



Hong Kong & The British Consulate's Post Office at Bangkok from 1855 to 1885

Toronto B62 Meeting

12 February 2023

by

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Topics

- A bit of history
- Establishing the British Post Office
- Stamps used there
- Obliterators & Cancellations
- Consular & Firm Chops
- Hong Kong Issues
- A few Covers
- Fakes



Bangkok in the 1800s was a far-off place.



For: diplomates, missionaries, workers at firms, and foreigners employed by the Siamese Government.

Bangkok to Hong Kong is 1,926 NM at 10 knots it takes 8 days
Bangkok to Singapore is 917 NM at 10 knots it takes 4 days
Singapore to Hong Kong is 1,442 NM at 10 knots it takes 6 days
Hong Kong to San Francisco is 18,880 NM at 10 knots it takes 79 days



1 NM = 1.15 M = 1.85 Km

New York to Liverpool sailing packets in the period 1818-1832 as follows:

Fastest crossing - 21 days
Slowest crossing - 29 days
This equates to a range of about 100 to 140 miles per day, or an average speed of about 4 to 6 knots.
The fastest speed ever achieved by a sailing ship was 22 knots (41 km/h), made while running down to Australia in 1854.

When steam engines were introduced, their top speeds didn't surpass those of the Age of Sail, but they ran 24 hrs per day. So, while a sailing ship might average 6 knots, and make 144 NM in a day, a steamer would average 9 knots and travel 216 NM.

A bit of history

- **1511** Portugal - first European contact
- **1592** "Siam" first used by Sir James Lancaster
- **1604** Dutch – trading station
- **1612** East India Company – trading posts
- **1680** French East India Company – factory
- **1688** Revolution, foreigners banned for 150 years
- **1767** Ayutthaya sacked; capital moved to Bangkok
- **1820** Portuguese open a consulate
- **1833** American missionaries arrive



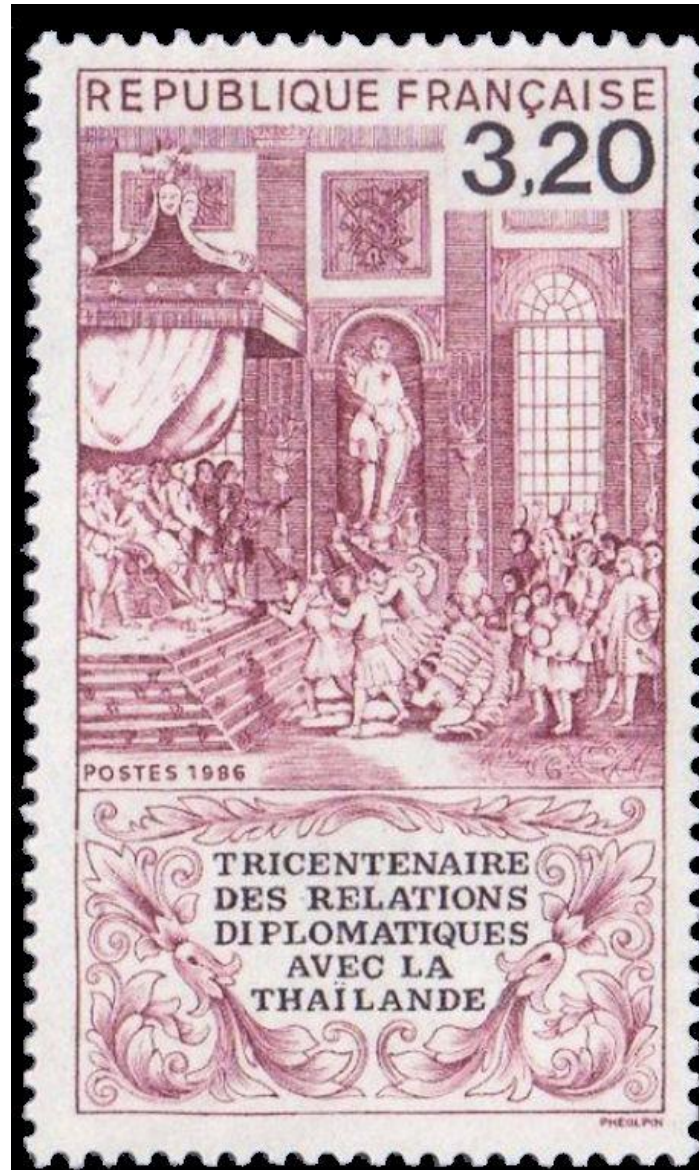


Four Portuguese stamps to mark 500 years of relations with Thailand in 2011.
A joint issue with Thailand. Issued: 20 July 2011.

Siamese Embassy to France in 1686

300 anniversary of diplomatic
relations between France &
Thailand.

Issued: 27 January 1986





Bowering Treaty

18 April 1855 – Treaty of friendship and commerce between Great Britain and Siam negotiated between King Mongkut & Sir John Bowring.

