

Domestic Letter Rates
via Panama

Over 3,000 Miles
Double 6 Cent Rate



April 1853 cover from San Francisco to Circleville OH. The letter left San Francisco 23 April on the *Isthmus* arriving in Panama 11 May. The mail was carried across the Isthmus to Aspinwall and then traveled to New York on the *Crescent City* arriving 24 May.

Stamps orange brown.



Cover to Westfield MA entered the mail in San Francisco.

Block of four pays the double rate.

Positions 36,37,46,47R1^L



April 1853 folded letter from San Francisco to Boston MA. The letter left San Francisco 17 April on the *Northerner* arriving in Panama 3 May. The mail was carried across the Isthmus to Aspinwall and then traveled to New York on the *Crescent City* arriving 24 May.

Domestic Letter Rates
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Over 3,000 Miles
10 Cent Rate effective 1 April 1855

Three cent bisect used from San Francisco

Folded address sheet from San Francisco CA to Oyster Bay NY.
Stamps dull red. Strip of three stamps positions 93-95 R1L.
Bisected stamp position 85 R1L.



Privately carried to New York from Bordeaux France.

September 1856 folded letter from Bordeaux France to San Francisco CA.

New York Ocean Mail type III cancellation.

Stamp is type II.

March 1857 folded address sheet from New York City to San Francisco CA.

Type III Ocean Mail postmark.

Block of 3 stamps are brownish carmine. 1 cent stamp type IV.



Domestic Letter Rates
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Over 3,000 Miles
10 Cent Rate effective 1 April 1855



Cover from Auburn NY
to San Francisco CA.

e Partial payment in cash

Cover from Fiddletown CA
to Scio NY. Stamps brownish
carmine positions 1-3L8, gash on
shoulder. Center stamp with pre-
printing paper fold.
Plate 8 was not used until after
January 1856.



Double Rate



Cover from Albany NY to
Stockton CA.

e

Domestic Letter Rates

Not Handled by the US Post Office

Over 3,000 Miles

Carried Privately

Stamps were required by law even when mail was carried privately. These letters had the postage properly paid with stamps but were never handled by the post office.



September 1854 folded letter from San Francisco to Scotland. The letter left San Francisco 1 September on the Uncle Sam to Panama City arriving 15 September. It was most likely turned over to the British Post Office in Panama City before crossing the isthmus. The letter never entered the US mail.

From Panama the letter was carried by ship to St. Thomas, then on to Southampton. From Southampton by rail to London then to Edinburgh. Finally to Linlithgow.

One shilling due on delivery in Scotland.

On the East coast, almost all mail was taken to the post office and sent via Panama from New York. The letters below were privately carried East to West, via the Nicaragua route, to San Francisco and delivered privately.

May 1854 folded address sheet to San Francisco CA.

The letter departed New York on 5 May on the Northern Light and arrived in San Francisco 3 June on the Cortes.



March 1854 cover to San Francisco CA delivered by Adams Express.

The letter departed New York on 5 March on the Star of the West to San Juan Norte and arrived in San Francisco 16 April on the Cortes.

Nicaragua Line handstamp applied in New York most likely by the Nicaragua Steamship Company.

Domestic Letter Rates

Carried Privately From San Francisco via Nicaragua

Over 3,000 Miles

Entered the Mail in New York



Cover from San Francisco to South Boston MA.
This letter was delivered to the ship by letter bag operator G. L. Leland, Still and Company.
Positions 73-74L3



Cover from San Francisco CA to Baltimore MD.
Delivered to the boat by letter bag operator 'The Noisy Carrier'.
Bisect accepted in San Francisco, New York and Baltimore.

While bisecting stamps was never approved by the Post Office Department they were often but not always accepted. In late 1853 the department clearly stated that bisects were not permitted.

via Nicaragua privately carried to New York



September 1853 folded letter from San Francisco CA to Boston MA via Nicaragua. The postmaster in New York City refused to recognize the bisect and rated the letter as a ship letter with 7 cents due, 5 cents for postage beyond New York and 2 cents captain's fee. The letter left San Francisco on the *Cortes* 16 September and arrived in New York City 9 October on the *Star of the West*.

via Panama



Cover from San Francisco CA to Bangor Maine. The letter entered the mail in San Francisco and was sent via Panama. The San Francisco postmaster accepted the bisect but the Bangor postmaster did not accept the bisect and rated the letter marked due 10.

During this period, postage paid for delivery from one post office to another. When sending a letter addressed to the same post office where it was deposited, the rate was 1 cent. This is known as the drop rate.



Advertising Collar

Detroit MI drop letter.

Stamp type IV position
27L1¹ double transfer.

Bush, Barnes & Co. stamp
collar.

5 cent integral rate marking
obscured by square grid.

