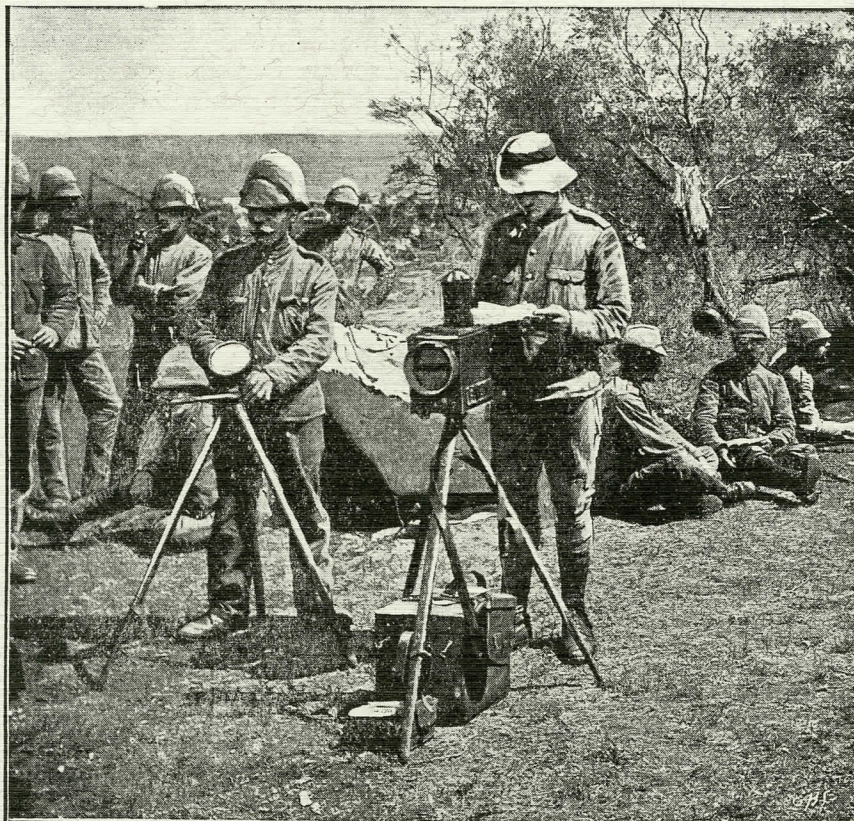


# THE HELIOGRAPH



SIGNAL STATION AT BLOEMFONTEIN.

On the left of the picture is the heliograph, and on the right a Begbie signal lamp, for use when there is no sun. (Photo by Reinhold Thiele.)

## The Postal History Foundation

**SPRING 1994 ISSUE      VOLUME 8, NO. 2**



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# THE HELIOGRAPH

## VOLUME 8 NUMBER 2 (Whole Number 30)

### Spring 1994

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**Dane S. Claussen,**  
Editor

Editorial Staff:  
**Robert Bechtel and**  
**Thomas Todsen**

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THE HELIOGRAPH is published quar-  
terly by THE POSTAL HISTORY FOUN-  
DATION, P.O. Box 40725, Tucson, AZ  
85717. Subscriptions are available by  
membership:

Annual membership.....	\$18
Sustaining.....	\$35
Patron.....	\$100
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# Complimentary Franks from the United States Express Company

By Bruce H. Mosher

## Introduction to complimentary franks

Many books and articles have addressed the early history and development of the 19th century boom in U.S. private express companies. Among the various published accounts, little can be found about the issuance and use of express company complimentary franks for free transport of personal packages over its lines. This author has seen only one catalog listing of these items--the Complimentary Franks section of Sherwood Springer's 1975 Handbook of Cinderella stamps (plus, of course, Springer's similar 1970 and earlier Handbook listings). Only a handful of other published information has been found that acknowledge these complimentary franks even exist and many of those references are found in auction catalogs. A contrast exists in the relative popularity of philatelic-related franking adhesives--complimentary telegraph message franks, a similar type of free service given to selected telegraph company patrons, are extensively documented in the *Scott Specialized Catalogue of the United States*. Telegraph franks are also the primary topic of at least two published philatelic books.

## Intro to U.S. Express Company Franks

From Springer's Handbook we know of 10 U.S. express companies that issued complimentary franks. The United States Express Company (USEC), operating from 1854 to 1914, was one.

This is confirmed by a booklet of franks within the covers (Fig. 1). Most of its franks were used by this 60x80mm (when folded) booklet long before it came into this author's possession, but nine selvage remnants of booklet panes remain. Historically, 10 would seem a more predictable number, so perhaps this is unusual, a freak or one booklet pane took its selvage with it.

Each USEC booklet pane consists of two chocolate brown, fully-gummed franks (Fig. 2). The top frank is horizontally rouletted 13 along the top and bottom, the bottom frank having three straight edges. Each frank measures about 34x60mm. Springer defined the overall design of these particular franks as USEC Type II. Light-brown, tissue-paper quality, interleaving sheetlets were placed behind each booklet pane in this booklet.

The Kendall Bank Note Co. of New York City engraved these Type II complimentary franks, and the firm's imprint appears at each frank's bottom. This author suspects that Kendall also assembled and stamped the booklets, but has no evidence. Only one other complimentary express frank listed by Springer was printed by Kendall--the Erie and New England Express Co. In addition, of all the catalogued telegraph company franks and prepaid stamps, only the 1886 Baltimore and Ohio Telegraph Company prepayment stamps were printed by Kendall. Both Erie and New England, and the B & O, express companies had strong ties with USEC, as is explained below, so this was probably not a coincidence.

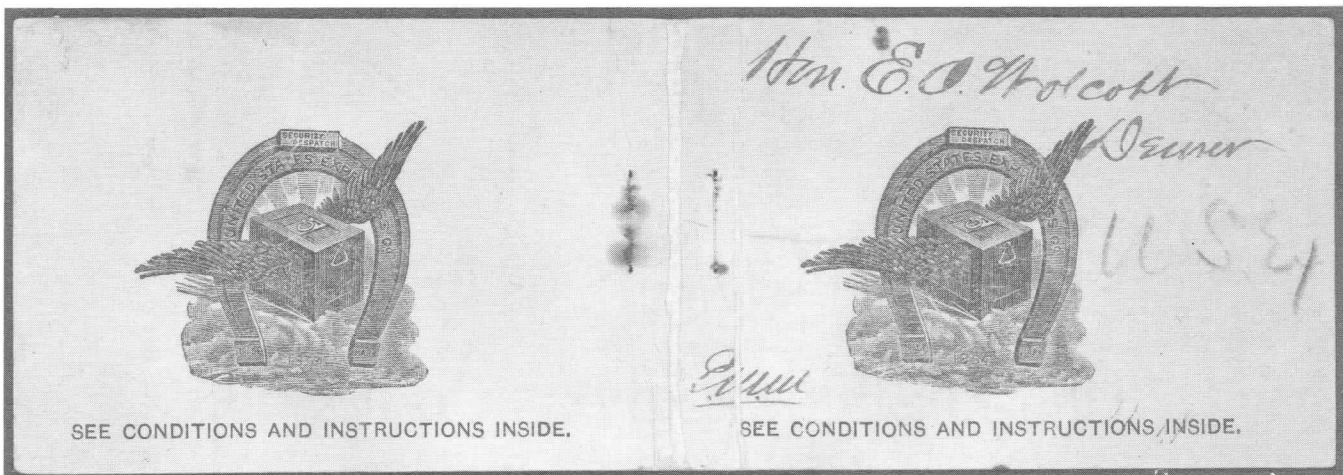


Figure 1. Undated covers of 1880-1910 United States Express Company

### Frank Usage Information

The discovery of an intact set of USEC complimentary frank booklet covers in readable condition was an important step in learning how these franks were issued and then used by patrons. The USEC booklet's inside cover faces (Fig. 3) contain text that summarizes some of the USEC's instructions and conditions for proper

booklet of complimentary pasters (franks)

use of their bookleted franks.

The first inside cover paragraph reads:

"Agents are expressly forbidden to forward any matter 'D.H.' over their names or initials, but in all cases (EXCEPT correspondence, remittances, supplies, or other business of this Company; business for account of the Railroads over which this Company operates; or business covered by this Company's Complimentary Card), these pasters must be used."

"D.H." in this context means "deadhead," a common railroad and later express term for free shipments that generate no revenue. This author believes that USEC was warning its agents that they were not authorized to forward any free shipments just by using their names/positions unless they used properly issued complimentary franks (i.e. "pasters") to pay for such shipments. The parenthetical list of shipping exceptions in this paragraph appears to define the kind of business material that USEC agents were authorized to ship under their signatures, without using any pasters or franks.

The USEC's use of the word "pasters" instead of "franks" is curious. Paster is typically defined as a sticker. Seven of the 10 express company franks that Springer illustrated included the word "FRANK" on their complimentary adhesives (Fig. 4's examples). Two other company franks contain the word "COMPLIMENTARY" (Fig. 5) and three express companies utilize both words (Fig. 6). But the USEC paster designs do not contain either of these telltale words. It is not possible to determine whether the USEC is unique in its paster designation because usage instructions (such as on paster-frank booklet covers) are not currently known for many of the



Figure 2. United States Express Company booklet pane of type II pasters (franks).



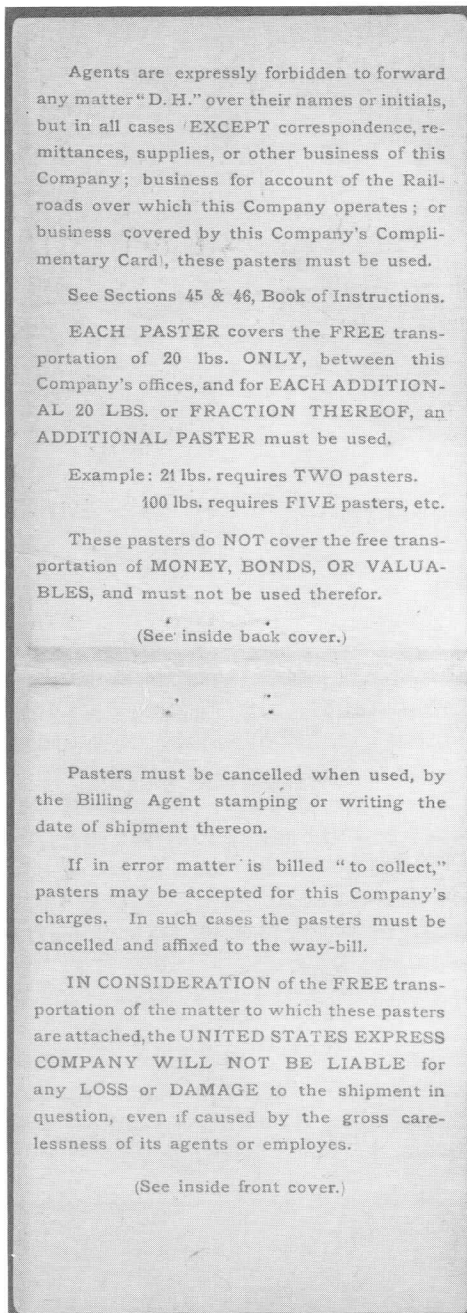


Figure 5. Complimentary frank from the National Express Company with "COMPLIMENTARY" printed on it.

Figure 3. United States Express Company instructions inside the Fig. 1 covers.

complimentary-frank issuing express companies. Paster may have been a more popular USEC term for sticker in the late 19th century; it does appear eight more times in the USEC booklet cover's inside text.

The USEC pasters exhibit another significant difference when compared to the other complimentary franks that Springer illustrated. They don't bear any serialized control numbers, while collected and illustrated examples of many other similar items show that almost all of the other express companies serialized their complimentary franks. No reasonable explanation for this currently exists. We do know that Western Union Telegraph Co. began using control numbers on its telegraph franks in 1871 to help prevent unauthorized usage. In addition, the majority of telegraph franks issued prior to the postulated USEC type II frank issue dates (i.e. 1880 and later) contain several control numbers on them--a



Figure 6. Complimentary franks from the New York & Boston Despatch and Westcott Express Companies with "FRANK" and "COMPLIMENTARY" printed on them.





Figure 4. Complimentary franks from the the Adams and American Express

feature that should not have escaped the attention of USEC officers who undoubtedly were exposed to some complimentary franks during that period.

The other fundamental difference between the USEC pasters and the telegraph complimentary frank booklets is an absence of specific allocated space on its covers to record assigned booklet ownership, information usually added by the express company's issuing agent. Western Union telegraph clerks of the era were known to have been instructed to compare the control numbers on detached or affixed user franks to the control number printed on his assigned booklet cover whenever the clerks were not sure of the user's identity. By comparison, a condition printed in-

Companies with "FRANK" printed on them.

side a 1904 (and also 1906) booklet of Wells Fargo and Co., control-numbered, complimentary express franks (Fig. 7) states: "They cover only the personal shipments of merchandise made by the holder, and if offered by any other person, agents are instructed to take up the Frank and collect regular charges." We would guess that the USEC probably had similar usage rules. The 1906 Wells Fargo booklet's front cover also contains ample blank spaces to record the recipient's name and business identity (Fig. 8). This booklet contained two Wells Fargo frank booklet panes (Fig. 9).

Perhaps the USEC wanted only to operate more economically than the other express companies by avoiding the extra cost of printing con-

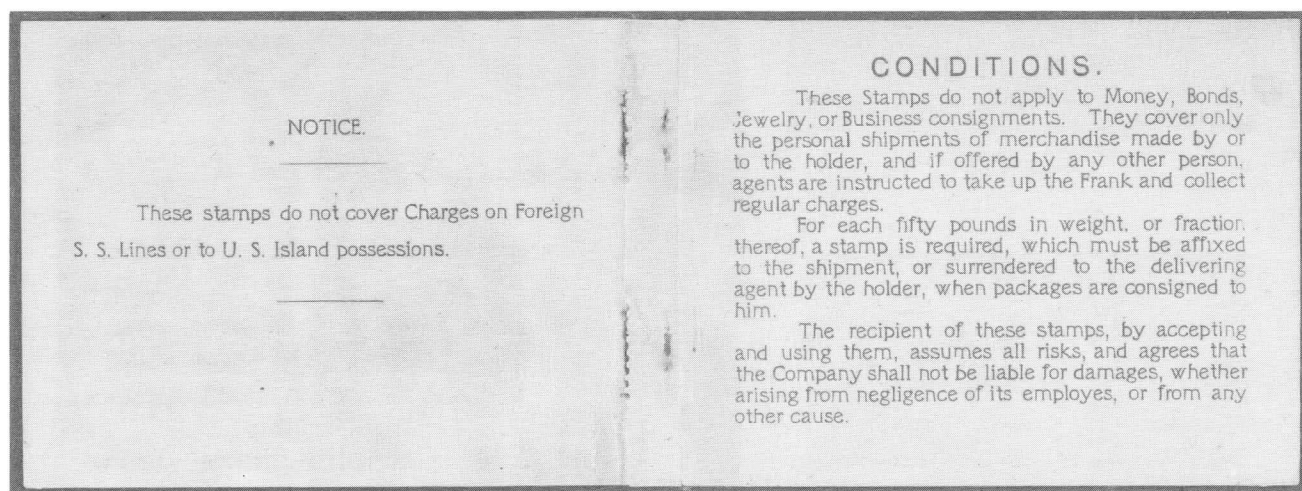


Figure 7. Inside covers of the S5044 Wells Fargo and Company compli-

mentary franks booklet.



