

*Contract Steamship Mail Between
Cuba and the South Atlantic Coast
of the United States (1848-1861)*

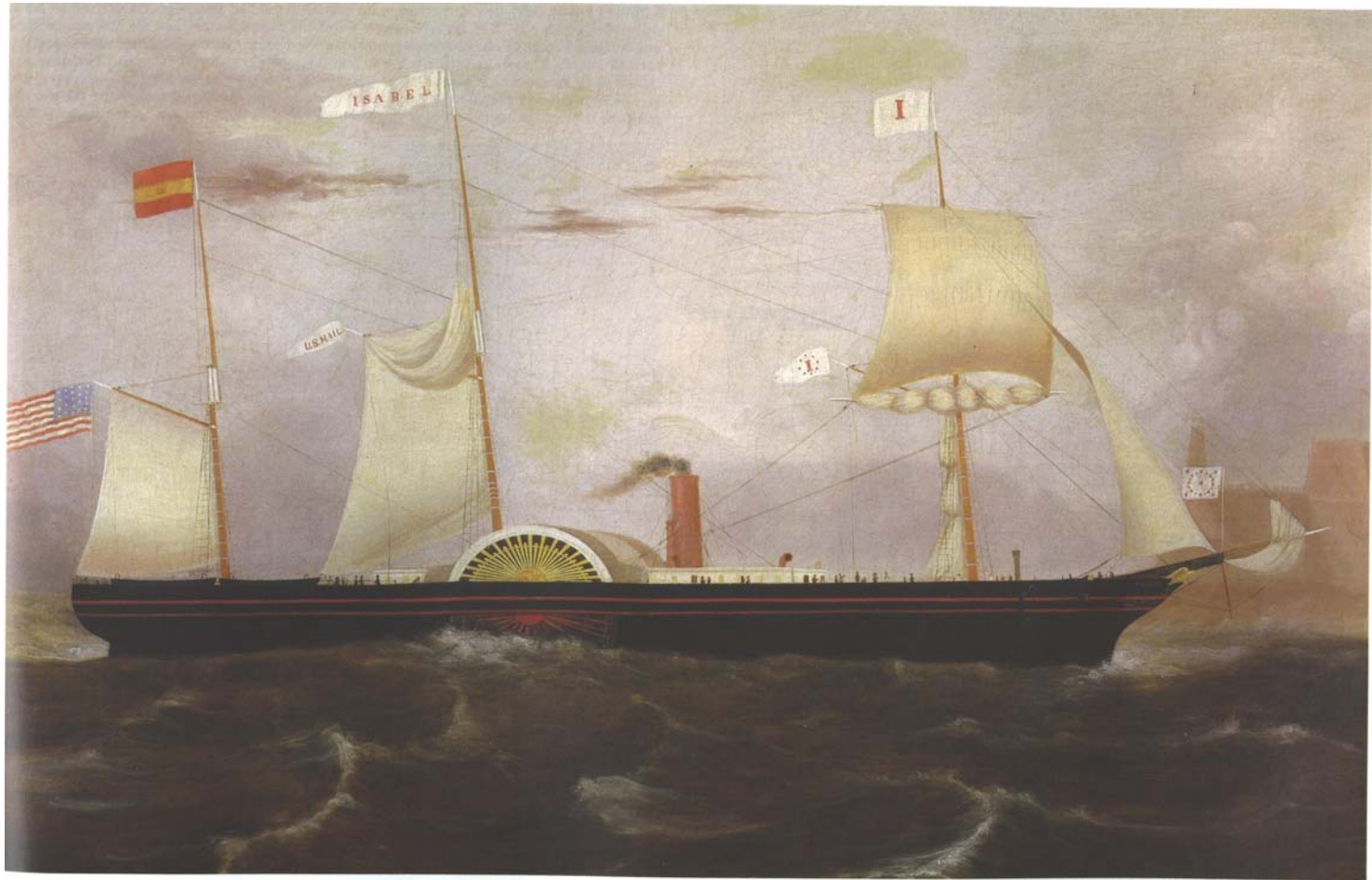
Type of Correspondence

- Between Cuba and Charleston & Savannah (Oct. 1848 to June 30, 1851)
- Printed matter (1848 until June 1851)
- Between Cuba and Charleston & Savannah (July 1, 1851 until 1861*)
- Printed matter (July 1851 until 1861*)
- Between Cuba and Canada
- Between Cuba and Europe

