



TRANSATLANTIC MAIL STUDY GROUP
OF THE
British North American Philatelic Society

Newsletter No. 56

March 1997

CONSIGNEES' LETTERS

Some months ago, Jack Arnell kindly sent me a collection of notes and photocopies, principally in connection with consignees' letters - I wanted to keep them together rather than use them piecemeal, as I see this as a little-known area. This is the first opportunity that I have had to devote an entire Newsletter to the subject.

My ignorance of this subject was absolute, so with the addition of a colour illustration, searches through Alan Robertson's *'Maritime Postal History of the British Isles'*, and various Post Office publications, all of which proved largely nugatory, I have quoted Jack Arnell at length - pretty much all the words are his.

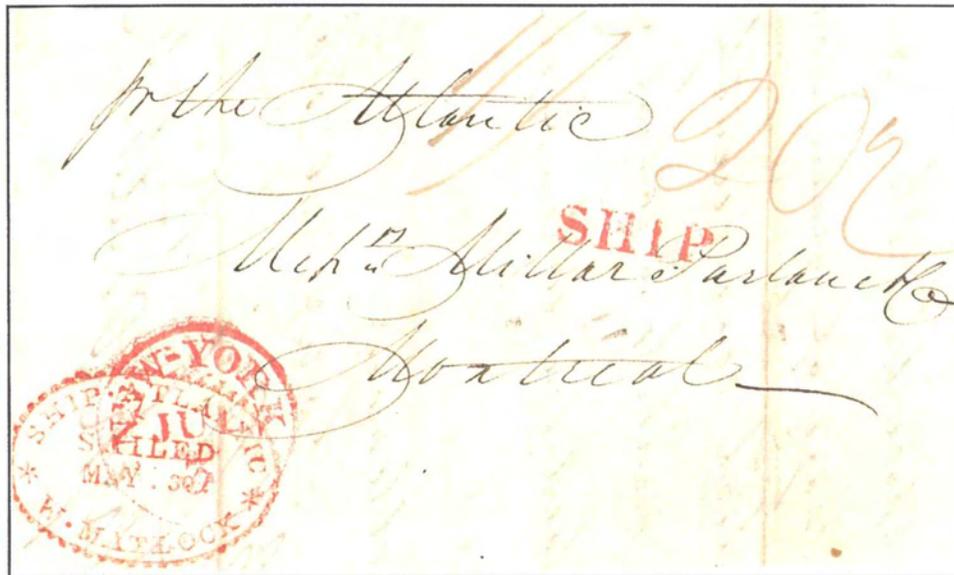


Figure 1: Liverpool to Montreal, carried by the sailing ship 'Atlantic'.

The more observant will have noticed that the 'colour illustration' has no connection whatsoever with the main subject, but I do not have a consignee's letter to use ... The letter above was carried, apparently without any United Kingdom prepayment of postage, by the ship 'Atlantic', from Liverpool to New York. The ship sailed on 30th May 1819, and the ship's master, W. Matlock, marked the letter accordingly, using his personal handstamp. I understand that Mr Matlock was one of two ships' masters on the Atlantic routes who used a

private handstamp (other examples would be welcome). 'Atlantic' made New York on 3rd July, and the letter was handed to the post office as a ship letter, to be charged 20³/₄ cents: 2 cents ship letter fee and 18³/₄ cents United States postage, the rate for 150-400 miles (*U.S. Act 1825*). In Canada, the letter was charged '1/7' (Currency), being 1s 1d for the 20³/₄ cents United States postage carried forward (computed at 1c = 0.6d Cy, rounded-up), and 6d Currency British Colonial postage, the 'all-up' rate from the Border to Montreal.

