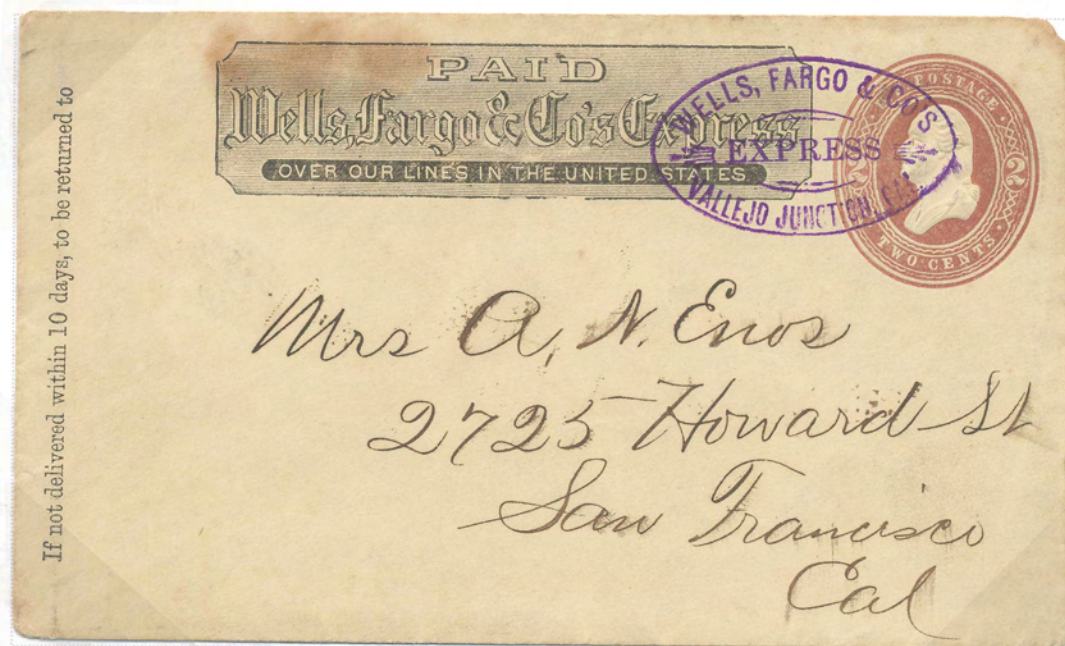


Solano Counties Two State Capitols – Benicia & Vallejo

Local, Express & Early Postmarks

Vallejo Junction, is not located in Vallejo nor in Solano County. It is located on the bay, west of the current Carquinez bridge, on the Crockett side, in Contra Costa County.

Southern Pacific ferries, from North & South Vallejo met mainline trains at Vallejo Junction. During WW1 there were also ferries from Mare Island.



This exhibit documents the postal history of early Benicia & Vallejo through carrier and western express covers along with early town postmarks. Under each category Benicia proceeds Vallejo.

The boundary of Solano County was set on February 18, 1850 by the first elected legislature of the territory of California, making Solano County one of the original 27 counties. For three years prior to this Solano was part of the Sonoma Territory under the American administration that began July 7, 1846.

Solano County's claim to fame is that it has been the location of two California State Capitols – Benicia & Vallejo.

Vallejo was the capitol January 5, 1852 to February 4, 1853. It was temporarily moved to Sacramento January 16, 1852 to May 4, 1852 while construction occurred. It was incorporated March 30, 1868.

Benicia was the capitol February 4, 1853 to February 25, 1854. Founded on May 19, 1847 on land purchased from General Vallejo and named for his wife. On March 27, 1850, it was the third city in California to incorporate, 5½ months prior to California statehood.

Exhibit Organization

Local Carrier – 2 pages, 2-3

Benicia – 2 pages, 2-3

Western Express – 9 pages, 4-12

Benicia – 3 pages, 4-6

Vallejo – 6 pages, 7-12

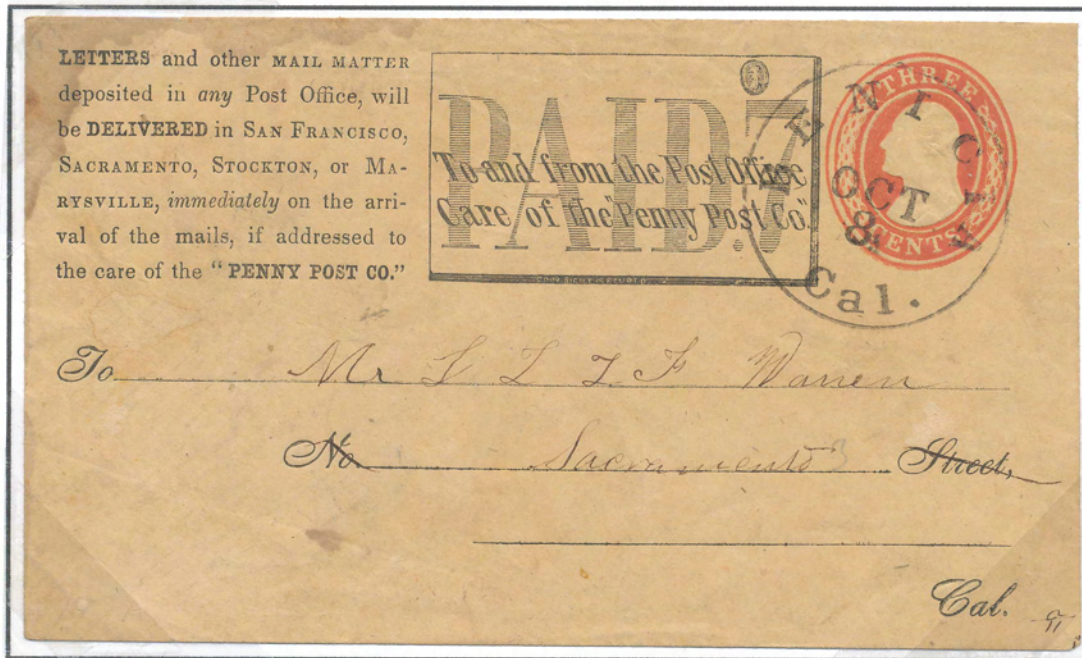
Town Postmarks – 4 pages, 13-16

Benicia – 2 pages, 13-14

Vallejo – 2 pages, 15-16

This exhibit contains:

