

THE EXPRESS MAIL OF 1836-1839

JAMES W. MILGRAM

AS RECEIVED BY
THE EXHIBITION PHOTOCOPY COMMITTEE
OF THE
U.S. PHILATELIC CLASSICS SOCIETY, INC.
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THE EXPRESS MAIL OF 1836 - 1839

THE FIRST PONY EXPRESS

This was a scheduled horse express for light letters not exceeding half an ounce in weight which was organized as a special service of the Post Office Department of the United States. It had special routing, schedules, and different mail contractors than the regular mails, but it connected with the rest of the postal network of its day. In 1836 horse express was the most swift method for transportation of land mail. But as the railroad network increased in size, the Express Mail service became too expensive to maintain, so it was discontinued with the last service in mid-1839.

Letters had to be designated "Express Mail" by the sender or postmaster at the town of origin. The charge for the service was triple regular postage for the entire distance carried, with 75 cents the average single rate charge, a very expensive service for its day.

As of November 1, 1837 Express Mail postage had to be prepaid.

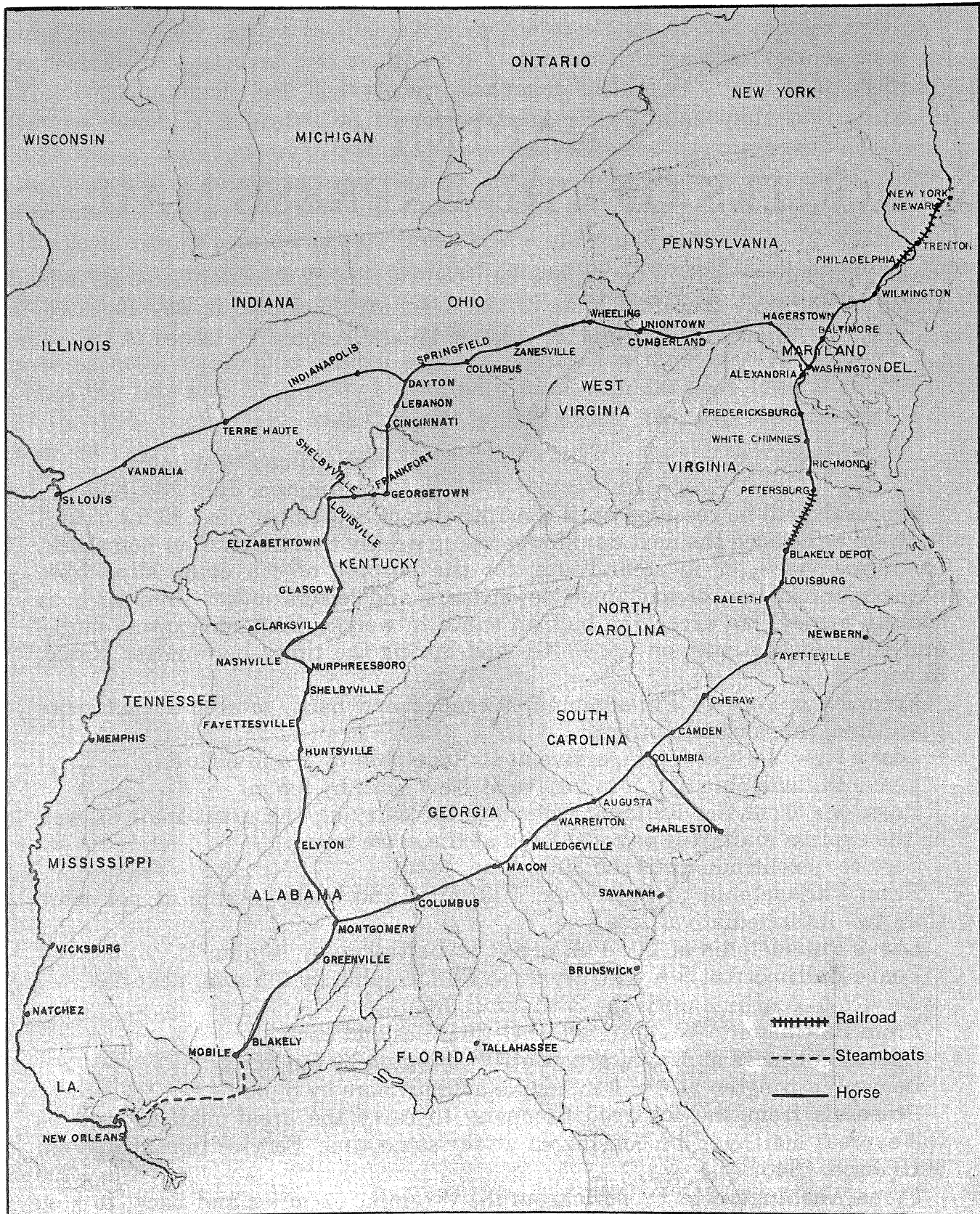
Free letters were prohibited as were also any letters containing money. Newspaper editors could mail slips from their papers to other editors.

The original southern route was the Great Mail route between the great northern cities and Mobile and New Orleans in the south. Later a spur to Charleston was added. The midwestern route connected Washington to Cincinnati. A few months later the southwestern route connected Cincinnati to Montgomery on the southern route. The final addition to the routes was a western route from Dayton to St. Louis.

Discontinuance of the Express Mail began in 1838 for certain routes. Many of the northern routes were discontinued in early 1839 and by July, 1839 the service was officially discontinued. Railroads provided reliable and fairly swift transportation of the mails in most areas by then.

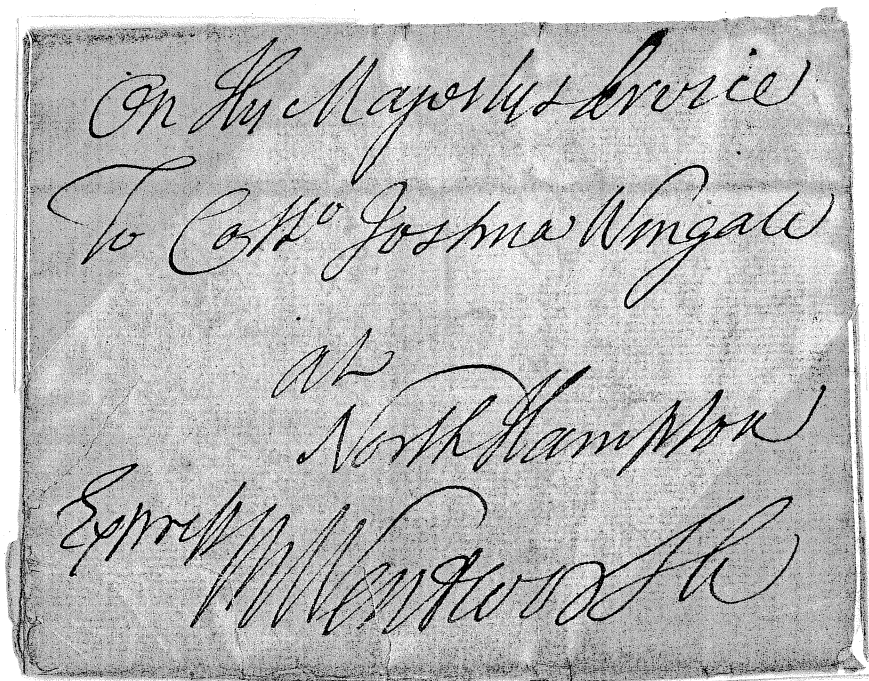
In 1845 the Express Mail was revived for a short period in February and March without any increased postage rates.

THE EXPRESS MAIL ROUTES OF 1836-1839



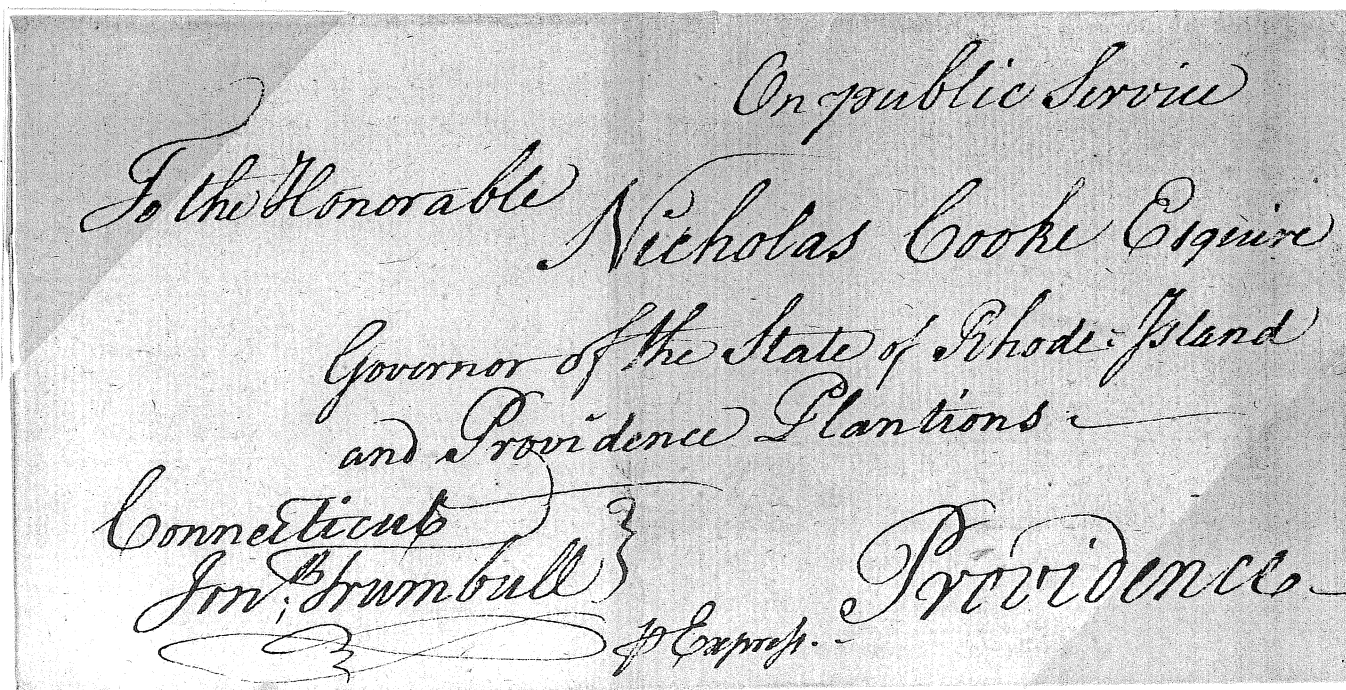
British Colonial Mail by Express

Mail service existed in the various colonies of the British crown in the new world, but it was slow and infrequent. In order to send messages right away, riders on horseback were paid to carry special letters "by express". Such express riders might carry only one letter.



On His Majesty's Service
To Capt^o Joshua Wingate
at
North Hampton
Express Wentworth JH

"On His Majesty's Service" and "Express B. Wentworth" to Colonel Joshua Wingate at North Hampton. This 1746 letter from Benning Wentworth, Colonial Governor of New Hampshire which pertains to an Indian attack is the earliest known American express cover.



On public Service
To the Honorable Nicholas Cooke Esquire
Governor of the State of Rhode Island
and Providence Plantations
Connecticut }
John Trumbull }
Pr Expre. Providence

"On public Service", "pr Express" and franked "John Trumbull", Colonial Governor of Connecticut to the Governor of Rhode Island, January 25, 1777 during the Revolutionary War.

Revolutionary War Mail by Express

During the Revolutionary War dispatches for the Patriots were sent regularly by express riders. These individuals were paid for their services and were paid for each occasion they had to ride express.

State of Connecticut D. To John Hays
 1780 To my Time ~~riding~~ as an Express to carry
 July Letters to Stratford 1 Day 20/ £0:0:0
 To Horse hire for Service 9 Miles 2/4 0:3:0
 To my Expenses for self & Horse 12/ 0:9:0
 £ 1:0:0

Fairfield Sept^r 9th 1780

These Certify that M^r John Hays performed the
 above service for this State at my Request

Abraham Abel Major

John Lawrence Esq^r Treas^r

going out to find them We having examined the doc-
 ument

Public Service

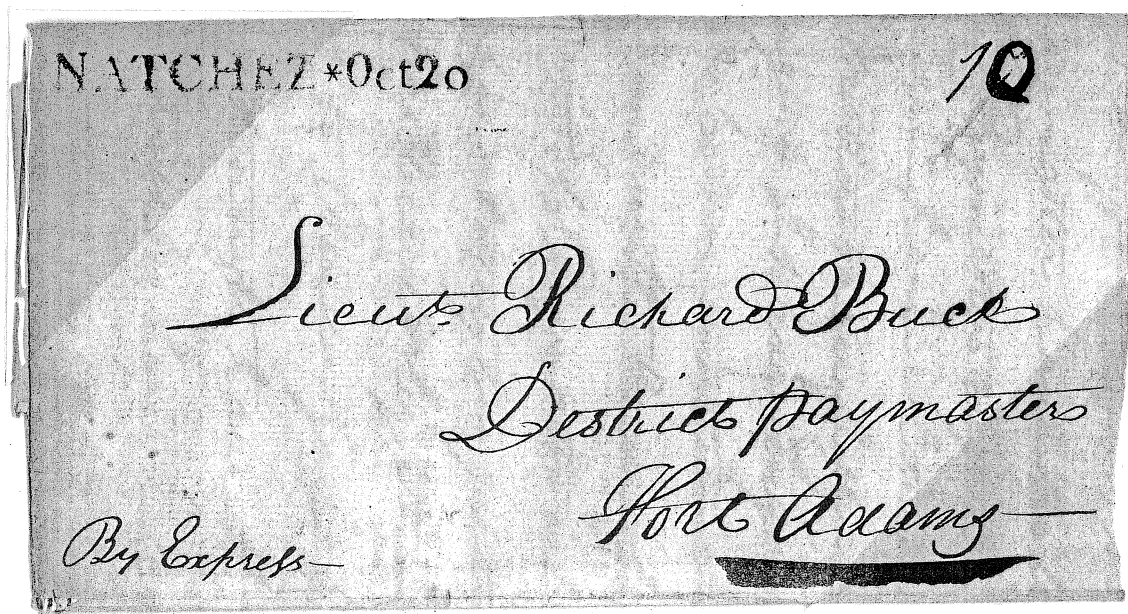
W. David Seyres David

A. B. Forage

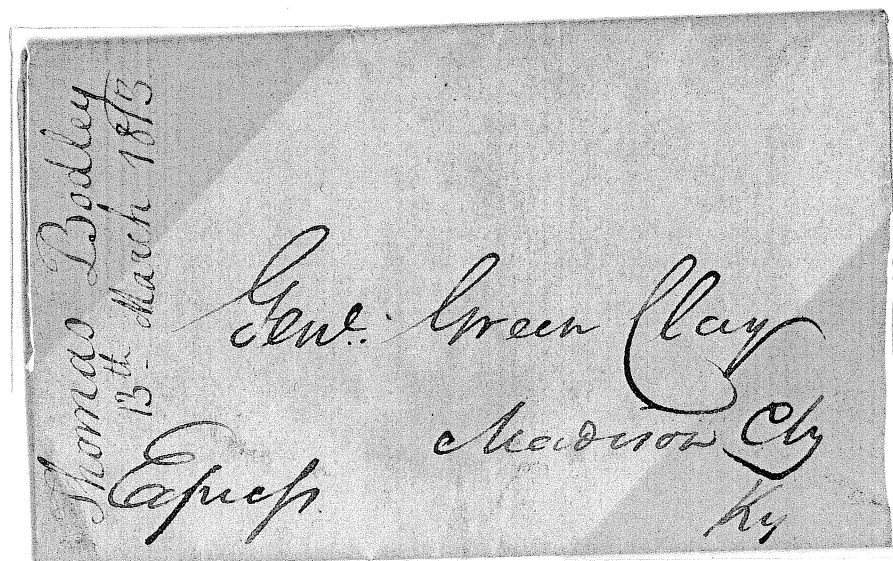
Proprs & Near Long Hill

July, 1780 bill to State of Connecticut from John Hays for "riding as an express to carry letter to Stratford at 8 shillings a day with certification by Major Abel and a Justice of the Peace. The cover "pr Express" contains a military message regarding animal forage December 20, 1779.

Early United States Mail by Express

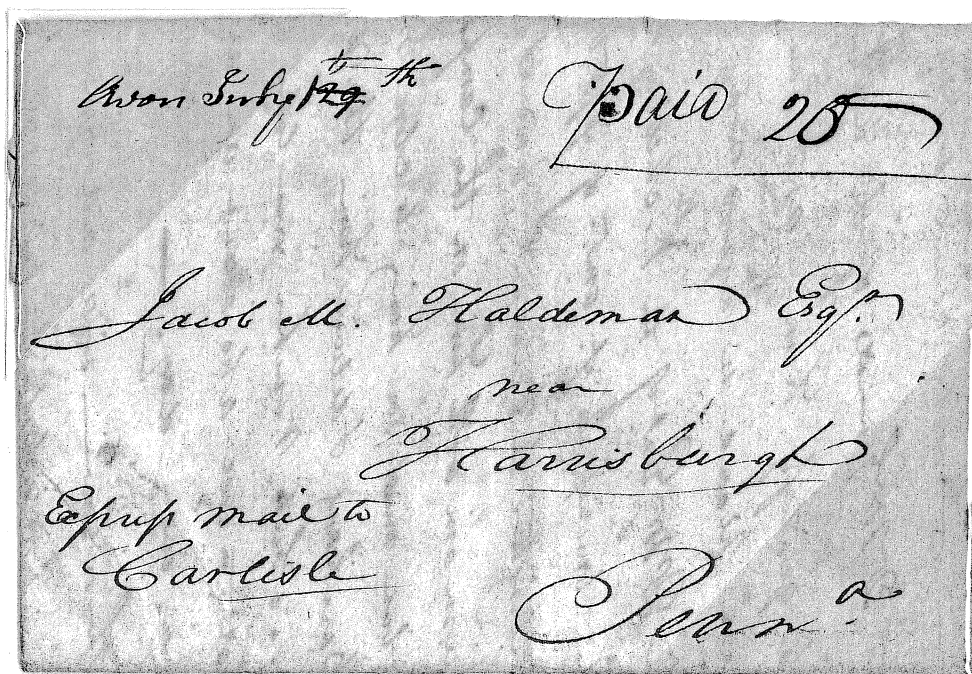


During the early years of the country the practice of sending military messages by express rider continued. This is a letter from Natchitoches, Orleans Territory, October 5, 1805 written by Matthew Arbuckle. Natchitoches is the oldest town in Louisiana, having been first established about 1714 as a French trading and military post. The letter was carried 150 miles "By Express" where it entered the mails with a "NATCHEZ *Oct 20" postmark and "10" for postage to Fort Adams, Mississippi Territory.

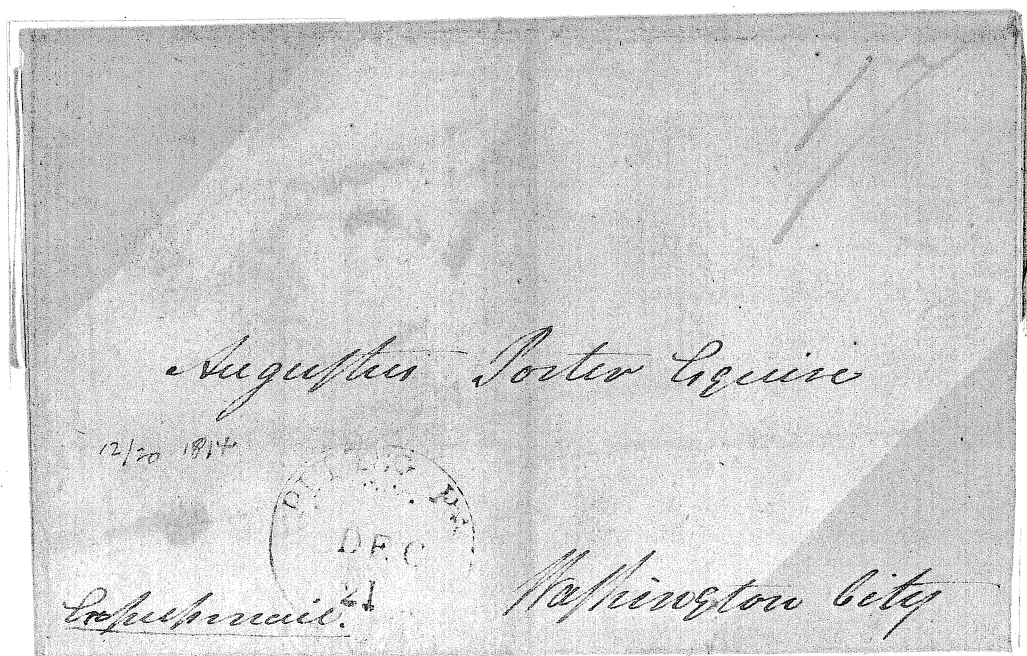


This is a War of 1812 dispatch from Lexington, Kentucky, March 17, 1813 enclosing another letter from Governor Shelby. The writer sends it by express and requests "to let me know by the return Express" about the subject of the route for Gen. Clay's joining Gen. Harrison's army.

Early United States Mail by Express

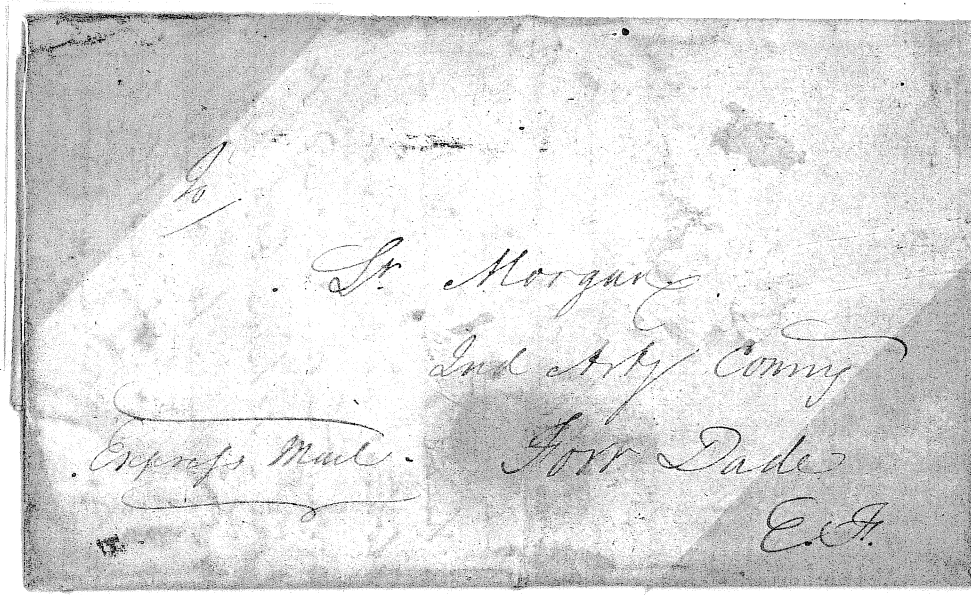


An express service was established by Postmaster General Granger during the War of 1812 for important communications. Some civilian letters were also carried over these routes. This cover from Genesee River June 28, 1813 to Harrisburg, Pennsylvania was carried by this express mail from Avon, New York as far as Carlisle, "paid 25", the regular postage rate.

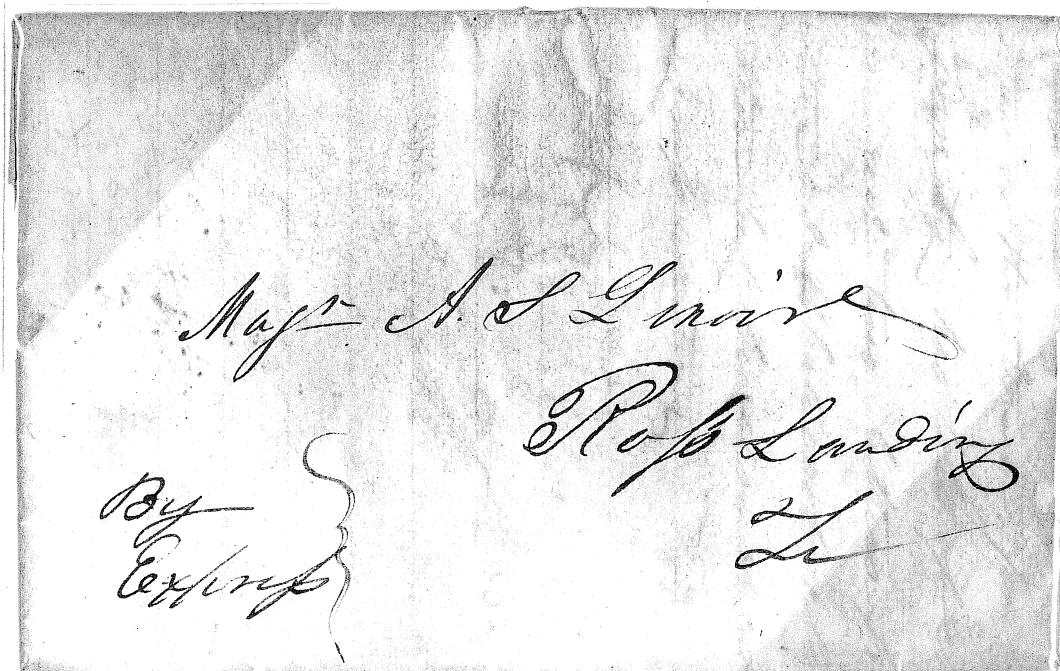


This is one of the covers described by Pitt Petrie in his original article on this express service. It was postmarked "PITTSG PA. DEC 21" (1814), "Express mail", and "17" to Washington. Six covers with War of 1812 Express Mail service have been recorded.

Early United States Mail by Express

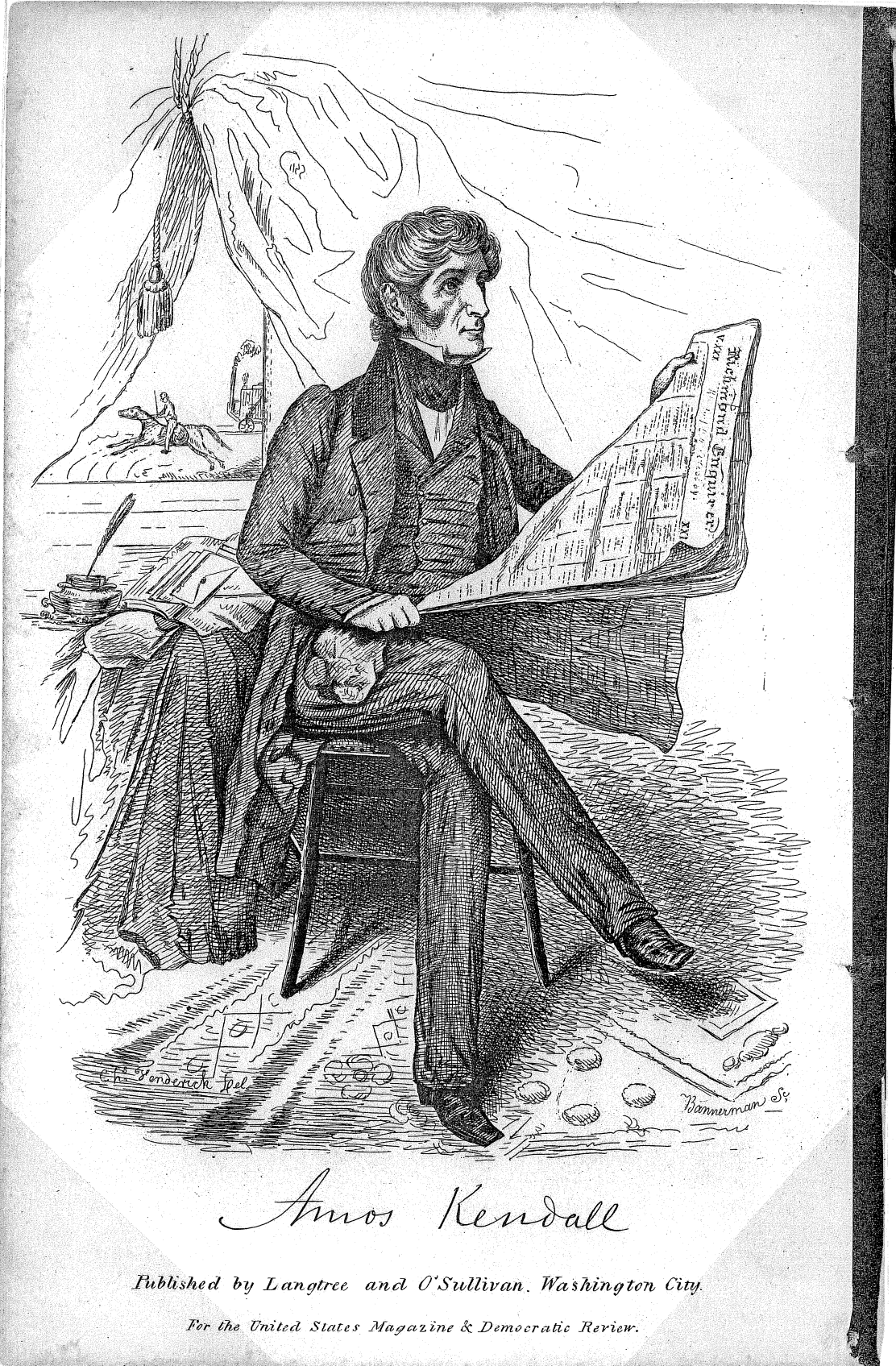


During the wars to remove Indians from the eastern half of the United States, military express usages exist from some of the soldiers. This is one of two "Express Mail" marked 1838 letters from Florida Territory, Fort Foster to Fort Dade, relating to actions against the Seminole Indian tribes.



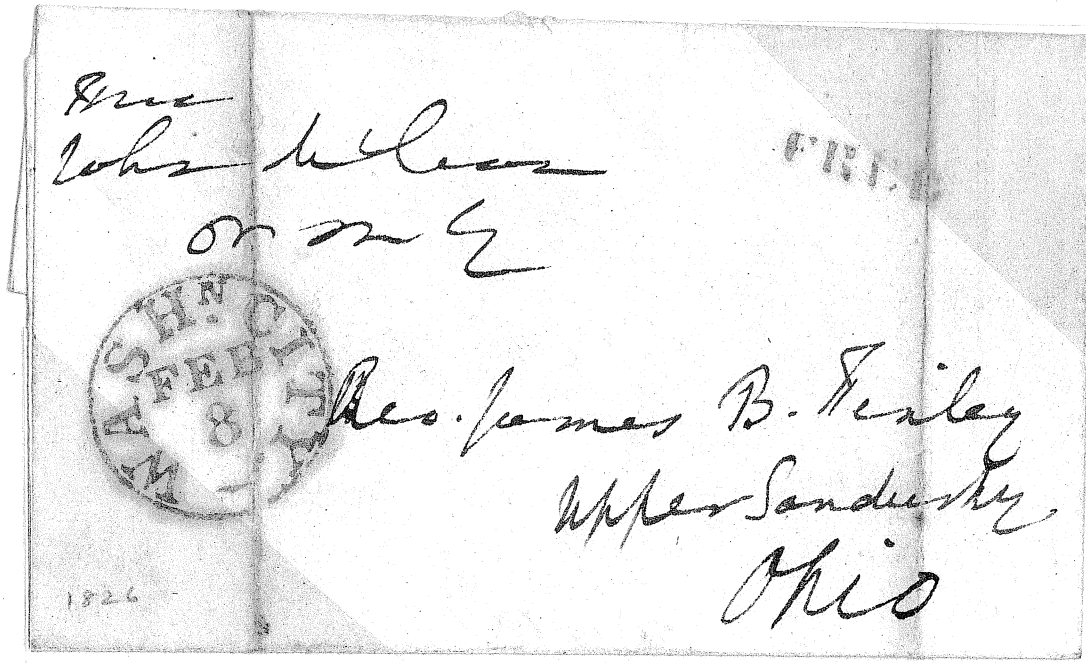
This cover was sent "By Express" to a Cherokee settlement, Ross' Landing in Tennessee, from Fort Lovell, Alabama, June 6, 1838, and describes the writer's experience with collecting Indians for transportation to Indian Territory.

Origin of the Express Mail

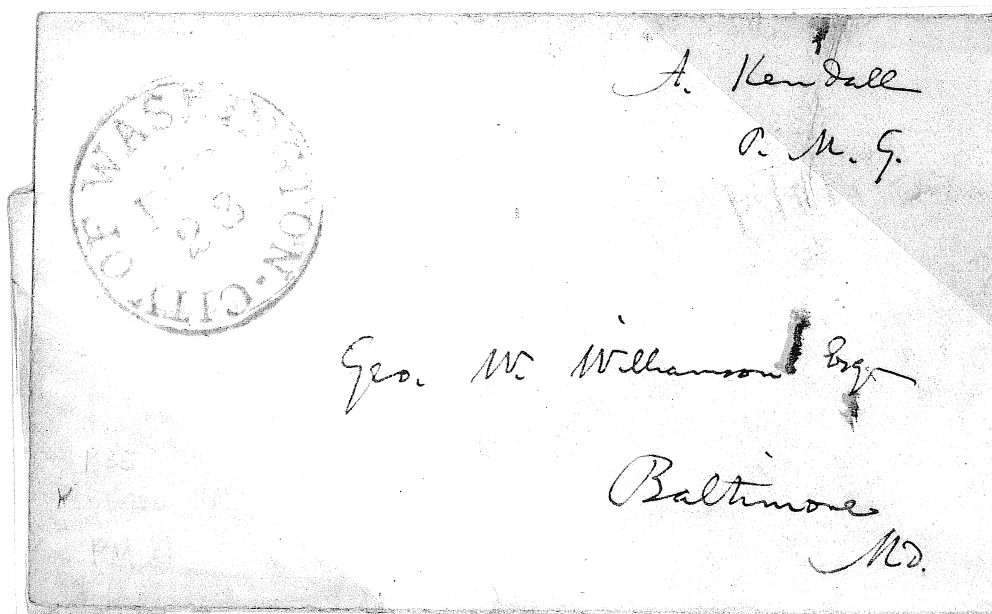


Andrew Jackson's close friend, Postmaster General Amos Kendall, felt the need existed in 1836 for a swifter method of mail transportation. Wagon or stage coach transportation of the mail often was delayed because of freight, passenger or weather considerations. A rider on horseback carrying a single pouch of letters could be counted on for much faster transport between two towns close enough for a horseback ride. Businessmen would take advantage of a faster mail and would be willing to pay for a premium service. In fact, private cotton expresses were running into New Orleans at the time. The real need for an express mail was along the route of the Great Mail: Boston- New York- Philadelphia- Baltimore- Washington- Mobile- New Orleans. This was the first Express Mail route.

Origin of the Express Mail

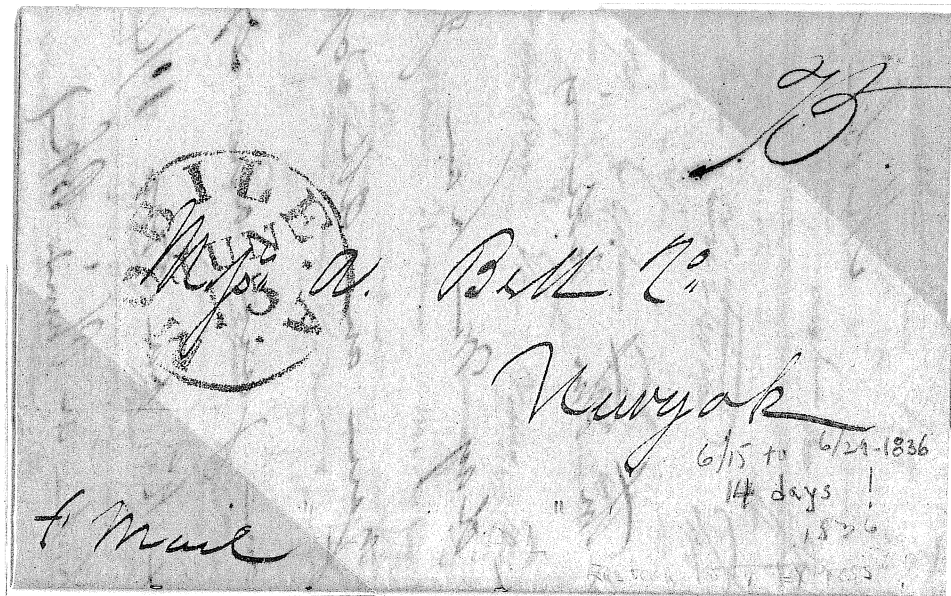


The idea of a fast mail route was first discussed by Postmaster General John McLean in 1825. This is a free frank of that individual, "Free John McLean, P M G", red "WASHN CITY FEB 8" (1826), and "FREE" to Upper Sandusky, Ohio.

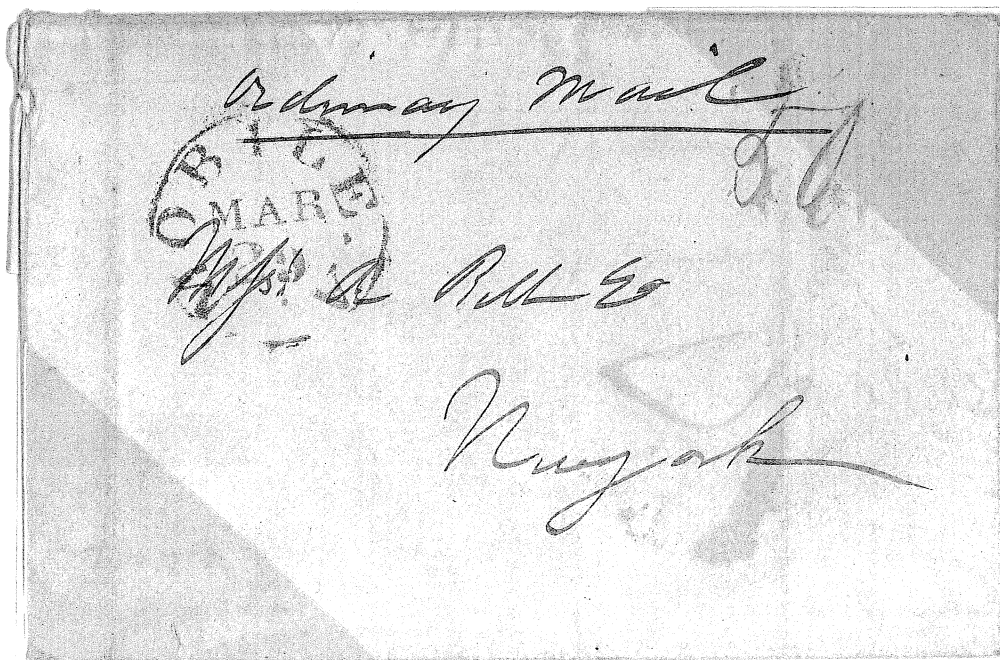


This is a free frank of Amos Kendall as Postmaster General. His franks are more common from the period when he was Auditor for the Post Office Department. The cover "CITY OF WASHINGTON DEC 23" (1836), "A. Kendall P.M.G." to Baltimore is dated during the period of the Express Mail.

Origin of the Express Mail



This letter with "MOBILE A. JUN 15" (1836) was mailed just a few months before the commencement of the Express Mail. It is rated "75" due because of enclosures. The single rate for over 400 miles was 25 cents, so this is a triple rated cover. "We wrote you yesterday and enclosed bank checks.... We now enclose the duplicates, hoping the Indians will not get the duplicates..." This letter was received June 29, 1836 which shows a transit duration of 14 days. It demonstrates the uncertainty of the mails as well as the passage time for a typical letter from the south to the north at that time.

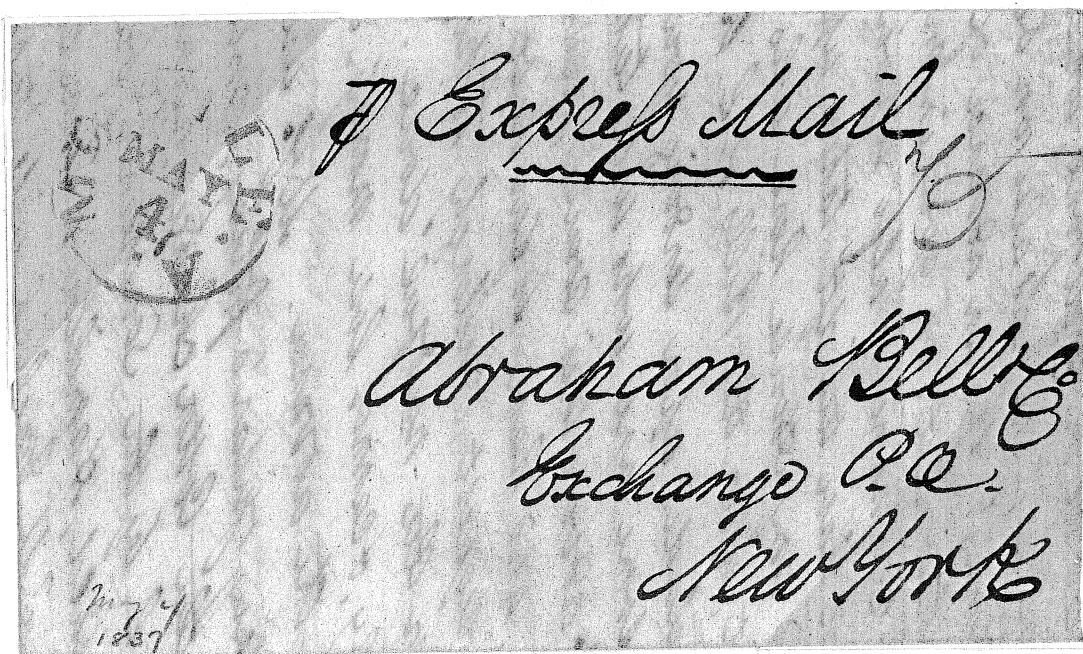


This cover was mailed also from "MOBILE A. MAR 29" (1837), "50" to New York. The date is during the period that the Express Mail ran. Both the letter and the cover are endorsed "ordinary mail", so that the Mobile post office would not charge a triple postage for express service. It is a double rate letter, so the postage is 25¢ X 2 = 50¢. It arrived 13 days after it was sent, a typical transit time for the regular mails.

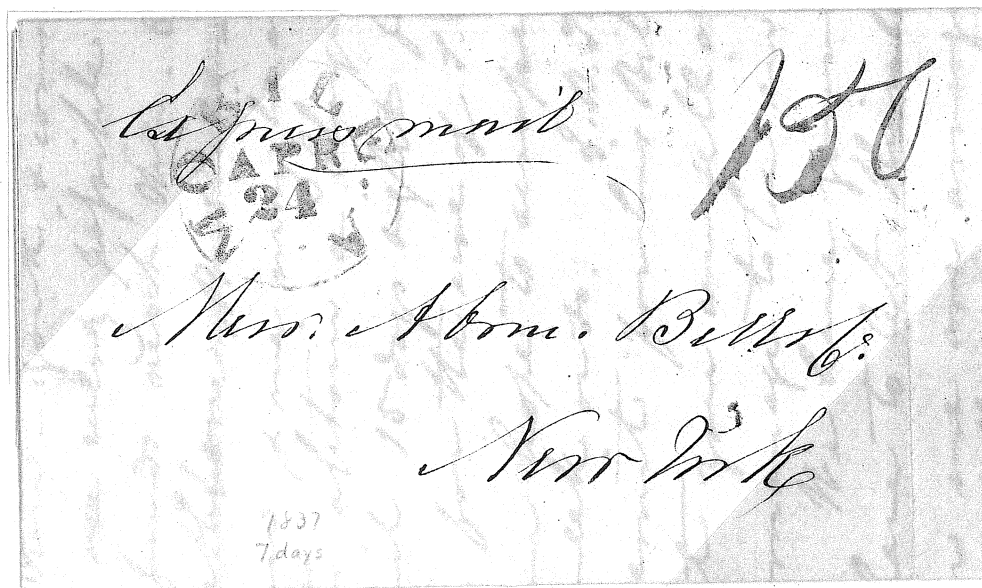
Rating of Express Mail Covers

In 1836 letters were rated for the distance carried in the mail. The following is a list of those rates:

		Single Ordinary	Single Express Mail	Double	Triple	Quadruple
Not over	30 miles	.06	.18	.36	.54	.72
Over 30 and not over	80 miles	.10	.30	.60	.90	1.20
Over 80 and not over	150 miles	.12½	.30½	.75	1.12½	1.50
Over 150 and not over	400 miles	.18¾	.56¾	1.12½	1.68¾	2.25
Over	400 miles	.25	.75	1.50	2.25	3.00

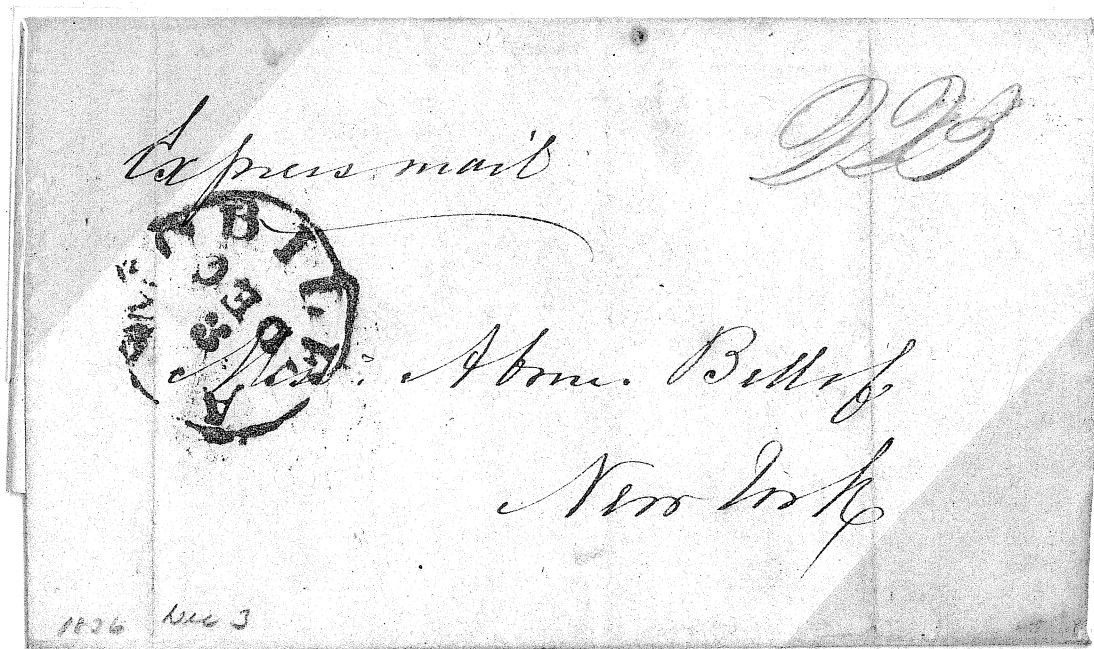


This cover "pr Express Mail" is postmarked "MOBILE A. MAY 4" (1837), "75" to New York. The red "75" is triple the 25 cents rate for over 400 miles and represents the single express rate. It arrived May 11, 1837, a seven day transit time.

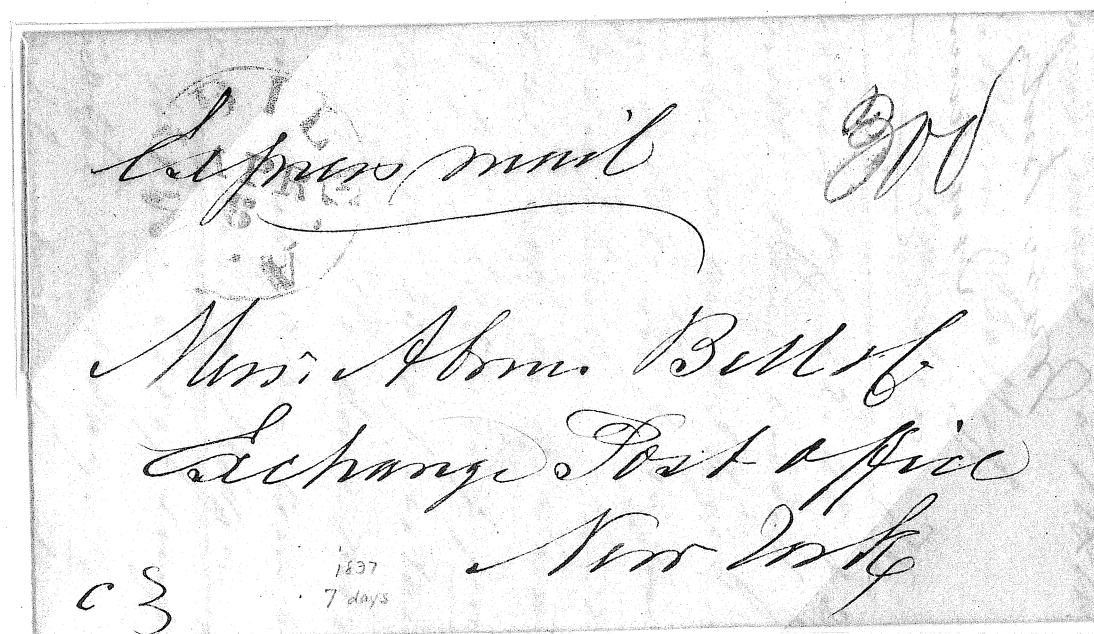


This cover endorsed "Express Mail" is to the same addressee. It was postmarked "MOBILE A. APR 24" (1837) and "150" to New York. This is an unpaid double rate by express for over 400 miles. It arrived in seven days.

Rating of Express Mail Covers

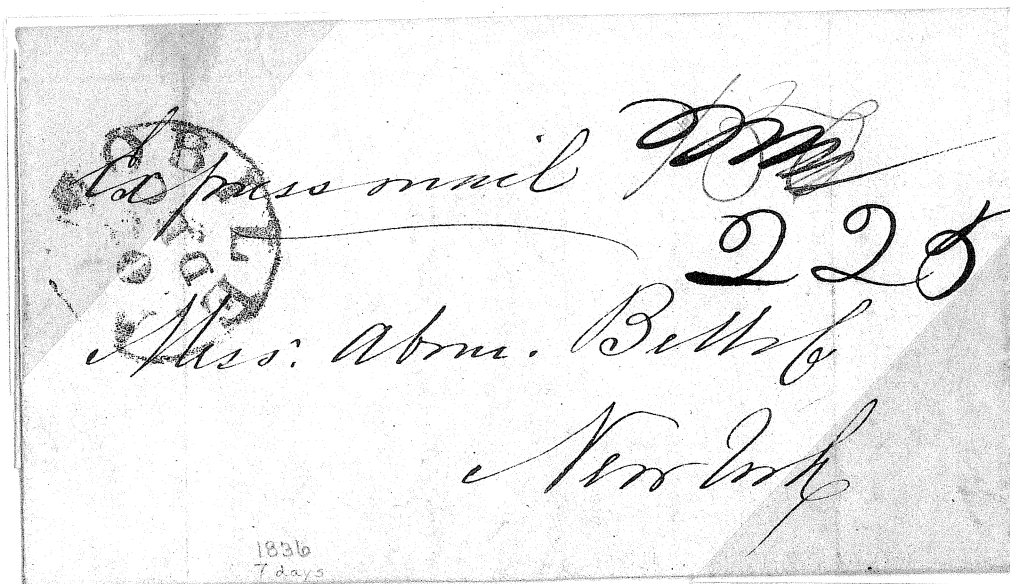


This cover demonstrates the triple Express Mail rate for over 400 miles. The postmark is "MOBILE A. DEC 3" (1836), an early usage, with "225" due in New York. "Express Mail" was written by the sender. This is the earliest triple rate cover recorded. The transit period was nine days.

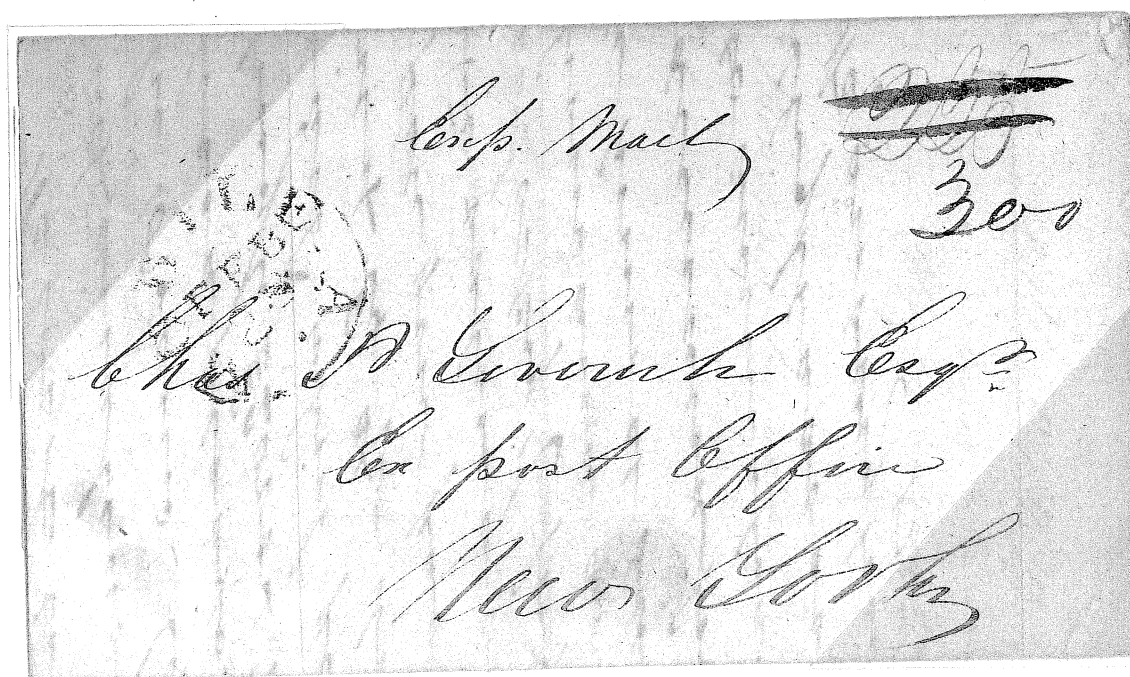


The final and highest Express Mail multiple was the quadruple rate. This is a fourth cover from the Abraham Bell correspondence and shows "Express mail", a "MOBILE A. APR 5" (1837) postmark, and magenta manuscript "300". Three dollars was the highest possible express mail rate. The transit time was seven days.

Rating of Express Mail Covers

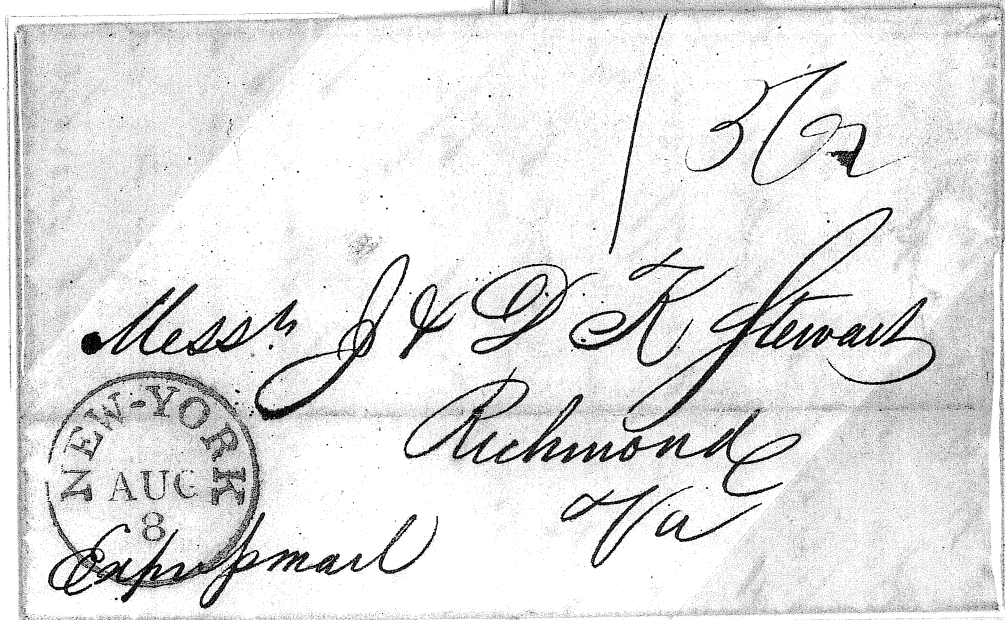
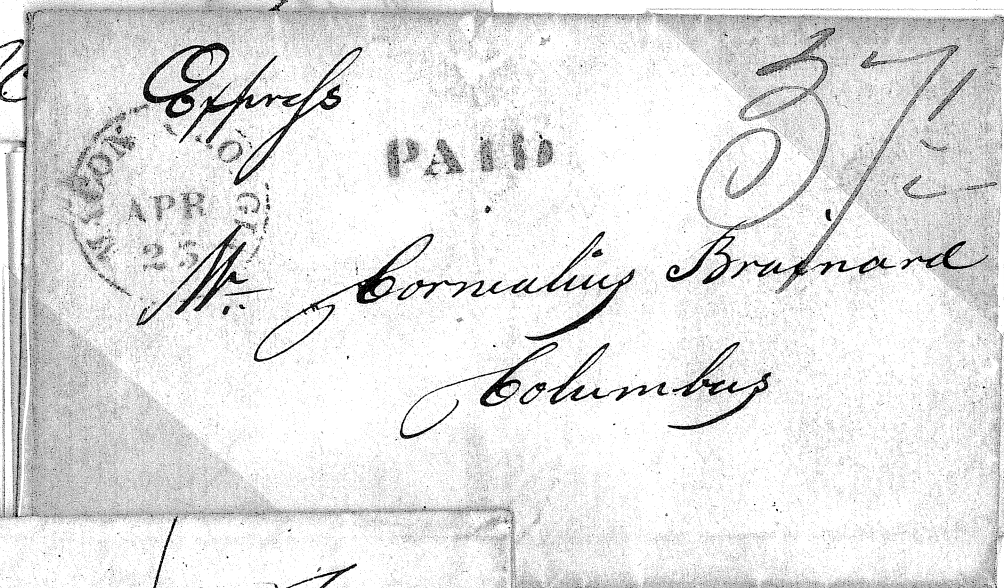
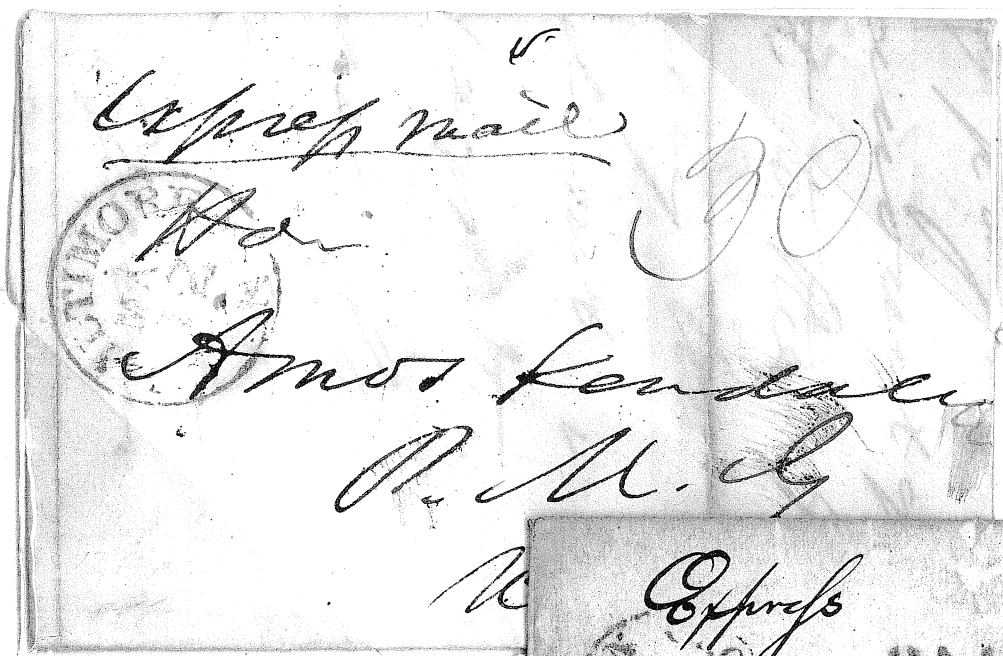


This cover endorsed "Express mail" was sent with "MOBILE A. DEC 20" (1836) postmark and magenta ms. "150". The Express Mail had a weight limit of one half ounce or less. This was also the weight limit for any letter to be rated at the single rate in 1836. The multiple rates for Express Mail letters grew out of the regulation that each enclosure was charged as an additional rate. This letter contained two bills; thus when examined by a postmaster probably in New York, it was rerated to a triple rate, \$2.25 due.



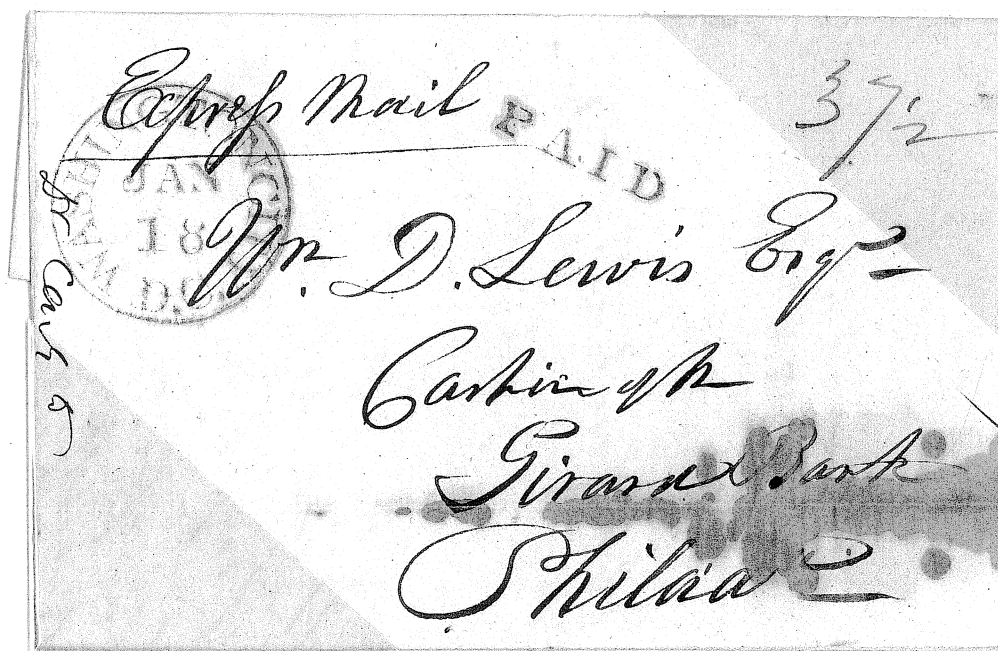
This cover bears "Exp. Mail", "MOBILE A. FEB 28" (1837) in blue, and ms. "225". But it was rerated to a quadruple rate "300". Some quadruple rated covers mention a greater number of enclosures, so evidently the Post Office would allow a greater number of enclosures as long as the entire letter did not weigh over a half ounce. As stated the quadruple rate was the highest rate accepted in the Express Mail.

Rating of Express Mail Covers

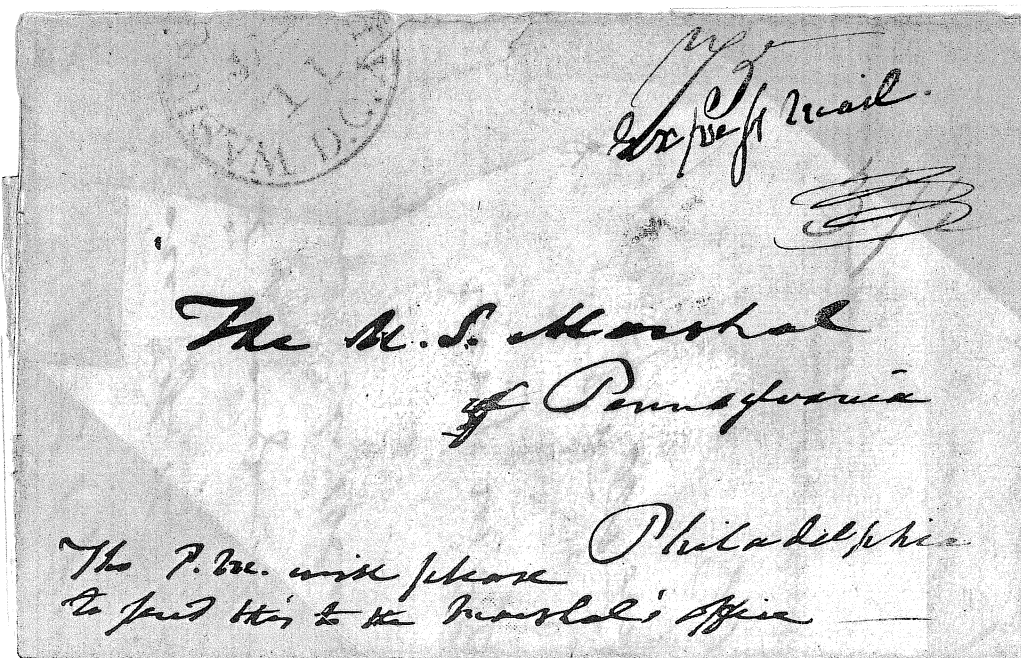


These three covers represent the known single Express Mail short rates, for distances under 400 miles. No 18 cent rated covers are known. The "BALTIMORE Md. May 12" (1837) cover to P.M.G. Kendall is "30" rate for a distance of 30 - 80 miles. The "MACON GEORGIA APR 25" (1838) with "PAID", ms. "37 1/2" to Columbus is the 80 - 150 mile single rate. The "NEW-YORK AUG 8" (1837) cover to Richmond, Va., a distance of 150 - 400 miles, is rated "56 1/4". All bear "Express Mail" notations as required on any Express Mail letter.