EXEMPT SHIP LETTER

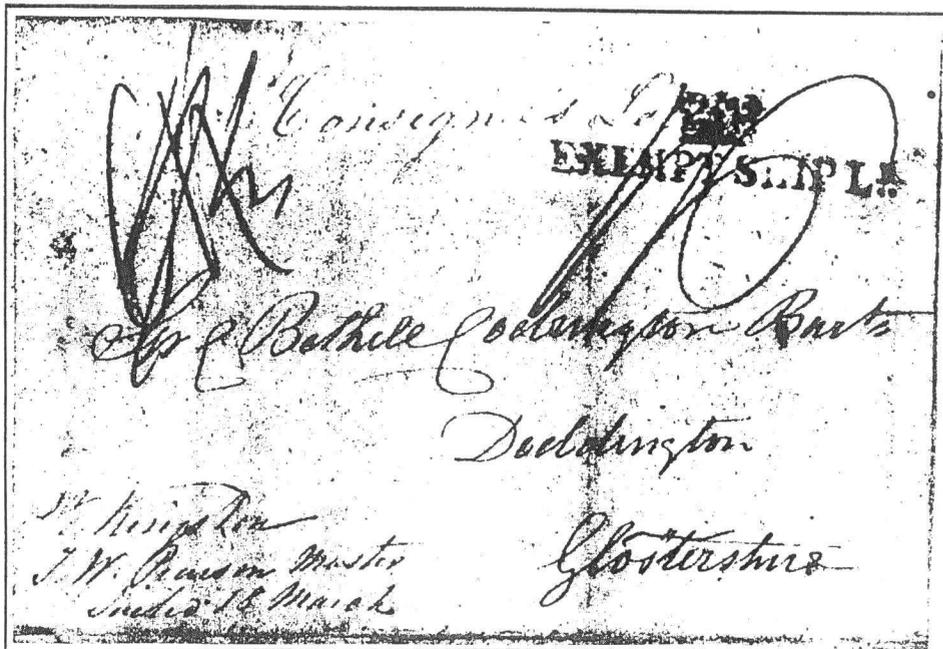


Figure 2: Barbuda to Doddington, 11th March 1833.

LONDON

EXEMPT SHIP LETTER

1832-45, letters 4mm.

EXEMPT SHIP LETTER

1841-55, letters 5mm.

EXEMPT-SHIP-LETTER

1859, letters 4mm.

Of 'Exempt Ship Letters' I have very little information, and will quote from Robertson's 'Maritime Postal History': 'No concessions were granted in respect of letters carried within the kingdom, but with the development of overseas trade in the early 18th Century, it was conceded and enacted in 1710 (9 Anne, 1710, Cap. 10) that "Letters of Merchants and Master Owners of any Ships, Barques or Vessels of Merchandise, or any cargo of Lading therein on board such Ships, whereof such Merchants or Masters are Owners, delivered by any such Masters on any such Ships, or by any other persons employed by them, for the carriage of such Letters by their respective Directions, such letters to be delivered to the respective persons to who they shall be directed, without paying or receiving any hire or reward, advantage or profit for the same in any wise."

A few years later the following proviso was added: "Proviso for Merchants. By Stat. 6 Geo. I. c. 21. f. 52. This Proviso is confined to Merchants' Accounts, etc, not exceeding one sheet of paper, and all Bills of Exchange, Invoices and Bills of Lading, are and shall hereby be understood to be allowed without Rate in the price of Letters; and likewise the Covers of Letters not exceeding one fourth part of a sheet of paper, shall be understood to be allowed to pass without rate or payment for the same." This practice of "exemption" was therefore one of very long standing. Subsequent Acts confirmed and modified the maximum total weight of letters exempt from ship letter charge sent by Owners, Charterers or Consignees. The Consignees name had to appear on the ship's manifest, proving that he had goods aboard the vessel carrying his letters. Prior to the 1830s no

GB "Exempt Ship Letter" handstamps have been recorded on incoming ship letters. A single example, found on an outbound letter, is recorded over the letter-join on the back of a letter sent to the Cape of Good Hope from London in 1814 (Robertson's footnote states: 'This type of crown, etc, indicates that this was doubtless a Cape handstamp'). The known handstamps appear to have been used at the London Ship Letter Office only until 1840, when a "LIVERPOOL EXEMPT SHIP LETTER" handstamp was issued to that port. At other ports of entry, the manuscript endorsement "Consignee's Letter" (supported by the entry in the ship's manifest) appears to have sufficed. The handstamps are scarce.'

Robertson shows no examples from or to British North America, and only one from the United States: a letter carried by the 'Stephen Whitney' in 1847, which may have originated in New York. It was charged threepence. I have borrowed (Figure 2) his illustration of a letter from Barbuda dated 11th March 1833, to Doddington via Hastings and London: "Per Kingston. T.W. Pearson, Master. Sailed 18th March." Inland charge only (the letter is from the Codrington correspondence (JW432) and Robson Lowe is acknowledged).

LIVERPOOL

LIVERPOOL
EXEMPT SHIP

4th September 1840 - 1864.

