

42



29 December 1859 Geneva, Switzerland to San Francisco  
Letter sent unpaid (2x21¢ rate)  
42¢ postage due in San Francisco

**Europa** 16 days (West)  
2x18¢ = 36¢ French debit to U.S.  
Boston applied "42" rate handstamp



## U.S. – France Mails by Steamship

Pre U.S. – French Treaty  
American Contract Steamship Direct

1850–1857  
1 Jul 51–1 Apr 57

PAID 26



14 January 1854 San Francisco to Bordeaux  
26¢ prepaid for British open mail rate by American packet  
6 decimes postage due in Bordeaux

**Franklin** 12 days (East)  
By Sep 1853, San Francisco used a  
straightline PAID26 rate marking



## U.S. - France Mails by Steamship

Pre U.S. - French Treaty  
American Contract Steamship via G.B.

1847-1857  
15 Feb 49-1 Jul 51

56



31 May 1851 San Francisco to Paris  
56¢ prepaid for West Coast American packet rate  
8 decimes postage due in Paris

*Hermann* 14 days (East)  
Prepayment included 40¢ U.S. inland and 16¢ sea postage  
French "Audos" refers to revised address on reverse

In mid-1851, Great Britain and France made a provisional agreement for reduced rates on mails transiting England. The agreement, not formally placed in effect until 1 September 1851, reduced the rate on letters conveyed by American packet from 15 to 8 decimes per 7½ grams.

This envelope was carried by the Pacific Mail Steamship Company steamer *Tennessee* to Panama City and the Empire City Line steamer *Empire City* to New York, where it was transferred to the Ocean Line steamer *Hermann*.

It shows the scarce handstamp "56" of San Francisco, introduced in November 1850 and used only until July 1851 when the U.S. rates changed. The envelope also shows the provisional 8 decime postage due rating. One other cover is known from this voyage with the same provisional rating.



## U.S. - French Postal Treaties

Pre 1857 Treaty

American Contract Steamship via G.B.

1847-1857

1 September 1851-1 January 1857

# 26



Folded Letter: San Francisco to Bordeaux, France, 30 September 1852

Ship: *Baltic*

Company: New York & Liverpool United States Mail Steamship Company  
(Collins Line)

Depart: New York, 30 October 1852  
Arrive: Liverpool, 10 November 1852

Rate: 26¢ prepaid for British Open Mail rate by American packet (West Coast)  
8 decimes postage due in Bordeaux

Notes: Letter carried from San Francisco by Pacific Mail Steamship Co. steamer *Tennessee* to Panama City and U.S. Mail Steamship Co. steamer *Georgia* from Aspinwall to New York. Paris marked the postage due of 8 decimes. Rare blue color used at San Francisco only from 1 October - 16 November 1852. (4 examples recorded as of 06/03)



## U.S. – French Postal Treaties

Pre 1857 Treaty

American Contract Steamship via G.B.

1847–1857

1 September 1851–1 January 1857

# 26



Envelope: San Francisco to Brest, France, 2 March 1852

Ship: *Pacific*

Company: New York & Liverpool United States Mail Steamship Company  
(Collins Line)

Depart: New York, 3 April 1852

Arrive: Liverpool, 15 April 1852

Rate: 26¢ prepaid for outgoing American packet rate (West Coast)  
8 decimes postage due in Brest

Notes: Letter carried from San Francisco by Pacific Mail Steamship Co. steamer *Northerner* to Panama City and U.S. Mail Steamship Co. steamer *Crescent City* from Chagres to New York. Paris marked the postage due of 8 decimes.



# U.S. - French Postal Treaties

Pre 1857 Treaty  
American Contract Steamship Direct

1850-1857  
1 July 1851-1 April 1857



Folded Letter: San Francisco to Herford, Prussia, 31 May 1852

Ship: *Franklin*

Company: New York & Havre Steam Navigation Company  
(Havre Line)

Depart: New York, 3 July 1852  
Arrive: Havre, 15 July 1852

Rate: 26¢      prepaid for British Open Mail rate by American packet  
13½ silbergroschen      postage due in Herford

Notes: Letter carried by Pacific Mail Steamship Company steamer *Tennessee* to Panama and United States Mail Steamship Company steamer *Crescent City* from Chagres to New York. Aachen indicated letter entered Prussia from France (Thurn & Taxis Post) and marked 13½ silbergroschen for double rate letter. This is only cover recorded from California to Prussia sent by New York directly to France instead of in the open mails via G.B.



