

The Allan Line

The Allan Line, formally known as the Montreal Ocean Steam Ship Company, was founded by Hugh Allan in 1853. Allan secured a contract with Canada to carry mails every two weeks between Quebec and Liverpool as well as a monthly mail between Portland and Liverpool during the winter months.

Portland was first designated as an exchange office for United States trans-Atlantic mails in February 1859. Originally the office only exchanged mails under the U.S. - British treaty. In April 1861 Portland was added as an exchange office for both French Treaty mails as well as for mail carried under the Prussian Mail Convention.

This presentation is primarily designed to show a variety of the exchange office markings used at the Portland exchange office, organized by treaty, but excluding the depreciated currency markings. The designated types and numbers known are from an unpublished census compiled by Van Koppersmith correcting and updating the Hazelton census.

It should be noted that only 60 of the 500 covers in the census originated in the United States. This is because most outbound mail, other than those covers originating near Portland, was exchanged in other offices, including Detroit and Chicago for western origins and Boston and New York for eastern origins. However, most inbound mail arriving at Portland was processed at the Portland exchange office before being forwarded to destination.

British Treaty Mail

Portland was made an exchange office under the existing U.S. - British postal treaty by additional articles finalized when signed in London 3 February 1859 (the arrival date of cover below).

Via Portland



18 January 1859 Detroit, via Portland, to England, prepaid 24¢
2 January 1859 the *North American* departed Portland, Maine to Liverpool (Feb 3)
3 February 1859 Liverpool US Packet Paid exchange office entry datestamp
first trip of an Allan Line steamer as an American packet under British Mail treaty

The Allan Line

British Treaty Mail

Portland Office



- 13 November 1859 Dromore-West, Ireland, unpaid use via Balisodare, and Dublin to New York
- 15 November 1859 Liverpool datestamp, carried on maiden voyage of the *Bohemian*
- 30 November 1859 Portland ME Am Pkt 24 datestamp, an early use for any Portland mark

The letter below was carried on the Allan Line steamer *Canadian* to Portland as the sender directed. It does not bear a Portland exchange office datestamp because it was included in a closed bag directed to the New York City.



- 28 March 1861 London, via Portland and Londonderry, to New York, unpaid 24¢ rate bagged at London exchange office in a closed bag to be opened at New York City
- 28 March 1861 the *Canadian II* departed Liverpool and stopped at Londonderry the next day
- 8 April 1861 arrived at Portland and was transmitted in closed bag direct to New York City

The Allan Line

British Treaty Mail

Portland Office Markings



type 1 w/24



29 November 1859 Arundel, England unpaid 1s rate to Envoy Lord Lyons at Washington, DC
30 November 1859 London office backstamp, sent to Queenstown to catch North American
8 December 1859 Queenstown, placed on board North American from Liverpool the day before
16 December 1859 Portland "24" cents due exchange datestamp and "3 CENTS" debit to U.S.



type 1 w/48

15 February 1860 Liverpool unpaid 2s double rate per Anglo-Saxon to Castine, Maine
2 March 1860 Portland "48" cents due exchange datestamp correcting a "24" cents marking
Portland office manuscript "6" cents for double rate debit to U.S.
the only reported example of this marking

The Allan Line

British Treaty Mail

Portland Office Markings



type 2



1 February 1860 Liverpool prepaid 1s rate, per *Bohemian*, to Allan Line Agents in Portland
"21 Cents" credit handstamp applied by British postal agent onboard the *Bohemian*
14 February 1860 arrived Portland with type 2 datestamp
the earliest of 6 known examples of this type

The 21 cents credit to the U.S. on the total rate of 24¢ represents 16¢ for sea postage by American packet plus 5¢ U.S. inland postage. Britain retained her 3¢ for her inland postage.