The First US Post Office Contract

- Authorized by Congress in 1845 & 1847
- Awarded to Moses Cohen Mordecai, merchant of Charleston, on October 1847
- \$50,000 per annum for fortnightly trips between Charleston, Savannah and Havana
- Mordecai built a 1,000 ton steamer in Baltimore for this route, the *Isabel*
- This ship made about 250 trips to Cuba until the outbreak of the US Civil War

Steamer *Isabel* entering Havana harbor





- Mrs. Moses Cohen Mordecai
(Isabel Rebecca Lyons
Mordecai)

First “Steamship” Rates

(October 1848 to June 1851)

- All outgoing mail had to be prepaid
- Letters of up to ½ ounce: 12 ½ cents
- Rate increments followed the “British” system
- Printed matter: 3 cents if prepaid, 6 cents if unpaid
- These rates initially applied only to mail carried on board contract steamships

From Cuba via Savannah

Rate – 12 ½ cents for ½ ounce.



From Cuba via Savannah

Rate – 12 ½ cents for ½ ounce.



From Cuba via Savannah

Printed matter rate – 6 cents (unpaid).



From Cuba via Charleston

Rates – 12 ½ cents for ½ ounce and 50 cents for 1½ ounces.



From Cuba via Charleston

Rate – 12 ½ cents for ½ ounce.



