

Pre-Confederation

BNA

money and registered letters

Synopsis

BNA, BRITISH NORTH AMERICA, refers to the the parts of what is now Canada in the pre-Confederation period. *Confederation* is normally taken to mean 1 July 1867, when the colonies of Nova Scotia (N S), New Brunswick (N B), and the province of Canada joined to form Canada. However, for this exhibit, the date of Confederation means the date a particular colony entered Canada: thus, for Manitoba (Red River Settlement/Assiniboia), 1870; British Columbia, 1871; Prince Edward Island (P E I), 1873; and Newfoundland, 1949. However, we restrict the Newfoundland material to the nineteenth century, to make it more of a challenge.

The money and registration systems enabled small valuables to be sent through the mail with some degree of security. In the province of Canada (constituting a tiny portion of what is now Ontario and Quebec), *money letters* (that is, letters, containing banknotes or other valuables, that were recorded by the post office) are known from 1825 (although the earliest known official notices date from 1827), and there is strong evidence that the money letter system did not begin until that year (on the basis of many covers pre-1825 that are known to have contained banknotes, but were not marked *money* or equivalent).

The Canadian money letter system was based on the British system (1792–1840), with a slight difference: in the British system, *money* meant coin (so senders of a wad of cash would include a farthing coin to ensure money letter treatment), whereas in Canada, there was no such constraint. There was no indemnity for loss and no receipt was given to the sender (as there was for the later registration system). However, money letters were recorded on the letter bill sent with each mailing (post office to post office), so they could be tracked; it appears that there were very few losses.

The money letter systems in the maritime provinces (N S, N B, and P E I) were similar, except we have no data on when they began. For British Columbia, Red River, and Newfoundland, there are no known money letters.

In the 1850s, the colonies replaced the money letter system by registration (province of Canada, 1855; N S, 1851; N B, 1852; P E I, possibly 1855; Newfoundland, 1858?). Now a receipt was given to the sender of the registered matter and registered letters were tracked on the letter bills, but there was still no indemnity (this had to wait until 1904).

Domestic money letters in the province of Canada are fairly common; far less common are those of N S, and those of N B verge on rare; only four (including non-domestic) are known for P E I (of course, we do not restrict to domestic material, but this is simply to give an indication of relative scarcity). Pre-Confederation province of Canada registered material is again relatively common, but that of N S is not, and neither is that of N B; for P E I, it is rare. There is one known Red River registered item, and several registered British Columbia covers have been reported. For Newfoundland, the earliest is 1860 (shown), and then in the Colin Lewis collection, one each in 1862, 1865, 1873, 1877, 1879, and six in the period 1886–90.

Organization of the exhibit

There are two initial subdivisions, *Money letters* and *registration*. Within each of these, we proceed colony by colony, (province of) Canada, NS, NB, PEI, Newfoundland, and Red River (where applicable), in that order. Unfortunately, I have no British Columbia material. At the end of the two subdivisions are the extremely rare letter wrappers used (seemingly irregularly) to enclose the money or registered letters.

Money letters

Highlights

- 1825 and 1826 money letters (Canada), latter free and enclosing a blue ribbon
- very early MONEY LETTER handstamp (1831)
- Canada to UK money letter (1829)
- earliest money letter with a beaver (17 May 1851)
- two of the four known PEI money letters (one domestic, the other to NS)
- three of the four known NS money letter wrappers

Registration

Highlights

- earliest known (province of) Canada registered letter (5 May 1855)
- dectuple rate (1864) and quintuple with postage unpaid but registration fee paid in stamps (the scarcest of six possible combinations)
- Canada to US in the interim period before US agreement had been adopted (November 1855)
- incoming from UK (1856, prior to official authorization of registration to Canada)
- incoming from Australian state, with postage due (1861)
- Halifax registration crown
- possibly earliest PEI registered cover (1855)
- 1856 PEI registered drop letter
- PEI registered arc (1867)
- December 1871 PEI registered letter (one of two known in this rate period)
- earliest (by far) reported Newfoundland registered cover (1860)
- unique Red River registered item (1860)
- registration letter wrappers of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island.

Research & References

There are numerous articles on Canadian registration. The one book on the subject in the past twenty years, Harrison, Arfken, & Lussey [HAL] (CCC, 2002), *Canada's registered mail 1802–1909*, has a lot of information, but there are numerous inaccuracies, not to mention organizational difficulties. Anything derived from there should be checked with an independent source.

Other sources include old issues of *the Registry*, the publication of the short-lived BNAPS registration study group, especially a letter to the editor by Gray Scrimgeour. The Pratt accumulation of Newfoundland (downloadable from the Chicago Collectors Club site, <http://www.nfldstamps.com/CCC.html>) contains lots of material. And of course, Wikipedia.

Cut-off date

When the colony joined Canada; for the province of Canada, NS, and NB, this was 1 July 1867. For Red River Settlement/Assiniboia, this was 1870 (becoming Manitoba); for PEI, 1873; for Newfoundland, 1949, but we cut the last off at 1900.

Pre-Confederation **BNA** money & registered letters

MONEY letters & **registered** mail from the province of Canada, Nova Scotia (NS), New Brunswick (NB), Prince Edward Island (PEI), Newfoundland, and Red River Colony prior to their joining Canada. *Money letters* were letters believed to contain valuables, and were recorded on letter bills between post offices. The money letter system was superseded in the 1850s by registration.

Money letters

Province of Canada First year (1825), and very early *free* (1826); early MONEY LETTER handstamp (1831); to UK (1829); earliest stamped money letter.

Nova Scotia & New Brunswick Much more difficult to find than those of Canada; early, free.

Prince Edward Island Two of the four known are shown, one domestic, the other intercolonial.

Money letter wrappers Used to enclose money letters; three (different) of the four known from Nova Scotia.

Registration

Province of Canada Earliest reported (5 May 1855); dectuple rate (1864), and the scarce registration paid in stamps, rest of postage collect combination (quintuple, 1865); interim to US (after Canada adopted registration, but before an agreement on cross-border registration); very early incoming from UK (1856); incoming from New South Wales with postage due (1861)

Nova Scotia & New Brunswick More difficult to find than those of Canada; free; Halifax crown; to exceedingly small towns; intercolonial.

Prince Edward Island Joined Canada 1873. Verging on rare. Candidate earliest known (2 April 1855); drop letter (1856); registered arc (1867); one of two known in the rate period ending 31 December 1855.

Newfoundland Joined 1949. Exceedingly rare pre-1880. Earliest (1860); to Holland (1893).

Red River Colony Joined Canada as Manitoba (1870). Only reported registered item to or from (1860)—is a Canadian return registered letter wrapper forwarded to the colony.

Registered letter wrappers Very few known. New Brunswick (1865); three different from Nova Scotia (1863–64), and the unique Prince Edward Island example (1857).



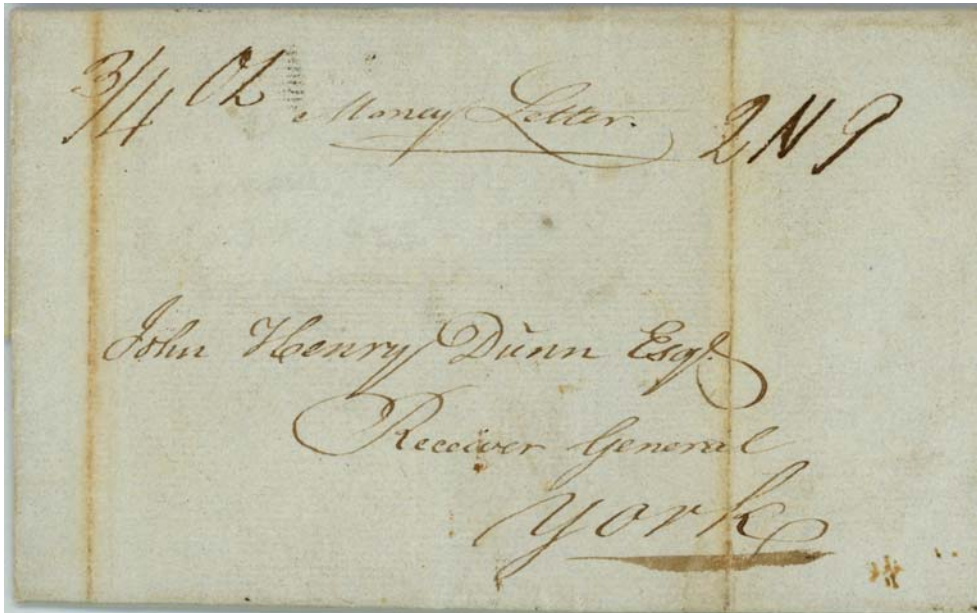
Typical of what would have been sent in a money letter, this 1837 note of the Agricultural Bank (Upper Canada) was equivalent to five shillings currency, and to one US dollar (*une piastre*). Currency was devalued with respect to sterling, the exchange rate fluctuating. Printed on one side only (normal in this period).

Money letters

BASED on the British scheme (in effect from 1792 until the advent of registration), money letters were in use in Canada 1825–1855. Any letter containing valuables would be marked *money letter* (or, less frequently, *cash*, or *money*), and special treatment would be given. There was no charge per se, but the enclosure increased the weight or the number of sheets, resulting in increased postage.

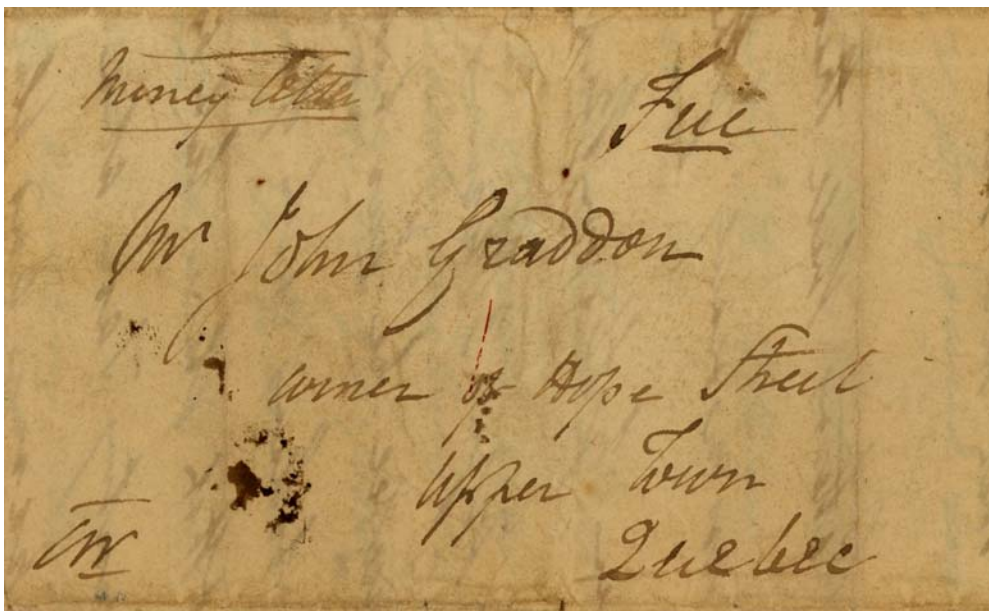
Canada

The earliest known official document mentioning money letters is a September 1827 notice in the journal of the Legislative Assembly, *after* these letters.



10th October
1825

Money letter, Cornwall–York (Toronto), 10 October 1825. *Earliest or second earliest money letter*, and one of two known in 1825. Rated 3/4 oz (triple) 2N9 (cy): 3×11 d cy for 201–300 miles. Enclosed £4 3s 3d cy, and since the weight was under an ounce, triple rate was based on two enclosures.

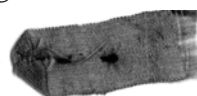


Sherbrooke Aug 3rd 26

Free money letter, Sherbrooke–Quebec, enclosed ribbon sample, 3 August 1826. Very early money letter and one of very few sent *free*—here, postmaster's perquisite—in this early period (until 1835; postmasters were allowed two free letters per mail). Initialed by Sherbrooke postmaster Ann Whitcher (AW) at lower left, with *ms money letter* at upper left.

Enclosed unspecified payment for boots and gloves, and sample blue ribbon for a colour match.

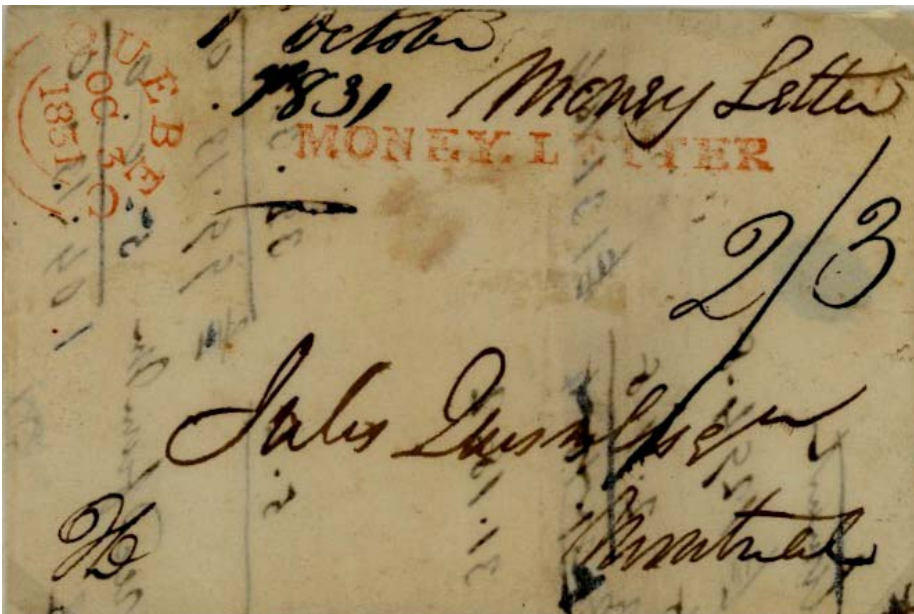
1 Piece of Blue Ribbon & Pattern



← Blue ribbon, attached by pin

Money letter handstamps

MONEY-LETTER (with or without hyphen, sometimes with period) and MONEY handstamps were introduced in 1831 at Quebec, and are seldom seen until the 1840s. There were several different general issue styles, and homemade ones exist as well.



Early Quebec handstamp, October 1831. Second earliest reported example; this style is said to be rare, and rarer in red (indicating prepaid) by [HAL], but this is likely one of their numerous errors.

The letter contained £104 in the form two drafts, hence triple rate 101–200 miles (Quebec–Montreal, by far the commonest route in Canada in the 19th century), collect 2/3 cy.

Quebec datestamp is the 1831-issue double broken circle.



