

# Letters from New Zealand to the USA in the Nineteenth Century

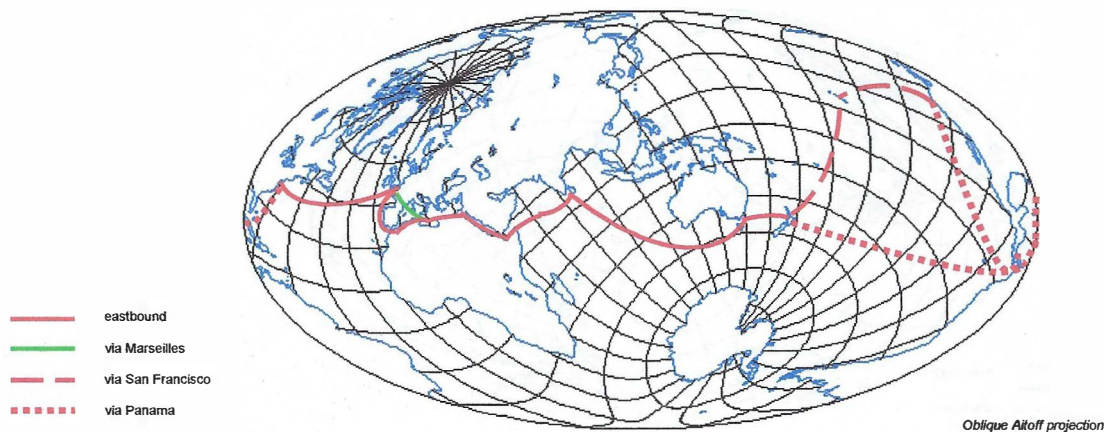
This exhibit is a survey of postal rates and routes on letters from New Zealand to the USA throughout the Nineteenth Century. The most frequently encountered routes as well as several of the rarer ones are represented.

The **plan** is by route showing various rates where applicable. Rare items are outlined in red.

Route	Rate	Effective dates	Pages
Carried privately to USA	[USA internal + ship rates]	—	2
Sent direct via Post Office by private ship	2d per ½ ounce (Colonial rate)	1 Apr 1851 – 26 Mar 1857	3
Sent via Suez and London			4
Via Suez and Southampton	1s 2d per ½ ounce *	27 March 1857 – 30 June 1868	5 – 6
	1s per ½ ounce *	1 July 1868 – 21 November 1871	7
	8d per ½ ounce	22 November 1871 – 30 September 1891	8
Via Marseilles	1s 2d per ½ ounce * + 3d to ¼ ounce	27 March 1857 – 11 September 1863	9
	1s 2d per ½ ounce * + 4d per ¼ ounce	12 September 1863 – 30 June 1868	
	1s per ½ ounce * + 4d per ¼ ounce	1 July 1868 – 31 March 1870	
Via Panama	1s to ½ ounce *	23 May 1866 – 31 May 1867 **	10
	6d to ½ ounce *	1 June 1867 – 7 December 1868 **	
Via San Francisco	6d to ½ ounce	1 August 1870 – 30 September 1891	11 – 14
UPU rates	2½d per ½ ounce	1 October 1891 – onward	15 - 16

\* Follows "British" rate progression whereby one rate was for a half ounce and progressed as 1:2:4:6 rates etc.

\*\* Unpaid past Panama. US steamship rate 10¢ per ½ ounce due from recipient.



- References:
- Elliott. *New Zealand Routes and Rates - 1874.*
  - Tabcart. *Australia New Zealand UK Mails. Vol I to 1880, vol II to 1900.*
  - Hubbard & Winter. *North Atlantic Mail Sailings, 1840-75.*
  - Winter. *Understanding Transatlantic Mail. Vol I.*
  - New Zealand Gazette*, various 19th century issues.
  - Contemporary online NZ, Australian, UK and US newspapers.

## Carried Privately to USA

It was common for letters to be handed to a vessel's captain to be carried to the destination, as have these two whaler's letters. Origin is usually determined by the dateline of the correspondence, and all postal markings are applied in the USA. These are charged as ship letters with a ship fee added to the internal American postage.



1840 Port Otago to Fairhaven, Massachusetts

Letter from captain of whaling ship *Columbus* to owners Gibbs & Jenny. The American whaler *John and Edward* likely carried this letter to New London, Connecticut. The *Columbus* did not return to Fairhaven until 22 April 1841. Manuscript "14½" in dark blue is postage due consisting of 2¢ ship fee plus 12½¢ from Newport to Fairhaven. Postmarked in red "New London, Ct. / Jul 13" and "SHIP" in red. *Port Otago* was a major whaling station at the time, preceding the settlements at Dunedin. This cover is believed to be the earliest recorded letter from Port Otago in private hands.



