# 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 not seen 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 <u>upss.org</u>, or refer to the binder below.

Outline: Left Column:	Right Column:
Quality and Refinement	Rates
Perspective	Part 2: Usages
Part 1: The Envelopes	Mail to Europe
<ul> <li>Design and Proofs</li> </ul>	Via British Closed Mail;
<ul> <li>Production Envelopes</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>NGU Mail;</li> </ul>
<ul> <li>Official Envelopes</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Registered Mail;</li> </ul>
<ul> <li>Paper, Watermarks, &amp; Orientation</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Via British Open mail</li> </ul>
Anomalies	GPU / UPU Mail
Color	<ul> <li>Steamship Rate Mail</li> </ul>
<ul> <li>Knives and Gum</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Express Company Mail</li> </ul>
<ul> <li>Specimen Envelopes</li> </ul>	The 1874 Contract

<b>A Traditional Treatment</b> was chosen to illustrate a wide variety of postal stationery topics, and associated postal <b>Scope:</b> Pre-Production through Normal Use Period: 1870 – 1880. <u>Note</u> : 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 severa	
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.	(25 mb)
<ul> <li>Key Points and Features:</li> <li>Of the Exhibit Content: <ul> <li>Quality and Refinement: Contrasts are drawn with earlier and later issues in regards to design and quality.</li> <li>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.</li> <li>Olive Shades: Potentially new information is presented on the Olive Black and Olive Gray varieties.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Of the Exhibit Construction: <ul> <li>Split Frame: The single frame is divided into two columns to allow better placement of key material.</li> <li>Large format pages are used to allow greater flexibility of arrangement.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul> <li>This frame is divided into two columns.</li> <li>Cross-referencing:</li> <li><u>Blue Underlined Text</u> and (1)→ points to (1) elsewhere in the frame.</li> <li>[5] References [5] or [5] In the eBook.</li> <li>Frame Line Color indicates the primary rate (see Rates, next column).</li> <li>Brown for unused, Green for Express</li> </ul>
A word about condition: Most of the envelopes shown here, especially the uses, are quite scarce. From 1870-1874, <u>125</u> ten cent stamps were issued for <u>each</u> 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 !	A Tag may be included in the frame line with supplementary information. Bibliography: Please refer to the eBook.

# 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 [1,1], who reformed 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.

(Smithsonian)

George H. Reay [4], the contractor, who maintained a quality and consistency not seen previously, or for years thereafter.

Rudolph P Laubenheimer [5.3.4], 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.



#### 1860 Nesbitt 1861 Nesbitt 1855 Nesbitt: Jun 30 1870: Reay 10¢ die approved. 1st 10¢ Envelopes. "Star Dies" Designs of the new issue are based

# - Part 1: The Envelopes:

2) Production Envelopes: [10]

Rudolph P.

The Exhibit:

PMG John A J George H. Reay

Creswell

Plaster model of Jefferson Statue

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 1863. **[5.2]** 

1) Design and Proofs: [5]

Reay began production of the new issue on July 3, 1870. The date of 10¢ production is uncertain, however 10¢ Specimen envelopes existed by Aug 11, 1870. The contract was protested, annulled, and rebid. To avoid shortages, a temporary contract was issued to Reay. Dempsey & O'Toole, won the re-bid, but failed to deliver. On Oct 8, the contract was once again awarded to Reay.

For "California Rate"

The POD specified two different 10 cent envelopes, both POD No. 3, Full Letter Size (see 7) on First Quality paper with the new *Monogram* watermark (see 4), one on White Paper, one on Amber. Approximately 125,000 were produced. (Note: *Brown* is used here generically in reference to ink color to avoid confusion of shades).





on designs of the new stamps.

## **Rates and Services:**

Transatlantic Mail:

Via British Closed Mail: [14.2]

Shown are three different convention rates,

Belgium Closed Mail via Great Britain:

all carried in closed bags, via British Mail.

