

1851

THE SHEARMAN CORRESPONDENCE

Liverpool to New York

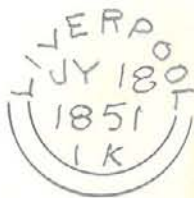
R.M.S. Niagara

Packet Ship Great Western, Black Ball Line

This letter was written at Liverpool, dated 7mo 16th 1851 (July 16, 1851) and later dated the 18th. It was penned by David Sands Shearman, born 1802 in New Bedford, to his wife Hepsa. He was the commander of the Black Ball Line's packet ship Great Western, 1443 tons, which made her maiden voyage from New York on June 16, 1851.

Shipping & Commercial List, N.Y. VESSELS UP FOR FOREIGN PORTS. Ship Great Western, (new), Shearman, 23 E.R., 16th June ... C.H. Marshall & Co.

The Great Western arrived at Liverpool on July 15 after a slow passage. Capt. Shearman reports that they nearly had a mutiny and that he had to put a man in irons to quell it, and that "(we had) one of the most inferior Crews that I have ever Commanded..."



July 18, 1851. Letter, endorsed: pr. Steamer, posted unpaid at Liverpool. This was a double rated letter at 24¢ x 2 = 48¢. U.S. was debited for 16¢ Sea (British Packet) + 3¢ British Inland = 19¢ x 2 = 38¢. R.M.S. Niagara of the Cunard Line departed from L'pool this same date. This was the first of 4 letters David Shearman penned from Liverpool on this voyage.

July 31. Niagara arrived at N.Y., letter processed Aug. 1 by the New York Exchange Office. 48¢ due from Mrs. Shearman, being double the U.S.-British Treaty of 1848 rate.

A docket on the letter face notes: No. 1 Liverpool, Great Western. M.E. & J.T.S. with their father. The letter content notes the activity of the children.

Capt. Shearman commanded the following Liverpool Black Ball packets: '49 Montezuma, temporarily; '50 Yorkshire, '51 Great Western to '52.



1851

THE SHEARMAN CORRESPONDENCE
BLACK BALL LINE

Packet Ship Great Western

The 1443 ton Great Western was built in 1851 at New York by William H. Webb. She made her maiden voyage for the Black Ball Line, or Old Line, owned by Messrs. Goodhue & Co. and C.H. Marshall, leaving New York on June 16, 1851. She was commanded by Capt. David Sands Shearman. He was in command of her until his death in 1852. The Great Western continued in the Black Ball Line until 1878, the end of the Line. She then sailed as a transient, having been sold to Pacific Coast shipping interests.



Great Western in Beaumaris Bay near Point Lynas Lighthouse, 1862. An oil on canvas painting by John Hughes (1806-78.)

Point Lynas was the main station of the Liverpool Pilot Service, where pilots boarded incoming ships. If conditions and tides were appropriate to continue directly to Liverpool without diverting into Beaumaris Bay, Parys Mountain would be on the right of the Lynas Lighthouse, both being south of the ship's course. If an incoming ship arrived before high tide it would turn and Parys Mountain would then appear on the left of the lighthouse, as in this example.

Across the Western Ocean, Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, Mass., pg. 65, 1995.

1851

THE SHEARMAN CORRESPONDENCE

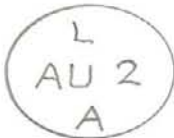
Liverpool to New York

R.M.S. Africa

Packet Ship Great Western, Black Ball Line

August 1, 1851. This letter was written at Liverpool by David S. Shearman, commander of the packet Great Western a sailing ship of the Black Ball Line two days before her return maiden voyage to New York. It is datelined 8 mo. 1st 1851 (August 1, 1851). In it he mentions that the sailing day of the Great Western, scheduled for August 1, was to be extended to August 3 because of the scarcity of passengers and freights.

He reports of a narrow escape of their friends Charles and Susan Wilson who were in a carriage with a runaway horse, Charles at the reins. He is thankful that their daughter M.E. (Mary Eliza) was not in the carriage as she normally would have been as she was visiting with the Wilsons. This is the fourth letter Capt. Shearman wrote to his wife from Liverpool on this voyage.



