



# Pre-adhesive mail



By Gabriel Foltz



HOW  
THE

MADE

# POST OFFICE AMERICA





THE US  
POST OFFICE  
AN *EXPRESS* HISTORY

# Pre-adhesive mail: Introduction

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- Most Americans did not exchange mail at this time
  - Was seen as an event
- Delivered along networks of personal acquaintance
- In 1799: delivery to Canandaigua from New York City took twenty days
- Majority of stampless mail sent “collect”
  - Recipient paid the postage
- Recipient and sender could also share the cost

# Introduction Cont.

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- 1790-1845: Incremental pricing system
  - Seen as confusing
  - Assessed on distance and number of sheets
- Starting in 1845: Charged on the basis of weight
  - 5 cents per half ounce
  - 10 cents per half ounce for distance greater than 300 miles
- Postal act of 1851: Eliminated distance as determinant of cost



And for a double letter there shall be charged double the rate above specified; and for a treble letter, treble those rates; and for a quadruple letter, quadruple those rates; and every letter or parcel not exceeding half an ounce in weight shall be deemed a single letter; and every additional weight of half an ounce, or additional weight of less than half an ounce, shall be charged with an additional single postage; and upon all letters passing through or in the mail of the United States, excepting such as

All postage but  
foreign to be pre-  
paid.

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THIRTY-THIRD CONGRESS. SESS. II. CH. 174. 1855.

are to or from a foreign country, the postages as above specified shall be prepaid, except upon letters and packages addressed to officers of the government on official business, which shall be so marked on the envelope.

Stamps may  
be put on prepaid  
letters.

And from and after the first day of January, eighteen hundred and fifty-six, the Postmaster-General may require postmasters to place postage stamps upon all prepaid letters upon which such stamps may not have

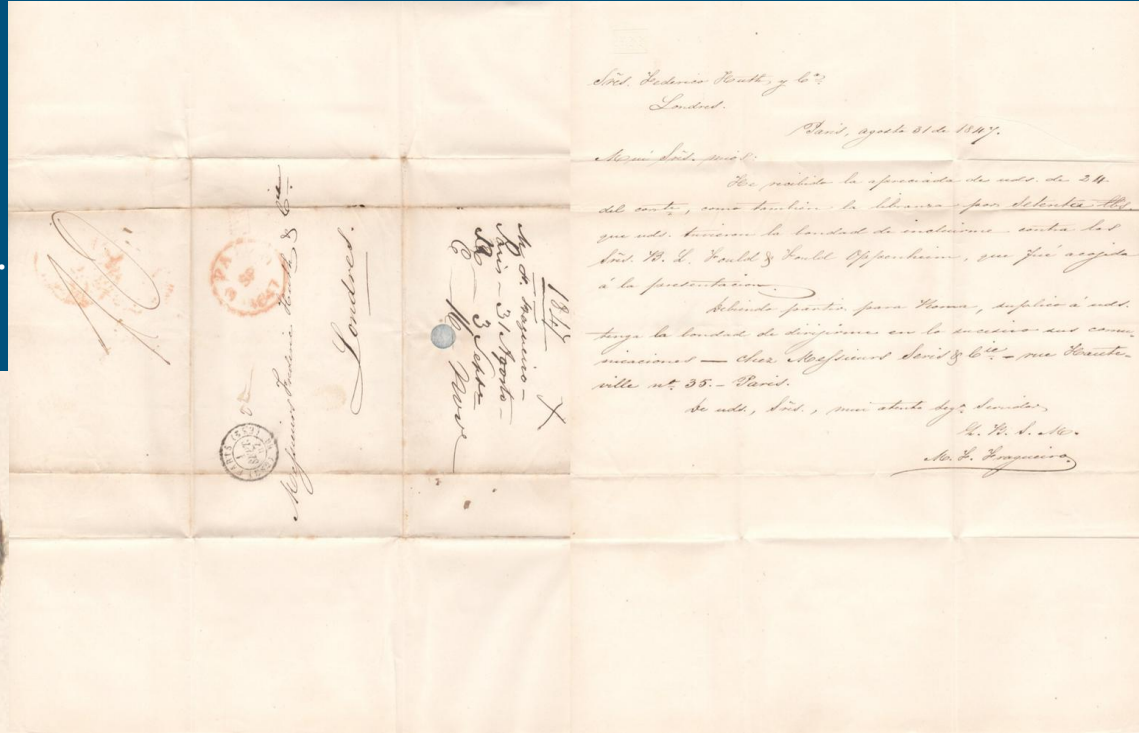
Drop-letters.

been placed by the writers.

# Introduction Cont.

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- Act of March 3, 1855
  - Made paying Pre-postage mandatory
  - Led to a significant increase in stamp usage
    - Stamp use doubled over next two years
- 1856: Mailers required to prepay postage only using postage stamps





Paris le 5 Janvier 1760.

Monsieur J. Hata N<sup>o</sup>.

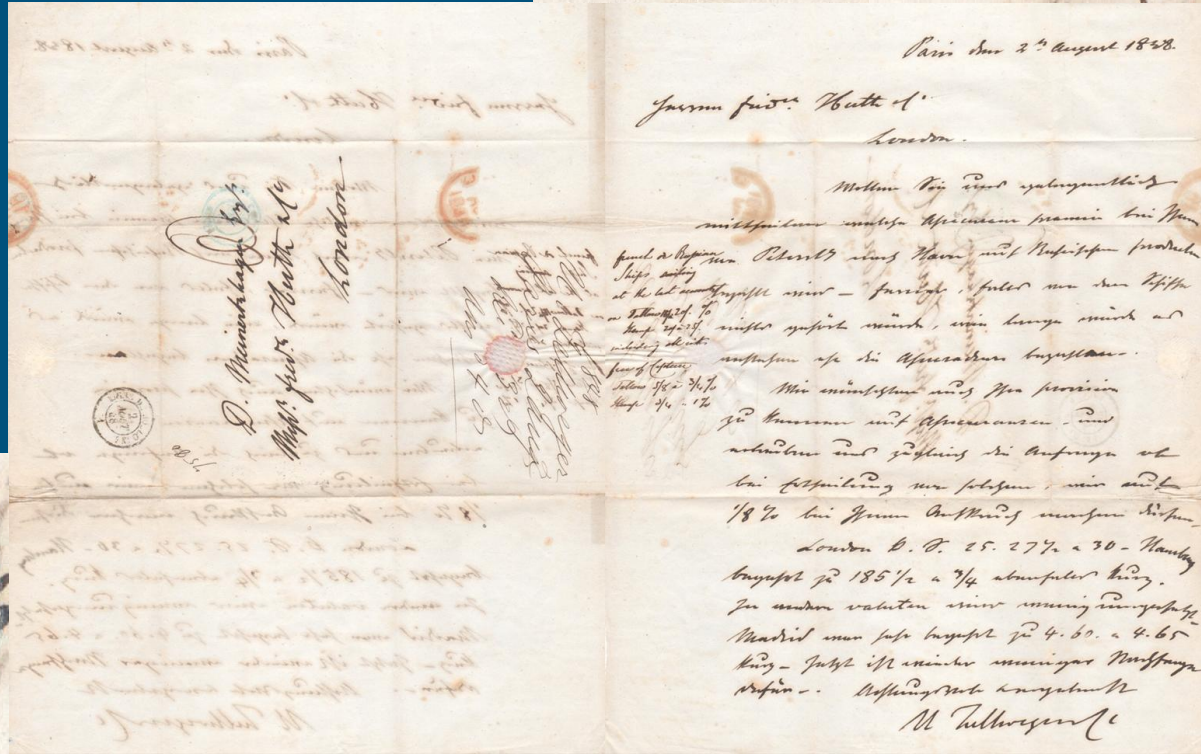
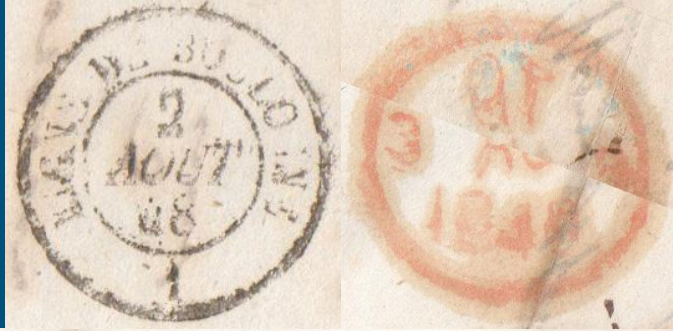
à Londres.

