



# BRITISH COLUMBIA POSTAL HISTORY NEWSLETTER

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*Okanagan Mission, Oct 8, 1890, to Rogers Pass (Oct 14 receiving backstamp) via Sicamous (Oct 10 transit backstamp). Missent to Canmore (transit marks on reverse, Oct 12, and face, Oct 14).*

*This favourite cover is from our late friend and colleague Alex Price: Many years ago I acquired a nice 1895 Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen item mailed from Kamloops to one R James Geddis, "locomotive engineer," at Vancouver. From time to time other covers appeared, addressed from various locations to Geddis at Rogers Pass, BC, and later at other places. The envelopes told the story of one man's railway career.*

*As it happened, I knew Geddis's grandson, a retired CPR vice president and friend of long standing. He was able to fill in some detail regarding the life of his grandfather. Eventually my "Geddis" album contained*

*36 covers, dated between 1884 and 1921, and much collateral material as well. Apparently Geddis was an official in the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, which would account for some of the correspondence.*

*This cover was mailed in 1890 from Okanagan Mission (as the post office was spelled until 1905) to Rogers Pass. It would have travelled by stage via Vernon to Sicamous, on the CPR mail line. It was then carried past its destination, however, to Canmore, Alberta, where the error was noted and the cover sent back. The Lequime brothers were one of the largest general merchants in the Okanagan Valley at this time.*

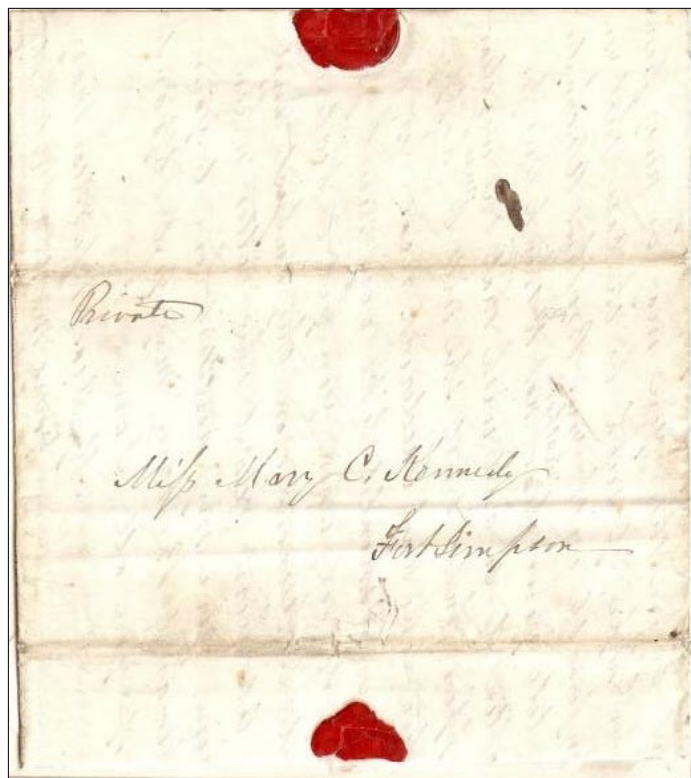
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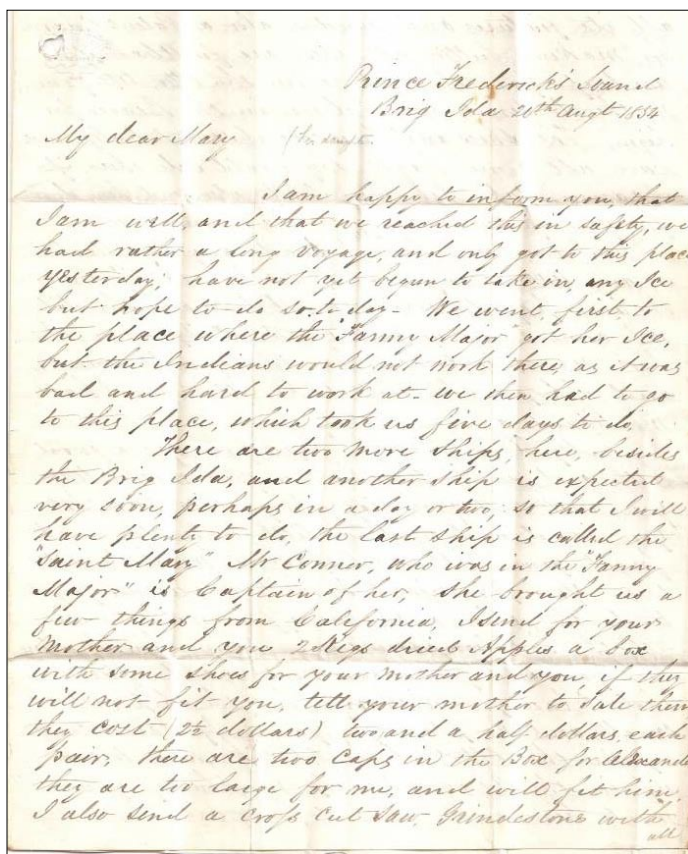
## Extraordinary results for BC postal history

The 1,000th auction held by Vancouver's All Nations Stamp and Coin, on Feb 21, 2015, caused a good deal of excitement. Proprietor Brian Grant Duff has been selling a number of fine early BC covers recently, mostly from Victoria and once part of the Gerald

"numeral 28" cancellation, an 1864 seaman's letter from Esquimalt, colonial covers from Nanaimo and Yale, express company material and more. But the lot that attracted the most attention, illustrated below, was an 1854 stampless letter sent from Alaska by



Stampless folded letter dated Aug 20, 1854, sent from the brig Sola at Prince Frederick's Sound to Fort Simpson.



Wellburn collection. He saved some better items for his millennial offering. These included an album page of BC colonial stamps with the scarce Burrard Inlet

Hudson's Bay Co surgeon and chief trader John Kennedy. It was addressed to his daughter Mary at the remote post of Fort Simpson on the north BC coast.

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*Extraordinary results continued*

Kennedy, though not as well known as many HBC officials in BC, nevertheless played a number of important roles for the company on the north coast. He was born at Cumberland House in northeastern Saskatchewan, son of an HBC trader and his Cree wife, and educated as a physician in Scotland. His marriage to Sudaal, daughter of the powerful coastal Tsimshian chief Legaic, helped the HBC consolidate its trading business in northern BC, and Kennedy had charge of several HBC forts and posts. He later was elected to Vancouver Island's colonial legislative assembly.

