

# **An 1839 Stampless-period Folded Letter from London, Upper Canada to Kilmun, Scotland**

***The Canada Rebellions of 1838-1839 Revisited***

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# **The Aroostook “War” of 1838**

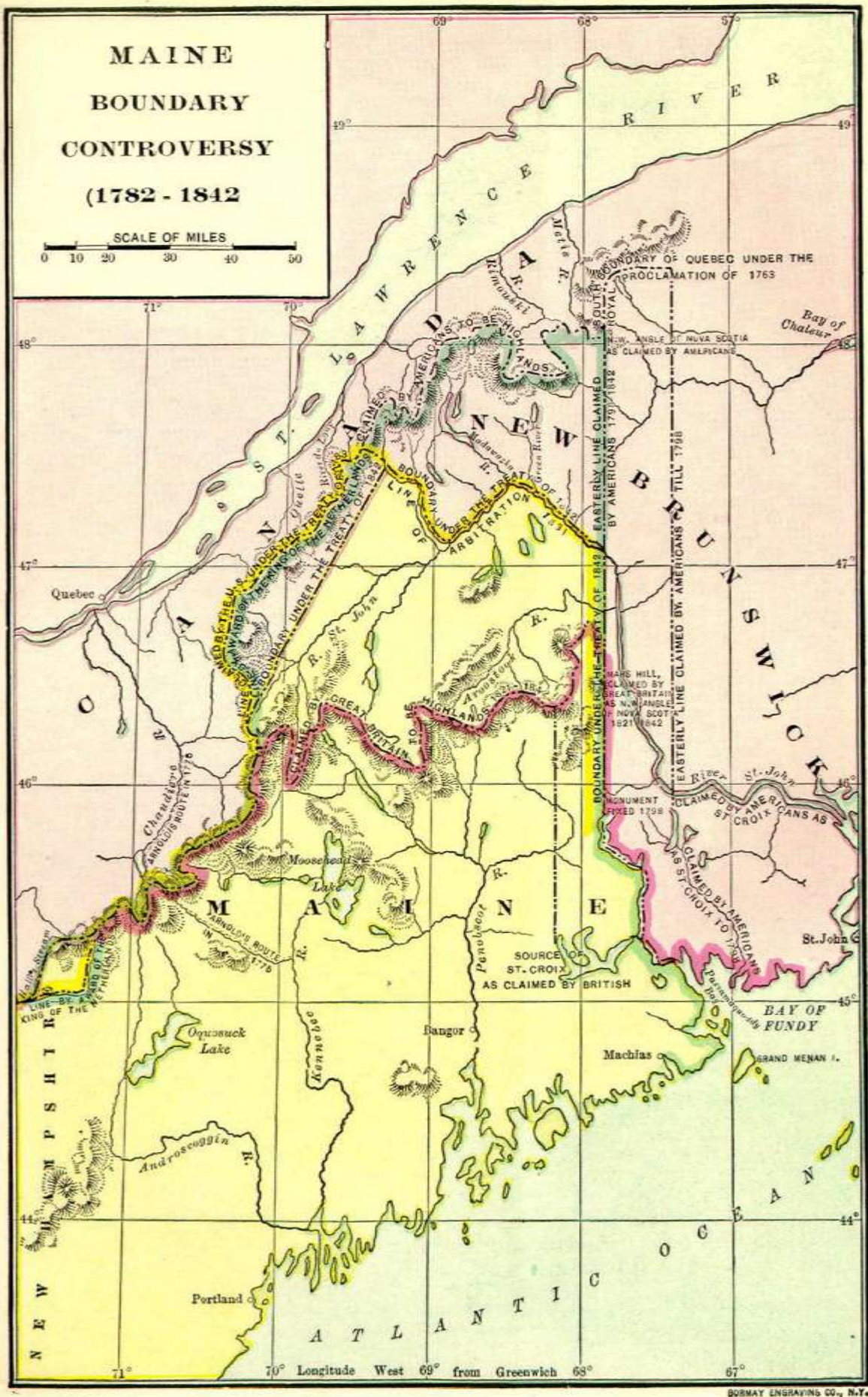
## ***The New Brunswick – Maine Border Dispute***

