

1853

GROTON, MASS. TO BEYROUTH, SYRIA VIA PARIS
OCEAN STEAM NAVIGATION COMPANY

S.S. Washington

New York-Southampton-Bremen



2/2



1851 Decree, French Postal Rates via England, American Packet, was made up, as follows:

U.S. Inland	5c	Transit postage (1/4 of 1 shilling)	3 decimes
Sea Postage	<u>16</u>	French Inland Postage	<u>5</u> "
	21c		(16c eq.) <u>8</u> "

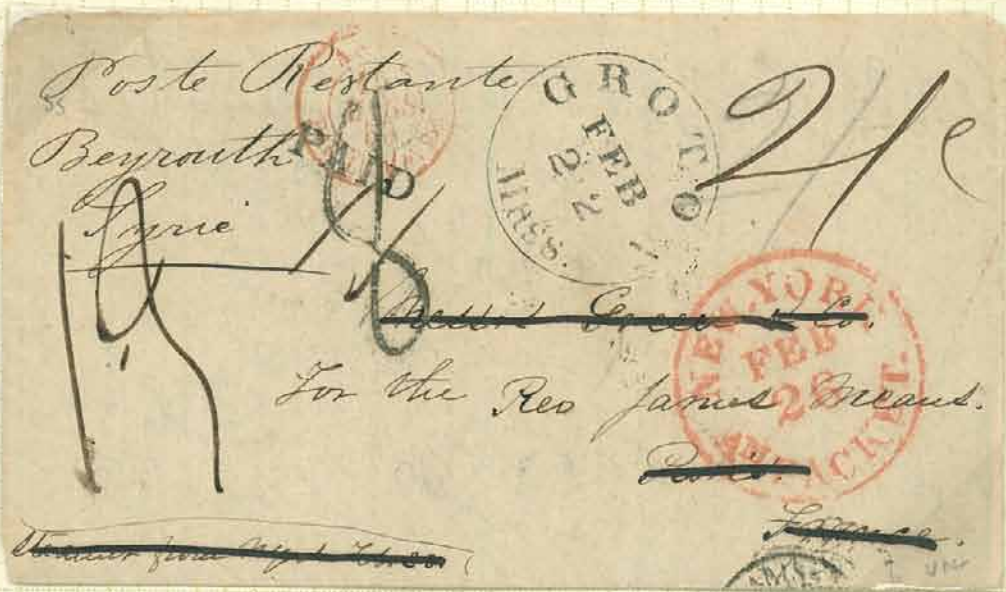
Feb. 22, 1853. U.S. and Sea postage was prepaid in the United States, here at 21c (see above), letter at Groton, Mass.



Feb. 26. U.S. Mail steamship Washington of the Ocean Steam Navigation Company, Capt. Fitch, departed this date from N.Y. for Bremen via Southampton.



Mar. 15. Southampton forwarded to France via Havre, a somewhat unusual routing. Ligne de Havre (T.P.O.) handled mail on to Paris.



Mar. 16. Letter at Greene & Cie. who paid 8 decimes (large handstamp) Brit. transit and French Inland and put letter back into mail unpaid, deleting their address, marking "Poste Restante" (General Delivery) at Beyrouth.



April 7, 1853. Arrival backstamp at Beyrouth, Syria. 13 decimes due as shown in manuscript.

1847

THE OCEAN STEAM NAVIGATION COMPANY

New York-Southampton-Bremen

U.S.M.S. Washington Maiden Voyage & 1st Voyage of the Line

This cover illustrates an historic event in U.S. Maritime postal history. The Ocean Line was established in the U.S. with the British & North American Royal Mail Packet Co., better known as The Cunard Line. As an American Packet line, the rating of letters was planned to follow the British plan, viz., the prepayment of a 24¢ Packet Letter charge plus inland postage in the U.S. with the letters to be received in England as Ship Letters at the 8d. rate, where the captain would receive the 2d. "Captain's pence" for each letter. However, when the Washington arrived at Southampton on this, her maiden voyage and the 1st voyage of the line, the British authorities declared that her letters were "Packet Letters" subject to the one shilling (24¢) Packet rate, and not eligible for any "Captain's pence." This in spite of the fact that these incoming mails had been transported by a U.S. Packet. After all, Royal Mails coming into American ports were rated as Ship Letters! This infuriated the U.S. postal authorities and resulted in the Retaliatory Rate period whereby all letters by British Packets in or out of American posts were charged 24¢ plus inland postage in the U.S. as well as being charged 1/- (24¢) in Britain.

PAID



June 1, 1847. Letter paid 24¢ in cash (not shown) at New York and endorsed: p Washington. The letter concerns the allocation of \$1,000 for Irish relief as collected by the Tennessee Irish Relief Association. This was to ease suffering caused by the Irish potato famine.

June 1. U.S.M.S. Washington departed N.Y. for Bremen via Southampton, England.

June 15. Washington arrived at Southampton, London backstamp same day. Letter was rated at 1/- as a Packet Letter (equivalent to 24¢) and not as a Ship Letter at 8d. (16¢) with a 2d. captain's gratuity.

June 17. Dublin, Ireland arrival backstamp.



1847

THE OCEAN STEAM NAVIGATION COMPANY

New York-Southampton-Bremen

U.S.M.S. Washington

2nd Outbound Passage

This letter was carried on the 2nd voyage of the Washington which was also the 2nd voyage of the Ocean Line. As on the 1st voyage, on arrival at Southampton the British letters were rated as Packet Letters, not as Ship Letters. In the latter circumstance, the Washington's captain would have been entitled to a payment of the "Captain's pence" out of the 8d. Uniform Ship Letter rate. Instead, the British post office insisted that her letters were Packet Letters subject to a collection of one shilling (12d.) and that no Captain's pence could be paid.

PAID

Mr: Joseph Bewley & Son
 Jonathan Pim & Son
 Central Reform: 43 Fleet St.
 Dublin

48

Stmr
 Washington }

September 23, 1847. A letter to Dublin, Ireland concerning Irish potato famine relief is dated at New York. It contained enclosures necessitating double the 24¢ U.S. Packet in-the-port rate. The 48¢ was paid in cash as shown by the manuscript "46". Letter is endorsed: Stmr. Washington. U.S.M.S. Washington departed from New York this date for Bremen via Southampton on her 2nd outbound passage.

October 9. Washington arrived at Southampton, same day transit backstamp at London. 2 shillings (2/- in manuscript) was charged for a double Packet Letter. This was equivalent to 48¢ U.S., thus a double Packet Letter charge was assessed twice.

October 10. Dublin arrival backstamp.

N.B.: Letter notes shipment of 167 bales of indian corn to Queenstown by the ship Queen of the West for Irish famine relief. A postscript on the reverse notes: "The Queen of the West" sailed yesterday.

JY
9 009
1847

7
OC 10
1847

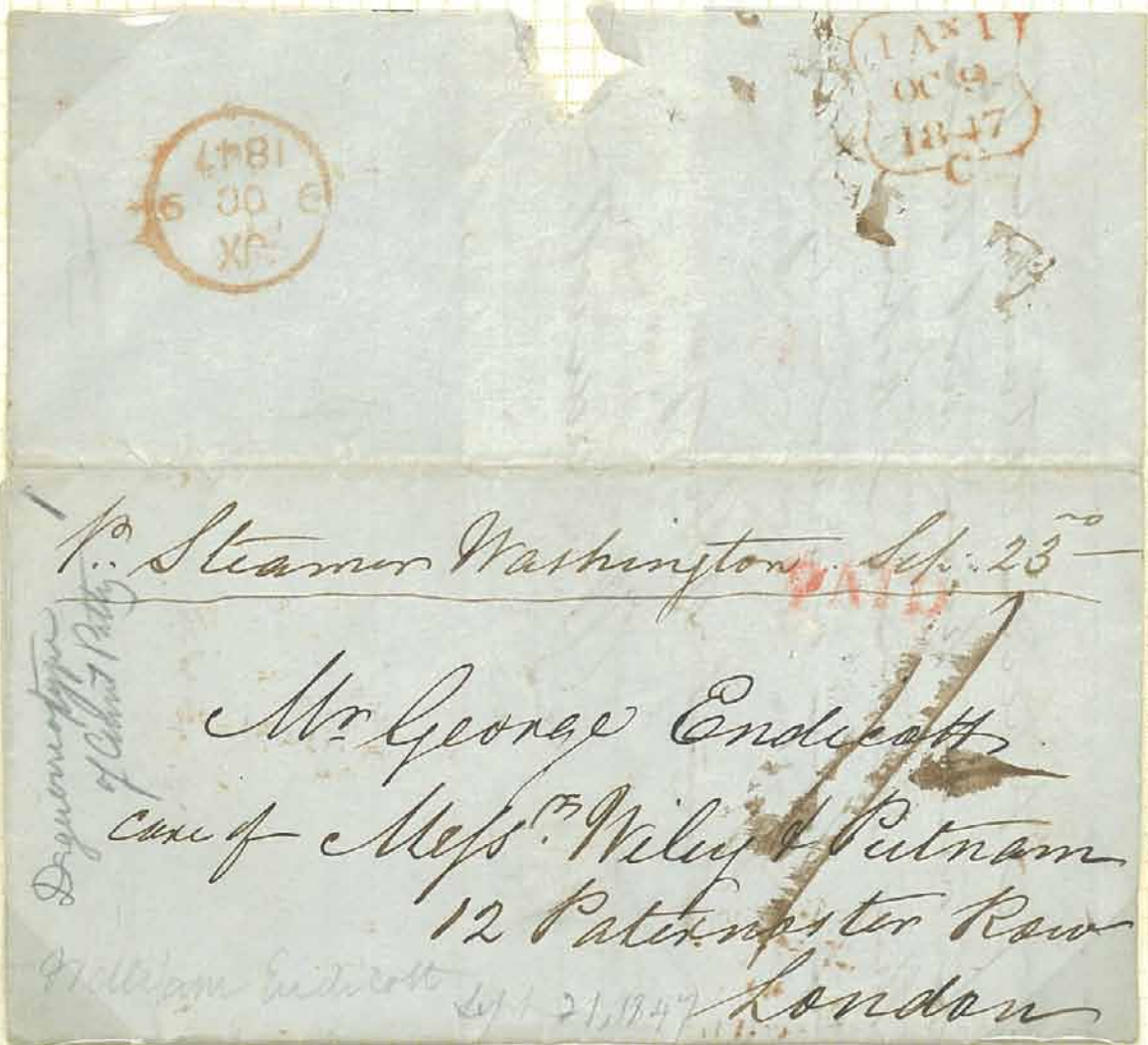
1847

OCEAN STEAM NAVIGATION COMPANY

New York - Southampton - Bremen

1847-1857

S.S. Washington



Sept. 21, 1847. Letter datelined at New York, it was endorsed: pr Steamer Washington Sep. 23rd. This was the 2nd outward voyage of Washington as well as the 2nd voyage of the Ocean Line. This letter though marked "PAID" in the U.S., was subject to an additional Packet Letter charge of one shilling in Britain, a condition that led to the Retaliatory Rate period when British Packet letters incoming to the U.S. were also subject to U.S. Inland and Ship Letter charges.

Oct. 9, 1847. Arrival backstamp at London. Washington had arrived at Southampton Oct. 8. One shilling (1/- in manuscript) due from the recipient. London District Office receiving backstamp is at 1 PM (1 A^N 1) or 1 Afternoon.