The Allan Line

British Treaty Mail

Portland Office Markings



type 3 w/24
"PAID" is low



20 March 1860 Spaulding, England prepaid 1s rate to Spencer Port, NY
21 March 1860 maiden voyage of *Canadian II* departed Liverpool, via Londonderry
7 April 1860 Portland "24 Paid" exchange datestamp

The *Canadian II* was a screw steamer replacement for *Canadian I* that sunk in 1857. *Canadian II* sank June 4, 1861 with the loss of 61 lives after being crushed by ice.



type 3 w/24
"PAID" is high

9 August 1860 Glasgow, Scotland prepaid 1s rate with twelve 1d red stamps
10 August 1860 placed aboard the *North American* at her stop at Londonderry
20 August 1860 arrived Quebec and thence by rail to Portland
22 August 1860 Portland "24 Paid" exchange datestamp

The Allan Line

British Treaty Mail

Portland Office Markings



4 September 1860 Rathfriland, Ireland unpaid 1s rate to Memphis, TN
4 September 1860 Newry transit backstamp, thence to Irish port of Londonderry
7 September 1860 placed onboard the Cunard Line steamer *Jura* at Londonderry
18 September 1860 Portland "24" cents due exchange datestamp
first of four trips of the Cunard Line steamer *Jura* under contract to the Allan Line



type 3 w/48

29 January 1863 Liverpool prepaid 2s double rate per *North-American* to Portland
17 February 1863 Portland "48" cents paid exchange datestamp overstrikes a "42 CENTS" credit
four known examples of this exchange datestamp

The Allan Line

British Treaty Mail

Portland Office Markings

From Hong Kong / From Malta



type 4



2 February 1861 Hong Kong, Markam correspondence cover to Wisconsin

21 March 1861 Southampton arrival from P&O Line steamers *China*, *Nubia*, and lastly *Pera*

21 March 1861 London transit and departed Liverpool on Allan Line *Nova Scotian*

4 April 1861 Portland arrival datestamp and 33¢ total Hong Kong postal rate due handstamp manuscript 12¢ (6d restated) debit to U.S. for British carriage from Hong Kong to London



type 1 w/5

12 November 1866 Malta 14d rate to U.S. port of entry prepaid with stamps, "A25" cancels

22 November 1866 London paid transit, then per *St. David* from Londonderry

10 December 1866 Portland "5" cents due exchange datestamp restated as "Due 5" at left the "16 CENTS" credit to U.S. handstamp struck onboard by the British postal agent

The Allan Line

British Treaty Mail

Portland Office Markings

On January 1, 1868 the rate for single letter between Great Britain and the United States was reduced to 6d (12¢). On January 1, 1870 it was further reduced to 3d (6¢).



type 7
w/ PAID

19 November 1868 England prepaid 6d (12¢) rate to Morristown, NJ
 19 November 1868 London paid transit, then per *Damascus* from Londonderry
 5 December 1868 Portland Am Pkt Paid exchange datestamp



type 6
w/ PAID



25 January 1870 Cambridge, MA to BF Stevens, U.S. Despatch Agent, prepaid reduced 6¢ rate
 29 January 1870 Portland exchange office datestamp and by *Nova Scotian* to England
 10 February 1870 arrived at Liverpool, 11 February 1870 London Paid arrival
 11 February 1870 U.S. Despatch Agent forwarded under cover to USS *Sabine* at Naples, Italy

The Allan Line

Prussian Closed Mail

Portland Office Markings

The U.S. - Prussian Closed Mail Convention utilized a postal route for mail traveling via Germany, Aachen (Belgium) and then in closed mail bags across Britain and to the United States by steamer. An additional article to the closed mail convention that was signed in Berlin on April 24, 1861 created additional exchange offices at Portland, Chicago and Detroit.



type 9 w/28 PAID



15 February 1867 Königsberg, Prussia prepaid 45kr (28¢) rate to Mabrige, Mass.
21 February 1867 Allan Line steamer Nova Scotian departed Liverpool, via Londonderry
8 March 1867 arrived Portland, "28 Paid" exchange datestamp

