

***British Postal Agency at St Thomas, Danish West Indies***

Two CROWN PAID hand-stamps were sent by the GPO in London to the British Postal Agency in St Thomas, Danish West Indies. The most common was the CC.1 handstamp. Used from 1850 to 1863. The CC.2, as shown on this cover is known used from 1855 to 1868.

**1860 Entire Letter from St Thomas to Copenhagen**



St Thomas CC2 CROWN PAID



Pre-paid Entire Letter from St.Thomas, Danish West Indies to Copenhagen. On the front are - red Crowned Circle (CC2) PAID AT ST THOMAS "1/4½" in red manuscript. Red "P" in oval and red LONDON PAID CDS dated JY 13 1860. On the back are a black St.Thomas double ring CDS dated 28 June 1860, K.D.O.P.A Hamburg 13 JUL and Oval St.P.A. 15 JUL - Kjøbenhavn 17. JULI.

**Rate:** 6d per ½oz was the rate from 1857 to 1865 for a single weight letter from St Thomas to London. The rate from London to Copenhagen via Belgium and Hamburg was 10½d.

**Route:** RMS Shannon from St Thomas (29<sup>th</sup> June) to Southampton (13<sup>th</sup> July)

## The Postmarks of the British Postal Agency at St Thomas, Danish West Indies

The British Postal Agency in St Thomas opened in January 1809 and by 1825 was a major packet office. In particular, the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company (RSMP), which had a near monopoly of mail contracts from the Caribbean to Great Britain from 1842, made St Thomas the hub of the service. Up to 15 feeder routes from other ports fed the main packet route from St Thomas to Southampton.

A number of date stamps were used on mail from St Thomas or in transit and are shown on the following pages, including the distinctive C51 barred obliterator used to cancel British postal stamps at St Thomas.

### 1850 wrapper from St. Croix in the Danish Virgin Islands to Copenhagen

This shows the seriffed St Thomas double ringed date stamp



1850 wrapper addressed from St. Croix in the Danish Virgin Islands, to Copenhagen, stamped at the British Post Office at St. Thomas on 17<sup>th</sup> March 1850. There are transit stamps for London and for Hamburg.  
**Rate:** Total postage charge 1s 9d; the 1847 West Indies rate of 1/- less 1d, the inland reduction for onward transmission to the Continent, plus 10d to Denmark under the 01.10.1846 tariff. The Danes charged 24% rigsbank skilling. Four skillings were equivalent to 1d, although 3½ skillings to 1d was more accurate.  
**Route:** Carried on the RMSMP steamer Teviot from St Thomas (17<sup>th</sup> March 1850) to Southampton (5<sup>th</sup> April)

The following sources were used for this display:

Kenton PJ and Parsons HG (1999) *Early routings of the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company 1842- 1879*. Postal History Society  
Lowe, R (1990) *The Encyclopaedia of British Empire Postal Stamps Volume VI Leeward Islands* Christie's Robson Lowe, London / Auction House, Bournemouth  
Parmenter J (1993) *GB Used Abroad: Cancellations and Postal Markings* Postal History Society, Beckenham  
Rowe, K (1996) *The Postal History and Markings of The Forwarding Agents*  
Tabart, C 2<sup>nd</sup> ed (2003) *United Kingdom Letter Rates Inland and Overseas* HH Sales Bradford

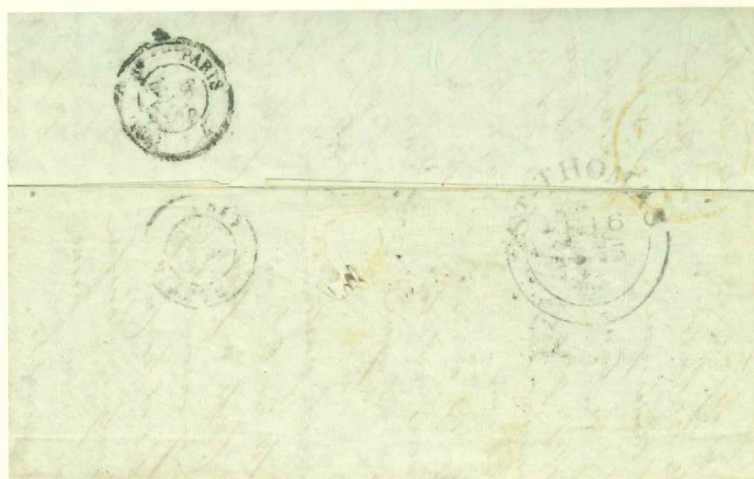
Danish West Indies

St Thomas



Lowe HS4 (Type PH) CDS

1855 entire letter from St Thomas, Danish West Indies to Bastia, Corsica



1855 Entire Letter (in French) sent to BASTIA, CORSICA with St. THOMAS double arc cds of the British PO on Reverse, fine red boxed COLONIES/& ART 13 top right on Obverse, endorsed 'per ATRATO'