BILL OF LADING, 1829

Shipped, in good order and condition, by ALAN KER & CO., AGENTS for
John Parker Esq in the good Ship or Vessel called the *Carl Dalhousie*
whereof *James Boyd* is Master for this present Voyage,
now riding at anchor in the River Clyde, and bound for *London*
to say,

Two Millstones

on account and risk, as w^{t} Invoice; being marked and numbered as in the margin, and are to be delivered in the like good order and condition, at the Port of *LONDON*
(the Act of God, the King's Enemies, Fire, and all and every other Dangers and Accidents of the Seas, Rivers, and Navigation, of whatever Nature and Kind, excepted,) unto
or to *The Honble Mr. Stewart Esq* Assigns. Freight for the said Goods to be paid *by the Shipper at the rate of Twelve*

Shillings per

with Average accustomed: In witness whereof, the Master or Mate of the said Ship hath affirmed to *five* Bills of Lading, all of this tenor and date; the one of which Bills being accomplished, the others to stand void. Dated in GREENOCK,

James Boyd 25 Aug. 1829

Figure 3a: Bill of Lading by Alan Kerr & Co., Greenock, 25th August 1829.

JE & 2 Millstones

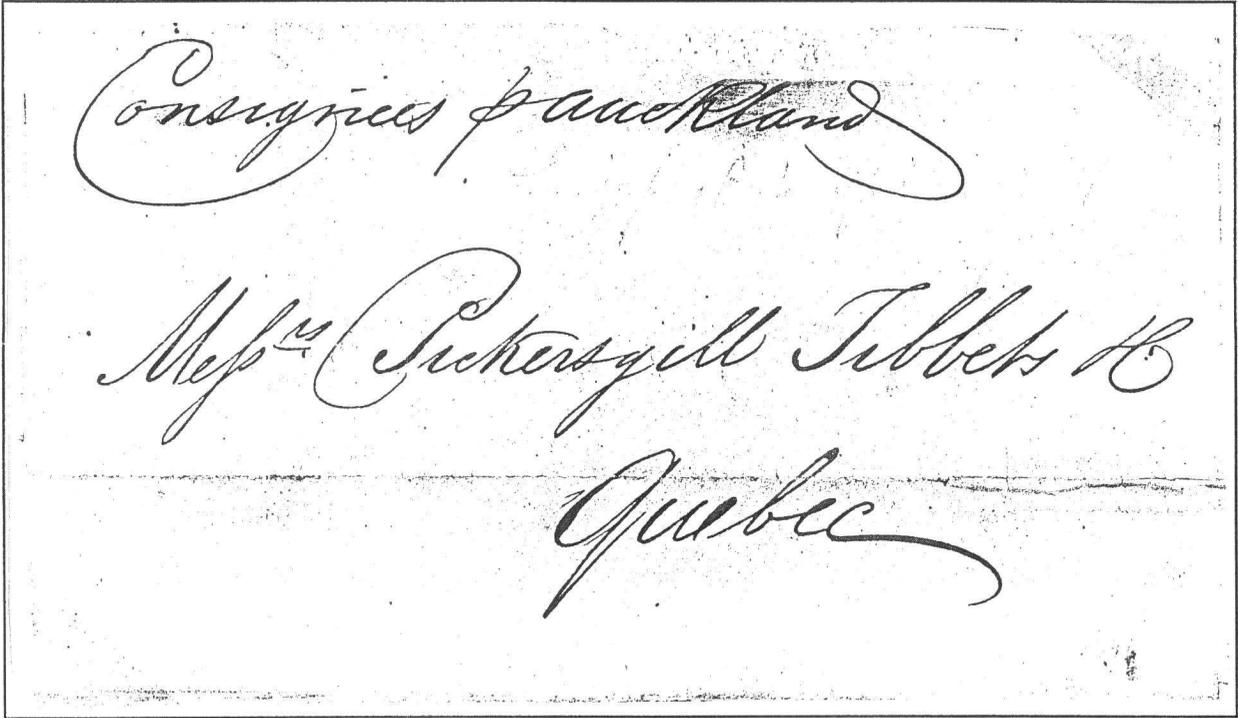
N^o 23 1/4 Tons

Figure 3b: '... being marked and numbered as in the Margin'.