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- Britain wanted to build a road connecting Halifax, Nova Scotia and Quebec through the disputed highlands territory.
- Bloodless war “fought” between the Canadian region of New Brunswick and the State of Maine.
- The only war ever declared by a state.
- Cause: The expulsion of Canadian lumberjacks in the disputed area of the Aroostook River region by Maine officials.
- Congress called up 50,000 men and voted for \$10,000,000 to pay for the “war”.
- General Winfield Scott arranged a truce, a border commission was convened to resolve.
- In 1842, the Webster-Ashburton treaty line assigned the current state boundaries of Maine and New Hampshire as we know them today.

SCALE OF MILES

0 10 20 30 40 50





# Maine Boundary Settlement, 1842

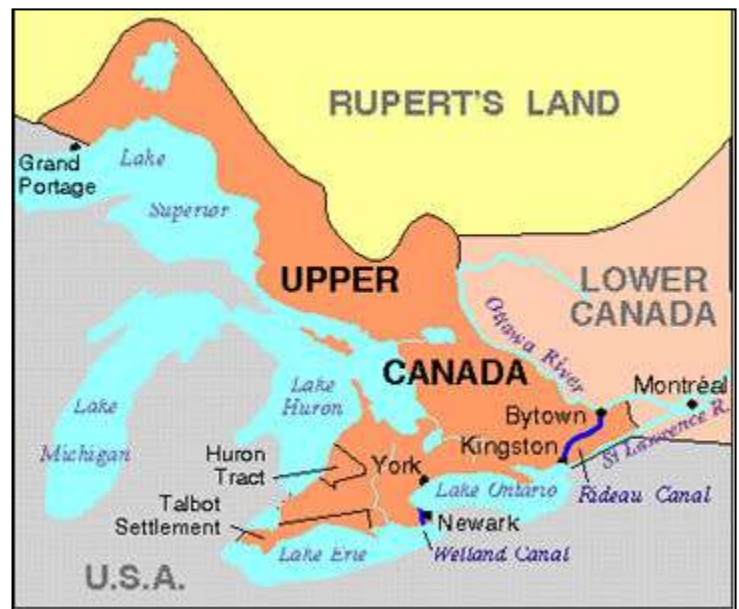


# The Rebellions of 1837-38

Upper and Lower Canada were thrown into turmoil when insurgents mounted rebellions in each colony **against the British Crown** and the political status quo. The revolt in Lower Canada was more serious and violent. However, both events inspired the pivotal **Durham Report**, which in turn led to the union of the two colonies and the arrival of **responsible government** — critical events on the road to nationhood with Province of Canada being formed in 1841.



