

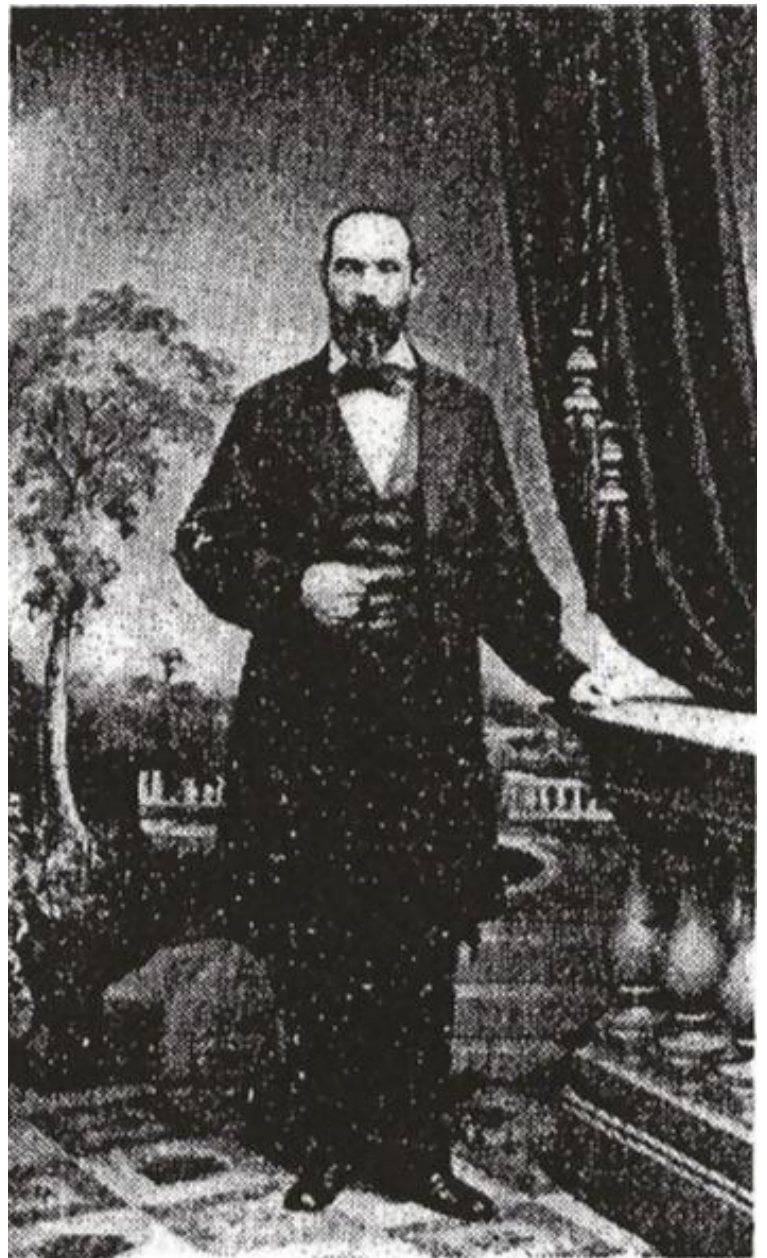
# Expressing with Samuel W. Langton, 1852-1865

Scott W. Prior

This exhibit documents the changing scope of Langton's express operations from his 3<sup>rd</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> partnership arrangements. No advertisements or covers exist for the first two periods, hence, they are not discussed. Author-generated route maps and covers from the author's collection document his expansion from 1852. The covers show a partial range of Langton's numerous hand stamps and destinations. Only one Nevada route is shown owing to the size limitations of a one-frame exhibit.

Born, educated and trained as a printer in Washington D.C., Samuel Langton came to California in 1849. Mining didn't "pan out" and he soon realized that carrying express matter was more remunerative. Over a period of 14 years, and with service to at least 173 camps in California and Nevada, Samuel Langton became one of the most highly respected of the California gold rush and Nevada silver rush expressmen.

**Research notes:** The route maps are based on Langton Express advertisements and articles from 28 different contemporary newspapers and additional City directories. The base maps used for the route maps were created from the earliest available U.S. Geological Survey quadrangle maps, generally editions of 1888 to 1897. Nineteen State and County maps published between 1851 and 1880 were used to locate obscure mining camps and for confirmation of how the early trails and roads connected those camps.

