

Evolution of the Gambian Postal System

A Postal History Perspective

Part 1 – Surface Transportation



Gary Wayne Loew FRPSL

Evolution of the Gambian Postal System

Steve Jobs – Radical Innovator?



"Some people say, 'Give the customers what they want.'

But that's not my approach.

Our job is to figure out what they are going to want before they do."

Evolution of the Gambian Postal System

Sir Rowland Hill – Postal Innovator

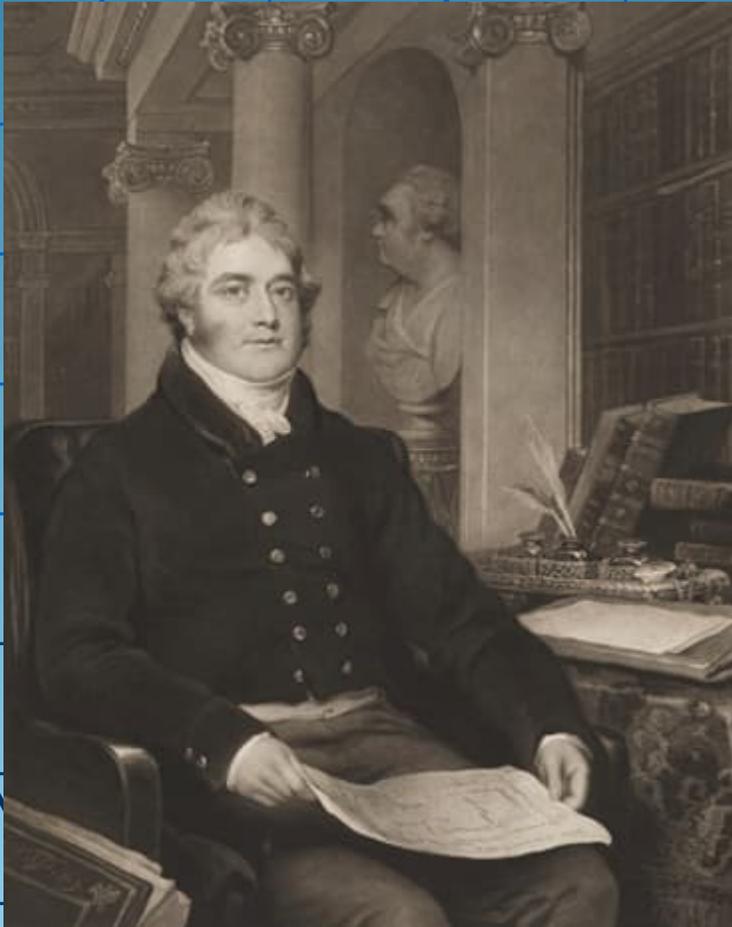


“It is the duty of the Post Office to stimulate, not restrict, correspondence.”

“If the public had the convenient means of sending frequent communications... the number of letters would be greatly increased.”

Evolution of the Gambian Postal System

Thomas William Anson, 1st Earl of Lichfield – Postmaster General 1835–1841



Referring to Hill's radical idea of Penny Postage:

"...the people had declared their readiness to submit to *any* impost that might be substituted in its stead."

Our Agenda Today

- The First Post Office Customers in Gambia
- Early Transportation Systems
- The Post Offices of Gambia & the TPO
- Services Offered by the Post Office

Talks for another day:

- Part 2: Between the World Wars – the Development of Airmail
- Part 3: Gambia at War: WW I and WW II
- Part 4: The First Postage Stamps

Evolution of the Gambian Postal System

Components of Mail Distribution

- Internal Mail Distribution
- Inbound from Around the World
- Outbound to International Destinations
- Transit Mail

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Components of Mail Distribution

Frequency of Occurrence

- 1) Transit Mail
- 2) Outbound to International Destinations
- 3) Inbound from Around the World
- 4) Internal Mail Distribution

