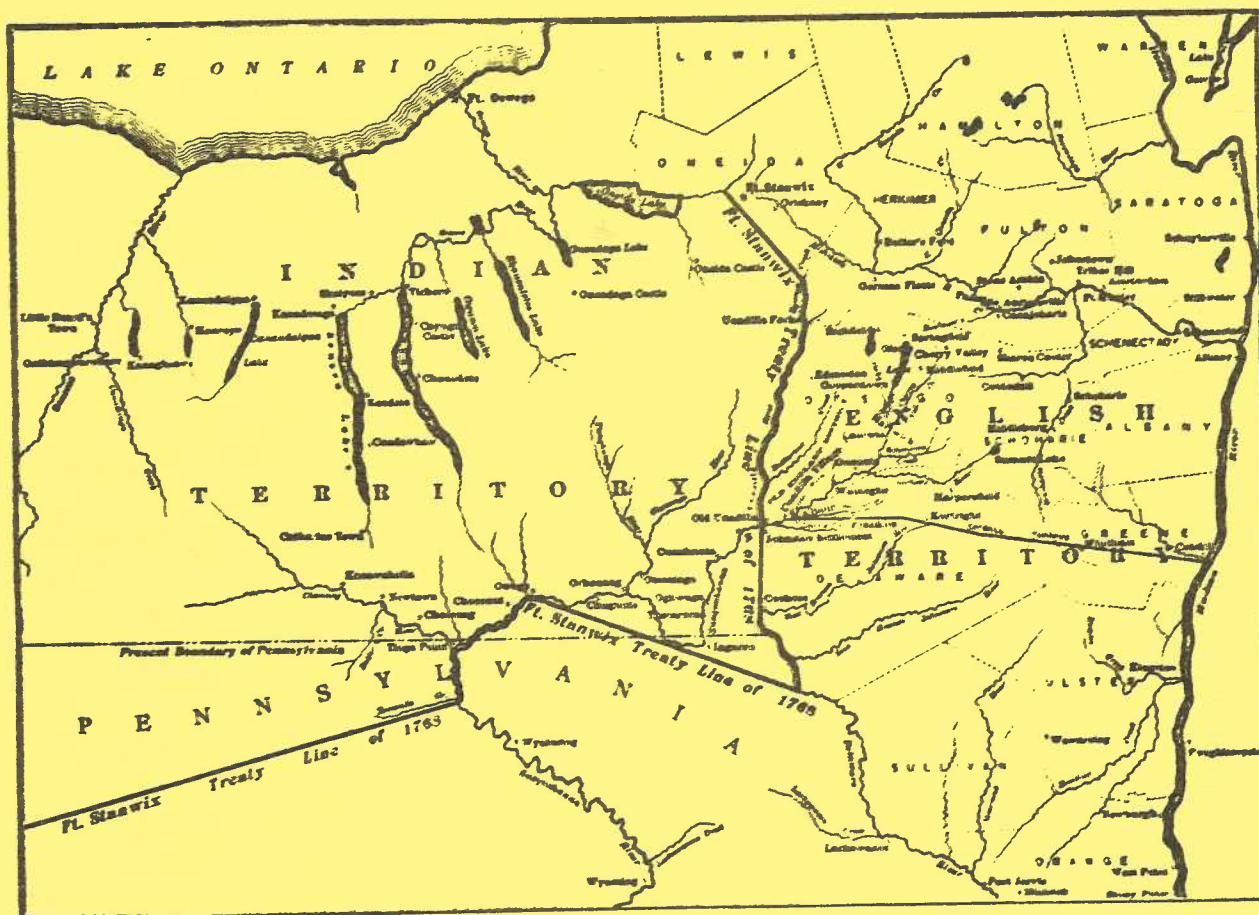


# Excelsior



THE FRONTIER OF NEW YORK IN THE REVOLUTION

Published by the  
EMPIRE STATE POSTAL HISTORY SOCIETY

## A CHANGE IN RATE - 1821

by Kenneth DeLisle

Students of postal history have long puzzled over the rates of postage marked on letters carried through the mails during Colonial times and up into the 19th Century. By diligent research, reporting of finds, exchange of information and some luck, most of the questions have been resolved, although it was not until recent years that such things as the complicated transatlantic rates were explained. Even now, markings such as 'Mail Route' are being discussed pro and con. The availability of Post Office Department Records on microfilm has enabled many of us to further our knowledge, particularly along the line of establishing and publishing lists such as the ESPHS monumental Federal Post Offices of New York State 1792-1969. Recently, the microfilm, The Letters Sent by the Postmaster General 1789-1836 (National Archives Microcopy No.601) enabled me to verify a curious change in the rate of postage between New York and Albany which took effect early in 1821.

New York City after the War of 1812 was an extremely busy seaport and center of merchantile and financial activity. Albany, the capital of New York State was an important legislative and administrative city, as well as transfer point for merchandise hauled up the Hudson River for shipment over the Champlain Canal and the operating portions of the Erie Canal. It was also a thriving manufacturing and agricultural town. Passenger traffic and freight hauled in working sloops and the new-fangled steamboats made the docks and warehouses a beehive of activity day and night. Mail between the two cities must have been of great volume, for letters between them are common in present-day collections. Collectors of New York and Albany postoffice markings often remark at the frequency the 'other' city is found as an address on letters in their albums.

Many years ago I sorted my covers by rate, for the various periods beginning with pre-Revolutionary mail. It was interesting to trace the changes from silver (pennyweights and grains), to decimal currency (dollars and cents). From Confederation to statehood, and then through the War of 1812 50% surcharge, the lower fees after the war continuing up to the great postal reform of 1845, one could use Albany and New York City examples exclusively, because of the easy availability of material for study. One aspect became apparent on close examination. The mails between Albany and New York received no benefit from the several rate reductions in the early years. Instead, the merchants and citizens of both cities had suffered losses from each so-called benefit.

