

British Postal Agency in Cape Haitien, Haiti

The first British Postal Agency was opened at Cape Haitien in 1842 and the CDS1 handstamp was sent on 1st January 1842. It was used until 1843 and another handstamp (Parmenter CDS2) is known to have been used from June 1855 to 1860 for the internal postal service operated by the British Post Office.

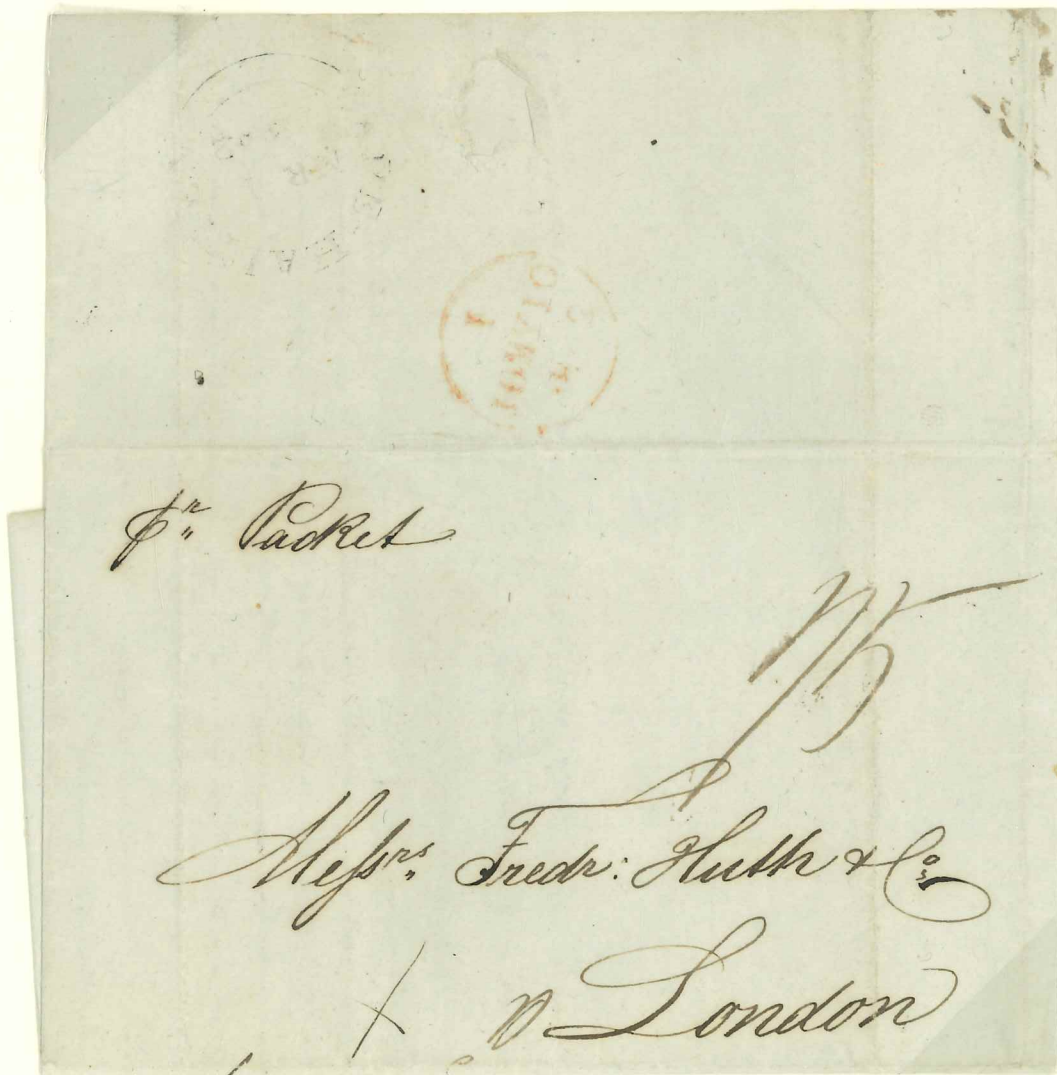
Wallace Dean III, in *The British and French Postal agencies in Haiti*, states that it is doubtful that the "Cap Haitien" cancels were sent out in January 1842 because Cap Haitien was not a regular Royal Mail Steam Packet Company (RMSP) port of call in 1842 and because the only known cover from Cape Haitien in 1842 has no date stamp. **However, this cover, with a rare albino postmark, shows that the Agency was operating in 1842 and used the agency hand stamp.**

