

CPSGB CONVENTION 2025 – CANADA’S DECIMAL PERIOD 1859 – 1868; **SOME POSTAL HISTORY**

This display is a combination of some covers from my own collection and many from the Camellia PLC collections. It is arranged in much the same order as Arfken and Leggett used for their seminal book on the subject. You will therefore see covers in the following order:-

- Domestic Mail
- Mail to the Maritimes
- Mail to the United States and British Columbia
- Mail to the United Kingdom
- Mail to Europe
- Mail to Newfoundland and the Caribbean
- Mail to the Far East and Australasia

The display is not intended to be a comprehensive show of the rates. Rather, it aims to feature the unusual and rarely seen. It even includes a couple of stampless covers.

And for those who may covet the Camellia covers..... Eastern Auctions are about to sell them; but you might need to have a wee chat with your bank manager beforehand!

Attribution for the covers is shown thus:-

S – the Searle collection

C – the Camellia PLC collection

A WORD ABOUT CAMELLIA PLC.

Camellia grew out of the tea business – once the largest privately owned tea company in the world. Now also into other areas of agri business. Employs over 75000 people worldwide.

The founder of Camellia, Gordon Fox, is a member of CPSGB. He is now retired, and lives in Switzerland.

Camellia also has an Investment Division. This invests in a portfolio of listed stocks, some significant property holdings (mainly in London) and a collection of art, philately and manuscripts.

The philately is essentially a large holding of 18th and 19th century BNA stamps and postal history – a particular interest of Gordon who was instrumental in acquiring much of it over a period of some 40 to 50 years.

The philatelic material, which includes many 100's if not 1000's of covers, was until recently housed in London and had a curator, Richard Berry, who is also a member of CPSGB. It contains a fair amount of what some may regard as duplication – for example 6 of the 13 known Cents period covers to China – albeit with different frankings.

About 10 years ago, Malcolm Montgomery, who was researching a book on Transatlantic mail, got access to the Camellia collections. He came away armed with 100's of scans of the album pages. Most relate to mail that crossed the Atlantic.

Malcolm and I properly researched many of the Large Queen covers to produce a display which was given at the 2018 CPSGB Convention in Grantown. (This display can also be viewed on the Society website).

This display follows a similar approach for some of the Cents period (1859 – 1868) covers.

DOMESTIC MAIL – THE LETTER RATE

Throughout the Cents period the domestic letter rate was 5 cents per ½ oz. However, letters bearing a single 5 cents stamp are not so interesting.



Quite common – the 5 cents rate prepaid with a strip of five 1 cent stamps.

S

Not so common – the rate prepaid with a pair of 2 cents stamps and 1 cent stamp. Only around 13 such covers have been recorded.



S

DOMESTIC MAIL – HEAVIER LETTERS

Letters weighing over ½oz and below 1oz were charged 10 cents. Most such covers show the use of either a 10 cents stamp or a pair of 5 cents stamps. Payment of this rate with any other combination of stamps is unusual.



S

Example from March 1868 showing the 10 cents rate prepaid with a 5 cents, 1 cent and pair of 2 cents stamps.

ex Daniel Cantor.

DOMESTIC MAIL – HEAVIER LETTERS

The cover below, sent from Belleville to Toronto in 1862 must have weighed between 2 and 2½ oz as it is rated at 5 times the normal letter rate at 25 cents.



ex Len Belle, RPSL cert 77788.

DOMESTIC MAIL – HEAVIER LETTERS

The cover below, sent from Montmagny to Quebec in 1866 has an unusual rating of 58 cents. It is believed that this was a 12 x rate cover (60 cents) underpaid by 2 cents.



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The strip of three 17 cents stamps are from plate positions 75, 85 and 95. The right hand stamp (pp75) shows the 'pitted E' variety and the left hand stamp (pp95) shows a minor re-entry.

DOMESTIC MAIL – HEAVIER LETTERS

The front below, sent from Quebec to Lotbiniere in 1866 has a rating of 75 cents. It could be for a parcel weighing between 2 and 3lbs but the front shows no Parcel Post indicator which was required. It is, therefore, more likely to be from a heavy package rated at 15 times the letter rate. Either way, it is probably a unique rating.



DOMESTIC MAIL – SPECIAL LETTER RATES

The adjacent post office, or suburban, rate was a special reduced 2 cents letter rate. This rate may have been inspired by the international ferriage rate across the St. Lawrence between Canada and the USA. It does not appear to have been an officially authorised rate until 1889, but it was tolerated much earlier and examples are known as early as 1856. Three stamped examples of this rate used on this route between Quebec and Pointe Levis have been recorded in the Cents era, the one shown below being the earliest and the only one franked with 1 cent stamps.

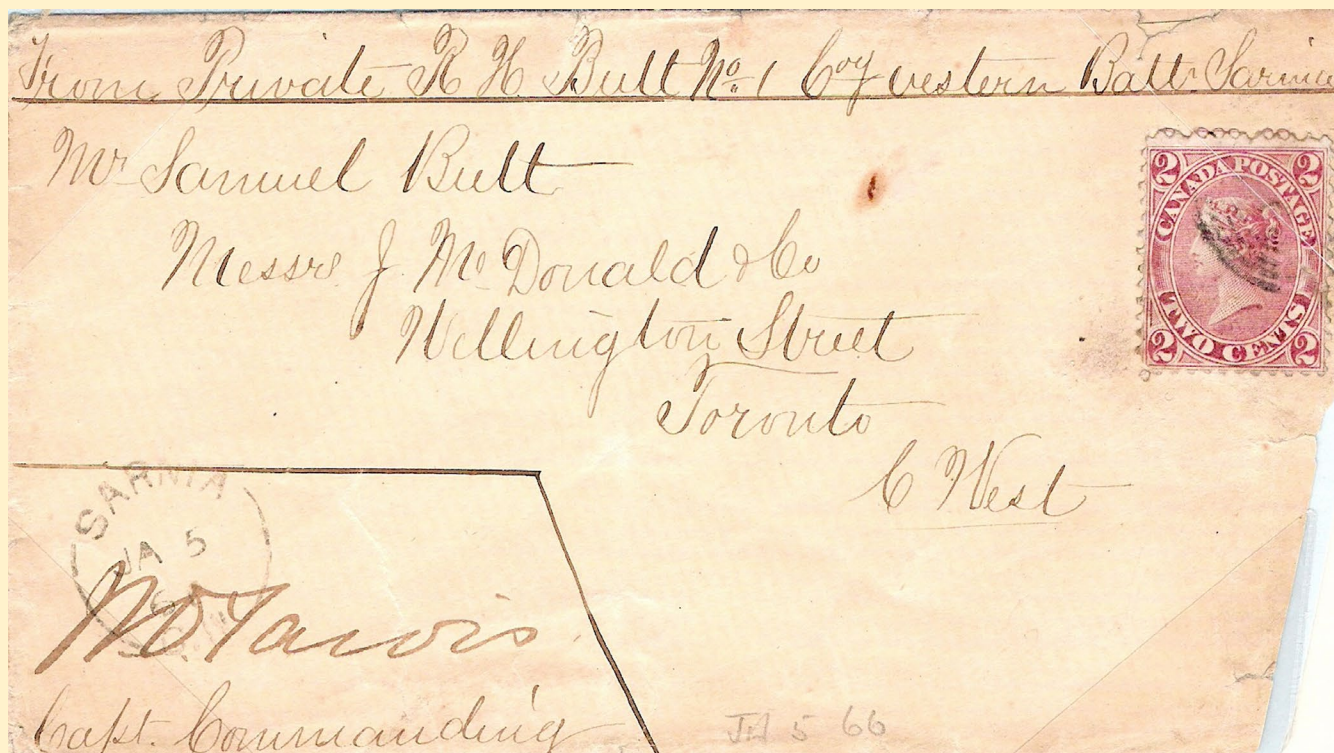


S

ex Daniel Cantor and James Woods

DOMESTIC MAIL – SPECIAL LETTER RATES

In 1795, a British act of Parliament had granted a special 1d letter rate for non-commissioned officers, soldiers and seamen. This special rate required letters to be certified by commanding officers. On 1 January 1865, this special rate was extended to letters to and from volunteer militia serving in Canada. The rate applied only to letters addressed to, or sent by, them within the Province of Canada. The rate for these letters was 2 cents. Whilst several examples of Soldier's letters to the UK are known (the Camellia collection has at least 14 of them), these domestic letters from soldiers are relatively rare.



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2 cents stamp used on a soldier's letter. The letter is certified by the commanding officer at lower left. The letter was sent by Private R.H. Butt who was in the No 1 Company of the Western Battalion Service of the volunteer militia during the Fenian raids at the U.S. frontier.

DOMESTIC MAIL – REGISTERED LETTERS

The registration fee on domestic letters was 2 cents. This was, more often than not, paid in cash and was the same regardless of the weight of the letter.



Covers showing the registration fee prepaid by stamp are surprisingly scarce. This 1866 letter from London to Brantford shows a 2 cents stamp used to pay the fee.

DOMESTIC MAIL – REGISTERED LETTERS

The registration fee on domestic letters was 2 cents. This was, more often than not, paid in cash and was the same regardless of the weight of the letter.



1864 letter from the Treasurer's Office in Sarnia. The letter was a heavy one at over 5oz, rated at 11 times the standard rate, and cost 55 cents in postage. The registration fee was paid in cash. Probably a unique franking.

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Examples are relatively common but one of the more unusual uses of this rate is shown at left – a Fire Insurance Renewal Application.

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RENEWAL APPLICATION.

Should you wish to renew your Insurance, please fill in this what you require—then sign and return it to this Office at your convenience.

