

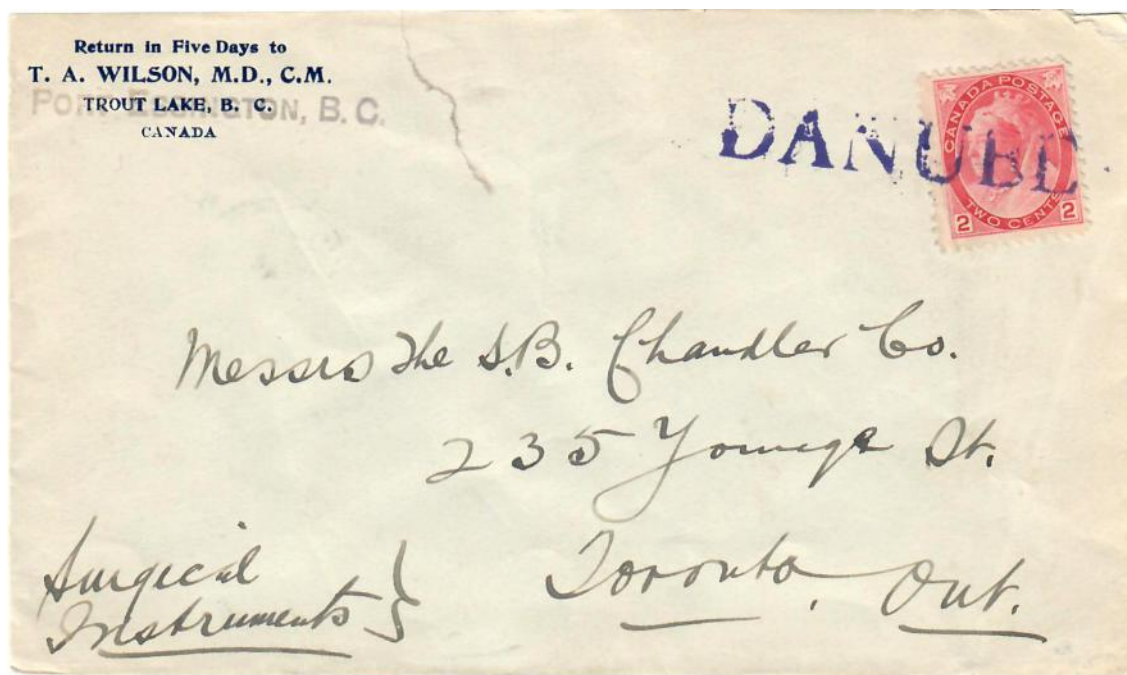


BRITISH COLUMBIA POSTAL HISTORY NEWSLETTER

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This **Favourite Cover** is eye-catching due to the bold purple **DANUBE** handstamp. The *Danube* built by John Elder & Co in 1869 and was acquired by the Canadian Pacific Navigation Company in 1890, arriving in Vancouver in 1892. She was taken over by the Canadian Pacific Railway Company in 1901 for use on the Vancouver to Skagway route until she was sold in 1905. The iron-hulled *Danube* (image on next page) with a length of 215.6 feet (65.7 m) was capable of a speed of 9.5 knots. This cover was apparently handed to the purser of the *Danube* at Port Essington for mailing when the vessel arrived in Vancouver. Dr. Thomas Alexander Wilson practiced medicine at Port Essington at this time, including acting as coroner from time to time. The cover is addressed to S.B Chandler Co. who were agents for surgical instruments, physician supplies and druggists' sundries.

The straight line **DANUBE** marking has only been reported for use in 1902 and is considered to be rare. While there are no date indications on the face of the cover a Vancouver backstamp indicates that it arrived there at 6 pm on May 13, 1902. The 2 cent small queen paid the prevailing surface letter rate. - Morris Beattie

In this issue:

- | | | | |
|---|--------|----------------------------------|--------|
| • Favourite cover - Steamship <i>Danube</i> | p 1283 | • BC Joins Confederation -Part 3 | p 1286 |
| • Editorial | p 1284 | • Grouse Creek 1st Period | p 1291 |
| • Letters and news | p 1285 | • Powell River Subs | p 1292 |



DANUBE at coastal wharf

Editorial – Andrew Scott retires as newsletter editor.

As of this issue we have a new editor. Andrew Scott has withdrawn from the editorship and I, Morris Beattie, have assumed the role. The first thing that I would like to do as your new editor is to thank Andrew for the amazing job of producing the newsletter that he has done since April 2014. The newsletter under his editorship has been recognized as a superior effort and he has left very large shoes to fill. I will do my best to do so and it is an exciting undertaking. Most of you are familiar with Andrew's background as a professional editor and the author of various books. My background is far humbler although I have previously edited a stamp club newsletter and many technical reports. There is no intention to change the structure of the newsletter at this time and I look forward to

continuing to receive contributions from our many readers. Tracy Cooper and Tim Woodland have both indicated that they will continue in their previous roles and I am grateful for their support. My contact information is noted below and I look forward to hearing from you. Please keep those articles and comments coming.

I am acquainted with many of our readers and, for those of you who do not know me, you have hopefully noted at least some of my articles in past newsletters. Over the past approximately 7 years I have assisted Andrew by proofreading the newsletter before it was distributed and so the format is very familiar to me. I am also currently working on an update of the index for the newsletter, including the correction of various typos in the first edition, and this update will be included as a supplement to an upcoming edition of the newsletter.

The *British Columbia Postal History Newsletter* is published quarterly by the BC Postal History Study Group, an affiliate of the British North America Philatelic Society (BNAPS).

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Newsletter submissions may be sent to the editors at the email addresses above.

Free digital newsletters can be downloaded as PDF files at <https://bnaps.org/hhl/n-bcr.htm> (for all issues). Issues 89 to present are in full colour; earlier newsletters are in b&w only. File size is approximately 1.5 Mb/issue.