The RMSP service started in 1842 but the first scheduled stop at Cape Haitien was not until 5th November 1842. However, *Kenton and Parsons* report that unscheduled stops were made at Cape Haitien in early January 1842 and on 18th June 1842. It is possible that an unscheduled stop was also made at Cape Haitien in March 1842.

1842 entire letter from Cape Haitien to London



Cape Haitien CDS1



1841 entire letter from Cap Haitien to London with "1/5" and "pr Packet" in manuscript. The back has a virtually albino Cap Haitien CDS1 cancel dated MR 11 1842 and faint red London receiver. The letter is dated 10 Dec although posted 4 months later. It is a very early use of the Cap Haitien CDS1 cancel.

British Postal Agencies in Aux Cayes and St Marc, Haiti

From 1849 to 1863 the British Post Office ran an internal mail service in Haiti; two of the seven agencies was set up at Aux Cayes and St Marc. The double ring cancels were not entered in the GPO proof books in London, but *Parmenter* states that covers are recorded until 1863 (Aux Cayes) and February 1854 to July 1861 (St Marc).. These are both very late usages, in the last few months of use at both Postal agencies.

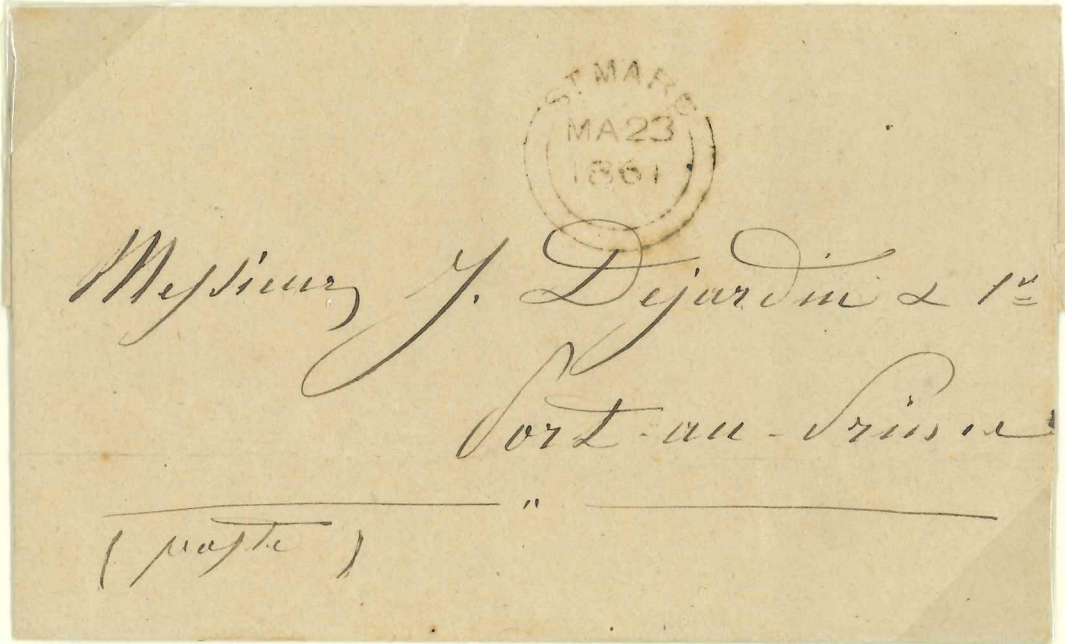


St Marc CDS



Aux Cayes CDS

1861 and 1863 entire letter from St Marc and Aux Cayes to Port au Prince



1861 entire letter from Aux Cayes to Port au Prince, Haiti. On the back there is a British Postal Agency St Marc double ring CDS cancel dated Mar 23rd 1861.



