

TRANSATLANTIC MAIL STUDY GROUP
OF THE
British North American Philatelic Society

Newsletter No. 50

January 1996

THE FIFTIETH NEWSLETTER

In the last Trans-Atlantic Newsletter, you were informed that I would be taking over the production responsibilities from Jack Arnell; the announcement was a trifle premature. I believe that it is fitting that, having published, single-handedly, forty-nine excellent newsletters, Jack should bow out on a 'round' number, and that the big five-oh should be dedicated to him. Jack has not been consulted, and will be reading this message at approximately the same time as the rest of the membership so Jack: From one who has enjoyed receiving and reading the newsletter for some years, and on behalf of the fifty or so members of the group, this fiftieth edition is dedicated to you. We recognise the enormous amount of work that you have put in to the journal, and the time that you have devoted to our hobby as researcher, collector and writer. Thank you for sharing your knowledge, collection and enthusiasm with us and, in particular, thank you for providing the newsletter with such regularity every two months. It has proved a great success and has given the readers great pleasure.

Although this edition of the newsletter will contain no letters from his collection, I hope that it will reflect some of Jack's particular interests. It may therefore remind the rest of us of the breadth and depth of Jack's knowledge, and the variety of information contained in the previous forty-nine newsletters.

OLD LETTERS

I believe that I will be safe from contradiction if I say that Jack had a particular regard for early letters - he certainly mentioned the extent of his collection as being 'pre-UPU', referred to a number of Eighteenth Century letters at various times, and collected predominantly 'stampless' (that is to say pre-adhesive stamp) letters.

The first contribution I hope reflects this: from Edinburgh, dated 8th March 1797, the letter is not only 'stampless', but is devoid of any postmarks. It is addressed to 'Charlotte Town, S^t Johns Island, Gulf of St. Lawrence', arriving there two years before the island was renamed Prince Edward's Island.

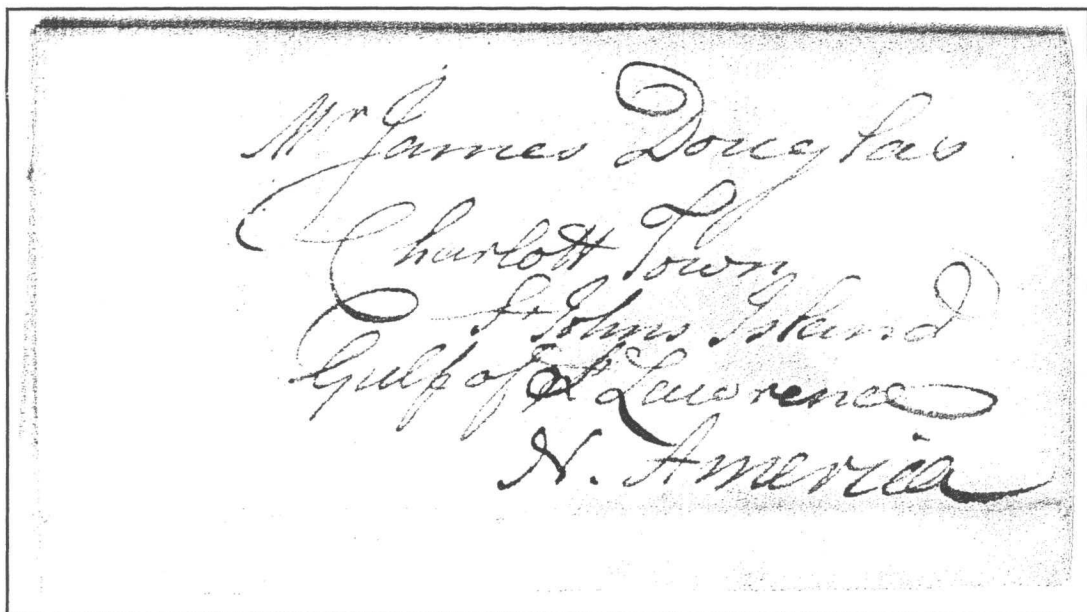


Figure 1: Edinburgh to St Johns Island, 1798.

The letter was apparently sent by favour of the ship's master along with a chest; some of the chest's contents are described:

'I have packed up a box to send with this, the contents of it are:

- A Medicine Chest with Medicines
- A box containing Twelve Silver table spoons & two salts silver
- The Edinburgh Newspapers for last three months

- Three last months Magazines
- An Almanac

There is also with this, Directions for using the Medicines for which you are obliged to your cousin Mr John Braimer - had he not made out these instructions I would have been obliged to send the chest without any.'

The remainder of the letter contains legal and family instructions.