19
CENTS



August 2, 1851. Letter posted unpaid at Liverpool and endorsed: Pr. Steamer. This is a single rated letter at 24¢ per ½-oz. under the U.S.-British Treaty of 1848. U.S. was debited for 16¢ Sea (British Packet) + 3¢ British Inland = 19¢. The R.M.S. Africa of the Cunard Line departed from Liverpool this date for New York.



August 12. The R.M.S. Africa arrived at New York. The New York Exchange Office marked the letter with a collect amount of 24¢. This handstamp is in error as it shows "A. PKT" (American Packet, it should show "B. PKT" as the Cunard Liners were British Packets. As the debits and credits were correct for British Packets, this error made no difference.

The docket No. 4 L"Pool/Great Western shows that this was the 4th letter written by Shearman from Liverpool.

1855

THE SHEARMAN CORRESPONDENCE

Ralston, Pa. to Providence, R.I.

Daughter Alice D. Shearman at the Friends' School



November 14, 1855. A letter from cousin Charley to Alice Shearman of the New Bedford Shearmans. He writes from the family saw mill at Ralston, Penn. in the Allegheny Mountains. He describes the valley in which the mill is located as being so confined that the November sun didn't reach them until 9 A.M. and at 2:30 P.M. it was gone, shining only on the

mountains above.

Life at Ralston was rather bucolic, with other cousins hunting, fishing, trapping and riding on horse back. He also mentions the nearby town of Roaring Branch as an ideal spot for these activities.

Alice is at the Quaker Friends School, and Charley's letter is Quaker dated 11mo. 9th 1855. He posted on November 14 at Ralston, paying 3¢ per ½-oz. for a domestic letter conveyed under 3,000 miles. This Act and rate, effective April 1, 1855, made prepayment of domestic mail compulsory.

SUTTON & CO'S

DISPATCH LINE



SAN FRANCISCO.

Sailing regularly and positively on or before the day advertised.

Clipper of **TUESDAY, 29th APRIL, Inst.**



THE CELEBRATED A 1 FIRST CLASS CLIPPER SHIP

JOHN GILPIN

RING, Master.

IS RECEIVING HER CARGO AT PIER 10, E. RIVER.

And will positively Sail as above.

Shippers will bear in mind the *John Gilpin* has made the voyage in 93 Days, and being of small capacity will probably fill considerably before her day.

SUTTON & CO.,

58 South St., cor. Wall.

N.B.—The Ships of this Line take no freight after their advertised day, preventing all delay to those desirous of landing their cargo in San Francisco at the earliest possible day.

From the collection of the State Street Trust Company

1855-56

THE SHEARMAN CORRESPONDENCE

SHIP LETTER

MANILA TO NEW BEDFORD VIA NEW YORK

Clipper Ship John Gilpin, Capt. Ring

December 14, 1855. Son Abraham Shearman writes to his mother, Mrs. Hepsa H. Shearman at No. 68 Prospect St., New Bedford, Mass. from aboard the ship John Jay at Manila. He noted that the John Gilpin of Boston is a clipper ship and was leaving for New York direct, and that she had arrived at Manila from Boston via the Sandwich Islands (Hawaii). He endorsed his letter: per John Gilpin. The clipper left Manila on Dec. 16.

The John Gilpin was a Boston product, designed and constructed by Samuel Hall for the well known merchants Pierce & Hunnewell. She met her end in 1857 or 1858 in an unusual manner; for under Capt. John F. Ropes on her way to New Bedford with whale oil, she ran into a submerged iceberg and had to be abandoned. John Gilpin, for whom she was named, himself had to ride to his wedding upon a steed over which he had little control. This scene is depicted on a sailing card for this ship.



N.Y. Times, March 27, 1856. Arrived March 26, Ship John Gilpin (of Boston,) Ring, Manilla Dec. 16 with sugar, cassia, &c. to order. Passed Java Head Dec. 31, Cape of Good Hope Feb. 6 and the Equator Mar. 1.

Letter subject to the rate of March 31, 1851, letter not over ½-oz., not exceeding 3,000 miles at 3¢ plus 2¢ Ship Letter charge = 5¢ due, shown in the N.Y. handstamp.

1856

THE SHEARMAN CORRESPONDENCE

MANILA TO U.S. VIA HONG KONG, SUEZ & MARSEILLES

January 3, 1856. This letter is datelined at Manilla (sic) and endorsed: via Marseilles.

