

BERMUDA: Postal History from 1620 to the UPU

The purpose of this precedent-setting exhibit is to present the comprehensive postal history of Bermuda: all routes within, to, from, and through as well as relevant rates and markings.

Bermuda's significance as the crossroads of the Atlantic has been apparent since her colonization in 1612.

Significant personal research and study in this exhibit have added to knowledge in this field. Many well-known items, such as the Postmaster stamps, the Moncrieff cover and other covers utilizing highly sought-after stamps, and Civil War blockade covers, are placed into their postal historical context in ways not previously done. Earliest, latest and only voyages abound.

INTRODUCTION

Bermuda was central to early development of transatlantic mercantile activity:

- Major refueling and provisioning station
- Winter home of the British Atlantic Fleet
- Important site of censorship during the War of 1812, WWI and WWII
- Major location for Prisoners of War, especially during the Boer War
- Principal transfer point for Civil War blockade runners.

- I: FORERUNNER PERIOD (1620-1806)
- II: INTERNAL MAIL
- III: MILITARY MAIL
- IV: SHIP LETTERS
- V: PACKET LETTERS (1806-UPU, 1877)

Section V exhibits scheduled packet services initiated by the Admiralty in 1806, preceded by other aspects according to the outline above. Subsections are listed at the beginning of each major section.

For any island, incoming and outgoing routes are inextricably related: all mail that used Bermuda in its transmission is important and relevant. Some transit mail has no Bermuda markings. The ships involved are noted in the text, highlighted in **unbolded red**.

Organizational and descriptive features:

All known rates for internal, military and external mail are noted at the lower right. A post-Admiralty rate chart (1840 onward) is at Section V B. Virtually all Bermuda marks of the period are present and noted at the lower left.

Items with certificates are denoted "c" near the lower right. Ancillary notes are in 12 pt. italics beneath the cover description.

Key items have a **bold red** border. Significant comments within the descriptive text are in **bold red**. The important point of a given cover is in **bold red** in its heading.

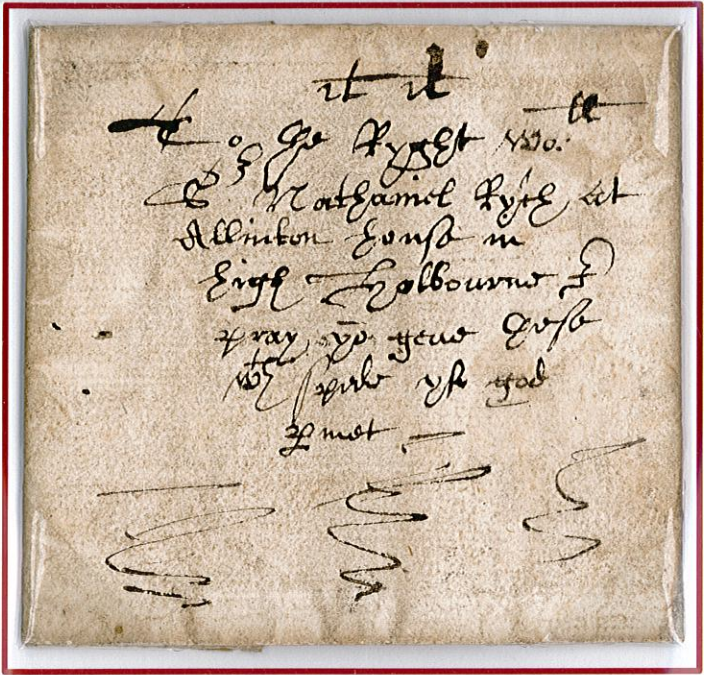
I. FORERUNNER PERIOD (1620-1806)

Mail from or to Bermuda during this pre-packet period is relatively rare. **25 covers are recorded: four prior to 1700** (three in private hands) and two to Colonial America. Interestingly, only seven of the 25 go to G.B.

Bermuda, having no official post office until 1812, had no origination marks. Outgoing mail is identified by the dateline of the contents.

During this period, mail was carried by favor of the captain of a private ship and either placed in the mail at the port of entry or handcarried to its recipient. The name of the captain or his vessel may or may not be specified.

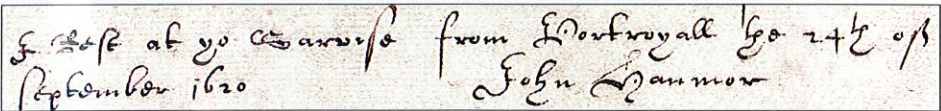
1620 Bermuda to England  
The earliest known Bermuda cover in private hands



Port Royal, Bermuda-High Holbourne, England

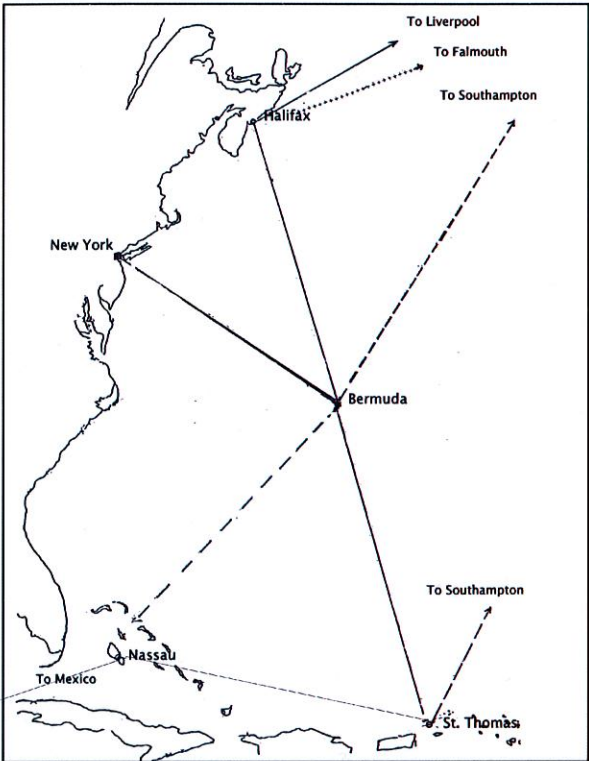
Sep 24, 1620. A letter from John Hanmor at Port Royal to his employer, Sir Nathaniel Rich, concerning the death of his brother. Three letters are known from this correspondence; the earliest, dated 1615, remains in the British National Archives. This and one from 1628 (see Section IV) were deaccessioned in 1969. **This is the earliest known cover in private hands from Bermuda as well as from any British territory.**

This letter was handcarried with no indication of what vessel carried it.

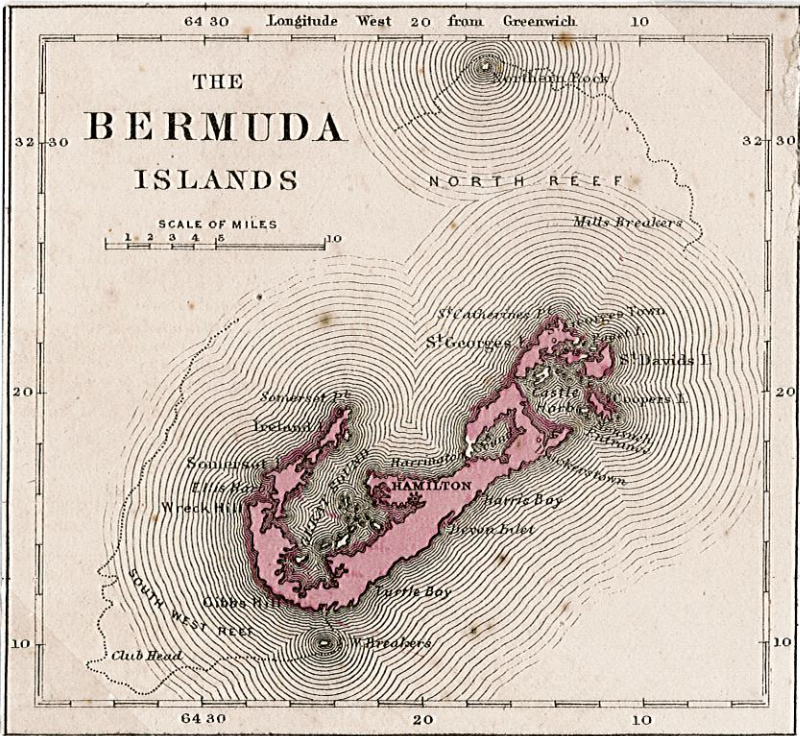


I Rest at your Sarvise from Portroyall the 24th of  
September 1620 John Hanmor

Bermuda in the Atlantic



This map places Bermuda in relationship to the principal routes described in Section V. Detail maps appear with each subsection.

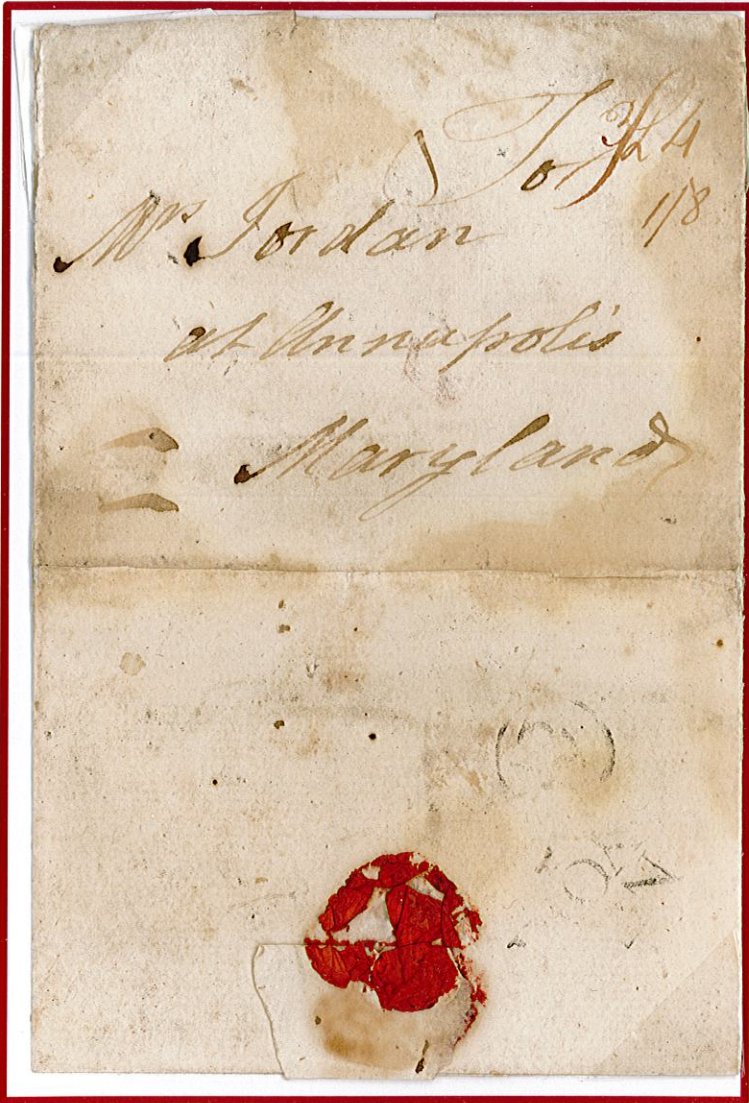


Original map from A. J. Johnson's Atlas, 1866, pl. 71



I. FORERUNNER PERIOD (1620-1806)

One of two recorded covers from Bermuda into the American Colonial Post, 1771.



*Bermuda to Annapolis 1771*

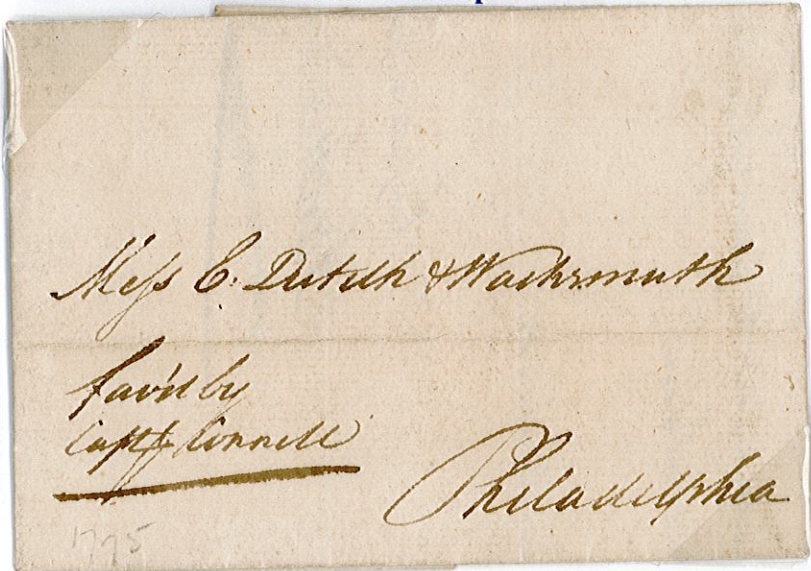
Bermuda-New York-Annapolis

Bermuda, Jun 25, 1771 to New York Jul 13 thence Annapolis.

Rate: 2d. ship letter + 10d. internal (240 mi.) = 1/- sterling = 1/8 New York currency = 3/4 Maryland currency.

Two-line "New York" handstamp and Bishop mark of "13 Jy."

Bermuda to Philadelphia. 1795



*By George Bermuda Nov 28 1795*

Bermuda, Nov 28, 1795 to Philadelphia "rec'd Jan 9, 1796" "fav'd by Capt. Connell" This is a "bootleg" cover, saving the 4d. packet rate between Bermuda and the U.S., a practice that was quite common during these early days.

Bermuda to Scotland, 1796  
One of seven recorded to G.B. before 1806



Bermuda-Halifax-London-Glasgow

Bermuda, May 4, 1796 to Halifax May 17 thence to the U.K.

Rate: 1/- packet rate + 1/- internal to Scotland = 2/-.

Boxed "Halifax N.S./May 1796" (Lowe HS 8 (fewer than six strikes known) overstruck by London night service arrival (Lowe HS 6); "Glasgow" circular receiver (Lowe HS 404).



## II. INTERNAL MAIL

- A. 5d. RATE PERIOD: 1812–1842
- B. 1d. RATE PERIOD, PRE-ADHESIVE: 1842–1865  
INCLUDING POSTMASTER STAMPS
- C. 1d. RATE PERIOD, ADHESIVE: 1865–1877 and beyond

### A. 5d. RATE PERIOD: 1812–1842

On May 20, 1812 an official post office was established on the island for the first time. The basic internal rate was 5d. No datestamp appeared before the fleuron in 1820. The earliest markings are handwritten.

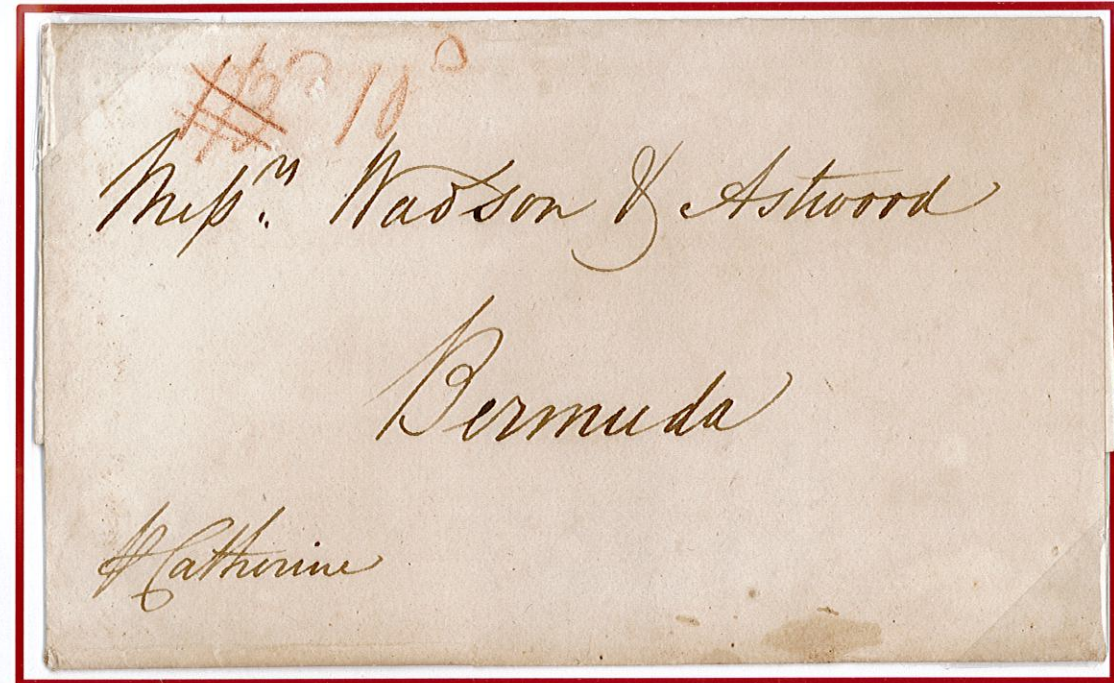
The early post office experienced a number of closings: from May 8 to November 25, 1814; from October 15, 1817 through July 31, 1818 and from October 1821 through May 1830.

During the latter two post office closings, publisher C. R. Beach undertook to deliver internal mail for 4d. and his mark can, on rare occasions, be found in the upper left corner.

During the 1821-30 closure, Postmaster William B. Perot in Hamilton continued service as usual, including internal delivery for the customary 5d fee. However, Postmaster James Taylor in St. George's acted only in the case of outgoing mail. Internal mail had to be picked up at the PO; rate markings are not always present. Both men used the existing fleuron datestamps.

The earliest island route (1812) was from St. George's to Hamilton, followed by Ireland Island (under Admiralty control) in 1842. In 1844, Mangrove Bay, Somerset Bridge, Southampton East and Warwick opened. Gradually the rest of the island was served.

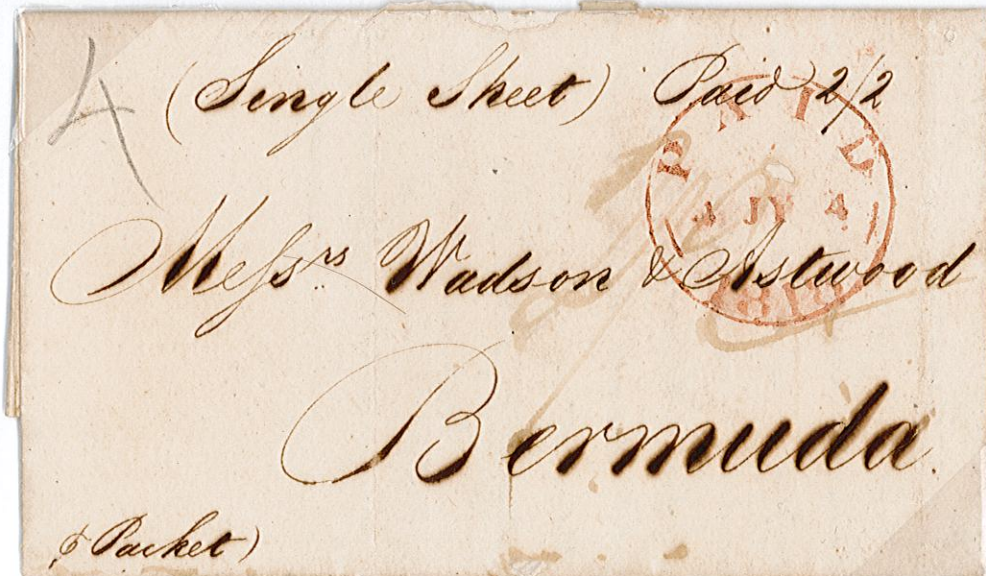
The earliest recorded Bermuda postal marking:  
manuscript "1/3" corrected to "10d"



Postmaster John Till, **the first official Bermuda Postmaster**, applied the "1/3" for triple rate, then re-rated it to the 10d. double rate.

London, Aug 21, 1812, "p. Catherine" (private) arrived at Bermuda in Sept or Oct.

### C. R. Beach's private 4d. charge

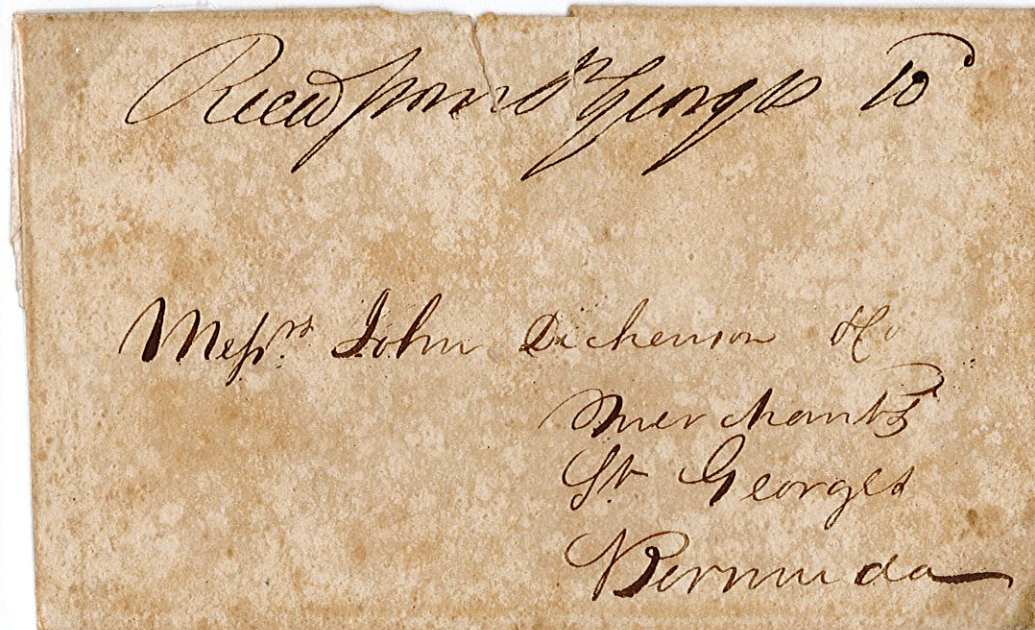


London, Jul 4, 1818, Falmouth July 18 per packet *Speedy* to Halifax Aug 17 and Bermuda Sep 13.

Rate: 1/1 packet + 1/1 between London and Falmouth = 2/2.

4d. Beach covers are **very seldom seen**.

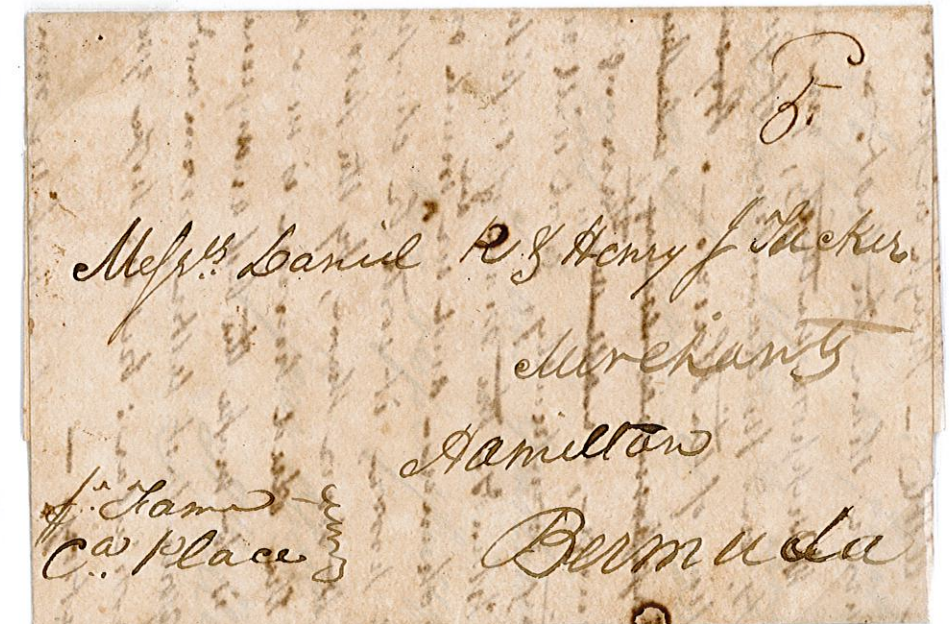
### Double 5d internal rate



5d. x2

1818 double 5d. internal rate, "Rec'd from St. George's 10d," presumably a ship letter arriving from GB at another port after the post office had reopened on Aug 1.

### "Bootleg" from Salt Key, Turk's Islands



5d.

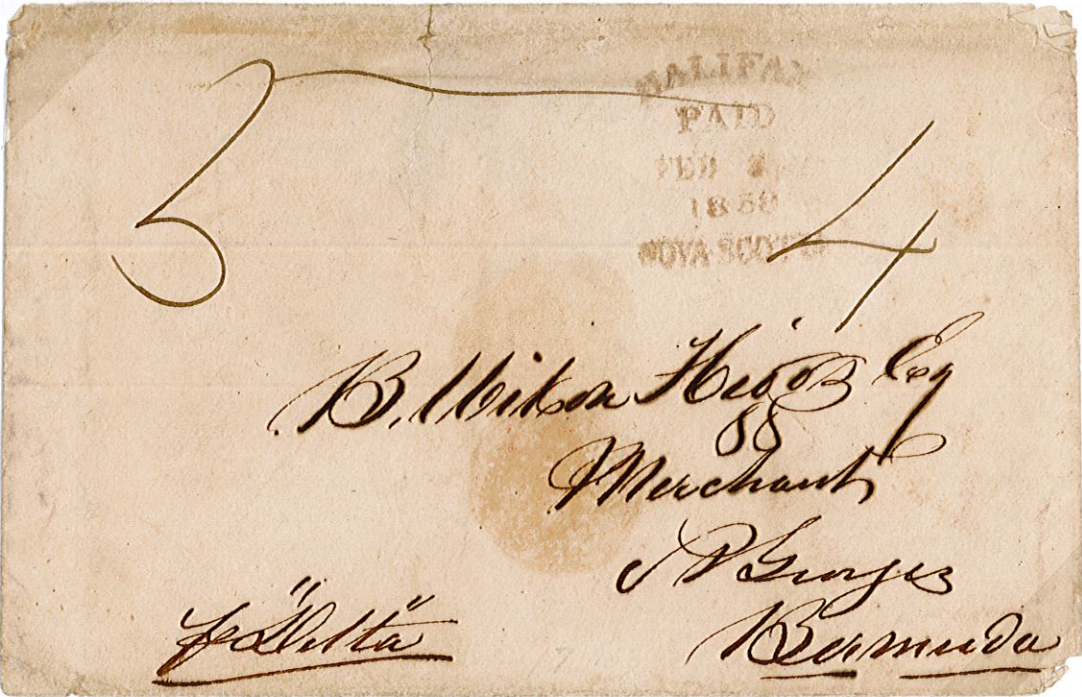
Salt Key, Turk's Islands (dateline), Sep 2, 1833 handcarried "per Fame/Ca. Place" arrived Oct 1 according to the *Bermuda Royal Gazette*, charged only the internal rate.



II B. 1d. RATE PERIOD, PRE-ADHESIVE: 1842-1865  
INCLUDING POSTMASTER STAMPS

After 1842, the internal rate was lowered to 1d. and remained so until 1939. It is highly unusual to find the 1d. rate included in any rate notation on incoming mail. The datestamp alone was enough to show prepayment of postage.

1d. accounted for as part of the rating



Halifax, Feb 2, 1858 (Lowe HS 51) "p. Delta" Feb 14 to Bermuda Feb 18. 4d.  
Rate: "4" for BNA rate + 1d. = "5". The 1d. internal rate is **almost never noted** on an incoming cover.

Hamilton Local (drop) Letter  
This Hamilton handstamp was used for the Perot Postmaster stamps



PM4 Hamilton in black [1d]

1866 unpaid drop letter. Prepayment not required until the 1870s. Intra-town (drop letter) mail is scarce.

THE PEROT POSTMASTER STAMPS

These stamps reveal an ingenious way of controlling postal revenue during the period before postage stamps were issued.

William B. Perot was Postmaster of Hamilton from 1818-1862. He received a stipend plus the proceeds from any mail handled by him. He created the First Issue to assure the required prepayment. They are not provisionals because there were no postage stamps they were replacing.

The **eleven known examples** of the First Issue are from 1848-56. Each is different, depending on the color ink and paper used.

In 1861, he produced his Second Issue, using the Hamilton crowned circle (handstamp P2 H in red only). He pen canceled the small adhesive. **Five are known.**

Perot First Issue in black  
1848-1849



1849, on bluish grey paper.  
**One of five known in black.**

Provenance: Ferrari, Hind, Caspary, Cartier, Leuhusen, Gilbert

Perot First Issue in red  
1853-1856



1853, on thick white paper.  
**One of six known in red.**

Provenance: Caspary, Mozian, Cartier, Cripps

Perot Second Issue  
1861



1861, red on bluish laid paper.  
**Five recorded, all in red.**

Provenance: Ludington, Ulrich

THE THIES POSTMASTER STAMP

James H. Thies, Postmaster at St. George's from 1860 to 1880, created Postmaster Stamp from 1860 to 1863, using the St. George's P2 crowned circle handstamp applied to small pieces of paper for affixing to an envelope. One is on white paper; four are on yellow. Normally he pen canceled the stamp. Shown here is the only occasion when he used a date stamp (P3 Ty2).

The Thies Issue  
1860-1863



1863, red on yellow paper.  
**Five known copies.**

**Only recorded** stamp canceled with a datestamp.

Provenance: Wedmore, King Carol of Romania, Ulrich

THE WARD POSTMASTER STAMP

Robert Ward became Postmaster of Hamilton from June 1862 until 1879 upon Perot's retirement. He, too, created a Postmaster Stamp, very similar to Perot's Second Issue but canceled with a blue crayon. Such crayons did not appear in a postal requisition until October 1862.

