

TRANSATLANTIC MAIL STUDY GROUP

of the

British North America Philatelic Society

Newsletter No. 16

March 1990

EDITORIAL NOTE

I had hoped for more support from the Group members since my plea for contributions in the December 1989 newsletter in order to keep the newsletter going. Only Maggie Toms, apart from the faithful Allan Steinhart, responded by sending in an interesting exchange of official letters regarding the refunding of the value of postage stamps on letters with insufficient postage. These are reproduced herewith, as they provide sufficient additional material to justify this number. If you are interested in seeing this continue, please send me at least a small item to share with the other members.

LEO LaFRANCE

Since the last newsletter, I have had a letter from Hans Steinhardt of Hendersonville, NC with sad news about our friend and group member, Leo LaFrance. For those who may not have heard about Leo, I quote from Hans' letter:

Leo came down with Lung Cancer, was operated on and most of it was removed. The other site could not be cleared. Chemo- and X-ray therapy followed. Unfortunately the type that Leo has, has a bad habit of going to the brain. It did. Some X-ray therapy followed but did not do much good. It goes back and forth between lung and brain. Leo is in bad shape. Sue has to do everything..feeding cleaning and everything in between. Unless I have a cold I go every week. He is better in the A.M. and I went this morning [7 January]. Work precludes my doing this during the week.

If you have met him or Sue please send her a cheerful letter.: 406 Glenheath Drive, Hendersonville, NC 28739.

As a relatively new BNAPS member, I have only known Leo for about four or five years, seeing him at successive annual meetings. We always had a discussion about some aspect of our mutual interest. Also I was impressed with his personal support of the society, particularly when he brought the exhibit frames in a truck from somewhere on the American East Coast to Charlottetown, PEI in 1987. I wrote to Sue LaFrance after reading Hans' letter.

START AND FINISH OF ROUTING MAIL THROUGH HALIFAX DURING THE 1847-1849 U.S. RETALIATORY PERIOD

Allan Steinhart has posed a series of questions, which he hopes some group member(s) can answer more specifically. These relate to the actual Cunard voyages which carried the first Mails between Liverpool and Halifax in 1847, after the USPO cancelled the Closed Mail agreement at the start of the Retaliatory Period and the last Mails after the 1848 UK-US Postal Convention was ratified. In conjunction with this are the last closed mails through Boston in 1847 and the first ones through Boston and New York in 1849.

He gives the following information. GPO London Circular No. 27, 1847 dated October 1847 stated that all letters in future addressed to Canada will be forwarded by way of Halifax unless specifically directed to be sent by another route. This was endorsed on 28 October 1847: '*one sent to each letter Receiver in town and country and as received by the P.O. in Canada on Oct 28 1847.*'

Another circular dated 25 October 1847 from GPO Montreal directed that from and after the 16th of next month no American postage was to be collected in Canada. A subsequent one dated 3 November 1847 stated that the Mail for England to go by the steamer which will touch Halifax on 3 December will be closed at Montreal on the 21st instant. The Mails were to go overland through New Brunswick and Nova Scotia.

Some clarification may be gained from a look at the negotiations which had been taking place in London during the previous three months between S.R. Hobbie, first assistant U.S. postmaster general and the British postal authorities to resolve the matter of transporting closed U.S. Mails, which had been carried by U.S. contract steam

packets and were destined for Europe, through England. In this, the Americans had linked the 1845 US-Canadian Wickliffe Agreement allowing the movement of closed mails between Boston and St. John's, Quebec with the question of similar mails through England.

George Hargest in his *History of Letter Post Communication Between the United States and Europe 1845-1875* recorded the negotiations in some detail, noting that a notice of abrogation of the Wickliffe Agreement was sent to George Bancroft, the U.S. Minister in London on 17 July 1847, with instructions to serve it on the British Post Office if no progress was made in the talks. As Hobbie was unable to settle anything of importance with the British Post Office, Bancroft served the notice of abrogation on 16 August, to take effect in three months, namely 16 November. Hobbie left England for Washington on 24 October, marking the end of the negotiations, and this explains the issuance of the GPO Circular on 28 October.