1863 entire letter from Aux Cayes to Port au Prince, Haiti. On the back there is a British Postal Agency Aux Cayes double ring CDS cancel dated FE 13 1863; the "FE" is inverted

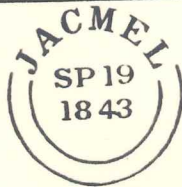
British Postal Agency in Jacmel, Haiti

In 1825 The United Kingdom acknowledged the Republic of Haiti and sent a consul-general.

In 1843 the British Packet Agency was established at Jacmel, a miserable place consisting of a row of white houses behind a long belt of sand. The wise and prudent did not land, because on the rickety landing stage gathered coloured gentlemen dressed in gold lace who desired to know his business, and a great many unpleasant looking men clad in nothing more than a cloth with a hole in the middle for the wearers' heads!

When the mails arrived in a small boat through the surf, the British Consular officials would have protected him from the inquisition. (Parmenter)

1847 cover from Port au Prince to London via Jacmel



CDS1



1847 cover from Port au Prince to London. Front has "2/5" and "p.packet" in manuscript, rectangular 1f60 Anglo-French accountancy mark and Calais transit stamp. Reverse has black British PO Jacmel May 10th 1847 CDS1 cancel, and red London receiving cancel for July 10th 1847. the sender would have paid for the cover to be taken on a mule train from Port au Prince to Jacmel.

The British Postal Agencies in Haiti from 1842 to 1881

The British General Post Office (GPO) opened agencies in Haiti at Cap Haitien (1842), Jacmel (1843) and Port au Prince (1843, although in reality the agency opened in 1869) for overseas mail, initially sent unpaid to be paid for on collection. The following pages give examples of unpaid mail:

Page 2 1842 entire letter from Cape Haitien to London

This is the only known cover from Cap Haitien with a complete 1842 date-stamp.

Page 3 1847 cover from Port au Prince to London via Jacmel

Early paid mail from Haiti used the crowned circle handstamps; The GPO sent one to Jacmel 9in 1843.

Page 4 1865 Entire Letter from Jacmel to New York with red Crowned Circle "PAID/AT/JACMEL"

In a unique overseas enterprise, the GPO ran the internal mail service in Haiti from 1849 to 1863, believed to be unique in postal history. The coastal towns provided with British date stamps were Aux Cayes, Cap Haitien, Gonaives, Miragoane, St Marc, Jacmel and Port au Prince.

This service was probably by contract with the Haitian government; the start of the service coincides with the "election" of President Soulouque and appointment of Etienne Salomon as Minister of Finance in 1849. In 1859 the government was overthrown and Geffrard became president; the contracts were allowed to expire and the British operated internal mail service to cease.

Examples of internal mail are all very rare. Those shown here are:

Page 5 1849 entire letter from Gonaives to Port au Prince

Page 6 1861 and 1863 entire letter from St Marc and Aux Cayes to Port au Prince

GB stamps and distinctive obliterators were sent to Jacmel in 1865 (C59 obliterator) and Port au Prince in 1869 (E53 obliterators). These were used until Haiti joined the UPU in 1881. Examples shown here are:

Page 7 Two 1877 Entire Letters stamped C59 from Jacmel to St. Thomas

Page 8 1876 envelope stamped E53 from Port au prince to Gera, Germany

Piece from Jacmel to USA with C59 obliterator on GB stamps and a JACMEL CDS PAID handstamp.

The final page shows 1879 covers from Port au Prince to France. The destination for much of the mail was France, the original colonial power in Haiti. Mail to France generally went unpaid using an Anglo-French accountancy agreement until Haiti joined the UPU in 1881.