The Ward Issue  
1862



1862 (?), red on cream laid paper.  
**Two known copies.**

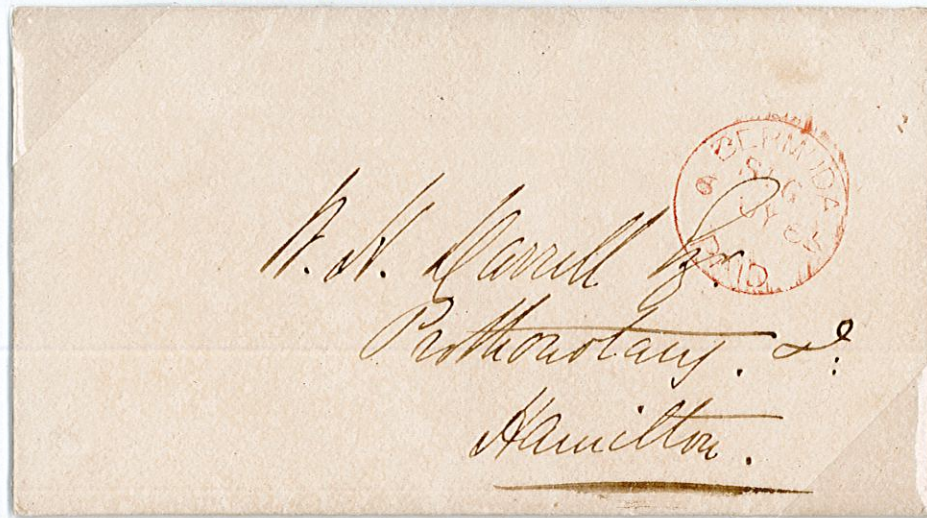
Provenance: Tucker



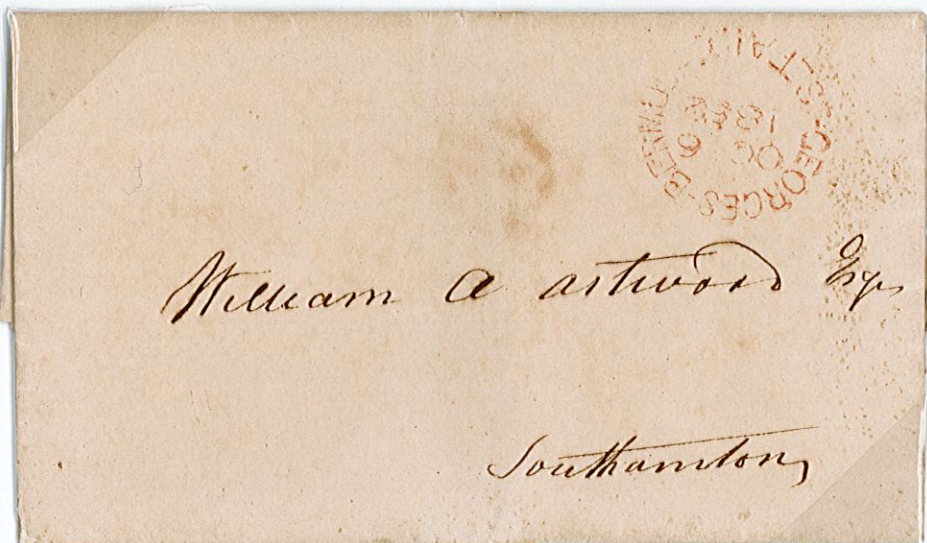
## II B: 1d. RATE PERIOD: PRE-ADHESIVE

The bulk of intra-island mail went between St. George's and Hamilton. Ancillary markings of any kind are rarely seen

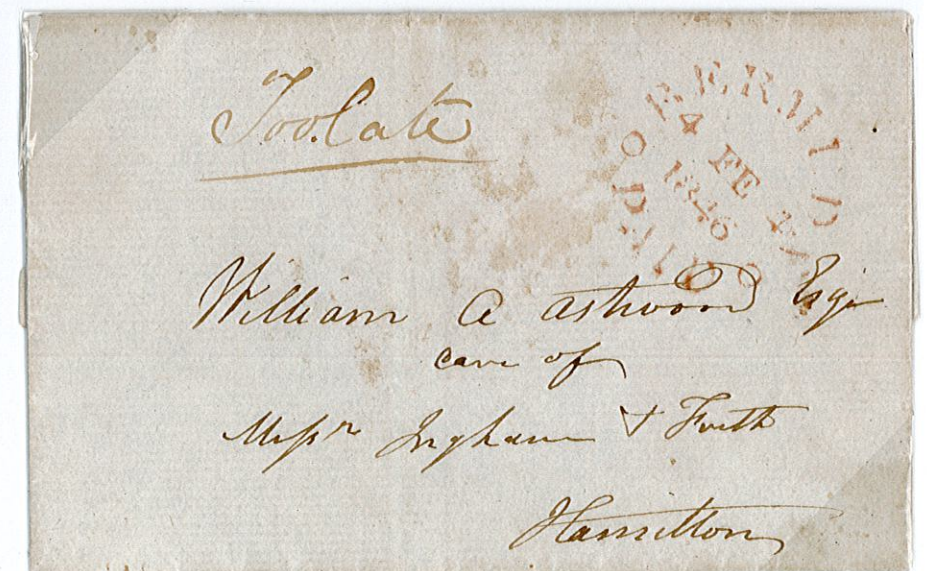
**Latest of four known strikes of P5: July 6, 1865**



St. George's to Southampton [P3 Type 1, 1852]



"Too Late" [P1, 1852]

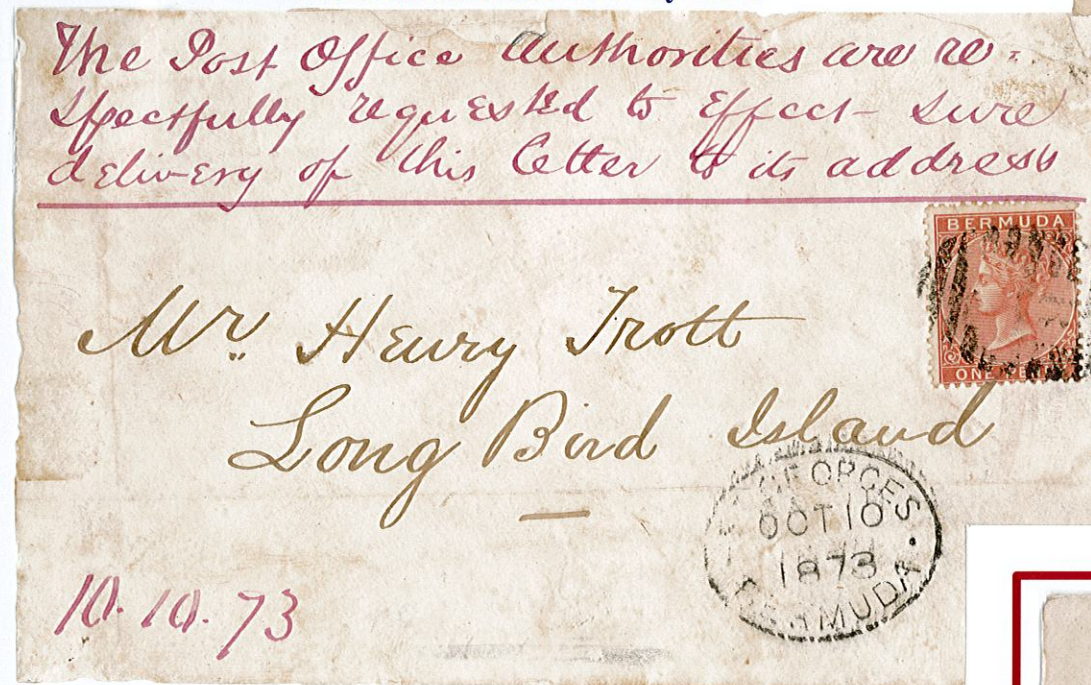


## II C: 1d. RATE PERIOD, ADHESIVE: 1865-1877+

Bermuda's first postage stamps were issued on September 26, 1865, obviated the need for the Postmaster Stamps. With the stamps came new canceling devices: numerals with a separate datestamp. Duplex cancels did not appear until 1879.

As the system developed, canceling devices often did not keep pace with the needs. The four Receiving Offices established in 1866 forwarded mail to either Hamilton or St. George's but had no handstamps of their own until the advent of the duplex in 1879.

**1873 to an addressee on a tiny island**



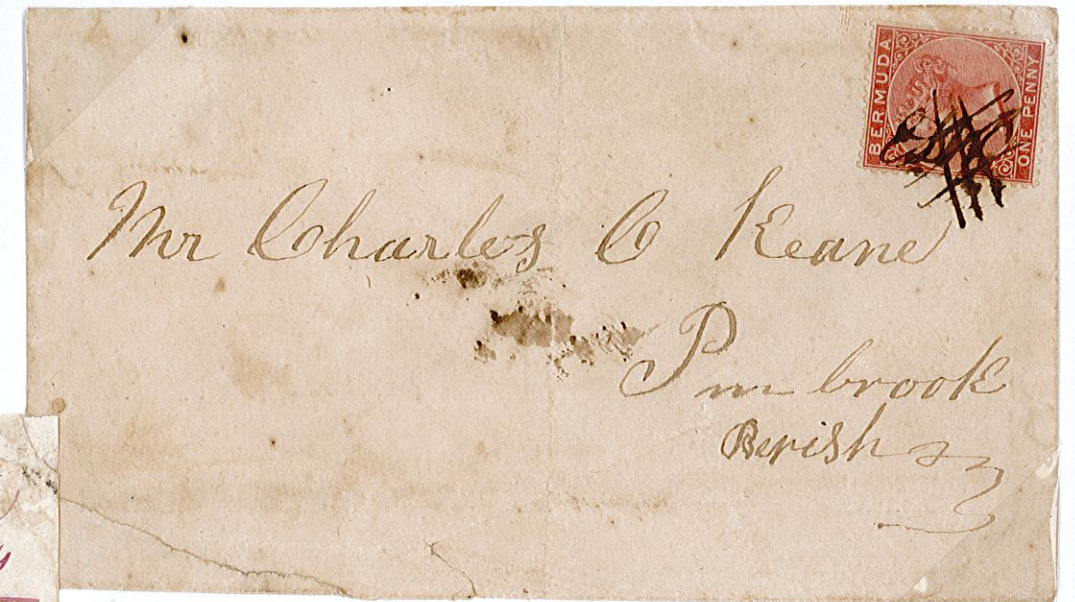
In Sep 1871, a causeway was opened between the mainland and tiny Long Bird Island. Only two people lived on the island and the sender gave explicit directions for the letter's delivery. Oval datestamp H3 was used from 1871-1879.

**Use of a datestamp to tie the stamp instead of the barred numeral**



Jun 28, 1870 St. George's P5 datestamp ties the stamp. It is unclear why this was done at one of the main Post Offices.

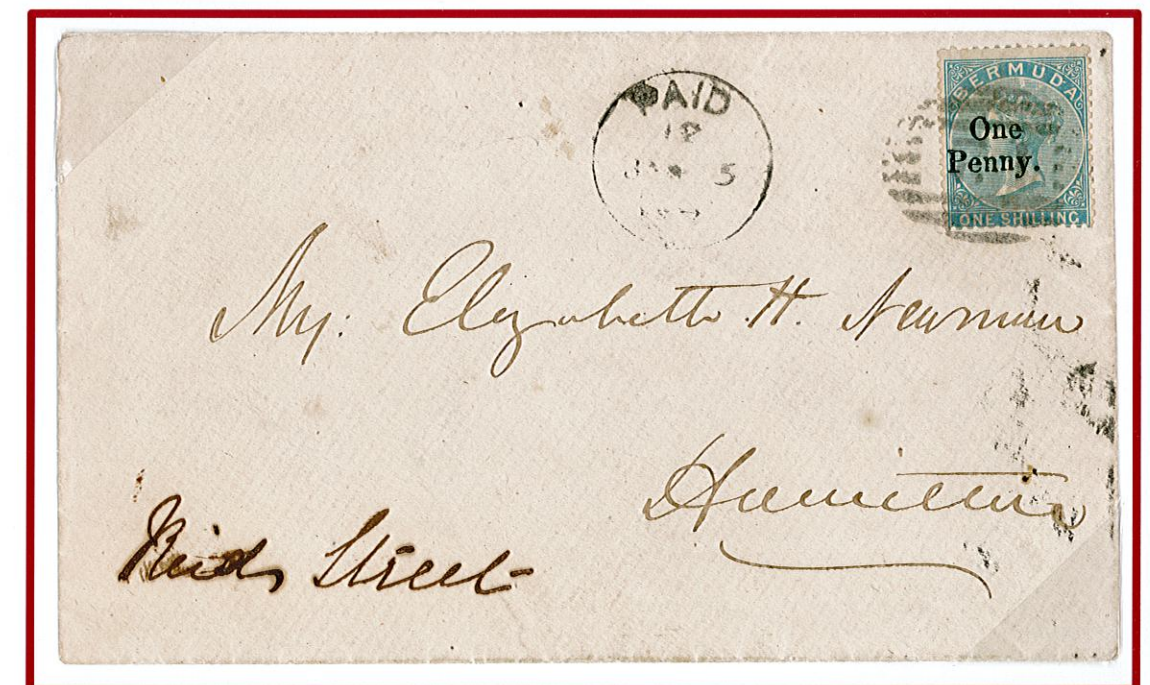
**Postmaster's pen cancel in lieu of handstamp  
Only recorded example of such treatment**



PM4 Hamilton backstamp in black

This 1867 cover shows an *ad hoc* method of pen canceling. Beneath the cross-hatching are the initials "J.D.W." (John Darrell Wainwright), Receiving Office keeper at Warwick. The lack of a datestamp was corrected by application of the Hamilton mark on the reverse.

**1875 "One Penny" on 1/- Provisional used from Harrington Sound  
Only recorded example of its barred "12" cancel on cover**



P5 Mangrove Bay

Jan 4, 1876 Harrington Sound to Hamilton

The barred "12" is inverted, tying the stamp. Adjacent is the H2 type datestamp with "12" beneath the "Paid."



III. MILITARY MAIL

- A. WAR OF 1812
- B. THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR BLOCKADE
- C. CONCESSIONARY RATES

The strategic importance of Bermuda was clear from the 18th century. Even after the Revolutionary War, the British maintained its bases on the American continent. It wasn't until the War of 1812 and the loss of those bases that there was a significant increase in the British naval presence on Bermuda. She became the winter home of the Atlantic Fleet and the principal naval port between Halifax and B.W.I. A British Army garrison protected the and manned the prison at Ireland Island.

Bermuda-Plymouth-Glasgow

Bermuda, Nov 9, 1814 per *Dolphin* direct to Plymouth (Lowe HS 246) and Scotland.

The ship rate of 1/1 was half the packet rate of 2/2 + 1/6 Plymouth to Glasgow postage and 1/2d. Scottish toll = 2/7 1/2d. due.



Bermuda to England via Halifax, 1814



Bermuda-Halifax-Portsmouth

Bermuda, Jul 23, 1814 per a small warship to Halifax Aug 18 thence per packet *Princess Mary* to Portsmouth.

Two Halifax marks in black: arced (Lowe HS 31) and oval Ship Letter (Lowe HS 39, *rarely seen*).

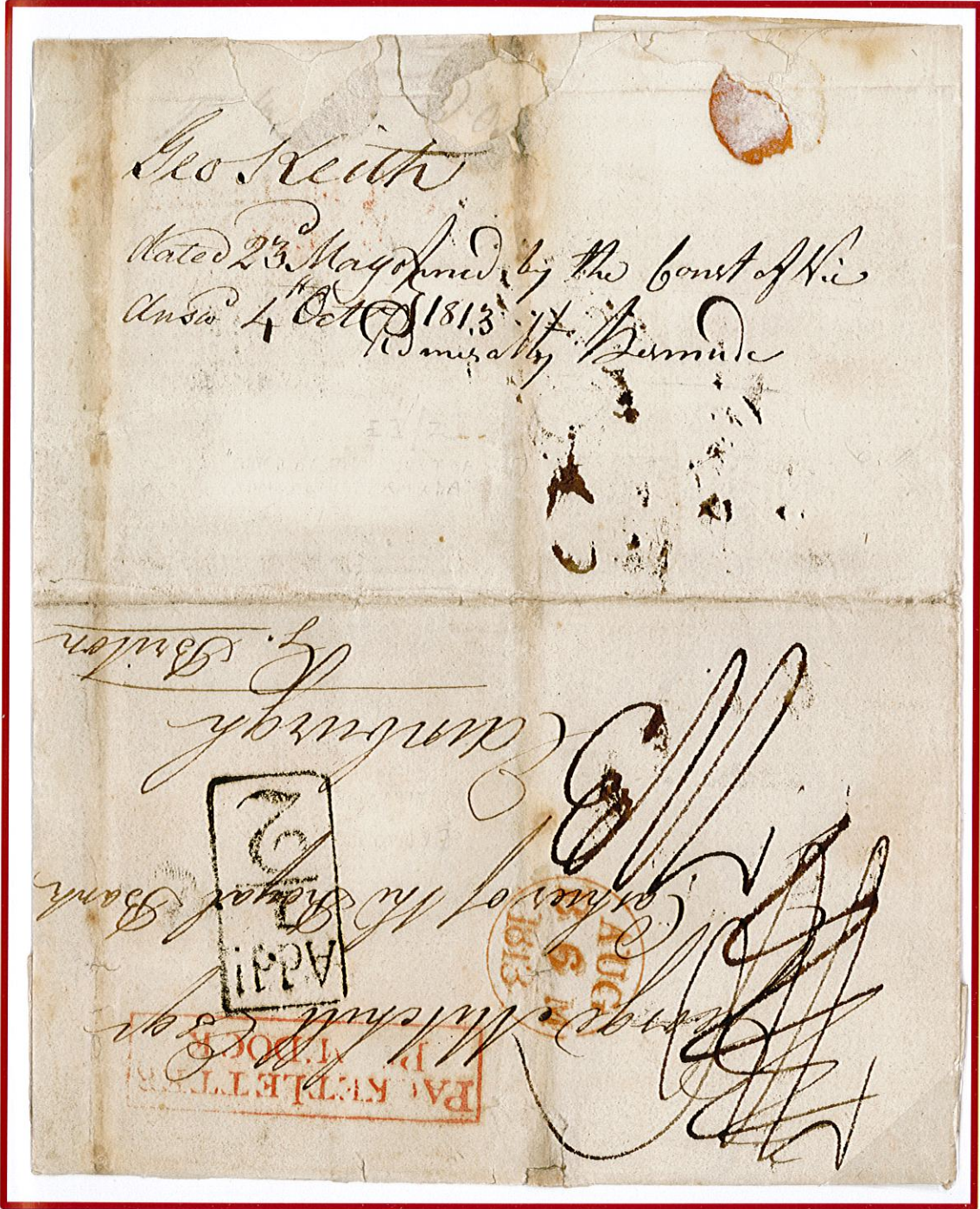
Written by an Admiralty officer aboard HMS Royal Oak at Bermuda (dateline).

III A. WAR OF 1812

The Admiralty packet had been in service since 1806 (see Section V A.).

During the War of 1812 (June 1812-February 1815) those packets were transferred to military duty and mail from Bermuda was carried either by regular ship or by a convenient non-scheduled packet. This continued from November 1812 to March 1815 when notice of the end of the war reached the Admiralty at Halifax.

Only recorded cover censored in Bermuda during the War of 1812



The Vice Admiralty Prize Court, established during the wars with France, was expanded in 1812 to include U.S. shipping.

Charleston, May 3, 1813 (dateline) per Brig *Langdon Cleve* bound for Lisbon, captured by HM Frigate *Atalanta* and taken to Bermuda on May 24. The ship, crew, cargo and mail (after censorship) were released on June 24 to continue on to Lisbon whence the letter was carried to Plymouth Dock Aug 6.

Endorsed: "opened by the Court of the Admiralty Bermuda" signed Geo. Keith.

Rate: double weight: 2/2 x 2 packet rate + 1/6 x 2 inland rate = 7/6 + 1/2d Scottish toll.

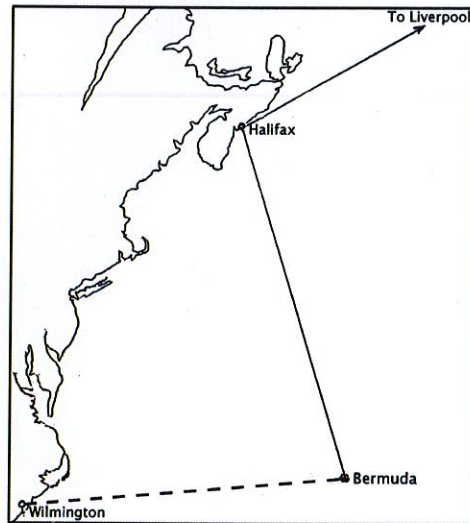
Red Plymouth arrival mark (Lowe HS 181).



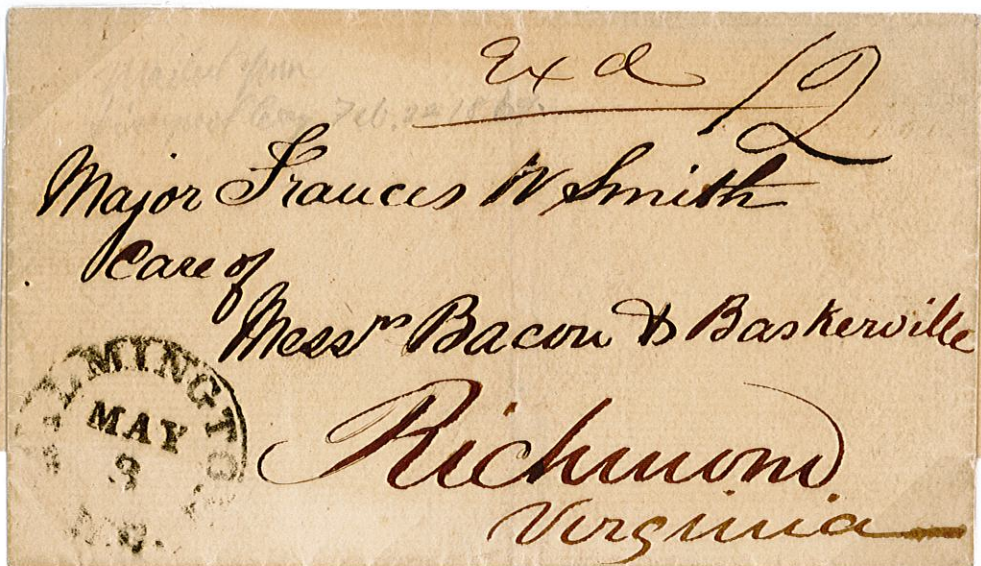
### III B. THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR BLOCKADE

During the American Civil War, the North sought to cut off the South from its cotton markets in Europe with a blockade of the Atlantic coast. Initially unsuccessful, as the War progressed it become more effective. The small, fast boats used by the South were known as "blockade runners." From Bermuda, these letters could be carried either by private ship direct or by packet via Halifax (see map). Most mail through Bermuda utilized Wilmington, N.C.

#### Blockade Route



#### Inbound Censor Marking



Censored by Wilmington Provost Marshal, marked "Exd."  
Fewer than 20 such manuscript markings are recorded.

Liverpool, Mar 9, 1864 per Cunard *Africa* to Halifax Mar 30 per Cunard *Alpha* to Bermuda Apr 7 thence per blockade runner *Atalanta* to Wilmington May 2.

Rate: "12" (¢ CSA postage) for 10¢ internal + 2¢ ship letter fee.

#### Wilmington to Germany

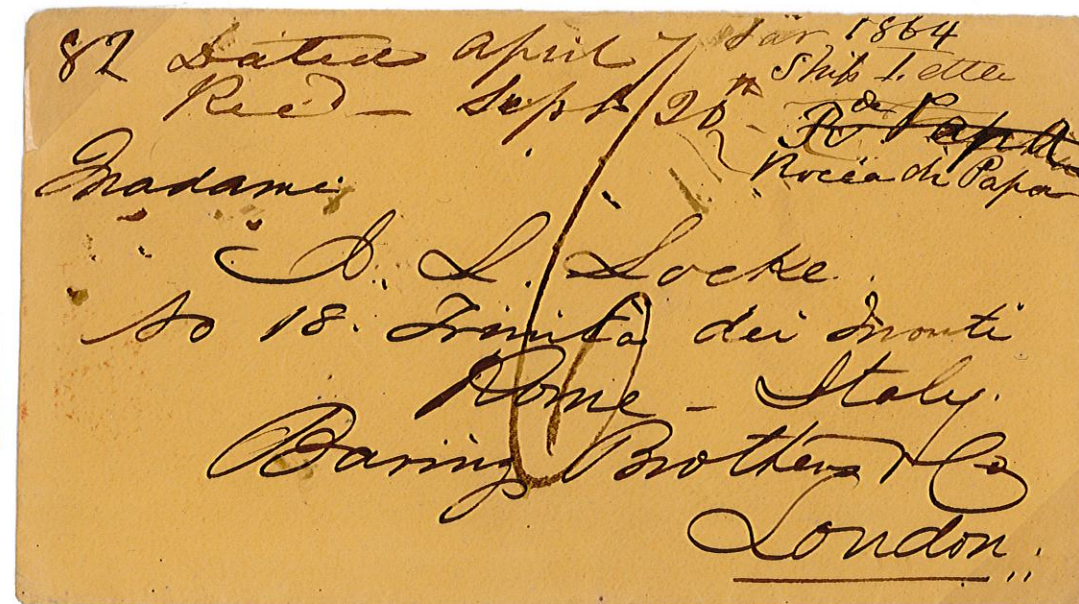


1864, unknown origin, docketed on reverse "via St. George's, Bermuda, Calais, Strassburg." Left Wilmington aboard blockade runner *Caledonia* to Bermuda (backstamp) Mar 9 thence via closed mail to Calais Mar 30 and Wurttemberg the next day.

Bermuda backstamps are uncommon on blockade mail: PM5 St. George's in black.

Rate: 2 Fr./oz. via closed mail, "7" due France, "1fl(orin)3 due on arrival.

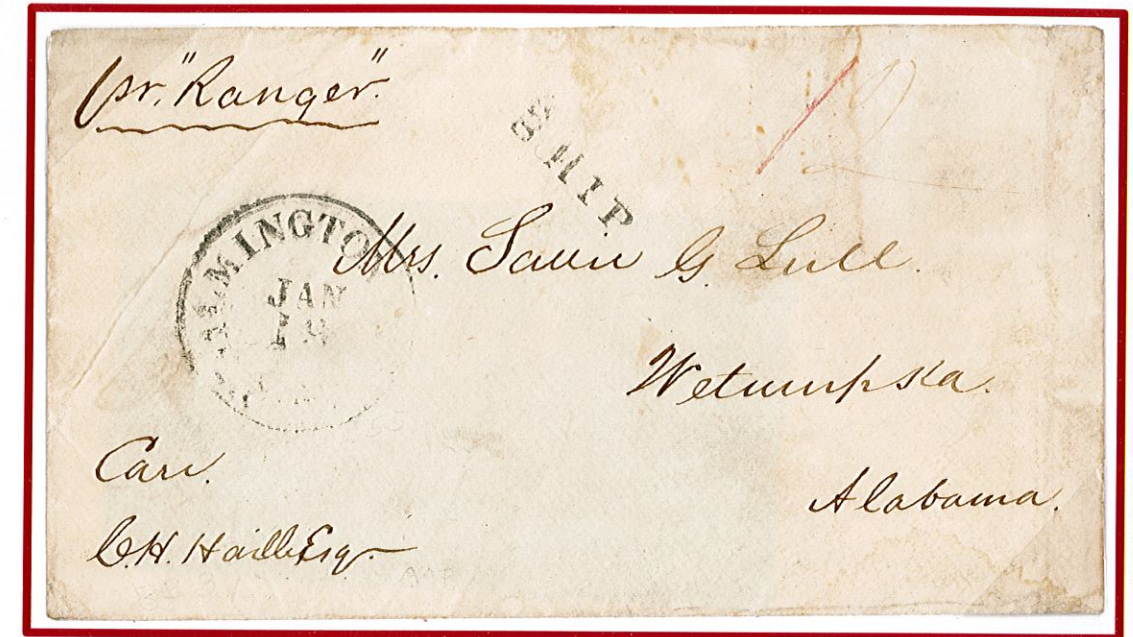
#### Wilmington to Italy



Savannah, Apr 7, 1864 (docket) Wilmington Apr 11 per blockade runner *Minnie* to Bermuda Apr 15 thence by private ship to Liverpool Sep 6 and London the next day (backstamps). Baring Brothers were the forwarding agents for the Locke correspondence. They took the letter and sent it under cover to Rome Sep 20 (docket).

Rate: 6d. ship fee + internal postage (unspecified)

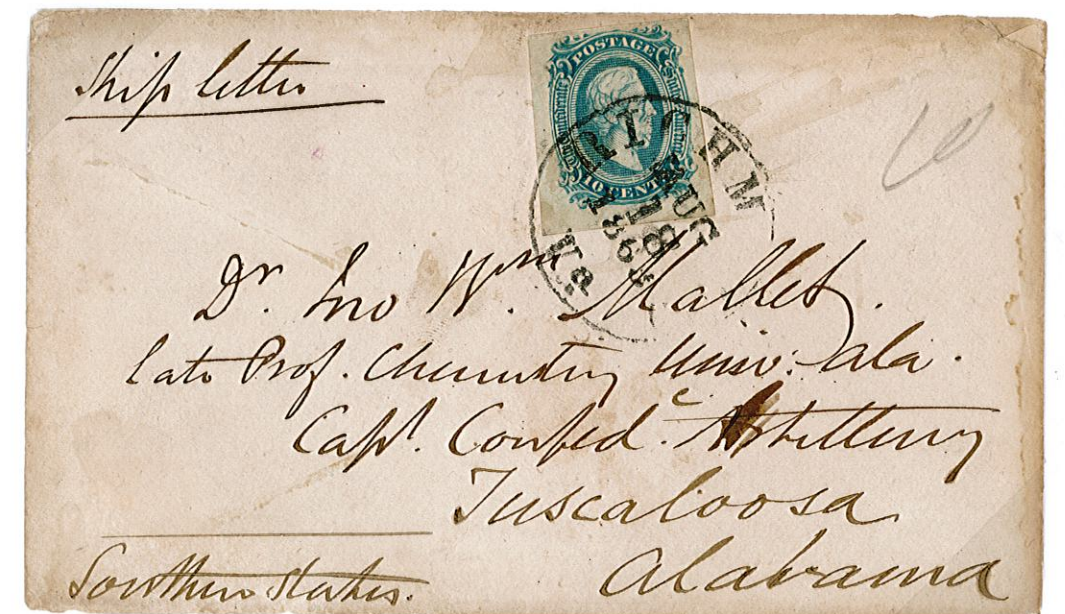
#### One of seven blockade covers originating at Bermuda



Bermuda, Dec 1863 "pr. *Ranger*" to Wilmington, Jan 18, 1864 thence Wetumpka, AL. The *Ranger*, a British steam sidewheeler, made two *ad hoc* trips. Her sailings could not have been known outside of Bermuda.

Rate: 2¢ ship fee + 10¢ CSA postage = "12"(¢)

#### Bootleg from G.B. through the blockade, placed in the mails in Richmond



1863 from London (known correspondence) handcarried on Cunard *Africa* from Liverpool Jul 11 to Halifax Jul 20 thence Cunard *Alpha* Jul 23 to Bermuda Jul 28. Blockade runner *Venus* left Bermuda Aug 12 to Wilmington Aug 16 thence to Richmond and Alabama.

"10" paid with 1863 10¢ CSA Die A stamp canceled Aug 18.



The routing of military mail is not as easily codified as is civilian mail. This is because mail was sent by the most expeditious method, either military or packet. Military vessels rarely carried civilian mail; their sailings were not advertised so their use was very much *ad hoc*. These options are seen in the covers that follow.

## Soldiers

No. 1212 Sent by post 97<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> Post  
~~to Mr. Richmond Smith~~  
~~Esq. of the Bank of~~  
~~Cleveland &c~~  
 Wm. G. Brown (by post)  
 33 ~~Essex Street~~  
~~London~~  
 W. P. Amell & Co  
 100 ~~Essex Street~~  
 London  
 The Bankers

## Sailors

Wm. J. Thomas & Co. Limited  
Feb 4 4 } 1842  
No. 22

B. Jones Esq  
28. Lombard Street  
London

POSTAGE  
ONE PENNY  
POSTAGE  
ONE PENNY

From 1150. P<sup>ce</sup> MacKenzie 1/42<sup>nd</sup> Regiment.

PAID TO  
AT  
RELAND ISLE DISTRICT

RELAND ISLE DISTRICT  
JULY 1848  
XXV 24

To Mr M Lethian.  
Solicitor 37 Court St.  
Edinburgh  
N.B.

Mack.  
Wm Mackenzie  
Comd'g Detachment  
42<sup>d</sup> Regt  
Blancfort

From. William Brittain. Adm. H. M. Ship. Royal  
*SS*  
 Commanding Officer

To. Mr. Blount  
 Little Downham  
 Isle of Ely  
 Cambridgeshire  
 England

20 oct

POSTAGE  
 ONE PENNY

*Military personnel were permitted to use 1d. GB stamps (plate 120) while serving abroad. The stamp was usually canceled on arriving at the Naval Office, in this case, "Devonport/H.M.S." Dec 19.*



### III C. CONCESSIONARY RATES

A special 6d. concessionary rate for Officers was in effect from July 1, 1857 through December 31, 1869. Regular rates applied, before and after those dates.

Both regular and concessionary rates used by military personnel are shown.

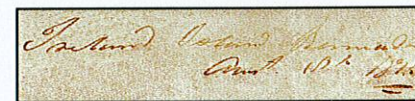
Ireland Island, Aug 18, 1815 (very early date), just after the end of the War of 1812, from an officer of the Marines to London via Cowes. Contents state "The *Regulus* is about to sail for Great Britain."

Rate: 1/1 (half the packet rate) + 4d. internal postage = 1/5. There was no concessionary rate until 1857.

