

### The 10 Cent US Envelopes of 1870-1874

A high point in quality.

The United States issued 10¢ stamped envelopes almost continuously from 1855 to 1900. 1870 marked a turning point. John A.J. Creswell had recently become Postmaster General and George H. Reay replaced George F. Nesbitt as the Stamped Envelope Contractor. For the first time, there was a one to one correspondence between adhesive stamps and stamped envelopes, in denomination, subject, and color. Paper quality, Watermarks, and Knives were also refined. The embossing dies used are widely regarded as the finest ever produced, and Reay was able to maintain production quality and not even previously. This Exhibit will examine all aspects of the 10¢ Reay envelopes. An accompanying eBook provides additional depth. Scan the QR Code to download a pdf version of the eBook (25MB) from [upss.org](https://upss.org/), or refer to the binder below.

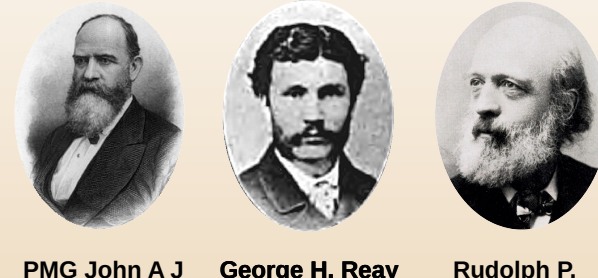
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	The 1874 Contract

#### Quality and Refinement: [1]

Three men can be credited with the quality and refinement of the 1870 Stamped Envelope issue: Postmaster General John A.J. Creswell [1, 11], who reformulated and modernized the POD. Under his direction:

- The contract was to be awarded to the bidder considered most advantageous to the Department not necessarily the lowest priced.
- The designs of the new envelopes would match the new stamp issue.
- Three grades of envelopes would be issued, allowing for a premium, 1<sup>st</sup> quality paper, while still offering more cost effective options.
- A new, more refined Monogram watermark was to be used.

George H. Reay [4], the contractor, who maintained a quality and consistency not seen previously, or for years thereafter.
Rodolph P. Laubenheimer [3, 4], the master engraver who produced the dies. 3<sup>rd</sup> Asst PMG W. H. H. Terrell sent a glowing letter of approval and thanks. Most still regard these dies as the finest ever produced.



PMG John A.J. Creswell, George H. Reay, and Rodolph P. Laubenheimer

#### Perspective: US 10 cent Envelopes 1855 - 1874: [2]



Jun 30 1870: Reay 10¢ die approved. Design of the new issue and based on designs of the new stamps.