**Rate:** 15 in manuscript i.e. 15 decimes

**Route:** By RMS Atrato from St Thomas (Feb 17<sup>th</sup>) to Southampton (8<sup>th</sup> April)

Sources

Kenton PJ & Parsons HG (1999) Early routes of the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company 1842-1879. Postal History So, East Grinstead  
Lowe, R (1990) The Encyclopaedia of British Empire Postal Stamps Volume VI Leeward Islands Christie's Robson Lowe, London and the Auction House, Bournemouth

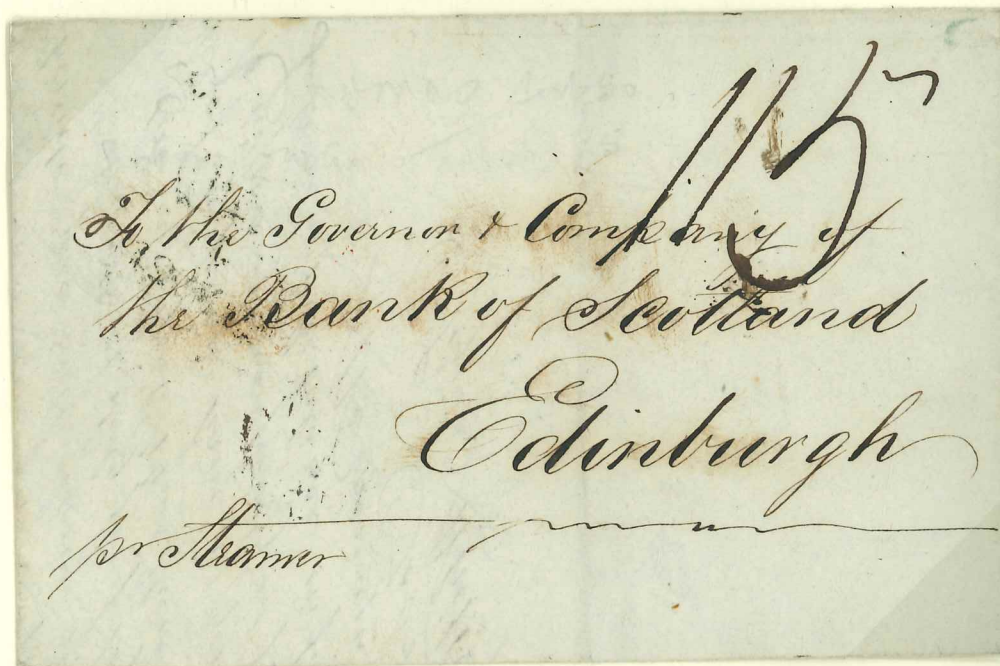
## Danish West Indies

### St Thomas

In 1842 the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company (RSMP) started packet boat services to the West Indies. Initially Falmouth was the British port used, but from September 1843 Southampton became the British port of call, because of better rail links to London. This mail was carried on one of the first packets to use Southampton. Charlotte Amalie, St Thomas became the main port of call in 1843, replacing Turk Island.

The RMS Tweed was one of the initial wooden hulled RMSP packet boats. It was only in service for five years and was wrecked on 12<sup>th</sup> February 1847 on route from Havana to Vera Cruz with the loss of 72 lives.

### 1843 entire from St Thomas to Edinburgh



1843 entire folded letter (a duplicate) addressed "by steamer" to Edinburgh from St. Thomas, Danish West Indies, stamped at the local British Post Office on 31<sup>st</sup> October 1843. There is a transit stamp for London (21<sup>st</sup>) with arrival in Edinburgh on the 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**Rate:** 1s 5d as per the 01.04.1840 tariff

**Route:** It was carried in the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company's steamer "Tweed" which left the next day for Southampton where it arrived on 20<sup>th</sup> November. The packet boats stopped at Grenada and Bridgetown, Barbados on route from St Thomas to Southampton.