



JOURNAL OF THE
CANADIAN PHILATELIC SOCIETY
OF GREAT BRITAIN

Maple Leaves

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Whole No. 205

Vol. 20 No. 1

October 1985



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MAPLE LEAVES

Journal of

THE CANADIAN PHILATELIC SOCIETY OF GREAT BRITAIN

INCORPORATED 1946

Founder:

A E. Stephenson, F.C.P.S.

Edited by: Eric Killingley,

16 St. James Road, Bridlington, North Humberside, YO15 3PF.

Opinions expressed in the various articles in this journal are those of the writers and are not necessarily endorsed by the Society

Published five times a year by the Canadian Philatelic Society of Great Britain

Annual Subscription £7 – Due 1st October

Vol. 20 No. 1

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EDITORIAL

Traditionally, the months of May to September, are the times when members put aside their collections to engage in other pursuits e.g. Sports, gardening and holidays. It is fortunate for the majority of the membership that we have a few members more dedicated than most, who can still find time during this period to sit down and write articles for our magazine, and I offer a sincere thank you to them all – some regular and other first time contributors.

During the same period PIPEX (Pacific International Philatelic Exhibition) was held 7-9 June 1985 in Vancouver and our Secretary, David Sessions, went over to attend and display at this Exhibition. I am pleased to be able to tell you that he was awarded a Gold medal for his display of Classic Flag cancellations and their contemporaries.

In addition six other members of this society were successful in obtaining medals for their displays of Canada as follows :-

Robert Lemire	Postal Stationery of the Admiral Issue.	Silver
Fred Fawn	A study of the Canada 1898 2 cent Map Stamp.	Gold
Robert A. Lee	Unofficial Duplex cancels of Canada.	Silver
Robert Bayes	Montreal Duplex cancels.	Vermeil
William G. Robinson	RPO cancels from B.C. Railways and Ships of the C.P.R.	Vermeil
Richard K. Malott	Canadian Airmail Flight covers.	Silver

Also displaying a non-Canadian entry member Ken Barlow was awarded a Silver-bronze for his entry "Switzerland – Postage Due usage".

To all of these members, I offer congratulations on behalf of the society and wish them continued success in their collecting.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Members are reminded that the Annual Subscription to the Society is due on 1st October 1985 and should be sent to the Assistant Treasurer, Mr. E. Burchell (for address see Officers Panel inside back cover).

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'CANADIAN PACKET' HANDSTAMP (continued)
by Lt-Col. D. M. C. Prichard, F.R.P.S.L.

As a result of my article in *Maple Leaves* of August 1984 I have received a surprising amount of correspondence not only concerning additional examples of the CANADIAN PKT 'mark' but also asking for information on other aspects of the Allan Line Canadian mail packet service in general.

The following additional 'mark' covers' were reported bringing the total (including those listed in my previous article) up to 12 :-

Franking	Date	Canadian Pkt Date	Ship	Short Paid Markings	Remarks
A	12½c 1859	Toronto NO 3 1864	NO 5 1864 BELGIAN ex Quebec NO 5	1/-	
B	6c S.Q.	Quebec OC 3 1873	4 OC (sic) 1873 CIRCASSIAN ex Quebec OC 4	Nil (Correctly paid)	'Parker' cover
C	6c S.Q.	? Arrived London SP 9 1874	? U.K. POLYNESIAN ex Quebec AU 29 1874 arr L'pool SP 8	SHORT PAID 3 HALF FINE $\frac{1\frac{1}{2}}{4\frac{1}{2}}$	6
D	2c U.S.	? JY 3 1875	POLYNESIAN ex Quebec JY 3	INSUFFICIENTLY PREPAID SHORT PAID 3 FINE $\frac{1\frac{1}{2}}{4\frac{1}{2}}$	These are U.S. handstamps differing from their Canadian equivalents
E	5c S.Q.	? Transit back-stamps Riviere du Loup AU 4 1877 Rimouski AU 4 1877	? ?	7½	'Parker' cover

In addition, the number of stamps off cover cancelled by 'the mark' now amount to about a dozen with a few more doubtful. I am of the opinion that these are accounted for by failure of the P.O. of origin to cancel the stamp, the omission being rectified by the Ocean Mail clerks. In contrast however to this efficiency there are several examples of pure carelessness by the mail clerks. Two covers show the date slugs wrongly inserted with the date preceding the month (e.g. 14 OC 1876 instead of OC 14 1876) whilst there are two examples of a reversed 3 (i.e. £) being used for E (indicating eastward).

The above covers, taken in conjunction with those already listed in my previous article, pose some new problems but before discussing these it would be as well to summarise the gradual development of the Canadian mail packets in an attempt to clarify some queries from correspondents :-

