letter carried on Carson's first eastbound trip.

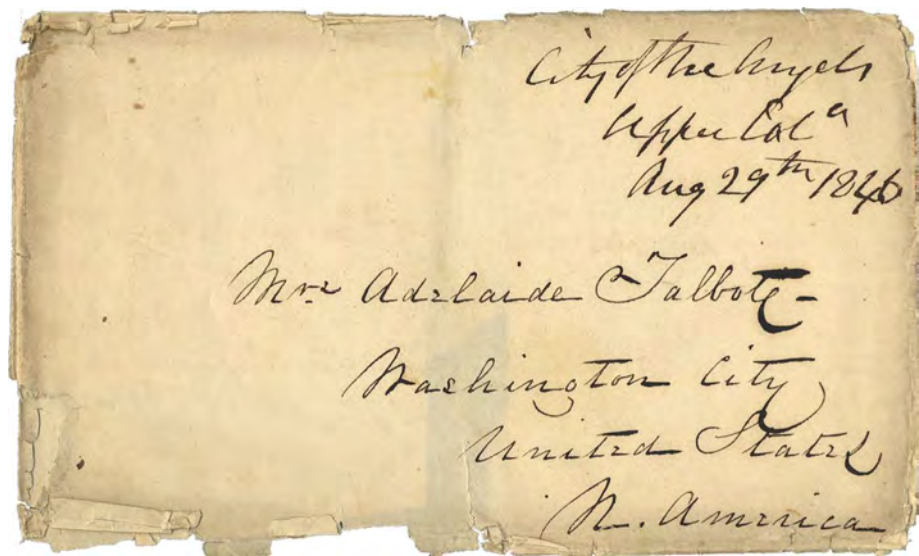


Figure 4-23. August 29, 1846 envelope for letter from Los Angeles carried by Kit Carson and Fitzpatrick to Washington, D.C. (Courtesy Smithsonian National Postal Museum)

4 - CALIFORNIA MAILS, 1821-1849

The letter (the actual letter is no longer with the envelope, but a transcription is recorded)⁸ was datelined "City of the Angels Upper Cala Aug 29th 1846," and was sent by Sergeant Major Theodore Talbot of Frémont's California Battalion. He wrote:

An Express is on the eve of starting to the United States under Carson and Maxwell. It has been kept perfectly secret and it is said they will be allowed to take no letters. They leave this evg. I have had barely time to scribble these hasty lines. I hope to slip them along.

Carson carried this letter, along with military dispatches, on his first eastbound trip. Along the way, he encountered General Kearny at Valverde, New Mexico on October 6. Kearny was traveling west with a portion of the Army of the West, and ordered Carson to turn around and guide him to California. From Valverde, Carson's dispatches were carried on to Washington, D.C. by Lieutenant William Murphy who passed through Santa Fe on October 9 and reached St. Louis on November 8 (see Figure 2-9).

Theodore Talbot had joined Frémont's 1843 and 1845 expeditions to California, and was mustered into Frémont's California Battalion on July 12, 1846.⁹ The Battalion captured Los Angeles on August 13, and Talbot wrote his letter shortly thereafter. Carson left Los Angeles to inform military officials in the East of California's subjugation, although later actions by the Mexicans would re-take Los Angeles from September 1846 to January 1847. Hostilities ceased in California with the January 13, 1847 Treaty of Cahuenga.

On March 11, 1848 The *California Star* announced that a military courier (Carson) would carry personal letters at no charge from Los Angeles to St Louis. One of the private letters carried east by Carson in 1848 is illustrated in Figure 4-24.



Figure 4-24. May 1, 1848 letter from Los Angeles carried by Kit Carson to St Louis.
(Courtesy Eric Nelson)

This letter was datelined "Pueblo de Los Angeles May 1 1848" and gave a news account of a duel to the New York *Herald*. The writer added a postscript, "This was written in haste as the mail bags close this day for the States." This was Carson's last transcontinental trip with dispatches, and he left on May 4. Following the Old Spanish Trail across the Mojave Desert, he arrived in Taos, New Mexico on June 14. He then travelled up the eastern foothills of the Rockies to the Platte River, and then followed that to St Louis,

where he arrived on July 25. He posted the letter unpaid in St Louis on July 26. Postage due of 10 cents for the greater than 300 miles to New York was collected from the addressee.

General Kearny ended his term as military governor of California on May 31, 1847. He was replaced by Colonel Richard B. Mason, and returned overland to Missouri with a small military contingent, which carried private mail along with military dispatches.

Figure 4-25 shows a private letter carried by Kearny's force. It was datelined "Bark Tasso San Francisco April 30th/47" and was written by John Bull, first officer of the *Tasso* (see Figure 4-16 for an earlier letter



Figure 4-25. April 30, 1847 letter from San Francisco carried by Kearny's force to St Louis.

from Bull). Bull noted in this letter to his sister that, "the U.S. Mail which will convey this to its destination leaves here the 3rd of May." Kearny's California regional mail service was scheduled to leave San Francisco every other Monday, and the second trip left on May 3. This letter was carried by the military courier to Monterey and placed in General Kearny's mailbag for transport to the East. On May 31, Kearny left Monterey for Sutter's Fort, where he awaited the arrival of Colonel Frémont's force, which he had ordered back east with him. The combined force left California on June 15, and arrived in Fort Leavenworth, Missouri on August 22. Kearny left on August 23 aboard the Missouri River steamer *Amelia*, which arrived in St. Louis on August 25. The mail was entrusted to the purser of the steamboat who brought it to the St. Louis post office. It was postmarked on August 26 and stamped "STEAM 10" for 10 cents due for postage from St. Louis to Boston.

Five Kearny letters with these "STEAM 10" markings are known to have survived. In addition, one letter that was carried overland in the military dispatch bag is known. It entered the mails on August 31, 1847 at Fort Leavenworth, Missouri, and is illustrated in Figure 4-26.



Figure 4-26. May 2, 1847 letter from San Francisco carried by Kearny's force to Fort Leavenworth.

This letter was datelined "San Francisco California May 2d 1847" and was written by James H. Maneis, who was a sergeant in Company E of Stevenson's New York 1st Volunteers. Stevenson's force was raised to reinforce the U.S. forces in California, and left New York on September 27, 1846 aboard sailing transports. After a six-month trip around Cape Horn, they arrived in San Francisco in March 1847.

The letter was carried by the same regional military courier to Monterey as the cover in Figure 4-25. Unlike that letter, however, it was placed with the military dispatches and carried to St. Louis in a different bag. That bag was delivered to military authorities at Fort Leavenworth, and this letter was placed in the mails at the fort sometime after the August 23 sailing of the *Amelia* to St. Louis. The August 31 Fort Leavenworth postmark indicates when it was transmitted onward by the regular mails and it was rated for 10 cents postage due to Connecticut.

The U.S. Navy also made provisions for overland communication. The *Californian* reported on September 8, 1847 that letter bags had been sent by the overland route from Philadelphia on the previous February 11. That mail probably arrived in California in July or August 1847. The *Californian*, in its October 13, 1847 issue, also refers to the receipt of an overland naval mail on October 11, which most likely left the East in June or July. No surviving letters carried by these naval couriers are known.

However, when Commodore Stockton stepped down as commander of the California naval forces in January 1847, he did carry a mail overland to the United States on his return trip. A letter carried on this trip is shown in Figure 4-27. It was written on March 24, 1847 by a sailor aboard the U.S.S. *Congress*, which was serving as Stockton's flagship, while in the harbor of San Diego. Per the letter, the sailor intended to send the letter via the U.S.S. *Savannah*, "which leaves this port to Day." However, as the U.S.S. *Savannah* was delayed, and did not leave for New York until September 8, this letter was instead carried with Commodore Stockton on his overland trip to the East.

Stockton, in a party of 49 men, left Monterey on June 20 and, after a four-month journey via Fort Hall and Fort Laramie, reached St. Joseph on October 26, 1847. Four days later this letter was postmarked at the St. Joseph post office and rated 10 cents due for the postage to Philadelphia.



Figure 4-27. March 24 1847 letter from a sailor at San Diego carried by Commodore Stockton's party overland to St Joseph.

Gold Shipments from California

A major historical event in California was the discovery of gold at Sutter's Mill (near Sacramento) on January 24, 1848. By early May 1848, Sam Brannan was striding through the streets of San Francisco proclaiming the discovery of gold, which triggered a mass exodus to the American River mines. The military governor of California, Colonel Richard B. Mason, investigated these claims and sent several couriers back East to inform the U.S. government. One such courier, B. Chouteau, was sent overland with gold samples from Monterey on May 19, 1848. He also carried private mail, an example of which is shown in Figure 4-28.



Samuel Brannan (center) and the Gold Rush, 1846-1851
(photograph with Thomas Larkin and William Howard)

- Brought 238 Mormons to California on the *Brooklyn*, July 31, 1846
- Started the *California Star* in San Francisco, January 7, 1847
- Travelled to meet with Brigham Young at Green River, WY, June 1847
- Proclaimed discovery of gold in San Francisco, May 12, 1848
- Became wealthy supplying gold rush from store at Sutter's Mill
- Disowned by Mormon church because of his vigilante committee

This letter was written on May 18, 1848 by Mrs. Persis Goodale Taylor, who had just arrived at Monterey, California after a trip around Cape Horn. She was on her way to join her missionary family in Hawaii, and was writing to her sister to describe her journey. She endorsed the letter "overland" and gave it to Colonel Mason to be carried back East by Chouteau. Shortly after May 19, Chouteau left Monterey for Los Angeles, a trip of about three weeks. He left southern California on July 4 with the letter and arrived at

4 - CALIFORNIA MAILS, 1821-1849

Santa Fe on August 15, where he apparently stopped for while before continuing up the Santa Fe Trail to Missouri. Chouteau reached St Louis in early October, and posted the letter unpaid on October 11. It was rated for postage due of 10 cents for the greater than 300 miles to Massachusetts.



Figure 4-28. May 18, 1848 letter from Monterey carried by Chouteau overland to St Louis.

By the end of 1848 gold fever was epidemic in the East as well as in California (Figure 4-29). Following the initial reports and samples of gold that had been carried overland, gold was beginning to flow east from California in quantity. Routes by sea around the Horn, and by sea and via Mexico were used for gold



Figure 4-29. View of San Francisco in 1848 after Bayard Taylor.

shipments in 1848. By mid-1849 most California gold, in common with the letter-mail, was carried by sea and across Panama.

A December 11, 1848 report¹⁰ from R.M. Patterson, Director of the United States Mint at Philadelphia, to the Secretary of Treasury reported the first deposit of California gold at the mint. It was deposited by David Carter, who had arrived via Panama, and was assayed at \$36,492, "besides a few ounces preserved in the native state for the Secretary of War, at his request."

The bark *Laura Ann* departed San Francisco with \$10,000 in gold bound for the U.S. on December 10, 1848. The Alexandria, Virginia *Gazette* of December 15, 1849 reported the arrival at New York of Robert Atherton, a miner who was onboard the *Laura Ann* when she departed San Francisco. From Mazatlan he then traveled overland via Guadalajara, Mexico City, and Vera Cruz. Although Atherton's published reports may have been exaggerated, he claimed to have bills of lading in the amount of \$200,000 for gold shipped on "English account" which he wished to insure.

The USS *Lexington* also departed San Francisco in December 1848. At her stop in Valparaiso, she off-loaded \$100,000 of gold which was carried north to Panama, overland to Chagres, and eventually arrived in New York aboard the *Crescent City* on June 23, 1849. The *Crescent City* also carried a further \$390,000 in California gold that had been received at Chagres during the first three months of 1849. After the *Lexington's* stop in Valparaiso, she proceeded around the Horn carrying her additional cargo of \$270,000 in California gold bullion and arrived at New York on June 11, 1849.

To put this quantity of gold in perspective, the total gold cargo of \$370,000 carried by the *Lexington* was 1,676 troy pounds (26,816 troy ounces). Gold was valued at approximately \$13.80 per troy ounce in 1849. The value of the shipment equates at \$1,250 per troy ounce to \$33,520,000.

Private Newspaper Overland Mails to Missouri, 1848

Samuel Brannan and Orrin Smith, leaders of a group of 238 Mormons from Illinois, arrived in San Francisco (called Yerba Buena until January 1847) aboard the ship *Brooklyn* on July 31, 1846. They brought with them a portable Franklin printing press, which they soon put to use publishing San Francisco's first English language newspaper, the *California Star*. The first issue appeared on January 9, 1847, but publication was interrupted on June 14, 1848 when the entire staff departed for the mines.

In January 1848, San Francisco merchants met to determine what they could do to revitalize their stagnant economy. They concluded that a promotional piece about the virtues of San Francisco might entice more emigrants from the United States. Accordingly, Brannan agreed to publish two special editions of his paper for this purpose, on April 1 and June 1, and to deliver them overland to the East. He also decided to carry private letters on those two trips.



**Nathan Hawk and the
Mormon Battalion,
1846-1848**

- Mustered into Kearny's Army of the West, July 16, 1846
- Fort Leavenworth to Santa Fe, September-October 1846
- To California via Mojave desert, October-December 1846
- Arrived in San Diego, January 29, 1847
- Mustered out in Los Angeles, July 16, 1847
- Led *California Star* Express to Missouri, April-July 1848
- Returned overland to California with his family, late-April to September 1849

4 - CALIFORNIA MAILS, 1821-1849

In its January 15, 1848 edition, the *California Star* announced that it was sponsoring an express to Independence, Missouri, which would leave San Francisco on April 1, 1848. It was then scheduled to depart from Brannan's store at New Helvetia (today's Sacramento) on April 15 and to arrive in Missouri 60 days later. Private letters were to be carried to Missouri for a fee of 50 cents each. Brannan hired ten men to carry the special newspaper edition and the mail to Missouri. Six of the ten were discharged soldiers from the Mormon Battalion, as was the leader of the party, Nathan Hawk.¹¹ After leaving Sacramento on April 15, they crossed the Sierra Nevada and reached Salt Lake City on July 9. The earliest newspaper reports of their arrival in Independence, Missouri were from St. Louis on August 8, 1848. Accordingly, letters carried by this express would have California datelines of January to March 1848, and Missouri postmarks of July 1848, although none are known to have survived.

The *Californian* newspaper moved from Monterey to San Francisco on May 22, 1847 to compete with the *California Star*. On April 19, 1848, it also announced an overland express mail:

Our overland Mail for the United States will positively close on Thursday the 27th day of April, (present month.) Our next paper will be the last that can be sent by this mail – It will contain much valuable information concerning California. Postage on letters 50 cents – on papers 12½.

This was clearly a competitive response to the April 1 *California Star* letter express. Then, on May 3, the *Californian* reported that, “Our overland mail for the U.S. was closed at this Office on Thursday last, and delivered to the courier, who immediately left for Sacramento on his way across the mountains.” Notwithstanding that report, no letters carried by the *Californian*'s express are known.



Figure 4-30. Advertisement for an Express to the United States in the May 20, 1848 *California Star*.

On May 20, 1848 the *California Star* announced (Figure 4-30) its second express, scheduled to depart on June 20. Per the advertisement, postage to Independence, Missouri remained at 50 cents per letter, and newspapers were to be carried for 12½ cents each. However, a longer article in the June 10 issue of the *California Star* listed different prices, and updated readers on the status of the April 15, 1848 express.

ANOTHER U.S. MAIL – We are able to announce to the public that on the 25th of this month, we will despatch from the valley of the Sacramento, another Mail, directly through to Independence, Mo. It will close at this office on the 12th, (Monday next) but will remain at the store of Messrs. C.C. Smith and Co., New Helvetia, for the reception of letters and newspapers until the day of departure. Postage on letters \$1.00, and on papers 25 cents.

This office advertised an Express for the United States, to take its departure on the 15th day of April last. Precisely, to a day, it took the great road leading over that immense obstacle, that insurmountable barrier, the Snowy Mountains, performed the unparalleled feat of crossing through “melting snows,” and was safely speeding onward, at last accounts. We say this much, not only that apprehensions on the part of the interested may be allayed, but that gratuitous prophesiers of ill may be comforted, if comfort there can be derived from their own discomfiture.

The Express of the 25th inst. will positively leave on that day.

Brannan's second special edition was never published because his entire publication staff left for the gold mines after the June 10, 1848 issue. It is also unlikely that the second overland express was sent.

Other Private Mails, 1848

Elbert P. Jones, who served as the first editor of the *California Star*, also announced an express mail to the United States on April 25, 1848, and placed an advertisement for it in the May 6 edition of the *California Star*.

THE MAIL! THE EASTERN MAIL! THE Undersigned, having made arrangements to transmit a private Express Mail across the mountains, gives notice that separate mail bags will be made up for Fort Hall, Salt Lake settlement, Fort Bridger, Fort Laramie, Santa Fe, and all parts of the United States.

The mail will be closed on the 10th of May. Postage will be the same as on similar expresses.
E.P. JONES

There are no known covers which prove that Jones's express successfully carried mail to the East.

An example of attempted westbound private mail carriage in 1848 is shown in Figure 4-31. The letter, addressed to Capt. Joseph Aram, was posted unpaid in Granville, Ohio on August 28, 1848 and directed to the post office at Independence, Missouri with instructions to "forward this by the first opportunity" to Monterey, California. Postage due of 10 cents was assessed at Granville for the greater than 300 miles to Independence.



Figure 4-31. Letter posted August 28, 1848 in Ohio, and sent to Independence, Missouri for forwarding to California. It was sent via Panama in 1849.

The letter arrived in Independence after the 1848 emigration was over, so it was held there until June 21, 1849 when the post office directed that it should be routed via New York and Panama to California on the

4 - CALIFORNIA MAILS, 1821-1849

recently established contract mail route. The Independence post office assessed 40 cents additional postage due for forwarding to California, which meant that a total of 50 cents was due from the recipient. The letter was too late to connect with the June 28 USMSC sailing from New York, so it was carried by USMSC steamship *Falcon*, which left on August 27 (see Appendix C) and arrived Chagres on September 18, 1849. After a trip across the isthmus, it left Panama City on October 1 aboard the PMSS *Unicorn*, which arrived in San Francisco on October 31, 1849, fully 14 months after the letter was written.

Captain Joseph Aram, the addressee, had emigrated to California in 1846 with the Russell - Boggs party. They left Independence on May 5, 1846 along with the Donner party, but parted ways in what is now Wyoming. The Donner party took the Hastings cut-off trail, and the Russell - Boggs party took the traditional Humboldt/Truckee River route to Sutter's Fort. They arrived there on October 10, and the Donner party was stranded in the Sierra Nevadas with tragic results.

The letter mostly gives personal news, but also refers to the receipt of an eastbound letter, "I received yours dated March 19, 1848 Monterey. Suppose it came by Lieutenant Carson favor to St Louis." That letter was apparently carried in the same Carson mail as the letter in Figure 4-24.

Endnotes

1. Weber, *The Mexican Frontier*, p. 180.
2. Unruh, *The Plains Across*, pp. 119-120.
3. Bancroft, *History of California Vol. IV*, p. 588.
4. Frajola and Risvold, "Kearny's California Mail Route," *Chronicle* 225, pp. 57-58.
5. 31st. Congress, House of Reps., Ex. Doc. No. 18, p. 614.
6. Bancroft, *History of California, Volume XXI*, p. 385.
7. Underhill, *From Cowhides to Golden Fleece*, p. 90.
8. R.V. Hine and S. Lottinville, *Soldier in the West*
9. Papp, "Fremont's Lieutenant in California, 1846-1850," *Western Express*, March 1996, pages 14.
10. *Niles National Register*, Volume 74, page 389 (December 20, 1848 issue)
11. Ricketts, "The California Star Express," *Sacramento Historical Society Golden Notes*, Spring 1982

*Salt Lake City
July 16*

Chapter Five

Central Overland Mail, 1847-1850

In 1847, Mormons began the third great stage of the westward migration, as thousands travelled from starting points on the Missouri River to Salt Lake City. This followed the earlier westward migrations to Oregon and California, which were described in Chapters Three and Four. The resulting large settlement at Salt Lake City (in today's Utah) created a need for communication with both the United States and California, and the Central Route evolved to service this need. The eastern segment of the route was the Platte River Road, which ran between the Missouri River and Salt Lake City. Figure 5-1 shows this segment, which passed through Fort Kearny, Fort Laramie and South Pass to Salt Lake City.

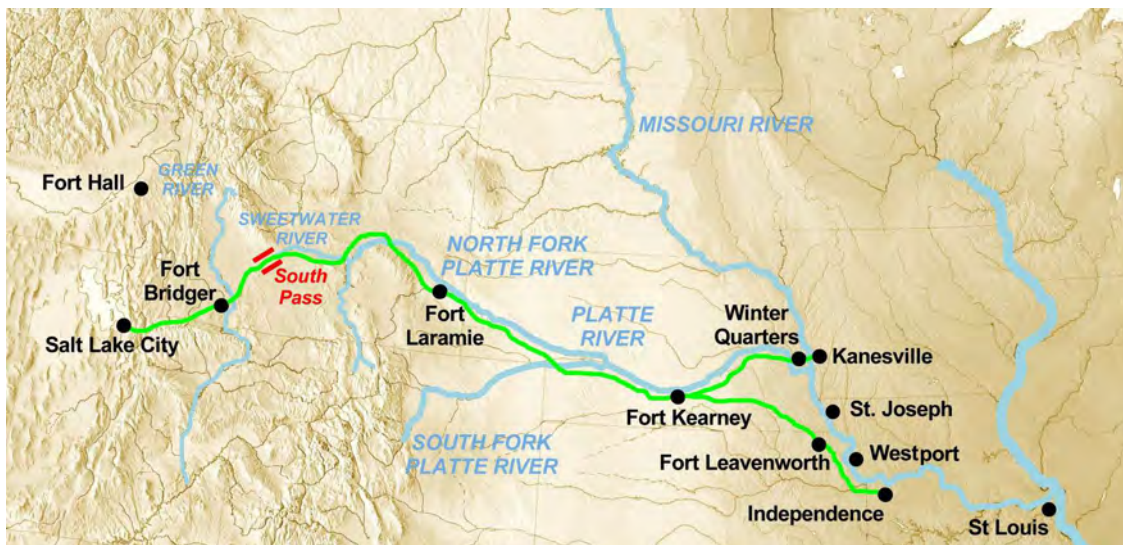


Figure 1-1. Map of the Platte River Road between Iowa/Missouri and Salt Lake City. The emigrant trails which evolved into mail routes are shown in green.

Westbound travelers typically began their journey from one of the principal Missouri River jumping off points at Independence, Westport, St Joseph, Kanessville or the nearby Winter Quarters. All trails converged on the Platte River near Fort Kearny. West of Fort Kearny, the Platte River splits into north and south branches, and westbound travelers followed the North Platte to Fort Laramie and South Pass. The Platte River turns south just before South Pass, so travelers to Salt Lake City continued on via the Sweetwater River to the Green River and Fort Bridger. This trail became the mail route for correspondence between the Missouri River and Salt Lake City.

The Mormon Church Migrates West

In April 1830, disciples of Joseph Smith were organized as the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in western New York State. Their different Christian beliefs, however, made them subject to continual harassment and violence, and many members moved westward to Ohio in search of a safe haven. From

5 - CENTRAL OVERLAND MAIL, 1847-1850

Ohio, they moved to Missouri in 1836, but were expelled by the Missouri state militia in 1838. They were able to re-settle in Nauvoo, Illinois from 1839 to 1845, and built their following there to 12,000 people. Concern over this concentration led to yet another expulsion in 1846, this time to Winter Quarters located just north of present-day Omaha on west bank of the Missouri River opposite Kanessville, Iowa (also called Kane, it was re-named Council Bluffs in 1852). By then, it had become clear to the Mormons that they were not welcome in the United States, so they began to look westward for a permanent settlement site.

As described in Chapter Four, Samuel Brannan was assigned the task of determining whether California might be an acceptable settlement site. He left New York City by sea on February 4, 1846 with 238 people,

and arrived in San Francisco on July 31. Along with members of the Mormon Battalion, they quickly became established in California, and Brannan concluded that California was the perfect spot for settlement - distant, lightly settled and commercially unattractive to American settlers. This was before the gold rush of two years later, however, so that assessment would prove to be dramatically incorrect.



**Brigham Young,
Leader of Mormon Church**

- Born in Vermont in 1801
- Joined the Mormon Church in 1832
- Founded Salt Lake City in July 1847
- Succeeded Joseph Smith as President in 1847
- Governor of Utah Territory, 1851-58
- Died at Salt Lake City in 1877

On April 5, 1847, Brigham Young led the pioneer party of 143 people¹ westward from the Winter Quarters. They followed the north bank

of the Platte River to avoid contact with travelers on the Oregon Trail, who typically used the south bank. The company reached Fort Laramie on June 1. During the last week of June, Brannan came east to meet Young near the Green River (in today's Wyoming) and tried unsuccessfully to convince Young that California was a better location for settlement.

On July 21, 1847, advance scouts reached the Salt Lake valley, and Young declared it to be their home three days later. By December of that year, 2,200 Mormons had made the trek to settle in the Salt Lake valley,² followed by 2,400 additional settlers in 1848. By the end of 1849, a total of 6,100 people had travelled to Salt Lake City.

Mail between Salt Lake City and the Missouri River

Within a month of their arrival, the Mormon settlers designated a small building in Salt Lake City as their post office and named it "The Great Basin Post Office." The Mormons had historically relied heavily on communication to connect their widely dispersed members, so the creation of a post office was one of their earliest priorities. Seventeen months later, in response to a petition from the Salt Lake settlers, the United States established the first official post office at Salt Lake City on January 18, 1849.

In the period before the establishment of a U.S. post office, there were only a few overland trips that could carry mail, as listed in Table 5-1.

Table 5-1. Trips between Salt Lake City and the United States, 1847 and 1848
Eastbound to the United States

Departed Salt Lake City	Arrived	Party	Notes
Aug 2, 1847	Sep 1847 at Winter Quarters	Ezra Benson	
Aug 26, 1847	Oct 31, 1847 at Winter Quarters	Brigham Young	Young's return
Oct 8, 1847	Dec 17, 1847 at Winter Quarters	Mormon Battalion	Carried 144 letters (Young's journal)
Jan 10, 1848	May 11, 1848 at Linden, MO	Mormon Battalion	See Figure 5-2
Mar 7, 1848	May 16, 1848 at Kanesville, IA	Levi Hancock	SLC Mar 5, 1848 letter via Kane
July 9, 1848	Aug 3, 1848 at Independence, MO	<i>California Star</i> Express	See Chapter 4, Aug 8 in St. Louis
Aug 9, 1848	Oct 18, 1848 at Kanesville, IA	Benjamin Rolfe	Carried 63 letters, SLC Aug 8 letter via Kane
Oct 14, 1848	Dec 20, 1848 at Kanesville, IA	Howard Egan	SLC Oct 13 letter via Kane Dec 20

Westbound to Salt Lake City

Departed	Arrived	Party	Notes
Apr 5, 1847 Winter Quarters	Jul 23, 1847	Pioneer Party	Young's first trip
Jul 4, 1847 Winter Quarters	Sep 19, 1847	First Migration	
May 26, 1848 Winter Quarters	July/August 1848	Second Migration	
Jul 3, 1848 Winter Quarters	Oct 19, 1848	Willard Richards	
Oct 14, 1848 Kanesville	Nov 30, 1848	Allen Compton	Carried 227 letters (Young's journal)

Figure 5-2 was written in Salt Lake City on January 9, 1848 and explains that, "I avail myself of this opportunity of writing to you by the mail which leaves tomorrow for the bluffs: this mail is carried by some of the soldiers of the Mormon battalion recently from the settlements of California." The soldier posted the letter at Linden, Missouri on May 11, where it was rated for 10 cents due to Indiana. This is the earliest reported use from Salt Lake City.

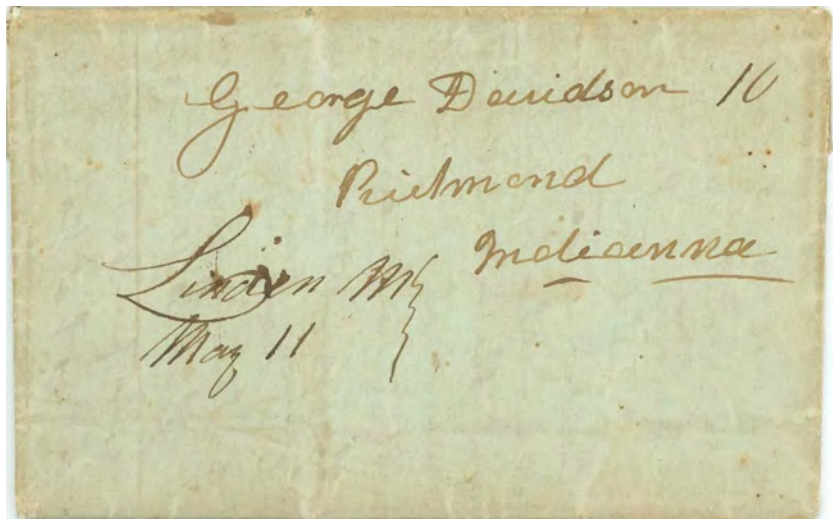


Figure 5-2. Letter datelined January 9, 1848 in Salt Lake City and carried by a returning Mormon Battalion soldier to Linden, Missouri.

5 - CENTRAL OVERLAND MAIL, 1847-1850


An August 8, 1848 letter from Salt Lake City³ describes the arrival of the first westbound mail two days earlier. This corresponds to the arrival of the Second Migration.

The Babbitt Special Contract Mails

The following announcement appeared in several newspapers across the country including the New Orleans Times Picayune of April 5, 1849:

MAILS TO THE PACIFIC - A post office has been established at the Salt Lake Valley, in California, and Joseph L. Heywood, formerly of Quincy, Illinois, appointed postmaster. Mr. Almon W. Babbitt, the contractor, will deliver the mail six times a year, and forward all mail matter, sent through by way of Kanesville, Iowa to Oregon and California. The first mail will go through the first of April.

This announced service was only partially implemented. There was no through mail to California or Oregon as no contractors were available to carry the westbound mail beyond Salt Lake City. Further, since

	<p style="text-align: center;">Almon Babbitt, Mormon Expressman, 1812-1856</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Joined the Mormon Church in 1833• Elected to Illinois House in 1844• Emigrated to Salt Lake City in 1848• Organized Salt Lake City-Missouri mail system in 1849• Requested territorial status for State of Deseret, 1849• Murdered April 1856 near Ft. Laramie
--	---

no funds were allocated by Congress for the route between Kanesville and Salt Lake City, the post office relied on a "special" contract, with compensation to the carrier consisting of each trip's postal proceeds. For purposes of classification, "Babbitt Special Contract Mails" is used here to differentiate this service from the previous mails carried at the expense of the Mormon Church, and the later regular contract mails. Regular contract routes required a contract between the federal government and a mail contractor for a specific sum of money to be paid for a specific route service.

Brigham Young's journal⁴ entry of February 28, 1849 (the date the news reached Kanesville) reported that:

This winter the Federal Government established a post office at Great Salt Lake City and appointed Joseph L. Heywood, postmaster, and also instituted a bi-monthly mail between Kanesville and Great Salt Lake City. Almon W. Babbitt engaged to carry the mail at his own expense and charges the net proceeds.

The church journal entry mentions bi-monthly mail, while the newspaper announcement states six times a year. The known trips correspond to six times a year as shown in Table 5-2. The six mails in 1849 all took place between the spring and the fall, and no winter trips were undertaken.

**Table 5-2. Babbitt Special Contract Mail Trips, March 1849 to August 1850
Eastbound to the United States**

Departed Salt Lake City	Arrived at Kaneshville	Mail Party	Notes
Mar 1849	May 16, 1849	Almon Babbitt	First trip
Apr 14, 1849	May 27, 1849	Allen Compton	
May 4, 1849	Jun 22, 1849	Deseret Territorial Memorial	Carried 31 letters (Young's journal)
Jul 27, 1849	Sep 3, 1849	Almon Babbitt	See Figures 5-3 and 5-4
Sep 10, 1849	Dec 7, 1849		Dec 12 1849 at St. Louis
Oct 19, 1849	Dec 10, 1849	John Taylor	See Figure 5-5
Apr 18, 1850	Jun 10, 1850	Robert Campbell	
May 1850	Jul 8, 1850		SLC Feb 14 letter via Kane
Aug 2, 1850	Sep 12, 1850	John Green and B. Holladay	See Figures 5-6 and 5-7

Westbound to Salt Lake City

Departed Kaneshville	Arrived Salt Lake City	Mail Party	Notes
Feb 1849	Apr 9, 1849	Allen Compton	
May 15, 1849	Jul 29, 1849	Howard Egan	
May 21, 1849	Jul 1, 1849	Almon Babbitt	Met St. Louis wagons enroute
Jul 1849	Sep 19, 1849	Campbell & Patten	
May 1, 1850	Jun 8, 1850	Thomas Williams	"First news from the States this season" ⁵
Jul 6, 1850	Aug 15, 1850	Orson Hyde	

On April 12, 1849, Thomas Bullock, the auditor of Church tithing accounts and probable acting Postmaster, recorded an accounting⁶ for the April 14 eastbound mail trip from Salt Lake City. He identified the men in Captain Allen Compton's party and listed an account of mails sent (in waybill form) as:

For the States	126 paid letters	\$63.00
Europe & C.	24 paid letters	\$12.00
Kaneshville	80 paid letters, 170 unpaid, 10 free	\$40.00
Mount Pisgah	4 paid letters	\$ 2.00
Way Mail	1 paid letter, 7 unpaid	\$.50
Totals:	235 paid letters, 190 unpaid letters	\$117.50

Bullock's entry also listed the number of letters carried by four of the men in the mail party: Compton (425), Johnson (54), Casto (11), and Huntington (12). The 425 letters carried by Compton matches the total listed in the waybill, so the others apparently carried letters on their own account.

The waybill shows that the amount collected per prepaid letter was 50 cents. At that time, the postal rate for over 300 miles was 10 cents.⁷ Thus, it appears that Babbitt charged a 40 cents fee for each prepaid letter

5 - CENTRAL OVERLAND MAIL, 1847-1850

in addition to the postal receipts associated with each trip. It is not clear if he collected a fee for each unpaid letter, and may have only received the amount of postage on such letters.

The earliest recorded letter posted from the Salt Lake City post office is shown in Figure 5-3, and was carried by Almon Babbitt under the terms of his special contract. The letter was datelined July 5, 1849 by Ursulia Hascall, who acknowledged receipt of letters dated January and February 1849 by "the mail which came in July 1" (the May 21 Babbitt trip from Kanesville). She also observed that, "the last letter we had (before that) was October 1847^s the mail will now be more regular, but it is impossible to pass through the Rocky Mountains in winter without people and animals both perishing." Ursulia was a Mormon convert from Massachusetts who left Nauvoo, Illinois on May 30, 1846 for Winter Quarters, Nebraska. She then took part in the First Migration, which left Winter Quarters on July 14, 1847 and arrived in Salt Lake City on September 19 of that year.

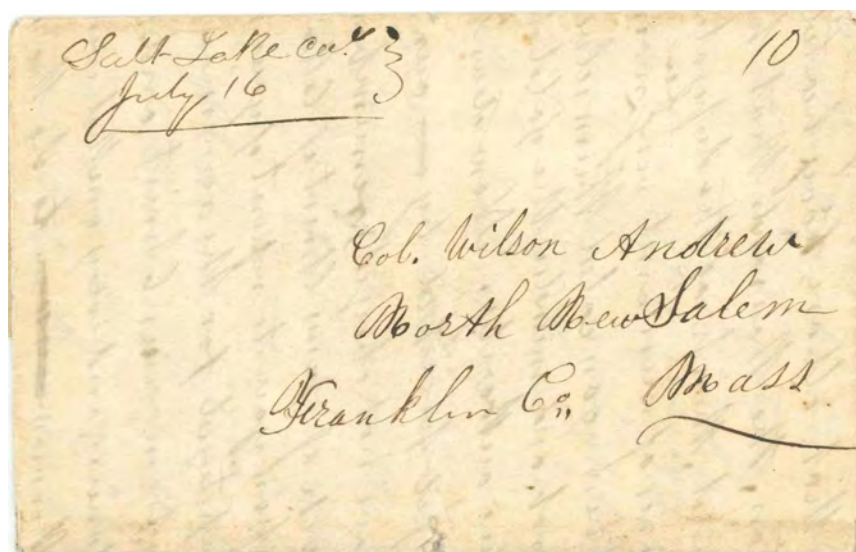


Figure 5-3. Letter datelined July 6, 1849 in Salt Lake City and carried by the Babbitt special contract mail to Kanesville, Iowa.

Another letter⁹ carried in the same July 1849 mail was datelined "Great Salt Lake City Upper California July 14th 1849" and postmarked on the same day as the Hascall letter in Figure 5-3. William Sucree wrote to his children in Indiana that, "you been write to us now and it will come direct as there is a post office established here and contract for the mail through to the bay once in three months." This apparently refers to a mail arrangement between Salt Lake and California.

Both letters received manuscript "Salt Lake Cal. July 16" postmarks in the hand of Thomas Bullock. They indicate that the Salt Lake City post office was part of California for postal purposes. Neither of the July 16, 1849 letters show indication of any express fees and both were rated for 10 cents postage due in Salt Lake City, reflecting the over 300 miles rate for domestic mail. As shown in Table 5-2, Babbitt left Salt Lake City with this mail on July 27 and arrived in Kanesville on September 3.

A way letter collected enroute by the Babbitt party on the same trip is shown in Figure 5-4. This letter was datelined on July 27, 1849 by Chauncey Swan, who wrote that, "Here I am in Mr Switzers tent writing, three miles west of the great south pass of the rocky mountains...I am in Orrigan and within 25 miles of California. I expect to be at Salt Lake by the 15th of August...My hopes are strong of being at Suters fort in California by the first day of October." He closed by saying, "it is getting late and I expect Mr. Babbitt along with the Mormon mails." Babbitt collected this letter during his July 27 mail-carrying trip which arrived in Kanesville on September 3. The letter was postmarked "Kane Iowa" three days later and assessed 10 cents postage due, for the postage from South Pass to Iowa City. The sender endorsement of "paid" was also lined through by the postmaster, which suggests that Babbitt collected an additional express fee (probably 50 cents) before the letter was posted. The other sender endorsement,

"Comp(limen)ts of Dr. McCormick" refers to a fellow member of Swan's party who had contemplating a return to the States but instead continued onward to California.

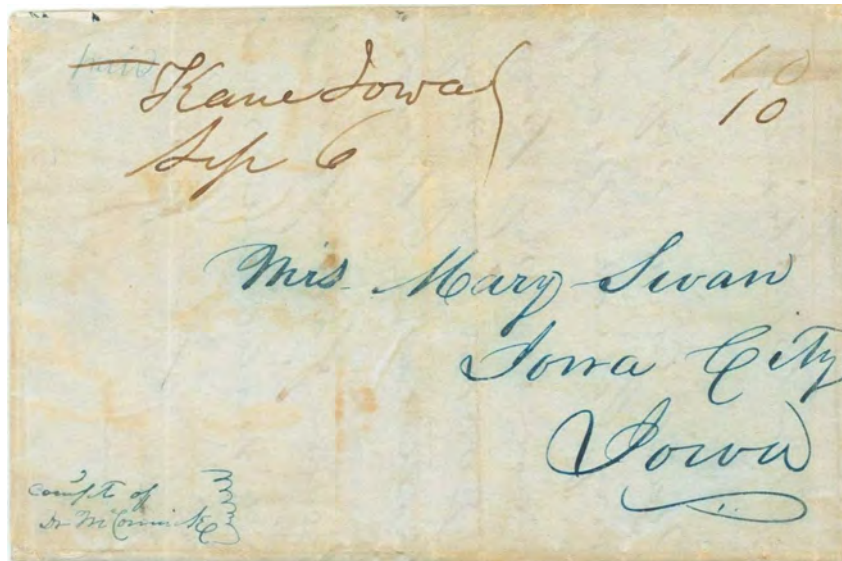


Figure 5-4. Dated July 27, 1849 in Pacific Springs and carried with Babbitt special contract party via Kanesville, Iowa on September 6.

Figure 5-5 illustrates an October 1849 prepaid letter carried by Babbitt's special contract mail service. This letter was written on September 22, 1849 in Salt Lake City by a gold miner passing through enroute to California. He wrote, "I intend staying at this place until spring than I am going on to the gold diggins...600 miles from this place there is a range of mountains called the ser-en-a-vade there is where fremonts men perished in the snow." His letter received a manuscript October 11 "Salt Lake Cal." postmark and was marked "Paid 10" cents to Missouri. As noted above, the sender also paid an additional 40 cents for the Babbitt special contract service, although that was not noted on the letter. The John Taylor mail party, carrying the Babbitt mails, left on October 19 and arrived in Kanesville on December 10.

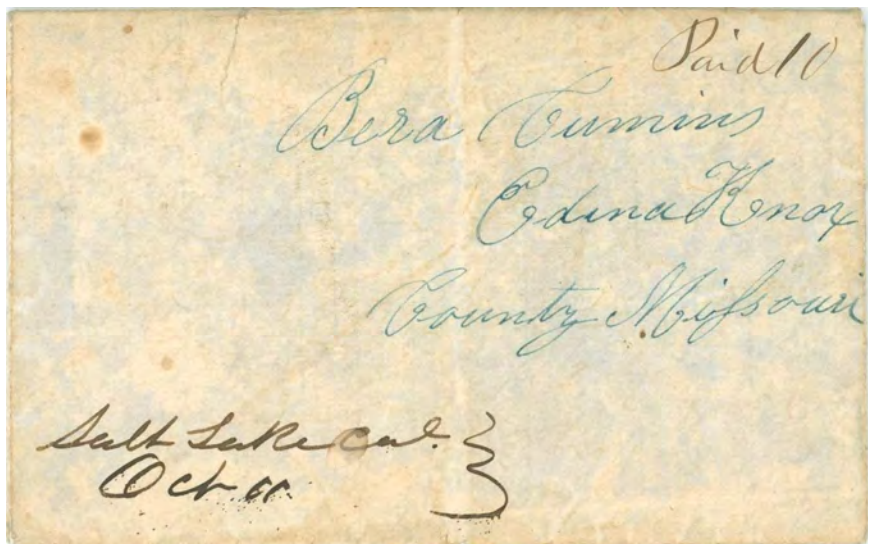


Figure 5-5. Letter dated September 22, 1849 in Salt Lake City and carried by the Babbitt special contract mail to Kanesville, Iowa.

Notices in the Deseret News in 1850 confirm the charges for the Babbitt special contract mail. The July 27, 1850 Deseret News reported that, "A mail is expected to leave for the States, about the 27th of July. Single letters to any part of the States, 50 cents." The July 27, 1850 mail trip actually left Salt Lake City on August

5 - CENTRAL OVERLAND MAIL, 1847-1850

2, and carried the letter shown in Figure 5-6. This letter was written at Fort Hall (northwest of Salt Lake City in today's Idaho) on July 20, 1849. The writer was enroute to California and reported that, "We have just arrived here and as an opportunity is now offered to send letters to the States by the Government Express I hasten to inform you of my whereabouts." This express was probably carried by military officers returning to the East, and they left this letter at Salt Lake City, where it languished for nearly a year.

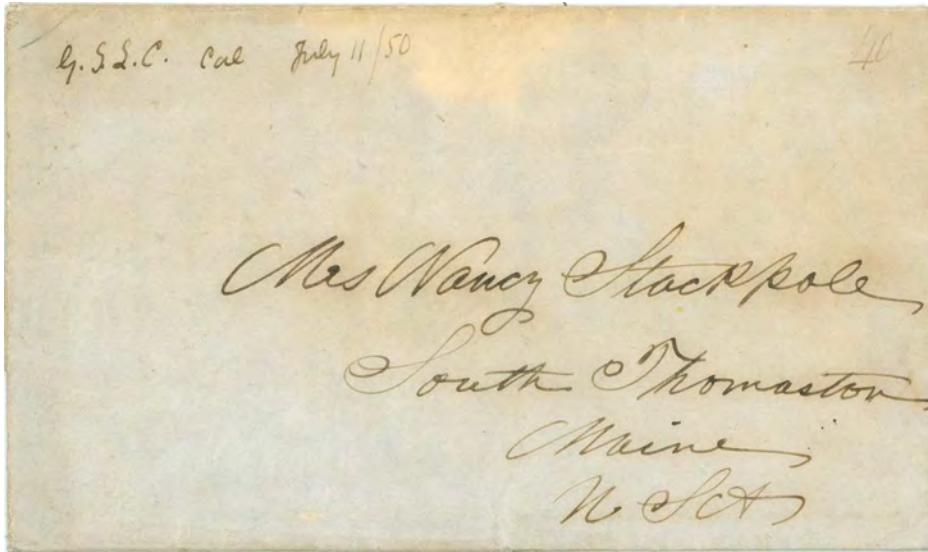


Figure 5-6. Letter datelined July 20, 1849 at Fort Hall and posted in Salt Lake with July 11, 1850 postmark. It was carried by Babbitt special contract mail party via Kanesville, Iowa.

It was finally postmarked "G.S.L.C. Cal" (Great Salt Lake City, California) in manuscript on July 11, 1850, probably by acting postmaster Willard Richards. Richards uncharacteristically rated this letter for 40 cents due, perhaps reflecting the transcontinental rate from California. It is unclear whether he had received instructions from Washington to charge 40 cents on mail to the East, or if he simply made a mistake. The letter was then given to John Y. Green and B. Holladay,

who were operating under the Babbitt special contract. They left Salt Lake City on August 2 and arrived in Kane on September 12.

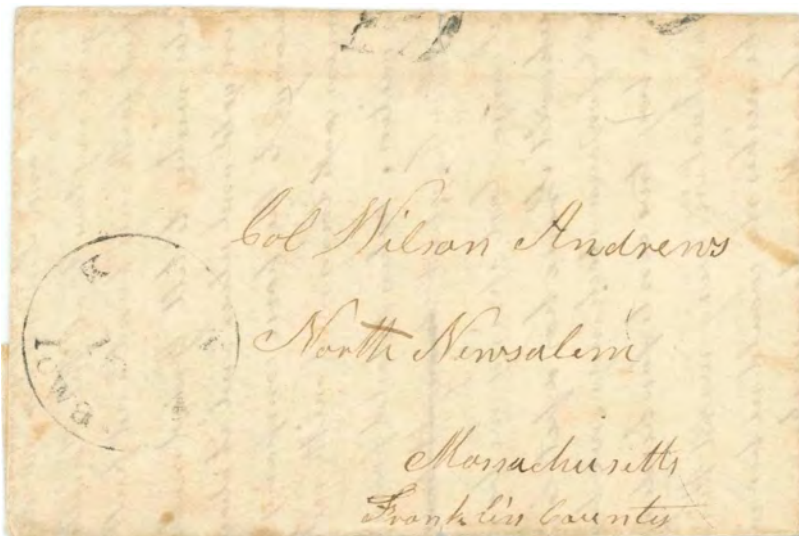


Figure 5-7. Letter datelined July 27, 1850 at Salt Lake City and carried by Mormon express via Kanesville, Iowa on September 16, 1850.

The letter in Figure 5-7 was carried in the same mail, but did not pass through the Salt Lake City post office.

This letter was written by Ursulia Hascall at Salt Lake City on July 27, 1850. It received a Kane, Iowa postmark of September 12 and was rated for ten cents postage due to Massachusetts.

As described in Chapter Seven, the post office route contract with Samuel Woodson superseded the Babbitt service.

The first eastbound Woodson mail departed from Salt Lake City on September 11, 1850, but the Babbitt mail to Kanesville may have made one additional trip in September 1850. An August 31, 1850 Deseret News notice reported that, "All who wish, can send letters at the usual rates, 40 cents, single letter, to Kanesville; 50 cents to any Post Office in the States, to be prepaid invariably. Those prepaying 40 cents will make their own change. Letters to England 65 cents or 40 cents to Kanesville; and the 25 cents may be paid in England."

Estill Express

A private letter mail express between Westport, Missouri and Pacific Springs (three miles west of South Pass) was organized by Colonel James M. Estill of Westport. He formed J.M. Estill & Co. to travel rapidly westward along the Platte River Road to Pacific Springs, collecting eastbound letters from the westbound travelers and delivering them back to Missouri for 50 cents each. His service was advertised in both Salt Lake City and Missouri. The May 7, 1850 St Louis *Daily Missouri Republican* reported that:

The mail will leave the frontiers on the 15th, relays of horses have been stationed at various points along the route, and it is intended to push this Express forward, so as to pass all of the emigrants and other trains on the route for California. This will enable persons who wish to communicate with their friends, to do so, and will probably be the last opportunity they will have, before their arrival in California. When the Express reaches the Pacific Springs, which will be in advance of any of the emigrant trains, another Express will be sent back to the State, bringing with it all the letters which emigrants on the route may send home. All letters sent to persons in California will be forwarded by one of the partners of the concern, and delivered according to direction...Every letter sent by this line must be delivered, postage paid, and accompanied by fifty cents - compensation to the express - double letters in proportion.

Estill & Co. apparently made only one trip to Pacific Springs, leaving Westport on May 21, 1850 and arriving around July 15. His return trip reached Weston on August 15, with a reported 4,000 letters. Even so, very few letters carried by this express are known to have survived. Figure 5-8 illustrates a letter addressed to New Jersey.

Estill collected this letter on the trail and endorsed it "Estill & Co. Express" on the front. It was apparently double-weight, since a \$1 charge is indicated on the front. It was

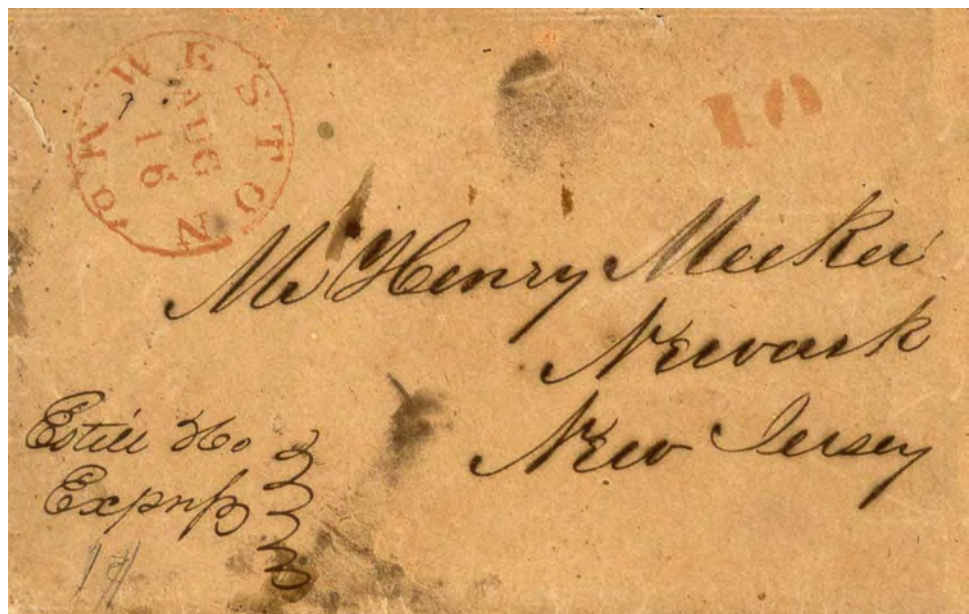


Figure 5-8. Letter written on the Platte River Road and given to Estill & Co. Express for transmission back East (courtesy of Ken Stach).

5 - CENTRAL OVERLAND MAIL, 1847-1850

carried to Weston, Missouri where it was posted on August 16 with ten cents postage due to New Jersey. This envelope also confirms the date of Estill's departure from Weston. It carries a note on the reverse that, "I have learned by the Gentlemen in Estalls Express mule train which left Weston on the 21st May that there is considerable sickness among the emigration behind."

Trail Mail on the Platte River Road

Travelers along the Platte River Road also found other ways to send letters. Travelers in the opposite direction were often willing to carry letters, but eastbound travelers were scarce before 1850. In May 1848, Fort Kearny was established next to the Platte River (see Figure 5-1) to protect the travelers along the Platte River Road. Before the U.S. post office was introduced there on July 7, 1849, some mail could be carried by military couriers between Fort Kearny and Fort Leavenworth on the Missouri River. Figure 5-9 illustrates such a use.



Figure 5-9. Letter datelined May 21, 1848 and carried by military express from Fort Kearny to Fort Leavenworth on June 14.

This letter was datelined "on the plains May 21st 1848" from an immigrant to California who explained that, "I have an opportunity to use the influence of one captain (who was an officer at this post last year) to get a letter conveyed. I gladly embrace this opportunity but were it not for this chance I could not write as there are so many persons wishing to send letters that it would be impossible for the Quartermaster to get them all in the mail." The fort's quartermaster marked this letter "Fort Kearny Oregon Route" and placed it with the military dispatches for Fort Leavenworth. At Leavenworth, it was placed in the mails on June 14 and rated ten cents due for the postage to Illinois. This is the earliest possible postmark from Fort Kearney.

Figure 5-10 shows the back of an interesting June 1849 letter to New York City that was collected along the Platte River Road and brought back to Missouri, probably by army personnel from Fort Laramie.



Figure 5-10. Letter docketed "McColl 1849" and probably carried by military express from Fort Laramie to the Missouri River in July 1849.

This envelope was delivered to the steamship *Algoma* on the Missouri River. It was marked "STEAM 10" due in red by the ship purser and carried to St Louis. Unfortunately, the *Algoma* was burned and sank at the wharf in St Louis on July 29. Some of the mail was recovered and forwarded with the post office label illustrated in Figure 5-10. This accident was widely reported, and the August 16, 1849 *Arkansas Weekly Gazette*, quoting from the *St Louis Republican*, gave one account:

The two bags of letters brought down in the *Algoma*, and which were supposed to have been lost in the fire, were found yesterday in a damaged condition. There are several thousand letters. . . Capt. A.J. Eaton, the mail agent has taken possession of them, and is endeavoring to dry them. . . One of our letters was delivered to us yesterday - a good deal burned, and scarcely in an intelligible shape. We gather from it that it was written 60 miles beyond Fort Kearney, on the 4th of July.

Other *Algoma* accounts include reports of letters dated June 19 at Fort Laramie.

Westbound travelers along the Platte typically stopped at Fort Laramie, which was located on the south bank of the river. This meant that they had to cross the North Platte at some point before South Pass. Brigham Young saw an opportunity while crossing the North Platte in 1847, and established the Mormon Ferry near today's Casper, Wyoming. For a fee, the Mormon Ferry carried travelers across the river during the May to September active emigration period, from 1847 to 1852.

Figure 5-11 is headed "Platte River Ferry 125 miles from Fort Laramie" and was written around May 9, 1850. The 1850 date is confirmed by the ten cents due rate on the cover and a reference in the letter to D.S. Norton, who travelled from Mount Vernon, Ohio to California in 1850. The writer of the letter explains that, "I have just been informed by the Captain of this Ferry that he would carry letters back to the States (note: at this point the phrase "at no charge" has been crossed out) as soon as Emigration was past." He also explains that he left Fort Laramie "on the 5th" (of May) and hopes to be in California by mid-July. The emigration ended sometime in September, and the captain of the ferry (Thomas Crover) arranged to have the letter carried back to St Joseph, where it was posted on November 8.



Figure 5-11. May 9, 1850 letter written at the Platte River Ferry and given to the captain of the ferry for transmission back East.

Mail between Salt Lake City and California

Figure 5-12 shows the western segment of the Central Route, consisting of the two principal trails from Salt Lake City to Sacramento and Los Angeles.



Figure 5-12. Map of the principal trails between California and Salt Lake City.

Prior to May 1851, post office special trip contracts were required to move the mail between California and Salt Lake City. The need for these was accentuated by the public notice of the Babbitt transcontinental mail service that had appeared in many eastern newspapers. An example was the April 6, 1849 *Liberty Missouri Weekly Tribune* which reported that, "The contractor, Almon W. Babbitt, will deliver the mail matter sent through, by way of Kanesville, Iowa, to Oregon and California." While Babbitt readily engaged in carrying the mail between Kanesville and Salt Lake City, onward delivery from Salt Lake City to California required a separate trip contract negotiated by the Salt Lake City postmaster. Table 5-3 lists the possible mail-carrying trips between Salt Lake City and California from August 1847 to April 1851.

Table 5-3. Overland Trips between Salt Lake City (SLC) and California - 1847 to 1851
Westbound to California

Departed Salt Lake City	Arrived in California	Notes
Aug 9, 1847	Oct 1847 at Monterey	Capt. James Brown party
Nov 18, 1847	Jan 7, 1848 at Los Angeles	Hunt & Rockwell party
Mar 12, 1848	(unknown)	Levi Riter (with Epistle)
Apr 12, 1849	May 25, 1849 at Sacramento	Lyman & Rockwell party
Oct 8, 1849	Dec 22, 1849 at William's Ranch	Rich & Pratt party
Nov 18, 1849	Jan 15, 1850 at Los Angeles	Egan party
Jul 7, 1850	Aug 27, 1850 at Sacramento	Goodale (?)

Easbound from California

Departed California	Arrived Salt Lake City	Notes
Aug 27, 1847 from Sacramento	Oct 11, 1847	Mormon Battalion
Oct 1847 from Monterey	Nov 16, 1847	Capt. Brown party
Feb 5, 1848 from Los Angeles	May 1848	Jefferson Hunt party
Apr 12, 1848 from Los Angeles	Jun 5, 1848	Orrin P. Rockwell party
Apr 15, 1848 from Sacramento	Jul 9, 1848	Nathan Hawks (" <i>Star Express</i> ")
Jul 2, 1848 from Placerville	Sep 25, 1848	Mormon Battalion
1848 from San Francisco	Sep 28, 1848	Addison Pratt party
1849 from (?)	Nov 1849	Supply Train
1850 from Los Angeles (?)	Sep 10, 1850	John Barnard party
Aug 16, 1850 from Sacramento	Sep 29, 1850	Amasa Lyman party - Figure 5-13
Sep 5, 1850 from Sacramento	Oct 12, 1850	Rockwell party
Sep 26, 1850 fom Middle Fork	Nov 12, 1850	General Rich Party

Figure 5-13 illustrates an eastbound letter sent from Sacramento to Salt Lake City. This letter was mailed at the Sacramento, California post office and postmarked on August 12, 1850 with 12½ cents intra-California postage due. As there was no regular contract mail service available, the Sacramento postmaster entered into a trip contract with a member of the Amasa Lyman party (see Table 5-3) to carry a mail to Salt Lake City for compensation amounting to the value of the postage on the letters carried. The Lyman party left Sacramento on August 16, and arrived in Salt Lake City on September 29, 1850.

The last line of the address shows "Deseret" as part of the location. In March 1849, the Mormon government in Salt Lake City proposed that the territory between the Rocky Mountains and the Sierra Nevada Mountains be added to the United States as the State of Deseret. This provisional state existed for about two years and was never recognized by the U.S. government. The United States initially considered combining the states of California and Deseret, but instead created Utah Territory on September 9, 1850. The news of this, however, was not received in either Utah or California until months later, so postmarks with the Deseret designation are known until June 1851.

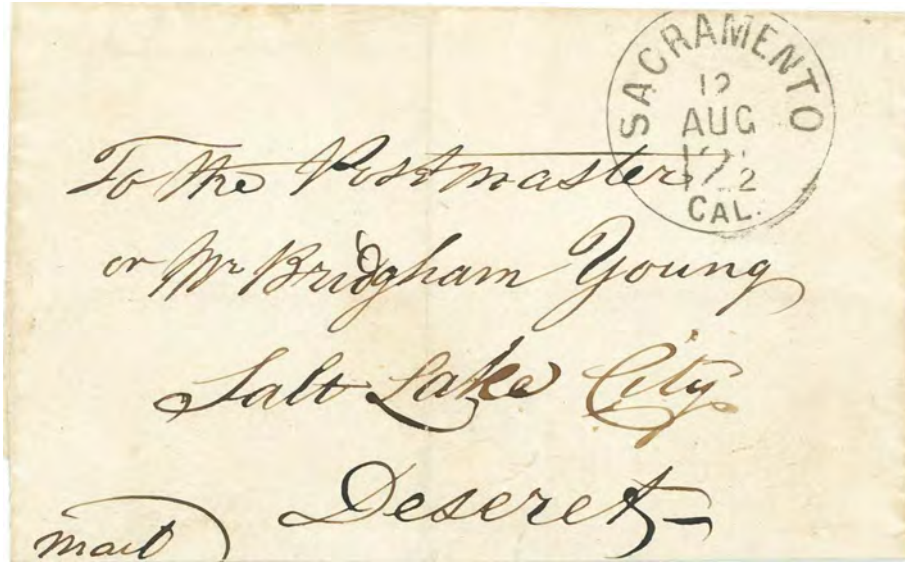


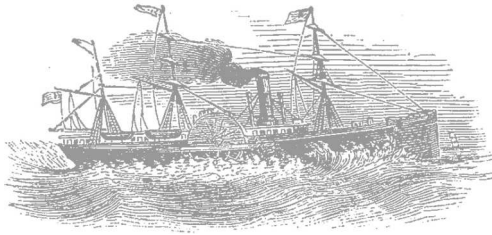
Figure 5-13. Letter posted on August 12, 1850 in Sacramento, California and carried by Mormon express to Salt Lake City.

The commencement of the U.S. postal contract routes between Salt Lake and Missouri (August 1850) and between Salt Lake and California (May 1851) brought this period to an end.

Endnotes

1. Bancroft, *History of Utah*, 1540-1886, page 253.
2. Unruh, *The Plains Across*, pages 119-120.
3. Lot 577 in the October 23, 1857 John Fox auction.
4. Harwell, *Manuscript History of Brigham Young 1847-1850*, page 163.
5. Described as the "First authentic intelligence from the States this season," in the September 28 1849 *Deseret News*.
6. Whall, *The Salt Lake City Post Office*, p39
7. August 14, 1848 Post Office Act, Sec 3
8. Probably carried by Willard Richard's party, per Table 5-1.
9. Lot 563 in the Spink January 2010 auction of Floyd Risvold's collection.

Via Panama.



Chapter Six

Mail Via Panama, 1848-1861

As described in Chapter Three, the dispute over the Oregon territory with Great Britain was resolved by the partition treaty of June 15, 1846. By August 6 of that year, President Polk was calling for a mail service to newly-acquired Oregon, and Congress responded with two bills on March 3, 1847. The first of those bills established new postal rates for the Pacific coast and intermediate points. The second of those bills authorized the Navy Department to contract for the transport of mail between Oregon and New York via Panama so long as the steamships used on the routes were readily convertible into warships.

For postal purposes, the route was divided into three segments, as illustrated in Figure 6-1. The Atlantic coast segment was serviced by steamships between New York/New Orleans and Chagres, New Granada via Havana, Cuba. The Pacific coast segment, also serviced by steamships, ran between Panama City, New Granada and Astoria, Oregon via San Francisco. The third segment, overland between Chagres and Panama City, linked the two steamship segments.



Figure 6-1. Map of the via Panama mail service.

Separate mail contracts were negotiated for the three segments, so this chapter will briefly examine each of the three contracts, but will consider the service via Panama as a single route, since the three contracts were interdependent. The mail route via Panama was relegated to a secondary status after the July 1, 1861 start of the daily overland contract mail service between Missouri and San Francisco.

United States Mail Steamship Company Contract, 1848 to 1859

On April 20, 1847, The Navy Department awarded a ten-year contract to Albert G. Sloo to provide a twice-monthly service between New York and Chagres in five newly-constructed steamships. Sloo transferred this contract to a group led by George Law on September 3, with the stipulation that at least two steamships would be ready for service on October 1, 1848.

Law organized the United States Mail Steamship Company (USMSC) on March 23, 1848 and began the construction of the new steamships. The construction was inordinately delayed, so Law proposed to use a small purchased steamship, the *Falcon*, to inaugurate the service on the Atlantic coast. Upon approval from the Navy, the *Falcon* left New York with the first monthly mail on December 1, 1848 and arrived in Chagres on December 27. Another small purchased replacement steamship, the *Isthmus*, carried the second mail from New York on December 26. It was not until September 1849 that the first of Law's new steamships was ready for service, which allowed the USMSC to begin the contracted twice-monthly service in January 1850. At that time, scheduled departures from New York were on the 13th of each month to Chagres and on the 28th of each month to New Orleans connecting at Havana for Chagres.

Pacific Mail Steamship Company Contract, 1848 to 1859

On November 16, 1847, the Navy Department awarded a ten-year contract to Arnold Harris to provide monthly steamship service between Panama City and Astoria, Oregon. Three days later, Harris transferred his contract to a group led by William Aspinwall with the approval of both the Navy and Post Office Departments. Aspinwall committed to provide three steamships for this service, which was to commence on October 1, 1848 and to run ten years from that date.

Aspinwall formed the Pacific Mail Steamship Company (PMSS) on April 12, 1848 and was timelier than Law in the construction of his steamships. The *California* left New York on October 6, 1848 for San Francisco around Cape Horn. After a stop in Panama City on January 17, 1849 to pick up the passengers and mail from the first two USMSC sailings to Chagres, the *California* arrived in San Francisco on February 28. With the June 1848 concurrence of the Navy Department, the PMSS used San Francisco as the main terminus of the line, and employed sailing ships or small steamships to carry mail between San Francisco and Astoria, Oregon.

Transit across the Isthmus of Panama

The March 6, 1844 New Granada-U.S. Postal Treaty set transit charges per pound of U.S. mail carried by New Granada across the Isthmus in closed mail bags. Nonetheless, the Postmaster General ordered an extension of the PMSS mail contract to include isthmian transit on October 25, 1848. Since this conflicted with the New Granada postal convention, the PMSS was unable to get a service started. Accordingly, the Postmaster General revoked the PMSS contract extension a year later, and relied on the New Granada postal system to carry the transit mail starting January 1, 1849. The New Granadian transit mail service, however, relied on local contractors and was very unreliable. While passenger trips across the Isthmus took anywhere from two to four days, transit times for freight and mail (which was viewed as low value freight) took from four to ten days, depending on the availability of pack mules. Starting in November 1849, postal agents carried on the steamships were supposed to ensure transit across the Isthmus by accompanying the local contractors, but sometimes stayed at Chagres, or were preoccupied with transporting higher priority private goods.

The longer term solution to the Panama transit was a railroad, so the Panama Railroad Company (PRC) received an exclusive contract from New Granada to build an isthmian transit railroad on May 29, 1850. They began work promptly, and the first daily trains across a portion of the transit began on March 15, 1852, reducing passenger transit times to two days. In anticipation of this, the U.S. Post Office awarded the isthmian mail transit contract to the PRC, effective January 1, 1852. Their service was excellent, as transit times decreased to four hours upon the January 28, 1855 opening of the completed railroad.

Early Contract Period, 1848 to 1851

This start-up period was marked by extremely long trips caused by irregular transit times across the Isthmus and irregular steamship schedules, particularly on the Atlantic coast. This meant that the sailings of the USMSC and PMSS were not synchronized, and mail could wait for as long as a month on the Isthmus to make a connection. Appendix C includes a detailed sailing table that illustrates these delays. Of note in the sailing table is the limited number of ships available to service the USMSC contract in 1848-49. As described above, the USMSC began with two small purchased steamships, and then took one of them off service in June 1849. That left only the *Falcon* to service the New York-Havana-New Orleans-Chagres circuit from July 1849 to January 1850. As a result, the U.S. Despatch Agent at Panama City had to employ non-contract steamships to carry some contract mails in 1849. Regular twice-monthly sailings along the entire route began in early 1850.

Westbound mail to California left from either New York or New Orleans. Eastbound mail was also distributed from both cities depending on the ultimate destination. The trips departing New York prior to October 1851 stopped at Havana while afterwards the trips were direct. Similarly, mails between New Orleans and Chagres were carried direct from September 28, 1851.

The March 3, 1847 Postal Bill set postage on letters to or from Chagres at 20 cents per half ounce; to or from Panama City at 30 cents; and to or from the Pacific coast at 40 cents.

Contract Letters Carried via Panama, 1848 to 1851

Examples of mail carried during the first year of operation are rare. Figure 6-2 shows a letter carried on the second USMSC sailing, which connected with the inaugural westbound sailing of the PMSS *California* at Panama City.

This commercial letter was datelined at New York on December 23, 1848 and is the earliest known letter carried on the Panama contract mail route. It was rated for 40 cents transcontinental postage due and postmarked for the December 25 expected sailing¹ of the USMSC *Isthmus*² which arrived in Chagres on January 16. The letter was then carried across the Isthmus to Panama City, where it caught the first PMSS sailing from Panama by the *California* on January 31. This first contract mail to San Francisco arrived on February 28.

The PMSS's *California* also carried the first Special Post Office Agent for California and Oregon, William Van Voorhies, on that maiden voyage. He tried to establish a transcontinental postal service from San Francisco, but was stymied by the desertion to the gold fields of the *California*'s crew and a shortage of coal. Not to be deterred, he chartered a Peruvian sailing ship, the *Callao*, to carry the first contract mail from San Francisco.



Figure 6-2. Letter postmarked at New York on December 25, 1848 and carried by the USMSC steamer *Isthmus* to Chagres and the PMSS steamer *California* to San Francisco.

Figure 6-3 shows the only known letter carried on that trip. This letter from a successful gold miner was datelined December 11, 1848 at San Francisco and waited three months to be forwarded. It was rated for 40 cents transcontinental postage due and postmarked for the expected March 15, 1849 sailing date of the *Callao* for Panama City. This is the earliest U.S. postmark from San Francisco, which relied on manuscript postmarks until June 1849.³ The *Callao* actually left on March 19, and arrived in Panama City on May 5.⁴ After crossing the Isthmus, it waited at Chagres for several weeks before the mail agent decided to use the non-contract Empire City Line steamship *Crescent City* to transport part of the mail to New Orleans. The *Crescent City* left Chagres on June 4 and arrived in New Orleans on June 10. Since this letter was addressed to Indiana, it was distributed directly from New Orleans, rather than continuing on to New York.



Figure 6-3. Letter postmarked at San Francisco on March 15, 1849 and carried by the PMSS chartered ship *Callao* to Panama and the non-contract steamship *Crescent City* to New Orleans.

The second PMSS steamship, the *Oregon*, left New York on December 8, 1848 and travelled around Cape Horn to San Francisco on April 1, 1849. During her stop at Panama City, the *Oregon* picked up San Francisco's first postmaster, John Geary, who quickly prepared her for the return trip to Panama City. She left San Francisco with the first steamship contract mail on April 12. Figure 6-4 shows a letter carried on that trip.

This unpaid letter was datelined April 5, 1849 at San Francisco and received a 40 cents due marking along with a manuscript postmark of April 9, which was the expected departure of the *Oregon*. She actually left three days after that and arrived in Panama City on May 5. The USMSC *Falcon* had waited only four days for the eastbound mails at Chagres before leaving on May 6 without any contract mails. Faced with the prospect of waiting two months before the next USMSC

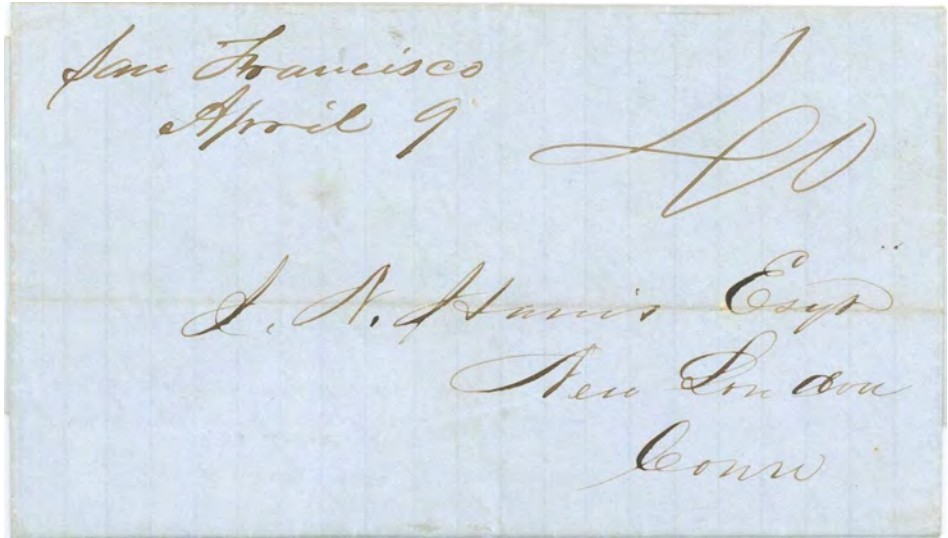


Figure 6-4. Letter postmarked at San Francisco on April 9, 1849 and carried by the PMSS steamship *Oregon* to Panama and the USMSC steamship *Falcon* to New York.

sailing from Chagres, the mail agent decided to use the non-contract Empire City Line steamship *Crescent City* to transport most of the March, April and May San Francisco mails to New Orleans on June 10, as seen with Figure 6-3. This letter connected with the USMSC *Falcon* at New Orleans on June 12 for the trip to New York, where it arrived on June 19. The two and a half months' transit time of this first steamship contract mail from San Francisco illustrates the unreliability of the early trips via Panama due to poor connections on the Isthmus.

San Francisco introduced a straight-line postmark in June 1849, which remained in use until August 1849. Figure 6-5 illustrates a letter with earliest use of this postmark.

This June 18, 1849 six-page commercial letter was rated for double-weight 80 cents due, and postmarked for the June 20 scheduled departure of the PMSS's *Panama* for Panama City, where it arrived on July 12. After a relatively short wait at Chagres, the letter left on the USMSC steamship *Falcon* to New York on August 17. An Empire City Line steamship had departed from Chagres nine days earlier on July 16, but the U.S. Despatch Agent opted not to send the contract mails mail with it.



John Bidwell, California Pioneer, 1819-1900

- Moved to Ohio in 1831 from New York
- Led first overland party to California in 1841
- Business manager at Sutter's Mill in 1842
- Discovered gold at Bidwell's Bar in 1848
- Brigadier general of California militia in 1863
- Member of U.S. Congress from 1865 to 1867

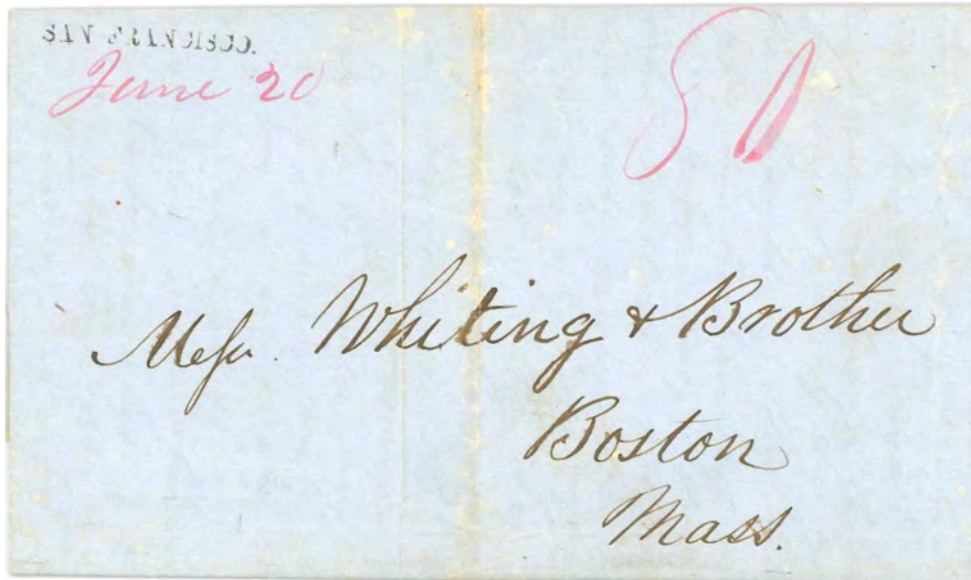


Figure 6-5. Letter postmarked at San Francisco on June 20, 1849 and carried by the PMSS *Panama* to Panama and the USMSC *Falcon* to New York.