The rare letter, an extremely early example of mail from BC, caught the eye of *Vancouver Sun* reporter John Mackie, who wrote an article about the auction that went into generous detail about the singular lives of Dr Kennedy and noted philatelist Gerald Wellburn. The article created additional interest in the auction, pulling in bidders, including the Royal British Columbia Museum, that might not normally participate. Grant Duff had valued the Kennedy letter at \$500; it sold for \$3,850 (no buyer's commission; realizations in Canadian currency). The Esquimalt seaman's letter went for \$2,750 (estimate \$500).

The group of #28 Burrard Inlet cancels, neatly laid out on a trademark Wellburn album page, together with a contemporary newspaper clipping and a miniature print of an early Vancouver Harbour scene, brought the most amazing result of the auction. The lot consisted of three stamps, with a catalogue value of no more than \$800 and an estimate of \$500. It sold for the rather extraordinary price of \$4,800.

(All Nations holds weekly auctions, which can be accessed at [www.allnationsstampandcoin.com](http://www.allnationsstampandcoin.com).)

Uncommon BC covers have also done well on eBay recently. The appealing Thunder Hill UPU card illustrated above right, for instance, brought \$570 and attracted 26 bids. A somewhat scruffy cover with the previously unreported BC town cancel of Hilliam (see pages 876-77) realized \$670. — Andrew Scott



Seaman's rate cover (1d) from Esquimalt to Bristol, cancelled Nov 28, 1864, in London.



UPU card from Thunder Hill, dated April 19, 1900, to the Imperial Bank at Golden. The domestic postcard rate was only one cent at the time, so this card is overpaid.

## Here and there

BC postal historians may be interested in a useful new book, *Mails of the Westward Expansion, 1803 to 1861*, by Stephen Walske and Richard Frajola, recently published by the Western Cover Society. This comprehensive examination of early mail routes looks at the Santa Fe Trail; Oregon, California and Colorado mails; southern and central Overland routes; mails via Panama, Nicaragua and Tehuantepec; and, of course, the Pony Express. Detailed trip and sailing lists are included as appendices. The book is US\$75 postpaid to Canada and can be ordered from the society's website at [www.westerncoversociety.org](http://www.westerncoversociety.org).

# An 1867 letter from Frederick W Foster

by Tracy Cooper

This colonial-era letter from Clinton merchant Frederick W Foster describes conditions in the Pemberton region after the Cariboo Wagon Road—which followed the Fraser Canyon and provided a faster route to the goldfields of the BC Interior—was opened and the old Douglas Trail from Harrison Lake to Lillooet mostly abandoned. It was written to Alexander Allan, editor of the historic *Cariboo Sentinel* at Williams Creek. Foster refers to “the new postal arrangements,” presumably the British Columbia postal ordinance of 1867, which was passed by the legislative council on April 2 and raised most Interior postal rates. Foster was born in England and trained as a chemist. He opened his first store in Lillooet in 1861, then moved it to Clinton in 1864. Foster was also a mineral assayer. He sold out in 1901. Note the mention in the letter of express operator Frank Barnard. “Siwash” is a Chinook jargon word for a native Indian. The text of the letter follows. (Editor’s note: I’ve cleaned up the punctuation a little, to make the letter comprehensible, but left most of the text exactly the way it was written to preserve the flavour of Foster’s irascible personality and style.)

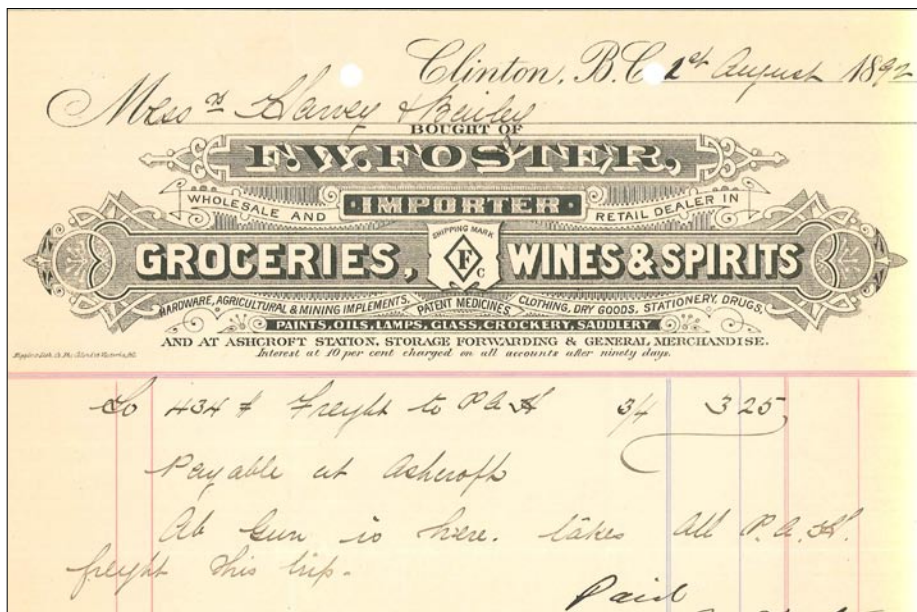
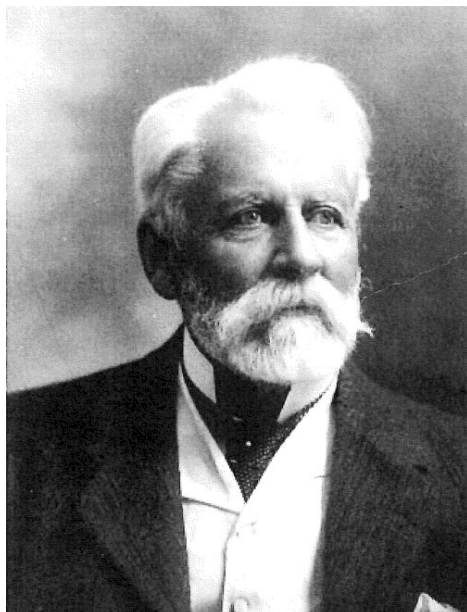
Lillooet April 15, 1867

A Allan  
Williams Creek

Dear Sir

I received your favor written from Victoria and in reference to the former advt will do all I can to collect. They are a doubtful crowd and all broke.