On the basis of the above, I have assumed for some time that the last closed mail through Boston was carried by the *Caledonia* on 16 November. This ties in with the Montreal circular of 3 November, announcing the closure of the Mail at Montreal on 21 November for the *Acadia* which called at Halifax on 4 December, after sailing from Boston on 1 December. On the same basis, the last closed mail from Liverpool through Boston was *Acadia's* outbound sailing of 4 November, and the first through Halifax, the next steamer, namely the *Britannia* on 19 November.

With respect to the return to normalcy, Steinhart quotes GPO London Circular No. 14 dated April 1849, which stated in part: *'After the 14th Instant the mails to Canada will be forwarded through the United States... unless directed to be sent by another route.'* This was endorsed on 13 April 1849: *'One sent to every Letter Receiver in town & country.'* A corresponding one from GPO Montreal dated 25 April 1849 stated that commencing with the Mail to leave New York on 16 May, *'the Mails for England will be sent via the United States.'*

The U.S. Postmaster General's annual report dated 31 December 1849 includes the *Articles agreed upon between the Post Office of the Great Britain and Ireland and the Post Office of the United States for carrying into execution the*

convention of December 15, 1848. This document was signed in duplicate by S.R. Hobbie (US) and H. Bourne (UK) on 14 May 1849 in Washington. The date on which this was signed confirms the GPO Montreal circular that the first restored closed mail to England went by the *America* from New York on 16 May and the first from Boston on the *Hibernia* a week later (23 May). All of which prompts me to speculate that the London notice was premature, as it implied that the above steamers carried closed mails from Liverpool on 21 and 28 April respectively, arriving at New York on 5 May and Boston on 12 May.

If anyone has a further information or comment on this subject, please send it to me for sharing with the Group in a future newsletter.

CLAIMS FOR INSUFFICIENT POSTAGE STAMPS ON CHARGED LETTERS

In sending copies of an exchange of letters between the Post Offices of Canada and Great Britain on the above subject in 1865, Maggie Toms wrote that she had always been under the impression that, under the 1856 Anglo-French Postal Convention, letters between the two countries, which were insufficiently prepaid with postage stamps, were treated as wholly unpaid, and that she had found this to be true. In contrast, with respect to the BNA provinces, if a claim were made by the addressee for the value of the postage stamps on a charged letter, the claim would be honoured.

She comments: *'Wouldn't it be wonderful if all the covers which were used as vouchers were available to collectors today. I suppose after they were no longer needed they were destroyed.'* [They were probably destroyed by the Post Office.] The letters follow.

Post Office Department 20th June '65

John Tilley, Esq.

Sir,

In reply to your letter No 42711 dated the 8th inst., I have the honor to inform you that credit will be given to your Office for 6d stg. to enable you to comply with the request that has been made by the French Post Office for the return of the value of the postage stamp affixed to the enclosed envelope addressed to Frere Phillipe, Paris.

I beg to remark that by the Statute Law of this Province, the Postmaster General of Canada is authorized to treat as wholly unpaid letters on which stamps for prepayment are affixed of less value than the true rate of postage to which such letters are liable, and as similar treatment still appears to be the rule of the French Post Office, it is difficult to understand upon what ground these claims, which have become somewhat frequent of late, are urged.

W.H. Griffin

[Public Archives of Canada (PAC). Records of the Post Office, Record Group 3, Volume 835, page 276]

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London
July 8 '65

Sir,

With reference to the latter paragraph of your letter of the 20th ultimo, I have the honor to state that the French Post Office, it is true, treats, as wholly unpaid, letters from Canada upon which the prepayment in French postage stamps has been insufficient, but that Office will be perfectly ready to allow in all cases the value of such stamps, and it is presumed that the Canadian Post Office will not object to make a similar allowance as regards Canadian postage stamps in all analogous cases.

All that would be necessary to carry out an arrangement of this sort would be for each Office, either the Canadian or the French Post Office, to return to the other periodically the covers of letters bearing stamps of insufficient amounts upon which an allowance has been made in regard to the stamps affixed to them, as vouchers for the same to be respectively claimed.