Readers write

From Study Group member Bruce Pollock:

Following Tracy Cooper's article "*British Columbia Joins Confederation: Part 2*" in Issue #119, I decided to take up his challenge to conduct more research into the existence of postal operations at Chemainus during the colonial period.

We know from the record that Thomas George Askew is listed as the first postmaster at Chemainus. I have been able to make contact with a family member who has provided a wealth of information about him. He was born in 1838 in Odell, Bedfordshire, England and came first to California and then Victoria and then Barkerville, arriving there in the mid-to late-1850s. He held mining claims in Barkerville and found a gold nugget worth £220. (*editor's note: this equates to an 18 ounce gold nugget worth \$32,000 at today's gold prices*). Using the earnings from his mining efforts, in about 1864 he bought land on Pemberton Road in Victoria and at about the same time he applied to homestead at Horseshoe Bay in Chemainus. He also purchased a small sawmill there and was dividing his time between Victoria and Chemainus. In 1868, he married Isobella Curtis.

Throughout his life in BC, Askew maintained a correspondence with Charles Edward Searle, a curate back in Odell. The family has transcriptions of the original materials that are held by the Provincial Archive. On November 19, 1866, Searle wrote to Askew congratulating him on the progress of his endeavours in Chemainus and said: "All that you tell me about the mill and the wharf at Horseshoe Bay is extremely interesting and I should uncommonly like to drop in upon you, and be shown over your establishment, where you combine so many trades: Boat Builder, Miller, Timber Merchant and Postmaster. Is there a good opening for a steady young man?"

So, it would appear from this source that Askew was indeed involved in postal administration at least as early as 1866. After his death from tuberculosis in 1880, his wife Isobella became postmaster. (*With thanks to Kathryn Askew.*)

New postal history book

Study group member Cecil (Cec) Coutts has published a new book dealing with mail sent to the Italian Aid Society Lodge at Coleman, Alberta over the period from 1912 to 1935. The book is based on nearly 1000 covers from Canada and the United States.

Of interest to our railway aficionados will be the covers with railway post office (RPO) markings that were in the lot, a few reported for the first time. Corner cards from Canada and U.S. Italian Lodges add to the array. Italian Lodges and coal miners go hand in hand. Coal mining towns in the Crow's Nest Pass suffered many tragedies. Included in the book are the names of 452 miners killed in major mine accidents from Fernie, B.C. to Lethbridge, Alberta during the period 1902 to 1967.

Mail from current ghost towns and existing small and larger towns alike are written up with a brief history of each.

The 170 page coil bound book (8 ½ x 11) is illustrated in colour with an Index rounding out the publication. The book is available from the British North America Philatelic Society (BNAPS) Book Department. Orders and/or correspondence can be directed to: BNAPS@longleyauctions.com Price is 48.00 plus GST and postage.



British Columbia Joins Confederation The First 10 Years 1871-1881

Part 3 Decline of the Express Companies

by: Tracy Cooper

With the enactment, on August 15, 1871, of the Dominion Postal System in British Columbia, one of the major incentives to British Columbia joining confederation on July 20, 1871 was realized and the dominance of the Express companies for the carriage of mail in the united colony of British Columbia began to wain.

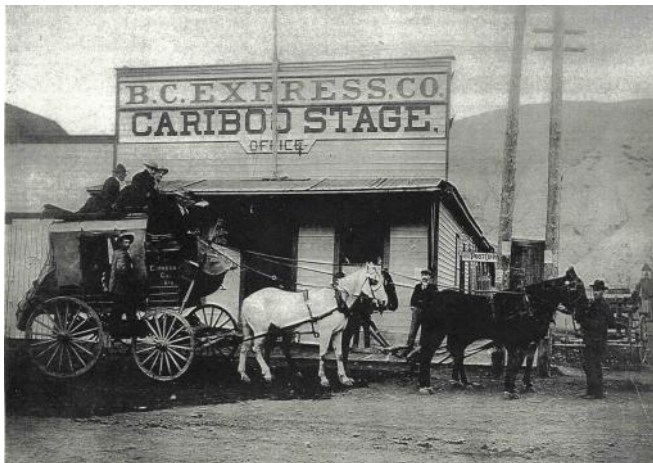


*Original photo British Columbia Express Office, Victoria BC.
Signed on reverse by F.J. Barnard circa 1870/71*

As background, Warner K. Spalding, Justice of the Peace and Postmaster General of the Colony of British Columbia wrote on Oct 21, 1862 in his report to the Governor on the state of the postal system in B.C. *"Four fifths of all letters and newspapers are carried throughout the Colony by Express Co's and private individuals, upon which no postage is paid at present"*. This was despite the fact, that the British Colonial Postage Act of 1849 empowered colonial governments in the empire to extract from the express companies Colonial postage at a rate as determined by the Governor of the colony in question.

Alexander Anderson on April 5, 1859 noted, *"it will be necessary, for the protection of our postal interests, that I should be empowered to exact from the Express Companies payment of the Colonial Postage of 5 cents per letter, upon all letters entering the Colony through the Expresses. At present all letters leaving Victoria through the Expresses have to be stamped; but so far no impact had been placed upon letters entering the Colony, except through the regular mail."*

Postmaster Generals, Caulfield Anderson and Warner Spalding, advocated for the establishment of a proper postal system that could be placed on a solid financial and operational footing. However, despite best intentions, mis-steps and neglect often occurred and as a result the Colonial postal service failed to meet even the most basic needs of the miners, and early settlers of the colonies of British Columbia and Vancouver Island. This poor service in turn led to the flourishing of the Express companies throughout the two colonies.



