Cross Border Mail Between the United States and Canadian Maritime Provinces

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Overview of Presentation

• I. Prior to 1817
  – Primarily Ship Mail, limited use of Falmouth Packets

• II. 1817 to 1851
  – Land Route Established, Cunard Line Service, Private Steamboat Expresses

• III. 1851 to Confederation
  – Postal Treaty, USPOD Takes-Over Steamboat Express Business

• IV. Mail to and from Third Countries
I. Prior to 1817

- Ship Letters
- Falmouth Packet
- Carried Out of the Mails
- Mail Interrupted by Revolutionary War
- Mail Interrupted by War of 1812
Ship Letters

Boston
August 5, 1792

New York
July 24, 1793

- Same correspondence originating in Saint John, NB
- Cover via Boston rated Sh[ip] 14¢ due (10¢ for distance of 61 to 100 miles to Springfield + 4¢ ship fee)
- Cover via New York rated Sh[ip] 19¢ due (15¢ for distance 150 to 200 miles to Springfield + 4¢ ship fee)
Falmouth Packet

- Paid 4½d Nova Scotia Currency [4d sterling]
- Falmouth Packet *Princess Royal* to New York
- Addressed to port of arrival, no US postage assessed
Carried Out of the Mails

• Paid 25¢ for distance over 500 miles
• Robert Pagan likely collected letter at Schoodick, ME (Robbinston) no Post Office in St. Andrews at this time
• Addressee Beverley Robinson was loyalist who lead burning of New London and son of Beverley Robinson allied with Benedict Arnold
Revolutionary War From Occupied New York

- Mails censored during British occupation (letter reports “perfect tranquility” in New York)
- Likely carried by military mail for favor of clergy (c/o Mr. Weeks in Halifax – both Bailey and Weeks were members of Loyalist clergy)
War of 1812 Occupied Castine / Eastport

- Castine, Maine, January 2, 1815
dateline
- Rated 9d (distance of 101 – 200 miles) to Halifax + 1d local charge

Lubeck, ME

- Moose Island, NB (Eastport)
  October 12, 1817
- Rated 12½¢ (distance of 80 – 150 miles)
- Eastport occupied until July 1818
- American mail routed through Lubeck
II. 1817 - 1851

- First Land Postal Route via Robbinston, ME and St. Andrews, NB
  - Additional Exchange office at Houlton, ME
- Falmouth Packet Replaced by Cunard Line
- Expresses Operate on Boston to Saint John Steamboats
Land Mail

• US Postage to/from Exchange Office plus BNA Postage to/from Exchange Office

• Letters FROM the US
  – US Postage Paid or Unpaid
  – BNA Postage Always Due

• Letters FROM BNA
  – BNA Postage Always Paid
  – US Postage Paid or Due

• BNA Exchange Office Postmasters were deputy US Postmasters
US Postage Unpaid

- Postage 18¾¢ due to Robbinston exchange office (150 – 400 mi.) converted to 11½d A[merican] P[ostage]
- Additional 9d BNA due from St. Andrews = 1 shilling 8½d due (rate should be 7d based on distance)
• US Postage 10¢ paid to Robbinston exchange office (over 300 miles) ("paid to lines")
• 11½d BNA due (201 – 300 miles) from St. Andrews exchange office
BNA Postage Paid to the Lines

Amherst, NS                                                                   March 21, 1850

• 11½d BNA paid to St. Andrews exchange office (201 – 300 miles)
• US Postage 10¢ due (over 300 miles) from Robbinston exchange office
US Postage Paid from BNA

- 7d BNA paid (101 – 200 miles) P[rovincial] P[ostage] to Woodstock exchange office

Fredericton, NB
September 23, 1842
San Francisco, CA

- Paid 40¢ to Robbinston exchange office
- BNA Postage 11½d due (201 to 300 miles)
- Received Truro, NS (Sept. 21) – 52 days transit
Mail Originating At BNA Exchange Office

Woodstock, NB

April 27, 1847

- Paid 5¢ for distance under 300 miles to Mattawamkeag, ME (No BNA postage)
Cunard Line

