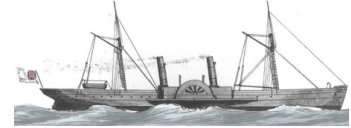


Civil War Blockade of the Southern Coasts

Mail Routes through the Federal Blockade, 1861-65



The United States (USA) proclaimed the blockade of the Confederate States of America (CSA) on April 19, 1861. Stretching from Virginia to Texas, the blockaded area encompassed over 3,500 miles of coastline and nearly 200 harbors and river openings, so the USA concentrated on the thirteen CSA deep-water ports that could serve as effective transit points for supplies and mail. By early 1862, six of these ports had been captured before they could commence blockade running. By mid-1862, New Orleans was also captured and Savannah was effectively closed. The remaining five ports were active in blockade running until they were captured late in the war, although Federal naval actions temporarily stopped blockade running at Charleston and Galveston. The blockade ended with the fall of Galveston on June 2, 1865.

There were eleven different routes between the seven CSA ports active in blockade running (Wilmington, Charleston, Savannah, Mobile, New Orleans, Galveston and Victoria) and the five foreign ports (Halifax, Bermuda, Nassau, Havana and Matamoros) that acted as the staging points for supplies and mail. This exhibit shows incoming and outgoing blockade run mail carried on nine of those blockade run routes. Only incoming mail is shown for the two Matamoros routes, since no outgoing mail is known.



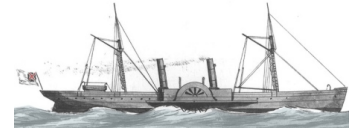
Endorsed to *Wild Rover* by Nassau forwarder - arrived in Wilmington on January 5, 1865

Fewer than 400 of the letters carried by blockade runners are known today. Other than at New Orleans and Mobile, the blockade mail service was slow to develop since less hazardous through-the-lines mail routes were available until early 1862. Nearly all of the surviving letters were carried in the May 1862 to March 1865 period.

An incoming letter to the CSA was typically sent inside of another envelope to one of the foreign staging ports for transfer to a blockade runner, and then posted in the CSA arrival port, where inland postage and a two cents ship fee were assessed. No West Indies postal markings appear on incoming mail. Outgoing letters were typically forwarded under cover to a blockade runner in a Confederate port, and did not enter the mails until they reached the blockade runner's destination port. With rare exceptions, CSA postal markings do not appear on outgoing mail.

Civil War Gulf Coast Blockade

Havana-Mobile - October 1861 to August 1864



The blockade of Mobile, Alabama was initiated on May 26, 1861 by the USS *Powhatan*. The few known covers carried through Mobile were used between October 1861 and May 1864. Mobile Bay was captured by Federal naval forces on August 5, 1864.



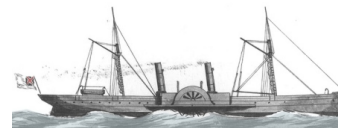
Envelope carried by blockade runner *Alabama* from Havana on August 10, 1863
Arrived in Mobile on August 15 - rated for 12¢ due (10¢ inland plus 2¢ ship fee)
Forwarded from Charleston on August 21 with additional 10¢ CSA postage due



Dated April 30, 1864 from the Confederacy - sent under cover to blockade runner at Mobile
Denbigh left on May 7 and arrived on May 10 in Havana - active on Gulf Coast 12/63-5/65
Spofford & Tileston steamship *Eagle* from Havana to NY on May 25 - 10¢ US postage due

Civil War Gulf Coast Blockade

Havana-New Orleans - May 1861 to April 1862



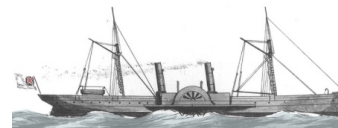
The blockade of New Orleans was initiated on May 26, 1861 by the USS *Brooklyn*. Blockade runners connected with Havana via three Mississippi River passes, or via Atchafalaya Bay and Brashear. New Orleans fell to the Federals on April 26, 1862.



Posted June 8, 1861 in St Vincent - franked 1 shilling 3d postage to Havana, Cuba
RMSP steamers *Teviot* and *Clyde* to Havana via St Thomas - 4d credit to St Thomas
Blockade runner *West Indian* to New Orleans on September 5 - 12¢ CSA postage due

Civil War Gulf Coast Blockade

Havana-New Orleans - May 1861 to April 1862



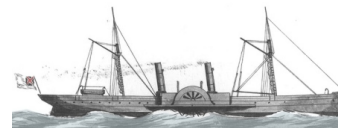
Dated Havana, Cuba 8th Feb 1862 - endorsed to schooner *Break O' Day*
Arrived March 15 in New Orleans - marked SHIP and rated 10¢ due (no ship fee)



