



BRITISH COLUMBIA

POSTAL HISTORY

RESEARCH GROUP

MEMBERSHIP DUES
ARE NOW DUE \$5

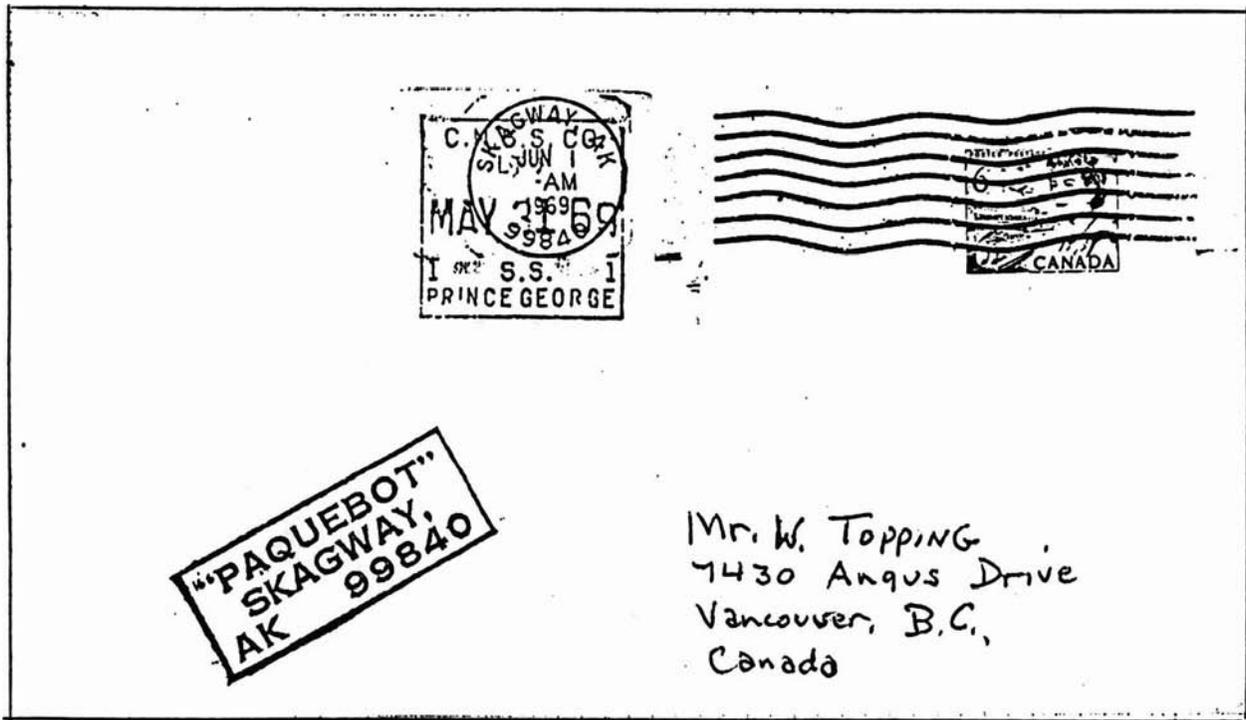
Volume 9 - Number 1

Whole number 33

APRIL 2000

WHEN IS A "PAQUEBOT" COVER NOT A "PAQUEBOT" COVER.

The increasing interest in covers and postal history has produced a spate of attractive covers that are represented as rare examples of postal history. In some cases these "too good" covers are what they are claimed to be, but in other cases they come from very questionable parentage. The cover below was marked with the ticket stamp on the S.S. PRINCE GEORGE dated May 31, 1969, and then marked with a "PAQUEBOT" SKAGWAY hand stamp before being mailed at Skagway on June 1, 1969. The cover looks like a rare "paquebot" cover but this is not the case.



The cover in fact is one of 27 produced by Vern Ardiff, a well known collector of ship cancellations. Vern found that Skagway, Juneau, and Ketchikan, Alaska post offices did not have "paquebot" or "Way Mail" markings and solved the problem by having suitable markings produced. These hand stamps were not approved by the United States Post Office and appear to have been used only on "cancel to order" (CTO) items produced by Mr. Ardiff or other CTO producers. The question is, was the "paquebot" cancellation applied illegally by the Skagway post office or by Mr. Ardiff?

WHEN IS A "PAQUEBOT" COVER NOT A "PAQUEBOT" COVER continued.

Similar "paquebot" markings were produced for British Columbia ports, in 1979, by Eugene Peterson and, in 1980, by Gene Falada. Markings have been reported for Coquitlam, Crofton, Kitimat, Nanaimo, Prince Rupert, Squamish, Tahsis, Vancouver, and Victoria. Similar markings were also produced for Eastern Canadian, as well as, West Coast United States ports.

