



# BRITISH COLUMBIA POSTAL HISTORY NEWSLETTER

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Sept 2023



**My Favourite Cover:** This cover had an interesting journey. It was cancelled in Cranbrook, B.C. at 4 am on Aug. 24, 1940. A purple handstamp on the front shows it was retour (returned) Sept. 7, 1940. At the bottom left front there is a faint purple handstamp saying "Missing Specific Address / Street and Number / Clerk No. 6." A second faint purple handstamp on the front says "Not in Directory, No. 6" A diagonal large purple handstamp REBUTS (rejected) obliterates the address.

The reverse of the cover (*Ed: shown on the next page*) adds considerably to the story. A purple CDS on the reverse shows that it arrived in Cleveland, Ohio on Sept 23rd. From there it was sent to the

Washington, D.C. Dead Letter Office, arriving on Sept 27th. After a search, Clerk 3 applied a purple handstamp Inconnu (unknown). It was then sent to the Inspection Division of the Dead Letter office in Ottawa, Canada, arriving 2nd Oct., 1940.

A Postal Convention between Canada and the United States was signed in March 1851 establishing that the U.S. and Canada "shall each return to the other all dead letters, unopened and without charge, every three months, or oftener, as may best suit the general regulations of each Department". Reciprocal agreements were the lifeblood that kept the mail moving smoothly, especially between high traffic neighbours like the US and Canada. After opening and checking for the

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sender's address, it would be destroyed. Any valuable items found were auctioned off.

The United States Postal Service started a Dead Letter Office in 1852 to deal with undeliverable mail. In the 1850s it was a widely popular activity for tourists to Washington, D.C. to visit the Dead Letter Office. Most of the staff were of the "feminine faculty" to decipher the illegible, incomplete or foreign addresses. In the 1890s, Mrs. Patti Collins achieved renown through her skilled "blind reading" - making sense of garbled addresses. The post office assumed that women, and a few clergymen, employed in the task would be more honest and discreet when opening a stranger's mail.

By 1893, the Dead Letter Office handled about 20,000 items every day. In 2006 approximately 90 million undeliverable-as addressed items ended up there. If the rightful owners cannot be identified, the correspondence is destroyed to protect customer privacy. Items of value, except pornography and firearms, are sold at auction. These facilities are now known as mail recovery centers (MRC). - Glenna Metchette



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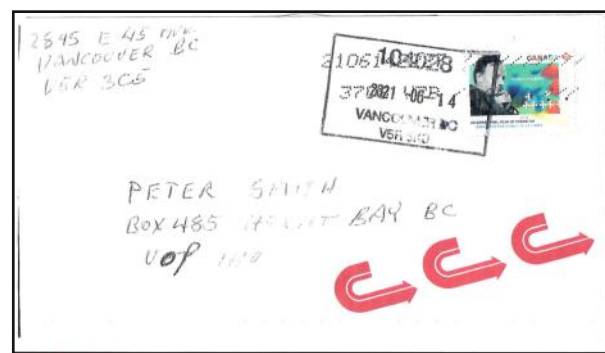
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Free digital newsletters can be downloaded as PDF files at <https://bnaps.org/hhl/n-bcr.htm> (for all issues). Issues 89 to present are in full colour; earlier newsletters are in b&w only. File size is approximately 1.5 to 3 Mb/issue.

## Editor's Notes

For this issue we include studies submitted by several study group members, for which we are grateful. We strive to include assorted areas of interest and this is best achieved by having varied contributors. Keep up the good work!

Below, is a cover sent in by study group member Don Crawford asking if anyone is familiar with the three red arrows at the bottom right. What do they mean; the postal code has been corrected and does the marking relate to this? There are no markings on the reverse.



## VANPEX 2023 (Sept 29-30, 2023)

VANPEX, the Regional Stamp Show hosted by the British Columbia Philatelic Society is back this year!

Friday September 29th (10-6pm) and Saturday September 30th (10-4pm) at the Jubilee United Church Hall, 7551 Gray Avenue, Burnaby. This year there will be up to 11 dealers present, a 30 frame exhibit, and for the first time a 150 lot "large item" auction on Saturday afternoon!

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

## In search of BC's first postmistress

*By Greg Nesteroff*

Who was the first woman to be a postmaster in BC? Or, in the vernacular of the day, a postmistress?

I started wondering about this after reading a story indicating the title belonged to Annie MacKay, whose husband was Hockey Hall of Famer Mickey MacKay. In fact, she was the first postmistress of Grand Forks (1955-63) but not the first in BC or even in the immediate vicinity.

Miss R.A. Yates was postmistress of West Grand Forks from 1917-21, followed by Mrs. M.L. Weber from 1921-27 and Mrs. M.R. Beninger from 1950-68. Mrs. G. Birch was postmistress in nearby Midway in 1920-21.

But there were plenty of earlier women postmistresses in BC. Mary B. Charlton was named postmistress of Port Haney (downtown Maple Ridge) in 1907 upon the death of her husband, who previously held the job. She served until 1945.

At Elko, south of Fernie, Mrs. E. Holbrook was postmistress from 1899-1916 and Miss I. McKee from 1917-19.

In Soda Creek, northwest of Williams Lake, Jean McLeese was postmistress from 1898-1907 followed by Mrs. D.A. Foster 1907-09. In fact, 13 women held the position there over the course of 66 years. Women were in charge from 1898 to 1909, 1914-32, 1943-63, and 1964 until the post office closed that year.

In Quesnel (formerly Quesnelle), Ada J. Skinner was postmistress from 1880-82 followed by Isabel Barlow from 1882-88 and Margaret McNaughton from 1901-03.

But, with the help of several study group members, we identified the woman who appears to have been the very first: Agnes Caroline Laumeister Buie was postmistress in Lytton from December 1875 to October 1877. While her claim to fame as the first named postmistress in BC doesn't appear to have been remarked upon before, one very unusual aspect of her family's history has been chronicled extensively.