Evolution of the Gambian Postal System

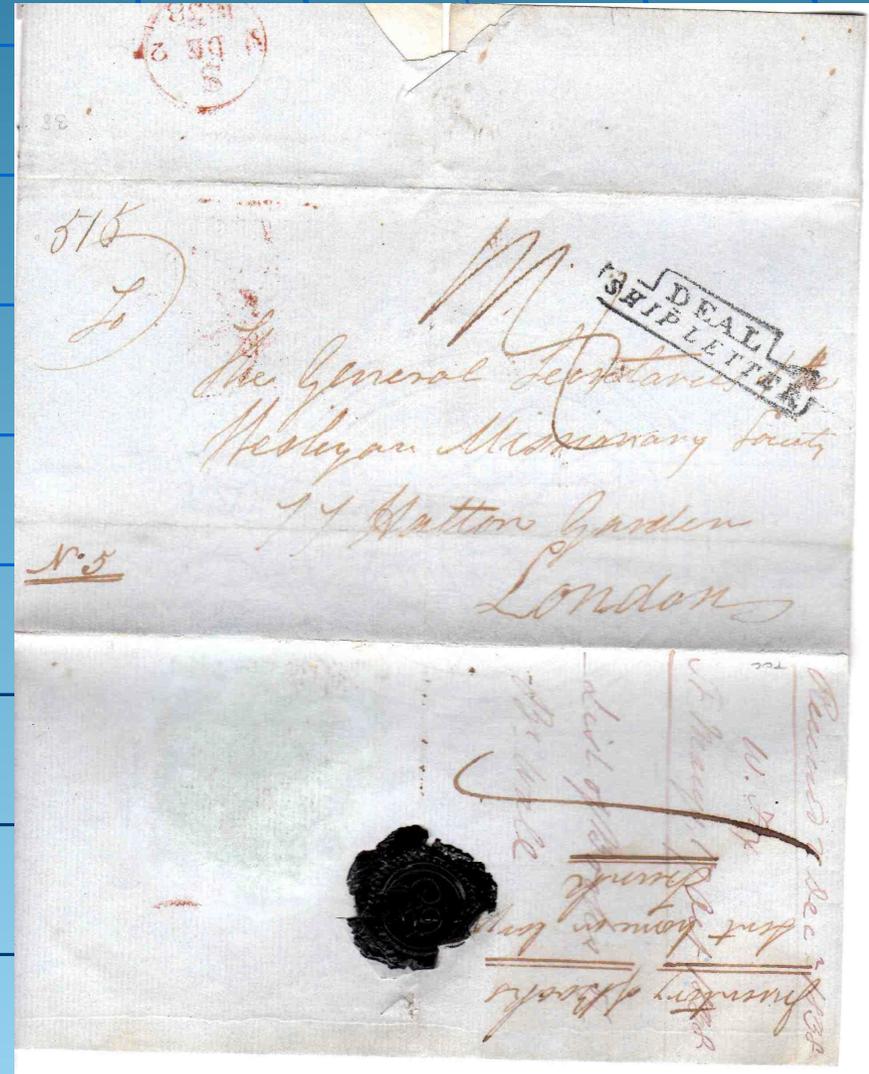
Early Customers of the Mails

- Initially, the posts served monarchs
- Military officers and civil servants had to communicate with their monarchs
- Missionaries
- Soldiers & Sailors

Evolution of the Gambian Postal System

Early Missionary Mail

- Deal Ship Letter 1838
- Bathurst to London via Deal
- 1/4d, double the 8d per sheet rate



Evolution of the Gambian Postal System

Early Missionary Mail

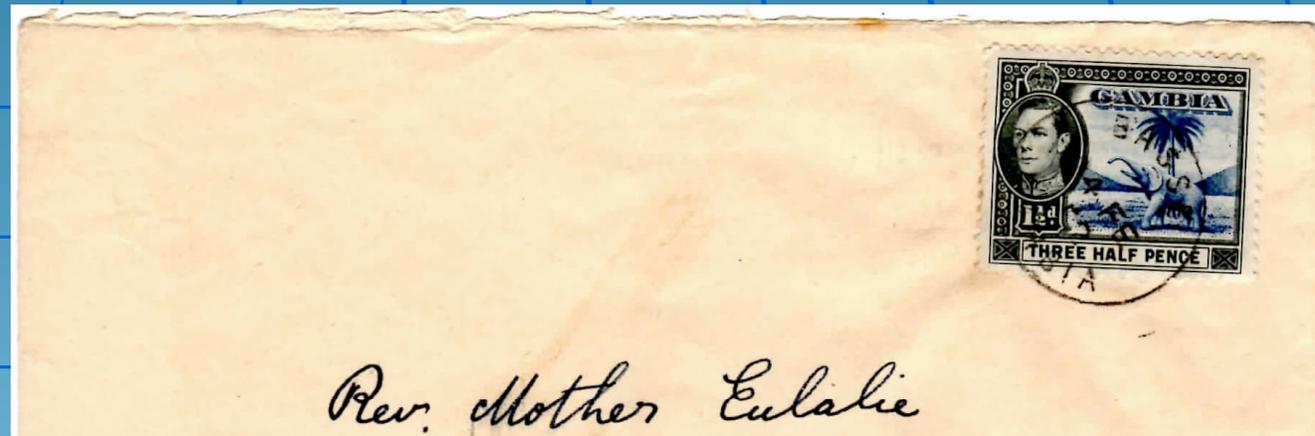
- Deal Ship Letter 1838
- 1/4d, double the 8d per sheet rate
- Sent by William Fox
- Wesleyan Missionary at Gambia 1833-1844
- "Inventory of Books Sent home in large Trunk"



Evolution of the Gambian Postal System

Modern Missionary Mail – St. Josephs Convent

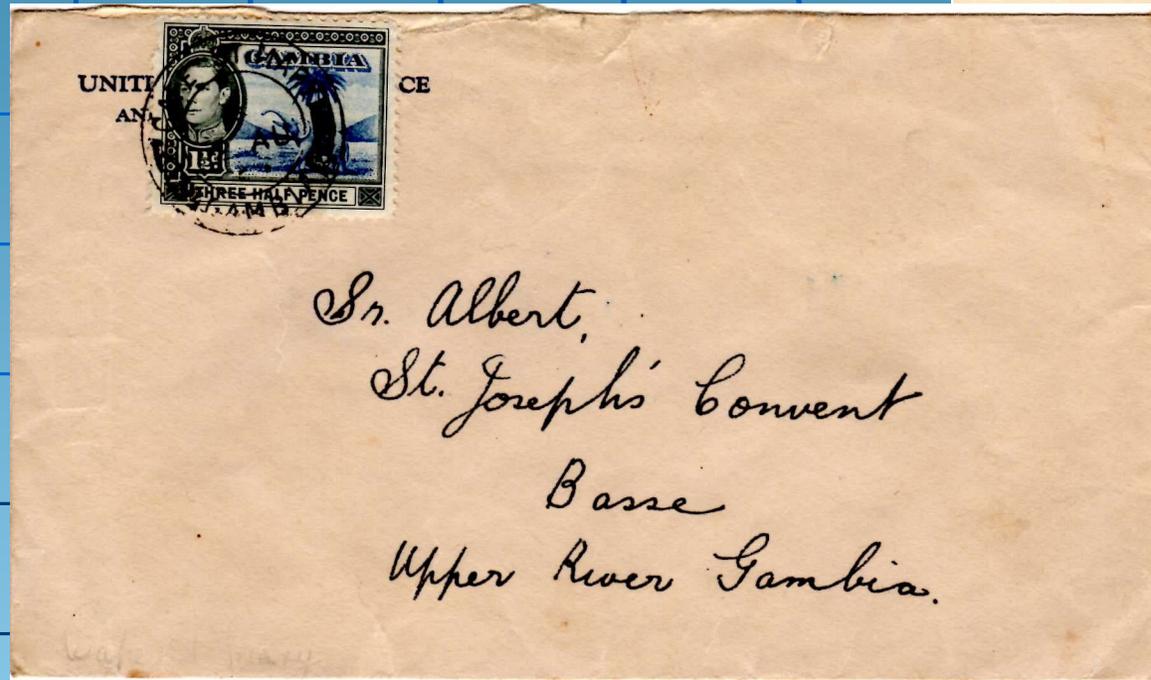
- Bathurst -
from
Basse
242 Miles
upriver



