



TRANSATLANTIC MAIL STUDY GROUP  
OF THE  
British North American Philatelic Society

Newsletter No. 64

August 1998

ISLAND OF SAINT JOHN - PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

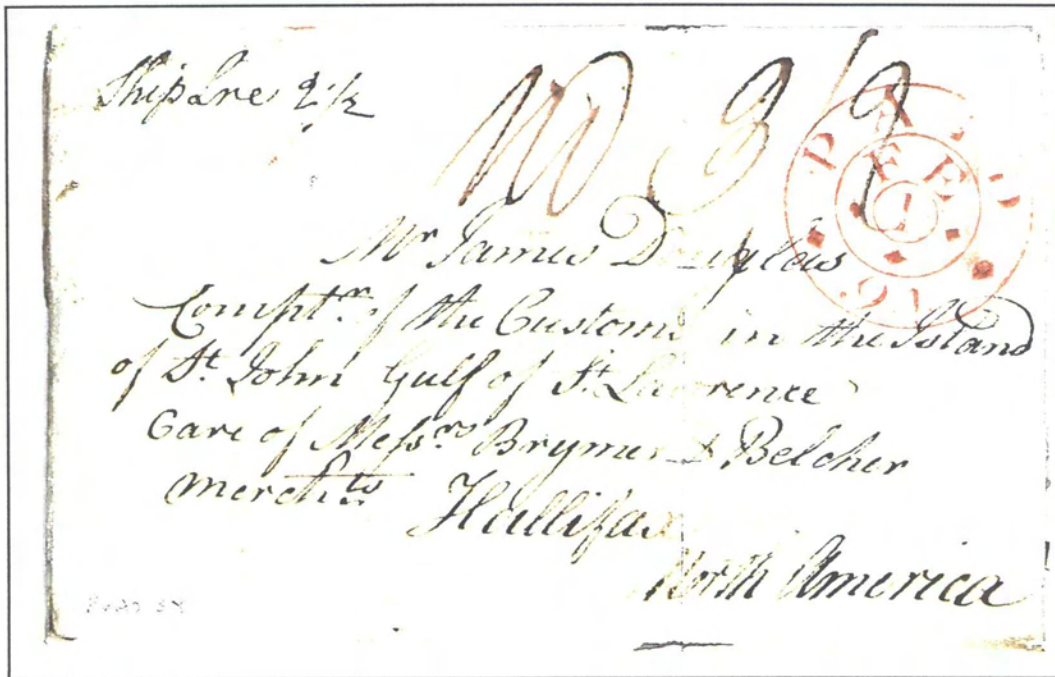
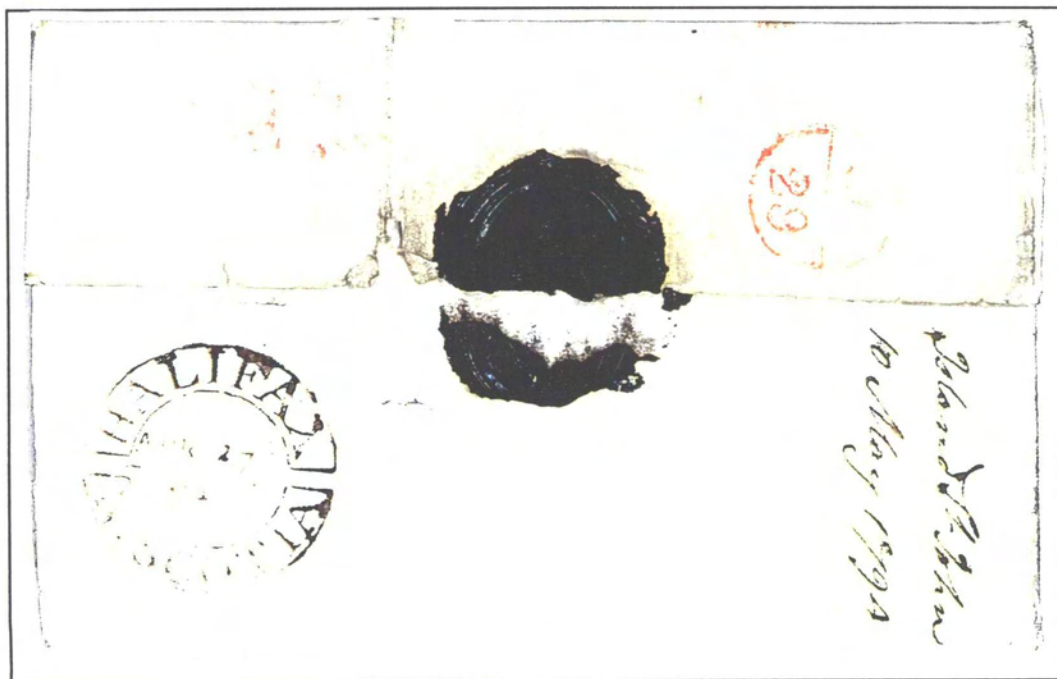


Figure 1: Edinburgh, Scotland to the Island of St. John, 1<sup>st</sup> February 1794.



## INTRODUCTION

This is the first of three newsletters which will examine aspects of trans-Atlantic mails to and from the Island of Saint John, later Prince Edward Island (from here on abbreviated to PEI). Since there have been a number of publications dealing with PEI's postal history, this series will add little new information, but will seek to clarify, correct and capture known information in a single structure which can be used for future amendments, corrections and new information.