British subjects were granted:

- Extraterritoriality
- Freer trade
- Permanent residency



Sir John Bowring
Governor of Hong Kong



King Mongkut



Other treaties followed quickly

- UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
- FRANCE
- DENMARK
- HANSEATIC REPUBLIC
- NETHERLANDS
- PRUSSIA
- AUSTRIA
- SWEDEN & NORWAY
- BELGIUM
- ITALY
- AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN EMPIRE
- SPAIN
- GERMAN EMPIRE

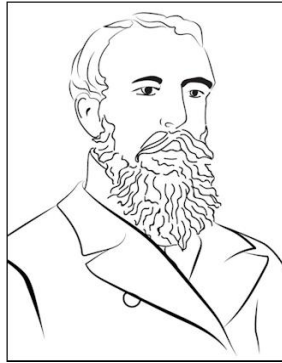
British Consuls 1855 to 1885



Charles Hillier
1856



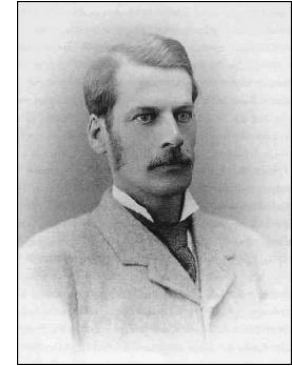
Robert Schomburgk
1858-1864



Thomas Knox
1864-1879



William Palgrave
1879-1884



Sir Ernest Satow
1884-1888

Hillier - was the Chief Magistrate at Hong Kong. He died at Bangkok on 18 October 1856 of dysentery.

Schomburgk - explored in British Guiana & Caribbean. Before Siam he was British Consul to the Dominican Republic. Explored in North Siam.

Knox - before being Consul was an army officer in India, China & Siam.

Palgrave – had been a priest, a soldier, a traveller and a spy in Arabia. He left Bangkok due to health reasons and was appointed Minister Resident and Consul-General to Uruguay.

Satow – after Siam was appointed Consul-General to the Oriental Republic of the Uruguay.

Of the eleven British Consular officials at Bangkok between 1856 and 1874, four died in Siam, one went home an invalid, two went home and retired from the service and the remaining four were constantly on leave to maintain their health.



Charles Batten Hillier (1820-1856) was the Chief Magistrate at Hong Kong when Sir John Bowring proposed him to be the British Consul at Bangkok on the July 4, 1856.

He died on 18 October 1856 of dysentery not long after arriving to take up his post.

He was 36 years old!

British Consulate



Officially opened on 1 January 1858

King Mongkut helped the Consulate to acquire a tract of land next to the Portuguese Consulate on the banks of the Chao Phya river.

The compound layout by Schomburgk with a boathouse on the left and the porters Lodge in front.

Bangkok was known as the Venice of the East due to the many canals.



Post Office Building

New Post Office building erected in 1883 on the river's edge.

Used 20 boatmen to ferry personnel, produce & messages.

FOREIGNERS NEEDED TO COMMUNICATE WITH HOME.



Dr. Daniel Bradley and family in 1864 Bangkok.

He arrived in 1835 & died there in 1873.

He brought a printing press & Siamese type and in 1840 he started the Bangkok Recorder.

Introduced Western Medicine, including smallpox vaccination.

Establishing the British Post Office

Permission requested
to piggyback the
British Consulate's
mail

11 June 1856

On 11 June 1856 – foreigners, business, missionaries and diplomats request permission to piggyback on the British Consulate's mail.

By 12 May 1859 – granted they could place their mail in the Consulate's mail bag in the porter's lodge.

12 May 1859

Granted!



Moving the mail

- *Chow Phya* owned by the King.
- Twice-monthly commercial and mail link with Singapore.
- One could entrust mail to any Captain if it was prepaid.
- Post Offices paid Captains a small fee for each letter.



- 17

Setting up the Siamese Post Office

2 July 1881 – King Chulalongkorn appoints his brother Director-General of the Post and Telegraph Department.

4 August 1883 – Postal service only in Bangkok was launched.



H.R.H. Prince
Bhanurangsi



First Post Office



First stamps were only valid in Siam

The Consulate Post Office's Own Stamps



23 basic stamps

used

From: **April 15, 1882**

To: **June 30, 1885**

(3 years, 2.5 months)

Other Stamps Used at the British Consulate

India – Up to 1 Sept 1867

Straits – 1 Sept 1867 onwards

Great Britain – Special

Hong Kong – 1855 to 1885

Indian Issues



Bangkok, 1st September 1859

← From inside

- Singapore PO controlled out of Bengal
- 1854 – First Indian stamps
- No Bangkok cancellations yet

Straits Settlements

Straits Settlements became a Crown Colony on 1 April 1867.
First stamps issued on 1 September 1867 (Overprinted Indian stamps).