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Modern Missionary Mail – St. Josephs Convent

- Cape St. Mary
(adjacent to
Bathurst)
- Basse



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Modern Missionary Mail – St. Josephs Convent

- Bathurst
- Dublin, Ireland – the “Home Office”



Evolution of the Gambian Postal System

Modern Missionary Mail – St. Josephs Convent

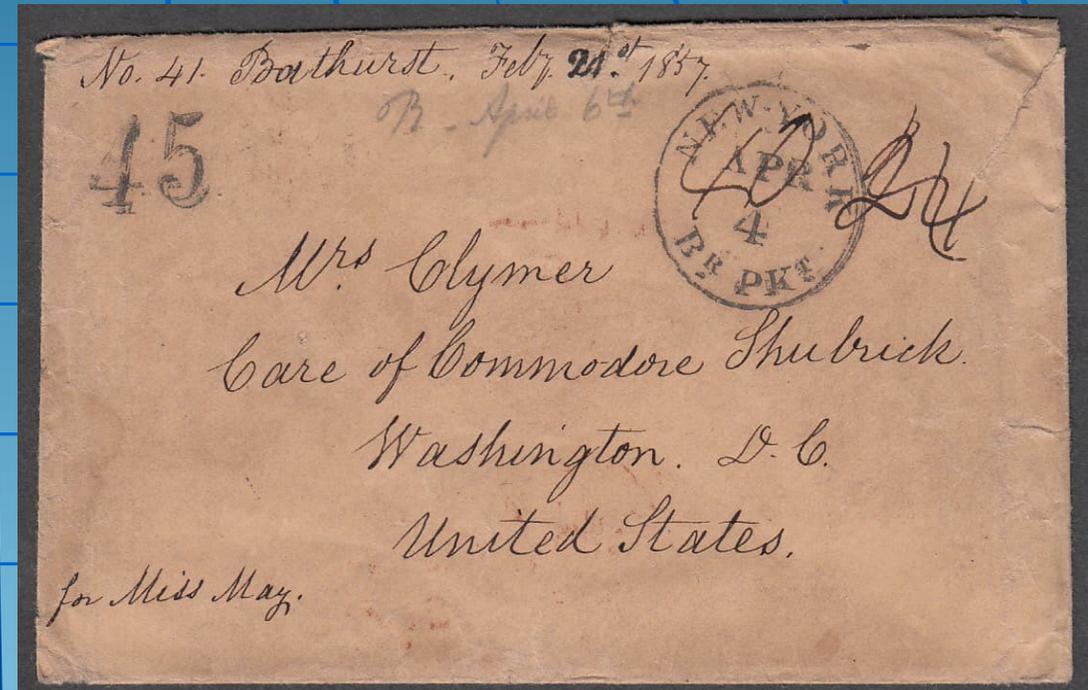
- Nice, France
- Basse from the French convent



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Early Military Mail - 1857

- Earliest mail from Gambia to USA
- Bathurst to Washington DC
- "NEW YORK / APR / 4 / B^r PKT"



- Dr George Clymer was the naval surgeon aboard the USS Jamestown, the flagship of the US anti-slaver Africa Squadron

Evolution of the Gambian Postal System

British Packet Mail – 1852 GPO Notice

Instructions, No. 40, 1852.



By Command of the Postmaster-General.

TO ALL POSTMASTERS.

GENERAL POST OFFICE,

September, 1852.

HER MAJESTY'S Government having entered into a Contract for the conveyance of Mails, by Steam Vessels, once in every Month, to the WEST COAST OF AFRICA, the new service will come into partial operation on the 24th instant, on which day the first Packet will be despatched from Plymouth.

This Packet, as well as that to be despatched on the 24th October next, will proceed only to—

Madeira,
Teneriffe,
Goree,
Bathurst (Gambia),
and Sierra Leone,

and then return to England, calling at the same places; but the service will hereafter be extended to FERNANDO PO, when a further Instruction will be issued.

The following are the Rates of Postage to be taken upon Letters and Newspapers addressed to the several places at which the Packets will touch:—

	Letters not exceeding Half Ounce	Newspapers
	s. d.	d.
Madeira	1 10	2
Teneriffe.....	1 10	2
Goree	1 0	2
Bathurst	1 0	Free
Sierra Leone	1 0	Free

Those Postmasters whose Instructions require them to send Letters for Plymouth by *Cross Post*, will forward Letters, &c., intended to be despatched by these Packets in like manner.

*On Sent to several Letter Recovers
Then and Counted and Receipt
21st Sept. 1852
1459*

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British Packet Mail – 1852 Maiden Voyage

THE ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS.

