

North American Blockade Run Mail, 1775-1865

Background: The early history of the United States is marked by three defensive wars: two with Great Britain and the Civil War. These wars precipitated four naval blockades of some portion of the North American coastline.

- During the Revolutionary War (1775-83), the British navy maintained an undeclared commercial blockade of the rebel colonies along the Atlantic coast. This blockade closed American ports to all commerce, including cargos carried in neutral ships.
- British forces occupied the ports of Boston, Newport, New York, Philadelphia, Charleston and Savannah at various times during the Revolutionary War. American privateers maintained an effective blockade of those British-held enclaves from 1775 to 1783.
- Great Britain was again the antagonist during the War of 1812, and maintained a formal commercial blockade (1813-15) that rolled out in stages along the Atlantic coast.
- Finally, the secession of southern states at the outset of the American Civil War precipitated a Federal commercial blockade of the southern coasts from 1861 to 1865.

Geography: The map below shows the portions of the North American coastline that were subject to blockade during the three wars. The red line indicates the scope of the Revolutionary War and War of 1812 blockades, while the blue line shows the Civil War blockade.



The Mails: Some letters were carried through the blockade by blockade runners which evaded the blockading fleet. Others out-flanked the blockade by entering through unblockaded ports and travelling overland to the blockaded region. Finally, some mail was carried by ships allowed through the blockade under special license, or by cartel ships sailing under a flag-of-truce.

This exhibit shows blockade run mail from all four blockades of this period. Icons in the upper right of each page differentiate the mail from each of the three wars.

Revolutionary War - Blockade of the Atlantic Coast

Introduction to the British Blockade, 1776-83



Hostilities between Great Britain and some of her North American colonies began on April 19, 1775. In response, Great Britain issued a “seize and detain” order against rebel American shipping in September 1775, and then passed the Prohibitory Act, which banned all commerce with the rebel colonies and authorized the seizure of all American ships, effective March 1, 1776. Warships were sent to North America to enforce this undeclared commercial blockade, and four stages of the British blockade can be identified:

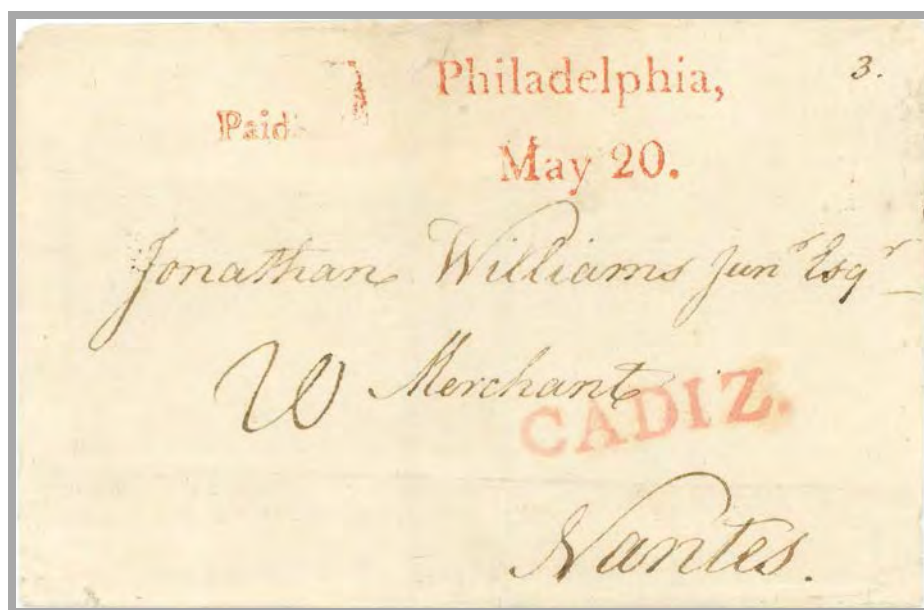
Partial Blockade: Under the “seize and detain” order, small British squadrons were sent to important American ports and enforced a partial blockade from September 1775 to March 1776.

First Phase of the Full Blockade: From March 1776 to June 1778, British naval forces in North America grew rapidly, but were mainly used to support army operations. Ships on blockade reached a peak of 32 warships.

Second Phase of the Full Blockade: The French entry into the war caused the British to withdraw ships from North America and virtually abandon the blockade from July 1778 to October 1781. Starting in September 1778, loyalist privateers were very effective in maintaining the blockade.

Third Phase of the Full Blockade: The end of British army actions and departure of the French fleet allowed the Royal Navy to re-assert a close blockade from November 1781 until peace was declared in March 1783.

Shown below is a letter which ran the British blockade during the third phase.



Postmarked on May 20, 1782 in Philadelphia - marked “Paid” but amount not specified
Carried through Delaware Bay blockade in convoy escorted by Spanish warships to Cadiz
Postmarked in Cadiz, Spain and sent overland to France - rated for 20 sols due in Nantes

Revolutionary War Atlantic Coast Blockade

British Partial Blockade - September 1775 to March 1776



The British Admiralty issued a “seize and detain” order on July 6, 1775. It was received in North America in mid-September, and was designed to prevent all commerce by the American rebels.



Dated at New York on January 6, 1776 - endorsed to the *Sampson* – left on January 10
Ran the blockade to Portsmouth, England on February 8 - 1d ship plus 3d inland postage due
The *Sampson* was captured under “seize and detain” order on February 19 at Portsmouth

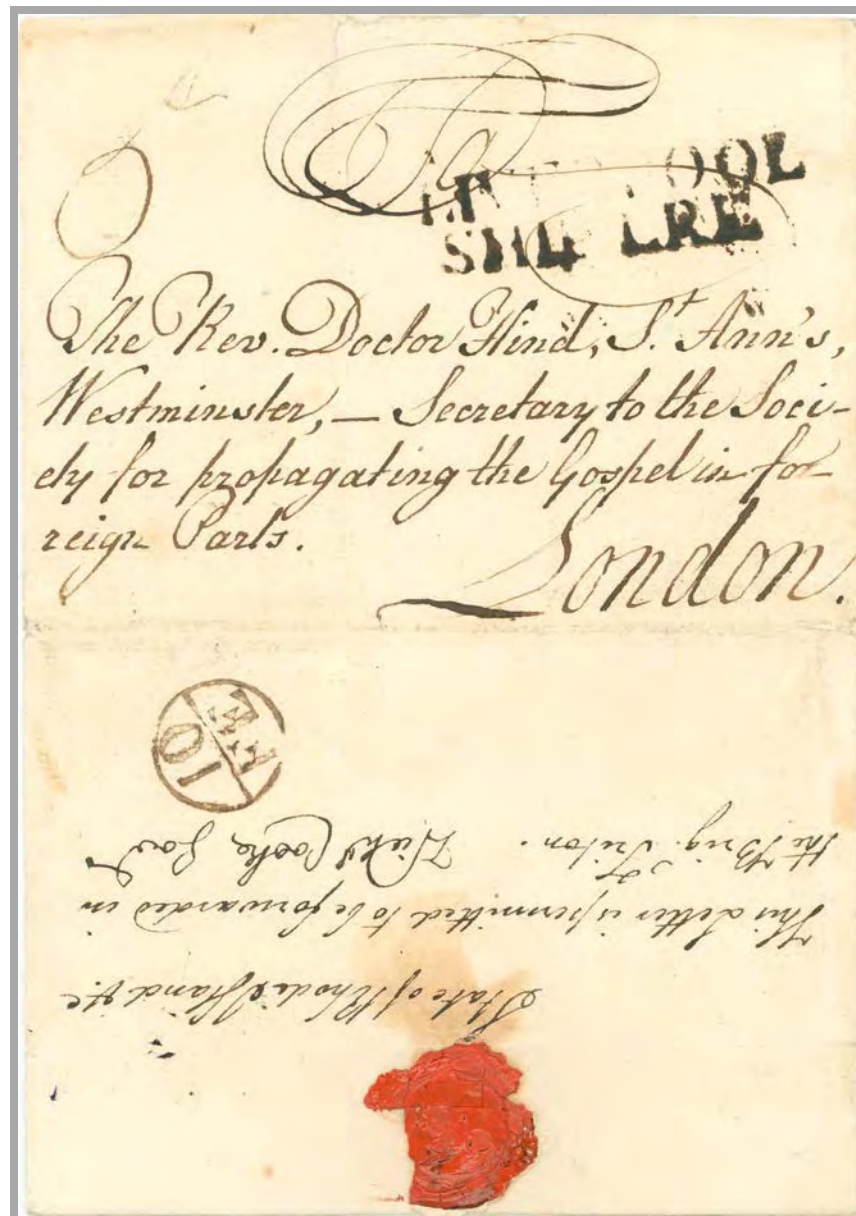


Revolutionary War Atlantic Coast Blockade

British Blockade - March 1776 to March 1783



Parliament's "Prohibitory Act" began the first phase of the full commercial British blockade on March 1, 1776. This phase ended when the French entered the war on the side of the Americans.



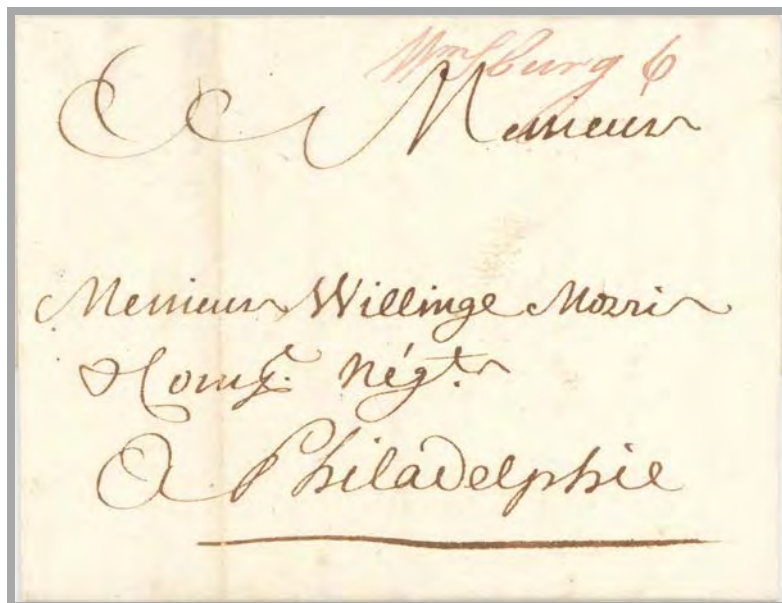
Dated September 19, 1776 from Providence, Rhode Island - **censored by the Governor**
Cartel *Triton* left Newport on December 16 with 79 returning British POWs
Arrived in Cork on January 20 - mail carried to Liverpool on February 7 by the *William*
Postmarked in Liverpool and rated for 5d due - received in London on February 17

Revolutionary War Atlantic Coast Blockade

British Blockade - March 1776 to March 1783



During the March 1776 to June 1778 first phase of the British blockade, the Royal Navy was mainly engaged in supporting army operations, and typically a quarter to a third of the force was on blockade duty.



Dated August 14, 1776 at Haiti - held over a year in Haiti
Blockade runner through Chesapeake Bay to Williamsburg, VA in early 1778
Rated for 6 dwt due (no ship fee) - October 1777 rate to Philadelphia



Revolutionary War Atlantic Coast Blockade

British Blockade - March 1776 to March 1783



Postage due was expressed in a pennyweight (dwt) currency of exchange and had to be converted into local currency for collection. One dwt equaled 3d sterling, and local currency was inflated above sterling.



Dated November 15, 1776 in Nantes, France - blockade runner to New London
Postmarked and rated for 3 dwt 8 grains to Philadelphia (no ship fee assessed)
Re-rated in Philadelphia to 1/7 due ($10d * 1.667 = 1/5 + 2p$ carrier)

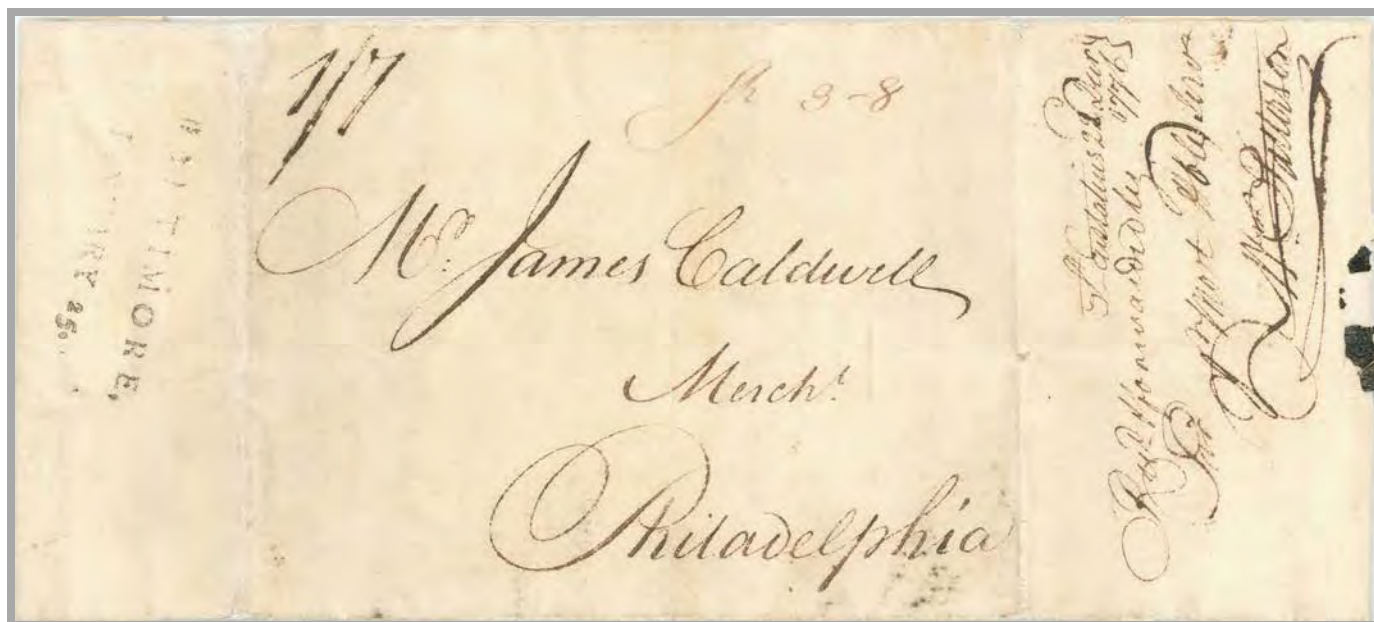


Revolutionary War Atlantic Coast Blockade

British Blockade - March 1776 to March 1783



Supplies and correspondence from Europe were often routed through the neutral West Indies island of St Eustatius, where they were transferred to smaller ships to run the British blockade of North America.



Dated December 20, 1776 - forwarded by Wm. Patterson from St Eustatius on December 22
Ran the Chesapeake Bay blockade into Baltimore - postmarked there on January 25, 1777
Rated for 2 dwt 16 grains to Philadelphia plus 16 grain ship fee - re-stated to 1/7 local postage

Revolutionary War Atlantic Coast Blockade

British Blockade - March 1776 to March 1783



The French entry into the war forced the British to reduce their blockade force during the July 1778 to October 1781 second phase of the blockade.



Dated May 15, 1779 in Nantes, France - endorsed to the *Courier de l'Europe*
French armed dispatch boat ran blockade into Boston - rated 18 dwt due to Alexandria
April 1779 rates were three times the 1775 rates - 16 dwt plus 2 dwt ship fee
Forwarded locally for 4 dwt - received on August 28



Revolutionary War Atlantic Coast Blockade

British Blockade - March 1776 to March 1783



Martinique was a French West Indies island used for the transshipment of supplies and mail to blockaded North America.



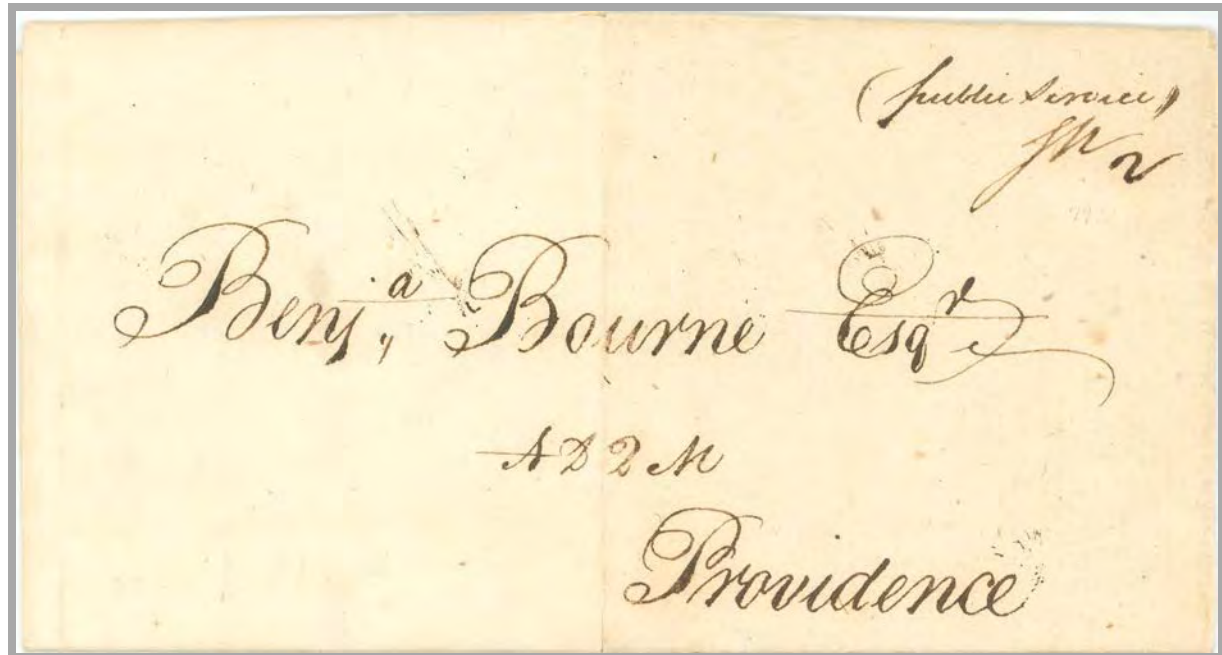
Dated July 19, 1778 in Martinique - carried by the brig *Favourite* to Boston on August 11
Left Martinique July 19 - given directly to post rider at Boston - "Way 4" dwt due to Falmouth
October 1777 rates were 1.5 times the 1775 rates - no ship fee charged

Revolutionary War Atlantic Coast Blockade

British Blockade - March 1776 to March 1783



Lower draft coastal vessels could evade the larger British warships on blockade duty. Even so, Boston was tightly guarded in June 1781 because the USS *Alliance* was there.



Dated June 25, 1781 in Boston - carried by coastal ship to Providence, Rhode Island
Endorsed "public service" and rated for 2 pence ship fee (local currency)
To the Quartermaster of the Rhode Island Regiment - about to leave for Yorktown

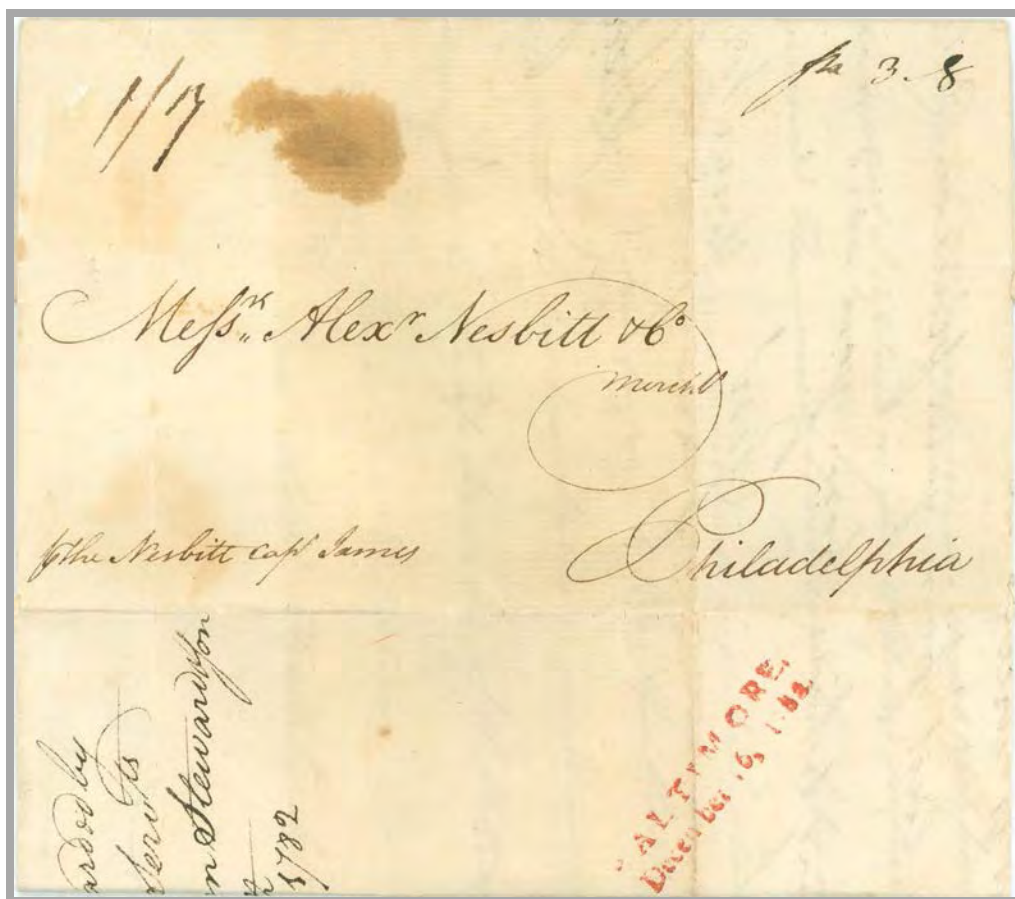


Revolutionary War Atlantic Coast Blockade

British Blockade - March 1776 to March 1783



The November 1781 withdrawal of the French fleet after the British defeat at Yorktown began the third phase of the British blockade. This phase ended with the lifting of the blockade in March 1783.



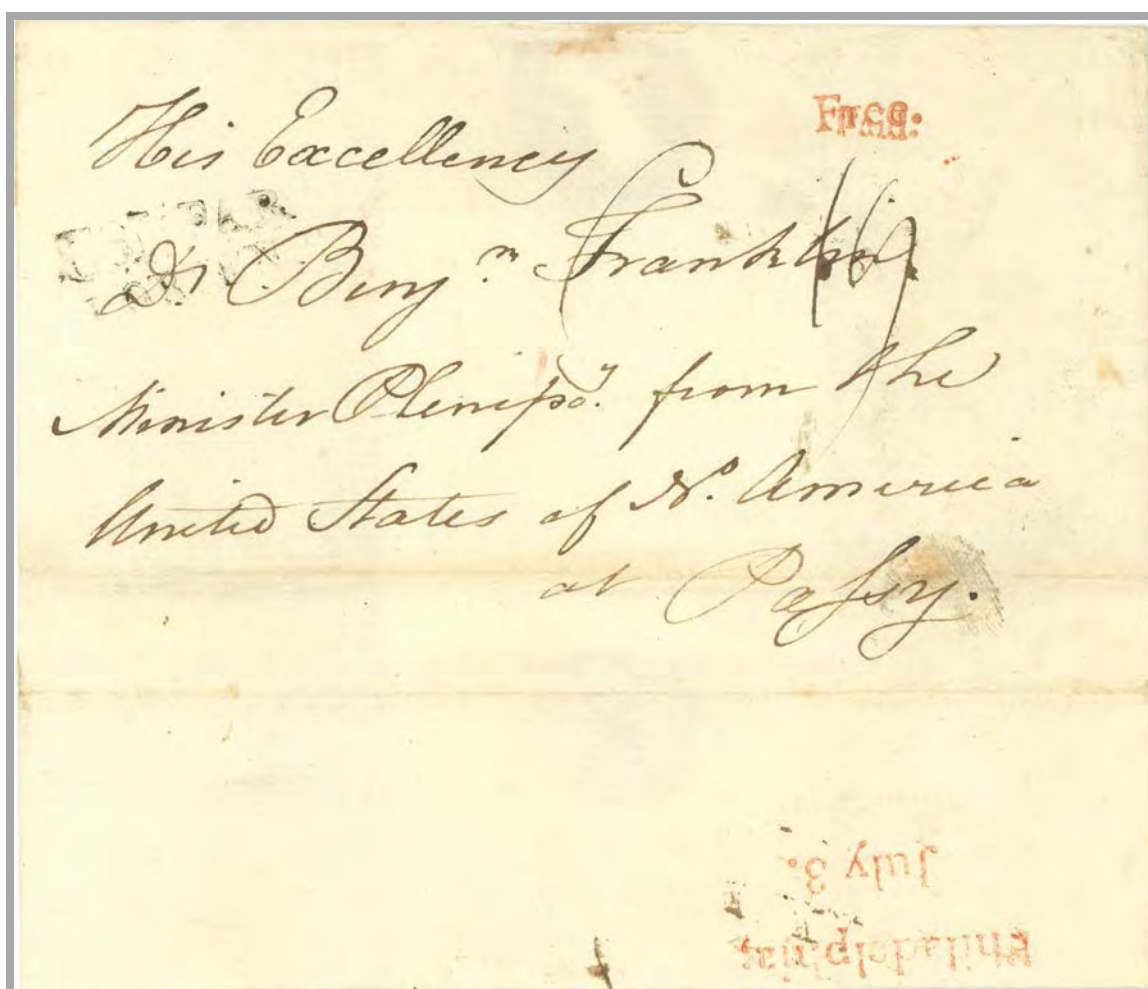
Dated November 25, 1782 in Havana, Cuba – endorsed to the brig *Nesbitt*
Delivered December 13 to Baltimore forwarder Stephen Seward & Son
Red December 16 Baltimore straight-line postmark – latest use known
3.8 dwt due (2.16 to Philadelphia plus .16 ship fee) – 1/7 in local currency due

Revolutionary War Atlantic Coast Blockade

British Blockade - March 1776 to March 1783



Founding Father Benjamin Franklin served as U.S. Minister Plenipotentiary (ambassador) to France from 1776 to 1785. He was lead negotiator for the April-November 1782 peace negotiations with England.



