



Pasteup Usage of Western Express Franks

by James W. Milgram, M.D.

One of the principal reasons for the creation of the Express Mail of 1836–1839 was the challenge to the Post Office Department posed by private express companies as to who could deliver the fastest mail transportation.¹ Merchants from New Orleans and Mobile and their counterparts in New York and Philadelphia were able to make greater profits if they knew the prices of commodities before their competitors. Not surprisingly, the majority of express mail letters sent were from merchants selling on commission for whom the increased speed of the express service justified the very high rates of triple postage for the horseback carrier service it offered, instead of the slower stages and wagons. This was the first pony express.

Within a few years, railroads and then the telegraph rendered the Express Mail service unnecessary for the transmittal of price information, but the transportation of money and legal papers relating to money became an increasing point of contention for the postal service as small companies sprang up to make use of new methods of transportation such as the railroad. There were two groups of these private express companies: those that carried mail within a city, going to and from the post office, *the independent mail carriers*, and those that carried mail between cities, sometimes out of the mail altogether, *the private express companies*. Small packages also were carried by these express companies, which

initially used existing transportation lines. During the 1840s the Post Office fought back by declaring many routes “post roads” and declaring that only the Post Office Department could transport letters on such post roads.

As steamboats became major transporters of mail — in particular along the western rivers, which were then the frontier of the country — their routes also were declared to be post roads. Thus it was illegal for boats to carry mail “out of the mails.”² The surviving letters show that only the bills of lading relating to freight on the steamboats were postage free; other letters had to pay three cents postage whether entering the post office or not. Earlier, letters could be carried on individual steamboats when the captains asked the post office for an additional two cents ship fee, but the Post Office increasingly gave mail contracts to steamboat lines along the main routes.³ Usually the captain of a steamboat brought the incoming letters to the post office unless they were bills of lading, in which case they were given directly to the person claiming the freight. Vessel-named markings frequently were placed on both types of steamboat letters as a form of advertising.⁴

Origins of the Western Franks

When the discovery of gold in California caused thousands of persons to travel west to seek their fortunes, the Post Office was unable initially to provide mail service to the huge influx of miners. The express companies that were formed to carry letters also served as a means of transporting the gold from miners to safer places of repository (if a miner left his claim, someone else might steal it). The solution for controlling the revenue generated by the mail carried by these many express companies, as far as the Post Office Department was concerned, was to compel all letters to pay U.S. postage in addition to the express postage fees.

The carrying of mail by private companies was legalized by the Act of August 31, 1852, which provided for the payment of U.S. postage as well as the express fees for any let-

Editor's Note: For this article, the author has provided an extraordinary selection of illustrations featuring these amazing covers, none of which we were willing to leave out. In order to accomplish this, and to present them in as large a format as possible, an extensive online album has been prepared that gives detailed information on a number of additional examples of Western Express Franks.

ter carried by the express companies. This was one of the reasons that the Post Office began issuing stamped envelopes July 1, 1853. Such envelopes were used extensively by both steamboats and express companies. Stamps were used before the issuance of the envelopes, but once the stamped envelopes became available, it became illegal to use stamps to pay postage on covers carried by private expresses although, in practice, stamps were still used occasionally.

Once the stamped envelopes were available for general usage, the express companies marked the envelopes with their names to show that the person mailing the letter had paid both the postage and the express fee. Usually the express fee is not indicated on the company envelopes, but a private individual who wished to use the express service had to buy his or her envelopes from the individual express company agent. The printed (occasionally handstamped) marking that the express company put on the envelope is called the express "frank." Some franks were just lines of type, but many were more illustrated. A person who did a regular business over an express route could buy a supply of franked envelopes that could be used to send letters. Thus only an address needed to be added before giving the letter to an agent of the express.

Letters could be carried on the express route only or they could be handed over to a post office after being carried for some portion of a letter's route by the express, at which time the letter would enter into the regular mails. The reverse could be true as well. A letter from a city in the east would be sent via New York through San Francisco with address to a miner in some remote location. At first, any type of folded letters or envelopes were sent with postmarks and sometimes stamps to prepay the postage or to show that postage was due. Later, the express companies could carry letters that had been mailed in stamped envelopes. The majority of surviving express mail in franked envelopes was transported between addresses within the western states, but wherever the express companies served, the stamped franks were the main envelopes used to send any express letter. It was illegal to use a blank envelope that did not provide a payment of U.S. postage.⁵

Some letters were carried by more than one express company. Most such letters pay the U.S. postage only once, while the express fees are paid in cash, but the envelopes were often marked with the handstamp of each express company. A cover from British Columbia illustrated above shows 15 cents extra U.S. postage paid by stamps on an envelope with



The only figure in this article that is not part of a pasteup usage. The cover shows two express company franks, with 15 cents paid for the Canadian rate (3 cents overpayment).

the Dietz and Nelson British Columbia frank and a second frank of Wells, Fargo & Co., which carried it from Victoria, B.C. to San Francisco. This is actually an overpayment by three cents of the required 15 cents U.S. postage, since it was sent in a 3-cent stamped envelope.

