

British Contract Steamship

Use of British Open Mail

Prepaid **5 cents** to New York

Cunard *Canada* :
New York 17 October
Liverpool 28 October

London applied
COLONIES & C. ART. 13

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

14 days

PAID
5

used for eight days
4 recorded



Philadelphia, 16 October 1849



Philadelphia, 17 December 1849

Prepaid **5 cents** to Boston

Cunard *Europa* :
Boston 19 December
Liverpool 30 December

London applied
COLONIES & C. ART. 13

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

16 days



used for six weeks
8 recorded

The treaty permitted both countries the use of open mails to other countries with which they had postal agreements, and would allow transmission of each others' letters if they arrived free of charges.

American Contract Steamship

Use of British Open Mail

From Barbados via St. Thomas



Prepaid 1/- for British packet
to New York

RMSPC *Derwent*
Barbados 14 July
St. Thomas 17 July

Cunard *Merlin*
St. Thomas 21 July
New York 30 July

New York rated
5 cents due for inland

Received 1 August

27 days

St. Nicholas Abbey, 5 July 1851

From The Netherlands Via London



16 CENTS
credit
markings
uncommon

Rotterdam, 24 December 1850

Prepaid 110 Dutch cents (reverse) to the U.S. port; 1/4 credit to Great Britain for all transit fees

London marked **PAID, 16/CENTS credit** to the U.S. for American packet

Collins Line *Atlantic* : Liverpool 19 Dec, returned with broken shaft; Cunard *Africa* : Liverpool 1 Feb, New York 15 Feb

New York rated 5 cents due for inland postage

Received 15 February

54 days

American Contract Steamship

Use of British Open Mail

From The Philippines Via Singapore & Marseilles



Manila, 22 January 1851

Carried to Singapore by forwarder A.L. Johnston, where sent unpaid in British mail on 7 February
 P&O *Pekin* to Galle (15 February), *Hindustan* to Suez (4 March), *Ripon* to Malta (14 March)
 Admiralty packet *HMS Medusa* to Marseilles (17 March)

London arrival 21 March, where rated **2/3** due: 1/5 packet rate, 10^d French transit for 1/4 to 1/2 oz.
 London converted 2/3 to a **54** cents debit to the U.S.

Collins Line *Baltic* : Liverpool 22 March, New York 3 April
 New York rated **75** cents due: 54¢ debit, 16¢ American packet, 5¢ inland

Received 5 April 74 days



reverse

British Contract Steamship

Use of British Open Mail

To Schleswig-Holstein



Philadelphia, 8 December 1851

Prepaid **5** cents to Boston
Cunard Asia : Boston 10 December
Liverpool 20 December

London debited Prussia **1/4** :
 8d transatlantic
 6d British transit
 2d Belgian transit

Sent via Belgium: closed bag under the
Anglo-Prussian Convention of 1846

Aachen exchange office, 25 December

Marienstadt arrival unknown

*Letter initially misrouted to St. Mary's
in Elk County, Pennsylvania*

To Württemberg

Prepaid **5** cents to New York

Cunard *America* :
New York 17 March
Liverpool 29 March

Sent via France under terms of the 1852 amendment to the *Anglo-French Convention of 1843*

Paris applied American Packet postmark
in error

Württemberg rated **40** kreuzer due:
34 Kr to France for transit
6 Kr to Thurn & Taxis Post for inland



Philadelphia, 3 March 1852

American Contract Steamship

Use of British Open Mail

To France

Prepaid **21¢** treaty rate:

5¢ inland
16¢ American packet

Collins Line *Atlantic* :

New York 8 January
Liverpool 20 January

Sent unpaid from London

Paris rated **16** decimes due
7½ to 15 grams

New York credited **3** in error;
no transit fee was due
to Great Britain.

Charles Toppan was a partner
in the company that printed
these stamps.