Son Abraham Shearman writes to his mother Hepsa H. Shearman at No. 68 Prospect St., New Bedford, Mass. He informs her that his ship [the John Jay] arrived at Manila from the U.S. after a long passage of 189 days - over 6 months! He attributes the long passage out partly due to the northeast monsoon season, also rough weather in the Indian Ocean and being becalmed in the Straits. Because of the monsoon season they did not go up the China Sea, but instead went up through the Timor Straits and stopped for 15 days at Copang on the Island of Timor for water. After that, they went through the Banda Sea and then through the Isolbo Passage (?) [probably Manipa Passage] into the Pacific. They then entered St. Bernadino Straits (also known as Embocadero Straits) up to Manila.

He notes that he sent three letters from Copang and, after arriving at Manila, one by the clipper ship John Gilpin [which see, the John Gilpin letter is in this collection. It is dated Dec. 14, 1855 at Manila. It is interesting to note that the John Gilpin, leaving Manila Dec. 16, arrived at New York on March 26, 1856, 100 days via the Cape of Good Hope, and only 5 days after this letter which went by steamers and the overland route across Egypt.]

Abe abruptly closes his letter because he has run out of paper. He notes that they may have to lay over at Manila 4 or 5 months as hemp is very scarce and high priced. It was the cargo for which they came to Manila



1856

THE SHEARMAN CORRESPONDENCE

MANILA TO U.S. VIA HONG KONG, SUEZ & MARSEILLES

P.&O. Line: S.S. Madras, Hong Kong to Galle

S.S. Bengal, Galle to Suez

S.S. Alhambra, Alexandria to Marseilles

Collins Line: S.S. Quaker City, Liverpool to New York

January 3, 1856. Letter is datelined at Manilla (sic) and endorsed: via Marseilles. It went under separate cover and probably by sail to Hong Kong, as it wasn't processed at Hong Kong until Jan. 14, 1856.



January 14, 1856. The letter entered the mail system at Hong Kong, backstamp. The postage rates applicable to this cover fell under the British Mail Instructions of October 1854 (Cf.: Raguin, Vol. 5, 54079): Letters for China, forwarded by the Overland Mail will, in future, be chargeable with the same reduced rate and conveyed by British Packet to Hong Kong, as letters directed to the British Colony of

Hong Kong, viz.: Via Marseilles, weighing under $\frac{1}{4}$ -oz. 11d.; weighing $\frac{1}{4}$ -oz. and not exceeding $\frac{1}{2}$ -oz., 1sh.4d. Via Southampton, not exceeding $\frac{1}{2}$ -oz., 6d.

22

This letter was debited to the U.S. at the October 1854 rate of 11d., Hong Kong to England, equivalent to 22¢ U.S., per manuscript notation.

The Peninsular & Oriental steamers conveyed the letter, as follows:

<u>S.S. Madras</u>		<u>S.S. Bengal</u>		<u>S.S. Alhambra</u>	
Hong Kong	Jan. 15	Galle	Feb. 2	Alexandria	-
Singapore	22-23	Aden	10-11	Malta	Feb. 26
Penang	25	Suez	17	Marseilles	29
Galle	30				(Leap Year Day).



March 3. Transit backstamp at London. This letter was forwarded to Liverpool to meet the March 5 sailing of the Collins Line. This was by the U.S.M.S. Quaker City which made one round voyage only under charter to the Collins Line due to the loss of the Collins Line's Baltic. This makes this a seldom seen conveyance.

March 5. Quaker City departed from Liverpool.

March 21. Quaker City arrived at New York. The transatlantic charges were 16¢ Sea (American Packet) + 5¢ U.S. inland = 21¢. This was added to the 22¢ debit from Britain to total 43¢ as shown in the New York charge mark. This China rate, British Mail via Marseilles was effective from October 1854 at 43¢ per $\frac{1}{4}$ -oz., 53¢ per $\frac{1}{2}$ -oz.



