



TRANSATLANTIC MAIL STUDY GROUP
OF THE
British North American Philatelic Society

Newsletter No. 55

December 1996

SOLDIERS' AND SEAMENS' LETTERS (1)

This is the first of two Newsletters which will be largely devoted to soldiers' and seamen's privilege rate letters which have crossed the Atlantic; I do not profess to be an expert in this subject, and hope that any errors and omissions will inspire some correspondence. I have touted around some other collectors in this field and have accumulated a number of photocopies of North American-associated material, with and without explanations.

Extracts from the various Acts governing the procedures for the privilege rates. These are by no means complete, and there will be a small prize for anyone providing a good copy of the 1795 Act (35 Geo.III, Cap. 53), introducing the privilege which remained largely unchanged until 1898, when with the introduction of the Imperial Penny Postage, it became redundant. A significant addition was the introduction of special rates for officers in 1857 (Post Office Instruction No. 24, 1857, effective 1st June 1857), but examples to and from Canada are scarce, for there was little to be gained from the sixpence rate, except for the Pacific Coast.

Chelsea Pensioners and the East India Company letters are omitted from this first pass, and will be covered later under 'Free and Official Mail', sometime in the New Year.

The illustrations start with letters to British North America, letters from Canada and the other Provinces will be included in Part 2.

I would value contributions for the 20th Century procedures and rates - United Kingdom Servicemen to this day are able to send their letters through the British Forces Post Office at inland rates, and enjoy free postage when on active service; I have no regulations to support this. I understand that Canadian Servicemen overseas enjoy similar privileges. I anticipate some reaction from other Study Groups, in particular from those who have been trying to raise an interest in the Atlantic Mails of the Second World War. As you know, I have been looking for opportunities to extend this study into the Twentieth Century (soon to be the 'last century'), and this may provide such an opportunity.

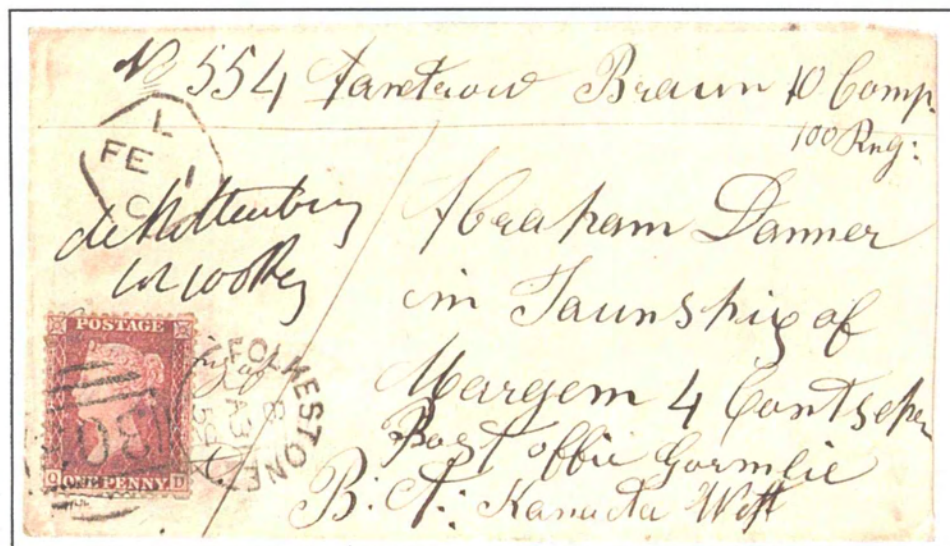


Figure 1: Shorncliffe Camp, Folkestone, to Gormlie, Canada West,

N^o. 13.

On the Exemptions granted to Seamen in the Navy, and Soldiers in the Army, in respect of the Postage of their Letters.

