

Non-Contract Steamship

Freight-Money Letters

Freight money was a fee charged by shipping companies for carrying letters from New York to Great Britain. In May 1838, private steamships began charging 25 cents per sheet; sailing ships responded by charging only 12½ cents. The Postmaster General allowed postmasters to collect these fees and forward them to the New York Postmaster for delivery to the appropriate shipping companies.

The Great Western Steamship Co.

Philadelphia, 23 February 1839

Prepaid **37½**cents: 12½¢ to New York, 25¢ freight money
 Steamship *Great Western* : New York 25 February, Bristol 13 March 17 days

Bristol rated **1/5** due: 8^d ship fee, 9^d inland to London



Bristol was *Great Western's* home port from 1838 until 1843, when it was abandoned in favor of Liverpool.

The ship's revenue for this letter was collected by the Philadelphia post office on behalf of the company, and the amount added to postage to denote the total prepayment.

Non-Contract Sailing, Steamship

Freight Money Letters

Red Star Line

Double rate: two sheets

Prepaid **50** cents

2x 12½¢ to New York

2x 12½¢ freight money by sail

Steamship *United States*

New York 14 February

Liverpool 15 March 32 days

Liverpool rated **4/9** due (3 sheets)

3x 8^d ship fee

3x 11^d inland

**LIVERPOOL
SHIP LETTER**

reverse



Philadelphia, 12 February 1839

British & American Steam Navigation Co.



Philadelphia, 30 November 1839

Single weight: one sheet

Prepaid **37½** cents

12½¢ to New York

25¢ freight money by steam

Steamship *British Queen*

New York 2 December

Gravesend 25 December

24 days

Gravesend rated **1/-** due

8^d ship, 4^d uniform inland rate

**SHIP LETTER
GRAVESEND**

reverse, in red

British Queen was the only steamship to arrive in the U.K during the 35-days (5 Dec 1839 to 9 Jan 1840) when the uniform 4^d inland rate was in effect.

Non-Contract Sailing Ship

Freight Money Letters

Kermit Line



Philadelphia, 9 March 1840

Double rate: two sheets

Prepaid **50** cents
 2x 12½¢ to New York
 2x 12½¢ freight money

Ship *Virginian* :
 New York 13 March
 Liverpool 15 April

34 days

Liverpool rated **8^d** due
 uniform ship fee

**LIVERPOOL
 SHIP LETTER**

reverse

Blue Swallowtail Line

Single rate: one sheet

Prepaid **25** cents
 12½¢ to New York
 12½¢ freight money

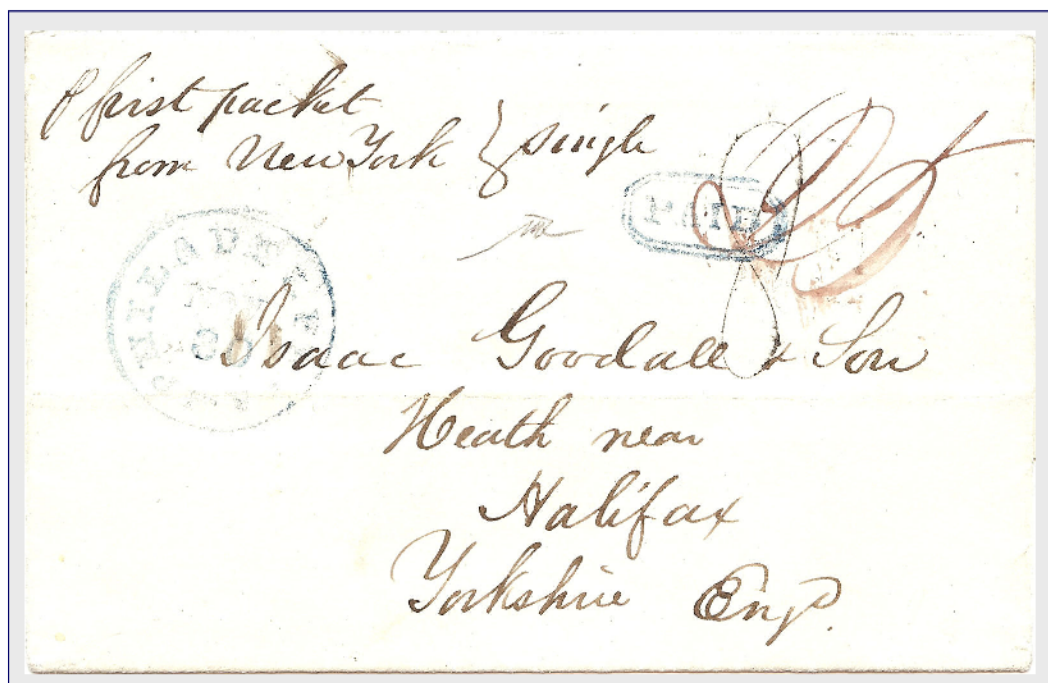
Ship *Independence* :
 New York 12 December
 Liverpool 31 December

