

Synopsis

Money & registered letters between Canada & the US to 1898

One might expect the registration services of Canada and the US to be similar, developed in parallel, and their artifacts (covers) in each direction to be almost as common as those of domestic registration. None of these is true in the nineteenth century.

A *money letter* is a letter believed to contain money or other valuables. Canada instituted a money letter system circa 1825 (based on a non-identical service available in the UK since 1792). Money letters were noted on letter bills carried with the mail from post office to post office, but there was no indemnity, nor were receipts given to the senders. The US did not adopt a similar system (relying on draconian laws—two convictions for mail robbery could result in a death sentence—for mail security), but many border towns, as well as some offices in Pennsylvania, did so informally, sometimes using the term *registered*, sometimes *money letter*. Domestic Canadian money letters are not uncommon, but US examples are scarce to rare; money letters from Canada to the US are very uncommon, while in the reverse direction, they are rare.

Canada adopted registration in 1855, and later in the same year, the US did as well; but there was a delay of about a year before registration could be continued from one country to the other. Early (pre-1870) Canada to US registered matter is very uncommon, while US–Canada is almost non-existent. This asymmetry can be explained by the popularity of express companies in the US; express companies were also used in Canada, but to a proportionately smaller extent.

In the 1870s, we see that Canada to US registered mail, while still difficult to find (although this has been exaggerated in the literature), is more common than in the previous decade; US–Canada is still much harder to find, but not virtually impossible. From the 1880s on, Canada–US registered material is common, while in the other direction, not common, but not scarce either.

Canada issued registered letter stamps (RLS) in 1875; over the period ca 1876–90, these were required for use on (almost) all registered matter, and could not be used to pay other parts of the postage. In this period, a 5¢ RLS was necessary on registered letters to the US, *except for one month in 1888*, when the rate unilaterally dropped to the domestic registration fee, 2¢. The US did not issue a registration stamp until 1911.

The exhibit begins with *Canada–US money letters*, followed by the much scarcer *US–Canada* examples (including “*registered*” in the US).

A rare example appears of *Canada–US* mail *registered* in Canada in the interim period before the bilateral agreement on registration applied. Later 1850s examples, with a special rate marking, and to California are shown. Examples bracketing the cents period (1859–1868) follow. There are examples showing rate changes, and uses of the registered letter stamp (RLS). The March 1888 temporary (and accidental) registration fee reduction is exemplified. Finally in this subsection, a scarce fifth class registered (1897) item to the US appears. Canada–US registered first class mail becomes very common in the late 1870s, so no examples are shown.

An 1857 *US–Canada* registered letter appears. We show a few 1870s covers illustrating rate changes (and anomalous rates), but material is still difficult to find.

We conclude with four pages on *AR*. The only known *AR* cover in the pre-Treaty of Vienna period (to 1892) between the countries appears, and one each of Canadian and US *AR* forms in the Vienna period (1892–98), which lead to question about following the Treaty of Vienna terms. The final page shows two of the three known Canada–US *AR* covers (to 1898).

Money & registered letters between Canada & the US to 1898

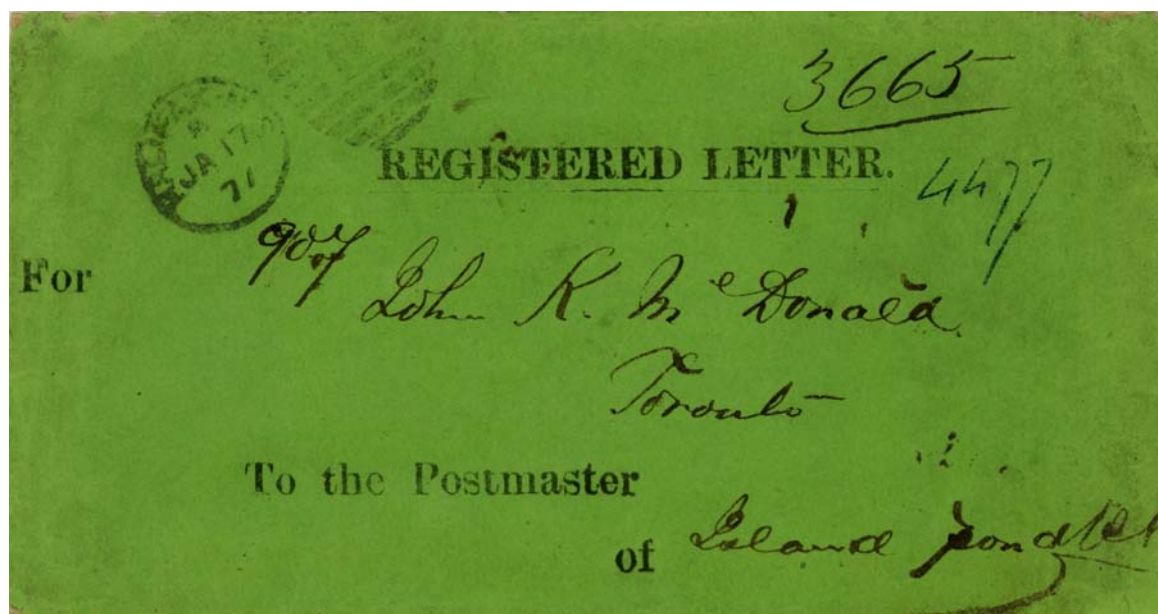
LETTERS believed to contain items of value are known as *money letters*, and in the period before registration, Canada recorded these on letter bills accompanying the mail sent between post offices. A few post offices in the US had an unofficial but similar system in the 1840–50s, sometimes called registration. In 1855, both countries adopted registration.