During this era the distance between the two was somewhat over 150 miles by the post road on each side of the Hudson River, although there seems to be no agreement in the various references consulted. But generally it was rated and charged at over 150 miles. In 1792, the rate for a single letter carried 150 to 200 miles was 15¢. When the rates were reduced in 1799, the Albany-New York run fell in the 150 to 300 mile zone, with a charge of 17¢. During the war rate surcharge the rate went up to 25½¢. When the reduced permanent rates were put into effect in 1816, the busy Albany-New York mail rate was the 150 to 400 mile zone, at 18½¢. There is no question this did not sit well with the business community, many with close ties to Washington. In this period, men like Van Buren, Butler, Fillmore, Seward and others sat at Albany. With personal ambitions on higher posts, they listened to remonstrances and petitions very closely!

Looking through the covers, sorted by distances and rates, it was apparent that something happened to change the postage rate, about 1820-1821. The late W.L.L. Peltz, who formed the best collection of Albany postal markings ever assembled (now located in the Albany Institute of History and Art) noted on one of his album pages "...the 18½¢ rate was continued until about 1820, when a re-survey of the post road placed the distance at less than 150 miles." No source reference to this information was given, a fault which was found throughout his collection. The latest 18½¢ rate in the Peltz collection is September 12, 1820, and the first 12½¢ rate is May 5, 1821.

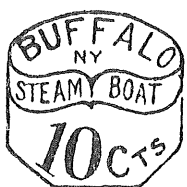
When I confirmed to my own satisfaction by reference to several other Albany and New York collections that the rate change did occur in this time period, I began a search for the reason. Was it because of the distance by water, now that the majority of mail was contracted to the steamboat companies? The reference to a re-survey was intriguing. Was it a Federal or state-sponsored survey and when did it take place?

The library of the Empire State Postal History Society has modern copies of several postoffice lists, the gift of the Chester County (Pa.) Historical Society, through the good offices of member

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Arthur Gregg, Jr. They show the distance, in 1803, between Washington and New York to be 292 miles, the distance between Washington and Albany to be 400 miles. Mathematically the New York-Albany distance is 158 miles. In 1811 the same set of figures is 222-369-155. In 1813, more changes: 232-277-155. In 1819, close to the period I was looking for, the figures are 227-356-129 (sic). Yet, a separate figure lists the distance between New York City and the State capital (Albany) at 145 miles in the same table. Clearly, there is little comfort in these distances. (Editor's note: The PL&R of Jan. 1, 1798 contains the last official route list by miles and reports the distance at 166 miles, one more than in 1774.)

Another well-regarded source of information is the New York Annual Register (not to be confused with the Legislative Manual) which gives a multitude of statistics of the period. My earliest copy was for 1835, published in New York by Edwin Williams, 41 Cortland Street. It is claimed, in the preface to be the sixth since commencement. On page 117 we find a table headed, "The Mail Route from New York to Albany." (Ed. Note: Henry Chlanda has supplied data from the 1831 and 1832 Williams' Registers. For 1832 the data on the West Side route is identical with 1835, but for the Eastern Route it matches that found on pg. 113 of the 1831 Register, noted below. In 1831 the West Side distance to Newburgh is 65 miles and the distance to Albany is 160 miles.)

<u>East Side of River</u>				<u>West Side of River</u>			
		<u>1835</u>	<u>1831</u>			<u>1832-1835</u>	
New York	-	0	-	0	New York		0
Kings Bridge	13	13	13	13	Ferry from Barclay to		
Yonkers	4	17	4	17	Hoboken	1½	1½
Dobb's Ferry	6	23	4	21	Weehawk Kill	1½	3
Tarrytown	7	30	7	28	Hackensack	9	12
Sing-Sing	5	35	6	34	New Prospect	10	22
Peekskill	11	46	12	46	NY State Line	7	29
Fishkill	22	68	21	60sic	Ramapo (Pierson's Factory)	3	32
Poughkeepsie	17	85	14	80	The Clove	18	50
Rhinebeck	15	100	17	97	Canterbury	10	60
Red Hook	7	107	6	103	Newburgh	4	64
Clermont	8	115	8	111	Milton	11	75
Hudson	17	132	12	123	Pelham	11	86
Kinderhook	15	147	14	137	Walkill River	7	93
Albany	13	160	20	157	Kingston	3	96
					Ulster Village	10	106
					Catskill	12	118
					Athens	5	123
					Coxsackie	7	130
					New Baltimore	6	136
					Coaymans	2	138
					Albany	13	151

4.

These were the stage routes, which carried mail between villages and hamlets and, undoubtedly, the through closed pouches between New York and Albany, when the steam boats were not running in winter. We have a confirmation of this, in the following excerpt from Munsell (Annals of Albany: Joel Munsell, Albany, N.Y. Ed. 1, 18) Vol. 7, page 149: Notes from the Newspapers December 21, 1820:

"The New York Mail Stage broke through the ice in crossing the river, and sunk in 15 feet of water. A reward of twenty dollars was offered for the rescue of the mail, which was fished up, dried, and re-mailed. None of the passengers had ventured to cross in the stage; the driver was rescued with difficulty; three horses were drowned; the stage and baggage was finally recovered and the proprietors suffered a loss of about five hundred dollars."

The river was closed early this year, on November 13, according to the same source, but the ice seems to have been hazardous enough to deter passengers from taking the chance. At all times when a channel could be kept open the Greenbush-Albany and Bath-Albany ferries carried passengers and freight across the river, but this involved the payment of a fee which the stage driver must have been told to avoid if possible.