- Unique, Frajola type 1C, 7 cent Penny Post Co. envelope from Benicia
- Unique *BENECIA* spelling on Pacific Express Co. cancel
- Likely unique Adams & Co.'s Express transition to Pacific Express envelope from Vallejo
- Two unique Vallejo Pacific Express Co. cancels, with & without *PAID*
- Rare Benicia, Cal. straight line cancel in red
- Earliest & latest known usage of Vallejo 36 mm cancel



PF 23 308

The **unique** Type 1C Paid 7 To and from the Post Office in the Frajola census, #113. October 8, 1855 letter to San Francisco.

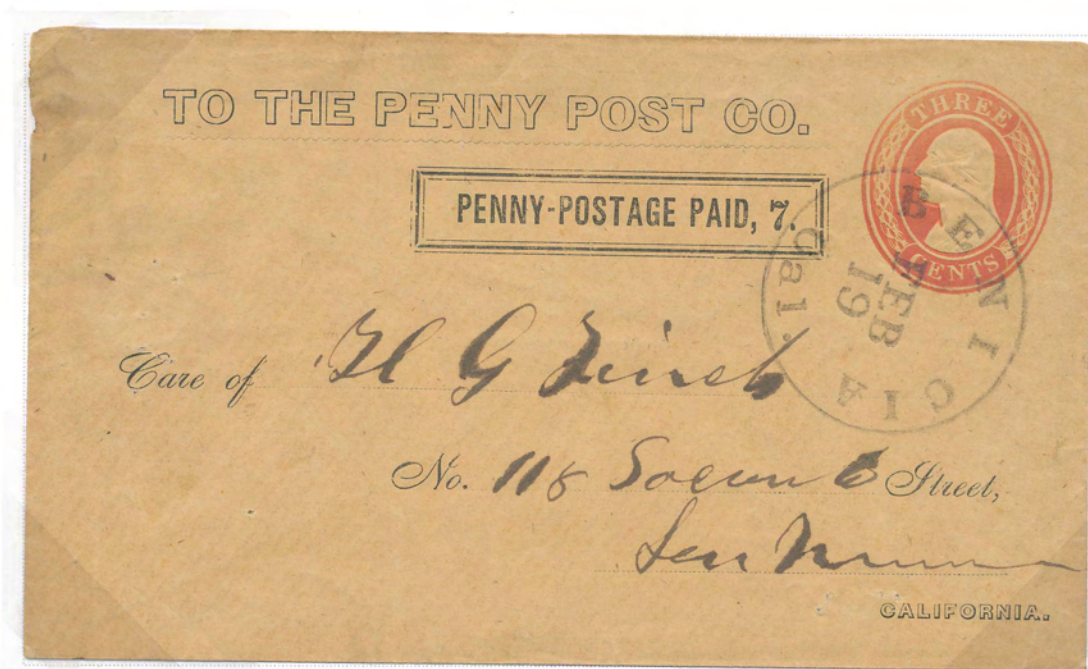
Two cents, of the seven cents, paid for taking the letter from the Penny Post letter box to the US Post Office. The remaining five cents paid for delivery from the Penny Post to the ultimate destination in the city of delivery, after the US Post Office delivered the letter to the Penny Post. US Post Office transportation from Benicia to San Francisco paid by the U10 envelope.

Henry L Goodwin established the Penny Post Company of California, beginning operations on June 25, 1855. The company delivered mail through July 1856. The phrase "Care of the Penny Post Co." on Type 1 envelopes was objected to by the San Francisco Postmaster. The text of the envelope *was almost immediately replaced* (Frajola).

Quoting from Mr. Richard Frajola's exhibit 'California Penny Post Co.':

Goodwin immediately ran afoul of San Francisco postmaster Charles L. Weller. Weller realized that his substantial income from post office box rentals would diminish significantly if the Penny Post customers began having their letters delivered to the single Penny Post box instead of the several individually rented post office boxes. Weller instructed clerks to ignore the "to the care of" style of printed instructions and to place mail directly into the boxes of the final recipient. This, of course, deprived the recipient of the city delivery for which a fee had been paid to the Penny Post and often delayed mail further.

Following a physical altercation at the San Francisco post office on July 20, 1855, Goodwin sued Weller. This was the first in an extended series of legal battles. On August 17, 1855 the Post Office Department published a written statement that they agreed with Weller's interpretation of regulations regarding the delivery of mail. Goodwin's legal case in California was resolved in Weller's favor on July 12, 1856. Goodwin then took his complaint to the U.S. Senate and it was not resolved until 1860.



Type 3D *Penny Postage Paid, 7* in the Frajola census, #326 (type 3 #26). February 19, 1856 letter to San Francisco. Two cents, of the seven cents, paid for taking the letter from the Penny Post letter box to the US Post Office.

Frajola's census documents 16 covers of Type 3D known, of which five originate from Benicia. The Type 3 covers were first issued on July 11, 1855 and include *TO THE PENNY POST CO.* in hollow letters across the top.

The Frajola census documents a total of 120 used Penny Post covers known of all types.