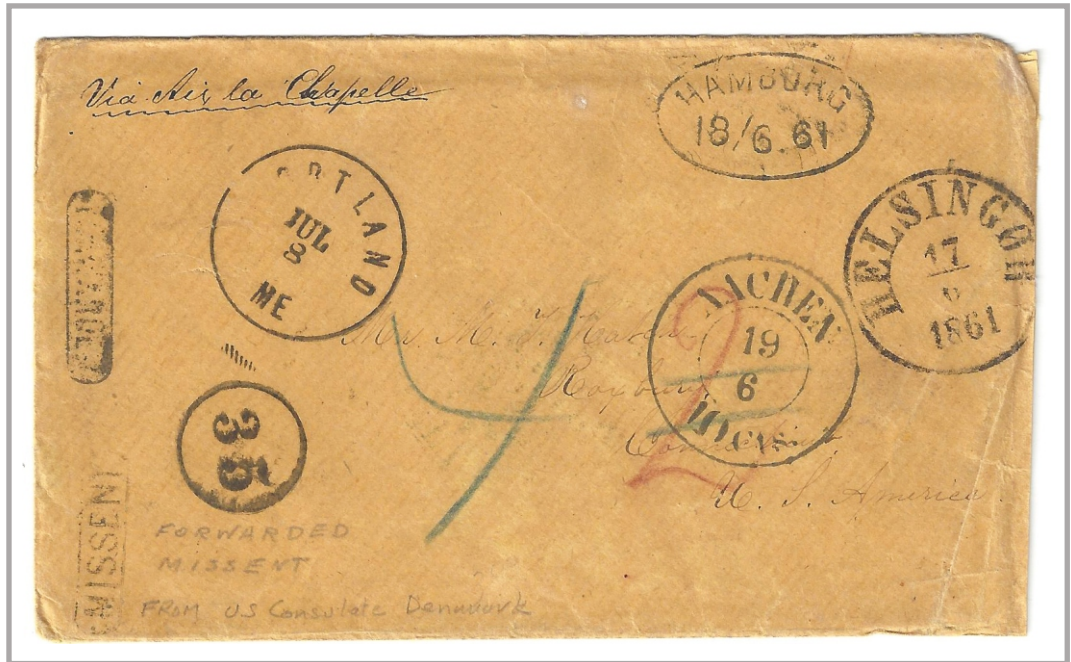
The Allan Line

Prussian Closed Mail

Portland Office Markings



type 10
earliest use



- 17 June 1861 Helsingør (Elsinore), Denmark to Roxbury, CT, unpaid 35¢ rate
- 19 June Aachen 10cts debit exchange office datestamp and equivalent 4 sg in blue crayon
- 20 June Liverpool departure date of the *Nova Scotian* to Quebec (4 July) and by train
- 8 July 1861 Portland exchange office datestamp of arrival and 35¢ due handstamp sent to Roxbury, Mass in error with with "Missent" and "Forwarded" boxed handstamps



type 8
earliest use



- 19 August 1861 Helsingør (Elsinore), Denmark to Roxbury, CT, unpaid 35¢ rate
- 21 August 1861 Aachen 10cts debit exchange datestamp and equivalent 4 sg in blue crayon
- 22 August 1861 Liverpool departure date of the *North American* to Quebec (2 Sep) and by train
- 4 September 1861 Portland exchange office datestamp of arrival and 35¢ due handstamp

The Allan Line

Prussian Closed Mail

Portland Office Markings



type 5
w/30 (due)



18 June 1866 Cologne, Prussia to Pigeon Cove, Mass., unpaid 30¢ rate

19 June 1866 Aachen 5cts debit exchange office datestamp

21 June 1866 Liverpool departure date of the *Damascus* to Quebec (7 July) and by train

8 July 1866 Portland exchange office datestamp of arrival with "30" for 30¢ due



type 9
w/ 30 PAID

5 August 1861 Baden, Baden to Pittsburgh, PA, prepaid 45kr (30¢) rate

8 August 1861 Aachen Paid 5cts exchange office datestamp and 39kr prepaid foreign postage

8 August 1861 Liverpool departure date of the *Bohemian* to Quebec (19 Aug) and by train

22 August 1861 Portland exchange office datestamp showing 30¢ paid at foot

The Allan Line

French Treaty Mail

Portland Office Markings

The France-U.S. Convention of 1857 introduced a prepaid letter rate of 80 centimes per 7.5 grams or 15 cents per ¼ ounce, effective April 1, 1857. Additional articles that became effective on April 1, 1861 added Canada's Allan Line, accounted for as British packets. All credit and debit accounting was marked in cents on each letter with France accounting for U.S. postage and the U.S. accounting for British and French postage. Mail from Boston or the Midwest (via Detroit or Chicago exchange offices) to France could be forwarded via Portland, Maine for transport by the Allan Line.