Rating of Express Mail Covers



Cover with "Express Mail" postmarked "WASHINGTON CITY D.C. JAN 18" (1837), "PAID", with ms. "37½" to Philadelphia (a longer distance than between Washington and Baltimore). Less than 12 37½¢ rated covers are known.



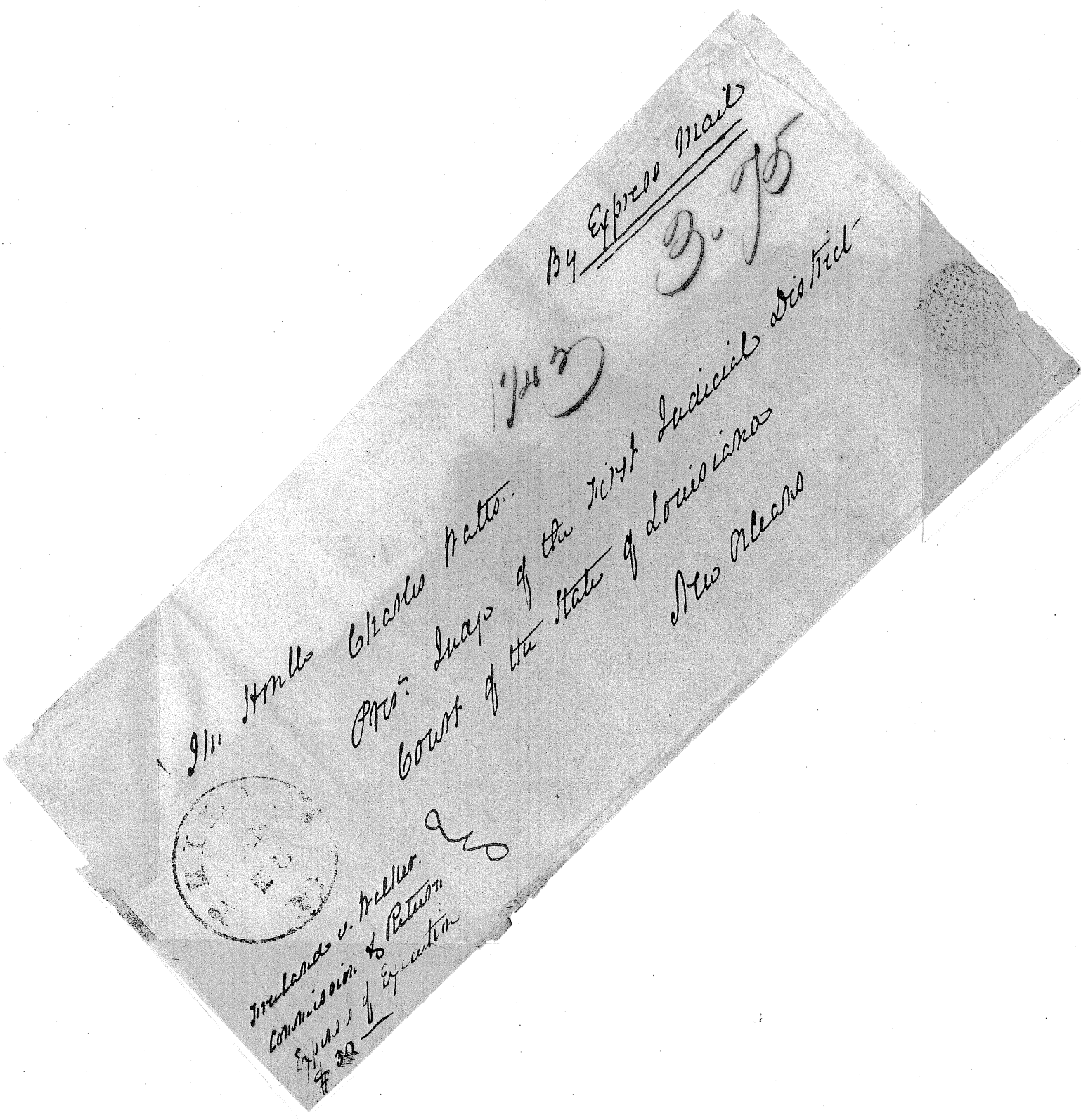
"Express Mail" with "WASHINGTON CITY D.C. JAN 11" (1837) with "37½" rerated to "75". The letter was written by Francis Scott Key, the author of the National Anthem, and contained an enclosure. Therefore, this is a double 37½¢ short rate, one of two such covers known.

Rating of Express Mail Covers



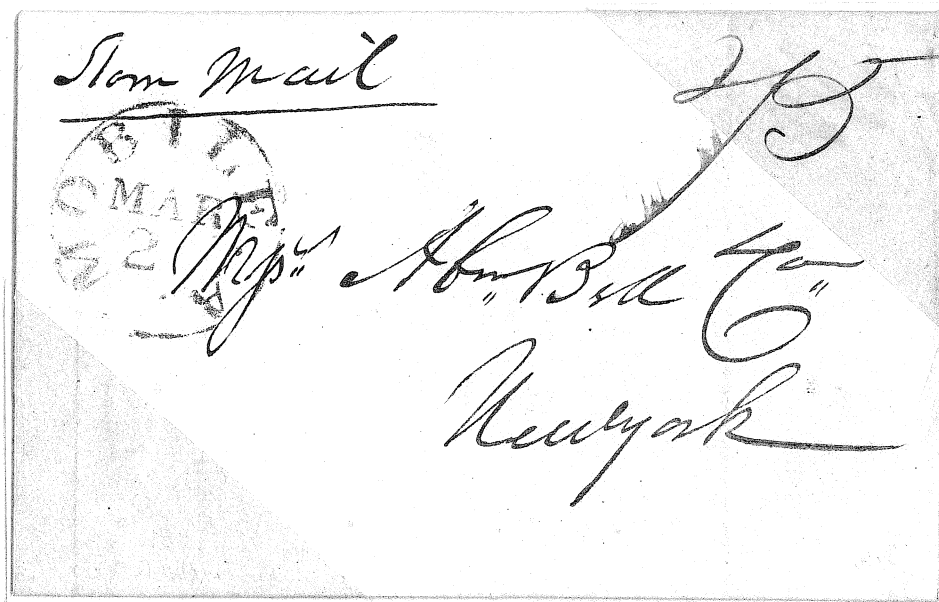
These three covers from Baltimore to New York demonstrate the non-express 18¾¢ rate, the single Express Mail rate of 56¼¢ (triple 18¾¢) and the double Express Mail short rate of \$1.12½. This is one of three covers known with this double rate.

Rating of Express Mail Covers

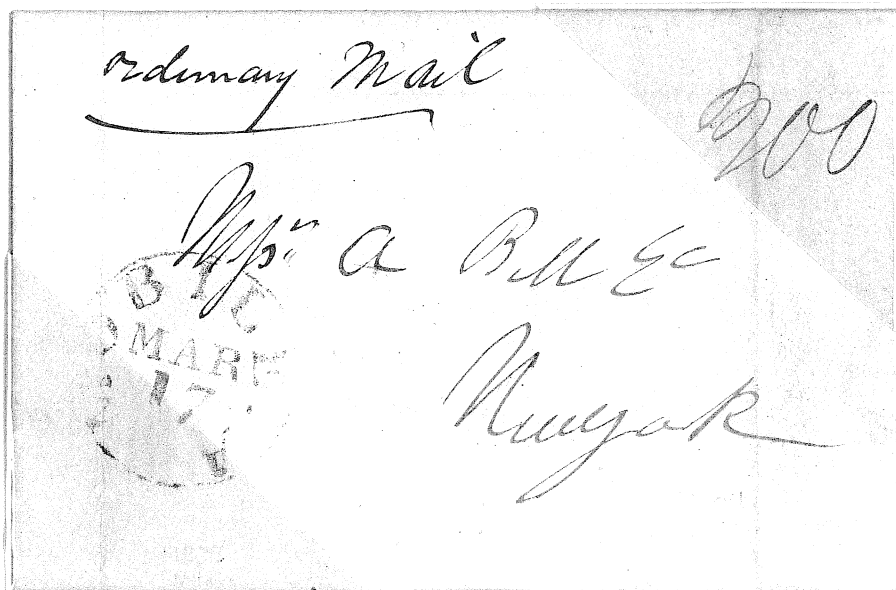


To everything there always seems to be an exception. Covers weighing over ½ ounce were prohibited in the Express Mail. Yet here is a cover sent "By Express Mail" weighing "1 ¼ oz" which is rated "3.75" with "PHILADA PA. JAN 28" (1837) to New Orleans. It is the only example of both this rate and of a heavy letter being carried in the Express Mail.

Rating of Express Mail Covers



This cover "MOBILE A. MAR 2" (1837) is rated with a red "75". But the notation is "Slow Mail". There were 2 enclosures, so the 75¢ is a triple regular rate, not the express rate. It took 13 days to travel north.

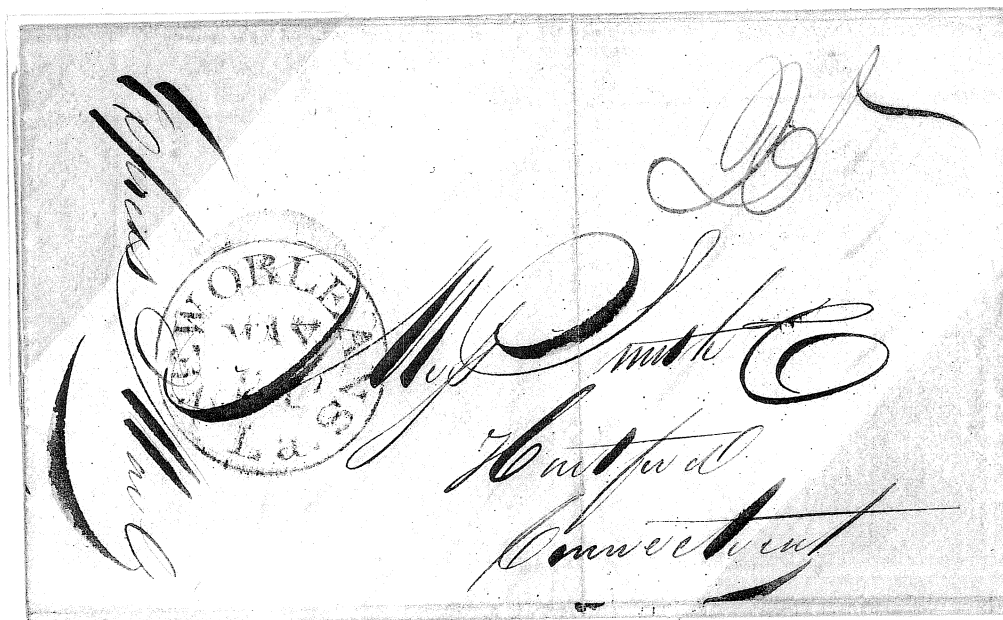


On the other hand, this cover is postmarked "MOBILE A. MAR 17" (1837) and is marked "ordinary mail". But it is rated "300", the express quadruple rate, and was definitely sent by Express Mail because it arrived in only 7 days. It contained 3 enclosures. This was a postmaster's mistake at Mobile, because the sender intended the letter to go by regular mail.

Rating of Express Mail Covers

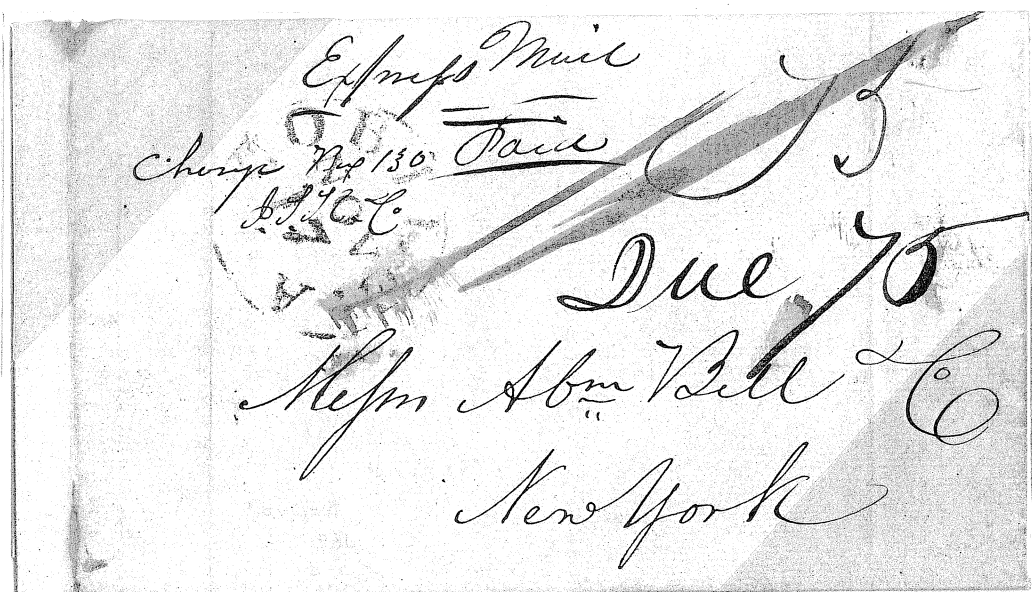


This cover is one of a pair with unusual vertical placement of "Express Mail. It bears a blue "NEW ORLEANS La. JUN 20" (1837) and is rated "75" the correct single express rate for this distance.

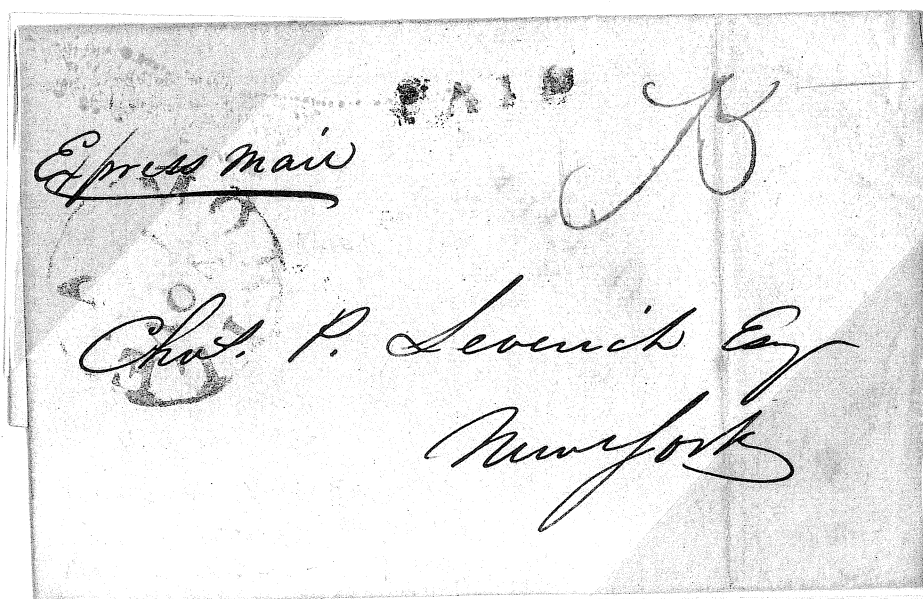


This cover from the same correspondence three weeks earlier also bears the "Express Mail" notation. However, it was rated "25" which is the ordinary mail rate. It is unknown as to whether this cover traveled by Express Mail because there is no date of receipt on the letter. If it went by express, this would be the only known underrated Express Mail usage.

Early Dates of Express Mail Usage

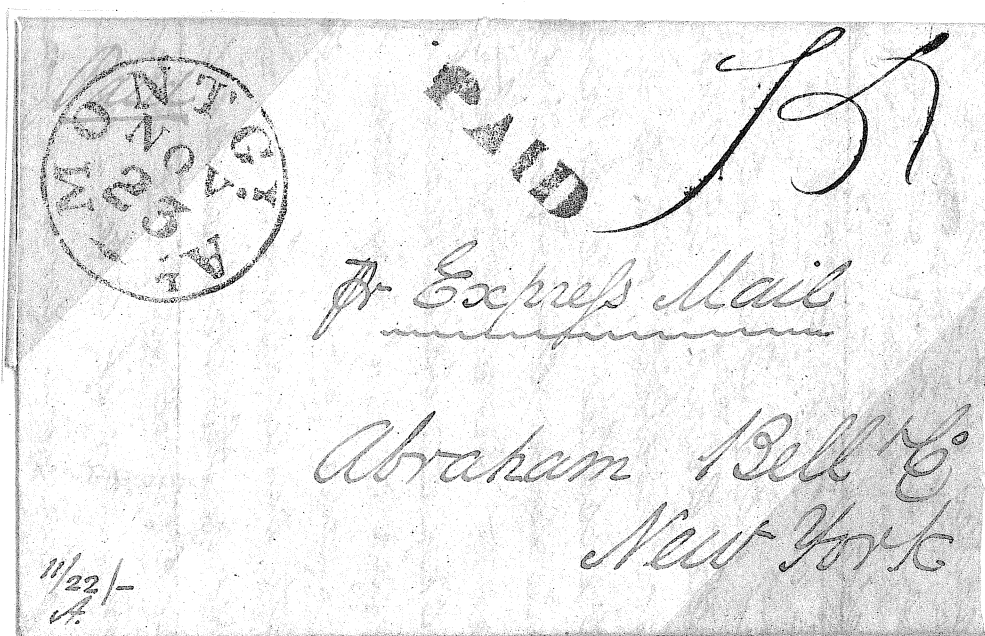


The commencement date of the southern route between New York and Mobile was November 15, 1836. This cover "Express Mail" is postmarked "MOBILE A. NOV 17" (1836) and was sent "Paid Charge Box 130" (a post office account) with "75" marked out and "Due 75" for an enclosed draft. It is the earliest known Express Mail cover, taking 8 days to reach New York.

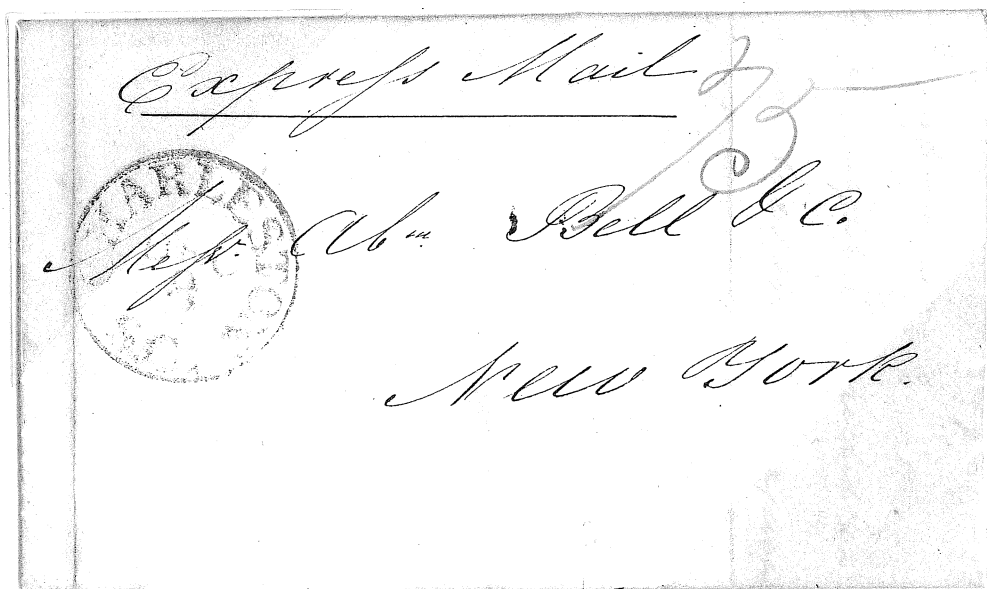


This cover is postmarked "MOBILE A. NOV 19" (1836), "PAID", and "75". As usual there is an "Express Mail" written by the sender. This is the second earliest known Express Mail cover. Several other November, 1836 dates are known from Mobile.

Early Dates of Express Mail Usage

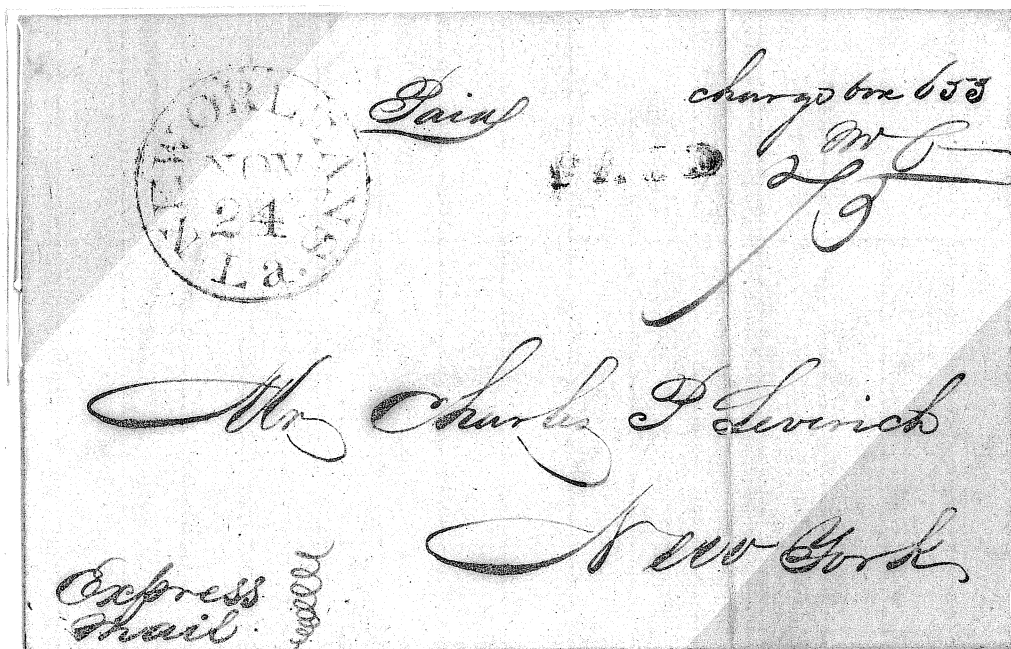


This cover "pr Express Mail" bears red "MONTGY. AL. NOV 23" (1836), "PAID", and ms. "75". It is the earliest usage from a town other than Mobile.

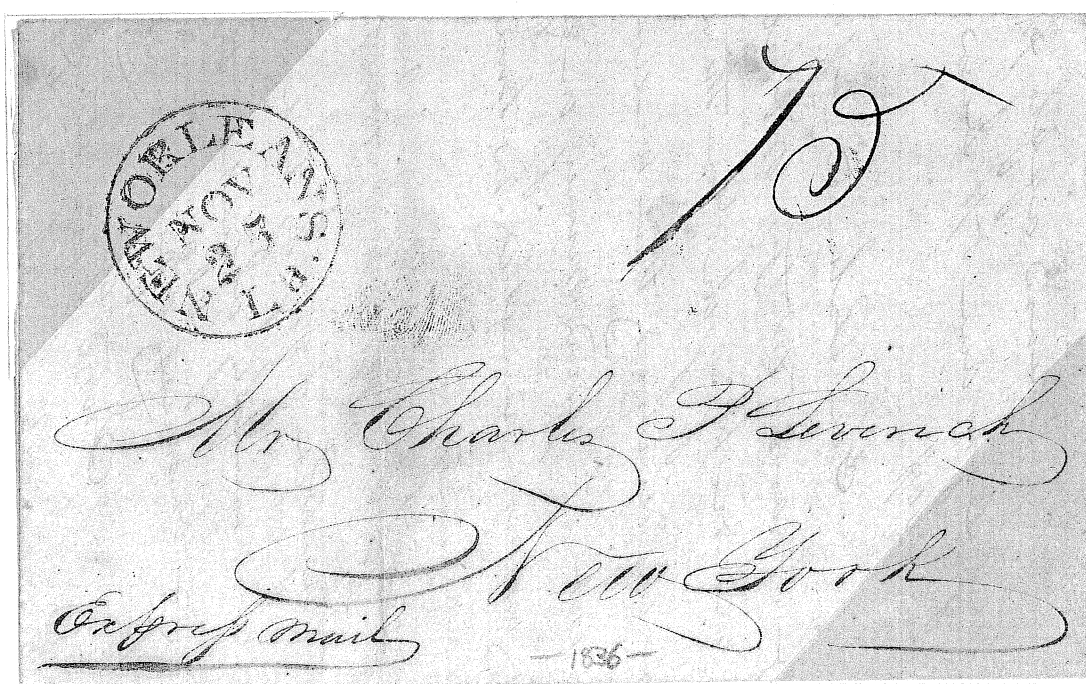


This cover "Express Mail" bears red "CHARLESTON S.C. DEC 8" (1836) and red ms. "75" to New York. At this very early date Charleston was not on the express route. The Charleston spur was established July 1, 1837. So this cover traveled by regular mail to Columbia which was on the southern Express Mail route and then north to New York by express.

Early Dates of Express Mail Usage

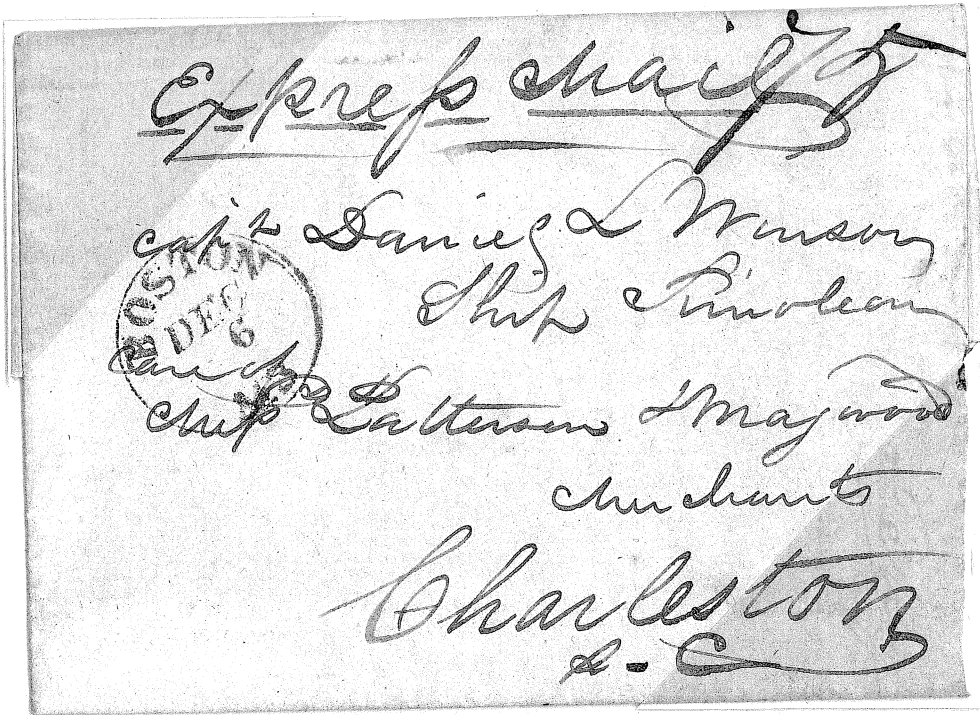


The *Bee*, a New Orleans newspaper, described the first Express Mail from Washington arriving on November 23, 1836. An 1837 document from postmaster Kerr to Amos Kendall describes that the first Express Mail from New Orleans was dispatched November 24, 1836. The cover “Express mail”, “charge box 653”, “NEW ORLEANS La. NOV 24” (1836), “PAID”, “75” to New York is one of two known showing first day of Express Mail usage from New Orleans.

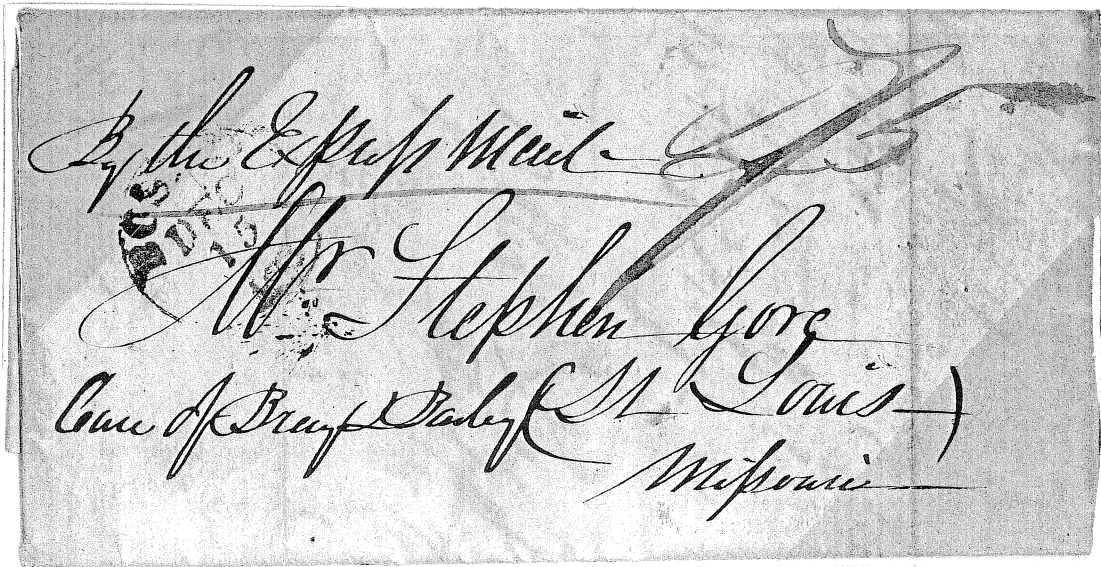


This cover bears “NEW ORLEANS La. NOV 25” (1836) with unpaid “75” on “Express mail” letter to the same correspondent. It is a usage of the second Express Mail sent from this important city. More surviving Express Mail covers are from New Orleans than any other city; it appears to have been the largest user of the Express Mail.

Early Dates of Express Mail Usage



No covers are known with north to south Express Mail usage in November, 1836. This cover is postmarked "BOSTON MS DEC 6" (1836) which is the earliest southbound date known. It was sent to a ship's captain in care of a mercantile firm in Charleston. Note the postmaster's red ink underlining the sender's "Express Mail" notation in the same ink as the "75" manuscript postmark



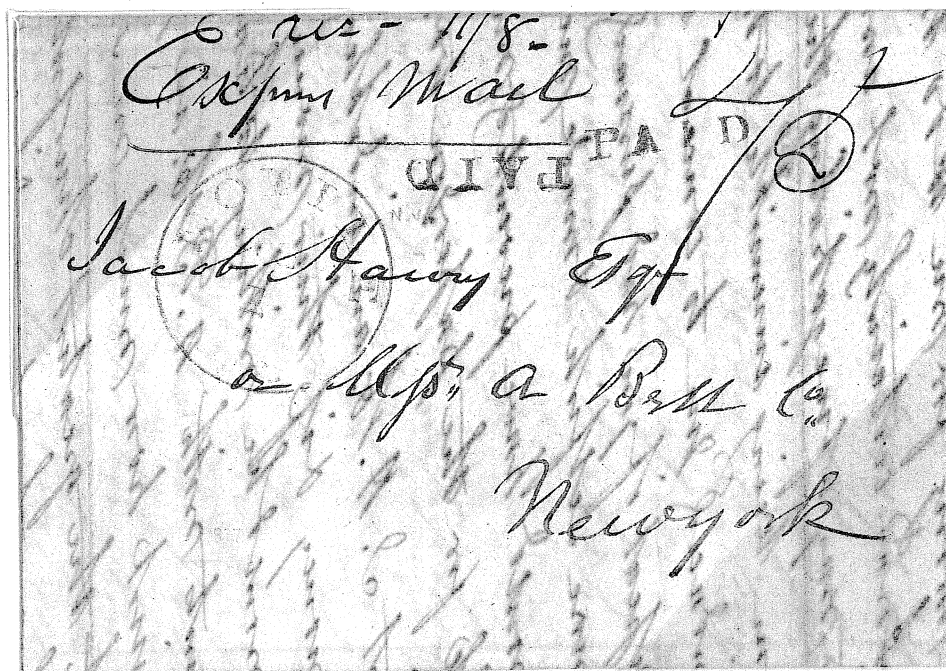
This letter was sent "By the Express Mail" from "BOSTON MS DEC 15" (1836) to St. Louis. The cover was originally rated "25" but was rerated "75", the single express rate for over 400 miles. It seems likely this cover went to Washington by Express Mail and then regular mails west. It is the earliest known western usage of an Express Mail cover.

Prepayment of Express Mail Postage

The Express Mail was the first U.S. postal service to require prepayment of postage. This came about because of the high rates which were charged to the government officials who received of such unpaid Express Mail letters; express letters were not free.

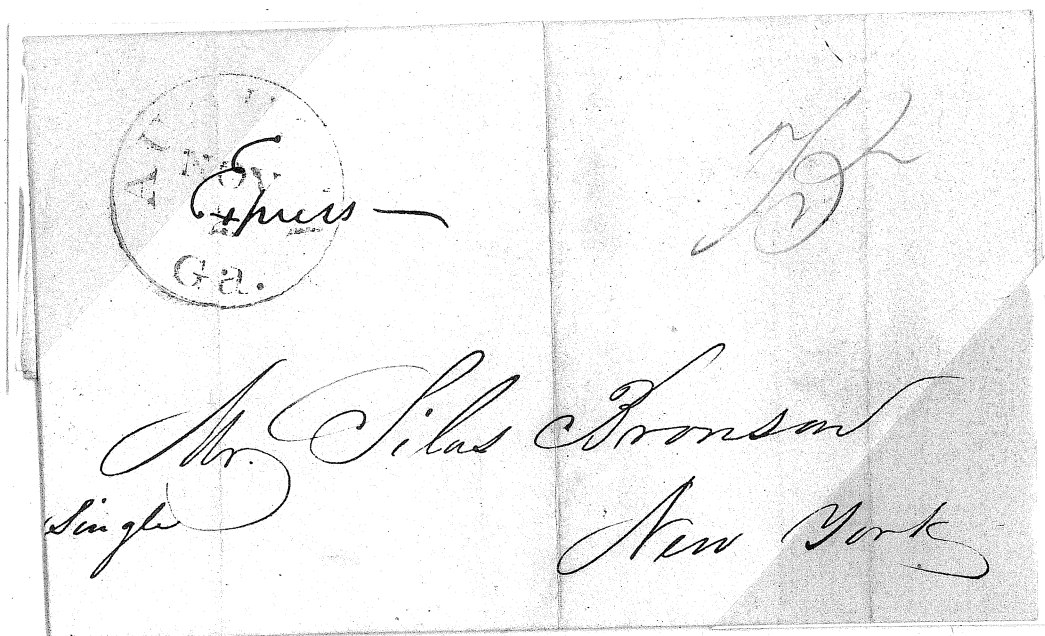


This cover was postmarked "NEW ORLEANS La. OCT 31" (1837), "Express Mail", and "75" unpaid to Boston. This was the last day of unpaid Express Mail rates.



This cover was sent "NEW ORLEANS La. NOV 1" (1837), two "PAID" strikes, "Express Mail", "75" to New York. This is a first day of usage for required prepayment (some Express Mail covers were prepaid by choice earlier).

Prepayment of Express Mail Postage

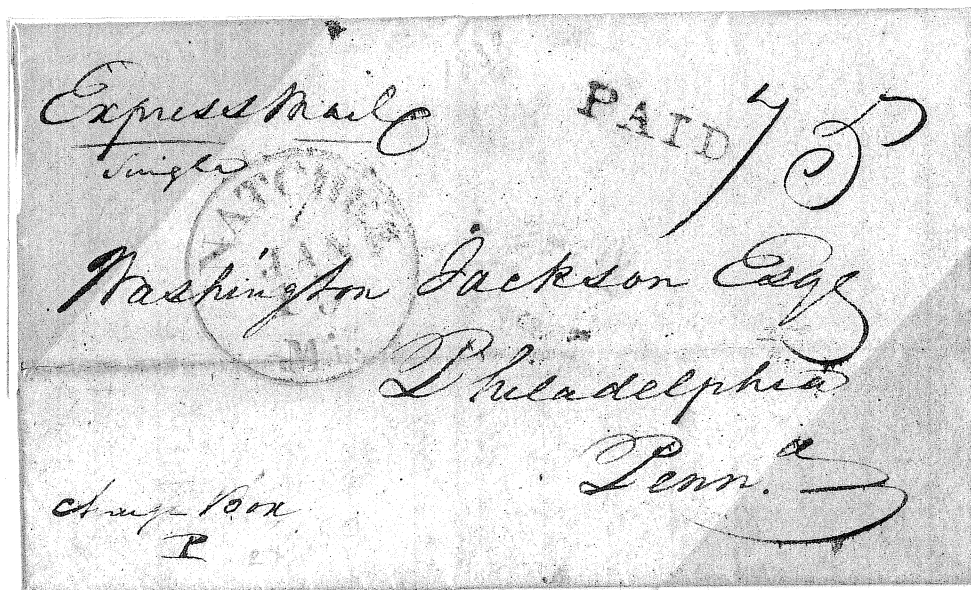


This cover "AUGUSTA Ga. NOV 2" (1837) with "Express" and "75" is an example of late unpaid usage, after prepayment was required. The "Express" without "Mail" is fairly unusual; this was by the postmaster evidently.

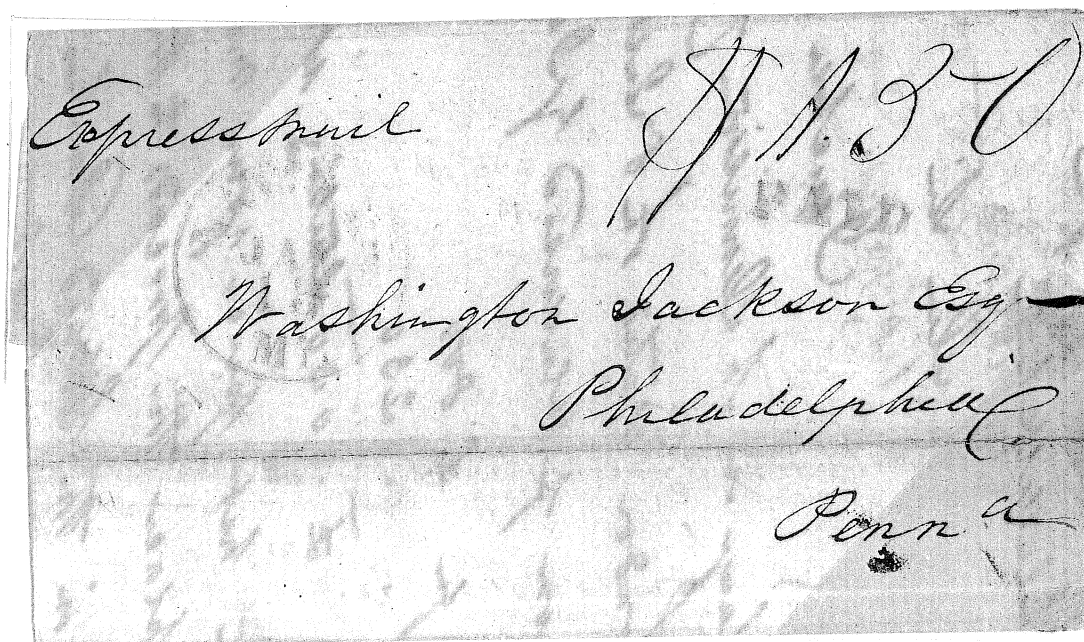


"Pr Express Mail" this cover is postmarked "CLARKSVILLE TENN. NOV 7" (1837) and was still allowed to be sent unpaid, "75" due to Richmond. This cover also demonstrates usage over two new western branches of the Express Mail routes which will be discussed later.

Prepayment of Express Mail Postage

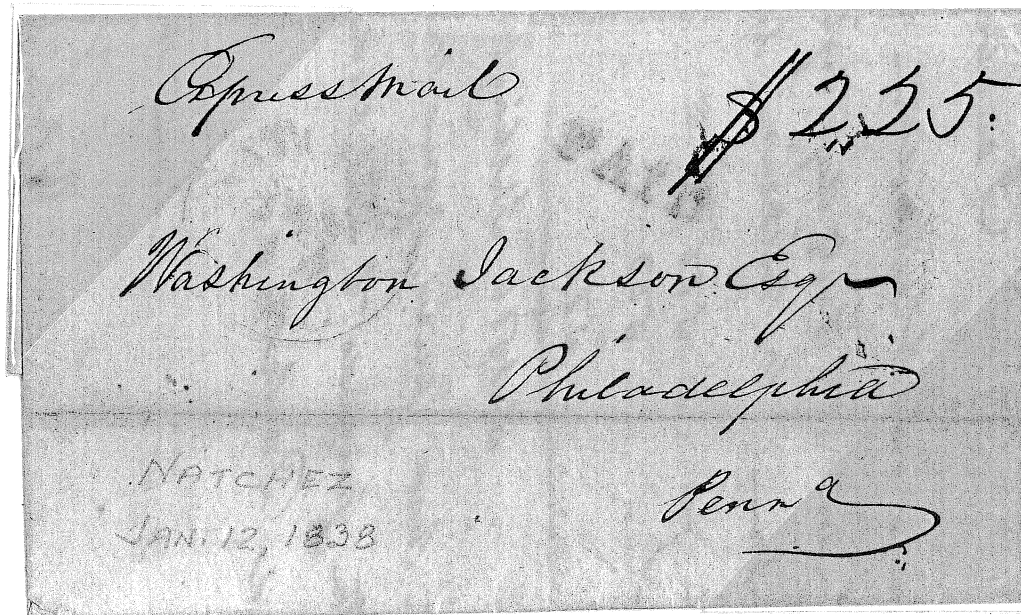


Prepayment of the four over 400 miles Express Mail multiple rates are shown by these four covers from the same correspondence to Philadelphia. The first is "Express Mail single", "NATCHEZ MI. JAN 15" (1838) bears a "PAID" with the single rate, "75", "Charge Box P".

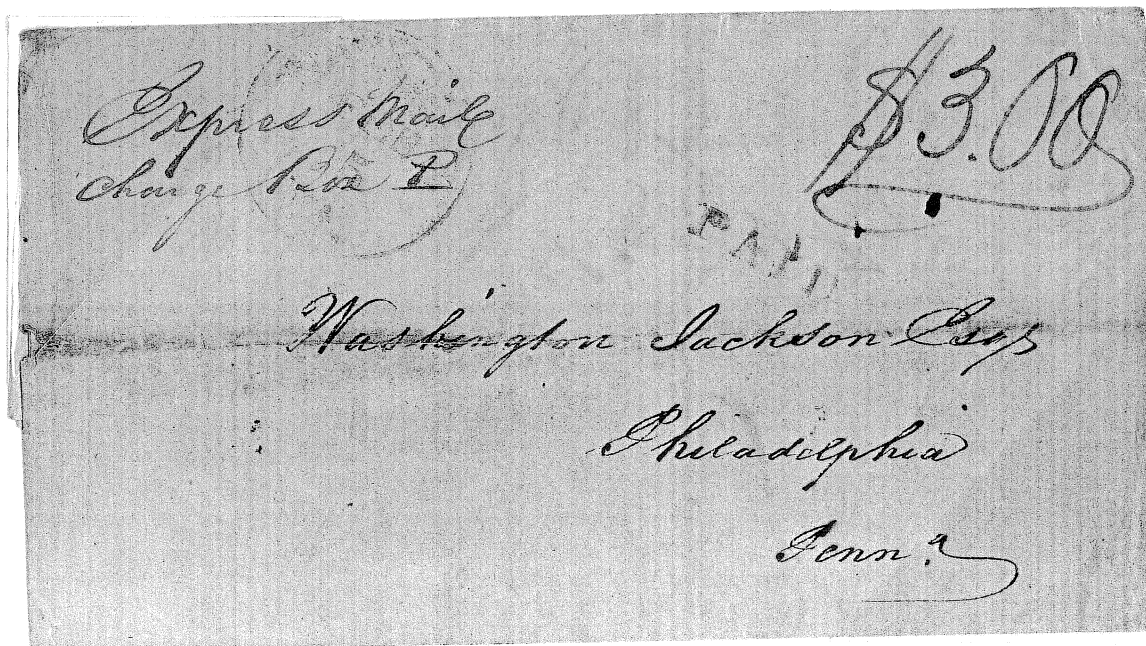


"Express Mail" and "NATCHEZ MI. JAN 13" (1838), "PAID" shows the double rate "\$1.50".

Prepayment of Express Mail Postage

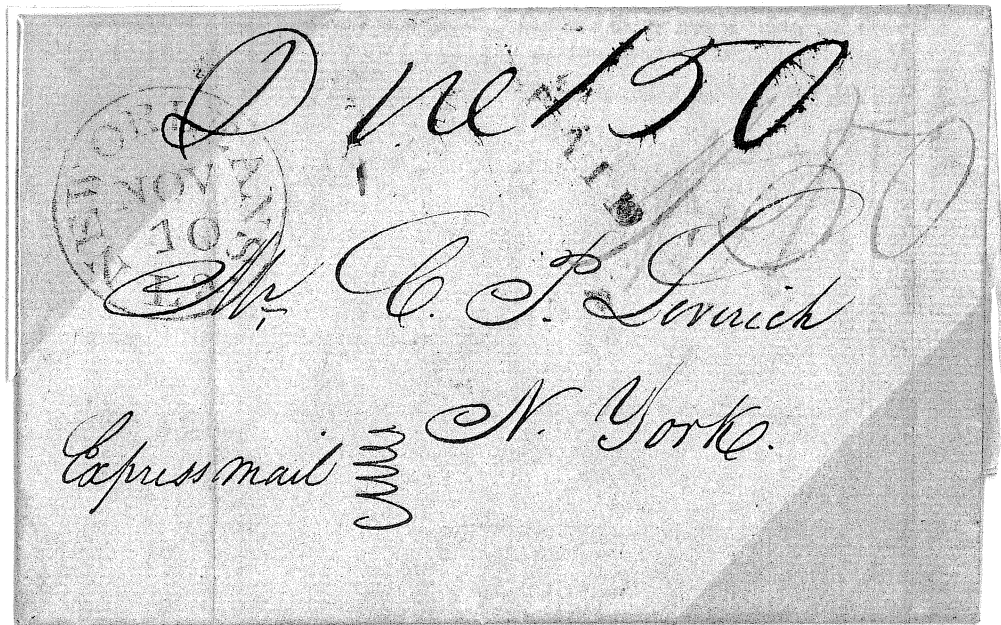


The prepaid triple rate "\$2.25" required with the "Express Mail" is shown by this cover "NATCHEZ MI. JAN 14" (1838) with "PAID".



This cover "NATCHEZ MI. FEB 5" (1838) demonstrates the quadruple rate, "\$3.00" with "PAID". The postage on all four letters was probably charged to a post office box account. The postage varied with the number of enclosures, all letters being less than one half ounce in weight.

Prepayment of Express Mail Postage

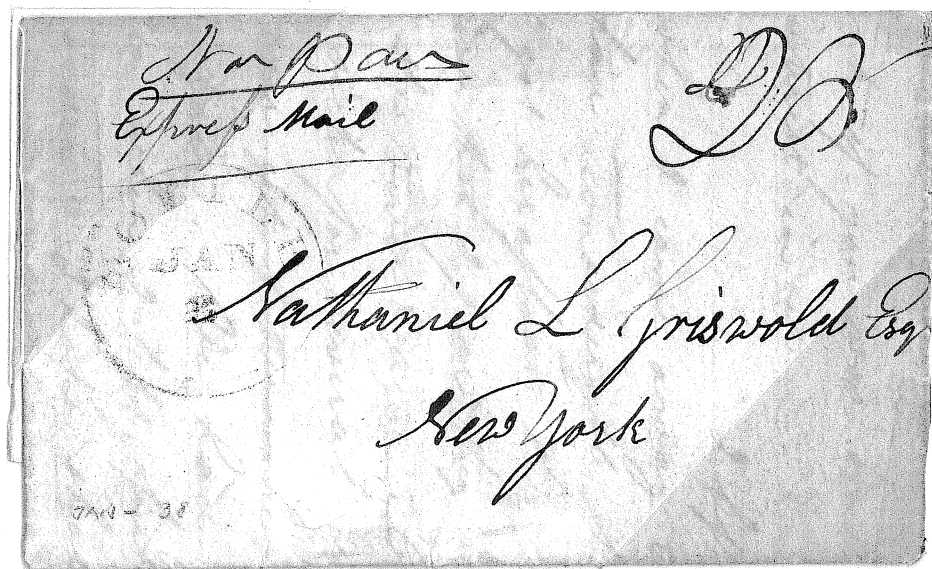


This "Express Mail" cover "NEW ORLEANS La. NOV 10" (1837) was sent "PAID", "150", the double rate to New York. The letter states it enclosed 2 bills, but perhaps there were three sheets of paper. It was rerated "Due 150" in New York. The partial prepayment was an obvious attempt to pay a lesser rate.

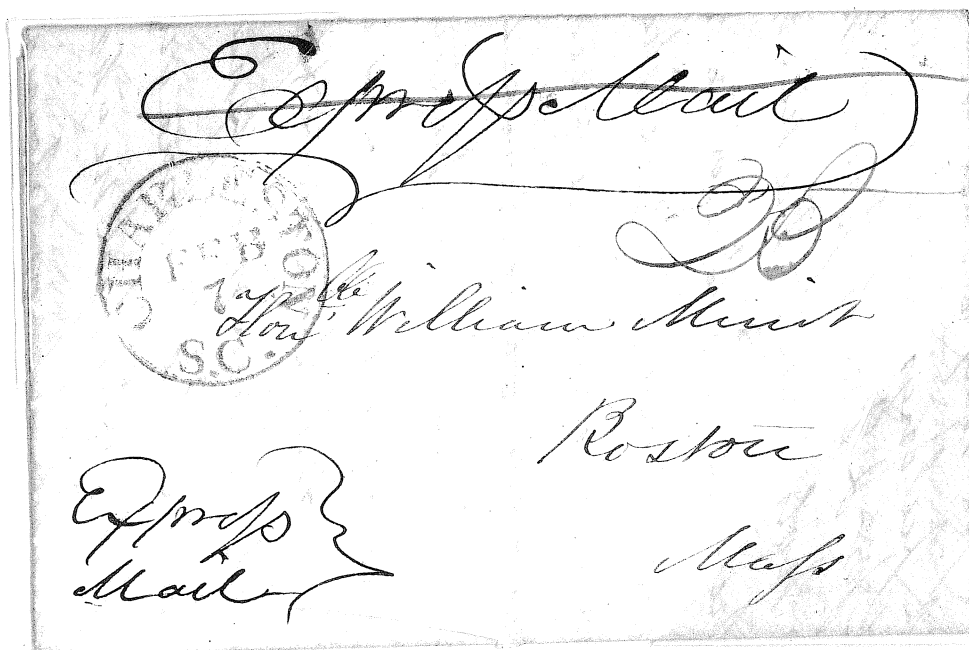


This letter also shows early prepayment. It is marked "Express" with "NEW ORLEANS La. NOV 5" (1837), "PAID" and "\$3.00". It is the earliest prepaid quadruple rate seen.

Prepayment of Express Mail Postage



This 1838 cover was endorsed "Express Mail" and is postmarked "MOBILE A. JAN 5", but the postmaster wrote "Not Paid" and sent it by regular mail, "25" due to New York. Prepayment of express postage was required after November 1, 1837.



This cover is endorsed "Express Mail" by the sender and again "Express Mail" by the postmaster (top). However, this "CHARLESTON S.C. FEB 7" (1838) cover was to be sent unpaid. So the postmaster wrote through the upper notation in red ink and rated it "25", the regular rate to Boston. The contents are from a wife to her husband.

Express Mail Routes and Schedule

795

[1]

On the first instant the department had bank funds - \$430,655 57
Specie in post offices reported subject to draft - 410,662 81

Total funds on hand - \$841,318 38

In consequence of the failure of Congress to reduce the postages at the last annual session, arrangements have been made to improve the mail service beyond the extent of the accruing revenue, so as to absorb the surplus. The career of improvement has been arrested by apprehensions of a reduction of revenue, growing out of the general commercial embarrassment; but no reduction of the service contracted for is at present contemplated.

The following improvements have been made in the time of transmitting intelligence within the last two years, viz:

FROM NEW YORK.

	1835.	1837.
To Washington D. C.	1 day 8 hours.	1 day 0 hours.
Richmond, Va.	2 " 13 $\frac{1}{2}$ "	1 " 13 $\frac{1}{2}$ "
Raleigh, N. C.	3 " 22 $\frac{1}{2}$ "	2 " 7 " "
Columbia, S. C.	6 " 3 " "	3 " 5 " "
Charleston, S. C.	6 " 19 " "	3 " 16 $\frac{1}{2}$ "
Milledgeville, Ga.	7 " 15 " "	3 " 21 $\frac{1}{2}$ "
Montgomery, Ala.	10 " 3 " "	4 " 19 " "
Mobile, Ala.	12 " 12 " "	5 " 17 " "
New Orleans, La.	13 " 19 " "	6 " 19 " "
Wheeling, Va.	3 " 11 " "	2 " 8 " "
Columbus, O.	4 " 16 " "	2 " 22 $\frac{1}{2}$ "
Indianapolis, Ia.	7 " 14 " "	3 " 19 $\frac{1}{2}$ "
Vandalia, Ill.	11 " 15 " "	4 " 15 $\frac{1}{2}$ "
St. Louis, Mo.	13 " 10 " "	4 " 23 $\frac{1}{2}$ "
Cincinnati, O.	5 " 17 " "	3 " 14 " "
Louisville, Ky.	7 " 18 " "	4 " 8 " "
Nashville, Tenn.	9 " 20 " "	5 " 6 " "
Huntsville, Ala.	11 " 22 " "	5 " 20 $\frac{1}{2}$ "

FROM NEW ORLEANS.

To Montgomery, Ala.	3 days 21 hours.	2 days 0 hours.
Huntsville, Ala.	8 " 5 " "	3 " 2 " "
Nashville, Te.	10 " 0 " "	3 " 18 " "
Louisville Ky.	13 " 0 " "	4 " 17 " "
Cincinnati, O.	14 " 11 " "	5 " 17 " "
Columbus, O.	16 " 9 " "	6 " 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ "
Pittsburgh, Pa.	18 " 5 " "	7 " 8 " "

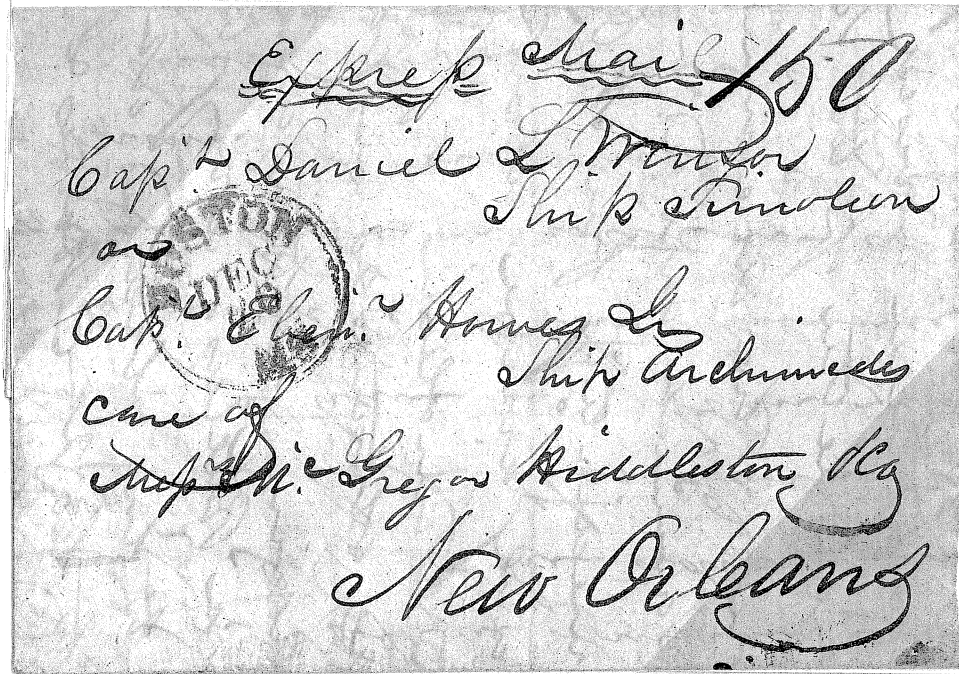
[These are the results of the express mails.] The ordinary mails have also been expedited.

REPORT of P.M.G

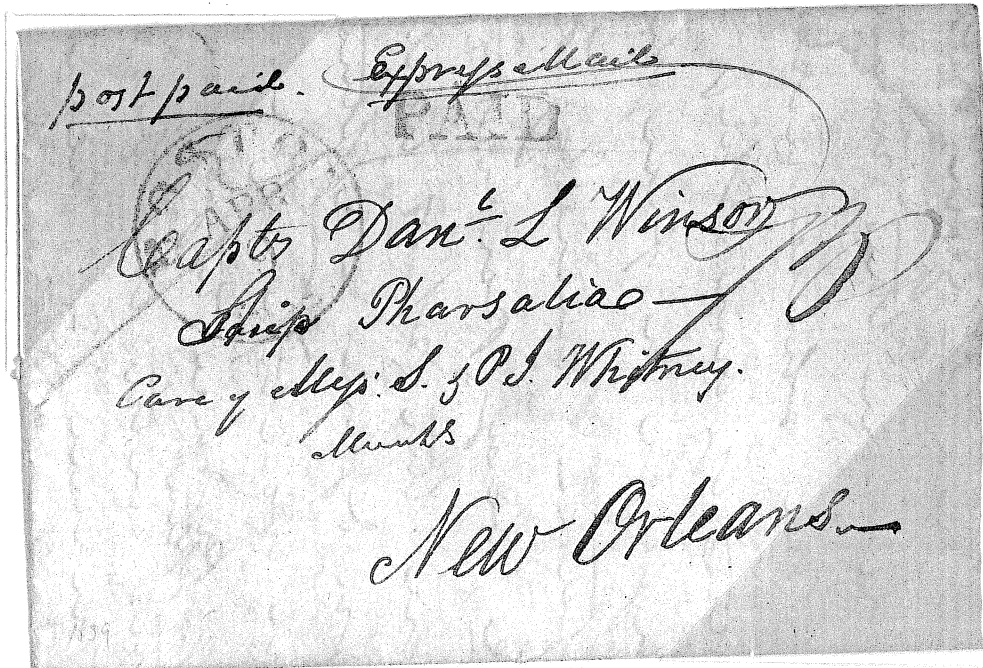
DEC. 4-1837

The Express Mail was carried over scheduled routes by private contractors as was all the mail in 1836-1839. Each route had a number, and the contractor was responsible to move the mail between post offices according to a fixed schedule. The contract for Express Mail transport called for horseback mail carriers who were to adhere to a fixed time schedule that was faster than the regular mails.

Usages from New England on Southern Route

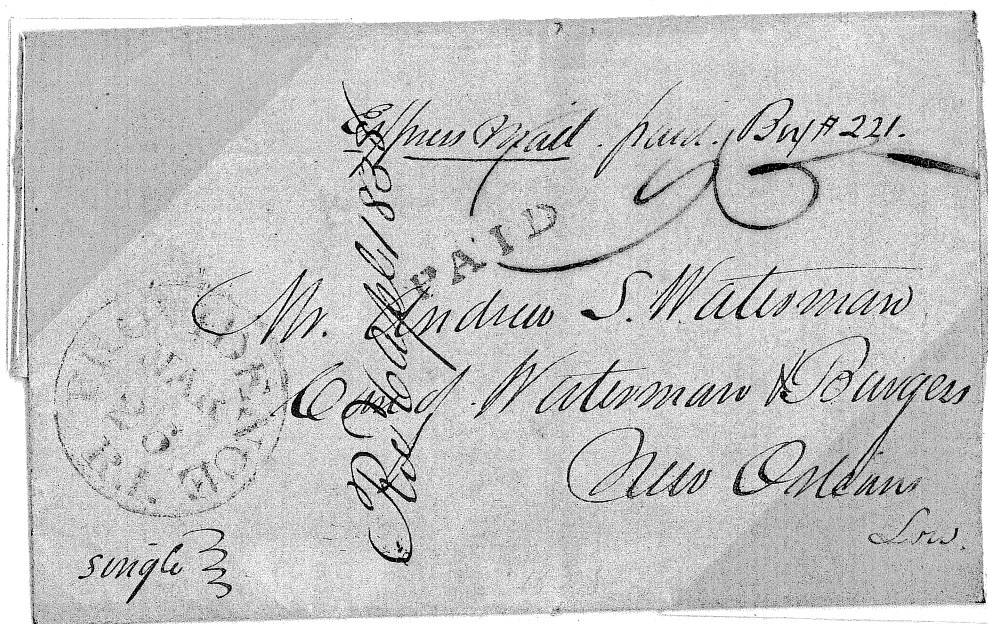


North to south usages of the Express Mail are more uncommon than are covers going in the reverse direction. New York is the most common town of northern origin followed by Boston, Philadelphia, and Providence probably in that order. All other towns north of Baltimore are very rare with Express Mail usage. This is the small red "BOSTON MS DEC 26" (1836), "Express Mail", underlined and "150" to either of two ship captains in New Orleans.

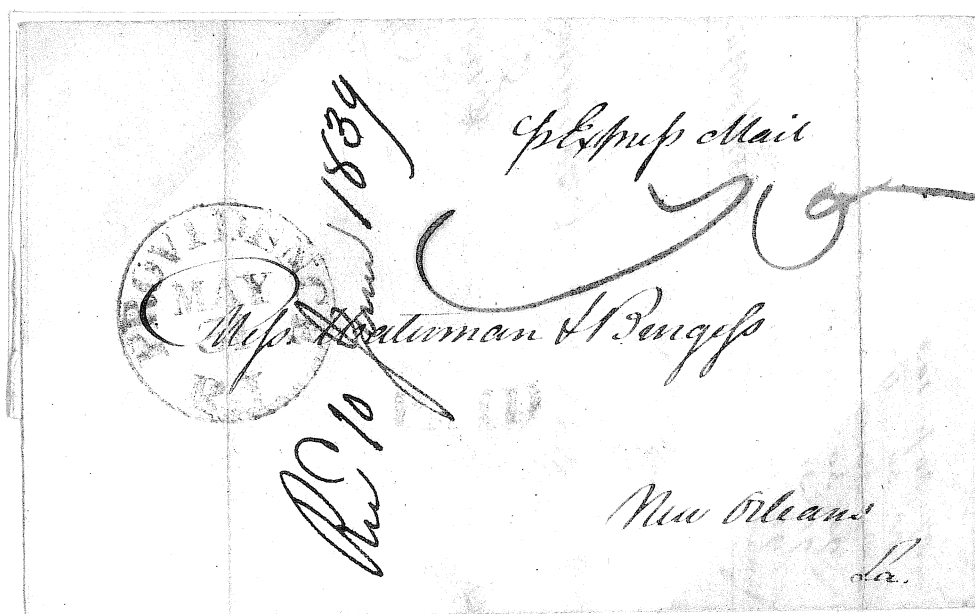


This "BOSTON Mas. APR 9" (1839) is a late "Express Mail" usage and shows again an address to Captain Winsor in care of a mercantile firm in New Orleans. It is "PAID" with single "75" rate.

Usages from New England on Southern Route



Most known Providence covers show the larger 30 mm. circle "PROVIDENCE R.I. MAR 26" (1838), "Express Mail paid Box #221", "PAID", and "75" rated to New Orleans. Less than 6 covers have been recorded from Providence.



The 28 mm. "PROVIDENCE R.I. MAY 31" (1839) later type in red is rarer with "Express Mail" usage. This is the only known example. It shows the same rate, "PAID" and "75" as the 1838 cover above. This is a cover carried during the last month of the Express Mail service.

Usages from New England on Southern Route

(Express Mail) 75

Samuel Leonard Esq
New Orleans



Express Mail
PAID 75

Edward A Bradford
Esq. New Orleans

Dorchester Mass } Paid 75
Nov 30

Express

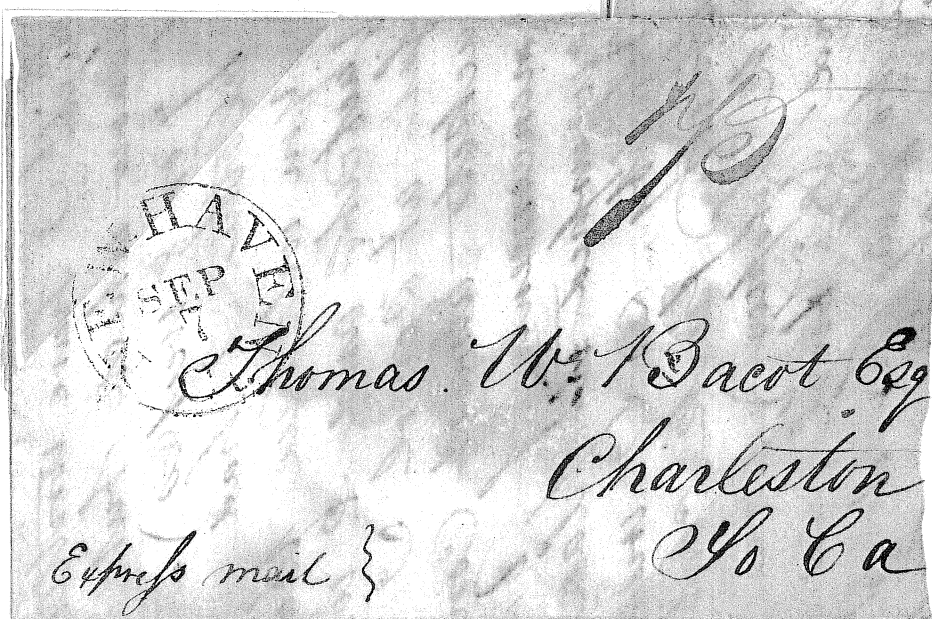
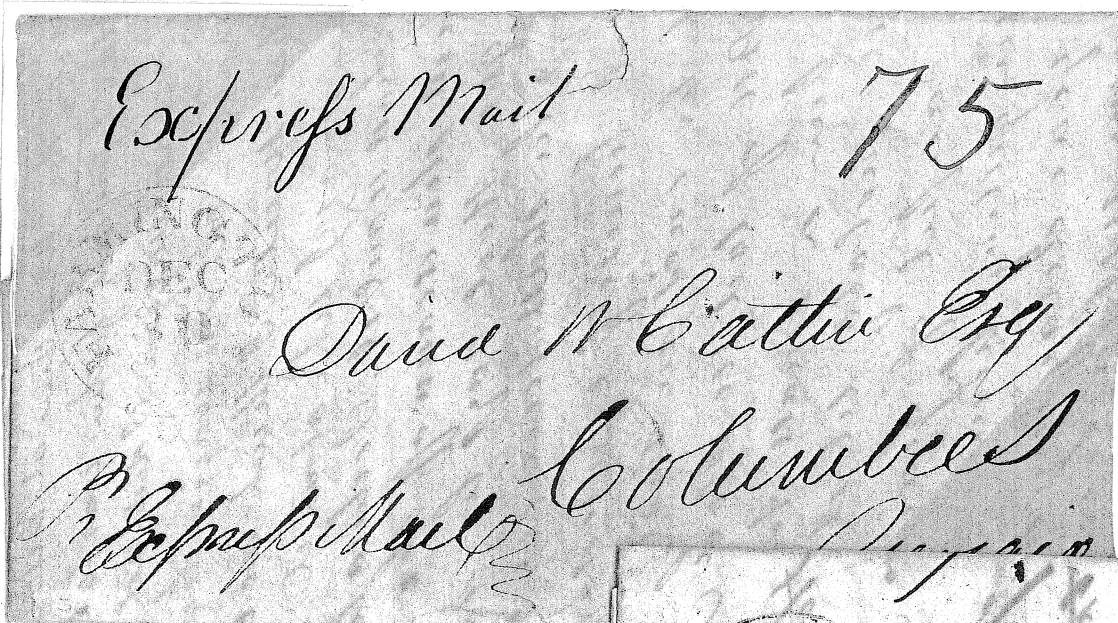
Mr. Thaddens. Clapp.