Postmarked July 3, 1782 in Philadelphia - rated "Free" for Richard Bache, former PMG
French 64-gun warship *L'Eveill * left in July and arrived in September at Brest, France
Postmarked "COL. PAR LORIENT" and rated 19 sols due (4 ship plus 15 inland)
Addressed to Benjamin Franklin at Passy (Paris)

Revolutionary War Atlantic Coast Blockade

British Blockade - March 1776 to March 1783



The British blockade tightened considerably during the third phase of the blockade. Freed from supporting army operations, they concentrated fully on the blockade.



Dated February 24, 1781 at Lyon, France - routed on *Ducondray* via Nantes
Letter held up West Indies for 18 months - ran blockade to Philadelphia in September 1782
Rated for 10d to Baltimore (2d ship plus 8d) - forwarded back to Philadelphia for additional 8d

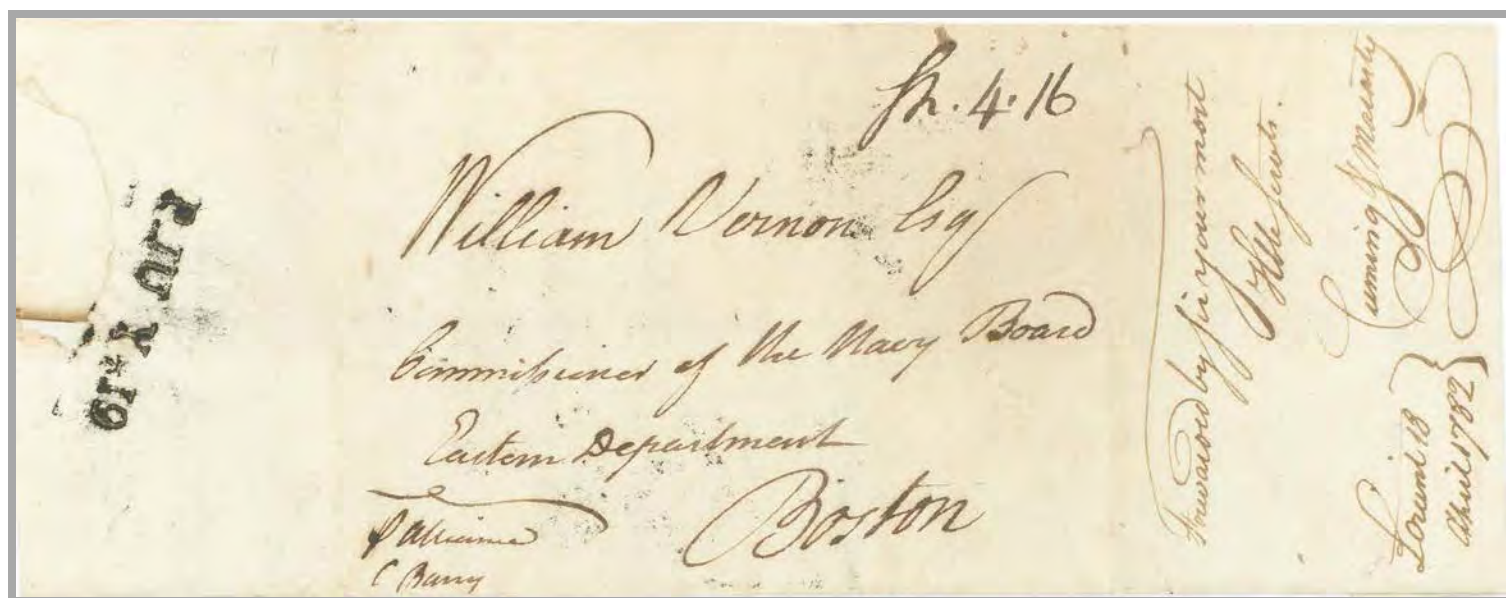


Revolutionary War Atlantic Coast Blockade

British Blockade - March 1776 to March 1783



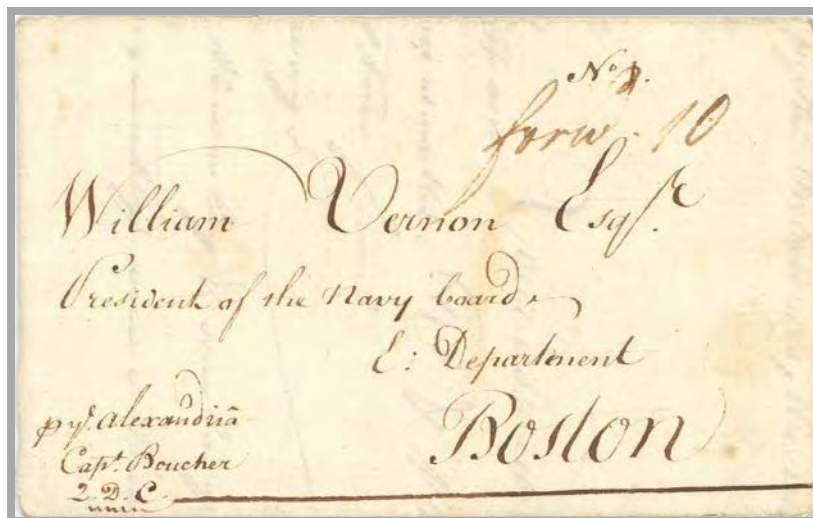
The U.S.S. *Alliance* was a 36-gun frigate in the Continental Navy. She carried the Marquis de Lafayette back to France in January 1782, and departed from Lorient, France on March 16 for New London, Connecticut.



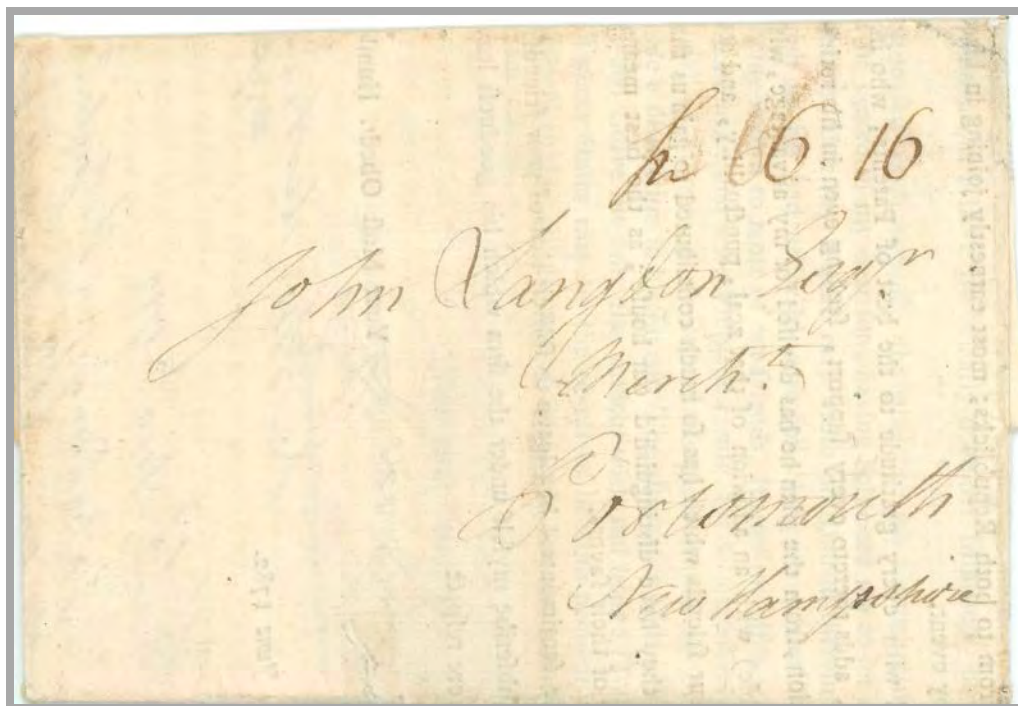
Forwarded from Lorient, France on April 18, 1782 - endorsed to the departed U.S.S. *Alliance*
American privateer *St Helena* departed on June 2 - ran the Delaware Bay blockade on July 18
Postmarked in Philadelphia on July 19 - rated for 4 dwt due to Boston plus 16 grain ship fee

Revolutionary War Atlantic Coast Blockade

British Blockade - March 1776 to March 1783



Dated January 22, 1782 from Bordeaux, France - endorsed to *Alexandria*, Capt. Boucher
Ran blockade to New London, CT - 10d due (2 dwt 16 grains to Boston plus 16 grains ship fee)



Dated Amsterdam, Holland August 2, 1782 - blockade runner *Firebrand* to Boston on Oct. 10
Rated for 6 dwt 16 grains due - triple-weight 6 dwt to Portsmouth plus 16 grains ship fee

Revolutionary War Atlantic Coast Blockade

British Blockade - March 1776 to March 1783



The Preliminary Articles of Peace were signed on November 30, 1782 at Paris. News of this was received at New York on March 17, 1783 and the blockade was lifted soon after that.



Postmarked October 5, 1782 at Philadelphia - marked "PAID"

Carried through Chesapeake Bay blockade - probably to neutral Ostend

Hand-carried across Channel to London - placed into Penny Post on January 22, 1783

Only letter from this period known with both American and British postmarks

Revolutionary War – Blockade of the Atlantic Coast

Introduction to the American Blockade, 1775-83



Shortly after hostilities began in April 1775, American privateers began attacking British supply ships and Falmouth packets. At various times, British forces occupied enclaves in North America at Boston, Newport, New York, Philadelphia, Charleston and Savannah, and relied on warships and Falmouth packets to communicate with England. The interception of supply ships and Falmouth packets by American privateers constituted a commercial blockade of those enclaves.



Shown below is a letter carried by the first Falmouth packet through the American blockade.



Dated London April 5, 1775 - posted that day and rated for 1 shilling packet postage due
Carried by Falmouth packet *Mercury* - arrived through the blockade in New York on May 28
Re-rated 1/10 for postage to Boston - converted into 18/4 Massachusetts Old Tenor currency

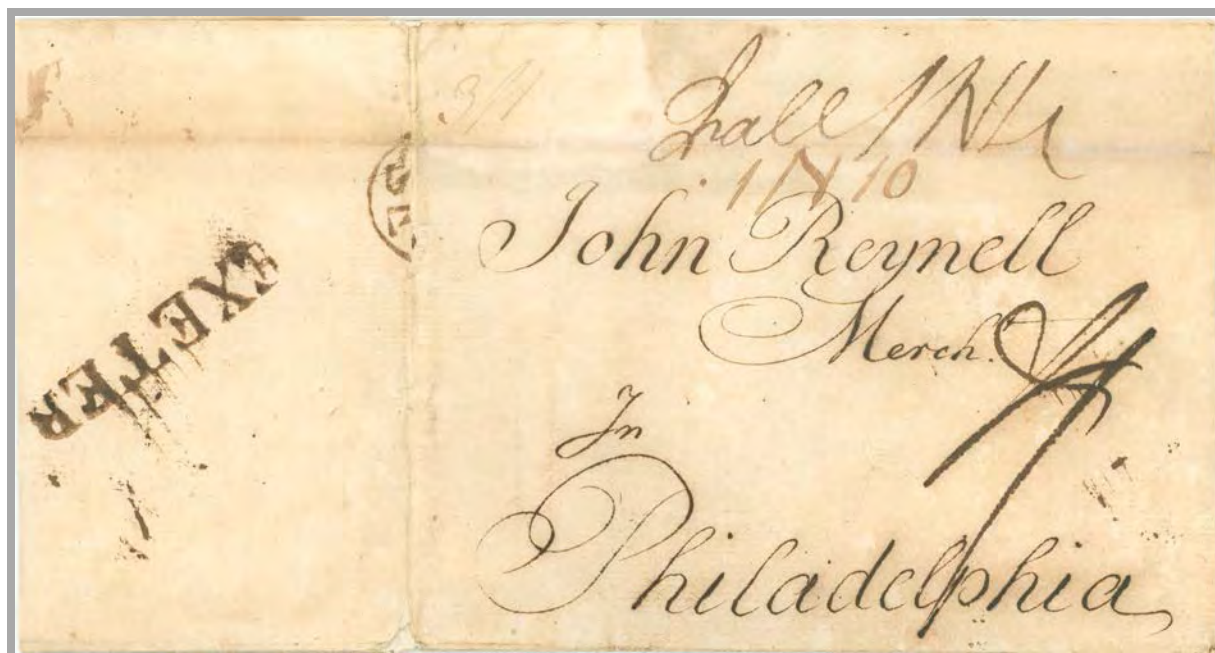
Revolutionary War Atlantic Coast Blockade

American Blockade - May 1775 to March 1783



The British Parliamentary post in America dismissed its post riders in May 1775, so the new American Constitutional post had to carry the mails. The Constitutional post began operations from New York in October 1775, and carried some Falmouth packet mail to Philadelphia.

The Admiralty began arming the Falmouth packets in September 1775 to protect them from privateers, and took control of them in January 1776.



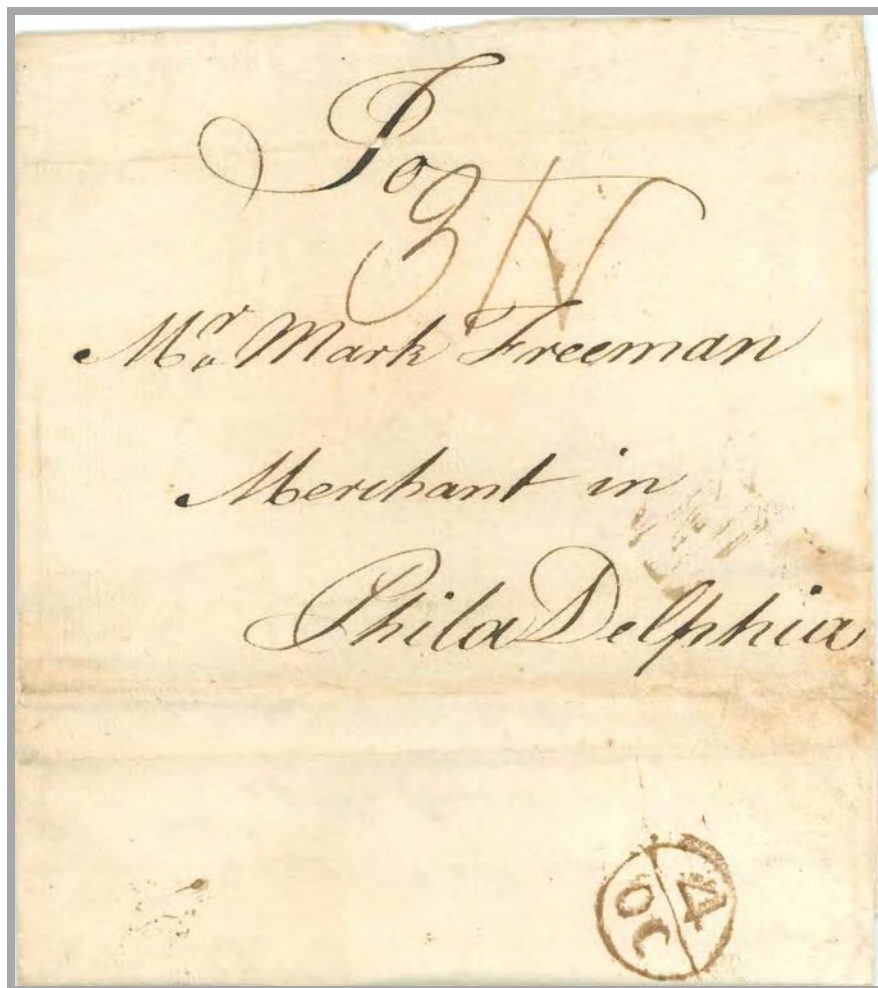
Posted September 2, 1775 in Exeter, GB - rated 1 shilling 4 pence due per the "In all 1N4"
Armed Falmouth packet *Mercury* left September 15 - arrived at New York on November 10
Re-rated "1N10" to add 6d (2 dwt) charge to Philadelphia - transferred to American post
Carried by Constitutional post to Philadelphia - 3 shillings 1p in local currency due

Revolutionary War Atlantic Coast Blockade

American Blockade - May 1775 to March 1783



The Admiralty ordered the October 1775 Falmouth packet to sail directly to the besieged British forces in Boston, rather than to New York.



Posted October 4, 1775 in London, England - rated triple-weight 3 shillings packet postage due
Falmouth packet *Lord Hyde* left October 16 - arrived through blockade to Boston on January 3
Exchanged through American siege lines for transport to rebel-controlled Philadelphia
Carried by Constitutional post to Philadelphia - no additional postal charges noted

Revolutionary War Atlantic Coast Blockade

American Blockade - May 1775 to March 1783



The British post office in New York stopped giving mails to the Constitutional post for transmittal to Philadelphia on December 25, 1775. Packet letters were advertised, and recipients had to make arrangements to pick them up.



Posted December 21, 1775 in Thirsk - prepaid 4 pence to London per the "P4" marking
Re-rated on December 25 in London for one shilling packet postage due per the "To pay 1N"
Falmouth packet *Swallow* left January 9 - passed through blockade to New York on March 9
Advertised in New York - Philadelphia recipient arranged for private delivery from New York

Revolutionary War Atlantic Coast Blockade

American Blockade - May 1775 to March 1783



New York City was the western terminus for the Falmouth packets. The British post office used straight-line "N YORK" dated postmarks until forced to evacuate in December 1775.



Dated October 4, 1775 in New York City – postmarked "N YORK oc 10"
Packet *Harriot* ran the blockade on October 19 and arrived in Falmouth on November 16
Postmarked November 17 in Falmouth - rated 1/6 due to Scotland per "In all" marking

Revolutionary War Atlantic Coast Blockade

American Blockade - May 1775 to March 1783



The British occupied New York City from September 1776 to November 1783. It was the western terminus for their Falmouth packets.



Dated November 4, 1778 in New York City - from Captain Campbell of the 71th Regt.
Packet *Swallow* passed through the blockade on November 20 and arrived on December 15
Postmarked December 21 in London - rated 1/6 due to Scotland per "In all" marking



Revolutionary War Atlantic Coast Blockade

American Blockade - May 1775 to March 1783



Westbound Falmouth packets to Charleston stopped at Madeira, after a trip of 9-14 days. Packet postage to Madeira was one shilling six pence.



Dated August 13, 1780 in New York City – endorsed to 20-gun ship *Fanny*
Passed through blockade around September 1 - arrived in Dover on October 14
Postmarked October 16 in London - rated 3/10 due to Madeira per “In all” marking
3/- double-weight packet postage to Madeira plus 10d inland and ship from Dover
Falmouth packet *Antelope* left November 23 - arrived December 2 in Madeira, per docket

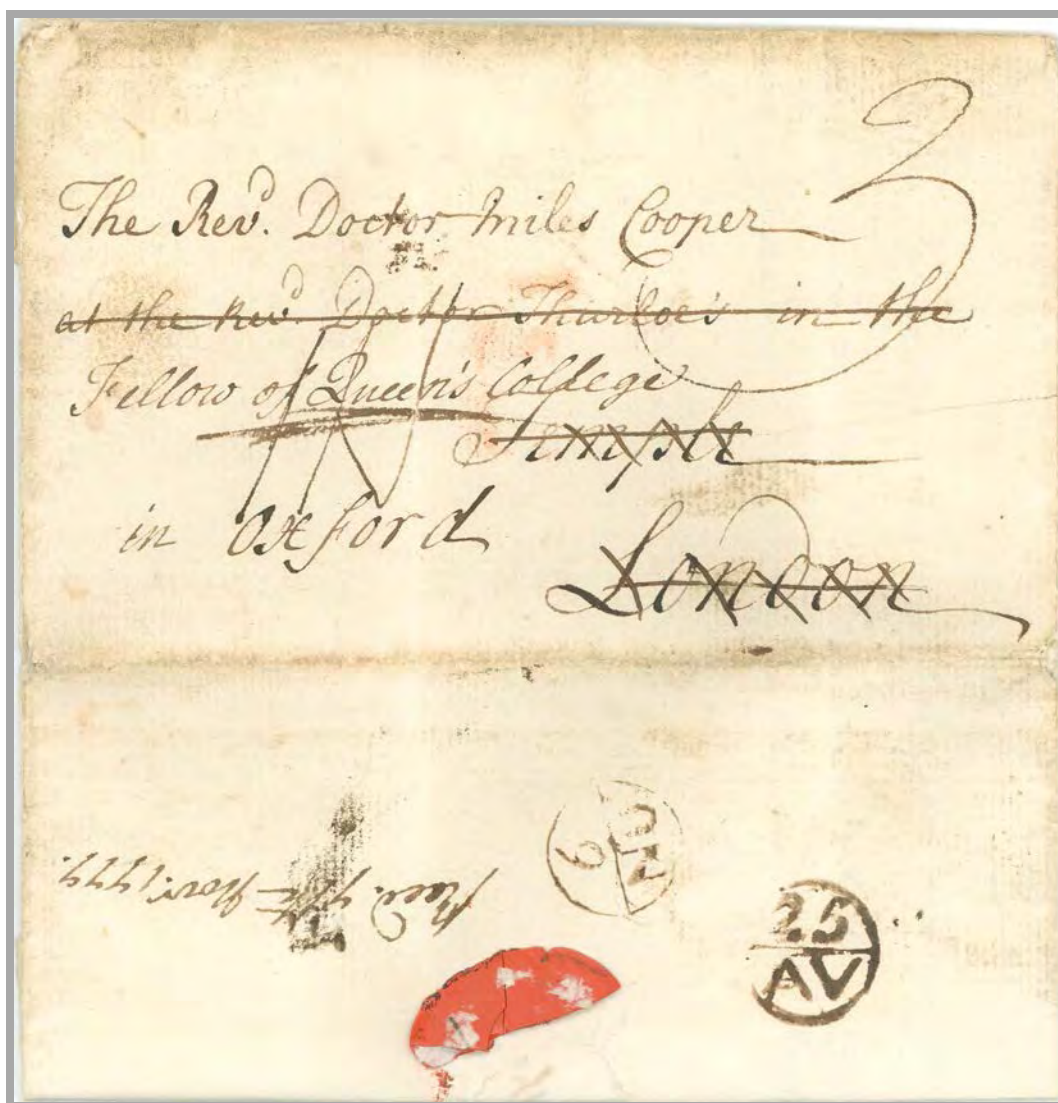


Revolutionary War Atlantic Coast Blockade

American Blockade - May 1775 to March 1783



Captain John Montresor of the 48th Regiment of Foot served in North America from 1754 to 1779. John Singleton Copley painted his portrait in 1771. This letter is from him at New York.



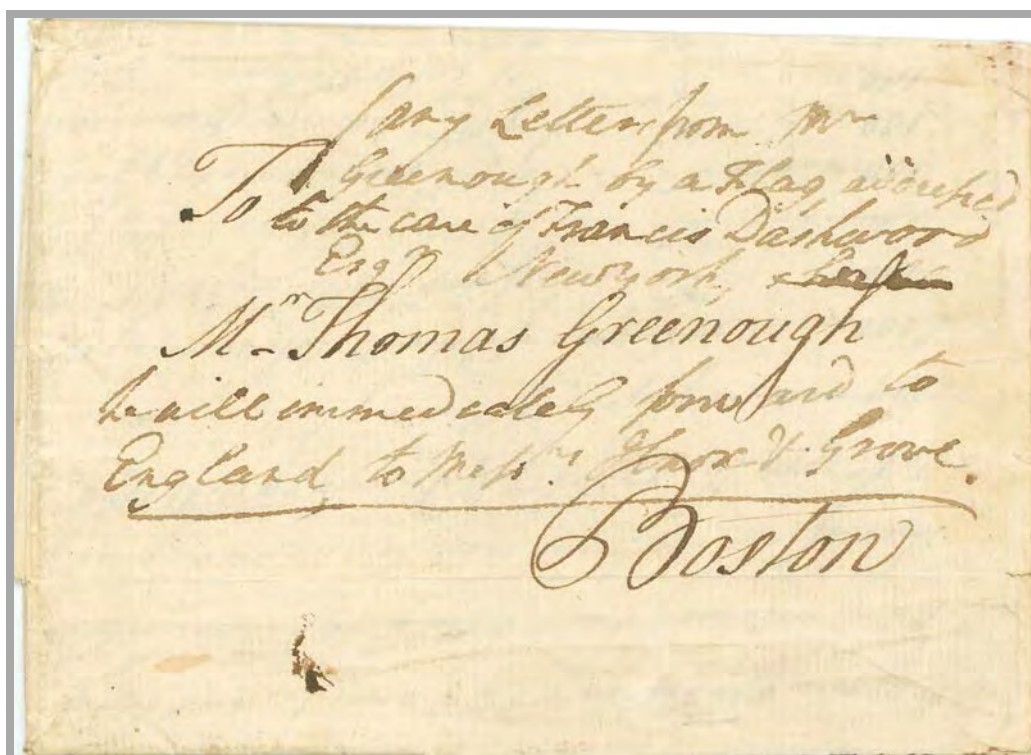
Dated March 12, 1777 in British-occupied New York - rated 1 shilling packet postage due
Packet *Earl of Sandwich* left July 17 and arrived August 21 - postmarked August 25 in London

Revolutionary War Atlantic Coast Blockade

American Blockade - May 1775 to March 1783



Following the British departure from Boston in March 1776, the only communications between New York and Boston were by flag-of-truce.