Pour vous renvoyer Messieurs, votre lettre du 17<sup>me</sup> et  
vous vous remettre entre l'extant de votre compte  
ouvant aussi au 15<sup>me</sup> par  
514.00. en outre faire suite l'ordie à nouveau.  
Veuillez nous en dire la bonne.  
Nous espérons que vous trouverez bientôt convenance à  
nous acheter quelques valeurs, nous vous signons nos  
vœux pour vous guider et bien à vos vœux nous  
vous saluons de cœur. *Respectueux*

Londres 9 20  
Frankfurt 1801/6  
Amsterdam 209  
Frankfurt 207 1/6  
Berlin & Hamb. 209  
Frankfurt 1924  
Paris 4 47  
Cass. 1.10

# Paris to London August 2, 1848

The recipient was Daniel Meinertzhagen who managed Frederick Huth & Co. His son is the controversial Colonel Richard Meinertzhagen who played a role in the Haversack Ruse in WWI. Green Paris postmark and black backstamp August 2. Red London receiving stamp.





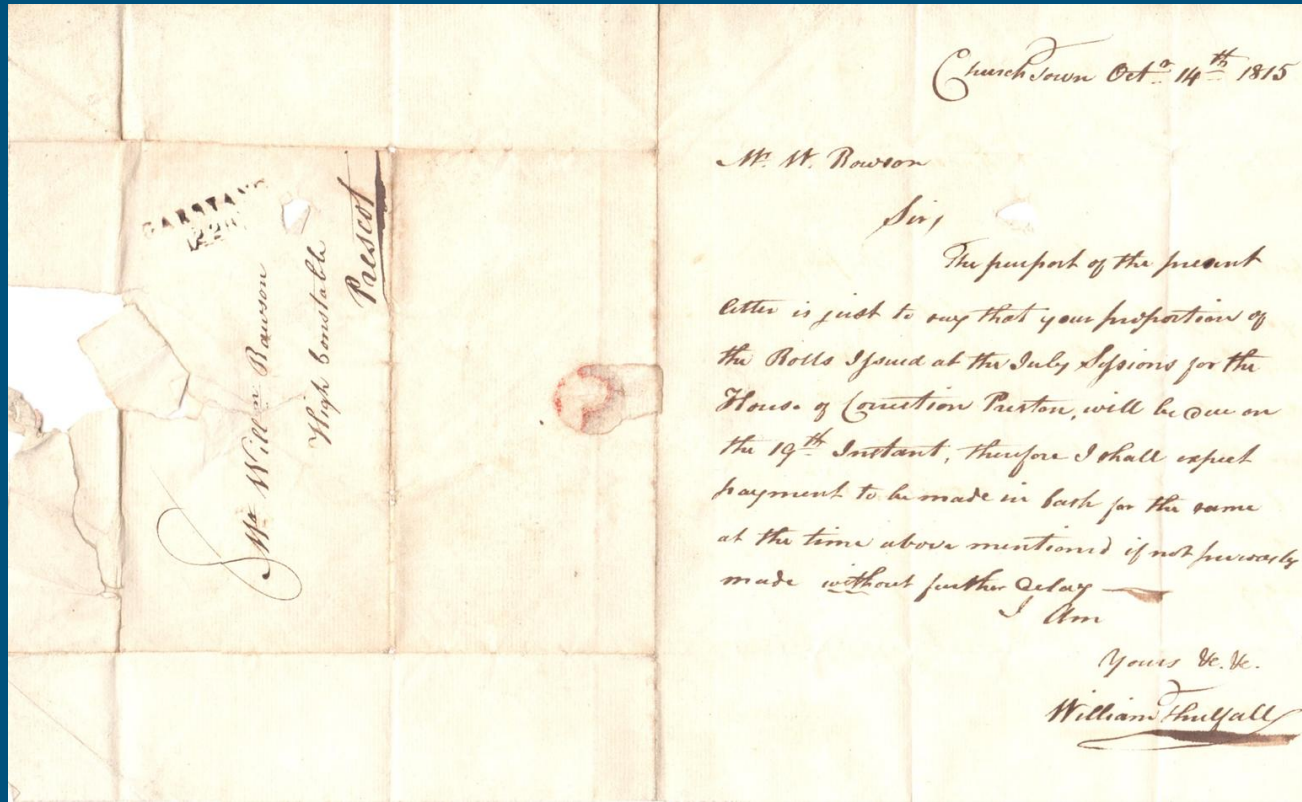
# Malton to Aislaby September 2, 1798

The Hayes cafe where this cover is addressed to, is run by the Hayes family, who are the subject of a book and other literature. Below is a Malton straightline mark. Straightline marks are hand stamped and indicate origin town.



# Garstang to Prescot October, 14 1815

Garstang 228 mileage mark from London.  
Provincial postal marks issued with the mileage from London so the receiving clerk was able to check the charge.

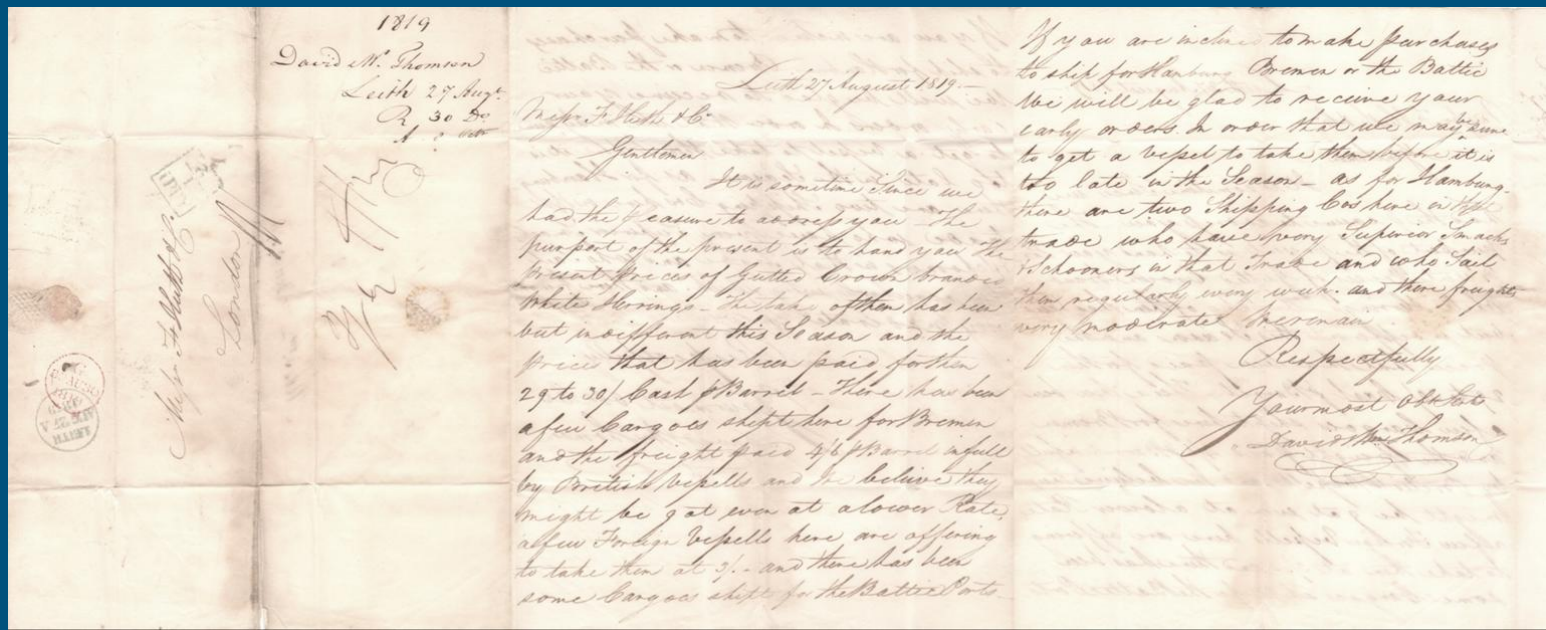


# Leith Scotland to London England

## August 27, 1819

Leith Scotland became a separate burgh of Edinburgh in 1833 but Leith was in possession of a regular date-stamp prior to this. The marks were impressed with a distinct blueish ink.