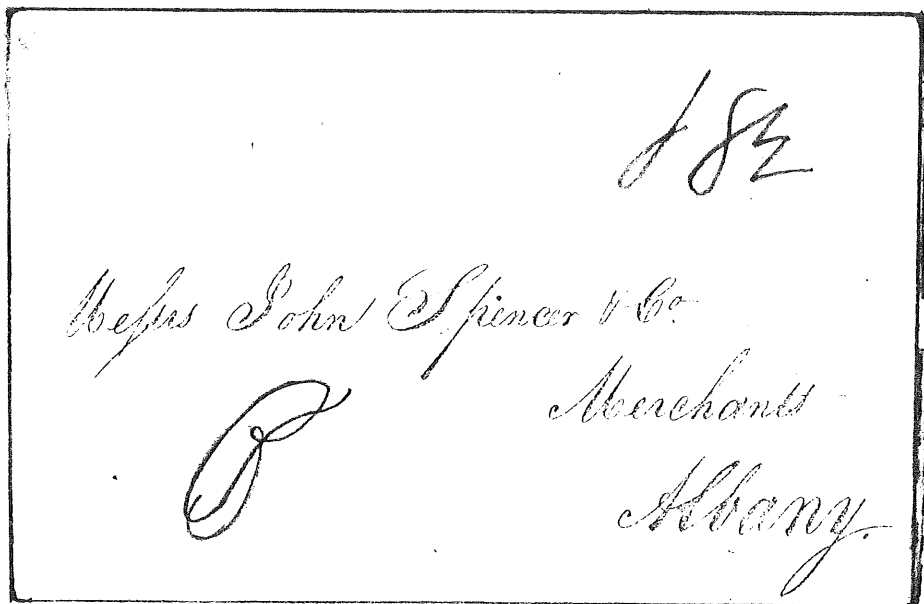


Figure 1: May 6, 1820, New York to Albany. Ms. 18½ and B (Boat), prior to reduction in rate between the two cities. Rate and steam boat marking in red.

This tabulation of the stage route offers no clue, even in the 1830's, that the land route was less than 150 miles, yet all letters between Albany and New York from 1821 on are charged only 12½¢. Reference to the steamboat tables offer no help, for Williams states the distance at 150 miles, right on the borderline, but still subject to the 18-3/4¢ rate (18½¢ prior to 1825). (Ed. Note: by taking the minimum distances between the 1831 and 1835 stage distance on the East Side of the river, one gets 146 miles). This is the side used for the winter stage according to the New York Annual Register of 1831. The distance is still listed at 153 miles as late as the New-York State Register for 1845, pg. 253; however, that volume on pg. 252 notes the principal steamboat route at 145 miles.)

Fortunately, for researchers into Albany history, there is a wonderful source of information, the aforementioned Munsell. Joel Munsell (4/14/08-1/15/1880), historian, publisher and the original Albany 'buff', during his long and distinguished career, published two editions of the Annals of Albany, a compilation of Albany history through first-hand interviews and perusal of Albany newspapers back into the 18th Century. When he wrote the Annals, many sources since lost or destroyed were available to him. He was a strict adherent to facts, something not always found among native writers.

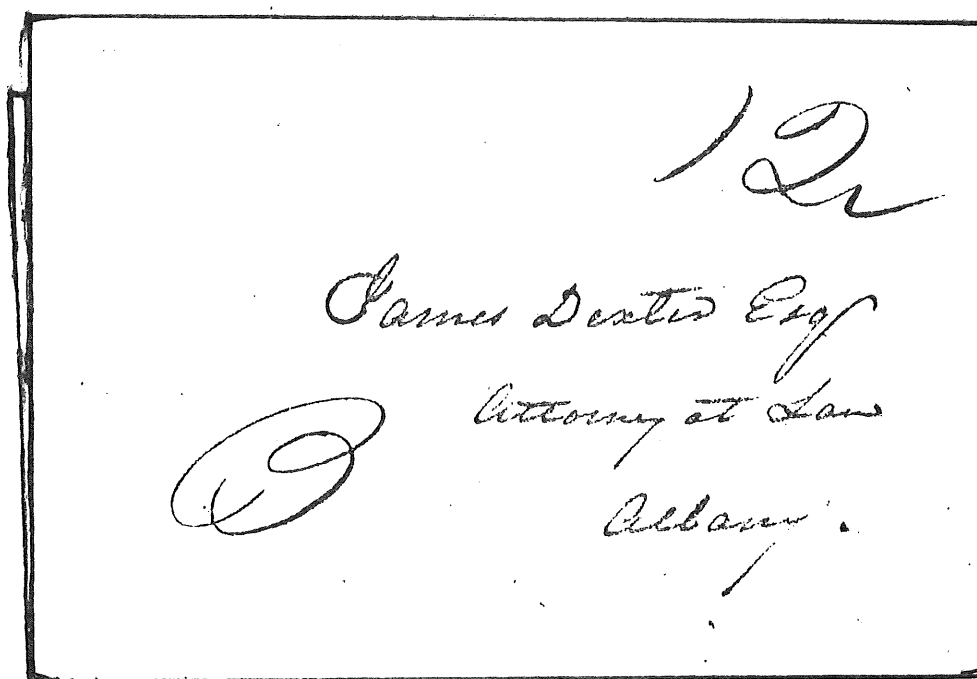


Figure 2: August 16, 1821, New York to Albany. Ms 12½ and B(Boat), subsequent to the reduction in rate between the two cities. Rate and steamboat marking in black, rarely seen in this color.

The Albany Institute of History and Art has a card index of his works by subject, profusely cross-indexed to locate names, events, etc. Looking up 'mail', 'post office', 'post routes', 'post office business', 'postmasters' and similar terms leads one into actual newspaper accounts of the subject. One search led to the following:

"Albany Argus, January 28, 1865: Obituary of William McHarg Sr., (1778-1865). Mr. McHarg, merchant, banker, Erie Canal commissioner and member of the Albany Common Council in his early life..It was through his active agency, in 1820 that the mail route between this city and New York was established as within 150 miles, a fact which secured the reduction of the then heavy postage of 18-3/4 cents to 12½ cents.."

Actually, there was a minor reporting error here, the rate was raised from 18½¢ to 18-3/4¢ in 1825, to more easily fit the currency of the time. Then, a dollar was divided into eight 'bits' of 12½¢ each, thus our expression even today of 'two bits' or 25¢. The Albany Evening Journal of the same day printed a similar obituary.

Archibald Mc Intyre Esq.  
Comptroller  
Albany

Figure 3: New York letter of November 4, 1820 with red ms. 18½ rate and 'B'(Boat) to Albany. This is the latest recorded example via steam boat, as the river closed on the 13th in 1820.