*Figure 1*

*Agnes Laumeister  
Buie  
Image I-78469  
courtesy of the Royal  
BC Museum*

Agnes was born in 1849 in Richmond, Virginia to Frank and Agnes Laumeister. By that time, her father had gone to San Francisco, lured by the California gold rush. His wife and daughter joined him a year later — reportedly traveling via Panama — and he then spent a few years as a government flour inspector before the family headed north for the Fraser Canyon gold rush of 1859.

The Laumeisters, who ultimately had six children, settled in Victoria where Frank ran a saloon and brewery and then went into the freighting business. What followed became the stuff of legend.

Laumeister and his business partners bought 23 Bactrian camels that previously worked in Arizona and California and amid much fanfare began packing goods between Lillooet and Alexandria.



*Continued from page 1406*

While the camels could carry heavier loads than mules, they annoyed stagecoach drivers and miners, as they spooked stage horses and had an unfortunate appetite for clothing and soap. The experiment ended in 1863, barely a year after it began. The camels' subsequent fate has been the source of much speculation, with one reportedly shot and killed after being mistaken for a grizzly bear.

A granddaughter reported Laumeister "not only lost his money over the venture but also his friends."

As for Agnes, she and her sisters attended St. Anne's Academy in Victoria. In 1866, she married Thomas Russell Buie of Buie Brothers, merchants of Lytton and the Cariboo. They moved to Lytton and had four children, but Thomas died in 1873 following a severe illness.

A few years later, Agnes became Lytton's postmistress, although I haven't found any specific information about her appointment, how it was viewed at the time, or how much work it involved. Her resignation came a couple of months after she married road superintendent Arthur W. Stevenson in New Westminster. They had four children. Agnes died suddenly in Mortlach, Sask. in 1914, age 65, while she and her husband were en-route home from visiting family in Quebec. She was buried in Lytton. Her obituary didn't mention that she had once run the post office.

One additional note: an 1877-78 list of post offices and postmasters in BC listed a second woman in addition to Agnes: Jane Macdonald of Chilliwack. Officially she was not appointed until April 1, 1879, but she had been doing the job following her husband's death the previous year. She continued until 1883.



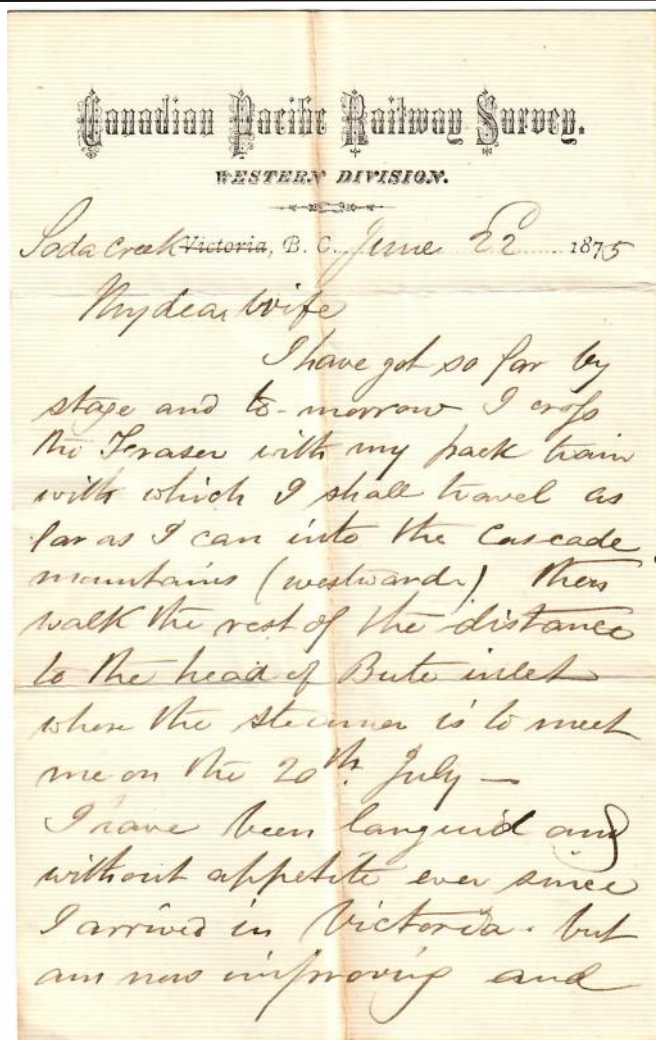
*Figure 2.  
Agnes Laumeister Buie was  
possibly the first woman to be in  
charge of a BC post office. She  
served in Lytton in 1875-77. The  
portrait seen here is undated.  
Image I-78999 courtesy of the  
Royal BC Museum*

## **Marcus Smith and the Canadian Pacific Railway Survey**

### **The Marcus Smith Correspondence**

*by Morris Beattie*

Since 2018, in addition to the usual array of stamps and postal history items, *All Nations Stamp and Coin* have offered a series of letters, of which there are over 200, written by Marcus Smith to his wife during the 1870s and 1880s. In these letters, as well as providing a day by day accounting of his activities, he very candidly voices his opinion regarding the powers-that-be during the surveying and construction of the CPR railway through British Columbia. Through his letters we gain considerable insight into the workings and manoeuvres, behind the scenes as it were, amongst the various players involved in CPR construction with names such as Fleming, Trutch, Cambie, etc. getting regular mention. So, who was Marcus Smith and what do the letters tell us? Dealing with the second question first, figure 1 shows the first page of one such letter.



The letter is worded as follows:

"Soda Creek, B.C. June 22, 1875

My dear Wife

I have got so far by stage and tomorrow I shall cross the Fraser with my pack train with which I shall travel as far as I can into the Cascade mountains (westwards) then walk the rest of the distance to the head of Bute Inlet where the steamer is to meet me on the 20th July-

I have been languid and without appetite ever since I arrived in Victoria but am now improving and hope a fortnight or three weeks in the bush will put me all right – but the season is very backward and we have frequent rains – You will now have all the children with you and I hope you will all enjoy the summer thoroughly. Give my love to them all and I hope to have a letter from every one of them before I leave Victoria again about the 1st of August.

