

# BRITISH WEST AFRICA STUDY CIRCLE

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## HANDSTRUCK STAMPS AND CANCELLATIONS OF:-

### THE NIGER TERRITORIES

### THE OIL RIVERS PROTECTORATE

### THE NIGER COAST PROTECTORATE

This is the first bulletin to be published by the Circle on these territories but much information has been drawn from a draft circulated in 1971 which was not completed.

The bulletin is concerned primarily with the usage and life of the many and varied cancellers during this most interesting period, from circa 1840 to 1900, and to this end there is included a section illustrating every canceller referred to herein. Pending publication there may well be some overlap with the bulletin for Southern Nigeria, which is due for publication in the coming months.

A short history of each territory has been included leading up to the establishment of the postal service together with an extract from P.O. Beale's article in *Postal History International* Jan. 1975, giving a West African Circulation List of 1886, as applicable to 'Nigerian' post offices.

There will in due course be published additional sections dealing more specifically with adhesives of the period; paquebot and ships letters; the Old Calabar and Opobo provisionals; plate flaws and re-entries of the Niger Coast issues. In view of incomplete information at this stage, the occurrence of C.T.O.'s is only referred to generally.

Omissions and fresh information relative to the present bulletin will be welcomed by the editors for publication at a later date, either through 'Cameo', or in an amended bulletin.

The editors gladly acknowledge the help of members and especially from Messrs. P.O. Beale, R.B. Sanderson and C.G. Young; and also the fact that they have drawn on previously published informations as listed in the bibliography.

SEPTEMBER 1975.

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J. F. INCE

Joint Editors.



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## THE NIGER TERRITORIES

Prior to the grant of a charter in 1886 to the Royal Niger Company Chartered and Limited, the centre of British activity on the West Coast of Africa was based on the island of Fernando Po which, although Spanish, possessed a British naval station until 1834. An Englishman, Captain Beecroft, remained and was, in 1843, appointed Governor by the Queen of Spain and became British Consul for the 'Bights of Benin and Biafra' in 1849. Apart from a short break between 1873-75 when it moved to Old Calabar, the Consulate remained until 1882 when it finally moved to Old Calabar.

Although Fernando Po was the main political base for British influence a consulate was also established between 1840 and 1860 at Lokoja as a result of the efforts of both the British Government and private traders to open up the Niger river.

By 1870 there were many British and foreign trading posts on the 'Oil Rivers', trading in the local product of palm oil. These interests were amalgamated in 1879 in the United African Company which applied to the home Government for a charter and meanwhile developed many new trading posts, extending well into the interior, and concluded treaties in the face of foreign competition with rulers well into the north of what is now Nigeria. French trading interests were bought out and by 1886 the British Government had been able to agree boundaries with Germany between the Niger and the Cameroons as far as Yola, which enabled a charter to be granted on 10th July of that year to a reconstituted and much more strongly financed company - The Royal Niger Company - over territory which became known as The Niger Territories.

These areas comprised the basins of the R. Niger, as far as Say (on the middle Niger), and of the R. Benue, the northern frontier being settled



with France in 1890 by a line from Say to Barua on Lake Chad, and the eastern frontier with Germany by a line drawn from the Cross River to a point a little east of Yola on the Upper Benue. The western frontier was not settled until 1898 when, by an agreement with France, the boundary was made a line running from the intersection of the 9th parallel with the frontier of Dahomey to ILLO on the Niger and thence to the northern frontier.

On the coast, the Territories occupied about 21 miles from the Forcados River to the Brass River, the adjacent coast line on either side falling within the Oil Rivers Protectorate. The Company sited its capital at Asaba on the River Niger, while Lokoja, at the confluence of the Niger and Benue Rivers, was the headquarters for its troops. Akassa became the main trading station for transhipment of goods from the interior.

In January 1895 the natives of Brass sacked Akassa. Following a punitive expedition by the British Government in February, the charter was revoked and the Company's powers transferred to the Crown but this did not physically take place until 1st January, 1900, when 'The Territories' were merged with the Protectorates of Northern and Southern Nigeria.

Prior to the grant of the charter in 1886, the 200 or so white people comprised officials of the Company, missionaries and a few other traders. Initially, mail was stamped on arrival in the United Kingdom and cancelled with the Liverpool '466' killer handstamp. The envelopes bore the Liverpool B.R. Packet date stamp. Owing to the absence of postage stamps in The Territories, and to avoid the shilling surcharge on arrival, The Royal Niger Company made an arrangement with the British Postal Authorities by which letters for the U.K., franked by a rubber handstamp of the Company, were accepted at Akassa, but a fee of 6d. was collected on delivery in the U.K.

The practice of sending mail without stamps applied only to U.K. addresses. That posted to a foreign country was surcharged at double the fee on arrival. Accordingly the Niger Company purchased a supply of current British stamps (1881-87 issue) valued from  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. to 2/6d. which were sent out at intervals and placed on sale at Akassa. The Bank of Liverpool did likewise for use at its own branches. These stamps were only used for mail going outside The Territories or on official documents. The fee for mail to the U.K. was 6d., later reduced to  $2\frac{1}{2}$ d. per  $\frac{1}{2}$  oz. During this period fourteen differing types of rubber cancellers were used.

The earliest known use of a British stamp is on a cover addressed to the Bank of Liverpool (Porter) dated 19th November, 1886, and unstamped on a cover endorsed 'No stamps procurable in the Niger Territories' dated 24th August, 1887, surcharged 1/- (also Porter). Neither of these covers bears a Royal Niger Company handstamp canceller. The earliest cover, showing the revised (U.P.U.) rate of postage at  $2\frac{1}{2}$ d. per  $\frac{1}{2}$  oz., is dated 20th September, 1892 (Porter), but see the check list.

At this period mail between the trading stations was carried free by the coast steamers, while the majority of mail was addressed to the U.K. offices of the Niger Company, and Bank of Liverpool, the Church Missionary Society and to certain U.K. suppliers.



After the post office at Akassa, the second office to be opened was at Burutu at the mouth of the Forcados River in 1896, the earliest known cancellation being 30th November, 1896. Lokoja was the next to be opened in 1899, the earliest known cancellation being 30th June, 1899 (Porter). The fourth and last post office of the Niger Territories was at Abutshi (now Onitsha) on the east bank of the River Niger, where customs and postal services were combined in one office. As this office was only in operation for a few months it was not provided with a regulation Post Office canceller, but made use of one belonging to the Customs Department. It was struck only in violet ink, the earliest known date being 4th October, 1899 and the latest 29th December, 1899. Mail was forwarded via Burutu.

On 1st January, 1900, The Niger Territories were transferred by purchase to the British Government for £856,895.

### THE NIGER TERRITORIES POSTAL HISTORY

The postal history of The Territories falls into two distinct periods, viz, the period prior to the grant of its charter to the Royal Niger Company in 1886; and the period subsequent thereto until The Territories were absorbed on 1st January, 1900 into the new protectorates of Northern and Southern Nigeria.

#### Circa 1840-1886 (First period).

There were no local date or other postal markings in the territories during this period and any marks fall into two categories:-

#### A (a) COVERS FROM FERNANDO PO - without adhesives.

British covers from Fernando Po are scarce. There were six in the Porter sale and three in the Hinde sale, one of which had come from Porter. The Glasco sale had one cover. All these covers, which date from 1831, and include one from the captain of the Dove (see later), are understood to be without adhesives and carry one or other of the following cancellers:- (see R.L. Enc. Vol. 2, page 294, and as illustrated herein).

- |                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| (i) HSI 1859-73   | Crowned circle in red 'Paid at Fernando Po'. |
| (ii) HS2 1874     | Boxed 'Paid at Fernando Po'.                 |
| (iii) HS3 1865-74 | C.D.S. in black 'Fernando Po'.               |

(Codes used 'B' and 'C' have been noted).



A cover owned with the Circle carries both (i) and (iii), the C.D.S. reading 'Fernando Po C/JU29/1859', while that illustrated in the Hinde Sale catalogue (1959) carries only the c. d. s. IN A BLUISH STRIKE, viz. 'Fernando Po B/JA25/62'.

(The day and the year are faint, but the catalogue and a Calais strike confirm the year as 1862).

#### A (b) G.B. STAMPS USED IN FERNANDO PO.

The use of British stamps is known and probably dates from 1860. However, as Beale writes on page 4 of his study of 'The Agents of the G.P.O. in Fernando Po etc.' (see bibliography), it seems probable 'that British postage stamps cancelled in Fernando Po are ones that had arrived at the Agency from other ports or from British ships not proceeding to Great Britain.'

