

NEW HANDBOOK

As predicted in the last newsletter, the second study group handbook was delivered just in time for Allan Steinhart to take two boxes with him to the ROYAL 89 show at the Convention Centre in Hamilton, Ontario, where Dave Clare, the BNAPS book manager, put them on sale at his booth and did a fairly brisk business. The book has the title: *Transatlantic Stampless Mail to and from*

British North America and is in the same format as the first handbook. The cost is \$20.00, with a special price of \$15.00 to study group members. If ordering from the BNAPS Book Department, P.O. Box 1082, Oakville, Ontario, Canada L6J 5E9, send Cdn \$17.00 or US \$14.00 to cover the postage and handling charge.

LIVERPOOL PACKET LETTER OFFICE HANDSTAMPS 1854-58

The following was contributed by Bob Parsons and will prove to be a useful reference to the Liverpool packet office handstamps in use through the Crimean War period and the immediate aftermath.

Tombstone Handstamps

On 12 August 1852, the GPO London despatched the 'PKT. LETTER PAID' handstamp, illustrated in Figure 1, to the Liverpool packet letter office. Four days later, it was used to datestamp mail that had just arrived on the *Cunard America*. Between that date and December 1858, it and the unpaid tombstone [Fig. 3] can be found on mail from British North America. Early strikes of the unpaid hammer are generally green, being changed to black later on. Every strike seen has been on the reverse of the cover.

On 22 March 1856, new paid and unpaid tombstone hammers [Figs. 2 & 4] were despatched to Liverpool. The inauguration of the Allan Line Canadian service during the following month and the expectation of an increase in the volume of mail may have contributed to the need for additional clerical staff. The second hammers may be distinguished from the first by the taller letters, in particular, the 'OO' in Liverpool. Like their predecessors, the second hammers were used until December 1858.

BY-CANADIAN PACKET Handstamps

With the reduction of postage in March 1854 on mail carried by the Canadian contract packets, it appears that the Liverpool packet letter office acquired the means of identifying this mail and authenticating the lower rate charged on it. This was in the form of a 38-mm two-line handstamp 'BY-CANADIAN PACKET' [Fig. 5]. The earliest recorded use of this handstamp is that

illustrated in Arnell's *Atlantic Mails* and is dated 2 September 1854. When the GPO sent out the new tombstone hammers in 1856, it seems likely that a second one of these was also sent, as a new 37-mm hammer appears about this time. The need for these markings ended with the introduction of the small circular 'LIVERPOOL PACKET' datestamps in December 1858.

CONVEYED BY UNITED STATES PACKET Handstamps

The handstamps illustrated in Figures 8 and 9 are generally associated with the carriage of Canadian mail by U.S. contract packets during the Crimean War period of 1854-55, though an example in Alan Robertson's *Maritime Postal History of the British Isles* is on a cover dated 5 December 1856. Robertson records the despatch date as 17 November 1856 from Chatham, N.B. and the

overall size as 40 mm x 13 mm. The examples here are 43-mm long and clearly indicate usage of at least two hammers, when compared with the examples in Robertson and Arnell's *Steam and the North Atlantic Mails*. However, both hammers were used in 1855.