This exhibit deals with money letters and registered mail between the two countries. It is asymmetric: US to Canada items are far less available than the other way around (until the 1880s), possibly because of extensive use in the US of private express firms for sending items of value.

- **Canada to US & vice versa money letters** are difficult to find; we show a few in the 1840s and 1850s, including two that were “registered” in the US. Very few examples are known in the opposite direction; we show two.
- **Canada to US registration** pages include an example registered in Canada but predating the 1856 agreement that allowed registered mail to continue as such in the other country. This is followed by three items during Canada’s pence period (to 1859), including one to California; and then a pair of covers bracketing the cents period.

Canada issued registered letters stamps (RLS) in 1875, but their use was not compulsory until October 1876; an example two weeks in is shown. By the 1880s, Canada–US registered mail has become common. For the month of March 1888 only, the registration fee dropped to 2¢; an example appears. Then there is the 20× registered fifth class item, showing a short-lived rate.

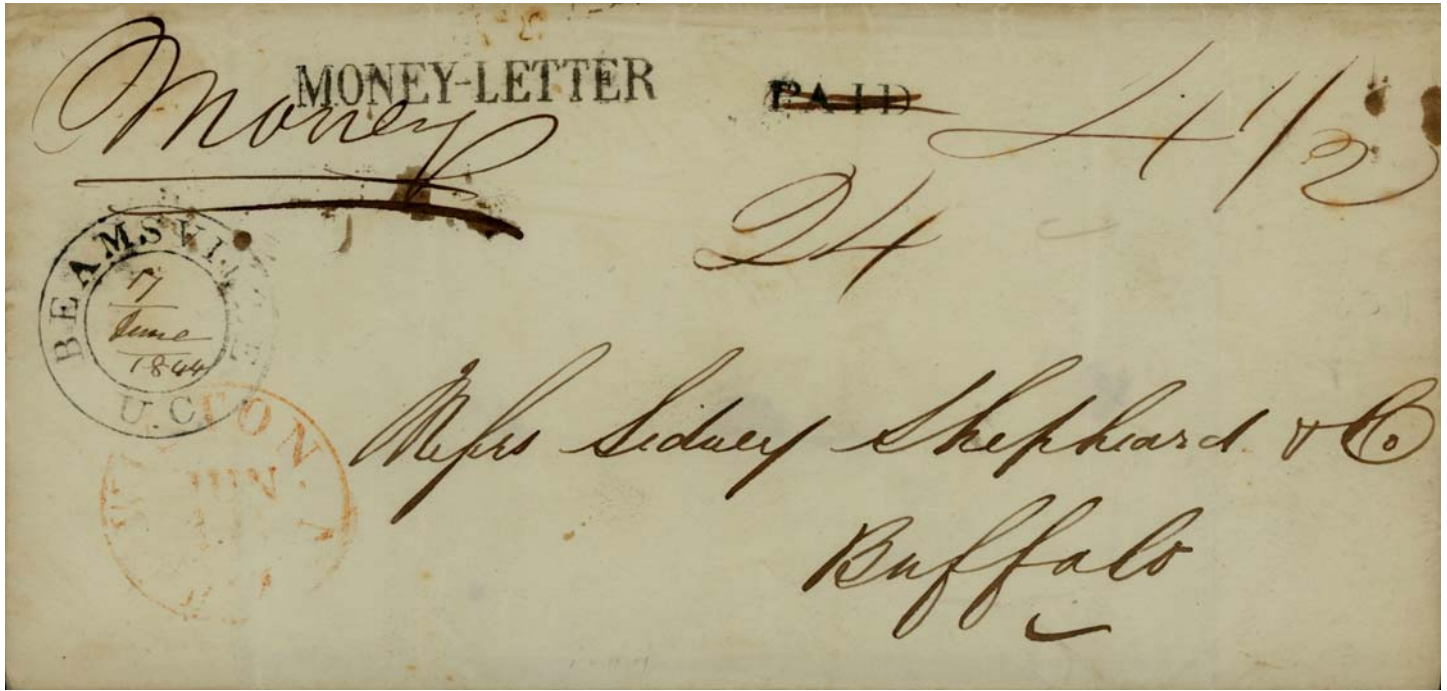
- **US to Canada registration** is rare pre-1870; we have one example, and a few in later rate periods, to 1879 (again, it becomes fairly common in the 1880s).
- **AR** (*avis de réception, acknowledgment of receipt, return receipt, . . .*), while in common use in the US, is almost nonexistent in nineteenth century Canada. Known are one US–Canada AR cover (shown), one Canadian AR form returned to the US (shown), eight US AR forms returned from Canada (one shown), and three AR covers from Canada to the US (two shown). No other pre-1899 AR material between Canada and the US has been reported.