1. SEAMEN and Soldiers within any Part of His Majesty's Dominions, to and from which there are regular Mails, can send and receive single Letters, on their own private Concerns only, while such Seaman or Soldier shall be employed on His Majesty's Service, and not otherwise, for ONE PENNY.

2. On Letters FROM
 a Seaman,
 or from a Serjeant
 Corporal,
 Trumpeter,
 Drummer,
 Fifer,
 and Private Soldier

{ The Penny must be paid at the Time it is put into the Post Office.
 The Name of the Writer, and the Name of the Ship, or Regiment, Corps or Detachment, must be written by himself.
 And the Officer actually having the Command, must sign his Name, and the Name of the Ship, or Regiment, Corps or Detachment, he commands.

3. On Letters TO Seamen or to Soldiers, as above

{ The Penny must be paid at the Time the Letter is put into the Post Office.
 Its Direction must specify the Class of the Person, and the Name of the Ship, or Regiment, Corps or Detachment, to which he belongs, that is to say—it must describe him, Seaman, Serjeant, Corporal, Trumpeter, Drummer, Fifer, or Private Soldier, as the Case may be

N. B. All the foregoing Descriptions must be legibly written, the Initials of the Names of any Ships or Regiments being insufficient.

4. The Postmaster General require Postmasters to examine every Letter purporting to be a Seaman's, or Soldier's Letter, and if it be not in all respects conformable to the above Regulations, to charge it with full Postage, recollecting that though the Law has given the indulgence to Seamen and Soldiers throughout His Majesty's Dominions, yet in such Parts of those Dominions with which there is no communication by Packet Boats, this Privilege cannot be enjoyed.

Note.—His Majesty's Forces whilst serving in Spain, Portugal, and Sicily, and British Ships of War in the Harbours, and on the Coasts of those Countries, have the Privilege extended to them, and single Letters of Seamen and Soldiers may accordingly pass for One Penny, under the usual Restrictions—They also pass for One Penny to Sicily, and to the Ships in the Mediterranean, being conveyed by the Packet Boats to Gibraltar and Malta, Places within the King's Dominions.

The following are Forms to be used for each Letter from a Seaman or Soldier, and also to a Seaman or Soldier, whether in the United Kingdom or in any of His Majesty's Dominions abroad, without which it cannot pass for One Penny, nor then unless the Penny be paid at the Time of putting the said Letter into the Post Office, in conformity to the preceding Articles.

SEAMEN.

From A. BOLD, Seaman, H.M.S Victory,

(here the Direction of the Letter to be inserted.)

CHA'. DAUNTLESS, Captain (or other Commanding Officer) H.M.S. Victory.

To A. BOLD,

Seaman H. M. S. Victory.

(Here the Direction to be finished.)

SOLDIERS.

From A BOLD, Serjeant (&c.) 60 Reg^t. Foot.

(here the Direction of the Letter to be inserted.)

CHA'. DAUNTLESS, Colonel (or other Commanding Officer) 60 Reg^t. Foot.

To A. BOLD,

Private 60 Reg^t. Foot (or Serjeant, Corporal, &c.)

(Here the Direction to be finished.)

5. Letters sent to or by Commissioned or Warrant Officers, Midshipmen or Masters' Mates in the Navy, or by Captains' Clerks, Schoolmasters, Caulkers, Rope-Makers, Armourers, Mates and Cooks, Masters at Arms, and Master Sail-Makers, are precluded the Benefit of the Act, as are Letters sent to or by Commissioned or Warrant Officers in the Army; and Care must be taken that no Person in the Navy or Army, not entitled, shall obtain the Benefit of this Act by having their Letters addressed to themselves under the general Description of Soldier or Sailor.

Figure 2: Post Office Instruction No. 13, September 1813.

JULY 1829

To all Postmasters.

GENERAL POST-OFFICE,
10th July, 1829.

