

VICTORIAN STAMP COLLECTORS AND THEIR AGENTS

JOHN FROGGATT

1. Bakana card text

As all the stamps in the Oil rivers protectorate are sold out I have been unable to complete my purchase for you. The new stamps are expected by every mail.

Yours truly

John M. Roberts Purser and Mail Master

2. Opobo card text

Kindly send me word to 59 Salisbury Road, Southdown Road, Liverpool If you receive all your letters and oblige.

Your truly

John M. Roberts

3. Second Opobo card text

Dear Sir

I am posting from Bakana the following envelopes viz.

Nos 1 containing 8 (d) in stamps

2 ditto. 11 ditto.

3 ditto. 3/1 halfpenny ditto.

26 ditto. 2/- ditto.

Yours truly John M. Roberts

4. The envelope annotated 1/11 value in stamps is also in Roberts' very distinctive hand writing but is not one of the batch referred to in the card.

As purser on an Elder Dempster ship Mandingo (5) travelling regularly around the West African coast Roberts was ideally placed as a mobile agent for Empson an industrialist and collector in Birmingham. The map (6) courtesy of Peter Wingent shows a typical route for a rather later year.

Holding office was no bar to taking part, in fact it seems to have been quite normal.

The next two sheets both relate to Thomas Wall, sometime postmaster and Vice Consul.

7. Old Calabar card text.

I have partially replied to your letter but owing to a great pressure of work I have had to put it aside. I hope to be able to do all that is necessary for you by next mail and return your post and mails also. I leave here for Europe about 14th April on S.S. Cabenda.

T.A. Wall

8. Second Old Calabar card with manuscript cancellation (has anyone seen another) with initials that look like TAW. Text reads:

Yours rec'd, no surcharges to hand, has converted Postal Order to Cash & will keep to see if any takes place within a month at which time the order shall have due attention. **I did those Mr W. got for you** and remember your address full well.

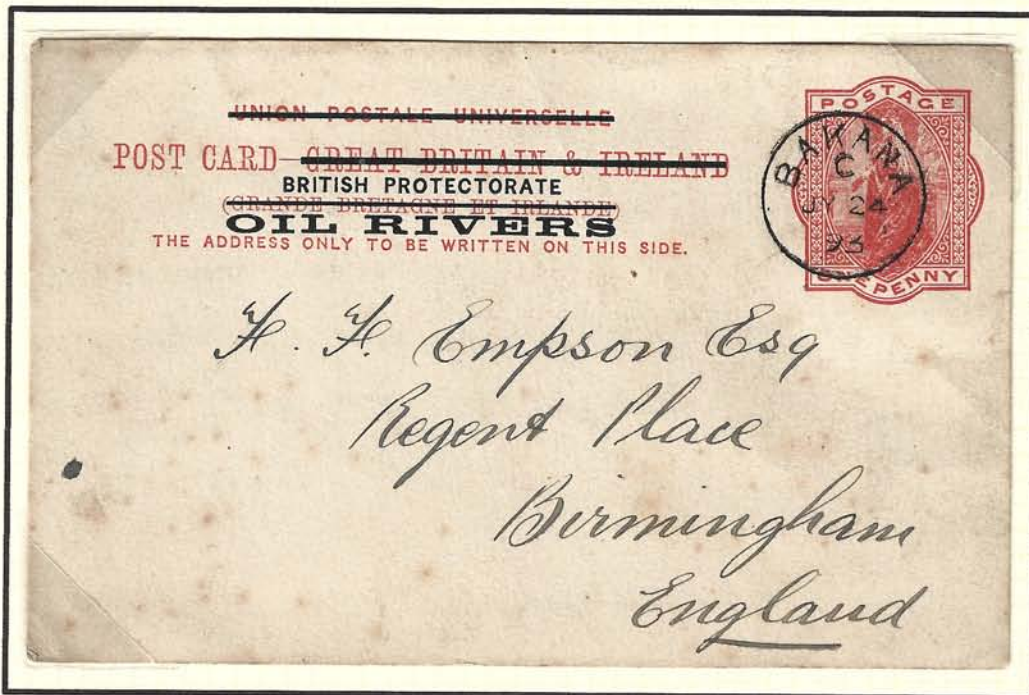
I cannot make out the name of the signatory.

The final two are sent by Vice Consuls,

9. The letter from Old Calabar with Provisional is from Arthur Griffith, who sent numerous letters with Provisionals to family members.