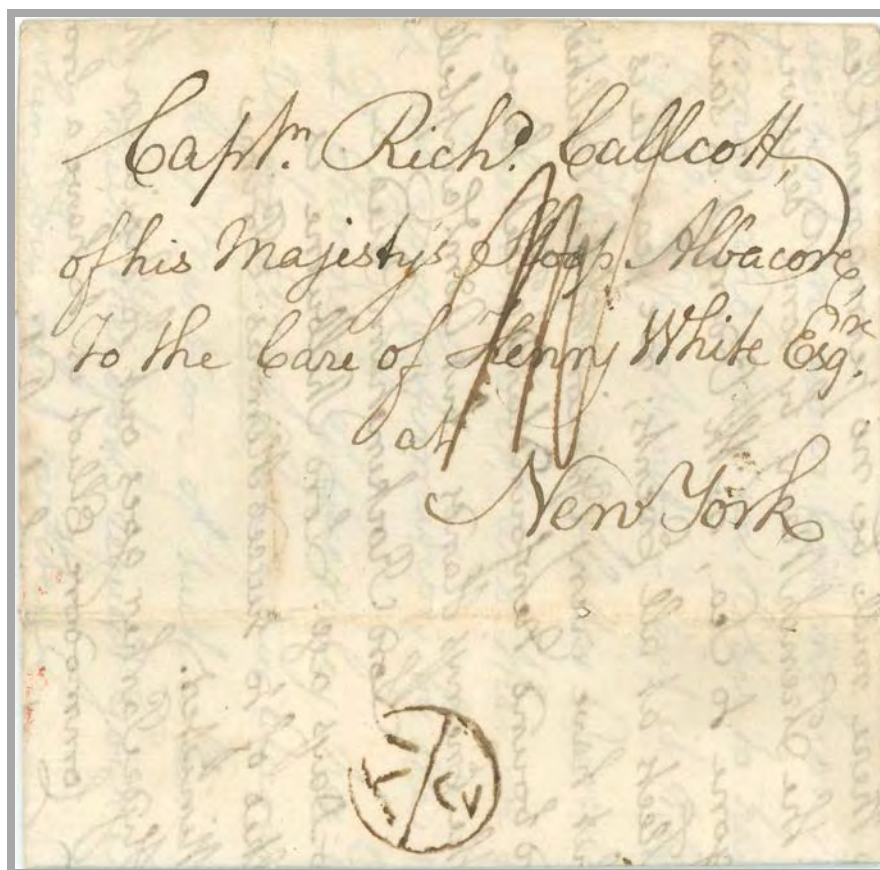
Dated August 4, 1779 in London - sent under cover to Francis Dashwood at New York
Packet *Anna Theresa* left Falmouth on Sept. 9 - arrived through the blockade on October 23
Sent under flag-of-truce to patriot-held Boston by Dashwood - no postal markings

Revolutionary War Atlantic Coast Blockade

American Blockade - May 1775 to March 1783



The 16-gun sloop HMS *Albacore* was formerly the American privateer *Royal Louis*, which had been captured by the 36-gun HMS *Nymphe* in October 1781.



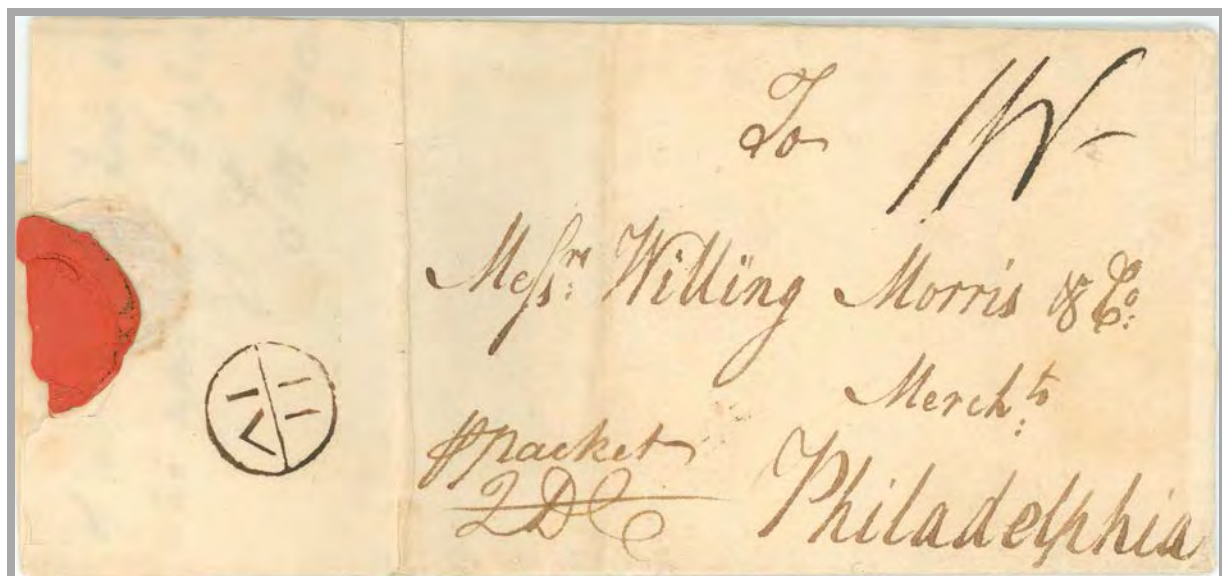
Dated July 3, 1782 in Westminster, England - Falmouth packet *Sandwich* left July 20
Arrived through blockade to New York on September 4 - one shilling packet postage due
Addressed to Captain of HMS *Albacore*, care of a New York attorney

Revolutionary War Atlantic Coast Blockade

American Blockade - May 1775 to March 1783



Docketed October 13, 1775 from Staten Island - postmarked N YORK NOV 14
Falmouth packet *Earl of Halifax* ran New York blockade to Falmouth on December 14



Dated in Bristol on March 5, 1776 - carried privately across the lines to Philadelphia

Revolutionary War Atlantic Coast Blockade

American Blockade - May 1775 to March 1783



Letters carried to England by private ships were subject to a 1d ship fee plus the inland postage to destination. The entry ports had special ship letter postmarks prepared for this type of mail.



Datelined August 2, 1775 in Philadelphia - ship *Liberty* ran blockade around August 15
Arrived in Bristol, England on September 17 - BRISTOL SHIP LRE entry marking
Rated for 5d due (1d ship plus 4d inland) at London on September 19



Revolutionary War Atlantic Coast Blockade

American Blockade - May 1775 to March 1783



The British occupied Savannah, Georgia from December 29, 1778 to July 11, 1782. Only three eastbound Falmouth packet trips were undertaken, and two resulted in captures by privateers.



Dated January 18, 1779 at Mount Pleasant, Georgia (next to Savannah)
Falmouth packet *Lord Hyde* from Savannah on January 18 - arrived February 22
Rated 1/6 due at London on February 26 (1/- packet plus 6d inland to Scotland)
From recently-arrived Captain Campbell of the 71st Regiment of Foot

Revolutionary War Atlantic Coast Blockade

American Blockade - May 1775 to March 1783



British forces occupied Charleston from May 1780 to December 1782. It was used as a supply base for army operations in South Carolina.



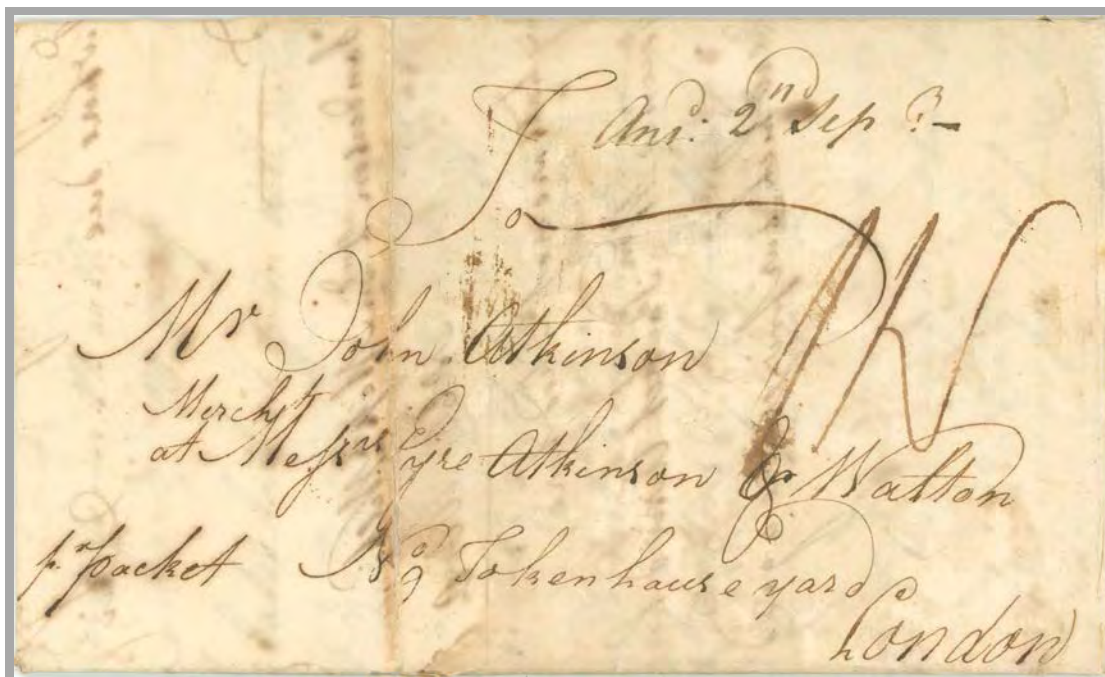
Dated January 19, 1782 in British-occupied Charleston - endorsed to care of Capt. Rainier
Transport HMS *Lucretia* left in late January and arrived in Portsmouth, GB on February 28
PORTSMOUTH SHIP LRE - postmarked in London on March 8 - rated double-weight 7d due

Revolutionary War Atlantic Coast Blockade

American Blockade - May 1775 to March 1783



Charlestown's Parliamentary postmaster used a straight-line postmark that was re-introduced during the May 1780 to December 1782 occupation.



Dated June 27, 1781 in Charleston, South Carolina - endorsed "pr packet"
Postmarked CHARLES/TOWN on the reverse and rated for 1/- packet postage due
Falmouth packet *Prince William Henry* left on July 5 and arrived on August 6



Fewer than ten examples known from this period

Revolutionary War Atlantic Coast Blockade

American Blockade - May 1775 to March 1783



Merchant ships protected themselves by arming and obtaining Letters of Marque, which allowed them to capture enemy prizes while on a voyage.



Dated June 17, 1782 in Charleston - endorsed to the 8-gun British Letter of Marque *Fame*
Arrived in a convoy at Deal, England on August 4 - DEAL SHIP LRE entry marking
Re-rated for 6d due (1d ship plus 5d inland) at London on August 5



War of 1812 - Blockade of North America

Introduction to the British Blockade, 1813-15



The United States declared war on Great Britain on June 18, 1812. In response, England ordered a blockade on November 1 that was implemented in stages. Local proclamations by the Royal Navy announced the actual closing by blockade of four successive portions of the coastline:

- February 6, 1813 – Chesapeake and Delaware Bays (“Mid-Atlantic”)
- May 26, 1813 – New York harbor and Long Island Sound to New London (“New York”)
- September 1, 1813 – North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia (“Southern Coast”)
- April 25, 1814 – Northern coastline from Rhode Island to Maine (“New England”)

The blockade of New Orleans and the Gulf Coast was declared on November 16, 1813 but not implemented in practice. The blockade was lifted on March 6, 1815 after news was received in North America that the December 24, 1814 Treaty of Ghent had ended the war.

Some blockade-run mail was carried on blockade runners which evaded the blockading ships. The British also issued licenses which allowed certain ships to pass through the blockade. These licensed ships carried mail, and are sometimes confused with cartel ships. Cartel ships carried returned POWs or official dispatches under a flag of truce, and also carried mail. Finally, some blockade-run mail was routed around the blockade via an unblockaded port.

The exhibit begins with a survey of pre-blockade mail, and then examines each of the four blockaded areas successively. An example carried by cartel ship through the New England blockade is shown below.



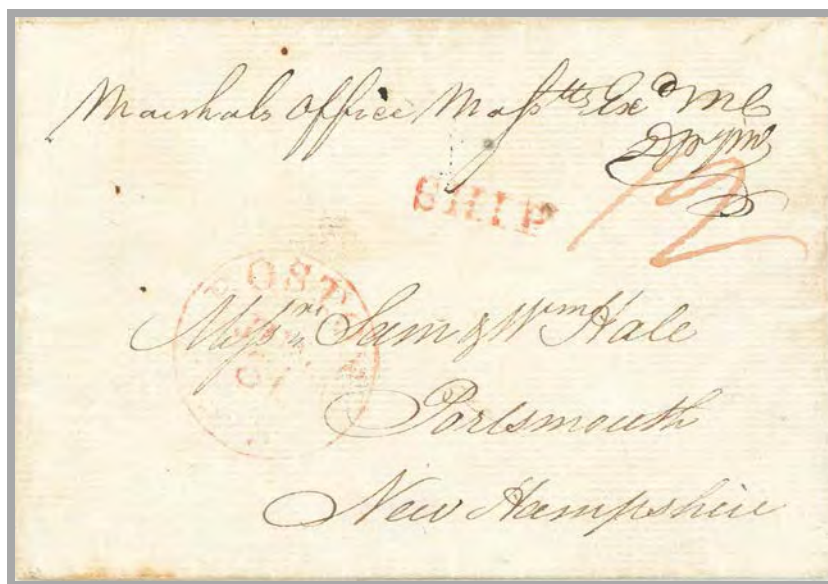
Dateline London May 4, 1814 – hand carried by Samuel Parkman with government dispatches
Falmouth packet *Osborne* to Halifax on June 9 – cartel schooner *Thistle* to Boston on June 20
Carried to Washington, D.C. on June 29 – posted with 20¢ due to Schenectady, NY

War of 1812 Pre-Blockade

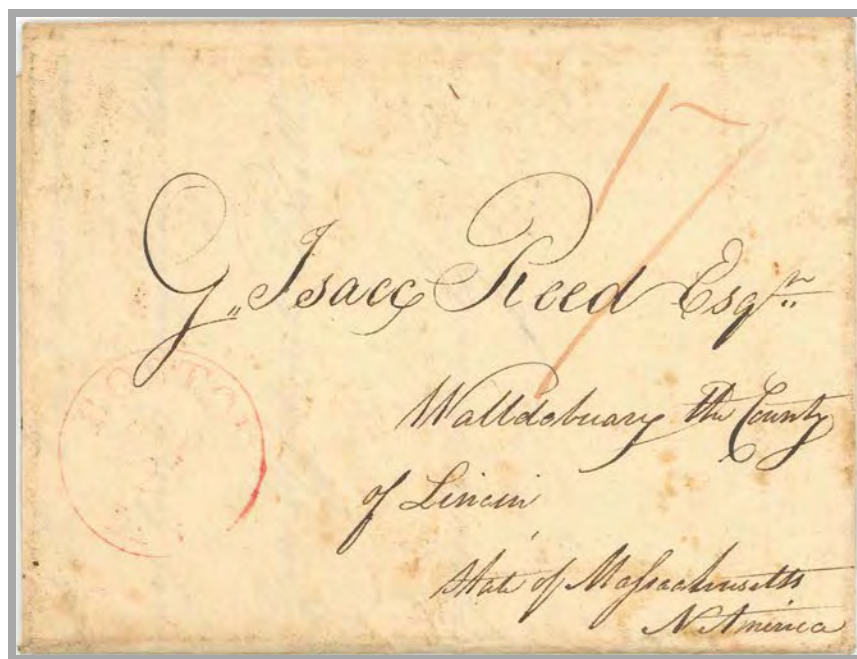
Cartel Ship - July 1812 to April 1814



The first stage of the blockade began on February 6, 1813. Before that, American ships were subject to seizure, so cartel ships for POW and official exchanges carried mail safely. Ship fees were typically not assessed on cartel letters.



Docketed from England on May 5, 1813 – carried by cartel *Hope* from Plymouth to Boston
Censored by Massachusetts Marshal's Office and posted July 31 in Boston - 12¢ due in NH



From prison ship HMS Nassau June 30, 1813 – carried by cartel *Fidelia* from Halifax to Boston
Postmarked in Boston on September 2 - 17¢ due to Waldoboro, Maine (no ship fee)

War of 1812 Pre-Blockade

Cartel Ship - July 1812 to April 1814



Transatlantic ships not only had to run the gauntlet of British ships off North America, but also the British blockade of Napoleonic Europe.



Dated 1st March 1813 - ran through the blockade of France to Bordeaux
Addressed to captured captain of American privateer *Charlotte* on parole in Devon, England
Forwarded by POW cartel from France to England - July 20 London transit postmark
Oval 'Transport Office Prisoners of War' - Red censor 'Appd CT' - 1 shilling due

War of 1812 Pre-Blockade

Cartel Ships - July 1812 to April 1814



Cartels were ships carrying prisoners or official correspondence under a flag-of-truce, and were exempt from capture by naval ships or privateers.

Cartel exemptions were formalized in the May 14, 1813 Barclay-Mason Cartel (or agreement).



Dated in Norfolk, Virginia on July 17, 1812 - **endorsed "P Cartel Friends Capt. Hopkins"**
Cartel *Friends* left New York on July 28 and arrived in Portsmouth – 1/6 ship letter postage due
Carried returning Colonel Hamilton, British consul for the Southern Department at Norfolk



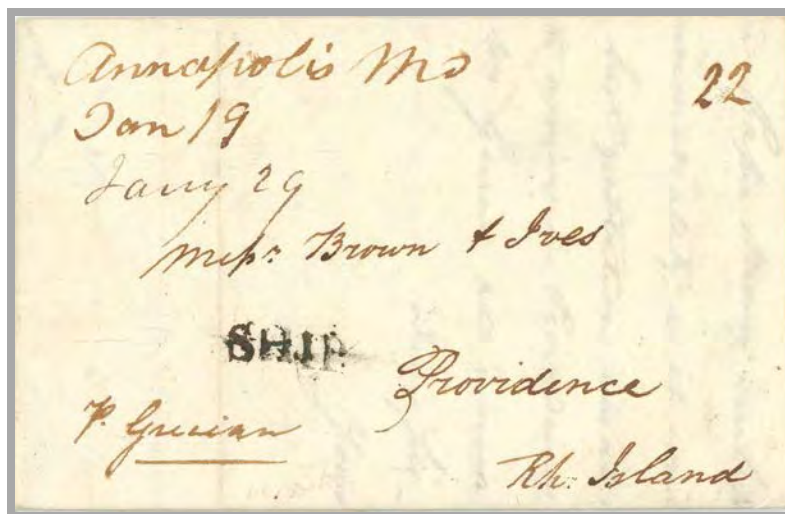
War of 1812 Pre-Blockade

Privateers - July 1812 to April 1814



American privateers were active from July 1812 until the end of the war, intercepting merchant shipping and carrying mail in relative safety.

Over 500 American privateers captured 1,300 enemy ships during the war.



Datelined from France on October 20, 1812 – passed through blockade of France

Carried by Privateer *Grecian* to Annapolis, Maryland in January 1813

Posted January 19 – 3 weeks before the start of the Chesapeake Bay blockade

22¢ due (20¢ for 300-500 miles to Rhode Island plus a 2¢ ship fee)



War of 1812 Pre-Blockade

Privateers - July 1812 to April 1814



The 22-gun privateer *America* captured 31 prizes from January 1813 to the end of the war, many in the English Channel. She sent her prizes back to New England ports.



Dated London on May 17, 1813 – forwarded May 25 from Liverpool by Hughes Duncan
Endorsed by forwarder to American ship *St Lawrence* - left Liverpool on May 30 for Newport, RI
Captured by Salem privateer *America* and taken to Portsmouth, NH – letter released August 3

War of 1812 Pre-Blockade

Falmouth Packets - July 1812 to April 1814



Falmouth packets went to New York under a flag-of-truce from August 1812 to January 1813, and then stopped going there.



Posted in Glasgow, Scotland on April 25, 1812 - Falmouth packet HMS *Alpheia* left May 12
Arrived July 2 in Bermuda – first wartime packet arrival – 17¢ due in Baltimore



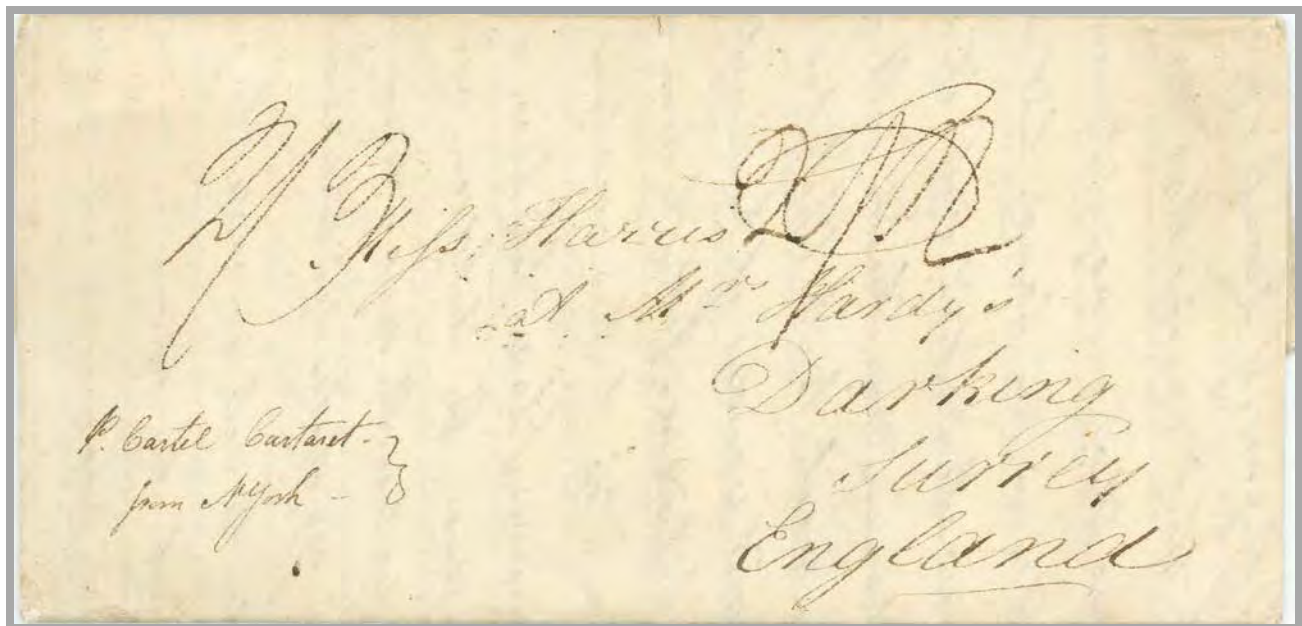
Dated New York September 28, 1812 – Falmouth packet *Nymphe* left September 29
Arrived October 25 - last packet sent without flag-of-truce - "AMERICA F" postmark

War of 1812 Pre-Blockade

Falmouth Packets - July 1812 to April 1814



For six months, Falmouth packets entered and left New York under a flag-of-truce, or "cartel." From February 1813 to February 1815, the packets went to Halifax or Bermuda and avoided New York.



Dated in New York on August 28, 1812 - **endorsed "P Cartel Carteret from N York"**

Falmouth packet *Carteret* left on August 29 and arrived on October 3 via Halifax
First eastbound packet sent under flag-of-truce - 1/1 packet plus 1/2 inland postage due



War of 1812 Pre-Blockade

Falmouth Packets - July 1812 to April 1814



Falmouth packets continued operating to Halifax or Bermuda during the war, so American correspondents could use them if they could get a letter to one of the termini.