Philadelphia, 6 January 1853

To Switzerland via France



Philadelphia, 21 April 1852

21¢ treaty rate, prepaid
5¢ inland
16¢ American Packet

Ocean Line *Hermann* :

New York 24 April
Southampton 7 May

Sent unpaid from London

Basel rated **60** rappen
due in Neuchâtel:
inland & French transit

British Contract Steamship

Use of British Open Mail

The 17-Day Retaliatory Rate Against France



Philadelphia, 8 February 1853

Prepaid **21¢** retaliatory rate: 5¢ inland, 16¢ British packet
 Cunard Africa : New York 9 February, Liverpool 23 February

Sent unpaid from London on 23 February
 Paris rated **13** decimes due, 7½ to 15 grams

Received 25 February 17 days

The only recorded cover from Philadelphia during this retaliatory period

The Retaliatory Rate Period of 24 January to 10 February, 1853

Due to miscommunication, U.S. Postmaster General Hubbard thought that double sea postage was being charged on letters to France carried via American packets in the British open mail. This had been the case, but Hubbard was unaware that the French had already corrected the inequity by lowering their rate to the U.S. from 15 decimes to 13 decimes. Hubbard's new rate was 21 cents regardless of whether a letter was carried by British or American packet. Hubbard's misapprehension was corrected, and the retaliation was suspended after only 17 days.

American Contract Steamship
British Contract Steamships

Use of British Open Mail

Quadruple Treaty Rate to China



Philadelphia, 11 June 1852

Sender prepaid **\$1.80**, four times the 45¢ treaty rate to China.

New York credited **96** cents to U.K.: four times the 1/- British packet rate from Southampton

Collins Arctic	: New York 12 June, Liverpool 23 June
P&O Sultan	: Southampton 29 June, Malta 9 July
HMS Medina	: Malta 13 July, Alexandria 17 July (Admiralty Packet)
P&O Oriental	: Suez 5 August, Galle 20 August
P&O Ganges	: Galle 21 August, Hong Kong 2 September, via Singapore

Received 3 September 86 days

The only recorded example of up-rating to \$1.80

Philadelphia's red octagonal postmarks, taken out of service in 1836 and then re-introduced in 1849, were up-rated in manuscript to a wide range of values to cover various prepayments encountered under the U.S.-British Treaty of 1848.

British Contract Steamship

The Philadelphia Exchange Office

Philadelphia became an exchange office on 1 January 1854, and was to correspond in closed bags with the exchange offices at Liverpool, London or Southampton. Although mail despatched by the Philadelphia exchange office could originate anywhere, **British bags sent to Philadelphia were to comprise only mail to addresses within the Philadelphia city limits.**

Accounting: Unpaid via British Packet

First westbound mails for the Philadelphia Exchange Office

Sent unpaid

Liverpool **19/CENTS** debit to U.S.

3¢ British inland

16¢ British packet

Cunard *Niagara*

Liverpool 7 January

Boston 25 January

Philadelphia rated **24¢** due:

21 days

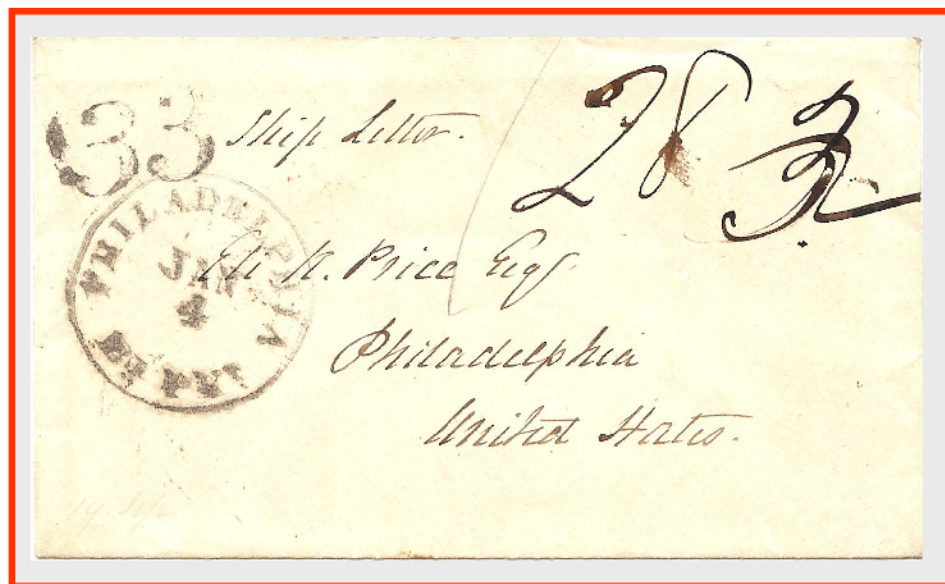
24/PHILADELPHIA / B^R PK^T

earliest recorded use



Manchester, 6 January 1854

From St. Helena, via London



St Helena, 24 October 1857

Sent unpaid

Sir Edward Paget from St. Helena
arr. London 18 December

London debited **3¢** to U.S. in error,
then corrected to a **28¢** debit:
12¢ (6d) uniform rate to London
16¢ transatlantic

Cunard *Niagara*

Liverpool 19 December

Boston 3 January

Philadelphia added 5¢ inland, and
rated **33¢** due 91 days



reverse

33

only recorded use

British Contract Steamship

Accounting: Unpaid via British Packet

Double Rate

Paid 1^d to Liverpool, but
partial payment not per-
mitted under the treaty

Liverpool **38 CENTS**
debit to U.S.:
2 x (3¢ inland + 16¢ sea)

Cunard Asia :
Liverpool 1 July
New York 12 July

Philadelphia rated
48¢ due

14 days

38
CENTS



Sheffield, 30 June 1854

Quadruple Rate



Liverpool, 21 January 1859

Sent unpaid, quadruple rate
1 to 2 oz.

Liverpool **76 cents**
debit to U.S.:
4 x (3¢ inland + 16¢ sea)

Cunard Asia :
Liverpool 22 January
New York 7 February

Philadelphia rated **96¢** due

18 days

96

British Contract Steamship

Accounting: Prepaid via British Packet

Single Rate

Prepaid **1** shilling
up to ½ oz.

5 cents credit to U.S.
for inland

Cunard Asia :
Liverpool 21 March
New York 4 April

Philadelphia **24**
confirmed prepayment

Received 4 April

20 days



Jersey, 17 March 1857

Double Rate



Liverpool, 12 September 1856

Prepaid **2** shillings,
½ to 1 oz.

Liverpool credited **10**
cents to U.S. for double
inland

Cunard Canada :
Liverpool 13 Sep
Boston 26 Sep

Philadelphia **48**
confirmed prepayment

Received 27 Sep

16 days

British Contract Steamship

Accounting: Prepaid via British Packet

Quadruple Rate + Late Fee



Liverpool, 23 May 1855

Prepaid 5 shillings: 4 x 1/- rate for 1 to 2 oz., 1/- late fee

Liverpool credited 20 cents to U.S., 4 x 5¢ inland

Cunard Africa : Liverpool 26 May, Boston 7 June
Philadelphia 96 confirmed prepayment of treaty rate

Received 7 June 16 days

F.R.H.
Floating Receiving House
on the landing stage
in Liverpool harbor



reverse

96

earliest recorded use in

The 1848 U.S. G.B Treaty did not permit a triple rate. Late fees were not addressed by the treaty, but were established by GPO London in 1849 at 1/- per letter regardless of weight, reduced to 6d in 1859.

American Contract Steamship

Accounting: Unpaid via American Packet**One-Month Round Trip**

Philadelphia, 17 May 1858

Prepaid **24 cents**Philadelphia **19¢** credit to U.K.
for British packet and inlandReturned unpaid by American
Packet; London **3 cents** debit
to U.S. for British inlandPhiladelphia rated **24¢** dueCunard *Europa* :
Boston 19 May
Liverpool 30 MayHavre Line *Arago* :
Southampton 2 June
New York 15 June

Round trip 30 days

From Gibraltar

Gibraltar, 17 January 1859

Carried privately to London, where sent unpaid
London **3 cents** debit to U.S. for British inlandInman Line *Lebanon* : Liverpool 29 January, New York 17 FebruaryPhiladelphia rated **24 cents** due