The gold rush in Canada was along the Fraser River and other sites in British Columbia. A good map of the British Columbia mines can be found in "Western Express Stamps" by A. Jay Hertz.⁶ The gold rush in that location began in earnest in 1857. When the news reached San Francisco, a general exodus of California miners converged at Victoria on Vancouver Island. Both Wells, Fargo & Co. and Freeman & Co. quickly opened offices in Victoria. Smaller companies made connections with the miners at their working sites along the waterways. During the 1860s Dietz and Nelson's British Columbia and Victoria Express connected with Wells, Fargo & Co. and the latter eventually took over operations along the entire route in 1867. One has to remember that Victoria Island was not part of British Columbia then.

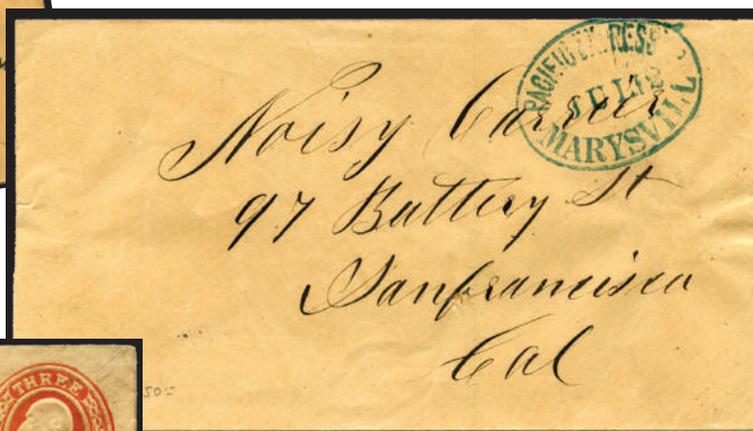
Origin of Pasteup Franked Envelopes

If one had an envelope that needed to be sent by express *as is* (that is, in the same envelope instead of in the U.S.P.O.D. stamped envelope), a problem arose of how to meet the Post Office requirement of using a stamped envelope for all express mail. One commonly used alternative was to take an unused franked envelope (a stamped envelope with a printed express frank) and attach it to the *back* of the original sealed letter. This is a pasteup.

Usually the franked envelope was glued to the other letter. The address naturally would be on the original envelope, not on the franked envelope. Typically both sides of the pasteup would bear cancellations of the express company and a post office handstamp on any stamps as well as on the indicia



Early pasteup, now separated, with an address to Charles Kimball, the "Noisy Carrier." The reverse shows that two red wax wafers were used to attach the envelope to a franked envelope.



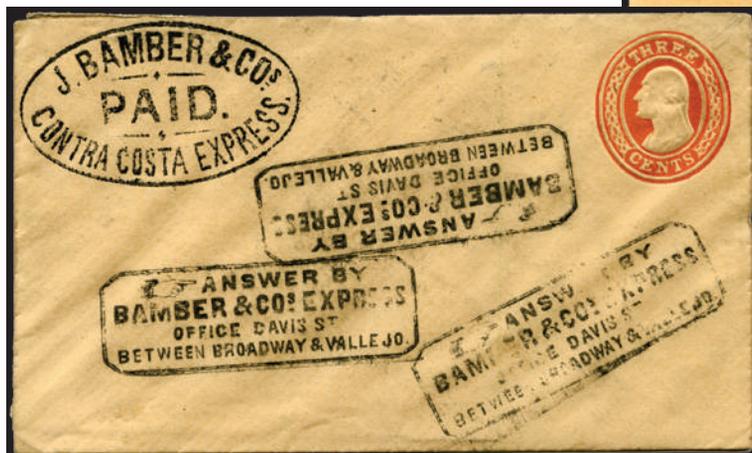
Early California Usages

Noisy Carrier (1850s)

The first example shows a pasteup envelope addressed to "Noisy Carrier," unknown date during the 1850s. The franked envelope is missing. The reverse side demonstrates that in this instance the pasteup had been held together not by glue but by two red wax wafers of the type used to seal stampless letters. One applied a hot metal seal to the paper-wafer-paper sandwich, which would then seal the two sides of paper together.