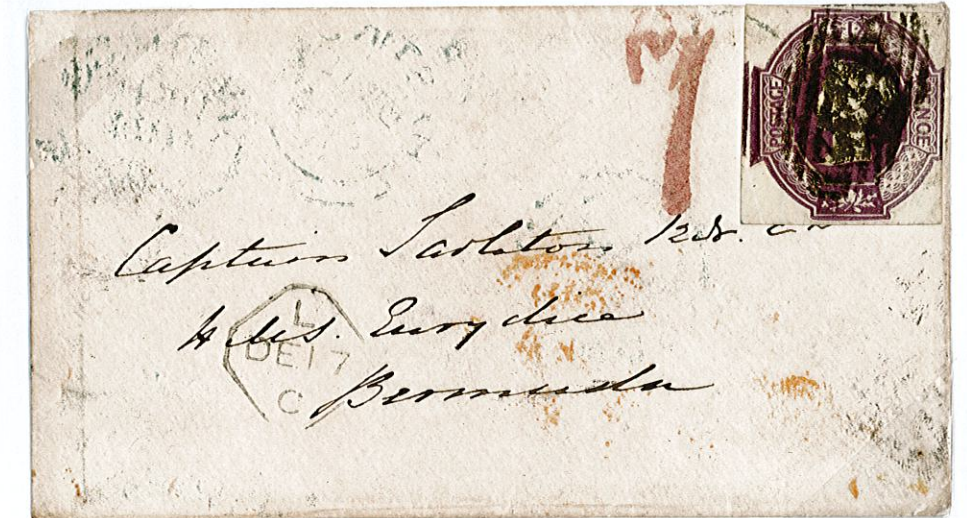
*Black Cowes/Ship Letter (Lowe HS 220).*

### Officers

#### From a Marine



#### To an Officer in **Nicaragua** via Bermuda



Hastings, Dec 15, 1855 to a Naval Captain aboard "H.M.S. *Eurydice* Bermuda" left Liverpool Jan 5, 1856 per Cunard *America* to Halifax Jan 19 per Cunard *Curlew* to Bermuda Jan 25. The *Eurydice* had already left. The *Curlew* continued on to St. Thomas Jan 29, whence the R.M.S.P. *Clyde* took it to **Greytown, Nicaragua**, Feb 11 (ship's log entry).

Rate: 6d. with red "d1" credited to Bermuda, franked with 1854 6d. GB embossed stamp. There was no 6d. concessionary rate at this time. The regular rate of 6d. applied.

#### To a passenger on a naval vessel



PM2 backstamp in red

1/-

Liverpool, October 19, 1841 "To John William Whyte Esq./H.M.S. *Victor*/Bermuda/or elsewhere" per Cunard *Acadia* for Halifax Dec 5 per Cunard *Lady Ogle* to Bermuda Dec 15. The absence of other markings suggests he was, in fact, at Bermuda. There was no concessionary rate at this time.

#### Ireland Island "6d" handstamp Officer's concessionary rate



P2 Ireland Island, R2 (**LKD**), PM5 Ireland Island backstamp

Bermuda, Dec 26, 1862 from naval officer by Cunard *Merlin* to Halifax Jan 2, 1863, Cunard *Europa* to Liverpool Jan 18.

The "6d" handstamp (R2) was made by the Ireland Island postmaster D.F.C. Grote and is usually found in conjunction with the Crowned Circle.

Rate: 6d. At this time, the regular postage had just been raised to 1/-.

#### 6d. Officer's concessionary rate



P5 St. George's in black

Bermuda, Sep 25, 1868 "Officer's Letter" to Scotland per Cunard *Alpha* to Halifax Oct 9 thence per Allan Line *City of New York II* to Liverpool Oct 19.

Rate: 6d. officer's rate paid with 1865 6d. dull mauve. The regular rate was 1/-.



IV. SHIP LETTERS

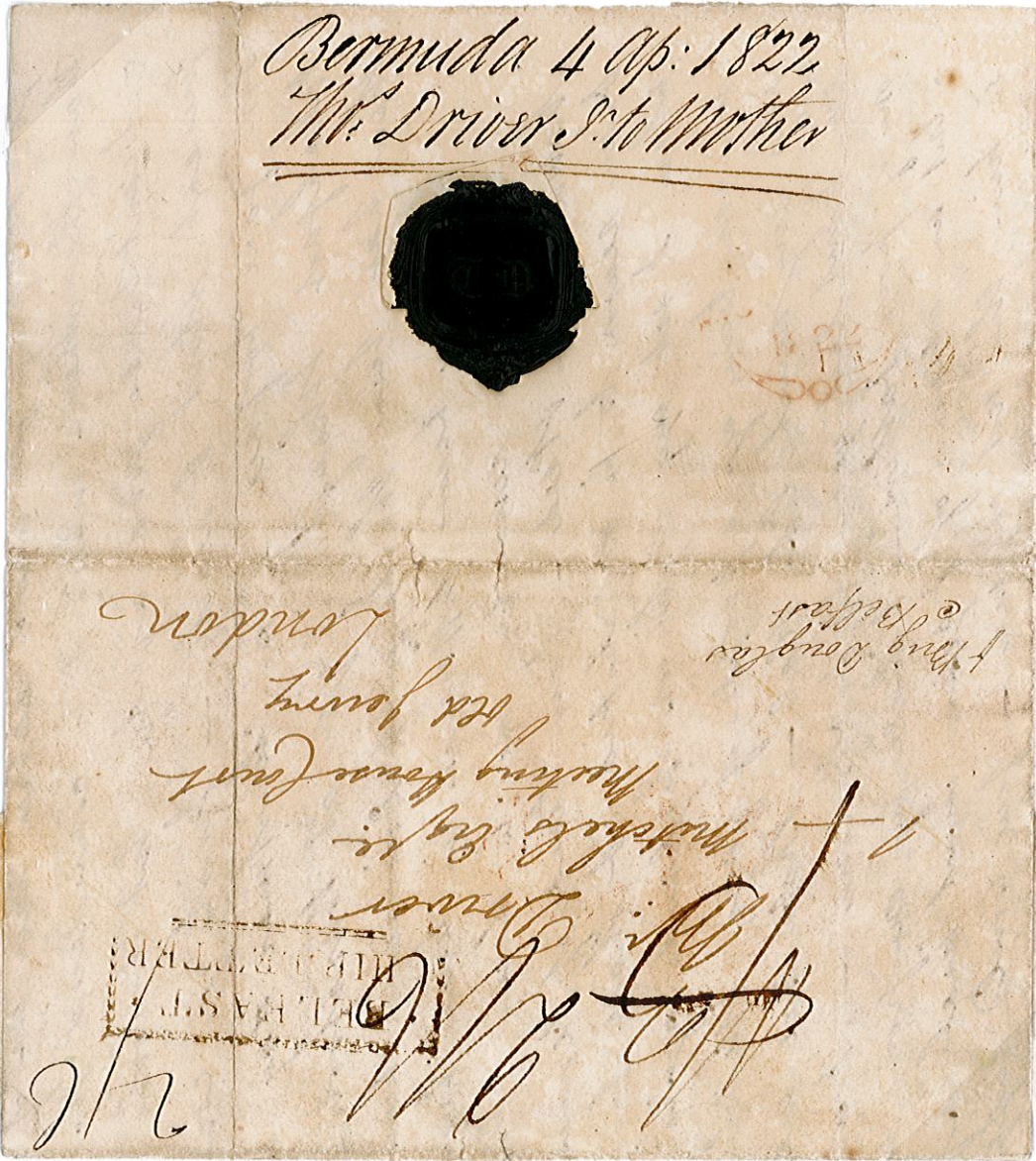
- A. SHIP LETTERS
- B. FORWARDING AGENTS

IV A. SHIP LETTERS

Because private ships did not maintain regular schedules, unless the ship is identified on the cover it is virtually impossible to determine what vessel carried a particular cover.

On occasion, the *Bermuda Royal Gazette* had the appropriate shipping news.

Unusual routing to London via Belfast



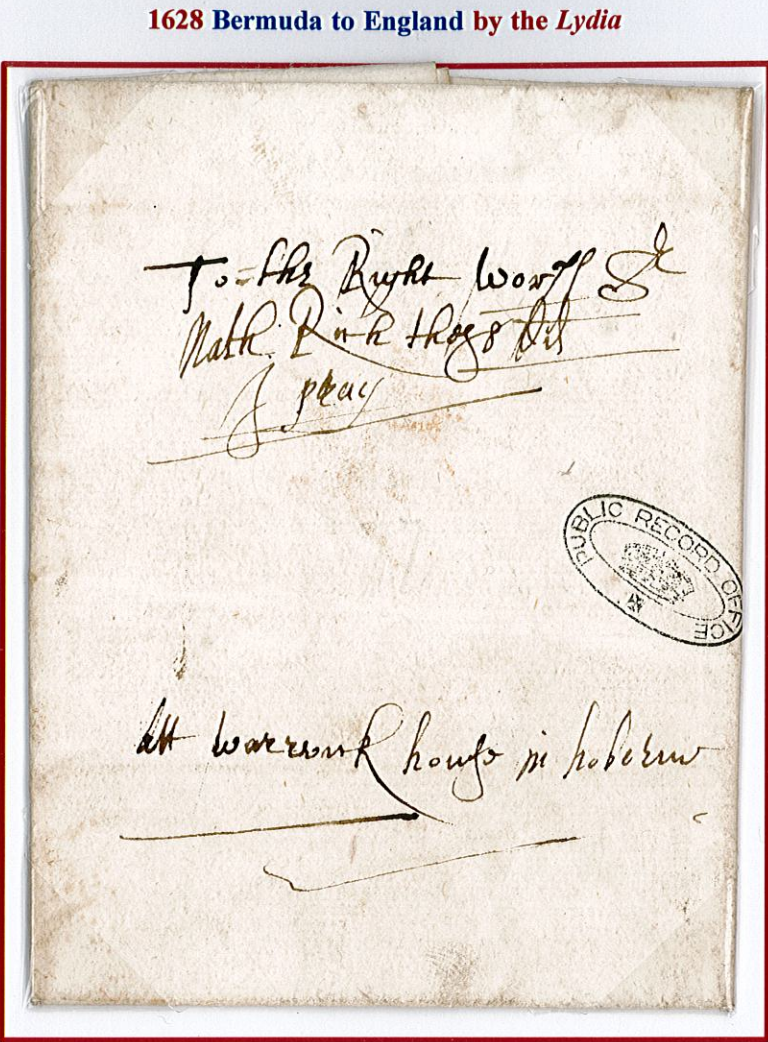
PM1 (10) in red, faint  
Bermuda, Apr 6, 1822 "p. Brig Douglas/Belfast" to London May 22.  
Rate: 2/6: 6d. ship fee + 9d. Irish internal + 2d. to Holyhead +1/- to London and 1d. Menai Bridge fee = 2/6.  
Black boxed two-line Belfast Ship Letter receiver (Lowe 595).

Sumer Iland [Bermuda]-Dartmouth-High Holbourn

"Sumer Iland [Bermuda]," Mar 18, 1628. This cover is part of the Rich correspondence noted on the title page and is the **second earliest** in private hands. John Hamnor writes to his employer about a shipment of tobacco and says very clearly that this letter and an invoice are being sent by the ship *Lydia* and docketed as being received on April 28 via Dartmouth. It is **almost unheard of** to have such explicit information about a specific carrier at this early date.

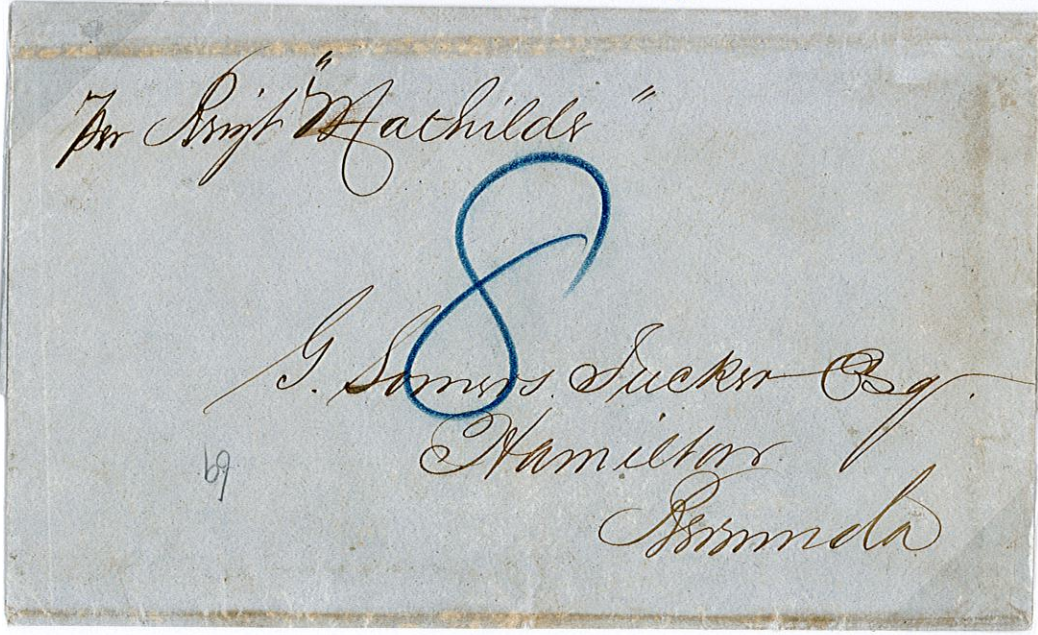
Sumer Iland this 18.  
of March 1628

John Hamnor get to and  
Invoice of Tobacco sent by  
the Lydia. Dated March 18.  
1628. 18 March 1628: Received  
at Dartmouth on Sunday Apr  
28 of April. 1629: Being  
sent me from Dartmouth, ashore by  
the Lydia



1628 Bermuda to England by the Lydia

Carried by a Danish Ship



PM5 St. George's backstamp in black  
Halifax-Bermuda  
Halifax, Jun 3 1864 per Danish Brigantine *Mathilde* to Bermuda Jun 21. **A most unusual carriage** by a non-British or American ship. She was, no doubt, serving St. Thomas.

Bermuda to London

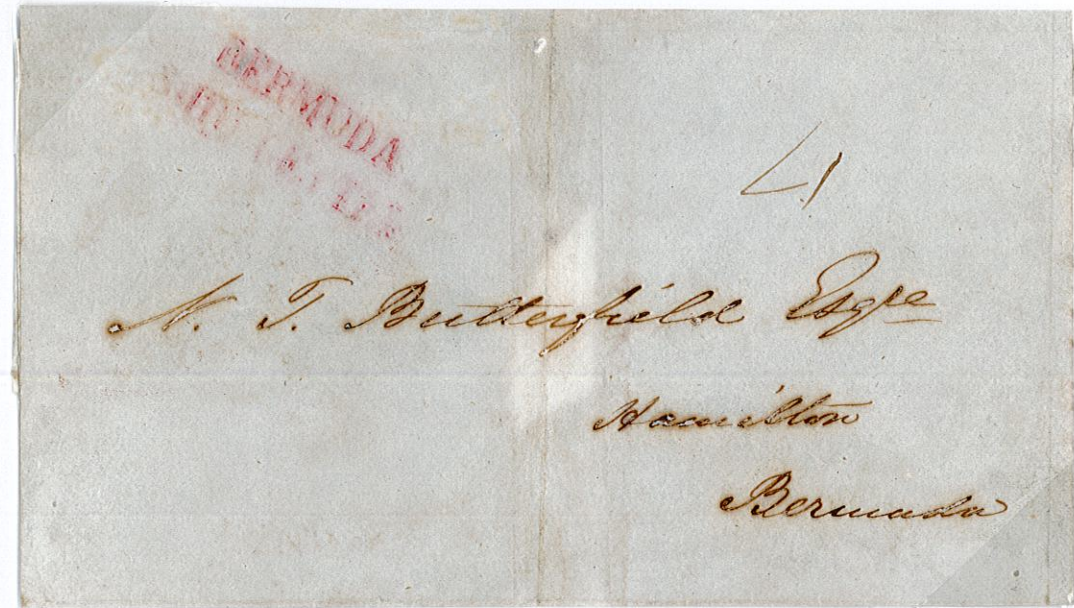


P3 Type 2 (long arcs)  
6d.  
Bermuda, Feb 18, 1862 by S.S. *Cleopatra* to Plymouth (Lowe HS 585 backstamp) May 6, London May 7.  
Such private ship designations were unusual at this late date.



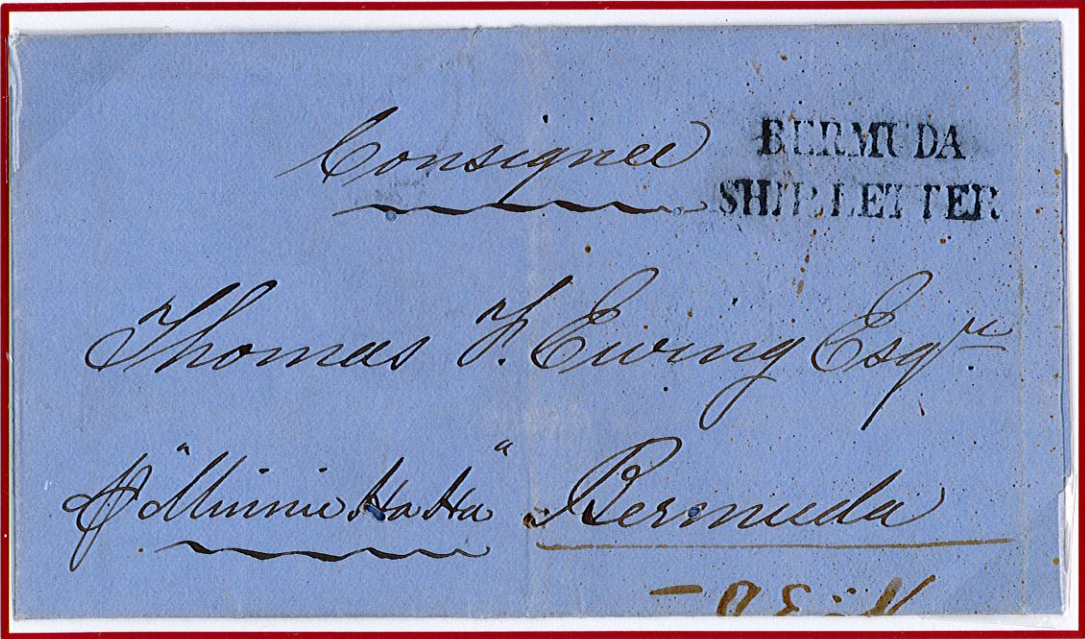
IV A. SHIP LETTERS

Red "Bermuda/Ship Letter" handstamp, Type 2  
Three known



S1 Type 2 (3) wide spaced P & L 4d.  
Sep 20, 1855 forwarded from Baltimore by Joseph C. Yates to Bermuda by private ship.

Free Consignee's Letter  
Black "Bermuda/Ship Letter" handstamp Type 1: two recorded

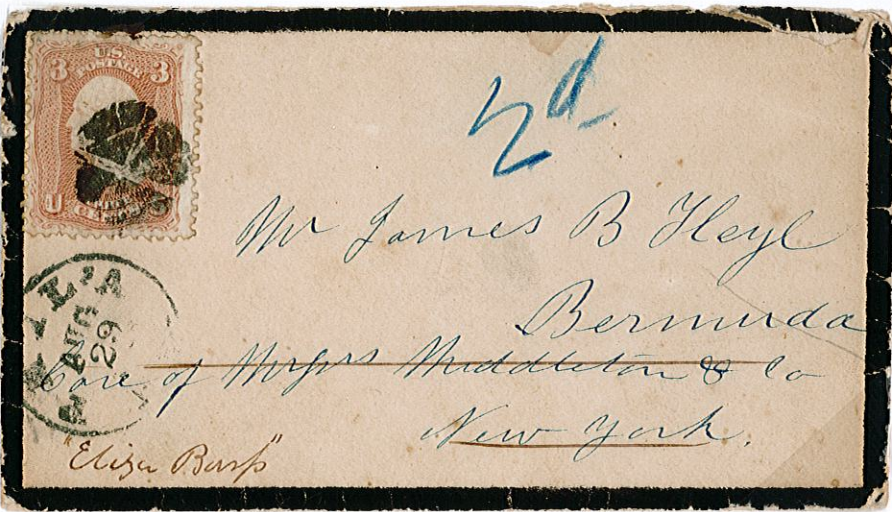


S1 Type 1 (2) (LKD) in black, PM5 St. George's backstamp in black  
London, Mar 14, 1866 per Brig MinnieHaHa to Bermuda May 22 (Bermuda Royal Gazette).  
Consignee's mail was free if picked up at the dockside (as most were). If not, internal postage was due.

A NEW CONVENTION

On October 25, 1865, a new convention between the U.S. and Bermuda came into effect. The rate became 2d. for private ship closed mail to the port-of-entry.  
All covers with this rate are very difficult to find.

Forwarded to Bermuda at the 2d. rate



Philadelphia-New York-Bermuda

Philadelphia, Aug 29, 1866 to New York forwarding agent Middleton & Co. who sent it to Bermuda on the Eliza Barss.  
Prepaid 1861 3¢ for U.S. internal rate. "2d" due in Bermuda.

New York-Bermuda

New York, Mar 27, 1873 hand-delivered to and forwarded by Middleton & Co. (back stamp) per Eliza Barss to Bermuda Apr 7.

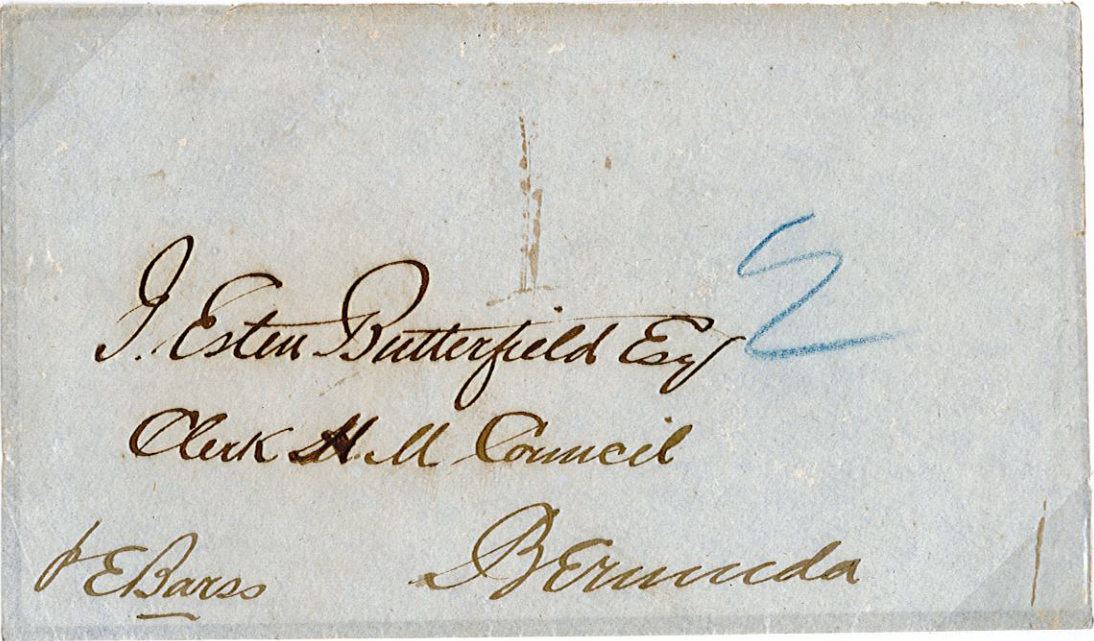
Only recorded franked letter from Bermuda to the U.S.  
under the new 2d. closed mail rate



Bermuda-New York-Wisconsin

Bermuda, Nov 11, 1865 per Eliza Barss to New York Nov 20, thence to Wisconsin.  
Rate: A pair of 1865 1d. paid the closed mail rate to the U.S. The 1861 3¢ U.S. stamp was probably placed on arrival but was short 3¢ for the U.S. ship letter fee of 6¢ beyond the port-of-call, thus "Due 3".  
This is also the earliest recorded cover from a receiving office using a barred killer, in this case the barred "9" of Southampton.

Handcarried to ship, no U.S. postage, ship rate only





# IV B. FORWARDING AGENTS

Forwarding agents became central fixtures of 19th century mail service as the complexities of and demand for postal service increased. Overseas agents often forwarded mail to Bermuda.

Six agents operated in Bermuda. Between them, there are only recorded 10 examples. Two are shown.

## Unusual routing and double forwarding



## Turk's Islands-Philadelphia-New York-Bermuda

Turk's Islands, Aug 20, 1841 to Philadelphia Sep 14 (straightline "Ship") sent on to forwarding agents Godet & Barclay (unrecorded in Rowe) and Geo. & J. Laurie, both of New York, thence to Bermuda.

## Forwarded from North Carolina



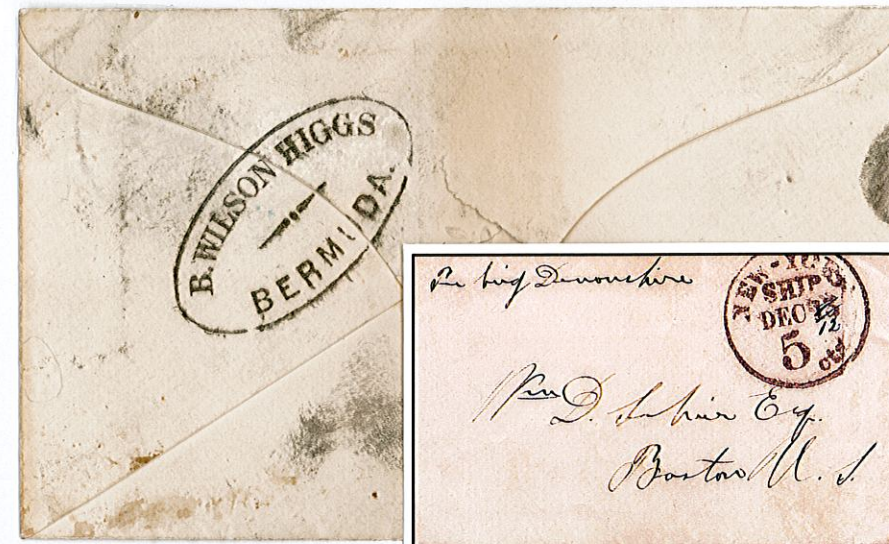
## Philadelphia-New Bern, NC-Bermuda

Philadelphia, c. 1820 to New Bern, NC forwarded from there by John Spencer West (manuscript on reverse) to Bermuda.

25¢ internal postage for more than 400 miles.

*Forwarded by John Spencer West*

## Bermuda forwarder B. Wilson Higgs: one recorded



## FA2 (1)

Dec 1855 (?) forwarded by Higgs from Bermuda per Brig Devonshire to Boston via New York.

Black "Ship" cancel (Hubbard 350).

## Forwarded from New York



S1 Ty1

## Alexandria, VA-New York-Bermuda

Alexandria, Aug 30, 1845 to New York "Care Middleton & Co." thence to Bermuda per Brigantine Princess Royal (BRG entry) Sep 11.

Rated: 5¢ U.S. internal.

## Bermuda forwarder S. Musson & Co., one recorded

## Incoming Blockade cover, unlisted in Walske



## FA3 (1)

## Liverpool-Bermuda-Wilmington, NC-Petersburg, VA

Liverpool, Jun 11, 1864 per Cunard Africa to Halifax Jun 22 thence per Alpha to Bermuda Jun 28, forwarded from Bermuda by S. Musson & Co. per blockade runner Ella (II) to Wilmington Aug 16.

Rate: 10¢ x 2 double internal Confederate rate + 2¢ ship fee = 22¢.



V: PACKET LETTERS

- A. GPO/ADMIRALTY PERIOD (1806–1840): 6 routes
- B. CUNARD (1833–1886): 5 routes
- C. ROYAL MAIL STEAM PACKET (RMSP) (1842–1850): 2 contracts, 7 routes
- D. OTHER CARRIERS IN CONJUNCTION WITH CUNARD: 6 options

A. GPO/ADMIRALTY PERIOD (1806–1840)

In response to military needs, the GPO established the Falmouth Packet from to North America and Bermuda in 1806. At first, the GPO had a virtual monopoly on the North Atlantic route. By 1823, competition from American companies rendered the service unprofitable. The Admiralty assumed responsibility since military needs remained unchanged.

The service underwent a number of route changes before it was finally abandoned in 1840 and contracted to Cunard. The 6 routes are presented. As will be seen, changes between 1806 and 1826 were primarily a function of weather and the War of 1812.

GPO Route 1.  
October 1806–February 1813

The first trip from England was made in October 1806. No covers are known before December 1807.

There were two routes depending on the weather:

**Winter route** (November–February):

Falmouth-Bermuda-New York-Halifax-Falmouth by packet throughout

Bermuda return mails were carried by naval vessels to Halifax

**Summer route** (March–October):

Falmouth-Halifax-Bermuda-Halifax-Falmouth by naval vessel throughout

The **2/- rate to BWI**, in effect from 1792, was raised to **2/2** on July 9, 1812. Rates were calculated to and from London. The packet portion was 1/-, then 1/2.

Earliest known Admiralty Packet Letter to Bermuda  
December 6, 1807

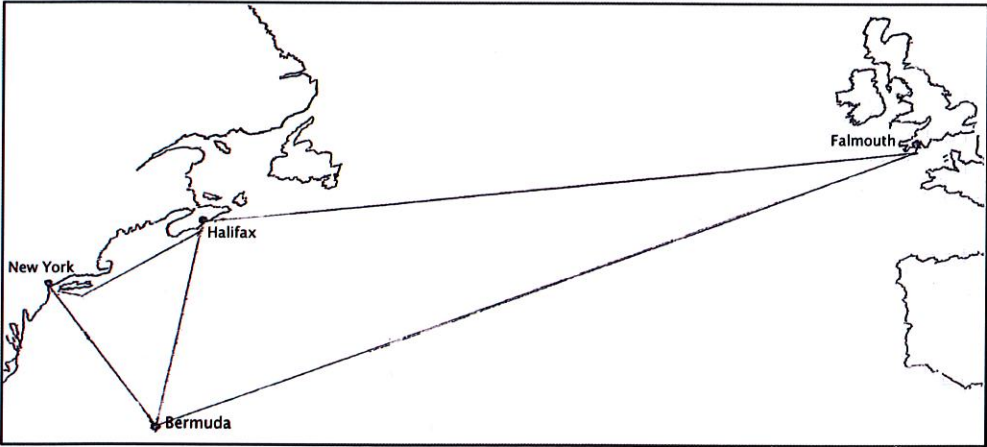


London-Bermuda

London, Dec 6, 1807 per packet *Prince Adolphus* to Bermuda Jan 22, 1808.

2/-

The GPO/Admiralty Route



GPO Route 2.: War of 1812 period  
March 1813–March 1815

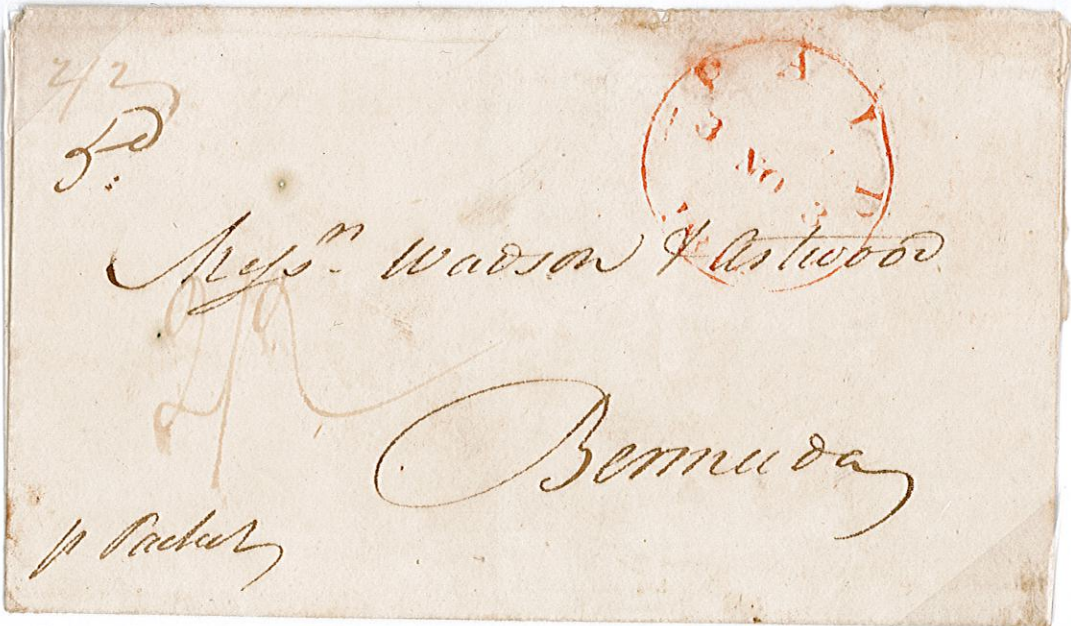
During the War of 1812, naval vessels carried the mail and the route was changed to avoid New York.