Franklin Louisiana.

Care of William T. Palfrey Esq
1838

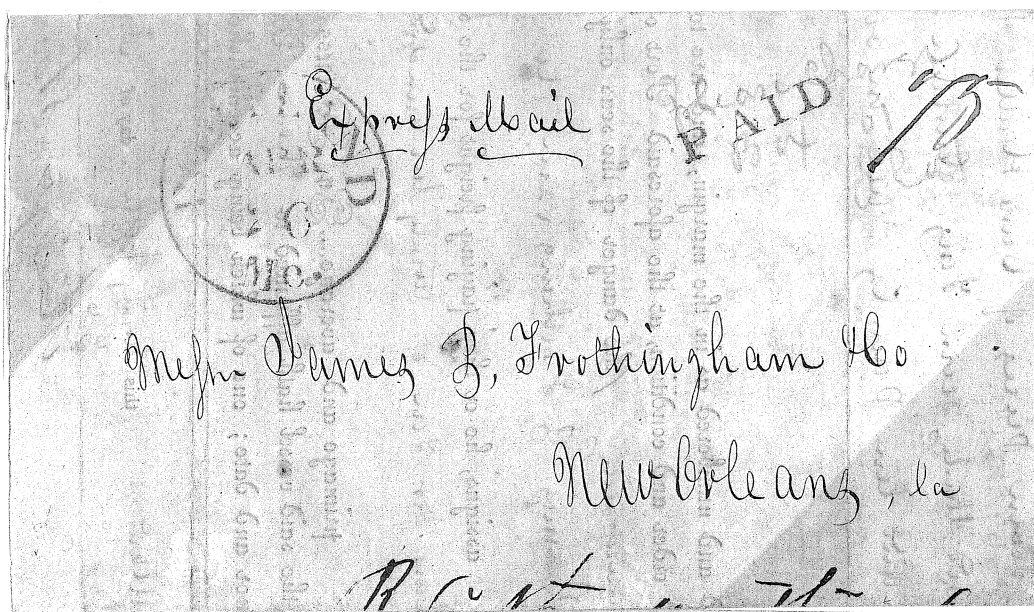
These are three "Express Mail" usages from Massachusetts towns, Bridgewater, Springfield, and Dorchester paying single 75¢ rates to New Orleans (2) or Franklin, La. The postmark from Dorchester is rare as a manuscript town Express Mail usage. All three are the only Express Mail examples recorded from these towns.

Usages from New England on Southern Route



These three Connecticut covers from Farmington to Columbus, Winchester to Columbus, and New Haven to Charleston show unpaid 1837 single 75¢ Express Mail rate usage. All three are the only Express Mail examples from these towns. There are also two covers known from Hartford.

Usages from New England on Southern Route

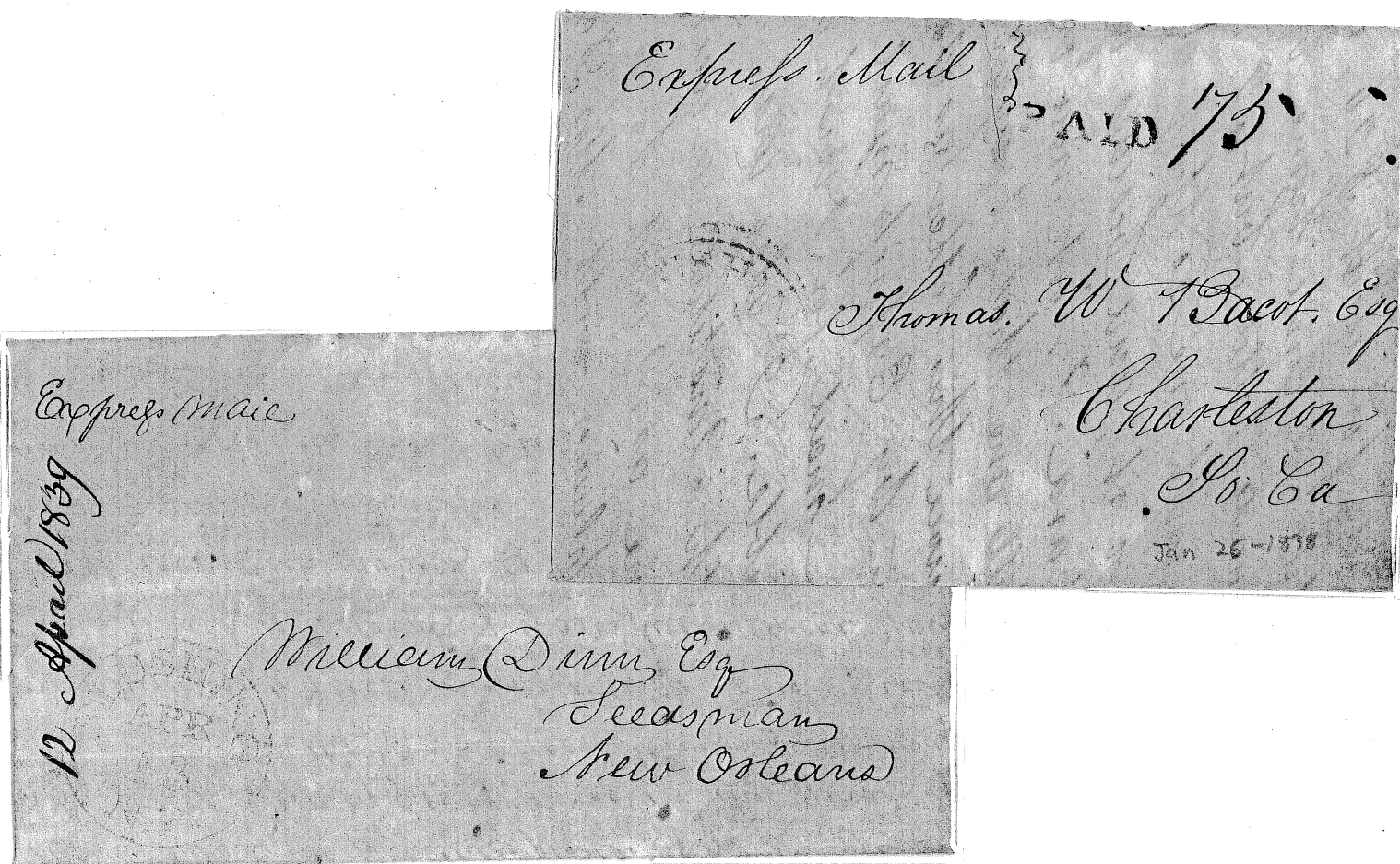


The charges for Express Mail letters were for the entire distance a letter traveled, not just the distance over an Express Mail route. This cover "PORTLAND Me APR 26" (1837) with "Express Mail" shows "PAID" and "75" postmarks. It was transmitted first to Boston and then to New York where it entered the southern route of the Express Mail, the Great Mail route. Only known example and one of two covers known from Maine.

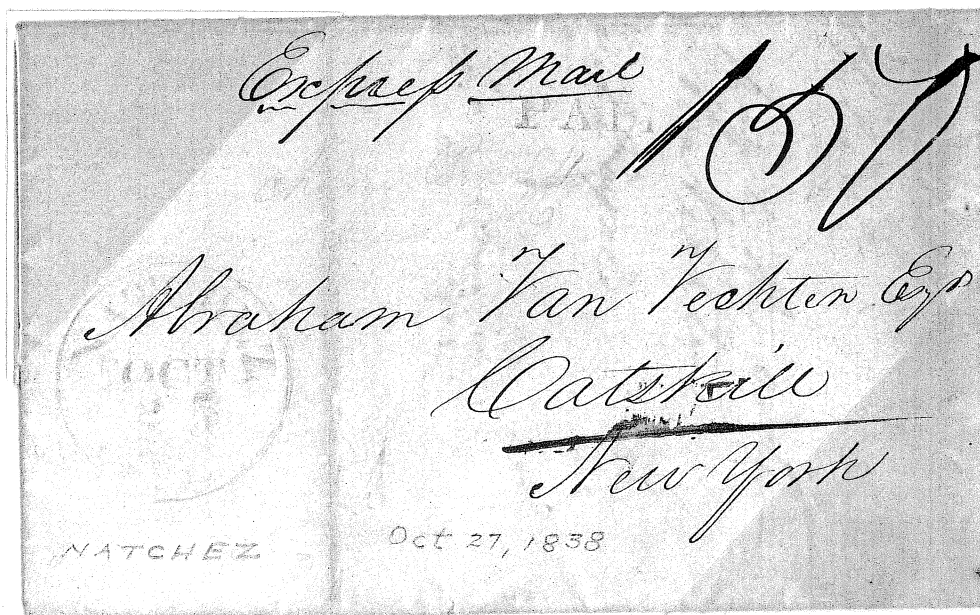


The furthest north for any Express Mail letter was a usage to or from Maine. The cover with "Express Mail" and "CHARLESTON S.C. DEC 31" (1838), "PAID", and "charge box 40 J.C.Jr." with "75" rating went to Portland. The other cover "per Express Mail" with "NATCHEZ MI. FEB 14" (1838), "PAID" and "75" went to Sheepscott Bridge, Me.

Usages from New York on Southern Route

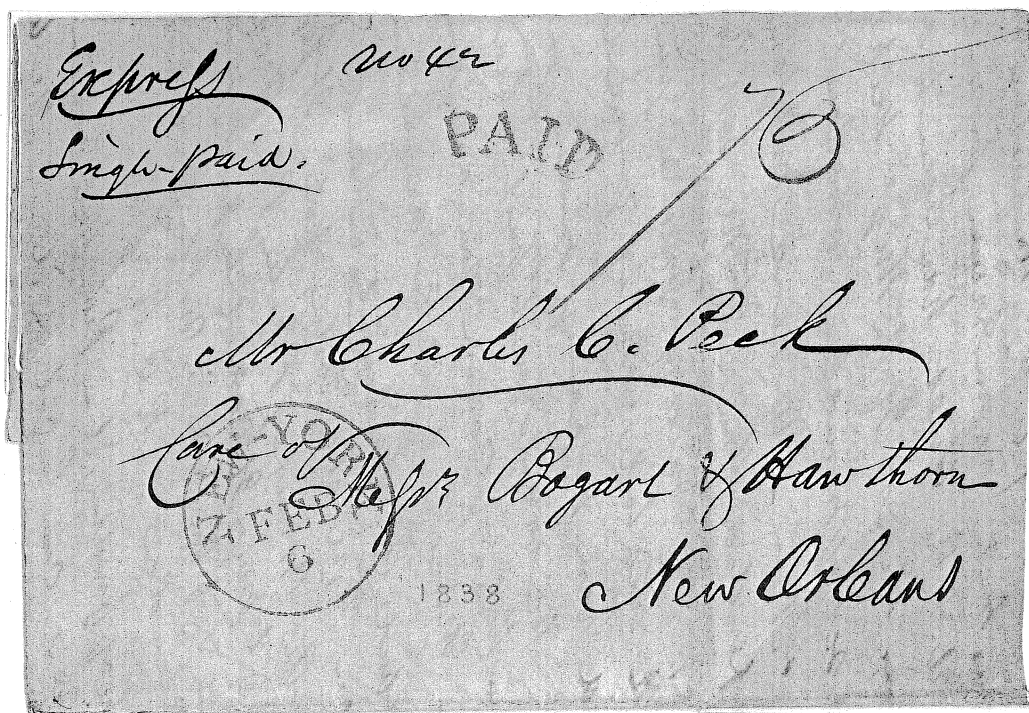


The "Express Mail" cover with blue "FLUSHING N.Y. JAN 26" (1838), "PAID", "75" to Charleston is an unusual town of origin. The other known usage from this town has "Express Mail", red "FLUSHING N.Y. APR 13" (1839), "PAID" and "75" to New Orleans.



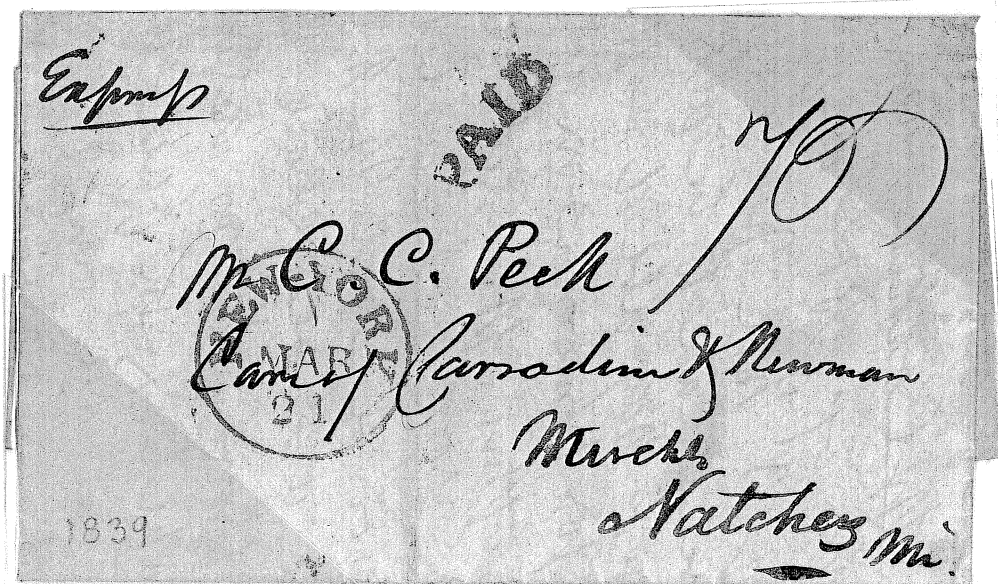
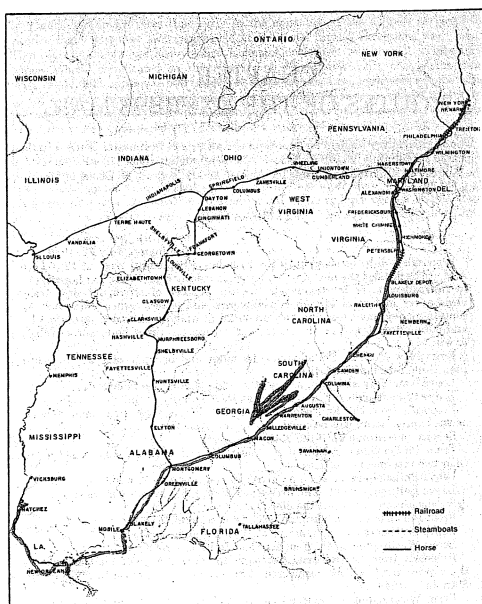
This cover with "Express Mail" has "NATCHEZ MI. OCT 27" (1838), "PAID" and "150" double rating to Catskill, New York. This cover would have been carried between New Orleans and New York by express and regular mail on the way to and from the Express Mail post offices.

Usages from New York on Southern Route



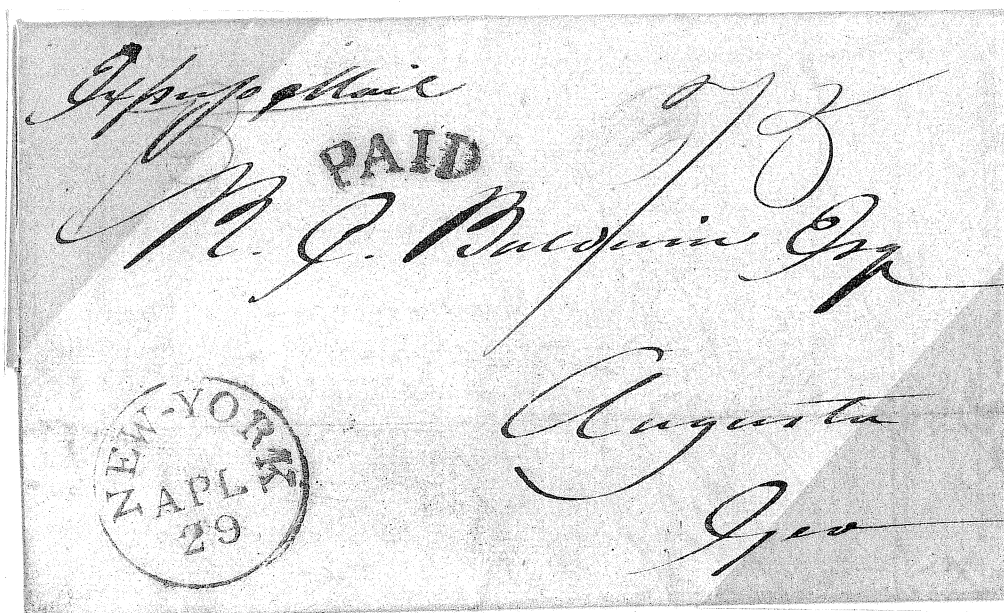
The most common northern point of origin was New York as exemplified by this “NEW-YORK FEB 6” (1838), “PAID” with ms. “Express Single Paid” and red “75” to New Orleans.

THE EXPRESS MAIL ROUTES OF 1836-1839



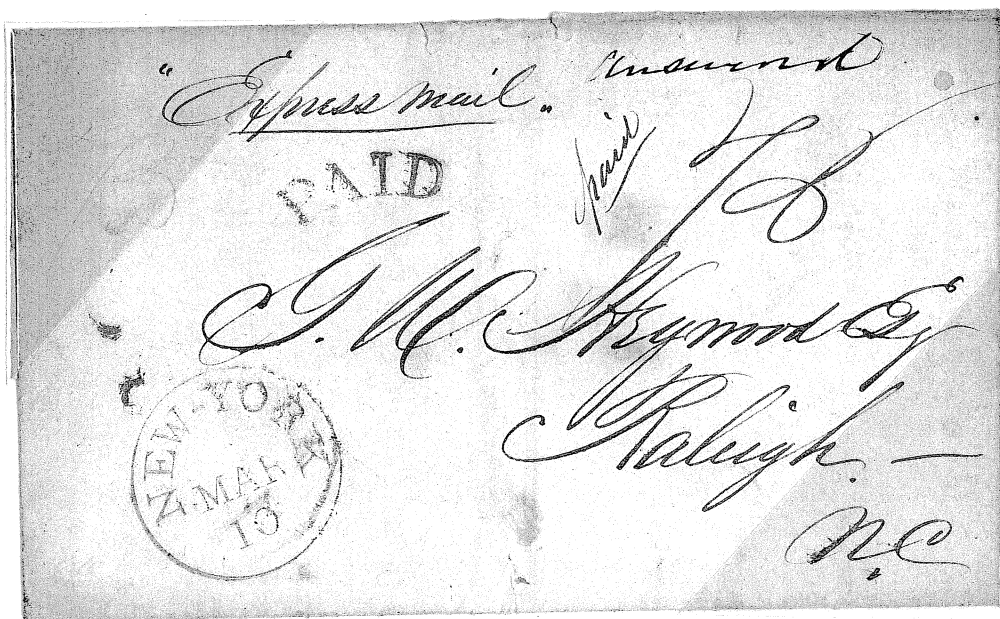
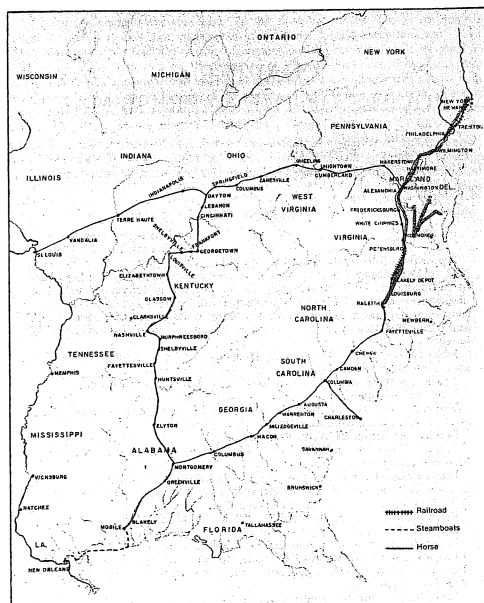
This cover to the same addressee who had moved to Natchez has red “NEW-YORK MAR 21” (1839), “PAID”, “Express” and “75”. The cover went first to New Orleans by Express Mail and then by steamboat to Natchez.

Usages from New York on Southern Route



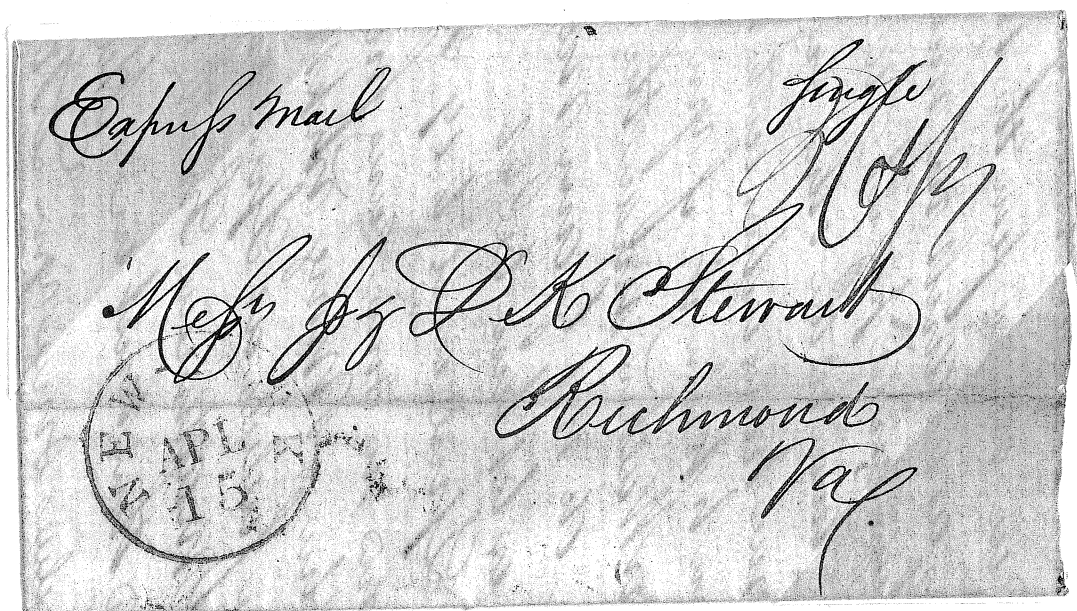
New York covers to other destinations than the two shown previously are more unusual. This "Express Mail" with "NEW-YORK APR 29" (1838), "PAID", and "75" single rate cover went only to Augusta, solely by Express Mail.

THE EXPRESS MAIL ROUTES OF 1836-1839

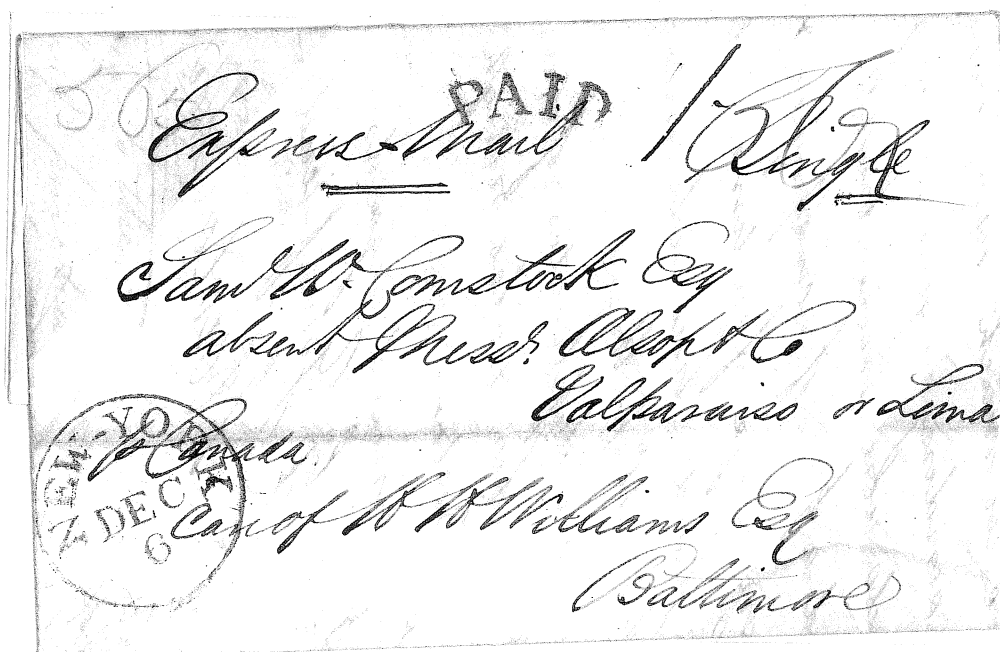


This "NEW-YORK MAR 10" (1838), "PAID", "75" rated "Express Mail" cover went to Raleigh, N.C., about a third the distance of a cover to New Orleans. But as it was over 400 miles, the rate was the same.

Usages from New York on Southern Route



This cover "Express Mail" and "NEW-YORK APR 15" (1837) with wide spacing in postmark shows "56¼" unpaid short rate usage over the southern Express Mail route to Richmond. This rate was for 150- 400 miles. An estimated 25-30 covers exist with the 56¼¢ short rate.

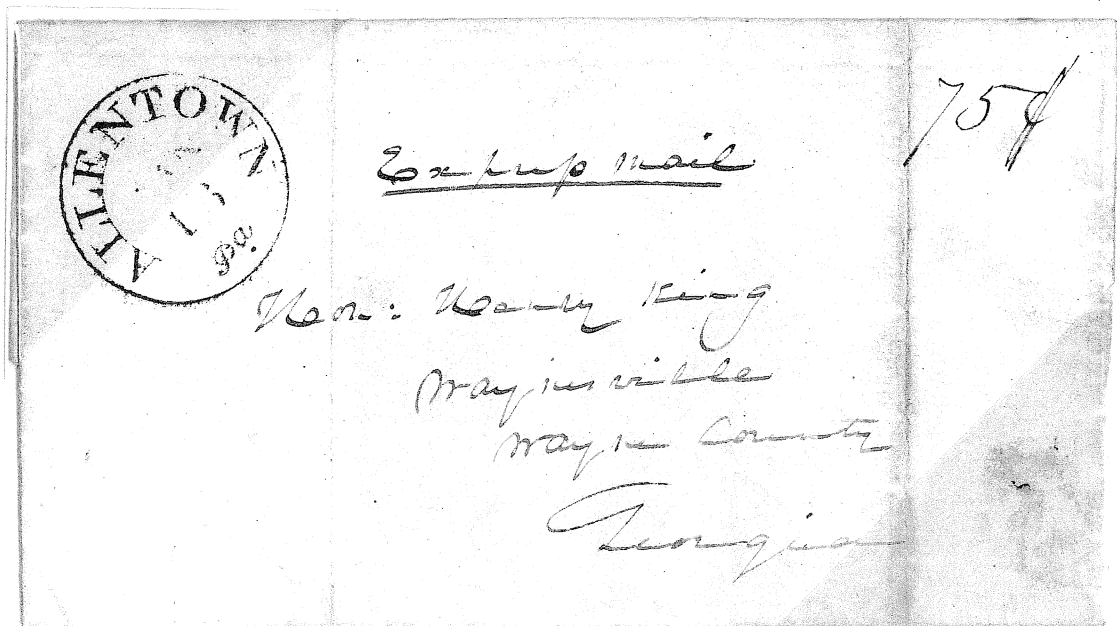


This cover "NEW-YORK DEC 6" (1837) with narrow spacing in the postmark was sent "Express Mail" with arc "PAID" at the "56¼" rate after prepayment was required. It is addressed to someone in Valparaiso or Lima by the ship "Canada" sent in care of a Baltimore business firm, a shorter distance than the previous cover.

Usages from Pennsylvania on Southern Route

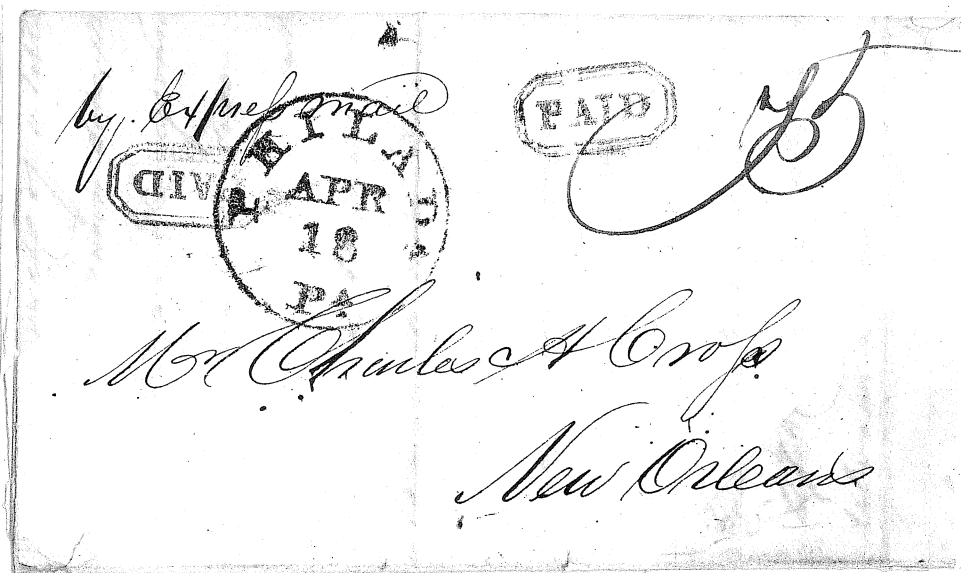


Although written in Philadelphia, this cover is postmarked "KENSINGTON Pa. AUG 29" (1837) and "Express" with "75" to New Orleans. Another Express Mail cover from Kensington but without the town postmark exists.

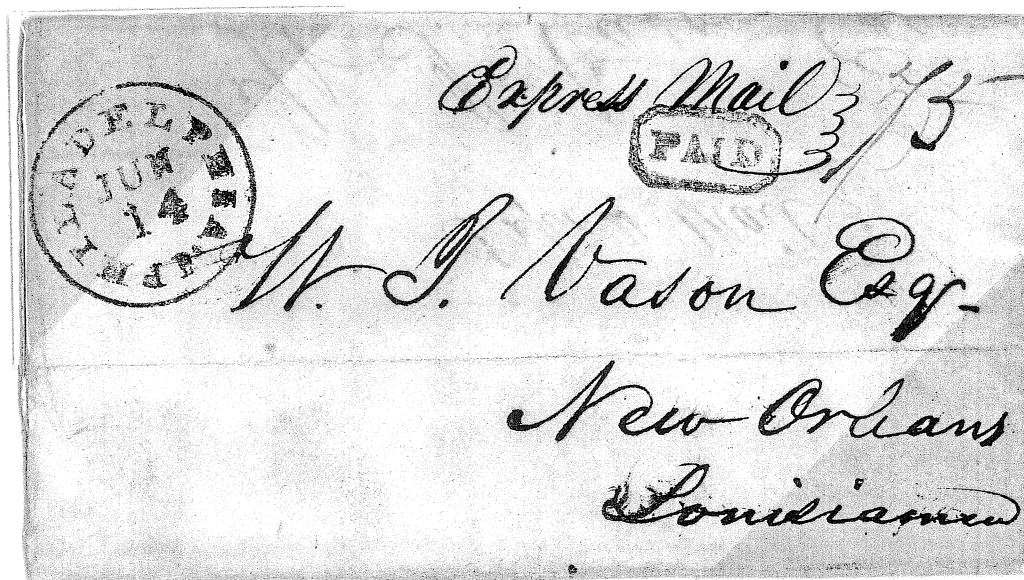


This is one of the unusual "Express Mail" usages with fancy "ALLEN TOWN Pa. JAN 13" (1837), unpaid "75¢" to Waynesville, Georgia. This usage is from a town not on the Express Mail southern route, and the town of destination is also off the route. Ex Rohloff, only known example.

Usages from Pennsylvania on Southern Route

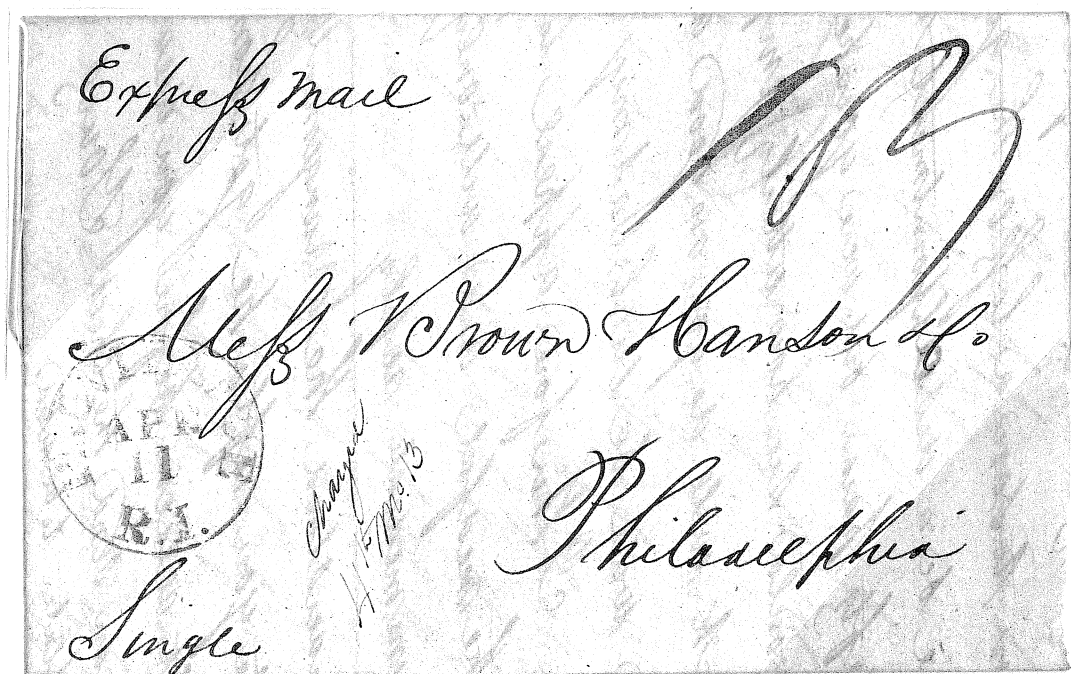


Since mail from New York to Philadelphia was carried by railroad in 1836, Philadelphia was actually the northern terminus of the horse express portion of the original Express Mail when it first commenced operation. The early type "PHILADA PA. APR 18" (1837) is exemplified by this early "by Express Mail", "PAID", "75" cover to New Orleans.

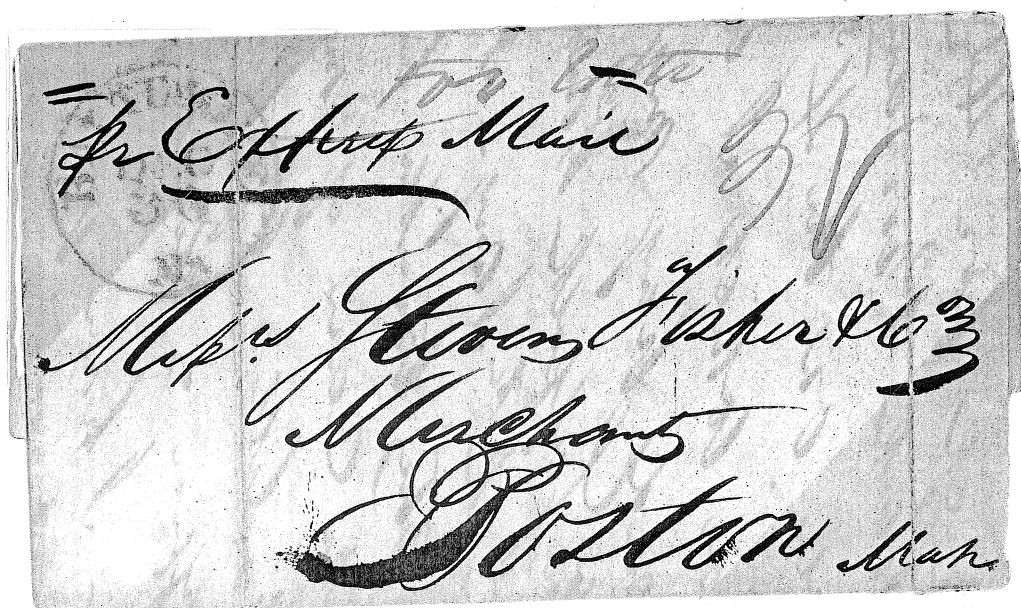


The later type with the town's name spelled fully, "PHILADELPHIA PA. JUN 14" (1839) is exemplified by this very late usage, "Express Mail", "PAID", and "75" to New Orleans.

Non-express Usages on Southern Route

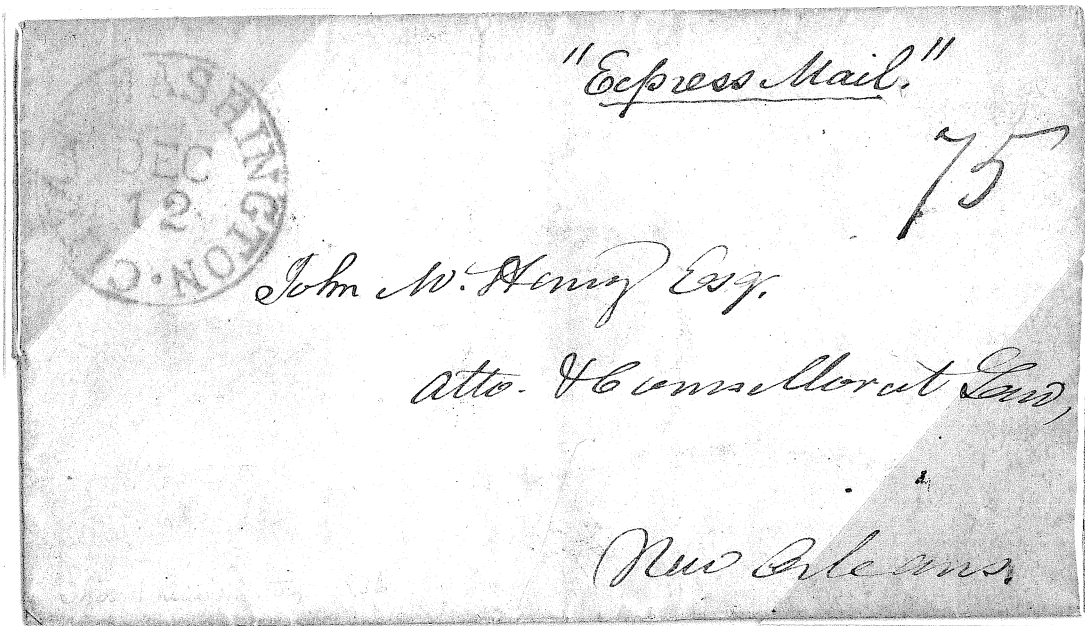


This cover is marked "Express Mail" and was postmarked "PROVIDENCE R.I. APR 11" (1837), but it is rated "18 $\frac{3}{4}$ ", not 56 $\frac{1}{4}$. The reason is that any letter from Providence to Philadelphia went by the regular mail, whether if it was an Express Mail letter or not. Note the "Charged 4th Mo. 13" which is a postal marking indicating the postage was charged to a box account in Philadelphia.

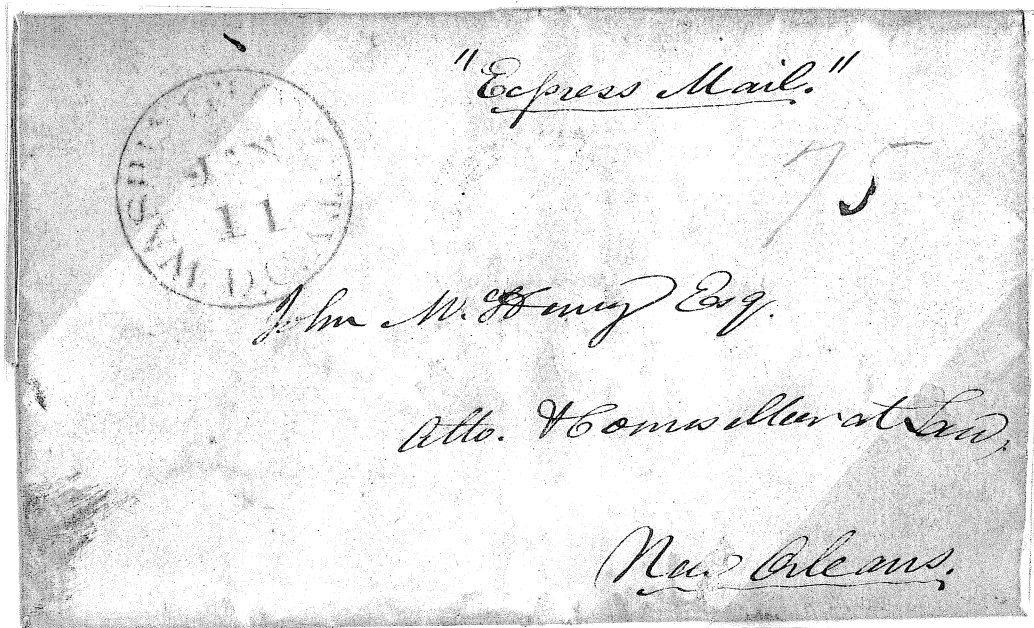


Marked "pr Express Mail" this cover was marked in red "too late" and was sent from "BALTIMORE Md. DEC 30" (1836) by the regular mail at "37 $\frac{1}{2}$ " (double 18 $\frac{3}{4}$ ¢ rate) to Boston. It would have been carried by express riders only to Philadelphia, so the Baltimore postmaster sent it by the regular mail rather than waiting a day for the next express.

Usages from Virginia on Southern Route

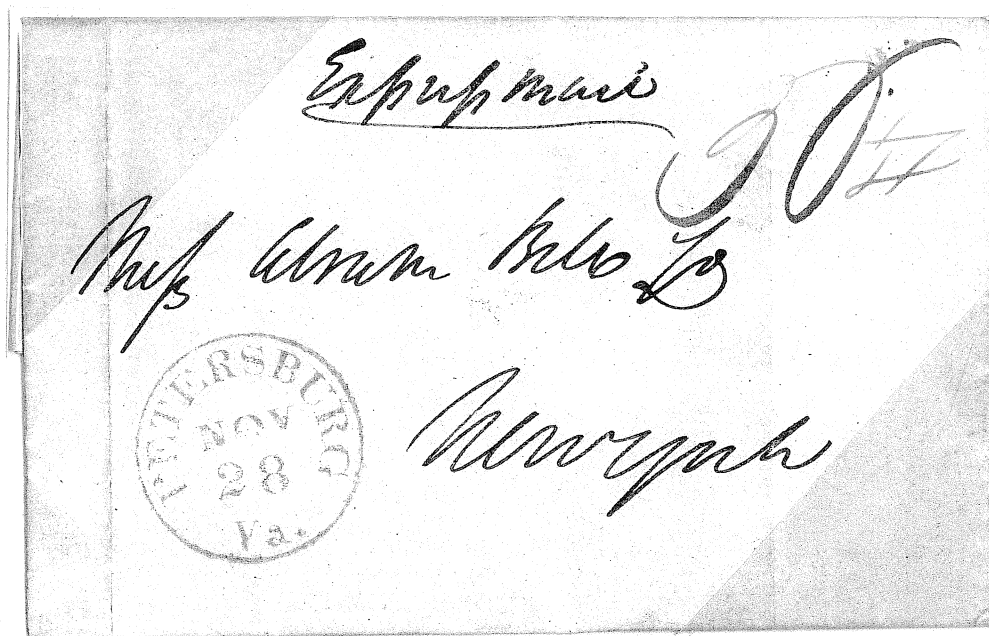


The "CITY OF WASHINGTON DEC 12" (1836) type of postmark from Washington is known only on this very early usage "Express Mail" letter with "75" to New Orleans. It was written by the famous senator, Thomas Hart Benton, who requests a return letter "by the express mail."

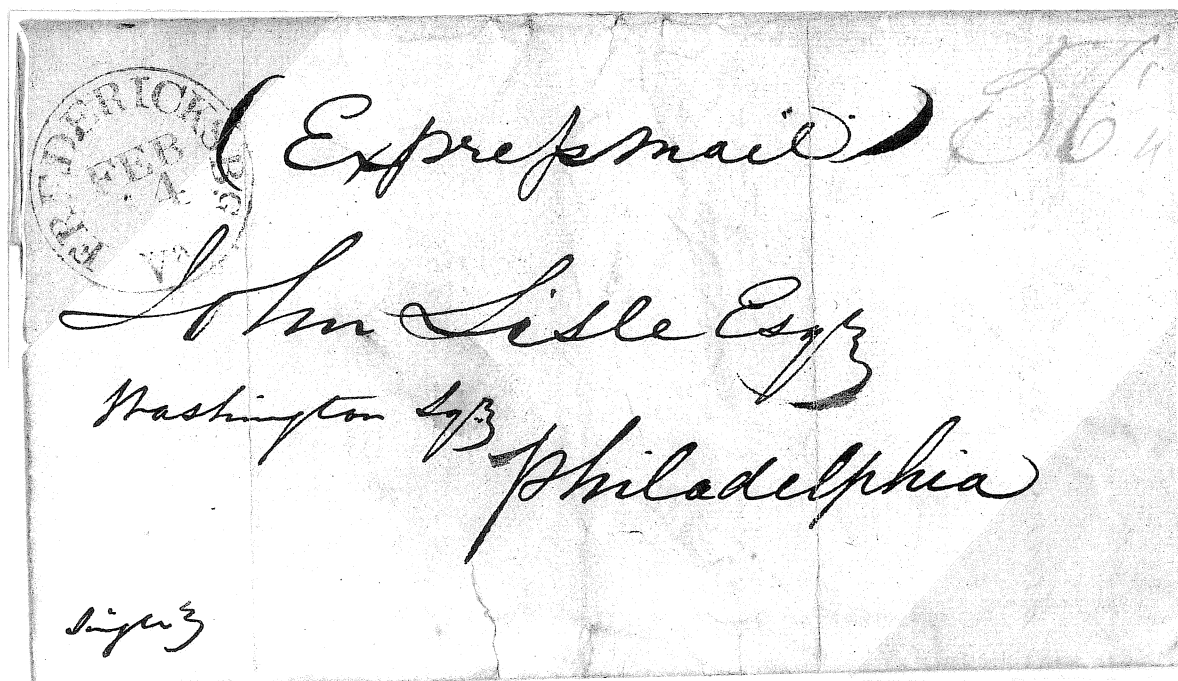


Other Washington "Express Mail" letters have "WASHINGTON CITY D.C. JAN 11" (1837) style postmarks. This is another letter by Senator Benton sent at the single "75" rate to New Orleans.

Usages from Virginia on Southern Route

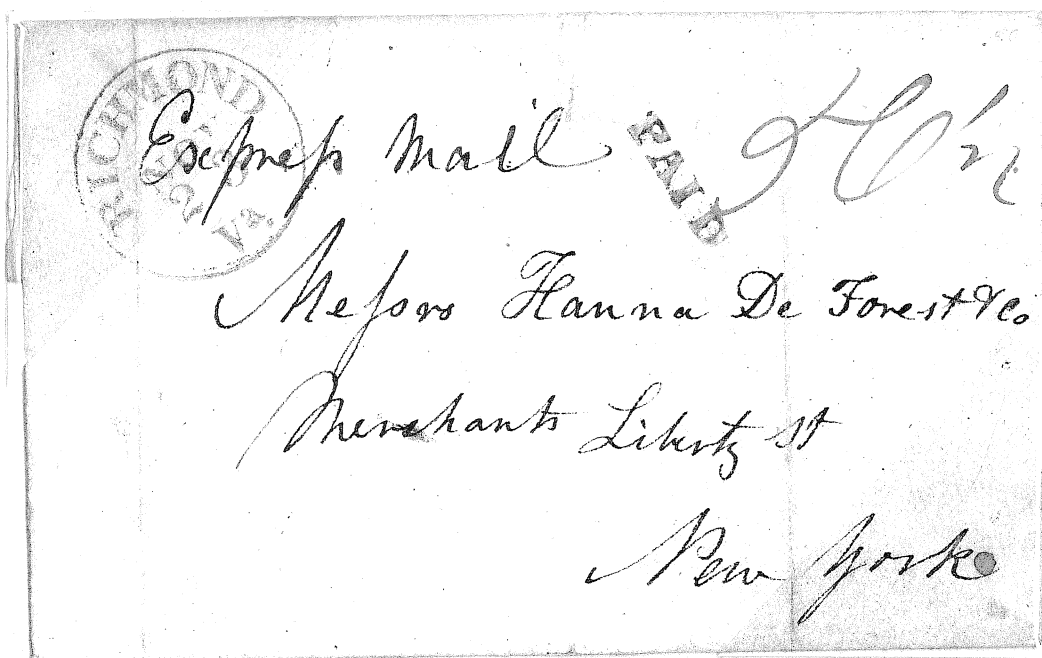


This cover "PETERSBURG Va. NOV 28" (1836) is one of the earliest known usages by "Express Mail". The letter was sent north on the southern route to New York, a distance of less than 400 miles so the rate is "56¼", a short rate. Only known example of this town.

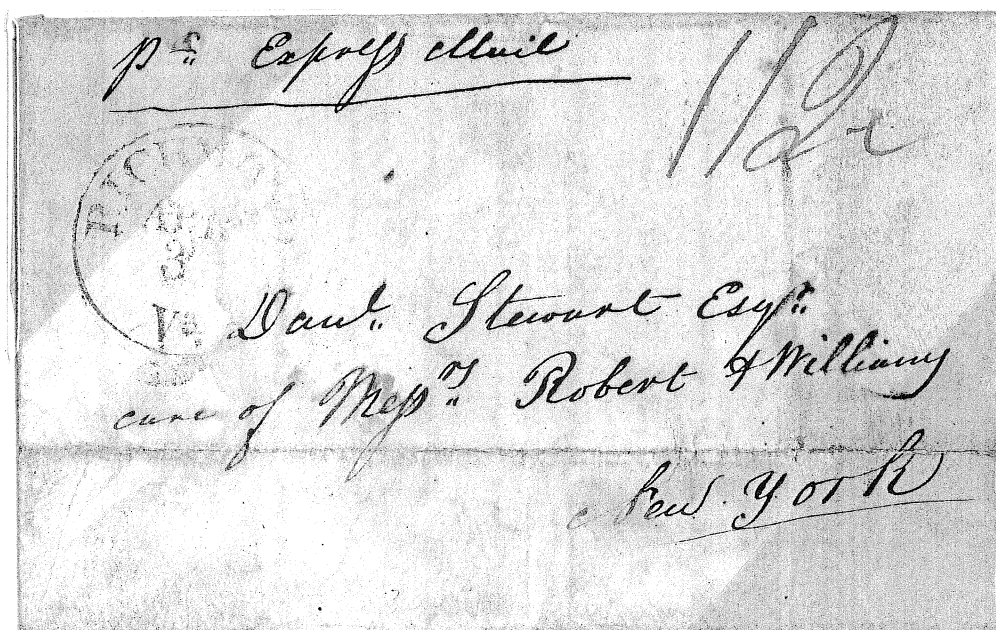


This second Virginia cover "FREDERICKSBURG Va. FEB 14" (1837) is the only known green postmark on an "Express Mail" letter. It also paid the short rate of "56¼" to Philadelphia, again a south to north usage.

Usages from Virginia on Southern Route

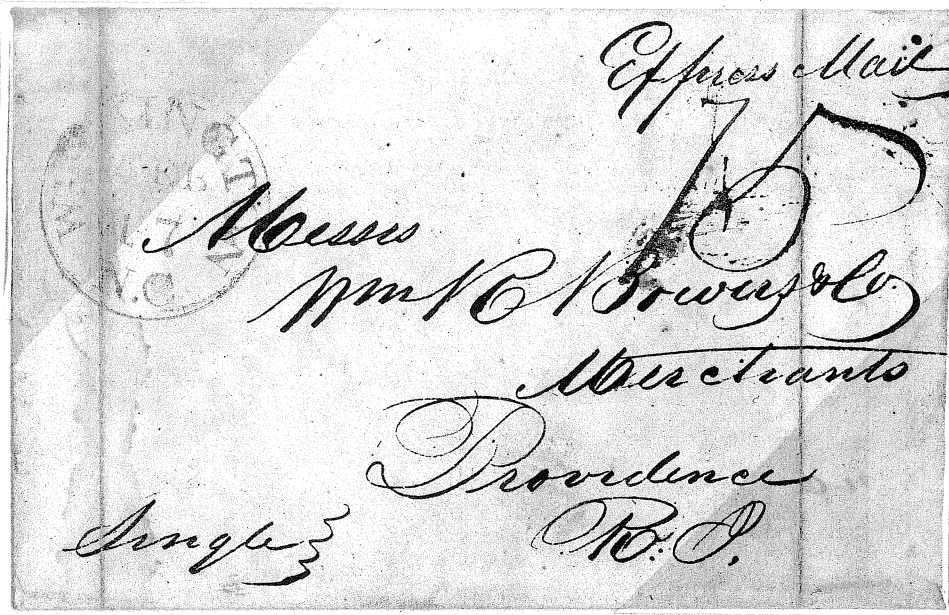


Richmond was an important town on the southern route. This cover with "Express Mail", "RICHMOND Va. NOV 23" (1837), required prepayment with "PAID" and "56¼", the single short rate to New York.



This cover "RICHMOND Va. APR 3" (1837) is marked "pr Express Mail" and was rated "112½" which is the double short express rate. The third known example of this rate is in the National Postal Museum.

Usages from North Carolina on Southern Route

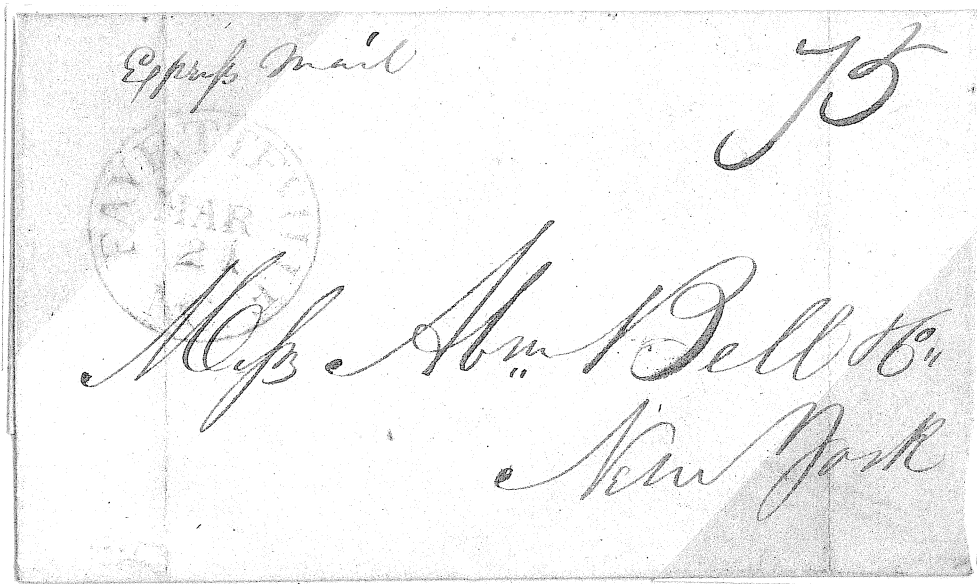


This cover "WILMINGTON N.C. FEB 17" (1837) was sent unpaid by "Express Mail", "75" to Providence,, a south to north Great Mail usage. It is docketed February 23, 1837 which demonstrates a transit time of 6 days.

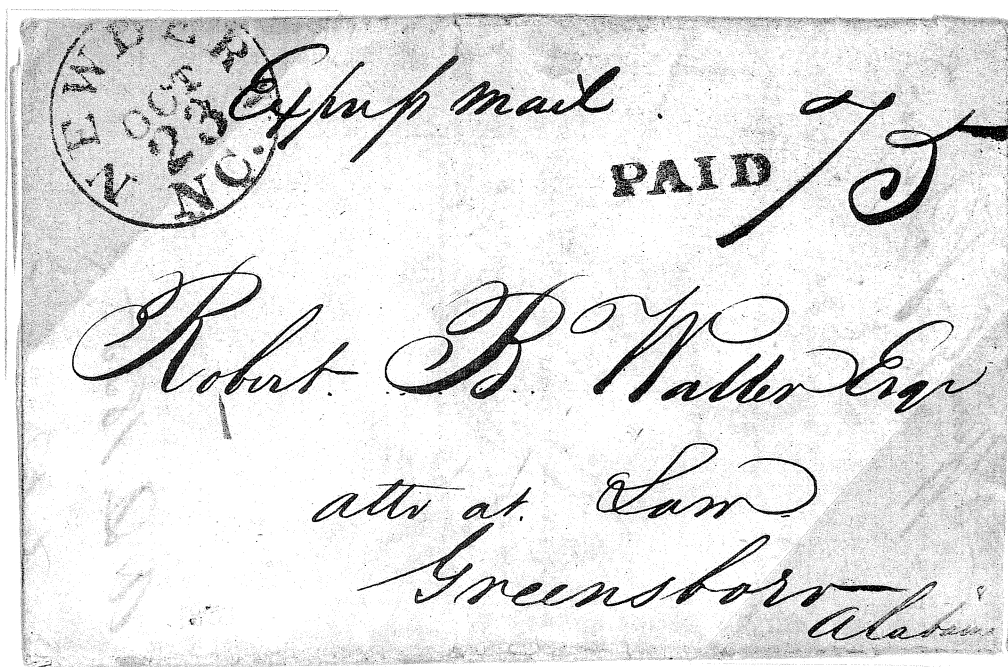


This second cover "WILMINGTON N.C. DEC 3" (1838) was sent during the period when prepayment of Express Mail postage was required. It is marked "Express Mail post paid" with "PAID" and "75" to New York. Wilmington was a harbor city not on the Express Mail routes.

Usages from North Carolina on Southern Route



This cover with "Express Mail" and "FAYETTEVILLE N.C. MAR 21" (1837) was sent at the single rate "75" to New York. Fayetteville is about midway on the southern route between New York and New Orleans. One of two examples known.

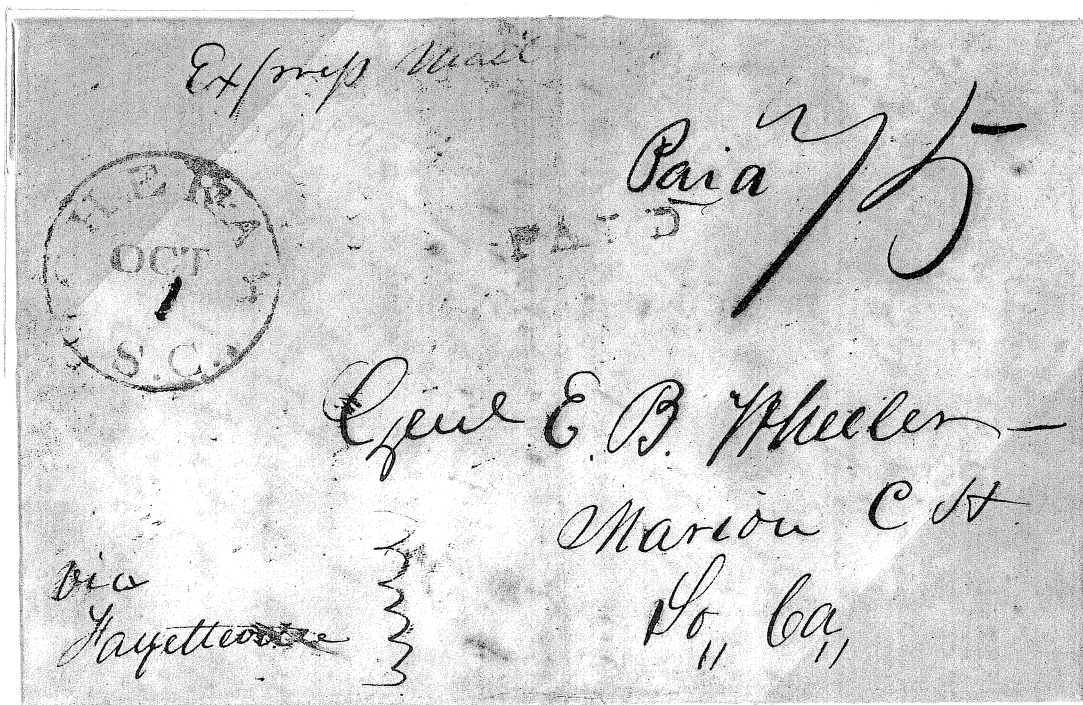


This "Express Mail" cover went north to south from "NEWBERN N.C. OCT 23" (1837), "PAID", "75" from a town not on the express route to Greensboro, Ala., another town not on the express route. The Express Mail postage rate is charged for the entire distance. Only known example.

Usages from South Carolina on Southern Route

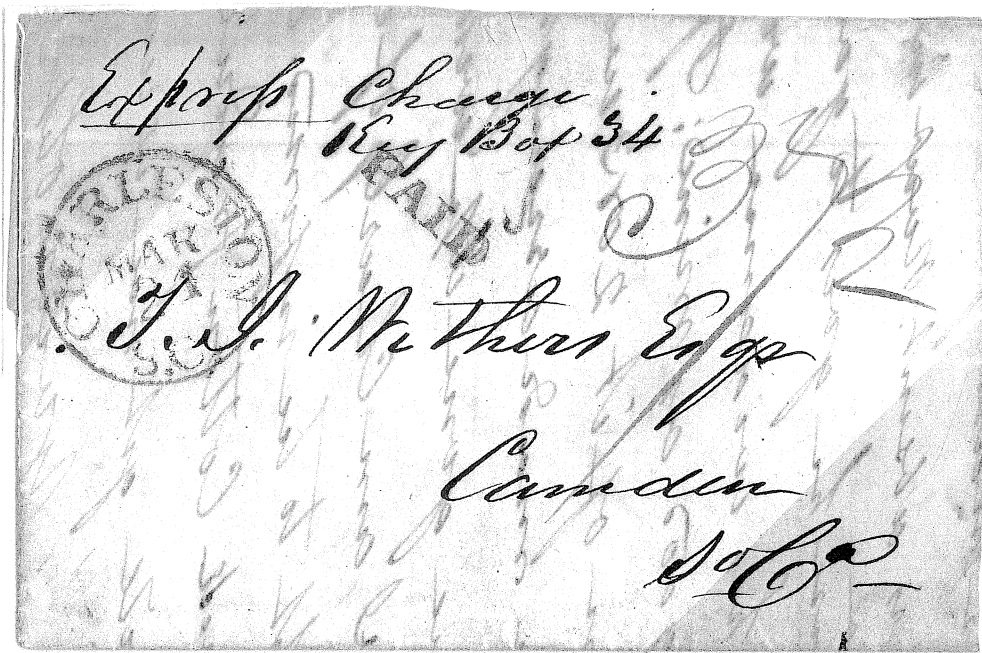


A spur or branch Express Mail route was established between Columbia, S.C. and Charleston on July 1, 1837. This "Express Mail" cover "CHARLESTON S.C. OCT 19" (1838), "PAID", and "75" to Boston thus went entirely by express to New York. Covers from Charleston are fairly plentiful, but many interesting usages exist from there.