20 days

Liverpool rated **8^d** due
 Uniform ship fee

**LIVERPOOL
 SHIP LETTER**

reverse



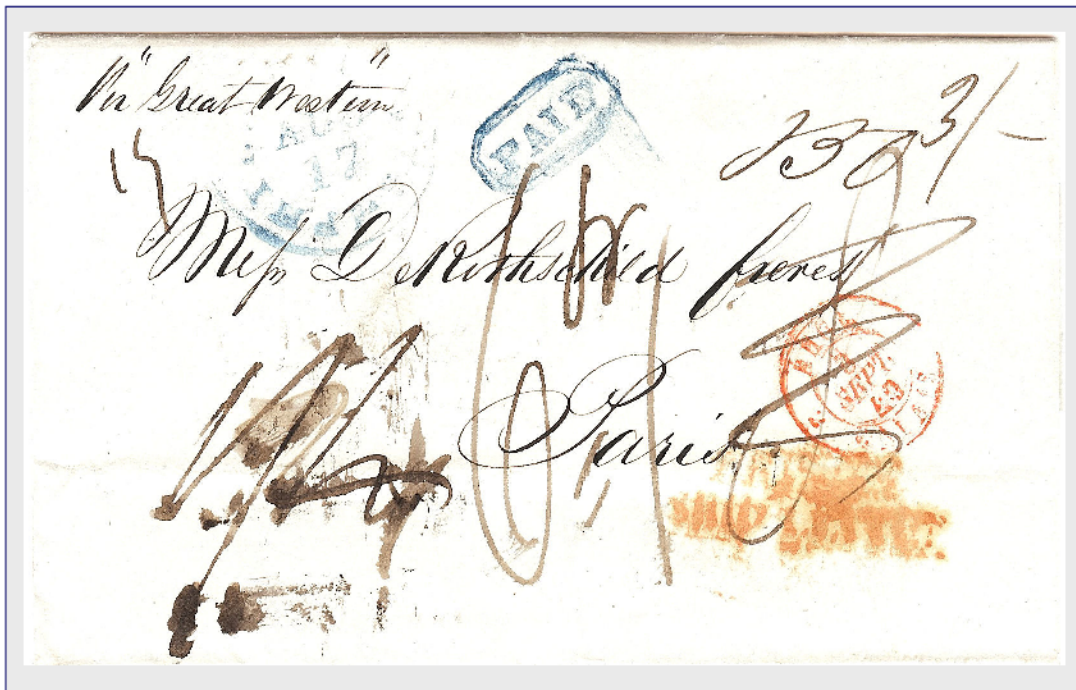
Philadelphia, 30 November 1840

On 10 January 1840 the United Kingdom inland rate was changed to 1d per ½ oz. At the same time the incoming ship-letter fee was considered to include inland postage to destination.