JX
9 OC 9
1847

1 A^N 1
OC 9
1847
C

1847

THE OCEAN STEAM NAVIGATION COMPANY

New York-Southampton-Bremen

U.S.M.S. Washington 2nd Return Voyage of the Ocean Line

October 13, 1847. A letter dated at Berlin and endorsed: By the Steamer Washington/ from Bremen. The writer discusses ocean postage, inter alia, "I take the opportunity offered by the departure of the steamer Washington from Bremen to comply with the promise I made you to write you from Berlin. By the British Line of steamers I am obliged to pay heavy postage both ways which threatened to amount in the course of the year to such a formidable sum as to make correspondence a burden instead of a pleasure [I am happy to correspond] but it is burdensome to pay 56 cents for the privilege of writing..."

BERLIN
16 10

6 1/4



October 16. Letter posted at Berlin and noted in manuscript "fr(anco) bis Bremen" or "Paid to Bremen." Amount paid was 6 1/4 silbergroschen to pay the internal postage from Berlin to Bremerhaven.

October 19. U.S.M.S. Washington sailed from Bremerhaven for New York on her 2nd homeward passage which also the 2nd return voyage of the Ocean Line. She touched at Southampton the 24th.

November 9. Washington arrived at New York. Letter was subject to the U.S. Packet Letter rate of 24¢ + Act of 1845 letter rate, not over 300 miles, New York to Albany, of 5¢, total due 29¢, shown in manuscript.

1848

THE OCEAN STEAM NAVIGATION COMPANY

New York-Southampton-Bremen

U.S.M.S. Washington 4th Outbound Voyage of the Ocean Line

RETALIATORY RATE PERIOD



PAID 24

February 19, 1848. Letter datelined at New York, posted at that port and paid at the in-port U.S. Packet Letter rate of 24¢, shown by the red handstamp, also shown in pencil.

February 21. The Ocean Line planned departure date from New York had been adjusted to the 20th of each month. However, Washington's departure was delayed one day on this trip by fog and a strong east wind.

March 7. Washington arrived at Southampton.

March 8. Letter in transit at London, backstamp. This letter was rated in England as a Packet Letter at one shilling (24¢), even though it had been transported by an American Packet. At this time the U.S. was also charging incoming and outgoing letters by British Packets at 24¢ per ½-oz. plus inland postage under the Retaliatory Rate Act.

March 8. Same day arrival backstamp at Sheffield.

AW
8 MR 8
1848

SHEFFIELD
8 MR 8
1848

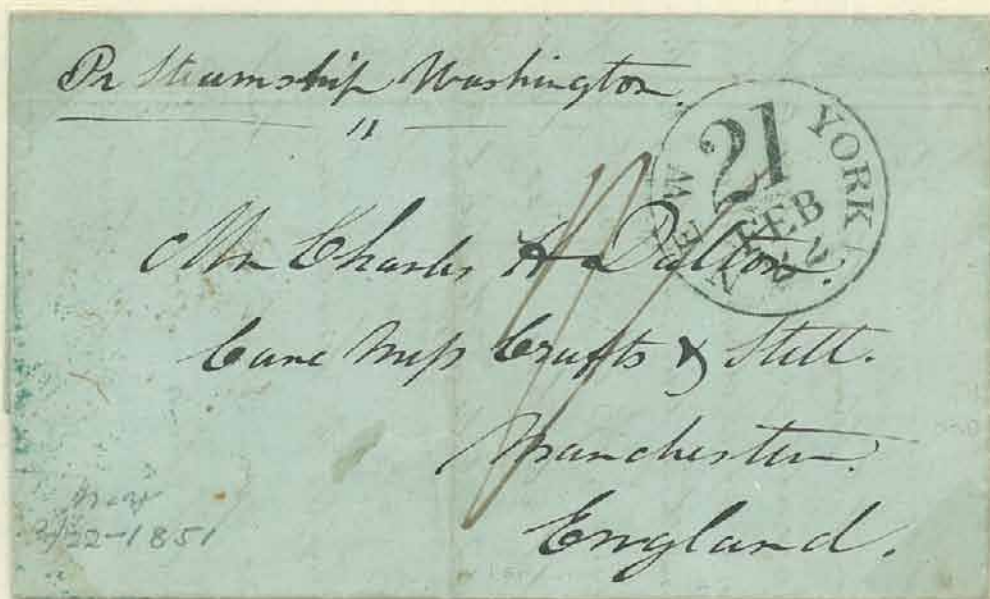
1851

TRANSATLANTIC SHIPPING LINES
— ÷ —
THE OCEAN STEAM NAVIGATION COMPANY
New York - Southampton - Bremen
1847 - 1857

S. S. Washington

1,750 ton steamer in service 1847-57. This ship, on her maiden voyage of June 1, 1847, was the first American Packet to deliver mail to England where it was refused as being paid, thus touching off the "Retaliatory Rate" situation whereby the transatlantic rate had to be paid at both ends. In 1848 a treaty was signed.

This line had one other ship, the Hermann.



February 22, 1851. Washington's birthday! Letter posted unpaid at New York. Trans-atlantic rate of 24¢ (1 shilling) was made up 5¢ U.S. Domestic + 16¢ trans-atlantic + 3¢ British Inland. Exchange office debits British for 16¢ trans-atlantic (U.S. packet) + 5¢ U.S. Domestic or 21¢. British kept their 3¢ Inland.

March 11, 1851. London transit backstamp. 1 shilling (24¢) due from recipient.

March 11. Manchester receipt backstamp.

1854

THE OCEAN STEAM NAVIGATION COMPANY

New York - Southampton - Bremen

S.S. Washington



PAID
24

May 18, 1854. This letter was paid in cash at Skaneateles, New York at 24¢, the U.S. - British Treaty transatlantic rate. This payment is shown by the uncommon blue PAID/24.

May 20. The U.S.M.S. Washington, Capt. Lines, sailed this date from New York City for Bremen via Southampton from the docks of C.H. Sands.

3

Letter was marked with a 3(¢) credit to Britain for British Inland Postage out of the 24¢ prepaid at Skaneateles. U.S. retained 5¢ U.S. Inland + 16¢ Sea (American Packet) = 21¢.



June 2. Transit at London. The N.Y. Times noted: The U.S. Mail steamer Washington arrived off Cowes on Friday morning (June 2) and proceeded to destination.



June 4. Arrival backstamp at Wells, Somerset, England.

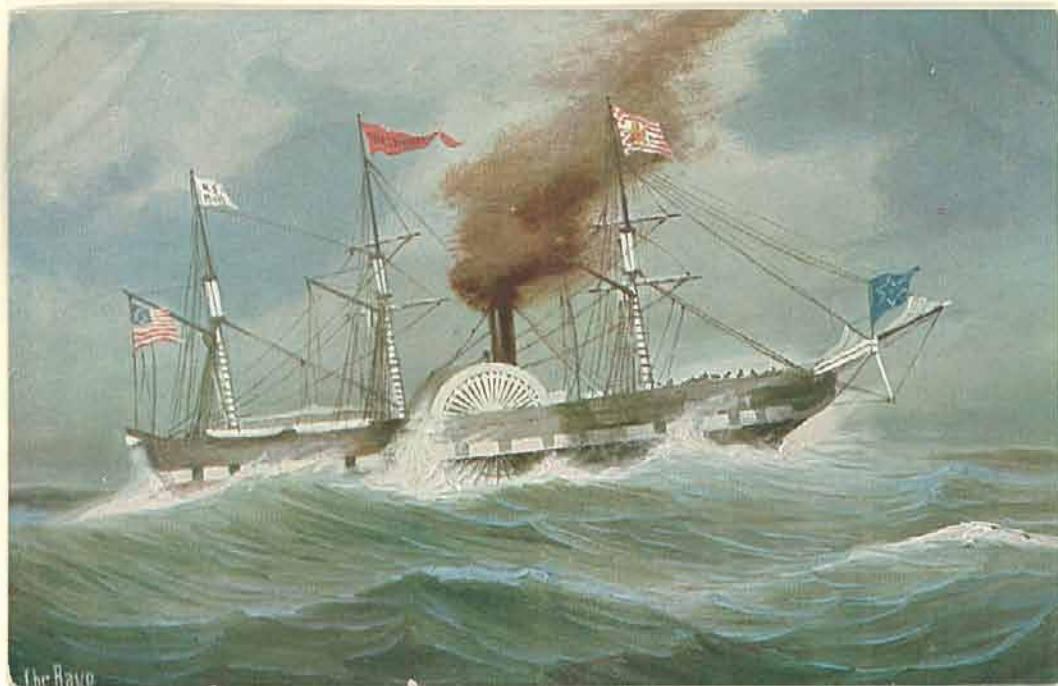
1854

THE OCEAN STEAM NAVIGATION COMPANY

S.S. Washington

August 11, 1854. S.S. Washington of the Ocean Line departed from Bremen, touched at Southampton the 16th, where this letter went aboard. It had been posted at London and endorsed: per Washington @ Southampton. U.S. was debited for 3¢ British Inland.

August 31. Washington arrived at N.Y. 24¢ due for U.S.-British Treaty of 1848 rate. U.S. retained 16¢ Sea (American Packet) + 5¢ U.S. Inland = 21¢.



1854

THE OCEAN STEAM NAVIGATION COMPANY

New York - Southampton - Bremen

S.S. Washington

1847 - 1857



10

August 10, 1854. Unpaid letter posted at the Bremen Post Office (ST. P.A. = Stadt Post Amt or State Post Office). The S.S. Washington, Capt. Lines, departed Bremen Aug. 11, touched at Southampton Aug. 16. Letter was subject to the Bremen direct rate of 10¢ per ½-oz., effective August 1853.



August 31. Arrival mark at New York with the scarce "U.S. PKT." circular date stamp. N.Y. Times notes the arrival of the Washington on Aug. 31 with merchandise and passengers to C.H. Sand, and excerpts from her log, "Passed the Needles at 5 P.M. From the Channel to the Banks experienced strong Westerly gales and rough wintry weather. Aug. 12 in the Downs, passed ship American Eagle from New York for London; 12th off Cowes passed ship Didso of Bath, bound in."

1855

THE OCEAN STEAM NAVIGATION COMPANY

New York-Southampton-Bremen

S.S. Washington



Nov. 20, 1855. Letter posted at Cairo, Georgia by postmaster R.D. McElveen, who marked it "Free". This had no bearing as the letter was handled as a normal unpaid transatlantic letter to the U.K.

Free
R.D. McElveen J.M.
Cairo Ga



Dec. 1. Letter transit at the N.Y. Exchange Office where it was marked with a debit to Britain of 16¢ Sea (American Packet) + 5¢ U.S. Inland = 21¢. S.S. Washington of the Ocean Line departed from N.Y. this date.

Dec. 17. Washington arrived at Southampton, London transit backstamp Dec. 18.

Dec. 19. Dublin, Ireland arrival backstamp.



N.B.: After leaving Southampton on Dec. 17, the S.S. Washington could not get into Bremerhaven on account of the ice. Her mails and passengers were transhipped to a tug and she put back to Southampton. On the way in thick weather, her pilot ran aground on the Long Sands, got off after 7½ hours without damage, after which she was in collision with a sailing ship, breaking a paddle-wheel and doing considerable damage to the after part of the ship. She arrived at Southampton on Dec. 24, was docked, caulked, recoppered, and generally repaired (N.Y. Tribune, January 1856.)



1856

TRANSATLANTIC MAIL
THE OCEAN STEAM NAVIGATION COMPANY

S. S. Washington

N.Y. to Bremen via Southampton



August 8, 1856. A single letter prepaid at New York at 21¢ in cash, the rate of February 1853, which required prepayment in the U.S. of this amount of letters to France by American Packet open mail (16¢ sea + 5¢ U.S. Inland.) British Packet open mail prepayment was 5¢.

August 9. S.S. Washington of the Ocean Line departed for Southampton. She arrived at Southampton August 23 and at Bremen Aug. 25.

August 24. Letter in transit through Britain, entered into France at Calais, noted A. CALAIS (Ambulant-RR-at Calais.) Arrival backstamp at Paris.