Yours ever  
M Smith "

Figure 1. Letter by Marcus Smith to his wife dated June 22, 1875, written on Canadian Pacific Railway Survey letterhead.

While this letter is of a personal nature, additional letters written from Kamloops include comments such as:

Jul. 19, 1881:

"Mr. Trutch is the Govt. agent and furnishes us with supplies- he has been very attentive- is a good businessman- but has no practical knowledge of Engineering and as Mr. Schreiber only runs over the work when he is here the four Division Engineers on Onderdonk's Contract viz. Cambie, Keefer, McLeod & Hamlin have no advice and will not be made the scapegoats for any trouble that may arise- and there will be plenty of it- but Trutch will take the credit for anything that is not done well However he does not interfere with my work- but he is not popular with the rabid politicians"

Sept. 20, 1885, from Kamloops

"Van Horne will be out here soon after the track is joined from East & west – say the end of October at latest – It is remarked in the Newspapers that Tupper, Pope & Schreiber are coming out the former can have no business except as most people think to whitewash Onderdonk and look after his share of the shares –

Everybody knows the line is not finished according to specification and none believe the C.P.Rwly will accept it as it is but will ask for a large sum from the Govt to complete it –"

Dec 26, 1884, from Kamloops

"I made a purchase of some land near Coal Harbour some months ago – which is now declared to be the terminus and next summer there will be a boom when (if I am here) could be sold at a good profit – Tom has also some – but it

*will be hard for me to remain – I am only placed here to do little or nothing so that Onderdonk may make a lot of money – and Schreiber and Trutch are acting as meanly as possible – I have no assistant and they ask me to accept the bare office room and allow nothing for fuel light or attendance – now wood by the time it is cut up costs \$10 a cord and fir wood at that – besides light and some one to clean up the office will cost me \$20 a month during the winter months – that was the rent allowed for the office, but I am now going into a building owned by the Domn Govt for which there is no rent to pay I proposed to take the \$20 a month make all repairs find fuel &c which Trutch does not want to allow me so I shall write to the Minister. (Pope) about it –”*

Throughout the letters there are numerous other examples of issues deriving from the construction of a railway on a very tight budget. Smith, by and large, has a negative perception of the way things are handled during both the survey and subsequent construction. What do the letters tell us? I would say that they give us considerable social insight into what many of the big names associated with the CPR during the early days were like.

So, who was Marcus Smith, apart from the obvious answer of being the Chief Assistant to the Chief Engineer, Sir Sandford Fleming, during the surveys? Marcus Smith was born in 1815 in Northumberland and received an engineering education at the village school. Starting in 1844, he obtained railway engineering experience working on a variety of railways in England. Over the period from 1849 to 1868 he was engaged in railway construction in New York, Canada and South Africa. In September 1868 he returned to Canada to work for Fleming until 1881. At that time the railway was transferred to the Government of Canada and Smith became a Government employee until his retirement in 1893. He has been described as “a man of sterling character, ability and strict integrity, modest and unselfish in all relations of life”.

For anyone interested in reading more fascinating accounts of his trials, tribulations and observations of senior CPR staff and general social issues around railway personnel, the letters can be found at the following link:

<https://allnationsstampandcoin.com/category/collections/marcus-smith/>

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## Every Cover tells a Story don't it? NIAGARA, B.C.

(with apologies to Rod Stewart)

*by Tracy Cooper*

One of the things that I find most interesting about postal history is that even the most innocuous looking cover often has an interesting story.

The cover below, which I recently purchased from a dealer at a reasonable price, exemplifies this contention. At first glance it looks like a typical 2c domestic rate cover with a 2c purple Numeral and cancelled with a Victoria Squared Circle Hammer 3 dated February 8, 1899. The part that got my attention was the addressee. “E.T. WICKWIRE, NIAGARA/B.C.

Niagara was a small settlement on Christina Lake situated between Brooklyn and Cascade, 9 miles north of Grand Forks on the projected line of the Columbia and Western Railway. It was authorized by the Post Office Department to open September 29, 1899 with Arthur S. Williamson as Postmaster but this opening was cancelled abruptly on November 22, 1899. No split ring hammer was proofed.

Niagara was one of several sites that became towns as a result of the construction of the Columbia and Western Railway. Wherever the rail contractor decided to set up a construction camp, that camp quickly





Figure 1.  
Cover with Feb. 8, 1899  
squared circle cancel  
mailed from Victoria to  
Niagara, BC.

grew into a small booming town and just as quickly disappeared when the railway construction moved on. Born in the early fall in 1898, by the end of year, Niagara had 11 hotels, nine general stores, three butchers, two blacksmiths and a variety of other businesses.

The *Greenwood Miner* reported on Oct 18, 1898 that "Mr. Wickwire left on Thursday for Niagara to take charge of W.M. Law & Co's store at that point" and that at Niagara "they sold a full line of groceries and dry goods with a fancy stock of boots and shoes."

By December 1898 the *Grand Forks Miner* was reporting that "the enterprising Manager for W.M. Law & Co. is occupying his spare moments studying the Italian language."

The mercantile operation was short lived however and by February 1899, Law & Co was pulling up stakes; "W.M. Law & Co. have disposed of their branch at Niagara and Mr. E.T. Wickwire, the Manager, returned to Greenwood on Saturday". By February 1899, Niagara was just a shadow of its brief glory. An interesting cover that one might have passed on, telling in part a story of a town that bloomed and died, and a Post Office that never was: Niagara, B.C.

## The TOFINO MPO 1122

by Tim Woodland

Newsletter Issue #114 (June 2020 ) included a discussion of a May 1st 1943 cover (the very first) mailed from the LONG BEACH post office on its opening day, addressed to RCAF Tofino, BC. Like many other places on the BC coast, where the chronology of post office openings/closings relative to the business or community activity timeline makes for a challenging research effort, the TOFINO MPO 1122 postal facility is another fascinating example.