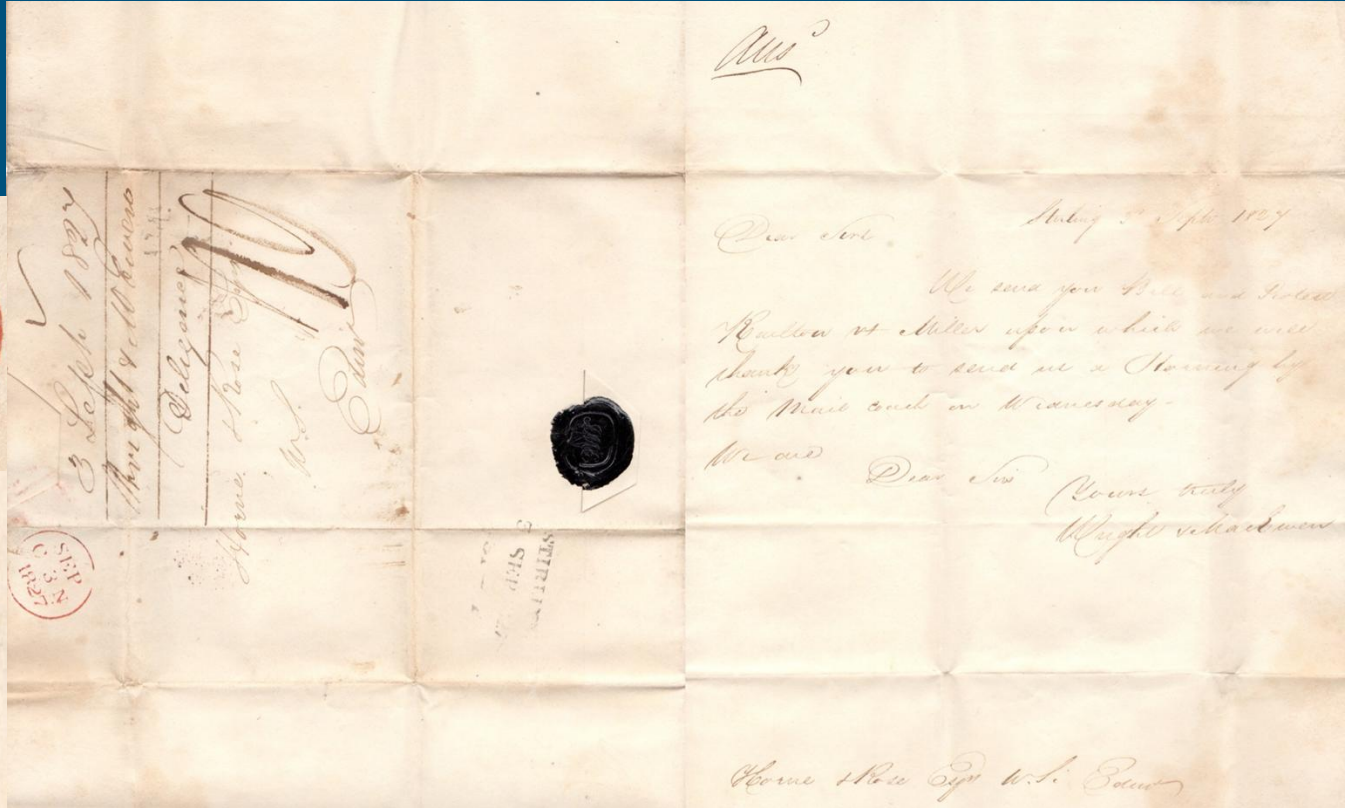
Add! Halfpenny surcharge to mail going over toll roads in Scotland.





# Stirling Scotland to Edinburgh September 3, 1827

Stirling 3 Sep 1827  
postmark and red  
receiving  
mark.

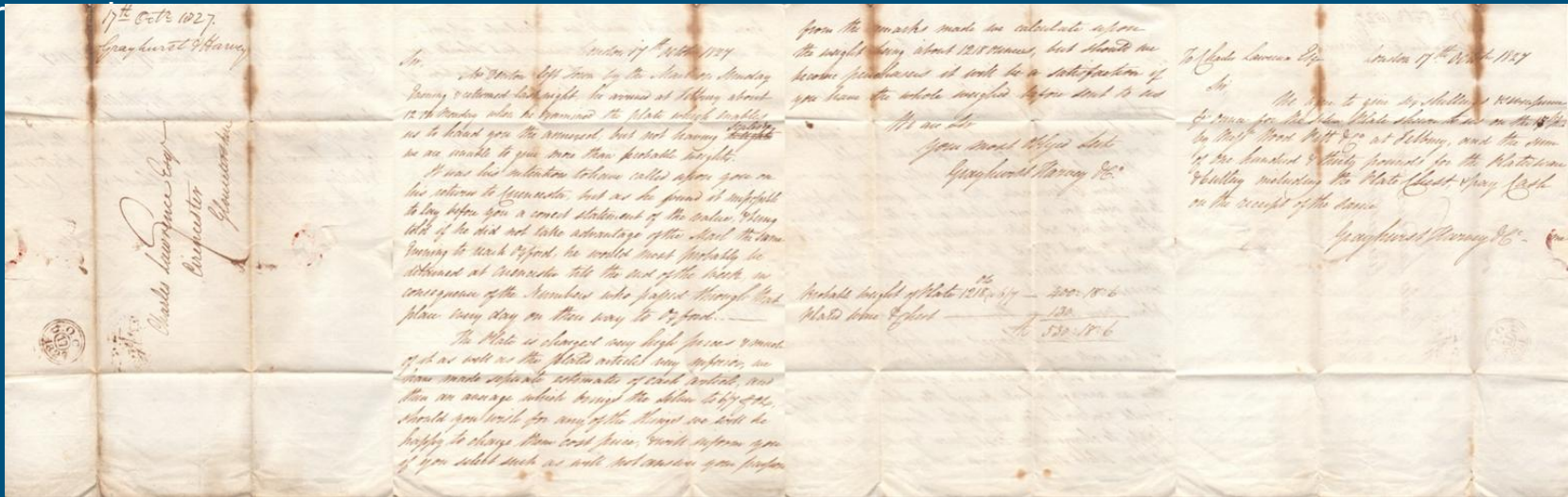


# London to Cirencester October 7, 1827



Grayhurst & Harvey is a watchmaker based in London. Their watches have been displayed in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The company is still in business to this day now under the name of Harvey and Gore Jewellers. The recipient Charles Lawrence was one of the founders of the Royal Agricultural College at Cirencester and brother to Sir William Lawrence, baronet, Serjeant sur

the queen  
Victoria.  
London  
evening  
double ring  
backstamp.



# Exmouth to Bicton November 16, 1823

The next 13 letters revolve around three people. Baron John Rolle who was a Member of Parliament and a member of the House of Lords. Rolle was a advocate for William Pitt the Younger and had significant landholdings, but was most known for falling during the coronation of Queen Victoria. The two people in the letter are John Rolle's second wife Louisa Trefusis and his solicitor John Daw.