British Service handstamp applied to inbound French Treaty mail before 1868

Effective January 1, 1868 the U.S. - G.B. Treaty made each county responsible for the dispatch of all mails and eliminated distinction between American and British packets.



type 6
w/PAID 12

- 11 September 1868 Portland to Paris, France, prepaid 30¢ double rate
- 12 September 1868 the *Hibernian* departed Quebec, via Londonderry, to Liverpool (23 Sep)
- 24 September 1868 Calais, Service American exchange office entry datestamp

The "Paid 12" portion of this exchange handstamp is not the same use as the Paid 12 cents credit mark used on single rate covers by French Packets. In this case it the double 6 cents credit to France for mail carried by Allan Line steamers after 1 January 1868.

The Allan Line

French Treaty Mail

Portland Office Markings



3 January 1869 Portland Paid exchange office datestamp, prepaid 15¢ rate to Paris, 6¢ credit
3 January 1869 carried on Allan Line steamer *Hibernian* to Liverpool (Jan 13)
14 January 1869 Calais, France entry datestamp and "PD"



13 November 1869 Portland Paid datestamp, sent to New York to catch French Line packet
14 November 1869 New York Paid 12(¢) exchange datestamp, by Ligne H steamer *St. Laurent*
25 November 1869 Havre, France entry datestamp

The Allan Line

French Treaty Mail

Portland Office Markings

Cover addressed to Louisiana after the state had joined the Confederacy.



type 6
w/PAID 15



22 April 1861 Paris, France, prepaid 80c (15¢) single rate to New Orleans, LA (CSA)
25 April 1861 the North American departed Liverpool, via Londonderry, to Quebec (8 May)
10 May 1861 Portland "Paid 15" (¢) datestamp, first month as exchange office for French mails
22 May 1861 docket of arrival after crossing the lines before service was terminated on 27 May



type 6
w/PAID 30

1 March 1864 USS Kearsarge, Bologne, France, prepaid 1f 60c (30¢) double rate to Beverly, Mass
3 March 1864 the ex Cunard Line Jura departed Liverpool, via Londonderry
15 March 1864 Portland "Paid 30" (¢) exchange datestamp, "6" (decimes) credit to France

Cover endorsed by a sailor 21 February 1864 onboard the USS Kearsarge. The ship was off the coast of France in pursuit of the CSS raider Alabama that was finally sunk on 14 June 1864.

The Allan Line

French Treaty Mail

Portland Office Markings



type 5
w/15



type 5
w/21



type 5
w/27

three different postage due rates:

- 1864 cover returned from France with 15¢ Treaty rate due, steamer *North Britain*
- 1864 use from Lucca, Tuscany (Italy) with 21¢ French Mail reduced rate, steamer *Hibernian*
- 1863 use from Rome with original 27¢ French Mail rate due, steamer *Hibernian*

The Allan Line

French Treaty Mail

Portland Office Markings



type 6
w/PAID

- 11 February 1865 Rome, Papal States, prepaid 32baj (27¢) rate to Cambridge, Mass
- 15 February 1865 Marseilles entry mark after carriage on the French Ligne steamer *Pausilippe*
- 16 February 1865 Allan Line steamer *Moravian* departed Liverpool, via Londonderry
- 2 March 1865 Portland "Paid" exchange datestamp, "3" cents credit to France



- 28 November 1866 Palermo, Italy, via disinfection station and France to ME, prepaid 120c (21¢)
- 7 December 1866 Allan Line steamer *Damascus* departed Liverpool, via Londonderry
- 26 December 1866 Portland "Paid" exchange datestamp (type 6), "3" cents credit to France

This cover was disinfected with two slits at the Sicily disinfection station before being carried by steamer to Leghorn and thence via Livorno (Dec 2), Torino (Dec 3) and through the Mont-Cenis tunnel to French entry point at Lanslebourg Mont-Cenis (Dec 5).

1854

MONTREAL OCEAN STEAM SHIP COMPANY

Beginnings of the Portland Terminal



PAID



August 26, 1854. Letter prepaid 10¢ at the U.S. - Canada Cross Border rate effective April 6, 1851.

Arrived Montreal same day via Grand Trunk Railway.



Early letter proposing Portland as a terminus for the Allan Liners on letterhead of John Rhynas & Co.