THE indulgence granted to Soldiers and Seamen in their correspondence having been greatly abused, by the Parties obtaining the Signatures of their Officers to Letters not written by themselves or on their own Business, and also permitting Letters to be addressed to them although they are intended for other Persons, the object in both cases being to evade the legal Rates of Postage;—I am commanded to direct that whenever a Postmaster has reason to suspect this mal-practice, he will charge the Letters with a Postage of Five Shillings; and all such Letters, if refused by the Parties to whom they are addressed, are to be enclosed to me by the first Post.

I am,

Your assured Friend,

F. FREELING,
SECRETARY

*Copies sent to Mr. Godby
the Clerks & Mr. Newton
Copies sent to our Postmen
July 10. 1829. J.F.F.*

700. Printed by J Hartnell, Wine-office-court. Fleet street, for His Majesty's Stationery Office July, 1829

Figure 3: Post Office Instruction, 10th July 1829.

Anyone able to produce an example of the imposition of the five shilling penalty introduced to deter abuse of the privilege rate, please let me know!

*One for every Letter Reciev'd
from a Country
30th Aug. 1850*



By Command of the Postmaster-General.

NOTICE to the PUBLIC.

AND

Instructions to all Postmasters, Sub-Postmasters,
and Letter Receivers.

GENERAL POST OFFICE,

August, 1850.

THE Lords of Her Majesty's Treasury having been pleased by a Warrant, dated the 30th July, 1850, to authorize the use of *Postage Stamps* for the payment of Letters forwarded to the United Kingdom by *Seamen employed on board Her Majesty's Ships on Foreign Stations*, all Seamen's Letters which may hereafter reach this Country in Bags made up on board any of Her Majesty's Ships will be delivered free, provided the postage of one Penny to which they are liable be paid by means of a postage Stamp affixed to such Letters.

In those cases where Bags of Seamen's Letters are brought to the United Kingdom by Private Ships, the gratuity of two pence payable by Law to the Master, will still be chargeable upon each Letter, unless such sum of two pence, *in addition to the postage of one penny*, be paid by the Seamen by means of postage Stamps.

It must of course be understood that all the conditions laid down by Law, under which the Letters of Seamen are transmitted at a reduced rate of postage, must be duly complied with as respects the Letters to which the present regulation refers.

Seamen will be supplied with postage Stamps by the Purser of the Vessel to which they are attached.



Charge upon the Letters of Soldiers and Seamen in Her Majesty's Service to or from parts beyond Sea.

AS some misapprehension is believed to exist with regard to the charge upon Soldiers' and Seamen's Letters sent from or brought into the United Kingdom, the Postmaster-General feels it necessary to call attention to the following regulations.

Letters sent by Soldiers and Seamen may be forwarded, on payment of a British rate of One Penny, to any part beyond Sea with which there is a direct communication by means of British Mail Packets.

Letters addressed to a Soldier or Seaman brought to the United Kingdom by a British Mail Packet, without passing through a Foreign country, are, in like manner, subject to no higher charge than One Penny. But, if this sum of One Penny be not prepaid, the Letters are chargeable with a rate of Two Pence.

Upon Soldiers' and Seamen's Letters addressed to, or originating in, a place with which there is no direct communication by British Packet, and which Letters are, therefore, sent by a Private Ship, as well as upon Letters specially directed to be forwarded by a Private Ship, the gratuity of One Penny, payable to the Commander of such Ship, must also be paid.

When Letters sent by Soldiers or Seamen pass through a Foreign country, the transit rate due to such country must be paid upon them, *in addition to the British rate of One Penny*, and the following Table shows the amount of the transit rate in each of the instances specified.