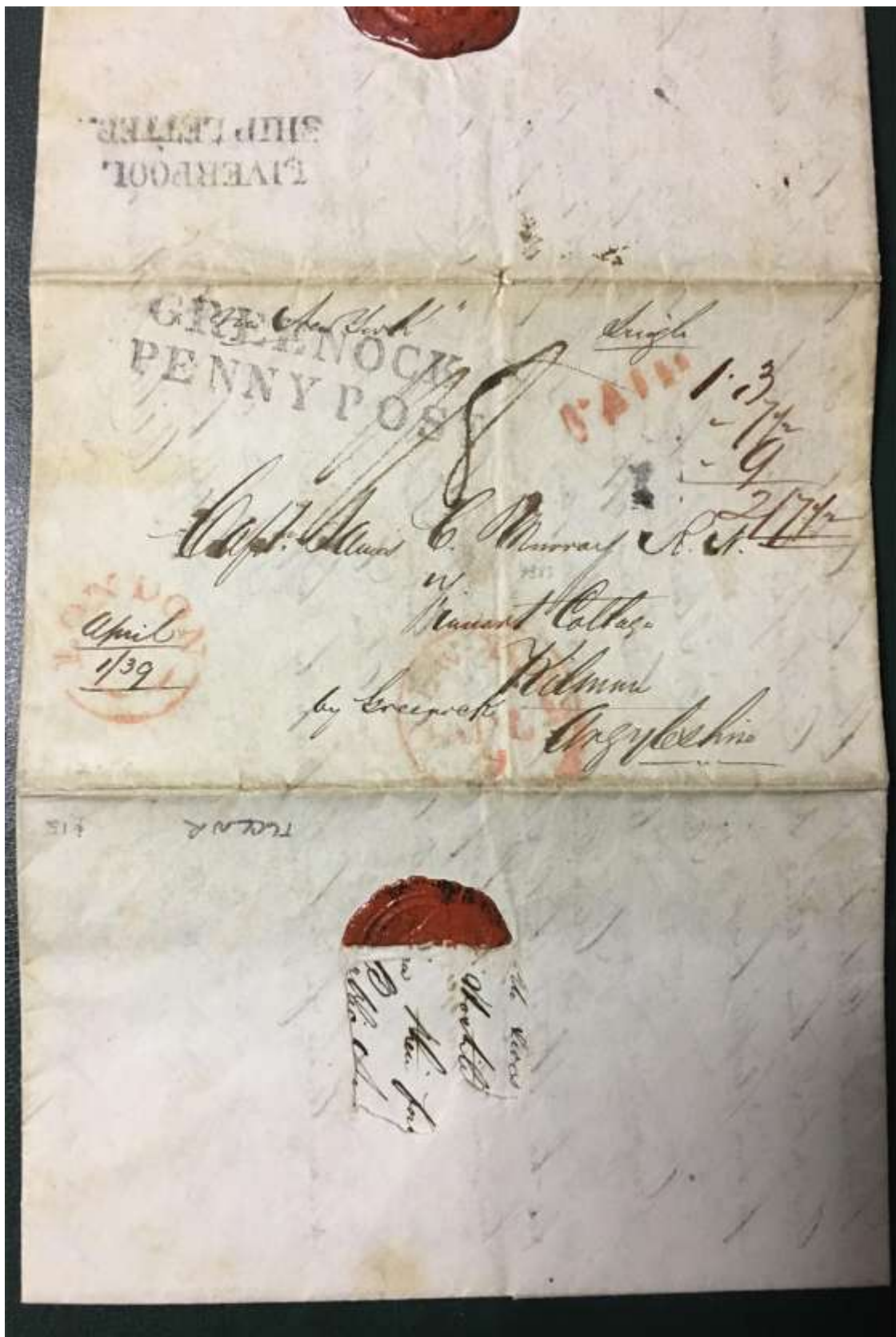
*Lower Canada Map*



*Upper Canada Map*

- Led by William Lyon Mackenzie, Scottish-born newspaper publisher and politician, critic of Family Compact (elite clique running colony)
- Opposed land grant system that favored British settlers instead of those with ties to U.S.
- Years of failed peaceful efforts led to ~1000 men (mostly farmers of American origin, poorly armed) to try to seize control of government and declare the colony a republic. Insurgency fizzled after 1838.
- Mackenzie took exile in New York, was pardoned in 1849, returned to Canada, while few were killed in rebellion; many were captured and executed by the government.

FLS from London, U.C. to Kilmun, Scotland via  
New York→“*Virginian*”→Liverpool→Glasgow→Greenock.



Acquired at Kelleher, Sale 637, June 2013, ex. Steinhart



## Folded Letter Sheet from London, Upper Canada with Rebellion-related contents to Kilmun, Scotland, 1839

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Entered the mails in London, Upper Canada; to New York City; via sailing vessel “*Virginian*” to Liverpool, via coach to Glasgow; then Greenock; via small boat across the Firth of Clyde to Kilmun.

