

THE  
STAMPS OF TASMANIA.

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HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE.

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(a) OF THE COLONY.

TASMANIA is an island situated in lat.  $40^{\circ} 38'$  to  $43^{\circ} 39'$ , long.  $144^{\circ} 38'$  to  $148^{\circ} 22'$ , at the southern extremity of the great Australian Continent, from which it is separated by Bass' Straits, 120 miles wide.

The island is 170 miles in length and 160 miles in width, and is about 25,000 square miles in extent. There are a number of small islands, dependencies of Tasmania, the chief of which are Flinder's Island; King's Island; Cape Barren Island, in Bass' Straits; Bruni Island, in the Derwent Estuary; and Maria Island, on the East Coast.

It was during the reign of Charles I. that the Dutch discovered Tasmania. At the time Anthony Van Diemen was Governor-General of Batavia, and by him Abel Jans Tasman was commissioned to explore the "Great South Land," the name by which New Holland (now Australia) was known until 1665, when, by the authority of the Netherlands Government, it received that now obsolete designation.

On the 14th of August, 1642, Tasman embarked at Batavia on board the *Heemskirk*, the fly-boat *Zeehaan*, Jerit Zanzoon, master, in company. On the 24th November, at noon, they found their latitude  $42^{\circ} 25'$  south, longitude  $163^{\circ} 31'$ ; in the afternoon at four o'clock they observed land (Point Hibbs) bearing east by north. On the 25th they were within three miles of the shore, and had soundings at sixty fathoms. On this day they named their discovery; "we called it Anthony Van Diemen's Land, in honour of our high magistrate and Governor-General."

The next visit to Tasmania was made by Captain Marion du Fresne with the ships *Mascarin* and *Castries*, who in 1772 arrived from the Mauritius in search of the "Southern Continent," and anchored in Frederick Henry Bay. Captain Marion landed, and had a brush with the natives, one of whom was killed by the French, the first victim of European intrusion.

Captain Tobias Furneaux, second in command of Captain Cook's Expedition of 1772, touched at Van Diemen's Land in the *Adventure* in March, 1773. On several other occasions visits were made by different voyagers, each of whom added something to the general knowledge about Tasmania; but it was not until 1803 that any attempt at settlement was made.

Lieutenant Bowen left Sydney in the *Lady Nelson*, and on the 7th September, 1803, landed at Risdon, on the east bank of the Derwent. His party included a few soldiers and prisoners, and Dr. Mountgarret, the surgeon. This first settlement was followed by a more important immigration.

The difficulty of obtaining pure water at Port Phillip (Victoria) impelled Governor Collins to seek another settlement, and accordingly he left that place in 1804. The *Lady Nelson* and the *Ocean* conveyed the party from Port Phillip to the Derwent. They arrived in two divisions in January and February, 1804, and the settlement at Risdon having been found undesirable, they landed at Sullivan's Cove, on the spot where the city of Hobart now stands. Norfolk Island was vacated in 1805, and the settlers conveyed to Van Diemen's Land, where grants of land were apportioned them.

From this date the Colony made rapid strides in progress. Mercantile houses were established, and trade direct with Great Britain was opened up. The whale fishery and trade in sealskins from the islands in the Straits became very prosperous.

Civil cases above £50 and all criminal cases were tried in Sydney, the only local court being that of the Lieutenant-Governor, for civil cases under £50 in value.

The first newspaper was published in 1810. It was styled *The Derwent Star and Van Diemen's Land Intelligencer*, and consisted of half a sheet of foolscap printed on both sides. The price was two shillings per copy, but notwithstanding its high value it only lived a few months. The press, however, was firmly established by Andrew Bent's publication of the *Hobart Town Gazette* in 1816.

In 1817 the population of the Colony was 3114.

Steps were taken to encourage immigration, and grants of land were given to new settlers; but their early experiences were beset with many difficulties, the hardships of bush life and the harassing encounters with the aborigines tending greatly to discourage them.