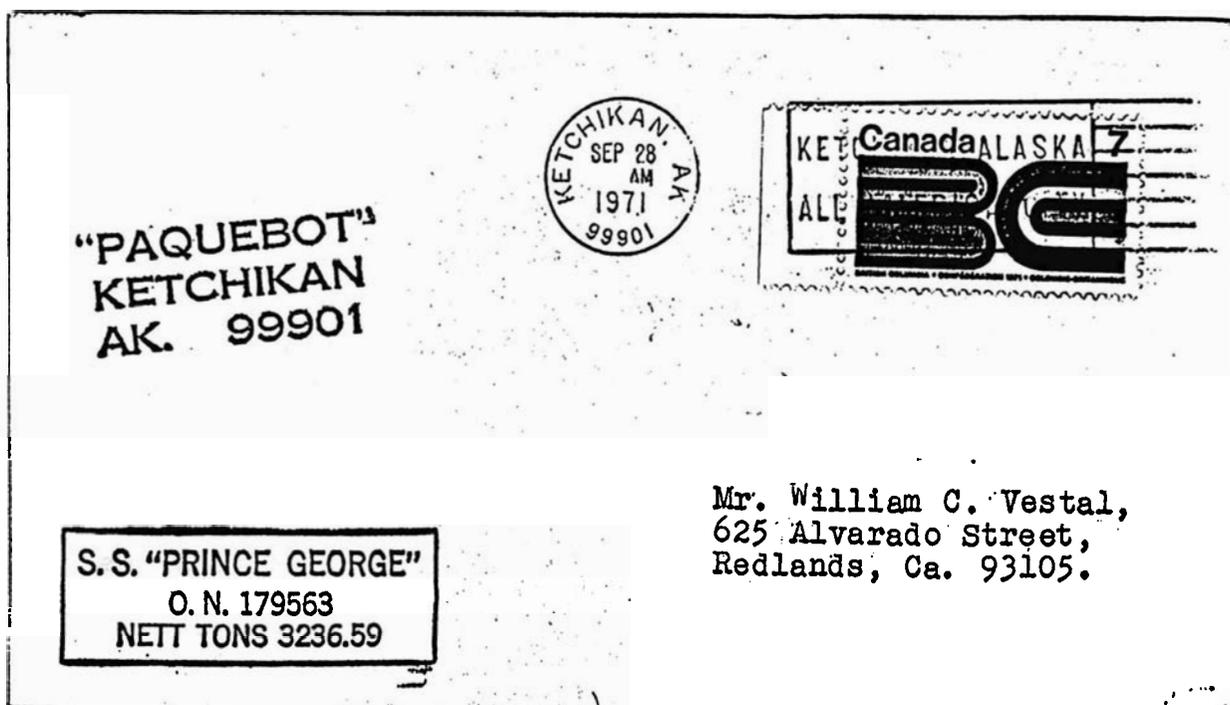
Posted at Sea
Paquebot
Kitimat, B.C.
VBC 1TO