The new postal arrangements has knocked every spark of enterprise out of this part of the country. Business men know if no mail comes over a road, neither do goods, so we know as well as if Govt had hollered in our ears they intend to give up this side of the country. It is a mistaken piece of retrenchment. The cost of the mail would more than quadruple itself in other ways indirectly. As soon as the news came a general gloom settled on everything. One man throws down his hammer: no more improvements. Another (Milty), with \$3000.00 in his pocket, going down to buy liquors, backs out and will leave soon for Europe. Another sticks out a shingle “for sale with fittings.” People once on the move leave the colony—for instance the population of Douglas and Pemberton Meadows. Of this latter place the population of whites was seventy, and when Govt threw their influence on the other road they left; out of the seventy not ten are content to make BC their home, and farms for seven miles up the Lillooet River are deserted. It is only a matter of time to “let out” the most of the farms here and of course with it the mills, both flour and saw. Steamboat property is not worth 5c on the dollar. Wayside houses have given up to the Siwash in all his glory, and homes men have



Left: Frederick W Foster portrait. Right: an 1892 receipt from Foster's Clinton store, with a fancy illustrated letterhead.



Frederick W Foster continued

Silent April 15<sup>th</sup> 1864

William Cray  
Williams Creek

Dear Sir,

I received your favor written from Victoria and in reference to the former ad. will do all I can to collect, they are a doubtful crowd and all broke.

The new postal arrangements has provoked very sparks of enterprise out of this part of the country, business men know if no mail comes over a pond neither do goods, so all know as well as if Govt. had hollowed in our ears they intend to give up this side of the country, it is a mistaken piece of presumption, the cost of the mail would move them quadruple itself in other ways, as soon as the news came a quarrel glowed settled in everything, one throws down his hammer no more improvements, another (Smith) with \$1000 in his pocket going down to buy liquors, books out and sails leave soon for Europe, another sticks out a shingle "for sale with fixtures" - people once on the move leave the colony, for instance the population of Douglas & Pemberton Islands of this latter place the population of solitaires was seventy & when the Govt. shows all their influence on the other ponds they left, out of the seventy not ten are content to make B.C. their home & farms for seven miles up this silent river are deserted - it is only a matter of time to "let out" the most of the farms here & of course with it the mill both flour & saw. Macaulay's property is not worth \$4000 the dollar

I was surprised to hear from you Mr. Knigir had gone to Australia, he will find a slim show there, but perhaps he will shake off his vagaries with his wife, she I conclude will be a widow again inside of twelve months if he takes up a residence in Sydney or Queensland.

Kind regards  
Yours very truly  
F. W. Foster

I have written on a slip enclosed an advert. to oblige you, & make you think I am not going to throw off send down a copy to see how it will look of

First and last pages of Foster's letter to Alexander Allan at Williams Creek.

been improving for years, and all for want of a little tact on the part of the Govt. Smiths of the 29 Mile go I believe to the States; Kittrill and family (six) are bound for Boise; Soues goes to Australia, and the rest of the people commercially speaking in colonial parlance are going to hell as fast as they can.

You need not expect an order for advertisements; I have seen round to the few left and they say "no more advertisements." The Lillooet Flour Mill Co are of the same mind. The town will of course not shut up absolutely; it takes time to wind up businesses, even those ranked as "one horse concerns." It will probably resolve itself into one white man's store and three Chinese shops. The hotels are undoubtedly on their last license; one may die and probably will be continued as a half-laugh restaurant.

You need not send any more *Sentinels*. I have received in this winter during the reign of McLaren 21 copies, of which seven are unsold. Barnard always brings them irregular . . . in fact I surmise from the look they have been read before they come; the last two received are two and a half months old dated back to February.

I shall be only too happy, Allan, to do anything for you in this part should any improvement occur but with present prospects there is not a chance. Personally I can hold mine own. I do not calculate to leave yet but think I am scraping up bed rock, one speck to two pans. The darn place pans out badly in collection or it would not be so bad to take. I was surprised to hear from you McKnigir had gone to Australia; he will find a slim show there, but perhaps he will shake off his vagaries with his wife; she I conclude will be a widow again inside twelve months if he takes up a residence in Sydney or Queensland.

Kind regards.

Your very truly,

F W Foster

I have written on a slip enclosed an advertisement to oblige you and make you think I am not going to throw off. Send down a copy to see how it will look.

# World War I civil censorship in British Columbia

by Tracy Cooper

Most collectors are familiar with the military censorship of mail going to or through areas of conflict during times of war. Some may not be aware, though, that during World War I Canada also practised civil (or non-military) censorship of mail leaving the country.

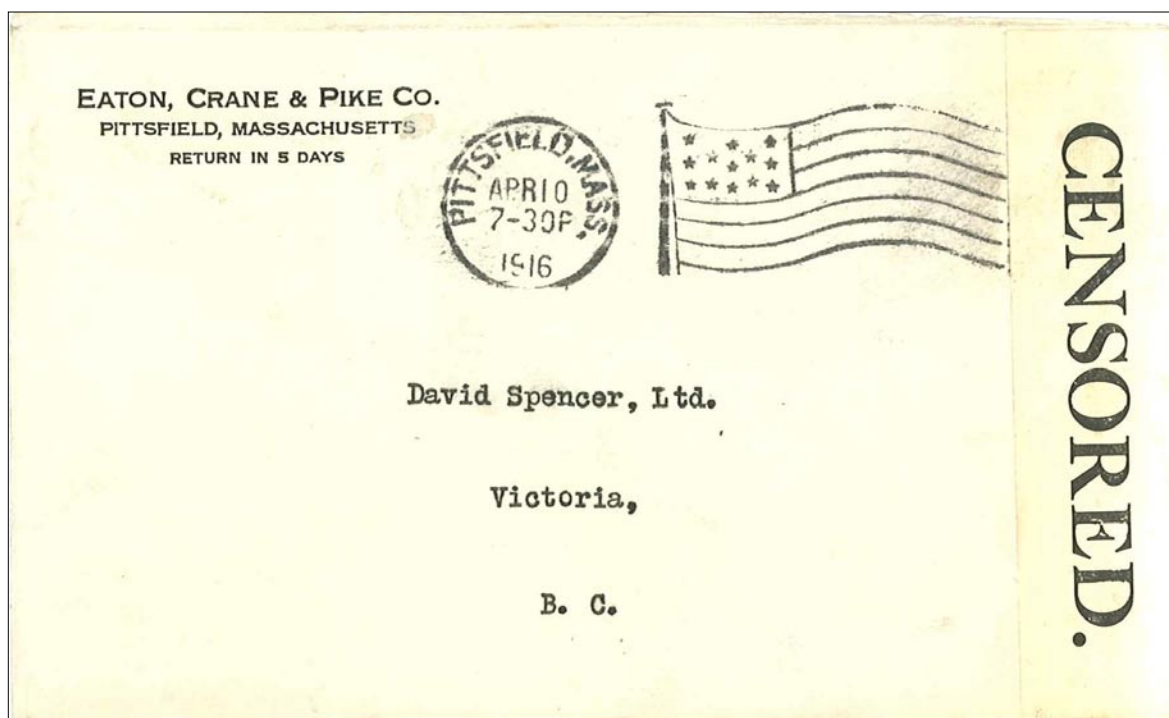
The late postal historian and dealer Allan Steinhart conducted one of the few examinations of this fascinating subject in his book, *Civil Censorship in Canada During World War I*. Steinhart (page 1) wrote that during World War I "there was censorship in operation in Canada on certain categories of mail during specific periods of time. When a country is at war, sometimes drastic measures are taken in order to safeguard the country in areas where military forces of the country are not active, that is at home."

