

TRANSATLANTIC MAIL STUDY GROUP

of the
British North America Philatelic Society

Newsletter No. 36

Jack Arnell, Chairman

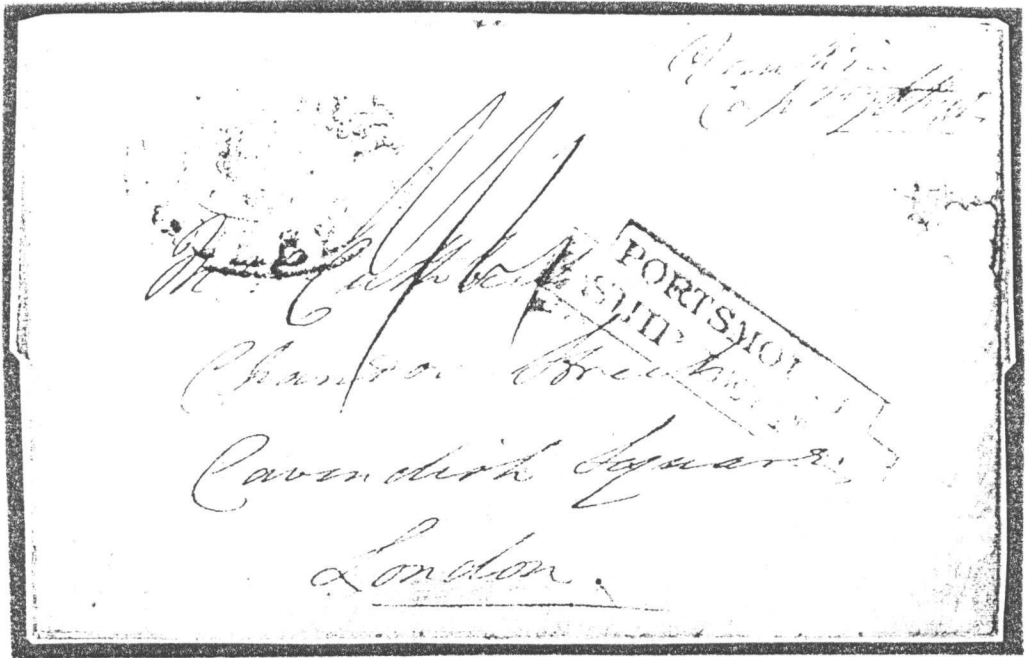
August 1993

INTERESTING COVERS WITH INTERESTING CONTENTS

Dorothy Sanderson and Malcolm Montgomery have sent along three short articles relating to unusual covers and contents. Two of them follow below and I shall include the third in a subsequent newsletter.

The first letter, dated 4 July 1815, is from Captain Rankin of the 76th Regiment, stationed on *Ile Aux Noix*, an island in the Richelieu River which played a strategic rôle in the Seven Years' War, the American Revolutionary War, and the War of 1812. Although no marked as 'official', it was certified by the officer himself at the upper right,

which was obviously accepted at Montreal, where it was backstamped on 17 July, and at Quebec, where it was struck as an outgoing ship letter. On arrival at Portsmouth, it was struck with a boxed 'PORTSMOUTH/SHIP LETTER' and rated 1s. 4d. Stg. (8d. ship letter fee + 8d. inland postage to London). It was backstamped at London on 28 August.



The letter reflects a very unhappy man and, from the conditions he describes, one can sympathize with him.