Datelined Portsmouth, NH January 2, 1813 - **cartel ship to Halifax, Nova Scotia**

Marked "Ship Letter HALIFAX" and postmarked on January 29

Falmouth packet *Chesterfield* left Halifax February 9 and arrived March 1

Rated for double-weight 4/3 due in Bristol, England

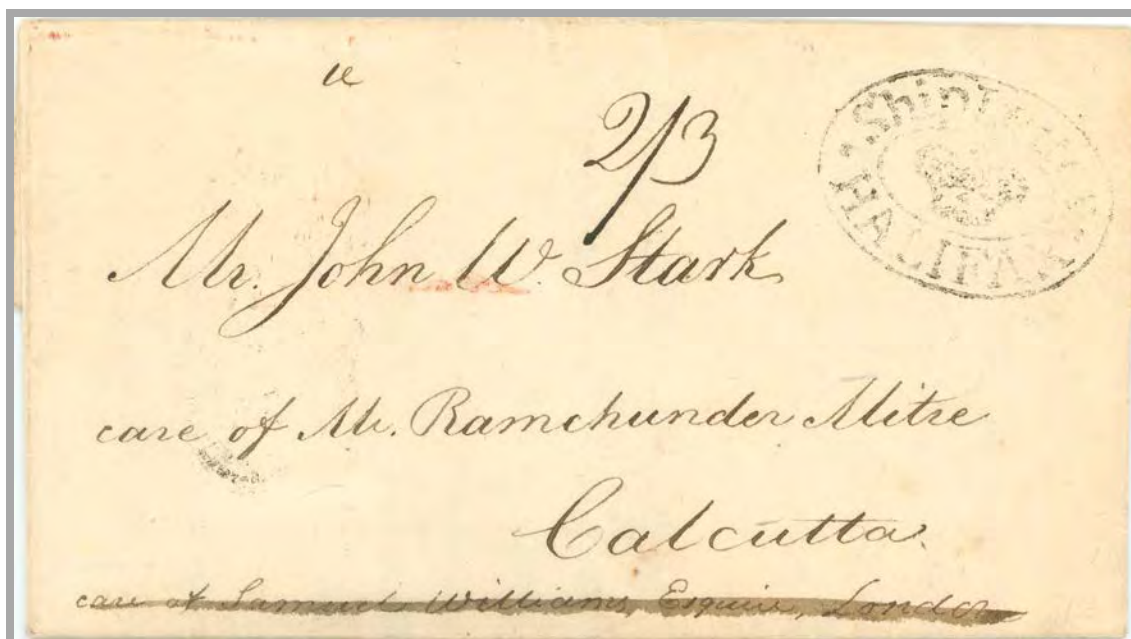


War of 1812 Pre-Blockade

Trading Ships - July 1812 to April 1814



Dated Calcutta September 25, 1812 - endorsed to the *Caravan* (Capt. Augustine Heard)
Did not know war had started when captured by British warship at Pernambuco on January 5
Released by Portuguese government - rated triple-weight 53¢ due at Salem, MA on March 23



Dated from Boston on January 16, 1814 - no blockade of Boston yet - ship to Halifax
Falmouth packet *Swiftsure* - left March 30 and arrived April 20 - Rated 2/3 due in London
Forwarded under cover to Calcutta, India on October 14

War of 1812 Pre-Blockade

Trading Ships - July 1812 to April 1814



Datelined at Paris on August 19, 1813 – passed through British blockade of France
Rated for 12¢ due (2¢ ship plus 10¢ to Boston) at Portsmouth, NH on November 30



Datelined at Liverpool on May 13, 1813 – endorsed to ship *Holland*
Rated double-weight 36¢ due (2¢ ship plus 34¢) at Portland, Maine - received July 8

War of 1812 Pre-Blockade

Licensed Ships - July 1812 to April 1814



The British issued round-trip licenses to some ships carrying vital supplies to Wellington's Army on the Iberian Peninsula.



Dated in Cadiz, Spain on March 16, 1813 - carried by licensed ship
Arrived April 19 in New Bedford, MA - double-weight 36¢ due to New York



Dated London February 23, 1813 - forwarded from Lisbon on March 12
Arrived April 23 in Boston - triple-weight 32¢ due to New York

War of 1812 Blockade of the Mid-Atlantic

Blockade Runner - February 1813 to March 1815



The British proclaimed the blockade of Chesapeake and Delaware Bays on February 6, 1813. It was lifted on March 6, 1815.



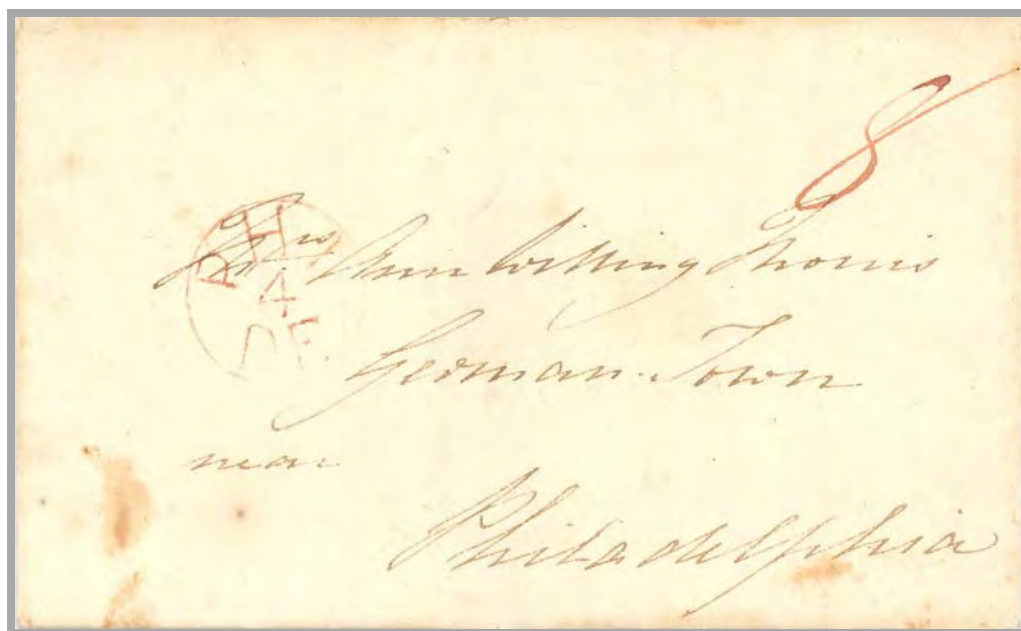
Datelined Curacao December 11, 1812 - forwarded from St Thomas on February 14
Blockade runner through Chesapeake Bay to Alexandria, VA on March 13, 1813
Rated 17¢ due to New York - no ship fee assessed

War of 1812 Blockade of the Mid-Atlantic

Blockade Runner - February 1813 to March 1815



Dateline Alexandria, VA May 16, 1814 - blockade runner through Chesapeake Bay
Rated as ship letter in Deal - one shilling due (4d ship fee plus 8d inland to London)



Dateline London October 10, 1814 - through Delaware Bay blockade to Philadelphia
Posted December 4, 1814 in Philadelphia - 8¢ postage due (less than 40 miles) to Germantown

War of 1812 Blockade of the Mid-Atlantic

Blockade Runner - February 1813 to March 1815



A line of British Royal Mail packets ran between Jamaica and Falmouth. A few blockade run letters connected with them for transit to England.



Datelined Norfolk, Virginia October 5, 1813 - ran Chesapeake Bay blockade to Jamaica
February 11 Jamaica Royal Mail Packet postmark - rated 2/7 due to Scotland

War of 1812 Blockade of the Mid-Atlantic

Around Blockade - February 1813 to March 1815



Mail could bypass the blockade by entering or leaving through an unblockaded port.



Docketed England April 5, 1813 - *Fair Trader* from Gravesend on May 9 to Boston on June 9
Carried overland to blockaded Philadelphia - rated 42¢ due (double weight 20¢ plus 2¢ ship)



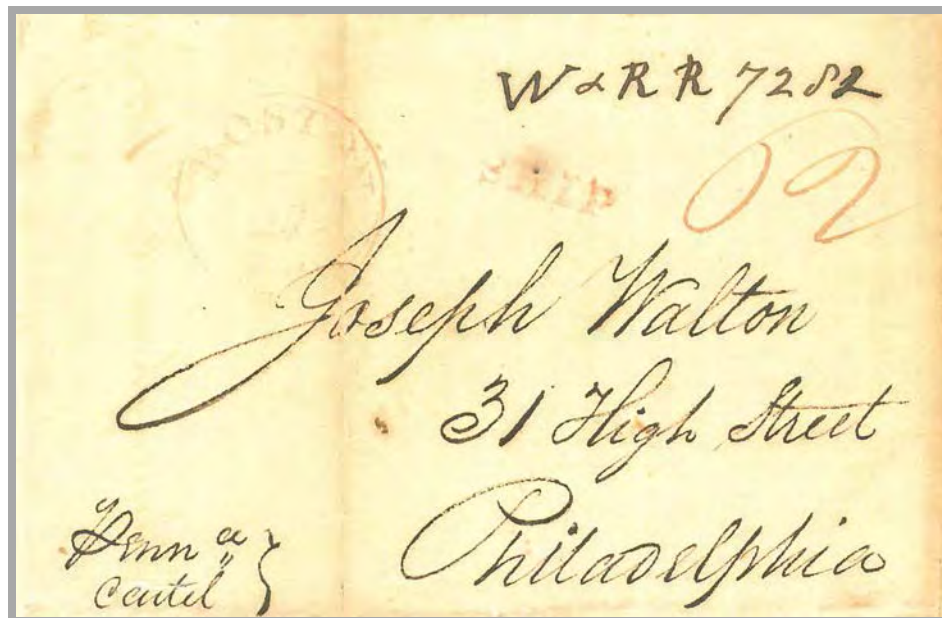
Dated London March 12, 1813 - endorsed "p Brazilian" by Liverpool forwarder on April 13
Brazilian left April 23 and arrived in Newport May 23 - rated double weight 36¢ to Philadelphia

War of 1812 Blockade of the Mid-Atlantic

Around Blockade - February 1813 to March 1815



The merchant ship *Henry* obtained a license from British authorities and left Liverpool on March 18, 1813. She was intercepted by HMS *La Hogue* on April 28 and sent in to Halifax. With a valid license, she was released on June 18 for Boston. On June 22, she was boarded by the HMS *Tenedos* but allowed to proceed to unblockaded Boston on June 23.



Datelined Birmingham, England January 6, 1813 - endorsed to Liverpool cartel *Pennsylvania*
Private letters were not allowed on the *Pennsylvania* - **sent instead on licensed ship *Henry***

Arrived at Boston on June 23 but mail was detained six days for examination

Postmarked in Boston on June 29 - rated for triple-weight 62¢ due to blockaded Philadelphia

War of 1812 Blockade of the Mid-Atlantic

Around Blockade - February 1813 to March 1815



The ship *Pacific* was denied cartel status on March 13, 1813 but left New York for Lisbon on March 21 with 30 passengers and dispatches for the Russian government.



Dateline Richmond, Virginia February 20, 1813 - endorsed "pr Pacific"
The *Pacific* left unblockaded New York on March 21 for Lisbon, Portugal
May 5 Lisbon-Falmouth packet carried letter to England per "Lisbon F" postmark
Rated 2/5 due (1/1 packet plus 1/4 inland postage to Scotland)



War of 1812 Blockade of the Mid-Atlantic

Around Blockade - February 1813 to March 1815



Datelined Cadiz, Spain on May 4, 1813 - endorsed to ship "Factor Captn Hamilton"
Factor left Cadiz on May 7 and arrived at unblockaded Boston on June 17 - posted next day
Overland to blockaded Philadelphia - rated 22¢ due (2¢ ship plus 20¢ for 300-500 miles)



Datelined Cadiz, Spain February 21, 1813 - carried to unblockaded New York on April 1
Rated 14.5¢ due - 2¢ ship plus 12.5¢ for 90-150 miles to blockaded Philadelphia

War of 1812 Blockade of the Mid-Atlantic

Cartel Ship - February 1813 to March 1815



London's Foreign Letter Office processed mail to and from the European continent. Letters handled by this office were entitled to a 2d deduction from the published rates.



Dateline Philadelphia October 23, 1813 - sent by cartel ship to Gibraltar
Processed through London's FOREIGN office on January 25 - rated double
Charged 1806 5/4 packet rate from Gibraltar, less 2d Foreign Office rebate

War of 1812 Blockade of the Mid-Atlantic

Cartel Ship - February 1813 to March 1815



The U.S. raised postal rates by 50% on February 1, 1815. These "War Rates" ended on March 31, 1816 and were in effect for only the final month of the blockade. The 2¢ ship fee was not intended to be increased, but this was not clarified until a March 23, 1815 post office circular.



Dated July 8, 1814 in London - postmarked **London Paid Ship Letter** on October 21
Prepaid 1 shilling 1 pence (half packet rate) - directed by post office to next cartel sailing
Cartel *San Felipe* left Plymouth on December 2 - arrived in Chesapeake Bay on February 23
Postmarked at Norfolk for March 2 mail to New York - rated for 33¢ to (30¢ plus 3¢ ship fee)



War of 1812 Blockade of the Mid-Atlantic

Cartel Ship - February 1813 to March 1815



Reuben G. Beasley was acting U.S. consul in England at the start of the war. He became agent for American POWs in England from 1812 to 1814. John Mason was the American Commissioner General of Prisoners during the War of 1812.



November 17, 1814 London Post Paid Withdrawn Ship Letter - prepaid 8½d
Cartel *San Felipe* to Norfolk on February 23, 1815 - rated "free" on February 27
From R.G. Beasley to John Mason regarding release of 157 American POWs

War of 1812 Blockade of the Mid-Atlantic

Cartel Ship - February 1813 to March 1815



The U.S. 1815 "War Rates" increased inland postage rates by 50%. The 2¢ ship fee was not increased, but the in-port 6¢ ship postage was raised to 9¢.

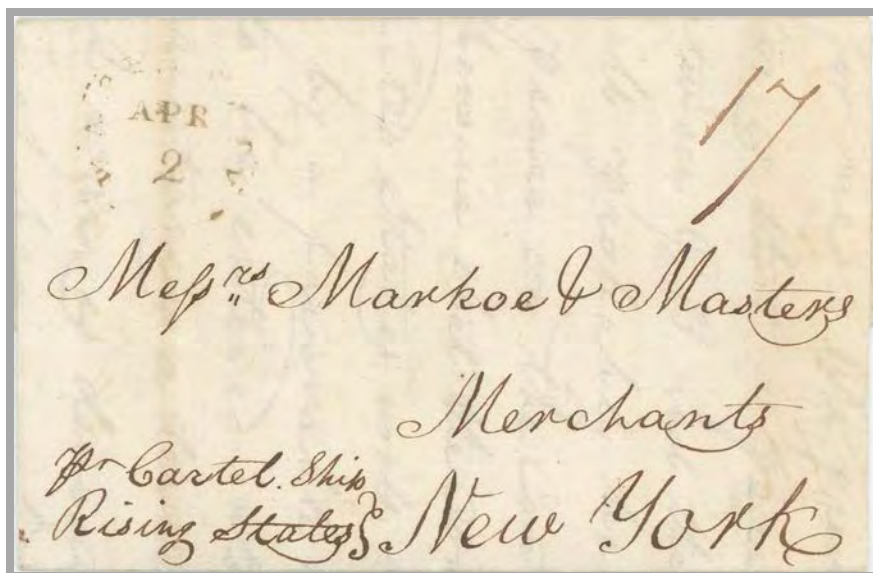


January 28, 1815 **Liverpool Post Paid Withdrawn Ship Letter** - prepaid 9d
Cartel ship to Philadelphia - 9¢ in-port ship fee due



War of 1812 Blockade of the Mid-Atlantic

Cartel Ship - February 1813 to March 1815



Dated St Bart's February 27, 1814 - **endorsed to cartel ship *Rising States***
Rising States left on March 1 with 50 exchanged POWs - arrived in Providence on March 16
Carried to Washington, DC and posted there on April 2 - rated 17¢ to NY (no ship fee)



Dated Liverpool March 19, 1814 - **endorsed to cartel *Fair American***
Posted June 2 in Washington, DC - 17¢ postage due (no ship fee assessed)

War of 1812 Blockade of the Mid-Atlantic

Cartel Ship - February 1813 to March 1815



For half of the 2/2 packet rate, the British post office "paid ship letter" service would forward mail by cartel ships to the United States.



Datelined at Blackburn on May 5, 1813 - prepaid 2/3 (1/1 prepaid ship fee plus 1/2 inland)
Postmarked **London Paid Ship Letter** on May 17 - cartel ship arrived in Boston on July 13



London Paid Ship Letter of June 25, 1814 - **endorsed "p. Cartel"** - prepaid double-rate 2/2
Rated 42¢ due at Boston - 2¢ ship fee plus double-weight 40¢ for 300-500 miles to Philadelphia

War of 1812 Blockade of New York

Blockade Runner - May 1813 to March 1815



The blockade of New York harbor and Long Island Sound was proclaimed on May 26, 1813. It lasted until March 6, 1815.



Docketed (France) October 23, 1813 - **passed through blockades of France and New York**
Letter of Marque brig *Mary* left Bordeaux November 28 and arrived in New York January 18
Posted in New York on January 19 - 19¢ due (2¢ ship plus 17¢ inland) to Albany



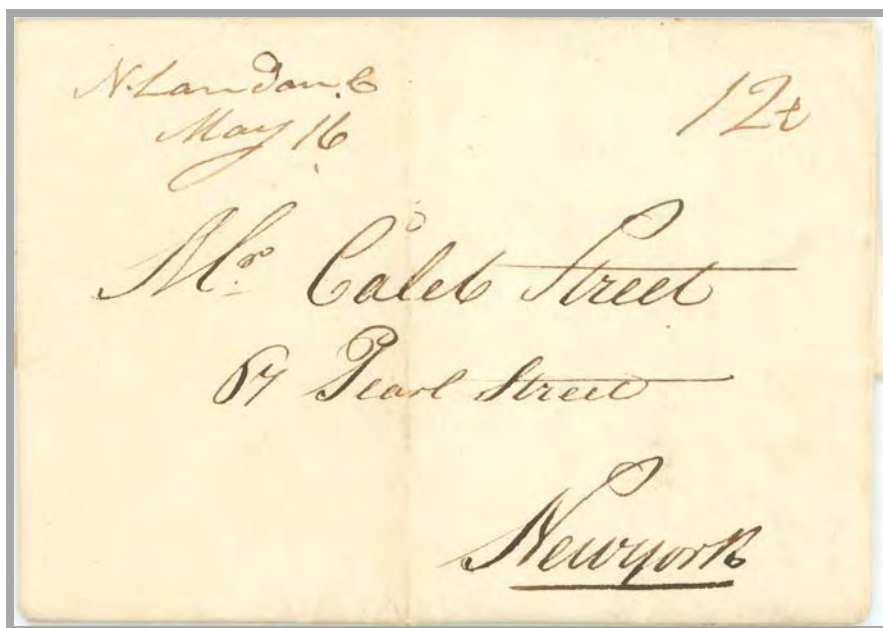
Datelined Dublin (Ireland) August 2, 1814 - forwarded from Liverpool on October 4
Through the New York blockade - posted October 29 with triple-weight 53¢ due to Albany

War of 1812 Blockade of New York

Blockade Runner - May 1813 to March 1815



The British fleet imposed a strict blockade on New London, Connecticut after Commodore Stephen Decatur's 55-gun frigate *USS United States* took refuge there on June 1, 1813.



Datelined in Curacao on March 28, 1814 - sent via St Bart's to run the blockade
Swedish cartel ship *Carle* left St Bart's on May 1 and arrived off New London on May 14
Carle waved off by HMS *La Hogue* but ran blockade under fire from HMS *Sylph* and *Maidstone*
Postmarked in New London on May 16 - 12.5¢ due (no ship fee) inland postage to New York



War of 1812 Blockade of New York

Blockade Runner - May 1813 to March 1815



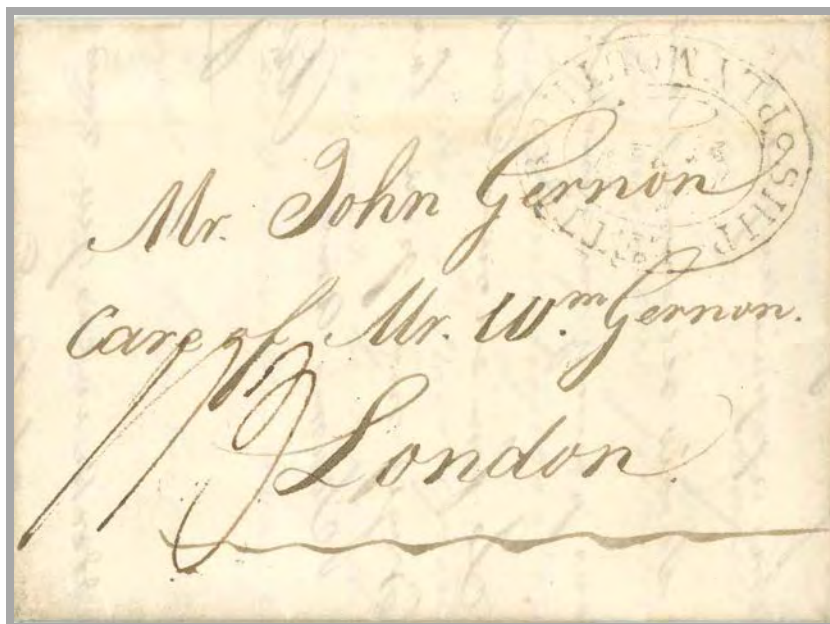
Dateline Bordeaux, France September 8, 1813 – paid fee of a half “piastre” (50¢)
Privateer Delille to blockaded New York on May 11, 1814 after capturing five prizes
6¢ in-port ship fee due - forwarded from New York to nearby Jersey City, NJ



(Scan of the cover's reverse side at 90%)
Re-posted in Jersey City, NJ on May 17, 1814 with 17¢ due to Baltimore, MD

War of 1812 Blockade of New York

Blockade Runner - May 1813 to March 1815



Dated New York September 2, 1814 - carried through New York blockade to Plymouth 1/3 due in London on October 14 - **forwarded privately to Calais, France on October 17**



Dated Curacao June 4, 1813 - carried via Puerto Cavello through New York blockade
Bootlegged into New York - posted on July 6 with 1¢ drop fee due

War of 1812 Blockade of New York

Around Blockade - May 1813 to April 1814



The blockade of New York was proclaimed on May 26, 1813. New England remained unblockaded until April 25, 1814, so letters to the New York area could be routed through those ports.



Datelined Cadiz, Spain on January 22, 1814 – carried by the Swedish brig *Fortuna*

Departed from Cadiz on January 22 - arrived at New Bedford, MA on March 21

Posted on March 23 – one month before blockade initiated there

14.5¢ (2¢ ship plus 12.5¢ inland postage) due to blockaded New London



War of 1812 Blockade of New York

Around Blockade - May 1813 to April 1814



Neutral ships which left port before the New York blockade notification was received were diverted from blockaded New York by British warships, and were not seized.



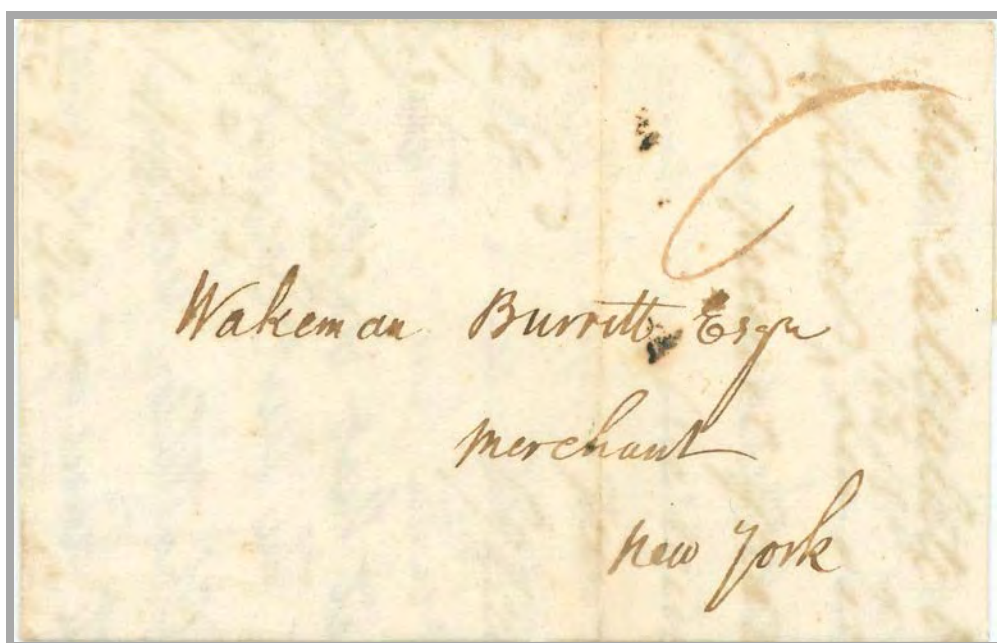
Departed from Bordeaux, France on June 24, 1813 on the schooner *Banyar* for New York
Chased off Cape Sable (Nova Scotia) by HMS *Poitiers* on July 18 - **threw mail bag overboard**
Mail bag recovered by Swedish schooner *Adolphus* which had left the Azores on July 8
Adolphus had been boarded by HMS *Loire* off Sandy Hook (New York) and ordered to Newport
Adolphus arrived in Newport, RI on July 31 and delivered mail to post office on August 3
No ship fee indicated - letter held at Newport until the blockade was lifted

War of 1812 Blockade of New York

Cartel Ship - May 1813 to March 1815



Dateline Liverpool August 29, 1813 - endorsed to cartel ship *Robert Burns*
Robert Burns departed on August 29 and arrived in New York on October 7
Posted in New York on October 15 - 20¢ due to Maine (no ship fee)



Dateline Liverpool April 4, 1814 - sent on "cartel now about to sail"
Cartel *Fair American* left Liverpool on April 8 and arrived in New York on May 13
Cartel carried dispatches for the U.S. Secretary of State - 6¢ in-port ship fee due

War of 1812 Blockade of New York

Cartel Ship - May 1813 to March 1815



September 17, 1814 G.B. postal act authorized ship letters for one-third of packet rates, or 8.5 pence. The sender paid the rate and “withdrew” the letter from the post office to place it on a cartel ship. This act was only effective until July 11, 1815.



Dated October 19, 1814 and posted in Lymington, England – prepaid 4d to London
Sent to the care of the New England Coffee House in London for forwarding by cartel ship
Paid 8.5d - received October 22 **London Post Paid Withdrawn Ship Letter** postmark
Carried by cartel ship *Jenny* to New York on December 2 - 6¢ in-port ship fee due

War of 1812 Blockade of New York

Cartel Ship - May 1813 to March 1815



Napoleon abdicated on April 6, 1814, ushering in a restored French monarchy and a brief period of peace between France and England.



Dated June 14, 1814 - sent with first dispatches to new French monarchy
French warship *Olivier* left New York on July 5 and arrived in Lorient, France on July 24
Marked "Colonies via Lorient" and sent via Calais, France to Dover, England
Rated 2/7 due at London's FOREIGN office on August 12 (1/2 packet plus 1/5 to Ireland)

War of 1812 Blockade of New York

Cartel Ship - May 1813 to March 1815



The Portuguese ship *Dois Hermaos* was permitted through the New York blockade because it carried officers from the new French government.