JOHN F. FINN, ATTORNEY AT LAW,

San Francisco, Cal

#### Convention Rates to Europe: (per 1/2 oz) [14.2, 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.

#### **<u>GPU / UPU Rates:</u>** [14.2, 15.4] Steamship Rate: [14.2, 16] Universal International Rates begin on July The 10¢ Steamship Rate applied to 1, 1875 under the **General Postal Union**. mail carried to or from foreign ports The rate from the US to signatory countries over established postal routes, on contract mail steamers, but only in was 5¢ per 1/2 oz. By Jan 1, 1876, this included all of Europe. From 1876-1878, a cases where no postal treaty or number of countries and colonies in South convention existed. On July 1, 1864 this rate became a flat 10¢ per 1/2 oz America, Africa, and Asia were admitted, at regardless of distance. a 10¢ rate, which became 5¢ when the

Universal Postal Union took effect in 1879

Netherlands Closed Mail via Great Britain:

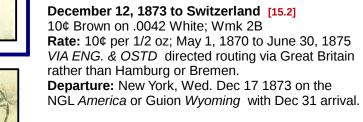
#### **Registered Mail:** [14.1.2, 15.3, 15.4] Registry service started in 1855 as a means of tracking valuable letters. Fees during the Reay era: Jan 1869: 15¢; Jan 1874: 8¢; July 1875: 10¢

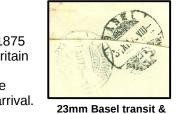
Express Company Mail: [17]

Prior to 1895, 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.









Lausanne Rec'v;

31 XII 73

### Aug 26, 1874 Michigan to Netherlands [15.2] 10¢ Brown on .0043 White; Wmk 2B; Kn 26 **Rate:** 10¢ per 1/2 oz; February 1, 1870 to June 30, 1875 PAID ALL B<sup>R</sup>. TRANSIT indicated that the letter was fully paid,

21-2 and directed routing via G Br. (the only option at that time). 21.5 mm 10? SEP

Curope.

## **Registered Mail:** [14.1.2,]

Germany, 8¢ Registry + 6¢ NGU Direct Mail:





## NGU Mail (via British Closed Mail) : [14.2]

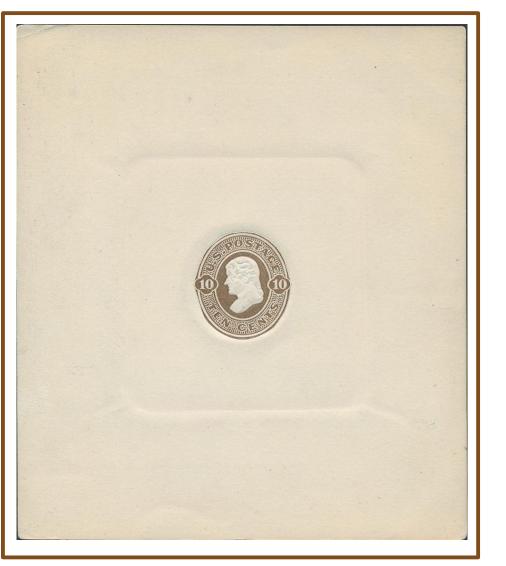
**10¢ Rate:** The 7¢ North German Union direct mail rate was suspended from Aug 1870 to Sept 1871 due to the Franco Prussian War. Mail to Germany was sent via British Closed Mail at a rate of 10¢ per 1/2 oz.

Under the GAPU (German-Austrian Postal Union), foreign mail sent to the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy was charged the same rate as mail to Germany.

Inderleenw Delgum

The new 10¢ Envelope Die Design was derived from the engravings for the new stamp. A die proof served as the reference. On June 29, 1870 George Reay submitted the final die proof which was approved June 30<sup>th</sup>. [5.1, 5.3]

Die Proof of new 1870 10¢ Stamp (Central area displayed, full size 144 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. [6.3.2]

### 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¢'s, with better finish and general appearance. Amber replaced Buff. Colors range from Bright to Creamy White, and Pale to Medium Amber. [7.1.3]

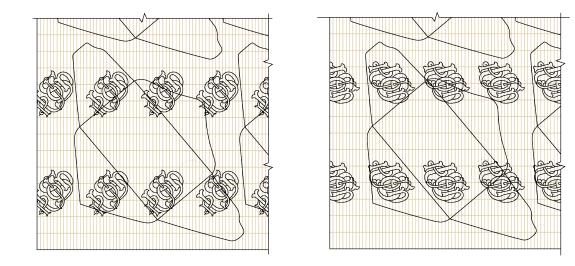
The new *Monogram* watermark design as requested by the POD is shown here. [7.2]