Charles P. Kimball of San Francisco became known as the "Noisy Carrier."²⁷ He arrived in San Francisco from Maine in July 1849. Almost immediately he established an express for parcels between San Francisco and the bay to Sacramento, personally carrying those items that were entrusted to him. He used the steamer *Sacramento* and a sailing ship, *James L. Day*. By February 1850 he was operating a city delivery express, charging 12½ cents for a letter, but was soon informed that his service was illegal without an appointment by the Postmaster General.

The name "Noisy Carrier" came later and referred to his practice of calling out the names of those whose letter or package he was carrying. His utterances included self-produced phrases of poetry with a wide range of subjects ranging from gold to politics. One of his services was to carry letters to the sailing steamers (so a patron could avoid the long wait in post office lines). He marked for advertising purposes the letters and newspapers that he carried and these markings are highly collected today. The pre-1853 items bear 1851 series postage stamps because the first stamped envelopes dated from 1853. Kimball eventually opened a book and newspaper business that became quite popular and went on to publish the first business directory of San Francisco.



Unaddressed franked envelope bears handstamps all over its surface advertising the J. Bamber Express Co. The express agent may have done this as a form of advertising.

of the envelope if the envelope entered the mails. However, many pasteups only show express company markings because such letters never entered the mails.

Since pasteups usually were created by individuals without any prior planning, there is a great deal of variety between different pasteups. This article will look at the pasteup usage as a type of mail by showing different examples that illustrate various usages and express companies. For the most part, these examples date from the early use of the 1853 stamped envelope into the 1860s. Pasteups from the 1870s and 1880s are fairly scarce.

Some items that originally were pasteups have been separated from one part of the pair of envelopes, making an incomplete pasteup. But such incomplete pasteups may still be interesting as postal history. So the rest of this article will present a figure with front and back elements, one of which may be missing. Since some pasteup envelopes have been opened along the sides of one of the two envelopes, both the sides can be shown in a single photograph. However, most are shown in two separate scans showing the frank side and the blank side. In a pasteup, the franked side is the side that shows no address.



The 10-cent franked entire pays the postage for a letter going to or from the California- Oregon region from the rest of the United States (all letters went to New York and were sent by steamer). The black printed frank reads "PAID Wells, Fargo & Co. THROUGH OUR CALIFORNIA AND ATLANTIC EXPRESS."



The original commercial envelope containing papers for a pension claim. It bears a "NEW-YORK SEP 3 FREE" postmark and two blue Wells, Fargo & Co. markings from San Francisco.

Bamber & Co. (1853 or later)

Another pasteup shows the frank of Bamber & Co. on an 1853 3-cent entire with the frank hand-stamped: "J. BAMBER & CO.^s / CONTRA COSTA EXPRESS / PAID." It was unaddressed and the Bamber & Co. agent had previously prepared a number of these envelopes with additional advertising handstamps for the company: "ANSWER BY BAMBER & CO.^s EXPRESS OFFICE DAVIS ST BETWEEN BROADWAY & VALLEJO." In this instance, there are three such advertising handstamp marks on the cover; clearly, he was not about to let all that blank space go to waste. Such envelopes with many handstamps are not rare.

Wells, Fargo & Co. (1855)

An early pasteup that shows a usage with the 10-cent 1853 entire is a blank envelope with two strikes of the San Francisco company marking, unusual for a pasteup. It is attached to a larger envelope with Wells, Fargo & Co. cornercard (not a frank) mailed to the Commissioner of Pensions via New York to Washington, D.C. The red "NEW YORK SEP 5 FREE" is from 1855. This free frank for the Commissioner of Pensions did not extend to the required U.S. postage on a western express franked entire.

Wells, Fargo & Co.; Pony Express (October 1861)

Shown is what may be a unique pasteup usage of a Wells, Fargo/Pony Express cover sent East to West during the fourth rate period of the Pony Express when the rate was \$1 per half ounce. The cover bears the red type 2 Pony Express



Unaddressed frank for a pasteup letter carried by the Pony Express, East to West, with the oval within a circle of the PONY EXPRESS handstamp dated October 3, 1861, the last month of overland pony express service. The rate was \$1 per ½ ounce.

frank, but it lacks the addressed envelope of the pasteup.⁸ The trip started October 3, which is within the last month of pony express service.