Forwarded from New York on July 14, 1814 - 50 cts letter charge for *Dois Hermaos*
Posted August 13 as a double-weight Portsmouth ship letter with 2/10 due to Lancaster



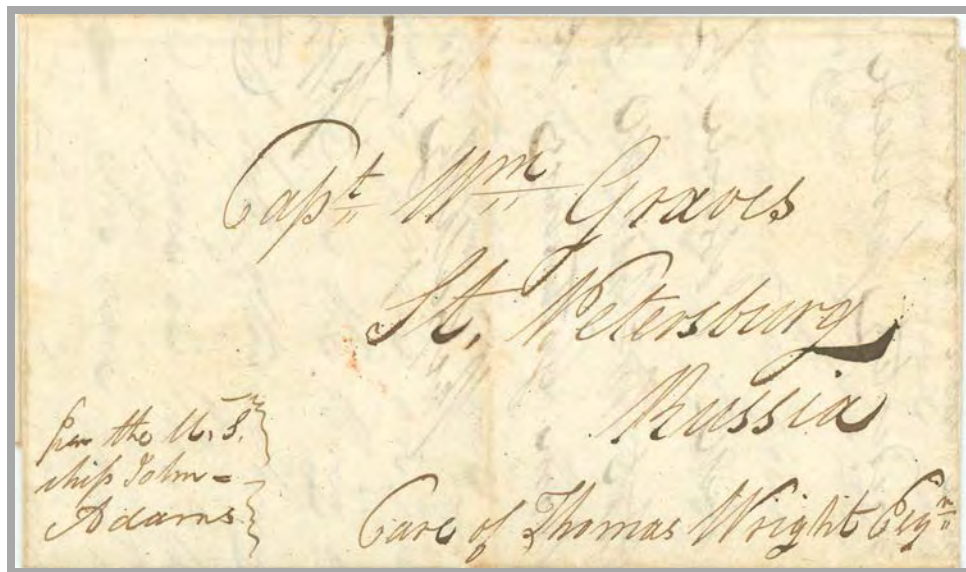
Dated June 13, 1814 - forwarded from New York on June 20 for \$1 fee

War of 1812 Blockade of New York

Cartel Ship - May 1813 to March 1815



The 28-gun frigate USS *John Adams* was granted cartel status by the British blockading squadron to carry a United States peace delegation to Sweden. She left New York on February 24, 1814 and arrived at Gothenburg on April 11.



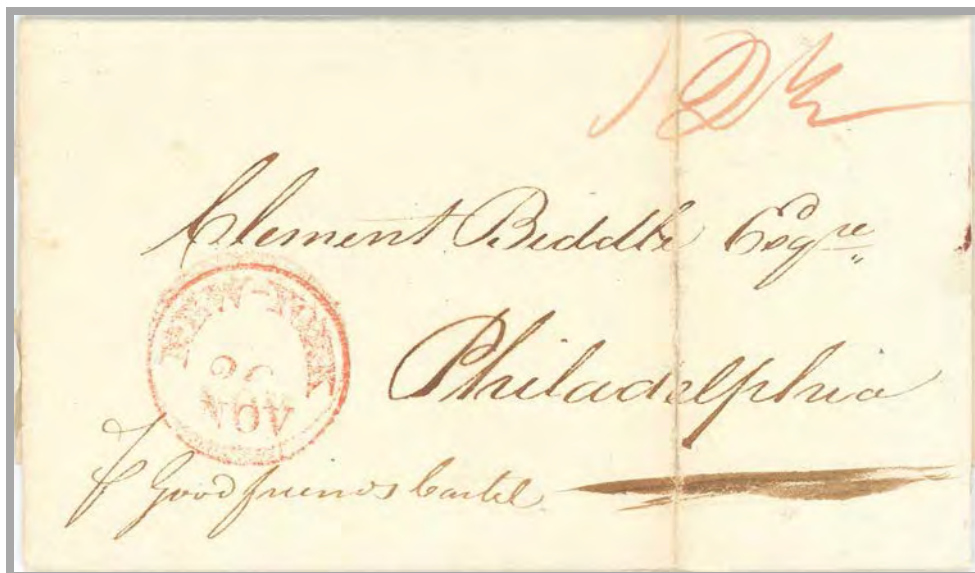
Dated Newburyport, MA on February 17, 1814 - **endorsed to the USS *John Adams***
Sent under cover to Thomas Wright in New York, who placed letter on the *John Adams*
Arrived in Sweden on April 11 - sent under cover to St Petersburg, Russia

War of 1812 Blockade of New York

Cartel Ship - May 1813 to March 1815



Letters by cartel ships could be handed to the ship captain in England or processed through the British post office at the 1799 one shilling one pence paid ship letter rate (half the packet rate).



Dated London August 17, 1813 - endorsed to *Good Friends* cartel ship
Posted in New York on November 20 - 12.5¢ due to Philadelphia (no ship fee)



Dated London January 29, 1814 - March 1 **London Paid Ship Letter** postmark
Prepaid 1/1 - cartel ship to New York on May 16 - 6¢ in-port ship fee due

War of 1812 Blockade of the Southern Coast

Blockade Runner - September 1813 to March 1815



British warships had been harassing American ships off Charleston, SC since July 1812, and the formal blockade began on September 1, 1813. Blockade runners sailed for nearby Spanish Florida to reach transatlantic ships from Havana, Cuba.



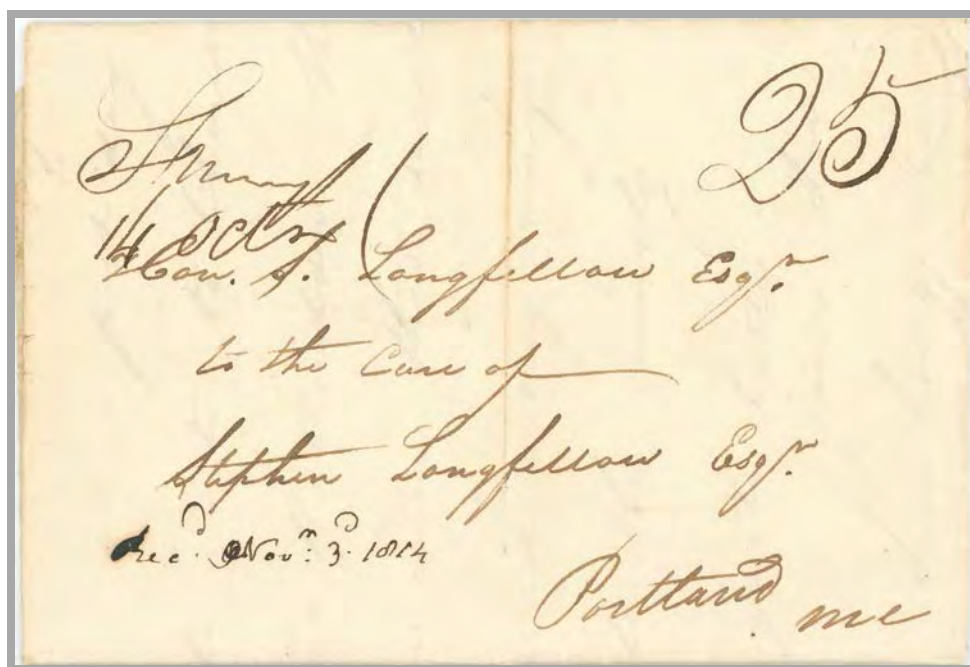
Dated June 12, 1814 – blockade runner to Amelia Island, Spanish Florida
Spanish ship to Havana – placed in mails for Cadiz, Spain per red “Islas de Barlovento” marking
Sent overland from Cadiz to England via Bayonne, France – 2/2 rate per April 1814 GPO Notice
Passed through London Foreign Office on September 21 – double-rate 6/2 due in Edinburgh

War of 1812 Blockade of the Southern Coast

Blockade Runner - September 1813 to March 1815



Datelined Fernandina, Spanish Florida October 19, 1814 - blockade runner to Charleston
Posted in Charleston October 27 - 25¢ due in Portland on November 7



Datelined Amelia Island, Spanish Florida October 15, 1814 - blockade runner to St Mary's
Postmarked in St Mary's, Georgia on October 14 - 25¢ due in Portland on November 3

War of 1812 Blockade of New England

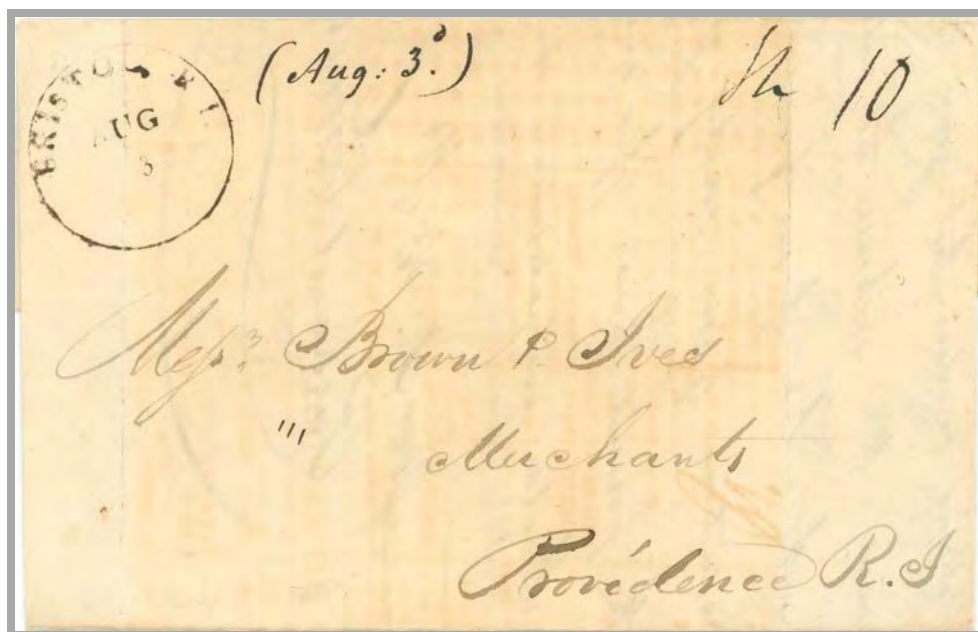
Blockade Runner - April 1814 to March 1815



The blockade of New England from Rhode Island to Maine was in effect from April 25, 1814 to March 6, 1815.



Dateline: Gothenburg, Sweden January 6, 1814 - Swedish ship *Fortuna* left April 28
Entry blocked by HMS *Nymph* - fishing boat carried mail to Boston on June 21 - 14.5¢ due



Dateline: Havana, Cuba July 6, 1814 - Swedish brig *Christiana* left July 21 for Rhode Island
Arrived August 1 and posted at Bristol on August 3 - 10¢ due to Providence (8¢ plus 2¢ ship)

War of 1812 Blockade of New England

Blockade Runner - April 1814 to March 1815



The Russian barque *Neva* left Sweden on April 19, 1814 – a week before the proclamation of the New England blockade. She was allowed through the blockade since she left before the notification.



Datelined in Gothenburg, Sweden on April 13, 1814 - Russian ship *Neva* left on April 19
Stopped by two British frigates in Boston Bay – allowed to proceed to Boston on June 6
Postmarked in Boston on June 8 - 12.5¢ due (no ship fee) to Maine

War of 1812 Blockade of New England

Cartel Ship - April 1814 to March 1815



Dated Le Havre, France December 10, 1813 - ship to America captured by the British
Examined by G.B. Transport Office - released by cartel ship to Boston on September 6
Examined in Boston per oval Marshal's Office marking - quadruple rate 82¢ due

War of 1812 Blockade of New England

Cartel Ship - April 1814 to March 1815



The Melville Island military prison in Halifax harbor was used to house captured American sailors. Their mail was carried by cartel ships to the United States.



Datelined from captured American sailor at "Melville Prison, Halifax" on May 14, 1814
British cartel schooner *Union* left Halifax on May 18 - arrived at Salem, MA on May 24
Examined in Salem per "John Hathorne Jr Dy Marshal" marking
Posted at Salem on May 26 - 14.5¢ due (2¢ ship plus 12.5¢ to Maine)
John Matthews was captured aboard the *Harriot* by the HMS *Dover* on May 29, 1813



War of 1812 Blockade of New England

Cartel Ship - April 1814 to March 1815



In England, the task of administering prisoners of war was entrusted to the Transport Office of the Admiralty. It used a special censor handstamp.



Dated Boston August 27, 1814 - addressed to POW, care of Liverpool forwarder
American cartel ship *Jenny* left Rhode Island on August 31 - carried letters for 50¢ fee
Arrived at Dartmouth, England on September 23 - censored at the Transport Office
Rated for 1/3 due (4d ship fee plus 11d to Liverpool) at London on September 27

War of 1812 Blockade of New England

Cartel Ship - April 1814 to March 1815



Dated Norfolk, Virginia on August 11, 1814 - forwarded from Boston on August 30
Endorsed to Dutch ship *D'Prins Van Orange* - leaving Boston under flag-of-truce
Entered England with "Deal Ship Letter" marking - triple rate 4/6.5 due in Scotland

War of 1812 Blockade of New England

Cartel Ship - April 1814 to March 1815



The British post office only used official cartel ships to carry paid ship letters to destinations not served by Falmouth packets.



Dated London June 16, 1814 - **June 25 Paid Ship Letter postmark**
Prepaid triple-weight 3/3 - cartel ship to Boston on September 5
Triple-weight 26¢ due - 2¢ ship plus 24¢ for less than 40 miles to Newburyport

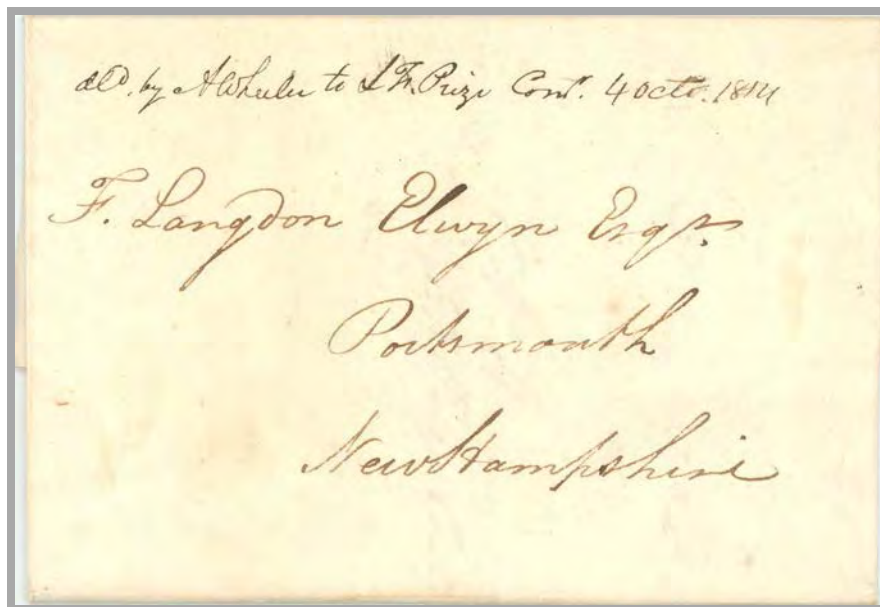


War of 1812 Prize Court

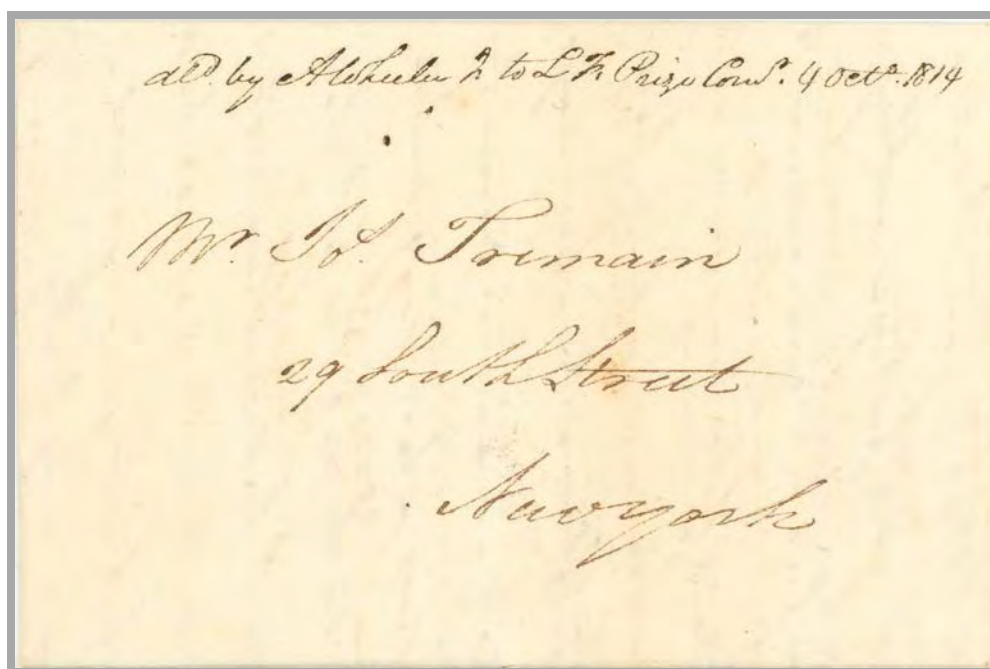
Privateers - July 1812 to April 1814



Letters carried on captured merchant ships were used as evidence in District Prize Courts to determine whether the capture was legal.



Dated September 25, 1814 – captured October 3 on the *George* in Long Island Sound
Docketed on inside - **“opened by L.F. Prize Comr Octr 6t 1814 No 4”**



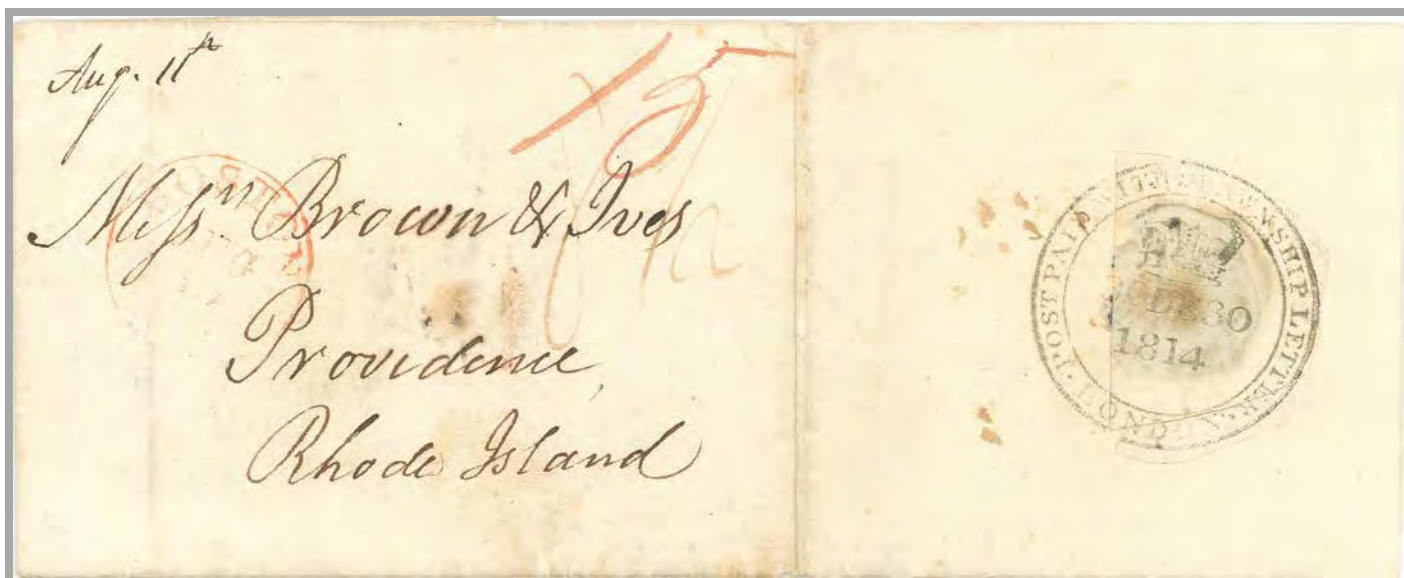
Dated Boston September 26, 1814 - **docketed “No. 1 L.F. Prize Comr”**
Letters used in evidence for condemnation of prize ship *George* in New London Court

War of 1812 Blockade of New England

End of Blockade - March 1815



Following the U.S. Senate's February 17, 1815 ratification of the peace treaty, the blockade was lifted on March 6, 1815.



Dateline London December 27, 1814 - December 30 Post Paid Withdrawn Ship Letter postmark
Ship to Boston on August 10 - 15¢ "War Rate" due (no ship fee assessed)



Dateline London April 5, 1815 - April 8 Liverpool Post Paid Withdrawn Ship Letter postmark
Ship *Milo* left on April 26 and arrived in Boston on June 2 - triple-weight 47¢ due
***Milo* was the first American ship to Liverpool after the peace** - arrived there on March 30

Civil War – Blockade of the Southern Coasts

Introduction to the Federal Blockade, 1861-65



The United States (USA) proclaimed the blockade of the Confederate States of America (CSA) on April 19, 1861. Stretching from Virginia to Texas, the blockaded area encompassed over 3,500 miles of coastline and nearly 200 harbors and river openings, so the USA concentrated on the thirteen CSA deep-water ports that could serve as effective transit points for supplies and mail. By early 1862, six of these ports had been captured before they could commence blockade running. By mid-1862, New Orleans was also captured and Savannah was effectively closed. The remaining five ports were active in blockade running until they were captured late in the war, although Federal naval actions temporarily stopped blockade running at Charleston and Galveston. The blockade ended with the fall of Galveston on June 2, 1865.

There were eleven different routes between the seven CSA ports active in blockade running (Wilmington, Charleston, Savannah, Mobile, New Orleans, Galveston and Victoria) and the five foreign ports (Halifax, Bermuda, Nassau, Havana and Matamoros) that acted as the staging points for supplies and mail. This portion of the exhibit shows incoming and outgoing blockade run mail carried on all eleven blockade run routes.



Forwarded by Adderley & Co. at Nassau - *Leopard* left July 30, 1862 for Charleston on Aug. 3

Fewer than 400 of the letters carried by blockade runners are known today. Other than at New Orleans and Mobile, the blockade mail service was slow to develop since less hazardous through-the-lines mail routes were available until early 1862. Nearly all of the surviving letters were carried in the May 1862 to March 1865 period.

An incoming letter to the CSA was typically sent inside of another envelope to one of the foreign staging ports for transfer to a blockade runner, and then posted in the CSA arrival port, where inland postage and a two cents ship fee were assessed. No West Indies postal markings appear on incoming mail. Outgoing mail was typically forwarded under cover by a blockade runner to a foreign port, where it was placed in the mails. With rare exceptions, CSA postal markings do not appear on outgoing mail.

Civil War Gulf Coast Blockade

Havana-Mobile - October 1861 to August 1864



The blockade of Mobile, Alabama was initiated on May 26, 1861 by the USS *Powhatan*. The few known covers carried through Mobile were used between October 1861 and May 1864. Mobile Bay was captured by Federal naval forces on August 5, 1864.



Envelope carried by blockade runner *Alabama* from Havana on August 10, 1863
Arrived in Mobile on August 15 - rated for 12¢ due (10¢ inland plus 2¢ ship fee)
Forwarded from Charleston on August 21 with additional 10¢ CSA postage due



Dated April 30, 1864 from the Confederacy - sent under cover to blockade runner at Mobile
Denbigh left on May 7 and arrived on May 10 in Havana - active on Gulf Coast 12/63-5/65
Spofford & Tileston steamship *Eagle* from Havana to NY on May 25 - 10¢ US postage due

Civil War Gulf Coast Blockade

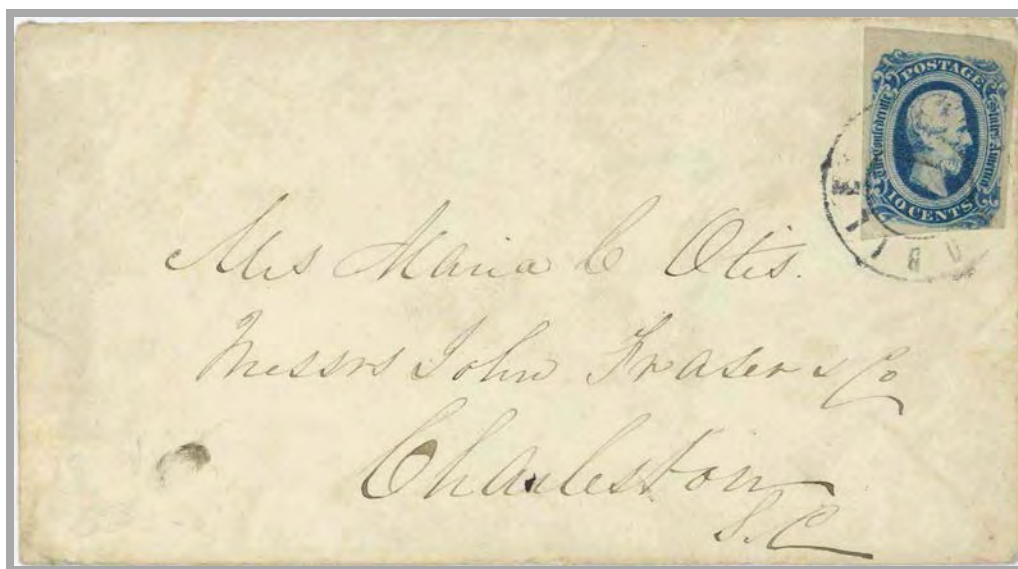
Havana-Mobile - October 1861 to August 1864



Nicknamed "The Mobile Packet," the *Denbigh* was one of the most successful blockade runners, with 26 trips to and from Havana.