With a looming threat of war and possible invasion from Japan, Western Air Command began patrolling the West Coast of BC in 1939, using amphibious flying boats from Vancouver which landed on Kennedy Lake, near Tofino. An RCAF base opened nearby in Ucluelet in 1940, but this base had quite rough conditions and was used in a secondary capacity only and in fact, though proofed in August of 1944, the hammer for UCLUELET MPO 1123 was never used as that post office never opened.

Nearby civilian post offices had been open since 1894 at UCLUELET, 1909 at TOFINO, and 1910 at PORT ALBERNI. The RCAF Tofino base opened October 14th 1942, and military airplanes and officers began arriving that day. As 1943 began, 30 officers, 357 non-commissioned officers, and 16 aircraft from No. 132

Fighter & No. 147 Bomber Squadrons were resident. Remember that the LONG BEACH PO did not open until May 1st 1943, correcting the thought that this PO served the construction crews initially involved in building the Tofino airfield, and TOFINO MPO 1122 was still almost 14 months away from opening! The closest MPO was PORT ALBERNI MPO 1105 which had just opened on December 2nd 1942.

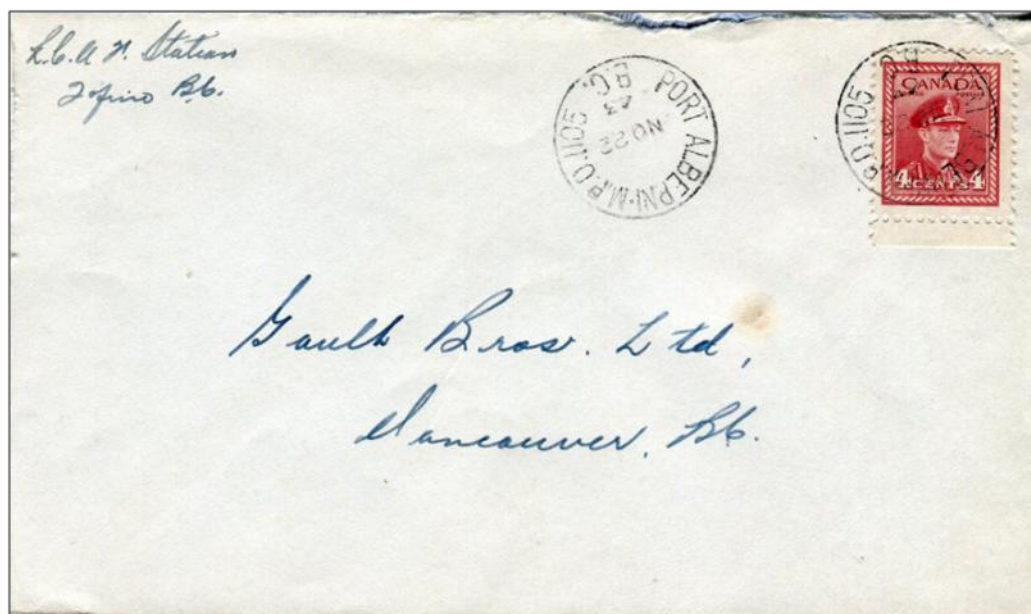


Figure 1.

A cover mailed from RCAF Station, Tofino BC to Vancouver, with the only marking being November 22nd 1943 PORT ALBERNI MPO 1105. As there were no roads into Tofino at this time, civilian mail was either carried on CPR or Union Steamships boats from the government wharf, or driven to Ucluelet and then taken by boat up the Alberni Canal to Port Alberni. As no other transit or arrival markings exist on this cover (nor on all but one of the five covers to be shown) it is not known which route was travelled, including any potential temporary direct military route from the coast to Port Alberni.

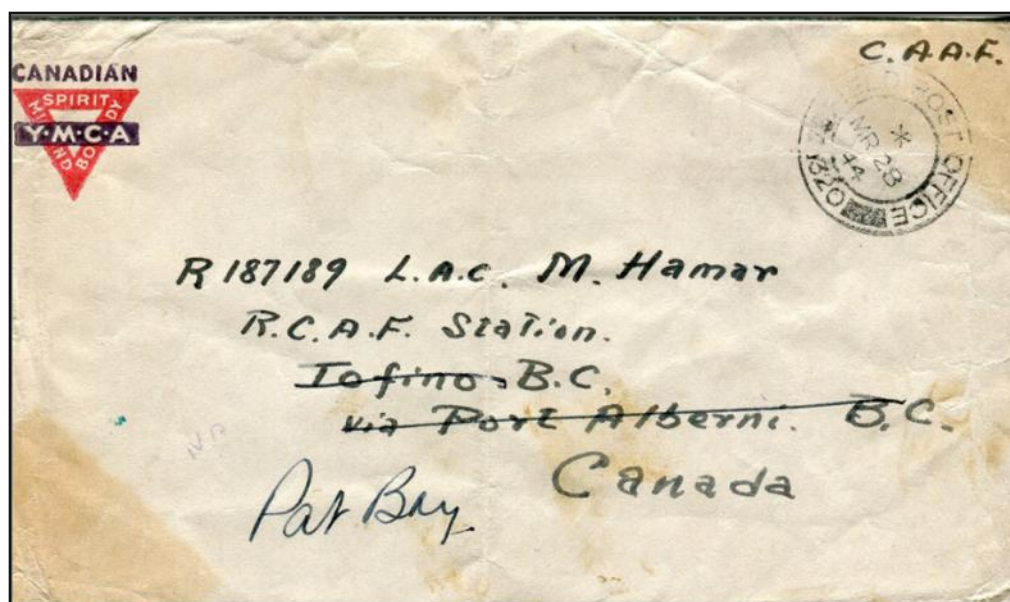


Figure 2.

A cover mailed March 28th 1944 from Canadian Army Post Office 320 in England to RCAF Station Tofino BC, via Port Alberni BC, perhaps in recognition that no MPO existed at Tofino yet did at Port Alberni.