In fact it seems that covers from Fernando Po bearing adhesives are very scarce and it is mostly off-cover items which have survived. These have been cancelled by use of the oval six bar killer 247 (with a dot), which distinguishes it from its earlier use at Elmham in the U.K., which canceller had no dot and the style of lettering differs slightly.

The following stamps thus cancelled are known:-

1. 4d. verm. SG: 27 issued 1872 - plates 13 and 14.
2. 6d. grey SG: 43 issued 1875 - plates 13, 14, 15 and 16.

#### B. PAQUEBOT OR SHIP LETTERS.

A letter from the 'Niger Coast' in 1840 is known as bearing a penny black which bears the normal red cancellation obviously applied on arrival in England (R.L.Enc.)

In 1845, the Baptist Missionary Society sent out a sailing boat, the Dove, to be based on Fernando Po and for making periodic voyages to various parts of the Coast. Correspondence between March 1845 and May 1846 originating from the ship's Captain (including the first reporting his arrival at Clarence Cove, Fernando Po, referred to above) shows that any vessel sailing to England was used for carrying letters. There is no record of the postal charge (if any) levied on arrival being shown on any covers (or folded letters) but postal marks have been recorded as follows:- Liverpool Ship Letter; Liverpool Ship; Ship Letter Gravesend; Beaumaris Ship Letter and circular date stamps for Bristol, Beaumaris K.W. and M.K. (Porter). It is interesting to record that the earliest cover offered in the Hinde Sale (January 1959) comprised an official letter from a naval officer at Fort William, Fernando Po, in 1831 which carried on the reverse a Milford Ship Letter mark.



Prior to 1860 letters with British adhesives from the African naval stations were cancelled on arrival in London but, between 1858 and 1870, the mail boat cancellers B.12 and B.56 are found on the current 1d, 6d, 10d and 1/- values. These are listed during this period as issued to the P. & O. Line Ships SS DELTA (B.12) and SS MOOLTAN (B.56). In a sale review in 1959 reference is made (in the P. & O. mail boat section) to the following:- B.12 on 6d. on cover in 1860: and, off-cover B.12 on 10d. and B.56 on pair of 6d. Possibly the 10d. value dates the strike as subsequent to November 1867. These were withdrawn in 1870 from this usage. A cover is held in the Circle bearing a G.B. 1/- (1862 -4), addressed to the U.K., carrying the B.12 canceller. However, the place of origin cannot be stated specifically, and, only generally, 'West Coast of Africa'.

A number of covers exist, from 1886, with the Liverpool arrival canceller, i.e. the '466' six bar oval killer, cancelling British postage stamps and bearing the 'Paid Liverpool B.R. Packet' in red. These covers do not bear the Royal Niger Company's handstruck stamp Type 1. Stamps of G.B. known to bear this cancellation are:-

- 6d. dull green (1884 issue)
- 6d. purple or red (1887 issue).

Covers without stamps are surcharged 1/-.

These earlier uses of British adhesives are believed to result from a supply being sent to its branches, or correspondents, by the Bank of Liverpool to avoid the surcharge, while the Royal Niger Company made an arrangement with the British Postal Authorities by which letters for England, franked by a rubber handstamp were accepted at Akassa. Thereafter only the basic charge of 6d. was collected on delivery. In addition, the Company arranged for its own supply of British adhesives, the earliest known use being 14th January, 1888 (Danson Sale).

Apart from examples itemised above, the following are a representative selection from the latter part of the period, as taken from published works and sale catalogues:-

1. Letters written from H.M.S. Growler 4th October, 1869 from Bonny River, and 8th December, 1869 (Danson Sale).
2. 1884 Cover to Liverpool inscribed 'Stamps not procurable in Benin' showing a large handstruck 1/- and Liverpool receiving C.D.S. (Hinde Sale).
3. Cover to Bank of Liverpool bearing dull green 6d. cancelled with '466' killer in black, together with 'Paid Liverpool B.R. Packet' in red dated 19th November, 1886. (Porter).
4. Cover to S. Wales endorsed 'No stamps procurable in Niger Territories', surcharged 1/- on arrival, and carrying 'Liverpool B.R. Packet' in black dated 24th August, 1887. (Porter).



5. Cover to Bank of Liverpool bearing 6d. purple on red cancelled with '466' killer in black together with 'Paid Liverpool B.R. Packet' 17th March, 1889 in red.

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The early postal rates for the whole of this period from circa 1840 to England were 1d. for sailors and 6d. for officers per  $\frac{1}{2}$  oz. Until the Royal Niger Company joined the U.P.U. in 1892 when the rate became 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. for  $\frac{1}{2}$  oz., these rates generally seem to have applied also to traders and others, i.e. 6d. per  $\frac{1}{2}$  oz. However, the use of the 4d. value S.G. 27 from Fernando Po, and especially found with the 247 cancellation, confirms that this stamp was sent out for use on letters between intermediate ports on the West African Packet boat run.

The earliest cover in the Circle indicating the revised U.P.U. rate of 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per  $\frac{1}{2}$  oz. is an unstamped cover bearing the Akassa Type 2 Handstamp taxed at 5d. on arrival Liverpool, 4th May, 1892, although Porter states 'the earliest date showing the revised rate of postage to 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per half ounce is 20th September, 1892.'

One other rather remarkable cancellation is listed in the Hinde sale catalogue, comprising a cover to London franked by 'a G.B. 3d. purple on yellow which is tied by an oval 'FB/8' obliteration and there is a fair strike of the oval (Type 2 Niger Territories) handstamp at back.' This item is catalogue dated at '1893 (Sept.)'- whether date of arrival or date handstamped at Akassa is not clear.

1887-1899 (Second period).

#### HANDSTRUCK STAMPS AND OTHER CANCELLERS.

Early in 1887 the Royal Niger Company set up its own postal system with a weekly mail boat calling at the various delta ports. It provided its offices with rubber date stamps which were used as franks or obliterations. At times administrative handstamps were used and a few of the rubber handstamps continued briefly in use after 1st January, 1900.

In addition there were instances of pen cancellations.

#### A. PEN CANCELS.

The following are known and are currently held by members of the Circle:-

- i) M/s 'Forcados/Niger Territories' on G.B. 1887 5d., SG207, dated 23/6/94 carrying also on face 'D.O. GANA GANA 23/6/94' with straight line 'PAQUEBOT' 23 mm.
- ii) M/s 'Forcados 25/5/94' on G.B. 1887 5d. on Royal Niger Company official envelope, carrying on face straight line 'PAQUEBOT' 38 mm.



## B. HANDSTRUCK STAMPS (see Check List and diagrams).

### Type 1. (Akassa Oval with Maltese Crosses)

The date of opening of the Akassa post office is uncertain but it was probably not before the end of 1887, as the first recorded cover bearing this handstamp is 14th January, 1888, (Porter). This bore no adhesives and was surcharged on arrival in U.K. only the basic rate of 6d. in accordance with the arrangement concluded with the British Postal Authorities, applicable when the Niger Company's Akassa handstamp had been impressed on the cover.

This handstamp was apparently only in use for two years, 1888 and 1889 and not many examples survive. Some examples of other covers recorded are:-

- a) 5th March, 88 'No stamps procurable in River Niger'. Surcharge 6d. in black.
- b) 6th May, 88 1887 G.B. 6d. cancelled by '466' Killer.
- c) 13th Feb. 89 'River Niger. No stamps procurable'. Surcharge 6d. in black.
- d) 7th Jun. 89 in m/s (7/6/89) 1887 pair of G.B. 6d. cancelled by '466' Killer.
- e) 4th Nov. 89 in m/s (4/11/89) 'Stamps not obtainable in the Niger, W. Africa'. Surcharged 6d. in black.
- f) 30th Dec. 89 - latest recorded date, details not stated. (R.L. Enc. Vol. 2 Amendmt.)

NOTE: Several covers in 1889 carry the date of the handstamp in manuscript.

### Type 2. (Akassa Oval with Post Office)

This is the second of the handstruck stamps and like Type 1 was used on covers both with or without stamps. As it had a life of some four years many examples survive. During its currency the Company joined the U.P.U. and the postal rate was accordingly reduced from 6d. to 2½d. per ½ oz.

The earliest recorded date of use of this handstamp is 30th Dec. 1889, the latest is - Dec. 1893 (both ex-Porter). The earliest use in connection with the revised postal rate of 2½d. is 8th February, 1892, on an unstamped cover, the surcharge being 5d.

### CANCELLATIONS.

### Type 3. (Akassa single ringed Oval, plus 'Post Office')

This rubber canceller had an extremely limited application both in its life and on covers which survive. No examples are held in the Circle



at this date. Porter states that the only known dates are July 1894 on G.B. 1d., 3rd October, 1894 on 2½d., and 9th January, 1895 on 2½d.

