INTERNATIONAL-reply-Coupons (IRC) from the Danish West Indies

When Victor Engstrom was gathering data for the three volumes of *The Mails of the Danish West Indies* he asked the Study Group members if anyone had seen an IRC. The third volume of *The DWI Mails* did illustrate one, likely the only recorded one at that time (1981). More have become available since then, and this is a list of five known at this time. IRC’s became available in 1907. Before that time Double/Reply cards served this purpose. Three of these have been sold at Thomas Helland auctions. Two new ones from St. Thomas are shown below for the first time:

The International reply Coupons were available as of 7 October 1907 as shown in the publication from the St. Thomas Tidende.

The following is a list of known IRC’s:

CHRISTIANSTED 2/11/1907

ST. THOMAS 15/10/1907

ST. THOMAS 18/01/1910

CHRISTIANSTED 9/01/1915 and TORONTO 10/4/1916

CHRISTIANSTED 7/12/1916

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COUPON-RÉPONSE INTERNATIONAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Internationalt Svarmærke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dette Marki kan de Lande, der deltagte i denne Udveksling, anvende nu det Primærkof Værdi 25 Centimer eller til dette Højere værende Værdi.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antilles danoises. Danske Vestindien.</td>
</tr>
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</tbody>
</table>
Mint/Never Used: At the Washington 2005 EXPO a European dealer had one never used, with an asking price of $600.00

All of the above are of the same type. It is likely more copies may exist or will be discovered in the future. None-the-less, only a few collector can have any one of these.

NEW MAIL FORWARDERS
The Danish West Indies Mails – Postal History Volume 1, 2nd Edition has a list of known mail forwarders. The list is subdivided into three categories as follows: Known, Probable and occasional forwarders. Mail forwarding after 1880 is very unusual. Several more can be added to the list of known mail forwarders at this time as follows:

H. H. PAULSEN/ST. THOMAS. Oval in blue ink, 30 mm x 14 mm. On an 1849 wrapper to Haiti

J. SALA Y CA/ST. THOMAS. Oval in purple ink 40 mm x 26 mm. On a printed circular
   From Curacao posted at St. Thomas 16/10/1881 to New York

A. LUGO & CO./ST THOMAS W.I. Red rectangular without frame 47mm x 17 mm. On a cover
   From Puerto Rico (mailed by/or forwarded by Lloyd Andaluz), and posted at St. Thomas with D.W.I. stamps on 21/12/1898 to London

INDEX OF COVERS WITH BOXED FRANCO STAMP

The boxed FRANCO stamp may be found on a of covers dated 1873-1876. It is a rather scarce postal history items, but not necessarily as scarce as album page descriptions and auction lot descriptions may suggest. The following is a list of nine black and four red stamps with references to their location. The manuscript notation “10¢ paid” is typically partially covered by the stamp. The V.E. and R.S. notations refer to the collection of Vector Engstrom and Dr. Roger Schnell who donated photocopies of their collections to the Scandinavian Collectors Club Library. (They are available for check-out/loan)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Black FRANCO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>St. Thomas Date Cancel</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/7/1873</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14/7/1873</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13/11/1873</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7/9/1874</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Red FRANCO


13/9/1875 | 5 cent US Taylor tied by New York Sept 20 cancel to New Jersey via “Merrimac” R.S. Sold at 2002 auction at $1,700 |
INDEX OF COVERS WITH THE CIRCULAR "PORTO" CANCEL

The circular "PORTO" handstamp is another rare item found on very few covers, some posted locally, while others are on mail from foreign countries. The postage due amount was indicated with a crayon notation inside the circle, and may be in red or blue. Prepaid postage was 3 cents, while a letter mailed without prepayment had 4 cents postage due from the recipient. Torben Geil in Nordisk Filatelsisk Tidsskrift, Volume 80, no. 4 states that in 1856 the ratio of prepaid to postage due letters was about equal, but by 1859-1860 the ratio was about ten prepaid for every one postage due letter. The handstamp was made available at St. Thomas (only?) as of 9 July, 1857.