43

1856

THE SHEARMAN CORRESPONDENCE

Singapore to New Bedford via Suez and Marseilles

P. & O. Line: S.S. Norna, Singapore to Pointe de Galle, Ceylon

S.S. Bombay, Galle to Suez

S.S. Valetta, Alexandria to Marseilles

Collins Line: U.S.M.S. Atlantic, Liverpool to New York

Forwarding Agent

Wm. Macdonald & Son, Singapore



Monday, March 10, 1856. Letter headed "Ship John Jay, China Sea, lat. S. 3°50', lon. E. 106°33'" by Abraham Shearman to his mother Hepsa at New Bedford. These coordinates put the ship deep in the South China Sea just off the coast of Sumatra and heading toward Selat Kelasa (Strait of Gaspar.) Abe notes, "...if the wind favours us we will be down to 'Java Head' tomorrow morning which will be a first rate run from Manilla. We left there on the 26th of Feb.... I expect to send this letter from 'Java Head'." The India Directory of the Honorable East India Company's ships (1852) describes Java Head as, "The western extremity of Java in the latitude S. 6°46'40"; lon. E. 105°15'5". It is a bluff promontory at the foot of the high land, and discernible at a considerable distance in clear weather."

Abe posted his letter at Jakarta where it was taken by local Dutch steamer under cover to Singapore, which was on the track of the Far East steamers of the P. & O. Line. Meanwhile, the John Jay was "homeward bound."

1856

THE SHEARMAN CORRESPONDENCE

FORWARDED BY
W^m MACDONALD & CO
SINGAPORE.



March 20. The forwarding agents Wm. Macdonald & Co. at Singapore handled this letter and struck their bold forwarder's backstamp (unlisted by Rowe.) They put the letter unpaid into the mail after endorsing it: Via Marseilles where it was transported to Marseilles via Suez by the following Peninsular & Oriental Steam Navigation Co. steamers:

<u>S.S. Norna</u>		<u>S.S. Bombay</u>		<u>S.S. Valetta</u>	
Hong Kong	March 15	Galle	April 1	Alexandria	ca. Apr. 19
Singapore	21-22	Aden	10 -11	Malta	23
Penang	24	Suez	17	Marseilles	26
Galle, Ceylon	29				



22

43

April 28. London transit backstamp. This letter was at first erroneously rated at 1/-, which notation was deleted. This was the British rate of June 1851 to May 1856 from Singapore via Southampton. This rate was modified by G.P.O. Instruction No. 1, effective Feb. 1, 1856, "Postage upon letters forwarded to the East Indies, via Southampton, will be reduced to a combined British and Indian rate of Sixpence the Half-ounce. Letters forwarded via Marseilles will be liable to the same rate, with the addition of Fivepence per Quarter-ounce." The rate via Marseilles thus totalled 11d. per $\frac{1}{4}$ -oz. This amount was debited to the U.S. as 11d. x 2¢/d. = 22¢, shown in manuscript. To this the U.S. added 16¢ Sea (American Packet) + 5¢ U.S. Inland = 21¢ + 22¢ British debit = 43¢, shown in the black handstamp.

April 30. This letter was forwarded by the Post Office from London to Liverpool to meet the sailing of the U.S. Mail Steamship Atlantic which departed from Liverpool on April 30.

May 12. Atlantic arrived at New York. The New York Exchange Office struck the incoming AM. PKT. mark and sent the letter on to New Bedford where Mrs. Shearman paid the 43¢. It is interesting to note that if this letter had been outgoing from the U.S. to Singapore British Mail via Marseilles, then the rate would have been 75¢ per $\frac{1}{4}$ -oz.



1860

THE SHEARMAN CORRESPONDENCE

Chincha Islands, Peru to New York via Panama
VANDERBILT LINE, S.S. Ariel, Aspinwall to New York



April 7, 1860. Letter dated, and docket notes at Chincha Islands. Lippincott's Gazetteer of 1882 notes: a group of three small islands in the Pacific Ocean, off the coast of Peru, about 14 miles from the shore...These islands, so noted for their guano (sea-fowl droppings used for fertilizer) have been worked out. [The 1855 Lippincott's doesn't even mention the Chincha Islands, so the guano deposits were no doubt collected in the 1860's.]

This letter went by local vessel to Callao, then by steamer of the Pacific Steam Navigation Co. to Panama where it arrived April 21.



