

THE 'PENITENTIARY ISSUE'

This first provisional issue was produced by convicts in the General Penitentiary, Kingston and issued in April 1877. It was required pending the arrival of the cards printed in England by De La Rue and Co. The cards were formula cards with the values added separately by a hand stamp. Two types of the frame exist with the difference most notable in the bottom left hand corner where in Type 1 the inner left vertical frame does not meet the inner bottom frame and in Type 2 the two lines meet.

The Halfpenny value was for delivery at the post office or within the town and the One Penny value was for intra-island delivery.

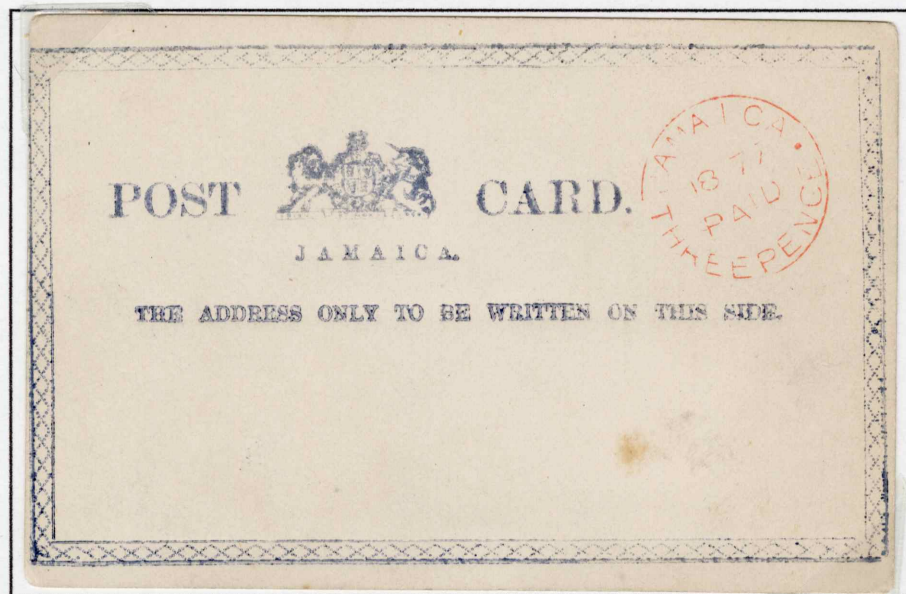
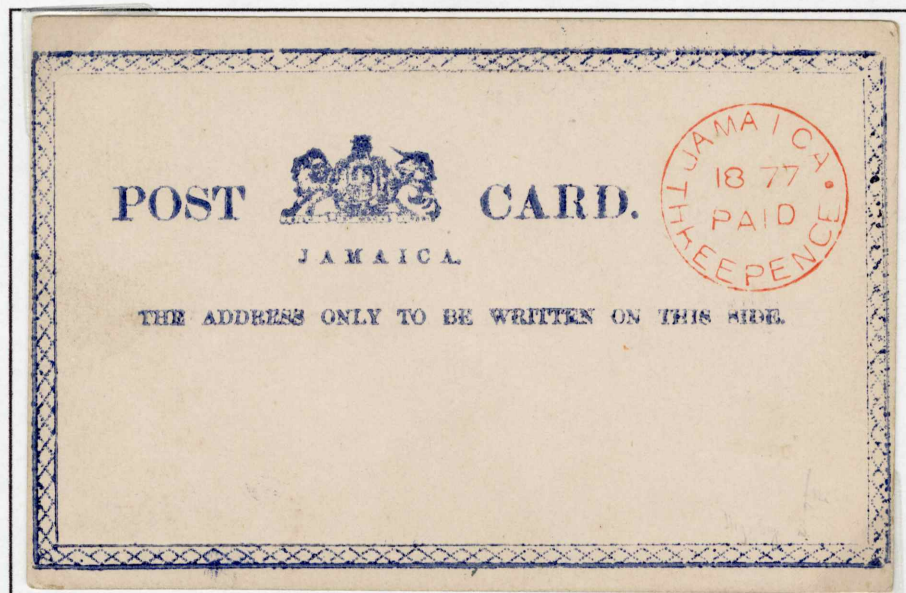
Type 1



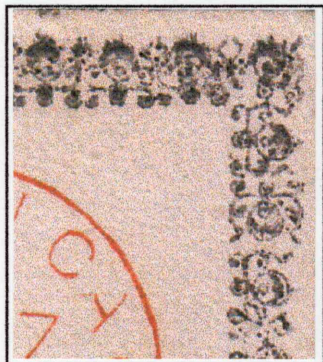
Type 2



Two examples of the Three Penny value, mint, on thick white card. This value was used for overseas mail. Both cards are Type 2.



