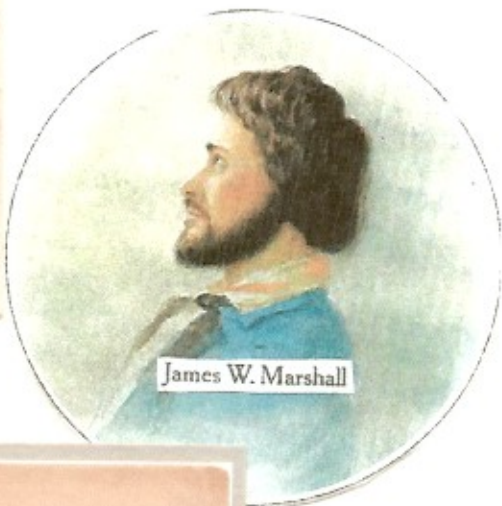


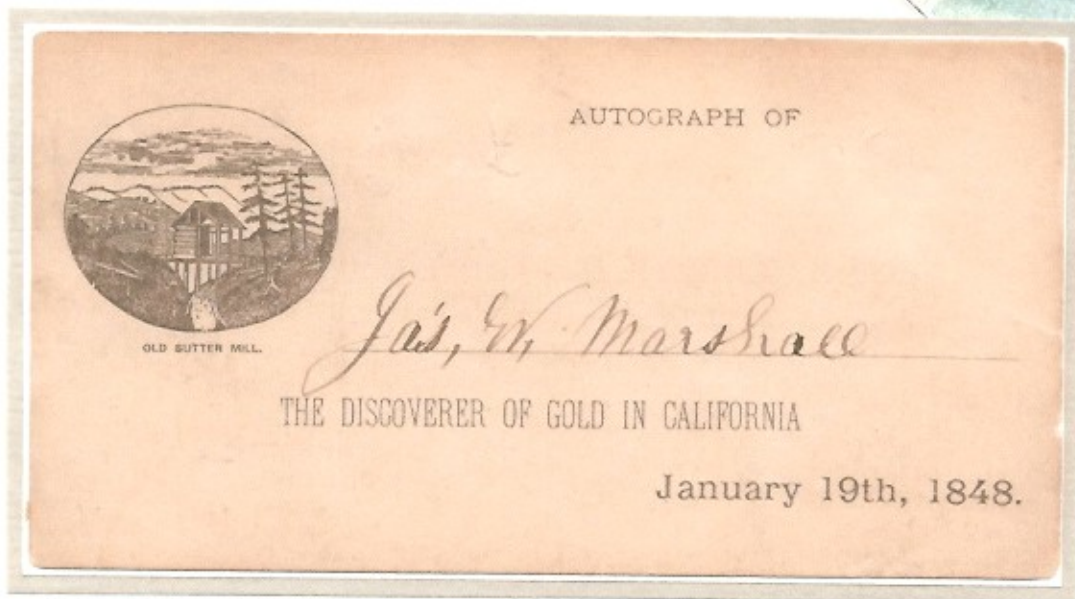
THE WESTERN MAILS



Hand drawn map of the Gold District by a forty-niner A.T. Mitchel.



