



BRITISH COLUMBIA  
POSTAL HISTORY  
RESEARCH GROUP

Volume 19 Number 3

Whole number 75

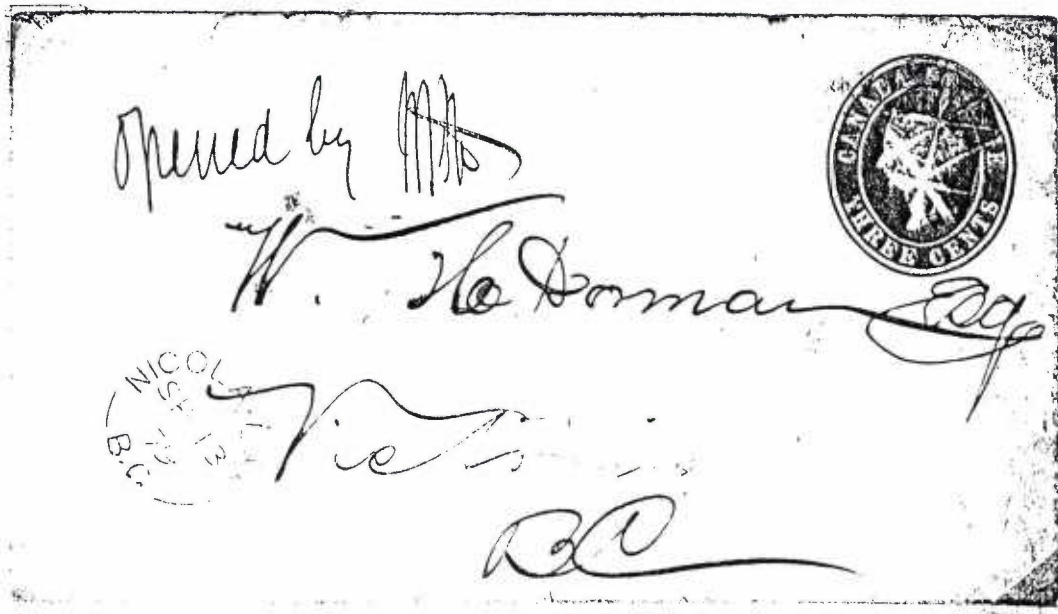
September 2010

## POST OFFICES OF THE NICOLA VALLEY

Don Crawford recently sent the editor a copy of the *Nicola Valley Historical Quarterly* for October 1979. The Quarterly is devoted to a detailed study of the 21 Post Offices established in the Nicola Valley between 1872 and 1979 and of these five are still open. The article will be run over the next few issues and will include covers from the editors collection

### NICOLA LAKE

NICOLA LAKE / SP 13 / 79 / B.C. + k



Back - SPENCES BRIDGE / SP 17 / 79 / B.C.  
NEW WESTMINSTER / SP 29 / 97 / B.C.  
VICTORIA-B.C. / SP 20 / 97 / CANADA

Nicola Lake was the first post office established in the Nicola Valley and there is some confusion as to when it was actually opened. It is listed in the 1<sup>st</sup> July 1871 *List of Post Offices in Canada* but it not included in the *Report of the Postmaster General* dated 30<sup>th</sup> June 1872 or the *Post Office Gazetteer* of the same year. It is listed in the 1873 *Canadian Almanac* but the name of the postmaster is left blank. It is listed regularly in the *Year Book Canada* after 1874. A.S. Deaville show Nicola Lake as opening 1<sup>st</sup> August 1872 with John Clapperton as postmaster and this is probably the most acceptable date. The earliest reported cover from Nicola Lake is dated November 24 1878,

# Nicola Valley Historical QUARTERLY

Vol. 2 - No. 4

Merritt, B.C.