Two examples of the Three Pence value, mint, on stout white paper, H&G Type 61, the third ornament from the top in the right hand frame points downwards and not to the right.



Enlargement of the top right hand corner showing the third ornament pointing downwards



INTRODUCTION

This display covers the first two issues of Jamaican postal stationery issued during the reign of Queen Victoria.

Jamaica joined the Universal Postal Union on the 1st. of April 1877 and the first postal cards were issued on that date. Pending the arrival of the first definitive issue from the printers in England two provisional issues were prepared on the island.

Both provisional issues were format cards, that is to say all three values used the same basic card and the value was indicated by a hand stamp in red applied separately by the Post Office. Both issues had three values. The Half Penny card that was for town or post office delivery; the One Penny card that was for intra-island mail and the Three Pence card that was for overseas mail. It was reported that a total of 4701 cards of both provisional issues were prepared.

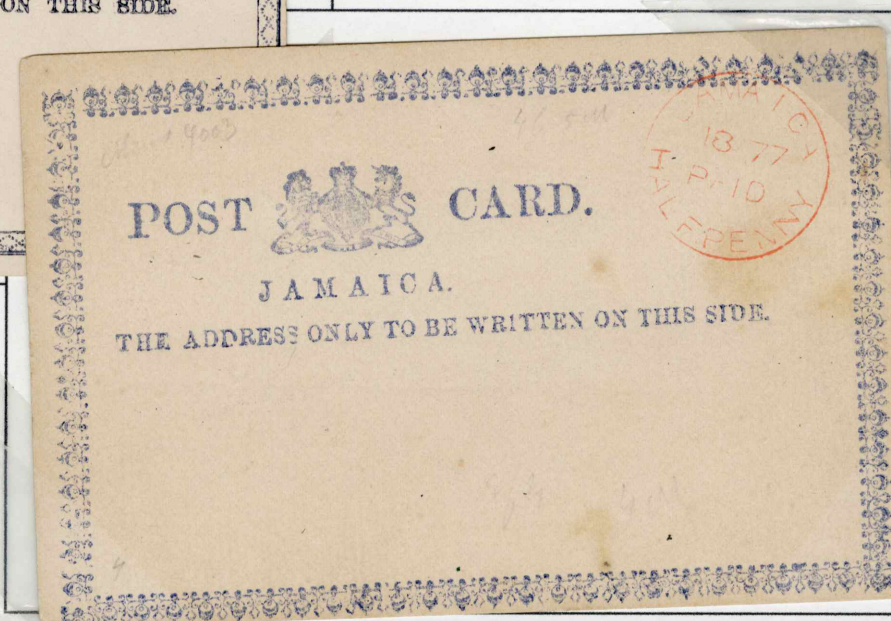
The first provisional issue was printed by the convicts in the General Penitentiary, Kingston and was generally considered to be a good use of the convicts' time. This issue is usually referred to as the Penitentiary cards.

The second provisional issue was printed by the Government Printer, Kingston. Because of the design of the border the issue is often referred to as the Floriate issue.

During the period of these cards most mail originated in Kingston or transited through Kingston, which acted as a hub. Where cards were carried across country this has been especially noted. Common features of the use of the cards is their immediacy, "Choir meeting tonight" and so on.



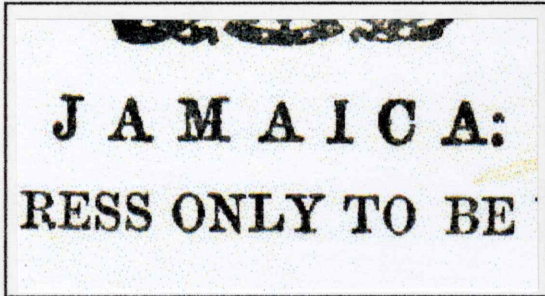
The card to the left is a mint example of a Penitentiary card Type 1 and the card below is a mint example of a Floriate card Type 4c. Both cards are the Half Penny value for use for delivery at the Post Office or within the town.



Bibliography

- Proud – The Postal History of Jamaica*
- Foster – Jamaica - The Postal History*
- Potter – The Postal Markings of Jamaica*
- Higgins and Gage*

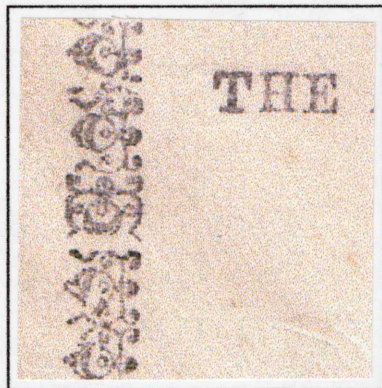
Examples of the Three Pence value, mint. This rate covered overseas countries. The first card is Type H&G 6h, on stout white paper, the letter 'I' in 'Jamaica' has a broken top and there is a colon after the word "Jamaica". This card shows part of the shield watermark.



