



CAPE-OF-GOOD-HOPE STAMPS AND POSTAL HISTORY

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Published by Camel Press NF



Cover image: The cover image shows Jo Bodeon, a back-roper in the mule room at Chace Cotton Mill. Burlington, Vermont. This and other similar images in this book were taken by Lewis W. Hine, in the period between 1908-1912. These images as well as social campaigns by many including Hine, helped to formulate America's anti-child labour laws.

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UNSTAMPED_LETTERS

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Unstamped Letters

At first sight the cover shown in 1, seems that the Postmaster is stating the obvious. He has applied a handstamp 'UNSTAMPED'. Well it should be obvious to anyone looking at the cover that it bears no stamps!

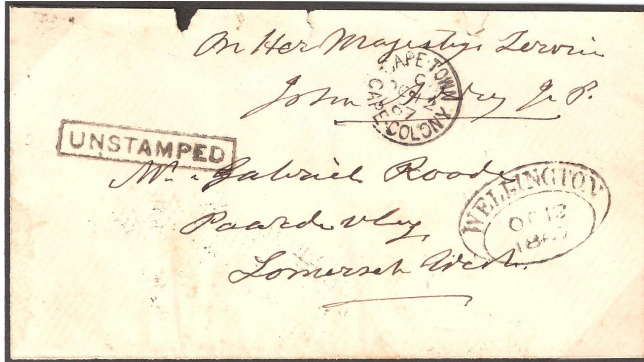


Figure 1: 1867 Cover posted from Wellington, with oval datestamp in black, addressed to Somerset West, with Cape Town transit c.d.s., endorsed 'On Her Majesty's Service', (signed), with superb example of boxed "UNSTAMPED" in black (Goldblatt SP 17). Use of this handstamp is uncommon.

Digging a bit deeper into the literature and postal rates of the Cape of Good Hope we find that in 1847, the new Postal Ordinance Section 10 provided that postmasters had to inform addressees of unpaid letters, which were available to them at the post office on payment of 6d. —the internal rate plus an additional half thereof. No special handstamps were provided for this purpose.

Pre-adhesive covers are seen with the rate of postage inscribed in manuscript, in either red or black ink. Generally, red ink indicates that the postage has been paid and black is an indication that postage was to be collected from the addressee.

Postage Stamps made Compulsory

Prepayment of postage on letters was made compulsory by Act 21 of 1857, which further provided that where postage has not been paid at all, or underpaid, the postmaster-general was authorised to open such letters to determine the address of the sender.

The sender then had to pay an amount of half the postage over and above the normal postage rate thereon.

An internal letter of this period with a 6d. or 4d. and two 1d. postage stamps would indicate that this procedure has been followed.

Postmasters would also write "Unstamped" on letters, but special handstamps (SP17 and 18) were later provided for this purpose.

Effectively, the way I understand it this was the first attempt at a 'POSTAGE DUE' mark.