The **summer route** was now used **year-round**:

Falmouth-Halifax-Bermuda-Halifax-Falmouth

The **new rate of 2/2** began July 10, 1812 through 1839.

During the War of 1812



London-Bermuda

London, Nov 3, 1814 via Falmouth per packet *Queensbury* to Halifax Dec 6 thence per H.M. Frigate *Narcissus* to Bermuda Jan 3, 1815.

2/2 packet + 5d. internal = 2/7



### GPO Route 3. April 1815–October 1823

After the War of 1812, The GPO resumed its pre-war summer/winter route, again depending on the weather.

**Winter route** (November–February):

Falmouth-Bermuda-New York-Halifax-Falmouth  
by packet

Bermuda return mails were carried by naval vessels to  
Halifax

**Summer route** (March–October):

Falmouth-Halifax-Bermuda-Halifax-Falmouth  
by naval vessel

The Bermuda Post Office was closed from November 1814 to  
October 1817 and again from November 1821 to May 1830.  
There was no official internal carriage but overseas letters  
continued to be handled as before despite formal GPO  
approval.

After April 6, 1823, the Admiralty took sole responsibility for  
this route until 1833 when it contracted the Bermuda-Halifax  
portion to Cunard.

### The first regular voyage after the War of 1812



2/2 (2/11 currency) + 5d. internal

#### London-Bermuda via Summer Route

London, Apr 6, 1815, Falmouth Apr 13 per packet *Princess Elizabeth* to Halifax May 25 thence  
per H.M. Schooner to Bermuda Jun 16.

Contents mention the peace treaty with the U.S.

### Post Office closed: carried by C. R. Beach service



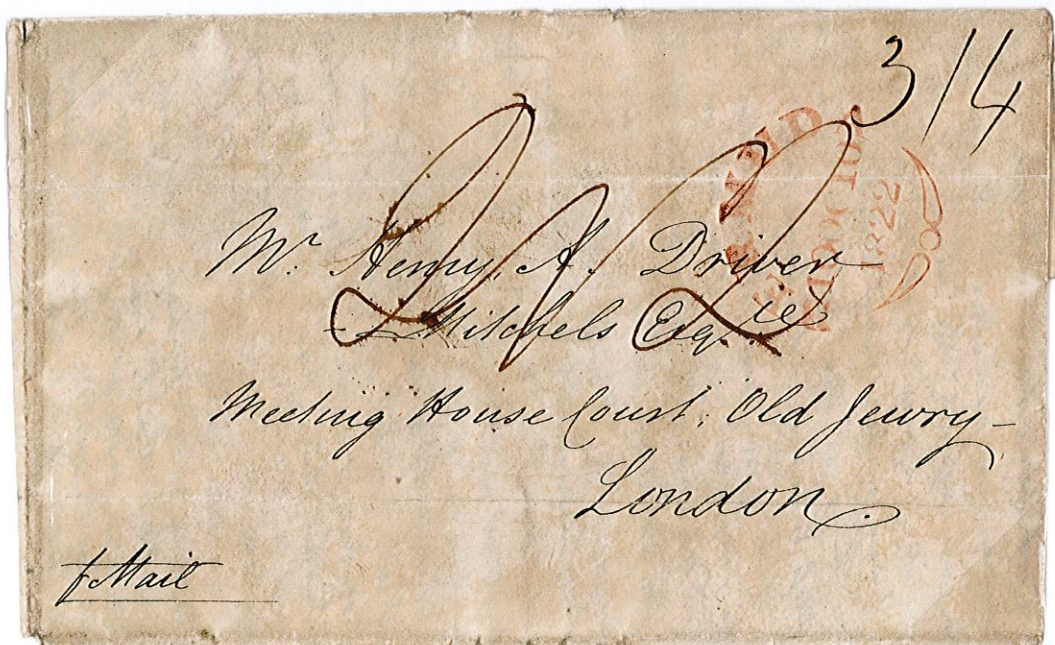
2/2 + 4d. Beach's internal

#### London-Bermuda via Winter Route

London, Feb 3, 1817, Falmouth Feb 24 per packet *Francis Freeling* direct to  
Bermuda Apr 4.

The old 5d. internal postage was marked (upper right) but replaced by the "4" of  
Beach's interim service (upper left) when he assumed responsibility for it..

### Bermuda Fleuron as dispatch on front



PM1 in red (10 known)

2/2 (3/4 currency)

#### Bermuda-London via Summer Route

Bermuda, Oct 10, 1822 per H.M. Brig *Doterel* to Halifax Oct 13 thence per packet *Francis Freeling* to Falmouth Nov 7 and London Nov 9.

Bermuda currency varied during this period, gradually inflating against sterling until sterling was  
adopted locally.

### Bermuda to North Carolina



PM1 in red (10 known)

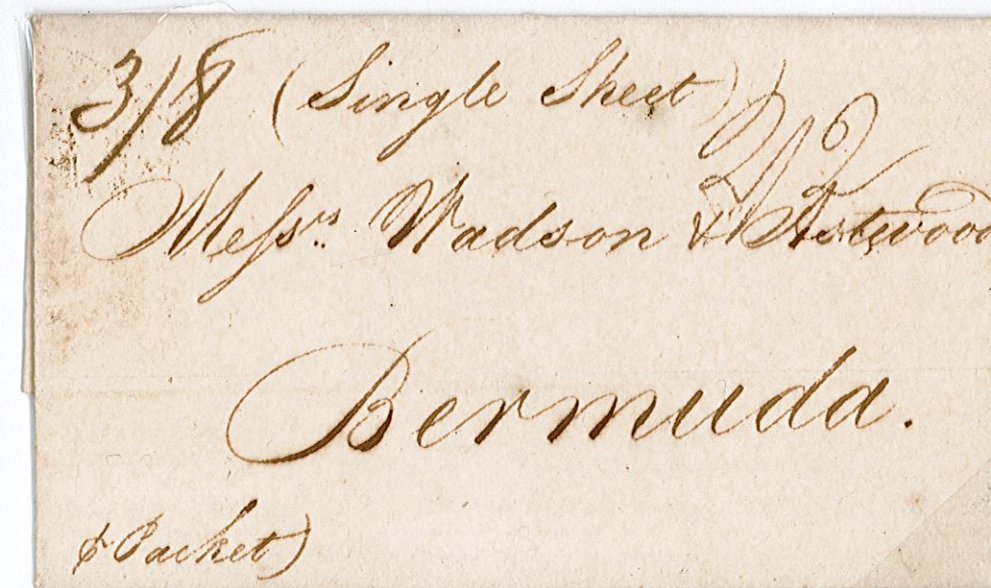
4d. to U.S.

#### Bermuda-New York-North Carolina via Winter Route

Bermuda, Jan 4, 1823 per packet *Marquis of Salisbury* to New York Jan 16 thence to  
New Bern, North Carolina.

Rate: 25¢ internal from New York to New Bern.

### The Admiralty assumes responsibility



2/2 (3/3 currency) + 5d. internal

#### London-Bermuda via Summer Route

London, Jul 1, 1823, Falmouth Jul 16 per packet *Lord Sidmouth* to Halifax Aug 23  
thence per H.M. Sloop *Argus* to Bermuda Sep 2.



**V: PACKET LETTERS: GPO/ADMIRALTY PERIOD**  
**Admiralty Route 4. November 1823- December 1826**

As note above, the Admiralty took over the North Atlantic route in April of 1823.  
 By November, they had returned to using the same year-round route as during the War of 1812:

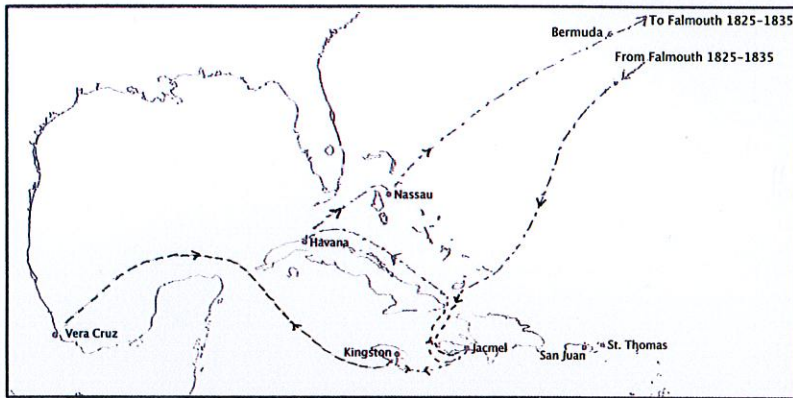
Falmouth-Halifax-Bermuda-Halifax-Falmouth

The Bermuda Post Office was closed from November 1821 to May 1830.

The British Admiralty's "**Mexican Packets**" were established to service the western Caribbean and Mexico in 1825. In 1842. the Royal Mail Steam Packet (RMSP) assumed that route until 1868 (see V C.). The Mexican route **passed through Bermuda** until 1850 (see map below from Stone, p. 154).

Jamaica served the eastern Caribbean and northeast coast of South America. Rates from BWI were less than from Mexico, so the red "Mexico" fleuron was sent to Jamaica to be used to distinguish those letters and assure proper charge in G.B. The fleuron was in use from 1825 to 1832.

**The "Mexican Packet" routes (1825-1835)**

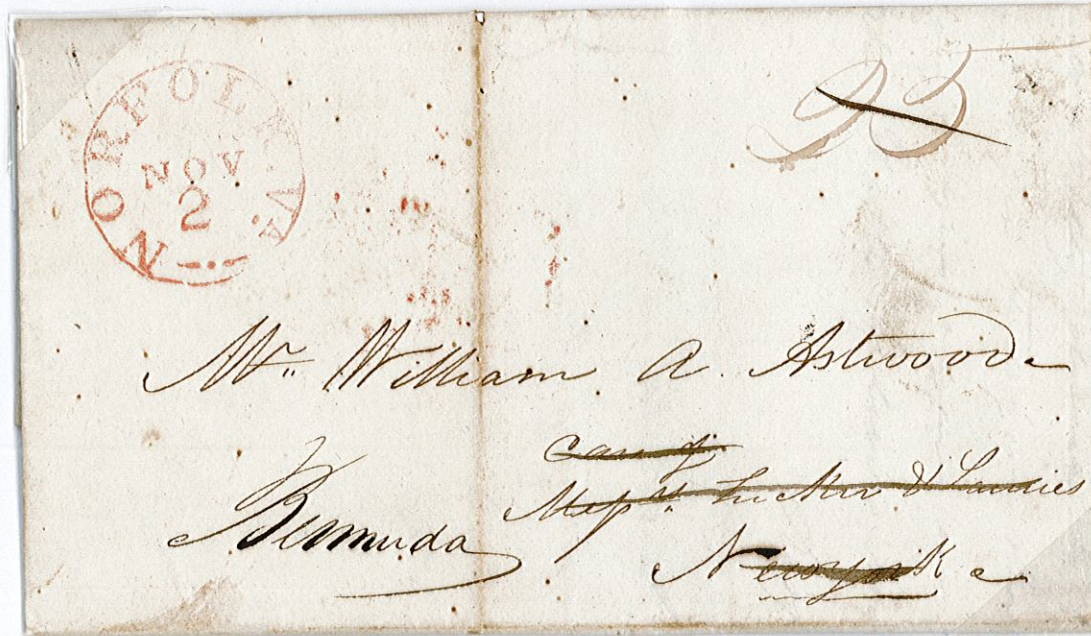


**"Bootleg" from Nova Scotia to Bermuda**



Nova Scotia, Dec 8, 1824 handcarried all the way to the recipient aboard H. M. Brig *Sappho* from Halifax Dec 22 thence Bermuda c. Dec 30.

**Bermuda to Virginia and returned**  
**A most unusual handling**



**Bermuda-Virginia-New York-Halifax-Bermuda**

Bermuda, Oct 8, 1825 handcarried to Norfolk, Va. Nov 2, placed in mails to New York care of Tucker & Lauries (backstamp) who forwarded it back to Bermuda per *Kingfisher* Nov 9 to Halifax Nov 21 thence per H.M.S. *Nieman* to Bermuda Dec 8.

Absence of a ship letter fee indicates handcarriage. 25¢ internal postage to New York (over 400 miles).

**Ireland to Bermuda**



**Belfast-Falmouth-Halifax-Bermuda**

Belfast, Mar 26, 1827 to Falmouth Apr 17 per packet *Frolic* to Halifax May 13 thence H.M. Sloop *Rifleman* to Bermuda May 22.

Rate: 2/7 "Foreign" + 8d. "internal" = 3/3 prepaid. Irish rates were different than G.B.

Irish framed "P.Paid" [Lowe #1602]

**The "Mexican Packet"**

**Earliest recorded usage of the Mexico fleuron**



**3/- Mexico City-Vera Cruz-Jamaica-Bermuda-Falmouth-London**

Mexico City, April 23, 1825, just before the formal establishment of the monthly packet in July, overland to Vera Cruz (forwarder dated Apr 28) to Jamaica Jun 8 (where the red Mexico fleuron was placed, unusually on the front) **via Bermuda** to London Jul 25.

The schedule and the particular packets for these early trips are unknown, unless noted by the sender.

3/- was the rate from Mexico to England.





**Admiralty Route 5.: 3 sub-routes, a, b, c  
January–September 1827**

In response to competition from American Packets, the Admiralty ceased its run to New York from Halifax. There were three possible routes during this brief period as the Admiralty sought to find the best way to accommodate the competing needs of Her Majesty's Government and the mercantile communities of both Bermuda and the U.S. They are shown in three subsections.

**Admiralty Route 5 a. Direct from and to Bermuda**

The route was:

Falmouth-Bermuda-Halifax-Falmouth by packet

**Bermuda to London**



PM1 (fleuron) in black (6)

2/2

**Bermuda-Falmouth-London**

Bermuda, Mar 10, 1827 (packet unlisted) to Falmouth Apr 6 and London Apr 7 carried on a return trip of the Mexican packet.

**Scotland to Warwick, Bermuda**



**Admiralty Route 5 b. The Annapolis Packet**

The route was:

Bermuda-Annapolis-Bermuda by Cunard mail boat

The Admiralty ceased its New York service at the end of 1826. The Annapolis route was an attempt to remedy that loss of service. Mail was dropped at Bermuda by the outbound Falmouth packet and taken to Annapolis by mail boats chartered from Samuel Cunard. It was his **first mail contract**. Return mail was brought back to Bermuda and taken home by the Mexican Packet. This proved too lengthy and **only nine trips** were made.

**Three of ten recorded covers are shown.**

Despite utilizing small mail boats, this is still considered a packet service as it was designated for mail carriage.

**Double weight, Scotland to the U.S., ninth and last trip**

**Only recorded cover by this trip**



**Couper Fife-Falmouth-Bermuda-Annapolis**

Couper Fife, Sep 4, 1827, Falmouth Sep 12 per Admiralty *Swallow* to Bermuda c. Sep 30 per Cunard *Susan* to Annapolis Oct 20 overland to New York.

Rate: G.B. prepaid 2/6 1/2d: 1/4 Couper Fife to Falmouth + 1/2 Falmouth to Bermuda + 1/2d. Scottish toll. U.S.: 18 3/4¢ (150-400 miles) x 2 = 37 1/2¢ + 2¢ ship fee = 39 1/2¢.

Black manuscript "Ship" inscribed at Annapolis.

**Edinburgh-Falmouth-Bermuda**

2/5

Edinburgh, May 19, 1827, Falmouth Jun 11 per packet *Rinaldo* direct to Bermuda Jul 8.

Rate: 1/3 Edinburgh to Falmouth + 1/2 Falmouth to Bermuda = 2/5 = 4/5 Bermuda currency + 1/2d. Scottish road tax.

Warwick is a small town and a scarce Bermuda destination.

**Aberdeen-Falmouth-Bermuda-Annapolis**

Aberdeen, Jun 8, 1827, Edinburgh Jun 9, Falmouth Jul 7 per Admiralty *Goldfinch* to Bermuda c. Aug 18 per Cunard *Susan* to Annapolis Sep 8 overland to Pennsborough, Va.

Rate: G.B. prepaid 2/7 1/2d: 1/5 Aberdeen to Falmouth + 1/2 Falmouth to Bermuda + 1/2d. Scottish toll. U.S.: 18 3/4¢ (150-400 miles) + 2¢ ship fee = 20 3/4¢.

Black Annapolis "Ship"

**Double weight, Bermuda to Philadelphia by Annapolis Packet**

**Only recorded cover originating in Bermuda by this route.**



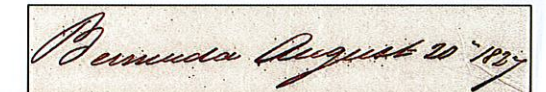
4d. x 2 = 8d.

**Bermuda-Annapolis-Philadelphia**

Bermuda, Aug 20, 1827 (dateline) per Cunard *Susan* ("Packet Susan/Capt. Stairs" docket. Such designations are present on **only two** of the ten known covers) to Annapolis Sep 8 thence to Philadelphia.

Rate: "Sea 8d." double rate to the U.S.: 18 3/4¢ (150-400 miles) x 2 = 37 1/2¢ + 2¢ ship fee = 39 1/2¢.

Black Annapolis "Ship"



**Scotland to the U.S., seventh trip**





V A. PACKET LETTERS: GPO/ADMIRALTY

Admiralty Route 5 c. The Mexican Packet

Return trips from Bermuda were possible either by the direct Admiralty route (V 4 A. above) or on the homeward bound trip of the Mexican Packet. **Very few** covers are known using this route; none from Bermuda.

The route was:

Falmouth-Jamaica-Vera Cruz-Jamaica-Havana-Bahamas-Bermuda-Falmouth.

Mexico to Ireland via Bermuda, forwarded



Vera Cruz-(Jamaica)-Bermuda-Belfast-Cheltenham

Mexico City May 28, 1827 to Vera Cruz "p. Lady Mary Pelham," bypassing Jamaica, to Bermuda Jun 8, Falmouth Jul 6 (green fleuron), Belfast, Jul 12 and Cheltenham, Jul 13.

Green Mexico fleuron was used at Falmouth if there was no Jamaica stop.

Rate: 2/1 Mexico to G.B. + 1/2 Falmouth to Belfast + 2d. Holyhead crossing + 1d. Menai Bridge toll = 3/6. Forwarding from Belfast to Cheltenham: 1/1 Belfast to London + 1/5 for original Falmouth to Belfast including tolls = 2/6.

Two-line red "Franco Has/ta el Puerto" (Paid as far as Port [internally])

Mexico to Gibraltar via Bermuda



Vera Cruz-Jamaica-Bermuda-London-Gibraltar

Vera Cruz Feb 3, 1827 handcarried through Bermuda, ship unknown, to London Apr 10, handled by G. Lubbock & Co., forwarders thence "via France" [French "Angleterre" marking] and Spain to Gibraltar.

Rate: 2/2 from G.B. to Gibraltar via France and Spain; 11R (reales) Spanish internal transit postage.

Black Foreign Office handstamp [Lowe HS 175] backstamp.



**Admiralty Route 6.**  
**October 1827-June 1833**

With the failure of the reorganization of 1827, the route was changed back to the **year-round** one of 1823-1826 (V A 4):  
Falmouth-Halifax-Bermuda-Halifax-Falmouth

**One of two known strikes of "America" arrival mark from Bermuda**

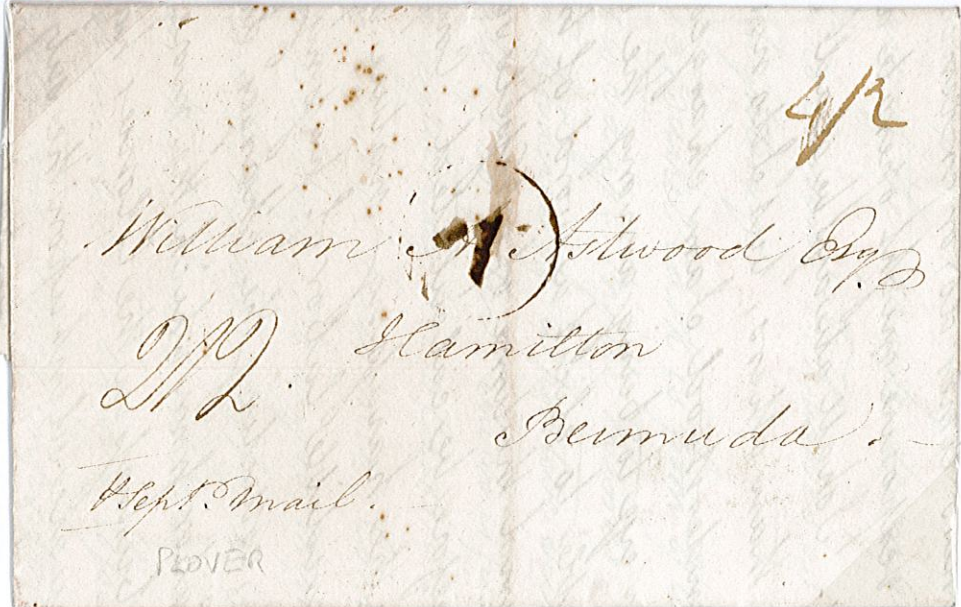


**Bermuda-Halifax-Falmouth-Fishbourne**

2/2

Bermuda, Mar 9, 1828 per packet *Skylark* to Halifax Mar 25 thence Falmouth Apr 10, "America" handstamp (Lowe HS 483) applied Apr 11, Fishbourne Apr 13.

**Fewer than five known strikes of Foreign Office circle A mark to Bermuda**

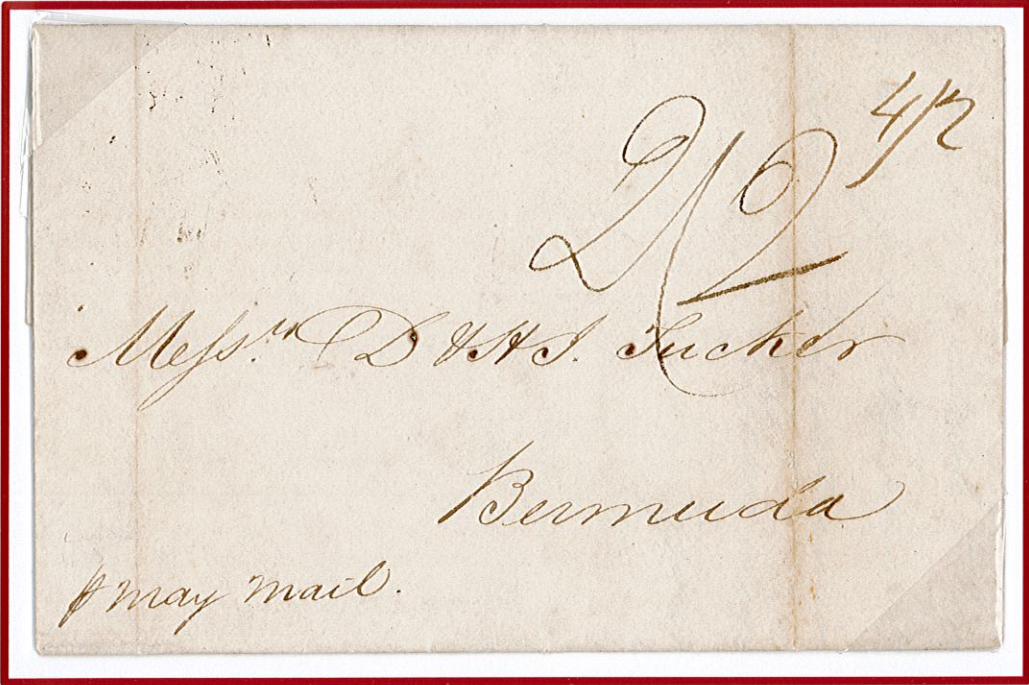


**Falmouth-Halifax-Bermuda**

London, Aug 1831 per *Plover* Sep 12 to Halifax Oct 22, Bermuda Nov 2.

Circle "A" was used by West India Room to re-route the letter for Halifax dispatch..

**Last trip of the Falmouth Packet to Bermuda**

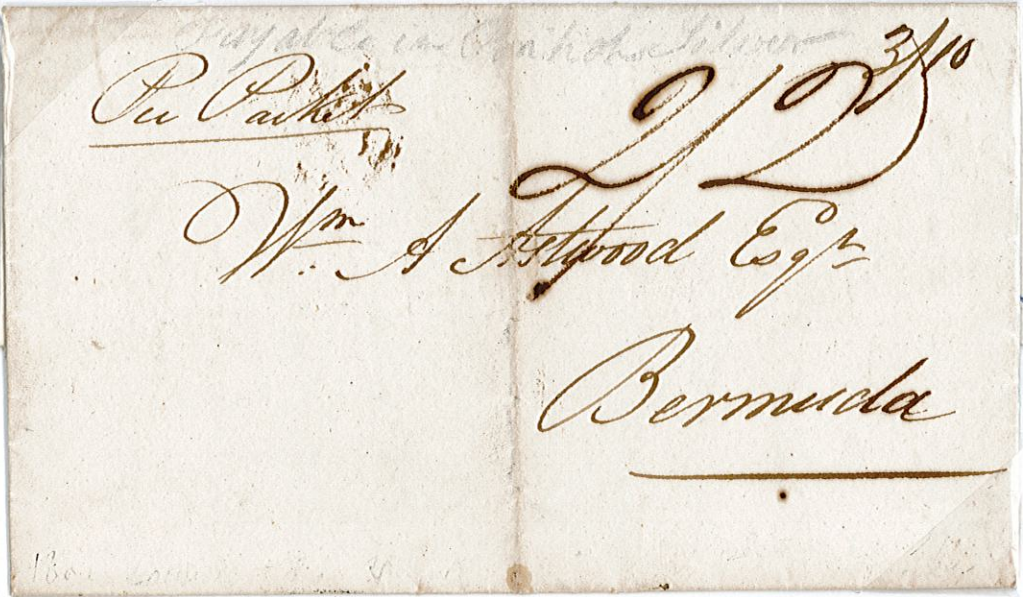


**Falmouth-Halifax-Bermuda**

2/2

Falmouth, May 6, 1833 per *Lyra* "p. May Mail" to Halifax Jun 5, Bermuda, Jun 14.  
After this, Cunard carried mail from Bermuda to Halifax under Admiralty contract.  
Rate: 2/2 = 4/2 Bermuda currency.

**Second outbound voyage on this new route**



**Falmouth-Halifax-Bermuda**

2/2

Falmouth, Nov 10, 1827 per *Cygnat* to Halifax Dec 9, Bermuda, Dec 15.  
Rate: 2/2 = 3/10 Bermuda currency.

**Second return voyage on this new route**

**Latest of six known strikes of PM 1 in black**



**PM1 in black (6, LKD)**

**Bermuda-Halifax-Falmouth-Greenwich**

Bermuda, Dec 17, 1827 per *Cygnat* to Halifax Jan 5, 1828 to Falmouth Jan 21, London Jan 24.

Faint LKD of PM1 is on the upper left flap.

London arrival (Lowe HS 275).

This pairing of the same vessel, the *Cygnat*, making a round trip is quite unusual.

2/2

2/2



Admiralty Route 6.

Quebec to Bermuda



Quebec-Halifax-Bermuda

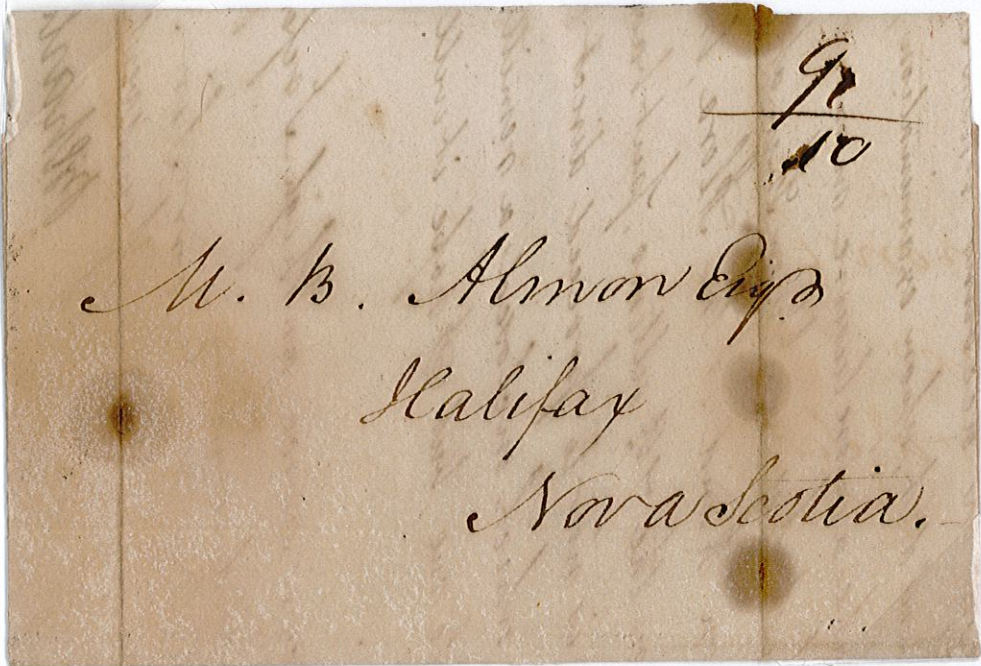
Quebec, Mar 23, 1830, Halifax Apr 15 (forwarded from Halifax by J. M. Tobin) per packet *Frolic* to Bermuda Apr 21.

Letters from B.N.A. other than Nova Scotia are **seldom seen**.

Rate: "paid to Halifax" 4 1/2d. Canada to Bermuda 1/3 + 3d. sterling (5d. Bermuda currency) = 1/6 due.