12c on 4 anna



The only stamp of this issue known on a
Bangkok cover

Great Britain

A privilege rate for British sailors on ships at Bangkok.



Known 4 loose or on piece.
Known 3 covers.
All are 1 penny.



Now For Hong Kong Stamps!

Any HK issue from 1855 up to July 1885
could have been used.

POSTAL NOTICE.

Straits Settlements and Hongkong Postage STAMPS, to cover mail matter for Europe, China, America, India, &c., can be obtained at the Post Office Department of the British Consulate General. Payment must be made in dollars.

Stamps I have seen!

August 1863-1871 Watermarked Crown CC

				
2c deep brown [Issued Nov 1864]	4c grey	6c lilac	8c pale dull orange [October 1864]	12c pale greenish blue [April 1865]
SG 8	SG 9	SG 10	SG 11	SG 12

?	?	?	?	?	?	?
18c lilac [1866]	24c green [October 1864]	30c vermilion	30c mauve [14 August 1871]	48c pale rose [January 1865]	96c olive-bistre [January 1865]	96c brownish grey [1865]
SG 13	SG 14	SG 15	SG 16	SG 17	SG 18	SG 19

August 1876-1877 Watermarked Crown CC

?	?
16c on 18c lilac [1 April 1877]	28c on 30c mauve
SG 20	SG 21

August 1877 Watermarked Crown CC


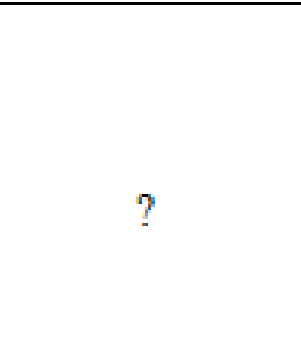
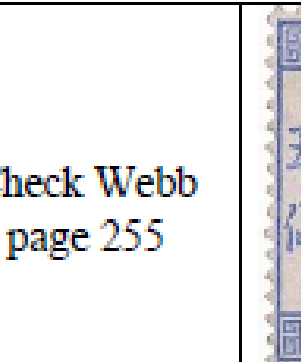

?
16c yellow
SG 22





1880 Watermark Crown CC Issued Between March and December

			
5c on 8c bright orange [Issued September]	5c on 18c lilac	10c on 12c pale blue	10c on 16c yellow [May]
SG 23	SG 24	SG 25	SG 26

?				?
10c on 24c green [June]	2c dull rose	5c blue [December]	10c mauve [November]	48c brown
SG 27	SG 28	SG 29	SG 30	SG 31

1882 Watermark Crown CA Issued Starting in May

			
2c rose-lake	2c carmine	4c slate-grey	5c pale blue
SG 32	SG 33	SG 34	SG 35

			
10c dull mauve [Issued August 1882]	10c deep blue-green [1884]	10c purple on red	30c
SG 36	SG 37	SG 38	SG 39

Fiscal Stamps Used for Postage



BANGKOK FE 5 / 84

Unique!
John Bull

Postal Stationery Cards



3c card mailed in July 1881 to New York transiting Hong Kong on 27 July 1881. Cancelled with the British Consulate Seal and in Hong Kong by the B62 obliterator.



3c card to Chicago mailed 8
November 1882. Cancelled by the
four-bar obliterator. HONG KONG
22 November 1882 CDS on
reverse.



3c card to Galion, Ohio mailed on 23 November 1882. Cancelled by the four-bar obliterator. HONG KONG DE 7 / 82 CDS over the 4-bars.







3c card cancelled BANGKOK 12
April 1884 CDS to New York.



1c card cancelled BANGKOK 18
July 1884 CDS to Nagasaki, Japan.

Obliterators & Cancellations

	British Consulate Seal	Four-Bar	Checkerboard or Chessboard	CDS
				
Earliest	Sept 1879	8 Nov 1882	Jan 1883	21 June 1883
Latest	Sept 1882	10 Dec 1882	April 1883	29 June 1885
Usual Colour	black	black	black	black
Scarce Colour	red, blue	-	red	-
----- SEEN ON WHICH STAMPS USED AT BANGKOK? -----				
India	-	-	-	-
Straits	✓	rare	✓	✓
"B"s	✓	✓	✓	✓
Hong Kong	✓	rare	✓	✓
Great Britain	rare	-	-	rare



British Consular Seal

September 1879 to September 1882



Seen in black, red and blue

Unknow why withdrawn. Maybe it was lost, needed elsewhere, sovereignty concerns of Siam, promised CDS soon, etc.



British Consular Seal

HONG KONG / A / AU 11 / 81: CDS



Only recorded example of a cover with the British Consulate seal on Hong Kong stamps

Four Bars

8 Nov to 10 Dec 1882

Rubber roughly cut. Lasted only a couple of months.



Hong Kong CDS
22 Nov 1882
on reverse



Only three seen!



