Bermuda Postal History: Forerunners to the UPU

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The Atlantic currents and trade winds
This display follows the outline below.

I: FORERUNNER PERIOD (to 1806)
II: INTERNAL MAIL
III: MILITARY MAIL
IV: SHIP LETTERS
V: PACKET LETTERS (1806–UPU (April 1, 1877))

The complete outline will be found on the handout sheet.
I. Forerunner period

1617 Bermuda to England
The earliest known Bermuda cover in private hands

1628 Bermuda to England
Carried by the *Lydia*
I. Forerunner period

One of three recorded covers from Bermuda into the American Colonial Post, 1771

Only known Bermuda cover
Carried on the 1755-1806 Falmouth-New York Packet, 1796
III. Military Mail
A. War of 1812

Only recorded cover censored in Bermuda during the War of 1812

Only recorded War of 1812 blockade cover through Bermuda
B. Civil War Blockade

One of 11 blockade originating in Bermuda
Only recorded blockade wreck cover

Routed from Hamilton due to Yellow Fever
III. Military Mail
   C. Concessionary Rate

Only recorded soldier’s letter using an 1875 1d. on 3d. Provisional

Only recorded use of the Penny Black in Bermuda
IV. Ship Letters
A. Ship Letters

Free Consignee’s Letter
Black handstamp Type 1, 2 recorded

Only recorded franked letter under the new 2d. Closed mail rate
IV. Ship Letters
B. Forwarding Agents

Bermuda forwarder B. Wilson Higgs
One recorded

Bermuda forwarder S. Musson & Co.
Two recorded
V. Packet Letters
   A. GPO/Admiralty
      Route 1: Oct 1806–Feb 1813
            winter/summer routings
      Route 2: War of 1812 Mar 1813–Mar 1815
            winter route only
      Route 3: Apr 1815–Oct 1823
            return to winter/summer routings
      Route 4: Nov 1823–Dec 1826

1: **Earliest known** Admiralty Letter

2: **Only recorded** War of 1812 blockade cover through Bermuda

3: **First trip** after War of 1812

4: Bermuda to Virginia and returned
A. GPO/Admiralty

Route 5: Jan–Sep 1827
   a. Direct to and from Bermuda
   b. The Annapolis Packet
   c. The Mexican Packet

5a: Direct to England

5b: Annapolis Packet
   Only cover from Bermuda

5c: Mexico to Ireland
   Via Bermuda
A. GPO/Admiralty
Route 6: Oct 1827– Jun 1833
return to Route 5a

Last trip of the Falmouth Packet

One of two known strikes of “America”
arrival mark from Bermuda
A. GPO/Admiralty
Route 7: Jul 1833–Jun 1840
Cunard to/from Halifax

Redirected
PM3, one of seven recorded

Last trip of the Admiralty Packet
B. Cunard

Route 1: May 1840–Jul 1848 sail to Halifax

First successful trip of the *Levantine*

Particularly fine strike of PM2

Route 2: Aug 1848–Jun 1854 steam (sail as needed)

Ireland Ireland Crowned Circle

[Image of map showing routes]

[Image of handwritten letter]
SAIL

STEAM

YEAR

1800 1810 1820 1830 1840 1850 1860 1870
B. Cunard
Route 3: Nov 1850–Jun 1854
New York to Bermuda direct

One of three covers to Bermuda by the England-New York route
B. Cunard
Route 4: Jul 1854–Dec 1867
St. Thomas added

Only recorded cover with two
Grote’s numeral hand stamps

Only recorded cover from
Bermuda to Sicily
B. Cunard
Route 4: Jul 1854–Dec 1867
St. Thomas added

Only recorded U.S. 1856 5¢ to Bermuda

To Nova Scotia franked with 1874 3d. on 1/- Provisional stamp

Only recorded cover to New Zealand
One of two Ireland Island P5 hand stamps

Only recorded strike “Paid at Ireland Island”
One of two known to New Brunswick
B. Cunard

Route 5: Aug 1861-Sept 1868
Transatlantic Closed mail via New York

Only fully prepaid cover by Closed Mail route
C. Royal Mail Steam Packet

Contract 1, Route 1: Jan 1840–Sep 1842

First trip to Bermuda on RMSP
C. Royal Mail Steam Packet
Contract 1, Route 2: Sep 1842–Jun 1843

Bermuda to England

England to Bermuda, delayed
The two routes serving Bermuda

Jamaica is west of St. Thomas. Mail could be routed either “via St. Thomas” for the direct run to Bermuda or by the return trip of the Mexican packet “via Havana.”
C. Royal Mail Steam Packet
Contract 1, Route 4: Aug 1844–Dec 1847

Mexico to Italy via Bermuda

Last trip of first RMSP contact

Barbados to Bermuda by West Indies packet
C. Royal Mail Steam Packet

Contract 2, Route 5: Nov 1847–Aug 1850
Bermuda southwest to Mexico

Contract 2, Route 6: Nov 1847–Aug 1850
Bermuda south to St. Thomas/Caribbean

Contract 2, Route 7: Nov 1847–Aug 1850
Bermuda northwest to New York

RMSP Routes 5-7

Route 5: Mexico to England

Route 7: Trinidad to New York via Bermuda

Route 6: England to Bermuda via Barbados
D. Combination of Carriers
Cunard and private vessels

Bermuda-New York
One of two prepaid with stamps at 5d. rate

Trinidad to Nova Scotia
D. Combination of Carriers
Cunard and RMSP: Sep 1850–Sep 1879

Puerto Rico to New York via Bermuda

Bermuda to Grenada
Hamilton Crown Circle
D. Combination of Carriers
Contract or Crop vessels to NY: 1868–1873

Bermuda to New York per Fah-Kee
thence England per HAPAG

Bermuda to England per
crop vessel Magnolia
D. Combination of Carriers
Cunard and Inman Line: Jan 1868–Jun 1871

Bermuda to France

U.S. to Bermuda
D. Combination of Carriers
Cunard and Allan Line: Jan 1871–Sep 1879

Only recorded cover to Gibraltar

Soldier’s Letter to Ireland
D. Combination of Carriers
Cunard and Quebec & Gulf Ports: Jan 1874–Dec 1877

The “Moncrieff” cover
Only recorded with all three 1875 1d. Provisionals
First trip of the Quebec Steamship Company

Bermuda to the U.S. at the new 2d. rate