*BC Express Co Cariboo Stage Office at Yale BC
Circa 1880*

British Columbia Express Company

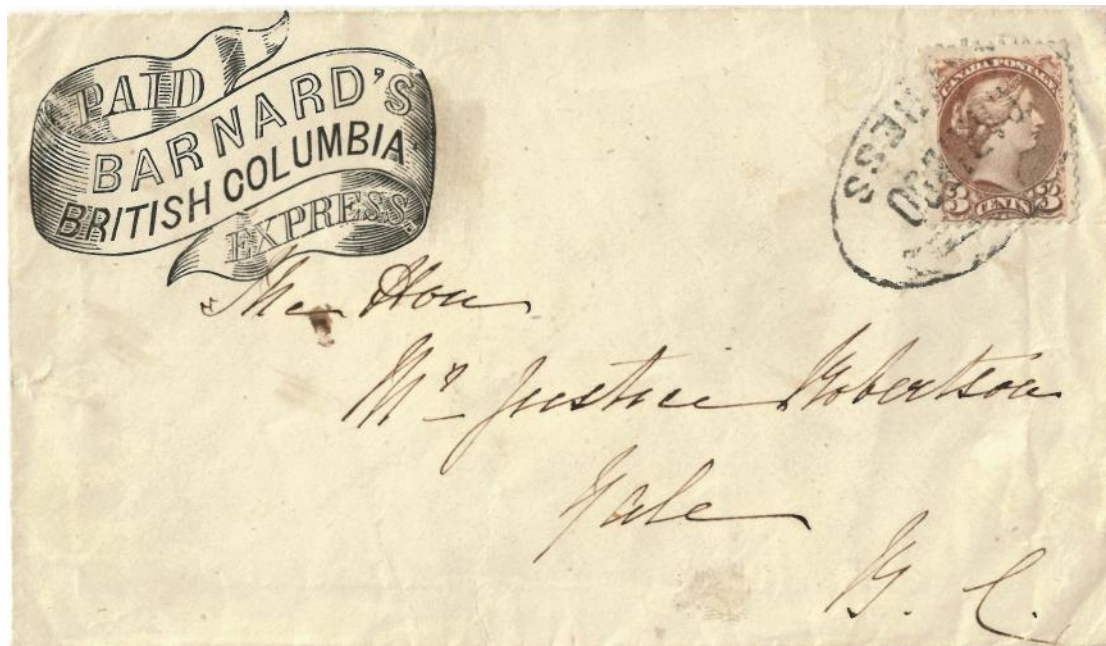


STAGES NOW LEAVE YALE FOR CARIBOO and intermediate points twice a week. Passengers will leave Victoria on Tuesday and Friday, and can be booked through at the office, 46 Yates St., on Monday evening to the number of 8, and on Thursday to the number of 15.

F. J. BARNARD & CO.
Victoria, 22nd May, 1878. my23dw

*Advertisement Victoria Colonist
British Columbia Express Co.*

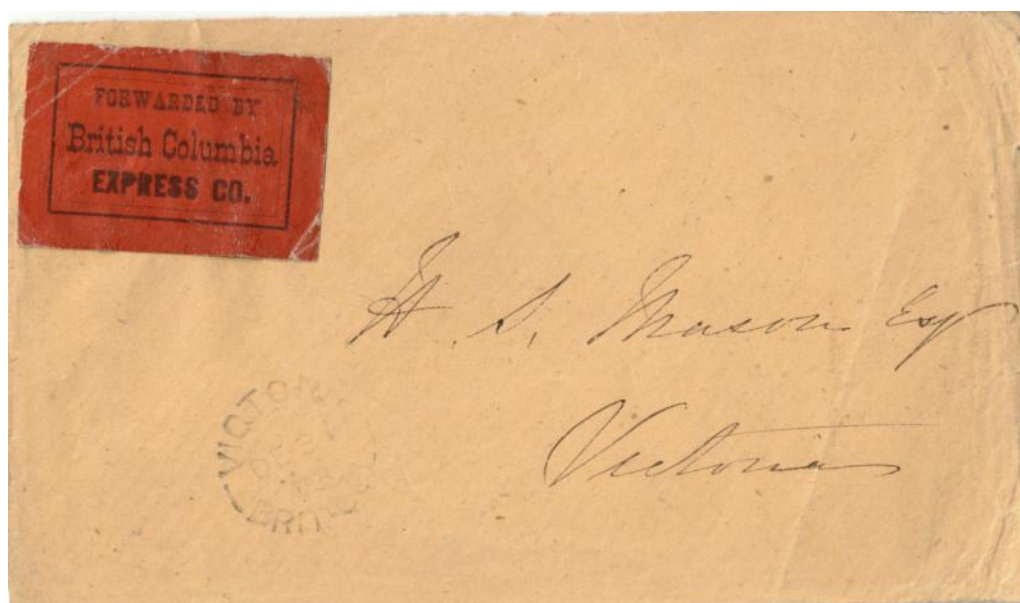
The dominance of the Express Companies largely emerged in British Columbia concurrently with the Fraser River gold rush of 1858. Wells Fargo & Company, with their extensive experience during the California gold rush of 1849, moved north with the 30,000 or so miners to provide freight and mail services, in the newly minted colony of British Columbia. Billy Ballou of Ballou's Fraser River Express also had his start in California along with Barnard's Express established by Francis Barnard. Along with the above early express companies, Freeman & Co's Express, Dietz & Nelson's British Columbia & Victoria Express, Jaffray's Express and Gerow & Johnson's British Columbia Express, were among the larger companies.



*Barnard's British Columbia Express franked envelope with Barnard's Cariboo Express
handstamp Type H4 circa 1874*



Wells Fargo Express Co franked stationery envelope with 3 cent green Washington and Barnard's Express double circle handstamp Type H2 used until 1880's
Cover is unusual in that it has BX(B) cork marking signifying Barkerville which would make this sent 1872 or later.



Forwarded by British Columbia Express label. From the famous Mason correspondence (much scarcer than the previous Barnard's printed franks).

At the time of Confederation, even with a reasonable but not entirely effective Colonial postal service in place, and despite increased diligence in collecting the colonial postage charge from the express companies, it had been speculated that almost 50% of all mail throughout the united colony of British Columbia was still carried by the Express Company's.