Lower Canada, Ile Aux Noix, the 4th July 1815

My Dear Mrs. Cuthbert,

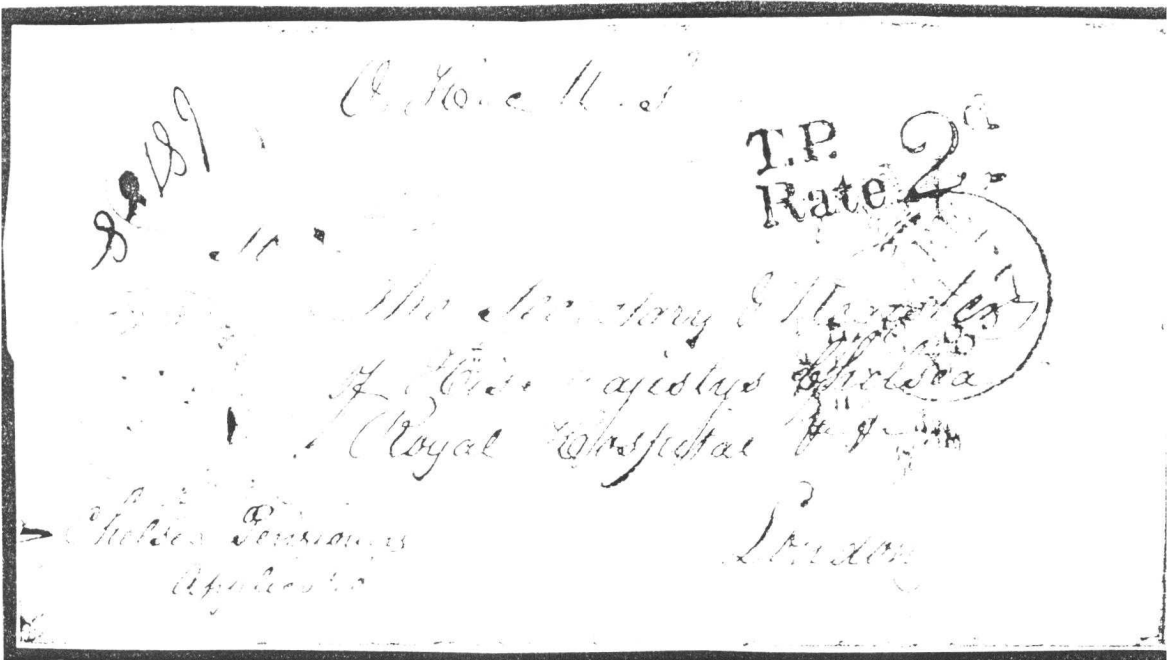
Think not, because I have delayed answering your kind letter that I have forgotten you – far from it I assure you. My last year has been passed in dissatisfaction and some bustle – Two months ago we were under orders to return to Europe, being weaker at that time than any other Reg^t here; I then flattered myself with the idea that I should soon have the pleasure of seeing you, when the Intelligence of Buonaparte's success arrived, changed our fate and all Canadian arrangements concerning the British army in this Country – where we are

doomed to remain in Durance vile God only knows how long. We came to this Place six Weeks since from Saint Denis. This Island is deemed the key to Lower Canada – it is about $1\frac{1}{2}$ a mile in length and very narrow – and to which there is only a Communication by Water, either from Canada by St. John's or from the States – the banks of the Richelieu being low and marshy and thickly covered with an impenetrable Wood. The surface of the Island is a complete flat & the river flows deadly along – of course the situation is not considered a healthy one – added to this the Weather is intensely hot – the Thermometer today being at 96 and we are tormented by muskitoes; a luxury you will allow! I live temperately and enjoy tolerable good health – though I am far from being content in so vile a Pays – & you must agree with me in thinking my fate unfortunate as far as my Military career is conserved – I may remain here for years to come, & then, perhaps, return home with grey hairs, half a Savage, by custom, and a Brevet Major! A Staff employ is the only thing that could make a military life bearable in Canada, but this I cannot obtain. I still, however, hope we may be ordered home next year, being so weak in numbers, & having above 100 men to discharge next Spring – We cannot muster so many as 300 at present. I perceive that Sir Geo. Prevost has arrived safe in England & hope that he may remain there as long as we remain here. I propose going to New York to see some thing civilised sometime next month – a Steam Boat plys between Saint John's on the Richelieu 12 miles below this, and Burlington a Town on Lake Champlain twice a week & it only requires 4 days and 24 Dollars to get to New York! – The Desertions from the British Army & Navy during the War & which still continues have been deplorably enormous though examples have been made of some offenders who have been apprehended. The Americans who flock to Canada for the sake of traffic avail themselves of every secret opportunity of inveigling away our men to the States – they offer large temptations for labourers & mechanics &c. &c. & you know there are many such in our Army & Navy. A man of the 100th Reg^t who was sentenced to be shot and pardoned for Desertion – Deserted to the Americans again and has since been retaken. What a deluded wretch!

(The final paragraph of the letter was personal and of little interest).

The second letter is from a retired disabled soldier in Kingston, U.C. dated 18 June 1837 and was marked: 'O.H.M.S.' and 'Chelsea Pensioners Application'. This was accepted by the Kingston P.O. as a FREE official letter, shown by the datestamp being in red. It arrived in England as a ship letter at Liverpool and was passed without charge to London, where it was datestamped 'FREE' on 7 August (in red)—the Royal Hospital was

entitled to free official mail. The General Post Office passed it to the Twopenny Post for delivery to the hospital; there is a red backstamp: '10.Fa.10 AU 7 1837'. As the G.P.O. privileges did not extend to the Twopenny Post, the letter was charged 2d. Stg. for the last stage of its journey. The contents, which are given below, appear to be have professionally written and seek an increment to an existing pension.