1852 Bay of Islands to New Bedford, Massachusetts

Postmarked "San Francisco, Cal / 15 Jun" plus "12"; datelined "Bay of Islands N. Zealand / Jany. 20<sup>th</sup> 1852". Rate: 12¢ = 2¢ ship letter fee + 10¢ over 3000 miles not prepaid. Writer was Third Mate on whaling bark *Louisa* which was reported at Bay of Islands in January 1852. Likely carried by *Warren* to Honolulu and *Eagle* to San Francisco. Then carried via Panama route to New York and then to New Bedford.



## 2d per ½ ounce “Colonial” Letter Rate

Sent direct via Post Office by private ship

Letters paid the 2d internal “colonial” postage. Sent by private ship in sealed Post Office bag to USA. Mail sent direct to foreign (non-British) addresses could not be prepaid prior to 1859. Arrival charges depended on prevailing ship rate plus internal rate on distance from port of entry to destination.



### 1855 Auckland to Sonoma, California

“Paid / at / Auckland New Zealand” crowned circle and “2” in red indicating that the 2d NZ internal postage was paid. “Auckland / New Zealand / JA 3 / 1855” [on back]. “San Francisco / May / 26” and “Ship 5” which indicated 5¢ postage due consisting of 2¢ ship fee + 3¢ internal postage under 3000 miles. Likely carried by *William Denny* to Sydney and by *Ella Francis* to San Francisco.



### 1856 Auckland to New Bedford, Massachusetts

“Paid / at / Auckland New Zealand” crowned circle and “2” in red indicating that the 2d NZ internal postage was paid. “Auckland / New Zealand / AP 28 / 1856” [on back], “San Francisco / 5 / Sep” and “Ship 12” which indicated 12¢ postage due consisting of 2¢ ship fee + 10¢ internal postage over 3000 miles. Docketing restates dateline “Bay of Islands, March 11/56”



**2d per ½ ounce "Colonial" Letter Rate**  
**Sent via Suez and London**

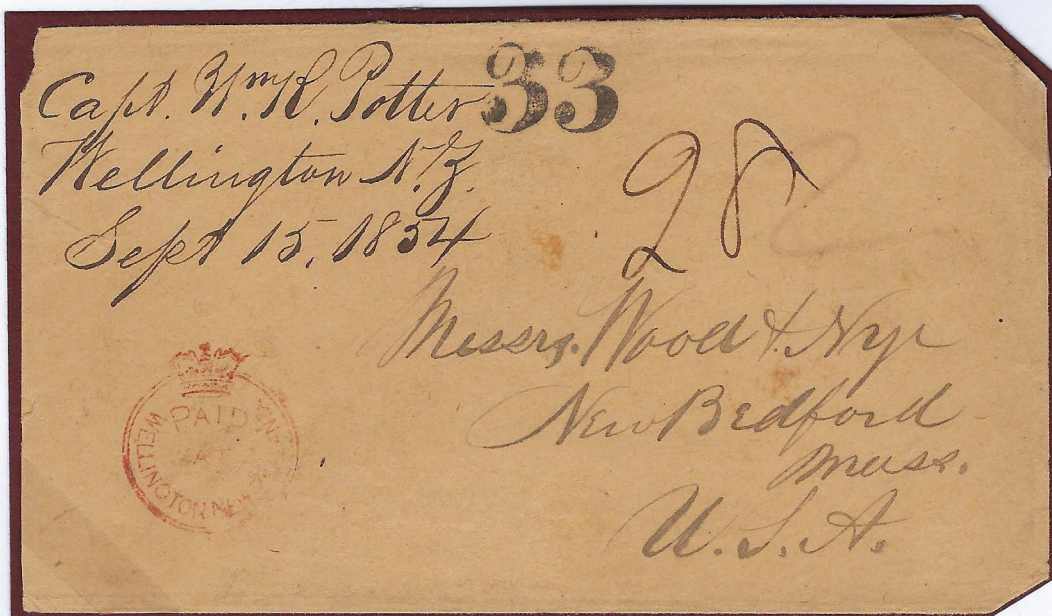
Only internal NZ postage of 2d could be paid prior to 1857 when full postage to destination had to be prepaid. The US-UK postal convention of 1848 governed trans-Atlantic rates from Britain.