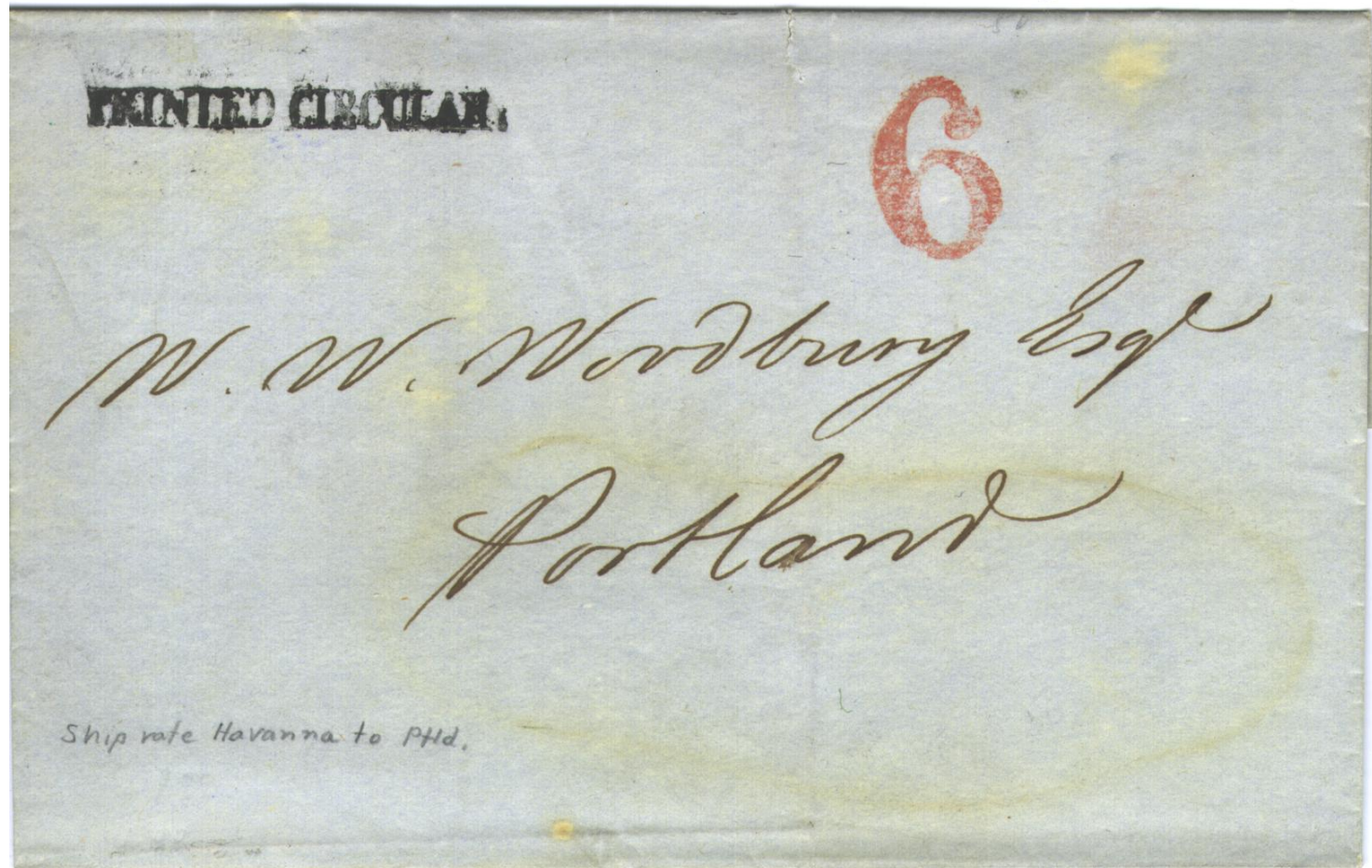
From Cuba via Charleston

Rate – 12 ½ cents for ½ ounce.



From Cuba via Charleston

Printed matter rate – 6 cents (unpaid).



From Charleston to Cuba

Rate – 12 ½ cents for ½ ounce.



Via Charleston to Cuba

Rate – 12 ½ cents for ½ ounce.