Watermark 2A: Nearly Vertical Watermark 2B: Slants Right 20° (2/3x) (2/3x)

Paper Type B, Watermark 2B



10¢ Brown on 1<sup>st</sup> Quality White (.0043") & 1<sup>st</sup> Quality Amber (.0042"); No. 3 Full Letter Size; White: Watermark 2B; Knife 26 (also w. Knife 25); Amber: Watermark 2B; Knife 27 (also w. Knife 25 & 26)

#### 3) Official Envelopes: [12]

The "Free Franking" privilege was abolished as part of PMG Creswell's reforms. The Congressional Act of March 3, 1873 then directed the PMG to prepare Official Stamps and Stamped Envelopes for each Department.

Official Stamped envelopes were only issued for the Post Office Dept, and the War Dept. The War Dept envelopes used the same busts as the regular issue envelopes, with different frames. 10¢ Post Office Dept. envelopes were not issued.

**10¢ War Department Envelopes** were only issued in POD *No.7 Official Size* (3 7/8" x 8 7/8") on 1<sup>st</sup> Quality White paper with Watermark 2.



10¢ Vermillion on 1<sup>st</sup> Quality White; No. 7 Official Size; Knife 98; Wmk 2B

## **5)** Anomalies: [10.5]

Anomalies and Errors found on stamped envelopes can include: • Over inked, Under Inked, and Albino impressions; • Offset Impressions on the back of the paper Misplaced and multiple Indicia (stamps); Color errors (wrong ink used). All are quite uncommon on the Reay issue. Of the (24) 10¢ Brown samples in this study group, only one anomaly was found, an offset image, so faint, that its existence is questionable.

**The Olive Shades:** The most significant anomalies to the Reay quality standard in the entire 1870 issue, are the Olive Black and Olive Gray shades found on a very limited number of

# (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 25 **Rate:** 10¢ per 1/2 oz; Aug 1870 to Sept 1871 **Departure:** New York, Feb 25 (1871, the only year possible) on the Inman *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: [14.2] 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.

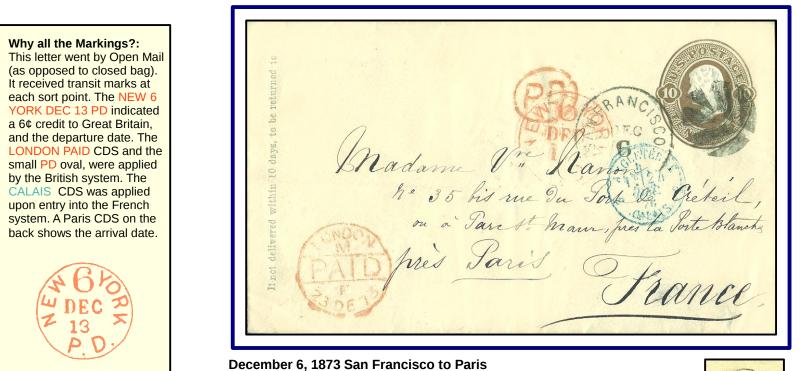
### France via British Open Mail: [15.2]

10¢ Brown on 1<sup>st</sup> .0040 Amber; Wmk 2A; Kn 26;

Rate: 10c per 1/2 oz January 1, 1870 to July 31, 1874

**Departure:** New York most likely on Sat. Dec 13 (based on London

23 DE 73 PAID Marking), on the NGL Donau. Arrived Paris on Dec 24.



Steamship Rate Mail: [14.2, 16]

Jan 16 (1875) New York to Germany [15.3] 10¢ Brown on .0043 White; Wmk 2A; Kn 26; 1873 1¢ & 3¢ Rates: Jan 1874 to June 30, 1875 8¢ Registry fee; 6¢ Oct 1871 to July 1875 NGU direct mail rate. Departure: New York, Jan 16, 1875 on the NGL Hohenstaufen German boxed "Recomandir" (Registered) mark. No transit or receiving marks.