Soldiers' or Seamen's Letters sent to or from	Routes.	Amount of the Foreign Transit Rate to be paid, in addition to the British Rate of One Penny.			
		When not exceeding $\frac{1}{2}$ oz.		Above $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. and not exceeding 1 oz.	
		s.	d.	s.	d.
MALTA, IONIAN ISLANDS, INDIA, CEYLON, MAURITIUS, CHINA, JAPAN, or AUSTRALIA	Marseilles	0	3	0	6
PANAMA, or any other Place on the Pacific side of NEW GRANADA; VALPARAISO, or any other Place in CHILI; CALLAO, or any other Place in PERU	Panama	0	6	0	6
	New York and Panama, conveyed between the United Kingdom and the United States by British Packets	0	5	0	5
VANCOUVER'S ISLAND or BRITISH COLUMBIA	New York and Panama, conveyed between the United Kingdom and the United States by United States Packets	1	1	1	1
	St. Thomas and Panama	1	4	1	4
CANADA	United States	0	2	0	2

Upon Unpaid Letters sent by Soldiers and Seamen from any of the places specified in the foregoing Table to the United Kingdom, and upon Letters sent from any of those places addressed to Soldiers or Seamen in the United Kingdom, the same transit rates will be chargeable, in addition to a British rate of Two Pence.

By Command of the Postmaster-General,

GENERAL POST OFFICE,

ROWLAND HILL,

4th June, 1859.

Secretary.

Figure 5: Post Office Instruction 4th June 1859.

WESTBOUND PRIVILEGE LETTERS

There appear to be no recorded examples of letters travelling at the penny privilege rate before about 1840. This is curious, for the privilege had been introduced some fifty years earlier - perhaps these notes will cause other, earlier, examples to come to light. In the meantime, and in the absence of any known post office instructions to the contrary, it has been assumed that the reason was social, *eg*, a shortage of literate soldiers and sailors.

There appear to be fewer letters travelling to, rather than from, British North America; and those I have seen have all been to addressees with some Service connection, *ie*, from a soldier, soldier to soldier. The colour illustration on the front page is one such. It is a letter with very Hessian overtones ('Taunship', 'Kanada', the Commanding Officer is 'de Rottenberg'), from a soldier in the 100th Regiment, stationed at Shorncliffe Camp, Folkestone; prepaid a penny and correctly endorsed and countersigned, it arrived in London on 1st February 1859.

It was held over, for the regulation stated that privilege letters should be carried by British Packets. In the case of Canada, this was a euphemism for 'not *viâ* the United States', for the letters were carried by both British and Canadian Packets, but United States transit charges were avoided.

The letter arrived in Canada only on 14th March 1859, which is not helpful, but at least rules out the Cunard Line New York sailings on 5th, 12th and 19th February, but leave as alternatives the Cunard Line 'Canada', sailing on 12th February 1859, to be put off at Halifax, Nova Scotia on 26th February 1859 (*Hubbard and Winter, page 42*).

The alternative, and seemingly most likely choice, is the Allan Line 'Anglo-Saxon', departing Liverpool on 23rd February and arriving at Portland on 11th March 1859 (*Hubbard and Winter, page 133*). There were no United States transit charges on this route.

