

TRANSATLANTIC MAIL STUDY GROUP

of the
British North America Philatelic Society

Newsletter No. 40

Jack Arnell, Chairman

May 1997⁴

SAM NICKLE

Once again I must report the loss of another Study Group member. I learn from the latest issue of *BNAPortraitS* to reach me that Sam Nickle died on 26 January. I only knew him from the various shows at which we often sat side-by-side in front of Allan Steinhart's table—Sam searching for something in his military field, while I looked for transatlantic covers. It was always a bit of an ordeal, for Sam was a chain smoker, as is Allan, so I was immersed in second-hand tobacco smoke; but it was worth it, both for the exchange of views and the rewards from the search through the black boxes. While Sam should have been one of the founding members of the Group, he procrastinated in joining. However, once a member he was a strong supporter of the effort.

EXAMPLES OF EARLY MAIL COURIERS

Sometime in the past few years, someone sent me two examples of *voyageur* licences or described by the contributor as a '*Sauf conduit*'. I would like to acknowledge the source, but the record appears to have been lost among my files. Whenever it was that I received them, I did not consider that they fitted into our subject. However, on reflection, I think they should be recorded here, as this formed part of the pre-postal system west of Quebec.

Because of the size of the original photocopies, I have reduced them to 78 per

cent to fit the page. The first licence was issued on 5 May 1768 by George Allsopp, Deputy Secretary to General Sir Guy Carleton, Lieutenant Governor of Quebec to Porlier Benac 'to pass unmolested with one Canoe manned with Six Men whose names, Occupations and places of abode, and also the Quantity of Merchandize on board are reported upon Oath and Specified in the Margin and from thence to such Markets or parts as he shall find most advantageous for the Disposal of the said Merchandize—'. The licence was good for one year.

The lists of the canoe men, their jobs and the merchandise they were carrying is interesting. This is shown on the left-hand side of the licence and are reproduced here.

Canoe-mens Names Occupations & places of abode –

Pedlach devant (in front)
Longtion Derriere (rear)
Louis Boyer }
Bourdeau } milieu (middle)
archambeau }
La Jeunesse }

Quantity and Quality of Merchandize. Vig^t

deux Cent Vingt cinq (225)
Gallons of Spirituous Liquors
4 Fusils (muskets)
hundred weight Gunpowder
hundred weight Shot & Balls
and dix neuf (19) Bales and Casks of
other Merchandize

in all amounting to the Sum of deux Cent (200) Pounds
lawful money of the said Province or thereabouts Upon Oath.

By the Honble Guy Carleton
 Lieutenant Governor and Commander
 in Chief of the Province of Quebec,
 Brigadier General of his Majesty's
 Forces &c. &c.

His Majesty having been graciously pleased
 to declare and enjoin by Proclamation given at
 his Court at James the seventh day of October One
 Thousand seven hundred and sixty three;
 That the trade with the Indians shall be
 and open to all his subjects whatever;
 In Obedience thereto this Licence is given unto
~~for the said~~
 to pass unmolested with one Canoe manned
 with Six Men whose names, Occupations and
 places of abode, and also the Quantity of
 Merchandise on board are reported upon oath
 and specified in the Margin to ~~the said~~
 and from thence to such Markets or parts as he
 shall find most advantageous for the Disposal
 of the said Merchandise
 Provided always that such places are not
 prohibited by the Regulations his Majesty
 has been pleased to give by himself or by the
 Superintendent or Commissioners by him
 appointed to direct the Indian Trade the said
~~for the said~~
 having given bond to observe and pay due
 Obedience thereto.

Canoe-mens Names
 Occupations & places of
 abode.
 Pedroschi de van
 LOUIS DIVINE
 Louis Boyer
 Romain
 archambault
 La June

Quantity and Quality
 of Merchandise
 Cent Singt cong
 Gallons of Spirituous Liqueur
 Fusils
 hund. w. Gunpowder
 hund. w. of Shot Balls
 and deaney
 Bales and Casks of other
 Merchandise in all
 amounting to the sum of
 dea Cent
 Pounds lawful money of
 the said Province or
 thereabouts Upon Oath.