"When the gold fever died down and permanent settlers declined to pay the high rates demand by the express agents, and the express business declined significantly as far as the carrying of letters was concerned." With British Columbia part of the Dominion Postal Service, the domestic letter rate of 3¢ became the universal charge and with the postal service more reliable and new routes developed, the demand for the Express mail services declined dramatically.

Confederation saw only Wells Fargo and Barnard Express as the sole large express companies servicing British Columbia. Malcolm Leitch, an eminent BC postal historian specializing in express company mail, in his unpublished manuscript on the subject wrote, "A few new express companies were established, such as those formed by William Parker in the late 1890's, but they were not able to successfully compete with Wells Fargo and Barnard's Express (later known as the BX)" and the amount of mail service carried by them at this time was almost nothing."

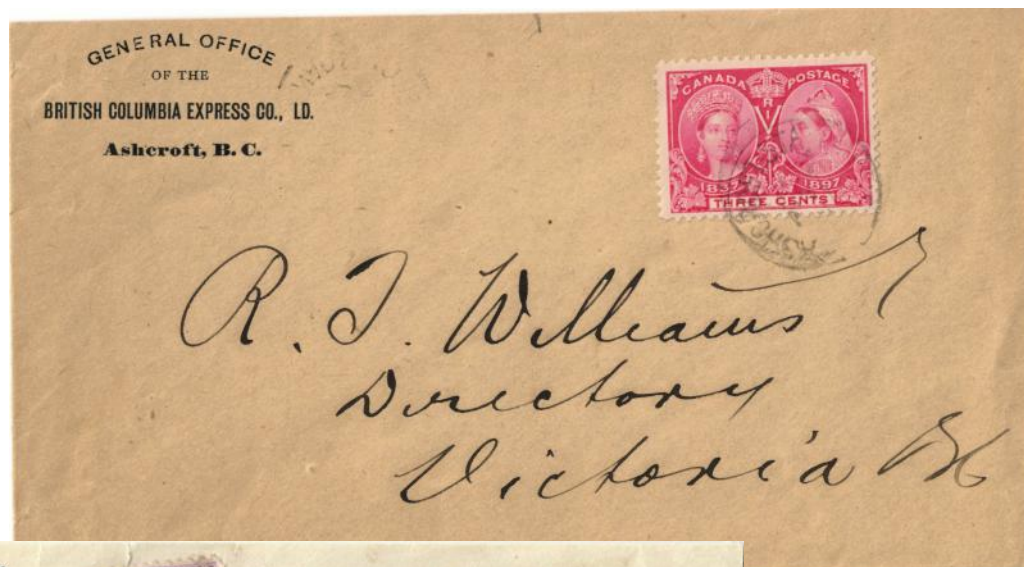


Wells Fargo & Co. franked 6 cent US stationery uprated with two 6 cent SQ's to England 1872



Late use of 3d BC tied with Numeral 28 (Burrard Inlet) c/w
New Westminster colonial oval on cover to USA 1871

By the turn of the century, the few remaining express companies were limited to carrying freight and other large goods, too bulky for the Post Office to transport effectively or beyond the weight restrictions on packages for mail delivery.



(above)
British Columbia
Express Co office at
Ashcroft 1897 at
which time goods
and passenger
carriage was the
trade.

William Parker
Express at 150
Mile House 1899.

References:

Alfred Stanley Deaville, *The Colonial Postal Systems and Postage Stamps of VI and BC 1849-1871* (Victoria, 1928) Library and Archives Canada

Colonial Correspondence- Files of the Post Office Department 1856 -1871 Provincial Archives British Columbia

Malcolm Leitch – Unpublished manuscript *Express Companies Operating In And To Vancouver Island and British Columbia 1858-1871*

W. Turrentine Jackson, *Banking, Mail and Express Service in British North America, The Role of Wells Fargo and Company on Vancouver Island and British Columbia*, *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*, October 1985, Volume 26 Number 4

Editor's Note: For anyone interested in learning more about the express companies operating in BC we recommend the following book:

Ken Mather, *Stagecoach North - A History of Barnard's Express*, Heritage House Publishing, 2020

Grouse Creek 1st Period (1873-74)

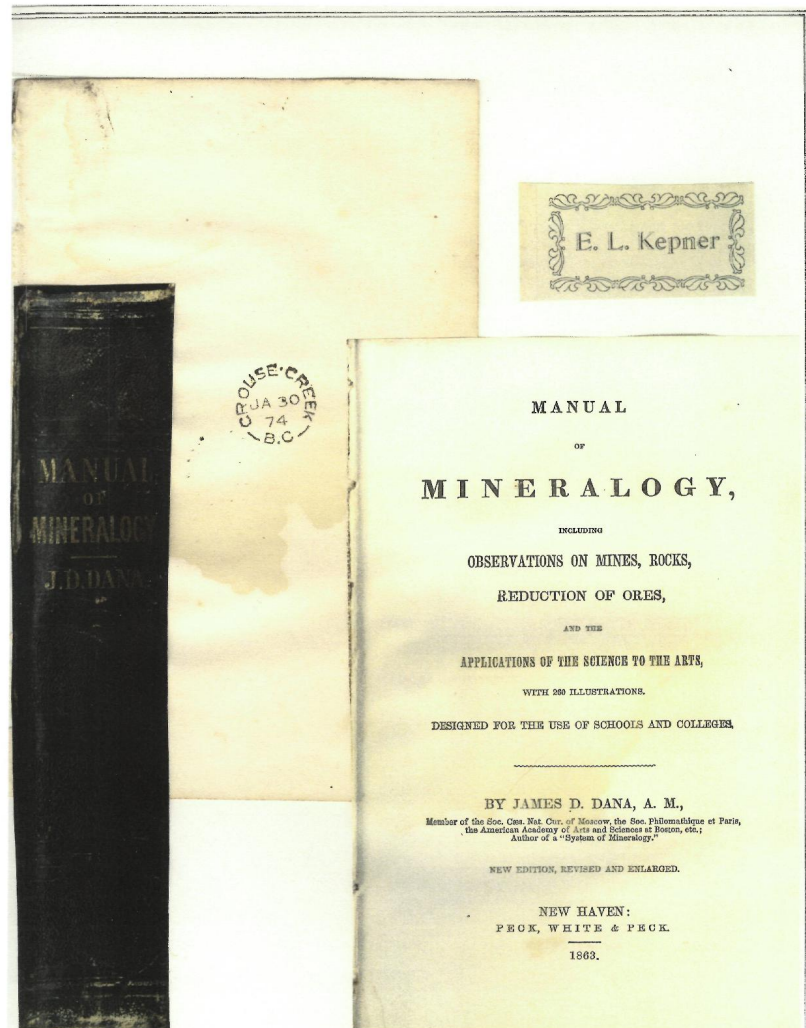
Postal History is where you find it!