CATHARINES

RECEIVED
JULY 16 1869
ONE CENT

DISTRICT MUTUAL FIRE INSURANCE COMPANY
ESTABLISHED 1836
NIAGARA

No.

PROPOSAL

FOR RENEWAL OF A

FIRE INSURANCE

under Policy No. 6200 expiring
16 day of July 1869

In the Niagara District
Mutual Fire Insurance
COMPANY.

BY Thos. J. & H. Bondrup

of _____

Township of _____

County of _____

Post Town M. K. David's

Dated this _____ day of _____

Agency No. _____

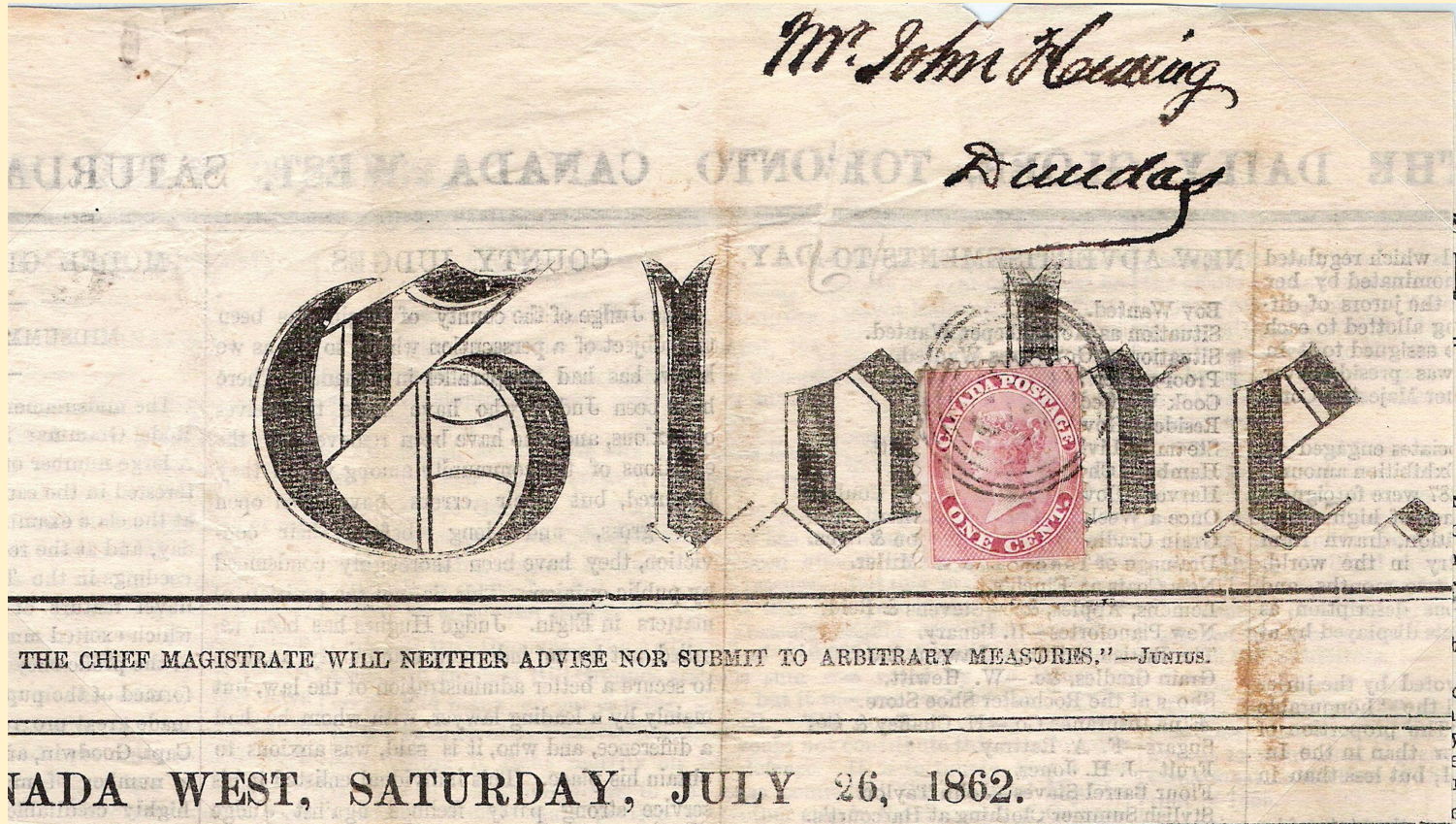
Amount applied for \$ _____

Agent.

Printed at the "Constitutional" Office, St. Catharines.

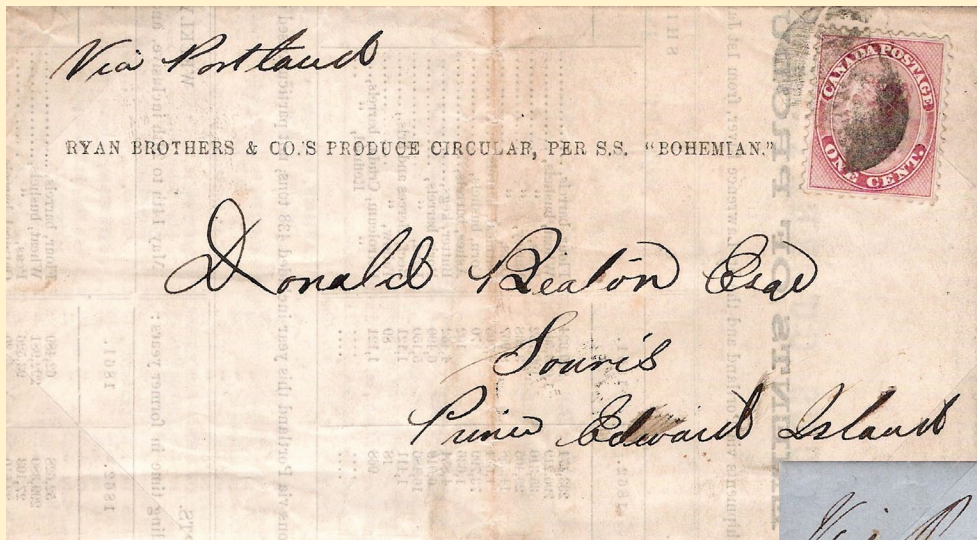
DOMESTIC MAIL – NON-LETTER RATES

The 1 cent rate also applied to transient newspapers (those mailed other than from the office of publication). Millions were probably mailed in this way, but few have survived.

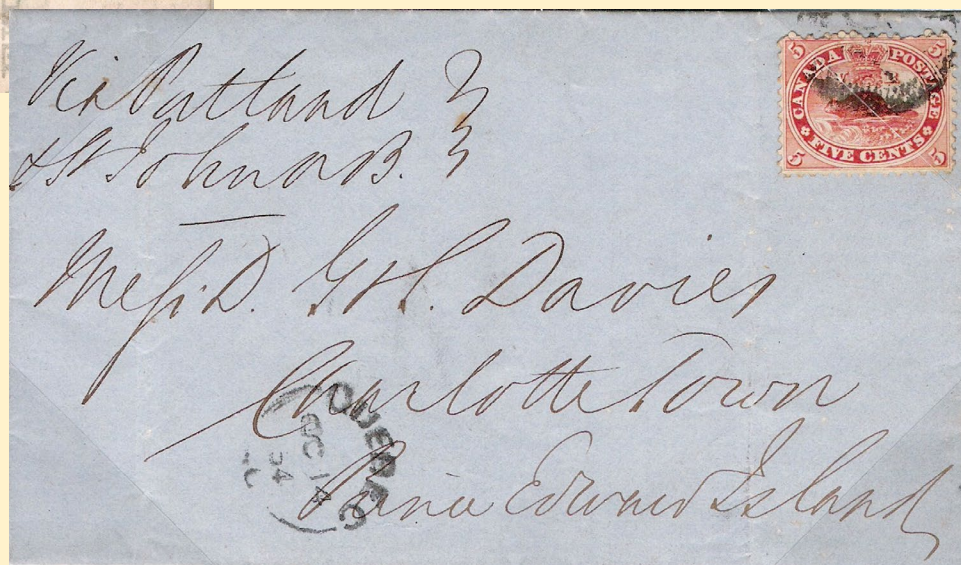


MAIL TO THE MARITIME PROVINCES – PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

Whilst surface mail to New Brunswick and Nova Scotia is not uncommon in the Cents period, mail to Prince Edward Island is scarce. Mail from Canada to P.E.I. was routed via Montreal and then by rail to Portland, Maine and by steamer from there to either St. John N.B. or Halifax N.S. The final journey was completed by mail coach and then ferry across the straights to P.E.I. Despite this rather tortuous routing, the postal rates were the same as for domestic mail.