I have been fortunate to gain access to copies of covers in the main collections of PEI postal history (with one exception, hopefully to follow) and will therefore be able to illustrate many of the elements for the first time. To those who have provided material, I am most grateful, and to those of you have not yet had reason to send me photocopies, please do so. It is of particular importance that letters held in more general collections come to light, for their true significance is not always recognised. Hopefully, the editor of 'Topics' will be able to help in this respect. I am sure that much material remains to be uncovered, particularly in specialist areas such as newspapers, printed matter, registration and the earlier letters and handstamps.

The material will be presented as follows:

#64: Background, early letters and general information.

#66: The 'handstamp' period (of trans-Atlantic significance).

#68: The 'adhesive stamp' period (of trans-Atlantic significance).

At the risk of being accused of ignoring later (and equally interesting material) I believe that after 1873 changes applied equally to the remainder of the Dominion of Canada, or were significant mainly to PEI's internal postal affairs. However, I would welcome examples of later PEI trans-Atlantic mail.

### BIBLIOGRAPHY

As I make little claim to originality, I will start by listing those books and references which I have found most useful, or of which I have been informed. I would add a note of caution in respect of PEI. I prefer to quote primary sources where possible, but much of the information which follows is 'second-hand', and some may be no better than hearsay.

I, too, may be guilty of perpetuating statements from books, etc, which cannot be substantiated, as earlier works have not always been scrupulous in identifying their sources. That said, my thanks to all who have provided me with information and to those who are about to unearth more information for future editions.

#### PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND BIBLIOGRAPHY

Ser	Author	Title	Comment
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
1.	R.E.R. Dalwick (edited by Fred J. Melville).	<i>'Prince Edward Island'</i> .	<i>'The Postage Stamp Handbook'</i> series. Date of publication unknown (between the wars?), price sixpence. An essential element of any PEI collection!
2.	Douglas Campbell	<i>'Prince Edward Island Postal History, 1790-1860'</i> .	Privately published by Douglas Campbell (only the actual collection has been seen).
3.	Leslie G. Tomlinson.	<i>'Prince Edward Island Cancellations, 1817-1873'</i> .	<i>'The London Philatelist'</i> July 1849, et seq. Not seen by me, but extensively quoted by JC Lehr.
4.	Robson Lowe.	<i>'The Encyclopaedia of British Empire Postage Stamps'</i> , Volume V, pages 402-421.	Published in 1973; essential reading, augmented in the pages that follow.
5.	James C. Lehr.	<i>'The Postage Stamps and Cancellations of Prince Edward Island'</i> .	A comprehensive review of all aspects of the subject, expanded in the pages that follow.
6.	G. Douglas Murray.	<i>'2000 Postmarks of Prince Edward Island, 1884-1995'</i> .	A comprehensive reference volume.

The best brief history that I have seen is in Robson Lowe's 'Encyclopaedia'; James Lehr and Doug Murray give more information. All provide the essential elements of geography, and history, but none of these reference books are very generous in their provision of contemporary maps, so extracts from three are included in the hope they may prove useful:

1544 (Figure 2) the earliest reference to Saint John's Island that I have been able to uncover; I have not seen an original, only an extract from a reproduction, which I have enlarged. The illustration is from a part of the world map by Sebastian (son of John) Cabot published in 1544,

following earlier voyages. It shows (my arrow, not his) 'I: des Juan.' If anybody wishes to challenge my interpretation, I will accept any other explanation, without discussion!

1760 (Figure 3) detail from a map of the Eastern Seaboard of North America, by M. Bonne.

1834 (Figure 4) detail from a map prepared by 'The Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge', and published in London on 15<sup>th</sup> December 1834. This is one of a series which gives excellent coverage of British North America; it is the one that will be used to illustrate early mail routes.