## U.S. – French Postal Treaties

1857 Treaty

French Contract Steamship Direct

1857–1870

15 June 1864–31 December 1869

# 45



**Folded Letter: San Francisco to Cognac, France, 12 November 1864**

Ship: *Washington*

Company: Compagnie Générale Transatlantique  
(French Line H)

Depart: New York, 7 December 1864

Arrive: Havre, 20 December 1864

Rate: --- letter sent unpaid  
6¢ U.S. debit to France  
16 decimes postage due in Salins

Notes: San Francisco marked unpaid letter rate as 45¢, a triple rate for 15–22½ grams by weight. Letter carried by Pacific Mail Steamship Co. steamer *Golden Age* to Panama and U.S. Mail Steamship Co. steamer *Costa Rica* from Aspinwall to New York. Paris considered letter weight under 15 grams and marked letter for 2x8=16 decimes postage due.



## U.S. – French Postal Treaties

1857 Treaty

British Contract Steamship via G.B.

1857–1870

1 April 1857–31 December 1869



**Folded Letter: Paris to San Francisco, 4 March 1858**

Ship: *Arabia*

Company: British & North American Royal Mail Steam Packet Company  
(Cunard Line)

Depart: Liverpool, 6 March 1858  
Arrive: New York, 20 March 1858

Rate: – – – letter sent unpaid  
12¢ French debit to U.S. for single rate  
15¢ postage due in San Francisco

Notes: Although San Francisco was named an exchange office in the original postal convention with France, it apparently was never an exchange office for outgoing mails under this convention and was an exchange office for incoming French mails only for a few months until late in 1857. Very few cover examples exist that show San Francisco as an exchange office. Markings on this cover illustrate that New York exchanged mails for San Francisco in March 1858.



## U.S. - French Postal Treaties

1857 Treaty

British Contract Steamship via G.B.

1857-1870

1 April 1857-31 December 1869



Folded Letter: San Francisco to Chilleurs-aux-Bois, France, 20 January 1860

Ship: Asia

Company: British & North American Royal Mail Steam Packet Company  
(Cunard Line)

Depart: New York, 15 February 1860

Arrive: Liverpool, 27 February 1860

Rate: 30¢ paid for double rate letter  
24¢ U.S. credit to France

Notes: San Francisco marked prepayment in red crayon first and later with circular datestamp. New York credited France  $2 \times 12\text{¢} = 24\text{¢}$ , retaining only  $2 \times 3\text{¢} = 6\text{¢}$  since British contract steamship carried letter to U.K.



## U.S. – France Mails by Steamship

U.S. – French Treaty of 1857  
French Contract Steamship Direct

1864–1870  
15 Jun 64–1 Jan 70



**18 December 1866** San Francisco to Chateau de Portets  
Letter sent unpaid  
8 decimes postage due at destination

**Péreire** 12 days (East)  
3¢ U.S. debit to France  
French mail agent on steamer struck red octagonal  
datestamp upon departure from New York



## U.S. – France Mails by Steamship

U.S. – French Treaty of 1857  
British Contract Steamship via G.B.

1857–1870  
1 Apr 57–1 Jan 70



**30 October 1866** San Francisco to Bordeaux  
Letter sent unpaid (double rate)  
16 decimes postage due in Bordeaux

**Java** 9 days (East)  
2x3¢ = 6¢ U.S. debit to France  
San Francisco marked through rate of  
2x15¢ with circle "30" handstamp



## U.S. – French Postal Treaties

Pre 1857 Treaty

American Contract Steamship via G.B.

1847–1857

1 September 1851–1 January 1857

97



Folded Letter: San Francisco to Cognac, France, 30 July 1853



## U.S. - French Postal Treaties

Pre 1857 Treaty

American Contract Steamship via G.B.

1847-1857

1 September 1851-1 January 1857



Envelope: San Francisco to Sermaises-du-Loiret, France, 20 June 1856

Ship: *Baltic*

Company: New York & Liverpool United States Mail Steamship Company  
(Collins Line)

Depart: New York, 19 July 1856  
Arrive: Liverpool, 30 July 1856

Rate: 26¢ paid for British open mail rate by American packet (West Coast)  
8 decimes postage due in Sermaises-du-Loiret

Notes: Letter paid 26¢, marked first in pencil then by circular datestamp. It was carried to Panama City by Pacific Mail Steamship Co. steamer *Sonora* and from Aspinwall to New York by United States Steamship Co. steamer *George Law*. San Francisco combined rate with circular datestamp starting in the spring of 1855.



## U.S. – French Postal Treaties

Pre 1857 Treaty

American Contract Steamship via G.B.

1847–1857

1 September 1851–1 January 1857



**Folded Letter: San Francisco to Cognac, France, 15 July 1853**

Ship: *Washington*

Company: Ocean Steam Navigation Company  
(Ocean Line)

Depart: New York, 13 August 1853  
Arrive: Southampton, 26 August 1853

Rate: 52¢ prepaid for British Open Mail rate by American packet (West Coast)  
24 decimes postage due in Cognac

Notes: Letter prepaid 2x26¢=52¢ for double rate. It was carried to Panama City by the Pacific Mail Steamship Co. steamer *John L. Stephens* and from Aspinwall to New York by the U.S. Mail Steamship Co. steamer *Illinois*. Mail put off by the Ocean Line steamers at Southampton and sent directly across the Channel to Havre by auxiliary steamer received this particular French entry marking. It has been seen only on Ocean Line covers. Postage due in France was 3x8=24 decimes.