Another pasteup cover from the Pony Express is also known. This was sent on the first eastbound trip and was postmarked April 3 (1860) on a 10-cent 1853 entire with a black "PAID. Central Overland Pony Express Company." It is interesting that the only two known pasteup letters sent by the overland Pony Express were at the two ends of this fascinating service.

Wells, Fargo & Co.; Pony Express Stamp (February 1863 & March 1864)

In addition to the two Pony Express covers just mentioned, there are two remarkable multiple rate covers sent

Remarkable pasteup cover shows a large block of the 25-cent blue Pony Express stamp on a six times single rate cover. Five 3-cent stamps are added to the 3-cent entire in the frank.



Cover showing the red 25-cent Pony Express stamp and additional postage stamps needed to pay a 7x express rate. This is the largest block known of the stamp.

over the Virginia City Pony Express between San Francisco and Virginia City (shown in Christies, October, 1991). The first is a legal sized envelope sent to the U.S. District Court of the First Judicial District, Storey County, Virginia City, Nevada Territory. It has a strip of five and a single of the 25-cent blue Pony Express stamp of Wells, Fargo & Co. The overweight envelope required six times the basic postage as well. This was provided by creating a pasteup 3-cent entire frank with five additional 3-cent stamps. All the stamps are canceled by a blue "WELLS, FARGO & CO'S EXPRESS / S.F.RCO / 25 FEB" (1863).

A second cover, this one from March 1864 and containing a similar type of court document, was sent to the same District Court in Virginia City. This cover, which has been shortened at the right-hand side, bears a block of six and a single of the 25-cent red Pony Express stamp, the largest recorded multiple of this stamp. The reverse pasteup was a misprinted Wells, Fargo & Co. 3-cent entire with a frank bearing six additional 3-cent stamps to make up a 7x rate. Most

of the writing on both envelopes is legal documentation. There is a blue "TOO LATE" in box over the pony block, signifying that the letter missed the intended steamboat departure to Sacramento.

Jamison's Express (1860s)

A different pasteup usage is from another small company, J.C. Jamison's Express, with a printed frank from somewhere in southwest Oregon. Note the uncanceled 3-cent stamp on the addressed envelope. This would support the interpretation advanced here on some of the other figures that the addition of a postage stamp to a franked entire was sometimes throwing away the value of the stamp since the franked entire satisfied the post office requirements. This is also seen on some steamboat covers to which stamps were added, although the letters never entered the mails.

Jamison's Express operated between Forest Grove, Hillsboro, Lafayette, and Portland, Oregon. The letter was carried as far as Portland by Jamison's, and then Wells, Fargo & Co. (two oval Portland handstamps) delivered it to The Dalles, the end of the overland Oregon Trail, which lay up the Columbia River about ninety miles east of Portland.



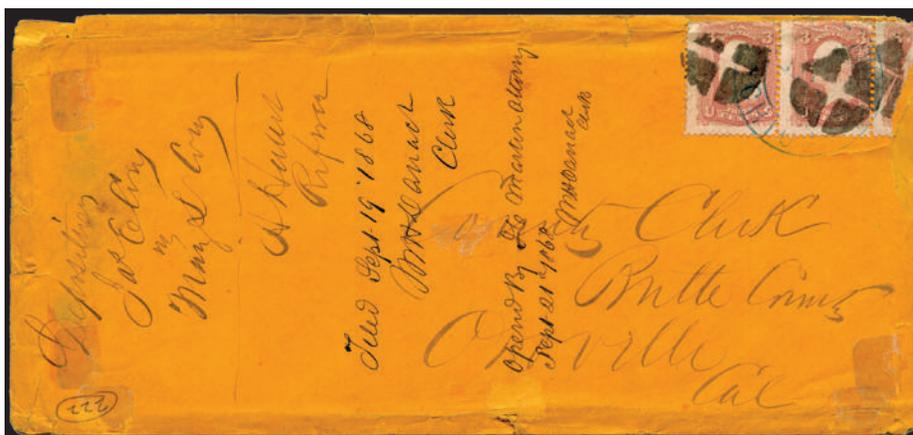
Pair of envelopes include a frank from a small express company and the original envelope, to which is attached an uncanceled postage stamp. The Express handstamp reads Portland and the address is Dalles, Oregon, on the Columbia River. This cover shows that pasteup usage was not only confined to the big express companies.

Union Pacific Express Co. (September 1868)

Another Pacific Union Express Co. pasteup shows a triple rate. The addressee envelope bears three postage stamps (one partially missing) with cork cancels but no town handstamp. The reason is that only the express carried this legal document from Chico to Oroville; it never went into the regular mailstream. The stamps were canceled so they could not be used again, but the postage was paid twice since there are three canceled stamped envelopes, all unaddressed, glued to the back of the larger envelope. So the postage has been overpaid although the U.S. postal system appears not to have handled the letter.