PRINCE RUPERT-PAQUEBOT
54° 22N · 130° 30W

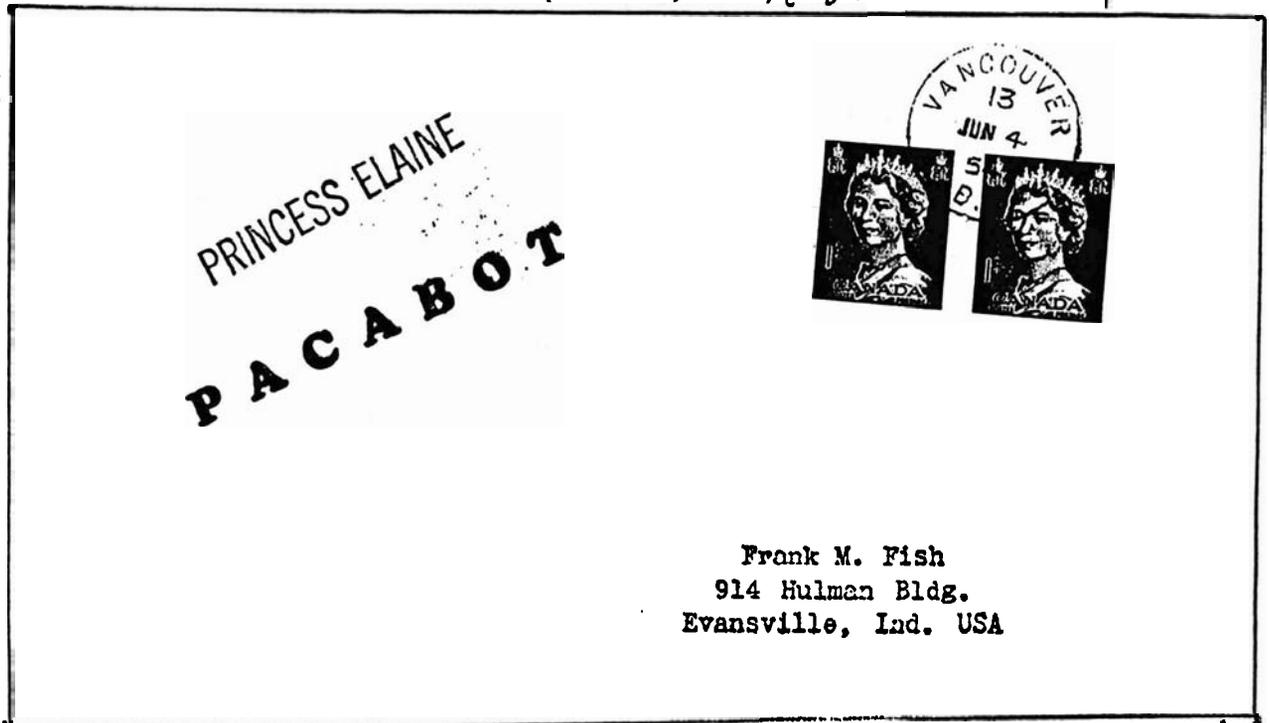
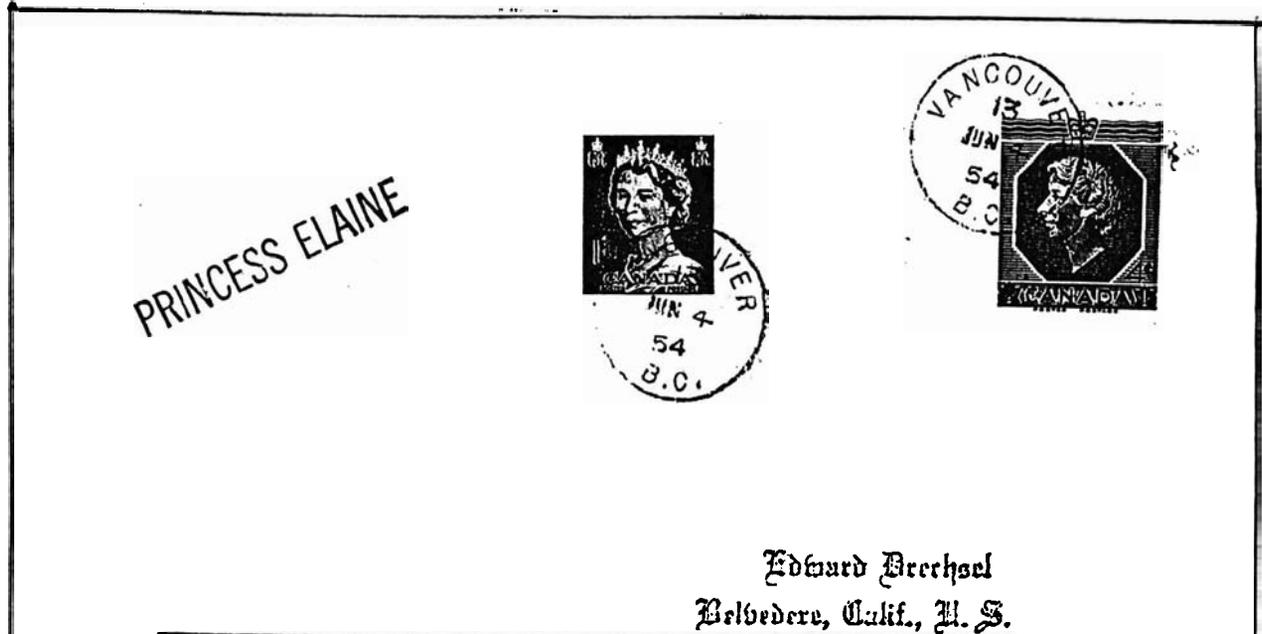
PAQUEBOT
POSTED
AT SEA

There is much confusion as to the status of these questionable "paquebot" markings. Gustave J. Lund lists them in his 1984 publication The Paquebot Marks of the Americas while Roger Hosking, in the 1987 second edition of Paquebot Cancellations of the World does not include them. Collectors are equally divided. There are those who hold the ship covers produced by William C. Vestal, of Redlands, California, and other producers of ship covers, in very high regard while others despise the inclusion of these items in collections.