Non-Contract Steamship

Freight Money Letters

The Great Western Steamship Co. - Quadruple Rate



Philadelphia, 17 August 1840

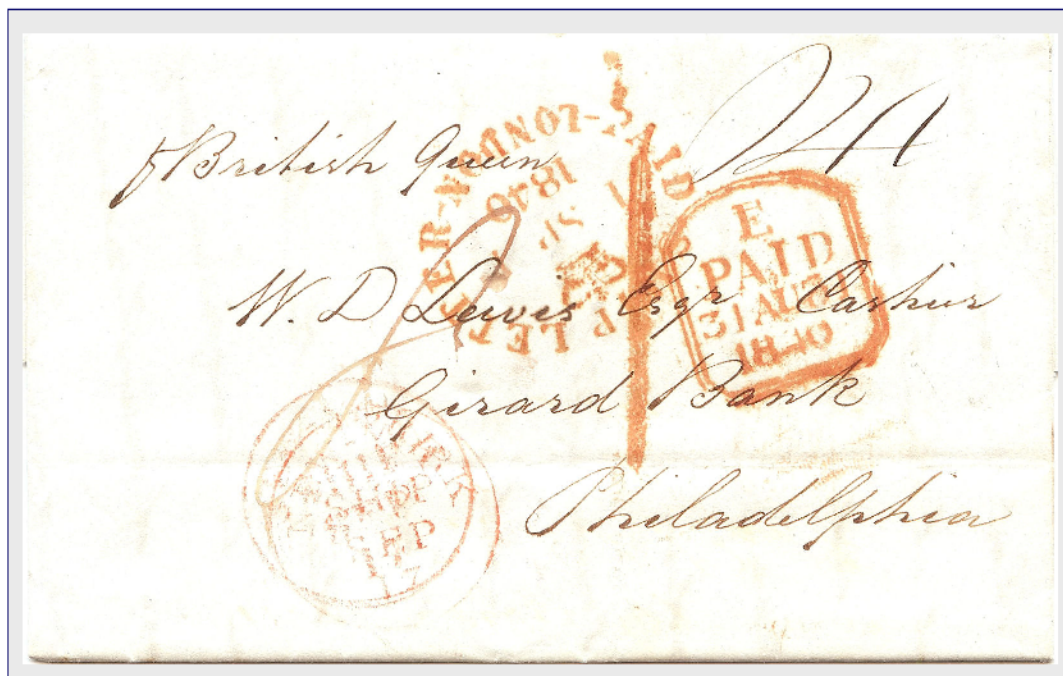
Prepaid **\$1.50** : 4 x (12½¢ inland + 25¢ freight money), for four sheetsSteamship *Great Western*: New York 18 August, Bristol 1 SeptemberLondon rated **3/-**, double rate for ½ - 1 oz.: 2 x (8^d ship, + 10^d to France)Paris rated **6fr=1** : 36 dec. (3/- converted) plus 25 dec. inland <20g*Philadelphia to Paris* 18 daysBRISTOL
SHIP LETTEROutport postmark, applied
in red in London

In most cities that collected the freight-money charge, the freight-money fee was accounted for separately. Only in Philadelphia did the post office add the two charges and show them as a single number.

Non-Contract Steamship

Pioneer Steamship Companies

British & American Steam Navigation Company, 1838-1841



London, 31 August 1840

Prepaid 9^d
8^d ship letter
1^d late fee

Steamship *British Queen* :
Portsmouth 1 September
New York 16 September

New York rated **14½ cents** due

Transit 17 days

Seventh of nine voyages

The company had only two ships, and was dissolved after one was lost in 1841.

The Great Western Steamship Co., 1838-1846

Prepaid 25¢ freight money to England (not shown), carried privately to New York

Steamship *Great Western* :
New York 9 May
Bristol 23 May

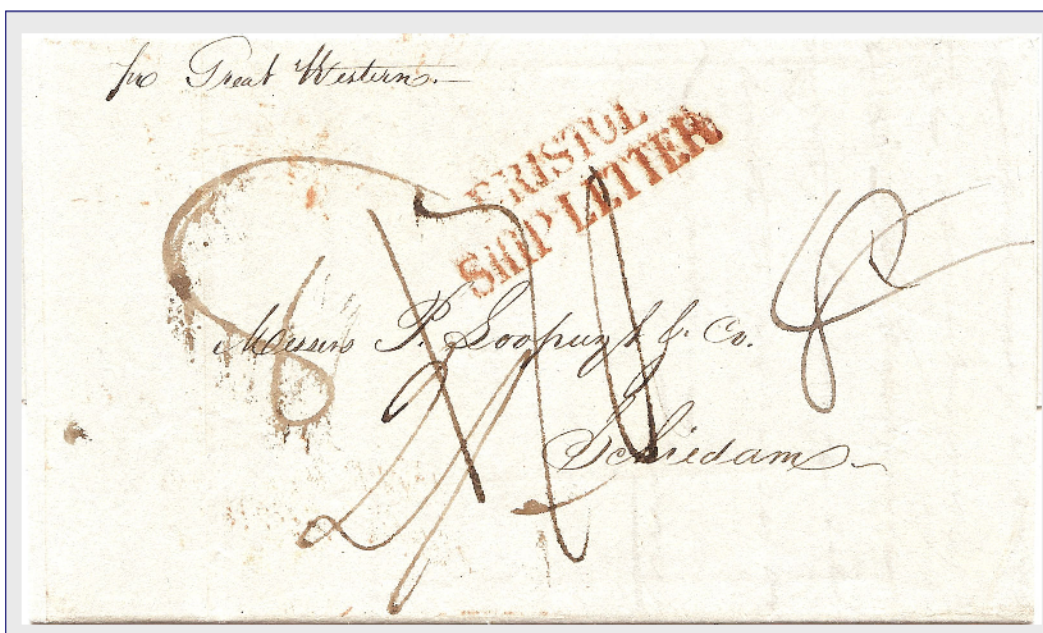
London debited 2/- to Holland:
8^d ship, 1s4^d to Rotterdam