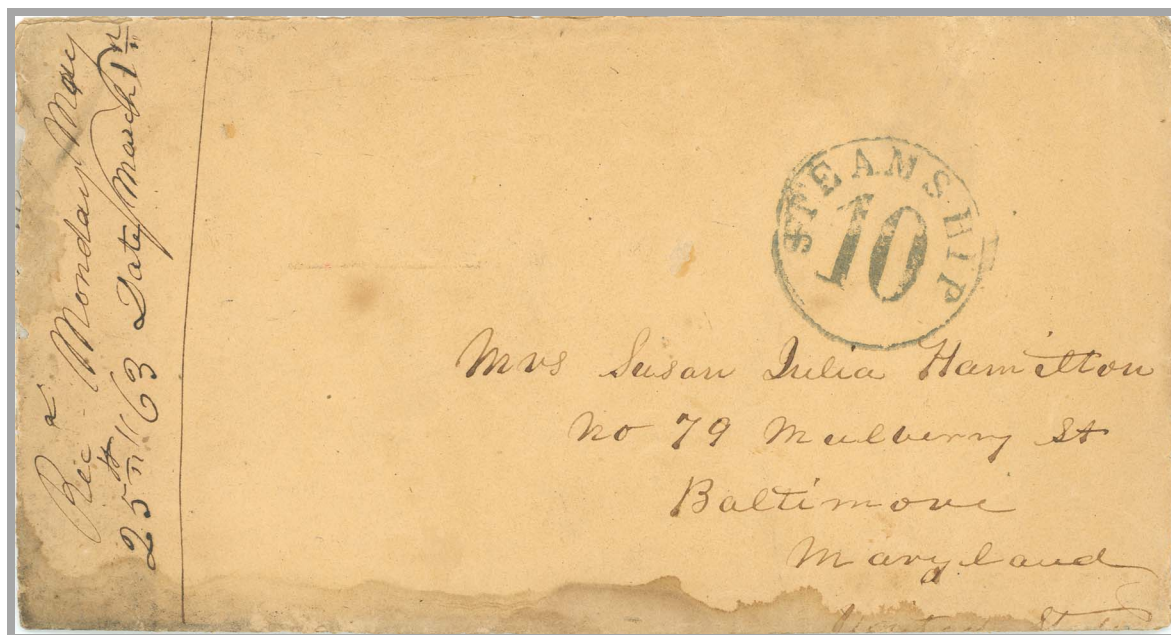
Dated February 1862 in New Orleans - sent under cover to New York
Blockade runner *Florida* left February 19 and arrived February 23 in Havana
Spofford & Tileston steamship *Columbia* from Havana to New York on March 3
Postmarked unpaid on March 4 in New York - Cunard steamer *Niagara* to France

Civil War Gulf Coast Blockade

Havana-Galveston - February 1863 to May 1865



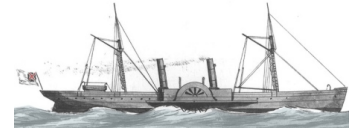
Letter forwarded by Vignier Robertson & Co. from Havana for 25¢ express fee
Blockade runner *Alice* arrived in Galveston on April 8, 1864 - active 4/62-9/64
Forwarded to Danville via Houston on April 10 with 10¢ CSA postage prepaid



Dateline Richmond March 1, 1863 - hand-carried to Galveston (detailed in letter)
Blockade runner *Alice* left Galveston on April 30 and arrived in Havana on May 4
Havana Line steamer *Roanoke* arrived NY on May 24 - 10¢ steamship postage due

Civil War Atlantic Coast Blockade

Nassau-Wilmington - June 1862 to January 1865



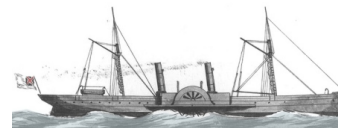
The blockade of Wilmington, North Carolina was initiated on July 14, 1861 by the USS *Daylight*. Cape Fear formed two inlets, so blockade runners could choose the most favorable route. Wilmington's port defenses fell on January 15, 1865. Surviving letters were used between June 1862 and January 1865.