**1852-53 Russell to London  
 Remailed to New York**

Delivered to agent in London who paid the 8d ship letter fee and reposed to USA.

Treated by USA as letter originating in UK. Recipient paid 24¢ due including 19¢ internal UK postage and trans-Atlantic carriage on British packet, plus 5¢ internal postage.

Letter from James Busby, former British Resident in New Zealand.



**1854-55 Wellington to  
 New Bedford, Massachusetts**

Paid at Wellington crowned circle, m/s "2" for Colonial (internal) rate.

m/s "28" for 28¢ credit due to UK from USA

"33" h/s applied at Boston for 33¢ due from addressee made up of 12¢ (6d) carriage NZ-UK, 16¢ (8d) trans-Atlantic charge on British packet, 5¢ inland US postage.

Shipped by *Waterwitch* to Sydney; then on *Calcutta* (General Screw Shipping Co.) via Cape Horn to UK. Cunard *Asia* Liverpool to Boston.

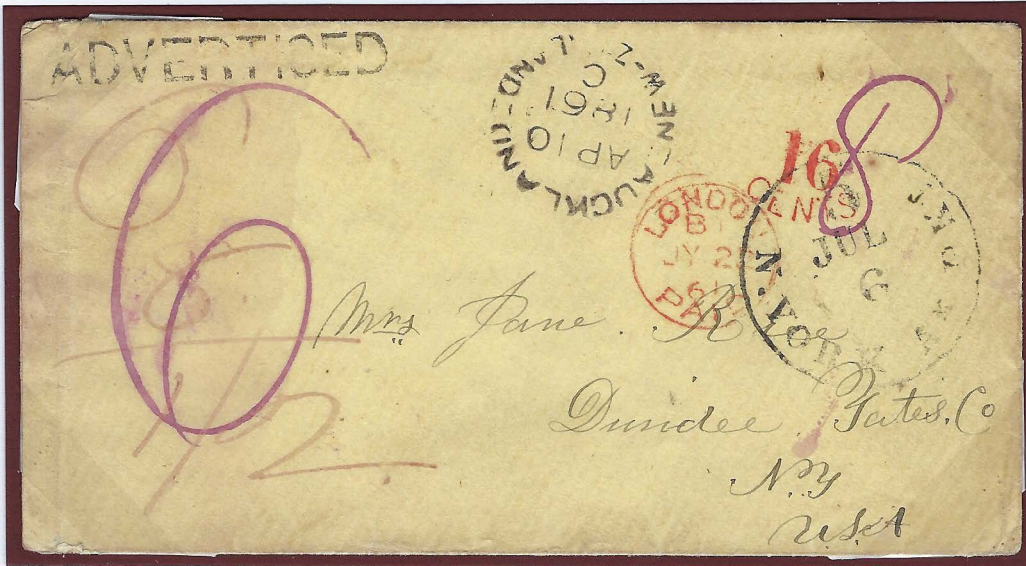
Docketing at UL. Whaling cover.



## Via Suez and Southampton

**1s 2d rate (27 March 1857 – 30 Jun 1868)**

Rates to various colonies and foreign countries via the United Kingdom were published when a new Australian Packet Service was introduced from 1857. Prepayment of full amount was required in New Zealand with partial payments ignored. It was possible to send letters stampless before April 1862, but stamps were compulsory after that date. Route from Australia was via Galle–Suez–Alexandria–Southampton. Route to USA was via various British or American packets. British scale was on a 1:2:4:6 progression (no odd amounts above ½ ounce).



**1861 Mongonui to Dundee, New York – Advertised**

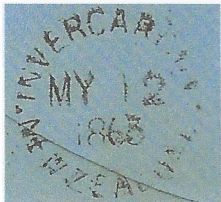


100%

Postmark "Mongonui, AP 6" on back.  
Rates: 1s 2d ["6" and "8" magenta m/s], "16 cents" [red] credit to USA for use of American packet, 5¢ due from addressee; "Advertised" applied at destination.

Shipped from Auckland on *Montezuma* to Sydney, Southampton to NY on *Fulton* arriving 5 August 1861.

*Note: NY postmark precedes the London one, and this is likely because the month was not reset in NY dial. Another known cover has the same postmark dates.*



100%



Postmark Invercargill, MY 12 1863 [back], 11-bar oval obliterator (Invercargill).

Rates: red 8d credit due to UK from NZ, "16 cents" [red] credit due to US for use on American packet; 5¢ due from addressee.

Carried from Bluff to Melbourne on *Aldinga*, from Southampton to New York on *America*.