### Part 1: The Envelopes:

#### 1) Design and Proofs: [5]

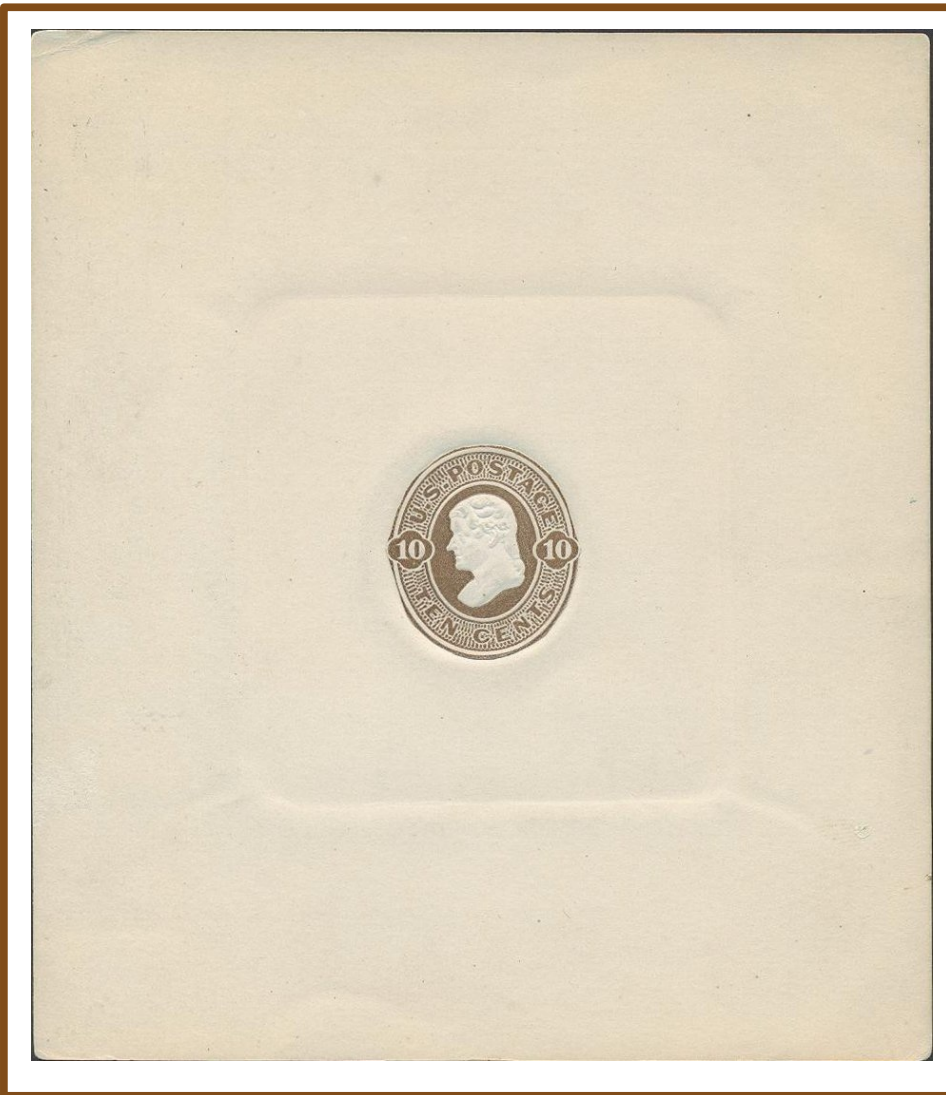


The new 1870 10¢ Stamps were issued on April 12, 1870. The design was derived from a statue of Thomas Jefferson by Hiram Powers, which was installed in the US Capitol in 1865. [6, 2]

The new 10¢ Envelope Die Design was derived from the engravings for the new stamp. A die proof served as the reference. On June 25, 1870 George Reay submitted the final die proof which was approved June 30<sup>th</sup>. [8, 1, 3]



Die Proof of new 1870 10¢ Stamp. Central area (envelopes: 141 size 141 x 222 mm)



Hybrid Die Proof of new 1870 10¢ Envelope Stamp

**Presentation Proofs:** Die proofs were produced by Reay for each envelope denomination. The proofs are cut to shape and mounted on die sunk cards similar to those used for adhesive stamps proofs. These were the first such presentation proofs of envelopes dies. [8, 1]

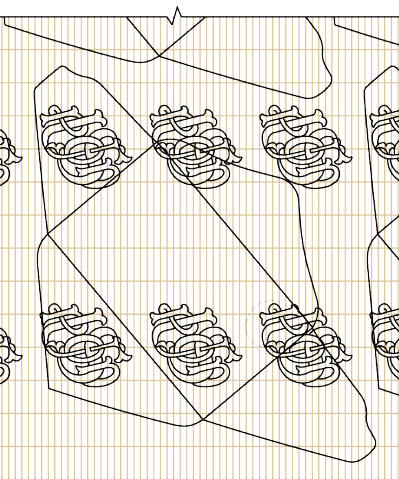
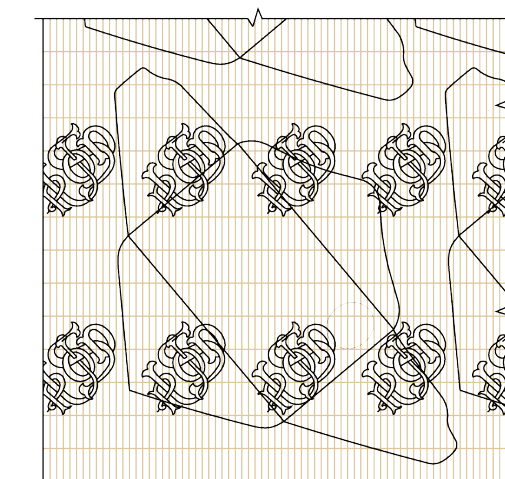
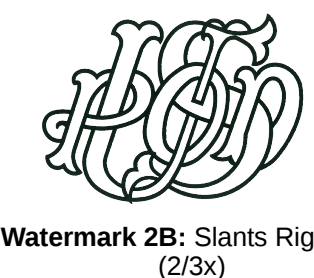
#### 4) Paper, Watermark, and Orientation: [7, 9]

