

# TRANSATLANTIC STUDY GROUP

of the

British North America Philatelic Society

Newsletter No.14

September 1989

## WHAT'S IN OUR FUTURE?

As I start to assemble this newsletter, I am faced with the fact that all available copy has either been contributed by Allan Steinhart or will be drawn from my own collection. While a few other members of the Group have contributed in the past, the majority of the forty-odd membership have been silent recipients of past newsletters.

When I undertook to get the study group going, following the Calgary meeting, it was in the belief that it was a necessary part of BNAPS and would reflect a cooperative endeavour of at least an appreciable numbers of the members. This unfortunately has not been the case.

The one truly cooperative effort was our first handbook, for it spanned the Atlantic and drew on expertise in

Canada and the United States. This was a significant contribution to BNA postal history, as it brought together a considerable amount of previously unpublished information on the Falmouth packet sailing dates and the pioneer steamers, as well as providing a concise reference to ship, packet and inland postage rates.

While I enjoy producing this newsletter, it cannot be continued if it is to be almost entirely dependent on Allan Steinhart and me. I shall be having a cataract operation in early November, which will slow me down a bit and I am hoping that, when I can take to the computer again by the end of the year, there will be enough copy from the rest of you to continue this series. **Its future is in your hands!**

## HALIFAX PACKET LETTER HANDSTAMP

Allan Steinhart has sent the photocopy shown here with a short discussion of the temporary handstamp used at Halifax on the back of a letter. He noted that the Jephcott, Greene & Young maritime postal history identified such temporary handstamps with moveable type as being used at various offices for a limited period, possibly due to the lack of a regular handstamp or while a regular one was being repaired.

This letter [shown on next page] was written in Boston on 30 October 1844 and delivered privately to the Cunard *Acadia*, which was sailing for Halifax on the following day. When it arrived at Halifax on 3 November, the Halifax postmaster could have entered it as a Ship Letter, charging 8d Stg. or 10d Cy., plus inland postage, but recognized that it should be charged as a packet

letter with a total postage of 1/- Stg. or 1/1 1/2 Cy. In doing this, he needed a datestamp to justify the charge, so he created one using a temporary hand-stamp reading: 'PACKET LTR H'. Within months, the 'UD STATES/HALIFAX' datestamp was in use, so that this may be the only example of a provisional packet letter mark.

*M. J. Gifford*  
Miss Mary J. Gifford,  
Annapolis, Nova Scotia  
Care of Francis W. Tickman Esq.  
Per Acadia

30

PACKET LTR H

55  
Victoria

## DEFICIENT POSTAGE PLUS FINE

There are many examples of letters with 6d Stg. postage prepaid, which were intended to go either by a Canadian contract steamer or Cunard via Halifax, but which went by Cunard via the United States, thus requiring 8d Stg. postage and hence were marked '2d More to Pay'. Such letters after 1 April 1859 had a 6d Stg. fine added to the 2d Stg. postage due. The cover shown here is the first that I have seen of such a cover being sent by a U.S. contract steamer; in this case, the *City of Washington* of the Inman Line.