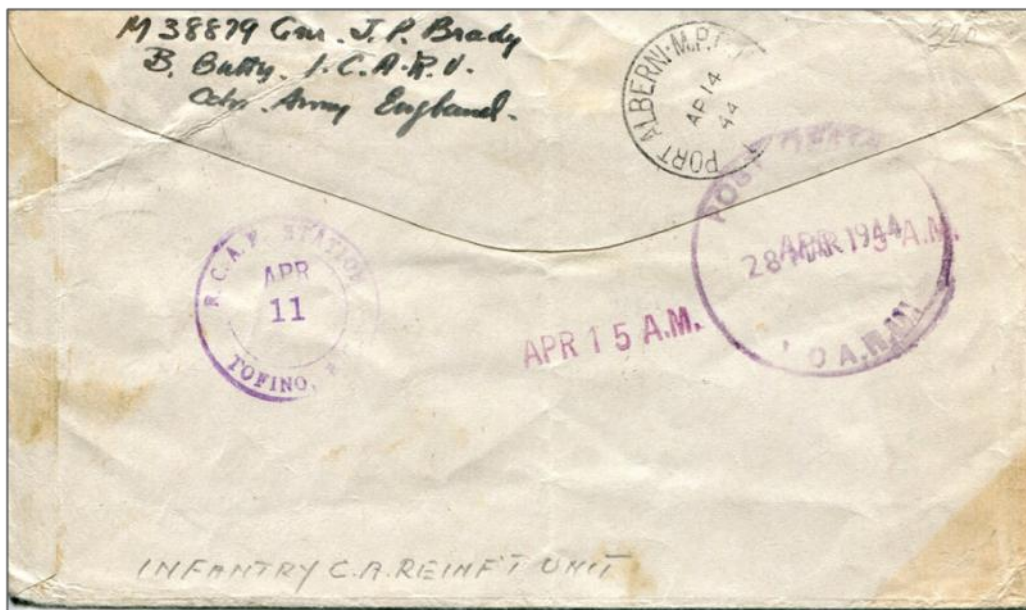


Figure 3.

The reverse of Fig.2, with additional March 28th 1944 ICARU PO Infantry Reinforcement Unit cancel, and an interesting RCAF STATION TOFINO, BC APR 11 marking, perhaps for temporary mail/document processing on base.

One month prior, on March 12th 1944, No. 115 Bomber Squadron had flown 15 aircraft from RCAF Patricia Bay, Victoria base to RCAF Tofino to replace the No. 147 Squadron. There would have been some uncertainty as to which personnel transferred, hence this cover was redirected with a manuscript "Pat Bay" on cover front. It transited back through PORT ALBERNI MPO 1105, receiving an April 14th 1944 cancel, and then was likely received at Patricia Bay as indicated by the two April 15th A.M. rubber stamps. The PAT BAY MPO 1102 did not open until August 16th 1944!

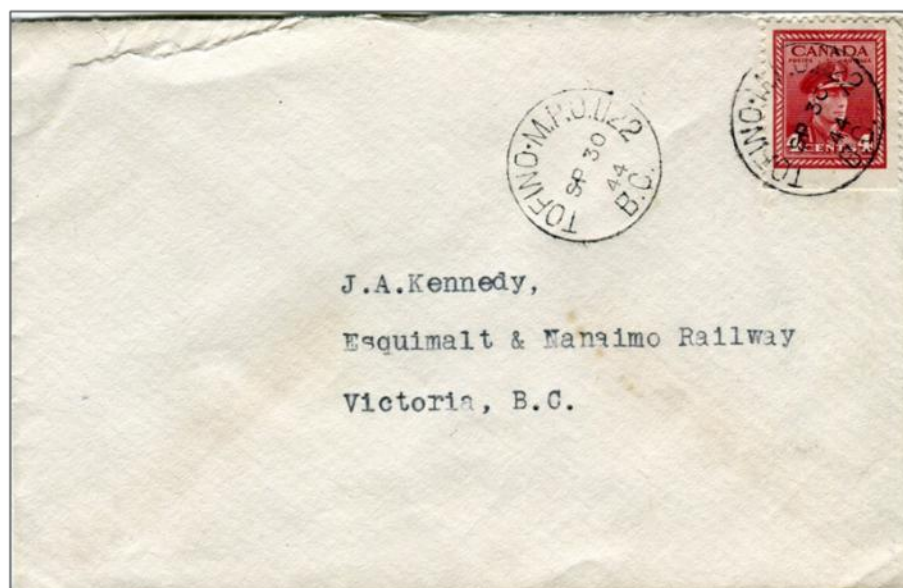


Figure 4.

Cover addressed to recipient at E&N Railway, which had transported Island passengers, freight & mail as far west as Port Alberni since 1914. Despatch TOFINO MPO 1122 cancel dated September 30th 1944, just over one month after opening. However, just prior on September 1st, both RCAF Ucluelet and RCAF Tofino had been declared inactive, with all aircraft and many personnel withdrawn. At Tofino Station the few remaining personnel became a signals unit, and some flight practice and training occurred.