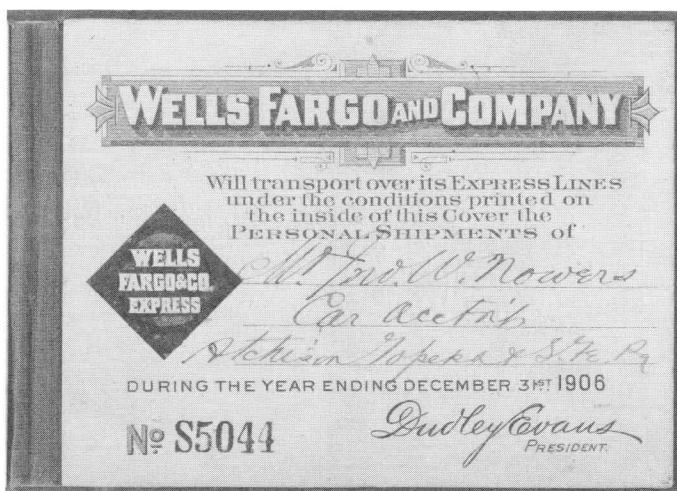


Figure 8. 1906 booklet of Wells Fargo and Company complimentary franks.



Figure 9. 1906 Wells Fargo franks found in the Fig. 8 booklet.

trol numbers on its pasters (this usually required another run through the printing press). Or perhaps it didn't feel the need to maintain accountability of its franking booklet handouts because most of the intended recipients would be honest about proper usage. Or perhaps the USEC didn't intend to issue very many complimentary booklets (booklet remnants are certainly hard to find now, whether this is indicative or not). However, all of this speculation doesn't make much sense as historians depict the major express companies as enjoying many operational similarities, copying each other's procedures, and

even employing common business principles. Because all of the other express companies serialized their complimentary franks, the unserialized type I and II USEC franking policy still remains a mystery.

The "Company's Complimentary Card" mentioned at the first paragraph's conclusion refers to USEC cards like the 1890 issue (Fig. 10). The front of this No. 142 (note the control number), 108x68mm, card bears the inscription, "THE UNITED STATES EXPRESS Co. (INCLUDING B. & O. EXPRESS) Will transport, Free of Charge, over their Lines the Personal Packages of".



Figure 10. 1890 United States Express Company complimentary franking card.



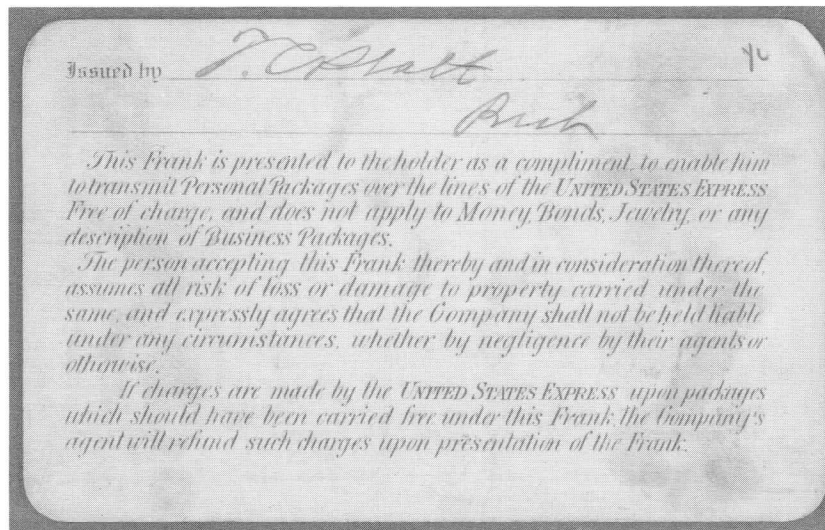


Figure 11. Back of the 1890 United States Express Company complimentary franking card.

sonal Packages of F.M. Baker Esq. during the year 1890 unless otherwise ordered subject to conditions indorsed hereon. Account Genl Supt. A. & P. R. R." The facsimile of Pres. T.C. Platt's signature appears on the card's front, while his actual signature appears on this particular card's back as he was the authorizing issuer to Superintendent Baker.

A very informative set of conditions are found on the No. 142 USEC card's back (Fig. 11) to wit:

"This Frank is presented to the holder as a compliment, to enable him to transmit Personal Packages over the lines of the UNITED EXPRESS Free of charge, and does not apply to Money, Bonds, Jewelry or any description of Business Packages.

"The person accepting this Frank thereby and in consideration thereof, assumes all risk of loss or damage to property carried under the same, and expressly agrees that the Company shall not be held liable under any circumstances, whether by negligence by their agents or otherwise.

"If charges are made by the UNITED STATES EXPRESS upon packages which should have been carried free under this Frank, the Company's agent will refund such charges upon presentation of the Frank."

We can now speculate that at one time (perhaps pre-1890?) the USEC may have used "paster" to exclusively refer to its complimentary adhesives like those shown in Fig. 2 (and perhaps Fig. 16), while reserving the "frank" design-

nation to apply only to the privileges granted under its complimentary cards. For substantiation, we note the USEC used the word "Frank" four times on the No. 142 complimentary card's back, but nowhere does this word appear on or within the illustrated USEC booklet covers, nor on the paster adhesives captured within those covers.

A couple of additional observations should be made on USEC complimentary cards. The USEC reportedly acquired all of the Baltimore and Ohio Express franchises in September 1887 and operated them thereafter. This helps to explain the "(INCLUDING B. & O. EXPRESS)" statement on the card's front since the USEC retained the "B & O Express" identity for a while on the operations associated with the newly acquired express lines. In 1886 the Main Stem Division of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad (Baltimore to Wheeling, W.Va.) covered 379 primary miles plus 352 miles of branch lines. W.H. Trego was the General Manager of Express operations in Baltimore, W.H. Snyder was the Express Superintendent in the Newark, Ohio, office and Charles Mendenhall was the Express Superintendent in Cincinnati. There were also nine B & O Railroad associated lines that covered 548 additional miles of railroad. This author assumes that the B & O Express operated over all 1279 miles of B & O controlled road. Fig. 12 shows customer routing labels that were supplied to Baltimore & Ohio Express patrons.

The card's "A & P. R. R." account entry refers to the Addison and Northern Pennsylvania





Figure 12. Booklet pane of Baltimore and Ohio Express customer routing labels.

Railway (ANPR) that Platt was president of in 1886 and probably later into the '90s. This association helps to explain why Platt personally issued this card to Superintendent Baker. The ANPR was a small railroad that connected Addison in western New York with Galeton, Pa.--a distance of 46 road miles plus a five mile branch line. General Superintendent was a very important job in the ANPR with responsibilities for the General Ticket and Passenger Departments, reporting mileage of railroad car service, receiving Car Service reports, and receiving Car Tracer and movement reports. The USEC was the sole express carrier on the ANPR, no doubt a direct result of Thomas Platt's position and influence.

Since this USEC complimentary card was issued in 1890 with a serialized control number prominently printed on it, we might loosely infer that the Fig. 2 unserialized franks were issued prior to 1890. However, much stronger documentary evidence will be needed before we can conclusively verify this speculation. We need to know about the history of the large, serialized USEC complimentary franks that are discussed later in this report. Review of additional date USEC complimentary cards (do others exist in collector's hands?) could also be beneficial.

The second inside front cover paragraph on the USEC booklet simply reads: "See Sections 45 & 46, Book of Instructions."

The USEC Book of Instructions has never been seen by this author and perhaps not by any readers. We can only guess what Sections 45 and

46 might say, regarding complimentary pasters (and perhaps complimentary card franks), that is different than printed on the inside booklet covers (or printed on its complimentary cards' backs). Maybe these Sections stipulate detailed USEC employee (i.e. drivers, messengers, clerks, agents, etc.) instructions and accountability procedures for handling paster-paid shipments on waybills, abstracts and other USEC business forms that were used during this complimentary franking era. The publication date of such an USEC Book of Instructions, if a copy were found, could possibly help in dating the USEC complimentary pasters and franks discussed in this report.

The USEC's Book of Instructions probably also defined company rules or guidelines for handing out complimentary paster booklets. Springer's Handbook states that "These franks were provided for use of express company employees in shipping personal parcels." Another philatelic writer (W.C. Michaels) believed that express franks "were given away to officers of the Express Companies and Railroads and perhaps others." This author certainly agrees with Michaels that many railroad employees probably received complimentary express franks, especially executives of railroads that had merchandise transportation contacts with express companies. The USEC complimentary card just discussed was certainly issued to a railroad executive, so maybe paster booklets were also given to such managers. Researching recipients of other



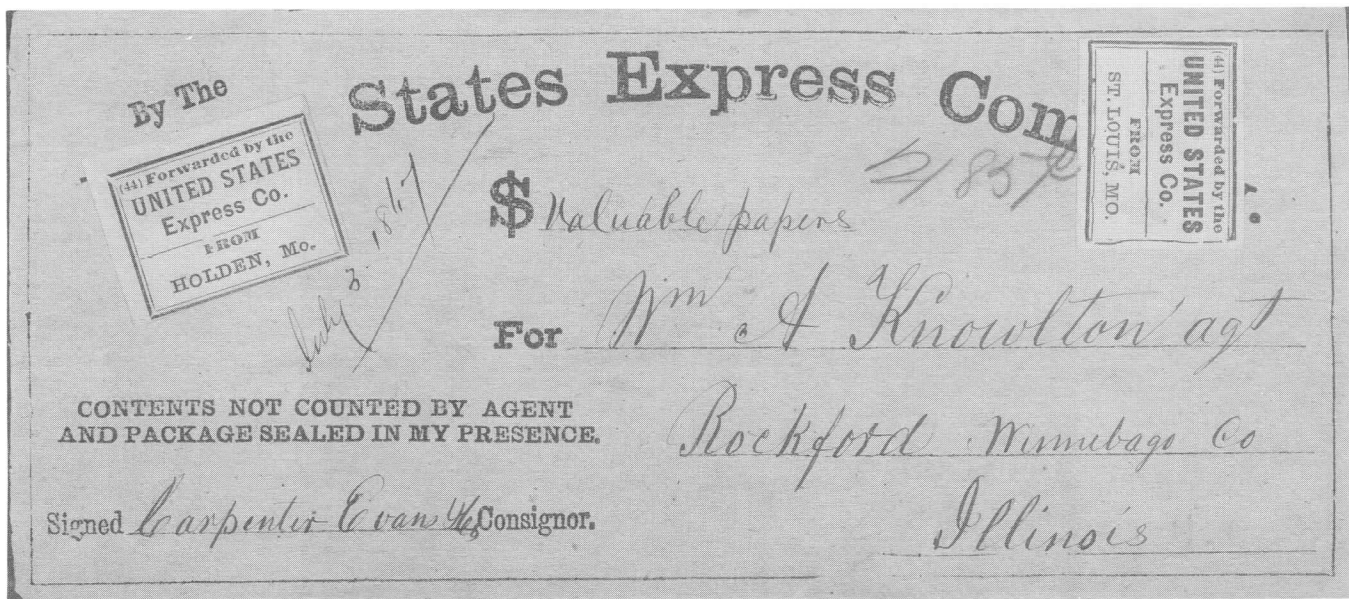


Figure 13. 1867 United States Express Company valuable papers en-

velope with two green forwarding labels affixed.

USEC complimentary cards in collector's hands could reveal additional information about the recipients of USEC franking privileges. Pursuit of Michael's "perhaps others" speculation led to a review of the documented recipients of the somewhat analogous telegraph message franks, to help define who the "others" might be.

We could assume that the express companies distributed their complimentary franks to a contingent of patrons who the era's telegraph companies similarly favored. We find that complimentary telegraph franks were issued as early as 1870-71 by the California State Telegraph Co. (in booklets) and the Western Union Telegraph Co. (as franking cards) for "Business" and "Social" use. In 1875 the Western Union issued franks to U.S. government officials for use while travelling on official business; in 1882 the Northern Mutual Telegraph Co. issued franks to potential customers to secure their business; and in 1883 the Mutual Union Telegraph Co. issued franks for stockholder use. Below, we explain that the "Hon. E.O. Wolcott," which is handwritten on the Fig. 1 USEC booklet cover's front, probably refers to Colorado Sen. Edward Wolcott. Thus we conclude that the USEC additionally issued complimentary express franks to some members of the U.S. Congress.

The third and fourth USEC inside cover paragraphs state:

"EACH PASTER covers the FREE transportation of 20 lbs. ONLY, between this Company's offices, and for EACH ADDITIONAL 20

LBS, or FRACTION THEREOF, an ADDITIONAL PASTER must be used.

"Example: 21 lbs requires TWO pasters.

"100 lbs. requires FIVE pasters, etc."

These instructions are explicit about paster usage --apparently no "liberal" parcel weighings were to be tolerated. However, note the restrictive "between this Company's offices" stipulation. This tells us that these pasters probably were not valid to cover shipping costs when packages were transferred to any (or perhaps not many) other express lines. During much of the late 19th century through 1914, USEC express companies were found from New York state west to Colorado and New Mexico, and from Alabama north to Minnesota. This was probably the primary legitimate usage area for the USEC's complimentary paster-franks.

A booklet of 18 complimentary, type II USEC pasters could have provided the owner with free passage of up to 360 pounds of personal packages over its lines. Typical express rates of the classic era were defined by weight and shipping distance, but apparently there was usually a minimum handling charge for transporting the smallest packages over the shortest delivery distances. Published USEC transportation rates are currently known from two sources: a 19th century USEC money package envelope and the national express rate tables documented by William Chandler in 1914.