**1863 Invercargill to Blackstone, Massachusetts**



Via Suez and Southampton (continued)

1s 2d (continued)



**1864 Lake Waipori to Marshall, Michigan via London & Detroit**

Postal markings: Obliterator 052 (Lake Waipori, now Berwick), Dunedin, MY 12 1864, London Paid JY 18; "8" credit due to UK from NZ, "16 Cents" due to US for use of American packet; "Detroit Am. Pkt., Aug 6 / 5" due from addressee.

Rare American Packet via the Allen Line via Quebec City and Grand Trunk Railroad entering USA at Detroit

**1864 Lyttelton to California via London and New York**

Postal markings: Obliterator 16 (Lyttelton), Lyttelton DE 7, 1864 [on back], London Paid FE 21 65; "8" credit due to UK from NZ, "16 Cents" due to US for use of American packet; "5" and San Francisco, Cal. Apr 7, 1865; 5¢ to collect.

Via closed bag from London via New York to San Francisco



**1867 Dunedin to New Castle, Delaware via London**

Postal markings: Dunedin SE 27 67 "O" duplex obliterator; London PAID 23 NO 67; "8" credit to UK from NZ; Boston Br. Pkt. (no credit to US), Dec 4, 5 (= 5¢ due)

Entry at Boston

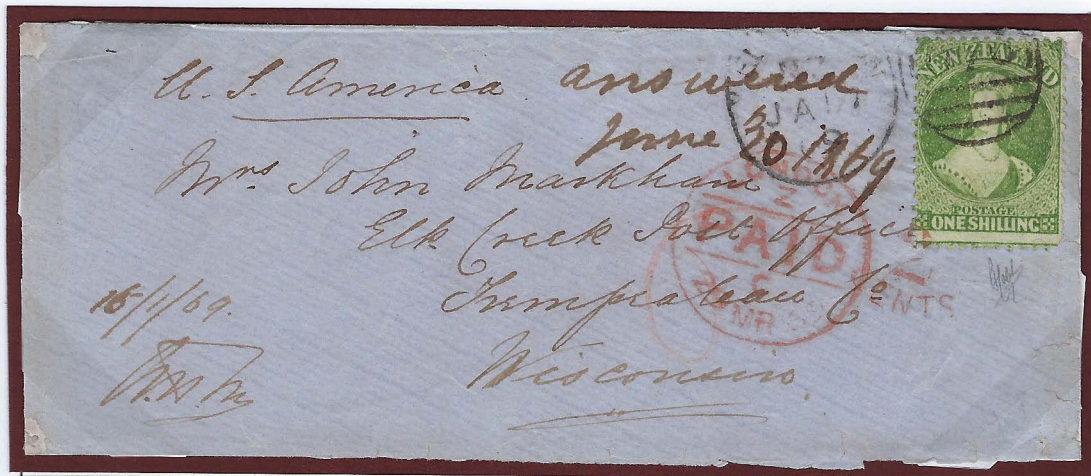
The sender was Henry Driver who was a prominent Otago merchant, member of the Provincial Council and later of Parliament.



## Via Suez and Southampton (continued)

1s (1 July 1868 – 21 November 1871)

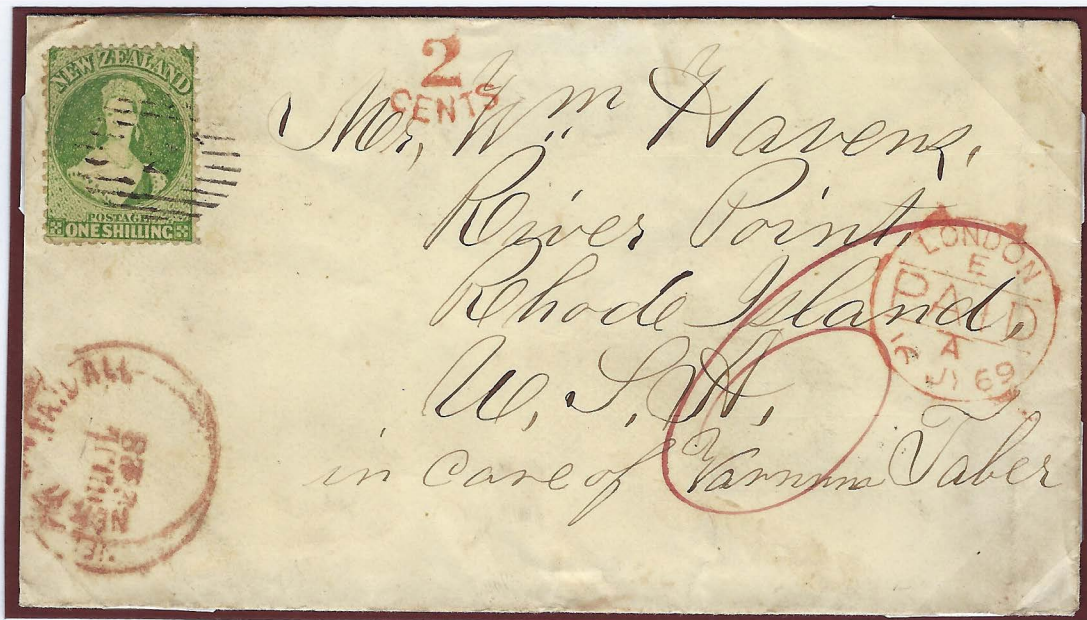
The rate was reduced by 2d under terms of the UK-US postal convention effective 1 January 1868 but not effective in New Zealand until 1 July 1868. The sending country paid for the trans-Atlantic passage, which simplified the accounting. The rate progression initially followed the "British" scale whereby one rate was for a half ounce and progressed as 1:2:4:6 rates etc. After April 1870, the progression became a simple one of half ounce multiples.