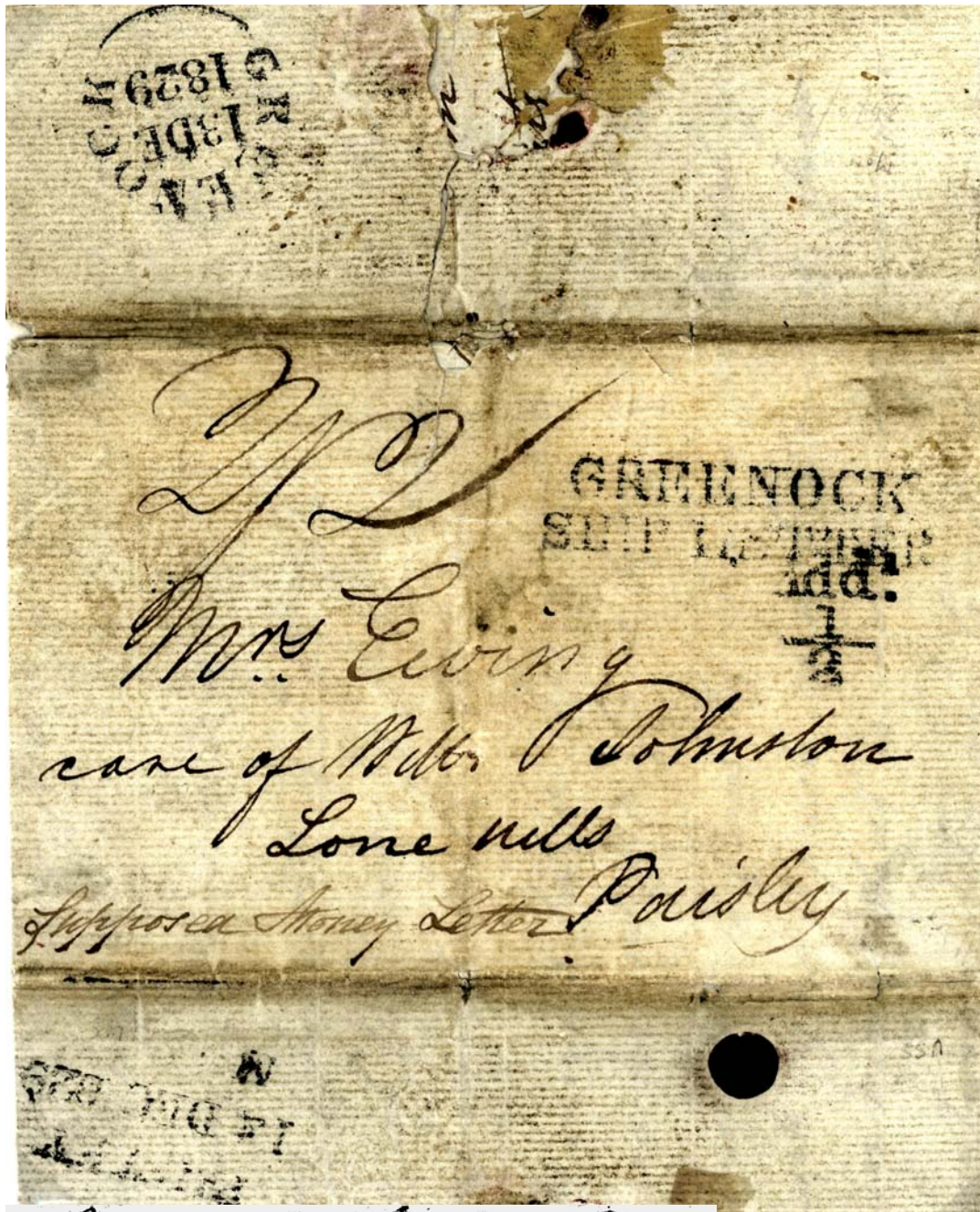
Later Quebec handstamp, 1847. General issue with large roman letters.

Rated prepaid 2/4 quadruple (one ounce) 61–100 miles, Quebec–St-Pierre-les-Becquets.

To United Kingdom

Fewer than ten money letters have been reported between BNA and UK.

Montreal October 26 1829



Supposed Money Letter

Montreal–Scotland, 1829. Treated as a money letter in the UK; *Supposed Money Letter* likely applied on arrival at Greenock. Rated collect 2/2 stg, made up from ship letter fee (8 d), captain's gratuity (2 d), and internal UK rate, Greenock–Paisley (double 8 d), plus the ubiquitous $\frac{1}{2}$ d Scottish wheel tax.

Two-step GREENOCK SHIP LETTER straightline (Robertson s–12), then Greenock dater, and Paisley straightline (at bottom/reverse).

Beavers and friends inundate the mail

The new-fangled and not much licked (in Canada) adhesive bits of paper, *postage stamps*, were issued on or after 23 April 1851. Their use on money letters was limited to April 1851–April 1855. The top cover is the earliest known stamped money letter, at most 24 days after the 3 d beaver was issued.

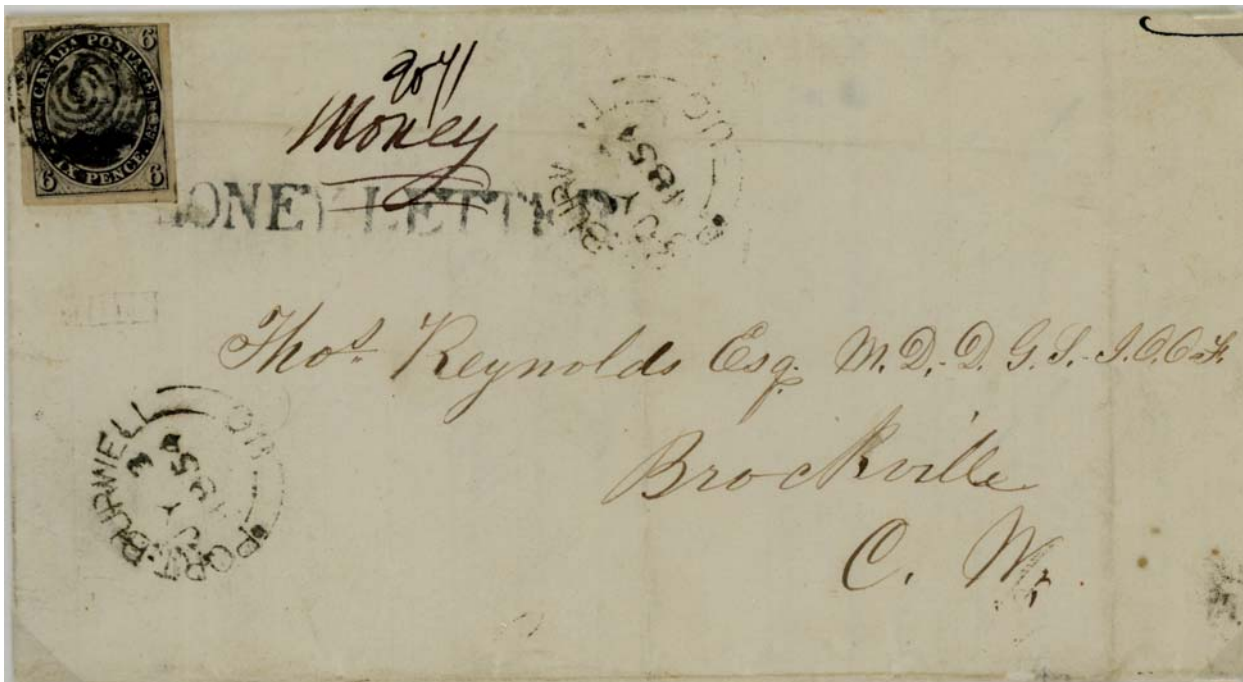


Earliest known stamped money letter, Woodstock–London (CW), 17 May 1851.

Serif general issue **MONEY-LETTER** and **TOO LATE** [for the day or week's despatch] handstamps at Woodstock. 3 d beaver (laid paper), issued around 23 April 1851, pays single domestic rate. Greene Foundation certificate 18150 (2011).

Woodstock May 18th
1851

Although the year resembles 1857, the horizontal stroke of the 5 has been joined to the 1. The London datestamp shows the 1 clearly. (And in any event, by 1857, the money letter system had been replaced by registration.)



Domestic double rate, Port Burwell–Brockville, 1854. Larger **MONEY-LETTER** hs.

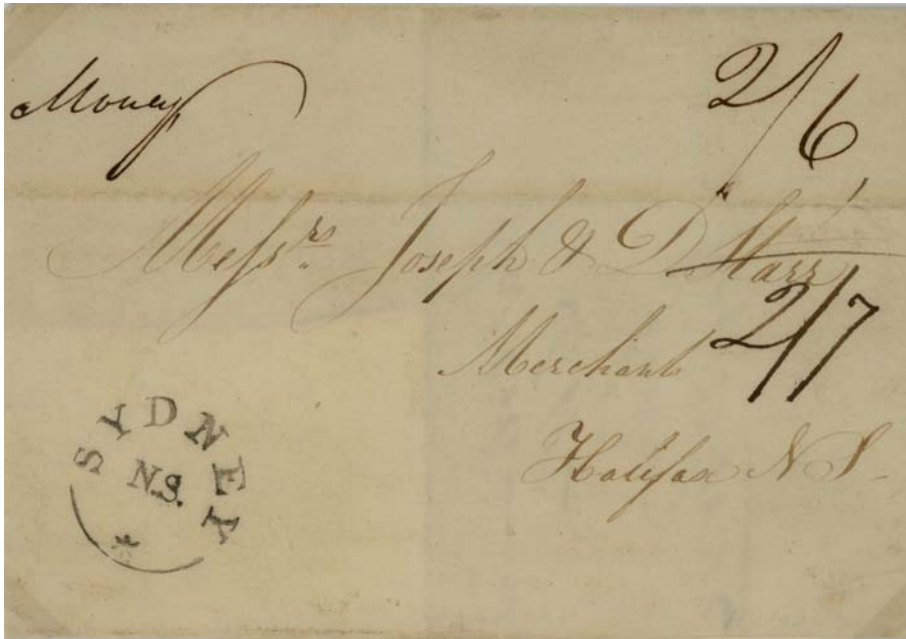
Rated prepaid 6d cy by Albert (also laid), double domestic. Royal Philatelic Society (London) #191127 (August 2005) ... is genuine.

Maritime money letters

(No money letters are known for Newfoundland, Red River Settlement, and of course, British Columbia.) In the Maritime colonies (Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, & Prince Edward Island), the money letter system was used, but *much* less frequently than in the Province of Canada. Nova Scotian examples are difficult to find, those of New Brunswick are very difficult, and at most four are known from P E I.

No reliable dates are known for the beginnings of money letters in the Maritimes. The money letter systems were replaced by registration at different times: NS, 6 July 1851; NB, 6 July 1852, and P E I, 1855.

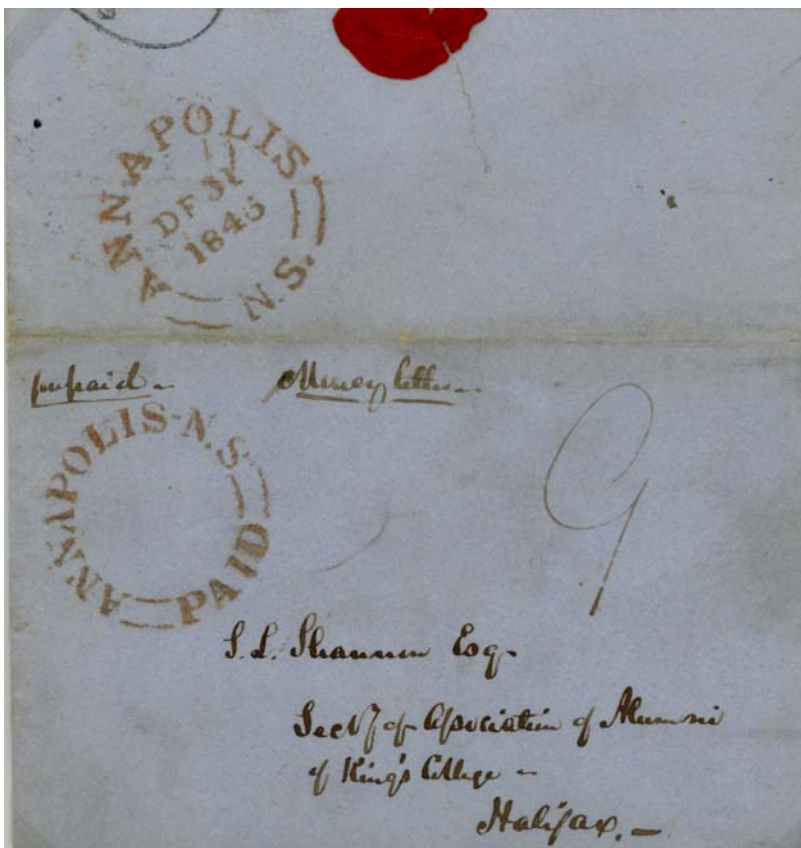
Nova Scotia (NS)



Sydney–Halifax, 1842. Earliest NS money letter reported.

Rated collect 2/6 d cy, double rate (rates only roughly based on mileage) for one enclosure, plus collect 1 d cy carrier/local delivery fee in Halifax.

Sydney * postmark is one of a group in use from the 1830s in NS & NB.



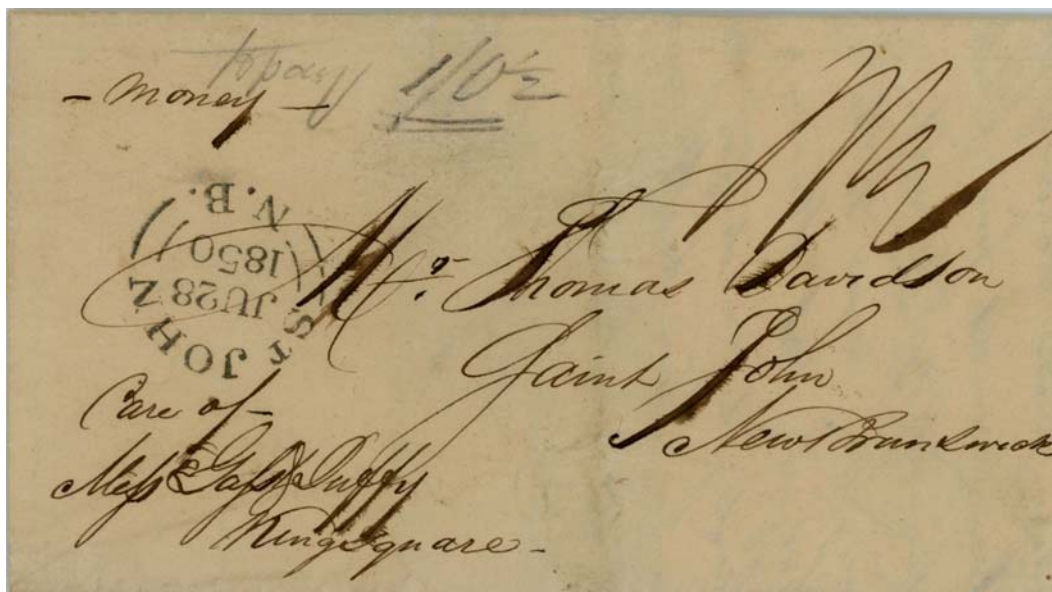
Annapolis–Halifax, 1846.