Antoine 25th Major Dasi, M^{rs} Byrne
 Com^{rs} of Indian Affairs
 M^{rs} M^{rs} Con^{rs} of Ind^{rs} Affairs

This Licence to be in force for six
 Months and no longer.

Given under my hand and seal
 at Arms at the Castle of St Lewis
 in the City of Quebec this 17th day
 of May 1768.

By the Lieut. Governor
 Command
 Geo: J. Allopp Secy

Guy Carleton

On the back of the licence are the notations of the commanders of successive forts, which the canoe with its load passed on the way west. These read:

Passed Fort Oswegatchie May 19th 1768 Nich^s. Addison, Captⁿ 52^d Reg^t.

Passed Fort Ontario May 25th M. Gemier, Cap^t 60th Regiment

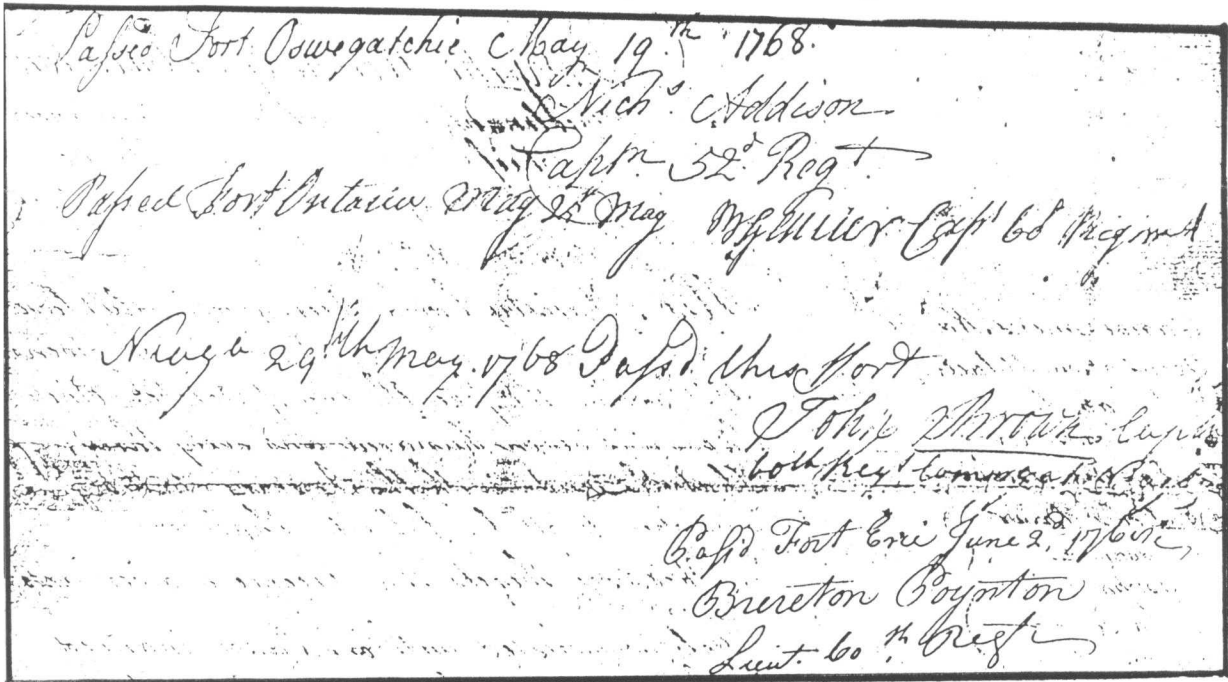
at the bottom of the left side of the front of the licence was the official clearance:

Ontario May 25th 1768 Passed, Mich^l Byrne Commissy of Indian Affairs

Nor^d MacLeod Com^{ry} of Indⁿ Affairs

Niag^a 29th May 1768 Passed this Fort John Brown Captn. 60th Reg^t Commg Capt.

Passed Fort Erie June 2^d 1768 Breerton Poynton Lieut. 60th Reg^t.