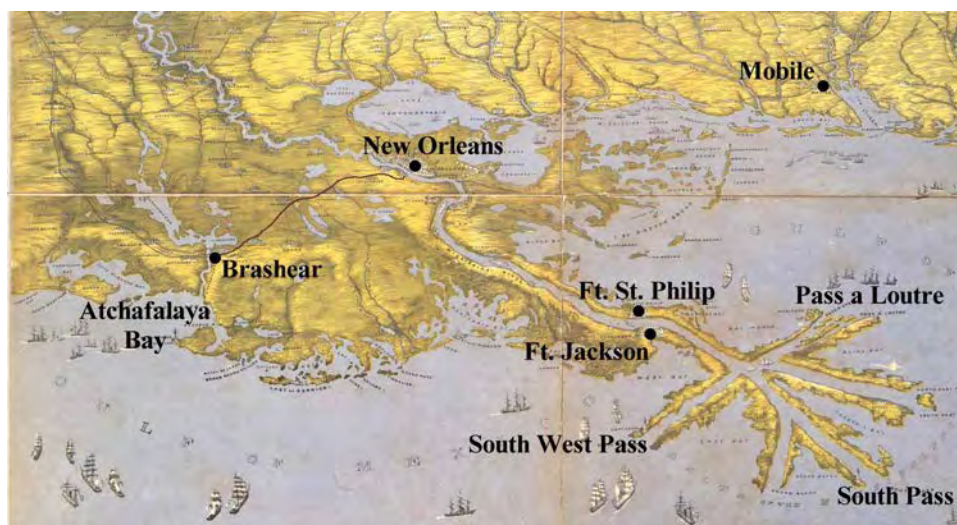
Docketed New York March 21, 1864 - blockade runner *Denbigh* to Mobile April 14
April 14 Mobile postmark - 10¢ postage prepaid by CSA stamp (no 2¢ ship fee)
Forwarded by Louisiana Relief Committee at Mobile - received April 18



Docketed New York April 12, 1864 - blockade runner *Denbigh* to Mobile April 30
Examined at Mobile by Thos. Cox, a.a.g. - dateless Mobile postmark - received May 8

Civil War Gulf Coast Blockade

Havana-New Orleans - May 1861 to April 1862



The blockade of New Orleans was initiated on May 26, 1861 by the USS *Brooklyn*. Blockade runners connected with Havana via three Mississippi River passes, or via Atchafalaya Bay and Brashear. New Orleans fell to the Federals on April 26, 1862.



Posted June 8, 1861 in St Vincent - franked 1 shilling 3d postage to Havana, Cuba
RMSP steamers *Teviot* and *Clyde* to Havana via St Thomas - 4d credit to St Thomas
Blockade runner *West Indian* to New Orleans on September 5 - 12¢ CSA postage due

Civil War Gulf Coast Blockade

Havana-New Orleans - May 1861 to April 1862



Dateline Havana, Cuba 8th Feb 1862 - endorsed to schooner *Break O' Day*
Arrived March 15 in New Orleans - marked SHIP and rated 10¢ due (no ship fee)



Dateline February 1862 in New Orleans - sent under cover to New York
Blockade runner *Florida* left February 19 and arrived February 23 in Havana
Spofford & Tileston steamship *Columbia* from Havana to New York on March 3
Postmarked unpaid on March 4 in New York - Cunard steamer *Niagara* to France

Civil War Gulf Coast Blockade

Havana-Galveston - February 1863 to May 1865



The blockade of Galveston, Texas was initiated on July 2, 1861 by the USS *South Carolina*. Blockade runners connected with Havana, except during the September-December 1862 Federal occupation. Galveston surrendered on June 2, 1865. Surviving letters were used between February 1863 and March 1865.



Docketed September 11, 1863 from Galveston - blockade runner to Havana
Trans-shipped to Nassau to catch Cunarder *Corsica* leaving September 28 for NY
Prepaid 1 shilling 5d (1/4 in cash) rate to Germany by forwarder Saunders & Son
Cunarder *China* left New York on October 7 - arrived in Liverpool on October 19

Civil War Gulf Coast Blockade

Havana-Galveston - February 1863 to May 1865



Letter forwarded by Vignier Robertson & Co. from Havana for 25¢ express fee
Blockade runner *Alice* arrived in Galveston on April 8, 1864 - active 4/62-9/64
Forwarded to Danville via Houston on April 10 with 10¢ CSA postage prepaid



Dated Richmond March 1, 1863 - hand-carried to Galveston (detailed in letter)
Blockade runner *Alice* left Galveston on April 30 and arrived in Havana on May 4
Havana Line steamer *Roanoke* arrived NY on May 24 - 10¢ steamship postage due

Civil War Gulf Coast Blockade

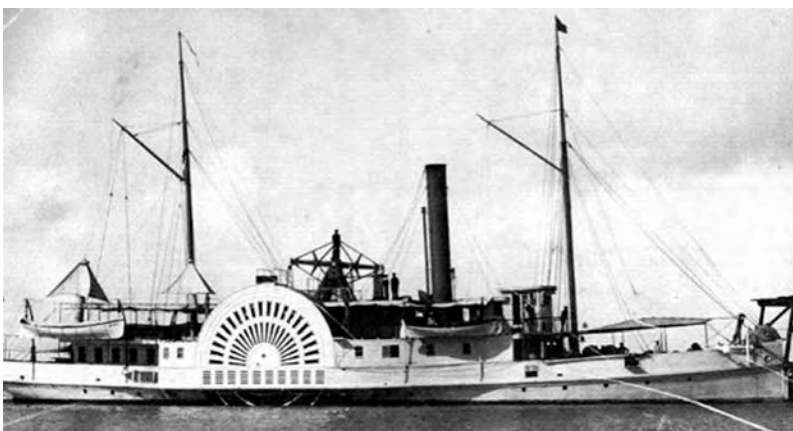
Havana-Galveston - February 1863 to May 1865



While Brownsville, Texas was occupied from November 6, 1863 to July 19, 1864, mail to the CSA from Matamoros could be sent via Havana to Galveston.



Mexican postage prepaid in Matamoros, Mexico on June 4, 1864 - 10¢ stamp paid CSA postage
Brownsville was closed because of the Federal occupation, so letter sent via Havana
Blockade runner *Alice* from Havana to Galveston - posted in Houston on June 26



Civil War Atlantic Coast Blockade

Nassau-Wilmington - June 1862 to January 1865



The blockade of Wilmington, North Carolina was initiated on July 14, 1861 by the USS *Daylight*. Cape Fear formed two inlets, so blockade runners could choose the most favorable route. Wilmington's port defenses fell on January 15, 1865. Surviving letters were used between June 1862 and January 1865.



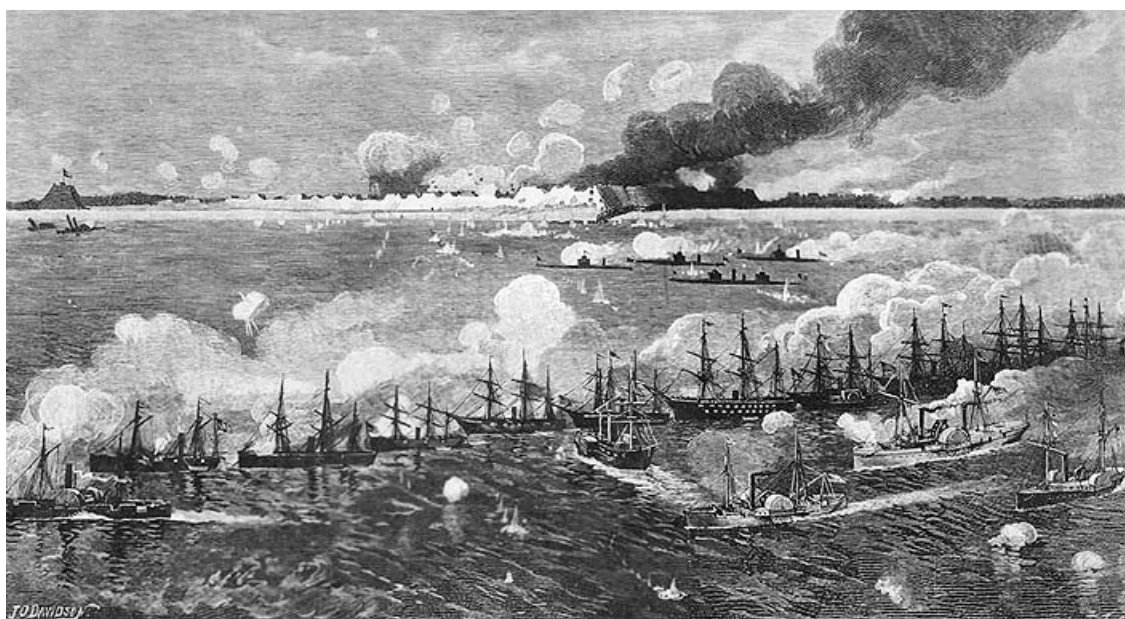
Posted September 25, 1863 in Liverpool - sent via Nassau forwarder Sawyer & Menendez
Prepaid 1 shilling postage to Nassau - 1d credit to Nassau - Carried by Cunard Line via NY
Fannie left Nassau on October 19 and arrived in Wilmington on October 23 - 12¢ due
Only known inbound blockade cover showing British packet postage prepaid

Civil War Atlantic Coast Blockade

Nassau-Wilmington - June 1862 to January 1865



The Union attacked Wilmington's port defenses in two land-sea operations from December 24, 1864 to January 15, 1865. The fall of Fort Fisher closed Wilmington to blockade running, and the last successful entry was by the *Wild Rover* on January 5.



Federal fleet's January 12-15, 1865 attack on Wilmington's Fort Fisher



Endorsed to blockade runner *Wild Rover* by Nassau forwarder Saunders & Son
Addressed to a Wilmington forwarder - prepaid 10¢ - overpaid 6¢ in-port ship rate
Wild Rover left Nassau on January 1, 1865 and arrived in Wilmington on January 5

Civil War Atlantic Coast Blockade

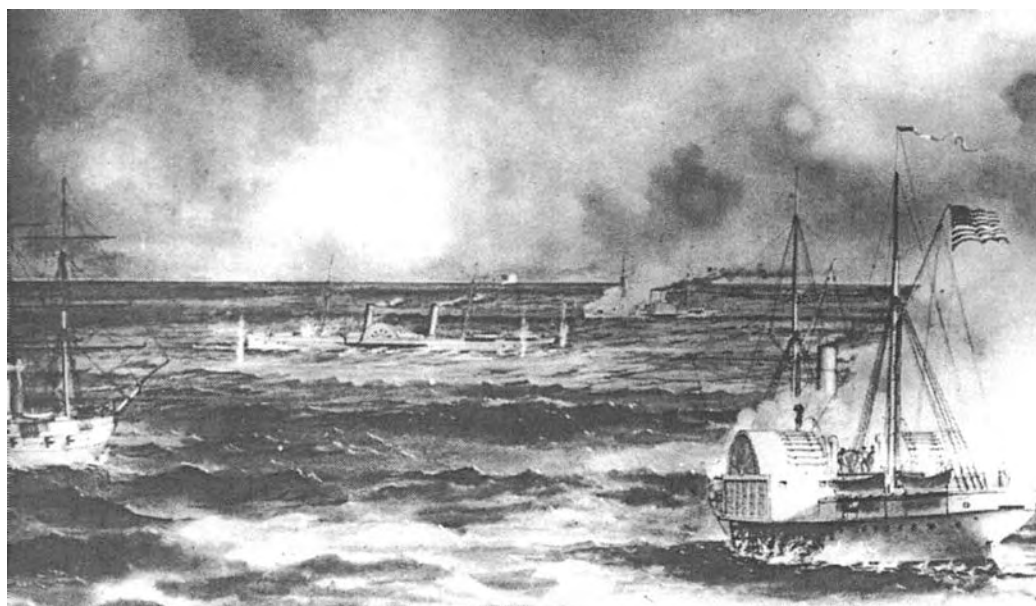
Nassau-Wilmington - June 1862 to January 1865



Most outbound blockade run letters were sent under cover to the departure port, so no CSA postmarks or appear on them. Some letters, addressed to Nassau or Bermuda, could be sent in the CSA mails via the departure port.



Posted August 20, 1864 in Raleigh, NC - prepaid 10¢ CSA postage to Wilmington
Endorsed to blockade runner *Lilian* which was bound for Bermuda, not Nassau
Sent instead by *Will of the Wisp* from Wilmington August 23 to Nassau August 27
Postmarked Nassau Ship-Letter on August 27 - 4d ship postage due



Lilian captured by the USS *Keystone State* and USS *Gettysburg* on August 24, 1864
The above letter would have been captured on this trip if carried as endorsed

Civil War Atlantic Coast Blockade

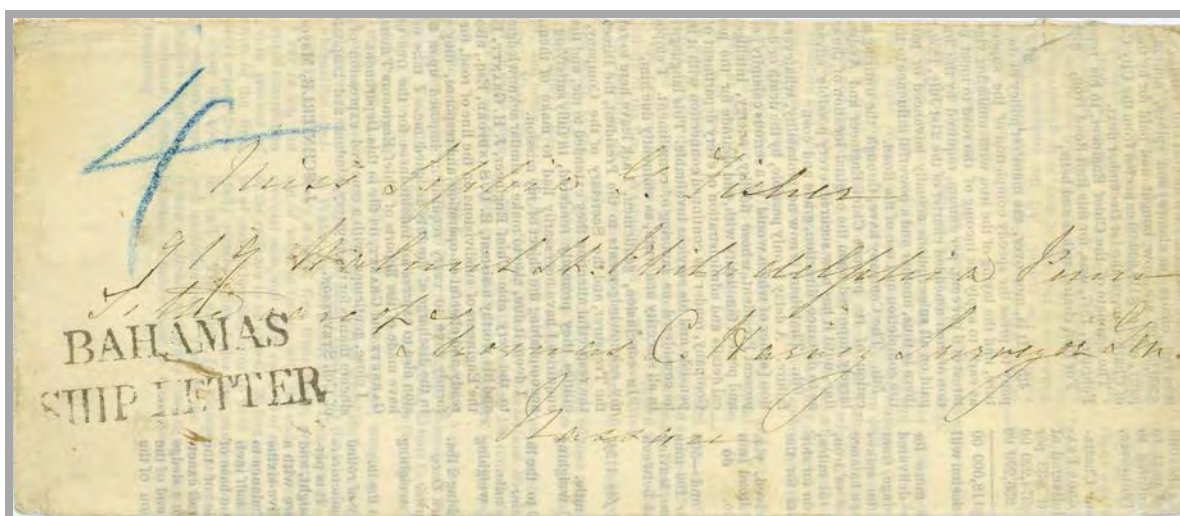
Nassau-Wilmington - June 1862 to January 1865



CSA ship postage to the port of arrival was 6¢, regardless of weight.
Bahamas incoming ship postage was 4 pence per half ounce.



Dated London September 23, 1864 - *Lucy* arrived in Wilmington Oct. 24 from Nassau
6¢ in-port ship fee due (under stamp) - 20¢ stamp paid double-weight forwarding postage



Originated in Charleston, SC - censored by Colonel B. Duncan, provost marshal at Charleston
Charleston was closed, so routed to *Fannie* from Wilmington Oct. 10, 1863 to Nassau Oct. 15
Marked BAHAMAS SHIP LETTER - assessed 4d ship fee - Cunarder *Corsica* to New York Oct. 31

Civil War Atlantic Coast Blockade

Nassau-Wilmington - June 1862 to January 1865



Blockade run mail was typically sent unpaid, but some senders prepaid all or a part of the postage in cash or with postage stamps.



Prepaid with 10¢ 'TEN' stamp - *Fannie* arrived on October 22, 1863 from Nassau
Marked SHIP and rated for an additional 2¢ due (for the 2¢ ship fee)



Docketed Charleston, SC - *Pet* left Wilmington Dec. 10 - arrived in Nassau Dec. 14, 1863
Prepaid with 1863 Bahamas 4d stamp for outgoing packet postage on December 15
Cunarder *Corsica* left Dec. 21 - arrived in New York Dec. 26 - 5¢ U.S. postage due

Civil War Atlantic Coast Blockade

Nassau-Wilmington - June 1862 to January 1865



Dateline Charleston November 28, 1863 - endorsed to *Fannie* from Wilmington Dec. 3

Posted unpaid on December 7 in Nassau - double-weight 3 shillings due to Liverpool

Writer was a director of the Importing & Exporting Co. of S.C., which owned the *Fannie*



Dateline London 1862 - *Giraffe* arrived at Wilmington Dec. 29 from Nassau Dec. 25

Marked SHIP and rated for 52¢ due (quintuple 10¢ inland plus 2¢ ship fee)

Earliest recorded Wilmington arrival postmark and largest known due marking

Civil War Atlantic Coast Blockade

Nassau-Wilmington - June 1862 to January 1865



Most blockade run letters were expedited by forwarders in the ports of departure, although forwarders typically did not mark the letters. Forwarder marks can be handstamps, embossed, or in manuscript.



Originated February 1863 in Cuba – forwarded by Adot Spalding of Havana
Endorsed “via Nassau” for Cunarder *British Queen* departing February 12 for Nassau
Arrived February 14 – forwarded twice in Nassau to blockade runner *Britannia*
Postmarked in Wilmington on March 16 – marked “SHIP” and rated for 12¢ due



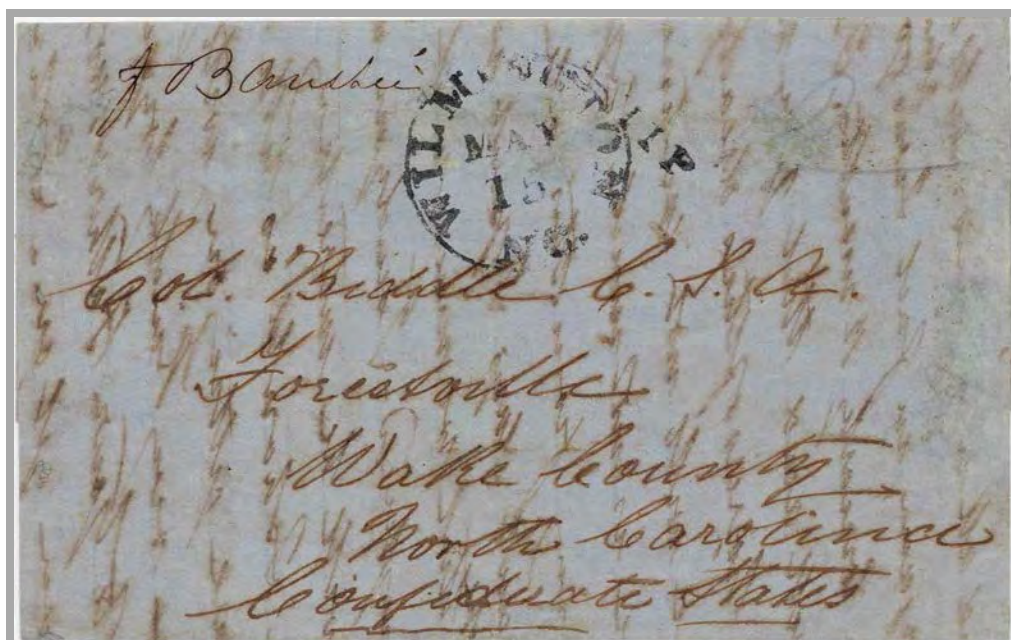
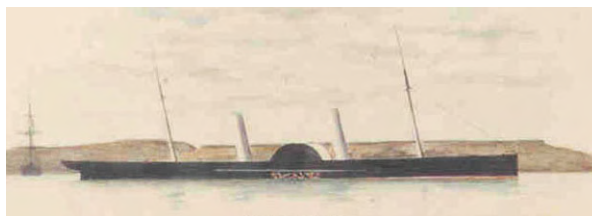
Partial scan of the reverse, showing Havana and Saunders & Son forwarder marks

Civil War Atlantic Coast Blockade

Nassau-Wilmington - June 1862 to January 1865



Endorsed to Capt. Steele of the *Banshee (I)* - arrived May 28, 1863 from Nassau
Posted on May 29 in Wilmington - marked SHIP and rated for 12¢ due



Dated March 25, 1863 in England - **endorsed by Nassau forwarder to the *Banshee (I)***

Civil War Atlantic Coast Blockade

Nassau-Wilmington - June 1862 to January 1865



Endorsements to blockade runners were marked on some letters. These appear on about 20% of inbound mail and on 6% of outbound.



Docketed Petersburg, VA November 3, 1864 - *Agnes E. Fry* left December 5
Posted unpaid on December 9 in Nassau - 2 shillings due in London on January 9
Embossed "STEAMSHIP AGNES E. FRY" ship marking



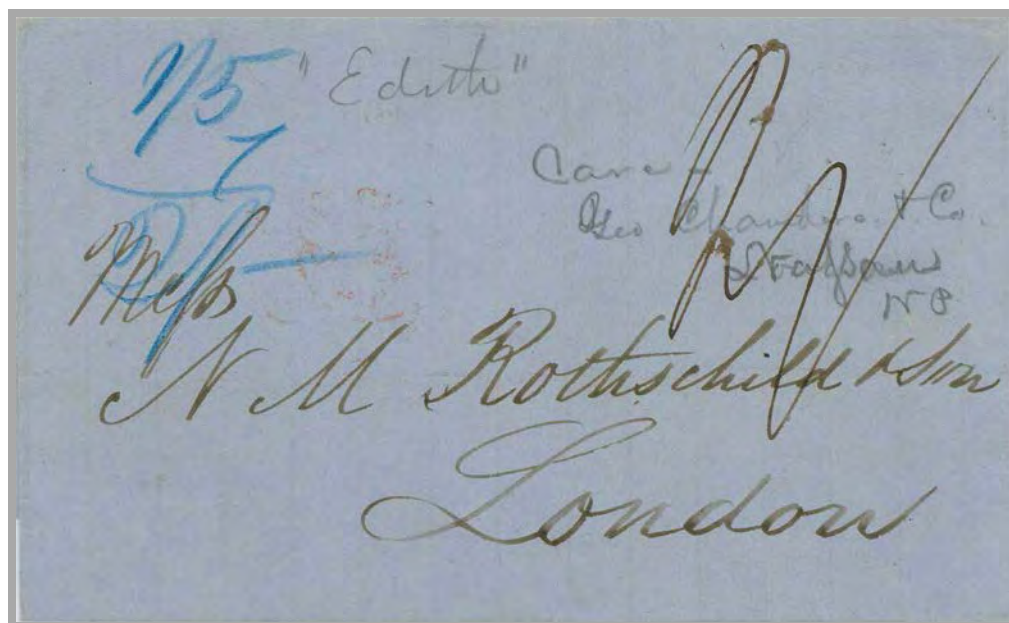
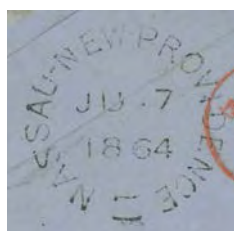
Dated London April 8, 1864 - **endorsed by Nassau forwarder to *Tristram Shandy***
Postmarked on May 10 and rated for 32¢ due (triple 10¢ inland plus 2¢ ship fee)

Civil War Atlantic Coast Blockade

Nassau-Wilmington - June 1862 to January 1865



A letter missing the monthly Cunard sailing from Nassau to New York could be re-directed to the alternate Royal Mail Steamship Company route from St Thomas to Southampton.



Docketed Petersburg May 23, 1864 - endorsed to *Edith* and Nassau forwarder Chambers & Co.

Edith departed from Wilmington on May 26 and arrived in Nassau on May 30

Posted unpaid by Chambers & Co. on June 7 - monthly Cunard steamer left a day earlier

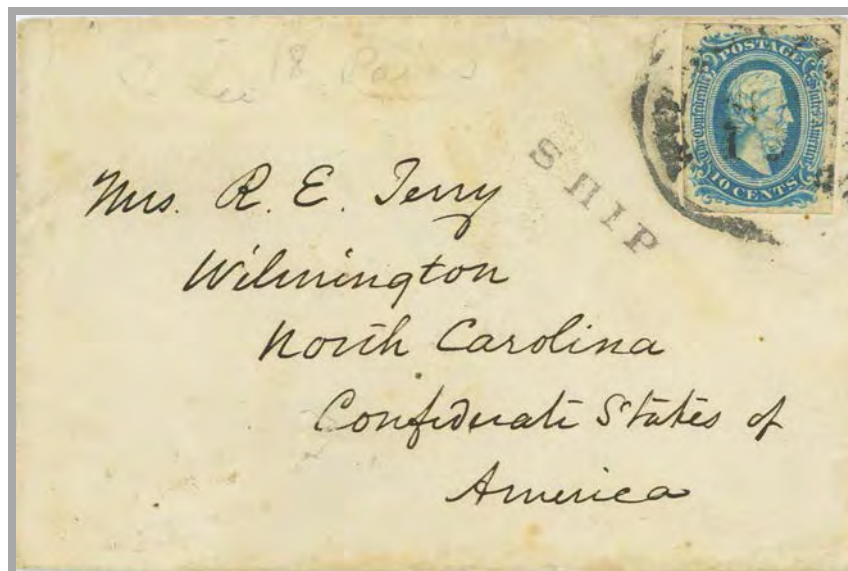
Routed to St Thomas for June 29 RMSP steamer *Tasmanian* - 2 shillings due on July 14

Civil War Atlantic Coast Blockade

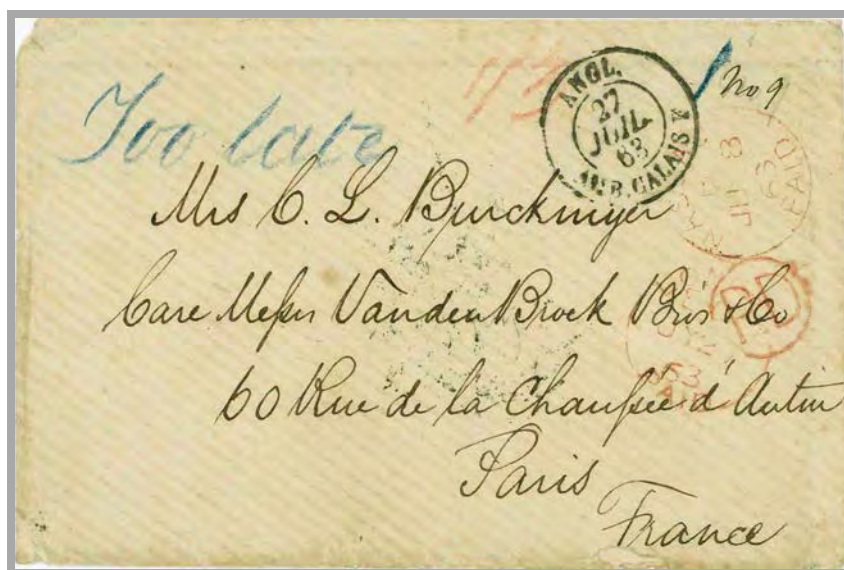
Nassau-Wilmington - June 1862 to January 1865



Blockade run mail was typically sent unpaid, but some senders or forwarders prepaid the postage in cash or with postage stamps.