October, 1979

## Post Offices - Nicola Valley Introduction

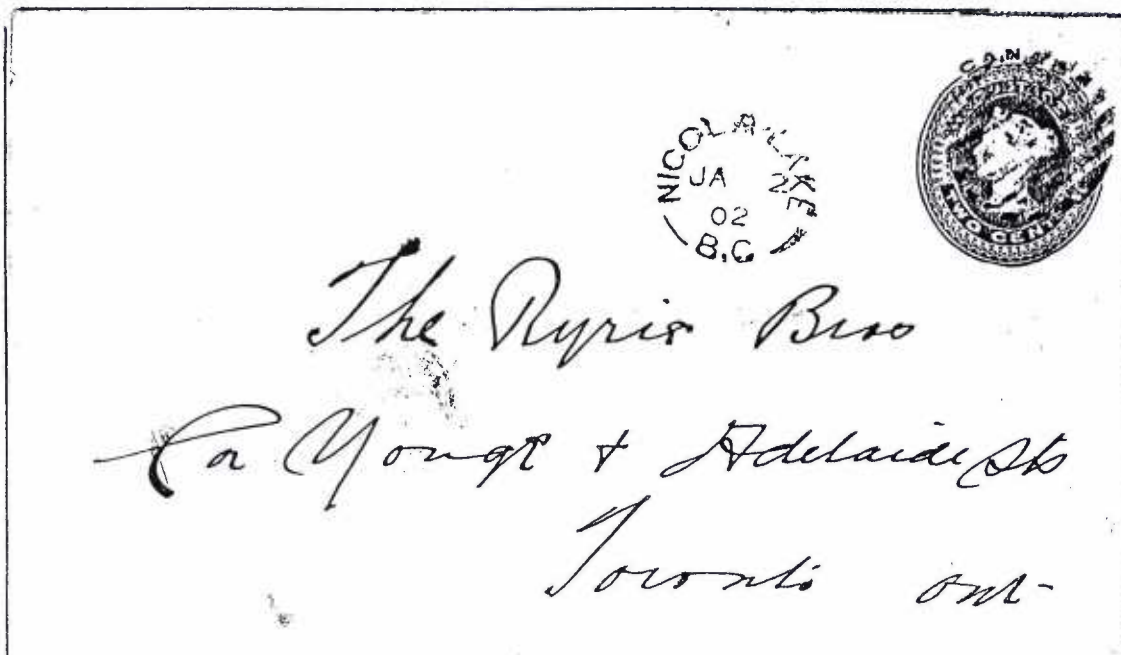
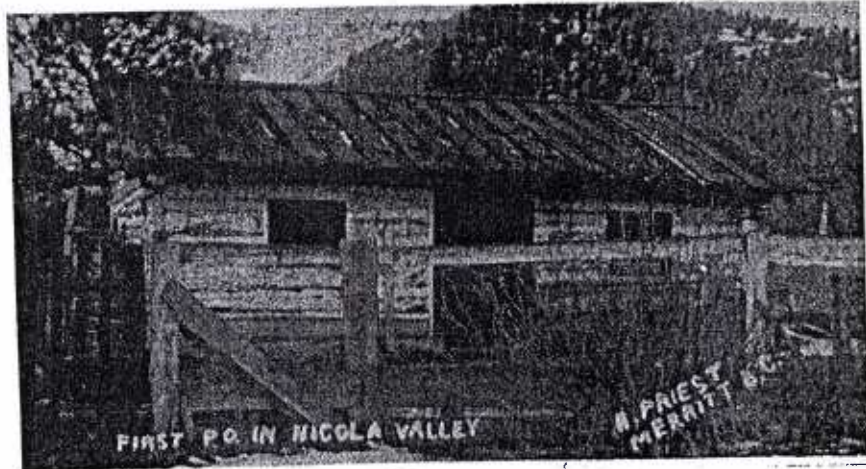
Historians suggest that the first mail delivery to what is now British Columbia was dated 1792. In it was a dispatch from the King of Spain instructing Captain Quadra, located at Nootka, to deliver possession of the colony to the British. However, it was not until 1811 that the first mail dispatch from the British Columbia Mainland was sent to eastern Canada.

The Coquihalla route from the coast to the interior via Forts Langley and Hope was used very early in the fur trade era for the transportation of furs and supplies including mail. Mail was the responsibility of the Hudson's Bay Company and as late as 1856 the HBC employed 67 postmasters to look after this important task. Letters were carried free of charge until 1845. From then on the company charged \$1.00 for the first half ounce and 25¢ for each additional half ounce.

The California gold rush of 1849 brought more ships and faster cross continental service to the west coast. This resulted in better services to Vancouver Island.

The first colonial post office was opened in Victoria in 1852. In 1858 the colonial administration took over responsibility for the Mainland and opened 3 offices at Hope, Langley, and Yale as well as another on Vancouver Island at Nanaimo. By the time British Columbia entered confederation in 1871, 40 post offices had been opened and 12 of these had been closed. After confederation, the number of post offices in British Columbia increased gradually. By 1900 there were 364; in 1910, 570; and in 1970 an estimated 910.

It is probable that little mail crossed the Nicola Valley after the alternate routes from the settled areas of the interior to the coast were developed during the colonial period. With permanent settlement in the Valley beginning in 1868, moves were taken to establish a postal service.



NICOLA LAKE  
JA 2 / 02 / B.C.

KAMLOOPS  
JA 3 / 02 / B.C.

TORONTO  
16 / JAN 6 / 02

Nicola Valley Historical **QUARTERLY**

*Nicola Lake*



On August 1, 1872 the first post office was opened at the home of John Clapperton, one of the first settlers at the foot of Nicola Lake.

**Nicola Lake**

There were a number of reasons for locating the post office at the foot of the Lake. The prime one was that it was centrally located in the Valley: 60 miles from Kamloops; 50 miles from Spences Bridge; 80 miles from Hope.

By the early 1880's, Nicola Lake community was serviced by a good wagon road from Kamloops and Spences Bridge and trails from Hope and the Similkameen. Mail service at this time was every two weeks with roadside reception and delivery over the route from Spences Bridge to the head of Nicola Lake.

DOMINION WATER AND POWER BUREAU  
FEDERAL BUILDING  
KAMLOOPS, B. C.



NICOLA  
OCT 5 / 48 / B.C.

*Nicola*



In 1905 the name was changed to Nicola. Nicola remained the main center of the Valley until the coal development at "the Forks" of the Nicola and Coldwater Rivers gave rise to Merritt in 1907. From 1907 on Nicola began to lose its importance. The post office finally closed in 1960.

The post masters and their dates of service were:

John Clapperton	72.08.01 - 82.10.01
George Pettit	82.10.01 - 84.04.12
Albert E. Howse	84.04.13 - 92.07.20
A. R. Carrington	92.12.01 - 14.03.13
Mrs. M. V. Munro	14.05.01 - 22.07.19
W. J. Hammond	22.09.01 - 53.05.29
J. A. Hay	53.05.30 - 55.09.24
Johnny F. Guichon	55.09.25 - 56.07.31
R. O. Turnbull	56.08.01 - 60.05.31
Louis Swoboda	60.06.01 - 60.08.29

*Douglas Lake*



The second community in the Valley to be served by a post office was Douglas Lake, which opened in 1884. Ronald McRae, an early pioneer of the immediate area, was the first postmaster.