by Tracy Cooper

One of the rarest of the Cariboo postmarks is from Grouse Creek located approximately 3 miles NE of Barkerville in the heart of the Gold Rush. Most everyone has heard of the Grouse Creek wars in the 1860's where competing gold rush companies fought over a rich piece of ground.

Mining continued at Grouse Creek and a small community arose around the diggings and in 1873 the Post Office department authorized the Grouse Creek Post Office opening on July 1, 1873 with S.A. Rogers as Postmaster. The Post Office was very short-lived as the gold was beginning to run out even as the Post Office was opening. When Rogers resigned, the Grouse Creek Post Office closed on April 30, 1874 as no suitable person could be found to succeed him and with a grand total of only \$15.00 in revenue.

About 20 years ago, postcard dealer and part time postal history dealer Albert Tanner, found the only report of a Grouse Creek 1st period split ring postmark in a most unusual place; on the front piece of a book! The unlikely place for this piece of postal history was on the front page of the Manual of Mineralogy by James D. Dana published in New Haven in 1863. While the book was definitely owned by E.L. Kepner once upon a time, it is quite likely that S.A. Rogers, the Postmaster, was also an owner and used the Grouse Creek split ring to note the book was his. As a Manual of Mineralogy, it was certainly topical and appropriate to the area.



Albert subsequently consigned the book to Robert A Lee where I purchased it in open auction. It is certainly the most unusual piece of BC philately in my collection and demonstrates, Postal History is where you find it!

Powell River, Part 5: The Sub Post Offices to 1961

by Morris Beattie

This article deals with the sub post offices of the Powell River region. As there were numerous changes in location and postmasters for these sub offices, a discussion of these two areas of study are not included or the article would become excessively long. Previous articles dealing with the main Powell River post office appeared in newsletters #s 106, 107, 110 and 115.

There are two distinct time intervals for the Powell River sub-post offices. Prior to 1961 there were three sub-offices with distinct names but following that time all sub-offices were numbered. The named offices are presented but for practical reasons, mainly the proliferation of hammers; the numbered offices are only tabulated.

By 1912 the Powell River pulp mill was constructed and in operation and the population of the area increased quickly, leading to the formation of three unique surrounding communities. Over the period of 1913 – 1914 the suburbs of Westview, Cranberry Lake and Wildwood came into existence although none of them warranted a post office for a number of years as listed below. The post offices in these suburbs were justified after about the mid-nineteen twenties into the nineteen thirties, when expansion of the pulp mill resulted in an influx of workers. All three of these post offices operated under the suburb names from the time that they were established until 1961 at which time they became numbered Powell River sub-offices.

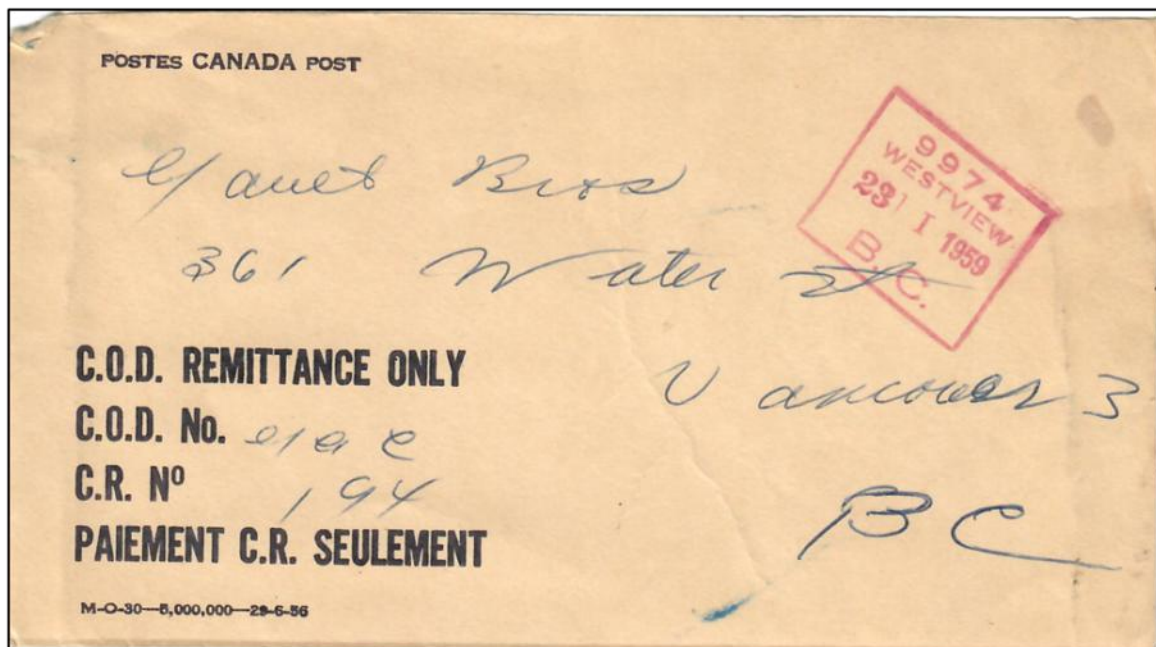
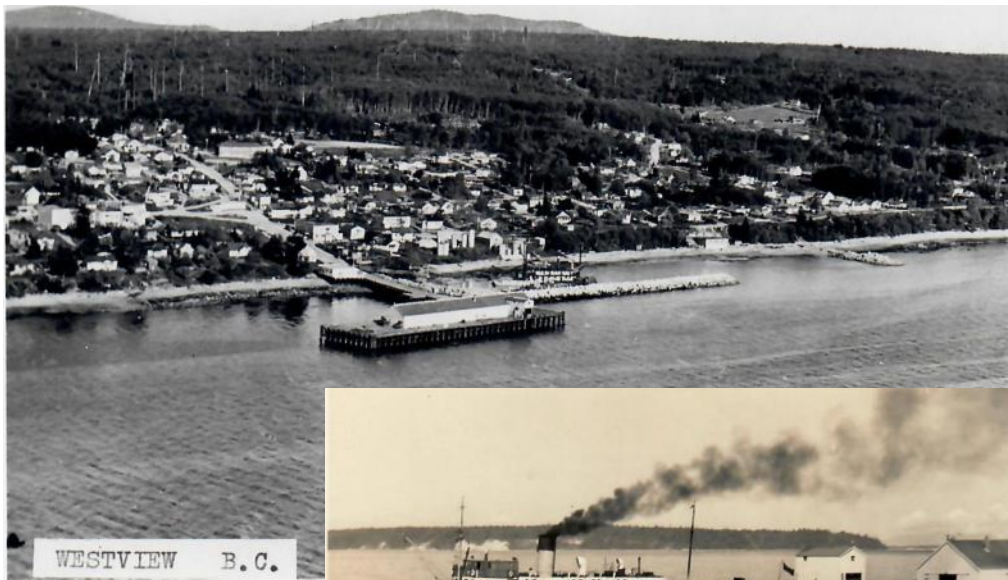
Post Office	Opening Date	1961 Designation
Westview	May 1, 1927	Sub 1
Cranberry Lake	Feb 1, 1931	Sub 3
Wildwood Heights	April 1, 1934	Sub 4