The new, First Quality Paper called for by the POD is typically .0044", compared to .0036" for the last Nesbitt 10¢, with better finish and general appearance. Amber replaced Buff. Colors range from Bright to Creamy White, and Pale to Medium Amber. [7, 1]

The new Monogram watermark design as requested by the POD is shown here. [7, 2]

Two major Watermark types exist, as shown to the right.

Both are shown below oriented and spaced on laid paper as used by Reay [7, 3]



Paper Type A, Watermark 2A

Paper Type B, Watermark 2B

**Orientation: The Overlaid Envelope Parameter: [9, 11]**

Orientation is rarely examined in detail. The only catalogs references to orientation are Diagonally Left, Horizontal (Laid), etc. These are far from a complete description.

**Definition:** We can define Orientation as The angular position of the knife with respect to the paper edge when the blank was cut.

The illustrations above show the Standard Orientation for the Reay Full Letter size envelope blanks, for types A & B paper. The image to the right shows an actual envelope.

Common Orientation

Varities result from the way the paper was oriented when the blanks are cut. Rotated 180°, produces inverted watermarks. Flap down produces mirror image watermarks, etc. These are common, and have no bearing on the knife placement with respect to the paper edge. Abnormal orientations have abnormal knife placement

A method of specifying orientation is proposed in the eBook. [11]

Virtual Unfolding: This image illustrates the Watermarks and Orientation of the Olive Gray envelope to the right. The techniques to produce this image are detailed in [Appendix A-1]



#### 6) Color: [10, 4]

The official ink color was Chocolate. With the exception of the rare Olive Shades, Reay's color consistency was far better than Nesbitt or Plimpton. The color bars below illustrate common color variations for 10¢ envelopes from the 3 contractors that produced them. The data indicates variations in HSV values seen in each color bar. [10, 4]

Color Variations
Nesbitt 1855-1870
Reay 1870-1874
Plimpton 1875-1900

HSV Color System defines color by Hue, Saturation, and Value. [10, 3] Hue specifies color (Red, Yellow, Green, etc). Saturation describes color depth (Gray to Vivid color), and Value describes brightness.

#### 8) Specimens: [13]

Stamped Envelope Specimens were used for:

- Advertising & Promotion
- Presentation Samples
- Bidders Samples



Specimen Form 10's: Bold 10pt Long Premier Antique (33.5 x 3mm) [13, 2] Top: .0044" Amber; Wmk 2A; Kn 25. Bottom: .0042" White; Wmk 2A; Kn 25

Specimen Form 12's: 12pt Pica Romanesque (35 x 4mm) [13, 2] Top: .0044" Amber; Wmk 2A; Kn 25. Bottom: .0042" White; Wmk 2B; Kn 25

The Form of the "Specimen" printing was left to the contractor. Three printings were done by Reay each with a different font. Specimen Forms (SF designations) are from the USPS catalog. 500 SF10 sets were printed in July 1870. 500 SF25 were used as bidder samples for the 1870 re-bid. A mix of SF13's & 14's were used as 1874 bidders samples. Specimen markings are unknown on Olive Shade 10¢ envelopes.

The Exhibit:

A Traditional Treatment was chosen to illustrate a wide variety of postal stationery topics, and associated postal history. Scope: Pre-Production through Normal Use Period: 1870 - 1880. Note: 20% of the issue was made in the 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> quarters of 1874. This extended the normal use period by several years.

The accompanying eBook expands on the information in the exhibit, and is referenced throughout (see Legend). The eBook is written for all levels of experience, and includes introductory information. The pairing can serve as an introduction to stamped envelopes, for those new to the subject. Each is intended to stand on its own. The exhibit is to be judged independently of the eBook.