Apparently this post office closed for two years between 1886-1888. Since it reopened in 1888 successive managers of the Douglas Lake Cattle Company have held the position of postmaster. Their names and dates of serving are:

J. B. Greaves	88.11.01 - 10.10.05
Frank B. Ward	10.11.01 - 40.03.11
B. K. deP Chance	40.05.01 - 67-11-30
E. N. Woolliams	68.02.1 - to date

Buck Greaves, a grandson of J. B. Greaves. (pronounced Graves) lives near Chapperon Lake on the Douglas Lake Ranch.

Betty (Ward) Farrow, the only child of Frank Ward, lives in retirement in Victoria. Brian Chance, a recent contributor to the Quarterly, lives in West Vancouver.

Neil Woolliams, present postmaster, and his wife, Nina, will be leaving shortly for a ranch of their own in Australia. Before they leave, Mrs. Woolliams' book "Cattle Ranch", on the history of the Douglas Lake Ranch will be released. Both Mr. and Mrs. Woolliams are founding members of the Nicola Valley Archives Association.

*Lower Nicola*



The first use of the name Lower Nicola appears to have been to designate the post office established here in 1885. Generally the area was referred to as Nicola Valley or Woodward's (the school did not change its name from Nicola Valley until 1897).

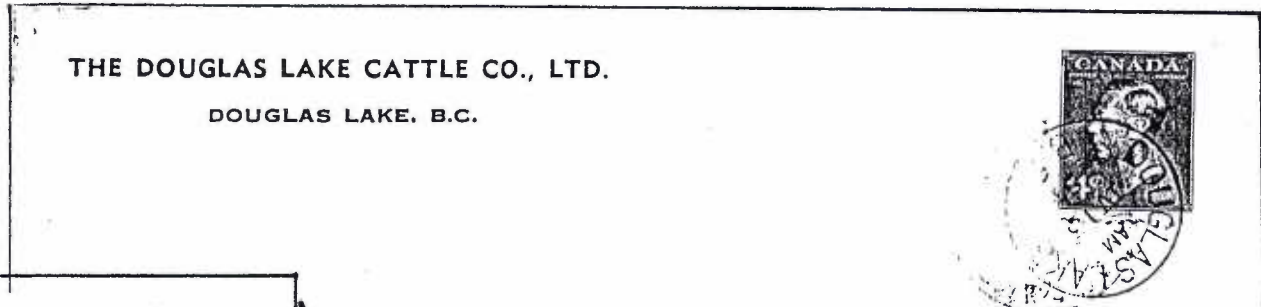
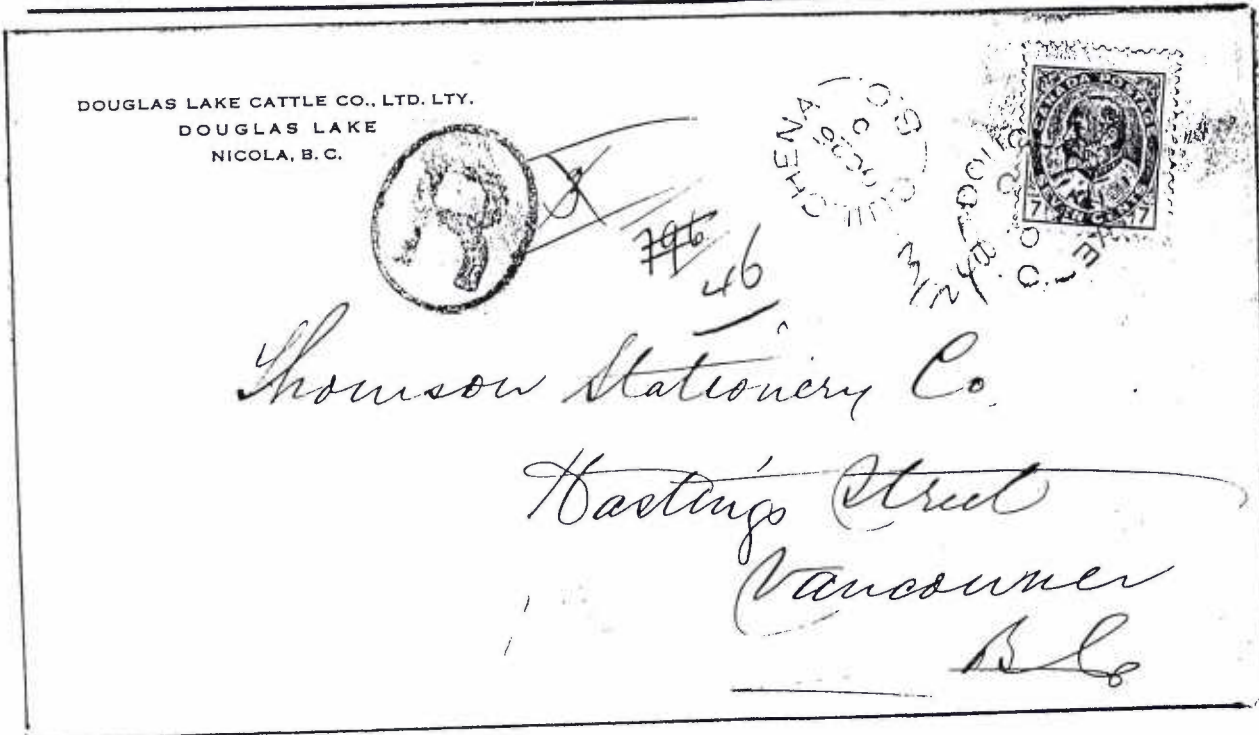
J. W. Marsh was the first postmaster, from 1885-4-1 to 1887-8-14. Nothing further is known of Mr. Marsh. The second postmaster, Reuben Marcus Woodward was the son of one of the pioneer families. He held the position for 35 years. It is quite possible that there was a relationship between J. W. Marsh and Mrs. R. M. Woodward whose maiden name was Sarah Jane Marsh.