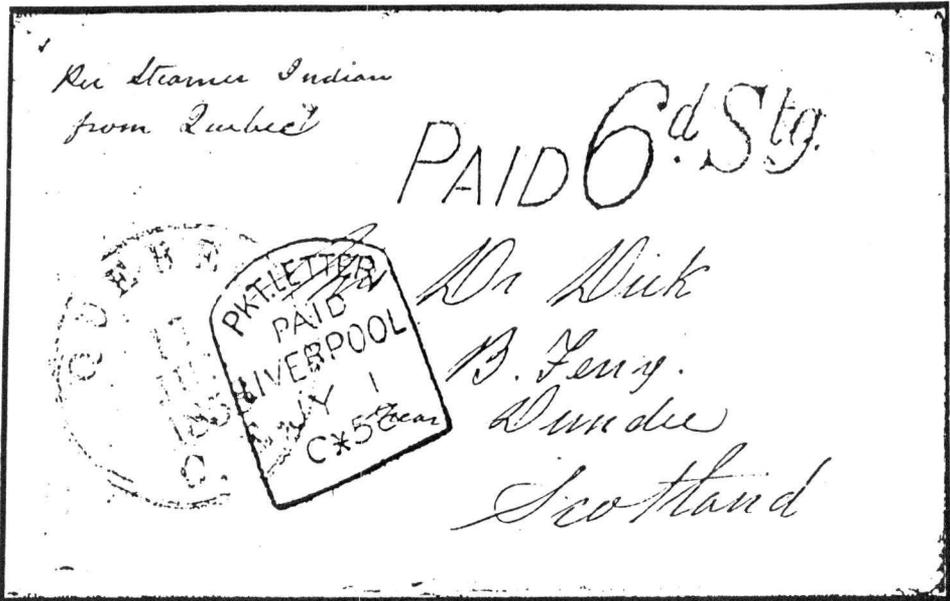


Figure 1. Struck with a PAID 6d Stg. handstamp, the Canadian packet letter rate from March 1854. Carried from Quebec on the Allan Indian on 19 June 1858 and arrived at Liverpool on 30 June. Backstamped with BY-CANADIAN PACKET.

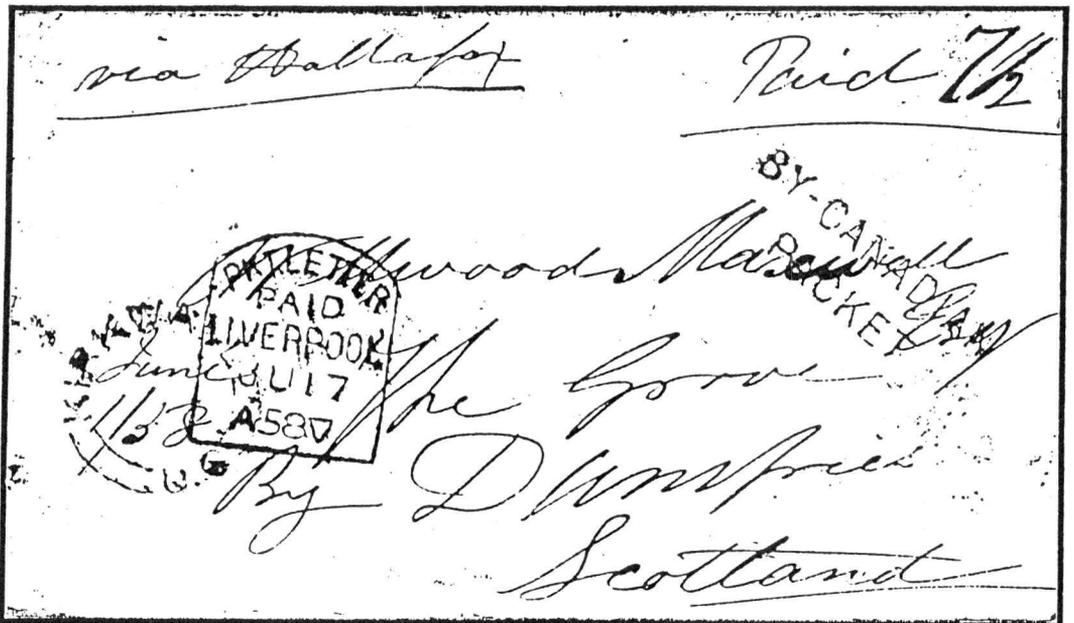


FIGURE 2. Mailed at Kirkwall, U.C. on 1 June 1858 with 7 1/2d Cy. postage paid. Carried from Quebec on the Allan North American on 5 June and arrived at Liverpool on 17 June, where struck with a PKT. LETTER/ PAID handstamp [hammer 2] and the 37-mm BY-CANADIAN PACKET.