Transportation and delivery of money letters or packages was a popular business service sup-



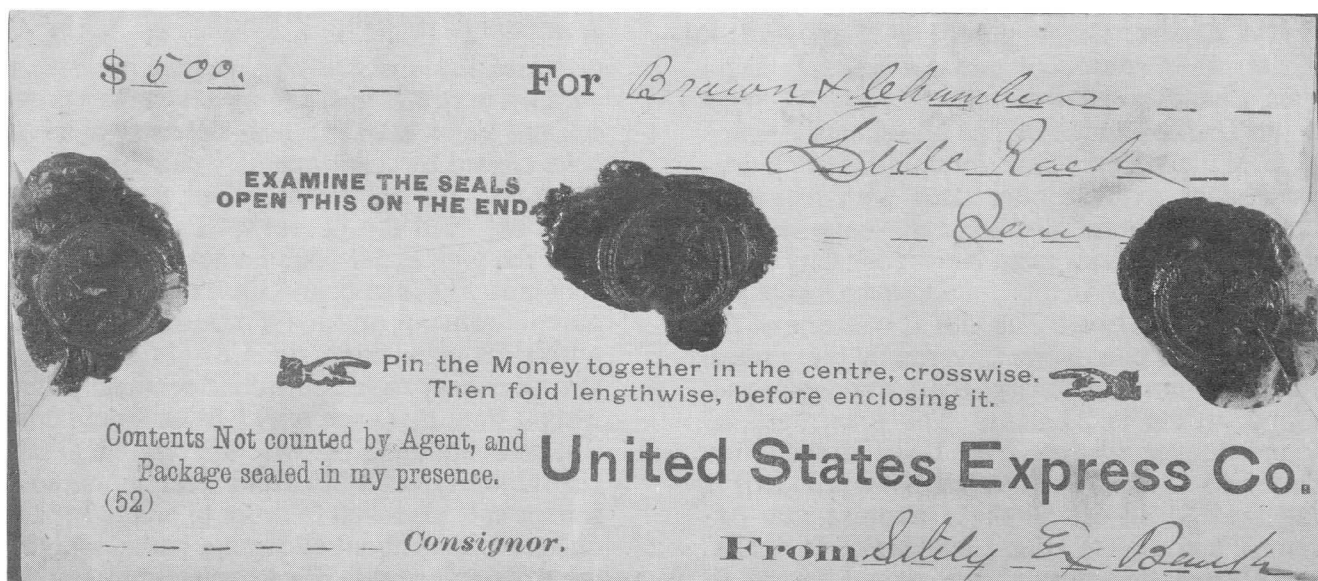


Figure 14. Front of United States Express Company money envelope.

plied by 19th century express companies. Many larger express companies supplied special legal-sized envelopes for shipping cash, bank drafts or valuable papers (Fig. 13). From its handwritten entries, the USEC money envelope shown in Fig. 14 appears to have carried \$500 from the Sityly (maybe Sibily or Sibley) Exchange Bank (possibly in Iowa or Michigan) to the firm of Brown and Chambers in Little Rock, Iowa. This envelope is undated, but was probably delivered in the late 1870s, or thereafter, when the USEC had numerous Iowa offices. This money envelope's back (Fig. 15) contains contemporary

shipping rates for money and merchandise packages. The seven-pound merchandise rates of 25c to \$1 are the most germane to our USEC pasteur usage discussion. Extrapolation of this rate indicates that the USEC probably charged a maximum of about \$3 to ship a 20-pound package over its longest express route at that time. Using these rate extremes as examples, a complete USEC booklet of 18 type II complimentary pasters/franks could have been worth anywhere from \$4.50 or \$54 to the honored recipients, quite a sizeable perquisite in those 19th century days.

UNITED STATES EXPRESS COMPANY'S					
Special rates for Currency or Gold Coin, to Railroad points only, within the United States and Canada, (unless the regular rates are less.)					
Paid C. O. D's. or Collections not included.					
For \$ 20 or less - - -	\$ .15	Over 70 to \$ 80 - - -	.40	Over 150 to \$175 - - -	
Over 20 to \$40 - - -	.20	" 80 " 100 - - -	.45	" 175 " 200 - - -	.85
" 40 " 50 - - -	.25	" 100 " 125 - - -	.50	" 200 " 225 - - -	.90
" 50 " 70 - - -	.30	" 125 " 150 - - -	.60	" 225 " 250 - - -	1.00
		Over 250 to \$300 - - -	\$1.25		
On MERCHANDISE.—Lowest and Highest charge according to distance,					
Packages 1 lb. or less, 25c.		Packages of 3 lbs., 25c. to 45c.		Packages of 5 lbs., 25c. to 75c.	
" 2 lbs., 25c. to 30c.		" 4 lbs., 25c. to 60c.		" 7 lbs. 25c. to \$1.00	

Figure 15. Back of United States Express Company money envelope.

William H. Chandler's *Merchants' Parcels Post & Express Guide*, published in early 1914, is the other source of express transportation rates. Chandler is listed as the Assistant Manager of the Traffic Bureau of The Merchants' Association of New York. This voluminous book documents the express rates filed with Interstate Commerce Commission by major express companies for deliveries from New York City to every express office in the United States located on the line of a railroad. The USEC was one of the large express companies covered by these rates. The minimum listed charge for delivery of a one-pound article is 21 cents. The maximum 20 pound delivery charge over USEC lines (New York City to Cuervo/Montoya, New Mexico) is listed as \$1.38 Using these express rate extremes, a complete USEC booklet of 18 USEC type II complimentary pasters would buy \$3.78 to \$24.84 worth of express shipments in 1914. It must be remembered that the USPOD Parcel Post System started in 1913 and its competitive threat may partially explain why these USEC express rates are somewhat lower than seen on the earlier Fig. 7 money envelope. One advertising page in Chandler's book states: "Rates are the floodgates of business. Just at the present time these floodgates are being lowered by the Express Companies." The back cover of his book bears the inscription: "SHIP BY EXPRESS! UNDER NEW RATES."

The USEC also issued carmine-pink complimentary-frank adhesives (USEC probably called

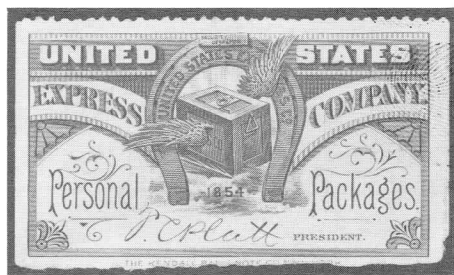


Figure 16. Type I United States Express Company complimentary frank.

them pasters, too), shown in Fig. 16, without any package weight limitation printed on them. These franks are the same size and format as the pasters found in the Fig. 1 booklet and were probably issued in similar booklets. Springer lists two varieties of these type 1 franks--those perforated 12 horizontally and those perforated 14 horizontally--but otherwise they are identical in design. This author can't help but speculate

that these type 1 franks may have become an operational or financial burden to the USEC because of the absence of a weight limit on the shipped personal-package coverage they provided, and some extravagant recipient-usage could have ensued by complimentary patrons.

If such misuse was prevalent, the USEC may have replaced the "Personal Package" pasters with the type II, 20-pound, package limit franks shown in Fig. 2 to bound the extent of their free parcel transportation. Of course, somewhere within its provisions, the USEC's Book of Instructions may have defined the personal package weight limit that each type 1 frank would cover. But no doubt this Book was unavailable to many USEC complimentary frank recipients, so we further speculate that in order to preclude patron disagreements about allowable parcel weight at the express agent's office during shipping consignments, the USEC simply found it more expedient to imprint the 20-pound package limit on its subsequent pasters.

The last paragraph printed on the USEC booklet's inside front cover advises the owner about excluded matter for which his free pasters will not pay. It reads:

"These pasters do NOT cover the free transportation of MONEY, BONDS, OR VALUABLES, and must not be used therefor."

As you may recall, a similar restriction appeared on the USEC complimentary card's back. We conclude from the above admonition that the pasters were used primarily to pay for transporting large and small personal packages. Section 45 or 46 of the USEC Book of Instructions probably provided additional definition and restrictions that described acceptable matter that could be shipped free with paster "payment." The USEC Book may also explain how the express agent was to handle the excluded matter if a paster-owner tried to use his franks to pay for shipping costs of money, bonds or other valuables.

We know historically that express companies at the turn of the century, and probably during earlier years, usually provided these customer services:

1. Collect the customer's parcel free of charge.
2. Provide parcel insurance up to \$50 for the normal delivery fee, but additional insurance of up to any amount could be contracted for through special (extra) fees.
3. Accept all sizes and weights of parcels without limitation.
4. Deliver parcels for customers for a fee.
5. Collect fee from consignee at destination



free of charge.

6. Collect cost of article itself to any amount (i.e. COD charges).

7. Buy pre-defined articles for a customer for a fee.

8. Sell consigned articles for customers for a fee.

This author guesses that the USEC's inside booklet cover stipulations in this paragraph made it very obvious to the user that his pasters were not valid to buy for any extra insurance fees, COD charges, article purchase fees, article sales fees or money/valuables package fees. If any questions about these restrictions arose during shipment consignments, the express agent should have been well versed in these USEC customer services and would have enlightened the consignor.

The first paragraph on the inside back cover instructs the USEC Billing Agent, and delivers an implied message to the paster owner. It reads:

"Pasters must be cancelled when used, by the Billing Agent stamping or writing the date of shipment thereon."

This admonition apprises the owner that he will be able to use his pasters only once. This author has seen only one photocopy of a nicely cancelled USEC complimentary paster--MAR or APR 20 1888 on a type II paster--and is eager to find more cancel dated examples to examine. The closest USEC dated cancel examples in this au-

"If in error matter is billed 'to collect,' pasters may be accepted for this Company's charges. In such cases the pasters must be cancelled and affixed to the way-bill."

Note the specific instruction that the pasters be put on the waybill and cancelled. When normally used, we expect that the pasters were affixed directly to the transported packages when the USEC forwarding agent collected them. This author is now anxiously looking for 19th century, USEC waybill examples with cancelled pasters on them.

We can speculate that the USEC's stipulated "If in error" condition was one way it could condone its agent's acceptance of paster-user's packages under circumstances where the paster owner was not personally present to turn over his parcel to the agent (or perhaps when he couldn't immediately produce his pasters). Based on the previous description of potential complimentary frank recipients, i.e. express, railroad and government officials, etc.; it is easy to postulate some express shipping situations in which the shipper was not present when his packages were to be consigned for shipment, so he engaged someone else to submit same on a collect shipment basis.

The last inside back cover paragraph stipulates the USEC's liability limitations when the pasters are used by their recipients:

"In CONSIDERATION of the FREE trans-

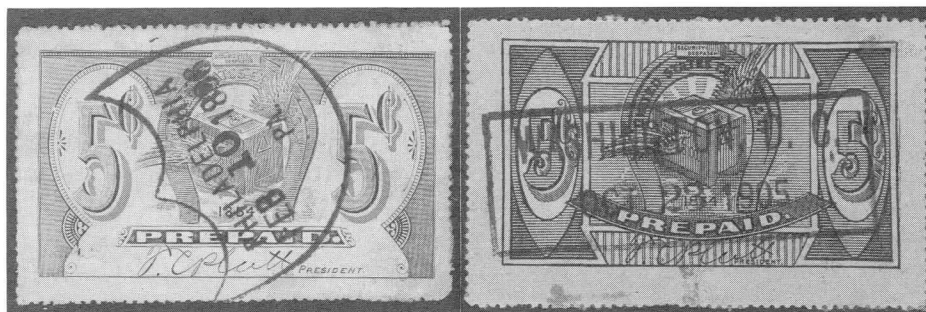


Figure 17. Cancelled United States Express Company 5-cent prepaid

stamps.

thor's collection are shown in Fig. 17. A FEB 10 1896 Philadelphia shield-design cancels the 5c USEC prepaid stamp shown at the left; an OCT 23 1905 Washington, D.C., cancel appears on the 5c prepaid stamp to the right. This author anticipates that similar cancel stampings were used by the USEC to obviate its pasters.

The second back cover paragraph explains how pasters can be used to pay "collect" waybills:

portation of the matter to which these pasters are attached, the UNITED STATES EXPRESS COMPANY WILL NOT BE LIABLE for any LOSS or DAMAGE to the shipment in question, even if caused by the gross carelessness of its agents or employees."

The paster recipient appears to have been required to ship his packages totally at his own risk, which as stated, may have portrayed a situation of potential shipping jeopardy for the con-

signor. However, most historians tell us that the express companies and their agents, especially the major forwarders like the USEC, were overwhelmingly very honest and reliable. Thus this liability limitation probably was not nearly as risky as it may have sounded. As you might recall, the USEC's No. 142 complimentary card's back contained a similar disclaimer statement about patron usage. No doubt these liability limitations were included in the paster booklets and on the complimentary cards for legal reasons so the USEC's lawyers would suppress user claims in the event of package loss or damage.

### More USEC Complimentary Franks

The USEC issued another type II paster-frank that is perforated 14 and is sepia colored (Michaels calls is black-brown). These franks are otherwise identical in design characteristics to the roulette 13 pasters shown in Fig. 2, and probably also came in booklets, certainly with smaller and perhaps identical designs and inscriptions shown on the covers illustrated in Figs. 1 and 3.

A larger style of USEC-issued complimen-

author for examination to identify the quantity of franks. The top inscription on this frank reads: "The United States Express Company will pass over its lines one package not exceeding 20 pounds in weight to which this frank is attached." This author's intuition is that this USEC frank was issued after the type I and II pasters. USEC definitely called this large complimentary frank a frank and not a paster, it bears a serialized control number, and its bottom is marked with this usage control restriction: "Good only \_\_\_\_\_ days from \_\_\_\_\_ when countersigned by \_\_\_\_\_," where the blanks were undoubtedly filled in when the booklet was issued to some worthy recipient. This design with its usage constraints is a significant departure from the type I and II complimentary pasters from the USEC.