Letter written in London, U.C. (Upper Canada) 31 March 1839. Entered mails 1 April 1839 where clerk added red “**LONDON**” split-ring postmark with manuscript “*April 1/39*” and red “**PAID**”. The postage paid at London was 1s3 dcy (pence Canadian currency) for U.S. inland fee, 7½ dcy for sailing ship freight money fee, and 9 dcy for Canadian inland fee. This totaled 2s7½ dcy. Received New York City where red “**NEW-YORK APL 9**” CDS applied (“**APL**” for April instead of “**APR**”); placed in mail carried by Red Star Line sailing vessel “*Virginian*”, which departed 16 April 1839; arrived Liverpool 6 May 1839 after 20 day transatlantic voyage.

Clerk added “**LIVERPOOL SHIP LETTER**” on reverse and postage due at destination “**1s8**” (1 shilling 8 pence sterling) on obverse (8p incoming ship fee plus 1sh inland fee from Liverpool to destination). Letter traveled ~240 miles north overland by coach to Greencock, where scarce two-line black “**GREENOCK PENNY POST**” marking was added; then by small boat across Firth of Clyde to Kilmun (a Receiving House for the Greenock Penny Post), where recipient paid 1s8p. Kilmun had no known postmarks at the time.

Letter sent from William Murray to his mother and father, the Captain James C. Murray, with detailed description of the **Upper Canada Rebellion** and New Brunswick – Maine border dispute (the **Aroostook “War”**).

## Summary of Postal Markings on Folded Letter Sheet

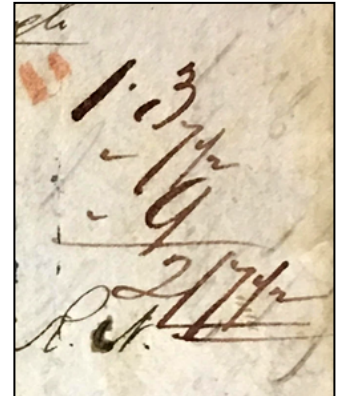
London, U.C.→New York→“*Virginian*”→Liverpool→Glasgow→Greenock→Kilmun



Split-ring pmk. + ms. “**April 1/39**”

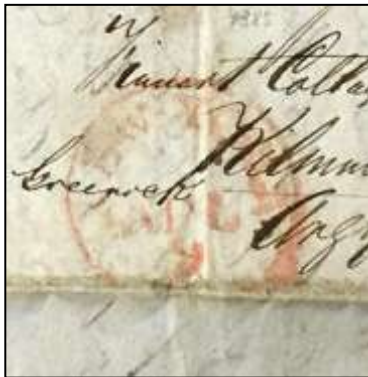


Red “**PAID**”

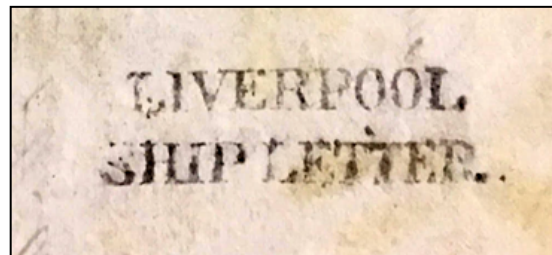


1s3 + 7½ + 9 = 2s7½ dcy

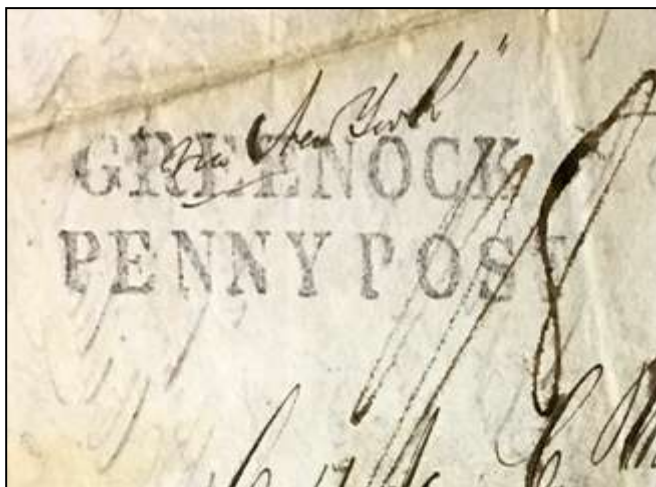
NOTE: Postage paid at London was **1s3 dcy** (pence Canadian currency) for U.S. inland fee, **7½ dcy** for sailing ship freight money fee, and **9 dcy** for Canadian inland fee. This totaled **2s7½ dcy**.