St. David's Church was completed in 1822, and the Presbyterian Church was opened in 1824.

The Post Office was conducted chiefly by private enterprise until 1832, but a more detailed history of this branch will be found later on.

In 1824 Lieut.-Colonel George Arthur was appointed Lieutenant-Governor. During the period of his government Van Diemen's Land was proclaimed independent of New South Wales, and Executive and Legislative Councils were appointed.

The aborigines became so aggressive, and committed such frightful outrages on the settlers, that in 1828 martial law was proclaimed. Subsequently a reward of £5 for every adult and £2 for every child captured without injury was offered by Government. Organized parties were formed, and numbers of aborigines were secured; and eventually—in October, 1830—a great movement, called the "Black Line," was set on foot, in which about 3000 persons took part. They formed a line, and thoroughly scoured the island from end to end. The enterprise, public and private, cost upwards of £60,000, and the result was *one man and a boy!* It was left to Mr. George Augustus Robinson, who adopted the method of *suaviter in modo* as opposed to the Government *fortiter in re*, to bring about the desirable result of accumulating the blacks in one spot. Almost alone and *unarmed* this man accomplished what 3000 armed men had failed in doing. An account of his work

would occupy too much space for the purposes of this historical sketch, but it is sufficient to say that towards the close of 1834 the last of the blacks were safely brought to Hobart Town by Robinson, and eventually transferred to Flinder's Island, where an aboriginal settlement was established. The race is now extinct, the last survivor dying in 1876.

Progress, steady though slow, marks the history of Tasmania up to the year 1853, in which year two events occurred, one of which is of the greatest importance from the point of view of this work.

The first was the "Cessation of Transportation," which took place in August; and the other was the issue of postage stamps in November, 1853. Following closely upon these important events came the "Constitution Act" of 1855, which gave Van Diemen's Land a responsible Government, administered by a Governor and two Houses of Parliament; and the Act which altered the name of the Colony from "Van Diemen's Land," with all its gloomy associations, to the bright and hopeful name of "Tasmania."

Since that date the constitution has remained unaltered in any important particular. The colony has steadily increased in population and wealth, and now numbers 145,000 souls, with an annual revenue of £720,000.

#### (b) OF THE POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT.

The history of the Post Office Department of Tasmania is of course one of a development as slow and gradual as that of the Colony itself. The earlier records which are at the present date attainable, are to a certain extent both imperfect and conflicting; but the following facts and statements will at least give some insight into the process of development which has resulted in the present very complete and well-organised postal service.

In the first days of settlement there was no definitely-organised system of carriage even of Government despatches. Mr. J. B. Walker, in his paper on "The French in Van Diemen's Land,"\* remarks that "the exigencies of the service compelled Governors to take whatever offered to aid them in accomplishing their plans. Many are the missions of relief or mail despatch that were entrusted to whalers, or even American sealers, and their remuneration was sometimes odd enough. Thus, on one occasion, Governor King desired Governor Collins to pay for the despatches sent to him by a sealing sloop going to King's Island (Tas.) by giving the skipper 30 empty salt meat casks—surely as odd a postage as ever was paid!"

Fenton's *History of Tasmania* also has a word or two on the subject. He says:

"The Post Office department was in an exceedingly primitive condition in those days. Mr. James Mitchell was Postmaster at Hobart Town. A weekly messenger carried letters to Coal River and Pittwater, but no further. In October, 1816, a vast stride was made in this branch of the public service by the appointment of Robert A. Taylor as 'Government messenger' between Hobart Town and Port Dalrymple, the name by which Launceston was then known. The messenger was to leave each place on alternate Sunday mornings. This was a grand undertaking. The places were 120 miles apart, without the vestige of a road. Taylor

\* Paper No. 107. House of Assembly, Session 1889.

managed to escape the attacks of hostile natives and bushrangers; at least, no cases of 'sticking up' the mailman are recorded.

