

## 1857 Treaty Mail to France, the Philadelphia Exchange Office

The 1857 mail treaty between the United and France became effective on April 1, 1857 and was in effect until December 31, 1869. The treaty specified Philadelphia as an exchange office even though no regular mail steamers used the port. The treaty called for a postage rate of 15¢ (8 decimes) for each letter weighing up to one-quarter ounce sent from locations in the United States to all destinations in France. Multiple rates were in a simple progression. Unpaid, or insufficiently prepaid, letters to France were charged 8 decimes per one-half ounce. The treaty called for all credits to France on prepaid mail to be shown in red and all debits in black

This exhibit shows the various markings used by the Philadelphia exchange office on mails carried from the United States to France. Mails were made up in Philadelphia and transported in closed bags to the port of departure. As a result, mails leaving from Boston usually show a two day lag time while mails leaving from New York usually departed the next day. Upon arrival in France, entry markings were applied that reflect the mode of conveyance used to transmit the mail to the border.

There were four schemes for division of the 15¢ postal rate that varied with the modes of conveyance used. France was responsible for payment to Great Britain for all services they provided on transit mails. The table below shows the credits and debits on the 15¢ rate.

Table of credits and debits, per single 15¢ rate, on mail from the United States to France				
	British Packet	American Packet via Britain	American Packet Direct	French Packet
US credit to France on single prepaid 15¢ rate	12¢	6¢	3¢	12¢
US debit to France on single unpaid 15¢ rate	3¢	9¢	12¢	3¢

**British Packet** - The British owned Cunard line operated steamers from Boston and New York on a regular schedule. Mails were transported in closed bags across Great Britain to France at the expense of France.

**American Packet via Britain** - Several steamship lines carried French mails from New York to Great Britain under contract to the United States. The American mails were off-loaded at Southampton or Queenstown and carried onward to France by the Britain at the expense of France. Lines shown include North German Lloyd (NGL), Inman Line, and the Hamburg American Line (HAPAG).

**American Packet Direct** - A few steamship companies operated under contract from the United States directly to France. British transit charges which had to be paid by France applied to the previous categories but mail carried directly to France by American or French packets were not subject to these charges.

**French Packet** - In June 1864 the Compagnie Generale Transatlantique, or French Line, began operating between New York and France. The company was subsidized by the French government.

British Packet  
Single Rate: Paid / Unpaid



ET. UNIS SERV. BR. A.C.



12¢ Credit

15 November 1858 Philadelphia, prepaid, Cunard steamer *America* from Boston departed 17 November route: Boston to Liverpool (arr. 11.29), via London and Dover, to Calais (arr. 11.30)



3¢ Debit



3 September 1860 Philadelphia, unpaid, Cunard steamer *Arabia* from Boston departed 5 September route: Boston to Queenstown (arr. 9.14), via Dublin, Holyhead, London and Dover, to Calais (arr. 9.17)

The ET. UNIS SERV. BR. A.C. French entry marking was applied to indicate that the letter originated in the United States, was carried by British service, and was sorted on the railway car (ambulant) from Calais.

British Packet

Single Rate: Paid / Unpaid



ETATS-UNIS SERV. BRIT. CALAIS



12¢ Credit

31 January 1863 Philadelphia, prepaid, Cunard steamer *Arabia* from Boston departed 4 February route: Boston to Queenstown (arr. 2.15), via Dublin, Holyhead, London and Dover, to Calais (arr. 2.17)



3¢ Debit



6 October 1861 Philadelphia, unpaid, Cunard steamer *Persia* from New York departed 9 October route: New York to Queenstown (arr. 10.19), via Dublin, Holyhead, London and Dover, to Calais (arr. 10.22)

The ETATS-UNIS SERV. BRIT. CALAIS French entry was applied to indicate that the letter originated in the United States, was carried by British service and entered France at Calais.