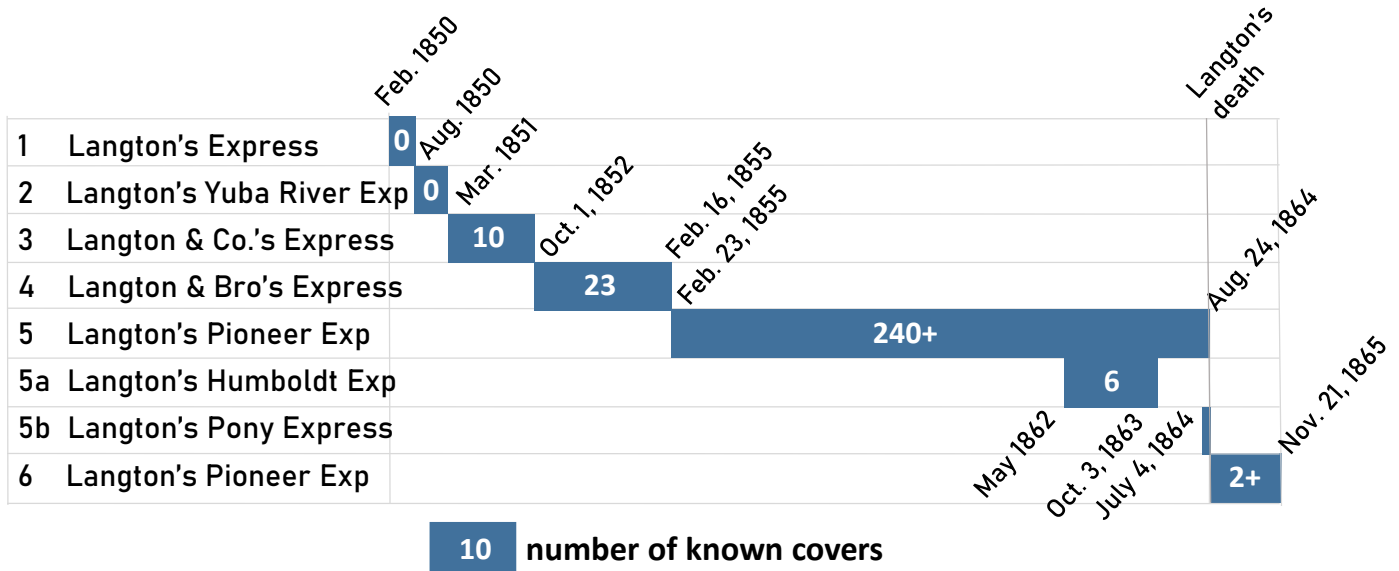


**Samuel W. Langton**

*Stamps, June 8, 1940*

# Langton's Expresses

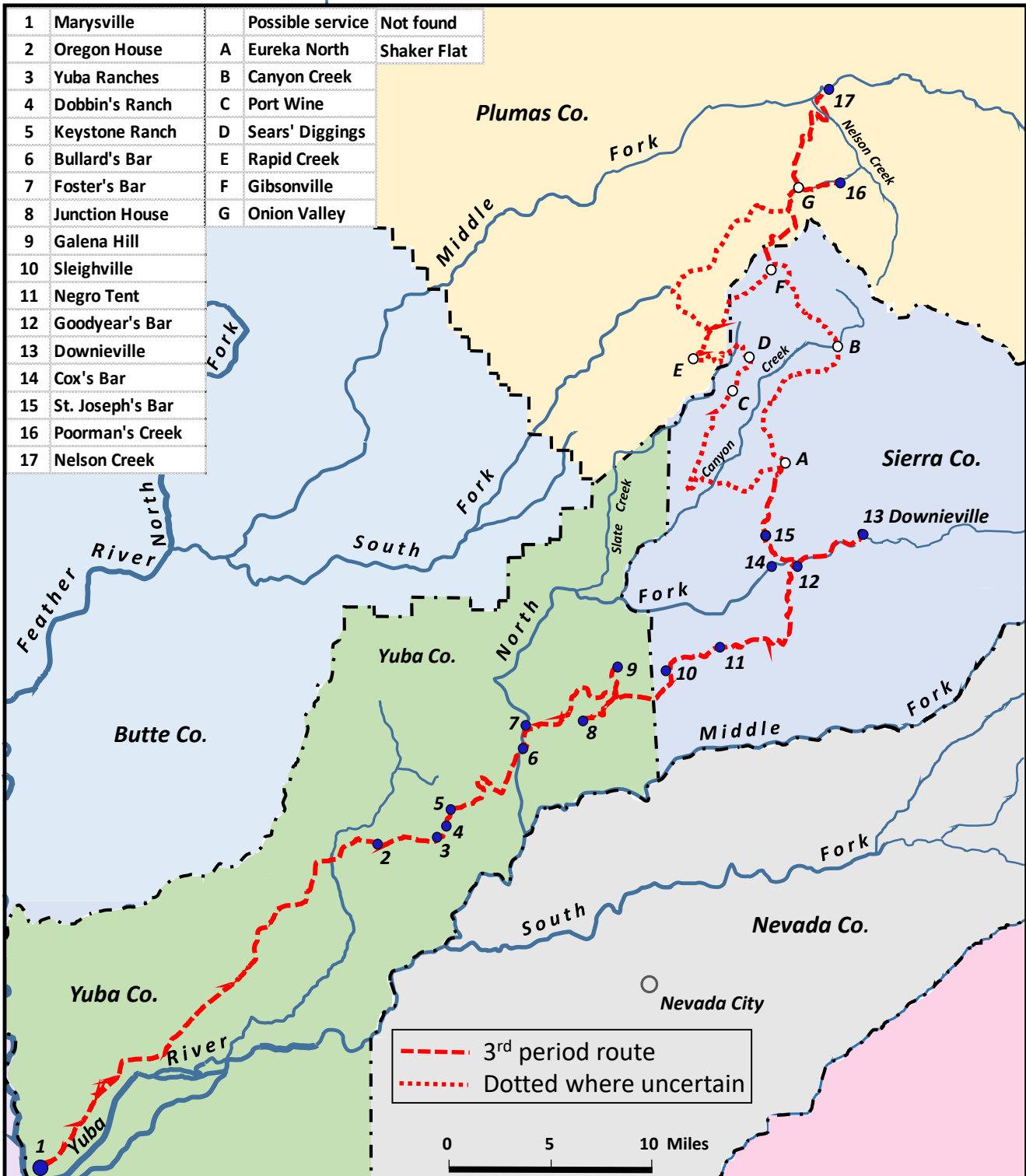
# Chronology of operating periods



1. **Langton's Express**, Feb. to August 1850. One-man express. *No covers*
2. **Langton's Yuba River Express**, August 1850 to March 1851. Partner Wm. T. Ballou. *No covers*
3. **Langton & Co.'s Express**, March 1851 to Oct. 1852. Partners Samuel L. Clapp and Z. White. Connected with Freeman at Sacramento, then Adams at Marysville. *10 covers, 5 hand stamps*
4. **Langton & Bro.'s Express**, Oct. 1852 to Feb. 16, 1855. Partner A. T. Langton. Sold out to Adams & Co., but not consummated. *23 covers, 13 hand stamps and 2 corner cards*
5. **Langton's Pioneer Express**, Feb. 23, 1855 to August 24, 1864. Banking partners N. N. Wilkinson and C. P. Stone. *240+ covers, 7 franks, 62 hand stamps, 2 labels*
- 5a. **Langton's Humboldt Express**, May 1862 to Oct. 3, 1863. *6 covers. Special local stamp*
- 5b. **Langton's Pony Express**, July 4 to August 24, 1864. *No covers*
6. **Langton's Pioneer Express**, Aug. 24, 1864 to Nov. 21, 1865. After Sam's death at Silver City, Nevada. Now owned by widow Anne E. Langton and operated by brother A. T. Langton. Sold out to P. A. Lamping. *2+ covers. Same franks and hand stamps as in the 5<sup>th</sup> period.*

# Langton & Co.'s Express, 3<sup>rd</sup> operating period Synopsis & route map

- New partners Samuel L. Clapp and Z. White after departure of Ballou
- Route expanded northward to Nelson Point/Creek
- He exchanged initially with Freeman & Co. at Sacramento, but shortened his route by changing his hand off to Adams & Co. at Marysville
- He started a passenger line from Marysville to Foster's Bar by stage and then by mule train to Downieville