Westbound mail during the early period also experienced significant delays. Figure 6-6 shows a July 1849 example. This letter was postmarked in New York on July 7, 1849 and was rated for 40 cents transcontinental postage due. It missed the June 28 sailing of the *Falcon* and had to wait until the *Falcon*'s next trip,⁵ which left New York on August 27 and arrived in Chagres on September 18. After a trip across the Isthmus, the letter

was picked up by the PMSS chartered steamship *Unicorn*, which arrived at San Francisco on October 31. The total transit time was nearly four months. This letter is addressed to John Bidwell, who led the Bidwell-Bartelson Party from Missouri to California in May-November 1841 (described in Chapter Four). Shortly after his arrival, he was employed by John Sutter at Suttersville (in today's Sacramento), where gold was first found in 1848.



Figure 6-6. Letter postmarked at New York on July 7, 1849 and carried by the USMSC *Falcon* to Chagres and the PMSS *Unicorn* to San Francisco.

As mentioned above, New Orleans was one of two termini on the Atlantic coast, and mail was distributed from there or New York. Eastbound mail typically did not receive postmarks at these termini, unless a letter entered the U.S. mails at that point. Even when this type of mail entered the mails at New York or New Orleans, the postage charged was from the west coast origin point. Figure 6-7 shows a January 1850 letter that entered the mails at New Orleans.

This letter was datelined at San Francisco on January 1, 1850 and hand-carried on the PMSS *Oregon* to Panama on January 23. The letter travelled across the Isthmus to Chagres, where it was most likely put into the USMSC mail bag. It then left Chagres aboard the USMSC *Falcon* on January 26 and, after a stop in

Havana, arrived at New Orleans on February 7. It was posted there on the following day and marked for the unpaid 59 cents rate to England.⁶ Had it originated in New Orleans, the unpaid postage would have been 24 cents, so the letter was marked with the red "STEAM" marking to indicate that it came in on a regularly-scheduled packet, and to indicate the reason for the higher rate of postage. The letter then travelled by river steamer and railroad to New York, where the "59" was crossed out and a manuscript 56

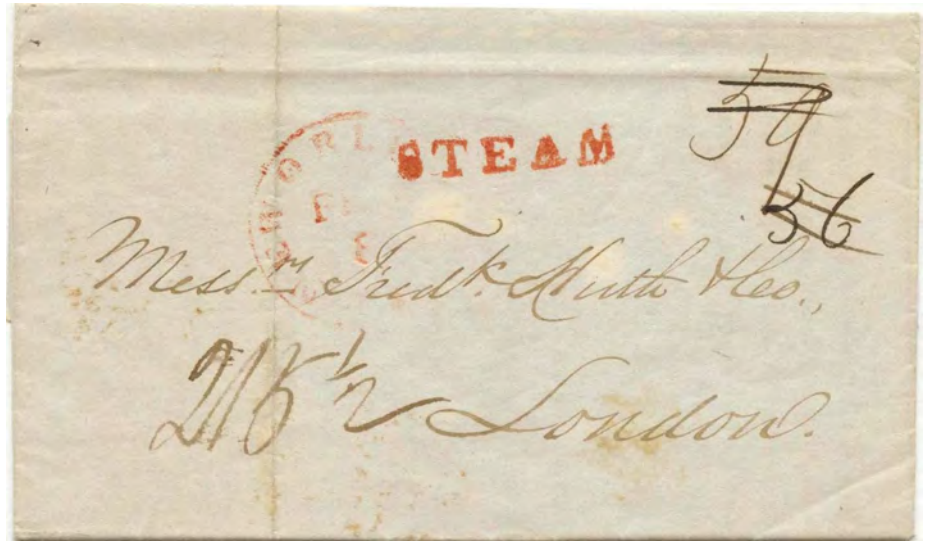


Figure 6-7. Letter datelined at San Francisco on January 1, 1850 and carried by the PMSS *Oregon* to Panama and the USMSC *Falcon* to New Orleans.

cents debit⁷ to England was added. It left New York on February 20 aboard the Ocean Line steamship *Hermann*, which arrived in Southampton, England on March 8. The letter was docketed as received on March 9 in London, where it was rated for two shillings five and a half pence due, which was equivalent to the 56 cents due to the United States plus three cents British credit for inland postage.

The 40 cents transcontinental postage could also be prepaid by 1847 issue postage stamps. All but one of the known examples originated in the East, since 1847 issue stamps were never placed on sale in California. Figure 6-8 shows an early westbound example.

This letter was posted in Philadelphia on October 1, 1849 and prepaid 40 cents transcontinental postage by four 10 cents singles of the 1847 issue. It left New York on the USMSC *Ohio* for Havana and was transferred there to the USMSC *Falcon* for Chagres, where it arrived on October 29. After a six to seven day transit of the Isthmus, the letter was carried by the PMSS *Oregon* to San Francisco on December 1.



Figure 6-8. Letter postmarked at Philadelphia on October 1, 1849 and carried by the USMSC *Ohio* to Havana and the PMSS *Oregon* to San Francisco.

Mail Agents on the Steamships, 1849 to 1852

The Navy Act of March 3, 1847 specified that, “steamers shall also receive on board and accommodate, without charge to the government, one agent, to be appointed by the Postmaster General, who shall have charge of the mails to be transported in said steamers.” Starting in November 1849, mail agents were carried on contract steamships via Panama. These agents saw the mails to the port of Chagres and accompanied New Granadian contractors with the mail across the Isthmus to Panama City.⁸ The U.S. Consul at Panama City, as U.S. Despatch Agent, received the mail for sorting and proper routing and paid the New Granadian government for the transit services according to the 1844 U.S.-New Granada convention. If the agent did not accompany the westbound mail all the way to San Francisco, he waited at Panama City for the next PMSS eastbound mail and accompanied it back to New York.

The mail agents were also responsible for sorting and postmarking mail received on board the steamer. Special route agent postmarks were prepared for this, and Figure 6-9 illustrates the only known westbound route agent datestamp.



Figure 6-9. Letter posted July 23, 1850 on board the USMSC *Georgia* and then carried by the PMSS *California* to California.

The original letter (no longer present) was datelined July 13, 1850⁹ at New York by John Bidwell. Bidwell was visiting back East, and had arrived in New York on July 8 aboard the USMSC *Georgia*. He gave this letter to the *Georgia*'s mail agent, Bannister Midgett, who was scheduled to leave New York on July 13. Midgett apparently did not process his New York way mail until well into the voyage. He rated the letter for 40 cents transcontinental postage due and postmarked it with his “N. York & Chagres S.S.” device on July 23, one day before the *Georgia* arrived at Chagres. Midgett then accompanied the mail, along with this letter, across the Isthmus to Panama City, where Amos Corwine, U.S. Consul and Despatch Agent, sorted the mail and gave 79 California mail bags back to Midgett for transportation to San Francisco. The PMSS *California* departed with Midgett and this mail on August 3 and arrived in San Francisco on August 23. Midgett departed for the East on September 1, accompanying the PMSS *Oregon*'s mails to New York. The addressee, John Townsend, was the first licensed physician in California. He came to California in 1844 as part of the Stephens-Townsend-Murphy overland party,¹⁰ and was appointed Alcalde (mayor) of San Francisco from April to September 1848. His term of office ended with his departure for the gold mines. He later treated victims of an October 1850 cholera outbreak in San Jose and died from the disease.

A few covers are known with manuscript “Panama & San Francisco (date)” route agent markings on mail collected on board a PMSS steamship. Others are known with one of two types¹¹ of circular route agent datestamps which read, “Pan. & San. Fran. S.S.” and are seen in both black and red ink. Research¹² has shown that the type I datestamp was used exclusively by route agent Gouverneur Ferris and the type II by route agent Bannister Midgett. Figure 6-10 shows a December 1850 example of the type II route agent postmark.



Figure 6-10. Letter postmarked December 23, 1850 on board the PMSS *California* and then carried by the USMSC *Falcon* to New York.

This letter was datelined July 24, 1850 at Sacramento and waited some time before being sent. It was probably given to route agent Midgett on board the PMSS *California* while at San Francisco. That ship left on December 15 and Midgett waited some time before processing his way mail. While off Acapulco on December 23, he postmarked the letter with his type II “Pan. & San. Fran. S.S.” device. The *California* arrived at Panama City on January 3, and Midgett accompanied the mail via Chagres to the USMSC *Falcon*, which arrived in New York on January 24. The New York post office marked the letter with its distinctive circled 40 cents due marking.

Midgett was active as a route agent on the entire route between July 1850 and June 1852, while Ferris was active between November 1850 and October 1852. Accordingly, the period of use of the route agent datestamps runs from July 1850 to October 1852.

Early Communications between Europe and the West Coast, 1849 to 1851

The exclusive Panama mail contracts meant that all post office mail from the West Coast to Europe was carried by PMSS and USMSC steamships via Panama for transfer to transatlantic steamships at New York.

6 - MAIL VIA PANAMA, 1848-1861

Figure 6-11 shows the earliest known letter from the San Francisco post office to England. This double-weight commercial letter was postmarked in San Francisco for the expected August 1, 1849 departure of the PMSS steamship *California* and marked in red for the unpaid 80 cents transcontinental postage.¹³ This is the earliest use of San Francisco's circular datestamp, which replaced the straight-line postmark in August. After a trip across the Isthmus, this letter was faced with the prospect of a long delay at Chagres, since the USMSC *Falcon* had left on July 25 and was not due back for several months. The U.S. mail agent accordingly arranged to have the Empire City Line carry this mail at no charge on the *Empire City* to New York September on 13. The New York post office crossed out the red "80" and added a 90 cents debit to England for the 80 cents plus twice the five cents British convention rate for U.S. postage, in a curious double charge for domestic postage. The letter then left on September 19 aboard the British Cunard steamer *Niagara* for Liverpool, where it arrived on October 2. London calculated five shillings four pence due, which was equal to three shillings nine pence due for the 90 cents U.S. debit plus one shilling seven pence due for double packet and British inland postage.¹⁴



Figure 6-11. Letter postmarked at San Francisco on August 1, 1849 and carried by the PMSS *California* to Panama, the *Empire City* to New York, and the Cunarder *Niagara* to Europe.

Letters from Europe to the Pacific coast were handled differently. The British Royal Mail Steam Packet Company (RMSP) had been running steamships between England and Chagres via the West Indies since 1842,¹⁵ and this became the default mail route for British mails to the Pacific coast. Mails from other European countries to the west coasts of North and South America were carried in the British mails, and were accordingly routed via the West Indies.¹⁶ The French post office introduced a fully-paid rate of two francs ten centimes (21 décimes) per 7.5 grams to Panama City by RMSP steamship effective August 1, 1849.¹⁷ Postage beyond Panama City had to be collected from the recipient. Figure 6-12 shows a rare example of this rate.

This letter was prepaid two francs ten centimes at Bordeaux, France on February 12, 1850 per a manuscript "21" (décimes) on the reverse, and routed via Southampton, England for the February 18 sailing of the RMSP steamship *Great Western* to Jamaica on March 18. It was transferred at Jamaica to the RMSP branch line steamer *Tay* for Chagres, where it arrived on March 25. British consular agents then arranged for the transit across the Isthmus, and the letter connected with the April 1 PMSS *Panama* sailing



Figure 6-12. Letter sent from Bordeaux, France to California on February 12, 1850. It was carried by RMSP steamships to Chagres and the PMSS *Panama* to San Francisco.

to San Francisco on April 20. Since the postage had only been paid to Panama City, the San Francisco post office charged 30 cents postage due for the March 1847 rate from Panama City.

A fully-paid 28 décimes closed mail rate to California via the West Indies became effective in France on January 1, 1851.¹⁸ Two months later, the French post office announced that the West Indies route was the default for all mails to California.¹⁹ Figure 6-13 shows a July 1851 example.



Figure 6-13. Letter sent from Angoulême, France to California on July 10, 1851. It was carried by RMSP steamships to Chagres and the PMSS *Panama* to San Francisco.

This letter was prepaid 28 décimes per a manuscript “28” on the back, in Angoulême, France on July 10, 1851. It was routed via Southampton to the July 17 sailing of the RMSP steamship *Avon*, which arrived at Chagres on August 12. British consular agents then arranged for the transit across the Isthmus to Panama City, where it met the September 1 sailing of the PMSS steamship *Oregon* to San Francisco on September 18. Although the 28 décimes was published as a fully-paid rate, San Francisco nonetheless charged 20 cents postage due, per the red “20.” It is surmised that the British consul in Panama City transferred the

6 - MAIL VIA PANAMA, 1848-1861

mail to the American consul, who opened the closed mail bags to extract any locally-addressed mail in his capacity as U.S. Despatch Mail Agent. Since the mail bags were no longer closed when they reached San Francisco, their letters were assessed 20 cents postage from Panama City. Per markings on the reverse, this letter was picked up at the San Francisco post office by Reynolds & Company, which delivered it to the southern gold mines for a \$1 express fee.

Contract Mails to and from Oregon, 1849 to 1851

The 1847 contract between the PMSS and the Navy Department called for service between Panama City and Astoria. After the February 2, 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ceded Upper California to the United States, the PMSS's interest shifted to San Francisco as the principal terminus. On June 19, 1848 the Secretary of the Navy approved that terminus for the PMSS steamships,²⁰ provided that the PMSS continue to provide monthly service between San Francisco and Oregon in chartered sailing vessels. In January 1850, the Navy Department ordered the PMSS to put steamships on the Oregon extension by June 10. Accordingly, the PMSS started steamship service to Oregon with the *Carolina* in June 1850. Finally, on March 13, 1851, the Navy Department, Post Office Department and PMSS reached an agreement to carry twice-monthly mails between Panama and Astoria in steamships, with connection at

San Francisco. Figure 6-14 shows an early example of westbound mail from Oregon.



Figure 6-14. Letter posted at Oregon City on March 1, 1850 and carried via San Francisco and Panama to New York.

This letter was datelined at Oregon City on February 24, 1850 and prepaid 40 cents transcontinental postage. It was postmarked for the March 1 boat departure down the Columbia River to Astoria, where it met the March 2 sailing of the PMSS-chartered brig *Seguin* to San Francisco on March 8. Too late for the

monthly PMSS steamship that departed on March 1, it waited for the April 1 PMSS *California* sailing to Panama on April 23. After a quick trip across the Isthmus, it was carried by the USMSC *Georgia* to New York on May 7.

Post Office Mails Carried by Opposition Steamships, 1849 to 1850

As early as December 1848, non-contract steamship lines (called “opposition steamships”) began running between New York and Chagres, mainly competing for the passenger traffic. Initial competition for the USMSC came from the Empire City Line (which used J. Howard & Sons as its New York agents) with the steamships *Crescent City* and *Empire City* on the Atlantic coast. These two were joined by three steamships on the Pacific coast in 1850, which prompted the PMSS to gain control of all but one of the Empire City Line steamships in October 1850. This left the PMSS in competition with the USMSC on the New York/New Orleans-Chagres route with the old Empire City Line steamships.

Perhaps anticipating this, George Law (principal owner of the USMSC) sent the *Isthmus*, *Columbus* and two other steamships of Law's Line to the Pacific in May-June 1850 to compete with the PMSS. This quickly ended with a January 1851 agreement between the USMSC and PMSS to sell their competing steamships to each other and to confine their activities to the Atlantic and Pacific coasts, respectively.

In the interim, the post office attempted to take advantage of the more frequent sailings. In an October 15, 1849 letter to the Boston postmaster, the First Assistant Postmaster General wrote,

...On the 27th of September, authority was given to the Postmaster of New York to make up and send mails by the *Crescent City* and the *Empire City* – the proprietors having consented to take them at the compensation authorized by the act of Congress of 1825...instructions were given under date of the 10th instant, that, in restricting the Postmaster of New York to the exclusive employment of the government packet line, whenever its ship and that of Howard & Son sailed on the same day he would nevertheless mail by Howard & Son's ship all letters marked to be conveyed by it.

Just before this, a mail was carried by the *Empire City* that was rated as a contract mail on the Pacific Coast. Figure 6-15 shows a letter carried in this mail.

This letter was datelined September 15, 1849 at New York, and placed in the *Empire City*'s mail bag on the wharf. The fee for the *Empire City* Line was paid per the manuscript "Paid" at the upper right, so the purser added the "EMPIRE CITY" marking to the letter and took it on the ship in a closed bag. The *Empire City* left New York on September 17 and arrived in Chagres on September 26. An *Empire City* Line agent carried the mail bag across the Isthmus, and then entrusted it to the U.S. Despatch Agent at Panama City. The *Empire City* Line mail bag and the regular contract mail bags were then carried by the PMSS chartered steamship *Unicorn* to San Francisco on October 31. Upon arrival, San Francisco added its boxed "40" marking,²¹ reflecting the contract transcontinental postage due.



Figure 6-15. Letter posted September 17, 1849 on board the *Empire City* Line's *Empire City* and then carried by the PMSS *Unicorn* to California.

The *Empire City* Line mail bag and the regular contract mail bags were then carried by the PMSS chartered steamship *Unicorn* to San Francisco on October 31. Upon arrival, San Francisco added its boxed "40" marking,²¹ reflecting the contract transcontinental postage due.

In March 1852, the Post Office approved payment for 42,969 letters carried by the *Empire City* Line in 1849-50. Compensation for this service was at the fairly meager rate of 2 cents per letter.²²

With respect to the opposition steamers on the Pacific coast, the May 14, 1850 *Alta California* reported:

We understand that O. Charlick, Esquire, agent of Law's Line of Steamers, has offered to take a mail, and that the Postmaster will dispatch one by the *Isthmus* on the 15th, which will reach Panama in time to connect with the regular mail steamer leaving Chagres on the 13th of June. Persons sending by this steamer must endorse their letters "Per Isthmus."

6 - MAIL VIA PANAMA, 1848-1861

This was the first sailing by Law's Line from San Francisco, and the postmaster sent four more special contract mails on the *Isthmus* and the *Columbus* in June, July, September and October 1850.²³ He did this to take advantage of the mid-month departures of Law's Line, which supplemented the PMSS monthly departures on the first of each month. He also took the precaution of requiring all letters carried by Law's Line to be specifically endorsed to that line, and it appears that he produced special endorsement handstamps for that purpose.

Figure 6-16 shows a letter carried in the June 1850 Law's Line special contract mail. This letter was written in San Francisco on June 8, 1850 and postmarked on June 11, with 40 cents transcontinental postage due.

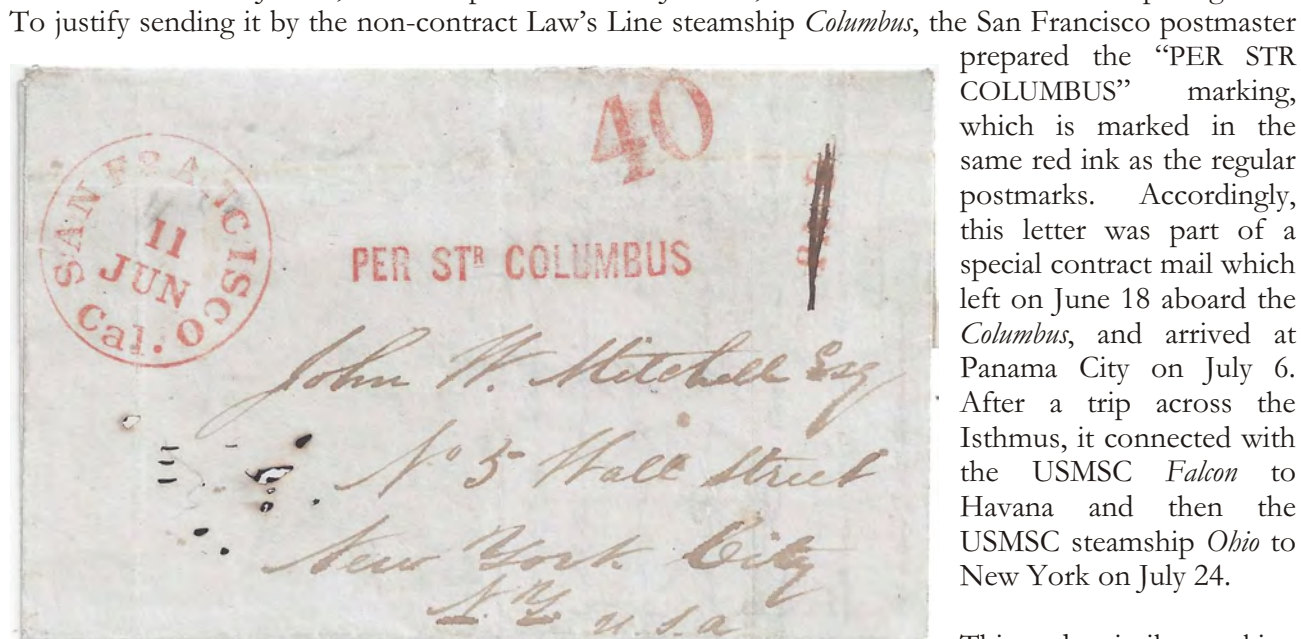


Figure 6-16. Letter postmarked at San Francisco on June 11, 1850 and carried by the Law's Line steamship *Columbus* to Panama and the USMSC *Ohio* to New York.

prepared the "PER STR COLUMBUS" marking, which is marked in the same red ink as the regular postmarks. Accordingly, this letter was part of a special contract mail which left on June 18 aboard the *Columbus*, and arrived at Panama City on July 6. After a trip across the Isthmus, it connected with the USMSC *Falcon* to Havana and then the USMSC steamship *Ohio* to New York on July 24.

This and a similar marking for the *Isthmus* are known in red and black ink. Manuscript endorsements to Law's Line steamships

were also accepted for these five special contract mails. An October 10, 1850 Post Office Department order put an end to this practice upon its receipt in San Francisco in early December. On July 15, 1850 the PMSS had extended its sailings to twice-monthly on the 1st and 15th of each month, so there was no further need to use Law's Line. Accordingly, the First Assistant Postmaster General wrote:

Sir: The Postmaster General has ordered that the arrangement for a semi-monthly mail, between Panama and San Francisco, (W.H. Aspinwall, Contractor,) be made complete: that a second monthly conveyance be made by said contract; that the mails depart from each of those places or the other on the 15th of each month as well as on the first; and that the regular Mail Agents accompany the mail on the 15th, as well as those dispatched on the 1st of each month in the ships of said contractor. The Postmaster General directs that hereafter no mails whatever be made up and sent over the New York, Havana, Chagres, Panama, San Francisco and Astoria routes otherwise than in the government mail packet lines...and that all mails over said routes should be sent exclusively in the charge of government agents.

Middle Contract Period, 1851 to 1855

With the partial opening of the Panama Railroad on March 15, 1852 the reliability and regularity of the twice-monthly Panama route increased significantly. In addition, the Atlantic steamship terminus was moved from Chagres to Aspinwall when the Panama Railroad started operations. This ensured much smoother transfers, as newly constructed wharves permitted the direct transfer of the mails and passengers from the steamships to the train. Accordingly, transit times between New York and San Francisco were reduced to around 30 days and mail volumes increased dramatically.

The March 3, 1851 Postal Act changed the transcontinental rates, effective July 1. The 1847 west coast rate of 40 cents per half ounce was dramatically reduced to six cents on prepaid mail. Unpaid mail was charged 10 cents, and the definition of transcontinental was refined to “exceeding 3,000 miles.” In addition, letters conveyed over 2,500 miles wholly or in part by sea between the United States and foreign countries were charged 20 cents. This replaced the 30 cents rate between Panama City and the United States, although the old 20 cents Chagres rate remained the same. These 1851 rates were superseded on April 1, 1855.

Contract Letters Carried via Panama, 1851 to 1855

A letter carried on the first westbound trip after the 1851 rate change is shown in Figure 6-17. This letter was datelined July 10, 1851 in New York City and prepaid six cents in cash for the new transcontinental rate to California. It was postmarked “New-York Paid 6” for the July 11 sailing of the USMSC *Georgia* to Chagres, where it arrived on July 24. After crossing the Isthmus, it was carried by the PMSS *Panama* to San Francisco on August 19. Its receipt was docketed on August 20 as “pr Panama by mail.”

San Francisco’s supply of three cents stamps became exhausted in mid-1853. In May 1853, the San Francisco postmaster began accepting bisects of the 12 cents stamp in payment of the six cents transcontinental rate.²⁴ These bisects were accepted as valid postage upon arrival in the East until a September 12, 1853 Post Office Department communication re-affirmed that they were not acceptable for postage.²⁵



Figure 6-17. Letter postmarked at New York City on July 11, 1851 and carried by the USMSC *Georgia* to Chagres and the PMSS *Panama* to San Francisco.

By October 1853, letters originating in California with bisects were charged postage due upon arrival in most eastern post offices. The notice of their non-validity reached San Francisco around October 17, and bisects were no longer used after that date. Accepted bisects, therefore, were carried on the seven contract sailings that left San Francisco between May 16 and August 16, 1853.

6 - MAIL VIA PANAMA, 1848-1861

Figure 6-18 illustrates an accepted 12 cents bisect from California. This letter was datelined August 15, 1853 from San Francisco and prepaid 6 cents by a bisected 1851 issue 12 cents stamp. San Francisco postmarked it for the August 16 sailing of the PMSS *Winfield Scott* to Panama, where it arrived on August 30. That mail connected across the Isthmus with the USMSC *Illinois*, which arrived in New York on September 10. Since this was just prior to the September 12 Post Office Department communication, New York accepted the letter as fully paid and sent it on to Boston.



Figure 6-18. Letter postmarked at San Francisco on August 16, 1853 and carried by the PMSS *Winfield Scott* to Panama and the USMSC *Illinois* to New York.

A month later, bisects were being rejected by eastern post offices, so bisect letters with 10 cents due were carried on the three contract sailings that left San Francisco between September 16 and October 16, 1853. Figure 6-19 shows a rejected example. This letter was prepaid in San Francisco by a bisected 1851 issue 12 cents stamp and postmarked for the September 16, 1853 sailing of the PMSS *John L. Stephens* to Panama



City on September 29. It arrived in New York on October 10 aboard the USMSC *Illinois*. In accordance with the September 12 Post Office Department notice, the New York post office refused to recognize the validity of the bisected 12 cents stamp, and charged the letter 10 cents due for the unpaid transcontinental rate.

Figure 6-19. Letter postmarked at San Francisco on September 16, 1853 and carried by the PMSS *John L. Stephens* to Panama and the USMSC *Illinois* to New York.

Rates on fully-paid French mail to California dropped to 25 décimes on September 1, 1851.²⁶ San Francisco continued to collect 20 cents on each of these letters. Figure 6-20 shows an example.

This letter was prepaid 2 francs 50 centimes in stamps of the French 1852 and 1853 issues.²⁷ It was posted in Paris on October 31, 1853 and routed via Southampton for the November 2 sailing of the RMSP steamship *La Plata* to Chagres on November 16. British consular agents arranged for the transit across the Isthmus to Panama City, where it connected with the December 3 sailing of the PMSS steamship *John L. Stephens* to San Francisco on December 16.



Figure 6-20. Letter sent from Paris, France to California on October 31, 1853. It was carried by RMSP steamships to Chagres and the PMSS *J.L. Stephens* to San Francisco.

San Francisco Letter Bag Operators, 1853 to 1858

In the long tradition of coffee houses and news rooms in the East, San Francisco letter bag operators maintained bags for the deposit of outbound mail. The need for this service arose because many of the steamers available for carrying mail were without government contracts and their departures, which could be well before the departure of the next contract mail steamer, were not served by the San Francisco post office. Depending on the nearest departure, the letter bag operators delivered their bags of mail to the San Francisco post office, a steamship agent, or directly to a non-contract steamship. Typically, the letters were marked by the letter bag operator to publicize the service.

The most widely known of the San Francisco letter bag operators was Charles Kimball, San Francisco's "Noisy Carrier." Kimball started his newspaper "crier" career in April 1850. By the end of that year, Kimball was printing a city directory from his publishing hall at 77 Long Wharf. In 1853, Kimball expanded his business to include a letter bag service. His Noisy Carriers handstamps and labels exist on eastbound mail in a wide variety of styles, and are known on mail delivered to contract steamships, as well as on letters carried by non-contract steamers via Panama or Nicaragua.

6 - MAIL VIA PANAMA, 1848-1861

Figure 6-21 shows an early example of a Noisy Carriers letter handled through the post office. This letter was deposited with the Noisy Carriers letter bag operator, who added their publicity label at the lower left and took it to the San Francisco post office. It was franked by a 12 cents bisect for the transcontinental postage and postmarked for the May 16, 1853 sailing of the PMSS *John L. Stephens* from San Francisco to Panama City on May 23. After 11 days on the Isthmus, this letter was carried by the USMSC *Illinois* to New York on June 12. The New York post office accepted the letter as fully paid and sent it onward to Wilmington, Delaware.

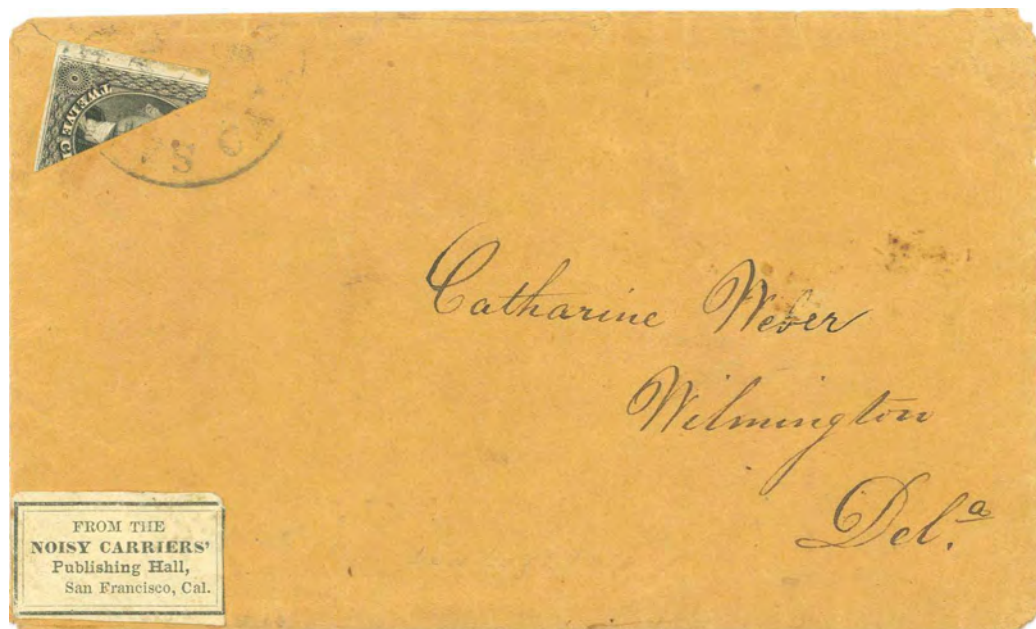


Figure 6-21. Letter collected by Noisy Carriers and postmarked at San Francisco on May 16, 1853. It was carried by PMSS and USMSC steamships to New York.

Late Contract Period, 1855 to 1861

The major events affecting the Panama contract mails in this period were:

- The January 28, 1855 completion of the Panama trans-Isthmus railroad, which reduced Isthmus transit times to four hours.
- The granting of the Butterfield Overland Mail Company contract to carry twice-weekly transcontinental mails starting in September 1858. This led to a decision by the Postmaster General to declare that overland was the default route for transcontinental mails on December 17, 1859.²⁸ Problems on the overland route would cause occasional mails to be re-directed back to the Panama route, but the tide shifted inexorably toward overland at that time.
- The expiration of the USMSC and PMSS mail contracts on September 30, 1859.
- The start of the daily overland mail service on July 1, 1861 which rendered the via Panama route largely irrelevant, except when American Indian conflicts closed the overland route.

The March 3, 1855 Postal Act changed the transcontinental rates, effective April 1. The rate per half ounce was increased to 10 cents and the unpaid surcharge was eliminated. Letters conveyed over 2,500 miles wholly or in part by sea between the United States and foreign countries continued to be charged 20 cents.²⁹

Contract Letters Carried via Panama, 1855 to 1859

The completion of the Panama railroad meant that transit times between San Francisco and New York were reduced to around 25 days.

Figure 6-22 shows how efficient the Panama route had become. This June 20, 1857 edition of the *San Francisco News Letter* was prepaid 10 cents³⁰ and postmarked for the June 20 departure of the PMSS *Golden Age* from San Francisco. The *Golden Age* arrived in Panama City on July 4 and connected across the Isthmus with the USMSC *Star of the West*, leaving that same day. The letter arrived in New York on July 13 – 23 days since leaving San Francisco.

Letter bag operators continued to direct letters via Panama. Figure 6-23 shows an example.

This letter was deposited with the Noisy Carriers letter bag operator, who added the “By Mail Steamer from Noisy Carrier’s” publicity scroll and took it to the San Francisco post office. It was prepaid 10 cents³¹ and postmarked for the December 5, 1857 sailing of the PMSS *Golden Age* to Panama City on December 18. After a one-day trip across the Isthmus, this letter was taken on board the USMSC *Illinois*, which arrived in New York on December 27.



Figure 6-22. Letter postmarked at San Francisco on June 20, 1857 and carried by PMSS and USMSC steamships via Panama to New York.



Figure 6-23. Letter postmarked at San Francisco on December 5, 1857 and carried by the PMSS *Golden Age* to Panama and the USMSC *Northern Light* to New York.

6 - MAIL VIA PANAMA, 1848-1861

Many of the foreign mail conventions at this time added a 5 cents transcontinental surcharge to the U.S. domestic portion of the rates. Figure 6-24 illustrates a February 1856 example from Canada.



Figure 6-24. Letter postmarked at Three Rivers, Lower Canada on February 5, 1856 and carried by USMSC and PMSS steamships via Panama to San Francisco.

This letter was posted on February 5, 1856 in Three Rivers, Lower Canada and prepaid nine pence (equivalent to 15 cents) by three 3d “Beaver” stamps.³² The July 1, 1851 Convention rate³³ between the United States and Canada was 10 cents per half ounce, but mail to California was charged an additional five cents transcontinental surcharge. The letter was carried by the USMSC *George Law* from New York to Aspinwall on March 1. It then connected with the PMSS *Golden Age* to San Francisco on March 14. This is the only known use of the Canadian pence issues to the West Coast.

The exclusivity of the RMSP route via the West Indies for mail from Europe to the Pacific coast was dropped in 1853. In the case of France, an April 14, 1853 Postal Circular permitted the routing of westbound mail by any available route, but it was not until well into 1855 that letters were routed from France to California via New York. Figure 6-25 shows an August 1856 example.



Figure 6-25. Letter postmarked at Levier, France on August 12, 1856 and carried by the Cunard line to New York, the USMSC to Aspinwall and the PMSS to San Francisco.

This letter was prepaid the one franc 30 centimes rate³⁴ via England to the United States at Levier, France on August 12. The French post office rated it “P.F.” (Paid only to the U.S. frontier), and routed the letter via Liverpool for the August 16 sailing of the Cunard steamship *Niagara* to Boston on August 27. Boston sent the letter via New York to catch the September 5 USMSC steamship *Illinois* for Aspinwall. The New York post office charged the letter 10 cents, consisting of the British Convention rate of 5 cents for U.S. domestic postage plus the 5 cents transcontinental surcharge. After crossing the Isthmus in one day, the letter was carried by the PMSS steamship *Golden Age* to San Francisco on September 28.

The End of the 1847 Ocean Mail Contracts in 1859

In March 1859, Vanderbilt’s Atlantic & Pacific Steamship Company started running steamships via Panama, perhaps in anticipation of the September 30, 1859 expiration³⁵ of the USMSC and PMSS mail contracts. The Post Office Department had resolved to significantly reduce the subsidies in those mail contracts and proposed that compensation should be limited to the amount of postage on the mail carried. Since most of the high value first class mail was being carried overland, the USMSC and PMSS declined to carry the mail under those terms, and the USMSC decided to withdraw from the steamship business altogether. Accordingly, the Post Office turned to Vanderbilt, who agreed on October 5, 1859 to carry the mail on both coasts for a greatly reduced subsidy.

The PMSS acquired three steamships to compete with Vanderbilt for the lucrative passenger traffic on the Atlantic coast in July 1859. Peace was declared on February 17, 1860 when they agreed to restrict the PMSS’s operations to the Pacific and those of the Atlantic & Pacific to the Atlantic. The Atlantic & Pacific also sub-contracted the western part of the mail contract to the PMSS at that time.

The Butterfield overland mails had terminated in March-April 1861 due to Civil War-related disturbances along the route, and the daily overland mail did not start until July 1, so the route via Panama carried virtually all transcontinental mails in the April-June 1861 period. Figure 6-26 shows a letter carried on the last regular mail steamer via Panama before the start of the daily overland mail on July 1, 1861.

This triple-weight unpaid letter to France was postmarked on June 21, 1861 for the departure of the PMSS *Sonora* from San Francisco. The *Sonora* arrived at Panama City on July 4, and her mails connected that day at Aspinwall with the Atlantic & Pacific Steamship Co. steamship *North Star*, which arrived in New York on July 13. New York postmarked the letter for the July 17 departure of the Cunard steamer *Persia* for England, and debited 9 cents to France for three



Figure 6-26. Letter postmarked at San Francisco on June 21, 1861 and carried by the PMSS *Sonora* to Panama and the *North Star* to New York.

6 - MAIL VIA PANAMA, 1848-1861

times U.S. inland postage of three cents. The *Persia* arrived in Queenstown on July 26, and this letter was charged triple-weight 24 décimes postage due upon its July 29 arrival in Bordeaux, France.

Non-Contract Mail via Panama

Vanderbilt's first competitive effort on the Panama route was his Independent Opposition Line, from October 1853 to September 1854. His steamships began running from San Francisco on October 16, 1853 and from New York four days later. He did not have a mail contract, but the competition for passenger traffic prompted the USMSC, PMSS and the Accessory Transit Co.³⁶ to buy him out on September 1, 1854. The small amount of eastbound non-contract mail carried by the Independent Opposition Line entered the U.S. mails upon the steamship's arrival at New York.

Figures 6-27 and 6-28 show two letters carried on the last of eight trips by the line. Figure 6-27, with six cents transcontinental postage prepaid, was given to Noisy Carriers in late August 1854. The next PMSS

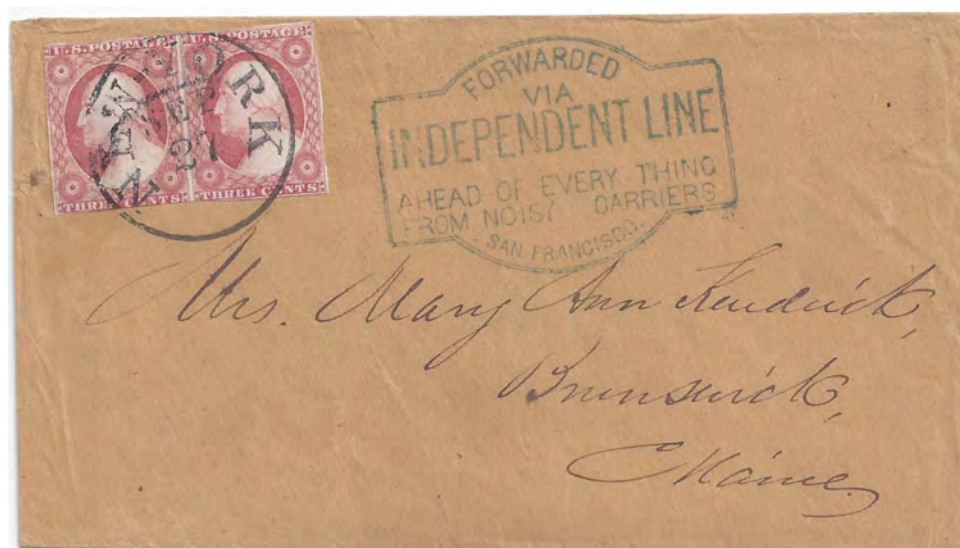


Figure 6-27. Letter carried by the Independent Opposition Line's *Uncle Sam* to Panama and the *Prometheus* to New York on September 27, 1854.

sailing was scheduled for September 1, so the letter was directed to the Independent Line sailing of the *Uncle Sam* on August 31. The advertising handstamp boldly proclaims, "Forwarded via Independent Line Ahead of Everything." The *Uncle Sam* arrived at Panama City on September 15, and her mails were carried across the Isthmus to Aspinwall. Upon arrival there, it was learned that the Independent Line had ceased operations on September 1. Vanderbilt's agent transferred the mail to San Juan del Norte, Nicaragua to connect with Vanderbilt's Nicaragua Line steamer *Prometheus*, which departed on September 18 and arrived in New York on September 25. The letter was deposited in the New York post office, which postmarked it on September 27 and sent it on to Maine.

The letter in Figure 6-28 was taken directly to the Independent Opposition Line steamer *Uncle Sam* at San Francisco with six cents transcontinental postage to Maine prepaid. It was marked for the expected routing via the *Uncle Sam* and the *North Star* but, as seen with Figure 6-27, the *North Star* was no longer in service when this letter arrived in Aspinwall. Accordingly, this letter followed the same route via Nicaragua, and arrived in New York on September 25, 1854.



Figure 6-28. Letter carried by the Independent Opposition Line's *Uncle Sam* to Panama and the *Prometheus* to New York on September 27, 1854.

Transcontinental express companies also carried non-contract mail (usually in contract steamships) as an adjunct to their service of transporting gold dust or other valuables. Their agents accompanied the shipments on the steamships, so it was relatively easy for them to carry mail as well. This type of mail often did not enter the U.S. mails. Companies that provided this service included:

Adams & Co's Express	November 1849 to February 1855
Berford & Co's Express	Fall of 1849 to February 1855
Gregory's Atlantic & Pacific Express	November 1849 to November 1852
Pacific Express	March 1855 to April 1857
Palmer & Co.	March 1850 to March 1851
Wells, Fargo & Co's Express	July 1852 to June 1861

Figure 6-29 shows a November 1849 eastbound envelope carried by Berford & Company. This letter was hand-carried by a Berford & Co. agent, who applied his red "Berford & Co. Letter & Package Express California" handstamp. He took it on the PMSS *California*, which left San Francisco on November 2, 1849 and arrived in Panama City on November 22. After crossing the Isthmus, the agent then boarded the

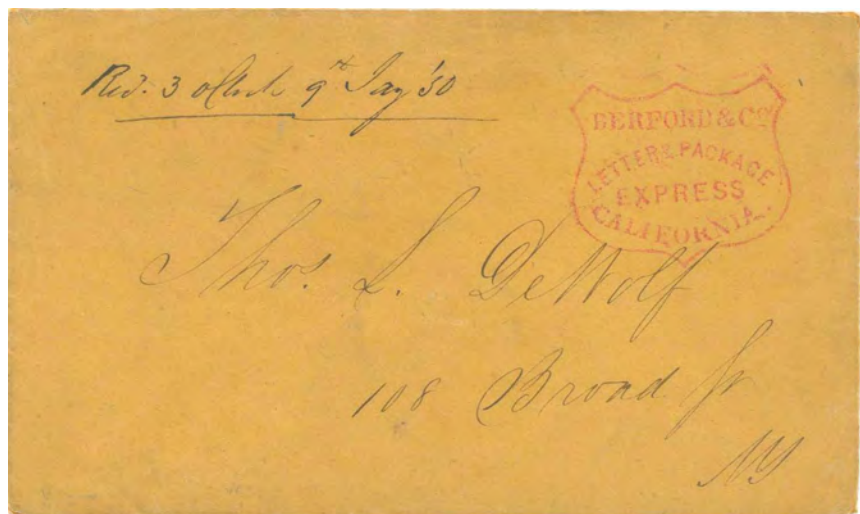


Figure 6-29. Letter carried by a Berford & Co. agent on the PMSS *California* to Panama and the USMSC *Falcon* to New York on January 8, 1850.

6 - MAIL VIA PANAMA, 1848-1861

USMSC steamship *Falcon*, which left Chagres on November 27 and arrived at Havana on January 3. He immediately boarded the USMSC *Ohio*, which left Havana that day and arrived in New York on January 8. The following day, the letter was delivered to the recipient, per the “Rec’d 3 oclock 9th Jany ‘50” docket. No U.S. postage was paid on this letter.

Figure 6-30 shows an 1851 westbound example carried by Gregory’s Atlantic and Pacific Express.

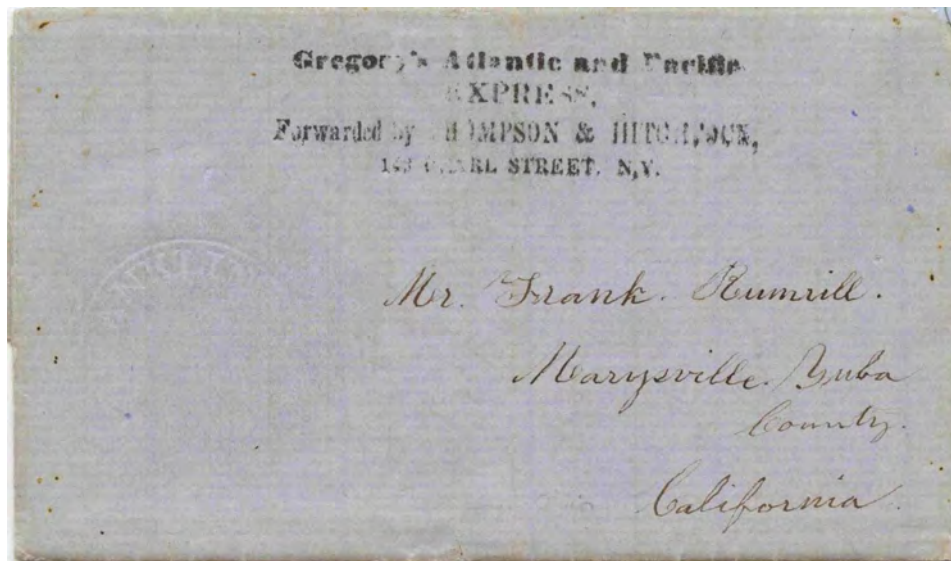


Figure 6-30. Letter carried by a Gregory’s Express agent on the USMSC *Cherokee* to Chagres and the PMSS *Columbus* to San Francisco on December 12, 1851.

This letter was datelined October 29, 1851 from Franklin, Ohio and sent under cover to Gregory’s Atlantic & Pacific Express in New York. It left New York aboard the USMSC steamship *Cherokee* on November 6 and arrived at Chagres on November 17. After a trip across the Isthmus, it connected at Panama City with the PMSS steamship *Columbus*, which left on November 26 and arrived in San Francisco on December 12. Gregory’s Express Company then arranged to deliver it to their agent at Marysville, California completely outside of the U.S. mails. The addressee, Frank Rumrill, was a noted expressman in his own right. He began as agent for Gregory’s Express at Marysville from March 1851 to October 1852, before becoming the Marysville agent for Wells Fargo & Company until August 1853. He then set out on his own, while maintaining close ties with Wells Fargo, and started F. Rumrill & Co.’s Northern Express, servicing the northern gold mines around Downieville. He sold his express company to Wells Fargo in April 1855.

This ability to avoid U.S. postage was soon prohibited. On January 13, 1854, the U. S. Special Postal Agent in California gave notice to the express companies that they must have U.S. postage prepaid on letter mail in an amount equivalent to the postage if carried in the government mails.

Endnotes

1. Detailed Panama route sailing tables can be found in Appendix C. This sailing actually left New York on December 26, 1848.
2. The *Isthmus*, formerly the U.S.S. *Scorpion*, did not return to New York after this trip to Chagres. Instead, the *Falcon* handled the New York-New Orleans-Havana circuit, connecting at Havana with the *Isthmus*, which handled the Havana-Chagres circuit until it was taken off this service after June 1849.

3. San Francisco manuscript postmarks were used from March 1849 to June 1849. In June, the post office transitioned to straight-line postmarks, so letters are known with both manuscript and straight-line postmarks in June. The straight-line postmark was used from June 1849 to August 1849, when the post office transitioned to a circular datestamp. Both straight-line and circular datestamps are known with August 1849 dates.
4. The arrival date of the *Callao* in Panama City was established by a letter owned by Theron Wierenga and datelined May 5, 1849 from Panama City, which reported that, "...today, a Peruvian Brig arrived here by way of Mazatlan from St. Francisco bringing the U.S. Mail at \$10,000 the trip – a passenger on board with \$100,000 in Gold – the Steamer Cal. lies high & dry at St. F.-co, with only her Capt. on board and offering \$3,000 per month for an engineer..."
5. One of the two operating USMSC steamship, the *Isthmus*, was taken off the route after June 1849, leaving only the *Falcon* to service the entire route between New York and Chagres.
6. The 1848 U.S.-Great Britain postal convention set a total rate of 24 cents per half ounce, consisting of 5 cents U.S. inland postage plus 16 cents packet postage (going to whichever country provided the packet service) plus 3 cents British inland postage. For transcontinental letters, the U.S. postage was 40 cents instead of five cents, resulting in a total rate of 59 cents.
7. Forty cents U.S. postage plus 16 cents American packet postage.
8. By May 1850, the mail agents accompanied most mails all the way to San Francisco, instead of just to Panama City. Wierenga, *Gold Rush Agents*, pages 60-63.
9. Information provided in Wierenga, *Gold Rush Agents*, page 112.
10. The 50-person Stephens-Townsend-Murphy overland party left Council Bluffs, Iowa on May 22, 1844 with mountain man Caleb Greenwood. They were the first overland party to cross at Donner Pass and the first to bring wagons over the Sierra Nevada Mountains. They arrived safely in December 1844.
11. Type I has the "&" centered between the "N" and "S" while type II has the "&" noticeably closer to the "N." (Wierenga, *Gold Rush Mail Agents*, page 101).
12. Wierenga, *Gold Rush Agents*, chapter V.
13. The 1848 U.S.-Great Britain Postal Treaty permitted unpaid mail, and the postage for each country was remitted through accounting noted on the way bills.
14. One English penny equaled two U.S. cents, so 90 cents would convert to 45d, or three shillings nine pence. Double packet postage of 32 cents plus double British inland of six cents converted to 19d, or one shilling seven pence. The novelty of mail from California must have blinded the British post office to the double U.S. inland charge on this letter.
15. The Royal Mail Steamship Company (RMSP) established a transit service for mail across the Isthmus of Panama in 1846, utilizing a combination of canoes and mules. This was designed to connect the Pacific Steam Navigation Company steamships running along the Pacific coast of South America with the RMSP steamships running between England and Chagres.
16. Letters from San Francisco could only be carried on this route if they were sent under cover to a Panama City agent, who would put the letter into the British mails. A few covers are known routed this way.
17. Per the September 12, 1848 French Postal Circular #27, effective September 15. This was a composite rate that arose from the September 15, 1848 Additional Articles to the 1843 France-Great Britain Convention, which set bulk credits from France to Great Britain at 5 shillings 4d per ounce (16 décimes per letter), and French domestic postage of 50 centimes per 7.5 grams, set out in the French Postal Circular #14, effective August 1, 1849.
18. Per the December 30, 1850 French Postal Circular #51, effective January 1. This 28 décimes rate was composed of 7 shillings 4.5d per ounce (about 23 décimes per 7.5 gram letter) bulk credit from France to

6 - MAIL VIA PANAMA, 1848-1861

Great Britain per the January 1, 1851 Additional Articles to the 1843 Convention, and 75 cents per ounce bulk credit from Great Britain to the United States (for domestic and Pacific coast steamship postage) per the April 24, 1850 U.S. Post Office Order. Mail was carried in closed bags to San Francisco.

19. Per the March 6, 1851 French Postal Circular #57.

20. Coburn, *Letters of Gold*, page 85.

21. Boxed 40 and 80 rate marking are known used at San Francisco from October 1849 to February 1850.

22. Wierenga, *Gold Rush Mail Agents*, page 254.

23. The San Francisco postmaster also sent a special contract mail on the Empire City Line's *New Orleans*, which departed from San Francisco on October 5, 1850.

24. A number of 12 cent bisects are known used from Sonora, California in 1852, but they do not relate to the later San Francisco shortage of three cent stamps.

25. James Allen, "Bisected 1c, 3c and 12c 1851 Stamps: When Were They Legal?" *Chronicle* No. 239, Vol. 65, No. 3 (August 2013), pages 260-261.

26. Per the September 1, 1851 French Postal Circular #67, arising from reduced bulk credits from Great Britain to the United States of 50 cents per ounce (reflecting lower transcontinental postage) as published in the July 3, 1851 U.S. Postal Order.

27. Vertical pairs of the 1852 issue 25 centimes blue and the 1853 issue 1 franc carmine.

28. The notice was received in California on January 20 and implemented on January 23, 1860.

29. In December 1856, the distance between New York and Aspinwall was re-assessed to be less than 2,500 miles, so that rate became 10 cents per half ounce.

30. The franking is an 1855 10 cents type III green stamp.

31. An 1851 one cent type IV blue stamp and a strip of three of 1851 three cents dull red stamps.

32. These are 3d orange-red stamps on thin paper from the 1852 issue of Canada.

33. The 10 cents Convention rate was superseded on August 1, 1864 and the transcontinental surcharge was also abandoned at that time.

34. The franking consists of a 10 centimes bistre, two 20 centimes blue and an 80 centimes carmine of France's 1853 issue. The 13 décimes rate per 7.5 grams via England was effective from December 1, 1851 to December 31, 1856 and paid the postage to the United States border only, since France and the United States had no direct postal relations. U.S. domestic postage had to be collected from the recipient.

35. The Panama contracts, which were originally scheduled to expire on September 30, 1858, had been extended by one year in a June 16, 1858 agreement with the Navy and Post Office Departments.

36. The Accessory Transit Company held the passenger and mail transit rights across the Isthmus of Nicaragua, as described in Chapter Eight.



Chapter Seven

Central Overland Mail, 1850-1861

Chapter Five described the opening of private and semi-private mail services over the Central Route. Starting in 1850, the U.S. Post Office Department began to extend its overland contract mail route system westward. Figure 7-1 shows the three segments which ultimately received mail contracts along the Central Route, and the alternate California route between Los Angeles and Salt Lake City.

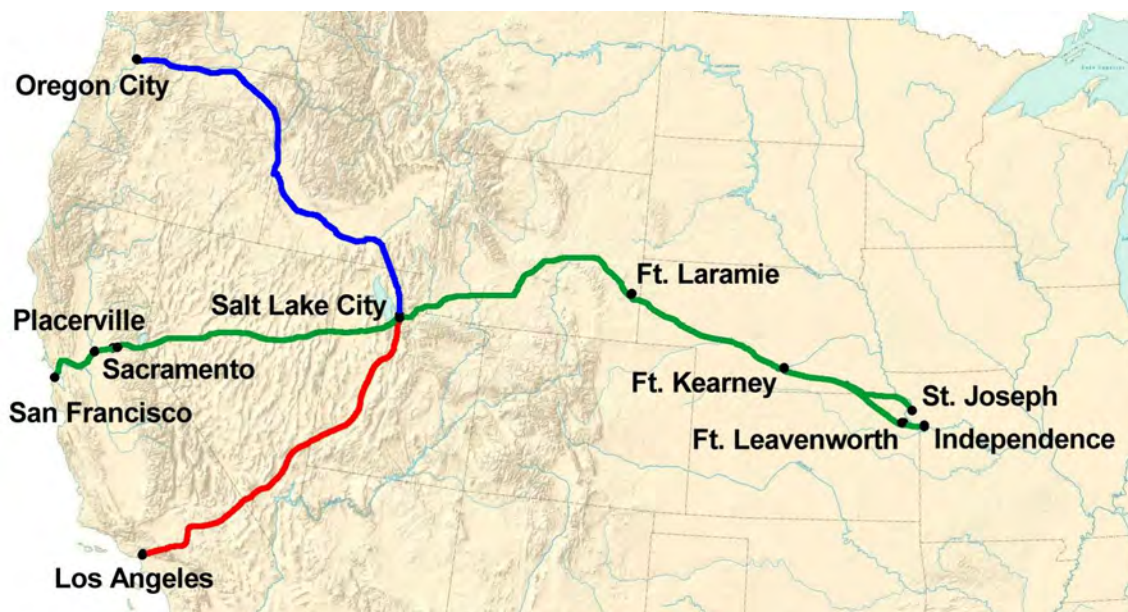


Figure 7-1. Figure 7-1. Map of the Central Route segments, consisting of Salt Lake City-Independence; Salt Lake City-Sacramento/Los Angeles; and Salt Lake City-Oregon.

Salt Lake City (in today's Utah) was the central element in this route system, and no single contract linked the east and west coasts over this route until the start of the daily overland contract mail service in July 1861. This chapter will examine the various mail contracts along the Central Route in chronological order: between Salt Lake City and Missouri, between Salt Lake City and California, and between Salt Lake City and Oregon.

Contract Route between Salt Lake City and Missouri

Table 7-1 summarizes the mail contracts between Salt Lake City and Missouri that are described in this chapter. Detailed schedules and many actual trip times for these contracts can be found in Appendix D.

Table 7-1 – Mail Contracts between Salt Lake City and Missouri, 1850-1861

Dates of Operation	Contractor	Route No.	Missouri Terminus	Contracted Service
Aug 1, 1850 to Jun 30, 1854	Woodson	4965	Independence	Monthly in 30 days
Jul 1, 1854 to Nov 30, 1856	Magraw	8911	Independence	Monthly in 30 days
Dec 1, 1856 to Jan 31, 1857	(none)			Individual trip contracts
Feb 2, 1857 to Jun 30, 1857	Kimball	8911	Independence	Monthly in 30 days
Jul 1, 1857 to Sep 30, 1857	(none)			No service
Oct 1, 1857 to Mar 30, 1858	Miles	8911	Independence	Monthly in 30 days
May 1, 1858 to Jun 30, 1859	Hockaday	8911	St. Joseph	Weekly in 22 days
Jul 1, 1859 to Jun 30, 1861	COC&PP	8911	St. Joseph	Twice-monthly in 22 days

Woodson Contract, 1850 to 1854

On May 20, 1850, the U.S. post office solicited proposals for a mail route between Oregon City and Independence, Missouri via Salt Lake City. The accepted proposal from James Brown and Samuel Woodson was only between Salt Lake City and Independence, and included monthly trips in about 30 days each way. All trips were to leave on the first of each month and arrive by the last of each month, with operations beginning on August 1, 1850 from Independence. In December 1850, Brown died, so the contract was subsequently transferred in its entirety to Woodson.

Until way stations were established along the route, Woodson had difficulty adhering to the 30-day schedule. He encountered particular difficulty on the Fort Laramie-Salt Lake City section of the route, so he sub-contracted that portion of the route to Feramor Little, starting on August 1, 1851.

Feramor Little, Mormon Mail Carrier, 1820-1887



- Born in New York to the sister of Brigham Young
- Left New York in 1843 for Nauvoo, Illinois
- Migrated to Salt Lake City in September 1850
- Obtained SLC-Ft. Laramie mail contract in 1851

- Co-founded Deseret National Bank in 1872
- Mayor of Salt Lake City from 1876 to 1882

Throughout this period, both Woodson and Little were often unable to negotiate the mountain snows during the winter months, and many trips did not get through to their destination. Appendix D describes many of the difficulties encountered.

After severe interruptions in service from Salt Lake City during the winters of 1850-51 and 1851-52, the Salt Lake City postmaster sent the December-March eastbound mails in 1852-53 and 1853-54 via San Pedro (the port of Los Angeles), California. This mail was carried down the Old Spanish Trail under the Chorpenning contract (see

below for more information about this contract), and then carried east by steamships via Panama to New York. Fewer than 40 percent of the trips for which sufficient information is available were completed within the contractual 30 days. This non-performance apparently convinced the post office not to renew the contract for Route 4965 after June 30, 1854.

Examples of mail carried during this period are rare. Figure 7-2 shows an example postmarked at “Salt Lake Deseret” on November 19, 1850.

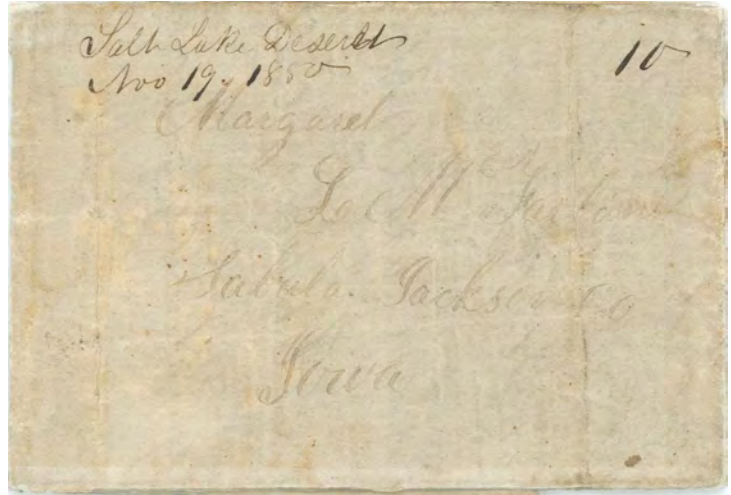


Figure 7-2. Letter postmarked “Salt Lake Deseret” on November 19, 1850 and carried under the Woodson contract to Independence.

This is the earliest known letter from this period, and was scheduled to be carried on the third eastbound Woodson contract trip. However, the severity of the 1850-51 winter snows caused the November-April mails to be held until the May 1, 1851 departure from Salt Lake City. Accordingly, this letter arrived in Independence around May 31, fully six months after it was posted in Salt Lake City. It was written by an emigrant to California who had reached Salt Lake too late to cross the snowbound mountain passes to California. It was rated 10 cents due for the postage to Sabula, Iowa.

Figure 7-3 illustrates a July 1, 1851 letter from Salt Lake City to New Jersey. This letter received the new Salt Lake City U.T. (Utah Territory) italic straightline postmark which replaced the series of manuscript postmarks used previously. The Salt Lake City post office was apparently confused by the new July 1, 1851 postal rates. This letter was initially rated for six cents due, reflecting the new over 3,000 mile transcontinental rate, but later re-rated for five cents due, reflecting the correct unpaid rate for less than 3,000 miles to New Jersey.

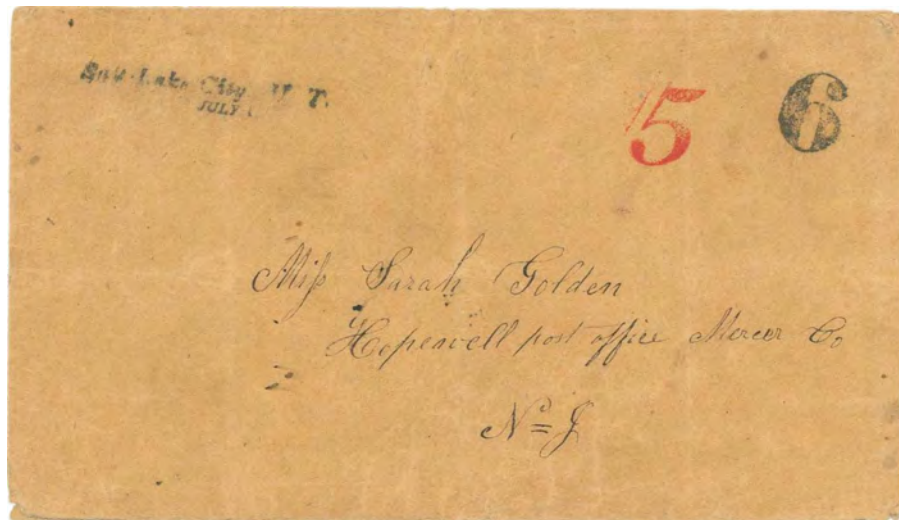


Figure 7-3. Letter postmarked Salt Lake City U.T. on July 1, 1851 and carried under the Woodson contract to Independence.

Mail was collected and delivered along the route at Fort Laramie and Fort Kearny. Eastbound trips were expected to leave Laramie around the 15th of each month, and to take another fifteen days to reach Independence.

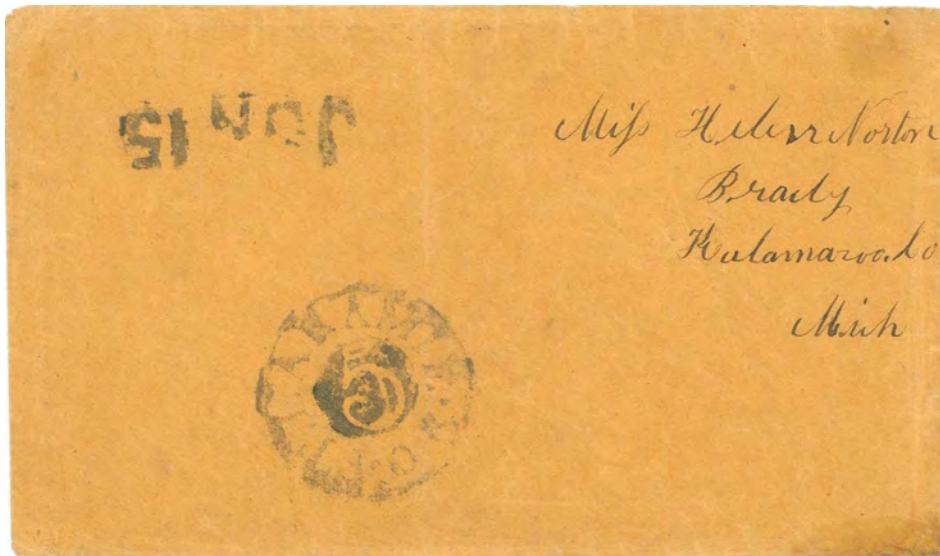


Figure 7-4. Letter postmarked at Fort Laramie O.R. (Oregon Route) on June 15, 1852 and carried under the Woodson contract to Independence.

Figure 7-4 shows a June 1852 example sent from Fort Laramie to Michigan. This letter was posted at Fort Laramie and postmarked for the expected June 15, 1852 departure of the Woodson mail carrier from the fort. The postmaster used three hand-carved markings: an undated circular "Ft Laramie O.R." (Oregon Route),² the straight-line date, and a negative "5" due. The due is a separate handstamp, but was carefully positioned in the center of the Fort

Laramie circular marking. The June mail, however, left twelve days late from Salt Lake City, and probably reached Fort Laramie around June 23. This letter arrived in Independence around July 8.

Figure 7-5 shows an 1852 cover that made a lengthy round trip to and from Fort Laramie. This letter was postmarked in San Francisco on August 15, 1852 and rated "Paid 6" for the transcontinental postage to



Figure 7-5. Letter postmarked at San Francisco on August 15, 1852 and sent via Panama to Fort Laramie. It was then forwarded back to North Carolina.

Fort Laramie. Endorsed "via Independence Missouri" it was carried by the PMSS steamer *Panama* which left San Francisco on August 15 and arrived in Panama on August 31. After a trip across the Isthmus of Panama, it was taken by the USMSC steamer *Illinois* to New York on September 12. It was then sent to Independence, Missouri to catch the October 1 Woodson mail, which arrived at Fort Laramie around October 15. It was delivered there to John Tull, who re-addressed it to Wilmington, North Carolina. It was then postmarked "Ft Laramie O.R." on

November 15, reflecting the expected departure of the mail for Independence, and was rated for five cents due after crossing out the San Francisco "Paid 6." Heavy snow and frigid temperatures between Fort

Laramie and Fort Kearny, however, prevented the mail from leaving Fort Laramie until January 12. It finally arrived back in Independence on February 4, and reached North Carolina in mid-February.

Figure 7-5 also shows that the preferred route from the West Coast to Independence and Fort Laramie was by steamships via Panama. By 1852, it was clear that weather problems along the Central Route were causing significant delays in the overland mails, and that the Panama route was much more reliable. The endorsement “Fort Laramie via Independence Missouri” was also in conformance with a Post Office directive. The March 17, 1853 Hannibal *Missouri Courier* observed that:

Generally, however, the mistake is made in directing letters, “Fort Laramie Oregon Route.” In the haste with which these letters are distributed at the various offices in the United States, the eye catching the word “Oregon,” it is at once supposed that it is to be sent by the California steamers, and off it goes in that direction. To ensure its getting to Fort Laramie, nothing more is necessary than to direct it, “Fort Laramie, via Independence Mo.

Figure 7-6 shows a June 1852 letter from Fort Kearny (in today’s Nebraska) to New Jersey. This letter was datelined “Fort Kearny June 15th/52” and posted at the fort. It was prepaid three cents postage to New Jersey and postmarked with the fancy “Ft Kearny O.R.” (Oregon Route) spread eagle postmark. A manuscript “June 22/52” was added to the postmark, reflecting the expected departure date of the mail for Independence. This letter was carried in the same mail as Figure 7-4, which was late in leaving Salt Lake City and which reached Fort Kearny around July 1.



Figure 7-6. Letter postmarked at Fort Kearny O.R. (Oregon Route) on June 22, 1852 and carried under the Woodson contract to Independence.

Magraw Contract, 1854 to 1856

The replacement contract route for the Salt Lake City-Independence mail service was designated Route 8911, but was in all material aspects unchanged from Route 4965. On May 10, 1854, the Post Office Department selected the proposal from William Magraw and John Reeside, effective July 1. Trips were monthly, leaving Salt Lake City and Independence on the first of each month, and arriving on the last day of each month.

7 - CENTRAL OVERLAND MAIL, 1850-1861

The contractors made the necessary investments in livestock and twelve way stations, and began operations optimistically. Unfortunately for them, Fort Laramie's Lieutenant Richard Grattan of the 6th U.S. Infantry led 29 soldiers from Company G into a conflict with Indian tribes that wiped out his command on August 19, 1854. The "Grattan Massacre" ignited full conflict with the Plains Indians along the Independence-Salt Lake City mail route from Fort Kearny to South Pass. Way stations were attacked and destroyed, and at least one mail party was attacked. Unable to fully protect trading posts and the mail way stations, General William Harney ordered their abandonment on September 18, 1855. The loss of the way stations and the increased need for security with the mail parties created a large financial burden on Magraw and Reeside, so they petitioned the U.S. Government for relief. Accordingly, additional compensation was granted to the contractors and their contract was annulled on August 18, 1856, effective November 30.

Much of the mail carried under this contract was routed via Los Angeles, as was the case with Route 4965. The contractor for the Salt Lake-California route, George Chorpenning, presented claims to Congress for having carried much of the Salt Lake City-Independence mail. He asserted that he carried all or a portion of the westbound Magraw mails in July 1855, February-May 1856, and July-August 1856. He also claimed to carry eastbound Magraw mails of January 1855, July 1855 and February 1856.

Magraw's performance was no better than Woodson's during 1850-54. Fewer than a third of the trips for which there is sufficient information were performed within the 30-day contractual period. Figure 7-7 shows a September 1855 letter from Salt Lake City to Scotland.



Figure 7-7. Letter postmarked at Salt Lake City on September 1, 1855 and carried under the Magraw contract to Independence.

This letter was prepaid the 24 cents rate to Great Britain in cash and postmarked with the new style of circular "Salt Lake City Utah T." (Utah Territory) postmark on September 1, 1855. The September mail left Salt Lake City that day and arrived in Independence around September 30. This letter was then carried by steamboat to St Louis and by train to New York, where it caught the American Collins Line steamer *Pacific*, departing on October 17 and arriving in Liverpool on October 28. In confirmation of this, the letter was marked "Paid in America Liverpool 28 OC 55," and sent onward to Scotland. The red "3" is the U.S. credit to England for their internal postage.

Figure 7-8 shows a January 1855 letter from Salt Lake City that was routed via Los Angeles. This letter was endorsed “via California” and postmarked at the Salt Lake City post office on January 5, 1855. It was franked at a phantom rate of nine cents by a three cents Nesbitt stamped envelope and a pair of 1851 three cents stamps. The Salt Lake City postmaster apparently based his rate calculation on the three cents rate to California (under three thousand miles) plus the six cents transcontinental rate from California to New Jersey. It was given to the Chorpenning mail carrier who left on January 5 and arrived in Los Angeles about thirty days later. It was then taken by coastal steamship to San Francisco, where it caught the Pacific

Figure 7-8. Letter postmarked at Salt Lake City on January 5, 1855 and directed to the Chorpenning California route because the Independence route was closed by snow.

Mail Steamship Co. steamer *Golden Age*, which departed on February 16 and arrived in Panama on March 2. After crossing the Isthmus of Panama by train, it caught the United States Mail Steamship Co. steamer *Illinois* to New York on March 12. By contrast, Magraw’s letter carrier left Salt Lake City on January 2, but returned on January 18, reporting that the trail was too unsafe for travel.

Figure 7-9 shows an extraordinary cover carried in part by Magraw to a soldier in Company G of the 6th U.S. Infantry at Fort Laramie.



Figure 7-9. Letter posted on March 26, 1854 in Morpeth, England and mis-directed to Oregon. It was carried to Fort Laramie via Salt Lake City.

7 - CENTRAL OVERLAND MAIL, 1850-1861

This letter was initially prepaid one shilling (the correct rate via Liverpool to New York) at Morpeth, England on March 26, 1854, but was stopped at Liverpool where a clerk made the mistaken judgement that it was addressed to Oregon. All Oregon mail was to be sent by Royal Mail Steam Packets (RMSP) from Southampton to Panama, but the cost on that route was two shillings four pence. Accordingly, the letter was returned to Morpeth for the additional one shilling four pence and then routed to the RMSP steamer *Magdalena*, which left on April 3 and arrived in St Thomas on April 18. The RMSP branch steamer *Clyde* then took the letter to Chagres, New Granada on April 24. After crossing the Isthmus of Panama, it was carried by the Pacific Mail Steamship Co. steamer *John L. Stephens* to San Francisco on May 16. It was then transferred in a closed mailbag to Oregon, where the mistaken routing was noticed and the letter was returned to San Francisco, receiving the rare boxed “Missent” marking.

The San Francisco postmark was dated for the June 1 departure of the Chorpenning mail to Salt Lake City. The latter apparently missed the July 8 Magraw trip from Salt Lake City to Independence, but did connect with the next Magraw trip, which left on August 1 and arrived at Fort Laramie around August 13. At that time, Company G was away from the fort with Lieutenant Grattan on its fateful mission with the Plains Indians and, as noted above, was wiped out on August 19. The addressee of this letter must have been with that group, since the letter bears a final English marking, “Sent Back to England Without a Reason for Non-Delivery.”