The second licence covered the return trip of this canoe party to Montreal. It is interesting to note that all the canoe men, except one, had been changed. One can only speculate about this. It was issued by Captain George Turnbull of the 2nd Battalion of the 20th Regiment, the Commandant of Detroit and its Dependencies on 12 July 1768. Here the licence was again in the name of Porlier Benac, but his companions were:

M^r Vauchere
& 4 Men Vig^t. Chattillon
Veine
Mullote
Bourdeaux (the one returnee)

The cargo consisted of twenty packs, made up of eight of Raccoons, one of Leather, seven of Bear Skins, one of ?? Skins, one of mixed Skins, and two of mixed Pelts. This was cleared by J. MacKay and Nor^d MacLeod of the Commissary of Indian Affairs.

The return journey was documented in the same way as the outward one on the back of the licence.

Passed Fort Erie 22^d day of July 1768 Thomas Walsh, Seg^t 60th Regmt.

Passed Niagara 25 July 1768 C. Honier, Captain of Engineers

Passed Fort Ontario 29 July 1768 William ...erie, Lieu^t of Artillery

Passed Fort Oswegatchie Augst 2^d 1768 Nich^s Addison, Captⁿ 52^d Reg^t.

eight Packs of Vases
one D. Leather
two D. of Beaverskins
one D. of Skins
one D. of Skins

Large
Two D. of Skins

By George Turnbull Esq: Capt: in the 2nd West^{Ind}:
of His Majesty's 60th Reg^t: Commandant
of Detroit and its Dependences

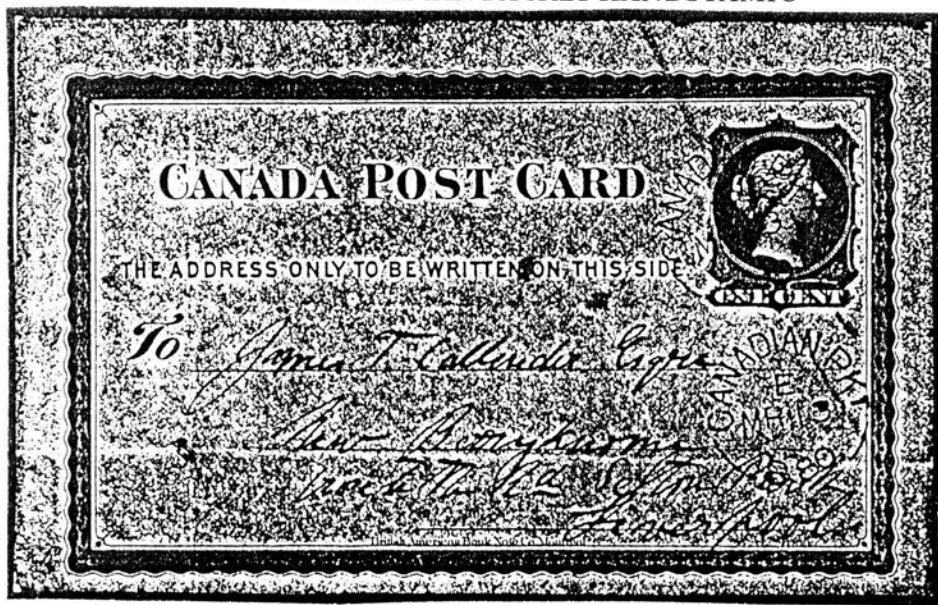
Small twenty Packs Permit the Bearers hereof Mr. Boileau Benoit
John May Mr. Vaucherese & 4 Men of L^{ieut}: Chatillon,
Corn: of 9 Affairs
Mr. MacLeod former
of Ind. Affairs to pass from hence to Montreal. They
will be behaving as becometh
Commissary of Affairs
Given under my Hand at Detroit this 12th
day of July 1766

To all whom it
May Concern

Geo: Turnbull

This would have been the only way in which the regimental officers and men could have corresponded with their families in Great Britain.