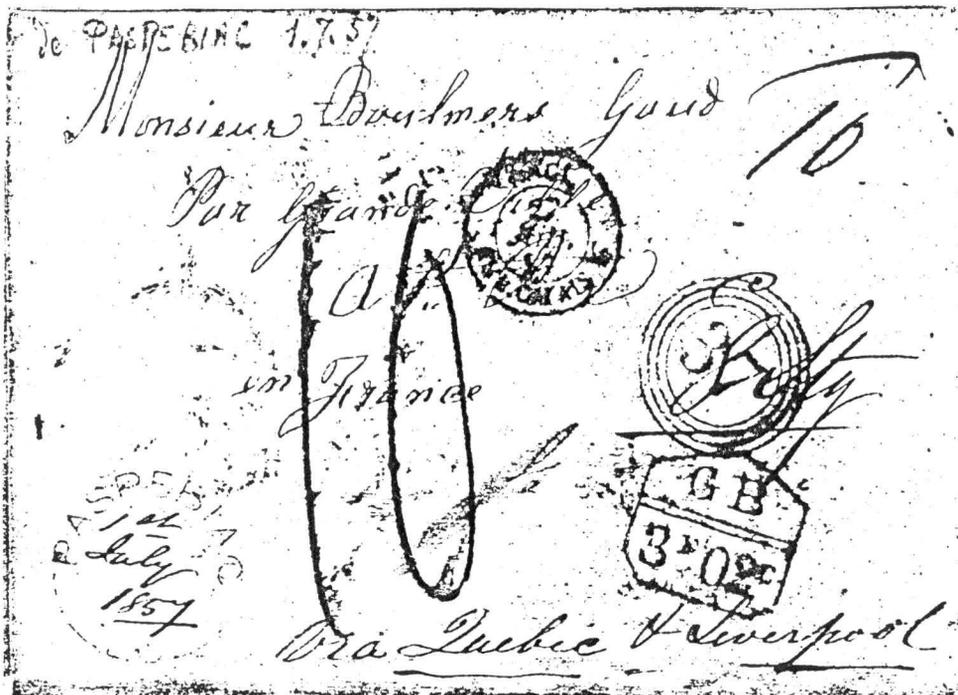
This letter was mailed at Glasgow on 21 May 1861 with only a 6d Stg. adhesive, although it was marked to go 'p "City of Washington" via Cork & New York'. This instruction is hard to understand, for although the *City of Washington* was due to leave Liverpool on 22 May, the Allan Line *Hibernian* was scheduled to leave on her maiden voyage to Quebec on the following day, reaching there on the same day [5 June] as the *City of Washington* reached New York. Nevertheless, the instruction was followed and, as the postage via a

U.S. contract steamer was 1/2 Stg., there was an 8d Stg. deficiency, which, when half the 6d Stg. fine was added, resulted in the British debit of 11d Stg. shown. When the letter reached Montreal, the 11d was crossed out and 29 cents postage due charged, which was equivalent to the 8d Stg. deficient postage, plus a 6d Stg. fine. I cannot explain the manuscript '2', unless it was originally put on to show the difference between the two Cunard rates.

## TWO COVERS FROM FRANCE

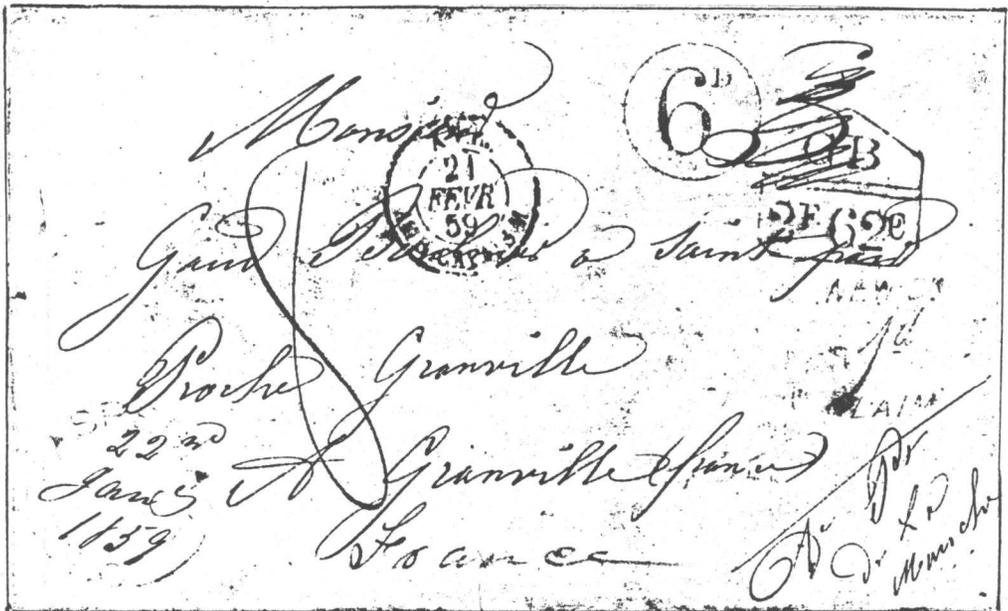
Allan Steinhart has a pair of covers to France from Paspebiac, L.C., which is in the Gaspé region on the south shore of the St. Lawrence River, near the eastern end of the province.