10. The card from Old Calabar to Stanley Gibbons which refers to receiving their bank of England note for £5 (*a very significant sum in 1894*) and headed H.B.M. Vice Consulate Old Calabar, seems to be from Edward Hewett, looking very like his signature from the National Archive, who was also Vice Consul.

OIL RIVERS
BAKANA "C" CDS JY 24 93 to Birmingham



Message on reverse headed Bakana W.C.A 24th July 1893 reads "As all the stamps in the Oil Rivers protectorate are sold out, I have been unable to complete my purchase for you. The new stamps are expected by every mail. John M. Roberts, Purser and Mail Master" S.S. MANDINGO stamp at top left

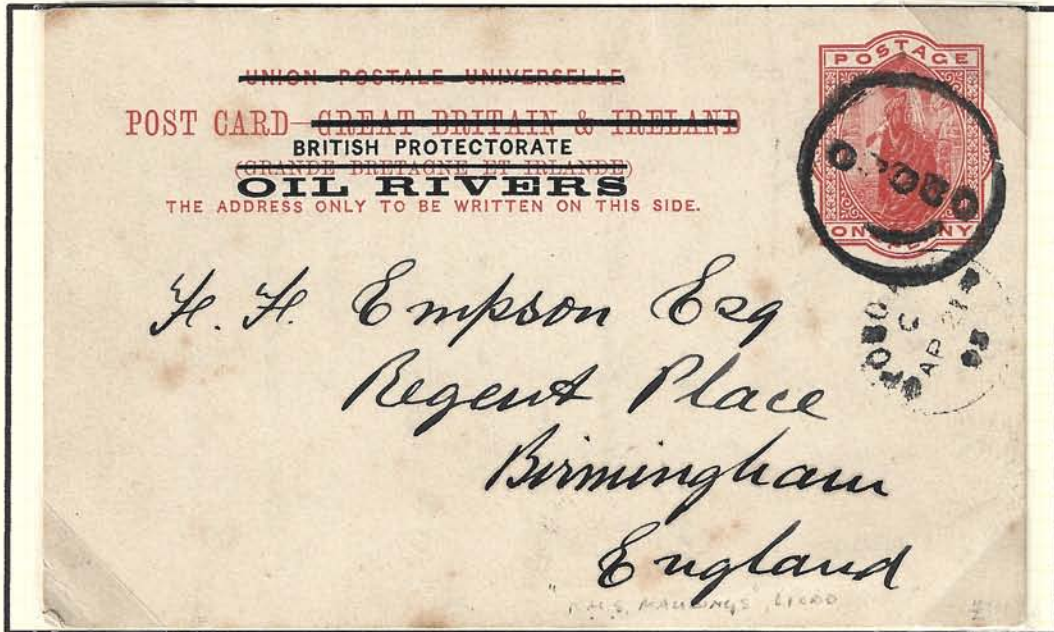
S. S. MANDINGO. Bakana. W.C.A.
24th July 1893.
Dear Sir,
As all the stamps in the
oil Rivers Protectorate are sold out, I
have been unable to complete my
purchase for you. The new stamps are
expected by every mail.
Yours truly
John M. Roberts
Purser & Mail Master.