- A Rare use of a 10c envelope under the scarce 8c Registry Fee

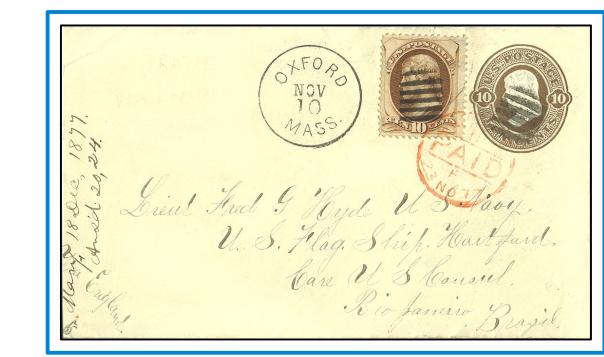
# **<u>GPU / UPU Mail:</u>** [14.2]

England, 2x UPU Rate + 10c Registry:



Post July 1875, Philadelphia To England [15.4] 10¢ Brown on .0043 White Wmk 2B; Kn 26; 1873 Stamps: 1¢, 3¢, & 6¢ **Rate:** 2x 5¢ GPU rate to England +10¢ registry fee. No date markings. Most likely late 1870's. Note the British Crown Registered mark.

#### Brazil, 2x 10c UPU Rate:



Orientation: The Overlooked Envelope Parameter: [9, 11]

Paper Type A, Watermark 2A

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

the right.

Reay. **[7.3]** 

**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** 

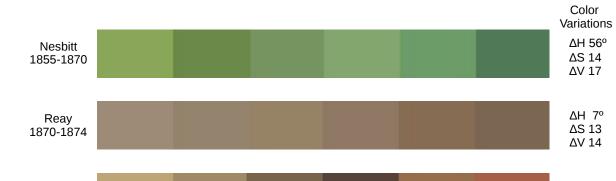
Varieties result from the way the <u>paper</u> was oriented when the blanks are cut. Rotated 180°, produces inverted watermarks. Face down produces mirror image watermarks, etc.. These are common, and have no bearing on the knife placement with respect to the paper edge. Abnormal orientations have abnormal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

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

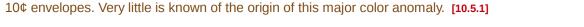
Virtual Unfolding: This image illustrates the Watermarks and Orientation of the Olive Gray envelope to the right. The techniques to produce this image are detailed in [Appendix A-1]



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 10c envelopes from the 3 contractors that produced them. The data indicates variations in HSV values seen in each color bar [10.4]



Plimpton



Olive Gray Cut Square with Offset Impression

**Offsets:** If the embossing press is cycled without paper, ink is printed on the backing plate. Subsequent envelope blanks are thus printed on both sides until the ink on the backing plate is depleted. [10.5.3]



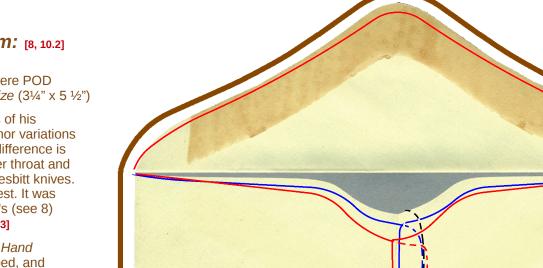
2013 PF Cert: 513464

10¢ Olive Black on Amber Wmk 2A; .0043"; Knife 25; Over-inked [10.5.4] (Orientation diagram ) <u>Also on white:</u> (2) (pg 2) 10¢ Olive Gray on Amber Wmk 2A; .0042; Knife 25; Under-inked. Also on white. See also Virtual Unfolded image to left.

These two examples illustrate the color extremes of the Olive Shades. (3) <u>Illustrates an Intermediate shade</u> (pg 2)

The Olive Shade Anomalies; Far more than just Color: [10.5.4] From old catalog data, and from the study leading to this exhibit the following appear to be true: Of the six Olive Shade items in the study group: • All are Knife 25 Envelopes • One is over inked • All are Watermark 2A • One is under inked • The Olive Gray shades have a Orange Yellow • Two have offset impressions Hue about 10° higher than the Brown Shades Three have abnormal orientation • The Olive Black shades have a Greenish Yellow • Only one has no anomalies Hue about 20° higher than the Brown Shades

> Compared to the lack of anomalies on the Brown shades, it is clear that the production of the Olive Shades was far from business as usual.



