



TRANSATLANTIC MAIL STUDY GROUP

OF THE
BRITISH NORTH AMERICA STUDY GROUP

Newsletter No. 42

Jack Arnell

September 1994

INTERCONTINENTAL POSTAL HISTORY SEMINAR

On 30-31 July 1994, there was a postal history seminar at the Stouffer Concourse Hotel, near Washington International Airport. This had been organized by two of our group members—Dick Winter of Virginia and James Van der Linden of Belgium. There were about twenty-five participants, with about forty percent from Europe and England. Allan Steinhart and I were the other group members present and who gave presentations.

It was a concentrated two days, as the meetings began at eight in the morning and continued until five-thirty in the afternoon, with two short breaks and a working lunch. Much of the material presented was related to early European postal history, which had a greater relevance to transatlantic mail than I had expected before the seminar. Fortunately, Dick and his associate had put together a large loose-leaf book with much of

the reference material discussed by the European participants, as well as some of our material as well for their benefit. As I have occasion to digest and use this information, I shall include any which might be a general interest to the group members in future newsletters.

Allan Steinhart gave a talk on Freight Money, illustrated with a handbook of his collection of these letters. It also contained a list of all such letters from B.N.A., of which he was aware. This was of the order of fifty, with additional ones continuing to come to light. My presentation was a slide show of correspondence during the War of 1812. This consisted of much of the material that I provided to Michael Rixon for the BNAPS video, which hopefully will be available by the Burlington BNAPEX.

NEWFOUNDLAND POSTAGE RATES

Paul Burega sent along transcripts from 1840 issues of the Newfoundland *Royal Gazette* giving rates of postage and other information related to the Island. Much of this information is in Bob Pratt's definitive study of Newfoundland postal history, including reproductions of these notices; however they are greatly reduced and dark, and not very easy to read. It also seems likely that many group members will not have the Pratt book, and will only have occasional need for this type of information. For these reasons, it is reproduced here.

Information published on 11 August 1840.

Rates of Postage between Newfoundland and the United Kingdom.

Letters posted in Newfoundland, addressed to any part of the United Kingdom, may be sent by Packet, unpaid, or the Postage may be paid by the sender.—If prepaid, the rates of Postage are as follows:—

On Letters not exceeding half an ounce in weight, one rate of postage—viz., One Shilling Sterling.

On Letters above half an ounce, and not exceeding one ounce, two rates,—viz. Two Shillings.

Above 1 Oz and not exceeding 2 Oz, 4 rates, 4s

" 2 " " " " 3 " 6 " 6s.

" 3 " " " " 4 " 8 " 8s.

Letters not to, or from, or passing through the United Kingdom, are still chargeable according to the old system of enclosures; that is to say, every Letter consisting of one sheet, or a single piece of paper, under the weight of

one ounce, shall be charged as a single Letters; and every Letter consisting of two sheets, or two pieces of paper, or containing any enclosure, shall be charged with double the rate of a single Letter; and every Letter consisting of three sheets, or three pieces of paper, or containing two enclosures, shall be charged with treble the rate of a single Letter; and no Letter shall be charged with a higher rate than a treble Letter, unless it be one ounce in weight, and in that case, whether it be a single or double or treble Letter, it shall be charged for one ounce, four times the postage of a single Letter; and for every quarter of an ounce beyond that weight, the postage of a single Letter, and all additional rates of postage shall be chargeable in like manner.

Sea Postage between Newfoundland and the other British Colonies, not paying through the United Kingdom.

For all Letters and Packets conveyed by Sea, from Newfoundland to any Port in the British Dominions In America, the charge is as follows:—

For every Single Letter	0	4d.	Sterling.
" " Double ditto	0	8d	"
" " Treble ditto	1	0	"
" " Ounce	1	4	"

And so on in proportion for every Packet of Deeds, Writs, or other things.

Ship Letters

By the 5th Geo. 3 Cap. 25 Sec. 4, a charge for every Letter and Packet delivered from any Ship or Vessel, other than Packet Boats, as shall be directed to any place within the Town belonging to the Port at which such Letter or Packet shall be landed, or within the limits of the delivery of Letters and Packets, a rate of One Penny over and above any inland rates to which the same may be liable.

Returned Letters.

