

LETTER FROM THE UNITED STATES CONSUL AT TAMPICO.

To the Hon. A. V. BROWN,

*Postmaster-General of the United States, Washington.*

CONSULATE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

*Tampico, Feb. 20, 1859.*

66. SIR:—I have the honor herewith to inclose a memorial addressed to this consulate by the principal merchants of this city, explanatory of the advantages which would be derived by the people of the United States, and those of the Mexican Republic, in the event of steam communication being established between New Orleans and several ports in the Gulf of Mexico, as suggested by Col. Butterfield; all of which I fully concur in, and which I trust will serve to aid you in your decision on that subject.

The only mail line of the steamers that touch at this port, are those of the British Royal West India Steam Packet Company, one of which arrives here monthly, bringing mails, passengers and quicksilver. They usually remain about forty-eight hours for return mails, passengers and specie; returning, they touch at Vera Cruz, Havana, Jamaica, Porto Rico and St. Thomas, and from thence to England.

American citizens are frequently compelled to avail themselves of the opportunity afforded by the steamers to communicate with the United States, by which means they must pay, first, Mexican outward postage; second, British steam postage; third, Spanish postage at Havana; fourth, postage by the United States mail steamers

to the final place of destination. The expense of placing a single letter in the United States, weighing under one ounce, by this conveyance, is one dollar.

For the performance of this and the Brazilian mail service, the British government pays an annual sum to the company of £270,000. On this coast, these steamers are exceedingly unpopular, in consequence of the unaccommodating disposition of the officers, and the want of more suitable elements to facilitate the disembarking and embarking of the mails and passengers, their dependence for the performance of such service resting entirely on the pilots at the bar, whose boats are not properly constructed for bar service.

Steamers drawing light, say from 8 to 8½ feet, can invariably enter the river in fine weather, and in boisterous weather life-boats so constructed as to live in heavy seas, would greatly facilitate the mail service.

Should the mail contractors make arrangements for the transportation of specie to Europe by a connecting line of steamers in the United States, at the same rate of freight which is paid to the British steamers, say 1½ per cent., and ½ per cent to the agent for shipping the same, they would soon have the carrying of all such freight, not only from this, but also from the port of Vera Cruz.

The annual amount of specie exported from this port in British steamers since the year 1848, to the year ending 1857, has averaged three and a quarter millions of dollars. During the year 1858 the revolutionary disturbances throughout the Republic, caused a total suspension of business between this city and the mining districts,



and the specie due to the merchants from the interior purchasers of goods, was sent by caravans to Matamoras and Brownsville, and from thence embarked in United States merchant steamers for New Orleans, consequently, the total amount of specie shipped at this port per British steamers during that period, was only \$352,707, and to the United States in sailing vessels, \$691,131.

The present interruption in the intercourse between this city and the interior, will doubtless be briefly remedied, and the business will then assume its wonted energy, and as the exports of Mexican produce to the United States are on the increase, the aid of steam communication will not only be of incalculable benefit to the trading community, but the Treasury of the United States will also derive an augmentation in the duties growing out of the facilities thus afforded.

I may venture to state to you, that the indulgent spirit which our Government has manifested towards the Mexican Republic since its initiation in the family of nations, has not had the desired effect, but, on the contrary, it has thrown all the advantages of trade into the hands of other foreign merchants.

England and France have a direct trade from their own ports to the ports of Mexico, whilst the Spanish merchants avail themselves of the facilities of owning and employing vessels under the American flag, whose knowledge of the language, and skill in intriguing with the Mexican authorities for advantages in the customs, have driven our merchants out of the market, and nearly all the commerce now carried on between this port and the United States, is in reality, in the hands of Spanish merchants.

But it is confidently expected that our Government will soon place us on a more equitable footing with this country, by a renewal of diplomatic negotiations, and then, by means of frequent communication, our merchants will be able to compete with those of any other nation.

In respectfully submitting these remarks to your superior consideration, I beg permission to subscribe myself, with the highest esteem and respect, sir,

Your most obedient servant,

FRANKLIN CHASE.

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MEMORIAL OF THE MERCHANTS OF TAMPICO.

*Tampico, Feb. 15, 1859.*

SIR:—We, the undersigned merchants established at this port, having been informed of a project initiated by Colonel Butterfield, for connecting New Orleans by means of a weekly steam communication, with several points in the Mexican Gulf, and being deeply impressed with the importance of such an enterprise, as calculated to develop to an incalculable extent the natural resources of every section of Mexican territory coming within the sphere of its influence, would respectfully solicit the exertion of your influence with the United States Government, to the end that the port of Tampico be included in the contemplated scheme.

As you are well aware, it would be impossible for us to overestimate the moral and material advantages which would be conferred on both countries by a system of frequent and rapid communication such as Colonel Butterfield proposes to establish.



Friendly relations between the people and governments of the United States and Mexico would thereby acquire additional strength, the existing trade attain proportions hitherto unknown, and countless new developments of industry be rapidly brought into existence.