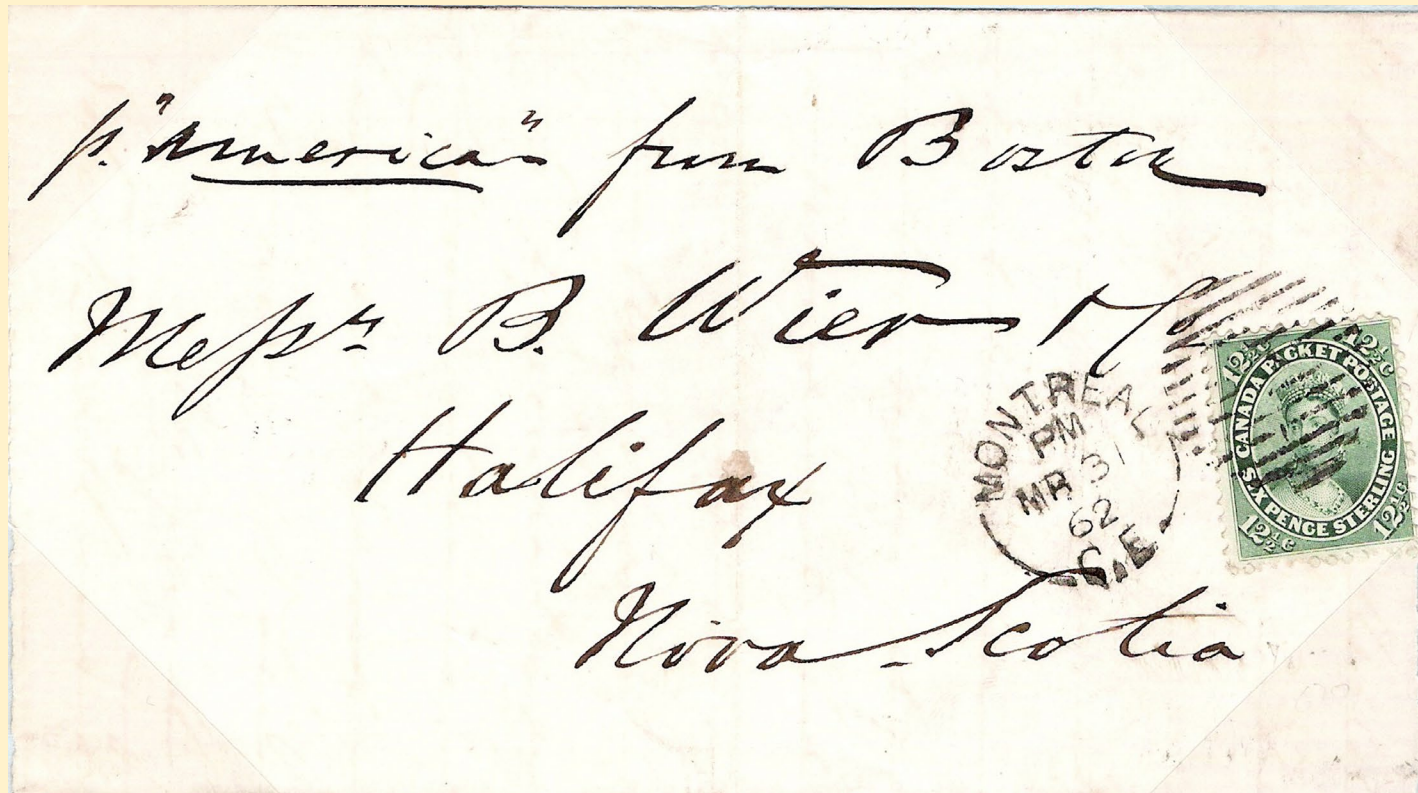


Examples of the 1 cent Printed Matter rate and the 5 cents Letter rate to Prince Edward Island. Only a handful of examples of either are recorded from the Cents period.



MAIL TO THE MARITIME PROVINCES – NOVA SCOTIA

Letters from Canada to New Brunswick and Nova Scotia were normally carried overland at the 5 cents per ½ oz rate. This route could be slow and unreliable in the winter months and in the early part of the Cents period, a faster mail service to Nova Scotia was available on alternate Fridays. This route comprised the railway from Montreal to Boston and then use of the Cunard steamer direct to Halifax (where it stopped en route to the UK). Closed mails could be endorsed 'via Boston' and sent on this route for 12½ cents. Given the significantly higher charge, the route was rarely used and surviving examples of mail carried this way are scarce.



S

The receipt stamp on the back indicates that this letter was received just 4 days after posting, no doubt justifying the higher cost.

MAIL TO THE MARITIME PROVINCES – NEW BRUNSWICK

Letters from Canada to New Brunswick and Nova Scotia were normally carried overland at the 5 cents per ½ oz rate. This route could be slow and unreliable in the winter months and a more regular fast mail service to Nova Scotia and New Brunswick was introduced in October 1866. This route comprised the Grand Trunk Railway from Montreal to Portland, New England and then use of the Nova Scotia Steamship Co. to Halifax. Mail for New Brunswick was then carried overland from Halifax. Closed mails could be endorsed 'via Portland' and sent on this route for 12½ cents. For mail to New Brunswick, the route proved to be unpopular as it offered no particular speed advantages over the normal routes costing 5 cents. The charge for this closed bag route via Portland was, itself, lowered to 5 cents some time before April 1868. Only one cover to New Brunswick, shown below, has been recorded paid at the 12½ cents rate.



MAIL TO THE UNITED STATES – LETTER RATE

The letter rate to the USA was set at 10 cents per ½ oz for all destinations except Oregon, Washington, Nevada and California. Examples are normally found franked with either a single 10 cents stamp or a pair of 5 cents stamps. The sender of the letter below must have had a lot of 1 cent stamps to get rid of.



S

1864 letter to Massachusetts franked with 10 copies of the 1 cent stamp to pay the 10 cents rate. There is barely room to fit them all on the envelope resulting in some of the docketing being over the stamps. Remarkably, four covers have been recorded showing this franking.

MAIL TO THE UNITED STATES – MULTIPLE RATE LETTERS

Very few triple or quadruple rate letters to the USA have been recorded. Of the four recorded triple rate covers, the one shown below is the only one franked with six 5 cents stamps.



S

ex Daniel Cantor

MAIL TO THE UNITED STATES – REGISTERED LETTERS

The registration fee on letters to the USA was 5 cents. As with domestic mail, this fee was fixed regardless of the weight of the letter.



S

1866 registered letter to Nebraska – a scarce destination in the Cents period. Both postage and registration were prepaid with stamps.

MAIL TO THE UNITED STATES – REGISTERED LETTERS

Double rate registered letters to the USA are scarce. The example shown below is the earliest of the five examples recorded by Arfken and Leggett.



October 1859 double rate registered letter to Michigan. The postage of 20 cents plus registration fee of 5 cents were prepaid with a pair of 12½ cents stamps.

MAIL TO THE UNITED STATES WEST COAST

From 1859 until July 1864, the letter rate to the west coast of the USA was 15 cents per ½ oz. Until January 1862 this same rate applied to letters mailed to Vancouver Island and British Columbia which were routed via San Francisco. After July 1864, the rate was reduced to 10 cents in line with the rest of the USA.



November 1860 letter from London Ont. to San Francisco showing the 15 cents rate. At this time, routing was via New York and then overland the USA to San Francisco. Later the overland route became less reliable and mail was often sent via Panama.

MAIL TO BRITISH COLUMBIA AND VANCOUVER ISLAND

The routing of mail from Canada to British Columbia in the Cents period was complex. The letter rate was initial set at 15 cents per ½ oz, with routing via New York and overland to San Francisco, the same as the west coast of the USA. In 1861, Canadian postal officials decided that the US overland route was no longer acceptable. With troops relocated east to fight in the US Civil War, the overland route was vulnerable to Indian attacks. Thus, from 1862 to mid 1864 Canadian mail to the west was routed via New York, down to Panama by ship, across the Panama isthmus by rail then back up the west coast by ship to San Francisco and onward to British Columbia. The postal rate was increased to 25 cents per ½ oz. during this period.



C

July 1862 letter from Sarnia C.W. to New Westminster sent at the 25 cents rate via Panama. On arrival in British Columbia, the letter was re-directed back to San Francisco at a local charge of 3 pence.

MAIL TO BRITISH COLUMBIA AND VANCOUVER ISLAND

Following the end of the US civil war, the overland route from New York to San Francisco was once again viable. In 1863, the US had reduced their own overland postal rate from 10 cents to 3 cents bringing it in line with all other domestic rates. In July 1864, the Canadian postal rate to British Columbia was reduced to 10 cents per ½ oz. and it remained at this level for the rest of the Cents period.

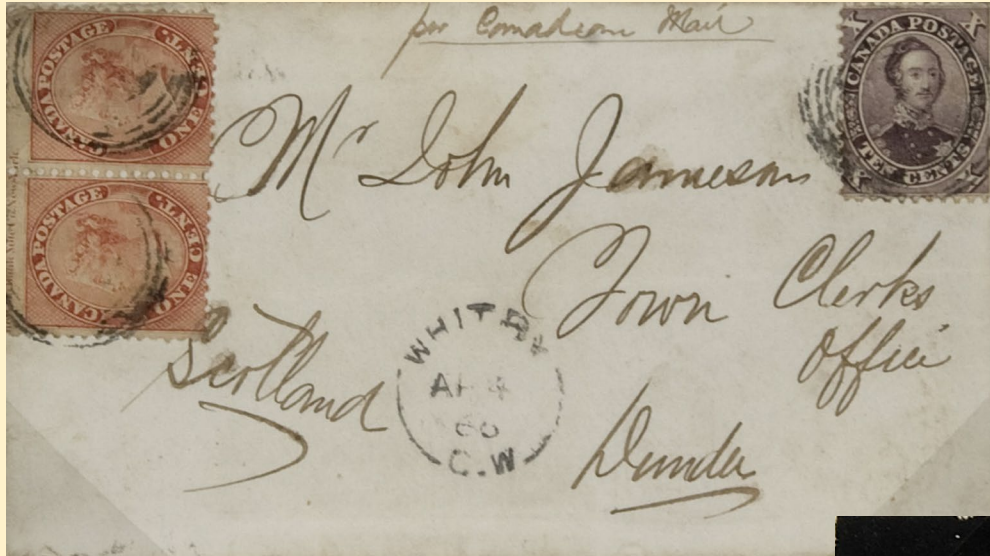


S

November 1867 letter from Canada West to Vancouver Island showing the reduced 10 cents rate. The letter was initially sent in error to Vermont, returned to Canada and then correctly routed to Victoria via the US overland route.