• Liverpool to Boston Sailings Called at Halifax
  July 1840- December 1867
• Liverpool to New York Sailings Called at Halifax
  January 1848 – September 1850
• US-Halifax Mail Never Covered by Postal Treaty
• US Postage to/from port paid by US correspondent
• Packet Postage + BNA inland to/from Halifax paid by BNA correspondent
Cunard Line – Single/Double

- 1 shilling packet postage due (rated by weight) Halifax to Boston
- 39½¢ due = double 18¾ (rated by number of sheets and distance (150 – 400 miles)) Boston to New York + 2¢ ship fee

Halifax, NS
June 16, 1845
Cunard Line

- 5¢ U.S. postage (under 300 miles)
  New York to Boston
- 1 shilling sterling packet postage due

New York                                                    June 29, 1846

Philadelphia, PA                                        January 22, 1850

- 10¢ U.S. postage (overpaid)
  Philadelphia to New York
- 4d sterling packet postage due, marked as 4½d NS currency
- Packet rate reduced Sep. 20, 1849
Cunard Line – Retaliatory Rate

Halifax, NS  August 23, 1848

- 1 shilling packet postage paid
- 24¢ retaliatory charge equal to US Packet Postage plus 5¢ (under 300 miles) to New York
Boston – Saint John, NB Steamboats

• Boston – Portland – Eastport – Saint John
• Early Service Ship / Steamboat Mail
  – S.S. Royal Tar
  – S.S. North America
• Postal and Package Expresses
  – Hale & Co. / Gunnison’s Express
  – Favor’s Express
S.S. Royal Tar

- Operated only in 1836
- Saint John, NB origin
- Rated 18¾¢ due based on distance from Eastport, ME to Boston
S.S. North America

- Rated 4½d due as ship letter
- *North America* advertised that it would carry ship letters for 12½¢ (not marked)
Bradford, MA dateline

October 26, 1844

- Paid 6¼¢ Hale Independent Mail Stamp
- Carried to Saint John by Gunnison’s Express
- 7d due Saint John, NB to Annapolis, NS
Favor’s Express

• Saint John, New Brunswick origin
• Carried by Favor’s Express to Boston
• Rated 10¢ due (over 300 miles) Eastport to New York
III. 1851 to Confederation

- Postal Agreement Sets Combined Rate
- Land Mail, Cunard Line Continue
- US Route Agents On Steamboats to Saint John
- Attempts to Establish a Halifax – Boston Mail Treaty Mail Route
- NB & NS Confederate With Canada in 1867
- PEI Joins Canada in 1873
July 6, 1851 Postal Arrangement

- 2¢ / 1d between adjacent exchange offices (rate added in 1852)
- 10¢ / 6d for distance up to 3,000 miles from exchange office
- 15¢ / 9d distance over 3,000 miles (eliminated August 1864 for New Brunswick)
- Paid or Unpaid but partial payment not recognized
- No accounting between countries (each country kept what it collected)
- 6¢ paid / 10¢ unpaid effective 1868
2¢/1d Line Office Rate

Houlton, ME

July 13, 1862

- Paid 2¢ to Woodstock, NB at Line Office Rate
10¢/6d Rate

- Covers paid at the 10¢ / 6d rate for distances up to 3,000 miles from the exchange office

Philadelphia, PA                                    December 1861
Andover, NB                                               August 4, 1855
15¢/9d Rate

- Covers exchanged at the 15¢ / 9d rate for distances over 3,000 miles from the exchange office

San Francisco, CA

May 1, circa 1854

Amherst, NS

January 31, 1860
Partial Payment Not Recognized

- Paid 5¢ equal to British Open Mail rate
- Missed May 21 sailing of Cunard Line *America* from Boston
- Sent overland and treated as entirely unpaid, due 10¢

Philadelphia, PA                        May 19, 1856

- Paid 3d / rated 10¢ due
- “all or none”