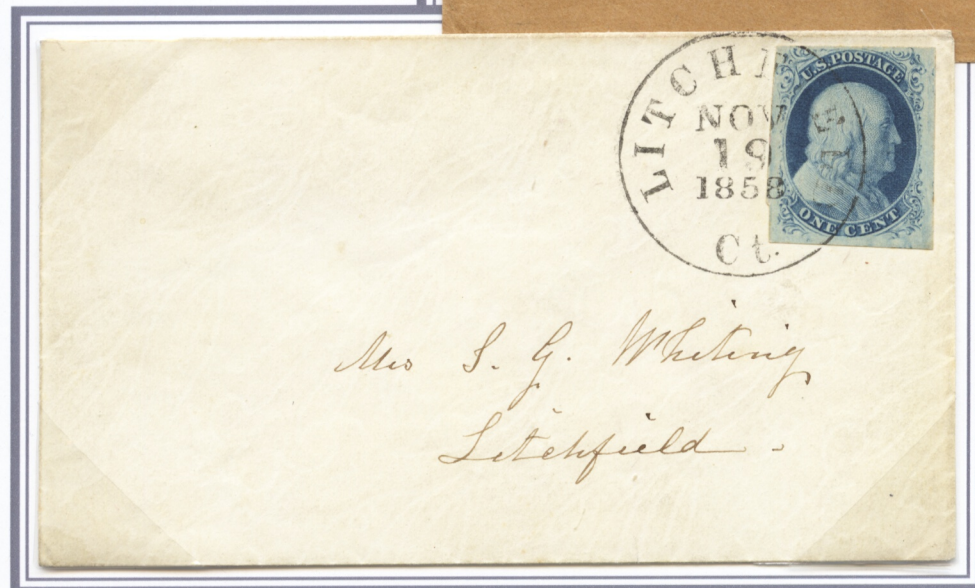
e

DROP

Red 'DROP' applied
by postmaster.

Drop letter from
Indianapolis IN.

Stamp type II position
100L1¹.



November 1858 Litchfield CT
drop letter. Ladies cover.

Stamp plate 4 type III.

e

Not exceeding 500 miles



Type I stamp position 7Rr^E

12 July 1851 unsealed circular from Great Falls to Portsmouth NH mailed the second week of use of the 1 cent stamp.

Red grid cancel.

Second earliest recorded use of type I stamp.

e

501-1,500 miles

December 1851 circular from Cleveland OH to Waterford NY.

Stamps type II and IIIa.



Over 3,500 miles



December 1851 circular from San Francisco CA to Providence RI via Panama.

One of two recorded examples of this rate paid with stamps.

via Panama



September 1857 San Francisco News Letter to New Orleans. Via Panama.
1 cent rate not exceeding 3 oz. for any distance.

via Nicaragua



Unsealed circular from San Francisco to Boston MA. Left San Francisco on 1 June 1853 for Nicaragua on the Brother Jonathan. Vanderbilt Independent Line 'VIA NICARAGUA/AHEAD OF THE MAILS' without box.

There are eight
recorded bisects
paying the 1 cent
circular rate



Wrapper front from
Jackson MS to New
Orleans LA paying the 1
cent circular rate. Stamp is
type II rose red.

Green town postmark.

Wrapper from Philadelphia PA
to Boston MA paying the 1 cent
newspaper or periodical rate.
Wrapper is made from writing
paper.



Unsealed circular from San
Francisco to Boston MA.
Left San Francisco on 1 June
1853 for Nicaragua on the
Sierra Nevada. Vanderbilt
Independent Line 'VIA
NICARAGUA/AHEAD OF
THE MAILS' without box.

One of two recorded via
Nicaragua hand stamps on
cover with bisected 3 cent
stamp.

While this newspaper was dated 1 November 1852 the publisher was not applying the new newspaper rate of 1 cent that went into effect on 1 October. Before 1 October the rate was 2 cents between 500 and 1,500 miles. This resulted in a 1 cent overpayment. Stamps type II and IIIa.

The only newspaper recorded, without a wrapper, with 1 cent stamps paying the postage

II

IIIa



November 1852 transient newspaper from Quincy IL to West Portland ME weighing one ounce.

Used From or To a U.S. Territory

Minnesota, Washington and Nebraska

Postage rates from United States Territories were the same as the prevailing domestic rates.
During this period there were 7 territories plus Indian Territory, which was not an official territory, and some unorganized territories.

from Minnesota Territory



Unsealed circular from
St. Anthony's Falls
Minnesota Territory to
Granby CT.