Page 9 1879 covers from Port au Prince and Jacmel to Le Havre, France

Sources (also referenced in the text):

Dean, L Wallace II *The British and French Postal agencies in Haiti - VIII Internal service in Haiti Philately, journal of the Haiti Philatelic Society Vol 4 No4 Oct 1980 pp 52-60*

Kenton PJ and Parsons HG (1999) *Early routings of the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company 1842- 1879. Postal History Society*

Parmenter J (1993) *GB Used Abroad: Cancellations and Postal Markings Postal History Society, Beckenham*

Tabart, C 2nd ed (2003) *United Kingdom Letter Rates Inland and Overseas HH Sales Bradford*

HAITI

Jacmel

Jacmel was a very unhealthy place and five vice-consuls were appointed British Packet Agents between 1865 and 1881. There was little authority and they were very unsettled times for foreigners.

According to Alec Waugh, of the 24 presidents who held office, two were murdered, one committed suicide, two died in office, two retired and seventeen fled to Jamaica with treasury funds. For most of these unsettled times, the only British Agency was at Jacmel.

1864 entire from Port au Prince to Marseilles France via Jacmel



CDS2



1864 entire from Port au Prince to Marseilles France via Great Britain on Rabeau Freres letterhead. The front has 1f60c rectangular GB/France accountancy / exchange mark, "8" and "steamer Anglais" in manuscript and black Calais 1 Mars 64 transit stamp. The back has a black British PO Jacmel Fe 10 1864 CDS2 cancel and transit marks including Lyon a la Mediterranee TPO.

Route: RMS Tyne Jacmel 10th Feb to St Thomas 13th Feb; RMS Shannon St Thomas 14th Feb to Southampton 29th Feb

Sources:

Kenton PJ and Parsons HG (1999) *Early routes of the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company 1842- 1879*. Postal History Society, Parmenter J (1993) *GB Used Abroad: Cancellations and Postal Markings* Postal History Society, Beckenham

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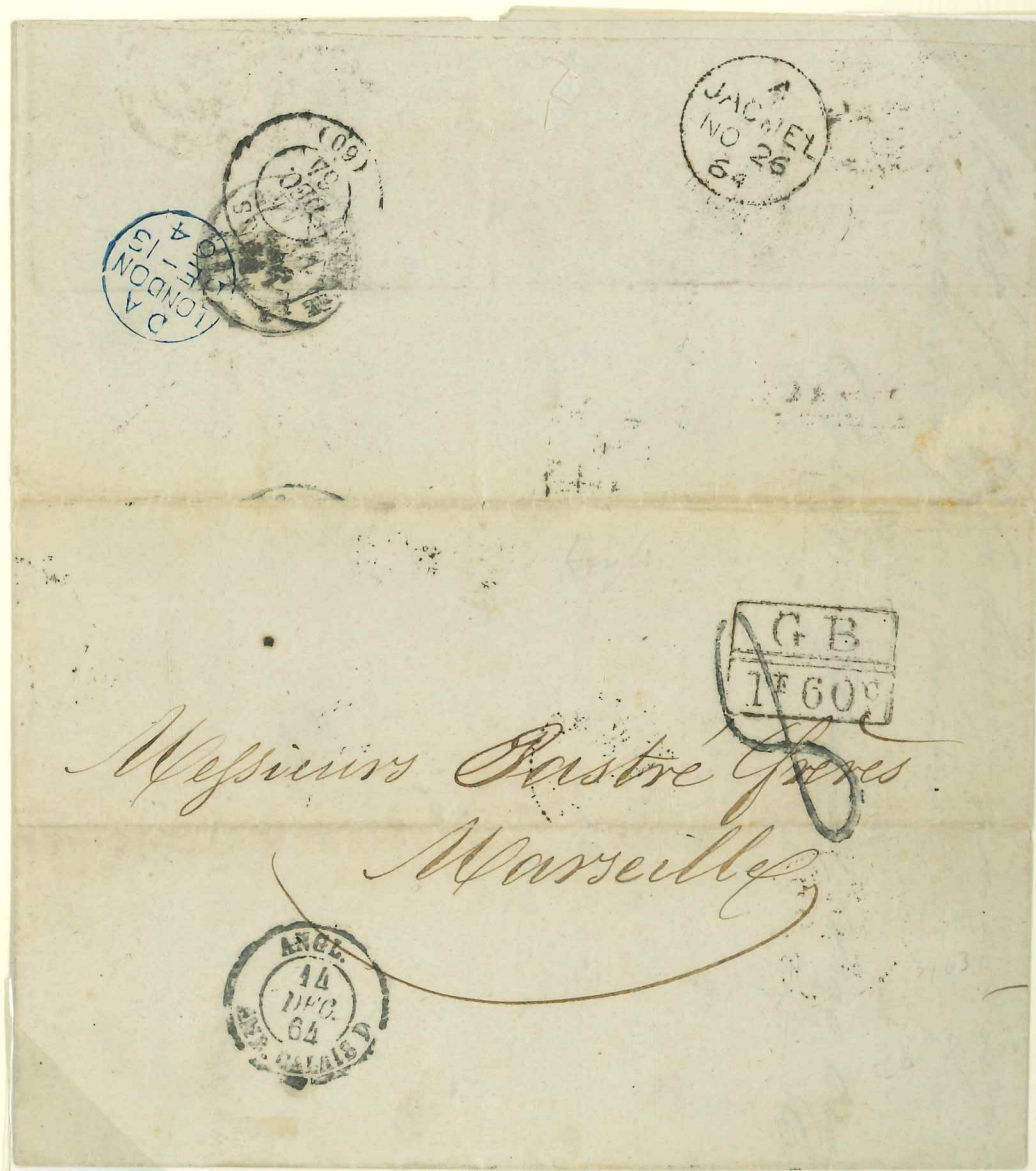
Jacmel