St. Thomas Cancel

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Origin and Destination</th>
<th>Postage Due Markings</th>
<th>Reference Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30/1861</td>
<td>St. Thomas to T. Kronsen, Esq. St. Croix</td>
<td>Red “4”</td>
<td>R.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/7/1865</td>
<td>St. Thomas to Heyliger, St. Croix.</td>
<td>Red “4”</td>
<td>Northland Auction 1997, lot #74. Sold at $725</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/1/1866</td>
<td>St. Thomas to Christiansted.</td>
<td>Red “8”</td>
<td>Nordisk Filatelisk Tidsskrift, September 1973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/12/1866</td>
<td>St. Thomas to W.H. Heyliger, Bassin St. Croix.</td>
<td>Blue “4”</td>
<td>R.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22/1/1858</td>
<td>København to Governor at St. Croix.</td>
<td>Red “4” and in ink “R.S”.</td>
<td>Nordisk Filatelisk Tidsskrift September 1973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/1862</td>
<td>Trinidad to St. Croix.</td>
<td>Red “4” Consular letter to the Governor</td>
<td>Matthew Bennett Auction December 2006. Sold at SF4000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14/6/1866</td>
<td>Liverpool to Heyliger, St. Croix</td>
<td>Blue “4”</td>
<td>Northland Auction February 2006. Sold at $1,395</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DID THE DWI HAVE AN UNPUBLISHED 2 CENTS POSTAL CARD RATE BETWEEN 1879 AND 1902?

There have been several recent interesting articles about the use of the 2 cent postal card within the D.W.I. Briefly, the 2 cent postal card has long been believed to be limited for use to islands within 300 nautical miles, and a 3 cents card was for use to nations beyond 300 miles, and also for local use. It has now been claimed the DWI may have had an unpublished two cents rate for local use.

The first article was by John BuBois, "A Phantom Rate for DWI Postal Cards, 1877-1901", Posthorn, November 2003. He reviewed the published postal rates for the D.W.I. from 1856-1917, and showed that a two cents local postal card rate never had been published and therefore did not exist. He did, however, show multiple examples of 2 cent cards used locally, and explained them as being either philatelic, or cards that apparently were mistakenly passed by the post office.

The post office published local post card rate was three cents, but philatelic articles and catalogues have long listed the local post card rate as two cents. He traced the two cent rate back to the January 16, 1969 issue of the Scribe where a table listed all the DWI postage rates from 1856 to 1917. The data in this table was later published in the Facit catalogues and in Volume 2 of the DWI Mails on page 17-1, two widely used reference sources. His conclusion was they were solely intended for use to islands within 300 miles, and long accepted two cents local rate was based upon mistaken belief.
Two more recent articles in the Danish journal, *PHT*, by Svend K. Seltsberg (March 2007) and Henning Mathiesen (September 2007) discussed this topic again and both illustrated examples of local use of the 2 cent postal card, but interestingly they disagreed about their validity.

Svend Seltsberg’s article “2 Cents Taksten i Dansk Vestindien” essentially agreed with John DuBois that a local two cent rate never existed, though, some cards apparently passed through the mails by mistake. His article listed all of the published two cent rates that were 1) foreign printed matter (to countries beyond 500 miles) and post cards to nearby islands from 1979 to 1902, and 2), after 1902, local letters and all foreign post cards.

Henning Mathiesen’s article “Dansk Vestindiens Localporto for Brevkort” also reviewed the published DWI postal rates, and agreed with both DuBois and Seltsberg that the DWI post office never had published a two rent post card rate.

But here, importantly, then expressed his opinion that

1. The published 3 cent card rate had to be a mistake. Why should it cost more to mail a card locally from St. Croix to St. Thomas than, for example, to Puerto Rico?
2. The DWI post office apparently never made an effort to collect postage due when a 2 cent card was used.
3. Importantly, this was widely known by the public.
4.

In his opinion, even though there is no official record of the DWI having had a published two cent card rate, it was a post office accepted rate.

Here we have three articles, all in agreement about the published rates, and all illustrating locally delivered 2 cent postal cards that had passed through the mail without penalty. Two of the authors believe this to have been an oversight by the post office staff. Interestingly, since many DWI specialists have 2 cents locally used postal cards in their collections, it may be Mathiesen has opened a new “window” for questioning the what the local post rate was (or was not).

In case three publications are not enough, here are more examples of the use of the 2 cent postal card.