Reverse of cover reduced 70%

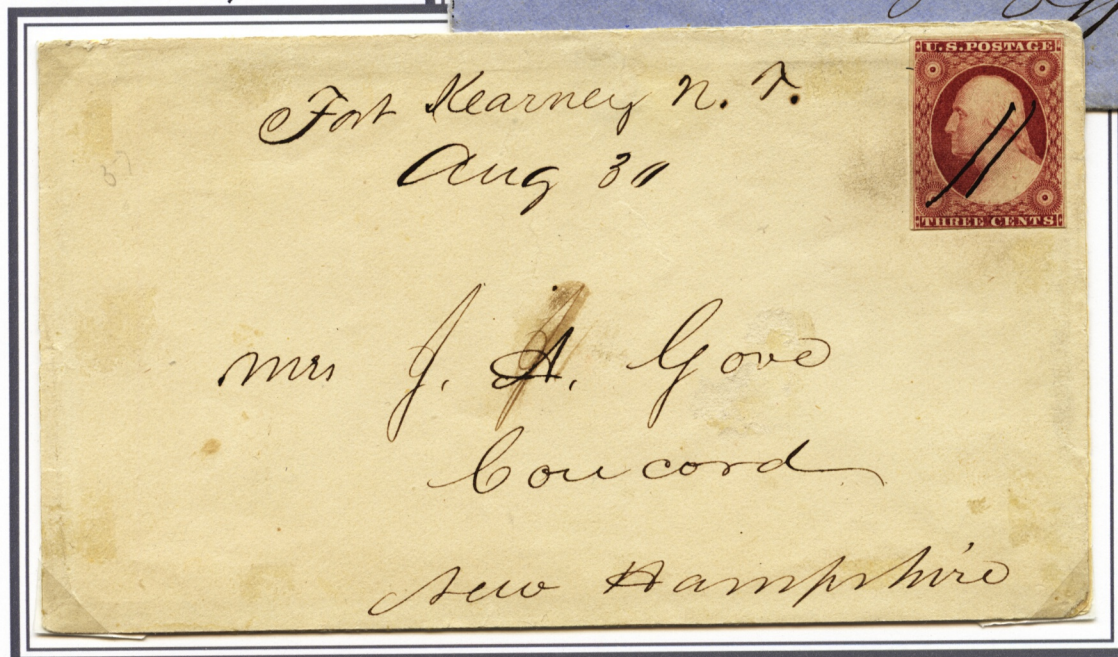
to Washington Territory

Cover from San Francisco CA
to US Navy ship John Hancock
deployed to Puget Sound
Washington Territory to help
suppress an Indian uprising.

Type IV all single recut top and
bottom positions 28, 38, 48Lr¹.



from Fort Kearney
Nebraska Territory



August 1857 cover front from
Fort Kearney NT to Concord
NH. 2,500 soldiers were sent
to Salt Lake City to put down a
rumored Mormon insurrection.
This letter was sent from a
member of the party to his wife.

The troops spent the winter of
1857 in the area of Fort Kearney
which had been destroyed by
the Mormons.

from Oregon Territory



Double 10 cent over 3,000 mile rate folded address sheet from Pleasant Hill OT to New York City. One cent stamps type IV positions 88,98R1L. Bisect was accepted.

from Indian Territory



Cover from Fort Washita Arkansas Territory, in the Chickasaw Nation, to Washington City. The addressee, Peter Pitchlynn, was half Choctaw and spent many years in Washington City. He served as Principal Chief of the Choctaw from 1864 - 1866. After the Civil War he returned to Washington City and was very active in pressing Choctaw land claims against the US.

One of two stamped covers recorded with this postmark.

California 'Phantom' 9 cent Rate

There was no official 9 cent rate. The Salt Lake City Postmaster most likely misunderstood the situation and deduced that, since the letter was docketed via California, the sender should be charged 3 cents, the under 3,000 mile rate to CA, and the 6 cent over 3,000 mile rate to the East Coast. The correct rate was 6 cents. Without the endorsement, the letter could have traveled on the overland route to Independence MO and on to NJ for 3 cents.

Three recorded covers paying this incorrect rate from Salt Lake.

January 1855 letter from Salt Lake City UT Territory to New Jersey.

The letter was endorsed to go 'via California'. It traveled on the Old Spanish Trail to San Pedro and San Diego. This was the Chorpenning Star Route 12801.

From San Diego it went by coastal steamer to San Francisco. In San Francisco it was placed on the Pacific Mail Steamship Company steamer *Golden Age* to Panama.

After crossing the Isthmus it arrived in New York 12 March on the United States Mail Steamship Company steamer *Illinois*.



Feb 1858 cover from Fort Bridger UT to New York City.

Number 18 in a series of letters from Major Porter to his wife.

Stamp pays the under 3,000 mile rate

This letter was carried overland under the miles contract, Star Route 8911, to Independence MO.

During this period postmasters occasionally fashioned their own devices to cancel stamps or indicate prepayment. Excluding manuscript cancels, about two-thirds of stamps were canceled by town postmarks. Considering this, the fact that many post offices were provided with canceling devices, and that a lot of mail was still sent stampless, fancy cancels are not common on the issue of 1851-1856. Rate markings intended for stampless mail were also occasionally used to cancel stamps.

Ribbon and Shield



April 1852 cover from Eutaw AL to Princeton NJ.

'J. Chiles' the postmaster's name in ribbon entwined around a patriotic shield.

Orange brown stamp.

Running Stag



Cover from Shelburne Falls to Haydenville MA.
Stamp is dull red type I.



Odd Fellows Links



Cover from Canton MS
to New Orleans LA.

Stamp is type II.

The covers below have stampless rate markings used as a canceling device. Rate markings were not needed on stamped mail since the stamps showed the amount paid.



Embossed ladies cover
from North Easton to
Mechanicsville NY.
Fancy negative 'PAID 3cts'
in box.

Stamp is orange brown
type II.



Cover from
Clappville MA to
Foxcroft ME.

Stamp is dull red
type II. Dark blue
postmark and cancel.