



BRITISH COLUMBIA
POSTAL HISTORY
RESEARCH GROUP

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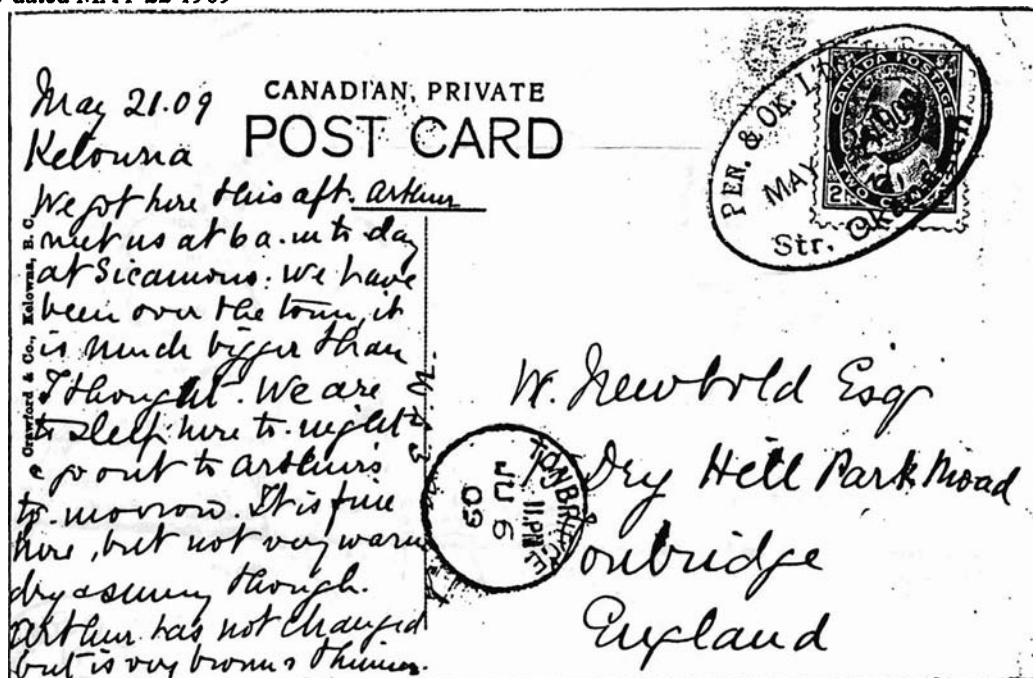
OKANAGAN STEAMERS

Mail service on Okanagan Lake appear to have started with the establishment an RPO mail service on the Steamer Aberdeen in about 1901. Prior to that Way Mail on the interior lakes had been carried by ships captains as a courtesy to the early settlers. To date only one cover with the STEAMER ABERDEEN postal marking has been reported and it is dated JUN 25 01. A second Steamer Aberdeen marking on stamp is dated JULY 8 02. The CPR Steamer Aberdeen served on Okanagan Lake from 1893 to 1916.



In 1907 the Steamer Okanagan was added to the CPR fleet serving Okanagan Lake and on APR 20, 1909 a rubber hammer was proofed reading "PEN. & OK. LDG. R.P.O. / Str. Okanagan". This dater was used for about a year. In June 1911 the "PEN. & O.L. - R.P.O." daters were introduced and the daters bearing the ship name were withdrawn.