Westview

Westview, the largest population center in the area, is located about 2 km south of Powell River proper which is still referred to as "The Townsite". The volume of postal business done in the area was not adequate to warrant a post office that was large enough to support house delivery of mail until 1954, at which point a larger post office was approved. A long-awaited road from Powell River to Vancouver, with ferries providing a section of the connection, was opened in 1954 and this development also contributed to increased population growth in the area. At the same time, rural delivery between Westview and nearby Stillwater was being contracted. The third post office at Westview was constructed in 1958 as the population in the area continued to grow.

Westview utilized a series of hammers with considerable overlap in dates of usage:

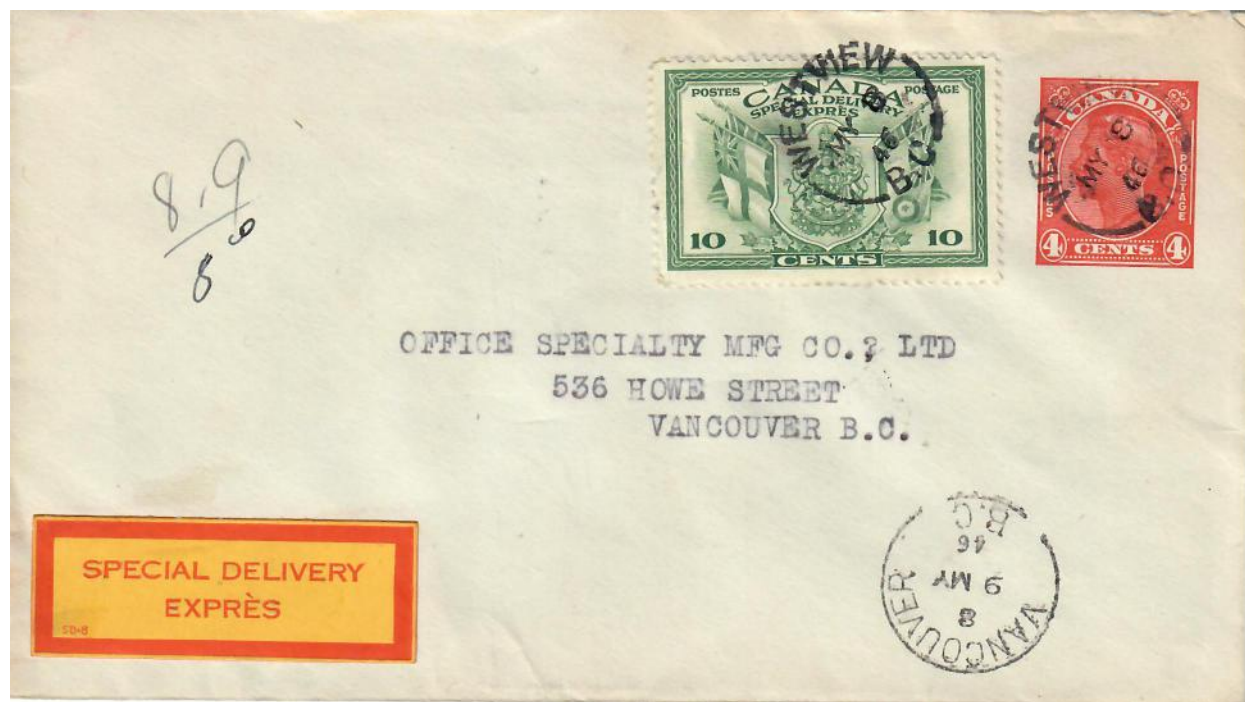
Hammer Type	ERD	LRD
Split-ring	26/09/1935	18/10/1950
Machine	04/04/1949	27/05/1961
CDS	17/08/1953	24/01/1961
Moon 9974	27/06/1952	12/04/1960
MOTO	04/09/1940	25/02/1960



Post office correspondence with Westview MOON, Sagar no. BCMN-3743, on cover to Vancouver.