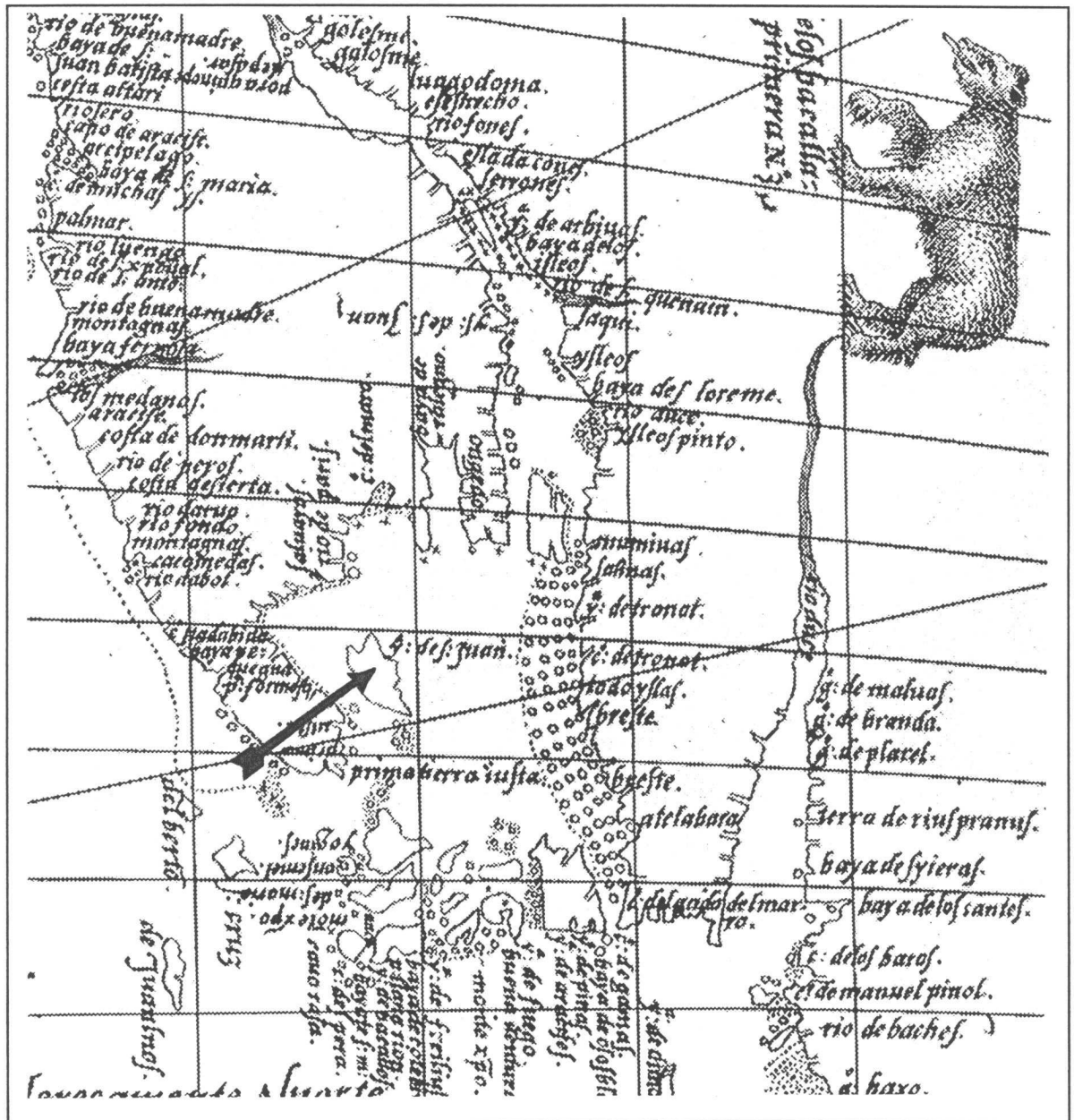


Figure 2: Extract from the world map of Sebastian Cabot, 1544.



Figure 3: Extract from a map by M. Bonne, 1760.

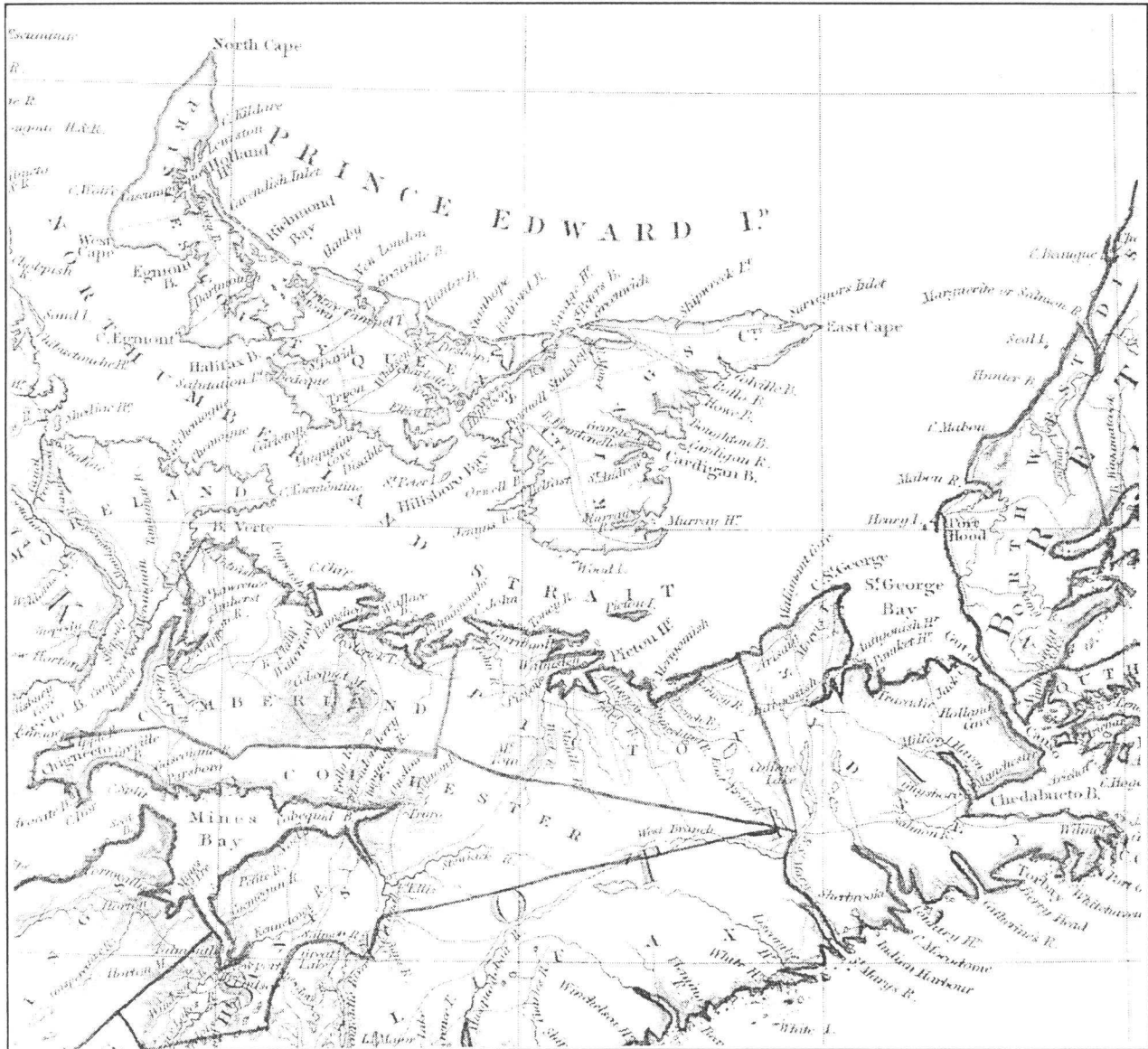


Figure 4: Extract from a map by 'The Society of Propagation of Useful Knowledge', 1832.



## THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

The front page illustration is from Martyn Cusworth's collection. It is one of only ten or so letters to PEI in the Eighteenth Century - no trans-Atlantic letters out of the island in that century are recorded. There appear to be just the two correspondences surviving, the one represented by a sole letter in Allan Steinhart's collection, the remainder from a correspondence from Scotland. Between them, however, they illustrate a wide range of options for mail travelling from the United Kingdom to the island:

- a. Direct by private ship.
- b. British Packet to New York, then through the regular mails viâ Canada to PEI (a possibility).
- c. British Packet to Halifax, then through the regular mails overland or by ship to PEI.
- d. British Packet to Halifax, private ship to PEI.

A table listing the known letters follows. If I receive more information, I will amend the table.

*Figure 1* is a letter with an enclosure from Edinburgh dated 29<sup>th</sup> January 1794 that has a London 'PAID' transit of 1<sup>st</sup> February. It was prepaid '3/2', three shillings and twopence Sterling, a double letter: twice Edinburgh to London 7d (24 Geo. III, Cap. 37, 31<sup>st</sup> August 1784), plus twice 1s Packet (5 Geo. III, Cap. 25). The letter was held over (there appears to have been no February sailing in 1794) and carried to Halifax, Nova Scotia by the Falmouth Packet 'Portland', arriving on 27<sup>th</sup> April 1794. It was delivered to Messrs Brymer & Belcher who forwarded it by private ship to the Island of Saint John. At the island a ship letter fee of twopence halfpenny Currency was collected. This is the earliest recorded PEI ship letter marking; the inscription *could* have been made at Halifax, but the Halifax postmaster would normally just hand the letter to the agents.

### THE EARLIEST RECORDED PEI TRANS-ATLANTIC LETTER

The earliest PEI trans-Atlantic letter recorded was owned by Allan Steinhart. Illustrated in Trans-Atlantic Newsletter #52, it is repeated here only for completeness. Dated 30<sup>th</sup> April 1789, it was prepaid '3s 2d'. Apparently again the double rate applied. It bears the curious notation: '*Sent from the General Post Office, in the Mail for Quebec to Halifax. The Postage from*

*Halifax to Quebec on this letter, forwarded - 5N*'. It too was carried by the Falmouth Packet 'Portland'. I cannot explain this, but using an approximation of the 1765 rates, if it was a double letter Halifax to Quebec the charge would have been 3s 4d, leaving a further 1s 8d for postage to PEI. I am still looking forward to receiving a precise translation of this inscription.

5N  
Mr. James Douglas Comptroller  
of the Customs - at the Island of St. John  
Gulf of St. Lawrence  
North America

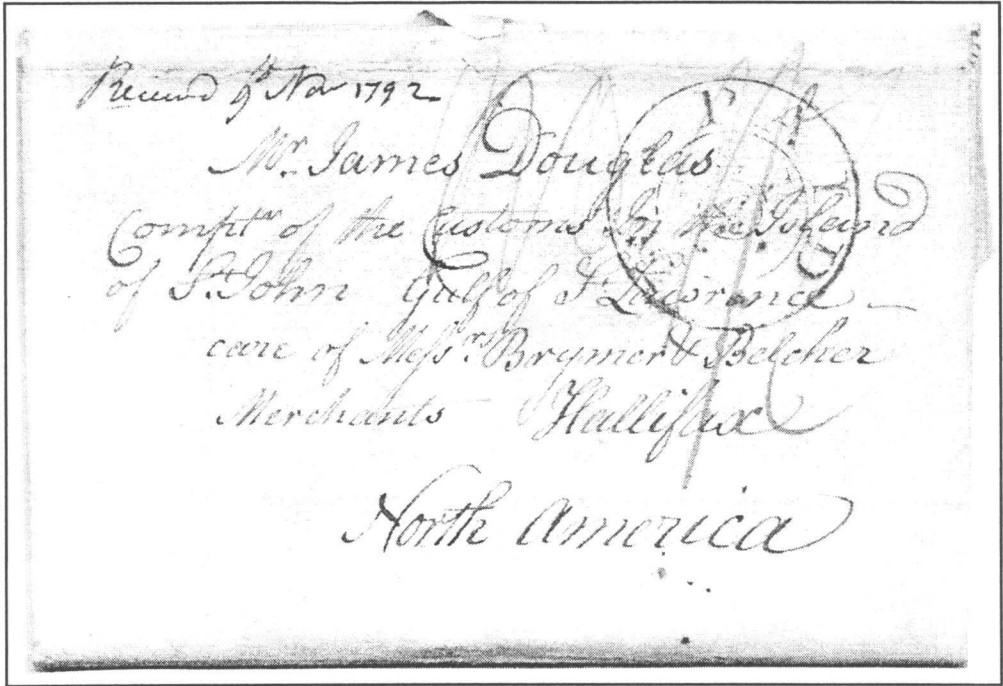
Figure 5: Edinburgh to Island Saint John, 1789.