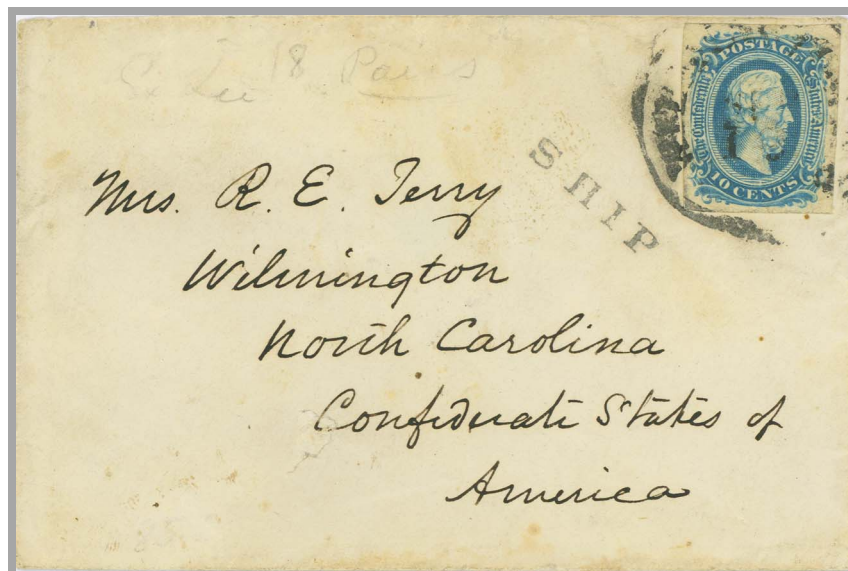
Posted September 25, 1863 in Liverpool - sent via Nassau forwarder Sawyer & Menendez
Prepaid 1 shilling postage to Nassau - 1d credit to Nassau - Carried by Cunard Line via NY
Fannie left Nassau on October 19 and arrived in Wilmington on October 23 - 12¢ due
Only known inbound blockade cover showing British packet postage prepaid

Civil War Atlantic Coast Blockade

Nassau-Wilmington - June 1862 to January 1865



Blockade run mail was typically sent unpaid, but some senders or forwarders prepaid the postage in cash or with postage stamps.



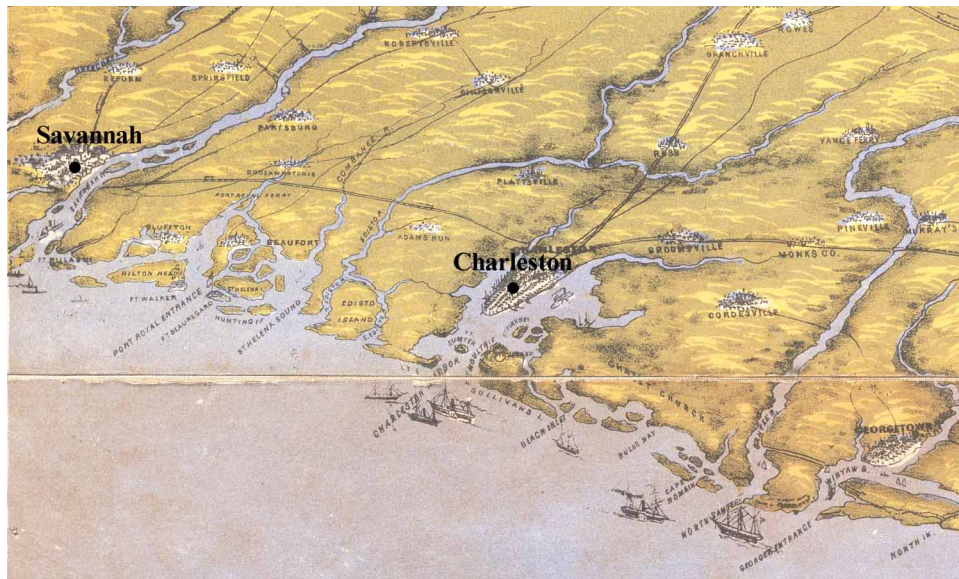
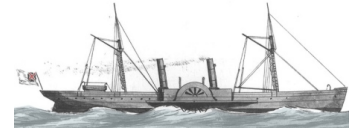
Gen. Beauregard arrived September 19, 1863 - 10¢ stamp overpaid 6¢ in-port ship fee
Examined at Wilmington per manuscript "Ex Lee" – postmarked and marked SHIP



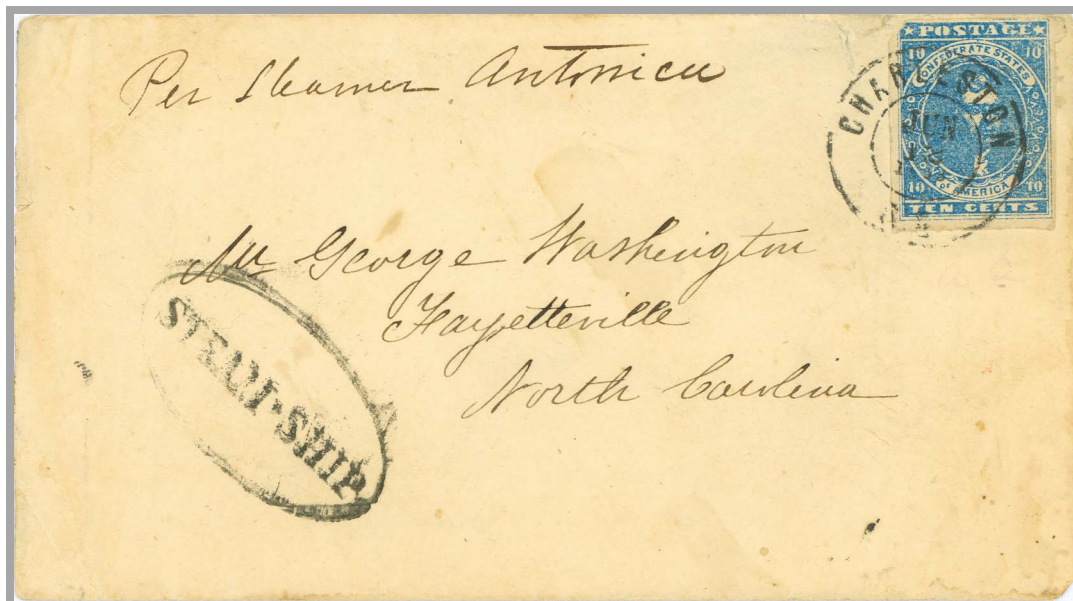
Datelined Charleston, SC May 22, 1863 – *Banshee (I)* arrived in Nassau on June 8
Forwarder prepaid 1/4 in cash for the postage to France - 1p retained by Nassau
"Too Late" for the June sailing to New York - Cunarder *Corsica* left Nassau on July 5