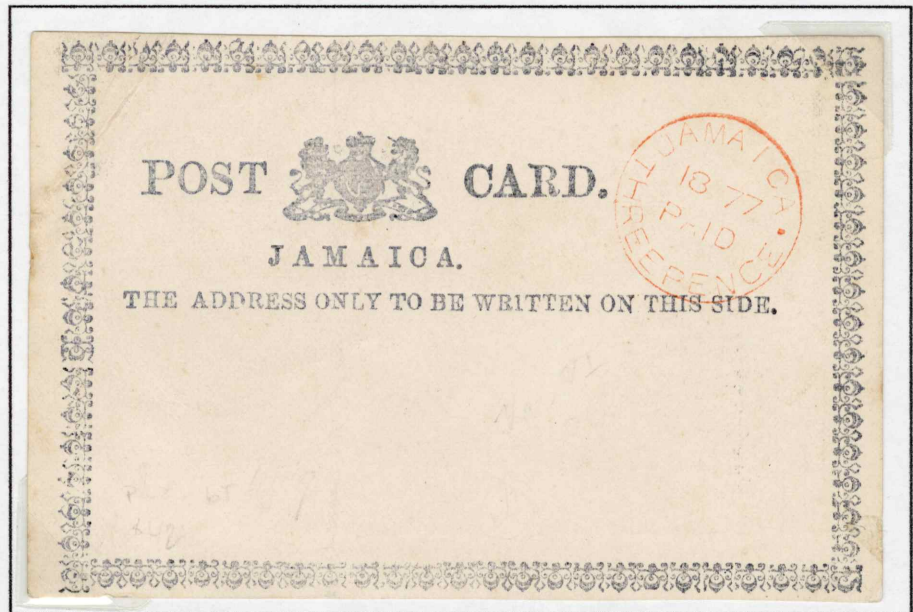
Enlargement of
'Jamaica'.



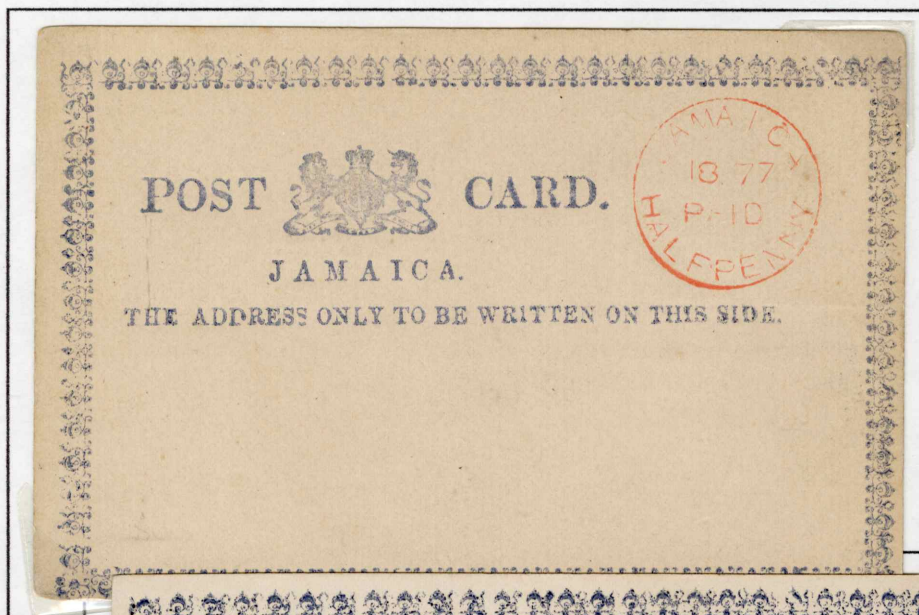
Type H&G 6j, on stout white paper, the ninth ornament from the bottom in the left hand frame points to the bottom instead of to the left.