- 1854-4 The first purely Canadian mail service was operated from April 1853 to December 1854 by the Canadian Steam Navigation Company with monthly or fortnightly sailings. This however was an erratic service equipped with ships unsuitable for rough trans-Atlantic crossings and proved thoroughly unsatisfactory. During the Crimean war these ships one by one were requisitioned as troop-ships and the Company ceased to exist. Perhaps a blessing in disguise.
- 1855 No Canadian mail packets to U.K.
The Crimean war severely affected the Atlantic mail. Several Cunarders were also requisitioned and between 24 Dec 1854 and 9 Jan 1856 the Cunard service of weekly sailings to and from Boston and New York in alternate weeks were reduced to a fortnightly New York service only.
- 1856 Contract given to Allan Line, which initially provided a fortnightly service between Liverpool and Quebec in the summer and Portland, Maine, U.S.A. in the winter. First sailing from Liverpool 23 Apr 1856.
- 1859 Weekly sailings introduced as from 20 Apr from Liverpool.
Summer: Arrangements made to land and embark mail to and from U.K. during the summer at Riviere du Loup (110 miles east of Quebec on the south bank of the St. Lawrence and then the eastern terminus of the Inter-Colonial Railway). This saved some 4 hours on mail from Liverpool.
Winter: In addition, the westbound ships to Portland as from 6 Dec 1859 called at Cork to pick up late mail forwarded via Holyhead and Dublin.
- 1860 Cork was not suitable for the summer route and as from 30 May 1860 the Irish port of call was changed for both summer and winter sailings from Cork in the south to Moville on Loch Foyle in the north. Apart from avoiding competition with the Cunard and Inman Lines, this move was all part of the Allan Line's continual efforts to speed up and increase the efficiency of their mail service. From Moville the mail went by steam tender 16 miles to Londonderry (3 hours) from whence it was routed :—
- (a) The Scottish mail by train to Belfast, thence by regular packet boat to Glasgow, thus short-circuiting Liverpool. This was of great benefit to Scotland, the mail being both cheaper and usually quicker than by Cunard.
 - (b) The English and Continental mail by train to Kingstown (near Dublin), by packet boat to Holyhead and train to Liverpool.
- Thus the ideal was for the Allan Line ships to dock at Liverpool with no mail at all left on board, but this was not always achieved if the sorting of the Scottish mail had not been completed or if bad weather prevented the Moville landing.

- 1871 Allan Line took over the contracts for the fortnightly service between Halifax N.B. and Queenstown in Ireland which had been relinquished by the Inman Line. First ship Peruvian ex Halifax 1 JY 1871.
- 1876 Completion of the first stage of the extension of the Inter-Colonial Railway from Riviere du Loup to Rimouski (60 miles further east). As from 17 June 1876 mail was landed and embarked at Rimouski.
- June
- Dec Inter-Colonial Railway completed, thus linking up Nova Scotia and New Brunswick with the rest of the Canadian Railway system. This enabled the Allan Line to switch their winter sailings from Portland, Maine to Halifax as from 2 Dec 1876.

In assessing the penalties for underpayment it is important to bear in mind the gradual reduction in postal rates per ½oz to U.K. by Canadian packets, the fine being reduced in proportion :—

1 July 1859-1869	12½c	(6d)
1 January 1870 – 30 Sep 1875	6c	(3d)
1 October 1875 – — — — —	5c	(2½d)

With this background, we can return to the problem of ‘the mark’. Of the 12 covers so far recorded, all but two are underpaid involving penalties. How do we account for these two exceptions? There is a possible line of explanation. It will be noted that no less than 4 of the 12 covers are addressed to Thomas Parker of Brownsholme Hall, Clitheroe, Lancs. or to his wife. All of these are in the same handwriting. Fig. 3 gives a clue.

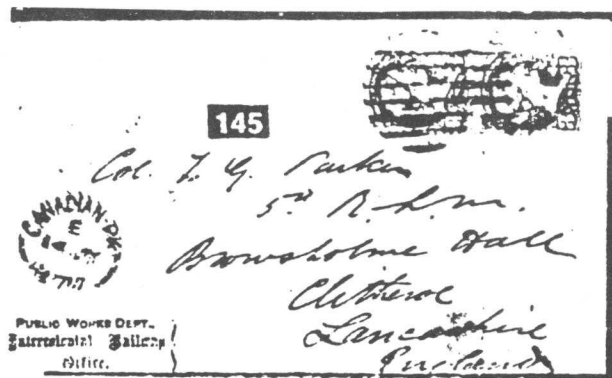


Fig. 3

This 'Parker' cover (listed in my previous article) is an envelope (1c overpaid) of the Public Works Dept., Inter-Colonial Railway, Quebec. It is a fair assumption that the writer was employed there. It could well be that the railway employees had some convenient but unofficial way of posting their letters direct onto the mail trains instead of being included in the official bags. The mail clerks may have considered this irregular and therefore deserving of 'the mark' even when no penalty for underpayment was involved. The same applies to cover 'B' above.

Cover 'E' above (another 'Parker' cover) is a real puzzler. The date of origin and of the mark are illegible or nearly so and where half legible do not seem to fit the sailings. The cover is backstamped with two transit marks Riviere du Loup and Rimouski both AU 4 1877. Such transit marks would not have been applied to a letter in the official bag. Perhaps the letter failed in a vain chase to overtake the ship at Rimouski and was sent on to Halifax. Unfortunately there is no U.K. arrival date stamp, so we cannot tell which ship it eventually caught. Altogether the writer of these 'Parker' covers was somewhat casual about postage rates. Of his four letters, one is 1c overpaid, and two others 7½d to pay (2 rates short plus fine). Only one is correctly franked.

I have been asked from where I get my information about ships and sailing dates. This is taken from *Atlantic Mails. A history of the mail service between Great Britain and Canada to 1889* by J. C. Arnell, published by the National Postal Museum, Ottawa in 1980. This book contains, apart from a mass of other information, complete tables giving the sailing and arrival dates of all mail ships of every line operating between U.K., Canada and U.S.A. from the earliest days and is quite indispensable for any serious study of Atlantic mails. Unfortunately it was never readily available in this country, but I presume that it can still be obtained in Canada. (BNA Topics Sep-Oct 1984 lists it for sale).

The problem of the 'mark' is by no means resolved. For instance I have still to trace even one cover with the 'mark' applied to the westward trip (i.e. 'W' instead of 'E'). Naturally these would occur on letters to Canada or U.S.A. from G.B. or quite likely France, and some must exist. I would appeal to any collector of these countries who may happen to read this, to keep their eyes open for the 'mark'.