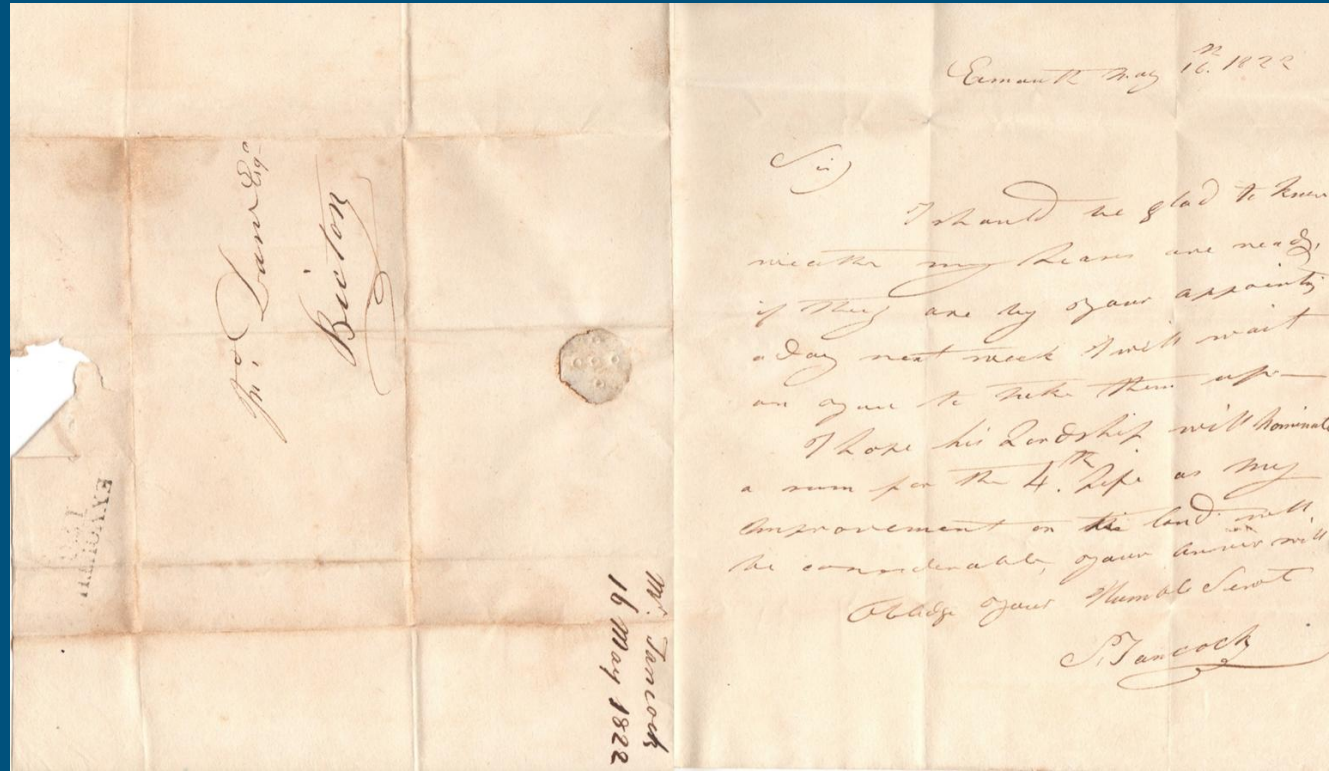
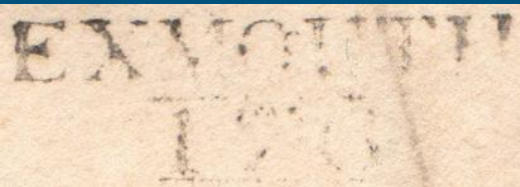




# Undated Torrington Postmark.

# Exmouth to Bicton May 16, 1822

Exmouth 176 mileage  
mark from London.



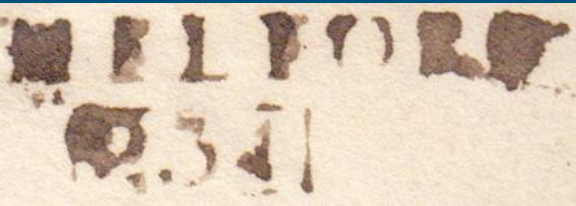
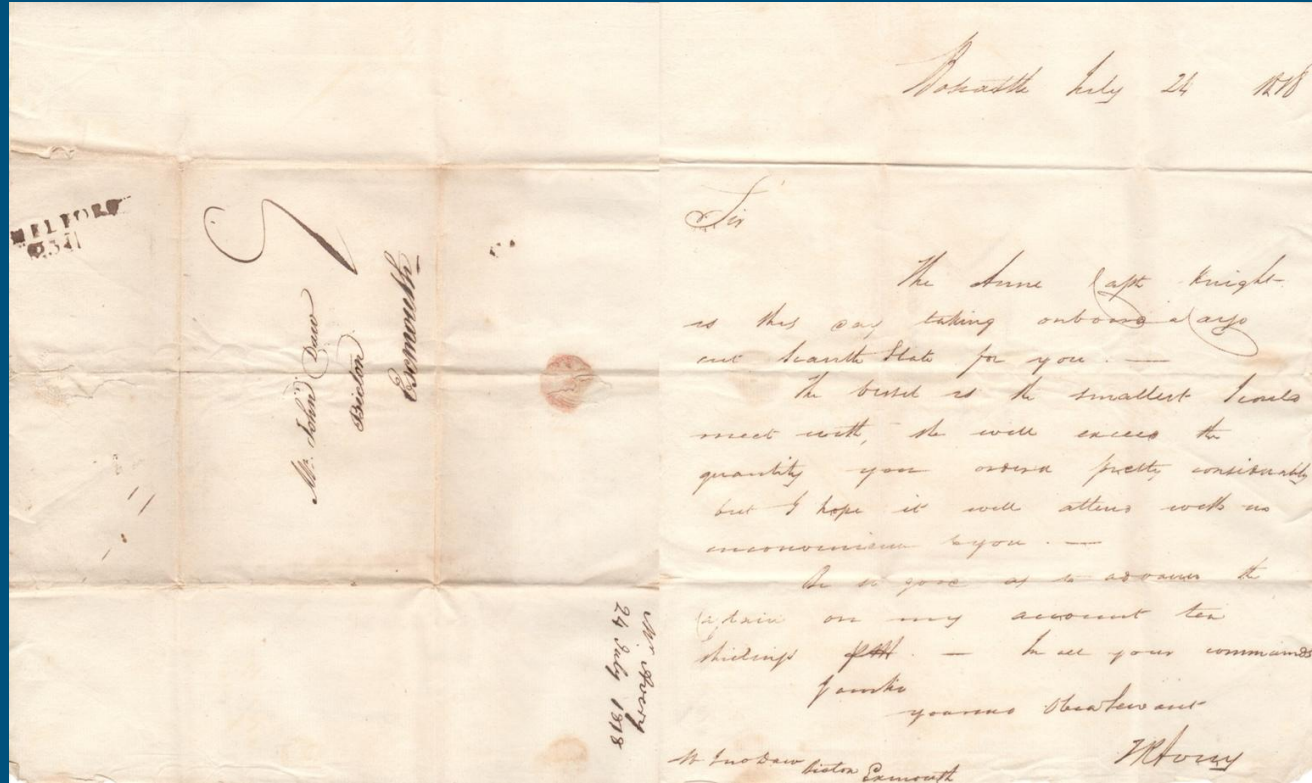


Another Exmouth 176  
mileage mark from  
London.

Mr. M<sup>r</sup> - Law  
Bicton  
paid  
22 Sept 1823

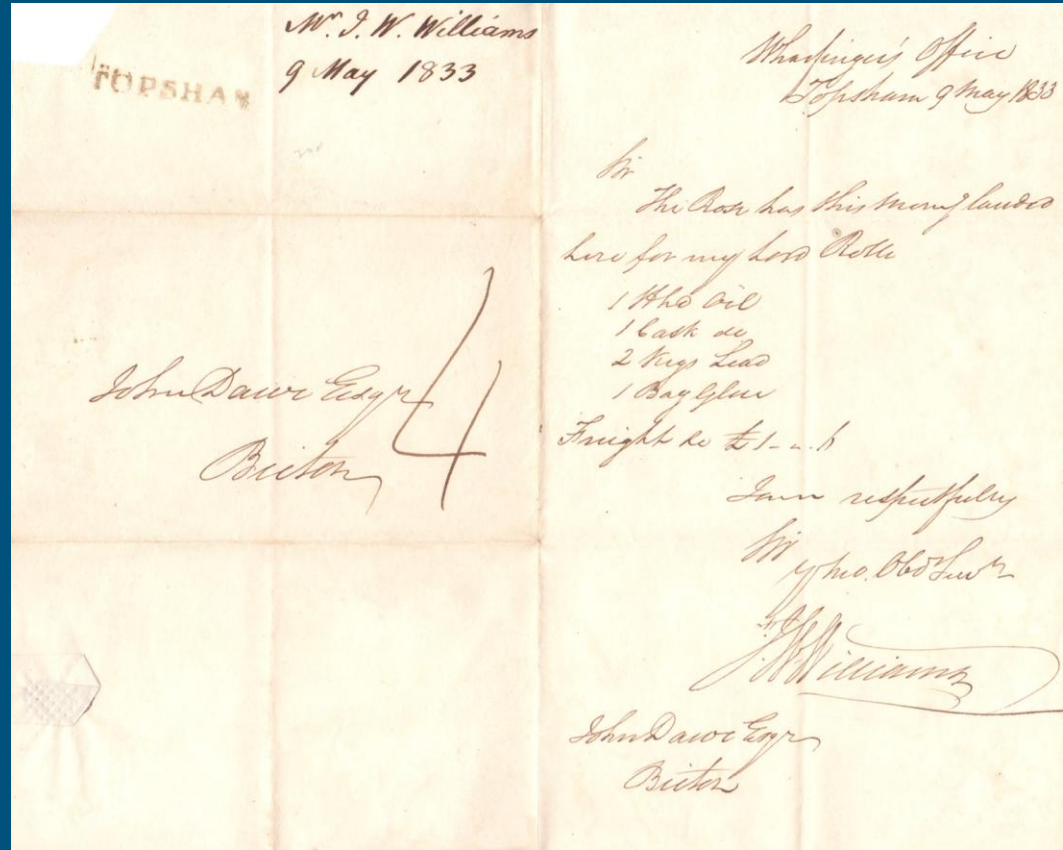
# Long Melford to Bicton July 24, 1828

Melford 23 mileage  
mark (from London).