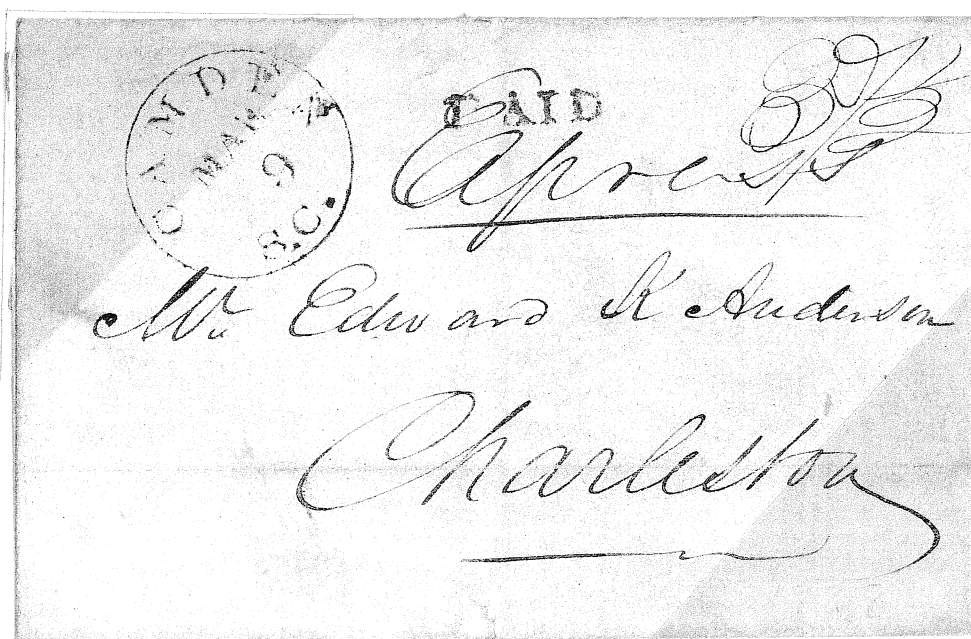


On first glance this "Express Mail" cover with "CHERAW S.C. OCT 1" (1837) is a single 75¢ rate. However, it is marked "via Fayetteville" to which it was carried by the Express Mail, and then it went to Marion Court House, S.C., back in South Carolina. This distance is just under 150 miles, so the single rate was 37½¢. This is thus a double short 37½¢ rate, the second of two known such usages (the other is Washington).

Usages over Charleston Spur Route

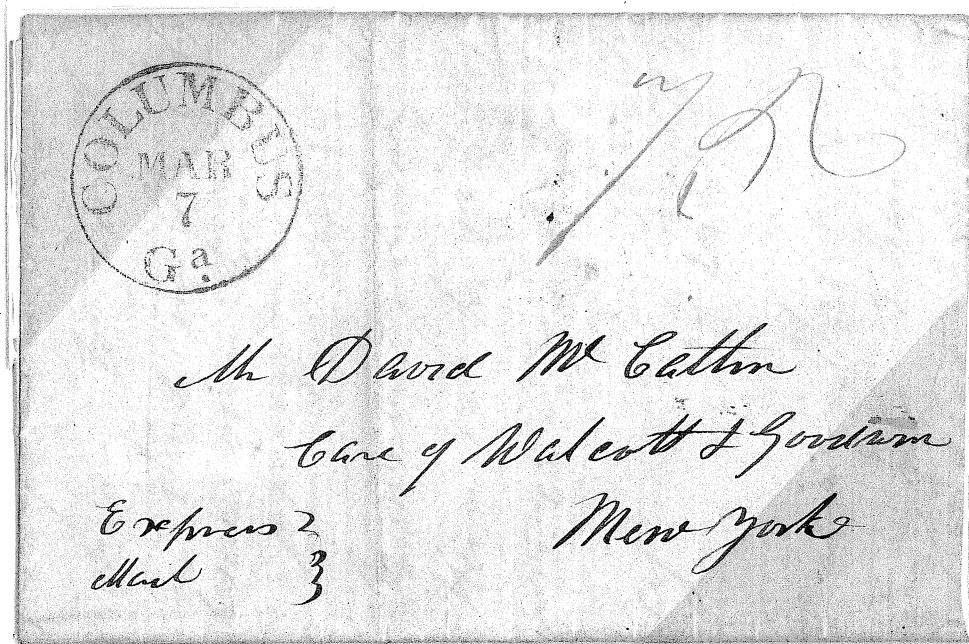


The Charleston branch of the Express Mail ran between Charleston and Columbia. This "Express" cover was charged to a "Key Box 34" account "CHARLESTON S.C. MAR 21" (1838) paying a short rate of "37½" for the distance to Columbia and then north to Camden, the next post office on the Express Mail southern route. Two known examples.

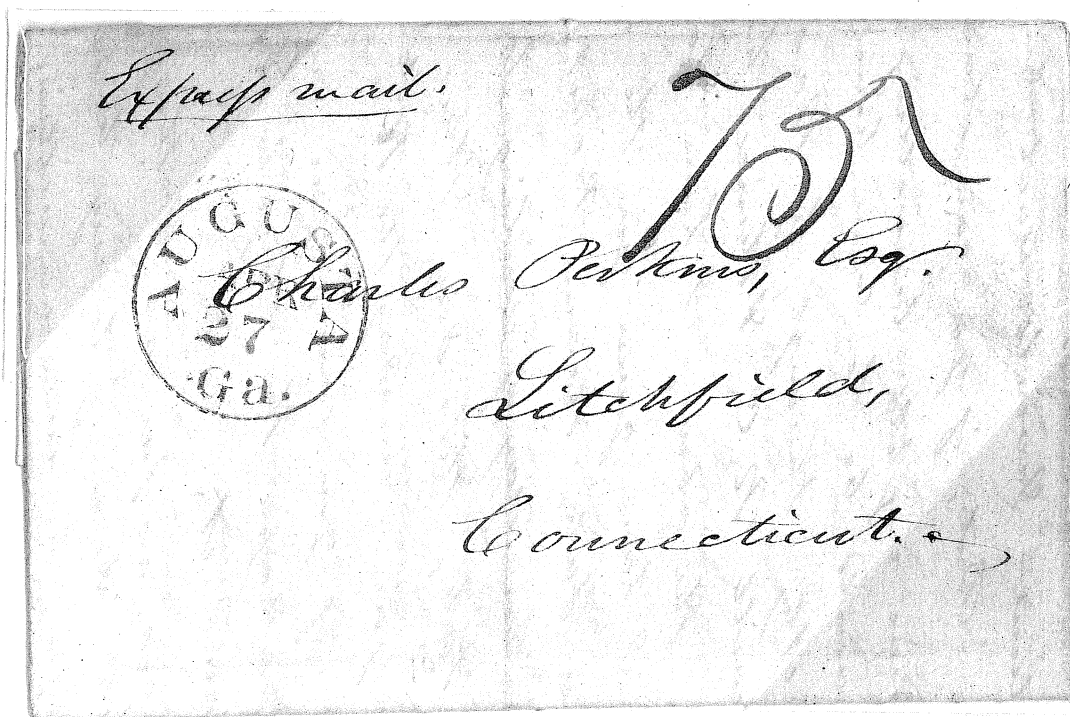


This cover "CAMDEN S.C. MAR 9" (1838), "PAID", "Express", and "37½" to Charleston demonstrates a cover in the reverse direction traveling north to south. Two known examples.

Usages from Georgia on Southern Route



The cover "COLUMBUS Ga. MAR 7" (1837) with single rate red "75" to New York, ms. "Express Mail" is from a town on the southern route near Montgomery. Usages from Columbus are not scarce;

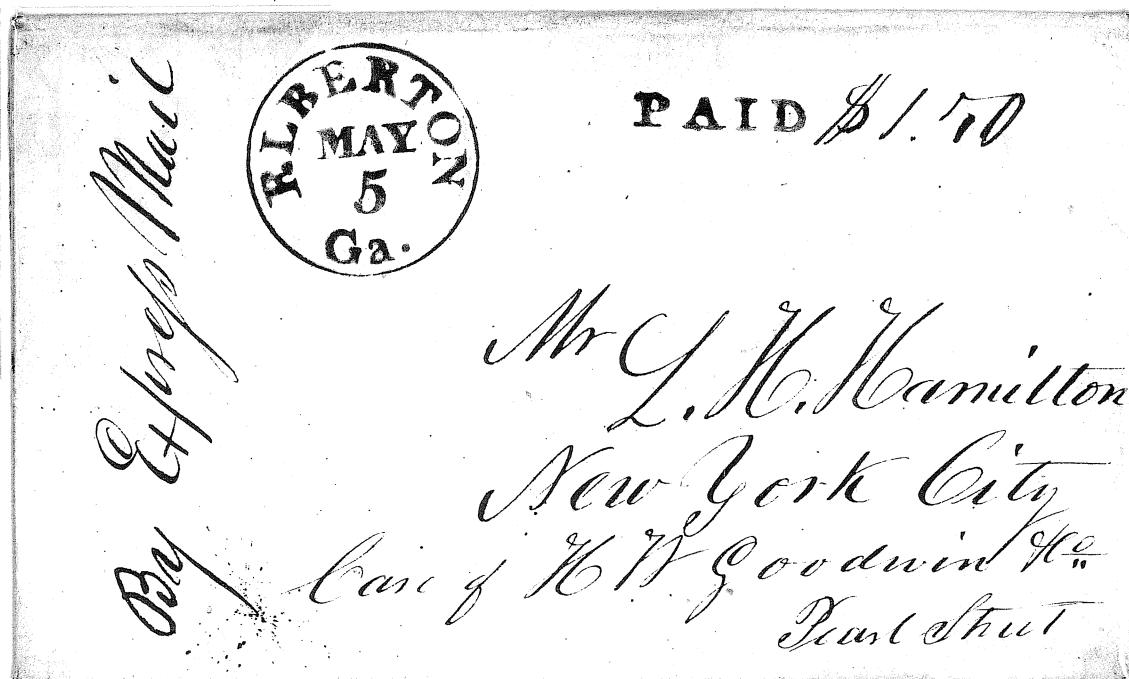


This cover with "AUGUSTA Ga. APR 27" (1837), "Express Mail", and "75" to Litchfield, Conn. went by Express Mail to New York and then regular mail to its destination. A number of 1837 covers from this town to New York exist. Augusta also had a handstamped marking for the Express Mail in 1838.

Usages from Georgia on Southern Route

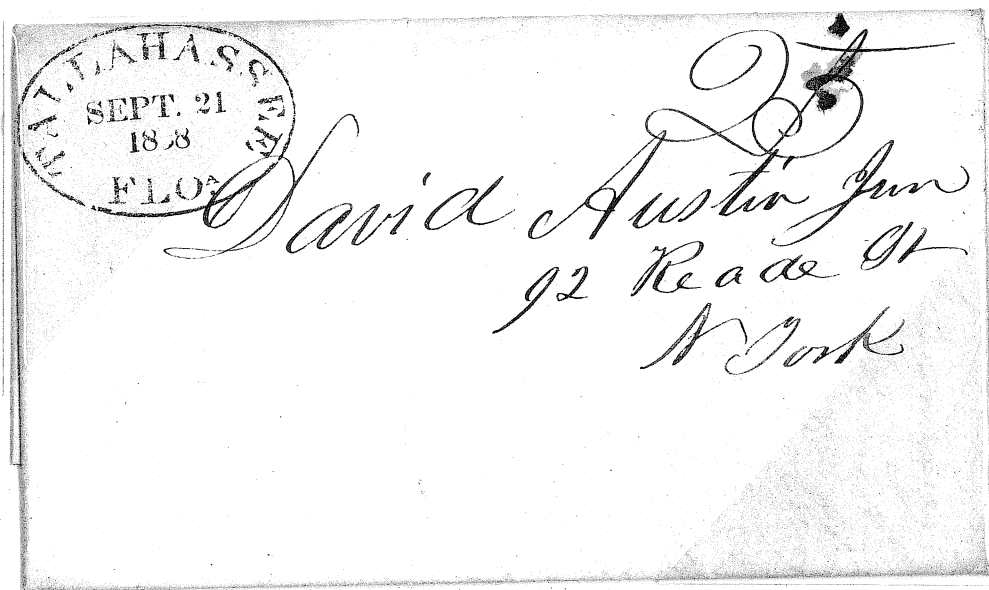


"Brunswick Ga Jan 15th" (1838), "Express mail", "Paid", "Single" and "75" to Boston, one of the few manuscript postmarks seen with Express Mail usage. "MACON GEORGIA DEC 15" (1837), "PAID", "37½" short rate "Express Mail" usage north to Augusta.

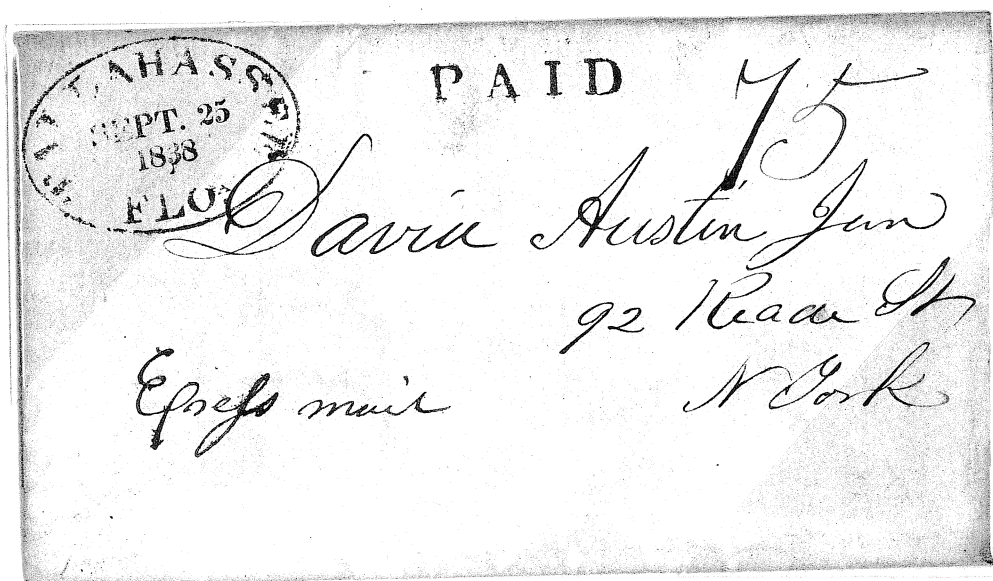


This cover bears "ELBERTON Ga. MAY 5" (1837), "PAID", "By Express Mail", "\$1.50", a double 75¢ rate, to New York. This is the only Express Mail usage of this town which was probably carried to Columbia, S.C. for the express service.

Usages from Florida Territory on Southern Route

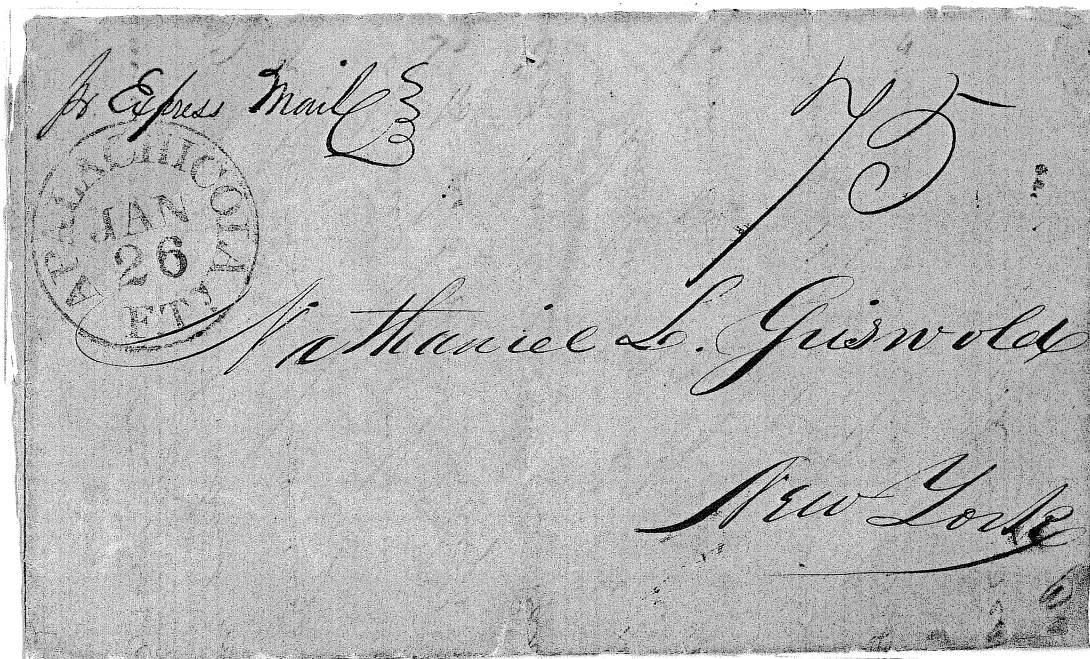


These two covers are from the same correspondence. The earlier has black oval "TALLAHASSEE FLOA. SEPT. 21 1838" with "25" rating to New York. This is by the regular mail paying the over 400 miles single rate.

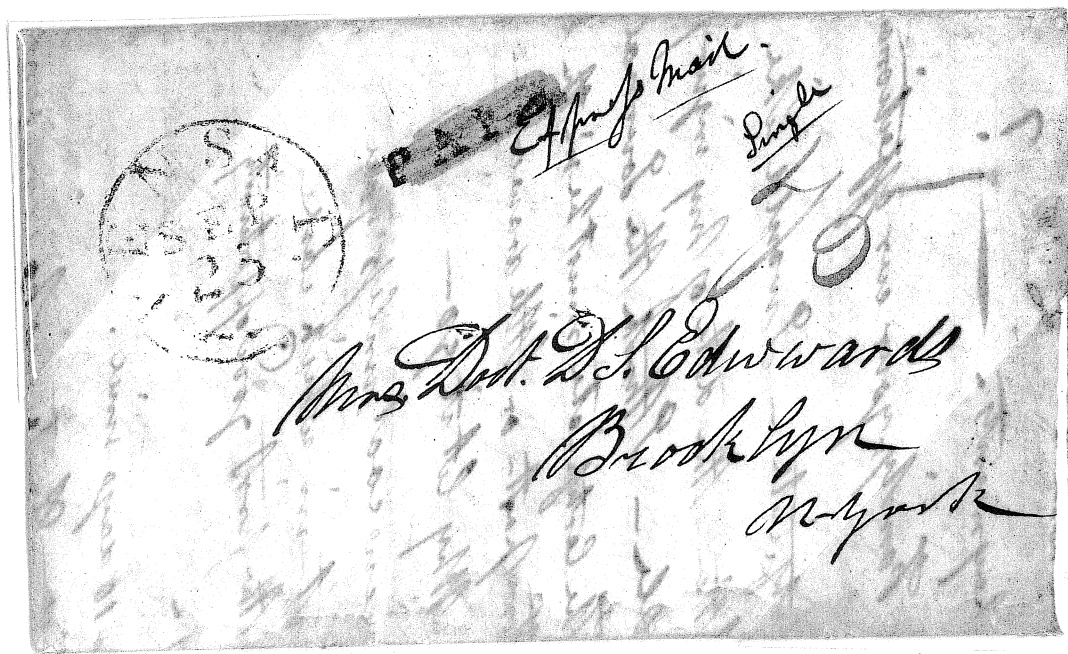


The other cover is marked "Express Mail" and has postmarks "TALLAHASSEE FLOA SEPT. 25 1838", "PAID", and "75" to New York demonstrating the single express rate which is three times the regular rate. This is the only year dated Express Mail postmark.

Usages from Florida Territory on Southern Route

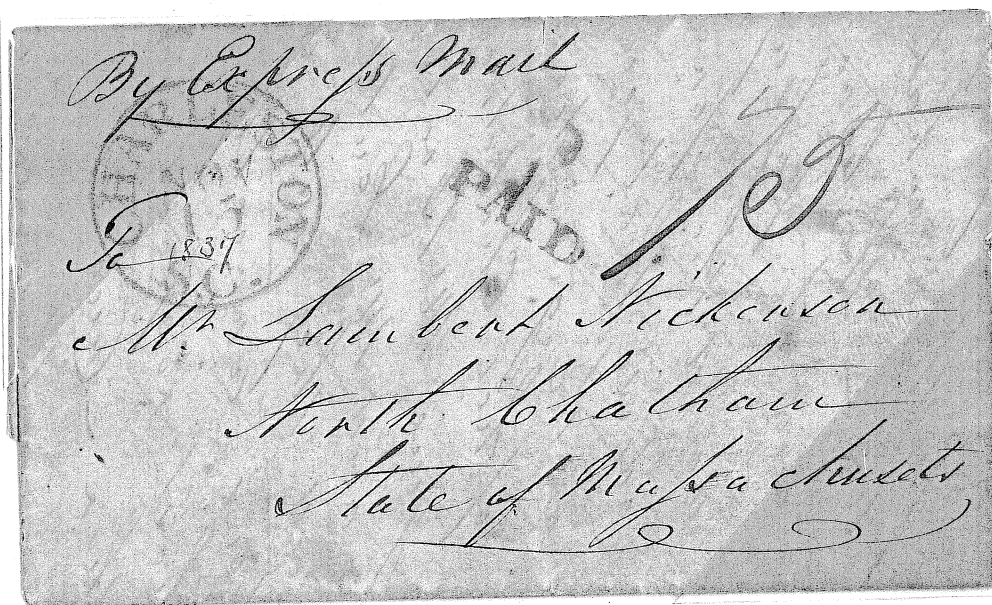


This is a second territorial usage, the earliest from Florida, "APALACHICOLA F.Ty JAN 26" (1837), "pr Express Mail", and "75" to New York. One other Express Mail cover in red is known from this town.

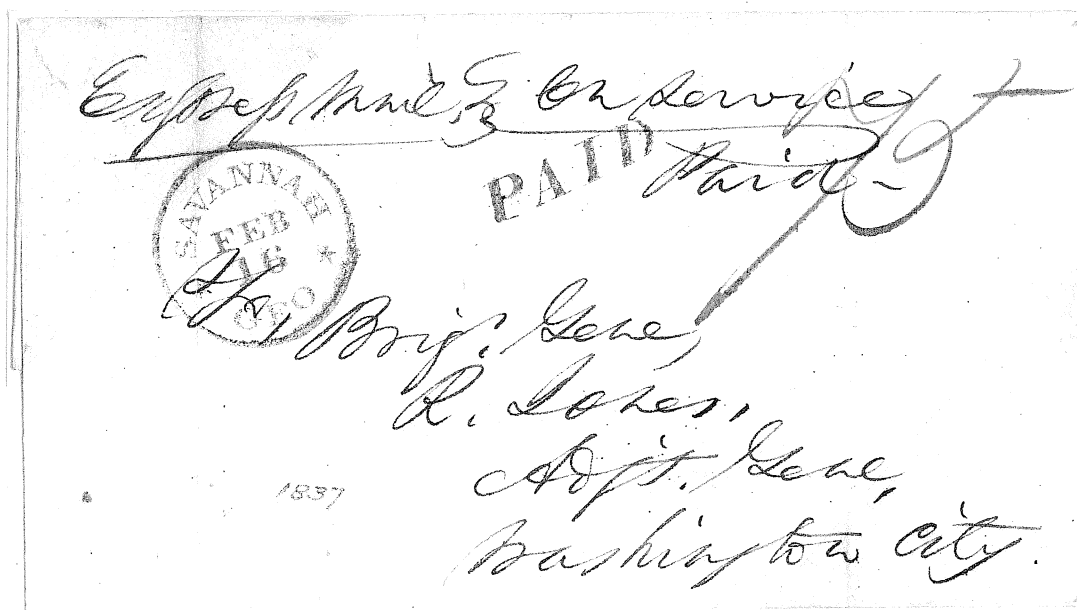


This example from Pensacola "PENSA F SEP 25" (1837) with "Express Mail" was sent due red "75" to Brooklyn, N.Y. The writer was a Fleet Surgeon for the West Indies Squadron on "U.S. Ship Constellation". He suggests a reply by express mail "for we may be off in 2 or 3 weeks." Three examples known.

Usages from Florida Territory on Southern Route

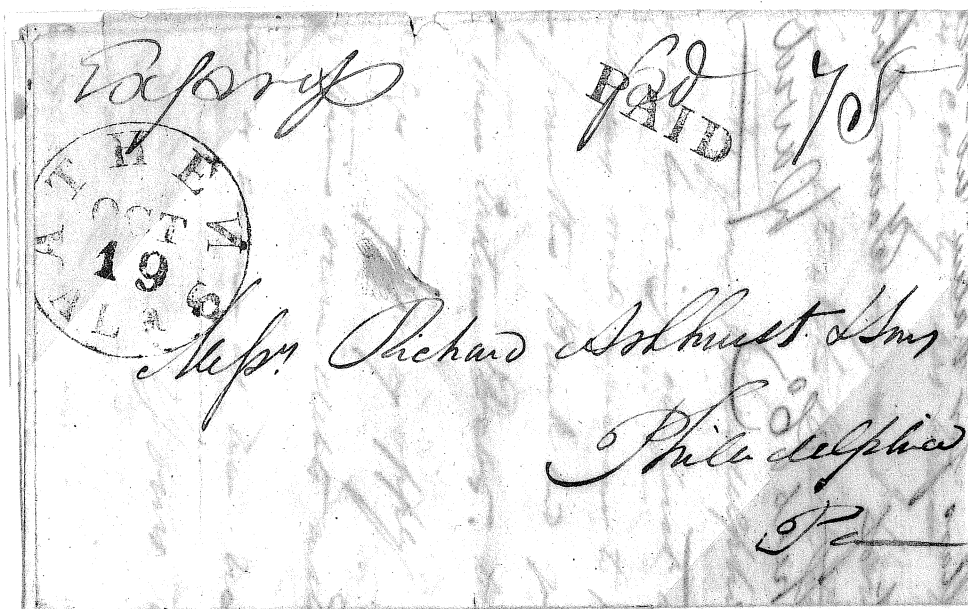


Many letters from Florida Territory were carried by ship to other port towns. These two covers represent the most common of these usages. This "By Express Mail" cover with "CHARLESTON S.C. NOV 15" (1837) required prepayment at this date, so it shows "PAID" and "75" to North Chatham, Mass. Its dateline is "St. Augustine November 10, 1837".

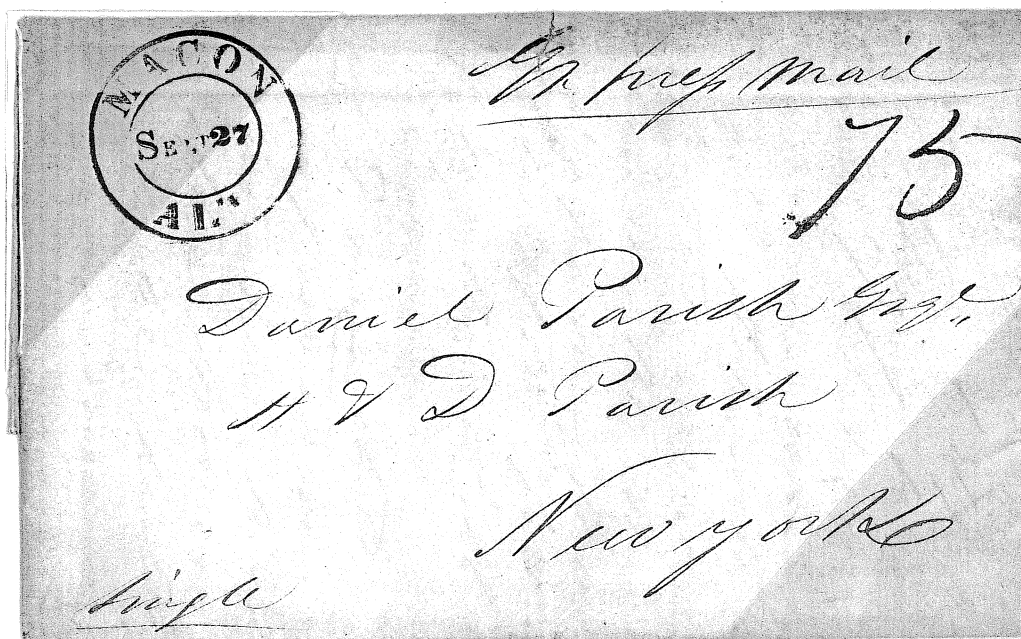


This cover from Fort Oglethorpe discusses actions in the Seminole War around Fort Dade. It also shows "Express Mail" usage from Savannah "SAVANNAH GEO FEB 16" (1837), "PAID", "75", and "on service" to the U.S. Adjutant General, who ordinarily received letters free of postage. Savannah usages like Columbia are not scarce. There is a "Charge no 54" box notation on the reverse.

Usages from Alabama on Southern Route

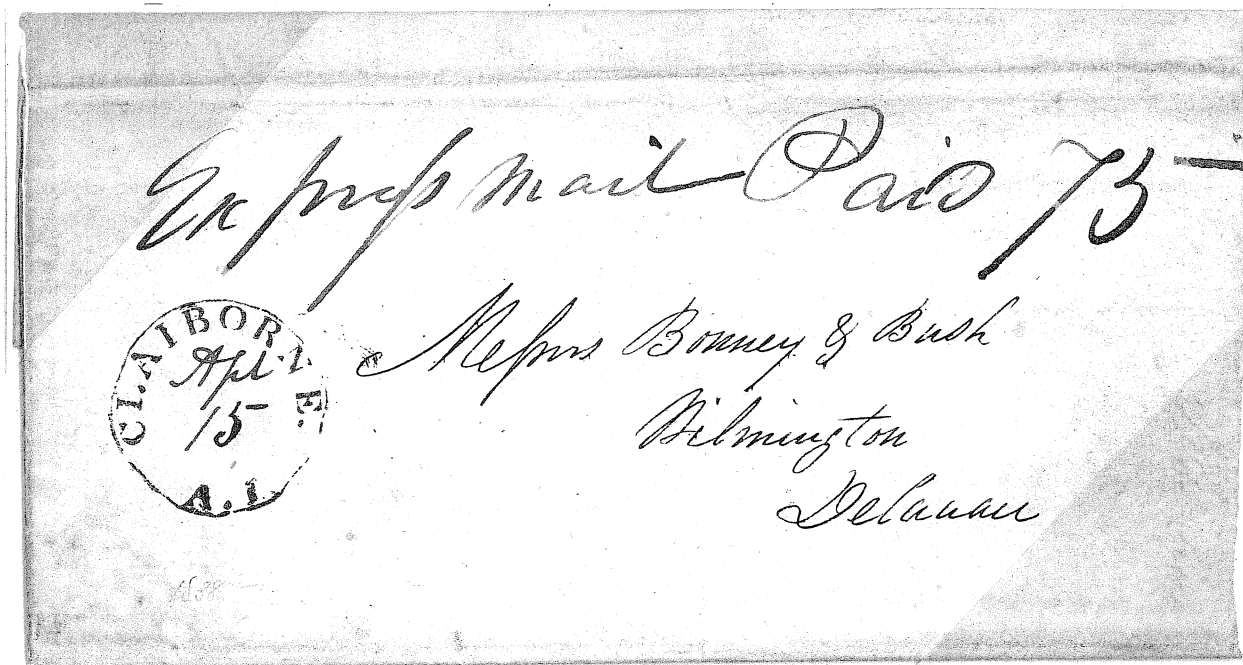


There were only two Express Mail distributing post offices in Alabama on the southern route, Mobile and Montgomery. But a number of postmarks from other Alabama towns exist. These were transported by the regular mail to an Express Mail post office. One is "ATHENS ALA. OCT 19" (1838), "PAID", "75" to Philadelphia. Only example known.

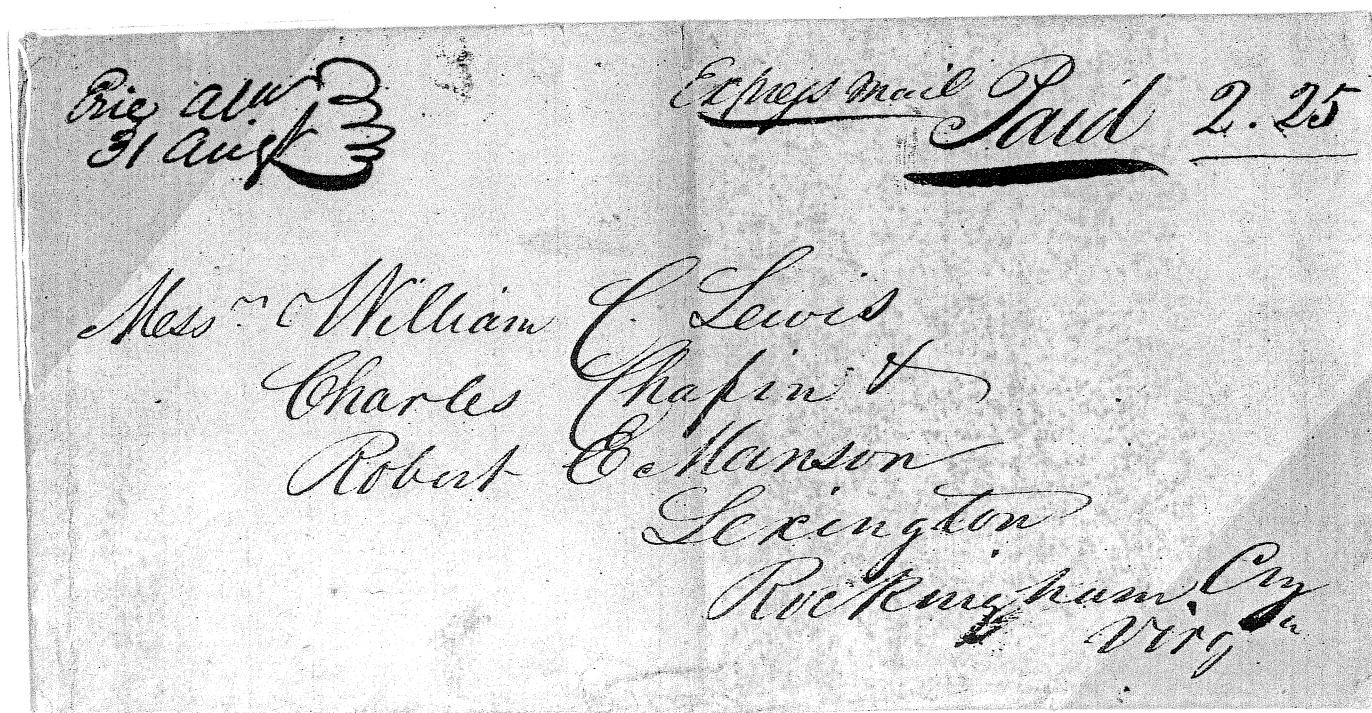


This cover from "MACON ALA. SEPT 27" (1837) with "75" to New York is a very unusual postmark for "Express Mail" usage. The lettering shows shading in each of the large letters. Note that the "27" is in solid numbers. This usage is probably the earliest recorded for this postmark, and it is the only Express Mail usage from this town.

Usages from Alabama on Southern Route



This postmark "CLAIBORNE A.T. Apr 15" (1838) was originally a territorial period postmark, but it was used until 1843. The letter is datelined at Selma. There are "Express mail", "Paid", and "75" manuscript postal markings with an address to Wilmington, Del., so this cover would have left the Express Mail at Philadelphia. Only example known.

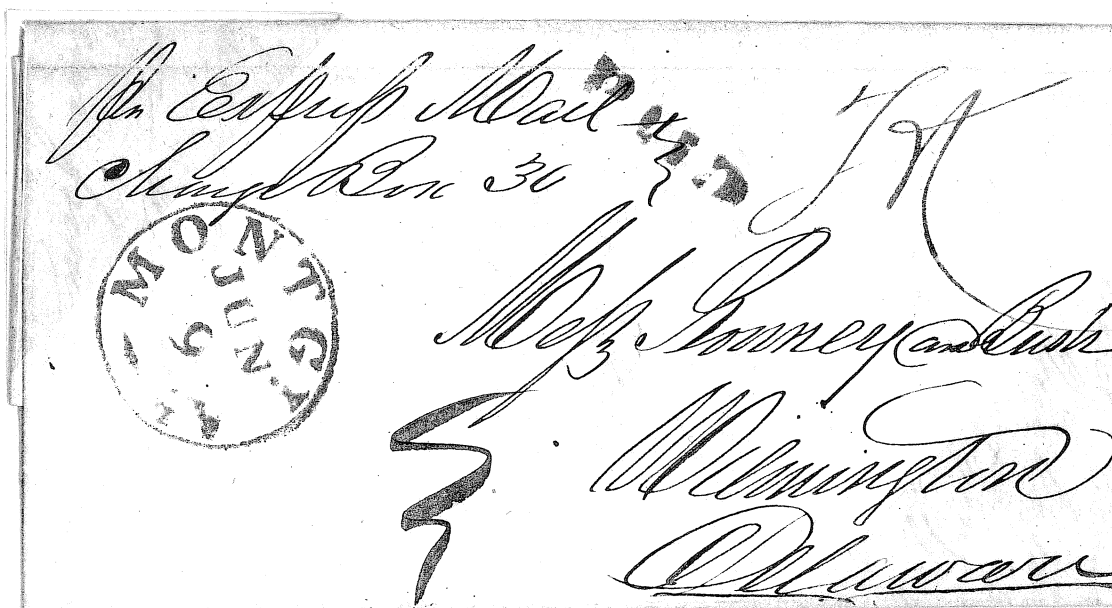


This cover "Erie Ala 31 Augt" (1838) in manuscript with "Express Mail", "Paid 2.25" to Lexington, Va. is an unusual triple rated 75¢ express rate from a small town. Manuscript town markings are very rare with Express Mail usage. Most known examples are included in this exhibit. Two examples known from Erie, Ala.

Usages from Alabama on Southern Route



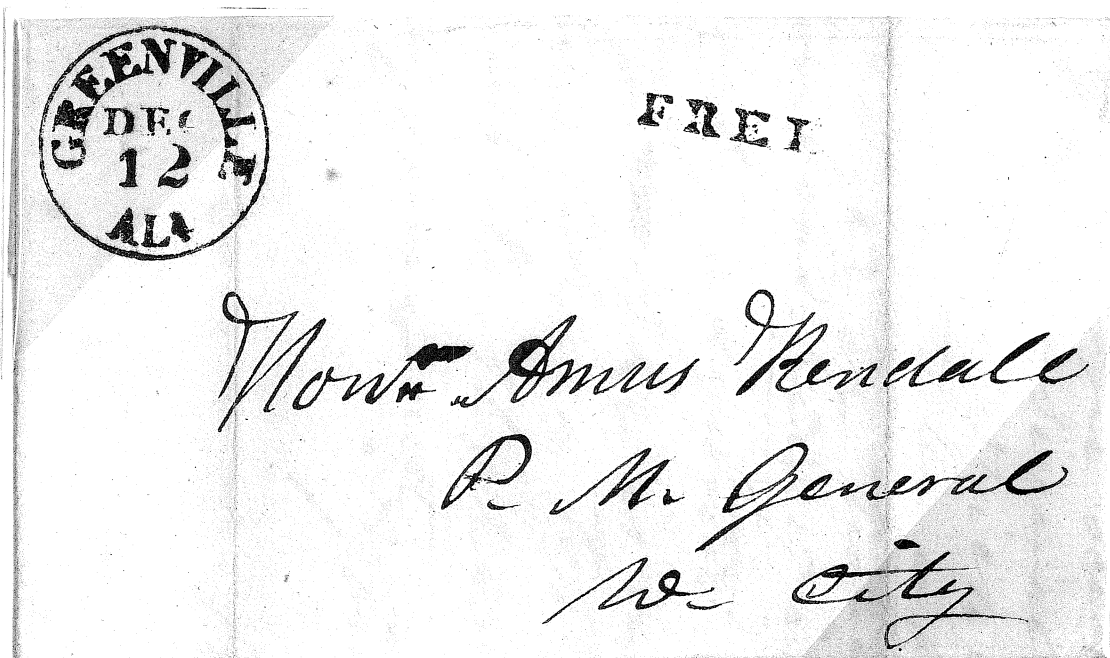
This cover with "MOBILE A. FEB 3" (1837), "Express", and "75" went to Hillsborough, N.C. which is a much shorter distance than the usual cover to New York or Boston. However, it was still over 400 miles so it paid the highest express rate. The other cover is the only recorded short rate cover from Mobile. It bears "Express Mail", "Mobile A. OCT 10" (1837) and "56¼", the 150 - 400 mile rate north to Montgomery.



This is one of two similar covers to Wilmington, Del. mailed six days apart. This "MONTGY AL. JUN 9" (1838), "PAID", and "75" bears "Express Mail Charge Box 30" notation. The unusual "75" is present on the other cover too.

Usages from Alabama on Southern Route

This letter from a contractor to P.M.G. Kendall gives a graphic picture of what the Express Mail really could be like. Spelling is of the writer.



Greenville 10th Dec 1836

Hon. A. Kendall
P.M. General

Dear Sir

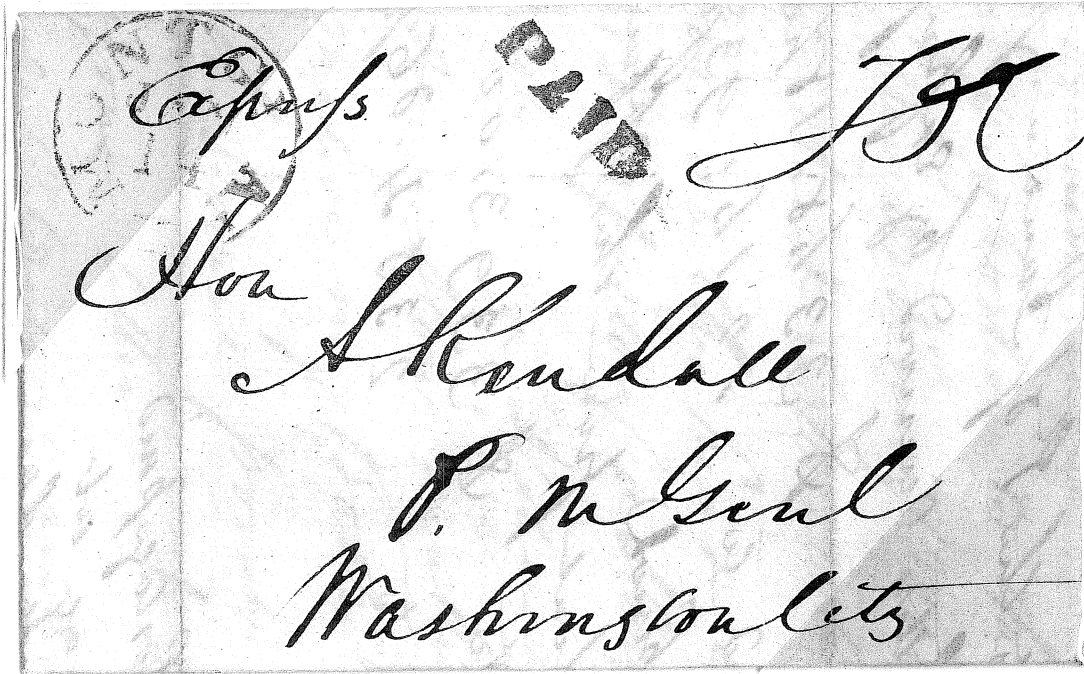
I have just recd yours of the 25th ult. I have eighteen routs from eight to ten miles on each of which I have two horses which ride through once a day & two routs about five miles one horse on each that rides both ways each day, a rider to two horses throughout, then about twenty extra horses & ten extra riders. There are twenty four streams of warter which are swimming in time of grate falls of rain all bridged over the main runs but one & that has a ferry, but the bridges are verry temporary & in time of those freshlets the water brakes over the banks & wash away the ends of the bridges & slews in the swamps of some of them git swimming. We calculate to swim wherever- & I have full confidence that nothing but accidents will cause failures of the Express on my rout. We had a failure at Mobile about the 1st Inst. A rider got thrown & his horse left him & run back about five miles when he found & recovered him which was not in time to save the mail. The straps of the bag had broke & it was lost & he could not find it until day. He was thrown about one oclock A.M. about 6 miles from Blakely. Several of the riders have been thrown which has caused delay & caused us to be a few minutes too late & once or twice the Machenery of the boat being intirely new & not properly adjusted caused a little delay. She is a fine little boat & runs like a top. We shall run hir up to stockton about the 1st of June next.

Your obt. servt.
Ward Taylor

P.S. nearly all the failures we make with the grate mail on this rout in the wet season could be prevented by the improvement of those bridges &c. W.T.

Usages from Alabama on Southern Route

In 1837 after one year of the Express Mail, PMG Kendall asked for reports from the postmasters with towns on the southern route. He received summaries with various degrees of detail. This report was not franked, but demonstrates "Express" with "MONTGY AL. JAN 14" (1838), "PAID", "75" to Washington.



Post Office Montgomery Jany 13 1838

Hon A Kendall P.M. Genl.

Sir

In compliance with your request under date of the 3d ult. I annex herewith a statement of postage on letters recd at this office by Express Mail from its commencement to the 1st inst. Also the amount of postage on all letters mailed at this office to be sent by Express Mail during the same period.

The amount paid for Express mail postage by any Department or public officers of the general Government on the account of the public service cannot be stated accurately though quite inconsiderable not exceeding I should judge ten dollars. The amount of dead letters returned to the Department which were mailed at this office by Express mail did not in my opinion exceed one twentieth (1/20 part in proportion to the amount received by the ordinary mail and returned as dead letters to the Department... A statement has been forwarded by slow mail giving all the information my books could give upon the several points referred to in your letter. I hope it will prove satisfactory and afford the information required.

Respectfully yours

N. Blum P.M.

Post Office Montgomery Al January 10th 1838

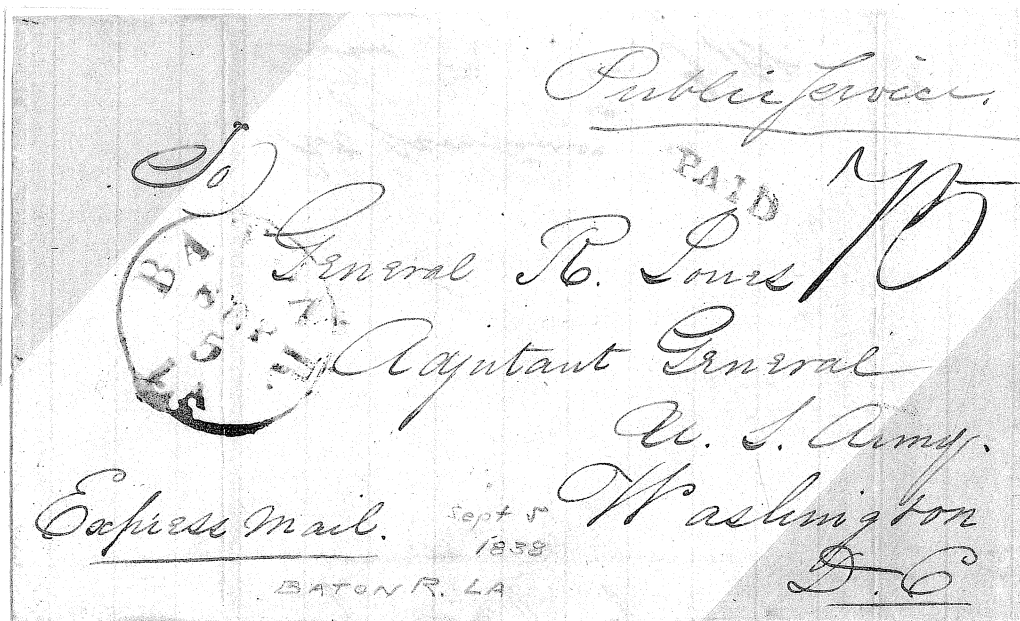
The Express mail went into operation at this office on the 15th Novr. 1836 from which time to the 1st of January 1838 the unpaid letters carried by express mail amounts to \$3368.18 and the paid letters carried to \$1216.93. during the same period the unpaid letters sent from this office amounted to \$3393.00 and the paid letters sent to \$2354.06.

The daily receipts of postage paid for express letters will average at this office 16 dollars pr day during the business season.

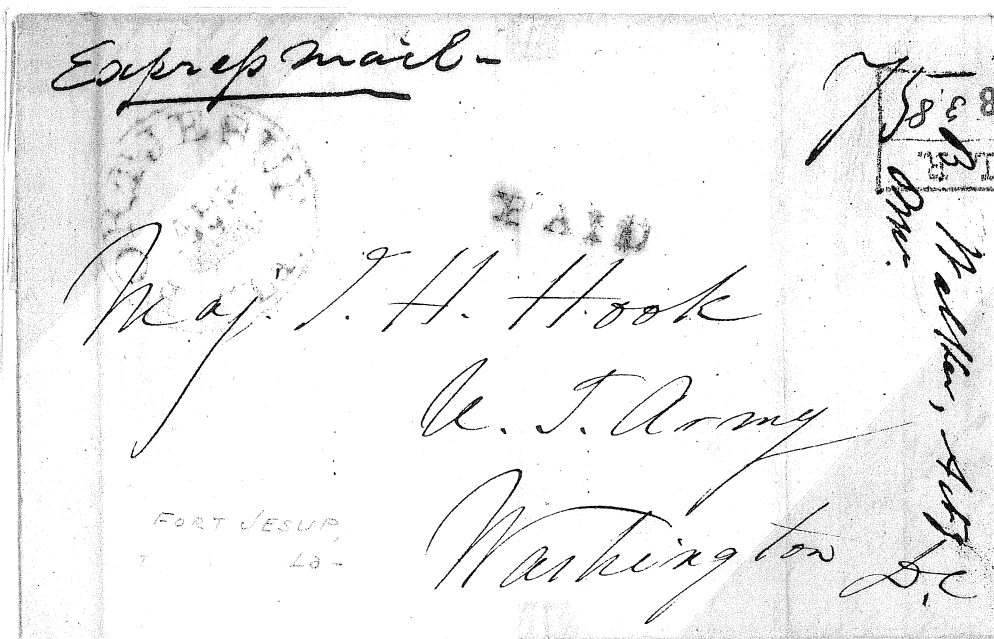
Respectfully submitted

N. Blum P.M.

Usages from Louisiana on Southern Route

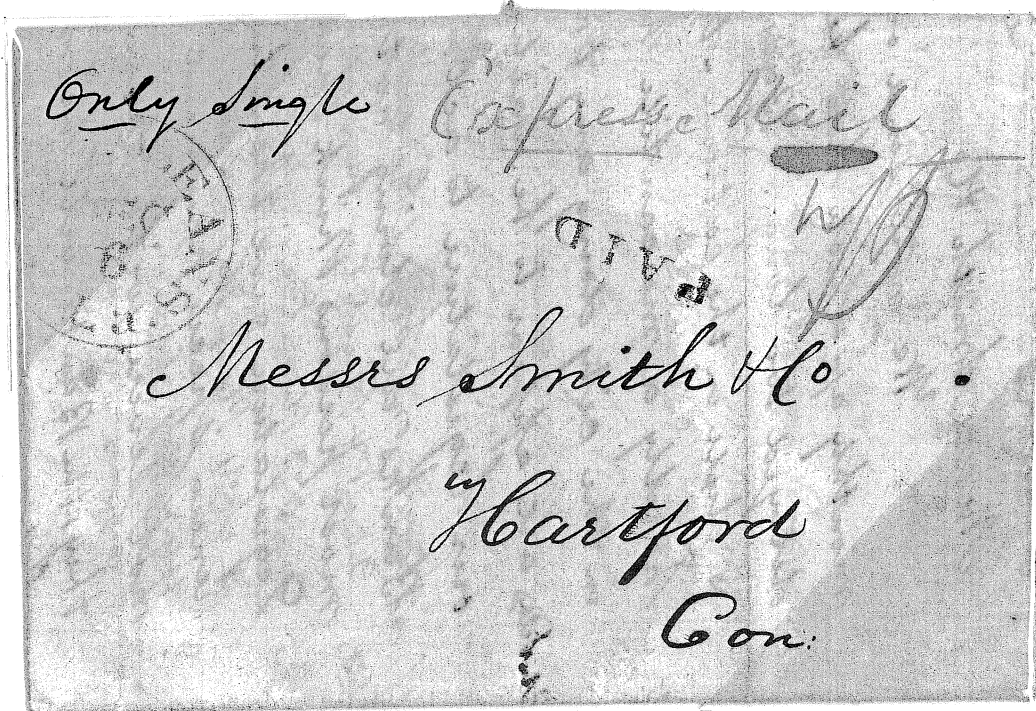


Cover with "BATON R.(OUGE) LA SEP 5" (1838), "PAID" in brownish red, ms. "Public Service" and "75" to Adjutant General in Washington, an Express Mail usage requiring prepaid postage in 1838. Only known example.

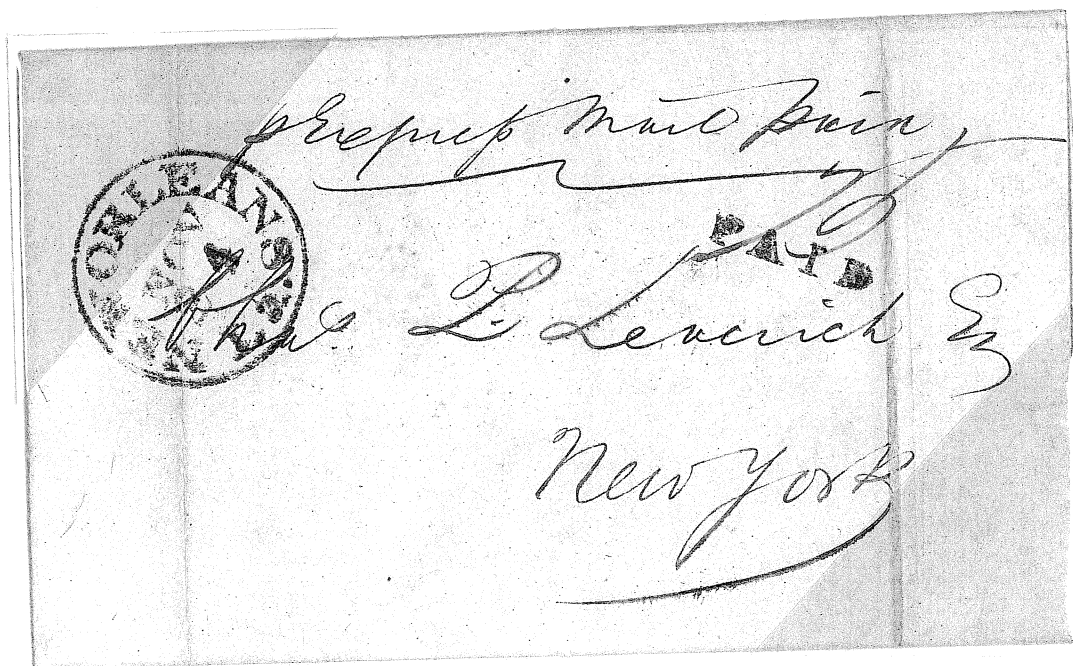


"FORT JESUP La. APR 24" (1838) in greenish blue, "PAID", "Express Mail" and "75" to officer of U.S. Army in Washington. This is the only fort postmark on an Express Mail letter.

Usages from Louisiana on Southern Route

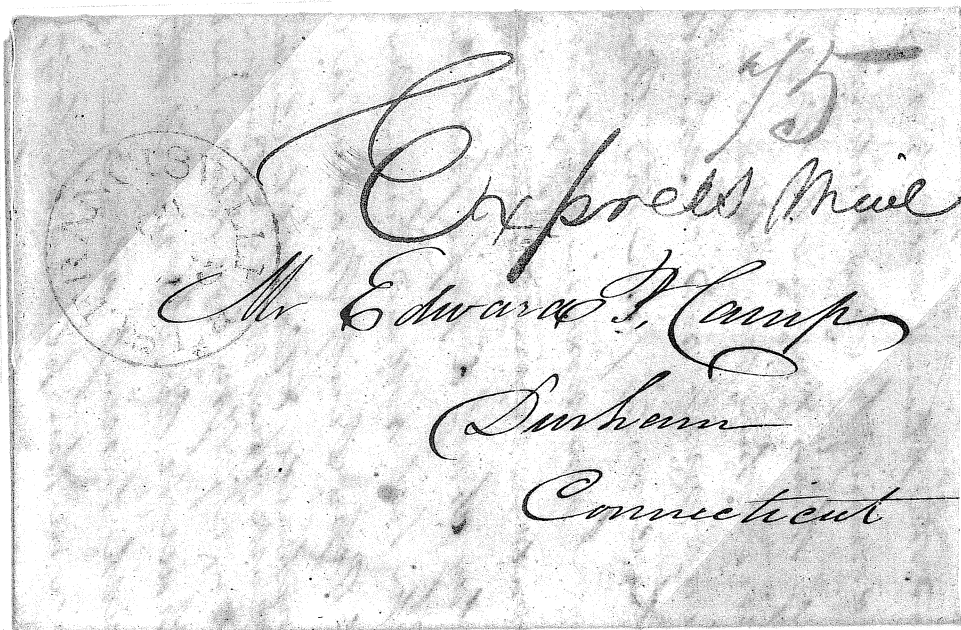


“NEW ORLEANS La. DEC 6” (1837) in red with blue “PAID” (transitional period for change in color at New Orleans), Express Mail” and “75” to Hartford.

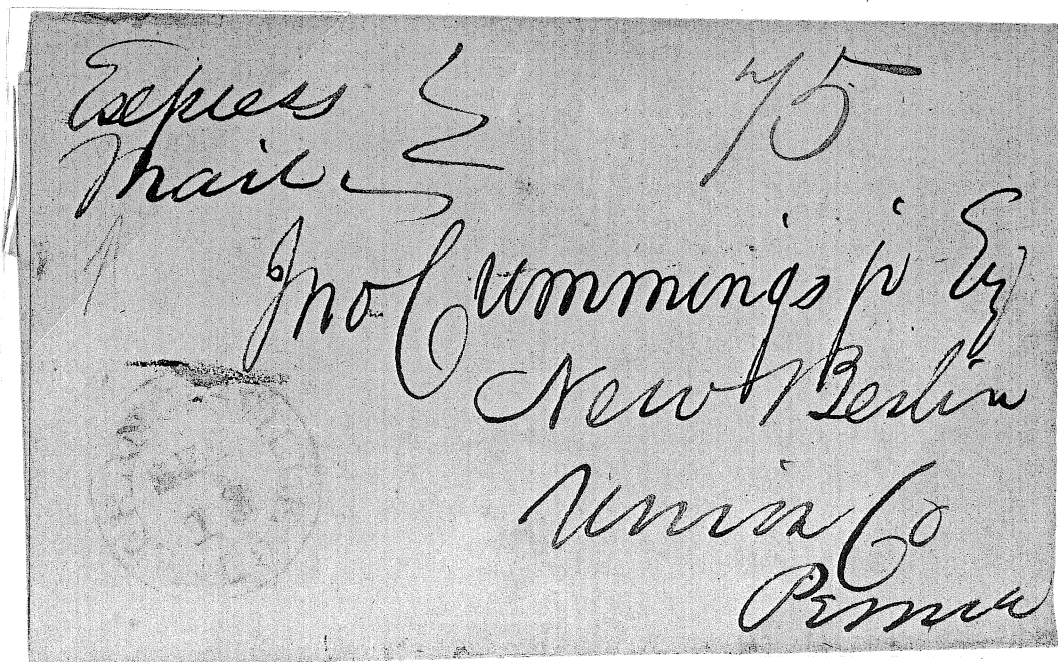


This cover although not rare shows the typical later usage from New Orleans, red “NEW ORLEANS La. NOV 24” (1838), “PAID”, “pr Express Mail Paid” and “75” to New York.

Usages from Louisiana on Southern Route



This "Express Mail" usage is "ST. FRANCISVILLE La. OCT 13" (1837) with "75" single rate to Durham, Conn., a south to north usage to and from towns not on Express Mail route.



This is the other known "ST. FRANCISVILLE La. SEP 18" (1837), "Express Mail" also single "75" to New Berlin, Pa. This destination is in the Appalachian Mountains, and the cover probably went in the regular mail by way of Harrisburg from Philadelphia, the last Express Mail post office it traveled through.

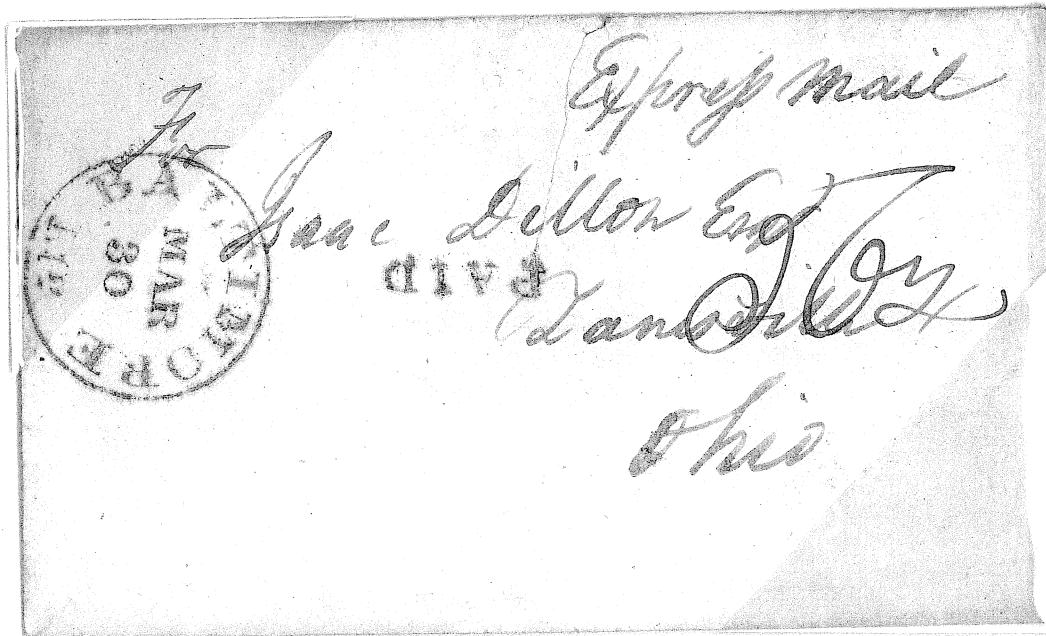
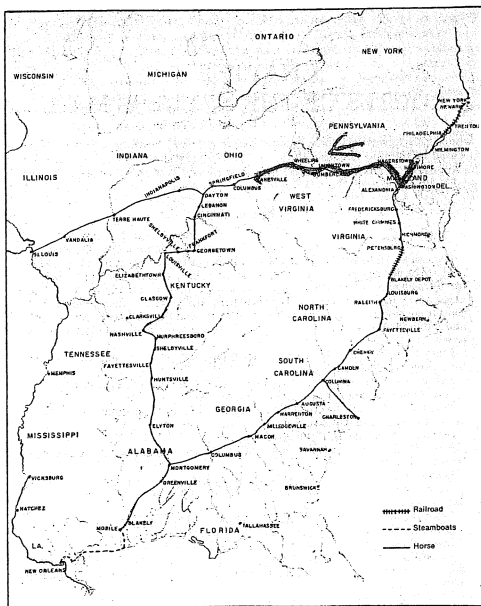
Usages on Midwestern Route

The midwestern route of the Express Mail went from Washington to Cincinnati. Route 20 (From Washington to Frederick) through to Route 28 (From Dayton to Cincinnati) were advertised to open July 1, 1837.



This important "Express Mail" cover was sent west to east over this route from "CUMBERLAND Md. JUL 6" (1837), "PAID", and "30" short rate for 30 to 80 miles to Hagerstown. Delf Norona felt this could be a first day of usage, but it is probably a trip later. Only known example of town, one of four recorded examples of 30¢ rate.

THE EXPRESS MAIL ROUTES OF 1836-1839



This cover "BALTIMORE MD. MAR 30" (1838), "PAID", "Express Mail", and "56 1/4" short rate to Zanesville, Ohio. Usage is southern route to Washington and transfer to midwestern route to Zanesville, a distance under 400 miles.

Post Office Department,
Contract Office
August 26, 1837.

Sir:

The Express Mail leaving Lanesville on the 4th September next, is directed to arrive at your office on the same day by 9 A. M. & you will dispatch it for Uniontown at 9 1/2 A. M.

The Express Mail leaving Uniontown on the 6th September next, is directed to arrive at your office by 10 1/2 A. M. same day & you will dispatch it for Lanesville at 11 A. M.

Respectfully
Yours obt. servt.

The first arrival of the
Express mail was made at

Wheeling on the 3rd of July 1837 (from the East)

J. N. Hoban

1st Apt. P. M. Genl.

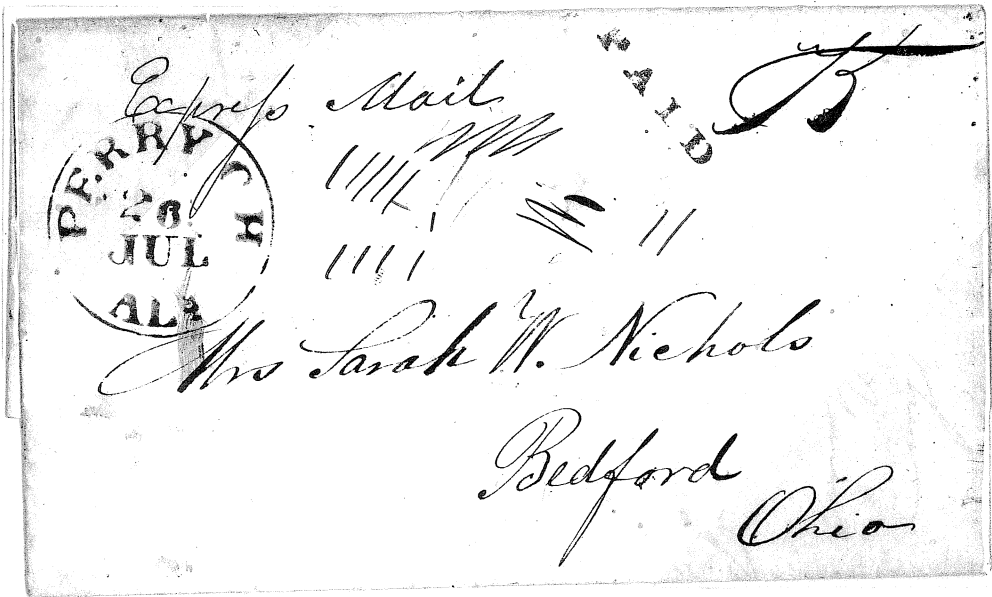
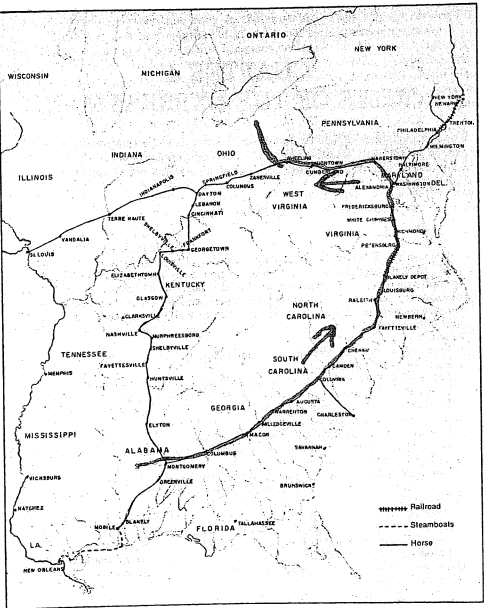
Original order for Express Mail service from Contract Office of Post Office Department to postmaster at Wheeling, Virginia. This document bears manuscript addition that the first Express Mail was sent west from Wheeling on July 4, 1837. It arrived July 3 "from the East". Since Wheeling is west of Cumberland, the first Express Mail from Cumberland going east might have left on a later date.