So far I have only located 12 covers and about the same number of stamps off cover bearing the 'mark'. I am quite sure that this is only skimming the surface and that many more must exist unrecorded or unrecognised. Perhaps in time more will emerge. One can only live in hopes.

Postscript:

Since completing this article, I have seen a letter from H. E. Duckworth of Winnipeg containing 3 further examples of CANADIAN PKT covers and some interesting comments which were published in August *Maple Leaves*.

THE TANTALIZING "LATCHFORD" COVERS

by The Yellow Peril

Being only a dealer-of-sorts it is not unusual for me to go for extended periods without purchasing anything exotic even though I have a generous credit card and the market is just loaded with goodies. Readers, therefore, can sympathize with my desire to share this legend breaking the lull . . . My mid-morning summer siesta was interrupted by a telephone conversation which began with ominous foreboding – "You will like what you are going to hear but not the price!"

About a quarter of a century ago a middle-aged lady showed twenty-two late nineteenth–early twentieth century covers (detailed below) to the then foremost stamp auctioneer in Canada. Thirteen of these covers were franked with the 1898 2c map stamp and were sent to British-colony postmasters in Asia, Africa and the Caribbean. The covers were all tied with an Ottawa Dec 25 1898 machine cancellation (Type M4). With the exception of one cover, all the others have destination backstamps as well as interesting route markings. One cover even has the receiver on front. Four covers were machine cancelled New York Dec 27 – just two days after posting; six covers received the London JA 4 transit (only a ten day sea journey). One letter was "intercepted".

The remaining nine covers were sent to Canada from far-away places. They were franked with either a penny, an anna, or a two-cent stamp depending on the currency of the Colony in which the letters were posted. The postmarks tying the stamps to the covers vary from January 4 to March 2 1899. The earlier dates were found on letters from the West Indies while later dates were on letters posted in Asia. The covers were addressed to a Mr. F. R. Latchford, 19 Elgin Street, Ottawa, Canada.

Covers To	Arrival	Backstamped	Covers From	Dated	Ottawa Backstamped
Aden (via London)	Aden	JA 15 99			
Ascension (via London)	London (transit)	JA 4 99			
Bahamas (via New York)	Nassau	JA 3 99	Nassau	JA 4 99	JA 10 99
Barbados (via NY)	Barbados Ship Letter	JA 9 99	Barbados	JA 13 99	JA 25 99
Pambele, British Central Africa (via London, Aden)	Zomba	FE 25 99	Zomba	MR 2 99	AP 30 99
British Guiana (via NY)	Georgetown	JA 12 99	Georgetown	JA 12 99	Ja 25 99
British Honduras (via NY, New Orleans)	Belize	JA 9 99	Belize (via New Orleans)	JA 12 99	Ja 20 99

India	Karachi	JA 23 99	Karachi	FE 1 99	MR 2 99
Jamaica (via Boston)	Kingston	JA 4 99	Kingston (via Boston)	Ja 12 99	Ja 25 99
Natal (via London)	Durban	JA 27 99	Durban	JA 30 99	MR 8 99
Niger Coast (via London)	Sabele	FE 7 99			
Borneo (via London, Singapore)	Sarawak	FE 11 99			
Scotland	Thurso	JA 6 99	Thurso	JA 13 99	JA 25 99

Note: Postmaster Georgetown same day response.

Ten years later (around 1969) the same lady took these covers to another specialist in Toronto for appraisal. As postal history, even as late as 1969, did not enjoy the popularity it does today, it was understandable that neither the appraisal nor the advice given impressed her. It was not until the summer of '84 that these covers, which have never been in a collection, again surfaced. This time a different lady took the twenty-two covers to a dealer. This dealer approached the caller who, in turn, telephoned me the reasons I should latch onto the Latchford covers. The two ladies were apparently close friends or relatives of Latchford and were aware that the covers had monetary value.

Francis Robert Latchford 1851-1938, jurist, practiced law in Toronto and Ottawa after being admitted to the bar in 1885. From 1899 to 1904 he was commissioner of public works in the Ontario legislature. He was later appointed a judge of the Supreme Court of Ontario and in 1923 he became chief justice in appeal in this court.

In all probability Francis Latchford was not a stamp collector – the archivist of The Toronto Stamp Collectors' Club cannot confirm his name on any membership list. The commotion created by the implementation of Imperial Penny Postage and his almost certain friendship with P. M. G. William Mulock must have inspired him to obtain these priceless souvenirs of the inauguration of Imperial Penny Postage. Mulock may have advised and provided him with a list of Penny Postage participating countries to which he sent the following letters on the first day of the 2c rate.

Ottawa, Canada.
December 25th, 1898.

Dear Sir,

The inauguration of Penny Postage throughout the greater part of the British Empire, takes place this Christmas Day. As a memorial of the event, I desire to have an envelope addressed to your distant city carried thither by a penny stamp, and sent back to me. I should accordingly take it as a very great favor if you would kindly return to me the envelope containing this letter with the stamp attached which has carried the letter to you.

I send you one of the new unused Canadian stamps, and a view of a scene in this city.

I shall take it as an additional favor if the envelope enclosed in this letter is returned bearing only a penny stamp.

