

XIII. The regional ship mail services

The Nordland line

S/S Constitutionen

Bergen - Hammerfest 1851 - 1860

S/S Constitutionen was introduced in the Nordland line in September 1855. In 1856 the ship went into a regular 4 week cycle with "Prinds Gustav", "Prinds Carl" and "Nordcap". The ship got a circular dated handstamp with text "CONSTITUTIONEN" in June 1855. Because of shortage of handstamps in the "NORDLAND" series, the sub-postmaster on board, Mr. Hans Severin Øyen, got no "NORDLAND" handstamp and instead used the ship's cancel-ler "CONSTITUTIONEN" in the Nordland route as well. This date-stamp is known to have been used on altogether six trips between Bergen and Hammerfest in 1856. Outside the Nord-land p. o. jurisdiction area, i.e. in the Troms post district (north of Tromsø), the sub-postmaster crossmarked the stamps with black ink and side-marked the letter with the date-stamp "CONSTITUTIONEN", or occasionally postmarked with his signature "H. S. Øyen" (with or without date) in manuscript directly on the postage stamp. A pen manuscript cancellation "C Constit C", is also recorded on 4 skill Oscar, probably made by the sub-postmaster on a trip (no. 12) in 1857



"CONSTITUTIONEN
17-11-1857" in blue
on 4 sk Oscar



"H. S. Øyen"
in pen manuscript
on 4 sk Coat of Arms I
[only copy (without date) known]



"C Constit C"
in pen manuscript
on 4 sk Oscar
[only copy known]



Postage due letter of May 4, 1856, from Christiania to Lenvig in Finmark; with origin postmark "CHRISTIANIA" and listed "5 (bill no.)—5 (Sk to pay)" on reverse, sent with S/S Constitutionen on the 10th northbound trip from Bergen to Hammerfest and postmarked "CONSTITUTIONEN 14-5-1856" in black ink

The ship's date-stamp was used within the Nordland postcontoir jurisdiction area as a substitute handstamp for the "NORDLAND" date-stamp