Type 4. (Agent General - Oval).

The earliest known date of usage occurs on a cover to Sierra Leone bearing G.B. 2½d. (uncancelled) dated 3rd October, 1894. This was illustrated in the Danson Sale catalogue. It would seem that few covers exist although surprisingly the latest date is 21st June, 1899. This is on a cover with m/s 'O.C.S.' (On Colonial Service) with G.B. 1d. lilac cancelled with Akassa date stamp Type 9 dated 22nd June, 1899 with the Agent General datestamp on the reverse. Porter's reference to this cover as dated 1st June, 1899 is a misprint (see Hinde Sale catalogue). Both covers are presently held within the Circle.

Type 5. (Akassa - large oval).

Covers carrying this handstamp are also scarce. Porter records the earliest date of use as 7th March, 1895 on G.B. 2½d. Mr. R.B. Sanderson (Circle member) considers that he currently holds this cover, the date having been manually amended in red ink to 20th March, 1895, and this revised date has been accepted for this bulletin. The last date is given by Porter at 5th April, 1895, also on G.B. 2½d.

Type 6. (Akassa Rectangle).

This handstamp was the first departure from the oval pattern adopted to date. It comprised a rectangle with five lines of lettering, viz: 'The Royal Niger Company - Chartered and Limited/date/Post Office/Akassa'. The words 'Post Office Akassa' have serifs - also the first use of this print.

The occurrence is more frequent than date stamps hitherto reflecting both the increasing trade of the period and the length of life of some 4½ years.

Porter states that this handstamp is found on all G.B. values of the period 1d. to 10d. and 2/6d. Items within the Circle show usage covering the following values: ½d., 1d., 2½d., 3d., 5d., 10d. and 2/6d. Usage also is known on stamps of the Niger Coast Protectorate 2½d. on 1893 issue and 1d., and 2½d., 1894 issue; on Sierra Leone stamps, viz. 1d. of 1896/7 issue and 2½d. of 1891 issue; and on 10c and 15c Spanish stamps of the 1889 issue. (Note: The Sierra Leone 2½d. value is held with the Circle, the others are as recorded by Porter).

The earliest recorded date of use is 1st June, 1895 and the latest is 14th October, 1899).



Type 7. (Agent General - Voided curved corners).

This handstamp would appear to be scarce. An example, on cover with G.B. 2/6d. is illustrated in the Hinde Sale catalogue, dated 4th August, 1895 which is the earliest date of use. The latest date, as given by Porter, is 14th March, 1896, on 2½d. G.B.

Type 8. (Burutu Rectangle - sans serif capitals).

This was the first handstamp to be issued for the newly opened post office at Burutu, situate on the Niger at the mouth of the Forcados River. It was similar to that used at Akassa (Type 6) but the words 'Post Office/Burutu' were in plain sans-serif type.

Many examples of strikes on cover and on piece survive and the ink used varied from violet, violet/black, black and blue. However, the blue strike is rare and it is believed only two examples exist, one with adhesives. Most values of G.B. 1882/87 are found, see check list, while examples also exist of use on stamps of Niger Coast: Sierra Leone (1891) 2½d. in violet; and Spain (1889) 25c in violet black (Porter).

The earliest recorded date of use is 30th November, 1896, and the latest is 10th November, 1898.

Type 9. (Akassa - voided straight corners).

This was the largest of the rectangular handstamps and was in use for nearly three years. As a result a number of examples survive both on cover and on piece. The single line frame could be described as octagonal, while the words (in large type) 'Post Office' have serifs. It is found on all G.B. values to 2/6 and on Niger Coast values ½d., 1d., and 2½d. (Porter), which Niger Coast issue is not stated, but it is known to occur on the 1897 1d. value.

The earliest recorded date of use is 14th January, 1897, the latest date is 31st December, 1899.

Type 9A. (Akassa - voided straight corners) with 'REC.D.'

This is a rare error, the words 'REC.D.' being in place of the year (following the day and month). The copy referred to by Porter is now held within the Circle and comprises a pair of G.B. 1d. lilac, on piece, dated '15th SEP. RECD.'. One other example was believed to be in the Bertram McGowan Collection comprising a strip of three G.B. 1d. (presumably lilac) but its present whereabouts is unknown. These two copies are the only ones to have been recorded.

Type 10. (Burutu rectangle serified capitals).

As with the earlier handstamp for this port, the growing volume of trade is reflected in the number of examples which survive, both in violet and black ink and with or without adhesives. A cover exists with a strike



in blue/black. A considerable amount of mail from the interior was forwarded through this port, particularly from H.M. Forces, and it is thus seen frequently as a transit stamp rather than as a canceller. It is found on most G.B. values to 2/6d. of the period; on Niger Coast values  $\frac{1}{2}$ d., 1d., 2d.,  $2\frac{1}{2}$ d., 5d., and 1/-; Lagos  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. and  $2\frac{1}{2}$ d.; and Sierra Leone 1d. (Porter).

The earliest recorded date of use is 9th January, 1898, the latest date 29th December, 1899.

Type 11a. (Burutu - voided corners).

This handstamp, in the same unusual style of as Type 7 but with different wording, appeared in the middle of 1898, but seems to have been little used during its apparent life of 8/9 months. In fact the six examples held in the Circle are dated 9th July, 1898 (3), 14th July (1), and 3rd August (2) on G.B. values of 1d., and  $2\frac{1}{2}$ d. Porter gives the latest date of use as 4th February, 1899. It is clear from these examples that its usage was extremely limited.

Type 11b. (Akassa - voided corners).

This is an identical handstamp to Type 11a, and, as Porter suggests, it is probable both were sent out for use at the same time. However, the Akassa canceller is even more rare than that at Burutu and Porter reports only one recorded date of use, namely 9th January, 1899 on G.B. 5d. No examples have been seen by members of the Circle.

Type 12a. (Akassa - Customs Dept.)

This is an identical handstamp to Type 6, the words 'Customs Dept.' being substituted for 'Post Office'. The only known date is 20th May, 1899 on a pair of 1d. G.B. and a pair of  $2\frac{1}{2}$ d. G.B. values. It is very probable that, in places, the postal and customs services were housed in one building and the accidental use of the wrong canceller by a native clerk could have occurred.

Type 12b. (Burutu - Customs Dept.)

The only reference known to the use of this handstamp (which is identical to Type 12a) is by Porter on a G.B. 1d. value on 20th May, 1899.

The fact that the only occurrence is exactly the same date as the only recorded date of use at Akassa renders it suspect. No examples have been seen by members of the Circle.

Type 13. (Lokoja - large Oval).

This post office opened in mid-1899 at the confluence of the rivers Niger and Benue is of particular interest since it not only represented the first truly inland, up-country, postal establishment, but it was through



this office that mail was channelled from the military forces operating in 'Northern Nigeria' and from the new trading stations being established in the northern hinterland. As a result many of the covers carry no adhesives and bear the words 'on special service' or 'Posted on River, near Lokoja' etc.

There are three phases of use of this handstamp. First, the period prior to 1st January, 1900 (on G.B. adhesives or un-stamped); the second, the period post 31st December, 1899 on G.B. stamps (approx. 2 months only), and third, the period post 31st December, 1899 on adhesives of Northern Nigeria (approx. 2 years - see Check List and N. Nigeria bulletin). A number of the N. Nigeria adhesives in this third period were cancelled in manuscript at an outstation, e.g. Jebba and handstamped on collection at Lokoja. This usage is basically outside the scope of this bulletin and is covered in the bulletin on Northern Nigeria. Mail from Lokoja travelled via Burutu and not by way of Akassa, and covers usually bear a Burutu Type 10 applied in transit.

There is no record in the Circle of this handstamp occurring on stamps of S. Nigeria, Lagos, Niger Coast or elsewhere, although Porter reports it is found on stamps of Niger Coast, Lagos and Sierra Leone, without stating values.

For earliest and latest dates of use, see Check List.

Type 14. (Abutshi - large oval) (Customs Office).

This was the last post office to be opened by the Royal Niger Company, situated on the east bank of the River Niger at the large native trading town now known as Onitsha. Its life was only three months before the Territories became part of S. Nigeria on 1st January, 1900. The postal and customs services were combined in one office and the customs handstamp appears to have been the only canceller made available for use.

As with mail from Lokoja, letters were forwarded via Burutu and covers usually bear Type 10 applied in transit.