To the Lords Commissioners of His Majestys Royal Hospital at Chelsea.

The Humble Petition of James Lally, out Pensioner of His Majestys Royal Hospital at Chelsea from the 97th Regiment of Foot at 6^d p^r diem. Most submissibly sheweth that he served in the above Corps for 13^{1/2} years and was discharged on the 30th December 1818 on disbandment and loss of left thumb, having completed a period of 21 years if allowed to reckon for absent time and being debilitated and infirm so as to prevent him of being able to provide for a large Family by Manual Labour, most earnestly intreats that your Lordship would be graciously pleased to order him an increase to his present rate of Pension he being an object worthy of your attention and Pett^r will as in duty bound

Ever pray

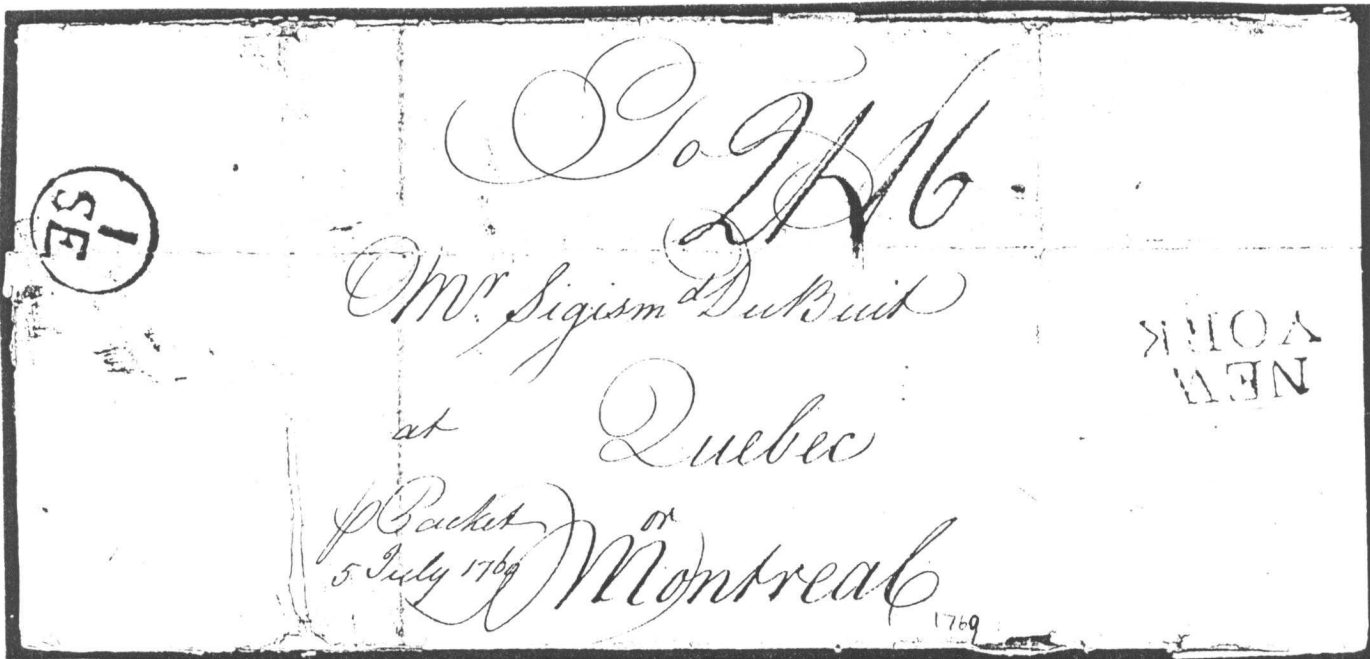
James Lally

The letter appears to have been annotated '6d again Ans^d 18.8.37', suggesting that the request was rejected.

PRE-REVOLUTIONARY PACKET LETTER

Falmouth packet letters to B.N.A. via New York before the American Revolution are both rare and interesting—interesting because of the currency in use. Having just obtained my first such example, it is included here.

The entire is unusual for the period in that it consists of an outer wrapper and a long letter folded inside. The letter is mainly in English, but the latter portion is in French. It was from Francis Peybol, London dated 5 July 1769.