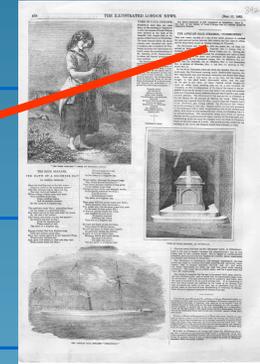
[Nov. 27, 1852.]

The above interment is still considered as temporary; since it is the wish of the family of Louis Philippe that his remains should be removed to France.

THE AFRICAN MAIL STEAMER, "FORERUNNER."

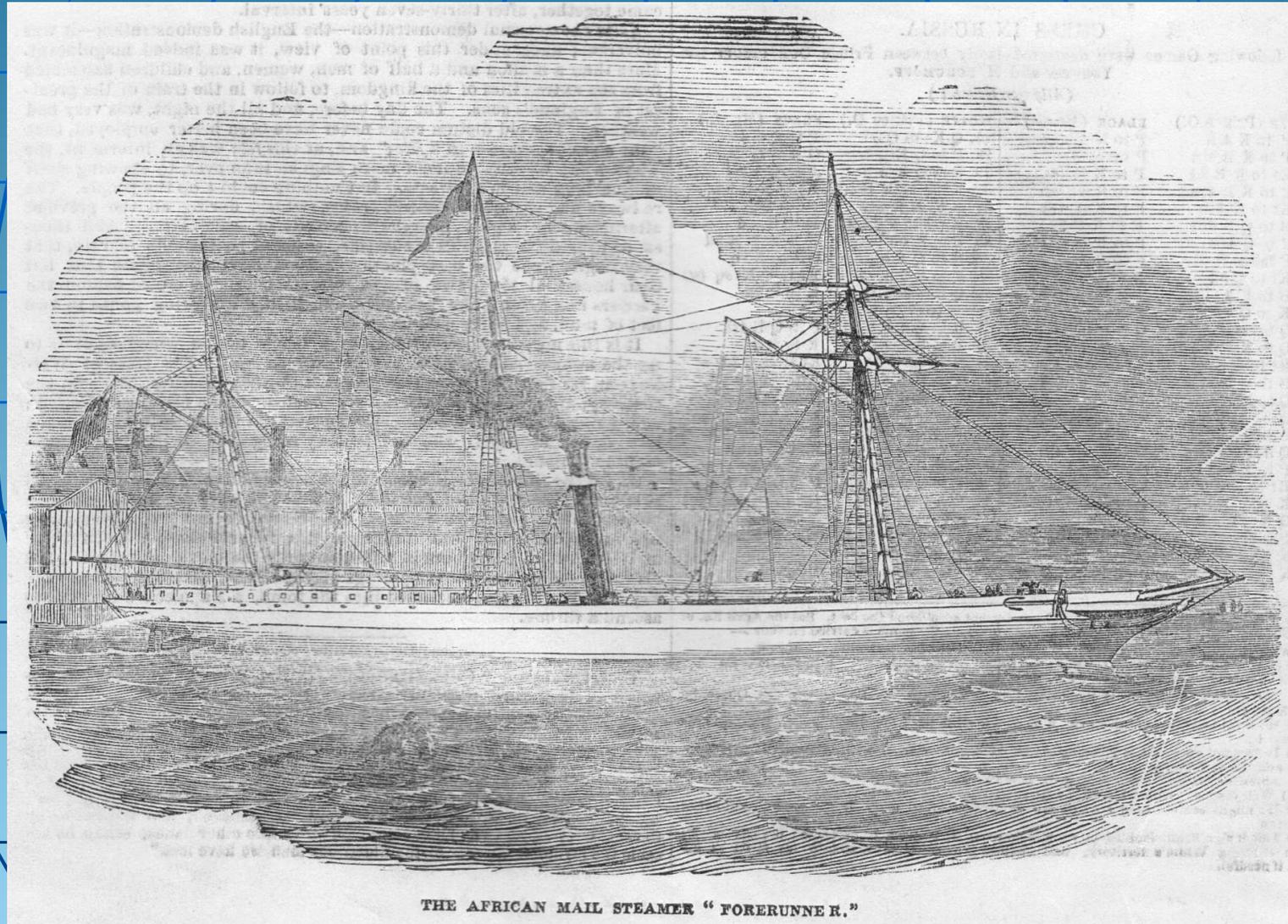
THIS new vessel, the first of a set of five screw steamers to conduct the mail contract service between this country and the coast of Africa, arrived from Sierra Leone on Sunday evening, at Plymouth.

The *Forerunner* left Plymouth, with the mails, &c., on Sept. 24; arrived at Madeira, Sept. 30th; Teneriffe, Oct. 1; Goree, Oct. 6; Bathurst (Gambia), Oct. 8; and Sierra Leone, Oct. 12. Having discharged her mails and cargo, landed her passengers, and taken in fresh cargo, and received the mails and passengers for England, she left Sierra Leone, on her homeward voyage, Oct. 18; Bathurst, Oct. 23; Goree, Oct. 24; Teneriffe, Oct. 31; Madeira, Nov. 2; was dismantled Nov. 4, arrived at Gibraltar, Nov. 8; left Nov. 14; arriving at Plymouth Nov. 21.