Civil War Atlantic Coast Blockade

Nassau-Charleston - May 1862 to February 1865



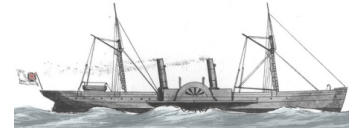
The blockade of Charleston, South Carolina was initiated on May 10, 1861 by the USS *Niagara*. Charleston was closed by Federal actions from September 1863 to March 1864, and fell to Sherman's Federal army on February 17, 1865. Known letters were used between May 1862 and February 1865.



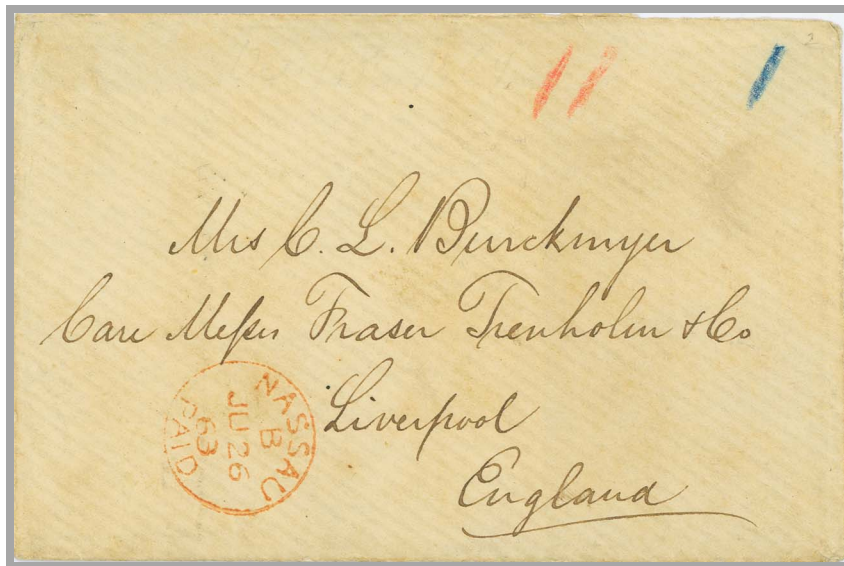
Docketed (England) April 24, 1863 - 10¢ Patterson stamp prepaid CSA postage
Carried by Cunard Line via New York to Nassau on May 26 - endorsed to *Antonica*
Antonica left on June 7 for Charleston on June 11 - marked oval STEAM-SHIP
Accepted as paid in Charleston on June 12 - no 2¢ ship fee assessed

Civil War Atlantic Coast Blockade

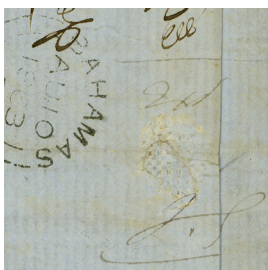
Nassau-Charleston - May 1862 to February 1865



The August 11, 1863 CSA Special Order No. 156 required the examination of all blockade run letters, although some letters were examined prior to that. Most were not marked as examined.