MORE ON CANADIAN PACKET HANDSTAMPS

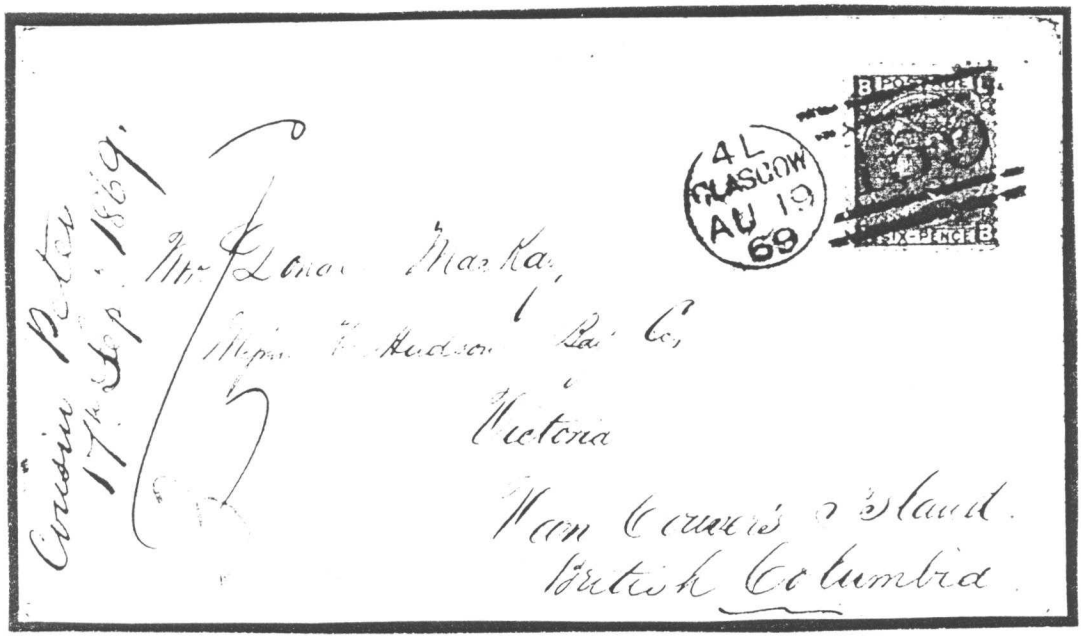


Further to the item on the handstamps used by the Canadian ocean mail clerks in Newsletter No. 36, page 7, Horace Harrison has sent along an interesting post card, which was mailed on board the Allan Line *Hibernian* during a voyage from Halifax to Liverpool. The steamer had sailed from the former port on 6 March 1880 and arrived at Liverpool on 16 March. As there is no message on the back, Horace suggested that the card was addressed to the traveller to provide a souvenir of his Canadian visit. It was struck twice with a 'CANADIAN PKT E' handstamp on 13 March—once to cancel the stamp and the second time for clarity.

MORE LETTERS TO BRITISH COLUMBIA

Malcolm Montgomery had sent several different covers with his last contribution. I only had space for one in the last newsletter, so include the rest here.