James W. Marshall



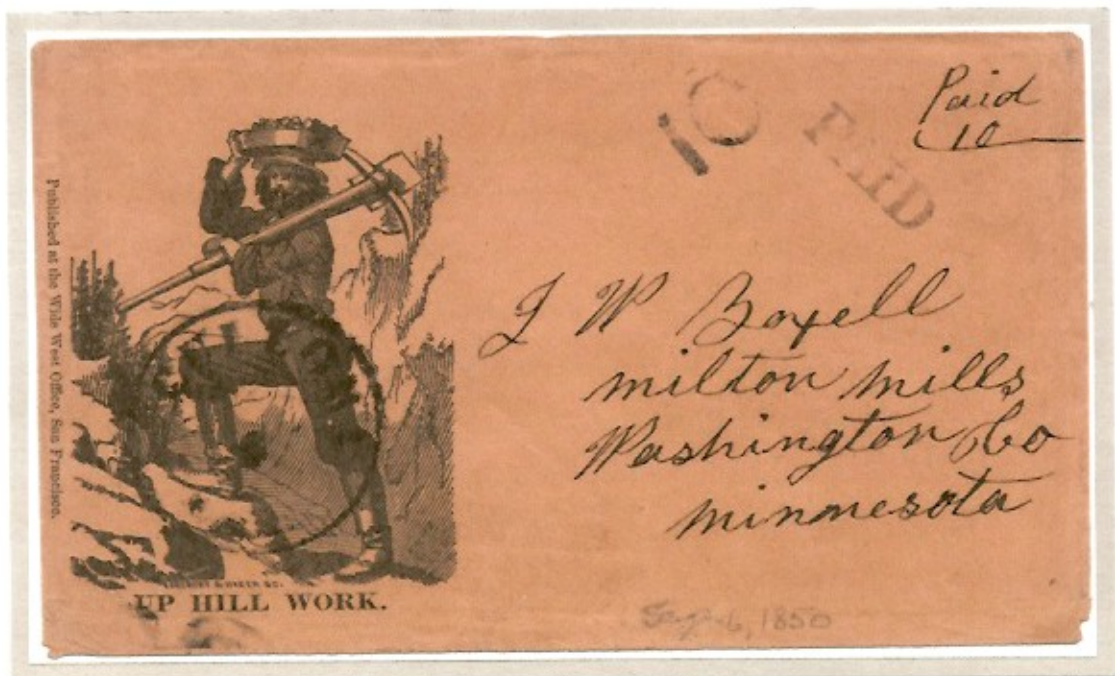
James W. Marshall Original autograph of the discoverer of gold in California in 1848. A shocking irony of the fate that the man who made the discovery that brought untold wealth to thousands and statehood to California was reduced to peddling his autograph on the streets of San Francisco. Marshall died at Coloma on August 10, 1885.

GOLD FEVER 1849



CULLOMA CAL, ELDORADO CO. Post office was established November 8, 1849, about three years before the county was established and about twenty one months after gold was discovered on January 24, 1848. On January 13, 1851 the spelling of the name was changed to **COLOMA** as it is today.

Both covers are from a member of the Boxell family who joined in the gold rush to California in 1849. From notes on back of each cover, the above one was used Dec. 7, 1852 and the one below in 1850.





EMIGRANT TRAIN PASSING WIND RIVER MOUNTAINS.



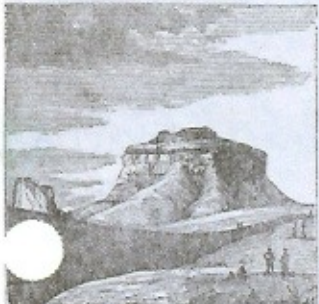
SIoux INDIANS.



INDIANS CHASING BUFFALOES, SCOTT'S BLUFFS.



CALIFORNIA INDIANS.



COURT HOUSE ROCK.



FIRST NIGHT ON THE PLAINS.



MOUTH OF ASH HOLLOW.



CHIMNEY ROCK.



DEVIL'S GATE.



LARAMIE PEAK.



SCENE ON THE DESERT.



CASTLE ROCK.



DRIVING STOCK ACROSS THE PLAINS.

THE WESTERN MAILS



MINERS COVERS used from COLUMBIA and WEAVERVILLE paying the six cent overland rate in cash and in stamps No year dates but in the 1850 period.



Georgetown California May ^{the} 19. 1851

fall or early in the winter I should be pleased
to hear from you as soon as this comes to hand,
it has been so long since I have received a letter
from Tennessee I am very anxious to hear from
you all give my best respects to all in quiring
friends & ~~and~~ relations Direct your Letter
Sacramento City no more at present remains
yours respectfully

J. B. Crow

40
Mr. Austin L. Greene
Kingslow Tennessee

40

CALIFORNIA GOLD Cover postmarked at SACRAMENTO Cal. 26 MAY (1851) and rated 40 cents via PANAMA. L.B. Crow writes from Georgetown: "This thing they call Gold diggin is a very disagreeable kind of work. A man has to work in mud and water most of the time." He and his partner have made \$300 in three weeks. "Sunday is the main day to play cards & drink liquor. If a man commits murder or is caught stealing horses they will raise a mob and just take him right out to a lim and swing him right up with out Judg or Jury ... There has been a grate distruction with fire a few days ago at San Francisco (May 4th)." He concludes with: "I SEND YOU FIVE SMALL S(P)ECIMENS OF GOLD DEUST IN A SMALL BIT OF PAPER." This is an ORIGINAL FIND made by Sandy Arnold, several years ago, with the ORIGINAL GOLD NUGGETS of the CALIFORNIA GOLD RUSH of 1849.