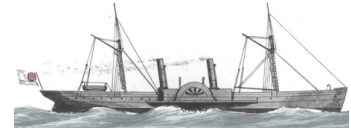
Dated June 20, 1863 - **censored there by 1st Military District of S.C.**
Antonica arrived in Nassau on June 26 - prepaid one shilling to England



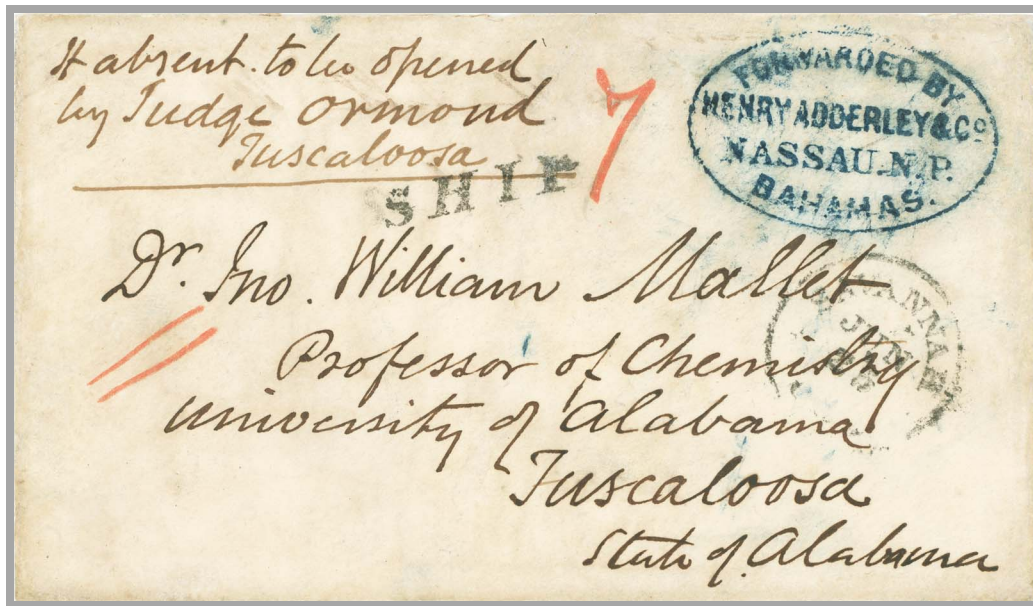
Dated Petersburg, VA July 30, 1863 - **censored at Charleston by "J.S."**
Antonica left August 4 for Nassau on August 9 - Cunard Line to England on September 11
Rated 2/2 due (1 shilling packet plus 1 shilling unpaid penalty plus 2 pence inland to Scotland)

Civil War Atlantic Coast Blockade

Nassau-Savannah - June to July 1862



The blockade of Savannah, Georgia was initiated on May 28, 1861 by the USS *Union*. Access to Savannah was limited after Union forces captured Fort Pulaski at the head of the harbor on April 11, 1862. Known letters were used in June-July 1862.



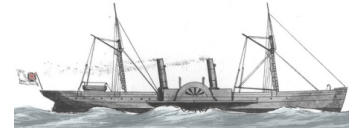
Dateline London May 7, 1862 - sent under cover to Nassau forwarder Adderley & Co. Blockade runner *Kate* left June 21 and arrived in Savannah on June 25 - active 1-11/62
7¢ CSA postage due - only known inbound blockade run letter via Savannah



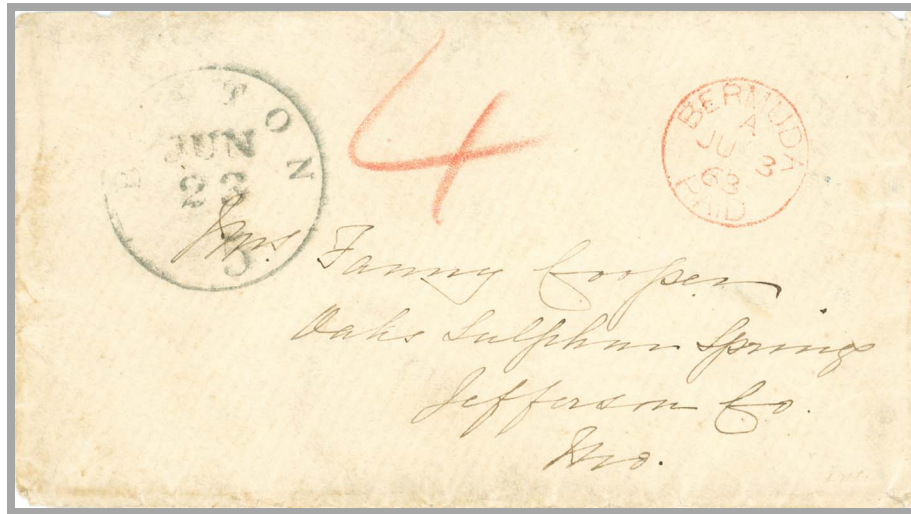
Kate left Savannah July 22, 1862 - arrived July 26 in Nassau - sent to forwarder Saunders & Son
Paid 4d postage on July 26 - Cunard steamer to N.Y. on August 2 - 5¢ due to San Francisco

Civil War Atlantic Coast Blockade

Bermuda-Wilmington – Dec. 1862 to January 1865



Starting in December 1862, Bermuda became continuously active in blockade running. Most ships ran between Wilmington and St George's until the 1864 yellow fever epidemic, when Hamilton and Halifax, Nova Scotia became alternate ports.