Looking a little further into the life of William McHarg shows him to be an active local politician, councilman from the 7th Ward of the City of Albany from 1818 to 1821. Next falls into place an article in the Albany Advertiser of September 1, 1820:

"A survey of the post road from Albany to New York was made some years previous to this by John Randal, Jr., under the direction of the board of the Common Council, by which it

appeared that the distance was more than 150 miles, by the post road. Mr. Randal proposed certain alterations to the road which would reduce the distance by the travelled route. Various improvements and alterations and by a new survey it is ascertained the distance has been reduced to one hundred and forty-four miles. This inured to the business portion of the community, as the postmaster had his attention called to the circumstance and the postage has been reduced to 12½¢ on letters between the two cities. The postmaster-general rated the distance 145 miles, but the editor of the Daily Advertiser adverts it is not more than 135 miles by land over the post road."

From all of the bits and pieces, it can be assumed that Councilman McHarg, importuned by his fellow citizens, started the ball rolling by having a survey made by John Randal, Jr., who was the official city surveyor. On a report by the surveyor that the distance was over the 150-mile magic line, efforts were made to reduce the travelled route by certain alterations and improvements (short-cuts?). Although it is by no means clear who made the changes or who paid for them, or even that they were made at all, a re-survey brought the answer wanted. This fact was then brought to the attention of then Albany Postmaster Solomon Southwick. There remains little doubt that Southwick called for assistance from powerful political interests in Albany, and Postmaster Theodorus Bailey of New York called on equally powerful financial and commercial interests in New York City, who brought pressure on Washington. In 1820 the Congressman from Albany was Solomon Van Rensselaer (3/4/19-1/14/22) while Rufus King and Nathan Sanford were the New York Senators. The Vice President, Daniel Tompkins was also from New York.

The final and authoritative fact then turns up in the aforementioned Letters of the Postmaster General. On microfilm reel No. 19, I find this letter:

January 18, 1821

General Theodorus Bailey, P.M.  
New York City

Sir: The distance between New York City and Albany has been ascertained to be a little less than 150 miles. Single letters should be noted at 12½¢ hereafter.

Return J. Meigs, Jr.

Also a letter to Mr. Southwick of the same.

R.J.M. Jr.



At the present writing, the earliest recorded  $12\frac{1}{2}\text{¢}$  rate between the cities of Albany and New York is still Mr. Peltz's example of May 5, 1821, while no examples of the  $18\frac{1}{2}\text{¢}$  rate are reported between November 4, 1820 and the date of Meigs' letter. It would be of interest to the writer if anyone can report examples that fill in the gaps of the intermediate dates.

#### ADDENDA

Even in manuscript, Mr. DeLisle's seminal article created excitement, and suggested that there may be other areas where a change in rate had occurred. Such changes would be noted where a city was on the break-point of a rating distance. While there have been no reports, yet, from other states, at least one other New York town shows such a change. This is Poughkeepsie. It is quite possible that the date of change corresponds to the Albany route change, although this has yet to be proven. The distance from Poughkeepsie to New York falls right on the border of the 10¢ rate for 30-80 miles and the  $12\frac{1}{2}\text{¢}$  rate for 80-150 miles. The rate was changed sometime between 1816 and 1827 from  $12\frac{1}{2}\text{¢}$  to 10¢ as the illustrated cover examples show.

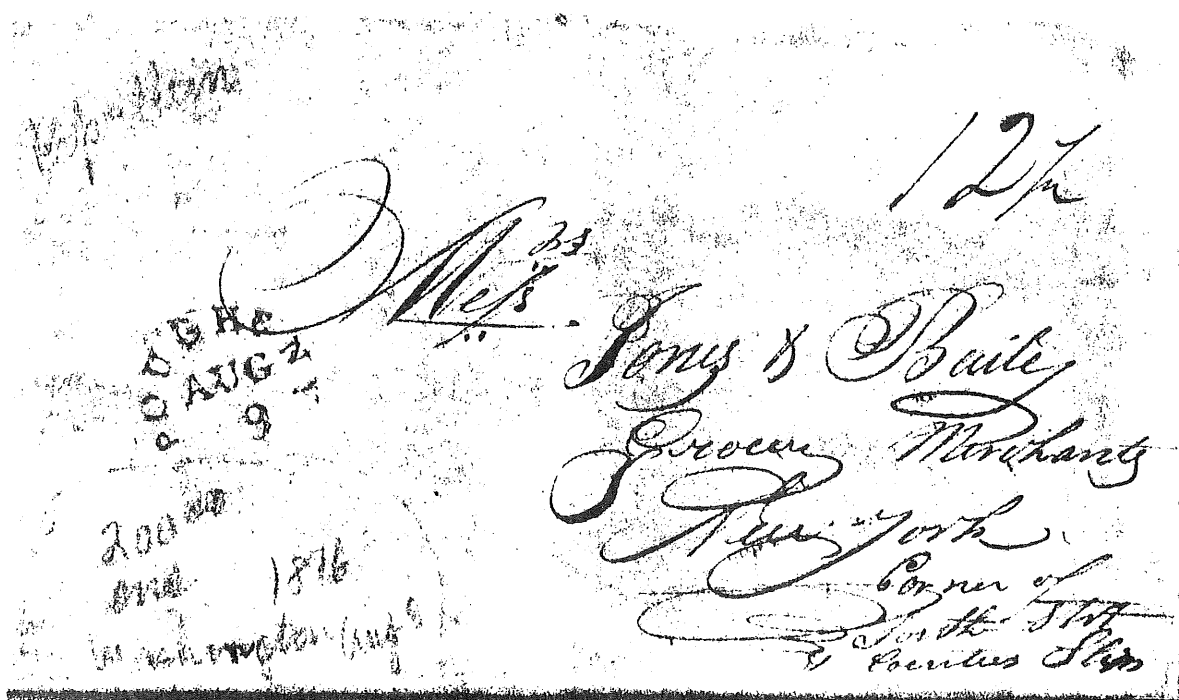


Figure 4: Red 25mm circle POUGH<sup>E</sup> N Y/AUG/9 on 1816 letter from a grocer asking for credit. This has a black manuscript  $12\frac{1}{2}\text{¢}$  rate to New York City--the 80-150 mile charge.