Ludlow S-5 dated MAY 22 1909



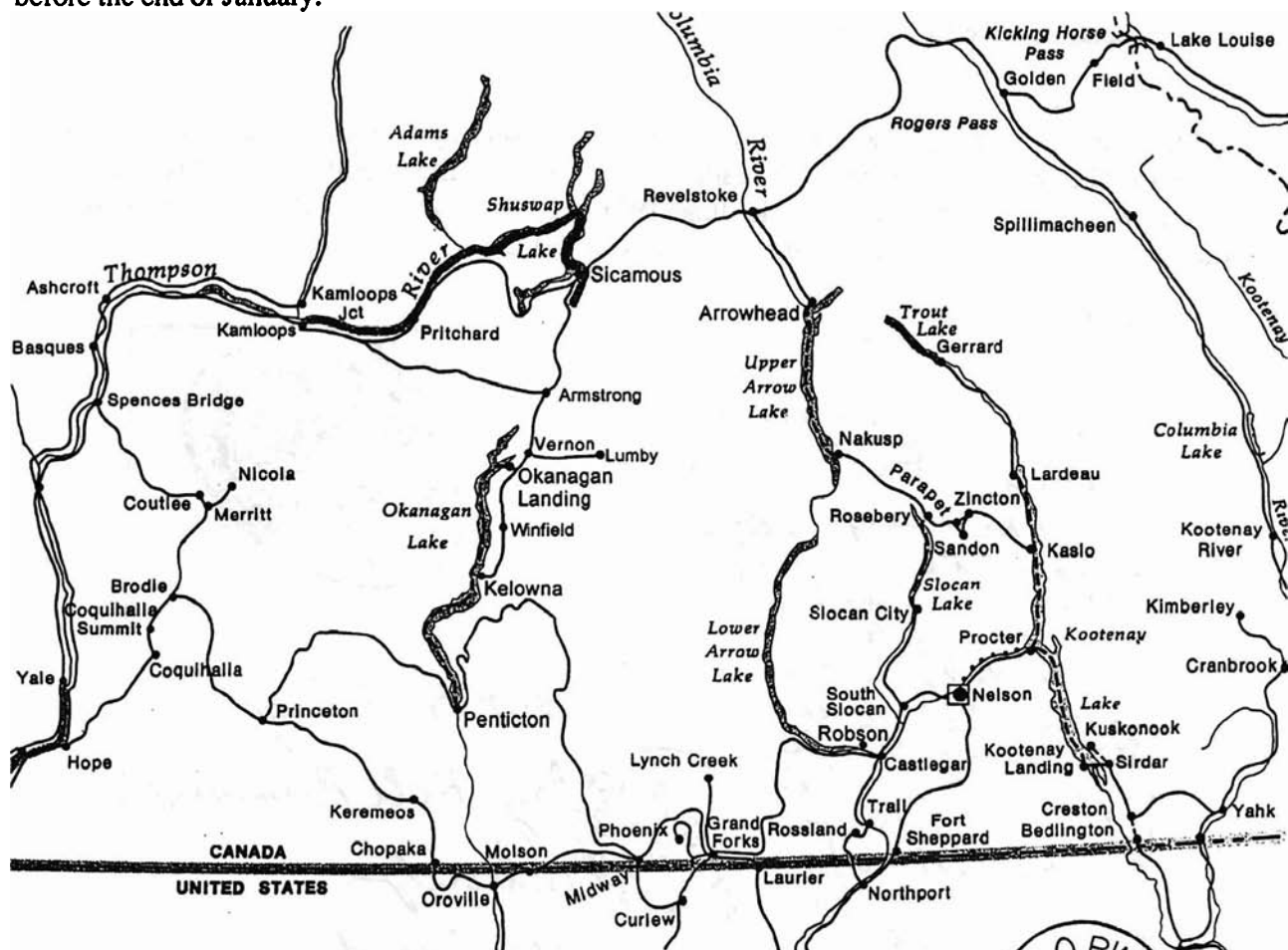
The following article on "Travelling Post Offices on Boats - Why?" was written by R.F. Marriage, a retired R.P.O. mail clerk and appeared in the January-February, 2002 issue of The Newsletter of the Canadian R.P.O. Study Group edited by Ross Gray.

TRAVELLING POST OFFICES ON BOATS - WHY?

by R.F. Marriage

Nature was not kind to southern British Columbia in pre-historic times. When the Cordilleran ice sheet retreated ten or twelve thousand years ago, it left the topography of the country pretty much as it is now, except for vegetation cover. The glaciers had gouged deep, narrow valleys, most of them aligned roughly north and south. It is not on record how inconvenient the aboriginal people found this to be but old trails indicate they did cope with the problem. But when impatient Europeans took over this part of the country and wanted to travel and trade east and west, the difficulties became obvious. High divides (passes), snowbound much of the year, required long detours, often of hundreds of miles. This problem was further aggravated in Canada, when the Oregon Treaty of 1846 fixed the boundary on the 49th parallel, although it was a few years before people on either side of the line paid much attention to it.