Portland 25th August 1854.

Messrs. Edmonstone Allan & Co.
Montreal.

Gentlemen: We have now got an excellent wharf completed, with storehouse & a switch from the Grand Trunk & Boston Rail Roads running down to the end of the wharf. We contemplate the erection of a shed for the storage of flour and goods. If our request is not premature we would be obliged by your informing us whether it is likely you will require the use of our premises for your steamers during the coming winter. In the event of their coming to Boston We would be happy to act as your agents in Portland to give information respecting the steamers, procure business & sell passages. The merchants of this place who have formerly bought their supplies of imported goods from Boston & New York importers are now getting alive to the necessity of going across the Water.

Mr. Bellhouse is here at present. The writer attended a meeting last evening of a Committee of the City Council to whom the Canadian line had applied for a grant towards the support of their steamers, provided they established a Yearly Communication - namely, (Continued).

1858

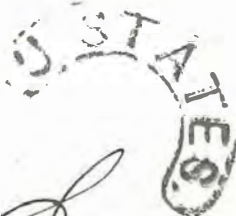
MONTREAL OCEAN STEAM SHIP COMPANY

Edmonstone Allan & Co., Portland and Montreal Agents

The Hugh Allan holograph letter Negotiating for a U.S. Mail Contract

Feb. 27, 1858. A letter written at Portland by Hugh Allan, founder of the Montreal Ocean Steam Ship Co., in which he describes the S.S. Indian as being loaded and on the stream. Indian sailed Feb. 27 from Portland on a winter trip and arrived at Liverpool March 12. Anglo-Saxon had arrived safely (Feb. 12) and did not enter the field of ice, hence suffered no damage. A rivet blew out of her Donkey engine boiler, so oxen were used to winch cargo ashore.

Allan also notes he has scheduled a meeting for the evening of Feb. 27 with important businessmen at Portland to discuss U.S. mail contracts for the Allan Line.



*Mr Edmonstone Allan & Co
Montreal
Canada*



Feb. 27, 1858. Unpaid letter at Portland at the 10¢ Cross Border rate shown as "10" at the base of the Portland datestamp, rate effective April 6, 1851 to July 1, 1859. U STATES. indicates country of origin. Letter was subject to collect in the Canadian equivalent of 6 pence currency, shown by the manuscript "6".



*I am Dear Sir
yours truly
Hugh Allan*

March 1. Montreal arrival backstamp.

1858

THE ALLAN LINE

Edmonstone Allan & Co.

The Hugh Allan holograph letter

Portland & Montreal

Allan negotiates for the U. S. Mail Contract

Portland, Maine 27 February 1858

Messrs. Edmonstone Allan & Co., Montreal

Dear Sirs.

I arrived here yesterday soon after 2 o'clock, found the Indian loaded and on the stream having taken all the cargo sent down for her and 563 Barrels of Young, Law & Co.'s besides. She has therefore a good cargo. She is drawing 19 feet aft and 18.5 forward, good trim and looks well. The three rolls of Rubber will come down with the passengers today and will go on board if they come.

The Anglo Saxon did not enter the field of ice and consequently suffered no damage. She looks well, an accident to the Donkey boiler (a rivet blew out) stopped the discharge a little, but we are going on with oxen. I have stopped the removal of coals from the after hold till we see whether or not you are going to get cargo for her. She has about 300 tons there.

For the Indian 4 steerage passengers have been here and five have come from Boston so that we may have about 30 in all.

I have sent 30 copies of the Governor's speech home by the Indian and 36 copies of the statistics of the Town of Montreal.

I have managed for a meeting this evening with

the collector of Customs)	
District attorney)	great politicians
one of the Judges)	
President Board of Trade)	

and four of the principal merchants, on the subject of mail contracts, the result of which I will inform you when I go up, meanwhile parties here are very sanguine about it.

I am Dear Sirs Yours truly Hugh Allan.

*I am Dear Sirs
yours truly
Hugh Allan*

Plan proposed for improving
the American Postal and Passage
Communication.

At present, the Mails leave London for North America every Friday night, and are embarked next day at Liverpool, from 9 A.M. to 3 P.M., according to Tide.

These Mails reach New York "in most cases" on the following Wednesday Week being the 12th day from London.