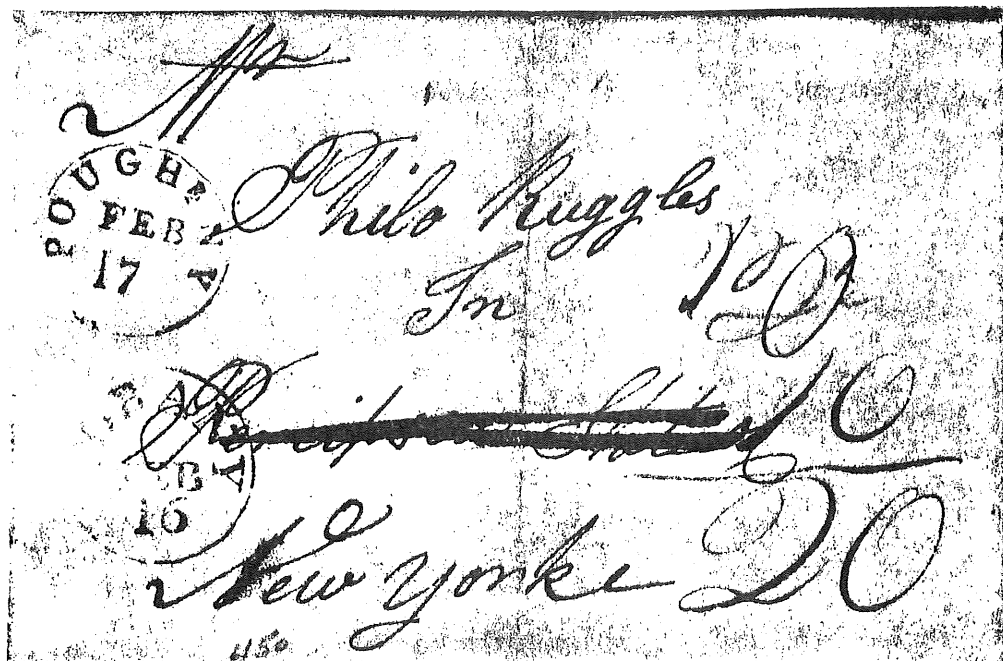


Figure 5: Red 25mm circle POUGH<sup>E</sup> N Y/FEB/17 on 1827 letter originating at Albany where a red 25mm ALBANY/FEB/16 strike and red ink 12½ rate is applied (to New York City). Corrected to 10 rate as it is addressed in 'Percipsea'. Upon arrival there it was rerated in red and forwarded on to New York with a total of 20¢ due. While earlier 10¢ charges--under 80 miles--from Poughkeepsie to New York undoubtedly exist, there are no recordings of them.

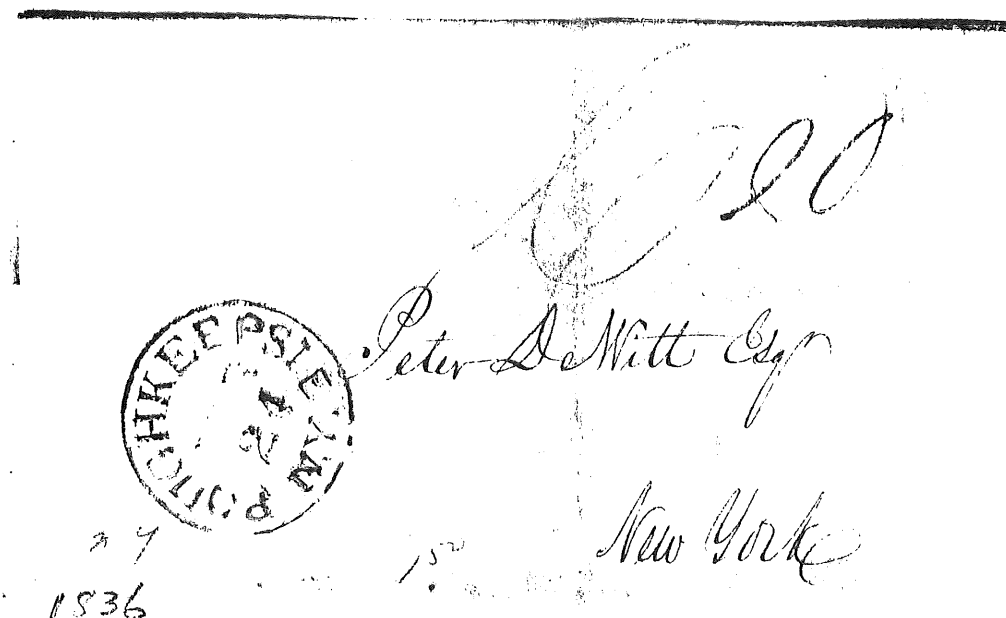


Figure 6: Blue 30mm circle POUGHKEEPSIE/MAR/24/N.Y. is struck on this 1836 letter to New York, with a manuscript 10¢ rate confirming the rate reduction to under 80 mile charge, as above. The recording copy in blue, a scarce use from Poughkeepsie.

TWO FROM FORT TY  
by Michael Peterson

In this Bicentennial period two letters written from the Fort Ticonderoga area in 1776 might be worth recording. At this point the American Army fought a series of retiring actions, having failed to take Canada, that carried them back to Lake Champlain. The key battle was that of Valcour Island on October 11, 1776 when General Benedict Arnold used his newly-built fleet to stop the British invasion. Although his fleet was inferior to that of Thomas Pringle, who opposed him, Arnold outmaneuvered and outfought the British who retreated to winter quarters in Canada on November 2nd.

The earlier letter was written at Ty miles (Ti Mills) to Sudbury, Mass. and the second from Ticonderoga to Southampton, Mass. While neither is postmarked we know that express mail service was recommended September 3, 1776 and that in the bills authorized for payment October 21st by the Auditor General was one for 49/90ths of a dollar for "postage of a letter from Ticonderoga", so that it is irrelevant that the basic Resolve authorizing extra service to Fort Ticonderoga (or the Northern Army) was not passed until 11/4/1776.