Kimball Contract, 1857 to 1857

The annulment of the Magraw contract caused the Post Office Department to once again solicit proposals for Route 8911, this time for December 1, 1856 to November 30, 1860. On October 16, it accepted the bid from Hiram Kimball of Salt Lake City for monthly service between Salt Lake City and Independence. Trips were to leave from Independence on the first of each month and from Salt Lake City on the second of each month. All trips were to arrive at their destination by the last day of each month, in about 30 days.

Kimball was required to accept the contract by December 1, but the Post Office Department chose to send his contract by the overland mails. At that time, the mails to Salt Lake City were severely disrupted. The November 1856 mail from Independence (which included the Kimball contract) was held at the Platte River Bridge over the winter, and did not arrive in Salt Lake City until March 24, 1857. Ironically, Kimball learned that he had been awarded the contract on January 6, 1857 by letter via Los Angeles. Accordingly, he commenced his service in February, even though he still had not received the actual contract. Nonetheless, he had not conformed to the requirements of the bid (through no fault of his own), and a rising tide of ant-Mormonism prompted the Post Office Department to annul his award on June 24, 1857. Notice of this was received in Salt Lake City sometime in July.

Prior to Kimball’s commencement of service, the Salt Lake City postmaster was forced into stopgap measures. He hired Feramorz Little and Ephraim Hanks to carry the November-December 1856 mails for single trip compensation of \$1,500. They left on December 10 and, after a difficult 79-day trip through the mountain snows, arrived at Independence on February 27, 1857. The Salt Lake postmaster then contracted with John Kerr for the January mails, but he was forced to return to Salt Lake City, so much of the eastbound mail was forwarded via California. The Independence postmaster faced an even larger problem with the westbound mails since there were no Kimball mail carriers in Independence. He sent the May mail to Fort Laramie with John Murdock, who delivered it to O.P. Rockwell for onward transmission to Salt Lake City. Little and Hanks then took the June mail on their return trip to Salt Lake City. Kimball was ultimately granted compensation for five half trips from Salt Lake City to Independence from February to June 1857, but was not recognized for two successful westbound trips.

Very little mail is known from this period. Figure 7-10 illustrates a November 1856 Salt Lake City letter carried by Feramorz Little and Ephraim Hanks. This letter was prepaid the 24 cents rate to England by a pair of 1851 issue 12 cents stamps on November 1, 1856 in Salt Lake City. It was carried in the arduous Feramorz Little overland mail to Independence, which left Salt Lake City on December 10 and arrived on February 27.



Figure 7-10. Letter postmarked at Salt Lake City on November 1, 1856 and carried by Feramorz Little through the mountain snows to Independence.

It took about two weeks¹ to reach New York from Independence, so this letter missed the March 14 sailing of the American Collins Line steamer *Ericsson*. The next American packet sailing was on April 4, so the letter was postmarked in New York on that day, and was directed to the American Havre Line steamer *Arago*, which arrived in Southampton, England on April 17. New York marked the letter for a 3 cents credit to England for their inland postage, and England marked the letter "U.S. Pkt" to indicate that it was paid only to England. It was then forwarded unpaid via Belgium and Prussia to St Petersburg, Russia. England collected 4 pence transit postage through a debit to Prussia (not marked), and the Aachen exchange office marked it for a double-weight 14 silbergroschen (8sgr due to England plus 6sgr Prussian transit) debit to Russia. 14sgr was equivalent to 46 Russian kopeks, so a Russian clerk marked the letter for 66 kopeks due (the 46 kopeks for Prussia plus 20 kopeks internal postage) on the reverse, and sent it to St Petersburg, where it arrived on April 13 (April 25 Gregorian calendar).³

Figure 7-11 shows a January 1857 letter from Salt Lake City to England.



Figure 7-11. Letter postmarked at Salt Lake City on January 2, 1857 and directed to the California route because of delays on the Independence route.

This letter was endorsed "via California" and prepaid the 29 cents West Coast rate to England on January 2, 1857 in Salt Lake City. Had it been sent via Independence, the rate would have been 24

7 - CENTRAL OVERLAND MAIL, 1850-1861

cents, as in Figure 7-10. It was taken by the Chorpenning mail carrier on the Old Spanish Trail to Los Angeles, where it arrived around February 1. It was then taken by coastal steamer to San Francisco, where it caught the Pacific Mail Steamship Co. steamer *John L. Stephens*, departing on February 20 and arriving at Panama City on March 5. After crossing the Isthmus of Panama to Aspinwall, the letter caught the U.S. Mail Steamship Co. steamer *George Law* to New York on March 16. The New York foreign mail office directed the letter to the British Cunard steamer *Persia* so it credited England with 19 cents, representing 16 cents packet postage and three cents British inland postage. The *Persia* left New York on March 18 and arrived in Liverpool on March 28, where the letter was struck with the red “America Paid Liverpool” postmark of that date.

Meanwhile, the Utah Expedition of 1857-58 was brewing. Federal troops began to gather at Fort Leavenworth in May 1857 to suppress a perceived Mormon rebellion. The first troops left Fort Leavenworth for Utah Territory on July 18, 1857 and their movement was known in Salt Lake City within a week. The Mormons organized for the defense of their territory, burning Fort Bridger in early October 1857 and evacuating Salt Lake City from May 10 to June 30, 1858. Prevented by heavy snows from reaching Salt Lake City, the Federals wintered from December 1857 to March 1858 at Camp Scott, which was built near the site of the destroyed Fort Bridger. The war was ended by negotiation in June 1858, and the Federal troops moved through Salt Lake City to Camp Floyd, about 50 miles southwest of Salt Lake City. This expedition interrupted direct mail communications between Missouri and Salt Lake City from July 1857 to June 1858.

Miles Contract, 1857 to 1858

The Post Office Department turned to underbidders to fulfill the unfinished portion of the Kimball contract, selecting Stephen B. Miles under similar terms as in the Kimball contract. He was to begin service on October 1, 1857 and the contract was scheduled to terminate on June 30, 1858.

The Utah Expedition played havoc with Miles’ mail contract. All mail to Salt Lake City after June 1857 was diverted to Camp Scott and delivered to Salt Lake City in June 1858. Also, no mail from Salt Lake City was carried on the Independence route during this period. In the meantime, Miles fulfilled his contract by carrying mails to and from Camp Scott, but was unable to maintain a regular eastbound schedule. The Federal army in Utah had a need for increased communication, so the Post Office Department discontinued Miles’ monthly contract on March 30, 1858 to replace it with a more frequent schedule.

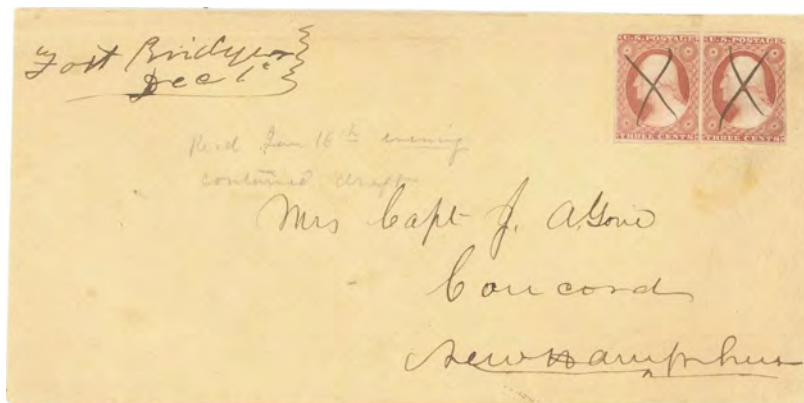


Figure 7-12. Letter postmarked at Fort Bridger, Utah Territory on December 1, 1857 and carried under the Miles contract to Independence.

The newly appointed postmaster for Salt Lake City, Hiram Morrell, accompanied the Federal troops to Utah in 1857, but was prevented from assuming his post in Salt Lake City until June 1858. In the meantime, he established a temporary post office at Camp Scott, and used Fort Bridger postmarks.⁴ Figure 7-12 shows a December 1857 example.

This letter received the provisional manuscript Fort Bridger postmark on December 1, 1857 and was prepaid the double-weight rate to New Hampshire by a pair of 1851 issue three cents stamps. It was sent by Captain Jesse Augustus Gove of the 10th U.S. Infantry at Camp Scott, and was docketed as received in New Hampshire on January 16, 1858. Gove later became Colonel of the 22nd Massachusetts Volunteer Regiment during the Civil War, and was killed in action at Gaine's Mill on June 27, 1862.

The Fort Bridger manuscript postmark was replaced by a provisional straight-line postmark in early 1858. Figure 7-13 shows an example to New York City. This letter, from Captain (and Adjutant to Colonel

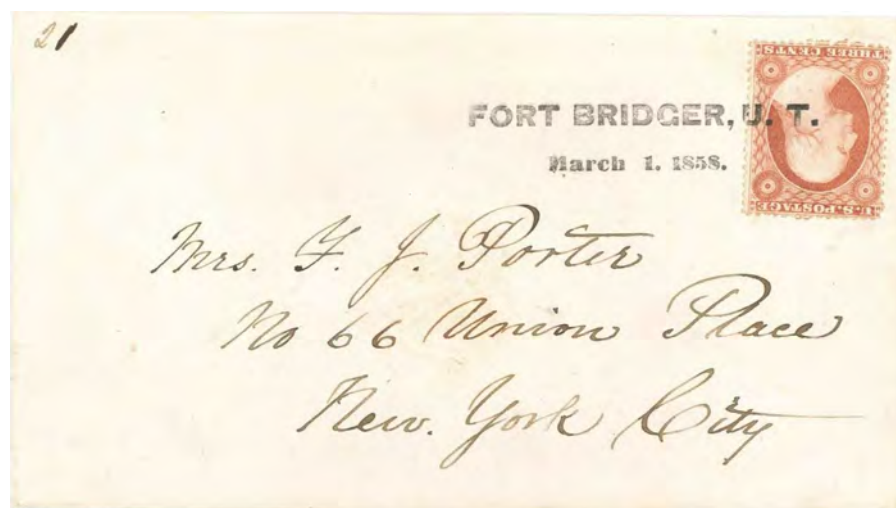


Figure 7-13. Letter postmarked at Fort Bridger U.T. on March 1, 1858 and carried under the Miles contract to Independence.

Albert Sidney Johnson) Fitz John Porter was prepaid with an 1857 issue three cents stamp and postmarked on March 1, 1858. It was carried in Miles' last mail to Independence. Porter later commanded the 5th Corps of the Army of the Potomac during the battles of Second Manassas and Antietam during the Civil War.

Hockaday/COC&PP Contract, 1858 to 1861

Departing from the normal procedure of advertising for route proposals, the Post Office Department opened direct negotiations with John Hockaday for a weekly mail service between St Joseph, Missouri and Salt Lake City. On April 8, 1858, Hockaday signed a two and a half year contract for a service leaving each Saturday morning from St Joseph and Salt Lake City, effective May 1. Trips were to take 22 days each way. St Joseph was chosen as the new eastern terminus for Route 8911 because of the impending completion of the Hannibal-St Joseph railroad. Construction was underway from each endpoint and stagecoaches ran between the railheads until the February 13, 1859 completion of the railroad. This reduced the transit time between St Joseph and the East by as much as five days.

James Bromley carried the first mail from St Joseph on Saturday, May 1, 1858 and arrived at Camp Scott, Utah (the temporary western terminus of the mail line) on May 27. He left with the first eastbound mail on May 29. Regular weekly service began on May 22, and Salt Lake City replaced the Camp Scott terminus in late June 1858.

7 - CENTRAL OVERLAND MAIL, 1850-1861

In 1859, the Post Office Department began considering less frequent service on this route to reduce expenses, and ordered a reduction to semi-monthly service, effective July 1. Departures were adjusted to every other Tuesday from St Joseph and every other Friday from Salt Lake City. Contractual transit time remained at 22 days. In response, Hockaday sold his interest in the mail contract on May 15, 1859 to the Leavenworth & Pikes Peak Express Company (LPPE). Following the failure of the LPPE, the contract was transferred in February 1860 to the Central Overland California & Pikes Peak Express Co. (COC&PP), which had absorbed the assets of the LPPE. In all significant respects, the operation of the mail route remained unchanged during these transitions. In fact, it continued to operate under the Hockaday & Smoot name to avoid conflict with the LPPE express business. The Post Office Department did not acknowledge the transfer to the COC&PP until November 6, 1860. When the COC&PP contract for Route 8911 expired on November 30, 1860, the Post Office Department extended it indefinitely, leaving any final decisions to the new Postmaster General in the Lincoln administration. This interim solution persisted until July 1, 1861 when the daily overland contract mail service began running on the Central Route. At that point, Route 8911 ceased to exist.

Not much Hockaday contract mail has survived, due to the short duration of the contract and the diversion of virtually all through transcontinental overland mail to the Butterfield southern route. Figure 7-14 shows a December 1858 example from Fort Laramie to Washington, D.C.



Figure 7-14. Letter postmarked at Fort Laramie N.T. (Nebraska Territory) on December 26, 1858 and carried under the Hockaday contract to St Joseph.

This letter is datelined “Fort Laramie Neb. Terr. 26 Dec 58”^s and was written by First Lieutenant George Hazzard of the U.S. 4th Artillery. Endorsed “Official Business” it was sent free of postage to Washington, D.C. per the Fort Laramie “FREE” marking. The Hockaday mail carrier departed from Salt Lake City on Saturday, December 25 and travelled via Fort Laramie to St Joseph around January 15. Hazzard later became Colonel of the 37th Indiana Volunteers during the Civil War, and died of wounds received during the June 1862 Battle of White Oak Swamp.

Figure 7-15 illustrates a July 1860 letter from Salt Lake City to England. This letter was postmarked in Salt Lake City for the Friday July 6, 1860 COC&PP departure to St Joseph. A black “24” restated the unpaid rate to England via St Joseph. It reached St Joseph around July 26, and was sent by train to New York. The New York postmark, with a three cents debit to England, was dated for the August 1 departure of the Cunard Line steamship *Africa*, which arrived in Liverpool on August 11. Liverpool postmarked it on August 12 and rated it for one shilling due. With a 37-day transit to Liverpool, this letter shows how efficient communications had become by this time.



Figure 7-15. Letter postmarked at Salt Lake City U.T. (Utah Territory) on July 6, 1860 and carried under the COC&PP contract to St Joseph.

Westbound mail is particularly scarce. Figure 7-16 shows a December 1859 letter to California. This letter was posted on the upper peninsula of Michigan at Lincoln on December 22, 1859. It was endorsed



Figure 7-16. Letter posted in Lincoln, Michigan on December 22, 1859 and carried under the LPPE contract to Salt Lake City and then by Chorpensing to California.

“Overland” and prepaid with an 1857 issue three cents stamp for a distance of less than 3,000 miles. The distance by the Butterfield southern overland route was greater than 3,000 miles, so this letter was routed via St Louis to St Joseph for the LPPE mail which left on Tuesday, January 3 and arrived in Salt Lake City around January 25. In Salt Lake City, it connected with the bi-weekly Chorpensing coach which left on Wednesday, February 1 and arrived in Placerville around February 10.

Contract Route between Salt Lake City and California

Given the two months needed to communicate with the West Coast and receive a response, the Post Office Department employed special agents to manage its business locally in California and Oregon. In October 1848, the post office sent Special Post Office Agent William Van Voorhies from New York to California. Upon his February 1849 arrival in San Francisco, he began establishing a network of post offices and contract routes to connect them. However, he and his successor, Special Agent Allen, faced a major problem in implementing contract mail routes. The cost of living in California was vastly higher than in the East, so they were not able to secure contractors to carry the mail for the meager pay allowed. Congress, a distant 3,500 miles away, had to approve contracts for all mail routes that produced insufficient revenue to cover their costs. As a result, route contracts in California were held up until Congress approved their advertisement, and news of the successful bidder was relayed back to California. Allen's successor in 1851, Special Agent James Goggin, apparently arrived with greater authority than his predecessors. As reported in the March 20, 1851 Sacramento *Daily Union*, he solicited proposals for 26 contract mail routes serving California, including the first Salt Lake City contract.⁶

Table 7-2 summarizes the mail contracts between Salt Lake City and California that are described in this chapter. Detailed schedules and many actual trip times for these contracts can be found in Appendix D.

Table 7-2 – Mail Contracts between Salt Lake City and California, 1851-1861

Dates of Operation	Contractor	Route No.	California Terminus	Contracted Service
May 3, 1851 to Mar 1 1853	Chorpenning	5066	Sacramento	Monthly in 30 days
Mar 15, 1853 to Jul 15, 1853	Blanchard	5066	Sacramento	Monthly in 30 days
Jul 1, 1853 to Jun 30, 1854	Chorpenning	5066	Sacramento	Monthly in 30 days
Jul 1, 1854 to Jun 30, 1858	Chorpenning	12801	San Diego	Monthly in 28 days
Jul 1, 1858 to May 10, 1860	Chorpenning	12801	Placerville	Weekly in 16 days
Jun 1, 1860 to Jun 30, 1861	COC&PP	12801	Placerville	Twice-monthly in 9 days

First Chorpenning Contract, 1851 to 1854

Goggin awarded the contract for Route 5066 between Sacramento, California and Salt Lake City to Absalom Woodward and George Chorpenning, Jr. for three years. The contract was for monthly service, leaving on the first of each month from each terminus, and arriving at the opposite terminus on the 30th of each month. Although trips were scheduled to begin on May 10, 1851 from Sacramento, Chorpenning left with the first mail on May 3.

From the beginning, the contractors encountered great difficulties in adhering to the schedule. Hostility from Indian tribes along the Humboldt River delayed many trips, and cost the lives of several mail carriers, including Woodward in November 1851. Following Woodward's death, Chorpenning continued to fulfill the contract alone. In addition, the winter snows in the Sierra Nevada and Goose Creek mountain ranges were often impassible, causing schedule delays and a change in the route. Figure 7-17 shows Chorpenning's mail route between Sacramento and Salt Lake City, as well as the alternate route via Los Angeles that was used to avoid snow-bound mountains in the winter months.



Figure 7-17. Map of the Chorpensing Route. The main route is in green and the alternate route via Los Angeles is in red.

After several failures to cross the Sierra Nevada Mountains in the December 1851-January 1852 period, Chorpensing carried those mails and the February 1852 mail via Los Angeles and the Old Spanish Trail to Salt Lake City. In all, due to Indian attacks and the severe winter, only one mail was received in Sacramento during the eight months between October 1851 and June 1852, and no mail was received in Salt Lake during the four months between early November 1851 and March 7, 1852. Consequently, Chorpensing's performance against his contract from May 1851 to March 1853 was unacceptable. Fewer than 40% of the trips in with known arrival dates made the journey within the contractual 30-day time. In addition, two mails were lost to Indian attacks and ten had to be re-routed via Los Angeles to reach their destination. Reacting to reports of erratic mail deliveries in Salt Lake City, Postmaster General Hubbard cancelled Chorpensing's contract for non-performance on November 18, 1852. He re-let the contract to William Blanchard on the same day, effective March 15, 1853 to June 30, 1856. Chorpensing learned of this cancellation in January 1853, and immediately left for the East by steamship. Fortunately for him, Special Agent Goggin was also returning at that time, and was able to intercede on Chorpensing's behalf in Washington. Accordingly, Postmaster General James Campbell revoked Blanchard's contract and reinstated Chorpensing, effective July 1, 1853.

Blanchard's contract was very similar to Chorpensing's annulled contract, except that departures were to take place on the 15th of each month. Blanchard's performance against his contract was excellent, but he did not experience the winter months or Indian troubles. His service was recognized by the Post Office Department from March 15 to July 15, 1853.

Chorpensing resumed service under the same terms and conditions as his annulled contract on July 1, 1853. He made even greater use of the alternate Los Angeles route during this period. Although 500 miles longer, the reliability of this route led the Salt Lake City postmaster to compel Chorpensing to carry some of the Independence-Salt Lake mails under a "take and deliver" clause in his contract. According to Chorpensing's later claim for additional compensation, he carried some or all of eight eastbound Independence mails from January 1853 to March 1854.⁷ It is likely that Chorpensing's regular California mails that were carried via Los Angeles were shipped by sea to San Francisco from San Pedro (the port of Los Angeles), and that Chorpensing paid for this sea transit out of his contract. The eastbound Salt Lake City-Independence mails carried by Chorpensing were most likely taken to San Diego to connect with eastbound Pacific Mail Steamship Company steamers. However, the Los Angeles route was not always reliable. The normal transit time on that route was about 32 to 35 days but, if a connection was missed in San Pedro, the delay could amount to as much as 20 days.

7 - CENTRAL OVERLAND MAIL, 1850-1861

Not much mail was carried by Chorpenning during this period. In responding to his claim for additional compensation, the Post Office Department determined that the regular mail between Sacramento and Salt Lake City never exceeded 150 pounds and was sometimes as little as 75 pounds.

Figure 7-18 shows a letter carried on Chorpenning's first westbound trip. This letter was endorsed for a postal free frank by Willard Richards, postmaster of Salt Lake City, and received a manuscript "Salt Lake

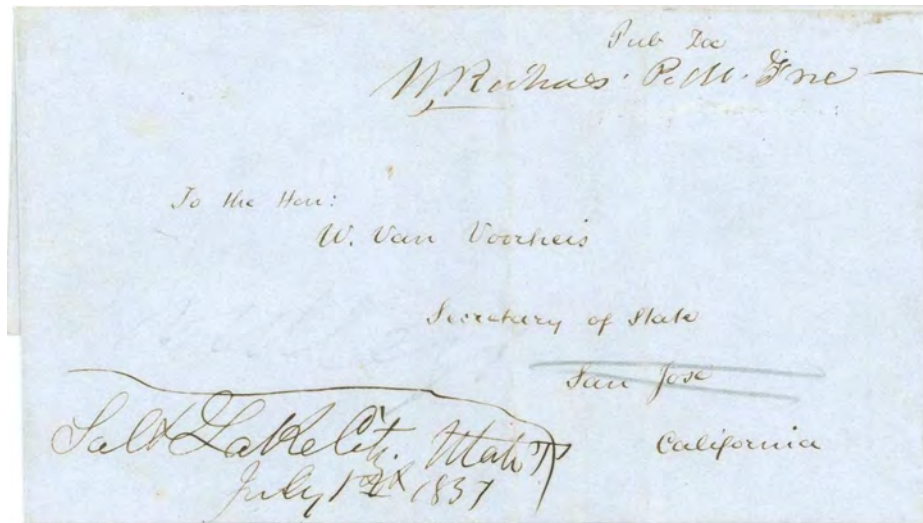


Figure 7-18. Letter postmarked "Salt Lake City Utah T" on July 1, 1851 and carried on Chorpenning's first westbound contract mail trip to California.

City Utah T" postmark on July 1, 1851.⁸ It was carried on Chorpenning's first westbound contract mail trip, and Indians harassed this mail trip to the extent that the mail party had to seek protection at the fort in Carson Valley until a unit of California militia could escort it to Sacramento. It arrived there around August 3. The postmaster at Sacramento, knowing that the Secretary of State was in Vallejo, directed the letter there, where it was docketed as received on August 4.



Figure 7-19. April 1851 letter from Hawaii which was routed to the Chorpenning mail route. It connected with the Woodson mail route to Missouri.

Figure 7-19 shows an April 1851 letter that was directed to Chorpenning's second eastbound trip by the San Francisco postmaster.

This letter is part of a correspondence from the missionary E.K. Whittlesey in Hawaii.⁹ A Honolulu forwarder placed this letter on the *Cheerful*, which left Honolulu on May 1, 1851 and arrived in San Francisco on June 1. The twice-monthly PMSS sailing via Panama had left the day before, so the San Francisco postmaster was faced with the choice of holding the letter for two weeks until the next steamship departure or sending it immediately on

the new Chorpenning/Woodson composite overland route via Salt Lake City. He opted for the latter, and endorsed the letter “overland” after rating it for a double-weight 80 cents due. It was postmarked in San Francisco on June 1, and the Woodward mail party left from Sacramento on the next day. They arrived in Salt Lake City on July 2. The Woodson contract mail trip from Salt Lake City to Independence left just after July 2 and arrived in Independence on July 24, so this letter reached New Jersey in early August. Had this letter been held for the next PMSS sailing on June 14, it would have arrived in New Jersey on July 21, or about two weeks earlier than it actually did. This is the earliest known through transcontinental letter sent over the Central Route.

Figure 7-20 shows a May 1852 letter from Tahiti to Salt Lake City via Sacramento. This letter was datelined in the Society Islands on May 5, 1852 and carried by the schooner *Emily Frances*, which left Tahiti on May 26 and arrived in San Francisco on July 15. It entered the U.S. mails at Sacramento, where it was postmarked on August 1 and rated for five cents postage due. Chorpenning’s eastbound mail party left the next day and arrived in Salt Lake City on August 28.



Figure 7-20. May 5, 1852 letter from Tahiti sent via Sacramento on August 1, 1852 and carried by a Chorpenning mail party to Salt Lake City.

Second Chorpenning Contract, 1854 to 1858

Given the relative success of Chorpenning’s alternate route via southern California, the Post Office Department invited proposals for a year-round contract between Salt Lake City and San Diego, California upon the expiration of Chorpenning’s 1851 contract. San Diego was chosen as the terminus so that PMSS steamers, on their twice-monthly trips between San Francisco and Panama, could carry the mail between San Francisco and San Diego. Chorpenning was again the low bidder for this newly-numbered Route 12801, which called for departures from Salt Lake City and San Diego on the 20th of each month, effective July 1, 1854. Contract trip times were 28 days and, since the contract termini were Salt Lake City and San Diego, Chorpenning was no longer responsible for transporting the mail between San Diego and San Francisco.

Since the PMSS steamships had been bypassing San Diego since 1853, the service between San Francisco and San Diego was sub-contracted to the Southern Accommodation Line, which made round trip voyages leaving San Francisco every other Saturday to San Pedro and San Diego. It made little sense to continue using San Diego as an endpoint on the Chorpenning route, so the Post Office Department ordered a

7 - CENTRAL OVERLAND MAIL, 1850-1861

change from San Diego to San Pedro, and moved departures to the first of each month, effective November 1, 1854. The Post Office Department then contracted with the Independent Line to provide weekly mail service between San Francisco and San Pedro. In November, advertisements for the Line began appearing, describing the U.S. mail service leaving San Francisco every Saturday and San Pedro every Friday. However, by March 18, 1856 the *Star* was reporting that:

Under the present mail arrangements with Utah Territory, from two to three hundred pounds of mail matter frequently lies in the Post Office here from two to four weeks, as the mail contractor, instead of waiting for the arrival of the steamer from San Francisco, are obliged to leave here on the first of each month. This is a serious inconvenience to the people of that Territory, and one we think could be easily remedied by altering the time for the departure of the mail from this office.

Apparently in response to complaints like this, the route schedule was altered again. The July 2, 1856 *Deseret News* reported a new schedule departing on the fifth of each month, effective July 5, 1856. Chorpennig ran on that schedule until his contract expired on June 30, 1858. Chorpennig's stagecoaches ran between Salt Lake City and San Bernardino, California (east of Los Angeles). Chorpennig apparently made other arrangements to get the mail between San Bernardino, Los Angeles and San Pedro. Trip times were roughly 23 days between Salt Lake City and San Bernardino, five days between San Bernardino and Los Angeles, and three days between Los Angeles and San Francisco. Overall trip times could obviously be affected by poor connections or obstacles encountered on the trail. In general, his performance against the contract was reported to be excellent. Figure 7-21 shows a November 1855 letter from Hawaii to Utah that was carried by Chorpennig via Los Angeles and San Francisco.



Figure 7-21. November 3, 1855 letter from Hawaii which was carried on the Chorpennig mail route via Los Angeles.

This letter was postmarked in Honolulu on November 3, 1855 and franked with 5 cents Hawaiian postage by an 1853 Boston Engraved issue stamp. It was carried by the American bark *Yankee*, which left Honolulu on November 3 and arrived in San Francisco on December 1. San Francisco rated it "SHIP 5" due, representing the two cents ship fee plus three cents postage to Utah. It was postmarked for the scheduled Saturday, December 1 departure of the California Steam Navigation Company steamer *Senator* with the mails for Los Angeles. The *Senator* left on December 3 and arrived in San Pedro around December 5. The

December Chorpenning mail from Los Angeles (scheduled to depart on December 1) was held until the arrival of this mail, and the mail carrier, David Savage, arrived in Salt Lake City on December 30.

Figure 7-22 shows a February 1856 letter from Salt Lake City to Honolulu. This letter was postmarked in Salt Lake City for the February 1, 1856 departure of the Chorpenning mail to Los Angeles, and prepaid the double-weight three cents rate to California by a six cents Nesbitt envelope. Chorpenning's mail carrier arrived in Los Angeles on February 27. The mail then left San Pedro on the Friday, February 29 Independent Line steamship that arrived in San Francisco around March 3. It was transferred there to the American clipper ship *Resolute* which left on March 25 and arrived in Honolulu on April 14. The letter was docketed as received on that day, and the recipient paid five cents Hawaiian foreign postage (not marked).



Figure 7-22. February 1, 1856 letter from Salt Lake City which was carried on the Chorpenning mail route via Los Angeles and San Francisco.

When the Post Office Department shifted Chorpenning's contract to the Salt Lake City-Los Angeles route, Carson Valley (on the eastern edge of the Sierra Nevada Mountains) was left without contract mail service. Consequently, the Post Office Department advertised for Route 12573 between Carson Valley and Placerville in 1857.

Figure 7-23 shows a March 1858 example of Carson Valley mail. This letter was posted in Carson Valley U.T. (Utah Territory) on March 29, 1858 with transcontinental postage prepaid by an 1855 10 cents type II stamp. It was carried by "Snowshoe" Thompson over the Sierras to Placerville on April 3, and connected with the PMSS



Figure 7-23. March 28, 1858 letter from Carson Valley carried to Placerville. It was then taken by steamships via Panama to the East.

7 - CENTRAL OVERLAND MAIL, 1850-1861

steamer *John L. Stephens*, which left San Francisco on April 5 and arrived in Panama around April 15. After a trip across the Isthmus, it was carried by the USMSC steamer *Moses Taylor* which left Aspinwall on April 19 and arrived in New York on April 27. It was docketed as received in Middletown, Rhode Island on the next day.

Third Chorpenning Contract, 1858 to 1860

As Chorpenning's second contract neared expiration, the Post Office Department began to consider a more frequent schedule for Route 12801 and a change back to the more direct Salt Lake City-Placerville route. Chorpenning was the low bidder for a semi-monthly service between Salt Lake City and San Pedro, but this was modified on June 19, 1858 to a weekly service between Salt Lake City and Placerville. Trips were to be made in 16 days or less, with departures from Salt Lake City every Monday and Placerville every Saturday. The first trip left Salt Lake City on Sunday, July 4 and arrived in Placerville on July 19. The first eastbound trip left Placerville on Monday, July 5 and arrived in Salt Lake City on July 21.

The press began to describe the combination of the 16-day Placerville-Salt Lake City segment and the 18-day segment between Salt Lake City and St Joseph as a 34-day transcontinental overland schedule on the Central Route. The two contractors, however, made little effort to synchronize schedules, and coaches often left a day before the arrival of a coach on the other route. Even so, by late 1858 some transcontinental letters began to appear with the directives "overland via Salt Lake" or "overland via Placerville."

Starting in March 1859, the Salt Lake City departures for Placerville were moved to every Tuesday in the interest of better connections between the two routes. The schedule was changed again on May 1, 1859 to weekly departures from Placerville and Salt Lake City on each Wednesday. Around this time, the Post Office Department began to consider a reduction in service on the Salt Lake City-Placerville route. Ultimately, the service was reduced to twice-monthly, effective July 1, 1859. Chorpenning continued to run his coaches weekly, but the finances of his enterprise were significantly impaired by this reduction. Even so, trip times became dramatically less. The Salt Lake newspaper reported regular arrivals from Placerville in nine days, on every other Thursday from July 7 to the end of September 1859. Chorpenning left California in January 1859 to protest the schedule change in Washington, D.C. and never returned, leaving his enterprise and employees to fend for themselves. Meanwhile, operations on his line began to collapse in October 1859 as unpaid employees left, and assets were seized by creditors. On October 12, Chorpenning's agent failed to call for the mail at Placerville, and the Post Office Department used that reason to annul his contract on May 10, 1860.

Figure 7-24 shows a July 1858 eastbound cover from Sacramento to Kansas Territory Governor James W. Denver at Fort Leavenworth. This letter was posted in Sacramento, California in late July 1858 (the date in the postmark is indistinct) and endorsed "via overland mail." Transcontinental postage was prepaid by an 1857 10 cents type III stamp, and the letter was carried by a Chorpenning stagecoach to Salt Lake City, probably leaving Placerville on Saturday, July 31 and arriving in Salt Lake City around August 10. It connected in Salt Lake City with a Hockaday stagecoach, departing on Saturday, August 14 and arriving at Fort Leavenworth around August 22. It was held at the fort until Governor Denver's whereabouts were determined, and then forwarded on September 12 to Lecompton, Kansas with three cents forwarding postage due.



Figure 7-24. July 1858 letter from Sacramento carried by Chorpenning from Placerville to Salt Lake City and by Hockaday to Fort Leavenworth.

Figure 7-25 shows a January 1859 westbound cover from Fort Laramie to California. This letter was posted at Fort Laramie N.T. (Nebraska Territory) on January 12, 1859 and franked 10 cents with three 1857 issue 3 cents type I stamps and an 1857 issue 1 cents type V stamp. Fort Laramie was on the Hockaday route between St Joseph and Salt Lake City, so this letter was picked up in transit by the weekly coach which left St Joseph on Saturday, January 1. It arrived in Salt Lake City around January 20 and connected there with the weekly Chorpenning coach, which left on Monday, January 24 and arrived in Placerville around February 5. It was missent to Benecia, California, and finally forwarded from there on February 7 to San Francisco. The addressee of this letter was Lieutenant James B. McPherson, who later rose to the rank of major-general of the Union Army of the Tennessee, and was the only Union army commander killed in combat during the Civil War.



Figure 7-25. January 12, 1859 letter from Fort Laramie N.T. to San Francisco which was carried by Chorpenning from Salt Lake City to Placerville.

7 - CENTRAL OVERLAND MAIL, 1850-1861

Figure 7-26 shows an April 1859 westbound letter from Camp Floyd, Utah Territory to Panama. This letter was initially posted at Camp Floyd, Utah Territory on February 7, 1859 and received the rare manuscript postmark of that date. It was, however, only prepaid three cents, which was insufficient to get it to Panama, so it was held for additional postage. On April 18, the deficiency to 20 cents was paid in cash, and the letter was postmarked again with the new semi-circular Camp Floyd postmark. Endorsed "Via California," it was carried by the weekly



Figure 7-26. April 18, 1859 letter from Camp Floyd, Utah Territory to Panama which was carried by Chorpensing from Salt Lake City to Placerville.

Chorpensing stagecoach which left Salt Lake City (northeast of Camp Floyd) on Monday, April 18 and which picked this letter up a day or two later in transit. That stagecoach arrived in Placerville around April 30, and this letter was taken to San Francisco for transport by the PMSS steamer *Golden Gate*, which left on May 5 and arrived in Panama City around May 15. This letter was addressed to the U.S. Consul at Panama City for delivery to the assistant surgeon of the 16-gun sloop-of-war, the USS *Decatur*. Ironically, the *Decatur* had been ordered from Panama to San Francisco on March 23, 1859. Although not marked as forwarded, the letter must have re-traced its path back to San Francisco.

Figure 7-27 shows a June 1859 transcontinental cover with an "Overland, via Placerville" route directive and an illustrated plea for the transcontinental railroad.



Figure 7-27. June 14, 1859 letter from Folsom carried by Chorpensing to Salt Lake City and by the LPPE to St Joseph, Missouri.

This letter was posted in Folsom City, California on June 14, 1859 and prepaid 10 cents postage to Michigan. It left on the weekly Placerville stagecoach on Saturday, June 18 and arrived in Salt Lake City around June 30. On Saturday July 2, it left Salt Lake City on a Leavenworth & Pikes Peak Express Co. (LPPE) twice-monthly stagecoach to St Joseph, arriving there around July 24.

A different illustrated railroad propaganda envelope used in October 1859 is shown in Figure 7-28. This letter bears the route directive “Per Overland Mail via Placerville and Salt Lake.” It was posted in San Francisco on October 7, 1859 and prepaid 10 cents transcontinental postage to Virginia. This was part of the October 12 Placerville mail that Chorpenning failed to call for. The Placerville postmaster had the Pioneer Stage Company standing by, and it carried the mail to Salt Lake City around October 21. On Friday, October 21, the letter left Salt Lake City on the twice-monthly LPPE stagecoach to St Joseph, arriving there around November 11.

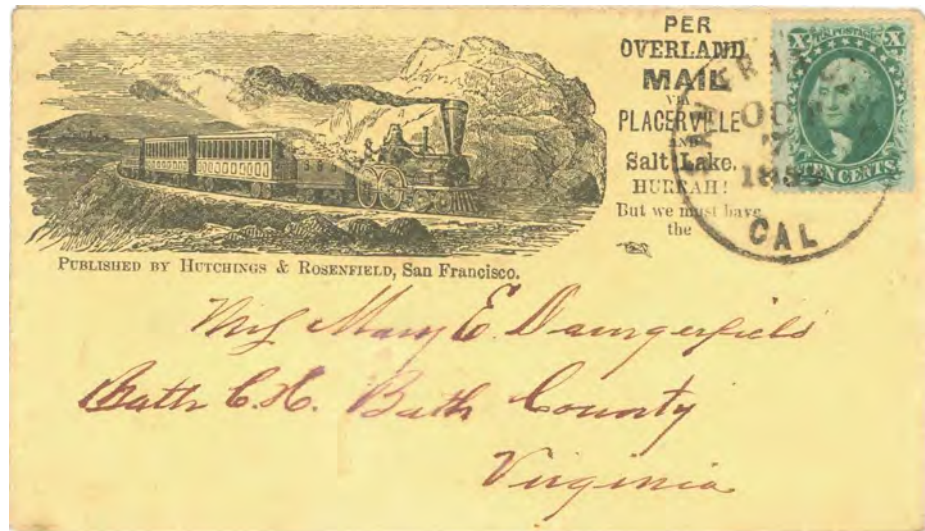


Figure 7-28. October 7, 1859 letter from San Francisco which was carried by Chorpenning to Salt Lake City and by the LPPE to St Joseph, Missouri.

Figure 7-29 shows a December 1859 illustrated stagecoach envelope with route directive “Overland via Placerville & Salt Lake.” This letter was posted on December 21, 1859 in Oroville, California and prepaid 10 cents transcontinental postage to Maine. At this time, the Placerville postmaster was using trip contracts with the Pioneer Stage Company to carry the eastbound mails halfway to Salt Lake City. At a mid-point, they were exchanged with Howard Egan, Chorpenning’s agent on the eastern segment of the line, for further carriage to Salt Lake City. This letter left Placerville on Wednesday, December 28 and arrived at Salt Lake City around January 9, 1860. It connected in Salt Lake City with the LPPE coach, which left on Friday, January 13 and arrived in St Joseph, Missouri around February 4.



Figure 7-29. December 21, 1859 letter from Oroville, California which was carried by Chorpenning to Salt Lake City and by the LPPE to St Joseph, Missouri.

7 - CENTRAL OVERLAND MAIL, 1850-1861

Central Overland California & Pikes Peak Express Co. Contract, 1860 to 1861

The Central Overland California & Pikes Peak Express Company (COC&PP) had gained great fame for running the transcontinental pony express (see Chapter Thirteen) since April 1860, and had previously purchased the Hockaday mail contract between St Joseph and Salt Lake City. It was not surprising, therefore, that Chorpenning's cancelled contract between Salt Lake City and Placerville was re-let without bid to the COC&PP, effective June 1, 1860. This meant that, for the first time, the transcontinental mail contracts along the entire length of the Central Route were in the hands of one party. The two contracts under the control of the COC&PP continued as under the previous contractors:

I. Route 12801: Every other Wednesday westward from Salt Lake City to Placerville and eastward from Placerville to Salt Lake City, both in 9 days.

II. Route 8911: Every other Tuesday westward from St Joseph to Salt Lake City and every other Friday eastward from Salt Lake City to St Joseph, both in 22 days.

The transfer of the Butterfield southern overland mail route to the Central Route meant the cancellation of both COC&PP contracts, effective July 1, 1861. The short duration of the unified contract and the diversion of virtually all transcontinental overland mail to the Butterfield southern route meant that very little mail was carried by the COC&PP under these contracts. Most of the surviving mail is addressed to intermediate points along the Central Route.

Figure 7-30 shows an October 1860 eastbound example. This letter was posted on October 8, 1860 in



Figure 7-30. October 8, 1860 letter from Georgetown, California to Denver carried by the COC&PP to Julesburg, Colorado.

Georgetown, California and was prepaid 10 cents transcontinental postage to Denver. It was carried on the COC&PP stagecoach that left Placerville on Wednesday, October 10 and arrived in Salt Lake City around October 20. It just missed the October 19 bi-weekly departure from Salt Lake City, and waited for the COC&PP stagecoach that departed on Friday, November 2. It reached Julesburg (in today's Colorado) around November 15, and was transferred to a stagecoach on contract route 15151 from Julesburg to

Denver (see Chapter Twelve for details on this contract). Hinckley & Company's express then collected this letter in Denver on November 26 and delivered it to the gold mines.

Figure 7-31 shows an August 1860 letter carried between intermediate points on the COC&PP routes. This military communication is datelined "Camp Floyd U.T. August 17th 1860" and postmarked on the same day. The letter was prepaid with an 1857 issue three cents stamp for the postage to Fort Laramie, and addressed to 1st Lieutenant Francis Shunk of the ordinance



Figure 7-31. Letter postmarked at Camp Floyd U.T. (Utah Territory) on August 17, 1860 and carried under the COC&PP contracts to Fort Laramie, Nebraska

department. The COC&PP collected the letter on its eastbound trip that left Placerville on Wednesday, August 29 and arrived in Salt Lake City around September 6. It was then transferred to the eastbound stage to St Joseph that left on Friday, September 7 and was delivered in transit at Fort Laramie around September 18.

Contract Route between Salt Lake City and Oregon

When the Post Office Department first advertised for overland service west of the Missouri River in 1850, they anticipated a route between Independence, Missouri and Oregon City, Oregon via Salt Lake City. They did not, however, receive any proposals for the leg to Oregon City, and settled for a contract between Independence and Salt Lake City (see Woodson contract above). This did not satisfy their desire for a contract route to Oregon, however, so they advertised for Route 5043 between Salt Lake City and The Dalles, Oregon on March 20, 1851.

Brown & Torrence Contract, 1851 to 1854

The low bid from J.L. Brown and L.G. Torrence was accepted on May 24, 1851, effective July 1. The contract called for a bi-monthly service, leaving Oregon on the first of July and then each alternating month after that, and arriving in Salt Lake City on the 30th of the departure month. Because they had no mail carrier in Salt Lake City, westbound service was scheduled to start on August 1, with the same alternating month schedule. Except in the winter months, their performance against their contract was acceptable, as shown in Appendix D.

The June 18, 1853 Salt Lake City *Deseret News* reported that, "The Oregon Mail arrived June 1, most of the papers as wet as water could make them, consequently, most of the matter for the States had to lie over and dry til next mail." This shows that transcontinental letters via Salt Lake City were carried. Even so, very little mail was carried on this route. The December 3, 1853 *Oregon Spectator* complained that, "The mail

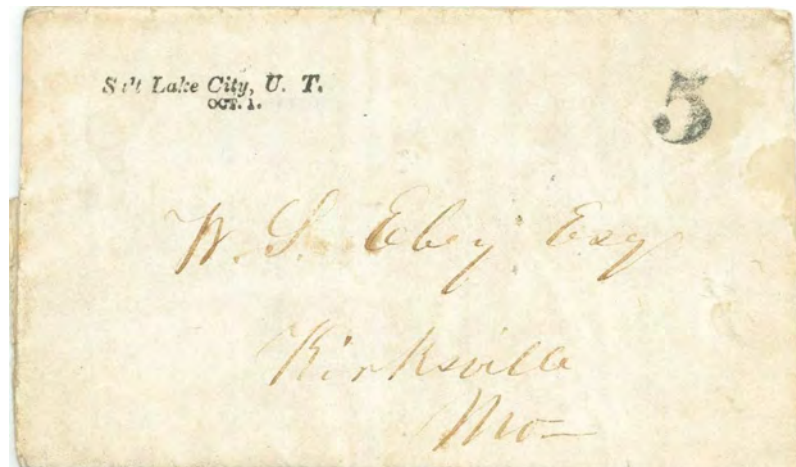


Figure 7-32. September 13, 1851 letter from Fort Boise carried by Brown and Torrence via Salt Lake City to Missouri.

matter from Oregon to the Salt Lake varies in weight from one to three ounces either way! Sometimes two papers and a letter, but mostly one paper is the entire contents of the mail." Perhaps because of the small mail volumes, the contract was not re-let when it expired on June 30, 1854.

Figure 7-32 shows a September 1851 way letter from Fort Boise to Missouri, via Salt Lake City. This letter was datelined "Fort Boise Sept 13th 1851" by a traveler who writes, "I have just

time to drop you a line as the Mail Carrier from the Dalles to Salt Lake waits for me to do so." The letter was picked up in transit by the September 1851 mail carrier from The Dalles, and arrived in Salt Lake City sometime before October 1. The Salt Lake City post office postmarked it with an italic straight-line postmark on October 1 and rated it for five cents due to Kirksville, Missouri. It was then given to the Woodson mail carrier who left on October 1 and arrived in Independence, Missouri on October 30.

Endnotes

1. As described at the end of Chapter Five, the Mormons proposed in March 1849 to create the State of Deseret, but were stymied by the creation of the Utah Territory on September 9, 1850. News of this, however, was not received in Salt Lake City until 1851. The few known manuscript "Salt Lake City Deseret" postmarks are known during the November 1850 to June 1851 period.
2. From the establishment of the post office on March 4, 1850 to May 29, 1854 (when it became part of the Nebraska Territory), Fort Laramie was attached to Clackamas County, Oregon for postal administrative purposes. Accordingly, the "O.R." (Oregon Route) designation in its postmarks reflects this affiliation. Letters addressed to Fort Laramie, Oregon Route were often mis-directed to Oregon.
3. Information on the rates on this letter was received from Richard Winter in a private communication.
4. The old Fort Bridger post office had been discontinued on June 9, 1857 and the post was burned down by the Mormons in October 1857. It was officially re-established on August 5, 1858, although provisional Fort Bridger postmarks had been used at Camp Scott in the intervening period.
5. Nebraska Territory was formed on May 30, 1854 and included Forts Laramie and Kearney.
6. Any questions about the legality of contracts let by the Special Agents were removed by Congressional action on January 13, 1852.
7. Chorpenning asserted that he carried some or all of the eastbound Salt Lake City-Independence mails for January-April 1853, December 1853 and January-March 1854. These mails were carried by Chorpenning from Salt Lake City to California, and then by steamer via Panama to New York.
8. The italic straight-line Salt Lake City postmark (see Figure 7-3) was introduced on July 1, 1851 but the manuscript postmark was also used on that day.

9. Several other letters from the same sender carry Honolulu postmarks, including one dated June 4, 1851 (June 25, 2013 Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries, Inc. Sale 1045, lot 10). The letter illustrated here did not pass through the Honolulu post office and therefore did not receive a Honolulu postmark.



Chapter Eight

Mail Via Nicaragua, 1851-1857

As described in Chapter Four, the California gold rush was triggered by the discovery of gold at Sutter's Mill on January 24, 1848. In his December 5, 1848 address to Congress, President Polk confirmed the discovery and set off the massive westward migration of Argonauts seeking their fortunes. Just before this, as detailed in Chapter Six, the Navy Department had contracted for the transport of mail and passengers between the west coast and New York by steamships via Panama in 1847. With the onset of the California gold rush, those contracts were transformed from speculative endeavors supported by mail subsidies to highly lucrative contracts supported by both high passenger volume and the mail subsidies.

Profitable businesses attract competition, and the California passenger business was no exception. Several steamship lines tried to compete on the Panama route, but were stymied by the companies holding the Panama mail contracts, since they could use those subsidies to stifle competition. However, one particularly enterprising competitor, Cornelius Vanderbilt, concluded that the real competitive opportunity was to gain control over a route that passed via the Isthmus of Nicaragua, rather than the Isthmus of Panama.

Figure 8-1 shows the relative positions of these two routes. It is clear from the map that the Nicaragua route had the advantage of being shorter than the Panama route. What is not as obvious is that the



Figure 8-1. Map of the Nicaragua (red) and Panama (blue) transits.

Nicaragua isthmian transit was healthier for travelers than the malaria-ridden Panama transit. What it lacked, however, was an established infrastructure for the transit of passengers, freight and mail.

8 - MAIL VIA NICARAGUA, 1851 - 1857

Others were interested in Nicaragua as well. In January 1848, British marines occupied the town of San Juan del Norte on the Atlantic side of Nicaragua and re-named it Greytown. They did this ostensibly to protect the hereditary rights of the local Mosquito Coast King, but also gained control of the Nicaragua transit route. This was alarming to both the Nicaraguans and the United States, so both took action. The United States' negotiations with Great Britain culminated in the April 19, 1850 Clayton-Bulwer Treaty, which re-affirmed the neutrality of the Nicaragua transit and withdrew the Mosquito King's control over San Juan del Norte. Meanwhile, on August 26, 1849, the Nicaraguan government awarded Vanderbilt's American Atlantic and Pacific Ship Canal Company the exclusive concession to construct a canal across the Isthmus of Nicaragua. This contract included the exclusive right to operate transit services until the canal was completed, which effectively gave Vanderbilt commercial control over the Nicaragua route.

Figure 8-2 shows a map of the Nicaragua transit. The route ran along Nicaragua's southern border with Costa Rica. Starting in the east at San Juan del Norte, a river steamer would carry passengers up the San



Figure 8-2. Map of the route across the Isthmus of Nicaragua.

Juan River to Lake Nicaragua, where another steamer would take them to the western side of the lake at Rivas. Carriages then carried them over a 12-mile road to San Juan del Sur, where they could meet the Vanderbilt steamship to San Francisco. Initially, the route was not at all developed, and native canoes were used for the river and lake transit. After steamers were introduced on the route in 1851, and the 12-mile road was macadamized, the transit could be accomplished in one to two days.

The Vanderbilt Independent Line and the Accessory Transit Company



Cornelius Vanderbilt
Transportation Tycoon
1794-1877

- Started a ferry service in Staten Island, NY in 1810
- Dominated NY region steamboat business, 1829-39
- Became President of Boston-NY railroad, 1847
- Began steamship service via Nicaragua in 1851
- Began Vanderbilt European Line to Le Havre in 1855
- Obtained via Panama mail contract in 1859

With the transit contract in hand, Vanderbilt began preparing the transit route and acquiring the necessary steamships on the Atlantic and Pacific coasts. In 1850-51, his Accessory Transit Company¹ began clearing river obstructions along the transit and cutting the 12-mile road between Rivas and San Juan del Sur. His Vanderbilt Independent Line added an initial two steamships on the Pacific, one on the Atlantic and two on the Isthmus. By July 14, 1851 the line was ready for operation, and simultaneous departures on that day by the *Pacific* from San Francisco and the *Prometheus* from New York inaugurated the new twice-monthly through service between New York

and California.² It was an immediate success. The westbound trip took 47 days to reach San Francisco, but the eastbound trip reached New York in a remarkable 29 days. Just as important, the initial isthmian transit was accomplished in three days, with indications that it could be reduced to 36 hours.

In early 1852, the Accessory Transit Company began accepting passengers only from Vanderbilt steamships. This completed Vanderbilt's exclusive control over the Nicaragua route. By the end of the year, he had set his sights on the Panama route by advertising "through ahead of any other line."

In February 1853, Vanderbilt sold his steamships to the Accessory Transit Company, and stepped down as President of that enterprise to take a five-month vacation in Europe. During his absence, two subordinates, Charles Morgan and Cornelius Garrison, gained control of the Accessory Transit Company, operating it as the Nicaragua Steamship Company in California and the New York & California Steamship Line in the East. Garrison greatly improved the efficiency of the line and, by 1855, transit times between New York and San Francisco had been reduced to twenty-one days. This improved the popularity of the line with passengers, and 1853-55 were the peak years for the Nicaragua route. Table 8-1 shows the number of passengers carried in both directions, compared to the volume via Panama.³

Table 8-1. Number of Passengers Carried via Panama and via Nicaragua

Year	Panama	Nicaragua
1851	29,653	5,102
1852	33,108	16,484
1853	27,246	20,083
1854	29,253	22,311
1855	25,809	18,987
1856	30,335	8,053

Table 8-1 shows that Vanderbilt's vision had created a very viable competitor to the Panama route, and had generated significant profits for his companies. It also shows a precipitous drop in passenger volume after 1855. This was due to the arrival in Nicaragua of another American adventurer, William Walker.

The Walker Filibuster in Nicaragua, 1855 to 1857

William Walker desired to create English-speaking colonies under his control in Latin America, an activity known as filibustering. After a failed effort in Mexico, he set sail for Nicaragua from San Francisco on May 4, 1855 with a small armed force. His first priority was to gain control of the transit route, so that additional reinforcements could easily reach him. After an initial setback, he gained control of the western end of the transit route and captured a transit steamer, although the transit service was unaffected. After a successful attack on the capital, Granada, he found himself as head of the army in a new Nicaraguan government in November 1855.

Meanwhile, Vanderbilt was maneuvering to re-gain control of the Accessory Transit Company from



William Walker
American Filibusterer, 1824-1860

- University of Nashville honors graduate in 1838
- Received medical degree in 1843
- Failed Mexican filibuster in Baja California, 1853-54
- Led a filibuster in Nicaragua, 1855-57
- Captured and executed in Honduras in 1860

8 - MAIL VIA NICARAGUA, 1851 - 1857

Morgan and Garrison, so Garrison reached an agreement with Walker to annul the Accessory Transit Company's transit charter and give it to the Nicaragua Transit Company, a new enterprise formed by Garrison and Morgan. In exchange, they agreed to transport reinforcements to Walker at significantly reduced prices. Vanderbilt re-gained control on January 30, 1856, but received news of the annulment of his charter and the seizure of his transit property on March 13. He wasted no time in responding. A notice in the March 17, 1856 New York *Herald* announced that,⁴

The Nicaragua Line is withdrawn for the present, in consequence of the difficulties in that country growing out of the extraordinary conduct of General Walker, in seizing or taking by force the property of American citizens.

I deem it a duty I owe the public, to the country and to the Transit Company, to remain quiet, by letting the ships of the company lay at their wharves, until our government has sufficient time to examine and look into the outrage committed upon their property. In the mean time, as I do not consider passengers or the property of American citizens safe on the transit of the Isthmus, I cannot be instrumental in inducing either to take the passage.

C. VANDERBILT

The last through Accessory Transit Company trips left from San Francisco on March 5 and from New York on March 8. Meanwhile, the Nicaragua Transit Company steamships began servicing the route in April 1856. Walker also sold the seized transit property to the Nicaragua Transit Company, so it was able to carry on the through service as before, albeit on a monthly schedule.

In June 1856, an internal dispute resulted in the surprising election of William Walker as president of Nicaragua. This did not sit well with Nicaragua's neighbors and, with prodding by Vanderbilt and the British, four armies invaded Nicaragua from the north and the south. Vanderbilt's support of the Costa Ricans was particularly damaging, as Costa Rican forces captured the transit steamers at San Juan del Norte on December 23, 1856, effectively closing the transit. Morgan and Garrison continued to run steamships on the Atlantic and Pacific coasts, but discontinued their service in March 1857. Walker was apprehended on May 1, 1857, and the Nicaragua route did not re-open for another five years.

Mail Carried via the Nicaragua Route, 1851 to 1857

Although Vanderbilt offered to carry the U.S. mails for half the amount being paid the Panama contractors, the Post Office Department remained committed to the Panama route. This meant that all mail remitted to the post office was carried via Panama on contract steamships. However, letters could be carried on the Nicaragua route if they were given directly to the steamship line, or entrusted to a letter bag operator. Such letters do not bear postmarks from the origin point, and generally entered the U.S. mails at the steamship's arrival port, typically New York.

An illustrative advertisement was placed in the July 1, 1853 *Alta California*.⁵

NICARAGUA STEAMSHIP COMPANY
FOR NEW YORK AND NEW ORLEANS
VIA SAN JUAN

The Shortest, Quickest and Healthiest Route

THROUGH AHEAD OF THE MAILS

The mail bag will close 15 minutes before sailing of the steamer. Letters not over ½ ounce FREE provided they are covered by postage stamps in accordance with the U.S. Postal regulation.

C.K. Garrison

Eastbound letters were carried free of any additional charge, so long as U.S. postage was prepaid by an amount equivalent to the postage if carried in the government mails.⁶ A January 8, 1856 advertisement in the New York *Herald* described the westbound letter service, but at a charge of 6¼ cents in addition to the obligatory U.S. postage.⁷

Transcontinental express companies were quick to embrace the new route. Figure 8-3 shows an October 1851 Gregory's Express letter.



Figure 8-3. Letter datelined at New York on October 21, 1851 and given to Gregory's Express for forwarding to San Francisco via Nicaragua.

This letter was datelined in New York on October 21, 1851 and given to Gregory's Express, which added its "Gregory's Atlantic and Pacific Express, Forwarded by Thompson & Hitchcock 149 Pearl St., N.Y." handstamp on the reverse. Gregory arranged to put it on the Vanderbilt Independent Line steamship *Daniel Webster*, which departed on October 22 and arrived in San Juan del Norte on November 4. The next day, it left San Juan del Sur on the Vanderbilt Independent Line steamship *Independence*, and arrived in San Francisco on November 16. This was the fifth through trip for the line, and was accomplished in the remarkable time of 26 days. It is also worth noting that this letter was carried entirely outside of the U.S. mails, and that no U.S. postage was paid.

8 - MAIL VIA NICARAGUA, 1851 - 1857

Letter bag operators also used the Nicaragua route extensively. Figure 8-4 shows an August 1853 example. This letter was entrusted to San Francisco letter bag operator George H. Leland⁸ for forwarding to New



Figure 8-4. August 1853 San Francisco letter given to Leland for transport via Nicaragua.

York. It was prepaid the required six cents U.S. transcontinental postage by a pair of three cents stamps of the 1851 issue. The next steamship departure was by the Accessory Transit's *Brother Jonathan* on September 1, 1853, so Leland applied his "Via Nicaragua ahead of the mails Leland" boxed handstamp for publicity purposes and took the letter to the ship. It arrived in San Juan del Sur on September 15 and connected across the Isthmus with the *Star of the West*, which departed from San Juan del Norte on

October 1 and arrived in New York on October 9. The letter entered the U.S. mails on the following day, per the October 10 "New-York Ship" postmark.

Another letter bag operator, J.W. Sullivan, employed the Nicaragua route as well. Figure 8-5 shows a striking October 1854 example to England. This letter was datelined October 24, 1854 in San Francisco,



Figure 8-5. Letter datelined October 24, 1854 at San Francisco, given to Sullivan for forwarding to New York via Nicaragua.

endorsed "pr Sierra Nevada" and entrusted to the letter bag operator J.W. Sullivan for forwarding. It was prepaid the 29 cents postage to England by stamps from the entire 1851 issue.⁹ Sullivan faintly marked it "Via Nicaragua in advance of the mails Sullivan" below the stamps and brought it to the Accessory Transit steamship *Sierra Nevada*, which left on October 24 and arrived at San Juan del Sur on November 6. A day

later, it connected with the *Northern Light* at San Juan del Sur, and reached New York on November 14. It entered the U.S. mails at the New York foreign mail office, which cancelled the stamps with its red 19 cents

credit marking,¹⁰ and transferred the letter to the Cunard steamer *Arabia*.¹¹ It was postmarked in London on November 27, barely a month after leaving San Francisco.

Letters given directly to the Accessory Transit Company were also marked with a variety of publicity handstamps. Figure 8-6 shows a January 1854 example of a straight-line marking. This letter was given to the Accessory Transit Company in San Francisco, which applied its red “Via Nicaragua ahead of the mails” straight-line handstamp. It was prepaid the required six cents U.S. transcontinental postage by a pair of three cents stamps of the 1851 issue. The Accessory Transit’s *Sierra Nevada* left on January 16, 1854 and arrived in San Juan del Sur on January 28. It connected with the *Star of the West* at San Juan del Norte, which departed on January 31 and arrived in New York on February 9. The letter entered the U.S. mails that day at the New York post office.



Figure 8-6. January 1854 San Francisco letter given to the Accessory Transit Co. for transport to New York via Nicaragua.

The steamship *Sierra Nevada* also had a publicity handstamp of its own. Figure 8-7 shows an example on an unusual July 1854 letter to France. This letter was given to the Accessory Transit Company in San Francisco, which applied its blue “Stmr Sierra Nevada via Nicaragua ahead of the Mails” oval handstamp. It was overpaid by one cent in stamps of the 1851 issue for the 26 cents transcontinental postage to France.¹² The Accessory Transit’s *Sierra Nevada* left on July 15, 1854 and arrived in San Juan del Sur on July 28. The letter then



Figure 8-7. July 1854 San Francisco letter given to the Accessory Transit Co. for transport to France via Nicaragua and New York.

connected across the Isthmus with the *Star of the West* at San Juan del Norte, which departed on July 29 and arrived in New York on August 7. The letter entered the U.S. mails at New York, where the stamps were cancelled with the August 12 “New-York Am Packet” datestamp for the departure of the Ocean Line steamer *Hermann*.¹³ It was routed via Calais to Paris, which postmarked it “Etats-Unis Paq. Am.” on August 29 and rated it for 8 décimes due.¹⁴

8 - MAIL VIA NICARAGUA, 1851 - 1857

Transcontinental express companies continued to utilize the Nicaragua route throughout its existence. Figure 8-8 shows a March 1854 westbound example handled in San Francisco by Adams & Company. This March 1854 letter was given to the Accessory Transit Company in New York City. It was prepaid the required six cents postage by a pair of 1851 three cents stamps, and marked with the Accessory Transit's oval marking, "Via Nicaragua in Advance of the Mail." The *Star of the West* left on March 20, 1854 and arrived in San Juan del Norte on March 30. It connected across the Isthmus with the *Cortes*, which left San Juan del Sur on April 2 and arrived in San Francisco on April 16. It was given there to Adams & Company, which added their April 16 San Francisco marking, and forwarded the letter to Stockton, entirely outside of the U.S. mails.



Figure 8-8. March 1854 New York letter given to the Accessory Transit Co. for transport to California.

San Francisco's Penny Post Company also sent mail via Nicaragua. Figure 8-9 shows a striking example. This August 1855 letter was enclosed in a "Via Nicaragua" envelope and entrusted to the Penny Post Co. for forwarding to Massachusetts. Per the large blue label, the sender paid 5 cents to the Penny Post for this service, and added an 1855 10 cents stamp for the transcontinental postage.¹⁵ The Penny Post took the letter to the Accessory Transit steamship *Uncle Sam*, which left San Francisco on August 18, 1855 and arrived in San Juan del Sur on August 29. This was just after William Walker had taken control of the western side of the transit route, and he had to be persuaded to let the passengers and mail through.¹⁶ Nonetheless, the letter connected across the Isthmus with the *Northern Light*, which left San Juan del Norte on August 31 and arrived in New York on September 8. It entered the U.S. mails on that day, per the "New-York Ship" postmark, and was sent onward to Massachusetts.



Figure 8-9. August 1855 San Francisco letter given to the Accessory Transit Co. for transport to Massachusetts via Nicaragua and New York.

Wells Fargo also patronized this route. Figure 8-10 shows a late example. This December 1855 letter was enclosed in a 10 cents Nesbitt stamped envelope and entrusted to Wells, Fargo & Company for forwarding



Figure 8-10. December 1855 San Francisco letter given to Wells, Fargo & Co. for forwarding to Philadelphia via Nicaragua and New York.

to Philadelphia. The stamped envelope paid the required 10 cents transcontinental postage. Wells Fargo applied its blue oval “Wells, Fargo & Co. Express San Francisco” marking and took the letter to the Accessory Transit steamship *Sierra Nevada*, which left on December 5, 1855 and arrived in San Juan del Sur on December 18. The letter connected across the Isthmus with the *Star of the West*, which left San Juan del Norte on December 20 and arrived in New York on December 29. It entered the U.S. mails on the next day, per the December 30 “New-York” postmark. Considering the conflict along the transit route, the transit time of 25 days is remarkable.

The latest known covers via Nicaragua during this period date from February 1856.

Endnotes

1. On March 9, 1850, the American Atlantic and Pacific Ship Canal Company signed a modified contract with Nicaragua to facilitate the transit, and incorporated in Nicaragua. On August 14, 1851, the American Atlantic and Pacific Ship Canal Company divided its responsibilities between building a canal and managing the isthmian transit, by creating the Accessory Transit Company to handle the transit duties. The Accessory Transit Co. had no interest in the Vanderbilt Independent Line steamships and derived its revenue by charging \$40 for each passenger carried across the Isthmus.
2. The Prometheus had been running a monthly service between New York and San Juan del Norte via Chagres since December 26, 1850 but the Pacific coast steamships did not arrive in San Francisco until July 1851 to provide the through service via Nicaragua. The *Independence* left New York on January 1, 1851 and arrived in San Francisco on July 2, after a trip around Cape Horn. The *Pacific* left New York on March 19, 1851 and arrived at San Francisco on July 2. Wierenga, page 331.
3. The Nicaragua numbers are from Folkman, page 163 and the Panama numbers are from Kemble, pages 253-54.
4. Wierenga, page 369.

5. Wierenga, page 260.

6. A September 20, 1852 Post Office pamphlet was published as a supplement to the postal laws and regulations in Section 8 of the Act of August 31, 1852. It permitted "letters enclosed in such envelopes with postage stamps thereon of an equal value to the postage which would be chargeable upon such letters and envelopes if the same were conveyed in the mails of the United States, may be sent, conveyed, and delivered otherwise than by post or mail." This pamphlet also described the new stamped envelopes and their intended uses. (Wierenga, pages 260-61). Postal agents in California reiterated these requirements in a January 13, 1854 Post Office Notice.

7. Wierenga, page 265.

8. In January 1852, Leland & Sullivan were advertising their news room located at the "Post Office Arcade." Their May 31, 1852 advertisement in the *Daily Alta California* announced that a letter mail bag "will be kept open all night" for mail to be sent on the contract steamer departing the next day. By June 30, 1853, J. W. Sullivan and George H. Leland had separated ways and were operating in competition. After the close of the Nicaragua route in 1857, the need for letter bag operators ended.

9. This rate consisted of the 1848 U.S.-U.K. Convention rate of 24 cents per half ounce plus the five cents transcontinental surcharge. The franking is made up by two 1851 issue one cent type IV stamps, an 1851 three cents dull red stamp and a pair of 1851 issue 12 cents stamps. These three were the only stamps issued in 1851 - later stamps in the series include the 1855 10 cents stamp and the 1856 five cents stamp.

10. Per the 1848 Convention, the U.S. credited 19 cents to Great Britain for 16 cents packet postage plus three cents British domestic postage, when British steamers carried the mail.

11. The *Arabia* left New York on November 15 and arrived at Liverpool on November 26.

12. The correct postage was 26 cents, for the 21 cents rate to France by American packet via England, plus the five cents transcontinental surcharge. The franking is an 1851 three cents dull red stamp and a pair of 12 cents stamps.

13. The *Hermann* arrived in Southampton, England on August 26.

14. The 8 décimes per 7.5 grams consisted of 3 décimes due to England for transit charges plus five décimes French postage. These rates were set by the September 1, 1851 French Postal Circular #67.

15. Transcontinental rates had been increased from six cents per half ounce to 10 cents on April 1, 1855 per the March 1, 1855 U.S. Postal Act.

16. Per a report in the September 9, 1855 *New York Herald*.



Chapter Nine

Southern Overland Mail, 1857-1861

By the late-1850s, the system of transcontinental mail routes was in a state of flux. The vast majority of trans-continental mail was carried by steamers via the Isthmus of Panama, but this expensive ocean mail contract was nearing its September 30, 1859 expiration. Meanwhile, California was clamoring for a frequent and reliable overland mail service. As seen in Chapter Seven, however, earlier experiments along the Central overland route had largely failed, but had shown some promise along the southerly trail between Salt Lake City and Los Angeles. In response to this, a March 3, 1855 Congressional Act authorized a monthly mail route between Independence, Missouri and Stockton, California via Santa Fe, although the Post Office Department would wait over three years before acting on it (see Chapter Ten). In August 1856, the 34th Congress considered a subsidized semi-weekly overland mail contract, but was unable to reach consensus. They did approve, however, a semi-monthly mail contract between San Diego, California and San Antonio, Texas via an extreme southern route in that year's postal route bill. At the same time, Congress appropriated funds for the construction of a military road between El Paso, Texas and Fort Yuma, California, which enhanced the feasibility of the San Diego–San Antonio mail route.

Congress finally approved a semi-weekly overland mail contract between St Louis and San Francisco in its March 3, 1857 Post Office Appropriation bill. Meanwhile, the Post Office Department was proceeding with the San Diego–San Antonio mail route. On June 22, 1857 it signed a four-year contract with James Birch to operate a semi-monthly mail, effective July 1. This was the first single-contract transcontinental overland mail route, designated as route 8076. Not content with that, the Postmaster General also signed a six-year contract on September 16, 1857 with a consortium led by John Butterfield to fulfill the March 1857 Congressional authorization for the St. Louis-San Francisco mail route. Route 12578 was to run along a southern route between St Louis/Memphis and San Francisco, effective September 15, 1858. Figure 9-1 illustrates these routes, including the two contracts along the Central route described in Chapter Seven and the route via Panama as described in Chapter Six.



Figure 9-1. Overland mail routes, consisting of San Francisco-St Louis/Memphis (green), San Diego-San Antonio (red) and the composite Central route (blue). Water route via Panama (black).

Early Communications with Fort Yuma

An important objective in the 1856-57 Congressional actions was to ensure rapid and reliable communications with military installations along the U.S. southern border. Fort Yuma, California was an important link in that chain, and had been built in March 1851 during the 1850-53 Yuma Indian Wars. Its main purpose was to protect settlers in the Colorado River region and to keep the southern emigration route safe.

Maintaining a connection between Fort Yuma and the California coast for supplies and mail was crucial, but the harsh Colorado Desert separated the two. Early efforts concentrated on a water connection around Baja California and up the Sea of Cortez. The letter in Figure 9-2 travelled by that route.



Figure 9-2. Letter postmarked at Bethlehem, Pennsylvania on August 2, 1854 and carried by steamers via Panama to San Francisco and forwarded to Fort Yuma by military steamers.

This letter was posted at Bethlehem, Pennsylvania on August 2, 1854, prepaid six cents transcontinental postage by a pair of 1851 issue three cents stamps. This letter left New York on August 5 aboard the USMSC steamship *George Law* to Aspinwall on August 15. After crossing the Isthmus on the mostly-completed railroad, it was carried by the PMSC steamship *Sonora* to San Francisco on August 31.

The letter is addressed to Lieutenant Beekman DuBarry, care of Major Osborne Cross, Military Quartermaster at San Francisco. DuBarry's unit, the 3rd Regiment of U.S. Artillery, had begun arriving in California in May 1854. DuBarry had been assigned in June 1854 to Fort Yuma, so Cross lined out the address in red military ink and re-directed the letter. This letter was then carried by military steamship from San Francisco via San Diego and around Baja California to the mouth of the Colorado River, and then by the supply steamer *General Jessup* of the Colorado Steam Navigation Company up the Colorado River to Fort Yuma.¹

Sometime in 1854, the U.S. Army gave a contract to Samuel Warnock and Joseph Swycaffer to carry mail and government dispatches overland between San Diego and Fort Yuma.² This service was maintained until the July 1857 start of the "Jackass Mail" contract (see below), and was known as the "Desert Dispatch." Six surviving covers endorsed "via San Diego" and addressed to Lieutenant DuBarry were

carried under this contract. Dating these covers is aided by the fact that DuBarry was re-posted away from Fort Yuma on July 31, 1856. One of the DuBarry covers is shown in Figure 9-3.

This cover was sent from West Point, New York on September 14, 1855 and correctly franked 10 cents by a three cents strip of three and a one cents stamp, all of the 1851 issue. On September 20, the letter left New York City aboard the USMSC steamship *Empire City* and arrived at Aspinwall on September 29. After a trip by rail across the Panama Isthmus, it left Panama on September 30 aboard the PMSC steamship *California* and arrived in San Francisco on October 16. It was carried to San Diego by the California Steam Navigation Company, and then by the “Desert Dispatch” to Fort Yuma.



Figure 9-3. Cover endorsed “via San Diego” and sent on September 14, 1855 from West Point to Fort Yuma, California.

“Jackass Mail” Contract Route, 1857 to 1860

Widely known to collectors as the “Jackass Mail” route, the first single-contract overland mail contract to California called for two trips per month between San Antonio, Texas and San Diego, California as authorized by Congress in August 1856. The 1,476 mile trip along route 8076, shown in Figure 9-4, was to be accomplished in thirty days.

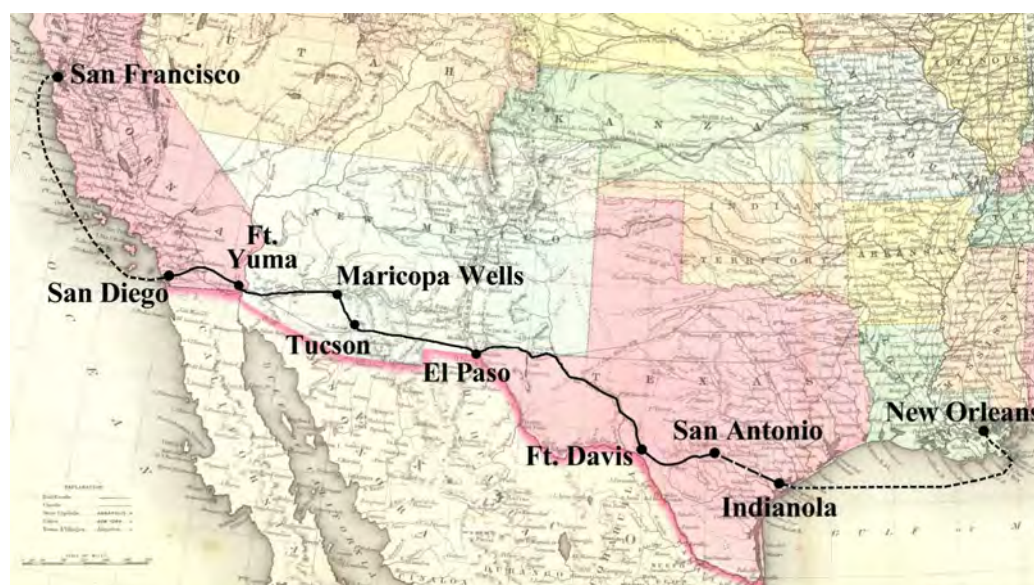


Figure 9-4. Map showing the entire San Diego and San Antonio (Jackass Mail) route.