I send you five
small specimens
of gold deust in
a small bit of paper

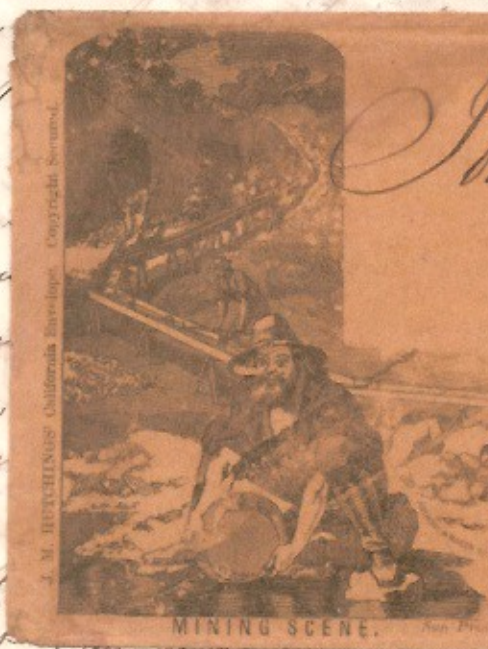




[Published at the WIDE WEST OFFICE, 184 Clay Street, San Francisco.]

HOW THE CALIFORNIA MINES ARE WORKED.

Respected Friends American Flat Jan 7th 1855
 Mrs J Mrs McCulloch your kind letter of the 15th Nov^r
 has just come all a happy
 of Good health with it, what
 Rain, and now has held of me
 now it has come, 16 days ago, for
 answered, and or else seeing
 every inquiry but
 Mrs Baillie has got the old pattern back as you tell in your



Paid by
 Jonathan McCulloch Esq
 Milan
 Erie Co
 Spanish Flat
 Cal Jan 13
 Ohio

THE WESTERN MAILS



GOLD RUSH EXPRESS VIA NICARAGUA

G.H. WINES & CO'S EXPRESS This express operated in California and Oregon during the Gold Rush — 1855-1857. They also ran their service between the Atlantic and Pacific via Nicaragua. Wines actually held a monopoly, handling all the letters and packages, in Nicaragua with agents in the more important towns. In 1856 J.A. Ruggles, one of their agents, was appointed Postmaster General of Nicaragua. This was during the time that William Walker of Tennessee, with 58 men, had seized control of Nicaragua by overthrowing the government and making himself president. The cover on this page could have originated in California, but more probably in Nicaragua where the sender put on the 3 cent stamp. Wines applied the Nicaraguan postmark, as well as their frank, "*Wines & Co's Express*" and then forwarded the cover by an American steamship via New Orleans. At New Orleans it was rated steamship contract mail at 10 cents. Credit was given for the 3 cent stamp and then sent on to New York "Due 7".

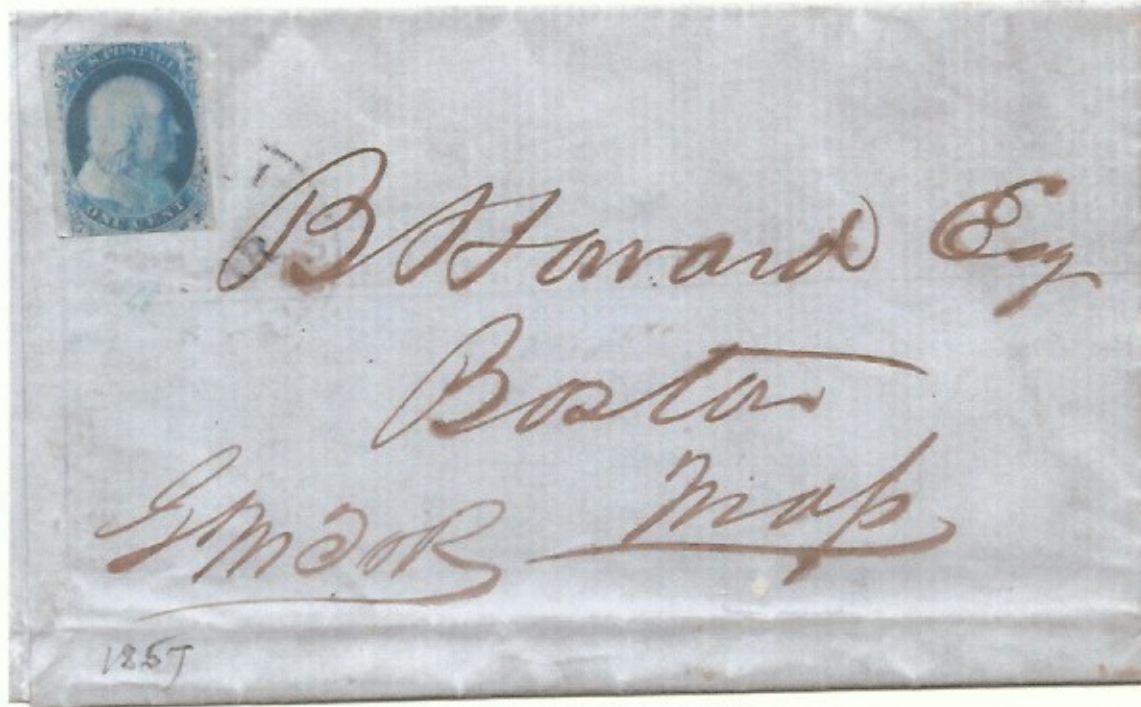
THOMPSON'S CARSON VALLEY EXPRESS.