**British Packet**

**Unpaid: Single / Double Rates**



**ETATS-UNIS SERV. BRIT. CALAIS**



3

**3¢ Debit**

17 April 1866 Philadelphia, Cunard steamer *Cuba* from New York departed 17 April route: New York to Queenstown (arv. 4.27), via Dublin, Holyhead, London and Dover, to Calais (arv. 5.1)



**6¢ Debit**

18 January 1864 Philadelphia, Cunard steamer *Africa* from Boston departed 20 January route: Boston to Queenstown (arv. 1.30), via Dublin, Holyhead, London and Dover, to Calais (arv. 2.1)

*The ETATS-UNIS SERV. BRIT. CALAIS French entry was applied to indicate that the letter originated in the United States, was carried by British service and entered France at Calais.*

British Packet  
Unpaid: Single



ET. UNIS SERV. BR. HAVRE



12 March 1861 Philadelphia, Galway Line steamer *Adriatic* contracted to Cunard, departed New York on 13 March route: New York to Queenstown (arr. 3.23), via Dublin, Holyhead, London and Dover, to Havre (arr. 3.26)



3¢ Debit

*The ET. UNIS SERV. BR. HAVRE French entry was applied to indicate that the letter originated in the United States, was carried by British service and entered France at Havre.*

**British Packet**  
**Single Rate: Unpaid**

ETATS-UNIS SERV. BRIT. CALAIS



marking reported used only in December 1867



26 November 1867 Philadelphia, unpaid, Cunard steamer *Scotia* from New York departed 27 November route: New York to Queenstown (arr. 12.6), via Dublin, Holyhead, London and Dover, to Calais (arr. 12.8)



3¢ Debit

*The ETATS-UNIS SERV. BRIT. CALAIS French entry was applied to indicate that the letter originated in the United States, was carried by British service and entered France at Calais.*

**French Packet Direct**

**Single Rate: Unpaid**

ETATS-UNIS PAQ. FR. H N<sup>o</sup> 1



Ligne H marking introduced for French Line steamers March 1866  
Number 4 was assigned to the steamer *Ville De Paris* until February 1868



1 November 1867 Philadelphia, unpaid, French Line steamer *Ville De Paris* from New York departed 2 November route: New York, via Brest, to Havre (arr 11.13)



**6¢ Debit**

*The ETATS-UNIS PAQ. FR. H N<sup>o</sup> 1 French entry marking was applied to indicate that the letter originated in the United States, was carried by French packet #1, and entered France at Havre.*

**French Packet Direct**  
**Single Rate: Paid**

ETATS-UNIS PAQ. FR. H N<sup>o</sup> 4



Ligne H marking was introduced for French Line steamers in March 1866  
Number 4 was assigned to the steamer *St. Laurent* in December 1866



Leconte's Mills, 17 April 1868 Philadelphia, French Line steamer *St. Laurent* from New York departed 18 April  
route: New York, via Brest, to Havre (arv 4.29)



**12¢ Credit**

*The ETATS-UNIS PAQ. FR. H N<sup>o</sup> 4 French entry marking was applied to indicate that the letter originated in the United States, was carried by French packet #4, and entered France at Havre.*

American Packet Via Great Britain

Single Rate: Paid / Unpaid

ETATS-UNIS SERV AM. CALAIS



6¢ Credit



Leconte's Mills, 10 March 1868 Philadelphia, NGL Line steamer Bremen loaned to HAPAG, New York departed 10 March route: New York, via Southampton, then British service to Calais (arv. 5.1)



9

9¢ Debit

2 March 1869 Philadelphia, unpaid, NGL steamer Main from New York departed 4 March route: New York, via Southampton, then British service to Calais (arv. 3.16)

The ETATS-UNIS SERV AM. CALAIS French entry was applied to indicate that the letter originated in the United States, was carried by American service to Britain and entered France at Calais.

American Packet Via Great Britain

Unpaid: Single / Triple Rate



ETATS-UNIS SERV AM. CALAIS



9¢ Debit

4 December 1863 Philadelphia, Inman Line steamer *City of Baltimore* from New York departed 5 December route: New York to Queenstown (arr. 12.17), via Dublin, Holyhead, London and Dover, to Calais (arr. 12.17)



27/3

27¢ Debit  
3x rate

29 March 1867 Philadelphia, unpaid, Inman Line steamer *City of Washington* from New York departed 30 March route: New York to Queenstown (arr. 4.9), via Dublin, Holyhead, London and Dover, to Calais (arr. 4.11)

The ETATS-UNIS SERV AM. CALAIS French entry was applied to indicate that the letter originated in the United States, was carried by British service and entered France at Calais.