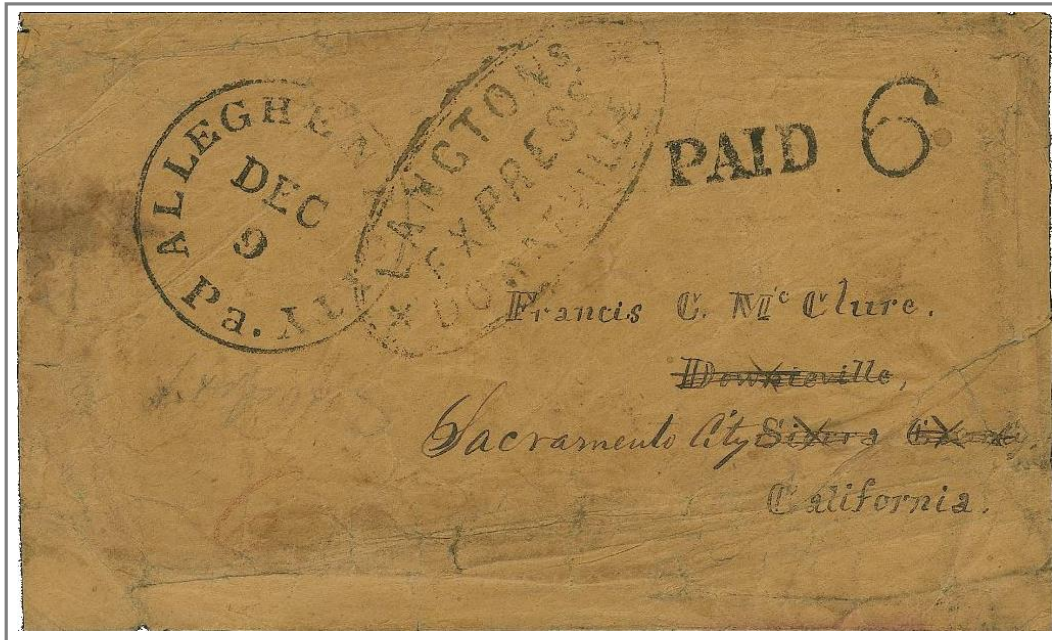




Langton & Co.'s Express

3<sup>rd</sup> operating period covers

Oval hand stamps with town name. Ten recorded covers



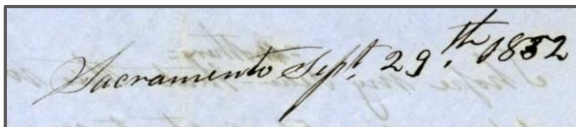
Dec. 9, 1851. Allegheny, PA to Downieville, California via Sacramento where Langton picked up this cover.



Langton copied the style of Adams & Co.'s earlier hand stamp



Sept. 29, 1852. Langton & Co. was no longer going to Sacramento, but picking up express from Adams & Co. at Marysville. Only known 3<sup>rd</sup> period conjunctive usage with Adams & Co.

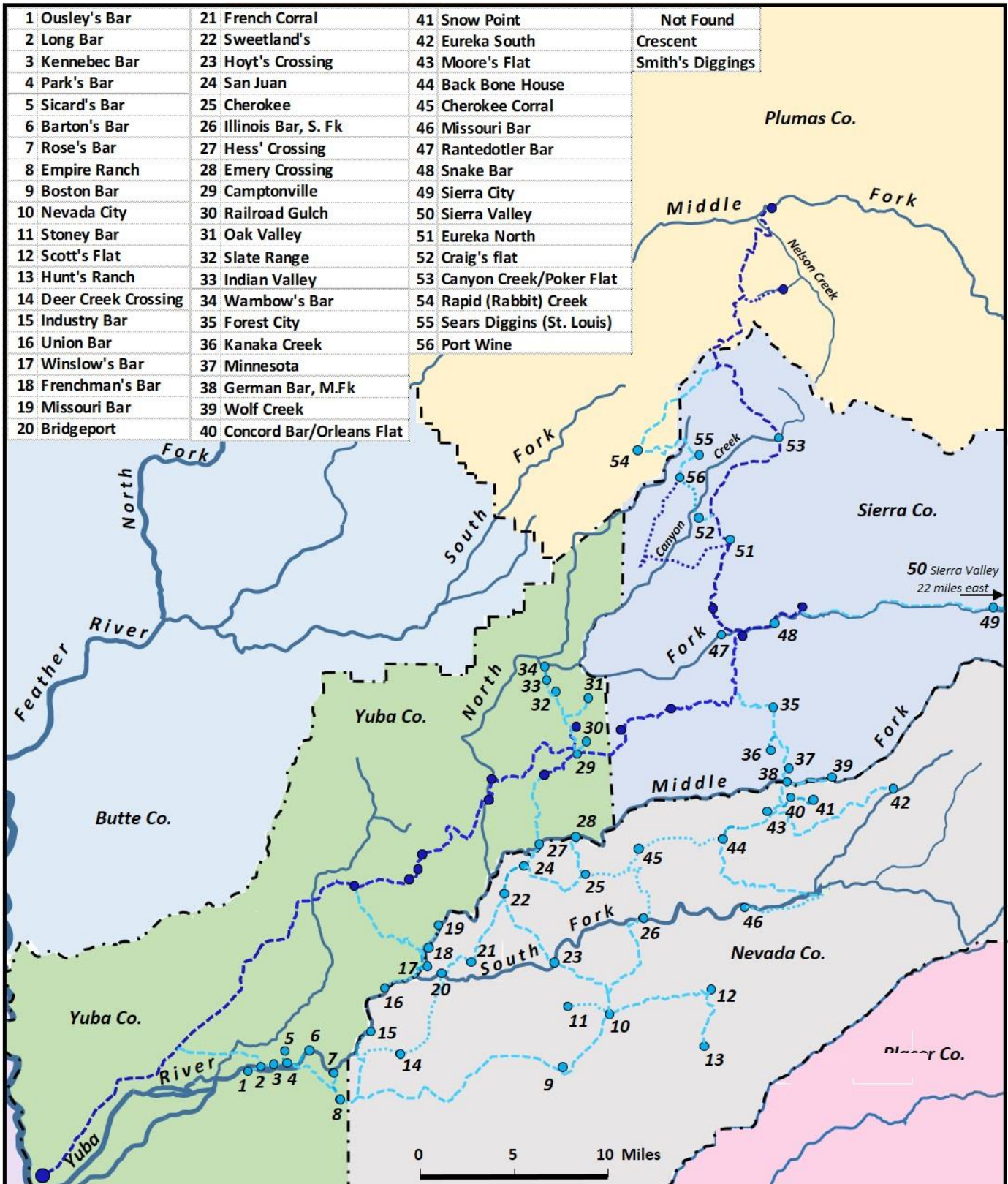


Letter dateline, Sacramento, Sept. 29<sup>th</sup>, 1852. (photocopy)