Evolution of the Gambian Postal System

British Packet Mail – 1852 Maiden Voyage



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Evolution of the Gambian Postal System
Maiden Voyage – *Forerunner* 24-SEP-1852



Evolution of the Gambian Postal System

Maiden Voyage – *Forerunner* 24-SEP-1852

- 1st Contract Mail
- A 2-sheet entire
- 1/4d rate @ 8d per sheet
- Bordeaux to London forwarding agent
- Onward to Bathurst via *Forerunner*



Evolution of the Gambian Postal System

Maiden Voyage – *Forerunner* 24-SEP-1852

- Maiden Voyage
- First ship in the Elder Dempster fleet
- From Bordeaux trading firm Maurel et Prom
- To Maurel's branch in Bathurst 2 Months after opening



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Maurel et Prom – Ongoing Commerce 1860s

- Per Elder Dempster *Lagos*
- Bordeaux / Liverpool / Bathurst - 1868



Evolution of the Gambian Postal System

Maurel et Prom – Ongoing Commerce 1860s

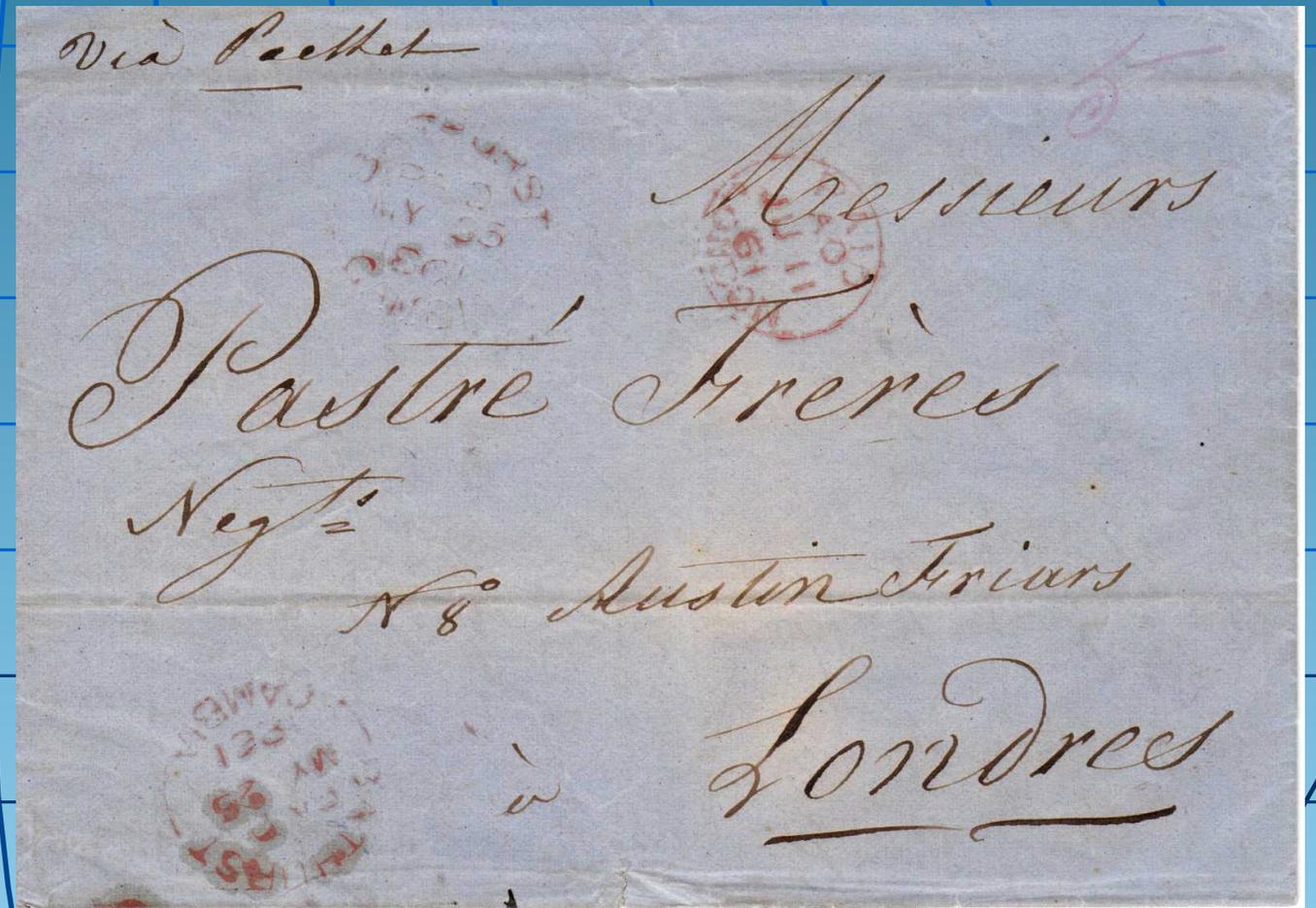
- Per Elder Dempster
Lagos
- Marseilles /
London /
Liverpool /
Bathurst - 1868



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Early Packet Mail *from* Gambia