Letter was subject to the 16 decimes (32¢) French rate. Charge in U.S. was per 1/4-oz., collect in France was per 1/4-oz. (7 1/2 grams.) Here letter weighed over 1/4-oz., but not over 1/2-oz., thus subject to double charge of 8 decimes x 2 = 16 decimes.



16

1856

THE OCEAN STEAM NAVIGATION COMPANY
S. S. Washington Bremen to U.S. via Southampton



21
CENTS

September 9, 1856. A paid letter posted at Manchester, England at the 1 shilling (24¢) U.S.-British Treaty of 1848 rate per ½-oz. The shilling is shown by the 1/- mark in manuscript. Letter endorsed: pr Washington via Southampton. British Exchange Office credited U.S. with 16¢ Sea (American Packet) + 5¢ U.S. Inland = 21¢.

September 10. PAID transit mark at London. The S.S. Washington of the Ocean Company had departed from Bremen Sept. 6 and picked up the English mails at Southampton on Sept. 10.



Sept. 24. Washington arrived at New York. Transatlantic rate of 24¢.

W. 31

1849

TRANSATLANTIC SHIPPING LINES
— † —
THE OCEAN STEAM NAVIGATION COMPANY
New York - Southampton - Bremen
1847 - 1857

S.S. Hermann

1850 ton steamer in service 1848-57. This line operated with two vessels under U.S. Government subsidy until 1857 when the U.S. Mail subsidy was suddenly withdrawn; whereupon the Ocean Steam Navigation Company closed down and the Hermann and the Washington were sold.



24



March 25, 1849. Letter put into mail at Havre, "Port Payee", i.e. paid to the port or at Southampton, the terminus of the Ocean Steam Navigation Company and endorsed, "p. Steamer Hermann from Southampton".

*Rate corrected to 24c
185 under the treaty*

April 14, 1849. Letter stamped incoming at New York as a Ship Letter. "24" is the trans-Atlantic rate via England. As letter had to go N.Y. to Portland, 325 miles, it was subject to the "over 300 miles" rate of 10c + 24c trans-Atlantic = 34c due.

1852

THE OCEAN STEAM NAVIGATION COMPANY
New York - Southampton - Bremen

S. S. Hermann



July 21, 1852. Unpaid letter posted at the old Lombard Street post office, London. Red backstamp. Letter endorsed: per "Hermann via Southampton.

S.S. Hermann departed from Bremen on July 16, touching at Southampton July 21 for the U.S. bound mails.

24
3
CENTS

August 3. Hermann arrived at New York. Letter was rated 24¢ due, the U.S.-British Treaty rate of 1848. The Exchange Office debited U.S. for 3¢ British Inland. U.S. retained 16¢ Sea (American Packet) + 5¢ U.S. Inland = 21¢.

1853

THE OCEAN STEAM NAVIGATION COMPANY

New York-Southampton-Bremen

S.S. Hermann

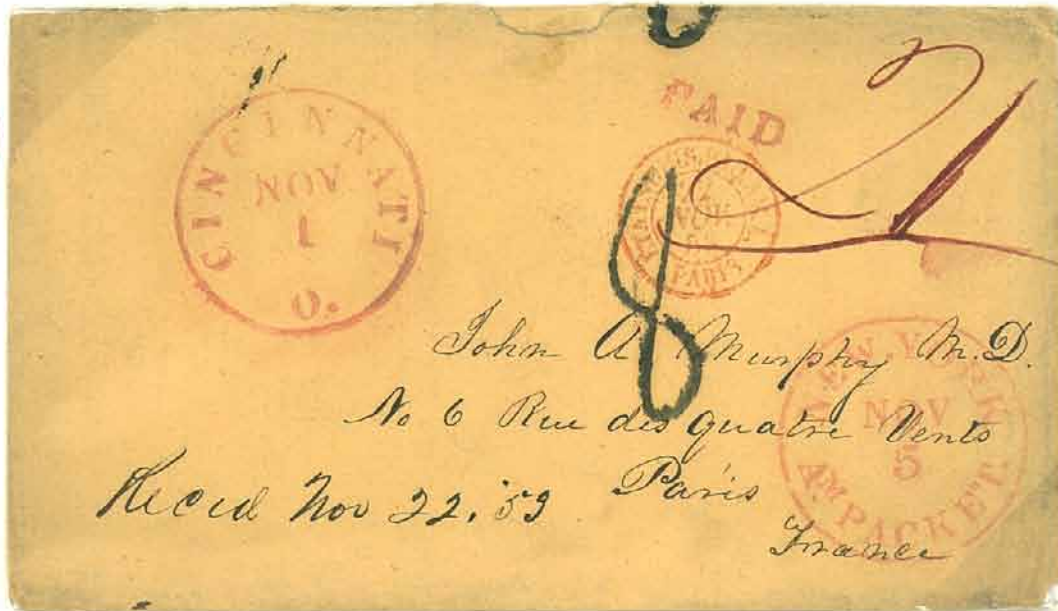
Rates to France via England, 1851 French Decree.

American Packet letters to France were rated, as follows:

U.S. Inland (U.S.-British Treaty)	5¢
Sea Postage	<u>16¢</u>
Prepaid in the U.S. per ½-oz.	21¢
Transit postage (¼ of 1 shilling)	3 decimes
French Inland postage	<u>5 decimes</u>
Collect in France per 7½ grams (¼-oz.)	8 decimes (equiv. to 16¢).



PAID



Nov. 1, 1853. Letter (per U.S. scale) under ½-oz., paid in cash at 21¢ in Cincinnati, Ohio.

November 5. Exchange Office marking at New York. S.S. Hermann of the Ocean Line sailed this date from New York for Bremen via Southampton.

November 19. Hermann arrived at Southampton. She went on to arrive at Bremen Nov. 23.

November 22. French entry mark, U.S. mail, American Packet, Ambulant (R.R.) Calais.

November 22. Paris arrival backstamp. 8 decimes due (see above.)



1855

TRANSATLANTIC MAIL

THE OCEAN STEAM NAVIGATION COMPANY

New York-Southampton-Bremen

S. S. Hermann

American Packet

Rates to France via England, 1851 French Decree

American Packet letters to France were rated, as follows:

U.S. Inland (U.S.-British Treaty)		5¢
Sea postage		<u>16¢</u>
Prepaid in the United States		21¢
Transit postage ($\frac{1}{4}$ of 1/-)	3 decimes =	6¢
French Inland postage	$\frac{5}{8}$ "	= <u>10¢</u>
Collect in France	8 "	<u>16¢</u>
Total Postage		<u>37¢.</u>

W



Jan. 27, 1855.
Letter endorsed
"p Hermann", and
prepaid 21¢ in
cash as noted in
pencil. S. S.
Hermann, Higgins

master, sailed Jan. 27 from N.Y. for Bremen via Southampton.



Feb. 15. Ambulant (T.P.O.)
mark at Calais showing U.S.
(Etats Unis) mail, American
Packet, Brigade A handling the mail.



Feb. 16. Paris arrival
backstamp. 8 decimes (16¢)
collected in France (see rate
structure above).

1855

THE OCEAN STEAM NAVIGATION COMPANY
New York - Southampton - Bremen
1847 - 1857

S. S. Hermann



June 17, 1855. Unpaid letter put into the mail at the Pitt Street Office, Edinburgh. The red circular mark has the "S" for Sunday. June 17th was a Sunday. M = morning.

PITTSTREET



June 18. Transit backstamps at Liverpool. During 1855 the Cunard Line did not run to New York as many of her steamers had been taken by the British Government for troopships for the Crimean War. As the next British Packet to sail after the 18th was not until the June 23 sailing of the R.M.S. America from L'pool to Boston, this letter was forwarded on to Southampton to meet the steam-ship Hermann, Capt. Higgins, from Bremen June 20.



3
CENTS

July 5. Recorded arrival date of the Hermann at New York. 3¢ debit to U.S. for British Inland. U.S. collected the 24¢ transatlantic rate which carried the letter all the way to Palestine, Texas. Transatlantic covers to Texas are scarce.

1855

CHARLESTON, S.C. TO BRITAIN VIA NEW YORK

Spofford, Tileston & Co., S.S. Southerner, Charleston to N.Y.

OCEAN LINE, U.S.M.S. Hermann, N.Y. to Southampton

July 11, 1855. A letter paid in cash at Charleston at the 24¢ U.S.-British Treaty of 1848 rate.

N.Y. Shipping & Commercial List: Cleared Charleston July 11, steamer Southerner, Ewan for New York.

Ibid.: July 18. Arrived at N.Y. July 14, steamer Southerner, Ewan from Charleston.

July 16. The S.S. Hermann of the Ocean Line departed from N.Y. for Bremen via Southampton. The New York

Exchange Office credited Britain for 3¢ British Inland. U. S. retained 16¢ Sea (American Packet) + 5¢ U.S. Inland = 21¢.



July 30. Hermann arrived at Southampton, and letter transited at London same day, PAID.

July 31. Liverpool arrival mark. Letter went to the offices of Brown, Shipley & Co. who acted as forwarding agents. They deleted their address and forwarded the letter care of another forwarder at Paris, Greene & Co.

July 31. Brown, Shipley & Co. paid the Jan. 1, 1855, Anglo-French Convention rate of 4d. per 1/4-oz. prepaid to France, shown in red manuscript. Liverpool receiving backstamp in blue.



August 1. Letter in transit at London where the Foreign Office struck the red PD mark.

August 1. French entry mark at Calais, Ambulant (T.P.O.) showing mail entering from England (Angleterre).

August 2. Letter arrived at Paris. Messrs. Greene & Co. acted as poste restante for Mrs. R.F.W. Allston.



1856

THE OCEAN STEAM NAVIGATION COMPANY
New York - Southampton - Bremen

U. S. M. S. Hermann



May 14, 1856. An unpaid letter posted at Bath, Maine. The post office at Bath noted the U.S.-British Treaty of 1848 rate of 24¢ per ½-oz. was due. The letter is endorsed to "Ship Rockaway" an 815 ton ship built in 1848 at Bath. It is addressed to her Capt. Sam'l R. Goodwin, care of a poste restante agent at Liverpool. Letter was in the bulk mail to New York.



May 17. S.S. Hermann of the Ocean Line departed from New York for Bremen via Southampton. The N.Y. Exchange Office debited Britain for 16¢ Sea (American Packet) + 5¢ U.S. INland = 21¢, shown in the transit mark.

May 31. Hermann arrived at Southampton. Letter was in transit at London on June 1, backstamp.



June 2. Arrival postmark at Liverpool is the dotted unpaid date stamp, seldom seen in blue. The recipient was charged at one shilling (1/- in manuscript), equivalent to 24¢ U.S. Britain retained 3¢ British Inland after remitting 21¢ to the U.S. under the Treaty.

1856

THE OCEAN STEAM NAVIGATION COMPANY
New York - Southampton - Bremen

S. S. Hermann

American Packet

Rates to France via England, 1851 French Decree.

American Packet letters to France were rated as follows:

U.S. Inland (U.S.-British Treaty)	5c
Sea Postage	<u>16c</u>
Prepaid in the U.S. per 1/2-oz.	21c.

Transit postage (1/4 of 1 shilling)	3 decimes
French Inland postage	<u>5 decimes</u>
Per 1/2-oz.	8 dec. x 2 = 16 dec. (32c equiv.)



May 17, 1856. Letter endorsed: p. Hermann St., and prepaid 21c in cash per manuscript notation. S.S. Hermann departed from New York May 17 for Bremen via Southampton.

May 31. Hermann arrived at Southampton. Mail to France routed via the Dover-Calais ferry. French entry mark June 2 notes U.S. mail (Etats Unis) entering Ambulant (R.R.) at Calais.