# Topsham to Bicton May 9, 1833

Topsham straightline mark.





# Exmouth to Bicton July 1, 1833

Exmouth straightline mark.

Mr Wise  
1 July 1833

Exmouth  
July 1. 1833

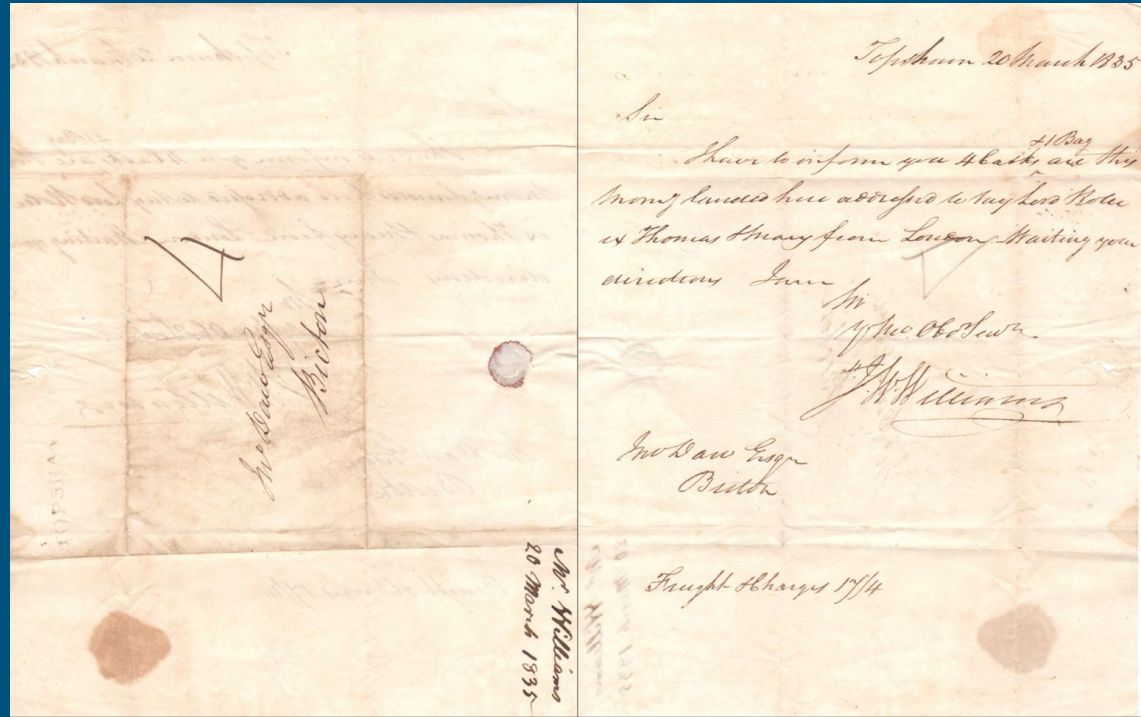
Post Paid  
Mr. David  
at Right Mr. Puller  
Bicton

Sir I shall feel obliged  
by your giving me an  
order to have about  
three cart loads of  
Duff, which can be  
had without detourment  
from the road that is  
cutting from Bergen's Farm  
Pray inform me I can this  
with great respect  
Yours Wm Wise

EXMOUTH

# Topsham to Bicton March 20, 1835

Another Topsham  
straightline mark.





# Exmouth to Budleigh November 25, 1836

Another Exmouth straightline mark.

Mr. Maherwood  
25 Nov 1836

S. Law Esq<sup>r</sup>  
Budleigh  
near Exmouth  
Devon

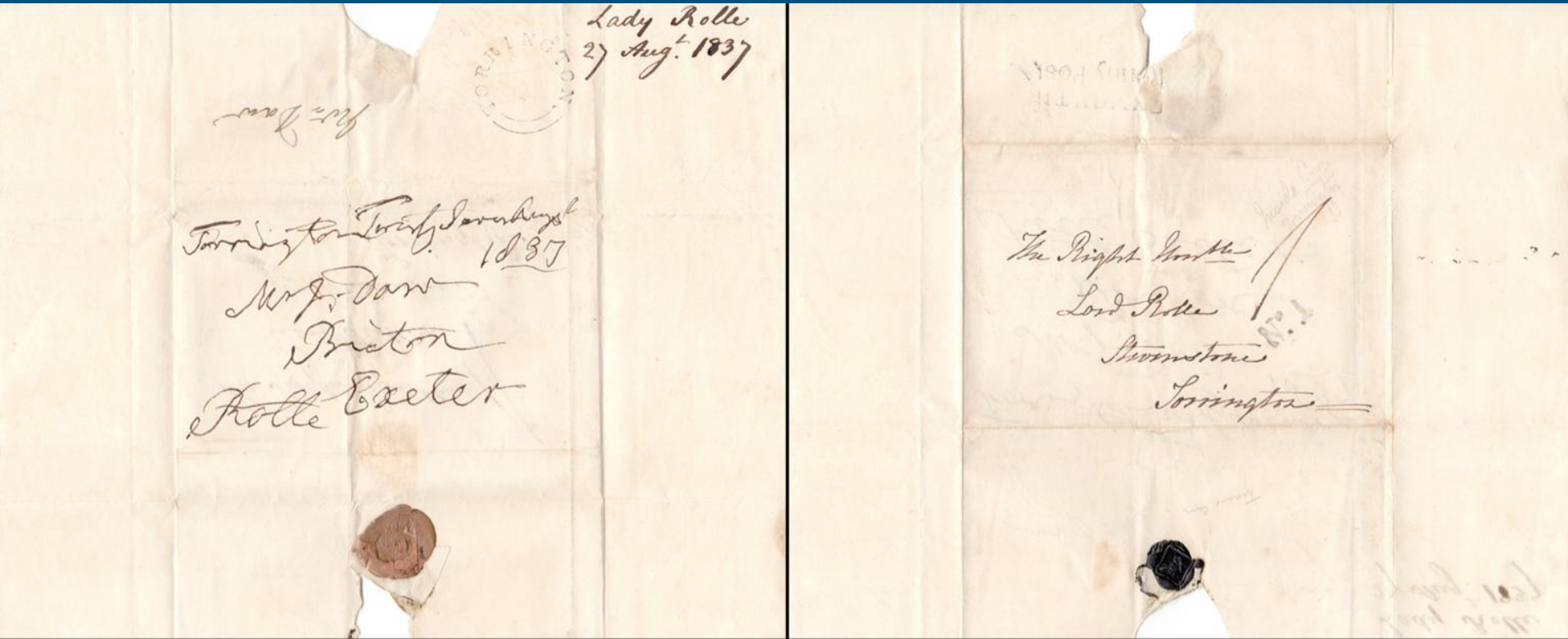
My dear Sir

I am much surprised by me at the without giving you any  
end of the time the use of the I remain Sir  
Barn & Shippins I must have Yours obedtly  
but I wish it to be understood  
I will have nothing to do with  
the repairs of this building.  
provided you accept my offer  
I can only say the fields shall be  
managed in every respect as if  
my own & the Rent shall be  
paid quarterly, half yearly, or as  
you please. although the Rent now  
owed may be left there that promised  
to be given by any recent tenant  
I wish to impress on your mind the  
money is good and will be paid

The two fields containing  
about 6 acres recently sent  
by Mr. Presgrave at Exmouth and  
you stated to me you had now to  
let I am induced to make you an  
offer for the same on the following  
terms viz £10 p year & pay to be  
to take for a term of 3 years or 21  
years to commence at Xmas at my  
option of giving up the said fields  
at the expiration of either of the above  
periods by giving 6 months notice  
Gates Gate post & hedges to be put  
in repair by your order &c

W. Maherwood

August 27, 1837 Turned Cover: cover reused for second letter after being turned inside out.