The Fig. 18 frank's inscriptions definitely suggest that the USEC decided to tighten up its complimentary frank distribution policy when it issued them in this style. The No. 16914 control number indicates that USEC possibly issued thousands of this frank type. One question is whether the booklet covers that presumably contained these franks contained any blank spaces

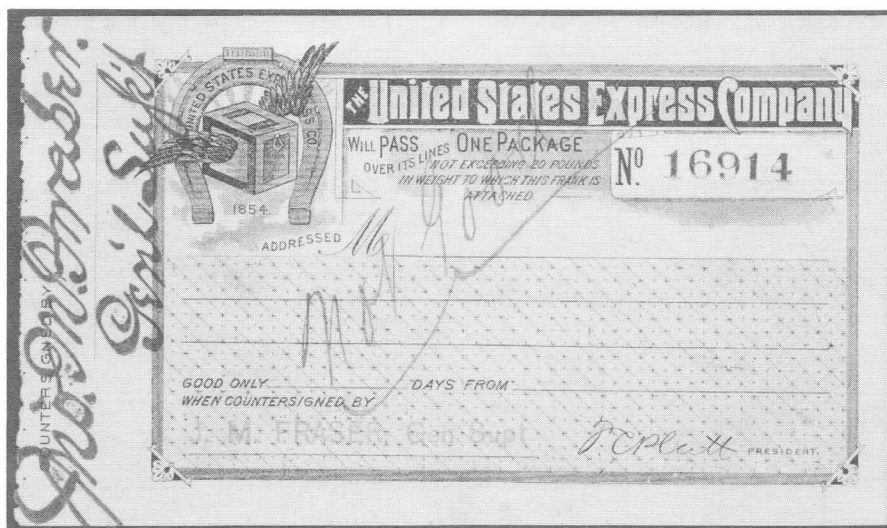


Figure 18. Large United States Express Company complimentary frank

tary frank is illustrated in Fig. 18. It measures 68x117mm, appears to be vertically perforated 8 along its left edge and very probably came from a booklet of multiple franks since its other three sides are imperforate. This author would be surprised if the host booklet (assuming this was the issued format) contained more than 10 franks, but no bookleted examples are available to the

that may have come from a booklet.

for recording the recipient's identity. The "Not Good" handwritten notation on this illustrated frank possibly suggests that USEC had significantly increased its control over complimentary frank distribution. Someone at USEC may have significantly voided the previously countersigned specimen shown in Fig. 10 (theoretically, it was validated earlier by John Fraser's signature and



could have been used on USEC's lines) and then apparently gave it to a requester who was not authorized to use it--perhaps a contemporary stamp collector?

Incidentally, about 1880 John M. Fraser was the superintendent of the Delaware, Lackawanna and Western railroad express--a subsidiary of Adams Express--with 900 miles of railroad route. He was also superintendent of Westcott's Long Island Express about this same time. We also find that in 1886, C.A. DeWitt and C. Cone were the General Superintendents of USEC's Eastern and Western Divisions, respectively. So this author doubts that Fraser was employed by USEC until 1887 or later.

In about 1880, USEC organized the Erie and New England Express Co. (E&NEEC) that procured equal shipping privileges with the Adams Express and other express companies over the New York and New England (approximately 470 route miles), Fitchburg (approximately 150 route miles) and other New England railroads. George R. Blanchard is the only recorded president of E&NEEC. The "equal opportunity" express arrangement caused a lot of spirited, but unprofitable, competition among the several express companies operating over these railroads. A peace conference was subsequently arranged among the competing express companies that led to the dissolution of the short-lived E&NEEC in 1883. Blanchard moved on to USEC's Board of Directors after his E&NEEC service.

During its short existence, E&NEEC issued the green complimentary franks illustrated in Fig. 19 that measure 39x66mm. As previously noted, these franks bear the imprint of the Kendall Bank Note Co. across the bottom. Because the majority of the known E&NEEC franks are imperforate on two or three sides, it seems probable they were issued in booklets and panes similar to the USEC paster format. The printed message on these franks states that they are "good also between offices of the Erie & New England Express and the United States Express Companies." Although the E&NEEC only existed for three years, we could speculate that its franks saw continued use on USEC lines long after this firm's 1883 demise.

E&NEEC franks contain the familiar "SECURITY DESPATCH" phrase that is found on the horseshoe's toe cleat on some versions of USEC's corporate logo design (e.g. the logo on the Fig. 1 booklet cover). Note that E&NEEC adhesives are prominently labeled as a "FRANK," they conspicuously display the word "COMPLIMENTARY," and they contain serialized control numbers. This is in stark contrast to the type I and II USEC paster-frank inscriptions



Figure 19. Erie and New England Express Company complimentary frank design.

already discussed. The fact that E&NEEC and USEC type I/II franks may have been issued within a year or two of each other in the 1880-83 timeframe adds to the mystery of why USEC pasters were unserialized.

### United States Express Company History

USEC was started on May 1, 1854, by American Express Company to provide package transportation service on the New York, Lake Erie and Western Railroad (later called the New York and Erie, or just the Erie Railroad) lines. D.N. Barney, a New York banker who had become a large American Express stockholder, became the first USEC president. USEC developed into a large and prosperous express company throughout the remainder of the century. Historians usually speak of USEC as being the third largest of the great express companies, behind the Adams and Wells Fargo. USEC provided express merchandise delivery service via negotiated contracts on many different U.S. railroads over its lifetime.

The large 19th century express companies generally followed the nation's railroads with their express services. These express companies, USEC among them, seemed to continually add, delete and modify the exclusive and shared express contracts with a large number of large and small railroad lines. The express company heydeys coincided with the premier growth and development period for our country's railroads. Railroad companies were constantly being organized, started, expanded, consolidated, merged, terminated and disbanded. This continuous dynamic railroad activity over many years (e.g. a 60-year span for USEC's operating lifetime) provided a very volatile framework for the many express companies who competitively chased the ever-changing railroad lines and their routes.



Figure 20. Combination express company customer routing label.

During its corporate lifetime, USEC predominately provided express services in the eastern United States outside of New England and north of the southern states, in the Middle West, and over several western routes to as far west as Ogden, Utah. USEC is known to have made express arrangements with the Pacific Express Company (PEC) and Wells, Fargo and Company (WFC) for shipping merchandise from and to the California coastal cities. The customer routing label shown in Fig. 20 promoted this liaison with PEC. It was in business from 1879 to 1911 and had a traffic agreement with USEC from 1882 to 1902. PEC is known to have shipped packages over the Union Pacific Railroad to as far east as Ogden, Utah. We can guess that during the 20-year agreement period, PEC and USEC exchanged express packages at Ogden, with the USEC transporting eastward on the Central Pacific Railroad. WFC and USEC also were known to have exchanged west-east and east-west express packages, many times at Ogden, Utah, or Omaha, Nebraska.

Three historical references provide some insight into USEC's primary operational areas during 1880, 1887 and early in 1914. A summary of these business activity profiles is tabulated in Table I with supporting 1887 railroad carrier information in Table II. The first profile comes from Alexander Stimson's book, *History of the Express Business*, that was published in 1881 and provides a broad overview of the major companies' business throughout the nation during 1879-80. The 1887 edition of Rand, McNally's *Business Atlas and Shippers' Guide* lists the hundreds of railroads operating within the United States that year with identification of the express company(s) contracted to move merchandise over each railroad plus each road's principal state of operations.

Information for the second USEC profile comes from the Atlas and Guide's contents. The 67 railroad lines cited in Table II all used USEC

express services (including USEC's then current Baltimore & Ohio Express route acquisitions) in 1887; 49 of these roads had exclusive USEC contracts. As previously mentioned, William Chandler published a list of the thousands of express offices located in each state plus the District of Columbia in 1914. Chandler identified those cities serviced by a dozen prominent U.S. and Canadian express companies. The third profile is found in the next to last column in Table I where the number of USEC express offices found in each state are listed, based on Chandler's information. We can see that in 1914 USEC operated over 25% of the existing express offices found in Arkansas, District of Columbia, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Missouri, New Jersey, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia.

These three historical references contained no mention of any USEC activity in the many states/territories that are not listed in Table I, so we can pretty well visualize USEC's overall sphere of business interest by examining the operating locations in these three profiles. Several of the USEC's prepaid newspaper stamps (bearing T.C. Platt's facsimile signature) provide additional insight about USEC's major business areas. These stamps state that they are valid for use at any USEC office in Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, Iowa, Minnesota, and Wisconsin. The usage dates of these newspaper stamps, other than sometime between 1880 and 1910, are unknown at this time.

In the late 1870s, Henry Kip became USEC president in addition to accomplishing his General Superintendent duties that he had faithfully accomplished for many preceding years. It appears that he may have directly succeeded Barney, but there may have been another USEC president(s) in between them. USEC stock certificates issued in 1868 and 1873 have been seen with Barney's signature as USEC president. A 1873 USEC stock certificate exists with Kip's signature as president, but this author suspects he signed for Barney because Stimson's book quotes an 1876 USEC operations memo authored by Kip who is listed as General Superintendent.

Henry Kip was a very respected USEC express manager for a number of years in its western operations out of Buffalo, N.Y.. He appears to have been interim president for a fairly short time, perhaps less than a year, while the USEC sought a more permanent, and probably higher profile, president. Kip did become vice-president during his successor's (i.e. T.C. Platt) administration.

In 1879, Thomas Collier Platt (Fig. 21) from Owego, N.Y., became secretary and director of



the United States Express Company and then was elected president in February 1880. Thomas Platt apparently was a very dynamic congressman and USEC president. He is variously described as a powerful Republican boss, a wily troublemaker, a lean and crafty capitalist-politician, and a recognized leader in New York Republican politics for years. Platt was a member of Congress from 1873 to 1877, and a U.S. Senator from 1897 to 1909. He was a member of the New York Republican State Committee and served on the Executive Committee of the Republican National Committee. He also is remembered as being president of the Southern Central Railroad and president of the Addison and Northern Pennsylvania Railroad. Platt died on March 6, 1910, at the age of 76. His replacement as USEC president, if any, is unknown at this time.

The once great USEC went out of business in 1914. Its liquidation occurred on June 30th, and its remaining lines were divided among the Adams, American and Wells Fargo Express Companies. The USPOD Parcel Post System debuted in 1913 and quickly provided devastatingly low-rate, "light-package" delivery competition for all the express companies. This new government sponsored competition, plus business exploitation by the Adams and American Express Companies, are credited as the most significant causes that felled the once mighty USEC.

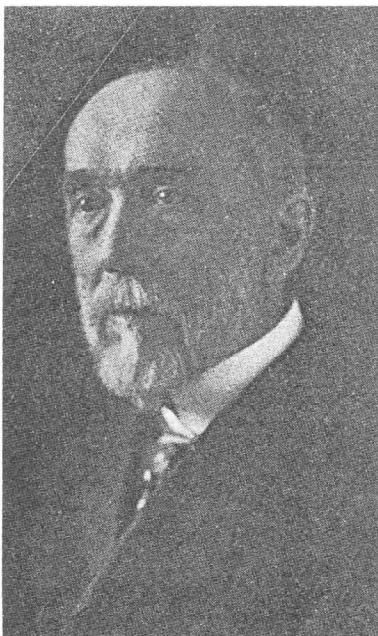


Figure 21. T.C. Platt, United States Express Company President from 1880 to 1910 (photo from *Old Waybills*).



Courtesy, Colorado Historical Society

Figure 22. U.S. Senator Edward Oliver Wolcott.

In his *Old Waybills* book, Alvin Harlow explains that U.S. express companies in the 19th century were primarily publicly held companies that contemptuously provided little information to their stockholders and other inquisitors. The express companies reportedly refused to give any significant information to the U.S. Census Bureau inquiries in 1880 and then provided little government-solicited information during the 1890 census. In 1906 the express companies purportedly admitted that they had not kept any general statistics regarding their own businesses. Harlow reports that after the Civil War period, the great express companies (including USEC) ceased to hold stockholders' meetings. USEC did not hold one from its 1862 meeting until its dissolution meeting in 1914.

The express companies' exclusion policies help to explain why so little has been written about USEC and its complimentary franking and prepaid stamping practices. Historical and philatelic researchers are constrained in analyzing the surviving USEC service-receipt emissions, such as those extolled in this report, in order to partially reconstruct how they conducted their express business. Fortunately, however, several

good books and journal articles exist that also explain some of the express companies' evolution and history. These references provide valuable assistance for understanding the sometime mysterious express company operations during the 19th century's second half.

### The Honorable E.O. Wolcott

As noted above, the USEC booklet of complimentary express paster-franks shown in Fig. 1 was apparently given to Sen. Edward Oliver Wolcott from Denver, Colo. (Fig. 22). Wolcott was a Republican senator from 1889 to 1901 and he resided at "Wolhurst," a modest 500-acre estate on Denver's outskirts. He was most noted for his involvement in the U.S.s 1890s bimetalism controversy during President McKinley's first term. The president appointed Wolcott to head a commission that went to Europe to attempt to negotiate for international bimetalism. History tells us his commission's efforts were not very successful.

Wolcott also became involved in the national controversy over the 1893 Columbus commemorative stamp series. In 1893, postmasters and others around the country were outspoken against the stamps because they felt they were too large and too different from the customary regular issue stamps. Wolcott introduced a joint resolution before the Congress that would require the POD to end general sales of the Columbians while making them available only when specially requested by postal patrons. This matter was thoroughly reviewed by Postmaster General Wilson Bissell in the spring of 1893. He decided in favor of continuing public sales of the already printed Columbians, a decision that received significant Congressional support and Sen. Wolcott's resolution was defeated.

This author strongly suspects that Wolcott travelled back and forth many times between Denver and Washington during his terms as U.S. senator. No doubt he extensively travelled by rail and presumably shipped some of his personal belongings via the express companies. The USEC complimentary franks were undoubtedly a welcome gift to Wolcott to defray some of his expenses when transporting his personal property.

But why did Wolcott receive USEC franks? Was the USEC the only company to give express franks to him? We'll never know the answer to the latter, but let this author postulate a rationale in response to the first question. Thomas Platt was a strong Republican leader and is known to have lobbied hard with other Republican Con-



Figure 23. Postmaster General John Wanamaker (photo from *The Story of our Post Office*).

gressman against the Postmaster General's attempts to initiate a parcel post system within the POD. John Wanamaker (Fig. 23) was Postmaster General from 1889 to 1893. During his term, he remarked that four great obstacles to the existed to the creation of a national parcels post--the Adams, American, Wells Fargo and United States Express companies.

Platt and other express company presidents or officers no doubt engaged in soliciting all the Congressional support they could muster to defeat PMG Wanamaker's, and his successor's, endeavors to start a national parcels post system. One way to obtain and possibly sustain Congressional support against the POD system was to hand out complimentary express company franks to the most influential legislating members who might defeat the parcels post initiative.

### Probable Issue Dates

USEC paster-franks discussed in this report all contain the facsimile signature of T.C. Platt as president. Since Platt held this office from 1880 to 1910, it seems reasonable to conclude that all the cited USEC franks, the prepaid stamps, and



other USEC emissions bearing his facsimile signature were issued sometime during those 30 years. In 1908, the U.S. government enjoined five express companies, including USEC, from transporting property in exchange for franks because the franks' issuance was a violation of our country's interstate commerce laws. This legal action may well have terminated the express company's policy of issuing complimentary franks to its favorite sponsors, patrons and employees. This 1908 decision may also define the last year in which the express companies issued complimentary franks (or pasters). We would note by way of partial confirmation that 1908 is the last year that Springer records the issuance of various dated complimentary express franks (i.e. the 1908 franks from Wells Fargo and Company of the design shown in Fig. 9).