The *Canadian War Measures Act* of 1914 authorized the Post Office Department to censor civilian mails, specifically newspapers, periodicals, books and any other articles passing through the mails of Canada. According to Steinhart (p 1), "This included domestic mails; mails addressed to Canada; mails from Canada to foreign countries, belligerent, neutral and allied; mails transmitted through Canada; and mails carried by ships, neutral or other, calling at Canadian ports."

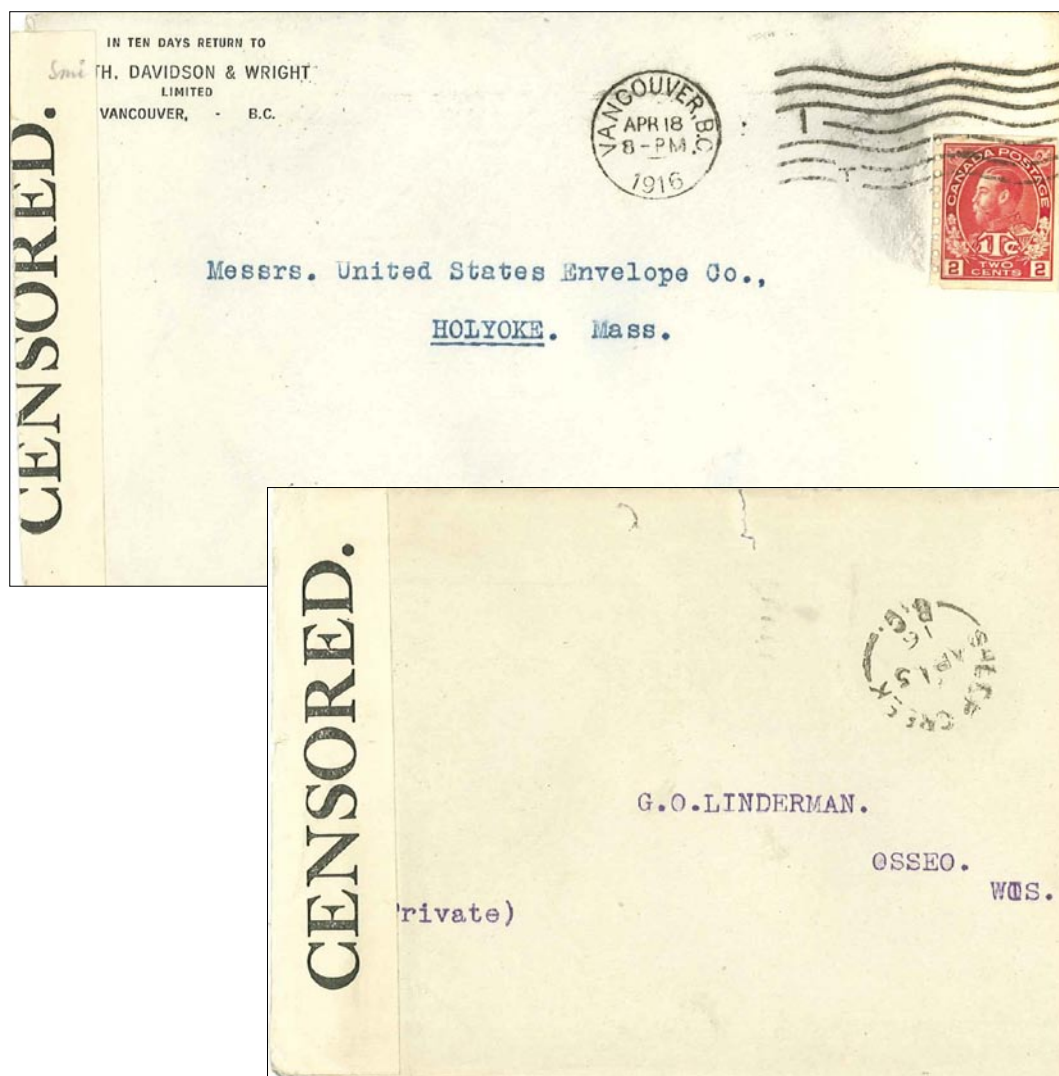
The post office censorship group consisted of about 120 people, primarily located at strategic ports such as Vancouver and, later, Halifax, as well as at other smaller centres. Examiners affixed a censor's label to every letter scrutinized, taking special care to not obliterate or cover the address. In some cases, particularly with postcards, a censor handstamp was applied. "Mail matter of an interesting or objectionable character was submitted by the examiner on a comment slip to the presiding assistant censor" (Steinhart, p 5). Steinhart also noted (p 42) that the necessity for establishing a censorship station at Vancouver "arose in June 1916, when mails carried by the CPR steamships on the trans-Pacific route were suspected of containing enemy correspondence." The censorship was carried out primarily with permanent post office staff, supplemented by up to 200 temporary translators and examiners: no small operation both in scope and execution.

## 1916 Neutral Censorship

Before the general censorship of 1917, there was an April 1916 test trial, which has come to be known as Neutral Terminal censorship, imposed on mails to the USA. The exact dates of this censorship are unknown,



April 10, 1916, incoming censored mail, no postage, endorsed manuscript "17" on reverse.