Rotterdam rated **170** Dutch cents
due: 120c to Great Britain, 50c inland

Received on 29 May 22 days

*Engeland
over Rotterdam*

reverse, in red



Philadelphia, 8 May 1840

Mail could not be fully prepaid to The Netherlands until 1868. In April 1835 the British and Dutch governments agreed to allow letters to transit Great Britain without prepayment. Mail was exchanged between London and Rotterdam, where the Dutch inland rate of 50c per 15 grams was charged.

Non-Contract Steamship

Pioneer Steamship Companies

The Transatlantic Steamship Company, 1838-1840

Sent unpaid

Privately to New York

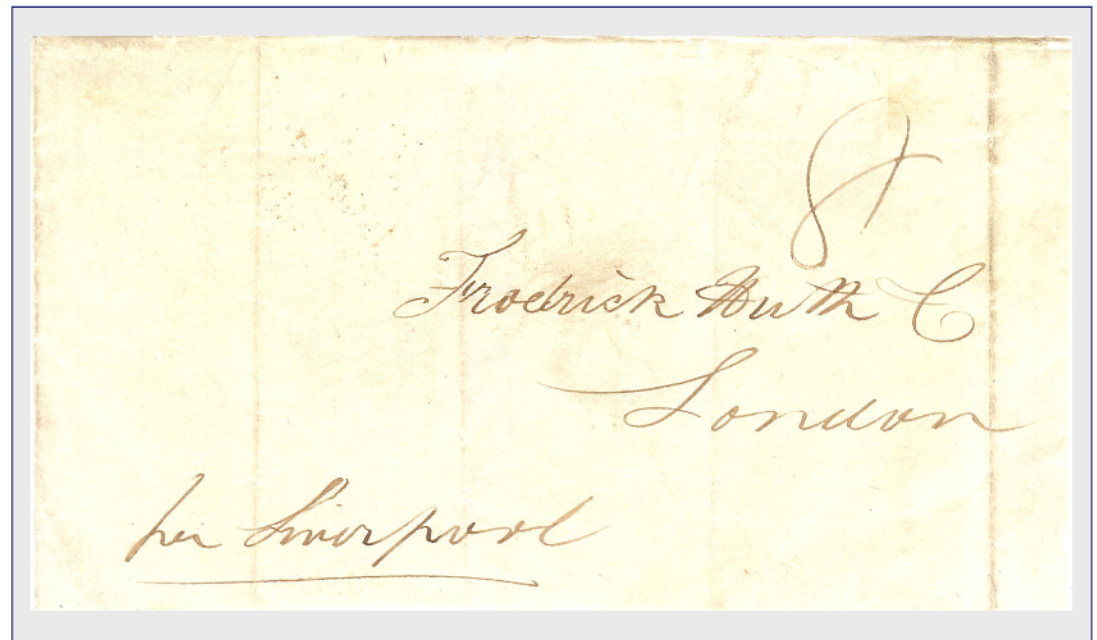
Steamship *Liverpool* :
New York 14 December
Liverpool 13 January

Liverpool rated 8^d due

Transit 31 days

Last of seven voyages

The company had only two ships, which together made ten voyages.



Philadelphia, 13 December 1839



Birmingham, 15 September 1838

Consignee's letter & invoice, carried privately to Liverpool by W&I Brown Co.

Steamship *Royal William* : Liverpool 20 September, New York 10 October
New York rated 14½¢ due: 2¢ ship, 12½¢ inland

Received 11 October 27 days

Second of three voyages

British Contract Steamship

Advent of British Contract Steamship Service

Cunard was awarded a seven year contract to convey mails by steamship between Liverpool, Halifax and Boston, beginning on 1 July 1840. Twice-monthly sailings were required. This contract drove the Great Western Steamship Company out of business, and ensured British dominance of scheduled transatlantic mail service by steamship for most of the decade.