June 3. Paris arrival backstamp. Double rated letter (1/2 to 1/2-oz.) at 8 decimes x 2 = 16 decimes due, shown by handstamp.



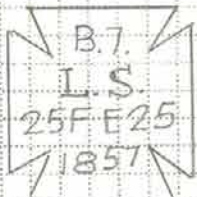
1857

THE OCEAN STEAM NAVIGATION COMPANY
New York - Southampton - Bremen

S.S. Hermann

The Hermann left Southampton Nov. 26, 1856, on her Westbound voyage, but had to return on Dec. 14 with a broken center shaft, side lever carried away, and port engine damaged from severe weather sustained about 1,000 miles out from Southampton. Her mails were transferred to Fulton of the N.Y. & Havre Line.

Constitution of the Compagnie Transatlantique Belge was chartered by Ocean Line to carry the Eastbound mails on Jan. 24, 1857, from New York. Hermann was finally repaired and went to Bremen in time to take the mails of Feb. 21 and picked up the U.S. mails at Southampton Feb. 25 (this voyage with cover below aboard.)



Feb. 25, 1857. Letter posted unpaid at the old Lombard Street post office, London. Endorsed: Hermann from Southampton, the letter was put aboard Hermann there the same day (see above.)

24

March 12. Hermann arrived at New York. 24¢ due, the U.S.-British Treaty rate of 1848. U.S. debited for 3¢ British Inland. U.S. retained 16¢ Sea (American Packet) + 5¢ U.S. Inland = 21¢.

3 CENTS

1850

BERLIN TO U.S. VIA BRITISH OPEN MAIL
OCEAN STEAM NAVIGATION CO. S.S. Washington



18 1/2
L6



June 17, 1850. A letter paid by the Anglo-Prussian Postal Treaty which covered carriage to the U.S. port of entry. Rate in lower left in red is $18\frac{1}{2}$ silbergroschen. Weight of the letter, also shown in red at upper left, was $\frac{1}{2}$ loth, a single letter weight.

June 20. Transit postmark at London where the Exchange Office credited U.S. with 16¢ Sea Postage as the transatlantic passage was to be by an American packet. The S.S. Washington of the Ocean Line departed from Bremen June 15, picked up this letter with the American mails at Southampton June 20.

July 4. Washington arrived at New York. The letter was there subject to 5¢ U.S. internal postage, all other charges having been paid at Berlin. The 5¢ covered delivery at Raleigh, North Carolina.

1855

THE OCEAN STEAM NAVIGATION COMPANY

Bremen - Southampton - New York

S. S. Washington

July 17, 1855. An unpaid letter posted at London by Baring Brothers & Co. to George Skolfield, Brunswick, Maine informing him that they have credited his account by £449.14.6, part of a remittance from Newport by Capt. A. Sawyer of the "Scioto." Letter is endorsed: p "Washington."

LS
17JY17
1855

3
CENTS



July 17. Receiving postmark of the old Lombard Street post office, London. The U.S. was debited with 3¢ British Inland, shown by the blurred "3 CENTS". The U.S. Mail Steamer Washington had departed from Bremen July 13, and touched at Southampton the 18th where this letter went aboard.

August 2. Washington arrived at New York. Letter was subject to the 24¢ per ½-oz. U.S.-British Treaty of 1848 rate. U.S. retained 16¢ Sea (American Packet) + 5¢ U.S. Inland = 21¢.



1856

THE OCEAN STEAM NAVIGATION COMPANY
New York - Southampton - Bremen

S. S. Hermann



September 6, 1856. A letter to Bremen paid in cash at New York at the 10¢ rate effective August 1853 to January 1868. Payment is shown by the blue crayon "10". As this letter was to go to Bremen by an American Packet, Bremen was credited only one cent, shown in the Exchange Office mark (W. 161). U.S. retained 6¢ for American Packet and 3¢ U.S. Inland postage. Letter is endorsed: pr. Str. Herman (sic).

September 6. U.S.M.S. Hermann of the Ocean Line departed from New York for Bremen. She touched at Southampton on September 19.

September 21. Hermann arrived at Bremen where this letter was delivered without further postal markings.

N.B.: R.F. Winter records only 12 strikes of W.161, including this one. The reason this mark is seldom seen is that most letters paid under the 10¢ rate went by Bremen Packets in which case Bremen was credited with 7¢, the U.S. retaining only her 3¢ domestic postage.

1861

ATLANTIC STEAM NAVIGATION CO.

"The Galway Line"

S.S. Adriatic

In March 1861, Adriatic (formerly of the Collins Line) was purchased by the Company. She sailed from New York on March 13 for Queenstown and Cowes carrying the mails and passengers intended for the Cunard Line steamer Australasian, who had turned back to Queenstown on her February 16 voyage to New York following a break down. The Adriatic reached Queenstown on March 23 where her mails were landed, and Cowes on March 24. After arriving at Cowes early on the 24th, she proceeded immediately to Southampton where she was docked and surveyed in preparation for being placed in service as a regular Galway Line steamer. Her eastbound mails on the March 13 departure from New York were handled as "British Packet" mails.



March 13, 1861. An unpaid letter endorsed "p. Adriatic" posted at New York to Copenhagen, Denmark. It was to go by Prussian Closed Mail through Germany. The only charges the U.S. could put on the letter was a debit to Prussia of 5¢ U.S. Inland + 18¢ Sea and British transit, total 23¢, shown at the top of the New York Exchange Office transit mark. All other charges would be settled between Germany and Denmark.

March 13. S.S. Adriatic of the Galway Line departed from New York on her first voyage for the Company after being purchased. She carried the R.M.S. Australasian's mail to Queenstown.

1861

ATLANTIC STEAM NAVIGATION CO.

"The Galway Line"

S.S. Adriatic

March 23. Adriatic arrived at Queenstown.



March 23. Adriatic arrived at Queenstown.

March 27. Letter in transit through Hamburg, oval transit backstamp. The transit charges beyond the German-Austrian Postal Union were settled between the Danes and Hamburg. Denmark was debited with 13 silbergroschen (13 s.g. x 2.4¢/s.g. = 31¢ U.S.)

March 27. Letter was handled by the Royal Danish Post Office in Hamburg, as shown by the backstamp: K.D.O.P.A. = KONIGLICHE DANISH OBER POST-AMT.



64

March 28. Letter went by Danish steamer to Copenhagen, backstamp. The letter was charged at 64 rigsbank skillinge. Thus, at the conversion rate of 64 sk. x .57¢/sk. = 36¢ U.S. The Danish recipient paid all the charges from New York to Copenhagen. This agrees with the U.S. prepaid rate to Denmark by Prussian Closed Mail of 35¢ per ½-oz., effective July 1855.

N.B.: The U.S. equivalents in foreign currencies are given for comparison purposes only. On unpaid letters the U.S. had no interest beyond Hamburg.

1864

NATIONAL STEAM NAVIGATION COMPANY LIMITED
Liverpool-Queenstown-New York

S. S. Louisiana

First Voyage for National Line

This company was founded in Liverpool late in 1863. The firm of Guion & Co. had acted as passenger brokers for Fernie Brothers during the few months in 1863 that their Liverpool-New York service was in existence, and before it was superceded by that of the National Line. They were glad to perform a similar service for the National Line due to the discontinuance of the Liverpool-New York sailing packets because of the Civil War.

The three steamers acquired by the Company were the 2266 ton Louisiana (built in 1858 as the Norddeutscher Lloyd Hudson), the 2876 ton Virginia and the 2872 ton Carolina. The first two had been running on the Liverpool-N.Y. route for Fernie Brothers, but Carolina was not launched until Oct. 27, 1863, renamed Pennsylvania.

The Company's first voyage was undertaken by the Virginia which departed Liverpool Feb. 2, 1864. The Louisiana followed two days later. The Company had no mail contracts, so letters were handled as Ship Letters.

Jan. 5, 1864.

Letter dated at Liverpool when a cargo of 10½ cases of essence of bergamont (a fragrant essential oil extracted from the rind of the bergamont fruit) was consigned to the Louisiana. Noted on letter face: Consignees pr "Louisiana."



Feb. 4.

Louisiana departed from Liverpool on her first voyage for National Line.

N.Y. Times. Arrived New York Feb. 23, steamship Louisiana (Br.,) Smellie, Queenstown Feb. 5, with mdse. and pass. to Williams & Guion.

Ship Letter rate effective July 1, 1863, addressed to port of arrival at double the 2c local rate or 4c as shown at the base of the entry mark.



1870

NATIONAL STEAMSHIP COMPANY LTD.

S.S. Holland

Depreciated Currency



August 8, 1870. Letter datelined at Naples and addressed to Boston (Amerique Settentrionale = North America). As the Franco-Prussian War was in full swing, the mail was diverted through northern Europe rather than the normal Marseilles-Paris route. August 9 transit backstamp at Torino in the Italian Alps. Mail was closed to New York.

August 11. Steam-ship Holland (Br.,) Thomas, departed from Liverpool August 10 via Queenstown 11th where U.S. via London went aboard.

August 23. Holland arrived at New York. The closed mail rate from Italy was 14¢ per 1/2-oz., effective July 1870. The international settlement in gold was converted by the N.Y. Exchange Office to the equivalent in greenbacks (U.S. NOTES) at 17¢.



1877

TRANSATLANTIC SHIPPING LINES
NATIONAL LINE

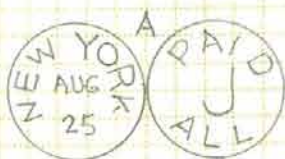
National Steamship Company Limited (1867)
1864 - 1914

S.S. Egypt

4670 tons, 443 ft. x 44 ft. beam. Liverpool Shipbuilding Co., L'pool; J. Jack, Rollo & Co., Liverpool, engines. Launched Feb. 9, 1871, maiden voyage Nov. 10, 1871, Liverpool-Queenstown-New York. On charter to Inman 1883, 1889. July 19, 1890, destroyed by fire at sea en route N.Y. to Liverpool.

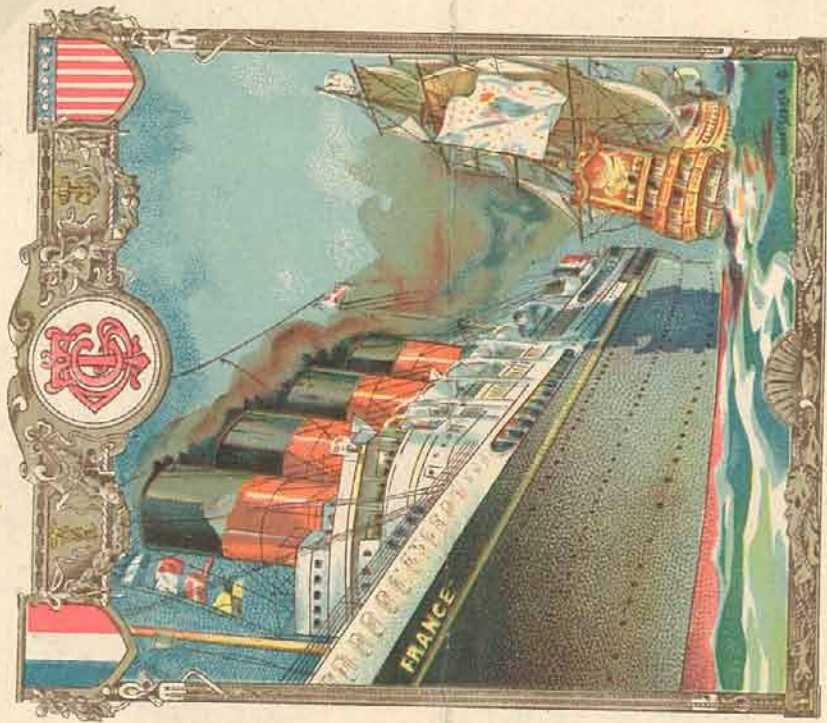


August 13-14, 1877. Letter at the Port of Le Havre, U.P.U. rating. Transit backstamp at Paris Foreign (Etranger) Office. S.S. Egypt, Capt. Grogan, left Liverpool Aug. 15, touched at Queenstown the 16th.