Registered letter wrapper, Halifax–Island Pond (VT) via Montreal, 1871. Pre-Confederation Nova Scotia registered letter wrapper (used to enclose a registered letter), used post-Confederation. **Only known example of a registered letter wrapper to the US.** (Very scarce to rare if domestically used.)

Canada to US money letters

Except for an informal “registration” system (more like a money letter scheme) in Pennsylvania (from the 1840s) and in some towns bordering Canada (late 1840s on), the US did not have anything comparable to money letters until it adopted registration in 1855. However, money letters could be sent to the US, with special treatment to the border. They are fairly difficult to find.



Beamsville–Buffalo, single Canada and quadruple US rate, 1844. Rated prepaid $4\frac{1}{2}$ d cy, single rate under 60 miles to the Queenston-Lewiston border crossing (from 5 January 1844, Canadian rates were calculated per half ounce, not by sheet or per quarter ounce). The PAID handstamp was struck through at the cross-border point, Lewiston (NY), and the rate 24¢ (to be collected) applied.

The distance Lewiston–Buffalo, 25 miles, required single rate fee of 6¢ (1825–1845). US rates were calculated by sheet, so this was quadruple (three enclosures; weight less than one-half ounce).



Mess made by US postmaster, London (UC)–New York, 1845. Red London MONEY-LETTER hs.

Originally rated 9d cy (201–300 miles, London to the border), and 10¢ = 6d US rate over 300 miles (border to New York), all prepaid. The US postmaster did not believe the latter could be prepaid (it could), and struck through the red PAID hs (only a tiny portion is still visible), tearing the paper; then charged 10¢.

Money letters to US “registered” there

In portions of the US, particularly in Pennsylvania, an informal registration system was in use, although it was more like a money letter scheme. The two covers below were mailed in Canada as money letters, and then given US registration numbers (the first tentative). These are the only two such known.

While Canadian letter bill numbers did not restart at 1 until they reached (at least) 999, US registration numbers restarted every quarter. Hence the latter tend to be low, particularly from small towns, while the former tend to be high.



Hamilton—Easton (Pennsylvania), May 1854. Ms money is not in the hand of the sender, whereas at Hamilton the MONEY-LETTER handstamps were applied—suggesting the former were applied in the US. What is certainly American is the parenthesized (Reg 8); Canadian offices did not use the term registration (until 1855, when registration was adopted). Parentheses suggest that the US postmaster was unsure about how to treat this item. *Only reported Canadian money letter with US registration marking.*

Rated prepaid 10¢ treaty rate single, noted with red exchange rate marking (applied at Hamilton).



London (CW)—Easton, July 1854; same correspondence. The ms 864 is almost certainly the London letter bill number, while the 5 is very likely the US registration number, this time, not tentative. London serif MONEY-LETTER handstamp, part of general issue (1851).

Rated prepaid 20 cts = 1/- cy, double treaty rate, in large script.

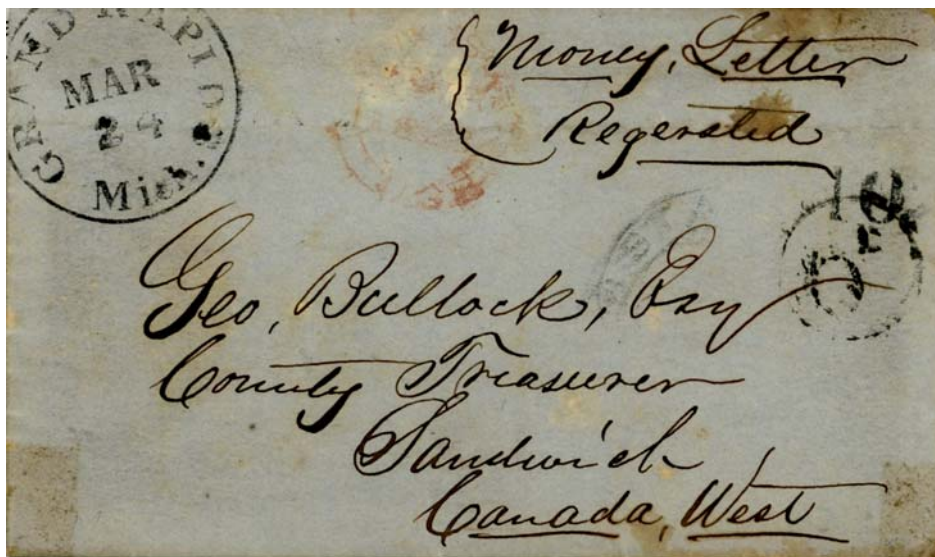
US to Canada money letters

A few US post offices near the border unofficially adopted a money letter system, at least for letters to Canada. There was no additional charge, but they were entered on the letter bill, exactly as in Canada. Very few such examples are known.