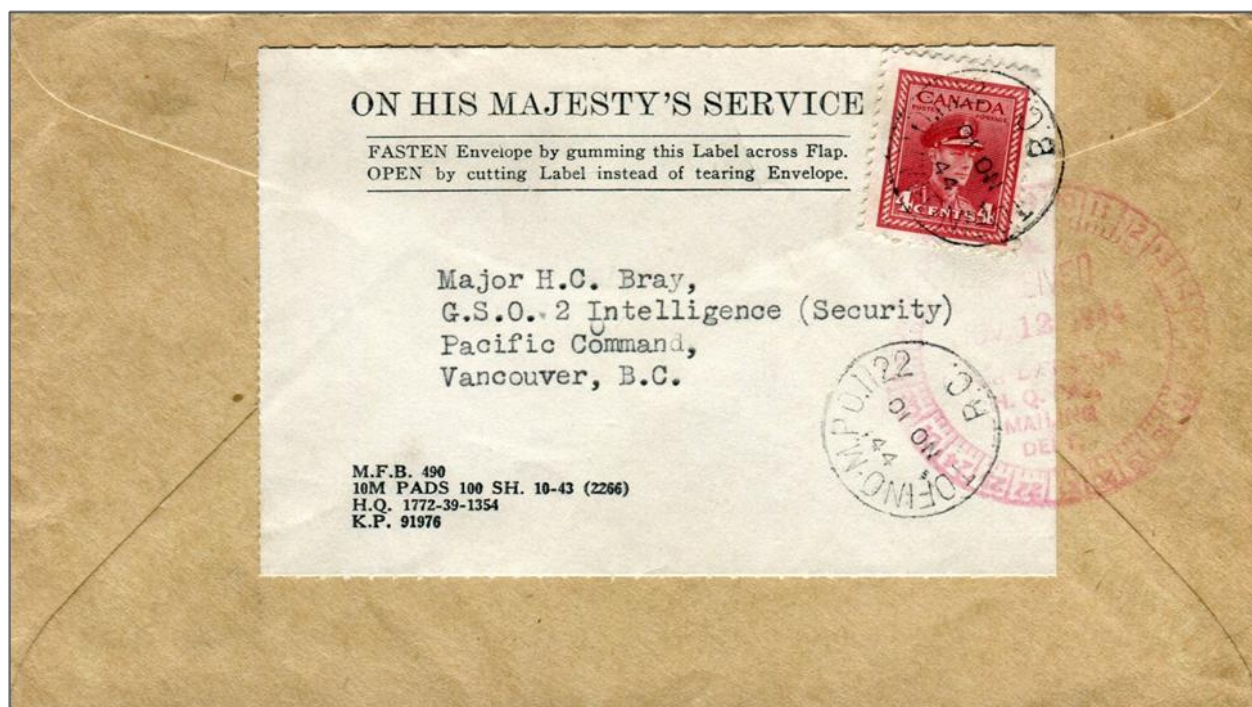


Figure 5.

TOFINO MPO 1122 November 10th 1944 from RCAF Tofino to Pacific Command HQ Vancouver, on previously unused War Economy envelope and label. Not used exactly as intended. Faint Nov. 12th 1944 office mailroom receiving mark. OHMS use may have qualified for free frank?

As indicated above, there are no markings on reverse of previous two covers shown as Figures 4 and 5.

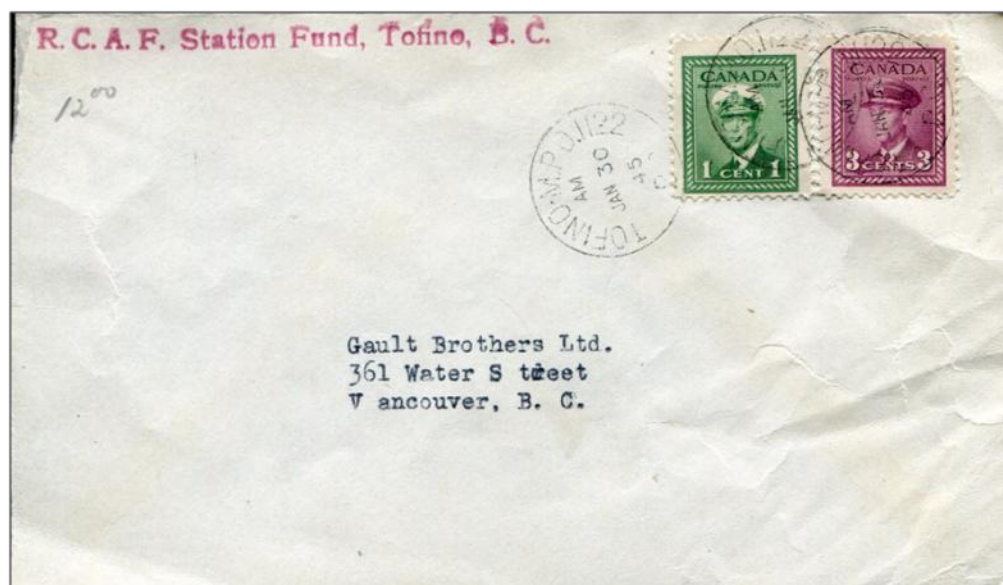


Figure 6.

Cover from RCAF Tofino base, with aircraft and most personnel now redeployed, yet some activity continuing. RCAF Station Fund, Tofino BC corner return address. I have noted one other Station Fund for a BC base, but it wasn't a term or entity known when I reached out to those with more military philatelic knowledge than I. Possibly suggests a social club on the base. TOFINO MPO AM JAN 30, 45 date is 6 months prior to the close of this MPO on August 22nd, 1945.



In summary, there are numerous examples of post offices which opened and operated seemingly out of sync with the mine, sawmill or cannery (which often burned down and may or may not have been rebuilt) which first justified its' existence. Though wartime conditions likely impacted decision-making and action, the TOFINO MPO 1122 seems to be an example of an office that was not yet open at its' greatest time of need, and then remained open beyond that time.

As military postal history is not my main area of interest, with this article I have tried to present an interesting story. I welcome any additional info, and corrections to any errors or omissions.

## Postal History of the Powell River Region – Part 6

### The Texada Island Offices – Part 6-A, Van Anda - Continuation from Issue # 126

*By Morris Beattie*

The previous issue on the Newsletter, Issue #126, June 2023, summarized the postal history of the Van Anda office on Texada Island through types A, B, C and G cancels. The completion of that study to include MOON, MOTO and POCON type cancels is presented here.

For POCONS, note that from P7 onward there is a space in Van Anda. Date ranges for the POCONS are given as years only where examples have been found. Many additional examples are required before more definitive date ranges can be expressed. The examples are presented here to indicate the great variety that exists and, as always, examples that further illustrate extended ranges are welcome.