The San Francisco Postmaster was concerned about a revenue decrease due to the express companies and the local post. SF box rent for year ending June 30, 1855 was \$30,670 and for the year ending June 30, 1856 was \$21,476. This was a decrease of 30% year-to-year.

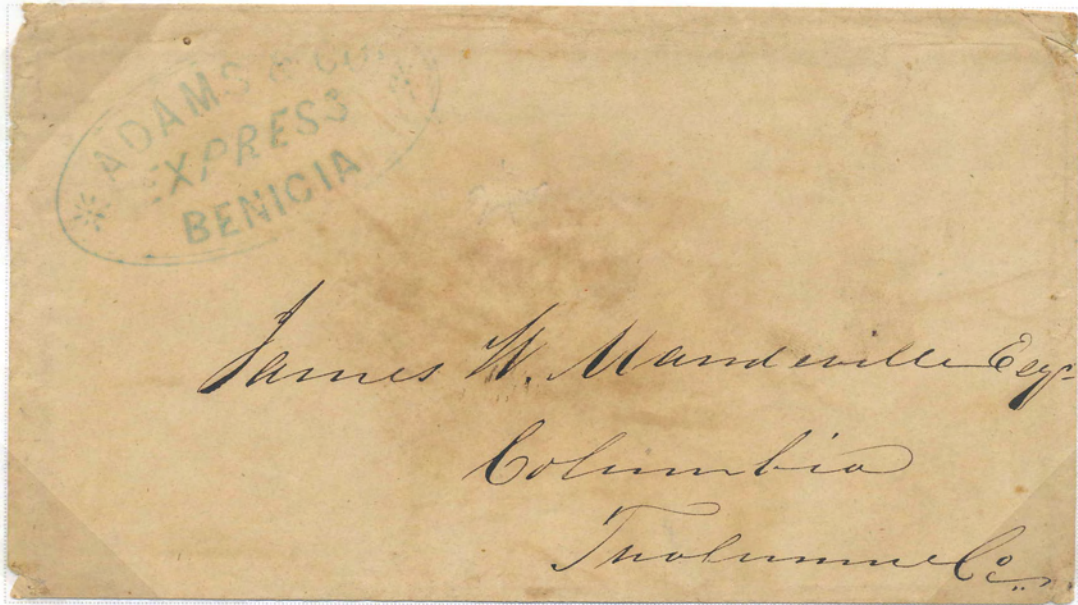
Additionally, he was concerned about the loss of stamp revenue. 111 letters were received by a mercantile firm in San Francisco during June, 1856. Only 18 came by mail, the remaining 93 by express; and of those received by express, only 15 were in conformity to law.

The Penny Post business model was that by using the US Postal Service to move letters between cities they were able to charge less than the express companies who used private carriers.

Western Express

Benicia

Adams & Co.



Eight Adams covers are known from Benicia. The cancel is known in both blue & red.

Adams & Co. was in existence between September 1849 and February 1855. Until late 1851 they weren't primarily an express company. In late 1852 to early 1853 they began aggressive expansion and assumed a leadership position among the western expresses. After failing in February 1855 most employees quickly reorganized as Pacific Express Co.

Pacific Express Co.



Only known BENECIA Pacific Express cover. One other cover known from Benicia with the correct spelling. Sent September 24, 1856 to the Secretary of State in Sacramento.

In operation from March 1855 to April 1857. Established from the copus of Adams & Co. Failed when the third president, Edwin A Rowe, who was also a California State Treasury clerk, embezzled funds from both to speculate in real estate.

Western Express
Benicia

Wells Fargo & Co.



Circa December 1853 during the California fourth assembly. Double lined *FREE* handstamp. Sent free, as a courtesy, from Henry Hubert, assemblyman, to the surveyor general's office in San Francisco.

Two Benicia express covers with a 21x37 mm double lined oval handstamp that is only known in black.

Wells Fargo established March 18, 1852 and began business in California on July 13. Originally letters delivered for 25 cents. On August 17, 1855, due to competition, this was reduced to 12½ cents.

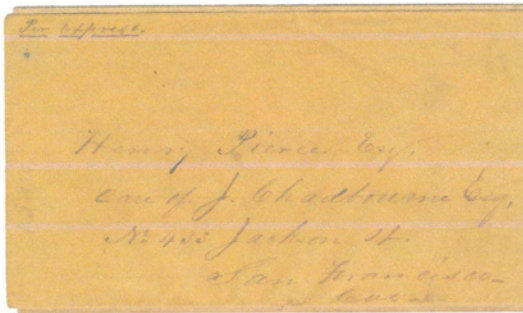


Two black *PAID* handstamps, with one used as a cancel, on the three cent Nesbitt entire. Sent prior to the issuance of Wells Fargo printed franks.