# Turned Cover Cont.

The early mail service revolved around delivering and receiving mail to and from the Post town. If you lived outside the post town, no door-to-door service was available. The fifth clause of the postal act of 1801 allowed private arrangements to be made between the postmaster of local British towns and the inhabitants. The charges agreed by the inhabitants tended to be one penny (Penny Posts namesake). Torrington undated postmark.

Torrington Torry Devon  
1837  
Mr J. Daw  
Bristol  
Rolle Exeter

EXETER  
Penny Post

EXETER  
NOV 1 1837

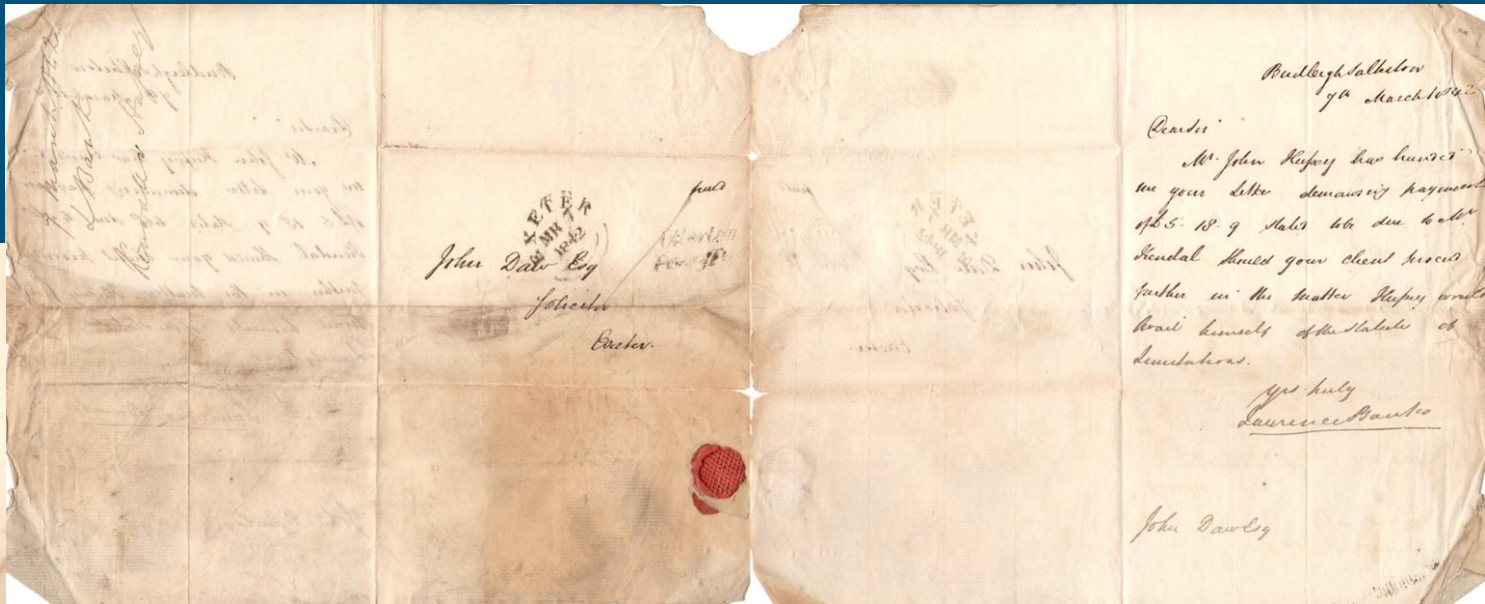


# Budleigh to Exeter March, 7 1842



These stamps were employed starting in 1822 for provincial post offices. It is claimed by the inventor that a bad impression was impossible and they were made by a “mathematical engine”.

Otterton Penny  
Post (Budleigh  
Salterton drop  
off).





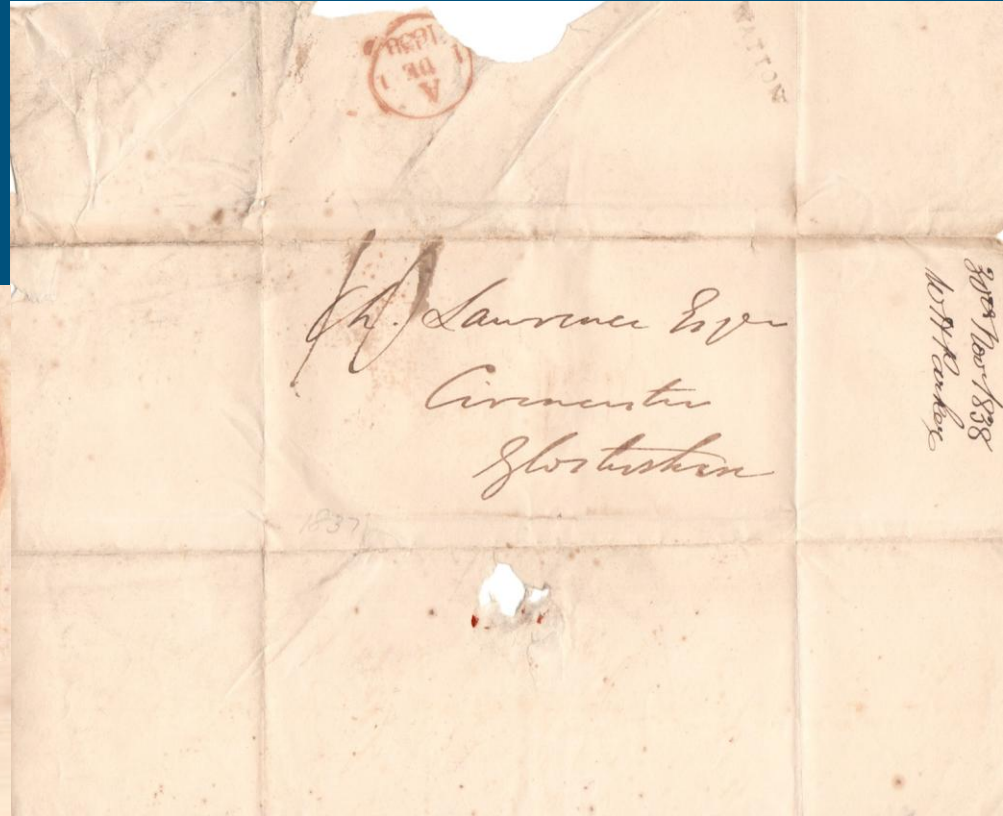
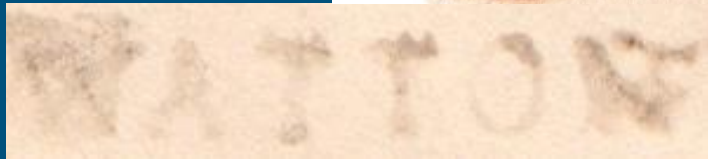
# Free Frank: allows specific government officials to send mail for free without paying postage.

In Britain, it was hand stamped to parliamentary mail and taxpayers took on the cost of this mail. The system was eliminated in 1840 by Rowland Hill because of various abuses and such abuses included companies appointing MPs to boards in order to take advantage of the free franking privilege. In the United States, the President did not have a free frank privilege; however, the Vice President and members of Congress were able to use it.