Buffalo money letter to Montreal, 1847. Rated prepaid 10¢ from Buffalo to the Swanton-Stanstead exchange, and then charged 4½ d cy (under 60 miles) to Montreal. Canadian postage could not be prepaid in the US.

Normally, mail to Canada from Buffalo would have crossed Lake Ontario to Toronto, but internal Canadian postage from Toronto to Montreal (1/2 cy) would have made it far more expensive.



Grand Rapids (Mich)–Sandwich, 1853. *Regersted*(!) Rated collect 10¢ = 6 d cy, US–Canada.

Faint red datestamp is (upside-down) Windsor, of which Sandwich is now a suburb; via Detroit.

Registered mail between Canada and the U S, 1855–1898

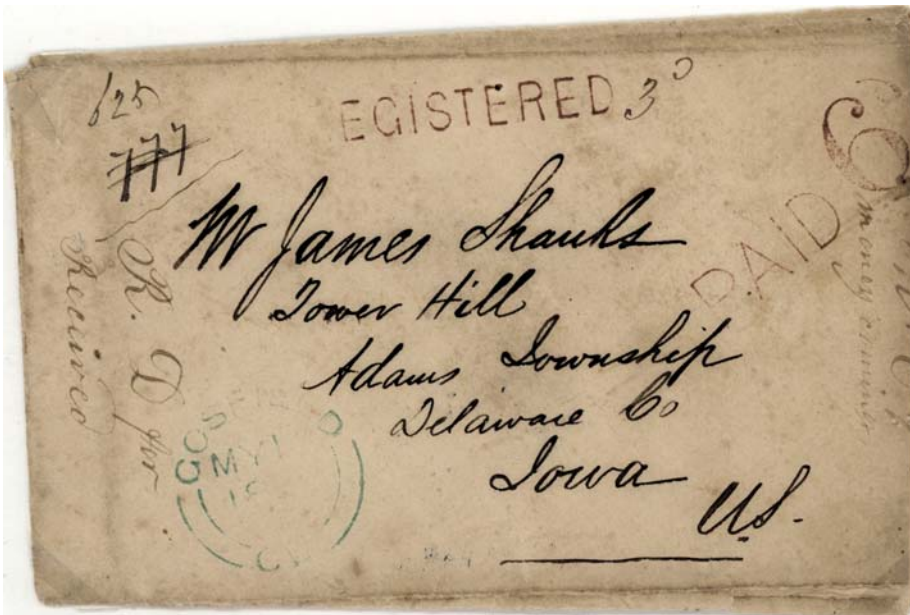
Canada initiated its registration system in May 1855, but this did not extend to mail to the U S until a bilateral agreement became effective October 1856. In the interim period (16 months), registered mail to the U S was considered registered to the border, and the domestic registration fee of 1d was charged. After the agreement came into effect, the registration fee to the U S was 3 d, which converted to 5¢ in 1859. With the exception of one month in 1888, it remained at this rate until 1920.

Canada to U S



Interim period, Aylmer (UC)–Albion (NY), November 1855. Rated (prepaid) 6d single rate to U S, plus 1d domestic registration fee (implied by REGISTERED handstamps).

Sent *Too Late* for the day's (or week's) despatch. Standard two-line CANADA/PAID 10 CTS exchange mark.



Gosfield (UC)–Tower Hill (IA), May 1859. Unusual 3^d, indicating registration fee to U S. Single rate to U S.

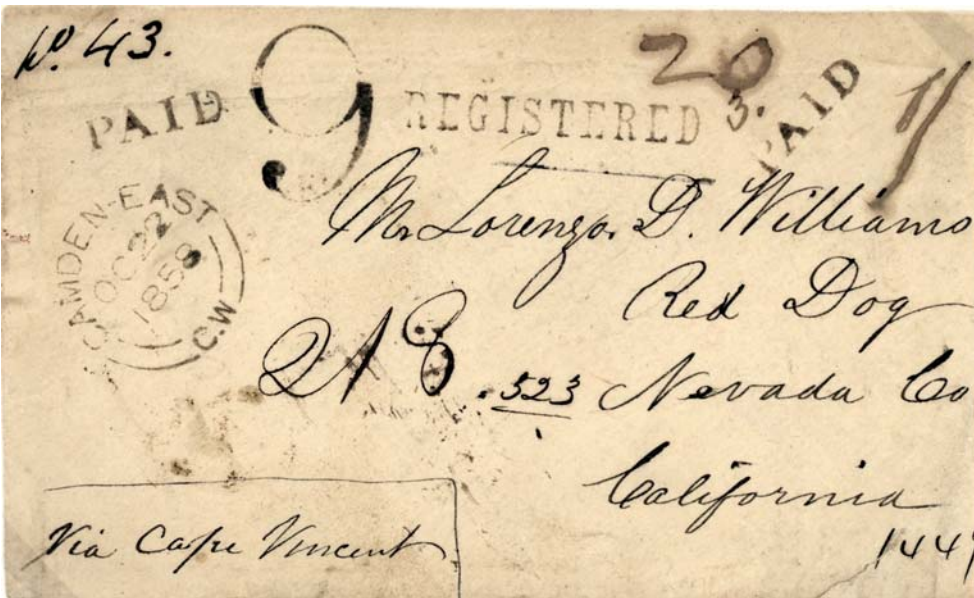
Blue GOSFIELD double broken circle; backstamped at AMHERSTBURG and WINDSOR.