Western Express
Benicia

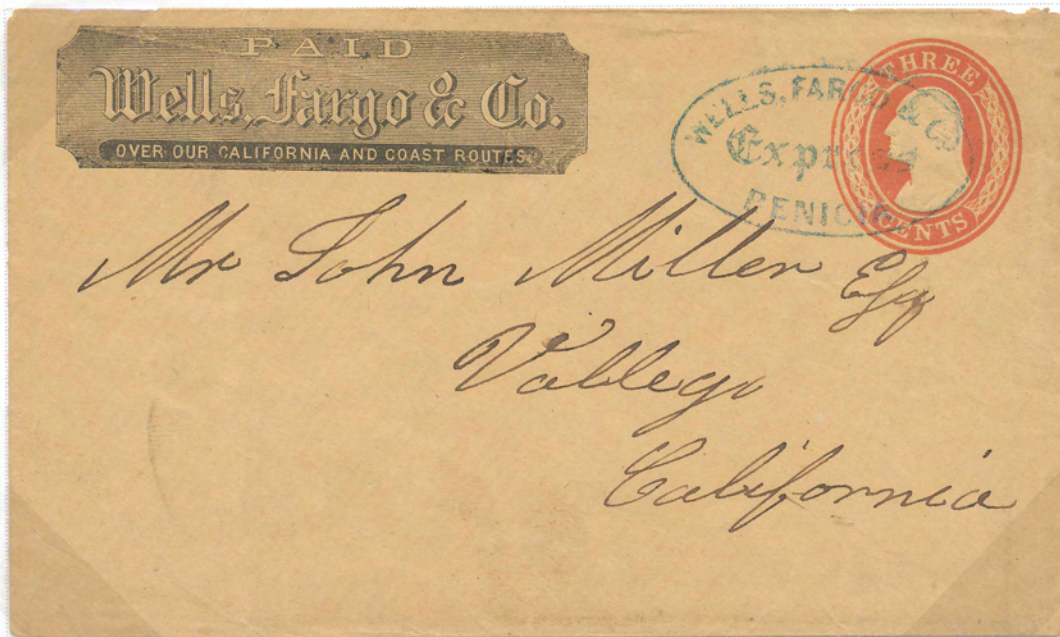
Wells Fargo & Co.

Paste up. Blue single lined oval handstamp 27x39 mm. Printed frank with nail hole through CALIFORNIA.



50% size

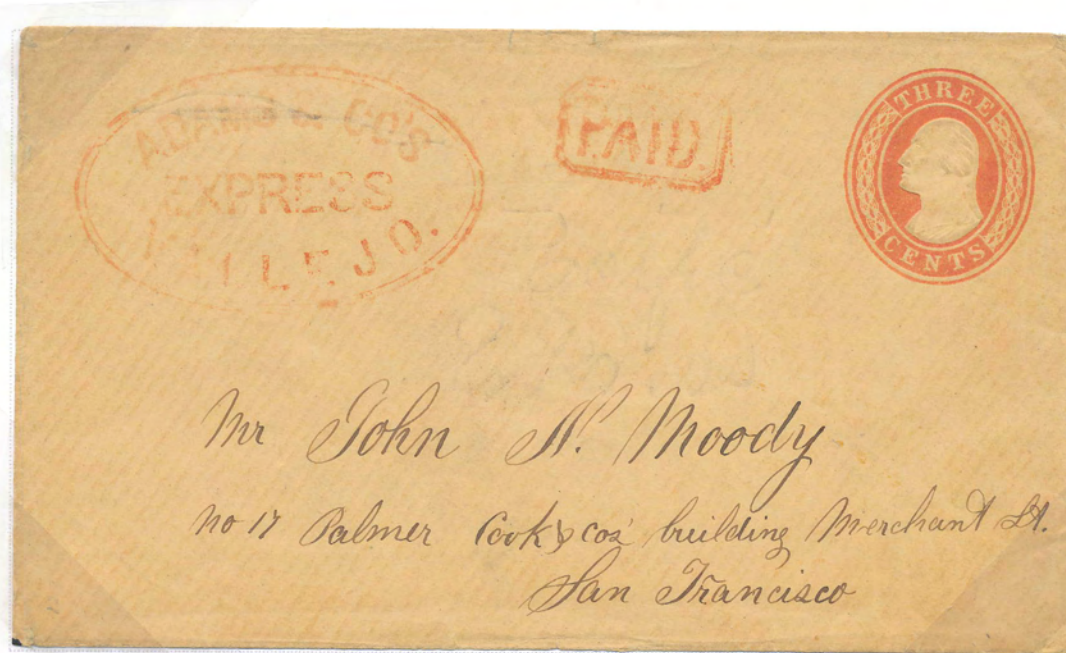
Wells Fargo first advertised their printed franks August 17, 1855. This style of frank used from 1856 to 1882. During the usage of this frank the fee was ten cents until the end when it was reduced to five cents.



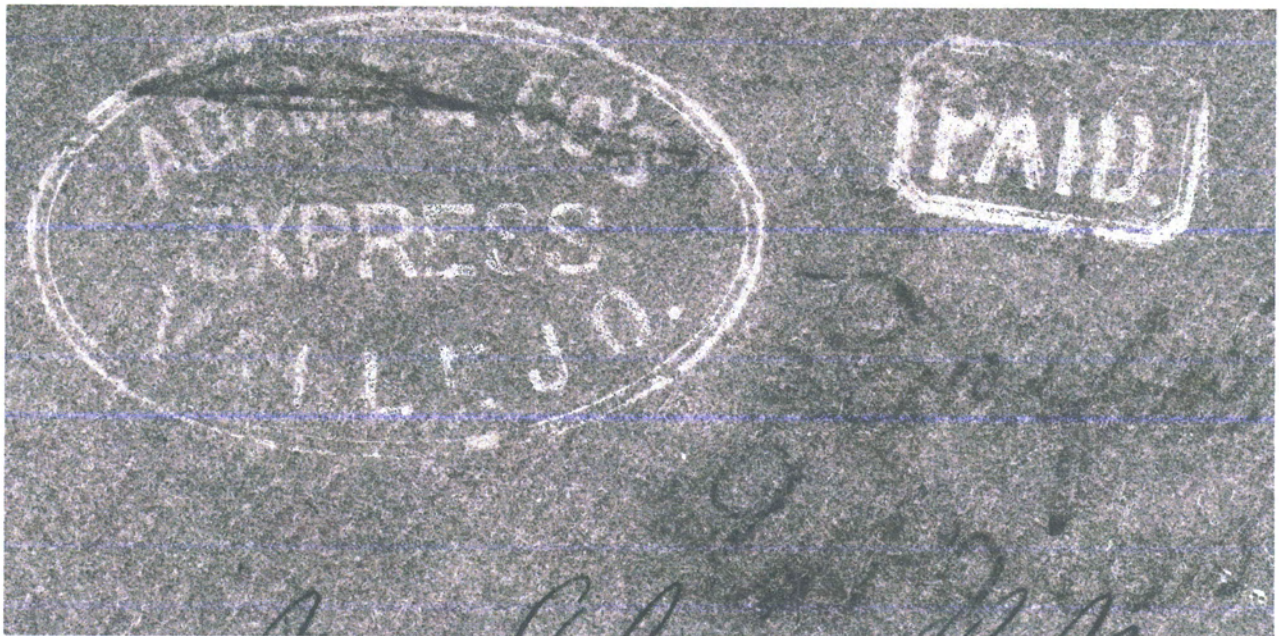
Benicia express handstamp with 23x41 mm single lined oval & EXPRESS in old German font. Unlisted in Leutzingier.