Such Letters as may be directed to places within the Colony, and the parties to whom they are addressed cannot be found, also such as may be directed 'to be left till called for' but not claimed, and have remained in the

Office for a period of Three Months, must be returned to the Dead-Letter Office, London.

Delivery of Mails.

If the mail should arrive from Halifax before sunset, the Letters may be delivered the same evening; but if later, the Letters are to be delivered next morning.

Office Hours.

The Office to be kept open from 9 in the morning till 4 in the afternoon, and later on the arrival of any ships bringing letters; and the Office to be closed one hour only before the despatch of the Bags.

Strangers not to be admitted into the Office

No persons except those who are actually engaged in the business, and have made the declaration of Office, are upon any account to have access to the Office.

Letters not to be returned to the Writers

Letters, when once put into an Official Receiving Box, become the property of the person to whom addressed; and therefore, on no application, however urgent, and indeed under no authority whatever, can they be returned to the writers, or to any persons for them—or any alteration allowed to be made to their addresses. Writers of Letters wishing to rectify mistakes, must do it by writing other letters.

Notice to all Ship Masters

Notice is hereby given to all masters of Vessels entering the Port of St. John's Newfoundland, from this date, that they are bound by the 1st Vict. Cap 34 Sec. 24, which enacts that no vessel shall be permitted by any Officer of Customs to break bulk or to make entry in any Port of the British Dominions until all Letters on board the same (with the exceptions therein mentioned) shall be delivered to the Post Office; and the 1st Vict. Cap 36 Sec. 6, enacts that every Master of a Vessel who shall break bulk or make entry before all Letters on board shall be sent to the Post Office, shall forfeit £20.

EXTRACTS FROM INSTRUCTIONS

1st.—The rate of Postage chargeable on Ship letters between Her Majesty's Colonies, and between the said Colonies and any Foreign Port, not passing through the United Kingdom, is on Letters not exceeding 1/2 an ounce in weight 4d. above 1/2 an ounce and not exceeding an ounce 8d. and so on in proportion must in all cases, be paid when the Letters are posted, and no unpaid letter can be forwarded.

2nd.—Letters by private Ship from any of the places undermentioned (not passing through the United Kingdom) but which arrive in the Ship's Bay [Bag?], or as loose letters, not having been forwarded through the Post Office at the place of departure, will be subject on arrival at Newfoundland to the sea postage of 4d. if not exceeding 1/2 ounce weight, and so on in proportion, — Viz.

Quebec, Halifax, Bermuda, Jamaica, Barbados, Dominica, Antigua, Nevis, St. Kitt's, Tortola, St. Lucia, St. Vincents, Tobago, Grenada, Trinidad, Berbice, Demerara, Bahamas, Carriacou, Montserrat.

3rd.—The following is also a summary of the various rates of postage chargeable on letters under half an ounce, passing between British North America, and the following countries, through the United Kingdom, in addition to the internal Colonial rates to which they are subject.

BY PACKET.

	s.	d.
France	1	0
Germany	2	8
Do. specially directed via France	2	4
Holland	2	4
Belgium	2	4
Switzerland	2	2
Spain, via France	2	7
Italy, Sicily, Venetian Lombardy, Turkey, &c.	2	7
Egypt	3	3
Spain, via Cadiz	3	2
Portugal	2	7
Brazil	3	7
Buenos Ayres, Chili, Peru	3	5
Mexico, Columbia, and Cuba	3	1
St. Domingo	2	3

Extracts from the Act 3d & 4th Vict. Cap. 96.

And be it enacted, that the Owners, Charterers, or Consignees of Vessels inward bound, and the Owners, Consignees, or Shippers of Goods on board Vessels inward bound, shall have their Letters by such Vessels free from postage (except as hereinafter mentioned) if delivered at the Port of the Ship's arrival; and if delivered at any other place within the United Kingdom, on Payment of the Postage, as on pre paid Inland Letters, according to the scale of weight and number of rates herein-before mentioned, from the Port of arrival to the place of delivery, and if delivered in any of Her Majesty's Colonies, on payment of the Colonial rates of Postage to which Letters in such Colony may be liable, on conveyance from such Port of arrival to the place of delivery, provided the Letters brought by any one Vessel to any one such Person shall not collectively exceed Six ounces in weight, and the Owner, Charterer, or Consignee shall be described as such on the address and superscription; and in the case of Owners, Shippers, or Consignees of Goods, it shall also appear by the Ship's Manifest that they have Goods on board the Vessel; and the Persons hereby exempted shall be entitled to have their Letters which come within the above conditions before the Master of the Vessel delivers the other Letters in his charge to the Post Office: Provided nevertheless, that all Ship Letter gratuities payable by Law to Masters of Vessels bringing any such Letters shall in all cases be paid to the Post Office by the parties to whom the same may be addressed (in addition to any Postage payable thereon) before delivery of such Letters to the parties entitled to receive the same, whether such Letters shall be delivered at the Port of arrival of such Vessel or elsewhere.