Canada-U s registration, pence period (1856-1859)



Combined rate handstamp, Montreal-New York, 1858. Indicates total of 6d single to U s plus 3d registration fee to U s. Two reported examples of this handstamp.

(Common) Montreal tombstone.

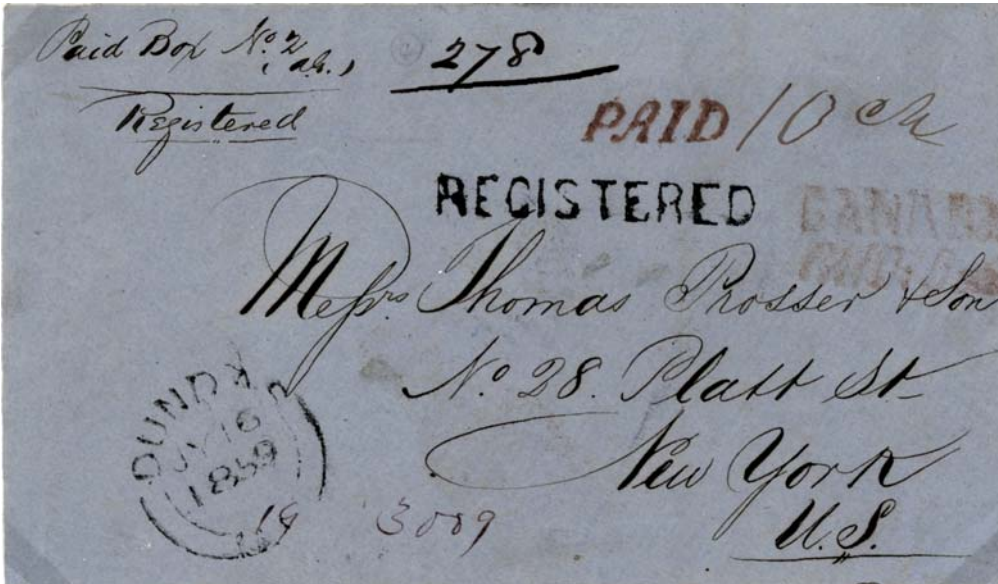


To California; Camden-East (C.W)-Red Dog, 1858. Rated (prepaid) 9d cy (treaty rate to California) at left, plus REGISTERED 3 d, totalling 1/ cy. This translated to 20¢. Notation at upper left, *pd 43*, refers to sender's post office account. Via the Kingston-Cape Vincent exchange.

Canada–U s registration, cents period (1859–1868)

When Canada converted its currency to decimal (ostensibly 1 July 1859, but this is not a hard date), the rates to the U s were converted proportionately; 3 d registration fee became 5¢, while domestic registration was 2¢, and the letter rate to the U s became 10¢.

Registration could be paid in cash or with stamps, but not with both; similarly, other postal charges could be paid in stamps or cash, but not mixed.