The earlier of the two letters reads:

Camp on Mount Hope Ty miles  
October the 3 1776

Loving wife

I receiv'd your letter yesterday datted the foreteen of September and was very much rejoiced to See it Have not Heard one word from you since I came from home till I receiv'd your letter and I understand by that that Lydia Underwood was a coming to Live with you and that Ruben had Dun Hayng and by your Letter that Every Fifth man was going to New York. I am afraid that Ruben is goneing but hope you will be provided for till I shall return to you again if it should be God will. I understand by your letter that you wanted to know where I was Stationed and in what Place. I am Stationed on a Hill caled Mount Hope near Ticonderoga miles about a mile and half from the old fort in Colonel Samuel Brewer Regiment in Capten Simon Edgels Company. I wood inform you that our Provictions are very short, only one pound Beef and one pound of Bread per day.

Everything is very Dear, and hardly a thing to be had. It is very sickly here Now with the Camp Disstembe. We have not one Died out of Company, but there are one or more buried out of the Regiment Every Day. We have 79 men in our Company, and 25 of them are Sick. They very Sickly over at Ticonderoga--

We are Building a New Fort on this Hill to guard our lakes. I beleve that they are Strong Down and about the old fort as I am in-

form there is a Great Number of Rogallows (row galleys) and Gund-erlows (gondolas?) that are fitted out, will man and mount a number of Gun Each and are gone Down to Seant Johns to Guard our En-imals (enemies).

N-B (Nota Bene) I hardly think our Enimals will Come to See us this fall but can not say. They wont they have cilled a Number of our Men Down at ounyon River (Onion River, now Winooski River Vt) but can not tell how many.

N-B Brother Ebenezer Plympton was over to see me Yesterday and Brought your letter to me and I was Rejoiced to See it for I am not very well. I have the Camp Disstember but I am Better than I have Been. I have never been so Bad but I could dow my Duty. The duty that I dow is a confined life for I have more care than Aney man in the Company. It is not hard.

N-B I Hope you wont Disstress your Self about me. I desire your prayers for me. I Hope my next letter will be more pleasing to you if my life be spared. I Hope you will write to me as offin as you can and will dow the same. My Sinceur Prayers is that you and my Little Children may Injoy Health and all my friends if you believe I yet remain your loving husband.

Augustus Moore

Pray Dear Wife dont be distressed about me, for I am not so bad but that I am able to dow my Duty every day. I hope we shall all be provided for

Augustus Moore

Solomon Price is Dead.

I hope you will Save me some Cyder and yites (eats?), again I come home. I hope you will me know how things are with \_\_\_\_.

I think my duty to let you know the Best as wil as worst. My Love to Mrs. Ruth and my children. My duty to father and Brother and Sisters and ask after me.

I am your dear friend.

Augustus Moore

Ruth Moore  
Sudbury, Mass.

The second letter reads as follows:

Ticonderoga october 10th 1776

Dear Madam

I received the favour of your letter dated ---- with a very king present and know not any other way to shew my gratitude than by my herty thanks for the same. You informed me that you was well which I was well very glad to hear but I cannot tell you so for I

12.

have been sick for about eighttteen days with the camp ail, but I hope that am in a likely way to get well again. I would have no news to write to you. I wanto have you write to me every opper-tunity you have and I will do the same by you for I want to hear from you as often as as I can but cannot write any longer but must conclud wishing you well this from your wor worthy frind.

Asahel HammOn

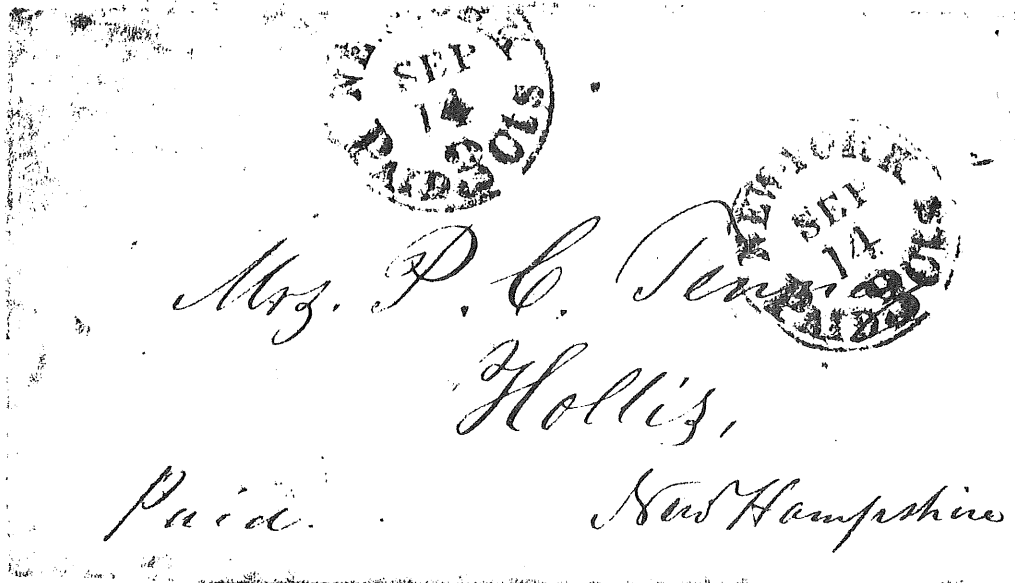
Pleas to give regards to Phebe Pomeroy and to all the rest of the folks.

To  
Mrs.  
Mary Pomeroy  
att  
Southampton  
This with Cair

(Note, UV revealed this address re -  
peted, plus an illegible word, perhaps  
"without" or name of bearer.)