Not The Four Bars

8 Nov to 10 Dec 1882



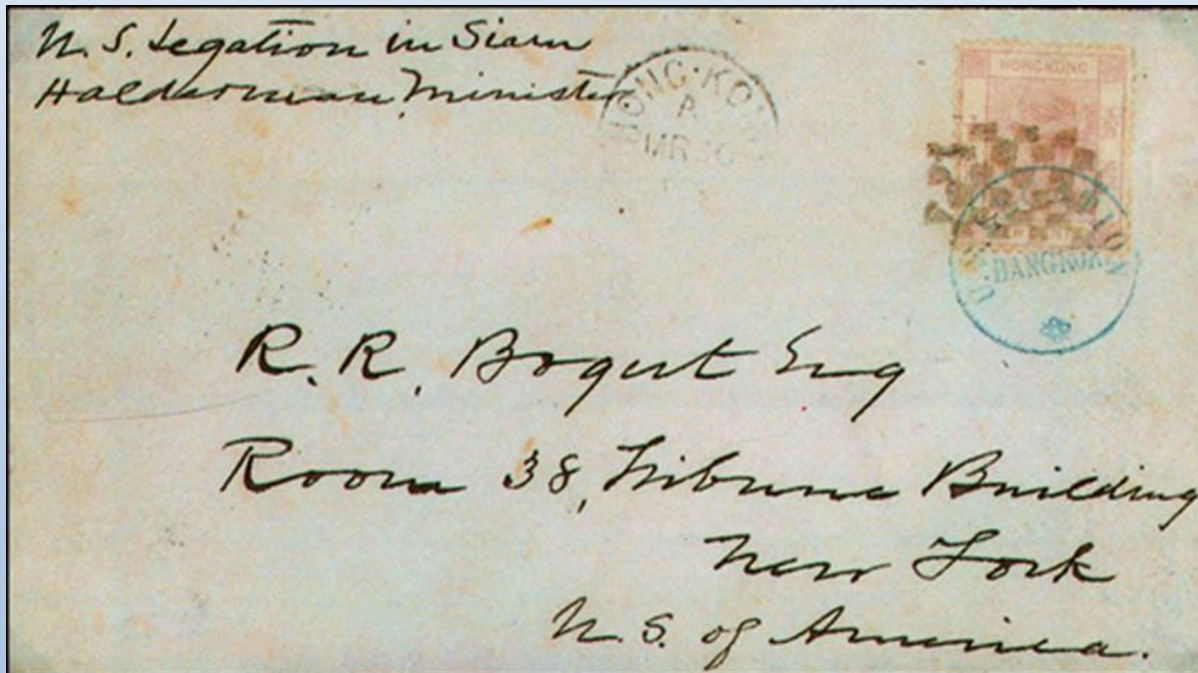
Pa Kua



Chessboard/Checkerboard

January to April 1883

Rubber



HONG-KONG / A / MR 30 / 83: CDS (black)

Occurs in black and red.

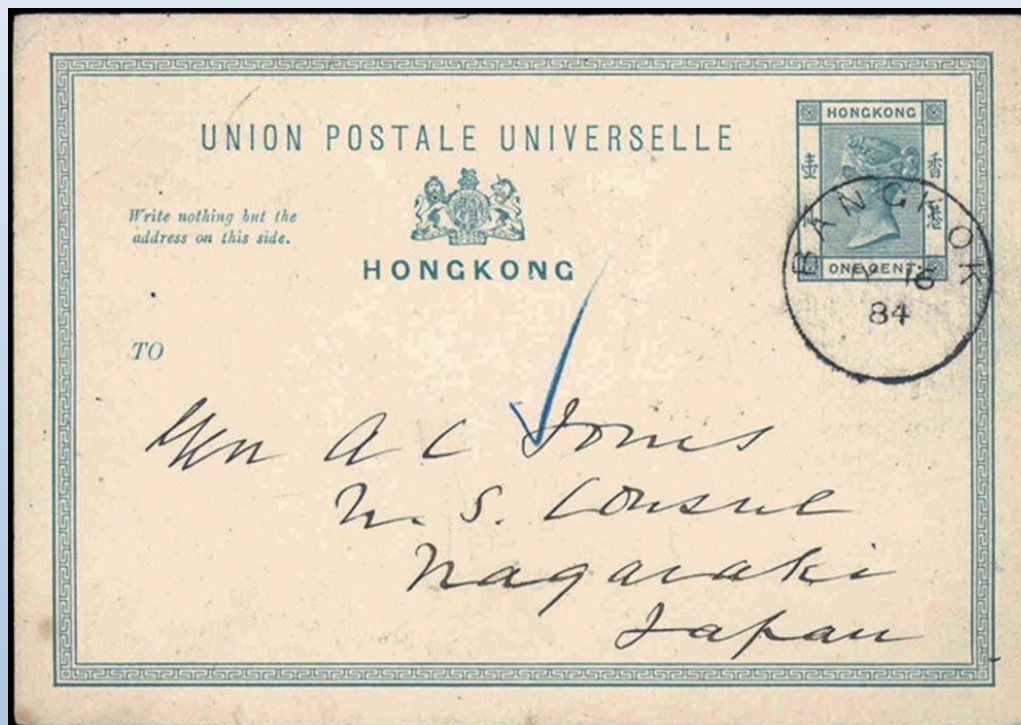


CDS

21 June 1883 to 29 June 1885

Likely supplied by
the Singapore PO.