*World War I censorship continued*

*Above: April 18, 1916, censored at Vancouver, endorsed "213" on reverse. Below: April 15, 1916, mailed from Sheep Creek and censored at Nelson the same day. Initialled "CS" on reverse.*

but postal historians believe that it was undertaken between April 10 and April 18, 1916. Civilian censored covers could exist from before or after these dates, however, so additional reports are encouraged.

Two types of censor tape were used in Canada. Type 1 was preprinted and pregummed on white paper with the word **CENSORED**, measuring 45 mm x 5 mm and printed in heavy thick block letters. The width of the tape itself varies from 86 mm to 90 mm. This type of censor tape does not appear to have been used in BC.

Type 2 censor tape, also preprinted and pregummed, had **CENSORED** in black serifed letters measuring 67 mm x 7.5 mm. The tape was between 87 mm and 91 mm in width. Steinhart assumed that these tapes were cut from larger sheets of labels and distributed across Canada. Type 2 tapes reported on covers from BC during this first period are listed in the table on the following page. Note that many received "free" registration.

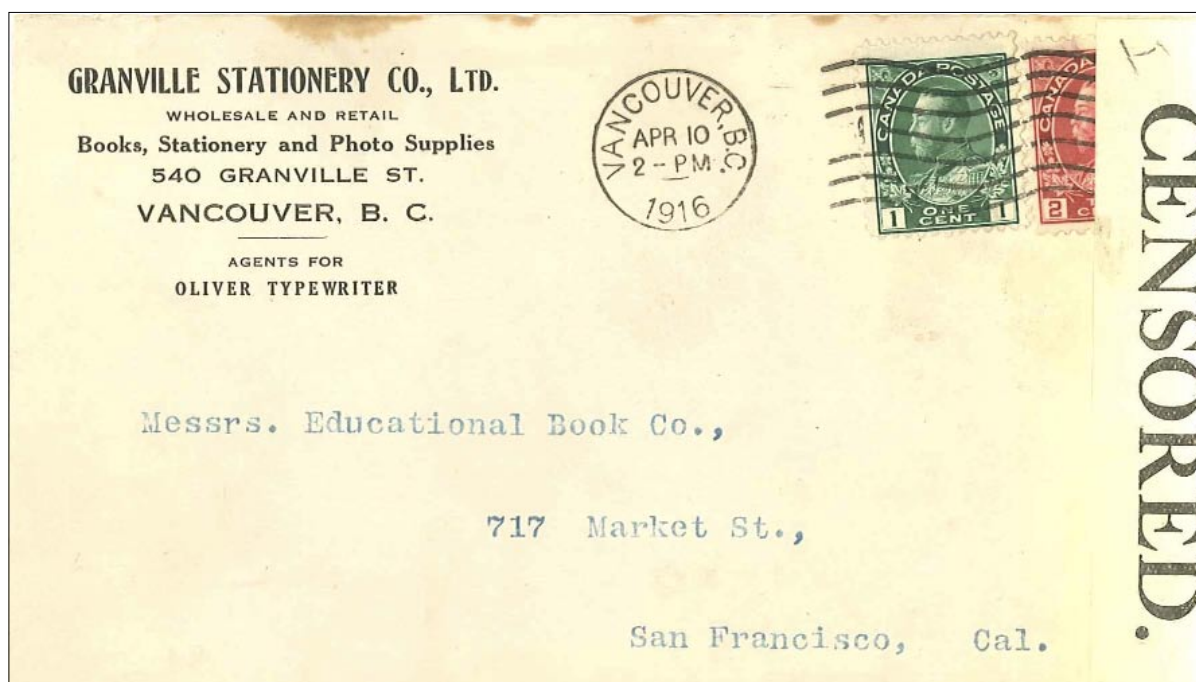
A cover with a provisional censor tape from Glacier, BC, dated April 18, 1916, has been reported. It has a piece of white tape applied over the end of the cover with a 59 mm x 6 mm **CENSORED** handstamp in purple. The tape itself measures 86 mm x 39 mm. (I have not seen this cover and would be pleased to have one of our members send in a photocopy or scan should that person be lucky enough to have it in his or her possession.)

Handstamps with the word **CENSORED** have been reported from the 1916 Neutral Censorship period on postcards from Vancouver (in black, April 17) and Victoria (in purple, April 19). Both cards were addressed to the USA. Censorship of postcards from 1916 appears to be much less common than that of general covered mail.



*World War I censorship continued*

Date	From	To	Censor's marks	Comments
Apr 10, 1916	USA	Victoria	17 (pencil)	
Apr 10, 1916	Vancouver	USA	321 on reverse	
Apr 10, 1916	Vancouver	USA	204 MSPT, "cheque 50.00" (pencil)	Free registration
Apr 11, 1916	Vancouver	USA	193, 173 MSPT, "cheque 5.30" (pencil)	Free registration
Apr 11, 1916	Vancouver	USA	179, 187 MSPT (pencil)	Free registration
Apr 12, 1916	Vancouver	USA	73 MSPT, "cheque" (pencil)	Free registration
Apr 12, 1916	Victoria	USA	2, 7 MSPT (pencil)	Free registration
Apr 12, 1916	Vancouver	USA	"Cheque 34/46," black "5" handstamp	Free registration
Apr 13, 1916	Victoria	USA	GRR MSPT (pencil)	Free registration
Apr 13, 1916	Vancouver	USA	169 on reverse	
Apr 14, 1916	Victoria	USA	AHG 25, 7/B MSPT (pencil)	Free reg, parcel?
Apr 15, 1916	Victoria	USA	31, 2 sets of initials MSPT (pencil)	Free registration
Apr 15, 1916	Vancouver	USA	"\$395.32"	Free registration
Apr 15, 1916	Sheep Creek	USA	Initialed "CS" on reverse	Cens'd at Nelson
Apr 16, 1916	OL&S RPO/BC	USA	126 WS MSPT (pencil)	Free registration
Apr 18, 1916	Vancouver	USA	179, "cheque"	Free registration
Apr 18, 1916	Vancouver	USA	213 on reverse	
Apr ??, 1916	Greenwood	USA	179, "cheque 5.60/172" MSPT (pencil)	Free registration



*April 10, 1916, to US. Manuscript "321" on reverse (likely the censor clerk number).*

**1917 General Neutral Censorship**

Allan Steinhart had access to records from the National Postal Museum, and his research showed that general censorship was in operation in Canada from April 1 to April 6, 1917, "for all outgoing letters,