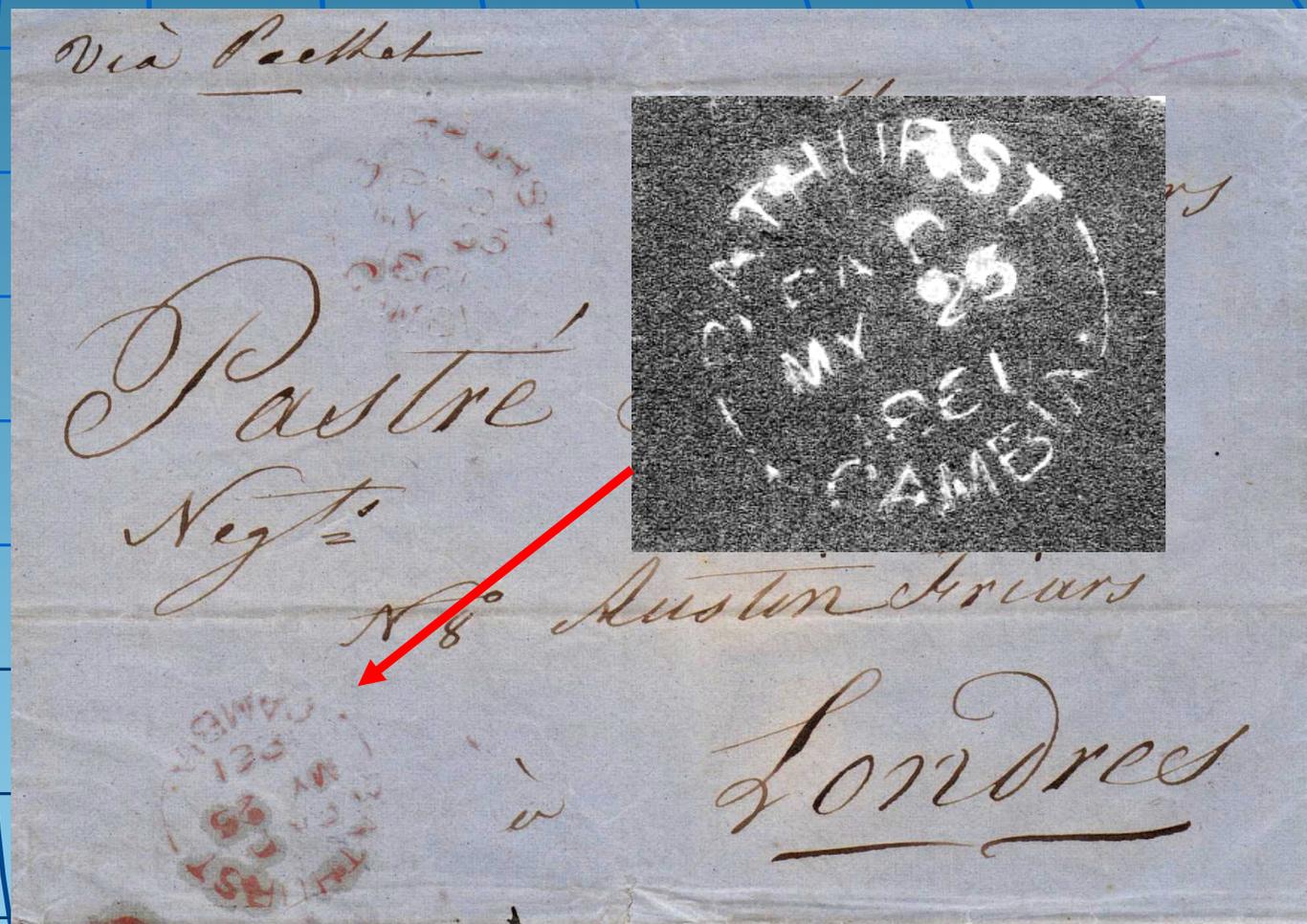
- More "French Connection"
- Bathurst Post Office opened October 1857



Evolution of the Gambian Postal System

Early Packet Mail *from* Gambia

- More "French Connection"
- Bathurst Post Office opened October 1857
- Discovery copy of First Bathurst Cancellor

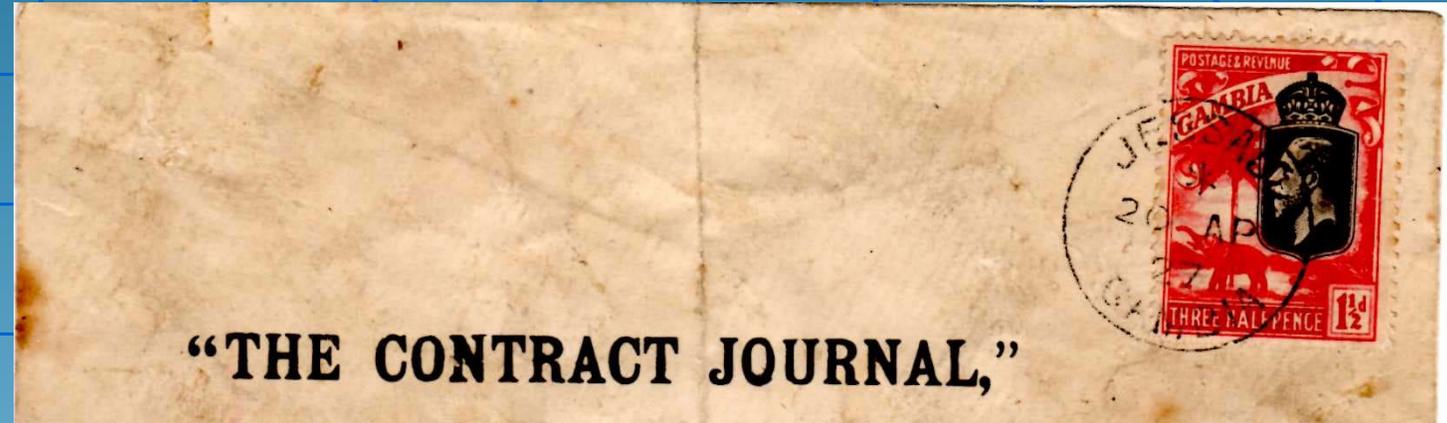


ex L.V.S. Glover

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Village Post Offices - Jessadi