The same problem exists with the ship markings as listed in Lewis M. Ludlow's, Catalogue of Canadian Railway Cancellations. In general markings used as corner cards rather than as postal markings were not listed. The S.S. PRINCE GEORGE marking on the cover below is not listed in Ludlow because it was a corner card rather than a ship cancellation. The only justification for the marking was under UPU regulations to explain the use of Canadian stamps on mail sent outside Canada, namely Ketchikan, Alaska. The Ketchikan "paquebot" marking is one of those produced by Vern Ardoff and is of an even more questionable nature.



The pair of covers below are marked on the back "MS / 205" are purported to have been mailed on the *PRINCESS ELAINE* on June 4, 1954. At the time it was on the Nanaimo-Vancouver run and had no reason to accept or process mail and as a result the marking is not listed by Ludlow. The cover addressed to Frank M. Fish has been further embellished by the addition of a "PACABOT" marking applied after the cover was received. It looks good but ...

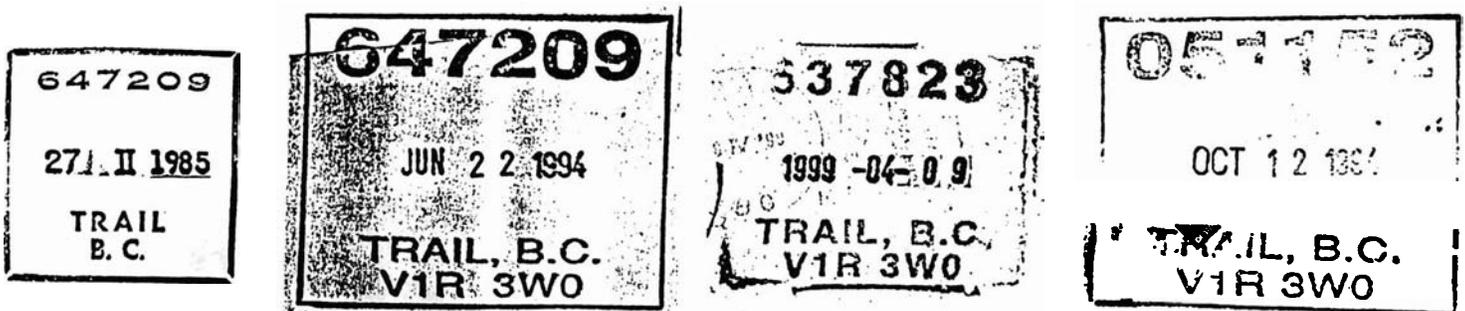


The World Ship Society and other similar organizations have produced many similar covers that are sold to unsuspecting collectors as extremely rare. The failure of catalogues to explain these markings, of a questionable nature, has prompted some dealers to place a high value on these "unlisted by ..." items and as a result covers that should sell for a few dollars are being listed in the hundred to five hundred dollar price range. These philatelic or CTO items are so common that it is impossible to list all of them but fledgling collectors should be aware of them and treat them for what they are, and not, as what some dealers would like them to be.

RC NUMBER - the origin and use

The introduction of the current "RC" numbers can be traced back to the assigning, in the early 1930's, of the four-digit accounting numbers that were used to identify post offices within Canada. The initials "RC" are used to identify the ten-digit "Responsibility Centre" numbers used for accounting purposes by Canada Post. At the same time a six, soon to be seven, digit portion of the number is used to identify the "Retail Counter" within each post office. These six-digit numbers are the numbers used on the standard rectangular daters used in most post offices.

The use of the "RC" number to identify the operator of a postal outlet while at the same time, in an expanded form, being used to identify accounting areas with the postal outlet has caused considerable confusion among postal historians. To further add to the confusion, un-listed "RC" numbers are also assigned to the various branches, depots or sections within some of the larger post offices. The three RC numbers found on the daters from Trail, B.C. are a good example of this problem. The official counter number for Trail is 647209 but the numbers 637823 and 051152 have been used to identify the Letter Carrier Depot and the Delivery Section within the Trail Post Office Building. To fully understand the present RC number system, it is necessary first to look back at the development of the original "Office Numbers". These are the number referred to by collectors as Money Order Office Numbers, or "MOON's" for short.