Pasteup combination demonstrates multiple rated covers that were sometimes paid with several franked envelopes attached to a large blank envelope. Here the three franked envelopes are glued to the back of the large envelope that also bears three 3-cent stamps. It is probable that this envelope was prepared for mailing before it was determined that it would have to be sent by express. The easiest way to do this was to attach three franked express envelopes to pay the triple fee. Of course, the stamps although canceled never paid any postal service. The Pacific Union Express Company carried the letter from Chico to Oroville.





Typical unaddressed 10 cents postage on Wells, Fargo frank, but the pasted on envelope is a stagecoach propaganda cover for an overland route passing south. The March 28 of the San Francisco postmark and the April 28, 1860 of the New York postmark demonstrate that it took a month for this letter to travel by steamers from San Francisco to New York.



Star Die 10-cent entire as the franked envelope with pasteup Civil War patriotic cover with overall flag design. Wells, Fargo & Co. carried the letter from Aurora, Nevada Territory to Carson City, U.T. Someone put a 10-cent stamp on the patriotic, but the 10-cent entire paid the West coast to East coast postage.

Wells, Fargo & Co. (April 1860)

The next type of usage to be discussed is sending an illustrated envelope by express — the pasteup usage was the only way to do this. The blank, red franked Wells, Fargo & Co. envelope bears a 10-cent 1853 indicia, so this is an envelope paying the West to East coast rate for more than 3,000 miles. The “NEW YORK APR 28 1860” cancellation is struck on the frank and on the other envelope. But instead of being a blank envelope, this is a printed propaganda cover promoting a southern route for the overland route and railroad when it would be built. Its usage as a pasteup must be very rare. It was carried from San Francisco by Wells, Fargo & Co. in their bag by steamer mail. At New York it entered the mails and went to Rondout, Ulster County, New York.

Wells, Fargo & Co.; Patriotic (1860?)

The most frequently seen propaganda cover that shows pasteup usage was the Civil War Union patriotic cover used from western towns but carried by express. Shown is a 10-cent Star Die envelope for usage to the East. It was carried from the Wells, Fargo Express Co. office, Aurora (in modern-day Nevada) to Carson City, Utah Territory. In order to

use the express service, however, the sender pasted on a 10-cent franked entire.

There are blue “CARSON CITY, NEV / SEP 27” markings with target cancels on both envelopes. The blank envelope is an overall patriotic image of a 34-star U.S. flag, printed in San Francisco (Milgram WP-9).^{9,10} Note that both the indicium and the 10-cent 1857 stamp are canceled by a target matching the town postmarks. It appears that there was a 10-cent overpayment of the postage. Note also that a 10-cent and not a 3-cent frank was used. The express company trip involved a post road for which the fee was 10 cents, but use of a 10-cent stamp on the patriotic cover was extraneous. It was probably applied in Aurora before the sender realized he had to send the letter by express.

The gold mining settlement of Aurora was founded in 1860, became an instant “boom town,” and was already in decline by 1864 when the ore veins proved shallow. Originally claimed by both the State of California and Utah Territory, by the spring of 1861 both California (April 1861) and the newly created Nevada Territory (March 1861) had formed new mining district counties (Mono Co., CA and Esmeralda Co., NV) that included Aurora. The resulting confusion over



Legal cover containing a deposition mailed in December 1865 from one city to another in Idaho Territory. It was overweight so a pair of franked envelopes were needed to pay both the express and the U.S. postal fees. Note that most pasteups show the express handstamp on both sides.

state citizenship lasted until a formal survey in September 1863 finally established that Aurora was actually three miles inside the Nevada border. It ultimately was incorporated into the county of Mineral, created in 1911.

Carson City was established in 1858 within the Utah Territory but also became part of the new Nevada Territory in March 1861 and was made the territorial capital.

Wells, Fargo & Co. (1865)

Over time pastepup usages began to appear in regions that were relatively unsettled earlier. One example is a Wells, Fargo & Co. usage from Idaho Territory on a large-sized en-

velope that originally contained a legal deposition filed in 1865. The letter went from Ruby City to Boise. There are three strikes of "WELLS, FARGO & CO. RUBY CITY DEC 4" on the envelope and on two different 3-cent franked covers. Why use two franked envelopes? The answer is probably due to the excess weight of a deposition.