No Index letter.



BANGKOK TO NAGASAKI

26 July 1884 – Hong Kong PSC

A few more



The highest value seen, other than the \$2 fiscal, is 12 cents.

Chops Used by Consulates

CONSULATES ESTABLISHED AT BANGKOK BEFORE 1 JULY 1885

CONSULATE	SIGNED TREATY	CHOPS SEEN
Great Britain	1855, 18 April	YES
USA	1856, 29 May	YES
France	1856, 15 August	YES
Denmark	1858, 21 May	Not yet
Hanseatic	1858, 25 October	Not yet
Portugal	1859, 10 February	Not yet
Netherlands	1860, 17 December	Not yet
Prussia	1862, 7 February	Not yet
Austria	1866, March	YES
Sweden & Norway	1868, 18 May	Not yet
Belgium	1868, 29 August	Not yet
Italy	1868, 3 October	Not yet
Austro-Hungary	1869, 17 May	Not yet
Spain	1870, 23 February	Not yet
German Empire	1871, 6 May	YES



*Consulat de France
à Bangkok*



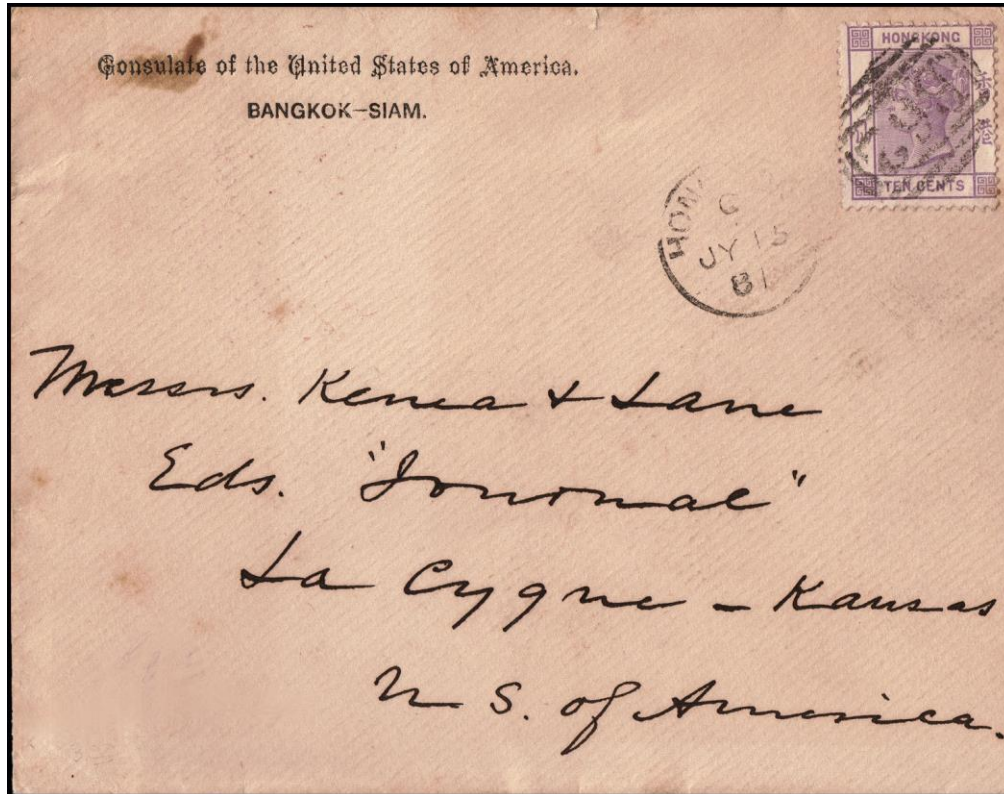
Only recorded example of a cover with the British Consulate seal
on Hong Kong stamps



August 1881

Twice the 10¢ per ½ oz. rate to a UPU. country

US CONSULATE LETTER HAND DELIVERED TO HONG KONG POST OFFICE



Likely from General John Adams Halderman the US Consul General. He was a onetime member of the Kansas House of Representatives and Senate.

