



Ceylon Postal Markings 1836-1903



Exhibit & Scope

This is a postal history exhibit of postal markings that tells the story of Ceylon's postal network accommodating a "gold rush" like growth of Victorian Ceylon's burgeoning tea plantation era.

The exhibit begins in 1836, with a British requirement that all letters in Ceylon be sent by Post. Pre-Stamp Markings were used on the island until stamps were issued in 1857. Bar Obliterator cancels, and later post office specific cancels of different types followed.

The exhibit ends in 1903, when new double ring obliterators replaced all earlier cancels shown in this exhibit.

Highlights include:

- 3 Errors in Cancels, 9 Only-Known Uses
- 9 Earliest Uses, 4 Latest Uses of Cancels
- 6 Original Research Findings

Format

Cancel information is **bolded**. Historic context is shown in *Arial italic*. Section headings are in green. Provenance and certification information is noted at the cover's bottom right.

Unique items are indicated with a side text box and **maroon border**. Original research is typed in **maroon** and underscored. Rates are indicated in British format: 1/- is one shilling, 1d is one pence, 1c is one cent. The exhibit is ordered chronologically by cancel type.

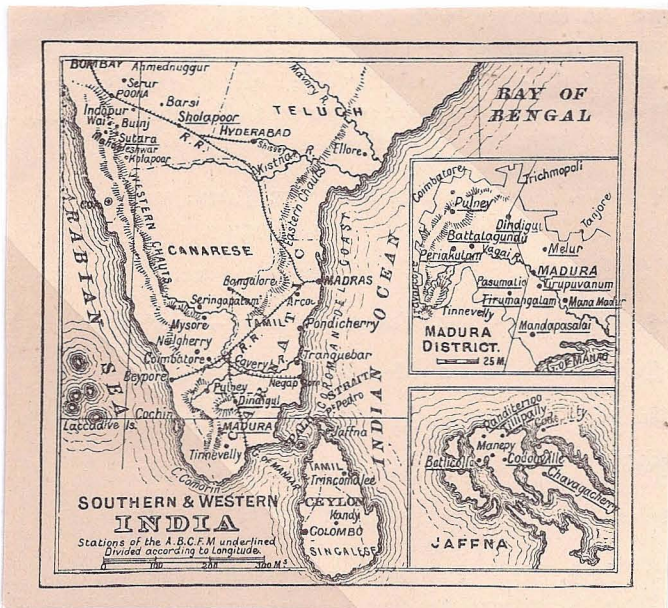


↑1828 Forerunner: "Bootlegged" Letter carried to Boston Board of Missions Jaffna, Ceylon to New Haven, Ct. Rate: US 18 ¾c plus 2c ship captain's fee.

Historical Background

Ceylon, now named Sri Lanka, lies just below India. The island is roughly the size of Indiana. Ceylon is known for tea, but it wasn't always so. Early mail shows first missionaries and traders came to Ceylon in the 1830s and 1840s. By 1850, British plantations in Ceylon grew coffee. Coffee plants died island wide in the 1870s, devastating the economy.

By the 1880s, Ceylon found new wealth growing tea. The island rapidly developed an extensive rail and postal network needed to ship tea and carry increasing amounts of mail. By 1903, 340 post offices were operating, up from 118 a dozen years earlier. This exhibit presents postal markings to tell the story of Ceylon's postal network serving the island's growing tea industry.



Map of South India & Ceylon, with Jaffna, Ceylon inset.

Philatelic Plan of Exhibit

1. Pre-Stamp Markings	1-18
2. Bar Obliterator Cancellations	19-27
3. Barred Letter Cancellations	28-36
4. Barred Numeral Cancellations	37-54
5. Circular Cancellations and Auxiliary Markings	55-80