Rated prepaid 9 d cy; changed to half-ounce increments (but still in terms of mileage) in 1843. Local Halifax delivery fee abolished by this time.

Annapolis datestamp is not common; the PAID datestamp is much scarcer, as relatively few letters in the Maritimes were prepaid when there was an option not to.

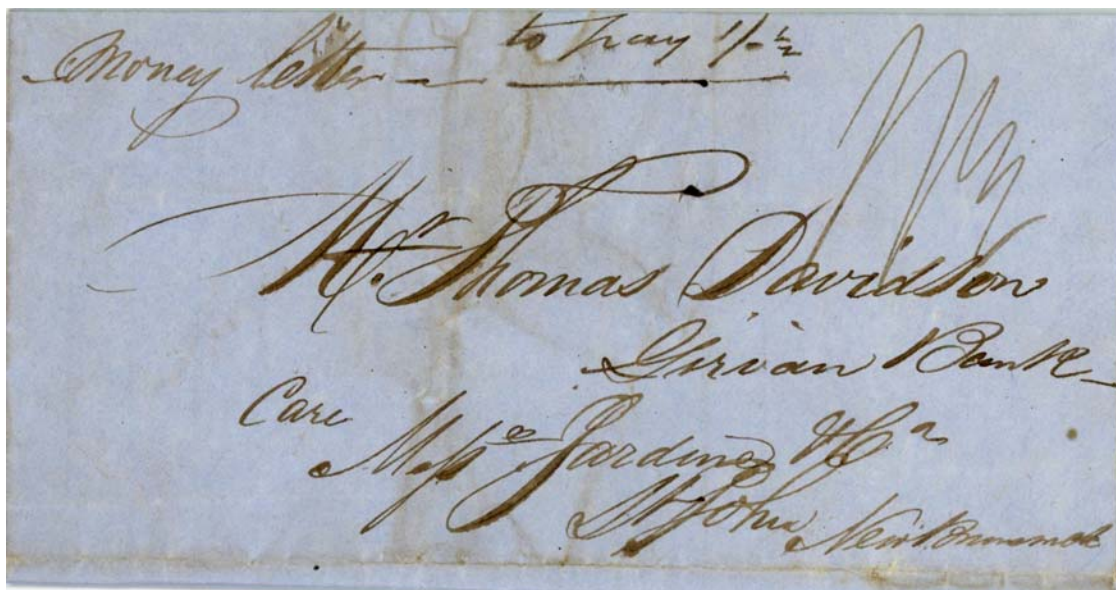
Nova Scotia to New Brunswick

Two money letters from the same correspondence, about a year apart.



Halifax–Saint John, 1850.

Rated collect $1/0 \frac{1}{2}$, single letter rate Halifax–Saint John.

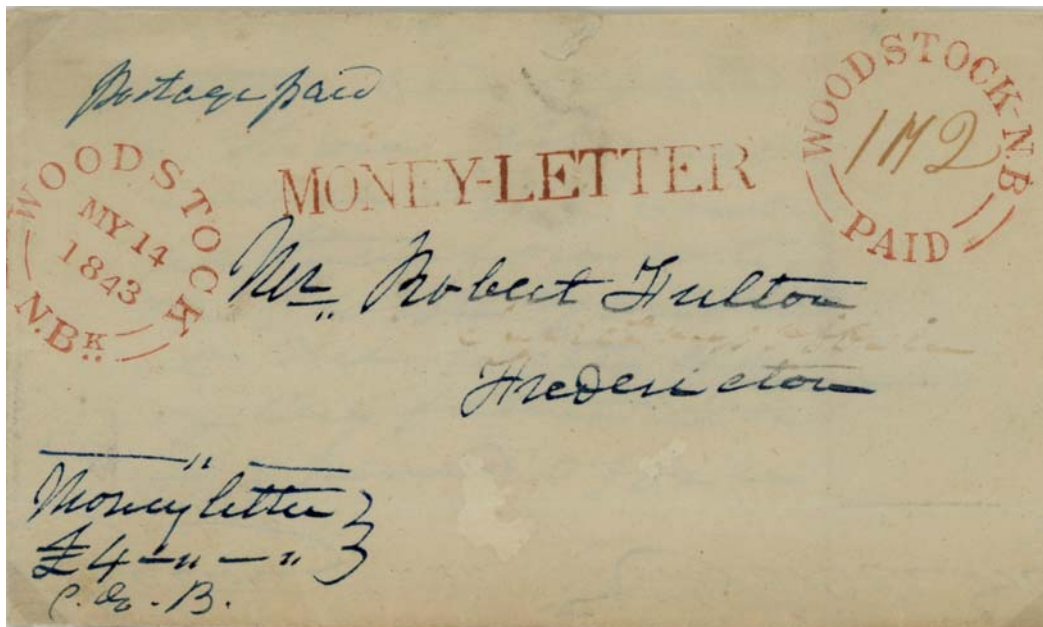


Halifax–Saint John, April 1851.

Rated as above; Nova Scotia did not acquire control of its post office until a few months later.

The (Halifax or Saint John) ON POST OFFICE BUSINESS FREE double broken circle is scarce, and used to indicate free postage. It was evidently applied in error, as it was overstruck at Saint John.

New Brunswick (NB) money letters



Woodstock–Fredericton, 1843. Large red MONEY-LETTER (similar to that of Quebec); only such handstamp in use in New Brunswick (several examples are known).

Rated prepaid 1/2 cy, double 7 d rate for this route.



Way Office Springfield–Fredericton, *free*, 1848. No rate marking; *On HM Service* is not an indication (by itself) of free mail, simply that it was intended to go through the postal service. This is extremely unusual for the Maritimes.

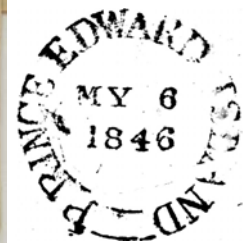
In Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, the numerous *Way Offices* were too small to be post offices, but were places to deposit and transmit mail.

Prince Edward Island (PEI) money letters

At most four have been reported.

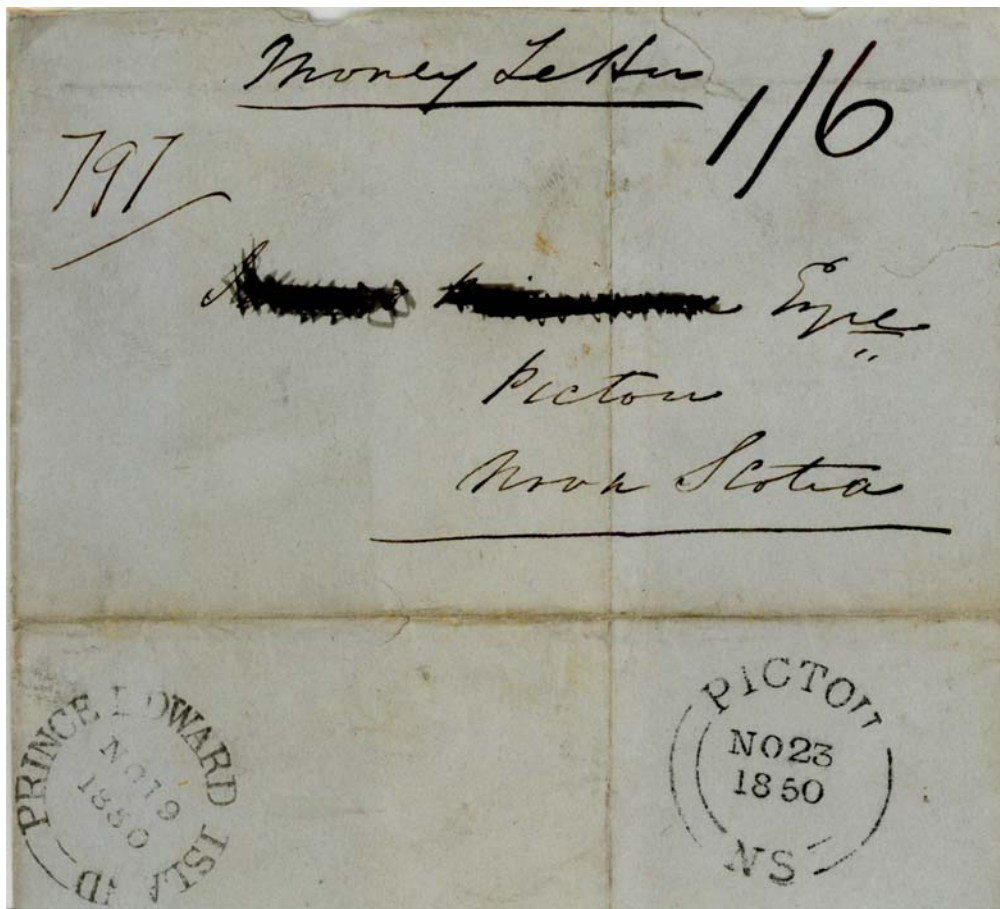


Tignish May 1st 1846
Dateline



Tignish—Charlottetown, domestic, 1846.

Rated collect 2 d P E I currency, Island rate (difficult to find even without the money aspect).



Charlottetown—Pictou (NS), 1850. Ms 797 is a letter bill number, probably applied at Pictou.

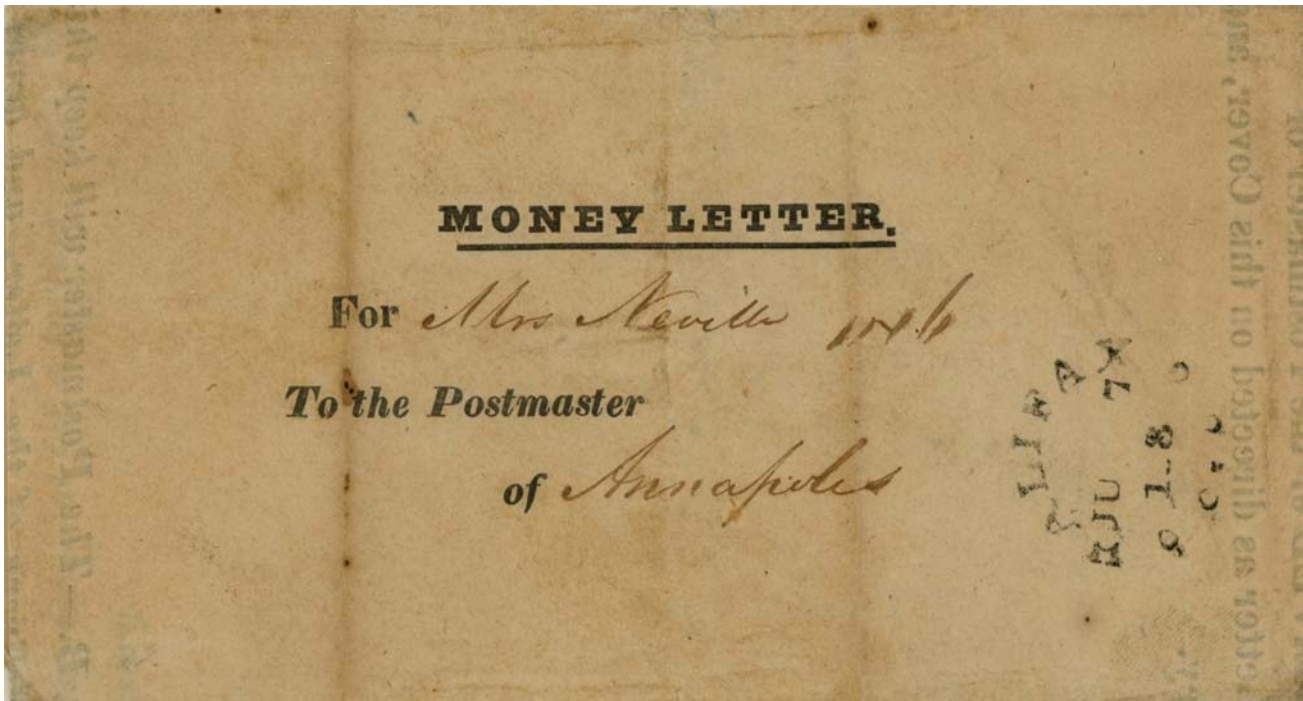
Rated collect 1/6 cy, quadruple (two ounces) P E I—Pictou.

Money letter wrappers

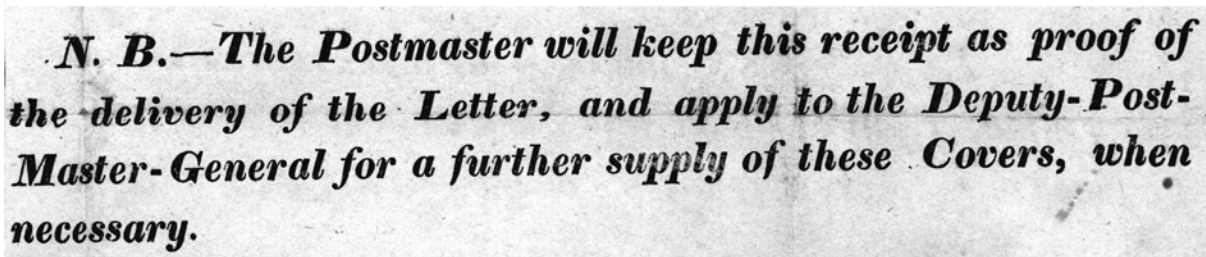
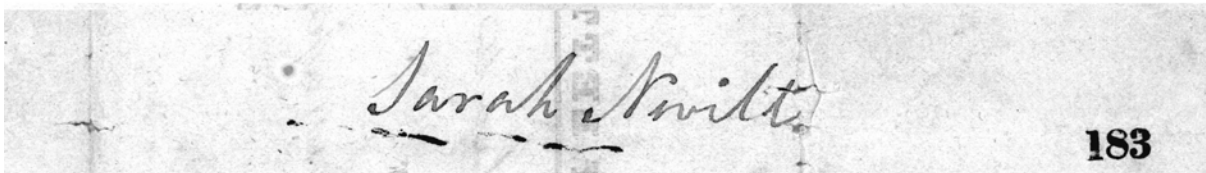
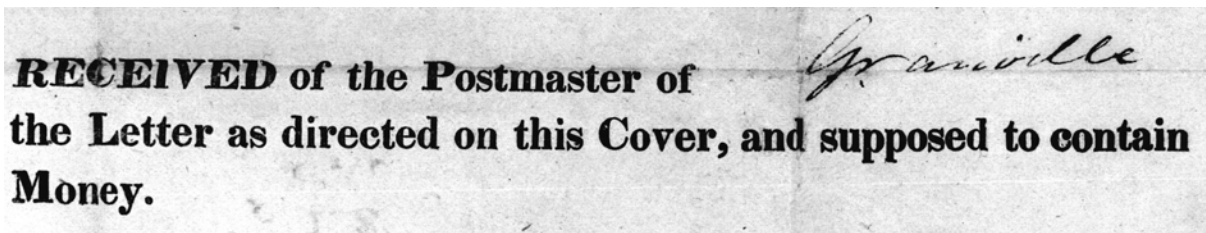
Money letters were put inside these wrappers for transit between post offices, and ultimately signed by the recipient; wrappers were kept by the destination office, to be destroyed within two years. None have been reported for NB, PEI, and LC; one is known for UC.