OIL RIVERS

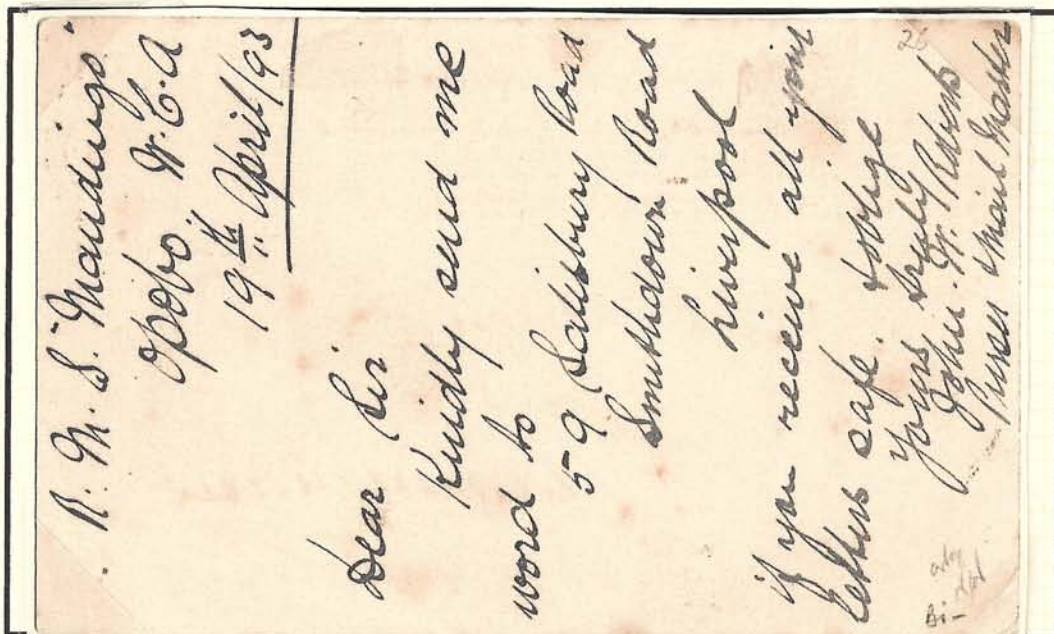
OPOBO to Birmingham

OPOBO Parcel post cancellation (Proud PP1) plus Opobo River Code

C Ap 21 93 (ProudD2) to F (Frank) Empson



Sent by John M Roberts "Purser and Mail Master" of R.M.S. Mandingo who appears to act as an agent sending stamps and covers to Empson.



OIL RIVERS PROTECTORATE

1893

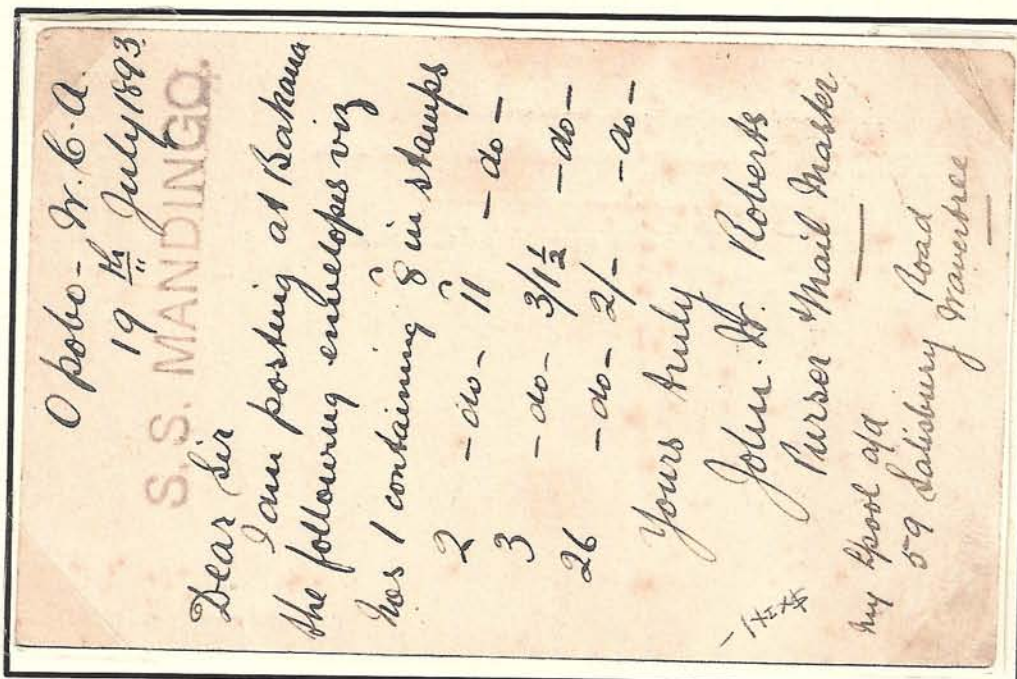
OPOBO RIVER A CDS (Proud D2) JY 20 93 to Birmingham

PAID Liverpool BR PACKET 1 SEP 93



Message on reverse headed Opobo 19th July 1893 lists

Envelopes to be posted at Bakana



NIGER COAST

OPOBO RIVER CDS Pride D2 FE 7 94 "A"

PAID LIVERPOOL BR PACKET 15 MAR 94 i.B

All six values of January 1894 issue with "1s and 11d in stamps"
noted by sender at bottom left hand corner