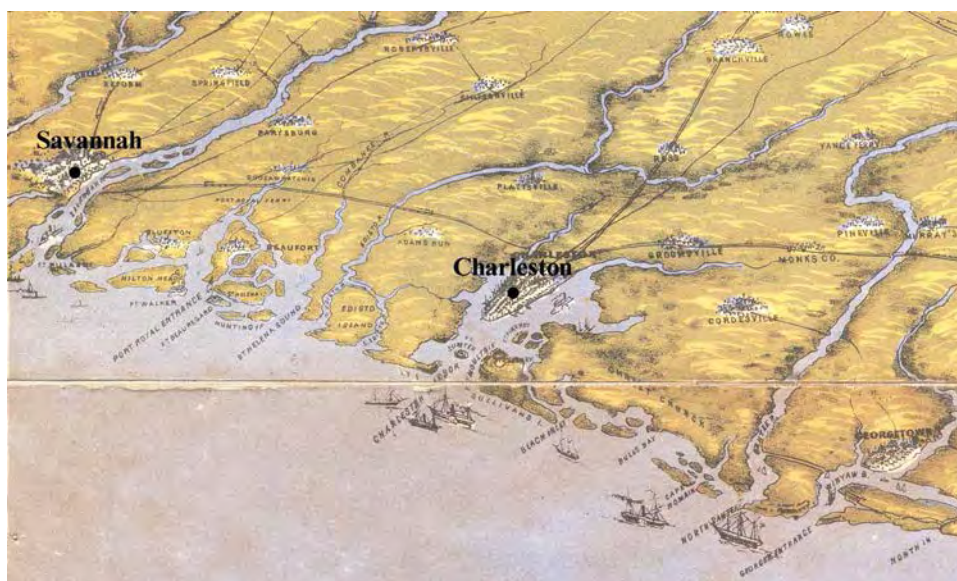
Gen. Beauregard arrived September 19, 1863 - 10¢ stamp overpaid 6¢ in-port ship fee
Examined at Wilmington per manuscript "Ex Lee" – postmarked and marked SHIP



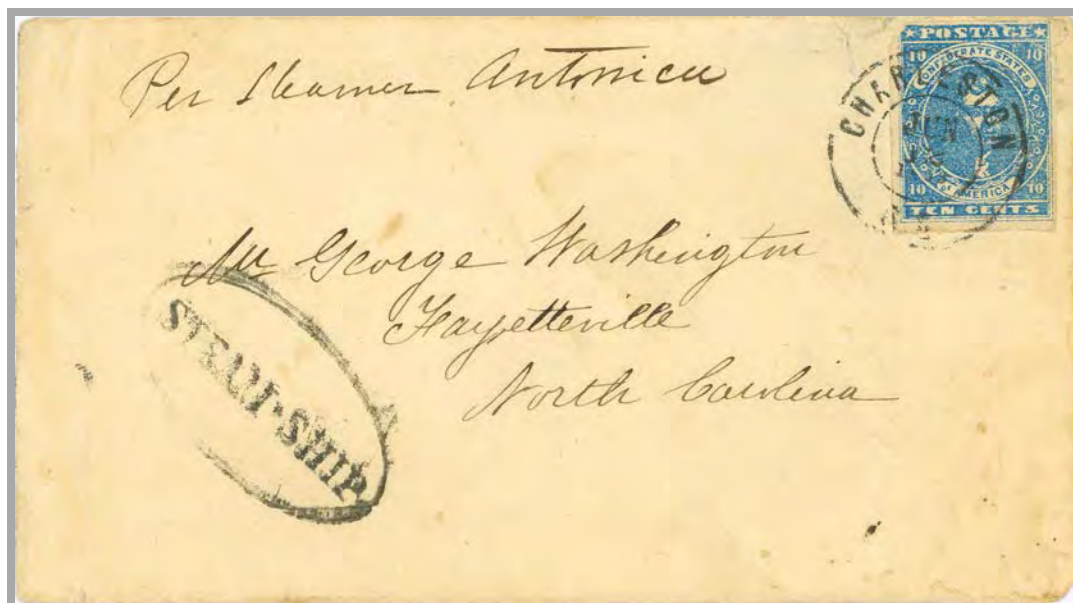
Datelined Charleston, SC May 22, 1863 – *Banshee (I)* arrived in Nassau on June 8
Forwarder prepaid 1/4 in cash for the postage to France - 1p retained by Nassau
"Too Late" for the June sailing to New York - Cunarder *Corsica* left Nassau on July 5

Civil War Atlantic Coast Blockade

Nassau-Charleston - May 1862 to February 1865



The blockade of Charleston, South Carolina was initiated on May 10, 1861 by the USS *Niagara*. Charleston was closed by Federal actions from September 1863 to March 1864, and fell to Sherman's Federal army on February 17, 1865. Known letters were used between May 1862 and February 1865.



Docketed (England) April 24, 1863 - 10¢ Patterson stamp prepaid CSA postage
Carried by Cunard Line via New York to Nassau on May 26 - endorsed to *Antonica*
Antonica left on June 7 for Charleston on June 11 - marked oval STEAM-SHIP
Accepted as paid in Charleston on June 12 - no 2¢ ship fee assessed

Civil War Atlantic Coast Blockade

Nassau-Charleston - May 1862 to February 1865



Liverpool-based Fraser Trenholm & Co. and its Charleston affiliate, John Fraser & Co., used Henry Adderley & Co. as their Nassau agent.



Originated in Charleston, SC - sent under cover to Nassau forwarder, Adderley & Co. *Leopard* left Jan. 14, 1863 for Nassau on Jan. 19 - Cunard Line to England on Feb. 12



Forwarded by Adderley & Co. - *Cecile* left May 20, 1862 for Charleston on May 24
Endorsed "From J Fraser & Co." - 22¢ due - **earliest known through Charleston**

Civil War Atlantic Coast Blockade

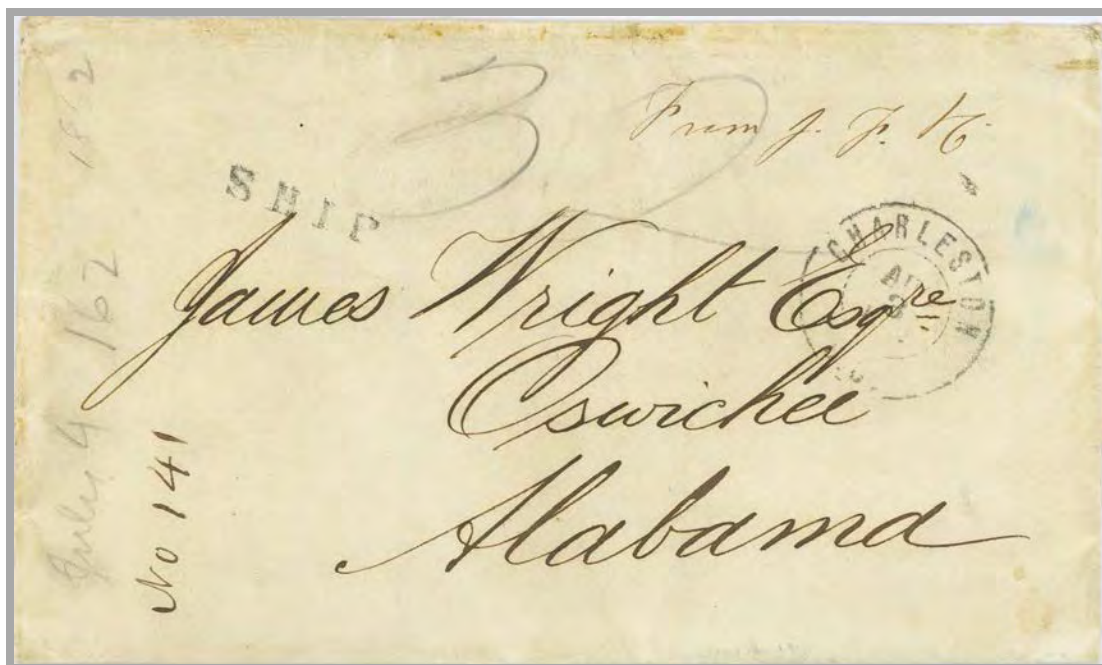
Nassau-Charleston - May 1862 to February 1865



The blockade runner *Leopard* made 8 successful trips for Fraser Trenholm & Co. from May 1862 to March 1863. She ran aground and was burned while trying to enter Charleston on April 12, 1863.



Remains of destroyed blockade runner near Charleston



Docketed (Liverpool) July 4, 1862 - endorsed 'From J.F. & C.' (John Fraser & Co.) Cunard Line to Nassau on July 23 - *Leopard* left July 30 for Charleston on August 3 Triple-weight 32¢ due - one of three known Charleston straight-line SHIP marks

Civil War Atlantic Coast Blockade

Nassau-Charleston - May 1862 to February 1865



Endorsed to *Fox* - arrived August 8, 1864 from Nassau - 6¢ in-port ship postage due
Envelope turned and re-used from Charleston to Columbia, SC on August 17 with CSA #12



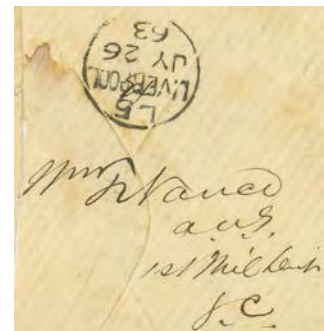
Prepaid 1d in London Oct. 26, 1864 to Reading - forwarded to Fraser, Trenholm in Liverpool
Addressee had returned to Charleston - letter forwarded under cover via New York to Nassau
Julia left December 10, 1864 - arrived in Charleston December 14 - 6¢ in-port ship postage due
Letter forwarded one more time within South Carolina with additional 10¢ postage due

Civil War Atlantic Coast Blockade

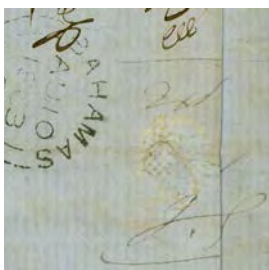
Nassau-Charleston - May 1862 to February 1865



The August 11, 1863 CSA Special Order No. 156 required the examination of all blockade run letters, although some letters were examined prior to that. Most were not marked as examined.



Dated June 20, 1863 - **censored there by 1st Military District of S.C.**
Antonica arrived in Nassau on June 26 - prepaid one shilling to England



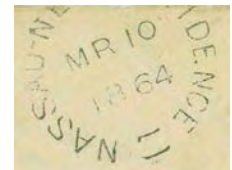
Dated Petersburg, VA July 30, 1863 - **censored at Charleston by "J.S."**
Antonica left August 4 for Nassau on August 9 - Cunard Line to England on September 11
Rated 2/2 due (1 shilling packet plus 1 shilling unpaid penalty plus 2 pence inland to Scotland)

Civil War Atlantic Coast Blockade

Nassau-Charleston - May 1862 to February 1865



The Federal capture of Morris Island in Charleston harbor precipitated the closure of Charleston as a blockade-running port from September 18, 1863 to March 6, 1864.



Dated Summerville, SC February 26, 1864 - *General Moultrie* left on March 6
General Moultrie was the first blockade runner departure after Charleston re-opened
2 shillings due in Liverpool on April 3 – forwarded privately to France on April 7



Postmarked July 30, 1864 in Charleston - year less postmark used only after June 1864
Marked "STEAM-SHIP" and rated for 12¢ due to Camp John's Island near Charleston harbor
Forwarded on July 31 with 10¢ stamp to Savannah, Georgia

Civil War Atlantic Coast Blockade

Nassau-Charleston - May 1862 to February 1865



In the face of Sherman's advancing Federal army, Charleston was evacuated on February 17, 1865. The post office, along with its mail and supplies, was relocated inland to Cheraw, South Carolina.



Forwarded from Nassau by Saunders & Son - *Chicora* left on February 12, 1865
***Chicora* was the last blockade runner to Charleston** - arrived February 16
Mail processed at Cheraw on February 28 - 12¢ due on double-weight letter



Originated in Augusta, GA - *Druid* left Charleston February 4, 1865 for Nassau on February 8
Prepaid 1 shilling 4 pence to France and marked with crowned "Paid at Bahamas"
Carried by Cunard steamers via New York to England on March 4

Civil War Atlantic Coast Blockade

Nassau-Savannah - June to July 1862



The blockade of Savannah, Georgia was initiated on May 28, 1861 by the USS *Union*. Access to Savannah was limited after Union forces captured Fort Pulaski at the head of the harbor on April 11, 1862. Known letters were used in June-July 1862.



Dateline London May 7, 1862 - sent under cover to Nassau forwarder Adderley & Co. Blockade runner *Kate* left June 21 and arrived in Savannah on June 25 - active 1-11/62
7¢ CSA postage due - only known inbound blockade run letter via Savannah



Kate left Savannah July 22, 1862 - arrived July 26 in Nassau - sent to forwarder Saunders & Son
Paid 4d postage on July 26 - Cunard steamer to N.Y. on August 2 - 5¢ due to San Francisco

Civil War Atlantic Coast Blockade

Bermuda-Wilmington – Dec. 1862 to January 1865



Starting in December 1862, Bermuda became continuously active in blockade running. Most ships ran between Wilmington and St George's until the 1864 yellow fever epidemic, when Hamilton and Halifax, Nova Scotia became alternate ports.



Endorsed to the steamship blockade runner *Flora* by a CSA agent in Bermuda
Flora left St George's on October 3, 1863 and arrived in Wilmington on October 8
Prepaid with 10¢ 'Frameline' stamp in Bermuda - additional 2¢ assessed for the ship fee

Civil War Atlantic Coast Blockade

Bermuda-Wilmington – Dec. 1862 to January 1865



Dateline Wilmington, NC May 23, 1863 - CSS *Cornubia* to St George's on May 29
Prepaid 4d ship postage on June 3 - Cunard steamer *Merlin* to Halifax on June 19
Private ship to Boston on June 23 - 5¢ postage (3¢ inland plus 2¢ ship) due to Missouri
Return mail instructions via Halifax to agent A.H. Williams at St George's, Bermuda



Endorsed "pr Advance" by CSA agent in St George's - prepaid 20¢ CSA postage
Advance left St George's on July 28, 1864 and arrived in Wilmington on August 2
20¢ overpaid the 12¢ postage (10¢ plus 2¢ ship fee) to Richmond, Virginia

Civil War Atlantic Coast Blockade

Bermuda-Wilmington – Dec. 1862 to January 1865



The *Fannie* brought yellow fever to St George's from June to October 1864, so some ships entered Hamilton; three covers are known with postmarks of July 28-August 30.



Docketed Petersburg, Virginia July 19, 1864 - routed to blockade runner at Wilmington
City of Petersburg left Wilmington on July 23 and arrived in Hamilton, Bermuda on July 26
Rated 4d ship plus 1 shilling packet on July 28 - marked HAMILTON-BERMUDA SHIP LETTER
Transferred to St George's on August 4 to catch Cunarder *Alpha* to Halifax on August 10
Re-rated 2 shillings due in London - 1 shilling packet postage plus 1 shilling unpaid letter fine

Civil War Atlantic Coast Blockade

Bermuda-Wilmington – Dec. 1862 to January 1865



Important or official mail was often sent in duplicate by different blockade runners to improve the chances of safe arrival. Colonel James Burton was superintendent of the CSA armories, trying to get English rifle-making machinery into the CSA.



Dated St George's, Bermuda April 18, 1864 - endorsed per "Helen"
Helen left St George's on April 27 and arrived in Wilmington on May 2



Duplicate of above letter - endorsed to the *Atalanta* on its first trip through the blockade
Atalanta left St George's on April 29, 1864 and arrived in Wilmington on May 3

Civil War Atlantic Coast Blockade

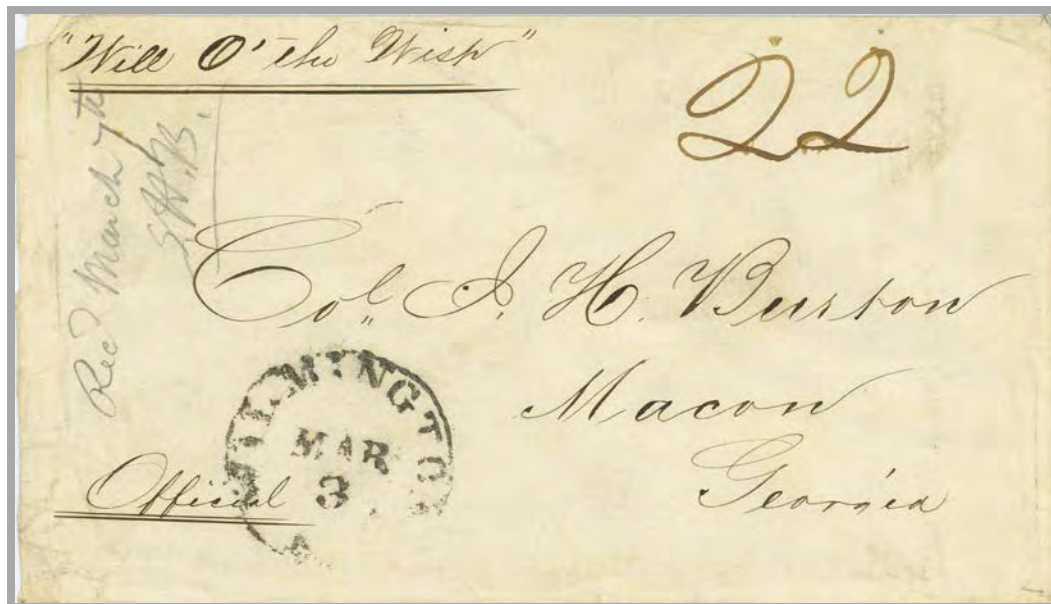
Bermuda-Wilmington – Dec. 1862 to January 1865



Duplicate official communications were sent by different ships, and sometimes via different departure ports for greater security.



Dated Liverpool January 23, 1864 - **endorsed to Advance at Bermuda**
Advance left St George's on February 13 and arrived in Wilmington on the 18th



Duplicate of above letter - **endorsed to the Will O' The Wisp from Bermuda to Nassau**
Left Nassau aboard the Annie on February 28, 1864 - arrived in Wilmington on March 3

Civil War Atlantic Coast Blockade

Bermuda-Wilmington – Dec. 1862 to January 1865



Commodore Samuel Barron, CSN was sent to Europe in September 1863 to serve as senior naval officer in Paris. After an unproductive stay, he returned to the CSA in February 1865.



Written at Bermuda in September 1863 – endorsed “Ship Letter Com: S. Barron C.S. Navy”
Cornubia left Bermuda on September 18 and arrived in Wilmington on September 23
Posted on September 26 – rated SHIP and 12¢ due to North Carolina
Forwarded to Virginia with 10¢ due

Civil War Atlantic Coast Blockade

Bermuda-Wilmington – Dec. 1862 to January 1865



Major Norman Walker was the CSA agent at Bermuda from February 1863 to June 1864. In addition to handling supplies for the war effort, he forwarded mail to blockade runners.



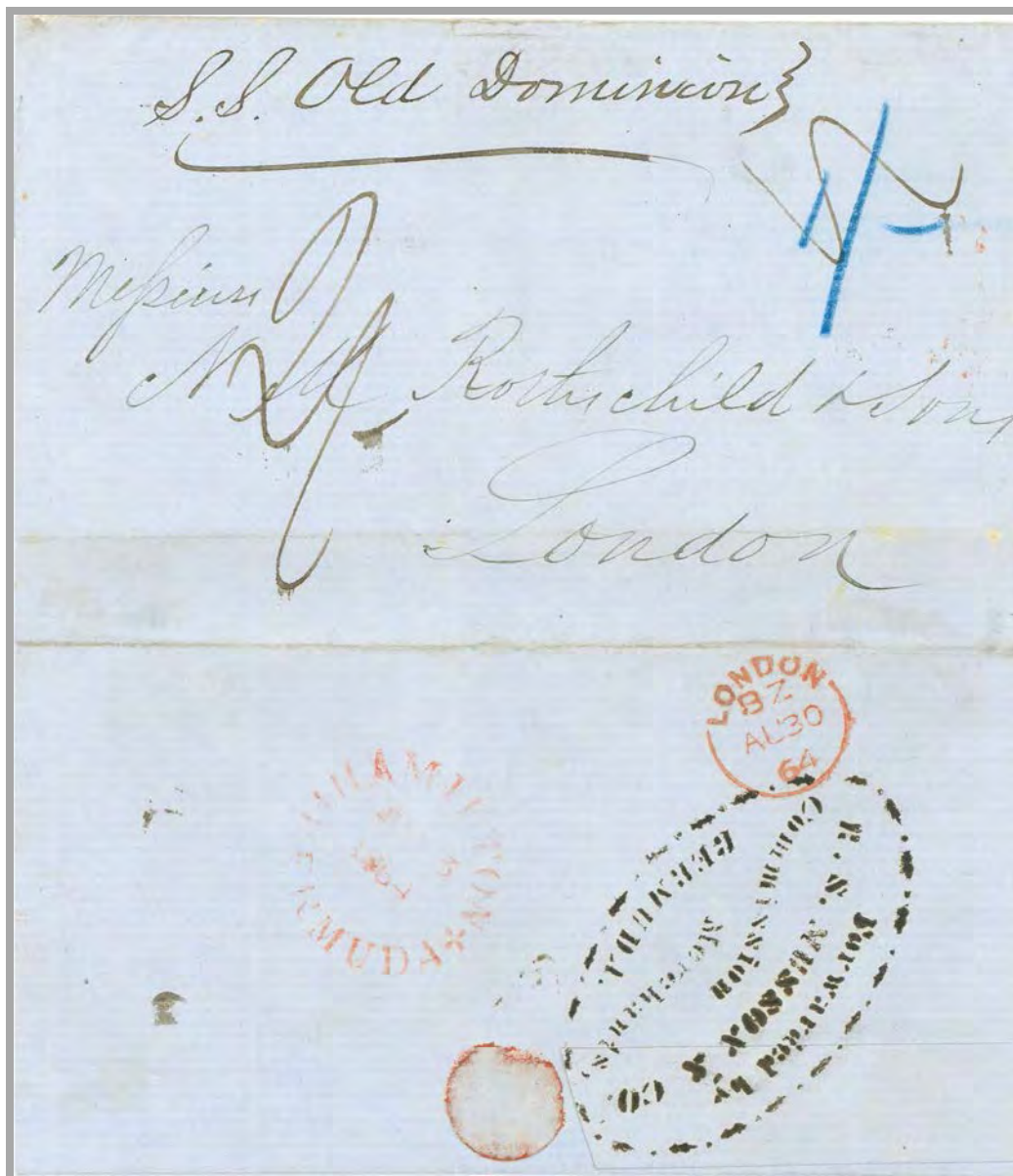
Forwarded from St George's, Bermuda by Major N.S. Walker - endorsed to the *Flora*
Left Bermuda on December 4, 1863 and arrived in Wilmington on December 8



Dateline Savannah August 3, 1864 - **endorsed to Mary Celestia at Wilmington**
Mary Celestia left Wilmington August 25 and arrived in Hamilton on August 29
Cunard steamers via Halifax to Liverpool on September 26 - 2 shillings due

Civil War Atlantic Coast Blockade

Bermuda-Wilmington – Dec. 1862 to January 1865



Docketed Petersburg, Virginia July 16, 1864 - endorsed "S.S. Old Dominion" at Wilmington
Old Dominion left Wilmington on July 23 and arrived in Hamilton, Bermuda on July 26
Forwarded by R.S. Musson & Co. at Hamilton - posted August 4 with 1 shilling postage due
Transferred to St George's on August 4 to catch Cunarder *Alpha* to Halifax on August 10
Re-rated 2 shillings due in London - 1 shilling packet postage plus 1 shilling unpaid letter fine

Civil War Atlantic Coast Blockade

Bermuda-Wilmington – Dec. 1862 to January 1865



The CSS *Florida* was a commerce raider under the command of Lt. John Maffitt that captured 37 prizes from January to August 1863 and from March to September 1864. She was finally captured in Brazil on October 7, 1864.