HONG KONG C JY 15 81

B62 Hong Kong obliterator

SAN FRANCISCO, CAL / AUG / 12 / HEQD. (on reverse)

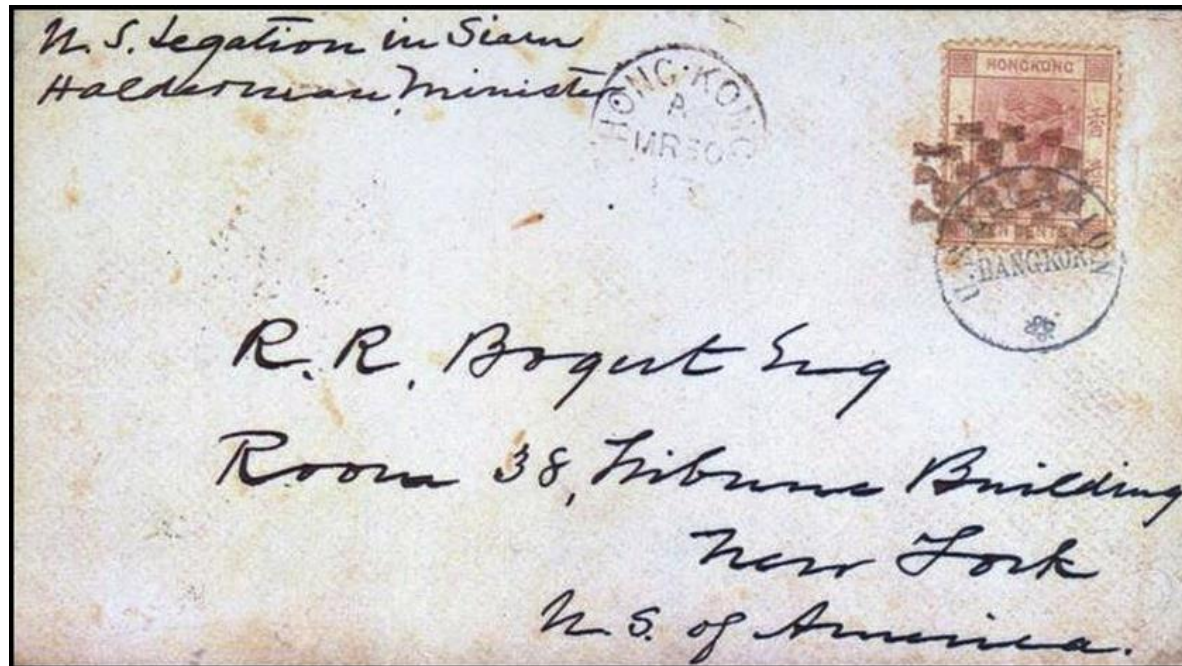


On 29 May 1856 Siam and the United States signed a Treaty of Amity, Commerce, and Navigation. A consulate was established which used the chop shown above.

No covers!



The only use of the US Legation chop on cover



March 1883

The US Consulate was elevated to a Legation in October 1882.

Shows that there was the need for high vales.



16 May 1884

Total of \$1 postage



German Consulate



Unique!

The German Empire established diplomatic relations with Siam on 6 May 1856. The Consulate used the distinctive chop similar to that shown in the figures above.

Firms That Used The British Consulate Post Office

Firm	Duration	Nationality
A. Bjurling & Cie.	1879 to 1885	Swiss
A. Markwald & Co.	1858 to 1917	German
Ameeroodin Mahomedbhoy Moochalla Ltd.	late 1880s	Indian
B. Grimm & Co.	1878 to date	German
De Bay, Götte & Co.	1867 to 1882	German
E. Lamache & Cie.	1860 to c1888	French
Ed. Bonneville	1870 to c1889	French
F. de Jesus & Co.	c1877 to c1888	Portuguese
Falck, Bramann & Beidek	1878 to 1883	German
Falck & Beidek	1883 to 1917	German
H. Klopp	c1880 to c1890	German
J. W. Torrey	c1877 to c1885	American
Malherbe, Jullien & Co.	1866 to 1882	French
Möller & Meisner	1871 to c1897	German
Pickenpack Thies & Co.	1858 to 1885	German
R. Götte & Co.	1882 to 1914	German
Ramsay & Co.	1880 to 1892	British
Rémi Schmidt & Cie.	1857 to 1866	French
Shaw & Chaland	c1880 to c1898	French
Siam Daily Advertiser	1868 to 1871 & 1874 to 1885	American
The Borneo Company Limited	1856 to 1967	British
Windsor, Clarke & Co.	late 1880s	French-British
Windsor, Redlich & Co.	1871 to 1884	French-German
Windsor, Rose & Co.	1884 to c1892	French-German

F. DE JESUS & Co.

(1877 – 1888)



The de Jesus family is one of the oldest Portuguese families in Siam. The firm of F. de Jesus & Co was operating in Bangkok as early as 1877. They were compradors, storekeepers and commission agents.

Filomeno Manuel de Jesus was the owner.

The firm is not listed in directories after 1888.

Unique!

MÖLLER & MEISNER

(1871 - 1897)



H.A. Möller and C.F. Meisner were ship captains in Bangkok as early as 1866. In 1871, they went into partnership as Möller & Meisner. They were general storekeepers, auctioneers, ship chandlers and producers of soda water.