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CDS2



1864 entire from Port au Prince to Marseilles France via Great Britain. Front has "8" i.e. 8 decimes in manuscript, rectangular 1f60 Anglo-French accountancy mark and Calais transit stamp. Reverse has black British PO Jacmel November 26 1864 CDS2 cancel, and various blue and black transit stamps.

British Postal Agency in Port au Prince, Haiti

The British Postal Agency at Port au Prince was set up in 1869 as a result of a contract awarded to the West Indies and Pacific Steamship Company for conveying mails from Haiti to Liverpool. The British Consul suggested that it was not possible to allow the local authorities to have any thing to do with the correspondence coming by the British mails and the Vice-Consul Mr Byron was appointed the Postmaster at £50pa. Letters were originally sent stamp-less and it was not until 1877 that postage stamps and the E53 cancel were widely used.

This letter has "via Southampton" in manuscript but in fact was sent via Liverpool.

1870 cover from Port au Prince to Le Havre, France via Liverpool



Port au prince cds



Liverpool Packet letter



1870 cover from Port au Prince to Le Havre with PORT AU PRINCE British PO CDSs2, boxed GB/1F60C accountancy marks, "10" and "via Southampton" (although it went via Liverpool) in manuscript and Liverpool BR packet CDS for 15 SP 80 (Whitney type 14/56) on back with various transit CDS including a red LONDON transit dated 16 SP 70.

Rate:

In London it received the Anglo-French accountancy mark for 1f60c before proceeding via Calais to Le Havre. The French charged 10 decimes under the 1st January 1857 Anglo-French Convention.

Haiti, Port au Prince

West India and Pacific Steam Ship Company mail boat service

The West India and Pacific Steam Ship Company had 5 contracts with the Post Office between 1865 and 1888. The contracts concerned the carriage of mail from Liverpool to various places in the West Indies; the first contract included a route to Tampico via Port au Prince. The Treasury Secretary, Mr Peel, announced in Parliament that the contract could be terminated at six months notice. This contract was short-lived, however, due to several alterations in sailing dates and occasions where no vessel was available. In April 1866, the contract was terminated and subsequent letters carried by the company were treated by the Post Office as normal ship letters. This letter, in 1867, was a ship letter with cachets from Liverpool and London.