EIGHTEENTH CENTURY LETTERS RECORDED TO PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

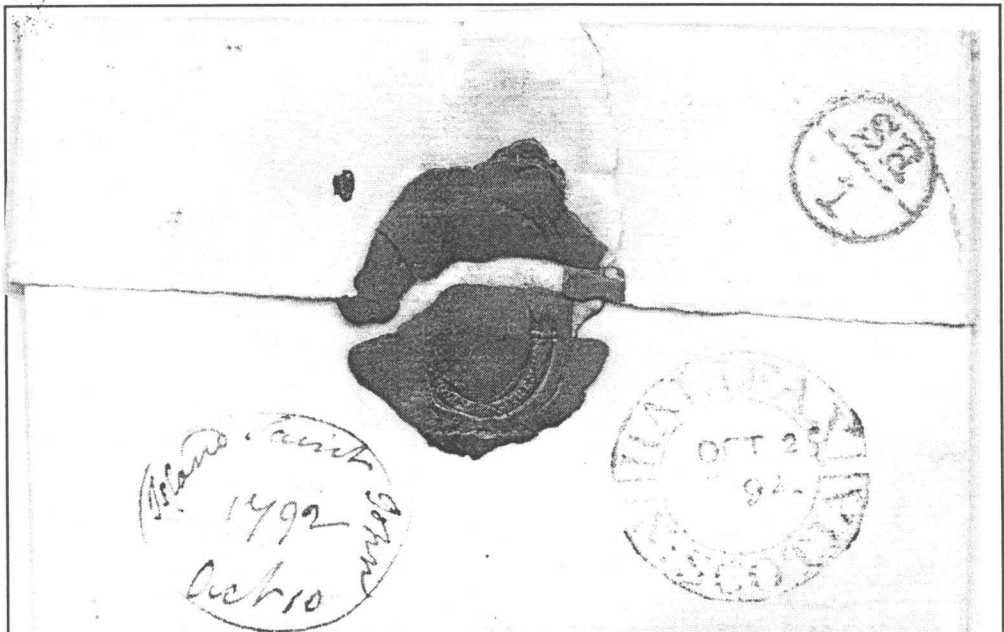
Scr	Date	From	British Prepayment	Route	BNA Charges	BNA Route	Arrival	Remarks
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)	(h)	(i)
1.	30 Apr 89	Edinburgh	3s 2d	Falmouth Packet ' <i>Portland</i> '.	5N (Cy)	Post Office Via Quebec	N/K	AL Steinhart collection. Apparently double rate; Edinburgh to London 7d (24 Geo. III, Cap. 37, 31 Aug 84), plus 1s Packet (5 Geo. III, Cap. 25). The route via Quebec appears to have been instigated by GPO London - presumably via New York. Photocopy in TANEWS #52.
2.	Sep 91	Hamilton	1s 10d	Falmouth Packet Probably ' <i>Prince William Henry</i> '.	Not known	Not known	NS: 5 Mar 92 SJI: Apr 98	Spink's sale, July 1998. Single rate: Hamilton to Edinburgh 3d, Edinburgh to London 7d (24 Geo. III, Cap. 37, 31 Aug 84), plus 1s Packet (5 Geo. III, Cap. 25).
3.	3 Mar 92	Edinburgh	1s 7d	Falmouth Packet ' <i>Portland</i> '.	9d Cy	Post Office	NS: 15 May 91 SJI: Not known	Spink's sale, July 1998.
4.	31 Aug 92	Edinburgh	1s 7d (?)	Falmouth Packet ' <i>Cumberland</i> '.	N/K	N/K	NS: 25 Oct 92 SJI: Oct 10 1792 (error)	MB Montgomery Collection. Single letter. Addressed care of Brymer, etc, Halifax. Marked with m/s circular arrival (wrong date) in different hand to addressee's. Received 9 <sup>th</sup> Nov 1792. Refers to 'Sandy' sailing to Canada with £600 of goods.
5.	7 Aug 93	London	1s	Falmouth Packet ' <i>Cumberland</i> '.	9d (Cy)	Post Office	NS: 21 Sep 93	AL Steinhart collection, illustrated in JC Lehr 'PEI'.
6.	29 Jan 94	Edinburgh	3s 2d	Falmouth Packet ' <i>Portland</i> '.	2½ (d Cy)	Private ship	NS: 27 Apr 94 SJI: 10 May 94	M Cusworth Collection. Two sheets, rated as double in Scotland. Addressed care of Brymer, etc, Halifax. Marked as a Ship Letter, apparently in NS or SJI. Receiving notation (Island St. John, 10 May 1794) in different hand than addressee's. Letter from addressee's younger brother.
7.	29 Feb 96	Edinburgh	3s 2d	Falmouth Packet ' <i>Tartar</i> '.	3½: 2½ + 1 (d Cy)	Private ship	NS: 23 Apr 96 SJI: 15 May 96	D Sanderson Collection. Two sheets, rated as double in Scotland. Addressed care of Joshua Newton, Halifax. Refers to other correspondence in both directions, and to 'Sandy', doing business in Niagara.
8.	2 Jul 96	Edinburgh	1s 7d	Falmouth Packet ' <i>Countess of Leicester</i> '	Not known	Not known	NS: 8 Sep 96 SJI: 10 Oct 96	Spink's sale, July 1998.
9.	8 Mar 97	Edinburgh	None	Private ship	None	N/A	N/K	M Cusworth Collection. Direct to SJI, apparently by favour. Refers to letter sent the previous month, and that 'Sandy' had received letters from addressee's wife.
10.	30 Mar 98	Edinburgh	Unclear	(?) HM Cutter ' <i>Constitution</i> '	Not known	Not known	NS: 21 May 98 SJI: Not known	Spink's sale, July 1998.