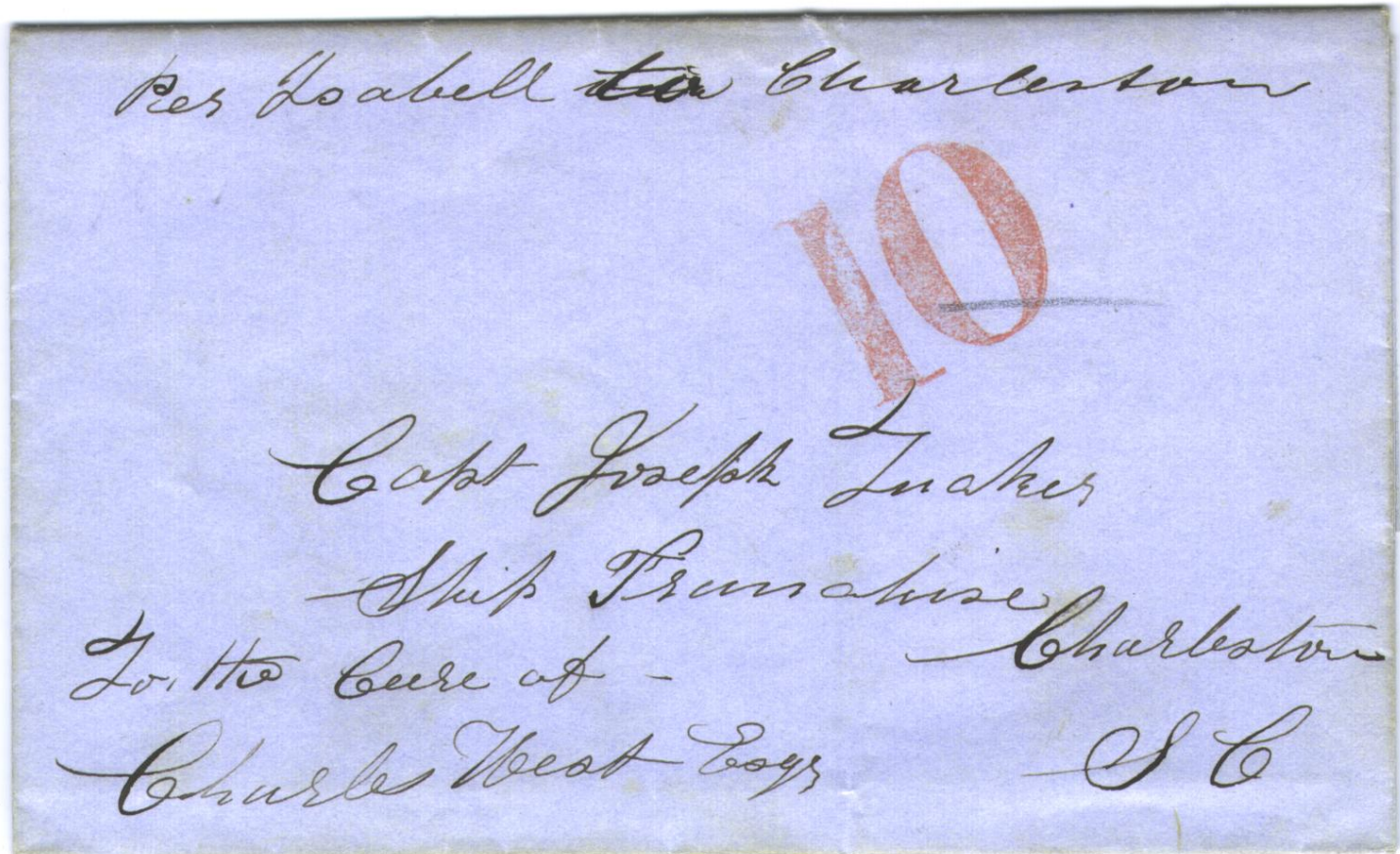


Second “Steamship” Rates (July 1851 to June 1864)

- Postal reform in the USA
- Letters of up to ½ ounce: 10 cents
- Printed matter: 2 cents
- These rates were extended to mail carried along postal routes
- Special rates for mail to Canada and Mexico
- European transit mail was allowed

From Cuba to Charleston

Rate – 10 cents for ½ ounce.



From Cuba to Charleston

Rates – 20 cents for 1 ounce and 40 cents for 1½ ounces.