The Fig. 1 booklet was issued to Sen. Wolcott who held Congressional office from 1889 to 1901. That public service period bounds the 12 years during which USEC probably issued this booklet to Wolcott. Platt also was a U.S. senator from 1897 to 1901 and this four-year overlapping Congressional period may further narrow the timeframe during which Wolcott was issued his complimentary booklet. Wolcott died sometime in 1905.

### Acknowledgements

Special thanks to Betsy Towle of the Postal History Foundation for introducing me to *Old Waybills*, a fascinating and factual romance about the history of many U.S. express companies, and for her other research help at the PHF Library. The author also wants to thank Sherwood Springer for permission to reference his Handbook material and to Frank Q. Newton Jr. for his review and excellent suggestions to improve this report.

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Table I. Three Profiles of United States Express Company national activity.

STATE	1 A. L. STIMSON'S 1880 ACCOUNT	2 RAND McNALLY'S 1887 PRINCIPAL RAILROAD ROUTES	CHANDLER'S JAN. 1914 GUIDE		
			TOTAL EXP. OFFICES	3 USEC OFFICES	USEC PORTION
Alabama	<i>(USEC not mentioned in this state)</i>	<i>(No USEC RRs cited)</i>	520	16	3 %
Arkansas	<i>(USEC not mentioned in this state)</i>	<i>(No USEC RRs cited)</i>	525	169	32 %
Colorado	Via other express connections	<i>(No USEC RRs cited)</i>	375	17	5 %
Delaware	<i>(USEC not mentioned in this state)</i>	<i>(No USEC RRs cited)</i>	75	14	19 %
Dist. Columbia	<i>(USEC not mentioned in this state)</i>	<i>(No USEC RRs cited)</i>	8	6	75 %
Illinois	Several busy USEC cities	7 USEC RRs, see Table II	1650	383	23 %
Indiana	<i>(USEC not mentioned in this state)</i>	6 USEC RRs, see Table II	945	324	35 %
Iowa	40% of Iowa's express business	7 USEC RRs, see Table II	1200	325	27 %
Kansas	Considerable USEC business	<i>(No USEC RRs cited)</i>	900	221	25 %
Kentucky	<i>(USEC not mentioned in this state)</i>	<i>(No USEC RRs cited)</i>	560	4	<1 %
Louisiana	<i>(USEC not mentioned in this state)</i>	<i>(No USEC RRs cited)</i>	520	54	10 %
Maryland	<i>(USEC not mentioned in this state)</i>	<i>(No USEC RRs cited)</i>	465	112	24 %
Michigan	Over 100 USEC offices	1 USEC RR, see Table II	925	328	35 %
Minnesota	Limited USEC operations	3 USEC RRs, see Table II	880	49	6 %
Mississippi	<i>(USEC not mentioned in this state)</i>	<i>(No USEC RRs cited)</i>	550	23	4 %
Missouri	St. L. and Columbus USEC offices	2 USEC RRs, see Table II	965	313	32 %
Montana	Considerable USEC business in Montana Territory	<i>(No USEC RRs cited)</i>	300	0	0
Nebraska	Exclusively USEC and AMEX	<i>(No USEC RRs cited)</i>	600	35	6 %
New Jersey	USEC in northern portion of state	1 USEC RR, see Table II	585	259	44 %
New Mexico	<i>(USEC not mentioned in NM Terr.)</i>	<i>(No USEC RRs cited)</i>	160	9	6 %
New York	USEC in much of the state	11 USEC RRs; Table II	1580	272	17 %
Ohio	USEC in most of the state	13 USEC RRs; Table II	1310	451	34 %
Oklahoma	<i>(USEC not mention. in Indian Terr.)</i>	<i>(No USEC RRs cited)</i>	600	313	52 %
Pennsylvania	Large USEC business	10 USEC RRs; Table II	1895	642	34 %
South Dakota	<i>(USEC not ment. in Dakota Terr.)</i>	<i>(No USEC RRs cited)</i>	390	10	3 %
Texas	<i>(USEC not mentioned in this state)</i>	<i>(No USEC RRs cited)</i>	1200	93	8 %
Virginia	<i>(USEC not mentioned in this state)</i>	<i>(No USEC RRs cited)</i>	765	31	4 %
West Virginia	<i>(USEC not mentioned in this state)</i>	4 USEC RRs, see Table II	600	223	37 %
Wisconsin	Exclusively USEC and AMEX for the prior 20 years	2 USEC RRs, see Table II	800	7	<1 %

AMEX = American Express Company      EXP. = EXPRESS

USEC = United States Express Company      &lt; = less than



Table II. United States Express Company Railroad Routes

(Source: Business Atlas &amp; Shippers' Guide, Rand, McNally &amp; Co., 1887)

Page 1 of 2

Contemporary Railroad Name	Primary State	Other Express Co.
Addison & Northern Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania +	
Baltimore & Ohio	West Virginia	(Was B & O Express)
Baltimore & Ohio & Chicago	Indiana +	(Was B & O Express)
Bangor & Portland & Martin's Creek Branch	Pennsylvania	
Bath & Hammondsport	New York	
Bowling Green & Toledo	Ohio	
Bradford, Bordell & Kinzua	Pennsylvania	
Bradford, Eldred & Cuba	Pennsylvania +	
Burlington, Cedar Rapids & Northern	Iowa	
Central Iowa	Iowa	
Chagrin Falls & Southern	Ohio	
Chicago, Burlington & Quincy	Illinois	American
Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul	Wisconsin	American
Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific	Iowa +	
Chicago, St. Louis & Pittsburgh	Indiana +	Adams
Chicago, St. Paul & Kansas City	Iowa +	
Chicago & Alton	Illinois +	
Chicago & Atlantic	Ohio	
Chicago & Indiana Coal	Indiana +	
Chicago & North-Western	Wisconsin +	American
Cincinnati, Hamilton & Dayton	Ohio	
Cincinnati, Jackson & Mackinaw	Ohio	
Cincinnati Northwestern	Ohio	Adams, American
Cincinnati, Wabash & Michigan	Indiana +	
Cincinnati, Washington & Baltimore	Ohio	(Was B & O Express)
Clarksburgh, Weston & Glenville	West Virginia	(Was B & O Express)
Cleveland, Columbus, Cincinnati & Indianapolis	Ohio	American
Corning, Cowanesque & Antrim	Pennsylvania +	American
Dayton & Union	Ohio	
Delaware, Lackawanna & Western	Pennsylvania +	
Des Moines & Fort Dodge	Iowa +	
Elmira, Cortland & Northern	New York	
Erie & Wyoming Valley	Pennsylvania +	
Geneva, Ithaca & Sayre	New York	
Grand Rapids & Indiana	Michigan	
Indiana, Bloomington & Western	Illinois +	American
Indiana, Illinois & Iowa	Iowa +	
Jacksonville Southeastern	Illinois +	
Kanawha & Ohio	West Virginia	Adams
Lackawanna & Pittsburgh	New York	

Table II. United States Express Company Railroad Routes

(Source: Business Atlas &amp; Shippers' Guide, Rand, McNally &amp; Co., 1887)

Page 2 of 2

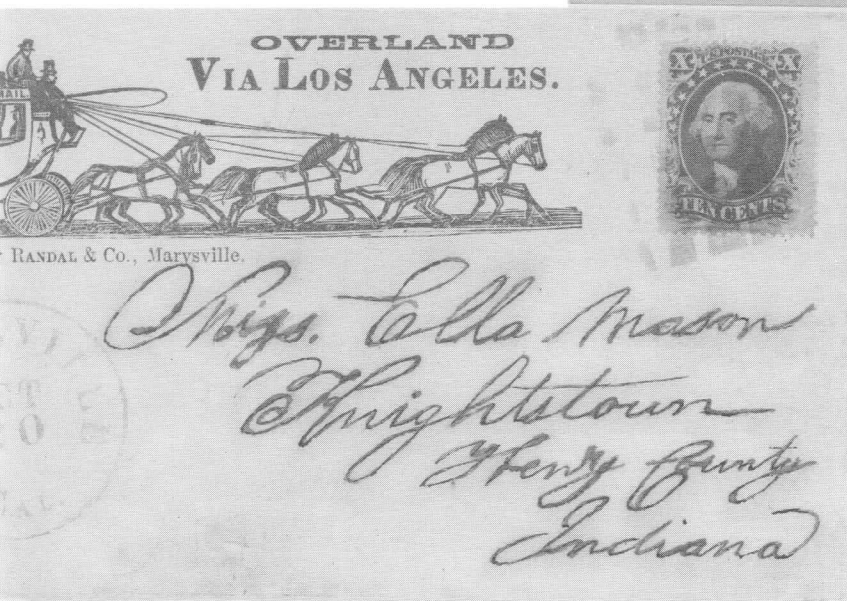
Contemporary Railroad Name	Primary State	Other Express Co.
Lake Champlain & Moriah	New York	
Lake Erie & Western	Indiana +	
Lake Shore & Michigan Southern	Ohio	American
Laurel Fork & Sand Hill	West Virginia	(Was B & O Express)
Litchfield, Carrollton & Western	Illinois +	
Little Sawmill Run	Pennsylvania +	(Was B & O Express)
Midland of Indiana	Indiana +	
Minneapolis, Lyndale & Minnetonka	Minnesota	American
Minneapolis & St. Louis	Minnesota	
Mount Hope Mineral	New Jersey	
New Jersey & New York	New York	
New York, Chicago & St. Louis	Ohio	American
Northern Central	Pennsylvania +	Adams
Ohio & Mississippi	Illinois +	(Was B & O Express)
Ohio Southern	Ohio	
Pittsburgh & Western	Pennsylvania	Pitts & West, (Was B & O)
Rochester & Lake Ontario	New York	American
Rock Island & Peoria	Illinois +	
Southern Central	New York	
St. Louis, Creve Coeur & St. Charles	Missouri	Adams, American
St. Louis, Des Moines & Northern	Iowa +	
St. Paul & Duluth	Minnesota	American
Sterling Mountain	New York	
Toledo & Ohio Central	Ohio	
Tonawanda Valley & Cuba	New York	
Wabash, St. Louis & Pacific	Missouri	Pacific
Walkill Valley	New York	