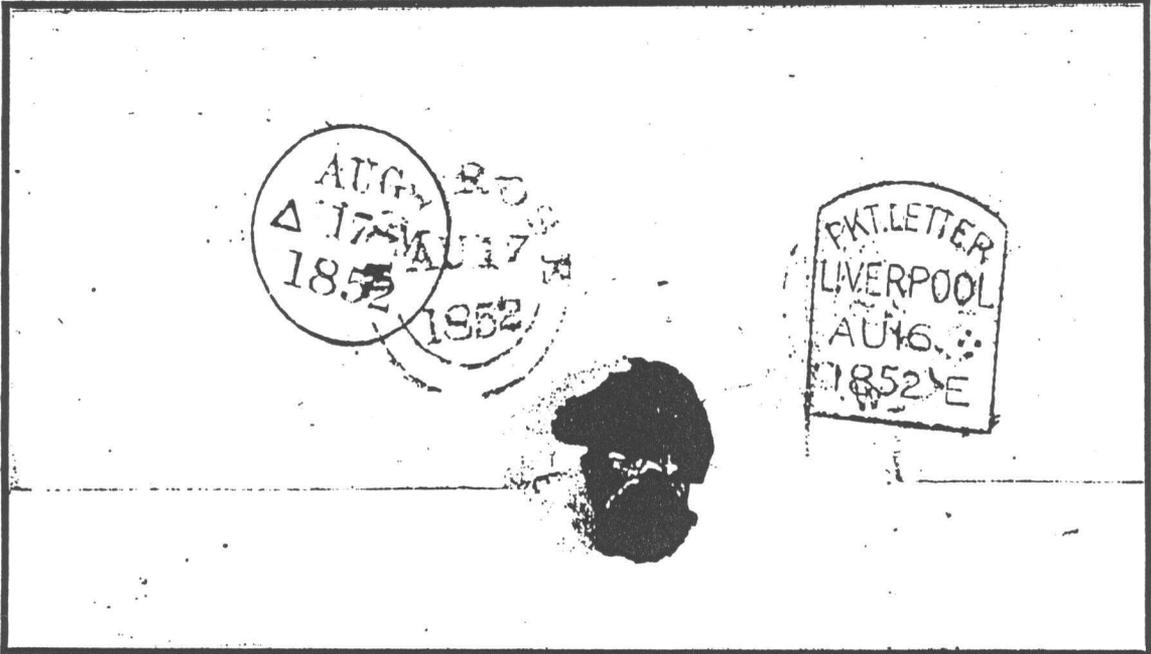


Figure 3. Unpaid letter from Grand River, mailed at Indiana, U.C. on 29 July 1852. Carried from Halifax on the Cunard America on 6 August and arrived at Liverpool on 16 August, where backstamped with the unpaid PKT. LETTER tombstone [hammer 1].