9 - SOUTHERN OVERLAND MAIL, 1857 - 1861

The San Diego and San Antonio termini had relatively frequent connections with points beyond. From the eastern terminus at San Antonio, there was a daily stagecoach mail to Indianola which connected with five-times a week steamers to New Orleans. From the western terminus at San Diego, the California Steam Navigation Company steamers operated to San Francisco, albeit only twice-monthly. A pre-existing postal route that connected San Antonio and El Paso was incorporated into the new through route and needed only minor upgrades. The El Paso-San Diego segment of the route required more substantial upgrades, and the military road authorized in 1856 only pertained to the portion between Fort Yuma and El Paso. Mail transportation across the Colorado Desert between Fort Yuma and San Diego was the biggest challenge facing the new contractor. Drawing from the experience of the 1854-57 "Desert Dispatch" service, mules were used to carry the mail and passengers, resulting in the "Jackass Mail" moniker.

For operational purposes, route was divided into two sections. The first, between El Paso and San Antonio, was operated as a round-trip unit. The second section, between El Paso and San Diego, utilized mail carriers from each end who met in the middle at Maricopa Wells to exchange the mail. The mail schedule called for simultaneous departures from San Diego and San Antonio on the 9th and 24th of each month. The first westbound mail departed from San Antonio on July 9, 1857 with James Mason in charge. A second westbound mail departed on July 24 under Captain Skillman's direction. Mason was delayed in Texas by Indian attacks and was able to proceed only after being joined by Skillman near El Paso. As a result, the first and second westbound mails arrived at San Diego together on August 31, 1857. The first eastbound trip departed from San Diego on August 9, 1857.

A significant reduction of the mail route occurred on October 27, 1858 when the Post Office Department ordered the contractor to discontinue the section between El Paso and Fort Yuma. This alteration arose from the September 16 commencement of service along Butterfield's route 12578 between St. Louis/Memphis and San Francisco, which overlapped with route 8076 in that section. The utility of the Jackass route to the postal service diminished significantly after the heart of the route was lost to Butterfield. Then, on February 1, 1860 the route was further reduced when service between San Diego and Fort Yuma was discontinued, effective April 1, since it could be replaced by the Los Angeles-Fort Yuma segment of the Butterfield route. This left the line operating only the intra-Texas route between El Paso and San Antonio, and eliminated the service by mule. The Jackass route ended at this point.

Approximately forty trips were made over the entire route prior to the 1858 reduction, but no surviving covers are known from that period. The Postmaster General reported postal receipts on the route of \$601 from July 1858 to June 1859, so not much mail was carried. Covers on this route were to be endorsed "via San Diego and San Antonio" or similar. Other covers carried on segments of the route within Texas or between Texas and the East are known but are not considered to be "Jackass Mail."

A "Jackass Mail" cover sent after the October 1858 route reduction bears the full endorsement "Via San Diego & San Antonio." Shown in Figure 9-5, this November 1859 cover is on the imprint stationery of the Alta California Newspaper Office and is franked by a 10 cents type V stamp of the 1857 issue.³ The letter was postmarked at San Francisco for the November 21 steamship departure for San Diego. It then left San Diego on November 24 and was carried on the Jackass route to Fort Yuma. Because of the route reduction, it was transferred at Fort Yuma to the Butterfield route for the trip to El Paso, and then transferred back to route 8076 for the segment between El Paso and San Antonio. The cover is docketed as having been received on December 15 in New Orleans - a remarkable 24 days from San Francisco.



Figure 9-5. Imprint cover, endorsed via San Diego and San Antonio, sent November 21, 1859 from San Francisco to New Orleans.

The envelope contains an interesting letter datelined November 18, 1859 at San Francisco:

Dear Sir,
We wish you would upon receipt of this ascertain the time of departure of mail from your city via San Antonio and send us a short weekly letter, with the latest telegraphic news etc. by that route. The agents of the Company think they will be able to make time at least 3 days ahead of the St. Louis line. We will notify you of the success of the experiment.
Respt, Yours, F. Mac Crellish & Co.

Butterfield Contract Mail Route, 1858 to 1861

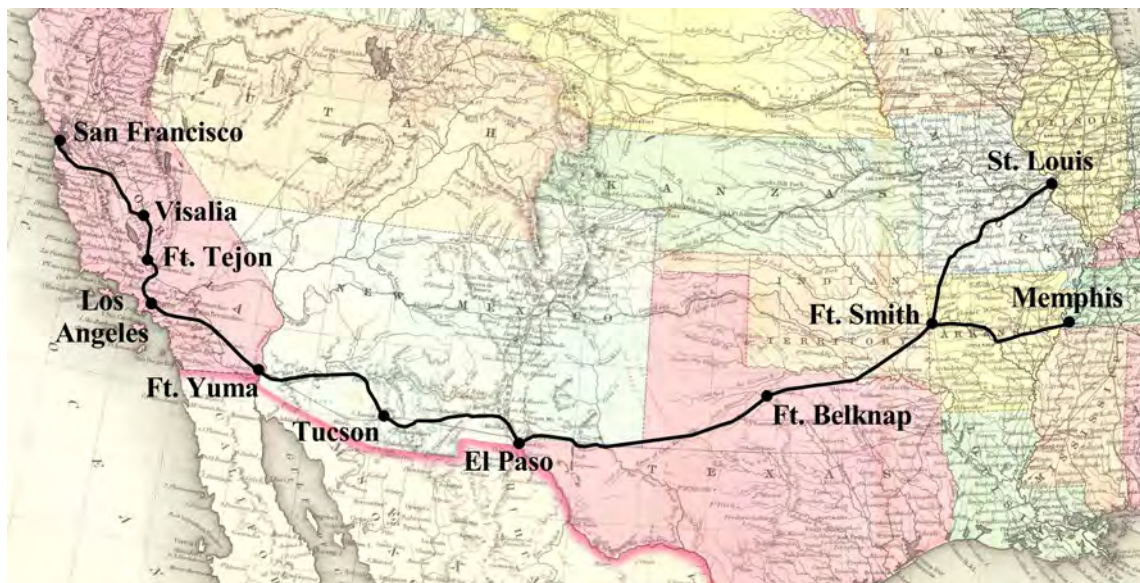


Figure 9-6. Map of the Butterfield overland mail route, showing the dual eastern termini at St. Louis and Memphis, with a bifurcation at Fort Smith.

9 - SOUTHERN OVERLAND MAIL, 1857 - 1861

Postmaster General Brown stipulated the 2,800-mile route to be followed when he awarded the twice-weekly overland contract to John Butterfield and his associates on September 16, 1857. Figure 9-6 shows the selected route, known as the Butterfield or Southern Overland route.

The map shows that two eastern termini were required, at St Louis and Memphis, Tennessee. To reach both termini, the route was bifurcated at Fort Smith, Arkansas. On the western side, the route ran through



John Butterfield, Mail Contractor, 1801-1869

- Born near Albany, NY
- Ran stagecoach lines throughout NY, 1822-49
- Organized the American Express Company in 1850
- President of the Overland Mail Company, 1857-60
- Elected Mayor of Utica, NY in 1865

California between San Francisco and Los Angeles. As mentioned above, the portion of the route between Fort Yuma and El Paso was already being serviced by the San Diego-San Antonio mail line, so this duplication was removed from the San Diego-San Antonio contract on October 27, 1858.

The value of the contract for route 12578 was \$600 thousand per year to the contractors for a twice-weekly mail in 25 days each way, but they had to man and stock the route at their own expense. Butterfield formed the Overland Mail Company for this purpose in October 1857 and began making preparations for a service

commencement in September 1858.

Per the twice-weekly westbound schedule with departures on Mondays and Thursdays, the first trip left St Louis on Thursday, September 16, 1858 and arrived in San Francisco on October 10, in just under 24 days. The first eastbound trip left San Francisco very early on September 15 and arrived in St Louis on October 9, in just under 25 days. Scheduled eastbound departures from San Francisco soon settled on Mondays and Fridays of each week. The service that ensued was very reliable, and trip times fell to 23 days or less (see Appendix F for a listing of Butterfield trips). Table 9-1 shows the initial published Butterfield schedule.

Table 9-1 Overland Mail Company through Time Schedule, September 16, 1858

Station	Eastbound	Westbound
San Francisco	Depart Mon. & Thursday	Arrive 24 days out
Visalia, California	2 days out	22 days out
San Bernardino, Calif.	4 days out	19 days out
Fort Yuma, Calif.	6 days out	18 days out
Tucson, Arizona	9 days out	15 days out
El Paso, Texas	12 days out	12 days out
Fort Smith, Arkansas	20 days out	4 days out
St. Louis, Missouri	Arrive 24 days out	Depart Mon. & Thursday

Following the September 30, 1859 expiration of the ocean mail via Panama contracts, the Postmaster General ordered on December 17, 1859 that the default route for transcontinental letter mail was overland (on the Butterfield line) rather than by steamship via Panama. This overland default order was announced in California newspapers on January 20, but not implemented in California until January 23. It dramatically increased the mail receipts carried by Butterfield to \$120 thousand in the year ending June 1860, although the line was still operating at a large loss to the Post Office Department. Prior to the December 17

announcement, only mail specifically endorsed to the Butterfield line (i.e. “Overland via Los Angeles,” or “Overland via St Louis”) was carried by Butterfield. Following the announcement, all letter mail was carried by Butterfield unless specifically endorsed otherwise.

Butterfield Mail Prior to the December 17 Overland Default Order

Mail from before the December 17, 1859 order can be identified by endorsements on the letters. Figure 9-7 shows an early eastbound example from this period. This cover with a manuscript “p(er) South(ern) Overland Mail” directive bears a San Francisco October 22, 1858 postmark and was prepaid 10 cents transcontinental postage to New York City. It departed on the Friday, October 22 Butterfield stagecoach, and arrived in St Louis on November 16. It was then carried by rail to New York.

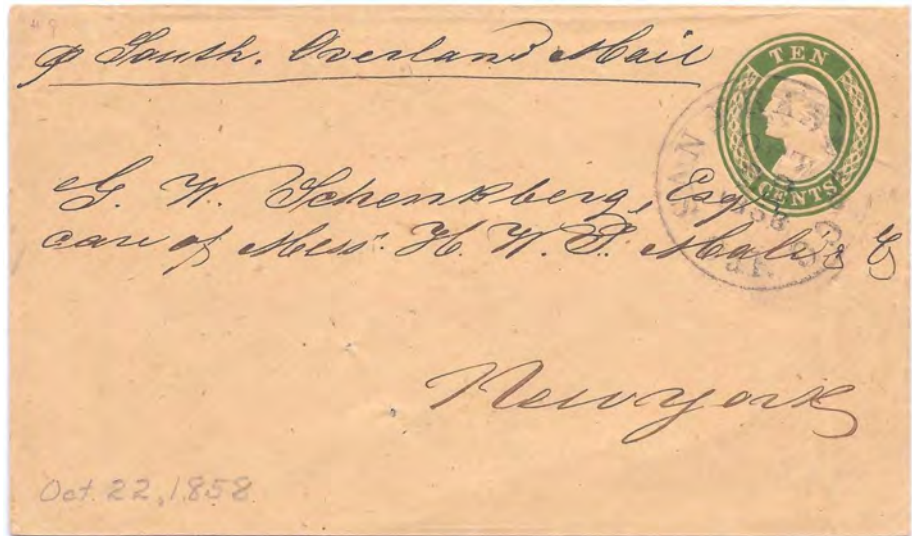


Figure 9-7. Letter endorsed per “South. Overland Mail” and sent on October 22, 1858 from San Francisco to New York.

Westbound mail is somewhat scarcer than eastbound mail. Figure 9-8 shows an August 1859 example. This letter was endorsed “Overland via St. Louis” and posted in Boston on August 29, 1859. It was prepaid 10 cents transcontinental postage to San Francisco. The Butterfield stagecoach left St Louis on Monday, September 5, but was forced to return to St Louis because of high waters. It left again on September 8, and arrived in San Francisco on October 1.

Starting in the spring of 1859, printed envelopes with overland directives began to appear, almost exclusively on eastbound mail. Figure 9-9 shows an early example. This envelope with a simple printed endorsement was postmarked in San Francisco on April 29, 1859 and prepaid 10 cents transcontinental postage to Connecticut. It departed on the Friday, April 29 Butterfield stagecoach and arrived in St Louis on May 25.



Figure 9-8. Letter endorsed “Overland via St. Louis” and sent on August 29, 1859 from Boston to San Francisco.



Figure 9-9. “Overland via Los Angeles” printed envelope sent on April 29, 1859 from San Francisco to Connecticut.

The endorsements became more elaborate with time. Figure 9-10 shows an August 1859 example.

This envelope with printed stagecoach design endorsement was postmarked in San Francisco on August 5, 1859 and prepaid 16 cents (overpay of the 15 cents French convention rate) in 1857 issue stamps to Givet, France. It departed on the Friday, August 5 Butterfield stagecoach which arrived in St Louis

on August 27, and was carried by rail to New York City. At the New York foreign exchange office, it received an August 31 “Paid” postmark with 12 cents credit (eight cents British packet and transit plus four cents French inland postage) to France. It was then routed to the Cunard steamer *Asia*, which left on that day and arrived in Liverpool on September 11. England sent the letter across the English Channel to Calais, where it entered the French mail system at a travelling railroad office with a September 12 “Et. Unis Serv. Br. A. C.” (From the United States by British service) entry marking.



Figure 9-10. Printed stagecoach envelope “from San Francisco via Los Angeles” sent on August 5, 1859 from San Francisco to France.

Californians were also agitating for the transcontinental railroad, so some printed endorsements expressed their desire for that. Figure 9-11 shows an example.

This envelope with railroad propaganda printed endorsement reading "Per Overland Stage, via Los Angeles in Hope of the (railroad)" was postmarked in San Francisco on September 23, 1859 and prepaid 10 cents transcontinental postage to Massachusetts. It departed on the Friday, September 23 Butterfield stagecoach that arrived in St Louis around October 15.



Figure 9-11. Printed railroad propaganda envelope "Per Overland Mail Stage, via Los Angeles" sent on September 23, 1859 from San Francisco to Massachusetts.

Post Office Directive Handstamps Prior to the December 17 Default Order

The San Francisco and Sacramento post offices introduced special straight-line "OVERLAND" handstamps prior to the December 17 overland default order. Examples of these auxiliary directive markings applied prior to January 23, 1860 can be interpreted as meaning: "This letter was received too late to catch the mail steamer departure from San Francisco and is being sent by the Butterfield overland mail instead."

A recent census³ records 53 covers with all of the known types of auxiliary overland handstamps. The largest group of these is the 33 covers that bear the San Francisco type 1 handstamp, used almost exclusively in the seven month period between October 1859 and April 1860. The marking, which shows a dropped "R" in the word "OVERLAND," is illustrated on the cover in Figure 9-12.



Figure 9-12. Cover sent on October 3, 1859 from Honolulu via San Francisco to New York with a type 1 San Francisco "OVERLAND" handstamp.

9 - SOUTHERN OVERLAND MAIL, 1857 - 1861

This letter originated in Hana, Maui on September 7, 1859 and was prepaid five cents Hawaiian postage plus 12 cents U.S. postage (10 cents transcontinental postage plus two cents ship fee) in cash. It received an October 3 “Honolulu U.S. Postage Paid” postmark, indicating that the 12 cents U.S. postage was credited from the Hawaiian post office to the U.S. post office. It left on October 3 aboard the ship *Yankee* which arrived in San Francisco on October 21, a day after the departure of the semi-monthly mail steamer. It was determined that the quickest service to the East was via Butterfield stagecoach, so the cover received the type 1 “OVERLAND” handstamp to indicate that the choice of this route was by the postmaster. It was also postmarked “Paid 12” for the Monday, October 24 departure of the Butterfield mail, which arrived in St. Louis on November 18. In comparison, the mail that departed San Francisco on the October 20 steamship via Panama arrived in New York from Aspinwall on November 21.

A different “OVERLAND” auxiliary marking was used in Sacramento. There are six reported covers, used in the August 1859 to January 1860 period. Figure 9-13 illustrates this marking. This cover was prepaid 10



Figure 9-13. Cover sent on October 10, 1859 from Sacramento via San Francisco to Pennsylvania with a Sacramento “OVERLAND” handstamp.

cents transcontinental postage and postmarked at Sacramento on Monday, October 10, 1859. It also bears an “OVERLAND” handstamp in matching ink. The letter was posted too late to make the October 10 Butterfield overland departure from San Francisco, so the Sacramento postmaster used the “OVERLAND” handstamp to direct that the cover should go overland on the following trip that departed on October 14, rather than by the steamer that was departing on October 20. The October 14 stagecoach arrived in St. Louis around November 15.

Different “OVERLAND” directive handstamps were also used at Nevada City and San Francisco after the December 17 overland default notice. They are described below.

Butterfield Mail After the December 17 Overland Default Order

After the Postmaster General’s December 17 overland order set the Butterfield route as the default for transcontinental letter mails, it was no longer necessary to endorse letters for the Butterfield service.

Unendorsed letters would be forwarded by the Butterfield route, rather than by the Panama steamship route, as was the case previous to the order. The effective date of the order for west coast offices was January 23, 1860. Even though it was no longer necessary to endorse letters to the Butterfield route, letters continued to be so endorsed. A remarkable example is shown in Figure 9-14.

This letter was posted in Auburn, California (north of Sacramento in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada Mountains) on March 11, 1860, prepaid 10 cents for the postage to Vermont. Although unnecessary, it carries a detailed manuscript endorsement to the Butterfield route, "Overland via Visalia, Fort Tejon, Los Angeles, Fort Yuma, El Paso & Fort Smith." The endorsement was probably intended to direct the letter from Auburn directly to Visalia to meet the stagecoach there. Accordingly, it caught the Monday, March 12 stagecoach from San Francisco, which passed through Visalia on March 14, and arrived in St. Louis around April 3.



Figure 9-14. Cover sent from Auburn, California on March 11, 1860 via the Butterfield overland mail to Vermont.

The U.S. postal rates in force between April 1855 and February 1861 were 10 cents per half ounce for distances over 3,000 miles and three cents for distances less than that. The entire length of the Butterfield route was slightly over 2,800 miles, so a letter sent between San Francisco and St. Louis (or intermediate points) would only be charged three cents postage.

Figure 9-15 shows an example of the three cents rate on a printed stagecoach envelope.

This envelope with printed stagecoach endorsement was postmarked in San Francisco on October



Figure 9-15. Printed stagecoach envelope "Per Overland Mail Stage, via Los Angeles" sent from San Francisco to New Mexico on October 19, 1860.

9 - SOUTHERN OVERLAND MAIL, 1857 - 1861

19, 1860 and prepaid three cents postage to Fort Craig, New Mexico. It departed on the Friday, October 19 Butterfield coach which passed through Mesilla, New Mexico around October 30. It was then carried from Mesilla to Fort Craig, where it was discovered that the addressee had returned to Virginia. Accordingly, the letter was postmarked at Fort Craig on November 8 and rated for three cents postage due to Stow Wall Mill, Virginia. It probably caught the October 29 stagecoach from San Francisco, which passed through Mesilla around November 9, and arrived in St. Louis on November 19. Total postage collected on this letter was six cents, but would have been 10 cents if it had originally been addressed to Virginia.

Endorsements from foreign countries are rare. Figure 9-16 shows a manuscript endorsement on a westbound March 1860 letter from France.



Figure 9-16. Letter endorsed “Malle overland - Via Los Angeles” and sent from Bordeaux, France to San Francisco on March 31, 1860.

This triple-weight letter was prepaid 2 francs 40 centimes and posted on the Bordeaux-to-Paris train on March 31, 1860. Addressed to San Francisco, the letter has a manuscript endorsement to the Butterfield route, “Malle overland – Via Los Angeles.” The French credited 27 cents (three times U.S. packet postage of six cents plus three times U.S. inland postage of three cents) to the United States and sent the letter via England to catch the New York & Havre Line steamer *Arago*, which departed from Southampton on April 4 and arrived in New York on April 18. The letter was postmarked “Paid 45” (restatement of the triple 15 cents French mail rate) in New York on April 19 and travelled by rail to St Louis, where it caught the Monday, April 23 Butterfield coach. The letter finally arrived in San Francisco around May 22.

Mail not specifically endorsed to Butterfield was still carried overland. On eastbound mail, the San Francisco postmark should correlate to a Butterfield departure. Figure 9-17 shows an example.

This letter was written in Victoria, Vancouver Island in early September 1860, and was carried by the HMS *Ganges* to San Francisco for transmission to Connecticut. The HMS *Ganges* had arrived off San Juan Island, Washington Territory in July 1859 in support of a military confrontation between the United States and Great Britain known as 1859-60 "Pig War." The ownership of the San Juan Islands was in dispute, and each side sent settlers to substantiate its claim. When an American settler shot a

British-owned pig on June 15, 1859 the bloodless (other than the pig) confrontation began, and was settled by an agreement for joint occupation of the islands in March 1860. Following that resolution, the HMS *Ganges* left Victoria on September 9 and arrived in San Francisco with this letter on September 20. The letter, prepaid 10 cents transcontinental postage, was postmarked in San Francisco on September 27. It was carried by the Butterfield stage which left the next day and arrived in St. Louis on October 21.



Figure 9-17. Letter from the HMS *Ganges* endorsed "via San Francisco" and sent from San Francisco to Connecticut on September 27, 1860.

Post Office Directive Handstamps after the December 17 Default Order

San Francisco postmaster Weller changed the default from steamer service via Panama to the Butterfield overland route on January 23, 1860. Accordingly, it is not clear why special "OVERLAND" post office directional handstamps were needed after that date.

The type 2 San Francisco "OVERLAND" marking was introduced in late 1860, distinguished by a dropped "LAN" in the lettering. Ten examples are reported with uses dated between September 6 and October 26, 1860. One of the three reported examples that originated in San Francisco is shown in Figure 9-18.



Figure 9-18. Cover sent from San Francisco on September 24, 1860 to Locarno, Switzerland with a San Francisco type 2 "OVERLAND" handstamp.

9 - SOUTHERN OVERLAND MAIL, 1857 - 1861

This letter was prepaid the 35 cents Prussian closed mail rate to Locarno, Switzerland and endorsed in manuscript to be sent overland. It was postmarked in San Francisco for the Friday, September 24, 1860 Butterfield stagecoach departure. It arrived in St Louis on October 15, and was carried by rail to New York, where it was postmarked for the October 20 departure of the Inman steamer *City of Baltimore*. New York credited 12 cents (seven cents to Prussia plus five cents for the additional postage to Switzerland) to Prussia per the manuscript magenta “12” and placed the letter in the closed mail to Prussia. It arrived in Queenstown on November 2 and, after transiting Great Britain and Belgium, was postmarked on the Verviers-to-Cologne train as fully paid per the boxed November 3 “Aachen Franco” marking. The mail clerk also marked “f2” in the lower left to indicate that postage had been paid to the second Swiss rayon. The letter was then sent via Baden per a November 4 “E.B. Curs. V” railroad marking. After passing through Lucerne, the letter arrived at Locarno on November 7, where a clerk indicated that postage had been paid by writing a red “6” (kr.) over the f2 in the lower left.

The Nevada City post office also employed a distinctive “OVERLAND” marking, known used between June and November 1860. Only two examples of this marking are known, and one of them is shown in Figure 9-19.



Figure 9-19. Cover sent on June 15, 1860 from Nevada City, California via San Francisco to Pennsylvania with a Nevada City “OVERLAND” handstamp.

This letter was prepaid 10 cents transcontinental postage to Pennsylvania and posted in Nevada City, California on June 15, 1860. It was forwarded by the Monday, June 18 Butterfield stagecoach from San Francisco, which arrived in St. Louis around July 11.

The End of the Southern Butterfield Mail Route

The election of President Lincoln in November 1860 set in motion the secession of the southern states and the Civil War. The Texas convention passed an ordinance of secession on February 1, 1861 and General David Twiggs surrendered the U.S. army forts and personnel in Texas on February 18. This gave Confederate sympathizers opportunities to confiscate equipment and stock from the Butterfield stations in Texas, and also opened the threat of Indian depredations on the stations. After reports of this were received in Washington, D.C., Congress passed the March 2, 1861 Post Office Appropriation bill which

discontinued the Butterfield overland service (route 12578) and moved the daily overland mail contract to the Central route, effective July 1, 1861. The Overland Mail Company struggled to maintain service in the March-April 1861 period. The last westbound Butterfield mail left St. Louis on March 21 and arrived in San Francisco on April 13. The final eastbound mail left San Francisco on April 1 and arrived in St. Louis on May 1. The April 5, 1861 San Francisco *Bulletin* reported that:

The Overland Mail by the Butterfield route did not leave this city today for St. Louis, as usual and will be discontinued hereafter. The following communication from Postmaster Weller fully explains the cause of the cessation of this mail,

POST OFFICE, San Francisco, April 5, 1861

EDITOR BULLETIN: You will see by the following letter received this morning from Washington, that there will be no through Overland mails dispatched from this office from this day until the 1st of June next, that being the time fixed for the commencement of the new service via the Central route.

Figure 9-20 shows a late westbound cover. This letter was prepaid 10 cents transcontinental postage and posted in Westfield, Massachusetts on March 6, 1861. It left St. Louis on the Monday, March 11 stagecoach and was docketed as received in San Francisco on April 3, a trip in the regular time of 23 days. Only three westbound trips left after this.

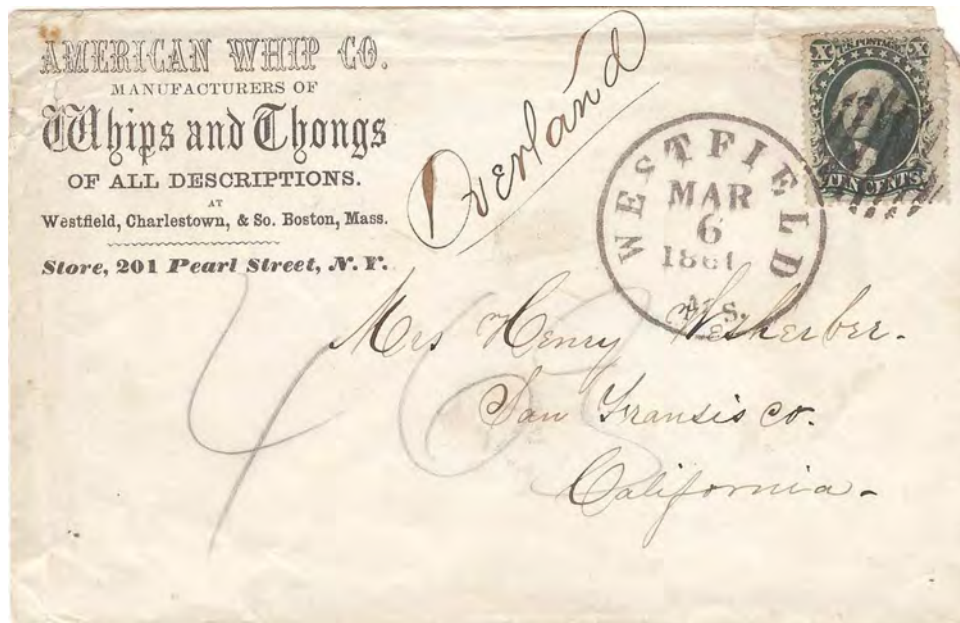


Figure 9-20. Letter endorsed “Overland” and sent on March 6, 1861 from Westfield, Massachusetts to San Francisco.

Endnotes

1. Richard Frajola, "Steamboat Mail on the Colorado River," Chronicle No. 221, Vol. 61, No. 1 (February 2009), pages 33-36.
2. Based on research by Jim Blaine and communicated privately to the authors.
3. This 10 cents payment represents an overpayment of the three cents rate for a distance of less than 3,000 miles, since the total distance was roughly 2,500 miles.
4. Frajola & Perlman, "Post Office Overland Mail Directive Handstamps."

Santa Fe Contract Mail, 1850-1861

The United States had a long-standing interest in the American southwest, culminating with the August 18, 1846 occupation of Santa Fe, New Mexico by American forces under General Stephen Kearny during the Mexican-American War. The presence of troops in Santa Fe created the need for private mail services between Santa Fe and Missouri (described in Chapter Two), which laid the foundation for the later post office contract mails along the Santa Fe trail. This chapter describes those contract mail services.

The February 2, 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which ended the Mexican-American War, ceded New Mexico to the United States. Anticipating this, a March 3, 1847 Congressional Act authorized a contract mail route between Independence, Missouri and Santa Fe via Bent's Fort, although the Post Office Department waited three years before advertising for contractors. In the interim, the Post Office established a post office at Santa Fe on October 1, 1849 even though there were no contract routes to service it.

Figure 10-1 illustrates the Santa Fe contract mail route. As described in Chapter Two, this route originally touched at Bent's Fort and served as a commercial and military route for decades. The Cimarron Cutoff

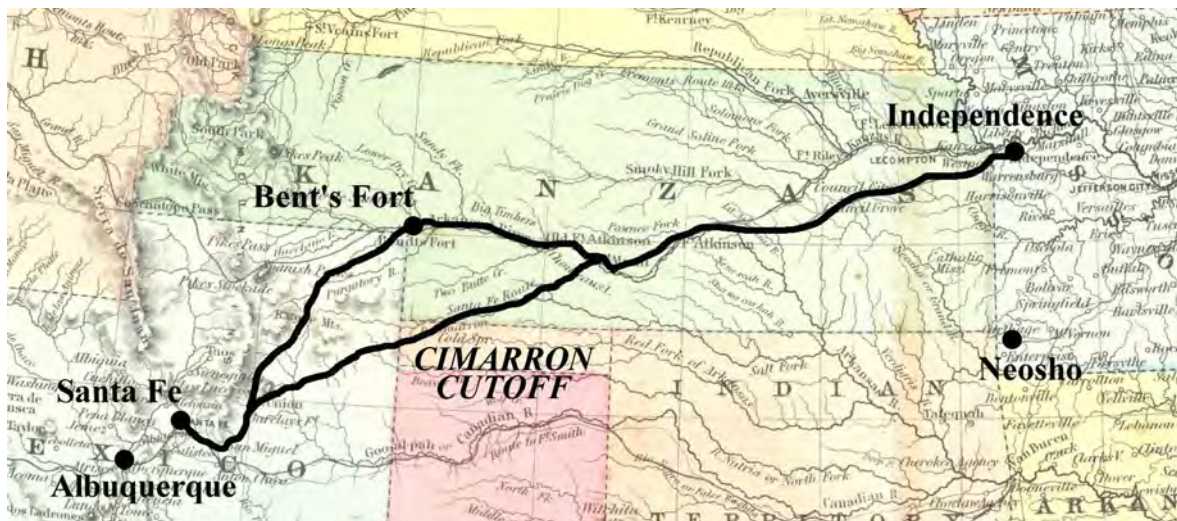


Figure 10-1. Map of the Santa Fe mail route, showing the intermediate stop at Bent's Fort and the Cimarron Cutoff, which shortened the route.

was a shorter route over less mountainous terrain that was used by the contract mail services described in this chapter. The contract mails between Santa Fe and Independence will be covered in chronological order, and then two less significant mail contracts that used the Santa Fe Trail for a portion of their routes will be described. Table 10-1 summarizes these contracts.

Table 10-1 – Mail Contracts using the Santa Fe Trail, 1850-1861

Dates of Operation To/from Santa Fe	Contractor	Route #	Terminus	Contract
Jul 1, 1850 to Jun 30, 1854	Waldo, Hall	4888	Independence	Monthly in 29 days
Jul 1, 1854 to Jun 30, 1857	Hall/Hockaday	8912	Independence	Monthly in 25 days
Jul 1, 1857 to Jun 30, 1858	Hall/Hockaday	8912	Independence	Twice-monthly in 25 days
Jul 1, 1858 to Aug 22, 1859	Hall & Porter	10532	Independence	Weekly in 20 days
Aug 29, 1859 to Jun 30, 1862	Hall & Porter	10532	Independence	Weekly in 15 days
To/from Albuquerque				
Oct 16, 1858 to Jun 30, 1859	Bowler/Green	10615	Neosho	Monthly in 25 days
To/from Stockton, Calif				
Oct 1, 1858 to Jun 30, 1859	Hall	15050	Kansas City	Monthly in 60 days

The First Mail Contract between Santa Fe and Independence, 1850 to 1854

Although authorized to implement a contract mail route by the March 3, 1847 Act, the post office waited until the spring of 1850 to advertise for proposals. Waldo, Hall & Company of Independence was the winning bidder for contract route 4888 between Santa Fe and Independence, and signed a four-year contract on May 11, 1850. Trips were monthly in 29 days each way, with service to begin on July 1, 1850.

Departures were scheduled for the first of each month at 8am from each terminus of the line. The first trip left Independence as scheduled on July 1, 1850 and arrived in Santa Fe about 28 days later. It turned around quickly, and left Santa Fe on August 1, for a 28 day trip to Independence. Next, a heavy mail left Independence on September 1 and reached Santa Fe on September 24. Starting October 1, simultaneous departures were made from each terminus. Service was very reliable, in spite of continual harassment by Indian war parties. The July 1850 *Missouri Commonwealth* of Independence explained why:

The stages are got up in elegant style, and are each arranged to convey eight passengers. The bodies are beautifully painted and made water-tight, with a view of using them as boats in ferrying streams. The team consists of six mules to each coach. The mail is guarded by eight men, armed as follows: Each man has at his side, fastened in the stage, one of Colt's revolving rifles, in a holster below one of Colt's long revolvers, and in his belt a small Colt's revolver, besides a hunting knife; so that these eight men are ready, in case of attack, to discharge 136 shots without having to reload. This is equal to a small army armed as in the ancient times, and from the looks of this escort, ready as they are either for offensive or defensive warfare with the savages, we have no fears for the safety of the mails. The accommodating contractors have established a sort of base of refitting at Council Grove, a distance of 150 miles from this city, and have sent out a blacksmith, and a number of men to cut and cure hay, with a quantity of animals, grain, and provisions; and we understand they intend to make a sort of traveling station there, and to commence a farm. They also, we believe, intend to make a similar settlement at Walnut Creek next season. Two of their stages will start from here the first of every month.

The citizens of Santa Fe soon agitated for a more frequent service. They sent a petition to the Postmaster General on February 5, 1851 expressing satisfaction with the existing service but requesting a semi-monthly mail between Santa Fe and Independence:

The undersigned, Petitioners, Citizens of New Mexico, would respectfully represent to your Honor, that, on the first day of July last, a monthly mail was established between Independence, in the State of Missouri, and Santa Fe, in the Territory of New Mexico; that the enterprise, energy, and untiring perseverance of the Contractors, up to this time, have delivered this mail, both at Independence and this place, with a punctuality not excelled, if equaled, by that of other Contractors in the United States...all demand the establishment of, at least, a SEMI-MONTHLY MAIL between Independence and Santa Fe.

The Post Office Department would wait six years before acting on this request.

An early letter carried on route 4888 is illustrated in Figure 10-2. This unpaid letter was postmarked at Santa Fe¹ on March 1, 1851 to correspond with the departure of the seventh contract stagecoach trip to Independence. It was rated 10 cents due for the over 300 miles rate to Waterford, NY.



Figure 10-2. Letter postmarked in Santa Fe on March 1, 1851 and carried on route 4888 to Independence, Missouri.

It is from Major Oliver Lathrop Shepherd, who was stationed at Fort Marcy in Santa Fe. Fort Marcy was a defensive structure constructed by Kearny's Army of the West in August 1846 to consolidate its occupation of Santa Fe. Shepherd was later appointed Lieutenant-Colonel of the U.S. 18th Infantry in the Army of the Ohio during the Civil War. He was brevetted to Major General in 1865 for his gallant services at the battle of Stone's River.

10 - SANTA FE CONTRACT MAIL, 1850 - 1861

Santa Fe used a manuscript postmark in the same period as the datestamp illustrated in Figure 10-2. Figure 10-3 shows the latest known use of the manuscript postmark.

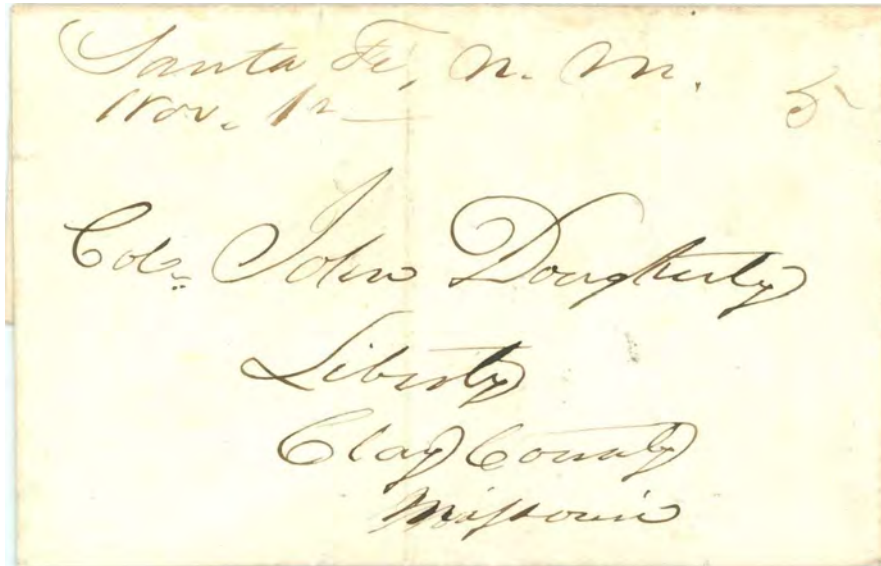


Figure 10-3. Letter postmarked in Santa Fe on November 1, 1851 and carried on route 4888 to Independence.

This letter was datelined "Santa Fe 31 Oct 1851" by Abraham Woolley, an Indian Agent in the New Mexico Territory. It was rated for five cents due and postmarked in manuscript for the November 1 departure of the 15th contract stagecoach from Santa Fe. The stage arrived in Independence around October 30, and the letter was delivered to nearby Liberty.

Eastbound letters carried on route 4888 are uncommon, but letters sent to Santa Fe during this period are particularly elusive. Figure 10-4 shows an example addressed to Dr. Samuel Woodhouse, surgeon and



Figure 10-4. Letter postmarked in Jerseyville, Illinois on March 20, 1851 and carried on route 4888 to Santa Fe.

naturalist attached to Captain Lorenzo Sitgreaves' 1851 scientific and military expedition to explore the Zuni and Colorado Rivers. The expedition set out from Santa Fe on August 15, 1851 and proceeded west via the Zuni Pueblo to Fort Yuma, California. Along the way, they were attacked by hostile Mohave Indians, and Dr. Woodhouse was wounded in the leg.

This unpaid letter was posted in Jerseyville, Illinois on March 20, 1851 and rated 10 cents due for the over 300 miles rate to Santa Fe. The largely personal letter was directed to the, "Capt. Sitgreaves exploring party" at Santa Fe, Texas. The incorrect Texas directive was crossed out, and it was carried on the April 1 stagecoach from Missouri to Santa Fe.

Much of the mail from Santa Fe in this period was from military personnel stationed there. Figure 10-5 shows a May 1852 letter endorsed "Official Business."

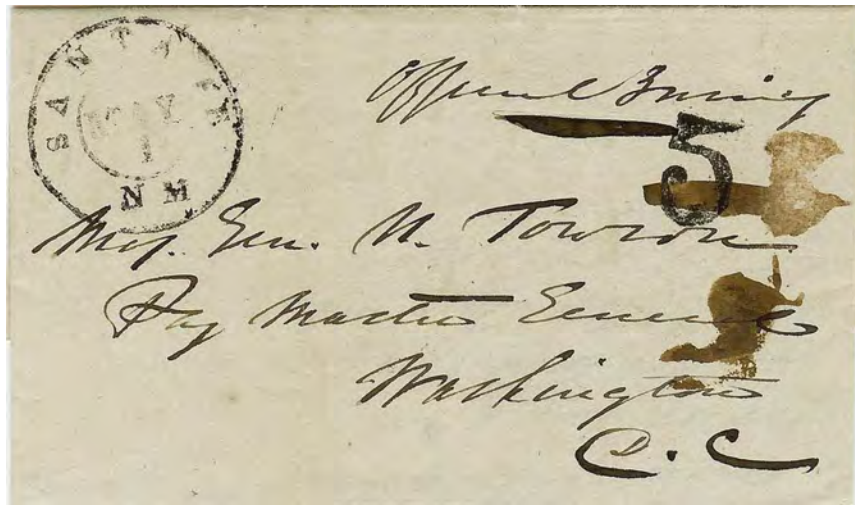


Figure 10-5. Letter postmarked in Santa Fe on May 1, 1852 and carried on route 4888 to Independence.

This unpaid letter was postmarked at Santa Fe² on May 1, 1852 to correspond with the departure date for the 20th contract stagecoach trip to Independence. It was rated for five cents due,³ but this was later crossed out in recognition of the free frank for official correspondence.

It is from Brevet Lieutenant Colonel Horace Brooks to Major General Towson, Paymaster General at Washington. Brooks graduated from West Point in 1835, and served with distinction with the 2nd Artillery Regiment during the Second Seminole War, and in the Mexican-American War. He later served as Colonel of the 4th U.S. Artillery Regiment in the Civil War.

The Second Mail Contract between Santa Fe and Independence, 1854-1858

The Waldo, Hall & Company contract for route 4888 expired on June 30, 1854. The post office reduced the contractual trip time to 25 days, re-numbered the route to 8912, and granted a four-year monthly mail contract to Jacob Hall and John Hockaday, effective July 1, 1854. Departures were still on the first of each month, but the post office retained an option to increase the trips to twice-monthly at twice the compensation.

10 - SANTA FE CONTRACT MAIL, 1850 - 1861

Despite the regularity of the line, not much mail is known from this period. Figure 10-6 shows a letter postmarked at Santa Fe⁴ on September 1, 1856 for the departure of the stagecoach for Independence. It



Figure 10-6. Letter postmarked in Santa Fe on September 1, 1856 and carried on route 8912 to Independence, Missouri.

was prepaid 21 cents⁵ for the American packet rate via England to France. Postmarked “New York Am Pkt” on October 4 for the departure of the American Ocean Line steamer *Washington*, it arrived in Southampton, England on October 18. By the time it reached Calais, France, it had been accidentally combined with the October 8 British packet mail from Boston and received an “Etats-Unis Paq. Br. Calais” (British packet from the United States) French entry marking on October 19. Consequently, 13 décimes⁶ British packet postage due was assessed.

The option to increase the frequency of trips was exercised on July 1, 1857 so departures were twice-monthly after that date, leaving on the 1st and the 15th of each month. The Hall-Hockaday contract expired a year later, on June 30, 1858.

The Third Mail Contract between Santa Fe and Independence, 1858-1862

The post office decided to increase the frequency on the Santa Fe - Independence route to weekly and re-numbered it as Route 10532. Trips were to be made in 20 days, leaving every Monday at 8am from each terminus. On April 24, 1858 a contract was signed with Hall & Porter, effective July 1. Figure 10-7 shows a letter carried under this contract.

This cover was postmarked at Santa Fe⁷ for the Monday, August 9, 1858 for the weekly stagecoach departure to Independence, where it arrived around August 29. The letter was prepaid the double-weight French mail rate by a strip of three 10 cents stamps.⁸ It was postmarked on September 4 in New York to coincide with the sailing of the Vanderbilt Line’s *Ariel*, which arrived in Le Havre on September 19.

Starting Monday, August 29, 1859 Hall & Porter implemented a 15-day schedule in response to a Post Office Department order. They then sold their stagecoaches and livestock to the Missouri Stage Company on December 23, 1860. After that date, the Missouri Stage Co. fulfilled the mail contract for route 10532 under subcontract to Hall & Porter.



Figure 10-7. Letter postmarked in Santa Fe on August 9, 1858 and carried on route 10532 to Independence.

Figure 10-8 shows a letter carried by the Missouri Stage Company. This letter was written by U.S. army surgeon Charles H. Alden, who stopped at Santa Fe on his way from Fort Garland (in today's Colorado) to Mesilla, New Mexico where he was captured along with much of the U.S. 7th Infantry by Confederate forces on July 27, 1861. The letter was prepaid three cents and postmarked in Santa Fe on Monday, May 27, 1861 for the departure of the weekly stagecoach to Independence.

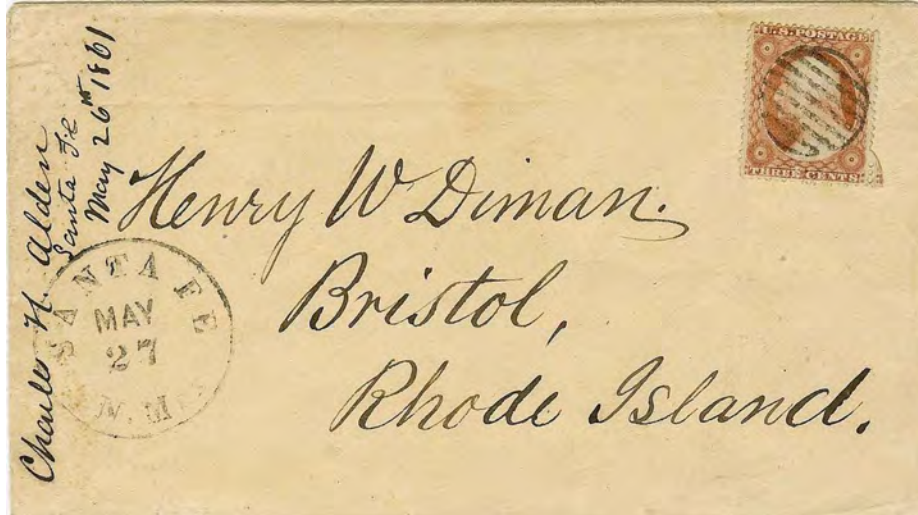


Figure 10-8. Letter postmarked in Santa Fe on May 27, 1861 and carried on route 10532 to Independence.

Contract Mail between Neosho and Albuquerque, 1858-59

On August 3, 1854 Congress approved a mail route between Neosho, Missouri and Albuquerque, New Mexico. The Post Office Department, however, wisely waited for four years to act on this authorization. On May 27, 1858 they signed a four-year contract for mail route 10615 with Thomas Bowler (of Santa Fe)

10 - SANTA FE CONTRACT MAIL, 1850 - 1861

and Frank Green for a monthly mail using Beale's wagon route along the Canadian River. Trips in 25 days were to leave on the 15th of each month and arrive on the 10th of the following month, with service to start between October 1 and November 1. A map of contract route number 10615 is shown in Figure 10-9.



Lt. (USN) Edward Fitzgerald Beale, 1822-1893

- Graduated from Naval Academy in 1842
- Sailed to California with Admiral Stockton, 1846
- Rescued Kearny at San Pasqual battle in 1847
- Crossed Panama to U.S. with gold samples in 1848
- Appointed to survey Beale's wagon route in 1857
- Ambassador to Austria-Hungary in 1876

Service began normally with the first westbound departure from Neosho on October 16, 1858. This mail accompanied Lieutenant Beale's military detachment for safety, and arrived in Santa Fe on January 2 before continuing on to Albuquerque. Washington's *Daily Globe* of January 25, 1859 ominously reported signs of impending Indian hostilities:

The Neosho mail arrived at Santa Fe on the 2d, having been detained by the slow movements of Lieutenant Beale's party. They met no hostile Indians, but signs of an approaching outbreak were daily visible. They were evidently only deterred by the strength of the mail company's force.



Figure 10-9. Map of contract mail route 10615 between Albuquerque, New Mexico Territory and Neosho, Missouri.

The first eastbound mail from Albuquerque departed on October 17, 1858. It made relatively good time, arriving in Neosho on November 17, although it was attacked, as reported in the December 3 New York *Herald*:

St. Louis, Dec. 2, 1858

The first daily mail from Albuquerque, New Mexico, arrived at Neosho, Missouri, on the 17th ult., thirty-one days out. The mail was intercepted by a war party of Kiowa Indians, but a shot from the mail party, wounding the principal chief, put them to flight.

The second Albuquerque mail left on November 15 and met with disaster. A correspondent for the *Kansas Journal of Commerce* reported from Santa Fe on November 21, 1858 that:

Major Wells, connected with the stage line, arrived here this morning from on the Neosho mail route, having deemed it unsafe to proceed with the mail, after hearing of that deplorable disaster which, he informs me, occurred to the last outgoing mail party. It seems that the party which left Albuquerque on the 15th instant, for Neosho, had some of their animals stolen by the Indians, the Comanches, of the Plains, which the party, however, pursued and recovered. The Indians thereupon largely reinforced themselves and attacked the mail party, which after several repulses, they eventually succeeded in overpowering. *The entire party was massacred, and all the outfit, including the mail, was destroyed.*

However, not all of the party were killed, as was later reported on March 13, 1859 from St. Louis.¹⁰

The loss of the Neosho and Albuquerque mail of last November, is confirmed by the arrival here of John Hall, the conductor, who makes affidavit to the effect that when about two days' march behind Lieut. Beale's party, he was attacked by forty Comanches, badly wounded and taken prisoner. The mail was destroyed. Hall escaped from the Indians in February, and, after enduring great hardships, succeeded in reaching the settlements in safety.

The Wells report suggests that the November 15 mail from Neosho was turned back for safety. There are no further reports of mails on route 10615, and the Postmaster General reported only \$320 in postal receipts for 1858-59. Accordingly, he notified Bowler on May 17, 1859 that the contract for route 10615 was terminated, effective July 1. No letters carried on this route are known to have survived.

Contract Mail between Kansas City and Stockton, 1858-59

On March 3, 1855 Congress authorized a mail route between Independence, Missouri and Stockton, California via Albuquerque. Three years later, the Post Office Department signed a four-year contract for mail route 15050 with Jacob Hall on May 28, 1858. The contract called for a monthly mail between Kansas City, Missouri and Stockton via Santa Fe and Albuquerque in 60 days. Service was to start on October 1. Figure 10-10 shows the map of route 15050.



Figure 10-10. Map of contract mail route 15050 between Stockton, California and Kansas City, Missouri via Santa Fe and Albuquerque.

10 - SANTA FE CONTRACT MAIL, 1850 - 1861

Hall transferred this contract to Barrow, Porter & Crenshaw on August 14, 1858. Hall and Porter were no strangers, since they were partners on the third Independence-Santa Fe mail contract, as described above. This allowed them to be aggressive in pursuing the contract for route 15050, since they already had a stagecoach service operating on the segment between Missouri and Santa Fe.

The September 5, 1858 *Kansas City Journal*¹¹ grandly reported the departure of the stocking trip for Barrow, Porter & Crenshaw's "Great Central Mail Line" as follows:

OVERLAND ROUTE TO STOCKTON. – The first train of the Great Central Mail Line, Barrow, Porter & Co., proprietors, from Kansas City to California, left yesterday. It consisted of twelve wagons, one hundred mules and twenty-five men. The coaches, with one hundred more mules, and an additional force of twenty-five men, will follow in a few days.

These advance parties are sent out to fix the stations and provide accommodations for the regular mail train, which leaves this city on the first of October. The whole station equipment, when organized, will be the most extensive on the American continent...Thus has this great central route, at once taken the precedence of all others as the overland route to California, not only for the mails, but for all the purposes of trade, traffic and commerce.

Westbound service began as scheduled on October 1, 1858 from Kansas City. After a rapid 54-day trip, the mail arrived in Stockton, California on November 24.¹² The first eastbound mail party did not fare as well. Departing from Stockton with 50-60 letters on November 1, they encountered hostile Indians north of Los Angeles, and took shelter in nearby Fort Tejon. They met the first westbound party there and returned to Stockton on November 24. The first successful eastbound mail arrived in Kansas City on March 1, 1859.¹³ This must have been the mail party that departed from Stockton on January 1.

The second and last successful westbound mail left Kansas City on April 1, 1859 and arrived at Stockton on May 29. Along the way, they encountered the eastbound mail party, which reached Santa Fe on May 2.¹⁴ This must have been the mail that left Stockton on April 1. The final eastbound mail left Stockton on June 1 and arrived at Kansas City on July 23,¹⁵ in a rapid 53 days.

In announcing the May 11, 1859 termination of the "Kansas and Stockton Mail" in his 1859 report, the Postmaster General stated that:

During the period of nine months that it was in operation, there were but four arrivals of through mails at Kansas, and but two at Stockton. The whole mail matter received at Kansas from Stockton consisted of two letters and twenty-six newspapers while it appears, from the returns, that but a single letter reached Stockton from Kansas.

He also reported that total receipts of \$1,255 arose mainly from letters carried over partial sections of the route. The termination was effective on July 1, 1859.

The Postmaster General's report identified a total of six successful trips by the line. The two westbound trips were confirmed by newspaper reports, but only three¹⁶ of the four successful eastbound trips were reported. The fourth successful eastbound trip must have left Stockton on February 1, 1859. This is confirmed by the letter in Figure 10-11, which is the only surviving letter carried on the Stockton-Kansas City contract mail route.



Figure 10-11. Letter postmarked in Dutch Flat, California on January 21, 1859 and carried on route 15050 to Kansas City, Missouri.

This letter was postmarked in Dutch Flat, California (northeast of Sacramento in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada Mountains) on January¹⁷ 21, 1859. It was endorsed “Overland via Stockton” and prepaid 10 cents postage to Wisconsin. It reached Stockton in time for the February 1 mail to Kansas City. With a normal transit time, it would have reached Kansas City around March 29.

The nearly simultaneous terminations of the Neosho-Albuquerque and Kansas City-Stockton contract mail routes were reported widely. The *Ohio State Journal* included the notice in its May 17, 1859 issue:

WASHINGTON, MAY 12 – The Territorial Overland mail routes between Neosho, Missouri, and Albuquerque, New Mexico, and between Kansas, Missouri and Stockton, California, which were let to contractors last year, have been discontinued, to take effect from the 1st of July next.

The failure of Congress to make the usual appropriations for the Postoffice Department, the interruptions of the mails mostly from the presence of hostile Indians along the lines, and the consequent obstruction of mail matter, to a comparatively insignificant amount, are the reasons alleged for the discontinuance of this overland service.

Endnotes

1. This is a Dike-Todsen type 1 Santa Fe postmark, which they record as used from January 1 to June 1, 1851.
2. This is a Dike-Todsen type 3 Santa Fe postmark, which they record as used from April to August 1852.
3. The July 1851 rates were three cents per half ounce up to 3,000 miles, and unpaid letters were assessed 5 cents due.
4. This is a Dike-Todsen type 9 Santa Fe postmark, which they record as used until May 1862.
5. 1851 Issue one cent type IV and a pair of the 1855 issue 10 cents type II.
6. Eight décimes for the British packet and transit postage plus 5 décimes for French inland postage. Had the letter been correctly rated as an American packet letter via England, only 8 décimes (3 décimes British transit plus 5 décimes French inland) would have been assessed.
7. This is a Dike-Todsen type 10 Santa Fe postmark.
8. The 1857 U.S.-France postal treaty established a fully-paid rate of 15 cents per quarter ounce, effective April 1. Amounts due to the receiving country were expressed in credit markings depending on which type of packet carried the letter. In this case, the New York credit to France was a double-weight six cents for French inland postage, since an American packet carried the letter directly to France. The strip of three 1857 issue 10 cents stamps making up the double rate consists of types II-III-II.
9. This is a Dike-Todsen type 6 Santa Fe postmark, recorded as used from February 1853 to November 1863.
10. Reported in the March 15, 1859 Alexandria Gazette.
11. Published in the September 12, 1858 Missouri Republican.
12. Reported in the 1859 Postmaster General's Report.
13. Reported in the March 1, 1859 Kansas City Daily Western Journal of Commerce.
14. Reported in the May 27, 1859 Westport, Missouri Border Star.
15. Reported in the July 23, 1859 Kansas City Daily Western Journal of Commerce.
16. The trips that departed from Stockton on January 1, April 1 and June 1, as described in the text of this chapter.
17. The month was originally written in pencil, but was partially erased sometime later.

via Tehuantepec

Chapter Eleven

Mail Via Tehuantepec, 1858-1859

As the September 30, 1859 expiration of the ten-year transcontinental mail contracts via Panama approached, the Post Office Department feverishly experimented with less expensive alternatives. In 1857-58, seven different transcontinental routes were given mail contracts or had their contract terms improved:

- The San Diego-San Antonio overland route contract was signed on June 22, 1857
- The Butterfield overland route contract was signed on September 16, 1857
- The Missouri-Salt Lake City overland route contract was upgraded to weekly on April 8, 1858
- The Neosho, Missouri-Albuquerque overland route contract was signed on May 27, 1858
- The Kansas City-Stockton overland route contract was signed on May 28, 1858
- The Tehuantepec route contract was signed on June 8, 1858
- The Placerville-Salt Lake City overland route contract was upgraded to weekly on June 19, 1858

With the exception of the Butterfield contract, all of these contracts were terminated or significantly cut back by the end of 1859. This chapter describes the background and operation of the Tehuantepec route contract, which was one of the contracts not renewed in 1859.

The Route via Tehuantepec

In the search for an easy and inexpensive route between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, Mexico's Isthmus of Tehuantepec had long attracted much attention. The Isthmus forms a narrow neck between two ranges of the Sierra Madre Mountains and abuts the Gulf of Mexico at its northern extremity, with easy access to New Orleans. This route, roughly four thousand miles in length, is about two thousand miles shorter than the Panama route (described in Chapter Six). Figure 11-1 shows the route.



Figure 11-1. Map of the route via Tehuantepec, Mexico.

11 - MAIL VIA TEHUANTEPEC, 1858 - 1859



Figure 11-2. Detailed map of the route across the Isthmus of Tehuantepec.

Starting in the East, this route required a steamship trip across the Gulf of Mexico from New Orleans to the Mexican port city of Coatzacoalcas and then 20 miles up the navigable Coatzacoalcas River to Minatitlán. A shallow draft steamer was then used to travel about ninety miles farther up the river to Suchil, where mail and passengers were transferred to stagecoaches for the 110-mile overland trip via Tehuantepec to Ventosa on the Pacific Ocean. From Acapulco - a short steamship hop from Ventosa - the twice-monthly Pacific Mail Steamship Co. (PMSS) steamships provided the final leg of the trip to San Francisco. Westbound trips followed the same itinerary in the opposite direction. Figure 11-2 shows a detailed map of the Isthmus, laying out the transfer points.

Early Interest in the Isthmus of Tehuantepec

Mexico's grand vision for the Isthmus contemplated a railroad linking the two coasts. In 1842, Mexican President Santa Ana awarded a grant to José de Garay to construct a canal or railroad across the Isthmus. Lacking funding, De Garay sold his concession, and it ultimately ended up in the hands of Peter A. Hargous of New Orleans on February 5, 1849. At this time, the California gold rush was just gathering steam, so Hargous saw an opportunity to provide an alternate route for the emigrant traffic to San Francisco. He organized the New Orleans Company, which undertook a survey of the Isthmus route and placed the steamship *Alabama* on the route across the Gulf of Mexico between New Orleans and Minatitlán. The *Alabama's* first trip left New Orleans on December 10, 1850 and reached Vera Cruz on December 16. It then continued for 235 miles along the coast and up the river to Suchil via Minatitlán. Passengers then took mules for the remaining 110 miles to Ventosa, where they had to arrange for a ship to San Francisco. The *Alabama* made five more round trips until May 22, 1851, when Mexico revoked the Garay concession for fear that American interests would colonize the transit.

A chronic shortage of funds caused the Mexican government to re-instate the Tehuantepec concession in February 1853. Albert G. Sloo¹ was the successful bidder, and proposed to carry the U.S. mails via Tehuantepec in conformity with the March 3, 1853 Post Office Appropriations Bill, which called for a mail route across the Isthmus. This was rejected by the Post Office Department as too expensive, so Sloo

was unable to proceed with his concession. The U.S. Government finally took steps to assure the right of transit in the December 30, 1853 Gadsden Treaty², which obtained a perpetual right-of-way across the Isthmus of Tehuantepec for U.S. mails in closed letter bags.

Congress then took more definitive action, authorizing a contract route between New Orleans and San Francisco via the Isthmus of Tehuantepec in the March 3, 1855 Postal Act. The Post Office Department advertised for bids in the spring of 1856, but received no responses. After the route was



James Gadsden, Diplomat and Soldier, 1788-1858

- Born in South Carolina
- Received degree from Yale College in 1806
- Rose to rank of Colonel in U.S. Army, 1812-23
- President of South Carolina Railroad, 1840-50
- Appointed Minister to Mexico and negotiated the Gadsden Purchase in 1853

re-advertised in December 1857, the Post Office Department was able to negotiate a satisfactory one-year contract with the Louisiana Tehuantepec Company (LTC) on June 8, 1858. In his 1858 report to Congress, the Postmaster General described the contract for Route 8162:

To convey mails from New Orleans, by Minatitlan, Suchil, Ventosa, and Acapulco, to San Francisco, twice a month, and back, in safe and substantial steamers between New Orleans and Minatitlan; in safe and substantial river steamers between Minatitlan and Suchil, and in post coaches or good covered spring wagons between Suchil and the Pacific; the residue of the route to San Francisco in steamers, the pay to be at the rate of \$286,000 per annum, with the understanding that the mails may be exchanged with the line between Panama and San Francisco, at or near Acapulco, without change of pay; and with the further understanding that the mails may be exchanged with the aforesaid line at Ventosa, or other port within a short distance of that place, at the annual compensation of \$250,000. Service to commence at any time between the first day of October and the first day of November, 1858, and to terminate on the thirtieth day of September, 1859. Each trip to be performed in fifteen days.

The one year contract term was designed to stimulate competition for the October 1, 1859 renewal of the Ocean mail contracts via Panama. The 1859 Postmaster General report to Congress indicated that the actual mail subsidy for the route was at the rate of \$250 thousand per annum, so the LTC opted to connect with the Pacific Mail Steamship Co. (PMSS) steamships at Ventosa, rather than at Acapulco.

The Louisiana Tehuantepec Company Sailing Schedule

The October 27, 1858 New Orleans *Times-Picayune* described the itinerary for westbound mail:

The *Quaker City* forms the first link of the Pacific connection with New Orleans, departing from our wharves regularly on the 12th and 27th of each month. At Minatitlan, the iron steamer Suchil takes its mails and passengers up the Coatzacoalcas to Suchil, eighty-seven miles. From Suchil the trip is made by stages overland, a distance of one hundred and twelve miles, to Ventosa, on the Pacific...The steamer *Oregon*, on the Pacific side of the Isthmus, leaves Ventosa on the 30th inst., with the passengers and mails of the *Quaker City*, for Acapulco, distant thirty-six hours, where steamers of the Pacific Mail Steamship Company coal. Here a connection is formed with the vessels of that line, which perform the service of the Tehuantepec Company from Acapulco to San Francisco.

The steamship leg across the Gulf of Mexico between New Orleans and Minatitlan took three days, while the trip across the Isthmus between Minatitlan and Ventosa took three to four days. The sea trip between Ventosa and Acapulco in the PMSS steamer *Oregon* took slightly more than a day, and the stretch between Acapulco and San Francisco in PMSS steamships took a consistent seven to eight days. With smooth connections, the contract time of fifteen days could be easily accomplished. However, the contract time was never met in the westbound direction, since passengers and mail generally had to wait several days for the connection with the PMSS steamship at Acapulco.

11 - MAIL VIA TEHUANTEPEC, 1858 - 1859

The first westbound trip left New Orleans on October 27, 1858 and arrived in San Francisco after a trip of eighteen days. Its detailed itinerary was partially described in the November 20, 1858 Marysville *Weekly California Express*.

The steamer *Quaker City* left New Orleans at 8 o'clock A.M. the 27th October, with mail and passengers, and arrived at Minatitlan at 10 o'clock A.M. on the 30th October. Steamer *Suchil* left Minatitlan at 1 o'clock P.M. same day, and arrived at Suchil at 10 o'clock A.M. on the 31st of October. Left Suchil overland, at 12 o'clock same day; arrived at the pass Nisi Conejo at 12 o'clock A.M. 1st of November. At 3 o'clock left pass Nisi Conejo, and arrived at San Jeronimo at 2 o'clock A.M., 2nd November; started from there at 7 o'clock A.M., same day, and arrived at Tehuantepec at half-past 12 o'clock P.M. Same day left for Ventosa at 4 o'clock, and arrived at the latter place at 7 P.M., making time as follows:

New Orleans to Minatitlan.....	71	hours
Minatitlan to Suchil.....	21	“
Suchil to Ventosa.....	<u>55</u>	“
	147	hours

Or 6 days and 3 hours

The average duration of the twenty-three westbound trips was nineteen days. Table 11-1 shows the complete westbound sailing schedule.

Table 11-1 Westbound Sailings of the Louisiana Tehuantepec Line

Trip #	Depart New Orleans	LTC Steamer	Arrive Minatitlan	Depart Acapulco	PMSS Steamer	Arrive San Francisco
WT1	Oct 27, 1858	<i>Quaker City</i>	Oct 30, 1858	Nov 7, 1858	<i>Golden Gate</i> ⁴	Nov 14, 1858
WT2	Nov 12, 1858	<i>Quaker City</i>	Nov 15, 1858	Nov 23, 1858	<i>J.L. Stephens</i> ⁵	Dec 1, 1858
WT3	Nov 27, 1858	<i>Quaker City</i>	Nov 30, 1858	Dec 21, 1858	<i>Golden Age</i> ⁶	Dec 28, 1858
WT4	Dec 12, 1858	<i>Quaker City</i>	Dec 15, 1858	Dec 21, 1858	<i>Golden Age</i>	Dec 28, 1858
WT5	Dec 27, 1858	<i>Quaker City</i>	Dec 30, 1858	Jan 6, 1859	<i>Golden Gate</i>	Jan 13, 1859
WT6	Jan 13, 1859	<i>Quaker City</i>	Jan 16, 1859	Jan 22, 1859	<i>J.L. Stephens</i>	Jan 29, 1859
WT7	Jan 28, 1859	<i>Quaker City</i>	Jan 31, 1859*	Feb 21, 1859*	<i>Sonora</i> ⁷	Mar 1, 1859
WT8	Feb 12, 1859	<i>Quaker City</i>	Feb 15, 1859	Feb 21, 1859*	<i>Sonora</i>	Mar 1, 1859
WT9	Feb 26, 1859	<i>Quaker City</i>	Mar 1, 1859	Mar 9, 1859*	<i>J.L. Stephens</i>	Mar 17, 1859
WT10	Mar 12, 1859	<i>Quaker City</i>	Mar 15, 1859	Mar 22, 1859*	<i>Golden Age</i>	Mar 29, 1859
WT11	Mar 27, 1859	<i>Quaker City</i>	Mar 30, 1859	Apr 8, 1859*	<i>Sonora</i>	Apr 17, 1859
WT12	Apr 12, 1859	<i>Coatzacoalcas</i>	Apr 15, 1859	Apr 23, 1859*	<i>J.L. Stephens</i>	May 1, 1859
WT13	Apr 27, 1859	<i>Coatzacoalcas</i>	Apr 30, 1859	May 9, 1859*	<i>Golden Age</i>	May 15, 1859
WT14	May 12, 1859	<i>Coatzacoalcas</i>	May 15, 1859	May 23, 1859*	<i>Sonora</i>	Jun 1, 1859
WT15	May 27, 1859	<i>Coatzacoalcas</i>	May 30, 1859	Jun 7, 1859*	<i>Golden Gate</i>	Jun 13, 1859
WT16	Jun 12, 1859	<i>W.H. Webb</i>	Jun 16, 1859	Jun 23, 1859*	<i>J.L. Stephens</i>	Jul 2, 1859
WT17	Jun 27, 1859	<i>W.H. Webb</i>	Jun 30, 1859	Jul 9, 1859*	<i>Golden Age</i>	Jul 15, 1859

Trip #	Depart New Orleans	LTC Steamer	Arrive Minatitlan	Depart Acapulco	PMSS Steamer	Arrive San Francisco
WT18	Jul 12, 1859	<i>W.H. Webb</i>	Jul 15, 1859	Jul 21, 1859*	<i>Sonora</i>	Jul 28, 1859
WT19	Jul 27, 1859	<i>Habana</i>	Jul 30, 1859	Aug 7, 1859*	<i>Golden Gate</i>	Aug 13, 1859
WT20	Aug 12, 1859	<i>Habana</i>	Aug 15, 1859	Aug 21, 1859*	<i>Golden Age</i>	Aug 28, 1859
WT21	Aug 27, 1859	<i>Habana</i>	Aug 30, 1859	Sep 7, 1859*	<i>J.L. Stephens</i>	Sep 14, 1859
WT22	Sep 12, 1859	<i>Habana</i>	Sep 15, 1859	Sep 21, 1859*	<i>Sonora</i>	Sep 28, 1859
WT23	Sep 27, 1859	<i>Habana</i>	Sep 30, 1859	Oct 9, 1859*	<i>Golden Age</i>	Oct 16, 1859

* dates are estimates based on an average of six days sea travel from Panama City to Acapulco.

Eastbound trip times were generally faster than westbound times, with an average of seventeen days for the twenty-one complete trips undertaken. Even so, the contract trip time of fifteen days was achieved only three times (trips ET13, ET17 and ET20).

The first eastbound trip left San Francisco on November 5, 1858 and arrived in New Orleans in the respectable time of sixteen days. With respect to the final eastbound trip, the LTC steamship *Habana* was taken off the service on October 2, so the final leg from Minatitlan to New Orleans was performed by a non-contract steamer.⁸ Table 11-2 shows the complete eastbound sailing schedule.

Table 11-2 Eastbound Sailings of the Louisiana Tehuantepec Line

Trip #	Depart San Francisco	PMSS Steamer	Arrive Acapulco	Depart Minatitlan	LTC Steamer	Arrive New Orleans
ET1	Nov 5, 1858	<i>Sonora</i>	Nov 12, 1858*	Nov 17, 1858	<i>Quaker City</i>	Nov 21, 1858
ET2	Nov 20, 1858	<i>Golden Age</i>	Nov 28, 1858*	Dec 4, 1858	<i>Quaker City</i>	Dec 7, 1858
ET3	Dec 6, 1858	<i>Golden Gate</i>	Dec 14, 1858*	Dec 20, 1858	<i>Quaker City</i>	Dec 23, 1858
ET4	Dec 20, 1858	<i>J.L. Stephens</i>	Dec 28, 1858*	Jan 5, 1859	<i>Quaker City</i>	Jan 8, 1859
ET5	Jan 5, 1859	<i>Golden Age</i>	Jan 13, 1859*	Jan 19, 1859	<i>Quaker City</i>	Jan 22, 1859
ET6	Jan 20, 1859	<i>Sonora</i>	Jan 28, 1859*	Feb 3, 1859*	<i>Quaker Citys</i>	Feb 7, 1859
ET7	Feb 5, 1859	<i>J.L. Stephens</i>	Feb 12, 1859*	Feb 18, 1859	<i>Quaker City</i>	Feb 21, 1859
ET8	Feb 19, 1859	<i>Golden Age</i>	Feb 27, 1859	Mar 6, 1859	<i>Quaker City</i>	Mar 9, 1859
ET9	Mar 5, 1859	<i>Sonora</i>	Mar 13, 1859*	Mar 19, 1859	<i>Quaker City</i>	Mar 22, 1859
ET10	Mar 21, 1859	<i>J.L. Stephens</i>	Mar 29, 1859*	Apr 5, 1859	<i>Quaker City</i>	Apr 8, 1859
ET11	Apr 5, 1859	<i>Golden Age</i>	Apr 12, 1859*	Apr 18, 1859	<i>Coatzacoalkosa</i>	Apr 21, 1859
ET12	Apr 20, 1859	<i>Sonora</i>	Apr 28, 1859*	May 4, 1859	<i>Coatzacoalkos</i>	May 7, 1859
ET13	May 5, 1859	<i>Golden Gate</i>	May 12, 1859*	May 18, 1859	<i>Coatzacoalkos</i>	May 20, 1859
ET14	May 20, 1859	<i>J.L. Stephens</i>	May 28, 1859*	Jun 9, 1859	<i>Jasper</i>	Jun 12, 1859
ET15	Jun 6, 1859	<i>Golden Age</i>	Jun 13, 1859*	Jun 19, 1859	<i>W.H. Webb</i>	Jun 22, 1859
ET16	Jun 20, 1859	<i>Sonora</i>	Jun 28, 1859*	Jul 4, 1859	<i>W.H. Webb</i>	Jul 7, 1859
ET17	Jul 6, 1859	<i>Golden Gate</i>	Jul 13, 1859*	Jul 18, 1859	<i>W.H. Webb</i>	Jul 21, 1859
ET18	Jul 20, 1859	<i>Golden Age</i>	Jul 27, 1859*	Aug 2, 1859	<i>Habana</i>	Aug 6, 1859

11 - MAIL VIA TEHUANTEPEC, 1858 - 1859

Trip #	Depart San Francisco	PMSS Steamer	Arrive Acapulco	Depart Minatitlan	LTC Steamer	Arrive New Orleans
ET19	Aug 5, 1859	<i>J.L. Stephens</i>	Aug 13, 1859 ⁹	Aug 17, 1859	<i>Habana</i>	Aug 21, 1859
ET20	Aug 20, 1859	<i>Sonora</i>	Aug 27, 1859*	Sep 1, 1859	<i>Habana</i>	Sep 4, 1859
ET21	Sep 5, 1859	<i>Golden Age</i>	Sep 12, 1859*	Sep 17, 1859	<i>Habana</i>	Sep 21, 1859
ET22	Sep 20, 1859	<i>J.L. Stephens</i>	Sep 28, 1859			

* dates are estimates based on seven to eight days transit times from San Francisco to Acapulco.

Mail Carried via the Tehuantepec Route, 1858 to 1859

Seven different transcontinental routes were available in 1858, so the “default route” concept was utilized by the Post Office Department to reduce confusion. During the period of the Tehuantepec contract, the contract mail route via Panama was the stated default for post office mail,¹⁰ so if someone wanted to send a letter by an alternate route, that alternate route had to be endorsed on the cover or letter, usually by denoting a terminus or prominent point on the route. This system was clearly explained by the San Francisco postmaster in the November 15, 1858 San Francisco *Daily Alta California* when he announced the start of the new service via Tehuantepec:

Editor Alta: As a matter of public information and general interest, will you please announce in your paper that hereafter I shall dispatch from this office on the 5th and 20th of each month a mail VIA TEHUANTEPEC TO NEW ORLEANS. I am directed by the Postmaster General to request writers of letters destined to places in the Atlantic States, to indorse thereon the route by which they wish them sent, to wit:

“VIA LOS ANGELES OVERLAND”

“VIA SALT LAKE OVERLAND”

“VIA TEHUANTEPEC”

Letters with no such endorsement upon them and all newspapers will be sent “Via Panama”. Three cents will pay the postage on a single letter “Via Overland” as far as Chicago, Ills. and Cincinnati, Ohio. Beyond those points the postage will be 10 cents. Newspapers throughout the state will do the public a favor by inserting this in their columns.

C.L. WELLER, P.M.