Wishing you the compliments of the season, I am,

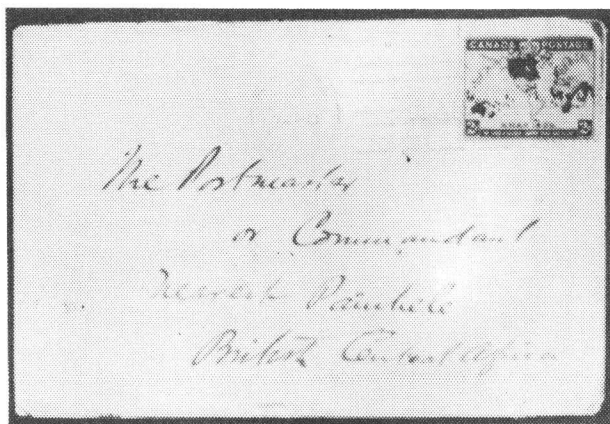
Yours very truly,

(Sgd) F. R. Latchford

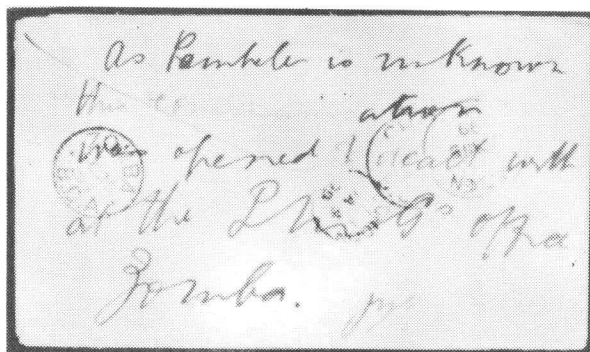
(Copy of letter send to Penny Postage colonies)



Dec 25 98 – First Day of Imperial Penny Postage to Sarawak, Borneo (via London and Singapore). To Durban, Natal (via London).

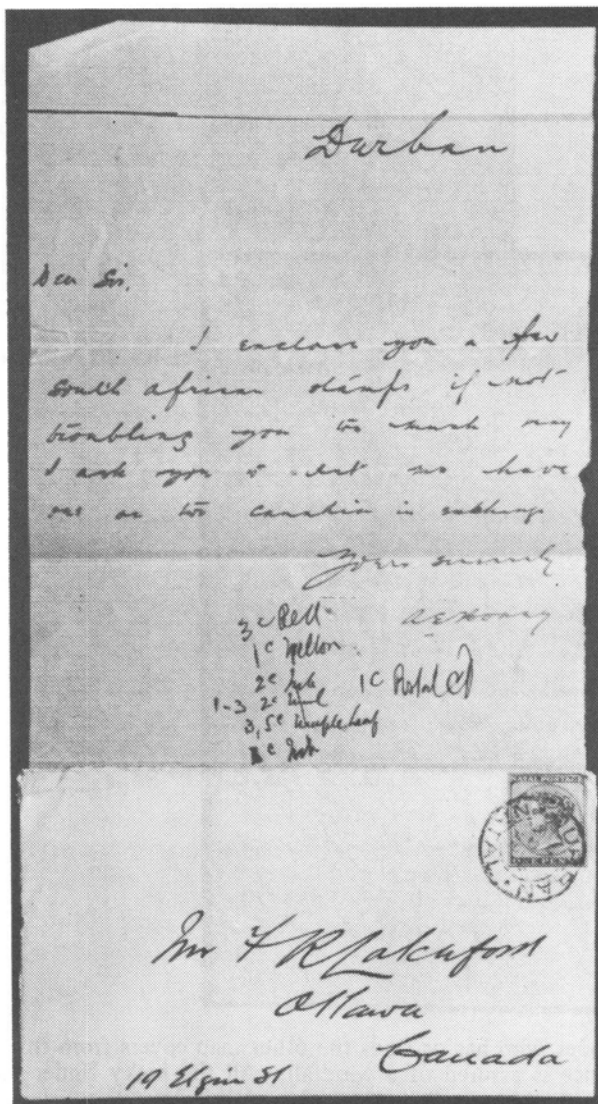


*Dec 25 1898: To The Postmaster or Commandant nearest Pambele.
British Central Africa (via London and Aden).*



Annotation on back of envelope, "As Pambele is unknown this communication was opened and dealt with at the PMG's office Zomba."

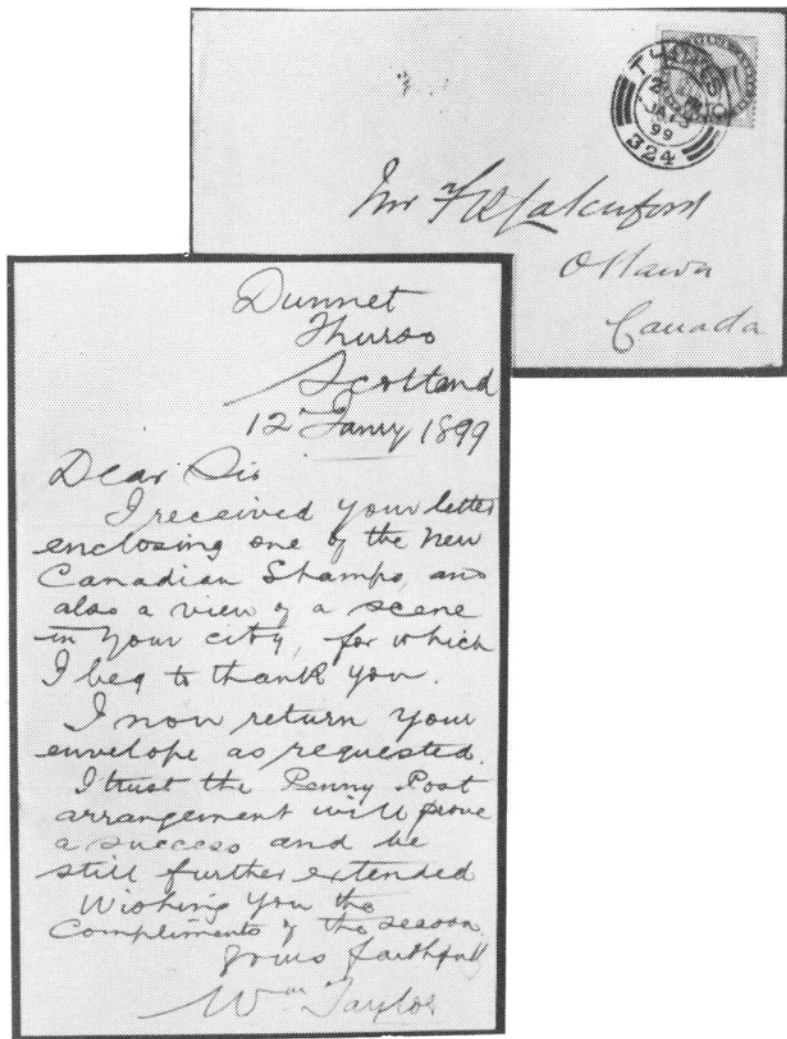
According to Winmill's listing in *The Evolution of Imperial Penny Postage and The Postal History of the Map Stamp* there were thirty-eight countries, including Canada, that joined the Imperial Penny Postage scheme on December 25 1898. Jamaica was not listed as an adherent. Seemingly, Latchford sent letters to all the countries conforming to the penny postage arrangement (Jamaica included); He did not, however, send any letter to Canada as the domestic rate of 3c was not reduced until 1 January 1899.* The thirteen covers returned represent 33% of the total possible. The remaining twenty-five covers were either lost or destroyed – assuming that every Colony postmaster received and complied with his request. Perhaps only thirteen postmasters took the trouble to return the original covers, and affix a penny or equivalent stamp to his self-addressed envelopes and post them back to Canada. Time may tell. In view of the circumstances it may not be too presumptuous to pronounce this group of covers "unique!".