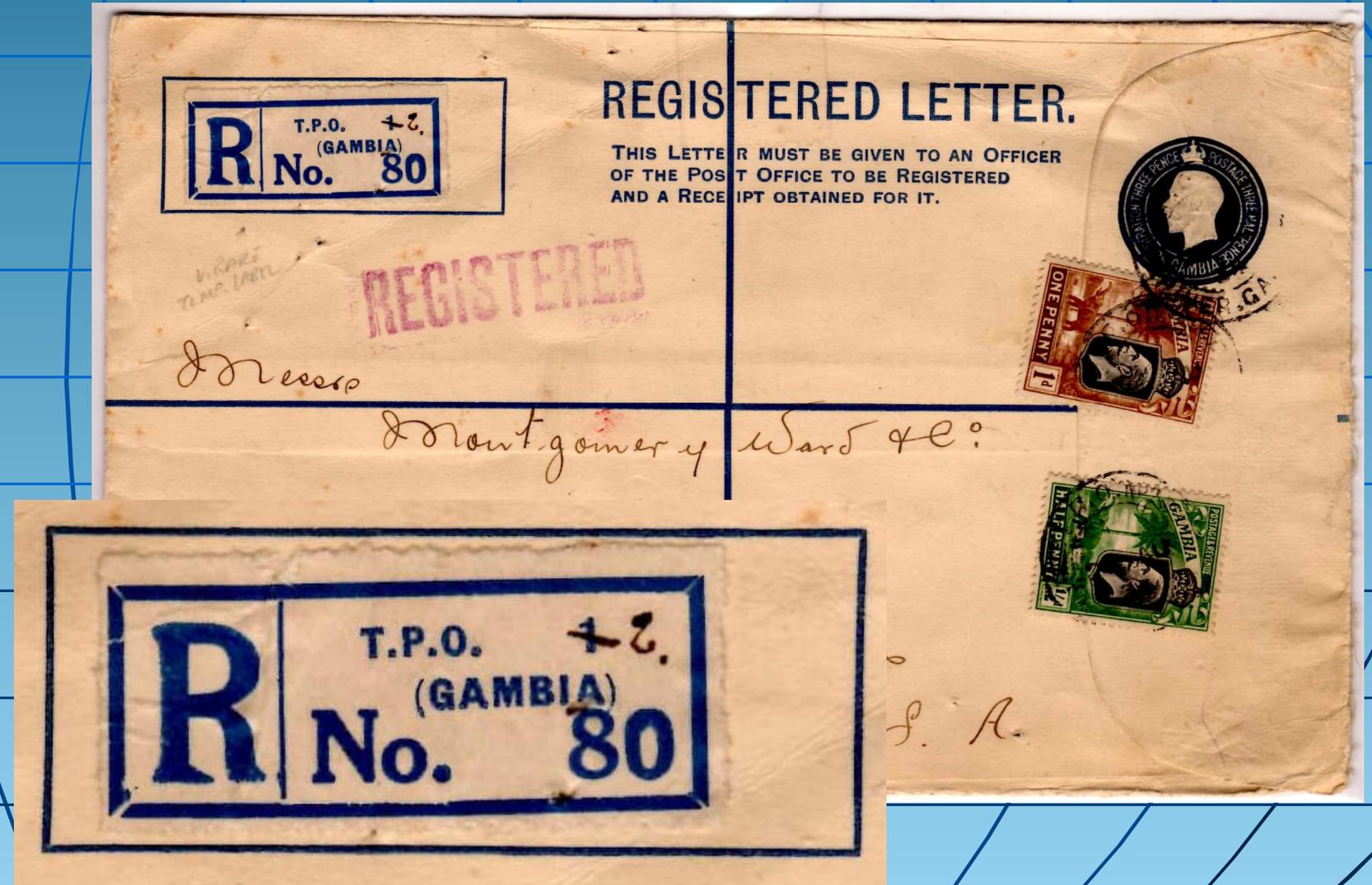
- Only example on Cover



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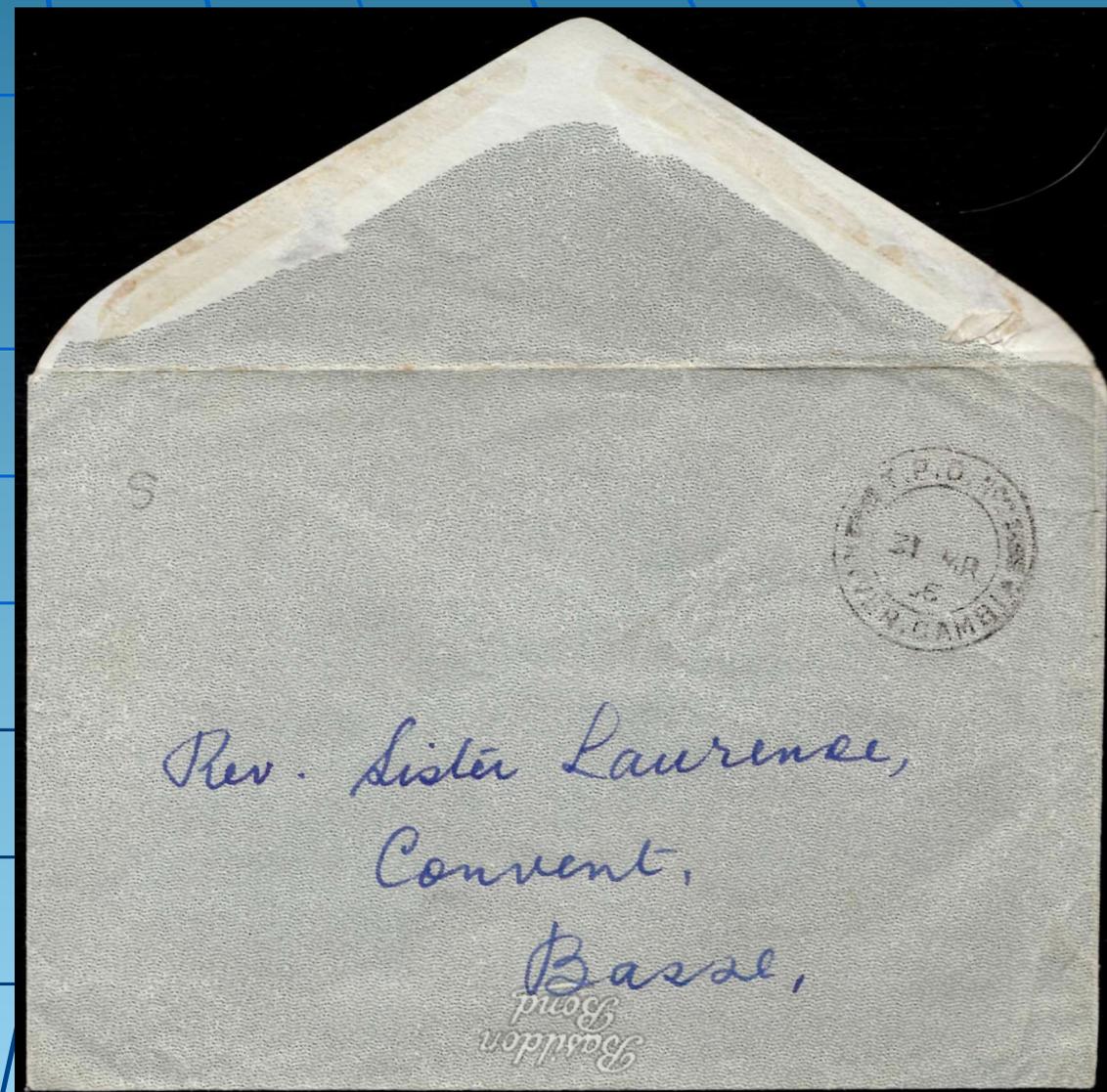
Internal Mail Distribution – Traveling Post Office