ENGLAND TO NOVA SCOTIA

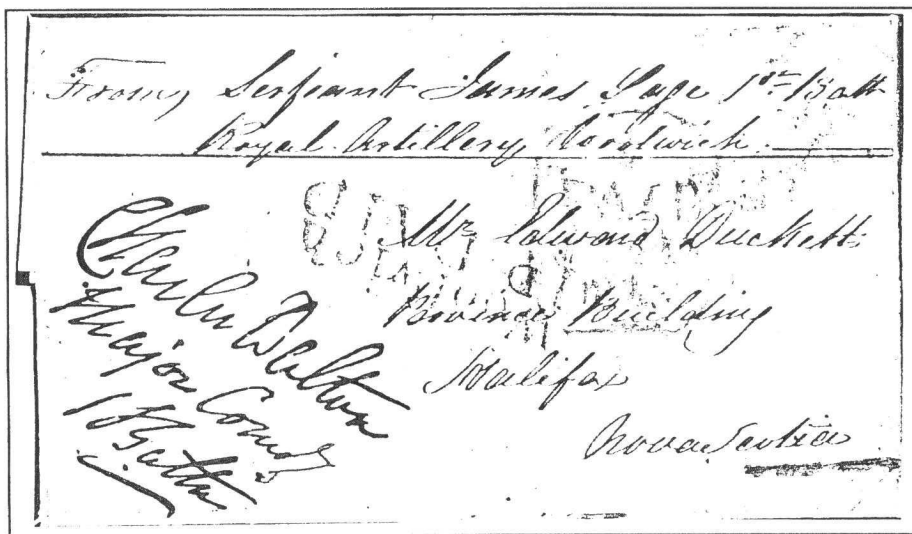


Figure 6: Woolwich, England to Halifax, Nova Scotia, 15th September 1843.

Gerald Sattin has provided a letter to a non-Service addressee: from Sgt Sage, 5th Company, 1st Battalion, Royal Artillery, who had recently returned from duty in Nova Scotia, thanking the addressee for his kindness. Countersigned by the commanding officer, Major Charles Walton, the

letter was posted in Woolwich (ancient home of artillery) and bears a two-line 'Woolwich 1^d PAID' handstamp. It was carried to Nova Scotia by the Cunard Line 'Acadia' (*J.C. Arnell, page 289*), arriving at Halifax on 1st October 1843 (handstamp on reverse).

LETTERS WITHOUT ENDORSEMENT

The two letters which follow are both from a musician, R. Morgan, serving with the Coldstream Guards in London, to his brother in the Attorney General's Office in Toronto. Both are unusual, in that they have not been endorsed by

a commanding officer, but were carried at the privilege rate (I have seen two others from this correspondence). I have no explanation for this anomaly, and can only assume that there was some local arrangement for bulk endorsement.

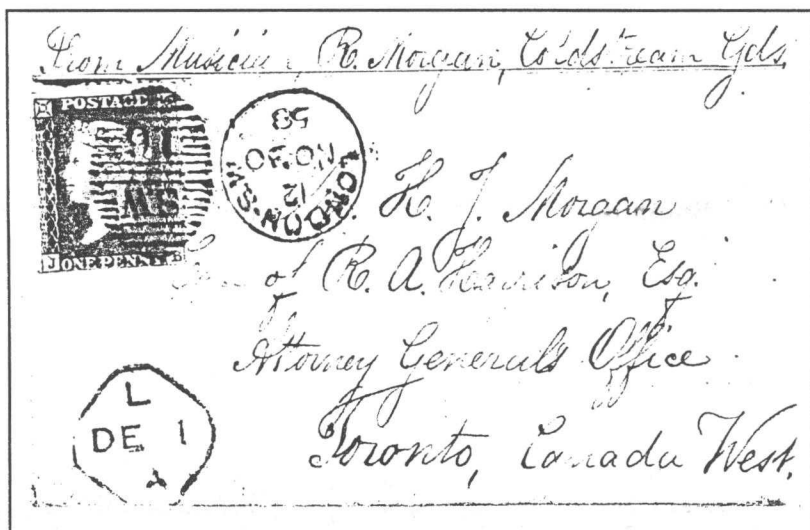


Figure 7: London, England to Toronto, Canada, 30th November 1858.