The G.B. values  $\frac{1}{2}$ d., 1d.,  $2\frac{1}{2}$ d., 5d., 10d., and 2/6d. (Porter) have been found cancelled with this handstamp, the earliest date being 4th October, 1899, the latest date 29th December, 1899.

A cover exists with 2d. value Niger Coast (1897 issue) dated '5th SEP 1900', forwarded via Agberi (date stamped 7th September, 1900) ex the Pilkington Collection. This date is suspect and may well have been cancelled by favour.



Type - Unallocated - (Lokoja Depot)

In the Hinde Sale catalogue (1959) there is a photograph of a single ringed oval date stamp bearing, in the perimeter, the words 'The Royal Niger Company Chartered & Limited' with a one line date across the centre '17 AUG 97' with above 'LOKOJA' and below 'DEPOT' (with serifs).

The catalogue states it has been applied on the back of a cover to England bearing on face a G.B. 2½d. cancelled by a blue Burutu date stamp. This is assumed to be Type 8 herein.

Since this has not been used as a postal canceller nor is anything else known, it has not been listed in the check list. Any further information will be welcome.

THE NIGER TERRITORIES CHECK LIST

The handstruck stamps and cancellations used by The Royal Niger Company following the grant of its charter in 1886, have been listed herein in chronological order of first recorded use.

To facilitate reference, the type numbers accorded by the Stanley Gibbons (British Commonwealth) Catalogue and by the Robson Lowe Encyclopaedia Vol. II (Africa) to these cancellers is shown alongside the Circle's own reference number - thus SG; R.L.; B.W.A.



## CANCELLATIONS - FERNANDO PO &amp; SUNDRY

SG	Type Ref. RL	BWA	In Use	Description	Colour	Size mm.	Town	Adhesives	Remarks
-	HS1	-	1859-73	Crowned Circle 'Paid at Fernando Po'.	Red	20	Fernando Po	-	Found with Spanish adhesives.
-	HS2	-	1874	Boxed 'Paid at Fernando Po'.	Black	?	Fernando Po	-	
-	HS3 (PQ)	-	1865-74	c.d.s. with F. Po at top, 2 line date surmounted by code.	Black	20(?)	Fernando Po	-	Code 'B' seen: Jan. 1862 (Hinde Sale) Also 'C'.
-	2	-	1865-72	6 bar oval 'killer' numeral '247'. (with full stop)	Black	25x18	?	G.B. 4d & 6d (1874-76)	4d plates 13 & 14 6d plates 13 to 16.
-	-	-	1858-70	6 bar oval 'killer' with either B.12 or B.56.	Black(?)	?	-	G.B. 1d, 6d & 10d 'Current Issues'.	See narrative and R.L. Enc. Vol. II.
-	-	-	19.11.1886 -1.1896.	8 bar oval 'killer' with '466' (Liverpool)	Black	30x20 (Liverpool) (approx.)		G.B. 6d 1884 G.B. 6d 1887 G.B. 2½d 1887	Early covers with no other cancella- tion. Later covers bear 'Niger Terri- tories' handstamps. Latest cover dated 11.12.95 Akassa.
-	-	-	25.5.94 & 23.6.94.	Manuscript date cancel.	-	-	Forcados	G.B. 5d 1887	No other handstamp of The Territories.

## CANCELLATIONS OF THE ROYAL NIGER COMPANY (a) With adhesives; (b) Without adhesives.

-	1	1	(a) 6.5.88 -7.6.89.	Double ringed oval 'The Royal Niger Co. etc.' Akassa with Maltese crosses.	Violet	36x22	Akassa	(a) G.B. 6d 1887	(a) Liverpool '466' killer.
			(b) 14.1.88 - 30.12.89.	- do -	Violet	"	"	(b) None	(b) Endorsed 'No stamps available' or similar.
1	2	2	(a) 7.5.90 - Dec.1893	Oval 'Niger Territories' Akassa with 'Post Office' & 'P. & O.'	Violet	39x24	Akassa	(a) 6d 1887 issue. 2½d, 3d, 5d, 6d, 10d, 2/6 (Porter)	Porter gives last date Dec.1893. This has been assumed to be with adhesives. The earlier recorded date is 14.3.93.
			(b) 30.12.89 -24.3.92.	- do -	Violet	"	"	(b) None.	R.L. Enc. Vol. II gives late date as 31.8.92 but does not state without adhesives.
3	3	3	3.10.94 - 9.1.95.	Akassa - single ring oval with 'Post Office'.	Violet	42x26	Akassa	G.B. 2½d 1887	
-	8	4	3.10.94 - 21.6.99.	Agent General Oval.	Violet	42x26	-	G.B. 1d, 2½d 1887	In use at Akassa.
2	-	5	20.3.95 - 5.4.95.	Akassa - large oval, no 'Post Office'.	Violet	39x25	Akassa	G.B. 2½d.	



4	-	6	1.6.95 - 14.10.99.	Akassa Rectangle.	Violet	44x24 Akassa	G.B.1887 values. Also Niger Coast, Sierra Leone & Spain.	See Narrative.
-	9	7	4.8.95. - 14.3.96.	Agent General - rectangle with voided corners.	Violet	42x22	G.B. 2½d, 2/6	In use at Akassa.
7	6	8	30.11.96. - 10.11.98.	Burutu rectangle with sans-serif capitals.	Violet	44x24 Burutu	G.B. 1887 values to 2/6, and Niger Coast.	Occurs on un- stamped cover 30.9.98 'No stamps available'.
9	-	9	14.1.97 - 31.12.99.	Akassa rectangle with straight voided corners (octagonal).	Violet	49x31 Akassa	G.B.1887 values to 2/6 and Niger Coast.	See Narrative.
9	-	9A	'15 SEP'	As Type 9 but 'RECD.' instead of year.	Violet	49x31 Akassa	G.B.1d.	Only one cover and one piece recorded.
4	4	10	(a) 9.1.88 -23.11.99.	Burutu rectangle - serified capitals.	Violet	44x27 Burutu	G.B. values to 2/6 and other issues.	See Narrative.
			(b) 10.7.98. - 20.8.98.	- do -	Violet	44x27 Burutu	None.	
4	4	10	(a) 18.2.99. - 29.12.99.	- do -	Black	44x27 Burutu	G.B. values to 2/6 and others.	See Narrative.
			(b) 8.12.98. - 23.12.99.	- do -	Black	44x27 Burutu	None.	
4	4	10	(a) 3.10.99.	- do -	Blue/ Black	44x27 Burutu	G.B. 1d.	Only one example known.
6	-	11A	9.7.98. - 4.2.99.	Burutu - voided corners.	Violet	42x22 Burutu	G.B.1d, 2½d.	Also occurs on unstamped cover 9.7.98.
6	-	11B	9.1.99.	Akassa - voided corners.	Violet	42x22 Akassa	G.B.5d.	Only one example recorded.
(4)	-	12A	20.5.99.	Akassa - 'Customs Dept.'	Violet	44x24 Akassa	G.B.1d, 2½d.	Only one example recorded.
(4)	-	12B	20.5.99.	Burutu - 'Customs Dept.'	Violet	44x24 Burutu	G.B.1d.	See Narrative.
8	7	13	(See below)	Lokoja Oval.	Violet	42x26 Lokoja		See Narrative.

PRIOR TO 1st JANUARY, 1900

(a) 7.9.98. - 31.12.99.	Violet	42x26 Lokoja	G.B.1d, 2½d.
(b) 11.8.99. - 19.8.99.	Violet	42x26 Lokoja	None.

POST 31st DECEMBER, 1899

1.1.1900. - (-)9.2.00.	Violet	42x26 Lokoja	G.B.1d, 2½d.
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POST 31st DECEMBER, 1899 ON N. NIGERIA STAMPS

		20.4.00. - (-) 10.02.		Violet	42x26 Lokoja	N/N SGs 1-7.	See Narrative.
(8)	-	14	4.10.99. Abutshi Oval - 29.12.99. 'Customs Office'.	Violet	42x26 Abutshi	G.B. values various.	See Narrative.