"The arrival of a mail only one week from Hobart Town was an occasion of great joy at Launceston, whose inhabitants now felt that they were living in an age of progress. Hitherto the settlement on the Tamar had been more isolated than either Sydney or Hobart Town, as but few vessels entered Port Dalrymple. Now there was a chance of a fortnightly mail, if it did not miscarry on the way."

The *Hobart Town Gazette* of 3rd May, 1817, contains the following notice:

"Post Office.—As a direct opportunity offers of forwarding a mail by His Majesty's armed brig *Kangaroo* for England which is hourly expected to sail, the inhabitants are hereby informed that a letter bag is now open for the reception of all letters from those who wish to write to their friends in Europe."

In November of the same year Mitchell notifies that another home mail will close in January following, thus giving ample time for writing letters, and also gives a list of letters lying at his office awaiting claimants.

On the 10th January, 1818, further reminder is given in these words:

"POST OFFICE.

"The brig *Spring* affording a desirable opportunity for those who wish to write to their friends in Europe, the Postmaster respectfully informs the public that a mail bag is open for the reception of letters, and will continue so until the eve of her departure.

"JAMES MITCHELL, *Postmaster.*"

And on 14th February, 1818, Mitchell states that "all letters which may be received at this office in future from any part of the world will be regularly advertised in the *Hobart Town Gazette.*" Post-office notices of 5th and 12th December, 1818, are not signed.

The *Gazette* of the 17th August, 1822, contains the appointment of John Thomas Collicott as Postmaster at Hobart Town.

Collicott was an auctioneer, and his store was situated in Murray Street, where the Derwent livery stables now stand; in fact, part of the original building is now used as a booking-office in connection with the stables.

Apparently the management of the Post Office was left entirely to these two successive Postmasters Mitchell and Collicott, the Government merely authorising and, where necessary, assisting them in the conduct of their undertaking. All the *Gazette* notices referring to matters postal up to 1828 are merely headed "Post Office," and contain no words or sign that would lead one to believe they were published by direct official authority. On the other hand all notices from the various departments of the Crown are invariably headed "Government Notice." The "Statistics 1824-35," quoted more extensively further on, state that "no records were kept, as until 1832 the Post Office belonged to a private individual," and yet the "appointments" of postmasters were gazetted. However, as everything was managed under Government superintendence in those days, it may be taken for granted that, though conducted as regards the details of routine by private individuals, nevertheless the Post Office was subject to the approval and under the surveillance of the Government.

In 1824 the *Gazette* notices are headed "General" Post Office.

The first legislation with reference to the establishment of a Government Post Office took place in 1828, in the passing of the Act 9 Geo. IV. No. 6—"An Act to

provide for the temporary Conveyance and Postage of Letters"—which, having recited that by an Act of the ninth year of Queen Anne's reign, provisions were made for the erection of one General Letter Office and Post Office for all Her Majesty's dominions, and for the appointment of a Postmaster-General, with power to settle posts for the carrying and receiving of all letters to and from all parts of Her Majesty's dominions, and that no post had been established within this island, and that it was expedient, until such post should be so settled, to make provision for the temporary conveyance and postage of letters; enacted that it should be lawful for the Lieutenant-Governor to establish one General Post Office at Hobart Town, and so many Post Offices elsewhere in the island, and to appoint such Principal-Postmaster, and other Postmasters, as to him should seem expedient; to make rules for management, and to fix rates for receiving, despatching, and delivering letters.

Section II. of the Act enacted that the rates of postage should not exceed the following amounts:

"For letters received at the Post Offices of and intended for delivery in Hobart Town or Launceston:

Not weighing more than two ounces:	Above four, and not more than six:
One Penny.	Three Pence.
Above two ounces, and not more than four:	Above six ounces, and not more than eight:
Two Pence.	Four Pence."

These weights were styled single, double, triple, and quadruple respectively, and no letter was to exceed eight ounces in weight.