CONSIGNEES LETTERS, 1844

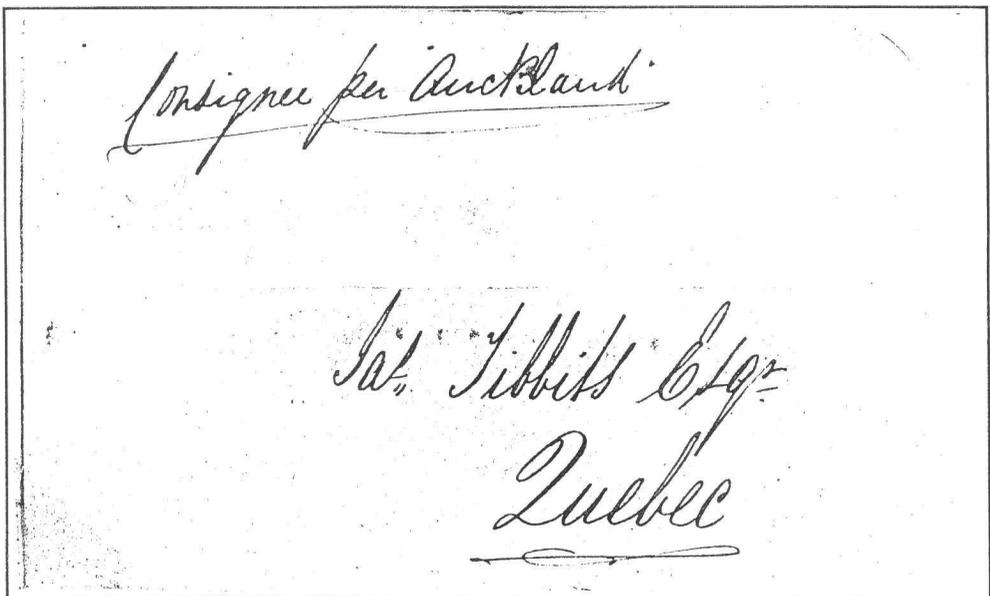
Letters from Fielding Brothers & Company and from Gibbs Bright, both of Liverpool, dated 6th 1844, with bills of lading relating to shipments on the 'Auckland'. As such, the letters were marked

'Consignee' and were permitted to be carried by the ship's captain along with the cargo, without any charge for delivery. No charges have been raised at Quebec.



Consignees per Auckland
Messrs Puckersill Tibbets & Co
Quebec

Figure 4: Consignees' Letter, Fielding Bros & Co., from Liverpool to Quebec, 6th April 1844.



Consignees per Auckland
Messrs Tibbets & Co
Quebec

Figure 5: Consignees' Letter, Gibbs, Bright & Co., from Liverpool to Quebec, 6th April 1844.

CONSIGNEE'S LETTERS 1849/50 & 1854

A letter and invoice from Momson and Dillon, London, dated 24th August 1849 for: 'One package #440# shipped per the 'Pearl', Chalmers, Consigned to the addressee, representing Customs, Freight, Insurance, etc, at £9 8s 6d'. It reached

Montreal on 20th May 1850, and was rated one penny postage as a Consignee's Letter accompanying the shipment. The delay was presumably associated with the St. Lawrence freeze-up.