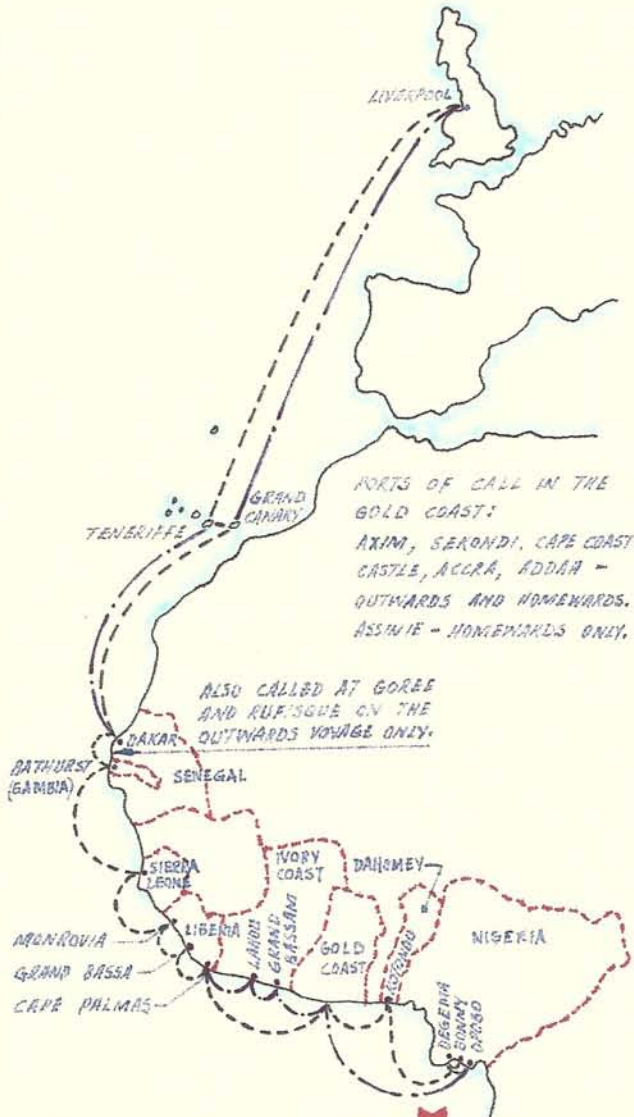


Philatelic cover addressed to Frank Empson of Birmingham in the distinctive handwriting of John M. Roberts Purser and Mail Master of RMS Mandingo who sent numerous covers to Empson from West Africa



OPOBO AND NEW CALABAR SERVICE

JULY TO SEPTEMBER 1906



OUTWARDS WEDNESDAYS

DEPARTURE DATES FROM LIVERPOOL						
JUL. 4	JUL. 18	AUG. 1	AUG. 15	AUG. 29	SEP. 12	SEP. 26

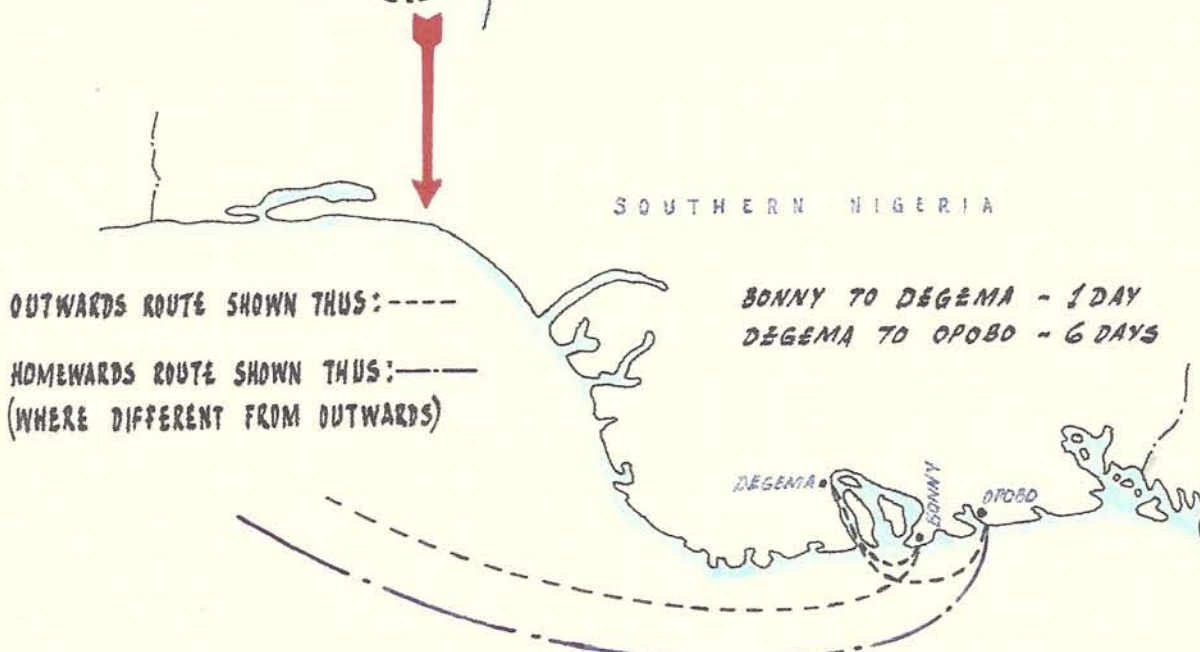
ARRIVAL DATES AT OPOBO						
AUG. 17	AUG. 31	SEP. 14	SEP. 28	OCT. 12	OCT. 26	NOV. 9