- Only completely water-based TPO in the world
- Rare use of TPO on postal stationary
- TPO #1 Label with TPO #2 CDS
- Destination: Montgomery-Ward



Evolution of the Gambian Postal System Internal Mail Distribution – Traveling Post Office

- Another missionary mail example from/to St. Joseph's Convent
- Stampless, no Tax
- Reused, reversed envelope



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Other Distribution Aspects – Landing Stage Office

- Open only on Sundays when ships were departing & PO Closed
- Previously only seen in the Gambian PO Impression Book
- Only reported use of this CDS



Evolution of the Gambian Postal System

Other Distribution Aspects – Parcel Post

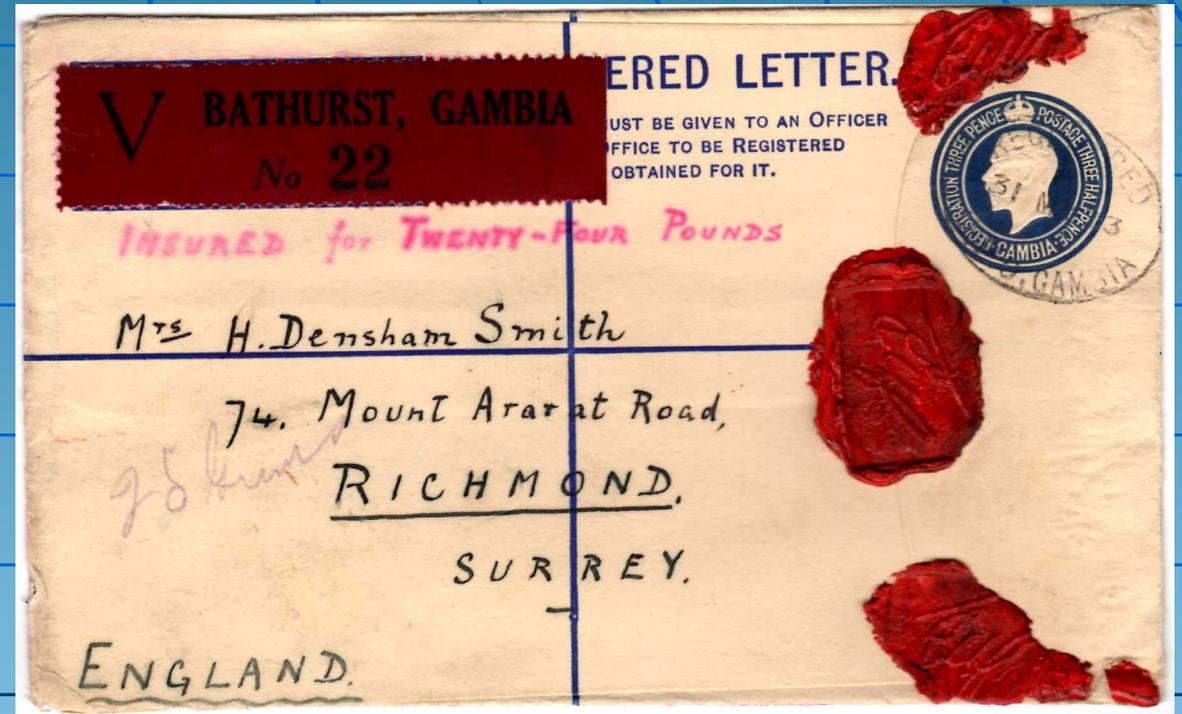
- Parcel Post to Gambia not instituted until 1-JAN-1888
- Orange "FOREIGN & COLONIAL PARCEL POST. / GAMBIA."
- Only reported example of this label – not cataloged anywhere



Evolution of the Gambian Postal System

Other Distribution Aspects – Postal Insurance

- Earliest reported use of the insured postal label
- 31-May-1933
- "V / BATHURST, Gambia / No 22"
- Insured for £24



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The Take-Aways from Today's Talk

- British postal authorities innovated to provide services to their consumers
- The earliest Gambian postal consumers were not commercial, but missionaries and soldiers
- The Gambian post office might not have been the first to offer services, but it offered all the services required by postal consumers

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Thank You For Your Attention!

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