

Cross-Border Mail via the Cunard Line:

Mail Carried Between the United States and Halifax, 1840-1867

Purpose:

This exhibit illustrates postage rates for mail carried between the United States and Halifax, Nova Scotia, by steamships of the British & North American Royal Mail Steam Packet Company, better known as the Cunard Line.

Importance:

Cunard Line steamships provided reliable, scheduled service between Halifax and the United States. The steamship route was favored by merchants because it was much faster than the overland route, and prior to 1851, was significantly less expensive. The exhibit illustrates the complex and poorly understood rates that were never subject to a postal treaty.

Scope:

From 1840 through 1867, Cunard Line steamships stopped in Halifax, *en route* between Boston and Liverpool. Cunard Line steamers to New York City also served Halifax between January 1848 and September 1850. Cunard Line mail between the United States and Halifax was never covered by postal treaty. As a result, letters could not be paid to destination, and include separate United States and British North American rates. The packet postage rates were set by the United Kingdom and were always paid by the correspondent in British North America.

Organization:

The exhibit is arranged chronologically, first illustrating the rate periods described at right for letters between the United States and Nova Scotia (pages 2-11), followed by the special closed mail rates to Canada via Boston (page 12), rates to or from Newfoundland (pages 13-15), Prince Edward Island, and St. Pierre et Miquelon (page 16).

Falmouth Packet Precursor To Cunard Line



Halifax — New York

16 May 1796

NS - paid 4½d currency (4d sterling) packet postage per *Princess Royal*
 US - no postage charged for packet letter addressed to port of arrival

The Cunard Line replaced Admiralty sailing packets.

Organization By Rate Periods Halifax—United States

Period	US Postage	BNA Packet and Inland
1	Inland rates of 1825 by distance + ship fee	4½d cy. to Halifax + inland rate by distance
2	Inland rates of 1825 by distance + ship fee	1 shilling stg. to Halifax + inland rate by distance
3	5¢ under 300 miles 10¢ over 300 miles + ship fee (retaliatory rate for part of this period)	1 shilling stg. to Halifax + inland rate by distance
4	5¢ under 300 miles 10¢ over 300 miles	1 shilling stg. to Halifax + inland rate by distance
5	5¢ under 300 miles 10¢ over 300 miles	4½d cy. to Halifax + inland rate by distance
6	3¢ outgoing 5¢ incoming	5d cy. to Halifax 8d cy. beyond Halifax
7	5¢ equal to British Open Mail rate	5d cy. to Halifax 8d cy. beyond Halifax
8	5¢ equal to British Open Mail rate	8½¢ to Halifax 13½¢ beyond Halifax
9	5¢ equal to British Open Mail rate	10¢ to Halifax 13½¢ beyond Halifax

Organization Of Interprovincial And Foreign Mail

Interprovincial Mail	Closed Mail With Canada Newfoundland Closed Mail With Newfoundland Prince Edward Island
Foreign Mail	Saint Pierre et Miquelon



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Key to Symbols Used in Exhibit

US postage in blue
 BNA postage in red

e = Expert Certification

■ Items of exceptional importance are matted in red

Rate Period 1

1 July 1840—4 December 1842

Inland rates of 1825 by distance + ship fee

4½d cy. to Halifax + inland rate by distance



Charlottetown, PEI —Boston—Charlestown, Mass.

14 March 1842

BNA - paid 1/1½d: 9d currency distance of 101 to 200 miles to Halifax, plus 4½d currency (4d sterling) packet postage per *Unicorn*

US - 6¢ due as ship letter at port of arrival, plus 6¢ forwarding less than 30 miles

Rate Period 2

5 December 1842—30 June 1845

Inland rates of 1825 by distance + ship fee

1 shilling stg. to Halifax + inland rate by distance



Halifax — New York

16, June 1845

NS —Paid 1 shilling sterling packet postage single rate for weight up to ½ ounce per *Caledonia*

US —37½¢ due: double 18¾¢ rate per sheet (enclosure) distance of 150 to 400 miles, plus 2¢ ship letter fee (ship letter fee not doubled)

Rate Period 3

5¢ under 300 miles / 10¢ over 300 miles + ship fee

1 July 1845—14 February 1849

1 shilling stg. to Halifax + inland rate by distance



Halifax — New York

15 September 1846

NS —Paid 1 shilling sterling packet postage per *Cambria*

US —7¢ due: 5¢ inland rate under 300 miles, plus 2¢ ship letter fee

Sent by closed bag from Boston to New York.