A. F. McInnes became postmaster for a little over a year, 1923-2-1 to 1924-5-8. He was succeeded by Thomas Bevan.

Mr. Bevan came to Canada from Wales in about 1921. Within the year he opened his store and operated it until his death in 1960. Since then his son Ron Bevan has operated the store and held the position of postmaster.

Nicola Valley Historical **QUARTERLY**

Page 5.



**Quilchena**



Gorden & Belyea Limited,  
101 Powell Street,  
Vancouver, B. C.

There are a number of explanations as to the meaning of the Indian word Quilchena. Akrigg's "1001 B.C. Place Names" says Quilchena was the name of a Nicola Indian Village here. It means "a flat place near water." We would appreciate further evidence before this is accepted as the final word. There is some suggestion that it may be a reference to a colour. There are so many variations in spelling, it is quite possible the name as we pronounce it today bears no resemblance to the natives' term.

Quilchena today stretches for about five miles along Nicola Lake from Nicola Bay Resort (Maggie Moore Bay) on the North East to the Guy Rose residence on the South-west. Included are two Indian Reserves, Quilchena Store and the historic Quilchena Hotel.

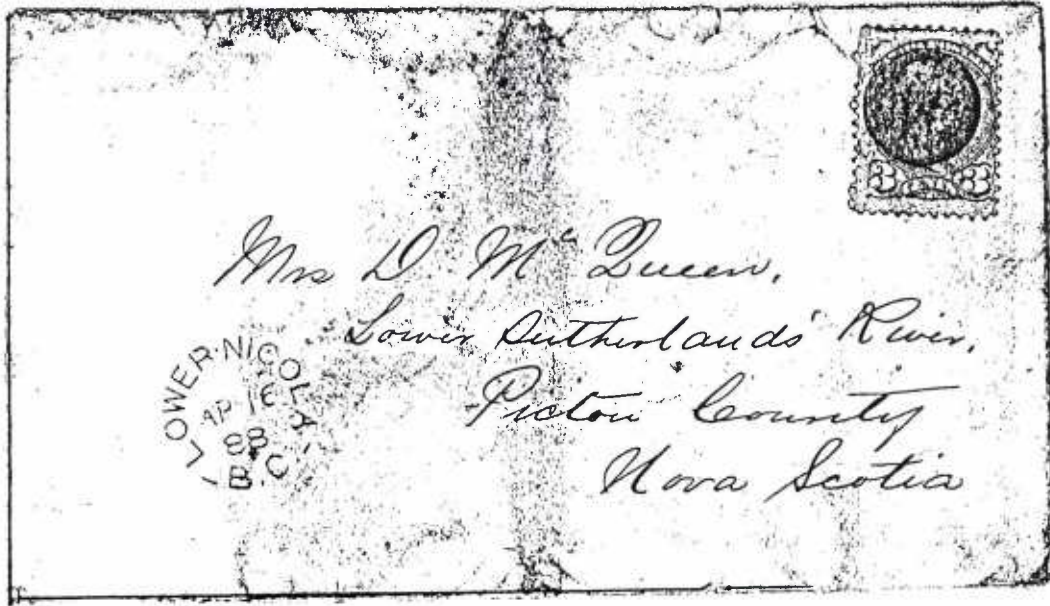
Robert Charters had two sessions, 1886-99, 1902. Charters was the storekeeper and was succeeded by Archibald Jackson (1902-1907).

Joseph Guichon bought the hotel business from Stanley Kirby in 1907 and assumed the postmasters' job at the same time. Mr. Guichon's tenure of 49 years, 4 months, and 4 days is the longest on record in the valley. The post office was of

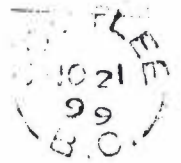
minor significance when considered against Mr. Guichon's tremendous ranching interests. After Mr. Guichon retired in 1956, the Guichon Ranch manager W. W. Crosina became the postmaster.

Nothing is known of the first postmaster R. Johnston - 1885. The second, R. Megaw (1885-1886), who had been on the 22 Mile Ranch (Dot), ran the store. He later moved to Vernon. The fourth, D. P. Selby (1899-1902) requires more research. Can anybody give information on this man?

In 1957 the Guichon Ranch divided into two ranches, Mr. J. G. Rose, a descendent of the original Guichon family, became the owner of one part, the Quilchena Cattle Co., and took over the general store, post office and hotel. Mr. Rose, a member of the N.V.A.A., is still postmaster.