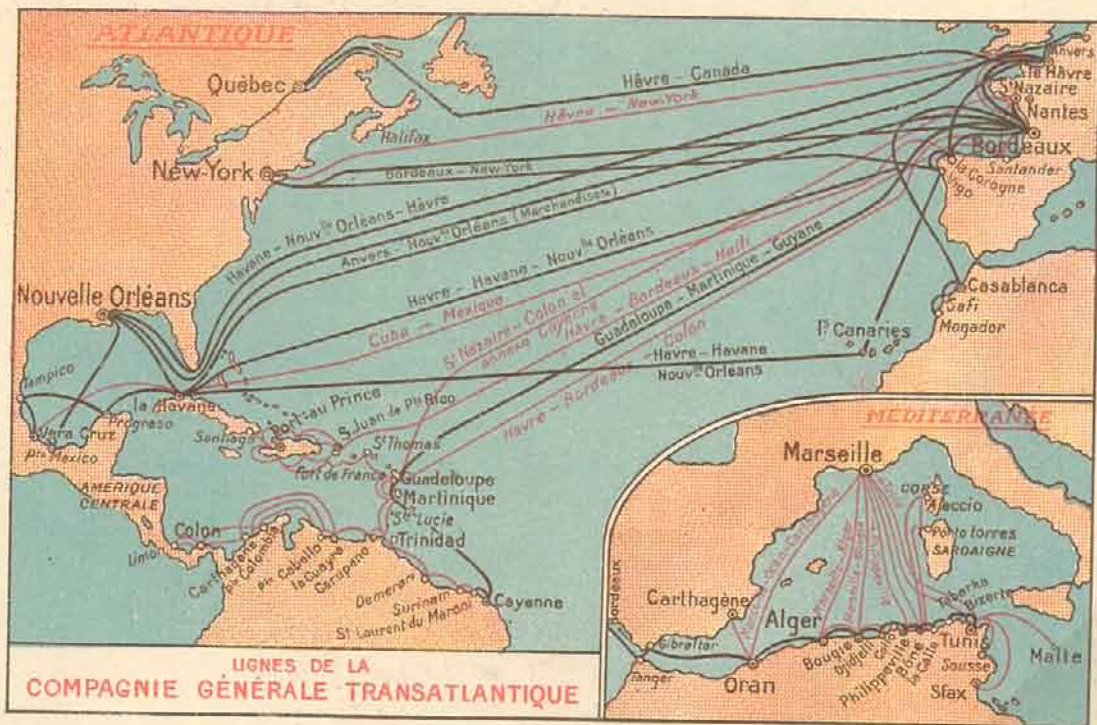


Aug. 25. New York "PAID ALL" backstamp agrees with the recorded arrival date of the Egypt at N.Y.

Another Aug. 25 arrival was the City of Richmond, Leich, from L'pool Aug. 16 and Queenstown Aug. 17.

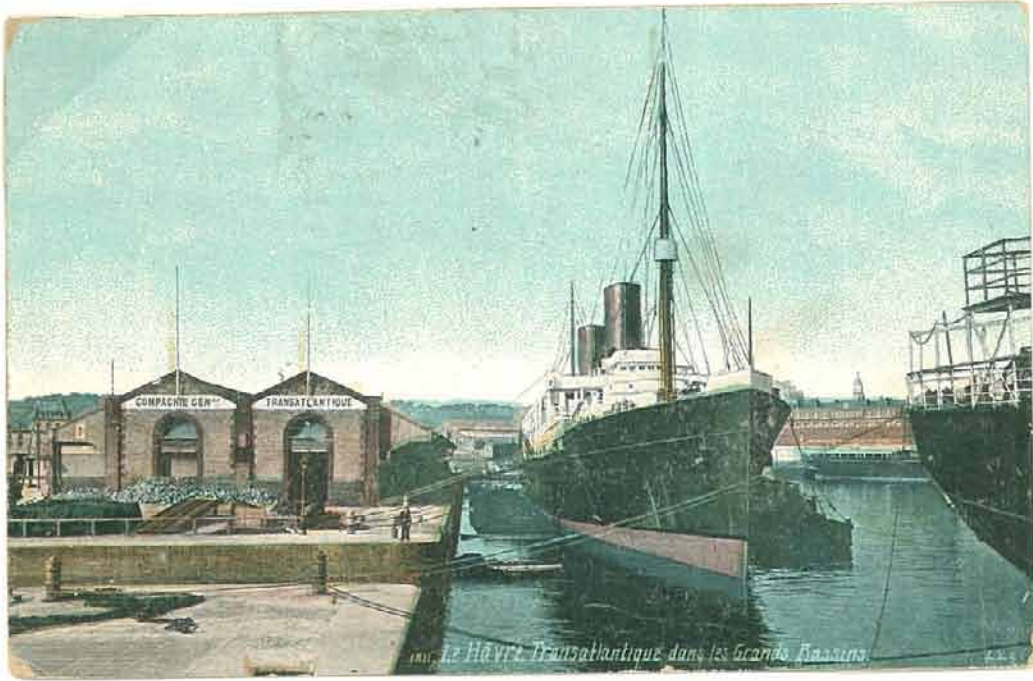


COMPAGNIE GÉNÉRALE
TRANSATLANTIQUE



1912

LA COMPAGNIE GENERAL TRANSATLANTIQUE
Le Havre - The Grand Basin



A post card showing a steamship of the French Line tied up in the "Grands Bassins" at Havre. The dock buildings of La Compagnie General Transatlantique are clearly shown.

1866

LA COMPAGNIE GÉNÉRAL TRANSATLANTIQUE
THE FRENCH LINE - LIGNE H

Paquebot Lafayette



June 23, 1866. Letter posted unpaid at New Orleans at the French Decree rate of April 1, 1857, at 15¢ per ½-oz. Letter went overland to New York.



June 30. Letter in transit at the New York Exchange Office. In the case of direct mail to Havre, the 15¢ rate was apportioned: 3¢ U.S. Inland, 9¢ Sea, 3¢ French Inland. Here the N.Y. Exchange Office debited France with 3¢ U.S. Inland. France would retain 9¢ Sea (French Packet) + 3¢ French Inland = 12¢.



The French Line Lafayette departed from New York June 30 for Havre via Brest. The octagonal receipt mark was struck aboard the Lafayette which was designated French paquebot No. 3, Ligne H on this passage.

July 14. Lafayette arrived at Havre via Brest on the 12th. Letter subject to 8 decimes collect, equivalent to 15¢ U.S.

8

1866

LA COMPAGNIE GÉNÉRAL TRANSATLANTIQUE

THE FRENCH LINE-LIGNE H

Paquebot Napoleon III

New York to Havre



15

NEW YORK
3 SEP 8

NEW YORK
3 SEP 1866

8

September 2, 1866. An unpaid letter posted at New Orleans. Rated at 15¢ per ½-oz., the April 1, 1857 U.S. - French Treaty rate. Letter, endorsed "first steamer", went overland to New York.

September 8. Letter transit at New York, it was forwarded by the French Line S.S. Napoleon III. The 15¢ rate was divided: 3¢ U.S. Inland, 6¢ Sea, 2¢ British Transit, 4¢ French Inland. N.Y. Exchange Office debited France for the 3¢ U.S. Inland.

September 8. The Ligne H paquebot Napoleon III departed from New York for Havre via Brest. She was noted PAQ. FR. H No. 4 on this voyage (Cf: Salles.)

September 21. Napoleon III arrived at Brest Sept. 20, Havre 21st. 8 decimes, equivalent to 15¢ U.S. now due.

1866

TRANSATLANTIC MAIL
LA COMPAGNIE GÉNÉRAL TRANSATLANTIQUE
— — — — —
THE FRENCH LINE - LIGNE H

Paquebot Ville de Paris

New York-Havre



June 15, 1866. Double rated letter at 15¢ x 2 = 30¢ paid by three copies of the 10¢ Issue of 1861. Of the single 1-oz. rate of 15¢, 3¢ was for U.S. Inland postage and 12¢ for French Line transatlantic carriage and French Inland. Here the Boston Exchange Office credited France with 12¢ x 2 = 24¢ shown at the base of the BOSTON/PAID mark. This mark is not listed by Blake, although similar ones are noted with different numbers at the base.



June 16. S.S. Ville de Paris departed this date from New York and the octagonal paquebot mark was struck aboard her. Ville de Paris was designated No. 1 on this voyage.



Ligne H as such had started the Havre to New York sailings with the departure of the S.S. Washington from Havre March 15, 1866.

S.1713/1

June 27. Ville de Paris arrived at Havre this date and mail backstamped at Paris the same day.



Poste Restante = General Delivery.

1866

LA COMPAGNIE GENERAL TRANSATLANTIQUE
THE FRENCH LINE-LIGNE H
Paquebot Lafayette



June 23, 1866. New Orleans Price-Current posted by Adolphe Odin (faint blue oval on face). It was paid at the 15¢ per ¼-oz. rate of April 1, 1857, by the 12¢ and 3¢ Issue of 1861.

June 30. Letter transit at the New York Exchange Office, who credited France with 6¢ French inland plus 6¢ Sea postage (French Packet.) The U.S. retained only 3¢ U.S. inland.

The octagonal French paquebot mark was struck aboard the Lafayette at New York. She was here designated PAQ. FR. (Ligne) H. No. 3. The Lafayette sailed from New York on June 30.

July 12. Lafayette touched at Brest July 12 and arrived at Havre July 12.

July 13. Paris arrival backstamp.



1866

LA COMPAGNIE GENERAL TRANSATLANTIQUE
THE FRENCH LINE - LIGNE H

Paquebot St. Laurent

Maiden Return Voyage



November 2, 1866. Dated company backstamp of Moses Taylor & Co. who endorsed the cover: City of London.

November 3. An unpaid letter posted at New York. Although endorsed to the City of London, Inman Line, which sailed from New York for Queens-town on Nov. 3, the N.Y. Exchange Office ignored this endorsement in favor of the more direct routing by the French Line to Brest and Havre.



This letter took a double rate per the April 1, 1857, U.S. - French Treaty. Rate per ½-oz. was 15¢, divided: 3¢ U.S. inland, 6¢ Sea, 6¢ French transit. This double rate letter, 15¢ x 2 = 30¢, shows a debit to France of 3¢ U.S. inland x 2 = 6¢. The paquebot St. Laurent sailed from New York on this date on her maiden return voyage. She was designated French Packet, Ligne H, No. 4, on this voyage. The red octagonal mark was struck aboard the St. Laurent at New York.

November 12-13. St. Laurent arrived at Brest on the 12th and sailed for Havre on the 13th. She arrived at the latter port on the 14th. Docket notes letter received at Paris on the 14th. French marked the letter at 16 decimes due, equivalent to 30¢ U.S.

1867

TRANSATLANTIC SHIPPING LINES
LA COMPAGNIE GÉNÉRALE TRANSATLANTIQUE
THE FRENCH LINE - LIGNE H

Paquebot Ville de Paris

New York-Havre

3014 tons, 345 ft. x 43 ft. beam. Iron screw steamer launched Dec. 1865 at R. Napier & Sons, Glasgow. Maiden Voyage may 24, 1866, Havre-Brest-New York. Made 66 voyages to New York between 1866 and 1878.

Postal Bulletin No. 133 of September 1866 confirmed the introduction of a certain number of new lines including that of the Havre to New York, already in existence since 1864, but now designated as "Ligne H".