My solitary contribution to this part of the story is *Figure 6*. A letter from the same correspondence, but this time prepaid at the single rate, 1s 7d. It too was addressed 'care of Messrs Brymer & Belcher' and was carried by the Falmouth Packet 'Cumberland' sailing on 11<sup>th</sup> September 1792. There is no evidence of how it travelled to the island, but on the reverse it has a manuscript notation which is arguably an early

attempt by Mr James Robertson, the postmaster at Charlottetown since 1787, to mark incoming mail. Unfortunately, he got the date wrong. It may be worth noting at this point that, according to Robson Lowe, the first post office and customs house was built in 1787 at Charlottetown; the addressee 'Mr James Douglas, Comptroller of Customs In the Island of St. John', was co-located with the post office.



*Figure 6*: Edinburgh, Scotland to the Island of St. John, 1<sup>st</sup> September 1792.



Dorothy Sanderson has contributed the letter which follows. Another double letter, but different again from those that precede it. Posted in Edinburgh on 1<sup>st</sup> March 1796, it was passed through London for the Falmouth Packet 'Tartar', which sailed on the 19<sup>th</sup>. The letter reached Halifax on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 1796 and has a notation that it was received in Island Saint John on 15<sup>th</sup> May.

It was addressed 'Care of Joshua Newton, Esq, Custom House, Halifax', and appears to have been forwarded by private ship, for it has been charged '2½'. A further charge of a penny has been raised, presumably at Charlottetown, for a total of '3½'. This suggests that the Postmaster in Charlottetown may have started raising charges on his own account. Again, comment would be most welcome.

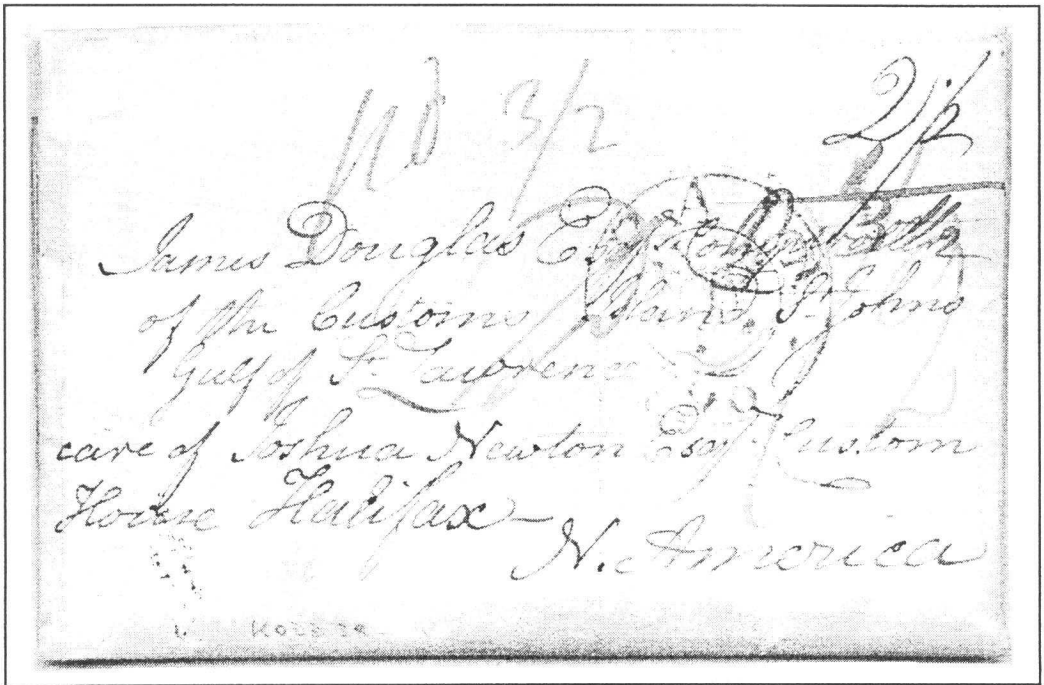
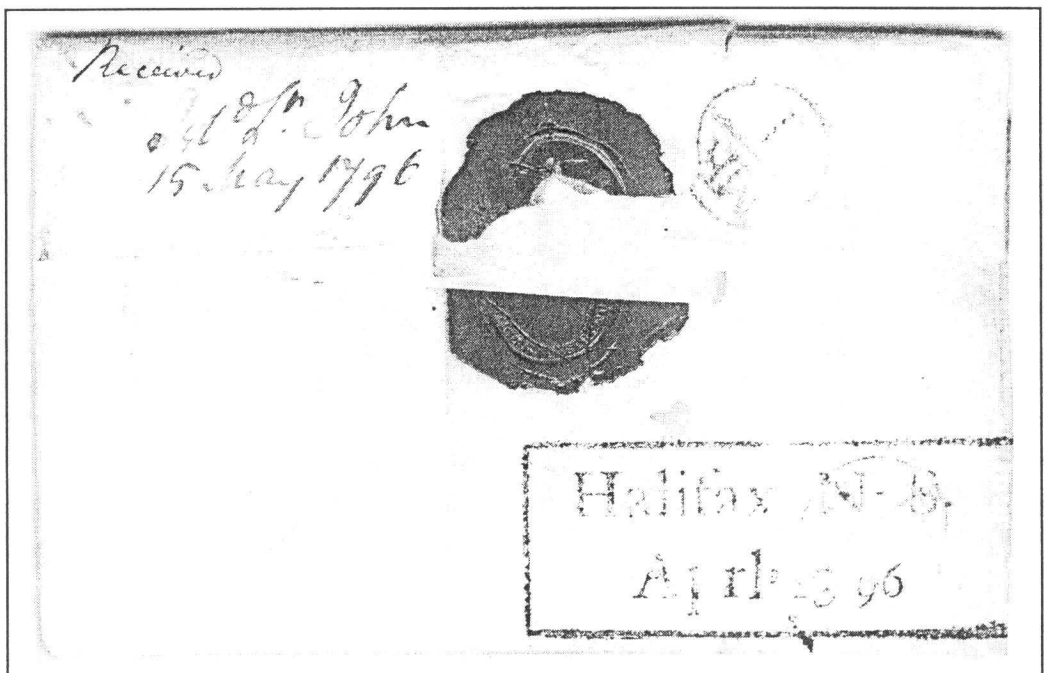