This clearly sets out the distinguishing characteristics of letters sent via Tehuantepec. Most importantly, they must bear a “via Tehuantepec” inscription, but they should also carry 10 cents per half ounce in postage, per the April 1, 1855 U.S. postal rates.¹¹

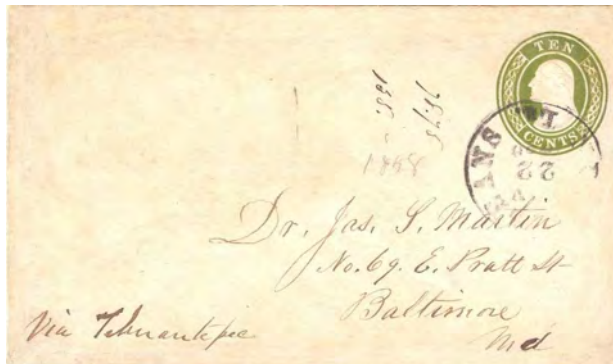


Figure 11-3. Eastbound letter endorsed via Tehuantepec which entered the mails at New Orleans on November 22, 1858.

Figure 11-3 illustrates a letter carried on the first eastbound trip. This 10 cents Nesbitt stamped envelope was endorsed “via Tehuantepec” and placed in the Tehuantepec contract mail at San Francisco on November 5, 1858. Curiously, it was not postmarked at San Francisco, but was still routed to the PMSS steamship *Sonora* which departed on November 5 and arrived in Acapulco around November 12. It was taken by

the PMSS *Oregon* to Ventosa and then carried overland and by river steamer across the Isthmus to meet the LTC steamer *Quaker City* at Minatitlan. The *Quaker City* departed on November 17 and arrived in New Orleans on November 21. This letter was postmarked at New Orleans on the following day, fully paid to its destination.

Just under half of the recorded eastbound covers originated in San Francisco. Most of the remaining covers were posted in northern California towns. Figure 11-4 shows one such cover carried on the 13th eastbound trip. This letter was posted in the gold mining town of Yankee Jims, California on May 4, 1859, endorsed “via Tehuantepec” and prepaid 10 cents transcontinental postage.¹² It was carried by the PMSS steamship *Golden Gate* from San Francisco on May 5, and arrived at Acapulco on May 12.¹³ After a five-day trip across the Isthmus by stagecoach and river steamer, it met the LTC steamer *Coatzacoalcas*, which left Minatitlan on May 18 and arrived in New Orleans on May 20. This trip was one of three accomplished in the contract time of fifteen days.

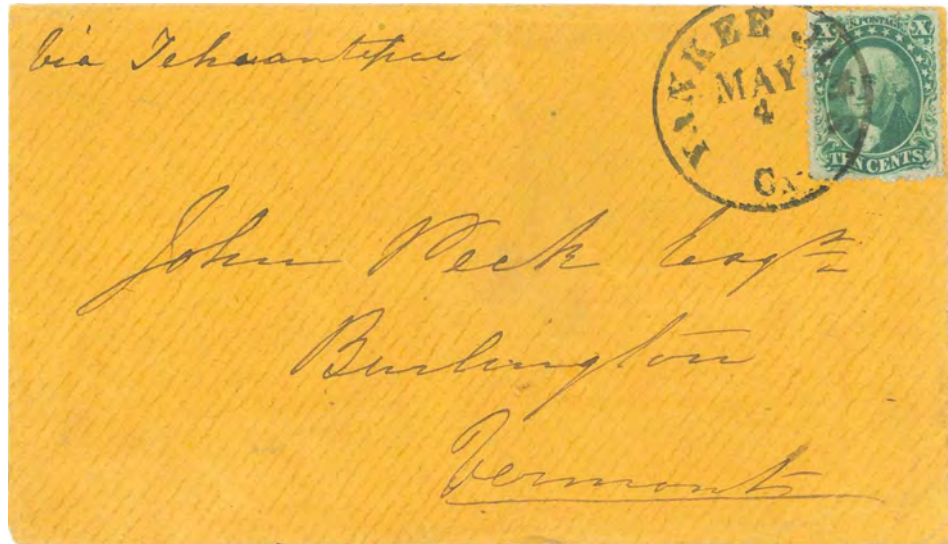


Figure 11-4. Letter postmarked at Yankee Jims, California on May 4, 1859 and carried via San Francisco and Tehuantepec to Vermont.

The 14th eastbound trip was the slowest, at 23 days from San Francisco to New Orleans. Figure 11-5 was carried on that trip.

This letter, endorsed “via Tehuantepec,” and was postmarked in San Francisco for the May 20, 1859 departure of the PMSS steamship *John L. Stephens*, and prepaid 10 cents transcontinental postage.¹⁴ It arrived at Acapulco on May 28, where it was transferred to the PMSS *Oregon* for the one day trip to Ventosa.



Figure 11-5. Letter postmarked at San Francisco, California on May 20, 1859 and carried via Tehuantepec to Alabama.

After crossing the Isthmus to Minatitlan, this letter was delayed for over a week. The LTC steamship *Coatzacoalcas* had been seized by the New Orleans sheriff, so the Louisiana Tehuantepec Company had to

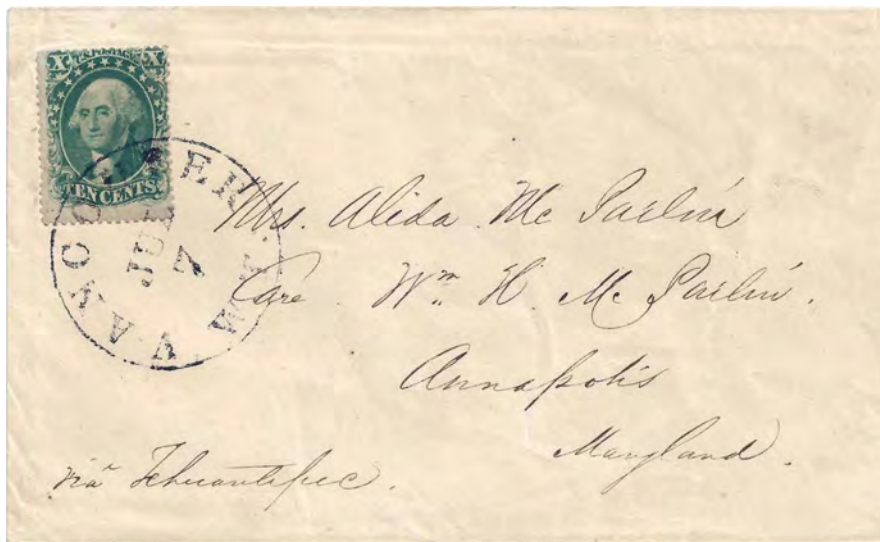


Figure 11-6. Letter posted in Vancouver, Washington Territory on July 7, 1859. Carried via San Francisco and Tehuantepec to Maryland.

Vancouver, Washington Territory on July 7, 1859, endorsed “via Tehuantepec” and prepaid 10 cents



Figure 11-7. Letter postmarked at New Orleans on March 11, 1859 and carried via Tehuantepec to San Francisco.

finally arrived in Annapolis around August 10, just over a month after it left the Pacific Northwest.

An unpublished census by Michael Perlman of surviving Tehuantepec route covers contains twenty-four eastbound examples and five westbound covers.¹⁷ This illustrates the great disparity in between eastbound and westbound mail volume on the Tehuantepec route. The reason for this is not completely understood, but it appears that most westbound mail originated around New Orleans, and that the service was not broadly advertised outside of that region.

scramble for a replacement. It chartered the steamship *Jasper*, which finally left Minatitlan with this mail on June 9 and arrived in New Orleans on June 12.¹⁵ This was the only sailing of the *Jasper* on this route.

News of the new transcontinental route spread far beyond San Francisco, and letters could be endorsed to the route from distant western post offices. Figure 11-6 shows a remarkable example carried on the 18th eastbound trip.

This letter was posted in transcontinental postage.¹⁶ It was carried across the Columbia River to Portland, where it met the PMSS steamship *Pacific*, which left on July 7 and arrived in San Francisco on July 12. It left there on July 20 aboard the PMSS steamship *Golden Age*, which arrived at Acapulco on July 27, where it was transferred to the PMSS *Oregon* for the one day trip to Ventosa. After a five-day trip across the Isthmus by stagecoach and river steamer, it met the LTC steamer *Habana*, which left Minatitlan on August 2 and arrived in New Orleans on August 6. It

Figure 11-7 shows a March 1859 cover carried on the tenth westbound trip. This quadruple-weight letter was posted on March 11, 1859 in New Orleans. It was endorsed “via Tehuantepec” and prepaid¹⁸ four times the 10 cents transcontinental rate. It left the following day on the LTC steamship *Quaker City*, which arrived in Minatitlan on March 15. After a trip across the Isthmus by river steamer and stagecoach, it was carried by the PMSS steamer *Oregon* from Ventosa to Acapulco. It left there on March 22 aboard the PMSS steamship *Golden Age*, and arrived in San Francisco on March 29.

Figure 11-8 shows an April 1859 letter that took eighteen days to reach San Francisco on the 13th westbound trip. This letter, endorsed “Mail via Tehuantepec,” was postmarked in New Orleans for the April 27, 1859 departure of the LTC steamship *Coatzacoalcas*, and prepaid 10 cents transcontinental postage.¹⁹ It arrived at Minatitlan on April 30, where it was transferred to the river steamer for the trip to Suchil, and from there by stagecoach to Ventosa. It met the PMSS *Golden Age* at Acapulco on May 9 and arrived in San Francisco on May 15.



Figure 11-8. Letter postmarked at New Orleans on April 27, 1859 and carried via Tehuantepec to Big Bar, California.

End of the Louisiana Tehuantepec Company Mail Contract

In his 1859 report to Congress, the Postmaster General explained why the Tehuantepec contract was not renewed after the first year:

The value of this route is very clearly expressed in its receipts of \$5,276.68, and its annual expenditures of \$250,000. In its present condition, it is comparatively useless, alike for purposes of travel and postal communication.

In total, fewer than 1,000 passengers and only 34,598 letters were carried via Tehuantepec²⁰ during the contract’s eleven months’ duration.

Endnotes

1. Sloo had previously been the successful bidder for the April 20, 1847 mail contract between New York and Chagres, Panama (see Chapter Six for details).
2. The Gadsden Treaty was signed on December 30, 1853 and purchased 30,000 square miles of Mexican territory in today's southern Arizona and southwestern New Mexico for the United States. It was ratified with modifications by the U.S. Senate on April 25, 1854 and finally approved by Mexico on June 8, 1854. The

11 - MAIL VIA TEHUANTEPEC, 1858 - 1859

perpetual right-of-way across the Isthmus of Tehuantepec contained in the Treaty was relinquished by the United States in 1937. (Conkling, pages 49 and 71-73).

3. The *Oregon* was the second steamship of the Pacific Mail Steamship Company. She was active on the San Francisco-Panama run until 1856 and served as a branch steamer after that. She was sold in 1861.

4. On this first westbound trip, the PMSS steamer *Oregon* left Ventosa with the mails on November 6, 1858 and took them to Acapulco. The PMSS *Golden Gate* left Panama City on November 1, collected the *Oregon's* mails during its coaling stop at Acapulco on November 7, and arrived at San Francisco on November 14.

5. The PMSS steamer *Oregon* left Ventosa on November 22, 1858 and took the mails to Acapulco. The PMSS *J.L. Stephens* left Panama City on November 17 and picked up the *Oregon's* mails Acapulco on November 23.

6. There was no early December 1858 PMSS sailing from Panama City, so the December 21 sailing of the *Golden Age* from Acapulco carried both the November 27 and December 12 New Orleans mails.

7. The *Golden Age* brought no Tehuantepec mails to San Francisco on February 12, 1859. A storm in the Gulf of Mexico delayed the mails and the *Oregon* waited at Ventosa until February 3, but was forced to leave before the arrival of the January 28 New Orleans mail. That mail had to wait for the departure of the PMSS steamship *Sonora* from Acapulco on February 21. The *Sonora* also carried the February 12 New Orleans mail to San Francisco from Acapulco. (February 12, 1859 San Francisco *Bulletin*)

8. A letter owned by Floyd Risvold was written at Tehuantepec by Charles Webster, U.S. consul and agent for the LTC, on September 29, 1859. Webster wrote, "The mail will leave in a few moments for Minatitlan and New Orleans, and as the contract with the Tehuantepec Company expires on the first of October, I greatly fear it will be the last direct opportunity I will have for some time." This letter has a New Orleans postmark of October 10, and was rated for 10 cents due as a non-contract incoming steamship letter.

9. The PMSS steamer *Oregon* arrived at Ventosa on the evening of August 14 from Acapulco. The mail and passengers left early next morning for Suchil, but were accosted by a band of armed men six miles from Ventosa. Both the passengers and mail were robbed and sent on their way to Minatitlan, where they caught the *Habana* for New Orleans on August 17. (August 20, 1859 New Orleans *Times-Picayune*)

10. Following the September 30, 1859 expiration of the Panama transcontinental contracts, the Postmaster General ordered on December 17, 1859 that the default route for transcontinental letter mail was overland (on the Butterfield line) rather than by steamship via Panama. This overland default order was announced in California newspapers on January 20, but not implemented in California until January 23.

11. The March 3, 1855 Postal Act changed the transcontinental rates, effective April 1. The July 1851 3,000-mile rate of six cents per half ounce was increased to 10 cents and the unpaid rate was eliminated since the Act required prepayment on all letters. These 1855 rates were slightly modified in 1861 and superseded on July 1, 1863. See Appendix G.

12. The franking is an 1857 issue 10 cents type II stamp.

13. The *Golden Gate* continued on to Panama City, where it arrived on May 17.

14. The franking is an 1857 issue 10 cents type II stamp.

15. The June 13, 1859 New Orleans *Times-Picayune* reported that the "U.S. mail steamship *Jasper*, Capt. Tilly, of the Louisiana Tehuantepec Transit Line, reached her wharf at an early hour yesterday morning. The *Jasper* brings the regular semi-monthly California mail, with dates from San Francisco to the 20th ult."

16. The franking is an 1857 issue 10 cents type I stamp.

17. Three of the eastbound covers originated on the Isthmus of Tehuantepec and entered the U.S. mails at New Orleans as steamship letters. Three of the five known westbound covers originated in Louisiana.

18. The franking consists of two vertical pairs of the 1857 issue 10 cents type III stamp.

19. The franking is an 1857 issue 10 cents type III stamp.

20. Coburn, *Letters of Gold*, page 105.



Chapter Twelve

Colorado Mail Routes, 1858-1861

The discovery of gold in the Pike's Peak region of Colorado led to yet another large westward migration. In July 1858, a prospecting party discovered gold along Cherry Creek near today's Denver. By the spring of 1859, gold seekers by the thousands were making their way from the United States to the Pike's Peak region. Sensing a business opportunity, William Russell and John Jones formed a private express company to carry passengers, gold and express mail between the gold fields and the Missouri River towns that formed the western border of the United States. Figure 12-1 shows a map of the region.



Figure 12-1. Map showing the routes used to access the Colorado Pike's Peak gold region near Denver from the Missouri River frontier towns.

The history of the private express mails and the U.S. contract mails are intertwined in this period, so this chapter considers them jointly in chronological order. The period begins with the informal arrangements for the transport of mail in 1858 and ends with the July 1, 1861 start of the daily overland contract mail.

Opening the Pike's Peak Region

The Green Russell party from Georgia discovered gold in July 1858 and established the town of Auraria near their diggings. Two months later, the Lawrence (Kansas) party arrived in the area and laid out the towns of Montana and St. Charles. By November, the cold weather had driven most of the Lawrence party back to the United States, so William Larimer took over the St. Charles site, re-naming it Denver City.

Figure 12-2 shows how the settlements appeared in 1859. This is a view toward the west of the confluence of the South Platte River and Cherry Creek, with the Rocky Mountains in the background. The tents to the left are the early settlement at Auraria and the area to the lower right is the settlement of St. Charles.

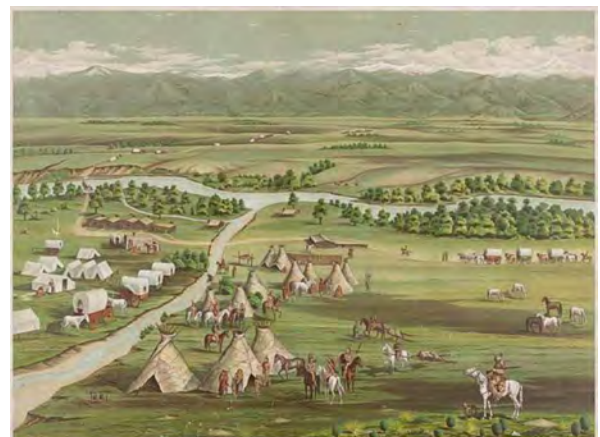


Figure 12-2. An 1859 view of the settlements at the Denver town site.

12 - COLORADO MAIL ROUTES, 1858 - 1861

Initially, mail from the new settlements was carried back to the United States by returning gold miners, but the settlers soon determined to have a more regular service. They contracted with mountain man Jim Saunders to carry mail between the Cherry Creek settlements and Fort Laramie for 50 cents a letter. His one documented trip left Denver on November 23, 1858 and arrived at Fort Laramie on January 9, 1859.¹ No letters are known to have survived from any of his mail-carrying trips, but they would show entry into the U.S. mails at Fort Laramie during the January-April 1859 period. Saunders reportedly made several other trips, but no information is known about them.

Figure 12-3 shows an example of one of the very few surviving 1858 letters. This example from October 1858 is the earliest known cover from the Denver gold mining region.



Figure 12-3. Cover datelined October 28, 1858 near Cherry Creek. Carried by a returning traveler to Pacific City, Iowa and mailed on December 4.

This letter was written by E.P. "Pinkie" Stout, who arrived in Denver on October 24, 1858 with the Dudley party. He datelined it "South Platte Near the Rocky Mountains Oct 28th 1858" and explained that, "an officer of the army at Ft. Kearny who came out with us returns tomorrow and will take our letters there & mail them from which place the mail runs once a week to the states." The letter was taken to Pacific City, Iowa (just south of Omaha, Nebraska) and postmarked there on December 4, prepaid three cents postage to Ohio. Stout settled in Denver City, and served as President of the Denver City Town Company from its inception on November 22, 1858 to September 24, 1859. For return mail, he instructed his wife to direct letters to Fort Kearney or Fort Laramie.

A November 1858 cover carried via Fort Kearney is shown in Figure 12-4. This letter from George Salsy, a member of the Lawrence party, is datelined "Montana K.T. Dec 2nd 1858" and describes the growing gold rush to Pike's Peak. He endorsed the envelope "Montana K(ansas) T(erritory) Cherry Creek Gold Mines" and gave it to a member of his party who was leaving the next day to return home. The letter was prepaid three cents U.S. postage to Michigan and postmarked on December 30 at Fort Kearney, Nebraska. For return mail, he gave the address of "Montana near Cherry Creek via Fort Laramie."



Figure 12-4. Cover datelined December 2, 1858 from Montana K. T. and carried by a returning prospector to Fort Kearney on December 30.

The May 7, 1859 *Rocky Mountain News* reported the arrival at Cherry Creek of what was likely the last mail via Fort Laramie (Saunders route shown in red on Figure 12-1 map) before the express mails began. It reported that:

Three days ago the Laramie mail came in, bringing we learn 1500 letters and a great number of papers which are delivered to their proper owners upon payment of fifty cents for each letter and ten cents for each paper. This is a heavy tax, yet we are glad to get them at any price and only mention it to show the necessity for some kind of regular postal favors – We learn there is a movement on foot to petition the P.O. at this place and presume before our next issue movement will be made, when we shall take occasion to allude to these matters again.

In response to multiple petitions, great changes in communication were already underway. On January 18, 1859 the U.S. Post Office Department had established post offices at Auraria and Montana,² and on March 18, a post office was also established at Coraville,³ in Denver City. However, no contract routes were authorized to serve these new post offices until July 1860, so their function was very limited. To fill that void, the Leavenworth & Pike's Peak Express Company began running express mails in April 1859, and their first mail arrived in Denver on May 7, 1859.

The Formation of the Leavenworth & Pike's Peak Express Company

The partnership of Jones & Russell formed the Leavenworth & Pike's Peak Express Company (L&PP) in February 1859. Its purpose was to serve the growing tide of emigrants to the Pike's Peak region, so they purchased 52 new stagecoaches using 90-day loans. Russell announced the new service in the March 12, 1859 *Leavenworth Herald*, claiming a daily line of coaches between Leavenworth and Denver, with trip times under twelve days, starting April 10. Unfortunately, the coaches did not arrive until Sunday, April 17 so service began on April 18. In the meantime, the L&PP mapped out a new route to Denver along the Solomon and Republican Rivers (the blue route in Figure 12-1), establishing re-stocking way stations along the route.

12 - COLORADO MAIL ROUTES, 1858 - 1861

Table 12-1 shows a reconstructed L&PP trip table for the April to June 1859 period.

Table 12-1 Schedule of L&PP Trips in 1859

Westbound		
Depart Leavenworth	Arrive Denver	Notes
Mon April 18, 1859	Sat May 7, 1859	Reported as first trip by 5/21 <i>Missouri Republican</i>
Sat April 23	Thu May 12	Reported as second trip by 5/14 <i>Rocky Mountain News</i>
Sat April 30	Wed May 18*	Census: 4/30 L&PP, May 19 return to Leavenworth
Mon May 2*	Fri May 20*	May 21 return to Leavenworth
Wed May 4*	Sun May 22*	May 23 return to Leavenworth
Fri May 6*	Tues May 24*	May 25 return to Leavenworth
Wed May 11	Sat May 28*	Census: 5/11 L&PP, June 1 return to Leavenworth
Sat May 21	Mon June 2*	Census: 5/21 L&PP, June 3 return to Leavenworth
Mon May 23	Wed June 4*	Census: 5/23 L&PP
Wed May 25	Mon June 6	Greeley/Richardson trip, June 7 return to Leavenworth
Fri May 27	Wed June 8*	June 9 return to Leavenworth
Mon May 30*	Fri June 10*	June 11 return to Leavenworth
Fri June 3*	Wed June 15*	June 17 return to Leavenworth
Eastbound		
Depart Denver	Arrive Leavenworth	Notes
Tues May 10, 1859	Fri May 20, 1859	Census: 5/9 L&PP; first return trip
Fri May 13	Wed May 25	Reported 2 nd return trip by 5/28 <i>Leavenworth Weekly Herald</i>
Thu May 19	Sat May 28	Reported 3 rd return trip by 5/30 <i>Leavenworth Daily Times</i>
Sat May 21	Thu June 2	Census: 5/21 L&PP via Leavenworth 6/3
Mon May 23	Sun May 29	Census: 5/23 L&PP via Leavenworth 5/29
Wed May 25	Wed June 8	Census: 5/25 L&PP via Leav. 6/9; <i>NY Herald-Tribune</i> 6/9
Wed June 1	Fri June 10	Census: 6/1 L&PP via Leav. 6/12; <i>NY Evening Post</i> 6/11
Fri June 3*	Sat June 11*	(No report on this trip)
Tues June 7	Mon June 13	June 14 <i>NY Evening Post</i> ; 1,000 letters
Thu June 9	Thu June 16	June 23 <i>NY Times</i> ; June 11 <i>Rocky Mountain News</i>
Sat June 11	Mon June 19	Brought Greeley report; June 22 <i>NY Herald Tribune</i>
Thu June 17	Thu June 30	July 5 <i>NY Evening Post</i> ; July 1 <i>Springfield Republican</i>

* Dates are inferred from connecting trip data and typical trip times.

The trip tables show that, after a slow start, trips left from Leavenworth on a fairly regular Monday, Wednesday, Friday schedule. Once the stagecoaches arrived at Denver, they were turned around in a day

or two for the return trip to Leavenworth. Westbound trips initially took about 18 to 19 days, but were reduced to around twelve days by mid-May. At ten to twelve days, initial eastbound trips were faster than the westbound trips. These trips times were also reduced as the route became more developed, to as low as six days in late May. On May 28, 1859, L&PP announced regular Monday-Wednesday-Friday departures from Denver. The same announcement set charges for letters at 25 cents for the express fee plus three cents for a U.S. stamped envelope.

The spring of 1859 brought great discouragement to the Pike's Peak gold mining region, as no significant new gold discoveries were made. Many miners began to return home, believing that the gold mines had played out. In June 1859, eastern journalists Horace Greeley and Albert Richardson visited the mines and wrote a favorable report of their very promising potential. That report reached Leavenworth on June 19, and the frantic gold rush resumed. The L&PP kept a low profile following the early reports of no gold, but kicked into full operation with the Greeley Report. On June 21, they began running ads in the Leavenworth *Times* stating that:

Jones, Russell & Co.'s express to the gold mines will leave every day when coaches are full of passengers. No coach will leave, except on Tuesdays, unless there are six passengers. One, two or three coaches will start every day, if there are passengers enough to justify. Fare \$125, including 20 lbs. baggage. Extra baggage will be charged express rates. John S. Jones, Supt.

Mail Carried by the Leavenworth & Pike's Peak Express Company

The "Leav'h City & Pike's Peak Express Co." express marking without year-date was prepared for the Leavenworth express office, and a variety with 1859 year-date was used at Denver.

The Republican River route mapping party returned to Leavenworth, and probably collected the eastbound cover in Figure 12-5 at one of the newly-established way stations on April 26. It bears the earliest known use of the Leavenworth "Leav'h City & Pike's Peak Express Co." express marking. It was prepaid three cents postage to Virginia, and was postmarked at Leavenworth City, Kansas Territory on April 27, 1859.



Figure 12-5. Eastbound cover marked "Leav'h City & Pike's Peak Express Co." on April 26, 1859 and posted in Leavenworth City, K. T. on April 27.

12 - COLORADO MAIL ROUTES, 1858 - 1861

Figure 12-6 shows the earliest westbound use of the Leavenworth express marking. This letter was prepaid three cents postage and posted in Stouts, Ohio on April 15, 1859. Unaware that the L&PP had commenced operations, the sender endorsed the cover "By way of Fort Larimia" expecting that it would be carried by private messenger from Fort Laramie to Denver. The Post Office Department, however, had instructions to deliver the Denver mails to the L&PP in Leavenworth City, from whence the L&PP would



Figure 12-6. Westbound cover posted in Stouts, Ohio on April 15, 1859. Marked "Leav'h City & Pike's Peak Express Co. Apr 30" at Leavenworth City.

transport them to Denver at no additional cost to the post office. Accordingly, this letter was probably diverted from St Joseph (the terminus for the mail route to Fort Laramie) to Leavenworth City, where it was delivered to the L&PP, who marked it with their April 30 "Leav'h City & Pike's Peak Express Co." express marking without year-date. It was then dispatched to Denver on their third westbound trip, which departed Leavenworth on Saturday, April 30 and arrived in Denver around May 18. This letter was sent to "Pinkie" Stout (see Figure 12-3) from his wife. The 25 cents express fee was collected on delivery.

An unpublished census of L&PP covers by Richard Frajola and Ken Stach includes eight westbound and eight eastbound covers. Figure 12-7 shows the Denver "Leav'h City & Pike's Peak Express Co." express marking on an eastbound cover.



Figure 12-7. Eastbound cover marked "Leav'h City & Pike's Peak Express Co." on June 1, 1859 at Denver and forwarded via Leavenworth City on June 12.

This Nesbitt stamped three cents envelope originated in Denver, where it was given to the L&PP for transmittal east. L&PP collected its 25 cents express fee and marked it with their express marking on June 1, 1859. It was carried on the seventh eastbound trip, which arrived in Leavenworth on June 10. It entered the U.S. mails to Ohio on June 12 at Leavenworth City.

The Leavenworth & Pike's Peak Express Company Expands

Not content to carry only passengers, mail and gold between Denver and Leavenworth City, the L&PP purchased the weekly U.S. mail contract between St Joseph, Missouri and Salt Lake City from John Hockaday on May 11, 1859 (described in Chapter Seven). This acquisition, financed with debt, further stressed the already fragile L&PP finances. It also necessitated a change in route from the Republican River route (shown in blue in Figure 12-1) to the Platte River route (shown in green in Figure 12-1). The June 11, 1859 *Denver Rocky Mountain News* reported that:

On Monday morning last (note: June 6) Mr. Williams of the Express arrived here with one of the company's coaches, in six days and twenty-three hours⁴ from Leavenworth City. This we consider making pretty good time, bringing us mail from the eastern cities in twelve days, and telegraphic dispatches in Leavenworth papers in seven days.

Mr. Williams informs us that he has made an entire change in the location of the mail route. The company having purchased the stock and route of the Salt Lake and California mail, will now move their whole force to the Platte route by way of Fort Kearney to the South Platte crossing, from whence one line will continue up the North Platte to Laramie and the South Pass, the other diverging, following the South Platte to this place – Mr. W. gave the necessary orders for the removal of all stations to the Platte as he came up... This is only another proof of the superiority of the Great Platte route over others bending across the plains.

In a letter to the June 18, 1859 *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, Williams further explained that:

Denver City, June 11th, 1859.

Messrs Editors,

Dear Sirs, – In your last paper you give the reason, as you suppose, why Jones & Russell moved their stock from the new road recently laid out by myself and others from this place to Leavenworth City, to the Platte River Route. You are mistaken in your supposition.

We purchased, after the trains started from Leavenworth, the Salt Lake Mail contract, and designed carrying it over the new road, but could not get the sanction of the Department, and to run the Mail on the Platte and the Express over the new road would be too expensive, we determined to move to the Platte route for the present, but in due time the new road will be the main road to this place... We will leave here with our coaches once each week, carrying the U.S. Mail, also all passengers. Hoping this will find a place in your columns, I remain yours very respectfully,

B.D. Williams, Agent, Jones & Russell's P.P. Exp. Co.

His comment about the U.S. mail reflects an unfortunate misconception by Williams, who thought that the U.S. mail contract purchased by the L&PP included service to Denver, rather than just the mails between St Joseph and Salt Lake City. The implication of this was that L&PP would no longer charge a 25 cents express fee, and would carry the mail between Denver and Leavenworth for just the regular U.S. postage of three cents. This, however, would only have worked financially for the L&PP if it had a U.S. mail contract with an annual subsidy from the Post Office Department.



**Beverly D. Williams, L&PP
Manager, 1822-1907**

- Born in Memphis, Tennessee
- Deputy sheriff in Kentucky, 1842-50
- Pork packing business in Louisville, 1853-56
- General manager of L&PP, 1859
- Territorial representative to Congress, 1860-61
- Captain in Union army, 1862-65

The “Phantom” U.S. Mail Contract

Upon his June 6 arrival in Denver, Williams undoubtedly passed the erroneous information about the U.S. mail contract to John Fox, agent for the L&PP in Denver who, in turn, informed the postmaster of the Coraville post office (located in the same building as the L&PP in Denver), Richard Edes. With the news

of a contract postal route servicing Denver, the formerly moribund Coraville and Auraria post offices jumped into action as dispatching offices.



Figure 12-8. Cover postmarked at Coraville, Kansas Territory on June 8, 1859. Carried to Leavenworth City on July 2 by the L&PP.

Coraville since the express fee had been paid so it entered the U.S. mails at Leavenworth City on July 2, per the postmark cancelling the indicia.

By June 17, Coraville was using a straight-line postmark, and the mails were being carried by the L&PP for only three cents

postage. Figure 12-9 shows one of the three known letters carried as U.S. contract mail from Coraville in June 1859. This cover was franked with three cents U.S. postage and postmarked at Coraville on June 17. It was carried by the L&PP free of additional express charges on the coach that left Denver on June 17 and arrived in Leavenworth City on June 30. Since it had already entered the U.S. mails at Coraville, there

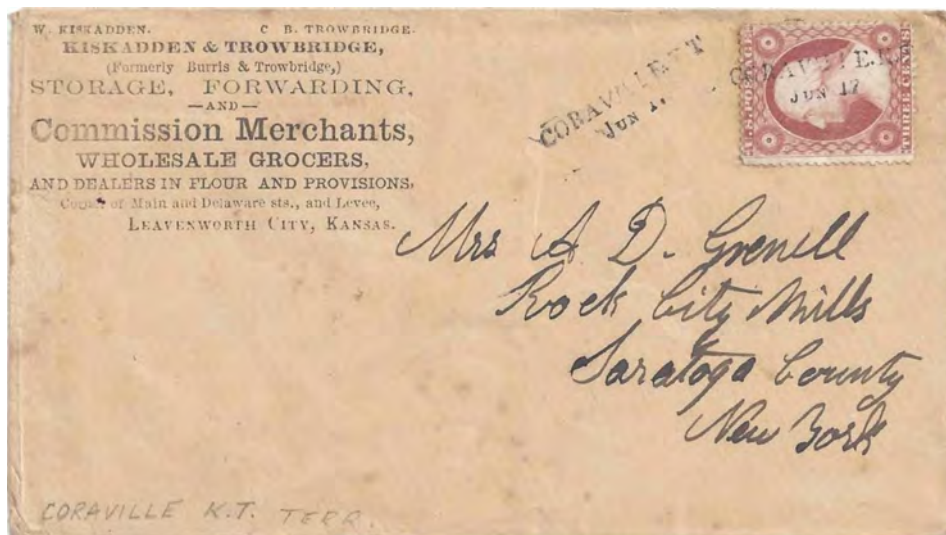


Figure 12-9. Cover postmarked at Coraville, Kansas Territory on June 17, 1859. Carried to Leavenworth City by the L&PP without express charges.

was no need for Leavenworth to postmark the cover, and it was sent onward to its destination in New York.

The Auraria post office (across Cherry Creek from Denver and Coraville) also began active operations at this time. The earliest known cover from Auraria is shown in Figure 12-10. This three cents stamped Nesbitt envelope was postmarked at Auraria on June 15, 1859 and carried, free of express charges, to Leavenworth on the June 17 L&PP coach from Denver.

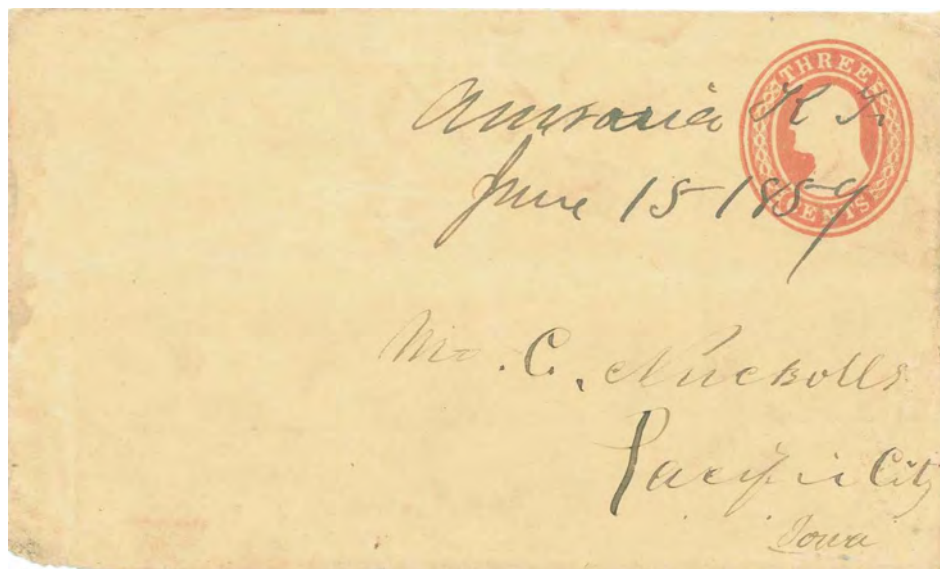


Figure 12-10. Cover postmarked at Auraria, Kansas Territory on June 15, 1859. Carried to Leavenworth City by the L&PP without express charges.

The L&PP made three “phantom” eastbound contract mail trips before Williams’ error was corrected by personnel in Leavenworth in late June. These three mails were sent on June 11 (arrived in Leavenworth on June 20), June 17 (arrived June 30) and June 22 (arrived July 2). After June 22, the L&PP began charging 25 cents express fees on all of the mail carried by it. John Fox explained why in the July 9, 1859 *Denver Rocky Mountain News*:

Dear Sirs: - I am aware that some prejudice is entertained by the citizens of the cities of Auraria and Denver and also the Mountains, against the Express Company of which I am agent at this place...When the Company first commenced running their stages the Postmaster at Leavenworth City was notified to deliver all mail matter for Pike’s Peak, Cherry Creek, and the gold mines of Kansas and Nebraska, to Jones and Russell’s Express Company, as long as they would carry it free of expense to the Government. The Postmaster at Leavenworth City obeyed the order of his superior. The Express Co. receiving no pay from the Government for carrying letters and papers as express matter, who will say that twenty five cents for a letter is unreasonable. It was afterwards in contemplation to transport the mail as a regular U.S. Mail and one of the Company’s agents acting under the impression and belief that arrangements to that effect had been made, announced to the citizens here, and in the mountains, that all mails which would thereafter arrive, would come as U.S. Mail. Under the same impression myself three mails were sent East by me, the letters bearing the three cent stamp only.

The arrangement to carry the mail was not perfected, and the Company, in justice to themselves, were compelled to charge the twenty five cents per letter still...I will close this communication by saying that no U.S. Mail has ever arrived at this office.

12 - COLORADO MAIL ROUTES, 1858 - 1861

Shortly after the discontinuance of the “phantom” contract mails, the Coraville post office was discontinued on June 25.

Further Changes with the Leavenworth & Pike's Peak Express Company

With the greater business scope represented by the St. Joseph-Salt Lake City mail contract, the L&PP name became less descriptive. The latest known L&PP express marking is dated July 2, 1859 and new dated express markings reading “Jones & Russell's Pike's Peak Express Co.” were prepared for Denver City and Leavenworth City. Only one example of the “Leavn'th City” variety is known, used on July 25, 1859. The “Denver City” handstamp arrived in Denver on July 20, and was quickly put into use on eastbound mail starting around July 22. Figure 12-11 shows an early example.



Figure 12-11. Cover marked “Jones & Russell's Pike's Peak Express Co. Denver City July 29, 1859.” Forwarded via Leavenworth City on August 8.

This letter was datelined from “Near Gregory diggings on a branch of Clear Creek, Nebraska Territory July 17th 59” and was carried by the Jones & Russell's Pike's Peak Express Company (Jones & Russell) on the stagecoach that left Denver on July 29. It ran over the new Platte River route to Leavenworth City, where it entered the U.S. mails on August 8. In this letter, W.H. Mann describes his westbound trip across the plains via “the express route which follows up between the

Republican and Smokey Hill Forks after leaving Junction City (at the head of the Kansas River)” to Denver, where he arrived on July 4, 1859. His was the last westbound trip over the old Republican River route.

The new Platte River route became fully operational with the westbound stagecoach that left Denver on July 2, 1859. A letter to the July 22, 1859 Leavenworth *Daily Times* described this first trip:

Denver City, July 9, 1859.

Editor of the Times: Through your columns we wish to make favorable mention of the Express Company of Messrs. Jones & Russell. We left Leavenworth on Saturday morning (note: July 2) at 10, A.M., 2d inst., and were landed here this morning at 7, A.M., making the entire trip in six days and twenty-one hours. The appointments of the route far exceeded our expectations, and when every arrangement that they have now under way is completed, there will be thrown open to the public one of the best, if not the best, stage routes in the world. The stations will be from twenty to thirty miles apart...The coach on which we came was the first one on the Platte Route, and consequently was subject to more than ordinary delay. By a computation of our own, we are able to say that twenty-eight hours were lost at the different stations in getting up the mules and arranging for the travel which is ready to go on to the line.

The movement to the Platte River route was not without glitches. The coaches from Denver were intended to connect with the Salt Lake City mail coaches at Julesburg for the trip between there and St. Joseph. However, the Leavenworth *Times* of June 24 and July 4, 1859 reported that the Salt Lake City stagecoaches refused to receive either passengers or letters. This was soon rectified, and the new route ran smoothly.

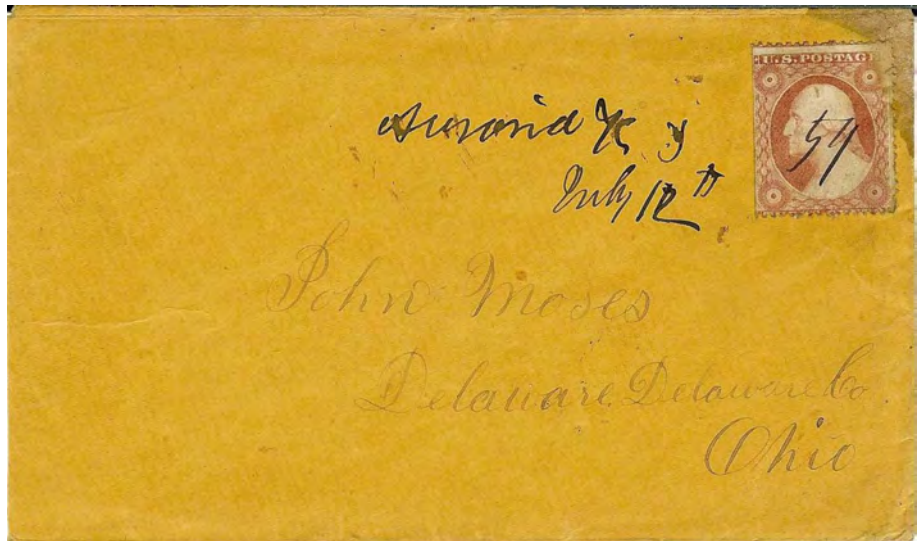
Further Efforts for a U.S. Contract Mail

Frustrated by the lack of contract mail routes, the postmaster at Auraria, Henry Allen, decided to contract directly for a weekly U.S. mail. In the July 9, 1859 Denver *Rocky Mountain News*, he announced that:

Mail Notice – Please inform your readers that I have made arrangements with Mr. Willis, one of the employees of the United States Express Company, to carry the mail from Auraria to the Missouri River, the contract to commence on Monday next (note: July 11), and continue to depart every Monday morning until further notice. Therefore 3 cent postage will convey the letters to the States, and the same back as soon as the agent gets through.

Willis received the total postage of each mail carried as compensation, and followed the Platte River route to Fort Kearney, where letters continued on in the U.S. mails.

Figure 12-12 shows a cover carried in the first Willis contract mail. This cover was prepaid three cents U.S. postage and postmarked at the Auraria Kansas Territory post office on July 12 (corrected from July 11), 1859. It was carried to Fort Kearney by Willis on his first trip under contract to the Auraria postmaster. The corrected Auraria postmark indicates that Willis left a day late, on Tuesday, July 12.



Willis' service was evidently unsatisfactory, since the following notice appeared in the August 27, 1859 Denver *Rocky Mountain News*:

Figure 12-12. Cover postmarked with Auraria, Kansas Territory on July 12, 1859. Carried to Fort Kearney by Willis, under contract to the Auraria postmaster.

The Mails – We learn from Mr. Allen, the postmaster, that Mr. Willis has failed to carry out the contract taken by him to carry the U.S. mail from this office to Fort Kearney...Mr. Allen has now entered into a contract with the Express Company by which mails will be transported three times a week each way between Auraria and Fort Kearney in U.S. mail bags, which will be opened only by the postmasters at either end of the line. The charge will be twenty five cents for each letter and ten cents for each paper in addition to the U.S. postage – that being the compensation allowed the Express Co.

12 - COLORADO MAIL ROUTES, 1858 - 1861

We can now rely upon having mails carried with promptness and dispatch, and the compensation is as little as any responsible company or individual will undertake to transport it for.

Since government has failed to extend to us privileges and advantages of postal facilities, we are certainly fortunate in being able to secure tri-weekly service even at the cost of twenty-five cents per letter, in the hands of so prompt a company as Jones Russell & Co. The mail will leave hereafter, until further notice, on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday of each week at 6 ½ o'clock a.m.

The Express Company also carry letters and papers to and from their office in Denver, at the same rates as formerly, they paying the U.S. postage.

Figure 13-13 shows a cover carried on Willis' last contract run to Fort Kearney. This cover was prepaid three cents U.S. postage and postmarked at the Auraria Kansas Territory post office on August 23, 1859. Auraria by then was using a straight-line postmark, which is known used in the period from July 26 to August 26, 1859. Willis left Denver on August 26 and carried the letter to Fort Kearney, where it continued on in the U.S. mails to Illinois.



Figure 12-13. Cover postmarked at Auraria, Kansas Territory on August 23, 1859. Carried to Fort Kearney by Willis, under contract to the Auraria postmaster.

The Only Game in Town

With the failure of Allen's efforts to establish a U.S. contract mail, Jones & Russell was the only option for getting a letter between the United States and Denver. Although Allen's August 27 announcement offered to process mail "in U.S. mail bags" there was no reason for a letter-writer to give his mail to the post office, since the fees were the same whether processed through the post office or directly by Jones & Russell. Accordingly, no letters postmarked at Auraria are known from August 27, 1859 to its discontinuance on February 11, 1860. On that date, the Auraria post office was moved across Cherry Creek and became the Denver City post office. Even so, no letters are known postmarked from Denver City until August 16, 1860.

At the same time that Allen optimistically described their tri-weekly service, Jones & Russell announced a reduced schedule, effective August 22, 1859:

From and after Monday, August 22nd, Jones Russell & Co.'s Express Stage Coaches will leave Denver City for Leavenworth City, on Thursdays...6 ½ o'clock A M
 Arrive at Leavenworth Thursdays...6 ½ o'clock A M
 Returning, leave Leavenworth Tuesdays...6 ½ o'clock A M
 Each stage coach is capable of carrying eight passengers with comfort and ease. Passage through to Leavenworth \$100, board included.
 All articles expressed through to the States are forwarded immediately to their place of destination without delay.

Despite their virtual monopoly in the passenger and express business, the L&PP was never able to turn a profit. In July 1859, the loans that Jones and Russell had used to finance the start-up of the L&PP were overdue, and the company did not have sufficient funds to pay them down. Accordingly, the powerful freighting partnership of Russell, Majors & Waddell (RMW) stepped in with financing to keep the stagecoach line and their partner, William Russell, solvent. The L&PP finances did not improve, so RMW had to absorb the L&PP on October 28, 1859. The line continued to operate as Jones & Russell's Pike's Peak Express Company,⁵ so no change in the markings or handling of the express mail took place after the takeover by RMW. On February 13, 1860 RMW received a charter for a subsidiary, The Central Overland California & Pike's Peak Express Company (COC&PP), which would handle all of its mail-related activities, and this new entity absorbed the L&PP on February 20. This change initiated a gradual change in express mail markings from Jones & Russell to COC&PP on May 24, 1860, although Jones & Russell express markings continued to be used at Denver until June 7, 1860.⁶

Of more significance, the COC&PP began the renowned transcontinental pony express in April 1860 (described in Chapter Thirteen), and this moved the eastern terminus for all of their mail handling activities to St Joseph, Missouri from Leavenworth City at the end of April 1860. For the month and a half between May 3 and June 14, Jones & Russell eastbound express mail from Denver entered the U.S. mails at St Joseph.

Figure 12-14 shows an example. This letter from "Pinkie" Stout was datelined "Denver April 30th 1860" and prepaid three cents U.S. postage. It was datestamped "Jones & Russell's Pike's Peak Express Co. Denver City" on May 3 to reflect the departure date of the Jones & Russell stagecoach, and to indicate that the 25 cents express fee had been paid. It entered the U.S. mails at St Joseph on May 10.



Figure 12-14. Eastbound cover marked "Jones & Russell's Pike's Peak Express Co. Denver City" on May 3, 1860. Entered the U.S. mails St Joseph.

COC&PP Takes Over

Following the February 20, 1860 COC&PP acquisition, both the L&PP and Jones & Russell ceased to exist. The trip that left Denver on February 23 marked the end of L&PP or Jones & Russell operations, although mail handling continued as before. The first COC&PP express marking was a crude undated straight-line woodcut that read “Denver Central Over’d Cal & Pike’s Peak Express” which is known used from March to May 1860.

Figure 12-15 shows an example used in conjunction with a Jones & Russell express marking. This envelope originated in Denver, where it was given to the COC&PP for transmittal to New York City. The COC&PP collected its 25 cents express fee and marked it with a Jones & Russell express marking on April 26, 1860. The April 26 marking was obliterated by the placement of a three cents stamp over it, and a May 3 Jones & Russell express marking along with a woodblock COC&PP marking were applied in Denver. It entered the U.S. mails at St Joseph on May 10.



Figure 12-15. Cover marked “Jones & Russell’s Pike’s Peak Express Co. Denver City” on April 26 (stamp applied over datestamp) and May 3, 1860. It received the Denver COC&PP woodblock marking, and was forwarded via St Joseph on May 10.

Oval COC&PP express markings were prepared for Denver, Leavenworth City and St Joseph. Magenta and yellow labels were also prepared as advertising for the service. The Denver marking was used mainly on eastbound mail, and its earliest confirmed use is May 24, 1860. The St. Joseph marking was used principally as a transit marking on westbound mail from August 1860 until November 1861. The St Joseph marking was also used in conjunction with the Denver COC&PP marking on eastbound mail in the September 1860 to March 1861 period. Finally, the rarest of the COC&PP markings, from Leavenworth City, is known on both eastbound and westbound mail.

The eastbound cover in Figure 12-16 shows the Denver COC&PP marking, a St Joseph transit COC&PP marking, and a magenta COC&PP advertising label. This cover originated in Denver, where it was given to the COC&PP for transmittal to New York City. The COC&PP collected its 25 cents express fee and marked it with an oval November 24, 1860 Denver City COC&PP express marking. Six days later, it arrived in St Joseph, where a November 30 St Joseph COC&PP transit marking was applied. It entered the U.S. mails at St Joseph on December 1, and the three cents stamp paid the postage to New York. The



Figure 12-16. Cover marked “Central Overland and California Pike's Peak Express Company Denver City K.T.” on November 24, 1860. At St Joseph, it was marked with a November 30 COC&PP transit marking.

magenta COC&PP advertising label reading “The Only Through Express, Direct Your Letters Care C.O.C. & P.P. Express St Joseph, MO., or Leavenworth, K.T.” is tied by the manuscript routing endorsement, indicating that it was applied in Denver City.

Figure 12-17 shows a westbound cover with a St Joseph COC&PP marking. This cover was mailed on December 17, 1860 at Fredonia, Maryland with three cents U.S. postage prepaid, and endorsed “via the C.O.C. & Pike's Peak Express from St. Joseph Missouri.” It was sent in the U.S. mails to St. Joseph, where it was transferred to the COC&PP for transmittal to Denver City. The COC&PP added their green December 25 St Joseph marking and sent it by coach that day to Denver.



Figure 12-17. Westbound cover postmarked in Fredonia, Maryland on December 17, 1860. Forwarded at St Joseph, Missouri on December 25.

12 - COLORADO MAIL ROUTES, 1858 - 1861

Not all of the mail was handled through St. Joseph. A few eastbound trips terminated at Leavenworth City, and at least one westbound cover originated in Leavenworth.

Figure 12-18 shows an eastbound example with a magenta advertising label. This cover originated in Denver, where it was given to the COC&PP for transmittal to Pennsylvania. The COC&PP collected its 25 cents express fee and marked it with an oval October 30, 1860 Denver City COC&PP express marking. It entered the U.S. mails at Leavenworth City on November 6, and the three cents Nesbitt stamped envelope paid the postage to Lockport. The magenta COC&PP advertising label is tied by the Denver City COC&PP marking.



Figure 12-18. Cover marked “Central Overland and California Pike's Peak Express Company Denver City K.T.” on October 30, 1860. A magenta advertising label was added at Denver, and it entered the U.S. mails at Leavenworth City on November 6.

Figure 12-19 shows the backstamp found on a westbound cover that entered the U.S. mails at Leavenworth City on June 25, 1860. This cover was prepaid three cents U.S. postage and postmarked in Leavenworth City, Kansas Territory on June 25, 1860. The Leavenworth postmaster gave it to the COC&PP for transmittal to Denver, and the COC&PP marked it with its rare Leavenworth City oval marking. The front of the envelope is marked “Collect 10cts” and “Paid G” in manuscript, indicating that the express fee was collected on delivery. Only three examples of the COC&PP Leavenworth City marking are known, used in the June-October 1860 period.



Figure 12-19. Leavenworth COC&PP datestamp on reverse of westbound cover postmarked in Leavenworth, Kansas Territory on June 25, 1860 and marked with the Leavenworth COC&PP marking of the same date. It was addressed to Hamilton, Colorado Territory.

Competition Enters the Market

The May 23, 1860 *Denver Rocky Mountain News* reported that, “C.S.S. Hinckley, Superintendent of the Hinckley & Co.’s Rocky Mountain Express Co., arrived on Saturday morning last (note; May 19) to set in motion their express arrangements throughout the mountain mines.” Hinckley & Co. quickly set up an express service between Denver City and the Pike’s Peak gold mines, and connected with the COC&PP for extended express service between Denver City and the Missouri River. This led to a cooperative period for the two express companies from May 31 to mid-August 1860. Letters carried conjunctively by the two express companies show the express markings of both. Figure 12-20 shows an eastbound example.



Figure 12-20. Cover carried from the mountains and marked “Hinckley & Co.’s Express Denver City” on June 2, 1860 and transferred that day to the COC&PP in Denver for forwarding via St Joseph.

This letter originated somewhere in the Pike’s Peak gold mining region and was carried by Hinckley to Denver, where they marked it “Hinckley & Co.’s Express Denver City” on June 2, 1860. Hinckley transferred the letter to the COC&PP, who also marked it with their June 2 Denver City marking. It was then carried by COC&PP stagecoach to St. Joseph, where it entered the U.S. mails on June 8. Hinckley charged 10 cents for their express service and the COC&PP charged 20¢ for their service. A three cents stamp applied by the sender paid the U.S. postage from Denver to Wisconsin.

Meanwhile, the U.S. Post Office Department finally moved to establish contract mail routes to the Pike’s Peak region. Congress passed the March 27, 1860 “Act to Establish Mail Routes in the Territory of Kansas” and the Post Office Department awarded the weekly Denver City-Julesburg contract for route 15151 to E.F. Bruce on June 16. About the same time, the Post Office Department established a new post office at Julesburg on May 23, which was intended to serve as a transfer point for mail to and from the Pike’s Peak region. Accordingly, on July 4, 1860, the Post Office Department ordered the COC&PP to increase its service between Julesburg and St Joseph to weekly and had to compensate the COC&PP for carrying the Denver City mail between Julesburg and St Joseph or Salt Lake City.

It is somewhat surprising that the COC&PP did not bid for contract route 15151, since they already had the infrastructure in place for a weekly mail. A July 3, 1860 dispatch of Albert Richardson to the July 26 *Lawrence Republican* may explain why:

12 - COLORADO MAIL ROUTES, 1858 - 1861

The express brings in and takes out about five thousand letters per week, for which the writers and recipients are compelled to pay twenty-five cents each, in addition to the Government postage. The recent "letting" of the mail contract to this place is believed to be merely a nominal affair, it is expected that the Pike's Peak Express Company will control it, and compel us to submit to this heavy tax through the season.

If Richardson's account is accurate, then the COC&PP was collecting about \$65,000 per year from its express mail service, and the contract for route 15151 paid only a fraction of that. Thus, the COC&PP stood to lose significant money from a functioning U.S. mail service to the region, and apparently chose to compete against it.

Bruce defaulted on his contract by late July. Upon his failure, the post office changed the eastern terminus from Julesburg to Fort Kearney, to avoid the COC&PP compensation for the Julesburg-St Joseph/Salt Lake City segments, since two other existing contract routes linked Fort Kearney with Omaha and St. Joseph. The modified route was re-named 15151a. On August 29, the post office accepted the winning bid for the modified contract from E.S. Alvord, superintendent of the Western Stage Company (Western).

Western, which had an established stagecoach business between Omaha and Fort Kearney, was not equipped to run stagecoaches over route 15151a, and needed some time to stock the route. To fill the gap, the post office offered compensation to the COC&PP for carrying the contract mails until Western could become operational. The August 15, 1860 Denver *Rocky Mountain News* reported the first arrival of U.S. mail on the evening of August 10:

First United States Mail. The Express coach which arrived here on Friday evening last, brought in two mail bags sealed with government locks, which were promptly passed over to Postmaster McClure at his new office on Larimer street. Whether the bags came through accidentally, or in accordance with an agreement made with the Express Company, we are unable to learn; the agents here having received no explanation from the east on the subject...How the numerous miners and business men in the mountains are to get their mail matter now, we are not advised. Messrs. Hinckley & Co., who have a list of some twenty thousand names to whom they are authorized to forward letters in the Mountain region, were unable to get such letters from the Postmaster.

The August 22, 1860 Denver City *Rocky Mountain News* confirmed that, "Mr. Williams informs us that arrangements have been made with the C.O.C. & P. P. Express Company for the temporary carrying the mail for this region once a week from Julesburg to this city." That same issue also reported the arrival of second U.S. mail on August 20, explaining that:

The Monday evening coach brought sixteen bags of U.S. Mail, which was duly deposited at the Post Office...We hope there is now a prospect of a regular weekly mail and that it will soon be increased to a more frequent service. The contractors for all the branch lines from this city, are on the ground and have commenced service in accordance with the letting.

The Denver office becomes the distributing office for all this region, and ere long will be the scene of immense business.

This report explains why the post office would not deliver mountain region letters to Hinckley, and foretells the end of Hinckley's mountain express business. A third mail of seven mailbags arrived in Denver on August 29, and marked the start of a reasonably consistent weekly mail. The first U.S. mail from Denver left on Tuesday, August 14 with a reported four thousand letters.⁷ The COC&PP was later recognized by the Post Office Department for carrying the U.S. mail from July 1 to September 13, 1860.

With a contract mail route finally in operation, the Denver City post office also became fully operational. Figure 12-21 shows an August 23, 1860 cover from Denver.

This cover originated in Nevada City on August 16, 1860 and was carried from there to Denver by Hinckley's Express, which datestamped the letter upon its August 23 arrival. Hinckley transferred the letter to the Denver City post office, which applied its earliest known "tombstone"

postmark,⁸ also of August 23. It was carried by COC&PP coach to St Joseph under a temporary U.S. mail contract.



Figure 12-21. August 16, 1860 letter from the Nevada City mines marked "Hinckley & Co.'s Express Denver City August 23." Postmarked at Denver City on August 23 and carried by the COC&PP to St. Joseph under a temporary U.S. mail contract.

Figure 12-22 shows a letter carried on the third westbound contract mail trip to Denver. This letter was prepaid three cents U.S. postage and posted in Stillwater, Minnesota on August 9, 1860. It was carried in the third contract mail to Denver, which was carried by the COC&PP and arrived on August 29. The Denver post office postmarked it on that day with its "tombstone" postmark.



Figure 12-22. August 9, 1860 letter from Stillwater, Minnesota carried by the COC&PP to Denver under a temporary U.S. mail contract.

12 - COLORADO MAIL ROUTES, 1858 - 1861

Throughout September 1860, the Western Stage Company was preparing the route for its mail contract. The September 15 New Orleans *Times-Picayune* reported that:

Mails to the Rocky Mountains – A dispatch from Omaha, Nebraska Territory, of the 10th says: The Western Stage Company having contracted for the U.S. mail to and from Denver, via Omaha, Mr. Hooker, the general agent, started this morning to stock the road and make the necessary arrangements for three mails per week, which will probably be perfected by the 1st of November, until which time they will continue running a weekly mail.

The Post Office Department accommodated Western's start-up by allowing them to carry weekly mails between Denver and Julesburg until November 1, and thereafter weekly between Denver and Fort Kearney in five days. The September 26, 1860 Denver City *Rocky Mountain News* reported that:

We had the pleasure of a call this morning from Mr. Hooker, of the Western Stage Company, who arrived a day or two ago. He has just passed over the route from Omaha to this city; making preparations to stock the road for a weekly line of coaches. He informs us that his company has secured the mail contract from Ft. Kearney to this city, and not from Julesburg alone, as has been reported. The stock for the route is being placed on the road as rapidly as possible; the coaches are ready, and the first mail up is on the way and should arrive this evening or tomorrow morning... The first mail down will leave this city tomorrow morning. The time through to Omaha this winter, will be about five and a half days, to be reduced to five or less, the coming summer.

The first Western stagecoach departure from Denver was on September 27, but the Denver postmaster reported that Western started its U.S. mail service on September 13. In addition, the September 18 New York *Herald Tribune* reported that the first through U.S. mail was received at Omaha on September 15 with Denver dates to September 7. Undoubtedly, Western contracted with the COC&PP to carry the mail on the September 7 trip as well as trips on September 13 and September 20. Figure 12-23 shows a letter carried on the September 20 Western contract mail trip.

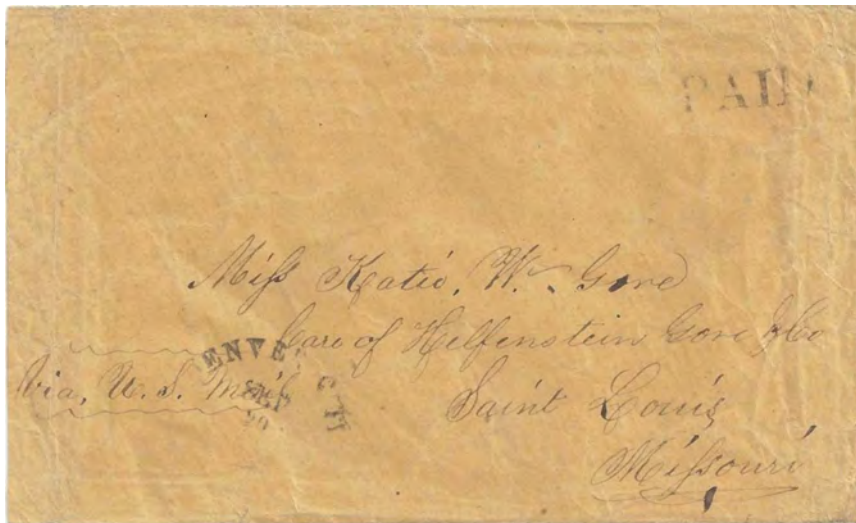


Figure 12-23. September 20, 1860 letter from Denver City carried by the COC&PP under subcontract to the Western Stage Company.

This letter was endorsed "Via U.S. Mail" in Denver City, where it was prepaid three cents postage in cash and received a September 20, 1860 "tombstone" postmark. The Western Stage Company had commenced operations under their weekly U.S. mail contract, but had no stagecoaches available to carry the mail. Accordingly, they contracted with the COC&PP to carry this mail to St. Joseph.

The postmaster at Fort Kearney reported that Western began its mail service on September 12, while the Julesburg postmaster reported commencement on September 17. This represented Western's slow westbound stocking trip which left Omaha on September 10 and arrived in Denver around September 28. Apparently, they carried

the first westbound U.S. mail on that trip. By October, Western's weekly stages were running smoothly, and continued on a weekly schedule until the contract for route 15151a was annulled by the Post Office Department effective July 1, 1861.

Figure 12-24 shows a February 1861 eastbound letter carried by Western. This letter was prepaid three cents U.S. postage and postmarked on February 11, 1861 in Denver City, which used the second type⁹ of "tombstone" cancel. It was carried by Western on its weekly U.S. mail run to Fort Kearney, and was sent during the brief period from the January 31, 1861 Kansas Statehood to the formation of the Colorado Territory on February 28, 1861.

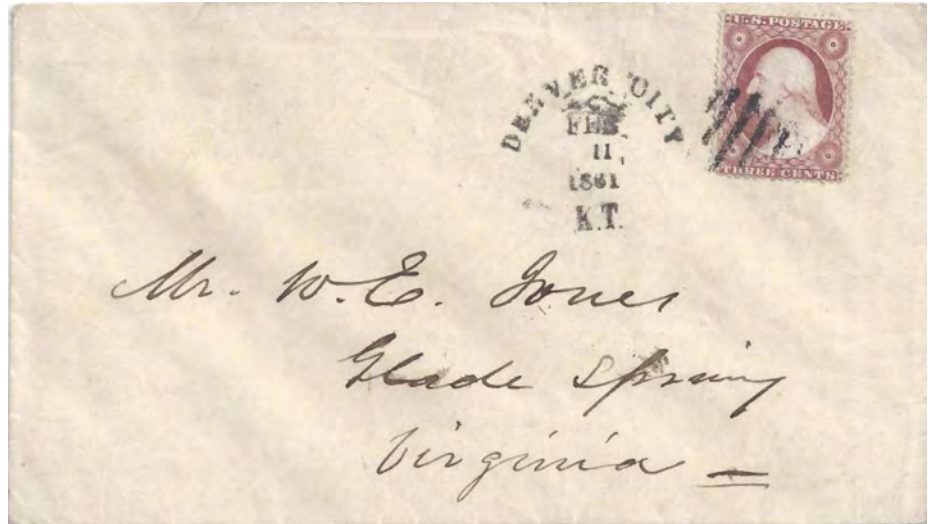


Figure 12-24. February 11, 1861 letter from Denver City carried by the Western Stage Company to Fort Kearney.

Western's weekly stages over the Denver-Fort Kearney route also represented the first real competition for the COC&PP. On September 7, 1860 Hinckley & Co. opened a competing express business to the East, using Western's facilities to carry letters, packages and gold dust. The COC&PP reacted quickly, and reduced its express letter fees to seven cents on September 17, 1860.

The race was on, but both Hinckley and COC&PP would suffer for it. Hinckley printed at least seven different types of franked U.S. three cents stamped envelopes that it sold for 10 cents. Figure 12-25 shows an early example. This Hinckley franked envelope was datestamped in Denver on November 13, 1860. It was carried by a Hinckley messenger on a Western stagecoach to Fort Kearney and then on to St Joseph, where it entered the U.S. mails on November 22.



Figure 12-25. Eastbound cover marked "Hinckley & Co.'s Express Denver City" on November 13, 1860. Mailed November 22 in St Joseph, Missouri.

12 - COLORADO MAIL ROUTES, 1858 - 1861

Most of the known eastbound Hinckley express letters entered the mail at St Joseph, but some stayed on Western stagecoaches all of the way to Omaha. Figure 12-26 shows an example on a different type of Hinckley franked envelope.



Figure 12-26. Eastbound cover marked "Hinckley & Co.'s Express Denver City" on December 24, 1860 and posted in Omaha, Nebraska on January 1.

This Hinckley franked envelope was datestamped in Denver on December 24, 1860. It was carried by a Hinckley messenger on a Western stagecoach to Fort Kearney and then on to Omaha, where it entered the U.S. mails on January 1, 1861.

Ultimately, competition from a competent U.S. mail service drove both Hinckley and COC&PP out of the letter express business. Hinckley was purchased by the COC&PP on May 11, 1861 and the latest known COC&PP express cover is from November 1861.

The Post Office Department notified Western Stage Company on May 21, 1861 that its Denver-Fort Kearney mail contract would be annulled, effective July 1. This was part of the great consolidation of the Central Route overland mail contracts into the daily overland mail managed by the Overland Mail Company. Perhaps sensing the end, E.S. Alvord sold the Western Stage Company to the Overland Mail Co. on May 1, 1861. Tri-weekly U.S. mail service to Denver by the COC&PP under subcontract to the Overland Mail Co. began on July 1, 1861.

Endnotes

1. Larimer, *Reminiscences*, page 136.
2. No mail is known from the Montana K.T. post office, and it is not clear that it was ever operational.
3. There was no town named Coraville; it was simply the name of a post office. When the office began to function in June 1859, it was located in the same building as the L&PP on Blake Street in Denver City.
4. The stagecoach, with Albert Richardson and Horace Greeley on board, left Leavenworth on Wednesday, May 25. B.D. Williams caught up to the coach on horseback at Station 23, and proceeded with them to Denver. The trip time of the coach was eleven days, but Williams made better time from Leavenworth because he travelled part of the way on horseback.
5. There was no discernible difference between Jones & Russell and the L&PP. Contemporary news accounts and advertisements use the two names interchangeably and sometimes in the same advertisement.
6. The census compiled by Richard Frajola and Ken Stach shows Jones & Russell markings used continuously up to May 22, 1860, and then replaced by oval COC&PP markings on May 24. One additional mail from Denver on June 7 was marked with Jones & Russell express markings.
7. Hafen, *Overland Mail*, page 160.
8. The earliest known Denver City postmark is an August 16, 1860 manuscript marking.
9. The "K.T." at the bottom of the postmark is elongated.



Chapter Thirteen

Pony Express Mail, 1860-1861

The transcontinental Pony Express captured the popular imagination while it operated between April 3, 1860 and October 26, 1861, and has continued to do so ever since. From a postal history perspective, the Pony Express was the combination of a private mail system and a government-subsidized mail system that is unique in American history.

In summary,¹ the Central Overland and California Pike's Peak Express Company (COC&PP) was formed in February 1860 to manage Russell, Majors & Waddell's² passenger, express and contract mail services to the booming regions of Colorado, Salt Lake City and California via the Central Route. In December 1859, the Post Office Department's default route for transcontinental mails had been changed from the via Panama route to the Overland Mail Company's (OMC) Southern Route. From May 1859 to May 1860, the COC&PP and its predecessor companies gained control of the contracts along the Central Route, and began a political campaign to move the lucrative default mail contract from the OMC's Southern Route to their Central Route.



Figure 13-1. Map showing the Central Route (in blue and red) and Southern Route (in green).

The COC&PP needed to prove the superiority of the Central Route over the Southern Route to wrest the contract away from the OMC. Accordingly, on April 3, 1860 they started a much-publicized transcontinental Pony Express along the Central Route, using relays of horse-mounted riders to deliver mail between Missouri and California in the then extraordinary time of ten days. This was the first phase of the Pony Express, under the complete operational and financial control of the COC&PP. No post office subsidies or endorsements were given to them for their service.

13 - PONY EXPRESS MAIL, 1860-1861

The COC&PP accomplished its goal of establishing the feasibility of the Central Route, and the outbreak of the Civil War convinced Congress that the daily overland mail contract should be moved to the Central Route at the impressive subsidy of \$1 million per year. However, the Post Office Department granted that contract to the OMC on March 12, 1861 (effective July 1) and the COC&PP was relegated to the role of sub-contractor on the eastern portion of the route. Since the contract stated that control of the Pony



**Russell, Majors & Waddell,
Creators of the Pony
Express**

- Partnership formed January 1855
- Dominated military supply contracts in West
- Financially damaged by 1857 Mormon War
- Formed COC&PP subsidiary in February 1860
- Operated Pony Express, April 1860 to June 1861
- Failed financially in 1862

Express was to pass to the OMC on July 1, this created an April-June 1861 interim operational period of the Pony Express. During that time, it was operated as a private enterprise under the joint control of the OMC and the COC&PP. However, preoccupied by the movement of the stagecoach line to the Central Route, the OMC delegated operational control to the COC&PP during that period. To shore up the failing finances of the operation, Wells Fargo & Co. (WF) also became involved as agent for the mail handling services at that time.

The new daily overland mail contract also stipulated the continuation of the twice-weekly Pony Express until the completion of the overland telegraph. This created the post office-subsidized third operational period of the Pony Express. Starting on July 1, the OMC had full operational control and used WF as its agent for the mail handling services. The post office service terminated at Placerville, California so WF also offered a private express service to link Placerville and San Francisco. The telegraph was completed on October 24, 1861 and the Pony Express ceased to operate two days later.

Thus, although the Pony Express has typically been viewed as a single unvaried enterprise, it was actually operated under distinctly different management schemes. These three operational phases encompassed four different rate periods. A brief overview is shown in Table 13-1.

Table 13-1 Summary of the Pony Express Rate Periods

	First Period	Second Period	Third Period	Fourth Period
Westbound Dates	Apr 3, 1860 to Jul 30, 1860	Jul 31, 1860 to Mar 31, 1861	Apr 1, 1861 to Jun 30, 1861	Jul 1, 1861 to Oct 26, 1861
Eastbound Dates	Apr 3, 1860 to Aug 14, 1860	Aug 15, 1860 to Apr 14, 1861	Apr 15, 1861 to Jun 30, 1861	Jul 1, 1861 to Oct 26, 1861
Operator(s)	COC&PP	COC&PP	OMC, COC&PP, WF	P.O., OMC, WF
Express Rate	\$5 per ½ oz.	\$2.50 per ¼ oz.	\$2 per ½ oz.	\$1 per ½ oz.
Schedule	Weekly*	Twice-weekly	Twice-weekly	Twice-weekly
SF-MO Trip Time	10 days	15 days	12 days	12 days

* Schedule increased to twice-weekly from July 7, 1861 to the end of the period.

The First Rate Period, April to August 1860

The first rate period began with the inaugural eastbound and westbound trips on April 3, 1860. As shown in Table 13-1, the basic express fee was \$5 per half ounce, although there was also a short distance rate between San Francisco and Salt Lake City of \$3 per half ounce. Per the regulations for private express companies, U.S. postage from origin to destination had to be paid on all letters. The regulation stipulated the use of U.S. stamped envelopes, but many examples with stamps are known.

Figure 13-2 shows the only known cover carried on the first westbound trip. It originated somewhere in the East and was marked “Paid 5.00” (for the \$5 per half ounce express fee) at the upper left. The letter was enclosed in a 10 cents Nesbitt stamped envelope, in accordance with private express regulations. It was forwarded under cover to the St Joseph COC&PP express agent, who marked it with the Company’s April 3 handstamp, and put it on the express leaving St Joseph at 6:30pm on Tuesday April 3, 1860. After a short ride across the Missouri River on the ferry boat *Denver*, the pony rider began his journey to the next relay station. This first westbound mail is reported to have passed through Salt Lake City on April 9 at 6:30pm, and arrived in Sacramento, California at 5:25pm on April 13. The steamer *Antelope* then carried it to San Francisco, where it arrived at 12:38am on April 14. The April 16, 1860 San Francisco *Bulletin* reported that 25 letters were delivered to San Francisco.



Figure 13-2. Cover carried on the first westbound trip that departed from St. Joseph, Missouri on April 3, 1860 and arrived in San Francisco on April 14. (Census #W1)³

Figure 13-3 shows one of two known letters carried on the first eastbound Pony Express trip. This letter was placed in a 10 cents Nesbitt stamped envelope with a red Wells Fargo frank (which served no purpose in this case) and given to the COC&PP express agent in San Francisco. He marked it with his April 3, 1860 black Running Pony handstamp to show that the \$5 express fee had been paid, and placed it on the steamer *New World* to Sacramento. This mail is reported to have passed through Salt Lake City on April 7 at 11:45pm, and arrived in St. Joseph on April 13, where the agent marked it with the April 13 COC&PP handstamp. It was immediately placed in the U.S. mails at St Joseph, and carried by train to New York City, where it was docketed as received on April 17. The August 4, 1860 *Alta California* reported that this first mail consisted of 70 letters and 15 telegraphic dispatches or newspapers.

13 - PONY EXPRESS MAIL, 1860-1861



Figure 13-3. Cover carried on the first eastbound trip that departed from San Francisco on April 3, 1860 and arrived in St. Joseph, Missouri on April 13. (Census #E1)

Figure 13-4 shows the use of the San Francisco COC&PP handstamp to indicate that express fees had been paid.



Figure 13-4. Cover carried on the eastbound Pony Express trip that departed from San Francisco on May 18, 1860 and arrived in St. Joseph on June 1. (Census #E5)

This 10 cents Nesbitt stamped envelope was given to the San Francisco COC&PP express agent, who marked it with his handstamp on May 18, 1860. It arrived 14 days later in St Joseph. It was marked with the June 1 St Joseph Running Pony handstamp and put into the U.S. mails the following day.