Text of Letter from Postmaster, Durban, Natal.

"I enclose you a few South African stamps if not troubling you too much may I ask you to let me have one or two Canadian in exchange."

Photos by Joseph Lum



Any reader who has or finds the other map covers from this Latchford correspondence is assured of a windfall. All the lucky finder has to do is send it to me, as did the caller.

*During the period 25-31 December 1898 it was cheaper to send a letter from Ottawa to Scotland than send the same letter from Ottawa to Toronto.

Bibliography:

Mackay, W. A., *The MacMillan Dictionary of Canadian Biography*.
Toronto: MacMillan of Canada, 1978.



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STEAMBOAT MAIL (Part 2)

by L. F. Gillam, F.C.P.S.

The era of the steamboat came later in Upper Canada than in the eastern province. There were a number of reasons for this: by far the greater amount of commercial activity was located in Lower Canada where Quebec City dominated the shipping and ship-building scene, while Montreal maintained its virtual monopoly of commercial and financial activities. Lower Canada at the beginning of the nineteenth century was also far more densely populated, its two principal cities alone accounting for about 75,000 inhabitants in 1830. Apart from Halifax these were the only communities which could lay claim to such a title in the modern sense of the word.

Westward from Montreal most of the small, scattered settlements along the north shores of the upper St. Lawrence and Lakes Ontario and Erie were isolated, poverty-stricken and only slowly emerging from the subsistence level with farming and fishery the main means of survival, and lumbering in the long winter months practically the only activity which might be described as commercial. Whatever other trade there was tended to be with the United States to the south across the river and lakes, and some of this might more appropriately be called smuggling. Nowhere in Upper Canada could there be found communities even remotely comparable to Montreal and Quebec in wealth and grandeur. That "dreary town" called York (later, in 1834, to be incorporated as the city of Toronto) was originally sited on a mud flat (hence "Muddy York", another of its derogatory sobriquets) and its chief claim to fame was due to its selection as the new capital of Upper Canada. It also boasted of Yonge Street, the sole road in Upper Canada worthy of the name, and a fine almost land-locked harbour. In 1813 it attracted the attentions of an American raiding party which had little difficulty in burning a considerable part of it since most of the buildings (sic) were made of wood. Kingston, 170 miles eastward, was a garrison town and naval base where British troops and naval personnel contributed much to its commercial well-being. The Rideau Canal, which linked the St. Lawrence and Ottawa Rivers also greatly enhanced its importance and for three years (between 1841 and 1844) it served as the seat of government of the newly-united Province of Canada, consisting of Canada East (formerly Lower Canada) and Canada West (formerly Upper Canada). At the time of which we are writing, however, the dockyard, shipbuilding and repair facilities were jealously guarded by the Admiralty in London and it was to the then flourishing little settlement of Ernestown, a few miles west of Kingston, that Canadians turned for the construction of the first steamboat to appear in Upper Canada waters.

Named *Frontenac* it was launched in 1816 and is alleged to have cost £15,000. According to one authority her deck was seventy-two feet long and thirty-two feet wide, while her burthen of 740 tons is calculated to extend credulity to breaking point. Whatever the truth of the matter there is no doubt that in 1816 she was the largest steamboat in the whole of Canada. Described in her time as a "floating palace" within nine years she was outdated and sold for the proverbial song, but whether this was for firewood or