HOMEWARDS THURSDAYS

DEPARTURE DATES FROM OPOBO						
AUG. 23	SEP. 6	SEP. 20	OCT. 4	OCT. 18	NOV. 1	NOV. 15

ARRIVAL DATES AT LIVERPOOL						
SEP. 26	OCT. 10	OCT. 24	NOV. 7	NOV. 21	DEC. 5	DEC. 19

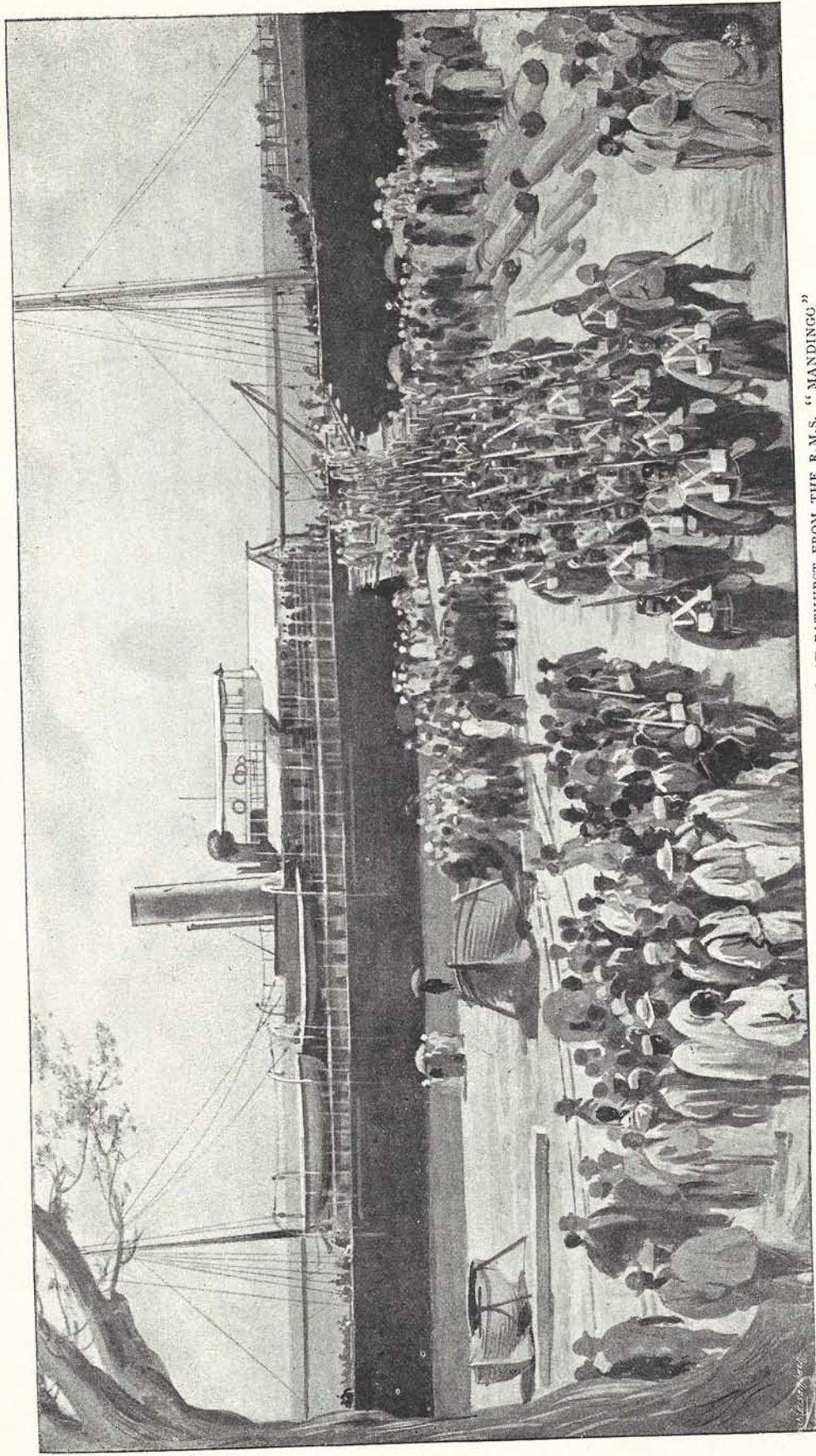
THE TIMETABLE BRACKETS THE PORTS OF BAKANA, BUGUMA AND ABONEMA AFTER DEGEMA. CALLS AT THESE SMALL PORTS MOST PROBABLY ACCOUNT FOR THE 6 DAY PERIOD TIMETABLED BETWEEN DEGEMA AND OPOBO.