Usages on Midwestern Route



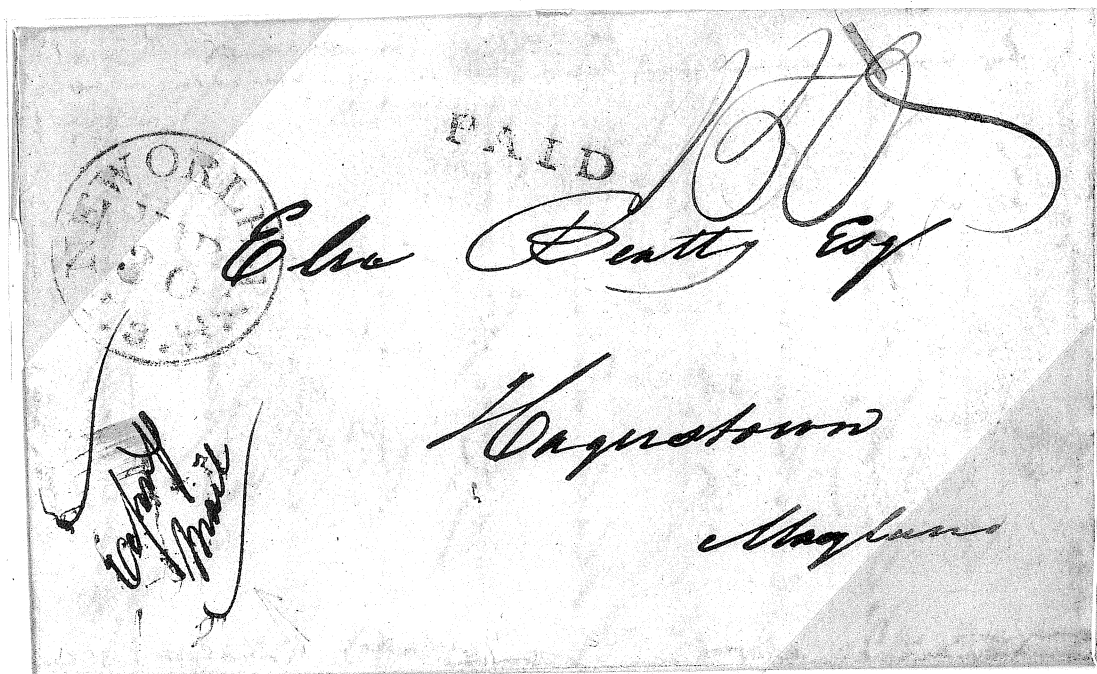
This “Express Mail” cover and “MOBILE AL DEC 24” (1838), “PAID”, and “75” went to Bedford, Ohio, a town outside of Cleveland. It would have traveled north on the southern route to Washington, then west on the midwestern express route to Wheeling, and then by regular mail to Cleveland region.

THE EXPRESS MAIL ROUTES OF 1836-1839

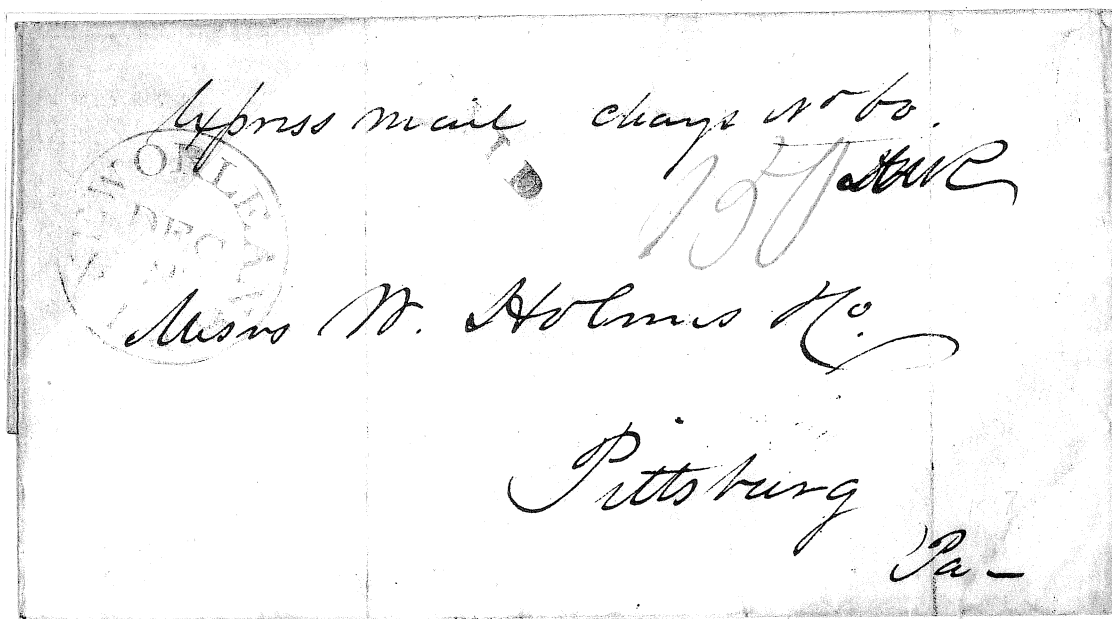


This earlier usage “PERRY C.H. Ala. 26 JUL” (1838), “PAID”, “75” by “Express Mail” to Bedford, Ohio went by the same route. Only known example.

Usages on Midwestern Route

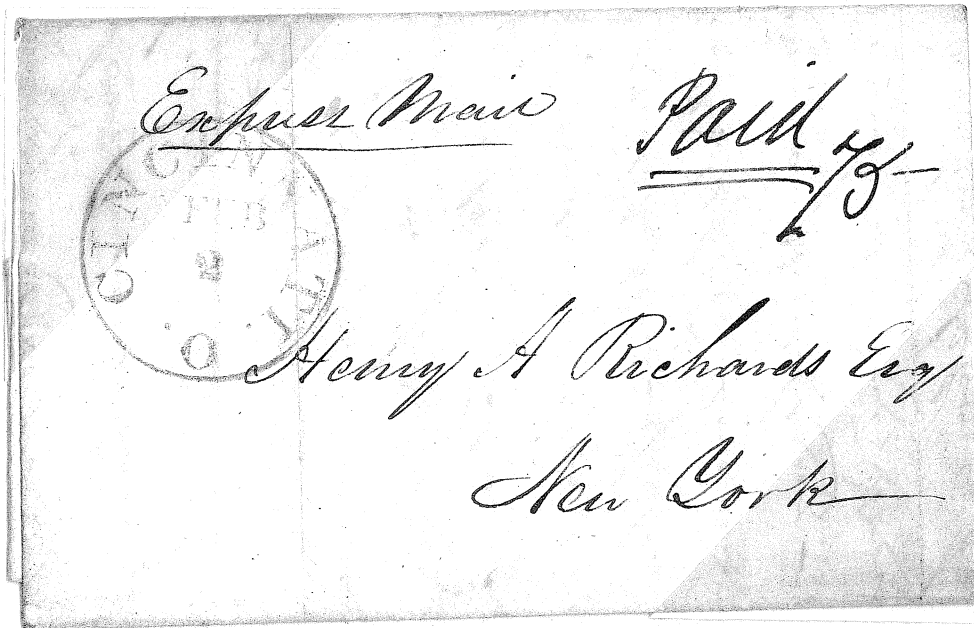


This cover with red "NEW ORLEANS La. MAR 30" (1838), "Express Mail", "PAID", and "150" to Hagerstown, Md. went north on the southern route to Washington, then west on the midwestern route to Hagerstown which was an express post office. It traveled exclusively by the Express Mail.

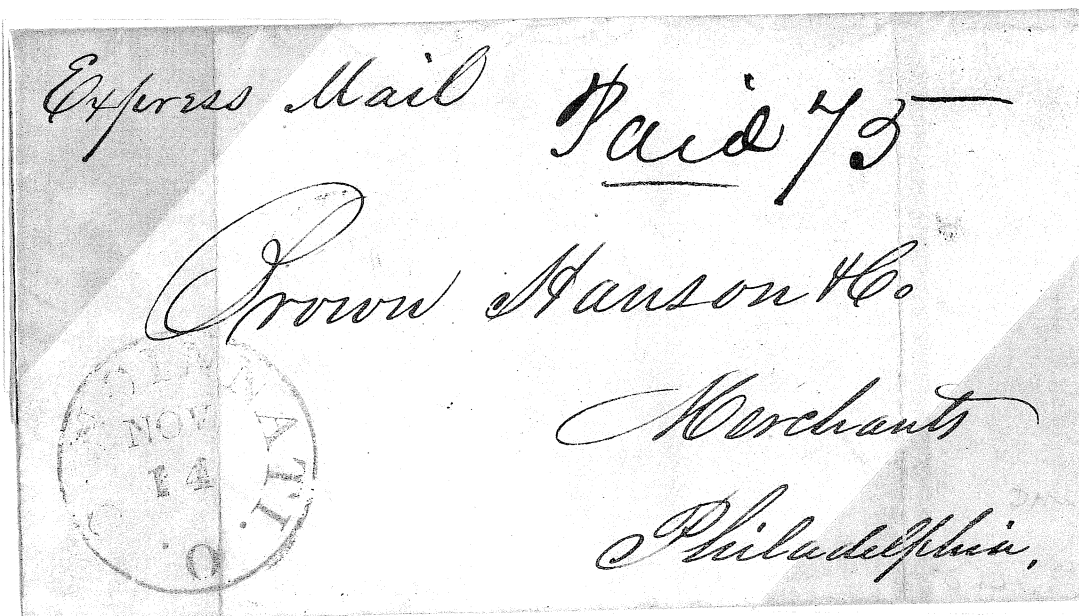


This earlier cover with blue "NEW ORLEANS La. DEC " (1837), "Express Mail charge No. 60 DWR", "PAID", "150" double 75¢ rate to Pittsburgh. The cover took the same route as the one above, but it went further west to Uniontown and then north by regular mail.

Usages on Midwestern Route



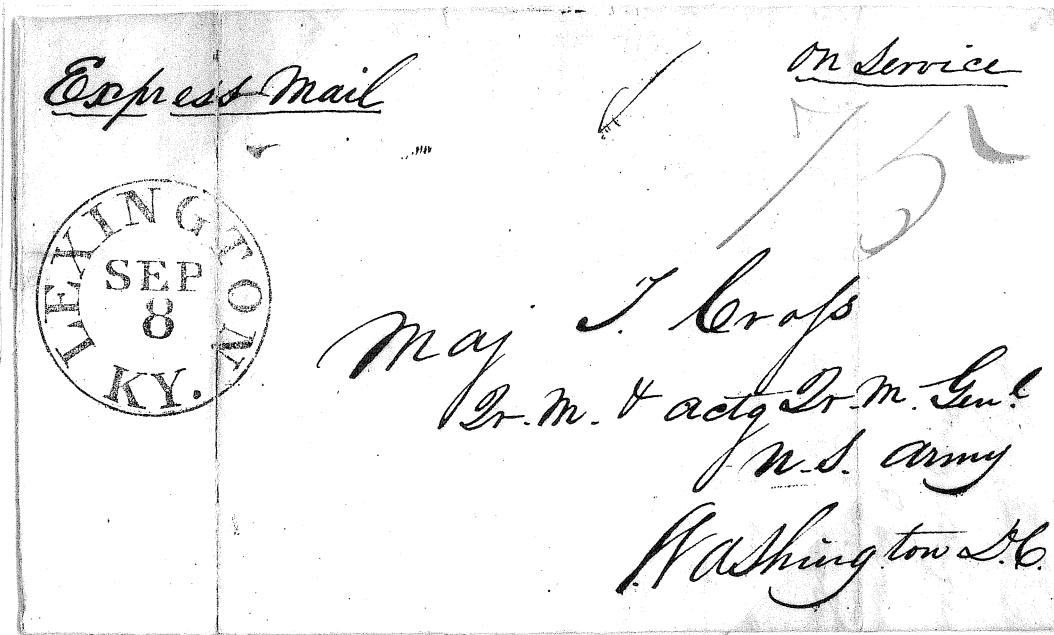
Cincinnati was the western terminus of the midwestern route. This cover "CINCINNATI. O. FEB 2" (1838), "Express Mail", "Paid 75" to New York is a typical usage going east to Washington and then north on the southern route.



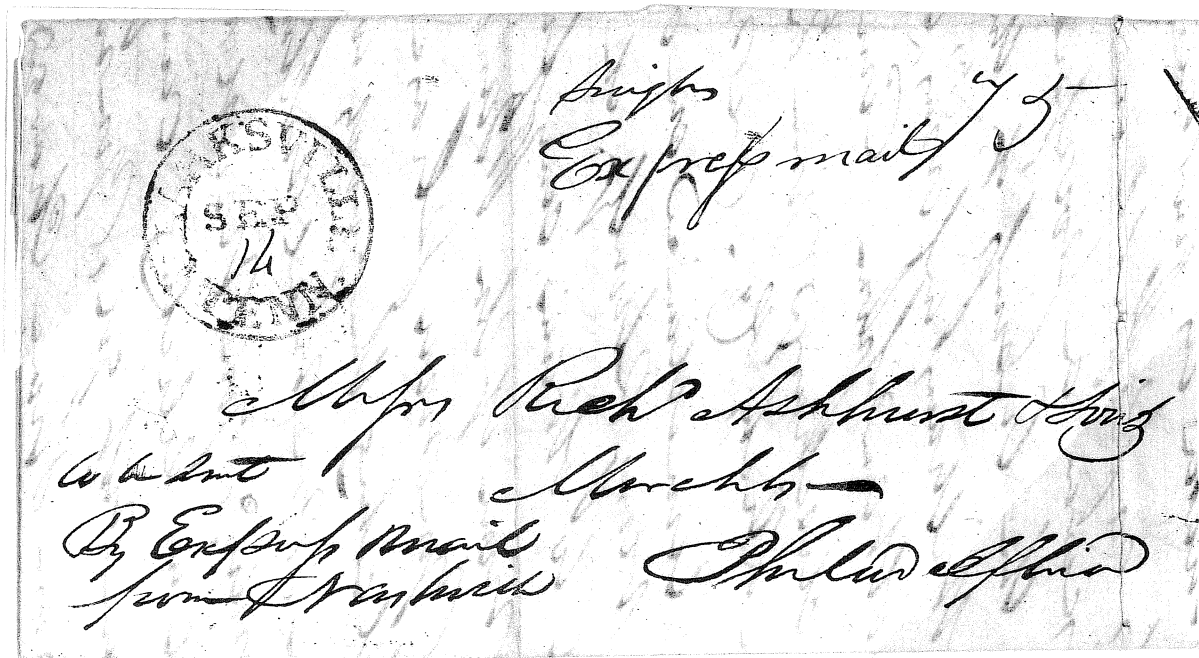
This cover "CINCINNATI. O. NOV 14" (1837), with magenta ms. "Express Mail" is an early required paid usage, "Paid 75" to Philadelphia. Covers from Cincinnati are the most common postmark on the midwestern route.

Usages on Southwestern Route

The southwestern branch ran from Cincinnati south to Montgomery, Alabama. It commenced service January 1, 1838 according to the advertisements by the Post Office Department in the *Washington Globe*. However, the line began service earlier, at least by October 11, 1837 according to local papers.

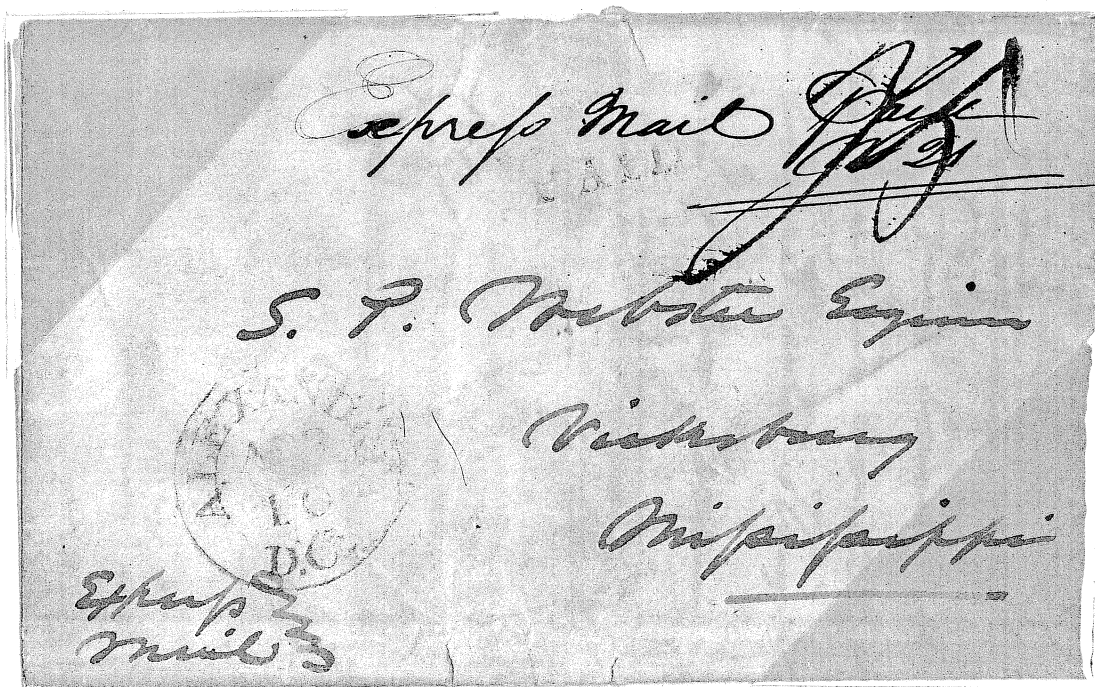


However, this cover "LEXINGTON KY. SEP 8" (1837) proves that the Express Mail was running at least a month earlier. It bears "Express mail", and "75" rating to the Quartermaster General of the Army in Washington. Only known example.

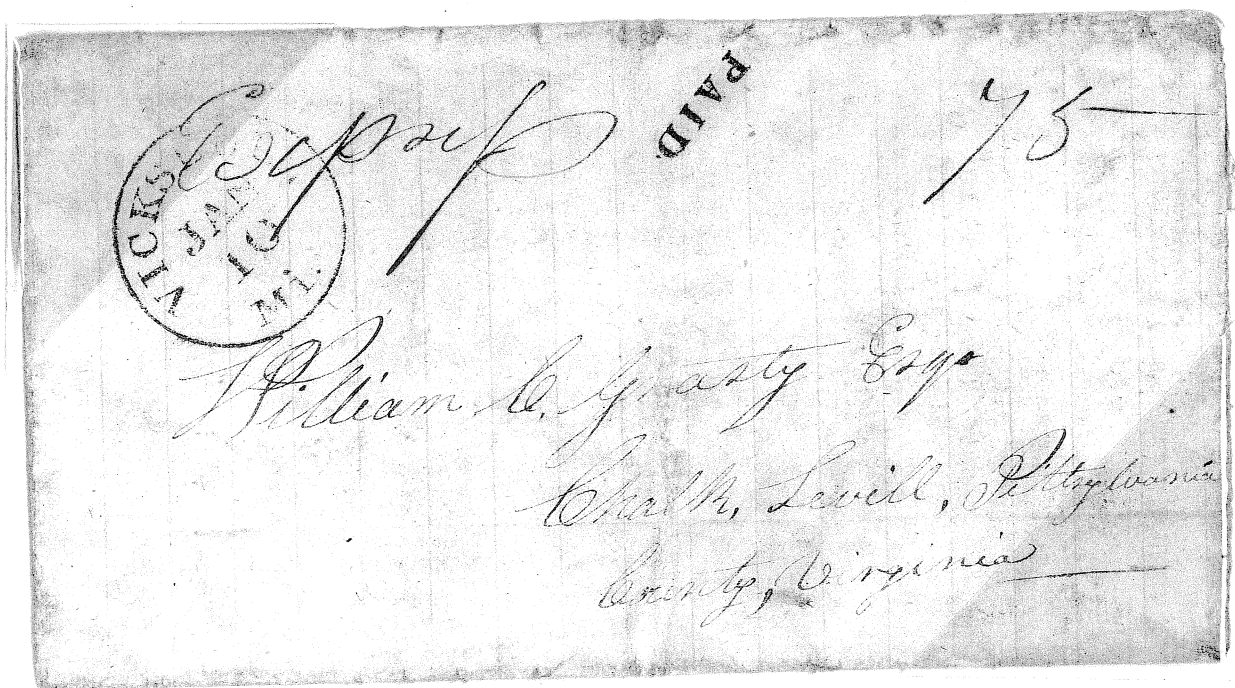


This very early cover "CLARKSVILLE TENN. SEP 14" (1837) bears the notation "to be sent By Express Mail from Nashville" with single rating "75" to Philadelphia. Clarksville is slightly to the northwest of Nashville, the distributing post office on the Express Mail route.

Usages on Southwestern Route

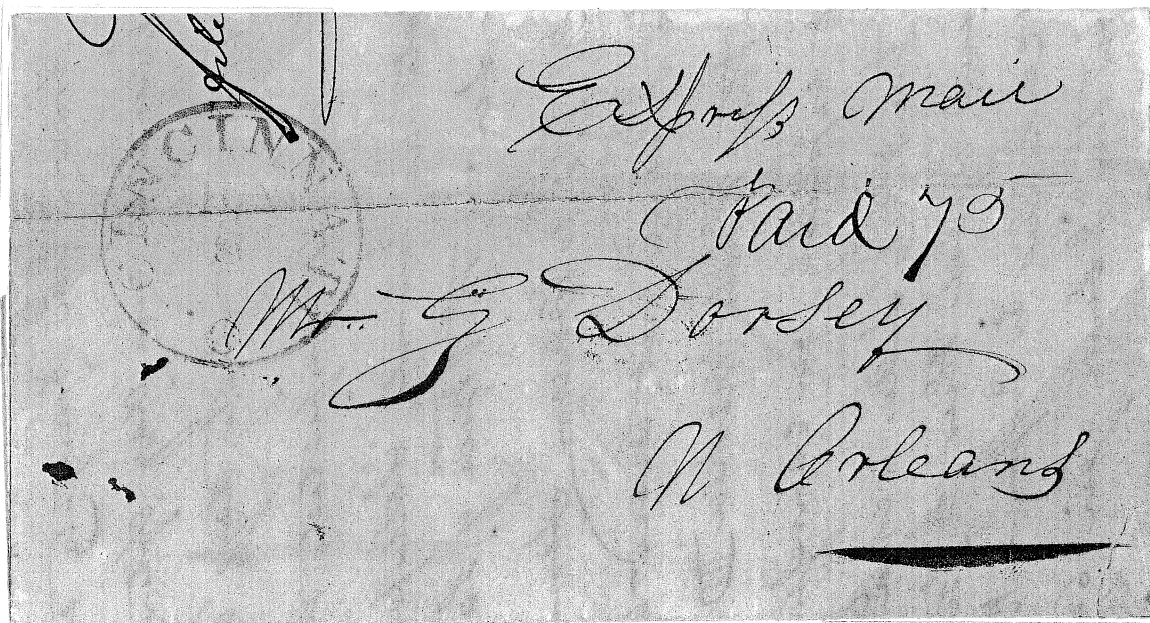


This cover was sent "ALEXANDRIA D.C. APR 10" (1838), "Express Mail paid", "PAID", and "75" with the address to Vicksburgh. The southwestern branch of the Express Mail was in existence at this time, so the routing would have been by the midwestern and then the southwestern routes. Only reported example from this town.



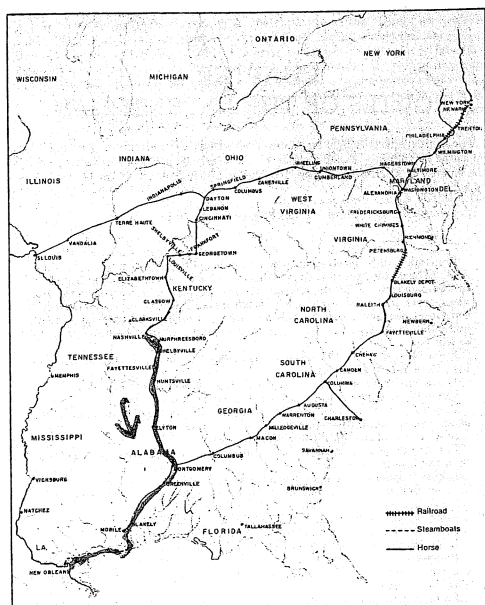
This cover "VICKSBURG MI. JAN 10" (1839), "Express", "PAID", and "75" is the reverse usage to a Virginia town. Only reported example.

Usages on Southwestern Route



This cover "CINCINNATI. O. JUN 8" (1838), "Express Mail", and "Paid 75" went south on the southwestern route to Montgomery and then on to Mobile by Express Mail and to New Orleans by contract steamship. This is a very rare usage.

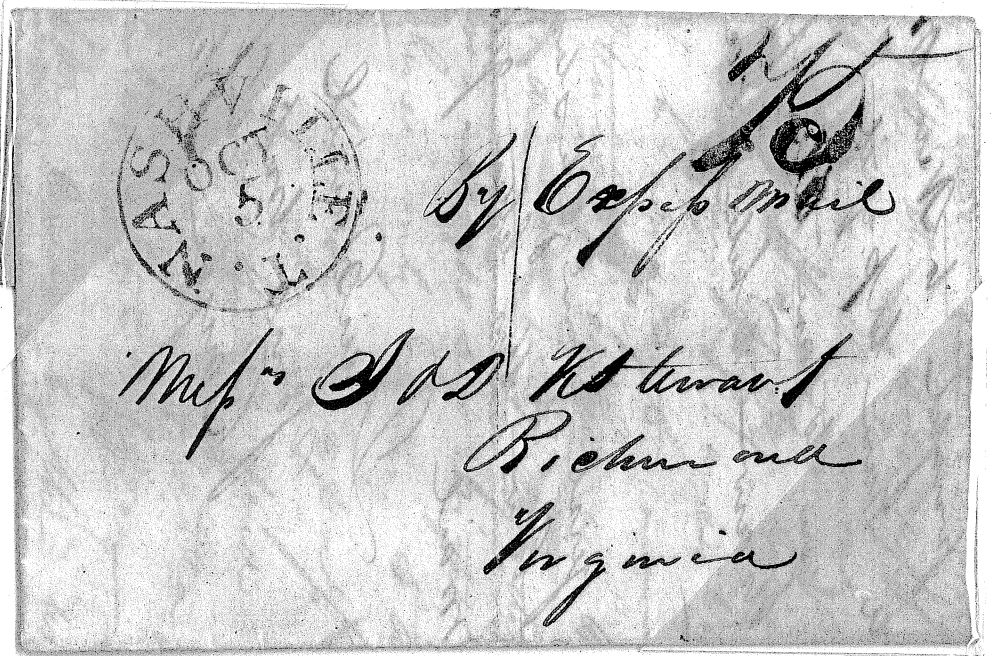
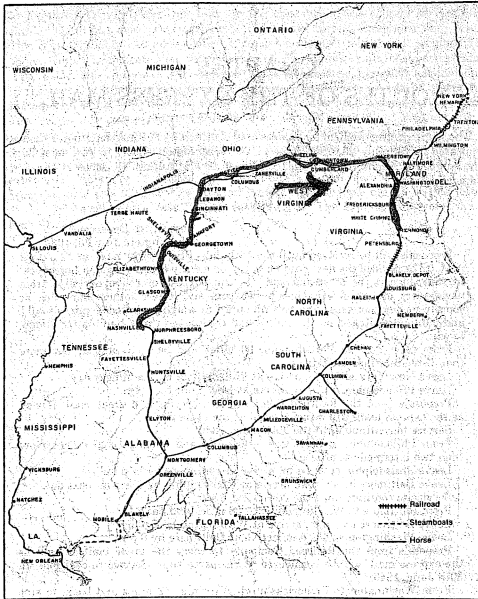
THE EXPRESS MAIL ROUTES OF 1836-1839



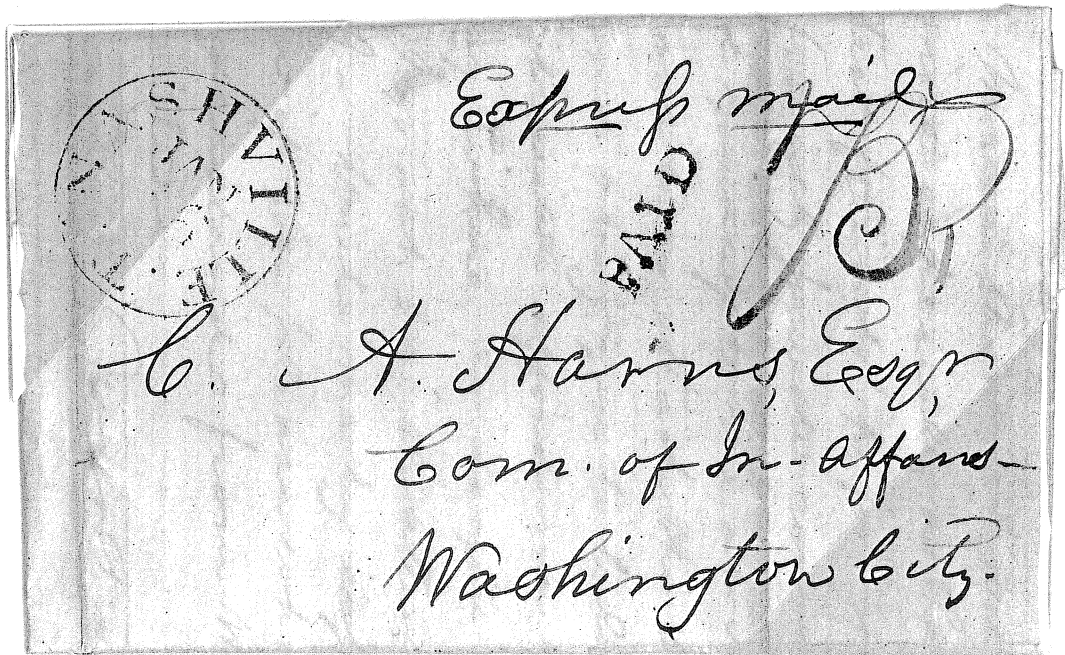
Covers from Nashville usually go east and north. This cover "NASHVILLE T APR 29" (1839), "Express Mail", "PAID", and "75" also went by the same southern routing as the cover above. At this time in 1839 Nashville was where the Express Mail routes commenced going south; railroads and other improvements had rendered the express riders superfluous further north.

Usages on Southwestern Route

THE EXPRESS MAIL ROUTES OF 1836-1839



The "NASHVILLE T OCT 5" (1837) usage is in a greenish ink. It went "By Express Mail" "75" to Richmond. Thus it went north on southwestern branch, then east on midwestern branch, then south on southern branch to Richmond.

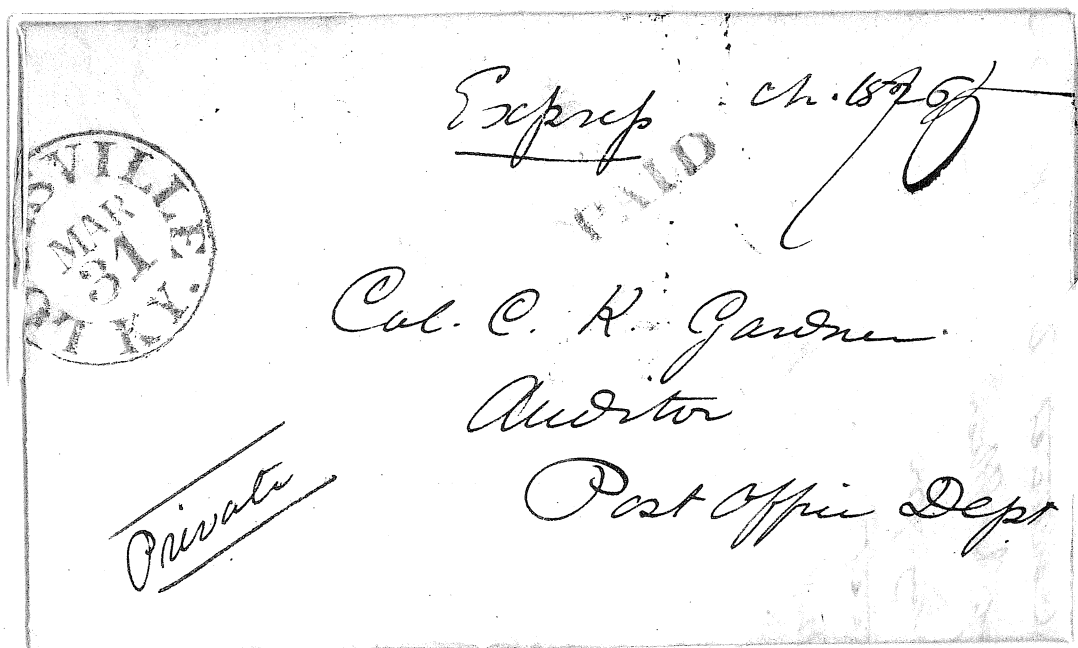


This later blue "NASHVILLE T JAN 26" (1838), "PAID", "Express Mail", and "75" to Washington arrived February 1, a six day transit period. A regular letter would have gone free to a Commissioner of the Executive Branch.

Usages on Southwestern Route

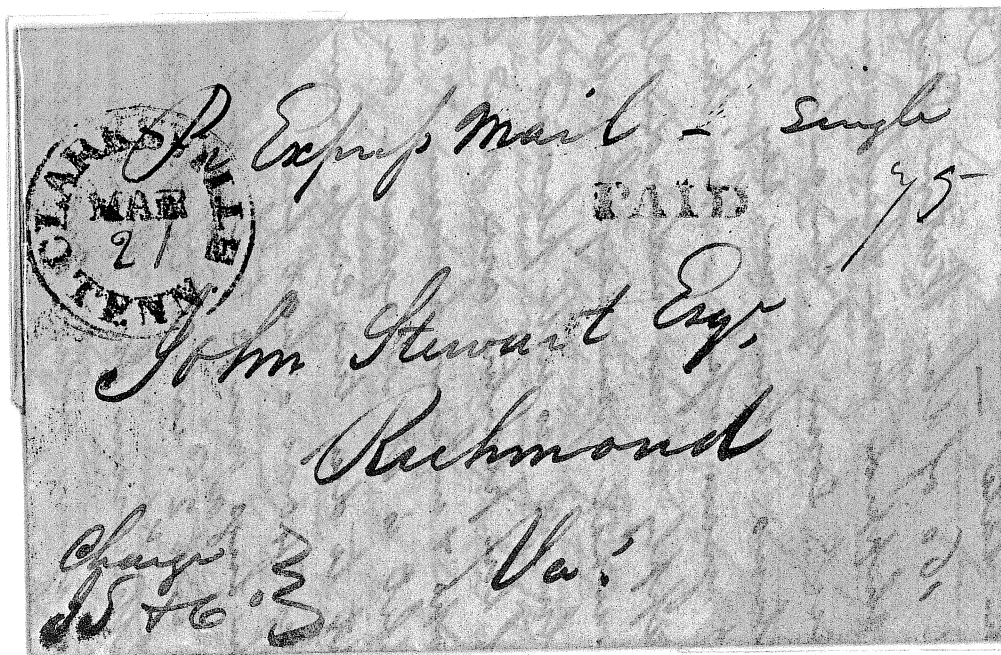


This pair of covers demonstrates usages to and from Louisville, Kentucky, a town on the southwestern route. This cover with the "PHILADELPHIA PA JAN 14" (1838), "PAID" in blue, "Express Mail Paid", and "75" shows the second type of Philadelphia postmark.

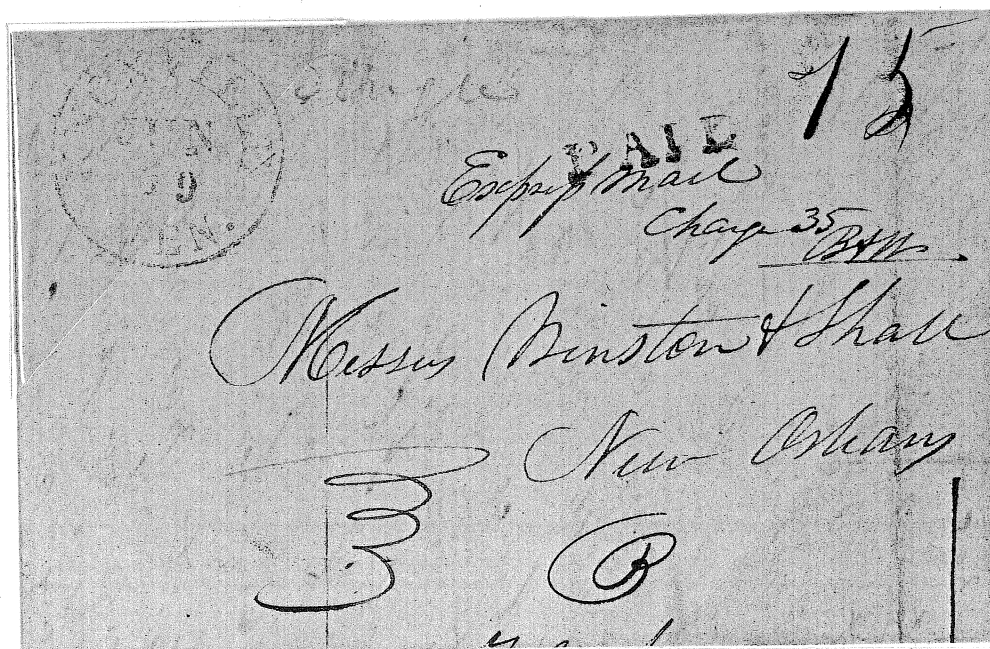


This cover with "LOUISVILLE KY. MAR 31" (1838), "PAID", "Express" and "75" to the Post Office auditor in Washington is a rare usage. Two other examples exist. Covers are known from several other Kentucky towns.

Usages on Southwestern Route

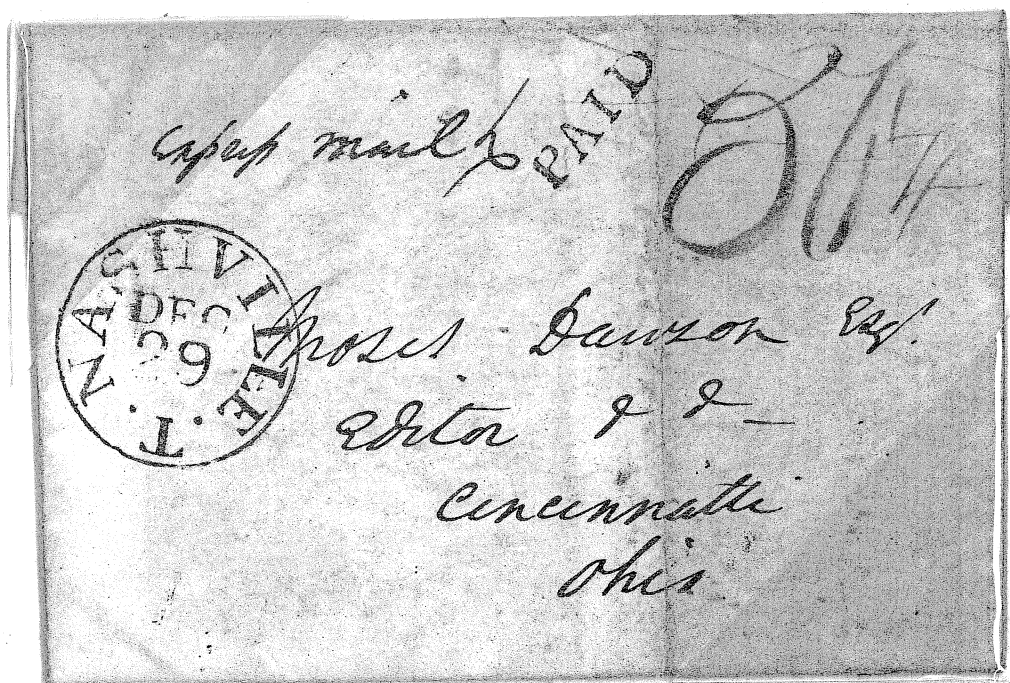


Covers from Clarksville, Tenn. are mostly from this correspondence to Richmond. This example "CLARKSVILLE TENN. MAR 21" (1838), "Pr Express Mail-single" with "PAID" and "75" is typical. This went regular mail to southwestern route to midwestern route to southern route, Richmond being on the Express Mail southern route.



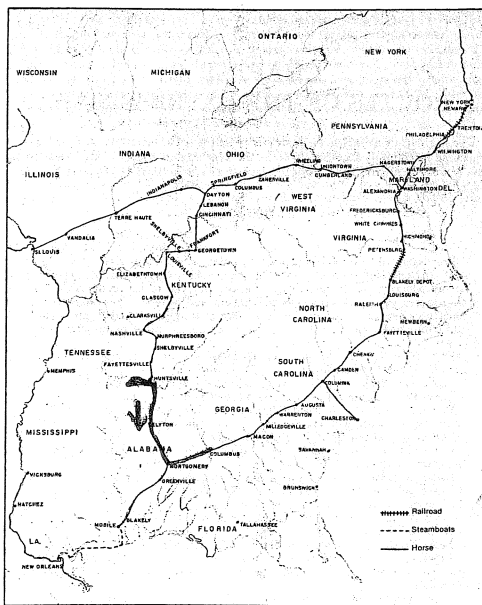
This cover "KNOXVILLE TEN. JUN 19" (1839), "PAID", "Express Mail" and "75" is one of the latest known usages of the Express Mail (discontinued July 1, 1839). It went south to Montgomery and then on to New Orleans by the southern or Great Mail route. Only known example.

Usages on Southwestern Route



These two covers are the only known short rates used over the southwestern branch. The "NASHVILLE T DEC 29" (1837), "Express mail", "PAID", "56¼" to Cincinnati went north entirely on the southwestern branch.

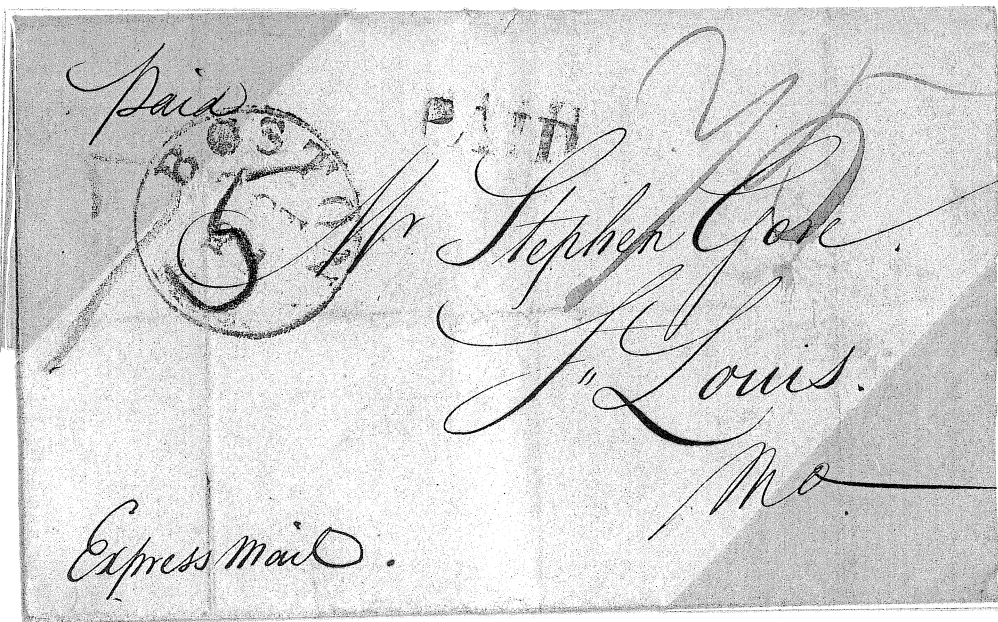
THE EXPRESS MAIL ROUTES OF 1836-1839



The cover with "TUSCUMBIA ALA APR 5" (1838), "Express Mail", "PAID", and "56¼" went east to Huntsville then south by express to Montgomery on the southwestern route and then north on the southern route to Columbus, a very unusual usage.

Usages on Western Route

The western route was primarily to supply the merchants of St. Louis with the availability of the Express Mail. It never supported its cost during the four months of its existence. It ran west from Dayton to St. Louis and was advertised to commence January 1, 1838.



This usage "BOSTON Mas. OCT 21" (1837), "PAID", "Express Mail", and "75" to St. Louis was carried by Express Mail to Dayton. Then it went west by regular mail.



This cover "ST. LOUIS MO. DEC 21" (1837), "PAID", "express mail", and "75" indicates that the Express Mail began on the western route before the advertised date. The destination to a small town near Harrisburg is also unusual.

Usages on Western Route

"Express Mail"
Weekly Register---Post Office at Saint Louis Mo
Route No. 32 from Saint Louis to Terre Haute
 Contract time of arrival, Daily 4.30 P.M.
 " " of departure, " 3.30 P.M.

Day of the Week.	Monthly Date.	Hour of Arrival.	Cause of delay, if known.	Hour of Departure.	Cause of Detention.	No. of newspaper bags received.	No. of Newspaper bags sent.
Sunday,	Dec 24 1837	6 P.M.		3.30 P.M.	{ Ice in the ill. prevented crossing in train		
Monday,	25	5.30 P.M.		3.30 P.M.			
Tuesday,	26	4.30 P.M.		3.30 P.M.			
Wednesday,	27	4.25 P.M.		3.30 P.M.			
Thursday,	28	4.10		3.30 P.M.			
Friday,	29	4.30 P.M.		3.30 P.M.			
Saturday,	30	4.25 P.M.		3.30 P.M.			

Certified to be correct by

M. R. Runk

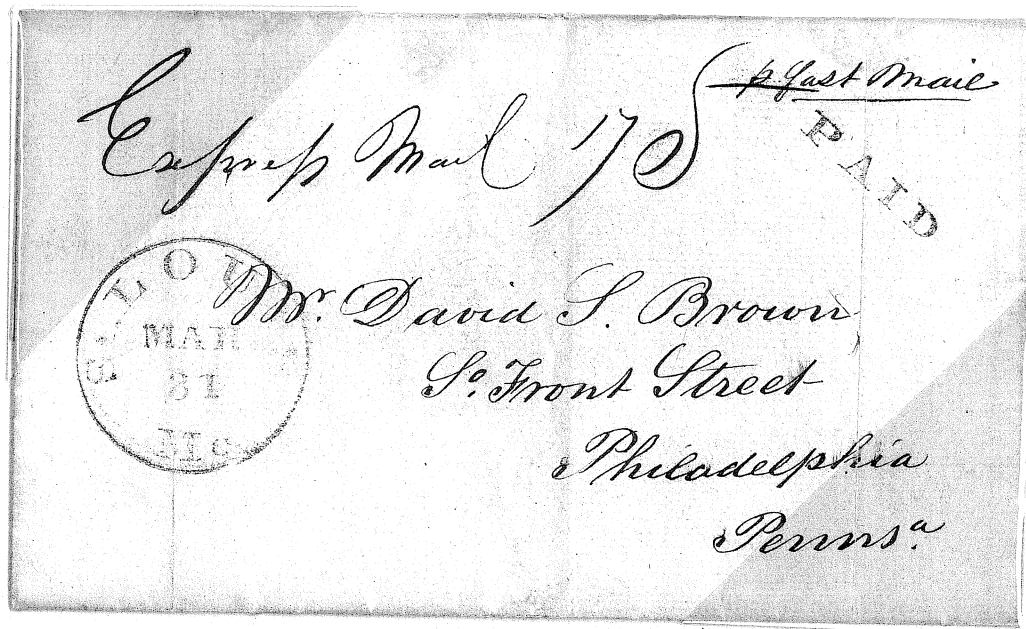
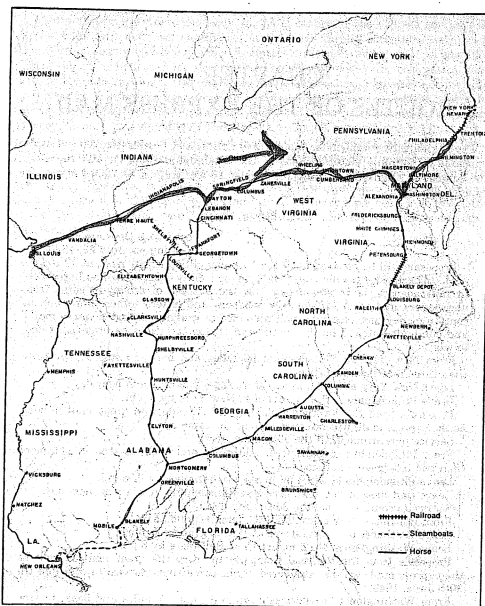
P. M.

Saint Louis Mo Dec 30-1837

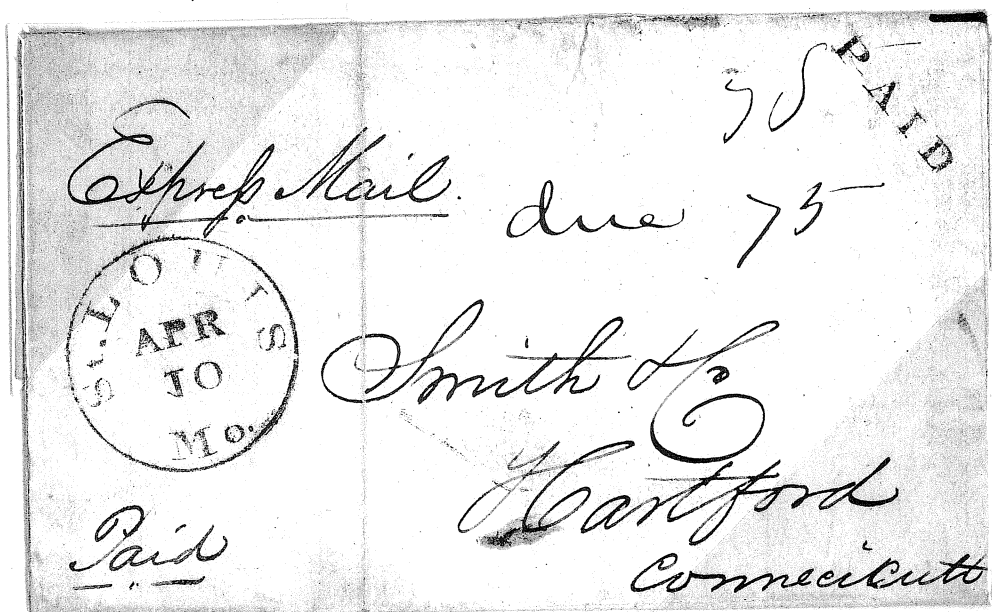
This is the only known route registry for the Express Mail from any location. It is a sheet from St. Louis for Route 32 for the last week of December, 1837, and it proves that the Express Mail was running prior to January 1, 1838 over the western branch.

Usages on Western Route

THE EXPRESS MAIL ROUTES OF 1836-1839

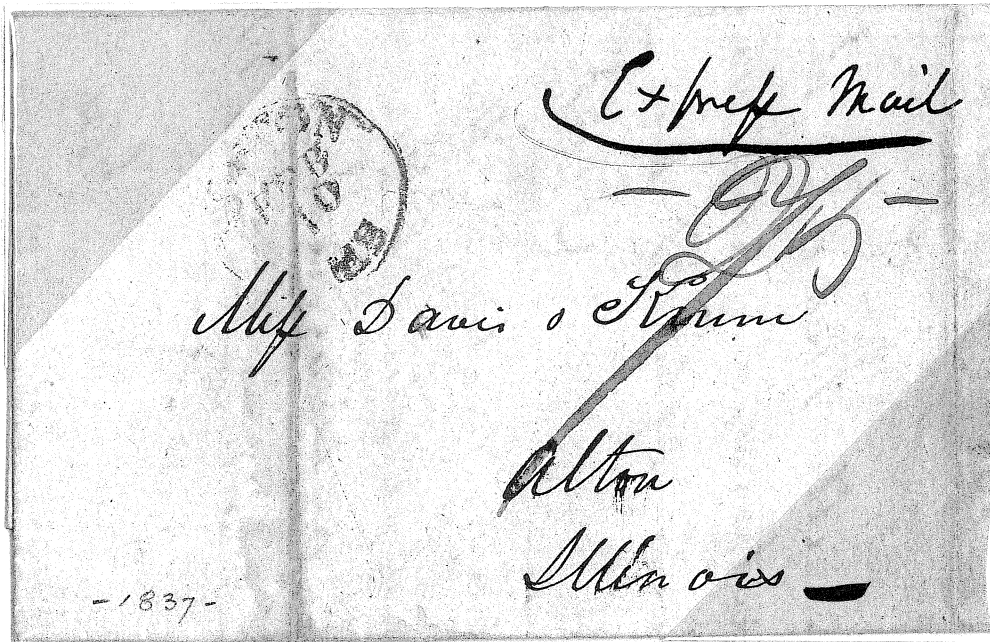


This usage "St. LOUIS Mo. MAR 31" (1838), "Express Mail", "PAID", and "75" to Philadelphia is during the short period when the Express Mail ran as far as St. Louis. Note sender wrote "pr fast mail" which the postmaster corrected to "Express Mail".



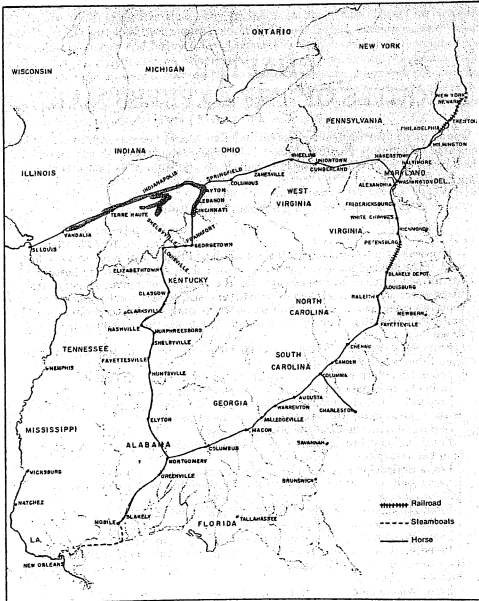
This cover "St. LOUIS Mo. APR 10" (1838), "Express Mail" was sent "PAID" and "75" to Hartford. However, it was opened and found to contain an enclosure of a draft, so it was rated another "due 75".

Usages on Western Route



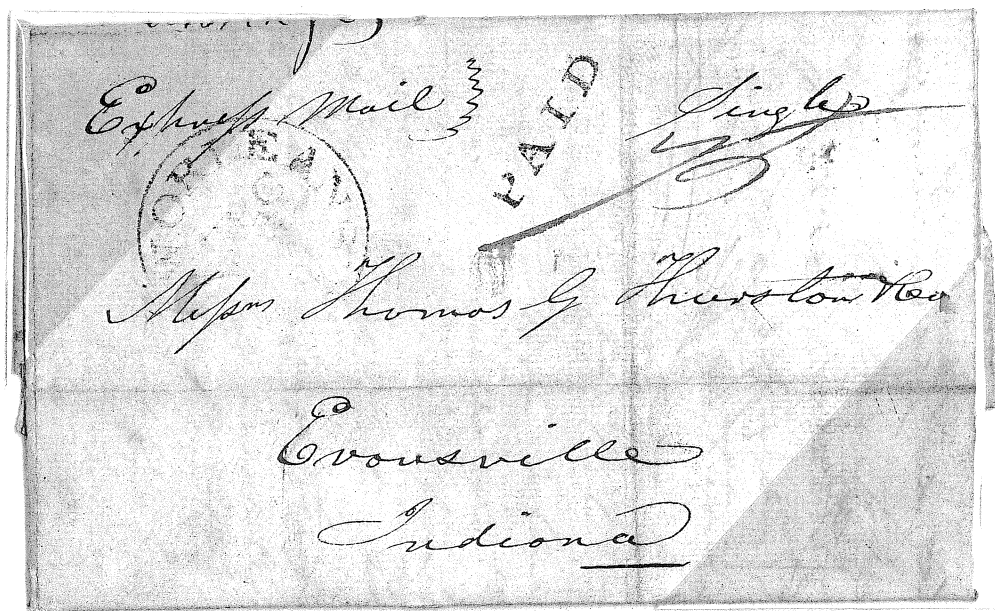
This cover from "BOSTON MS FEB 10" (1837), "Express Mail", and "25" changed to "75" is addressed to Alton, Illinois. At this early date the Express Mail only carried this letter from New York to Washington. Then it traveled by regular mail to Alton, the only known Express Mail cover to Illinois.

THE EXPRESS MAIL ROUTES OF 1836-1839



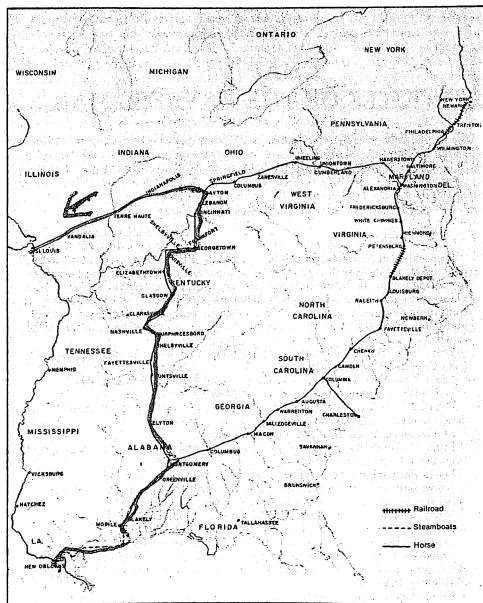
This cover is the only usage known from Illinois. "VANDALIA ILLS. MAR 31", "Express Mail", "PAID", and "\$1.50" altered to "Paid 75" is the correct rating of a single rate without enclosure to Cincinnati, a city on the southwestern route. The distance is just over 400 miles. The letter went the entire distance over express routes.

Usages on Western Route



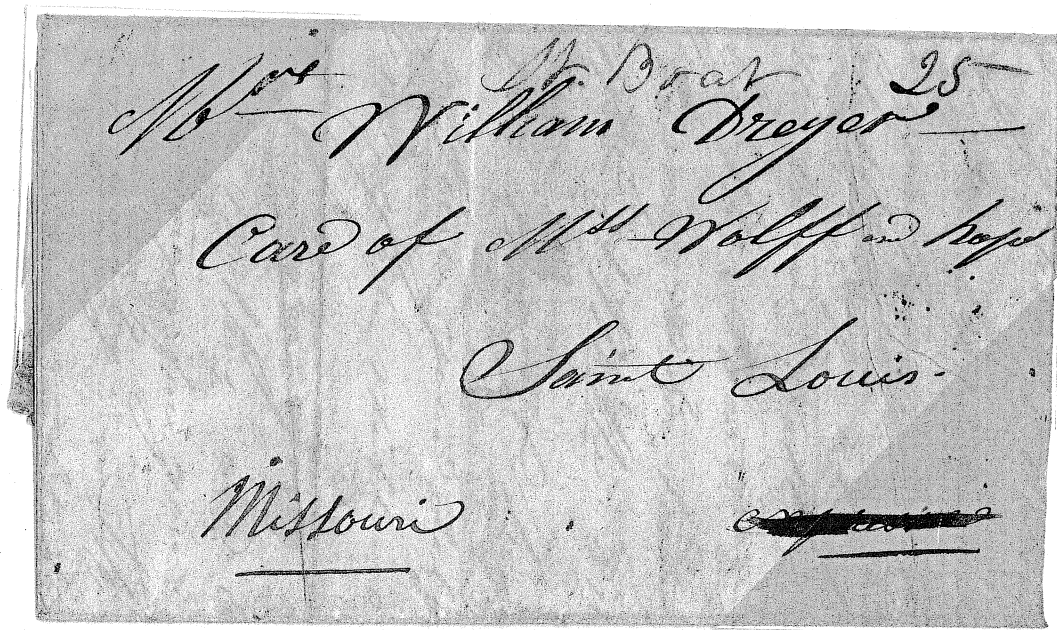
This cover "NEW ORLEANS La. DEC 24" (1838), "Express Mail", "PAID" and "75" shows usage to Evansville Indiana. The letter comments: "reply by returning Express Mail". This went by way of the southwestern route to Dayton and went by regular mail thereafter because the St. Louis branch had been discontinued by this date.

THE EXPRESS MAIL ROUTES OF 1836-1839

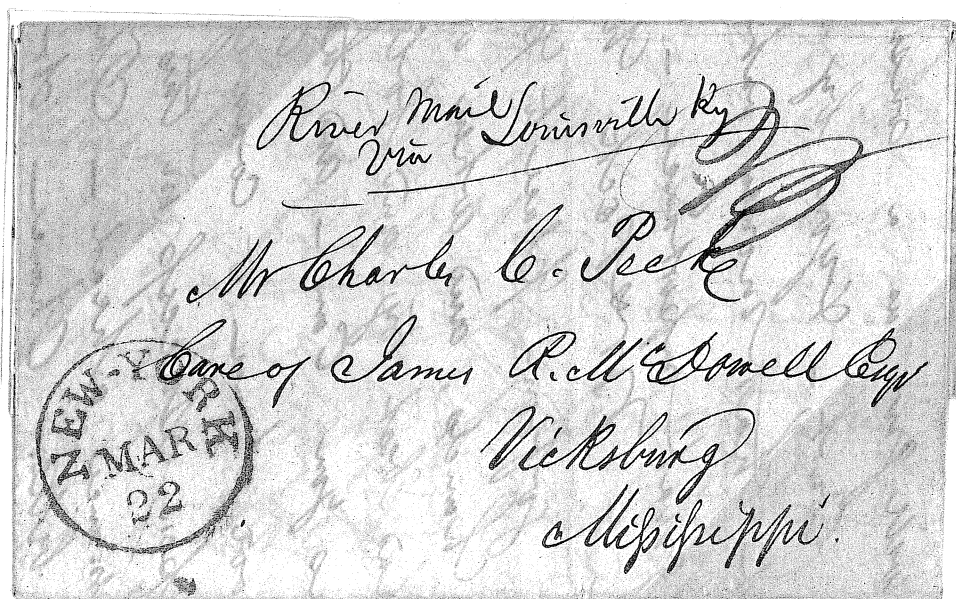


However, this similar cover "NEW ORLEANS La. JAN 25" (1838), "expresse mail", "PAID", and "75" to St. Louis did travel all the way by Express Mail because the western branch was operational at this time.

Non-express Usages on Western Route

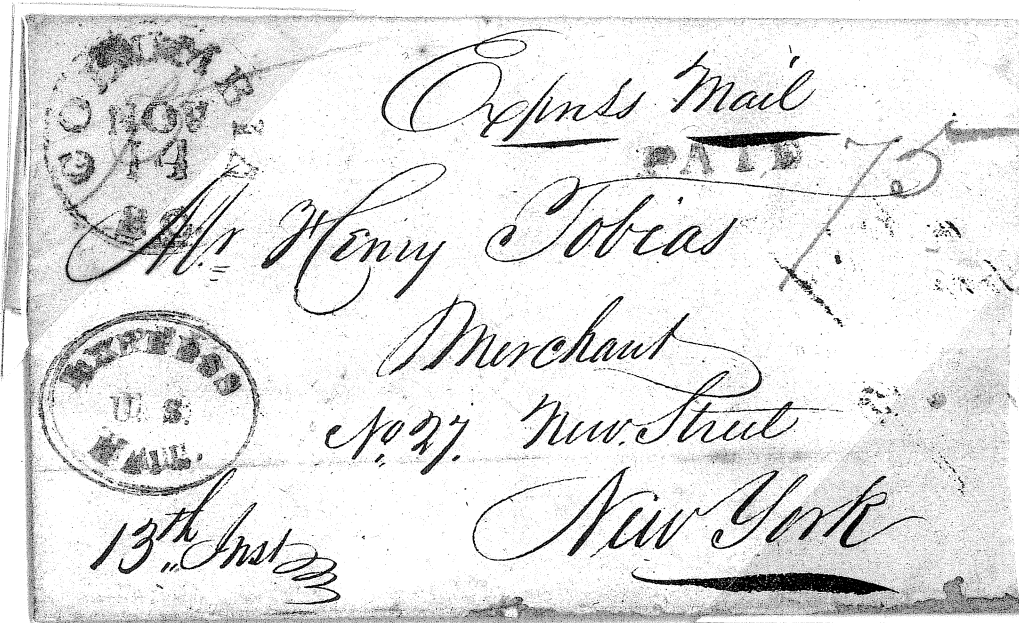


This is from the same correspondence as the last letter shown. It was written November 4, 1837, four days after prepayment for Express Mail was required. Also the western branch of the Express Mail had not opened by this date. "Expresse" is written in the corner, then crossed out with "St. boat 25" written in magenta. Thus this letter was sent up the Mississippi River to St. Louis.