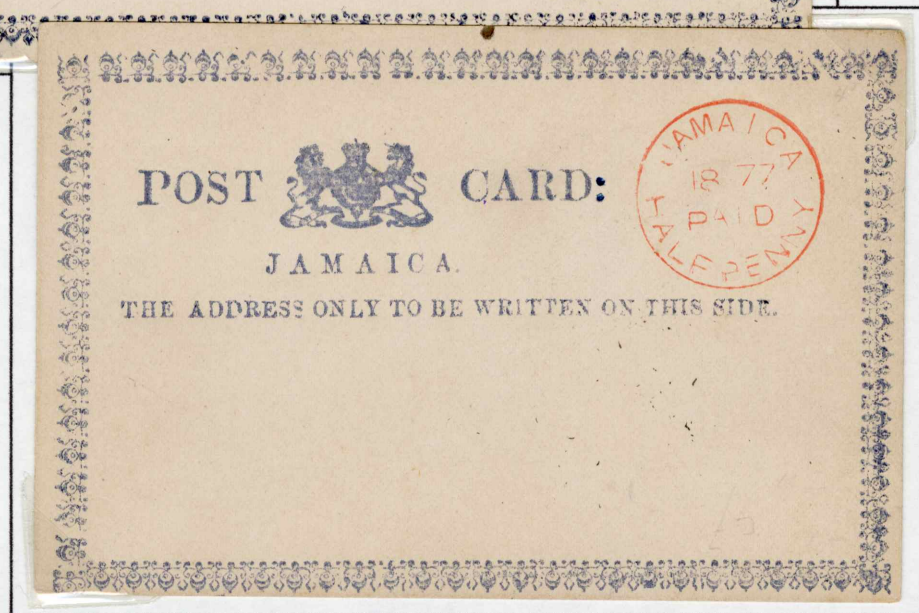
Enlargement of left hand
frame



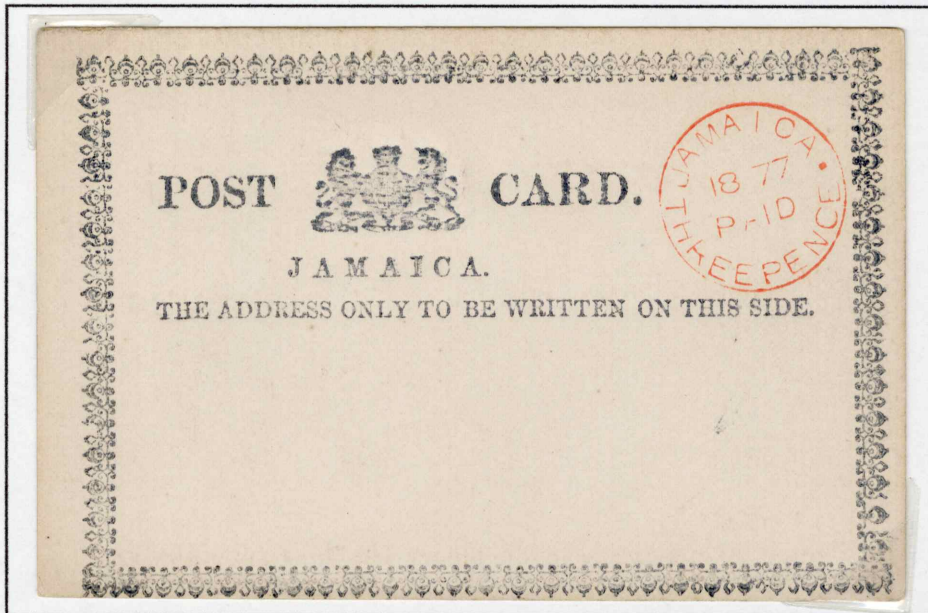
Examples of the Halfpenny value, mint, Type 4c, printed on thick white card; the ornament at the top of the right hand frame is pointing upwards.



Enlargement of the top right hand corner showing the top fleurs-de-lis pointing upwards



Examples of the Three Pence value, mint, on thick white card, H&G Type 6a, two fleurs-de-lis are missing from the second ornament from the bottom on the right hand side.

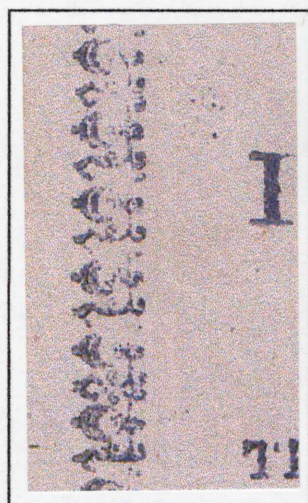


These two cards demonstrate the range of shades in which these cards can be found.

Two mint examples of the One-Penny value, both on thick bluish card. The first card is H&G Type 5b, where two fleurs-de-lis are missing from the second ornament from the bottom on the right hand side.