Jan. 26, 1867.
Letter prepaid at the 15¢ rate. The Paquebot Ville de Paris sailed from NY on Jan. 26 for Havre. C.d.s. notes 12¢ debit to U.S.

leaving her with 3¢ U.S. Inland. Balance went for sea and French Inland. Originally directed "per Persia" (Cunard), but this steamer had already sailed from N.Y. on Jan. 23.



Jan. 26. Marked aboard Ville de Paris on sailing day. She was designated as Ligne H, No. 1. Salles 1713.

Feb. 5, 1867. The Ville de Paris arrived at Havre Feb. 6. Backstamp at Paris has date error.

1867

LA COMPAGNIE GENERAL TRANSATLANTIQUE
THE FRENCH LINE - LIGNE H

Paquebot Europe Machinery damage off Newfoundland



September 19, 1867. A letter posted at St. Louis, Missouri and paid at double the U.S.-French convention of 1857 rate (15¢ x 2) for a letter over 7½ grams, but not over 15 grams (½-oz.). Payment is by the 30¢ Issue of 1861.



September 21. Transit at the New York Exchange Office. France was credited for 12¢ Sea (French Packet) and French Inland x 2 (double letter) = 24¢, shown in the N.Y. handstamp. Letter was transferred to the French Line paquebot Europe, designated No. 3 on this voyage.

Europe, eastbound, broke the drive shaft to one of her paddle wheels off Newfoundland and continued the voyage to Brest under sail and the remaining paddle, escorted by the French Line steamer Tampico only to Brest. Partial repairs made at Brest on October 7, she arrived at Havre October 13.



October 7. Europe arrived at Brest. Mail by rail to Paris, Paris arrival backstamp on October 8.

1867

TRANSATLANTIC MAIL
LA COMPAGNIE GÉNÉRAL TRANSATLANTIQUE
THE FRENCH LINE - LIGNE H
Paquebot Europe New York - Havre



B. 854



S. 1713/3



S. 1714/3

November 15, 1867. Single letter paid at the 15¢ rate by a copy of the Issue of 1866. As letter was to go by the French Line, U.S. retained only 3¢ out of the total prepaid for U.S. inland postage. The Boston Exchange Office credited France with 12¢ for Sea postage (French Packet) and French Inland.

November 16, 1867. The French packet Europe departed this date from New York, and was designated No. 3 of Ligne H, the octagonal stamp applied aboard the ship records this date. It would appear the "Correspondences d'Armees" mark was struck in error as this was normally used on mail posted by the French military and prepaid in French stamps cancelled by an anchor. Three sailings out of New York are recorded by Salles bearing this mark: June 1, 1867 H.3 (Europe); May 19, 1866 H.4 (Napoleon III) and June 15, 1867 H.4 (St. Laurent).



December 3. Arrival backstamp, Paris. Salles records Europe as arriving at Havre Dec. 4.

1867

LA COMPAGNIE GENERAL TRANSATLANTIQUE
THE FRENCH LINE - LIGNE H

Paquebot Europe

New York to Havre



S.1713/3

November 16, 1867. Letter posted unpaid at New York. It was subject to the April 1, 1857 U.S.-French Treaty rate of 15¢ per ¼-oz, here double, 30¢ for a ¼-½-oz. letter. Rate was divided (at double): 6¢ U.S. inland, 16¢ Sea, 8¢ French inland. Here letter went by French Packet, so France was debited 6¢ for U.S. internal postage, France to retain the balance or 24¢.

Letter was endorsed: per Europe. S.S. Europe of the French line departed from N.Y. for Havre Nov. 16. She was designated Ligne H No. 3 for this voyage.



16

December 3. Arrival backstamp at Paris. Europe had arrived at Brest this date, and at Havre on December 4. Letter marked with 16 decimes due, equivalent to 30¢ U.S.

1867

LA COMPAGNIE GENERAL TRANSATLANTIQUE
THE FRENCH LINE - LIGNE H
Paquebot Ville de Paris Saving the Crew of the
Depreciated Currency Brigantine Abby P. Fenno



December 3, 1867. Letter originated unpaid at Leghorn (Livorno), Italy. Transit backstamp at Pistoia, Italy, the letter entered France at Lanslebourg as shown by the entry mark (Faint on face), on Dec. 6.



N. 856

Dec. 5. The French Line steamship Ville de Paris, Capt. Surmont, departed from Havre this date and called at Brest where she sailed for New York on the 7th. This letter went aboard at Brest.

Dec. 16. Ville de Paris encountered a heavy gale from the northwest at lat 40 40N. lon 70 30W. where she fell in with the British brigantine Abby P. Fenno, showing signals of distress. On approaching learned she was from St. John, N.B., bound for Barbados, water logged and unmanageable: sent a boat to take off the crew, consisting of Captain, mate and five men, all suffering severely from the cold.



18

Dec. 17. Ville de Paris at New York. Rate from Italy of 21¢ was converted from gold to U.S. NOTES at 29¢. Of the single rate of 21¢, 3¢ was for U.S. Inland, 12¢ for French transatlantic and 3¢ Italian, all per 1/4-oz. The manuscript "18" at left debits U.S. for all but her 3¢ Inland.

1869

LA COMPAGNIE GENERAL TRANSATLANTIQUE
THE FRENCH LINE - LIGNE H

Paquebot Ville de Paris



April 16, 1869. A letter posted at Cambridge, Mass. and paid at the 15¢ rate to France by the Issue of 1866. Cover is endorsed: France / By french mail.

April 16. Transit mark at Boston. France was credited with 12¢ for Sea (French Packet) and French Inland. U.S. retained but 3¢ out of the 15¢ for U.S. Inland postage.

April 17. Transit at New York. The French Line's Ville de Paris departed from New York this date and the octagonal Ligne H mark was struck aboard the ship.

April 26. Ville de Paris arrived at Brest, bulk mail forwarded to Paris. She went on to Havre, arriving April 27.

April 27. Paris and Paris to Marseilles (T.P.O.) backstamp, night train (circular center).

April 28. Mens arrival backstamp.

1869

LA COMPAGNIE GENERAL TRANSATLANTIQUE
THE FRENCH LINE-LIGNE H

Paquebot St. Laurent



*Messieurs de Rothschild Freres
Paris
France*



September 13, 1869. Letter datelined at Mobile, Alabama to Rothschild Brothers at Paris concerns cotton prices and the attacks on the crop by insects, inter alia, "We now hear more complaints of the injury sustained both from the 'caterpillar' & 'Boll Worm' It is possible that this many have been rather underestimated but, even now, we do not think it either very serious, or general."



September 18. Transit at New York, this letter took a double rate per the April 1, 1857, U.S.-French Treaty, divided: 3¢ U.S. Inland, 6¢ Sea, 6¢ French transit. This double rate letter, 15¢ x 2 = 30¢, shows a debit to France of 3¢ U.S. Inland x 2 = 6¢.

The French Line paquebot ST. Laurent sailed from New York on the same date, the black octagonal mark was struck aboard the St. Laurent at New York.



September 29. St. Laurent arrived at Brest, transit backstamp at Paris on Sept. 30. Letter held for pick up Poste Restante (General Delivery) at Paris. Double rate of 8 decimes (equivalent to 15¢ U.S.) x 2 = 16 decimes due shown by the "16" charge mark.

1869

LA COMPAGNIE GENERAL TRANSATLANTIQUE
THE FRENCH LINE - LIGNE H

Paquebot Lafayette

Depreciated Currency



24

24

November 5, 1869. This unpaid letter was posted at Place de la Bourse, Paris. It is endorsed: per Brest. This was to indicate routing by the French Line.

November 5. The paquebot Lafayette of the French Line departed from Le Havre. She touched at Brest the 6th where this letter went aboard with the U.S. mails.

The letter was to be rated under the rates of April 1, 1857, at 15¢ for a letter not over ¼-oz. and 30¢ between ¼ and ½-oz. This letter took the latter (double) rate. The U.S. was debited for 6¢ French Inland + 6¢ Sea (French Packet) = 12¢ x 2 = 24¢.



November 17. Lafayette arrived at New York. The 30¢ double rate was due, so the U.S. would retain 3¢ U.S. Inland x 2 = 6¢. As the exchange with France was to be in gold, the 30¢ (gold) was converted to its equivalent value in depreciated U.S. paper money at the day's ratio of gold to paper at 1.30 x 30¢ = 39¢, shown in the New York Exchange Office mark.

1870

TRANSATLANTIC MAIL

French Line: S. S. Ville de Paris, New York to Havre

Cunard Line: R. M. S. China, Queenstown to New York



1870

French Line: S. S. Ville de Paris, New York to Havre
Cunard Line: R. M. S. China, Queenstown to New York



June 11, 1870. A letter to France paid at the direct rate by French packet of 10¢ per 7½ grams, here 7½-15 grams, double at 20¢, paid by the vertical pair of the National Bank Note Co. Issue of 1870. Letter is endorsed: Stmr. Ville de Paris. The French Line Ville de Paris departed from New York June 11, where the French Paquebot Ligne H, No. 3 mark was struck.



16

June 22. Ville de Paris arrived at Le Havre, Paris same day transit backstamp. As the U.S. had no treaty with France at this time, a 16 decimes charge was due for a double letter from the forwarder John Monroe & Co., Paris. As the addressee was not at Paris, the forwarder deleted the "16" and noted in manuscript "audos" [in French = see over] on the face and deposited the letter back into the mail to John P. Howard at the Hoffman House, New York.

audos

SHORT PAID



BRITISH FOREIGN 14

Monroe & Co. forwarded a great deal of mail and they probably had an arrangement with the French Post Office to recover postage paid on forwarded letters (16 decimes =

36¢

32¢). They marked the letter SHORT PAID to show this situation. The French passed this charge along to the British.

June 25. Arrival at London. The British noted BRITISH/FOREIGN charges due of 1sh.4d., or 1sh. (24¢) + 4d. (8¢) = 32¢. To this they added 2¢ British Transit + 2¢ Sea postage, total 36¢, shown in manuscript on the reverse.

The letter was then sent on to Queenstown, Ireland to meet the sailing of the R. M. S. China, which had departed from Liverpool June 25, touched at Queenstown June 26.



July 5. China arrived at New York where the Exchange Office added 2¢ U.S. Inland to the 36¢ British debit to total 38¢. This was due in hard currency, so the 38¢ was converted to depreciated paper currency (greenbacks) at the day's ratio of 1.11 to total 42¢ due in U.S. NOTES as shown by the manuscript "42" on the reverse.

42

At this time the New York Exchange Office generally noted only the amount due in green-back currency.

1871

LA COMPAGNIE GÉNÉRAL TRANSATLANTIQUE
THE FRENCH LINE - LIGNE H

Paquebot Pereire

Havre to New York

The French Line provided direct service from Havre to New York. Rate, as per the Versailles Agreement of 1 July 1871, was 50 centimes per 10 grams, paid to the port of debarkation. Letters were then subject to a U.S. domestic steamship charge of 10¢ per ½-oz. regardless of what amount had been paid in France.



Sept. 28, 1871. Letter paid at the 50 centimes per 10 grams rate by two copies of the 25 cent. Ceres, Issue of 1871. Posted at The Port, Havre, cancellation is by the gros chiffres "1769" of Le Havre. P.P. = Port Payee.

Sept, 29. Paquebot Pereire of the French Line sailed from Le Havre for New York.



October 12. Recorded arrival date of the Pereire at New York. The N.Y. Exchange Office mark shows the 10¢ Steamship rate due from the recipient for a letter not over ½-oz. (U.S. rate basis).

1872

LA COMPAGNIE GENERAL TRANSLANTIQUE
THE FRENCH LINE - LIGNE H

Paquebot St. Laurent

The French Line provided direct service from Havre to New York. Rate, per the Versailles Agreement of 1 July 1871, was 50 centimes per 10 grams, paid to the port of debarkation. Letters were then subject to a U.S. Steamship charge of 10¢ per ½-oz. regardless of the amount paid in France.



