



## Section Eight - Transatlantic Mail

To England



Uses to England including before, during and after the Retaliatory Rate period. Uses to France, Italy, Belgium, Holland, and Switzerland.

To England prior to the United States-British Postal Convention of 1848. Postage paid to port of departure. Sea postage and internal British postage could not be prepaid.

**First Cunard steamer sailing from Boston after the 1847 stamps were issued**



July 1847 folded letter from New York City to Liverpool via Boston. This letter was carried on the Cunard steamer *Caledonia* departing Boston 16 July, arriving in Liverpool 28 July. 5 cent stamp paid the single rate to the port of departure. One shilling due on delivery.





August 1847 folded address sheet from New York City to Liverpool via Boston. 10 cent stamp paid double rate postage to Boston and double rate 2 shilling due on delivery. Carried on Cunard steamer *Hibernia* departing Boston 16 August, arriving in Liverpool on 27 August. 1 shilling due on delivery **Unusual 2 shilling handstamp.**



September 1847 folded letter from Washington D.C. to London via Boston. 10 cent stamp paid postage to Boston. Cunard steamer *Britannia* leaving Boston on 1 October, arriving in Liverpool on 16 October. The letter arrived in London on 16 October.



This letter left on the first Cunard steamer departing from New York City to Liverpool. Prior to this all departures were from Boston. Subsequently Cunard alternated between Boston and New York City.



January 1848 folded address sheet from Philadelphia PA to Sheffield England via New York. 5 cent stamp paid postage to New York. Cunard steamer *Cambria* leaving New York on 29 January and arriving in Liverpool on 13 February. The letter arrived in Sheffield on 14 February.



## Retaliatory Rate Period

To England

The Retaliatory Rate period, 3 July 1848 till 3 January 1849, resulted from a dispute with England over the U.S. entering the transatlantic mail business. Sea postage prepaid in the United States was not accepted by England and 1 shilling was charged. The U.S. retaliated by charging 24 cent sea postage on all packet mail.

December 1848 folded letter from New Orleans to Greenock Scotland via Mobile and New York. The letter entered the mail in Mobile AL as an unmarked way letter. Left New York 6 December on the Cunard steamer *Cambria* arriving in Liverpool 20 December.

The stamps overpay by 1 cent the 10 cent domestic rate and the 24 cent rate to England. The 24 cents was ignored by the British and the recipient charged 1 shilling.

One of three Retaliatory Rate covers with both 5 and 10 cent stamps.



## Avoiding the Retaliatory Rate

Many non-contract ships sailed East from Boston and New York to England and carried letters given to the captain of the ship. The Retaliatory Rate did not apply to this mail. It was charged the ship letter rate of 8 pence in England **saving 32 cents**. This practice was not well known.



Black Liverpool backstamp used on non-contract ship letters.

October 1848 cover from Alden NY to Liverpool. 5 cent stamps paid domestic postage to Boston. Left Boston 8 October on the non-contract ship *Washington Irving*, owned by Enoch Train & Company arriving in Liverpool on 28 October.

Right stamp 'dot in S' variety.



One of two recorded Retaliatory Rate period letters to France with 1847 stamps



July 1848 folded letter from Augusta GA to Bigorre, Hautes-Pyrenees, France. 10 cent stamp paid the rate to the port of New York. 24 cents applied to charge box 298. Red '34' shows total of 34 cents paid. Carried by Cunard steamer *Caledonia* departing New York City 19 July and arriving in Liverpool 2 August where red 'COLONIES/&c ART. 13' applied. Arrived in Boulogne 4 August. 21 decimes due on delivery.



The conflict over the transatlantic mail route between England and the United States impacted not just mail to England, but mail that went through England.

**The only recorded Retaliatory Rate period letter to Belgium with 1847 stamps**



October 1848 folded address sheet from Charleston SC to Ghent Belgium. The letter was sent by steamer to New York and then to Boston where it left on 1 November on the Cunard steamer *Niagara* arriving in Liverpool 13 November. The British ignored the prepayment and debited 1 shilling 8 pence to Belgium. The letter was then sent to Ostend and Ghent where 24 decimes was collected from the recipient. No credit was given for the 24 cents paid for carriage by British packet. In effect the 24 cent packet rate was paid twice.