It is not disputed that the Canadian Post Office was perfectly justified in treating the letter in question as wholly unpaid.

I have the honor to be
Sir,

Your obedient servant

F Hill

[42711 — Courtesy of the British Post Office]

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Post Office Department 11 August '65

John Tilley, Esq.

Sir,

Referring to your letter No 42711, dated 8th ultimo, I beg to say that this Dept. sees no objection whatever to the adoption as a rule, of the practice of giving credit for the amount actually prepaid on insufficiently paid letters to France, but at the same time, I beg to submit that to deal with such claims in the manner proposed would seem to involve a good deal of unnecessary trouble, and to suggest that it would be much more convenient if insufficiently paid French letters could be rated by both Countries with the deficient postage, and such amount as a fine, if it be considered advisable to impose a fine, as may be agreed upon with the French Post Office.

W.H. Griffin

[PAC. Ibid., page 285]

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London
15 September '65

Sir,

Referring to your letter of the 11th ultimo and previous correspondence, I beg leave to inform you that the proposal made in my letter of the 8th of July was not meant to have reference to all insufficiently paid letters passing between Canada and France, but only to cases in which application might be made for a return of the value of stamps uselessly affixed to insufficiently paid letters. Instead of the arrangement for carrying out this proposal, to which I referred in my last letter, I now beg to propose that all claims made in France for the value of stamps on insufficiently paid letters from Canada shall be at once acceded to, the covers of the letters being retained in the French Post Office and sent periodically to this Office with a claim for the amount represented by the stamps on them, which amount shall be claimed by this Office from the Canadian Office, the covers still being transmitted as vouchers, — and that a similar course shall be pursued by your Office with regard to claims made in Canada for the value of stamps on insufficiently paid letters from France.

These claims do not appear to be very numerous, and I do not think that much trouble would be involved by the arrangement.

I shall be glad to hear whether you approve of the proposal as it is now made.

I have the honor to be,
Sir,
Your obedient servant,

[Ibid., British Post Office]

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Post Office Department 16th November '65

John Tilley, Esq.

Sir,

Referring to your letter of the 15th September, No. 42711 respecting the return of the value of postage stamps uselessly affixed to insufficiently paid French letters, I beg to say that this Dept. will willingly consent to your proposal that these claims shall in future be at once acceded to, and that the covers transmitted to your Dept. by the French and Canadian Offices.

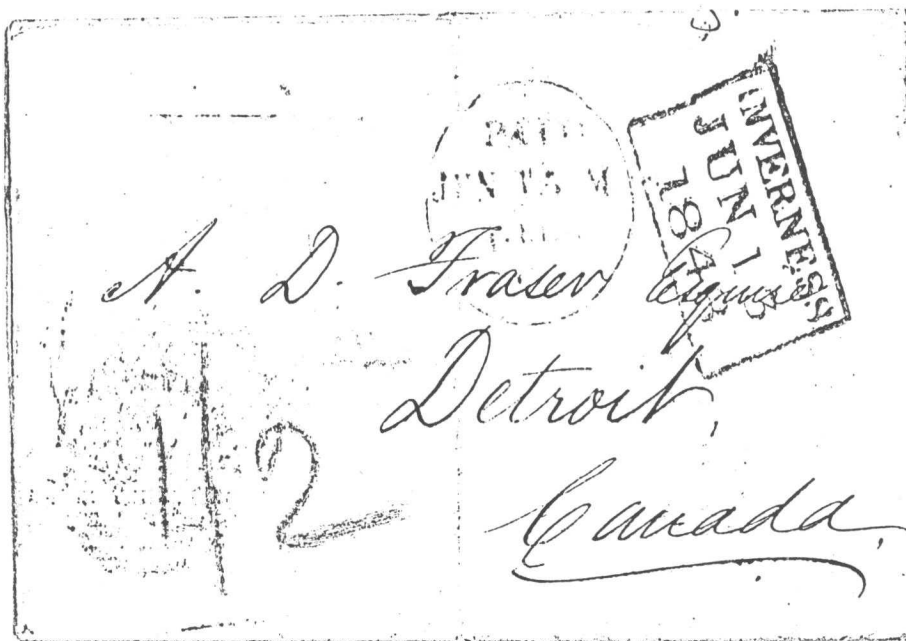
W.H. Griffin

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Does anyone have any further information about this subject or an example of such a letter returned to refund? It would be particularly interesting to know what, if any, markings were put on them.