*Quebec fleuron (Lowe HS PG), Quebec Paid (Lowe HS 10), Halifax date stamp (Lowe HS 11).*

Bermuda to Nova Scotia



PM2 backstamp in black

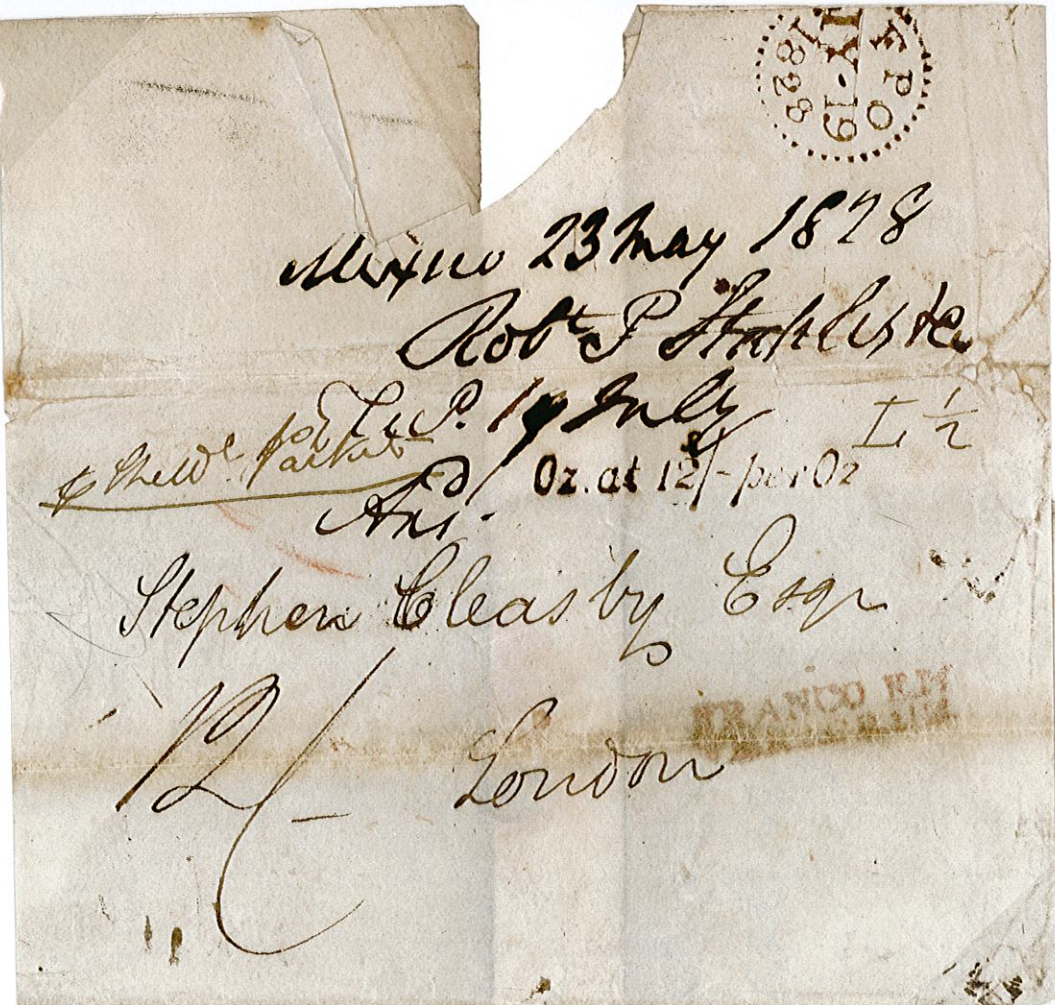
**Bermuda-Halifax**

Bermuda, Apr 24 1829 (dateline) per packet *Rinaldo* to Halifax May 6.

Rate: 4d. x 2 + 1d. N.S. local delivery = 9d.

*St. Georges Bermuda, 24 April 1829*

Mexico to London by Mexican Packet



Covers carried by the Mexican Packet via Jamaica and Bermuda rarely have postmarks of either place. The fleuron is certain evidence, as are ship's records.

Mexico to Ireland by Mexican Packet



Mexico City-Vera Cruz-Jamaica-Bermuda-London-Belfast

Mexico City, Jul 11, 1832, Vera Cruz Jul 22 per *Princess Elizabeth* **via Jamaica** (red fleuron) **and Bermuda** to Belfast Aug 30.

Rate: 3/- Mexico to Ireland + 6d. Irish ship fee = 3/6.

"Franco Has/ta el Puerto" of Vera Cruz, red "Mexico" fleuron applied at Jamaica, Irish receiver (Lowe HS 510).

Mexico City-Vera Cruz-(Jamaica)-Bermuda-London

Mexico City, May 23, 1828, Vera Cruz per *Sheldrake*, bypassing Jamaica, to Falmouth **via Bermuda** and London, Jul 19.

Rate: 12/-, "1 Oz.. at 12/- per Oz." accountancy mark (Lowe HS 195).

Small "Franco en/Vera Cruz" handstamp. London Foreign Office receiver (Lowe HS 174).

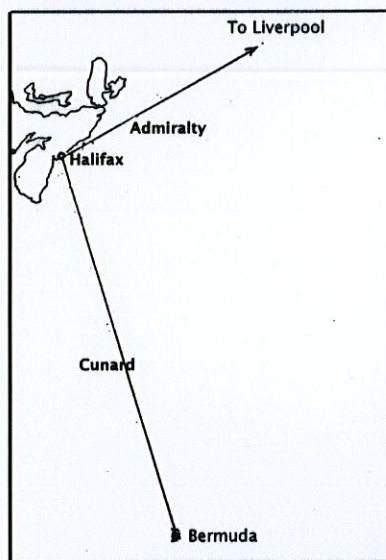


## Admiralty Route 7. July 1833-June 1840 by Cunard to Halifax

In July of 1833, the Admiralty discontinued its Bermuda-Halifax service and contracted it to Samuel Cunard. The Cunard Line carried mail from and to Bermuda by one route or another until 1886.

During this period, Cunard used five sailing vessels to carry the mail from Bermuda to Halifax and return. From Halifax mail was carried by an Admiralty packet to G.B. or U.S..

### Admiralty & Cunard route



### Bermuda-Halifax-Falmouth-Richmond-- Maidstone

Bermuda, May 3, 1838 per *Velocity* to Halifax  
May 12 per *Tyrian* to Falmouth Jun 3, London  
Jun 5, Richmond, forwarded to Maidstone.

Rate: 2/2 packet + 2d. London to Richmond  
and 2d. return + 7d. Richmond to Maidstone =  
3/6

London (Lowe HS 102, black oval and 103, red)  
(Hendy #66, black circular). Red boxed "Postage  
not paid/to London" & "TP/Rate/2d" unlisted in  
Lowe.

### Bermuda to Richmond, redirected Bermuda PM 3, one of seven recorded



PM3 (7 known)

2/2

### Earliest known date of 1/- rate from Bermuda Earliest known date & one of five known of Bermuda P1 handstamp



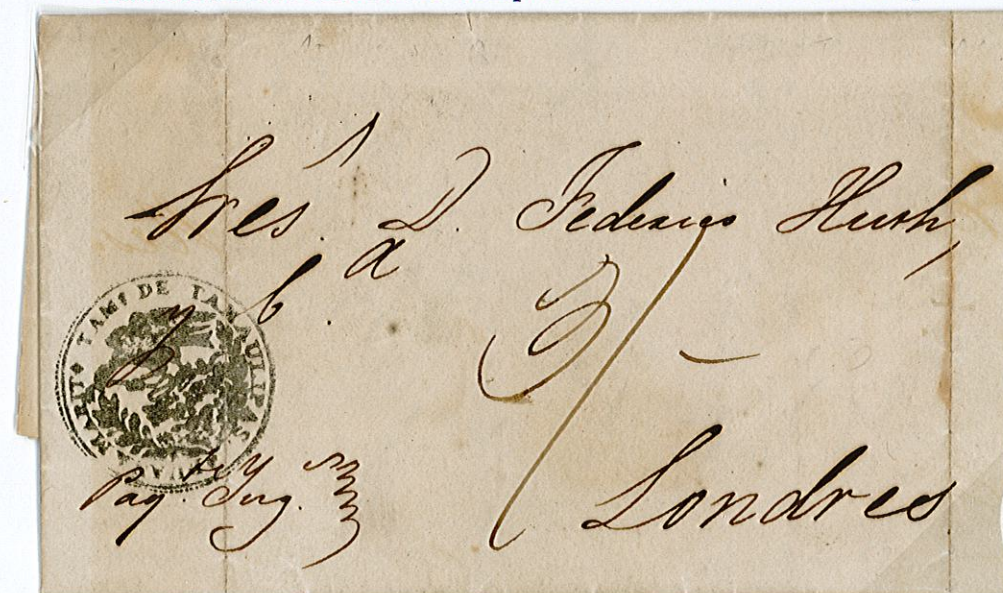
P1 (5 known) (EKD) in black

1/-

### Bermuda-Halifax-Falmouth-Chester

Bermuda, Sep 26, 1839 per *Velocity* to Halifax Sep 26 per *Star* to Falmouth Nov 7.  
The 2/2 packet rate was **reduced** to 1/- on Mar 4, 1839.

### Earliest known date of the Tampico Customs House handstamp

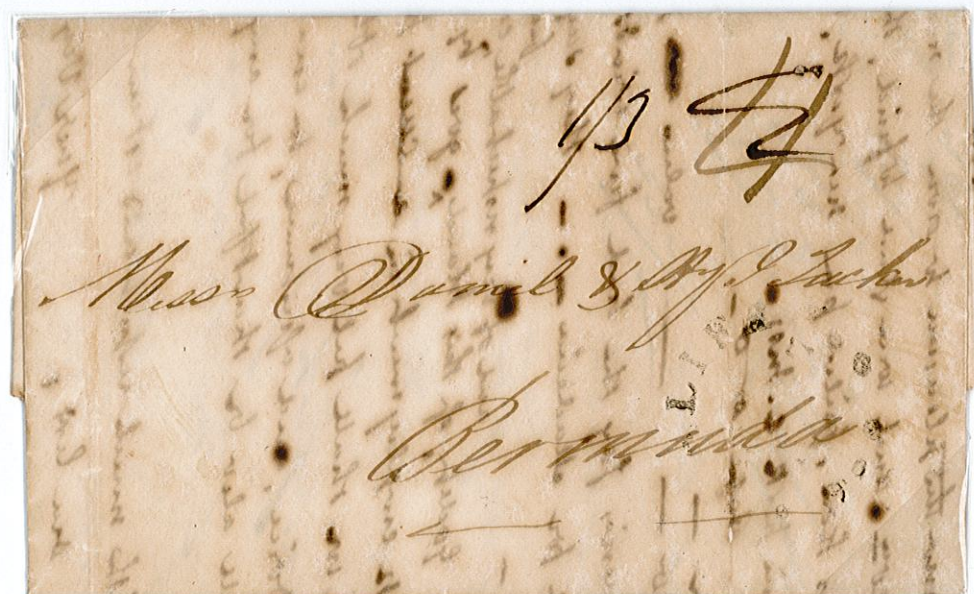


### Santa Anna-Tampico-Vera Cruz-(Jamaica-Bermuda)-London

Santa Anna, Mexico, Jun 18, 1834, Tampico and Vera Cruz thence by Mexican Packet  
*Goldfinch* via **Jamaica** and **Bermuda** to London Aug 25.

Rate: 3/- Mexico to England.

### Second trip by Cunard to Bermuda (from Newfoundland)



### St. John's-Halifax-Bermuda

Newfoundland, Jul 17, 1833, Halifax per *Margaret* Aug 9 to Bermuda Aug 19. It just  
missed the first trip (Jul 15) by *Lady Ogle*.

Rate: 4d. sterling Newfoundland to Nova Scotia (= 8d. Bermuda currency) + 5d. inland  
= 1/3 currency.

### Last trip of the GPO/Admiralty Packet



### Halifax-Bermuda

Halifax, Jul 20, 1840 per *Lady Ogle* to Bermuda Aug 1. This trip also carried the mail from  
U.K. by the **last** North American Admiralty packet *Express*.

Rate: After Jan 1, 1840, all rates in Bermuda were calculated in sterling. Thus, double 4d.  
from Nova Scotia to Bermuda (= 8d.) + 3d. inland = 11d. due.



V B. PACKET LETTERS: THE CUNARD LINE

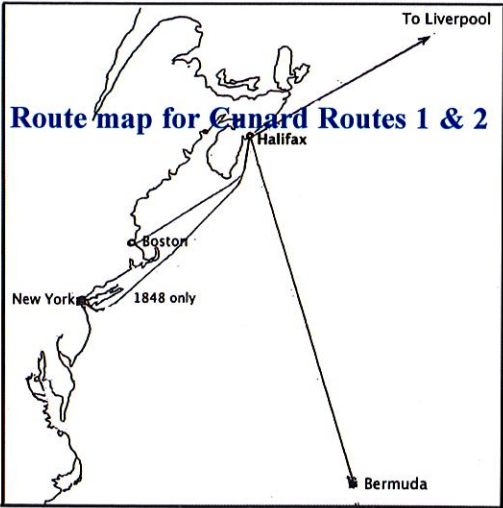
The last Admiralty packet left Falmouth on June 6, 1840. Thereafter, Cunard steamers assumed the transatlantic route under contract to the Admiralty, using Liverpool as home base. From January 1848, Cunard's transatlantic service alternated weekly between Boston and New York. However, after July 1848 the New York steamer **did not stop** at Halifax.

There were five main Cunard routes diuring the period under study. Details are given in each of the five subheadings. It is important to remember that Cunard continued servicing Bermuda from Halifax until 1886, regardless of who carried the mail beyond. This was true even when there was direct service between Bermuda and NY.

THE RATES:

Below are the commonly seen rates that came into effect in mid-1839. Rates to other places are noted where known.

Country	1840	1852	1856	1862	1865	1872	1875	1876	1879
UK	1/-	6d.		1/-		6d.			
US	1/-		4d.					2d.	
BNA	4d.				6d.	3d.			
BWI	4d.				6d.		4d.		



Cunard Route 1. **sail** to Halifax  
May 1840-July 1848

Cunard sailing vessels carried mail between Bermuda and Halifax twice a month but only once a month during the winter (January-April).

Including the transatlantic steamer leg, the route was:

Liverpool-Halifax-Boston (or New York Jan-Jul 1848)-Halifax-Liverpool  
Halifax-Bermuda-Halifax **by sail**.

**Saxony** to London forwarded to Bermuda

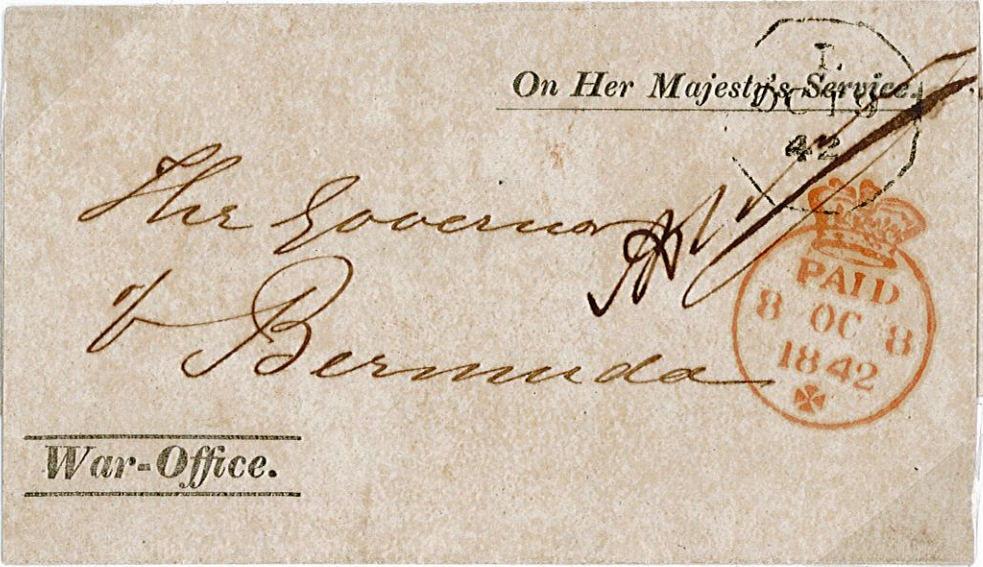


Pirna, Saxony, Jul 25, 1847 "via Belgium" to London Jul 31, Liverpool Aug 1 per Cambria to Halifax Aug 18 per Margaret to Bermuda Aug 27.

Rate: 1/3 Saxony to England; 1/- to Bermuda.

Very few covers from Germany to Bermuda are recorded.

Free Official War Office mail to Bermuda



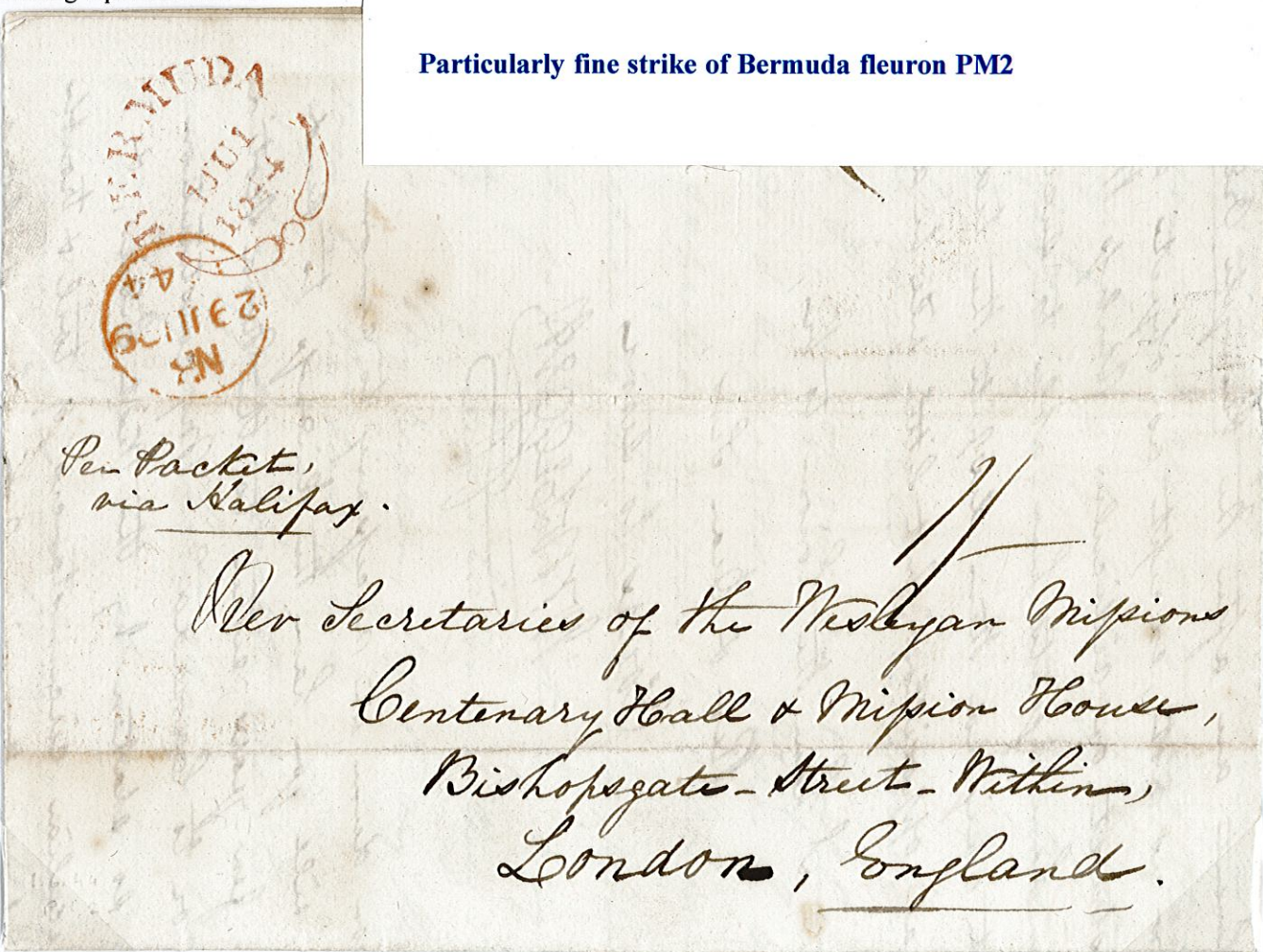
London-Liverpool-Halifax-Bermuda

London, Oct 8, 1842, Liverpool Aug 8 per Cunard R.M.S. Caledonia to Halifax Aug 31 per Lady Ogle to Bermuda Sep 6.

Official mail to Bermuda at this time is difficult to find. This cover was sent to the Governor of Bermuda.

Red crowned Paid (Lowe HS 24).

Particularly fine strike of Bermuda fleuron PM2



Bermuda-Halifax-Liverpool-London

Bermuda Jun 3, 1844 per Roseway to Halifax  
Jun 9 per Caledonia to London Jun 29.



Cunard Route 2. steam (sail as needed)  
August 1848–June 1854

While the monthly winter and biweekly summer schedule between Halifax and Bermuda was unaltered, the **important change** was from sail to steam which was not without its resultant delivery time uncertainty

The steamer *Levantine* was to service the Halifax to Bermuda run from December 1851 but had numerous problems resulting in considerable use of sail until the return of the all-steamer service in January 1854.

The steamer route was:

Liverpool-Halifax-Boston-Halifax-Liverpool  
Halifax-Bermuda-Halifax **by steamer.**

This combination of transatlantic and Bermuda routes continued until the Inman Line won the transatlantic contract as of January 1, 1868 (V D 4). However the Cunard steamers continued their Halifax to Bermuda route until 1886.

Bermuda to Scotland

"CR" Caledonian Railway, one of two known from Bermuda



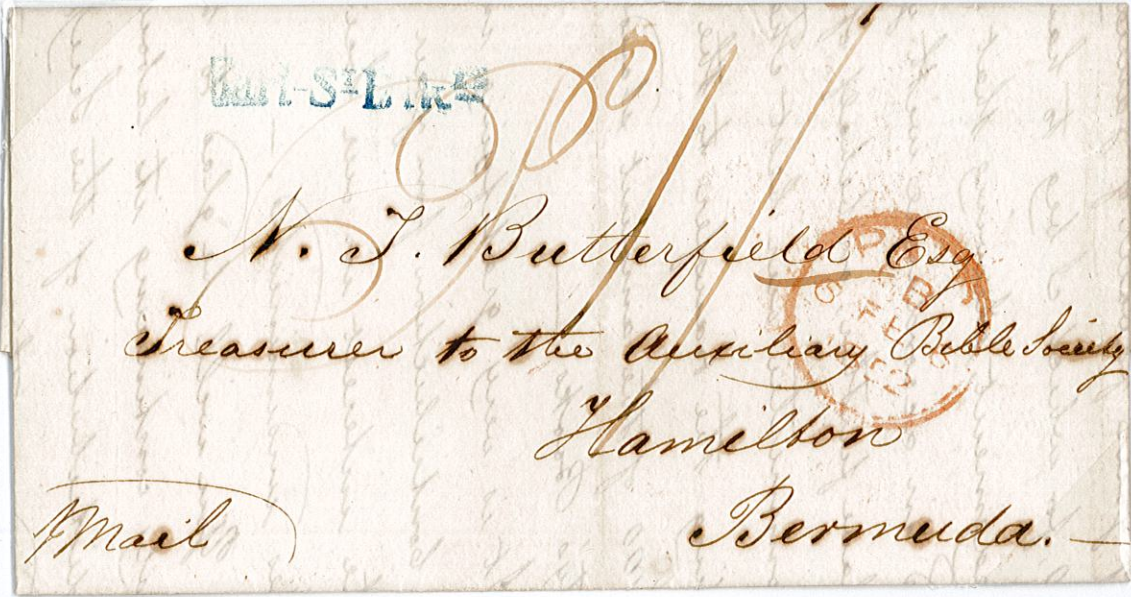
PM4 Hamilton backstamp in red

1/-

Bermuda-Halifax-Liverpool-Stirling

Bermuda, Nov 6, 1849 per *Ospray* to Halifax Nov 23 thence *Cambria* to Liverpool Nov 27 and Stirling Nov 28.

First successful trip of the *Levantine*



London-Liverpool-Halifax-Bermuda

1/-

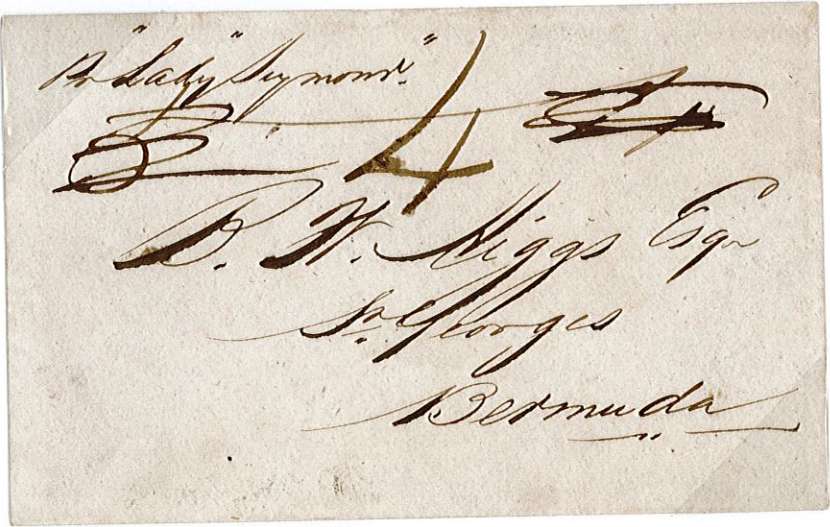
London, Feb 6, 1852, Liverpool Feb 7 per *Cambria* to Halifax Feb 21 per *Levantine* to Bermuda, Feb 26.

red "d.11" credited to England.

Blue "Earl-St.Blkre" (Blackfriars branch, LPO).

Between April and mid-December 1853, **only sail was used** on the Bermuda run until the steamer *Merlin* entered service in late December.

First trip under sail, by Brigantine *Lady Seymour*



Halifax-Bermuda

4d.

Halifax, Apr 13, 1853 per *Lady Seymour* to Bermuda Apr 21.

This is the first trip by a sailing vessel after the decommissioning of the *Levantine*.

The letter is addressed to Bermuda forwarding agent B. Wilson Higgs.

Last trip by the steamer *Levantine*

Even the last trip of the *Levantine* was plagued with problems so that she had to finish the trip to Bermuda under sail, thus delaying the mail by about 6 days.



London-Liverpool-Halifax-Bermuda

1/-

London, Mar 4, 1853, Liverpool Mar 5 per *Canada* to Halifax Mar 19 thence by *Levantine* to Bermuda Mar 29.

Last trip under sail, by Brig *Velocity*, before the return of steamers



London-Liverpool-Halifax-Bermuda

1/-

London, Dec 9, 1853, Liverpool Dec 10 per *America* Halifax Dec 23 thence *Velocity* to Bermuda Jan 11. Delay due to use of sail in both directions. Mail held in Halifax



Cunard Route 3. New York to Bermuda direct  
November 1850–June 1854

When the RMSP abandoned its service from Southampton to Bermuda and St. Thomas in August of 1850, Cunard took over the transatlantic England to New York route. They offered a route from England to Bermuda via this New York connection. Transit time was much longer than the route via Halifax. Despite being available for four years, **only three covers** are known by this route into Bermuda. None are known outbound from Bermuda.

One of three recorded covers to Bermuda by the England-New York route



PM5 St. George's backstamp in red  
London-New York-Bermuda 1/-

London, Jul 30, 1852, Liverpool Jul 31 per *Canada* (missed *Africa* sailing of that day) to New York thence by *Merlin* to Bermuda Sep 13.

Rate: England initially credited "19 cents" but overstruck by "24" (1/-) when forwarded.

Forwarded from London by T. H. Brookings and again from New York by Gillespie Dean & Co. who endorsed and sent it "p. Mail Steamer Merlin."

Cunard Route 4.  
July 1854–December 1867 (1886)

At this point, Cunard no longer stopped at Halifax on its biweekly run to New York; its alternate biweekly service to Boston continued its Halifax stop. Bermuda received its mail by Cunard steamer only once a month. Depending on the connection, some mail from England arrived in about 18 days (the "regular" route). The mail brought by the "intermediate" Boston-bound trip had to wait two weeks at Halifax and took about 33 days.

The "regular" route was: G.B.-Halifax-Bermuda-St. Thomas-Bermuda-Halifax-G.B.  
The "intermediate" route was: G.B.-Boston-Halifax-Bermuda

Inman took over the transatlantic portion on January 1, 1868, also stopping at Halifax, while Cunard continued its monthly Halifax to St. Thomas via Bermuda run until 1886.

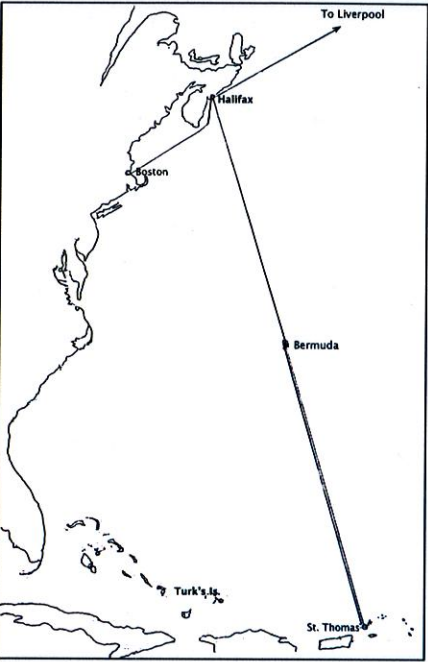
There was no direct organized service from the U.S. to Bermuda from 1854-1868. Mail was carried on an *ad hoc* basis from N.Y. depending on availability. Some was carried through Halifax or St. Thomas. Direct service began on a private contract basis in 1868 (see Section V D 3).

After 1865, the **Bermuda handstamps P5, PM4 and PM5** may be found used in black as datestamps until about 1871, along with the new numeral killer cancels supplied in 1865 with the issuance of Bermuda's first postage stamps. This posthumous use is noted at the lower left as usual.

There are two subcategories of this basic routing:

- 4 a. North of Bermuda not involving St. Thomas
- 4 b. South of Bermuda involving St. Thomas

Route 4: Halifax-Bermuda-St. Thomas



Cunard Route 4 a. North of Bermuda not involving St. Thomas:  
Between Bermuda and the G.B.

One of two known covers Bermuda to G.B. paid with a strip of 6-1d stamps

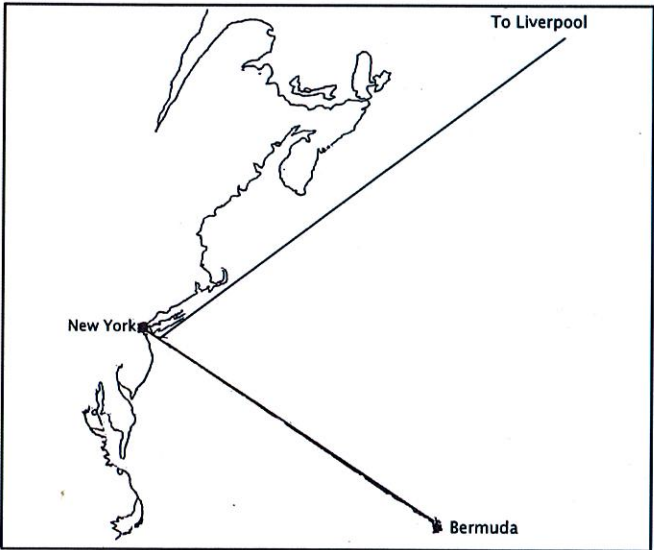


Bermuda-Halifax-England 6d.

Bermuda Jun 22, 1856 per *Merlin* to Halifax Jul 3 thence per *America* out of Boston to Liverpool & Canterbury Jul 12. Stamps cancelled at the Chief Office, London.

Rate: correct 6d packet rate paid with strip of 6 1854 1d. Die 1, perf. 16. stamps.

Route 3: England-New York-Bermuda

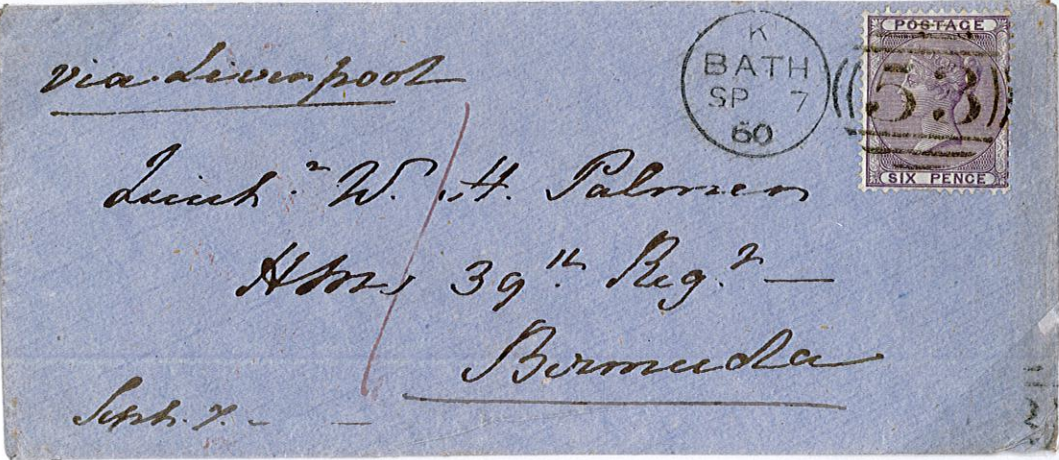




Cunard Route 4 a.

Between Bermuda and G.B.

