

An Overview of Canadian Continental Postal Rates from 1763 to 1851 through the Québec City Post Office Window

Purpose of Exhibit: The purpose of this 8 frames exhibit is to illustrate the evolution of the rates and services of the Continental Canadian postal system during the Colonial Administration (1763-1851) shown through the window of the Québec City Post Office. Specific attention has been paid to include all type of letters handled by this major post office, by destination and mail categories matters during 88 years period. This exhibit will also show and explains, behind, **specific and exclusive to Québec rate handstamps used by** this post office. Important **postal routes** connected to that city will therefore also be presented, analyzed and explained.

Historical background: From June 1763 to 5 April 1851 the postal system in what is now Canada was under Colonial Administration depending of Great Britain. From the creation of the postal system and the opening of the Québec City post office in June 1763 to the Postal reform of 1851, many ways (and currencies) were used to determine the postal rates in what is now Canada. In conjunction with the evolution of postal rates, the network of postal roads by land, river or sea is growing and becoming more and more complex. Postal roads and rates are so closely linked that we cannot talk about one without talking about the other.

Treatment/Organization: To allow a better evolutionary understanding of the postal rates during this long and much complex period, the exhibit, based on the various documented rates, is presented geographically (3 main destinations) and within, by postal matters (categories) in a chronologically manner.

Geographical destinations:


1. Domestic rates
2. Rates to/from the British North America Colonies
3. Rates to/from the United States of America

Postal matters categories:

Within each of the above 3 geographic sections, the collection is developed chronologically under a sequence by rate according (when possible and recorded) to the major postal matters categories treated during each period:

- .1 Letter rates
- .2 Free Mail (*Only for Sections 1. & 2.*)
- .3 Money letters
- .4 Non-letter rates

Philatelic Importance/Challenge: These first 9 decades or so of the postal history in Canada saw, of course, the creation in June 1763 of the postal service, the opening of the first official postal road and the introduction of the first internal postal rates. Its development was slow until the control of the Post Office in Canada was transferred from Great Britain to the Provincial Government in 1851. The fact remains that the first beginnings of the postal network of our country are fascinating and that the latter was a determining factor which allowed its development. To the best of authors' knowledge, it is the first time such a national rate study is done through the window of only one Canadian post office (Québec City). It is a real challenge as examples of some Canadian rates of this period are known - when known - often by only one or a few covers and not necessary in relation with Québec City. The missing or unrecorded rates examples are listed and indicated by this icon ☹.

Knowledge, personal Study and Research: This Canadian postal history Era has been more than well researched since a long time. Original research in this classic field is not easy as many fellow philatelists, among the greatest of all times, worked well before the exhibitor. However, the exhibitor continues to make research in the Public Archives, philatelic literature, old Auction catalogues, as well as continuous correspondence with postal historian friends. Primary research and exhibitor's discoveries are noted by the icon .

For more information about the rates and general postal history of this period, please consult:

Boggs, W.S., The Postage Stamps and Postal History of Canada, 1975 (reprint), 870 p.

Steinhart, Allan L., The Rates of Postage of Canada 1711-1900, including Some Rules and Regulations Regarding Rating and Treating of the Mails, Gray Scrimgeour Editor, PHSC, 2011, 443p.

The Encyclopedia of British Empire Postage Stamps 1639-1952, Vol. V The Empire in North America, Robson Lowe Ed., London, 1973, 320p.

Ibidem, Part III, The Maritimes provinces, 760p.



Various Quebec City Almanach and newspapers from BAnQ.

Condition and rarity: Every possible effort has been taken to include items in the best condition obtainable, but if many letters (rates) from this period are very commons, some are known to only one or a hand-full copies (pre-stamp, stamped or stampless letters or covers), while others, who should exist, are still unknown or have not yet been recorded. So, the hunt is on!

What is not shown in this exhibit:

- **Mail to / from the United Kingdom** (with a very few exception*)-This interesting, but large and complex chapter, is a collection by itself. I presented such a collection at BNAPEX 2018 QUÉBEC. Reserve Grand Award. * However, as some rates are known only on transatlantic mail, occasionally this type of mail is represented in this collection.
- **Other Foreign destinations** - During this period (apart for the United States and United Kingdom) items are for most, with a few country exceptions (Germany eras and France), quite rare. I just don't have enough material to present an intelligent and representative collection on this subject.
- **In the present exhibit**, some items are missing. Either because they have not yet been recorded (with a connection to Québec City), or because I just have not yet had the opportunity to acquire the existing ones.

Legend:

- Primary research or discoveries on the part of the exhibitor is noted by the icon 
- Important or unusual items are marked with a red dot ●
- The provenance of some important items, researched by the author, is indicated as follow: Ex. (Name)
- Certificate of authenticity is indicated by this icon: 

General introduction

Forerunners

- 1. Domestic rates**
 - 1.1 Letter rates**
 - 1.2 Free Mail**
 - 1.3 Money letter**
 - 1.4 Non-letter rates**

- 2. Rates to the British North America Colonies**
 - 2.1 Letter rates**
 - 2.2 Money letter**
 - 2.3 Non-letter rates**

- 3. Rates to the United States of America**
 - 3.1 Letter rates**
 - 3.2 Free Mail**
 - 3.3 Registered letter rates**
 - 3.4 Non-letter rates**

Epilogue