April 21. Transit stamp at Panama at the British Consular post office. The N.Y. Times reported that the Panama mail, including the Pacific Naval fleet's bags, was accidentally left behind at Panama, thus missed the sailing of the Vanderbilt Line's S.S. North Star, which departed from Aspinwall May 4. Letter went by Panama Railroad to Aspinwall to make the next steamer sailing for New York.

May 10. S.S. Ariel of the Vanderbilt Line departed from Aspinwall for New York with the Pacific and California mails.



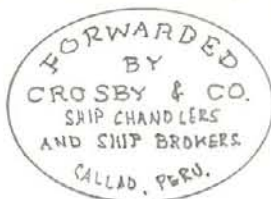
New York Times. Arrived N.Y. May 18. Steamship Ariel, Miner, Aspinwall May 10 with mdse. and passengers to D.B. Allen.

Letter subject to the 10¢ Steamship Letter charge per ½-oz., single.

1860

THE SHEARMAN CORRESPONDENCE

PACIFIC STEAM NAVIGATION CO., R.M.S. Lima, Callao to Panama.
VANDERBILT LINE, S.S. Ariel, Aspinwall to New York



May 26, 1860. A letter dated aboard the ship Hamasucket at Callao, Peru. Son Joseph Shearman writes to his mother Hepsa at New Bedford informing her that the ship is to sail that afternoon for Cork, Ireland. He is mate of the Hamasucket and complains he should be captain as he holds a master's license and he feels he is more qualified than the current master. The letter was handed to the forwarding agent Crosby & Co. at Callao (S.R. 5)

May 29. The R.M.S. Lima of the Pacific Steam Navigation Co. picked up this letter on her way to Panama. Her dates were: Valparaiso, May 18; Callao, May 29; and Panama June 8. The letter went by the Panama Railroad cross isthmus to Aspinwall.

June 9. S.S. Ariel of the Vanderbilt Line departed from Aspinwall for New York.

New York Times. Arrived June 18. Steamship Ariel, Miner, Aspinwall June 9, with specie and passengers to D.B. Allen.



Letter subject to double the 10¢ Steamship Letter rate or 20¢ due, shown by the N.Y. handstamp.

N.Y. Times, June 19. SOUTH PACIFIC. PANAMA, Fri. June 8. The English steamer Lima, from Valparaiso and intermediate ports, arrived here on the 5th inst. Her dates are Valparaiso 18th and Callao 29th inst.

1860

THE SHEARMAN CORRESPONDENCE

Whampoa, China to New Bedford via Hong Kong & Marseilles

P.&O. Line: S.S. Singapore, Hong Kong to Galle

S.S. Nemesis, Galle to Suez

S.S. Massilia, Alexandria to Marseilles

Allan Line: S.S. Anglo-Saxon, Londonderry to Quebec



July 3, 1860. A letter from Abraham Shearman to his sister Mary at No. 68 Prospect St., New Bedford. The letter is headed, "from Hong Kong toward Whampoa." His ship had touched at Hong Kong where Abe received four letters and a package of New Bedford newspapers. The letterhead has an embossed seal "Kent Mills Packet Post" with a paddle wheel steamship logo in the center. The paper is watermarked "KENT MILLS/Improved/1852."

July 16. Abraham furthers his correspondence. The ship is being discharged at Whampoa. This letter was posted unpaid at Whampoa, local steamer down river to Hong Kong.

1860

THE SHEARMAN CORRESPONDENCE

Whampoa, China to New Bedford via Hong Kong & Marseilles



Handwritten signature or initials.

July 25. Letter in transit at Hong Kong, backstamp. The China rates via Marseilles were 39¢ per $\frac{1}{4}$ -oz., 45¢ per $\frac{1}{2}$ -oz. from Jan. 1, 1857 to Sept. 1, 1861. These rates were apportioned:

	$\frac{1}{4}$ -oz.	$\frac{1}{2}$ -oz.
U.S. Inland	5¢	5¢
Transatlantic	16	16
British	12	12) = 24¢ to
French Transit	6	12) Britain
	39¢	45¢.

This letter was marked with a debit to the U.S. of 12¢ British handling + 12¢ French Transit = 24¢, shown in black manuscript. This rating was done in London when it was known that transatlantic carriage would be by American Packet.

