

British & American Contract Steamships

Insufficiently Prepaid

Underpaid by 4 pence

Treated as unpaid: London 3¢
debit to U.S. for U.K. inland

NGL Bremen :
Southampton 19 April
New York 1 May

New York rated 24 cents due

13 days

**Letter should have been
rated at the Philadelphia
Exchange Office**



Ashford, 18 April 1859



Philadelphia, 13 August 1861

Double 24¢ treaty rate, underpaid by 24 cents so treated as unpaid
Philadelphia 10 cents debit to U.K. for double U.S. inland: **10/PHIL^A B^R PK^T**
Cunard Africa : New York 14 August, Liverpool 25 August 12 days
Liverpool rated 2/- due

INSUFFICIENTLY / PAID : earliest recorded use

Under the treaty, partially paid letters were treated as wholly unpaid, with the full rate due on arrival. No fines were applied.

British & American Contract Steamships

Registered Mail

Prepaid 53 cents
 2 x 24¢ in adhesives
 5¢ registration in cash

Philadelphia credits to U.K.:
 6¢ double inland
 2½¢ registered (manuscript)

Inman City of Washington :
 New York 6 December
 Liverpool 16 December

12 days

REGISTERED

earliest recorded use
 on foreign mail



Philadelphia, 6 December 1862



London, 8 June 1860

1s6^d prepaid
 1s packet. 6^d registered

London 5 / 6 credit to U.S.:
 5¢ inland, 6¢ registered

Cunard Asia :
 Liverpool 9 June
 New York 21 June

Philadelphia overstruck
 London registered oval:
PHIL^A/24/B^R PK^T/PAID

13 days

Additional articles effective 1 May 1856 allowed exchange of registered letters, provided that registration was fully prepaid, and that the receiving country would bear no liability for loss. Each country was to credit the other with half of their registration fee.

British Contract Steamship

Registered Mail

Quadruple Rate



London, 16 March 1860

Prepaid **4s6d** : 4/- quadruple treaty rate (1-2 oz.), 6^d registrationLondon **20 / 6** credit to U.S.: 4 x 5¢ inland / 6¢ registeredCunard *Arabia* : Liverpool 17 March, New York 30 MarchPhiladelphia marked **PHIL^A/B^R PK^T/PAID**, and restated the rate in manuscript

15 days

2

2 oz.

20/6

20/6
credits to U.S.

96

96
quadruple rate

Under the 1848 treaty, the registration fee was fixed by the sending country, at this time 6^d in Great Britain and 5¢ in the United States. The fee was independent of the letter weight, so was the same for both single and multiple weight letters.

American Contract Steamship

Forwarding

Domestic



Philadelphia, 24 August 1858

Prepaid 24¢

Philadelphia 3¢ credit to U.K.
for British inlandInman City of Washington :
New York 28 August
Liverpool 10 SeptemberForwarded to London,
then to Clifton, where 1^d due

25 days

POSTAGE NOT PAID
TO LONDON

International

Prepaid 24¢

Phila. 3¢ credit to U.K.
for British inlandCollins Line Atlantic :
New York 21 February
Liverpool 4 MarchForwarded to Paris unpaid
Arr. 7 March
8 decimes due

16 days



Philadelphia, 20 February 1855

Prepaid mail could be forwarded unpaid by the receiving country to any of their treaty partners. Internal forwarding was at the expense of the addressee. Returned letters were treated the same way—sent unpaid to the original sender.

American Contract Steamship

Forwarding

The *Three Month Period* for U.S. Mail to France

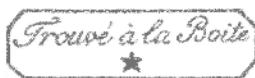
Philadelphia, 20 January, 1857

Prepaid **21** cents: 5¢ U.S. inland, 16¢ American packet
 Ocean Line *Constitution* : New York 24 January, Southampton 7 February

London debited **40** centimes/oz. to France; Paris rated **5** decimes due (canceled)
 Deposited in a postbox for unpaid forwarding to Rome : **Trouvé à la boîte**

Routed Paris-Marseilles-Civitavecchia-Roma, arrived 14 February
 Rome rated Rome rated **20** bajocchi due: inland plus British & French transit

25 days



"Found in the Box"
 Paris

VIA DI MARE

"By Sea"
 Marseilles to Civitavecchia

Under the 1856 Anglo-French treaty, effective 1 January 1857 the fee charged to France by Great Britain for unpaid letters transiting the U.K. was reduced from 40 decimes to only 40 centimes per ounce. Senders in America paid the same amount, but recipients in France saw a steep reduction in postage due. Because the U.S-French treaty was not effective until April 1, the first quarter of 1857 is often called the **Three Month Period** by collectors. Few covers are known from Philadelphia.