FREIGHT LETTERS

There have been a number of articles written about freight letters in the last twenty-five years or so, and a great deal of supporting information has been published in various journals, supplementing the principal articles. Jack's contribution was to research and collate the information pertaining to British North American freight letters, and to unearth and illustrate many of the known letters. The example below, provided by Dorothy Sanderson, is from a newly-

discovered correspondence, and has not been displayed before. The correspondence consists of some ten trans-Atlantic letters in all (of which more later), and is from a family living South Cayuga to their cousins in England. The letter below was written by Sarah Cook, elder sister of Charles and Louise (whose photographs were reproduced in Newsletter #45), to her cousin Elizabeth Partridge ('Eliza'), who lived in Shelley Hall, Suffolk, near Ipswich.

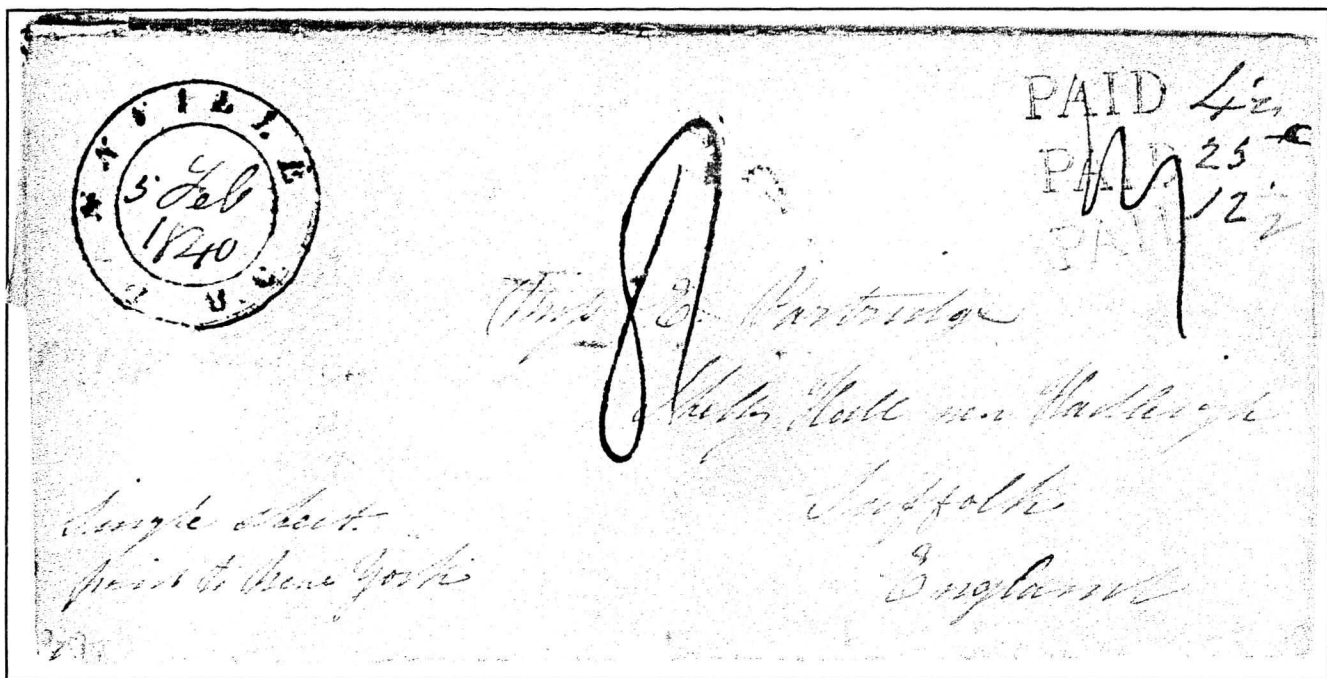


Figure 2: A freight letter from Dunnville, U.C. to Suffolk, 1840.

The letter was posted at Dunnville, U.C., on 5th February 1840, prepaid 'to New York': '4½' (pence Currency), inland postage to 60 miles [5 Geo. III, Cap. 25, up-dated from time to time]; '25' (cents) the United States' inland postage for over 400 miles [US Act 3 March 1825]; and '12½' (cents), the 'freight' charge by United States' sailing

'packets'. The letter passed through Liverpool, was marked as a ship-letter and charged eightpence [3/4 Vic., Cap. 96, effective 10th January 1840]; unfortunately, wax applied on forwarding the letter from one side of the family to the other conceals the arrival mark, but it appears to be 14th March 1840.

GETTING THE MAIL TO THE COAST

Jack has been prominent in researching how Canadian trans-Atlantic mails were moved to and from the ports. I hesitate to add anything to what has been said, but would like to introduce the subject of how the British mails found their way to the ships.