32 days

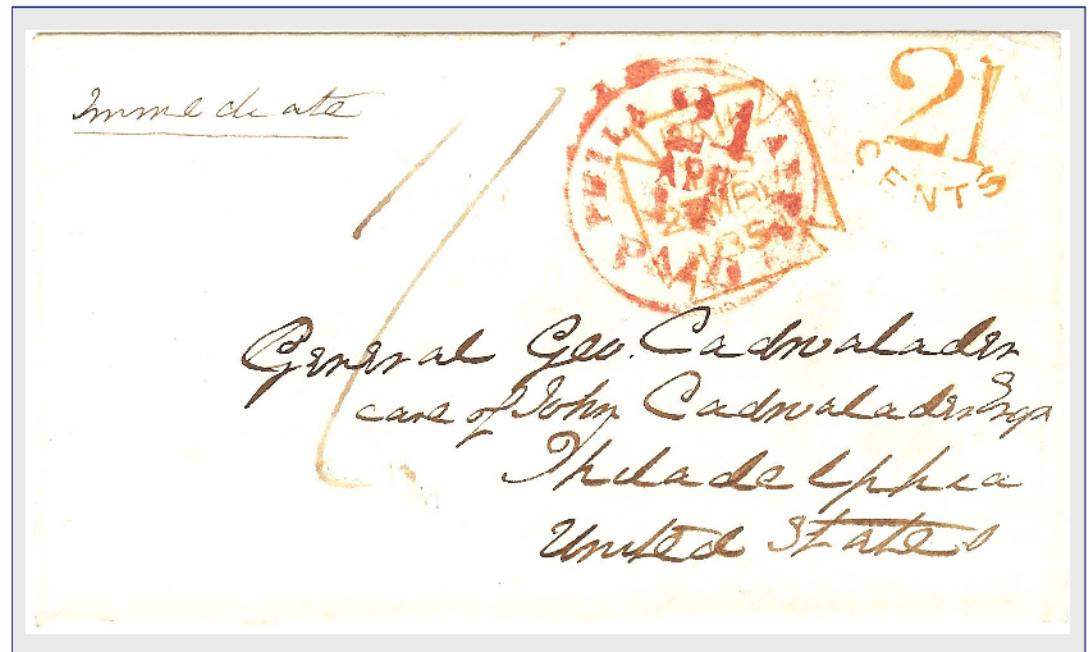
American Contract Steamship

Accounting: Prepaid via American Packet

Prepaid 1 shilling

London 21 cents credit to
U.S.: 5¢ packet, 3¢ inlandOcean Line *Hermann* :
Southampton 29 March
New York 14 AprilPhiladelphia restated
payment

19 Days



London, 27 March 1854



Cape May, New Jersey, 15 July 1858

Prepaid 24 cents

Philadelphia 3 cents credit to
U.K. for British inlandInman *City of Washington* :
New York 17 July
Liverpool 29 July

London restated payment

15 days

Contract Steamships

Handling Anomalies

Incorrectly Postmarked



Philadelphia, 14 September 1857

Prepaid **24** centsPhiladelphia **19¢** credit to U.K.
for British packet & inlandCunard Asia :
New York 16 September
Liverpool 27 September

Liverpool restated payment

14 days

Branch offices in Philadelphia
were instructed not to postmark
treaty mail, but to pass it to the
foreign desk. The black date
stamp was applied in error.

e

Address Misunderstood



Penrith, 23 November 1858

Prepaid **1** shillingLiverpool **21¢** credit to U.S.
For Am. packet and inlandInman City of Washington :
Liverpool 26 November
New York 13 December

New York restated payment

22 days

Germantown was part of
Philadelphia, so letter should
not have gone in the bag for
New York.