**Table 3 - Listing of Van Anda MOON and POCON Hammers**

Hammer Type	Features	ERD	LRD	Remarks
<b>MOON 9778</b>				
MN1	Sans serif 16 mm	30/11/1953	21/07/1959	Sagar type 1
MN2	Serif	12/12/1959	27/03/1965	Sagar type 2
MN3	Sans 14-14.75 mm	23/08/1969	04/09/1970	Sagar type 10
MN4	No number	19/04/1969	24/04/1970	Sagar type 15
MOTO	25x29 mm box, serif red and black	30/05/1949	14/08/1968	
<b>POCON 647349</b>				
P1	P&A style Vananda=20.5 mm	18/06/1973	11/02/1976	Proofed May 1973
P2	P&A style Vananda=24.5 mm			Proofed May 1973
P3	29 x 27 mm 0 under B in BC	1978		Proofed 22/11/1977
P4				Proofed 31/08/1978
P5	30 x 30 mm 0 under space	1987	2003	Proofed 22/05/1985
P6				Proofed 14/01/1981
P7	48 x 37.5 mm Large numbers	1996	2003	
P8	48 x 31 mm	2008	2013	
P9	Circle with code at top, VON 3K0	2011	2013	
P10	Circle with "Post Office" at top	2013	2016	





Figure 1  
MN1



Figure 2.  
MN2



Figure 3  
MN3



Figure 4  
MN4



Figure 5  
MOTO



Figure 6  
P1



Figure 7  
P3



Figure 8  
P5



Figure 9  
P7



Figure 10  
P8



Figure 11  
P9



Figure 12  
P10

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Grieco, Gary, *Blubber Bay Quarry's Party*, <http://www.island-bound.com/Texada-s-Blubber-Bay-Centennial.html>, accessed March 15, 2012.

Copeland, Brian, BCPHN Vol. 98, June 2016

## THUNDER HILL / CANAL FLATS

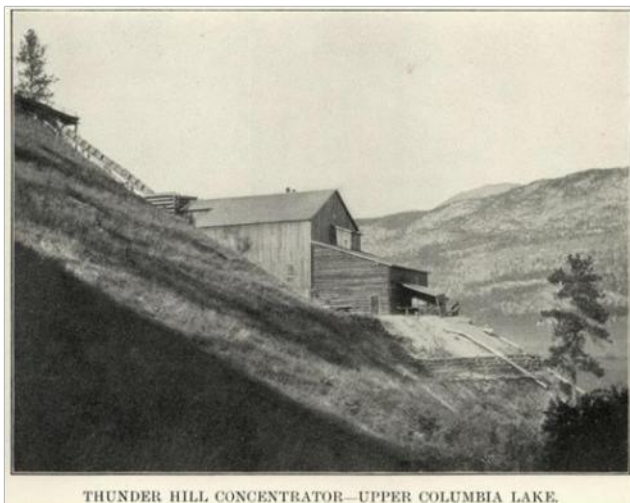
*by Morris Beattie*

This write-up was inspired by two very different covers, one mailed at Thunder Hill in 1897 and the second addressed to Thunder Hill/Canal Flats in 1915.

Thunder Hill is located at the head of navigation from Golden, 216 km (135 miles) south of Golden and about 80 km (50 miles) north of Fort Steele and in the late 1800s was along the route between Golden and St. Eugene Mission, located just west of Fort Steele. Thunder Hill was the name of a mining property located in 1884 by James Brady, just north of Canal Flats. The discovery was made by James Brady who formed the Thunder Hill Mining Corporation in 1891. While the silver-lead resources were deemed to have an "unlimited supply" and development was started on this basis, the mine never ran at any capacity and much of the infrastructure that was built was never utilized. What was one of the first concentrators built in B.C. was never operated and in 1918 was dismantled and sold, with much of it going to Russia. By mid 1893 works at the site were shut down but then some limited work at the site was again carried out in 1895. This was the end of attempts at mine development at Thunder Hill.

The Thunder Hill Mine did have an impact on the development of the Windermere Valley. As part of the early excitement in developing the mine, the Upper Columbia Navigation & Tramway Company constructed a tramway to connect Columbia Lake with Mud Lake (just south of Windermere Lake). That tramway was meant to bridge the section that was not navigable by steamboat to get the ore up to Golden. The last spike for the tramway was driven in early September 1892. With the failure of the Thunder Hill Mine the tramway was used far less than anticipated, and it eventually fell into disrepair.

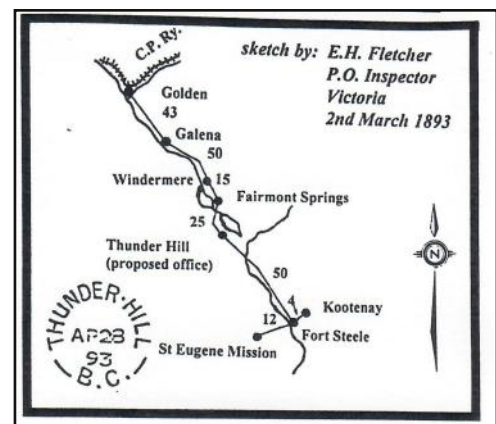
The Minister of Mines Report from Dec 31, 1898 shows a picture of the concentrator that had been constructed at the mine but which, as mentioned above, does not appear to have been used as the operation was shut down shortly after its completion. The target metals were lead and also some silver and gold but it appears that the grade of the "ore" was too low to justify the expenditure that had been made.



THUNDER HILL CONCENTRATOR—UPPER COLUMBIA LAKE.

*Figure 1. Photograph of  
Thunder Hill concentrator  
(Minister of Mines Report*

The post office at Thunder Hill was established June 1, 1893, using a split-ring cancel proofed on April 28, 1893. This cancel is the only one used at Thunder Hill and is rare. Two examples of the Thunder Hill strike are included in this article. Revenues at the post office were very low throughout its operating history, generally not even providing enough for the postmaster salary.