DETAILS OBTAINED FROM ELDER DEMPSTER & CO. TIMETABLE, 1906.

Drawn by Peter Wingent

THE GRAPHIC



REINFORCEMENTS OF WEST INDIA TROOPS DISEMBARKING AT BATHURST FROM THE R.M.S. "MANDINGO"
THE RECENT FIGHTING ON THE GAMBIA

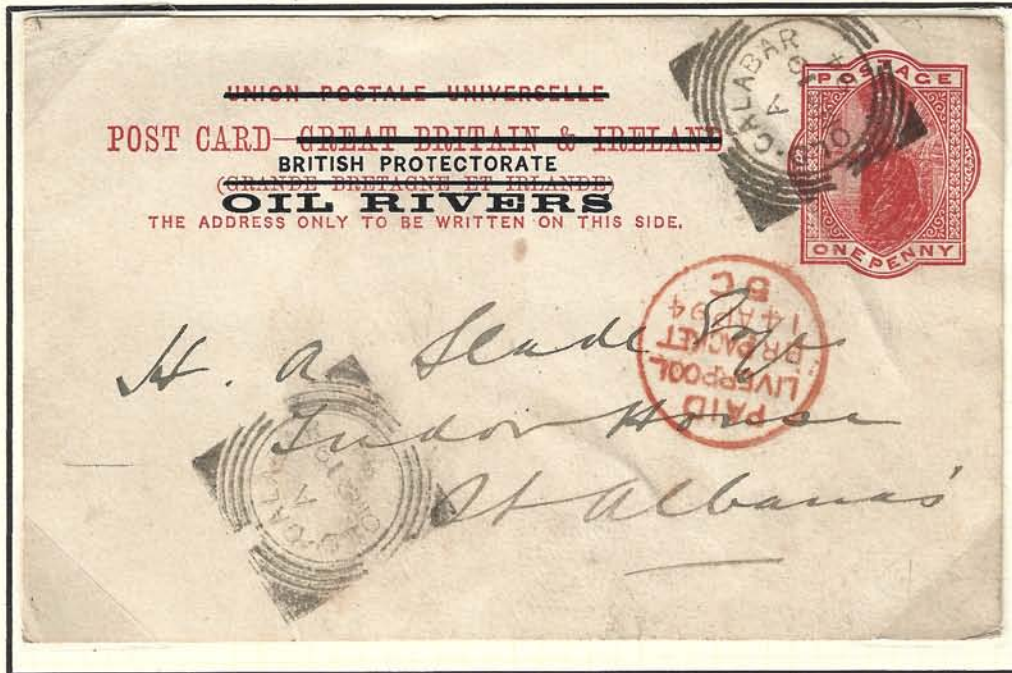
OIL RIVERS PROTECTORATE

19 MAR 1894

PSC with Old Calabar Squared Circle "A" cancel date 19/3/94 and

"PAID LIVERPOOL BR PACKET 14 AP 94

Addressed to H.A. Slade a known collector in St Albans



In the message on reverse headed Old Calabar dated July 5th 1894 signed by T. A Wall Postmaster General and Vice Consul at Old Calabar he apologises for not carrying out all necessary work for Slade and that he is returning to Europe on 14th April.