Post offices in Canada were first assigned numbers in the mid 1930's. At first four-digit numbers were assigned to Accounting Post Offices and later five-digit numbers were assigned to Non-accounting Post Offices. These numbers were assigned to the post office name and indicated the status of the post office. If the status of an office was changed, the number was also changed. The first digit of the number was also used to identify the region in which the post office was located. For example all British Columbia Accounting Post Offices were assigned numbers in the 9000 series. From time to time other number series were assigned to identify special types of offices such as Postal Outlets.

In 1973, a new six-digit number series was introduced to solve the problem of a shortage of numbers in regions such as Ontario. Again the first digit of the number could be used to identify the region in which the post offices was located, and like the earlier series a number was assigned to the post office rather than the postmaster or operator. Larger offices such as Trail might be assigned more than one number for accounting purposes, but only the front counter number was listed in the official list of post offices. Thus although Trail, BC was officially assigned the number 647209, the number 637823 was also assigned to the Trail Letter Carrier Depot in the same building.

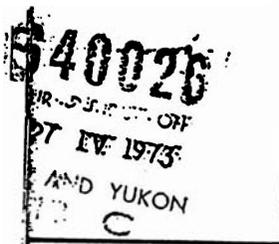
In the late 1980's, a major change in the post office accounting methods took place and a new ten-digit number system was introduced. The numbers were initially referred to as "HIRS" (Human Inventory Resource System) numbers and were assigned to the owner/operator of the Retail Counter rather than to the Post Office itself. The first seven digits identify the Retail Counter (RC), although at present all numbers appear as six-digit numbers with one or more unwritten zeros preceding the number. Within the next few years, when the present series of six-digit numbers will be exhausted, the seven-digit numbers will come into use.

For post offices established prior to 1990, the six-digit number shown on the dater at the retail counter remained unchanged. For example the number shown on the Trail Post Office dater remained 647209 but the actual ten-digit number was 0647209010 with the last three digits "010" being used to indicate counter service. The last three digits "450", "490", and "570" were assigned for accounting purposes to identify different section or branches within the Trail Post Office such as the Letter Carrier Depot. At the same time Retail Managers and Retail Reps are assigned RC#'s with up to eight sub numbers being used to identify the various accounts under their jurisdiction. Occasionally these numbers are used on daters and the Trail RC# 051153 falls into this category. A study of the ten-digit numbers shows that it is possible to identify post office status using the last three digits of the ten-digit numbers. For example Semi-staff offices end in "470" while Retail Outlets end in "920" and Revenue Offices end in "480".

At the same time as the new numbers were introduced, the post office policy was changed and the new numbers were assigned to the operator of the retail counter rather than the actual post office name as was done in the past. As a result each time a retail counter (post office) changes ownership a new number is used. The new numbers were initially assigned as blocks of numbers to each region but this was quickly changed and, at present all numbers are assigned from Ottawa. Each of the new numbers contains a check digit, designed to reduce the chances of error in recording the numbers. (A more detailed study of the use of check digits can be found in the PHSC Journal, Vol. 59 page 15.) As a result of the use of a check digit is that about one in every eight consecutive number is assigned. The numbers, which are assigned consecutively, ignore postal regions but do give an indication as to the date when a request was made for a change in postal status.

From time to time, under the new accounting system introduced in 1990, numbers are assigned to special postal functions such as Commercial Sales and these numbers are used on daters much to the confusion of postal historians. The two numbers below are such numbers. The RC number 640026 was assigned to the Pacific Division Cash Accounts Section which was further divided, for accounting purposes, into 11 sub sections using the ten-digit number system. The 640018 RC number was used at the Vancouver Postage Stamp Depot and was withdrawn before 1995 when the B.C. and Yukon Postage Stamp Depot was moved to Edmonton.

These in-house numbers are extremely rare but do appear from time to time on regular mail. A complete listing of all the ten digit numbers for British Columbia would run to over 30 pages and would only further muddy an already confused situation.



From Andrew Scott



POSTAL WATCH
Bill Topping

On a recent trip to Vancouver Island I spent my spare time visiting recently established post offices and at each post office I obtained a cancellation from the rubber dater.

The first, and most obvious, fact was that although all the daters were manufactured in 1999, there was no consistency in shape or information shown on the daters despite the fact that almost all the offices were designated as FA (Franchise "A"). Samples of the variety of markings obtained are shown at right.

Although most of the new post offices had been issued with MI-00048 (96-09) labels some were issued the older pre 1996 types. A few office refused to provide labels but for the most part I found the postal clerks most co-operative and would like to express my thanks for their assistance.