For letters for delivery out of the town boundaries the rates were not to exceed:

		Single.	Double.	Triple.	Quadruple.
For distances within	10 miles	3d.	5d.	6d.	8d.
Above 10, and not exceeding	20 "	4d.	6d.	8d.	10d.
"	20 "	5d.	8d.	10d.	13d.
"	30 "	6d.	9d.	12d.	15d.
"	40 "	7d.	11d.	14d.	18d.
"	50 "	8d.	12d.	16d.	20d.
"	60 "	9d.	14d.	18d.	23d.
"	70 "	10d.	15d.	20d.	25d.
"	80 "	11d.	17d.	22d.	28d.
"	90 "	12d.	18d.	24d.	30d.

and so on progressively in the same proportion.

Section V. exempted from postage all newspapers published within the island, all letters on public service, and all convicts' letters.

Section VI. charged a uniform rate of one penny on all soldiers' and seamen's letters.

Section VII. fixed the postage on deeds, &c., for registration at half letter rates.

There were several other sections containing directions and regulations as to carriage, &c., of letters, and the last section provided that the sums received for postage were to be applied in defraying the cost of the Department, and that all surplus was to be appropriated for the construction and repair of the roads and bridges throughout the island.

No appointment of officers was made under this Act until 1832, when Collicott was appointed Principal-Postmaster. A committee for the regulation of the Post, consisting of John Montague and George Yeoland, Esquires, with Mr. Stephen

Tunbridge Hardinge as clerk, was also appointed. The clerk to the Principal-Postmaster was Mr. George Milne, and the Postmaster at Launceston was Mr. Arundel Wrighte.

In 1834 the constitution of the Department was changed by 4 William IV., No. 18, "An Act to amend and consolidate the laws providing for the conveyance and postage of letters," which recited the Act of George IV., No. 6, and stated that the Lieutenant-Governor should continue to have the powers of establishing offices and appointing officers until His Majesty's Postmaster-General should exercise his powers under the Act of Queen Anne.

The rates of postage were altered to twopence for each letter not exceeding four ounces in weight, posted at and for delivery in Hobart Town or Launceston.

INLAND POSTAGE :

				Single.	Double.	Triple.	Quadruple.
2 miles and under 15	.	.	.	4d.	8d.	1s.	1s. 4d.
15 "	"	30	.	5d.	10d.	1s. 3d.	1s. 8d.
30 "	"	45	.	6d.	1s.	1s. 6d.	2s.

and so on progressively in the same proportion.

Sea postage on every letter (in addition to its appropriate inland postage) :

Fourpence, if single.	Eightpence, if double.	One shilling, if triple.	One shilling and fourpence, if quadruple.
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Letters not weighing more than  $\frac{1}{2}$  oz. were deemed single; over  $\frac{1}{2}$  oz. and not exceeding  $\frac{3}{4}$  oz., double; over  $\frac{3}{4}$  oz. and not exceeding 1 oz., triple; and over 1 oz. and not exceeding  $1\frac{1}{4}$  oz., quadruple; and so on in the same proportion.

Under this Act Mr. James England was appointed Director-General, in place of the Regulation Committee, Mr. Collicott remaining Principal-Postmaster.

The Introduction to the "Statistics, 1824-35," contains the following remarks relating to the Post-office :

"No. 23 gives a return of the Post Office Department, the result of which is exceedingly satisfactory. The number of Post Offices increased from 1824 to 1835 from 9 to 30; the persons employed in it from 13 to 113, and the extent of post roads from 239 miles, over which the Post was carried once a fortnight, in 1824, to 434 miles travelled over by the Post twice in each week in 1835. There was also established, in 1835, a Twopenny Post, having three deliveries a day, for Hobart Town and its neighbourhood to the extent of three miles. The returns of letters and of the income and expenditure of the Post Office cannot be procured prior to the year 1832; but from that year to 1835 the increase in every respect has been quite remarkable, being upon letters and newspapers forwarded from Hobart Town from 22,255 and 13,000 respectively to 93,483 and 118,708 respectively; and in the same period the letters received at Hobart Town have increased from 23,005 to 99,602; whilst the income derived has, in the same period, increased from £1398 to £3852, although the expenditure for that period has only increased from £2283 to £2879.