British & North American Royal Mail Steam Packet Company-The Cunard Line

Canton, 17 February 1840

Carried by to London forwarders Russell & Sturgis from China, via Manila

Private ship to London, arrived 17 Sep 1840, where 1/- packet rate prepaid

Steamship *Caledonia* : Liverpool 19 September, Boston 3 October

Boston rated **20¾cents** due: 2¢ ship, 18¾¢ inland

Received 5 October 1840 226 days

The maiden voyage of Cunard's *Caledonia*



Reverse, in red

When the Cunard Line began steam service to Boston in 1840, delays in Philadelphia's British mails had shrunk dramatically. New York was less than a day away, Boston only two days.

British Contract Steamship



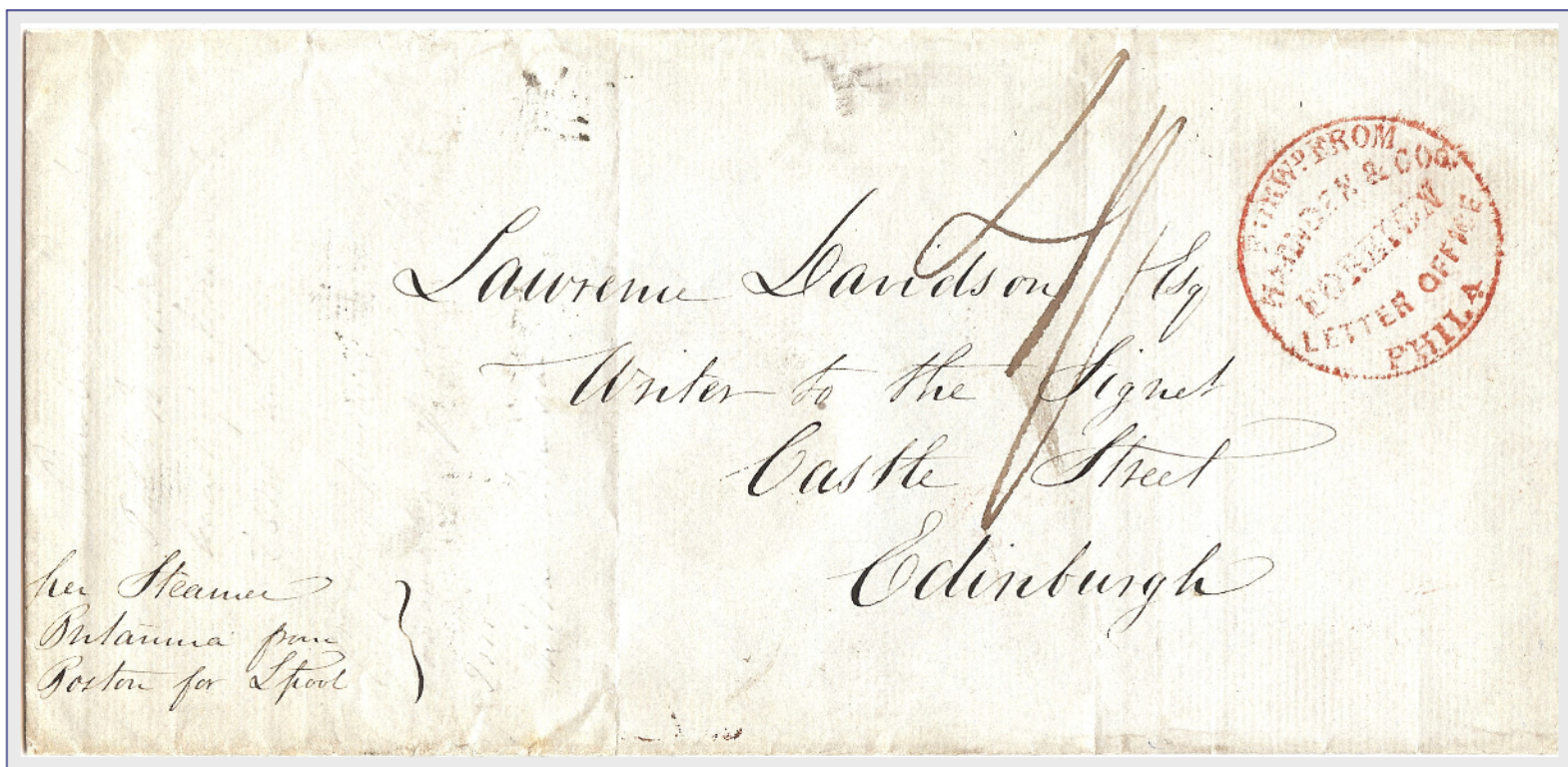
Philadelphia, 12 July 1841

Sent unpaid; carried to
Boston by Harnden & Co.Cunard *Britannia*
Boston 17 July
Liverpool 29 JulyLiverpool rated 1/- due
single packet rate