**Coutlee**

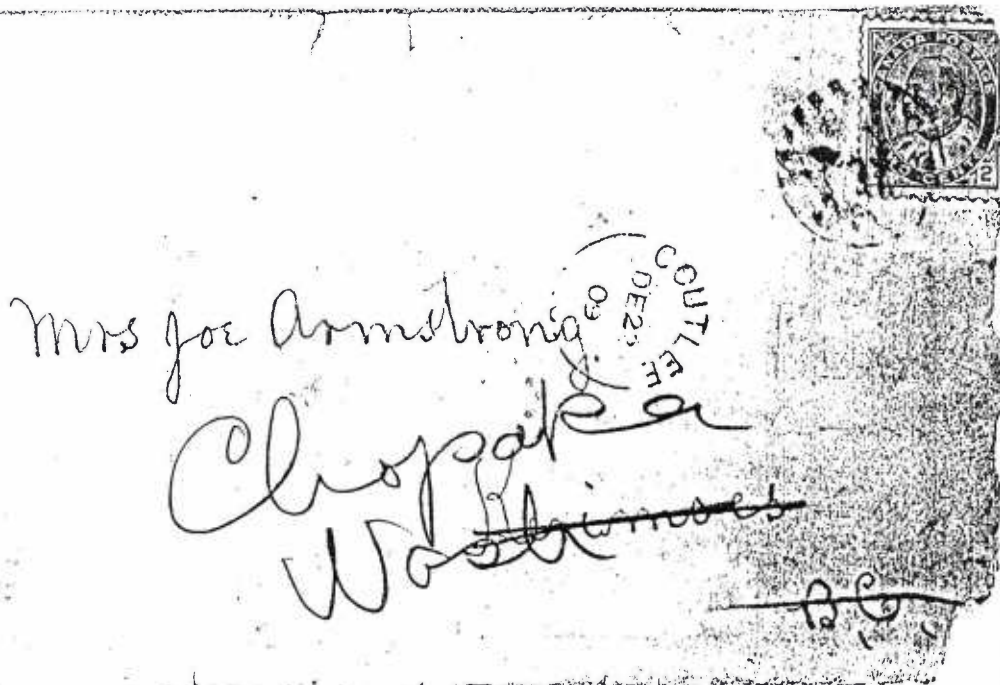


Alexander Coutlie entered on Lot 127 (near present Co-op Stock Yards), September 29, 1873. Prior to this, the land had been staked by Thomas Carrington for Noah Shakespeare, the Victoria, B.C. postmaster. Almost immediately after entering on the land, Coutlie built a house and obtained a liquor licence.

In the 1880's a store, hotel and warehouse was built. In about 1883, Gilbert Blair bought the store. It was from this store that the post office first operated in 1885. Mr. Blair was postmaster, until his partner, H. D. Green-Armitage took over in 1898, Green-Armitage became the postmaster being succeeded by Sidney J. Solomon, who bought the business in 1907, becoming postmaster until the office closed in 1917.

The population of Coutlee entertained great hopes for the future during the score of years 1885-1905. During these years, Coutlee serviced the Granite Creek mines and looked after Voght Valley, Mamette Lake, Otter Valley and Coldwater. It was situated in the centre of a most attractive agricultural area and on top of what was believed to be the richest coal deposits on the mainland. With great assurance, 1892, this was said of Coutlee: "Here will be the townsite in near future of another Nanaimo, and which holds out to the capitalist a rare opportunity for investment."

Today the population of Coutlee numbers 13 counting men, women and children. This is not a very large population, but they boast one Medical Doctor which is probably the best per capita Medical Service for any community in British Columbia.



## KEREMEOS

# Special delivery for Grist Mill

## New postage stamp unveiled featuring heritage building in Similkameen Valley

By Okanagan Saturday Staff

By putting your stamp on a letter, you can help keep the Keremeos Grist Mill on the map.

The mill was the site for Friday's unveiling of a Canada Post stamp from its ongoing Flags over Canada series depicting the history of a way of life that has ties to the country's industrial past.

Four additional mills will be featured on the stamps, which were issued in January of this year: Watson's Mill in Manotick, Ont.; the Old Stone Mill National Historic Site in Delta, Ont.; the Riordon Grist Mill in Caraquet, N.B.; and the Cornell Mill in East Stanbridge, Que.

Darren Smith, a supervisor with Canada Post, said mills have been central to the social and economic development of Canada.

"They combined the natural power with mechanization to do the work of many men that, along the way, made life easier for a lot of ordinary Canadians," he said. "When the

Grist Mill was first built in 1877 . . . it made life easier for the local area residents, who no longer had to travel 170 miles to Colville, (Wash.), to get their flour."

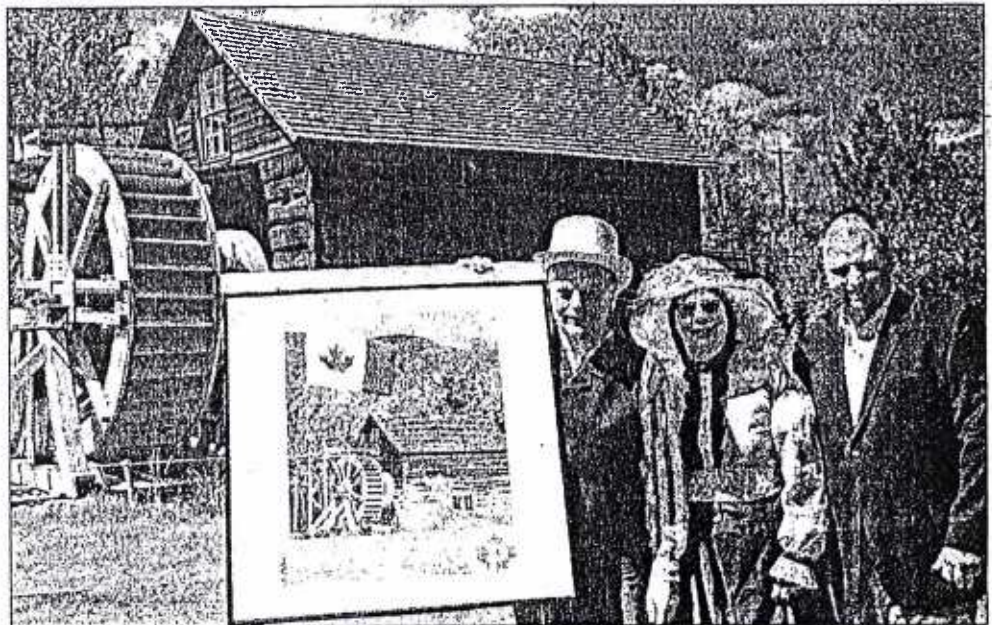
Before grain-milling technologies were developed and introduced, people had no choice but the labour-intensive and time-consuming process of hand grinding.

Smith said these mills offer a glimpse into the industrial past and what life was like during the latter part of the 1800s, and that many of Canada's oldest mills have been preserved and restored as memories rich in heritage.