The St Joseph Running Pony handstamp was also used on westbound mail. Figure 13-5 shows an example. This 10 cents Nesbitt stamped envelope originated in New York, per the red “California Pony Express Paid” marking. There is also a faint pencil “5.00” marking, which confirmed that the \$5 express fee had

been paid. The letter was forwarded under cover to the St Joseph COC&PP express agent, who marked it with the June 10 (1860) Running Pony handstamp. The express left St Joseph that day and arrived in San Francisco on June 25.



Figure 13-5. Cover carried on the westbound Pony Express trip that departed from St. Joseph on June 10, 1860 and arrived in San Francisco on June 25. (Census #W8)

Figure 13-6 illustrates the only known example of the short distance \$3 rate. This letter left San Francisco on April 20, 1860 with the third eastbound Pony Express trip. It was addressed to Carson City, Nevada, thus qualifying for the special short distance \$3 per half ounce rate. The San Francisco COCPP agent added the black Running Pony handstamp and noted “3.00” at the upper right to indicate the express fee paid, although the “Central Overland Pony Express Company” frank also served to indicate that express fees had been paid.

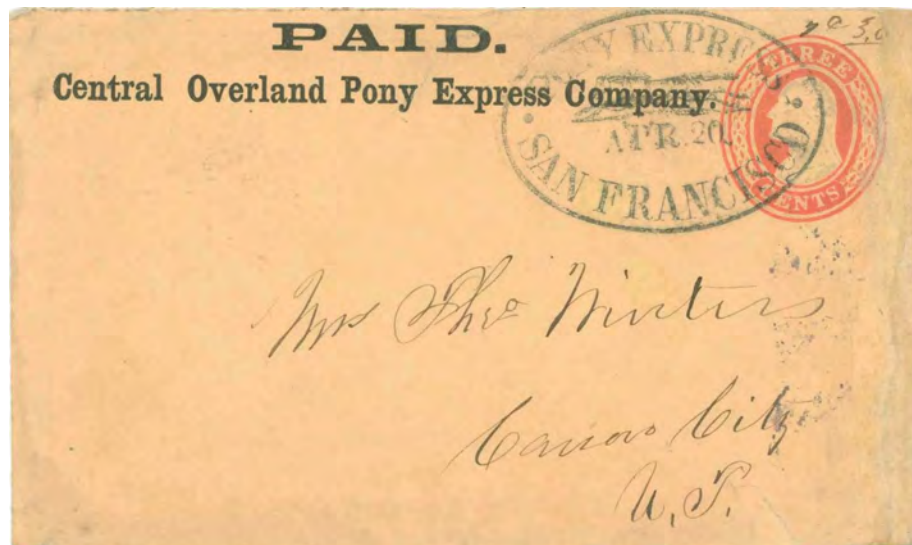


Figure 13-6. Cover carried on the eastbound Pony Express trip that departed from San Francisco on April 20, 1860 and arrived in St. Joseph on April 30. (Census #E53A)

13 - PONY EXPRESS MAIL, 1860-1861

From late May to July 1860, the Pony Express was severely disrupted by Paiute Indian disturbances in Nevada.⁴ Most of the May-June mail was stopped or significantly delayed through the troubled area, and the risk to pony riders continued into July. Figure 13-7 shows the celebrated letter that was captured by Indians in July 1860.



Figure 13-7. Cover carried on the eastbound Pony Express trip that departed from San Francisco on July 21, 1860 and was intercepted by Indians. (Census #E10)

This letter was given to the San Francisco COC&PP agent, who added his July 21 handstamp to indicate that the \$5 express fee had been paid. The rider was intercepted by Indians at the Mormon Ferry,³ and the mailbag was lost. There is a manuscript note across the front that reads, “recovered from a mail stolen by the Indians in 1860” and the letter has a May 3, 1862 New York receiving mark on the reverse.

The Second Rate Period, August 1860 to April 1861

On July 31, 1860, William Russell sent a notice from Leavenworth, Kansas to COC&PP agents reducing the express rate to \$2.50 per quarter ounce from the previous \$5.00 per half ounce. Although it only reduced the weight progression, it was obviously an effort to increase the volume of mail carried by the Pony Express by reducing the cost of a single letter. The notice was dispatched on the August 1 Pony Express trip from St Joseph that arrived in San Francisco on August 12. News of this rate change was published in San Francisco newspapers on August 15.

Figure 13-8 shows an eastbound letter addressed to New York City during this period. This cover was prepaid the required U.S. postage by an 1859 Type V 10 cents stamp in San Francisco. The COC&PP agent there marked it with his September 29 (1860) blue Running Pony handstamp, indicating that the \$2.50 express fee had been paid. It arrived in St Joseph on October 10, where the COC&PP agent marked it with his COC&PP handstamp. It was placed in the U.S. mails on the following day.



Figure 13-8. Cover carried on the eastbound Pony Express trip that departed from San Francisco on September 29, 1860 and arrived in St. Joseph on October 10. (Census #E22)

Figure 13-9 shows the \$2.50 express rate on a westbound cover during the second period. This 10 cents star die stamped envelope originated in the East, and was forwarded under cover to the St Joseph COC&PP express agent, who marked it with the March 10, 1861 green “double oval” Pony Express handstamp. He also marked it with a manuscript “2.50” near the indicia, indicating that the express fee had been paid. The express arrived in San Francisco on March 23, and the letter was mailed at the post office, where it was postmarked for the March 25 departure of the mail for Portland, Oregon. The presence of a San Francisco postmark on a westbound Pony Express letter is very unusual.

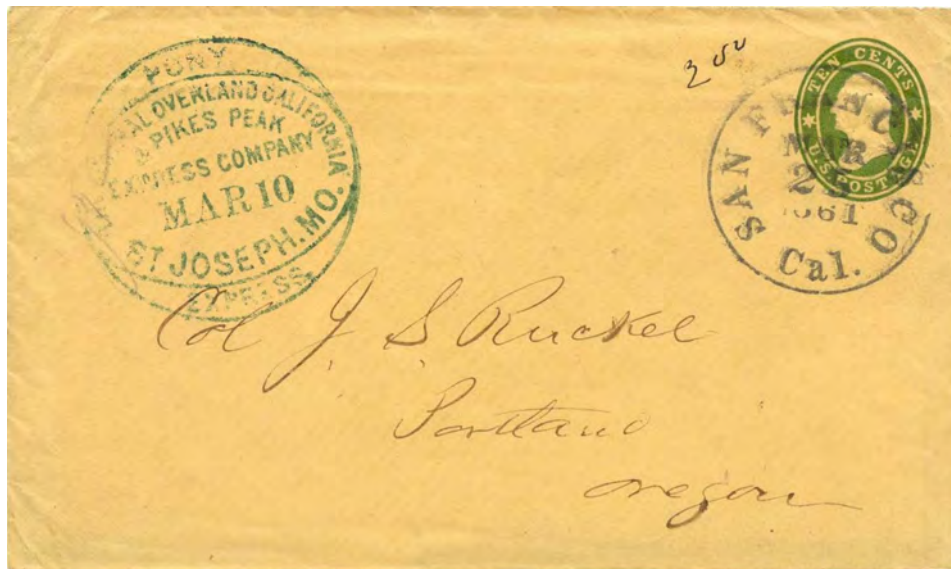


Figure 13-9. Cover carried on the westbound Pony Express trip that departed from St. Joseph on March 10, 1861 and arrived in San Francisco on March 23. (Census #W34)

13 - PONY EXPRESS MAIL, 1860-1861

Figure 13-10 illustrates a “way” cover collected along the route of the Pony Express, rather than at San Francisco or St Joseph.



Figure 13-10. Way cover carried on the eastbound Pony Express trip that departed from San Francisco on October 20, 1860 and arrived in St. Joseph on November 1. (Census #E28)

This three cents Nesbitt stamped envelope originated in Virginia City, Nevada on October 21, 1860. The envelope also bears a “Paid Central Overland Pony Express Company” frank to indicate that the \$2.50 express fee had been paid, although the Virginia City agent also added a manuscript “2.50” to confirm that. This type of franked envelope was often used for telegraph messages. It connected with the Pony Express trip that left San Francisco on October 20 and arrived in St Joseph on November 1, where it received a COC&PP handstamp and was placed in the U.S. mails on the following day. U.S. postage of three cents was sufficient in this case because the distance travelled was less than 3,000 miles.

Beginning in early January 1861, Pony Express mail originating in Sacramento was no longer treated as way mail, and began receiving a special Pony Express handstamp. Figure 13-11 shows an April 1861 example.



Figure 13-11. Cover carried on the eastbound Pony Express trip that departed from San Francisco on April 3, 1861 and arrived in St. Joseph on April 16. (Census #E62)

This cover was prepaid 10 cents U.S. postage in Sacramento, and the COC&PP agent there marked it with his April 4 (1861) blue handstamp, indicating that the \$2.50 express fee had been paid. It arrived in St Joseph on April 16, and was placed in the U.S. mails on the following day.

Figure 13-12 shows a westbound cover sent free of U.S. postal charges.

This letter bears the Congressional free frank of William Gwin, senator from California, so it was sent free of any U.S. postage from Washington, D.C. It was sent under cover to St Joseph, where the COC&PP agent added his December 13 (1860) St Joseph Running Pony handstamp. He also marked it "Paid JTC", reflecting the payment (or forgiveness) of the \$2.50 express fee. It left St Joseph on December 13 and arrived in San Francisco on December 28. Senator Gwin sponsored Russell, Majors & Waddell in their quest to obtain the overland contract on the Central Route, and was credited by Majors⁵ as coming up with the idea for the Pony Express.



Figure 13-12. Cover carried on the westbound Pony Express trip that departed from St. Joseph on December 13, 1860 and arrived in San Francisco on December 29. (Census #W27)

The addressee, Frederick Billings, was the first land claims lawyer in San Francisco and a trustee of the College of California. He suggested the name change of that college to the University of California at Berkeley. He later became President of the Northern Pacific Railroad, and the city of Billings, Montana is named after him.

Figure 13-13 shows a Pony Express letter sent to Scotland. This illustrated stagecoach envelope was prepaid 10 cents U.S. postage in San Francisco, and the COC&PP agent there marked it with his



Figure 13-13. Cover carried on the eastbound Pony Express trip that departed from San Francisco on November 7, 1860 and arrived in St. Joseph on November 19. (Census #E38)

13 - PONY EXPRESS MAIL, 1860-1861

November 7 (1860) blue Running Pony handstamp, indicating that the \$2.50 express fee had been paid. It arrived in St Joseph on November 19, where the agent marked it with a COC&PP handstamp. It was placed in the U.S. mails on the following day, and was postmarked in transit at New York on November 24. Since only 10 cents of the 24 cents rate to Scotland was paid, it was rated as unpaid with a debit to Great Britain of 21 cents (16 cents packet fee plus five cents U.S. inland postage). It was carried to England by the Inman steamer *Kangaroo*, which left on November 24 and arrived in Liverpool on December 7. The recipient in Scotland was charged one shilling postage due.

Figure 13-14 shows the only other known Pony Express letter to Great Britain, but in this case with a red San Francisco Running Pony handstamp. That handstamp, initially applied in black, is seen primarily in blue. For a very short period in March-April 1861, it appeared in red.



Figure 13-14. Cover carried on the eastbound Pony Express trip that departed from San Francisco on April 13, 1861 and arrived in St. Joseph on April 25. (Census #E64)

This letter was given to the San Francisco COC&PP agent with no U.S. postage prepaid, since mail to England could be sent unpaid. The agent applied a dateless red Running Pony handstamp to indicate that the \$2.50 express fee had been paid. He also applied a red April 13 (1861) COC&PP handstamp to indicate the date of departure from San Francisco. That trip arrived in St Joseph on April 25, and its mail was placed in the U.S. post on the following day. This letter was postmarked in New York on April 30, and rated for a five cents debit to Great Britain for U.S. inland postage.⁶ It then left Boston on May 1 aboard the Cunard steamer *Niagara*, which arrived in Queenstown on May 12. The following day, it was rated for one shilling due in Liverpool.

The Third Rate Period, April to June 1861

The end of the COC&PP's sole operational control of the Pony Express occurred in April 1861 when the Post Office contracted with the Overland Mail Company, rather than the COC&PP, to operate the daily overland mail along the Central Route between St. Joseph and Placerville, California. The negotiations preceding the letting of this contract included provisions for the COC&PP's continued involvement as a subcontractor for the handling of mails, both by Pony Express and by stagecoach, but left the OMC fully in charge.

The third rate period lasted from April 1, 1861 (from April 15 in San Francisco, due to the delay in communications from the East) until a postal contract for a daily overland mail took effect on July 1, 1861.

During this phase, Wells, Fargo & Company (WF) was appointed as agents for the handling of the mail, and began issuing special Pony Express \$2 and \$4 adhesive stamps and franked envelopes. WF established new lower rates of \$2 per half ounce to increase the volume of mails carried. The first WF Pony Express \$2 adhesive stamps were used on the April 27, 1861 trip from San Francisco.

Figure 13-15 shows a patriotic envelope carried in June 1861. This 10 cents star die patriotic envelope was given to the WF agent in San Francisco, who franked it with a \$2 Pony Express stamp and marked it with his blue Running Pony handstamp. It left San Francisco on June 1, 1861 and arrived in St Joseph on June 13, where it was immediately placed in the U.S. mails for New York City. This is one of three known Pony Express letters on patriotic envelopes.



Figure 13-15. Cover carried on the eastbound Pony Express trip that departed from San Francisco on June 1, 1861 and arrived in St. Joseph on June 13. (Census #E89)

Eastbound multiple weight letters used \$4 green Pony Express stamps. Figure 13-16 shows the only known example used on cover. This triple rate cover carried \$6 worth of Pony Express stamps and 30 cents in U.S. postage, although 20 cents of the postage is no longer present. It left San Francisco on June 26, 1861 and arrived in St Joseph on July 8, where it was placed in the U.S. mails to New York City.



Figure 13-16. Triple-weight letter carried on the eastbound Pony Express trip that left San Francisco on June 26, 1861 and arrived in St. Joseph on July 8. (Census #E105)

13 - PONY EXPRESS MAIL, 1860-1861

Westbound letters were sent under cover in packets addressed to the St. Joseph post office for delivery to the Pony Express agent, and WF created a special westbound franked envelope for the \$2 express rate. Only two examples, used in May-June 1861, are known. These Type I WF franked envelopes, not denominated for the \$2 express fee, can be distinguished from the later Type II WF franked envelopes by the use of 10 cents Nesbitt stamped envelopes, a comma after the word “Placerville,” and the absence of the printed directive to the Agent of the Pony Express in the address panel. Figure 13-17 illustrates the Type I WF franked envelope.



Figure 13-17. Cover carried on the westbound Pony Express trip that departed from St. Joseph on May 12, 1861 and arrived in San Francisco on May 23. (Census #W41)

This WF Type I franked envelope was purchased for \$2.10 (\$2 express fee plus 10 cents U.S. postage) from the New York WF agent, who applied the blue May 7 (1861) “California Pony Express New-York” handstamp. It was sent in a packet to St Joseph, where the COC&PP agent applied a May 11 COC&PP “double oval” handstamp, later corrected to the actual departure date of May 12. It arrived in San Francisco on May 23.



Figure 13-18. Cover carried on the westbound Pony Express trip that departed from St. Joseph on April 14, 1861 and arrived in San Francisco on April 25. (Census #W38)

Most westbound mail during this period was not enclosed in WF Type I franked envelopes, probably because they were not available until May. Figure 13-18 shows an example in WF franked envelope..

The WF black transcontinental frank on this 10 cents Nesbitt envelope was used to indicate payment of the delivery express fee. The agent in New York applied a blue April 6 (1861) “California Pony Express New-York” handstamp, and sent it under cover to St Joseph. The

COC&PP agent there applied an April 14 green “double oval” handstamp to indicate the date of departure, and it arrived in San Francisco on April 25.

The Fourth Rate Period, July to October 1861

The fourth and final rate period of the Pony Express began on July 1, 1861 when the Pony Express became a partially subsidized, government-mandated, postal service. The postal contract included a clause that stipulated that the Overland Mail Company:

be required also during the continuance of their Contract, or until the completion of the Overland Telegraph, to run a Pony Express Semi-weekly at a Schedule of times of ten days eight months of the year and twelve days four months of the year, and to convey for the Government free of charge five pounds of Mail Matter; with liberty of charging the public for transportation of letters by said Express not exceeding One dollar per half ounce.

In the prior three rate periods, the Pony Express fee covered the service between San Francisco and Placerville. In this period, it became an additional service by WF and was subject to an additional charge of 10 cents. This service fee, plus the cost of the 10 cents U.S. postage, meant that a user based in San Francisco had to pay 20 cents (25 cents if not in a WF franked entire), in addition to the \$1 pony express fee.

Eastbound mails were collected at WF offices and transmitted to Placerville or the nearest Pony Express station for the additional charge of 10 cents. Westbound mail continued to be sent under cover to the St. Joseph post office in July and early August 1861. By the middle of August, a new westbound mail handling procedure was adopted. Pony Express franked envelopes, pre-addressed to the Pony Express Agent in St. Joseph, began to be sold in eastern WF offices. These franked envelopes were deposited directly into the U.S. postal system at the point of origin and transmitted individually to the Pony Express agent in St. Joseph.

Because of the lower rates in the fourth rate period, WF introduced a new set of \$1, \$2 and \$4 adhesive stamps for eastbound mail and a \$1 franked envelope for westbound mail. In addition, a \$1 “garter” stamp was created for multiple-weight westbound mails.

A cover carried on the first trip of the fourth period is shown in Figure 13-19. As required, this letter was enclosed in a WF 10 cents star die franked envelope that cost 20 cents for the U.S.



Figure 13-19. Cover carried on the eastbound Pony Express trip that left San Francisco on July 3, 1861. It arrived in St Joseph around July 15. (Census #E109)

13 - PONY EXPRESS MAIL, 1860-1861

postage and the 10 cents WF fee. The express agent added a \$1 WF stamp for the Pony Express service and dispatched it on July 3, 1861.

One of the two known covers showing usage of the \$2 WF green adhesive is shown in Figure 13-20. This double-weight letter, enclosed in a regulation WF 10 cents "Watermelon" envelope, was franked with additional 10 cents U.S. postage and a \$2 WF stamp. It was carried on the last eastbound Pony Express trip, which left San Francisco on October 23, 1861 and arrived in Atchison, Kansas on November 7.



Figure 13-20. Double-weight cover carried on the last eastbound Pony Express trip that departed from San Francisco on October 23, 1861 and arrived in Atchison on November 7. (Census #E180)

One of two covers known with the triple-weight \$4 WF black adhesive is shown in Figure 13-21. This large cover originated at the U.S. Consulate in Honolulu, Hawaii and was sent under cover to the forwarder McRuer & Merrill in San Francisco. That forwarder entrusted it to WF on August 10, and paid the triple-weight fee represented by the \$4 WF stamp. Because it is addressed to the U.S. Treasury, this letter was sent free of any U.S. postal charges. It left San Francisco on August 10, and arrived in St Joseph on August 22, where it was immediately put into the U.S. mails for Washington, D.C.



Figure 13-21. Triple-weight cover carried on the Pony Express trip that departed from San Francisco on August 10, 1861 and arrived in St Joseph on August 22. (Census #E140)

Commencing with the trip leaving San Francisco on September 11, 1861, the eastern terminus for the pony riders was changed from St. Joseph to Atchison, Kansas to connect with the St. Joseph & Atchison Railway. On eastbound Pony Express mails, this change of terminus resulted in letters being delivered into the Atchison post office rather than the St. Joseph office

until the end of the period. An extraordinary cover that entered the U.S. mails at Atchison is shown in Figure 13-22.



Figure 13-22. Patriotic cover carried on the Pony Express trip that departed from San Francisco on September 14, 1861 and arrived in Atchison on September 27. (Census #E160)

This patriotic envelope was given to a San Francisco WF agent, who franked it with a \$1 WF stamp and 30 cents U.S. postage for the Prussian Closed Mail rate to Hamburg, Germany. He also marked it with his September 14 (1861) handstamp, to indicate the date that it left San Francisco. That trip arrived in Atchison on September 27, where it was put into the U.S. mails for New York. The New York foreign mail office marked it with an October 5 “7 Paid” postmark for the departure of the HAPAG steamer *Saxonia* to Southampton, England. The letter arrived there on October 17, and was processed in transit through Aachen on October 19.

As described above, WF collected eastbound letters at its many express offices and transferred them to the Pony Express, typically at Sacramento. Figure 13-23 shows an example.

This letter was enclosed in an overprinted WF 10 cents star die franked envelope⁷ at Marysville, California that cost 20 cents. The Marysville WF agent added a \$1 WF stamp for the Pony Express service, cancelled it with his July 17 handstamp, and sent it to Sacramento, where the agent added his July 18 Pony Express handstamp. It caught the Pony Express trip that passed through Sacramento that day and arrived in St Joseph on July 29.



Figure 13-23. Cover carried on the eastbound Pony Express trip that left San Francisco on July 17, 1861 and arrived in St. Joseph on July 29. (Census #E116)

13 - PONY EXPRESS MAIL, 1860-1861

Until mid-August 1861, westbound letters were sent in packets addressed to the St. Joseph post office for delivery to the Pony Express agent. These packets were opened at the St Joseph post office, and some of the letters in them were postmarked there.

Figure 13-24 shows an example of this. This letter was datelined on July 3, 1861 in London and sent under cover to a forwarder in New York. It was carried from England on the Cunard steamer *Asia*, which left Liverpool on July 6 and arrived in New York on July 18. The New York WF agent added the blue July 20 “California Pony Express New-York” marking to reflect payment of the \$1 express fee, and franked it with 10 cents U.S. postage. It was then sent under cover to St Joseph, where the postmaster opened the package and postmarked this letter on July 28 before giving it to the Pony Express agent. The agent then date stamped it on July 28 for the trip that departed on that day. After carriage by pony express to Placerville, the letter was given to WF for delivery in San Francisco for an additional 15 cents fee (not marked).



Figure 13-24. Cover carried on the westbound Pony Express trip that left St. Joseph on July 28, 1861 and arrived in San Francisco on August 8. (Census #W46)

WF created a new Type II franked envelope for the \$1 express rate to reflect the new westbound mail handling procedures that were introduced in mid-August 1861. These envelopes, still not denominated for the \$1 express fee, can be distinguished by the use of 10 cents “Watermelon” stamped envelopes and the printed directive to the Agent of the Pony Express in the address panel. It is this last feature that caused the creation of new franked envelopes, since Pony Express mail was now to be dispatched in the U.S. mails from the various origin points to St Joseph. The frank reads “Paid from St Joseph to Placerville per Pony Express,” so the additional 15 cents WF fee for carriage from Placerville to San Francisco still had to be collected on delivery.

Figure 13-25 shows an example of the Type II WF franked envelope. This envelope was acquired by the sender for \$1.10 at the WF office in New York City (\$1 Pony Express charge plus 10 cents for the government entire), and was placed in the regular mails in New York on October 5, 1861. Upon receipt by the postmaster in St. Joseph, it was recorded and delivered to the Pony Express agent, who date stamped it with his October 10 “double oval” marking. After carriage by pony express to Placerville, the letter was delivered by WF to Sacramento for an additional 15 cents fee.

Two days after the October 24, 1861 completion of the overland telegraph, Wells Fargo announced that the Pony Express service was terminated. The last westbound trip made by the Pony Express departed St. Joseph on October 23, 1861 (date stamped as October 24). However, by the time that the news of the

termination was disseminated in the East, there was some mail already in transit, since mail took as much as three days to get to St. Joseph. Accordingly, the October 27 and October 31 mails were still processed by the St. Joseph agent as pony mail. However, when the bags arrived at Atchison they were put on daily overland mail coaches.



Figure 13-25. Cover carried on the westbound Pony Express trip that departed from St. Joseph on October 10, 1861 and arrived in San Francisco on October 22. (Census #W61)

The San Francisco newspapers report these two late “Pony Express” arrivals in about 22 days from St. Joseph, which is more consistent with the timing of the daily overland stagecoach. The San Francisco *Bulletin* of November 18, 1861 announced the arrival of “The Last Pony Express” carrying 78 letters. Then, the November 21 *Alta California* reported the arrival on the previous night of a Pony Express mail with 53 letters. Figure 13-26 shows a cover from the October 27, 1861 mail.



Figure 13-26. Cover intended for the westbound Pony Express trip scheduled to depart from St. Joseph on October 27, 1861 but carried to San Francisco by stagecoach on November 18. (Census #W68)

This double-weight Type II WF franked envelope with \$1 “garter” stamp was purchased by the sender for \$2.20 (including the 20 cents U.S. postage) at the Boston WF office and was placed in the U.S. mails on October 19, 1861. Upon receipt by the postmaster in St. Joseph, it was recorded and delivered to the Pony Express agent, who date stamped it with his October 27 “double oval” marking. The Pony Express had

13 - PONY EXPRESS MAIL, 1860-1861

ceased operation the day before, so it was placed on the daily overland coach which arrived in San Francisco on November 18.

The Pony Express is possibly the most representative icon of the West. The postal artifacts that survive from this brief enterprise will undoubtedly continue to hold the fascination of postal historians for years to come.

Endnotes

1. The 1860-61 Pony Express has been thoroughly researched, most notably in Frajola, Kramer & Walske, *The Pony Express, A Postal History*, (New York: The Philatelic Foundation, 2005).
2. The Russell, Majors & Waddell partnership had been formed in January 1855 to pursue government contracts to supply U.S. military installations west of the Missouri River, based out of Leavenworth, Kansas Territory. In April 1859, William Russell started the Leavenworth & Pike's Peak Express Company (L&PP) to provide stagecoach passenger and express services between Missouri and the booming Colorado Pike's Peak region. L&PP also obtained the U.S. mail contract between Missouri and Salt Lake City in May 1859, but the company failed and was ultimately absorbed by the COC&PP. In this way, Russell, Majors & Waddell backed into the Post Office contract mail business.
3. The references to Census W(estbound) or E(astbound) numbers are to the pictorial census in Appendix B in *The Pony Express, A Postal History*. An updated pictorial census of Pony Express covers is maintained at <http://www.rfrajola.com/ponyHTM/PonyCensus.htm>.
4. This period was extensively researched by Scott Trepel in *The Impacts of Indian Attacks on the Pony Express in 1860*, (Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries, Inc., 2014).
5. Trepel, *The Impacts of Indian Attacks on the Pony Express*, page 31.
6. Alexander Majors, *Seventy Years on the Frontier: Alexander Majors' Memoirs of a Lifetime on the Border*. Reprint of 1893 edition, (Columbus, OH: Long's College Book Co., 1950), pages 182-84.
7. The domestic transcontinental rate was 10 cents per half ounce, so the Post Office Department received five cents less on this letter because of the terms in the U.S.-Great Britain postal agreement.
8. Wells Fargo re-used Freeman's Express franked envelopes, overprinted with the WF frank.

Appendix A

Rocky Mountain Trip List, 1804 to 1843

Dep Date	From	Arv Date	To	Party, Route and Notes
May 14 1804	St Louis	Dec 7 1805	Columbia River	Lewis & Clark Expedition via Upper Missouri River and across the Rockies to Oregon
» Mar 23 1806	Oregon	Sep 23 1806	St Louis	
Jul 15 1806	St Louis	Nov 1806	Pike's Peak	Zebulon Pike's Expedition via Arkansas River to Colorado, captured by Spanish Feb 26 1807
» Mar 1807	Santa Fe	Jul 1 1807	Louisiana	
Apr 1807	St Louis	Jul 1807	Fort Raymond	Manuel Lisa, via Upper Missouri River and Yellowstone River to Big Horn River and Fort Raymond
» Jul 1808	Ft Raymond	Aug 1808	St Louis	
May 17 1809	St Louis	Jul 1809	Fort Raymond	Manuel Lisa of St Louis Missouri Fur Co. (SLMFC) via Fort Osage (Jul 8 1809) to Big Horn River and Fort Raymond, SLMFC formed
» Jul 1809	Ft Raymond	Oct 1809	St Louis	
Mar 11 1811	St Louis	Feb 15 1812	Fort Astoria	Wilson P. Hunt of Astor's American Fur Co. (AFC), Missouri River to Arikara Villages, then overland via Teton Pass and Snake River to Oregon, return trip led by Robert Stuart discovered South Pass
» Jun 29 1812	Fort Astoria	May 5 1813	St Louis	
Mar 30 1811	St Louis	Jun 1811	Fort Raymond	Manuel Lisa (SLMFC), via Upper Missouri River and Yellowstone River
» Sep 1811	Ft Raymond	Oct 1811	St Louis	
May 6 1812	St Louis		Dakota	Manuel Lisa (SLMFC), via Upper Missouri River to Mandan Villages in what is now North Dakota
» 1813	Dakota	Jun 1 1813	St Louis	
War of 1812 - 1815; British Domination of the Upper Missouri River, 1815 - 1819				
Sep 10 1815	St Louis	Nov 1815	Colorado	Chouteau & DeMun, to Rocky Mountains and headwaters of Arkansas River in what is now Colorado, arrested in Santa Fe
» Jul 1817	Santa Fe	Sep 1817	St Louis	
1819 Unsuccessful Atkinson / Long Military Expedition to Yellowstone to re-assert U.S. control				
Jun 6 1820	Ft Atkinson	Jul 14 1820	Pike's Peak	Stephen Long's Platte Expedition, via South Platte River to the Rock Mountains, return trip via Arkansas River
» 1820		Sep 9 1820	Fort Smith, AR	
Spring 1821	St Louis	Aug 1821	Big Horn River	Immel & Jones (MFC), via Upper Missouri River to Yellowstone River, both killed May 31, 1823
Apr 3 1822	St Louis		Fort Henry	Andrew Henry (Ashley), via Upper Missouri River to Mouth of Yellowstone River (Fort Henry)
May 8 1822	St Louis	Oct 1 1822	Fort Henry	William Ashley & Jedediah Smith, via Upper Missouri River to Yellowstone River, Ashley returned via Upper Missouri River
»		1823	St Louis	
May 13 1822	St Louis		Fort Benton	Louis Bompert (MFC), via Upper Missouri River and Yellowstone River to Fort Benton

APPENDIX A - ROCKY MOUNTAIN TRIP LIST, 1804-1843

Dep Date	From	Arv Date	To	Party, Route and Notes
Mar 10 1823	St Louis	Jun 2 1823	Arikara Village	William Ashley & William Sublette, via Upper Missouri River, battle of Arikara Villages
Sep 1823	Fort Kiowa	Mar 19 1824	Green River	Smith, W. Sublette & Fitzpatrick (Ashley), via Wind River valley and South Pass, Fitzpatrick returned down Platte River
» Jun 1824	Green River	Sep 1824	St Louis	
1823		1823	Wind River	Joshua Pilcher (MFC), MFC failed in the Spring of 1824
Nov 3 1824	Ft Atkinson	Jun 29 1825	Henry Fork	Ashley Supply Train, via Platte River, Bridger Pass & Green River (Apr 19 1825), return via Yellowstone River
» Jul 7 1825	Henry Fork	Oct 4 1825	St Louis	
Mar 25 1825	St Louis	Aug 19 1825	Yellowstone River	Atkinson-O'Fallon military expedition, via Upper Missouri River to Yellowstone River
» Fall 1825		Oct 7 1825	St Louis	
Oct 29 1825	St Louis	Jun 1826	Cache Valley	Jedediah Smith (Ashley) to Cache (Willow) Valley Rendezvous
Mar 8 1826	St Louis	May 25 1826	Ham's Fork	Ashley-Sublette Supply Train, via Platte River, South Pass and Green River to Ham's Fork Rendezvous, Ashley sold out to Smith, Jackson & Sublette (SJS)
» Jul 18 1826	Bear River	Sep 26 1826	St Louis	
Aug 16 1826	Cache Valley Rendezvous	Nov 27 1826	San Gabriel, CA	Jedediah Smith First California Expedition, following Rendezvous went via Colorado River
May 20 1827	Stanislaus River, CA	Jul 3 1827	Bear Lake	Jedediah Smith Second California Expedition, from California via Nevada & Great Salt Lake to Bear (Sweet) Lake Rendezvous and return
» Jul 13 1827	Bear Lake	Sep 18 1827	Stanislaus River, CA	
» Jan 1 1827	Willow Valley	Mar 4 1827	St Louis	W. Sublette & Harris from Mountains via South Pass and Platte River
Apr 12 1827	Lexington	Jul 1 1827	Bear Lake	W. Sublette-Hiram Scott (SJS), from Missouri via Platte River and South Pass to Bear (Sweet) Lake Rendezvous, Sublette & Drips returned Platte River
» Aug 1 1828	Bear Lake	Sep 26 1828	Independence	
Sep 1827	Ft Atkinson	1828	Green River	Drips, Pilcher, Bent & Fontenelle (AFC), via Platte River and South Pass, arv St Louis Oct 6 1828
» Aug 1 1828	Bear Lake	Sep 26 1828	Independence	
Oct 6 1827	Lexington	1828	Rocky Mts Spring	Jackson & Bruffee (SJS), via Platte River and South Pass
Mar 17 1829	St Louis	Popo Agie	Jul 17 1829	W. Sublette & Joe Meek (SJS), via Platte River and South Pass to Popo Agie Rendezvous, Campbell & Drips returned via South Pass
» Jul 18 1829	Popo Agie	Aug 20 1829	St Louis	
Mar 12 1829	Fort Vancouver	Aug 20 1829	Pierre's Hole	Jedediah Smith with Hudson's Bay Co. (HBC) Fur Brigade, via Columbia & Snake Rivers to Pierre's Hole Rendezvous
» Jan 1 1830	Wind River	Feb 11 1830	St Louis	W. Sublette & Harris from Wind River, via South Pass and Platte River

APPENDIX A - ROCKY MOUNTAIN TRIP LIST, 1804-1843

Dep Date	From	Arv Date	To	Party, Route and Notes
Apr 10 1830	St Louis	Jul 16 1830	Wind River	W. Sublette (SJS), via Santa Fe Trail to Platte River and Wind River Rendezvous, SJS sold out to Rocky Mountain Fur Co. (RMFC)
» Aug 4 1830	Wind River	Oct 10 1830	St Louis	
Apr 30 1830	Bellevue, MO	Aug 16 1830	Ham's Fork	Fontenelle, Drips & Warren Ferris (AFC), via Platte River, South Pass (Jun 20) & Green River (Jun 21) to Ham's Fork Rendezvous, Fontenelle returned with Nez Perce delegation
» Jun 19 1831	Monida Pass	Oct 1831	St Louis	
1830	Fort Vancouver	Aug 1830	Ham's Fork	HBC Fur Brigade to Ham's Fork Rendezvous
» Aug 1830	Ham's Fork	1830	Fort Walla Walla	
» Mar 1831	Rocky Mts	May 6 1831	Lexington	Fitzpatrick (RMFC), via Big Horn, Yellowstone & Missouri Rivers to Missouri
Apr 24 1831	St Louis	Aug 27 1831	Sweetwater River	Gant-Blackwell Trapping Party, via Laramie River to Sweetwater River (wintered there)
May 6 1831	Lexington	Sep 9 1831	Sweetwater River	Fitzpatrick (RMFC) with Kit Carson, via Santa Fe Trail to Santa Fe (Jul 4) and north through Rockies, outward trip with SJS, returned via Platte River
» Sep 9 1831	Sweetwater River	Fall 1831	St Louis	
Oct 1 1831	Bellevue, MO	Apr 24 1832	Bear River	Drips (AFC), via Platte, Laramie & South Pass
1831	Fort Vancouver	Aug 1830	Bear River	HBC Fur Brigade to Bear River Rendezvous of 1831
» 1831	Bear River	1831	Fort Walla Walla	
Mar 26 1832	St Louis	Jun 17 1832	Fort Union	Pierre Chouteau on Steamboat <i>Yellowstone</i> (AFC), via Missouri River to Fort Union at mouth of Yellowstone River
» Jun 1832	Fort Union	Jul 7 1832	St Louis	
May 13 1832	Independence	Jul 8 1832	Pierre's Hole	W. Sublette (RMFC) & Nathaniel Wyeth, via Platte River and South Pass to Pierre's Hole Rendezvous, Sublette & Campbell returned via Union Pass to Independence (Sep 18) and St Louis; Wyeth group continued to the Northwest
» Jul 30 1832	Pierre's Hole	Oct 3 1832	St Louis	
» Jul 24 1832	Pierre's Hole	Oct 24 1832	Fort Vancouver	
1832	Fort Vancouver	Jul 1832	Pierre's Hole	HBC Brigade to Pierre's Hole Rendezvous of 1832
» Jul 1832	Pierre's Hole	1832	Fort Walla Walla	
May 1 1833	Fort Osage	Jul 26 1833	Green River	Bonneville, Cerré & Joseph Walker Party, via Platte River and South Pass to Green River Rendezvous of 1833, Cerré returned via Yellowstone & Missouri Rivers
Jul 1833	Green River	Oct 1833	St Louis	
Mar 16 1833	St Louis	Jul 27 1833	Green River	Fontenelle & Provost (AFC), by boat to Fort Union (Jun 19), then via South Pass to Green River Rendezvous; Provost returned via Yellowstone & Missouri Rivers
Aug 12 1833	Green River	Sep 30 1833	Fort Tecumseh	
Feb 3 1833	Fort Vancouver	Jul 16 1833	Green River	HBC Brigade with Nathaniel Wyeth to Green River Rendezvous of 1833; the Wyeth group went east from the rendezvous (Jul 24) via Yellowstone River to St Louis (Oct 9 1833)
» Jul 1833	Green River	1833	Fort Walla Walla	

APPENDIX A - ROCKY MOUNTAIN TRIP LIST, 1804-1843

Dep Date	From	Arv Date	To	Party, Route and Notes
May 7 1833	Lexington	Jul 5 1833	Green River	Campbell and Stewart, via Platte River and South Pass to Green River Rendezvous, returned via Yellowstone & Missouri Rivers
» Jul 24 1833	Green River	Sep 29 1833	Liberty MO	
Jun 1833	Fort Pierre	Jul 8 1833	Green River	Fontenelle & Provost (AFC), via Yellowstone and Big Horn Rivers to Green River Rendezvous, returned via Missouri River
» Jul 1833	Green River	Aug 29 1833	Fort Pierre	
Jul 24 1833	Green River	Oct 30 1833	Yosemite, CA	Joseph Walker Expedition via to Humboldt River and Yosemite valley to California, returned via Walker Pass & Humboldt River
» Feb 14 1834	Monterey	Jul 12 1834	Bear River Valley	
Dec 25 1833	Portneuf River	Mar 4 1834	Fort Walla Walla	Bonneville party from Portneuf River camp, Idaho to Oregon, via Powder River (Jan 12) and Snake River
» Mar 6 1834	Fort Walla Walla	May 12 1834	Portneuf River	
May 5 1834	Independence	Jun 13 1834	Ham's Fork	William Sublette Supply Train via Platte River and South Pass to Ham's Fork Rendezvous; Cerré returned via Platte River
» Jul 10 1834	Ham's Fork	Aug 25 1834	Lexington	
Apr 28 1834	Independence	Jun 17 1834	Ham's Fork	Wyeth Supply Train with Jason Lee, via Platte River and South Pass to Ham's Fork Rendezvous; via Fort Hall (Aug 6) to Oregon
Jul 1 1834	Ham's Fork	Sep 16 1834	Fort Vancouver	
May 1834	Independence	Jun 1834	Ham's Fork	Provost (AFC), via via Platte River and South Pass to Ham's Fork Rendezvous
» Aug 7 1834	Ham's Fork	1834	St Louis	
May 1834	Independence	Jul 20 1834	Bear River	Cerré (Bonneville), via Platte River and South Pass to Bear River Valley, Cerré returned with Sublette
» Jul 30 1834	Bear River	Aug 25 1834	Lexington	
1834	Fort Vancouver	Jun 1834	Ham's Fork	HBC Fur Brigade to the Ham's Fork Rendezvous
» Aug 1834	Ham's Fork	1834	Fort Walla Walla	
May 28 1835	Ft Leavenworth	Aug 6 1835	Bent's Fort	Colonel Dodge Expedition (Second Dragoon Expedition), via Platte River to Front Range and then returned on Santa Fe Trail
» Aug 1835	Santa Fe	Sept 16 1835	Ft Leavenworth	
Jun 22 1835	Bellevue, MO	Aug 12 1835	Green River	Fontenelle (AFC) with Whitman, via Platte River, Fort Laramie (Aug 1) and South Pass to Green River Rendezvous
» August 1835	Green River	1835	Missouri	
May 1835	Fort Vancouver	Jul 1835	Green River	Ermatinger (HBC) & Stewart, via Fort Hall (Jun 12 1835) to Green River Rendezvous
» Aug 1835	Green River		Fort Walla Walla	
Aug 21 1835	Green River	Oct 6 1835	Ft Walla Walla	Bridger with Parker to Northwest
» Jun 1835	Popo Agie	Aug 29 1835	Independence	Bonneville returns to Missouri
May 14 1836	Bellevue, MO	Jul 6 1836	Green River	Fitzpatrick with Whitman, Spaulding group, via Platte River, Fort Laramie (Jun 18) and South Pass to Green River Rendezvous, Fitzpatrick (RMFC) sold out to AFC
Jul 1836	Green River	1836	Bellevue, MO	
May 1836	Missouri	1836	Wind River	Bonneville's last trip to the mountains, via Platte River and Laramie
» 1836	Wind River	Aug 1836	Ft Leavenworth	

APPENDIX A - ROCKY MOUNTAIN TRIP LIST, 1804-1843

Dep Date	From	Arv Date	To	Party, Route and Notes
1836	Fort Vancouver	Jul 12 1836	Green River	McLeod & McCay (HBC), trip to Green River Rendezvous, returned with Marcus Whitman
» Jul 1836	Green River	Sep 1836	Fort Walla Walla	
May 1837	Independence	Jul 18 1837	Green River	Fitzpatrick (AFC) with Stewart & Alfred J. Miller, via Platte River, Laramie (Jun 23) and South Pass, Fitzpatrick, Provost & Drips returned
» Jul 1837	Green River	1837	Missouri	
1837	Oregon Spring	Jul 2 1837	Green River	HBC Fur Brigade with William Gray, Gray left Rendezvous Jul 25 for Missouri
» Jul 1837	Green River	1837	Fort Walla Walla	
1838	Fort Walla Walla	Jul 7 1838	Wind River	Ermatinger (HBC) with Jason Lee to Wind River Rendezvous, Lee went on to Washington, DC
Jul 1838	Wind River	Sep 1 1838	Westport, MO	
July 1838	Fort Hall, ID	Sep 1838	Westport, MO	Richardson-Curtis with dispatches for Jason Lee
Apr 23 1838	Westport, MO	Jun 23 1838	Wind River	Drips (AFC) with Gray, Walker & Eels, via Platte River, Laramie (May 30) and South Pass, Ermatinger (HBC) escorted missionaries to OR
» Jul 12 1838	Wind River	Aug 29 1838	Whitman Mission	
1838	California	1838	Wind River	Joseph R. Walker, California to Rendezvous
May 4 1839	Westport, MO	Jul 5 1839	Green River	Moses Harris (AFC) with Griffin-Munger, via Platte River, Laramie (Jun 14) and South Pass to Green River Rendezvous
» 1839	Green River	1839	Missouri	
Spring 1839	Fort Hall	Jul 1839	Green River	Ermatinger (HBC), escorted Griffith-Munger party
» Jul 10 1839	Green River	Sep 4 1839	Fort Walla Walla	
May 30 1839	Independence	Sep 22 1839	Fort Walla Walla	Farnham-Shortess (Peoria Party), via Santa Fe Trail, Bent's Fort (Jul 6), South Platte River, Green River & Fort Hall (Sep 1)
Apr 30 1840	Westport, MO	Jun 30 1840	Green River	Drips (AFC) with Father DeSmet & Harvey Clark, via Platte River and South Pass to Green River Rendezvous
» Jul 1840	Green River	Dec 31 1840	St Louis	
Jul 1840	Green River	Dec 15 1840	Willamette Valley	Newell-Joe Meek with Walker-Clark from Rendezvous via Fort Hall (Jul 20) to Oregon
May 12 1841	Independence	Nov 5 1841	San Francisco Bay	Bidwell-Bartelson Party (Western Emigration Society), w/ Fitzpatrick, Chiles & Father DeSmet (Cal. group), via Fort Laramie (Jun 23), South Pass, St Mary's Mission MT (Sep 24), Humboldt River, & San Joaquin Valley, CA (Oct 30)
May 12 1841	Independence	Sep 24 1841	The Dalles, OR	Bidwell-Bartelson Party (Oregon group), via Fort Laramie (Jun 23), and South Pass
Sep 6 1841	Santa Fe	Nov 5 1841	Los Angeles	Rowland-Workman party of 24, via Santa Fe and old Spanish trail
Mar 1842	St Louis		Green River	Bill Williams - George Perkins Trapping Expedition, via South Platte, Fort Laramie, South Pass & Wind River Mountains
» Sep 1 1842	Green River		Taos	

APPENDIX A - ROCKY MOUNTAIN TRIP LIST, 1804-1843

Dep Date	From	Arv Date	To	Party, Route and Notes
Mar 1842	Oregon	Dec 7 1842	Westport, MO	William Fowler
May 14 1842	Independence	Sep 20 1842	Ft Vancouver	Elijah White-Hastings Party, via Fort Laramie (Jun 23), South Pass, Fort Hall (Aug 16), Ermatinger (HBC) escorted party to Oregon
May 17 1842	Waiilatpu Mission	Oct 25 1842	Westport, MO	Joseph Williams party via Fort Hall (Jun 16-28), Green River (Jul 3) and Bent's Fort (Sep 16-26)
Jun 10 1842	Kansas City		Wind River Mtns	Fremont First Expedition with C.C. Carson, via Fort Laramie (Jul 13) and South Pass (Aug 8)
» Aug 31 1842	Ft Laramie	Oct 1 1842	Bellevue, MO	
Apr 1842	Sutter's Fort, CA	Sep 9 1842	Independence	Joseph Chiles Party, via Tejon Pass, Humboldt River, Fort Hall, Santa Fe & Santa Fe Trail
May 17 1842	Whitman Mission, OR	Oct 25 1842	Independence	Joseph Williams, Grant, Rogers & Ross Party, via Fort Hall (Jun 28), Green River, Fort Roubideaux CO & Bent's Fort (Sep 26)
Jun 30 1842	Ft Vancouver	Oct 30 1842	St Louis	Father DeSmet party, via St Mary's Mission (Jul 29), Fort Union and Missouri River
Oct 3 1842	Waiilatpu Mission	Feb 15 1843	Westport, MO	Marcus Whitman via Fort Hall (Oct 14), Santa Fe & Bent's Fort (Jan 7)
May 3 1843	Independence	Oct 24 1843	Ft Vancouver	Burnett-Gantt Party (Oregon Emigration Co.) with Whitman, via Platte, South Pass, Fort Bridger, Fort Hall (Aug 27) and Fort Walla Walla
May 21 1843	Independence	Aug 5 1843	Fremont Lake	W. Sublette-Stewart Touring Party, the last trip to the mountains for both
» Aug 18 1843	Fremont Lake	Oct 20 1843	Westport, MO	
May 29 1843	Independence	Nov 4 1843	Dalles, OR	Fremont Second Expedition with Carson & Fitzpatrick, via Platte South Fork, Fort St Vrain, South Pass, Fort Hall and Whitman Mission, returned via Sutter's Fort and Bent's Fort
Nov 25 1843	Dalles, OR	Aug 6 1844	St Louis	
Spring 1843	Missouri	Nov 11 1843	Sutter's Fort, CA	Chiles-Joseph Walker Party, via South Pass, Fort Hall, Humboldt River & San Joachim Valley
May 1843	Willamette Falls	Aug 1843	Missouri	William Sutton party, carried petition to US government to extend laws to Oregon



Capt. William Drummond Stewart (on horseback) at 1833 Fur Trade Rendezvous (by A. J. Miller)

Appendix B

Oregon Ship Sailings, 1824 to 1848

The Hudson Bay Supply Ship Sailings to the Columbia River, 1824 to 1846					
HBC Ship	Dep LON	Arv COL	Dep COL	Arv LON	Notes
<i>William & Ann</i>	Jul 27 1824	Apr 8 1825	Oct 25 1825	Apr 13 1826	to COL via Galapagos Is.
<i>Dryad</i>	Sep 25 1826	Apr 30 1827	Aug 23 1827	Feb 8 1828	Dec 19 1826 in Valapraiso
<i>William & Ann</i>	Sep 25 1826	May 1824	Aug 23 1827	Feb 8 1828	
<i>Eagle</i>	Sep 16 1827	May 19 1828	Aug 20 1828	Feb 10 1829	1st trip
<i>Ganymede</i>	Sep 16 1828	did not arrive		May 31 1830	rtm via Tasmania
<i>William & Ann</i>	Sep 16 1828	date?			via HON Feb 12-16 1829, wrecked on arv COL
<i>Isabella</i>	Oct 30 1829	May 2 1830			via HON, wrecked on arv COL, crew arv FV Jun 4 1830
<i>Eagle</i>	Nov 1 1829	Jun 2 1830	Oct 29 1830	Apr 17 1831	2nd trip (lot #1402 Steinhart)
<i>Dryad</i>	Jan 30 1830	Aug 10 1830	Oct 20 1835	Apr 10 1836	out via HON
<i>Ganymede</i>	Nov 16 1830	Jul 17 1831	Nov 7 1831	May 15 1832	rtm via HON
<i>Eagle</i>	Sep 24 1831	May 19 1832	Nov 6 1832	May 30 1833	3rd trip
<i>Ganymede</i>	Sep 15 1832	May 1 1833	Sep 19 1833	Feb 23 1834	
<i>Nereide</i>	May 6 1833	Apr 14 1834	Jun 20 1834	May 27 1835	delay at Lisbon on trip to COL
<i>Eagle</i>	Dec 8 1833	Sep 20 1834	Nov 25 1834	Jun 6 1835	4th trip
<i>Ganymede</i>	Dec 10 1834	Jul 27 1835	Oct 19 1836	Mar 1837	arv before Mar 30 1837
<i>Beaver</i>	Aug 29 1835	Mar 19 1836			via HON Feb 4-25 1836, arv FV Apr 10 1836
<i>Columbia</i>	Aug 29 1835	Mar 22 1836	Nov 30 1836	May 12 1837	1st trip, via HON Feb 4-25 1836 & Dec 21-Jan 5 1837
<i>Nereide</i>	Feb 13 1836	Aug 26 1836	Nov 18 1839	Apr 19 1837	via HON Jul 15-21 1836, arv before Nov 18 1839
<i>Sumatra</i>	Feb 3 1837	Sep 4 1837	Nov 21 1837	Apr 10 1838	via HON Aug 1-? 1837
<i>Columbia</i>	Nov 18 1837	May 24 1838	Nov 11 1838	May 21 1839	via HON Apr 27-May 4 1838 & Dec 9-22 1838, 2nd trip
<i>Vancouver (II)</i>	Nov 6 1838	May 3 1839	Nov 29 1840	Jun 3/4 1841	via HON Mar 28-Apr 5 1838 & Jan 2-16 1841
<i>Columbia</i>	Sep 18 1839	Mar 15 1840	Dec 24 1841	Jul 7 1842	3rd trip, via HON Feb 13-22 1840 & Jan 2-16 1841
<i>Cowlitz</i>	Aug 24 1840	Feb 5 1841	Nov 16 1842	May 9 1843	1st trip, arv FV Mar 6 1841, via HON Dec 7-? 1842
Hudson's Bay Company (HBC), London (LON), Columbia River (COL), Honolulu (HON), Fort Vancouver (FV) LON listings dates were usually the port of Gravesend but were reported by HBC as London dates.					

APPENDIX B - OREGON SHIP SAILINGS, 1824-1848

The Hudson Bay Supply Ship Sailings to the Columbia River, 1824 to 1846 (cont)					
HBC Ship	Dep LON	Arv COL	Dep COL	Arv LON	Notes
<i>Beaver</i>	Sep 9 1840		Apr 3 1841		
<i>Vancouver (II)</i>	Sep 9 1841	Apr 3 1842	Nov 29 1843	Jun 10 1844	2nd trip
<i>Cowlitz</i>	Sep 23 1843	Mar 24 1844	Dec 18 1845	Jun 27 1846	2nd trip
<i>Columbia</i>	Sep 10 1842	May 3 1843	Dec 5 1844	May 22 1845	4th trip, via HON Mar 23-26 1843 & Dec 31 - Jan 12 1844
<i>Vancouver (II)</i>	Sep 4 1844	Feb 18 1845	Dec 12 1846	Jul 12 1847	wrecked at FV May 48
<i>Columbia</i>	Oct 4 1845	Spring 1846	Nov 10 1847	May 22 1848	5th trip, via HON Dec 6-30 1847
<i>Cowlitz</i>	Oct 8 1846	Mar 21 1847	Dec 7 1848	May 19 1849	arv/dep Victoria not COL
<i>Mary Dare</i>	Nov 3 1846	Apr 14 1847	Dec 14 1853	May 27 1854	arv/dep Victoria not COL

Sailings from the Columbia River to Honolulu, 1836 to 1848			
Ship	Dep COL	Arv HON	Notes
HBC <i>Columbia</i>	Jul 1 1836	Jul 14 1836	
Am. <i>Jos. Peabody</i>	(June ?) 1836	Jul 29 1836	from COL, Sitka and CA (Jul 15)
Am. <i>Loriot</i>	Sep 29 1836	Nov 1 1836	
HBC <i>Columbia</i>	Nov 30 1836	Dec 21 1836	(annual return trip)
HBC <i>Lama</i>	Jun 18 1837	Jul 8 1837	
HBC <i>Lama</i>	(Jan 1838 ?)	Jan 24 1838	
HBC <i>Nereide</i>	Feb 22 1838	Mar 27 1838	
HBC <i>Columbia</i>	Nov 11 1838	Dec 9 1838	(annual return trip)
HBC <i>Lama</i>	(Dec) 1838	Jan 13 1839	
HBC <i>Nereide</i>	Dec 28 1838	Jan 31 1839	
HBC <i>Vancouver</i>	Jul 9 1839	Jul 24 1839	
HBC <i>Vancouver</i>	Nov 18 1839	Dec 15 1839	
HBC <i>Columbia</i>	Jun 3 1840	Jun 24 1840	
Am <i>Lausanne</i>	Jul 4 1840	Aug 11 1840	dep COL via CA
Am <i>Maryland</i>	Sep 21 1840	Oct 21 1840	
HBC <i>Columbia</i>	Nov 29 1840	Jan 2 1841	(annual return trip)
HBC <i>Cowlitz</i>	(May) 1841	Jun 25 1841	
Br <i>Wave</i>	(Jun) 1841	Jul 20 1841	
HBC <i>Columbia</i>	Dec 24 1841	Jan 26 1842	(annual return trip)
HBC <i>Cowlitz</i>	Dec 1841 / Jan 1842	Feb 11 1842	dep COL via Monterey (Jan) w/ mail
HBC <i>Cowlitz</i>	Jun / Jul 1842	Aug 3 1842	
Am <i>Chenamus</i>	Aug / Sep 1842	Oct 6 1842	
Am <i>Nerius</i>	Sep 1842	Oct 28 1842	

APPENDIX B - OREGON SHIP SAILINGS, 1824-1848

Sailings from the Columbia River to Honolulu, 1836 to 1848 (cont.)			
Ship	Dep COL	Arv HON	Notes
HBC <i>Cowlitz</i>	Nov 16 1842	Dec 7 1842	annual return trip
HBC <i>Vancouver</i>	Dec 14 1842	Jan 5 1843	
Br <i>Diamond</i>	Jul / Aug 1843	Sep 16 1843	dep COL via CA Aug 1843
HBC <i>Vancouver</i>	Nov 29 1843	Dec 19 1843	
Am <i>Pallas</i>	Nov 1843	Dec 19 1843	
HBC <i>Columbia</i>	Jan 1844	Feb 27 1844	
Br <i>Brothers</i>	Jul 21 1844	Aug 18 1844	dep COL via San Francisco
Am <i>Chenamus</i>	Aug 2 1844	Aug 26 1844	
HBC <i>Columbia</i>	Dec 5 1844	Dec 31 1844	
Belgian <i>Indefatigable</i>	Dec 1844	Jan 4 1845	
Am <i>Chenamus</i>	Apr 22 1845	May 25 1845	1st direct trade COL-HON-COL
HBC <i>Cowlitz</i>	Jul 29 1845	Aug 20 1845	
Swedish <i>Bull</i>	Sep 4 1845	Sep 27 1845	dep COL via Monterey ca Sep 10
Am <i>Chenamus</i>	Sep 13 1845	Oct 3 1845	
HMS <i>America</i>	Sep 20 1845	Oct 20 1845	
HBC <i>Cowlitz</i>	Dec 18 1845	Jan 27 1846	annual return trip
Am <i>Toulon</i>	Feb 25 1845	Mar 24 1846	
HBC <i>Vancouver</i>	Mar 1846	Apr 10 1846	dep COL via San Francisco Mar 15
Am <i>Meteor</i>	May 1846	Jun 6 1846	crew mutineed at sea & imprisoned at HON
Am <i>Albion</i>	May 1846	Jun 6 1846	
Am <i>Bengal</i>	Jul 1846	Aug 4 1846	NW Coast
HBC <i>Vancouver</i>	Aug 31 1846	Sep 16 1846	
Am <i>Toulon</i>	Sep 9 1846	Sep 23 1846	
Am <i>Mariposa</i>	Sep 11 1846	Oct 7 1846	
HBC <i>Vancouver</i>	Sep 1846	Oct 12 1846	dep from Puget Sound (Victoria)
HBC <i>Columbia</i>	Dec 1 1846	Dec 20 1846	dep from Victoria
HBC <i>Janet</i>	Dec 11 1846	Jan 9 1847	
HBC <i>Columbia</i>	Apr 1847	May 5 1847	dep COL via San Francisco Apr 17 w/ lumber
Am <i>Toulon</i>	Apr 1847	May 14 1847	dep COL via San Francisco Apr 23 and Monterey
Am <i>Henry</i>	Apr 30 1847	May 22 1847	
HMS <i>Modeste</i>	Jun 12 1847	Jun 27 1847	detained 5 weeks in Baker's Bay before dep
HBC <i>Mary Dare</i>	Jun 1847	before Jul 3 1847)	
Am <i>Toulon</i>	Jul 16 1847	Jul 29 1847	
HBC <i>Columbia</i>	Jul 16 1847	Jul 30 1847	
HBC <i>Mary Dare</i>	Jul 1847	Aug 13 1847	

APPENDIX B - OREGON SHIP SAILINGS, 1824-1848

Sailings from the Columbia River to Honolulu, 1836 to 1848 (cont.)			
Ship	Dep COL	Arv HON	Notes
<i>Am Brutus</i>	Jul 1847	Aug 15 1847	
<i>Am Mt Vernon</i>	Aug 1847	Sep 6 1847	
<i>HBC Mary Dare</i>	Nov 2 1847	Nov 23 1847	w/ lumber & salmon
<i>HBC Cowlitz</i>	Nov 4 1847	Nov 25 1847	
<i>HBC Columbia</i>	Nov 10 1847	Dec 6 1847	annual return trip, dep from Victoria
<i>Am Toulon</i>	Nov 25 1847	Dec 15 1847	
<i>Br Janet</i>	Jan 2 1848	Feb 1 1848	
<i>HBC Cowlitz</i>	Apr 2 1848	May 6 1848	
<i>Am Eveline</i>	May 8 1848	May 26 1848	
<i>HBC Mary Dare</i>	Jun 13 1848	Jul 1 1848	
<i>Am Eveline</i>	Jul 31 1848	Aug 14 1848	lumber & salmon from COL
<i>HBC Columbia</i>	Dec 1 1848	Dec 20 1848	dep from Victoria
<i>HBC Cowlitz</i>	Dec 7 1848	Dec 28 1848	dep from Victoria

Sailings from Honolulu to the Columbia River, 1836 to 1848			
Ship	Dep HON	Arv COL	Notes
<i>HBC Columbia</i>	Feb 25 1836	Mar 22 1836	for Astoria
<i>HBC Beaver</i>	Feb 25 1836	Mar 19 1836	for Astoria
<i>Am Joseph Peabody</i>	Feb 29 1836		for N.W. coast
<i>Am La Grange</i>	Apr 11 1836		for N.W. coast
<i>Am Convoy</i>	Apr 23 1836		for N.W. coast
<i>HBC Nereide</i>	Jul 21 1836	Aug 26 1836	
<i>HBC Columbia</i>	Aug 1 1836		for COL
<i>Am Lorient</i>	Aug 21 1836		for N.W. coast
<i>Am Convoy</i>	Oct 27 1836		for N.W. coast
<i>Am Lorient</i>	Nov 24 1836		for COL
<i>Am Hamilton</i>	Jan 23 1837		for N.W. coast
<i>Am Dart</i>	Apr 8 1837		for COL
<i>HMS Starling</i>	Jul 22 1837		for N.W. coast
<i>HMS Sulphur</i>	Jul 24 1837		for N.W. coast
<i>HBC Lama</i>	Aug 6 1837		for N.W. coast
<i>HBC Lama</i>	Feb 19 1838		for N.W. coast
<i>HBC Columbia</i>	May 4 1838	May 24 1838	
<i>HBC Lama</i>	Aug 30 1838		for N.W. coast
<i>HBC Nereide</i>	Mar 6 1839		for COL
<i>HBC Vancouver</i>	Apr 5 1839	May 3 1839	

APPENDIX B - OREGON SHIP SAILINGS, 1824-1848

Sailings from Honolulu to the Columbia River, 1836 to 1848			
Ship	Dep HON	Arv COL	Notes
HMS <i>Sulphur</i>	Jun 8 1839		for Sitka and COL
Am <i>Thomas Perkins</i>	Jun 23 1839		for N.W. coast
HBC <i>Vancouver</i>	Aug 16 1839		for COL
HBC <i>Vancouver</i>	Feb 22 1840	Mar 15 1840	for N.W. coast
HBC <i>Columbia</i>	Feb 22 1840		for COL
Am <i>Lausanne</i>	April 28 1840		for Astoria
HBC <i>Columbia</i>	Jul 15 1840		for California and COL
Br <i>Forager</i>	Aug 31 1840		for N.W. coast
Am <i>Thomas Perkins</i>	Apr 2 1841		for N.W. coast
USS <i>Vincennes</i>	Apr 5 1841	Apr 27 1841	
USS <i>Porpoise</i>	Apr 5 1841		for COL
Br <i>Wave</i>	Apr 9 1841		for N.W. coast
USS <i>Peacock</i>	Jun 21 1841		for COL
USS <i>Flying Fish</i>	Jun 21 1841		for COL
HBC <i>Cowlitz</i>	Jul 13 1841		for COL via Monterey
Br <i>Clementine</i>	Oct 5 1841		for N.W. coast
HBC <i>Vancouver</i>	Mar 14 1842	Apr 3 1842	
Am <i>Nerius</i>	Mar 16 1842		for COL
Am <i>Chenamus</i>	Apr 16 1842		for COL
HBC <i>Cowlitz</i>	Aug 18 1842		for COL
HBC <i>Columbia</i>	Mar 26 1843	May 3 1843	
Am <i>Fama</i>	Apr 18 1843		for COL
Am <i>Pallas</i>	Aug 16 1843		for COL
Am <i>Chenamus</i>	Apr 2 1844		for COL
HBC <i>Columbia</i>	Apr 2 1844		for COL
Br <i>Brothers</i>	May 2 1844		for COL
HMS <i>Modeste</i>	Jun 11 1844	Jul 17 1844	
Am <i>Chenamus</i>	Sep 18 1844		for COL
Swedish <i>Bull</i>	Apr 7 1845		for COL
Am <i>Chenamus</i>	Jun 12 1845		for COL
Am <i>Toulon</i>	Aug 23 1845	Oct 18 1845	
HBC <i>Cowlitz</i>	Sep 11 1845		for COL
Am <i>William Nelson</i>	Apr 3 1846		for N.W. coast
HBC <i>Vancouver</i>	May 1 1846		for San Francisco (arv May 26) and COL, mail for Monterey
Am <i>Luminary</i>	May 12 1846		for N.W. coast

APPENDIX B - OREGON SHIP SAILINGS, 1824-1848

Sailings from Honolulu to the Columbia River, 1836 to 1848			
Ship	Dep HON	Arv COL	Notes
HBC <i>Admiral Moorsom</i>	May 20 1846		for COL
Am <i>Mariposa</i>	Jun 2 1846		for COL
Am <i>Toulon</i>	Jun 2 1846		for COL
Am <i>Toulon</i>	Oct 4 1846	Oct 25 1846	
HBC <i>Vancouver</i>	Oct 13 1846		for COL
Am <i>Henry</i>	Jan 6 1847		for COL
Am <i>Wm Thompson</i>	Jan 22 1847		for N.W. coast
HBC <i>Columbia</i>	Jan 27 1847		for COL
HBC <i>Mary Dare</i>	May 1 1847		for COL
HBC <i>Columbia</i>	May 23 1847		for COL
Am <i>Toulon</i>	May 30 1847		for COL
Am <i>Henry</i>	Jun 2 1847		for COL
Am <i>Mt Vernon</i>	Jun 3 1847		for COL
Br <i>Jeanette</i>	Jun 12 1847		for COL
Am <i>Toulon</i>	Aug 9 1847		for COL
HBC <i>Columbia</i>	Aug 14 1847		for COL
HBC <i>Mary Dare</i>	Aug 22 1847		for Victoria
HBC <i>Mary Dare</i>	Dec 16 1847		for Victoria
HBC <i>Cowlitz</i>	Jan 14 1848		Ft Vancouver
Haw <i>Mary Ann</i>	Feb 24 1848		for Portland, Oregon
Br <i>Janet</i>	Feb 27 1848		for COL
HBC <i>Vancouver</i>	Mar 17 1848		Victoria
HBC <i>Cowlitz</i>	May 28 1848		Ft Vancouver
Am <i>Eveline</i>	Jun 8 1848		for COL
HMS <i>Pandora</i>	Jun 15 1848		for Puget Sound
HMS <i>Constance</i>	Jun 27 1848		for COL
HBC <i>Mary Dare</i>	Jul 16 1848		for COL
Haw <i>Starling</i>	Aug 10 1848		for COL
Am <i>Eveline</i>	Sep 14 1848		for Oregon

APPENDIX B - OREGON SHIP SAILINGS, 1824-1848

This list of Hudson's Bay Company sailings to York Factory (YF) and Moose Factory (MF) is included here because mail to England was often carried overland to Hudson's Bay and then to England.

The Hudson's Bay Company Round Trip Sailings to Hudson's Bay, 1826-1846							
HBC Ship	Dep LON	Arv YF	Dep YF	Arv MF	Dep MF	Arv LON	Notes
<i>Prince of Wales</i>	May 30 '26	Sep 7 '26	Sep 20 '26			Oct 26 '26	
<i>Camden</i>	May 30 26	Sep 17 26	Sep 17 26	Aug 30 26	Sep 10 26	Oct 16 '26	damaged on return trip, to YF then LON
<i>Prince Rupert</i>	Jun 2 30	Aug 15 30	Sep 17 30			Oct 29 30	
<i>Prince of Wales</i>	Jun 2 30			Aug 30 30	Sep 22 30		*
<i>Camden</i>	Jun 1 31	Aug 25 31				Oct 23/25 31	to Deal from HB
<i>Prince Rupert</i>	Jun 5 32	Aug 22 32	Sep 21 32			Oct 25 32	
<i>Prince of Wales</i>	Jun 5 32			Aug 25 32	Sep 20 32	Nov 8/18 32	
<i>Prince of Wales</i>	Jun 6 33			July 23 33	Aug 12 34	Sep 16 34	
<i>Prince Rupert</i>	Jun 6 33	Aug 22 33	Aug 31 34			Oct 20 34	*
<i>Prince George</i>	Jun 4 34	Aug 22 34	Sep 12 34			Oct 21 34	
<i>Gandymede</i>	Jun 4 34			Aug 25 34	Sep 8 34		to Ft. Chimo Sep 27 34 for winter
<i>Prince Rupert</i>	Jun 7 35	Aug 23 35	Sep 24 35			Oct 29/31 35	
<i>Prince of Wales</i>	Jun 7 35			Aug 18 35	Sep 7 35	Oct 15 35	
<i>Nonpareil</i>	Jun 7 35						
<i>Esquimaux</i>	Jun 7 35	Sep 24 35				Oct 19 37	ship damaged, wintered at Ft. Churchill
<i>Prince Rupert</i>	Jun 2 36	Sep 24 36	Oct 5 36			Nov 12 36	
<i>Prince of Wales</i>	Jun 4 36			Sep 2 36	Sep 18 36	Nov 6 36	
<i>Prince Rupert</i>	Jun 1 37	Aug 28 37	Sep 16 37			Oct 29/30 37	
<i>Prince of Wales</i>	Jun 1 37			Aug 27 37	Sep 13 27	Oct 25 37	
<i>Prince George</i>	Jun 11 37					Oct 24 37	
<i>Aurora</i>	Jun 15 37						
<i>Prince Rupert</i>	May 29 38	Aug 28 38				Oct 21 38	
<i>Prince Rupert</i>	May 29 39			Aug 14 39	Sep 11 39	Oct 16 39	mail entered at Brighton
<i>Prince of Wales</i>	May 28 39			Aug 22 39	Sep 7 39	Oct 16 39	
Notes: The listed arrival dates are mostly dates of arrival at Gravesend. However, mail was off-loaded at Deal (or less frequently at other ports) usually 2 or 3 days prior. This mail reached London in advance of arrival at Gravesend. * didn't get out of Hudson's Bay that winter because of ice							

APPENDIX B - OREGON SHIP SAILINGS, 1824-1848

The Hudson's Bay Company Round Trip Sailings to Hudson's Bay, 1826-1846 cont.)							
HBC Ship	Dep LON	Arv YF	Dep YF	Arv MF	Dep MF	Arv LON	Notes
<i>Prince Rupert</i>	Jun 3 40	Aug 9 40	Sep 6 40			Oct 25 40	
<i>Prince Albert</i>	Jun 1 42			Aug 29 42	Sep 10 42	Oct 28/29 42	
<i>Prince Rupert (V) *</i>	May 29 44	Aug 11 44	Sep 15 44			Oct 18 44	stopped at Rigolet, Labrador
<i>Prince Albert</i>	May 29 44			Aug 28 44	Sep 10 44	Oct 14 44	
<i>Marten</i>	May 15 44					Nov 10 44	
<i>Prince Rupert (V)</i>	Jun 5 45	Aug 10 45	Sep 11 45			Oct 13 45	
<i>Prince Rupert (V)</i>	Jun 3 46	Aug 6 46	Sep 19 46			Oct 21 46	
<i>Price Albert</i>	Jun 5 46			Aug 9 46	Aug 31 46	Oct 4/5 46	
* ship Prince Rupert (V) was a new vessel with old name retained, some sources report as Prince Rupert (VI)							

Appendix C

Via Panama Sailings, 1849 to 1861

This appendix includes sailing information for ships carrying post office mails sent via Panama between San Francisco and New York City as well as a sample of early trips to New Orleans (pages 252 and 253). Each trip is numbered with year, direction and trip number within that year. So, trip "1851 E-5" would be the fifth mail carrying trip from San Francisco in 1851. Westbound trips are not included as arrangements for mail varied considerably depending on the port of mail departure. The general schedule for mail departures from New York, Charleston, Savannah, New Orleans and Panama from January 1850 is described in the Postmaster General notice shown on following page.

Information on the first line of each eastbound trip includes the departure date, name of ship, and date of arrival in Panama City. After carriage across the Isthmus of Panama, the mail was transferred to a ship operating in the Atlantic Ocean. The second line includes the date of departure from either Chagres or Aspinwall as specified, the name of the ship, and the ship arrival date in New York City. When two ships are listed on a single line, it indicates that mail was transferred from the first ship listed to the second. The specifics are mentioned in the notes column.

An "x" in parenthesis after a ship name in the "notes" column means that the trip was an extra. The departure date is given. In general these extra vessels did not carry post office letter mail but, unless specifically mentioned, they may have carried some letter mail and/or newspapers. It should be remembered that these extra vessels often carried letters and other mail matter for the various express companies. If such letters entered the US mails before delivery, they bear postmarks other than San Francisco postmarks..

Abbreviations - Steamship Companies	Abbreviations - Places
A&PSS - Atlantic and Pacific Steamship Co (Vanderbilt)	ASP - Aspinwall
ECL - Empire City Line	CHA - Chagres
H&A - Howland & Aspinwall Atlantic Line	CRL - Charleston
LL - Law Line	HAV - Havana, Cuba
NASC - North Atlantic Steamship Co.	KIN - Kingston, Jamaica
PMSS - Pacific Mail Steamship Co.	NO - New Orleans
S&T - Spofford & Tileston Charleston & New York Line	NYC - New York City
USMSC - US Mail Steamship Co	PAN - Panama City
	SFC - San Francisco
	TEH - Tehuantepec, Mexico
Notes: (x) next to name of a vessel in the "notes" column means that the trip was an extra. In general these extra vessels did not carry letter mail but, unless specifically mentioned, they may have carried some letter mail and/or newspapers.	

APPENDIX C - VIA PANAMA SAILINGS, 1849-1861

1849 Eastbound Trips Via Panama				
Trip	Depart	Steamer	Arrive	Notes
1849 E-1	Mar 19 (SFC)	Peru Bark <i>Callao</i>	May 4 (PAN)	first post office mail from California
1849 E-2	Apr 12 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Oregon</i>	May 5 (PAN)	
1849 E-3	May 1 (SFC)	PMSS <i>California</i>	May 23 (PAN)	
	Jun 4 (CHA)	ECL <i>Crescent City</i> / <i>Falcon</i> and S&T <i>Northerner</i>	both arv Jun 19 (NYC)	combined mails E1 to E3, mail transfer at NO Jun 10, <i>Falcon</i> via HAV Jun 14, <i>Northerner</i> via CRL Jun 16
1849 E-4	Jun 20 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Panama</i>	Jul 11 (PAN)	
1849 E-5	Jul 2 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Oregon</i>	Jul 21 (PAN)	
	Jul 25 (CHA)	USMSC <i>Falcon</i>	Aug 17 (NYC)	combined mails E4 & E5, via NO Aug 3-8, CRL and HAV
1849 E-6	Aug 2 (SFC)	PMSS <i>California</i>	Aug 24 (PAN)	
	Sep 1 (CHA)	ECL <i>Empire City</i>	Sep 13 (NYC)	via KIN Sep 4/5
1849 E-7	Sep 2 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Panama</i>	Sep 22 (PAN)	
	Sep 27 (CHA)	USMSC <i>Falcon</i> / <i>Ohio</i>	Oct 13 (NYC)	mail transfer at NO Oct 4/5, via HAV Oct 8
1849 E-8	Oct 1 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Oregon</i>	Oct 24 (PAN)	
	Oct 29 (CHA)	ECL <i>Empire City</i>	Nov 11 (NYC)	via KIN (Port Royal) Nov 1-3
1849 E-9	Nov 2 (SFC)	PMSS <i>California</i>	Nov 22 (PAN)	
	Nov 27 (CHA)	USMSC <i>Falcon</i>	Dec 30 (NO)	missed <i>Ohio</i> at HAV, all mail to NO
1849 E-10	Nov 16 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Panama</i>	Dec 4 (PAN)	
1849 E-11	Dec 1 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Unicorn</i>	Dec 28 (PAN)	
	Jan 2 (CHA)	H&A <i>Cherokee</i>	Jan 13 (NYC)	combined mails E10 & E11, via KIN Jan 7, PO Agt McLean carried 10,000 letters for the East

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC, AND INSTRUCTIONS TO POSTMASTERS.