The principal Officer of Customs at every Port shall search every Vessel for Letters which may be on board contrary to the Post Office Acts, and may seize all such Letters and forward them to the nearest Post Office.

And be it enacted, that printed Newspapers may be sent free of Postage, or liable to Postage according to the regulations and rates herein after set forth; (that is to say,)

Between the United Kingdom and Her Majesty's Colonies, as follows:

By Packet Boats to any of Her Majesty's Colonies and Possessions beyond the Seas, free.

By private Ships, One Penny each.

And be it enacted, that no printed Paper, whether Newspapers or Votes and Proceedings in parliament, or of the Colonial Legislature, shall be sent by the Post, either free or at the aforesaid rates of Postage, unless the following conditions shall be observed:

First, It shall be sent without a cover, or in a cover open at the sides.

Second, There shall be no word or communication printed on the Paper after its publication, or upon the cover thereof, nor any writing or marks upon it or upon the cover of it, except the name and address of the person to whom sent.

Third, There shall be no Paper or Thing enclosed in or with any such Paper:

Fourth, The said printed papers shall be put into the Post office at such hours in the day, and under all such regulations, as the Postmaster General may appoint.

And be it enacted, that in all cases in which the Postage of any unstamped Letter

shall not have been paid by the sender, it shall be paid by the Person to whom the Letter is addressed on the delivery thereof to him: but if the Letter be refused, or the party to whom it is addressed shall be dead, or cannot be found, the writer or sender shall pay the Postage; and this enactment shall apply to every Packet, Newspaper, and Thing whatsoever chargeable with Postage which is transmitted by the Post.

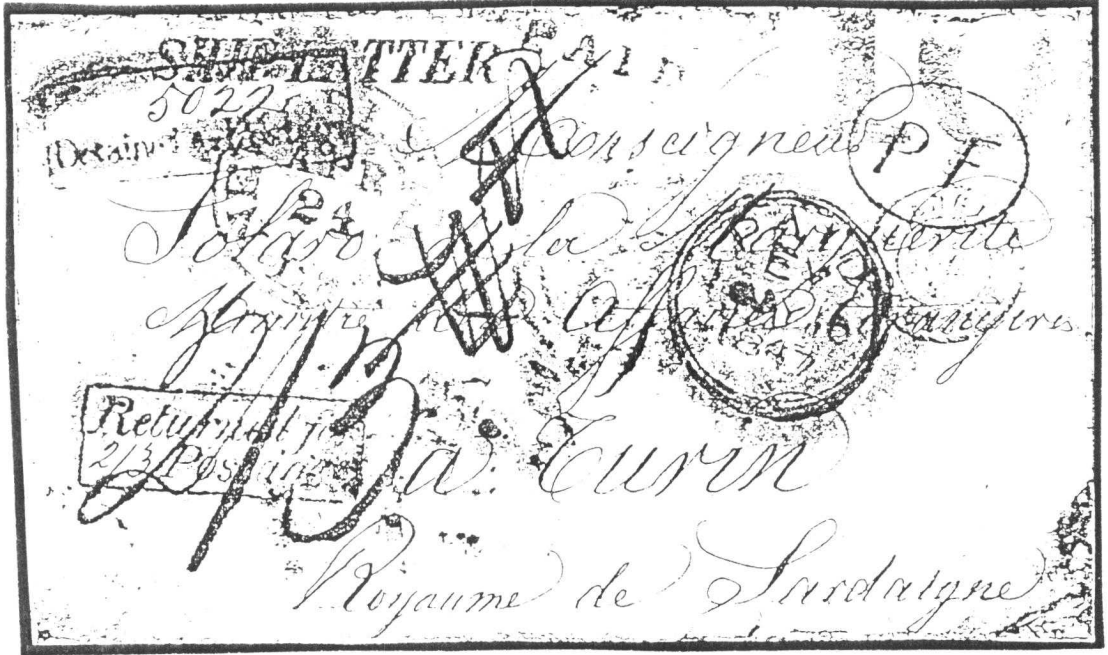
Extract from Treasury Warrant.