"Regular" route of the Boston-bound packet, 18 day transit to Bermuda



Bath-London-Liverpool-Halifax-Bermuda

6d.

Bath, Sep 7, 1860, London Sep 8, Liverpool Sep 8 per *Europa* to Halifax Sep 19 thence per *Delta* to Bermuda Sep 25.

Rate: properly prepaid with British 1856 dull purple 6d. stamp. "1"d. credited to Bermuda.

Alternate "Intermediate" Boston-bound packet, 33 day transit to Bermuda



London-Liverpool-Halifax-Bermuda

6d.

London, Jul 7, 1854 (red transfer handstamp), Liverpool Sep 8 per *Niagara* to Halifax Jul 17, held for 17 days until taken per *Curlew* to Bermuda Aug 8.

Rate: not prepaid 6d., "d5" to England

Unusual late use of sailing vessel



Liverpool-Halifax-Bermuda

6d.

Liverpool, Feb 3, 1855 per *Asia* to Halifax Feb 14 thence per *Alice Rogers* to Bermuda Feb 26.

The steamer *Curlew* was under repair and the Schooner *Alice Rogers* was chartered to carry the mail twice. This was her **first** trip.

Fine on unpaid letters



London-Liverpool-Halifax-Bermuda

1/-

London, May 10, 1866, Liverpool May 12 per *Cuba* to Halifax Feb 21 thence per *Alpha* to Bermuda May 30.

After December 1865, unpaid letters were fined double the deficiency. 1/5 was charged in London (11d. British share of postage + half the 1/- fine). On arrival at Bermuda, it was fully charged at 2/- with Bermuda retaining 7d. (6d. fine + 1d. internal postage).

Between Bermuda and the U.S.

Bermuda to U.S. via Boston

Only recorded cover with two Grote's numeral handstamps



R1 (4 known) (LKD) and R2, PM5 Ireland Island backstamp

4d.

Ireland Island-Halifax-Boston-Saranac Hollow (NY)

Bermuda, Apr 18, 1861 per *Merlin* to Halifax Apr 21 per *Arabia* to Boston May 1 thence to Saranac Hollow in the Adirondack Mountains, an unusual destination.

The woodcut rate handstamps, made by Grote at the Ireland Island post office, are almost always in red, indicating prepayment. In this case, he erroneously marked the letter with a "6d" for the U.K. rate. He crossed that out and put the correct rate of "4d" to the U.S.

Bermuda to U.S. via Boston



P4

Bermuda-Halifax-Boston-New York

4d. x2

Bermuda, Jun 11, 1864 to Halifax per *Delta* Jun 22 per *Africa* to Boston Jun 26.

Rate: misrated 1/- x2 as if to UK; "20" for 2x steamship rate



V B. PACKET LETTERS: THE CUNARD LINE

Cunard Route 4 a. **North** of Bermuda not involving St. Thomas

Between Bermuda and the **U.S.**

Only recorded U.S. 1856 5¢ to Bermuda



Georgetown, S.C.-[New York]-Bermuda

This cover was carried in December of either 1856 or 1857.

The rate of 10¢ paid the U.S. carriage. The "4" probably represents the Bermudan ship fee. The "Not Paid" most likely is a U.S. mark indicating that payment is due Bermuda. Another possibility is that the "4"d. (= 8¢) represents the Bermudan share of rate. If that were the case, it would be been carried by a British ship, leaving 2¢ for the U.S.. The absence of any transit marks makes routing and rating conjectural.

Bermuda to U.S. via Boston



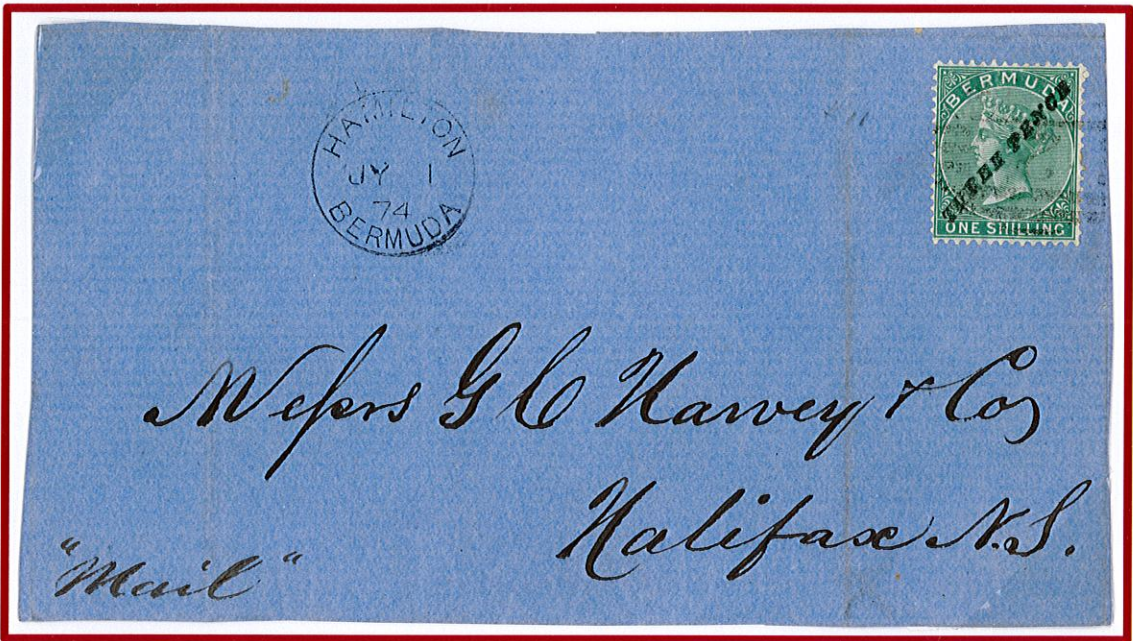
Bermuda-Halifax-Boston-Hartford

Bermuda, Mar 27, 1858 per *Delta* to Halifax  
April 3 per *America* Apr 9 to Boston Apr 11  
thence to Hartford, Conn.

P2 and PM4 Hamilton backstamp in red

Between Bermuda and **Nova Scotia**

Bermuda to Nova Scotia, franked with 1874 3d. on 1/- provisional stamp



Bermuda-Halifax

Bermuda, Jul 1, 1874 per *Delta* to Halifax Jul 7.

Use of the 3d. on 1/- provisional stamp (Type 6a), on this cover front, is very unusual.

Only recorded cover from Nova Scotia franked with her 1860 issue



Halifax-Bermuda

Halifax, Jun 23, 1864 per *Alpha* to Bermuda Jun 28.

Rate: 10¢ 1860 Nova Scotia stamp pays internal rate. Black "4" is the unpaid rate to Bermuda.



### Between Bermuda and other destinations

Mr. Thomas O'Brien  
 Post Office  
 Bermuda  
 West Indies  
 1855  
 ENGLISH PACKET  
 PAID  
 1/4 POSTAGE

A circular postmark from the U.S. Post Office, New York. The text "U.S. POST OFFICE" is curved along the top inner edge, and "NEW YORK" is curved along the bottom inner edge. In the center, the date "JY 25" is printed above "1857".






 William Goshing Esq.  
 Hamilton  
 Bermuda.  
 Via Marseilles.

*Boxed "India Paid" (Lowe HS 40)*

Black "GB/2F" accountancy mark.

Major M. Matthews  
Paymaster 57th Regiment  
Wangasser.  
New Zealand.

Rate: correct 1/5 paid with 1865 1/-, pair of 2d. & 1d.

*Stata*

PM5 St. George's backstamp in black



South of Bermuda involving St. Thomas

St. Thomas to New York via Bermuda



St. Thomas-Bermuda-Halifax-Boston-New York

St. Thomas, Sep 1, 1862 per *Merlin* to Bermuda Sep 6 and Halifax Sep 10 per *Arabia* to Boston Sep 17 thence New York.

Rate: 1/- from Danish West Indies. 5¢ due U.S.

St. Thomas crowned circle handstamp.

1/-

St. Thomas to Bermuda, printed matter



St. Thomas-Bermuda

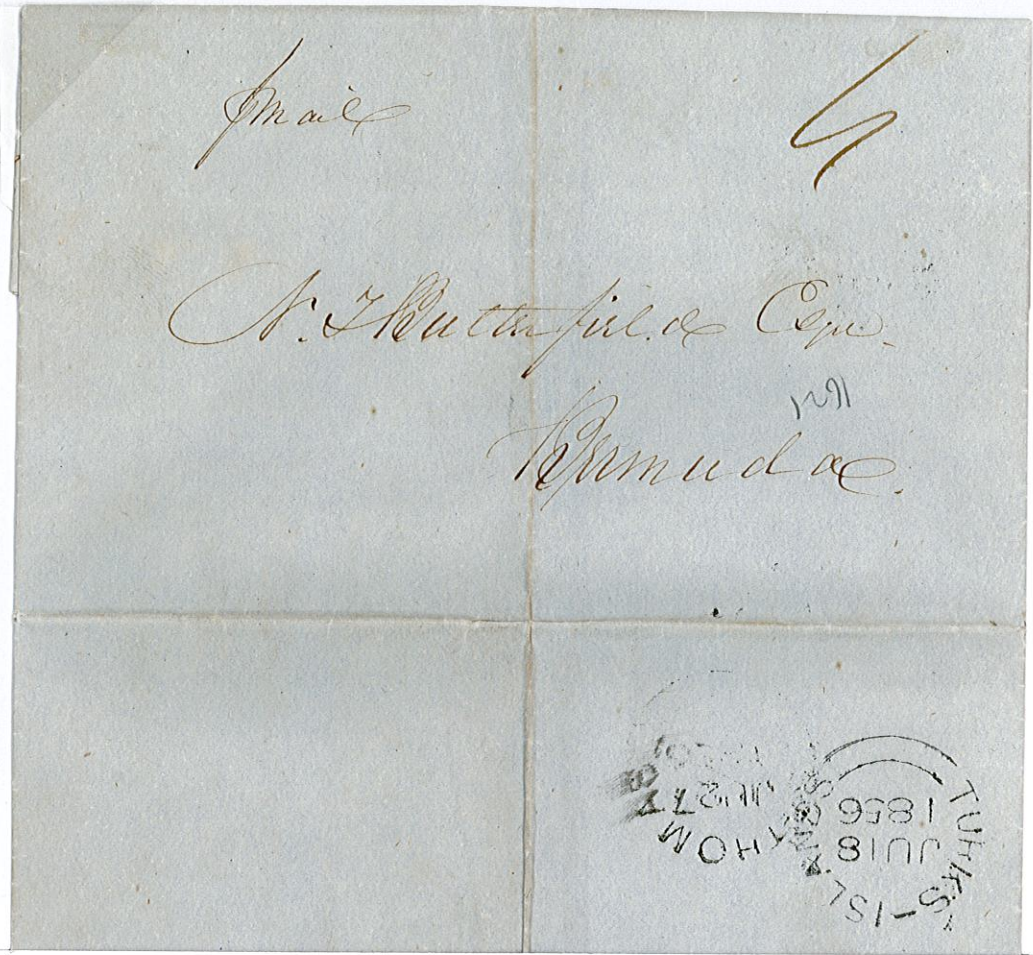
St. Thomas, Jun 8, 1863 per *Merlin* to Bermuda Jun 15.

Rate: 1d. printed matter rate is quite hard to find.

St. Thomas crowned circle handstamp.

1d.

Turk's Islands to Bermuda



East Harbor, Turk's Islands-St. Thomas-Bermuda

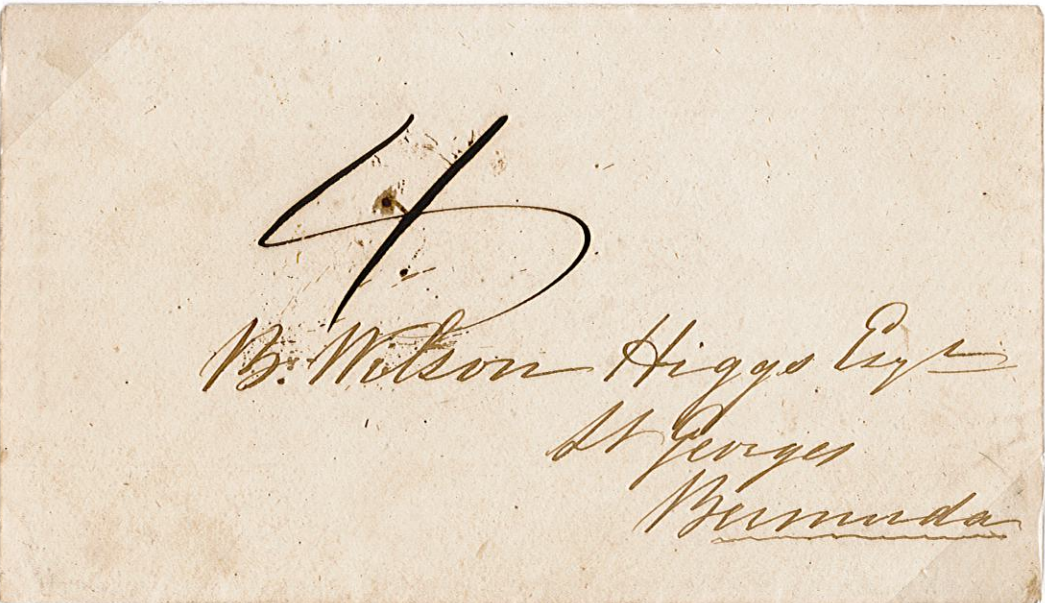
Turk's Islands, Jun 18, 1856 by private ship to St. Thomas Jun 27-Jul 16 per *Merlin* to Bermuda Jul 20.

This letter missed the Jun 22 voyage, thus the delay.

Earliest recorded date of St. Thomas datestamp.

4d.

St. Thomas to Bermuda



St. Thomas-Bermuda

St. Thomas, Oct 5, 1858 per *Merlin* to Bermuda Oct 10.

Addressed to B. Wilson Higgs, a forwarding agent.

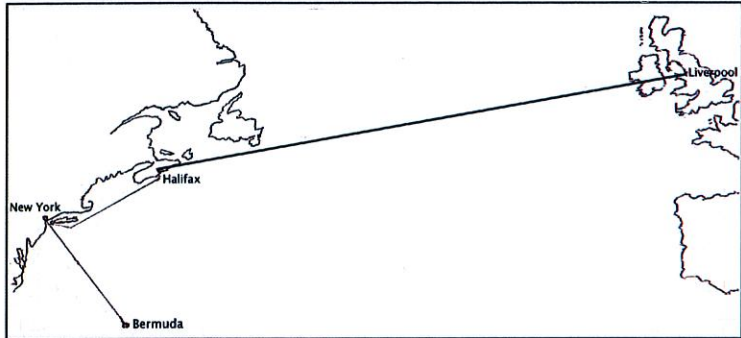
4d.



## Cunard 5. Transatlantic Closed Mail August 1861–September 1868

There was another route from G.B.: closed mail to New York by Cunard steamer from Liverpool, thence by sailing vessel (**not** steamship) to Bermuda. The rate was 9d. (August 3, 1861–March 1, 1863), raised to 1/3 (April 1, 1863–September 30, 1868). It was more expensive as well as slower due to the unpredictability of the sailing ship schedule. It was rarely used. In fact, **only three covers** are recorded using this route to Bermuda and none from Bermuda. **All three are shown.**

### The Transatlantic Closed Mail route



### England to Bermuda via New York, short paid



9d.

### London-Liverpool-New York-Bermuda

London, Sep 12, 1861, Liverpool Sep 14 per *Persia* to New York Sep 26 per Brig *Penguin* Oct 3 to Bermuda c. Oct 15.

Rate: 9d., short paid 3d. with 1856 deep lilac 6d. stamp. Short paid letters were charged the deficiency plus a 6d. fine. "Insufficiently/Stamped" with pen "3d" and "Half fine 3." "6" due G.B., deleted on arrival, replaced with "9" due to include Bermuda's share of the fine; "2" due U.S.

### England to Bermuda via New York, short paid



### London-Liverpool-New York-Bermuda

Liverpool, Oct 7, 1865 per *Scotia* to New York Oct 19 per Brig *Eliza Barss* Oct 23 to Bermuda Oct 30.

Rate: 1/3, short paid 3d. with 1865 1/- plate 4 stamp, "Insufficiently/Prepaid" Fine of 1/-, "9" for G.B. share of the fine, deleted on arrival, replaced with "1/3" due to include Bermuda's share of the fine; red "2d" handstamp due Bermuda from the correct 1/3 postage.

P4 Hamilton backstamp in black

1/3

### England to Bermuda via New York, only fully prepaid cover



PM4 Hamilton backstamp in black

### London-Liverpool-New York-Bermuda

London, Oct 6, 1866, Liverpool Oct 6 per *Scotia* to New York Oct 16 per *Excelsior* Nov 8 to Bermuda Nov 17. Note long delay in New York waiting for a sailing vessel.

Rate: prepaid with 1865 1/- (plate 4) + 3-1858 1d. (plate 101) = 1/3.

1/3



## V C. PACKET LETTERS: ROYAL MAIL STEAM PACKET (RMSP) (1842-1850)

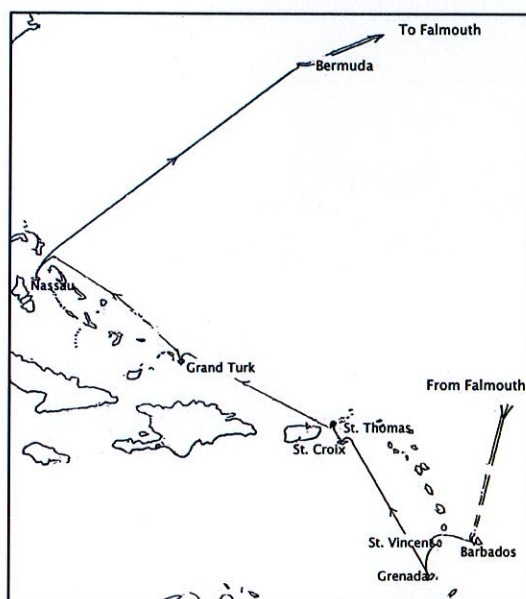
The RMSP was formed to take advantage of the faster communications offered by steam power, initially for the West Indies but including a few Mexican ports.

In 1847, as trade with Mexico increased, additional routes to the western Caribbean and east coast of Mexico were added..

There were two contracts with RMSP involving stops at Bermuda between 1842 and 1850. After 1850, RMSP ceased stopping Bermuda; Cunard's Halifax route became the principal one for Bermuda.

There were four changes during the first contract and three during the second. They will be examined in turn.

### RMSP Route 1



### Bermuda to England



PM4 Hamilton backstamp in black, **exceptional strike**

### RMSP First Contract: Route 1.

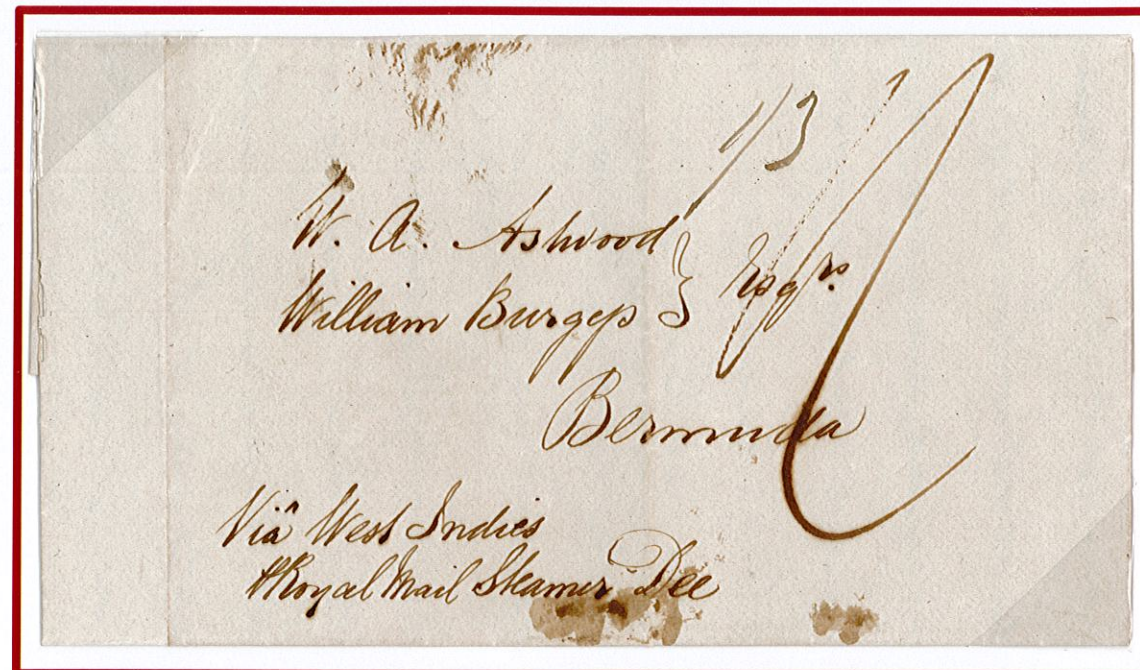
January 1, 1840-September 12, 1842

While the contract was initiated in 1840, it took almost two years to build the ships. The first trip mail-carrying was in January 1842.

The route was:

Falmouth-Barbados-St. Vincent-Grenada-St. Croix-St. Thomas-Turks-Nassau-Bermuda-Falmouth, biweekly on the 2nd and 16th.

### The first trip to Bermuda by RMSP



### Falmouth-Barbados-St. Thomas-Nassau-Bermuda

Falmouth, Jan 17, 1842 per RMSP *Dee* to Barbados Feb 3 per *Clyde* to St. Thomas Feb 12 Nassau Feb 16 per *Thames* to Bermuda Feb 23.

Rate: 1/- postage + 3d. internal = 1/3 due.

Per Hamilton P.O. return only 28 letters arrived on this **first trip**.

### Trinidad to France via Bermuda

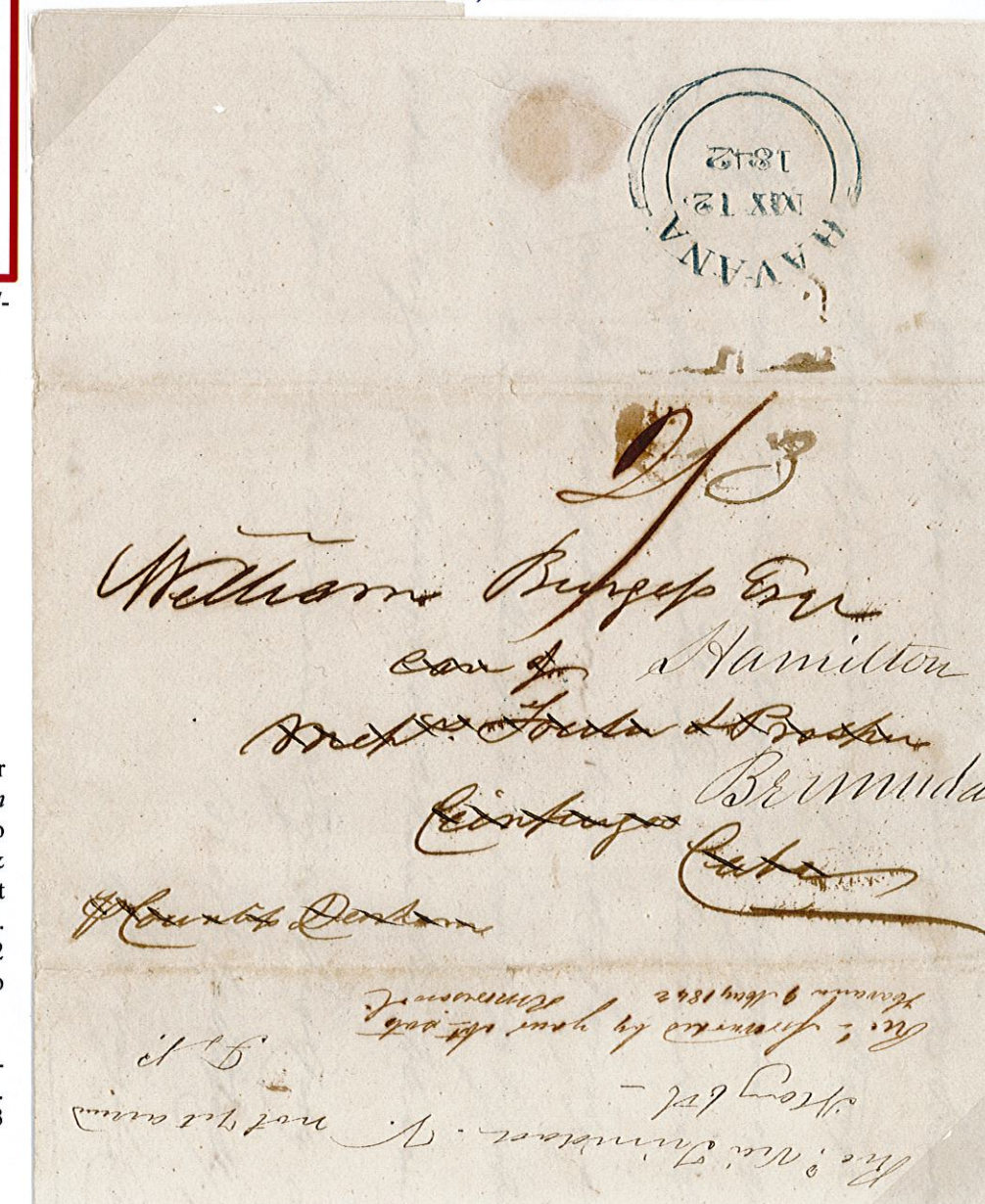


### Trinidad-Grenada-St. Thomas-Nassau-Bermuda-Falmouth

Trinidad, Jul 14, 1842 per *Dee* to Grenada Jul 23, St. Thomas Jul 27, Nassau Aug 4 per *Trent* to Bermuda Aug 10, Falmouth Aug 28, London Aug 29 thence Calais Aug 31.

Red oval "P.D." shows 3/11 fully paid to destination.

### Jamaica to Cuba, forwarded to Bermuda



### Jamaica-Cuba-Bermuda

Jamaica, Apr 9, 1842 per non-RMSP *Countess Durham* from Trinidad de Cuba to Cienfuegos c/o Fowler & Bros., docket "V. not yet arrived" forwarded to R. Morrison in Havana May 12 who sent it per *Dee* to Bermuda May 24.

Rate: double weight 1/- Foreign West Indies (i.e. Cuba) + 3d. internal + 2/3 due.

### Bermuda-Falmouth-London

Bermuda Jun 22, 1842 per *Dee* to Falmouth and London Jul 10.



**RMSP First Contract Route 2.**  
**September 12, 1842-June 15, 1843**

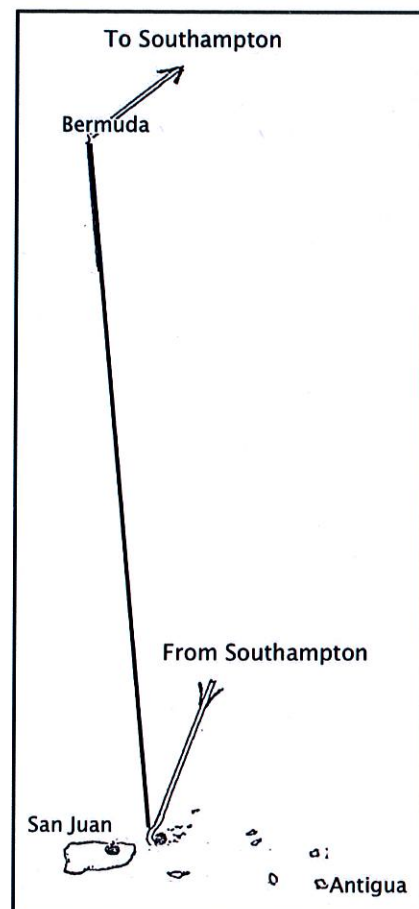
After October 1, 1842, ships left from Southampton stopping at Falmouth which remained the packet terminus until September 1, 1843. With improvement of land transport to Southampton, she became the terminus. No stop was made at Falmouth after that date (see next subsection).

The new route was:

Falmouth to St. Thomas and return with a branch from St. Thomas to Bermuda

After July 20, 1842, no internal Bermuda postage was collected on incoming mail.

**RMSP Route 2**



**Bermuda to England**



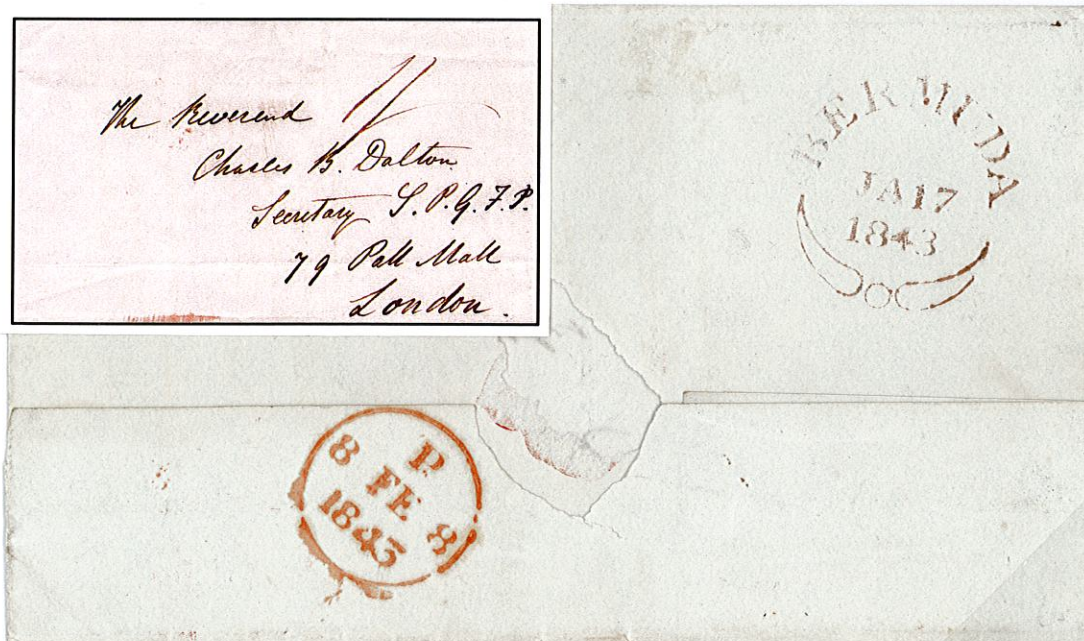
PM2 backstamp in red

1/-

**Bermuda-Falmouth-London**

Bermuda, May 31, 1843 per *Trent* to Falmouth Jun 17, London Jun 18.

**Bermuda to England**



PM2 backstamp in black

1/-

**Bermuda-Falmouth-London**

Bermuda, Jan 17, 1843 per *Solway* to Falmouth and London Feb 6.

**Cienfuegos-Havana-Nassau-Bermuda**

Cienfuegos, Oct 24, 1842, Havana Dec 7 per *Teviot* to Nassau Dec 9, Bermuda Dec 13.

Forwarded from Havana by R. Morrison & Co.

Rate: 1/- Foreign West Indies rate.

**England to Bermuda, delayed**



1/-

**London-Liverpool-Halifax-Bermuda**

London, Oct 15, 1842, Liverpool Oct 16 per *Caledonia* to Halifax Oct 31 per *Lady Ogle* to Bermuda Nov 6.

Originally docketed "Not via Halifax" "via St. Thomas/p R.M.S. Dee" but missed *Dee* and sent on to Liverpool for the Cunard steamer rather than wait for *Tay* leaving Nov 1.