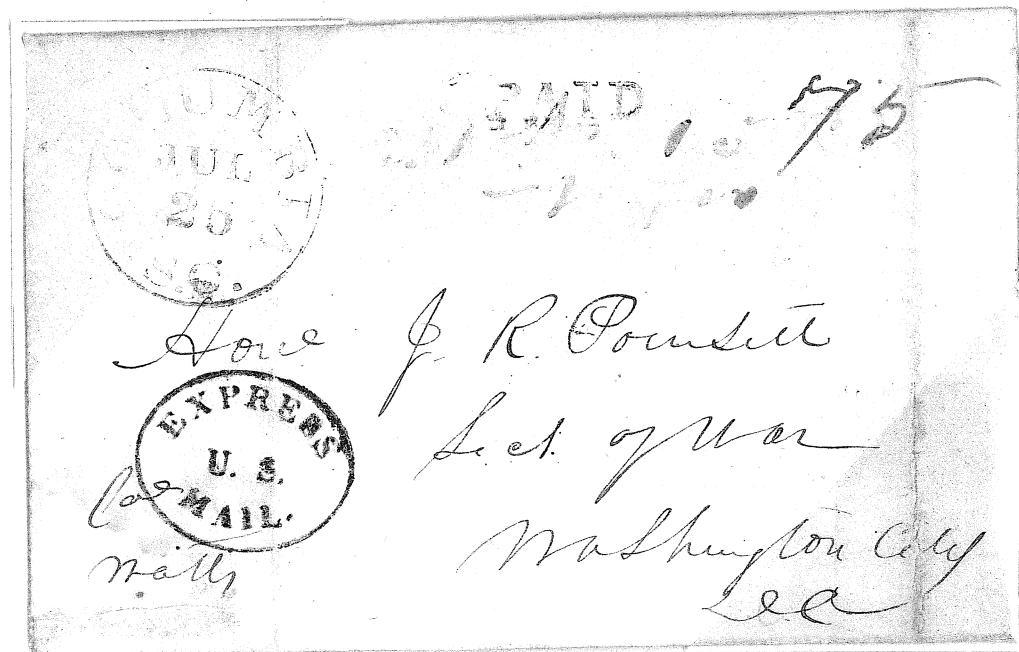


There must be more than a dozen New York Express Mail covers to Charles C. Peck at different southern locations. This is the latest letter to him seen and demonstrates that by March, 1839 the regular mails to Louisville had so improved that "Express Mail service did not save much time. It is marked "River Mail via Louisville, Ky" to Vicksburg and was sent "25" due.

Handstamped Express Mail Postmarks



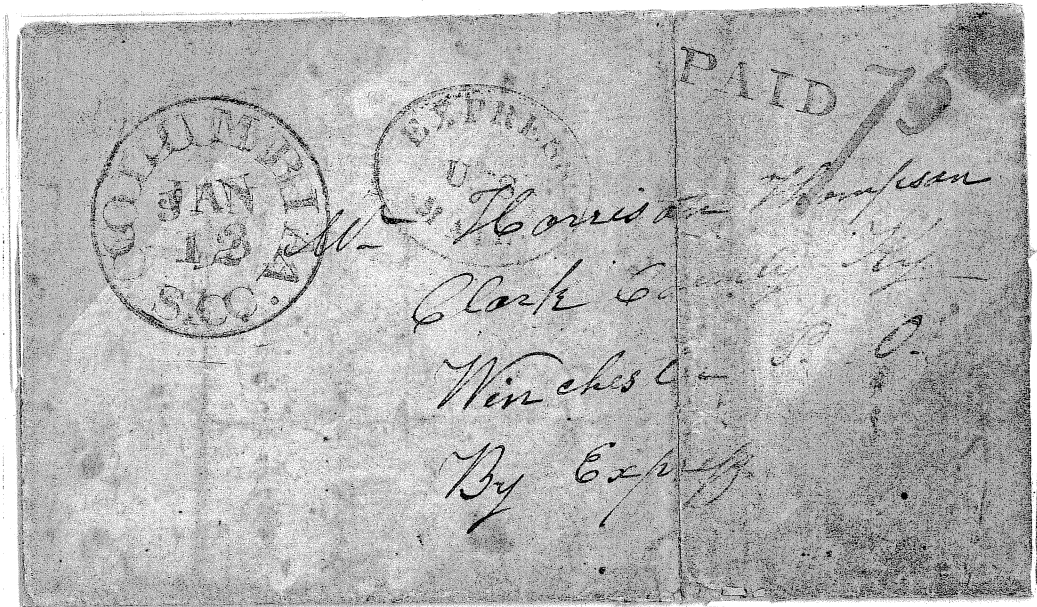
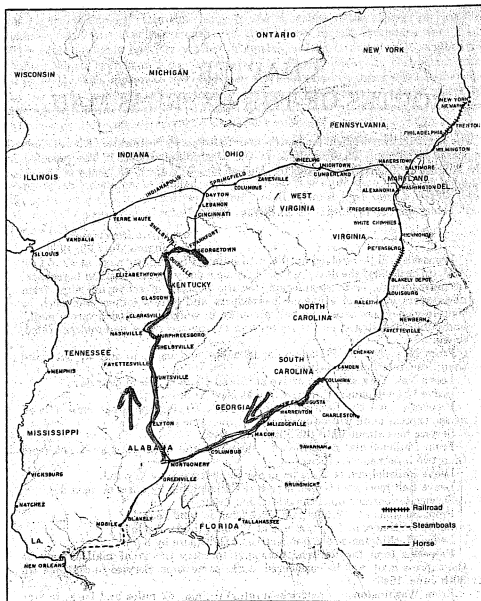
This cover bears a red "COLUMBIA S.C. NOV 14" (1837), "Express Mail", "PAID", and "75" single rate to New York. But it also bears a red oval "EXPRESS U.S. MAIL" [U.S. EXPRESS MAIL], a postal marking for Express Mail service. Ex Baker. Six or seven examples known.



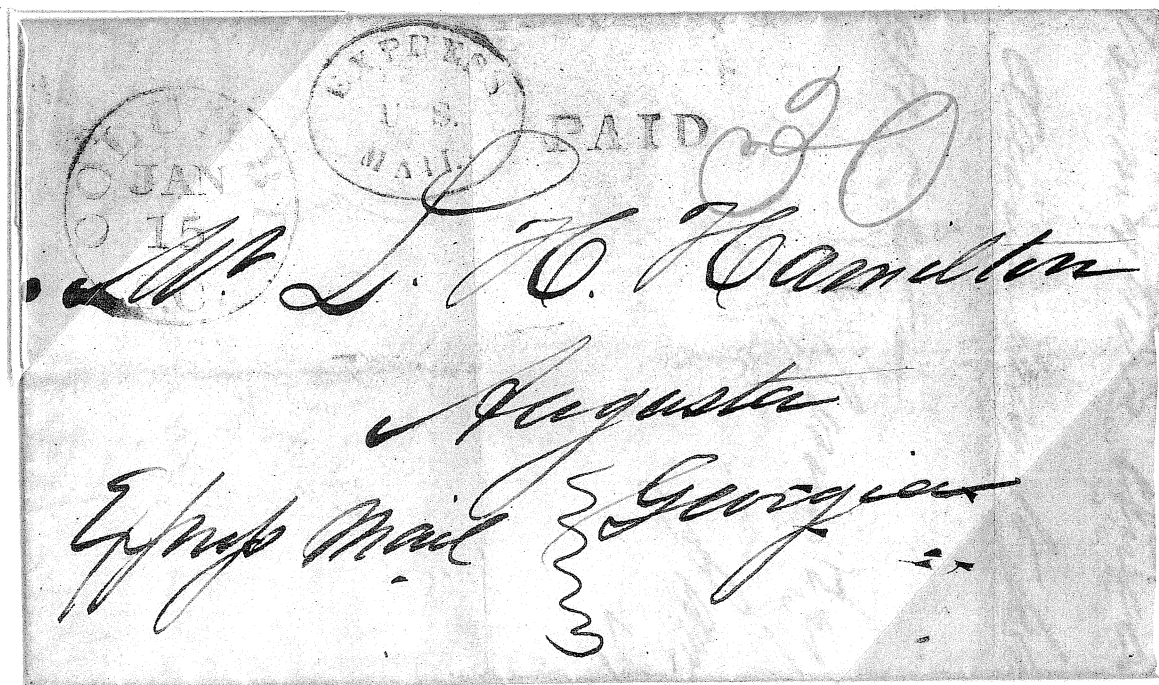
A second cover with red "COLUMBIA S.C. JUL 25" (1838), "PAID", "75" does not have "Express Mail" written by sender. However, it bears a black "EXPRESS U.S. MAIL" oval to the Secretary of War at Washington. Only known example in black, ex Baker.

Handstamped Express Mail Postmarks

THE EXPRESS MAIL ROUTES OF 1836-1839

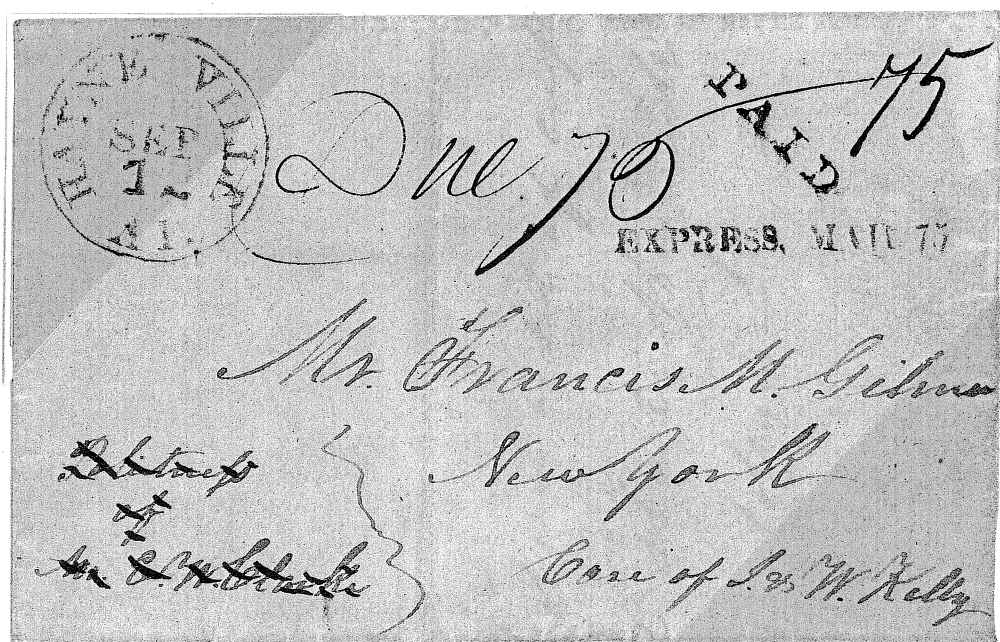


This very unusual usage "COLUMBIA S.C. JAN 12" changed to "JAN 13" (1838), "By Express", "PAID", "75" with red oval "EXPRESS U.S. MAIL" went through Montgomery south and then north on southwestern branch to Winchester, Ky. Winchester is just outside of Lexington which is to the southeast of Georgetown, an Express Mail post office.



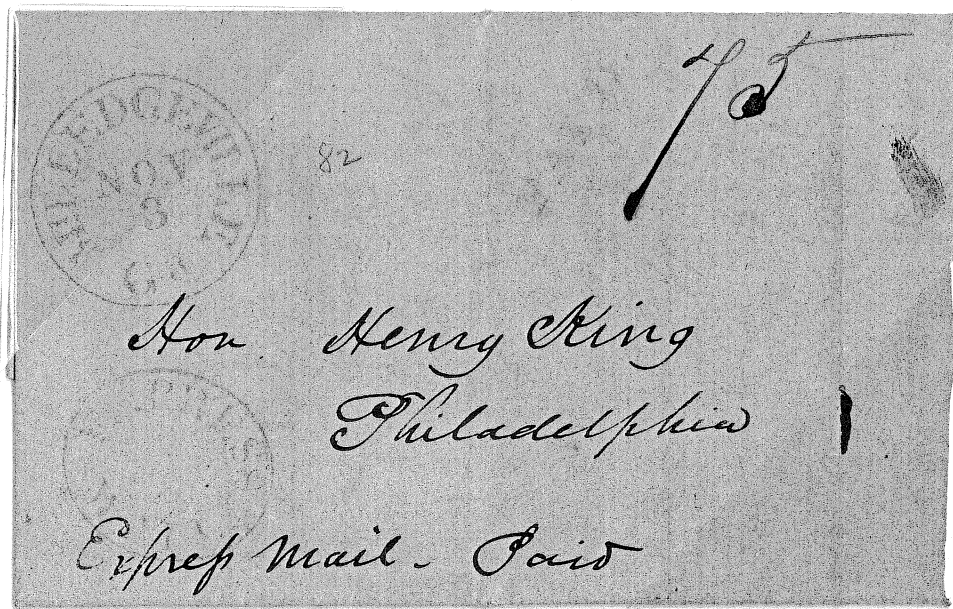
This is certainly one of the important Express Mail letters. It is postmarked "COLUMBIA S.C. JAN 15" (1838), "Express Mail", "PAID", and "30" to Augusta, Ga. with "EXPRESS U.S. MAIL" in red oval. It is a handstamped marking on one of four recorded 30¢ short rate covers for 30-80 miles.

Handstamped Express Mail Postmarks

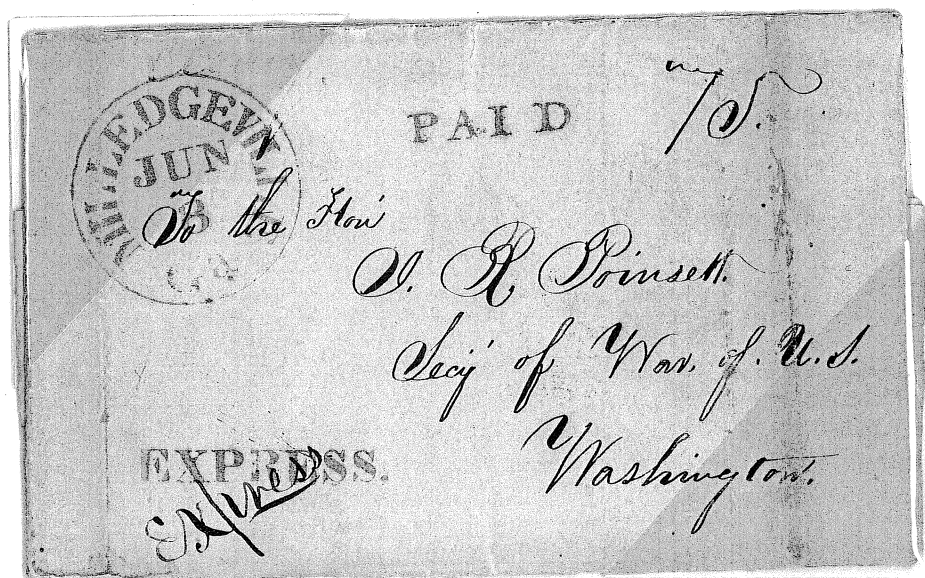


This is generally considered to be the most important Express Mail letter. It was postmarked at a small Alabama town "HAYNESVILLE AL. SEP 12" (1838), "PAID", and "75" with straight line "EXPRESS MAIL 75" also in black. It was rated "Due 75" for enclosure at New York. Haynesville is just to the south of Montgomery. Another Express Mail cover is known from this town but without the straight line postal marking. Ex Stannard.

Handstamped Express Mail Postmarks



This cover "MILLEDGEVILLE Ga. NOV 3" (1837), "Express mail-Paid", "PAID", "75" to Philadelphia was mailed on the third day of required prepayment. It also bears a red oval "EXPRESS MAIL". Three examples known.

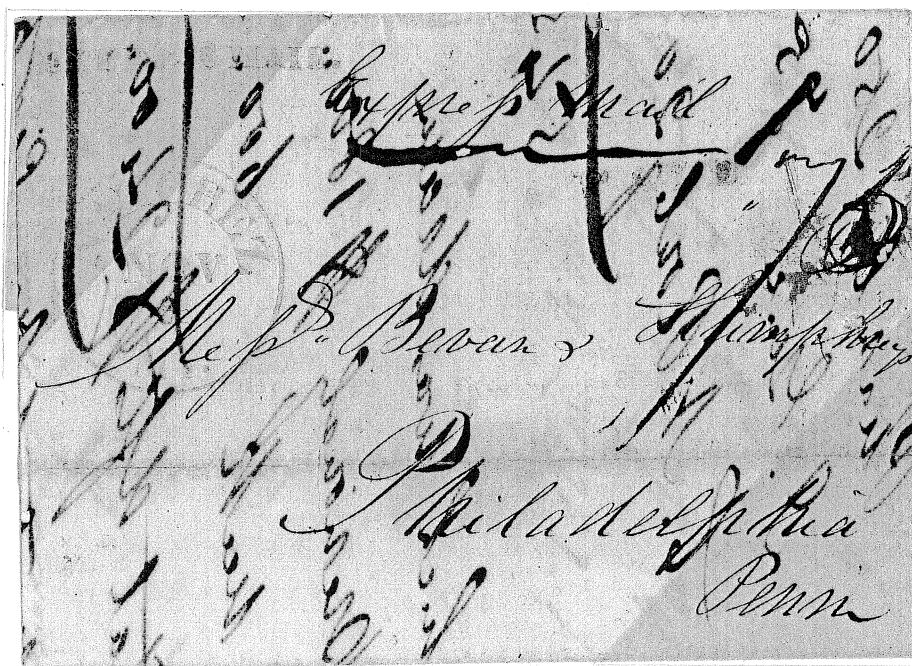


Also from "MILLEDGEVILLE Ga. JUN 8" (1838) with "Express", red "PAID" and "75" to Secretary of War Poinsett in Washington, this cover bears red straight line "EXPRESS.". Four examples recorded, one in museum.

Handstamped Express Mail Postmarks

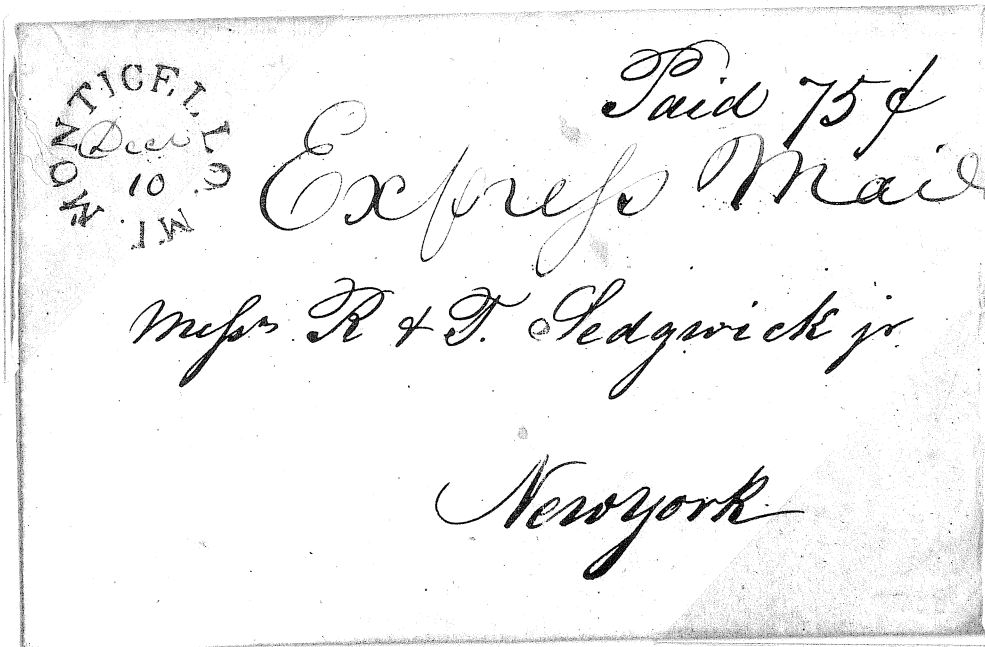


This cover with "AUGUSTA Ga. JAN 17" (1838), "PAID" and "37½" to Milledgeville bears red straight line "EXPRESS MAIL" handstamp. It is a short rate usage for 80 – 150 miles south on the southern route. Milledgeville was an Express Mail post office. Only known example, ex Baker.

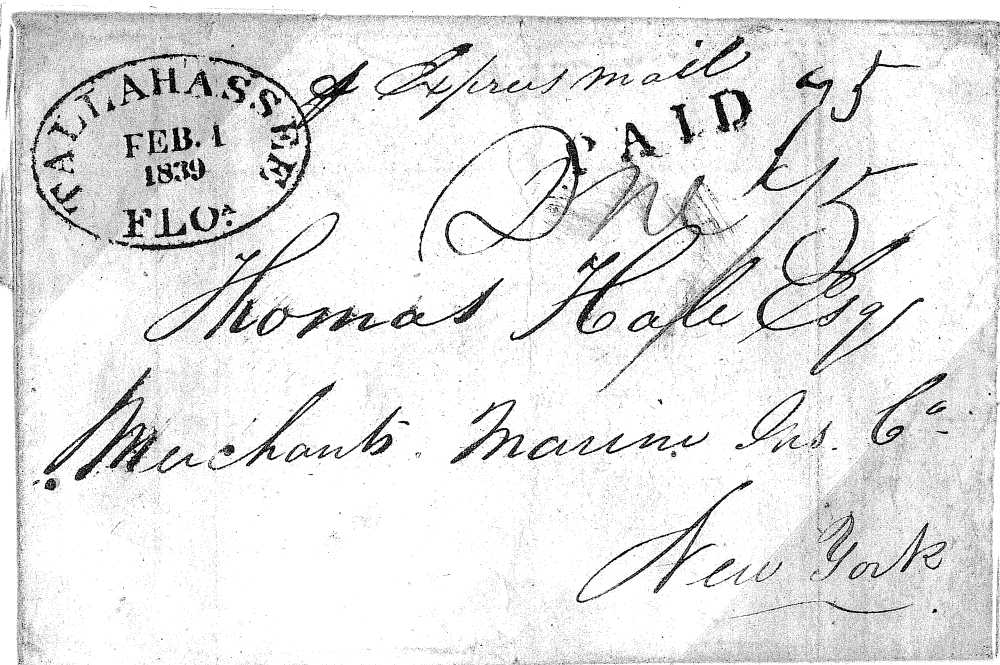


Although the markings are light, this cover "NATCHEZ MI. NOV 4" (1838), "Express Mail", "PAID", and "75" to Philadelphia shows the only known example of red straight line "EXPRESS MAIL."

Unusual Postmarks with the Express Mail

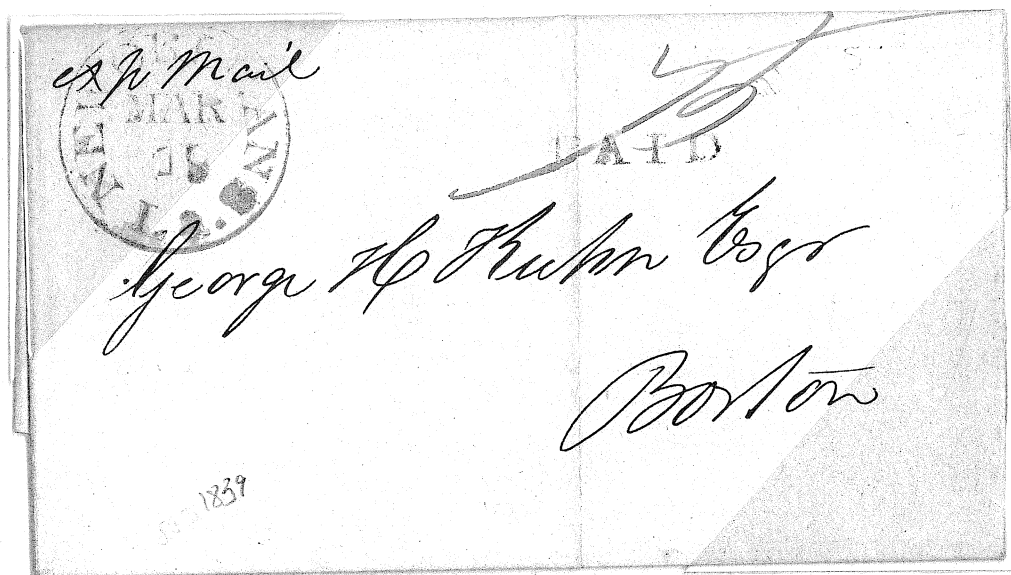


This blue rimless "MONTICELLO. MI. Dec 10"(1837), "Express Mail", "Paid 75¢" demonstrates a fancy postmark of origin. This is a small town due south of Jackson. It probably went to New York via New Orleans although the southwestern express route was open.

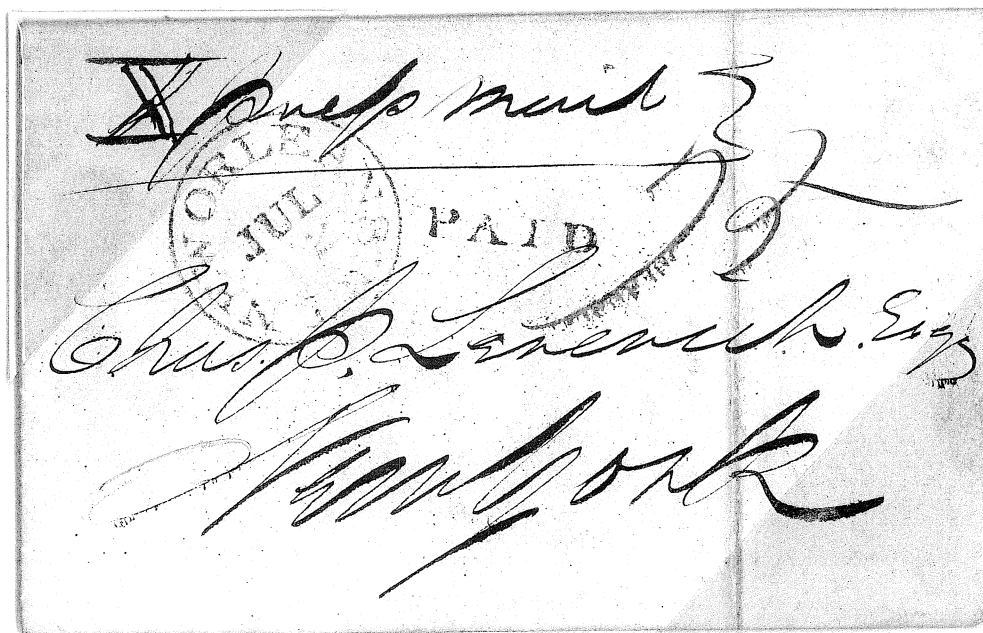


This black oval year dated "TALLAHASSEE FLOA . FEB 1 1839" is another very fancy postmark as well as being a territorial usage. It is marked "pr Express Mail", "PAID", and "75", but it was charged "Due 75" for an enclosure. The New York postmaster seems to have opened many Express Mail covers to discover underpayment. Ex Gibson, Ward, and Haas.

Unusual Notations with the Express Mail

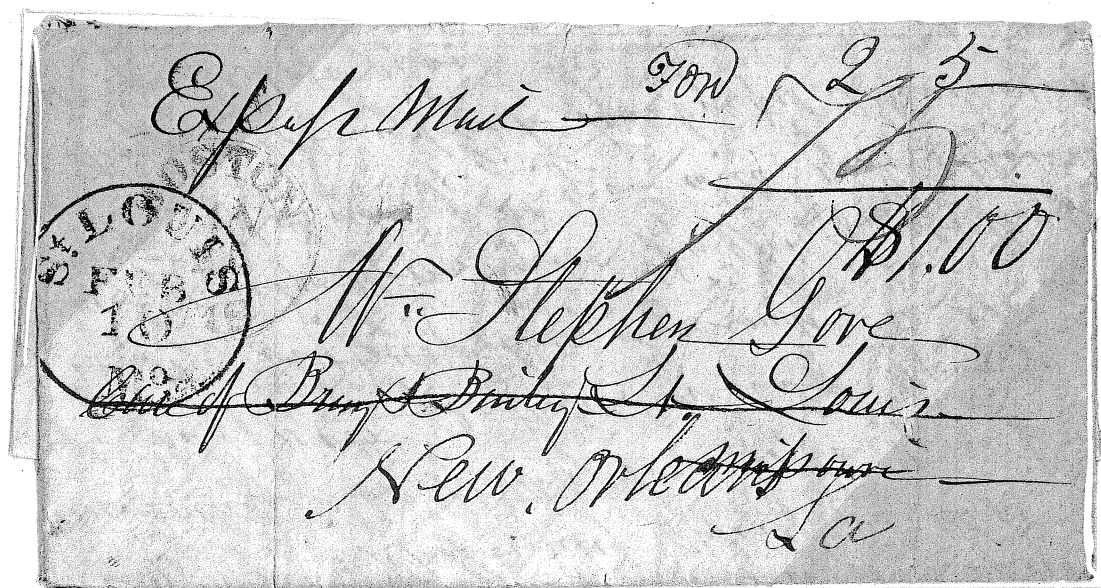


One cannot overemphasize the point that a cover cannot be considered to be an Express Mail letter unless that designation is written or, more rarely, handstamped on its face. The cover "NEW ORLEANS La. MAR 19" (1839), "PAID", and "75" to Boston bears an unusual "exp mail" notation.

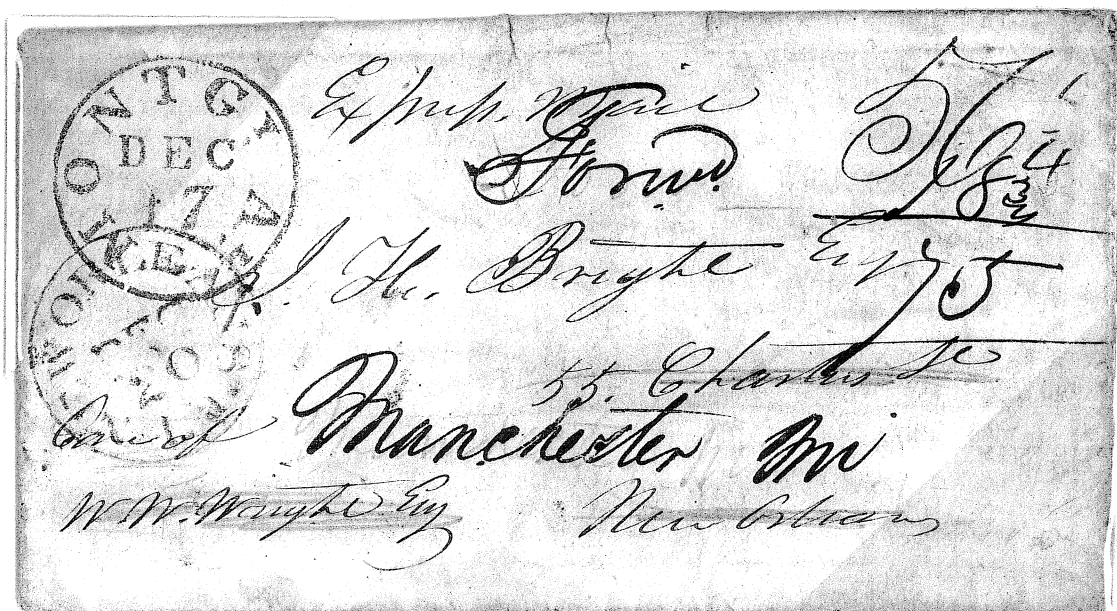


"Xpress mail" was written by the sender as an amusing variation for the usual notation. The "NEW ORLEANS La. JUL 12" (1838) cover was "PAID", "75" single rate to New York from Leverich correspondence.

Domestic Forwarded Express Mail Usages



This cover was sent "Express Mail", "75" from "BOSTON MS JAN 21" (1837). But the addressee had moved on, so it was "Fowd", "25" due, and black "St. LOUIS Mo. FEB 10" postmark added to New Orleans with total postage due "\$1.00". Carried by Express Mail only on southern route.

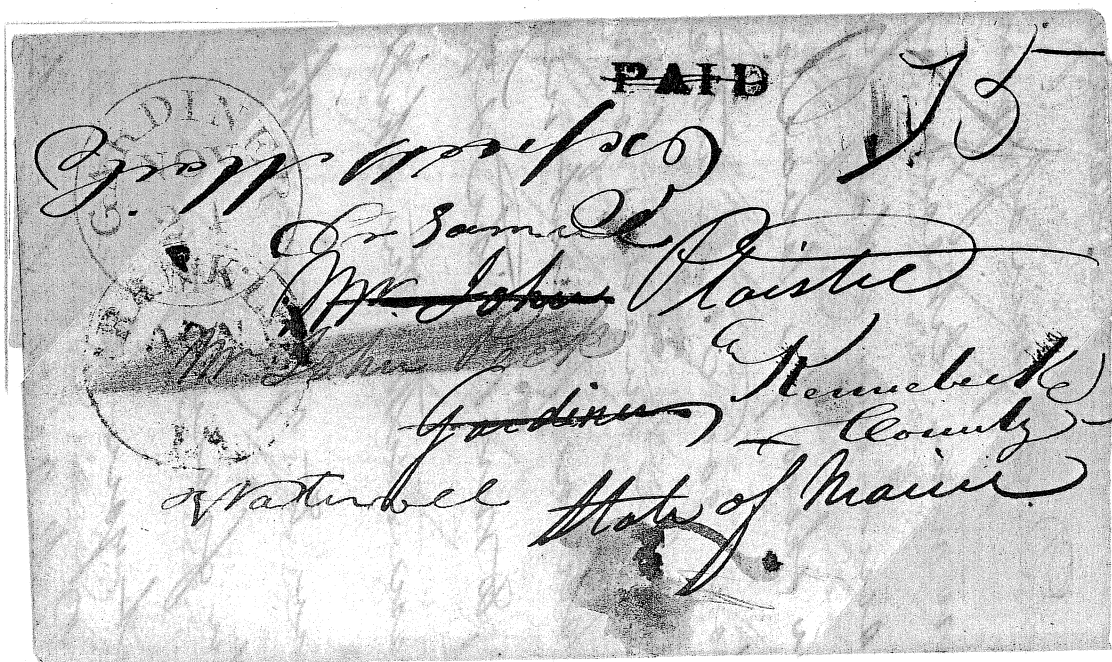


This is the earliest recorded Express Mail cover that was forwarded, and it is the only known short rate cover with that usage too. It is postmarked red "MONTGOMERY ALA. DEC 17" (1836), "Express Mail", "56 1/4" to New Orleans where it was "Fowd. 18 3/4" totalling "75" with blue "NEW ORLEANS, La. DEC 20" to Manchester, Miss. (now Yazoo City).

Domestic Forwarded Express Mail Usages



This is a letter from the Peck correspondence. It was sent unpaid "Express Single" with "NEW-YORK MAY 19" (1837) and "75". That charge was paid by the forwarder. The cover was readdressed by regular mail to Montgomery with "MOBILE A. MAY 28" and "18¾ due. There is manuscript notation on the reverse requesting: "if Mr. Peck has left for up country- please forward to Montgomery and oblige R.C.W. &Co."

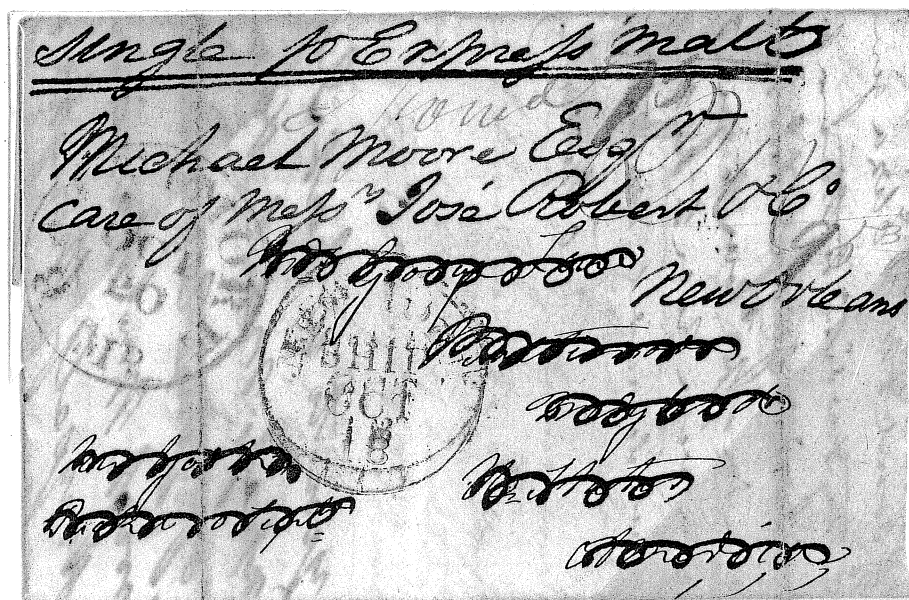


The "FRANKLIN La. NOV 8" (1837) is a rare town with "Express Mail" (upside down), "PAID" and "75" to Gardiner, Maine, also an unusual destination. Again the express postage had to be paid at this date. The cover was forwarded "GARDINER Me. NOV 21" with "6" to Waterville. This is the lowest postage rate for under 30 miles.

Domestic Forwarded Express Mail Usages

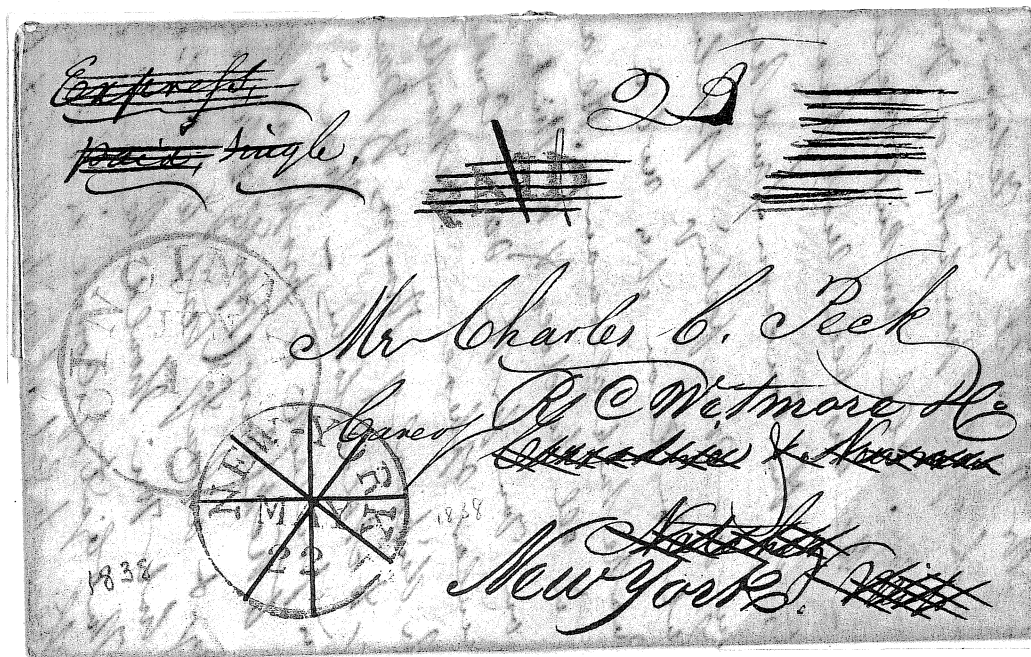


This cover bears "Per Express Mail" with blue "PHILADELPHIA PA JAN 31" (1838), and "PAID" in octagon, "75" single express rate. At New Orleans it was forwarded red "NEW ORLEANS La. MAR 22" unpaid "18 $\frac{3}{4}$ " to Natchez, a long delay.

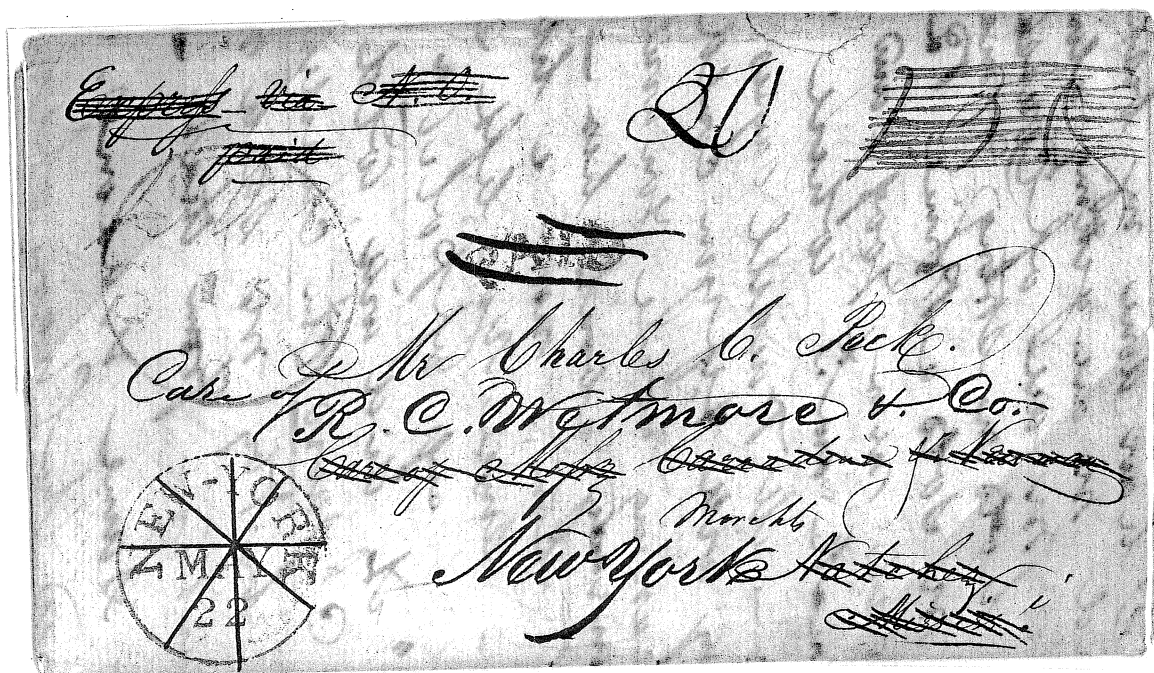


This is a very unusual forwarded usage. The original postmark was "NEW YORK SHIP OCT 18" (1837) from London with 18 $\frac{3}{4}$ ¢ plus 2¢ ship fee = 20 $\frac{3}{4}$ ¢ due to Baltimore. There it was forwarded "pr Express Mail", "BALTIMORE MD. OCT 20", "Ford. 75" totaled "95 $\frac{3}{4}$ " to New Orleans. This usage could only have occurred before required prepayment of the express fee. The reverse side of the cover is covered with similar notations with "Express Mail" written twice.

Domestic Forwarded Express Mail Usages

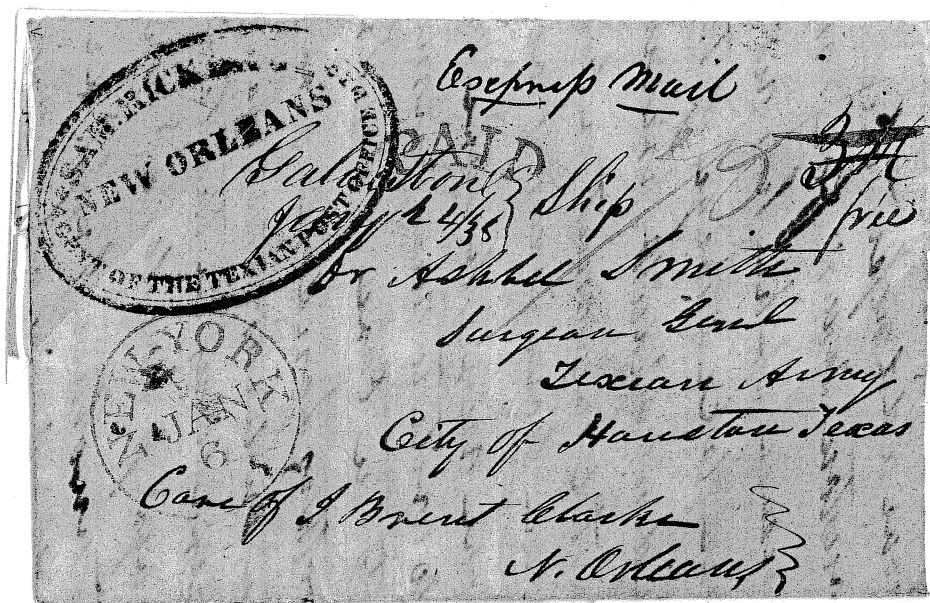


These two Peck covers are the only two round trip covers known. This "Express paid single" with "NEW-YORK MAY 22" (1838), "PAID", "75" went via New Orleans to Natchez. Then it was carried on a steamboat to Cincinnati with "CINCINNATI O. JUN 15" unpaid "25" back to New York.



The other cover was marked "Express via N.O. paid" with double express rate "1.50", "PAID" with same date postmark at New York. At Natchez it went north. There is "forwarded from Cincinnati by H. Clark" on the reverse. It went in the same mail as the other cover, double rate "50" to New York.

Forwarded Express Mail Usages to Texas Republic



This "Express Mail cover originated "NEW-YORK JAN 6" (1838), "PAID", "75" to Surgeon General of Republic of Texas. At New Orleans it received "SAM RICKER JR. AGENT OF THE TEXIAN POST OFFICE NEW ORLEANS" in black oval. It was postmarked "Galveston Jany 24/38", "Ship" and "34" which was changed to "free" because the addressee had Texan franking privilege.

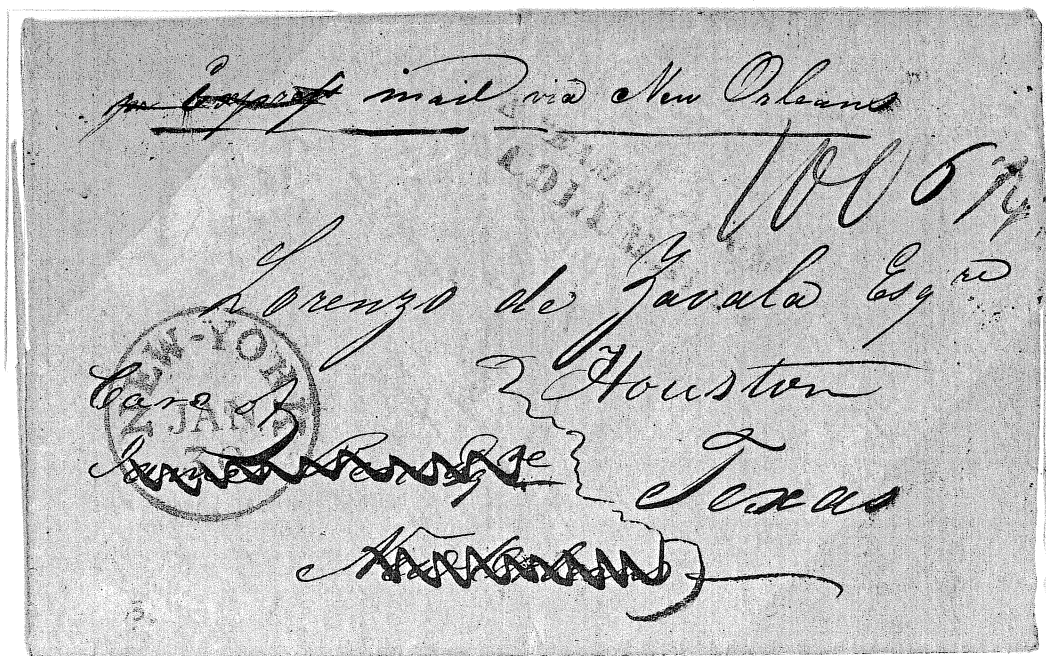


This well-known cover with "Express Mail" and red "BALTIMORE MD. JUL 4" (1838), "PAID", "75" was sent to an addressee in Galveston in care of a New Orleans mercantile firm. It received a clear strike of the Ricker oval and also is marked "STEAM PACKET COLUMBIA" in rare black ink to the port city of Galveston with no Texas postal markings. Ex Mayer.

Forwarded Express Mail Usages to Texas Republic

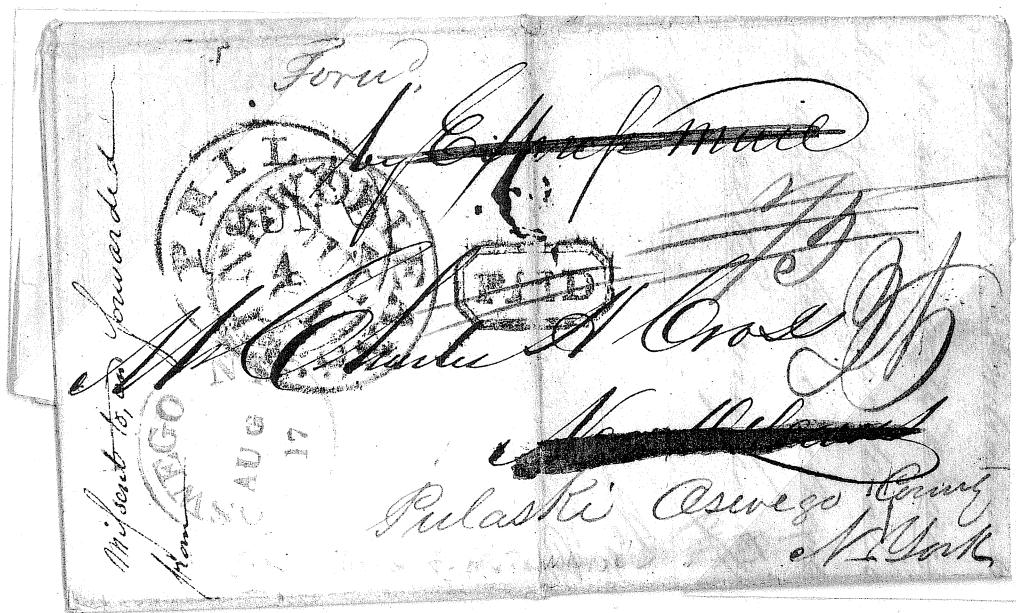


This cover "Express Mail", "WASHINGTON CITY D.C. MAR 3" (1838), "PAID", "75", "via New Orleans" was forwarded by Ricker, but there is a red "STEAM PACKET COLUMBIA". The Galveston manuscript postmark indicates "Free" usage to Texan Secretary of War. A.L.S. Ashbel Smith, who negotiated treaty of Texas independence with Mexico.

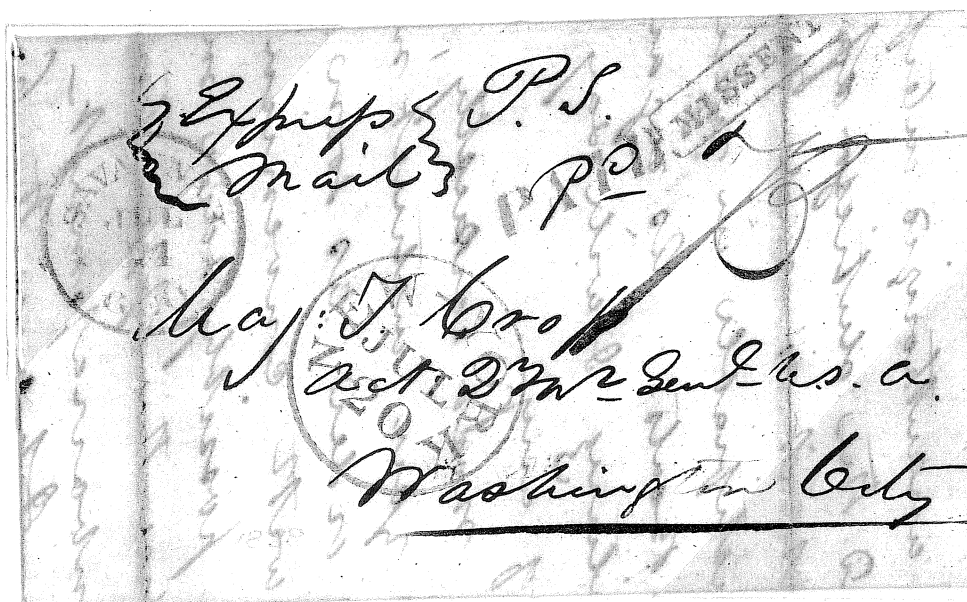


This "NEW-YORK JAN 30" (1839) usage was also sent unpaid at the quadruple rate so "per Express Mail" is crossed out, and it is rated "100". The postage was paid by the New Orleans firm (notation at lower left) which sent it via "STEAM PACKET COLUMBIA" in red to Galveston where "6¼" charge was added.

Missent Express Mail Usages

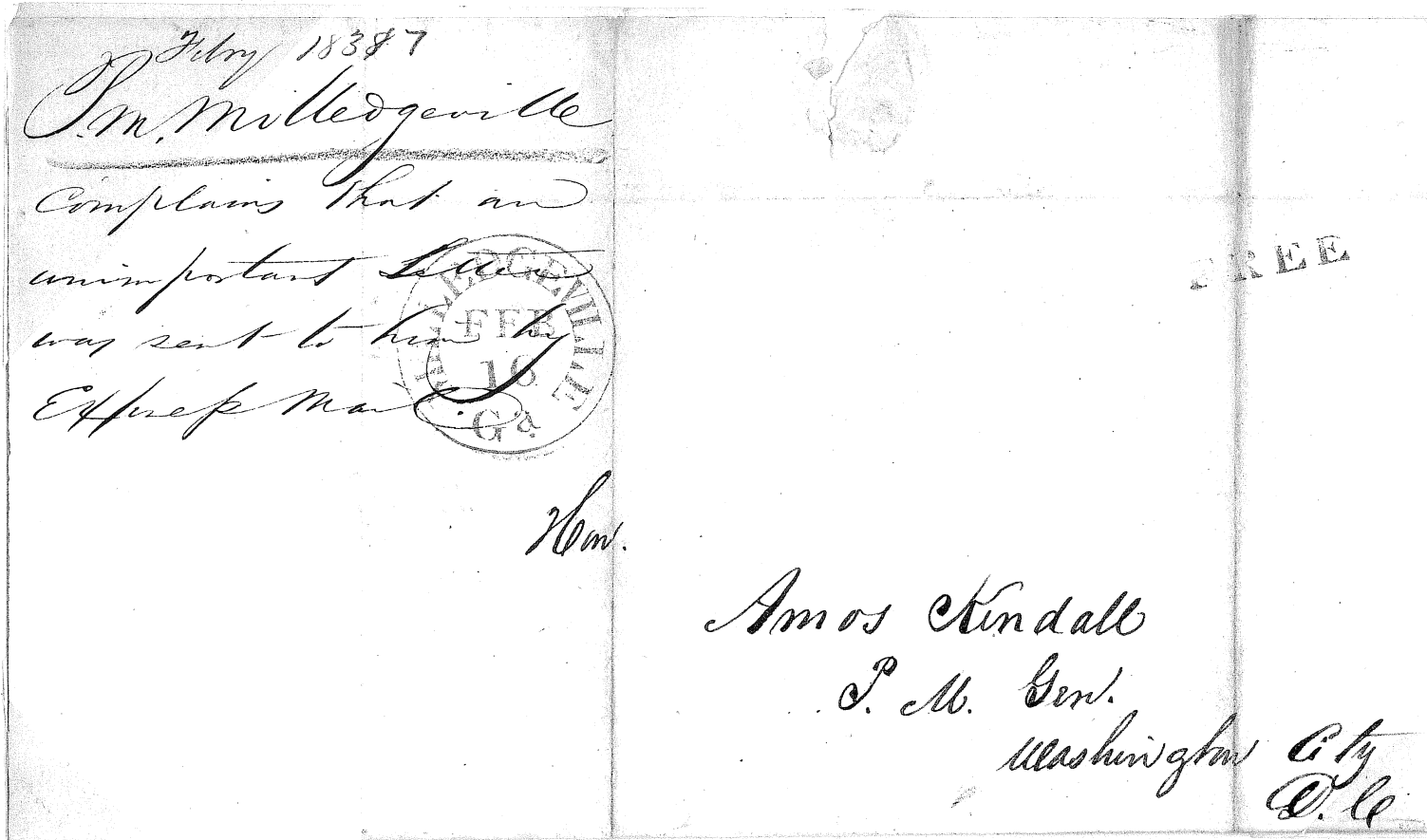


This is the only Express Mail cover with three different town postmarks. It began with "PHILADA PA JUN 4" (1838), "Express Mail", "PAID", "75" in red ms. to New Orleans. Then it was forwarded "Fowd", blue "NEW ORLEANS La; JUL 21" (six weeks later) with "25" due to Pulaski, Oswego Co. N.Y. But it was "missent to and forwarded from" "OSWEGO N.Y. AUG 17" in red.



This is the only MISSENT handstamp on an Express Mail cover. Its origin was "Fort Heileman, E.F. (East Florida Territory) 9th July 1838". It was sent "Express Mail P.S." (Public Service), "SAVANNAH GEO JUL 14", "PAID", "75" to Washington, but was "MISSENT" in rectangle of "NEW-YORK JUL 20". It shows six days transit time, on schedule.

Official Mail and the Express Mail



The sending of Express Mail letters with due triple postage caused officials used to receiving their mail free by virtue of the franking privilege endless unhappiness. An outcry for salvation from these costs resulted – see below letter from postmaster complaining to P.M.G. Kendall. There is notation on the reverse “P.M. Milledgeville complains that an unimportant letter was sent to him by Express Mail.” The solution was to require prepayment of postage on all Express Mail postage, the first required prepayment for any postal service.

Amos Kendall
P.M. Gen.

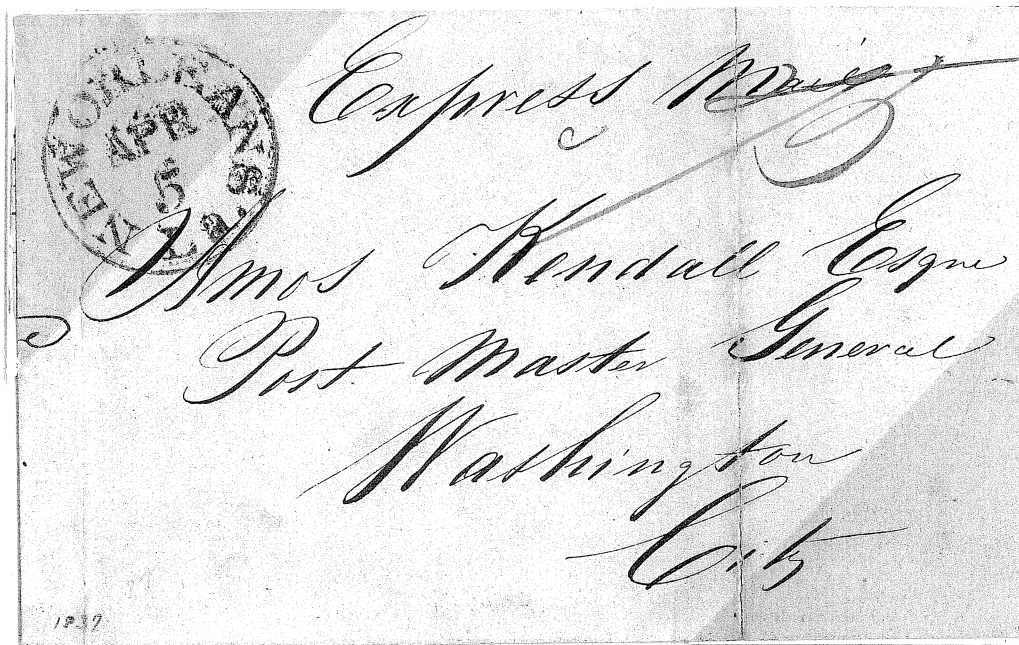
You will perceive that the enclosed letter to me was of no value to me, and was an unnecessary expenditure of 75 cts. the Dep was always very severe on me by omitting any little part of my duty, but suppose the P.M. at Washington City is blameless.

Very Respectfully
Your obt. servt.
Sol D. Bitton

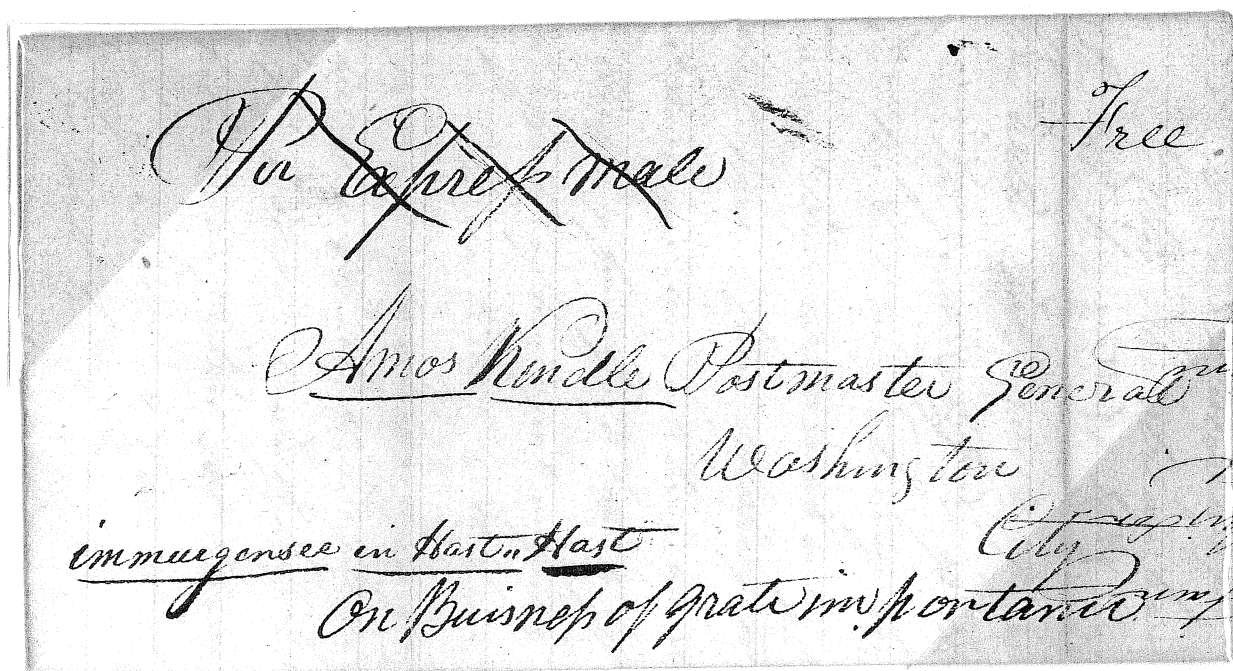
P.S. Should you wish to learn of the throwing off of sacks [of mail] for the purpose of carrying passengers on Route 2353, you can do so by addressing me on the subject, and requesting proof &c.

Sol. D. Bitton

Official Mail and the Express Mail

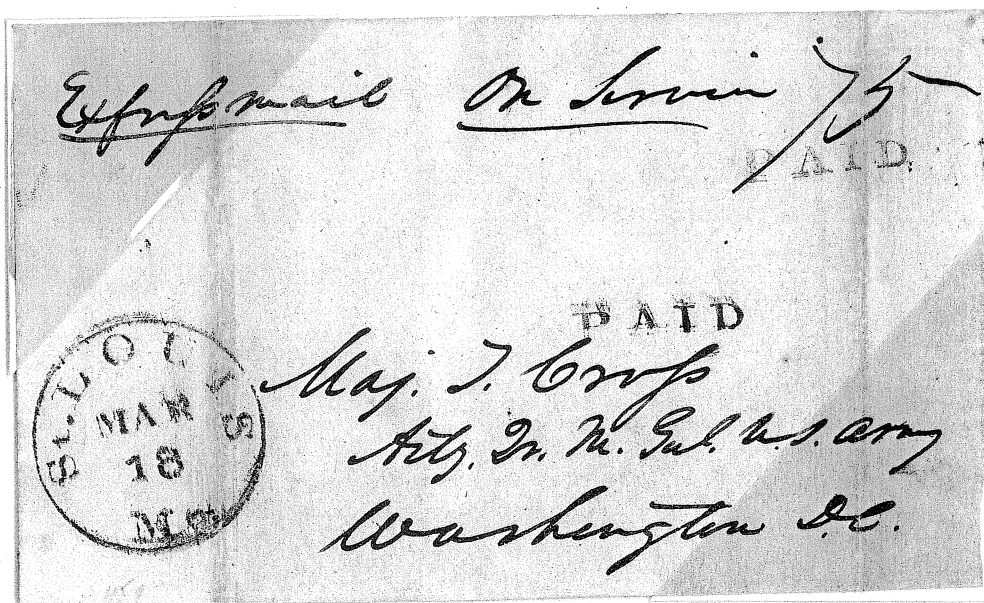


This cover "NEW ORLEANS La. APR 5" (1837) was sent "Express Mail" to Postmaster General Amos Kendall in Washington. Even the P.M.G. had to pay Express Mail postage charges because free mail was prohibited in the express, so the cover is rated "75" due.

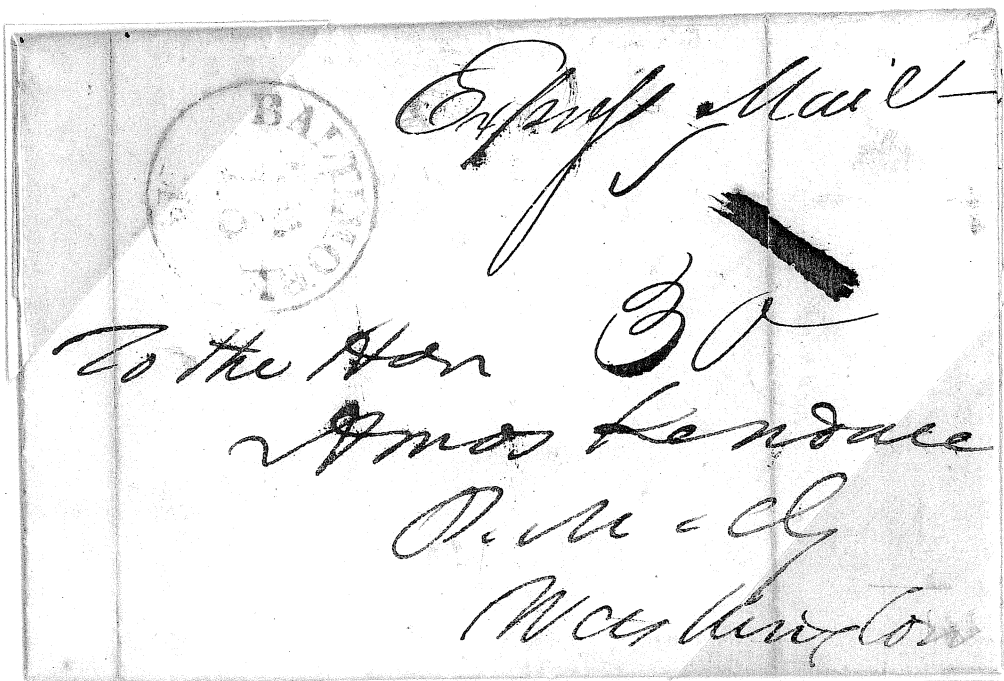


The "Per Express Male" was crossed out on this letter "On Buisness of grate importance" to the P.M.G. sent "Free: from the postmaster of Liberty, Ohio on February 4, 1838. Free mail was prohibited in the express. The contents are about a gang of swindlers "yea worse than common Highwaymen".