Western Express
Vallejo

Adams & Co.'s Express

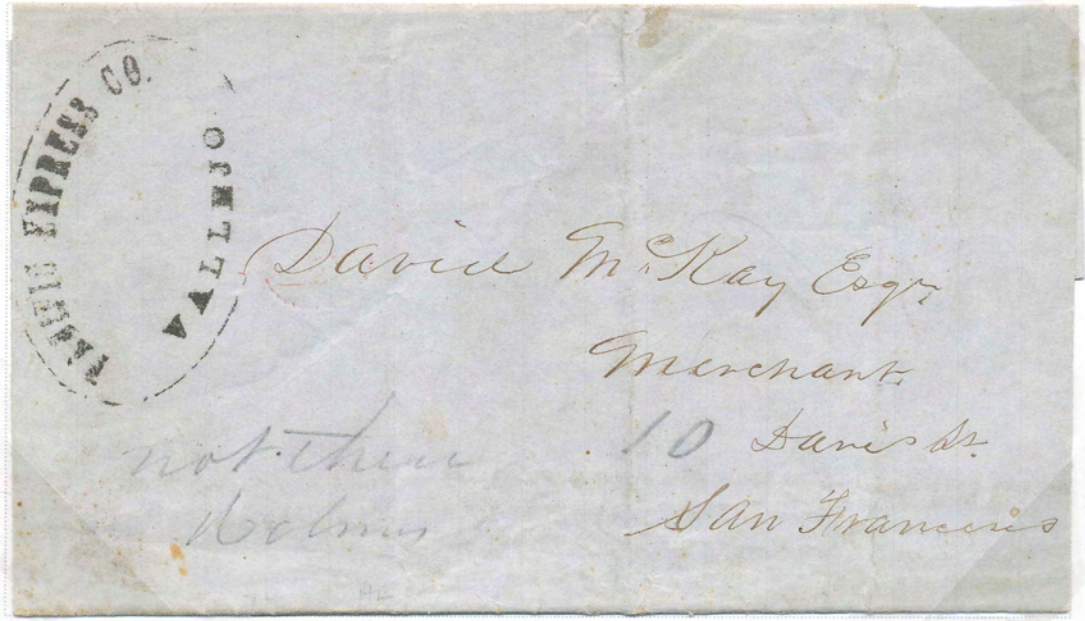


Likely date is February or March 1855 as during this period Adams & Co.'s Express went out of business & Pacific Express was founded. Red double oval 32x54 mm handstamp on three cent Nesbitt with matching boxed PAID. handstamp.



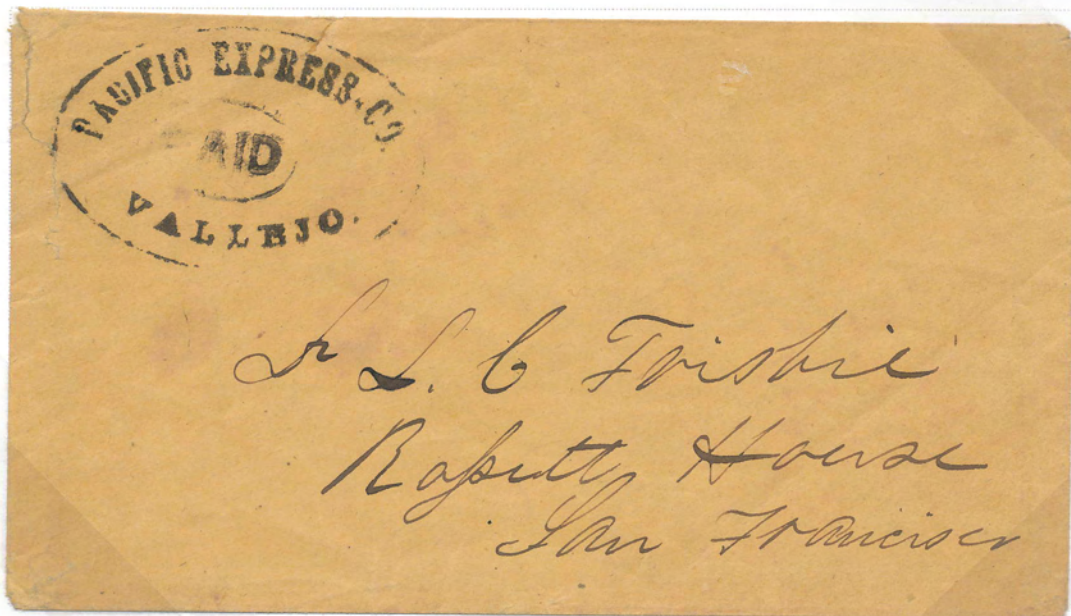
Retro Reveal shows that Adams & Co's had been scratched out & Pacific Express written in prior to erasure. Handstamp likely used prior to the creation a new Pacific Express handstamp. Likely a unique transition cover

Adams & Co.'s Express first advertisement placed on November 8, 1849. They ceased business February 1855. Most employees quickly reorganized & rebranded as Pacific Express Company which operated from March 1855 to April 1857.