Datelined Wilmington, NC on May 23, 1863 - CSS *Cornubia* to St George's on May 29
Prepaid 4d ship postage on June 3 - Cunard steamer *Merlin* to Halifax on June 19
Private ship to Boston on June 23 - 5¢ postage (3¢ inland plus 2¢ ship) due to Missouri
Return mail instructions via Halifax to agent A.H. Williams at St George's, Bermuda



Endorsed to the steamship blockade runner *Flora* by a CSA agent in Bermuda
Flora left St George's on October 3, 1863 and arrived in Wilmington on October 8
Prepaid with 10¢ 'Frameline' stamp in Bermuda - additional 2¢ assessed for the ship fee

A map of the Eastern United States and the Caribbean region, showing distances between major cities. The cities and their distances are as follows:

- Brownsville to Galveston: 725 miles
- Galveston to New Orleans: 590 miles
- New Orleans to Mobile: 590 miles
- Mobile to Savannah: 515 miles
- Savannah to Charleston: 570 miles
- Charleston to Wilmington: 772 miles
- Wilmington to Bermuda: 674 miles
- Bermuda to Nassau, Bahamas: 715 miles
- Nassau, Bahamas to Havana: 715 miles
- Havana to Brownsville: 725 miles

4 + 6 = 10

BERMUDA
OCT 17
1862

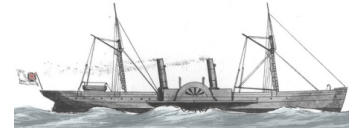
BERMUDA
SINCE 1862

Messrs Fraser & Neave & Co.
for
Mr C. H. P. P. P.
Liverpool
Eng

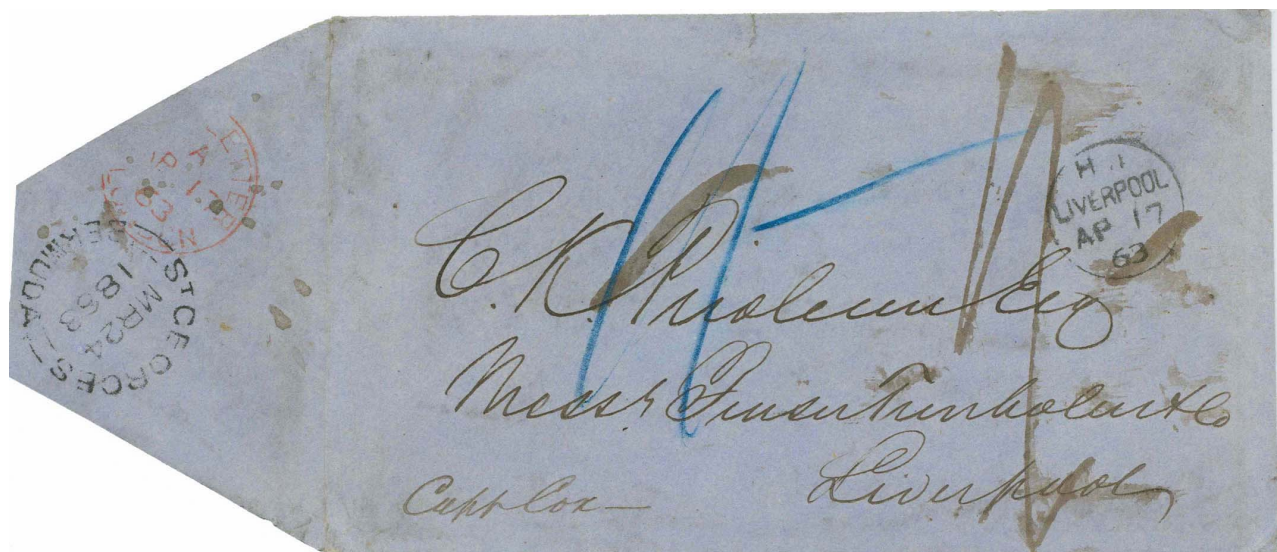
Datelined Charleston October 3, 1862 - *Herald* arrived in Bermuda on October 16
Marked BERMUDA SHIP LETTER and rated for 4d ship fee plus 6d packet postage due
Cunard and RMSP steamships via St Thomas to Southampton on November 13

Civil War Atlantic Coast Blockade

Bermuda-Charleston – July 1862 to April 1863



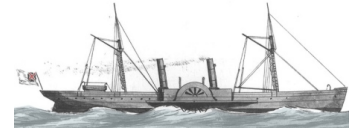
Endorsed "Per SS Princess Royal" by CSA agent in St George's - departed January 23, 1863
Princess Royal ran aground and was captured entering Charleston on January 29 - mail saved
Double-weight 22¢ postage due (20¢ plus 2¢ ship fee) to Richmond, Virginia