more humble purposes as a freighter is not known. What is known is that a "postmark" reading ST.B. FRONTENAC (with all letters in lower case except the initial capitals) was used, presumably on mail carried on board. The primitive nature of the type used in this marking bears all the characteristics of an amateur's handiwork. It is illustrated in the *Canada Specialised Postage Stamp Catalogue* where it is stated that *Frontenac* ran from York to Montreal in 1818. This would have been a considerable feat for a steamboat at that time! Then, and for nearly thirty years afterwards only canoes, bateaux and Durham Boats could have made such a journey owing to the numerous rapids on the upper St. Lawrence between Prescott and Cascade Point over a distance of about 90 miles. It was not until the completion of a series of canals between Cornwall and Dickinson's Landing in 1847 that such a steamboat voyage became possible. Even in the early 1830's steamboats could only ply from Lachine to the Cascades and from Coteau to Dickinson's Landing. The remainder of the journey from Montreal to Prescott had to be made by land over what was acknowledged to be the worst road in Upper Canada. This was accomplished in a box on wheels, euphemistically called a stage coach. It is not to be wondered, therefore, that the flood of immigrants into Upper Canada after the Napoleonic Wars preferred to make their journey westward huddled on the decks of bateaux and the larger Durham Boats. Given fair weather the voyage from Lachine to Kingston upsteam might be made in seven or eight days. From Kingston immigrants could change to a sailing schooner which, on Lake Ontario, could make the voyage to York in less than two days, favourable winds permitting.

During the 14 years which elapsed between the advent of *Frontenac* and 1830 the development of steamboat engineering was such that by the latter year York is said to have had a steamboat sailing every hour of the day during the navigation season with vessels plying to and from Kingston, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Hamilton and Queenston as well as Lewiston, Rochester and Oswego in the United States. Under the Mississippi influence these vessels became larger, more powerful and more ostentatious in their appointments with state-rooms, saloons and pianos, potted plants, luxurious sleeping accommodation and dining rooms which surpassed anything known in Europe. To many Canadians, absorbed and fascinated by the speed and comfort of such vessels as they were, it is not to be wondered that they considered such a means of transport to be the "last word" as far as travel was concerned. Moreover, while competition between rival steamboat companies found expression in greater speed, comfort and luxury for the privileged few, it also rebounded to the benefit of poor immigrants who were enabled to travel on deck for a few dollars if they provided their own meals.

Typical of these "steamers" as they were soon to be called, were the *Great Britain* and *United States* which by 1835 were plying regularly between Prescott and Niagara, calling at Brockville, Kingston, Oswego, Cobourg, Port Hope and Toronto. In the following years further vessels such as the *Queen*, *Princess Royal*, *Experiment*, *Gore*, *Traveller* and *City of Toronto* became familiar sights in Upper Canadian ports. They were built at Niagara under the supervision of a certain Captain Dick who claimed the added distinction of owning as well as commanding the latter.

By 1840 there is every reason to believe that Deputy Postmaster General Stayner had profited from his unfortunate experiences in Lower Canada as far as the carriage of mail was concerned, and that from the beginning of regular services he tried to establish it on as satisfactory a basis as possible. To this end he entered into verbal contracts with the owners of vessels at the commencement of each navigation season, and in his returns made in 1840 to the commissioners responsible for an enquiry into post office business it is stated that ten shillings was paid for the carriage of mail per double trip between Toronto and Queenston and Toronto and Hamilton. On the other hand the contract for the conveyance of mail between Toronto and Dickinson's Landing (near Cornwall) where connection was made with the Montreal stage, was made on a basis which took account of the manner in which the service was performed. It was stipulated, for instance, that the trip should take no more than 36 hours, and there is a suggestion here that with increasing competition the carriage of mail upon an official basis and under definite contract began to assume an importance in the eyes of the owners of the vessels if only from a prestige point of view. This arrangement, in Stayner's own words to the commissioners was the "best that circumstances permitted me to take".

That this was an improvement upon the makeshift and irregular practices which had hitherto obtained there can be no doubt since it cannot be assumed that the private conveyance of "favour" letters was any less prevalent in Upper Canada than in the lower province. To what extent the commissioners were impressed by Stayner's verbal contracts is not known, but it is perhaps significant that in 1841, when the navigation season opened with the introduction of the steamboats *Niagara*, *Princess Royal* and *City of Toronto*, which plied between Toronto and Kingston where they connected with *Canada*, *Brockville* and *Gildersleeve*, which operated between Kingston and Dickinson's Landing, a more businesslike form of written contract was introduced, probably after tenders had been invited. In that year the contract for the carriage of mail between Lachine and Dickinson's Landing was awarded to Donald Bethune at the rate of approximately £2,478 per season, although it is not clear whether this figure included that part of the journey by stage where the cascades still impeded navigation.

It is not known, to the writer at least, to whom the contract for the carriage of mail between Toronto and Dickinson's Landing was awarded. It may well have been the Honourable John Hamilton who had commenced his steamboat services in 1837. Whatever the situation was, in 1847 it was decided to make Kingston the halfway point between Lachine and Toronto, and as a consequence the contract for the carriage of mail between Lachine and Kingston was awarded to him, while Bethune received the Kingston to Toronto contract. This new arrangement coincided with the opening of the Cornwall Canal and henceforward it was possible for vessels of twenty-six feet beam and drawing nine feet of water to sail from the Atlantic to Chicago via the Lachine, Cornwall, Welland and American canals.

Hamilton's contract marked the beginning of a steamboat service which in time became known as the Royal Mail Line by virtue of the monopoly of the carriage of mail which he secured. By 1857 his company could boast of being the only through line between Lachine and Hamilton. Among the ports which his vessels served were Kingston, Cobourg, Port Hope and Toronto. The fleet was composed of six vessels, three of them built of iron. All mail on these steamboats were scheduled to arrive in Montreal in time to connect with steamers from Quebec, and in 1852 the Post Office declined to pay for any trips which failed to connect in time. Their status as official Government mail steamers was underlined by the special Royal Mail pennant that was flown from a staff at the bow, and the precedence accorded to them at canal locks where all other vessels had to give way. It is one of the ironies of Canadian history, however, that just as the steamer reached its heyday as a mail and passenger carrier it was superseded by the railway. After 1859 when the Grand Trunk Railway established its through service between Riviere du Loup and Sarnia, it not only captured the bulk of the passenger traffic, but was also granted monopoly rights as a mail carrier as well. Henceforward, on the St. Lawrence and Lakes Ontario and Erie the steamer was rapidly relegated to the role of bulk freight carrier. Only in one respect could it vie with the railway on more than equal terms other than this, and that role was reserved for the leisurely sight-seer: the 1850's saw the dawn of tourist traffic and among the attractions offered, then as now, were the Thousand Islands, the Niagara Falls and other scenic wonders.