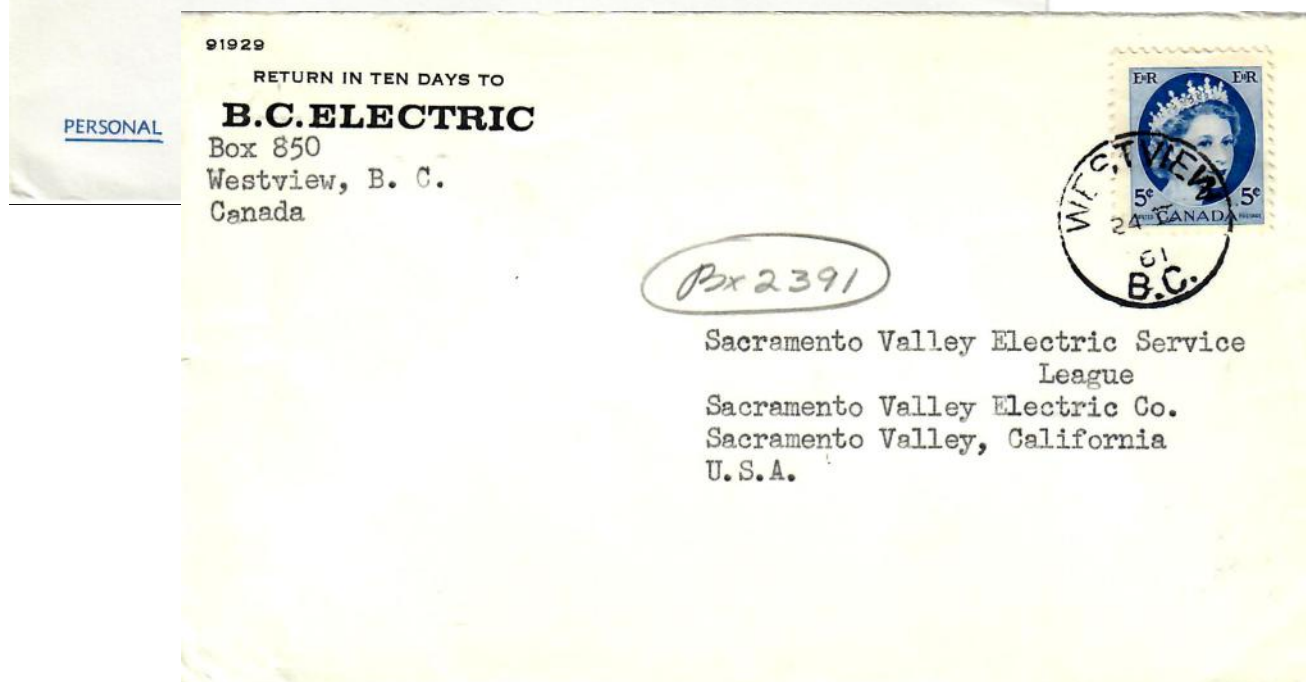
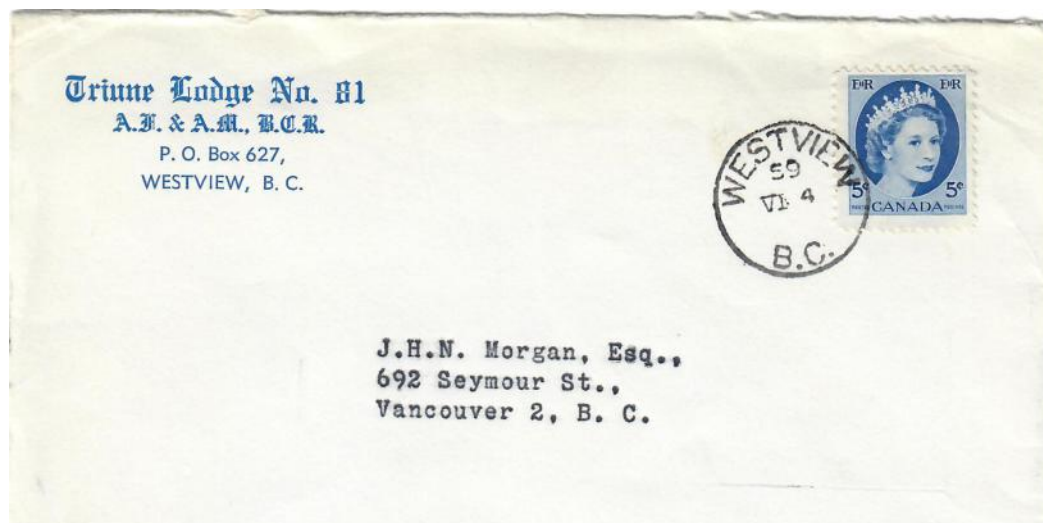
1935 and 1950 examples of split-ring cancels.



1946 example of split-ring cancel on special delivery cover to Vancouver, arriving in Vancouver the next day.