Dave Cursons, a lead hand for the Grist Mill who worked with Jim Bagley to form the Grist Mill Heritage Club, said that in doing so, they've seen a greater interest in the mill.

According to the stamps' designer, Michael Kirlew, as simple as they seem, there's more to their design than meets the eye.

Kirlew said a great deal of work went into selecting the best shots and enhancing the natural environment around them, and since the images are printed at such a small size, each mill's defining attributes were highlighted.



SCOTT TRUDEAU/The Okanagan Saturday

The Keremeos Grist Mill was the site for Friday's unveiling of a Canada Post stamp designed in its likeness. From left are mill operator Jim Millar, manager Brenda Millar and Canada Post supervisor Darren Smith.

Thanks to Mary Scott

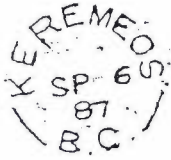
## KEREMEOS

Originally an Indian settlement on the banks of the Similkameen River. Visited by Alexander Ross in 1813, Hudson Bay Post 1869-1872. Keremeos Hotel built by George Kirby. 1907 first GNR train arrived,

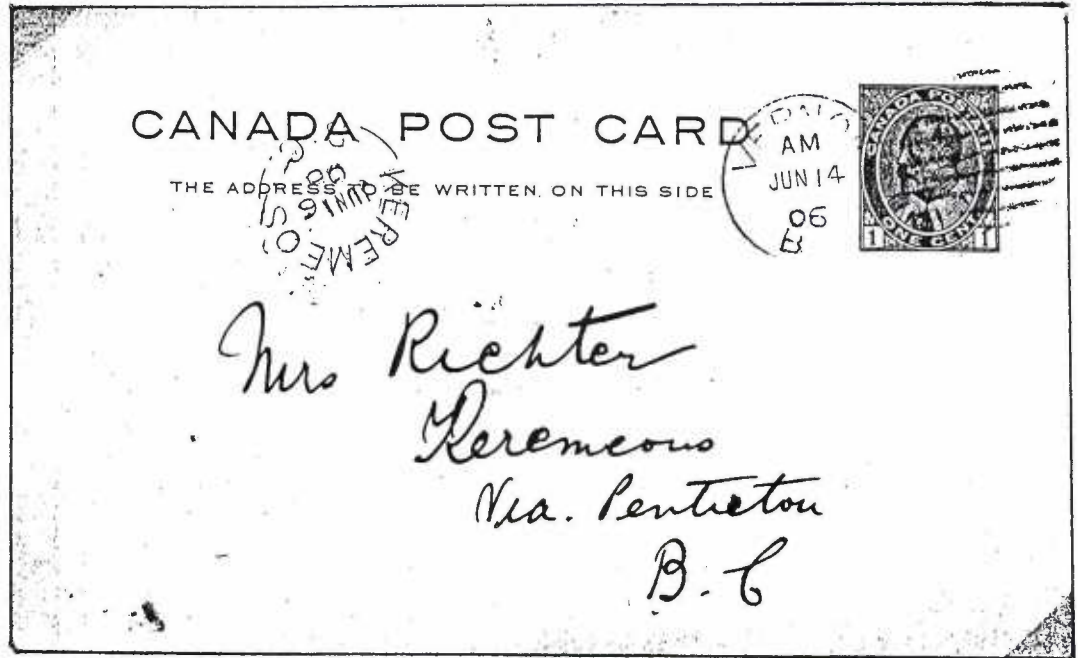
The first Keremeos Post Office was established on August 1, 1887 in the Hudson's Bay Company store adjacent to the Keremeos grist mill that was located on the bench land above the Similkameen River. The Keremeos Post Office closed on October 15, 1907 and at the same time it was replaced on October 16, 1907 by two new post offices Keremeos Centre and Keremeos Station.

Keremeos Centre was located on the bench land near the Keremeos Hotel and Keremeos Station was near the Great Northern Station on the flats by the Similkameen River. On April 1, 1910 the name of the Keremeos Station Post Office was changed to Keremeos although the George Kirby continued as postmaster. The Keremeos Centre post office continued in operation until June 30, 1917 when it closed leaving Keremeos (2) to serve the settlement. The Keremeos post office is still open and is a regional office serving the region.