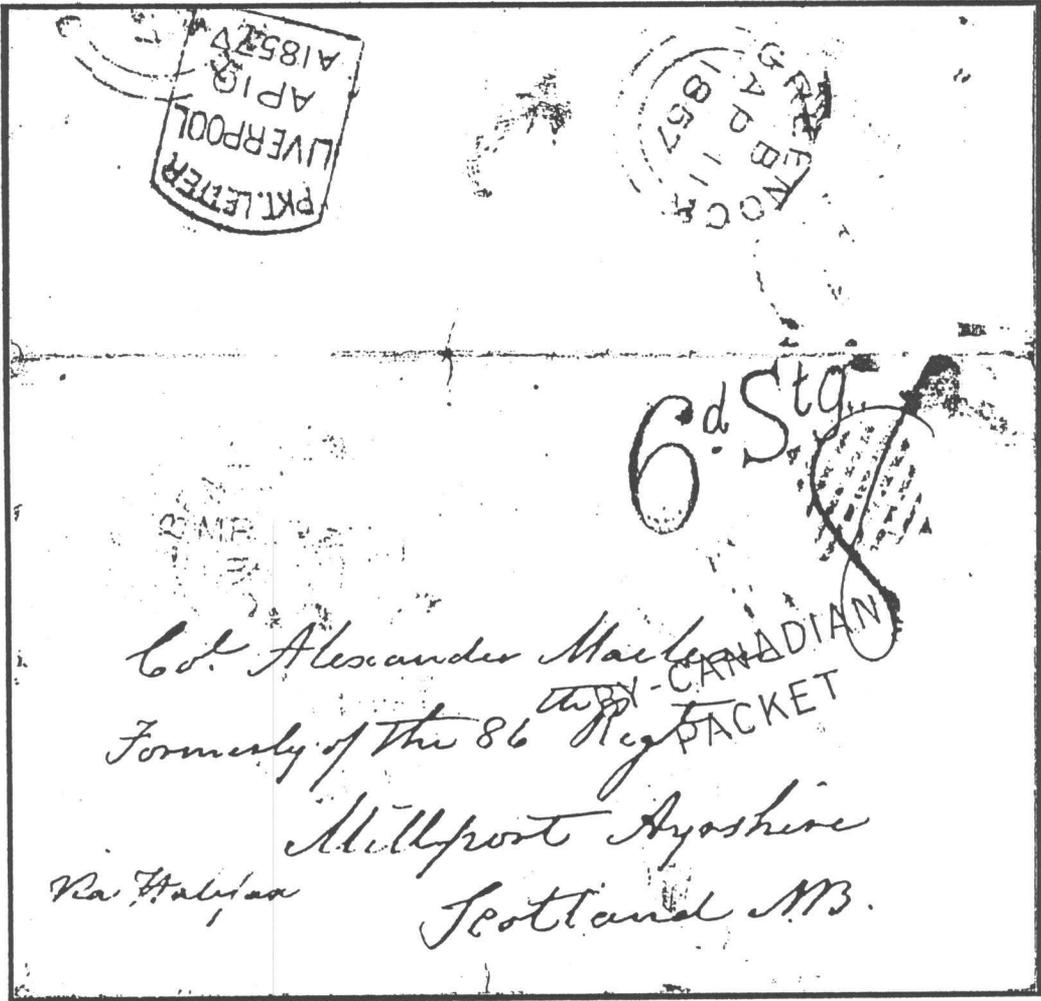


Figure 4. Unpaid letter marked 'via Halifax'. Backstamped at Toronto on 25 March 1857 and struck with 6d Stg. Carried by the Allan North American from Portland on 28 March and arrived at Liverpool on 10 April, where backstamped with a PKT. LETTER tombstone [hammer 2] and struck with BY-CANADIAN PACKET.



Figure 5. Rated 6d Stg. postage due, this letter was found to be 'over 1/2 oz' and rerated 1/- in manuscript. Carried by the Allan North American from Quebec on 20 June 1857 and arrived at Liverpool on 2 July, where struck with 38-mm BY-CANADIAN handstamp in red.

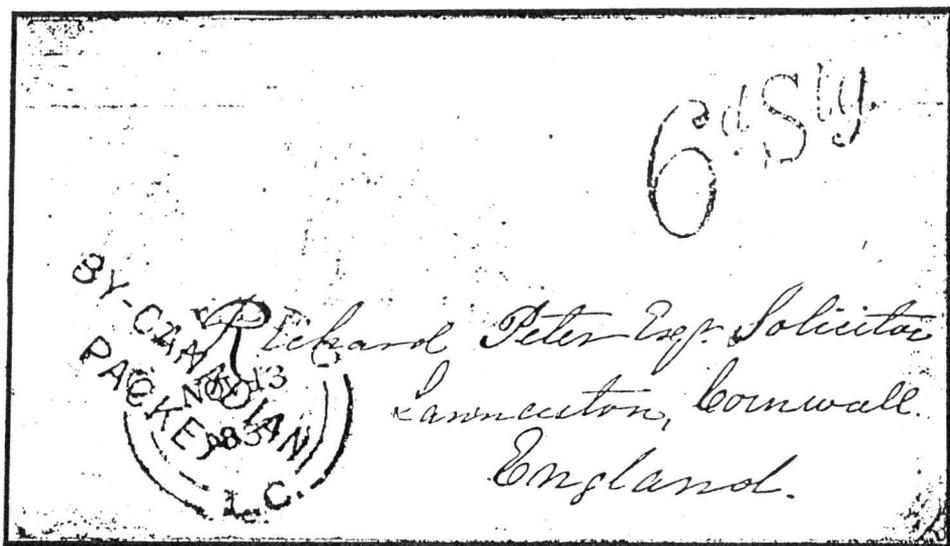


Figure 6. Mailed at Quebec on 13 November 1857 with 6d Stg. postage due and carried by the Allan Indian from there on the following day. Arrived at Liverpool on 25 November, where backstamped with a unpaid PKT. LETTER handstamp [hammer 2] and struck with the 37-mm BY-CANADIAN PACKET in black.