Red “**NEW-YORK APL 9**”



Black “**LIVERPOOL SHIP LETTER**”



Scarce two-line black “**GREENOCK PENNY POST**”

The clerk in Liverpool added the “**1s8**” marking (postage due at destination).

This accounted for 8p incoming ship fee plus 1sh inland fee from Liverpool to destination; Kilmun, Scotland.



## View of Greenock Harbor, 1838



### Selected Excerpt:

*"The news from this part of the province is unimportant at present moment but I suspect we shall soon have again have some bloody work in expelling another invasion of our territory by 'American sympathizers and Canadian refugees'. As yet the British arms have on every occasion been singally (sic) successful and the Canadians are now in such an efficient state of organization and defence (sic) that I have no apprehensions as the result.*

*With 18<sup>th</sup> Regiment of the line and a heavier and overpowering force of artillery along with about 20,000 militia under arms I should surely think would at least be equal in action to 3 times the number of Yankee boosters and midnight cowardly assassins. Of the 60 prisoners captured at the recent action at Windsor, 6 have already suffered death on the scaffold in this town and the remainder into exile to be transported for life.*



# Transit from London, U. C. to New York City *via Niagara, the Canal system, and Hudson River*

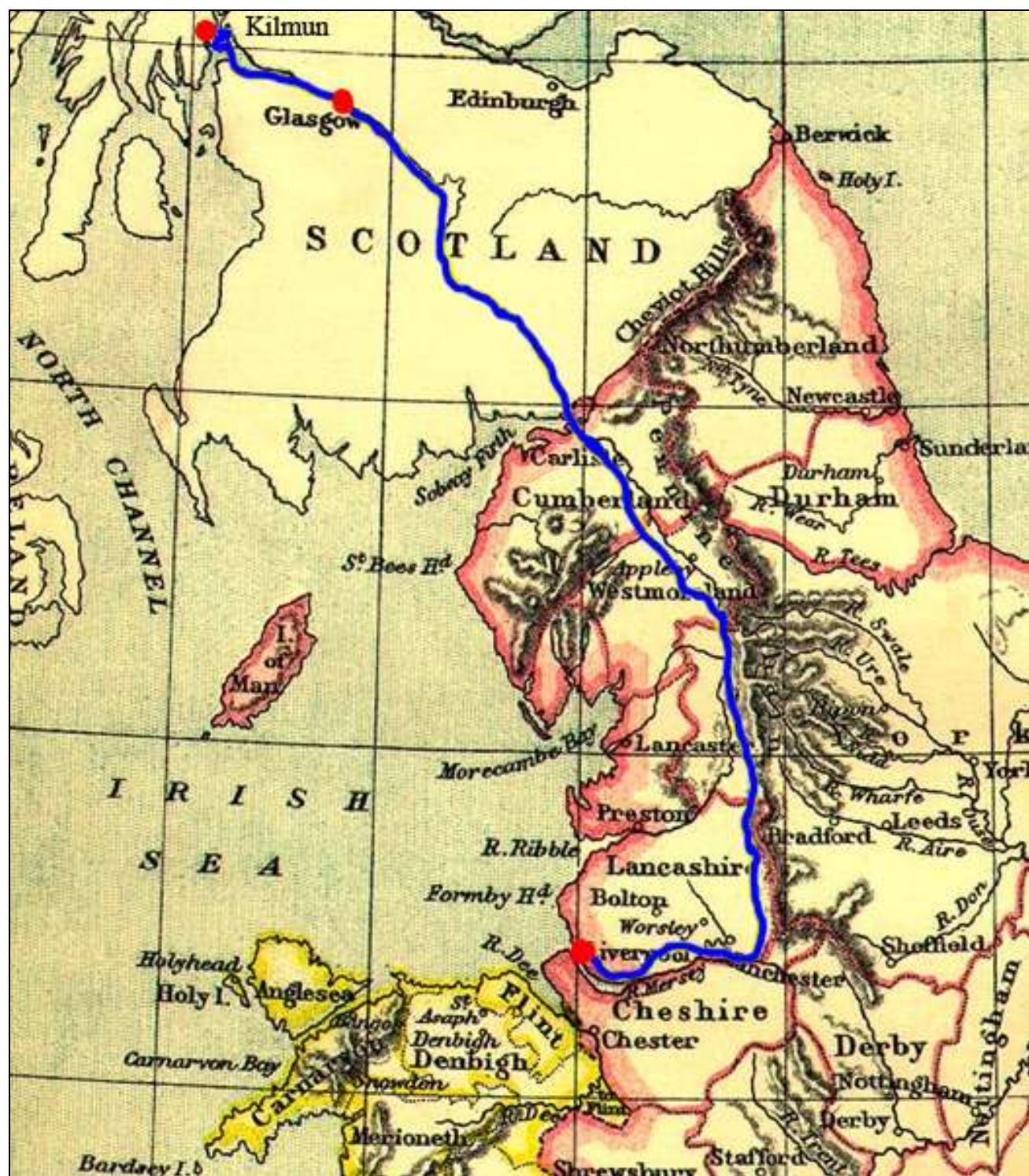




# Transit from Liverpool to Kilmun, Scotland

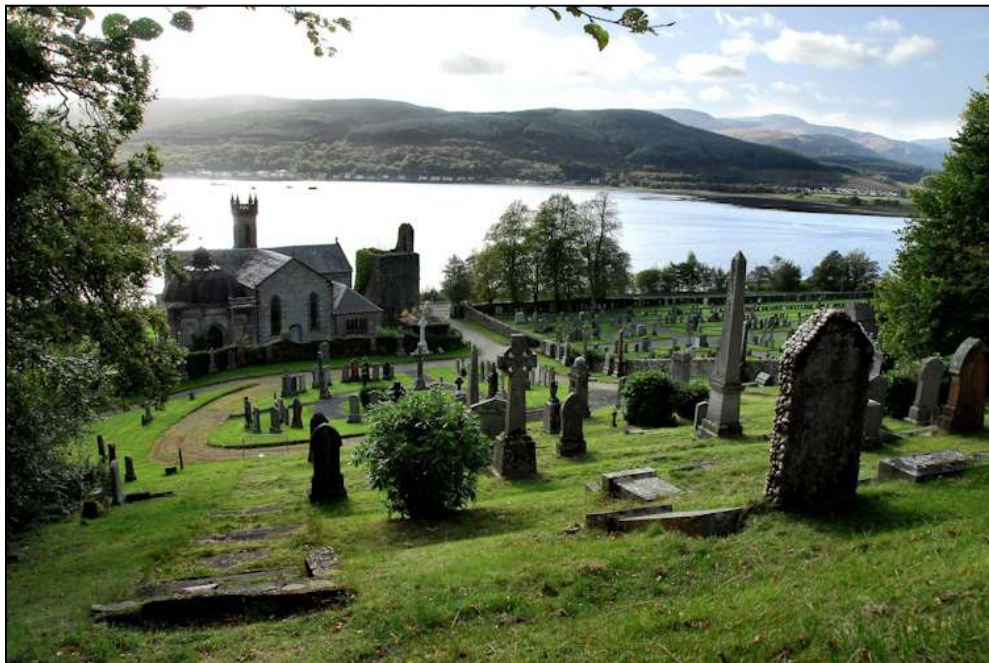
Letter traveled ~240 miles north overland by coach to Glasgow, then the coastal town of Greenock, where scarce two-line black “**GREENOCK PENNY POST**” marking was added; then by small boat across the Firth of Clyde to Kilmun (a Receiving House for the Greenock Penny Post), where recipient paid 1s8p.

Kilmun had no known postmarks at the time, thus no receiver found on FLS.





# Glasgow to Kilmun via Greenock across Firth of Clyde



Kilmun Parish Church & Argyll Mausoleum