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A NEW NEW YORK CITY LISTING



The above cover illustrates a thus-far unique example of the New York Paid 3¢ rate struck in black. This item has the 30mm red circle NEW-YORK/SEP/14/PAID 3 Cts and the same repeated in black. While undated, the breaks on the handstamp make it almost certain to be an 1853 date. This cover has been recorded for years, for it was in George Keller's collection. It was included in the mixed lot comprising Keller's NYC circles when sold by Siegel and it was bought in by Herbert Rosen, a postal history collector. Late in 1976 it was in a small lot of Rosen material at the Zimmerman sale. It is quite unclear as to why a black strike was used, but as the marking was repeated in red, there may have been an accidental use of the unpaid 'black' ink pad, which was promptly rehit in red. This item is recorded in the Rotnam, Chambers, Bond records.

WILLIAM PRINCE--THE BOTANICAL MAN  
by Michael Heller

Intrigued by an eight month difference between the interior date and that of the postmark, I picked up a cover with a red 30 mm FLUSHING/AUG/4/N.Y. circle and FREE addressed to Earlville, S. C. Inside it was datelined, "Prince's Linnean Garden & Nurseries New York, Jan. 1, 1842". It wasn't until I asked a friend if he could explain the dating difference that I realized that I had an interesting printed circular--an area I happen to collect. This set me to studying my serendipitous acquisition. Several other collectors, it appears, also had Prince letters, some of which had printed letterheads. But, most interesting of all was the information in the English Philatelist of June 1972 given by collector Bradford Gill, one of Prince's descendants.

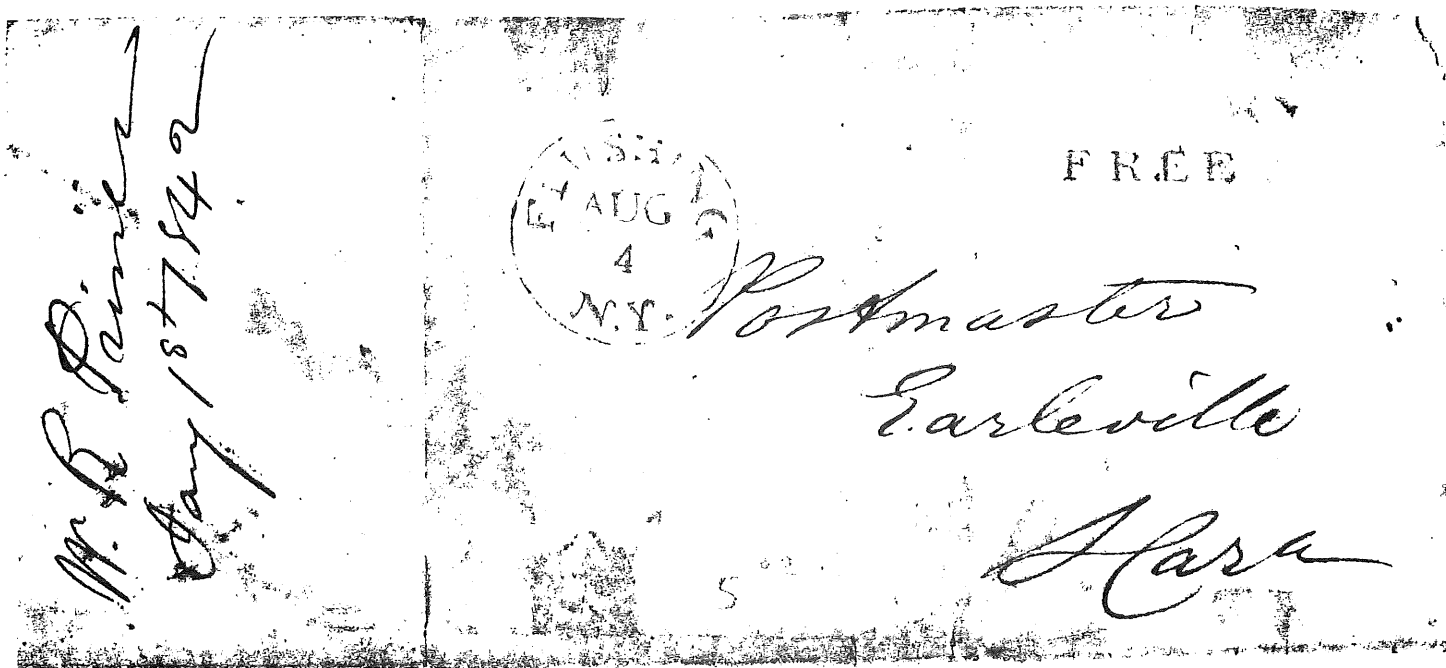


Figure 1: Outer leaf of the Prince printed circular showing dates.

Mr. Gill wrote that William Robert Prince came from a family of dissenters--Quakers who settled in New Amsterdam in the days of the Dutch, settling in Vlissengen (Flushing), where they built the Quaker Meeting House, which is still used today! They began a horticultural operation, the Linnean Garden, which became quite famous as a source for rare trees, such as the Cedar of Lebanon, Chinese magnolia and rare tulips (a Dutch passion in the days of New Netherland). The development of New York's grape and wine industry was credited to William R. Prince, who authored this printed circular while Admiral Prince William made a special trip by gig to Flushing to see the gardens while on a goodwill trip to New York in 1848.

William R. Prince was also a member of the Louis Agassiz expedition of scientists that appraised the newly acquired California

territory in 1850-51. Letters are extant from him, discussing the Sacramento flood during which he had to live for several days on a diet of guava jelly.

Thus, it can be seen that a chance acquisition opened up this whole area of history for me.

Dear Sir . . . Prince's Linnean Garden,  
& Nurseries, New York Jan 1/42

Being desirous to open a correspondence with any Proprietors of Nurseries, & Venders of Garden Seeds in your vicinity, I wish you would favor me with their names.—

I can supply all kinds of Fruit & Ornamental Trees, Shrubbery, & Flowering Plants, Greenhouse Trees & Plants, Bulbous Flower: Roots, splendid Double Dahlias, &c at low rates, & much less than the prices usually charged for them.— Also Garden Seeds by the pound, or put up in small parcels for retailing.— On all orders sent in Cash, or a Draft, or referring to a house in some Atlantic City that will pay the amount of the articles required, I will allow 10 per cent discount if the amount is under \$50. & 15 per cent when the amount is \$50 to \$100 & upwards.— The Catalogues will be sent to you gratis, desired—

Yours very truly

J. M. Prince

Figure 2: The printed circular contents of the 1842 letter. A circular is not necessarily put in the mail when it is printed and this one did not make it for 8-months.