Key Points and Features:

- Of the Exhibit Content:**
  - Quality and Refinement:** Contrasts are drawn with earlier and later issues in regards to design and quality.
  - Orientation:** A detailed study of knife, paper and watermark orientation was conducted. Methods to specify, record and display orientation were developed. This seldom examined subject is introduced in the exhibit, and expanded upon in the eBook.
  - Olive Shades:** Potentially new information is presented on the Olive Black and Olive Gray varieties.
  - Of the Exhibit Construction:**
    - Split Frame:** The single frame is divided into two columns to allow better placement of key material.
    - Large format** pages are used to allow greater flexibility of arrangement.

A word about condition: Most of the envelopes shown here, especially the uses, are quite scarce. From 1870-1874, 125 ten cent stamps were issued for 1870 ten cent Reay envelope. A conscience decision was made to include some covers that may not be considered "Show Quality" in order to expand the breadth of the exhibit. Ugly covers have stories to tell too!



Legend: Important: This frame is divided into two columns. Cross-referencing: Blue Underlined Text and (1) -> points to (1) elsewhere in the frame. [5] References [5] or [5] in the eBook. Frame Line Color indicates the primary rate (see Rates, next column). Brown for unused, Green for Express. Rare

A Tag may be included in the frame line with supplementary information.

Bibliography: Please refer to the eBook.

### Rates and Services:

#### Convention Rates to Europe: [per 1/2 oz] [142, 15]

Rate reductions:

- to Great Britain: Jan 1870 - July 1875: 6¢ (from 12¢)
- to NGU (North German Union): July 1870 - Oct 1871: 7¢ (from 10¢)
- Oct 1871 - July 1875: 6¢

These resulted in 10¢ Convention rates between the US and a number of European countries, for closed mail passing through England and the NGU. By far, most of the US mail to Europe in the early 1870's, went by way of the British Mails.

#### GPU / UPU Rates: [142, 15, 4]

Universal International Rates began on July 1, 1875 under the General Postal Union. The rate from the US to signatory countries was 5¢ per 1/2 oz. By Jan 1, 1875, this included all of Europe. From 1875-1878, a number of countries and colonies in South America, Africa, and Asia were admitted at a 10¢ rate, which became 5¢ when the Universal Postal Union took effect in 1879

#### Steamship Rate: [142, 15]

The 10¢ Steamship Rate applied to mail carried to or from foreign ports over established postal routes, on contract mail steamers, but only in cases where mail was carried to or from remote areas, sometimes in conjunction with the Post Office, other time in competition. Express uses of 10¢ Reay envelopes are generally Steamship Rate mail, with the express fee added separately.

#### Registered Mail: [142, 15, 15, 4]

Registry service started in 1855 as a means of tracking valuable letters. Fees during the Reay era: Jan 1869: 15¢; Jan 1874: 8¢; July 1875: 10¢

#### Express Company Mail: [7]

Prior to 1885, private companies could legally carry and deliver mail. During the westward expansion, a host of express companies carried mail and freight to and from remote areas, sometimes in conjunction with the Post Office, other time in competition. Express uses of 10¢ Reay envelopes are generally Steamship Rate mail, with the express fee added separately.

### Part 2: Usages

#### Transatlantic Mail:

##### Via British Closed Mail: [142]

Shown are three different convention rates, all carried in closed bags, via British Mail

##### Belgium Closed Mail via Great Britain:



May 17, 1873 San Francisco to Belgium: [15, 2] 10¢ Brown on .0048 Amber; Wmk 2B; Kn 27 Rate: 10¢ per 1/2 oz; March 15, 1870 to June 30, 1873. By the time of mailing, the 1873 reduction to 6¢ had been signed, but was not yet in effect. Departure: New York, May 24 on NGL Donau or White Star Atlantic.