December 5, 1872. Letter paid at the 50 centimes per 10 grams rate by two copies of the 25 cent. Ceres, Issue of 1871. Posted at Le Havre, stamps are cancelled by the "1769" gros chiffres of Le Havre. Letter endorsed: p St. Laurent.

December 5. St. Laurent of the French Line sailed from Havre for New York.



December 24. Letter postmarked at New York. St. Laurent had arrived at N.Y. December 23. The N.Y. Exchange Office mark shows 10¢ due from the recipient for a letter not over ½-oz. (U.S. rate basis.)

1873

TRANSATLANTIC SHIPPING LINES
LA COMPAGNIE GENERALE TRANSATLANTIQUE
— ÷ —
THE FRENCH LINE

Havre - New York



Ville de Paris was a 3014 ton steamer in service from 1866-76. The French Line provided direct service from Havre to New York. Rate, as per the Versailles Agreement of 1 July 1871 was 50 centimes per 10 grams, paid to the Port of Debarkation. Letters were then subject to a U.S. Domestic charge of 10¢.



Feb. 27, 1873. Double weight letter, 10-20 grams, prepaid by 100 centimes in stamps, cancelled by "1769" lozenge of dots of Havre and date stamped. The Ville de Paris sailed from Havre on Feb. 28.

Port Payee mark of France indicates letter paid to port only.

Mar. 14, 1873. New York receipt. 10¢ due from recipient.

1873

LA COMPAGNIE GENERAL TRANSATLANTIQUE
THE FRENCH LINE - LIGNE H

Paquebot Pereire

The French Line provided service from Havre to New York. Rate, as per the Versailles Agreement of 1 July 1871, was 50 centimes per 10 grams, paid to the port of embarkation. Upon arrival in the U.S. the letters were subject to a U.S. domestic steamship charge of 10¢ per ½-oz. regardless of what amount had been paid in France.



June 3, 1873. Letter paid at the 50 centimes per 10 grams rate by two copies of the 25 cent. Ceres Issue of 1871. Posted at Villefranche-sur-Mer, cancellation is by the gros chiffres "4244" of that town. "87" is the Department number of Alpes-Maritimes. Letter is endorsed: Via France, indicating transit by French Line via Havre. Letter marked "P.P.", or Paid to the Port (Havre).



June 3-4. Transit backstamps, day trains, Marseilles to Lyon to Paris.

June 4. Foreign Department (Etranger) backstamp at Paris..

June 6. Letter forwarded to Le Havre where the paquebot Pereire departed from Le Havre to New York via Brest, June 7.



June 17. Recorded arrival date of Pereire at New York. The New York Exchange Office mark shows the 10¢ Steamship rate due from the recipient for a letter not over ½-oz. (u.s. rate basis.)

1867

TRANSATLANTIC SHIPPING LINES
LA COMPAGNIE GENERALE TRANSATLANTIQUE

THE FRENCH LINE: LIGNE "H", Du Havre A New York, 1866-72

This line of packet ships was designated Line "H". Rate by reason of "Le Bulletin des Postes N^o 105, de Mai 1864" was 80 centimes per 7½ grams. This rate applied until 1 Jan. 1870.



Nov. 19, 1867. Letter posted at Marseille, 80 centimes rate, prepaid. "2240" is lozange of dots Post Office numeral canceler at Marseille.

Nov. 19, 1867. Marseille to Paris RR backstamp.



3

Regulations stated letters to be marked "Serv. Fr." or "Serv. Br." in blue on letters transmitted directly (in red, if by way of England). Also marked "Paid" in red.

Nov. 23, 1867. Ligne H backstamp of the French Line. Ship H-2 was the PEREIRE.

Exchange Office mark. Credit to the U.S. for her domestic postage.



Dec. 3. Receipt handstamp at Boston.

1875-76

LA COMPAGNIE GENERAL TRANSATLANTIQUE
THE FRENCH LINE - LIGNE H

Paquebot Labrador

First Voyage under the Berne Congress

A change in French rates to the U.S. occurred on January 1, 1876. Prior to that date, the Reciprocal Period, rates were 50 centimes per 10 grams prepaid in France with letters subject to a 10¢ per ½-oz. "Steamship Letter" charge on arrival in the U.S. On January 1, 1876, the Berne Postal Congress rates became effective. These were 40 centimes per 15 grams (½-oz.) all inclusive and by any route. The corresponding Berne rate in the U.S. was 8¢ per ½-oz. These rates were effective until May 30, 1876, when France entered the G.P.U.



December 31, 1875. Letter datelined and company stamped at Le Havre. It was paid at double the Reciprocal Period rate of 50 centimes x 2 = 100 cent. by the 80 centimes Issue of 1872 and 2 copies of the 10 cent. Issue of 1875. Overpayment was by 20 cent. based on the Berne Congress rates. Stamps are cancelled by the large numerals "6311" of Havre, Le Port.

January 1, 1876. Letter processed at Havre where the paquebot Labrador sailed on the same date carrying the first westbound Berne Congress rated mail. Mail was marked "PD" or paid to destination, previously "PP", or paid to the port.

N.Y. Times, January 15. Arrived N.Y. Jan. 14 steam-ship Labrador (Fr.,) Sanglier, Havre Jan. 1 and Plymouth 2d. with mdse and passengers to Louis deBebian.

Letter accepted at New York as PAID ALL, backstamp.

Labrador was originally launched as Nouveau Monde in 1865 as a paddle steamer, 3200 tons, 346 ft. In 1875 she was lengthened to 395', 4612 tons, single screw, renamed Labrador.



1876

LA COMPAGNIE GENERAL TRANSATLANTIQUE
THE FRENCH LINE - LIGNE H

Paquebot Amerique

July 11, 1876. Letter paid at New Orleans by the 5¢ Taylor Issue of 1875. This is an early G.P.U. rate to France as that country did not enter the G.P.U. until July 1, 1876.



July 15. Transit at New York. The New York Times carried the following advertisement: ONLY DIRECT LINE TO FRANCE THE GENERAL TRANSATLANTIC COMPANY'S STEAMERS BETWEEN NEW-YORK AND HAVRE, Calling at Plymouth (G.B.) for the landing of passengers.

AMERIQUE, Pouzois, Sat. July 15, 11 AM
ST. LAURENT, Lachesuez, Sat. July 22, 6:30 AM
FRANCE, Tondelle, Sat. July 29, 11 AM.

July 26. Amerique arrived at Havre. The mails went by rail, Havre to Paris where this receiving mark was struck, although noted "BREST".

July 26. Railway post office mark, Paris to Bordeaux, 2nd Section, Brigade E handled the sorting. Circular center shows that this was a night train. It was marked in blue crayon "Gironde" to show the department.

July 27. Branne, Gironde, receiving backstamp.



1878

TRANSATLANTIC SHIPPING LINES
LA COMPAGNIE GÉNÉRAL TRANSATLANTIQUE
Ligne du Havre a New York S.S. St. Laurent

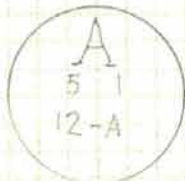
The Saint-Laurent, 3400 tons, constructed at Penhoet in 1865-66. Made 75 voyages from 1866 to 1880.



April 20, 1878. Letter posted by firm of Chr. Eglin & Maring, Havre, and paid the U.P.U. rate of 40 centimes per half ounce. Stamped by the Le Havre cancellation. Records show the St.-Laurent left Havre April 20, 1878 on the "summer" weekly sailing schedule.



May 1, 1878. Arrival backstamps at New York. U.P.U. rate "PAID ALL".



1880

TRANSATLANTIC MAIL

LA COMPAGNIE GÉNÉRAL TRANSATLANTIQUE

Ligne du Havre a New York

S. S. France



July 20, 1880. Letter paid at Narragansett Pier, Rhode Island at the 5¢ U.P.U. rate to member countries, 1¢ overpaid by a pair of the 3¢ Bank Note Issue.

July 21. The paquebot France of the French Line departed from New York.

August 1. France arrived at Havre, letter forwarded on to Paris where the "BREST" mark was struck on August 2.

August 2. Letter was addressed care of the Paris forwarding agents Drexel Harjes & Cie, who deleted their address and forwarded the letter to Lucerne, Switzerland. Original postage included forwarding under U.P.U. regulations.

August 3. Lucerne arrival backstamp.



5,1721

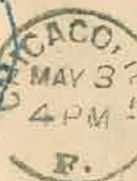


1888

TRANSATLANTIC MAIL
LA COMPAGNIE GENERAL TRANSATLANTIQUE
THE FRENCH LINE

Paquebot La Champagne

(133)
RETURN IN THREE DAYS TO
THE CHICAGO NATIONAL BANK
CHICAGO.



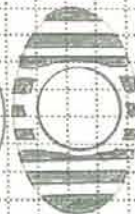
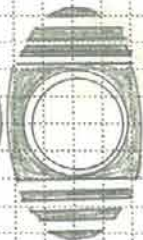
THE COMPTOIR D'ESCOMPTE,

PARIS,

PER S. S.

La Champagne

FRANCE.



May 3, 1888. Letter posted at Chicago at double the 5¢ U.P.U. rate paid by the 5¢ stamped envelope, Grant Issue of 1887, Die I, and the 5¢ Garfield Issue of 1888. Cover endorsed: PER S.S. La Champagne.

May 4. Transit backstamp at New York.

N.Y. Times: OUTGOING STEAMSHIPS, Sat., May 5, 1888. La Champagne, Havre, Mails Close 10 AM, Vessel Sails 1 PM.

May 14. La Champagne arrived at Havre and mail bulked to Paris, receipt postmark at the Paris Foreign (Etranger) office. It was held as General Delivery (Poste Restante) as shown by the Paris backstamp.



1888-89

S.S. LaChampagne

THE FRENCH LINE

Dec. 29, 1888. Registered letter posted at N.Y. 5¢ U.P.U. rate + 15¢ Registry fee paid by the 5¢ stamped envelope Issue of 1886, 3¢ vermilion, Issue 1887, 4¢ blue green, Issue 1883 and 8 copies of 1¢ ultramarine, Issue 1887, total 20¢.

SS LaChampagne of the French Line departed from N.Y. this same day.

BY CABLE, N.Y. Times. London Jan. 6, 1889. The General Transatlantic Line steamship LaChampagne, Capt. Boyer, from New York Dec. 29, arrived at Havre at noon to-day.



1895

COMPAGNIE GÉNÉRAL TRANSATLANTIQUE

French Line

S.S. La Bourgoigne

New York to Havre

7395 tons, 494' x 52', single screw, built by Forges & Chantiers de la Méditerranée, La Seyne. Launched Oct. 8, 1885, maiden voyage June 19, 1886, Havre - N.Y. 1896 (Feb.) collided with and sank SS Ailsa (Atlas) off U.S. coast. 1898, July 4, sank in collision with ship Cromartyshire off Cape Sable, 549 lives lost.



1886 LA BOURGOGNE 7,395 tons
Sunk in collision in 1898 with heavy loss of life.

June 6, 1895. Letter posted at Chester, Pa. to Paris, directed to the forwarding agents Morgan, Harjes & Co. U.P.U. rate of 5c to member country paid by Issue of 1894.

June 6. Transit backstamp at N.Y.
Times: Sat. June 7. At 1 AM for France, Switzerland, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Turkey and British India per steamship La Bourgoigne via Havre.



5



By Cable: London. June 16. SS La Bourgoigne (Fr.,) Capt. LeBoeuf, from New-York June 8 (sic) arrived at Havre to-day. Arrival mark of the Paris Etranger (Foreign) Office. June 17. Morgan Harjes & Co. forwarded letter to Dresden after striking their purple forwarders' mark. Letter entered mails at Rue Taitbout. June 19. Dresden arrival backstamp.