# Langton & Bros. Express

# 4<sup>th</sup> operating period route map



----- Existing 3<sup>rd</sup> period routes.      ----- 4<sup>th</sup> period route extensions

## Langton & Bros. Express

## 4<sup>th</sup> operating period synopsis

October 1, 1852 to February 16, 1855

- Partners Clapp and White departed
- Older brother Alexander T. Langton becomes a partner
- Younger brother John C. Langton is an employee
- Expansion throughout Nevada County
- 58 new offices advertised. 75 total delivery points.
- 23 known covers, 14 hand stamps and 2 corner cards.



Embossed by W. Evans, New York

Langton & Bros Yuba River Express embossed corner card. Two known of this type.



Probably handed off to Adams & Co. at Marysville and then carried to New York via Panama on *SS Senora* and *SS George Law*. Entered U.S. mails at New York City August 24, 1854. Delivered two days later. Marked 2 shillings due from recipient.



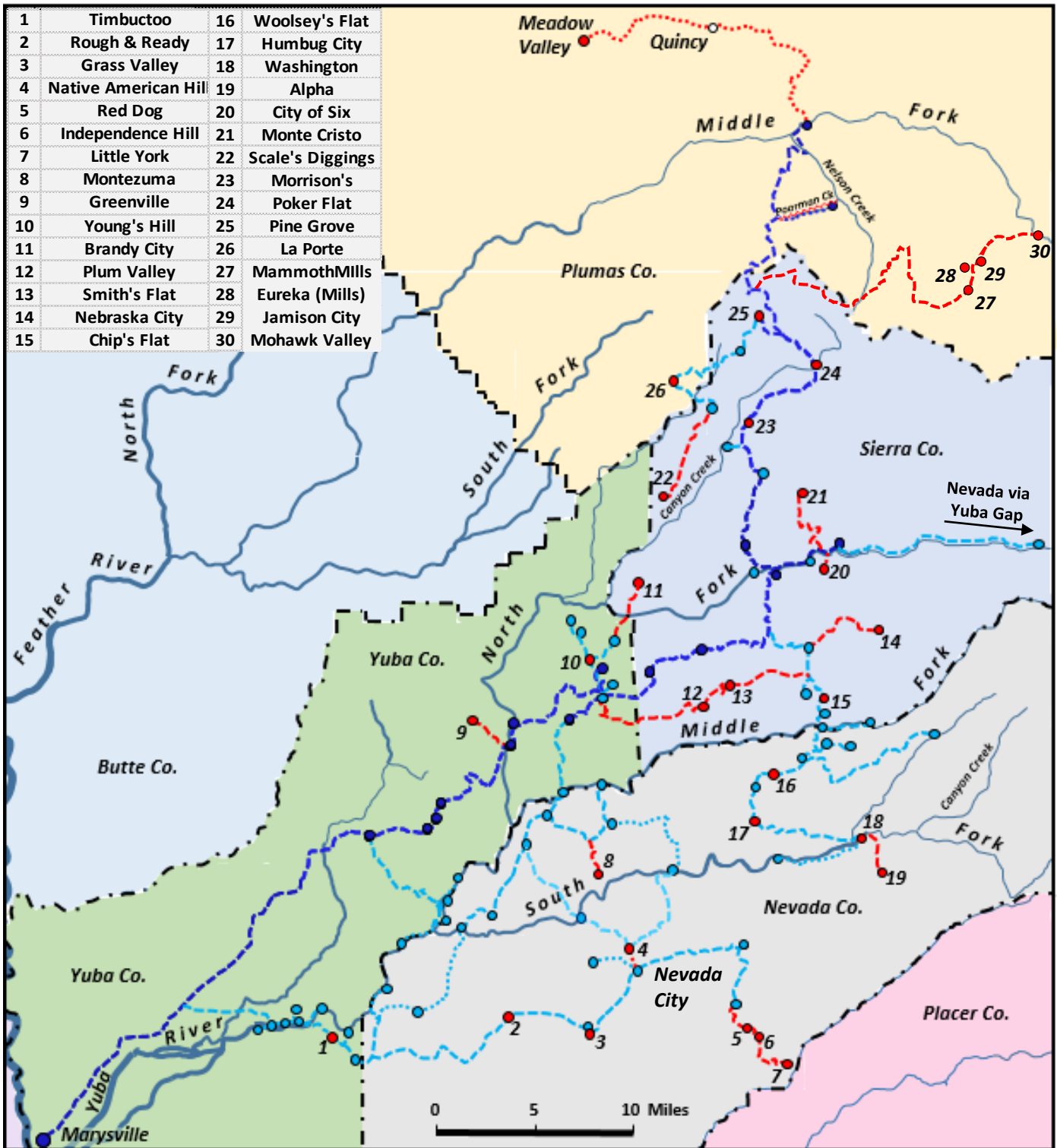


French Corral, July 19, 1853. Langton carried to Marysville where it entered U.S. mails and was marked 5 cents due. Four known of this hand stamp (3 blue, 1 black).

Langton's, and later Wells, Fargo's, office at French Corral. Probably the finest preserved California express office. Author's photo

# Langton's Pioneer Express

# 5<sup>th</sup> operating period route map



Langton introduced printed franks during his 5<sup>th</sup> operating period.

Langton connected initially with Pacific Express at Marysville, but switched to Wells, Fargo & Co. when Pacific Express failed in 1856. Langton added Nevada City as a Wells, Fargo exchange point.