MAIL TO THE UK – BY CANADIAN STEAMER

Throughout the Cents period the letter rate to the UK via the Allan Line steamers was 12½ cents per ½ oz. The vast majority of such letters were paid using the 12½ cents stamp. However, just occasionally the sender did not have the correct stamp to hand. The two covers below were both underpaid by ½ cent but neither incurred postage due.



April 1866 letter from Whitby to Dundee, Scotland. Carried by the Allan Line *Moravian* which departed Portland 7 April and arrived in Liverpool on 18 April,

C

February 1868 letter from Montreal to London UK. Carried on the Allan Line *Austrian* which departed Portland on 21 February and arrived in Liverpool on 4 March.



C

MAIL TO THE UK – BY CANADIAN STEAMER

Some people went to great lengths to pay the correct postage even if they didn't have the right stamp, but it didn't always work out. The letter below includes a bisected 1 cent stamp to ensure the correct 12½ cents rate.



November 1863 letter from Bentick CW to Dublin. It was found to be over ½ oz in weight and was thus charged 1 shilling on arrival in Ireland, comprising the 6d stg additional postage and a 6d stg fine. It seems, however, that the authorities did not take exception to the bisected stamp.

MAIL TO THE UK – BY CANADIAN STEAMER

Other people without the correct stamp, simply played it safe and overpaid the rate.



July 1864 letter from London CW to Fife, Scotland. Carried by the Allan Line *Nova Scotian* which left Quebec on 16 July and arrived in Londonderry on 27 July. The letter is overpaid by ½ cent.

MAIL TO THE UK – BY CANADIAN STEAMER

The cover below is one of my favourites from the Camellia collection and is a rare example of a cover franked with stamps from three different countries. Initially mailed from Canada to Ireland it was forwarded to France with the addition of a 4d GB stamp. On arrival in Paris it was re-addressed to London, England with the addition of a 40 Centimes French stamp.



April 1865 letter from Quebec to Kells in Ireland, carried on the Allan Line vessel *Belgian* which left Portland on 29 April arriving in Liverpool on 10 May. Initially forwarded to Paris, France and then re-addressed back to London, England it has the distinction of having stamps from three different countries on it.

ex Sam Nickle and Charles Firby. RPSL cert 170798

MAIL TO THE UK – BY CANADIAN STEAMER

Multiple rate covers on this route are not often seen, and when they are the postage is usually paid with multiples of the 12½ cents stamp. The example below is an exception.



Double rate letter weighing over ½ oz mailed from Fonthill UC to Newcastle upon Tyne in England in December 1860. The 25 cents postage is paid with three values of the Cents issue. The letter was carried on the Allan Line vessel *Bohemian* which departed Portland on 29 December and arrived in Liverpool on 10 January.

MAIL TO THE UK – BY CANADIAN STEAMER

Multiple rate covers on this route are not often seen, and when they are the postage is usually paid with multiples of the 12½ cents stamp.



Triple rate letter weighing over 1oz mailed from Montreal to London in February 1866. The 37½ cents postage is paid with three copies of the 12½ cents stamp. The letter was carried on the Allan Line vessel *Hibernian* which departed Portland on 11 February and arrived in Liverpool on 22 February. This letter shows an early example of the triple rate which only came into effect in 1 January 1866. Prior to this, mail to the UK was governed by the UK rate scales which charged letters between 1oz and 2oz as double rate and above 2oz at quadruple rate.

MAIL TO THE UK – BY CANADIAN STEAMER

Multiple rate covers on this route are not often seen, and when they are the postage is usually paid with multiples of the 12½ cents stamp.



C

Quadruple rate letter weighing over 2oz mailed from Quebec to London in February 1865. The 50 cents postage is paid with a block of four of the 12½ cents stamp (from plate positions 64, 65, 74, 75). The letter was carried on the Allan Line vessel *Peruvian* which departed Portland on 12 February and arrived in Liverpool on 23 February.

REGISTERED MAIL TO THE UK – BY CANADIAN STEAMER

Prior to 1 February 1866, the registration fee on mail to the UK was set at 12½ cents (the equivalent of 6d stg). The fee could be paid with stamps or by cash.



C

August 1860 registered letter from Rondeau UC to Bath, England franked with a pair of 12½ cents stamps. Carried on the Allan Line vessel *North Briton* which departed Quebec on 4 August and arrived in Liverpool on 15 August. Whilst it is assumed that this is a single rate letter, registered, it could equally be a double rate letter with the registration fee paid in cash.

REGISTERED MAIL TO THE UK – BY CANADIAN STEAMER

From 1 February 1866, the registration fee on mail to the UK was reduced to 8 cents. Covers showing this reduced fee paid with stamps are scarce.



C

March 1868 double rate registered letter from Dunnville UC to Dublin. Postage is paid with a pair of 12½ cents stamps and the registration fee is paid by a strip of four 2 cents stamps. Carried on the Allan Line vessel *Austrian* which departed Portland on 22 March and arrived in Londonderry on 1 April.

Arfken and Leggett recorded only 8 registered covers paying the 8 cents fee paid with stamps carried via the Allan Line.

MAIL TO THE UK – BY CUNARD STEAMER

For most of the Cents period the rate for mailing a letter to the UK via the Cunard service was 17 cents per ½ oz. In the vast majority of cases the rate was prepaid using a 17 cents Cartier stamp but occasionally the sender did not have the correct stamp and had to use other values to make up the rate.



C

December 1861 letter from Whitby C.W. to London UK. Franked with a range of Cents stamps to make up the 17 cents Cunard rate. In the event, the letter was carried on the Allan Line vessel *Bohemian* under the First Packet Principle so was overpaid. Departed Portland on 7 December and arrived in Liverpool on 18 December.

MAIL TO THE UK – BY CUNARD STEAMER

The franking shown below is quite common and, in many cases, results from the sender initially franking the cover for the Allan Line service and then realizing that the letter will miss the sailing. If the letter was urgent, they would then want it to go on the next Cunard sailing. The resulting franking is ½ cent overpaid for the Cunard rate.



Letter mailed from Montreal to the Isle of Wight and then forwarded to Rugby. Initially franked with a 12½ cents stamp for the Allan Line service, the sender realized that it would miss the sailing of the *North American* which departed Portland on the 24th, so added a 5 cents stamp to cover the Cunard rate. Carried on the Cunard vessel *Arabia* ex Boston on 28 September arriving in Liverpool on 10 October. The mss '1' indicates the forwarding fee of 1d stg within the UK.

MAIL TO THE UK – BY CUNARD STEAMER

The franking shown below is probably unique and shows a good deal of ingenuity to overcome the previous problem. Whilst the bisecting of stamps was contrary to regulations, it seems to have been tolerated when small post offices, which may have run out of some stamp values, were involved.



C

Letter from Bentinck C.W. to Ireland franked with a 12½ cents stamp and 4½ copies of the 1 cent stamp to make up the 17 cents rate. Probably carried on the Cunard vessel 'Canada'. The bisected 1 cent stamp has been accepted through the post.

ex Louise Boyd - Dale and Alfred Lichtenstein and Geoffrey Whitworth

MAIL TO THE UK – BY CUNARD STEAMER – MULTIPLE RATES

The large cover below must have weighed over 2oz as it was charged at the quadruple rate of 68 cents.



February 1860 letter from Montreal to Edinburgh in Scotland. Franked with two pairs of the 17 cents stamp for the 68 cents quadruple rate. Carried on the Cunard vessel *Arabia* out of New York on 29 February, arriving in Liverpool on 12 March.

ex Pritchard and Frank Laycock.

MAIL TO THE UK – BY CUNARD STEAMER – A LOWER 15 CENTS RATE

The UK and the USA negotiated a new postal convention, effective 1 January 1868 which had the effect of reducing the postal rate between the UK and Canada on the Cunard route from 17 cents to 15 cents per ½ oz. The new 15 cents Large Queen stamp, designed primarily to pay this reduced rate was not issued until late March 1868. Examples of letters sent by Cunard in the early part of 1868 and beyond with the postage paid with Cents stamps are scarce.



January 1869 letter from Georgina C.W. to Epsom in England. Sent via New York and the Cunard service at the reduced rate of 15 cents. Although this was well into the Large Queens period, Georgina was a small town (postal revenue in 1870 was only \$1000) and clearly had slow moving stocks of stamps.

REGISTERED MAIL TO THE UK – BY CUNARD STEAMER

The registration fee was 12½ cents on any letter mailed to the UK prior to February 1866 when the rate was reduced to 8 cents. Arfken and Leggett recorded just four registered covers with the fee paid by stamps carried on the Cunard route in the Cents period prior to February 1866. The Camellia collection includes two of these covers.



C

November 1865 registered letter from Brantford C.W. to Rugby, England. Postage paid by the 17 cents stamp (pp34) with the registration fee paid by the 12½ cents stamp (pp 14). Carried on the Cunard vessel *Africa* which departed Boston on 8 November arriving in Liverpool on 19 November.

REGISTERED MAIL TO THE UK – BY CUNARD STEAMER

The registration fee was 12½ cents on any letter mailed to the UK prior to February 1866 when the rate was reduced to 8 cents. Arfken and Leggett recorded just four registered covers with the fee paid by stamps carried on the Cunard route in the Cents period prior to February 1866. The Camellia collection includes two of these covers.



Double rate registered letter mailed from Cornwall C.W. to London just two weeks before the registration fee was reduced in early 1866. The letter was carried on the Cunard vessel *Canada* out of Boston on 17 January arriving in Liverpool on 30 January.