THE CALIFORNIA AND OREGON MAILS, VIA HAVANA, CHAGRES, AND PANAMA, will be despatched from New York on the 13th of December next; from Charleston (S. C.) and Savannah (Ga.) on the 16th; from New Orleans on or about the 15th; and from Havana, at which point the steam packet from New York and that from New Orleans will connect, the mail will depart on the 19th of December direct for Chagres, reaching Panama overland in due time for the Pacific steam packet to leave that port for San Francisco on the 1st day of January next.

In January next semi-monthly service will be put in operation between New York and Chagres; and steam-packets will leave the different ports during the ensuing year, agreeably to the following schedule:

New York on the 13th and 28th of each month; Charleston and Savannah on the 16th and 31st (or first) of each month; New Orleans on the 15th and 30th; Havana on the 19th and 4th; and Panama on the 1st.

They will leave San Francisco on the 1st of each month; Chagres on the 13th and 1st of each month, with privilege, if San Francisco mail is received in time, to leave on the 28th instead of the 1st.

Leave Havana for New York on the 19th and 6th of each month, with privilege of leaving on the 4th, instead of the 6th, if the Chagres mail has arrived; and also for New Orleans on the same dates.

The entire postage for a single letter not exceeding half an ounce in weight, will be 12½ cents to Havana; 20 cents to Chagres; 30 cents to Panama, to be prepaid in all cases; and 40 cents to Monterey, San Francisco, Astoria, or any other point in California or Oregon, to be prepaid or left unpaid, at the option of the sender; newspapers and pamphlets sea postage three cents each, and inland postage to be added.

J. COLLAMER, Postmaster General.
POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT, November 15, 1849.
Nov. 17—31

In 1849 Postmaster General Collamer published several notices to the public that detailed the new arrangements for the Pacific mails. His November 17, 1849 notice shown above outlines the schedule for both eastbound and westbound mails effective January 1850.

APPENDIX C - VIA PANAMA SAILINGS, 1849-1861

1850 Eastbound Trips Via Panama				
Trip	Depart	Steamer	Arrive	Notes
1850 E-1	Jan 1 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Oregon</i>	Jan 23 (PAN)	
	Jan 26 (CHA)	USMSC <i>Falcon / Ohio</i>	Feb 9 (NYC)	mail transfer HAV Feb 4
1850 E-2	Jan 15 (SFC)	PMSS <i>California</i>	Feb 4 (PAN)	
1850 E-3	Feb 1 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Panama</i>	Feb 23 (PAN)	
	Feb 27 (CHA)	USMSC <i>Georgia</i>	Mar 9 (NYC)	combined mails E2 & E3
1850 E-4	Mar 1 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Oregon</i>	Mar 20 (PAN)	
	Mar 28 (CHA)	USMSC <i>Georgia</i>	Apr 8 (NYC)	
1850 E-5	Apr 1 (SFC)	PMSS <i>California</i>	Apr 23 (PAN)	
	Apr 27 (CHA)	USMSC <i>Georgia</i>	May 7 (NYC)	via HAV May 1-3
1850 E-6	Apr 21 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Tennessee</i>	May 11 (PAN)	
	May 13 (CHA)	USMSC <i>Falcon / Ohio</i>	May 24 (NYC)	mail transfer HAV May 20
1850 E-7	May 1 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Panama</i>	May 21 (PAN)	
	May 26 (CHA)	USMSC <i>Georgia</i>	Jun 9 (NYC)	via HAV Jun 5
1850 E-8	May 15 (SFC)	LL <i>Isthmus</i>	Jun 16 (PAN)	Law Line, required a directive
1850 E-9	Jun 1 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Oregon</i>	Jun 21 (PAN)	
	Jun 26 (CHA)	USMSC <i>Georgia</i>	Jul 8 (NYC)	combined mails E8 & E9
1850 E-10	Jun 18 (SFC)	LL <i>Columbus</i>	Jul 6 (PAN)	Law Line, required a directive
1850 E-11	Jul 1 (SFC)	PMSS <i>California</i>	Jul 20 (PAN)	
	Jul 26 (CHA)	USMSC <i>Georgia</i>	Aug 7 (NYC)	via HAV Aug 4, combined mails
1850 E-12	Jul 15 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Tennessee</i>	Aug 6 (PAN)	
1850 E-13	Jul 17 (SFC)	LL <i>Isthmus</i>	Aug 8 (PAN)	Law Line, required a directive
	Aug 12 (CHA)	USMSC <i>Falcon / Ohio</i>	Aug 24 (NYC)	combined mails E12 & E13, mail transfer HAV Aug 16
1850 E-14	Aug 1 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Panama</i>	Aug 21 (PAN)	
	Aug 26 (CHA)	USMSC <i>Georgia</i>	Sep 6 (NYC)	
1850 E-15	Aug 15 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Carolina</i>	Sep 4 (PAN)	
	Sep 12 (CHA)	USMSC <i>Falcon / Ohio</i>	Sep 22 (NYC)	mail transfer HAV Sep 17
1850 E-16	Sep 1 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Oregon</i>	Sep 19 (PAN)	Agt Midgett**
	Sep 25 (CHA)	USMSC <i>Georgia</i>	Oct 6 (NYC)	
1850 E-17	Sep 15 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Tennessee</i>	Oct 4 (PAN)	
	Oct 12 (CHA)	USMSC <i>Falcon</i>	Oct 27 (NYC)	
1850 E-18	Sep 17 (SFC)	LL <i>Isthmus</i>	Oct 10 (PAN)	Law Line, required a directive
1850 E-19	Oct 1 (SFC)	PMSS <i>California</i>	Oct 22 (PAN)	
1850 E-20	Oct 5 (SFC)	ECL <i>New Orleans</i>	Oct 22 (PAN)	carried a mail, required a directive
	Oct 26 (CHA)	USMSC <i>Georgia</i>	Nov 7 (NYC)	combined mails E18, E19 & E20

APPENDIX C - VIA PANAMA SAILINGS, 1849-1861

1850 (Oct 15 to Dec) Eastbound Trips Via Panama				
Trip	Depart	Steamer	Arrive	Notes
1850 E-21	Oct 15 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Carolina</i>	Nov 3 (PAN)	
1850 E-22	Oct 19 (SFC)	LL <i>Columbus</i>	Nov 7 (PAN)	Law Line, required a directive
	Nov 11 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Pacific / Ohio</i>	Nov 23 (NYC)	combined mails E21 & E22, mail transfer HAV Nov 16
1850 E-23	Oct 31 (SFC)	ECL <i>Northberner</i>	Nov 22 (PAN)	Empire City Pacific Line, carried mail
1850 E-24	Nov 1 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Panama</i>	Nov 21 (PAN)	
	Nov 26 (CHA)	USMSC <i>Georgia</i>	Dec 7 (NYC)	combined mails E22 & E23
1850 E-25	Nov 15 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Tennessee</i>	Dec 1 (PAN)	
1850 E-26	Dec 1 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Oregon</i>	Dec 20 (PAN)	
	Dec 26 (CHA)	USMSC <i>Georgia</i>	Jan 6 (NYC)	combined mails E24 & E25
1850 E-27	Dec 15 (SFC)	PMSS <i>California</i>	Jan 3 (PAN)	Agt Midgett**
	Jan 12 (CHA)	USMSC <i>Falcon</i>	Jan 24 1851 (NYC)	combined mails E26 & E27
<p>* - Post Office Route Agent Gouveneur A. Ferris used his "PAN. & SAN. FRAN. S.S." marking device, type 1 (ampersand is centered), on mail received by him enroute.</p> <p>** - Post Office Route Agent Bannister Midgett used his "PAN. & SAN. FRAN. S.S." marking device, type 2 (ampersand to left near "N"), on mail received by him enroute.</p>				

Below and continued on the following page is a incomplete listing of the eastbound trips from Chagres to New Orleans that delivered mail to be distributed to New Orleans and the South. The listings only include the Atlantic Ocean leg of the trip. The trip numbers correspond to the numbers used on the San Francisco to New York trips with these trips replacing the leg from Chagres to New York..

1849 to 1851 Eastbound Trips from Panama to New Orleans (secondary route)				
Trip	Depart CHA	Steamer	Arrive NO	Notes
1849 E1-3	Jun 4 1849	ECL <i>Crescent City</i>	Jun 10 1849	newspaper notes "3 mails" arrived
A June 20, 1849 newspaper notice placed by NO postmaster Musson notes that the westbound "California and Oregon mails via Panama closes once a month - irregular." Similarly, eastbound mails arrive "once a month - irregular."				
1849 E4-5	Jul 25	USMSC <i>Falcon</i>	Aug 3	
1849 E-7	Sep 27	USMSC <i>Falcon</i>	Oct 4	
1849 E9	Nov 28	USMSC <i>Falcon / Ohio</i>	Dec 23	via HAV Dec 20 mail transfer
1849 E-11	Jan 1 1850	USMSC <i>Falcon</i>	Jan 8 1850	with 3,000 letter for the South & NO
1850 E5	Apr 27	USMSC <i>Georgia / Ohio</i>	May 8	via HAV May 3-5 mail transfer
1850 E10-11	Jul 26	USMSC <i>Georgia / Ohio</i>	Aug 8	via HAV Aug 4
1850 E15	Sep 12	USMSC <i>Falcon</i>	Sep 23	via HAV Sep 17
1850 E16	Sep 25	USMSC <i>Georgia / Ohio</i>	Oct 8	via HAV Oct 4
1850 E20-21	Nov 11	USMSC <i>Pacific</i>	Nov 20	via HAV Nov 16
1850 E22-23	Nov 25	USMSC <i>Philadelphia</i>	Dec 4	via HAV Dec 1

APPENDIX C - VIA PANAMA SAILINGS, 1849-1861

1849 to 1851 Eastbound Trips from Panama to New Orleans (secondary route)				
Trip	Depart CHA	Steamer	Arrive NO	Notes
1850 E24-25	Dec 12	USMSC <i>Falcon</i> / <i>Empire City</i>	Dec 22	at this date the <i>Empire City</i> was under USMSC control
1850 E26-27	Jan 11 1851	USMSC <i>Philadelphia</i>	Jan 21 1851	via HAV Jan 15 1851
1851 ET2	Feb 10	USMSC <i>Ohio</i> / <i>Falcon</i>	Feb 23	
Between Feb 26 and Sept 10, 1851 PM Musson's California mail notices list westbound mail closes 7PM on the 14th and 29th of each month and arrivals of eastbound mail "on or about the 8th and 23rd of each month."				
1851 ET3-4	Feb 25	USMSC <i>Georgia</i> / <i>Ohio</i>	Mar 10	
1851 ET5	Mar 12	USMSC <i>Falcon</i> / <i>Georgia</i>	Mar 22	mail transfer at HAV on Mar 17
1851 ET6	Mar 29	USMSC <i>Falcon</i> / <i>Ohio</i>	Apr 6	SFC dates to Mar 5
1851 ET7	Apr 11	USMSC <i>Falcon</i>	Apr 21	
1851 ET8	Apr 25	USMSC <i>Georgia</i> / <i>Ohio</i>	May 6	with large CA mail
1851 ET9	May 10	USMSC <i>Falcon</i> / <i>Cherokee</i>	Jun 5 1851	via KIN May 16
1851 ET10-12	Jun 10 1851	USMSC <i>Falcon</i> / <i>Georgia</i>	Jun 21	
1851 ET13	Jun 26	USMSC <i>Falcon</i> / <i>Cherokee</i>	Jul 6	SFC mails to Jun 1
1851 ET14-16	Jul 12	USMSC <i>Falcon</i>	Jul 22	NO mails delivered by tugboat <i>Yankee</i> as <i>Falcon</i> stuck on bar in harbor, SFC mails to 6/15
1851-ET17	Jul 27	<i>Georgia</i> / <i>Cherokee</i>	Aug 5	
1851-ET18	Aug 11	<i>Falcon</i> / <i>Empire City</i>	Aug 22	SFC mails to Jul 15
1851-ET19	Aug 25	USMSC <i>Falcon</i> / <i>Cherokee</i>	Sep 4	SFC mails to Aug 1
1851-ET20-25	Oct 13	<i>Falcon</i>	Oct 31	with mails
		<i>Georgia</i>	Nov 3	no mail - bags sent to NYC in error
From Nov 9, 1851 PM Musson's California mail notices list westbound mail closes 7PM on the 9th and 24th of each month and the eastbound mail "arrives on or about the 9th and 24rd of each month."				
1851-ET26-28	Nov 5	<i>Illinois</i> / <i>Empire City</i>	Nov 20	(SFC mail sent to NYC in error) large CA mail dates to Oct 15
1851-ET29	Nov 25	<i>Philadelphia</i>	Dec 7	with mail to Nov 1
1851-ET30	from ASP Dec 10	<i>Georgia</i> / <i>Empire City</i>	Dec 22	first rail transit (8 to 9th) & dep from Navy Bay because of weather, via HAV Dec 16

APPENDIX C - VIA PANAMA SAILINGS, 1849-1861

1851 Eastbound Trips Via Panama				
Trip	Depart	Steamer	Arrive	Notes
1851 E-1	Jan 1 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Carolina</i>	Jan 19 (PAN)	Agt Kildruff
	Jan 28 (CHA)	USMSC <i>Georgia</i>	Feb 8 (NYC)	
1851 E-2	Jan 15 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Unicorn</i>	Feb 7 (PAN)	Agt Ferris*
	Feb 10 (CHA)	USMSC <i>Ohio</i>	Feb 22 (NYC)	via HAV Feb 17
1851 E-3	Feb 1 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Panama</i>	Feb 21 (PAN)	Agts Workman & Whitney, <i>Tennessee</i> (x) dep Jan 23
	Feb 25 (CHA)	USMSC <i>Georgia</i>	Mar 8 (NYC)	via HAV Mar 3
1851 E-4	Feb 16 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Oregon</i>	Mar 5 (PAN)	
	Mar 12 (CHA)	USMSC <i>Falcon / Ohio</i>	Mar 22 (NYC)	mail transfer at HAV on Mar 17
1851 E-5	Mar 5 (SFC)	PMSS <i>California</i>	Mar 26 (PAN)	Agt McLean
	Mar 29 (CHA)	USMSC <i>Falcon / Georgia</i>	Apr 7 (NYC)	mail transfer at HAV on Apr 3
1851 E-6	Mar 16 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Northerner</i>	Apr 1 (PAN)	Agt Seymour
	Apr 8 (CHA)	USMSC <i>Cherokee</i>	Apr 20 (NYC)	via KIN
1851 E-7	Apr 1 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Tennessee</i>	Apr 19 (PAN)	Agt Bayley
	Apr 25 (CHA)	USMSC <i>Georgia</i>	May 6 (NYC)	via HAV
1851 E-8	Apr 15 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Panama</i>	May 2 (PAN)	Agt Slocum
	May 10 (CHA)	USMSC <i>Falcon / Ohio</i>	May 21 (NYC)	mail transfer at HAV on May 17
1851 E-9	May 1 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Oregon</i>	May 19 (PAN)	Agt Ferris*
	May 25 (CHA)	USMSC <i>Empire City</i>	Jun 3 (NYC)	via KIN May 27 (OR dates to Apr 12)
1851 E-10	May 15 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Northerner</i>	Jun 3 (PAN)	Agt Midgett**, <i>Carolina</i> (x) no mail, dep May 12
	Jun 10 (CHA)	USMSC <i>Falcon / Cherokee</i>	Jun 23 (NYC)	via HAV Jun 16
1851 E-11	May 31 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Tennessee</i>	Jun 20 (PAN)	Agt Griswold
	Jun 26 (CHA)	USMSC <i>Empire City</i>	Jul 6 (NYC)	
1851 E-12	Jun 14 (SFC)	PMSS <i>California</i>	Jul 2 (PAN)	Agt Seymour, <i>Columbus</i> (x) no mail, dep Sep 29
	Jul 10 (CHA)	USMSC <i>Crescent City</i>	Jul 20 (NYC)	via KIN Jul 14
<p>* - Post Office Route Agent Gouveneur A. Ferris used his "PAN. & SAN. FRAN. S.S." marking device, type 1 (ampersand is centered), on mail received by him enroute.</p> <p>** - Post Office Route Agent Bannister Midgett used his "PAN. & SAN. FRAN. S.S." marking device, type 2 (ampersand to left near "N"), on mail received by him enroute.</p>				

APPENDIX C - VIA PANAMA SAILINGS, 1849-1861

1851 (Jul to Dec) Eastbound Trips Via Panama				
Trip	Depart	Steamer	Arrive	Notes
1851 E-13	Jul 2 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Panama</i>	Jul 19 (PAN)	Agt French
	Jul 25 (CHA)	USMSC <i>Empire City</i>	Aug 6 (NYC)	via KIN Jul 30
1851 E-14	Jul 16 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Northerner</i>	Aug 5 (PAN)	Agt Workman & Whitney
	Aug 11 (CHA)	USMSC <i>Falcon / Cherokee</i>	Aug 21 (NYC)	mail transfer at HAV on Aug 17
1851 E-15	Aug 2 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Oregon</i>	Aug 20 (PAN)	Agt McLean
	Aug 26 (CHA)	USMSC <i>Georgia</i>	Sep 7 (NYC)	via KIN Aug 31
1851 E-16	Aug 15 (SFC)	PMSS <i>California</i>	Sep 3 (PAN)	<i>Republic</i> (x) dep Aug 13, no mail
	Sep 9 (CHA)	USMSC <i>Illinois</i>	Sep 20 (NYC)	via KIN Sep 12
1851 E-17	Sep 1 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Tennessee</i>	Sep 19 (PAN)	Agt Ferris*
	Sep 24 (CHA)	USMSC <i>Ohio</i>	Oct 6 (NYC)	
1851 E-18	Sep 15 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Panama</i>	Oct 3 (PAN)	Agt Chapin, <i>Carolina</i> (x) dep Sep 13
1851 E-19	Oct 1 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Oregon</i>	Oct 20 (PAN)	Agt Seymour, <i>Columbus</i> (x) dep Sep 29
	Oct 24 (CHA)	USMSC <i>Cherokee</i>	Nov 2 (NYC)	large mail (combined E18+E19)
1851 E-20	Oct 15 (SFC)	PMSS <i>California</i>	Nov 2 (PAN)	Agt Midgett**
	Nov 9 (CHA)	USMSC <i>Illinois / Georgia</i>	Nov 19 (NYC)	mail transfer at HAV on Nov 14
1851 E-21	Nov 1 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Tennessee</i>	Nov 16 (PAN)	Agt Whitney
	Nov 20 (CHA)	USMSC <i>Cherokee</i>	Nov 30 (NYC)	
1851 E-22	Nov 15 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Northerner</i>	Dec 2 (PAN)	Agt McLean, first rail transit (Dec 8-9)
	Dec 10 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Georgia</i>	Dec 21 (NYC)	dep from Navy Bay because of weather, via HAV Dec 16
1851 E-23	Dec 5 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Golden Gate</i>	Dec 18 (PAN)	Agt Ferris*
	Dec 21 (CHA)	USMSC <i>Cherokee</i>	Jan 1 (NYC)	
1851 E-24	Dec 16 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Panama</i>	Jan 1 (PAN)	Agt McLaughlin
	Jan 4 (CHA)	USMSC <i>E/ Dorado</i>	Jan 15 1852 (NYC)	
<p>* - Post Office Route Agent Gouveneur A. Ferris used his "PAN. & SAN. FRAN. S.S." marking device, type 1 (ampersand is centered), on mail received by him enroute.</p> <p>** - Post Office Route Agent Bannister Midgett used his "PAN. & SAN. FRAN. S.S." marking device, type 2 (ampersand to left near "N"), on mail received by him enroute.</p>				

APPENDIX C - VIA PANAMA SAILINGS, 1849-1861

1852 Eastbound Trips Via Panama				
Trip	Depart	Steamer	Arrive	Notes
1852 E-1	Jan 1 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Oregon</i>	Jan 17 (PAN)	
	Jan 20 (CHA)	USMSC <i>Cherokee</i>	Jan 30 (NYC)	via KIN Jan 21/22
1852 E-2	Jan 16 (SFC)	PMSS <i>California</i>	? (PAN)	<i>Golden Gate</i> (x) Jan 21, no mail
	Feb 5 (CHA)	USMSC <i>El Dorado</i>	Feb 16 (NYC)	via KIN Feb 9
1852 E-3	Feb 1 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Tennessee</i>	Feb 15 (PAN)	
	Feb 19 (CHA)	USMSC <i>Crescent City</i>	Feb 29 (NYC)	
1852 E-4	Feb 18 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Panama</i>	Mar 3 (PAN)	<i>Fremont</i> (x) dep Feb 2 <i>Isthmus</i> (x) dep Feb 14
	Mar 6 (CHA)	USMSC <i>El Dorado</i>	Mar 15 (NYC)	
1852 E-5	Mar 2 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Northerner</i>	Mar 18 (PAN)	<i>Oregon</i> (x) dep Feb 28
	Mar 21 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Crescent City</i>	Mar 30 (NYC)	first departure from ASP, first trip after completion of RR across the isthmus
1852 E-6	Mar 15 (SFC)	PMSS <i>California</i>	? (PAN)	<i>Republic</i> (x) dep Mar 11 <i>Constitution</i> (x) dep Mar 13 <i>Tennessee</i> (x) dep Mar 20
	Apr 7 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Cherokee</i>	Apr 23 (NYC)	
1852 E-7	Apr 5 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Golden Gate</i>	Apr 19 (PAN)	<i>Panama</i> (x) dep Apr 8 <i>Columbus</i> (x) dep Apr 15
	Apr 22 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Crescent City</i>	May 2 (NYC)	
1852 E-8	Apr 18 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Northerner</i>	May 5 (PAN)	
	May 8 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Illinois</i>	May 17 (NYC)	via HAV May 13
1852 E-9	May 6 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Columbia</i>	May 22 (PAN)	
	May 25 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Crescent City</i>	Jun 4 (NYC)	
1852 E-10	May 16 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Oregon</i>	Jun 1 (PAN)	<i>Unicorn</i> (x) dep May 29
	Jun 4 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Illinois</i>	Jun 12 (NYC)	
1852 E-11	Jun 1 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Tennessee</i>	Jun 16 (PAN)	
	Jun 19 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Crescent City</i>	Jun 28 (NYC)	
1852 E-12	Jun 18 (SFC)	PMSS <i>California</i>	Jul 4 (PAN)	
	Jul 7 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Illinois</i>	Jul 15 (NYC)	via HAV Jul 11
1852 E-13	Jun 28 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Golden Gate</i>	Jul 11 (PAN)	an extra mail from SFC
	Jul 14 (ASP)	USMSC <i>El Dorado</i> / <i>Empire City</i>	Jul 25 (NYC)	due to illness, mails transferred at Key West to <i>Empire City</i> , dep Jul 21

APPENDIX C - VIA PANAMA SAILINGS, 1849-1861

1852 (Jul to Dec) Eastbound Trips Via Panama				
Trip	Depart	Steamer	Arrive	Notes
1852 E-14	Jul 1 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Columbia</i>	Jul 19 (PAN)	
	Jul 21 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Ohio</i>	Aug 2 (NYC)	via KIN Jul 26
1852 E-15	Jul 15 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Northerner</i>	Aug 2 (PAN)	
	Aug 6 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Illinois</i>	Aug 14 (NYC)	
1852 E-16	Jul 31 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Oregon</i>	Aug 15 (PAN)	
	Aug 19 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Ohio</i>	Aug 31 (NYC)	via KIN Aug 24
1852 E-17	Aug 15 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Panama</i>	Aug 31 (PAN)	
	Sep 3 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Illinois</i>	Sep 12 (NYC)	
1852 E-18	Sep 1 (SFC)	PMSS <i>California</i>	Sep 17 (PAN)	
	Sep 21 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Ohio</i>	Oct 6 (NYC)	via KIN Sep 25
1852 E-19	Sep 16 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Golden Gate</i>	Sep 29 (PAN)	
	Oct 2 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Illinois</i>	Oct 13 (NYC)	via KIN Oct 7
1852 E-20	Oct 1 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Tennessee</i>	Oct 16 (PAN)	
	Oct 20 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Georgia</i>	Oct 29 (NYC)	via KIN Oct 23
1852 E-21	Oct 16 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Oregon</i>	Oct 31 (PAN)	
	Nov 4 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Illinois</i>	Nov 12 (NYC)	
1852 E-22	Nov 1 (SFC)	PMSS <i>California</i>	Nov 16 (PAN)	<i>Unicorn</i> (x) dep Oct 17 <i>Northerner</i> (x) dep Oct 30
	Nov 18 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Georgia</i>	Nov 28 (NYC)	with papers from <i>Unicorn</i> , via KIN Nov 22
1852 E-23	Nov 16 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Golden Gate</i>	Nov 28 (PAN)	
	Dec 2 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Illinois</i>	Dec 12 (NYC)	via KIN Dec 6
1852 E-24	Dec 1 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Panama</i>	Dec 17 (PAN)	
	Dec 20 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Georgia</i>	Dec 31 (NYC)	via KIN Dec 24
1852 E-25	Dec 16 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Tennessee</i>	Dec 31 (PAN)	
	Jan 2 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Illinois</i>	Jan 13 (NYC)	via KIN Jan 5
1852 E-26	Dec 30 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Oregon</i>	Jan 15 (PAN)	
	Jan 19 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Georgia</i>	Jan 30 (NYC)	via KIN Jan 21/22

APPENDIX C - VIA PANAMA SAILINGS, 1849-1861

1853 Eastbound Trips Via Panama				
Trip	Depart	Steamer	Arrive	Notes
1853 E-1	Jan 1 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Northerner</i>	Jan 16 (PAN)	
	Jan 22 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Empire City</i>	Feb 4 (NYC)	via HAV Jan 27-30
1853 E-2	Jan 15 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Golden Gate</i>	Jan 28 (PAN)	
	Feb 3 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Ohio</i>	Feb 18 (NYC)	via KIN Feb 6/8
1853 E-3	Feb 1 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Tennessee</i>	Feb 15 (PAN)	
	Feb 18 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Georgia</i>	Mar 1 (NYC)	
1853 E-4	Feb 15 (SFC)	PMSS <i>California</i>	Mar 3 (PAN)	<i>Panama</i> (x) dep Feb 15, no mail
	Mar 4 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Ohio</i>	Mar 18 (NYC)	via HAV Mar 10/12
1853 E-5	Mar 1 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Oregon</i>	Mar 16 (PAN)	
	Mar 19 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Georgia</i>	Mar 28 (NYC)	
1853 E-6	Mar 16 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Golden Gate</i>	Mar 28 (PAN)	
	Mar 31 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Illinois</i>	Apr 9 (NYC)	
1853 E-7	Apr 1 (SFC)	PMSS <i>California</i>	Apr 15 (PAN)	<i>Columbus</i> (x) dep Apr 8, no mail
	Apr 17 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Georgia</i>	Apr 27 (NYC)	
1853 E-8	Apr 17 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Northerner</i>	May 3 (PAN)	<i>Isthmus</i> (x) dep Apr 23, no mail
	May 4 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Illinois</i>	May 14 (NYC)	via KIN May 7/9
1853 E-9	Apr 30 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Golden Gate</i>	May 12 (PAN)	<i>Panama</i> (x) dep May 7, no mail
	May 14 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Georgia</i>	May 25 (NYC)	via KIN May 18
1853 E-10	May 16 (SFC)	PMSS <i>John L. Stephens</i>	May 31 (PAN)	<i>Republic</i> (x) dep May 24, no mail
	Jun 3 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Illinois</i>	Jun 12 (NYC)	
1853 E-11	Jun 1 (SFC)	PMSS <i>California</i>	Jun 16 (PAN)	<i>Columbus</i> (x) dep Jun 8, no mail
	Jun 19 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Georgia</i>	Jun 29 (NYC)	via HAV Jun 24
1853 E-12	Jun 16 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Golden Gate</i>	Jun 29 (PAN)	
	Jul 2 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Illinois</i>	Jul 11 (NYC)	

APPENDIX C - VIA PANAMA SAILINGS, 1849-1861

1853 (Jul to Dec) Eastbound Trips Via Panama				
Trip	Depart	Steamer	Arrive	Notes
1853 E-13	Jul 1 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Oregon</i>	Jul 17 (PAN)	
	Jul 19 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Georgia</i>	Jul 29 (NYC)	
1853 E-14	Jul 16 (SFC)	PMSS <i>John L. Stephens</i>	Jul 29 (PAN)	
	Aug 1 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Illinois</i>	Aug 10 (NYC)	
1853 E-15	Aug 1 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Northerner</i>	Aug 17 (PAN)	
	Aug 19 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Georgia</i>	Aug 29 (NYC)	
1853 E-16	Aug 16 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Winfield Scott</i>	Aug 30 (PAN)	first trip as PMSS steamer
	Sep 2 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Illinois</i>	Sep 10 (NYC)	
1853 E-17	Sep 1 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Oregon</i>	Sep 17 (PAN)	
	Sep 24 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Crescent City</i>	Oct 4 (NYC)	
1853 E-18	Sep 16 (SFC)	PMSS <i>John L. Stephens</i>	Sep 29 (PAN)	
	Oct 1 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Illinois</i>	Oct 10 (NYC)	
1853 E-19	Oct 1 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Panama</i>	Oct 17 (PAN)	
	Oct 18 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Ohio</i>	Oct 28 (NYC)	
1853 E-20	Oct 16 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Golden Gate</i>	Oct 29 (PAN)	
	Oct 31 (ASP)	USMSC <i>George Law</i>	Nov 10 (NYC)	
1853 E-21	Nov 1 (SFC)	PMSS <i>California</i>	Nov 17 (PAN)	
	Nov 19 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Illinois</i>	Nov 28 (NYC)	
1853 E-22	Nov 16 (SFC)	PMSS <i>John L. Stephens</i>	Nov 28 (PAN)	
	Dec 1 (ASP)	USMSC <i>George Law</i>	Dec 12 (NYC)	
1853 E-23	Dec 1 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Winfield Scott</i>	Dec 15 (PAN)	wrecked Dec 2 on Anacapa Island
		69 bags of salvaged mail from <i>Winfield Scott</i> sent by <i>California</i> to PAN to dry		
1853 E-24	Dec 7 (SFC)	PMSS <i>California</i>	Dec 24 (PAN)	
	Dec 26 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Illinois</i>	Jan 5 (NYC)	
1853 E-25	Dec 16 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Golden Gate</i>	Dec 28 (PAN)	
	Dec 30 (ASP)	USMSC <i>George Law</i>	Jan 10 (NYC)	w/mail from <i>Winfield Scott</i> wreck
1853 E-26	Dec 31 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Oregon</i>	Jan 16 (PAN)	<i>Republic</i> (x) dep Dec 29, no mail
	Jan 18 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Ohio</i>	Jan 29 1854 (NYC)	

APPENDIX C - VIA PANAMA SAILINGS, 1849-1861

1854 Eastbound Trips Via Panama				
Trip	Depart	Steamer	Arrive	Notes
1854 E-1	Jan 16 (SFC)	PMSS <i>John L. Stephens</i>	Jan 29 (PAN)	
	Feb 1 (ASP)	USMSC <i>George Law</i>	Feb 10 (NYC)	
1854 E-2	Feb 1 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Columbia</i>	Feb 18 (PAN)	
	Feb 22 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Empire City</i>	Mar 4 (NYC)	via KIN Feb 25
1854 E-3	Feb 16 (SFC)	PMSS <i>California</i>	Mar 3 (PAN)	
	Mar 5 (ASP)	USMSC <i>George Law</i>	Mar 14 (NYC)	via KIN Mar 8
1854 E-4	Mar 1 (SFC)	PMSS <i>John L. Stephens</i>	Mar 14 (PAN)	
	Mar 20 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Ohio</i>	Mar 29 (NYC)	
1854 E-5	Mar 16 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Golden Gate</i>	Mar 28 (PAN)	
	Mar 31 (ASP)	USMSC <i>George Law</i>	Apr 9 (NYC)	
1854 E-6	Apr 1 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Oregon</i>	Apr 15 (PAN)	
	Apr 17 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Illinois</i>	Apr 25 (NYC)	
1854 E-7	Apr 15 (SFC)	PMSS <i>John L. Stephens</i>	Apr 28 (PAN)	
	Apr 30 (ASP)	USMSC <i>George Law</i>	May 9 (NYC)	
1854 E-8	May 1 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Panama</i>	? (PAN)	
	May 17 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Illinois</i>	May 25 (NYC)	
1854 E-9	May 16 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Golden Gate</i>	? (PAN)	
	May 31 (ASP)	USMSC <i>George Law</i>	Jun 8 (NYC)	
1854 E-10	Jun 1 (SFC)	PMSS <i>John L. Stephens</i>	Jun 15 (PAN)	
	Jun 16 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Illinois</i>	Jun 24 (NYC)	
1854 E-11	Jun 16 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Sonora</i>	? (PAN)	
	Jul 1 (ASP)	USMSC <i>George Law</i>	Jul 9 (NYC)	

APPENDIX C - VIA PANAMA SAILINGS, 1849-1861

1854 (Jul to Dec) Eastbound Trips Via Panama				
Trip	Depart	Steamer	Arrive	Notes
1854 E-12	Jul 1 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Golden Gate</i>	Jul 15 (PAN)	
	Jul 16 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Illinois</i>	Jul 24 (NYC)	
1854 E-13	Jul 15 (SFC)	PMSS <i>California</i>	? (PAN)	
	Aug 1 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Empire City</i>	Aug 11 (NYC)	
1854 E-14	Aug 1 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Sonora</i>	Aug 14 (PAN)	
	Aug 15 (ASP)	USMSC <i>George Law</i>	Aug 24 (NYC)	
1854 E-15	Aug 16 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Oregon</i>	Aug 31 (PAN)	
	Sep 2 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Empire City</i>	Sep 12 (NYC)	
1854 E-16	Sep 1 (SFC)	PMSS <i>John L. Stephens</i>	Sep 15 (PAN)	108 bags of mail*
	Sep 17 (ASP)	USMSC <i>George Law</i>	Sep 26 (NYC)	
1854 E-17	Sep 16 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Panama</i>	Oct 2 (PAN)	89 bags
	Oct 3 (ASP)	USMSC <i>North Star</i>	Oct 11 (NYC)	
1854 E-18	Sep 30 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Sonora</i>	Oct 14 (PAN)	101 bags
	Oct 17 (ASP)	USMSC <i>George Law</i>	Oct 27 (NYC)	
1854 E-19	Oct 16 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Golden Gate</i>	Oct 28 (PAN)	116 bags
	Nov 1 (ASP)	USMSC <i>North Star</i>	Nov 9 (NYC)	
1854 E-20	Nov 1 (SFC)	PMSS <i>John L. Stephens</i>	Nov 14 (PAN)	100 bags
	Nov 15 (ASP)	USMSC <i>George Law</i>	Nov 24 (NYC)	
1854 E-21	Nov 16 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Golden Age</i>	Nov 28 (PAN)	114 bags
	Nov 30 (ASP)	USMSC <i>North Star</i>	Dec 9 (NYC)	
1854 E-22	Dec 1 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Sonora</i>	Dec 15 (PAN)	91 bags
	Dec 16 (ASP)	USMSC <i>George Law</i>	Dec 25 (NYC)	
1854 E-23	Dec 16 (SFC)	PMSS <i>John L. Stephens</i>	Dec 30 (PAN)	93 bags
	Jan 1 (ASP)	USMSC <i>North Star</i>	Jan 10 1855 (NYC)	
* Number of mail bags as reported in <i>Hutchings' California Magazine</i> issue of January 1858				

APPENDIX C - VIA PANAMA SAILINGS, 1849-1861

1855 Eastbound Trips Via Panama				
Trip	Depart	Steamer	Arrive	Notes
1855 E-1	Jan 1 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Golden Age</i>	Jan 14 (PAN)	107 bags of mail*
	Jan 15 (ASP)	USMSC <i>George Law</i>	Jan 25 (NYC)	via HAV Jan 20
1855 E-2	Jan 16 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Sonora</i>	Jan 29 (PAN)	98 bags
	Jan 31 (ASP)	USMSC <i>North Star</i>	Feb 8 (NYC)	
1855 E-3	Feb 1 (SFC)	PMSS <i>John L. Stephens</i>	Feb 15 (PAN)	108 bags
	Feb 16 (ASP)	USMSC <i>George Law</i>	Feb 25 (NYC)	
1855 E-4	Feb 16 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Golden Age</i>	Mar 2 (PAN)	99 bags
	Mar 2 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Illinois</i>	Mar 12 (NYC)	
1855 E-5	Mar 1 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Golden Gate</i>	Mar 16 (PAN)	102 bags
	Mar 16 (ASP)	USMSC <i>George Law</i>	Mar 24 (NYC)	
1855 E-6	Mar 16 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Sonora</i>	Mar 29 (PAN)	85 bags
	Mar 30 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Illinois</i>	Apr 13 (NYC)	
1855 E-7	Mar 31 (SFC)	PMSS <i>John L. Stephens</i>	Apr 13 (PAN)	95 bags
	Apr 15 (ASP)	USMSC <i>George Law</i>	Apr 24 (NYC)	
1855 E-8	Apr 17 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Golden Age</i>	May 2 (PAN)	103 bags, stuck on reef, <i>John L. Stephens</i> took mails from Jicarón Island to PAN
	May 3 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Illinois</i>	May 13 (NYC)	
1855 E-9	May 1 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Golden Gate</i>	May 13 (PAN)	89 bags
	May 15 (ASP)	USMSC <i>George Law</i>	May 24 (NYC)	
1855 E-10	May 16 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Sonora</i>	May 29 (PAN)	80 bags
	May 31 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Illinois</i>	Jun 8 (NYC)	
1855 E-11	Jun 1 (SFC)	PMSS <i>John L. Stephens</i>	Jun 15 (PAN)	100 bags
	Jun 16 (ASP)	USMSC <i>George Law</i>	Jun 28 (NYC)	
1855 E-12	Jun 16 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Golden Gate</i>	Jun 25 (PAN)	102 bags
	Jun 30 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Illinois</i>	Jul 10 (NYC)	
1855 E-13	Jun 30 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Sonora</i>	Jul 15 (PAN)	92 bags
	Jul 16 (ASP)	USMSC <i>George Law</i>	Jul 25 (NYC)	
* Number of mail bags as reported in <i>Hutchings' California Magazine</i> issue of January 1858				

APPENDIX C - VIA PANAMA SAILINGS, 1849-1861

1855 (Jul to Dec) Eastbound Trips Via Panama				
Trip	Depart	Steamer	Arrive	Notes
1855 E-14	Jul 16 (SFC)	PMSS <i>John L. Stephens</i>	Jul 31 (PAN)	97 bags of mail
	Aug 2 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Empire City</i>	Aug 11 (NYC)	via HAV Aug 6
1855 E-15	Aug 1 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Golden Age</i>	Aug 13 (PAN)	95 bags
	Aug 16 (ASP)	USMSC <i>George Law</i>	Aug 25 (NYC)	
1855 E-16	Aug 18 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Golden Gate</i>	Aug 31 (PAN)	94 bags
	Aug 31 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Empire City</i>	Sep 10 (NYC)	
1855 E-17	Sep 5 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Oregon</i>	Sep 21 (PAN)	93 bags
	Sep 23 (ASP)	USMSC <i>George Law</i>	Oct 2 (NYC)	via HAV Sep 27
1855 E-18	Sep 20 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Sonora</i>	Oct 5 (PAN)	96 bags
	Oct 6 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Empire City</i>	Oct 16 (NYC)	
1855 E-19	Oct 5 (SFC)	PMSS <i>John L. Stephens</i>	Oct 20 (PAN)	82 bags
	Oct 20 (ASP)	USMSC <i>George Law</i>	Oct 30 (NYC)	
1855 E-20	Oct 20 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Golden Age</i>	Nov 2 (PAN)	95 bags
	Nov 3 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Empire City</i>	Nov 13 (NYC)	
1855 E-21	Nov 5 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Sonora</i>	Nov 18 (PAN)	93 bags
	Nov 20 (ASP)	USMSC <i>George Law</i>	Nov 30 (NYC)	
1855 E-22	Nov 20 (SFC)	PMSS <i>John L. Stephens</i>	Dec 5 (PAN)	96 bags
	Dec 5 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Empire City</i>	Dec 17 (NYC)	
1855 E-23	Dec 5 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Golden Age</i>	Dec 18 (PAN)	101 bags
	Dec 19 (ASP)	USMSC <i>George Law</i>	Dec 28 (NYC)	
1855 E-24	Dec 20 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Sonora</i>	Jan 3 (PAN)	113 bags
	Jan 3 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Empire City</i>	Jan 14 1856 (NYC)	

APPENDIX C - VIA PANAMA SAILINGS, 1849-1861

1856 Eastbound Trips Via Panama				
Trip	Depart	Steamer	Arrive	Notes
1856 E-1	Jan 5 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Golden Gate</i>	Jan 19 (PAN)	89 bags of mail
	Jan 19 (ASP)	USMSC <i>George Law</i>	Jan 29 (NYC)	
1856 E-2	Jan 21 (SFC)	PMSS <i>John L. Stephens</i>	Feb 5 (PAN)	125 bags
	Feb 6 (ASP)	USMSC <i>St. Louis</i>	Feb 14 (NYC)	
1856 E-3	Feb 5 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Golden Age</i>	Feb 18 (PAN)	101 bags
	Feb 19 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Illinois</i>	Feb 27 (NYC)	
1856 E-4	Feb 20 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Sonora</i>	Mar 4 (PAN)	106 bags
	Mar 5 (ASP)	USMSC <i>George Law</i>	Mar 17 (NYC)	
1856 E-5	Mar 5 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Golden Gate</i>	Mar 17 (PAN)	95 bags
	Mar 18 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Illinois</i>	Mar 27 (NYC)	
1856 E-6	Mar 20 (SFC)	PMSS <i>John L. Stephens</i>	Apr 4 (PAN)	107 bags
	Apr 4 (ASP)	USMSC <i>George Law</i>	Apr 16 (NYC)	via HAV Apr 11
1856 E-7	Apr 5 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Golden Age</i>	Apr 20 (PAN)	126 bags
	Apr 21 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Illinois</i>	Apr 30 (NYC)	via HAV Apr 26
1856 E-8	Apr 21 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Sonora</i>	May 5 (PAN)	116 bags
	May 7 (ASP)	USMSC <i>George Law</i>	May 16 (NYC)	
1856 E-9	May 5 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Golden Gate</i>	May 19 (PAN)	92 bags
	May 20 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Illinois</i>	May 29 (NYC)	via HAV May 24/25
1856 E-10	May 21 (SFC)	PMSS <i>John L. Stephens</i>	Jun 4 (PAN)	129 bags
	Jun 4 (ASP)	USMSC <i>George Law</i>	Jun 13 (NYC)	
1856 E-11	Jun 5 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Golden Age</i>	Jun 18 (PAN)	149 bags
	Jun 19 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Illinois</i>	Jun 28 (NYC)	via KIN Jun 22
1856 E-12	Jun 20 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Sonora</i>	Jul 4 (PAN)	150 bags
	Jul 5 (ASP)	USMSC <i>George Law</i>	Jul 14 (NYC)	
* Number of mail bags as reported in <i>Hutchings' California Magazine</i> issue of January 1858				

APPENDIX C - VIA PANAMA SAILINGS, 1849-1861

1856 (Jul to Dec) Eastbound Trips Via Panama				
Trip	Depart	Steamer	Arrive	Notes
1856 E-13	Jul 5 (SFC)	PMSS <i>John L. Stephens</i>	Jul 18 (PAN)	142 bags of mail
	Jul 18 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Illinois</i>	Jul 27 (NYC)	
1856 E-14	Jul 21 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Golden Age</i>	Aug 4 (PAN)	147 bags
	Aug 4 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Ariel</i>	Aug 13 (NYC)	
1856 E-15	Aug 5 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Sonora</i>	Aug 19 (PAN)	121 bags
	Aug 20 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Illinois</i>	Aug 30 (NYC)	via Key West Aug 25
1856 E-16	Aug 20 (SFC)	PMSS <i>John L. Stephens</i>	Sep 2 (PAN)	141 bags
	Sep 3 (ASP)	USMSC <i>George Law</i>	Sep 14 (NYC)	
1856 E-17	Sep 5 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Golden Age</i>	Sep 18 (PAN)	140 bags
	Sep 19 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Illinois</i>	Sep 27 (NYC)	
1856 E-18	Sep 20 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Sonora</i>	Oct 3 (PAN)	114 bags
	Oct 4 (ASP)	USMSC <i>George Law</i>	Oct 12 (NYC)	
1856 E-19	Oct 6 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Golden Gate</i>	Oct 20 (PAN)	129 bags
	Oct 21 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Illinois</i>	Oct 28 (NYC)	
1856 E-20	Oct 20 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Golden Age</i>	Nov 2 (PAN)	113 bags
	Nov 3 (ASP)	USMSC <i>George Law</i>	Nov 13 (NYC)	
1856 E-21	Nov 5 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Sonora</i>	Nov 19 (PAN)	115 bags
	Nov 20 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Illinois</i>	Nov 29 (NYC)	
1856 E-22	Nov 20 (SFC)	PMSS <i>John L. Stephens</i>	Dec 3 (PAN)	122 bags
	Dec 4 (ASP)	USMSC <i>George Law</i>	Dec 13 (NYC)	
1856 E-23	Dec 5 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Golden Gate</i>	Dec 18 (PAN)	99 bags
	Dec 19 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Illinois</i>	Dec 28 (NYC)	
1856 E-24	Dec 20 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Sonora</i>	Jan 3 (PAN)	112 bags
	Jan 4 (ASP)	USMSC <i>George Law</i>	Jan 13 1857 (NYC)	

APPENDIX C - VIA PANAMA SAILINGS, 1849-1861

1857 Eastbound Trips Via Panama				
Trip	Depart	Steamer	Arrive	Notes
1857 E-1	Jan 5 (SFC)	PMSS <i>John L. Stephens</i>	Jan 19 (PAN)	120 bags of mail
	Jan 19 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Illinois</i>	Jan 28 (NYC)	via HAV
1857 E-2	Jan 20 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Golden Gate</i>	Feb 3 (PAN)	96 bags
	Feb 3 (ASP)	USMSC <i>George Law</i>	Feb 13 (NYC)	
1857 E-3	Feb 5 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Sonora</i>	Feb 19 (PAN)	121 bags
	Feb 19 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Illinois</i>	Feb 27 (NYC)	
1857 E-4	Feb 20 (SFC)	PMSS <i>John L. Stephens</i>	Mar 5 (PAN)	119 bags
	Mar 6 (ASP)	USMSC <i>George Law</i>	Mar 16 (NYC)	via HAV (Mar 11) NO mails off-loaded
1857 E-5	Mar 5 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Golden Age</i>	Mar 18 (PAN)	103 bags
	Mar 19 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Illinois</i>	Mar 28 (NYC)	
1857 E-6	Mar 20 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Golden Gate</i>	Apr 4 (PAN)	119 bags before return to SFC for repair, dep Mar 23 with +6 late bags
	Apr 4 (ASP)	USMSC <i>George Law</i>	Apr 13 (NYC)	
1857 E-7	Apr 6 (SFC)	PMSS <i>John L. Stephens</i>	Apr 19 (PAN)	115 bags
	Apr 20 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Illinois</i>	Apr 29 (NYC)	via KIN Apr 23
1857 E-8	Apr 20 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Golden Age</i>	May 4 (PAN)	102 bags
	May 4 (ASP)	USMSC <i>George Law</i>	May 13 (NYC)	
1857 E-9	May 5 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Golden Gate</i>	May 18 (PAN)	122 bags
	May 19 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Illinois</i>	May 28 (NYC)	via KIN May 22
1857 E-10	May 20 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Sonora</i>	Jun 2 (PAN)	104 bags
	Jun 3 (ASP)	USMSC <i>George Law</i>	Jun 20 (NYC)	
1857 E-11	Jun 5 (SFC)	PMSS <i>John L. Stephens</i>	Jun 19 (PAN)	116 bags
	Jun 19 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Illinois</i>	Jun 27 (NYC)	
1857 E-12	Jun 20 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Golden Age</i>	Jul 4 (PAN)	96 bags
	Jul 4 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Star of the West</i>	Jul 13 (NYC)	charter trip to replacing <i>George Law</i>
* Number of mail bags as reported in <i>Hutchings' California Magazine</i> issue of January 1858				

APPENDIX C - VIA PANAMA SAILINGS, 1849-1861

1857 (Jul to Dec) Eastbound Trips Via Panama				
Trip	Depart	Steamer	Arrive	Notes
1857 E-13	Jul 4 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Sonora</i>	Jul 18 (PAN)	109 bags
	Jul 19 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Illinois</i>	Jul 27 (NYC)	
1857 E-14	Jul 20 (SFC)	PMSS <i>John L. Stephens</i>	Aug 3 (PAN)	108 bags
	Aug 3 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Central America</i>	Aug 12 (NYC)	
1857 E-15	Aug 6 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Golden Age</i>	Aug 19 (PAN)	121 bags
	Aug 19 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Illinois</i>	Sep 3 (NYC)	grounded Aug 23/26, then via HAV
1857 E-16	Aug 20 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Sonora</i>	Sep 2 (PAN)	102 bags
	Sep 3 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Central America</i>	sunk Sep 12	after stop at HAV Sep 11 (NO mails)
1857 E-17	Sep 5 (SFC)	PMSS <i>California</i>	Sep 24 (PAN)	112 bags, late arriving in PAN
	Sep 24 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Star of the West</i>	Oct 4 (NYC)	via HAV Sep 28 & Key West
1857 E-18	Sep 21 (SFC)	PMSS <i>John L. Stephens</i>	Oct 5 (PAN)	109 bags
	Oct 5 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Northern Light</i>	Oct 16 (NYC)	via HAV Oct 11
1857 E-19	Oct 5 (SFC) Oct 11	PMSS <i>Golden Gate</i> / <i>Golden Age</i>	Oct 21 (PAN)	91 bags, machinery problems, returned to SFC Oct 10, mails to <i>Golden Age</i> , dep Oct 11 with +23 late bags
	Oct 21 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Star of the West</i>	Nov 4 (NYC)	via HAV Oct 29
1857 E-20	Oct 20 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Sonora</i>	Nov 2 (PAN)	96 bags
	Nov 4 (ASP)	USMSC <i>St. Louis</i>	Nov 16 (NYC)	via HAV
1857 E-21	Nov 5 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Golden Gate</i>	Nov 19 (PAN)	125 bags
	Nov 21 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Northern Light</i>	Nov 30 (NYC)	
1857 E-22	Nov 20 (SFC)	PMSS <i>John L. Stephens</i>	Dec 4 (PAN)	110 bags
	Dec 4 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Star of the West</i>	Dec 14 (NYC)	via HAV Dec 9
1857 E-23	Dec 5 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Golden Age</i>	Dec 18 (PAN)	110 bags
	Dec 19 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Northern Light</i>	Dec 27 (NYC)	
1857 E-24	Dec 21 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Golden Gate</i>	Jan 3 (PAN)	94 bags
	Jan 4 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Star of the West</i>	Jan 13 1858 (NYC)	

APPENDIX C - VIA PANAMA SAILINGS, 1849-1861

1858 Eastbound Trips Via Panama				
Trip	Depart	Steamer	Arrive	Notes
1858 E-1	Jan 5 (SFC)	PMSS <i>John L. Stephens</i>	Jan 18 (PAN)	
	Jan 19 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Moses Taylor</i>	Jan 27 (NYC)	
1858 E-2	Jan 20 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Golden Age</i>	Feb 2 (PAN)	
	Feb 3 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Star of the West</i>	Feb 14 (NYC)	
1858 E-3	Feb 5 (SFC)	PMSS <i>John L. Stephens</i>	? (PAN)	
	Feb 19 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Moses Taylor</i>	Feb 27 (NYC)	via KIN, Jamaica
1858 E-4	Feb 20 (SFC)	PMSS <i>John L. Stephens</i>	Mar 6 (PAN)	
	Mar 6 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Star of the West</i>	Mar 15 (NYC)	
1858 E-5	Mar 5 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Golden Age</i>	Mar 17 (PAN)	
	Mar 18 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Moses Taylor</i>	Mar 26 (NYC)	
1858 E-6	Mar 22 (SFC)	PMSS <i>John L. Stephens</i>	Apr 4 (PAN)	
	Apr 4 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Star of the West</i>	Apr 13 (NYC)	
1858 E-7	Apr 5 (SFC)	PMSS <i>John L. Stephens</i>	? (PAN)	
	Apr 19 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Moses Taylor</i>	Apr 27 (NYC)	
1858 E-8	Apr 20 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Golden Age</i>	May 3 (PAN)	
	May 4 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Star of the West</i>	May 13 (NYC)	
1858 E-9	May 5 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Golden Gate</i> / PMSS <i>Sonora</i>	May 20 (PAN)	<i>Golden Gate</i> dep May 5 and returned to SFC, May 7 mails transferred to <i>Sonora</i>
	May 21 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Moses Taylor</i>	May 29 (NYC)	
1858 E-10	May 20 (SFC)	PMSS <i>John L. Stephens</i>	Jun 3 (PAN)	
	Jun 3 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Star of the West</i>	Jun 12 (NYC)	
1858 E-11	Jun 5 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Golden Age</i>	Jun 19 (PAN)	
	Jun 19 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Moses Taylor</i>	Jun 27 (NYC)	
1858 E-12	Jun 21 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Sonora</i>	Jul 5 (PAN)	
	Jul 5 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Star of the West</i>	Jul 14 (NYC)	

APPENDIX C - VIA PANAMA SAILINGS, 1849-1861

1858 (Jul to Dec) Eastbound Trips Via Panama				
Trip	Depart	Steamer	Arrive	Notes
1858 E-13	Jul 5 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Golden Gate</i>	Jul 19 (PAN)	
	Jul 19 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Moses Taylor</i>	Jul 27 (NYC)	
1858 E-14	Jul 20 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Golden Age</i>	Aug 3 (PAN)	
	Aug 3 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Star of the West</i>	Aug 12 (NYC)	via Key West
1858 E-15	Aug 5 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Sonora</i>	Aug 18 (PAN)	
	Aug 19 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Moses Taylor</i>	Aug 27 (NYC)	via Key West
1858 E-16	Aug 20 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Golden Age</i>	? (PAN)	
	Sep 3 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Star of the West</i>	Sep 11 (NYC)	
1858 E-17	Sep 6 (SFC)	PMSS <i>John L. Stephens</i>	Sep 19 (PAN)	
	Sep 20 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Moses Taylor</i>	Sep 28 (NYC)	
1858 E-18	Sep 21 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Sonora</i>	Oct 5 (PAN)	
	Oct 5 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Star of the West</i>	Oct 15 (NYC)	via KIN
1858 E-19	Oct 5 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Golden Gate</i>	Oct 17 (PAN)	
	Oct 19 (ASP)	USMSC <i>St. Louis</i>	Oct 28 (NYC)	
1858 E-20	Oct 20 (SFC)	PMSS <i>John L. Stephens</i>	Nov 3 (PAN)	carried via Tehuantepec mails to TEH
	Nov 3 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Star of the West</i>	Nov 12 (NYC)	
1858 E-21	Nov 5 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Sonora</i>	Nov 19 (PAN)	carried via Tehuantepec mails to TEH
	Nov 20 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Star of the West</i>	Nov 28 (NYC)	
1858 E-22	Nov 20 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Golden Age</i>	Dec 4 (PAN)	carried via Tehuantepec mails to TEH
	Dec 4 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Moses Taylor</i>	Dec 12 (NYC)	
1858 E-23	Dec 6 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Golden Gate</i>	Dec 19 (PAN)	carried via Tehuantepec mails to TEH
	Dec 20 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Illinois</i>	Dec 29 (NYC)	
1858 E-24	Dec 20 (SFC)	PMSS <i>John L. Stephens</i>	Jan 2 (PAN)	carried via Tehuantepec mails to TEH
	Jan 3 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Moses Taylor</i>	Jan 12 1859 (NYC)	

APPENDIX C - VIA PANAMA SAILINGS, 1849-1861

1859 Eastbound Trips Via Panama				
Trip	Depart	Steamer	Arrive	Notes
1859 E-1	Jan 5 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Golden Age</i>	Jan 18 (PAN)	carried via Tehuantepec mails to TEH
	Jan 19 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Illinois</i>	Jan 28 (NYC)	
1859 E-2	Jan 20 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Sonora</i>	Feb 2 (PAN)	carried via Tehuantepec mails to TEH
	Feb 3 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Moses Taylor</i>	Feb 11 (NYC)	
1859 E-3	Feb 5 (SFC)	PMSS <i>John L. Stephens</i>	Feb 19 (PAN)	carried via Tehuantepec mails to TEH
	Feb 19 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Illinois</i>	Feb 27 (NYC)	
1859 E-4	Feb 19 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Golden Age</i>	Mar 4 (PAN)	carried via Tehuantepec mails to TEH
	Mar 5 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Star of the West</i>	Mar 13 (NYC)	
1859 E-5	Mar 5 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Sonora</i>	Mar 18 (PAN)	carried via Tehuantepec mails to TEH
	Mar 19 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Illinois / Granada</i>	Mar 29 (NYC)	mails transferred to <i>Granada</i> at HAV
1859 E-6	Mar 21 (SFC)	PMSS <i>John L. Stephens</i>	Apr 4 (PAN)	carried via Tehuantepec mails to TEH
	Apr 4 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Star of the West</i>	Apr 13 (NYC)	
1859 E-7	Apr 5 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Golden Age</i>	Apr 16 (PAN)	carried via Tehuantepec mails to TEH
	Apr 17 (ASP)	USMSC <i>St. Louis</i>	Apr 25 (NYC)	
1859 E-8	Apr 20 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Sonora</i>	May 3 (PAN)	carried via Tehuantepec mails to TEH
	May 4 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Star of the West</i>	May 14 (NYC)	
1859 E-9	May 5 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Golden Age</i>	May 17 (PAN)	carried via Tehuantepec mails to TEH
	May 18 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Moses Taylor</i>	May 26 (NYC)	
1859 E-10	May 20 (SFC)	PMSS <i>John L. Stephens</i>	Jun 2 (PAN)	carried via Tehuantepec mails to TEH
	Jun 3 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Star of the West</i>	Jun 13 (NYC)	
1859 E-11	Jun 6 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Golden Age</i>	Jun 10 (PAN)	carried via Tehuantepec mails to TEH
	Jun 10 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Granada</i>	Jun 28 (NYC)	
1859 E-12	Jun 20 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Sonora</i>	Jul 2 (PAN)	carried via Tehuantepec mails to TEH
	Jul 3 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Star of the West</i>	Jul 12 (NYC)	

APPENDIX C - VIA PANAMA SAILINGS, 1849-1861

1859 (Jul to Dec) Eastbound Trips Via Panama				
Trip	Depart	Steamer	Arrive	Notes
1859 E-13	Jul 6 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Golden Gate</i>	Jul 18 (PAN)	carried via Tehuantepec mails to TEH
	Jul 19 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Moses Taylor</i>	Jul 27 (NYC)	
1859 E-14	Jul 20 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Golden Age</i>	Aug 1 (PAN)	carried via Tehuantepec mails to TEH
	Aug 2 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Star of the West</i>	Aug 11 (NYC)	
1859 E-15	Aug 5 (SFC)	PMSS <i>John L. Stephens</i>	Aug 18 (PAN)	carried via Tehuantepec mails to TEH
	Aug 19 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Moses Taylor</i>	Aug 27 (NYC)	
1859 E-16	Aug 20 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Sonora</i>	Sep 1 (PAN)	carried via Tehuantepec mails to TEH
	Sep 2 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Star of the West</i>	Sep 12 (NYC)	
1859 E-17	Sep 5 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Golden Age</i>	Sep 18 (PAN)	carried via Tehuantepec mails to TEH
	Sep 19 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Moses Taylor</i>	Sep 27 (NYC)	
1859 E-18	Sep 20 (SFC)	PMSS <i>John L. Stephens</i>	Oct 2 (PAN)	carried via Tehuantepec mails to TEH
	Oct 3 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Star of the West</i>	Oct 16 (NYC)	
1859 E-19	Oct 5 (SFC)	A&PSS <i>Cortes</i>	Oct 17 (PAN)	with mails, contract expired Sep 30
	Oct 20 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Northern Light</i>	Oct 28 (NYC)	with Oct 5 mails
1859 E-X1	Oct 5 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Golden Gate</i>	Oct 17 (PAN)	extra, no mail
	Oct 18 (ASP)	NASC <i>Baltic</i>	Oct 24 (NYC)	connected with <i>Baltic</i> , no mail
1859 E-20	Oct 20 (SFC)	A&PSS <i>Uncle Sam</i>	Nov 3 (PAN)	with mail
	Nov 11 (ASP)	A&PSS <i>North Star</i>	Nov 21 (NYC)	via Key West Nov 16
1859 E-X2	Oct 20 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Sonora</i>	Nov 1 (PAN)	extra, w/ newspapers
	Nov 3 (ASP)	NASC <i>Atlantic</i>	Nov 10 (NYC)	with 19 pkgs of newspapers
1859 E-21	Nov 5 (SFC)	A&PSS <i>Orizaba</i>	? (PAN)	with mail
	Nov 11 (ASP)	A&PSS <i>North Star</i>	Nov 21 (NYC)	
1859 E-X3	Nov 5 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Golden Age</i>	Nov 19 (PAN)	
	Nov 19 (ASP)	NASC <i>Baltic</i>	Nov 27 (NYC)	
1859 E-23	Nov 21 (SFC)	PMSS <i>John L. Stephens</i>	Dec 4 (PAN)	with mails, A&PSS line failure
	Dec 5 (ASP)	NASC <i>Atlantic</i>	Dec 13 (NYC)	w/ NYC mails, to NO per <i>Dan Webster</i>
1859 E-24	Dec 5 (SFC)	A&PSS <i>Uncle Sam</i>	? (PAN)	with mails
	Dec 20 (ASP)	USMSC <i>Northern Light</i>	Oct 28 (NYC)	with mails
1859 E-X4	Dec 5 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Golden Gate</i>	Dec 17 (PAN)	no mail
	Dec 17 (ASP)	NASC <i>Baltic</i>	Dec 24 (NYC)	no mail
1859 E-25	Dec 20 (SFC)	A&PSS <i>Orizaba</i>	? (PAN)	with mails
	Jan 4 (ASP)	A&PSS <i>North Star</i>	Jan 11 (NYC)	with mails
1859 E-X5	Dec 20 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Sonora</i>	Jan 1 (PAN)	no mail
	Jan 2 (ASP)	NASC <i>Atlantic</i>	Jan 9 1860 (NYC)	no mail

APPENDIX C - VIA PANAMA SAILINGS, 1849-1861

1860 Eastbound Trips Via Panama				
Trip	Depart	Steamer	Arrive	Notes
1860 E-1	Jan 5 (SFC)	A&PSS <i>Champion</i>	Jan 19 (PAN)	94 bags w/ 25,983 letters
	Jan 20 (ASP)	A&PSS <i>Northern Light</i>	Jan 28 (NYC)	
1860 E-2	Jan 20 (SFC)	A&PSS <i>Cortes</i>	Feb 3 (PAN)	110 bags w/ 30, 294 letters
	Feb 4 (ASP)	A&PSS <i>North Star</i>	Feb 12 (NYC)	via HAV
1860 E-3	Feb 6 (SFC)	A&PSS <i>Orizaba</i>	Feb 20 (PAN)	93 bags w/ 19,473 letters
	Feb 21 (ASP)	A&PSS <i>Northern Light</i>	Feb 28 (NYC)	via HAV
1860 E-4	Feb 20 (SFC)	A&PSS <i>Champion</i>	Mar 6 (PAN)	85 bags w/ 15,875 letters
	Mar 6 (ASP)	A&PSS <i>North Star</i>	Mar 15 (NYC)	via HAV
1860 E-5	Mar 5 (SFC)	A&PSS <i>Cortes</i>	Mar 20 (PAN)	101 bags w/ 16,996 letters last trip of A&PSS on Pacific side
	Mar 21 (ASP)	A&PSS <i>Ariel</i>	Mar 29 (NYC)	via HAV
1860 E-6	Mar 20 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Sonora</i>	? (PAN)	94 bags w/ 20,090 letters
	Apr 2 (ASP)	A&PSS <i>North Star</i>	Apr 10 (NYC)	contract ceded to PMSS Mar 20
1860 E-7	Apr 5 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Golden Age</i>	Apr 19 (PAN)	104 bags w/ 23,000 letters
	Apr 19 (ASP)	A&PSS <i>Northern Light</i>	Apr 27 (NYC)	
1860 E-8	Apr 20 (SFC)	PMSS <i>John L. Stephens</i>	May 4 (PAN)	98 bags w/ 17,908 letters
	May 4 (ASP)	A&PSS <i>North Star</i>	May 11 (NYC)	
1860 E-9	May 5 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Golden Gate</i>	May 15 (PAN)	103 bags w/ 15,897 letters
	May 15 (ASP)	A&PSS <i>Northern Light</i>	May 26 (NYC)	
1860 E-10	May 21 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Sonora</i>	Jun 4 (PAN)	119 bags w/ 21,298 letters
	Jun 4 (ASP)	A&PSS <i>North Star</i>	Jun 12 (NYC)	
1860 E-11	Jun 5 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Golden Age</i>	Jun 18 (PAN)	94 bags w/ 16,141 letters
	Jun 19 (ASP)	A&PSS <i>Northern Light</i>	Jun 27 (NYC)	
1860 E-12	Jun 20 (SFC)	PMSS <i>John L. Stephens</i>	Jul 4 (PAN)	88 bags w/ 15,646 letters
	Jul 4 (ASP)	A&PSS <i>North Star</i>	Jul 12 (NYC)	
1860 E-13	Jun 30 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Uncle Sam</i>	Jul 14 (PAN)	59 bags w/ 1,485 letters
	Jul 15 (ASP)	A&PSS <i>Ariel</i>	Jul 22 (NYC)	
Letter statistics as reported in January 3, 1861 issue of San Francisco's <i>Daily Alta California</i>				

APPENDIX C - VIA PANAMA SAILINGS, 1849-1861

1860 (Jul to Dec) Eastbound Trips Via Panama				
Trip	Depart	Steamer	Arrive	Notes
1860 E-14	Jul 11 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Sonora</i>	? (PAN)	this trip not listed in statistics report
	Jul 25 (ASP)	A&PSS <i>Northern Light</i>	Aug 2 (NYC)	with SFC mails of Jul 11
1860 E-15	Aug 1 (SFC)	PMSS <i>John L. Stephens</i>	Aug 14 (PAN)	118 bags w/ 5,895 letters
	Aug 14 (ASP)	A&PSS <i>Ariel</i>	Aug 23 (NYC)	
1860 E-16	Aug 11 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Uncle Sam</i>	Aug 25 (PAN)	67 bags w/ 5,252 letters
	Aug 26 (ASP)	A&PSS <i>Northern Light</i>	Sep 2 (NYC)	
1860 E-17	Aug 21 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Sonora</i>	Sep 3 (PAN)	77 bags w/ 6,887 letters
	Sep 4 (ASP)	A&PSS <i>North Star</i>	Sep 12 (NYC)	
1860 E-18	Sep 1 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Golden Age</i>	Sep 15 (PAN)	76 bags w/ 7,889 letters
	Sep 15 (ASP)	A&PSS <i>Ariel</i>	Sep 22 (NYC)	
1860 E-19	Sep 11 (SFC)	PMSS <i>John L. Stephens</i> / PMSS <i>Uncle Sam</i>	Sep 30 (PAN)	68 bags w/ 7,298 letters disabled at Acapulco, mail transferred
1860 E-20	Sep 21 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Uncle Sam</i>	Oct 6 (PAN)	86 bags w/ 9,329 letters
	Oct 6 (ASP)	A&PSS <i>North Star</i>	Oct 13 (NYC)	carried E-19, E-20 mails*
1860 E-21	Oct 1 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Sonora</i>	Oct 14 (PAN)	65 bags w/ 5,723 letters
	Oct 15 (ASP)	A&PSS <i>Ariel</i>	Oct 23 (NYC)	
1860 E-22	Oct 11 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Golden Age</i>	Oct 25 (PAN)	78 bags w/ 7,261 letters
	Oct 25 (ASP)	A&PSS <i>Northern Light</i>	Nov 2 (NYC)	
1860 E-23	Oct 21 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Cortes</i>	Nov 4 (PAN)	66 bags w/ 5,376 letters
	Nov 5 (ASP)	A&PSS <i>North Star</i>	Nov 13 (NYC)	
1860 E-24	Nov 1 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Uncle Sam</i>	Nov 15 (PAN)	87 bags w/ 9,742 letters
	Nov 16 (ASP)	A&PSS <i>Ariel</i>	Nov 25 (NYC)	
1860 E-25	Nov 10 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Sonora</i>	Nov 23 (PAN)	54 bags w/ 8,029 letters
	Nov 24 (ASP)	A&PSS <i>Northern Light</i>	Dec 3 1860 (NYC)	
1860 E-26	Nov 21 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Golden Age</i>	Dec 5 (PAN)	67 bags w/ 10,617 letters
	Dec 5 (ASP)	A&PSS <i>North Star</i>	Dec 14 (NYC)	
1860 E-27	Dec 1 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Cortes</i>	Dec 16 (PAN)	67 bags w/ 6,775 letters
	Dec 16 (ASP)	A&PSS <i>Ariel</i>	Dec 25 (NYC)	
1860 E-28	Dec 11 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Uncle Sam</i>	Dec 25 (PAN)	73 bags w/ 8,534 letters
	Dec 25 (ASP)	A&PSS <i>Northern Light</i>	Jan 3 1861 (NYC)	
1860 E-29	Dec 21 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Sonora</i>	Jan 4 (PAN)	69 bags w/ 13,762 letters
	Jan 4 (ASP)	A&PSS <i>North Star</i>	Jan 13 1861 (NYC)	
1861 E-1	Jan 5 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Golden Age</i>	Jan 15 (PAN)	
	Jan 15 (ASP)	A&PSS <i>Ariel</i>	Jan 25 (NYC)	
Letter statistics as reported in January 3, 1861 issue of San Francisco's <i>Daily Alta California</i>				
* A&PSS <i>Northern Light</i> dep ASP on Sep 30 (no waiting for SFC mails) and arv NYC on Oct 7				

APPENDIX C - VIA PANAMA SAILINGS, 1849-1861

1861 Eastbound Trips Via Panama				
Trip	Depart	Steamer	Arrive	Notes
1861 E-2	Jan 11 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Cortes</i>	Jan 25 (PAN)	
	Jan 25 (ASP)	A&PSS <i>Northern Light</i>	Feb 3 (NYC)	
1861 E-3	Jan 21 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Uncle Sam</i>	Feb 4 (PAN)	
	Feb 4 (ASP)	A&PSS <i>North Star</i>	Feb 12 (NYC)	
1861 E-4	Feb 1 (SFC)	PMSS <i>California</i>	Feb 15 (PAN)	
	Feb 16 (ASP)	A&PSS <i>Ariel</i>	Feb 25 (NYC)	
1861 E-5	Feb 11 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Golden Age</i>	Feb 25 (PAN)	
	Feb 25 (ASP)	A&PSS <i>Northern Light</i>	Mar 5 (NYC)	
1861 E-6	Feb 21 (SFC)	PMSS <i>St Louis</i>	Mar 7 (PAN)	
	Mar 7 (ASP)	A&PSS <i>North Star</i>	Mar 18 (NYC)	
1861 E-7	Mar 1 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Cortes</i>	Mar 16 (PAN)	
	Mar 16 (ASP)	A&PSS <i>Champion</i>	Mar 26 (NYC)	
1861 E-8	Mar 11 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Golden Gate</i>	Mar 25 (PAN)	
	Mar 25 (ASP)	A&PSS <i>Northern Light</i>	Apr 2 (NYC)	
1861 E-9	Mar 21 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Golden Age</i>	Apr 4 (PAN)	
	Apr 4 (ASP)	A&PSS <i>North Star</i>	Apr 12 (NYC)	
1861 E-10	Apr 1 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Sonora</i>	Apr 15 (PAN)	
	Apr 15 (ASP)	A&PSS <i>Champion</i>	Apr 23 (NYC)	
1861 E-11	Apr 11 (SFC)	PMSS <i>St. Louis</i>	Apr 25 (PAN)	
	Apr 25 (ASP)	A&PSS <i>Northern Light</i>	May 3 (NYC)	
1861 E-12	Apr 21 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Golden Gate</i>	May 4 (PAN)	
	May 4 (ASP)	A&PSS <i>North Star</i>	May 12 (NYC)	
1861 E-13	May 1 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Golden Age</i>	May 14 (PAN)	
	May 15 (ASP)	A&PSS <i>Champion</i>	May 24 (NYC)	
1861 E-14	May 11 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Golden Gate</i>	May 25 (PAN)	
	May 25 (ASP)	A&PSS <i>Northern Light</i>	Jun 2 (NYC)	
1861 E-15	May 21 (SFC)	PMSS <i>St Louis</i>	Mar (PAN)	
	Jun 4 (ASP)	A&PSS <i>North Star</i>	Jun 12 (NYC)	
1861 E-16	Jun 1 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Orizaba</i>	Jun 15 (PAN)	
	Jun 15 (ASP)	A&PSS <i>Ariel</i>	Jun 24 (NYC)	
1861 E-17	Jun 11 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Golden Age</i>	Jun 25 (PAN)	
	Jun 25 (ASP)	A&PSS <i>Northern Light</i>	Jul 4 (NYC)	
1861 E-18	Jun 21 (SFC)	PMSS <i>Sonora</i>	Jul 4 (PAN)	
	Jul 4 (ASP)	A&PSS <i>North Star</i>	Jul 13 (NYC)	

Appendix D

Central Overland Trip List, 1850 to 1861

This appendix includes trip tables for the various mail contracts along segments of the Central Route. These contracts are described in detail in Chapter Seven. The tables in this appendix show the scheduled departure and arrival times for each contract, separated into eastbound and westbound sub-tables. The "Notes" column in each table includes actual performance against the schedule for many of the trips.