# U.S. - G.B. Mails by Steamship

1848 Treaty  
California Mail via West Indies

1849-1863  
1 Jul 1851-1 Jul 1863

20



**16 March 1852** Lausanne, Switzerland to San Francisco  
Letter carried privately to Havre; posted by forwarding agent  
50 decimes paid for transit fees to Panama (manuscript on reverse)  
20¢ postage due in San Francisco

**Great Western** 21 days (West)  
Payment = 2x25 decimes (reflecting reduced British  
fees for this route from Jul 51); postage due for  
distance > 2,500 miles from Panama to S.F.



**6 March 1859** Antwerp, Belgium, to San Francisco  
31 decimes paid for all transit fees by West Indies route  
San Francisco marked PAID and "783" for recipient's box  
number

**Thames/Medway** 28 days (West)  
Prepayment consisted of 2 dec. Belgian and 29 dec. British  
fees (marked on reverse); RMSP Co. steamers carried  
letter from Southampton to St. Thomas and Colon

al

(Pencil reverse)



# U.S. - G.B. Mails by Steamship

1848 Treaty  
California Mail via U.S. East Coast

1849-1863  
Prior to 9 Sep 1850



30 June 1850 San Francisco to Bordeaux, France  
56¢ paid (British Open Mail rate by Am. packet - West Coast)  
21 decimes postage due in Bordeaux

**Hermann** 14 days (East)  
Prepayment included 40¢ U.S. inland and 16¢ transatlantic  
fees; postage due of 21 decimes marked at Havre in error  
(rate for West Coast of South America via Panama)



(Reverse)



30 August 1850 San Francisco to London  
Letter sent unpaid  
40¢ U.S. debit to G.B. (not shown)  
2s5½d postage due in London (59¢ rate)

**Niagara** 11 days (East)  
Letter carried by Pacific Mail Steamship Co. steamer *Oregon* to Panama  
and U.S. Mail Steamship Co. steamer *Georgia* from Chagres to New  
York; Scarce boxed "D" applied at Liverpool (may be inspector's mark)



## U.S. - France Mails by Steamship

U.S. - French Treaty of 1857  
British Contract Steamship via G.B.

1857-1870  
1 Apr 57-1 Jan 70

On 1 April 1857, the first postal convention between the United States and France went into effect. It was now possible to send mail fully paid to destination or to the limits of either country's mail system. The rate breakdown for a ¼ oz. (7½ gm.) letter by British packet service via Great Britain was:

U.S. inland	3¢
Sea	6¢
Br. transit	2¢
Fr. transit	4¢
	15¢ or 8 decimes

Paid letter posted in France - U.S. credited 3¢

Paid letter posted in U.S. - France credited 12¢

Unpaid letter posted in France - U.S. debited 12¢;

Unpaid letter posted in U.S. - France debited 3¢



7 July 1857 Paris to San Francisco  
8 decimes prepaid for single rate  
3¢ French credit to U.S.

Asia 13 days (West)  
7 gram weight marked upper left  
San Francisco marked black PAID

46 (Reverse)

This letter was placed in a closed mail bag at Paris and not opened until San Francisco. It was carried from New York to Aspinwall by the U.S. Mail Steamship Company steamer *Illinois* and from Panama City to San Francisco by the Pacific Mail Steamship Company steamer *John L. Stephens*. "1077" in pencil was box number of San Francisco recipient. French credit to U.S. of 3¢ written in pen below letter weight in upper left.



6



15 December 1852 San Francisco to Marseille  
 26¢ prepaid for British open mail rate by American packet  
 6 decimes postage due in Marseille

*Humboldt* 14 days (East)  
 By mid-Dec 1852, San Francisco shifted to black ink  
 Letter carried by PMSS Co. steamer *Tennessee* to Panama  
 and USMSS Co. steamer *Illinois* to New York



## U.S. - French Postal Treaties

Pre 1857 Treaty

British Contract Steamship via G.B.

1840-1857

1 August 1849-1 July 1851

*[Handwritten signature]*



Folded Letter: San Francisco to Paris, 16 June 1850

Ship: *Cambria*

Company: British & North American Royal Mail Steam Packet Company  
(Cunard Line)

Depart: Boston, 21 August 1850  
Arrive: Liverpool, 2 September 1850

Rate: 5¢ prepaid for British Open Mail rate by British packet  
15 decimes postage due in Paris

Notes: Letter carried "out of the mails" from San Francisco to New York (probably in package with other letters to avoid very high west coast rate) by mail steamers *California* to Panama, *Georgia* to Havana, and *Ohio* to New Orleans (by accident). Hargous Brothers of New York posted letter and paid 5¢ rate marked in pencil at New York.