##### Netherlands Closed Mail via Great Britain:

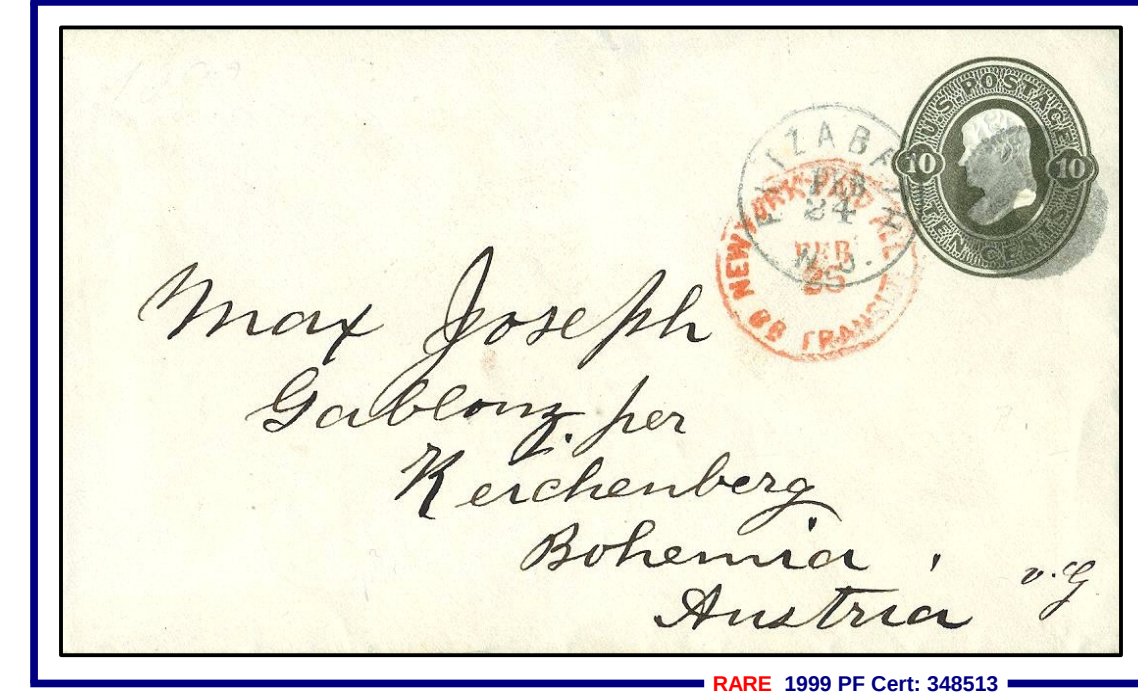


Aug 26, 1874 Michigan to Netherlands: [15, 3] 10¢ Brown on .0043 White; Wmk 2B; Kn 20 Rate: 10¢ per 1/2 oz; February 1, 1870 to June 30, 1875. PHAD ALL 97. TPAWST indicated the letter was fully paid, and directed routing via G Br. (the only option at that time).

##### NGU Mail (via British Closed Mail): [142]

10¢ Rate: The 74 North German Union direct mail rate was suspended from Aug 1870 to Sept 1871 due to the Franco Prussian War. Mail to Germany was sent via British Closed Mail at a rate of 10¢ per 1/2 oz. Under the GAPS (German-Austrian Postal Union), foreign mail sent to the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy was charged the same rate as mail to Germany.

##### (2) Austria, via NGU Closed Mail via Great Britain:



February 24, (1871) Elizabeth NJ to Gablonz, Austria: [15, 2] 10¢ Olive Black on .0043 White; Wmk 2A; Kn 24 Rate: 10¢ per 1/2 oz; Aug 1870 to Sept 1871. Departure: New York, Feb 15, 1871, the only year possible on the Imman City of Brooklyn Note also the unusual "Donut" killer. Today, Gablonz (now Jablonec) is in the Czech Republic.

A very rare use of a 10¢ Olive Black envelope paying the short lived 10¢ NGU closed mail rate via England to Austria. Likely Unique.

##### Via British Open Mail: [142]

Negotiations Fail: From January 1870 until August 1874, the US and France had no postal agreement. Since both had Postal Conventions with Great Britain, US mail to and from France could be sent via British Open Mail. At first, this was not an announced rate, but by July 1, 1870 it was official.