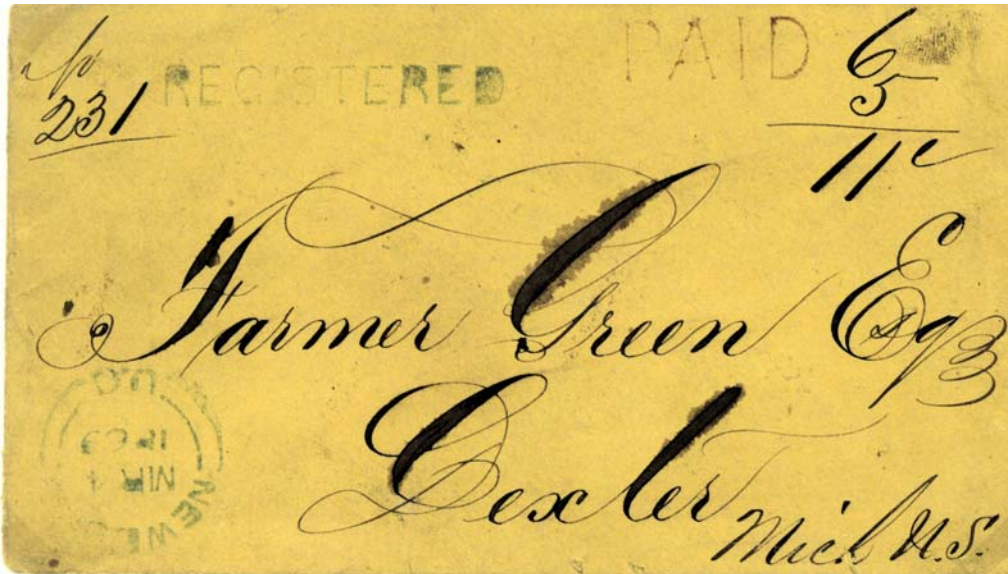


Dundas–New York, 16 July 1859 (two weeks after decimal conversion). Letter rate 10¢ to U s, and prepayment of registration fee indicated by registered handstamp. Standard exchange mark, probably applied at Clifton.



Paid entirely in stamps, double rate, Hamilton–New Haven, January 1868. Double 10¢ to U s, plus 5¢ registration.

Canada–U s registration



- 1 April 1868, letter rate to U S, 6¢ per half ounce if prepaid (all postage to the U S on registered letters had to be prepaid).

- 1 January 1875, letter rate to the U S, 3¢, and paid in stamps only.

- 1 October 1876, 5¢ RLS compulsory on registered mail to the U S.

- 5¢ registration to the U S in effect 1859–1920, except for March 1888.

Newbury (U.C)–Dexter (MI), 4 March 1869. Single letter rate (6¢) plus registration fee itemized upper left. Late use of **NEWBURY U.C** double broken circle by six months.



Walton (ONT)–Boston, 14 October 1876 (date corrected from 15 October). Registration 5¢ and letter to U S 3¢. Early use of 5¢ RLS.

Second reported strike of WALTON ONT single broken circle.



Two 2¢ RLS from a small town, December 1876. Registration fee paid by the RLS stamps, plus the 1¢ small queen. This use was countenanced when the office had no 5¢ RLS.

From ROUND-HILL NS (faint; upper right); backstamped at Saint John. Blurred Boston registered datestamp on the front.

Canadian registration fee to U S reduced for one month (March 1888)

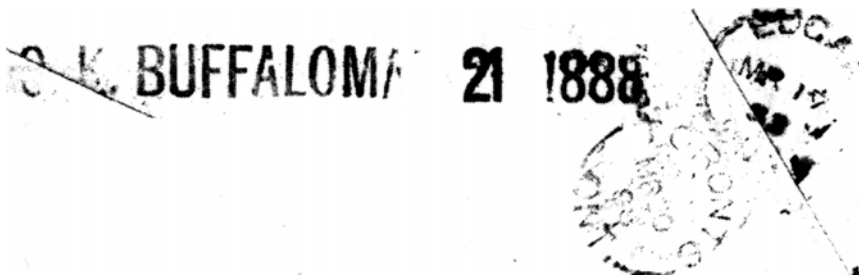
On first class letters to the U S, Canada unilaterally lowered the registration fee to 2¢ (the domestic fee) effective 1–31 March 1888. This was probably the result of a mistake in Canada Postal Guide supplements sent to postmasters. After U S protest, the fee was restored to 5¢ on April Fool's Day.

Fewer than twenty covers with the reduced fee have been reported. More probably exist, since registered material to the U S is quite common in the 1880s (and later).



2¢ registration fee to the U S; Edgar (ONT)–Providence, 17 March 1888.

Two of the registration numbers are very low (3, 5); one of them was probably applied at Edgar. Low Canadian registration numbers are fairly difficult to find, since for smaller towns, they did not turn the corner until they reached 999. In contrast, U S offices typically restarted at 1 every quarter.



The Buffalo transit marking reading OK was likely intended for letter bills.

Registered fifth class to U S

This class contained miscellaneous material sent open for examination. It was available to the U S from 1 March 1888 to 31 December 1898 (and is much more difficult to find to the U S than domestically). The rate was 1¢ per ounce.



Only 1 lb of tea, vigintuple rate, Halifax–Baltimore, 1897. Rated 5¢ registration fee plus 20 × 1¢ for twenty ounces. The tea container, likely metal, probably weighed four ounces (a pound of tea is voluminous). Obviously *not* philatelic, despite the franking by various stamps lying around.

Sent to a long-term patient or employee at Johns Hopkins Hospital, based on the amount of tea.

U s–Canada registration

Although the U s instituted (domestic) registration in 1855, it did not permit registration to Canada until an agreement effective 1 October 1856. It is much more difficult to find U s–Canada registered mail in the period to 1880 than the other way around.



Portland (ME)–Montreal, March 1857. Early registered letter to Canada. Rated (faint red ms) 10¢, rate to Canada, and 5¢ registration (to Canada), not marked (as usual), all prepaid. The lower number, 35, was probably applied at Portland, and the higher one, 420, at Montreal.