American Packet Via Great Britain

Single Rate: Paid / Unpaid



ET. UNIS AM. V.A. HAVRE



6¢ Credit



15 April 1859 Philadelphia, prepaid, NGL steamer *Weser* (Cunarder contracted to U.S.) from New York departed 16 April route: New York, via Southampton, then British service to Havre (arv. 5.1)



9¢ Debit

22 February 1861 Philadelphia, unpaid, Inman Line steamer *City of Baltimore* from New York departed 23 February route: New York, via Queenstown, via Dublin, Holyhead, London and British service to Havre (arv. 3.8)

The ET. UNIS AM. V.A. HAVRE French entry was applied to indicate that the letter originated in the United States, was carried by American service to Britain and entered France at Havre.

**American Packet Via Great Britain**  
**Error Credit**



ET. UNIS SERV. AM. V.A. HAVRE



**Error**  
**3¢ Credit**

13 May 1859 Philadelphia, prepaid, NGL steamer *Bremen* from New York departed 14 May

Philadelphia exchange office error of "Paid 3" instead of "Paid 6" credit

the *Bremen* was the regular Saturday American packet to Britain but credit reflects direct carriage to Havre route: New York, via Southampton, to Havre (arv. 29.5)

**Map of American Packet (via Great Britain) and American Direct Service Routes**  
**American Service shown in red, British service shown in blue**

**Via Great Britain**

- To Southampton by American packet then by British mails, via London and Dover, to Calais.
- To Queenstown by American packet then by British mails via Dublin, Holyhead, to London. Then via Dover, to Calais or via Southampton to Havre.

**American Direct**

- To Southampton and continuing to Havre.
- To Brest and continuing Havre



American Packet Direct  
Single Rate: Paid / Unpaid



ET. UNIS SERV. AM. D. HAVRE



3¢ Credit



16 September 1859 Philadelphia, prepaid, Havre Line steamer *Arago* from New York departed 17 September route: New York, via Southampton, to Havre (arr. 10.1)



12¢ Debit

7 October 1859 Philadelphia, unpaid, Vanderbilt Line steamer *Vanderbilt* from New York departed 8 October route: New York, via Southampton, to Havre (arr. 10.20)

The ET. UNIS SERV. AM.. D. HAVRE French entry was applied to indicate that the letter originated in the United States, was carried by American direct service and entered France at Havre.

American Packet Direct  
Unpaid: Single / Double Rates



ET. UNIS SERV. AM. D. HAVRE



12¢ Debit



1 March 1861 Philadelphia, unpaid, Havre Line steamer *Fulton* from New York departed 2 March route: New York, via Southampton, to Havre (arr. 3.14)



24¢ Debit

4 January 1861 Philadelphia, unpaid, Havre Line steamer *Fulton* from New York departed 5 January route: New York, via Southampton, to Havre (arr. 1.19)

The ET. UNIS SERV. AM. D. HAVRE French entry was applied to indicate that the letter originated in the United States, was carried by American direct service and entered France at Havre.

American Packet Direct  
Single Rate: Paid / Unpaid



ET. UNIS SERV. AM. D. HAVRE



3¢ Credit



Leconte's Mills, 30 August 1867 Philadelphia, prepaid, Havre Line steamer *Fulton* from New York departed 31 August route: New York, via Falmouth, to Havre (arv. 10.1)



12

12¢ Debit

19 July 1867 Philadelphia, unpaid, Havre Line steamer *Guiding Star* from New York departed 20 July route: New York, via Falmouth, to Havre (arv. 8.2)

The ET. UNIS SERV. AM.D. HAVRE French entry was applied to indicate that the letter originated in the United States, was carried by American direct service and entered France at Havre.

American Packet Direct

Double Rate: Unpaid

ET. UNIS SERV. AM. D. HAVRE



5 July 1867 Philadelphia, short paid double weight letter treated as unpaid  
Havre Line steamer *Fulton* from New York departed 6 July  
route: New York, via Falmouth, to Havre (arv. 7.18)



24

24¢ Debit

The ET. UNIS SERV. AM.D. HAVRE French entry was applied to indicate that the letter originated in the United States, was carried by American direct service and entered France at Havre.