SOLDIER'S LETTERS TO THE UK

In 1795, a British act of Parliament had granted a special 1d letter rate for non-commissioned officers, soldiers and seamen. This special rate required letters to be certified by commanding officers. The equivalent rate in Canada during the Cents period was 2 cents. There was a limitation of ½ oz on the weight of such letters. Well over 30 such Soldier's letters to the UK have been recorded in the Cents period. However, the one shown below is a little unusual.



C

June 1863 Soldier's letter mailed from Hamilton to Newcastle upon Tyne correctly endorsed by the Commanding Officer at lower left. This is one of only two known examples sent from Hamilton where troops were stationed temporarily during the US Civil War.

ex Pritchard, Sam Nickle and George Arfken

NON LETTER MAIL TO THE UK

As an encouragement to trade, Prices Current could be sent to the UK at a 2 cents postal rate. Other printed circulars were not eligible for this rate but this distinction seems to have caused some confusion with the UK postal authorities. A high percentage of the Prices Current sent to the UK at the 2 cents rate were charged a further 1d sterling on arrival. This would appear to reflect a misunderstanding on the part of the British postal service. An example is shown below.



C

November 1863 circular from Thomas W. Raphael giving general information and trading conditions, mailed from Montreal to Glasgow. Carried on the Allan Line vessel *Nova Scotian* which left Quebec on 14 November and arrived in Londonderry on 26 November. Charged an additional 1d sterling on arrival in Scotland.

MAIL TO EUROPE - FRANCE

All mail to France was routed via the UK and London. The postal rate for letters carried on the Allan Line was 17 cents per $\frac{1}{4}$ oz. The low weight limit on these letters may be one reason why single rate letters to France in this period are scarce. Arfken and Leggett recorded just 11 such letters in the period between 1859 and 1866.

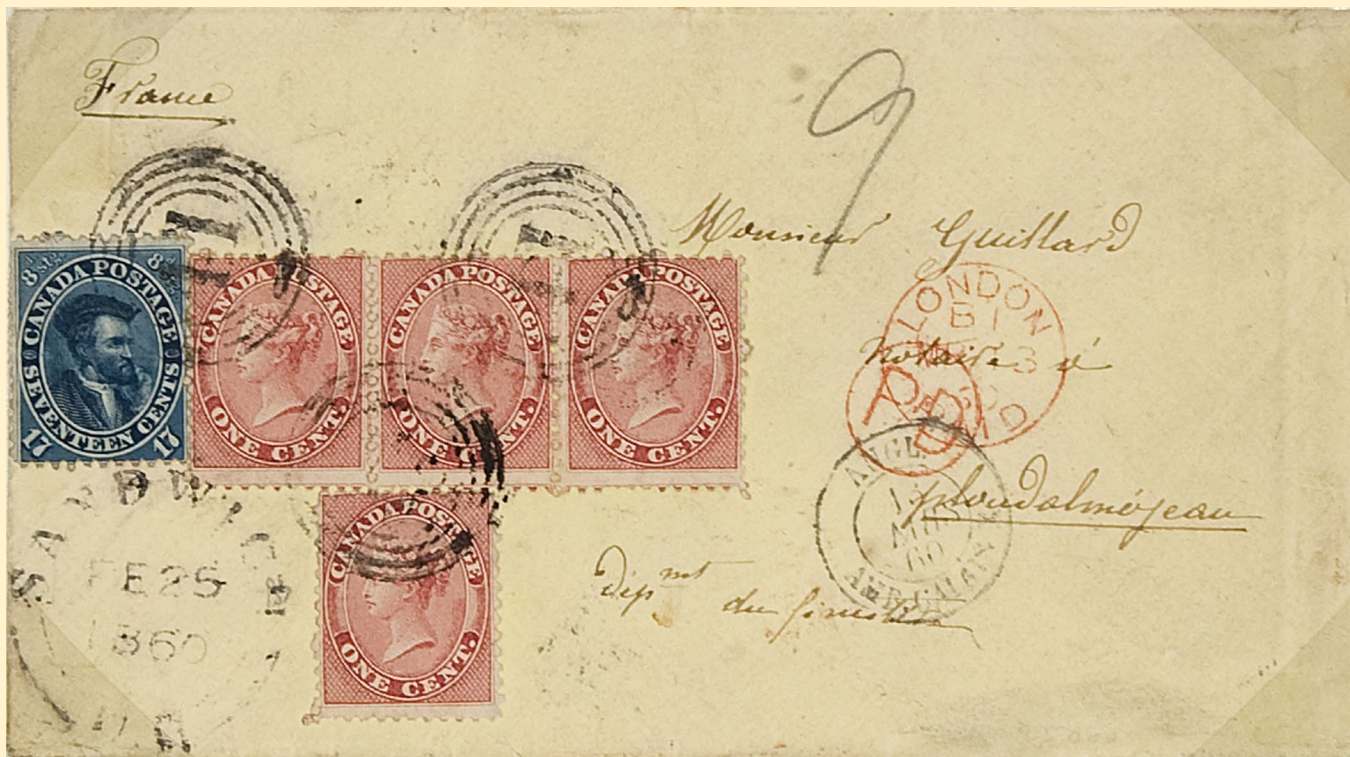


S

December 1861 letter from Montreal to Aix in France paid at the 17 cents per $\frac{1}{4}$ oz rate. The red PD mark was applied in London to indicate that postage was paid all the way. Carried on the Allan Line vessel *Anglo-Saxon* which departed Portland on 21 December arriving in Liverpool on 3 January.

MAIL TO EUROPE - FRANCE

All mail to France was routed via the UK and London. The postal rate for letters carried on the Cunard Line was 22 cents per $\frac{1}{4}$ oz. However, in the period from 1859 to 1862 there seems to have been some ambiguity around this rate and a few letters are known rated at 21 cents and accepted as such by the British post office. As the example below shows, this acceptance did not always extend to the French.



C

February 1860 letter from Sandwich U.C. to France. Franked with 21 cents of postage. Carried to the UK on the Cunard vessel *Arabia*, the cover was stamped in London as paid to destination. However, the French marked it in mss as due 9 decimes. Apparently, France did not trust the London 'PAID' mark.

MAIL TO NORTH AFRICA - ALGERIA

All mail to Algeria was routed via the UK and France. Indeed, for postal purposes, in the 1860's Algeria was considered to be part of France. As such, the postal rate for letters carried on the Cunard Line was 22 cents per ¼ oz. Confusion over this rate appears to have been every bit as great as that for France itself.



February 1863 letter from Montreal to Mostaganem in Algeria. The letter was paid 23 cents which may have been as much as 6 cents overpaid as it was possibly carried on the Allan Line *Nova Scotian* out of Portland on 28 February. It is more likely that the cover was sent to Boston for the Cunard *Canada* that sailed on 4 March in which case the overpayment was only 1 cent. This is one of three covers to Algeria recorded in the Cents period – all from the same correspondence and all overpaid.

MAIL TO EUROPE – GERMAN STATES

Mail to the German States was routed via the UK and then onward via either France or Belgium. The postal rate of 23 cents applied to a letter up to ½oz if sent to Prussia or Saxony but only ¼oz if sent to Bavaria or Wurttemberg. Arfken and Leggett recorded only five covers bearing Cents stamps mailed to Germany, although a few stampless covers from the period are also known. Four of the stamped covers reside in the Camellia collection, the most impressive of these is shown below.



October 1863 registered double rate letter mailed from Waterloo U.C. to Tomplin in Prussia. Carried on the Allan Line vessel *North American* out of Quebec on 17 October, arriving in Liverpool on 28 October, then via London and Belgium. Franked with 46 cents in stamps to pay the postage. An additional 25 cents registration fee was paid in cash. The 17 cents stamps are from pp51 and 52.

MAIL TO EUROPE – GERMAN STATES

Mail to the German States was routed via the UK and then onward via either France or Belgium. The postal rate of 23 cents applied to a letter up to ½oz if sent to Prussia or Saxony but only ¼oz if sent to Bavaria or Wurttemberg.



December 1865 letter from Montreal to Wurttemberg. Carried to the UK on the Allan Line vessel *Hibernian* which departed Portland on 23 December arriving in Liverpool on 3 January. The letter was then carried via London, Ostend in Belgium and Aachen. Franked with 23 cents of stamps for the ¼ oz rate. The stamp on the left has been added (the picture of this cover in Arfken and Leggett shows it without this extra stamp).

MAIL TO EUROPE – HOLLAND

The letter rate to Holland was 19 cents per ½ oz prior to December 1865 and then reduced to 17 cents per ½ oz. Despite the fact that mail to Holland was routed via Belgium, this latter rate was 2 cents lower than the rate to Belgium. It was also half the rate to France. Just two decimal covers to Holland have been recorded.



C

January 1868 double rate cover from Meaford C.W. to Hilversum near Amsterdam. Franked with 34 cents worth of stamps paying the double rate. Carried to the UK on the Allan line vessel Nestorian which left Portland on 25 January and arrived in Liverpool on 4 February. Routed via London, Ostend, Utrecht and Hilversum. For reasons which are unclear, the British claim of 6(d) has been crossed out and replaced with a claim of 5(d).

MAIL TO EUROPE – SWITZERLAND

The letter rate to Switzerland was initially set at 19 cents per $\frac{1}{4}$ oz with routing through France. In January 1865, the routing was changed to send mail via Belgium and Prussia and the rate became 26 cents per $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. Only three decimal frankings to Switzerland have been recorded, one of which is Printed Matter. The example below is the only one sent at the 19 cents per $\frac{1}{4}$ oz rate.



C

July 1864 letter from Ottawa to Switzerland. The weight must have been over 1 oz as it is rated at quadruple rate with postage of 76 cents paid by a pair and four singles of the 12½ cents stamp plus a 1 cent stamp. Carried to the UK on the Allan Line *Nova Scotian* which departed Quebec 16 July and arrived in Liverpool 28 July. Then routed via London, Calais, Paris, Darau and Zurich. The significance of the mss '20' is unknown.