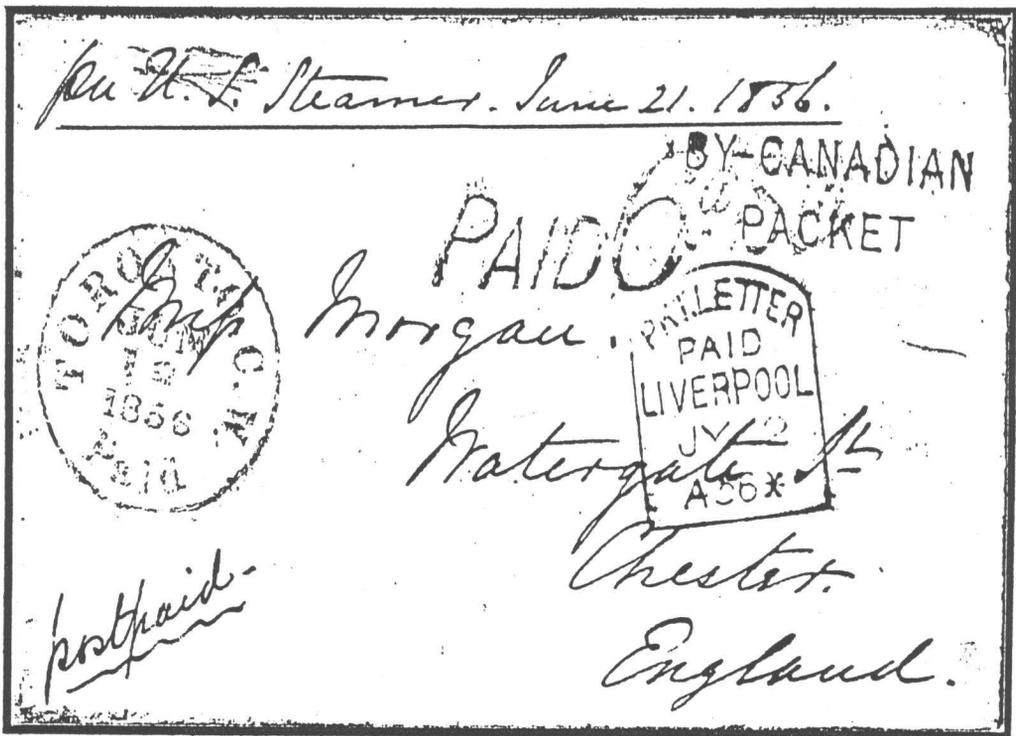


Figure 7. Letter written at Scarborough, C.W. on 17 June 1856 and put on board the westbound lake steamer with the required postage shown as '6 - 7¹/₂' in pencil. Backstamped with 'STEAMBOAT-LETTER HAMILTON'. At Toronto, the 'U.S.' of the endorsement was deleted and the letter struck with a 'PAID 6d Stg.' and a 'Paid' datestamp on 18 June. Carried by the Allan Indian on its return maiden voyage from Quebec on 21 June and arrived at Liverpool on 2 July.