Official Mail and the Express Mail



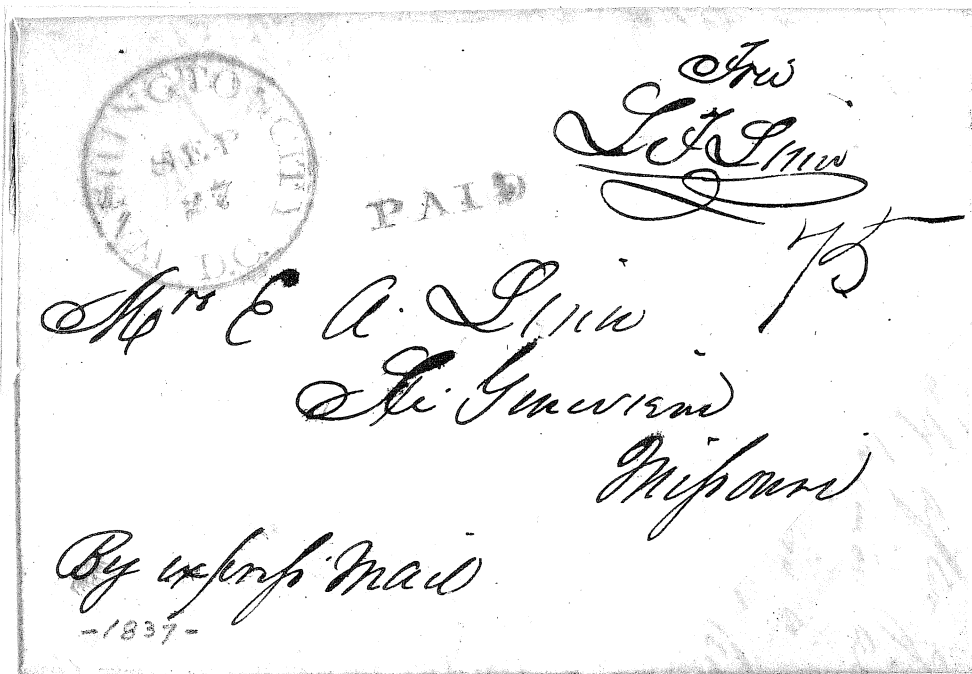
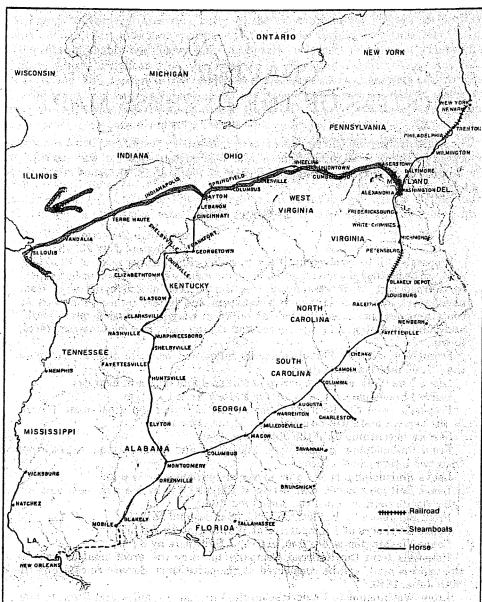
Other covers already shown have demonstrated addressees who held the franking privilege. This cover "St. LOUIS Mo. MAR 18" (1838) because it went by "Express Mail" over the western and midwestern routes had to pay the triple postage "PAID" and "75" to Washington, "on service" but not free.



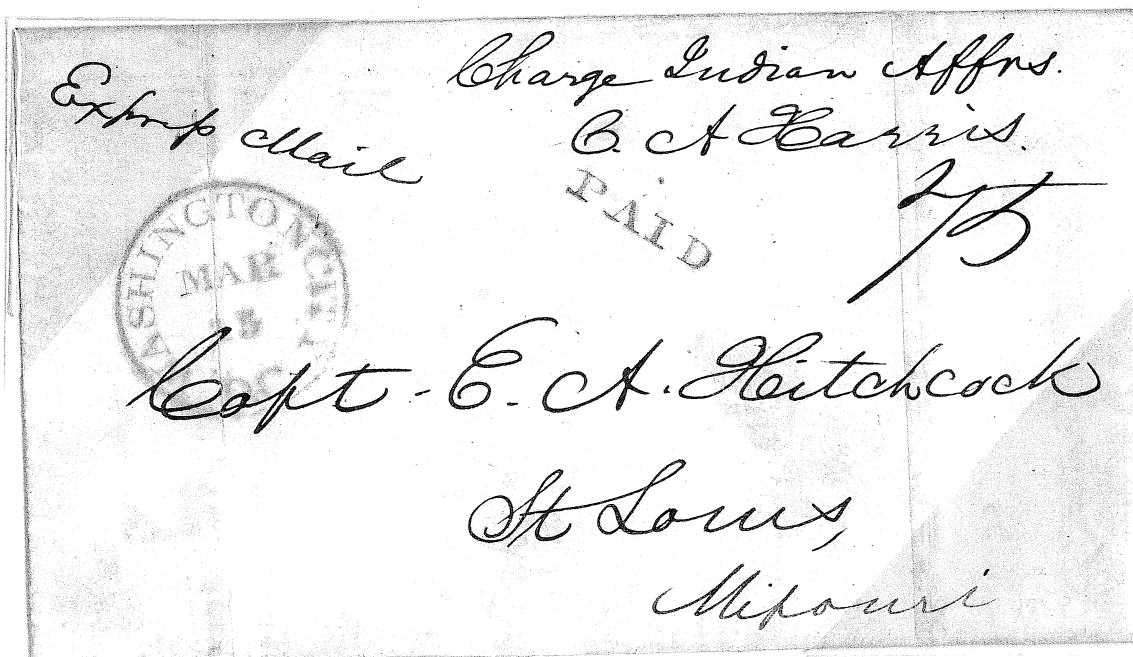
This cover is addressed to the Postmaster General and was first handstamped "FREE". But because the cover was marked "Express Mail" the postmaster at "BALTIMORE Md. MAY 16" (1837) sent it at the triple short rate "30" for the 30-80 mile rate between Baltimore and Washington.

Official Mail and the Express Mail

THE EXPRESS MAIL ROUTES OF 1836-1839

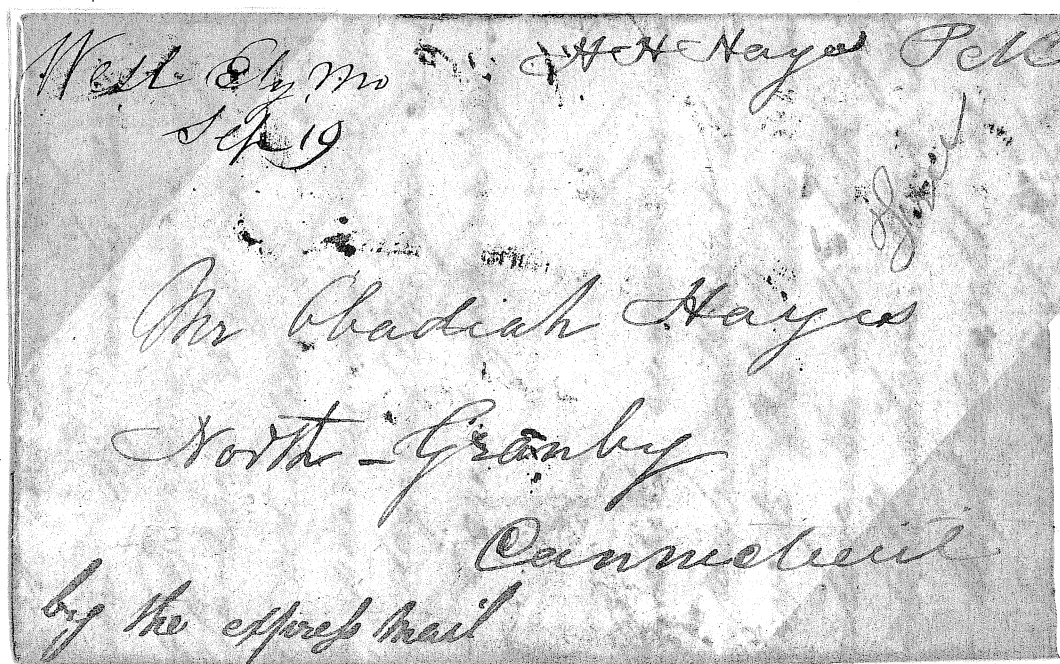


This cover "WASHINGTON CITY D.C. SEP 27" (1838), "By express Mail" is actually franked "Free L F Linn", a Congressman, but he had to pay the "75" Express Mail single rate to St. Genevieve, a small town on the Mississippi River below St. Louis, a rare western usage after the western branch had been discontinued. The Express Mail carried it to Dayton.

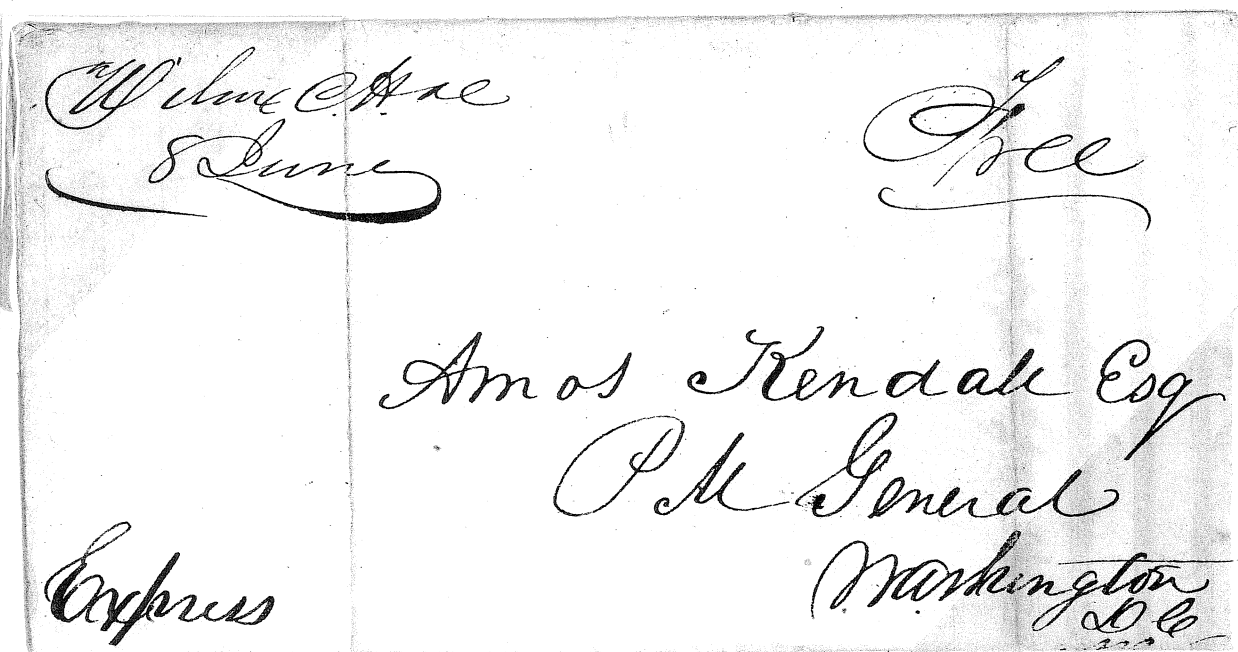


One of three similar covers this was sent by the Commissioner for Indian Affairs who held the franking privilege. But it was sent "Express Mail" from "WASHINGTON CITY D.C. MAR 15" (1838), so the "75" postage was "PAID" and charged to a post office box account at the Washington post office. It also shows a usage to St. Louis, so this is a very rare western usage, east to west which is more rare than the reverse direction. The western branch was operational at this time so this letter was carried entirely by Express Mail.

Official Mail and the Express Mail



These two covers are the only known covers that may actually have been sent free by Express Mail. The cover with "West Ely Mo Sep 19" (1838) is franked by the postmaster who wrote "Free" and endorsed it "by the express mail". At this date the western route had closed, but it could have gone by Express Mail from Dayton to New York.

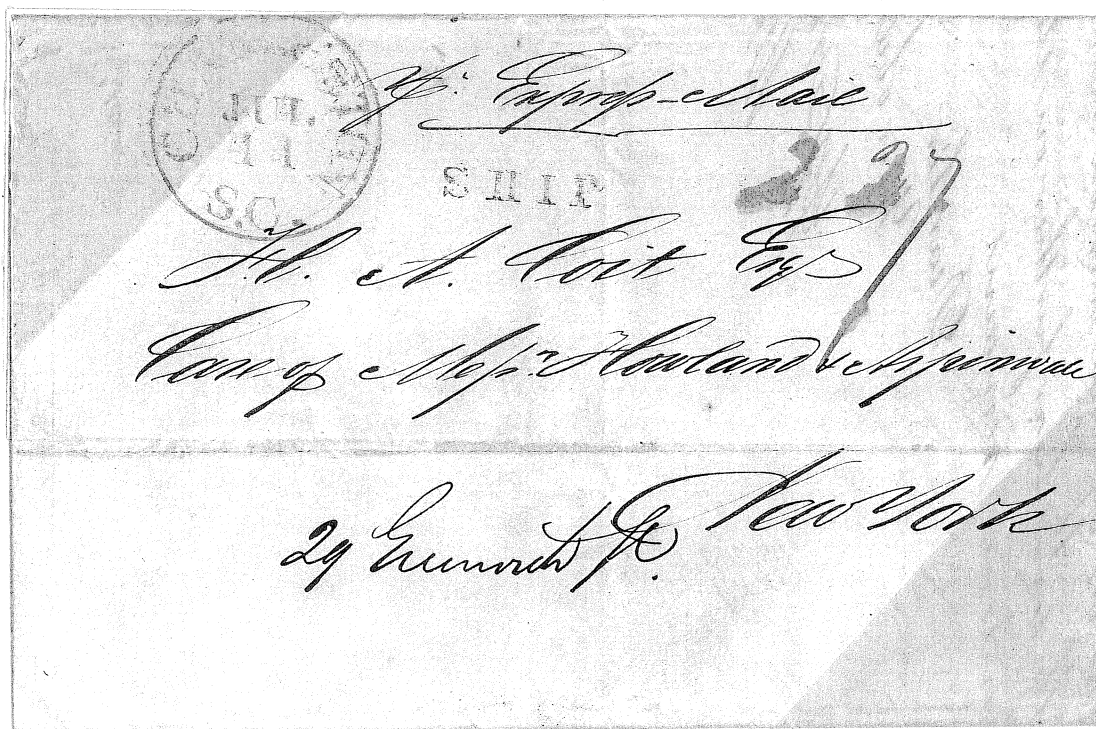


This cover postmarked "Wilcox C.H. Al. 8 June" (1839) is marked "Free" and "Express" to P.M.G. Kendall. This is a very late usage, the last month of the service, so it might have been sent by Express Mail.

Ship Postal Markings with Express Mail Usages

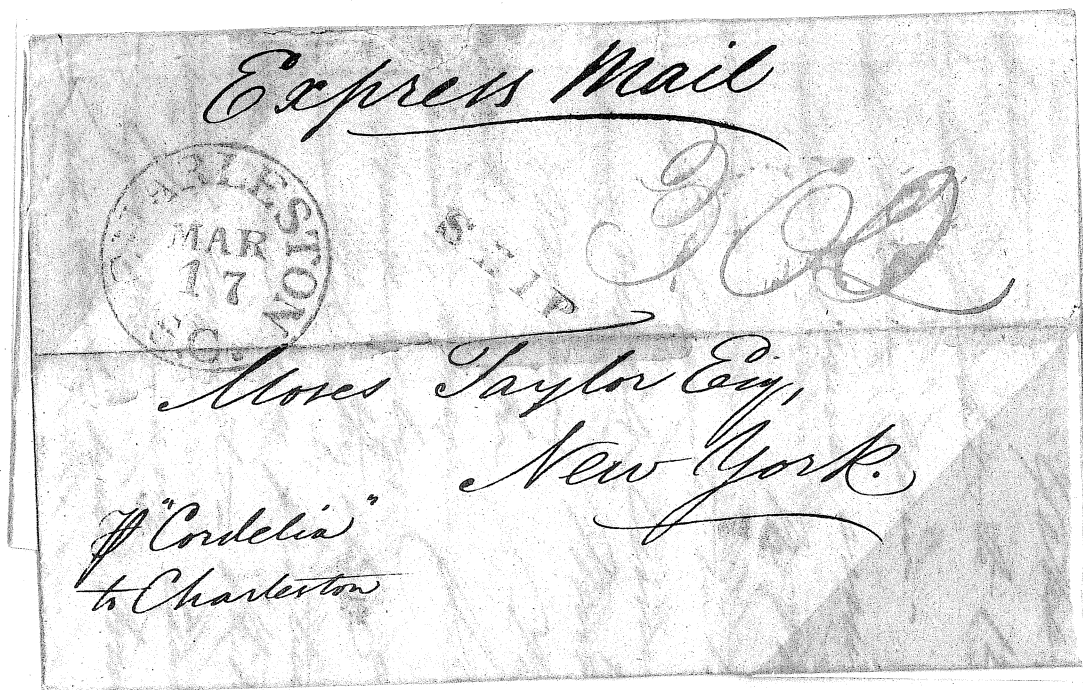


Incoming ship usages on Express Mail letters are known from three port cities. This example "CHARLESTON S.C. MAR 18" (1837) with "Express Mail", "pr Catherine via Charleston" from Matanzas, Cuba has red "SHIP" and "77" (75¢ express plus 2¢ ship) to New York.

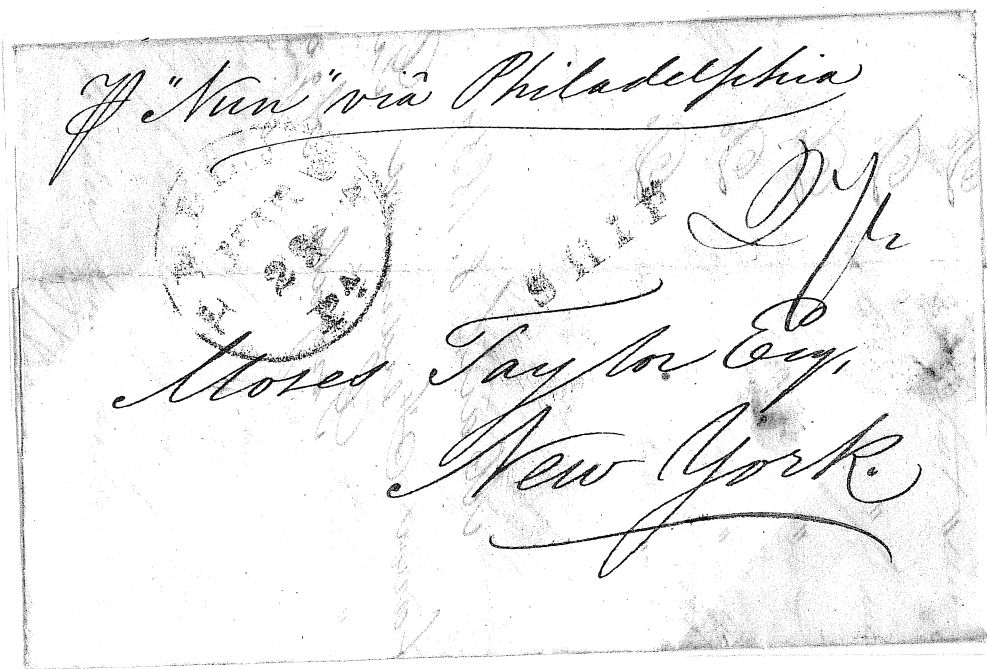


This June 29, 1837 letter from Cuba is postmarked "CHARLESTON S.C. JUL 11", "SHIP", "pr Express Mail" and "227", triple express postage for enclosures plus 2¢ ship. No double rate \$1.52 ship covers are known from Charleston. This cover would have been carried over the Express Mail branch between Charleston and Columbia (service commenced July 1, 1837).

Ship Postal Markings with Express Mail Usages

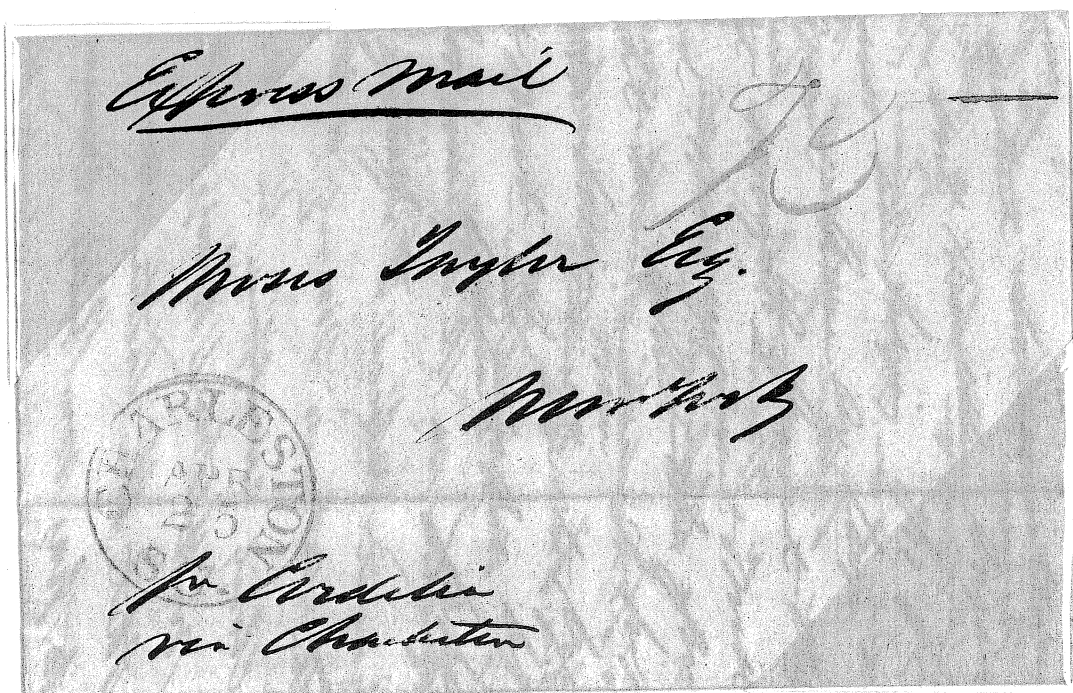


From the Moses Taylor correspondence this cover from Cuba has "Express Mail", "pr Cordelia to Charleston" with postmark "CHARLESTON S.C. MAR 17" (1837), "SHIP", and "302" postmarks, a quadruple rate with ship usage to New York. Only known example.

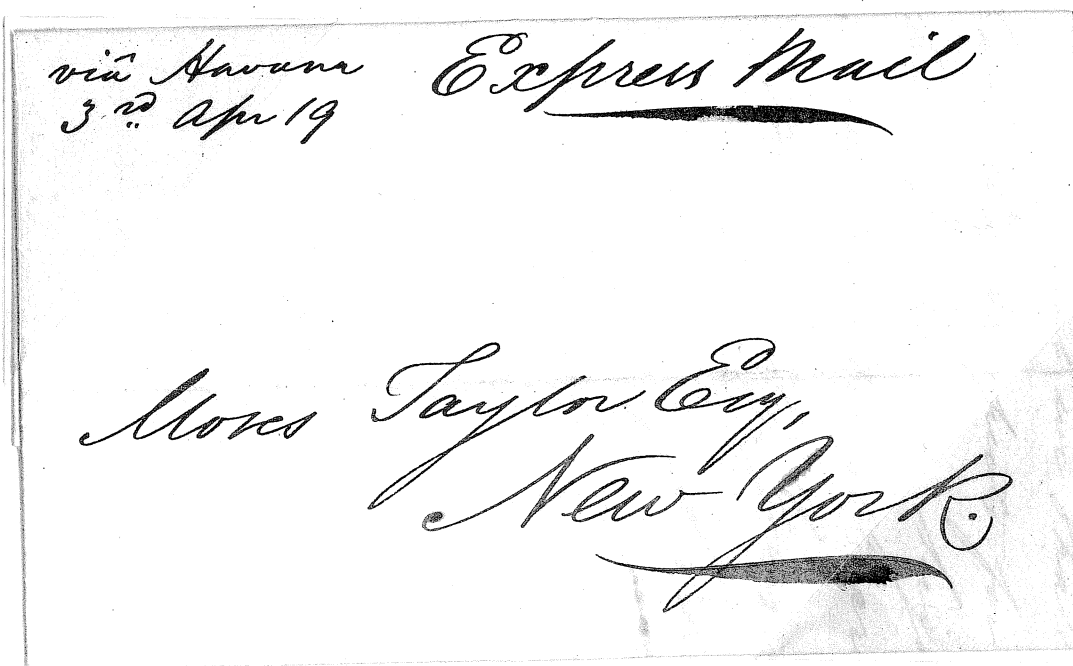


This is a second cover from the same correspondence also written at Matanzas March 9, 1837. It is an exact copy of the contents of the above letter sent by Express Mail. That letter was marked "original" and this is marked "duplicate". It was the practice at the time to send several copies of important letters to ensure that at least one would arrive. Sent by "PHILADA PA MAR 23", "SHIP" and "27" for double 12½¢ plus 2¢ ship.

Ship Postal Markings with Express Mail Usages

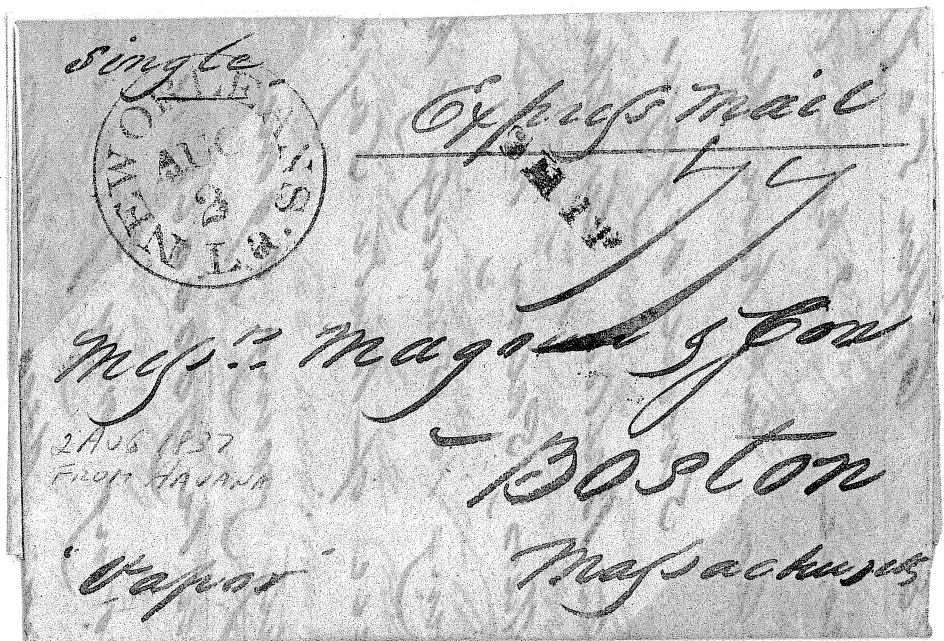


Not all ship covers have "SHIP" postmarks. This cover with Cuban origin and markings "CHARLESTON S.C. APR 25" (1837), "Express Mail", "pr Cordelia via Charleston" was handed to the post office without requesting the ship fee, so it is just "75" single rate to New York.

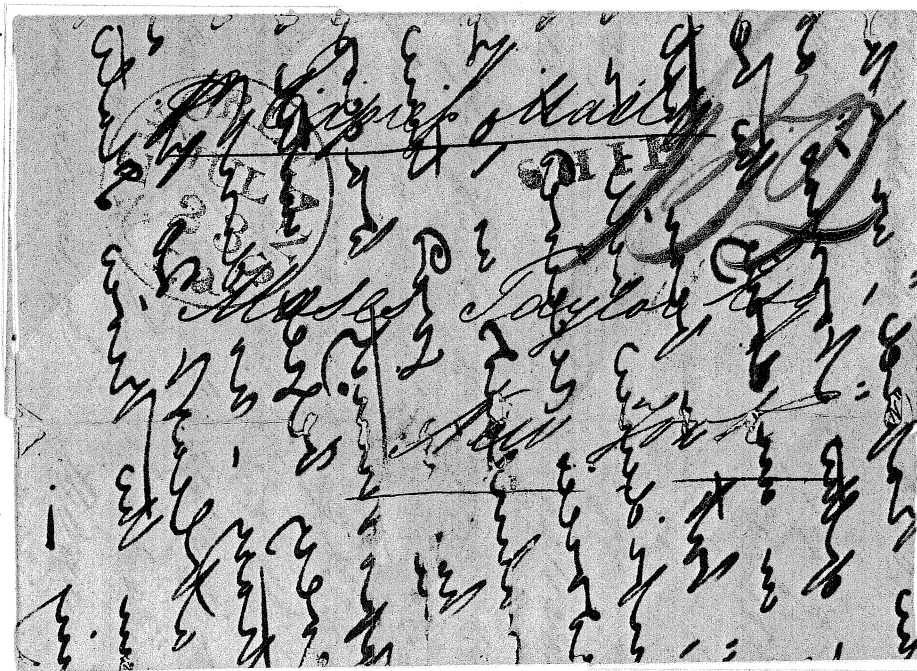


This 1837 letter was meant to be an "Express Mail" letter by ship probably Charleston. It is a triplicate copy with original and duplicate sent via Havana. It was apparently carried directly to New York and never entered the mails.

Ship Postal Markings with Express Mail Usages

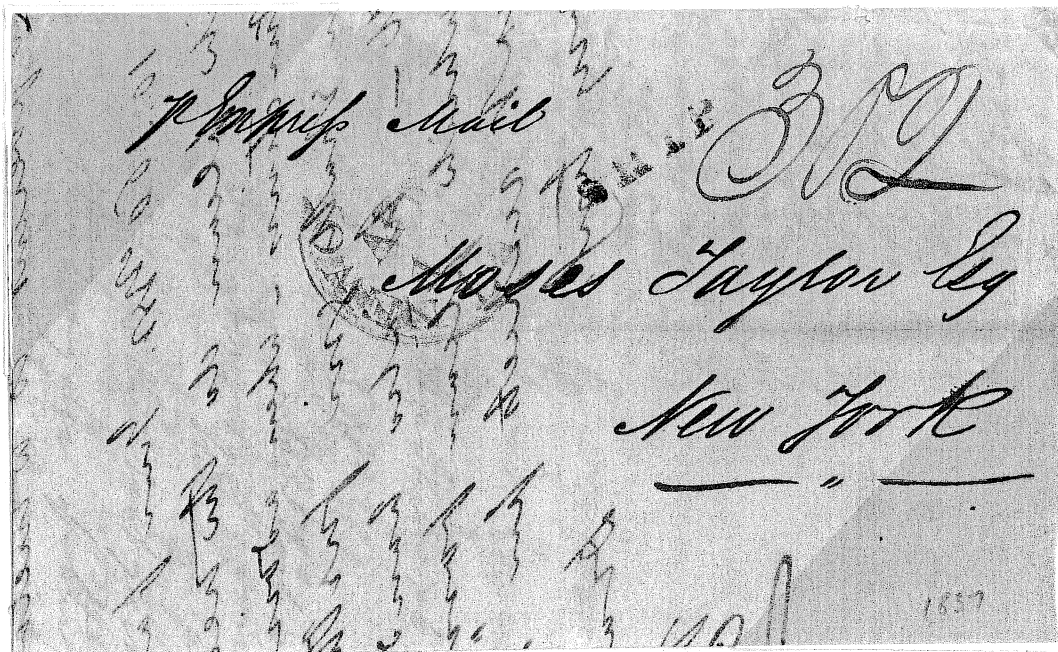


The second city with ship usages was New Orleans. This "NEW ORLEANS La. AUG 2" (1837), "Express Mail", "single" letter from Havana was sent "Vapor" with "SHIP" and "77" (75¢ + 2¢) to Boston on the southern route.

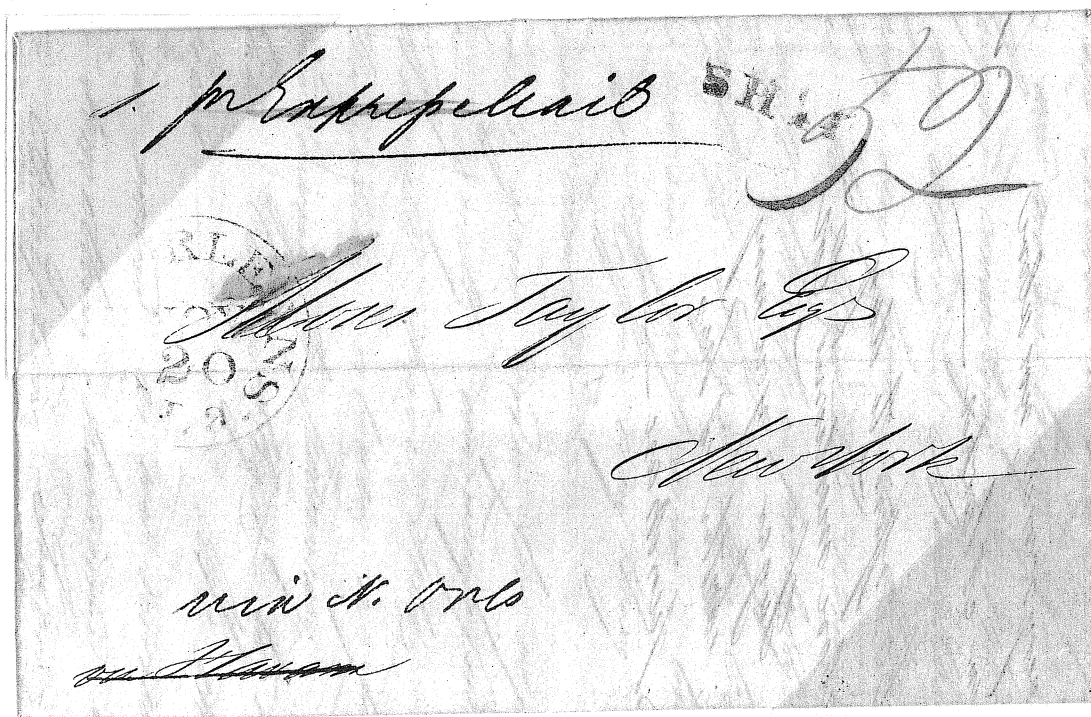


This is a double rated "NEW ORLEANS La. JUL 23" (1837), "pr Express Mail", "SHIP" and "152 to New York. Three known examples of \$1.50, + 2¢ rate.

Ship Postal Markings with Express Mail Usages

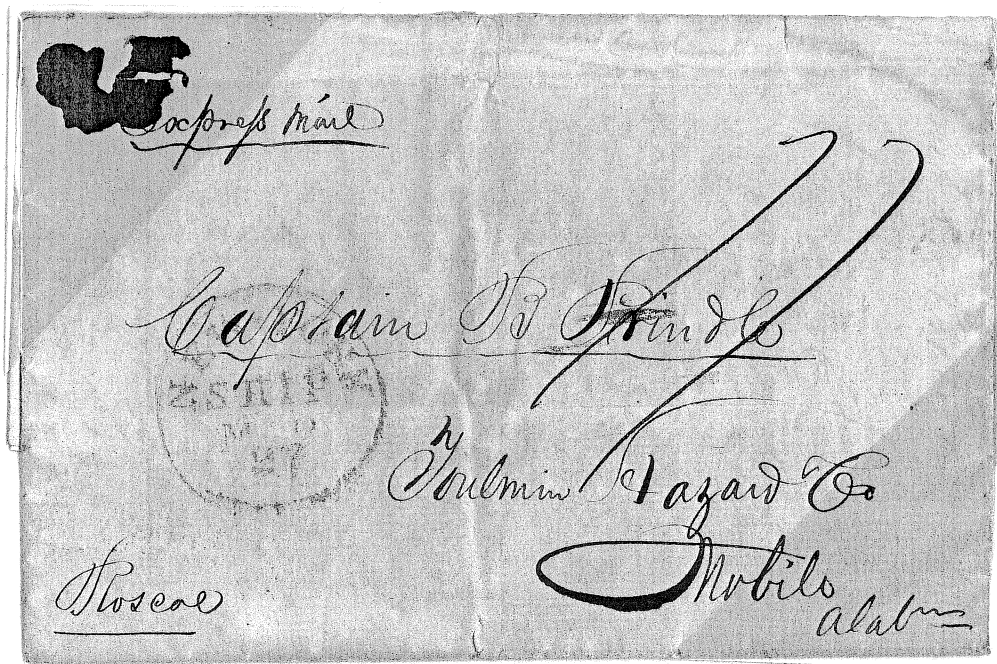


This "pr Express Mail" cover from Cuba to New York with "NEW ORLEANS La. APR 18" (1837) shows the "SHIP" usage with a quadruple rate "302", one of two examples recorded. No triple rate \$2.27 ship covers are known from New Orleans.

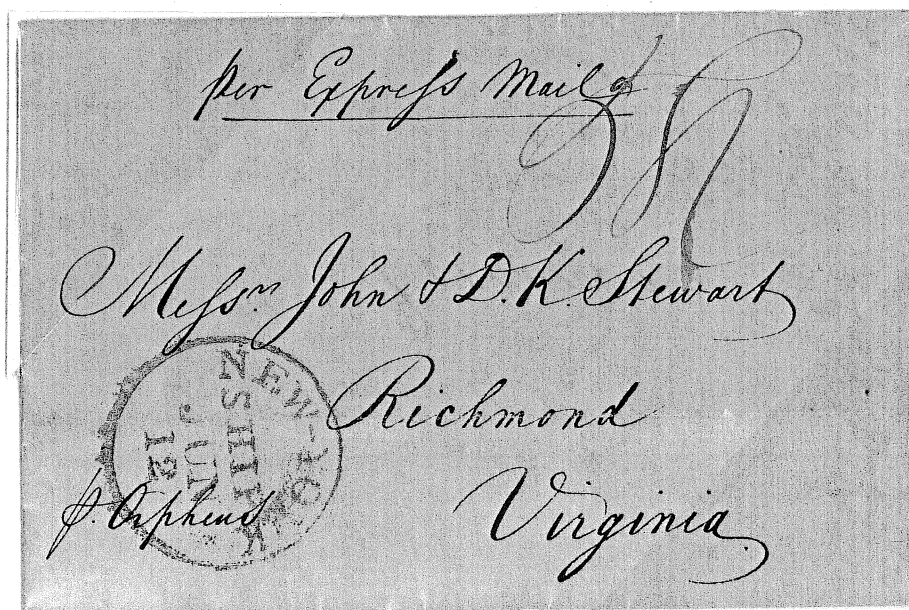


This very interesting cover demonstrates that ship usage ceased with the Express Mail requirement for prepayment of postage as of November 1, 1837. It was sent Cuba "pr Express Mail" to New York, but has "NEW ORLEANS La. NOV 20" (1837) dating, so it had to go regular mail, double rate 50¢ plus 2¢ "SHIP" fee of "52" due.

Ship Postal Markings with Express Mail Usages



New York is the third city with ship postmarks combined with Express Mail usages. This north to south usage shows "NEW-YORK SHIP MAR 27" (1837), "Express Mail", "77" to Mobile single rate plus 2¢ ship captain's fee. "Roscoe" was the name of the incoming ship from Liverpool. So the New York Ship usages are also transatlantic covers.

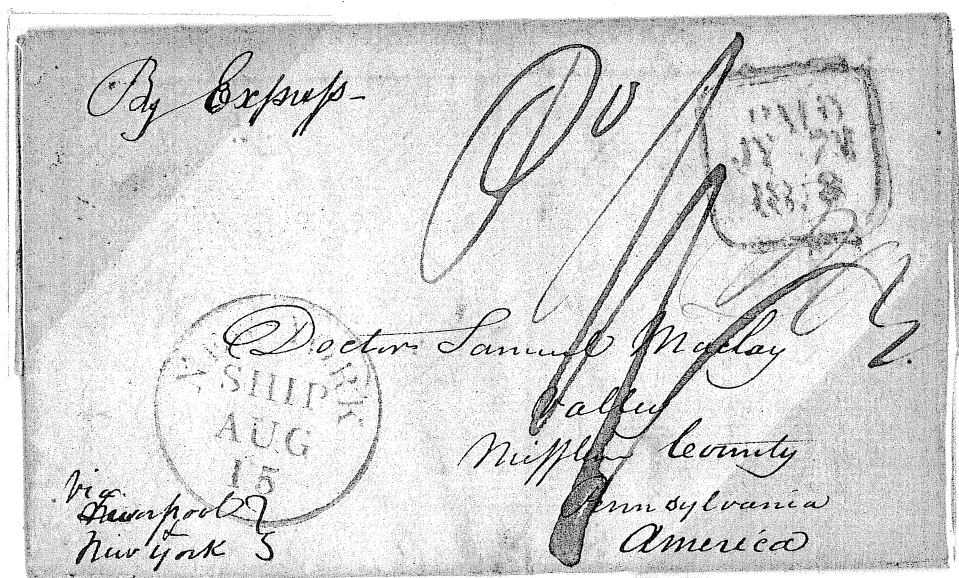


This cover from the Stewart correspondence to Richmond bears "NEW-YORK SHIP JUN 12" (1837) postmark with "58¼" due rating, the short express rate of 56¼¢ + 2¢ ship, only known example of this combination.

Ship Postal Markings with Non-express Usages



This transatlantic cover from Liverpool is marked "Express mail" and "Hibernia" which docked at New York. There is "NEW-YORK SHIP MAY 2 (1837)". But it is addressed to Boston so it was charged ordinary postage, not triple express postage, $18\frac{3}{4}\text{¢}$ + 2¢ = " $20\frac{3}{4}$ " since there was no Express Mail service north of New York.

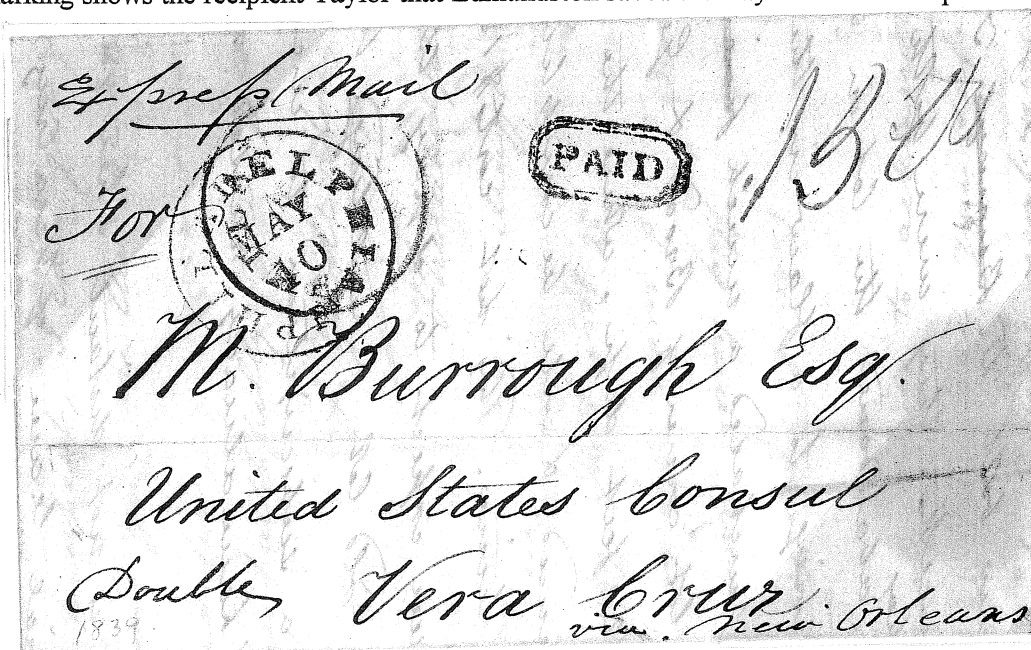


This cover is also marked "By Express" and was sent "ARMAGH JY 6 1838" by paid ship letter "via Liverpool & New York" with "NEW-YORK SHIP AUG 15" to Mifflin County, Penn., an $18\frac{3}{4}\text{¢}$ postage charge for distance. It was charged " $20\frac{3}{4}$ " including ship fee because in 1838 Express Mail postage had to be prepaid.

Forwarders Markings with Express Mail Usages

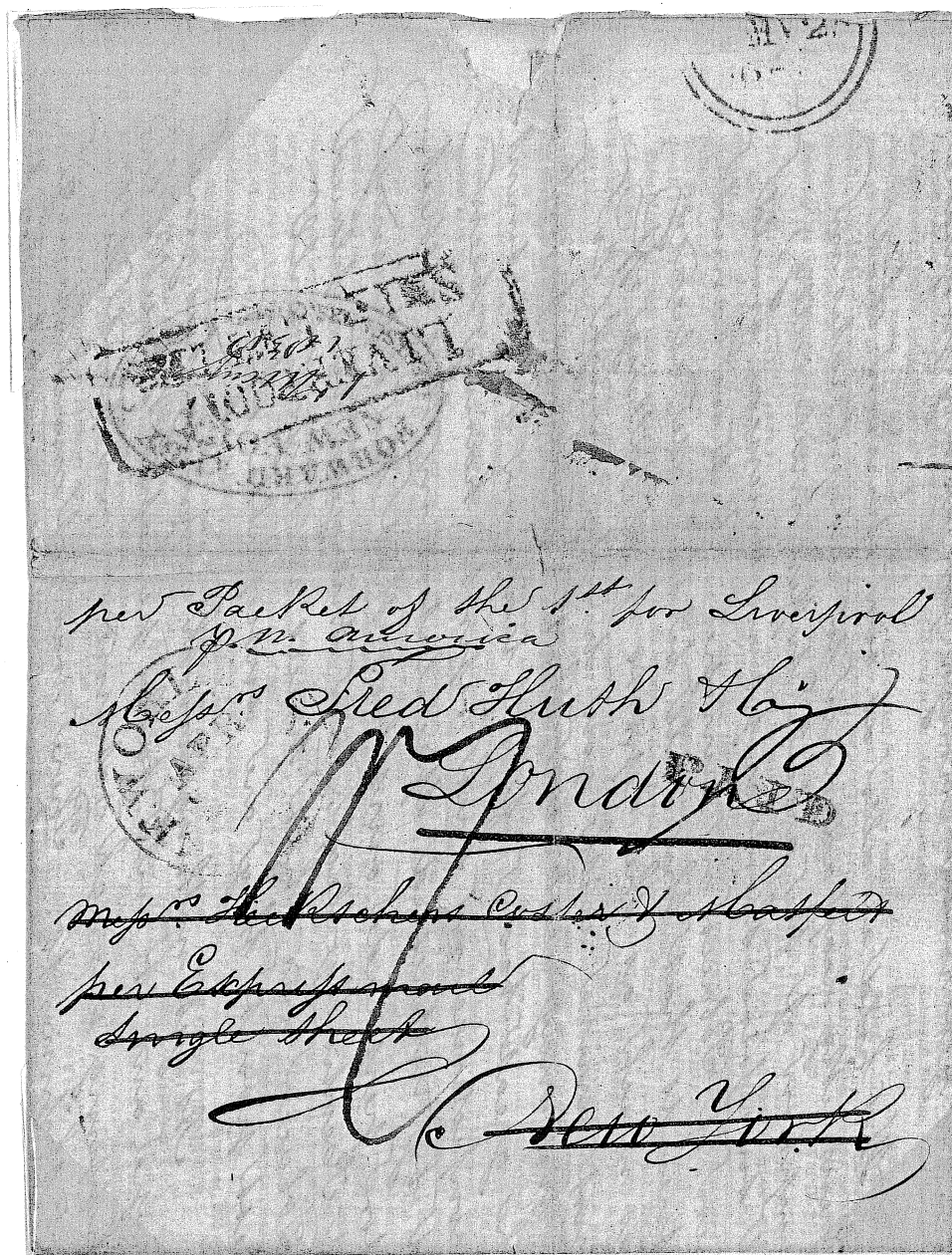


In addition to the Texan forwarding markings, mercantile forwarding postmarks are known on Express Mail covers. This example with "Express Mail", "via Charleston pr Catherine" is a Cuban ship usage, but it was "FORWARDED BY C. EDMUNDSTON & Co. CHARLESTON, SH. CA." in double red octagon, red "CHARLESTON S.C. FEB 22" (1837), "75" to New York. This marking shows the recipient Taylor that Edmundston saved the Taylor firm the ship fee charge.



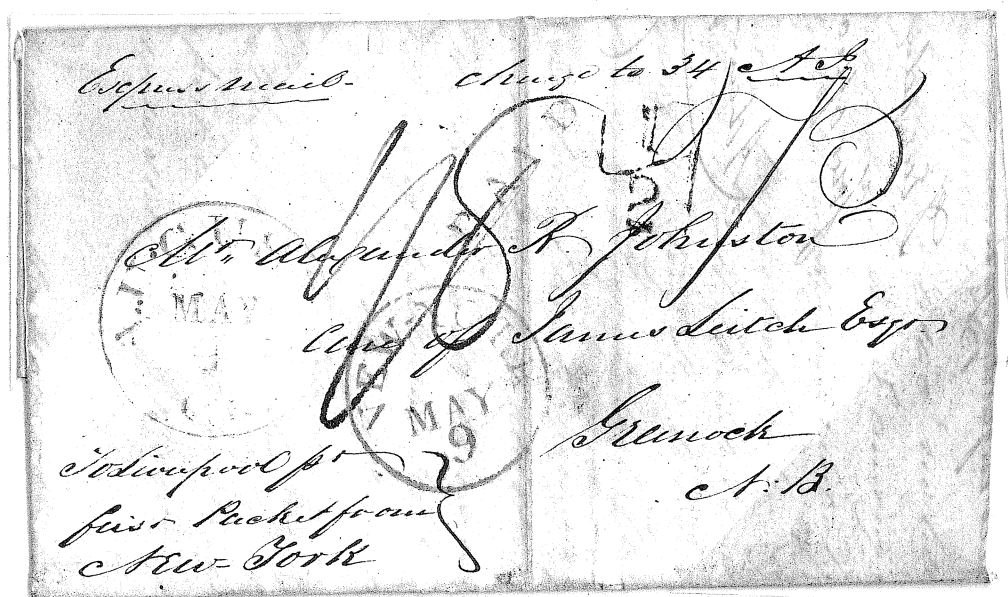
This cover "PHILADELPHIA PA. MAY 10" (1839), "Express Mail", "PAID", and "150" was addressed to Vera Cruz, Mexico "via New Orleans". There is a difficult to read red oval New Orleans Received and Forwarded handstamp on the reverse.

Forwarders Markings with Express Mail Usages

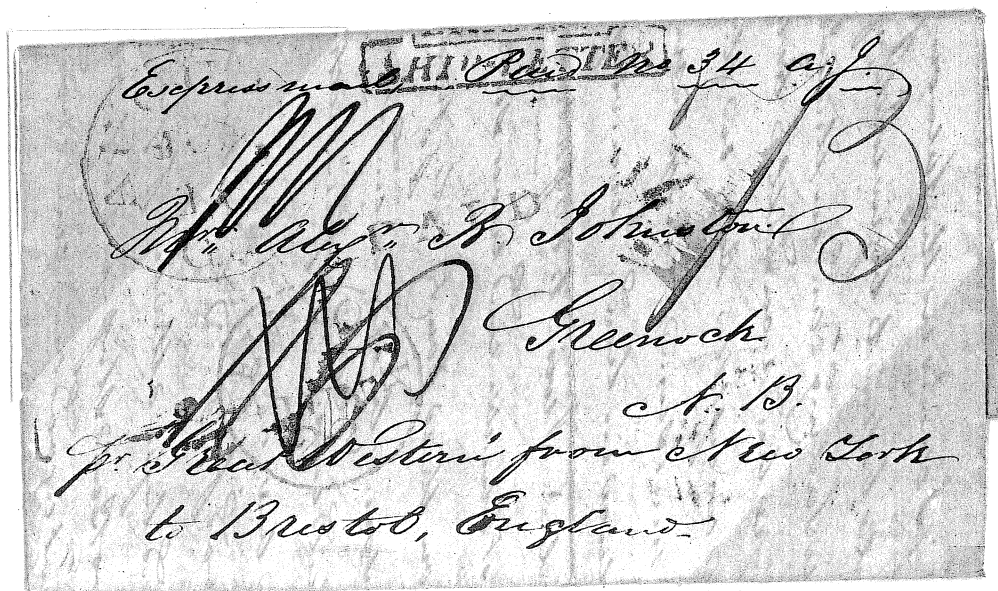


The Frederick Huth correspondence contained many Express Mail covers from New Orleans to New York which were then sent by ship to London. This cover with red "NEW ORLEANS La. APR 22" (1838) bears notations "per Express single sheet", "per Packet of the 1st for Liverpool p.n. America" with "PAID" and "75". At New York it was given by the New York post office as directed to the firm which forwarded it to a transatlantic vessel, red oval "FORWARDED BY / NEW YORK/ HECKSCHERS, COSTER & MATFIELD 1 May 1838". There is a black rectangular "LIVERPOOL PHIP LETTER" and "1/7" for 8d ship letter and 11d postage, London red May 25 backstamp.

Transatlantic and Express Mail Usages



A cover with "AUGUSTA Ga. MAY 3" (1838), "Express Mail Charge to 34 A.J." was sent to New York "PAID" and "75". It arrived with "NEW-YORK MAY 9". There it was sent by a Liverpool sailing packet. This is indicated by notation at lower left. At Liverpool the letter was sent directly to Greenock, Scotland "1/8" due for inland ship letter fee 8d and British postage 1/-.

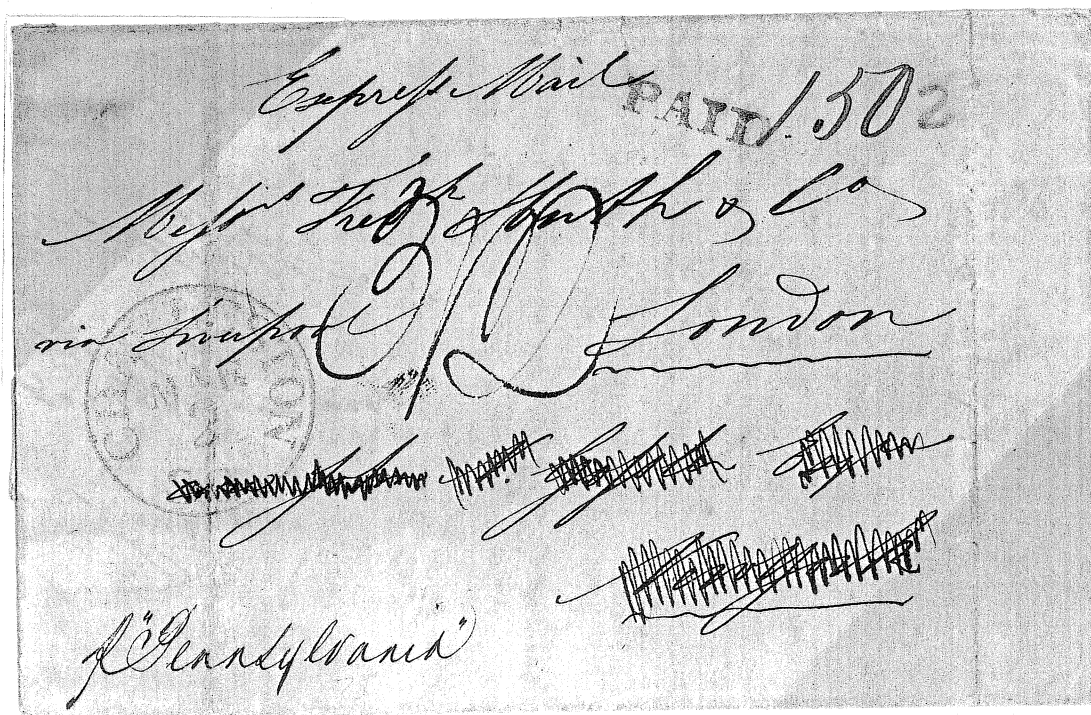


This matching cover from the same correspondence has "Express Mail" "Charge to 34 A.J.", with red "AUGUSTA Ga, JUN 16" (1838), but the notation at left reads "pr Great Western from New York to Bristol, England". This went by the new transatlantic steamship which left New York June 25, 1838. This was the first ship charging 25¢ freight money fee, but the fee was waived on this letter. The British "1/6" was changed to "1/11" at London. There was 8d ship letter fee at Bristol and postage of 1/3 to Scotland via London.

Transatlantic and Express Mail Usages



The "CHARLESTON S.C. JAN 11" (1838) usage went "pr Express Mail", "PAID", "75" to New York to be forwarded to Havre, France. On the reverse is a notation by boat to Havre of 16th or boat to London of 20th [in French]. This went "pr Rhône", a French sailing packet directly to Havre where it was postmarked and rated 2 decimes ship fee to port of entry. The crayon notation means single letter and was applied in Charleston post office.

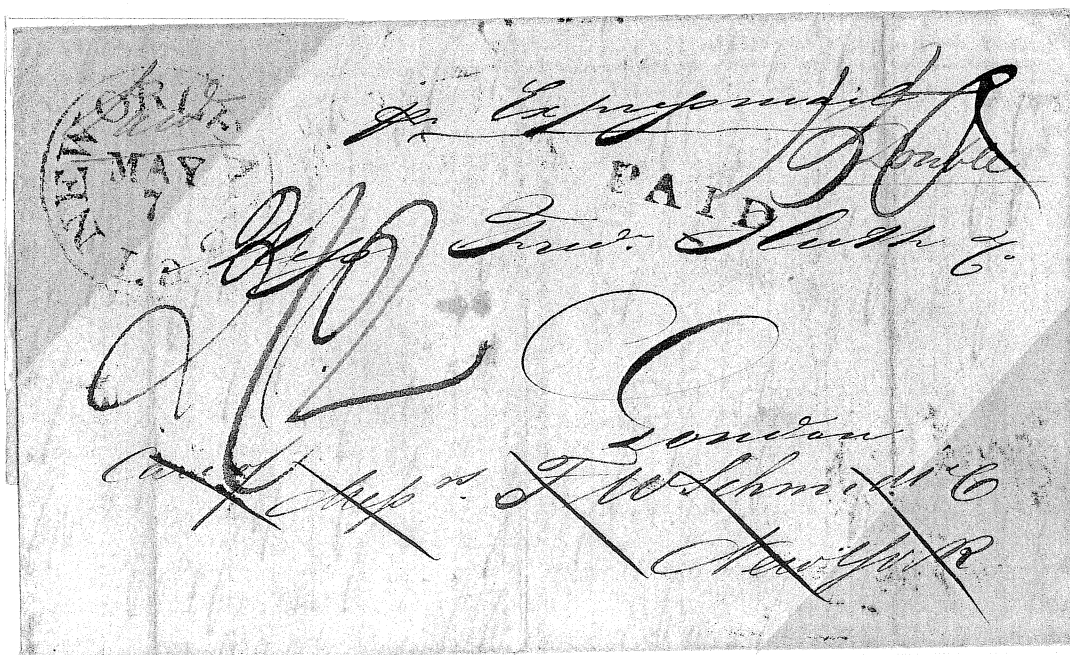


This "CHARLESTON S.C. MAR 2" (1838), "Express Mail" letter paid a double rate, "PAID" and "150" to New York. The commercial addressee forwarded it "pr Pennsylvania" to London where it was treated as double rate 8d ship and 11d inland, "3/2".

'Transatlantic and Express Mail Usages

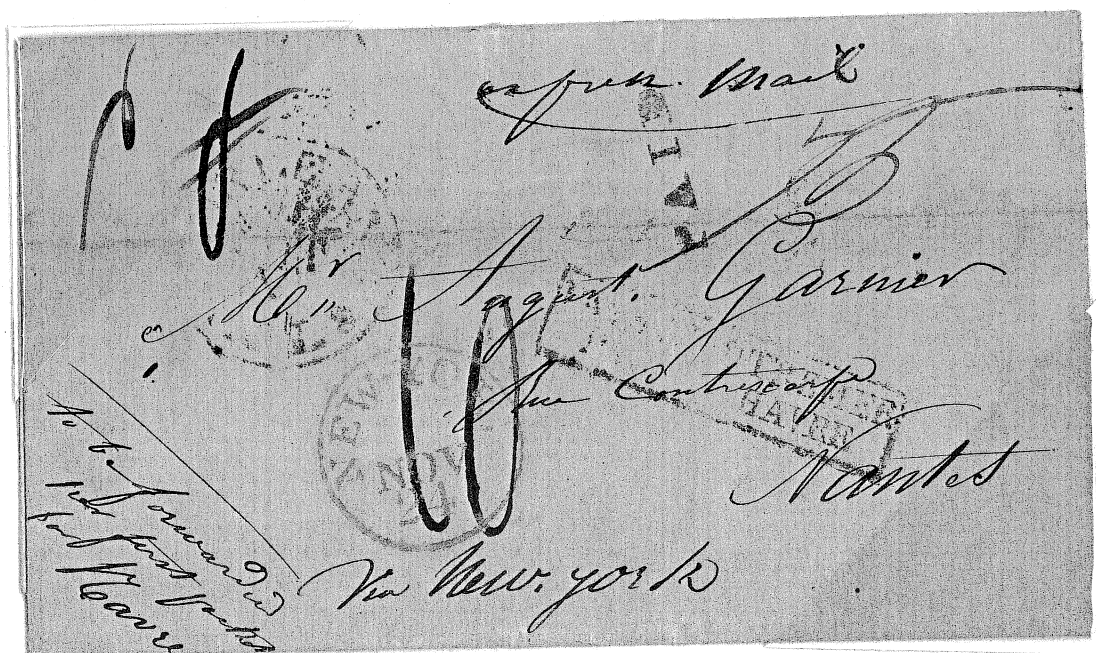


The majority of the known transatlantic Express Mail covers going from the United States were mailed from New Orleans. This blue "NEW ORLEANS La. JUN 22" (1837), "pr Express Mail" was "PAID", "75" which was necessary for a letter to be taken from the New York post office to be forwarded "pr Liverpool packet" to London. It arrived July 22 (30 days transit). The rate was "1/4" from Portsmouth to London, 8d ship letter and 8d postage.

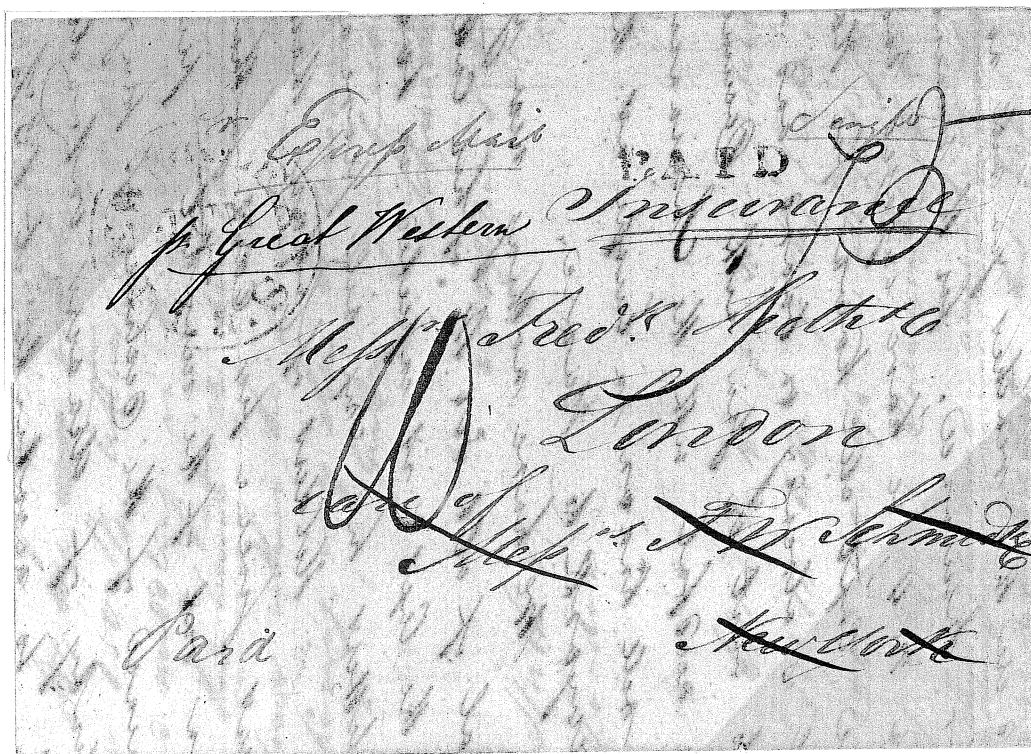


This is a double rated "per Express Mail" with red "NEW ORLEANS La. MAY 7" (1838), "PAID", "150" to New York. However, the origin of this cover is Tampico, Mexico, and it was forwarded at New Orleans (pen notation on reverse) and again forwarded by Schmitt & Co. in New York. It has "LIVERPOOL SHIP LETTER" and "3/2" for double 8d ship and double 11 d postage. Only known Express Mail letter with origin and destination outside of the United States.

