

act of Queen Anne raised the charge to ninepence, just double the former rate. A letter posted in Boston, and addressed to Philadelphia, which under the Neale patent cost for postage fifteen pence, cost twenty-one pence under the act of 1710. But these figures give no adequate idea of the magnitude of the postal charges as fixed by the act of Queen Anne.

An explanation of the system to which these rates applied will make the matter clearer. At the present time the postage on a letter passing anywhere within the British Empire, or from Canada to any part of the United States or Mexico, is two cents per ounce weight, whether the letter is addressed to the next town or to the farthestmost post office in the Yukon.

In 1710, and indeed in Canada until 1851, the distance a letter was carried was an element which entered into the cost. It would have been thought no more proper to ignore the element of distance in fixing the postage on a letter than in fixing the charge for the conveyance of a parcel of goods. By the act of 1710 the postage on a single letter passing between two places sixty miles apart or less was fourpence; where the places were from sixty miles to one hundred miles apart the charge was sixpence.

Besides the distance, however, there was another factor which helped to determine the amount of the postage. This factor will appear from a description of the classes into which letters were divided.

Letters were single, double, and treble, and ounce. A single letter was one consisting of one sheet or piece of paper, weighing less than one ounce. If with this single sheet letter, a piece of paper was enclosed, no matter how small, the letter was called a double letter. The treble letter was a letter consisting of more than two sheets or pieces of paper, under the weight of an ounce.

Whatever the postage of a single letter might be, the postage on a double letter was equal to that of two such single letters; and that on a treble letter was three times that on a single letter. There were no envelopes in use at this period, and the sheet on which the letter was written was so folded that an unwritten portion came on the outside, and on this space the address was written.

The question will occur as to how the presence of enclosures could be detected among the folds of the larger single sheet. There were several means of detection born of ingenuity and experience. The approved method and the one long in service, was to hold