**PHILATELIC CARD OCTOBER 1, 1894**

![Image of a philatelic card dated October 1, 1894.](image)

The First card is one of many 2 cents postal cards (and 2 cents envelopes) showing no wear and tear addressed to Dr. Med. Neuman, Christiansted. All have the exact same meticulous handwriting, and all are canceled Christiansted with October and November 1894 dates. Svend Seltsberg and John DuBois both included one in their publications, both canceled 17 October 1894. This one has, with the same handwriting, a short message,

“Consignment duty to hand / With Best Regards, Bertram”

These must have been mass produced philatelic “mail” that were favor canceled at the post office and maybe addressed afterward.

**COMMERCIAL MAIL TO DR. MED. L. NEUMANN, COPENHAGEN, CANCELED CHRISTIANSTED 7 JANUARY 1895**

![Image of a commercial mail card.](image)

Did the “good” doctor ever reside in Christiansted, or did he live in Copenhagen? The second card is a correctly used 3 cent card mailed from Christiansted 9 January, 1895 to Dr. Med. L. Neumann, 39 Vesterbrogade, Copenhagen, Denmark. The Danish message reads:

“Kære dr. N. Jeg har l dag afsendt $120,00. Glemte at det was postdag hvorfor jeg ikke sender nyhederne, som er mange men ikke alle er ubehagelige. Brev med første Tyske damper. Hilsen til deres frue.”
The English translation is as follows:

"Dear dr. N. Today I dispatched $120.00. Forgot today was a mailing day, and that is why I am not sending news, there are many but all are unpleasant. Letter with the first German steamer. Greeting to your wife."

It could appear Dr. Neumann was a dealer on a large scale. It would be interesting to learn if other mail exists that was addressed to him in Denmark in late 1894.

The third card is canceled Frederiksted 15 December 1896 from M. A. Pretto to a ship in the harbor. The message reads:

"Dear George! Please call on Mr. Petford for a bill of Lading"

The Morris A. Pretto name frequently appears on DWI mail, and being a commercial company sending a lot of mail he may very well have been aware that the 2 cent card was acceptable to the post office.

Interestingly, John DuBois showed a 2 cent card addressed to the cruiser "Ingolf" in the St. Thomas harbor, and it was marked 2 cents postage due. The "Ingolf" was a Danish naval ship, so perhaps mail to it was treated as mail to a distant country. If it was considered foreign territory the correct rate would have been three cents, and 2 cents postage due would have been correct. On the other hand, one of the many ships known to have carried intra island DWI mail was named "Eagle". If this is the same one, it undoubtedly was registered in the DWI, and therefore mail addressed to it would be considered local/domestic. If so, according to Mathiesen two cents may have been acceptable postage.

The card also shows the limited use of the 2 cent postal card to nearby islands. This card was replaced with the five-line card in 1888-89, so this card was not used until about ten years after purchase. The DWI economy had been in a continuous decline after the 1870's, and there would have been an ever decreasing mail volume to the favored islands.

The last card is canceled St. Thomas 7 January 1902 immediately after the foreign postage was reduced to two cents, so there is no controversy but that it has the correct postage. A much more interesting aspect is the heavy black "F" indicating it arrived from Frederiksted without having been canceled there. This is a rare postal routing mark. A similar "C" was used for mail that arrived from Christiansted, but it is much more common. There was no equivalent arrival mark for mail arriving from St. Jan.

Poul Hvid and Henning Mathiesen had an interesting article in Nordisk Filatelsk Tidsskrift, December 1983 that explained why The St. Thomas Post Office used these two arrival marks.

An English translation is as follows:

The years of use of these cancels are not known. The DWI post offices had the St.Thomas/St. Jan district and the St. Croix district. There was a certain value in knowing if mail arrived from St. Croix. If so, St. Croix had derived income from the sale of the stamps, and a debit had to be applied for the transit fee the sending post office was responsible for. The St. Thomas post office was responsible for calculating the UPU transit fees, and thus had to ensure that St. Croix paid its fair share.

They listed a total of six letters known to them that had the "F" arrival mark (in 1983), but there has to more. Any letter or card with the "F" commands a significant price premium.