1867 cover from Port au Prince to Le Havre via Liverpool



Liverpool ship letter



Stampless cover sent from Port au Prince to Le Havre dated Feb 19 1867. On the front are an Anglo-French GB/1F60c cachet, ANGL/AMB/CALAIS cds, Francoz & Co green oval merchant's cachet and "10" rate and "par Steamer via Liverpool" in manuscript. On the back are LIVERPOOL/SHIP/MR 23/1867 C boxed cachet, SHIP LETTER LONDON cds in red & LE HAVRE cds.

Sources:

Hansard Parliamentary Proceedings 20th March 1865 Vol 177 c1921

Moubray Jane and Moubray Michael 1992 *British Letter Mail to Overseas Destinations 184- 1875* Royal Philatelic Society

Tabart, C *The West India and Pacific Steam-Ship Company: The Mail Contracts 1865-1888* Stuart Rossiter Fund – Rossiter Postal History Journal Volume 7:2006

British Postal Agencies at Port au Prince and Jacmel, Haiti

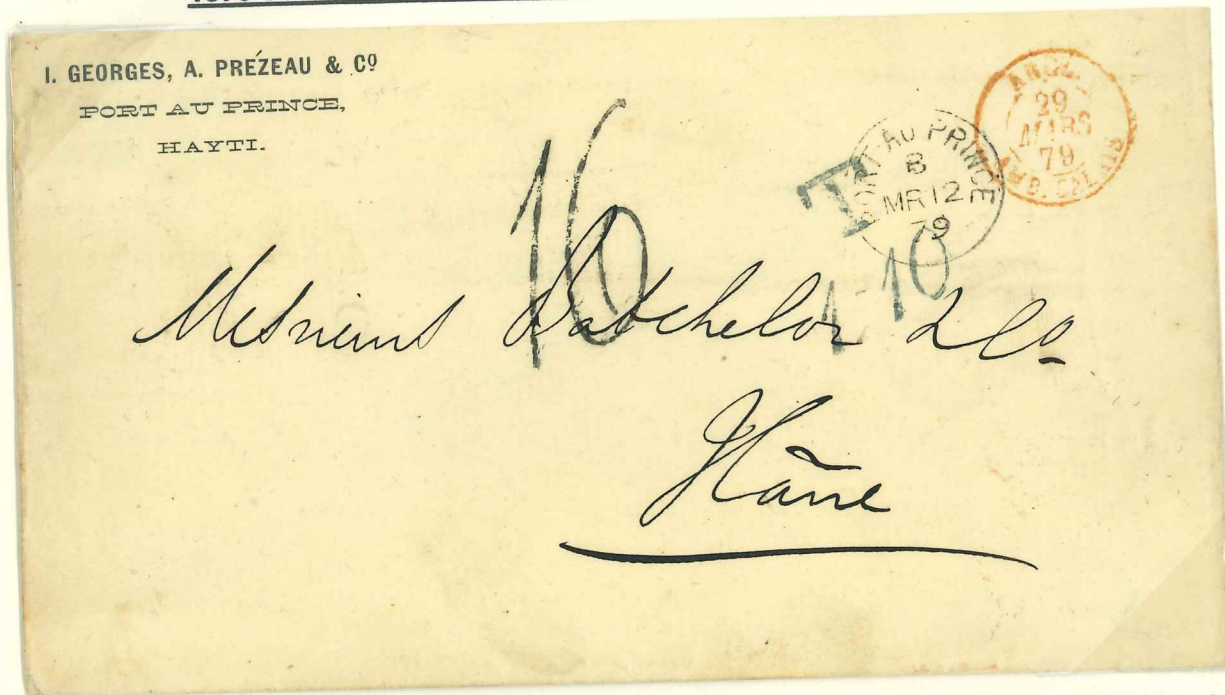
Mail to France was sent unpaid with a procedure to recompense the British Government for the cost of carrying the mails. These two covers were carried in 1979 to Le Havre from Port au Prince and Jacmel, the two remaining British Postal agencies in Haiti. In London the mail received a red transit stamp and the Anglo-French Accountancy mark for 1f10c, reaching Calais the same day and Le Havre the day following. The UPU rate, effective 1st January 1876, was 1f10c but as Haiti had not joined the UPU(it did so in 1881) there was an additional 5 decimes payable on unpre-paid mail delivered to France, making 16 decimes in total.