- - - - 3<sup>rd</sup> period
- - - - 4<sup>th</sup> period
- - - - 5<sup>th</sup> period



## Langton's Pioneer Express

## 5<sup>th</sup> operating period synopsis

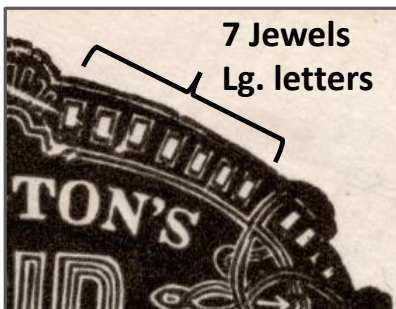
- Langton sold out to Adams In February 1855, but their almost immediate failure, before payment was made, permitted Langton to reclaim his express. He reorganized as Langton's Pioneer Express.
- Printed franks were introduced during Langton's 5<sup>th</sup> period.
- His 5<sup>th</sup> period expansion was that of short extensions of his existing routes, except in December 1858 he commenced serving the Washoe District of Nevada. His Nevada Expansion continued as additional silver strikes were made.
- Service to Sacramento and San Francisco was re-established in late October 1855, but was withdrawn by April 1, 1856 after a truce was signed with Wells Fargo & Co.
- Samuel W. Langton was seriously injured in a buggy accident in Silver City, Nevada on August 16, 1864 and died August 24<sup>th</sup>, thus ending the 5<sup>th</sup> period.

### Langton's "football" frank

Came in two sub-types and in four colors (see next slide).



1855 to July 1861



June 1861 to Nov. 1865



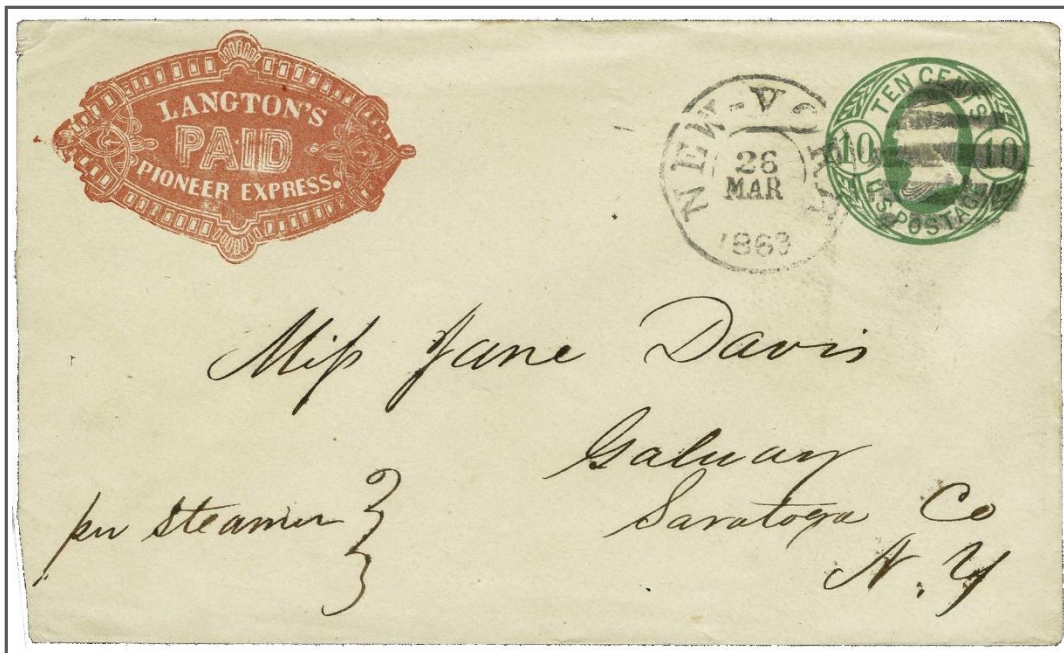
Black frank on U34 envelope. Conjunctive usage with Wells, Fargo & Co. More than 100 black, "football"-franked covers are recorded.

Langton's Pioneer Express  
Blue and Red franks

5<sup>th</sup> period "football" covers



Blue frank on U38. 14 known used. This example may be a reprint (research in progress)



Red frank on Scott U40. Experimental color copying Wells, Fargo & Co.'s red-franked transcontinental covers. The "Per Steamer" instruction meant this cover was carried via Panama instead on the default Central Overland route.

Four known covers, all to the east coast. Used from March to July 1863.

One brown example is known. Its significance, if any, is unknown.



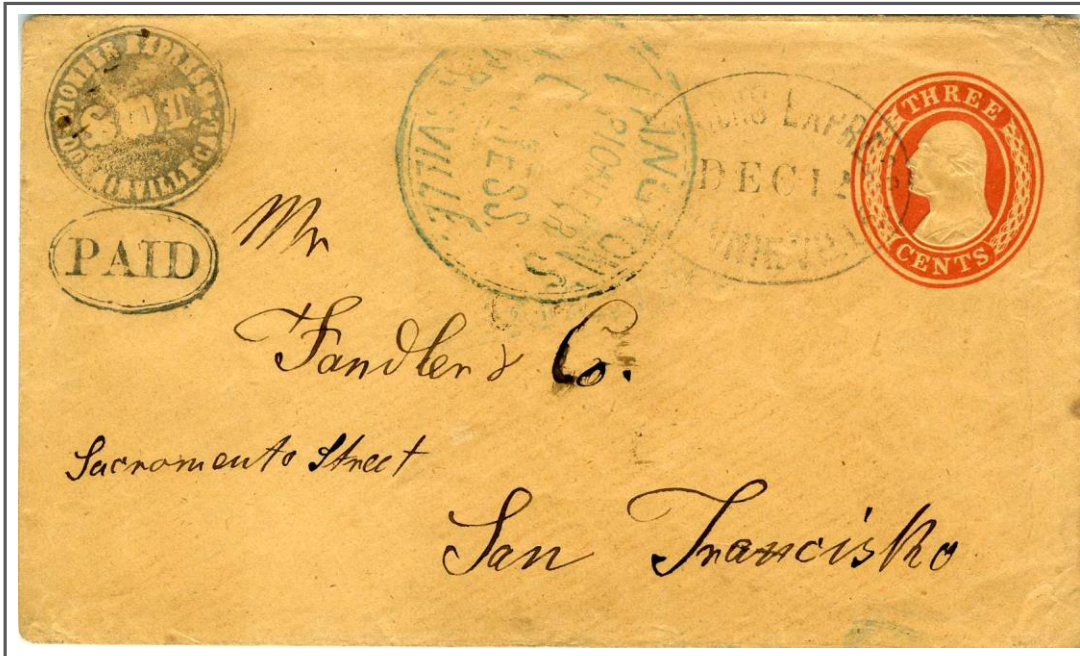
# Langton's Pioneer Express

5<sup>th</sup> period covers

## Extension to San Francisco, October 31, 1855 – April 1, 1856

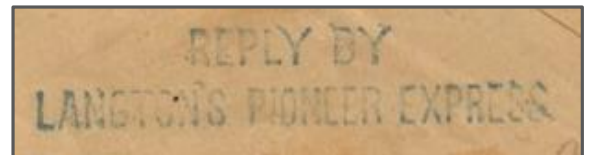
Langton re-opened offices in San Francisco and Sacramento directly competing with Wells, Fargo & Co. They retaliated by opening six offices above Marysville in Langton territory. A truce was signed April 1, 1856 whereby Langton no longer went below Marysville and Wells, Fargo closed their newly opened offices.