American Contract Steamship

To Tuscany via London, Marseilles & Livorno

Prepaid **5** cents

Cunard Canada :
 Boston 16 August
 Liverpool 27 August

London 28 August
 Paris 29 August

Paris to Firenze via
 Marseilles & Livorno

28 grazie (19 decimes) due
 in Firenze:

13 dec. U.S. to France
 6 dec. France to Tuscany

Received 3 September

24 days



Philadelphia, 9 August 1854

Treated under the Anglo-French treaty of 1843, and Franco-Sardinian treaty of 1838

From The Netherlands, British Packet



Rotterdam, 17 July 1855

Prepaid **80** Dutch cents:
 10¢ inland
 10¢ Belgian transit
 20¢ U.K. transit
 40¢ transatlantic

Rotterdam 1/- credit to
 U.K. for British packet

Cunard Asia :
 Liverpool 21 July
 Boston 2 August

Philadelphia rated **5¢**
 due for inland

18 days

5

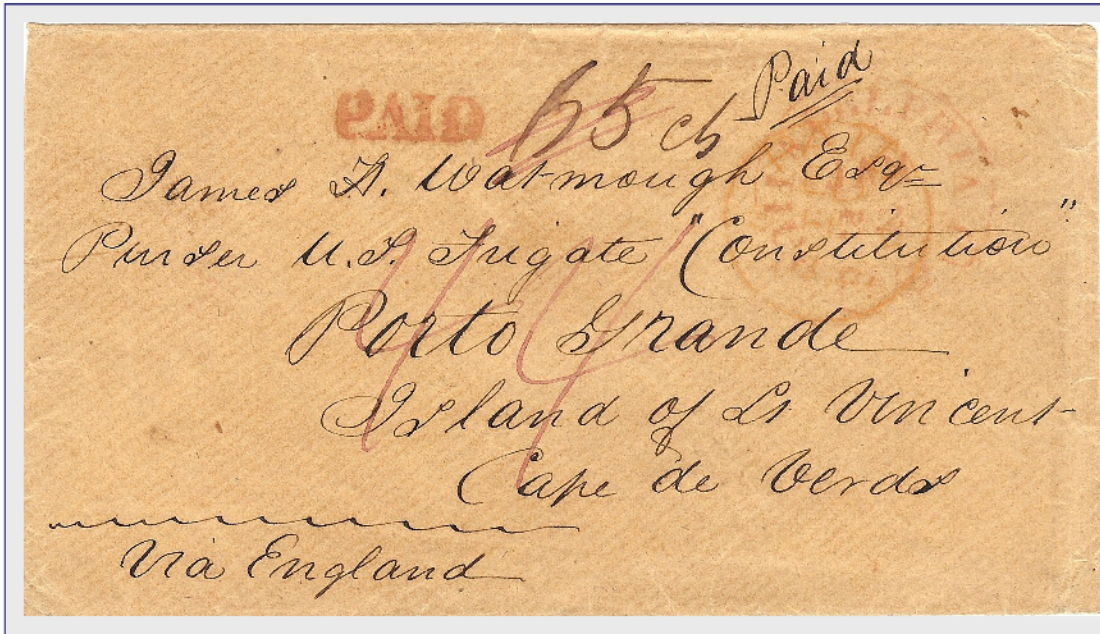
earliest recorded use

Treated under the Anglo-Dutch postal convention of 1854.

American & British Contract Steamships

Anti-Slavery Patrols

To the Cape Verde Islands, American & British Packet



Philadelphia, 22 January 1855

Prepaid **65** centsPhila. retained 21¢
for inland & Am. Pkt.Phila. **44¢** credit to G.B.,
(1s10^d) for British packet
to Porto GrandeCollins Line *Baltic* :
New York 25 January
Liverpool 5 February