THE NIGER TERRITORIES  
CANCELLATIONS  
(not to scale)



Type 1 (36 x 22)



Type 2 (39 x 24)



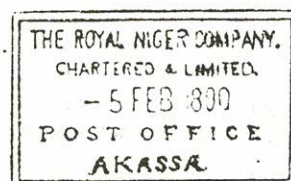
Type 3 (42 x 26)



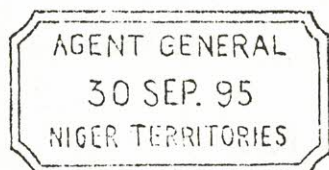
Type 4 (42 x 26)



Type 5 (39 x 25)



Type 6 (44 x 24)



Type 7 (42 x 22)



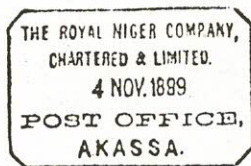
Type 8 (44 x 24)



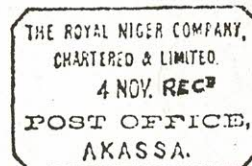
THE NIGER TERRITORIES

CANCELLATIONS

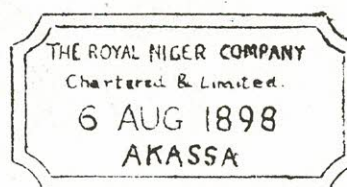
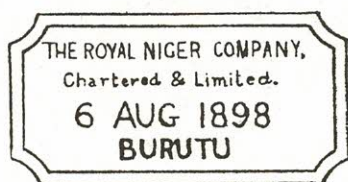
(not to scale)



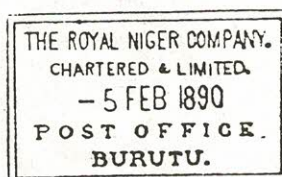
Type 9 (49 x 31)



Type 9A (49 x 31)

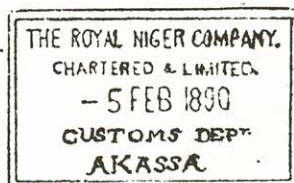


Type 10 (44 x 27)

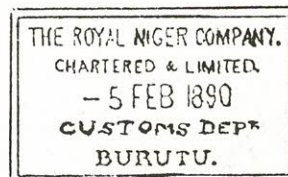


Type 11A (42 x 22)

Type 11B (42 x 22)



Type 12A (44 x 24)



Type 12B (44 x 24)



Type 13 (42 x 26)



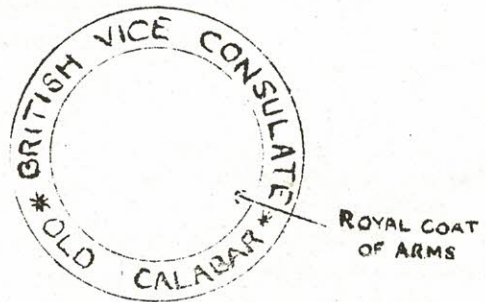
Type 14 (42 x 26)



OIL RIVERS AND NIGER COAST  
CANCELLATIONS



"Oil Rivers Oval"



Vice Consulate H.S.



(1)



(1)



(1)



(1A)



(2)



(3)



(4)



(4A)



(4B)



## THE BRITISH PROTECTORATE OF THE OIL RIVERS

The Protectorate was formally assumed in July 1884 by treaties concluded with various native chiefs by Mr. E.H. Hewitt, C.M.G. Great Britain obtained acknowledgment of this fact at the Conference of European Powers held in Berlin in 1885 and an Order in Council appeared in the London Gazette of 5th June, 1885 giving the title of OIL RIVERS PROTECTORATE. It was placed under consular rule.

The name derives from the fact that the lands fed by the numerous rivers, creeks and estuaries in this part of the African Coast produced the bulk of the palm oil which constituted the chief export of West Africa. All consignments of this oil were water-borne by these creeks, etc., to the trading posts at the mouth of the delta.

In 1891 consular rule was exchanged for that of a High Commissioner and Consul-General whose headquarters were at Old Calabar. Deputy Commissioners and Vice-Consuls were appointed to Benin River, Brass River, Forcados River and to the districts of Sapele and Warri.

By an Order in Council of 12th May, 1893 the Protectorate was extended into the hinterland under the name of the NIGER COAST PROTECTORATE.

The Oil Rivers Protectorate extended along the coast from Benin River where it joins the boundary of Lagos, to the mouth of the Rio del Ray at 9 degrees East longitude. The territory between the Forcados River and the Nun mouth of the Niger River was claimed by the Royal Niger Company and the remainder formed the Oil Rivers Protectorate.

Postal arrangements had followed those of Lagos and the Niger Territories and mail steamers called regularly at Old Calabar and Bonny. Under consular auspices the first postal system was opened at Old Calabar in November 1891 with sub-offices at Brass, Bonny, Benin, Opobo and Warri, and for a period of about eight months ordinary British postage stamps were on sale at the post offices. Such letters as were sent from the Protectorate during this period can only be identified by their cancellations, that of Old Calabar being the one most usually seen. The postage rate was reduced from 6d. to  $2\frac{1}{2}$ d. per  $\frac{1}{2}$  oz. during 1892 consequent upon joining the U.P.U.

In July 1892 British stamps overprinted 'British Protectorate', 'Oil Rivers' were introduced. The  $\frac{1}{2}$ d., 2d.,  $2\frac{1}{2}$ d., 5d. and 1/- values were of the British 1887-92 issue while the 1d. value was the 1881 issue. These stamps continued in use after the creation of the NIGER COAST PROTECTORATE on 12th May, 1893 until the introduction in November (?) 1893 of the first issue of specially printed stamps. Dates of this issue prior to January 1894 are not thought to exist except for c.t.o.'s of 2nd December, 1893.



This section of the Bulletin is concerned with postal services and cancellations during the life of the Protectorate for the following periods:-

- a) 1884 - 1891.
- b) Nov. 1891 - July 1892 (on G.B. issues).
- c) July 1892 - Dec. 1894 (Oil Rivers 'Ovals').
- d) British Vice-Consulate Handstamps used postally.

The Oil River '1892 G.B. Overprints' bearing Niger Coast cancellers are included in the Niger Coast Check List. Niger Coast Type 1 (R.L. Type C.1.) on G.B. issues 1891/92 are shown separately herein but the dates thereof as necessary are also included in the Niger Coast Check List.

### OIL RIVERS PROTECTORATE CANCELLATIONS

#### PERIOD 1884-1891

For the period from the assumption of the Protectorate in July 1884 until the establishment of the first post offices in November 1891, postal information is scarce. No regular postal service existed and letters for Great Britain were carried home by the British and African Steamship Company's vessels which called regularly at Old Calabar and Bonny. The postal rate of 6d. per ounce was dealt with on arrival at Liverpool where the requisite stamps were affixed before forwarding to destination.

However, most other ports at which these vessels called along the West Coast had, by this date, their own adhesives or other identification, e.g. Lagos, Gold Coast, Sierra Leone, Gambia, quite apart from letters emanating from the Niger Territories which, apart from official Royal Niger Co. mail, were usually marked in m.s. 'No stamps available on the Niger' or similar.

The following covers are held by members of the Circle:-

1. From Bonny dated 29th September, 1890. Printed on cover 'Stamps unobtainable (Bonny, West Africa)' 6d. fee paid Liverpool.
2. 1886 Cover per R.M.S. Nubia to Bank of Liverpool franked with 6d. green (1884 SG 63) and cancelled '466' oval killer, together with 'Paid/Liverpool/Br. Packet' 19 Nov. 86 in red (ex Porter).
3. 1888 Cover per S.S. Volta franked with 6d. fee at Liverpool dated NO. 12.88.
4. 1889 Cover per S.S. Kisemba franked with 6d. fee at Liverpool dated JU 28 89.
5. 1890 Cover to Hastings. Large H.S. '6d.' Transit Liverpool Packet 27.4.90 in black. Hastings 28.4.90.



NOTE: Items 3, 4 and 5 cannot be positively identified as originating from or via Old Calabar and Bonny but are typical of mail from the West Coast of Africa of the period.

PERIOD NOV. 1891 - JULY 1892 (et seq)

From November 1891, post offices were successively opened at Old Calabar River, Bonny River, Brass River and Forcados River and cancellation of the G.B. adhesives in use was normally by application of the Oil Rivers/Niger Coast Type 1 (R.L. Type C.1) date stamp. This comprised a single circle, diameter varying (between offices) from 20 to 22 mm; the town name at top, with two line date in centre surmounted by a letter code. The date comprised a two letter month followed by the day while the year (below) is abbreviated to the last two figures. Although the G.B. overprints were placed on sale on 20th July, 1892 at Old Calabar, Bonny, Opobo, Brass, Benin and Warri (Forcados), G.B. issues (not overprinted) officially remained acceptable until 30th September, 1892 (Sierra Leone Royal Gazette Vol. XXIII. No. 301). In fact these G.B. issues continued to be accepted until late 1893 as shown in the Check List below. Post cards and registered envelopes were placed on sale from the same date, viz. 20th July, 1892.

The same issue of this Gazette carried two further important advices. First, that arrangements were being made to 'establish an Inter-Riverine Postal Service between Old Calabar and Brass via Qua Iboe, Opobo, Bonny and New Calabar; and between Warri (Forcados) and Benin'.