The stamps represent a 1 cent overpayment of the 10 cent domestic postage Charleston to Boston and 24 cent packet rate to British packet to England. The 10 cent stamps positions 22-24R.



Under the Postal Convention of 1848, effective 15 February 1849, a reciprocal rate for sea postage of 24 cents was put in place. The postage was to be either fully prepaid or unpaid.



August 1849 folded letter from Buffalo NY to Edinburgh Scotland. The cover was carried on the American Ocean Line steamer *Hermann* departing New York 20 August and arriving in Southampton 3 September. The stamps overpay the 24 cent rate. 3 cents due England.

One of four covers paying this rate with both 5 and 10 cent stamps.

Under the Postal Convention of 1848 part payment was not allowed  
The 21 debit marking was known used in New York April – December 1849

This cover to Liverpool from an unknown origin was placed on the American steamer *Hermann* leaving New York on 20 August arriving in Southampton 3 September. The 1 shilling due marking was applied indicating that 1 shilling (24 cents) would be collected from the recipient. The letter arrived in Liverpool on 4 September.

New York debited Britain 21 cents, 5 cents inland postage plus 16 cents ship rate indicated by the black '21'.

The two 5 cent stamps were not recognized.





The postal convention of 1848 with Great Britain provided a 2 cent rate in the U.S. and 2 pence due on delivery for printed matter. Had the circular contained any writing or an enclosed letter the rate would have been 24 cents.

**The only recorded circular to Europe paid with a 5 cent 1847 stamp**



November 1850 unsealed circular from Charleston SC to Greenock Scotland. The 5 cent stamp overpaid the 2 cent printed matter rate to Great Britain under the treaty of December 1848. Manuscript '2' applied in Liverpool represents 2 pence due for British circular rate. There is no writing within the circular.

The circular was sent from Charleston to New York City where it was carried on the Cunard steamer *Niagara* to Liverpool, arriving 17 December. It arrived in Greenock 18 December.



## Under the United States-British Postal Convention of 1848

## To France

The under and over 300 miles U.S. rates applied to mail to France until the 1848 U.S. British postal treaty took effect on 15 February 1849. The new 5 cents U.S. inland rate applied to letters to France via Great Britain, regardless of the distance between the place of mailing and port of embarkation. The British charged 10 decimes for packet and transit charges for a simple letter less than 7 1/2 grams. After 1 August 1849 French inland postage was fixed at 5 d. for 7 1/2 grams.



August 1850 cover from Philadelphia to Marseille France. 5 cent stamp paid the inland postage. Sailed on the Cunard steamer *Niagara* leaving New York 28 August and arriving in Liverpool 9 September, where it received the orange 'COLONIES/&c.ART.13' handstamp. Exchanged at Calais 11 September, arriving in Marseille 13 September. 15 decimes postage under the British-French postal treaty was collected on delivery of which 10 decimes went to England.



May 1848 folded address sheet from New York to Bordeaux France. 5 cent stamp paid the postage to Boston with red U.S. Express Mail route agent marking. Two red 5's and red PAID indicate postage paid to the port of embarkation. Sailed on the Cunard steamer *Arcadia* leaving Boston 3 May arriving in Liverpool 16 May where it received the orange 'COLONIES/&c.ART.13' handstamp. Exchanged at Boulogne-S-Mer, then traveled by rail to Paris and on to Bordeaux arriving 20 May. 20 decimes postage under the 1843 British-French postal treaty was collected on delivery of which 10 decimes went to England for sea and transit postage. Weight less than 7 1/2 grams.



Mail to Italy via England was prepaid at the 5 cent inland rate, regardless of distance. British packet, British transit, and French transit charges and Italian domestic charges collected on delivery.

Only recorded cover to Italy with an 1847 stamp



December 1850 folded letter from Philadelphia PA to Naples Italy. Departed New York on Cunard steamer *Niagara* on 4 December arriving at Liverpool 17 December where it received the orange 'COLONIES/&c.ART.13'. handstamp. Calais transit and Italian transit marking. 37 grana due on receipt. Stamp is orange brown.