A traveller's account published in an 1878 newspaper describes the firm this way: "A German firm, Möller & Meisner, has the largest general trade, and sells everything from a box of pills to a marine engine; it has a line of American goods, some purchased in Hong Kong or San Francisco and some coming by way of London or Hamburg."

Besides the illustrated chop the firm used two other oval chops that have empty centres one having a single outer ring the other a double ring.





WINDSOR, REDLICH & Co. (1871 – 1884)

On 14 August 1871, Alexis Redlich, joined in partnership with Daniel Thomas Windsor as Windsor, Redlich & Co. The head office was in Bangkok and a satellite office was in Hamburg. They were merchants, owners of the Steam Rice Mill and were agents for several insurance companies.

Filomeno Manuel de Jesus from Macao was one of their clerks. He left the firm in 1877 to found his own firm F. de Jesus & Co (see previously).

Paul Rose also worked for the firm and could sign per procuration. The firm became Windsor, Rose & Co in 1884 when Paul Rose became a partner after Redlich left the firm.





WINDSOR, ROSE & Co.

(1884 - 1892)



Windsor, Redlich & Co. became Windsor, Rose & Co. when Paul Rose, a German, was admitted as partner in 1884.

The firm had its headquarters in Bangkok with a branch office in Hamburg. They evolved into a large shipping and import-export business.

They were agents for the Chartered Mercantile Bank of India, London and China, the Ocean Steamship Company, the Scottish Oriental Steamship Co., Ltd. and numerous insurance companies.

They were also partners in the Bangkok Saw Mill.

HK PSC



3c card mailed in July 1881 to New York transiting Hong Kong on 27 July 1881. Cancelled with the British Consulate Seal and in Hong Kong by the B62 obliterator.



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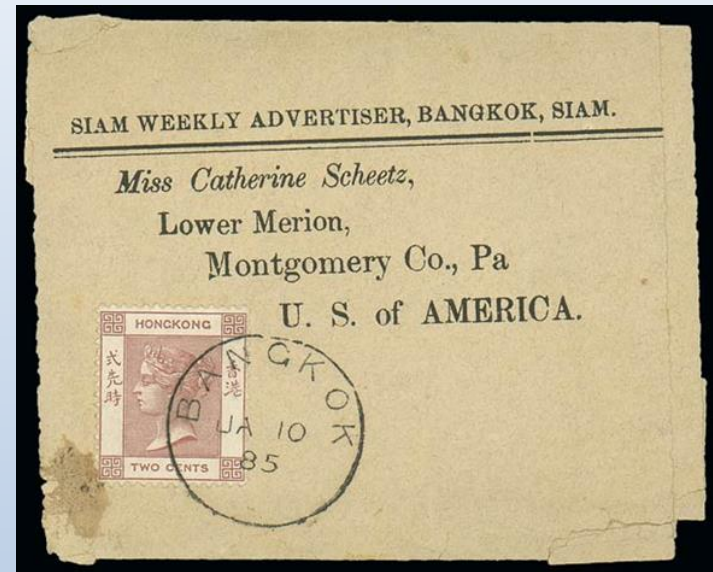
BANGKOK TO ENGLAND

17 December 1884 – Wrapper



BANGKOK TO USA

10 January 1885 – Wrapper



Rev. Samuel J. Smith
(1820-1909)

American missionary & publisher

Printed matter rate was 2 cents.

The Siam Daily Advertiser was the first English-language daily newspaper in Siam. The paper was first published on 1 September 1868.

The Siam Weekly Advertiser followed in 1869.



A few inbound covers



1870

To: Borneo Company Limited

A front forwarded by John Burd & Co. of Hong Kong to the Borneo Company's Singapore office for transmission to Bangkok.