It should be mentioned that there are two "C" types. The second type was used the last few years before the transfer to the U.S.A. If anyone has a letter or card with the second type, please submit a scan for inclusion in the next newsletter.
The 2 cent card is commonly found on foreign mail with a one cent stamp added. The DWI post office discounted the price of its stamps when twenty or more were purchased, so a slight savings was possible by adding a stamp to a 2 cent card.

Returning to the two articles by Svend Seitzberg and Henning Mathiesen, the following discussion may be a confirmation by of Mathiesen's belief that the DWI post office did not necessarily publish all postage rates. The cover below is a printed matter cover canceled Christiansted 18 July 1898 and addressed to St. Lucia. It is franked with a single one cent stamp (printing X), and St. Lucia is at the very limit of 300 nautical miles when measured from St. Croix.

Mr. Seitzberg, in his review of the postal rates effective 1 April 1879, included a new 1 cent printed matter rate to the islands of Guadeloupe, Puerto Rico and Viequez. These were the first of the so-called "Favored Islands" benefiting from a one cent printed matter rate at a time when the rate to all other UPU member nations was two cents. But, using published DWI postal rate data he also stated that in 1899 the affected islands within the 300 mile limit was expanded to include Antigua, Dominica, Montserrat, Nevi, Santa Domingo and Tortola. This means there is no published post office record between 1879 and 1899 showing the special rate had been expanded to more islands. On the other hand, Tortola is closer than any of the first named islands.

This cover predates 1899, so the expanded favored islands rate must have been in effect prior to 1899 without necessarily having been published. The original three islands were significant for DWI exports, but the island expansion likely was done much earlier than 1899 without being published in the newspapers. The letter rate to these islands was five cents, and such letters dated prior to 1899 regularly appeared on auctions. The effective date of this unpublished expansion should be much earlier than 1899, and, in fact, John DuBois showed a 2 cent postal card to St. Christopher canceled St. Thomas 25 August 1883. It could possibly have been as early as when the 2 cent postal cards went on sale. The DWI Mails Volume 2 gives an ERP (earliest reported postmark) of 25 November 1881 for the 2 cent card, but the destination is not given.

Mr Mathiesen may therefore be correct when he concluded his article as follows: "Postage rates are not always what they should be". If can be shown that the post office did not publish an early list of an expansion of the favored islands, then by extension, it may very well be that they also did not publish any notice that the local post card rate was only two cents. The islands only had 2 post offices, and maybe some postal changes were posted rather than being published. The page 1 section about the International Reply Coupons includes a post office notification that a list of applicable countries was available.

PRINTED MATTER TO ST. LUCIA, CHRISTIANSTED 18 July 1898

There will be no easy answer to the question of a published 3 cents rate vs. an unpublished 2 cents rate. It could become a matter of personal belief.

The Study Group may be able to collectively add more information, and if you wish to assist in a small ways, share the used 2 cents cards you have that was used domestically and to the favored islands.

It would be interesting to know the ratio of domestically used 2 cents cards vs. cards used for foreign mail. The post office can only be credited with a certain percentage of mistakes.
TRANSITION MAIL CANCELED ST THOMAS 3 April 1917, Marked Postage due in Puerto Rico, and Censored

The transfer to the United States was late Saturday afternoon March 31, 1917, so the first day of use of US stamps would have been Monday April 3. This cover was canceled Tuesday April 4 with the DWI cancel that was used into May 1917. The correct postage to Denmark was 5 cents but a 2 cent US stamp was used. The envelope was sealed. The new US postmaster would have had access to the DWI “T” postage due stamp, but the letter was sent onto Puerto Rico where it was marked 30 centimes postage due; this was equivalent to 24 øre at delivery in Denmark on May 16. The islands were transferred on short notice, and it is well known that the new postmaster was not supplied with cancels, etc.

The question is why the sender would make a special trip to the post office and be confused about the correct postage? The stamp color for foreign letter mail had been and remained blue (25 bit DWI and 5 cents US). The only two cent rates were postcards to foreign destinations and for a double rate printed matter envelope.

It may very well have been a mistake, but the following is not an impossible scenario. The postal staff undoubtedly knew the regular patrons, and even though mail sent at the printed matter rate is supposed to be unsealed, it is not uncommon to find DWI printed matter mail that was sealed. UPU regulations specified the sending post office was responsible for verifying the accuracy of the postage used, and the receiving post office could not make adjustments unless a gross error had been made.