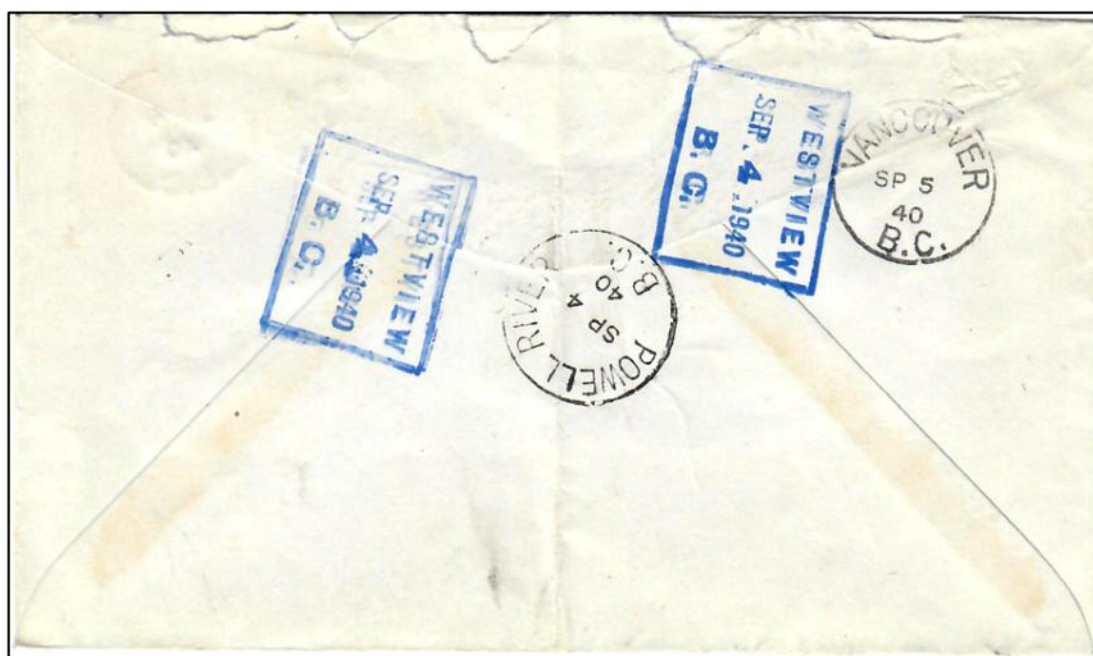
1950 split-ring cancel on piece from Westview District services.



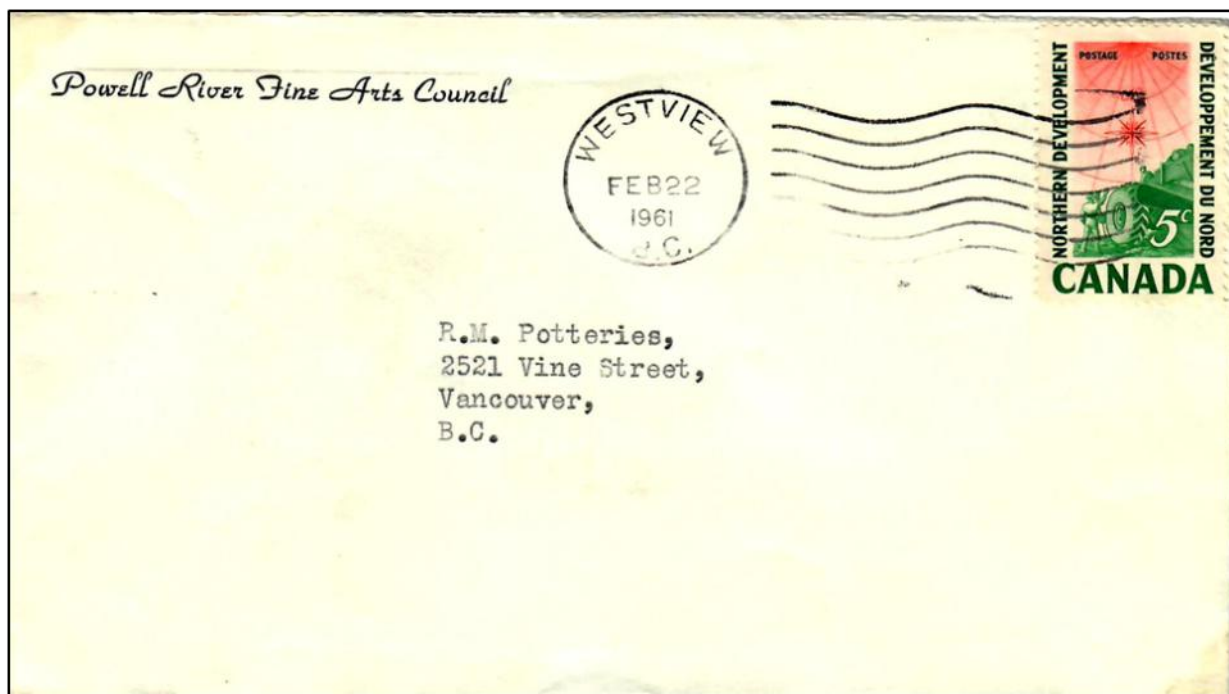
Two examples of CDS cancels, the top one with the year at the top of the cancel and the bottom one with the year at the bottom.



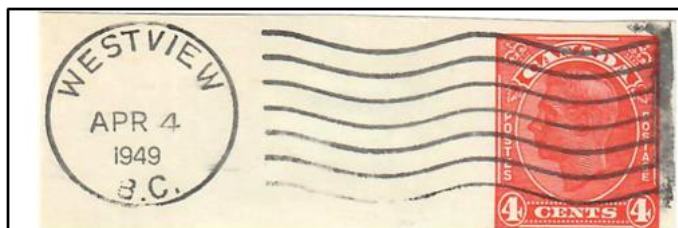
*MOTO cancel in red ink
dated Feb 25, 1960*



Registered Westview cover mailed to Vancouver, receiving a split-ring Westview cancel. As well as the registered Westview marking in blue on the front, the cover received two Westview MOTO cancels in blue ink on the back dated Sept 4, 1940 as well as a Powell River CDS transfer mark with the same date and a Vancouver receiving mark dated the following day.



1961 Westview machine cancel on cover to Vancouver.



1949 example of machine cancel



1947 Westview split-ring and
1958 Westview CDS on piece.



Note: The remainder of this article dealing with Cranberry Lake and Wildwood Heights will appear in the next issue of the newsletter.

Recent BC pictorial cancels from Canada Post



Auction Highlights



From time to time we will report outstanding auction items and the results achieved.

The accompanying 5 cent Vancouver Island 1865 rose is such an outstanding item in superlative condition. It has a very clear #35 cancel from Victoria.

The estimate before the Siegel October 20 auction was \$10,000 to \$15,000 and the hammer price was \$20,000.

A number of other early BC stamps, both mint and used went for \$1,500 to \$2,000 in this auction.