It has already been seen (in Part 1) how, in 1845, mail conductors were appointed by the Post Office to serve on vessels plying between Montreal and Quebec. The completion of the so-called Cornwall Canal (actually a series of canals) between Cornwall and Dickinson's Landing, enabled the Post Office to adopt a similar service on vessels plying between Lachine and Toronto after 1847. Twelve steel handstamps were ordered from John Francis for the use of conductors. Six of these bore the wording STEAM BOAT LETTER with KINGSTON at the base, three were similarly worded with TORONTO CITY at the base and three with MONTREAL at the base. All were about 25mm in diameter and those worded KINGSTON were numbered 1 to 6, MONTREAL 1 to 3 and TORONTO CITY 4 to 6 (Fig. 1). Three of the KINGSTON handstamps were used on the Kingston to Montreal voyage and three on the Kingston to Toronto voyage.

It is important to note here that despite the wording of the MONTREAL handstamps it is extremely unlikely that Royal Mail vessels plied beyond Lachine. At this time the Lachine Canal was being widened and deepened to accommodate larger vessels, thus precluding its use. By the time this work had been completed the Montreal & Lachine Railroad had commenced operations over its 7½ miles of line. This journey could easily be accomplished in 20 minutes in 1850 when regular services began to operate. Prior to this the post chaise road between Montreal and Lachine also afforded a quicker means of communication. At no time, therefore did the water route between Lachine and Montreal offer any advantages. The passage of vessels through canals was necessarily slow and tedious, and while it is probably true

(as some authorities assert) that vessels were now powerful enough to breast the Lachine Rapids on the journey upstream their progress was, of necessity, very slow. Downstream the reverse applied; but it was also too hazardous for large passenger-carrying vessels to undertake.

Later, probably in the early 1850's, a further set of handstamps similar to those already described, and worded HAMILTON were introduced. The earliest known date of use is 1854 and the latest 1856. While earlier dates of usage may be found it is highly unlikely that dates later than 1856 will be found. In December, 1855, the branch line of the Great Western Railway between Toronto and Hamilton was opened for traffic, whereupon (as in the case of the Grand Trunk and other railways) advantage was immediately taken by the Post Office to transfer the carriage of mail from lake to land. In this instance, however, it was not to everyone's satisfaction. The cross-lake service by steamboat from Hamilton to Niagara and Queenston served the interests of the inhabitants of Niagara better than the railway, and they were not slow to complain. The Great Western Railway ran from Toronto via Hamilton to Niagara Falls, from where mail was transferred to the stage coach for the final leg to Niagara. As a consequence the Toronto mail arrived later than that which had been delivered by steamboat. The complaints went unheeded, however. In any case the complainants conveniently overlooked the fact that the railway offered an all-the-year round service and not merely a seasonal one.

A number of "unofficial" steamboat markings are also known. These are listed in the *Canada Specialised Postage Stamp Catalogue*. All are extremely rare and the possibility exists that they owe their origins to the enterprise of American postmasters in some instances. The compilers of this catalogue have obviously made a commendable attempt to collate all the known steamboat markings of Canada; but if this section is to match, for example, those devoted to straight line and legislative postmarks (to name but two) in the amount of information provided it will require the co-operation of postal historians to a much greater degree than has apparently been forthcoming so far. In this respect the writer is of the opinion that the title of the catalogue is in need of revision since it is now far more than a "mere" specialised stamp catalogue. Cover collectors, postal historians and postmark "fans" are certainly missing out if they do not subscribe to this modestly-priced work since it has much to offer them, and they have much that they could contribute towards its subsequent improvement. The compilers have asked for constructive criticism and it is certain that they would also appreciate further information as well.

One further point needs to be made: postal history is very often lacking in "human interest". For every Finlay, Heriot, Sutherland, Stayner and Griffin who figures so prominently in Canada's early postal history there were thousands who remain shadowy "extras" on the stage. The humble, footsore courier with his mail sack on his back, the village postmaster struggling to interpret the complex and ever-changing regulations with which the post office bureaucracy bombarded him, the railway mail clerk in his lurching,

swaying, dimly-lit postal car, the mail conductor on the steamboat anxiously awaiting the arrival of the contractor's mail at a port of call, they too played their part. It is pleasant, therefore, to record in the story of steamboat mail two names at least that have come down to us from the distant past. Did Mr. William Brown who served as a mail conductor on *The Magnet* between Toronto and Kingston in the early 1850's or Mr. D. Hefferman who served on the *Princess Royal* at the same time ever pause to consider that they, as well as their lord and master, William H. Griffin, would also be remembered?

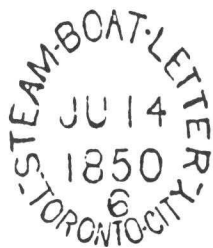


Fig. 1



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ADMIRAL NOTEBOOK (Part 13)

by J. Hannah, F.C.P.S.

2 Cents — Plates 21 and 22

— Plates 23 and 24

As Marler explains to us it can be difficult to describe adequately the features of subjects from these plates so that individual copies cannot always be placed with certainty. In the case of Plates 21 and 22, the vertical lines of the numeral boxes were retouched extensively and this repair work seems to have been well done in the mint strips I have from both these plates.