Dated lined Charleston March 17, 1863 - endorsed to 'Capt Cox' (etter) of the *General Beauregard*
General Beauregard left Charleston on March 20 and arrived at St George's on March 24
Carried by HMS *Orlando* from Bermuda on March 1 to Portsmouth, England on April 16
From George Trenholm of Fraser, Trenholm & Co. - owners of the *General Beauregard*

Civil War Atlantic Coast Blockade

Halifax-Wilmington - August-December 1864



Because of yellow fever in Bermuda, much of the blockade running activity was shifted from Bermuda to Halifax, Nova Scotia in the August-December 1864 period. Only 25 trips between Wilmington and Halifax are recorded.



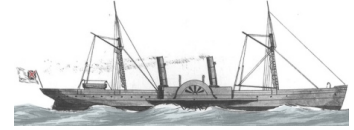
Endorsed "S.S. Old Dominion" and put with official dispatches by CSA agent in Halifax *Old Dominion* left Nov. 16 and arrived Nov. 22 - franked 10¢ and mailed by Navy Agent



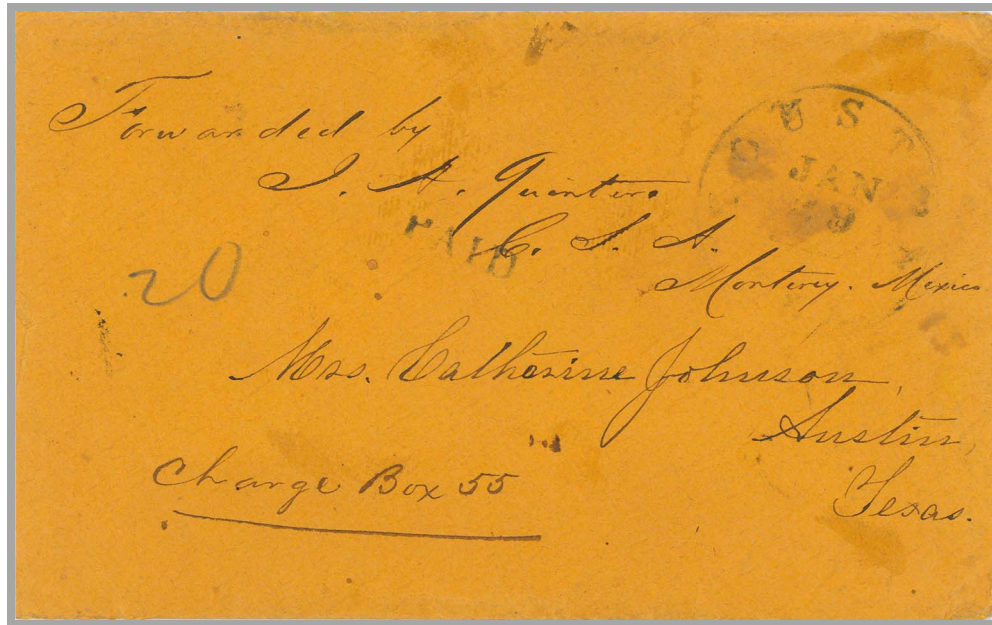
Carried by *Helen* from Wilmington on September 15, 1864 to Halifax on September 20
Censored (reverse) at Wilmington by "W Strong aag" - posted unpaid at Halifax September 20
1d Halifax debit to London - 50c debit to France - 33 kreutzer due in Heidelberg, Germany