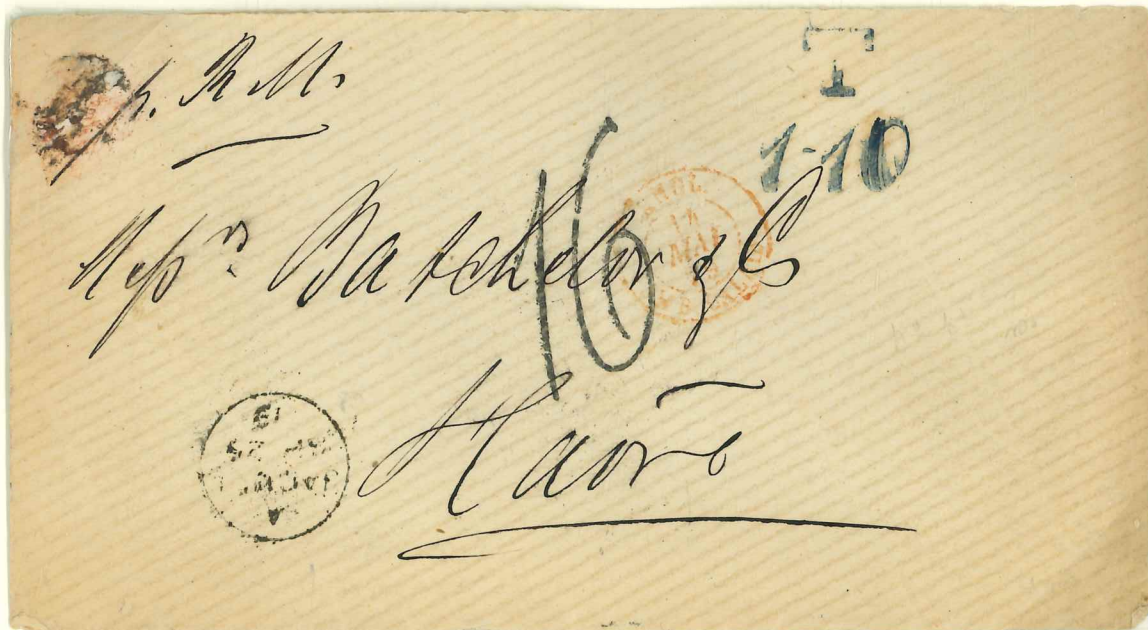
Port au Prince CDS2

Jacmel CDS2

1879 covers from Port au Prince and Jacmel to Le Havre, France



1879 cover from Port au Prince to Le Havre with PORT AU PRINCE British Postal Agency CDS2 dated March 12th 1979, Calais transit, 1-10 taxe mark, and "16" in manuscript on the front and red London transit for MR 29 1979 and Le Havre arrival on the back.



1879 cover from Jacmel to Le Havre with JACMEL British Postal Agency CDS2 dated April 25th 1979, Calais transit, 1-10 taxe mark, and "16" in manuscript on the front and red London transit for MR 29 1979 and Le Havre arrival on the back.

British Postal Agency at Port au Prince, Haiti

Port au Prince became the centre of British business in Haiti in 1870, after the British Consulate moved from Jacmel. It was served by many mail boat lines, including the West Indian and Pacific Steam Ship Company which at the beginning of 1870 set up a direct service to Liverpool using Moit Scott and Co. as agents. Much mail was carried by the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company (RMSP), mostly to Plymouth.

1880 cover from Port au Prince to Bordeaux



Port au Prince CDS (second version)



1880 entire letter to Bordeaux with PORT AU PRINCE British PO cds2 dated August 9th 1880 "p Royal Mail" in ms, light T 1-10 tax mark, 16 in manuscript (16 decimes to pay on arrival) and blue oval merchants mark "J. DEJARDIN, TH LUDERS & Co, PORT AU PRINCE". On the back are red London transit CDS AU 27 1880 and black Bordeaux receivers 29 AOUT 80

Route: This cover went by the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company (RMSP) 6th contract which started in January 1880.

