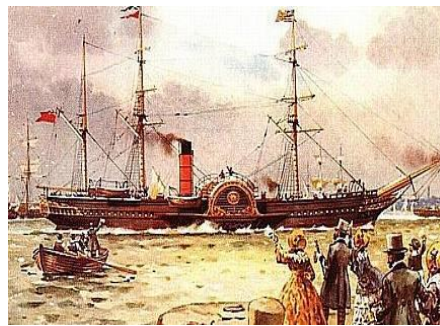


## Judge's Synopsis

### Essex County Packet Mail: 1840 up to UPU



#### Treatment, Organization and Development

Before scheduled transatlantic service was introduced, it was very difficult for people in towns other than major ports to send letters overseas. That changed in 1840 with Cunard transatlantic service. At that point, letters could be sent to the port of departure while knowing when the steamer was scheduled to depart.

Using historic Essex County, Mass. The objective of this exhibit is to include as an example, this exhibit letters from as many towns, to as many destinations, under as many postal treaties, as possible. 18 different towns, with populations from <300 to more than 22,000, sent under a very broad variety of postal treaties. Salem and Newburyport are over-represented here because of their focus on international trade. Letters represent 11 postal treaties, and destinations range from Peru; England; other European countries; Calcutta; Singapore; Zanzibar and China.

The exhibit is organized by treaty as shown on the title page.

18 post offices included from towns and villages of <300 to more than 22,000.

|                      |               |               |
|----------------------|---------------|---------------|
| West Newbury (1,550) | Beverly Farms | Ipswich       |
| Amesbury (3143)      | Lynn          | North Andover |
| Marblehead (6000)    | Andover       | Haverhill     |
| Nahant (<300)        | Danvers       | Rockport      |
| Newburyport          | North Danvers | Pigeon Cove   |
| Salem                | Lawrence      | Beverly       |

#### Destinations

|        |                   |                |
|--------|-------------------|----------------|
| U.K.   | Genoa             | Zanzibar       |
| France | Orange Free State | Syria / Turkey |
| Egypt  | Hong Kong         | Prussia        |
| Chile  | Tuscany           | Calcutta       |
| Peru   | Italy             | Bombay         |
| Russia | Argentina         | Australia      |

#### Conventions

|                                             |                            |                                   |
|---------------------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| U. K. Convention of 1848                    | British Mail via Panama    | U. S. – French Convention of 1852 |
| British Open Mail                           | U. K. Convention of 1868   | Italian Convention of 1870        |
| British Mail via Marseilles                 | U. K. Convention of 1870   | Brazil Convention of 1870         |
| British Mail via S'hampton                  | Prussia Convention of 1852 | New Zealand Convention of 1870    |
| South Africa Colonies Postal Treaty of 1892 |                            |                                   |

## **Importance**

While the importance of letters sent overseas from a single county in the U.S. may not seem important, this period represents the opening up of international communications to even the smallest towns in the U.S. Before this, letters generally came from those seaboard towns whose senders had easy access to the captains of sailing ships leaving from there or from large towns nearby.

## **Personal Study and Research**

I have been collecting this material for at least 25-30 years. Initially exhibiting was limited to letters sent from Essex County up to 1851, even though collecting included later material. A 10-frame exhibit won a grand award at the Philatelic Show in Boxboro in 2011. But I have also obtained every Essex County packet letter I could over the past 15+ years. Two shows ago, I noted that I had only missed one that I was aware of, from Ipswich, Mass. to Peru. I have since acquired that cover and now have acquired all that I know of. This exhibit was last shown at Nojex, where it received a Large Gold. I am confident this exhibit could not be duplicated.

## **Condition**

The material in this exhibit is generally in very fine condition. There are a couple of items I would like to see improved, but they are fairly rare items, and are unlikely to be found in better condition.

## **Difficulty of Acquisition**

There were over 70 post office operating in Essex County at some point from 1840-1875. However, many of these are scarce to rare to any destination, not to mention a foreign one. Others have quite small populations. As noted above, I have been looking broadly for these letters for at least 15 years, and only failed to obtain one that I know of. Transatlantic letters were expensive, requiring both inland and transatlantic (24c) postage. Most transatlantic letters came from towns along the coast with a history of transatlantic trade, such as Salem or Newburyport, and were business letters. Others came from well-off smaller towns like Nahant, where inhabitants were more likely to maintain correspondence with friends and relatives overseas.

Important items are bordered in red. They are generally from very small towns or villages, post offices that were open only a small time, sent per uncommon treaties or sent to unusual destinations.