Established by John A. "Snowshoe" Thompson in 1857/58, operating between Genoa, Nev. & Placerville, Cal. Cover shown is one of only two known and the only one on a Wells Fargo franked envelope. The other recorded example is in black and dated in 1858. Both covers are used out the same time. The clipping illustrating Thompson is from the fold-S.F. News Letter bearing a 1¢ 1851 stamp. He also carried the overland mails for chorpennin during the winter months to 1861. "Snowshoe" died May 15, 1876.



—Thursday, June 11, 1857 Sacramento Union

THOMPSON'S CARSON VALLEY EXPRESS—The undersigned will hereafter run a weekly Express between MOKELUMNE HILL and GENOA, CARSON VALLEY, via The Big Tree Road. Those wishing to send Letters or Packages, by forwarding them through the mail of Wells, Fargo & Co.'s Express, and directed to my care, will be strictly attended to.
J. A. THOMPSON. j11-1m



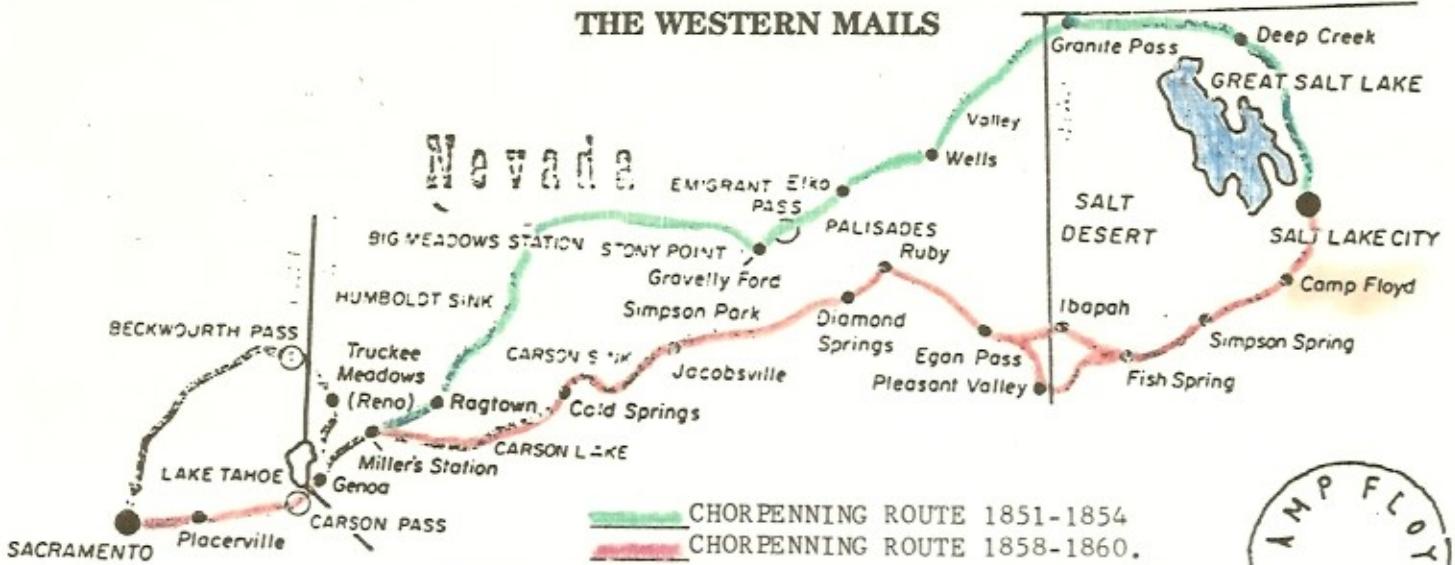
Mr. THOMPSON THE MOUNTAIN EXPRESS MAN, has again arrived at Sacramento City, and has forwarded to us the subjoined sketch of himself, wearing the celebrated Norwegian snow shoes, seven feet long, by which alone he was enabled during the late severe winter to accomplish his perilous journey over the Sierra Nevada, and deliver to our readers in Carson Valley the San Francisco News-Letter. He says the snow-drifts were 50 feet deep—but that our friends were all well in the valley.