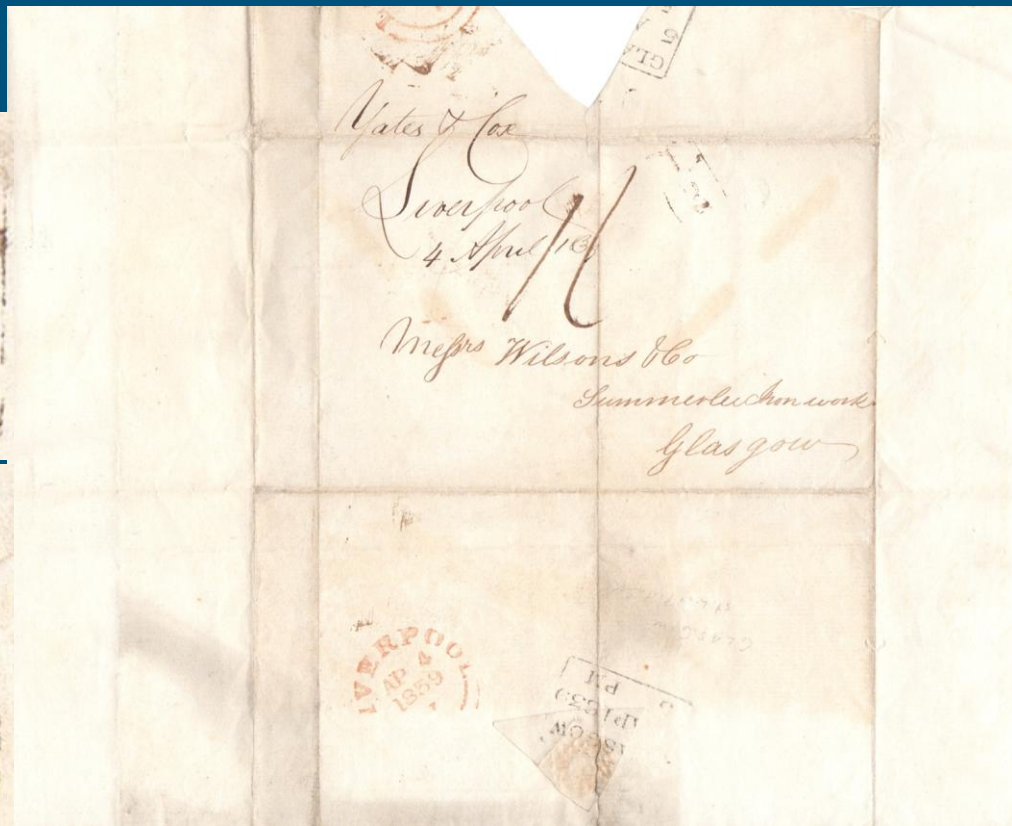
# Watton to Cirencester November 30, 1838

Watton straightline mark and  
December 1 receiving backstamp.



# Liverpool to Glasgow April 4, 1839

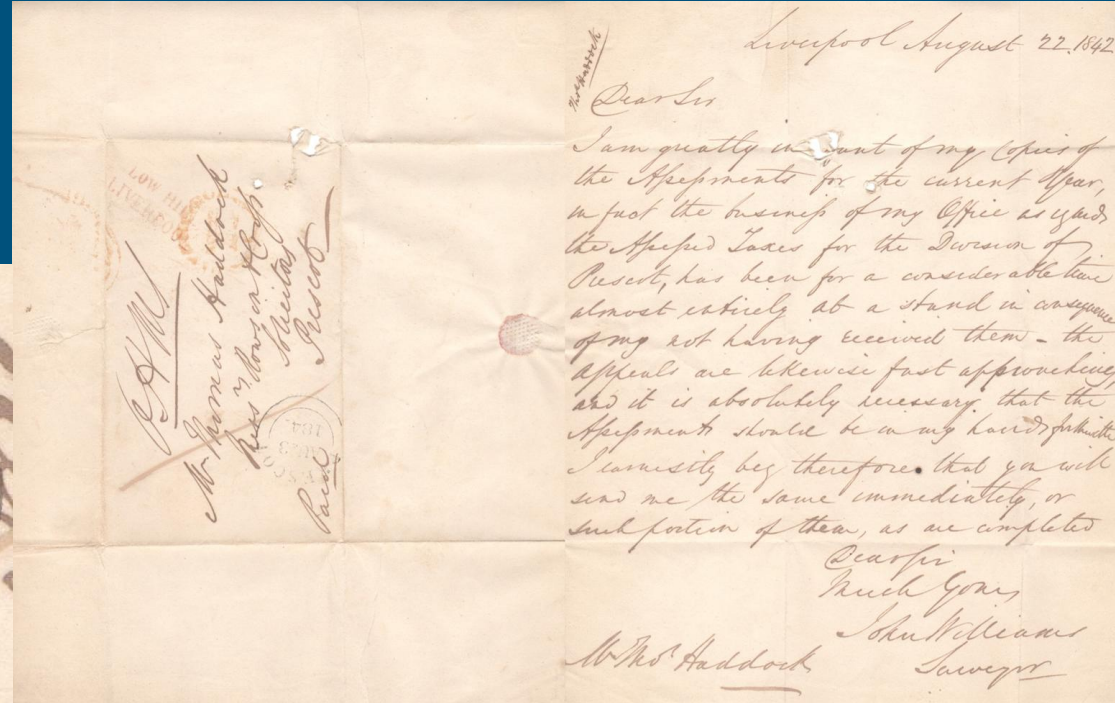
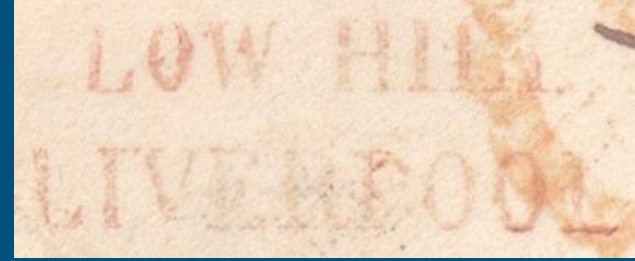
Certain Glasgow receiving backstamps bore the hour along with the date. The flat rate Halfpenny surcharge was imposed by the Scots on the letter.





# Liverpool to Prescott August 2, 1842

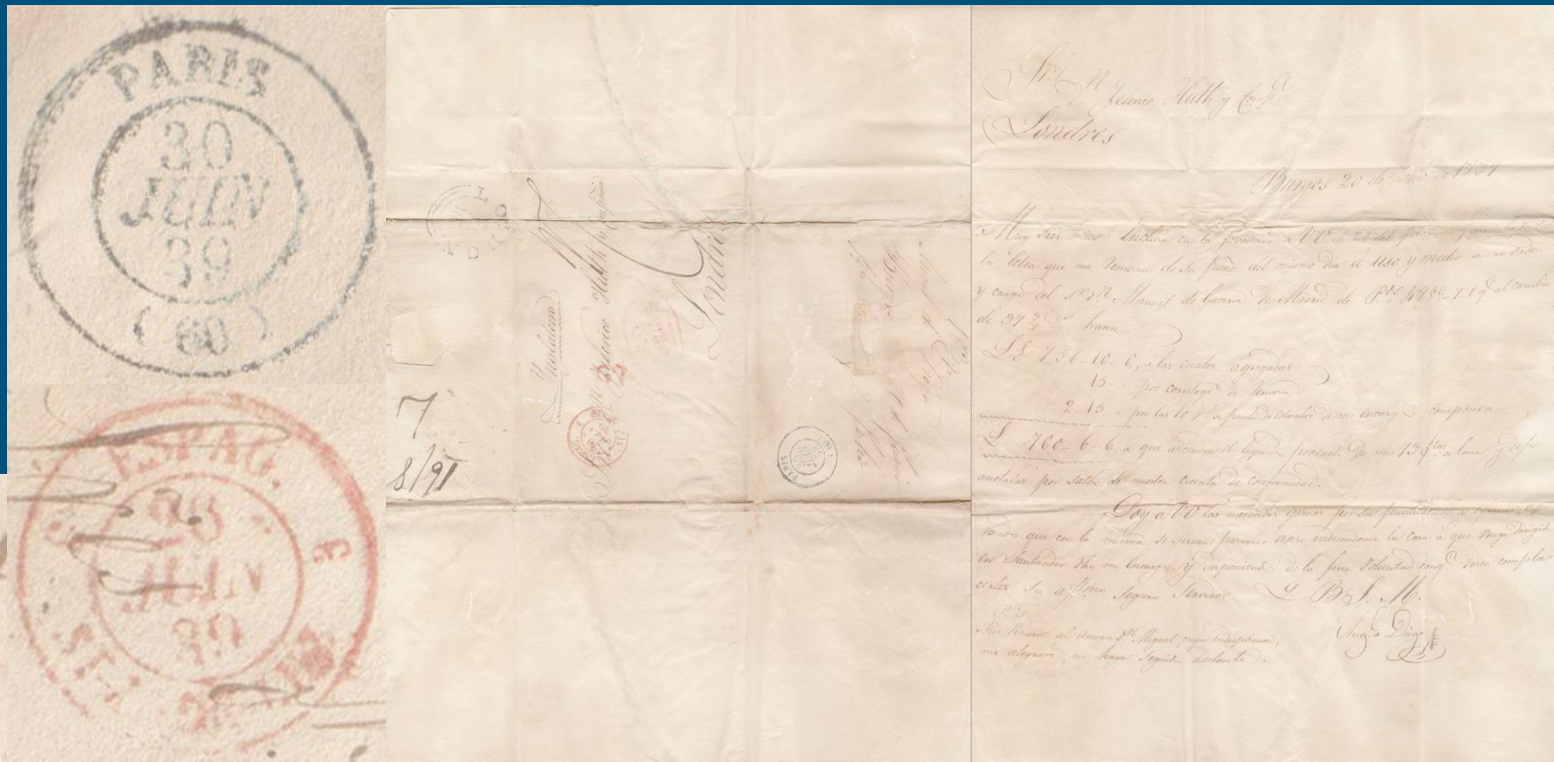
Low Hill Liverpool post office mark.