### 1869 Wellington to Elk Creek, Wisconsin

Postal markings: Wellington, JA 17 69, "070" duplex; London PAID 29 MR 69; m/s "6" indicating 6d credit to UK from NZ, applied London; "2 cents" [red] credit to US from UK for US internal postage; NGL Main to NY

The docketing "16/1/69 AHM" indicates it was sent by Lieut. A. H. Markham, First Lieutenant aboard HMS Blanche. (logo of H M S Blanche on back flap)



### 1869 Russell to River Point, Rhode Island

Postal markings: Russell, MR 31 1869, "2" barred oval of Russell, London PAID 16 JY 69; m/s "6" indicating 6d credit to UK from NZ, applied London; "2 cents" [red] credit to US from UK for US internal postage. To NY on *China*.



## Via Suez and Southampton (continued)

### 8d per half ounce (22 November 1871 – 30 September 1891)

This rate was available during the period when the preferred route was via San Francisco (pp 11-14, below). A gap in the San Francisco service in 1873 due to the failure of the Hall Line required mail to be directed via the Southampton route which required an extra 2d postage.

#### 1873 Auckland to Columbus, Ohio via London

Postal markings: Auckland JY 28 73 duplex barred oval; London Paid 8 OC 73; New York Paid All Oct 20; m/s "2" credit to US for domestic postage. Pair 4d yellow (SG 120)

Reduced slightly at left



#### 1873 Kapanga (Coromandel) to Valatie, New York via London

Postal markings: "COROMANDEL" in barred oval obliterator; Kapanga, AU 27 73 [back]; Auckland AU 29 73 [back]; London Paid 31 DE 73 [red]; New York Paid All Jan 15; m/s "2" credit to US for domestic postage.

Rare "COROMANDEL" obliterations on Chalon cover

Restored at upper left; reduced slightly at left



#### 1873 Dunedin to New York via London – held for postage

Postal markings: Dunedin, JL 8 73 with small "O" 8-barred oval duplex obliterator; "Detained for [2d m/s] postage" then obliterated by large "O" in 7-barred oval after addition of 2d stamp, stamps cancelled by small "O" 8-barred oval; London Paid 8 OC 73 [red]; New York Paid All Oct 20 [back]; m/s "2" credit to US for domestic postage.



## Via Marseilles

This premium route involved sending mail in closed bags via Suez and Marseilles, across France by rail then to the UK by mail ferry. This involved additional postage with a gain of as much as 72 hours. Rates for the French portion added an extra amount per ¼ ounce to the normal rates via Southampton. As the British scale was on a 1:2:4:6 progression (no odd amounts above 1), the calculations were somewhat complicated for higher weights.

1s 5d to ¼ ounce (27 March 1857 – 11 September 1863)

### 1863 New Zealand to Rochester, New York

Endorsed "Via Marseilles"; Postal markings: barred oval cancels; London Paid My 21 63; New York [Br.] Pkt, June 3, 5; m/s "8" credit to UK for trans-Atlantic carriage. Stamps 2x SG 42 + 2x SG 36 + SG 33

A rare example of this rate and route to USA



1s 6d to ½ ounce (12 September 1863 – 30 June 1868)

### 1864 Invercargill to Blackstone, Massachusetts

Postal markings: Invercargill, Southland NZ, AP 18 64; London Paid JY 13 64; New York Am. Pkt. / 5 / Jul 28; m/s "8" credit to USA for carriage on American packet; red "16 cents" for same; m/s "5" US inland rate.