Anomalous rate, New York–Hamilton, 1871. At this time, registration was 15¢, and the letter rate to Canada was 6¢, so this is 2¢ overpaid (unusually, the franking is on reverse).

U s—Canada

- 1 January 1874, registration 8¢
- 1 July 1875–1893, registration 10¢
- 1 February 1875, letter rate to Canada, 3¢ per half ounce.

Anomalous rate, Kokomo (IN)—Elmira (ONT), 1873–74. Registration is 5¢, rate to Canada 6¢. No missing stamps. Possibly the postmaster confused the rate to Canada with the domestic rate (3¢).

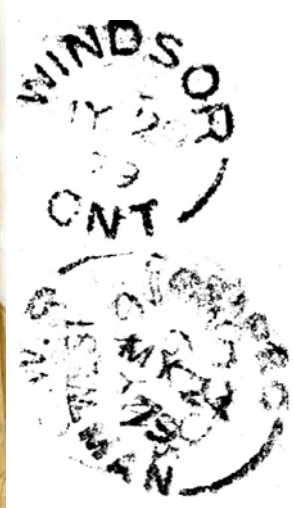
Boxed REGISTERED G.W.R. is a Canadian registered RPO marking.



Anomalous rate, New York to Toronto, 1874. Registration fee 8¢ and 6¢ letter rate to Canada, shortpaid by 3¢. Again, clerk confused the domestic rate (3¢) with the rate to Canada.



Septuple rate, Middletown (NY) to Winnipeg, 1879. Rated $7 \times 3¢$ (per half ounce) plus 10¢ registration. With REGISTERED GWR ACCOMDN, another Canadian RPO registration marking.



A R service between Canada and the U S

Although A R (*avis de réception*; *return receipt* in the U S) was popular in the U S, in nineteenth century Canada, it was almost unheard of. Canada instituted A R service (to members of the UPU) in 1879; the U S, prior to 1875. In the pre-Treaty of Vienna period (1879–1892), the only A R item known between the two countries is on this page; there are no A R forms, A R covering envelopes, or Canada to U S A R covers known.

Pre-Vienna (1879–92) U S to Canada A R cover

No A R covers (that is, registered letters provably sent with A R) of Canadian origin are known in the pre-Vienna period.

- **One of two known incoming to Canada (from anywhere) A R covers in the pre-Vienna period** (the other is addressed to stamp dealer Hechler).



Received in bad order, L'Anse (MI)–Montreal, 1890. U S formula for A R was *return receipt demanded*, and this was a free option (the U S was one of very few countries that did not charge for international A R service).

Rated 10¢ registration fee and (double) $2 \times 2\text{¢}$ rate to Canada (equals the domestic U S rate). With 1889 U S officially sealed stamp. Via Detroit (likely where the officially sealed stamp was applied) and Windsor.



Treaty of Vienna period (1892–98), part 1; Canadian A R form to U S

This seems to have followed the usual procedure during the Treaty of Vienna period, that is, a registered letter from the U S was sent with A R service, and the form prepared in Canada, in this case, at the destination office, Vancouver.

However, there exist at least eight U S A R forms A R representing registered items in the *same* direction. To have been consistent with the Treaty of Vienna, they should have been for registered items from Canada to U S.

Discovery example: Canadian A R form in the Vienna period. Only Canadian A R form to U S in this period.

ADMINISTRATION DU CANADA.
POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT, CANADA.

AVIS DE RÉCEPTION ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF RECEIPT

{ d'une lettre recommandée } enregistré sous le N° , et adressé à
{ d'un objet recommandé }

of a Registered { letter } entered under N° , and addressed to
{ article }

M. *Catholic Supply Store* le 189.....
to *Vancouver* on the

Le soussigné déclare { qu'une lettre recommandée } à l'adresse sus-
{ qu'un objet recommandé } mentionnée

The undersigned acknowledges that a registered { letter } addressed as above
{ article }

Timbre du bureau distributeur. et provenant de *Dayton Ohio*
and posted at

a été dûment livré le 189.....
was duly delivered on the

Signature (*)

du destinataire : *Lawrence King* du chef du bureau distributeur : *J. C. Curvall*
of the addressee: of the Postmaster of the office of destination:

Stamp of the office of destination.

(*) Cet avis doit être signé par le destinataire et par le maître de poste du bureau distributeur, puis être envoyé, sous recommandation, par le premier courrier, au bureau d'origine de l'objet qu'il concerne.

(*) This acknowledgment of receipt should be signed by the addressee, and by the Postmaster of the office of destination; it will then be transmitted under registration, by the first mail, to the office of posting of the article to which it relates.

39 B.-2,500-2-11-92.

1239 Post Office, DAYTON, OHIO.
Received *11/20/96*, 1896 from
Unter amann
addressed *Mc Cathole Supply Store*
Vancouver B.C.
J.C. Curvall, P. M., per

Letter { No. } 1239
of registered piece.
This space is reserved on counterparts
for particulars connected with dispatch
of registered piece.