## 7) Size, Knives, and Gum: [8, 10.2]

Size: All Reay 10¢ Envelopes were POD designation No. 3: Full Letter Size (3<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>" x 5 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>")

Knives: Reay made new knives of his design. Three are known, all minor variations on the same design. The main difference is throat depth. All have a shallower throat and more refined design than the Nesbitt knives. Knife 25 appears to be the earliest. It was used for the Specimen Form 10's (see 8) produced in July of 1870. [8.2, 8.3]

**Gum:** All Reay Envelopes were *Hand Gummed*. Blanks were overlapped, and the gum was applied with a wide brush. Note the *Square* ends. [10.2]

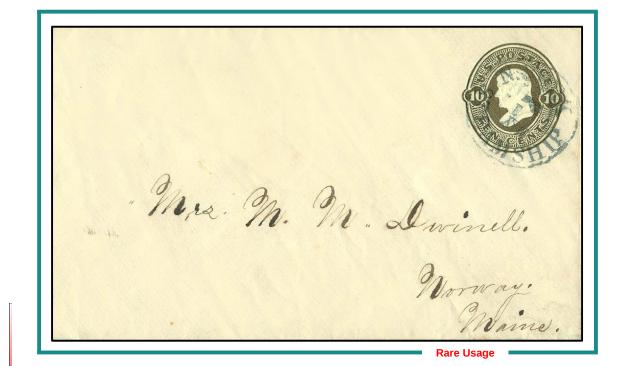
Steamship Routes: In the early 1870's, six Steamship routes ran from New York: The Havana Line, The Mexico Line, The Aspenwall (Panama) Line, The San Domingo Line, The Brazil Line, and *The Bermuda Line*. Sailing intervals for the first three ranged from weekly to 20 days. Other, less In addition, ships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

(3) Inbound from an Unknown Origin:

Note: The "3" is unreadable. It

frequently

is assumed from sailing dates.



10¢ Olive Gray on .0046 Amber; Wmk 2A; Kn 26; [16.3] 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.

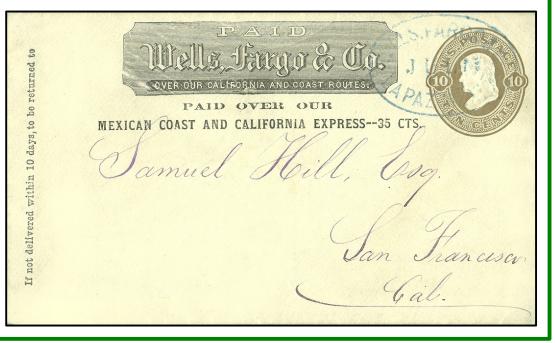
**Unknown Origin:** Since Steamship mail did not involve agreements with other countries, inbound mail did not enter a foreign postal system. Hence, markings of origin were not applied. Instead, markings were applied upon arrival in New York. [16.3]

— A Rare Used Olive Gray envelope —

## Express Company Mail to and from Mexico: [17]

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 [17.4] 10¢ Brown on .0046" Amber; Wmk 2A; Kn 25; Wells Fargo 35¢ Mexican Coast and California frank; July 24, 1872 received date (docketing on the back). 10¢ Steamship Rate + 35¢ express fee. Never entered the mails. A significant

November 10, 1877 Oxford, Mass to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil [15.5] 10¢ Brown on .0041 Amber; Wmk 2A; Kn 26 Rate: 2x the 10¢ per .5 oz, GPU rate to Brazil. British Mail via London, arriving Dec 18 (from docketing). Carried a letter to a US Naval Officer from his future wife.



July 21, (1871?) New Orleans to Vera Cruz, Mexico 10¢ Brown on .0041 Amber; Wmk 2A; Kn 26 [16.2] Rate: 10¢ Steamship rate to Mexico. Directed Via N York, however, the lack of a New York marking is curious.

The terminus of the Mexico Line was Vera Cruz.



Addressed to Havana, Cuba but never mailed [16.2] 10¢ Brown on .0044 White; Wmk 2B; Kn 25 Rate: Intended to pay the 10¢ Steamship rate to Cuba. Had it been mailed, it would most likely have received a Cuban NA1 postage due marking.