Peter Thompson has sent me a photocopy of a letter from Kinross in Scotland to Dundas in Upper Canada. It was directed to an agent in Liverpool, and from there it was carried to New York on the 'George Washington'. A variety of companies in Liverpool are addressed in this manner; I am not aware of any formal listing, and it might be worth comparing companies in trans-Atlantic collections to Lowe's excellent catalogue of forwarding agents. I have seen no cachets, other than manuscript directions, on BNA mails in this middle period; if you have some, please let me know.

Another aspect which may would bear closer examination, is the post office procedures. Peter described the British rate as one shilling, to cover

inland postage from Kinross to Liverpool [*single letter carried 230-300 miles, 52 Geo.III, Cap.88, effective 9th July 1812*], plus a halfpenny Scottish Road Tax [*Geo.III, Cap.68, effective 3rd June 1813*]; yet this was clearly an outbound ship letter - it is even marked 'via New York' apparently in the hand of the writer.

Coincidentally, from 21st August 1835 [*5/6 Will.IV, Cap.25*], outbound ship letters from the interior were also charged one shilling, regardless of distance carried. I have not seen post office guidance distinguishing postage to the ports against outbound ship letters - again, if you have seen something, please write.

The American markings are straight-forward:

United States' ship letter:	2 cents
United States' inland (400 miles +):	25 cents
Total:	27 cents
Converts to:	1s 4½d Cy
Canadian (British Colonial) inland:	4½d Cy
Total due:	1s 9d Cy

Figure 3: British outbound ship letter, 28th March 1838.



THE UNITED STATES' PACKETS DURING THE CRIMEAN WAR

Allan Steinhart's display of 1850s letters carried by United States' Packets, some thirty or more examples explaining every aspect of the service. There can be little left to say - so here goes ...

One element of this subject, gleaned from letters out of London to Postmaster Charles Banning at Liverpool, deserves some attention:

Post 48/133, America 752, 21st November 1854:

'Sir, I have to inform you that in consequence of her Majesty's Government requiring the use of several of the British North American Contract Packets, to convey Troops to the seat of War, no British Packet can be despatched to America on Saturday next the 25th Instant.'

and: Post 48/133, 760-761, 23rd November 1854:

'Immediate: Sir, I have to request that you will report to this Office tomorrow, by Electric Telegraph, the number of Letters in Your Office addressed to Canada, and also the number of Letters addressed to the Lower Provinces of North America collectively, which letters, if not ordered to be sent by United States' Packet, will be detained for the British Packet of the 9th Proximo.'

'P.S. In the Account of the number of Letters for Canada, you may omit those which are specially addressed 'via Halifax'."

And Post 48/133, 766-767, 24th November 1854:

'Sir, The attention of the Postmaster General has been drawn to the delay which the Correspondence for British North America, posted in ignorance of the interruption in the British Packet Service, will sustain if it is retained for despatch by the Packet of the 9th Proximo, and in order to avoid such delay, I have received his Lordship's directions to instruct

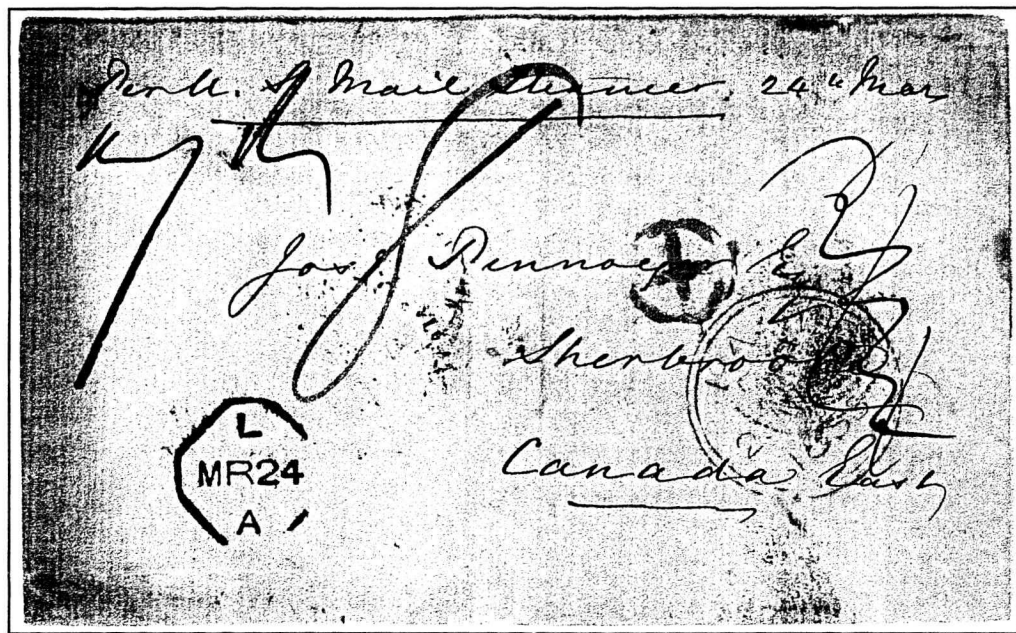
you to forward in Closed Mails, but not in iron boxes, by the United States' Packet of the 29th Inst, all the Letters (official despatches excepted) for Canada which reach your Office before the departure of that vessel, as well as all the Letters (with a like exception) for the Lower Provinces which may arrive in Liverpool in time to have been despatched by the British Packet of tomorrow, if that Packet had not been withdrawn.