The only saving grace in this problem of identification is the presence of the nick in the upper right corner of the outer frame in many subjects which however was also retouched and so removed as a distinguishing feature in some subjects.

As might be expected where retouching is done in an extensive scale, in some subjects the repair work is variable such as in this example dated December 1912 with the nick in the upper right frame, where we find the vertical line in the right numeral box is rough in outline and extends downwards to meet the bottom outer frame line. I have two copies of this plate variety. (Fig. 1)



Fig. 1

I have other plate varieties which I believe can be allocated to Plates 21 and 22 but which do not merit inclusion in these notes.

As to Plates 23 and 24, as the nick in the upper right corner of the outer frame appears consistently in all the dated material I have, I therefore classify these stamps as a separate group following on Plates 21 and 22.

However it will be noted that in preference, Marler groups Plates 23 and 24 along with the earlier Plates 13 and 14, this classification being based on his examination of the proof sheets. Nevertheless as he explains fully, the proof state of Plates 13 and 14 does not match exactly the printed sheets as supplied to the Post Office in so far as the nick in the corner is no longer a constant distinguishing feature on which the student can rely.

POSTAL CODE MARKINGS ON RECENT CANADIAN MAIL by Dale Speirs *(continued from August issue)*

Now the fun begins. There are exceptions. If the letters N, P, T, W, or Z appear in the first position of the Area code or the second position of the Local code, then the phosphor bars will be switched. Instead of an Area code ANA, the phosphor bars will appear as NAA. For the Local code, the phosphor bars will not be printed on the envelope as NAN but will appear in the order NNA.

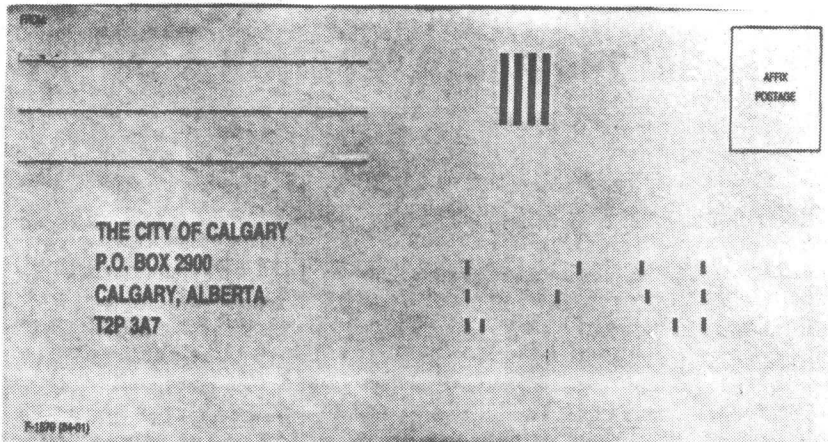
Another exception occurs with the letter X in the first position of the Area code or the second position of the Local code. The X Table on the Bar Code Reader must be used. An example is X8, which will have the bar code for BP.

The above system applies to the GDS phosphor bars. The OCR bars are the same except that far to the left of the 27 bars are five more bars identifying the machine. I have a cover overprinted with an incorrect GDS marking but a correct OCR marking. The letter arrived, therefore somewhere along the line it was properly sorted. I suspect it was kicked out of the machine and sorted by hand. Unfortunately, phosphor bars are difficult to photocopy or photograph even though they are clearly visible to the human eye.

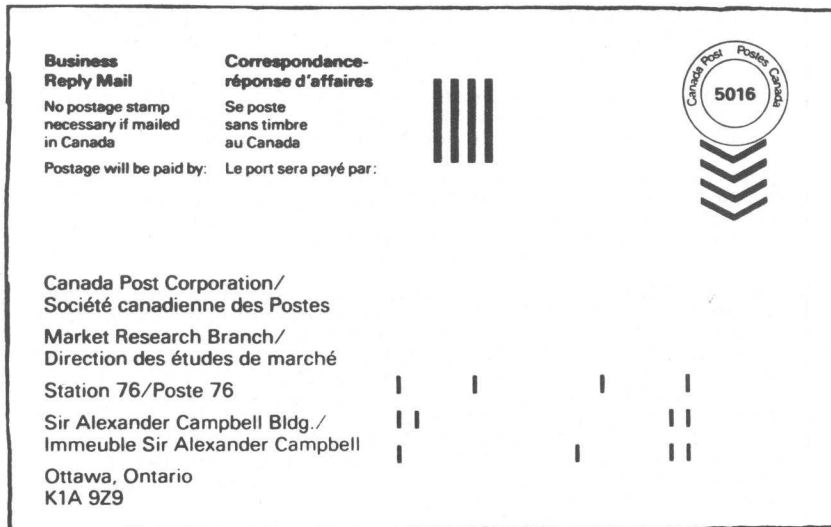
There are all kinds of variations in collecting these markings. GDS bars can often be seen applied upside-down on the top edge of the envelope, a result of the letter being fed wrong side up into the GDS machine. The operators can still read the codes, albeit not as fast, and the phosphor bars are applied.

In 1983 and in 1984, the Canadian post office introduced Stick and Tick labels for Christmas mail. These labels use a different set of markings which enable the sorting machines to read the postcode without the letter first going through a GDS or OCR. Larger mailers print the new postcode bars on their return envelopes, as shown in Figure 3. Besides the markings to the right of the address, there are four bars to the left of the stamp area.

(From the Editor: Interested members may obtain a copy of the envelope shown in fig. 3 on receipt of a stamped addressed envelope.)



(i)



(ii)

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