Received 26 February

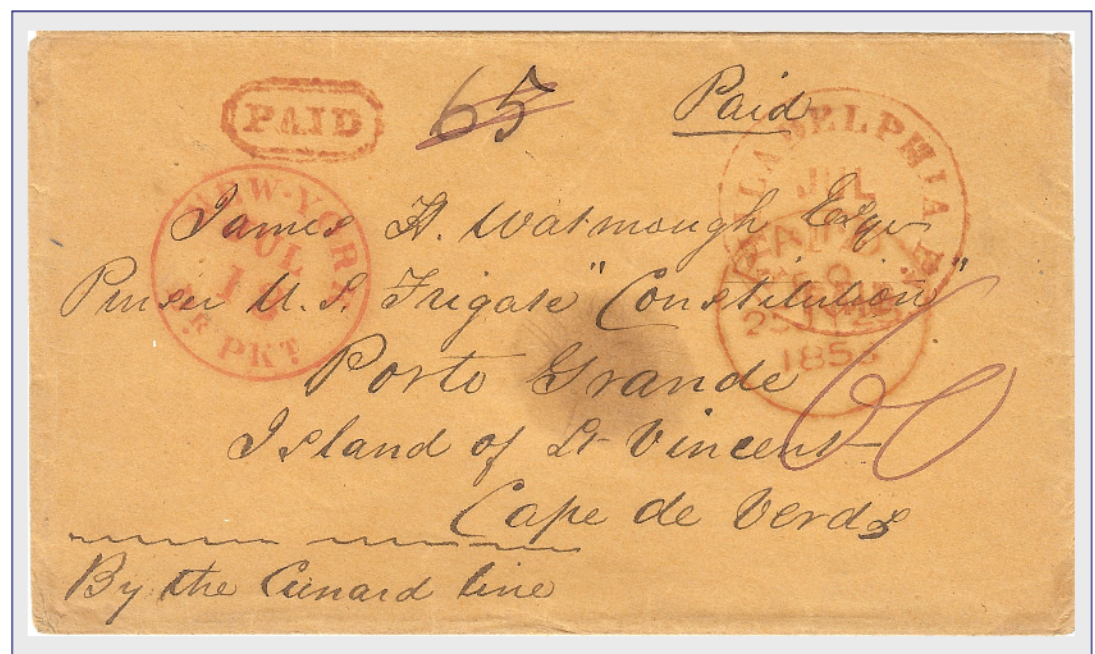
36 days

To the Cape Verde Islands, British Packets

Prepaid **65** centsPhila. retained **5¢** for inlandPhila. **60¢** credit to G.B.
for transatlantic and packet
to Porto GrandeCunard *Arabia* :
Boston 14 July
Liverpool 24 July

Received 18 December

160 days



Philadelphia, 12 July 1853

The U.S. Navy's **Africa Squadron** operated antislavery patrols, in cooperation with the Royal Navy's West African Squadron, along the west African coast from 1819 to 1861. The American squadron was based at Porto Grande in the Cape Verdes.

American & British Contract Steamships

To Chile via Panama, American and British Packet



Philadelphia, 4 February 1858

Prepaid **34** cents, the treaty rate: 10¢ to Aspinwall, 24¢ British packet
 Philadelphia **24** cents credit to U.K. for British packet from Panama to Chile

U.S. Mail Steamship Co. *Moses Taylor* : New York 5 February, Aspinwall 19 February
 Pacific Steam Navigation Co. *Valparaiso* : Panama 22 February, Valparaiso ~16 March

Consular mail in closed bag, so no Panama transit or Valparaiso arrival markings

~41 days

**Rated by the Philadelphia exchange office
 after having been date stamped in error by the domestic mail department**

Letters to the west coast of South America conveyed by British packet from Panama entered the British mails at Chagres for the trip across the isthmus. From January 28, 1855 onward the Chagres-Panama leg was by rail, a journey of only a few hours.

American Contract Steamship

To Norway—Misrouted in Philadelphia

Prepaid **33** cents via French mail;
bagged for Southampton in error

Havre Line *Arago*
New York 23 July
Southampton 4 August

London **1/-** credit to Prussia, per
U.K.-Prussian convention

Hamburg marked **Franca 6** Sgr,
indicating transit fee prepaid

Hamburg backstamp 8 August;
Grimstad arrival unknown

19+ days

Franca 6



Philadelphia, 22 July 1859

To Belgium, Paid Only to England



reverse

Doylestown, Pa., 13 December 1859



reverse

Prepaid **24** cents to Great Britain
Havre Line *Fulton* : New York 17 December, Southampton 31 December
London debited Belgium **2^d** per 1857 postal convention; Brussels rated **4^d** due

Received 31 December

19 days

Havre Line steamships sailed the New York-Southampton-Havre route on a monthly schedule. British mails were dropped at Southampton. The clerk in Philadelphia may have been misled by the **via Southampton** endorsement on the letter to Norway.

British Contract Steamship

From South Yemen, via Southampton



Aden, 30 December 1855

Privately to London by Baring Brothers
on P&O steamers via Suez

Baring Brothers paid 2/- in London
for ½ to 1 oz.