Langton carried this cover to San Francisco (see reverse marking).

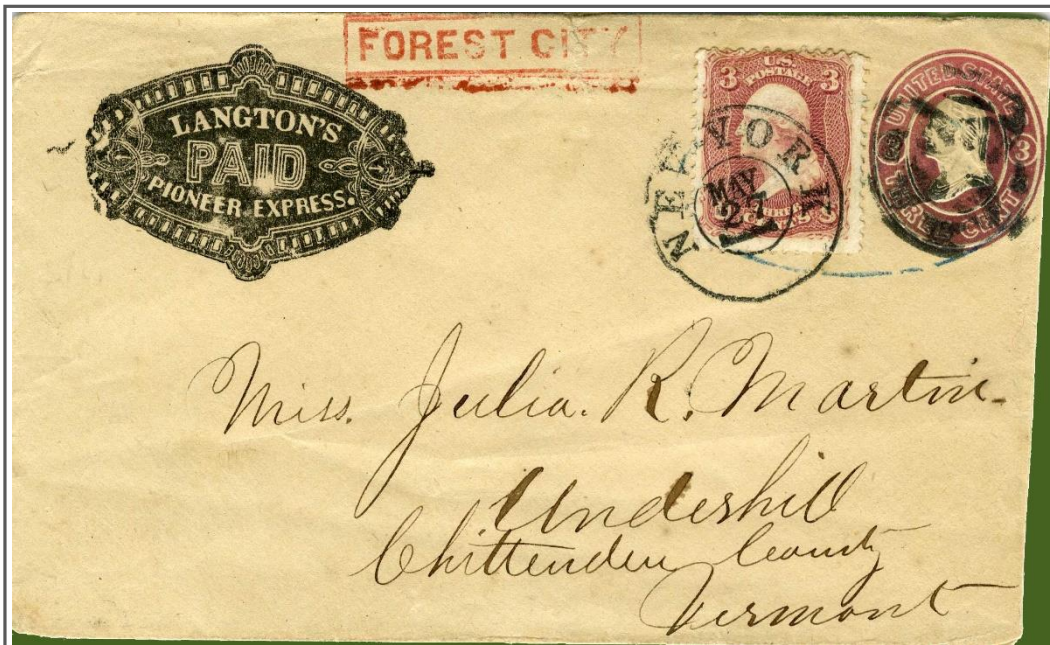


This negative hand stamp with Sam Langton's initials served as a company frank on this cover. (4 known)

Dec. 12, 1855. Downieville to San Francisco via Marysville and Sacramento. With five different Langton hand stamps.



### Straight line & oval town hand stamps



REPLY BY LANGTON'S PIONEER EXPRESS. On reverse of above cover. Applied only at their Sacramento office. Photocopy. (Five examples recorded).



Photocopy with stamp lifted showing Langton's oval Alleghany hand stamp. Cover probably forwarded from Forest City where the 3 cent stamp was applied as the letter was underweight.



## Langton's Pioneer Express

## 5<sup>th</sup> period "football" covers

### Triple conjunctive usage

Triple conjunctive usages are rare. Typically a franked cover of the initial carrier and hand stamps of the two connecting carriers are present. This one is especially nice in that all three companies applied their hand stamps.



Langton's at Forest City to Wells, Fargo at Marysville and then Bamber & Co. from San Francisco to Oakland, California. The three companies split the express fee.

### Langton's signature used as a pre-cancel



"Langton" signature on Scott #10. (two known)  
Enlargement x2

Pre-cancel on a drop letter. Express companies were required to pay U.S. postage even if the post office did not handle the letter. Overpaid by 2 cents

with Scott # 10. Only four Langton franks known printed on non-Government envelopes.



## Langton's Pioneer Express

## 5<sup>th</sup> period scroll frank

This elaborately engraved frank succeeded the Langton "football frank", although the football was still in circulation. The earliest two examples are on the 3<sup>rd</sup> series Nesbitt envelope, so this frank was introduced after August 1861. One unused example is known on an 1860 star die envelope, but this is thought to be a later reprint. (This research is on-going)



Black frank, 25 known used. Conjunctive usage with Wells, Fargo



Blue frank. Three used covers known. Printed on amber paper. The purpose of the blue colored frank, if any, has not been determined.

# Langton's Humboldt Express

Mid-May 1862 to October 2, 1863

Twelve months after the May 1861 silver strikes along the east side of the Humboldt Range, Langton began operating a four-horse stage between there and Virginia City. Special 25-cent stamps were printed which appear to have been used in the summer of 1863. Langton was forced to drop this route owing to increased competition from Wells, Fargo & Co.