18 days



Used only on transatlantic mail



Philadelphia, 14 September 1841

Sent unpaid; carried to Boston by Harnden & Company's Foreign Letter Office
Cunard *Britannia* : Boston 16 September, Liverpool 30 September
Liverpool rated 4/- due, for letter weighing 1-2 oz., **quadruple packet rate**

Received 2 October 1841

19 days

British Contract Steamship

To France - Paid Only to the U.S. Port

Harnden prepaid $18\frac{3}{4}$ cents
and carried to Boston

Cunard *Columbia* :
Boston 16 October
Liverpool 30 October

London debited 1/- to France
for transatlantic packet

Paris rated 33 decimes due:
12 dec. to U.K.
21 dec. Calais to Lyon

Received 4 November

26 days

Packet Letter.

London



Philadelphia, 10 October 1842

From Wales - Double Rate, Paid Only to U.S. Port



Taibach, 18 May 1845

Prepaid 2/- to Boston

Cunard *Cambria* :
Liverpool 20 May
Boston 1 June

Boston rated $39\frac{1}{4}$ ¢ due
2¢ ship
 $18\frac{3}{4}$ ¢ x 2 inland

Received 4 June

16 days

**Finest reported strike
of Boston's $39\frac{1}{2}$
ship-letter postmark**

British Contract Steamship

"Special Arrangement" with the Liverpool Postmaster

Businessmen in Philadelphia and other eastern cities complained about delays in mail arriving via Boston, due to sorting and rating. After an 1843 request to the Liverpool Postmaster by the U.S. Postmaster General, from June 1844 to late 1848 mails to Philadelphia and ten other cities were made up in separate parcels in Liverpool. These were included in the New York bag, from where they were forwarded un-postmarked.

From The Two Sicilies, British Open Mail via France

Naples, 9 August 1844

Sent unpaid via ship to Marseilles, where letter entered the French mail system
In London, forwarding agent Heath, Furse & Co. paid $\frac{1}{3}$ due, plus $\frac{1}{-}$ packet postage

Cunard *Hibernia* : Liverpool 21 August, Boston 1 September
Philadelphia rated $20\frac{3}{4}$ due: 2¢ ship, $18\frac{3}{4}$ ¢ inland

Received 2 September

Transit 25 days

Nine $20\frac{3}{4}$ postmarks recorded in red

Red:
June 1844
to
October 1844

$20\frac{3}{4}$



reverse

Philadelphia's $20\frac{3}{4}$ and circled **12** postmarks were obtained specifically for incoming British mails arriving via Boston under the Postmaster General's special arrangement with the Liverpool Postmaster.

British Contract Steamship

Special Arrangement with the Liverpool Postmaster



Liverpool, 19 November 1844

Prepaid 1/- packet rate

Cunard *Caledonia* :
Liverpool 19 November
Boston 7 DecPhiladelphia **20³/₄** due :
2¢ ship, 18³/₄¢ inland
(150-400 mi)Received 8 December
19 days20³/₄Blue
Oct 1844 - Jun 1845

Prepaid 1/- packet rate

Cunard *Hibernia* :
Liverpool 4 January
Boston 23 JanuaryPhiladelphia **12** cents due:
2¢ ship
10¢ inland, effective 1 July 1845