"It is not unworthy of remark, that in 1824 there was no public conveyance in any part of the island, and that the mail was conveyed between the two principal towns of Hobart Town and Launceston, as well as elsewhere, on foot; whereas the mail is now conveyed, under contract, in a mail-cart twice a week, between those two towns in nineteen hours (121 miles); and there is also a public coach twice a week upon the same road, as well as several public conveyances in other parts of the island, for the accommodation of travellers."

In 1833 the following list of Post Office stations, with the rates of postage and distances from Hobart Town, was published :

	Pence.	Miles.
Hestercombe . . . . .	2	13
Brighton . . . . .	2	15
Green Ponds . . . . .	3	26
Jericho . . . . .	4	42
Oatlands . . . . .	4	50
Antill Ponds . . . . .	5	59
Ross . . . . .	6	72
Campbell Town . . . . .	6	79
Snake Banks . . . . .	8	97
Perth . . . . .	8	109
Launceston . . . . .	9	121
George Town . . . . .	11	152
Westbury . . . . .	9	122
Norfolk Plains (Longford) . . . . .	8	105
Lake River . . . . .	8	95
Macquarie River (Gatenby's) . . . . .	7	85
St. Paul's Plains . . . . .	8	99
Fingal . . . . .	9	112
Waterloo Point . . . . .	6	74
Bothwell . . . . .	4	43
Hamilton . . . . .	4	43
New Norfolk . . . . .	3	21
Macquarie Plains . . . . .	3	30
Richmond . . . . .	2	14
Sorell . . . . .	2	14
Kangaroo Point . . . . .	2	2

In 1837 the Post Office was removed to premises belonging to David Lord, situated at the corner of Collins and Elizabeth Streets (now the All Nations' Hotel), which premises were occupied until the removal to the present building, Macquarie Street, in 186-.

In 1840 Captain F. C. Smith was appointed Postmaster-General, which office he held until 1858.

Shortly after his appointment (1842) an Act of some considerable importance was passed, inasmuch as it did away entirely with the old-world system of paying rates of postage varying according to the distance, and fixed uniform rates of inland postage according to weight. The following were the chief provisions of 5 Vict., No. 15, "An Act to amend an Act passed in the Fourth Year of the Reign of His Late Majesty King William the Fourth, intituled, An Act to amend and consolidate the Laws providing for the Conveyance and Postage of Letters"—it enacted that it should be lawful for the Lieutenant-Governor by proclamation to alter, fix, reduce, or remit rates of postage; that the rates of postage should not exceed 4d. the  $\frac{1}{2}$  oz. for letters delivered beyond Hobart Town and Launceston, and 2d. in Hobart Town and Launceston; that the postage upon letters forwarded to and arriving from parts beyond the seas should not exceed 4d. for each  $\frac{1}{2}$  oz.; and that official franking should be regulated by the Lieutenant-Governor.

No further legislation took place until 1853, when the 17 Vict., No. 6, was passed, "An Act to regulate the Conveyance and Postage of Letters," which

provided for the compulsory prepayment of all letters by means of postage stamps, fixed the rates of postage at 1d. per  $\frac{1}{2}$  oz. for town letters, and 4d. for inland and ship letters. It also consolidated and amplified all the provisions of the preceding Acts, all of which were repealed. Further reference to this Act will be found in Chapter II.

18 Vict., No. 13 (October 6th, 1854), "An Act to provide for the better transmission of Letters by Ship," empowered the Lieutenant-Governor to make arrangements for the transmission of letters by ship to and from this Colony and England and foreign countries; fixed the rate of postage on all letters to and from this Colony and the United Kingdom at 6d. per  $\frac{1}{2}$  oz.; and to and from any of the Australian colonies and New Zealand at 4d.