Figure 7: Edinburgh to Island Saint John, 1<sup>st</sup> March 1796.





## THE EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY

There are very few letters recorded in the first part of the Nineteenth Century. The first known to me is the one shown below, again in Dorothy Sanderson's Collection. It was posted in London on 5<sup>th</sup> May 1806, paid eight shillings, four times the rate as a one ounce letter (45 Geo. III, Cap. 11, 12<sup>th</sup> March 1805). The rate from London at this time was two shillings for a single letter,

made up of elevenpence, the inland rate to Falmouth (230-300 miles), and one shilling and a penny the Packet rate to North America; this appears to be the only letter recorded to PEI showing this rate (which changed in 1812). It was carried by the Falmouth Packet, probably 'Leicester', but the absence of any other markings precludes certainty.

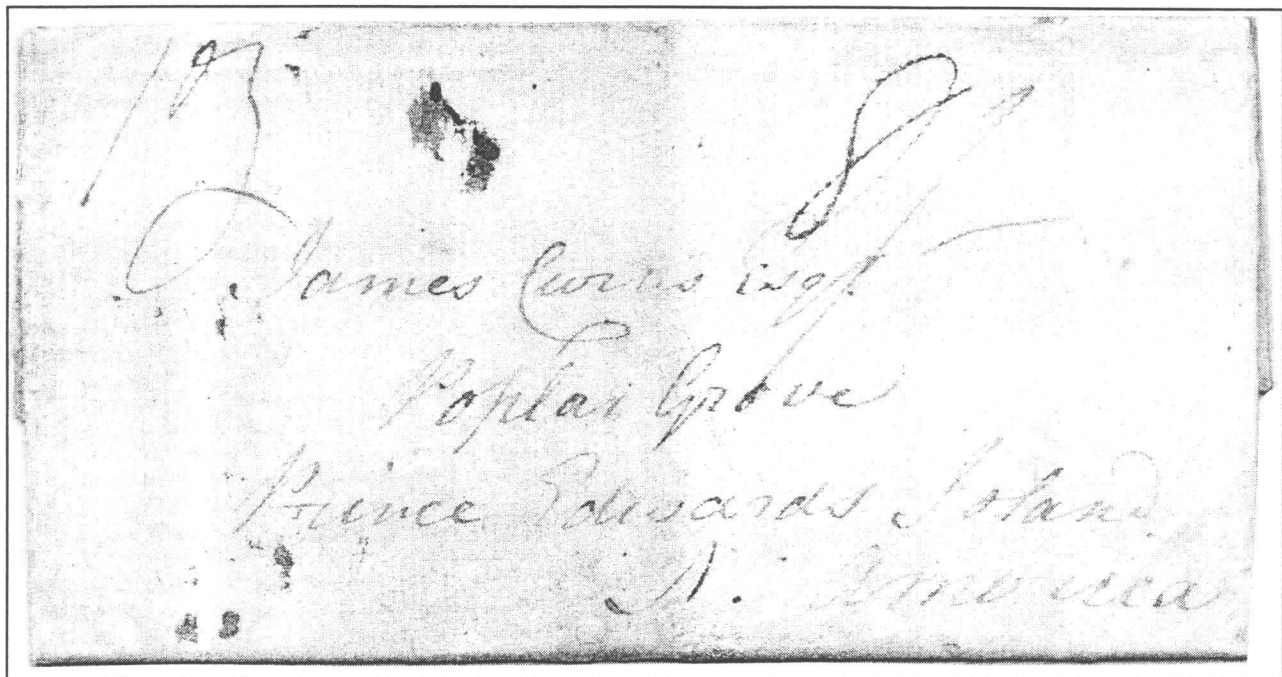


Figure 8: London to Prince Edward Island, 5<sup>th</sup> May 1806.

### PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND TRANS-ATLANTIC PACKET RATES

I conclude this introduction with a summary of what I hope is a comprehensive listing of the Packet rates between the United Kingdom and Prince Edward Island (the earliest rates do not strictly apply, as the island was captured from the French only in 1755 and did not pass into British hands until 1763). I would appreciate comments, in particular references from Prince Edward Island Statutes and Post Office Notices which indicate when 'British' rates were actually published on the island; without these it may not be possible to record all dates correctly. In particular, I have no reference to when the exchange between Sterling and PEI Currency changed from 1:1.125 to 1:1.5. Up until 1851, a shilling Sterling equated to 1s 1½d PEI Currency; after the island assumed control of its postal affairs, the rate slipped and 1s Sterling was exchanged for 1s 6d PEI Currency. As far as I am aware, on the adoption of decimal currency, a penny Sterling was exchanged at two cents PEI. Again, an authority would be useful.

