

Synopsis: Newspapers and Prices Current between USA and GB 1840 – 1875

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This article discusses examples of the rates and treatment of newspapers and registered and unregistered prices current (circulars / printed matter) between Great Britain and the USA in the 1848 Anglo-US Treaty period 1849 to 1875, before GPU.

Its purpose is to summarize the talk given by the author with his 16 sheet display to the Congress of the Postal History Society in November 2023 at the request of the PHS Journal's editor.

It provides the background to the development of the postal rates and handling of newspapers and prices current during the period prior to GPU. Primary sources are cited as footnotes in this text.

In 1840 the GB packet rate to the USA per newspaper or printed matter item registered as a newspaper was 2d. On arrival in the USA newspapers were charged 1¢ for less than 100 miles, 1½¢ for more. Newspapers and circulars incoming to GB were also charged 2d.

The 1848 Anglo US Treaty effective February 1849 set rates for newspapers. However, circulars were not explicitly addressed by the Treaty: outgoing GB registered circulars were charged as newspapers at 1d under the treaty but incoming circulars were charged 2d postage due until the GB rate was changed to 1d in 1865. Treaty revisions between 1867 and 1875 regularised the treatment and also changed the rates to provide payment to destination.

The most coherent account of rates of postage between Great Britain and the USA for newspapers and prices current between 1840 and 1875 is in Dick Winter's *Understanding Transatlantic Mail*¹, pages 146 to 156. It summarises the position prior to the 1849 Anglo US Treaty as well as under the Treaty and its changes from 1867 to 1870. (The Treaty ended in June 1875).

The Anglo US Treaty is available from the US Philatelic Classics Society [website](#) in its [Postal Conventions section](#). Articles XV to XVIII of the 1849 Treaty address newspapers, circulars and periodicals. ([Convention of 1848](#)). Article XVI deals with newspapers in transit through the USA. Newspapers etc. are then dealt with in greater detail in the [1867 update to the convention](#). Further changes in rates were addressed in the [1868-69 Treaty Amendments](#). These are all summarised in Dick Winter's book, mentioned above.

Malcolm Montgomery's *Postage Rates of the North Atlantic Mails*² cites British primary sources and includes newspapers (pages A2-12, A3-1 to A3-11). Page A2-12 makes the point about British 'Authorised' printed papers and prices current, prepaid up to 2oz being rated at 1d – GPO Regulation 1839. On page A2-32 Malcolm confirms the Article XVII printed paper rates for USA and GB. US inland newspaper rates from 1825 are summarised on page A2-23, but are also available in many US publications, e.g. *Linn's World Stamp Almanac*, 5th Edition, Amos Press, 1989, pages 374-5.

Finally, "Private British Newspapers sent from the United Kingdom to any foreign port by packet or ship, 2d each" [Act 3/4 Vic c96, effective 1st Sep 1840³].

The go-to book for the sailing dates of mail carrying liners from 1840 to 1875 is Hubbard and Winter's *North Atlantic Mail Sailings*⁴.

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¹ Winter, RF: *Understanding Transatlantic Mail* Volume 1, American Philatelic Society, 2006

² Montgomery, MB: *The Postage Rates of the North Atlantic Mails 1635-1950*, The Author, 1991

³ Personal correspondence with Colin Tabcart

⁴ Hubbard, W & Winter, RF: *North Atlantic Mail Sailings 1840-75*, US Philatelic Classics Society, Inc 1988