*World War I censorship continued*

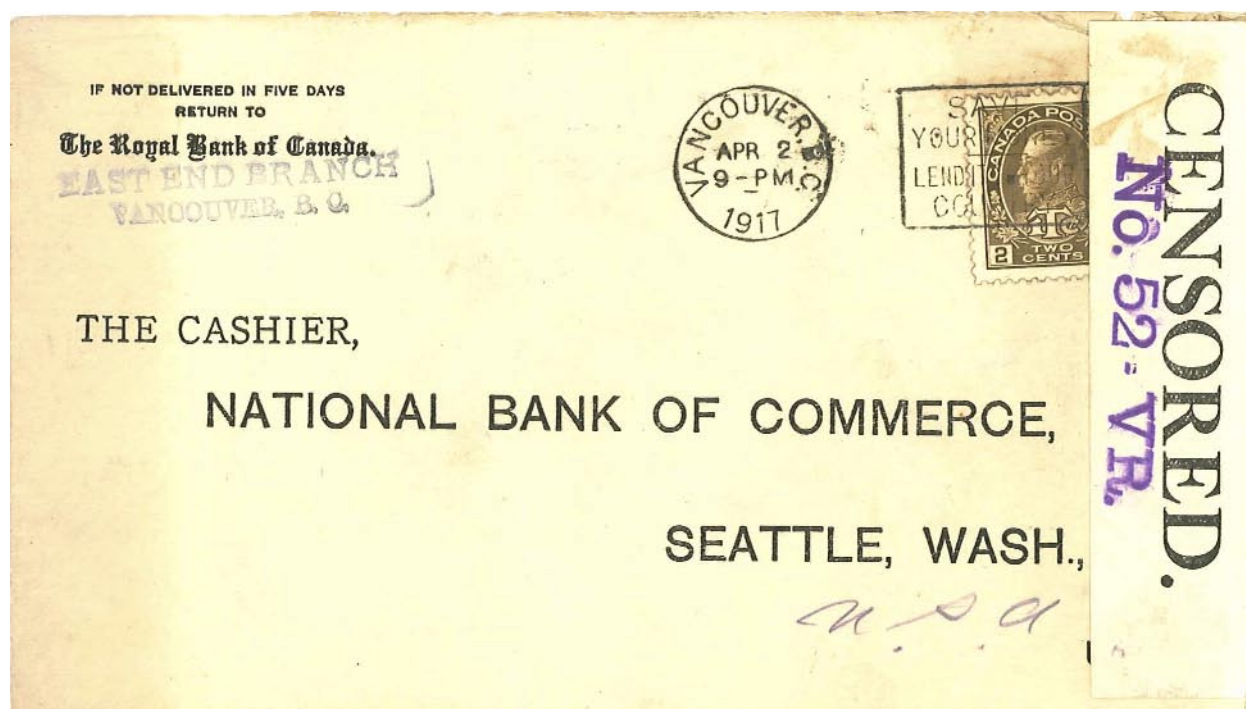
both ordinary and registered, from Canada addressed to neutral countries including the United States." According to postal records, censorship offices were established in the following BC cities, with the following abbreviations: Victoria (VA), Nelson (NN), Vancouver (VR) and Prince Rupert (no examples reported but assumed to be PR).

The 1917 censorship was apparently more formal, as numbered rubber handstamps were issued to most if not all of the personnel censoring mail during this period. As was the case the previous year, only Type 2 censor tapes are known to have been used in BC. The following Type 2 tapes have been reported on covers from BC during the April 1917 period.

Date	From	To	Censor's marks	Comments
Apr 2, 1917	Victoria	USA	No. 25 – VR.	
Apr 3, 1917	Trail	USA	No. 2 – NN.	Censored at Nelson
Apr 5, 1917	Vancouver	USA	No. 2 – VR.	
Apr 5, 1917	Vancouver	USA	No. 40 – VR.	

I can add the following new reports from my collection:

Date	From	To	Censor's marks	Comments
Apr 2, 1917	Vancouver	USA	No. 52 – VR.	
Apr 2, 1917	Atlin	USA	No. 33 – VR.	Censored at Vancouver
Apr 4, 1917	New Westminster	USA	No. 4 – VR.	Postcard, "censored" handstamp applied at Vancouver
Apr 5, 1917	Vancouver	USA	No. 42 – VR.	
Apr 8, 1917	Vancouver	USA	No. 3 – VR.	Postcard, "censored" handstamp



*April 2, 1917, from Vancouver East End to US and censored at Vancouver with No. 52 – VR. handstamp. Unrecorded by Steinhart.*

*World War I censorship continued*

Steinhart also noted from his findings the following censored covers in an entirely different time period, all sent to the Far East and all with censor tape Type 2.

Date	From	To	Censor's marks	Comments
Dec 6, 1917	(not described)	Japan	No. 75 – VR.	
Dec 7, 1917	(not described)	Japan	No. 43 – VR.	
Dec 7, 1917	(not described)	Japan	No. 91 – VR.	
Dec 7, 1917	(not described)	Japan	No. 117 – VR.	
Dec 10, 1917	(not described)	USPO, Shanghai	No. 104 – VR.	
Dec 11, 1917	(not described)	China	No. 115 – VR.	
Nov 20, 1918	China	Canada	No. 56 – VR.	

Most of the covers in the table above came from one “find” by Steinhart, and their whereabouts today are unknown. I have not personally seen any of these Asian censored covers and would like to know if our readers have any in their possession. In a 1987 update to his book, published in *BNA Topics* (see references), Steinhart mentioned additional censored covers from China (2), Japan (1) and the US Postal Agency at Shanghai (2), all to the USA, with Vancouver censor numbers 56, 77, 80, 104 and 112 in blue and purple ink. He did not provide further details, and images were not published.

In a second *BNA Topics* update, from 1988, Steinhart described a report to the US War Trade Board from a board representative visiting the Vancouver censorship station on Aug 27-28, 1918. The report suggested that “mail between Canada and Japan, Canada and Russia, and Canada and the Dutch East Indies was not censored at Vancouver” at that time, “but mail to and from neutral countries was. . . . Mail between Japan



Above: April 4, 1917, postcard to US with No. 4 - VR. censor handstamp in violet. Unrecorded in Steinhart. Below: April 6, 1917, postcard to US mailed from Revelstoke and censored at Vancouver with No. 3 - VR. handstamp in violet.