And we further direct, that on all printed prices current and printed commercial lists conveyed by packet boat, or by any vessel from any of her Majesty's colonies, addressed to any place within the United Kingdom, there shall be charged and taken a rate of postage of one penny each; and on all such printed prices current and commercial lists, passing through the United Kingdom, there shall be charged and taken a rate of British postage of two pence each.

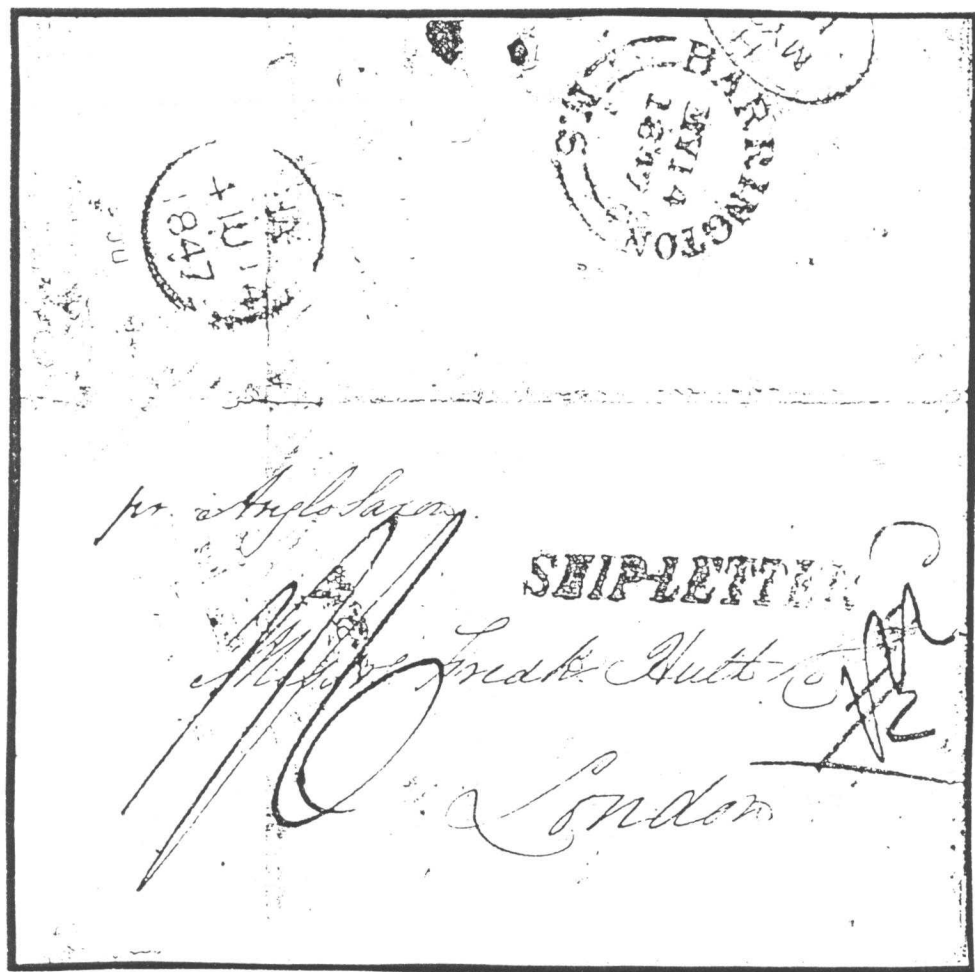
[To ensure the benefit of this reduction, it is required the 2d. should be paid when posted.]

SALVAGED LETTERS

The two letters reproduced here were contributed by Allan Steinhart and, although from the United States, are of interest to B.N.A. collectors because they landed on the rocks of Nova Scotia on their way across the Atlantic.