##### France via British Open Mail: [15, 2]

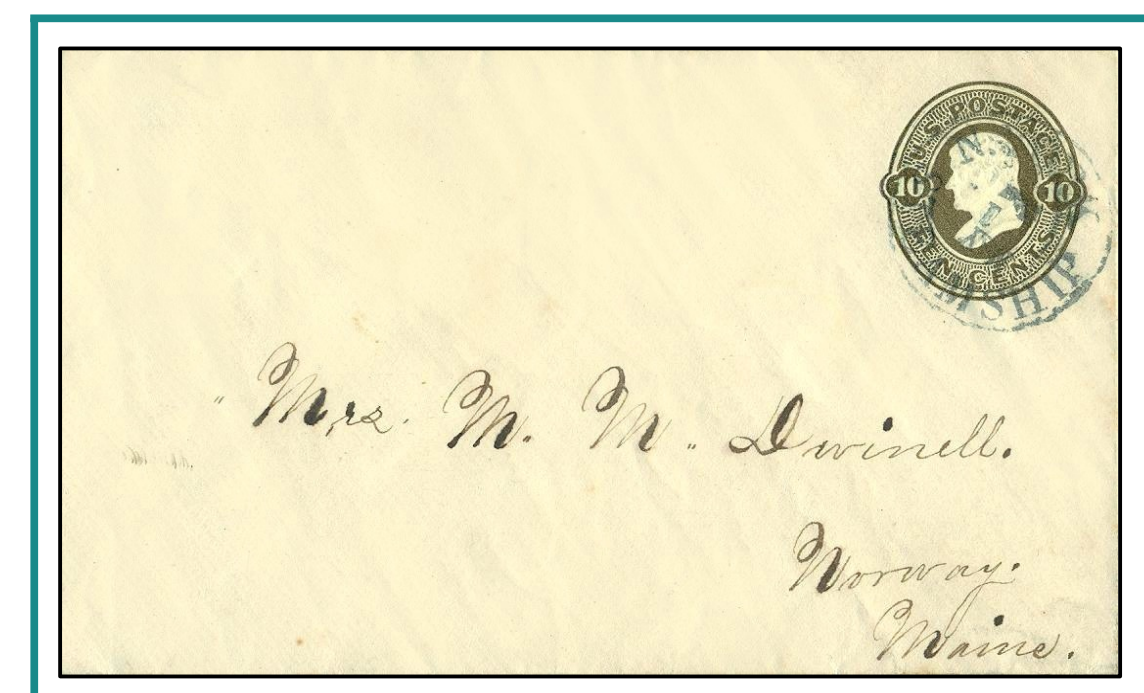


December 6, 1873 San Francisco to Paris 10¢ Brown on 1<sup>st</sup> .0040 Amber; Wmk 2A; Kn 26. Rate: 10¢ per 1/2 oz; January 1, 1870 to July 31, 1874. Departure: New York most likely on Sat. Dec 13 (based on London 25 Dec 73 PHAD Markings), on the NGL Donau. Arrived Paris on Dec 24.

#### Steamship Rate Mail: [142, 15]

**Steamship Routes:** In the early 1870's, six Steamship routes ran from New York: The Havana Line, The Mexico Line, The Aspinwall (Panama) Line, The San Domingo Line, The Brazil Line, and The Bermuda Line. Sailing intervals for the first three ranged from weekly to 20 days. Other, less frequently. In addition, ships ran from San Francisco to Mexico, Central America and Panama.

#### (3) Inbound from an Unknown Origin:



10¢ Olive Gray on .0046 Amber; Wmk 2A; Kn 26: [15, 3] Rate: 10¢ Steamship Rate over one of the Pan American Steamship Routes to New York, then to Norway, Maine. The N YORK STEAMSHIP CDS was commonly applied to prepaid, inbound Steamship mail upon arrival at New York.

A Rare Used Olive Gray envelope

Unknown Origin: Since Steamship Mail did not involve agreements with other countries, inbound mail did not enter a foreign postal system. Hence, markings of origin were not applied. Instead, markings were applied upon arrival in New York. [15, 3]