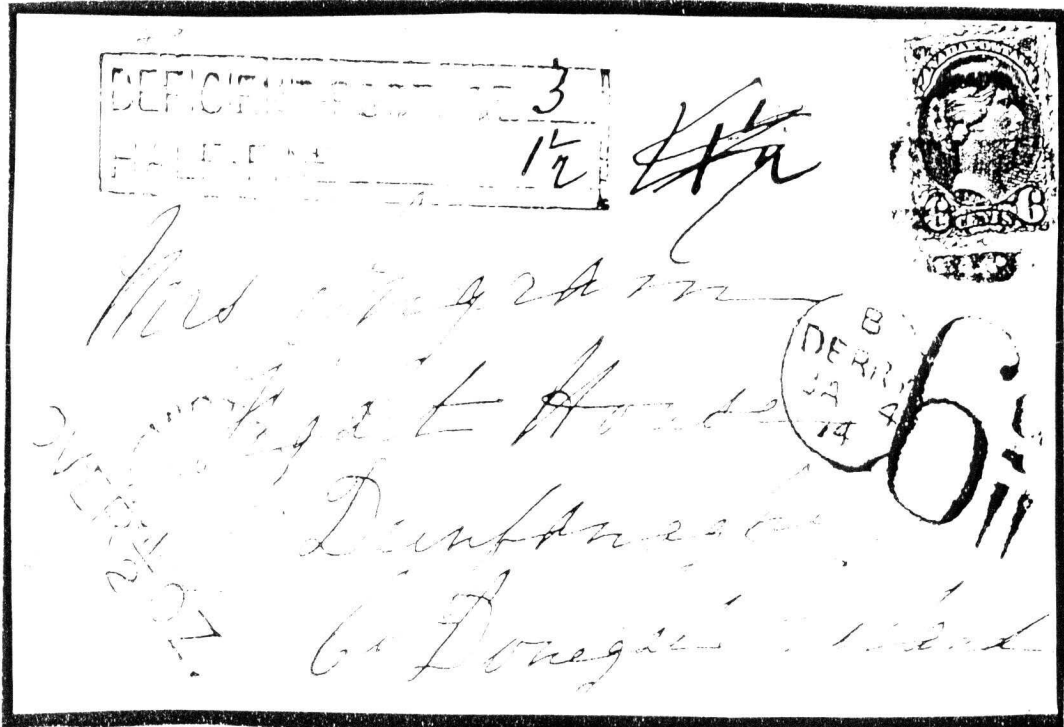
In commenting on the first one, he notes that the default route for letters to the Pacific Coast remained through Panama even after the trans-U.S routes were established. If directed to go 'via New York', letters were charged 7d. Stg., but without direction they would be sent by the longer route, for which the rate was re-established at 1s. 0d. Stg. from 1 October 1868. However, underpaid letters for this route were only charged the deficient postage, not a fine as well.



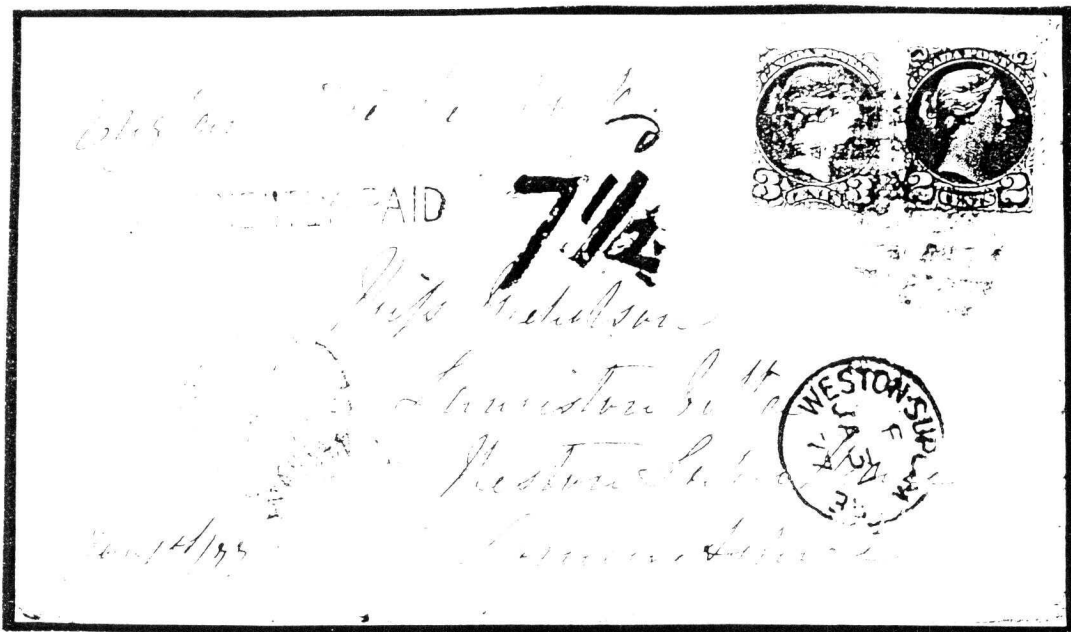
The above was mailed at Glasgow on 19 August 1869 with postage prepaid with a 6d. adhesive. As it lacked any direction, it was rated with an addition 6d. Stg. postage due, which is shown in *black* manuscript on the left. The smaller '3' at lower left was in *red* was presumably the Canadian credit from the total postage, as the letter would have gone on the *Cunard China* from Liverpool on 21 August.

