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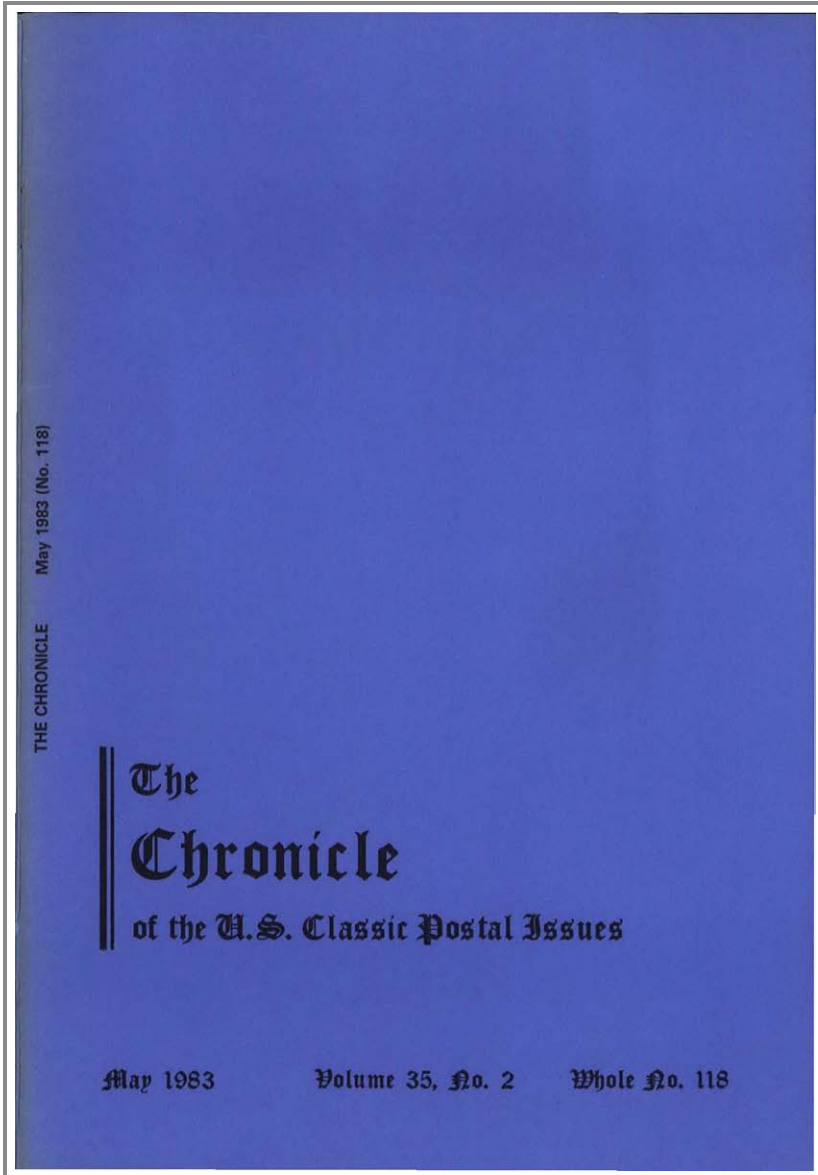


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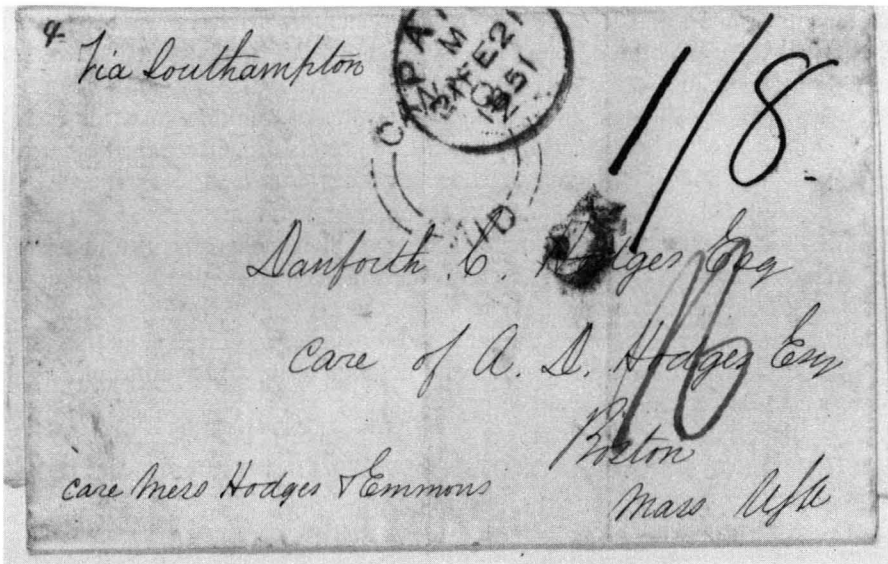


Figure 2. Letter from Canton, China, 28 Dec. 1850, prepaid 1/8 (40¢). By Collins Pacific from Liverpool 22 Feb. 1851, hence ms. 16¢ credit to U.S. Earliest reported example of 16¢ credit.