Route via Marseilles taken from postage

1s 4d to ½ ounce (1 July 1868 – 22 December 1870)

### 1869 Greymouth to New York: double rate to 1 ounce

Postal markings: Greymouth / FE 23 / 69 [back], barred oval "20" of Greymouth, Hokitika / FE 24 / 69 [back], London Paid / MY 15 69, New York Paid All / May 25, m/s "4" credit to USA for double 2¢ internal postage, "1/-" credit to UK for trans-Atlantic carriage.





## Via Panama

A short-lived route that was developed in the 1860s to better speed the mail to and from the UK. Route was from New Zealand to Panama [City], New Granada to New York or San Francisco by US services. Rates to USA could not be prepaid beyond Panama. Addressees in the US had to pay an additional Steamship fee of 10¢ per ½ ounce.



1s per ½ ounce (23 May 1866 – 31 May 1867)

### 1866 Dunedin to Worcester, Massachusetts

Sixth sailing, Dec 1866, Rakaia.

Aspinwall to New York on New-York (PMSS).

Rates: 1s to ½ oz. paid to Panama, 10¢ due from addressee for "steamship"

### 1866 Invercargill to Worcester, Massachusetts

Sixth sailing, Dec 1866, Rakaia.

Aspinwall to New York on New-York (PMSS).

Rates: 1s to ½ oz. paid to Panama, 10¢ due from addressee for "steamship"



6d per ½ ounce (1 June 1867 – 7 December 1868)

### 1868 Lyttelton to Stockton, Maine

Twenty-third sailing, May 1866, Mataura.

Aspinwall to New York on Rising Star (PMSS).

Rates: 6d to ½ oz. paid to Panama, 10¢ due from addressee for "steamship"





## Via San Francisco

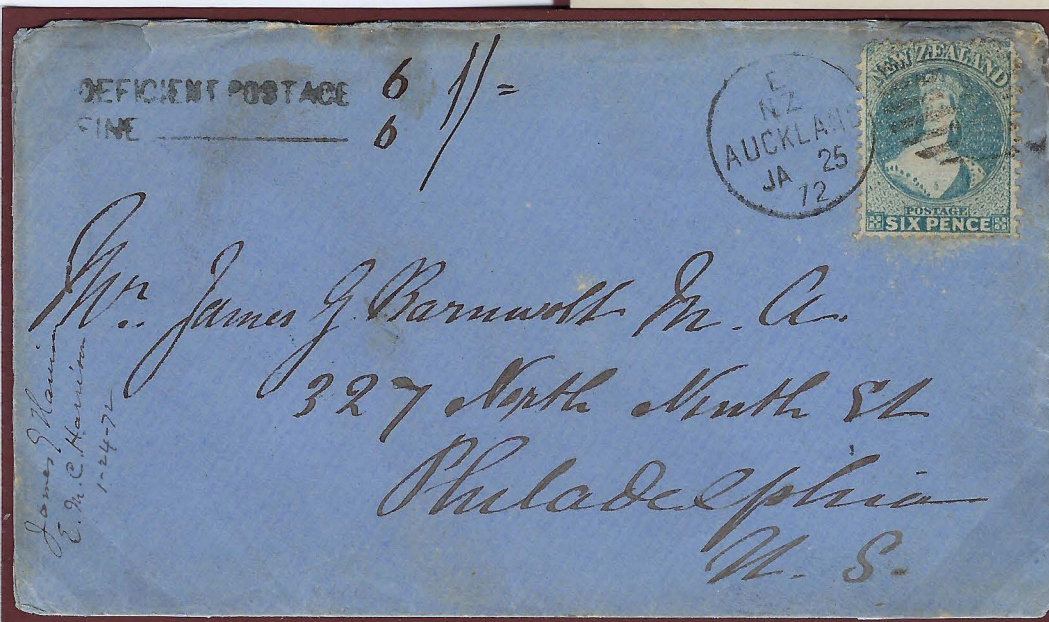
In 1869 the Transcontinental Railroad was completed across the USA that allowed speedier transmission of mails from New Zealand to the UK and other destinations including the USA itself. A subsidised mail contract began in early 1870 via Honolulu to San Francisco (The Hall Line). A postal convention between the USA and New Zealand was ratified later effective from 1 December 1870. This became the principal route for mail from NZ to the USA and beyond. Rates were published prior to the commencement of the convention and were initially treated by the US as steamship mail. There were eight trips before the convention took effect. **6d per ½ ounce.**