# Burgos Spain to London via Paris June 1839

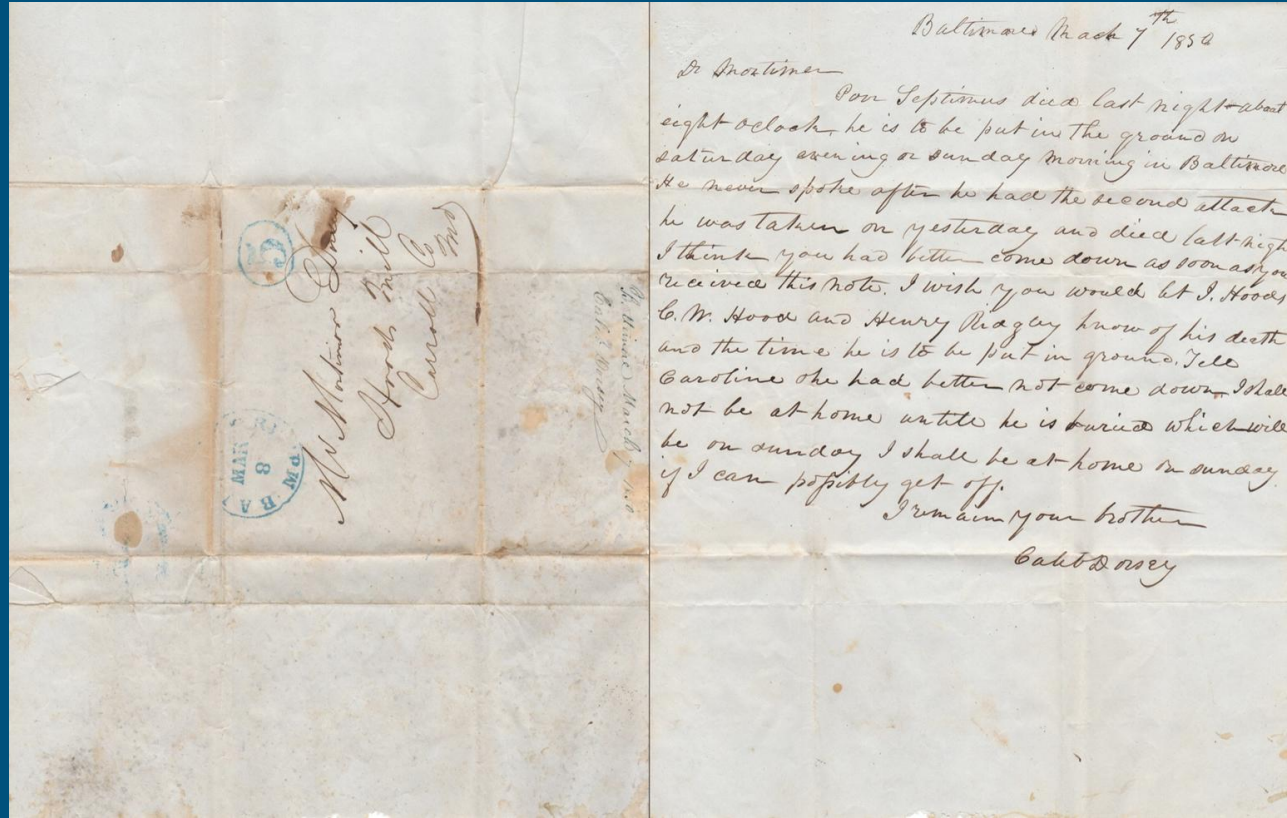
Spain June 26  
postmark and  
a Paris June  
30 transit  
backstamp.  
Two Spanish  
pesos paid.





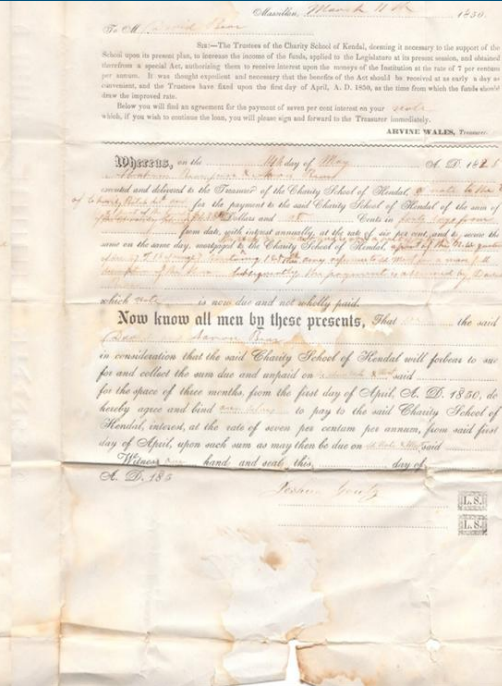
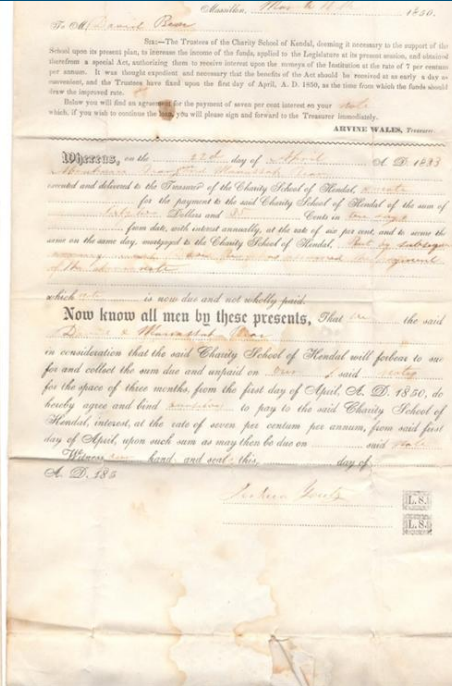
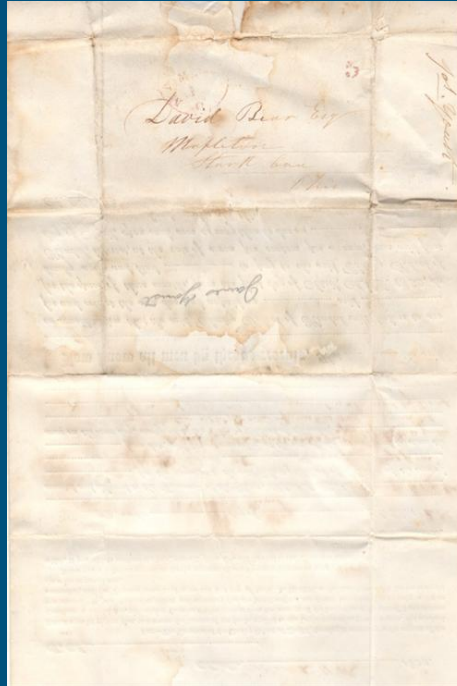
# Baltimore Maryland to Hood(s) Mill Maryland

Descendants of an early colonist Edward Dorsey who is a subject of many genealogical literature.



# Massillon Ohio to Mapleton Ohio March 11, 1850

Charity School of Kendall: one of the first vocational schools in Ohio. The school is loaning a person \$238.05 (~\$9000) at 7% interest. Below is Massillon Ohio's postmark.





# Owl Creek Ohio to Clear Spring Maryland February 20, 1854

Looks like it was stamped free first by mistake and then restamped paid.