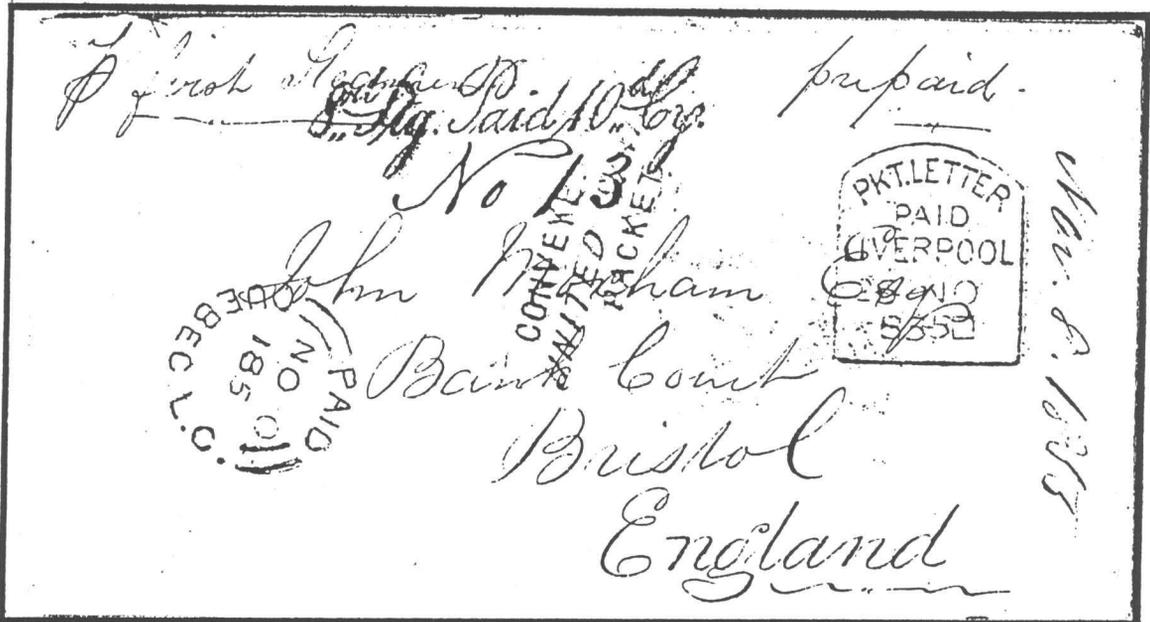


Figure 8. Mailed at Quebec on 10 November 1855 with 8d Stg./10d Cy. postage prepaid. This letter would have been carried by the Cunard Arabia from New York on 15 November and arrived at Liverpool on 26 November. However, the U.S. Collins Baltic also left New York on 15 November and arrived at Liverpool on 26 November, so that the CONVEYED BY UNITED STATES PACKET used in error is understandable. [Courtesy of A. Steinhart]