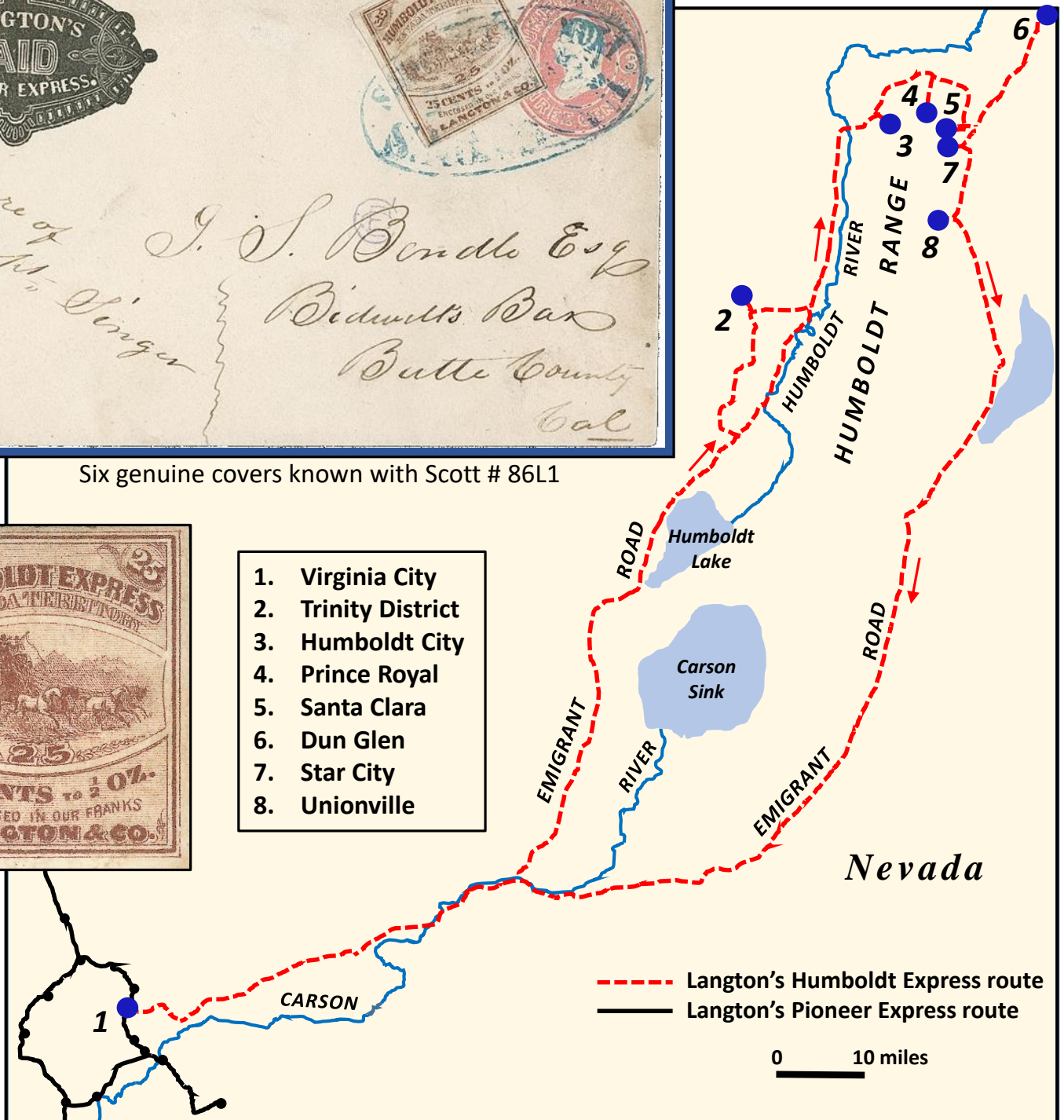
PF cert 440816

Six genuine covers known with Scott # 86L1



1. Virginia City
2. Trinity District
3. Humboldt City
4. Prince Royal
5. Santa Clara
6. Dun Glen
7. Star City
8. Unionville

Humboldt route map



The proposed one-way route around the Humboldt Range is based on a Langton-published return trip time table.