With proper facilities afforded to its merchants in their intercourse with the United States, no other Mexican port in the Gulf could vie with Tampico for the purposes of commerce. Its geographical position renders it the natural channel for the transit of manufactured and other foreign goods destined to supply the wants of a thickly populated section of the interior, embracing within its area the great mining districts of Guanajuato, Zacatecas, and Catorce, for whose enormous productions of the precious metals it is consequently the outlet, while its exports of hides, goat-skins, sarsaparilla, jalap, fibre, vanilla, fruit, and dye-woods, already of considerable magnitude, would, under the vivifying influence of a weekly steamship communication with New Orleans and the other Gulf ports, speedily expand to an extent hitherto unknown in its history.

Convinced as we are, that your own personal observation and experience during a protracted residence at this port will enable you to bear testimony to the accuracy and moderation of the foregoing remarks, it only remains for us, in conclusion, earnestly to request the favor of your making such representations in the proper quarter, as will insure to Tampico a just participation in the general advantages which Colonel Butterfield's scheme cannot fail to secure to the commerce of both Republics.

We have the honor to be, sir, your most obedient servants,

Laquidaien, Keiford & Co.	Eugene Dauban.
Lelong, Camacho & Co.	Joaquin Matienzo.
F. Claussen & Co.	V. Bastien.
P. J. de la Lastra.	Manuel A. Fernandez.
C. Sansette, Son, Chabot & Co.	Ramon & Obregon.
J. J. Promm & Co.	Fusco & Brother.
H. M. Rugi & Co.	Borde & Co.
Gregorio Oatline.	Conrad Meyer.
Droege & Co.	Frederico F. Schultz.
Domingo Ysarri.	S. W. Aldrich.
F. Hartoz.	Sidney Udall.
M. Zubazan & Co.	

To FRANKLIN CHASE, Esq.,  
*United States Consul, Tampico.*

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LETTER FROM CONSUL AT MINATITLAN, (ISTHMUS OF TEHUANTEPEC.)

67. The intelligent and efficient Consul at Minatitlan, (Isthmus of Tehuantepec,) A. C. Allen, Esq., writing to the Department of State, under date of October 1st, 1858, as published in the annual Report on Foreign Commerce for 1858, says: "I learn that the Mexican Government has made a concession to an American citizen to establish a weekly line of mail steamships, half under American, and half under Mexican colors, from New Orleans or Mobile, touching at Galveston, Matagorda and Brazos de Santiago, Texas, to and from the following Ports in Mexico: Tampico, Vera Cruz, Coatzacoalcos, Tabasco, Laguna, Campeche and Sisal.



If this enterprise is carried out, and I have no doubt it will be, if the United States Government will extend towards it the same liberal patronage and assistance that the Mexican Government has agreed to do, it will be the means of greatly increasing our commerce with this country, as well as by this constant and frequent communication be the means of cementing more firmly a now growing friendship between the two people, while to the American merchants and those engaged in American trade it will be a most valuable convenience in receiving and forwarding letters and goods. It could not fail also to prove a means of diverting in part the large trade which this country now has with Europe, to the United States."

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CONCLUSION.

69. These memorials and official letters present the subject of Steam communication with Mexico in so distinct a form as to leave nothing to be added; their statements are of themselves the strongest argument in favor of the proposed line. With the advantage which we possess from contiguity, we could easily, by the adoption of the means proposed, change places with Great Britain on the commercial list. To secure a treaty with Mexico for such commercial advantages as would divert in our favor a large portion of her trade, our government is willing to pay millions. This same object can be obtained without exciting the jealousy of other nations by the simple means which this contract with the government affords, and this at the cost of a comparatively insignificant sum.

Nor is the aid asked for in this matter a mere gratuity. All that is desired is, that the government should adopt the contemplated line as a part of its postal system, dealing with it in the same liberal spirit which has characterized its relation to other ocean lines of steamers. Thus, without departing from its established policy, or invoking any extraordinary power, it may perfect its system of postal arrangements, and at the same time open up a commerce which would stimulate the industry of all sections of our country.

It would not be becoming in the undersigned to enlarge upon the political aspects of this question, to those whose knowledge and wisdom have entitled them to seats in Congress as the political representatives of the people. Besides which, it is too apparent to need discussion, that contiguity and similarity of political institutions demand that above all other nations, we should exert an influence over Mexican affairs, and this without regard to what has been termed "our manifest destiny."

If these considerations are deemed worthy the attention of the Government, the undersigned trusts that such support will be granted to him by the present Congress, as will justify him in at once placing in the most effective operation, the important enterprise which has been inaugurated by the Government of Mexico.

CARLOS BUTTERFIELD.

*Washington City, December, 1859.*



UNITED STATES

MOBILE

New Orleans

FLORIDA

UNITED STATES & MEXICAN MAIL STEAM SHIP LINE  
GULF OF MEXICO

Brazos de Santiago  
Matamoros

MEXICO  
Tampico

Vera Cruz  
Alvarado

Coatzacoalcos  
Tabasco

Sisal

Merida

Campeche

YUCATAN

CUBA

Galveston

Outward bound steamer that sailed on the 16th, 1 day out.  
Homeward bound steamer that sailed on the 8th, 9 days out.

Outward bound steamer that sailed on the 2nd, 1 day out.  
Homeward bound steamer that sailed on the 15, 9 days out.