Unique Vallejo handstamp per Thomas. Only 17 handstamps of this type known. Black oval two-line handstamp 49x32 mm

Pacific Express Co. operated from March 1855 to April 1857. It was founded by former employees of Adams & Co., a few weeks after that firm failed in February 1855. Most of the Adams offices were rebranded as Pacific Express. The majority of envelopes were carried to their destinations without the use of government mail or other express companies.



Unique Vallejo handstamp per Thomas. Only six covers of this type known. Black oval three-line handstamp 49x32 mm with PAID inside an oval.



Aug 19 double circle cancel in royal blue & reddish orange frank. 3 cent pink on buff postal entire, roughly opened at right. J. Litkin was the station agent.

The Pacific Union Express Co. incorporated in California on December 18, 1867. Service commenced on July 1, 1868. Frajola wrote *The company was set up "on the Wells, Fargo plan" to compete with them.* This rivalry with Wells Fargo resulted in a rate war that economically damaged both companies.

May 1868, Pacific Union Express Co., the Trevis group, was granted exclusive rights to transport express mail and material over the Central Pacific Railroad. They also were granted a ten year exclusive contract, by Union Pacific Railroad, when the two railroads completed the transcontinental link. Leading up to the joining of the Central Pacific & Union Pacific Railroads, Wells Fargo stock price dropped from \$100 to \$13. The Tevis group, bought Wells stock at distressed prices. On October 4, 1869 the two parties met & Wells Fargo purchased the railroad contracts to carry express material for stock & cash. After this a consolidation of the two companies started to take place and on December 1, 1869 Pacific Union Express discontinued operations. The reality was that Pacific Union Express' Trevis group assumed ownership and control of Wells Fargo. Lloyd Trevis was elected President of Wells Fargo in 1872, an office he held for twenty years.

Western Express
Vallejo

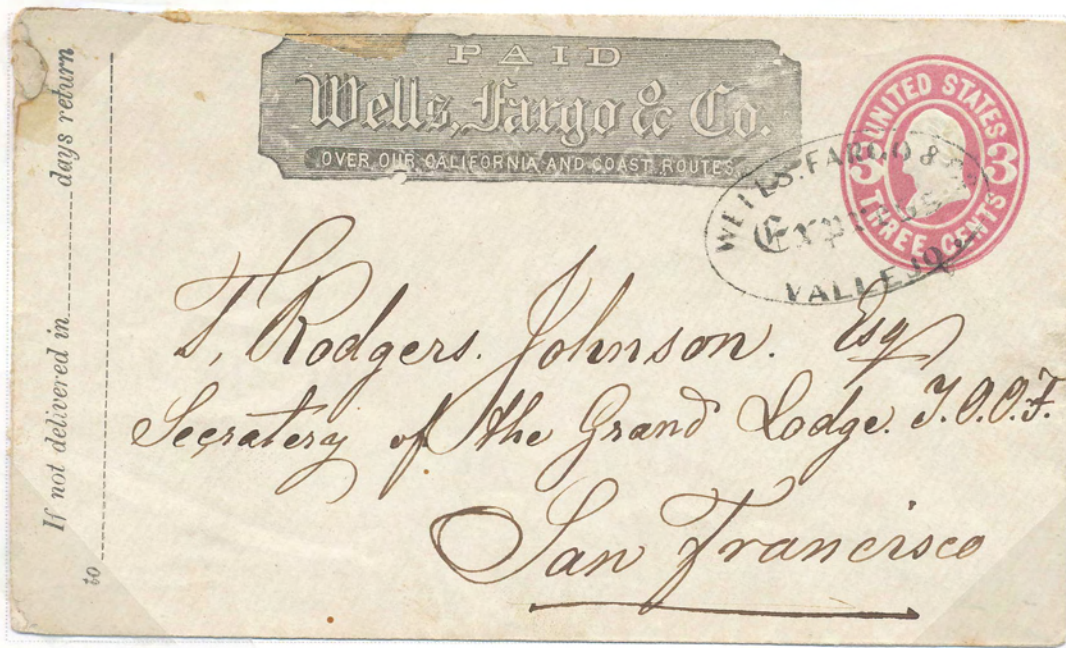
Wells Fargo & Co.



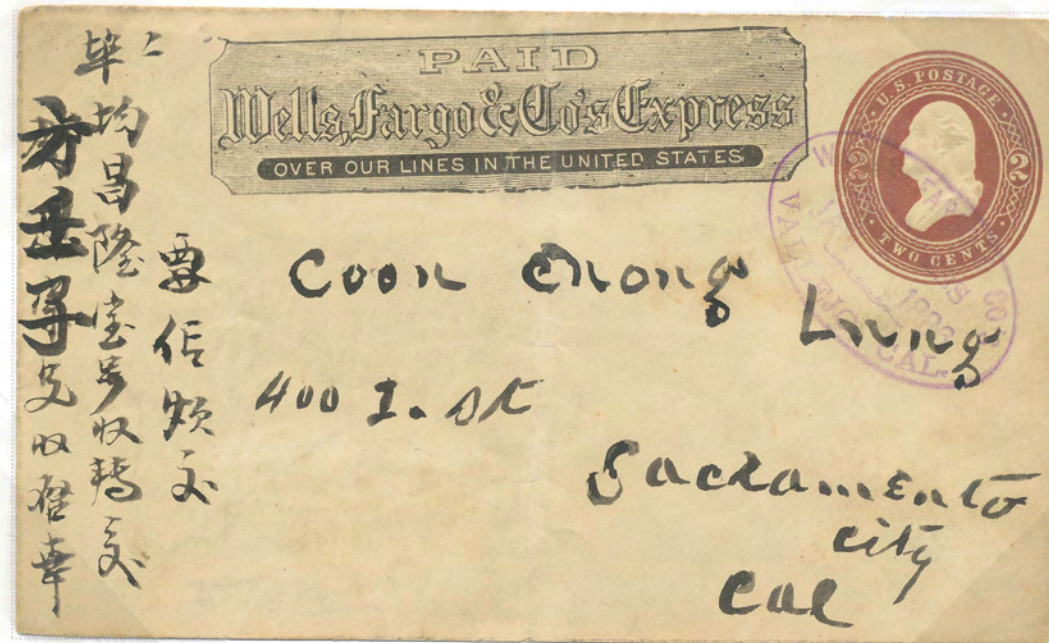
Dec 12 date in 28x38 mm blue oval handstamp cancel. Dash under Co. with period after Vallejo. S. G. Hilborn, attorney, shaded ad. July 23, 1866 Hilborn was elected Vallejo's attorney and in 1869 he was on the town's board.