BOOKS.—Prince's Treatise on Horticulture, 75 cents—Prince's Treatise on the Vine, \$1 50—Prince's Treatise on Fruits, or Pomological Manual, containing accurate descriptions in detail of about 800 varieties of Fruits, in 2 vols., \$2 00.

NEW CATALOGUES, with reduced prices, which are distributed gratis, on application, post paid. Descriptive Catalogue of Fruit Trees, Shrubs, and Plants—No. 2. Hardy Ornamental Trees, Shrubs, and Plants—No. 3. Bulbous and Tuberous rooted Plants, Double Dahlias, &c.—No. 4. Greenhouse Trees, Shrubs and Plants—No. 5. American Indigenous Trees, Shrubs, and Plants—No. 6. A Catalogue of Garden and Flower Seeds, with reduced wholesale prices—No. 7. Do, do, do, in French—No. 8. Wholesale Catalogue for Nurseries only.

PRINCE'S LINNEAN BOTANIC GARDEN AND NURSERIES, *Flushing, Long Island, near New-York.*

WM. B. PRINCE & CO.

CITY OFFICE, 23 Pine-street, New-York.

Figure 3: Letterhead used by Prince in the 1844-8 period.

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# SPECULATIONS ON COINAGE TO PAY POSTAGE 1816-45

by Robert Dalton Harris

The postage rates of 1816 were 6, 10, 12½, 18½, 25 and multiples thereof. The only change until 1845 was the 18-3/4 for 18½ in 1825. The 6¢, 10¢ and 25¢ rates could be paid conveniently in U.S. coins. The only difficulty being that 6¢ took two U.S. coins while if the postage payer were willing to overpay a bit he could manage it with a Spanish medio (6¼¢). Now how difficult would it be for a person to muster the 5¢ + 1¢ U.S. coins, instead of the medio? This would depend on how many 5¢ and 1¢ coins were in circulation compared with the number of medios around. And that suggests looking at the figures of how many coins the U.S. mints were cranking out.

Over the years 1800-1840, the U.S. minted around 80 million large cents--averaging 2-million per year. Lulls in production occurred in the 1805-1815 era and in the early 1820's. There was good production 1815-20 and post 1830. I believe there were sufficient U.S. large cents in circulation for commerce. At a time when the U.S. population was around 10-million, a penny was coined each year per five persons. These days we get in about five per person, but our commerce is greatly different. Thus, as only gold and silver foreign specie were valid (they were made valid in 1793 and lasted until 1857) and among these there were none of the 1¢ value, we have to presume there were enough pennies to go around.

How about 5¢ pieces? Ah! The U.S. suspended production of half-dimes in 1805. While, before that, the government had only minted about a quarter of a million. Not many half-dimes I'd say. But, the U.S. started minting half-dimes with a vengeance in 1829 averaging two million a year until 1840. So, I would imagine that in the period 1829 on, the half-dime rapidly replaced the foreign specie as the predominant silver coin in circulation.

Dimes were in steady production throughout 1800-1840, averaging perhaps a half-million per year.



Quarters lapsed 1807-1815, but were in healthy production after that, averaging about a quarter-million annually.

In postage, therefore, I speculate that the Spanish coins figure heavily, because there were few half-dimes, or, because there were Spanish medios there was little need for a half-dime. But, beginning in 1829---a date that may be quite significant in analysis of covers for the under 30-mile rate--the U.S. started producing 5¢ coins in sufficient quantities to replace the silver Spanish coins --almost as many half dimes as 1¢ pieces. Thus, we have a possible explanation for the difference between a  $6\frac{1}{4}$ ¢ rate and a 6¢ rate in the pre-1829 period. We definitely know that in the 1844-5 period of the independent mails, Hale & Co. used both a 6¢ and  $6\frac{1}{4}$ ¢ rating handstamp for its letters, so it would appear the Spanish medio was still in fairly heavy circulation that late.

What about the other rates? The  $12\frac{1}{2}$ ¢ rate could be either paid in one Spanish coin (the  $12\frac{1}{2}$ ¢ real) or in four U.S. coins (10¢, two 1¢, and a  $\frac{1}{2}$ ¢). The rate seems to have been a natural for a Spanish coin! The  $18\frac{1}{2}$ ¢ rate of 1816-1825 did not fit the Spanish coinage, and it took six U.S. coins (10¢, 5¢, 3 1¢ and a  $\frac{1}{2}$ ¢). However, with the change in 1825 to an  $18\frac{3}{4}$ ¢ rate, the Spanish real plus a medio would fit exactly. The English shilling, of course could be used, at 12¢ plus  $\frac{1}{2}$ ¢ U.S. or in combination with a half-dime, a penny and a half cent to fit these two rates, and we do know that shillings were popular coinage inasmuch as the express companies such as Wells & Co., American Express, etc. used shillings in the 1840's, in calculating their rates on covers.

Nevertheless, it appears that the key currency for several of the 1816-45 rates was the Spanish (real and medio) and that it was not until the post-1829 period that U.S. currency was in adequate supply to replace it.

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The official Federal Register records of New York postoffices, postmasters and net proceeds by office are available to ESPHS members. Contact the editor. 10% of the proceeds go to the society:

Year	Pages	Price	Year	Pages	Price	Year	Pages	Price
1802*	40	\$10	1841	64	\$5	1853	64	\$5
1817*	103	10	1843	46	5	1855	47	5
1823*	131	10	1845	74	5	1857	51	5
1835	44	5	1847	75	5	1859	45	5
1837	44	5	1849	91	5	1861	54	5
1839	44	5	1851	75	5	1869	53	5

\* Entire U.S.