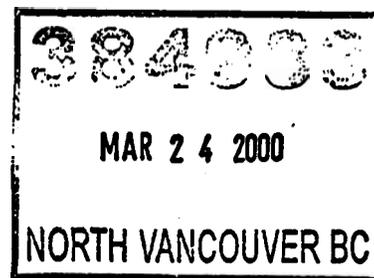
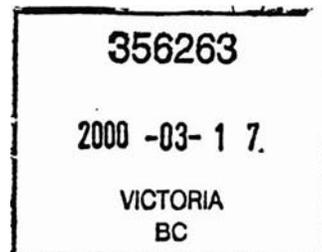
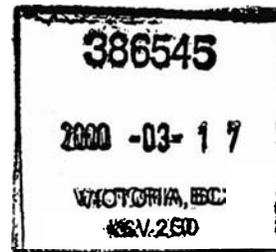
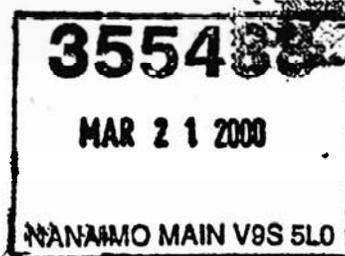
At the same time a number of errors were noted.

Harbour Centre RO (355712) was using the new RC number on the label and receipt but was issued with a dater showing the former number 636053.

Gorge Plaza RO (355976) is an upgrade of the former Victoria SUB 61 and replaces the recently closed Tillicum RO located a few blocks away. The receipt shows the correct office name and RC number but the newly issued dater reads 355976 SUB/AUX 61 and the incorrect postal code V9V 1T0 not V9A 2A0.

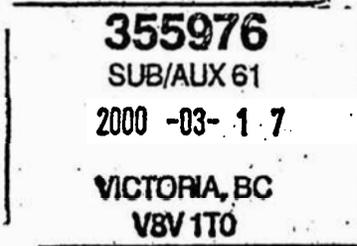
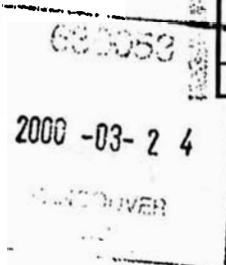
Lagoon Grocery (382930) and Bookkeeping Unlimited (382922) in Nanaimo are both parcel pick up (SC) locations and have no equipment showing the name or RC number of the office.

Willington Heights, which was moved a mile or so to the west, is shown as being in Vancouver in the postal records but the dater reads BURNABY, which is correct.



Canada Post / Postes Canada
Postal Outlet / Comptoir Postal
Gorge Plaza
2497 Tillicum Rd
Victoria V9A2A0
GST/TPSH: 137526174