Mr. Thompson, the Carson Valley Expressman, left Placerville on Wednesday, February 18th, on his return trip. The Placerville American says he was accompanied by an assistant, whom he found it necessary to employ to relieve him of a part of his load, which the requirements of the people on the other side of the mountain had increased to the weight of eighty pounds. The only way in which the people of Carson Valley can procure in the winter season, the San Francisco News Letter, or the California Advertiser, and such other articles as they may happen to need, is through the agency of Mr. Thompson. Not an individual has visited the Valley over any other route, during the present winter. Mr. Thompson, however, has made regular trips, and has sometimes carried upon his broad shoulders over the entire route a load weighing fifty pounds. Seven pounds weight being San Francisco News Letters. He has heretofore performed the journey alone, except when his protection and guidance have been sought by persons desirous of crossing the mountains; but in order to keep pace with the increasing wants of the people of the Valley he has found it necessary to employ an assistant.

THE SAN FRANCISCO NEWS LETTER.

THE WESTERN MAILS



CAMP FLOYD, UTAH
TERRITORY VIA
CHORPENNING ROUTE
& THE BUTTERFIELD
OVERLAND MAIL.

CARRIED BY
"SNOWSHOE"
THOMPSON OVER
THE SIERRA
NEVADAS.



George Chorpensing held the mail contract between Salt Lake and Sacramento from 1851 to May 1860. Late in 1858 he contracted with John A. "Snowshoe" Thompson to carry the mails over the Sierra Nevadas during the winter months. Previous to this the mails, during the winter, were taken south, over the Old Spanish Trail to San Pedro or San Diego and thence by steamship to San Francisco. Thompson had started to carry the mails over the snowbound passes on skis in January of 1856. In 1858 Thompson and Judge John S. Childs organized the THOMPSON CARSON VALLEY EXPRESS to run between Genoa, U.T. (now Nevada) and Placerville, California. They used sleighs in the winter or skis if the snow was too deep in the mountains. On Dec. 18, 1858 the Sacramento UNION reported that Chorpensing had negotiated a contract with Snowshoe Thompson to carry the winter mails over the Sierras for \$2000 per annum. Also in a claim against the United States Chorpensing had stated that "...The famous Snowshoe Thompson was one of the men who aided in getting these mails across the Sierra Nevadas during the winter of 1858 and 1859."

The cover shown above originated at Camp Floyd, U.T. Dec. 14, 1859 and was routed west-bound, as per the manuscript directive "Via San Francisco and Overland Mail." In view of the evidence presented above there can be no doubt that this cover was carried over the Sierras by Snowshoe Thompson for Chorpensing. On arrival in San Francisco it was routed eastbound on the Butterfield Overland Stage line.

The writer of the letter, Fitz John Porter, was a major and adjutant general to Albert S. Johnston commanding the Army of Utah which was stationed at Camp Floyd during the "Mormon War".

CAMP FLOYD, U. T. To PANAMA "Via California"

This cover is addressed to a surgeon onboard the U. S. S. DECATUR at Panama, New Grenada. It was originally posted with only a three cent 1857 issue stamp and postmarked with the manuscript Camp Floyd, Utah Territory postmark on February 7 (1859). It also bears a manuscript "Paid 20", which is the rate from California to Panama. For some unexplainable reason IT WAS HELD UNTIL APRIL 18, 1859, when it was canceled with the newly introduced rimless postmark of Camp Floyd and then released. The manuscript postmark and the "Paid 20" are both in the same hand and the ink matches. The route marking looks like it was written in by the postmaster.