AVOIDING THE PAYMENT OF U.S. RETALIATORY POSTAGE

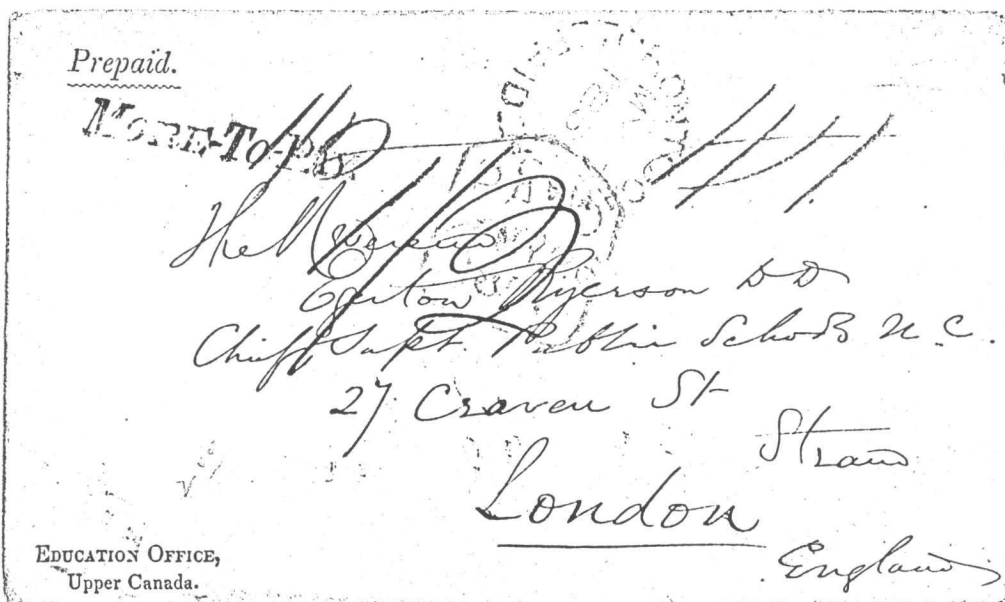
Here is a letter which has intrigued me ever since I bought it at the Virginia Beach BNAPEX in September 1988. This was during the period of the U.S. Retaliatory Act, when the USPO was charging 24 cents postage on any prepaid letter from Great Britain arriving at an American port, and there were no closed mails to Canada through the United States.



This letter was written by John A. Valentine, the factor on Insher, Insher House by Inverness, Scotland on 12 June 1848 to the estate owner, who was in Detroit. In order to avoid the retaliatory charge, if he addressed the letter to 'Detroit, Michigan', he addressed it to 'Detroit, Canada'. With this address, the Liverpool post office put it in the closed bag for London, U.C. and sent it via Halifax on the *Cambria* from Liverpool on 17 June and reached Halifax on 28 June. It was backstamped at London, U.C. on 9 July and at Windsor, U.C. two days later, where presumably the addressee collected it, as he replied the following day.

WAS THIS A PREPAID LETTER?

Here is a preprinted envelope bearing 'Prepaid' at the upper left and 'EDUCATION OFFICE, /Upper Canada' at the bottom.



As there is only the envelope, there is no way of knowing who sent it. However, the address suggests that it was related to public business. In any case, when mailed on 7 May 1851, it was accepted as prepaid at Toronto and datestamped with a red 'PAID' handstamp. It was similarly treated at Montreal, as it was backstamped in red on 9 May and put in a closed bag for London, England. Carried by the *Niagara* from Boston on 14 May, it arrived at Liverpool on 25 May and was datestamped 'PAID' at London on the following day. However, there were second thoughts about this because there was no authorizing signature, for it was struck with a 'MORE-TO-PAY' and rated 1/2 Stg. postage due!

From: Dr. J.C. Arnell
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VIA AIR MAIL