#### Express Company Mail to and from Mexico: [7]

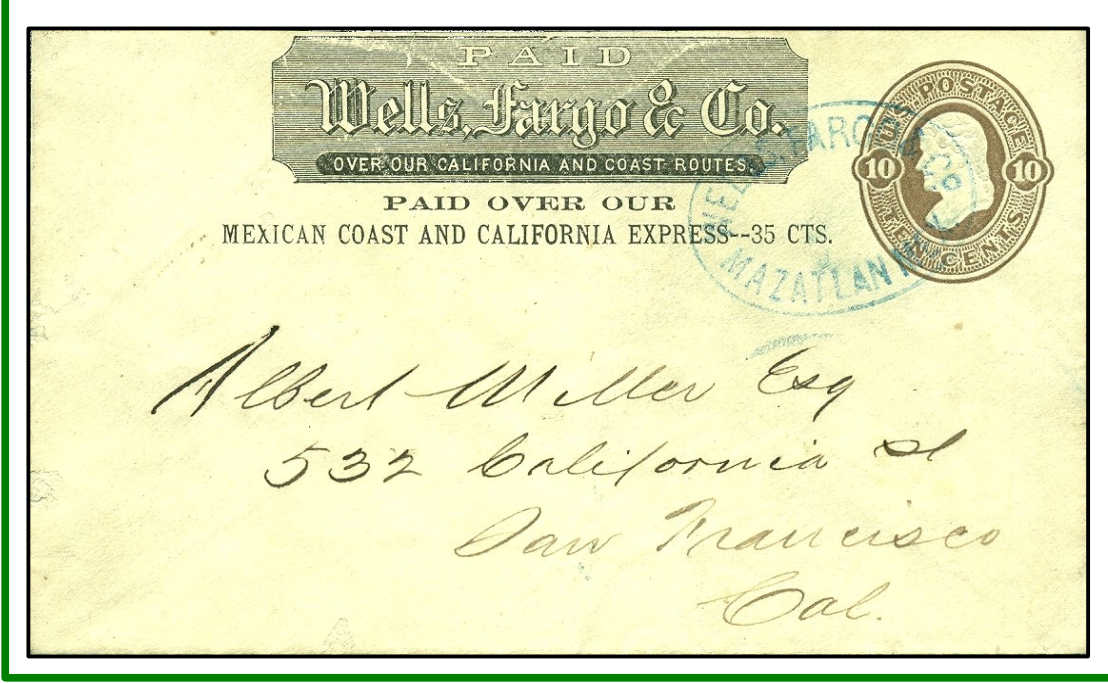
Express uses of 10¢ Reay envelopes are generally Steamship Rate mail. Presented here are covers from all three Wells Fargo Mexican offices of the Reay era.

#### Inbound Express from LaPaz, Mexico:



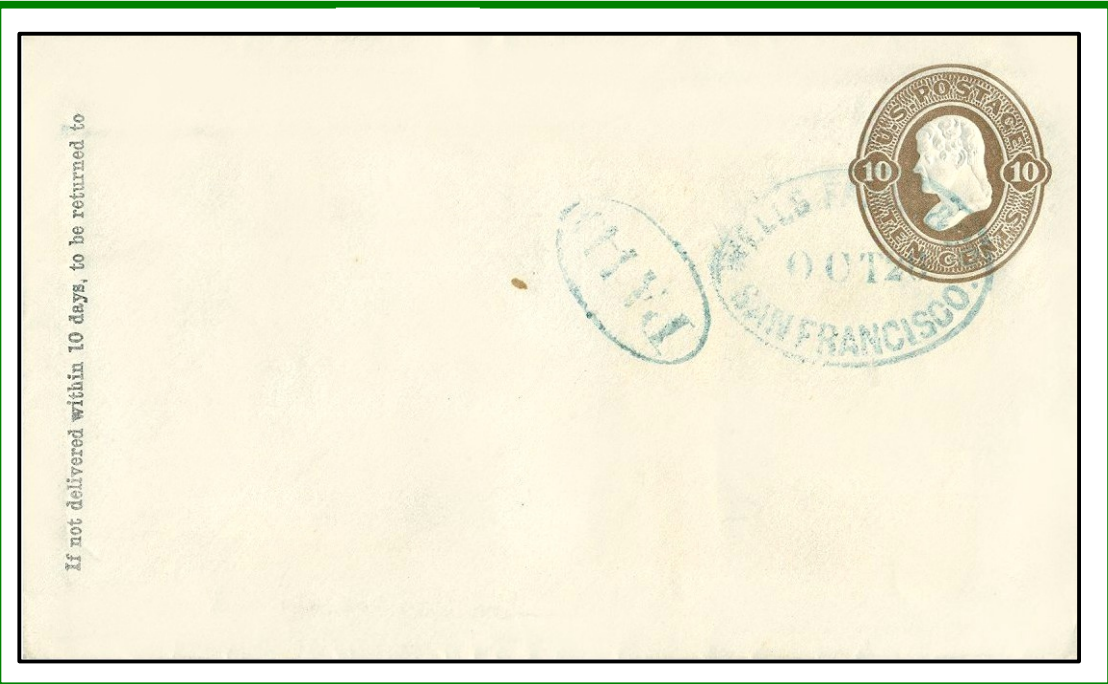
Jul 11 (1872) LaPaz, Mexico to San Francisco [7, 4] 10¢ Brown on .0046 Amber; Wmk 2A; Kn 25. Wells Fargo 35¢ Mexican Coast and California frank, July 24, 1872 received rate (clocking on the back). 10¢ Steamship Rate + 35¢ express fee. Never entered the mails. A significant percentage of these Mexican franked envelopes were used for inbound mail.