The information is presented here according to the following outline:

Division 1 - Between Salt Lake City and Missouri, 1850-1861

- A. Woodson (Aug 1, 1850 to Jun 30, 1854), eastbound / westbound
- B. Magraw (Jul 1, 1854 to Nov 30, 1856), eastbound / westbound
- C. Individual Trip Contracts (Dec 1, 1856 to Jan 31, 1857, no listings)
- D. Kimball (Feb 2, 1857 to Jun 30, 1857), eastbound / westbound
- E. No service (Jul 1, 1857 to Sep 30, 1857), no listings
- F. Miles (Oct 1, 1857 to Mar 30, 1858, eastbound / westbound
- G. Hockaday (May 1, 1858 to Jun 30 1859), eastbound / westbound
- H. COC&PP (Jul 1, 1859 to Jun 30, 1861), eastbound / westbound

Division 2 - Between California and Salt Lake City

- A. Chorpenning (May 3, 1851 to Mar 1 1853), eastbound / westbound
- B. Blanchard (Mar 15, 1853 to Jul 15, 1853), eastbound / westbound
- C. Chorpenning (Jul 1, 1853 to Jun 30, 1854), eastbound / westbound
- D. Chorpenning (Jul 1, 1854 to Jun 30, 1858), eastbound / westbound
- E. Chorpenning (Jul 1 1858 to May 10, 1860), eastbound / westbound
- F. COC&PP (Jun 1, 1860 to Jun 30, 1861), eastbound / westbound

Division 3 - Between Oregon and Salt Lake City

- Brown & Torrence Contract (Jul 1, 1851 to Jun 30, 1854), eastbound / westbound

APPENDIX D - CENTRAL OVERLAND TRIP LIST, 1850-1861

DIVISION 1 - Woodson Contract (Aug 1, 1850 to Jun 1, 1854) - EASTBOUND Salt Lake City to Missouri, Schedule Dates / Actual		
Dep Date Salt Lake City	Arv Date Independence	Notes on Actual Trip Times
Sep 1 1850	Sep 30 1850	Thomas Scoggins left on Sep 11, passed Fort Laramie on Sep 29 and Fort Kearny on Oct 8, arrived at Independence on Oct 21
Oct 1 1850	Oct 31 1850	Milligen left on Oct 20 and arrived at St Joseph on Dec 24
Nov 1 1850	Nov 30 1850	left Nov 22 but forced to return, held until May 1851 mail because of impassible mountain snows
Dec 1 1850	Dec 31 1850	held until May 1851 mail because of impassible mountain snows
Jan 1 1851	Jan 31 1851	held until May 1851 mail because of impassible mountain snows
Feb 1 1851	Feb 28 1851	C.G. Olin returned to Salt Lake on Feb 3, mail held until May 1851
Mar 1 1851	Mar 31 1851	held until May 1851 mail, Mar mail bags contained 800 letters
Apr 1 1851	Apr 30 1851	held until May 1851 mail because of impassible mountain snows
May 1 1851	May 31 1851	May 16 Kanesville <i>Frontier Guardian</i> report "no mail had passed Fort Kearny from Salt Lake since Dec last." Figure 7-2 was carried in this mail
Jun 1 1851	Jun 30 1851	mail arrived in Independence on Jun 27
Jul 1 1851	Jul 31 1851	Figure 7-3 was carried in this mail which left on Jul 2 and arrived on Jul 24
Aug 1 1851	Aug 31 1851	Feramorz Little and E.K. Hanks left Salt lake Aug 9 on their first trip from Salt Lake, mail arrived in Independence on Aug 30
Sep 1 1851	Sep 30 1851	C.F. Decker reached Laramie from Salt Lake on Sep 16, Smith carried the mail from there to Independence arriving on Sep 28
Oct 1 1851	Oct 31 1851	Figure 7-34 was carried in this mail which arrived on Oct 30
Nov 1 1851	Nov 30 1851	held until Jan mail due to impassible mountain snows
Dec 1 1851	Dec 31 1851	held until Jan mail due to impassible mountain snows
Jan 1 1852	Jan 31 1852	E.K. Hanks carried the mail to Fort Laramie on Jan 17, Wyrock carried the mail to Independence, reported that no Salt Lake mail had been at Fort Laramie before Jan 17 (since Oct), Figure 7-2 was carried in this mail
Feb 1 1852	Feb 29 1852	C.F. Decker took the mail to Fort Laramie on Feb 16
Mar 1 1852	Mar 31 1852	
Apr 1 1852	Apr 30 1852	mail carrier Caldwell left Fort Laramie on Apr 17 for Independence
May 1 1852	May 31 1852	
Jun 1 1852	Jun 30 1852	mail left Salt Lake on Jun 13, Figures 7-4 and 7-6 were carried in this mail
Jul 1 1852	Jul 31 1852	Jul mail contained 3,000 letters
Aug 1 1852	Aug 31 1852	Aug mail contained 4,000 letters
Sep 1 1852	Sep 30 1852	
Oct 1 1852	Oct 31 1852	mail arrived in Independence on Oct 29

APPENDIX D - CENTRAL OVERLAND TRIP LIST, 1850-1861

DIVISION 1 - Woodson Contract (Aug 1, 1850 to Jun 1, 1854) - EASTBOUND Salt Lake City to Missouri, Schedule Dates / Actual (cont.)		
Dep Date Salt Lake City	Arv Date Independence	Notes on Actual Trip Times
Nov 1 1852	Nov 30 1852	F. Little carried mail to Laramie on Nov 10, due to heavy snow on the Plains, the mail did not leave Laramie until Jan 12, and arrived on Feb 4, Figure 7-5 was carried in this mail
Dec 1 1852	Dec 31 1852	mail carrier was forced to return because of mountain snows, so the mail was routed westward to San Pedro around Jan 31, from California it was sent east by steamships via Panama to New York on Mar 16
Jan 1 1853	Jan 31 1853	mail routed westward via San Pedro, California
Feb 1 1853	Feb 28 1853	mail routed westward via San Pedro, California
Mar 1 1853	Mar 31 1853	mail routed westward via San Pedro, California
Apr 1 1853	Apr 30 1853	F. Little carried mail to Laramie, Hobbs left Laramie on Apr 16 and arrived in Independence on May 15
May 1 1853	May 31 1853	C.F. Decker carried mail to Laramie, W. Allison left Laramie on May 13 and arrived in Independence on May 25
Jun 1 1853	Jun 30 1853	
Jul 1 1853	Jul 31 1853	
Aug 1 1853	Aug 31 1853	
Sept 1 1853	Sep 30 1853	mail arrived in Independence on Sep 28
Oct 1 1853	Oct 31 1853	
Nov 1 1853	Nov 30 1853	mail arrived in Independence on Nov 29
Dec 1 1853	Dec 31 1853	mail routed westward via San Pedro, California, J.H. Jones carried the Dec 24 Fort Laramie mail to Austin, Iowa on Feb 17
Jan 1 1854	Jan 31 1854	mail routed westward via San Pedro, California
Feb 1 1854	Feb 28 1854	mail routed westward via San Pedro, California. Steamer <i>Goliab</i> arrived Mar 9 in San Francisco from San Pedro with news from Salt Lake to Feb 2 and from Los Angeles to Mar 4
Mar 1 1854	Mar 31 1854	mail routed westward via San Pedro, California
Apr 1 1854	Apr 30 1854	mail arrived in Independence on May 3
May 1 1854	May 31 1854	mail arrived in Independence in early Jun
Jun 1 1854	Jun 30 1854	mail arrived in Independence on Jun 29

APPENDIX D - CENTRAL OVERLAND TRIP LIST, 1850-1861

DIVISION 1 - Woodson Contract (Aug 1, 1850 to Jun 1, 1854) - WESTBOUND Salt Lake City to Missouri, Schedule Dates / Actual		
Dep Date Independence	Arv Date Salt Lake City	Notes on Actual Trip Times
Aug 1 1850	Aug 31 1850	Thomas D. Scoggins carried the first mail to Salt Lake on Sep 9
Sept 1 1850	Sep 30 1850	Milligen arrived in Salt Lake on Oct 8
Oct 1 1850	Oct 31 1850	mail arrived in Salt Lake on Nov 9
Nov 1 1850	Nov 30 1850	
Dec 31 1850	Dec 3 1 1850	mail carrier W.H. Arnold arrived in Salt Lake on Mar 7
Jan 1 1851	Jan 31 1851	Powell to Fort Laramie on Feb 8, Hackard left Laramie on Feb 11, and arrived in Salt Lake in early April
Feb 1 1851	Feb 28 1851	mail arrived in Salt Lake on Apr 3
Mar 1 1851	Mar 31 1851	forced to return to Independence due to weather, held until April mail departure, which arrived in Salt Lake City on May 24
Apr 1 1851	Apr 30 1851	R.S. Phelps arrived in Salt Lake on May 24
May 1 1851	May 31 1851	Jarvis Streeter arrived in Salt Lake on May 28
Jun 1 1851	Jun 30 1851	
Jul 1 1851	Jul 31 1851	
Aug 1 1851	Aug 31 1851	Feramorz Little began carrying mails on the Laramie -Salt Lake segment
Sept 1 1851	Sep 30 1851	mail carrier C.F. Decker
Oct 1 1851	Oct 31 1851	Feramorz Little left Laramie on Oct 15 and arrived Nov 3
Nov 1 1851	Nov 30 1851	mail arrived in Salt Lake on Nov 29
Dec 1 1851	Dec 31 1851	mail arrived in Salt Lake on Jan 29 1852
Jan 1 1852	Jan 31 1852	mail carrier E.K. Hanks arrived in Salt Lake on Feb 22
Feb 1 1852	Feb 29 1852	mail held at Laramie due to impassible snows, John Green brought Feb and Mar mails from Laramie to Salt Lake on Apr 3
Mar 1 1852	Mar 31 1852	John Green arrived in Salt Lake on Apr 3
Apr 1 1852	Apr 30 1852	

APPENDIX D - CENTRAL OVERLAND TRIP LIST, 1850-1861

DIVISION 1 - Woodson Contract (Aug 1, 1850 to Jun 1, 1854) - WESTBOUND Salt Lake City to Missouri, Schedule Dates / Actual (cont.)		
Dep Date Independence	Arv Date Salt Lake City	Notes on Actual Trip Times
May 1 1852	May 31 1852	mail carrier C.F. Decker arrived in Salt Lake on Jun 5
Jun 1 1852	Jun 30 1852	
Jul 1 1852	Jul 31 1852	mail arrived in Salt Lake on Jul 28
Aug 1 1852	Aug 31 1852	mail arrived in Salt Lake on Aug 26
Sept 1 1852	Sept 30 1852	C.F. Decker arrived in Salt Lake on Sep 26
Oct 1 1852	Oct 31 1852	Figure 7-5 was carried in this mail
Nov 1 1852	Nov 30 1852	mail reached Fort Laramie on Nov 30, Feramorz Little left Laramie on Dec 1 and arrived in Salt Lake on Jan 20
Dec 1 1852	Dec 31 1852	no report for this mail, trip canceled?
Jan 1 1853	Jan 31 1853	no report for this mail, trip canceled?
Feb 1 1853	Feb 28 1853	no report for this mail, trip canceled?
Mar 1 1853	Mar 31 1853	no report for this mail, trip canceled?
Apr 1 1853	Apr 30 1853	mail arrived in Salt Lake on May 7
May 1 1853	May 31 1853	W. Allison to Laramie on May 11, C.F. Decker to Salt Lake on May 29
Jun 1 1853	Jun 30 1853	mail arrived in Salt Lake on Jun 25
Jul 1 1853	Jul 31 1853	mail arrived in Salt Lake on Jul 21
Aug 1 1853	Aug 31 1853	
Sept 1 1853	Sept 30 1853	
Oct 1 1853	Oct 31 1853	mail carrier E.K. Hanks
Nov 1 1853	Nov 30 1853	mail arrived in Salt Lake on Dec 25
Dec 1 1853	Dec 31 1853	no report for this mail, trip canceled?
Jan 1 1854	Jan 31 1854	no report for this mail, trip canceled?
Feb 1 1854	Feb 28 1854	mail arrived in Salt Lake on Mar 1
Mar 1 1854	Mar 31 1854	no report for this mail, trip canceled?
Apr 1 1854	Apr 30 1854	
May 1 1854	May 31 1854	
Jun 1 1854	Jun 30 1854	

APPENDIX D - CENTRAL OVERLAND TRIP LIST, 1850-1861

DIVISION 1 - Magraw Contract (Jul 1, 1854 to Nov 30, 1856) - EASTBOUND Salt Lake City to Missouri, Schedule Dates / Actual		
Dep Date Salt Lake City	Arv Date Independence	Notes on Actual Trip Times
Jul 1 1854	Jul 31 1854	Erastes Snow left on July 8
Aug 1 1854	Aug 31 1854	William Allison arrived in Independence on Aug 27, Figure 7-9 was carried in this mail to Fort Laramie around Aug 13
Sep 1 1854	Sep 30 1854	Magraw arrived on Sep 18
Oct 1 1854	Oct 31 1854	
Nov 1 1854	Nov 30 1854	mail party attacked and killed by Indians on Nov 13, 22 miles west of Fort Laramie, some scattered mail recovered and taken to Independence on Dec 5
Dec 1 1854	Dec 31 1854	arrived in Independence on Dec 30
Jan 1 1855	Jan 31 1855	John Y. Green left on Jan 2 and returned to Salt Lake on Jan 18 reporting the trail unsafe for travel, mails held until Feb mail?
Feb 1 1855	Feb 28 1855	
Mar 1 1855	Mar 31 1855	arrived in Independence on Apr 20
Apr 1 1855	Apr 30 1855	
May 1 1855	May 31 1855	held until Jun mail, arrived in Independence on Jun 28
Jun 1 1855	Jun 30 1855	Hudspeth arrived in Independence on Jun 28
Jul 1 1855	Jul 31 1855	Jesse Jones left on Jul 2 and arrived in Independence on Aug 19
Aug 1 1855	Aug 31 1855	
Sep 1 1855	Sep 30 1855	Figure 7-7 was carried in this mail
Oct 1 1855	Oct 31 1855	Charles Gilkey arrived in Independence on Oct 31
Nov 1 1855	Nov 30 1855	
Dec 1 1855	Dec 31 1855	held until Feb mail which arrived on Feb 28
Jan 1 1856	Jan 31 1856	J.C. Dotson was unable to get through and returned to Salt Lake on Jan 4, mail was held until Feb mail which arrived on Feb 28
Feb 1 1856	Feb 29 1856	George Richmond arrived on Feb 28
Mar 1 1856	Mar 31 1856	left on March 12 and arrived around Apr 27
Apr 1 1856	Apr 30 1856	left on April 10 and arrived in Independence around May 29
May 1 1856	May 31 1856	
Jun 1 1856	Jun 30 1856	mail left on Jun 2
Jul 1 1856	Jul 31 1856	
Aug 1 1856	Aug 31 1856	arrived in Independence on Aug 28
Sep 1 1856	Sep 30 1856	Feramorz Little left on Sep 10
Oct 1 1856	Oct 31 1856	left Oct 2 and arrived in Independence on Nov 2
Nov 1 1856	(no trip)	Magraw's contract annulled effective Nov 30 from Independence

APPENDIX D - CENTRAL OVERLAND TRIP LIST, 1850-1861

DIVISION 1 - Magraw Contract (Jul 1, 1854 to Nov 30, 1856) - WESTBOUND Salt Lake City to Missouri, Schedule Dates / Actual		
Dep Date Independence	Arv Date Salt Lake City	Notes on Actual Trip Times
Jul 1 1854	Jul 31 1854	Magraw arrived in Salt Lake on Jul 31
Aug 1 1854	Aug 31 1854	arrived in Salt Lake on Aug 31
Sep 1 1854	Sep 30 1854	arrived in Salt Lake on Sep 28
Oct 1 1854	Oct 31 1854	arrived in Salt Lake on Oct 30
Nov 1 1854	Nov 30 1854	arrived in Salt Lake on Dec 1
Dec 1 1854	Dec 31 1854	held until Jan mail, arrived in Salt Lake on Feb 5
Jan 1 1855	Jan 31 1855	arrived in Salt Lake on Feb 5
Feb 1 1855	Feb 28 1855	arrived in Salt Lake on Mar 16
Mar 1 1855	Mar 31 1855	held at Fort Kearny and combined with Apr mail, arrived on May 12
Apr 1 1855	Apr 30 1855	Hudspeth arrived in Salt Lake on May 12
May 1 1855	May 31 1855	arrived in Salt Lake on Jun 5
Jun 1 1855	Jun 30 1855	arrived in Salt Lake on Jul 9
Jul 1 1855	Jul 31 1855	Charles Gilkey arrived in Salt Lake on Aug 2
Aug 1 1855	Aug 31 1855	arrived in Salt Lake on Sep 5
Sep 1 1855	Sep 30 1855	held at Fort Kearny and combined with Oct mail, arrived in Salt Lake on Nov 26
Oct 1 1855	Oct 31 1855	J.M. Hockaday left on Oct 2 and arrived in Salt Lake on Nov 26 with Sep and Oct mails
Nov 1 1855	Nov 30 1855	held until Apr 1856 mail, arrived in Salt Lake on May 1
Dec 1 1855	Dec 31 1855	held until Apr 1856 mail, arrived in Salt Lake on May 1
Jan 1 1856	Jan 31 1856	held until Apr 1856 mail, arrived in Salt Lake on May 1
Feb 1 1856	Feb 29 1856	held until Apr 1856 mail, arrived in Salt Lake on May 1
Mar 1 1856	Mar 31 1856	held until Apr 1856 mail, arrived in Salt Lake on May 1
Apr 1 1856	Apr 30 1856	Maxwell arrived in Salt Lake on May 1 with Nov through Apr mails
May 1 1856	May 31 1856	arrived in Salt Lake on Jun 4
Jun 1 1856	Jun 30 1856	arrived in Salt Lake on Jun 28
Jul 1 1856	Jul 31 1856	arrived in Salt Lake on Jul 30
Aug 1 1856	Aug 31 1856	George Richmond arrived in Salt Lake on Aug 28
Sep 1 1856	Sep 30 1856	Maxwell arrived in Salt Lake on Oct 6
Oct 1 1856	Oct 31 1856	due to impassible snows, the Oct and Nov mails were held at the Platte River Bridge over the winter, arrived in Salt Lake City on Mar 24 1857
Nov 1 1856	Nov 30 1856	held at the Platte River Bridge over the winter, arrived in Salt Lake City on Mar 24 1857

APPENDIX D - CENTRAL OVERLAND TRIP LIST, 1850-1861

DIVISION 1 - Kimball Contract (Feb 2, 1857 to Jun 30, 1857) - EASTBOUND Salt Lake City to Missouri, Schedule Dates / Actual		
Dep Date Salt Lake City	Arv Date Independence	Notes on Actual Trip Times
Dec 10 1856	Feb 27 1857	Feramorz Little and E.K. Hanks carried the Nov and Dec 1856 Salt Lake mails on a single trip contract
Jan 7 1857	n/a	John Kerr, on single trip contract, was forced to return to Salt Lake on Jan 10 due to heavy snows, the mail was sent via California
Feb 2 1857	Feb 28 1857	Hickman left Feb 7 and arrived on Apr 11
Mar 2 1857	Mar 31 1857	O.P. Rockwell left Mar 3 and carried the mail to Fort Laramie, N. Groesbeck carried it to Independence
Apr 2 1857	Apr 30 1857	
May 2 1857	May 31 1857	
Jun 2 1857	Jun 30 1857	mail arrived on Jun 30
Jul 2 1857	n/a	John Murdock met advancing Federal troops east of Fort Laramie and returned to Salt Lake City on Jul 23 (Whall, page 106)

DIVISION 1 - Kimball Contract (Feb 2, 1857 to Jun 30, 1857) - WESTBOUND Salt Lake City to Missouri, Schedule Dates / Actual		
Dep Date Independence	Arv Date Salt Lake City	Notes
Mar 1 1857	31 Mar 1857	mails did not go for lack of carriers
Apr 1 1857	Apr 30 1857	mails did not go for lack of carriers
May 1 1857	May 31 1857	John Murdock carried the mail to Fort Laramie and O.P. Rockwell carried it to Salt Lake City on May 29, this was the first mail from Independence to Salt Lake since the Nov 1856 mail
Jun 1 1857	Jun 30 1857	Feramorz Little and E.K. Hanks on return trip from Washington, D.C. arrived in Salt Lake on Jun 23

DIVISION 1 - Miles Contract (Oct 1, 1857 to Mar 30, 1857) - COMBINED Between Utah and Missouri, Schedule Dates			
Dep Independence	Arrive Camp Scott, UT	Dep Camp Scott, UT	Arv Independence
Oct 1 1857	Nov 19 1857		
Nov 1 1857		Nov 29 1857	Dec 30 1857
Dec 1 1857		Dec 1 1857	
Jan 1 1858		Jan 5 1858	Feb 19 1858
Feb 1 1858		Feb 1 1858	
Mar 1 1858	Apr 12 1858	Mar 1 1858	
Apr 1 1858	May 17 1858	Apr 18 1858	Jun 4 1858
		May 23 1858	Jun 19 1858

APPENDIX D - CENTRAL OVERLAND TRIP LIST, 1850-1861

DIVISION 1 - Hockaday / COC&PPE Contracts (May 1, 1858 to Jun 30, 1861) - COMBINED Between Utah and Missouri, Combined Schedule Summary			
Period	Frequency	Departures	Trip Time
May 1 1858 to Jun 30 1859	Weekly	St Joseph every Saturday Salt Lake City every Saturday	22 days
Jul 1 1859 to Jun 30 1861	Bi-weekly	St Joseph every other Tuesday Salt Lake every other Friday	22 days

DIVISION 2 - First Chorpenning Contract (May 3, 1851 to June 30, 1854) - EASTBOUND California to Salt Lake City, Schedule Dates / Actual		
Dep Date Sacramento	Arv Date Salt Lake City	Notes on Actual Trip Times
May 10 1851	May 30 1851	Chorpenning left on May 3 and passed through Carson Valley on May 22, he arrived in Salt Lake on Jun 5
Jun 1 1851	Jun 30 1851	Figure 7-19 was carried in this mail, Woodward departed on Jun 2 and arrived in Salt Lake on Jul 2
Jul 1 1851	Jul 30 1851	arrived in Salt Lake on Jul 28
Aug 1 1851	Aug 30 1851	Henderson met Woodward going in the opposite direction on Aug 15 and was ordered to return to Carson Valley until the passage was safe, he arrived in Salt Lake on Sep 12
Sep 1 1851	Sep 30 1851	two members of the mail party were killed by Indians near Goose Creek, mail arrived in Salt Lake sometime after Oct 1
Oct 1 1851	Oct 30 1851	Chorpenning was delayed at Carson Valley for lack of men to carry it farther east, and arrived in Salt Lake sometime in early Nov
Nov 1 1851	Nov 30 1851	mail party with Woodward left Carson Valley on Nov 14 and was attacked and killed by Indians near Goose Creek, all mail was lost.
Dec 1 1851	Dec 30 1851	mail party failed to cross Carson Pass of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. Chorpenning sent the Dec mail together with the Jan mail via Los Angeles, arrived in Salt Lake on Mar 7
Jan 1 1852	Jan 30 1852	Luther Olds failed to cross Sierras and returned to Sacramento, Dec and Jan mails were sent via Los Angeles, and arrived in Salt Lake on Mar 7
Feb 1 1852	Feb 29 1852	Edson Cady left on Feb 2, crossed the Sierras via the Beckwourth Pass, and arrived in Salt Lake on Mar 25
Mar 1 1852	Mar 30 1852	mail was sent via Los Angeles and arrived in Salt Lake on Apr 21
Apr 1 1852	Apr 30 1852	mail party took weeks to cross Sierras, arrived in Carson Valley on May 15, they were overtaken by the May mail party and arrived in Salt Lake on Jun 13
May 1 1852	May 30 1852	Chorpenning led the May mail party and arrived in Salt Lake with the Apr and May mails on Jun 13
Jun 1 1852	Jun 30 1852	George Leslie departed on Jun 2 and arrived in Salt Lake on Jul 8
Jul 1 1852	Jul 30 1852	arrived in Salt Lake on Jul 28

APPENDIX D - CENTRAL OVERLAND TRIP LIST, 1850-1861

DIVISION 2 - First Chorpensing Contract (May 3, 1851 to June 30, 1854) - EASTBOUND California to Salt Lake City, Schedule Dates / Actual (cont.)		
Dep Date Sacramento	Arv Date Salt Lake City	Notes on Actual Trip Times
Aug 1 1852	Aug 30 1852	departed on Aug 2 and arrived in Salt Lake on Aug 28, Figure 7-20 was carried in this mail
Sep 1 1852	Sep 30 1852	arrived in Salt Lake on Oct 1
Oct 1 1852	Oct 30 1852	Orson Burlingame and Virgil Merrill departed on Oct 7
Nov 1 1852	Nov 30 1852	departed around Nov 5 and arrived in Salt Lake on Dec 9
Dec 1 1852	Dec 30 1852	on Nov 14 1852 Chorpensing requested permission to send the winter mails via Los Angeles and request was approved by Special Agent Goggin, the Dec mail was sent via San Pedro and Los Angeles to Salt Lake
Jan 1 1853	Jan 30 1853	mail sent via San Pedro and Los Angeles
Feb 1 1853	Feb 28 1853	mail sent via San Pedro and Los Angeles, arrived in Salt Lake on Mar 17
Mar 1 1853	Mar 30 1853	mail sent via San Pedro and Los Angeles? (E.L. Barnard left Sacramento on Mar 16 and arrived in Salt Lake in Apr)

DIVISION 2 - First Chorpensing Contract (May 3, 1851 to June 30, 1854) - WESTBOUND California to Salt Lake City, Schedule Dates / Actual		
Dep Date Salt Lake City	Arv Date Sacramento	Notes on Actual Trip Times
Jul 1 1851	Jul 30 1851	Figure 7-18 was carried in this mail, mail party was attacked by Indians and waited for a military escort from Carson Valley, arrived in Sacramento around Aug 3
Aug 1 1851	Aug 30 1851	Woodward arrived in Sacramento on Aug 31
Sep 1 1851	Sep 30 1851	Mail arrived in Sacramento on Oct 1
Oct 1 1851	Oct 30 1851	H.H. Jamieson party was attacked by several hundred Indians just west of the Goose Creek headwaters, mail was lost, but the party reached Sacramento on Nov 1
Nov 1 1851	Nov 30 1851	Samuel Hanson arrived in Sacramento on Jan 9, via Beckwourth Pass
Dec 1 1851	Dec 30 1851	probably unable to cross the mountains due to heavy snow, held until the May 1852 mail, which arrived in Sacramento on Jun 3
Jan 1 1852	Jan 30 1852	probably unable to cross the mountains, held until the May mail
Feb 1 1852	Feb 29 1852	probably unable to cross the mountains, held until the May mail
Mar 1 1852	Mar 30 1852	probably unable to cross the mountains, held until the May mail
Apr 1 1852	Apr 30 1852	Edson Cady found the remains of Woodward and returned to Salt Lake, mail held until May, and arrived in Sacramento on Jun 3
May 1 1852	30 May 1852	John R. Smith arrived in Sacramento on Jun 3 with the Dec-May mails
Jun 1 1852	30 Jun 1852	
Jul 1 1852	30 Jul 1852	Chorpensing arrived in Sacramento around Jul 22
Aug 1 1852	30 Aug 1852	arrived in Sacramento on Aug 29

APPENDIX D - CENTRAL OVERLAND TRIP LIST, 1850-1861

DIVISION 2 - First Chorpenning Contract (May 3, 1851 to Jun 30, 1854) - WESTBOUND Salt Lake City to California, Schedule Dates / Actual		
Dep Date Salt Lake City	Arv Date Sacramento	Notes on Actual Trip Times
Sep 1 1852	Sep 30 1852	arrived in Sacramento on Sep 30
Oct 1 1852	Oct 30 1852	
Nov 1 1852	Nov 30 1852	Alphonse Borland and John Adams arrived in Sacramento on Jan 7
Dec 1 1852	Dec 30 1852	mail party returned to Salt Lake on Dec 9 due to impassible mountain snows, Dec mail sent with Jan mail via Los Angeles and San Pedro
Jan 1 1853	Jan 30 1853	Dec and Jan mails sent together via Los Angeles and San Pedro
Feb 1 1853	Feb 28 1853	mail sent via Los Angeles and San Pedro
Mar 1 1853	(no trip)	first Chorpenning mail contract annulled, effective March 1853

DIVISION 2 - Blanchard Contract (Mar 15, 1853 to Jul 9, 1853 - EASTBOUND California to Salt Lake City, Schedule Dates / Actual		
Dep Date Sacramento	Arv Date Salt Lake City	Notes on Actual Trip Times
Mar 15 1853	Apr 14 1853	E.L. Barnard departed on March 16 and arrived sometime in April
Apr 15 1853	May 14 1853	arrived in Salt Lake on May 14
May 15 1853	Jun 14 1853	arrived in Salt Lake on Jun 7
Jun 15 1853	Jul 14 1853	arrived in Salt Lake on Jul 8

DIVISION 2 - Blanchard Contract (Mar 15, 1853 to Jul 9, 1853 - WESTBOUND Salt Lake City to California, Schedule Dates / Actual		
Dep Date Salt Lake City	Arv Date Sacramento	Notes
Mar 15 1853	Apr 14 1853	E.K. Hanks departed March 19 and took mail via Los Angeles
Apr 15 1853	May 14 1853	
May 15 1853	Jun 14 1853	E.L. Barnard arrived in Sacramento on Jun 10
Jun 15 1853	Jul 14 1853	mail departed on Jun 18 and arrived in Sacramento on Jul 9
Jul 15 1853	Aug 14 1853	Blanchard's last mail departed on Jul 9

APPENDIX D - CENTRAL OVERLAND TRIP LIST, 1850-1861

DIVISION 2 - First Chorpenning Contract Resumed (Jul 1, 1853 to Jun 30, 1854) - EASTBOUND California to Salt Lake City, Schedule Dates / Actual		
Dep Date Sacramento	Arv Date Salt Lake City	Notes on Actual Trip Times
Jul 1 1853	Jul 30 1853	arrived in Salt Lake on Jul 25
Aug 1 1853	Aug 30 1853	
Sep 1 1853	Sep 30 1853	
Oct 1 1853	Oct 30 1853	arrived in Salt Lake on Oct 21
Nov 1 1853	Nov 30 1853	mail sent via San Pedro and Los Angeles
Dec 1 1853	Dec 30 1853	mail sent via San Pedro and Los Angeles
Jan 1 1854	Jan 30 1854	mail sent via San Pedro and Los Angeles
Feb 1 1854	Feb 28 1854	mail departed five days early on Jan 27 and sent via San Pedro and Los Angeles, arrived in Salt Lake on March 1
Mar 1 1854	Mar 30 1854	mail sent via San Pedro and Los Angeles
Apr 1 1854	Apr 30 1854	mail sent via San Pedro and Los Angeles. arrived on May 5
May 1 1854	May 30 1854	departed on May 2 and arrived in Salt Lake on Jun 3
Jun 1 1854	Jun 30 1854	

DIVISION 2 - First Chorpenning Contract Resumed (May 3, 1851 to Jun 30, 1854) - WESTBOUND Salt Lake City to California, Schedule Dates / Actual		
Dep Date Salt Lake City	Arv Date Sacramento	Notes on Actual Trip Times
Aug 1 1853	Aug 30 1853	mail arrived in Sacramento on Aug 25
Sep 1 1853	Sep 30 1853	mail arrived in Sacramento on Sep 28
Oct 1 1853	Oct 30 1853	
Nov 1 1853	Nov 30 1853	mail sent via Los Angeles and San Pedro, arrived on Dec 23
Dec 1 1853	Dec 30 1853	mail sent via Los Angeles and San Pedro, arrived on Jan 25
Jan 1 1854	Jan 30 1854	mail sent via Los Angeles and San Pedro, arrived on March 3?
Feb 1 1854	Feb 28 1854	departed on Feb 4 and sent via Los Angeles to Sacramento on Mar 10, <i>Goliath</i> arrived on Mar 9 in San Francisco from San Pedro with news from Salt Lake to Feb 2 and Los Angeles to March 4, Figure 8-22 was carried on this trip
Mar 1 1854	Mar 30 1854	mail departed on March 3 and sent via Los Angeles and San Pedro
Apr 1 1854	Apr 30 1854	mail sent via Los Angeles and San Pedro. arrived on May 17
May 1 1854	May 30 1854	mail sent via Los Angeles and San Pedro. arrived on Jun 25
Jun 1 1854	Jun 30 1854	mail departed on Jun 4 and arrived in Sacramento on Jul 2

APPENDIX D - CENTRAL OVERLAND TRIP LIST, 1850-1861

DIVISION 2 - Second Chorpenning Contract (Jul 1, 1854 to Jun 30, 1858) - EASTBOUND California to Salt Lake City, Schedule Dates / Actual			
Dep Date San Francisco	Dep Date Los Angeles	Arv Date Salt Lake	Notes on Actual Trip Times
Jul 15 1854	Jul 20 1854	Aug 16 1864	departed from San Diego on Jul 20; left San Bernardino on Jul 27 and arrived in Salt Lake on Aug 14. Leonard Conger was attacked near Death Valley and one of two mailbags lost
Aug 12 1854	Aug 20 1854	Sep 16 1854	departed from San Diego and arrived on Sep 17
Sep 9 1854	Sep 20 1854	Oct 17 1854	departed from San Diego
Oct 7 1854	Oct 20 1854	Nov 16 1854	departed from San Diego
Oct 21 1854	Nov 1 1854	Nov 28 1854	first trip from San Pedro, departures now on the first of each month. Left San Bernardino on Nov 14 and arrived on Nov 28
Nov 25 1854	Dec 1 1854	Dec 28 1854	arrived on Dec 27, Figure 7-21 carried on this trip
Dec 30 1854	Jan 1 1855	Jan 28 1855	arrived on Jan 27
Jan 27 1855	Feb 1 1855	Feb 28 1855	arrived Feb 27
Feb 24 1855	Mar 1 1855	Mar 28 1855	arrived Mar 25
Mar 29 1855	Apr 1 1855	Apr 28 1855	arrived Apr 26
Apr 29 1855	May 1 1855	May 28 1855	L.S. Conger arrived May 25
(none)	Jun 1 1855	Jun 28 1855	arrived Jun 28
Jun 27 1855	Jul 1 1855	Jul 28 1855	arrived Jul 21, a week ahead of schedule
Jul 28 1855	Aug 1 1855	Aug 28 1855	arrived Aug 27
(none)	Sep 1 1855	Sep 28 1855	
Sep 29 1855	Oct 1 1855	Oct 28 1855	left San Bernardino on Oct 7 and arrived on Oct 26
Oct 24 1855	Nov 1 1855	Nov 28 1855	left Los Angeles on Oct 27, San Bernardino on Nov 1 and arrived on Nov 23
Dec 1 1855	Dec 5 1855	Dec 28 1855	trip was delayed five days at Los Angeles for the arrival of the San Francisco mail. David Savage arrived in Salt Lake on Dec 30. Figure 7-23 was carried on this trip
Dec 28 1855	Jan 1 1856	Jan 28 1856	arrived Jan 28
Jan 30 1856	Feb 1 1856	Feb 28 1856	L.S. Conger arrived Mar 1
Feb 23 1856	Mar 1 1856	Mar 28 1856	arrived Apr 2
Mar 29 1856	Apr 1 1856	Apr 28 1856	arrived Apr 28
Apr 26 1856	May 1 1856	May 28 1856	arrived May 24
May 17 1856	Jun 1 1856	Jun 28 1856	arrived Jun 24
Jul 1 1856	Jul 5 1856	Aug 1 1856	departures from Los Angeles were on the 5 th of each month starting Jul 1856
	Aug 5 1856	Sep 1 1856	left San Bernardino on Aug 9 and arrived on Sep 1

APPENDIX D - CENTRAL OVERLAND TRIP LIST, 1850-1861

DIVISION 2 - Second Chorpenning Contract (Jul 1, 1854 to Jun 30, 1858) - EASTBOUND California to Salt Lake City, Schedule Dates / Actual (cont.)			
Dep Date San Francisco	Dep Date Los Angeles	Arv Date Salt Lake	Notes on Actual Trip Times
	Sep 5 1856	Oct 2 1856	arrived Sep 29
	Oct 5 1856	Nov 1 1856	arrived Nov 1
	Nov 5 1856	Dec 2 1856	arrived Dec 6
	Dec 5 1856	Jan 1 1857	arrived Jan 6
	Jan 5 1857	Feb 1 1857	arrived Feb 4
	Feb 5 1857	Mar 4 1857	arrived Mar 8
	Mar 5 1857	Apr 1 1857	departed San Bernardino on Mar 8 and arrived on Apr 3
	Apr 5 1857	May 2 1857	arrived May 2
	May 5 1857	Jun 1 1857	
	Jun 5 1857	Jul 2 1857	arrived Jul 1
	Jul 5 1857	Aug 1 1857	arrived Aug 2
	Aug 5 1857	Sep 1 1857	arrived Sep 2
	Sep 5 1857	Oct 2 1857	
	Oct 5 1857	Nov 1 1857	arrived Nov 2
	Nov 5 1857	Dec 2 1857	arrived Dec 3
	Dec 5 1857	Jan 1 1858	arrived Jan 3
	Jan 5 1858	Feb 1 1858	arrived Feb 3
	Feb 5 1858	Mar 4 1858	arrived Mar 3
	Mar 5 1858	Apr 1 1858	arrived Apr 2
	Apr 5 1858	May 2 1858	arrived May 4
	May 5 1858	Jun 1 1858	John Hunt arrived at Provo on Jun 1, due to evacuation of Salt Lake City from May 10 to Jun 30, 1858
	Jun 5 1858	Jul 2 1858	Daniel Taft arrived at Provo on Jun 27

APPENDIX D - CENTRAL OVERLAND TRIP LIST, 1850-1861

DIVISION 2 - Second Chorpenning Contract (Jul 1, 1854 to Jun 30, 1858) - WESTBOUND California to Salt Lake City, Schedule Dates / Actual			
Dep Salt Lake	Arv Los Angeles	Arv San Francisco	Notes on Actual Trip Times
Jul 20 1854	Aug 16 1854	Aug 21 1854	mail terminus was San Diego
Aug 20 1854	Sep 16 1854	Sep 18 1854	mail terminus was San Diego
Sep 20 1854	Oct 17 1854	Oct 30 1854	departed Sep 21, mail terminus San Diego
Oct 20 1854	Nov 16 1854	Nov 20 1854	mail terminus was San Diego
(Nov 1 1854)	(no mail)	(none)	first trip from San Pedro (port of Los Angeles) and new departures on the 1st of each month. No Nov 1 mail from Salt Lake since the previous mail was only 11 days earlier
Dec 1 1854	Dec 28 1854	Jan 1 1855	mail left Dec 4
Jan 1 1855	Jan 28 1855		departed Jan 5, Figure 7-8 was carried on this trip
Feb 1 1855	Feb 28 1855		
Mar 1 1855	Mar 28 1855		John Williams arrived Los Angeles on Mar 28
Apr 1 1855	Apr 28 1855		
May 1 1855	May 28 1855		
Jun 1 1855	Jun 28 1855		
Jul 1 1855	Jul 28 1855		mail left Jul 2
Aug 1 1855	Aug 28 1855		
Sep 1 1855	Sep 28 1855		
Oct 1 1855	Oct 28 1855		
Nov 1 1855	Nov 28 1855		
Dec 1 1855	Dec 28 1855		
Jan 1 1856	Jan 28 1856		
Feb 1 1856	Feb 28 1856		arrived Los Angeles on Feb 27, Figure 7-24 was carried on this trip
Mar 1 1856	Mar 28 1856	Apr 2 1856	left Los Angeles on Mar 29 and San Pedro on April 3, on April 20, the <i>Sea Bird</i> arrived in San Francisco
Apr 1 1856	Apr 28 1856		
May 1 1856	May 28 1856		arrived in Los Angeles May 22
Jun 1 1856	Jun 28 1856		arrived in Los Angeles Jun 25
Jul 5 1856	Aug 1 1856		departures on 5 th of each month, starting Jul 1856, arrived in Los Angeles on Jul 25
Aug 5 1856	Sep 1 1856		arrived in Los Angeles Sep 2
Sep 5 1856	Oct 2 1856		
Oct 5 1856	Nov 1 1856		
Nov 5 1856	Dec 2 1856		
Dec 5 1856	Jan 1 1857		

APPENDIX D - CENTRAL OVERLAND TRIP LIST, 1850-1861

DIVISION 2 - Second Chorpensing Contract (Jul 1, 1854 to Jun 30, 1858) - WESTBOUND California to Salt Lake City, Schedule Dates / Actual (cont)			
Dep Salt Lake	Arv Los Angeles	Arv San Francisco	Notes on Actual Trip Times
Jan 5 1857	Feb 1 1857		Figure 7-11 was carried on this trip
Feb 5 1857	Mar 4 1857		arrived in Los Angeles on Mar 10, delayed by attack on travelers ahead on Santa Clara River
Mar 5 1857	Apr 1 1857		
Apr 5 1857	May 2 1857		
May 5 1857	Jun 1 1857		
Jun 5 1857	Jul 2 1857		
Jul 5 1857	Aug 1 1857		
Aug 5 1857	Sep 1 1857		arrived in Los Angeles on Sep 4
Sep 5 1857	Oct 2 1857	Oct 12 1857	Oct 12 <i>Daily Alta California</i> reported news by the Independent Line <i>Senator</i> dates from Salt Lake of Sep 5, San Bernardino of Oct 4, Los Angeles of Oct 9 and San Diego of Oct 10, brought reports of the Mountain Meadows massacre
Oct 5 1857	Nov 1 1857		John Hunt arrived in Los Angeles Oct 30
Nov 5 1857	Dec 2 1857		arrived in Los Angeles on Dec 4
Dec 5 1857	Jan 1 1858		departed on Dec 6 and arrived in Los Angeles on Jan 5
Jan 5 1858	Feb 1 1858		departed on Jan 7 and arrived in Los Angeles on Feb 3, missed steamer to San Francisco, arrived Feb 15
Feb 5 1858	Mar 4 1858		departed on Feb 6 and arrived in Los Angeles on Mar 6
Mar 5 1858	Apr 1 1858		
Apr 5 1858	May 2 1858		departed on Apr 7 and arrived in Los Angeles on May 4
May 5 1858	Jun 1 1858		arrived in Los Angeles on Jun 1
Jun 5 1858	(no trip)		evacuation of Salt Lake City meant no mail

APPENDIX D - CENTRAL OVERLAND TRIP LIST, 1850-1861

DIVISION 2 - Third Chorpenning Contract (Jul 1, 1858 to May 10, 1860) - COMBINED Between Placerville and Salt Lake City, Schedule of Departures			
Period	Frequency	Departures	Schedule Trip Times
July 1, 1858 to March 1859	Weekly	Placerville every Saturday Salt Lake every Monday	16 days
March 1859 to April 30, 1859	Weekly	Placerville every Saturday Salt Lake every Tuesday	12 days
May 1, 1859 to June 30, 1859	Weekly	Placerville every Wednesday Salt Lake every Wednesday	12 days
July 1, 1859 to May 10, 1860	Bi-weekly	Placerville every other Wednesday Salt Lake every other Wednesday	9 days

DIVISION 2 - COC&PPE (Jun 1, 1860 to Jun 30, 1861) - COMBINED Between Placerville and Salt Lake City, Schedule of Departures	
Every other Wednesday westward from Salt Lake City to Placerville in 9 days	
Every other Wednesday eastward from Placerville to Salt Lake City in 9 days	

DIVISION 3 - Brown & Torrance Contract (Jul 1, 1851 to June 30, 1854) - EASTBOUND Oregon to Salt Lake City, Schedule Dates / Actual		
Dep Date Dalles	Arv Date Salt Lake City	Notes on Actual Trip Times
Jul 1 1851	Jul 30 1851	L.G. Torrence carried the first mail from Portland, Oregon
Sep 1 1851	Sep 30 1851	Figure 7-34 was carried on this trip
Nov 1 1851	Nov 30 1851	arrived in Salt Lake on Dec 2
Jan 1 1852	Jan 30 1852	trip not completed due to heavy mountain snows
Mar 1 1852	Mar 30 1852	John R. Bisbee arrived in Salt Lake on Apr 10
May 1 1852	May 30 1852	no report on this trip
Jul 1 1852	Jul 30 1852	arrived in Salt Lake on Jul 31
Sep 1 1852	Sep 30 1852	Torrence (?) arrived in Salt Lake on Sep 28
Nov 1 1852	Nov 30 1852	arrived in Salt Lake on Dec 12
Jan 1 1853	Jan 30 1853	not completed?
Mar 1 1853	Mar 30 1853	not completed?
May 1 1853	May 30 1853	arrived in Salt Lake on Jun 1. Mail had through letters to the U.S.
Jul 1 1853	Jul 30 1853	no report on this trip,
Sep 1 1853	Sep 30 1853	no report on this trip.
Nov 1 1853	Nov 30 1853	no report on this trip.
Jan 1 1854	Jan 30 1854	
Mar 1 1854	Mar 30 1854	
May 1 1854	May 30 1854	

APPENDIX D - CENTRAL OVERLAND TRIP LIST, 1850-1861

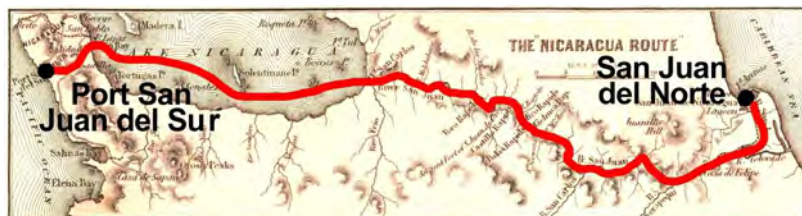
DIVISION 3 - Brown & Torrance Contract (Jul 1, 1851 to June 30, 1854) - WESTBOUND From Salt Lake City to Dalles, Schedule Dates / Actual		
Dep Date Salt Lake City	Arv Date Dalles	Notes on Actual Trip Times
Aug 1 1851	Aug 30 1851	L.G. Torrence arrived in The Dalles on Aug 25
Oct 1 1851	Oct 30 1851	
Dec 1 1851	Dec 30 1851	mail departed Salt Lake Dec 2
Feb 1 1852	Feb 29 1852	no report of this trip
Apr 1 1852	Apr 30 1852	Torrance in 15 days, dates not reported
Jun 1 1852	Jun 30 1852	
Aug 1 1852	Aug 30 1852	
Oct 1 1852	Oct 30 1852	
Dec 1 1852	Dec 30 1852	trip not completed, left Dec 13 and returned to Sal Lake before Jan 8
Feb 1 1853	Feb 28 1853	
Apr 1 1853	Apr 30 1853	
Jun 1 1853	Jun 30 1853	
Aug 1 1853	Aug 30 1853	
Oct 1 1853	Oct 30 1853	Torrance arrived in Nov
Dec 1 1853	Dec 30 1853	
Feb 1 1854	Feb 28 1854	left Feb 2 arrived before Mar 18
Apr 1 1854	Apr 30 1854	
Jun 1 1854	Jun 30 1854	

Appendix E

Via Nicaragua Sailings, 1851 to 1856

This appendix includes sailing information for steamships carrying non post office mails sent via Nicaragua between San Francisco and New York City (see Chapter 8). Covers sent on this route lack San Francisco post office postmarks and may often be identified by New York entry postmarks or express company markings consistent with such use.

Abbreviations - Places
ASP - Aspinwall
HAV - Havana, Cuba
KIN - Kingston, Jamaica
NO - New Orleans
NYC - New York City
SFC - San Francisco
SJN - San Juan del Norte, Nicaragua
SJS - San Juan del Sur, Nicaragua



APPENDIX E - VIA NICARAGUA SAILINGS, 1851-1856

1851 Eastbound Trips Via Nicaragua						
Dep SFC	Steamer	Arv SJS	Dep SJN	Steamer	Arv NYC	Notes
Jul 14 1851	<i>Pacific</i>	Jul 29	Aug 4	<i>Prometheus</i>	Aug 13	
Jul 31	<i>Independence</i>	Aug 16	Aug 26	<i>Prometheus</i>	Sep 4	
Sep 6	<i>Pacific</i>	Sep 20	Sep 26	<i>Prometheus</i>	Oct 4	
Oct 4	<i>Independence</i>	Oct 19	Oct 26	<i>Prometheus</i>	Nov 6	via HAV Oct 30 / Nov 1
Oct 15	<i>North America</i>	Oct 26	Nov 8	<i>Daniel Webster</i>	Nov 16	
Nov 1	<i>Pacific</i>	Nov 16	Nov 23	<i>Prometheus</i>	Dec 1	
Nov 16	<i>Gold Hunter</i>	?	Dec 9	<i>Daniel Webster</i>	Dec 19	via HAV Dec 13/14
Dec 1	<i>Independence</i>	?	Dec 21	<i>Prometheus</i>	Dec 29	
Dec 15	<i>North America</i>	?	Jan 1	<i>Daniel Webster</i>	Jan 11	via HAV Jan 6
1852 Eastbound Trips Via Nicaragua						
Jan 2 1852	<i>Pacific</i>	?	Jan 19	<i>Prometheus</i>	Jan 30	via HAV Jan 24/25
Feb 2	<i>North America</i>	?	Feb 19	<i>Prometheus</i>	Feb 28	
Feb 14	<i>Pacific</i>	Feb 27	Mar 5	<i>Daniel Webster</i>	Mar 15	
Mar 1	<i>Independence</i>	Mar 17	Mar 25	<i>Prometheus</i>	Apr 3	
Mar 17	<i>New Orleans</i>		Apr 4	<i>Daniel Webster</i>	Apr 12	
Mar 23	<i>Monumental City</i>	Apr 13				
Apr 1	<i>Pacific</i>		Apr 19	<i>Northern Light</i>	Apr 27	via HAV Apr 23
Apr 16	<i>Independence</i>		May 8	<i>Daniel Webster</i>	May 16	
May 1			May 19	<i>Northern Light</i>	Jun 2	
May 14	<i>Pacific ?</i>		Jun 11	<i>Prometheus</i>	Jun 22	dates to May 19?
Jun 2	<i>Independence</i>	Jun 17				
Jun 3	<i>Pacific</i>	Jun 14	Jun 24	<i>Northern Light</i>	July 2	
Jul 3	<i>Pacific</i>	Jul 11	Jul 21	<i>Prometheus</i>	Jul 29	
Jul 16	<i>S.S. Lewis</i>		Jul 7	<i>Northern Light</i>	Aug 15	
Jul 31	<i>Independence</i>	Aug 15	Aug 21	<i>Prometheus</i>	Aug 30	
Aug 14	<i>Pacific</i>	Aug 27	Aug 30	<i>Northern Light</i>	Sep 7	
Sep 1			Sep 20	<i>Prometheus</i>	Oct 3	
Sep 15	<i>S.S. Lewis</i>		Oct 4	<i>Star of the West</i>	Oct 15	
Oct 1	<i>Independence</i>	Oct 16	Oct 23	<i>Prometheus</i>	Nov 1	via HAV Oct 27
Oct 16	<i>Pacific</i>	Oct 30	Oct 31	<i>Star of the West</i>	Nov 8	
Nov 1	<i>Brother Jonathan</i>	Nov 15	Nov 18	<i>Prometheus</i>	Nov 27	
Nov 15	<i>S.S. Lewis</i>		Dec 8	<i>Star of the West</i>	Dec 19	
Dec 2	<i>Independence</i>	Dec 17	Dec 20	<i>Prometheus</i>	Dec 29	
Dec 15	<i>Pacific</i>	Dec 27	Jan 1	<i>Northern Light</i>	Jan 9 1853	
The VPI steamers <i>Daniel Webster</i> (after Jul 24 1852) and <i>Pampero</i> operated between SJN and NO						

APPENDIX E - VIA NICARAGUA SAILINGS, 1851-1856

1853 Eastbound Trips Via Nicaragua						
Dep SFC	Steamer	Arv SJS	Dep SJN	Steamer	Arv NYC	Notes
Jan 1 1853	<i>Brother Jonathan</i>	Jan 12	Jan 17	<i>Star of the West</i>	Jan 28	
Jan 14	<i>Independence</i>	Jan 31	Feb 4	<i>Northern Light</i>	Feb 13	
Jan 31	<i>Pacific</i>		Feb 20	<i>Star of the West</i>	Mar 3	via HAV Feb 25
Feb 15	<i>Brother Jonathan</i>		Mar 6	<i>Prometheus</i>	Mar 15	
Mar 1	<i>S.S. Lewis</i>		Mar 23	<i>Star of the West</i>	Mar 31	
Mar 15	<i>Pacific</i>	Mar 30	Mar 31	<i>Prometheus</i>	Apr 10	
Apr 1	<i>Sierra Nevada</i>		Apr 16	<i>Star of the West</i>	Apr 25	
Apr 16	<i>Brother Jonathan</i>		May 4	<i>Prometheus</i>	May 12	
May 1	<i>Pacific</i>	May 13	May 16	<i>Star of the West</i>	May 25	
May 16	<i>Sierra Nevada</i>		May 31	<i>Prometheus</i>	Jun 9	
Jun 1	<i>Brother Jonathan</i>		Jun 16	<i>Northern Light</i>	Jun 24	
Jun 15 ?	<i>Cortes</i> ?					
Jul 1	<i>Sierra Nevada</i>		Jul 16	<i>Northern Light</i>	Jul 25	
Jul 15	<i>Brother Jonathan</i>		Aug 1 ?	<i>Star of the West</i>	Aug 9	
Aug 1	<i>Cortes</i>		Aug 15	<i>Northern Light</i>	Aug 23	
Aug 16	<i>Sierra Nevada</i>		Sep 1	<i>Star of the West</i>	Sep 9	
Sep 1	<i>Brother Jonathan</i>	Sep 15	Sep 16	<i>Northern Light</i>	Sep 25	
Sep 16	<i>Cortes</i>		Oct 1 ?	<i>Star of the West</i>	Oct 9	
Oct 1	<i>Pacific</i>	Oct 14	Oct 17	<i>Northern Light</i>	Oct 27	
Oct 16	<i>Sierra Nevada</i>		Oct 31	<i>Star of the West</i>	Nov 9	
Nov 1	<i>Cortes</i>	Nov 12	Nov 17	<i>Prometheus</i>	Nov 29	via HAV Nov 22-23
Nov 16	<i>Pacific</i>		Dec 1	<i>Star of the West</i>	Dec 13	
Dec 1	<i>Sierra Nevada</i>	Dec 14	Dec 16	<i>Northern Light</i>	Dec 24	
Dec 16	<i>Cortes</i>		Dec 31	<i>Star of the West</i>	Jan 9	
Dec 31	<i>Brother Jonathan</i>	Jan 12	Jan 15	<i>Northern Light</i>	Jan 24 1854	

APPENDIX E - VIA NICARAGUA SAILINGS, 1851-1856

1854 Eastbound Trips Via Nicaragua						
Dep SFC	Steamer	Arv SJS	Dep SJN	Steamer	Arv NYC	Notes
Jan 16	<i>Sierra Nevada</i>	Jan 28	Jan 31	<i>Star of the West</i>	Feb 9	
Feb 1	<i>Cortes</i>		Feb 15	<i>Northern Light</i>	Feb 23	
Feb 16	<i>Brother Jonathan</i>	Mar 1	Mar 5	<i>Star of the West</i>	Mar 14	
Mar 1	<i>Sierra Nevada</i>		Mar 17	<i>Northern Light</i>	Mar 25	
Mar 16	<i>Cortes</i>		Mar 31	<i>Star of the West</i>	Apr 9	
Apr 1	<i>Pacific</i>		Apr 17	<i>Northern Light</i>	Apr 25	
Apr 15	<i>Sierra Nevada</i>		Apr 30	<i>Star of the West</i>	May 8	
May 1	<i>Cortes</i>	May 14	May 17	<i>Northern Light</i>	May 25	
May 15	<i>Brother Jonathan</i>		May 31	<i>Star of the West</i>	Jun 8	
Jun 1	<i>Sierra Nevada</i>	Jun 14	Jun 17	<i>Prometheus</i>	Jun 25	
Jun 16	<i>Cortes</i>		Jul 3	<i>Star of the West</i>	Jul 12	
Jul 1	<i>Pacific</i>	Jul 13	Jul 16	<i>Prometheus</i>	Jul 24	
Jul 15	<i>Sierra Nevada</i>	Jul 28	Jul 29	<i>Star of the West</i>	Aug 7	
Aug 1	<i>Brother Jonathan</i>	Aug 14	Aug 16	<i>Prometheus</i>	Aug 24	
Aug 16	<i>Cortes</i>		Aug 31	<i>Star of the West</i>	Sep 8	
Aug 31	<i>Pacific</i>		Sep 16	<i>Prometheus</i>	Sep 25	
Sep 16	<i>Sierra Nevada</i>		Oct 1	<i>Northern Light</i>	Oct 8	
Sep 30	<i>Cortes</i>		Oct 15	<i>Star of the West</i>	Oct 27	via KIN Oct 19-20
Oct 24	<i>Sierra Nevada</i>	Nov 6	Nov 7	<i>Northern Light</i>	Nov 14	
Nov 9	<i>Cortes</i>	Nov 20	Nov 23	<i>Star of the West</i>	Dec 2	via KIN Nov 27
Nov 24	<i>Uncle Sam</i>			<i>Northern Light</i>	Dec 15	
Dec 9	<i>Sierra Nevada</i>	Dec 21	Dec 23	<i>Star of the West</i>	Jan 1	via KIN Dec 28
Dec 23	<i>Cortes</i>			<i>Northern Light</i>	Jan 15 1855	via KIN Jan 11

APPENDIX E - VIA NICARAGUA SAILINGS, 1851-1856

1855 Eastbound Trips Via Nicaragua						
Dep SFC	Steamer	Arv SJS	Dep SJN	Steamer	Arv NYC	Notes
Jan 9	<i>Uncle Sam</i>	Jan 20	Jan 22	<i>Star of the West</i>	Jan 30	via KIN Jan 25-26
Jan 24	<i>Sierra Nevada</i>		Feb 6	<i>Northern Light</i>	Feb 14	via KIN Feb 10
Feb 9	<i>Cortes</i>	Feb 21	Feb 23	<i>Star of the West</i>	Mar 4	via KIN Feb 27
Feb 26	<i>Uncle Sam</i>		Mar 11	<i>Northern Light</i>	Mar 19	
Mar 9	<i>Sierra Nevada</i>	Mar 22	Mar 24	<i>Star of the West</i>	Apr 3	via KIN Mar 28-29
Mar 24	<i>Cortes</i>		Apr 8	<i>Northern Light</i>	Apr 15	
Apr 9	<i>Uncle Sam</i>	Apr 21	Apr 23	<i>Star of the West</i>	May 2	via KIN Apr 28
Apr 24	<i>Sierra Nevada</i>		May 8	<i>Northern Light</i>	May 16	
May 9	<i>Cortes</i>	May 22	May 24	<i>Star of the West</i>	Jun 1	
May 16	<i>Uncle Sam</i>		May 30	<i>Northern Light</i>	Jun 6	
			Jun 16	<i>Star of the West</i>	Jun 24	
Jun 16	<i>Sierra Nevada</i>		Jul 1	<i>Northern Light</i>	Jul 8	
Jun 30	<i>Cortes</i>	Jul 13	Jul 16	<i>Star of the West</i>	Jul 25	via KIN Jul 20
Jul 16	<i>Uncle Sam</i>	Jul 27	Jul 29	<i>Northern Light</i>	Aug 5	
Aug 18	<i>Uncle Sam</i>	Aug 29	Aug 31	<i>Northern Light</i>	Sep 8	
Sep 4	<i>Sierra Nevada</i>			<i>Star of the West</i>	Sep 30	
	<i>Cortes</i>	Oct 3	Oct 5	<i>Northern Light</i>	Oct 13	
Oct 5	<i>Uncle Sam</i>		Oct 25	<i>Star of the West</i>	Nov 3	
Oct 20	<i>Sierra Nevada</i>		Nov 2	<i>Northern Light</i>	Nov 11	
	<i>Cortes</i>	Nov 20	Nov 17	<i>Star of the West</i>	Nov 28	via KIN Nov 23
	<i>Uncle Sam</i>	Dec 1	Dec 3	<i>Northern Light</i>	Dec 11	
Dec 5	<i>Sierra Nevada</i>	Dec 18	Dec 20	<i>Star of the West</i>	Dec 29	via KIN Dec 24
Dec 20	<i>Cortes</i>		Jan 4	<i>Northern Light</i>	Jan 12 1856	

APPENDIX E - VIA NICARAGUA SAILINGS, 1851-1856

1856 Eastbound Trips Via Nicaragua						
Dep SFC	Steamer	Arv SJS	Dep SJN	Steamer	Arv NYC	Notes
Jan 5	<i>Uncle Sam</i>		Jan 19	<i>Star of the West</i>	Jan 29	
	<i>Sierra Nevada</i>		Feb 5	<i>Northern Light</i>	Feb 13	
Feb 4	<i>Cortes</i>		Feb 19	<i>Star of the West</i>	Feb 28	via KIN Feb 23
	<i>Uncle Sam</i>		Mar 5	<i>Northern Light</i>	Mar 13	
Mar 5	<i>Brother Jonathan</i>		Mar 22	<i>Star of the West</i>	Apr 2	via KIN Mar 28
Apr 4	<i>Uncle Sam</i>		Apr 21	<i>Orizaba</i>	Apr 29	via KIN Apr 26
May 5	<i>Sierra Nevada</i>		May 24	<i>Orizaba</i>	Jun 1	via KIN May 28
Jun 21	<i>Sierra Nevada</i>		Jul 7	<i>Orizaba</i>	Jul 14	
Aug 5	<i>Sierra Nevada</i>		Sep 22	<i>Tennessee</i>	Oct 2	via KIN Sep 27
Sep 20	<i>Sierra Nevada</i>		Oct 6	<i>Texas</i>	Oct 18	via KIN Oct 11-12
Oct 12	<i>Sierra Nevada</i>		Nov 8	<i>Texas</i>	Nov 16	the <i>Tennessee</i> dep SJN Nov 5 for NO arv Nov 11
Nov 20	<i>Orizaba</i>		Dec 5	<i>Tennessee</i>	Dec 15	
Dec 31	<i>Sierra Nevada</i>	Jan 2	Jan 13	<i>James Adger</i>	Jan 24 1857	via Key West Jan 17, the <i>Texas</i> dep Jan 13 for NO
The December 31, 1856 departure of the <i>Sierra Nevada</i> from San Francisco was the last trip that connected across Nicaragua to a Vanderbilt steamer on the Atlantic side. Costa Ricans controlled the entire transit route from January 11, 1857. Later trips between Nicaragua ports and the United States continued for several months but included stops at Aspinwall or Panama City where all through passengers and freight were discharged.						

Appendix F

Southern Overland Trip List, 1858 to 1861

Eastbound 1858		
Dep SFC	Arv StL	Notes
Sep 16 1858	Oct 9 1858	first trip, 23 days 4 hr
Sep 20 1858		Mon & Fri departures
Sep 23 1858	Oct 18 1858	
Sep 27 1858	Oct 23 1858	report Sep 29 departure
Sep 30 1858	Oct 26 1858	report Oct 1 departure
Oct 4 1858	Oct 30 1858	
Oct 8 1858	Nov 3 1858	
Oct 11 1858	Nov 6 1858	
Oct 15 1858	Nov 9 1858	Oregon dates to Oct 6
Oct 18 1858		
Oct 22 1858	Nov 16 1858	
Oct 25 1858	Nov 21 1858	
Oct 29 1858	Nov 24 1858	
Nov 1 1858	Nov 28 1858	
Nov 5 1858	Dec 2 1858	
Nov 8 1858	Dec 6 1858	Oregon dates to Oct 27
Nov 12 1858	Dec 9 1858	
Nov 15 1858	Dec 11 1858	
Nov 19 1858	Dec 15 1858	
Nov 22 1858	Dec 21 1858	
Nov 26 1858	Dec 22 1858	
Nov 29 1858	Dec 25 1858	
Dec 3 1858	Dec 31 1858	
Dec 6 1858	Jan 1 1859	
Dec 10 1858	Jan 4 1859	
Dec 13 1858	Jan 6 1859	
Dec 17 1858	Jan 11 1859	
Dec 20 1858	Jan 14 1859	
Dec 24 1858	Jan 18 1859	
Dec 27 1858	Jan 20 1859	
Dec 31 1858	Jan 25 1859	

Eastbound 1859		
Dep SFC	Arv StL	Notes
Jan 3 1859	Jan 29 1859	
Jan 7 1859	Jan 31 1859	
Jan 10 1859	Feb 3 1859	
Jan 14 1859	Feb 6 1859	
Jan 17 1859	Feb 9 1859	
Jan 21 1859		
Jan 24 1859	Feb 16 1859	
Jan 28 1859	Feb 26 1859	
Feb 4 1859	Mar 3 1859	
Feb 7 1859	Mar 4 1859	
Feb 11 1859		
Feb 14 1859	Mar 14 1859	
Feb 18 1859		
Feb 21 1859	Mar 21 1859	
Feb 25 1859		
Feb 28 1859		
Mar 4 1859		
Mar 7 1859	Mar 30 1859	
Mar 11 1859	Apr 4 1859	
Mar 14 1859	Apr 6 1859	
Mar 18 1859	Apr 10 1859	
Mar 21 1859		
Mar 25 1859		
Mar 28 1859		
Apr 1 1859		
Apr 4 1859		
Apr 8 1859		
Apr 11 1859		
Apr 15 1859		
Apr 18 1859	May 11 1859	
Apr 22 1859	May 16 1859	

APPENDIX F - SOUTHERN OVERLAND MAIL TRIP LIST

Eastbound 1859 (cont.)		
Dep SFC	Arv StL	Notes
Apr 25 1859	May 18 1859	
Apr 28 1859	May 25 1859	
May 2 1859	May 27 1859	
May 6 1859		
May 9 1859	May 30 1859	
May 13 1859	Jun 4 1859	
May 16 1859	Jun 7 1859	
May 20 1859		
May 23 1859	Jun 14 1859	
May 27 1859	Jun 19 1859	
May 30 1859	Jun 23 1859	or May 31 dep
Jun 3 1859	Jun 25 1859	
Jun 6 1859	Jun 26 1859	w/ HI mails to May 5
Jun 10 1859		
Jun 13 1859	Jul 5 1859	
Jun 17 1859	Jul 10 1859	
Jun 20 1859		
Jun 24 1859	Jul 16 1859	
Jun 27 1859	Jul 19 1859	
Jul 1 1859		
Jul 4 1859	Jul 27 1859	
Jul 8 1859	Jul 31 1859	
Jul 11 1859	Aug 2 1859	
Jul 15 1859	Aug 6 1859	
Jul 18 1859		
Jul 22 1859		
Jul 25 1859		Memphis Aug 16
Jul 29 1859	Aug 20 1859	
Aug 1 1859		
Aug 5 1859	Aug 27 1859	
Aug 8 1859	Aug 29 1859	
Aug 12 1859		
Aug 15 1859		
Aug 19 1859	Sep 12 1859	
Aug 22 1859		

Eastbound (1859)		
Dep SFC	Arv StL	Notes
Aug 26 1859		
Aug 29 1859		
Sep 2 1859		
Sep 5 1859		
Sep 9 1859		
Sep 12 1859		
Sep 16 1859		
Sep 19 1859	Oct 10 1859	
Sep 23 1859		
Sep 29 1859		
Oct 3 1859	Oct 25 859	
Oct 7 1859		
Oct 10 1859	Oct 31 1859	
Oct 17 1859	Nov 9 1859	
Oct 21 1859	Nov 12 1859	
Oct 24 1859	Nov 18 1859	w/ news from HI (per NY Times)
Oct 28 1859	Nov 19 1859	
Oct 31 1859	Nov 21 1859	
Nov 4 1859	Nov 25 1859	
Nov 7 1859		
Nov 14 1859	Dec 6 1859	
Nov 18 1859	Dec 11 1859	
Nov 25 1859	Dec 18 1859	mail delayed by high water in Texas
Nov 28 1859	Dec 21 1859	
Dec 5 1859	Dec 26 1859	
Dec 12 1859	Jan 2 1860	
Dec 16 1859	Jan 6 1860	
Dec 19 1859		
Dec 22 1859		
Dec 26 1859	Jan 17 1860	w/ news from HI (per NY Times)
Dec 30 1859	Jan 23 1860	

APPENDIX F - SOUTHERN OVERLAND MAIL TRIP LIST

Eastbound 1860		
Dep SFC	Arv StL	Notes
Jan 2 1860		
Jan 6 1860		
Jan 9 1860		
Jan 13 1860	Feb 5 1860	
Jan 16 1860	Feb 9 1860	announced overland default on Jan 17 1860
Jan 20 1860		steamer <i>Atlantic</i> carried SFC mail Jan 20, arv NYC Feb 10 1860
Jan 23 1860	Feb 15 1860	
Jan 27 1860	Feb 19 1860	
Jan 30 1860	Feb 22 1860	
Feb 3 1860	Feb 25 1860	
Feb 6 1860		
Feb 10 1860	Mar 4 1860	
Feb 13 1860		
Feb 17 1860	Mar 11 1860	
Feb 20 1860		
Feb 24 1860	Mar 17 1860	
Feb 27 1860		
Mar 2 1860		
Mar 5 1860		
Mar 9 1860		
Mar 12 1860		
Mar 16 1860	Apr 6 1860	
Mar 19 1860	Apr 8 1860	
Mar 23 1860	Apr 11 1860	prob dep Mar 24
Mar 26 1860		
Mar 30 1860		
Apr 2 1860		
Apr 6 1860		
Apr 9 1860		
Apr 13 1860		
Apr 16 1860		
Apr 20 1860	May 13 1860	
Apr 23 1860		

Eastbound 1860 (cont.)		
Dep SFC	Arv StL	Notes
Apr 27 1859		Springfield MO May 20
Apr 30 1860	May 22 1860	dep May 1?
May 4 1860		
May 7 1860	May 29 1860	
May 11 1860		
May 14 1860		
May 18 1860	Jun 11 1860	arv date?
May 21 1860	Jun 11 1860	Springfield MO Jun 10
May 25 1860		
May 28 1860		Springfield MO Jun 17
Jun 1 1860		
Jun 4 1860		Springfield MO Jun 24
Jun 8 1860		Springfield MO Jun 29
Jun 11 1860		Springfield MO Jul 2
Jun 15 1860		Fayetteville AR Jul 5 "largest mail yet"
Jun 18 1860		Fayetteville AR Jul 8
Jun 22 1860		Fayetteville AR Jul 12
Jun 25 1860		Fayetteville AR Jul 14
Jun 29 1860		Fayetteville AR Jul 19
Jul 2 1860		Ft Smith AR Jul 22
Jul 6 1860	Jul 31 1860	
Jul 8 1860	Aug 3 1860	
Jul 13 1860		
Jul 16 1860		
Jul 20 1860		
Jul 23 1860		Ft Smith AR Aug 13
Jul 27 1860		
Jul 30 1860		
Aug 3 1860		
Aug 6 1860		
Aug 10 1860		dep date?
Aug 13 1860		
Aug 17 1860		
Aug 20 1860		

APPENDIX F - SOUTHERN OVERLAND MAIL TRIP LIST

Eastbound 1860 (cont.)		
Dep SFC	Arv StL	Notes
Aug 24 1860	Sep 16 1860	
Aug 27 1860		Ft Smith AR Sep 15
Aug 31 1860		
Sep 3 1860		Sep 20 Ft Smith AR OMC office burned with 4,000 letters
Sep 7 1860		Ft Smith AR Sep 27
Sep 10 1860		Ft Smith AR Oct 1
Sep 14 1860		Ft Smith AR Oct 4
Sep 17 1860		
Sep 21 1860	Oct 13 1860	dep Sep 22?
Sep 24 1860	Oct 15 1860	
Sep 28 1860		Ft Smith AR Oct 17
Oct 1 1860		Sh. <i>Ariel</i> arv NYC Oct 24 w/mails of Oct 1
Oct 5 1860		
Oct 8 1860		Ft Smith AR Oct 27
Oct 12 1860		
Oct 15 1860		
Oct 19 1860		New York NY Nov 13
Oct 22 1860		
Oct 26 1860		
Oct 29 1860	Nov 19 1860	
Nov 2 1860		
Nov 5 1860		
Nov 9 1860		
Nov 12 1860		
Nov 16 1860		
Nov 19 1860		
Nov 23 1860		
Nov 26 1860		
Nov 30 1860		dep Dec 1 ?
Dec 3 1860		
Dec 7 1860		
Dec 10 1860		
Dec 14 1860		

Eastbound 1860 (cont.)		
Dep SFC	Arv StL	Notes
Dec 17 1860		
Dec 21 1860		
Dec 24 1860		
Dec 28 1860		
Dec 31 1860	Jan 24 1861	

Eastbound 1861		
Dep SFC	Arv StL	Notes
Jan 4 1861		
Jan 7 1861		
Jan 11 1861		
Jan 14 1861		
Jan 18 1861		
Jan 21 1861		
Jan 25 1861		dep Jan 26?
Jan 28 1861		dep Jan 29?
Feb 1 1861		
Feb 4 1861		
Feb 8 1861		
Feb 11 1861		
Feb 15 1861		
Feb 18 1861		
Feb 22 1861		
Feb 25 1861		
Mar 1 1861		
Mar 4 1861	Mar 27 1861	
Mar 8 1861		
Mar 11 1861		
Mar 15 1861	Apr 11	
Mar 18 1861		before Apr 20
Mar 22 1861		
Mar 25 1861		dep date Mar 25/27?
Apr 1 1861	May 1 1861	carried 4,485 letters, Apr 5 news that no overland dep on 4th and route suspended

Appendix G

United States Postal Rates (simplified), 1816 to 1861

Effective Date	Distance	Rate for single weight letter	Notes and Special Rates
May 1, 1816	not over 30 miles	6 cents	Ship rate: 2 cent fee added to inland postage if transmitted by mail; 6 cents due if delivered at port of entry (any weight) Drop rate: 1 cent to any weight Way letters: 1 cent fee
	30 to 80 miles	10 cents	
	80 to 150 miles	12½ cents	
	150 to 400 miles	18½ cents	
	over 400 miles	25 cents	
May 1, 1825	not over 30 miles	6 cents	New postal Act superceded and replaced all previous postal Acts (postal rates the same except 18½ cents changed to 18¾ cents. Letters received from steamboats to be rated as if carried by mail under contract Ship rate: as previous Drop rate: as previous Way letters: as previous
	30 to 80 miles	10 cents	
	80 to 150 miles	12½ cents	
	150 to 400 miles	18¾ cents	
	over 400 miles	25 cents	
Jul 1, 1845	to 300 miles	5 cents	Ship rate: as previous Drop rate: 2 cents Way letters: as previous
	over 300 miles	10 cents	
Jul 1, 1847	to/from Chagres	20 cents	as well as to / from Pacific Coast within U.S. territory
	to/from Panama	30 cents	
	to from Oregon	40 cents	
Aug 14, 1848	letters conveyed within California	12½ cents	also, letters between the Pacific Coast, within U.S. territory, and the Atlantic Coast, 40 cents
Jul 1, 1851	to 3,000 miles	3 cents if prepaid or 5 cents unpaid	
	over 3,000 miles	6 cents if prepaid or 10 cents unpaid	
Apr 1, 1855	to 3,000 miles	3 cents	prepayment compulsory
	over 3,000 miles	10 cents	
Feb 27, 1861	over the Rockies	10 cents	1855 Act modified to require 10 cent prepaid postal rate on letters from any point east of the Rocky Mountains to any point on the Pacific side and vice versa Ship rate: 2 cent fee added to inland postage if transmitted by mail; 5 cents due if delivered at port of entry (any weight)

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