Transatlantic and Express Mail Usages

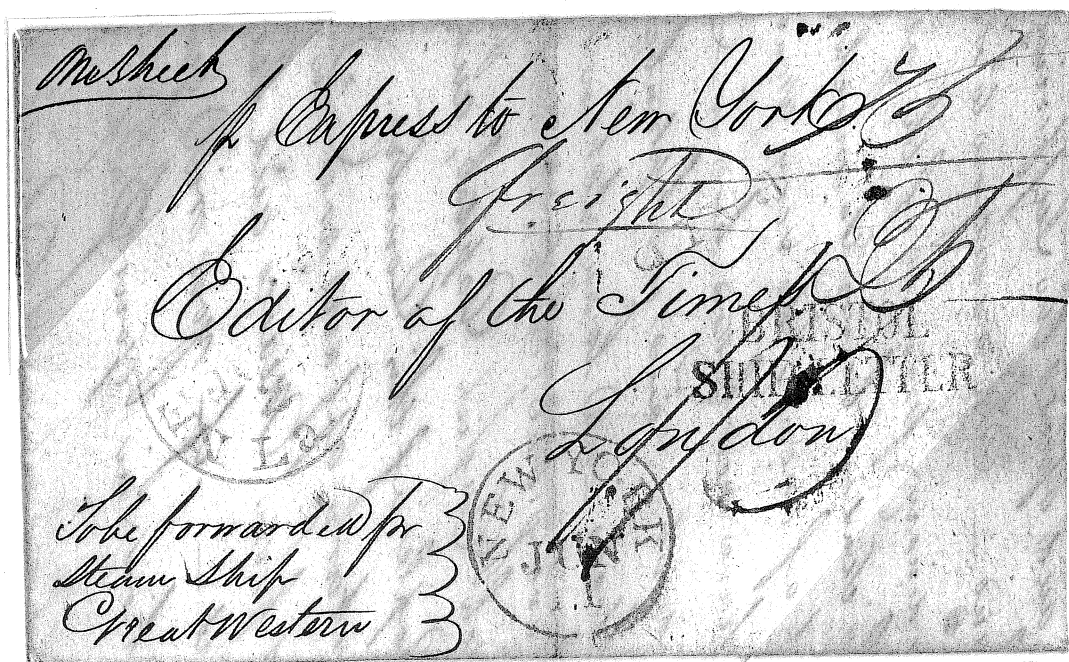


With red "NEW ORLEANS La. Nov 16" (1838), "express mail", "PAID", "75" to New York, this cover was "to be forwarded per first packet for Havre." This was done with "NEW-YORK NOV 24" added. The backstamps are blue Paris 23 Dec 38 and 25 Dec 1838 at Nantes. Rated 10 decimes (1 decime sea tax plus 9 decimes for 7½-10 gram letter going 280 km. from Havre to Nantes).

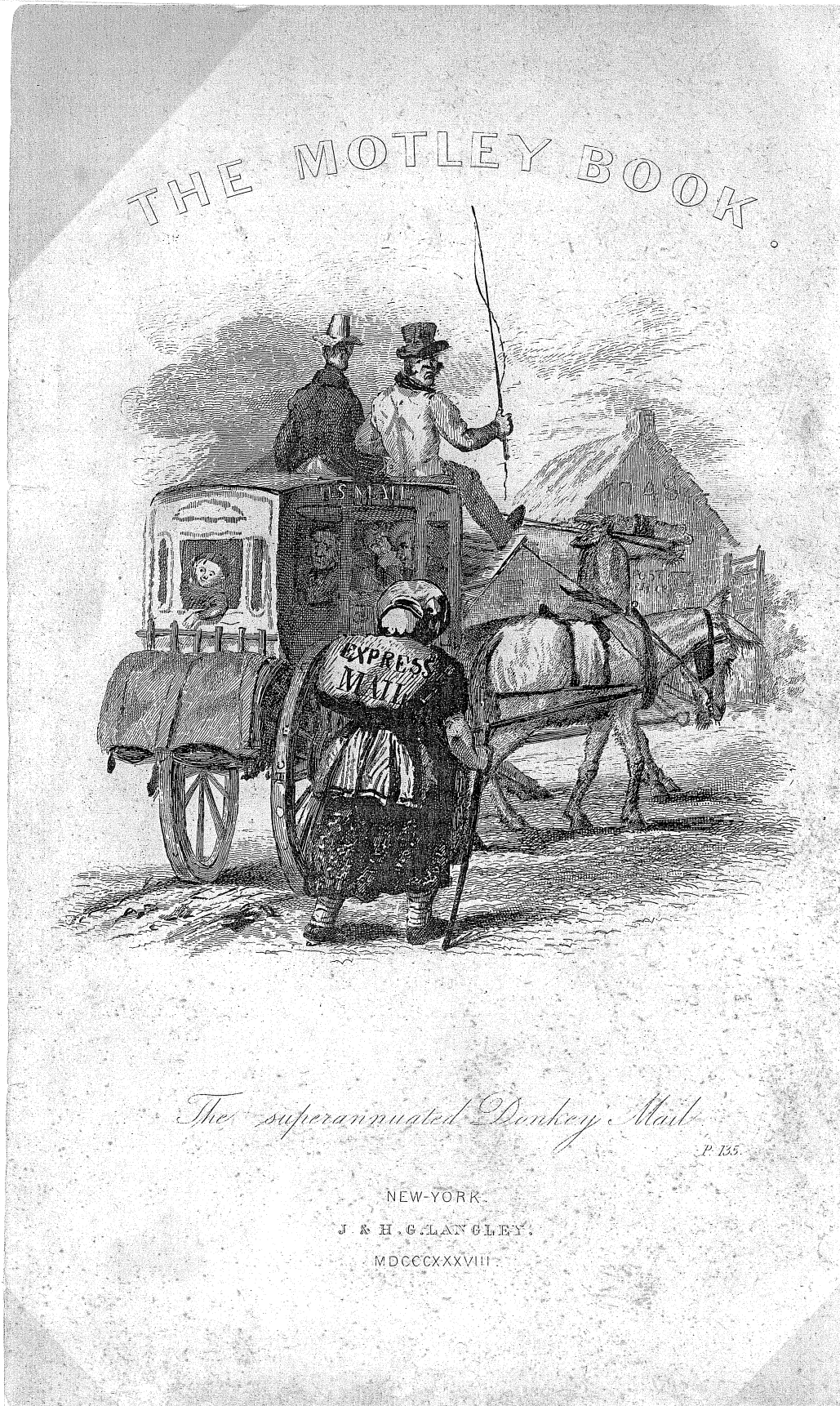


This cover from "NEW ORLEANS La. JUN 17" (1838) by "Express Mail", "PAID", "75" to New York made the second return sailing of the "Great Western" steamship. The cover was carried out of the mails to Bristol where it was posted at unpaid 10d inland fee from Bristol to London. No freight money was collected.

Transatlantic and Express Mail Usages

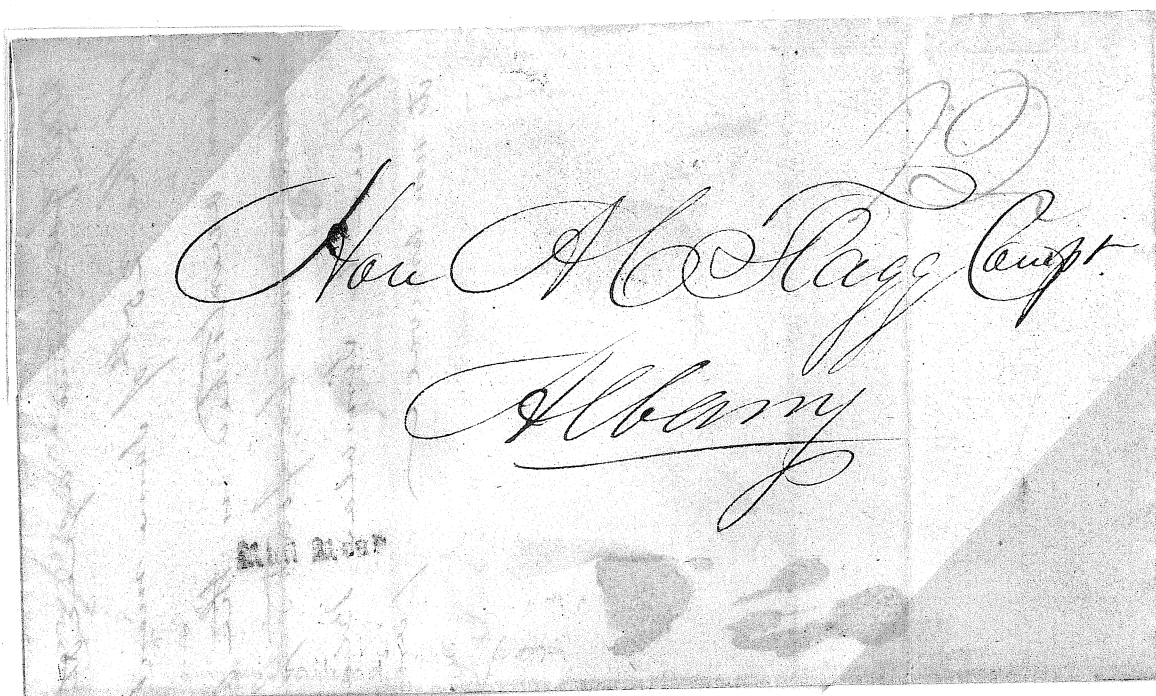


Freight money fees were charged by the transatlantic steamship lines beginning in June, 1838. This is the only known Express Mail letter showing this fee. The cover has red "NEW ORLEANS La. JUN 2" (1839), a late usage during the last month of the Express Mail. There is "pr Express to New York", red "PAID", and magenta "75". But it also has notation "to be forwarded pr steam ship Great Western" so the New Orleans post office collected the freight fee and marked the letter "freight" and "25" in the same magenta ink with a horizontal line between the two fees. There is a red "NEW-YORK JUN 11" showing that this cover was forwarded by the New York post office, not a private forwarder to the steamship. There is "BRISTOL SHIP LETTER" and "1/5" for 8d ship letter plus 9d postage. The contents are a fascinating exposé of cotton frauds to be published in the *London Times*. The printed sheet included seems to be the only example preserved of a publisher's slip being sent by Express Mail which was a special class of mail permitted in the earlier express.

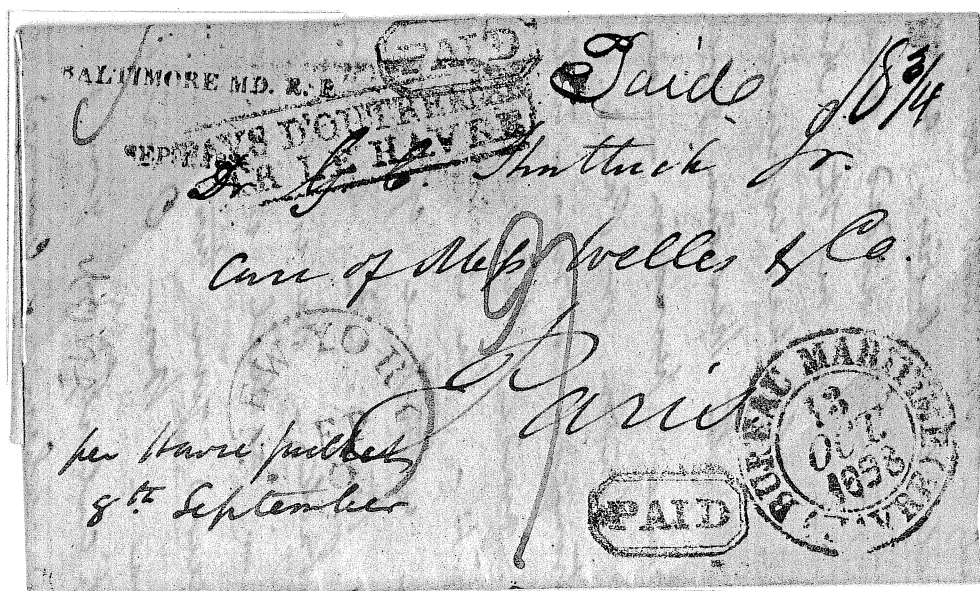


Almost as soon as the Express Mail commenced there were complaints to the Post Office Department concerning the long transit time for certain individual letters that had been delayed but still had been charged the high express fees. And postmasters wrote the Department about the delays or lack of service by individual contractors who usually blamed the weather. This cartoon is the frontispiece for an 1838 book about different subjects. The portrayal of the Express Mail sack on the shoulders of an old woman being passed by a U.S. mail stage is an adverse comment about the dependability and speed of the service.

Discontinuance of the Express Mail



However, it was the extension of the more dependable railroad network and the carriage of mail over this form of transportation that caused the regular mail schedule to decrease the transit time for ordinary letters which in essence rendered the Express Mail at triple postage unnecessary. This is the earliest known postmark of a train that carried mail, "Rail Road" in old English lettering, and this is the earliest known usage, November 2, 1837, Mohawk and Hudson R.R., "12" to Albany. Ex Towle.



The schedule for the Express Mail from Baltimore to New York was 7:30 P.M. to 1 P.M. the next day. With the railroad this cover "BALTIMORE MD. R.R. SEP 7 1838" in two red straight lines, with "Paid 18 3/4" was given to the route agent marked "PAID" in blue at Philadelphia, and was postmarked the next day "NEW-YORK SEP 8" in time for the Havre packet leaving September 8th. There was no reason to pay 56 1/4¢ which would have been the express fee. Nine decimes were charged for postage in Paris.

Recd. by 25 Jan 1838.

Jan 29 1838

Committee Room

Jan 29 1838
Hon. Mr Robinson
Sir

Jan 25 1838

Called for an answer in this case

I am directed by the Committee
on the P. Office & P. Roads - to ask of
you the number of miles upon which
the express Mail is now carried.

This is a letter of the Chairman for the Committee on Post Office concerning the railroad companies not being willing to carry mail on fair terms. Kendall's reply (a separate document) shows that as early as January, 1838 the railroad expansion of mail routes was causing a discontinuance of the Express Mail service as far south as Gaston, N.C:

Post Office Department
Jan. 29th 1838

Hon. John Robinson

Chm. Com. P.O. & P.R. Senate

Sir.....Having made a contract with the Rail Road companies on the line from Washington D.C. to Philadelphia which will bring in the whole mail but two hours later than the express arrives, the Express Mail now running from this place will be discontinued in a few days and probably in a short time as far as the termination of the Petersburg and Roanoke Rail Road at Gaston, North Carolina. The distance from Philadelphia to Gaston is ___ miles. There will then be no Rail Roads on the Express lines, and their only utility will be in the more rapid conveyance of letters for such as choose to employ them at triple rates and of intelligence for the whole country gratis in newspaper slips

Very respectfully
yours obt. servt.
[Amos Kendall]

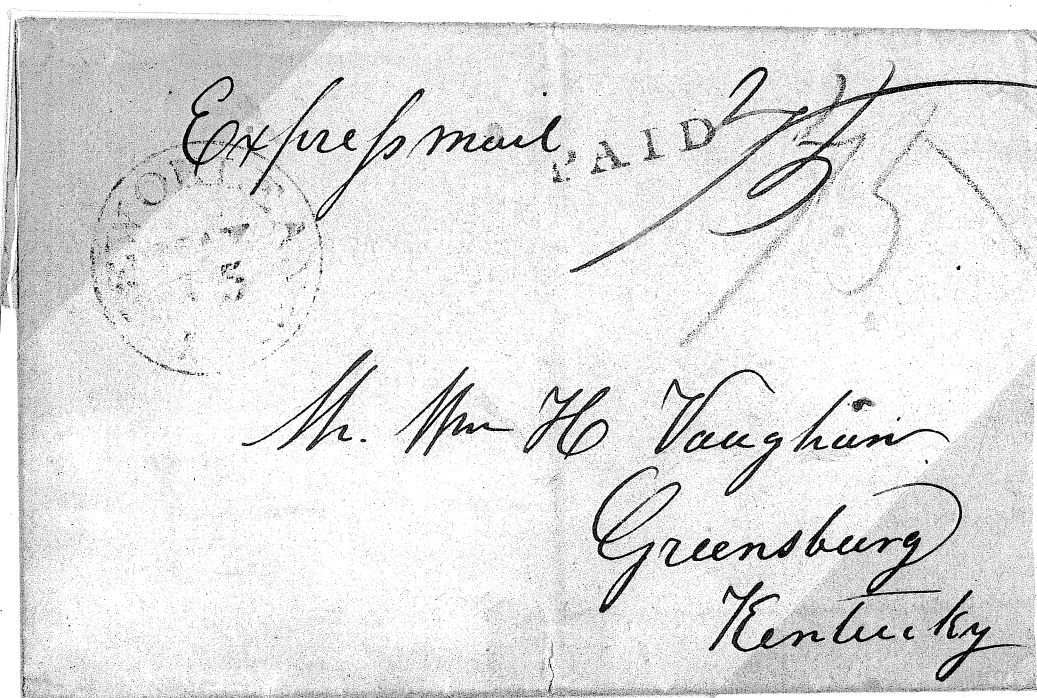
Yours Most Respectfully
John Robinson
Ch

Hon A Kendall

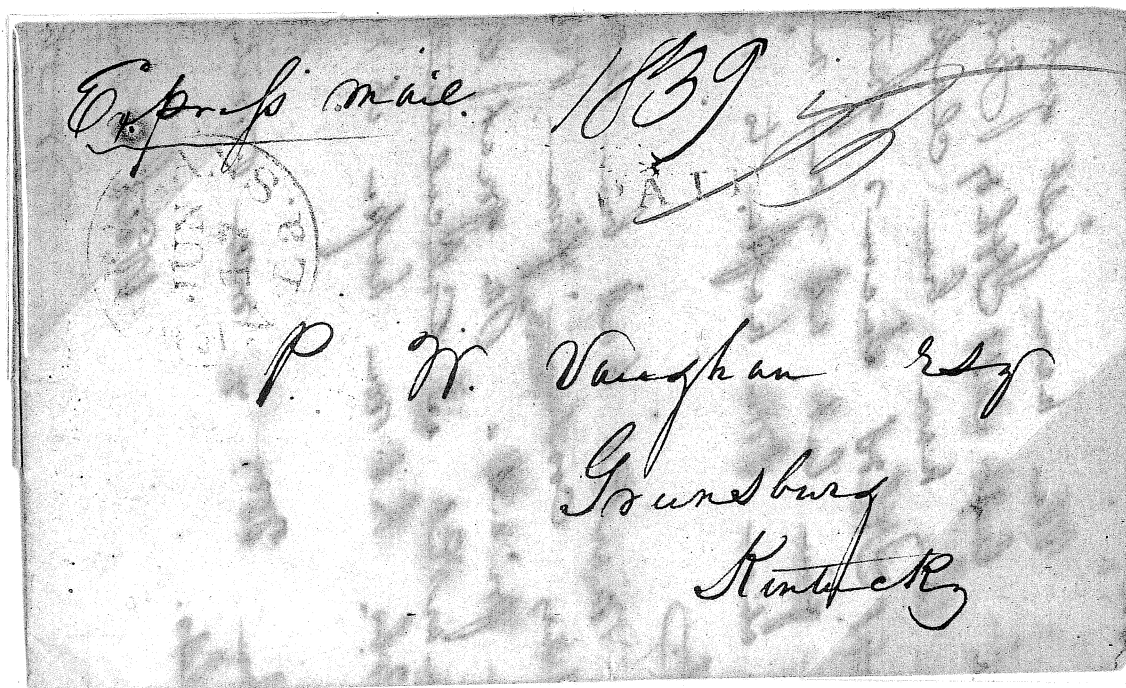
P Master Genl

Washington City

Discontinuance of the Express Mail



This cover "Express Mail" with red "NEW ORLEANS La. MAY 15" (1838), "Express Mail", "PAID", "75" to Greensburgh, Ky. went north by the southwestern route to Three Forks, Ky. by Express Mail and then regular mail to Greensburgh.

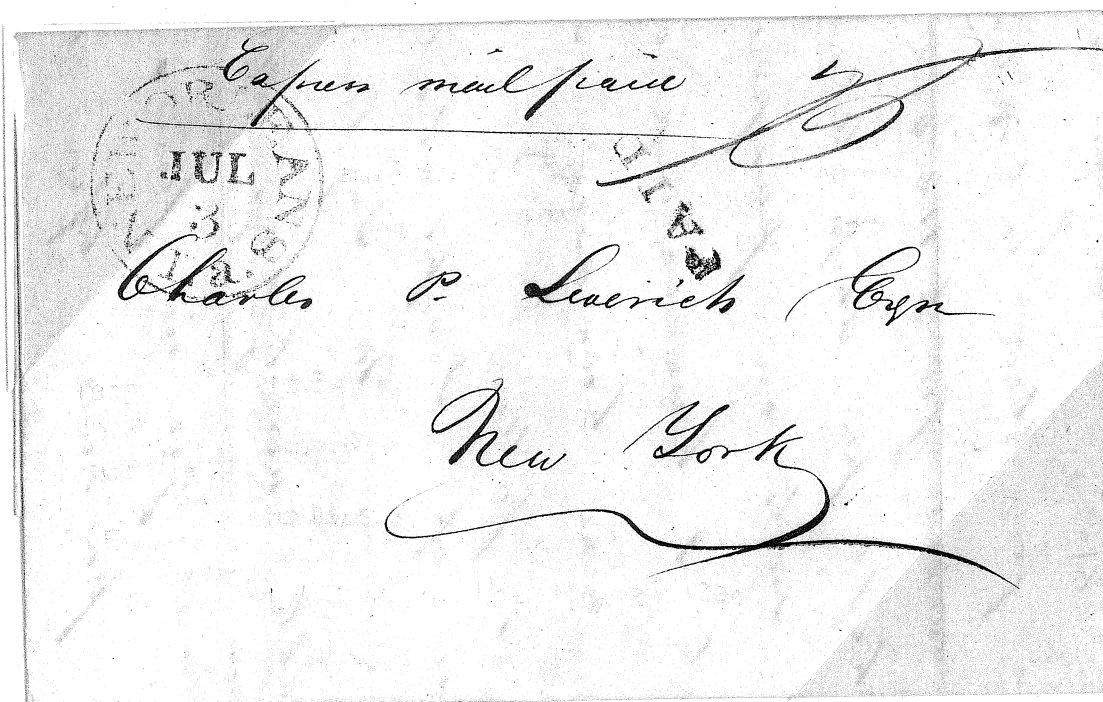


By the date of this very late usage ""Express Mail", "NEW ORLEANS La. JUN 15" (1839), "PAID", "75" to the same destination, the Express Mail carried the letter (by horseback) only to Nashville. The express service between Louisville and Nashville ceased January 15, 1839.

Discontinuance of the Express Mail

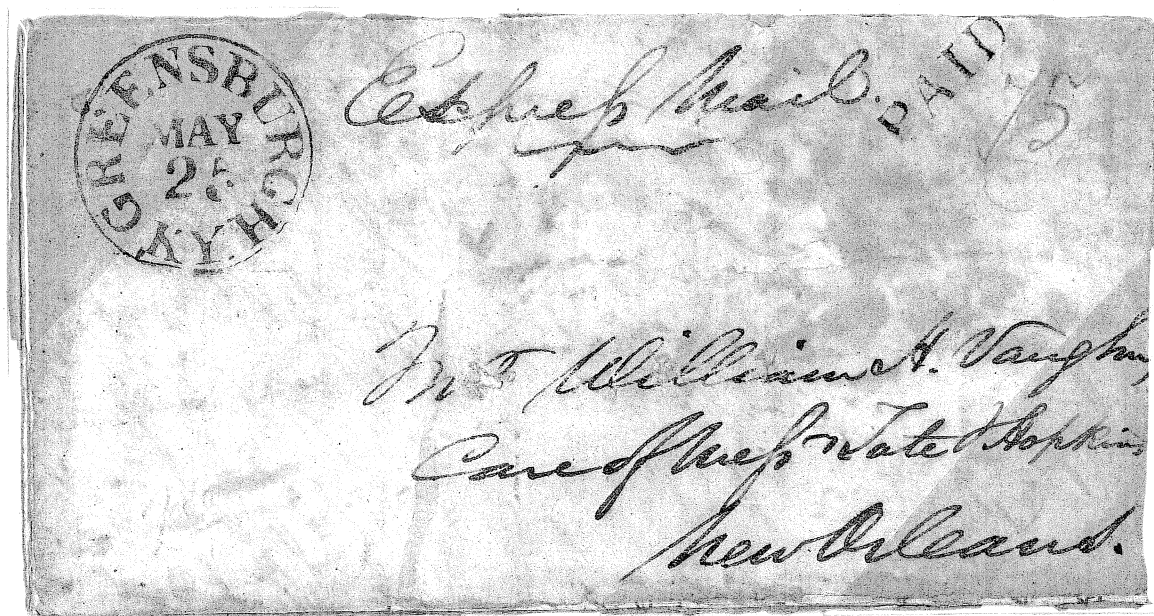


This cover "MOBILE A. JAN 14" (1839), "Express", "PAID", "75" to St. Clairsville, Ohio is another rare usage over the southwestern line of the Express Mail. It was carried by the express only to Nashville, because all the more northern routes had been discontinued.



This well-known cover, "Express Mail", "NEW ORLEANS La. JUL 3" (1839), "PAID", "75" to New York has long been considered as the latest known use of the Express Mail. However, it took 10 days to reach New York, so it is questionable as to what the sender got for his money. The Express Mail transit time in 1836-1837 was 6-7 days for a letter like this.

Discontinuance of the Express Mail

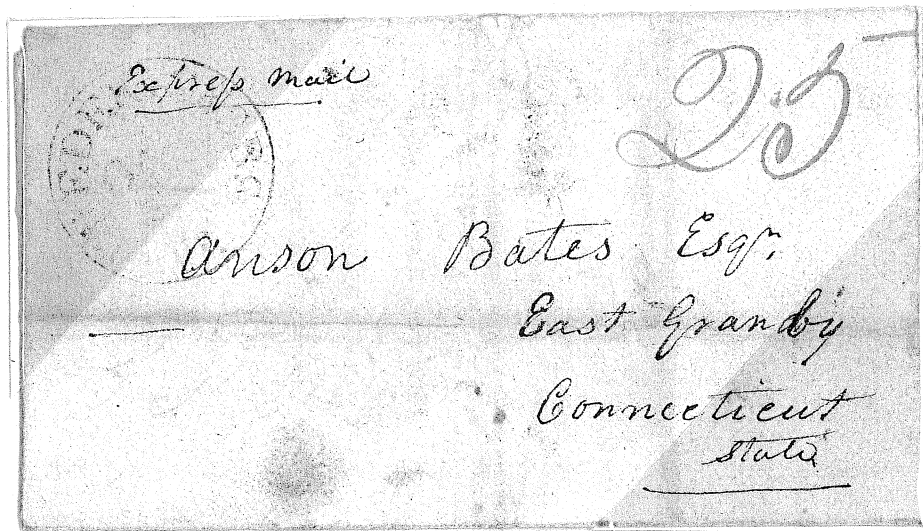


This cover "Express Mail" with "GREENSBURGH KY. MAY 25" (1839), "PAID" and "75" was sent over the southwestern branch to New Orleans during the period that the express routes (horseback mail) were only running south of Nashville. It is the reverse usage for the New Orleans covers to Greensburgh just shown.

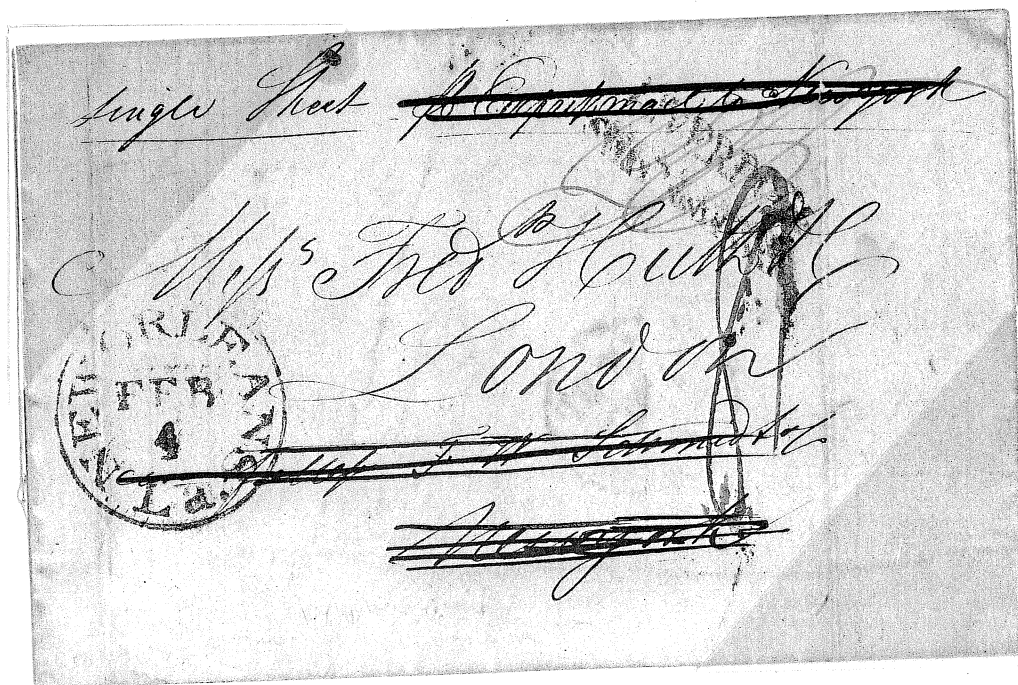


This cover marked "Express" and postmarked "GREENSBURGH KY. July 8" (1839) also "PAID" the "75" Express Mail rate and is directed to New Orleans. However, it is very unlikely that any type of express carriage was in existence at this late date. July 1 had been announced as the termination date for the Express Mail.

Discontinuance of the Express Mail



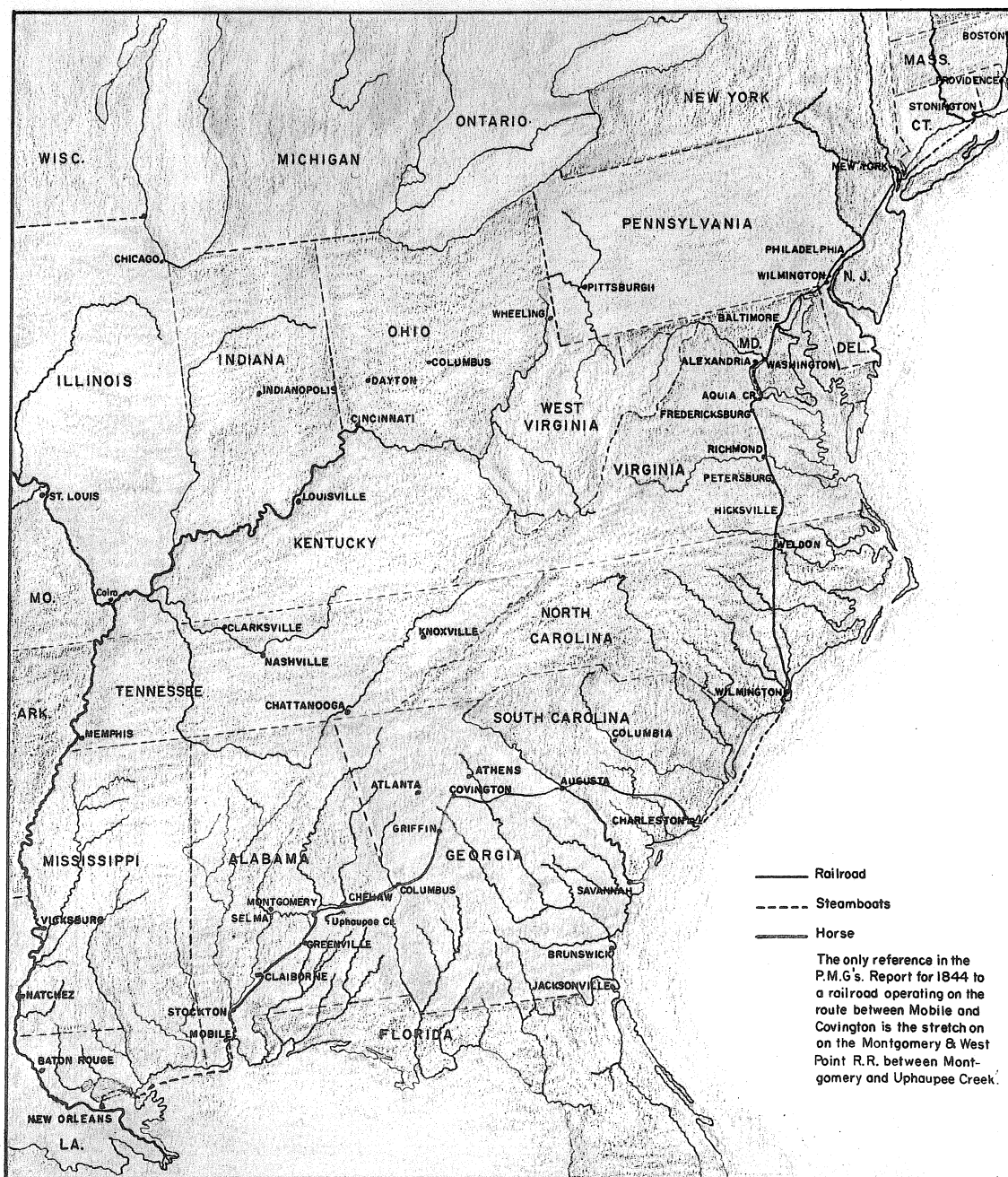
Marked "Express Mail" this cover with green "FREDERICKSBURG Va. OCT 20" (1839) was sent after the Express Mail ceased to function and is also unpaid, so the rate was "25" north to East Granby, Ct.



Originating in Vera Cruz, this cover was "forwarded by your obt. ser. Sch W & Co N.O. 4 february 1840" (ms. on reverse) and although marked "single sheet pr Express mail to New York", it was postmarked "NEW ORLEANS La. FEB 4" (1840) and sent "25" since the Express Mail had ceased operating. Another forwarder, F.W. Schmidt & Co. paid the postage and sent it by ship to Liverpool and ultimately London where it arrived March 18, 1840. Rated "8d", the incoming ship letter fee.

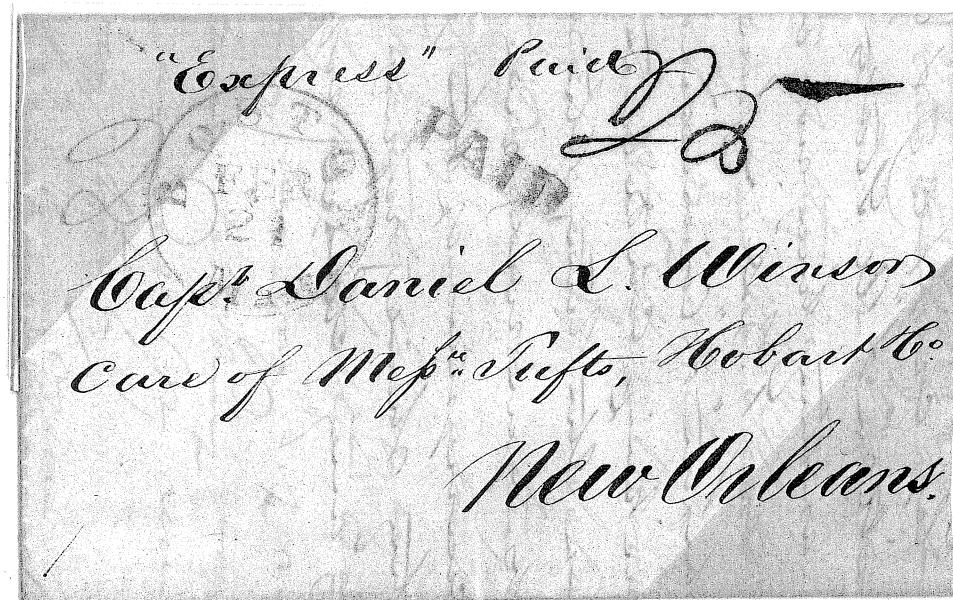
THE EXPRESS MAIL ROUTE OF 1845

From the P.M.G.'s Report of 1844

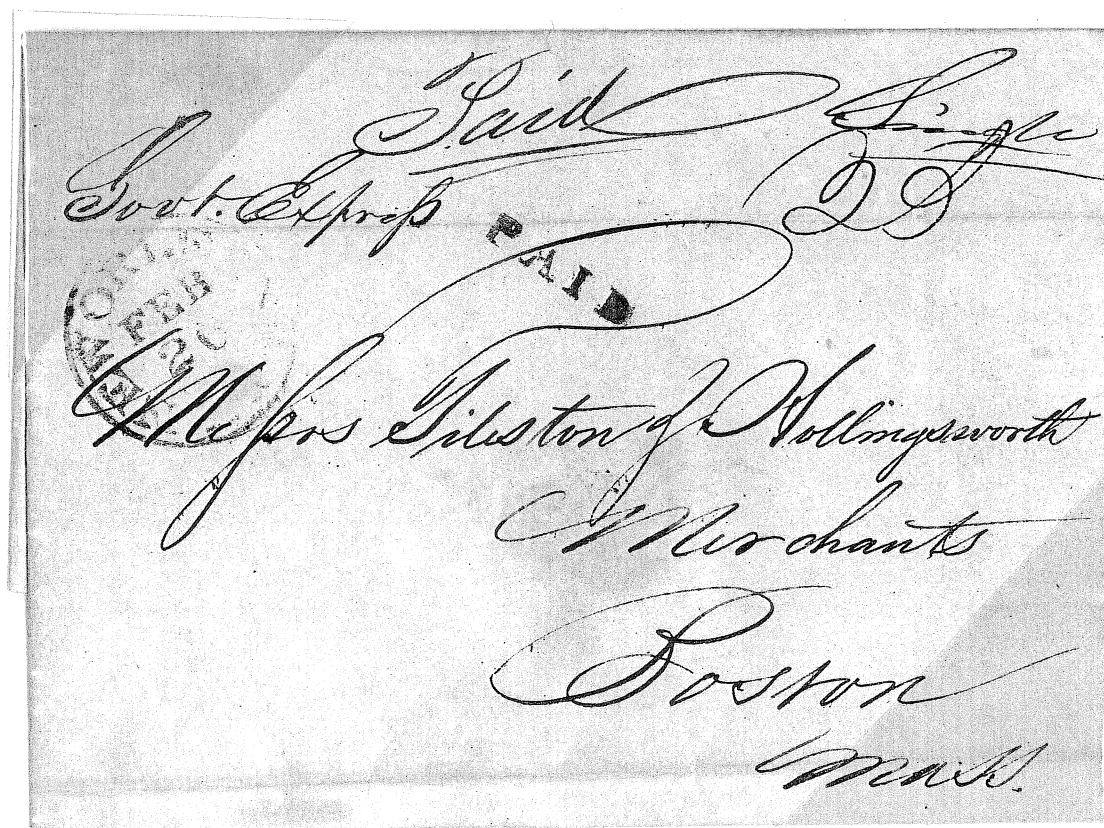


After the cessation of the Express Mail service the transportation of mail in Georgia and Alabama was largely by stage coach. Frequent delays in the mail service caused a demand for another express by southern newspapers in 1844. The weakest link in the Great Mail route was between Covington, Ga. and Montgomery, Al.; railroads carried the mail south as far as Covington. The stages traveled at half the speed an express rider, so one or two days could be gained. To combat private express companies, the P.M.G. established an Express Mail between Covington and New Orleans advertising it January 27, 1845. Letters were to be prepaid and marked "Express Mail". There was no extra fee for the service. Printed slips from newspaper editors could be exchanged as with the earlier 1836-1839 express. The announcement reached New Orleans February 7, 1845. The service was discontinued March 11, 1845 at New York and a little later at New Orleans.

1845 Revival of Express Mail

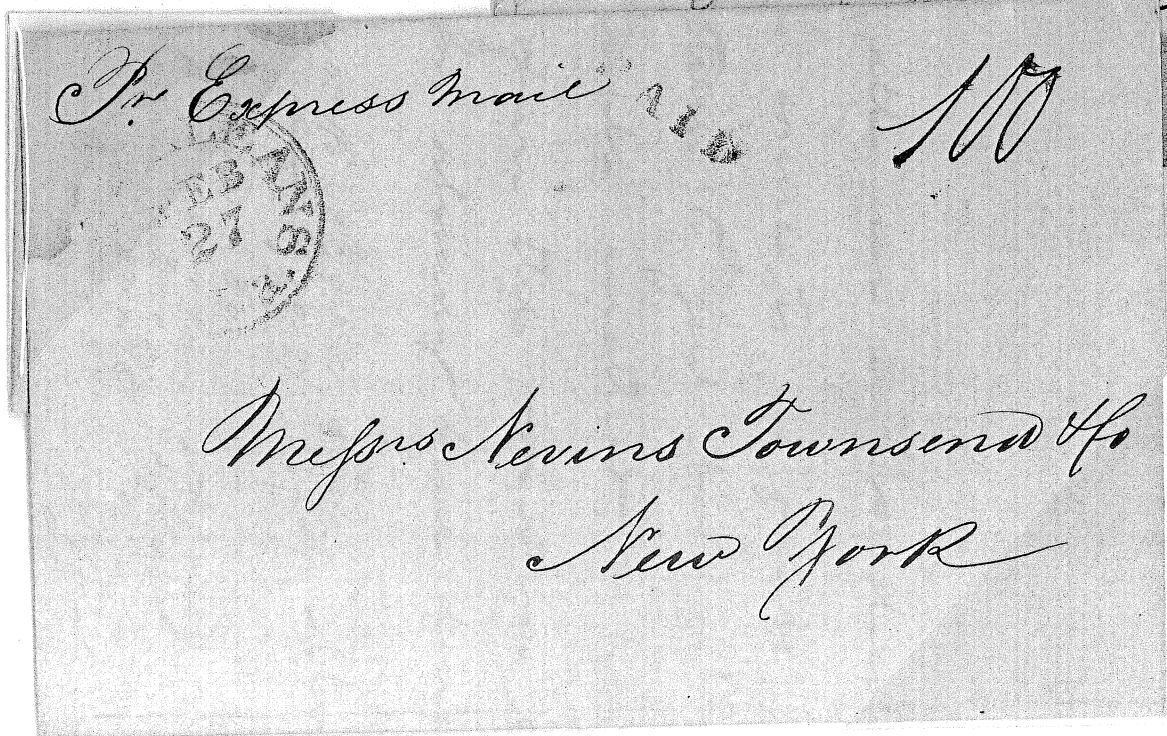
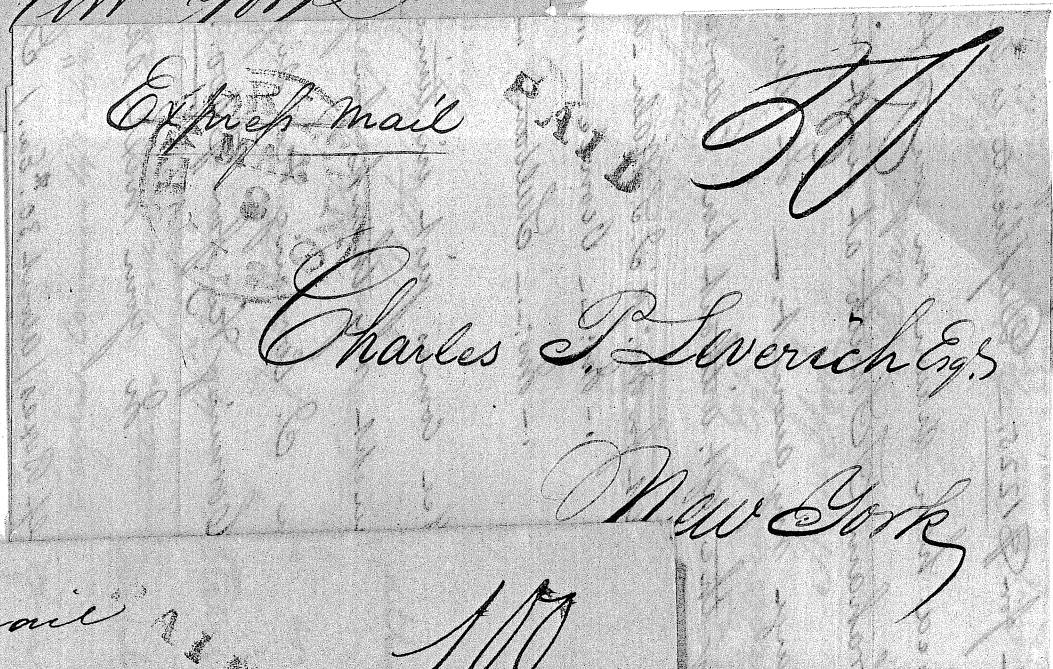


A very few covers are known from Boston going south. This example "BOSTON Mass. FEB 21" (1845) shows the single rate to New Orleans. To establish a cover as an Express Mail cover, it has to bear the designation "Express" in pen and show usage over the Great Mail route in the south for the correct date period.



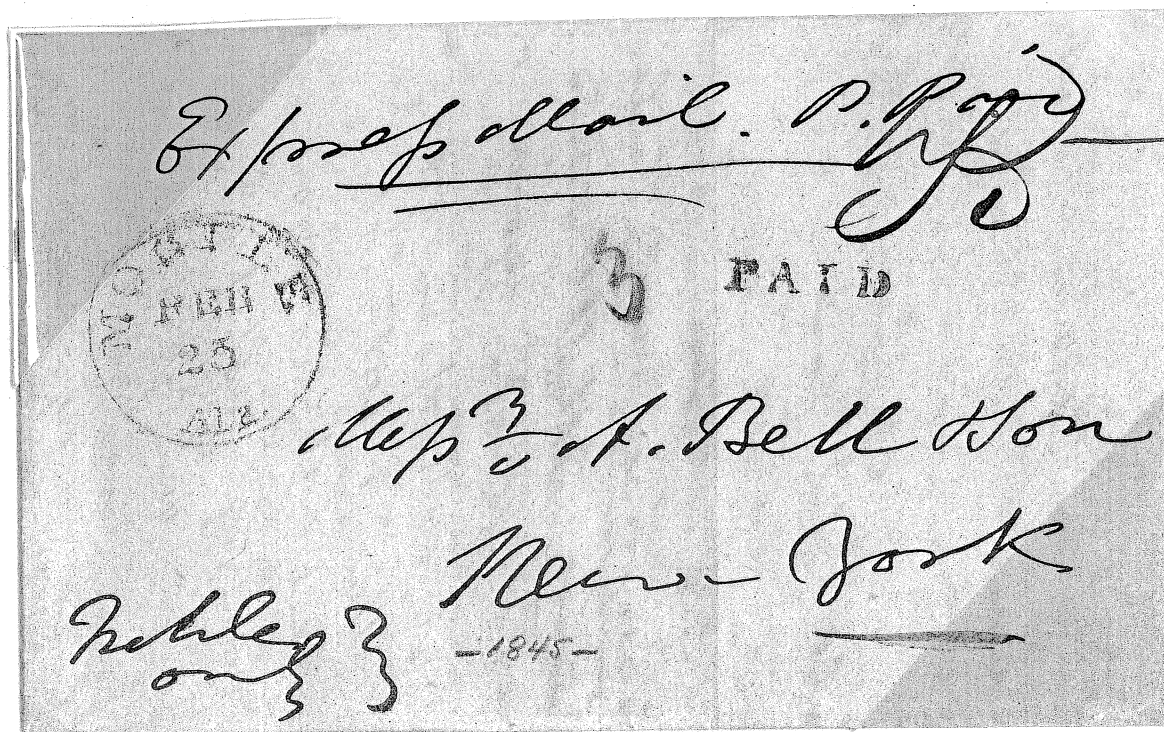
This cover bears an unusual "Govt Express" notation, "Paid", "Single" with blue "NEW ORLEANS La. FEB 20" (1845), "PAID", and "25" in blue ms. to Boston.

1845 Revival of Express Mail

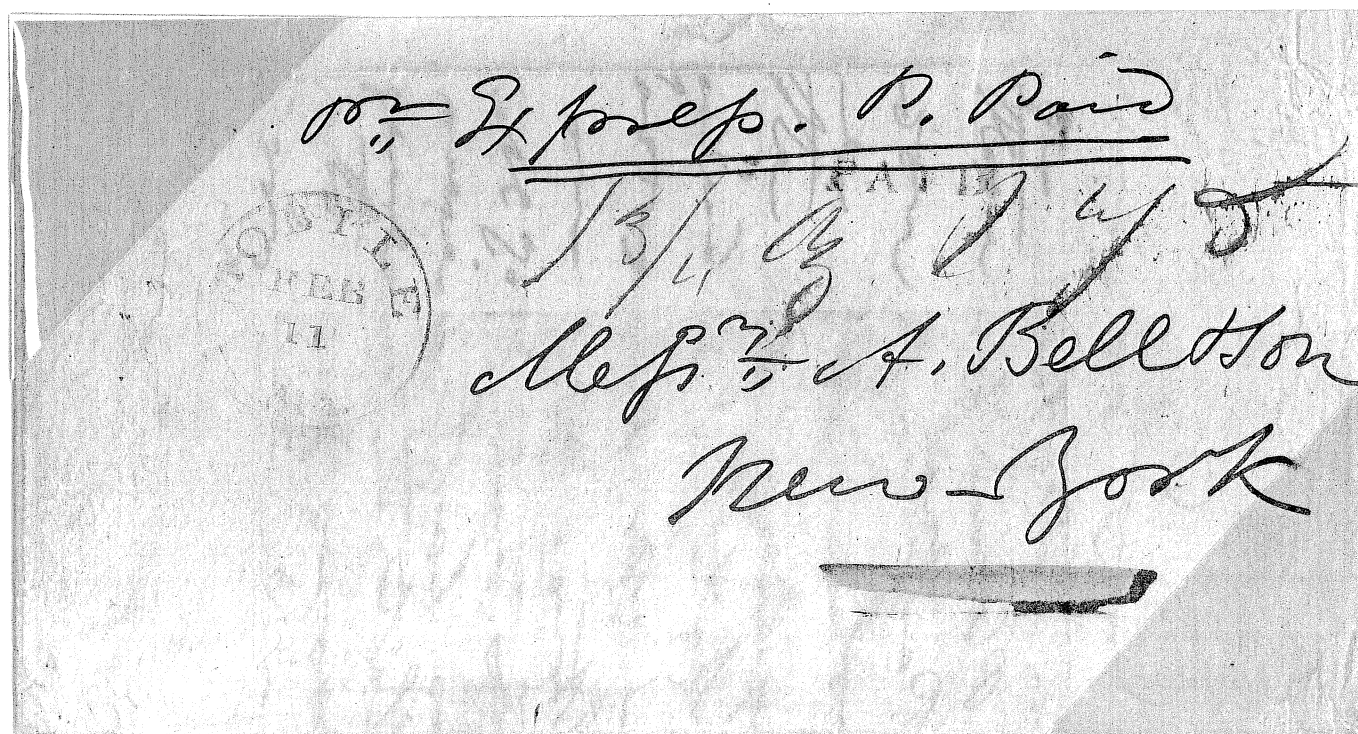


These three covers from New Orleans to New York between February 22 and March 3, 1845, all marked "Express Mail" demonstrate single, double, and quadruple rates, all "PAID".

1845 Revival of Express Mail

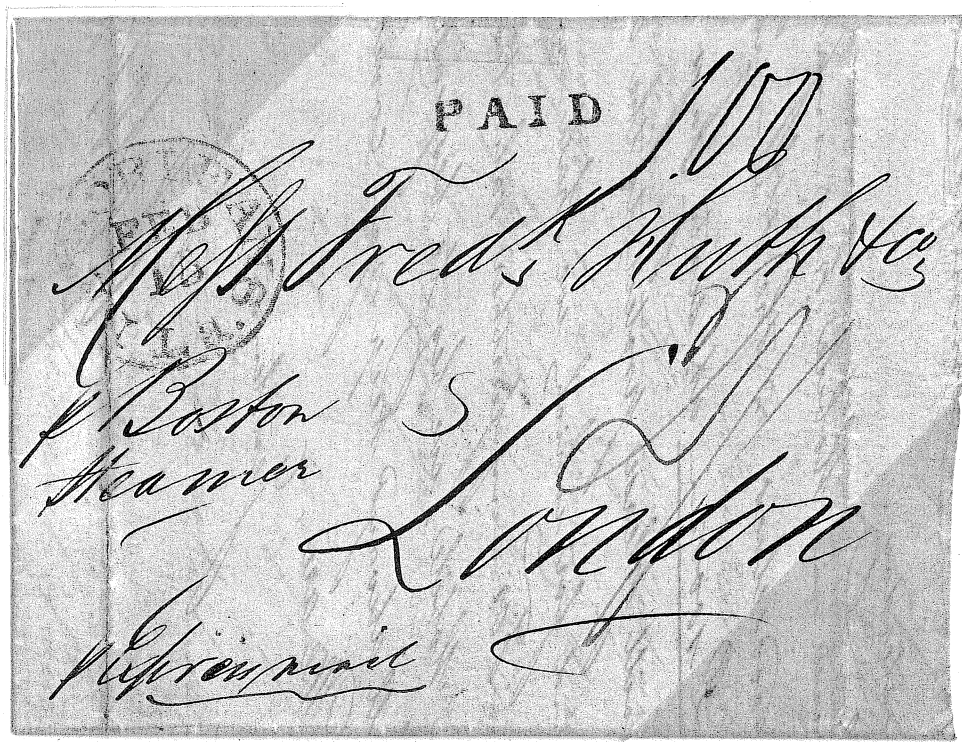


This example "Express Mail p. paid" with "MOBILE Ala. FEB 25" (1845), "PAID", and "75" is marked "treble only", the triple rate to New York. It was received March 5, a longer transit time than in 1836.

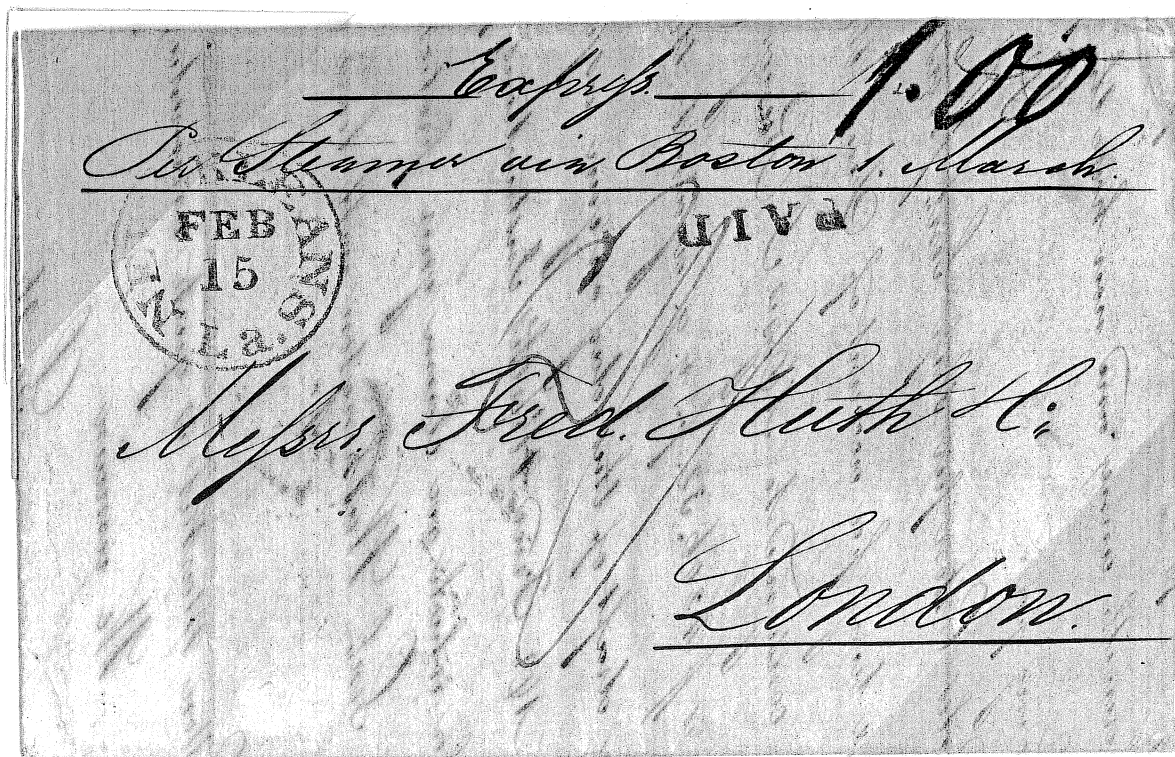


Unlike the half ounce weight limit of the 1836-1839 Express Mail, the revival service of 1845 allowed heavier letters. This "MOBILE Ala. FEB 11" (1845) is an early usage with "pr Express p. paid", "1 3/4 oz.", "175", and "PAID", a 7 x 25¢ rate for four letters enclosed. This is the highest known rating.

1845 Revival of Express Mail

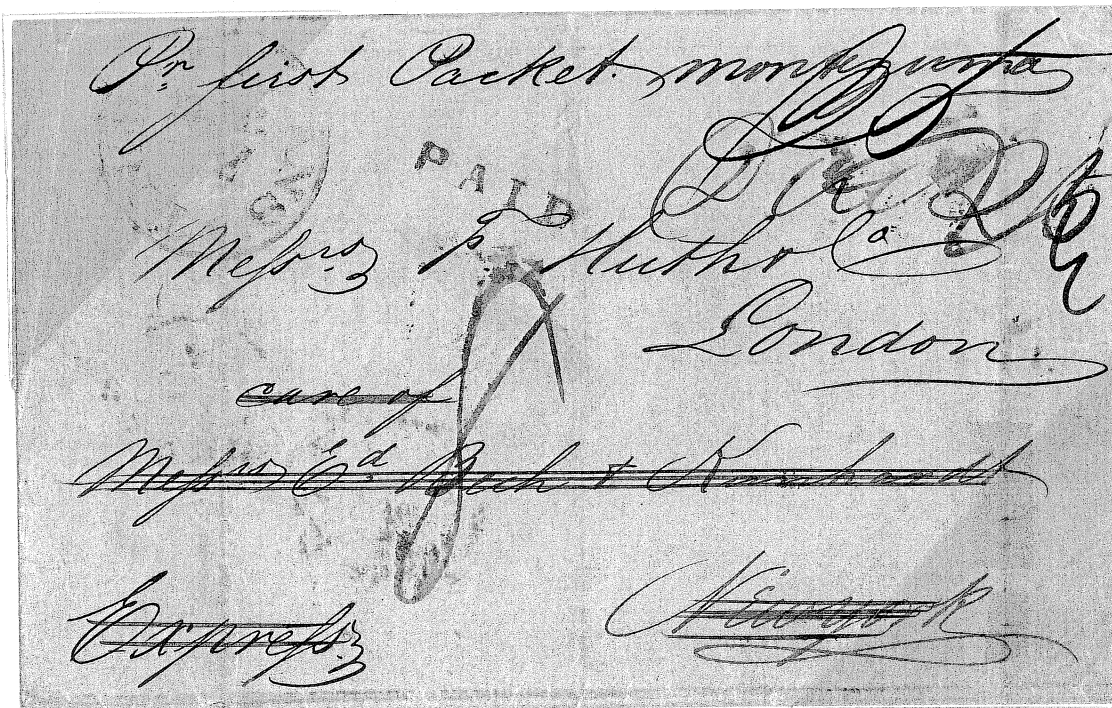


This cover has its origin at "NEW ORLEANS La. FEB 15" (1845) and is marked "pr Express mail" and "pr Boston Steamer". It is postmarked "PAID" and "1.00", quadruple rate for enclosure. At Boston it went by *Hibernia* leaving 1 March and arriving 17 March 1845 at Liverpool and at London the following day, due "2/-" double rate packet letter.



This is another quadruple rate cover in the the same mail. It was marked "Express", "Per Steamer via Boston 1 March", "NEW ORLEANS La. FEB 15" (1845), "PAID", "1.00". Like the other cover it was put into the Cunard steamer's mail by the Boston post office. Also rated "2/-" at London, double packet postage.

1845 Revival of Express Mail

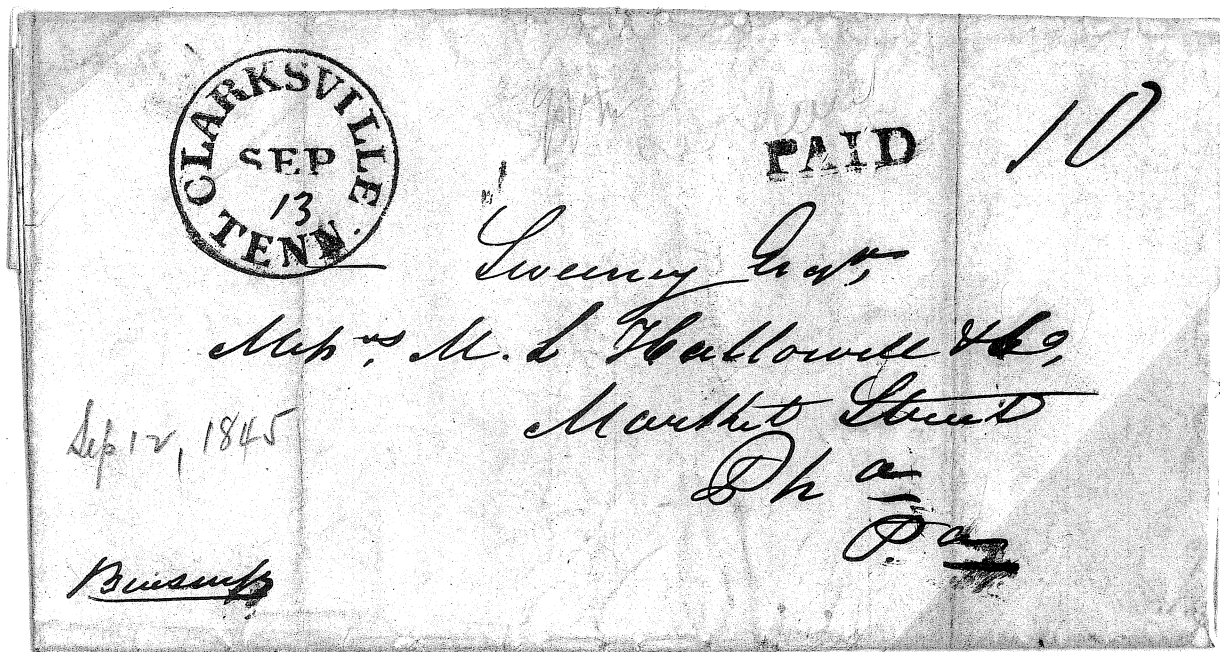


This cover "Express" with "Pr. First Packet Montezuma" was sent "NEW ORLEANS La. MAR 7" (1845), "PAID", "25" to London in care of mercantile firm. The cover is marked "Due 25" evidently being a double. There is ms. "Forwarded by E.W. Beck & Neuhardt N.Y. 17/3/45". A freight money fee of 12½¢ was charged in New York for the sailing packet. On reverse is octagon "8 AP 1845 LIVERPOOL SHIP" and London red 9 AP 9 1845 stamp. The rate was "8d" ship letter fee.

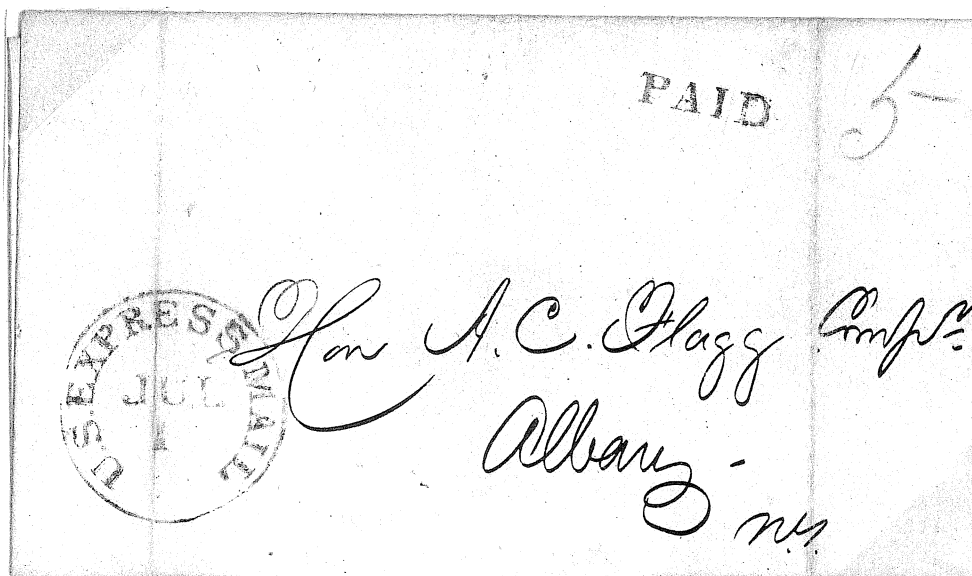


This is the only known 1845 usage of Express Mail to France. It was sent "pr Express Mail" at "NEW ORLEANS La. MAR 6" (1845), "PAID", "25", "via New York by first Havre packet" to Paris. There is handstamped "6" for six decimes (1 decime sea tax plus 5 decimes inland postage), a red Havre mark on front and blue Paris marking on verso.

1845 Reduction in Postal Rates



1845 was the year of postal reform when the high rates of the first half of the century were cut to 5 cents under and 10 cents over 300 miles for a single ½ oz. letter. This “CLARKSVILLE TENN. SEP 13”(1845), “PAID”, “10” to Philadelphia shows the new single rate. Previously this letter would have been charged 25¢ by ordinary mail or 75¢ by Express Mail.



This cover “U.S. EXPRESS MAIL JUL 1” (1845), “PAID”, “5” to Albany is a first day of usage for the new rates. These markings are route agent postmarks on Massachusetts and New York railroads. They bear no relationship to the Express Mail postal service. Other Express Mail handstamps were used in 1853-1857 on coastal express covers between Boston and St. Johns, New Brunswick.

Modern Express Mail



FIRST DAY OF ISSUE



FIRST DAY OF ISSUE

However, the Express Mail was revived by the U.S. Postal Service in 1983. Again this new postal service was in response to the competition from private expresses as in 1836. The service charged a high fee to transport mail by the fastest means available including special dispatches for delivery. These two first day covers bear the first two special stamps for this service. The rates continue to escalate over the years, but the service is still available.