Wells, Fargo & Co.; Sweden (1860)

Overseas usage of pastepup covers must be rare, because many countries would have charged these as two letters. The example shown is a pastepup with strip of three 10-cent Type V stamps canceled at New York, delivered first to Aachen



Rare pastepup usage of a cover mailed to Europe. The three 10-cent stamps paid the postage to Germany by American Packet; however, the cover was carried from California to New York by Wells, Fargo & Co. express, which is why there is a blank envelope glued to the other envelope. The oval "PAID" is the tipoff of a pastepup usage.



One half of a pastepup showing six 3-cent franked entires cut and glued on a 6-cent entire, paying an 8x rate. In addition, a 24-cent stamp was canceled at New York. A Wells, Fargo, & Co. company handstamp from Belmont is struck on all the entires. The address is to Doylestown, Pennsylvania. This envelope may have been attached to a large envelope or parcel with a 16x rate of postage. In May 1867 forwarding was free, so it is unlikely that forwarding was the reason for the 24-cent stamp.



Two Star Die 3-cent entires, one with an express frank. The letter began at Fort Vancouver, went to Portland, and then to San Francisco, perhaps by the maritime direct route. There is no explanation why it is a pastepup.

and then to Sweden. The 10-cent 1853 frank side bears a Stockholm backstamp with an October 11, 1860 date; however, there is no Wells, Fargo company marking indicating a town of origin. Nevertheless, there is a bold, blue Wells, Fargo & Co. "PAID" handstamp, which would indicate San Francisco as a possible town of origin. The European markings indicate prepayment of postage. There is a ten cents overpayment of postage.

Wells, Fargo & Co. (1867)

This is probably the most unusual pastepup in the entire article, but unfortunately only the frank side of the pastepup remains, the other side is missing. Addressed to Doylestown, Pennsylvania in 1867, the multiple pastepup

appears to indicate an overweight shipment, perhaps a parcel. The large envelope is a 6-cent entire on which are pasted portions of six additional 3-cent franked envelopes, all canceled by a Belmont Wells, Fargo & Co. blue oval. The total of the franks is 24 cents. At New York another 24 cents was added by a 24-cent stamp. The large amount of money paid by the franks and stamp is probably due to heavy weight (8x).

British Columbia-United States Combination Usages

The next group of covers are some very complex usages from the Northwest and British Columbia.

Tracy & Co. Oregon Express (1861)

The first shows a pasteup with two different 3-cent Star Die envelopes, one franked and the other not franked. This would be an 1861 usage of a Tracy & Co. Express frank from “FT VANCOUVER” (Washington Territory) that was carried across the Columbia River to Portland. Here there was a choice of an overland route with Tracy & Co. connecting with the Beekman Express at Jacksonville, Oregon and further travel to Yreka where Wells, Fargo & Co. would receive it and carry the letter to San Francisco via a ship route from Portland to San Francisco. When a ship was available, the maritime route was the most rapid since the stage trip took more than a week. This cover, which bears no markings suggesting the overland trip, probably went by ship despite the fact that “Per Overland” is written on the pasteup entire.

Wells, Fargo & Co.; Patriotic (1861)

The patriotic pasteup in the next illustration shows a scarce California design (Milgram WP-31A) used from Canada (although, technically, Victoria Island was not part of Canada at the time). The pasteup envelope is addressed to Lafayette, Oregon. The frank envelope shows the prepaid postmark for usage through Victoria (this postmark was on the blank franked envelope when it was purchased), “VICTORIA PAID V.I.” with two strikes of “WELLS, FARGO & CO. VICTORIA / AUG 21.”

Wells, Fargo & Co. carried the letter on to Portland. There the cover was transferred to Tracy & Co. Portland on August 25 (double circle marking), and Tracy & Co. carried it to Lafayette, Oregon. The prepayment of the Tracy fee would have been given to the Wells Fargo agent at Victoria. The usage of a Star Die entire documents 1861 as the year of usage.

Wells, Fargo & Co.; Ballou's Fraser River Express (June 1861)

The next pasteup cover is one of the most complex express covers I have seen. It originated in the Fraser River mines where the Ballou's frank was purchased with the red NEW WESTMINSTER oval post office cancel already on it. The cover was carried by Ballou to Victoria on Vancouver Island where it was transferred to Wells, Fargo & Co. Note the manuscript “Paid through Ballous Express,” probably written when it was sent.