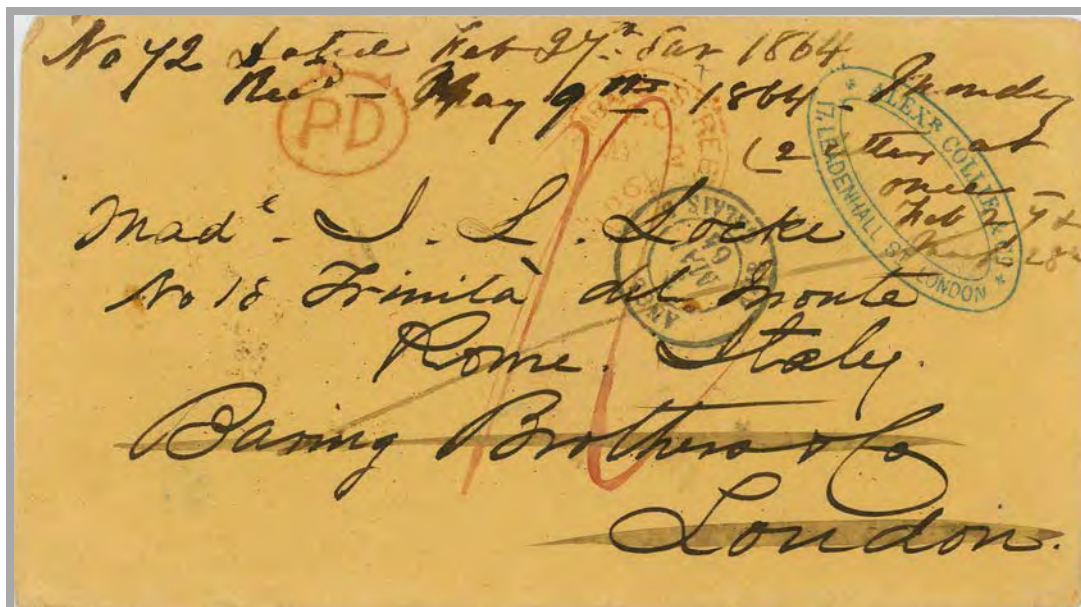
From CSS *Florida* at Bermuda in July 1863 - CSS *R.E. Lee* to Wilmington on July 28
Marked SHIP and rated for 12¢ due (10¢ to Richmond plus 2¢ ship fee) on July 30
One of two known covers that originated from the CSS *Florida*

Civil War Atlantic Coast Blockade

Bermuda-Wilmington – Dec. 1862 to January 1865



Robert E. Lee arrived September 10, 1863 from Bermuda - 12¢ due (under stamp)
Censored on reverse by Colonel B. Duncan, Wilmington provost marshal
Sent to care of W.C. Bee & Co., operator of blockade runners - forwarded



Docketed from Savannah February 27, 1864 – sent under cover to London
Collie & Co.'s *Index* from Wilmington on March 13 to Bermuda on March 18
A. Collie & Co. (blue handstamp) posted letter prepaid in London on May 2
Alexander Collie & Company was a major owner/operator of blockade runners

Civil War Atlantic Coast Blockade

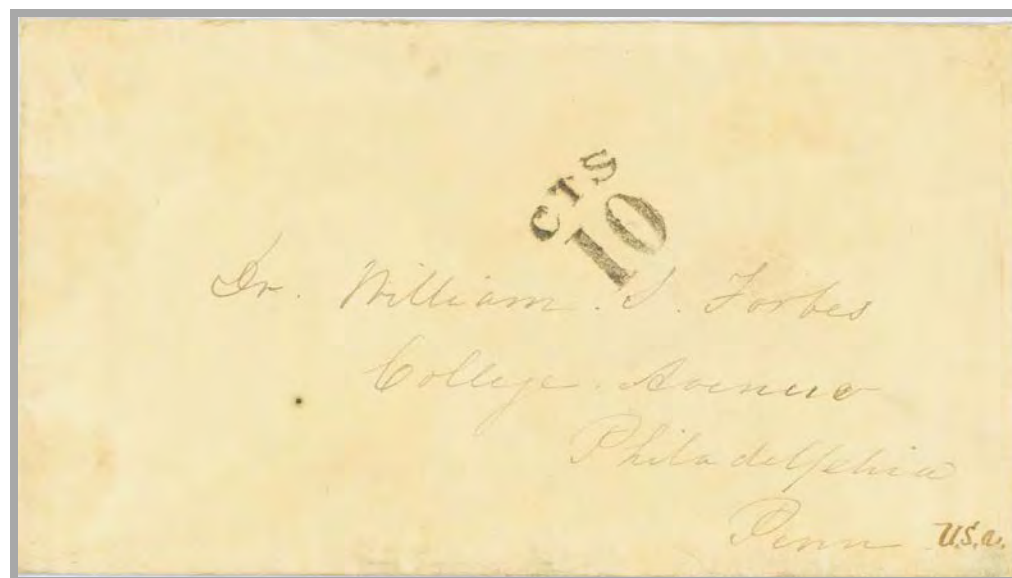
Bermuda-Wilmington – Dec. 1862 to January 1865



A Cunard branch line ran between Halifax and St Thomas via Bermuda, connecting either with the Cunard line between Halifax and Liverpool, or the RMSP line between St Thomas and Southampton.



Dated June 28, 1864 in Spartanburg - *Edith* arrived July 8 in Bermuda
Too late for Halifax steamer, so sent via St Thomas - RMSP steamer to Southampton



Dated Richmond June 28, 1863 - family witnessed Chancellorsville from Hooker's HQ
Robert E. Lee from Wilmington July 4 to Bermuda on July 9 - Cunarder *Alpha* to Halifax
Posted by forwarder in Halifax on July 16 - Cunarder *Africa* to Boston on July 22

A map of the Southeastern United States and the Caribbean region, showing distances between major cities. The cities and their distances are:

- Bermuda to Charleston: 674 miles
- Charleston to Savannah: 515 miles
- Savannah to Nassau, Bahamas: 570 miles
- Nassau, Bahamas to Havana: 590 miles
- Havana to Brownsville: 725 miles
- Brownsville to New Orleans: 590 miles
- New Orleans to Mobile: 515 miles
- Mobile to Charleston: 772 miles

4 + 6 = 10

BERMUDA
OCT 17
1862

Wm Fraser Trevelyan & Co.
for
Mr C. H. P. P. P.
Liverpool
Eng

Datelined Charleston October 3, 1862 - *Herald* arrived in Bermuda on October 16
Marked BERMUDA SHIP LETTER and rated for 4d ship fee plus 6d packet postage due
Cunard and RMSP steamships via St Thomas to Southampton on November 13

Civil War Atlantic Coast Blockade

Bermuda-Charleston – July 1862 to April 1863



Endorsed "Per SS Princess Royal" by CSA agent in St George's - departed January 23, 1863
Princess Royal ran aground and was captured entering Charleston on January 29 - mail saved
Double-weight 22¢ postage due (20¢ plus 2¢ ship fee) to Richmond, Virginia



Dated lined Charleston March 17, 1863 - endorsed to 'Capt Cox' (etter) of the *General Beauregard*
General Beauregard left Charleston on March 20 and arrived at St George's on March 24
Carried by HMS *Orlando* from Bermuda on March 1 to Portsmouth, England on April 16
From George Trenholm of Fraser, Trenholm & Co. - owners of the *General Beauregard*

Civil War Atlantic Coast Blockade

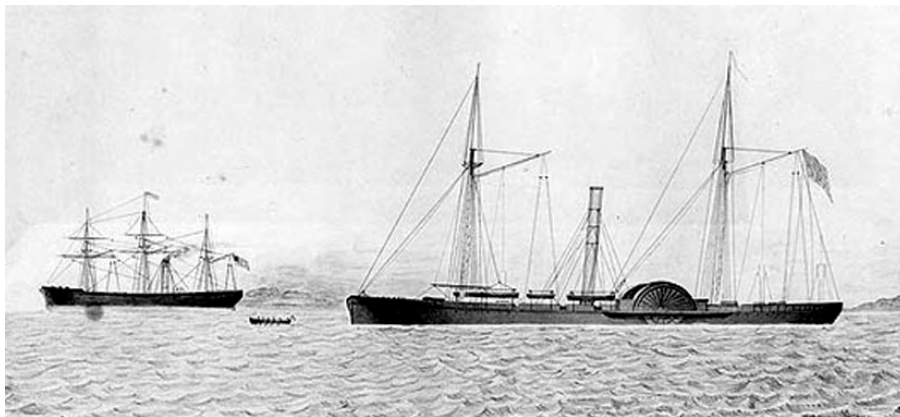
Bermuda-Charleston – July 1862 to April 1863



William C. Bee & Company of Charleston was a major owner/operator of blockade runners and shipped goods as the Importing & Exporting Co. of South Carolina.



Docketed Savannah April 4, 1862 - forwarded by "WB & Co" (Wm. Bee & Co.)
Gladiator left Charleston on April 28 and arrived at Bermuda on May 6
Continued voyage from Bermuda on May 11 - arrived at Liverpool on May 26
Rated as a ship letter per May 26 Liverpool Ship postmark on reverse



Blockade runner *Gladiator* watched by USS *Sonoma* at Bermuda

Civil War Atlantic Coast Blockade

Halifax-Wilmington - August-December 1864



Because of yellow fever in Bermuda, much of the blockade running activity was shifted from Bermuda to Halifax, Nova Scotia in the August-December 1864 period. Only 25 trips between Wilmington and Halifax are recorded.



Endorsed "S.S. Old Dominion" and put with official dispatches by CSA agent in Halifax *Old Dominion* left Nov. 16 and arrived Nov. 22 - franked 10¢ and mailed by Navy Agent



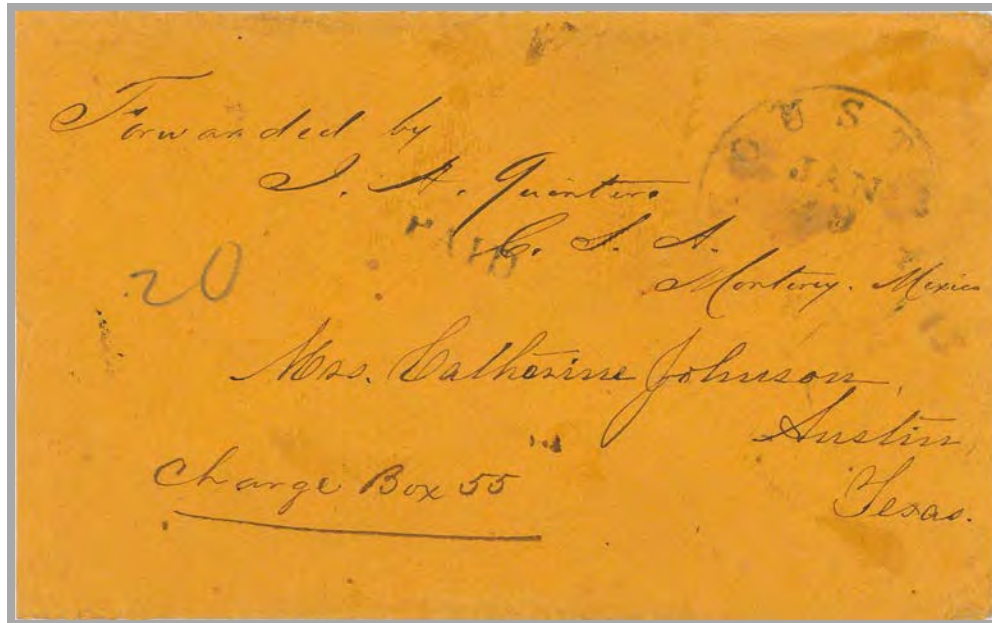
Carried by *Helen* from Wilmington on September 15, 1864 to Halifax on September 20
Censored (reverse) at Wilmington by "W Strong aag" - posted unpaid at Halifax September 20
1d Halifax debit to London - 50c debit to France - 33 kreutzer due in Heidelberg, Germany

Civil War Gulf Coast Blockade

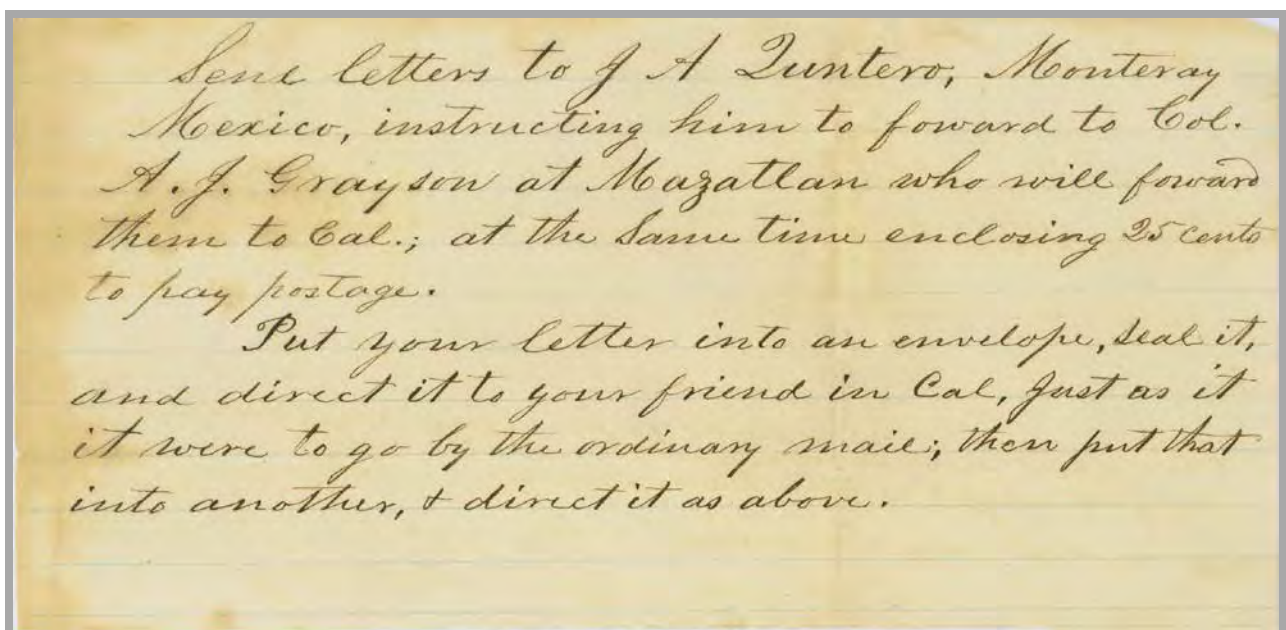
Matamoros-Galveston - November 1863 to July 1864



Matamoros, Mexico was a conduit for trans-Rio Grande mail via Brownsville, Texas, except when Brownsville was occupied from November 6, 1863 to July 19, 1864. During that period, mail to the CSA was sent by coastal blockade runner.



Datelined Santa Clara, California Sept. 27, 1863 - forwarded via Mazatlan and Monterrey
Then forwarded by CSA agent Jose Quintero to Matamoros - enclosed broadside below
Blockade runner from Matamoros to Galveston - prepaid 20¢ in Houston on January 29



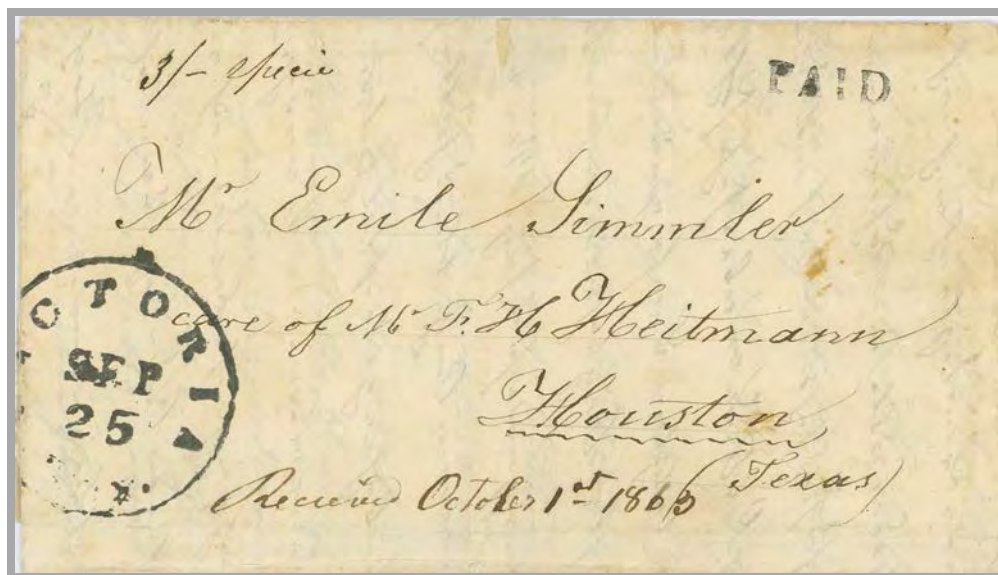
Enclosed Quintero broadside giving return mail instructions to California

Civil War Gulf Coast Blockade

Matamoros-Victoria - February 1862 to Dec. 1863



On February 1, 1862 the USS *Portsmouth* initiated the blockade of the west Texas coast. Coastal blockade runners ran between Matamoros, Mexico and Matagorda Bay, Texas. Mail was processed at nearby Victoria. Matagorda Bay was occupied by Federal forces on December 26, 1863.



Dateline Mulhouse (France) July 2, 1863 - RMSP steamers to Tampico on August 29
Forwarded by A.M. Erhard in Matamoros (mark on reverse) - charged "3/- specie"
Blockade runner to Matagorda Bay - posted prepaid in Victoria on September 25
Received at Houston on October 1 - recipient was French consul at Houston

Civil War Atlantic Coast Blockade

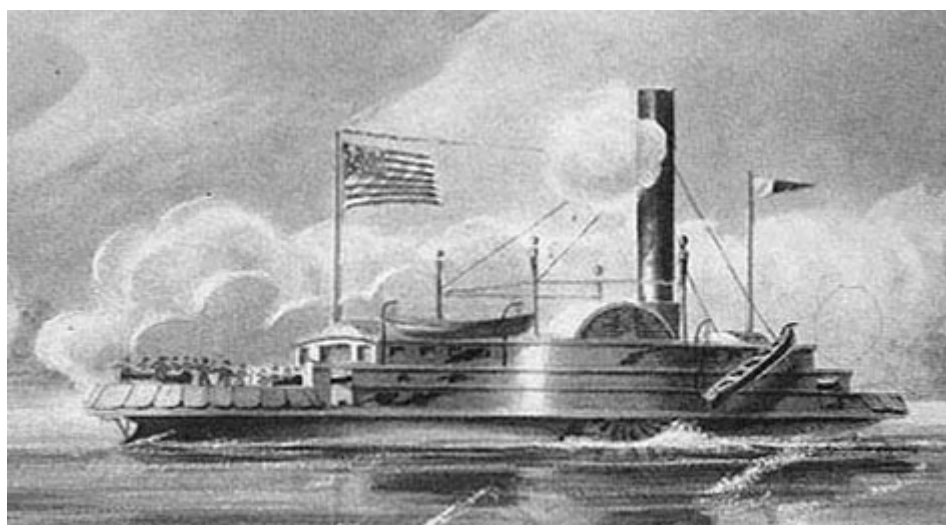
Prize Court – May 1861 to June 1865



Mail on a captured blockade runner was useful in determining whether it was contraband. It was often introduced into evidence with magenta ink docket numbers. The New York Prize Court commissioner was Henry H. Elliot.



Posted September 11, 1861 at Pendleton, SC - prepaid 10¢ CSA postage to Charleston
Letter was aboard *Nuestra Senora del Regla* - ran the blockade from Charleston to Havana
Captured December 1, 1861 by USS *Aries* near Port Royal - taken to New York Prize Court
Magenta evidentiary docket "E(xhibit) 16/HHE" (Henry H. Elliott)



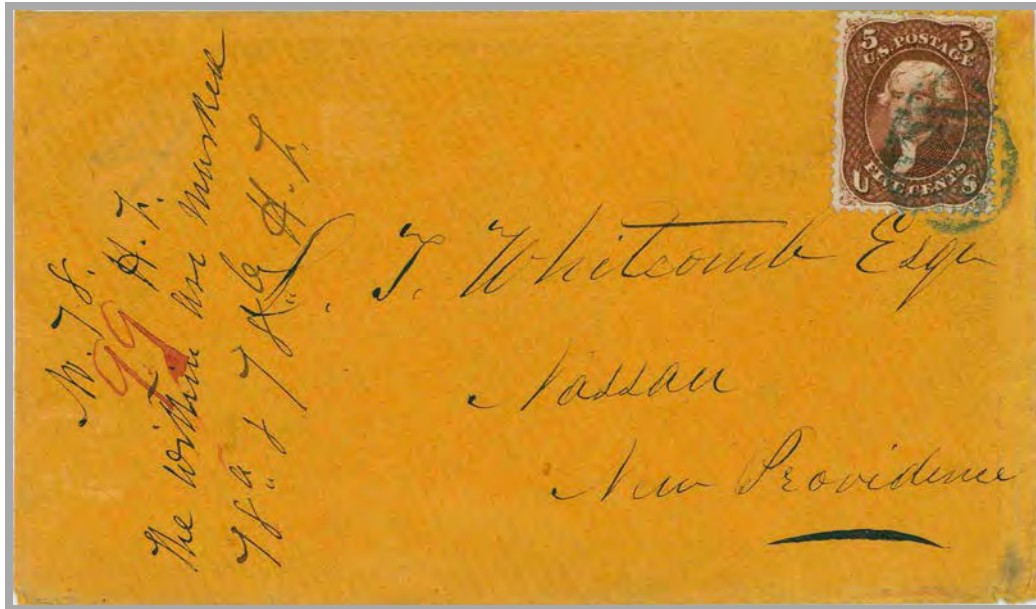
Nuestra Senora del Reglo re-flagged as the USS *Commodore Hull*

Civil War Atlantic Coast Blockade

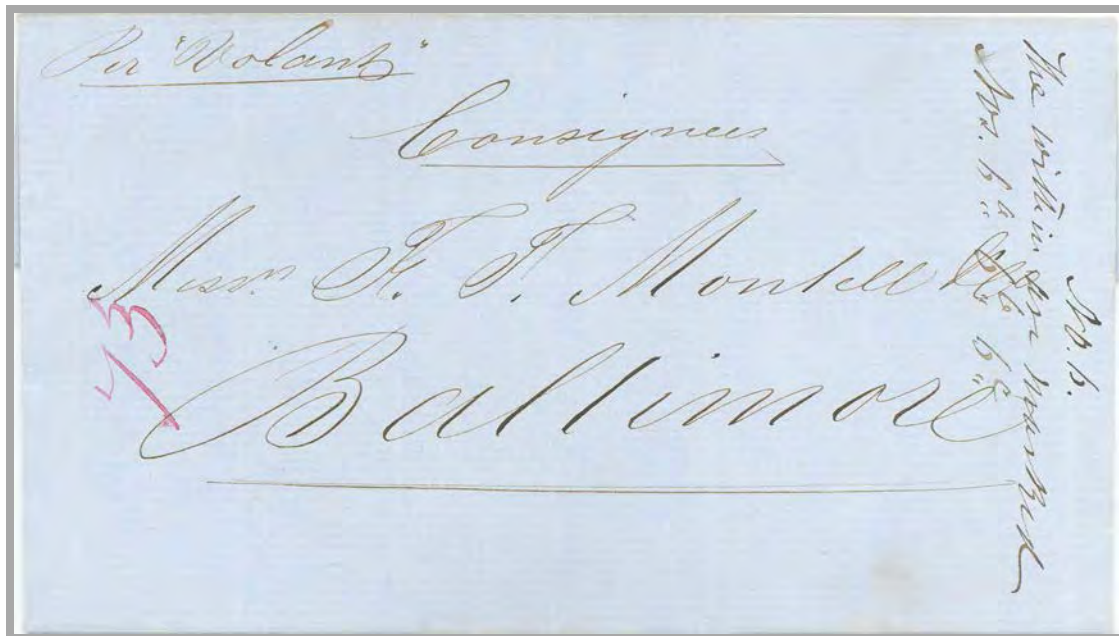
Prize Court – May 1861 to June 1865



The Philadelphia Prize Court commissioner was Henry Flanders. His initials appear on letters entered into that Prize Court as evidence.



Posted prepaid 5¢ in Baltimore and received November 15, 1862 at Nassau
Was aboard the schooner *Lightning* when it was captured off Georgia on March 9, 1863
Taken to Philadelphia - manuscript evidentiary docket "No. 78 99 HF" (Henry Flanders)



Consignee's letter from Henry Adderley & Co. dated June 21, 1862 at Nassau
Addressed to Baltimore to mislead Federals - captured July 2, 1862 on schooner *Volant*

Civil War Atlantic Coast Blockade

Prize Court – May 1861 to June 1865



From Commander John Goldsborough, captain of USS *Union* off Charleston in June 1861
Union captured the blockade runner *Amelia* inbound to Charleston on June 18, 1861
Amelia sent north to Philadelphia Prize Court with this letter aboard - arrived June 28



Private papers captured on CSS *Calhoun* - attempted to enter New Orleans on January 23, 1862
Note on back: "letter to T.B. King, Rebel Commissioner...found on the capt'd Schr *Calhoun* 1862"
Calhoun was taken to Ship Island, and then north to the Philadelphia Prize Court

Civil War Atlantic Coast Blockade

End of the Blockade - January-June 1865



The last blockaded Atlantic ports of Wilmington and Charleston fell in January-February 1865, and the last Gulf port of Galveston surrendered on June 2, 1865. Lincoln formally lifted the blockade on June 23, 1865.



Carried by Southern Express from Augusta, Georgia to Union-occupied Savannah
Posted June 14, 1865 at Savannah - sent via New York on June 26 to France



Overpaid by 2d on March 1, 1865 at Nassau, Bahamas - addressed to South Carolina
Charleston had fallen February 17, so sent via New York - mails suspended to the South