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HALIFAX U^P STATES
July 3, 1846 transit
backstamp applied to
Cunard Line mail from the
United States 1845 - 1867.



New York—Halifax

June 29, 1846

US - 5¢ black 1845 New York provisional pays inland rate under 300 miles

NS - 1 shilling sterling packet postage due per *Caledonia*

Large part folded address sheet, only reported use of a postmaster provisional on packet cover to Halifax, and only reported use to Nova Scotia.



Halifax — New York

30 October 1848

NS — Paid 1 shilling sterling packet postage per *Hibernia* to Boston

US — 29¢ due: 5¢ for distance under 300 miles, plus 24¢ American packet postage

From June 27, 1848 to January 3, 1849, United States charges American packet postage on prepaid letters by British packet, including letters from Halifax.



Halifax — New York

23 December 1848

NS — Paid 1 shilling sterling packet postage per *Europa* to New York

US — 24¢ due American packet postage

Last sailing from Halifax during retaliatory period. Cunard Line packets between Liverpool and New York serve Halifax between January 1848 and September 1850.

Rate Period 4

15 February 1849—19 September 1849

5¢ under 300 miles / 10¢ over 300 miles

1 shilling stg. to Halifax + inland rate by distance



Halifax — New York

3 September 1849

NS — Paid 1 shilling sterling per *Niagara* to New York

US — 5¢ due inland rate under 300 miles

Rate Period 5

20 September 1849—30 June 1851

5¢ under 300 miles / 10¢ over 300 miles

4½d cy. to Halifax + inland rate by distance



Philadelphia — Halifax

7 May 1850

US — 5¢ red brown 1847s overpay 5¢ inland rate under 300 miles to New York

NS — 4½d currency (4d sterling) due packet postage per *Cambria*

Seven 4½d-rate Cunard Packet covers to Nova Scotia reported with 5¢ 1847s

Rate Period 6

6 July 1851—1854 (exact date unknown)

3¢ outgoing / 5¢ incoming

5d cy. to Halifax / 8d cy. beyond Halifax



New York—Halifax

November 1851

US — 3¢ orange brown 1851 pays domestic rate under 3,000 miles

NS — 5d currency (4d sterling) due packet postage per *Cambria*

US rates effective 1 July 1851, BNA rates effective 6 July 1851
no Cunard sailing between 1 July and 6 July 1851



Halifax—Boston

1 February 1854

NS — 3d dark blue 1851 and pair 1d red brown 1853s pay 5d currency (4d sterling) packet rate per *America*

US — 5¢ due

16 packet covers reported paying the 5d rate with pence issue stamps.



5[¢] BOSTON B^R PK^T
FEB 6, typical of
exchange office
markings applied to
Cunard mail from
Halifax 1853—1867.



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BOSTON B^R PK^T 13
AUG typical of transit
markings used on Cunard
mail to Halifax 1853 -
1867.



Philadelphia—Halifax

11 August 1856

US—5¢ red brown 1856 pays 5¢ rate equal to the British Open Mail rate

NS—5d currency (4d sterling) due per *Arabia*

22 covers reported to Nova Scotia with this franking (overland and packet).



Halifax—Toronto

6 November 1855

NS—3d dark blue 1851 and two 1d red brown 1853s pay 5d currency (4d sterling)
packet rate per *Asia*

US Treaty Rate to Canada—10¢ (6d currency) due

Only open-mail packet pence issue cover to Canada.

Total postage of 11d versus 7½d if sent by closed mail or 3d if sent by land mail.



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Boston —Cornwallis, NS

16 June 1858

US—two 1857 1¢ Type Vs, and 3¢ 1857 Type II pay 5¢ rate equal to British Open Mail rate
 NS—8d currency: 5d currency (4d sterling) per *America* plus 3d currency inland



Antigonish, NS—Boston

20 January 1860

NS— 6d dark green 1857 and pair 1d red brown 1853s pay 8d currency rate: 5d currency (4d sterling) packet rate per *America*, plus 3d inland (mailed before cents issue was available)
 US postage—5¢ due

5 packet covers reported paying the 8d rate with pence issue stamps,
 this being the only cover with the 6d dark green.



Halifax—Baltimore

18 February 1861

NS—8½¢ green 1860 pays packet postage (4d sterling) per *America*

US—5¢ due equal to British Open Mail rate

The 8½¢ packet rate was in effect for only nineteen months after the stamp was issued.