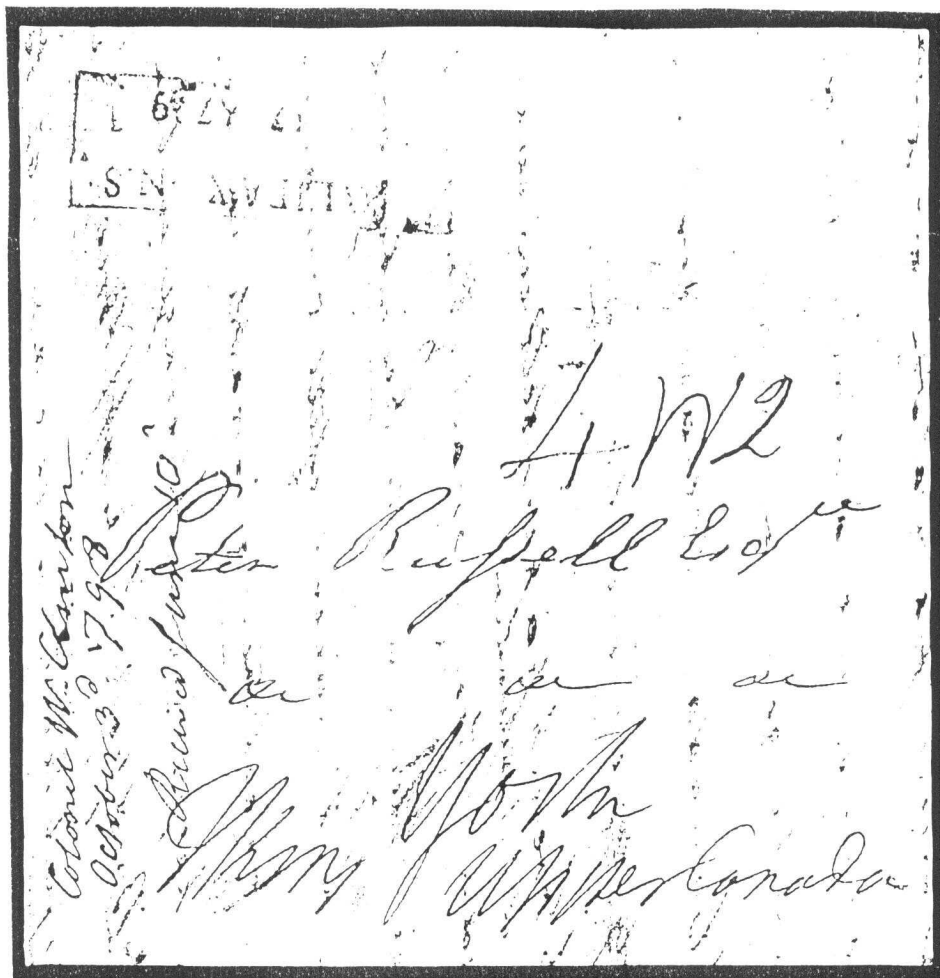
The notation at lower left: 'p Packet/5 July 1769' must have referred to the closing of the monthly packet mail at London. When mailed, the letter was rated 2s. Stg. postage due to New York as a double packet letter. It was carried by the *Cumberland* packet from Falmouth on 22 July to New York, where it

was backstamped with a Bishop mark on 1 September and rated 16 pennyweights (dwt.) total postage due at Montreal, shown in red beside the black '2N'. The original 2s. was converted to 8 dwt. and 2 x 1s. = 8 dwt. double postage to Montreal was added to produce the total.

A PROBLEM COVER

Illustrated here is a cover which J.J. MacDonald first wrote to me about last December seeking help in interpreting the postage due. We have been corresponding since, and J.J. now suggests that the members of the group be invited to try their hand at interpreting it. If any would like to send me their views, I shall

consolidate them in a future newsletter. The following illustration shows part of the back as well as the front of the letter. Unfortunately, the inner writing shows through the paper making it a little difficult to see all the detail.



Unfortunately this is only half the original folded letter, so that its origin can only be surmised from the residual text. It was written on 3 October 1798 by General Clinton, who was the commander-in-chief of the British forces in North America during the American Revolution, and Peter Russell was the administrator of Upper Canada, following Lord Simcoe. From the text, the letter originated in Ireland.