**Cuba to Bermuda**



1/-



### RMSP First Contract Route 3. June 16, 1843–July 6, 1844

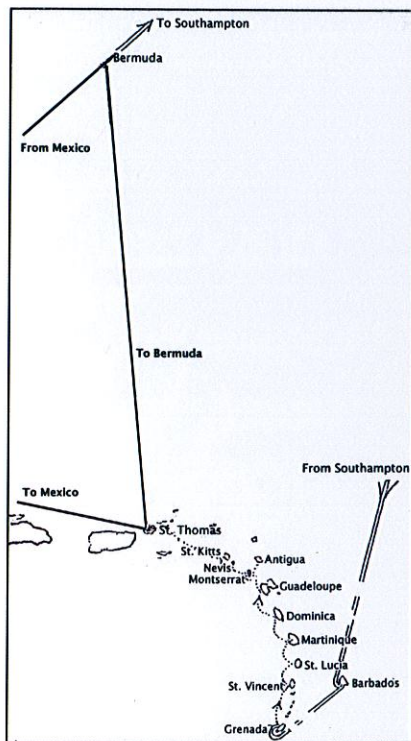
The steamer of the 2nd made for St. Thomas where there was a split: 1) St. Thomas to Bermuda (as Route 2 above) and 2) St. Thomas to Mexico returning home via Bermuda. Thus, Bermuda had two homeward bound services a month: from St. Thomas and from Mexico. But there was only one inbound from U.K.: the St. Thomas branch.

Second was the transfer of the packet terminus from Falmouth to Southampton on September 1, 1843 and the abandoning of the Falmouth stop.

The new routes were:

- Falmouth (Southampton)-St. Thomas-Bermuda-Falmouth
- Falmouth-(Southampton)-Barbados-Grenada-St. Thomas-Mexican Ports-Havana-Bermuda-Falmouth

### RMSP Route 3



### Quadruple weight to London, forwarded



PM2 backstamp in red

Bermuda-Southampton-London-Weymouth

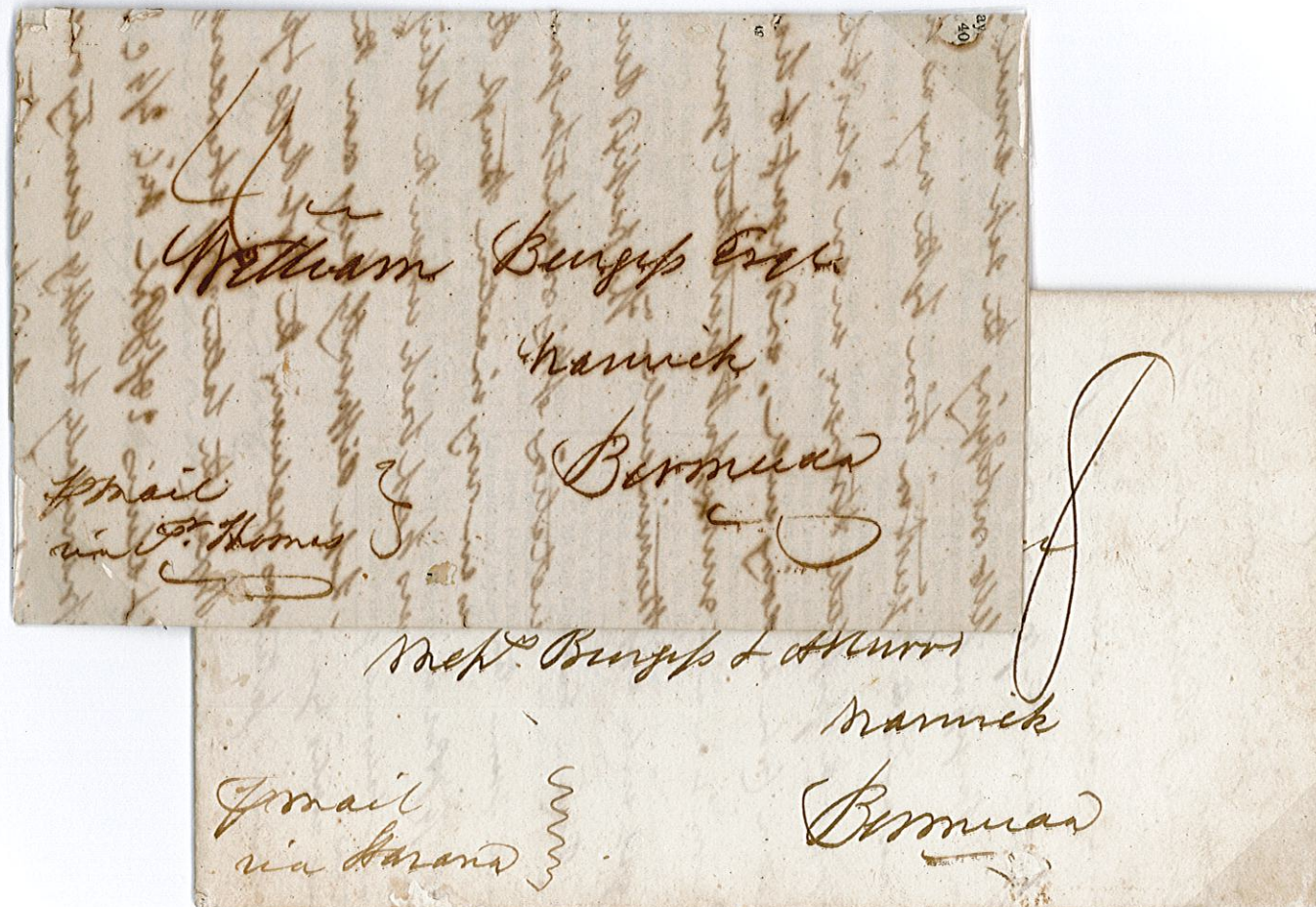
1/- x 4

Bermuda, Nov 20, 1843 per *Thames*, returning from Mexico, Southampton Dec 7.

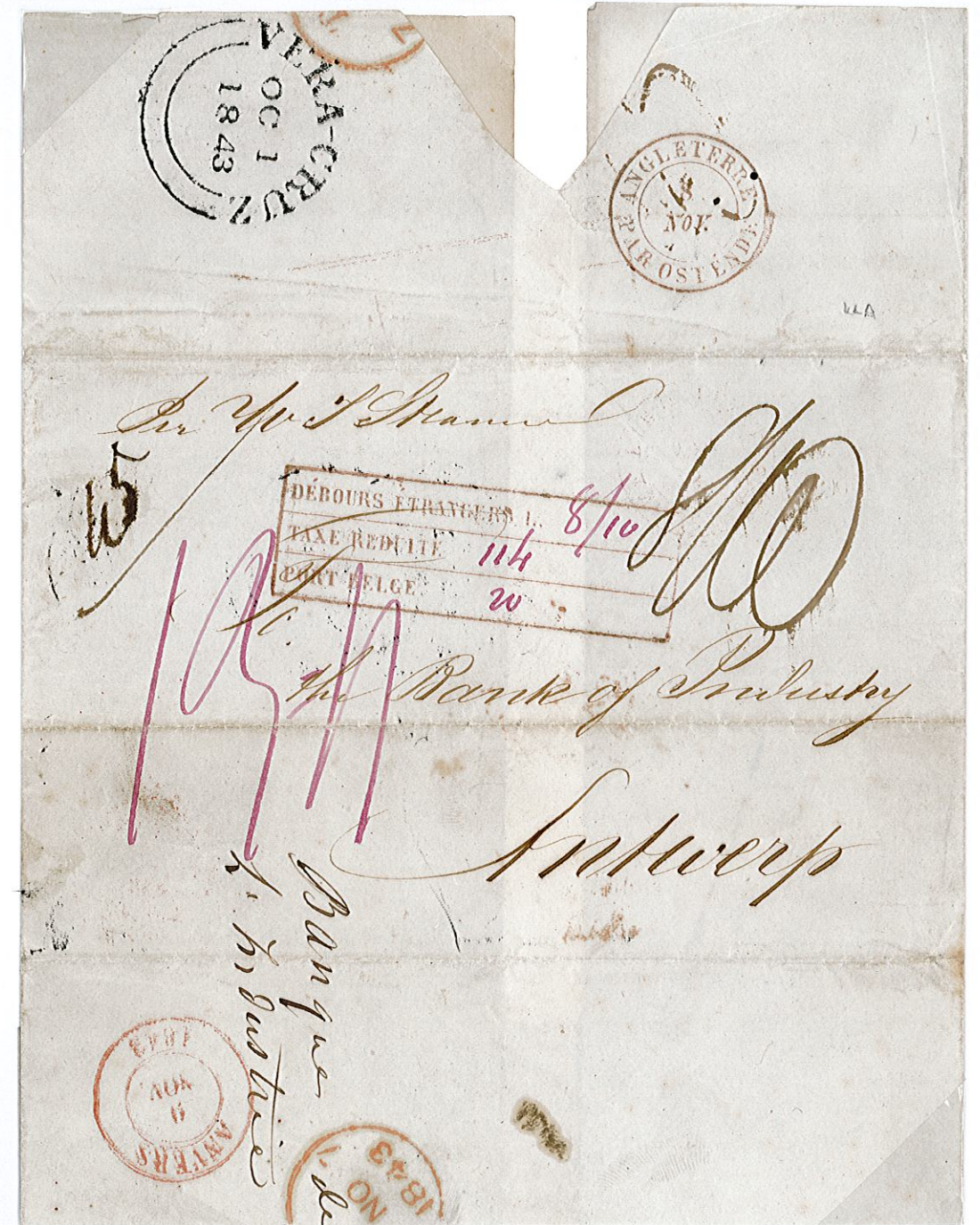
Rate: 1/- x 4 = 4/- + "d4 paid" forwarding to Weymouth = 4/4.

Blue "St. James St" [London] handstamp.

### The two routes serving Bermuda



### Mexico to Belgium via Bermuda



Vera Cruz-Bermuda-Southampton-London-Ostende-Antwerp

Vera Cruz, October 1, 1843 per *Severn* to Bermuda Oct 22 per *Trent* to Southampton and London Nov 7 thence "Angleterre par Ostende" Nov 8, Antwerp Nov 9.

Rate: double weight Mexico to Belgium, 4/6 less 1d. concession to London x 2 = 8/10, 114 centimes (= 1/-) due Belgium and 20 c. Belgian internal postage.

Jamaica is west of St. Thomas. Mail could be routed either "via St. Thomas" for the direct run to Bermuda or by the return trip of the Mexican packet "via Havana."

The two alternatives are docketed at the lower left: 1) "via St. Thomas" per *Avon* to St. Thomas thence per *Forth* to Bermuda; 2) "via Havana" per *Severn* to Cuba thence per *Tay* to Bermuda (double weight, rated "8").



**RMSP First Contract Route 4.**  
**August 8, 1844–December 31, 1847**

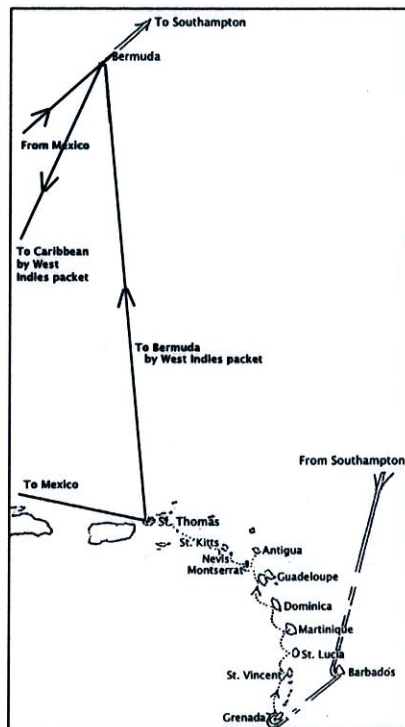
The change during this period was subtle. Mail continued to be carried to Bermuda only by the West Indies packet via St. Thomas, once a month. During the previous period, Bermuda had two homeward bound services, by the West Indies and Mexican packets. Now her homeward bound mail was carried **only** by the Mexican packet.

The routes were:

Outbound: Southampton-Barbados-Grenada-St. Thomas-Bermuda-Caribbean and return by same route

Homeward only: from the Mexican Ports-Havana-Nassau-Bermuda-Southampton

**RMSP Route 4**



**Bogota-Santa Martha, Colombia-Jamaica-Bermuda-Southampton-London-Calais-Paris**

Bogota, Jan 15, 1847 per *Thames* to Santa Martha Jan 29, Jamaica Jan 31 per *Medway* to St. Thomas Feb 12, **Bermuda Feb 18**, Southampton Mar 10, Calais Mar 12.

Rate: 2/3 prepaid from Mexico to England (no mark) carried to France "Colonies/& Art. 13" accountancy mark, "15" decimes due France.

**Bermuda to England: return of the Mexican packet**  
**EKD of St. George's crowned circle**



P2 St. George's (**EKD**), PM5 St. George's backstamp in red  
**Bermuda-Southampton-Manchester-Strand**

Bermuda, Oct 21, 1845 per *Avon* via Nassau to Southampton Nov 11, London & Manchester.

**Colombia to France via Bermuda**



**Nassau via Bermuda to England, disinfected**  
**Ireland Island PM4**



**PM4 Ireland Island black backstamp (5 known)**  
**Nassau-Bermuda-Bawtry, Yorkshire**

Nassau, May 13, 1845 per *Thames* to Ireland Island May 19, Southampton Jun 1, London Jun 3 to Yorkshire.



## V C. PACKET LETTERS: ROYAL MAIL STEAM PACKET

### RMSP Second Contract: November 2, 1847–August 1, 1850

There were three routes involving Bermuda during this period, all monthly, alternating between Routes 5 and 6.

Bermuda was the first stop on all three, where the route split: southwest to Mexico (Route 5), south to St. Thomas (Route 6), and northwest to New York (Route 7). Homeward bound mail on all three routes passed through Bermuda.

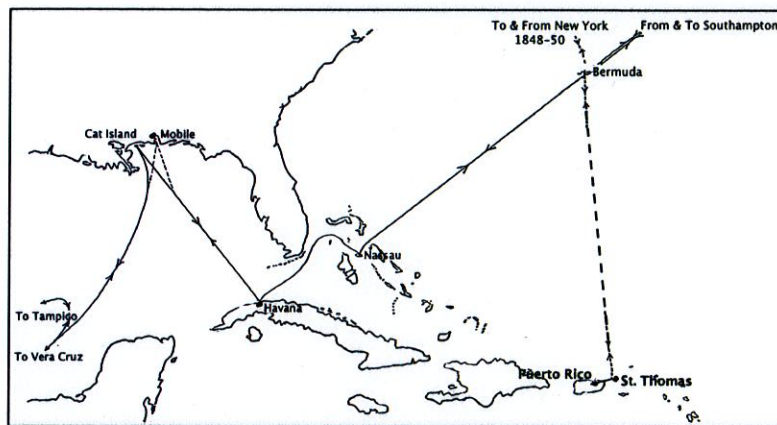
**Route 5. on the 16th:** Southampton-Bermuda-Nassau-Havana-New Orleans (later Mobile)-Vera Cruz-Tampico and return.

**Route 6. on the 2nd:** Southampton-Bermuda-St. Thomas-Puerto Rico St. Thomas-Bermuda and return.

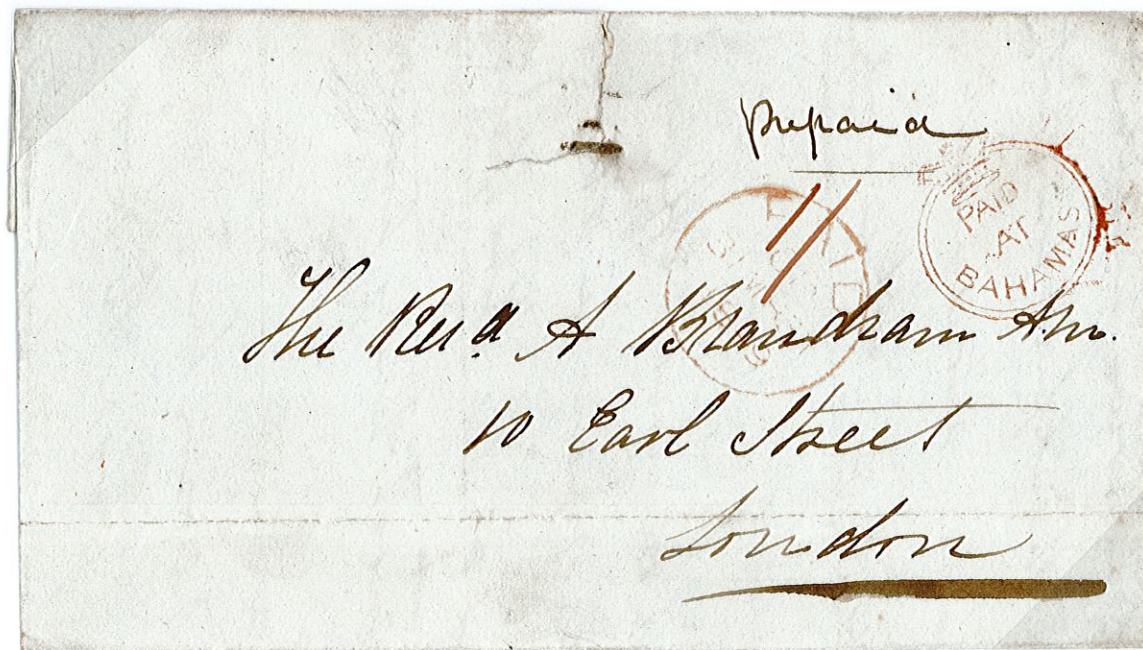
**Route 7. New York direct:** St. Thomas-Bermuda-New York-Bermuda St. Thomas

After August 1850, RMSP stopped all service to Bermuda to concentrate on the more lucrative Mexican routes.

RMSP Routes 5, 6, 7



### Bahamas to England via Bermuda



### Bahamas-Mexican Ports-Bermuda-Southampton-London

Nassau, Jan 25, 1849 per *Dee* to Bermuda Mar 12, Southampton Mar 31.

Picked up at Nassau on the **outbound** trip and carried through the entire Mexican route before reaching Bermuda onward to Southampton, resulting in a 5 week delay, **a very unusual occurrence.**

*Bahamas crowned circle.*

## RMSP Second Contract Route 5. (The Mexican Packet)

The Mexican packet ran monthly leaving G.B. on the 16th. Intermediate covers, like the one from Nassau (lower left), are quite uncommon.

### Ireland to Mexico via Bermuda, fully prepaid



### Belfast-Southampton-Bermuda-Vera Cruz-Mexico City

Belfast, Feb 28, 1850, Southampton Mar 2 per *Medway* to Bermuda Mar 18, Vera Cruz Apr 6, Mexico City Apr 9.

Barred "62" of Belfast.

Rate: 2/6 paid with 2-1847 1/- + 6-1841 1d.



## La Guayra, Venezuela to England via Bermuda



### La Guayra-St. Thomas-Bermuda-Southampton-London

La Guayra Jun 6, 1848 per *Larne* to St. Thomas Jul 1 per *Forth* to Bermuda Jul 7 to Southampton Jul 23.

*Black three-ring "Correos de Venezuela Guaira Franco" handstamp.*

### Mexico to England via Bermuda



PM5 St. George's backstamp in red

### Vera Cruz-Bermuda-Southampton

Vera Cruz Jan 24, 1848 per H.M.S. *Daring* to Bermuda Feb 5 per *Tay* to Southampton and London Feb 24.

Docketed for *Thames* which was delayed. Mail carried by a naval vessel direct to Bermuda, **a most unusual carriage.** It was placed in the mails and, unusually, received a Bermuda backstamp.

Rated 1/- as if from Bermuda, probably bootleg from Mexico.



**RMSP Second Contract Route 5.**

Initially the stop was at New Orleans but Mobile proved more accessible. **Both routings**, by Mobile to England and via Jamaica to Chagres to San Francisco, are **very difficult to find**.

New Orleans to England via **Mobile, Ala.**, redirected



New Orleans-Mobile-Havana-Nassau-Bermuda-Southampton

New Orleans, Mar 22, 1849 overland to Mobile per *Great Western* to Havana Mar 30, Nassau Apr 1, **Bermuda Apr 9**, Southampton Apr 24, Carlisle Apr 25 forwarded to Fleetwood Apr 26.

Rate: "5"¢ U.S. internal postage; 1/- packet to England + 1d. forwarding = 1/1 due.

England to **California** via **Bermuda & Chagres**



Southampton-Bermuda-St. Thomas-Jamaica-Chagras-San Francisco

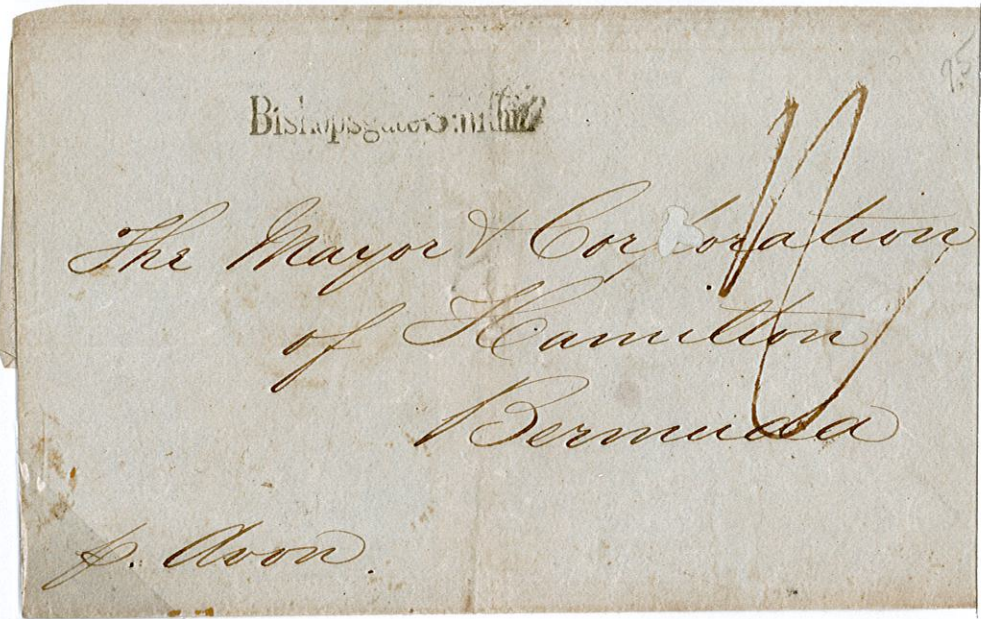
Southampton, Jun 2, 1850 per *Tay* to **Bermuda Jun 18** per *Medway* to St. Thomas Jun 22, held until Jul 14 then per *Clyde* to Jamaica Jul 19, per *Avon* to Chagres, Panama Jul 24 thence per Pacific Mail S.S. Co. *Oregon* to San Francisco.

Rate: Prepaid 1/- to Panama, red boxed "30"¢ due in San Francisco.

**RMSP Second Contract Route 6. (The West Indies Packet)**

The West Indies Packet left G.B. on the 2nd. This route is generally scarcer than Route 6.

England to Bermuda, **re-routed** by storms



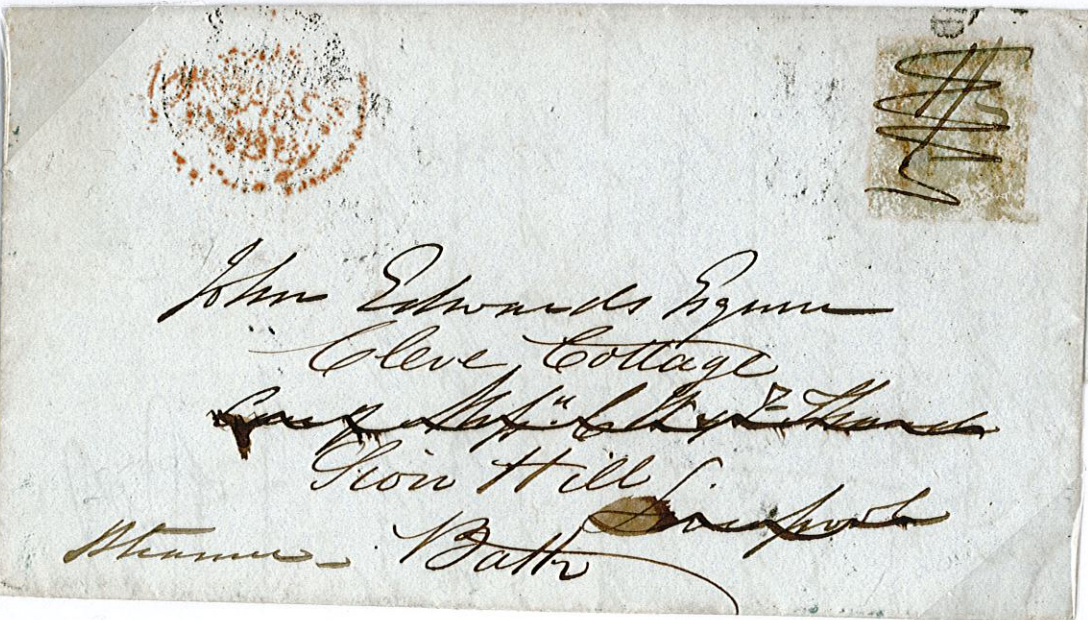
Southampton-Barbados-St. Thomas-Bermuda

London & Southampton, Dec 2, 1848 per *Avon* (on the Mexican route), blown off course to Barbados (West Indies route) finally arriving at St. Thomas Jan 2, 1849. Mail was sent to Bermuda via Brig *Chebucto* on her return trip from St. Thomas to New York, arriving Bermuda Jan 27.

This is a **most unusual unscheduled confluence** of the Mexico, West Indies and St. Thomas-New York routes. The New York route was almost always served by the direct Southampton-Bermuda route.

Black straightline "Bishopsgate Station."

Antigua to England via Bermuda, **re-directed**



1/-

Puerto Rico to **Spain** via Bermuda



2/-

Puerto Rico-St. Thomas-Bermuda-London-Calais-Cadiz

San Juan, Jan 23, 1850 per *Thames* to St. Thomas Jan 29 per *Trent* (West Indies Packet) to **Bermuda Feb 7**, Southampton Feb 22, London and Calais Feb 23, Cadiz Mar 3.

The Mexican Packet Trent

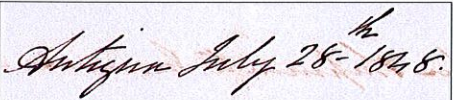
Rate: 2/- F.W.I. + 13R Spanish internal postage.

Red San Juan crowned circle, black double-ring San Juan date, red Cadiz arrival.

Antigua-St. Thomas-Bermuda-Southampton-Liverpool-Bath

Antigua (dateline), July 28, 1848 per *Eagle* to St. Thomas Jul 30 per *Trent* to **Bermuda Aug 5** per *Great Western* to Southampton Aug 20, Liverpool Aug 21, re-directed to Bath, Aug 23.

A now-missing 1d. stamp for forwarding was placed over the 1/- manuscript due mark.





**RMSP Second Contract Route 7.**

This route permitted direct connection between the Caribbean and New York through Bermuda.

**Trinidad to New York via Bermuda**



4d.

PM5 St. George's backstamp in red  
**Trinidad-Barbados-St. Thomas-Bermuda-New York**

Trinidad, May 21, 1848 per *Eagle* to Barbados May 29, St. Thomas Jun 1, Bermuda Jun 5 per *Great Western* to New York Jun 9.

Island covers carried on the Bermuda-New York route are **difficult to find**.

**V D. PACKET LETTERS:  
OTHER CARRIERS IN CONJUNCTION WITH CUNARD**

Cunard operated throughout the period from 1827-1877 and beyond, making it the one constant factor in Bermuda postal history of this era.

There were two major changes in Cunard's relationship with other carriers. The first was the RMSP's abandonment of her Bermuda stops in 1850. The other was Cunard's loss of her transatlantic contract to Inman in 1868. These changes made the Cunard Bermuda-Halifax connection more important.

Having examined in detail the purely Cunard and RMSP routes, the interrelationships between Cunard, RMSP and others lines constitute the final phase of the story. They are presented in roughly chronological order as follows:

- D 1. Private vessels**
- D 2. Royal Mail Steamship Packet Company**
- D 3. Contract or Crop vessels**
- D 4. Inman Line**
- D 5. Allen Line**
- D 6. Quebec & Gulf Ports Steamship Company**

**D 1. Cunard and Private vessels**

This cover demonstrates the role of happenstance in carrying the mail.

**Bermuda-New York**

**One of two** recorded prepaid with stamps at the 7d. rate



7d.

P5 St George's in black  
**Bermuda-Halifax-Newport, RI-Boston-New York**

Bermuda Jun 3, 1871 per Cunard *Delta* to Halifax Jun 6 thence by private vessel to Newport Jun 10, Boston Jun 16.

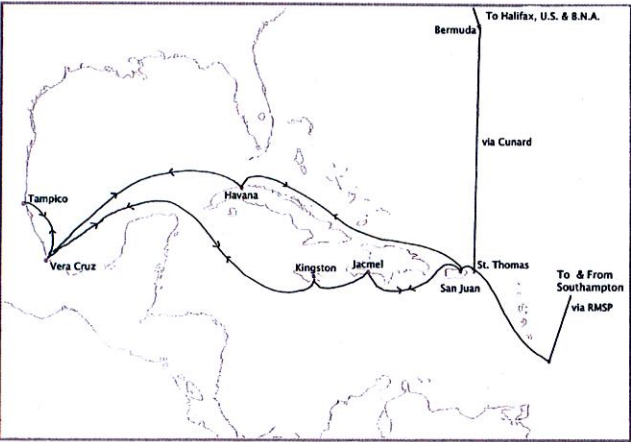
Rate: 7d.: 1d. to Bermuda; 4d. to England; 2d. to the U.S.; 1865 2-2d. bright blue + 1d. pale rose Bermuda stamps.

Endorsed on reverse "Recue le 10 Juin 1871/Newport, R.I." Carried overland to Boston and then New York. This is a **very unusual private ship carriage to the U.S.** in combination with Cunard.

**D 2. Cunard and Royal Mail Steamship Packet Company  
September 1850-December 1879**

As noted above, after 1850 RMSP no longer stopped at Bermuda, servicing B.W.I. and Mexico directly. Joint carriage by Cunard and RMSP is complex depending on points of origin and destination.

**Cunard and RMSP routes**



**D 2. Cunard & RMSP to G.B.**

Mail by this combined, longer route to G.B. is **rarely seen**.

**Bermuda to Scotland via St. Thomas**



**Bermuda-St. Thomas-Southampton-Glasgow-Helensburgh**

Bermuda, Jun 25, 1867 per Cunard *Alpha* to St. Thomas Jun 26 per RMSP *Tasmanian* to Southampton Jul 11, London and Glasgow Jul 15, Helensburgh Jul 16..

Rate paid with 1865 Bermuda 1/- stamp.

St George's barred "1" cancel.