Four white wrappers are known for NS, of which three are shown here. The fourth was badly damaged and subsequently repaired, and then exhibited (not by me) without noting the extensive repairs!

Green wrappers have been reported, but I am skeptical of their existence—they may have been confused with the later registration wrappers.

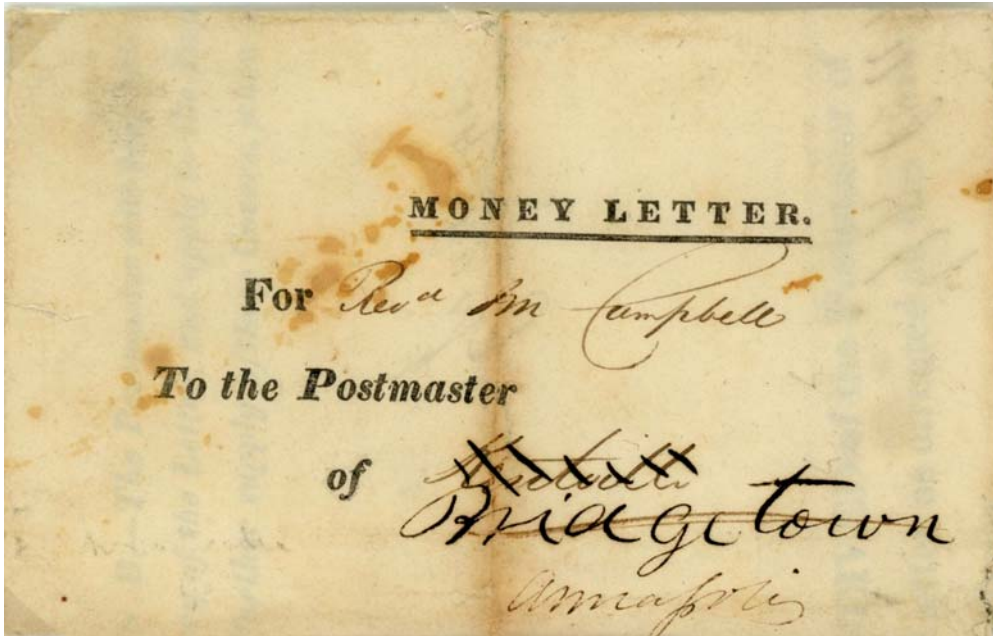


Halifax—Annapolis, 7 June 1839. Made of poor quality paper. Signed on the interior by the recipient. Rated IN6 collect, the postage due on the enclosed cover (there was no fee for the money letter wrapper service itself). This is likely double 9d cy.

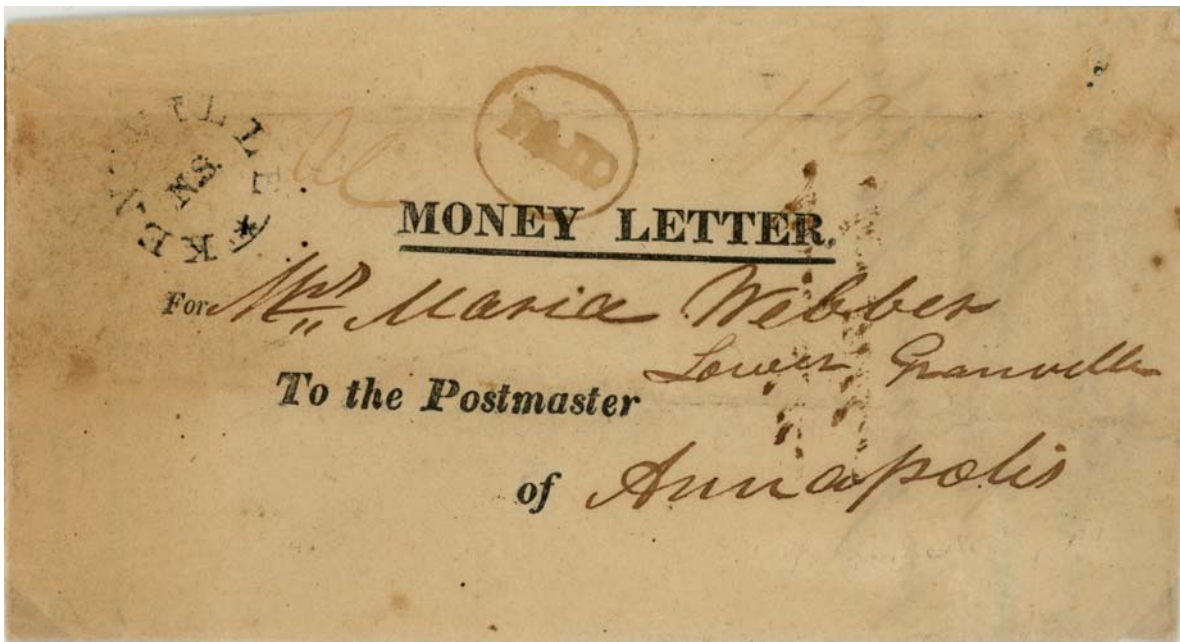


Signed by recipient. Large sections have been deleted in this image.

Money letter wrappers



Granville–Kentville, forwarded to Bridgetown & Annapolis, 19 July 1839. Printing on the interior is identical to that of the previous wrapper, but differs on the outside.



Ms AC (faint, red, to the right of Kentville strike) after closing, frequently used in the Maritimes instead of too late.

Kentville–Annapolis, 17 November 1841. Text on the interior is identical to that of the previous wrappers, but typeface differs.

Rate prepaid 1/2cy, referring to the postage on the enclosed money letter (very unusually—for the Maritimes—it was prepaid), double rate (one enclosure) Kentville–Annapolis.

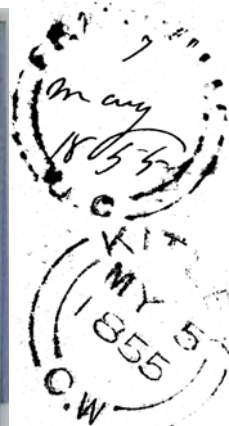
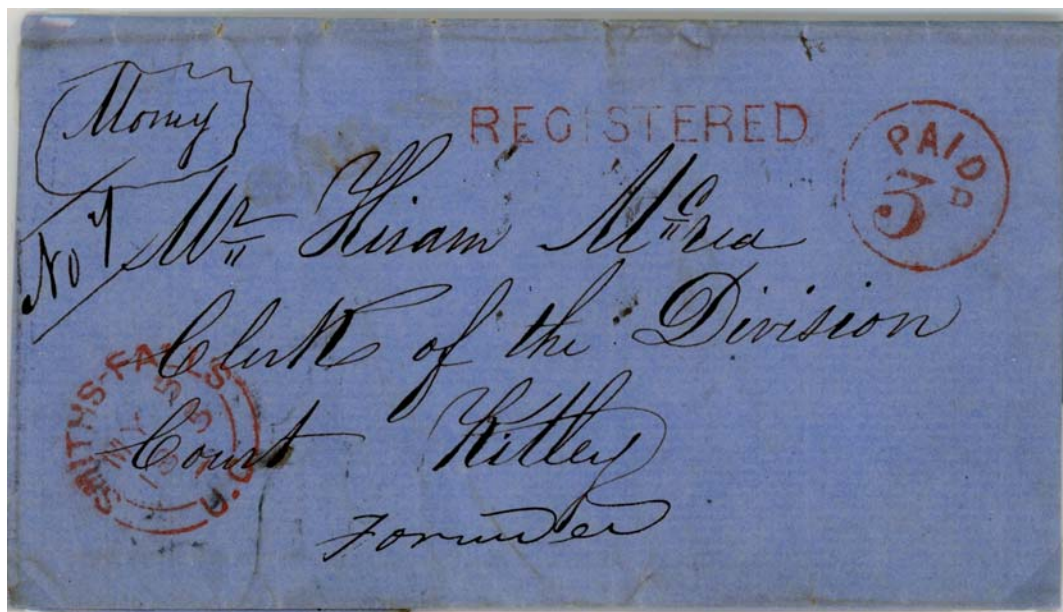
Fewer than ten strikes of the Kentville * hammer are known.

Registration

Canada

DOMESTIC registration began in the Province of Canada 1 May 1855 (*not* 1 March 1855), replacing money letter service. It cost a flat 1d cy, to be prepaid, in stamps (not available until 1858) or cash. Most letters were otherwise sent collect (until 1875). If the rest of the postage was prepaid, it had to be completely prepaid, and either all in stamps, or all in cash, not a mixture.

Early on, registered items were supposed to be put in registration wrappers—*none* of which survive for the Province of Canada (examples exist for the Maritimes).



Frankville UC, known use
1855–73;
Kitley CW, known use
1853–1855 (closed 1856)

Earliest known Canadian registered cover, Smiths Falls–Kitley (UC), 5 May 1855. General issue (to hundreds of offices) straightline **REGISTERED**. The presence of this marking is evidence of the required prepayment of the registration fee. Registration number is either 1 or 7, extremely low for a medium-size office. Sender had originally written *Money*, being accustomed to the old system.

Rated 3 d cy domestic, and 1d registration fee, both paid in cash. Forwarded to Frankville (at no extra charge).



Triple, Cannington–Whitby, 1858. Triple rate paid by beavers (necessarily, the 1d registration fee was paid in cash). Green handstamps; the **PAID** circle is extremely unusual. Blue **Whitby** changeling on reverse. Registration from a small town is difficult to find in this period.

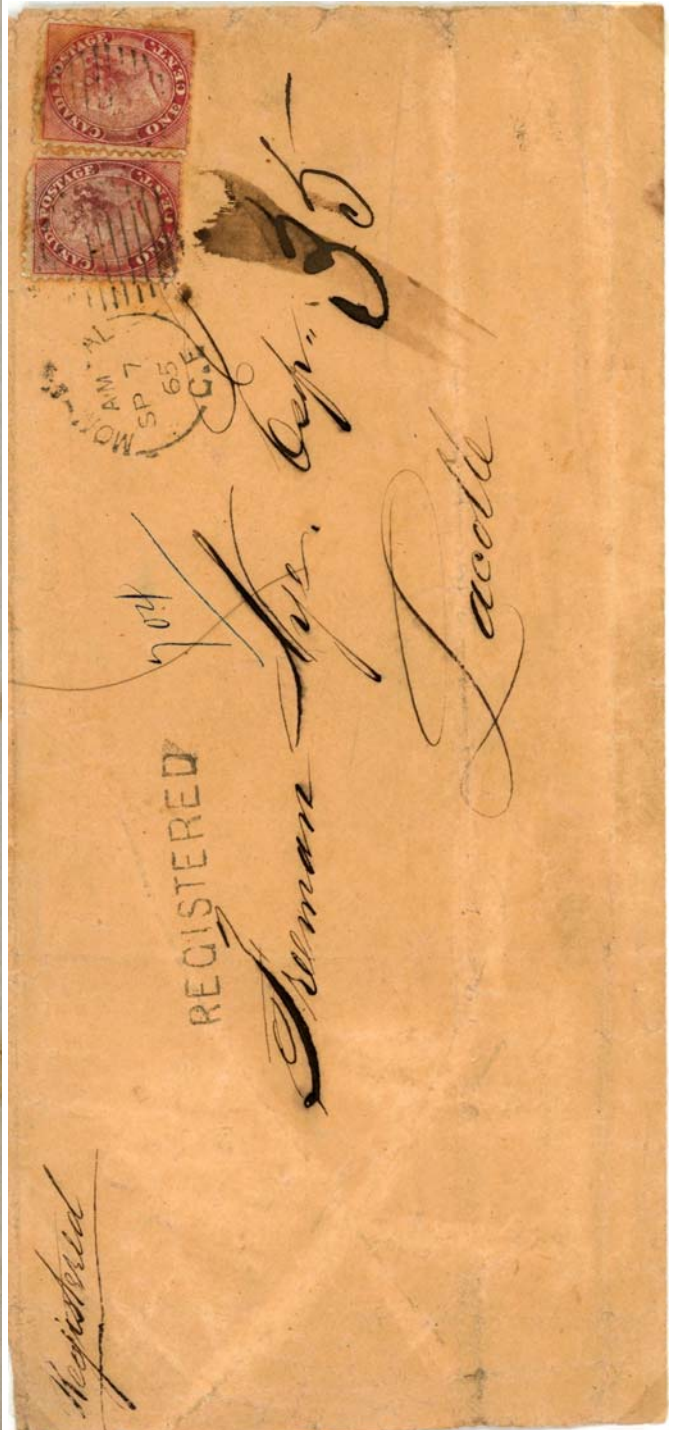
Multiples

Dectuple, Lucan—Goderich, 1864. Ten times domestic rate at 5¢ per half ounce; registration (2¢) paid in cash.



GTR T & S RPO.

Quintuple, Montreal—Lacolle (CE), postage due, 1865.
Charged 35¢ (2½ ounces at 7¢ unpaid per half ounce).
Paid registration fee in stamps and unpaid letter rate, scarcest of six combinations possible. ↓↓



Canada to US

Canada initiated its registration system in May 1855, but this did not extend to mail to the US until an agreement became effective October 1856. In the interim period (16 months), registered mail to the US 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 US was 3d, which converted to 5¢ in 1859.



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

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



To California; Camden-East (C.W.)–Red Dog, 1858. Rated (prepaid) 9 d cy (treaty rate to California) at left, plus 3d registration, 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.

Early UK and Australia to Canada

Owing to confusion at the G P O, registration to Canada from UK was not authorized until 1857. Nonetheless, several such covers exist in 1856.



Very early registered cover UK–Canada in the registration period, Belper–Montreal, 15 August 1856. (Registered UK covers to Canada are known in the latter's money letter period.) Rated 6d stg to Canada by British (Cunard) steamer, and 6d registration fee. The large red ms 1 indicates the amount in sterling to be credited to the Canadian post office.

Mailed from BELPER (in green; on reverse), where the stamps have been cancelled with a 64 grid; thence to DERBY and LIVERPOOL.