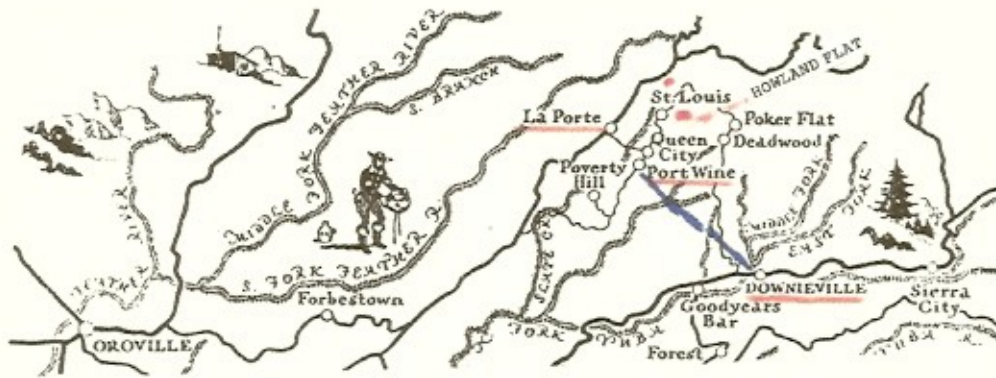


FLOYD, U.T.
APRIL
1

CAMP FLOYD, U. T. to Panama carried by Snowshoe Thompson on the overland route between Genoa, N.T. and Placerville, California **CHORPENING** held the overland mail contract in 1858/1859 and in 1859/1860 and it would be unlikely that he would not continue with Thompson in view of the weather as reported by Effie Mona Mack in her **HISTORY OF NEVADA** - "that the weather of 1859/1860 ...was one of the most severe thus far experienced by the settlers...most of the passes were closed with deep snow drifts until late in the spring". SEE Porter cover Camp Floyd Dec. 14th, 1859 "Via San Francisco and Overland Mail" in this collection.

LEVI COOPER LANE 1828/1902, joined the Navy in Dec. 1855. He was onboard the **U. S. S. DECATUR** when the Decatur and the U. S. S. Coast Survey ship **ACTIVE** helped repulse the Indians in the battle of Seattle on Jan. 26, 1856. SEE hebner's letter in this collection. At the time of this cover the Decatur was off the coast of Central America and it became the temporary refuge of members of the filibustering expedition of Wm Walker who sought to control Nicaragua which ended his life before a Honduran firing squad. On the return of the Decatur to San Francisco in the fall of 1859 Lane resigned his commission for a notable medical career.

THE WESTERN MAILS



SIERRA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

ZACK'S EXPRESS

Granville Zackhrian operated a one man express between Downieville and La Port, via the Gibsonville Ridge in 1865/1866. There were no roads between these two points. From Downieville to Port Wine, the route was via Marysville southwest and then northeast to La Port and the Gibsonville mines. SEE MAP. Zack took a direct route northerly over the ridges, canyons and rivers stemming from the high Sierra mountains. **On snowshoes in the winter** and horseback at other times. Thus he avoided a long circuitous route.



*Kleckner Bro.,
Port Wine
California*

cover above is one of three recorded examples. All are addressed to Kleckner Bro., Port Wine and are fronts only. COVER below is newly discovered, although this frank was known to exist. Both FRANKS are printed. SEE opposite page for a group of express covers to Kleckner at Port Wine. All are fronts only. SEE other page for more on ZACK.



THE SNOW SHOE EXPRESSES
OF THE HIGH SIERRAS



Downieville Mountain Messenger

New Advertisement.

Snow-Shoe Express.

MR. COOK, THE EXPRESSMAN, WILL LEAVE Downieville on Tuesdays and Fridays and La Porte on Wednesdays and Saturdays, of each week, carrying all Letters and Packages entrusted to his care. The Post Office at either place, will receive his letters and packages, which should be directed "In Care of Cook's Snow-Shoe Express." All letters for the ~~Mountain~~ Office, containing advertisements or correspondence, should be in the La Porte Post Office on Tuesday evening, to be in time for insertion the same week.