The Peninsular & Oriental Steam Navigation Co. steamers carried this letter as follows:

<u>S.S. Singapore</u>		<u>S.S. Nemesis</u>	<u>S.S. Massilia</u>
Hong Kong	July 26	Galle	Aug. 18 Alexandria Sep. 5
Singapore	Aug. 4-5	Aden	28-29 Malta 8
Penang	7	Suez	Sep. 4 Marseilles 11
Galle	14		

September 13. London transit backstamp. The mail was forwarded to Londonderry to meet the sailing of the Allan Line's S.S. Anglo-Saxon which departed from Liverpool Sept. 13, touched at Londonderry September 15.

September 26. Anglo-Saxon arrived at Quebec. Mail forwarded by rail to Portland, Maine, thence to Boston where the Boston Exchange Office marked the letter as an "American Packet", backstamp.

The Boston office charged the 16¢ Sea (Am. Pkt.) + 5¢ U.S. Inland = 21¢ plus the 24¢ British and French charges, total 45¢ shown by the Boston charge mark.



45

1862

THE SHEARMAN CORRESPONDENCE

MACAO TO U. S. VIA HONG KONG AND SOUTHAMPTON

P. & O. Line: S. S. Orissa, Hong Kong to Galle

S. S. Colombo, Galle to Suez

S. S. Pera, Alexandria to Southampton

Allan Line: S. S. Anglo-Saxon, Londonderry to Quebec

Son Abraham Shearman lost at sea!

July 24, 1862. Letter headed at Macao. It is to Hepsibah Shearman at New Bedford informing her that the fears that her son Abraham had been lost at sea were now almost certain. The writer, a cousin and seaman himself, writes, "It became my painful duty some time ago to convey to you an intimation that your fears for the safety of your son Abraham were also felt in China; but I could not relinquish hope that he might have reached the Coast of Cochin China or Siam or some off lying island, and I stated the circumstances of his disappearance. We have a lingering but fainter and fainter hope of finding your son Abraham."

He was sending a duplicate letter together with returning all of Hepsa's letters to Abraham by the sailing ship Comet, homeward bound from Macao to New York. His letter below is headed "p. Mail" indicating it was to go by steamer as endorsed via Southampton.



1862

THE SHEARMAN CORRESPONDENCE

MACAO TO U.S. VIA HONG KONG AND SOUTHAMPTON

3/4

3/2



July 24, 1862. Letter, headed Macao, is endorsed: viâ Southampton. This is a double weight letter and fell under the September 1861 China rates for British Mail via Southampton at 45¢ per ½-oz. Here a letter weighing over ½-oz., but not over 1 oz. was 90¢. It went by local steamer to Hong Kong where all the postage save the U.S. inland portion was prepaid. This is shown in British sterling at 3sh.4d., namely, 3sh.(72¢) + 4d. (8¢) = 80¢ U.S. The Crown Colony of Hong Kong was debited for 3sh. 2d. or 76¢, thus retaining 2d. (4¢) for inland postage. These transactions are shown as 3/4 and 3/2.

July 26. Hong Kong receiving backstamp (blue) and Hong Kong PAID transit marks. The index letter in the latter looks suspiciously like an "O", but is actually a "C" on its side (Webb type 14a.)

The Peninsular & Oriental Steam Navigation Co. steamers carried this letter to Southampton, their dates being:

<u>S.S. Orissa</u>		<u>S.S. Colombo</u>		<u>S.S. Pera</u>	
Hong Kong	July 28	Galle	Aug. 19	Alexandria	Sept. 5
Singapore	Aug. 3-5	Aden	29	Malta	8
Penang	7	Suez	Sep. 4	Gibraltar	12
Galle	14			Southampton	18.



32 CENTS

September 18. London transit PAID mark. As the transatlantic leg of this letter's voyage was to be by an American Packet, the U.S. was credited with 16¢ Sea (Am. Pkt.) x 2 (double letter) = 32¢, shown in red.

The Allan Line a.k.a. Montreal Ocean Steam Ship Co. steamer Anglo-Saxon departed from Liverpool on Sept. 18, picked up this letter with the London mails at Londonderry, Ireland on September 19.