However, nature had provided some convenient routes of travel and trade which would cater to local and regional business for over half a century. The retreating glaciers had filled the valleys with water and while the steep shorelines made railway and wagon road construction difficult, steamboats provided a free right-of-way needing no maintenance except at landing points. Many ports of call did not even require a wharf. Shallow draft vessels simply nosed on to a beach to discharge and load freight and passengers. Only the occasional severe winter caused any trouble. Deep water cools very slowly and thick ice seldom formed before the end of January.



Soon after completion of the Shuswap & Okanagan Railway in 1892, the growth of settlement and business in the Okanagan Valley warranted use of a postal car to make up mail for local exchange on the line and for despatch south via the steamer "Aberdeen". In 1894, R.P.O. service was established between Sicamous and Okanagan Landing. At that time, the term "M.C." (Mail Clerk) was still in use to designate such an office.

RR-149
 Proof Date - 1894/07/09
 Period
 1894/11/03 to 1901/04/23

TRAVELLING POST OFFICES ON BOATS - WHY?

by R.F. Marriage

In 1901, a new dater was issued reading Okanagan Landing & Sicamous R.P.O. As a matter of passing interest, the engines and other equipment on the S. & O. Railway were always lettered "Canadian Pacific". The parent company made a lease agreement in 1915 for 999 years with the S. & O., the signing secretary being the same for both companies.

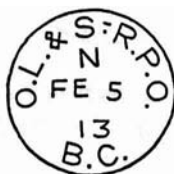


W-102Y

Proof Dates - unknown

Period

1901 to 1913



W-102Z, Ornament # 174

Proof Date - 1909/07/19

Period

1909 to 1912

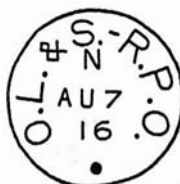


W-102X, Ornament # 172

Proof Date - 1913/02/02

Period

1913 to 1923



W-102W, Hammer I

Proof Date - 1915/08/25

Period

1915 to 1935



W-102W, Hammer II

Proof Date - 1924/09/25

Period

Unreported

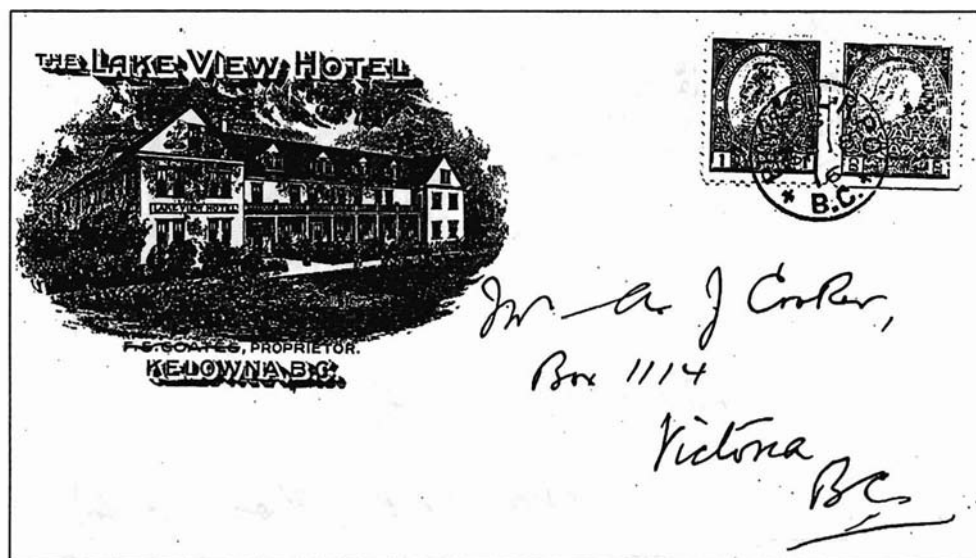


W-102V

Proof Date - 1919/01/25

Period - 1922

Early in the 20th century, it was obvious that the closed mail service on the lake steamers was inadequate and Ottawa was urged to supply R.P.O. type service. In 1911, the "Aberdeen" and the "Okanagan" were fitted with mail rooms on their freight decks. The deckhands continued to exchange mails with side service couriers at each landing, as it was done at railway stations. Although it was a water service, the route was designated Penticton & Okanagan Landing R.P.O. Plans of the steamship "Sicamous", launched in 1914, included a mail room. The combined operation of the trains and boats, with resorting mails enroute, offered a quality of service, which has never been equalled. The highways of the day, although crude, forced the C.P.R. to withdraw the "Sicamous" from service, as she was incurring a loss of \$14,000 monthly, a large sum in 1934.