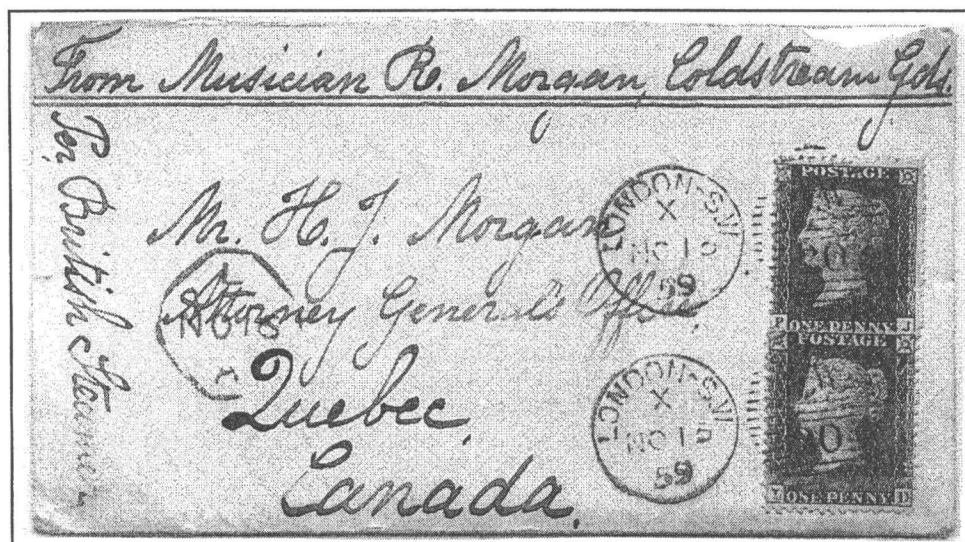


Figure 8: London, England to Toronto, Canada, 15th November 1859.

The first, paid a penny, courtesy again of Gerald Sattin, arrived at Liverpool on 1st December; there is no arrival date. The first vessel to sail was the Cunard Line 'Arabia' on the 4th, for Boston viâ Halifax, but it would seem likely that it was carried by the Allan Line 'North American' departing Liverpool on 7th December 1858 (*Hubbard and Winter, pages 42 and 133*). The second letter was directed 'per British Packet' and was prepaid twopence; this was,

however, insufficient for the penny soldiers' rate plus twopence United States transit, and the letter was passed to the Allan Line 'Bohemian', for her maiden voyage, departing Liverpool on 16th November 1859 and arriving at Quebec on 29th November 1859 (*Hubbard and Winter, page 133*). The letter has a Toronto arrival mark of 30th November 1859. Since 'Bohemian' was in any case the first vessel to sail, this would seem to have been a penny apparently wasted.

The last in this group of westbound letters are more re-assuring, insofar as they appear to conform in every respect to the regulations. The first is again from Gerald Sattin's collection, and will be of greater interest to Canadian collectors. It is from #128 Private Ludger N. Voyer, 100th Depot, Parkhurst, Isle of Wight, and is addressed to St. John Street, Quebec.

Gerald states that H.M. 100th Royal Canadian Regiment was raised early in 1858 in Canada as an infantry battalion of the British Army, to assist in the suppression of the Sepoy Mutiny.

The regiment came to England in July, forming a depot at Parkhurst on the Isle of Wight. Pte Voyer remained at Parkhurst when the regiment went to Gibraltar in 1859.

The letter was correctly endorsed by Colonel E.R. Jeffreys C.B., who commanded the 5th Depot Battalion. It appears to have travelled on the Allan Line 'North Briton', sailing out of Liverpool on 18th April, calling at Queenstown on the 19th, and arriving at Quebec on 1st May 1860 (*Hubbard and Winter, page 134*); the cover has a Quebec arrival for that date.