Civil War Gulf Coast Blockade

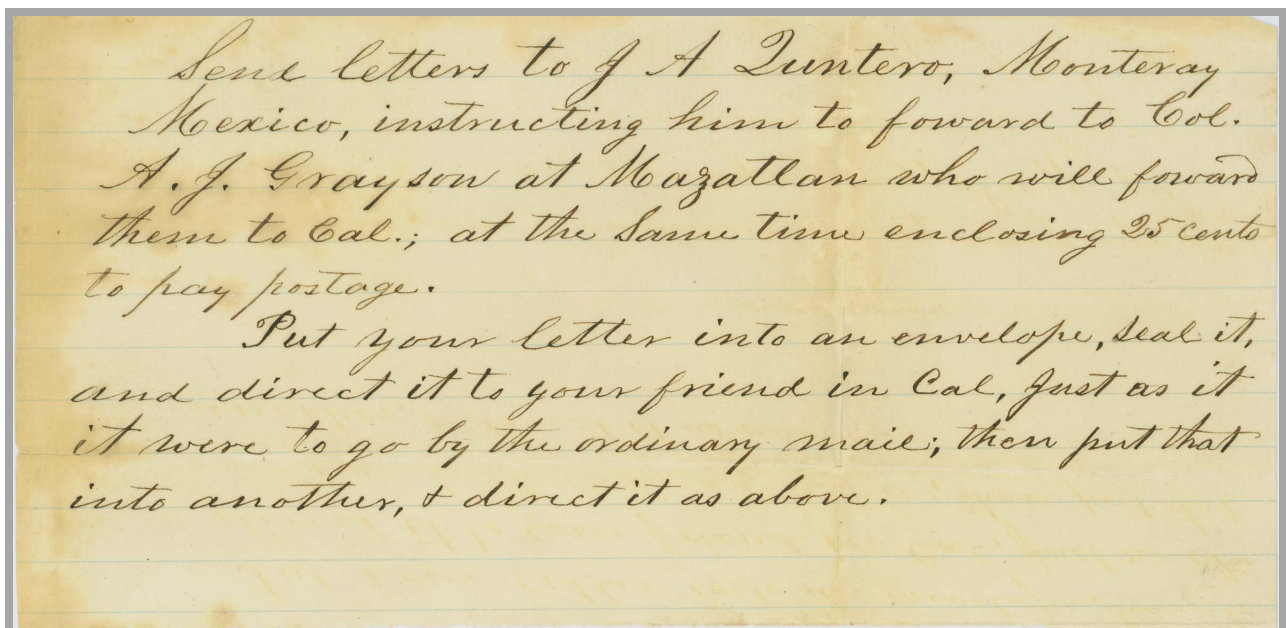
Matamoros-Galveston - November 1863 to July 1864



Matamoros, Mexico was a conduit for trans-Rio Grande mail via Brownsville, Texas, except when Brownsville was occupied from November 6, 1863 to July 19, 1864. During that period, mail to the CSA was sent by coastal blockade runner.



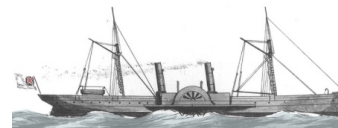
Datelined Santa Clara, California Sept. 27, 1863 - forwarded via Mazatlan and Monterrey
Then forwarded by CSA agent Jose Quintero to Matamoros - enclosed broadside below
Blockade runner from Matamoros to Galveston - prepaid 20¢ in Houston on January 29



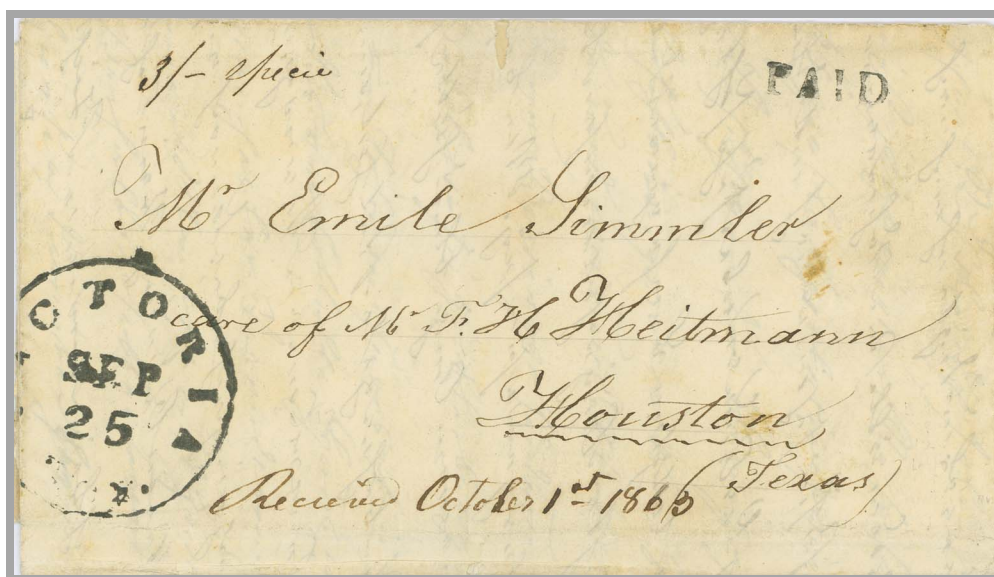
Enclosed Quintero broadside giving return mail instructions to California

Civil War Gulf Coast Blockade

Matamoros-Victoria - February 1862 to Dec. 1863



On February 1, 1862 the USS *Portsmouth* initiated the blockade of the west Texas coast. Coastal blockade runners ran between Matamoros, Mexico and Matagorda Bay, Texas. Mail was processed at nearby Victoria. Matagorda Bay was occupied by Federal forces on December 26, 1863.



Dateline Mulhouse (France) July 2, 1863 - RMSP steamers to Tampico on August 29
Forwarded by A.M. Erhard in Matamoros (mark on reverse) - charged "3/- specie"
Blockade runner to Matagorda Bay - posted prepaid in Victoria on September 25
Received at Houston on October 1 - recipient was French consul at Houston