COOK'S EXPRESS is a recently discovered cover bearing a printed frank of an unlisted express, exactly identical to the printed frank of **ZACK'S EXPRESS**, both operating out of Downieville. Granville Zachariah began his express about January 1st 1865. Newspaper reports as illustrated here, from the Downieville Mountain messenger, indicate that Geo. E. Cook had taken over the "snow shoe express line" between Downieville & La Porte as of Dec. 15, 1866. The Meadow Lake Sun, of June 15, 1866, reports that Tibbitts and Zachariah were running a Saddle and Pack Train into Meadow Lake. The Nevada Daily Gazette on

Nov. 20, 1865 reported that Tibbitts had employed a man to carry the winter express on Norwegian snow shoes, which were superior to those used in Canada. The man was Granville Zachariah. Both expresses were short lived to about 1870. Both most likely had their covers printed in the work shop of the Mountain Messenger and both worked with the post-masters at the ends of the Downieville/La Porte route.

Mr. Cook, of Eureka, who has taken charge of the snow-shoe express line between Downieville and La Porte, is a gentleman on whom the public can rely in any matter of business entrusted to his care. This line is a great public convenience, and our citizens should all contribute their mite to sustain it.



Drawn by W. H. Hackett

For Lectum & Strong. Lith by Britton & Rey S. Francisco.

ST. LOUIS, SEARS DIGGINGS, SIERRA CO. CAL.

Pub. by Everts, Snell & Co. St. Louis, Cal.



EVERETT SNELL & Co. EXPRESS FEATHER RIVER.

Letter carried by express to Marysville, California where it was placed in the mails Feb. 25, 1853. Note large building in center to right in the above illustration — "Everets Snell & Co, Express/Gold dust bought".

THE WESTERN MAILS



TRACY & CO. OREGON EXPRESS. The cover shown **above** was carried outside the mails by Tracy from Walla Walla to Salem, Oregon via Portland. Cover **below** bears the overprint of SHEPHERD'S EXPRESS on a franked envelope of TRACY & CO. In July of 1863 J.M. Shepherd ran an ad in the DAILY OREGONIAN, "Shepherd's Express. To Auburn, John Day and Boise Mines. Leaves Walla Walla every monday and returns . . . connecting with Wells, Fargo & Co's Express at Walla Walla . . ." Although Shepherd was an agent for both Tracy and Wells Fargo, it is not clear as to his ownership of Shepherd's Express or why he would overprint the Tracy frank. The cover entered the U.S. Mails at Portland Sept. 6, 1863.

SHEPHERD'S EXPRESS
AUBURN, JOHN DAY'S AND
BOISE MINES.
PAID.



THE WESTERN MAILS



AN EXTRAORDINARY COMBINATION COVER!

This unique cover bears the postage stamps and the printed express franks of the United States and Canada, plus the postmark of the UNION PACIFIC R.R.! Wells Fargo received it from Barnards, at Victoria, British Columbia, on March 25, 1868 and carried it via steamship to San Francisco. Thence by their agent, via the Central Pacific R.R., which was building eastward, and the overland stage-coach to where the Union Pacific was pushing its way west from Laramie, Wyoming in the spring of 1868. On arrival at Bowmanville, Canada on April 25, 1868 the cover was backstamped and forwarded to Toronto.



COVER originated with Barnard's Express; the Sc. V. l. Perf. 14 cancelled numeral "35" at Victoria P.O. Date stamped Mar. 25 by Wells Fargo & Co at Victoria when letter was turned over to them.



THE WESTERN MAILS



BRITISH COLUMBIA GOLD RUSH

In 1858 gold was discovered on the Fraser River in British Columbia. When the news hit the streets of San Francisco it started another Gold Rush similar to that of 1849 in California and Australia in 1850. The richest strike was made at Williams Creek in the Cariboo district.

The cover shown above was carried from Williams Creek to Yale, B.C. by Barnards Cariboo Express, where it was turned over to Dietz & Nelsons Exp. The U.S. stamps were added by the Victoria P.O. or the Express Co., as both carried U.S. stamps in stock. The Victoria P.O. forwarded the cover by steamer to San Francisco as per postmark Feb. 19, 1864. Thence by the Overland Stage Line and railroad to the east and its destination in Stamford, Canada. This cover was prepaid through as indicated by the express label, the Victoria handstamp PAID and the U.S. rate of 15¢ to Canada in stamps.