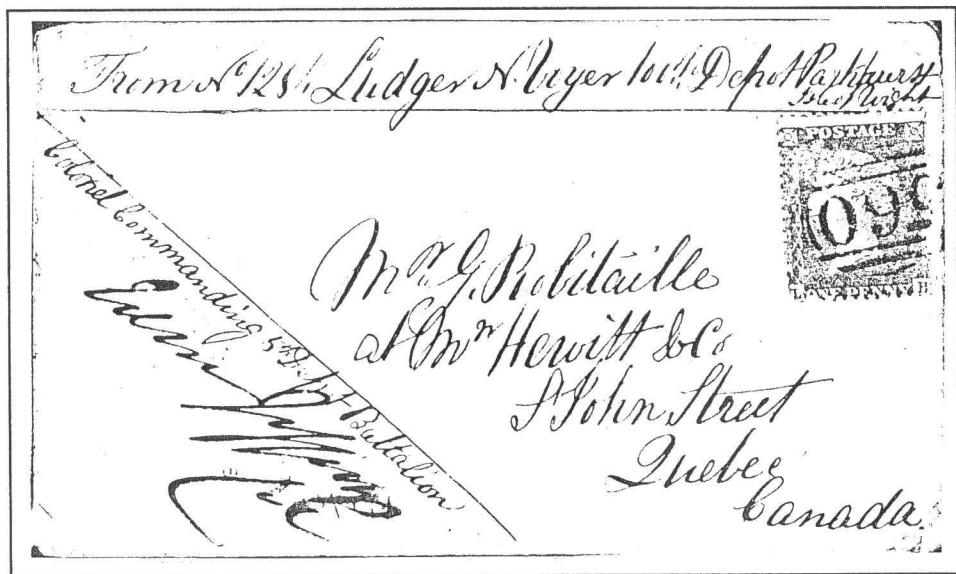


Figure 9: Parkhurst, Isle of Wight, to Quebec, Lower Canada, 17th April 1860.

LATER PRIVILEGE LETTERS

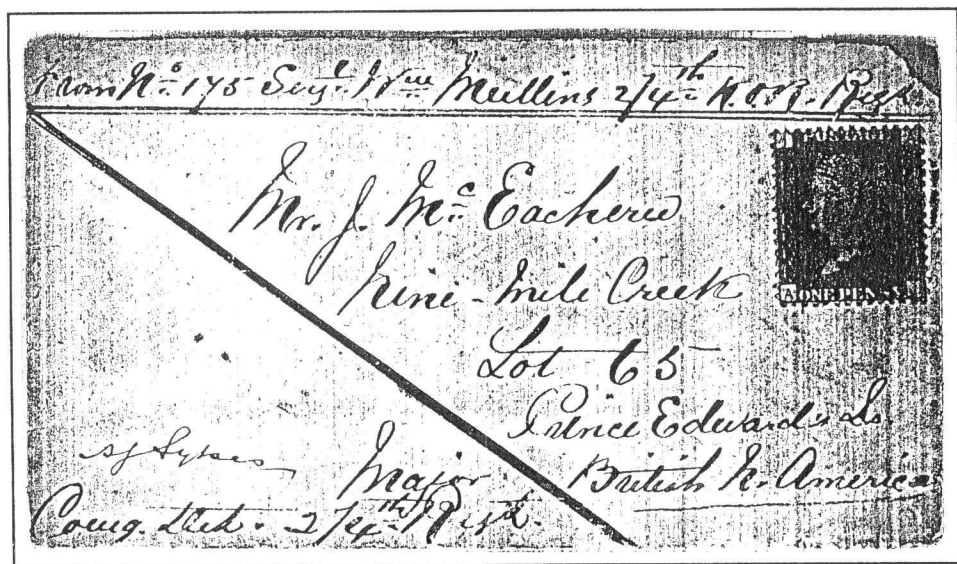


Figure 10: Curragh Camp to Charlottetown, Prince Edward's Island, 26th May 1875.

ONE TO PRINCE EDWARD'S ISLAND

The cover opposite arrived just before Christmas, in a marvellous group of photocopies sent by Ron Saint (for which, many thanks). It is dated Curragh Camp 26th May 1875, and is addressed to Nine Mile Creek, Lot 65, Prince Edward's Island. It bears a Charlottetown arrival of 11th June 1875. There are two accompanying quotes.

Allan Steinhart: 'Only a few exist. This is the only one I've seen'.

Jack Arnell: 'Carried by the Allan Line Nova Scotian, departed Liverpool, 27th May and called at Londonderry on 28th May for late mail. This cover could have been boarded at either place. The steamer reached Quebec City on 8th June, however, the mails for the Atlantic Provinces were landed at Rivière du Loup to connect with the east bound Intercolonial Railroad. This would have been consistent with the 11th June Charlottetown receiver.'