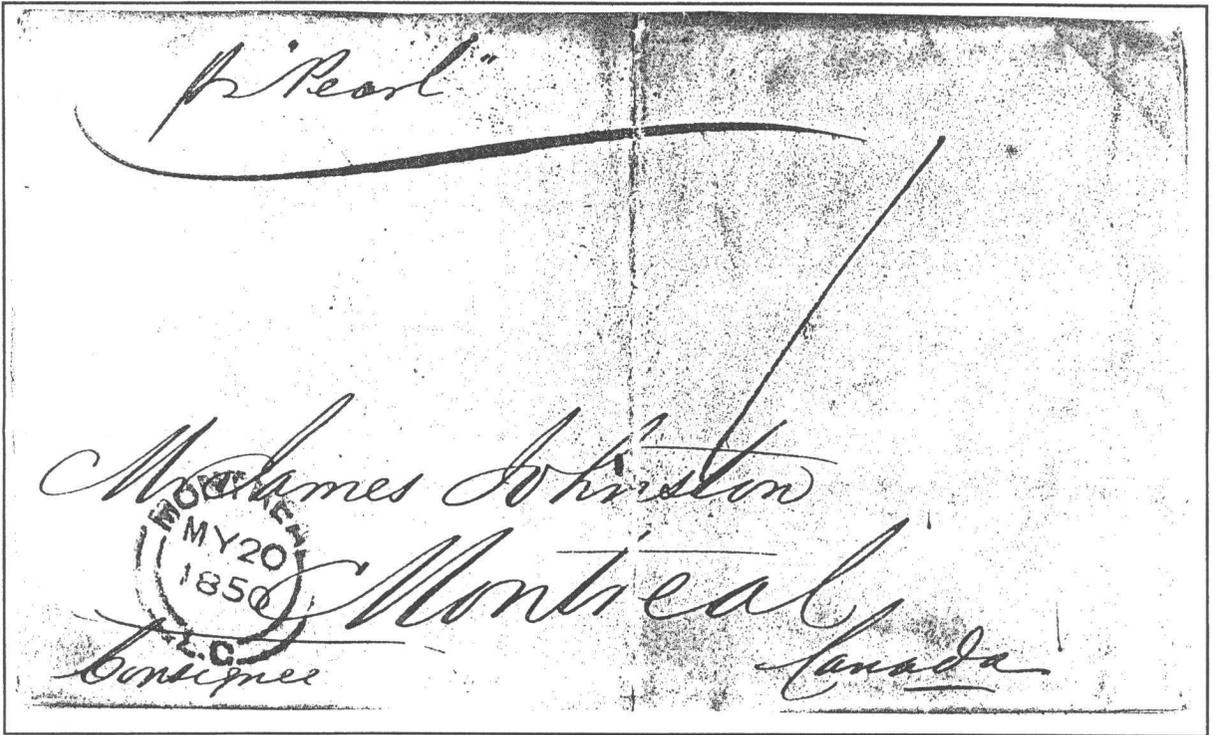


Figure 6: London, to Montreal, 24th August 1849.

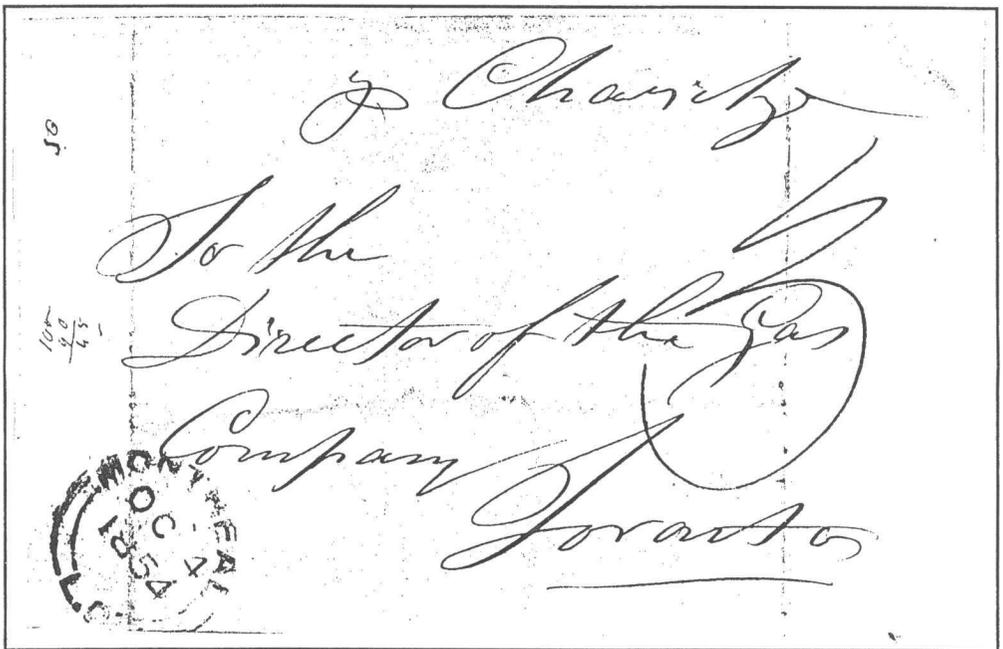


Figure 7: Liverpool to Montreal, 15th September 1854.

Arthur Linley Co., Liverpool, letter with lamps and gas fittings to David Billhouse, Montreal, for Toronto; carried by the 'Charity' (Canadian Steam Navigation Co.), from Liverpool, 15th September 1854, to Quebec on 2nd October. The

letter has a Toronto arrival mark of 7th October 1854; it travelled post-free to Montreal, as a Consignee's Letter, but was then charged threepence Currency, the inland postage established on 6th July 1851.