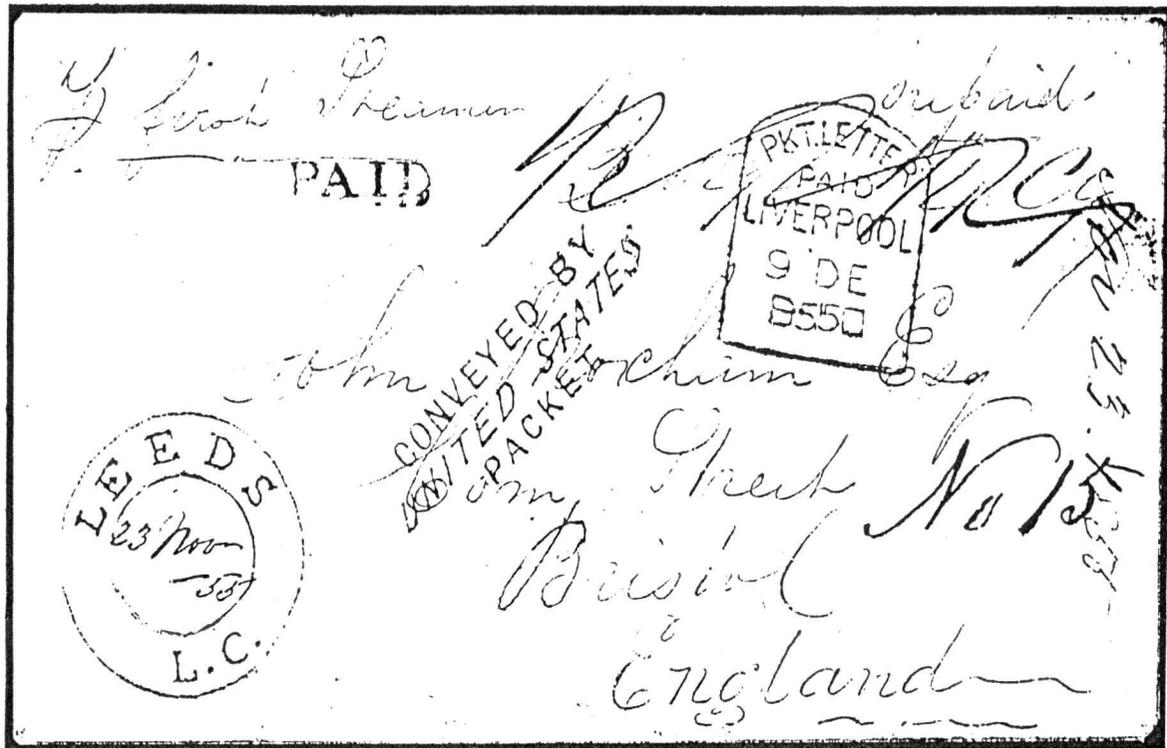


Figure 9. Mailed at Leeds, L.C. on 23 November 1855 and prepaid at the U.S. packet letter rate of 1/2 Stg. or 1/4 Cy. Carried from New York by the Collins Pacific on 28 November and arrived at Liverpool on 9 December, where struck with the CONVEYED BY UNITED STATES PACKET handstamp. [Courtesy of A. Steinhart]

EXCHANGE OFFICE SWITCH FROM SWANTON TO HIGHGATE

Having answered some cross-border queries for John Wriston of Newark, Delaware, he sent me the following extract from a multi-volume history of Vermont, edited by Abby M. Hemenway in the 1870s-1880s. It is of equal interest to transatlantic collectors.

'The mail stage which had from a very early day run daily from Burlington to Montreal had up to about 1830 passed from St. Albans through Swanton, and vice versa, and a daily mail stage was considered of much importance in those days to the business and prosperity of a place. About that time the Keyes [they moved in 1819] having large political influence in Washington, secured the stage to be run by way of Highgate Falls

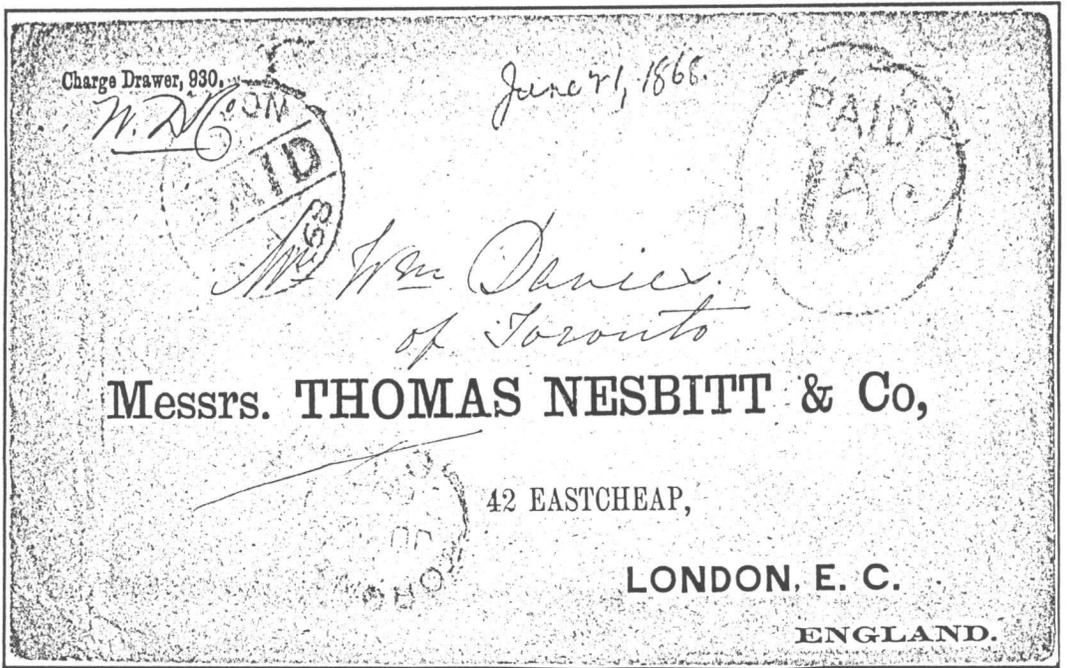
instead of Swanton Falls, and it continued on that route until railroads superseded the stage altogether. Strenuous efforts made to reverse this had no effect.'