The letter shown on the previous page was mailed at New Orleans on 24 April 1847 with 10 cents inland postage to Boston prepaid. It was carried by the sailing packet *Anglo-Saxon* of Train's Line from Boston early in May. Allan noted that the vessel was wrecked on Duck Island, Shag Harbour on the southern tip of Nova Scotia in a thick fog on 8 May. The Mails were salvaged and taken to Barrington, where this letter was struck with 'SHIP-LETTER', rated 4d. Stg. postage due as an inbound ship letter, backstamped on 14 May; and forwarded to Halifax, where it received the packet office oval on 20 May and was rated 3s. 4d. Stg. postage due. It was carried by the Cunard *Britannia* from there on 3 June and arrived at Liverpool on 13 June. At London, it was detained because of the postage due—now set at 2s. 3d. Stg.—there being no means of collecting this from Sardinia, and held until this was paid on 10 July, when it was forwarded through France.



This letter was dated at Boston on 1 May 1847 and marked 'pr. Anglo Saxon'. It was handled in the same way as the above, also being rated 4d. Stg. postage due as a ship letter at Barrington. Halifax added the regular 1s. 2d. Stg. packet and colonial postage. At London, it was marked with a total postage due of 1s. 6d. Stg.

There are relatively few salvaged transatlantic letters from the early days of steam. I have several, at least one of which has been written up elsewhere in years past, but it seems worthwhile including them here for the record.

Several of the early wooden Cunard steamers had narrow escapes. The *Hibernia* struck a reef off Cape Race in a fog on 5 November 1845. Although badly leaking, she lay off at anchor overnight until her position could be determined and then was able to limp into St. John's,

where with the help of the crew of HMS *Hyacinth*, the bow was beached and sufficient repairs made to allow the voyage to Liverpool to be completed. In mid-September 1847, the *Britannia* had the same experience in a fog off Cape Race on a westbound voyage, but was able to get off with a high tide and continue to Halifax, where repairs were made.

The first total loss suffered by a main-line Cunard steamer in the first decades of steam was the *Columbia* on a passage out of Boston on 1 July 1843. The following day went in a dense fog off southern Nova Scotia, she ran hard aground on Seal Island and could not be refloated. The passengers and mails were landed on the nearby mainland and were collected by the small Cunard reserve steamer *Margaret*—based at Halifax—and taken there. There being no regular packet as a result of *Columbia*'s loss, the *Margaret* left on 9 July with the *Columbia*'s Mails and arrived at Liverpool on 23 July. The letter shown below was written in Kingston, U.C. on 23 June and mailed two days later with 25 cents U.S. postage to Boston prepaid. It was in the salvaged *Columbia* Mail and taken in a closed bag for London by the *Margaret*, where it is backstamped on 24 July and rated 2s. 0d. Stg. postage due as a double weight letter.

The Reverend G. Alder D.D.
Secretary of the Miss. Socy.
Centenary Hall & Mission House
Bp. Gate Street, within
London
England

Honre July 25th 48
Pres. of the Miss. Socy.
Recd - G. W. Johnson
Bishop's Church St John's
Newfoundland

Stamp: L JY 6
Stamp: BOROUGH
Stamp: 5
Stamp: 1848

LOSS OF GROUP MEMBERS

I am sorry to have to report that it has been necessary to drop quite a number of the study group members because they did not respond to the request for another contribution to keep the newsletter coming. Some, I am quite sure, probably meant to send something along but did not get around to it; while others found the newsletter of little interest and did not have the courtesy to write and ask to be dropped—several did.

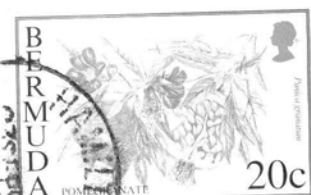
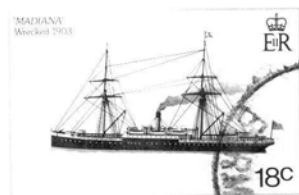
I did not take the names off the mailing list when I first threatened to do so, but sent a couple more newsletters, with reminders on them. I saw several of the delinquents in the interim and collected from them.

After all this, the group is eight smaller at the moment. Perhaps some of those dropped will join again.

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AIRMAIL

PRINTED MATTER



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