Paste-ups: [17.5] Since the express companies were not allowed to use stamps, if a customer brought in a plain, addressed envelope, or if additional postage were required, a franked, stamped envelope would be pasted on the back, acting as a stamp (a very large one). **Unaddressed paste-ups** occurred in cases where the address was elsewhere on the item.

largest of the express companies, offering express services throughout the West, to the East Coast. and to foreign destinations. Franked, Stamped Envelopes: [17.2] The express companies were required by law to use US stamped envelopes for all mail they carried. The Post Office got paid even if they never touched the letter. The express companies printed their *Franks* on the envelopes to signify that the express fee had been paid, just as the Government stamp paid the postage. Wells Fargo in Mexico: [17.3] As mining activity increased in northwest Mexico. Wells Fargo answered the need for express

services. Initially, the only practical mode of transportation was water. WF's first Mexican office opened in the port city of Guaymas in 1859, followed in 1863 by offices in LaPaz and Mazatlan. Rates: [17.3.1] During the Reay era, Steamship rates applied to Mexico. Wells Fargo's Mexican fee was 35¢ per 1/2 oz

Wells Fargo & Co. [17] was, by far the

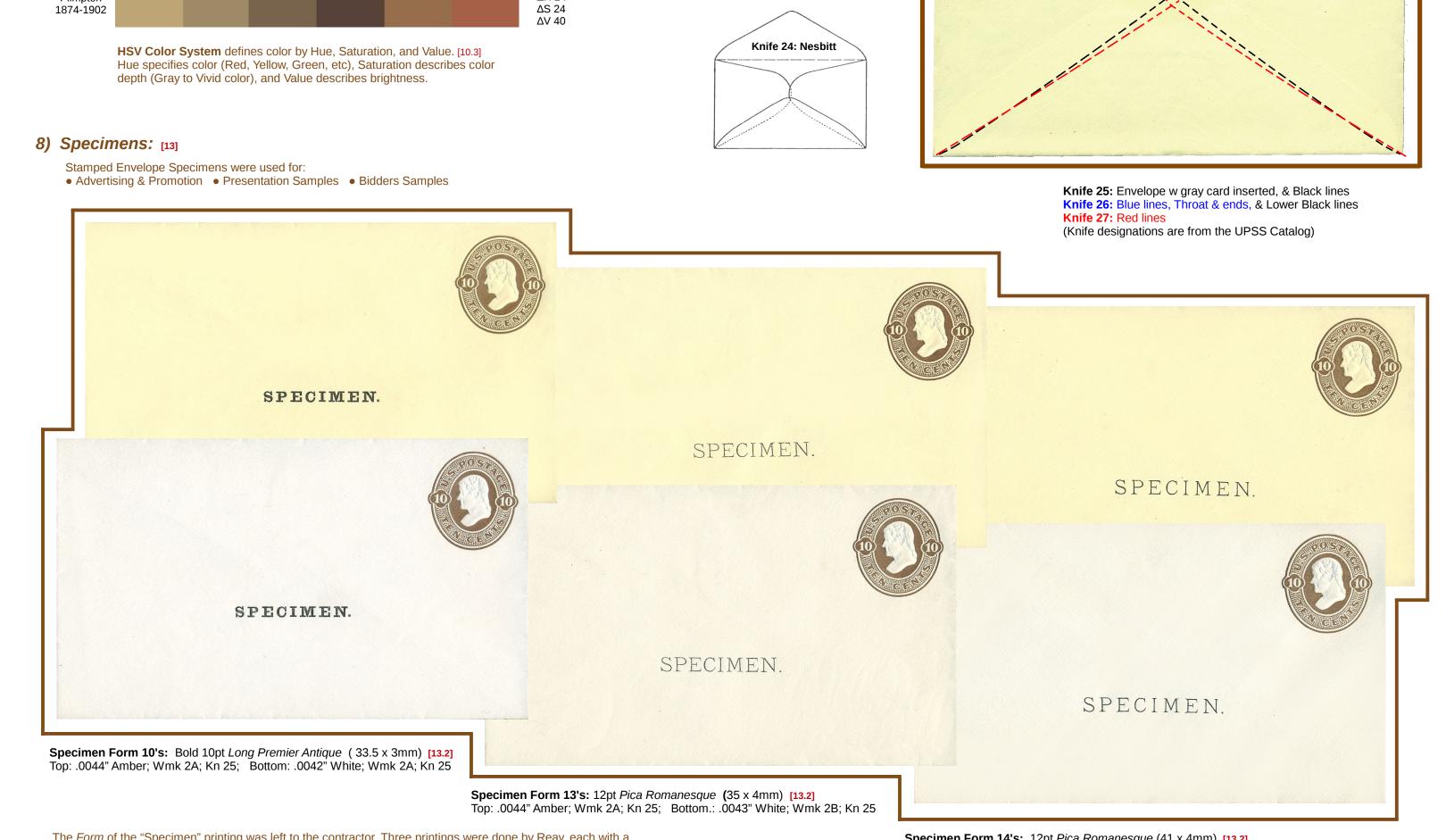
23 mm

Dec 24

**Outbound to Mexico:** 

SAMS A!

