

British Contract Steamship

Cunard Adds New York As a British Packet Port

In January 1848 Cunard added New York as a second American terminus, after which sailings alternated between Boston and New York. Both west- and eastbound sailings called at Halifax for Canadian mails. By April 1848, sailing frequency had increased to weekly. By the winter of 1852-1853 service was year-round.

Inaugural Cunard Voyage to New York

Manchester, 31 December 1847

Prepaid 2/- for a letter weighing ½ to 1 oz.

Cunard *Cambria* : Liverpool 1 January, New York 18 January
 New York rated 7 cents due as single-weight ship letter: 2¢ ship, 5¢ to Philadelphia

19 days

New York ship-letter postmarks appear on Cunard covers for only six months in 1848 and two months in 1849, prior to 8 March 1849 New York arrival of the first Cunard steamer to sail under the United States - Great Britain postal convention.

British Contract Steamship

Cunard's Two Western Termini

Costlier via Boston

Prepaid **10** cents to Boston
single rate, >300 miles

Cunard *Cambria* :
Boston 1 November
Liverpool 15 November

London rated **1/-** due
packet rate

18 days

e



Philadelphia, 28 October 1847

Cheaper via New York



Philadelphia, 23 May 1848

Prepaid **5** cents to New York
single rate, <300 miles

Cunard *Cambria* :
New York 24 May
Liverpool 6 June

Liverpool rated **1/-** due
packet rate

15 days

Philadelphians could now pay five cents less for their letters to Great Britain by specifying a ship departing from New York.

Advent of American Packets

Insufficiently Paid for American Packet



Philadelphia, 19 June 1848

Prepaid 5 cents to New York

Sender endorsed for American packet *Hermann* via Southampton, but paid only inland postage, so the New York post office sent via Cunard steamer as an unpaid ship letter.

Cunard *Acadia* : New York 21 June, Liverpool 5 July
London rated 1/- for British packet

17 days

In March 1845 Congress authorized a 24-cent sea-postage rate for letters carried on American contract vessels, a charge to be added to inland postage. The first contract was awarded in June 1847 to the Ocean Line. Great Britain immediately began charging their one-shilling packet rate on incoming American packet letters, rather than treating them as unpaid ship letters. Because eastbound letters sent during this period were effectively charged double, most letters were sent on Cunard sailings.

No American packet letters from Philadelphia during this period are recorded.

British Contract Steamship

Retaliatory Rate Period

The U.S. responded to the British one-shilling discriminatory rate against American packets with a 24 cent charge on both incoming and outgoing British packet letters, added to inland postage.



Liverpool, 30 June 1848

Prepaid 1/-
packet rate

Cunard Niagara :
Liverpool 1 Jul
Boston 12 Jul

Boston rated **34** due
24¢ retaliatory fee
10¢ inland, >300 mi.

Received 14 Jul

15 days

Prepaid 1/-
packet rate

Cunard Niagara :
Liverpool 2 December
Boston 16 December

Boston rated **34** due
24¢ retaliatory
10¢ inland, >300 mi.

Received 17 December

17 days

34

7 recorded
3 in blue



Manchester, 1 December 1848

British Contract Steamship

Retaliatory Rate Period

Single Retaliatory Rate - First Westbound Sailing in the Period

Prepaid 1/- packet rate

Cunard *Caledonia* :
Liverpool 24 June
New York 8 July

New York rated **29** due
24¢ retaliatory fee
5¢ inland, <300 mi.