*Figure 2. Location of Thunder Hill and proof  
of split-ring cancel. (Tracy Cooper "Post  
Office Revenues")*



The cover shown in Figure 3 originated in Fort Steele but entered the mail system at Thunder Hill on Aug. 26, 1897, receiving a weak Thunder Hill split-ring cancel shown as Figure 4. At this date, while there was a post office at Fort Steele, it did not have a direct connection to Vancouver and the transit time to Vancouver would be shorter by taking it to Thunder Hill so it could be forwarded northward to Golden to be carried to Vancouver along the CPR main line. In March 1897, F.P. Armstrong of Upper Columbia and Tramway Navigation Company fame, who had held the fortnightly mail contract between St. Eugene Mission and Golden, including Thunder Hill, lost the contract to A. Doyle. The cover was likely carried by Doyle from Thunder Hill to Golden. The cover is back-stamped Golden dated Aug. 29, 1897 and Vancouver Aug. 31, 1897. Tracy Cooper authored a series of articles in PHSC Journal no's 89 through 91 that detail early mails in the Columbia and Kootenay river areas. Further background to the business shown on the cover was described in an article in 2021 in the Canadian Philatelist Vol. 72.

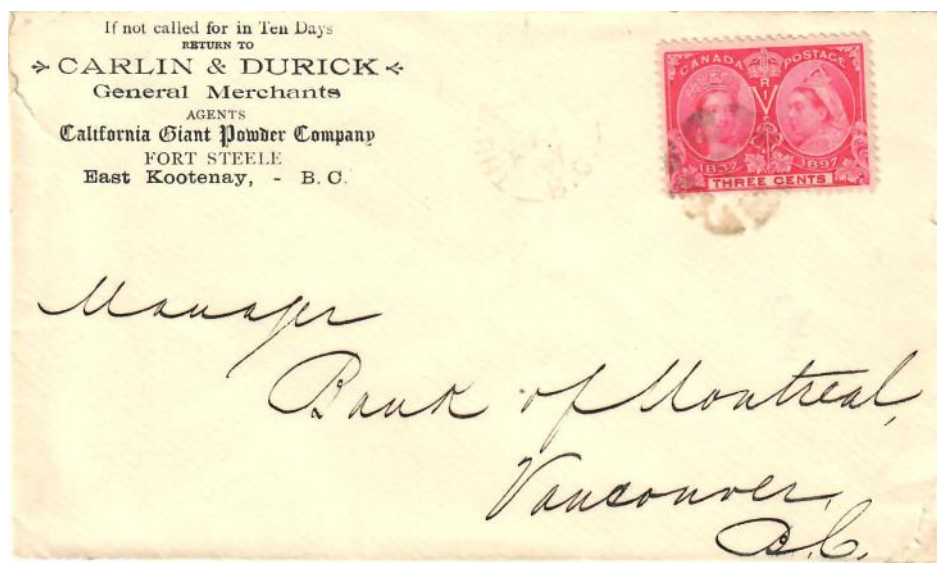


Figure 3. Cover mailed from Fort Steele to Vancouver, dated Thunder Hill Aug. ?, 1897.

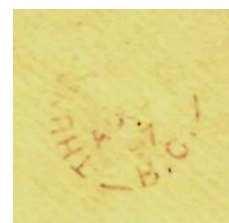


Figure 4. Thunder Hill split ring cancel from Fig. 3, dated Aug. ?, 1897.

A better example of the Thunder Hill strike, dated 1898, on a registered cover to Victoria is shown in Figure 5.



Figure 5. Cover mailed from Thunder Hill to Victoria, receiving a split-ring cancel dated Feb 5, 1898 (courtesy of Tracy Cooper).



The destination of Thunder Hill/Canal Flats on the 1916 cover shown in Figure 6 makes sense as the Thunder Hill post office became Canal Flats on August 1, 1913. The cover was mailed from Field Post Office H.14 on January 22, 1916, transited through Vancouver on February 11, 1916 and Golden Feb. 13, 1916, arriving in Canal Flats on Feb.15, 1916, at which time it received the Canal Flats split-ring cancel that had been proofed Aug. 19, 1913. Canal Flats was originally known as McGillivray's Portage but was renamed in 1818 when the short-lived plan to connect the Kootenay River to Columbia Lake with a canal was undertaken.

The cover has an originating postmark Field Post Office H.14 which was in use in the Somme area of France at this time of WW1 by the British XIV Corps. It also has a censor 1581 marking, believed to be in use by the British in France at this time and is signed by censor H. Miller. It was mailed post-free at source and a stamp was added when it arrived at the post office, probably Vancouver, in Canada. As the destination was outside Vancouver, the correct rate was 2 cents plus 1 cent war tax for a total of 3 cents. The total transit time of just over three weeks is quite impressive for this time in history.

The cover is addressed to Mrs. O.B. Richards and likely was from a family member serving in the war. No record of anyone named Richards from the Canal Flats region serving during WW1 could be found so the family member either had a different name or was not from this area.



Figure 6.  
Cover addressed to Thunder  
Hill/Canal Flats.



Figure 7.  
Reverse of cover shown in Figure 6, showing  
Golden transit marking dated Feb 13, 1916.

Acknowledgement: The help of Bob Toombs and Harold Krische in researching the details of the cover shown in Figure 5 is gratefully acknowledged.

#### References:

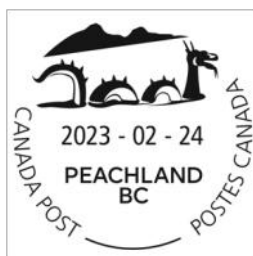
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Cooper, Tracy, *Early Mails of the Upper Columbia and Kootenay Rivers*, PHSC Journal, 89-91, 1997.

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## ODDS AND ENDS

### Recent Pictorial Postmarks



Treasures from the Jack Wallace collection continue to appear. The adjacent mourning cover appeared on Hugo Deshayes's list on July 17 and sold for \$650. Its journey from Quebec by land and sea to its destination in New Westminster is the sort of tale on which postal historians thrive.

Here is a challenge!

Send us your interpretation of the various markings and franking on this cover. What is the story here?