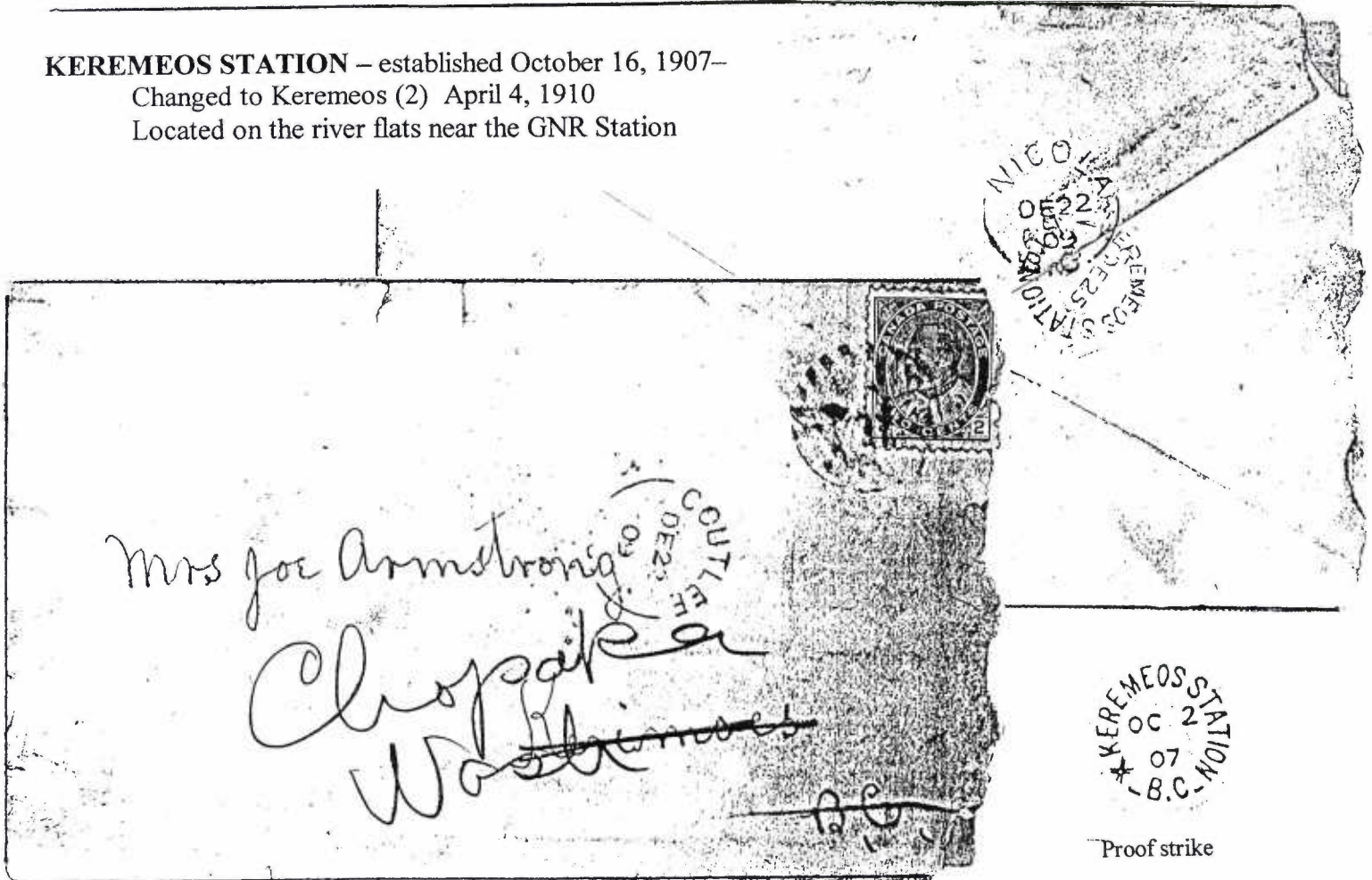
**KEREMEOS (1)** – established August 1, 1887 –  
Closed October 15, 1907  
Located on the bench land near the HBC post



Proof strike



**KEREMEOS STATION** – established October 16, 1907–  
Changed to Keremeos (2) April 4, 1910  
Located on the river flats near the GNR Station



Proof strike

KEREMEOS CENTRE - established October 16, 1907-  
closed June 30, 1917 "no person willing"  
On bench by Keremeos Hotel - west of Keremeos (1)



Proof strike

INTEREST CHARGED ON OVERDUE ACCOUNTS  
MONTHLY STATEMENT

KEREMEOS CENTRE, B.C., Oct. 10 1916

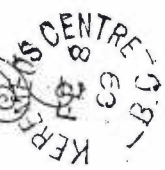
Mr. Rice

IN ACCOUNT WITH

THE FRANK RICHTER ESTATE STORE  
GENERAL MERCHANDISE

1914 Aug	To Mdse	2560
Sept	To Bal. Statement Rendered	1145
	To Mdse. Bill Rendered	110
		\$3815
		3000
		815

POST CARD



This space for correspondence

Love from  
B. R.

ADDRESS ONLY

Mrs J P Realy  
113 Broughton St  
Victoria  
B.C.

Mfd. by Inland Ptg. Co., Spokane, Wash.