*World War I censorship continued*

and Latin America was censored at Vancouver.” Rick Parama, however, has reported a cover to Japan dated Dec 24, 1918, censored at Vancouver, in a recent issue of the *PHSC Journal* (see references).

It is possible that covers exist from Vancouver for all censor numbers from 1 to 117—and perhaps beyond. Censored items are quite uncommon; I generally only see a new example from BC every couple of years.

**Free registration**

A curious side benefit of censorship was free registration. Steinhart noted (pp 36-37) that when “a cover was censored during these two periods [April 1916 and April 1917] and it was a first class unregistered letter, and something of value was found in the envelope, it appears that . . . such a cover was registered at no additional charge to the sender or addressee at the place of censorship.” Of the registered covers of this type examined by Steinhart, a number originated in BC in 1916. These are listed and described in the first table (on page 870). An additional cover from the 1917 censorship period is described below. This type of “free registration” should intrigue registered cover collectors, as the Post Office Department did not readily dispense “free” anything.

Date	From	To	Censor’s marks	Comments
Apr 2, 1917	Vancouver	USA	No. 69 – VR., initials	

In closing, Steinhart noted that much more study was needed on this interesting topic, and that exceptions to the general rules of civil censorship were common. To summarize, most civil censorship of mail in British Columbia took place in April 1916 and 1917. Some, however, may well have occurred in 1918 and possibly as late as 1919. I have quoted liberally from Steinhart but have only just touched on the research that he undertook. For those interested, I highly recommend his book; it is packed full of original material, and almost nothing has been written on the subject since.

We look forward to any information that readers may have on this topic.

**References**

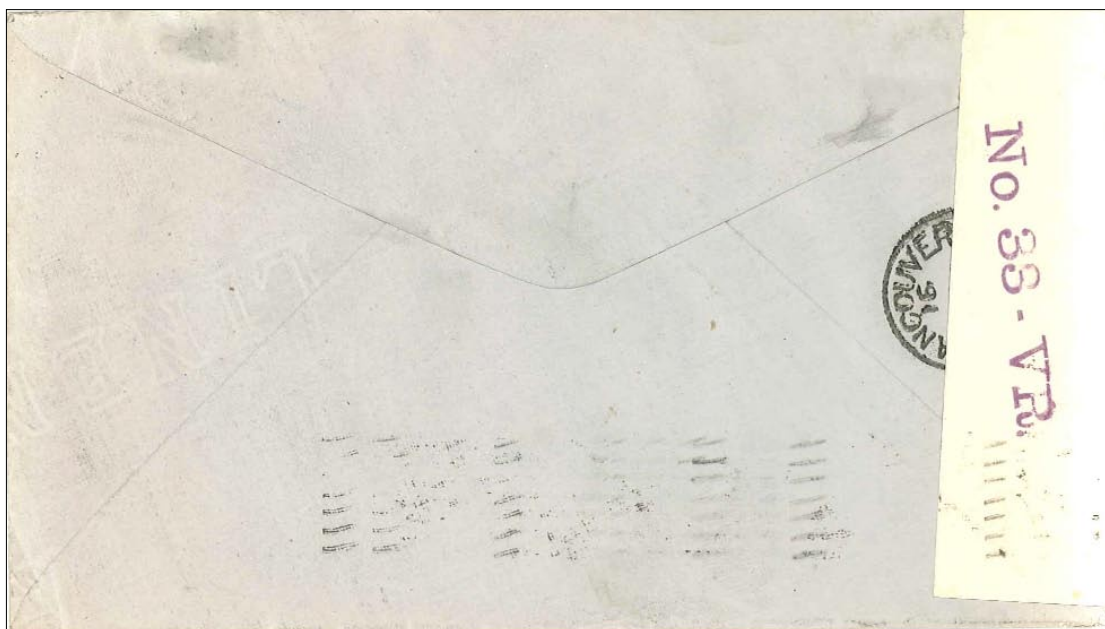
Steinhart, Allan L. *Civil Censorship in Canada During World War I*. Toronto: Unitrade Press, 1986.

\_\_\_\_\_. “Civil Censorship in Canada During WWI — An Update,” *BNA Topics*, Vol 44, No 3 (May-June 1987), pp 55-57.

\_\_\_\_\_. “WWI Vancouver Censorship Notes,” *BNA Topics*, Vol 45, No 4 (July-Aug 1988), pp 34-35.

Harrison, Horace. “Censored Registered Mail of World War I,” *BNA Topics*, Vol 32, No 3 (Feb 1975), pp 39, 55.

Parama, R. “Civil Censorship, Japan and the Great War,” *PHSC Journal*, No 157 (Spring 2014), pp 30-32.



*April 2, 1917, reverse of cover mailed from Atlin and censored in Vancouver. Handstamp No. 33 –VR.*

# Whiteman Creek: an Okanagan pioneer tale

by Glenna Metchette

After a friend sent CPR pamphlets promoting the Okanagan valley as the "land of milk and honey," my grandfather, Victor J A Willett (1873-1958), and his family left the Isle of Wight in England in 1905 and sailed to Canada. The family homesteaded at Whiteman Creek on the west side of Okanagan Lake, approximately 14 miles (23 km) from Okanagan Landing. They lived in a tent while they cleared land and built a small log cabin. At first the cabin was just logs with a tent on top. They called their farm Wydcombe, after the home in England they had been forced to sell in order to pay debts and taxes, but it was quite a change from the original Wydcombe's castle-like proportions. The farm was 1,200 feet (365 m) above lake level and 900 feet (275 m) above Westside Road. They grew fruit and vegetables, all of which had to be packed, crated and shipped to Vernon on one of the sternwheelers.



Left: split-ring strike in author's collection, date unclear. Right: strike from proof book, dated JUN 19/08.



On July 1, 1908, Victor was appointed postmaster of Whiteman Creek post office, which was located in his home. It was the first and only Whiteman Creek post office. It closed on December 31, 1919, as Victor resigned as postmaster on Oct 25, 1919.

Mail was brought out weekly from Vernon, then twice weekly, Monday and Friday, on the SS *Aberdeen*, SS *Okanagan* and SS *Sicamous*—sternwheelers that plied Okanagan Lake from Okanagan Landing, terminus of the Sicamous & Okanagan Railway, south to Penticton.