2000/03/17 12:32:32 id.SDM
RC/CR355976 W/G1 TR46491



FILE	DATE	OUTLET	TOWN	OLD RC	NEW RC	CODE
960	1999 10 28	Pitt Meadows SS	Pitt Meadows	645583	closed	V3Y 1A0
962	1999 11 06	Westminster PO	Penticton	645583	358789	V2A 1J0
963	1999 11 01	James Bay PO	Victoria	630993	386545	V8V 2G0
964	1999 11 12	Yellowhead PO	Smithers	new	359297	VOJ 2N0
965	1999 11 ??	Bowen Island	Bowen Island	640719	closed	VON 1G0
966	1999 11 30	New Westminster CSC	New Westminster	073989	moved	V3L 1B0
969	1999 11 22	Mission GMO 2	Mission	251941	387487	V2V 1A0
970	1999 12 ??	Abbotsford GMO 11	Abbotsford	178160	387340	V2S 5A0
971	1999 11 20	Courtenay GMO 2	Comox	651818	386502	V9N 5H0
971a	1999 11 29	Comox Centre PO	Comox	651818	386502	V9H 5H0
972	1999 11 29	Nanaimo GMO 2	Nanaimo	644714	386537	V9R 6L0
972a	1999 11 29	South Gate Mall PO	Nanaimo	644714	386573	V9R 6L0
973	1999 11 28	Ladysmith GMO 1	Ladysmith	651710	386529	VOR 2E0
973a	1999 11 29	Coronation Square PO	Ladysmith	651710	386529	VOR 2E0
974	1999 11 28	Nanaimo GMO 12	Nanaimo	651524	386510	V9S 5K0
974a	1999 11 29	Beaufort Centre PO	Nanaimo	651524	386510	V9S 5K0
975	1999 11 30	Abbotsford GMO 14	Abbotsford	654272	387886	V2T 1X0
975a	1999 12 01	Clearbrook Town Centre	Abbotsford	654272	387886	V2T 1X0
976	1999 12 03	Big Eddy CFS	Revelstoke	262382	388335	VOE 3K0
976	1999 12 ??	Ta Ta Creek CFS	Ta Ta Creek	CFS	385247	VOB 2H0
979	1999 12 14	Lakeview Heights CFS	Kelowna	CFS	355909	VOH 1V0
980	1999 11 30	Campbell River GMO 6	Campbell River	136654	closed	V9W 2G0
981	2000 01 01	Fanny Bay	Fanny Bay	246913	closed	VOR 1W0
982	1999 12 22	Capilano PO	N. Vancouver	062596	closed	V7P 1S3
983	1999 12 ??	Corner Grocery <i>Frnp?</i>		new	384739	
984	1999 12 ??	Spillamacheen	Spillamacheen		642517	VOA 1P0
985	1999 12 12	Campbell River GMO 3	Campbell River	148008	384348	V9W 5T0
985a	1999 12 13	Ironwood Mall PO	Campbell River	148008	384348	V9W 5T0
986	1998 06 30	Halston Esso CFS	Kamloops	CFS	349003	V2B 6C5
987	1999 09 02	Kingsgate PO	Vancouver <i>GMD 48</i>	648108	384321	V5T 1W0
989	1999 12 16	Duncan Bay CFS	Campbell River	CFS	388572	V9W 2J0
991	1999 12 31	Victoria GMO 62	Victoria	1522161	388505	V8N 4G0
991a	2000 01 01	Cadboro Bay PO	Victoria	152161	388505	V8N 4G0
992	2000 01 20	Capilano PO	N. Vancouver	new	388459	V7P 1S0
993	1999 12 08	Hasty Market CFS	Vancouver	CFS	388718	V6Z 2VH
994	2000 01 18	Barkerville SO	Barkerville	640446	MY-SP	VOK 1B0
996	2000 02 01	Sasamat RO	Vancouver	655430	388777	V6R 2H0
997	1999 12 14	Lynnmore PO	N. Vancouver	654823	closed	V7J 2L0
999	2000 02 11	Squamish RO	Squamish	656615	closed	VON 3G0
1000	2000 01 25	Eagle Bay PO	Eagle Bay	092967	388785	VOE 1T0
1002	2000 02 14	Squamish CFS	Squqmish	CFS	412147	VON 3G0
1003	2000 01 31	Delta RPO 16	Delta	654515	moved	V4L 2C0
1004	2000 02 28	Chinatown PO	Vancouver	011959	movrd	V6A 2T0
1005	2000 02 01	Powell River GMO 11	Powell River	177156	388521	V8A 5K0
1005a	2000 02 02	Town Centre PO		177156	388521	
1006	2000 02 01	Westholme PO	Westholme	130540	388904	VOR 1K0
1009	2000 04 09	Hasty Market #30	Vancouver	388718	388416	V6Z 2V0
1009a	2000 04 10	Yaletown PO	Vancouver	388718	388416	V6Z 2V0
1010	2000 03 27	Squamish CFS	Squamish	412147	412880	VON 3G0
1010a	2000 03 28	Squamish PO	Squamish	412147	412880	VON 3G0
1011	2000 03 27	Fanny Bay PO	Fanny Bay	new	412449	VOR 1W0
1012	1999 12 01	Tulameen RO	Tulameen	130737	388319	VOX 2L0
1013	2000 04 03	Coquitlan Centre PO	Coquitlam	170429	moved	V3B 5R0

CANADA POST 2000

Collectors continue to complain about the number of products produced by Canada Post. Unfortunately the special products are not produced for the true collector. Over a third of a million people maintain a deposit account with Canada Post Philatelic section and in most cases they purchase one or more copies of each issue released.

One of the latest promotions was the Millennium Collection. The Official Millennium Keepsakes stamp box, retailing at \$8.99 plus taxes, produced 1.2 million sales. At the same time 200,000 copies of the Millennium Collection stamps books, retailing at \$59.99 plus taxes, were printed. Although according to Michel Tremblay, vice-president of Retail Business, the sales target for both products were not met. At the same time to overcome the objections of catalogue publishers to stamps in the Millennium Stamp Book not being issued for postal purposes, Canada Post is producing 17 Millennium Souvenir Sheets, of four stamps each, featuring the stamps contained in the Stamp Book. The press run is expected to be 36 million sheets with some stamps being available in booklet form as well.

Add to these, the year 2000 Millennium coin sets, at \$24.95, plus taxes, or \$149.95 for sterling silver coins, is being successfully sold by Canada Post, and it is not surprising that Canada Post pays little regard to stamp collectors complaints regarding the number of products being produced by Canada Post.