Tenterfield (NSW)–Barrie (CW), postage due, December 1861. Red London registered crown. Rated 1/10 including 6d registration stamp; rate Australia–Canada via Marseille was 1/8, resulting in an ostensible underpayment of the letter rate by 4d. The registration stamp only covers registration from Australia to UK; an additional 6d was needed for registration from UK to Canada.

Deficient 6^d registration
and 5^d postage

On reverse, Deficient 6^d registration; but the second line, and 5^d postage, appears to be an error for 4d. There is also a tiny 6 (not shown), just below the 5^d; this may be the penalty (in effect since 1859) applied in UK on short paid letters. On front, are various rate marks, 9^d, 10^d struck through, and 7^d; these are possibly British claims on the postage due. It appears that the total postage due is 6 + 5 + 6 = 1/5.

Tenterfield 84 in sunburst; London registered oval date stamp and red registered crown (on the registration stamp); partial Sydney datestamp and very partial Barrie c w receiver on reverse, not shown.

Registration in the rest of what is now Canada

The three Maritime colonies (NS, NB, PEI) replaced their money letter systems by registration at different dates: NB, 6 July 1852; NS, 6 July 1851; PEI, ca 1855. On joining Canada (NB & NS, 1 July 1867; PEI, 1 March 1873), rates and practises became those of Canada. Registered mail in this period is much less frequently seen than that of Canada.

A handful of Newfoundland registered covers are known pre-1890. One incoming DLO letter wrapper is the only registered item known for Red River Settlement.

Nova Scotia

Nova Scotia introduced registration on 1 July 1851, the same day that its post office became autonomous. Domestic (and to the rest of British North America) registration was 6 d cy, prepayment required. Domestic postage became 3 d per half ounce on the same date. The money letter system ceased.

The frequent absence of registration numbers, particularly in the early period, suggests that registration wrappers were used to enclose them. These wrappers (shown later) are more frequently seen from Nova Scotia than from any of the other Maritime provinces or the province of Canada.



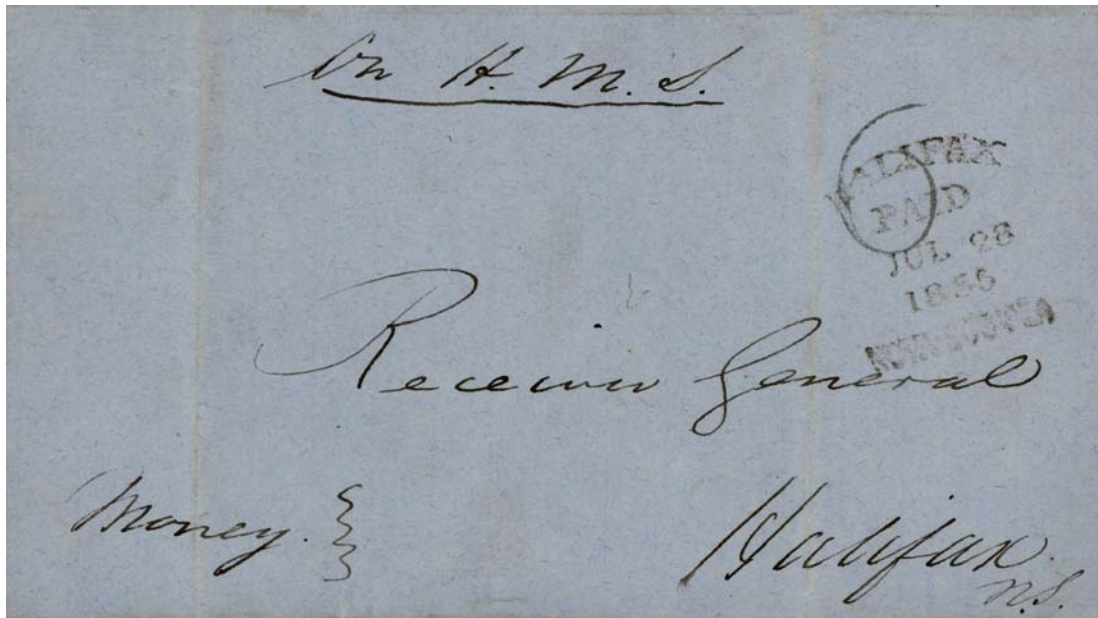
Lower Stewiacke to Rawdon (NS), 1853. Rated prepaid 6 + 3 d cy, itemizing registration and domestic rates.



Double, Halifax–Kentville, 1854. Rated prepaid 1/ cy, made up from 6 d registration and 2 × 3 d domestic. Sender has used the obsolete term *Money Letter*. Standard (and extremely common) Halifax tombstone, indicating payment.

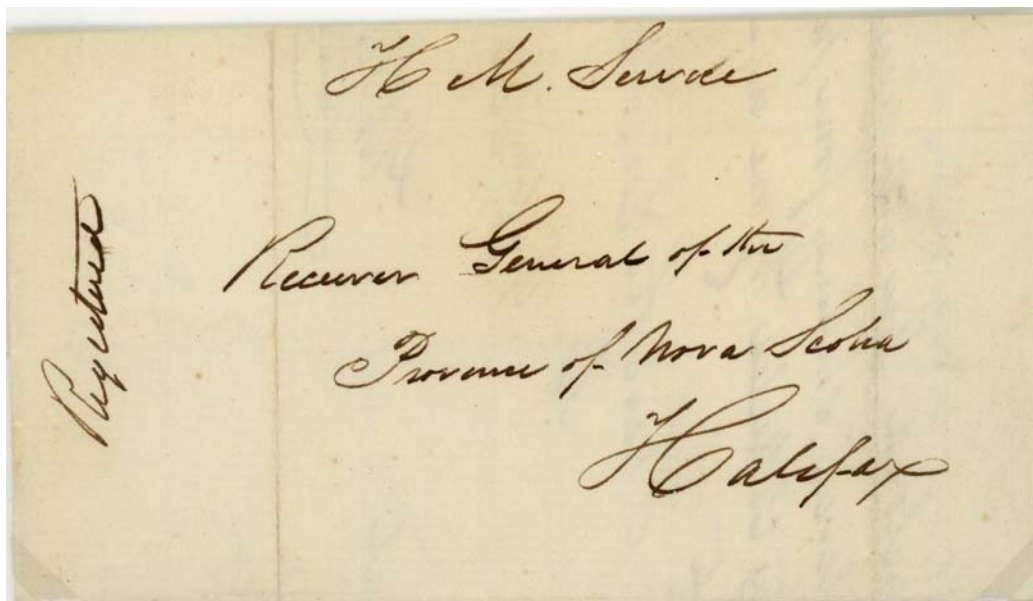
Nova Scotia (partially) free

The sender's endorsement, *OHMS*, (On His/Her Majesty's Service) is often seen on pre-Confederation BNA covers. The modern meaning is that it is eligible to pass without postage through the mail. However, at the time, it almost always meant that it was to be sent through (Her Majesty's) mail (as opposed to private carrier or via a friend), and that the sender hoped—usually fruitlessly—that it would be free. The items below show that occasionally at least the domestic postage was free. In both cases, the address was the Receiver-General of Nova Scotia, so that it was plausible that the domestic postage was free (but there are lots of covers to the same addressee that were not free).



Domestic postage free, Antigonish–Halifax, 1855. A late use of the term *Money*, four years after the money letter system had ceased to exist. Rated prepaid 6, the registration fee; since there are no other charges, it appears that the 3 d domestic rate was not applied.

One other strike of the Antigonish 6 ratestamp is recorded (JJ Macdonald), also in 1855.



Null rate, Canso–Halifax, 1856. Endorsed *Registered* and *HM Service* (both by the sender), there are no postmarks at all. Docketing indicates it arrived four days after mailing. It presumably was enclosed in a registration wrapper, but it appears that no postage was paid.

Nova Scotia, 1860–1867

NS converted to decimal on 1 January 1860, and the rates changed to 10¢ for registration and 5¢ per half ounce domestic letter rate. Halifax acquired a crown registration handstamp (in use 1862–66), similar to those of a few British offices.

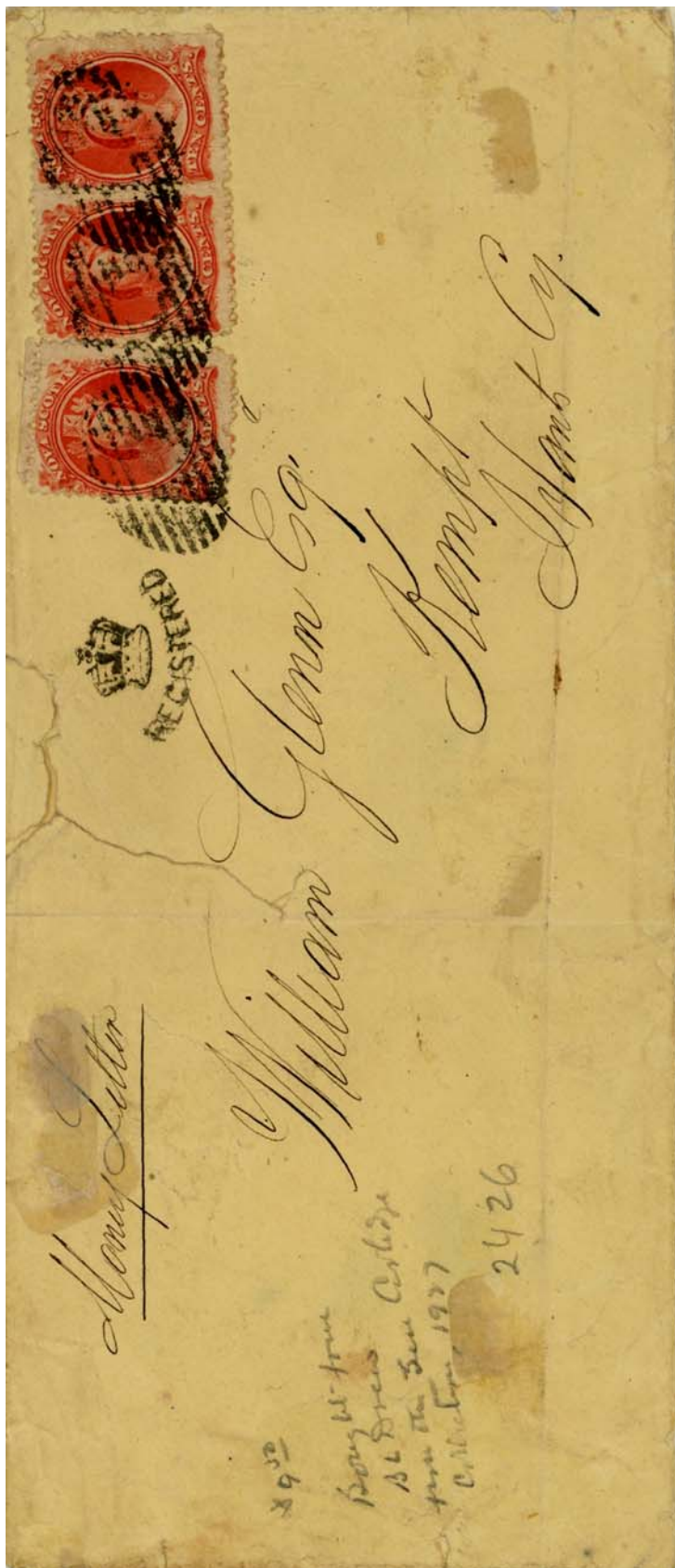


Triple, Halifax–Bridgewater, April 1860. Although NS converted to decimal on 1 January 1860, the previous currency was still in use. Rated 6 d registration plus 3×3 d per half ounce.

No backstamps, but a faint BRIDGEWATER NS double broken circle on the front of the cover.



Halifax to Granville via Annapolis, double, 1863. Crown REGISTERED (1862–66). Rated 10¢ registration plus double 5¢ domestic letter.



Quadruple, Halifax–Kempt (Hants County), 1863. Rated 10¢ registration plus 4 × 5¢ per half ounce, all paid in stamps. Unusually clear Halifax crown in black.

Old habits die hard—*money letter* (endorsed by the sender) had been obsolete for twelve years.

Backstamped Halifax (origin) & Newport. Kempt Shore is a tiny community in the district of West Hants; it had no post office, and mail was sent to Newport.

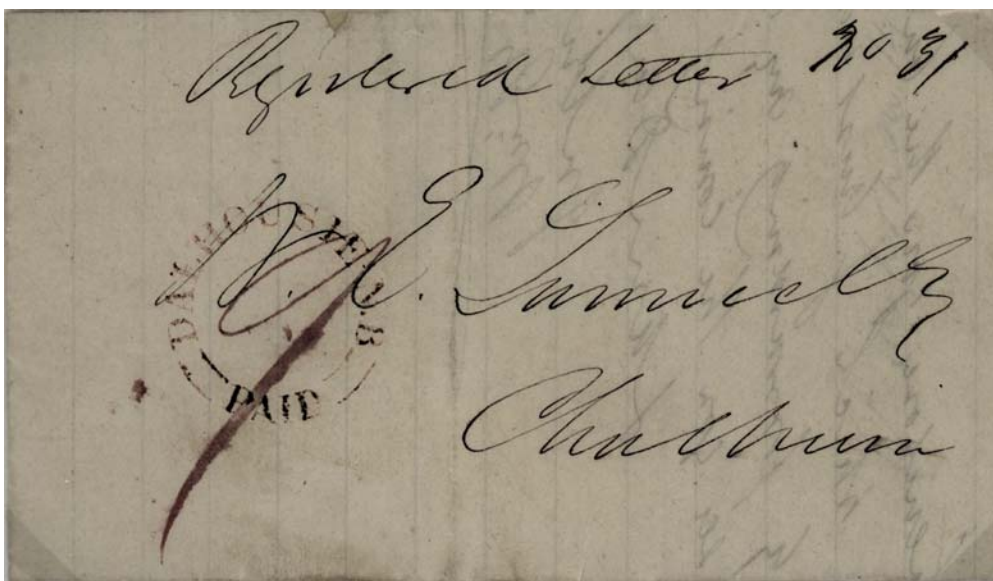
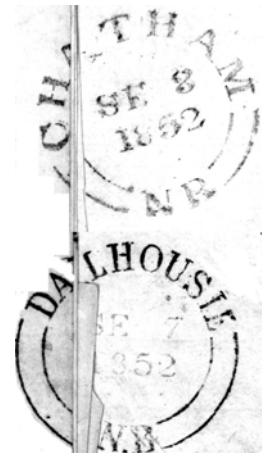
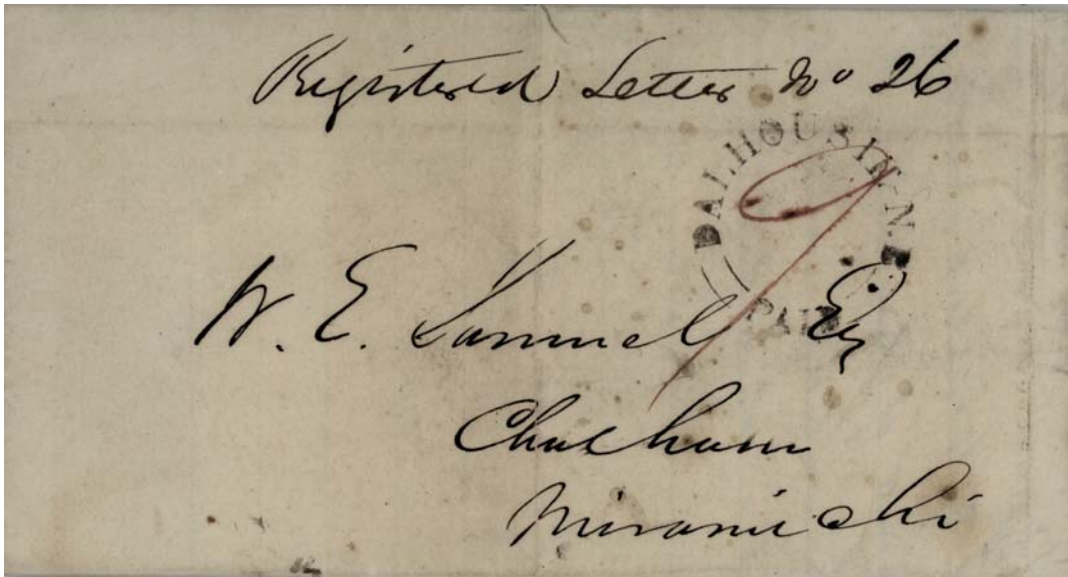
Halifax–Grand Narrows (Cape Breton), 1865. Rated pre-paid 10¢ registration and single 5¢ domestic. With worn red Halifax registered crown.