THE "BUTTERFIELD" OVERLAND ROUTE

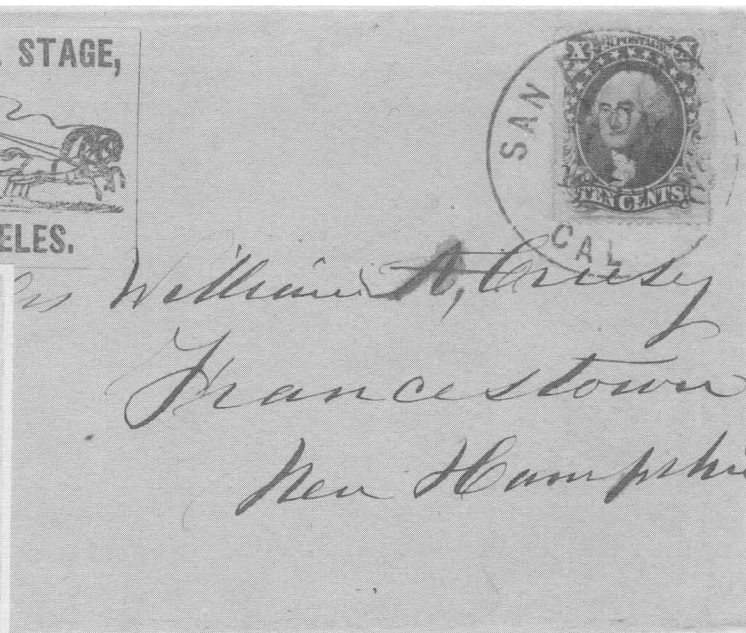
NOVEMBER 14, 1859

OCTOBER 20, 1860



MARYSVILLE

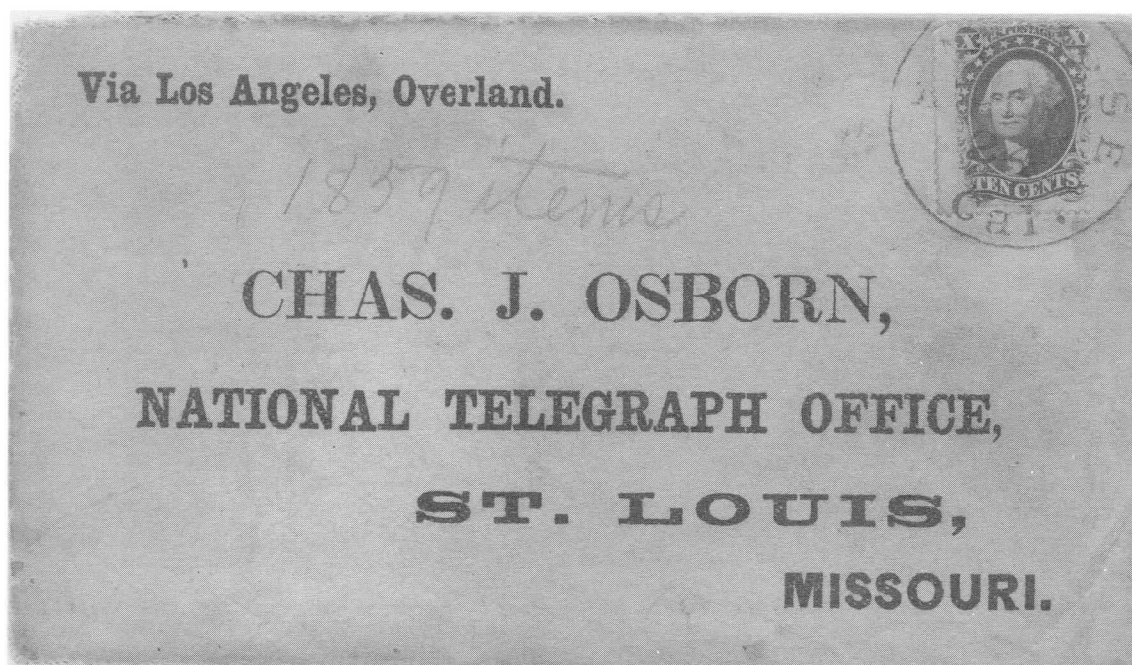
HEIGHTSTOWN, INDIANA



SAN FRANCISCO -  
FRANCESTOWN, NEW HAMPSHIRE

TO THE NATIONAL TELEGRAPH OFFICE

1859



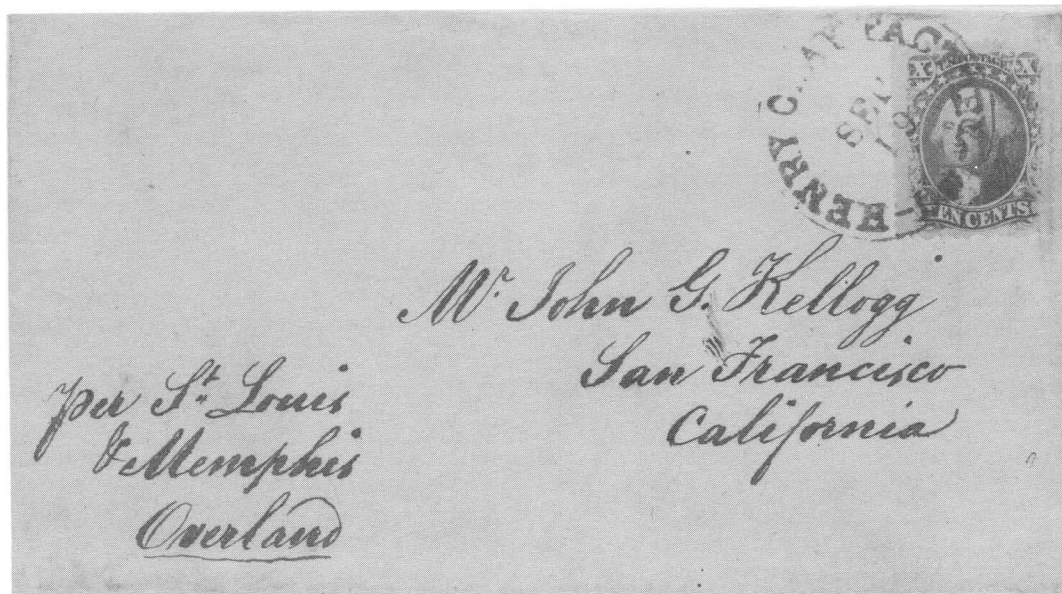
SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA

ST. LOUIS

THE "BUTTERFIELD" OVERLAND ROUTE

EAST - WEST

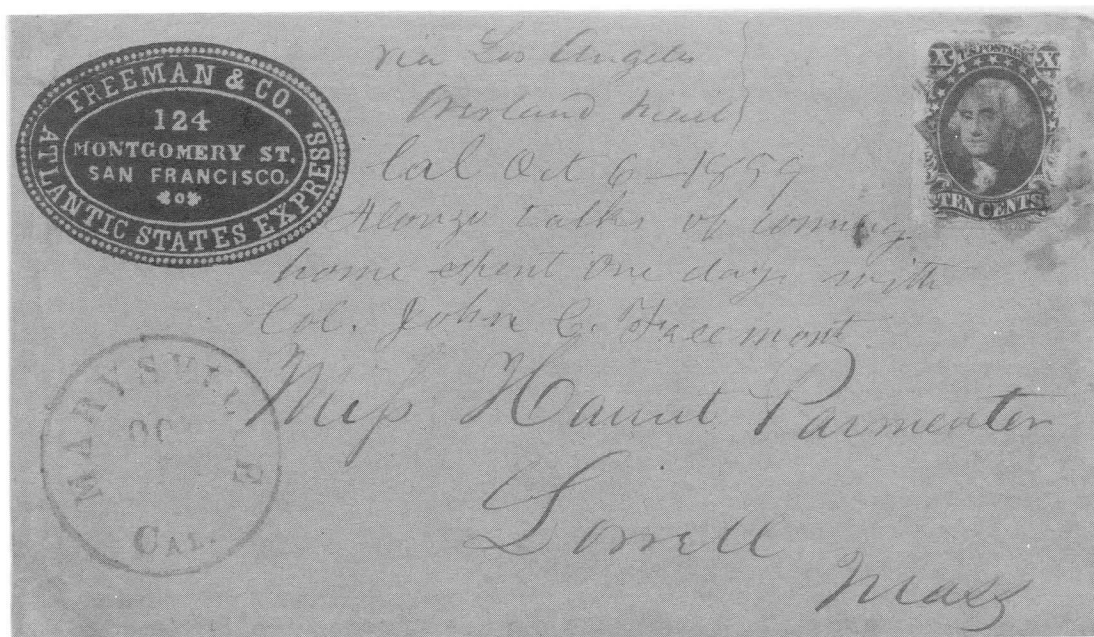
SEPTEMBER 19, CIRCA 1859



HENRY CLAY FACTORY, MARYLAND - "PER ST. LOUIS & MEMPHIS OVERLAND" - SAN FRANCISCO

FREEMAN & CO.

OCTOBER 6, 1859



FREEMAN & CO. MARYSVILLE, CALIFORNIA OCTOBER 6  
BUTTERFIELD OVERLAND ROUTE

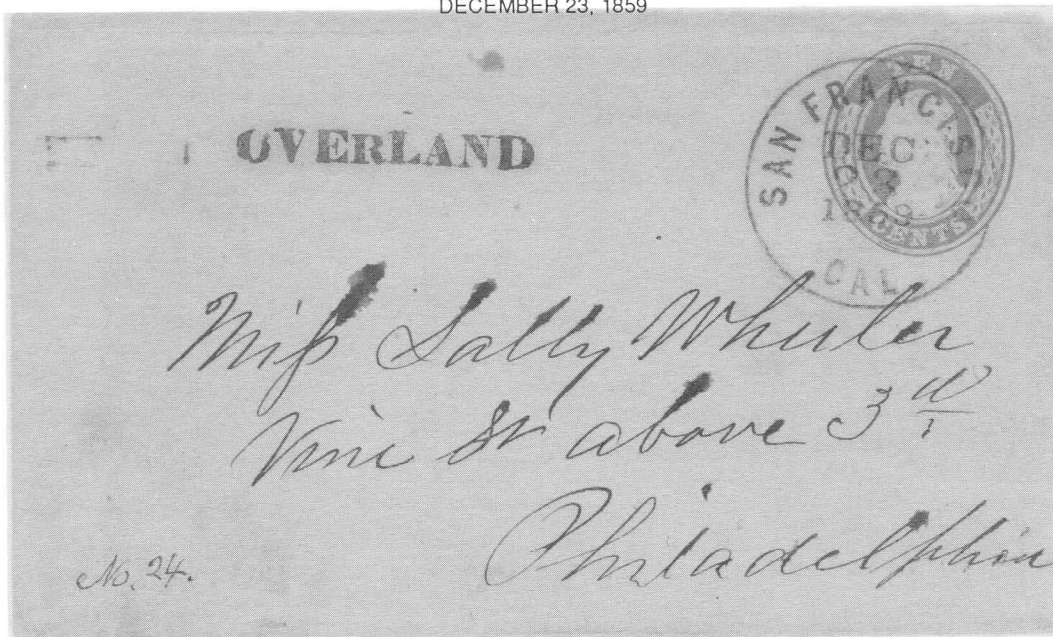
MARYSVILLE PO OCTOBER 7  
LOWELL, MASSACHUSETTS

"VIA LOS ANGELES OVERLAND MAIL  
GEORGE TALKS OF COMING HOME  
SPENT ONE DAY WITH COL. JOHN C. FREEMONT"



THE "BUTTERFIELD" OVERLAND ROUTE

DECEMBER 23, 1859

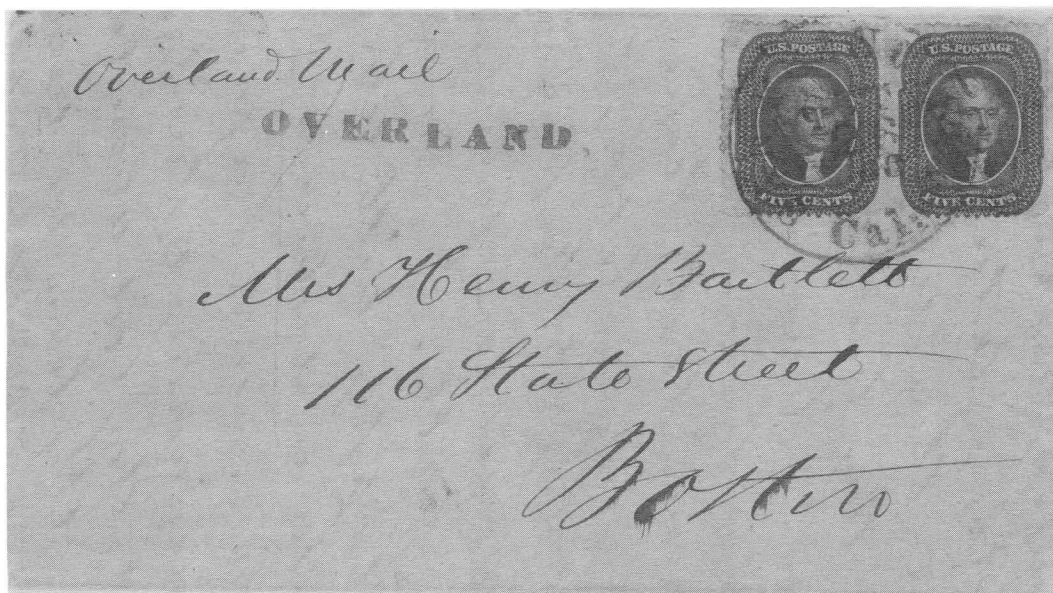


SAN FRANCISCO

PHILADELPHIA

STRAIGHTLINE CANCELLATIONS

OCTOBER 26, 1860



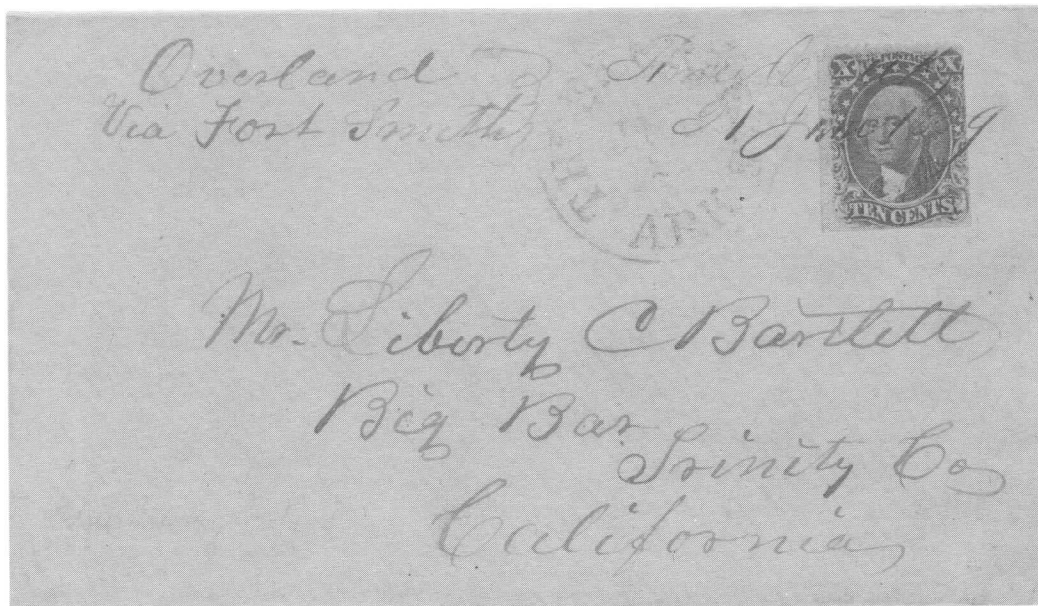
SAN FRANCISCO

THE FIVE CENT 1857 PAIR IS TYPE II.

BOSTON

THE "BUTTERFIELD" OVERLAND ROUTE

JUNE 21, 1859

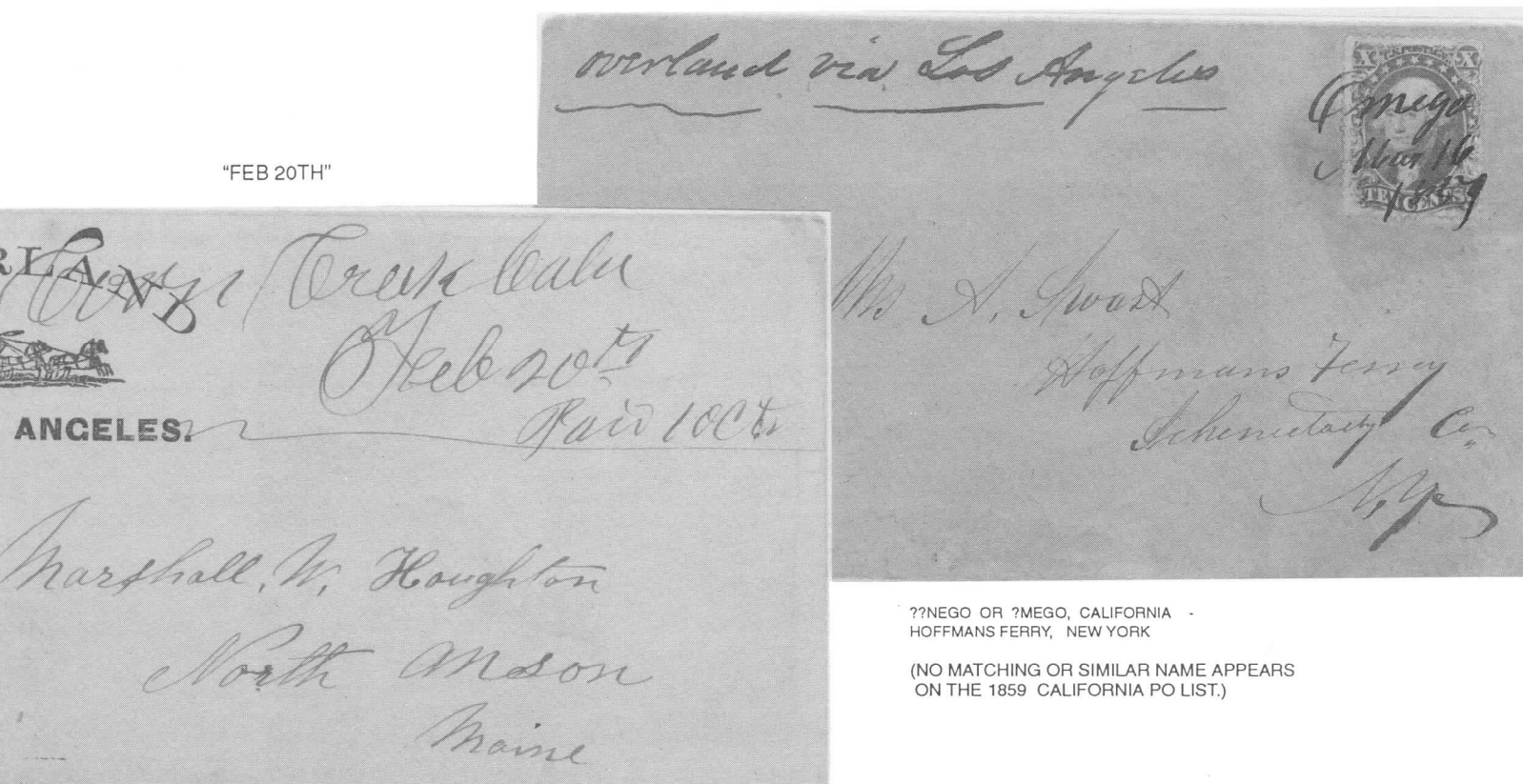


THREE CREEKS, ARKANSAS

BIG BAR, CALIFORNIA

MANUSCRIPT CANCELLATIONS / ENDORSEMENTS

MARCH 16, 1859



"FEB 20TH"

??NEGO OR ?MEGO, CALIFORNIA -  
HOFFMANS FERRY, NEW YORK

(NO MATCHING OR SIMILAR NAME APPEARS  
ON THE 1859 CALIFORNIA PO LIST.)