**1870 Kakanui to Mount Union, Ohio**  
Fifth trip: *Wonga Wonga* to Honolulu and *Ajax* to San Francisco; Rates 6d to ½ ounce, 10¢ steamship fee due

**Sent before introduction of the NZ-US Postal Convention**

**1871 Auckland to San Francisco**  
Second contract, voyage 1: *Nevada* to Honolulu and *Moses Taylor* to San Francisco; Rates 6d to ½ ounce



**1872 Auckland to Philadelphia – Double weight, Deficient postage**

Second contract, voyage 10: *Nebraska* to Honolulu and *Moses Taylor* to San Francisco; Rate 1s to 1 ounce; 6d paid and 6d deficient as marked, fine of 6d totalling 1s due



Via San Francisco (continued)

6d per ½ ounce (continued)



**1871 Russell to Edgartown, Massachusetts**

First contract, voyage 13: *Wonga Wonga* to Honolulu (extra trip to fill gap until next contract) and *Ajax* to San Francisco; Rate 6d to ½ ounce



**1872 Auckland to San Francisco, Triple Rate**

Second contract, voyage 12: *Nebraska* to Honolulu. Because of a breakdown of the *Mohongo*, which was to take this mail onward, the *Nebraska* completed this voyage to San Francisco; Rate 1s 6d (3 × 6d) to 1½ ounces



## Via San Francisco (continued)

### PAID ALL Markings

The US-NZ Postal Convention stipulated that full-prepaid letters between the countries were required to be plainly stamped "PAID ALL" in red ink. In practice that was not always done, as evident on the previous two pages. Most covers with such markings from New Zealand appeared in the first and second sideface eras. Several different typefaces and colours have been found and were classified by Williams\*. Receiving offices often applied a Paid All mark as a receiver.

**1877 Wellington to Pittsburgh**

Postmark Wellington 5 May 77

Magenta San Francisco Paid

All Jun 1 in circle

6d FSF

**Badly struck PAID ALL**

**Williams Type 1 red**



**1878 Auckland to Idaho Territory**

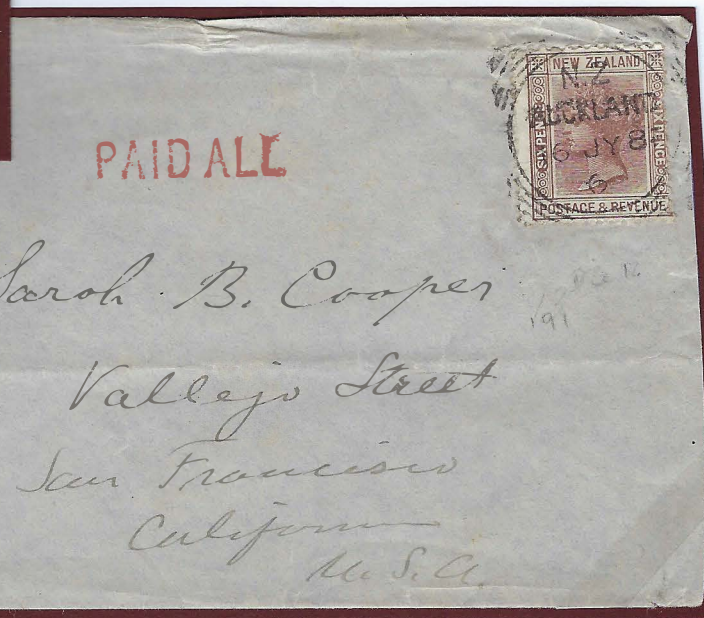
Postmark Auckland 17 SP 78

Magenta San Francisco / [Paid] All / Oct 9

in circle

6d FSF

**PAID ALL Williams Type 1 red**



**1883 Auckland to San Francisco**

Postmark Auckland 16 JY 83

Magenta San Francisco Paid All

Aug 7 in circle

6d SSF

**PAID ALL Williams Type 1 red**

\* Reference: J. Edgar Williams, "The New Zealand Straight Line 'PAID ALL' Markings," *The Informer* (Journal of SAS-Oceania), First Quarter 1991, pp. 3-8.