There are no British postal markings to indicate where it started and what route it took to a vessel heading for North America. The first postal marking is a boxed Halifax backstamp with a date which I think was 17 May 1799; the 4s. 2d. Cy. (4N2) postage due

was probably put on at Halifax. It was finally received at York (Toronto) on 10 June 1799.

Although the time gap between its writing and reaching Halifax makes it very unlikely that the letter was taken privately to an Irish port and thence by ship to Halifax, the fact that the inland postage from Halifax to York was only 2s. 9d. Cy., which with the ship letter fee, is insufficient to account for the postage due, eliminates this possibility. Similarly, the absence of any British markings makes it difficult to suggest any routes through Great Britain and then direct to Halifax.

After eliminating all these, I concluded that it must have been a Falmouth packet letter, and assumed that the absence of any postage due marking may be due to fading; I have examples where this was in poor ink and had virtually faded completely. On this basis, it should have been put in the closed bag for Montreal to go by the *Lady Harriett* packet from Falmouth on 12 November, arriving at New York on 13 February, but it was mistakenly put in the closed bag for Halifax. The packet stayed at New York until 10 March and then called at Halifax on its way back to Falmouth about the beginning of April. As this would have been the time of the spring break-up, the overland route to Quebec would have been very difficult, if not

Finally there is the mystery marking at the lower left. It appears to be in the same hand as the address, but does not seem to relate thereto. If anyone has any idea what is might represent, let me know. A 200% enlargement of the marking is at the right.

As I asked at the beginning of this, both J.J. and I would appreciate any views which group members may have about this very interesting cover. Send them to me!

AN UNUSUAL TRANSATLANTIC COVER

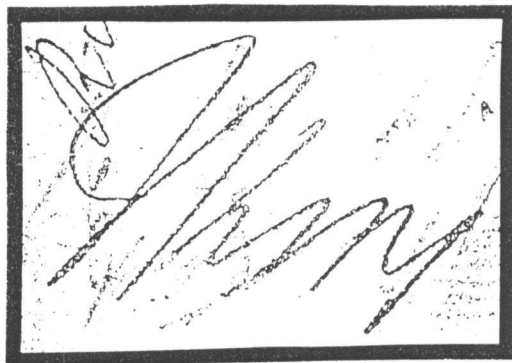
Allan Steinhart has sent in a very interesting cover, reproduced on the next page, with respect to its routeing. It was written in Cincinnati, Ohio on 2 February 1842 and mailed the following day. It was endorsed: 'p Steam Via Boston' and prepaid thereto with 25 cents. It should have been carried by the Cunard *Caledonia* on her eighth return voyage from Boston. However, the steamer, having sailed from Liverpool on 4 February, was damaged in a violent storm and forced to return to Liverpool, arriving on 17 February. This meant that there was no steamer available for the 1 March sailing from Boston.

After the *Caledonia* was a week overdue at Halifax, the *Unicorn*, which operated on the Pictou-Quebec City run during the season when the St. Lawrence was open and was wintering at Halifax, was sent to Boston on 25 February, arriving on 27 February. She took on board the *Caledonia's* mails and passengers and left for Halifax on the scheduled 1 March. It had been the intention that she

impassable in places, after which there was still the long haul to York, so the 10 June receipt is not implausible.

Attempting to equate this routeing with the postage charged, it is necessary to assume that the Halifax postmaster, recognizing the error decided to rate the letter as if it had been in the Montreal bag. On this basis and the fact that the maximum British inland postage at the time was 8d. Stg., the following would apply:

British inland	8d. Stg.	10d. Cy.
Packet postage	1s. 0d.	1s. 2d.
U.S. inland	20 cents	1s. 0d.
Montreal-York	1s. 0d.	<u>1s. 2d.</u>
		4s. 2d. Cy.



continue to Liverpool and sailed from Halifax on 6 March.