A couple of other points, looking forward to the next two PEI-orientated Newsletters. First, I intend to include photocopies of other material which may come to light as and when I receive it. Secondly, I hope to explain how PEI letters were passed to and from the United States to connect with the British (and possibly US and Canadian Packets) sailing out of US ports. I believe that the route became viable in the late 1850s when the New Brunswick railway reached Shediac, but there are very few trans-Atlantic letters carried by this route, none apparently before the late 1860s. Your help is needed with information and examples to bridge this gap.

As a reminder, my address is:

Malcolm B. Montgomery  
76, Glen Eyre Road,  
Southampton, SO16 3NL  
ENGLAND

**PACKET RATES WITH ISLAND OF SAINT JOHN/PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND**

Ser	Date	Rate	Remarks
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
1.	1 <sup>st</sup> June 1711	1s Stg	9 Anne, Cap. 10. Between London and New York.
2.	10 <sup>th</sup> October 1765	No change	5 George III, Cap. 25. Between London and New York; inland extra (from 1755, rates to New York had applied also to Halifax (Frank Staff, <i>'The Trans-Atlantic Mail'</i> , page 173)).
3.	22 <sup>nd</sup> May 1784	No change	GPO Notice. Inland and Packet postage to be prepaid.
4.	5 <sup>th</sup> January 1797	From Falmouth: 1s Stg From London: 1s 8d Stg	37 George III, Cap. 18. London to Falmouth: 270 miles, therefore 8d. Inland charges to London extra.
5.	5 <sup>th</sup> April 1801	From Falmouth: 1s Stg From London: 1s 10d Stg	41 George III, Cap. 7. Inland charges increased.
6.	12 <sup>th</sup> March 1805	From Falmouth: 1s 1d Stg From London: 2s Stg	45 George III, Cap. 11. Inland and Packet charges increased.
7.	9 <sup>th</sup> July 1812	From Falmouth: 1s 3d Stg From London: 2s 2d Stg	52 George III, Cap. 88. Packet rate increased (2d single); inland postage on letters through Falmouth abated by 1d.
8.	4 <sup>th</sup> March 1839	1s Stg	GPO Instruction (no number), March 1839. UK inland postage included (but not Colonial postage, although some confusion in North America about this).
9.	June 1840	No change	GPO Instruction #2, June 1840. Prepayment optional, anywhere in UK to Quebec, Montreal, NB, NS, PEI, NF (NF to be prepaid); the service from Liverpool was to Halifax and Boston only, and North American inland postage was to be extra, but this last not specified.
10.	4 <sup>th</sup> September 1840	To Halifax: 1s Stg Beyond Halifax: 1s 2d Stg	Treasury Letter Book, 6 <sup>th</sup> July 1840. An additional 2d to any place in British North America beyond Halifax (excepting the West Coast). This equated to 1s 1½d Cy to Halifax and 1s 4d Cy to the remainder.
11.	15 <sup>th</sup> April 1849	Viâ Halifax: 1s Stg (1s 1½ Cy) Via US: 1s 2d Stg (1s 5½d Cy)	Treasury Warrant, 3 <sup>rd</sup> April 1849. By British Packets (direct, or 'all-British' route): between any place in the UK to any place in BNA (except West Coast). By British or US Packets (viâ US): an additional 2d Stg charged for transit through the US. Thus the rate to PEI now 1s 1½d Cy, unless viâ US, 1s 5½d Cy (no example known of the latter rate).
12.	15 <sup>th</sup> May 1851	No change	Post Office Act. PEI assumes control domestic postal affairs.
13.	28 <sup>th</sup> June 1851	No change	Post 48/130, page 511. Letters between UK and PEI gives rate breakdown: 10d Stg UK inland and Packet (the British element) and 2d Stg PEI inland postage. Letters viâ US an extra 2d Stg. Accounting for British and Colonial elements of the rate instituted. The exchange rate now 1s Stg = 1s 6d Cy (but no source or date for this).
14.	23 <sup>rd</sup> March 1854	Viâ Halifax: 6d Stg (9d Cy) Viâ US: 8d Stg (1s Cy) US Packet viâ US: 1s 2d Stg (1s 9d Cy)	Treasury Warrant. Rates by British Packets, US Packet rate remained unchanged until 1 <sup>st</sup> 1868. Stg/PEI Cy exchange (1:1.5) recognised at this time: 9d Cy and 1s Cy respectively. US Packet example not seen.
15.	1 <sup>st</sup> June 1860	6d fine on underpaid mail.	PMG Report, 1861.
16.	1 <sup>st</sup> January 1868	Viâ US: 7d Stg (10½d Cy)	GPO Notice #43/67, December 1867. Rate viâ Halifax remained unchanged.
17.	9 <sup>th</sup> May 1870	Viâ Halifax: 3d Stg (4½d Cy) Viâ US: 4d Stg (6d Cy)	Post Office Instructions and 1871 Guides (no specific reference, PEI not included in Dominion reductions).
18.	1 <sup>st</sup> January 1872	Viâ Halifax: 6c Viâ US: 8c	First decimal adhesives.
19.	July 1873	No change	PEI joins Dominion of Canada.