Secondly, that 'negotiations are also being presented to the various British and Foreign Governments on the West and South-west Coasts of Africa, and the Royal Niger Company, Chartered and Limited, for a universal rate of Postage of  $2\frac{1}{2}$ d. the  $\frac{1}{2}$  oz. between their respective possessions, instead of the existing high rates.'

This Gazette notice, dated 19th July, 1892 (published 17th September, 1892) is interesting in that the first recorded application of the U.P.U. rate in the Niger Territories is 20th September, 1892 while examples given by Porter of the first date of use of the new rate are Brass River 19th September, 1892 ( $2\frac{1}{2}$ d.) and Bonny River 28th September, 1892 ( $2\frac{1}{2}$ d.). On the other hand an item held in the Circle for Bonny River gives a G.B.  $2\frac{1}{2}$ d. cancelled on 6.2.92! This would tend to be supported by an unstamped cover 'No stamps available' from the British Vice-Consul, Forcados, which bears a 5d. surcharge on arrival at Liverpool on 8th February, 1892.

With the introduction of the G.B. overprints in July 1892 Type 1 c.d.s. was increasingly used for each post office as it was opened and Niger Coast cancellers Types 2, 3 and 4a will be found on these adhesives.



The c.d.s. registration used at Old Calabar (with no town name) has also been seen on late cancellations. This has been numbered Type 4 for reference.

#### PERIOD JULY 1892 - DEC. 1894 (OVAL CANCELLERS)

The 'Oil Rivers Oval' as it is usually known comprises a double ringed outer oval 40 x 30 mm with an inner oval which contains a one line date across the centre, the month abbreviated to three letters is preceded by the day and followed by the last two figures of the year. Between the outer and inner ovals the words 'Oil Rivers Protectorate' are in the upper half, the town name being in the lower half flanked on each side by an asterisk or star.

These ovals are almost certainly administrative handstamps used generally in conjunction with Type 1 date stamp, and not so often as cancellers on their own.

The Old Calabar 'Oval' is known on cover without adhesives dated 23rd July, 1892 (Porter) while the Benin 'oval' is known on G.B. 2½d. (without overprint) in violet dated 7th October, 1892; the Brass 'oval' on 4 x 5d. G.B. of 14th August, 1892 and the Old Calabar 'oval' (undated) on 2½d. G.B.

Examples also occur of the canceller being used on stamps of the Niger Coast.

No examples have been recorded of its use at Forcados, Qua Iboe, Sapele and Warri.

#### PERIOD 1892 - 1900 (VICE-CONSULAR HAND STAMPS)

From circa 1892 the handstamps of the British vice-consulates at Old Calabar, Brass and Forcados were very occasionally impressed on covers, not always as cancellers. Its rare usage seems primarily to have been confined to Old Calabar, but the Forcados Vice Consulate handstamp appears on an unstamped cover (marked 'No stamps available') which carries the Liverpool arrival date of 8th February, 1892. (This is unconfirmed). The Brass handstamp occurs also early in 1900, viz:-

- |               |   |
|---------------|---|
| BRASS -       | Applied to reverse of reply-paid post card (1d. printed card) cancelled Akassa 1.5.00.  |
| FORCADOS -    | On piece cancelling pair of 2½d. G.B. overprints 1892 issue - no date but probably 1892/3.  |
| OLD CALABAR - | On cover cancelling G.B. overprint 5d. with Oil Rivers 'Oval' alongside dated 23.7.92. Another cover is similar bearing pair of 2½d. G.B. overprints carrying an oval of the same date. |

The handstamp comprised a double ringed circle with diameter 35 and 27 mm. approx. containing within the outer and inner circles at top 'British Vice-Consulate' with town name at bottom flanked by asterisks or stars. The Royal Coat of Arms is in centre. The fact that it bears no date means that items appearing 'on piece' cannot usually be dated.

#### OIL RIVERS PROTECTORATE CHECK LIST



## 20a.

Type RL	BWA	Town	Code	In Use	Colour	Size mm.	Adhesives	Remarks
C.1.	1	Old Calabar River.	A	2(-).11.93.	Black	21	G.B. pair 2½d.	Only example of this code at this early date.
		"	C	2.9.92. - 6.11.93.	Black	21	G.B. ½d, 1d, 2d, 2½d, 5d, 6d, 1/-	Cover ex Burrus 2.9.92 with 2½d. Later cover 28.9.92 with 6d.
C.1.	1	Bonny River	C	6.2.92. - 17.10.92.	Black	21	G.B. 2½d, 5d.	The use of 2½d rate on 6.2.92. appears to be prior to U.P.U. Cover of 6.9.92. bears 2 x 2½d.
C.1.	1	Brass River	C	30.4.92. - 19.9.92.	Black	21	G.B. 2½d & 6d.	As recorded by Porter, the earlier item bearing 6d.
C.1.	1	Porcados River	?	9.12.92.	Black	21	G.B. 1d.	Porter also records 5d, 10d but no dates or codes given.

OIL RIVER OVALS

Bakana	-	16.1.93. - 21.11.94.	Black	40x30	G.B. Ovpts. 1892 & Niger Coast, 1893 & 1894.	See Hinde Sale Catalogue.
	-	26.1.93.	Violet	"	Values not known.	
Benin	-	4.8.92. - 5.12.92.	Violet	"	G.B. Ovpts.	Also on G.B. 1887 2½d (7.10.92)
Bonny	-	24.9.92. - 19.7.93.	Violet	"	G.B. Ovpts.	Late date of 19.7.93. occurs on Ovptd. G.B. reply paid card.
Brass	-	14.8.92.	Black	"	G.B. Ovpts.	4 strikes recorded, all on same date; at least 2 cancelling G.B. 2½d 1887.
Buguma	-	20.1.93. - 28.1.93.	Violet	"	G.B. Ovpts.	
Old Calabar	-	23.8.92. - 30.8.92.	Black	"	G.B. Ovpts.	Also on G.B. 2½d 1887 (colour not recorded).
- do -		23.7.92. - 2.8.92.	Violet	"	"	
Opobo	-	23.8.92. - 26.8.92.	Black	"	? G.B. Ovpts.	Dates recorded from previous draft bulletin but no current con- firmation.
- do -	-	?	Violet	"	G.B. Ovpts.	Recorded by Porter on 1d & 2d values but no dates given.
Sombreiro River	-	7.2.93. - 27.4.93.	Black	"	G.B. Ovpts. - all values to 1/-.	
- do -	-	10.1.93. - 10.6.93.	Violet	"	G.B. Ovpts.	See Hinde Sale Catalogue.

NOTE: From information given, the Benin handstamp was used much more than any other office, fourteen strikes being advised compared with three, four or five only at other places. Many strikes off cover and off piece exist, but can either not be dated or located because of incomplete strike remaining on adhesive.



BRITISH VICE-CONSULATE HANDSTAMPS

Old Calabar	-	23. 7. 92.	Black	35 dia.	G. B. Ovpts. 2½d & 5d.	Two strikes recorded with same date. A further strike has date obscured.
Brass	-	April 1900	Black	"	1d (Pre-paid card).	Date of strike approx. Cover cancelled at Akassa 1. 5. 00. Although this item is S. Nigeria and outside this bulletin, it is noted for interest.
Forcados	-	1892/3	Black	"	G. B. Ovpt. 2½d (2).	Date of approx. use assumed in view of adhesives cancelled.

## NIGER COAST PROTECTORATE

At the time of the assumption in 1884 of the British Protectorate of the Oil Rivers the inland limits were vague and probably extended nowhere more than 50 miles from the coast. However, as trade developed, and, with the establishment of vice-consulates at Benin, Bonny, Brass and Forcados, influence into the hinterland extended considerably in line with the extension of activities by the Royal Niger Company inland up the Rivers Niger and Benue. As a result, by 1893, the inland area of the Protectorate had been greatly increased.

Accordingly, on 12th May, 1893 by an Order in Council, the Oil Rivers Protectorate was extended indefinitely into the interior under the name of The Niger Coast Protectorate. This Protectorate, with a consul at Old Calabar, had a life of some  $6\frac{1}{2}$  years until, by an Order in Council dated 27th December, 1899, the area was merged with The Niger Territories, with effect from 1st January, 1900, to form the Colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria and the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria.