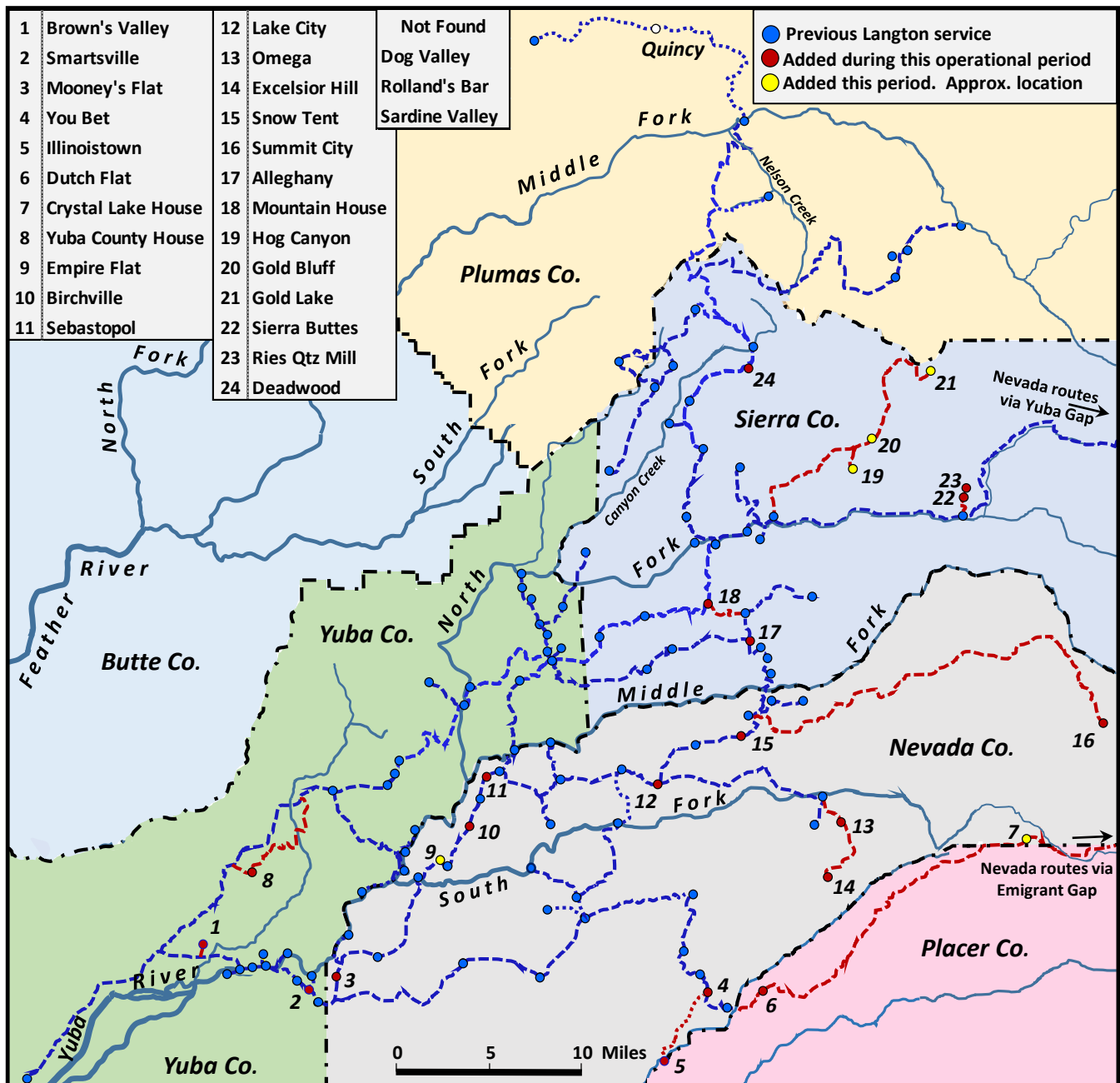


# Langton's Pioneer Express

# 6<sup>th</sup> period synopsis and route map

Aug. 24, 1864 – Nov. 21, 1865

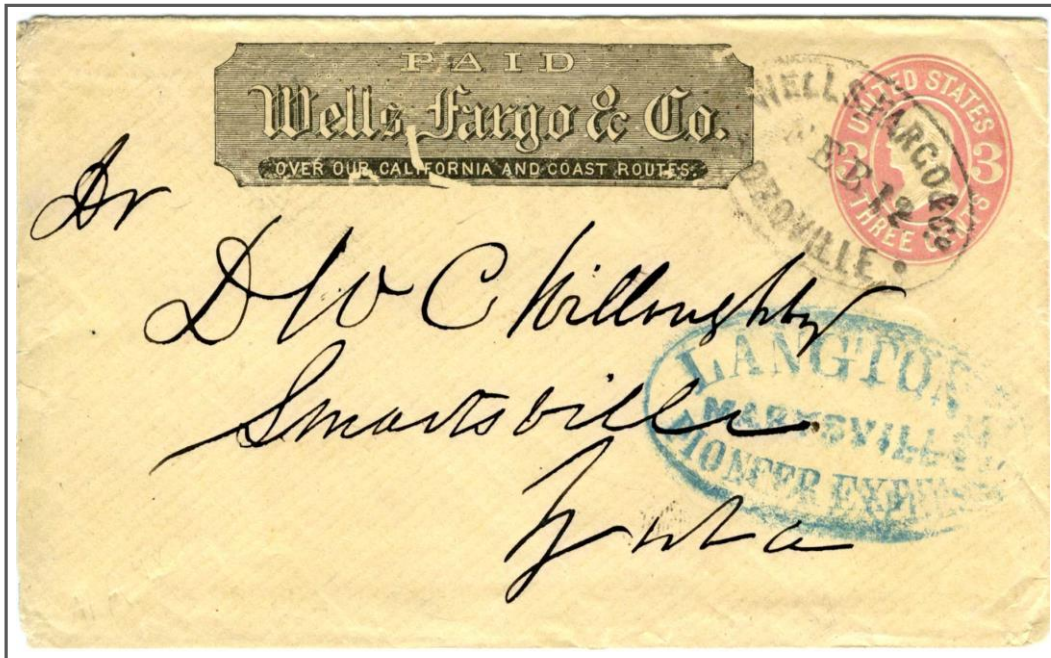
- Sam Langton died at Silver City, Nevada on August 24, 1864 from a buggy accident on the 16<sup>th</sup>.
- Widow Anne Langton and brothers A.T. and John C. Langton carried on.
- Southern route to Nevada via Emigrant Gap was added, but was sold to Wells, Fargo along with some Nevada County routes in late 1865.
- Anne Langton sold the express to Downieville banker Peter A. Lamping on November 21, 1865.



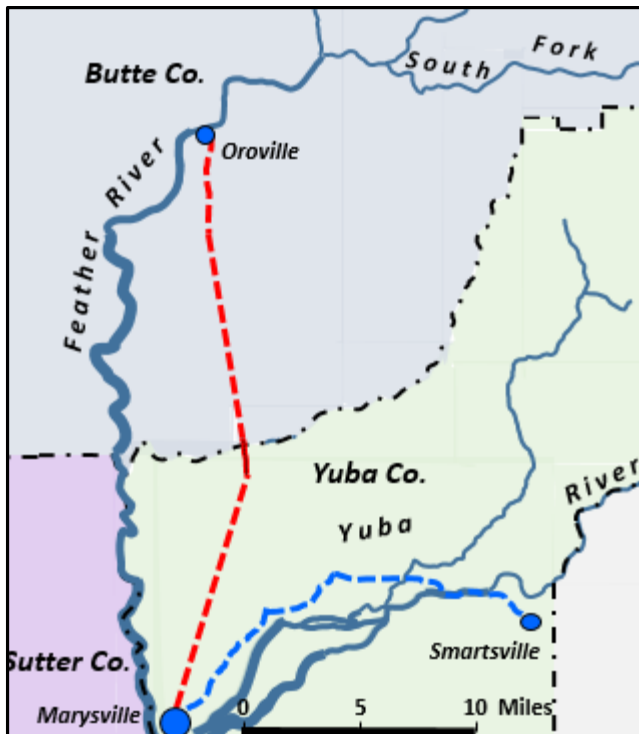
# Langton's Pioneer Express

# 6<sup>th</sup> period cover

Only two covers are confirmed to Langton's 6<sup>th</sup> operating period. The low number results from the use of identical Langton markings during the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> periods and the general absence of year dates on Langton covers. A 6<sup>th</sup> period cover must be proven to have been carried within the 6<sup>th</sup> period date range.



**Incoming conjunctive usage.** Wells, Fargo & Co. handed off to Langton at Marysville for final delivery. Only four covers are known in which another express company handed-off a cover to Langton.



Attribution to the 6<sup>th</sup> operating period (1865) is based on the fact that February 12 only occurred between the September 1864 release of this Nesbitt 4<sup>th</sup> series envelope and the sale of Langton's Express on November 21, 1865. Thus, it must be an 1865 usage and therefore, 6<sup>th</sup> period.

On November 21, 1865, widow Anne Langton sold the express to Downieville banker Peter A. Lamping. Ten months later he was squeezed out by Wells, Fargo & Co.

- 1<sup>st</sup> carried by Wells, Fargo. W,F&Co. did not open an office at Smartsville until 1866.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> carried by Langton