10



September 30. Anglo-Saxon arrived at Quebec. The U.S. mails were forwarded to Portland, Maine by rail, which in turn sent the bagged Boston mails onward, also by rail.

October 1. Bulk was broken at Boston where this letter received identity as an American Packet letter, backstamp. The Boston Exchange Office assessed twice the 5¢ U.S. portion or 10¢, per the handstamp. This added to the already paid 80¢ at Hong Kong totalled the 90¢ double China rate.

October 2. New Bedford arrival backstamp.

1864

THE SHEARMAN CORRESPONDENCE

SHANGHAI TO NEW BEDFORD VIA HONG KONG & MARSEILLES
MESSAGERIES MARITIMES

Paquebot Hydaspe, Ligne Annexe de Shanghai a Hong-Kong

Donnai, Hong Kong to Suez

Said. Alexandria to Marseilles

Inman Line: S. S. Edinburgh, Liverpool to New York

May 5, 1864. A letter dated at Shanghai from Joseph Shearman to his mother Hepsa Shearman at New Bedford. It appears from the content that Joe was no longer at sea, but had a permanent job ashore at Shanghai, which place he detested, both from the dullness of business there as well as his ill health. His footnote says, "You see hypochondria has me in her vicious clutches again..."

An excerpt from his letter, "My health is poor. I have been laid up over a month. At all events I expect to return home a year from this season if all goes well. Oh how homesick I get when I receive your letters. I am sick and tired of this spot, I want to see Baby [his wife had died some time ago] and all of you."



Mass. ag Imps



1864

THE SHEARMAN CORRESPONDENCE

SHANGHAI TO NEW BEDFORD VIA HONG KONG & MARSEILLES
MESSAGERIES MARITIMES

Paquebot Hydaspe, Ligne Annexe de Shanghai a Hong-Kong

Donnai, Hong Kong to Suez

Said, Alexandria to Marseilles

Inman Line: S.S. Edinburgh, Liverpool to New York

2/2 1/2 2 1/2

May 12, 1864. Of the two letters found in this envelope, the latest is dated May 12. Shearman posted the letters fully paid at Shanghai in cash at 2sh.2 1/2d. (U.S. equivalent: 2sh. [48¢] + 2 1/2d. [5¢] = 53¢) shown as 2/2 1/2 in red crayon. Of this

amount Hong Kong was debited with 2sh.1 1/2d., leaving that colony 1d. [2¢] for inland postage. Both of these transactions are shown in red. This was the 53¢ per 1/2-oz. June 1863 China mail rate for British Mail via Marseilles.

The envelope is marked: via Marseilles and, in red, Messag. Imp. or Messageries Imperiales, noting it was to go by French Packet to Marseilles. Because it was so noted, the letter was held for the monthly sailing of the French annex line, Shanghai to Hong Kong, which sailed on the 20th of each month. The paquebot Hydaspe departed from Shanghai, arrived at Hong Kong May 25. The letter was forwarded onward by the Messageries Maritimes (French) packets of the Ligne d'Indochine, as follows:

<u>Donnai</u>		<u>Said</u>	
Hong Kong	May 26	Alexandria	June 29
Saigon	30	Marseilles	July 5
Suez	Jun. 27		

LONDON
JUL 7
PAID
21 CENTS

July 7. Transit stamp at London after the China Mails from Marseilles had been forwarded overland. The U.S. mails were sent directly to Queenstown to meet the sailing of the Inman Line's S.S. Edinburgh which had departed Liverpool July 6, touched at Queenstown the 7th. U.S. was credited with 16¢ Sea (American Packet) + 5¢ U.S. Inland = 21¢. Britain and France retained 32¢.

BOSTON AM PKT.
JUL 20
24 PAID

NEW BEDFORD MASS
JUL 21

July 19. Edinburgh arrived at New York. The Boston mails were bulked to Boston by rail where on July 20 the Boston Exchange Office struck the "24 PAID" mark. This was actually the U.S.-British Treaty of 1848 transatlantic rate of 24¢/1/2-oz. As the U.S. had already received credit for the transatlantic sea passage and U.S. inland (total 21¢) there was no reason

to mention the French and British charges because they didn't fit into the U.S.-British accounts.

July 21. Receiving backstamp at New Bedford, Mass.