It has proved difficult to establish actual dates of opening of the various post offices and sub-offices during the existence of the Oil Rivers and Niger Coast Protectorates. The following tabulation summarises the information gleaned to date:-

Office (Town)	Reported Opening Date	Earliest recorded Date of c.d.s., etc.
BAKANA	-	1.5.1892.
BENIN RIVER	Nov. 1891	25.1.1893.
*BENIN	-	29.3.1893.
BONNY RIVER	Nov. 1891	6.2.1892.
*BONNY	-	19.4.1894.
BRASS RIVER	Nov. 1891	30.8.1892.
*BRASS	-	22.3.1894.
BUGUMA	28.1.1893.	4.4.1893.
FORCADOS RIVER	28.8.1892.	26.9.1892.
OLD CALABAR RIVER	Nov. 1891.	7.2.1892.
OLD CALABAR	-	28.9.1892.
OPOBO RIVER	Nov. 1891.	24.6.1892.
*OPOBO	-	16.4.1894.
QUA IBOE RIVER	14.11.1892.	21.11.1892.
SAPELE	18.4.1895.	28.6.1895.
SOMBREIRO RIVER	23.12.1892.	1.4.1893.
WARRI	Nov. 1891	26.12.1893.

\* The first use of the town name without reference to 'RIVER' occurred with the introduction of Type 2 canceller (squared circle). The date does not necessarily represent opening of a new post office.



CANCELLERS OF THE NIGER COAST

These include those also already seen on G.B. issues and on the Oil Rivers 1892 G.B. overprints.

- TYPE 1. Circular date stamp varying in diameter from 20 to 22 mm. bearing town name at top with two line date at centre surmounted by a code letter.
- TYPE 1a. Circular date stamp 22 mm. in diameter used at Old Calabar River between 1898 and 1901. It is similar in content to Type 1, the letters however, are smaller and narrower, being  $2\frac{1}{2}$  mm. high compared with 3 mm. on Type 1.  
Porter states it was also used at Forcados River but no examples have been recorded within the Circle.
- TYPE 2. Comprises a squared circle approx. one inch square with four inner circles, three of which are broken, only the innermost being complete. Triangular shaped spandrels are filled in solid at the four corners. This generally was in use for registered mail with the notable exception of Warri where apparently the Type 1 c.d.s. despatched from U.K. on 3.1.94. never arrived and Type 2 was therefore used for cancellation of mail.  
This canceller does not appear to have been issued to offices at Bakana, Buguma, Forcados, Qua Iboe and Sombreiro River.
- TYPE 3. Comprises a heavy outer ring approx. 27 mm. in diameter with a broken inner circle, the name of the town being carried through the horizontal break in the inner circle in bold sans-serif type. This was used for parcel mail but has been seen on letters and postcards.  
As this canceller bears no date, the date of use can only be ascertained where it exists on cover or piece carrying also Types 1 or 2 date stamps. The check list references are therefore confined to the stamp issues on which it is found at each office. Although G.P.O. records show that this canceller was despatched for use at Forcados, New Calabar and Qua Iboe in February 1893 (see below) no examples appear to exist for its use at Forcados; only Porter records its use at Qua Iboe, while only one example has been seen prior to 1900, for its use at New Calabar (see below).



- TYPE 4. In reference books to date this circular registration canceller is usually given no type number. It is now listed with the two other registration cancellers of the period. It is similar to Type 1, diameter 22 mm. and was introduced about 1896 and seems to have been used only at Old Calabar. There is no identifying town name, the word 'Registered' appearing at top in lieu. Examples record the use of Code A only.
- TYPE 4a. Comprises a small oval canceller measuring 28 x 22 mm. The word 'Registered' appears at top and the name of the town at bottom, the one line date at centre being surmounted by a code letter. During the period of the Protectorate it would appear to have been in use at Old Calabar only with Codes A and C in various coloured inks the earliest date of use being 11.6.94.
- TYPE 4b. Similar to Type 4a but the oval is larger measuring 30 x 22 or more, the lettering is larger and a star flanks the town name on each side. During the period up to 1900 it was in use at Benin, Bonny, Brass, Forcados, Opobo, Sapele and Warri. It does not appear to have been introduced until 1899 and first dates of use at some of these offices are unknown, the fact of use only having been recorded by Porter. In view of the late date, experience may show in fact it was not introduced in some cases until after 31st December, 1899.

#### NOTES ON CANCELLERS OF NIGER COAST

1. Although there are a number of references to New Calabar during the period of the Protectorate, it seems that no post office was actually opened until after 1900. The earliest recorded date of use of a c.d.s. is 16th May, 1902. On the other hand a clear parcels (Type 3) strike 'New Calabar' appears on a cover from Sombreiro River bearing that office's c.d.s. JY.11.93 (ex Hinde Sale).
2. The (U.K.) G.P.O. Impression Book of the period shows strikes of the Type 3 canceller (undated and presumably for use on parcels) for Benin, Bonny, Brass, Forcados, Old Calabar, New Calabar, Opobo, Qua Iboe and Warri, sent to J.A. Wall (Vice-Consul and Postmaster General, Old Calabar) on 18th February, 1893. A strike of Type 3 on Benin cover (in red ink) exists with a c.d.s. 12.5.93.



3. The Impression Book also shows Type 1 c.d.s. Code C for Benin, Bonny, Brass, Old Calabar, Opobo and Warri despatched 3rd January, 1894. However, strikes of Code C for these offices exist prior to this date. No strikes are known for the Warri c.d.s.

4. Similarly the G.P.O. records contain impressions of Type 2 (squared circle) Code C recording despatch to the Colonial Postmaster, Oil Rivers Protectorate on 15th January, 1894 (the Niger Coast Protectorate having already been declared in May 1893!) for the following offices:- Benin, Bonny, Brass, Old Calabar, Opobo and Warri. Earlier strikes of this canceller exist (with Code C) for Benin on 29.3.1893 and for Warri on 26.12.1893. On the other hand the Circle has no record of strikes Type 2 for Bonny 'C' and Brass 'C'.

#### NIGER COAST - CHECK LIST

SG	Type RL BWA	Size mm.	Town	Code	Colour	Early	Late	Remarks
C1	1	21	Bakana	C	Black	1.5.92.	4.7.02.	(1) Occurs with year '94' inverted. (2) No other codes or types recorded.
		22	Benin River	A	Black	12.5.96.	20.3.01.	
			Benin River	A	Red	16.1.95.	7.9.95.	
			Benin River	C	Black	25.1.93.	10.6.94.	
			Benin River	C	Red	31.3.93.	25.8.95.	C.T.O. 's recorded for several dates.
C2	2	25*	Benin	A	Black	6.2.95.	18.8.00.	
			Benin	A	Violet	14.2.94.	14.2.95.	
			Benin	C	Black	29.3.93.	30.9.94.	
C3	3	27	Benin	-	Black	-	-	) Occurs on 1892 ovpts. ) )
			Benin	-	Violet	-	-	
			Benin	-	Red	-	-	
	4b	30x22	Benin	A	Black	Recorded by Porter.		
C1	1	21	Bonny River	A	Black	2.6.92.	10.2.05.	Code letter A occurs inverted.
			Bonny River	A	Blue	21.8.96.	25.11.99.	
			Bonny River	A	Violet	24.4.94.	28.8.99.	
			Bonny River	B	Black	21.6.93.	21.4.97.	
			Bonny River	C	Black	6.3.92.	24.1.95.	
			Bonny River	C	Violet	28.10.93.	-	
			Bonny River	C	Red	7.3.93.	-	
C2	2	25*	Bonny	A	Black	19.4.94.	29.11.95.	
C3	3	27	Bonny	-	Black	-	-	Occurs on 1892, 1893 and 1894 issues.
			Bonny	-	Red	-	-	Occurs on 1892 and 1894 issues.
	4b	30x22	Bonny	A	Black	3.1.99.	26.7.00.	
			Bonny	A	Blue	21.9.99.	26.6.00.	
C1	1	21	Brass River	A	Black	1.10.94.	20.3.96.	
			Brass River	A	Violet	4.6.95.	11.11.95.	C.T.O. 's occur.
			Brass River	A	Black/ Violet	1.10.94.	-	
			Brass River	B	Black	19.3.94.	1.5.97.	Occurs with day/month reversed.
			Brass River	C	Black	30.8.92.	28.6.04.	) Earliest date recorded for this office is 30.4.92. but no code identified. ) )
			Brass River	C	Red	26.3.93.	1.1.04.	
			Brass River	C	Black/Red	27.4.94.	-	
			Brass River	C	Red/Violet	12.5.93.	-	
			Brass River	C	Black/ Violet	17.9.96.	30.9.98.	
			Brass River	○	Black	14.3.01.	2.5.02.	(S. Nigeria).
C2	2	25*	Brass	A	Black	22.3.94.	3.12.95.	
			Brass	A	Black/ Violet	1.10.94.	14.9.95.	
			Brass	A	Violet	16.10.94.	8.10.95.	