PROVINCE OF CANADA, }
 DISTRICT OF QUEBEC. }

I, Archibald Campbell,

Her Majesty's Notary for the District
 of Quebec, and Notary Public for that
 part of the Province of Canada here-
 tofore called Lower-Canada, being duly

authorized and appointed by WILLIAM HOPKINS, the Master and Commander of the
 Barque or Vessel called the "PERSIAN," belonging to the Port of Newcastle, and
 by the Consignees and Owners of the cargo shipped on board the said Vessel, to
 settle and adjust the amount of charges, expenses, &c., to which the ship and cargo
 are liable and to establish the average or sums to be paid by the owners of the said
 ship and by the consignees and owners of the said cargo under and by virtue of the
 Obligation or Bond under the hands and seals of the said consignees and owners,

DO hereby declare that the sum of *Two pounds four*
shillings
 Halifax currency, is the proportion of charges and expenses awarded to be due
 and payable on the goods shipped on board the said vessel and consigned

to *The Toronto Gas Company*
 as per statement forwarded with the Original Protest, &c., to Messrs. W.
 Fisher & Son, Liverpool, for the use of the consignees and owners of goods laden
 on board the said vessel: copies of which statement of average and of the various
 documents connected therewith have been also forwarded to Lloyd's.

Witness my hand at Quebec, this Seventeenth day of March, in the
 year of Our Lord one thousand eight hundred and fifty-one.

Archibald Campbell
 Her Majesty's Notary
Notary Public

Figure 8: Bill of Apportionment for the 'Persian' at Quebec, 17th March 1851.

CONSIGNEE'S LETTERS - 1858 & 1865

Part of a notice from H. Gould, London, dated 23rd February 1858, with the invoice for a prismatic compass valued at £5. 5s. Struck with the '1^d' when mailed to show the British debit. Carried by 'Canada' from Liverpool on 27th February, arriving Boston on 12th March 1858, it

was passed to Montreal in the closed bag, arriving there the following day, to be charged '2½d' Currency postage due. It was used to clear the compass through customs, and has a customs datestamp of 13th March, and a 'FREE' (with initials) inside.

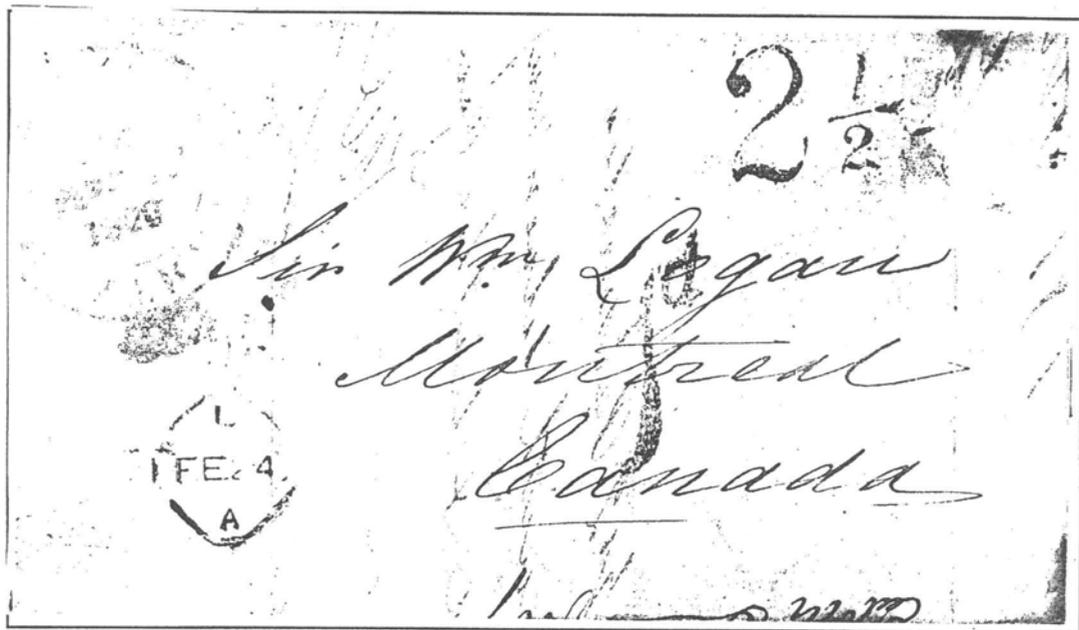


Figure 9: London to Montreal, viâ Boston, 23rd February 1858.



Figure 10: Glasgow to Quebec, thence to Ottawa, 1865.

Envelope marked 'Consignee Per ss St. David'. This steamer was commissioned in 1864 for the Glasgow-Quebec service, carrying passengers and freight, but no regular mail. The letter was

mailed at Quebec on 4th November 1865, and struck 'FREE', as it was directed to an official. Re-addressed to Ottawa and dated on the reverse at Montreal the following day.