Sherbrooke, NS                          May 1855
6¢ Paid / 10¢ Unpaid

- Covers exchanged at the 6¢ paid 10¢ unpaid rate
Printed Matter

- No combined rate, must be paid to the lines, with circular rate postage collected from recipient.
Cunard Line

- Kingston, Jamaica origin
- Paid 5¢ equal to British Open Mail rate
- 5d currency [4d stg.] packet postage due

New York  October 15, 1861

- 5d currency [4d stg.] packet postage + 3d inland paid
- 5¢ due

Antigonish, NS  January 20, 1860
Boston – Saint John Express Mail

• “Steamboat Letter Carriers” (Route Agents)
  – First appointed in 1845, but only domestic service
  – Most were expressmen that continued to operate package expresses

• In July 1853 service extended to Saint John

• Loose letters handed to steamboat letter carriers on the docks received Express Mail markings
Express Mail Boston / Eastport

Express Mail Boston
October 30, 1855

Express Mail Eastport
September 15, 1856

- Saint John dateline
- Enters mails at Eastport so paid 3¢
U.S. Express Mail St. John

- Loose letter handed to USPOD route agent at dock in New Brunswick
- Favor’s Express Steamer Admiral, route agent marking on back

U.S. Express Mail Saint John, NB
May 26, 1856
Halifax – Boston Treaty Mails

• Cunard service not covered by postal treaty, so there were attempts to provide treaty service

• Sir John Harvey
  – 3 contract sailings in 1853
  – 4 covers recorded

• Boston and Colonial Steamship
  – Service initiated in 1864
  – Boston – Halifax – Strait of Canso – Charlottetown, PEI
Sir John Harvey

- Three contract sailings, one of four recorded covers
- Nova Scotia “scroll” exchange office marking
• Endorsed “p Steamer Commerce from Boston”
• Boston was not listed as exchanging mail with Halifax in PL&R
IV. Mail To/From Third Countries

• **BNA Mail**
  – Canada
    • Closed Mail via Boston (Cunard Line)
    • Closed Mail via Portland (Boston-St. John Steamboats)
  – Red River Colony
  – British Columbia / Vancouver Island
  – Newfoundland

• **Non-BNA**
  – Great Britain
  – St. Pierre et Miquelon
  – Hawaii
  – Puerto Rico
Closed Mail via Boston

- Rate was 4d stg. packet + 2d stg. inland = 7½d currency = 12½¢
- (no US postage)
Closed Mail via Portland

- Charged ordinary BNA domestic rate of 3d / 5¢ (no US postage)
Red River Settlement

- Red River Settlement [now Winnipeg, MB], paid 1d [2¢] to Pembina
- Paid 10¢ treaty rate Pembina to Victoria Island, NS
British Columbia & Vancouver Island

San Francisco

February 8, 1861

- 2½p BC&VI pays postage to San Francisco
- 15¢ US postage (applied in BC) to Halifax, NS
Newfoundland

- 4d stg. packet postage paid by BNA correspondent
- 5¢ paid by US correspondent
Great Britain via US

- By Cunard Line via New York
- Rate was additional 2d stg. if sent via the United States
- 1 s 5½ d cy. [1/2 stg.] until August 1854 when reduced to 10d cy. [8d stg.]
Saint Pierre et Miquelon

- paid 5¢ equal to British Open Mail rate
- 10d packet postage due Boston to North Sydney, CB
- 10d = 1 Fr. due, plus 25 centimes for French packet

New York                                               June 29, 1858
Saint Pierre                                    August 24, 1865

- Carried by French packet to North Sydney, CB [likely paid 25 ct]
- 10¢ treaty rate to Boston
- Nova Scotia stamps likely applied in Saint Pierre
Hawaii

- 5¢ Hawaii postage to San Francisco
- 15¢ US postage overpays the 10¢ rate to New Brunswick plus 2¢ ship letter fee
Puerto Rico

San Juan, Porto Rico

March 26, 1865

- paid 1 shilling per RMSP to St. Thomas and then Cunard Line from St. Thomas to Halifax
- 10¢ US postage to Boston