In contrast, the next letter, which was mailed in Victoria on 27 November 1873, was prepaid with a 6-cent adhesive. However, it was over half an ounce in weight and therefore required double postage. Following the joining of the Dominion of Canada by British Columbia, the province became liable for fines on underpaid letters. By G.P.O. Notice No. 2/6 January 1870, postage to and from B.N.A. was reduced to 4d. Stg. via the United States or 3d. Stg. direct; but West Coast letters were treated as direct, even though they had to pass through the United States in crossing the continent. The Mails travelled to San Francisco, across the plains to Detroit, Michigan, were exchanged at Windsor, Ontario, where it was backstamped on 13

December and forwarded to Montreal to be made up in the Allan Line Mail to be carried by the *North American* from Portland, Maine on 23 December. At this time, it was stamped with the framed 'DEFICIENT POSTAGE/HALF FINE' and marked with '3' and '1 1/2' to show the amounts in sterling; also the total '4 1/2' was shown in *black*. It was landed at Londonderry on 4 January 1874, where it struck with the large handstamp to show 6d. Stg. postage due—deficient postage, plus total fine.

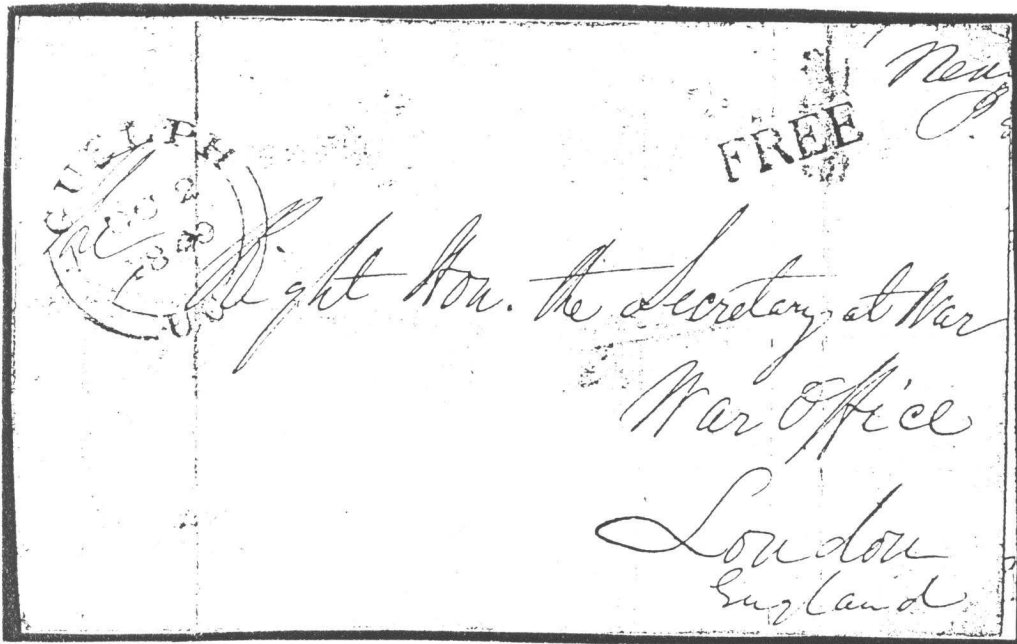


A third letter is similar to the above, except that from 1 October 1875 unpaid and underpaid letters from British Columbia were charged at the double rate, less any postage prepaid. This one also from Victoria was mailed on 2 January 1877 with 5 cents prepaid with adhesives. Being overweight, it was stamped 'INSUFFICIENTLY-PAID' and rated 7 1/2d. Stg. postage due. This represented a double charge of 2 x 10 cents, less 5 cents, or 15 cents, converted to sterling. It travelled the same route as the above, except that it went on to Halifax from Montreal, whence it was carried by the *Allan Austrian* on 21 January to Londonderry on 30 January. As it was sorted by the Canadian ocean clerk, it was datestamped 'CANADIAN PKT-E'.