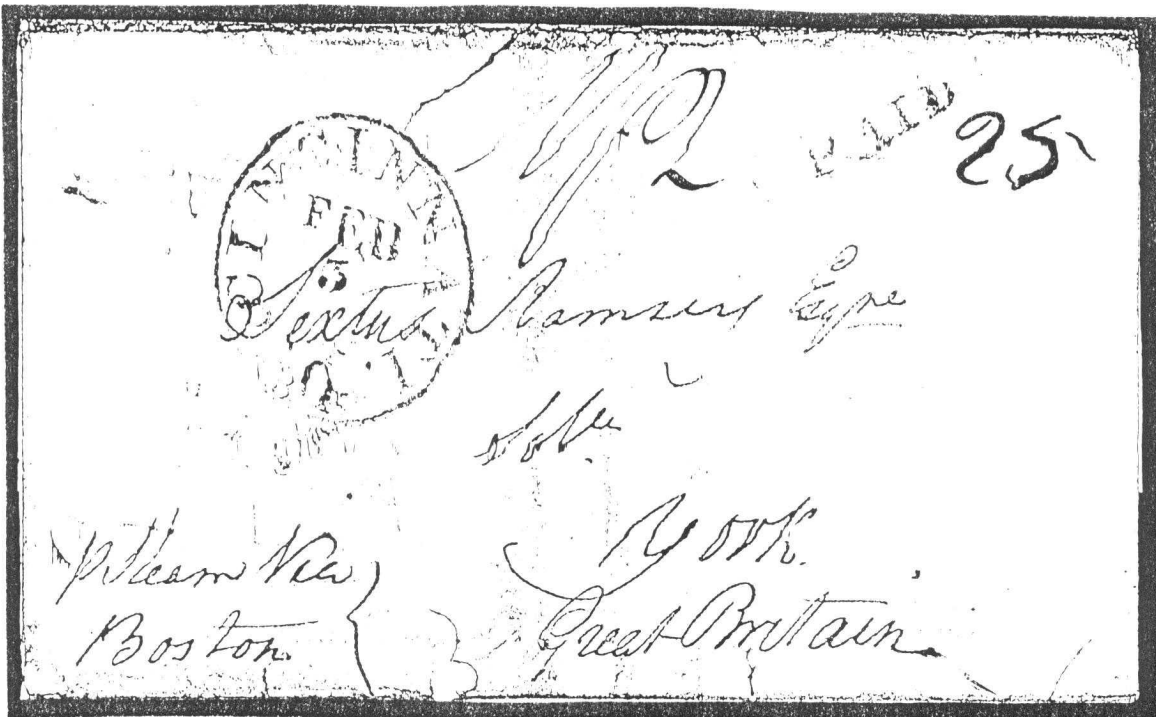
With the return of the *Caledonia*, the *Acadia*, which was scheduled to leave Liverpool for Halifax and Boston on 4 March, was moved ahead to 19 February. A few miles outside Halifax Harbour, she met the *Unicorn* on her way out for England. Both steamers returned to Halifax on 7 March. The respective Mails was transferred and on the following day, the *Unicorn* left for Boston with the *Acadia's* British Mails; while the *Acadia* prepared to return to Liverpool with the *Unicorn's* U.S. Mails and those that had accumulated at Halifax, sailing on 12 March and reaching Liverpool on 25 March.

Turning to Allan's cover, which under normal circumstances should have been carried from Boston by the *Unicorn* and transferred to the *Acadia* at Halifax. Instead, it was sent in a closed bag overland through New Brunswick to Halifax. This is shown by the following:

1. It was struck with a blue "ST ANDREWS N.B. ★' (faint and partially in the Cincinnati datestamp).

2. There is no Boston nor Halifax postmark, nor a forwarding agent notation, indicating that it travelled in a closed bag, except that this was opened at the St. Andrews exchange office, datestamped and put in the relevant English bag for York.

3. The normal packet rate from Boston was 1s. 0d. Stg., but because it travelled overland in B.N.A., an additional 2d. Stg. was added for colonial postage, when it was rated at St. Andrews with 1s. 2d. Stg. postage due. As 25 cents was also the rate from Cincinnati to the New Brunswick border, via Boston, there was no change here.