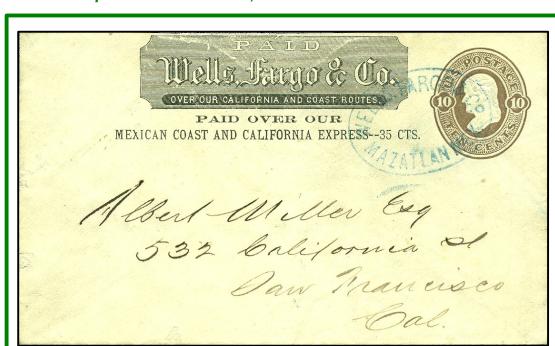
The Steamship Rate, only paid the postage to the port of arrival, (Vera Cruz). Most mail to Vera Cruz bears no Mexican markings, (delivered without entering the Mexican mails). This cover, however, bears a (blurred) 23mm Vera Cruz receiving mark on the back (probably Aug 6, maybe 1871), and a large **2** (reales) 'postage due' marking for the Mexican postage. Outbound to Cuba (almost):



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 UPSS catalog. 500 SF10 sets were printed in July 1870. SF10's were used as bidders 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.

**Specimen Form 14's:** 12pt *Pica Romanesque* (41 x 4mm) [13.2] Top: .0038" Amber: Wmk 2A; Kn 26; Bottom.: .0042" White; Wmk 2B; Kn 26 percentage of these Mexican franked envelopes were used for inbound mail.

### Inbound Express from Mazatlan, Mexico:



Unknown Date: Mazatlan, Mexico to San Francisco [17.4] 10¢ Brown on .0048" Amber; Wmk 2B; Kn 26 Wells Fargo 35¢ Mexican Coast and California frank; 10¢ Steamship Rate + 35¢ express fee. Never entered the mails.

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



Oct 28, Year Unknown, From San Francisco, most likely to Mexico [17.5.1] 10¢ Brown on .0045 White; Wmk 2B; Kn 26; An unusual **un-franked paste-up**, most likely paying the 10¢ Steamship Rate to Mexico. The PAID oval acknowledged payment of the express fee, most likely 35¢ .



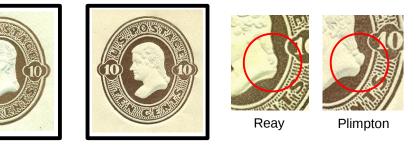
**Unknown Origin, "Mexican Route" Handstamp** 10¢ Brown on .0043 White; Wmk 2B; Kn 25 This marking indicated that the letter was received



From Guaymas, Mexico 10¢ Brown on .0046 White; Wmk 2B Also with weak "Mexican Route" oval [17.5.2]

### The 1874 Contract: [18]

The Reay Contract expired on Oct 1, 1874. On Sept 23, the new contract was awarded to the Plimpton Envelope Co. of Hartford CT. By the time of the 1874 contract bidding, Marshall Jewell, also of Hartford, CT, had replaced John Creswell as PMG. Jewell seemed more intent on seeing Plimpton win the contract, than he was in a quality product. The initial Plimpton dies including the 10c



Plimpton 10¢: "Rejected" Die Production Die

(left) were rejected, but PMG Jewell allowed them to be used on an interim basis. Plimpton was also ill-equipped for production. Jewell issued further orders to Reay to bail out Plimpton. 20% of the 10¢ Reay envelopes (several years worth) were ordered in the third and fourth quarters of 1874. Reay, more than likely, figured that it was only a matter of time until the Plimpton contract was canceled. Unfortunately for him, that never happened.

Had John Creswell still been Postmaster General in late 1874, things may have turned out quite differently.