The Santa letter-writing Program also produced a good return for Canada Post as over one million letters were received each with a 46 cent stamp affixed. In fairness to Canada Post it should be pointed out that 13,000 volunteers replied to 1,026,601 letters received in 1999, an increase of four-percent from 1998.

Despite concerns that the internet and e-mail would put Canada Post out of business the use of Canada Post has increased in all areas. The revenue from letter mail is up by 2.2 percent, while the revenue from Xpresspost was up 27 percent. Revenue from both Addressed, Addmail and Regular Parcel Post were up slightly while Expedited Parcel Post increased by 29.3 percent.

Based on information from Performance Vol. 14, No 8.

A CHECKLIST OF BRITISH COLUMBIA POST OFFICES

The introduction of the Human Resource Inventory System (HRIS) numbers also referred to as "RC" (Responsibility Centre or Retail Counter) numbers and the change to assigning the RC number to the owner or operator of the Postal Outlet has produced many problems in the listing of current post offices. In the past, Checklists listed the post offices in alphabetical order with sub offices listed under the name of the main post office. In most cases the name were the name appearing on the metal dater and the rubber money order stamp. This system of listing is not suited to the dating equipment issued today. The basic daters contain the "RC" number, the name of the city or region, and the name of the province. In a few cases the Sub/GMO name or number may be included as well as the postal code. Only in a few cases does the rubber dater contain the actual name of the postal outlet. Duplication of Retail Outlet names is also common.

This months Reply Sheet asks for input as to what information should be included in an up date of the BC Checklist of Post Offices and how offices should be arranged. A complete listing of all Post Office in operation since 1990 takes about 30 pages.

MEMBERSHIP DUES \$5.00 (CAN OR US) ARE NOW DUE

RESPONSE FORM

Volume ⁹8 Number 1, April 2000

Forms should be mailed to Bill Topping
B.C. Postal History News Letter
7430 Angus Drive
Vancouver, B.C. V6P 5K2 CANADA

CHECKLIST OF BRITISH COLUMBIA POST OFFICES - proposed update

I keep being asked if I intend to reprint the BC Post Office book. The answer is "Yes". Because of the changes in the postal system the old format is not suitable. I would like your input on the types of information you would like to see included.

Rate each of the items below by circling the number that best indicates the need for inclusion. +2 essential, -2 unnecessary

- | | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|----|----|---|----|----|
| 1. RC number | +2 | +1 | 0 | -1 | -2 |
| 2. Outlet name | +2 | +1 | 0 | -1 | -2 |
| 3. Outlet Grade (ie Franchise A) | +2 | +1 | 0 | -1 | -2 |
| 4. Address | +2 | +1 | 0 | -1 | -2 |
| 5. Postal code | +2 | +1 | 0 | -1 | -2 |
| 6. Date open | +2 | +1 | 0 | -1 | -2 |
| 7. Date Close | +2 | +1 | 0 | -1 | -2 |
| 8. Former number | +2 | +1 | 0 | -1 | -2 |
| 9. Previous name | +2 | +1 | 0 | -1 | -2 |
| 10. Changed to number | +2 | +1 | 0 | -1 | -2 |
| 11. New name | +2 | +1 | 0 | -1 | -2 |
| 12. Operator (postmaster) | +2 | +1 | 0 | -1 | -2 |
| 13. Post Office phone number | +2 | +1 | 0 | -1 | -2 |
| 14. Contractor | +2 | +1 | 0 | -1 | -2 |
| 15. Regional Representative | +2 | +1 | 0 | -1 | -2 |

Name
Address
.....

DUES ENCLOSED \$5.00
Checks payable to -
Bill Topping

FINANCIAL REPORT - 1999-2000

REVENUE

Surplus previous year	\$794.00
Membership dues	275.00
New members added	5.00
Sale of back issues	38.75
Grant from BNA	87.00
	<hr/>
Revenue	1199.75

EXPENSES

News Letters - members	\$275.00
News Letters - new members	5.00
News Letters - back Issues	38.75
Mailings to BNA officers	40.00
BNA free News Letters	-
Complimentary News Letters	15.00
Sample copies	171.25
	<hr/>
Expenses	545.00
	<hr/>
Surplus	\$654.75

The British Columbia Postal History News Letter is published quarterly in conjunction with the British North Philatelic Society.

The membership fees are \$5.00 paid in Canadian or U.S. funds. Individual issues sell for \$1.25 post paid.

Bill Topping (604) 261-1508
7430 Angus Drive
Vancouver, BC, V6P 5K2, CANADA

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