Received 9 July

16 days

**The earliest recorded
retaliatory cover
to Philadelphia**



London, 23 June 1848

Double Retaliatory Rate



Liverpool, 29 August 1848

Double rate

Prepaid **2s3^d** :
2 x 1/- packet, ½-1 oz.
3^d late fee

Cunard *Europa* :
Liverpool 2 September
New York 15 September

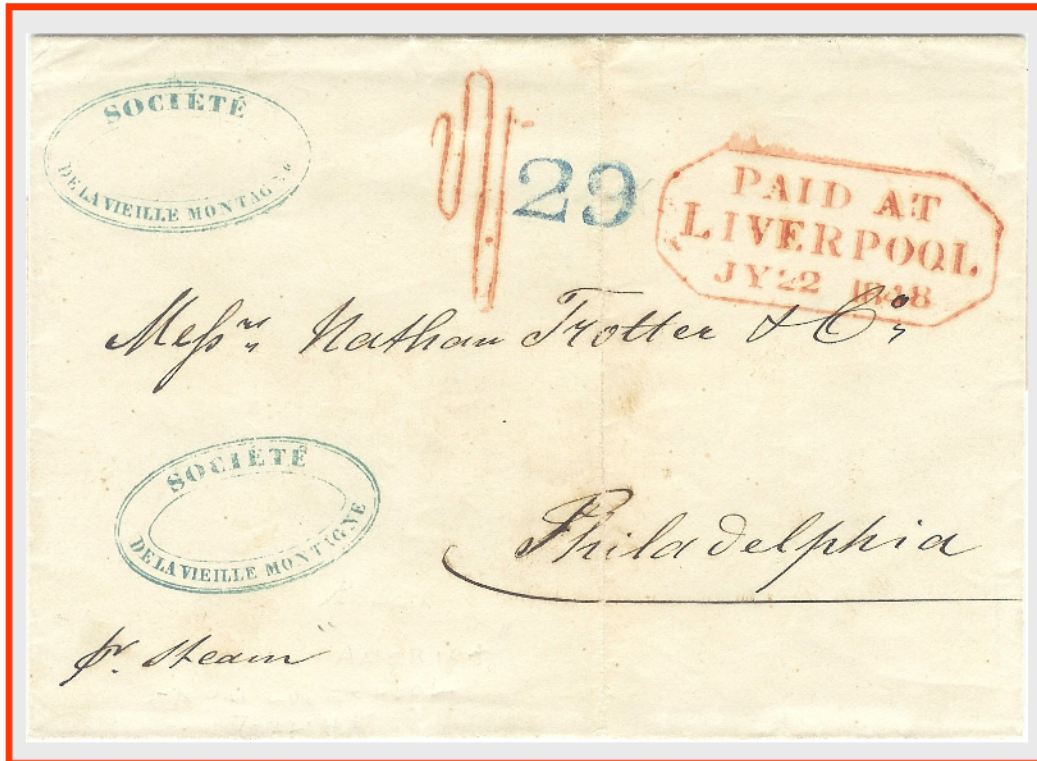
New York rated **58** due
48¢ retaliatory
10¢ inland

Received 15 September

18 days

**Four covers recorded
to Philadelphia
at this rate**

Retaliatory Rate Period



Liege, Belgium, 19 July 1848

Privately to Liverpool
Prepaid 1/- packet rate

Cunard America
Liverpool 22 July
New York 4 August

Phila. Rated **29** due
24¢ retaliatory rate
5¢ inland

Received 5 August

15 days

**Finest of 12
retaliatory covers
rated 29 cents
in Philadelphia**

Prepaid **29** cents
24¢ retaliatory rate
5¢ inland

Cunard Britannia
New York 25 October
Liverpool 11 November

London postmarked
COLONIES &c. ART. 13

Paris 14 November
via Boulogne

22 days

29

Finest recorded strike



Philadelphia, 24 October 1848

British Contract Steamship

Restored Rate Period

After the U.S. British Postal Convention was signed in December 1848, the retaliatory rate was rescinded by the Postmaster General on 3 January 1849. Rates reverted to those in force pre-June 1848, so incoming British packet letters were again treated as unpaid ship letters.

Prepaid 2/-, double packet rate

Cunard *Canada* :

Liverpool 13 January

New York 29 January

New York rated **12** cents due

2¢ ship

10¢ inland, <300mi.

Received 30 January

19 days



Birmingham, 12 January 1849



Falmouth, 7 February 1849

Prepaid 1/-, packet rate

Cunard *Europa* :

Liverpool 10 February

New York 24 February

New York rated **7** cents due

2¢ ship

5¢ inland, <300 mi.

Received 26 February

18 days

Only four Cunard packets arrived at American ports during this period.