The first cover was postmarked on 1 July 1857 and rated 10d Cy. [8d Stg.] postage due, the rate to Britain via the United States and Cunard. It was first sent several hundred miles west to Quebec, as it was endorsed: 'Via Quebec & Liverpool', where it was dated on 8 July and put in a closed bag for London.



It was carried by the Cunard *Niagara* from Boston on 15 July and arrived at Liverpool on 26 July. It was dated at London, where the Anglo-French accountancy handstamp 'GB/3<sup>F</sup>02<sup>C</sup> [Salles Fig. 3043] was applied. Salles states that this was only used in 1857. This showed that the British were owed 3 francs 2 centimes per 30 grams under Article 37 of the Anglo-French Postal Agreement, effective from 1 January 1857. Another interesting feature on this cover is the early use of the 4-ring '37' Quebec cancel to obliterate the '8 Stg'. On being forwarded to France, it was datestamped at Calais and rated 10 décimes postage due.

The second cover is dated 22 January 1859 and was sent through the New Brunswick postal system. Originating in a Canadian post office, it was rated 3d Cy. postage due, which was crossed out. It went by the Carleton-Gaspé post office, through Newcastle to Sackville, N.B., where the 6d Stg. handstamp [E.15] was applied, together with a 'NEW B<sup>K</sup> 1d CLAIM' [F.12] accountancy handstamp. From there, it travelled along the north shore of New Brunswick to Halifax in a closed bag for London.



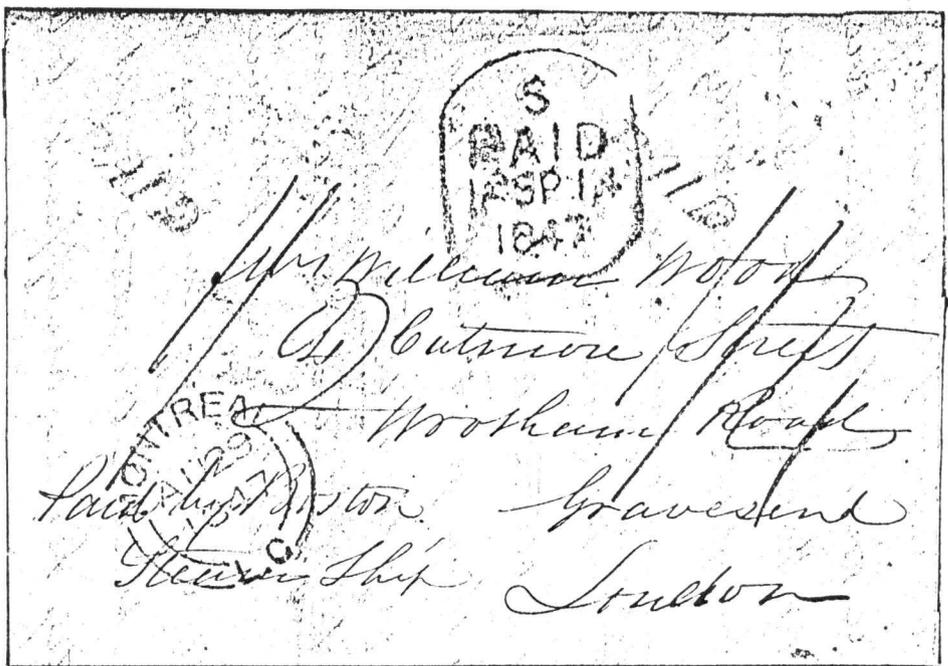
It was carried by the *Arabia* from Halifax on 11 February and arrived at Liverpool on 20 February. At London, an Anglo-French accountancy hand-stamp 'GB/2F62C' [Salles Fig. 3048], which superseded the 3f 2c stamp on 1 January 1858, and is stated to have only been used in 1858, although it was used here in 1859. This was the accountancy rate per 30 grams from Canada via the United States. As this letter went via Halifax, the rate should have been 2 francs per 30 grams, so this mark was used in error. At Calais, it was datestamped on 21 February and rated 8 décimes postage due.