"COON CREEK CALA"

NORTH MASON, MAINE

"PAID 10 CTS"



## THREE CENTS OVER THE MOUNTAINS RATE

MARCH 11, 1859



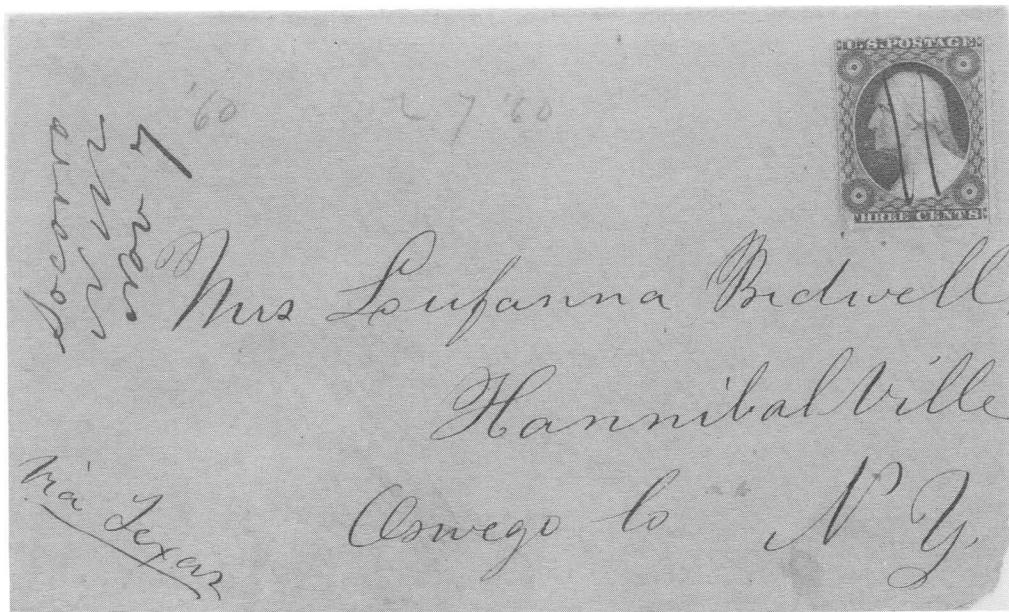
SAN FRANCISCO - "VIA LOS ANGELES OVERLAND" - ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

THE THREE CENTS RATE VIA THE BUTTERFIELD OVERLAND ROUTE WAS GENERALLY APPLIED TO MAIL CARRIED OVER A PORTION OF THE FULL ROUTE; IN THIS CASE, THE ENTIRE ROUTE WAS TRAVERSED. THE RATE WAS IN EFFECT FROM APRIL 1, 1855 THROUGH FEBRUARY 27, 1861.

## THE "BUTTERFIELD" OVERLAND ROUTE

## SANTA FE BRANCH "VIA TEXAS"

NOVEMBER 8, 1860



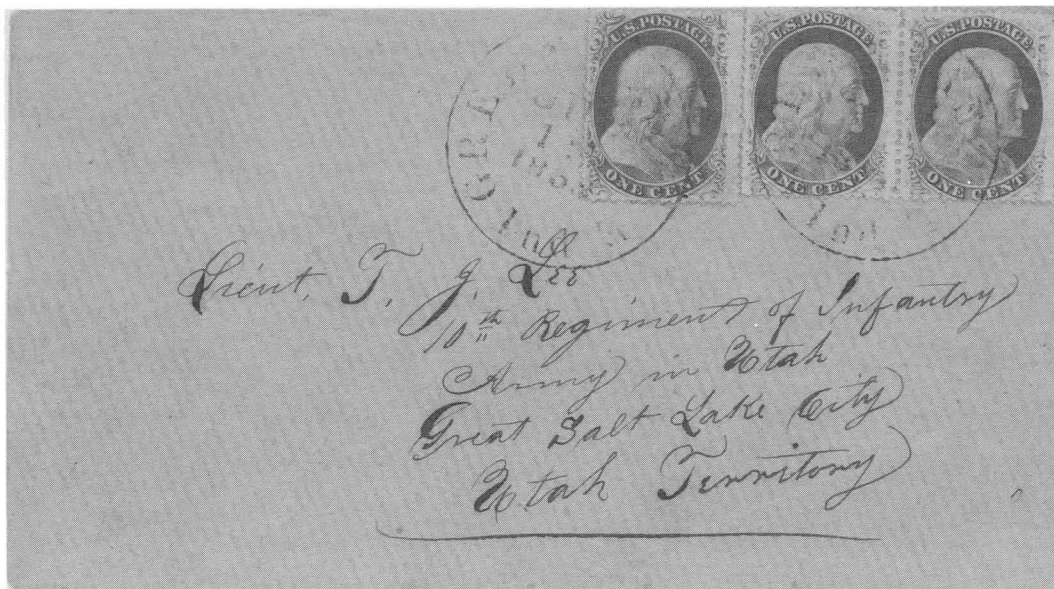
SOCORRO, NEW MEXICO TERRITORY - MESILLA - "VIA TEXAS" - HANNIBALVILLE, NEW YORK

FROM THE SPRING OF 1860 INTO MARCH 1861, THE BUTTERFIELD OVERLAND MAIL COMPANY OPERATED A BRANCH LINE FROM THE SOUTHERN JUNCTION OF MESILLA NORTH TO SANTA FE. SOCORRO WAS MIDWAY AND THE NORMAL ROUTING FOR THIS COVER WOULD HAVE BEEN NORTH ON THE SANTA FE TRAIL. THEREFORE, THERE WAS VERY LITTLE USAGE ON THIS BRANCH.

THIS COVER WAS RATED THREE CENTS BECAUSE THE DISTANCE FROM NEW MEXICO IS LESS THAN 3000 MILES.

## "ARMY IN UTAH"

JULY 13, 1858

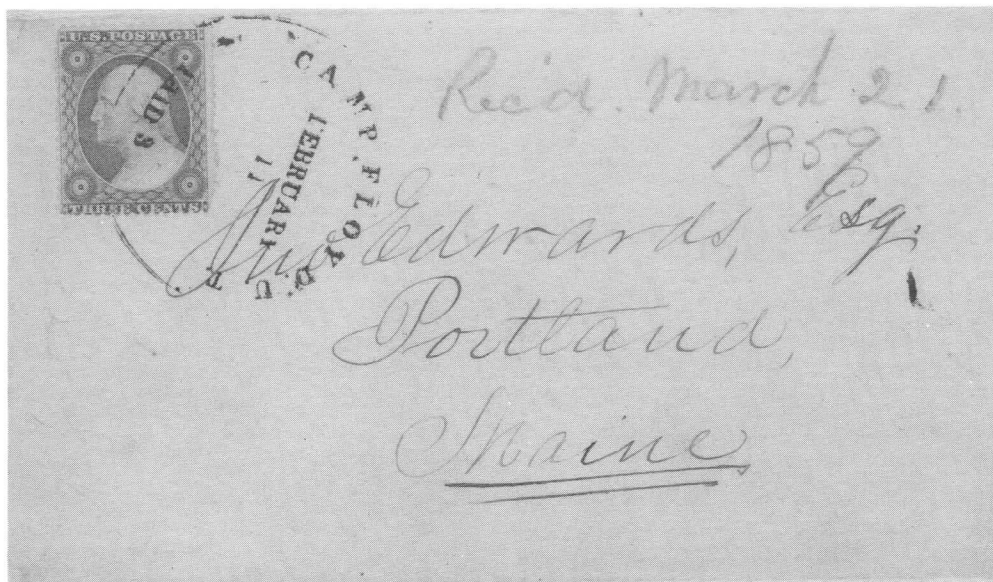


GREENCASTLE, INDIANA - VIA THE CALIFORNIA TRAIL - GREAT SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH TERRITORY

DURING THE "MORMON WAR", THE ARMY WAS SITUATED IN FORT BRIDGER, CAMP SCOTT ETC. WHEN THE CHARGES AGAINST THE MORMANS WERE CLEARED UP, THE ARMY WENT THROUGH SALT LAKE CITY TO CAMP FLOYD.

## CAMP FLOYD

FEBRUARY 11, 1859



CAMP FLOYD, UTAH TERRITORY

M/S "VIA ST. JOSEPH" ON BACK

"REC'D MARCH 21 1859" PORTLAND, MAINE

M/S RETURN ADDRESS ON BACK:

"LIEUT JNO EDWARDS, JR.  
3d REG. U.S. ARTILLERY  
CAMP FLOYD U.S."

## RAILROAD PROPAGANDA

DECEMBER 26, 1859



NEVADA CITY, CALIFORNIA - CHORPENNING ROUTE - OHIO, NEW YORK

CHORPENNING ROUTE: GEORGE CHORPENNING OPERATED AN EARLY MAIL RUN BETWEEN SACRAMENTO AND SALT LAKE CITY; IN 1858, HE CONNECTED WITH THE CENTRAL OVERLAND CALIFORNIA & PIKES PEAK EXPRESS CO. WHICH RAN BETWEEN SALT LAKE CITY AND THE MISSOURI RIVER. THIS ROUTE WOULD LATER BE TERMED "THE OVERLAND STAGE ROUTE".

THESE TWO COVERS ARE REACTIVE TO THE PUBLIC OUTCRY WHICH DEMANDED FAST MAIL BY A TRANSCONTINENTAL RAILROAD.

## PUTT'S OVERLAND ENVELOPE

APRIL 8, 1861



RED DOG, CALIFORNIA - CHORPENNING ROUTE - MIDDLE CREEK, PENNSYLVANIA  
FORWARDED MAY 7 (TO WHERE?) M/S "RECD MAY 18 / 61"

"GREAT MULE RAILROAD . . . PROVIDED THE CARS DON'T GET STUCK IN THE MUD,  
NOR THE LOCOMOTIVE RUN OUT OF GRASS! WE WANT A DIFFERENT RAILROAD."



## Contents of the April 8, 1861, Putt's Overland letter

Red Dog, April 7, 1861

Dear Cousin I herewith inform you that yours of the 2nd of March came to hand on the 6th of April and I was glad to hear that were enjoying good health. I should be very glad to see you all once more but I can't for the present time. I wish you was out here with me. I think you could do better here than you can back there. I am still working at the same place that I was when I wrote the other letter. David started to come out here and instead of coming out here he went to Missouri. He talks of coming out here this spring. At first when I came out here I told him how everything was and he couldn't raise money enough to come out that spring and so he wrote to me to and told me if I would send him some money to come out on he would surely come and so I send him one hundred seventy five dollars and then he started to come out here and three more men started with him. They started to go to Kansas and he had to go the same way to get to the railroad and they persuaded him to go with them. I haven't had a letter from him since he left home but he wrote home and others have wrote to me. I have wrote to him and told him that you had a notion to come out here and I told him that he had better write to you and find out whether you

was coming out and you was. He had better come with you. These other boys that are out here yet that came out with me, others are going home, the first of many. I think that I will stick to it yet for two or three years more. These other boys had a job of making ? last summer and they and they (sic) made 60 dollars per month clear from every. They have about a thousand dollars each. They have a farm each of them and others will give them quite a start, no you want me to let you know about school now. I ? sure whether they have four month or five. They have it in the summer. It is public (sic) school. There is a good many foreigners here but they ? any more there than what there is in Iowa except Spaniards and Chinamen. We have lots of them here. We had about three weeks steady rain. That is the longest rain that I ever saw. We have nice weather now. There was two men killed here lately in the mines it caved on them and it caved on one here the other night but it hadn't hurt him much. I am well at present and hope you are enjoying the same blessing.

Please answer soon.

Respectfully yours,

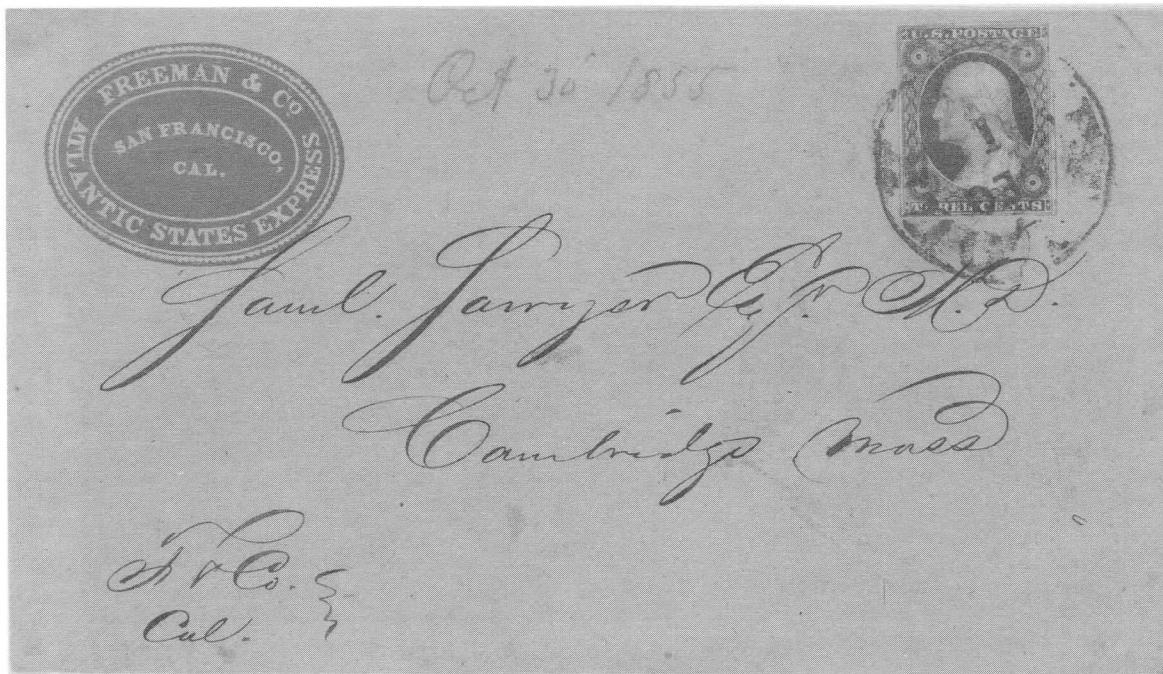
? ?