With regard to the charge on the Letters so forwarded, His Lordship has decided no additional rate be levied on the Paid Letters, but that the Unpaid Letters shall be charged with the usual rate for Letters forwarded through the United States, - that is 8^d per half ounce.

I have only to add that no Official Despatches for the North American Provinces, or for the United States, must be forwarded by United States Packet, unless specifically directed to that effect,

P.S. In the Account of the number of Letters for Canada, you may omit those which are specially addressed 'via Halifax'."

Figure 4: Directed 'Per U.S. Mail Steamer'.



I have not seen an example of a letter prepaid and routed for the Cunard Line and arriving at Liverpool for the cancelled sailing. Nor have I seen an unpaid letter intended for the Cunard Line (as opposed to the example at TMSG 49-1, which was intended for the Collins Line 'Atlantic', and was carried on that ship).

The letter above is later, but illustrates the treatment of misdirected British mails during this period. Prepaid eightpence on 23rd March 1855, as though for the British Packet (Cunard Line) via the United States, but directed 'Per U.S. Steamer 24th Mar'.

Whether the writer in fact intended that the letter be carried by a steamship of the United States, rather than by any steamship for the United States, is not certain; the Post Office decided on the former and sent the letter to Liverpool for the Collins Line 'Baltic', leaving the following day. Fourpence Sterling '4', remained due to the British Post Office, to make up its one shilling share of the (by then defunct) rate for a half ounce letter to Canada through the United States. Looked at another way, this was also the half ounce letter rate to the United States. In this instance, the breakdown was: three halfpence British inland, eightpence ocean postage and

twopence halfpenny United States' inland postage [Anglo/US Convention, 1849]. Since the letter was underpaid, the Canadian inland postage, a further twopence Sterling was left to the Canadians.

In Canada the claim has been deleted and either seven or seven and a half pence (the manuscript mark is open to discussion) charged; this would have been a Currency charge, and either can be explained.

If '7d': the Canadian Post Office had to recover the fourpence Sterling, traditionally fourpence halfpenny Currency claim, and would raise twopence halfpenny Currency for inland postage on trans-Atlantic letters by United States' Packets. Alternatively, '7½': the rate for such letters was one shilling and twopence Sterling - the letter was sixpence Sterling shortpaid, which at that time was seen to be sevenpence halfpenny Currency. Comments welcome!

TRANS-ATLANTIC HANDSTAMPS

Of all Jack's writing, the most enduring is likely to be his catalogue of handstamps, used for rates, claims and credits on trans-Atlantic mail. These now are normally quoted as 'Arnell #xx'. Hopefully, there may yet be some left to discover (of which more in Edition 51); in the meantime, I would like to commemorate the work by illustrating one of the less common markings:

Arnell #G8: the Quebec thirty cent charge mark applied principally (at least, I have never seen it used for any other purpose ... now prove me wrong!) to unpaid mail from the United Kingdom

in the eighteen-sixties. The charge was eightpence Sterling, seventeen cents, plus sixpence Sterling fine, twelve and a half cents, in all twenty-nine and a half cents. Commonly rounded-down to twenty-nine cents, at Quebec it was rounded-up. The illustration is of a cover owned by Mr Brian Hunt; particularly pleasing to me because of its Southampton origins - unfortunately it remains firmly embedded in his Southampton collection!

The letter was carried by the Cunard Line 'Arabia', out of Liverpool on 4th January 1862, bound for Queenstown and New York.

Figure 5: Arnell #G8, used at Quebec 1861-1863.



FOOTNOTE

In the last Newsletter, Jack included an appeal for material ... with Number 51, I am taking up the responsibility. I would like to reiterate that, although there is a small group of collectors and researchers to the east of the pond, it would be dull if I use only our material. Please give the matter some thought, then visit your local photo-

copier and let me have some material to get started - if your contribution has any special or unusual features, it would be helpful if you could include a scribbled note, but I expect that we will be able to rustle up a few words and references to accompany the illustration; a DOS-format disc would be even more helpful. Happy New Year.

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