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

Cunard Africa :
Liverpool 23 February
New York 8 March

Philadelphia confirmed **48** cents **PAID**

Received 9 March 1856 70 days



To Liberia by British West African Packet from Southampton



Philadelphia, 1 February 1859

Prepaid **33** cents: 5¢ inland, 16¢ transatlantic, 12¢ Br. packet to Liberia

Cunard *Europa* : New York 2 February, Liverpool 14 February

African Steam Ship Co. *Armenian* : Liverpool 24 February, Cape Palmas 12 March

Received 13 March 41 days

British Contract Steamship

Posted at Piccadilly Branch Post Office

Prepaid **1s**, 5¢ credit to U.S.

Cunard Africa:

Liverpool 17 May

New York 28 May

Received 28 May 14 days



1854 - 1867



London, 15 May 1856

To Hong Kong via Southampton & Suez



Philadelphia, 29 September 1863

Prepaid **45** cents: 5¢ inland, 16¢ transatlantic, 24¢ Far East packet
Philadelphia **40¢** credit to U.K for all but U.S, inland postageCunard Arabia: Boston 30 September, Queenstown 10 October
London **1^d** credit to Hong KongP&O Ripon: S'otn - Alex.; Mooltan: Suez - Galle; Norna: Galle - Hong Kong
Arrived 13 December 87 days

1854 - 1867

Philadelphia's treaty-mail postmarks were introduced when the city became an exchange office for British mail in January 1854.

The Peninsular & Oriental Steam Navigation Company provided biweekly contract steamship service from Southampton to Hong Kong and Shanghai, with port calls at Gibraltar, Malta, Alexandria, Suez, Aden, Galle, Penang and Singapore.

British Contract Steamship

From India via Marseilles



Calcutta, 7 April 1855

Sent unpaid via British packet

P&O *Oriental* : Calcutta to Suez, via Madras and GalleP&O *Vectis* : Alexandria to Marseilles, via Malta

Rated at London on 18 May: **54** cents debit to U.S.: 34¢ packet from India, 20¢ French transit
 Collins Line *Pacific* : Liverpool 19 May, New York 30 May

Philadelphia rated **75** cents due: 54¢ debit from U.K., 16¢ transatlantic, 5¢ inland
 Re-rated **77** cents due, to include a 2¢ carrier fee

Received 30 May 54 days

INDIA

Calcutta

77

postage due

Non Contact Sailing Ship, Contract Steamship

From Victoria via Cape Horn & Liverpool



Melbourne, 1 August 1854

Prepaid 1/- Victoria ship fee

Clipper ship *Red Jacket* :
 Melbourne 2 August
 Liverpool 16 October

Liverpool **16** cents debit
 to U.S. for unpaid ship letter

Collins Line *Pacific* :
 Liverpool 18 October
 New York 30 October

Philadelphia rated 37¢ due:
 16¢ debit from U.K.,
 16¢ American packet.
 5¢ U.S. inland

91 days

The Winter/Forster census records two Victoria covers to Philadelphia sent at this rate.

From Victoria via Cape Horn & Liverpool

Prepaid 1/- Victoria ship fee

Private ship *Orwell* :
 Melbourne 28 February
 Plymouth 25 May

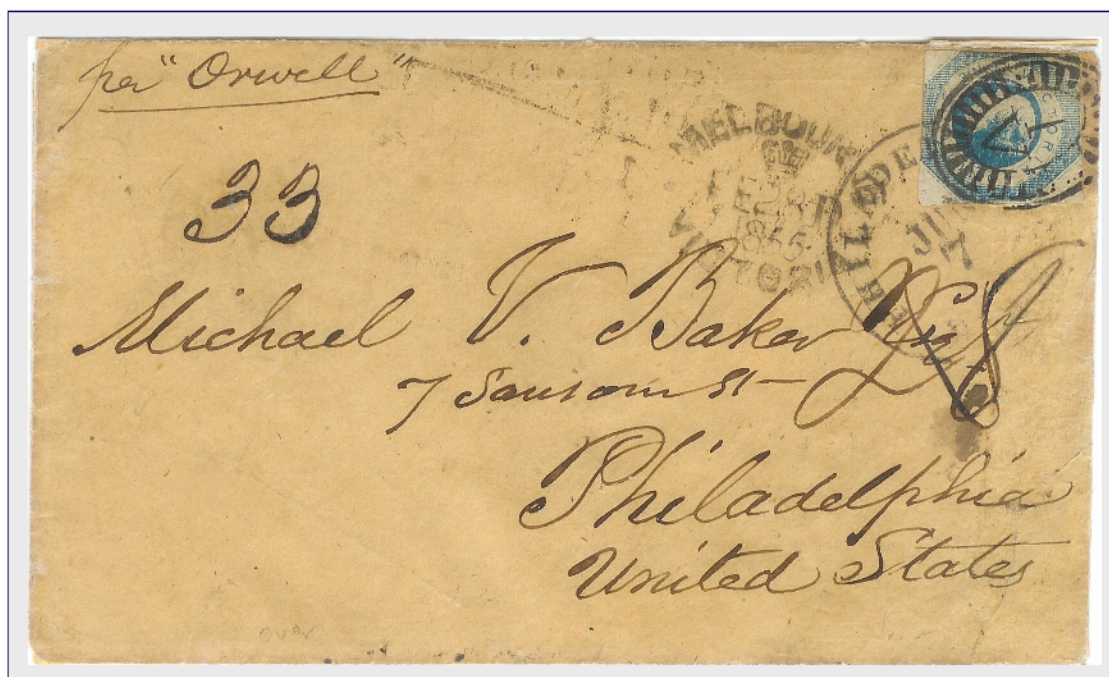
Liverpool **28** cents debit
 to U.S.:

12¢ ship letter (6^d)
 16¢ transatlantic (8^d)

Cunard *Africa* :
 Liverpool 26 May
 Boston 7 June

Philadelphia rated **33¢** due
 28¢ debit from U.K.
 5¢ inland

100 days



Melbourne, 28 February 1855

The U.K. lowered its 8^d ship fee to the 6d uniform rate in October 1854. Victoria retained its 1/- ship-letter fee, which was paid on all incoming and outgoing maritime mail. The fee did not pay for conveyance, but amounted to a revenue-generator for the colonial post office. Victorian letters arriving in England were charged the British ship-letter fee.

Non Contact Sailing Ship, Contract Steamships

From New South Wales via Suez & Southampton

Prepaid **20** pence: 6^d uniform,
8^d transatlantic;
6^d via Marseilles

Placed in London bag, in error

E&ARM *Emeu* :

Sydney 11 Sep, Suez 3 Nov

E&ARM *Australasian* :

Alex. 6 Nov, South'n. 18 Nov

Emeu grounded on reef off
Sudan; mail delayed two weeks

Cunard *America* :

L'pool 21 Nov, Boston 3 Dec

Boston rated **5¢** due for inland

Received 4 December 86 days



Sydney, 10 September 1857

e

From Tasmania via Melbourne, Suez & Southampton



Torquay, 13 March 1858

Prepaid **14** pence: 6^d uniform rate (stamps) 8^d transatlantic (cash)

Barque *Swordfish* : Hobart 16 March, Melbourne 22 March

E&ARM *Victoria* to Suez (16 April, 6 June), *Cambria* to Southampton (8 June, 20 June)

London **16** cents credit to the U.S. for Inman *City of Washington* : Liverpool 23 June, New York 6 July

Philadelphia rated **5** cents due for inland postage from New York

Received 6 July 116 days

Outbreak of Civil War



Philadelphia, 31 May 1861

Prepaid **24** cents, Philadelphia **3c** credit to U.K. for inland postage
HAPAG Saxonia : New York 1 June, Southampton 12 June

London marked *PAID*
Received at Liverpool 13 June

14 days

6 Civil War patriotic covers are recorded from Philadelphia to a foreign destination

The stamp paying the treaty rate on this cover, issued in 1857, continued in use after hostilities began between the northern and southern states in April 1861. The issue was demonetized in August 1861 to prevent use by the southern states.

American Contract Steamship

Civil War's Impact on American Packet Service

Vanderbilt Line's Short-Lived Packet Service, 1855-1860

Prepaid **1** shilling treaty rate

London **21** cents credit
for American packet

Vanderbilt *Illinois*
Southampton 1 May
New York 13 May

New York marked **24** in red,
confirming prepayment

Philadelphia **PAID**

Received 14 May

15 days



Manchester, 30 April 1860

British-Flagged Inman Line Under American Contract



Paris, 24 October 1863

Prepaid **80** centimes for
French-U.S. treaty rate,
but sent via British open mail

Inman Line *Edinburgh*
Liverpool 28 October
New York 15 November

Philadelphia **21¢** due
16¢ American Packet
5¢ inland

24 days

Vanderbilt ships were American-flagged vessels. When the Civil War began in April 1861, all of Vanderbilt's ships were chartered to the government for military use, which put a permanent end to their mail service.

U.S.-British treaty mails carried by other lines were unaffected. In 1860 the Inman Line expanded their New York—Liverpool schedule from bi-weekly to weekly service.