Backstamped Halifax (origin), Sydney (transit), and St Peters (nearest post office to destination). Grand Narrows (a strait of Bras D'Or Lake) was and still is an extremely tiny community (2001 population: 15). ✓✓



New Brunswick

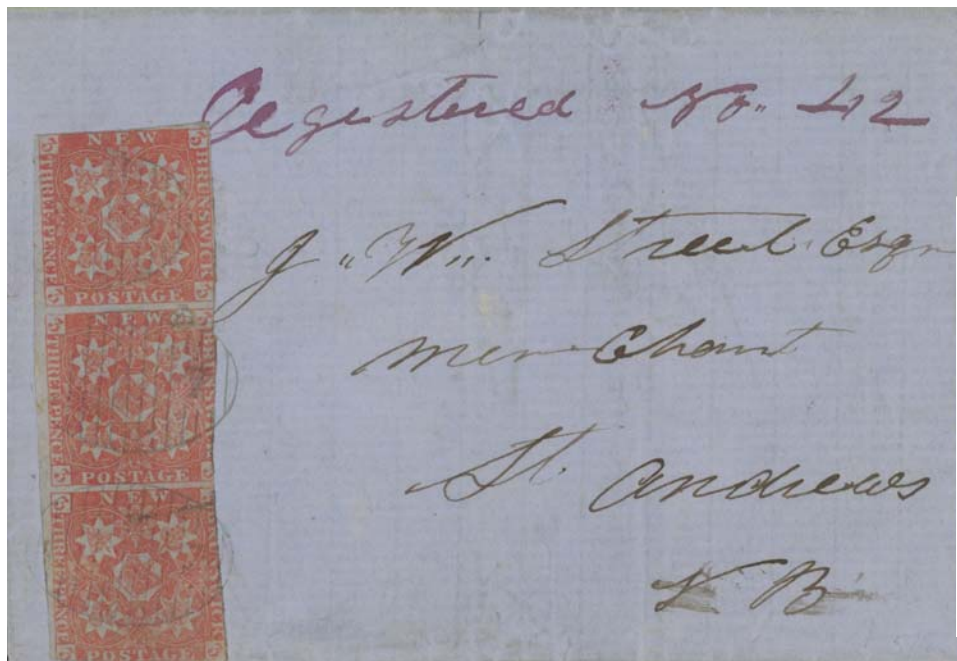
Took control of its post office 6 July 1851, but did not adopt registration until a year later. The registration fee was 6 d cy (until 1860, when decimal conversion occurred) with compulsory prepayment of *all* postage on registered letters.



Dalhousie–Chatham, 7 & 14 September 1852. Same correspondence, a week apart. Given registration numbers 26 & 31; since these did not restart until they reached at least 999, we conclude that only six registered letters passed through the Dalhousie post office in that week!

Rated prepaid 9 d cy in cash, made of 6 registration and 3 d single domestic rate.

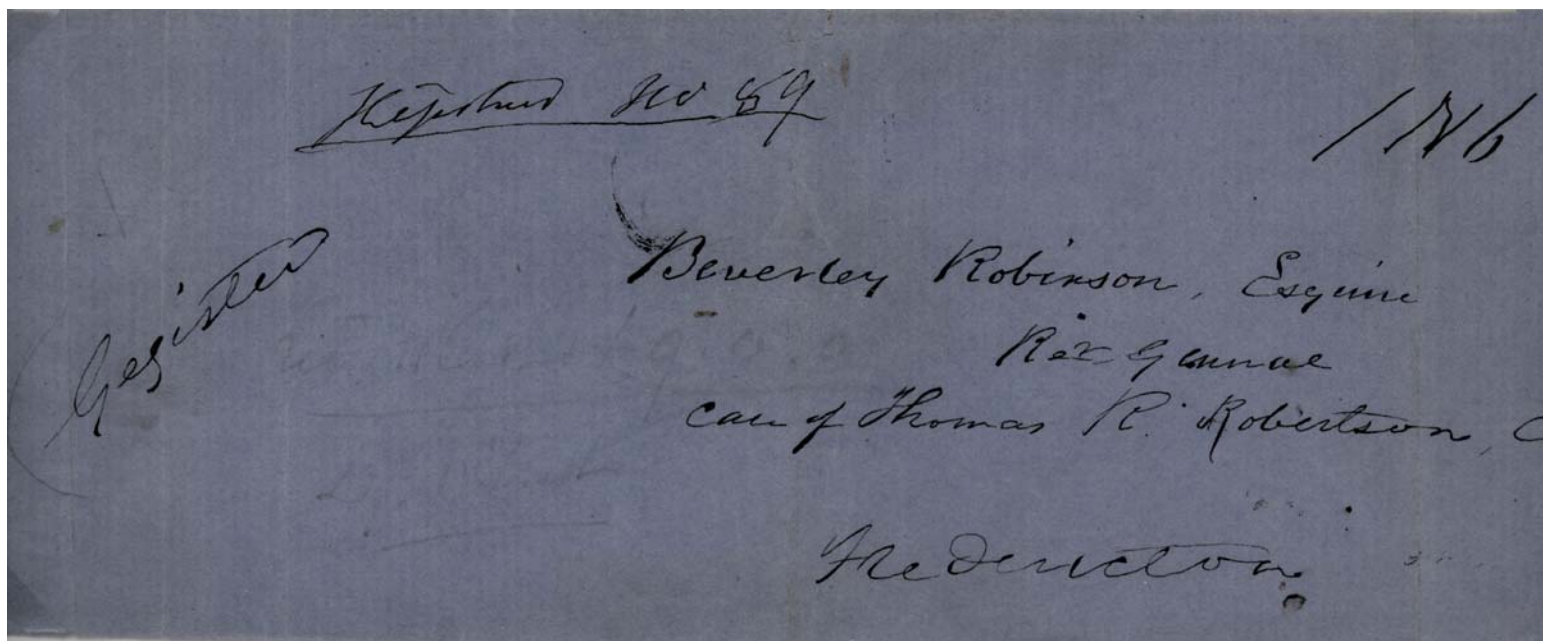
New Brunswick, 1852–1860



Campobello–St Andrews, 1854. Rated 6 d registration fee prepaid in cash (implied by *Registered No. 42* at top) and 3 d domestic rate paid in stamps (strip of three).

Campobello number 7 in grid killer.

Greene certificate #18059.



Quadruple, Salisbury–Fredericton, 1858. Rated 1N6 ostensibly made up from 6 d registration fee and 4×3 d per half ounce domestic. Regulations required prepayment of all the postage (non-registered letters could be sent collect), but there is no indication of this—unless the rate was marked in red ink, which has degenerated in time to black.



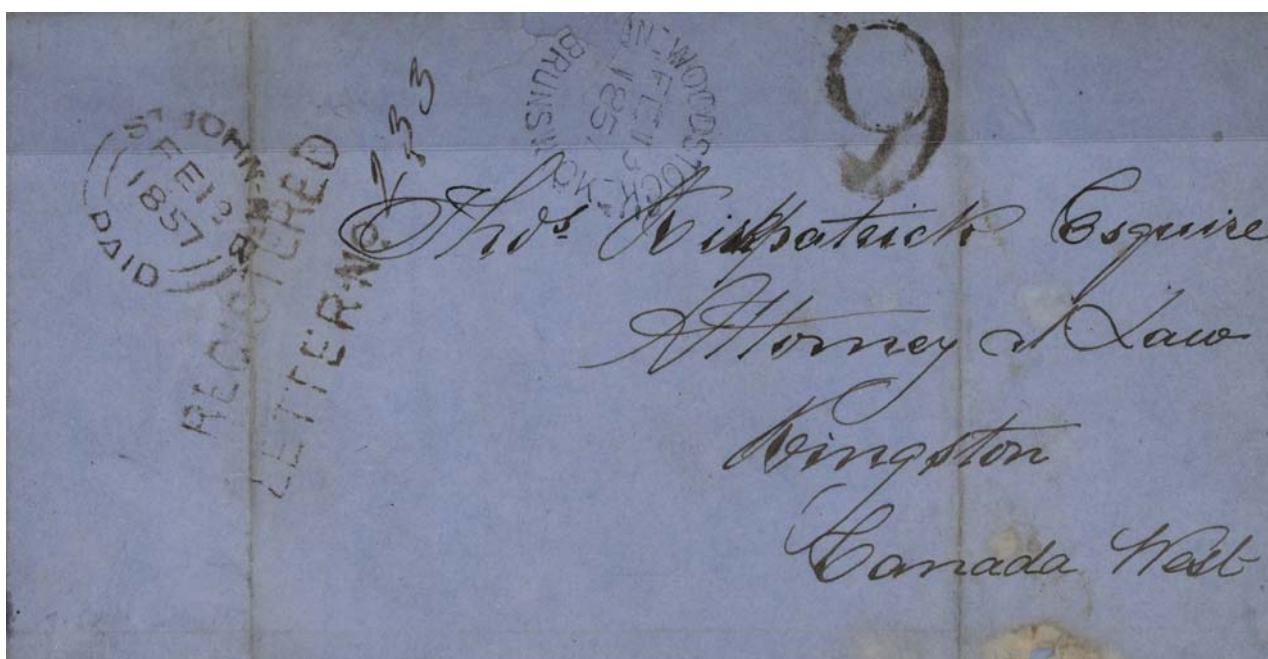
New Brunswick, intercolonial

Letter and registration rates to the province of Canada were the same as domestic, 3 d per half ounce, converting to 5¢ in 1860, and 6 d, converting to 10¢.



Same addressee, Woodstock–Papineauville (CE) & Fredericton–Newborough (CW), 1856 & 1861. Rated prepaid 9 d (1856), and prepaid 15¢ (1861), both single.

The sender of the 1856 letter (CLO, Crown Lands Office) has marked it *Money letter*—four years after the money letter system ceased in New Brunswick.



St John–Kingston (CW), 1857. Rated prepaid 9 d combined registered single letter rate. Two-line REGISTERED LETTER-NO handstamp was part of general issue to offices in NB & NS.

Prince Edward Island

PEI was economically backward (a consequence of the system of absentee landlords), so not many registered letters exist. Information about the registration system is also sparse; registration began in the early 1850s, and early registration fees are not documented. PEI joined Confederation on 1 July 1873, and at that point, its rates became those of Canada.

Island currency was equivalent to about two-thirds the corresponding amount in sterling, much more heavily devalued than the currency of Canada, NS, & NB.



Registered Charlottetown–Georgetown, 2 April 1855. Apparently rated 2 d Island domestic rate plus 6 d registration fee prepaid. A candidate for the earliest known PEI registered letter. An envelope, also very unusual for PEI in this period.



Registered Summerside drop letter, 1856. Rated 3 d Island currency registration fee, and 1 d drop letter rate (very difficult to find for PEI in this period), presumably prepaid, although there is no such indication.

Registered arc



Charlottetown–Wolfville (NS), 1867. Rated 6 d registration fee and 3 d intercolonial within BNA, paid by single stamp (stamp has been moved a little). This is tied by the common Charlottetown numeral **13** in bars (known 1864–72).



Fewer than ten examples are known (1862–66)

Prince Edward Island



Charlottetown–Acadia Mines (NS), 1868. Rated 6 d registration fee and 3 d intercolonial within BNA. The registration number appears at the left, and may be *III*. The typeset datestamp on the front, reading PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND was used at Charlottetown, the principal town. Via Amherst and Truro.

Some time after March 1871, the registration fee changed to 3 d (precise date unknown, but the implementing legislation was passed in March); this lasted only until the end of the year, when PEI finally converted to decimal (1 January 1872). *Two registered covers are known in this rate period.*

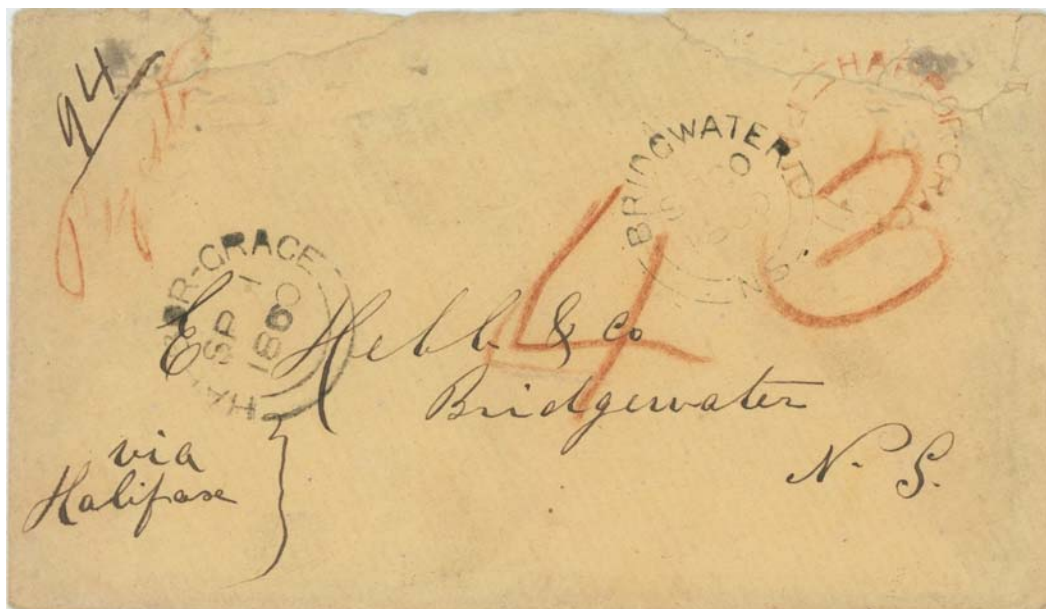


Charlottetown–Stellarton (NS), December 1871. Rated 3 d registered and 3 d intercolonial. Ugly datestamp on front is standard broken circle CHARLOTTETOWN PEI.