Single line, 23x39 mm, oval handstamp in blue. *Express* in old German script. Second known Wells Fargo cover originating from Vallejo with Bamber & Co 38mm double circle forwarding handstamp in blue. A similar cover, dated Mar 07, is listed in Thomas.



Black, single line, 23x39 mm, oval handstamp on white envelope. *Express* in old German script. Tear at top left repaired with inserted piece. This style frank was used from 1856 to 1882.



Jan 1886 single line, 24x41 mm, oval handstamp in violet. Evidently clerk forgot to inset the day into the handstamp. Last style Wells Fargo frank used in the United States. Frank used from 1882 to 1895 and only known in black. Plimpton brown two cent envelope. It can be found used after Wells ceased mail delivery in 1895.



Oct 2 date in 28x38 mm black oval handstamp cancel. Reduced at left.

South Vallejo encompassed the area between Benicia avenue, sixth street & magazine street. It had the railroad terminus including five spurs to wharves and the lower depot. Post office established August 8, 1870 and discontinued December 5, 1872.

Vallejo Route



Undated, single line, 28x38 mm, oval handstamp in blue. Vallejo Route cancel unlisted in Leutzinger.

Vallejo Route referred to the rail line terminating in South Vallejo. 1871 San Francisco directory advertised this route as saving 80 miles & three hours from Marysville to San Francisco and 52 miles from Sacramento to San Francisco. Two express trains daily, except for one on Sunday, each carrying U.S. mail and all fast express.



April 29, 1850, cancel. Red straight-line handstamp, size 24.5x 2.5 mm, with manuscript .12½ rate. Folded wrapper postmarked pre-California statehood. This has been described as *the finest known example of this rare straight line postmark*.

Cancel is known used from December 29, 1849 to May 29, 1850. This intra-California rate was in effect from August 14, 1848 until June 30, 1851. Few straight-line handstamps were used in California.

Benicia's postmaster appointment was published in the Official register as November 8, 1849, along with six other California cities. The post office was in operation prior to this date. A special agent was sent to California and authorized to establish post offices & appoint postmasters. Consequently, the post office opened typically three to six months earlier than the published date. In a letter, special agent Allen stated, in a letter, that he was in Benicia June 25, 1849, where he established a post office and appointed Charles W. Hayden as the first postmaster.

Town Postmarks
Benicia

Intra-California Rate



July 3, 1850, cancel. Red 35 mm handstamp with ornate 12½ intra-California rate. Two page folded letter postmarked pre-California statehood. Cancel known used from May 23, 1850 to October 31, 1861.

Less than 3,000 mile rate

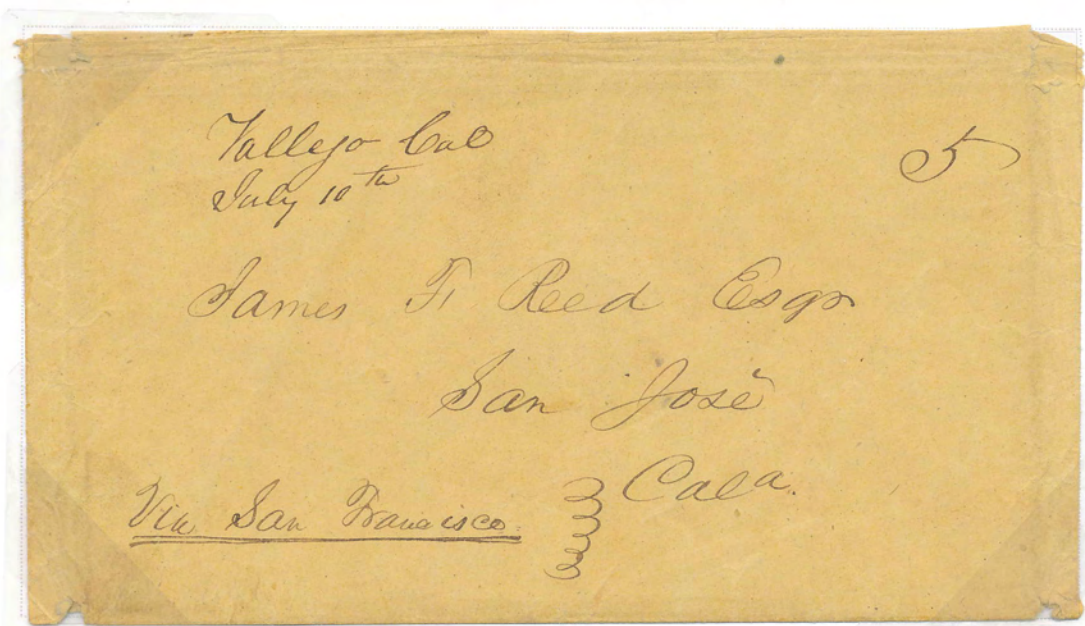


October 31, 1861, cancel. Black 35 mm handstamp on a three cent stamped envelope. Year confirmed by arrival date of November 1, 1861, written on reverse. This is six months after the latest date of March 27, 1861 recorded in Williams.