Restored Rate Period



Philadelphia, 8 January 1849

Prepaid **5 cents** to New York

Cunard *Europa* :
New York 10 January
Liverpool 22 January

London marked
COLONIES &c. ART. 13

Paris rated **15** decimes due
10 dec. to G.B.
5 dec. French inland

16 days

Prepaid 5 cents to Boston
underpaid 5 cents

Cunard *America* :
Boston 24 January,
Liverpool 4 February

G.B. debited **1/8** to Holland

120c due in Schiedam
for debit and inland

Received 8 February

18 days



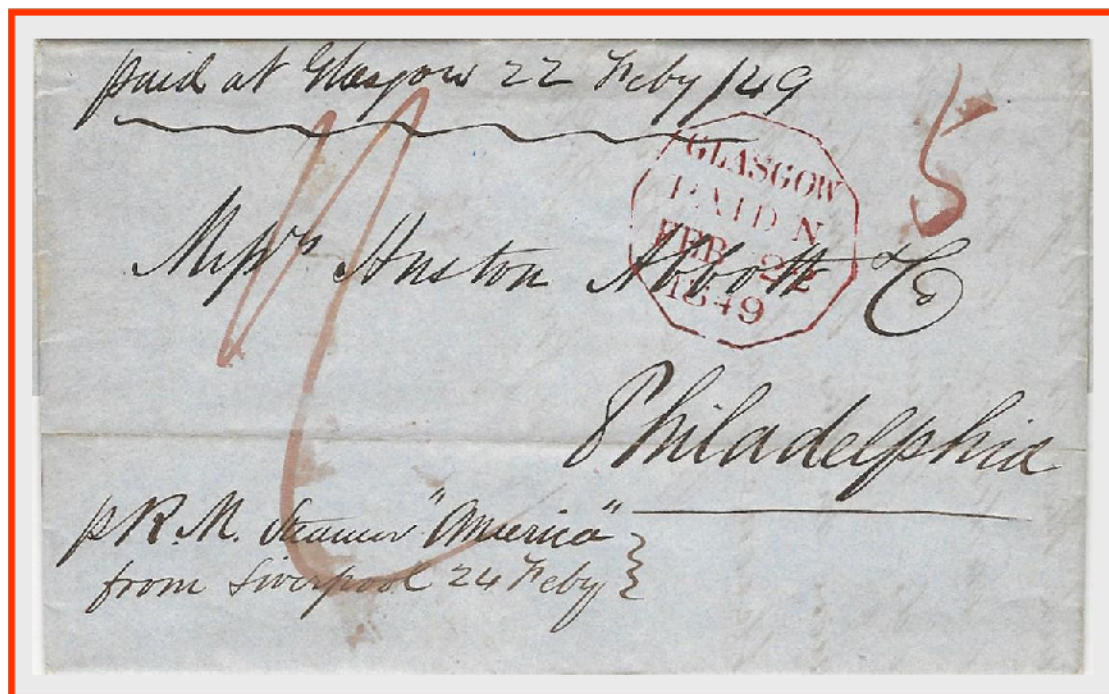
Philadelphia, 22 January 1849

Only three Cunard packets sailed from America during this period. Few covers to Europe are recorded.

British Contract Steamship

The 1848 Postal Treaty

The 1848 treaty set sea and inland rates between the two countries. Offices were established in Boston, New York, Liverpool, London and Southampton to exchange mails and account for respective shares of postage.

Accounting: Prepaid via British Packet, Adoption of Rate Markers

Glasgow, 22 February 1849

Prepaid 1/- treaty rate

Liverpool **5 (cents)** credit to U.S. for inland

Cunard America:
Liverpool 24 February
Boston 8 March

Received 10 March

15 days

**First westbound sailing
under the treaty**

Prepaid 1/- treaty rate

Liverpool **5/CENTS** credit
to U.S. for inland

Cunard Niagara :
Liverpool 25 August
New York 7 September

Received 7 September

14 days

1848 Treaty Rates

effective 15 February 1849

U.S. inland	5c
Transatlantic	16c
British inland	3c



Liverpool, 21 August 1849

Handstamp rate markers were unavailable for the first four westbound sailings under the 1848 treaty. Devices were delivered to the British exchange offices in mid-April 1849, to Boston in March 1849, and to New York in August 1849.

British Contract Steamship

Accounting: Prepaid via British Packet

Prepaid **24c** treaty rateNew York **19** credit to G.B.Cunard *Cambria* :
New York 27 June
Liverpool 10 JulyLondon **PAID**, 11 July

17 days

24Mar - Oct 1849
earliest recorded use

Philadelphia, 25 June 1849



Philadelphia, 18 February 1850

Prepaid **24c** treaty rateNew York credit **19** to G.B.Cunard *Europa* :
New York 20 Feb
Liverpool 4 MarLiverpool marked **PAID**

13 days

Feb 1850 - Mar 1853
earliest recorded use

Prior to 1836, Philadelphia's red octagonal rate postmarks were used only on domestic mail. In late 1849 they were reintroduced for use on foreign mail, often up-rated in manuscript. Although Philadelphia was not an exchange office, these postmarks adhered to the treaty requirement that prepaid amounts be shown in red.

British Contract Steamship

Accounting: Unpaid via British Packet**Rejected Printed Circular Rate, Treated as Unpaid****Liverpool, 6 April 1849**

Liverpool Metal Review prepaid the 1^d treaty rate for a printed circular
 Inspected at the Liverpool exchange office where treated as an unpaid letter, so U.S. debited **19¢** for inland and sea

Cunard *Europa* : Liverpool 7 April, New York 19 April

New York rated **24¢** due: 19¢ debit, 5¢ inland

Very early circular under the treaty, sent on the fourth westbound sailing under the treaty

Articles XV and XVI of the 1848 treaty specified that newspapers and circulars could be sent for 1d from Great Britain, or 2¢ from the United States. No accounting was required. Written matter was not permitted, and if found resulted in the full letter rate being charged. Each item had to be unsealed to allow easy inspection. The red handstamp paid no postage, but signified that a newspaper tax had been paid at 1d per 4 ounces.