MAIL TO EUROPE – ITALY – ROME AND THE PAPAL STATES

The letter rate to Rome was 29 cents per ¼ oz if sent by Canadian Packet and 35 cents if sent via Cunard. Routing was via the UK and then onward from London via France. Only a handful of covers are recorded to this destination in the Cents period.



C

November 1862 letter from Montreal to Rome paid for the Cunard route at 35 cents. Carried to the UK on the Cunard vessel *Scotia* which departed New York on 19 November arriving in Liverpool on 30 November. From there it was routed via London and France arriving in Rome on 8 December. The PD mark applied in London indicated that the letter was fully paid to destination and the British claim of 1/3d is shown in mss.

MAIL TO EUROPE – ITALY – TURIN

The letter rate to Turin was 21 cents for the first ¼ oz and a further 10 cents for an additional ¼ oz if sent by Canadian Packet. Routing was via the UK and then onward from London via France. The cover shown below is the only one to Turin that Arken and Leggett reported during the Cents period.



A rather scruffy June 1864 cover from Montreal to Turin, Italy. Paid for the ½ oz rate of 31 cents and carried by the Allan Line steamer *Belgian* which departed Quebec on 25 June and arrived in Liverpool on 6 July. The only recorded cover to northern Italy in the Cents period.

MAIL TO EUROPE – NORWAY

The letter rate to Norway from 1863 to 1865 was 40 cents per ½ oz. The rate was reduced in 1866 to 27 cents per ½ oz. Only one cover paying the 40 cents rate has been recorded, this is shown below. Routing was to the UK then onward from London to Ostend, Hamburg in Germany and Copenhagen.

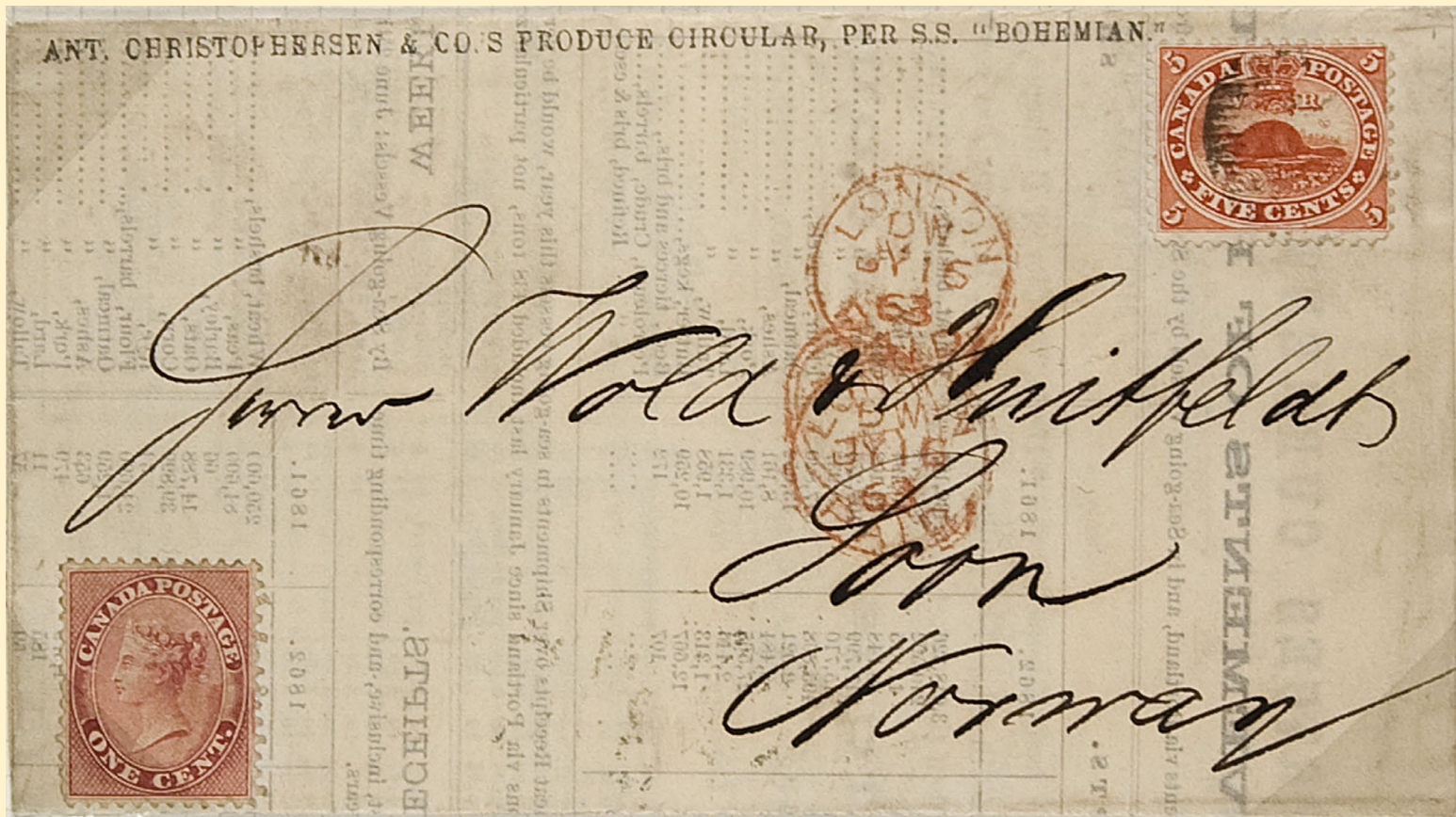


C

July 1865 letter from Quebec to Laurvig (probably modern day Larvik) in Norway. Correctly franked 40 cents for the ½ oz rate. Although the rate allowed for passage on the Cunard line, the letter was carried to the UK on the Allan Line vessel *Damascus* which left Quebec on 8 July and arrived in Liverpool on the 20 July. From there the letter was routed via London, Hamburg and Sandosund in Norway.

MAIL TO EUROPE – NORWAY – PRINTED MATTER

Printed Matter of all kinds was sent to Norway at the Book Post rate of 6 cents per 2 oz.



Produce circular mailed from Montreal to Norway in July 1863 at the 6 cents per 2 oz Book Post rate. Carried on the Allan Line vessel *Bohemian* which departed Quebec on 4 July arriving in Liverpool on 16 July. From there the item was routed via London (same day) and Hamburg (21 July). Decimal stamp franked printed matter to continental Europe is extremely rare.

MAIL TO EUROPE – GIBRALTAR

Throughout the Cents period, letters could be sent from Canada to Gibraltar at a postage rate of 23 cents per ½ oz. Routing was via the UK and then by P&O vessel from Southampton bound for Alexandria which called off at Gibraltar. A surprisingly large number of stamped letters to Gibraltar are known, mostly from two separate correspondences.



Two letters from the Codrington correspondence. The top one at left was mailed at the single rate of 23 cents from Montreal in September 1863. Carried to the UK on the Allan Line vessel *Nova Scotian* which departed Portland 19 September and arrived in Liverpool on 30 September. The 17 cents stamp is from pp82.

C

The lower cover at right is the only recorded double rate cover to Gibraltar. Mailed from Montreal in April 1863 the cover has one 10 cents stamp missing. The full rate would have been 46 cents.



C

MAIL TO EUROPE – GIBRALTAR

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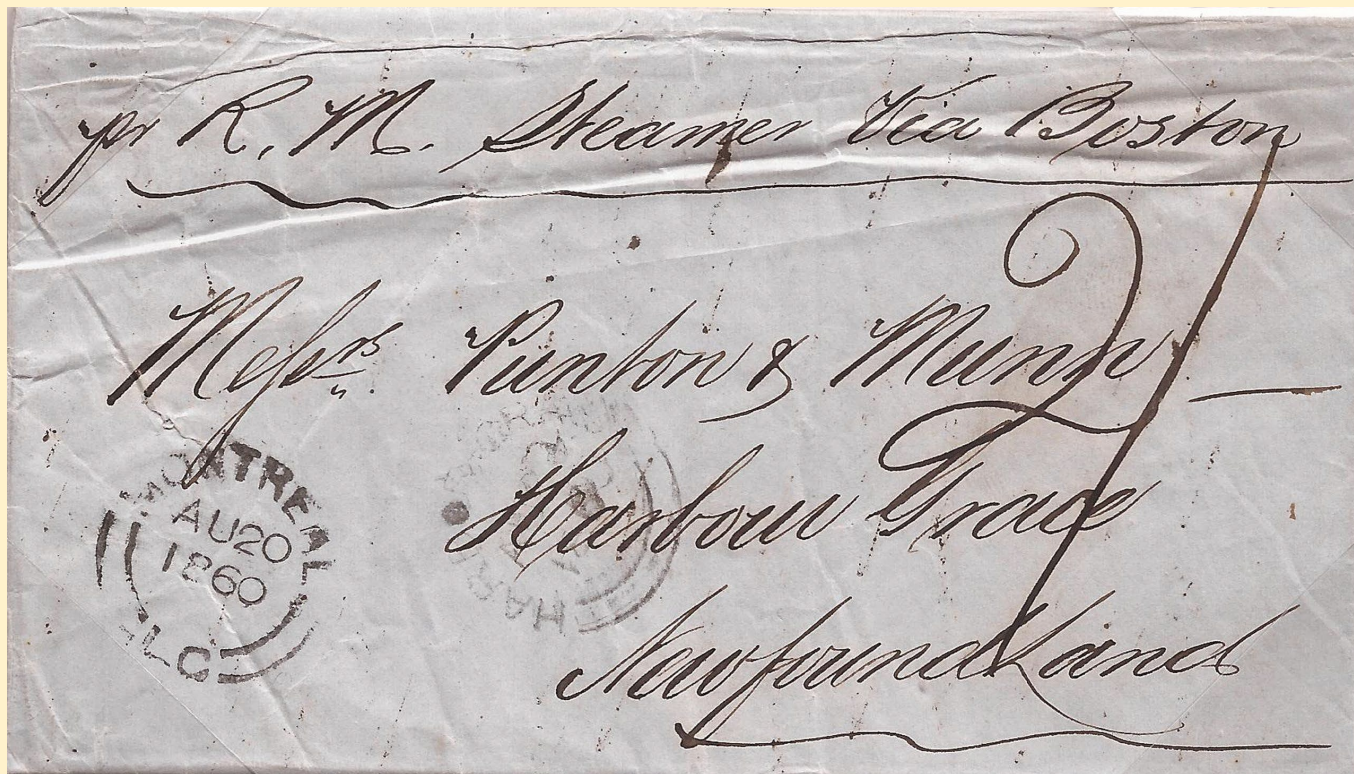