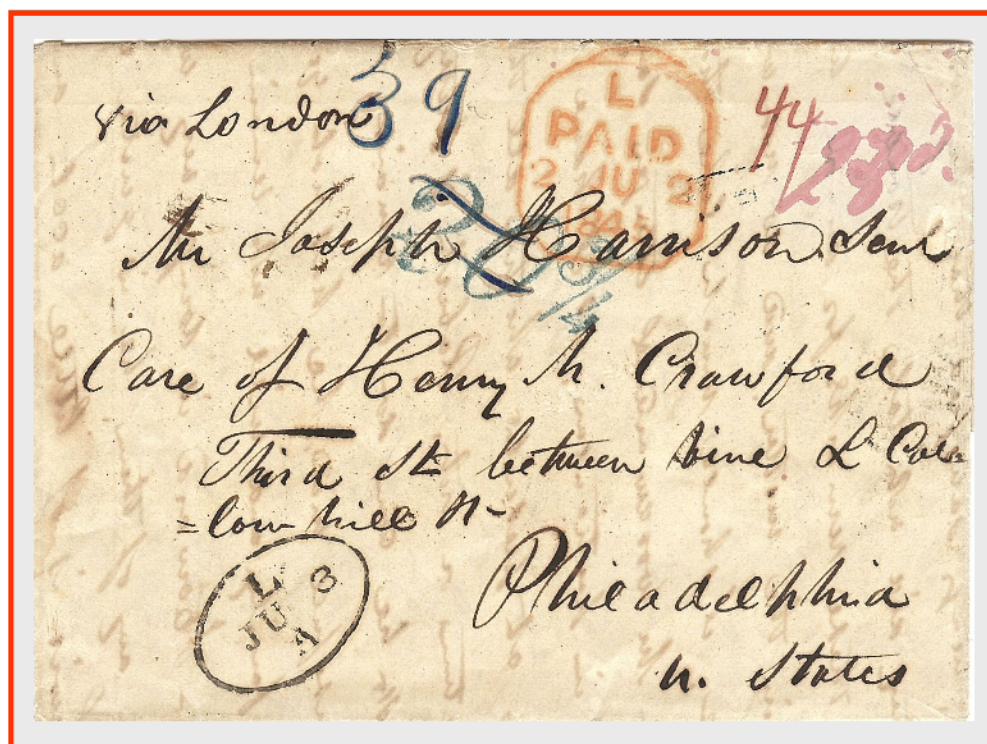
Received 24 January 26 days

Blue
Jul 1845 - Nov 1850

Ipswich, 30 December 1845

Special Arrangement with the Liverpool Postmaster

From Russia Via Hamburg & London, Prepaid to U.S. Port

44 kop. Russian
credit to Prussia2/8^d Prussian
credit to U.K.

St. Petersburg, 12 May 1845

Prepaid 240 kopeks at Prussian P.O. in St. Petersburg:

15 kop. Russian inland, 44 kop. Prussian transit, 180½ kop. British transit & transatlantic

London arrival 2 June, rated **PAID** to U.S. frontierCunard *Caledonia* : Liverpool 4 June, Boston 19 June

Philadelphia rated 20¾ due, then corrected to 39 due, a 1½¢ under-charge

Received 20 June 40 days

The only recorded letter from Russia to the United States for this route and rate

reverse

This letter was handled under the 1843 Russia-Prussia convention and the 1841 Prussia-Great Britain convention, then traveled in British open mail, arriving in the United States as an unpaid ship letter.

Last Transatlantic Voyage of the Pioneer Steamship *Unicorn*



Liverpool, 17 March 1846

Prepaid 8^d ship-letter fee

Steamship *Unicorn* : Liverpool 19 March, Boston 17 April
New York rated **12** due : 2¢ ship, 10¢ inland, >300 miles

Received 18 April Transit 33 days

The only Unicorn cover to Philadelphia of the seven recorded

U.S. Act of 1845 effective 1 July 1845	
Mileage	Cents
Up to 300	5
Over 300	10
Ship letters	
Delivered at port	6
Elsewhere, plus postage	2



reverse

Unicorn carried Cunard's first transatlantic mail in 1840, then operated on the St. Lawrence River between Quebec and Pictou, Nova Scotia, a feeder line for Cunard packets calling at Halifax. *Unicorn* returned to private service when the line was discontinued in 1845, and made her last transatlantic voyage in March 1846.

Non Contract Steamship

The Saint George Line of Sailing Packets (The Red Cross Line)

Prepaid **30** cents
 5¢ to New York
 25¢ freight money

Steamship *Sarah Sands* :
 New York 24 February
 Liverpool 17 March

Liverpool rated **8^d** due,
 ship letter rate

Received 18 March
 23 days

Late use of freight money



Philadelphia, 23 February 1847

The only recorded freight-money cover carried by Sarah Sands



Liverpool, 1 April 1848

Prepaid **8^d** ship-letter rate

Steamship *Sarah Sands* :
 Liverpool 3 April
 New York 21 April

New York rated **7** cents due
 2¢ ship, 5¢ inland

Received 22 April
 22 days

British Contract Steamship

Pre U.S.-French Treaty: Use of British Open Mail to France



Philadelphia, 28 December 1845

Latest recorded use of COLONIES &c. ART. 12 on mail from the United States

Prepaid 5 cents to New York

Cunard *Hibernia* :
 New York 26 February
 Liverpool 11 March

London applied
COLONIES &c. ART. 13

Paris rated 15 decimes due:
 8 dec. transatlantic
 2 dec. Br. transit
 5 dec. French inland