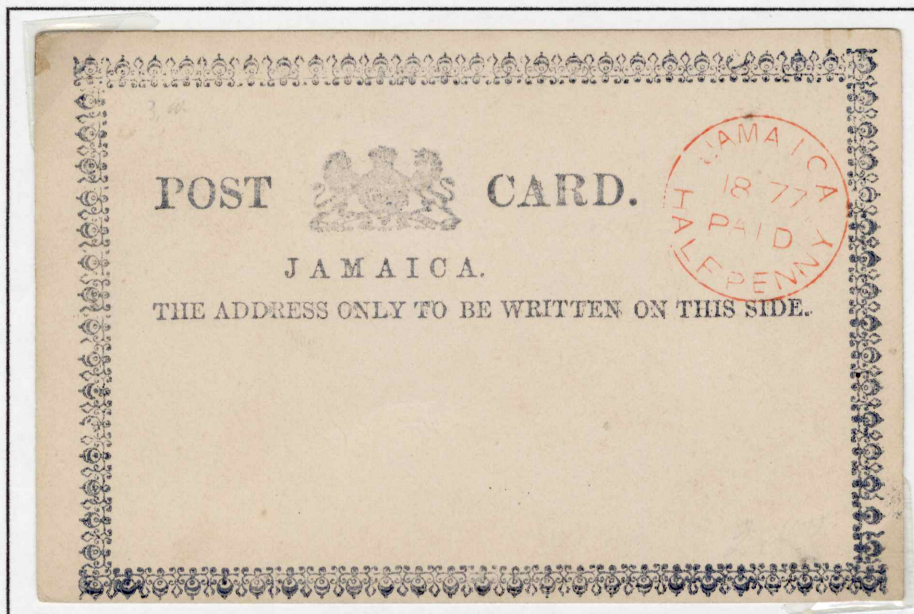
The second card is H&G Type 5f that has the two fleurs-de-lis missing from the second ornament from the bottom on the right side and also broken ornaments in the middle of the left hand frame; 'JAMAICA' has a colon after the name.



Enlargement of the left hand frame



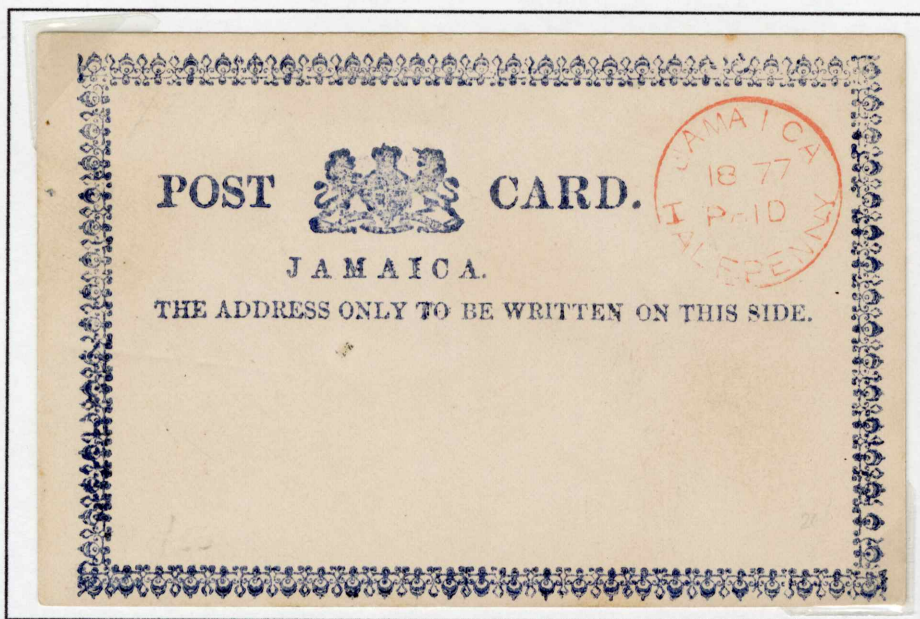
Shown is a further example of H&G Type 4a and an example of H&G Type 4b. Type H&G 4b were printed on thick bluish card and also have the two fleurs-de-lis missing from the second ornament from the bottom on the right hand side.



THE SECOND PROVISIONAL ISSUE – THE ‘FLORIATES’.

The second provisional issue was also printed on the island, but this time by the Government Printer. Again the cards were formula cards with the value added separately. There are a number of variations in the border as well as the card used. References are to the Higgins and Gage catalogue.

Shown are two examples of Type 4a, this is printed on stout white card and two fleurs-de-lis are missing from the second ornament from the bottom on the right hand side.



Enlargement of bottom right hand corner showing the two missing fleurs-de-lis