Old Calabar 19. 3. 94
I have partially replied to
your letter but owing to
a great pressure of
work I had to put it
aside. I hope to be able
to do all that is necessary for
you by next mail, and
return your post card also.
I leave here for Europe about
14th April in H. C. C. C. I. Wall

OIL RIVERS PROTECTORATE

5 July 1894

PSC with manuscript cancellation with TW under date 5/7/94
suggesting Thomas Wall, Postmaster General and feint "PAID
LIVERPOOL BR PACKET 8 AU 94



In the message on reverse headed P. O. Old Calabar dated July 5th 1894 the writer discusses obtaining surcharged stamps and states "I did those Mr W got for you"

P.O. Old Calabar
July 5th 1894

H^r Sci
Jones rec^d no surcharges on hand, has
Consented Postal order to Cash & will keep
to see if any takes place within a month
at which time the order shall be of due
attention - I did those Mr. W. got for you
and remember your address full well -
with kind regards
Jones respectfully
A. W. Dixon Esq.

NIGERIA

British Protectorate – Oil Rivers

1895 registered cover to Twickenham with “Old Calabar provisional”
HALF PENNY on two and a half penny hand stamped Type 4 in green
S.G.11 with two 2d S.G. 3. Old Calabar CDS.



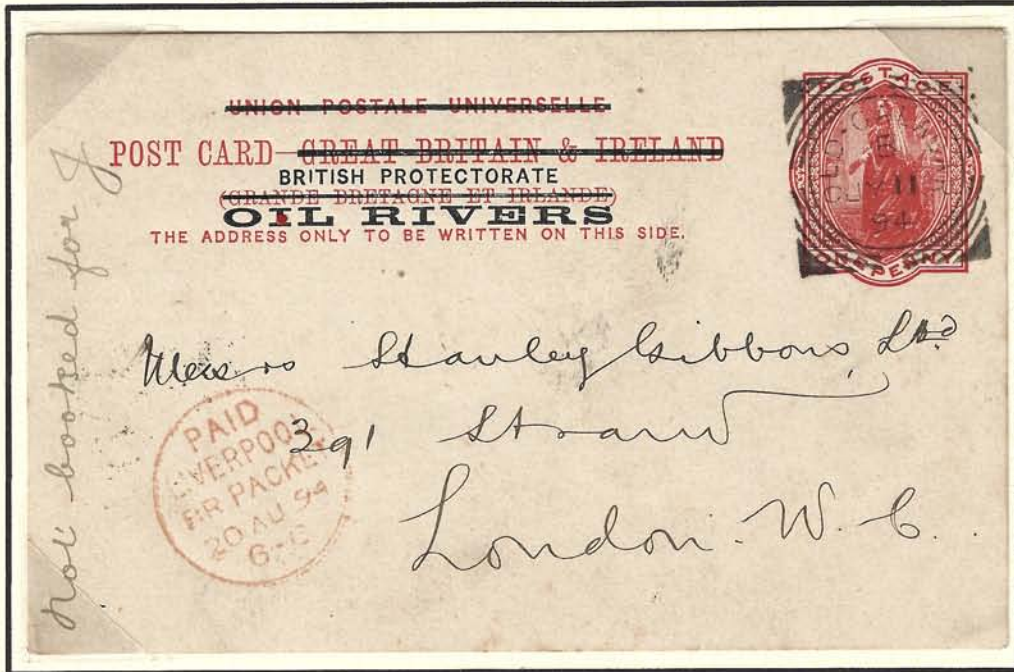
Provenance: Jeremy F. Watson Collection of British
Commonwealth sale 24th July 2023 Stanley Gibbons Lot 1251
with BPA Certificate 4974 dated 22 March 1980.

The letter is addressed by A. G. (Arthur) Griffith, Vice Consul
at Old Calabar who sent 50 of the 113 provisionals on cover
recorded by John Sacher in March 2009.

OIL RIVERS PROTECTORATE

1894

Old Calabar B CDS JY 11 94 to Stanley Gibbons in London with PAID
LIVERPOOL BR PACKET 20 AU 94



Message on reverse headed H.B.M Vice Consulate Customs Department Old Calabar refers to receiving "your last letter with Bank of England note for £5. Will write by this mail by letter on that subject." Signature could be Bennett or possibly Hewett, i.e. Edward Hewett the Vice Consul.

