

OUT OF THE FIELD.

Wells, Fargo & Co. Have Decided to Abandon the Carrying of Letters.

Wells, Fargo & Co. have decided to retire from the business of carrying letters within the States and Territories of the United States. Thus will cease to exist another of the institutions which, in early days, served to make California a State apart from its many sister commonwealths. What the company could not be forced to do years ago by the direct interposition of the Government, it now voluntarily does by force of circumstances brought about by the powers that it once defied.

Just when the letter service of the company will be discontinued has not yet been definitely decided, as it will depend entirely on how long the present supply of the franked envelopes in their possession will last. No more of these will be printed, and with the sale of the last one the people of this State will have to depend entirely on the Government for the transmission of their letters. Such is the announcement made by Manager E. M. Cooper.

The letter service of the company in Mexico, however, will be continued, as heretofore, as competition with the Mexican Government mail service is still a lucrative undertaking.

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There is no institution on the Pacific Coast more interesting than Wells, Fargo & Co.'s express. It was the omnipresent, universal business agent of all the region from the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Ocean; its offices were in every town, far and near; a saloon, a blacksmith shop and a Wells, Fargo express office were the first three features of a Pacific Coast town.

In the carrying of letters its operations were rather curious. Going along hand in hand with the rapidly changing population of the mining camps and districts, offering readier and more varied facilities than the slower moving and circumscribed Government postal machinery, it conveyed many of the letters upon routes that the Government mail service operated as quickly as the express company, though their cost by the latter was twice as great. The extent of this business is shown by the statement that Wells, Fargo & Co. bought of the Government in 1863 over 2,000,000 of the 3-cent denomination of Government stamped envelopes, some 15,000 of the 6-cent denomination and 30,000 of the higher values, besides 70,000 3-cent adhesive stamps and 12,000 6-cent stamps used on letters that had been deposited in their letter-boxes short paid for overweight. In 1864 this business had increased to such an extent that the 3-cent envelopes bought amounted to 2,250,000 and the extra adhesive stamps to 125,000.

Each year saw a gradually increasing amount of business added to this branch of the company, until the many improvements made in the Government service and its cheaper rates gradually drew the patronage away from the express company.

Aside from the general interest of this news to the mercantile community, it has a special one for philatelists, or stamp collectors, as many of them collect the franks and stamps of private mail carriers, as well as those issued by the various governments. The franks of Wells, Fargo & Co. will now become obsolete, and consequently rarer and more valuable.