## One of three recorded 1847 covers to Switzerland



July 1850 folded letter from New York to Chaux-De-Fonds, Switzerland. Entered the mail on a mail train to Boston, with U.S. 5 cents paid the U.S. inland postage under the United States - British treaty of 1848.

French due marking of 36 decimes, the rate for 7 1/2 - 15 grams, to be collected from the recipient. This letter transmitted under the United States-British treaty for open mail to European destinations beyond England. It was double weight in France but single weight in the United States.





March 1850 folded address sheet from Charleston SC to Ghent Belgium, entering the mails on the Wilmington & Raleigh Railroad. 5 cents paid the U.S. inland postage under the United States - British treaty of 1848. Blue pinwheel cancellation and route agent postmark.

This letter was rated 16 decimes due. 12 decimes for England (8 d. for package postage and 4 d. British transit) and 4 decimes for Belgium inland postage. The letter was over 7 1/2 grams but less than 1/2 oz. The small check mark indicates more than a single rate letter in Belgium.



July 1850 folded letter from Philadelphia PA to Rotterdam Holland. 5 cents paid the U.S. inland postage under the United States - British treaty of 1848.

110 Dutch cents were collected from the recipient. The British received 80 cents (1 shilling 4d.), Belgium received 10 cents for the transit fee and the Netherlands retained 20 cents for domestic postage.



Only recorded 1847 stamped cover with the 'U.S. STEAMSHIP POSTAGE NOT PAID' handstamp

March 1851 cover front entered the mail on a mail train to New York addressed to Bremen. Red 'BALTIMORE RR' handstamp applied on arrival in New York. The 'U.S. STEAMSHIP POSTAGE NOT PAID' indicating that the letter could not be sent on the March 19th voyage of the Collins Line's *Pacific* but was delayed for the Cunard Steamship *Asia*. The blue 'X' through the directive indicates it could not be followed because sea postage was not prepaid. The Steamship postage marking was ambiguous and most likely abandoned early.

1 shilling 6 pence British debit and 44 grots due in Bremen.



One of three 1847 stamped covers with the 'AMERICA per ENGLAND' handstamp



March 1849 double rate folded letter from Philadelphia to Cologne. 5 cents paid the U.S. inland postage due under the United States - British treaty. The '6' in octagon cancel was normally used for incoming ship letters.

From Philadelphia the letter was sent to Boston and then to England. From England the letter went via Ostende Belgium to Aachen Germany under the Anglo-Prussian Convention.

The boxed black 'AMERICA per ENGLAND' handstamp was applied in Aachen. On reverse the black double circle 'RES' handstamp was applied at Cologne.





## Section Nine - Demonetized Uses



The issue of 1847 was demonetized effective 1 July 1851 and could not be used to prepay postage after 30 June. Those holding stamps could redeem them for cash before 30 September 1851.

The order to demonetize the stamps was issued on 11 June and required the stamps be redeemed only by the postmaster that sold the stamps or by a postmaster that had been issued stamps by the department. This rigid approach was aimed at making it easier for the department, not their customers. There are examples of the stamps being used after 30 June, so some postmasters clearly overlooked the order.



30 June 1851 folded letter from Rochester to New York City.  
Red 7 bar grid cancels stamps.



Two covers showing demonetized stamps not accepted for postage  
 Letters where the postmaster refused demonetized stamps are much less common



October 1852 folded address sheet from Harrisburg PA to Washington DC. 5 cent stamp not accepted and the recipient was charged 5 cents.



June 1852 folded letter from Philadelphia to Cowdarsport PA. 5 cents due, stamp not accepted.



## Two covers showing demonetized stamps accepted for postage



November 1851 folded letter from Petersburg V to Philadelphia PA.

This 'Way' letter was picked up by a ship and delivered to the post office in Philadelphia. The captain of the ship collected 1 cent from the postmaster. The 5 cent stamp was accepted to pay the 3 cent rate under 3,000 miles and it appears the 1 cent way fee.

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October 1852 cover from New York City to Chillicothe OH. It is very unusual for New York City to use black to cancel an 1847 stamp.

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