#### Inbound Express from Mazatlan, Mexico:



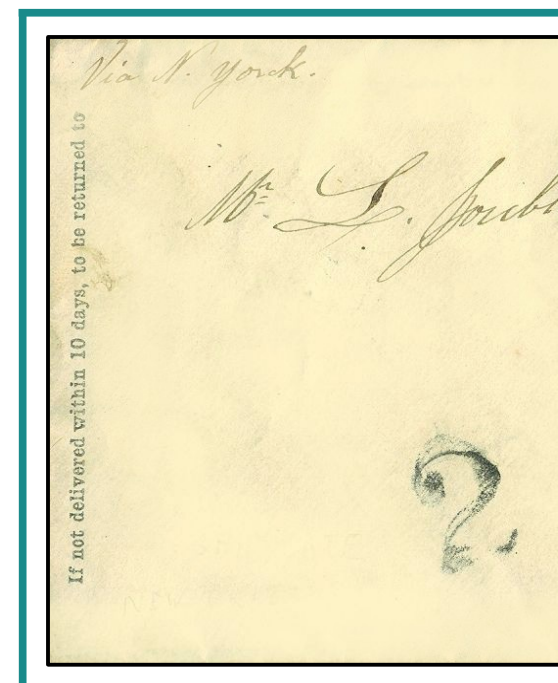
Unknown Date: Mazatlan, Mexico to San Francisco [7, 4] 10¢ Brown on .0046 Amber; Wmk 2B; Kn 26. An unusual unfranked paste-up, most likely paying the 10¢ Steamship Rate to Mexico. The PHAD oval acknowledged payment of the express fee, most likely 35¢.

#### Outbound Un-Franked, Unaddressed, Paste-Ups



Oct 28, Year Unknown, From San Francisco, most likely to Mexico [7, 5, 1] 10¢ Brown on .0045 White; Wmk 2B; Kn 26. An unusual unfranked paste-up, most likely paying the 10¢ Steamship Rate to Mexico. The PHAD oval acknowledged payment of the express fee, most likely 35¢.

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Express Company Mail to and from Mexico: [7] Express uses of 10¢ Reay envelopes are generally Steamship Rate mail. Presented here are covers from all three Wells Fargo Mexican offices of the Reay era.

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#### Swiss Closed Mail via England & Ostend:



December 12, 1873 to Switzerland: [15, 2] 10¢ Brown on .0042 White; Wmk 2B Rate: 10¢ per 1/2 oz; May 1, 1870 to June 30, 1875. VIA ENG. & OSTED directed routing via Great Britain rather than Hamburg or Bremen. Departure: New York, Wed. Dec 17 1873 on the NGL America or Gulf of Wyoming with Dec 31 arrival.

Aug 26, 1874 Michigan to Netherlands: [15, 3] 10¢ Brown on .0043 White; Wmk 2B; Kn 20 Rate: 10¢ per 1/2 oz; February 1, 1870 to June 30, 1875. PHAD ALL 97. TPAWST indicated the letter was fully paid, and directed routing via G Br. (the only option at that time).

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