AND ONE TO NEW BRUNSWICK

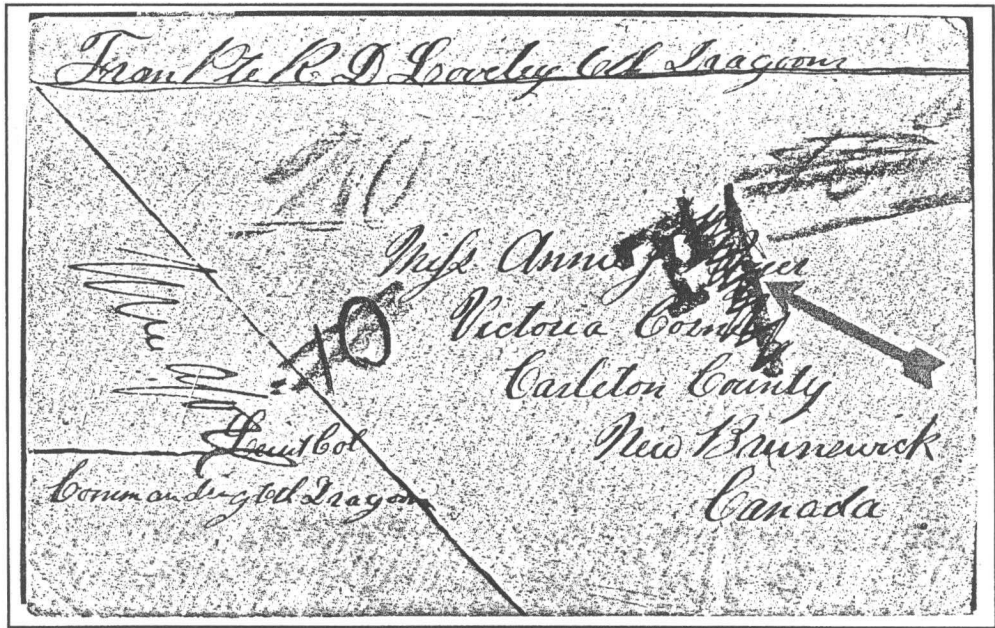


Figure 11: Transvaal, South Africa to Canada, 7th April 1881.

A soldier's letter written by Private R.D. Lovely, H.M. 6th Inniskilling Dragoons, from Transvall, South Africa, during the First Boer War, and correctly countersigned by the Commanding Officer. This is another of Gerard Satin's covers. There is little to add by way of route, dates and arrivals, since no record of the back has been provided.

It appears to have been marked 'd1' (reminiscent of many British marks), although it is not clear whether that mark was a payment or a charge. The letter has been assessed as unpaid at some stage in its travels (possibly North America?), and double the Universal Postal Union half ounce letter rate charges were raised; these were later deleted.

TABLE OF SOURCES

Serial	Source	Synopsis	Remarks
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)

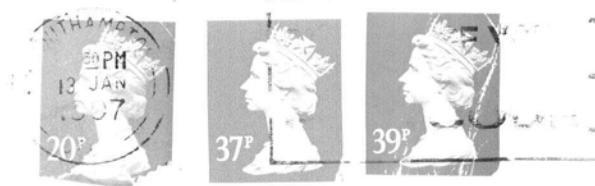
A table along the lines of the one above would seem to be a fitting objective for this particular subject it will have to wait, there being little to enter as yet. Contributions would be welco

A number of responses to the request for information and funds have been forthcoming; to date, fourteen which leaves nearly thirty outstanding need I say more?

From:

*MB Montgomery
76, Glen Eyre Road,
Southampton, SO16 3ND
ENGLAND*

PRINTED MATTER
AIR MAIL OUTSIDE UK



Mr Clarence A Stillions
010 48th Street NW,
Washington,
DC 20007-1552
USA

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