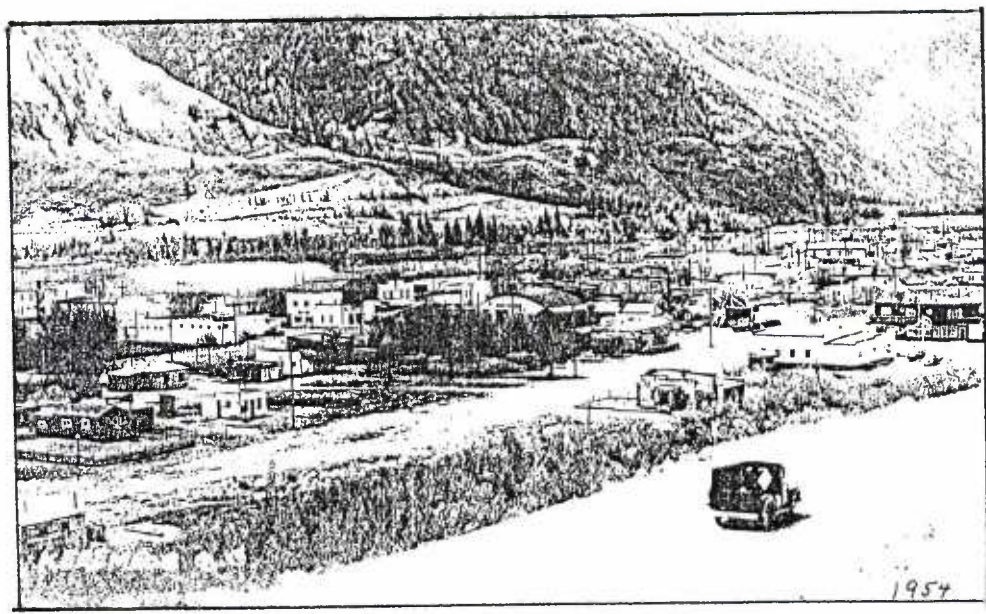
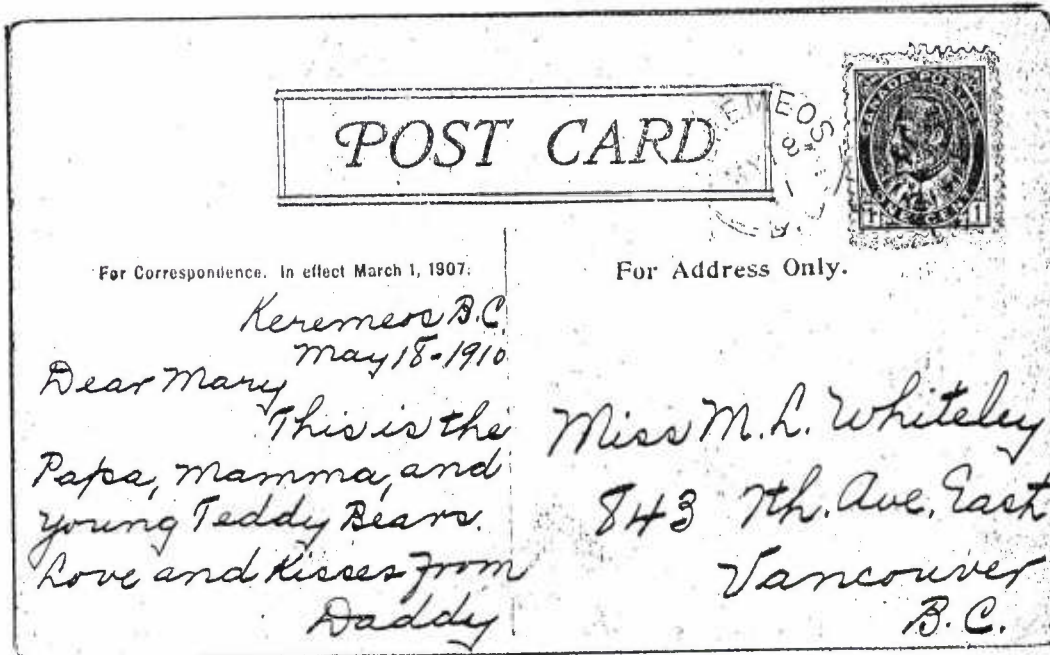
On the first of each month we render statements of all Bills due and not due as per our ledgers. If any errors exist please advise us at once.

**THIS STATEMENT IS NOT A REQUEST FOR BILLS NOT DUE**

For amounts due we prefer a remittance, but if advice or remittance is not received prior to \_\_\_\_\_ inst., we shall make a sight draft for \$ \_\_\_\_\_ the amount due.



KEREMEOS (2) – changed April 1, 1910 –  
Still open open  
Formerly Keremeos Station



The British Columbia Postal History News Letter is published quarterly on behalf of the British North America Philatelic Society. Dues for the News Letter are \$8.00 for one year or \$15.00 for two years (\$ CAN or \$ US). Checks should be payable to the Editor, Bill Topping, 7430 Angus Drive, Vancouver, BC, V6P 5K2, Canada.

**KEREMEOS POST OFFICE**

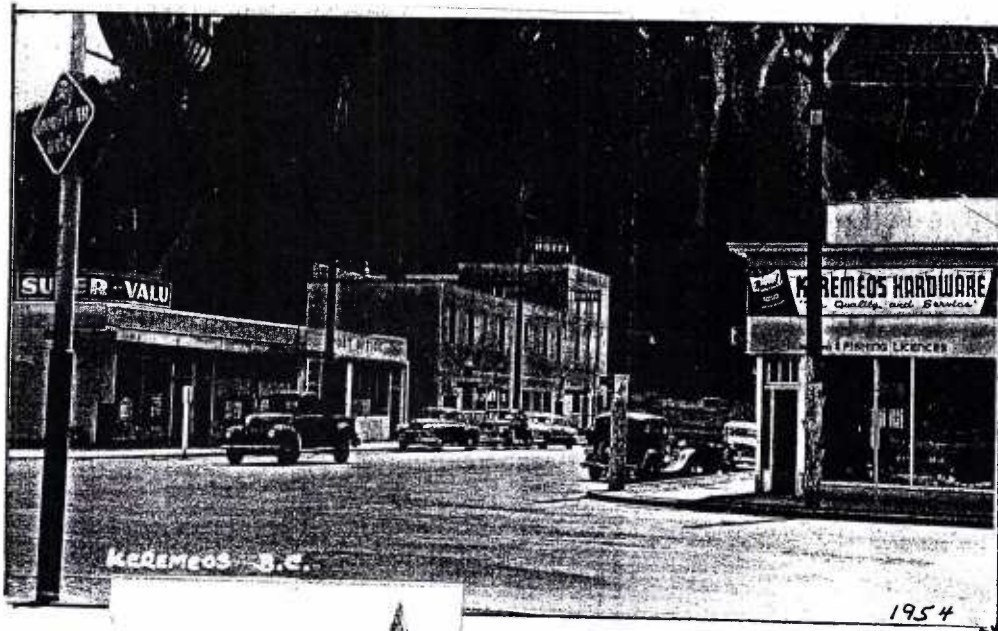
Semi-staff office RC 653739

625 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue VOX 1N0

Similkameen Secondary School

KEREMEOS, B.C.

Miss A. B. Macfarlane,  
Office Assistant  
B.C. Teachers' Federation  
1815 West 7<sup>th</sup> Ave  
VANCOUVER 9, B.C.



KEREMEOS  
Post Office