It was at this point that the pasteup was prepared. Wells, Fargo & Co. pasted their own franked envelope to the franked envelope from British Columbia and marked it “WELLS, FARGO & C^o. VICTORIA JUN 19.” This frank only paid postage for Victoria Island usage, the blue “VICTORIA PAID V.I.” at upper left. The U.S. postage was covered by the 3-cent Star Die envelope (1861 usage). Wells, Fargo & Co. carried the letter south to Portland, either by ship via Astoria or overland via Olympia, Washington Territory. At Portland there must not have been a ship ready to leave, so Tracy &



One of two known usages of U.S. patriotic covers from Victoria on Vancouver Island. This is a scarce western design caricature type design that was attached to a prepared frank as a pasteup. The unaddressed frank bears a “VICTORIA V.I. PAID” handstamp showing that postal fees had been paid by the express company and passed along to the user through the use of the franked envelope.

Co. took it on to Jacksonville: “TRACY & C^o. PORTLAND JUN 25” in blue on both sides of pasteup. At Jacksonville Tracy had a contract with the Beekman Express Co. to continue carrying southbound letters to Yreka. Beekman did not apply franks or cancels for this service. Wells, Fargo & Co. carried them from Yreka to San Francisco.

Here we must make note of the manuscript “By Bamber Express,” apparently written by the sender. There are two strikes of a Bamber & Co., San Francisco marking for the further transportation from San Francisco to Alvarado, Alameda County, California, the letter's address. The Bamber fee was evidently paid at the start. There may have been a separate waybill accompanying the letter explaining the different fees, but just like post office waybills, they are usually separated from the letter and destroyed after a certain time period. We do know the letter was “Recd July 2” (1861).

Three governments were paid a fee, although the pasteup never entered the official mails, and five different express companies (Wells, Fargo & Co. twice) were involved in its transport.

Pacific Union Express Co. (1868)

The Pacific Railway Act of 1862 provided for the establishment of an intercontinental railroad across the United States: the Union Pacific Railroad Company to build west



Incredibly complex cover showing usage from British Columbia with a Ballou's Fraser River Express frank. This was attached to an unaddressed Wells, Fargo & Co. frank with prepaid Victoria postage. It is likely this cover went overland to San Francisco and then was carried by Bamber & Co. Express to the destination. It can be seen that the sender "Paid Through" and even wrote "By Bambers Express" on the Ballou's envelope.

Large envelope (with letters enclosed), on the back of which are two overlapping Pacific Union Express franks canceled at San Francisco. This cover went by railroad the next day when a R.R. route agent added the "C.P.R.R. M E S Sr' / AUG 21" handstamp in Sacramento. It evidently went to Virginia City by train and express.



from Omaha, Nebraska, and the Central Pacific Railroad Company to build east from Sacramento, California. The city of Sacramento gave thirty acres to the Central Pacific Railroad along its levee and on January 8, 1863, ground was broken for the beginning of the western terminus. The first section of track was laid that fall on October 26.

Because the mountainous terrain that the Central Pacific had to cross was much more difficult than that faced by the Union Pacific, progress was slower heading east. Tunnels had to be carved from the granite walls of the Sierra Nevadas, sometimes limiting progress to inches per day, and heavy mountain snows routinely brought work to a near standstill. Several articles by the author describe postal usages from that period.^{11,12}

By the end of 1867 all the tunnels across the mountains had been connected and real progress began to be made. On May 4, 1868 the CPRR reached the new town of Reno, Nevada, only 154 miles from Sacramento, but by August, the two ends of the transcontinental railroad were approaching each other.¹³ By early December, the Central Pacific Railroad tracks were 445 miles from Sacramento.

In 1868 steamboats carried the bulk of freight and mail to Sacramento, including almost all the raw materials required for building a railroad, but



Cover shows a Wells, Fargo label used instead of a frank to signify payment of the express company's fees. Since this must have been a heavy letter, several franks were glued to the large original envelope. This pasteup is a nice example of the usage during the 1870s. Pasteups are rare with label usage.

that was all due to change. On May 10, 1869, at Promontory Summit near Ogden, Utah, the two ends of the transcontinental railroad finally met — five days later, train service began. Passenger tickets cost \$111, \$80, or \$40, depending on the creature comforts provided. The trip across the country was advertised as taking four days, four hours, and forty minutes.

The cover shown is a large envelope on which two Pacific Union Express Co. pasteup fronts were glued. Each frank bears a printed address to Batterman & Co. in Virginia City. Each frank also bears a black “PACIFIC UNION EX CO./ SAN FRANCISCO/ AUG 20” over the indicia of the envelope. In addition, there is a blue double circle “C.P.R.R./ M E S S^R AUG 21.” This fancy marking indicates that the letter was given to the railroad steamer, and is a route agent marking used on the steamer for letters that were to travel by train.