SINGAPORE date stamp 18 July 1870

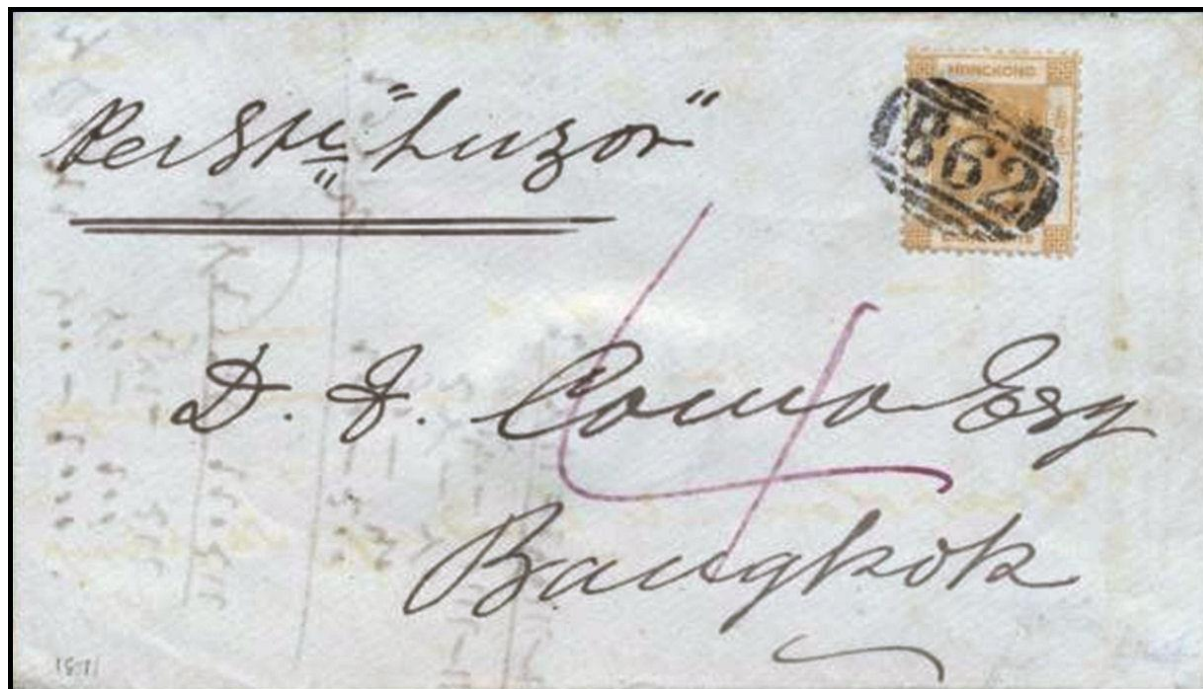


21 February 1871

To: Rev. Samuel R. House M.D. for his wife.

SINGAPORE 27 February 1871 CDS on reverse.

[Interasia Auction 26 June 2016, lot 4296]



17 July 1871

To: D.J. Cama Esq
Per Steamer Luzon?

Hong Kong 17 July 1871 departure CDS on reverse.

[Christoph Gärtner 28th/30th May 2008 Lot 1636]

FAKES!

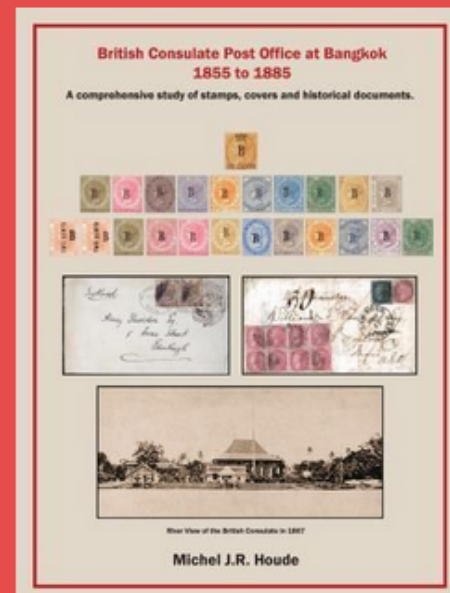


A BOOK!



Welcome to the website of The Stuart Rossiter Trust.

We are a Charitable Trust supporting research and publication relating to the history of communication through postal systems of the world.



**NEW BOOK... British
Consulate Post Office
at Bangkok 1855 to
1885**

Michel J. R. Houde



THANKS!

- Sam Chiu
- David Foot
- Andy Gould
- Ingo Nessel
- Andrew Norris
- Garfield Portch
- Del Smith
- Ken Snelson
- John Wilson

Many others!

The Stuart Rossiter Trust



British Consulate Post Office at Bangkok 1855 to 1885



Click [here](#) for information about the book.

I finished writing my book in July of 2021 and thus the content is frozen in time.
This website notes new discoveries and information that adds to the knowledge on this subject.
If you have anything that you think belongs on these pages please contact me.

[Contact](#)

UPDATED	CONTENTS
2022 March 26	CORRECTION!
2022 June 20	OK - What is this!
2022 Jan 19	History
2022 July 1	"Bs"
2021 Nov 15	Obliterators & Cancellations
Not yet	Other Stamps used at Bangkok
2021 Aug 23	Firm & Consular Chops
2023 Feb 2	Mail – Outbound
2022 Nov 10	Mail – Inbound (new section, not in the book) 56 covers, looking for more!
2022 April 18	Mail Closure Notices
2021 Nov 14	Anchor Chop
Not yet	Varieties & Flaws
2022 Dec 1	Fakes, Forgeries & Relics!
2022 Oct 18	Not Siam!
2022 Dec 18	Directional-Markings
Not yet	Publications
Not yet	Everything Else

I would be most pleased to hear from you if you have things to add. I always like seeing new items and better examples.

Michel Houde

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Also my update website.

<https://michelhoude.com/Book-Update/Index.html>



thanks
FOR WATCHING