The Mails from North America, leave New York on Wednesdays, usually reaching Liverpool some time on the Sunday Week following, and are delivered in London on Monday Morning, being the twelfth day.

The reply to a letter posted in London on Friday night, cannot be counted on until the following Monday four weeks, though in some rare cases, with the "Persia" it may arrive a week sooner, allowing a day or part of a day for writing in New York.

The arrival therefore between the posting of a letter in London and the receipt of a reply may be considered almost universally 30 days, including 7 days for writing in America.

Plan proposed for improving the American Postal and Passage

- Communication. -

At present, the Mails leave London for North America every Friday night, and are embarked next day at Liverpool, from 9 A.M. to 3 P.M., according to Tide.

These Mails reach New York "in most cases" on the following Wednesday Week being the 12th day from London.

The Mails from North America leave New York on Wednesdays, usually reaching Liverpool some time on the Sunday Week following, and are delivered in London on Monday Morning, being the twelfth day.

The reply to a letter posted in London on Friday night cannot be counted on until the following Monday four weeks, though in some rare cases with the "Persia" it may arrive a week sooner allowing a day or part of a day for writing in New York.

The arrival therefore between the posting of a letter in London and the receipt of a reply may be considered almost universally 30 days including 7 days for writing in America.

The interval between the posting of a letter in New York and the receipt of a reply is 27 days including 5 days for writing in London.

Proposed arrangement

Steam Ships of about 5000 Tons Builders measurement, and with Engines of sufficient power to attain the average speed of 15 knots per hour, to be provided.

Let the departure be from the most suitable port on the West Coast of Ireland.

Let Portland be the Port in North America the distance from Galway being 2450 miles.

This distance would be accomplished (at 15 knots per hour) in 6 days and 20 hours.

Let the Mails leave London as at present, on Friday night, they would reach Dublin next morning at 8 A.M. when the improved Irish Postal Service is in operation (London time) and should be on board the Packet at Galway or Foynes in 4 hours 40 minutes.

The Packet to leave Port at 12.40 P.M. about the present time (on the average) when the Mail Packets leave Liverpool.

The Packet should reach Portland on Saturday at 4 A.M. Portland time, and the Mails could be delivered in the evening of same day (8th from London) in New York by Railway a distance of 340 miles.

Also in Quebec 316 miles.

Also in Montreal 292 miles.

Let the Mails leave New York, Quebec and Montreal, suppose on Tuesday night for Portland.

The Packets to sail on Wednesdays at 1 P.M. Portland time (5.40 P.M. London time) due at Galway or Foynes on the following Wednesday at 1.40 P.M. London time thence to Dublin for Mail Packet leaving Kingstown at 7.30 P.M. and to be delivered next morning in London.

The reply to a letter posted in London on Friday night would be received on the

morning of the following Thursday fortnight so that the interval between posting a letter in London and the receipt of the reply would be 19 days including 4 days in America for writing.

And the interval between the posting of a letter in New York and the receipt of the reply would be 17 days including 2 days in London for writing.

On the service from London the transport by Railway in England would be at night and in America by day, consequently 8 days are required for the entire journey from London to New York etc.

But on the return, the transit by Railway in America as well as in England would be at night, therefore the entire journey would require practically but 7 days.

Plan proposed for improving
the American Postal and Passage
— Communication. —

At present, the Mails leave London for North America every Friday night, and are embarked next day at Liverpool, from 9 A.M. to 3 P.M., according to Tide.

These Mails reach New York "in most cases" on the following Wednesday Week being the 12th day from London.

The Mails from North America, leave New York on Wednesdays, usually reaching Liverpool some time on the Sunday Week following, and are delivered in London on Monday Morning, being the twelfth day.

The reply to a letter posted in London on Friday night, cannot be counted on until the following Monday four weeks, though in some rare cases, with the "Persia" it may arrive a week sooner, allowing a day or part of a day for writing in New York.

The arrival therefore between the posting of a letter in London and the receipt of a reply may be considered almost universally 30 days, including 7 days for writing in America.

The interval between the posting of a letter in New York and the receipt of a reply is 27 days including 5 days for writing in London.

Proposed arrangement.

Steam Ships of about 5000 Tons Builders