CONSIGNEES LETTERS - 1861 & 1868

Two notices of shipment, the first of clay retorts with a bill of lading and invoice from Gillespie Borthwick & Co., on the 'Samuel Boddington', the second for 13½ tons of fire clay in 100lb bags, from John Ferguson, on the 'Saint Devenick'.

Both letters were mailed on arrival in Montreal, on 12th June 1861 and 14th August 1868 respectively; being unpaid, they were rated at seven cents and five cents postage due. They bear Toronto arrival marks each on the day following dispatch.

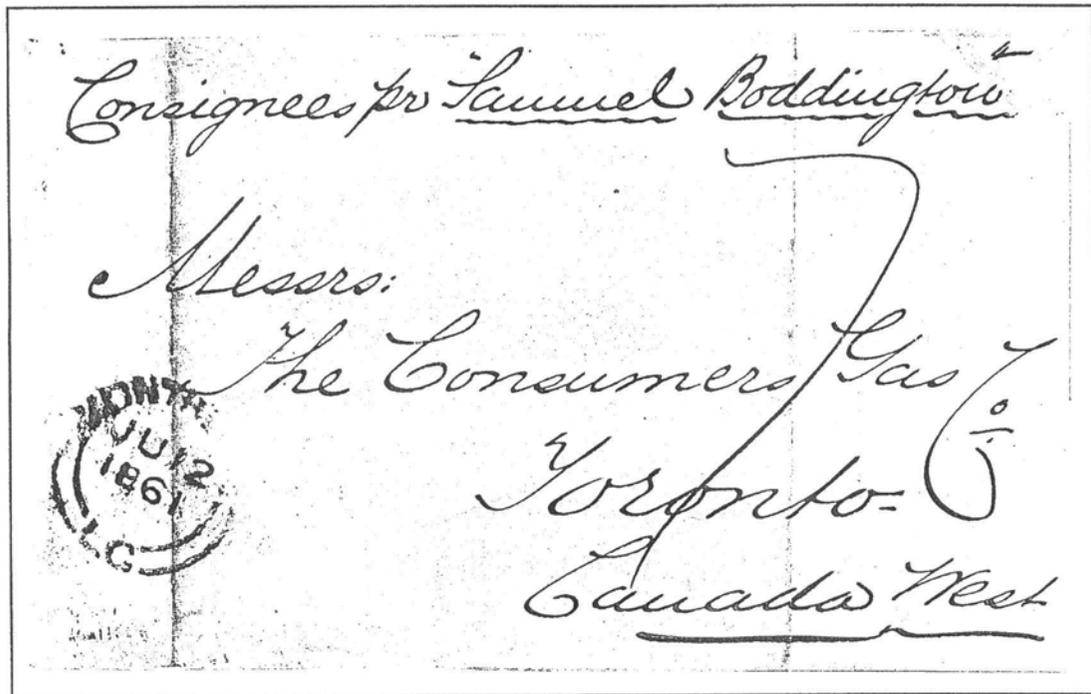


Figure 11: Liverpool to Toronto, viâ Montreal, 26th April 1861.