C

November 1865 mourning letter from London C.W. to Gibraltar franked with two 12½ cents stamps and thus overpaid 2 cents. Carried to the UK on the Allan Line vessel *Hibernian* which left Quebec on 4 November arriving in Liverpool on 14 November. Addressed to Major General Crutchley who was the Military Commandant on Gibraltar. The Camellia collection contains four covers from this correspondence all of which are overpaid by 2 cents possibly for convenience.

MAIL TO NEWFOUNDLAND

From 1859 to the end of 1864, the letter rate to Newfoundland was 20 cents (or 1 shilling) per ½ oz. Given that this was a higher rate than to the UK it is perhaps no surprise that little mail passed between the two colonies. From January 1865, the rate was reduced to 12½ cents per ½ oz. Mail was typically routed via Boston and then by Cunard ship to Halifax N.S. A separate Cunard vessel would then transport the mail to St. John's.



S

Double weight letter from Montreal to Harbour Grace mailed in August 1860 and sent unpaid. The rate shown of 2 shillings was the equivalent of 40 cents. The rating was probably shown in shillings as a courtesy to the Newfoundland Post Office as the latter did not switch to decimal currency until 1865.

MAIL TO NEWFOUNDLAND

From January 1865, the rate from Canada was reduced to 12½ cents per ½ oz. The equivalent rate from Newfoundland to Canada was 13 cents. Mail was typically routed via Boston and then by Cunard ship to Halifax N.S. A separate Cunard vessel would then transport the mail to St. John's.

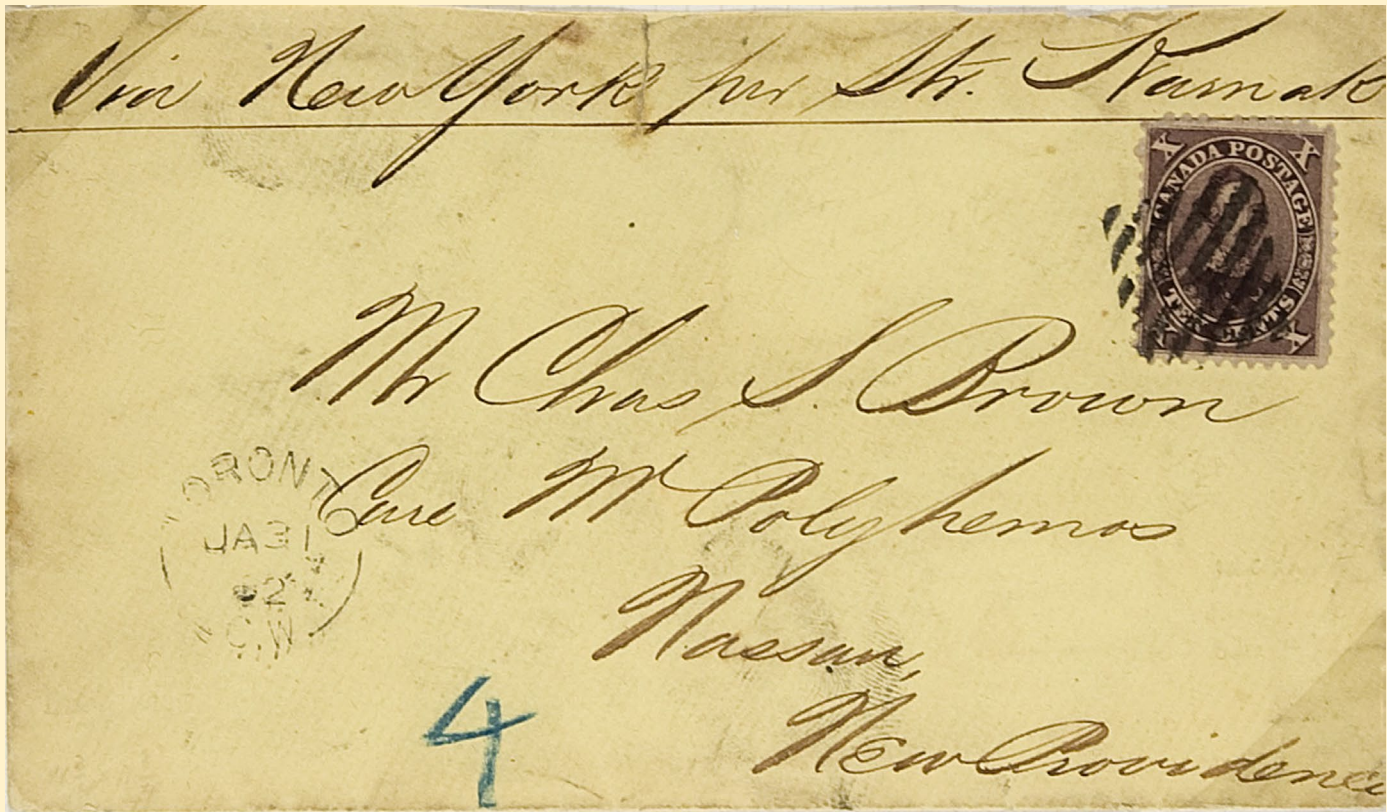


C

October 1866 letter from Owen Sound C.W. to Upper Island Cove on Conception Bay. The 12½ cents rate was paid with two 5 cents Beavers and three 1 cent stamps overpaying the rate by ½ cent. The letter was routed via Boston and the Cunard vessel *Asia* as far as Halifax N.S., then onward by local Cunard ship to St. John's. The overpayment may have been a simple case of convenience or could have been the result of confusion over the different rates to and from Newfoundland.

MAIL TO THE WEST INDIES - BAHAMAS

Unlike many of the other British colonies in the West Indies, the proximity of the Bahamas to the US mainland meant that mail from Canada was normally routed via the USA. The letter rate was 15 cents per ½ oz when routed via New York.



January 1862 letter from Toronto to Nassau in the Bahamas. The letter was routed via New York and then on the steamer Karnack to Nassau. Paid 10 cents which only covered the postage to New York so the letter is rated in blue mss '4' (pence Sterling) due on arrival in Nassau.

MAIL TO THE WEST INDIES - CUBA

Mail from Canada to Cuba was normally routed via the USA. The letter rate was initially 20 cents per ½ oz which reduced to 10 cents per ½ oz in early 1867.



Piece from a large envelope mailed from Quebec to Havana in Cuba in March 1867 just a few weeks after the reduction in the postal rate.

Routed via New York, it arrived in Havana on 4 April. It is unclear if the franking relates to a double rate letter at the new 10 cents per ½ oz rate or if the old 20 cents per ½ oz rate was still being employed. Either way, the letter is 2½ cents overpaid.

ex Maurice Burrus

MAIL TO THE WEST INDIES - BARBADOS

For a large part of the Cents period, the letter rate to the British West Indies was 23 cents per ½ oz. This was described in the Postal Guides as the 'British Empire Rate'. The rate applied provided mail was not routed via the UK. The normal routing was via Halifax N.S. From there Cunard ships ran a service to the St. Thomas in the Danish West Indies which the British used as a hub for the distribution of mail to the various Caribbean islands and South American mainland.