1904

LA COMPAGNIE GENERAL TRANSATLANTIQUE

The French Line

Paquebot La Lorraine

Built by Cie. Gen. Transatlantique, St. Nazaire, France. 11,146 tons, 563' x 60', twin screw, 20 knots. Sister ship to La Savoie. Launched Sept. 20, 1899. Maiden voyage August 11, 1900, Havre-New York. July 25, 1914, last voyage. 1914-17 she was Lorraine II (armed merchant cruiser). 1918 reverted to La Lorraine, resumed North Atlantic run. Scrapped December 1922 at St. Nazaire.



January 29, 1904. A registered letter posted at Paris. Payment is by the 50 centimes Liberty and Peace Issue of 1900, 25 cent. for U.P.U. postage per 20 grams and 25 cent. registration.

January 30. Paquebot La Lorraine sailed from Le Havre for New York where she arrived on February 7.

Backstamps:



REGISTERED
FEB 9 1904
Malden Station
P. O., BOSTON, MASS.

1904

LA COMPAGNIE GENERAL TRANSATLANTIQUE
The French Line

S. S. La Gascogne

7395 tons, 495' x 52', single screw, iron and steel, compound engine, six cylinders (1894 quadruple-expansion engines by CGT). Originally laid down as L'Algerie, launched January 5, 1856 as La Gascogne. Built by Forges & Chantiers de la Mediterranee, La Seyne. Maiden voyage Sept. 18, 1886, Havre-New York. In 1912 sold to Cie Sud Atlantique.



June 15. Letter to Germany paid at the 5¢ U.P.U. rate by the Louisiana Purchase Issue of 1904. Letter is endorsed: p. S.S. LaGascogne. Stamp cancelled by the New York duplex, backstamped at the N.Y. Foreign Branch, 8 P.M.

N.Y. Times: OUTGOING STEAMSHIPS, Thursday, June 16. La Gascogne, Havre. Mails close 7:00 A.M. Vessel sails 10:00 A.M.



June 28. Würzburg, Bavaria arrival backstamp.

1904

LA COMPAGNIE GENERAL TRANSATLANTIQUE
The French Line

S.S. La Savoie

Built by Cie. Gen. Transatlantique (Penhoet), St. Nazaire, France. 11,168 tons, 563' x 60', twin screw, 21 knots, triple expansion engines. Launched March 31, 1901. Served as armed merchant cruiser in World War I. Broken up in 1927.

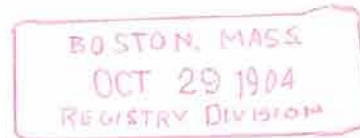


October 20, 1904. A registered letter paid at Paris, 25 centimes for the U.P.U. rate plus 50 cent. registration, by 3 copies of the Issue of 1903. Letter is endorsed: Via "La Voie" (sic)/Havre.

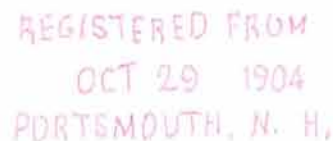
N.Y. Times. October 22. Sailed from Havre, S.S. La Savoie.



N.Y. Times. Arrived at New York October 28, La Savoie, Havre, October 22.



October 29. Registry Division back-stamps, Boston and Portsmouth, New Hampshire.

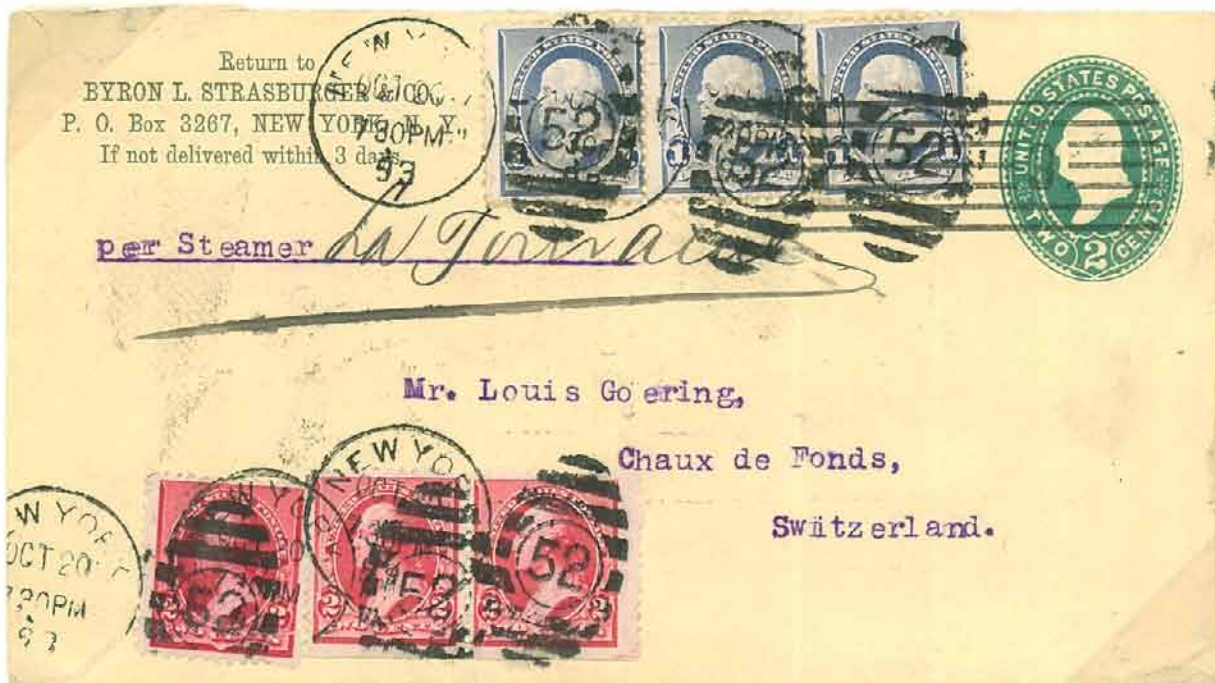


1893

LA COMPAGNIE GENERAL TRANSATLANTIQUE
The French Line

S.S. La Touraine

Built 1891 by Chantiers de Penhoet, St. Nazaire, France. 9047 tons, 520' x 56', twin screw, 19 knots. Triple expansion engines. Launched March 21, 1890, maiden voyage, Havre-New York June 20, 1891. Scrapped in 1924.



Mr. Louis Goering,

Chaux de Fonds,

Switzerland.

October 20, 1893. A double U.P.U. rated letter posted at New York. The 5¢/½-oz. rate x 2 = 10¢ was overpaid 1¢ by the 2¢ stamped envelope, Issue of 1886, Die 2, three copies of the 1¢ and three of the 2¢, both Issue of 1890, total 11¢.

October 21. The S.S. LaTouraine, as endorsed, sailed from N.Y. for Havre. Mails closed at 9 AM, vessel sailed at 12:00M.

N.Y. Times. BY CABLE. London, October 28. General Transatlantique Line SS LaTouraine, Capt. Franguel, from New-York for Havre, passed the Lizard to-day. Oct. 29. LaTouraine arr. at Havre to-day.

Oct. 30. Chaux de Fonds arrival backstamp.



1904

LA COMPAGNIE GENERAL TRANSATLANTIQUE
The French Line

S. S. La Touraine

After 5 days, return to
SCHULZ & RUCKGABER,
P. O. Box 257,
NEW YORK, N. Y.



La Touraine.

ALLGEMEINE DEUTSCHE CREDIT ANSTALT.
ABTHEILUNG BECKER & CO.,
LEIPZIG.

Germany.



September 14, 1904. A letter to Germany paid at the U.P.U. rate by the 5¢ stamped envelope, Issue of 1903. The envelope was cancelled by the New York duplex at 8 P.M. There is a N.Y. Foreign Branch transit backstamp, same day at 11 P.M. The cover bears Schulz & Ruckgaber's directional handstamp: La Touraine.

N.Y. Times: OUTGOING STEAMSHIPS, THURS. Sept. 15: La Touraine, Havre, Mails Close 7 AM, vessel sails 10 AM.

The venerable La Touraine was built in 1890 and lasted until scrapped in 1924.

N.Y. Times, FOREIGN INT'L ARRIVALS: La Touraine at Havre, September 21.

September 24. Arrival backstamp at Leipzig, Germany.

L 13.
249
8-9V.
h.

1892

LA COMPAGNIE GENERAL TRANSATLANTIQUE

The French Line

S.S. La Bretagne

7112 tons, straight stem, 2 funnels, 4 masts, steel, single screw, 6 cylinder triple expansion engines, 17 knots. Launched September 9, 1885 at CGT, St. Nazaire. August 14, 1886, maiden voyage Havre-New York. 1895 quadruple expansion engines installed by builders, reduced to two masts. Last voyage June 8, 1912 Havre to New York. In 1912 she went to the Cie Sud Atlantique.



December 9, 1892. Printed envelope to Germany endorsed: Per S.S. La Bretagne. 5¢ U.P.U. rate paid by the Issue of 1890.

N.Y. Times: COMPAGNIE GENERAL TRANSATLANTIQUE
FRENCH LINE TO HAVRE EVERY SATURDAY

LA BRETAGNE, Collier, Sat. Dec. 10, 8 AM
LA BOURGOGNE, Leboeuf, Sat. Dec. 17 5:30 PM
LA CHAMPAGNE, Boyer, Sat. Dec. 24, 6 AM

A. FORGET, General Agent
No. 3 Bowling Green.

December 19. Arrival and transit mark at the Paris Foreign (ETRANGER) office.

December 20. German arrival backstamp.



1900

LA COMPAGNIE GENERAL TRANSATLANTIQUE

The French Line

S.S. La Bretagne



RICHMOND,
 VA.
 JUN 5 630PM '00 - 1

June 5, 1900. A letter posted at Richmond, Virginia to Switzerland. It is paid at the 5¢ U.P.U. rate by the 1¢ embossed envelope, Issue of 1899, with the added 4¢ Issue of 1898, type I. The cover is endorsed: per, "La Bretagne".

New York Times, Tuesday, June 5, 1900:

OUTGOING STEAMSHIPS, Thursday, June 7
 La Bretagne, Havre Mails Close 6:30 AM Vessel Sails 10:00 AM.



June 16. Basel, Switzerland arrival backstamp.

1929

LA COMPAGNIE GENERAL TRANSATLANTIQUE

The French Line

S. S. Mexique

Built in 1915 as the French Line Lafayette by Chantiers & Ateliers de Provence, Port Boue, France. 11,953 tons, 546' x 64', quadruple expansion engines and steam turbines. Maiden voyage: Bordeaux-New York, November 3, 1915. Converted to a hospital ship in 1916. Transferred to West Indies service after World War I. Renamed Mexique (1928). Sunk by a magnetic mine in the Gironde, June 19, 1940.



September 14, 1929. A postal card processed by a postmark collector to meet the sailing of Mexique from New York for Le Havre, France.

N.Y. Times, Sept. 11, 1929. Sailings-Transatlantic: Mexique (French Line) for Havre, to sail Sat., Sept. 14.

Outgoing Passenger & Mail Steamships, Sept. 14, MEXIQUE (FRENCH LINE) Havre, Mails close 7 A.M. Sails 11 A.M. Specially addressed ordinary mail only.

This card received the octagonal handstamp of the NEW YORK AU HAVRE line of the day of sailing. It was stamped with the MEXIQUE handstamp to qualify as "specifically addressed ordinary mail". The Mexique arrived at Havre September 23.

This card was kept aboard the Mexique for the return voyage to New York. She departed from Plymouth, England on September 26 (N.Y. Times.)