Received 12 March

17 days



Philadelphia, 24 February 1848

Prepaid 10 cents to Boston

Cunard *Acadia* :
 Boston 1 January
 Liverpool 15 January

London applied
COLONIES &c. ART. 12

Paris rated 15 decimes due:
 8 dec. transatlantic
 2 dec. British transit
 5 dec. French inland

Received 18 January

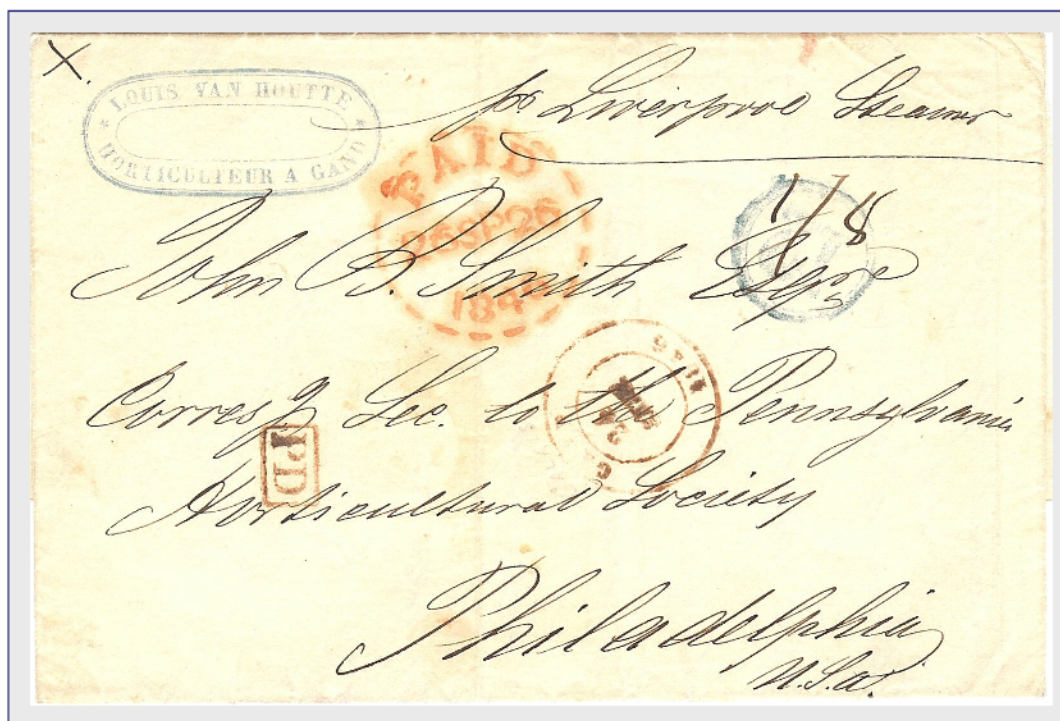
21 days

COLONIES &c. ART. 12, 13 markings noted that the U.K. was entitled to a French payment of 3s4^d per 30 grams of bulk weight, under the 1843 Anglo-French convention. This was equivalent to 10 dec. per single-weight letter.

British Contract Steamship

Pre U.S.-Belgium Treaty: Use of British Open Mail to The United States

From Belgium via London, Prepaid to U.S. Port



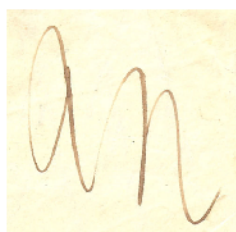
Ghent, 24 September 1846

Prepaid **24** decimes: 4 dec. inland, 8 dec. British transit, 12 dec. transatlantic
 Ghent marked **PD** and credited **1/8** to Great Britain

London arrival 26 September, marked **PAID** to U.S. frontier
 Cunard *Caledonia* : Liverpool 4 October, Boston 20 October

Philadelphia arrival 5 October, rated **12** due : 2¢ ship, 10¢ inland (>300 mi)

Received 21 October 28 days



reverse

24 decimes

The United States had no postal convention with Belgium until 1859, so this letter went via British open mail under terms of the Anglo-Belgian convention of 1844. Letters could be paid only to the U.S. port, since no U.S.-British postal treaty was in place.