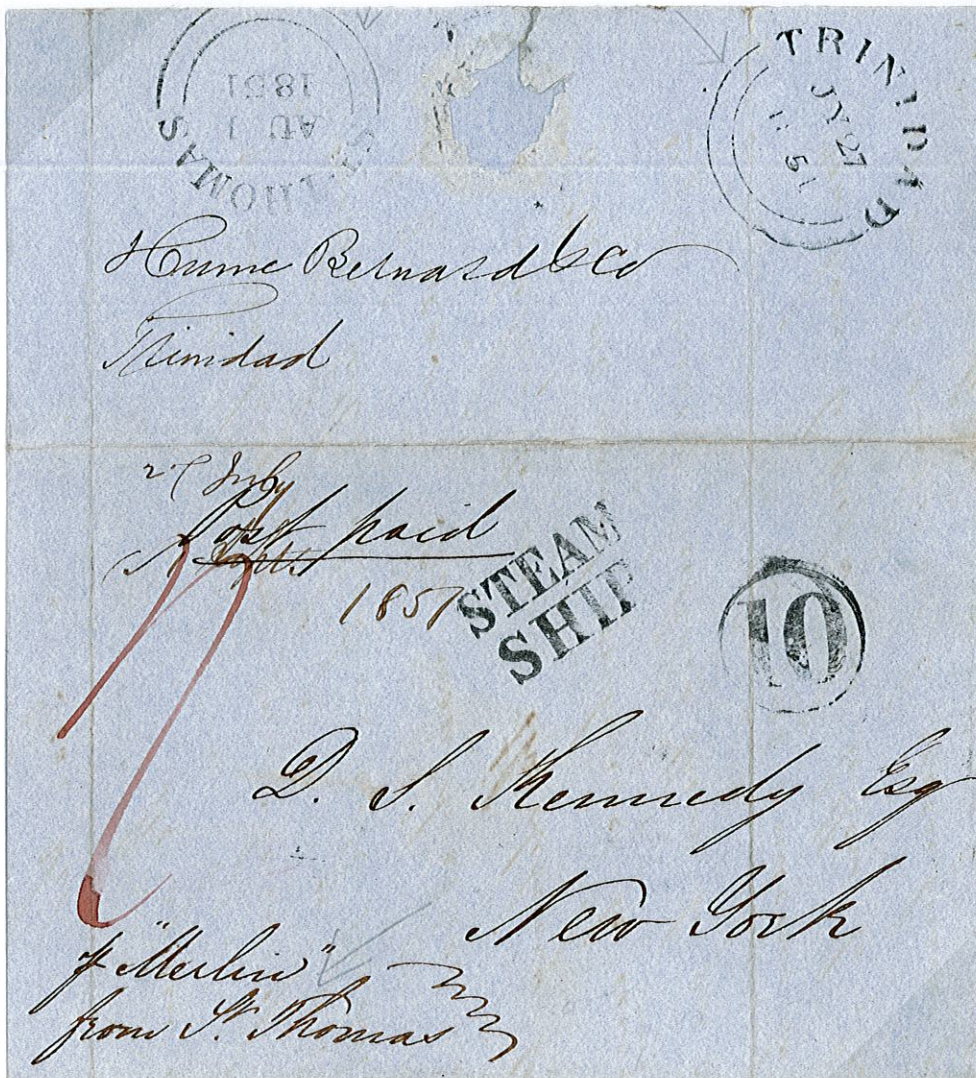
## D 2. Cunard & RMSP to U.S., B.N.A. and within the Carribean

As noted in section IV B 3, between 1850 and 1854, there was a rarely-used purely Cunard service direct to New York from Bermuda. The combined routing with RMSP via Halifax was much more efficacious.

Mail to B.N.A. beyond Nova Scotia is quite uncommon. Interestingly, Canada is the scarcest destination.

Combined routings within the Caribbean is **quite uncommon**.

### Trinidad to New York via St. Thomas and Bermuda



### Trinidad-Barbados-St. Thomas-Bermuda-New York

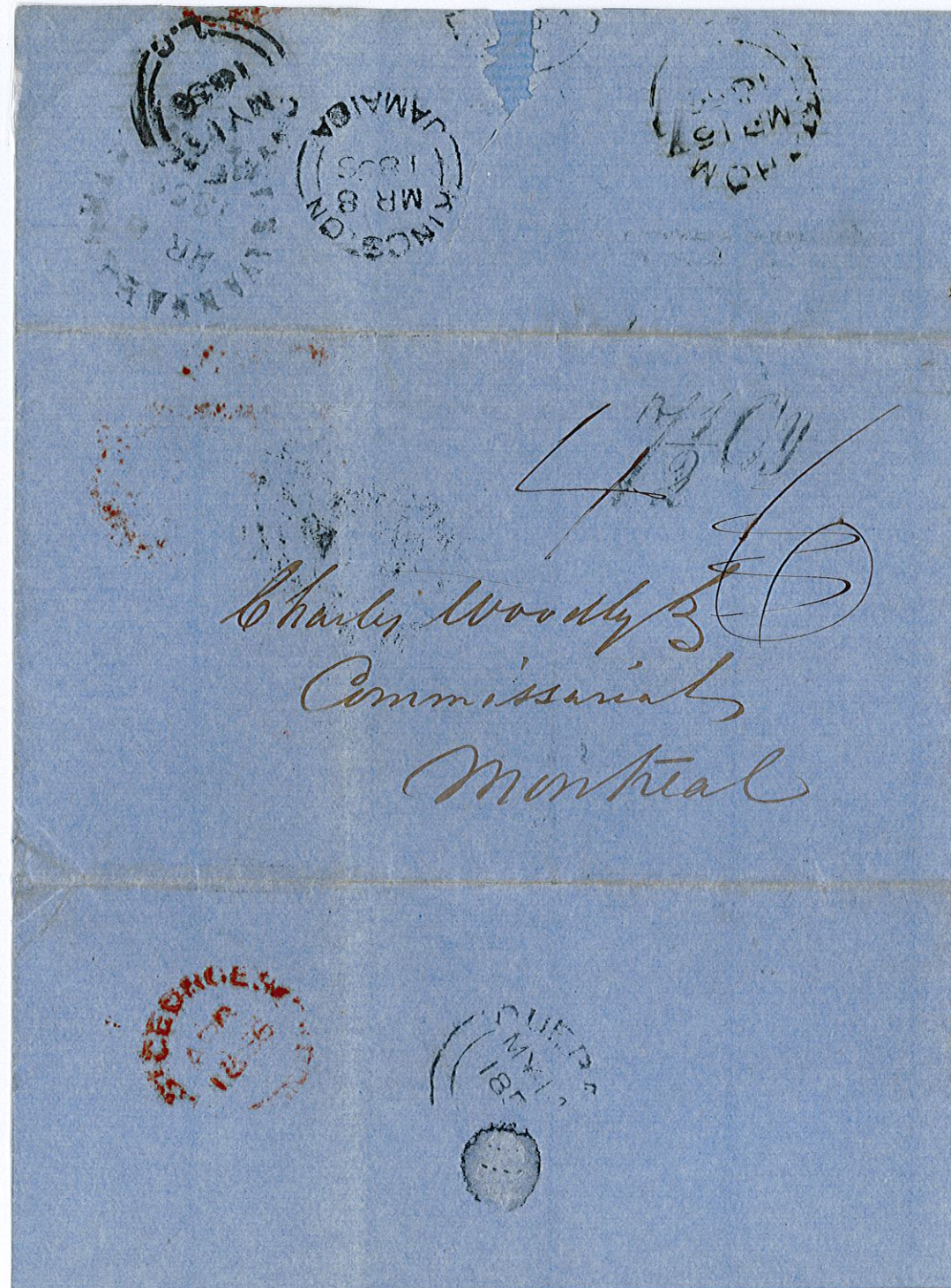
Trinidad, Jul 27, 1851 per RMSP *Eagle* to Barbados Jul 29 per RMSP *Derwent* to St. Thomas Aug 1, delayed until Aug 21 then per Cunard *Merlin* to Bermuda Aug 25, Halifax Aug 30 thence to New York Sep 4.

This is an early use of the St. Thomas-Bermuda-New York route connecting Cunard with RMSP.

Rate: prepaid 4d. B.W.I. + 8d. F.W.I to New York = 1/-; "10"¢ U.S. steamship rate.

Black New York double-line "Steam/Ship" and circle "10."

### Jamaica to Canada via Bermuda



PM5 St. George's backstamp in red

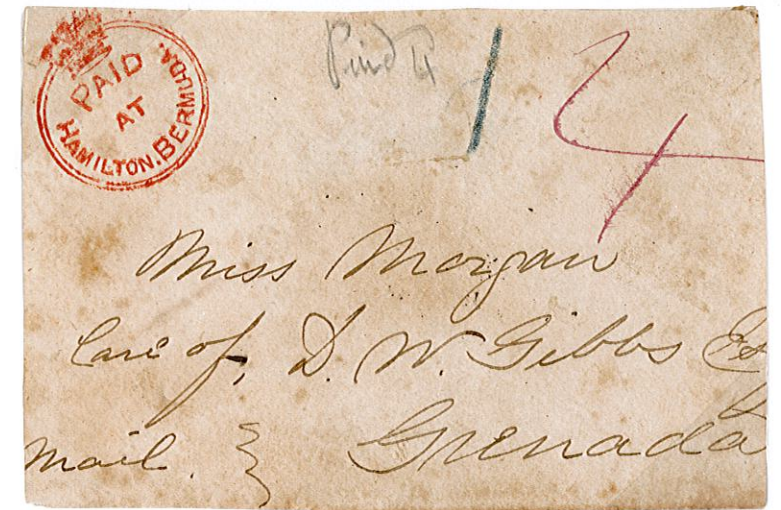
### Jamaica-St. Thomas-Bermuda-Halifax-Quebec-Montreal

Savannah La Mar, Jamaica, Mar 6, 1856, Kingston Mar 8 per RMSP *Derwent* to St. Thomas Mar 15 per H.M.S. *Medea* to Bermuda Apr 4, held until May 1, per Cunard *Merlin* to Halifax May 5 overland to Quebec May 14, Montreal May 16.

Rate: "4"d. Bermuda to Halifax + "6"d. stg. = "7-1/2d cy." to Montreal.

The delay was due to the loss of Cunard's *Curlew* off Bermuda. It was necessary to await the return of *Merlin* before departure of the mail. Very unusual emergency **carriage by a naval vessel** at this late date.

### Bermuda to Grenada



P2 Hamilton

4d.

### Bermuda-St. Thomas-Barbados-Grenada

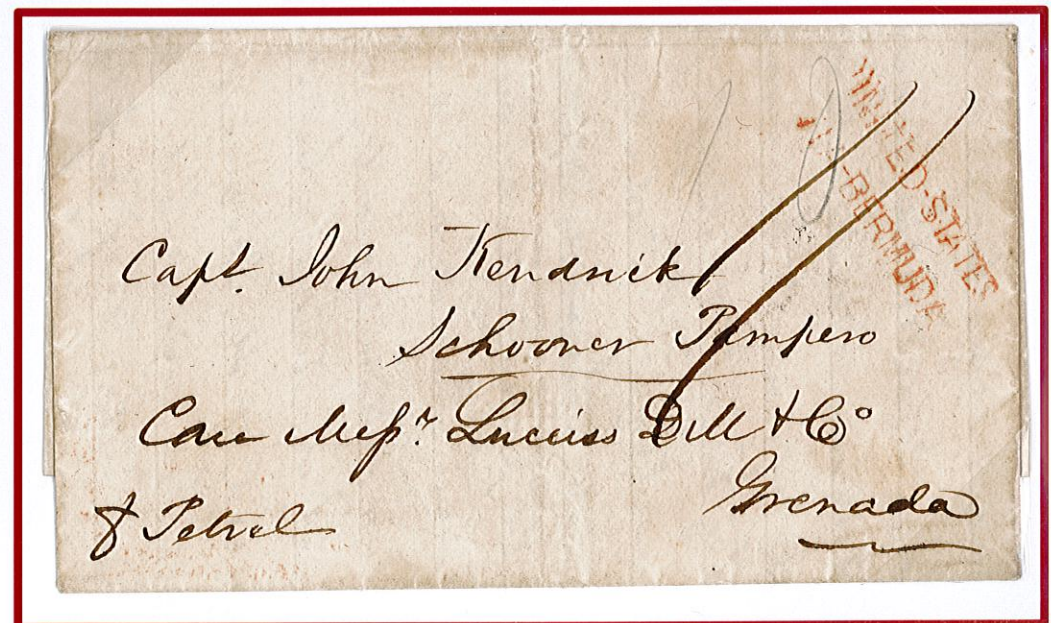
Bermuda, Jul 28, 1862 per Cunard *Delta* to St. Thomas Aug 8 per RMSP *Conway* to Barbados Aug 19 per *Wye* to Grenada Aug 21.

Rate: 4d., 1d. due Bermuda.

Backstamped Bermuda, St. Thomas and Grenada on large piece.

### U.S. to Grenada via Bermuda

One of two recorded "United-States/via-Bermuda" transit marks



Misc3 (2 known) (LKD)

### Alexandria, Va.-New York-Bermuda-St. Thomas-Barbados-Grenada

Alexandria, Feb 1853 overland to New York Feb 7 per Cunard *Petrel* to Bermuda Feb 11 thence St. Thomas Feb 17 per RMSP *Great Western* to Barbados Feb 21 per *Derwent* to Grenada Feb 22.

Last trip of the *Petrel*.

Rate: "10" U.S. internal rate (pencil); 1/- U.S. to Grenada.

Backstamped in Bermuda, St. Thomas and Grenada.



### V D 3. Cunard and Contract or Crop Vessels (1868–1873)

With the cancellation of Cunard's service to New York, there was no **direct** service from Bermuda to the U.S. after 1854. To overcome this, Bermuda contracted directly with a number of steamers and small crop vessels. The rate to GB via NY was 7d., rather the 6d., the extra 1d. credited to the U.S. as a transfer fee.

Two steamers operated this route, the *Fah-Kee* between 1868-1871 and the *San Francisco* from late 1870-1873. When needed, crop vessels were used for **only 9 trips** between 1871-3.

#### U.S. direct to Bermuda per *San Francisco*



#### Covington, LA-New York-Bermuda

Covington, LA, Sep 8, 1870 overland to New York Sep 28, forwarded by Middleton & Co. as requested, per contract vessel *San Francisco* to Bermuda Oct 4.

This is an **unusual** case of a U.S. cover sent **to Bermuda** by this route.

Rate: 5¢ U.S. internal, convenience overpayment of 1¢, pair of 1870 3¢ stamps; "2" due Bermuda for carriage to Bermuda per treaty.

#### Bermuda to England per *San Francisco*



#### Bermuda-New York-Queenstown-Liverpool

Bermuda, Apr 27, 1871 per contract vessel *San Francisco* to New York Apr 26 per Cunard *China* to Queenstown May 5 and Liverpool May 6.

Rate: 5d. to England [+ 1d. to Bermuda + 1d. to U.S.] = 7d.

#### Bermuda per *Fah-Kee* to New York thence to England per HAPAG



P5 Ireland Island in black

#### Bermuda-New York-Southampton

Bermuda, Jan 4, 1869 per contract vessel *Fah-Kee* to New York Jan 14 per **HAPAG** *Allemania* to Southampton Jan 25.

A **highly unusual** carriage by a German ship. No other schedule fits the dates. The N.Y. dispatch agent was required to send it by the quickest way.

Originally docketed "via St. Thomas," a much longer route. "Officer's Letter" deleted.

Rate: 6d. to England including 1d. to Bermuda [+ 1d. to U.S.] = 7d. There appears to be no additional charge for carriage by a non-British ship.

#### Bermuda to England per crop vessel *Hatteras*



P5 Mangrove Bay in black

#### Bermuda-New York-Queenstown-London

Bermuda, May 23, 1873 per crop vessel *Hatteras* to New York May 27 per Cunard *Java* to Queenstown Jun 7, Liverpool Jun 8 and London Jun 9.

7d.

#### Bermuda to England per crop vessel *Magnolia*



#### Bermuda-New York-Queenstown-London

Bermuda, Dec 20, 1872 per crop vessel *Magnolia* to New York Dec 25 per Cunard *Abyssinia* to Queenstown Jan 3, Liverpool Jan 4 and London Jan 6.

**Only trip** of the *Magnolia*; the *San Francisco* contract had been cancelled.

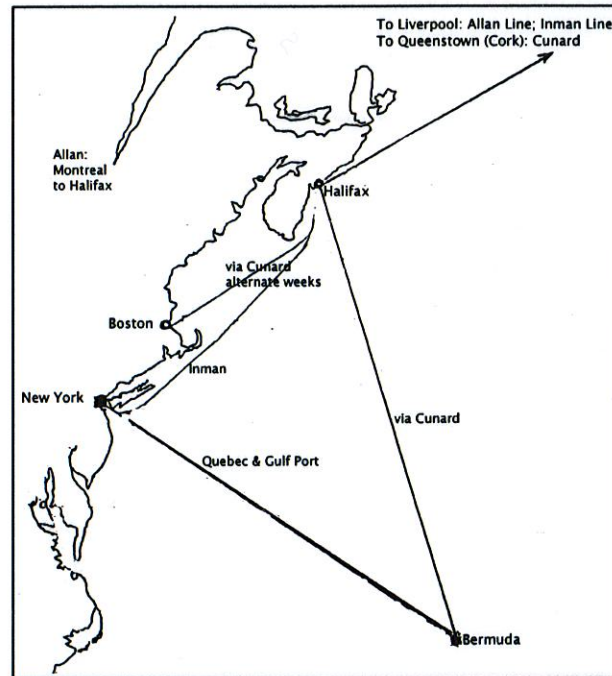
7d



# V D 4. Cunard and The Inman Line: January 1, 1868–June 1871

After January 1, 1868, Cunard lost the contract for the transatlantic route to the British steamship company The Inman Line but continued her service to Halifax where she connected with that line, later with other lines, see V D 5 and V D 6.

## The Cunard routes with Inman, Allen and Quebec S.S. Lines



This map shows the routes for Sections V D 4, 5 and 6.

## Officer's Letter to Scotland via Halifax



P5 St. George's in black  
Bermuda-Halifax-Queenstown-Liverpool-Glasgow

Bermuda May 8, 1868 per Cunard *Alpha* to Halifax May 12 per Inman *City of Washington* to Queenstown May 31, Liverpool Jun 1 onward to Glasgow.

Rate: The 6d. officer's rate was the same as the regular rate, paid with a 1865 6d. stamp.

*Earliest recorded date* of the barred "K2" cancel of St. George's.

## Bermuda to France



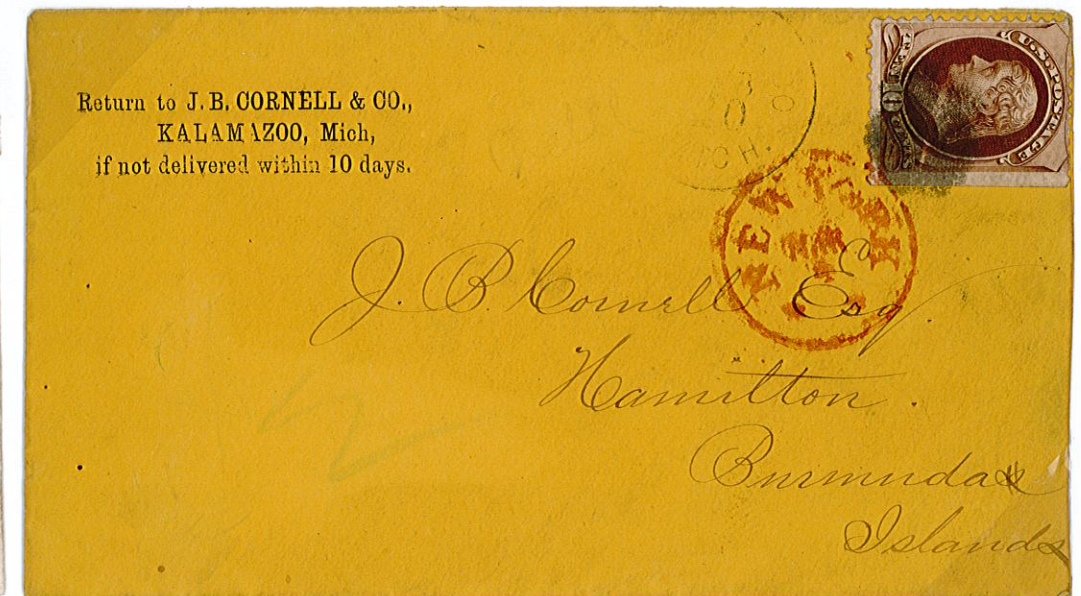
P5 St. George's in black  
Bermuda-Halifax-Queenstown-London-Calais-Paris-Bordeaux

Bermuda, Apr 9, 1869 per Cunard *Alpha* to Halifax Apr 23 per Inman *Etna* to Queenstown May 2, Liverpool and London May 3 thence Calais and Paris May 4, Bordeaux May 5.

Rate: properly franked 1/4 with Bermuda 1865 6d + 2d. **block of 4** and single; 1/2 due England.

Red oval "P.D." (paid to destination).

## U.S. to Bermuda



Kalamazoo-New York-Halifax-Bermuda

Kalamazoo, Mich. Feb 28, 1875 overland to New York Mar 4 per Inman *City of Antwerp* to Halifax Mar 21 per Cunard *Alpha* to Bermuda Mar 29.

Rate: 10¢ to Bermuda; U.S. 1870 10¢ stamp, no grill.

P5 St. George's in black

**Bermuda-Halifax-Queenstown-Liverpool-Edinburgh**  
Bermuda, May 3, 1869 per Cunard *Alpha* to Halifax May 12 per Inman *City of Bombay* to Queenstown May 31, Liverpool Jun 1 onward to Edinburgh.

Rate: double weight, 1/- x 2 = 2/-; "1/10" due England.

## Double weight to Scotland via Halifax



1 /- x2 = 2/-



**V D 5. Cunard and The Allan Line**  
**January 1871–December 1877 (then to 1879)**

The Allan Line was a Canadian company that had the contract to carry Canadian mail across the North Atlantic. Like Cunard and Inman, Allan made a stops at Halifax and Queenstown.

**Double 1/- rate to England**



**Bermuda-Halifax-Queenstown-London**

Bermuda, Dec 19, 1871 per Cunard *Alpha* to Halifax Jan 2 per Allan *Caspian* to Queenstown Jan 14, Liverpool Jan 15, London Jan 16.

Rate: 1/- rate until Mar 30, 1872, paid with pair of 1865 1/ Bermuda stamps.

**Double 6d. rate to England**



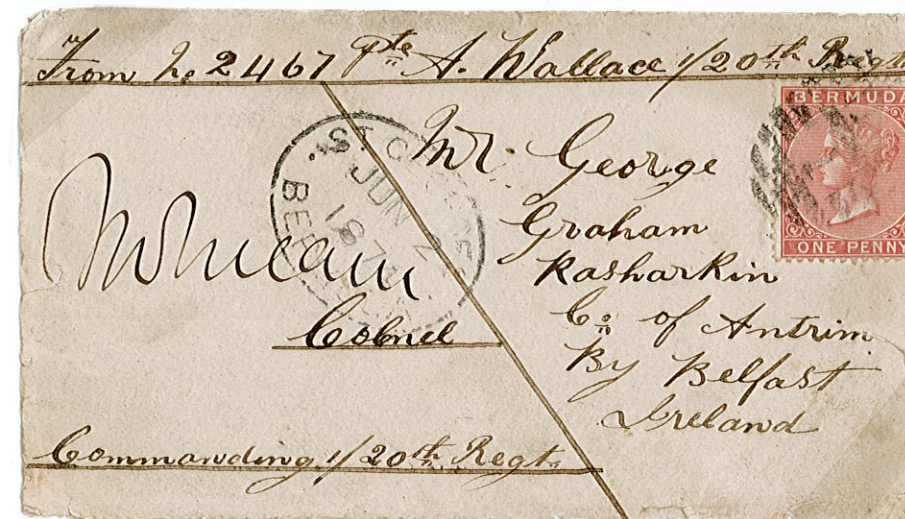
**Bermuda-Halifax-Queenstown-London**

Bermuda, Sep 20, 1873 per Cunard *Delta* to Halifax Oct 7 per Allan *Nestorian* to Queenstown Oct 15, Liverpool and London Oct 17.

Rate: double weight 6d. x 2 = 1/-, after Apr 1, 1872, paid with 1865 Bermuda 1/-.

6d. x 2 = 1/-

**Soldier's Letter to Ireland**



**Bermuda-Halifax-Londonderry-Belfast**

Bermuda, Jun 2, 1874 per Cunard *Beta* to Halifax Jun 8 per Allan *Polynesian* to Londonderry Jun 16 and Rasharkin near Belfast.

Rate: soldier's concessionary rate of 1d., Bermuda 1865 1d.

Ireland is a very unusual destination for a soldier's letter from Bermuda.

**Only recorded cover from Bermuda to Gibraltar**



**Bermuda--Halifax-Queenstown-Liverpool-London-Gibraltar**

Bermuda, Sep 22, 1873 per Cunard *Delta* to Halifax Oct 7 per Allan *Nestorian* to Queenstown Oct 15, Liverpool Oct 17 thence to Gibraltar Oct 28.

Rate: 11d., "10d" to England, paid with 1865 Bermuda 1d. (2), 3d. & 6d.

**Ireland to Bermuda, registered**



**Dublin-Queenstown-Halifax-Bermuda**

Dublin, Nov 11, Queenstown Nov 15 per Allan *Austrian* to Halifax Nov 25 per Cunard *Alpha* to Bermuda Dec 1.

Rate: 1875 1/- (plate 12), postage from Ireland + 1873 4d., (plate 15) for registry fee.

Black barred "186" of Dublin; black octagonal Dublin registry mark.



V D 6. Cunard and The Quebec & Gulf Ports Steamship Co.  
January 1874–December 1877 (then to 1879)

This line offered direct service between Bermuda and New York. The connections to G.B. are complicated by the number of companies that now held contracts to depart on different days to different ports.

In 1869, after Inman lost its contract, Cunard again carried transatlantic mail. It is these Cunard connections in association with the Quebec line that are presented.

Mail direct to the U.S. could be carried only by Quebec Company steamers, with no Cunard connection required, and did so until 1916.

CONCLUSION

This exhibit has demonstrated Bermuda's pivotal role as the crossroads of the Atlantic during the 19th century.

Prior to 1806 there was no formal scheduled service. After Bermuda entered the GPU in 1877, the routes remained essentially unaltered until the early 20th century. Cunard stopped her Bermuda-Halifax service in 1886; Quebec in 1916. Other steamship lines, such as Pickford & Black of Canada and the Bermuda Atlantic Steamship Co., carried mail from the late 19th century well into the 20th, until aviation assumed that role in 1937. These latter services deserve their own examination.

Bermuda to England via New York  
First trip of the Quebec Steamship Company



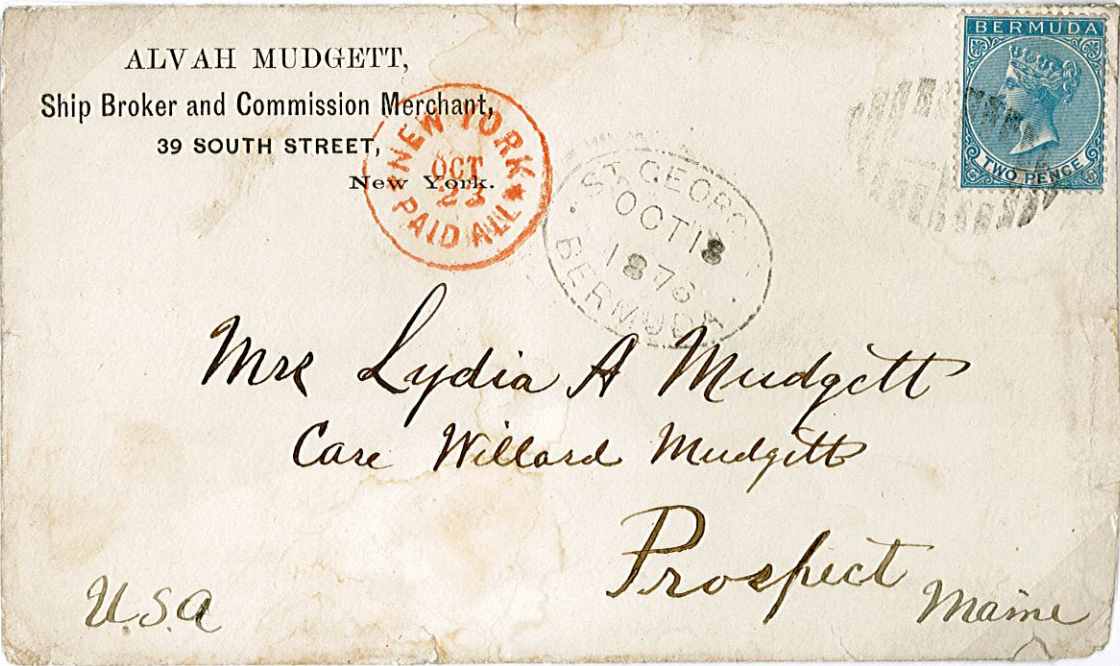
Bermuda-New York-Queenstown-Doncaster 7d.  
Bermuda, Jan 9, 1874 per Quebec *Canima* Jan 26 to New York Feb 4 per Cunard *Abyssinia* to Queenstown Feb 12, London Jun 21.  
*First trip* of the *Canima*.

The "Moncrieff" cover  
The only recorded cover with all three 1875 1d. provisionals



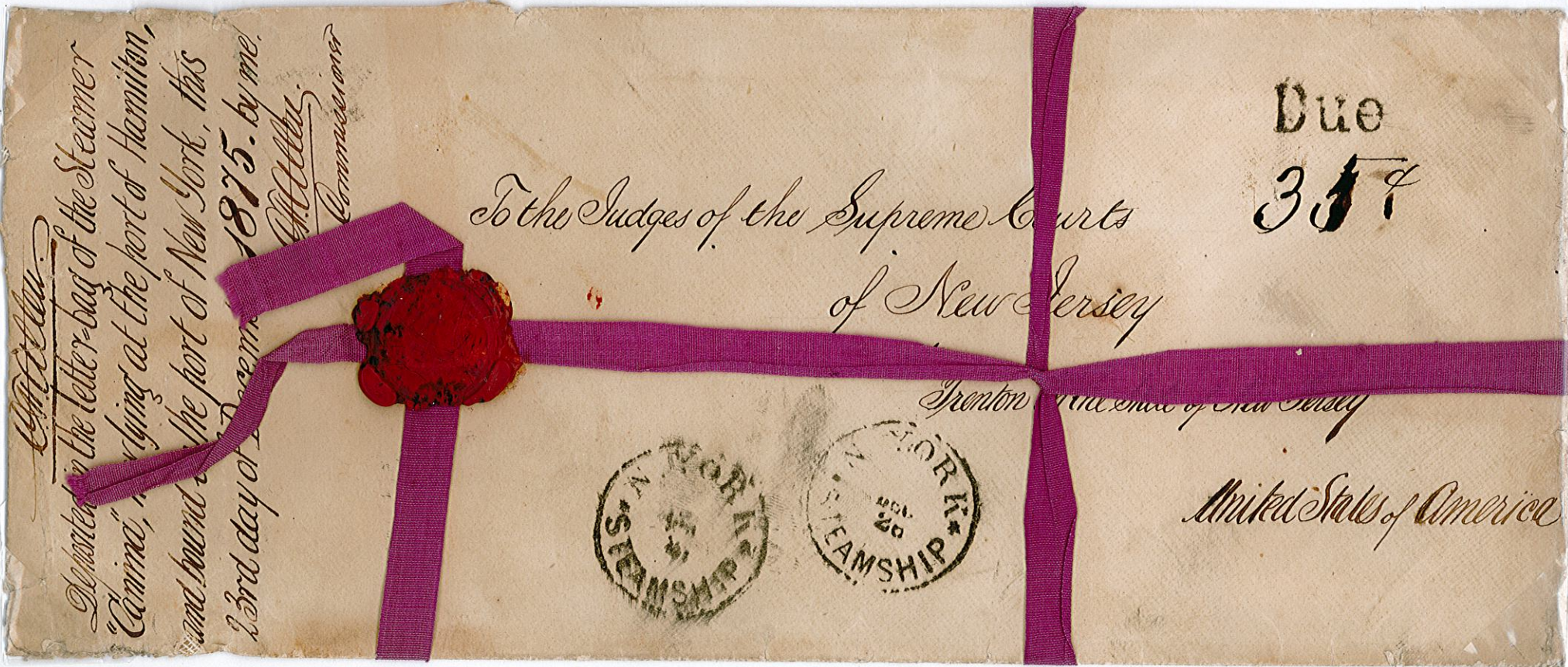
Bermuda-New York-Queenstown-London 7d.  
Bermuda, May 26, 1875 per Quebec *Canima* to New York Jun 8 per Cunard *Abyssinia* to Queenstown Jun 18, London Jun 21.  
7d. rate paid with 1875 four "One/Penny" on 4d (including a pair) + "One/Penny" on 2d.. "One/Penny" on 1/- and a single 1d.

Bermuda to the U.S. at the new 2d. rate



Bermuda-New York-Maine 2d.  
Bermuda, Oct 18, 1876 per Quebec *Canima* to New York Oct 23 thence to Prospect, Maine.  
The first formal postal convention between Bermuda and the U.S. established a prepaid 2d. rate after October 1, 1876.  
This cover went on the *second trip* after the treaty was signed.

Bermuda to the U.S., septuple rate official cover



Bermuda to New York unpaid 5¢ per 1/2 oz. x7= 35¢  
Bermuda, Dec 23, 1875 per Quebec *Canima* to New York Dec 26.