Sources:

Kenton PJ and Parsons HG (1999) *Early routings of the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company 1842- 1879*. Postal History Society, Parmenter J (1993) *GB Used Abroad: Cancellations and Postal Markings* Postal History Society, Beckenham

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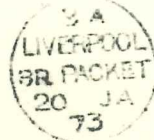
Port au Prince

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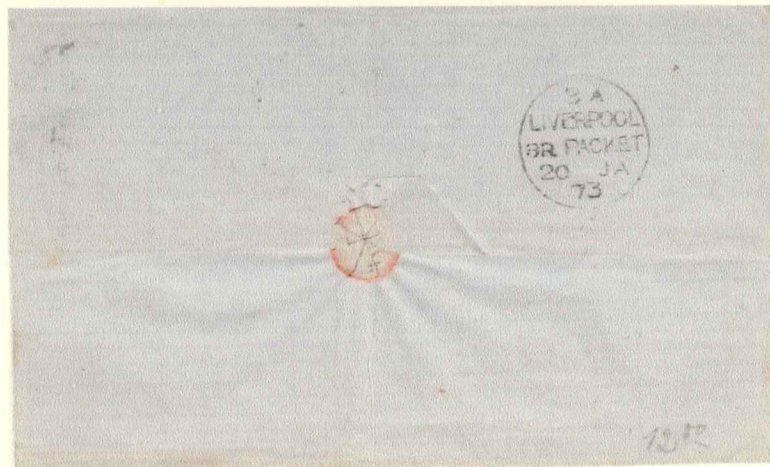
1872 cover from Port au Prince to Le Havre, France via Liverpool



Port au Prince CDS



Liverpool Packet letter



1872 cover to from Port au Prince to Le Havre with PORT AU PRINCE British PO CDS2, boxed GB/1F60C accountancy mark, "12" in manuscript and Liverpool Br packet CDS for 20 JAN 73 (Whitney type 14/56) on the back.

British Postal Agency in Jacmel, Haiti

White, Hartmann and Co, financiers of Port au Prince

This cover was sent on April 1874 and later in the year the Government of Haiti had to call on White, Hartmann and Co to provide a huge loan to bankroll the country:

"President Domingue, on his accession to-power, found the finances exhausted, the French debt, that standing burden to, layti, in arrears, the army unpaid, the country staggering under interior debts, and floundering generally in financial embarrassment. The government, therefore, in December last judged it necessary to negotiate, and did negotiate, with the English house of Messrs. White, Hartmann & Co. here, a loan of three millions of dollars, with which to liquidate the arrears of the French debt and meet the installments coming due thereon, release itself from its engagements to this same house for loans advanced under the former administration, to effect the retreat of the paper currency, and to consolidate some of its smaller floating interior debts. The terms upon which this loan was made were quite favorable to the lenders." United States Department of State

1874 cover from Port au Prince to Le Havre France via Jacmel and London



CDS2



1874 cover from Port au Prince to Le Havre France via Jacmel and London. The front has 1f60c rectangular GB/France accountancy / exchange mark, "12" and "packet" in manuscript, blue White, Hartmann & Co, Port au Prince cachet and black Calais 14 Avril 1874 transit stamp. The back has a black British PO Jacmel MR 24 1874 CDS2 cancel and Le Havre receiver.

Route: By RMS Tagus Jacmel (26th March) to Plymouth (13th April)

Sources:

Kenton PJ and Parsons HG (1999) *Early routes of the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company 1842- 1879*. Postal History Society,

Parmenter J (1993) *GB Used Abroad: Cancellations and Postal Markings* Postal History Society, Beckenham

United States Department of State / *Executive documents printed by order of the House of Representatives*. 1875-'76 Vol. II (1875-1876) Hayti [Haiti], pp. [XIX]-748