British Contract Steamships

Handling Anomalies

Credit for Missing Adhesive

Prepaid **24** centsPhiladelphia **19c** credit to U.K.
For British packet & inlandCunard Asia :
New York 28 March
Liverpool 8 April

16 days

Stain on envelope is the same
size as the 1857 24-cent issue.
Postal clerk accepted as paid.24⁰

previously unrecorded



Philadelphia, 24 March 1860

Sorted Aboard Ship; Not Postmarked in Philadelphia



Liverpool, ca. 1859-66

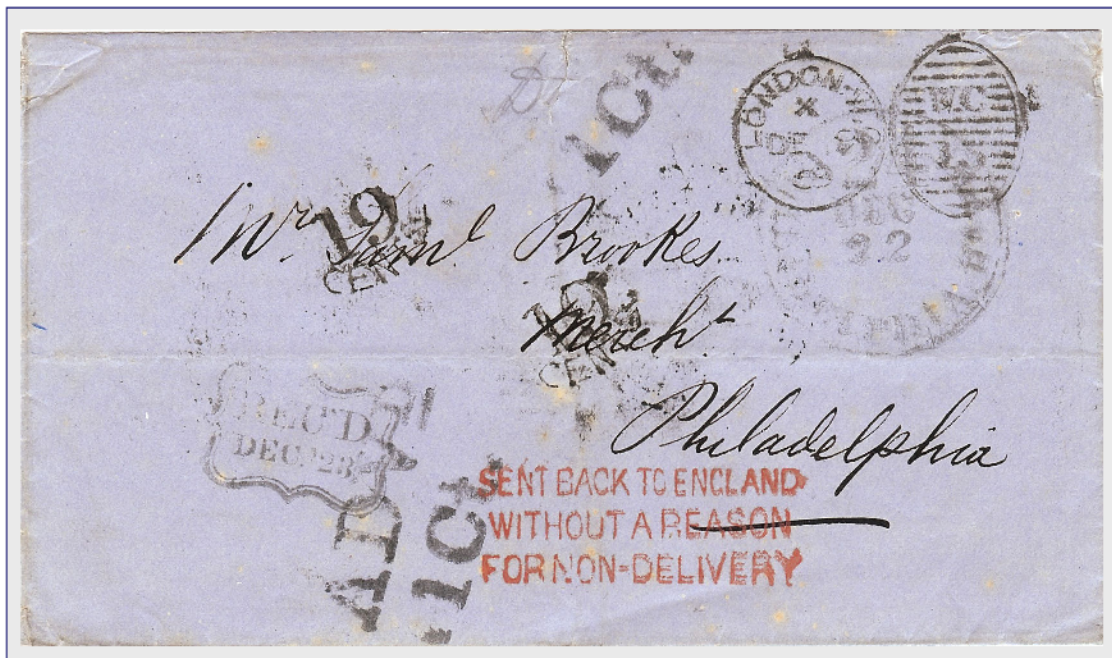
Prepaid **1** shillingLiverpool **5c** credit to U.S.
for inland**A92**: mail-boat cancel issued
in June 1859 to Mr. Nash,
Marine Packet Service
Atlantic Line, for use aboard
Cunard packets Asia and
Arabia.Philadelphia failed to apply a
datestamp, per Treaty.

e

rare on cover

The British post office pioneered the establishment of shipboard mail-sorting offices. In the Atlantic, numeral handstamps were issued to clerks aboard Cunard and Allan Line steam packets from 1859-1870. Few examples have survived on cover.

Undeliverable, Returned



London, 9 December 1859

Sent unpaid, London **19** cents debit to U.S. for British inland and packetCunard *Asia* : Liverpool 10 December, New York 22 December 12 daysCunard *America* : Boston 8 February, Queenstown 20 February 13 days

Received at Philadelphia on 22 December, but insufficiently addressed, so passed to the Directory Section: **REC'D/DEC 23** and advertised the same day. Addressee did not respond so marked **DEAD** on 1 February and forwarded to the Dead Letter Office in Washington. Returned to the U.K.; no net charges to either country.

ADV^d
1Ct.



SENT BACK TO ENGLAND
WITHOUT A REASON
FOR NON-DELIVERY

London Exchange Office
latest recorded use

reverse