

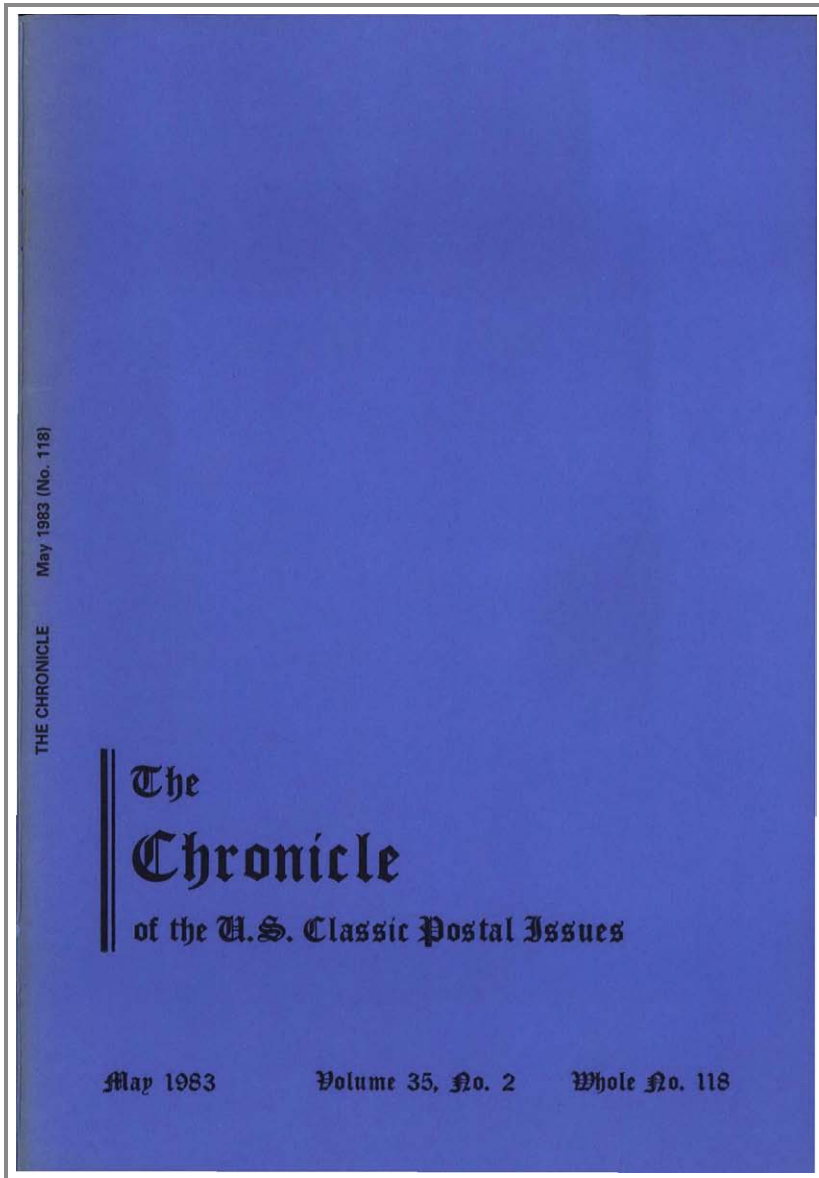


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relates to steamship markings used at various ports, including Baltimore, Boston, Charleston, New Orleans, New York and San Francisco, while route and despatch agent markings associated with steamship service are treated next.

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.<sup>1</sup> 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."<sup>2</sup>

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.

to Sir Samuel Cunard to tell him that "the Postmaster General has decided therefore on trying the experiment for six months of leaving the Officer in charge of Mails on board the Packet to determine, after consultation with the Commander of the Packet and with the Postmaster of Queenstown, whether the Liverpool portion of the Mail shall be landed at Queenstown or carried on by the Packet. . . . The Commander will, of course, judge from the state of the weather and other circumstances, how long a time the Packet will probably occupy in the voyage from Queenstown to Liverpool." There is some evidence to show that this practice was, in fact, continued until the spring of 1869 when, shortly after the Mail Officers and their staff were withdrawn, the Cunard Company was informed, on March 5 1869, that in future the decision would be entirely in the hands of the Postmaster at Queenstown in consultation with the Cunard Company's Agent at that port.<sup>3</sup>

The "Liverpool portion of the Mail" did not, of course, mean only letters addressed to that city but consisted of all mail which was going to be distributed through the Liverpool Post Office. Details of the area covered have not been found, but it is known that it included Manchester and the Scottish mails arriving in England by this route. There is not much doubt that expeditious delivery ranked high in the deliberations of the Postmaster General and his staff.

3. Ibid. : Post 48 296.

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

WALTER HUBBARD

*Abbreviations* : NY New York : B Boston : QT Queenstown : LP Liverpool : F/V or L/V first or last voyage : F/VP or L/VP first or last voyage as a packet : PD planned date of departure : (M) carried the British mails from Liverpool and Queenstown to New York or Boston.

*A figure in brackets after a departure date indicates a late sailing.*

**From 4 January 1860 to 1 January 1868**  
**from Boston via Halifax to Queenstown and Liverpool**  
**from New York via Queenstown to Liverpool**

1860 PD LP QT	ARR NY or B	PACKET	PD NY or B	ARR QT or LP	NOTES
10 Dec 11	22 Dec(M) NY	ASIA	4 Jan(5)	LP 16 Jan(0355)	
17 Dec 18	2 Jan(M) B	CANADA	11 Jan	22 Jan	
24 Dec 25	8 Jan(M) NY	ARABIA	18 Jan	29 Jan(1930)	
31 Dec 1 Jan	16 Jan(M) B	EUROPA	25 Jan	4 Feb	
7 Jan 8	23 do(M) NY	AFRICA	1 Feb	12 Feb	
14 Jan 15	4 Feb(M) B	AMERICA	8 Feb	20 Feb(1555)	
21 Jan 22	5 Feb(M) NY	ASIA	15 Feb	LP 27 Feb(0205)	
28 Jan 29	15 Feb(M) B	CANADA	22 Feb	4 Mar(0100)	
4 Feb 5	18 Feb(M) NY	ARABIA	29 Feb	LP 12 Mar(1825)	
11 Feb 12	24 Feb(M) B	EUROPA	7 Mar	19 Mar	
18 Feb 19	4 Mar(M) NY	AFRICA	14 Mar	LP 26 Mar	
25 Feb 26	13 Mar(M) B	AMERICA	21 Mar	1 Apr(1200)	
3 Mar 4	16 Mar(M) NY	ASIA	28 Mar	LP 8 Apr(1240)	
10 Mar 11	25 Mar(M) B	CANADA	4 Apr	14 Apr(2210)	
17 Mar 18	30 Mar(M) NY	ARABIA	11 Apr	LP 22 Apr(1ate)	
24 Mar 25	9 Apr(M) B	NIAGARA	18 Apr	29 Apr(0735)	
31 Mar 1 Apr	12 Apr(M) NY	PERSIA	25 Apr	4 May(1730)	
7 Apr 8	23 Apr(M) B	AMERICA	2 May	14 May(1425)	
14 Apr 15	27 Apr(M) NY	AFRICA	9 May	19 May(1320)	
21 Apr 22	4 May(M) B	CANADA	16 May	27 May(1320)	
28 Apr 29	11 May(M) NY	ASIA	23 May	2 Jun(1700)	
5 May 6	17 May(M) B	EUROPA	30 May	9 Jun(2040)	