## 25b.

C3	3	27	Brass	-	Black	-	-	On 1892, 1894 issues.
			Brass	-	Red	-	-	On 1892 issue.
			Brass	-	Violet	-	-	On 1892 issue.
	4b	30x22	Brass	A&B	?	Recorded by Porter.		
			Brass	C	Black	4.10.98.	3.8.01.	
			Old Calabar	C	Black	2.8.94.	19.1.95.	
			Old Calabar	D	Black	12.8.94.	2.10.95.	
			Old Calabar	D	Blue	3.9.94.	-	
			Old Calabar	D	Violet	21.6.94.	-	
			Old Calabar	F	Black	30.11.94.	19.(J)A.95.	
C3	3	27	Old Calabar	-	Black	-	-	Occurs on 1892, 1893 & 1894 issues.
C4	4a	28x22	Old Calabar	A	Black	11.6.94.	9.12.01.	
			Old Calabar	A	Violet	9.7.94.	17.9.94.	
			Old Calabar	A	Blue	29.7.94.	29.8.94.	
			Old Calabar	C	Black	29.10.94.	27.4.95.	
			Old Calabar	C	Violet	2.10.94.	22.10.94.	
-	4	22	No Town Name "Registered"	A	Black	13.8.96.	15.1.02.	Used only at Old Calabar.
C1	1	22	Opobo River	A	Black	24.6.92.	8.11.01.	
			Opobo River	A	Violet	24.3.96.	8.7.01.	
			Opobo River	A	Red	13.6.96.	-	
			Opobo River	A	Blue	22.7.94.	14.2.97.	
			Opobo River	B	Black	19.9.92.	30.9.92.	
			Opobo River	C	Black	15.10.92.	20.2.93.	
C2	2	25*	Opobo	A	Black	16.4.94.	23.1.99.	
			Opobo	B	Black	-	2.5.02.	
			Opobo	C	Violet	2.8.94.	-	
C3	3	27	Opobo	-	Black	-	-	Occurs on 1892, 1893, 1894 and 1897 issues.
-	4b	30x22	Opobo	B	Black	28.2.99.	12.2.00.	
			Opobo	B	Violet	6.1.99.	-	
C1	1	21	Buguma	A	Black	22.7.93.	- .9.96.	) No other types recorded.
			Buguma	C	Black	14.4.93.	27.4.94.	
C1	1	21	Forcados River	A	Black	2.3.93.	18.8.05.	
			Forcados River	B	Black	-	24.6.05.	
			Forcados River	C	Black	26.9.92.	22.9.03.	
			Forcados River	⌢	Black	10.12.93.	16.12.93.	
			Forcados River	⊃	Black	2.12.93.	2.7.94.	
			Forcados River	⊃	Red	2.12.93.		2 strikes on this date.
			Forcados River	D	?	Recorded by Porter.		
-	4b	30x22	Forcados River	A	Black	7.5.99.	8.3.02.	
C1	1	21	Old Calabar River	A	Black	2(-).11.92.	13.10.99.	Occurs with Code 'A' inverted.
			Old Calabar River (letters 3mm. high)	A	Red	3.1.95.	15.12.96.	
			Old Calabar River	A	Violet	19.10.93.	20.1.95.	
			Old Calabar River	B	Violet	5.10.93.	- .10.95.	
			Old Calabar River	B	Red	- .4.94.		

			Old Calabar River	C	Black	2.9.92.	1.12.02.	C.T.O.'s exist.
			Old Calabar River	C	Violet	-.9.93.	27.8.94.	
-	1A	22	Old Calabar River (letters 2½ mm. high)	A	Black	17.3.98.	10.12.01.	
C1	1	20	Old Calabar	A	Black	16.3.94.	26.7.94.	
			Old Calabar	C	Black	28.9.92.	2.10.95.	C.T.O.'s exist for many dates.
			Old Calabar	C	Violet	19.6.94.	29.11.94.	
			Old Calabar	F	?	Recorded by Porter.		
C2	2	25*	Old Calabar	A	Black	2.3.94.	10.8.98.	
			Old Calabar	A	Violet	21.6.94.	18.10.94.	
			Old Calabar	B	Black	20.4.94.	23.4.95.	
			Old Calabar	B	Violet	4.8.94	31.8.94.	
C1	1	22	Qua Iboe River	A	Black	21.11.92.	2.10.01.	C.T.O.'s exist.
			Qua Iboe River	A	Violet	13.11.94.	2.11.97.	Occurs with day and month reversed.
C3	3	27	Qua Iboe River	-	-	Noted by Porter and despatch of canceller from U.K. recorded.		
C1	1	21	Sapele	A	Black	28.6.95.	10.2.04.	
			Sapele	A	Violet	17.11.95.	30.3.98.	
			Sapele	B	Black	4.2.99.	12.8.99.	
			Sapele	C	Black	12.9.98.	2.9.99.	
			Sapele	D	Black	10.10.98.	27.4.99.	
			Sapele	E	Black	11.5.99.	18.11.99.	
			Sapele	F	Black	24.6.99.	9.12.99.	
C2	2	25*	Sapele	A	Black	14.6.95.	29.7.99.	
			Sapele	A	Violet	28.10.96.	23.4.97.	
			Sapele	B	Black	22.6.98.	13.1.00.	
			Sapele	C	Black	16.11.95.	3.9.99.	
			Sapele	D	Black	31.10.98.	12.4.99.	
			Sapele	E	Black	22.11.98.	4.11.99.	
			Sapele	F	Black	17.6.99.	-	
-	4b	30x22	Sapele	B	Black	13.1.00.	22.2.00.	S. Nigeria but recorded for reference.
			Sapele	C	Black	16.9.99.	24.1.01.	
			Sapele	D	Black	1.10.98.	12.4.99.	
			Sapele	E	?	Recorded by Porter.		
C1	1	21	Sombreiro River	A	Black	15.12.94.	10.12.01.	C.T.O.'s occur.
			Sombreiro River	A	Violet	3.1.98.	-	
			Sombreiro River	B	Black	27.9.97	-	
			Sombreiro River	C	Black	1.4.93.	3.12.96.	Occurs with code inverted, reversed and upturned.
			Sombreiro River	D	?	Recorded by Porter.		
C2	2	25*	Warri	A	Black	9.7.98.	1.12.02.	Occurs with day and month reversed.
			Warri	A	Red	14.5.95.	-.10.97.	
			Warri	B	Red	1.7.99.	-	
			Warri	C	Black	26.12.93.	6.8.96.	Occurs with code reversed and sideways.
C3	3	27	Warri	-	Black	-	-	Occurs on 1892 and 1897 issues. Found on G.B. 2½d. (1887), on 1894 issue.
			Warri	-	Red	-	-	
-	4b	30x22	Warri	A	Black	15.1.99.	15.5.99.	



# NIGER COASTLINE - G.P.O. CIRCULATION LIST 1886

Following the setting up of the Universal Postal Union, post masters were required to submit lists of places where mail could be received as well as instructions concerning the main places to which bags should be directed. The G.P.O. file containing these returns is dated 1886.

The details relative to the Niger Coastline as extracted from P.O. Beale's article in *Postal History International* of January 1975 are as under:-

Place	Circulation	Place	Circulation
Fort Douglas	<u>Benin</u>	Abutshi	<u>Niger (Nun)</u>
Fort Harrison		Akassa	
Ambrisina	<u>Bonny</u>	Allenso	
Cumberland		Benue River	
Okrika		Eggo	
Fort Elizabeth	<u>Brass</u>	Glebe	
Rio Bento		Lokoja	
Abeokuta	<u>Lagos</u>	Abonema	<u>New Calabar</u>
Aganaway		Bakana	
Aghwey		Buguma	
Abome Calevi		Degema	
Badagry		Sombreiro River	
Eraiva		Adiabo	<u>Old Calabar</u>
Fagi		Akayon	
Fort Mousse		Creektown	
Godomey		Cross River	
Gomabee		Duketown	
Ebuteniton		Eboe - or Qua Iboe	
Haganaway		Egbotown	
Ibade		Eyamba	
Kotonou		Ikimiki	
Landama		Ikimetu	
Leckie		Ikotanyan	
Obba		Ikoroftong	
Obogotan		Ikotana	
Okafajo		Stanley Beach	<u>Opobo</u>
Ogbawmoshaw			<u>Warree</u>
Olowagbawo			
Oyo			
Porto Arthur			
Porto Novo			
Wamangi			
Yaba			
Yoruba County.			