I send my love to all my cousins and uncles and aunts and also to all inquiring friend.

## BOOTLEG OR WAY COVER

FREEMAN &amp; CO.

OCTOBER 30, 1855

FREEMAN & CO. SAN FRANCISCO OCTOBER 30  
USPO NEW YORK DECEMBER 1"BOOTLEGGED" VIA PANAMA  
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

JOHN M. FREEMAN OPERATED FROM EARLY 1855 UNTIL MID 1859. HE DID SUBSTANTIAL BUSINESS THROUGH PANAMA AND TO THE EAST COAST. APPARENTLY, THE SENDER PAID FREEMAN & CO. IN CASH. THE LETTER WAS CARRIED TO NEW YORK AND GIVEN TO THE NYPO FOR THE UNDER 3000 MILE RATE OF 3 CENTS. THE CARRIER KEPT THE 7 CENTS DIFFERENCE.

AN ALTERNATIVE THEORY IS THAT THE LETTER WAS TAKEN ALONG THE WAY AND LEGITIMATELY CHARGED 3 CENTS.

## FORGOT TO MAIL THE LETTER

MID SEPTEMBER, 1861

EAST COAST MID SEPTEMBER  
USPO SAN FRANCISCO OCTOBER 16CARRIED PRIVATELY TO SAN FRANCISCO  
ADDRESSEE

AS A 3 CENT STAMP COULD HAVE BEEN PURCHASED AT THE SAN FRANCISCO PO, THIS STAMP WAS AFFIXED ON THE U.S. EAST COAST. PERHAPS THE SENDER WAS CONCERNED ABOUT THE USPO DURING THE EARLY PART OF THE CIVIL WAR.

# SMALL TOWNS

## SNELLINGS RANCHE

MARCH 25, 1861



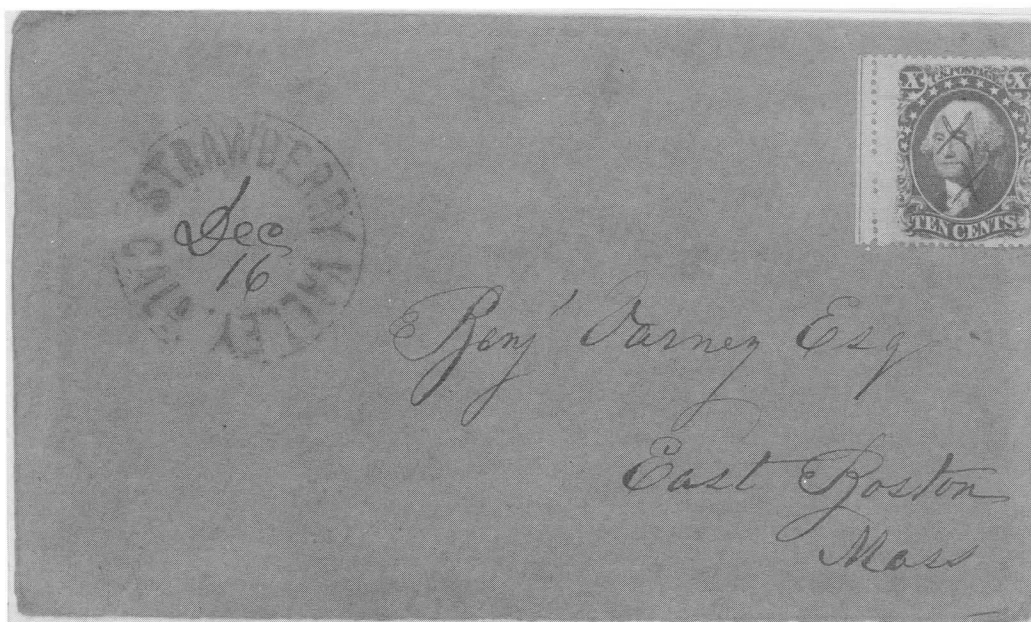
SNELLINGS RANCHE, CALIFORNIA

BOW, NEW HAMPSHIRE

ALTHOUGH THE OFFICIAL POSTAL LIST SHOWS THE NAME "SNELLINGS RANCH",  
THIS STRIKE CLEARLY HAS AN "E" ADDED.

## STRAWBERRY VALLEY

DECEMBER 18, 1858



EAST BOSTON NOVEMBER 4 - STRAWBERRY VALLEY, CALIFORNIA  
STRAWBERRY VALLEY, CALIFORNIA - EAST BOSTON

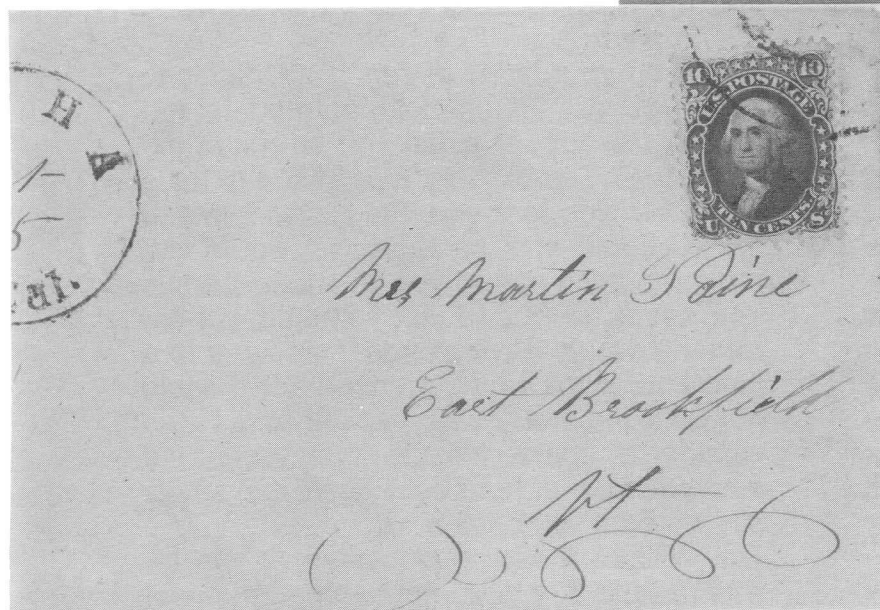
TURNED COVER





SMALL TOWNS

ALPHA  
OCTOBER 25, 1861



ALPHA, CALIFORNIA

EAST BROOKFIELD, VERMONT

BRUSH CREEK

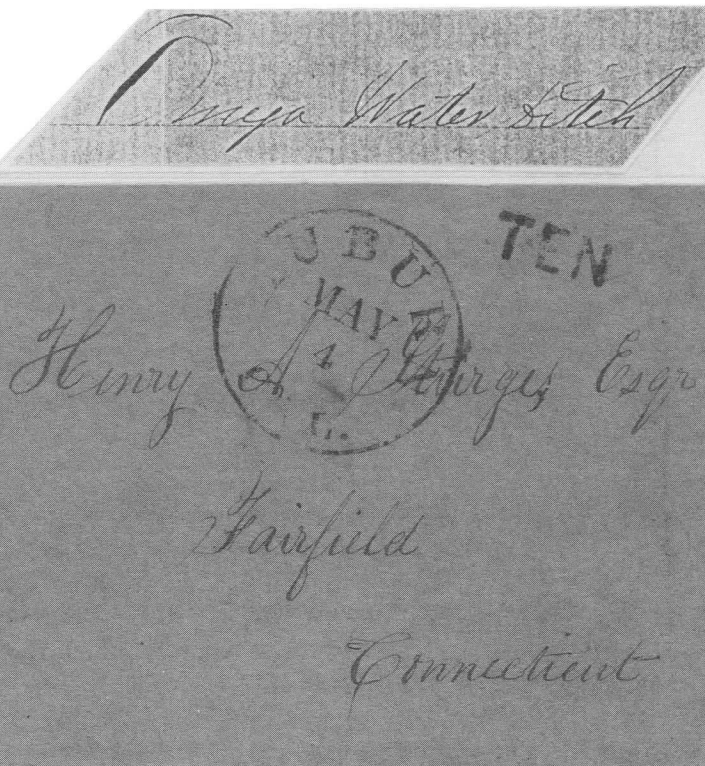
MAY 11, 1862



BRUSH CREEK, CALIFORNIA

THETFORD CENTER, VERMONT

THE LEFT 3c 61' IS PASTED OVER A 1c 61'; THERE IS TWELVE CENTS POSTAGE.



OMEGA WATER DITCH, CALIFORNIA FEBRUARY 26, 1857  
AUBURN MAY 4 - FAIRFIELD, CONNECTICUT

"THE LAST SNOW LASTED ELEVEN DAYS.  
IT MUST BE OVER TWENTY FEET ON THE RIDGE."

THIS LETTER EVIDENTLY DID NOT REACH THE  
POST OFFICE UNTIL AFTER THE SPRING THAW.

## Contents of the Omega Water Ditch letter

Omega Water Ditch, Sat. Eve. Feb. 26, 1857

My dear Harriet:

I again take the pleasure of writing you a few lines but I am at a loss what to write for nothing new has transpired since my last writing for the weather has been very stormy ever since and we have had to stay close to the home most of the time. I believe I wrote you in my last of the snow storm we were having, it lasted for eleven days and snowed in that time at this place nine feet and I suppose on top of the ridge fifteen. There must be over twenty feet deep now on top of the ridge. IT is at this place over twelve. It has snowed yesterday and day before over fifteen inches and today it has been quite warm thawing very fast the snow has settled over two feet since morning. I want to see spring set in for I am tired of these deep snow. I was to Omega one week ago today. Had a hard trip of it. We had a meeting of the Directors of our Ditch Company and they adjourned from day to day for four days to have me get there for the snow was so deep I would not undertake to go until it cleared up and then they sent men from Omega to mark the trail for me. If is only four miles when we ? stop. Out cabbins (sic) are buried out of sight under the snow. The tops are ? with the ? ?. I am in hope before writing

you my next we shall be able to convene our works again.

Received your letter of Jan. 16th. Sorry to hear you are much disappointed in not having me appear when you so much expected me. I would very much liked to have been with you to ? you ? at Sister ? to you think I could of ? so I guess I would like much to accompany you to those parties you speak of but I think i should appear rather ? would have to ? in ? anew. It is a long time since I have danced and I could not go ? the first ? you. I speak about cold weather at home. We cannot say hear we beat you on that but I believe we can safely say we beat you on snow.

Tell William it was really news to me he was making ?. It does not seem to me as if he could yet be large enough to be making ?. I am very glad to hear he is so smart a boy as to be able to make his own ?. Does James W. have so much to do he cannot get time to ? his ?.

The boys are all well but are getting tired of alying. I tell hear ? the snow doing nothing for the last month from your Ever loving husband, A. ?

P.S. March 2nd it is doubtful whether this will be in time for the mail is it has been snowing ever since I wrote it has been impossible to send sooner. We had 21 days strom in ? all well this morning. A. ?.



## Contents of the Brush Creek letter

Brush Creek, Butt Co. Cal. May 11th, 1862

By Dear precious Frank

Yours of 12th March is before me & I have nothing but a pencil with which to answer. Please excuse & you spoke of the anxiety you have felt for my safety. Could you know dearest F how much of anxiety of hope & fear I have felt for you & your safety you would never again be visited by any feelings of distrust. No language can express it & no heart but yours can ever know it. Well darling since my doom is fixed by the highest authority having jurisdiction in the premises & I am assured that no mercy will be shown me I take it for granted that your severity is intended for my particular good. I do not feel disposed to question the justice of my sentence or to escape the obligation it imposes, but will postpone its settlement for some quiet evening by our own fireside. Nothing of importance has transpired since my last & I have nothing of interest to communicate. We are now being treated to a snow storm: commenced last Friday & it will be as likely to continue for a week as to clear away sooner. Here in the mountains we have from 5 to 8 feet of snow; within a day's walk farmers are harvesting their grain. I shall remain in the mountains during the remainder of my stay in the country. The climate in the valley does not agree with me. Time passes very rapidly with me. I shall not stay here longer than next fall if I am alive & well I will see you. It

seems to me but a few days & I have got so much to do. You say that you are lonesome & so am I but I am not disheartened or discouraged. You know me well enough to understand that when my mind is once made up that hardship privations nor discouragements will not avail & I only yield the point with life or until I am convinced that the object is unworthy of further pursuit. If I do not accomplish what I came here by next fall I will call it sour grapes & return. You say you have had repeated invitations to go back to Dover & take charge of your School again & say what shall I do. Well this is not strictly in accordance with law & precedent in courts of justice for the judge to ask the prisoner's advice but I will give it notwithstanding. I should be very much disappointed should I visit Vt. next fall & not find you there & I really hope you will remain where you are for you are the first one that I shall want to see. Summer will soon be gone can you not endure your lonely state a few weeks longer & then I will go to Dover with you. I do not like to have you teach school any more. These of course are only suggestions & your own better judgment will decide. My health is quite good & I think that with the return of warm weather will be fully restored. Give my best wishes to all who enquire for me & accept for yourself the offering of a faithful heart.

Yours affectionately, S.C. Chamberlin.





This Issue of *The Heliograph*  
Offers A Living Testimonial  
To The Service of  
Arthur E. Springer  
Arizona Philatelic Ranger since 1961  
Executive Director of the Foundation, 1976-1987  
Patron and Inspiration

**Arthur E. Springer**  
Philatelic Education Department  
1994