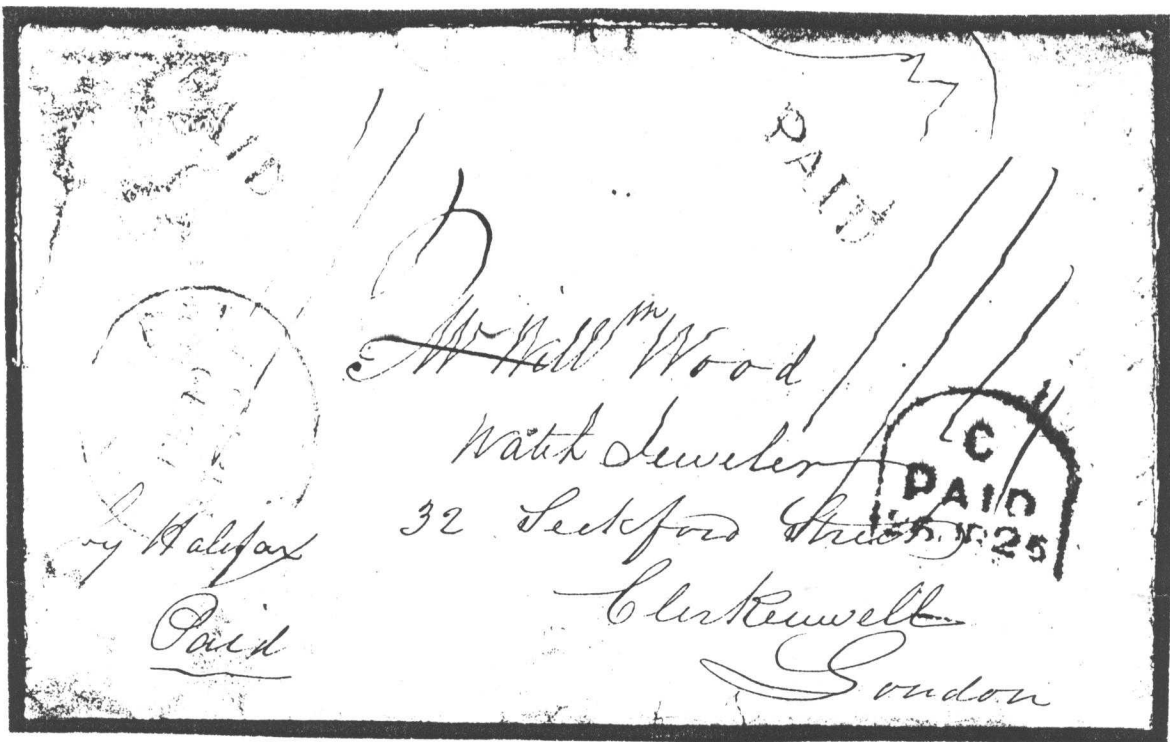


Presumably because the *Caledonia* did not arrive on schedule soon after mid-February, the Boston postmaster decided to make up a Mail and send it overland through New Brunswick to Halifax to connect with the first Cunard steamer from there. It would be interesting to know whether there was more than

one Mail sent this route as the days went by without the arrival of a steamer.

Allan suggests that this cover may be unique, pointing out that it falls into the double category of both Cross Border and Transatlantic.

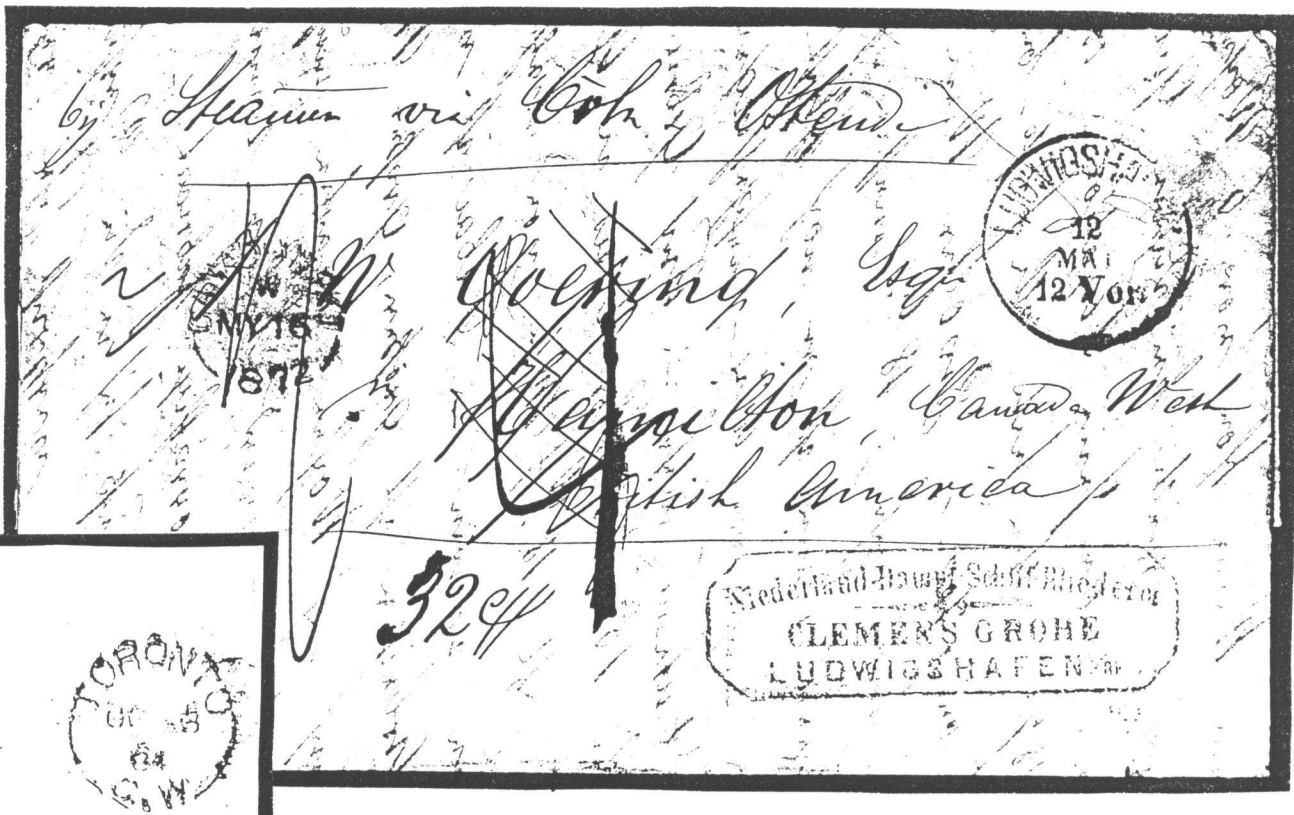
While on the subject of the disrupted Cunard service, I include a 'normal' letter which was carried by the *Acadia* on her unscheduled voyage from Halifax to Liverpool. The letter, shown on the next page, was mailed at Montreal on 19 February 1842 with 1s. 2d. Stg./1s. 4d. Cy. prepaid. It was marked 'by Halifax/Paid'. Taken overland by courier to Halifax in a closed bag for London, it was carried by the *Acadia* as above and was datestamped 'PAID' at London on 26 March.