US registration receipt for the registered item.

REGISTRY DIVISION
DEC 12 1896
DAYTON, OHIO
REGISTERED.
AVIS DE RÉCEPTION.
Administration des Postes du Canada.

R

Le Receveur des Postes
The Postmaster
J. C. Curvall
at *Dayton Ohio*

6744

POST OFFICE SERVICE.
FREE.

Stamp of the office of destination.

Canadian A R form for registered letter from the U S to Canada, Dayton (OH)–Vancouver, 1896. Travelled through the mail as a registered folded letter sheet, not requiring a covering envelope. Printed 2 November 1892, in a quantity of 2,500.

- One of three Canadian A R forms (to anywhere) known used in the Vienna period.

Vienna period, part 2; U S A R form returned from Canada

One of eight reported U S A R forms returned from Canada in the Vienna period, all for registered items to Canada; *not consistent* with the Treaty of Vienna. No U S A R forms are known in the other direction.

Some pairs of countries, e.g., New Zealand & Australia, adopted the practice of filling out the A R form at the office of origin (as occurred both pre- and post-Vienna) on mail between them (and otherwise adhering to Vienna procedures). While no documentation is known for this between U S & Canada, the eight U S A R forms would be consistent with it, and the example on the previous page is an anomaly (or an oversight, or the original A R form was not received at Vancouver).

(3870.)
A^{bis}.

U. S. Post Office Department.
RETURN RECEIPT
AVIS DE RÉCEPTION
RÜCKSCHEIN 1047

for a registered article entered under No. _____, and addressed to
d'un objet recommandé enregistré sous le No. _____, et adressé à
für eine Einschreibsendung No. _____, an
M Catholic Supply Store, the _____, 18
M _____, à _____, le _____, 18
M _____, in Vancouver - B.C., 18
Canada

Stamp of the office of origin. The undersigned certifies that a registered article to the above address
Timbre du bureau d'origine. Le soussigné déclare qu'un objet recommandé à l'adresse susmentionnée
Stempel der abliefernden Postanstalt. Der Endesunterscribene bescheinigt dass eine Einschreibsendung an die obige Adresse

and originating at Dayton ^{OH}, has been duly
et provenant de 17-97 # 134, a été dûment
und angegeben in _____, wurde vorschritts mässig
delivered the _____, 18
livré le _____, 18
abgeliefert den _____, 18

Stamp of the office of delivery. Signature (*) Lawrence Kip
Timbre du bureau distributeur. Signature (*)
Stempel der abliefernden Postanstalt. Unterschrift (*)

of the addressee: of the Chief of the office of delivery:
du destinataire: du chef du bureau distributeur:
des Empfängers: des Chefs der abliefernden Postanstalt:

77. Barber

(*) This Return Receipt must be signed by the addressee, or if the regulations of the country of destination allow it, by the Chief of the office of delivery, placed in an envelope, and returned under registration by the first mail.
(* C'est avis doit être signé par le destinataire ou, si les règlements du pays de destination le permettent, par le chef du bureau distributeur, puis être mis sous enveloppe et renvoyé sous recommandation, par le premier courrier.
(* Dieser Rückschein muss vom Empfänger unterschrieben werden, oder wenn die Bestimmungen des Empfangslandes es erlauben von dem Chef der abliefernden Postanstalt, in einen Briefumschlag gelegt, und als Einschreibsendung mit der ersten Gelegenheit zurück geschickt werden.

Typical trilingual U S A R form, requiring a covering envelope for its return. Prepared en route, at St. Paul (MN), where it likely crossed the border (to travel via Winnipeg to Vancouver).

Generally, U S A R forms are not rare, even in the nineteenth century.

This space is reserved on counterpart for particulars connected with dispatch of registered piece.

Registered Letter {
Parcel } No. 134
Post Office, Dayton, OH
Received 1/17, 1897, from
addressed Catholic Supply Store,
Vancouver, B.C., P. M., per L. Kip

U S registration receipt for the registered item (full size).

U S A R form for registered letter from the U S to Canada, Dayton (OH)–Vancouver, 1897. Same correspondence as preceding. Signed and handstamped at Vancouver, and returned to sender. Very early **Customs Canada** (Vancouver) cogged oval datestamp.

Canada to U S A R covers

No U s to Canada A R covers are known in the Vienna period.

- Two of three known non-philatelic Canadian A R covers to U s 1879–1898.



St John–Middletown (CT), 1893. Rated 5¢ R L S (registration), 3¢ letter rate to U s, and 5¢ A R fee. **Earliest Canadian A R cover, and only one with an R L S.**



Halifax–Cedar Rapids (IA), 1896. Rated combined registration fee and letter rate to U s paid by 8¢ small queen, and 5¢ A R fee.

Very clear AR handstamp showing no wear—consistent with being rarely used.