### POSTAL HISTORY vs. SOCIAL HISTORY

There are times when the contents of a letter is more interesting than the story told by its markings on the outside, and here is an example.

This letter was written by John Wood in Montreal on 28 August 1847 and mailed on the following day with the 1/2 Stg.-1/4 Cy. postage prepaid. Travelling in a closed bag for London, it was carried by the Cunard *Cambria* from Boston on 1 September and arrived at Liverpool on 13 September. Reaching London on the next day, it was datestamped 'PAID'.

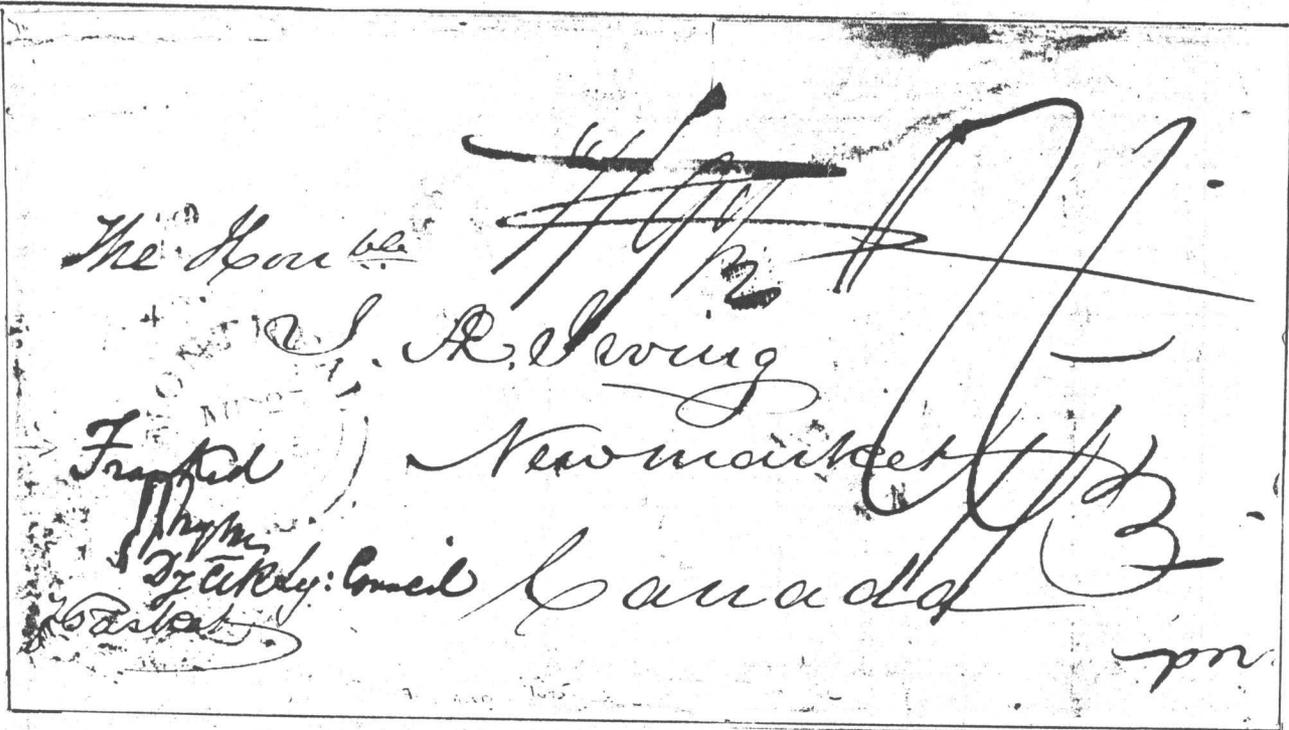
After discussing several personal matters, John Wood gave the following vivid description of the cholera epidemic current among the Irish immigrants and being transmitted to the local inhabitants:



'We have all enjoyed tolerable Good health notwithstanding the extreme hot weather and the Emigrant fever, numbers have fallen victim to it among ourselves and the excitement has been so great that neither Country People or Americans would come near us - there are still Dying at the Emigrant Hospital about 30 per day and about the same number at Grose Isle besides those who are Dying in every part of the Province. I have been very much among them and have seen many of them Die - the Mouth always becomes quite Putrid & black, the Tongue covered with a film which not only attracts the flies but holds them there - the symptoms of its approach is various Some of them comparatively well in health have swollen legs which is a fatal symptom - others become delirious and swell in the face - one poor man who came from Birmingham threw himself on my sympathy, as he had some Property I procured him a Lodging a short distance from the city with a Family name Burgess it appeared however that the fever was on him in a short time he died and in a few day Burgess also took the fever and Died leaving a Widow and two children - it has given me great pain, but few Persons feared or thought about the fever at the time and the Doctor distinctly told us his complaint was simply dysentery. Great numbers of our Catholic Priests have fallen victims from the fact that in receiving the confession & Giving the rites of the Church they are brought so immediately in contact with the Miasma or Poison - some idea of the appalling State of the Hospitals may be inferred by the fact that the Government are paying in Montreal alone for Doctors about £200 per week Many hundreds of these poor people who recover have to be provided for during the Winter as they are so ....ly emaciated as to be quite unable to do anything if they are even willing - Our harvest promises abundance but notwithstanding so many Emigrants have arrived Labourers are much wanted to get it in - in many cases the country people are affraid to look an Emigrant in the face, for though they are looking well and healthy, Yet set them to work and the fever developed and often ends not only in the death of the Emigrant but in the death of some members of the family.'

AN ODD RATE COVER

Allan Steinhart writes that this cover has several interesting features. It is dated 3 March 1845 from London, England and is addressed to J.Æ. Irving, a member of the Legislative Council, at Newmarket, U.C. It has a Montreal transit/receiving datestamp of 27 March and a Newmarket backstamp of 31 March.



The letter was carried by the *Cambria* on her second voyage from Liverpool on 4 March and arrived at Halifax on 16 March. The first interesting feature is that this was the last sailing to carry closed mails to Canada via Halifax; the next Cunard sailing was the *Caledonia* on 4 April, which carried the closed Canadian mails via Boston.

The cover appears to have been rated 7/- Stg. ocean postage due as a 3½-4 oz. letter. At Halifax, this was converted to 7/9½ Cy. and the B.N.A. colonial postage of 7 × 2d Stg. = 1/2 Stg., converted to 1/3 Cy. Steinhart

notes that the '1/3' is in red and that there is a 'PAID' handstamp. This suggests that the Halifax post office, knowing that Mr. Irving was a member of the Legislative Council, marked it thus and sent it to Montreal, as indicated by the datestamp, where it was endorsed: 'Franked [signature] Dy Clk Lg: Council', and sent on to Newmarket.

I have to confess that this last paragraph is my interpretation, rather than Allan's, and if any of the members want to try their hand at interpretation, please drop me a line.

As you will have seen in the July/August TOPICS, there is a meeting of our study group scheduled for 11:45 a.m. on Friday, 22 September at the Hamilton Sheraton. These meetings have in the past been quite disappointing, because there has been another study group with greater appeal at the same time. As a result, I have not organized anything, but hope that some members will find the time to get together so that we can have at least a general discussion of what the group could undertake in the coming year. Hopefully, I shall see you there.

Jack Arnell

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