Wriston noted that the Keyes brothers were prominent businessmen and millowners, who moved the few miles from Swanton to Highgate.

NEW RATE MARKING HANDSTAMP

Post Office Circular No. 1 dated 16 January 1868 announced a reduction in the postage on packet letters sent via New York from 17 cents [8d Stg.] to 15 cents [7d Stg.] per 1/2 oz., as a result of a reduction in the U.S. transit fee. It noted that 'Postage Stamps representing the new 15 cent Packet Rate will be issued as soon as they can be prepared.' The 15-cent Large Queen adhesives appeared just over a month later.

In the interim, it appears that Toronto introduced a 'PAID 15' handstamp to replace the 'PAID 8d Stg.', which had been used on such letters since March 1854. I have had an example of this handstamp for many years, together with half a dozen similar envelopes with either 'PAID 6d Stg.' or 'PAID 8d Stg.' on them, and looked at it many times without its significance registering. It did a month ago, so here is a new rate marking, which I have designated H.6. It was probably little used, and is scarce.



This letter was mailed at Toronto on 22 June 1868 with the postage prepaid. It was first struck with a large red '3', apparently in error to show the 3-cent inland postage rate to London, C.W. This was then overstruck with the encircled 'PAID 15' to show the newly established postage by Cunard via the United States. Carried by the *Australasian* from New York on 24 June and arrived at Queenstown on 4 July. Struck 'PAID' at London on 6 July.



EXPLAINING A COVER

Maggie Toms has provided an interesting explanation for the unusual postal charges on the cover illustrated on page 124 of the new Hubbard-Winter book *North Atlantic Mail Sailings 1840-75*. This cover was endorsed to go by the Canadian Steam Navigation Co. *Canadian* and was carried by this steamer from Liverpool on 7 November 1854 and arrived at Portland, Maine on 22 November. Not being in a closed bag for Montreal, it was

datestamped at Portland, struck with a horseshoe 'U. STATES' and rated 10 cents postage due. At Montreal, it was struck with a large '6' to show 6d Cy. postage due.

Maggie sent me a transcript of a letter from W. Griffin of the Canadian Post Office to Rowland Hill, GPO London dated 2 December 1854, which explains the above.

Referring to the question of the transmission of Mails between this country and England by the winter voyages of the Canadian line of steamers plying at that season between Liverpool and Portland, Me., with regard to which you expressed a desire to be informed as to the arrangements made by this Dept. with the General Post Office, Washington, for the transmission of such Mails through the United States territory, I have the honor by desire of the Postmaster General to acquaint you that the Mails so sent from Canada, and such as may be forwarded by these steamers to Canada from England, will be duly passed over the United States Mail Route between Portland and the Canadian Frontier, and that the General Post Office, Washington, proposes to charge a transit rate upon the letters sent in these Mails.

I beg further to state that the amounts which may from time to time become due to Washington upon these transit rates on the correspondence by this channel both to and from Canada, will be paid to the United States by this Dept., but that it is not the intention of the Government of Canada to lay any additional charge on this account upon the letters so sent and received, retaining the rate at 6d stg - 7¹/₂d cy, as in summer, when the steamers sail direct from a Canadian port.

The Postmaster General hopes that you will be so good as to give such instructions to the Postmaster of Liverpool as will ensure the despatch of Mails for Canada by each winter voyage of these steamers from Liverpool to Portland.

Much disappointment was felt in this Country on the arrival of the steamer CANADIAN which sailed from Liverpool on the 7th of Nov. and arrived at Portland on the 22nd of Nov. without any Mails for Canada, at a time when so much anxiety naturally prevails for the most constant communication with Great Britain.

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



Clarence A. Stillions,
5031 Eskridge Terrace NW,
Washington, DC 20016,
U.S.A.