Via San Francisco (continued)

PAID ALL Markings



1884 Dunedin to San Francisco, Forwarded  
 Postmark Dunedin 20 JU 84  
 Magenta San Francisco Paid All Jul 14 in circle  
 San Francisco Jul 15  
 Violet "FORWARDED" & read-dressed to Guerneville  
 6 x 1d SSF

PAID ALL Williams Type 5 red

1891 Christchurch to New Jersey

Christchurch 30 JA 91  
 New York Mar 24 PAID ALL [back]  
 3 x 2d SSF

PAID ALL Williams Type 1 black



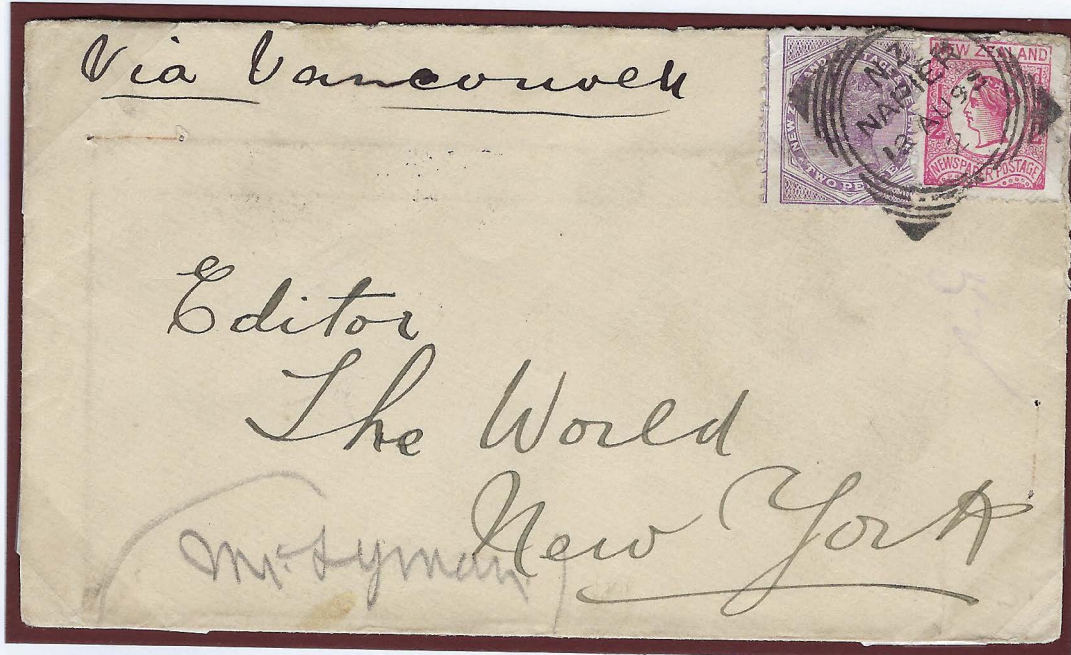
1888 Nelson to Boston  
 Nelson 10 MR 88  
 Boston Paid Apr 28 1888 [back]  
 3 x 1d + 3d SSF

PAID ALL Williams Type 5 violet



## Universal Postal Union (UPU)

On 1 October 1891 New Zealand was allowed to join the Universal Postal Union on 1 October 1891, initially as one of the Australasian Colonies, later as a voting member in its own right. This resulted in a considerably simplified arrangement for postage with other countries within the Union, including the United States. The rate was a uniform 2½d per ½ ounce, and the route no longer needed to be specified, although the direct route via San Francisco continued as the principal one. Some mail also went via Vancouver.



**1895 Napier to New York via Vancouver**  
Napier 13 Au 95, Auckland 14 AU 95 [back], P.O.N.Y. 9-9 95 [back]  
2d SSF die 3 perf 10 + ½d newspaper perf 12½



**1897 Wellington to New York, double rate**  
Wellington 13 MY 97, P.O.N.Y. Paid All 6-8-97  
Double 2½d rate



Universal Postal Union (continued)



1894 Auckland to Iowa  
Auckland 14 JL 94, San Francisco Aug 2 1894, Iowa City Aug 6 1894  
5 x 1/2d newspaper stamps

1899 Wellington to Boston  
Wellington 15 AP 99, Boston May 08 99 received [back], Boston Back Bay Station May 10 1899  
2 1/2d issue of 1898 "Wakatipu"



1897 Roxburgh to Floral Park, New York  
Letter cards were accepted for international use at letter rates from 1 Jan 1895  
Roxburgh 11 Je 97, Bluff 14 JE 97 [back], New York Aug 5 1897  
1 1/2d lettercard [Samual BA.7a] up-rated with 1d SSF