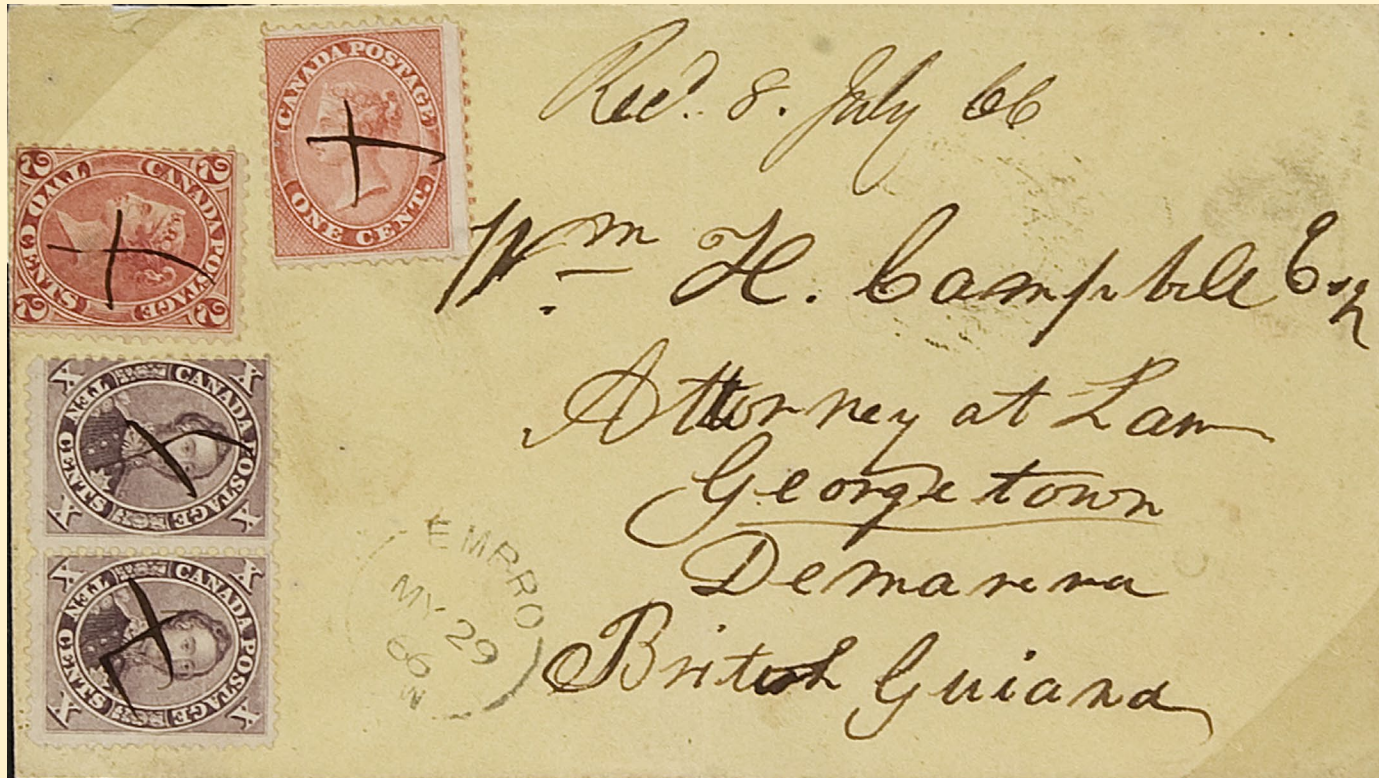


C

May 1864 letter from Montreal to Barbados. Routed via Boston from where it was carried by the Cunard vessel Europa which left on 11 May to Halifax N.S. From Halifax it was carried by the Cunard vessel Delta which left on 26 May for St. Thomas in the Danish West Indies. The cover would have been carried on from St. Thomas to Barbados by a Royal Mail packet arriving on 10 June. The mss '1' is an internal postage charge in Barbados.

MAIL TO THE WEST INDIES – BRITISH GUIANA

For a large part of the Cents period, the letter rate to the British West Indies was 23 cents per ½ oz. This was described in the Postal Guides as the 'British Empire Rate'. The rate applied provided mail was not routed via the UK. The normal routing was via Halifax N.S. From there Cunard ships ran a service to the St. Thomas in the Danish West Indies which the British used as a hub for the distribution of mail to the various Caribbean islands and South American mainland.



C

May 1866 letter from Embro C.W. to Demarara in British Guiana, mailed at the 23 cents rate. Sent via St. Thomas in the Danish West Indies. This is probably the only recorded stamped letter to this destination in the Cents period.

MAIL TO INDIA

Mail to India was routed via the UK and then by P&O service to Alexandria, overland by rail to Suez and then another P&O service to Bombay and Madras. The basic letter rate during the Cents period was 23 cents per ½ oz although this could be higher if the Cunard service was used across the Atlantic and/or rail services were used from London to Brindisi to connect with the P&O ships. I am unaware of any stamped letters to India during the period. However, a number of stampless covers are known including the one below.



January 1863 letter from Toronto to Mooltan in India rated PAID 23 (cents). Carried to the UK on the Allan Line vessel *Nova Scotian* which departed Portland 17 January arriving in Liverpool 31 January. From the UK, routed by rail to Marseille then via P&O steamers to Alexandria and from Suez to Bombay (24 February). Then sent overland to Mooltan where it arrived on 4 March. The mss '6' in red is a British claim and the mss '1' in red is a claim by the colonial post office in India.

MAIL TO INDIA – SOLDIER’S LETTER

The Soldier’s letter rate of 2 cents applied to anywhere in the Empire. However, the example shown below is the only such letter from Canada sent overseas to a destination other than the UK.



Soldier’s letter mailed from London C.W. to Ahmednugger, Bombay in India in June 1867. Carried to the UK on the Allan Line vessel *Moravian* which departed Quebec 22 June and arrived in Liverpool on 4 July. P&O steamers carried the letter from the UK to Bombay where it arrived on 7 August reaching its final destination on 10 August.

MAIL TO BURMAH

The cover below mailed to Burmah seems to have been treated by the Canadian and British Post Offices as a letter to India. Certainly, the routing would have been the same. From England it would have been sent on a P&O vessel to Alexandria then overland by rail to Suez and on a second P&O vessel to India then overland into Burmah.



C

March 1867 letter from Hamilton C.W. to Akyab in Burmah. Paid at the India rate of 23 cents. Note that the 5 cents stamp shows the 'rock in waterfall' variety. Carried to the UK on the Allan Line Nova Scotian which departed from Portland on 17 March arriving in Liverpool 29 March. The mss '6' in red is a British claim and the '1d' handstamp in red is a claim by the colonial post office in India.

MAIL TO CHINA

The route for getting mail from Canada to China was both long and complex. It involved the Canadian Packet ship to the UK then P&O packet from Southampton to Alexandria. From there the mail would have been carried by train to Suez on the Red Sea and then by P&O steamer to Galle in Ceylon. A third P&O ship would have taken the mail from Galle to Hong Kong and from there a local ship would have delivered the mail to destination. The rate for all of this was 35 cents per ½ oz. Most of the Cents period covers recorded from Canada to China were sent to the Rev and Mrs Kip who were missionaries working out of Amoy.



C

January 1866 letter from Wardsville C.W. to Amoy in China correctly rated 35 cents. Carried on the Allan Line *Moravian* from Portland 20 January to Londonderry 30 January. Then from Southampton on the P&O *Mongolia* departing 2 February to Alexandria arriving 16 February. The P&O vessel *Bengal* carried the letter from Suez departing 19 February to Galle arriving 8 March. From there the P&O vessel *Behar* carried the letter departing 16 March to Hong Kong arriving 31 March. The final leg to Amoy was on the P&O vessel *Formosa* which departed Hong Kong 3 April and arrived in Amoy on 5 April. There is a 1/- accountancy credit to the British Post Office and the '1' handstamp is a credit to the Hong Kong Post Office.

MAIL TO CHINA

Below are two more covers from the Kip correspondence mailed from Wardswille C.W. to Amoy in China.



C



C

MAIL TO AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND VIA THE UK

During the Cents period there were two routes for getting mail from Canada to Australia and New Zealand. The first of these was via the UK. From there a series of P&O vessels would take mail from Southampton to Alexandria in Egypt, then from Suez to Galle in Ceylon and finally from Galle to Melbourne, Sydney and Wellington. Sailings on this P&O route were monthly. The postal rate for this route via the UK was 23 cents per ½ oz.



May 1867 letter from Gananoque U.C. to Auckland in New Zealand routed via the UK at the 23 cents rate. Carried on the Allan Line vessel *North American* which departed Portland 4 May and arrived in Liverpool on 17 May. The mss red '6' is a British claim and the red '5' handstamp is a claim on behalf of the New Zealand post office.

MAIL TO AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND VIA THE UK

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Rather scruffy double rate letter from Hamilton C.W. to Woodstock near Melbourne, Australia. Rated 46 cents being double the 23 cents rate via the UK. This is the only recorded double rate cover via this route. Carried on the Allan Line *Austrian* out of Quebec on 3 November, arriving in Liverpool on 13 November and then onward from London on a series of P&O vessels arriving in Melbourne on 13 January 1868; a transit time of 75 days which was fairly average for this route.

MAIL TO AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND – VIA PANAMA

Towards the end of the Cents period in early 1867 a new transpacific route was opened up to Australia and New Zealand. This involved mail being sent by US steamer on a monthly service from New York to Colon in Panama. The mail was carried across the Panama isthmus by rail and then loaded on a ship of the Panama, New Zealand and Australian Royal Mail Co and carried from Panama City to Sydney NSW and then to Wellington. The postal rate for this route was a slightly cheaper 22 cents per ½ oz. and the route was, in theory at least, quicker than the one via the UK.



September 1867 mourning cover from Hamilton C.W. to Woodstock, Victoria, Australia. Sent by the Panama route the letter was charged 22 cents. Routed via New York and Colon there is a Panama transit mark of 30 September. Carried on the PNZ&A royal Mail vessel *Mataura* which reached Sydney on 27 October. There is a Melbourne backstamp dated 7 November. The red '12' handstamp is an accountancy credit to the USA. It seems that the 22 cents rate only covered postage to the port of arrival. Onward carriage from New South Wales to Victoria resulted in a MORE TO PAY 6d charge.

MAIL TO NEW ZEALAND VIA THE UK AND PANAMA

Although it was mailed just outside the Cents period in late April 1868, the cover below is one of the more remarkable Decimal issue covers.



C

Mailed from London C.W. to Otago in New Zealand in April 1868, this letter was correctly franked 22 cents and endorsed 'Via New York' for the route via Panama. However, the authorities sent the letter to the UK by mistake. It was carried on the Allan Line *Austrian* out of Portland on 2 May arriving in Liverpool on 12 May. Note the London UK transit mark of 13 May. The British Post Office promptly sent the letter back across the Atlantic to New York where it commenced its correct journey to Panama. Carried across the Pacific by the PNZ&A vessel *Mataura* it finally arrived in Otago on 25 July – some 86 days in transit having crossed three oceans.

THE END