19 Vict., No. 4 (1855), "An Act to amend 'The Post Office Act, 1853,'" provided for the opening and examining of newspapers, for the purpose of ascertaining whether they contained anything contrary to the provisions of the Act of 1853; exempted from postage all inland letters and packets addressed to or by any member of the Legislature for the time being of the Colony during session; provided for the opening and dealing with refused letters and packets; and contained several provisions with reference to the offence of stealing letters.

19 Vict., No. 20, "An Act to make further provision for Postal Communication by Ship," merely amplified the provisions of 18 Vict., No. 13.

21 Vict., No. 38, "An Act to amend the Laws relating to the Post Office" (February 25th, 1858), commenced March 1st, 1858, fixed the rate of inland and intercolonial postage at 6d. per  $\frac{1}{2}$  oz., instead of 4d., as before. Packets were raised to 1s. for every 4 ozs. This Act reduced the list of exemptions from postage to a few kinds of official packets and petitions to His Excellency; under it the bulk of the official correspondence was franked by adhesive stamps supplied to the various departments for the purpose.

22 Vict., No. 28, "An Act to decrease the Postage on Inland Letters and Packets" (November 5th, 1858), commenced January 1st, 1859, reduced the rates on suburban letters (five miles radius from Hobart and Launceston) to 2d., and inland letters to 4d. per  $\frac{1}{2}$  oz.

23 Vict., No. 13, "An Act to authorise the Franking of certain Letters and Packets" (September 23rd, 1859), commenced October 1st, 1859, and restored all "On Public Service Only" franking privileges. 24 Vict., No. 21 (October 4th, 1860), extended the franking privilege to letters "On Police Service Only." 26 Vict., No. 1, "The Money Order Act" (September 25th, 1862), introduced the Money Order system into Tasmania. 28 Vict., No. 9 (September 21st, 1864), extended the franking privilege to municipal officers. 29 Vict., No. 31, "An Act to establish Post Office Savings Banks" (September 29th, 1865), was to commence operation on January 1st, 1869, but the system was not adopted until July 1st, 1882.

31 Vict., No. 28 (October 11th, 1867), exempted "Rural Police Rate" receipts from postage.

33 Vict., No. 5, "The Post Office Act, 1869," amalgamated and amended most of the former Acts; fixed rates of postage on town letters at 1d., suburban letters at 2d., inland letters at 4d., and intercolonial letters at 6d. per  $\frac{1}{2}$  oz.

34 Vict. No. 4, "An Act to amend 'The Post Office Act, 1869'" (October 18th, 1870), commenced November 1st, 1870, fixed rates of postage on town letters at 1d.,

inland letters at 2d., and intercolonial letters at 3d. per  $\frac{1}{2}$  oz., and exempted "Scab Act" notices from postage.

45 Vict. No. 13, "The Post Office Act, 1881" (8th November, 1881), commenced 1st January 1882, provided for transmission of cards by post, fixed rates of postage on town letters at 1d., inland and intercolonial at 2d. per  $\frac{1}{2}$  oz., and inland postcards at 1d. each. The Act also consolidated all the previous Acts, and is now the principal Act under which the Post Office is regulated.

49 Vict. No. 30, "The Post Office Act Amendment Act, 1885," reduced book-packet rates to 1d. for every 4 ozs.

52 Vict. No. 42, "The Post Office Act Amendment Act, 1888," commenced January 1st, 1889, provided for postage on certain classes of newspapers; fixed the rates on post cards to all the Australian Colonies and New Zealand at 1d., and to Great Britain at 2d. by the long sea route, and 3d. *via* Brindisi. This Act also authorised the issue of postal notes.

In 1858 Mr. Stephen Tunbridge Hardinge succeeded Captain Smith as Secretary of the Post Office, the latter title taking the place of that of "Postmaster-General," which, on the passing of the Constitution Act, was reserved for the Ministerial Head of the Department. Mr. A. C. Douglas succeeded Mr. Hardinge in April, 1869; and on the death of the former gentleman, in 1888, the present secretary, Mr. Thomas H. Magrath, was appointed.