British Contract Steamship

U.S. Accounting: Unpaid Incoming

Sent unpaid, **24¢** treaty rate

London debited **19/CENTS**
to the U.S.:

16¢ British packet
3¢ British inland

Cunard *Caledonia* :
Liverpool 10 November
Boston 24 November

Boston rated **24 cents** due

Received 25 November

17 days



London, 9 November 1849



Calcutta, 7 September 1849

Sent unpaid to London;
forwarder paid **1/10**, the
India rate via Marseilles

London debited **19/CENTS** to
the U.S.:

16¢ British packet
3¢ British inland

Cunard *America*:
Liverpool 3 November
New York 17 November

New York rated **24 cents** due

Received 19 November

73 days

Prepaid letters: amount prepaid and credit to receiving country to be marked in red

Unpaid letters: amount unpaid and debit to receiving country to be marked in black

Ship-letter fees were unaffected by the treaty

American Contract Steamship

Accounting: American Packet

Prepaid, **24¢** treaty rate

New York **3¢** credit to U.K.
British inland
by American packet

Collins Line *Atlantic* :
New York 29 May
Liverpool 9 June

14 days



Philadelphia, 27 May 1852



Philadelphia, 19 April 1850

Sent unpaid, Philadelphia noted **24** cents packet rate

New York debited **21** cents to Great Britain: 5¢ inland, 16¢ American packet
Ocean Line *Hermann* : New York 20 April, Southampton 7 May

Southampton exchange office rated **1/-** due for an unpaid packet letter
Received 8 May 20 days

Finest of five recorded examples of New York's 21 cent debit marking

Under terms of the Treaty, the Southampton exchange office could exchange mails only with New York.

American Contract Steamship

Adoption of Accounting Procedures



Philadelphia, 28 March 1853

Prepaid, **24¢** treaty rate

Philadelphia **PAID, 24**

Boston **19¢** credit to G.B.
British packet & inland

Cunard Canada :
Boston 30 March
Liverpool 10 April

14 days

Prepaid **24¢** treaty rate

Philadelphia **PAID, 24**

New York **19¢** credit for
British packet & inland

Cunard Africa :
New York 1 June
Liverpool 12 June

13 days



Philadelphia, 31 May 1853

Philadelphia's red **24** hand stamps appeared in March 1853 shortly after James Campbell, a Philadelphian, was appointed Postmaster General. His renegotiation of the 1848 Treaty yielded Exchange-Office status for Philadelphia on 1 January 1854.

Non Contract Steamship

Liverpool-Philadelphia Scheduled Steamship Service: The Inman Line**Inman's First Westbound Voyage**Forwarded to Liverpool by
Geo. H. Draper

Unpaid by private ship

Inman *City of Glasgow* :
Liverpool 11 December
Philadelphia 3 JanuaryPhiladelphia rated 6¢ due
for delivery at the port

38 days

**10 days longer than via
Cunard to New York.**

Lyon, 28 November 1850

Inman's First Eastbound Voyage

Philadelphia, 15 January 1851

Sent unpaid by private ship

Inman *City of Glasgow*
Philadelphia 16 January
Liverpool 30 JanuaryLondon forwarded to France
Under 1843 Anglo-French
Treaty as an unpaid letter**15** decimes due in CognacReceived 3 February
19 days

reverse

Inman offered monthly service with three new steamships, the largest and most modern ever built on the Clyde. Philadelphia lobbied the government for a Liverpool-Philadelphia mail contract, but after years of losing freight and passenger business to the New York lines, Inman moved its western terminus there in 1857 and began carrying mail under temporary U.S. contracts.

Non Contract Steamship

Liverpool-Philadelphia Scheduled Steamship Service: The Inman Line

Sent Prepaid



Prepaid 8^d ship-letter rate

Inman Line *City of Manchester* :
Liverpool 17 September
Philadelphia 3 October

Philadelphia rated 7 cents
due in Buffalo:
2¢ ship, 5¢ inland

17 days

Liverpool, 17 September 1851

Sent Unpaid

Unpaid ship letter

Inman Line
City of Manchester :
Liverpool 7 December
Phila. 23 December

Philadelphia rated 7¢
due in Baltimore:
2¢ ship
5¢ inland

17 days



Sheffield, 24 November 1853