Perhaps the most important of the 16¢ credit covers unearthed since *Chronicle* 113 was published is illustrated as Figure 2. Mailed in Canton, China,¹ on 28 December 1850, its 1/8 (40¢) prepayment covered the half ounce rate to U.S. port via Southampton. Postmarked in London on 21 February 1851 and bearing a red manuscript "16," this folded letter was presumably carried by Collins Pacific, which left Liverpool the next day and arrived in New York on 6 March. If so, it antedates the 1852 cover illustrated in *Chronicle* 113 by a full year and expands considerably the known existence of the 16¢ credit procedure.

1. The red double circle "CANTON PAID" postmark appears to be scarce. F. W. Webb, in *Hong Kong & The Treaty Ports of China & Japan* (1961), pp. 259-60, stated that "about half a dozen" examples were recorded. First known used in September 1850, this was the only preadhesive stamp supplied to Canton for use on prepaid correspondence.

Review: United States Incoming Steamship Mail 1847-1875. By Theron Wierenga. Published by the author, P.O. Box 595, Muskegon, Mich. 49443. 242 pages. Available from the author at \$30 postpaid.

This book is the result of a decade of study, but, as the author freely admits, it is, in many areas, only a beginning. The subject matter is complex with many ramifications and stretches the boundaries the author originally intended.

Theron Wierenga begins with a discussion of ship letters and the rates and markings applicable to them, in order to distinguish them from steamship mail. These distinctions are clearly stated and illustrated by well chosen examples. The steamship rates are next discussed, with reference to the original acts and regulations, and their implementation demonstrated in a select group of cover photographs.

Another chapter is devoted to the routes over which steamship mail as a class was carried, the contracts governing them, and the steamship companies involved. A discussion of letters carried along the Atlantic coast, some of which received steamship markings, follows.

Succeeding chapters deal with the steamship lines, British and American, particularly those serving the South American coast and the Caribbean, and touching U.S. ports. The information therein is certain to lend fascination to rather ordinary-appearing covers and stimulate interest in their study and collection. The 15¢ steamship rate on letters to Canada (once the subject of a Cover Corner query) is well explained and illustrated. Another chapter

relates to steamship markings used at various ports, including Baltimore, Boston, Charleston, New Orleans, New York and San Francisco, while route and despatch agent markings associated with steamship service are treated next.

There are four appendices: first, a detailed listing of markings used at U.S. ports, illustrated with exact size reproductions; second, the original contracts and other material concerning mails to Cuba and Panama; third, sailing data for these services; fourth, details of the West India line of steamers. Notes, an extensive bibliography, and a useful index complete the book. The binding, printing, and paper are high quality, the illustrations profuse and well done. A few typos and misspellings are not serious enough to cause misunderstanding.

Theron Wierenga is to be congratulated on an excellent job in elucidating a difficult subject. The book is an outstanding value and belongs in the library of anyone with the slightest interest in U.S. postal history.

Susan M. McDonald

THE CUNARD LINE'S MAIL PACKETS ON THE NORTH ATLANTIC 1860-1869

WALTER HUBBARD

In this list the westbound sailings, showing the carriage of the British mails to Boston and New York, have been added to those in the other direction (see *Chronicles* 90 and 91) whilst, with additional sources available, some amendments have been made to the arrival dates at Queenstown and Liverpool. Voyages on which no contract mail was carried in either direction have not been included. Although the Cunard mail packets did not sail from Boston to Liverpool from 1 January 1868 to 3 June 1871, in 1869 they landed the British mails there nearly every week before going on to New York to make the return trip. The arrival dates at New York have not been listed as they carried no mails beyond Boston. Sailing from Liverpool on Tuesdays, these voyages were additional to the regular Saturday sailings to New York which, on their return, carried the United States mails to Great Britain.

With regard to the handling of the mails on board the Cunarders in this period, from July 1859 they had been under the charge of officers of the Post Office Department who, on the homeward journey to Liverpool, opened and sorted the British mails despatched from the United States. Sorters, also from the Post Office Department, were appointed and paid an allowance of £6 per trip plus subsistence money of seven shillings a day for the time they stayed on shore in America between the arrival of one packet and the departure of the next. As the need arose, additional sorters could be taken on and were to be paid thirty-one shillings a week increasing by one shilling a week annually to thirty-five shillings a week. The subsistence allowance was soon found to be inadequate and a benevolent Post Office increased it from seven to nine shillings a day — retrospective to the start of the service, whilst the Mail Officer's staff were to be provided with uniforms. Although the Post Records do not mention it, one supposes that they had found it necessary to keep intruders, whose honesty might not be above reproach, out of the Mail Room. These practices continued until the end of 1868 when, under the new contract, the Mail Officers and their staff were withdrawn.¹ In 1867 the Inman Line was informed that the Postmaster General required Sorting Rooms on board their vessels to be "not less than twelve feet in width and length and seven feet in height."²

The Cunard commanders were under strict instructions to land the Irish and London mails at Queenstown unless prevented by bad weather or some other emergency and, until the early summer of 1862, to take the Liverpool bags on to Liverpool, it being assumed that they would arrive there earlier than if landed at and forwarded from Queenstown. In May, however, the Postmaster at Liverpool reported to London complaints of delay under this arrangement and, on May 20 1862, F. Hill, the British Postmaster General's Secretary, wrote

1. Post Office Records, London : Post 48 288,357,388,400,605.

2. Ibid. : Post 48 55,198,290,304.