Other covers show that a similar blue double-circle marking labeled “NEWCASTLE” was used by a train route agent at Newcastle, a town on the CPRR route. There is also a blue Wells, Fargo & Co. oval handstamp with “C.P.R.R.” instead of a town name.

We are fortunate to have the contents of the cover illustrated: two letters written at San Francisco August 20, 1868 by J.H. Jones to “Friend Batterman” enclosing legal papers. This verifies the year date of usage and would support a double-weight fee.

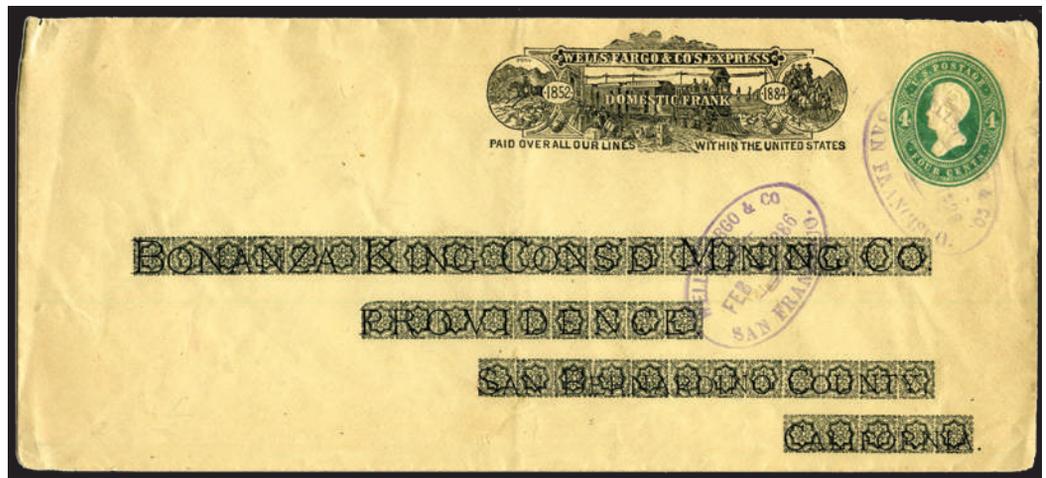
Wells, Fargo & Co. (1870s)

Pasteups are much less common from the 1870s. Shown is a pasteup cover with a large legal-sized envelope addressed to T.C. Plunkett Esq. in Nevada City, California. This cover also bears a Wells Fargo express label that was used instead of a frank, here from the origin city, Truckee, California. There are two franked entires glued to the back of this envelope, indicating an overweight letter. They show advertisements printed over the entires for a Elle Ellen/ Manufacturer of and Dealer in/ All Kinds of Building Lumber and Shingles/ Truckee/ CAL.” Neither of these covers bear company handstamps; in this instance they were replaced by the label usage.

Wells, Fargo & Co.'s Express (1884/1886)

The final cover is only an unaddressed half of a pasteup pair, but the back shows that it appears to have been glued to another envelope. The 4-cent legal-sized entire bears a later type of Wells, Fargo & Co. frank dated 1884, but it also shows a second usage that Dale Forster has discussed as “Wells Fargo Grids.”¹⁴ Once a franked entire was prepared by printing the frank on the entire, the value to the post office was lost if the cover was not used as a frank. There was a fairly large business in printing names and addresses on these franks and the overall ads (as was shown imprinted on the previous cover). Different methods were used by the printer to deface some of the earlier advertisements, corner

Legal sized envelope originally printed with a particular client's address; the frank meant that the envelope would always go by express. Since this envelope showed not only double U.S. postage but also express postage paid, the bank altered the address on the envelope by overprinting the original address. The postmarks show an 1886 usage.



cards, and printed addresses so the frank could be used by a different customer.

In the illustrated example a heavy printed box design is used to cover the prior address, "Bonanza King Consd. Mining Co. Providence, San Bernardino County, California." There is a purple "WELLS, FARGO & CO./ SAN FRANCISCO./ FEB 1886" struck twice. This envelope was used on the back of a new envelope that would have only borne an address; it pays a double weight express and post office fee. By applying the grids or blocks over the previous address, the envelope was made usable for another customer.

The author would be interested in seeing scans or photocopies of interesting pasteup usages (j-milgram@northwestern.edu).

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Endnotes

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The Author

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For more information and illustrations on "Pasteup Usage of Western Express Franks visit www.stamps.org/AP-Album