- A pre-treaty letter from West Newbury (pop. 1560) canceled with an unrecorded straight-line postmark.
- A 1<sup>st</sup> U.S.-U.K. convention cover from the smallest town in the county (Nahant - pop. <300) with a very scarce three-line handstamp.
- A second 1<sup>st</sup> U.S.-U.K. convention cover sent from the village of Beverly Farms (pop. <1000) bearing both U.S. and U.K. adhesives.
- A cover sent from Salem via Marseilles to Zanzibar in 1867, from the Goodhue correspondence.
- A letter sent in 1855 from Newburyport to Valparaiso, Chile per U.S. packet to Panama, then British packet to Chile. This was the result of an 1853 amendment to the 1<sup>st</sup> U.S.-U.K. agreement.
- A second letter sent from Nahant in 1871 (when the population had increased to 475) to London, per the 2<sup>nd</sup> U.S.-U.K. agreement.
- A letter from Salem to St. Petersburg in 1862, sent by Prussian Closed Mail. From the Josiah Pierce correspondence.
- A patriotic cover from Pigeon Cove (pop. <1000), a village in Rockport, to Egypt, per French Mail.
- A letter from Ipswich (pop. 3300) sent via Panama to Callao, Peru, per British Mail.

May 2024

### **Key Reference**

1. “American Stampless Cover Catalogue” Volume I, Fifth Edition, David G. Phillips Publishing Co., Inc. 1997.

# Packet Mail sent from Essex County, Mass.: 1840 up to UPU

## Purpose and Scope

Before regularly scheduled transatlantic packet (Cunard) mail service began, it was quite difficult for people in small towns to send letters across the Atlantic. Post 1840, even those in small towns knew which steamers were leaving from where and when they planned to sail. The examples shown in this exhibit are from the small and very small towns in a historic northeastern Massachusetts county, from the inauguration of the Cunard steamers in 1840 up until the standardization of international postal rates by the U.P.U. A very wide range of postal conventions are included.

- Pre - U.S. – U.K. Convention of 1848
- The U.S.- U.K. Convention of 1848
  - Mail to the U.K.
  - British Open Mail
  - British Mail *via* Marseilles
  - British Mail *via* Southampton
  - British Mail *via* Panama
- The U.S. – U.K. Conventions of 1867 and 1869
- U.S. – Prussia Postal Convention of 1852
- U.S. – French Postal Convention of 1857
- U.S. – Italian Postal Convention of 1870
- U.S. – Brazil Convention of 1870
- Epilog: Post-1875 Mail

## Background

Essex County lies on the Atlantic Ocean, north of Boston and ending at the New Hampshire border. Established in 1643, it is one of the oldest and most historic counties in the U.S. In 1850, town populations ranged from just over 22,000 (Salem) to less than 400 (Nahant). Populations noted are from the closest census unless otherwise noted.

**Important items include those from very small towns (population bolded above rate information); short-lived post offices; and unusual destinations. They are outlined in red.**

### Pre – U.S. – U.K. Convention

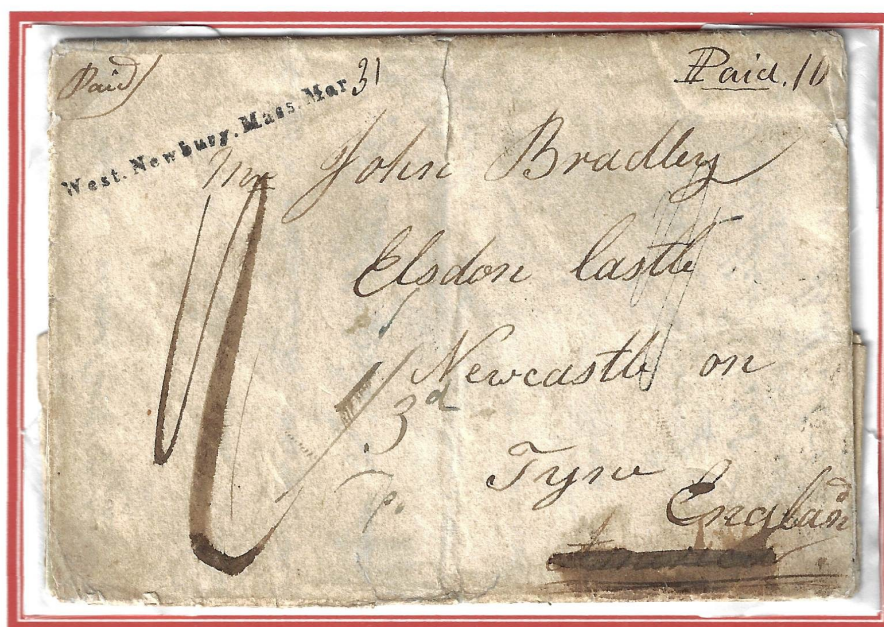
Act of Congress, Mar. 3, 1825 (eff May 1)

#### **West Newbury (pop. 1,560)**

Rated (paid) 10c as a single letter sent 30-80 miles to Boston. Carried by British packet at the 1sh (due) packet rate to the U.K.

This is the  
**only known example**  
of the 36x2mm  
West Newbury SL  
(with “Mass.”)

Situated in the northern part of the county, the post office was opened on Feb. 18, 1819 as Parsons; its name was changed on Aug. 20, 1820.



West Newbury *via* Boston and Liverpool to Newcastle on Tyne

March 31, 1842

Cunard Steamers *Unicorn* to Halifax, *Caledonia* to Liverpool