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Kingston, Jamaica—New York—Halifax

15 October 1861

US—5¢ buff 1861 pays rate equal to British Open Mail rate

NS—5d currency (8½¢ [4d sterling]) due packet postage per *Niagara*

Halifax continued to use the 5d rate marking during the 8½¢ rate period.



Halifax—New York

20 July 1863

NS—10¢ orange 1860 pays 8½¢ (4d sterling) packet postage per *Africa*, plus 1½¢ inland

US — 5¢ due

Additional 1½¢ charged on letters addressed to Halifax.



Philadelphia—Halifax

30 March 1863

US — 5¢ red brown 1862 pays rate equal to British Open Mail rate

NS — 10¢ due: 8½¢ (4d sterling) packet postage per *Canada* plus 1½¢ inland



Windsor, Nova Scotia—San Francisco

15 January 1867

NS — 10¢ orange 1860 and 5¢ blue 1860 overpay 8½¢ (4d sterling) packet postage per Asia
plus 5¢ inland postage

US — 5¢ due



Boston—Halifax

29 August 1867

US — 5¢ brown 1863 pays rate equal to British Open Mail rate

Canada — 10¢ due, 8½¢ (4d sterling) packet postage per Java and 1½¢ inland charge, initially rated
13½¢ due in error as letter addressed beyond Halifax

Nova Scotia Joins the Dominion of Canada July 1, 1867.



Halifax —Montreal

27 December 1858

BNA — 6d dark green 1857 and 3d dark blue 1851 bisect pay 5d currency (4d sterling) packet postage per *America* via Boston plus special 2½d currency inland rate

One of four Nova Scotia pence issue covers paying the exact rate,
and the only cover with a 6d dark green.

Minor repair to bisect.



Montreal—New Glasgow, Nova Scotia

3 June 1867

BNA — 12½¢ yellow green 1859 pays 8½¢ (4d sterling) packet postage per *Africa* via Boston plus special 4¢ (2½d sterling) inland rate

One of 11 recorded Canada decimal issue covers paying the closed mail rate.



St. Johns—Philadelphia

November 1846

NL — Crowned Circle Paid 1 shilling packet postage per Acadia

US — 12¢ due: 10¢ inland rate over 300 miles, plus 2¢ ship letter fee

Sent from Boston to Philadelphia by closed-bag.



St. Johns—New York

6 September 1854

NL—paid 8d sterling: 4d sterling packet postage to Halifax, plus 4d sterling packet postage per Niagara to Boston

US—5¢ due



St. Johns—Baltimore

29 February 1860

NL — 8d Scarlet Vermillion 1857 bisect pays 4d sterling packet postage per *America*

US — 5¢ due



New York—Harbor Grace

28 October 1863

US—10¢ yellow-green 1861 overpays 5¢ rate equal to British Open Mail rate

NL— 4d sterling due packet postage due per *Olympus*, plus 3d currency inland



St. John's—Charlestown, Massachusetts

27 June 1865

NL—10¢ black 1865 pays 8¢ (4d sterling) packet postage per *Cuba*, plus 2¢ inland
 US—5¢ due



Montreal—Harbor Grace, Newfoundland

4 May 1857

BNA—1 shilling currency due, 10d currency (8d sterling) packet postage per *America* via Boston
 plus 2d currency interprovincial postage

One of five recorded examples of the 1 shilling closed mail rate from Canada to Newfoundland.

Interprovincial Mail: Prince Edward Island

6d cy. packet rate



Boston — Summerside, Prince Edward Island

12 August 1857

US—3¢ rose 1857 Type I underpays 5¢ rate equal to British Open Mail rate

BNA—9d currency due: 6d Prince Edward Island currency (4d sterling) packet postage per *Europa*, plus 3d currency inland

Prince Edward Island currency had greater depreciation against sterling than Nova Scotia.

Foreign Mail: Saint Pierre et Miquelon

10d currency packet rate



New York — Saint Pierre et Miquelon

29 June 1858

US - paid 5¢ equal to the British Open Mail Rate

NS —10d cy: 5d currency (4d sterling) per *Europa* to Halifax plus 5d currency (4d sterling) per Cunard feeder route to North Sydney, Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia

SPM postage—1.25 franc, 10d Nova Scotia postage due converted to 1 franc, plus 25 centimes for French packet from North Sydney to Saint Pierre