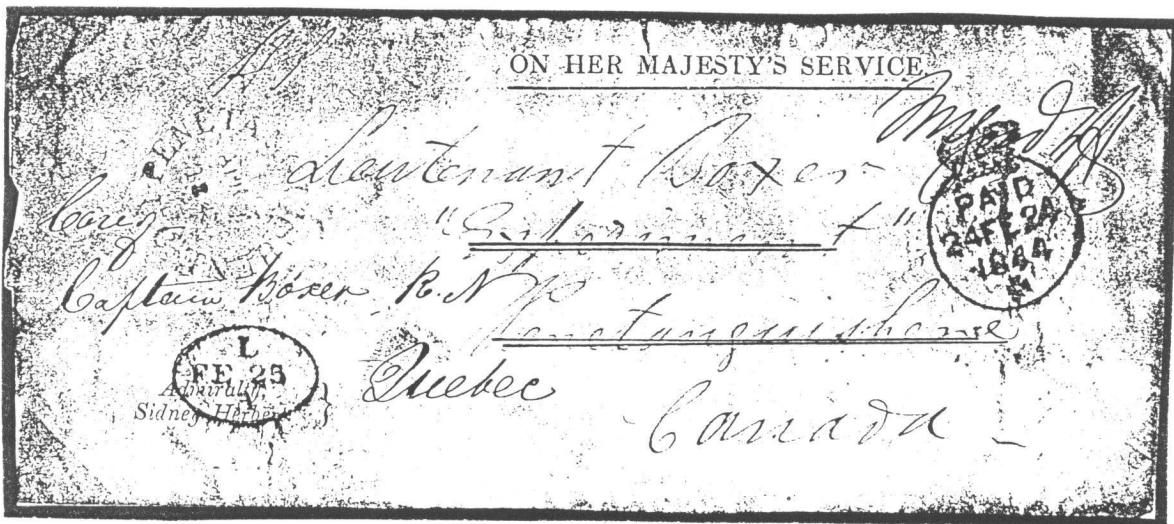


'FREE' LETTERS

It is very unusual to see a postmarked letter, which was stamped 'FREE' presumably at its point of origin, though unendorsed by a sender authorized to send such letters, pass through the Mails and be delivered in England without being charged 1s. 2d. Stg. postage due. In this case, the addressee would have justified such treatment. This is from Allan Steinhart's collection and was mailed in Guelph on 2 October 1849. It was backstamped at Hamilton on the following day, and at Montreal on 5 October, where it would have been put in the closed bag for London and sent on to Boston. The Cunard *America* left there on 10 October on her 11th return voyage and arrived at Liverpool on 21 October. Backstamped at London on the next day.



The second letter from Allan is in an official Admiralty envelope with a signature at the upper right to certify its use. Because of its size, the illustration has been reduced to 75 percent. It was addressed to Lieutenant Boxer, HMS *Experiment*, based at the Pentanguishene Naval base on Lake Huron.



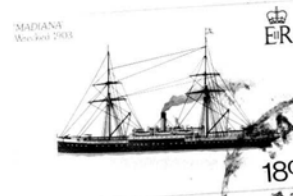
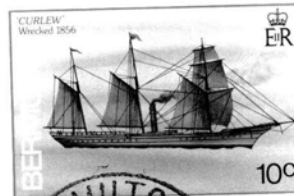
It was datestamped 'PAID' at London on 24 February 1844, and struck with a Liverpool packet office oval on the next day. Carried by the Cunard *Caledonia* (18th voyage) from there in a closed bag for Toronto on 5 March and arrived at Halifax on 20 March. Having to be carried overland in winter, it was not backstamped at Toronto until 17 April. As the letter was forwarded to Captain Boxer at Quebec on 7 August, it must have been held for his return to the base, only to have him posted without returning to the naval base.

Allan noted that letters addressed to naval vessels on the upper Great Lakes is very unusual.

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AIRMAIL

PRINTED MATTER



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