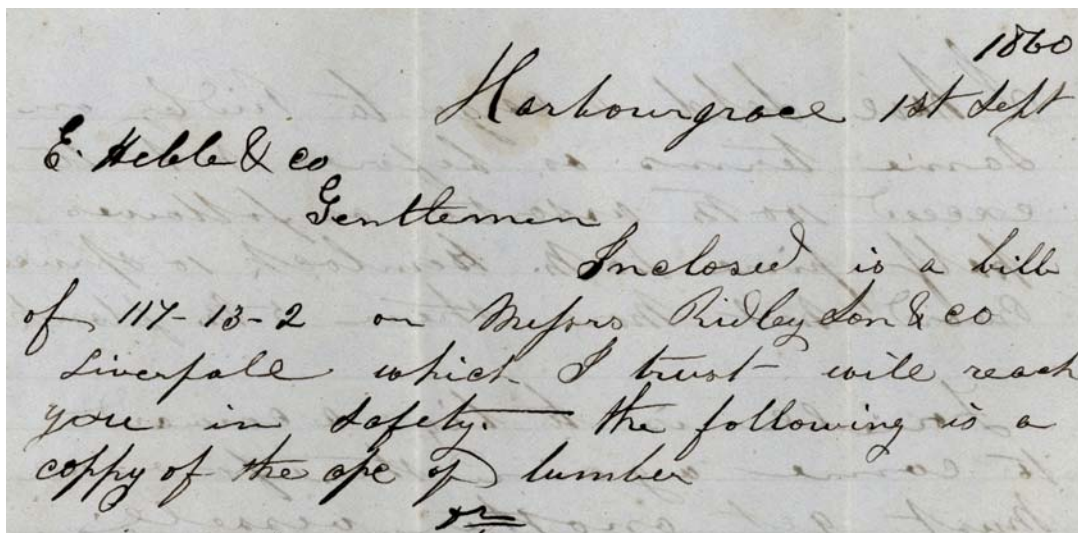
Greene certificate #13757.

Newfoundland

Earliest known registered cover The Pratt accumulation (downloadable from the Chicago Collectors Club website, <http://www.nfldstamps.com/CCC.html>) contains four covers 1861–63 (pp 459, 464 of first file) which are claimed to be registered, but are almost certainly not. Newfoundland registered covers are known in the years 1860, 1862, 1865, 1873, 1879 (one each), and six in 1886–90 (all but one in the Colin Lewis collection; several also in Pratt's accumulation). From the early 1890s on, there are more of them, but they are still difficult to find.



Harbour Grace–Bridgewater (NS), September 1860. Red crayon *Register* and registration number 94. Rated paid 3 d registration and 4 d intercolonial to Halifax. Red **HARBOUR GRACE PAID** and black Harbour Grace double broken circles. Standard Halifax **H** oval datestamp on reverse.



Enclosed is a bill of 117-13-2* on Messrs Ridley Son & Co, Liverpool, which I trust will reach you in safety. The following is a copy [sic] of the ?? of lumber ...

*£117 13 s 2 d (sterling)

Newfoundland



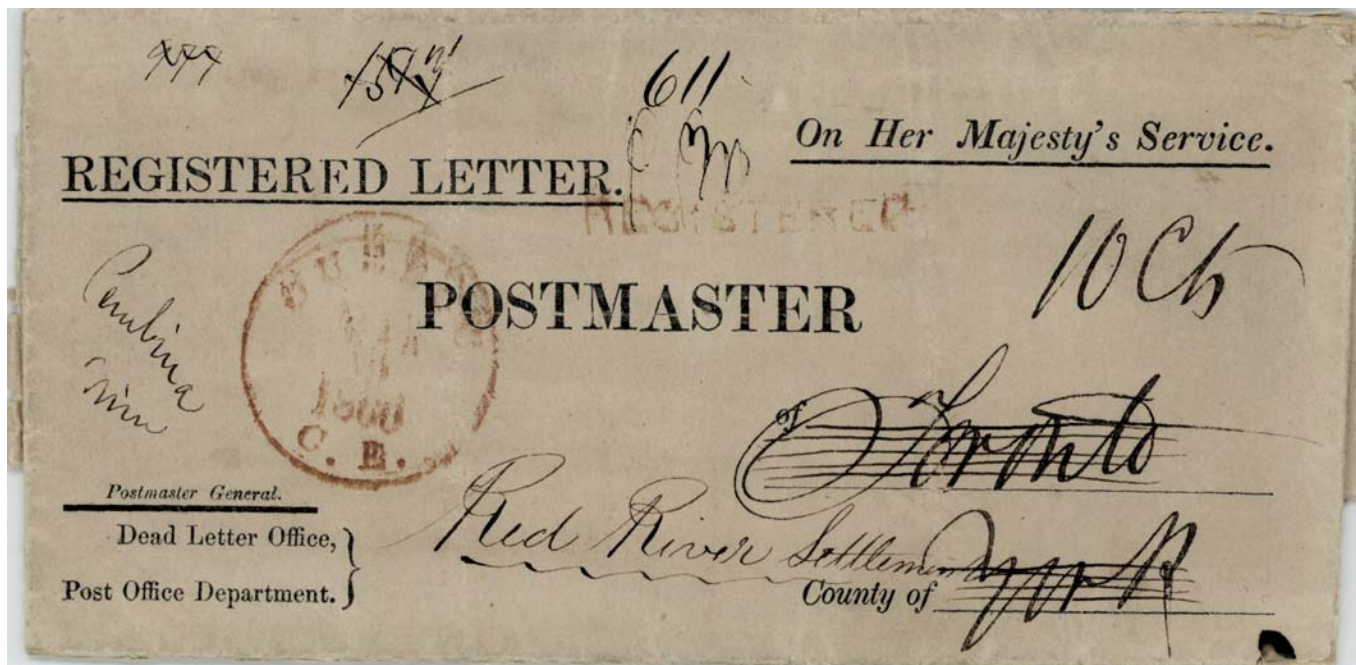
St John's to Amsterdam via Glasgow, 1893. Registration ovals of St John's and London. Rated 5¢ for each of U P U letter rate and registration fee.



Mary Town to St John's, 1899. Rated 3¢ for each of domestic letter rate and *domestic* registration fee.

Red River Settlement

Founded by Lord Selkirk in 1811, this British colony joined Canada in 1870 (after the first Riel Rebellion) as the province of Manitoba (which was just a small piece of what currently constitutes Manitoba). Unsurprisingly registered mail is almost nonexistent. The item shown here is the **only known pre-Confederation registered matter to or from Red River**. It has a number of other interesting features.



Canadian returned registered letter wrapper, forwarded to Red River, 1860. There was a 5¢ fee for the return letter service (believed to be 1859–68). From the Dead Letter Office in Quebec (city).

The original letter that was enclosed had been registered; so the return wrapper sent as registered mail, and charged 5¢ registration fee to Red River (domestic registration was 2¢). Thus the total charge was 10¢, as indicated on the wrapper.

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT, QUEBEC.

DEAD LETTER OFFICE, *19 March*, 1860

The Postmaster of *Montreal* will cause the enclosed Letter directed to *Mr. John D. Pritchard* containing *5¢* to be delivered to *The Writer*

on payment of the Postage charged on this Cover, and be very particular to take *1/2* Receipt upon the enclosed form, and transmit it immediately, under cover, to the Postmaster General, for the DEAD LETTER OFFICE, Quebec.

If after being Advertised, the Letter should not be claimed, the Postmaster will return it under cover to the DEAD LETTER Office, taking credit in Dead Letter Bill, for the Postage charged on this Envelope.

Ms Pembina Minn, indicating the route.

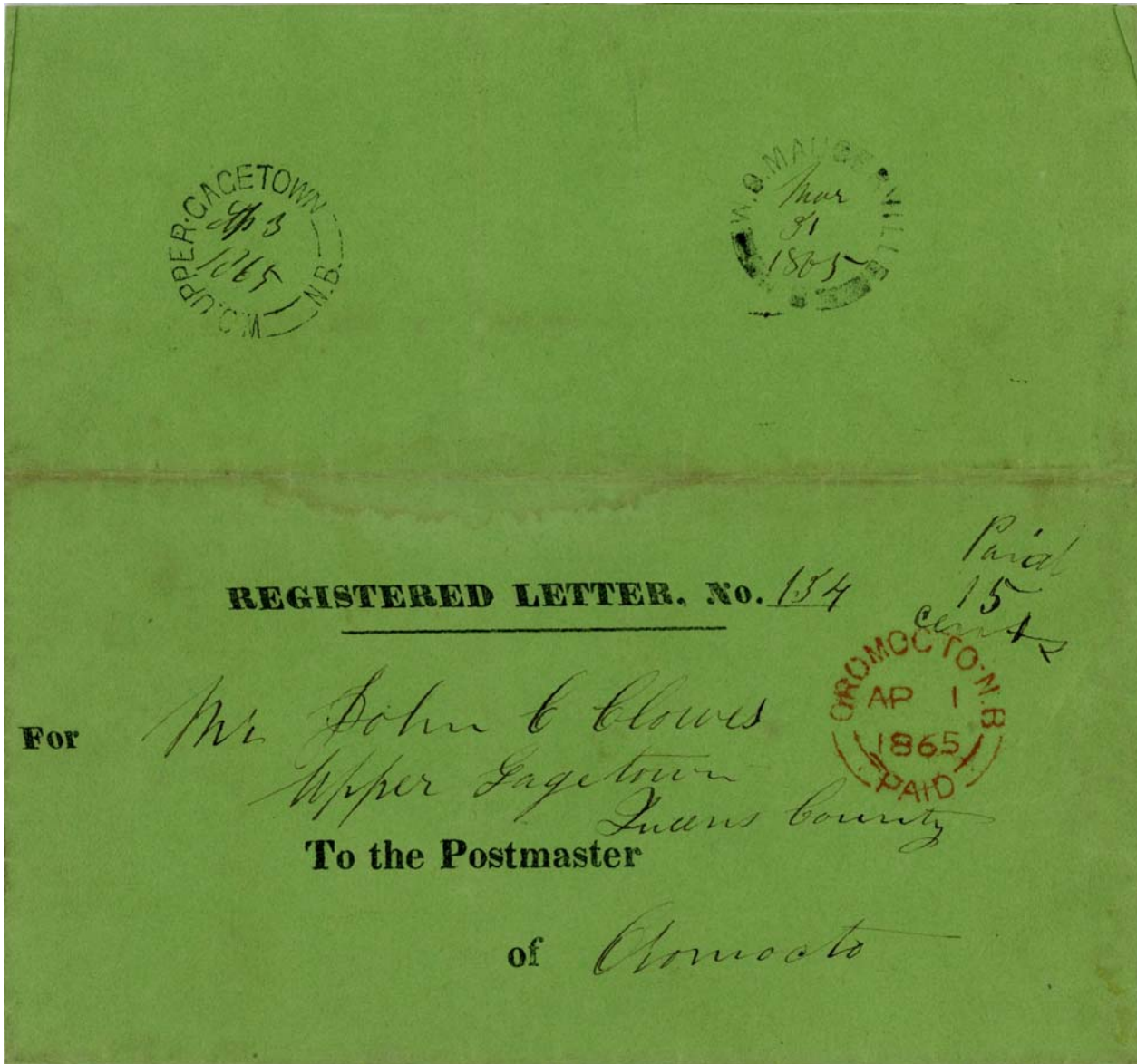
- Only known registered matter to or from the Red River Settlement in the colonial period
- only known Canadian covering envelope/returned letter wrapper for the period 1859–68
- only known pre-1868 Canadian **registered** covering envelope/returned letter wrapper
- only pre-1868 **forwarded** Canadian returned covering envelope/returned letter wrapper known,
- one of two items showing the 5¢ Canadian returned letter fee for 1859–68, which is otherwise undocumented

Prior to the province of Canada's conversion to decimal currency in 1859, the returned letter fee was 1 d cy—which should have translated to 2¢. This is one of the very few rates which was not simply its equivalent in decimal.

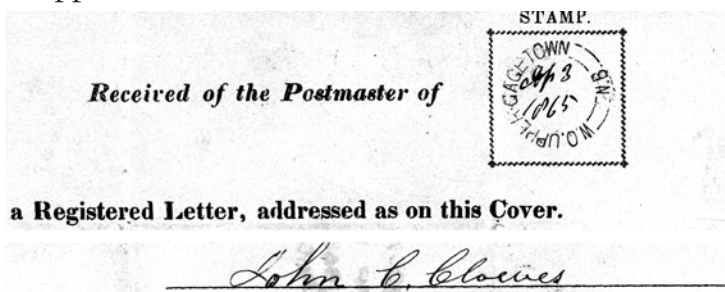
Registration letter wrappers

Often called *registered letter wrappers*, these are similar to money letter wrappers. Registered letters were (frequently) wrapped in these for post office to post office transmission, and they were signed by the recipient of the enclosed registered letter. The destination post office kept the wrapper for one to two years, and then it was disposed of, usually destroyed. As a result, very few have survived—none from the province of Canada in the pre-Confederation era, a handful from New Brunswick, one from Prince Edward Island, and a few dozen from Nova Scotia.

Based on the practice in UK, it is not clear when it stopped, but very likely it simply wound down—as the amount of registered mail increased, the awkward procedure became an increasing nuisance.