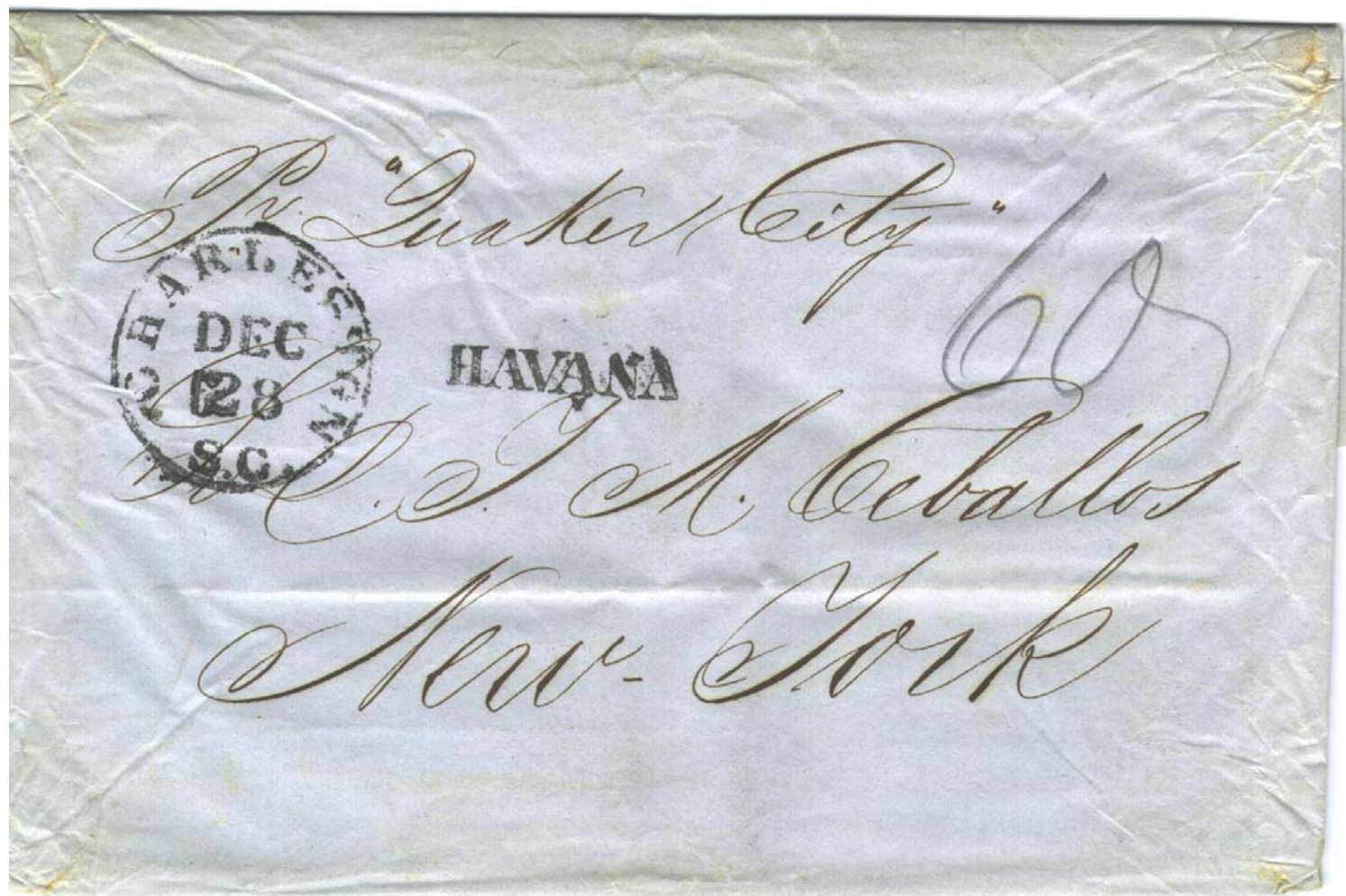
From Cuba via Charleston

Rate – One silver real internal mail fee and 10 cents for ½ ounce.



From Cuba via Charleston

Rate – 60 cents for 2 ounces.



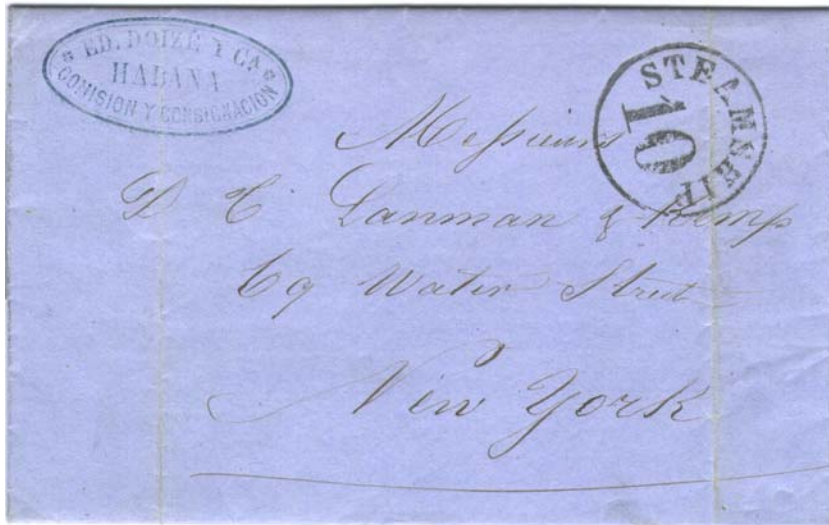
From Cuba via Charleston

Rate – 10 cents for ½ ounce forwarded and re-rated to free.



From Cuba via Charleston

Rates – 10 cents for ½ ounce, and 20 cents for 1 ounce.



From San Juan via Havana & Charleston

*Rate – One silver real local fee, 1 shilling by British steamer to Havana, and
10 cents for ½ ounce.*



From Cuba via Charleston

Rate – 20 cents for 1 ounce.



Via Charleston to Cuba

Rate – 20 cents for 1 ounce.



From Cuba Savannah

Rate – Half silver real internal mail fee and 10 cents for ½ ounce.



From Cuba via Savannah

Printed matter rate – 2 cents.



Rates to Canada (July 1851 to 1864)

- Mail had to be fully prepaid or fully unpaid
- Up to 3,000 miles: 10 cents for ½ ounce
- Over 3,000 miles: 15 cents for ½ ounce (this applied only to mail from the west coast of the US or from the West Indies)
- Distance traveled on maritime routes was considered for these rates

From Cuba to Canada via Charleston

Rate – 15 cents for ½ ounce.



From Cuba to Canada via Savannah

Rate – 15 cents for ½ ounce.