Postal Act of March 3, 1851 lowered the postage rate to three cents prepaid per half ounce for a distance of less than 3,000 miles.

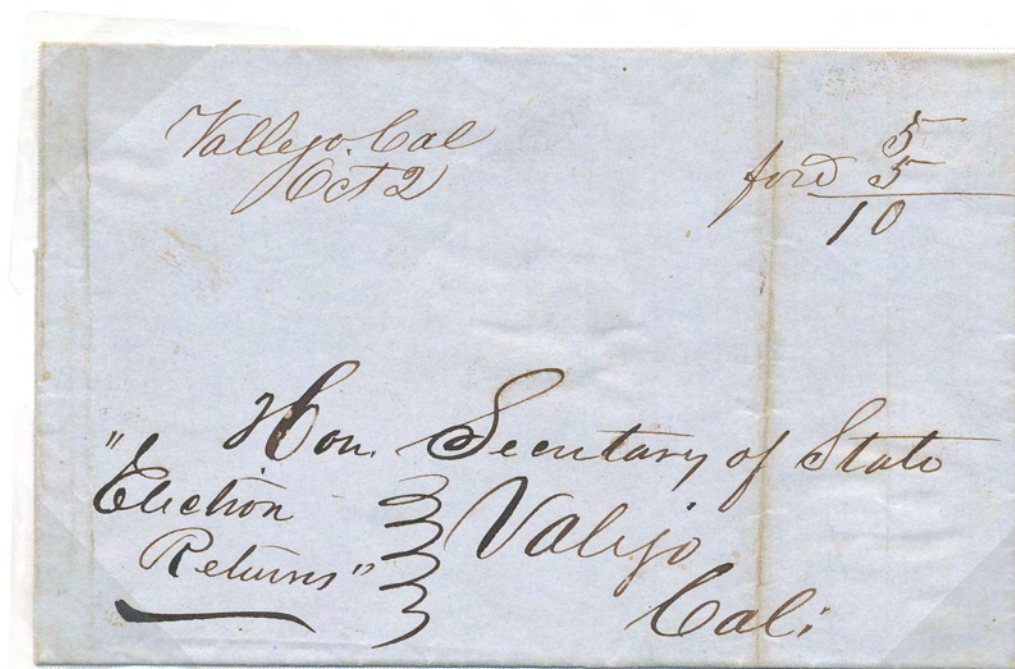
Town Postmarks
Vallejo

Less than 3,000 mile collect rate



July 10, 1851 manuscript cancel. Earliest known Vallejo cover. Two page letter, from secretary of state, W. Van Voorhies, validates the 1851 year. He comments on the construction of a temporary State House & thoughts of moving the State Capitol to San Jose.

Vallejo manuscript cancel known used from July 10, 1851 to August 17, 1855. Postal Act of March 3, 1851 lowered the postage rate to five cents, collect, per half ounce for a distance of less than 3,000 miles.



October 2 manuscript cancel with the year, 1851, validated by the receiving date on reverse. Folded sheet evidently overlaying the original cover, requiring 5 cents plus 5 cents forwarding docking notation. Likely originally sent to San Jose & then forwarded to Vallejo as the State Archives moved during this period.

Town Postmarks
Vallejo

Less than 3,000 mile prepaid rate

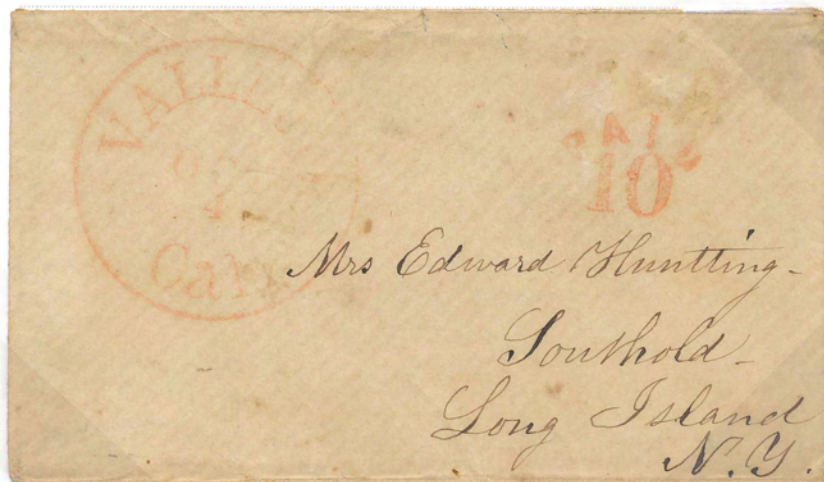


September 8, 1856 cancel. Paid 3 red handstamp for distances less than 3,000 miles. Year documented by dated Naval Lodge No. 87 F&AM flyer. Latest known use of this cancel. Cancel pictured in Williams.

Vallejo red 36 mm handstamp cancel known used from October 4, 1855 to September 8, 1856. The Vallejo post office established prior to July 28, 1851, the date that Lyman Leslie, the first postmaster, appointment confirmed in Washington. Post office discontinued September 3, 1853 and reestablished January 9, 1855.

Postal Act of March 3, 1851 lowered the postage rate to three cents, prepaid, per half ounce for a distance of less than 3,000 miles and six cents, prepaid, for a distance of over 3,000 miles.

Greater than 3,000 mile prepaid rate



October 4, 1855 is the earliest known use of this cancel. PAID 10 handstamp paid for distances greater than 3,000 miles, in this case to Long Island NY.