CANADIAN PACKET HANDSTAMPS

In the May 1993 newsletter (No. 34) on page 6, I reproduced a cover from Malcolm Montgomery which was short paid and fined. I noted that it had been sorted at sea as shown by a backstamp. I did not reproduce the backstamp as it was very indistinct. For those of you who may not be aware of these very rare handstamps, they were circular with 'CANADIAN-PKT' around the upper arc and either a 'W' or an 'E' below to show whether it was an outbound (westward) voyage or homebound (eastward) one, and the date.

While examples are shown in the Study Group Handbook No. 2 on page 160, I reproduce them here for easy reference.



After printing the master copy of this newsletter, I received in the mail M. M. Raguin's Volume 6 of British Post-Office Notices 1666-1877 for the years 1860-1869. This is a massive publication of 648 pages in two parts. It is available from him at 280 Boston Avenue, Medford, MA 02155, U.S.A. at a cost of US \$75 or £50.

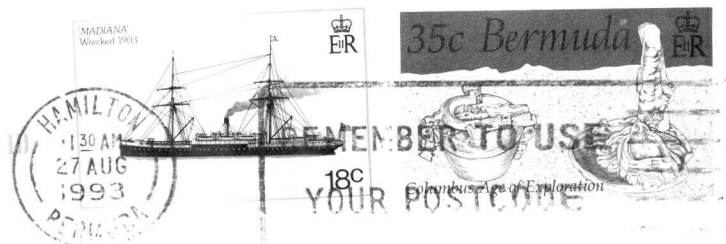
I have two 'CANADIAN-PKT /E', one from Collingwood Harbour dated 8 October 1864, the backstamp shown here, and one from Boston dated 12 February 1865, struck on the front of the cover and a bit smudged; and the one 'CANADIAN-PKT /W' dated 11 May 1872, also shown here. If any group member either has an example or knows of one, I would appreciate receiving a photocopy and/or details for inclusion in a future newsletter.

REQUEST FOR UNPAID OR UNDERPAID LETTERS

Malcolm Montgomery is looking for unwanted unpaid or underpaid letters between B.N.A. and Great Britain. If anybody has some they would be happy to dispose of, drop him a line at: 76, Glen Eyre Road, Southampton SO2 3NL, England.

Dr. J.C. Arnell
P.O. Box HM 1263
Hamilton HMFx
Bermuda

AIR MAIL



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Clarence A. Stillions
2010 48th Street NW
Washington, DC 20007-1552
U.S.A.