A small post office, Whiteman Creek served the few scattered ranchers and a number of individuals along the lakeshore, as well as a few grizzled men still searching for gold back in the hills (placer gold was discovered in Whiteman Creek in the 1870s, and the region has long been of interest to miners). Residents of the district arrived in buggies, on horseback, on foot and by boat to collect their mail.



RR 4 Kelowna Sunday Mar 25-56  
 My dearest Geoff. We haven't heard from you for ages but hope that you are all well. I thought I would write this afternoon to wish you all a happy Easter holiday. I think that possibly the snow here will mostly have gone by then. but there is still a lot in the orchard & fields. We had a heavy rain most of last night which will help clear it away. I think it is to be the most horrible winter, cold & wet. I best not

Top section of a 1956 letter illustrated by Victor Willett with scenes from Wydcombe Farm.



*Whiteman Creek continued*

*An April 8, 1909, cover from Wargrave, Berkshire, UK, to Okanagan Landing (AP 22/09 split-ring, earliest reported strike), forwarded to Whiteman Creek (AP 28/09 split-ring receiver). The addressee is the author's grandmother, Marjory Lucy Mary Willett (1876-1962). Image courtesy Tracy Cooper.*

In 1927 a forest fire swept the area, destroying all of the buildings on Wydcombe. Today the land is covered by a housing development, but you can still see a few blackened stumps and some yellow rose bushes planted by Victor and his wife Marjory. The family eventually settled on a small orchard at Okanagan Mission, where Victor died in 1958.



*Opening meet of the Apse Manor Harriers in front of the Willett's former home on the Isle of Wight. Victor, mounted behind the pack and holding a whip, was Master of the Hounds & Hunt; Marjory, riding sidesaddle, is just left of centre.*



# Unreported BC post offices continue to surface

by Andrew Scott

Two more town cancels can be struck off BC's unreported list. The last time we explored this topic was in issue #90 (Vol 23, No 2, July 2014, pp 806-7), with first reports for Magoffin Spur and Spiller River. The latest discoveries are from Hockin Landing and Hilliam. This find is particularly interesting, as the two post offices are related. Both were located on Shuswap Lake, 24 kilometres north of Salmon Arm, and reflect a Post Office Department name change that occurred almost a century ago. We'll update the unreported list in an upcoming issue, as quite a few new discoveries have taken place recently.



*Slightly cut-down cover from Vancouver (APR 24/1917 machine cancel) to "Hocking Landing" (a common misspelling), "Via Notch Hill" (APR 25/17 transit). APR 28/17 Hockin Landing receiver.*

Hockin Landing was a farming community and steamship stop. It was named for Mrs Jane Hockin, the postmaster, who homesteaded the area in 1913 and at that time was one of the few registered female property owners in the North Shuswap. She became Mrs Jane Burkhart in 1918, after marrying Charles Burkhart, and died at Burnaby in 1973, aged 85. Hockin Landing post office opened on Aug 1, 1915, and was renamed Hilliam on June 1, 1919. Notch Hill, about ten kilometres away on the CP railway line (note the backstamp and address direction), was the transfer point for the landing's mail. There are still a number of people named Hockin in this area.



*Latest unreported cancels continued*



*Window envelope from Toronto booksellers McClelland & Stewart, dated May 2, 1920, with Toronto machine cancel. Notch Hill transit (May 6) and Hilliam receiving backstamps (May 8). Enlargement at left. Proof date for Hilliam split-ring: May 21, 1919.*

Hilliam post office was also a short-lived affair; it closed on Sept 30, 1923. Jane Burkhart continued as postmaster for the life of the office. The name change, which commemorated war hero Edward Hilliam (1862-1949), was perhaps the result of post-WWI patriotic fervour. Hilliam was born in Spalding, Lincolnshire, son of a militia captain, and became a soldier and police officer, serving with the 17th Lancers (1883-93), the Royal Northwest Mounted Police (1893-1900) and the South Africa Constabulary (1902-05). He began his military career as a lowly trooper but was commissioned as an officer during the Boer War and quickly promoted to captain. After retiring from the police force Hilliam took up fruit farming at Sorrento (about five kilometres from the future site of Hockin Landing).

When war broke out in 1914, he re-enlisted and served in France, eventually transferring to the British Army and rising to the rank of major general in 1919. He was a highly decorated (and often wounded) soldier, appointed to the orders of the Bath, and St Michael and St George, and awarded the Distinguished Service Order (and bar), Croix de Guerre (with three Palm Leaves) and Legion of Honour. Hilliam fought at Ypres, the Somme and Vimy Ridge. He married Letitia Wallace (1865-1934) of London, Ontario, and lived in Vancouver for many years after his wife's death, eventually becoming blind and deaf. Several other features in the Shuswap region are named for him, including Hilliam Road and Mount Hilliam.

Both the Hockin Landing and Hilliam covers are somewhat the worse for wear, and the split-rings are backstamps only. But they are the only examples seen so far, and we're delighted to feature them, regardless of their condition. The Hilliam appeared on eBay early in 2015, and the Hockin Landing was offered privately by the same vendor. Study group member Jim White emerged as the proud new "caretaker" of these rare items. The two covers together will make a most unusual album page.

*(With thanks to Brian Copeland, Jim White, Firmin Wyndels and Tracy Cooper)*

## Vancouver's "number-in-circle" markings

A study group member has requested information about the "number-in-circle" markings seen on some mail to Vancouver from the late 1950s and early '60s. These are a bit of a mystery to BC collectors. I've had the opportunity to examine a dozen or so relevant covers recently. Here are a few observations.

All were mailed to the same address in Vancouver—768 Seymour Street—to the Employees' Medical Services Association of the BC Telephone Co. One was sent from Abbotsford, one from Trail and the rest from Vancouver. The covers range in date from Nov 26, 1959, to Feb 24, 1964. The numbers seen are 1, 2 and 4, in both red and blue inks. Somewhat similar markings—letters and numbers, but not in circles—were used on Vancouver special delivery letters during the same era (1957-64). This topic was discussed in the *BC Postal History Newsletter*, Vol 20, No. 3 (Whole No 79), Sept 2011, pp 687-89.

We have no idea what these numbers mean or what they were used for. Our first guess was that they were for district sorting, but now we're not even sure they have any postal relevance whatsoever. The fact that all are found on covers mailed to the same address makes me suspect that they are probably BC Telephone Co internal markings. Does anybody else have any details or suggestions? — *Andrew Scott*



Four-cent Vancouver drop letter rates dated Feb 9, 1962 (above), and Aug 9, 1963 (below).