Maybe the post office counter clerk accepted this letter as printed matter from a familiar patron without knowing a more thorough processing of all mail would be done at the Puerto Rico post office for a short time period until the US St. Thomas post office was fully functional. The Puerto Rico then assessed postage due since it was sealed. The content could have been newspaper clipping from the many articles printed in the St. Thomas Tidende in the last few weeks before the sale of the islands. The above explanation may be described as wishful thinking!

The last date the St. Thomas Tidende was published was Saturday 31 March 1917

**DWI STUDY GROUP NEWSLETTER INDEX**

The DWI Study Group Newsletters were started by Victor Engstrom in 1971, and he produced twenty newsletters through February 1986. There were no illustrations in these newsletters.

Dr. Roger Schnell took over with his first newsletter dated May 21 1988, and he continued as Coordinator-Editor until May 1994. These are numbered as No. 1-22. John DuBois then continued as Coordinator-Editor with newsletters 23-29.

An index has been prepared listing illustrated covers, (Stampless, Foreign mail to DWI, Transit mail, DWI post office mail, miscellaneous), DWI stamps, DWI postal stationery, and postal history and routing.

However, the following Newsletters are missing and needed for completion of the index:

- Newsletters 9, 15, 20, by Dr. Roger Schnell, and also No. 14, 15, and 16 by Victor Engstrom.

If anyone can provide copies of the above the index can be completed. The incomplete index is four pages long.

**Recent Exhibits**

The year 2008 was not a good one for Danish West Indies exhibitors. Rolf L. Johansson (Sweden) received Gold for his “Danish west Indies 1758-1880's: Private, foreign and Danish Post” at the World stamp Championship in Israel, 2008., and that is the only one known to the editor.

The recent NORDIA 2009 in Iceland only had one DWI exhibit, so 2009 looks bleak as well.

**Newsletter contributions**

There were no contributions for this newsletter! Please contribute so a new newsletter can be prepared.
CHRISTIAN THE TENTH
BY THE GRACE OF GOD KING OF DENMARK, OF THE WENDS AND GOTHS, DUKE OF SCHLESWIG, HOLSTEIN, DITMARSH, LAUENBOURG AND OLDENBOURG,
send Our beloved and faithful subjects in the Islands of St. Thomas, St. Croix and St. John Our Royal Greetings.

In the firm conviction, that the welfare of the Islands best can be promoted and developed through a connection with the United States of America, We have, with the consent of the Rigsdag, concluded a convention with the President of the United States respecting the cession of the Islands to the said States. Through detailed and minute stipulations, which are embodied in the said convention, We have taken pains to secure, for You protection in the execution of your liberty, religious, property and other private rights. You are likewise entitled at will to remain in the Islands or at any time to remove therefrom, and, in either event, You shall retain Your property rights and be entitled to dispose of such property or the fruits thereof.

In case You remain in the Islands, You shall, until otherwise provided, continue to enjoy all the private rights, municipal and religious liberties as are secured for You by the laws now in force, and if the present laws are altered, You shall not thereby be placed in a less favourable position in respect of the above mentioned rights and liberties than You now enjoy.

Those of You, who remain in the Islands, are entitled to preserve Your citizenship in Denmark by making before a court of record within one year, from the date of the exchange of the ratifications of this convention, the 17th of January 1917, a declaration to the effect, that You desire to preserve such citizenship; for children under 16 years of age the said declaration can be made by parents or guardians.

The election of such Danish citizenship shall however not, after the lapse of the above mentioned term of one year, be a bar to Your renunciation of the citizenship thus preserved, nor to Your election of citizenship in the United States and Your admission to the nationality thereof on the terms, which in conformity with the laws of the United States may be provided for other inhabitants of the Islands.

In bidding You farewell, We express the hope, that You will cherish the memory of the centuries, during which the Islands have been connected with Denmark as their Mother Country, We bring You Our Royal thanks for the loyalty and affection You have shown to us and to the population of the Mother Country, and express Our warmest wishes for a happy and prosperous future for all of You and for the Islands, which You inhabit.

We commend You to God now and always.

Given at Amalienborg the 9th March 1917.
Under Our Royal Hand and Seal
CHRISTIAN Rex.