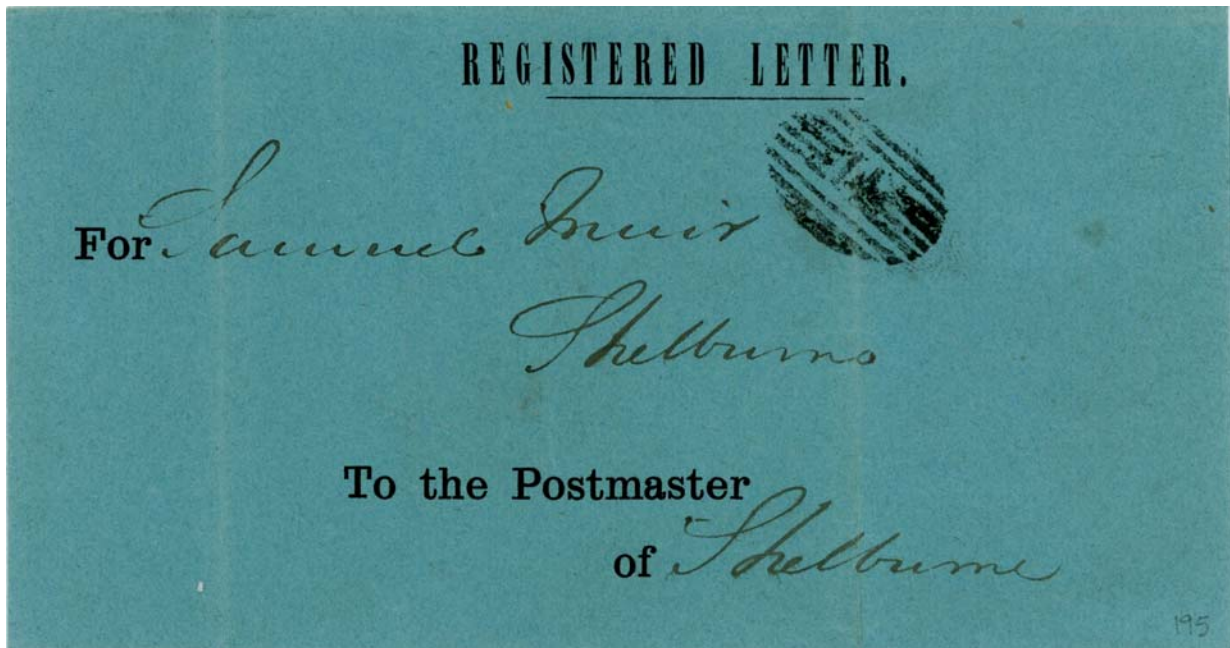
New Brunswick registration letter wrapper, 1865. Contained a registered letter from Maugerville Way Office to Upper Gagetown Way Office (in NS & NB, way offices were very small postal outlets for the distribution of mail along the routes of the mail carriers), transitting Oromocto (the nearest post office). Rated *paid 15¢*, combined 10¢ NB registration fee & 5¢ domestic letter rate. I'm aware of fewer than five NB registration wrappers.



The white area represents a very large vertical space. Signed by the recipient of the registered letter.

Nova Scotia registration letter wrappers

There are (at least) three different printings in the 1860s, suggesting wider use of these than in the other provinces.



Registration wrapper for a letter Halifax–Shelburne, 1864. The killer is a Halifax H.

REGISTERED LETTER.

Received of the Postmaster of
a Registered Letter as directed on this Cover.

186

The Sending as well as the Receiving Postmaster is on no account to neglect Stamping this Cover.

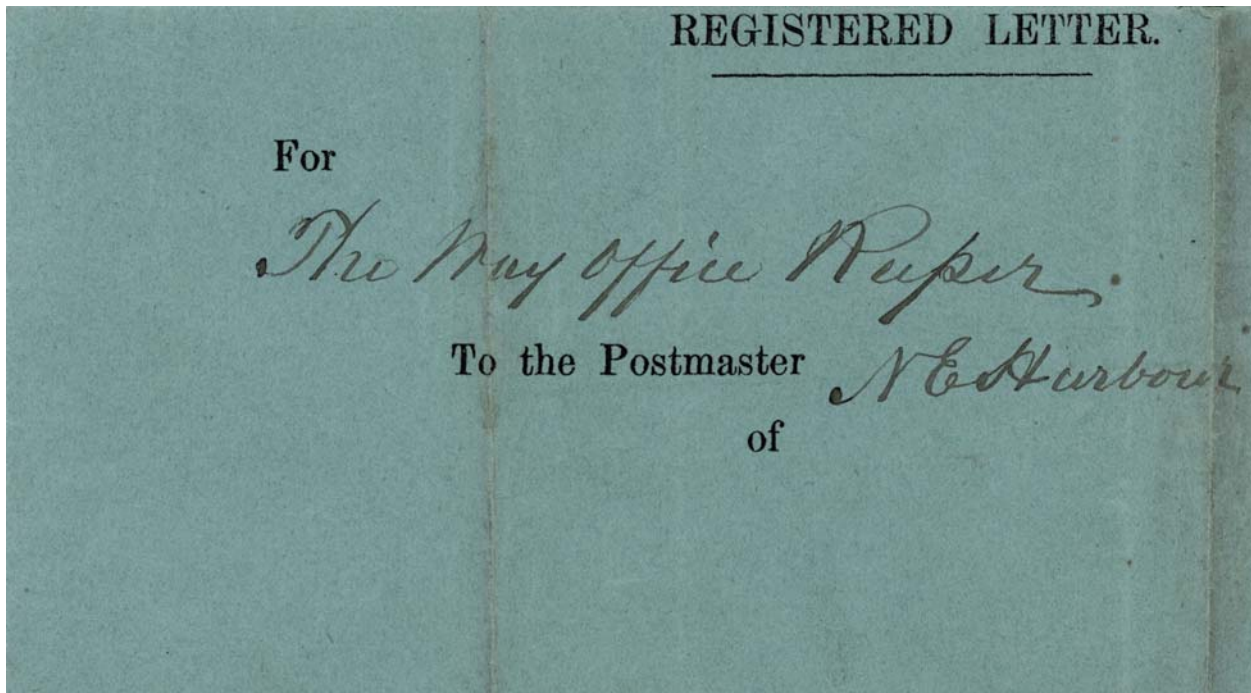
N. B.—The Postmaster will keep this Receipt as a proof of the delivery of the Letter, and apply to the Postmaster General for a further supply of these Covers, when necessary.

STAMP.

Generic interior of Nova Scotia registration letter wrappers. Typefaces vary. White areas represent very large vertical spaces.

Nova Scotia registration letter wrappers

Two almost identical printings. The only significant difference lies in the vertical space above the rule. Since these are both folded letter wrappers, the apparent locations of the text will vary depending on the size of the cover they enclose, and subsequent folding caused by filing.

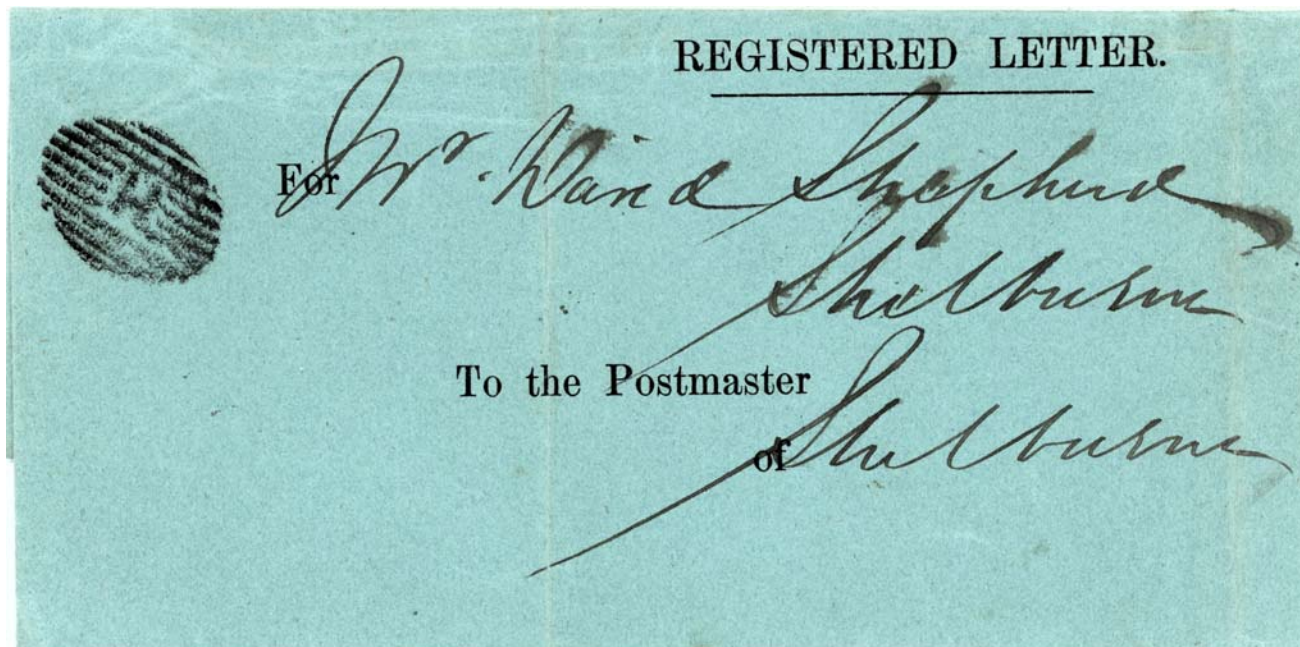


For a registered letter, Shelburne—Northeast Harbour Way Office, 1863.

REGISTERED LETTER.

REGISTERED LETTER.

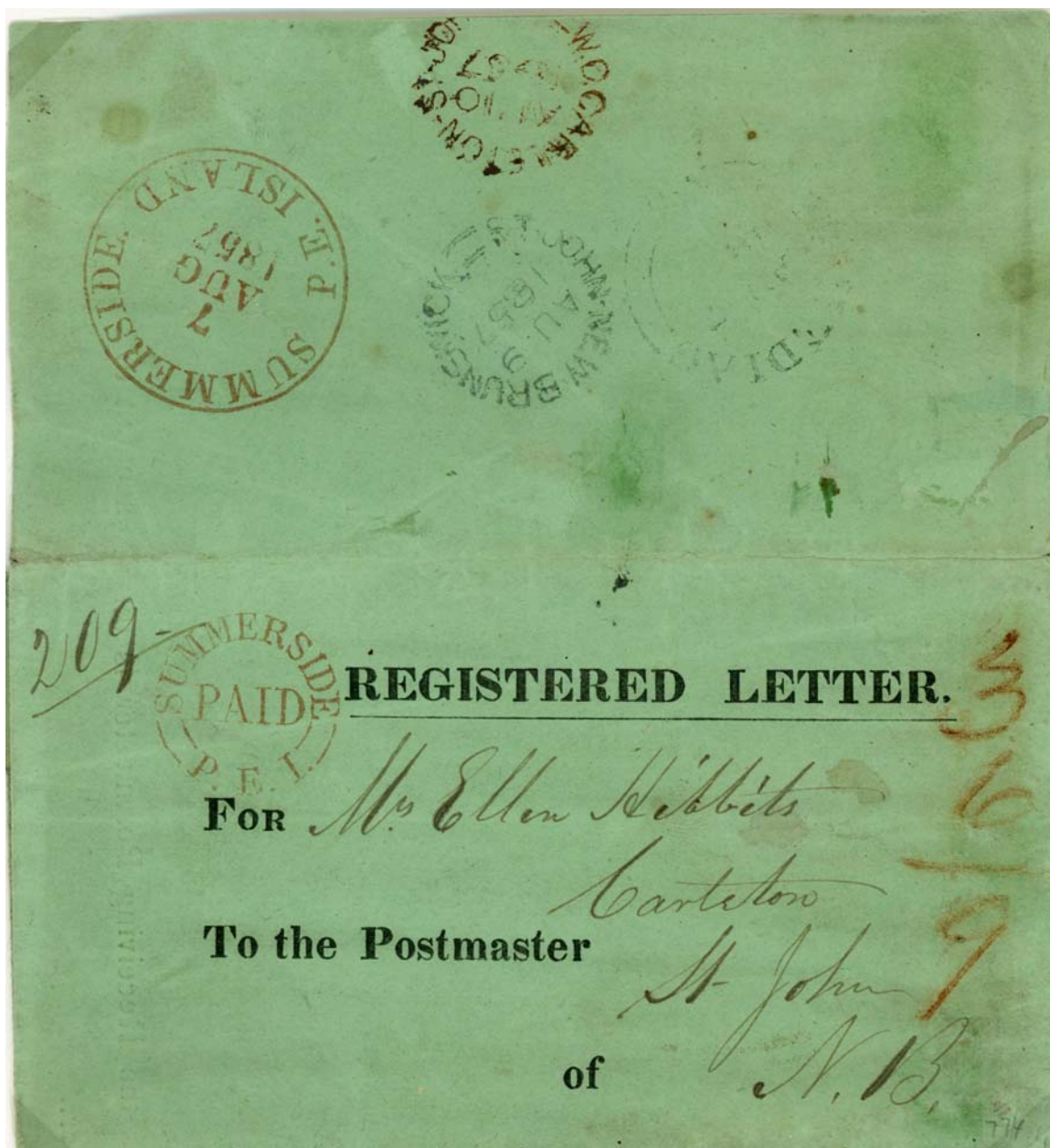
At the same scale; the rule at left (top cover) is further distant from the lettering than the rule at right (lower cover).



For a registered letter, Halifax—Shelburne, 1863. With Halifax H in grid.

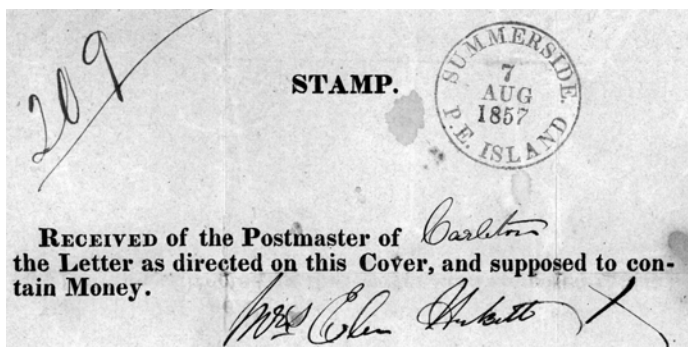
Prince Edward Island registration letter wrapper

Only known example



For a registered letter from Summerside to Saint John (NB), 1857. Similar interior wording to the Nova Scotia registration wrappers, but a different typeface. Rated 6d registration fee (apparently; there are no reliable sources for P E I registration fees in this period), possibly for intercolonial mail, since domestic mail in this period seems to have had a registration fee of 3d) and 3d intercolonial letter rate.

Fewer than ten examples of the SUMMERSIDE P.E.I. PAID handstamp have been reported; the large SUMMERSIDE P.E. ISLAND dater is known 1853-74, but with year slug only in 1857. The W.O. CARLETON-ST. JOHN datestamp is known 1852-57, after which the way office became a post office.



The Sender as well as the Receiving Postmaster is on no account to neglect stamping this Cover.

N. B.—The Postmaster will keep this Receipt as a proof of the delivery of the Letter, and apply to the Deputy Postmaster General for a further supply of these Covers, when necessary.

STAMP.