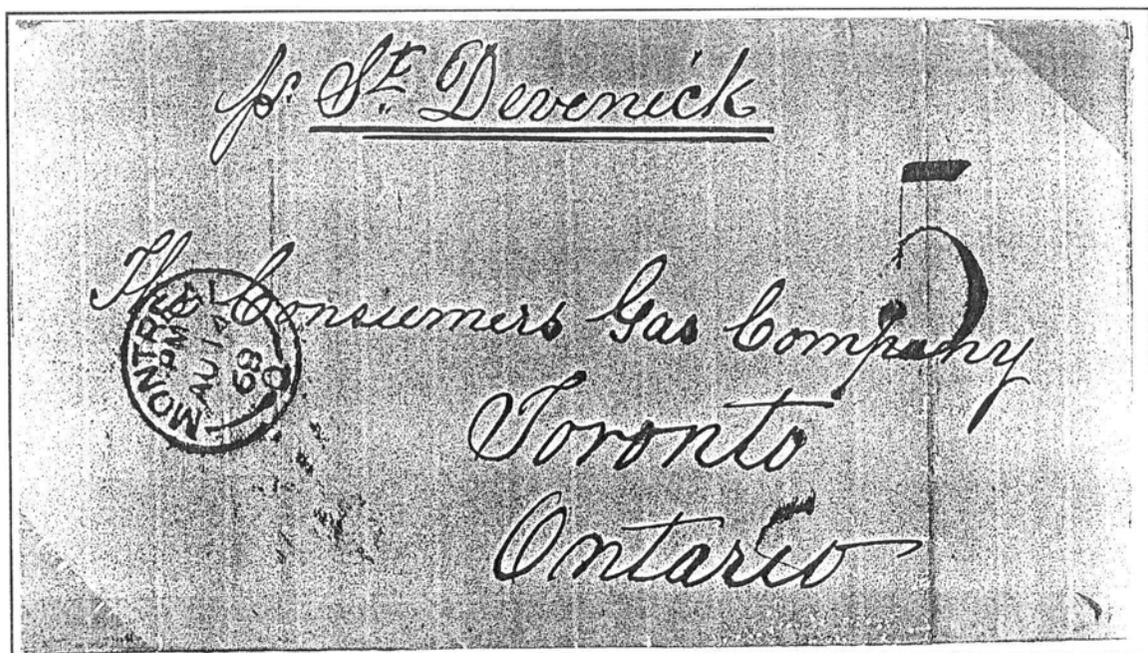


Figure 12: Liverpool to Toronto, viâ Montreal, 1st July 1868.

POLYMETRIC TABLE OF AMERICA,

CORRECTED AND IMPROVED,

Shewing the DISTANCES between the PRINCIPAL TOWNS.

N. B. The distance in British miles, between two places, is found in the small square at the intersection of the lines, drawn both ways, from those places; as for example, the distance from *Detroit* to *Williamsburgh* 659 miles; from *Charlottesville* to *Quebec* 1396 miles

Albany, in New-York	391	Alexandria (or Bellhaven) in Virginia	243
	168	Amboy, East New-Jersey	217
	371	ANNAPOLIS, Maryland	498
	524	Boston, in New-England	281
	150	Burlington, West New-Jersey	333
	206		165
	970	CHARLESTOWN, South-Carolina	750
	140	Crown-Point, New-York	1096
	695	Fort Detroit, Province of Quebec	835
	583		1139
	458	Fort Duquesne (now Pittsburgh) Pennsylvania	350
	305		723
	680	Frederickburgh, Virginia	281
	295		521
	452	Fort Frontenac, Province of Quebec	763
	270		550
	692	HALIFAX, Nova Scotia	940
	170		1115
	464	Lancaster, Pennsylvania	972
	328		175
	229	Marlborough, Virginia	175
	146		119
	425	Montreal, Province of Quebec	722
	225		500
	1605	New BERN, South-Carolina	962
	220		273
	186	Newcastle, Delaware Counties	428
	440		534
	229	Newhaven, Connecticut	221
	146		649
	425	NEWPORT, Rhode-Island	110
	225		331
	1605	Falls of Niagara, Province of Quebec	571
	220		595
	186	Olwego, New-York	200
	440		371
	229	PENSACOLA, West-Florida	1826
	146		1671
	425	PHILADELPHIA, Pennsylvania	1322
	225		454
	1605	Prince-Town, West New-Jersey	43
	220		1415
	186	QUEBEC	626
	440		669
	229		2041
	146	ST. AUGUSTINE, East-Florida	1726
	425		1100
	225	SAVANNAH, Georgia	220
	1605		1506
	220	WILLIAMSBURGH, Virginia	534
	186		754
	440	Winchester, Virginia	174
	229		708
	146		9283
	425		5
	225		259
	1605		166
	220		1243
	186		670
	440		619
	229		313
	146		512
	425		402
	225		110
	1605		334
	220		665
	186		92
	440		100
	229		1015
	146		750
	425		84
	225		283
	1605		632
	220		597
	186		518
	440		189
	229		584
	146		80
	425		291
	225		86
	1605		445

THE NEXT NEWSLETTERS

My apologies for the delay in publishing this edition of the Newsletter - I have no excuse, this delay was entirely due to me allowing myself to become distracted into preparing parts of my own collection for a couple of club presentations I had promised. I will be more punctual in future! The next issue will be used to cover a number of letters which have been sent to me, but which do not necessarily fit into any particular category.

In April/May I will return to registered mail, including 20th Century material, then the second part of the 'soldiers' letters'. In the summer I will devote some space to late fees, printed papers and newspapers (the last of these categories will need some assistance - I have very little in this area). Towards the end of the year I would like to look at the Maritime Provinces, perhaps interspersed with some modern material. Your suggestions would be very welcome.

From:

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

PRINTED MATTER
AIR MAIL OUTSIDE UK

Mr Clarence A Stillions *
2010 48th Street NW,
Washington,
DC 20007-1552
USA



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