W-106b, Ornament #178

PEN. & O.L. - R.P.O. / + B.C. +

S, SP 18, 16

TRAVELLING POST OFFICES ON BOATS - WHY?

by R.F. Marriage



S-201

Proof Date - unknown

Period

1901 to 1902



S-5

Proof Date - 1909/04/20

Period

1909 to 1910



W-106a, Ornament # 176

Proof Date - 1911/06/29

Period

1912 to 1915



W-106b, Ornament # 178

Proof Date - 1911/06/29

Period

1916 to 1918



W-104, Hammer I

Proof Date - 1919/02/25

Period

1919 to 1923



W-104, Hammer II

Proof Date - 1923/10/03

Period

unreported



W-104, Hammer III

Proof Date - 1923/10/26

Period

1923 to 1935



W-105, Hammer I

Proof Date - 1919/04/09

Period

1924 to 1927

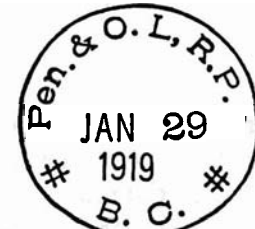


W-105, Hammer II

Proof Date - 1928/04/06

Period

unreported

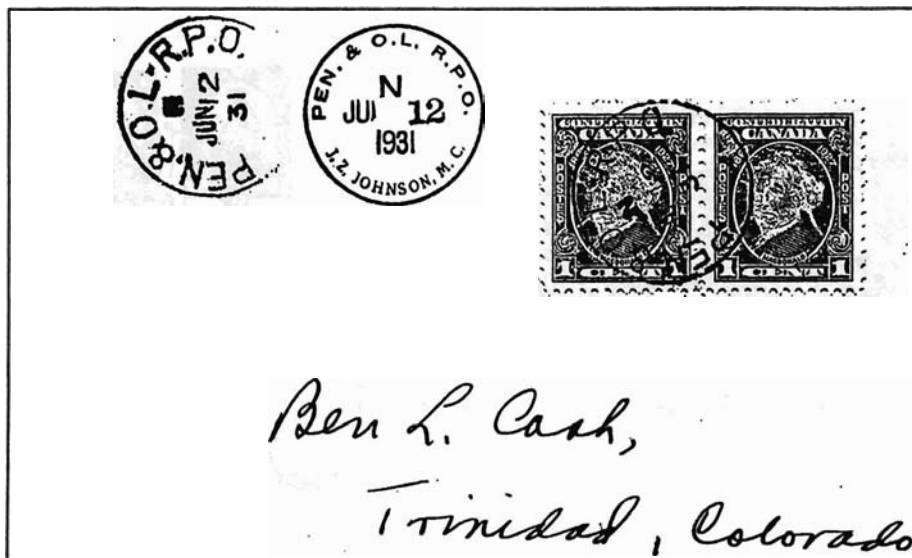


Unlisted

Proof Date - 1919/01/29

Period

unreported



W-104 (Hammer III)

PEN. & O. L. - R. P. O. / .

N, JUN 12, 31

W-104Z PEN. & O. L. R. P. O. / J. Z. JOHNSON, M. C.

N, JUN 12, 1931

TRAVELLING POST OFFICES ON BOATS - WHY?

by R.F. Marriage

Already holding running rights on the C.N.R., from Vernon to Kelowna, the C.P.R. extended its mixed passenger run to Kelowna and the new Kelowna & Sicamous R.P.O. was established the first week of January, 1935. D. Chapman Company had a contract to haul closed mails between Penticton and Kelowna and also served the intermediate offices.

In the 1940's, the Kel. & Sic. R.P.O. was augmented by a baggage car service on the C.N.R., from Kamloops to Armstrong, Vernon, Winfield and Kelowna, southbound only.

In 1954, the Post Office cancelled its contracts with the railways and established highway services between Kamloops and Okanagan Valley points, hauling closed mails. The writer was employed on trains 708 and 707 the last day the car operated - September 30th 1954.



W-64

Proof Date - 1935/05/30
Period
1935 to 1949

W-64D

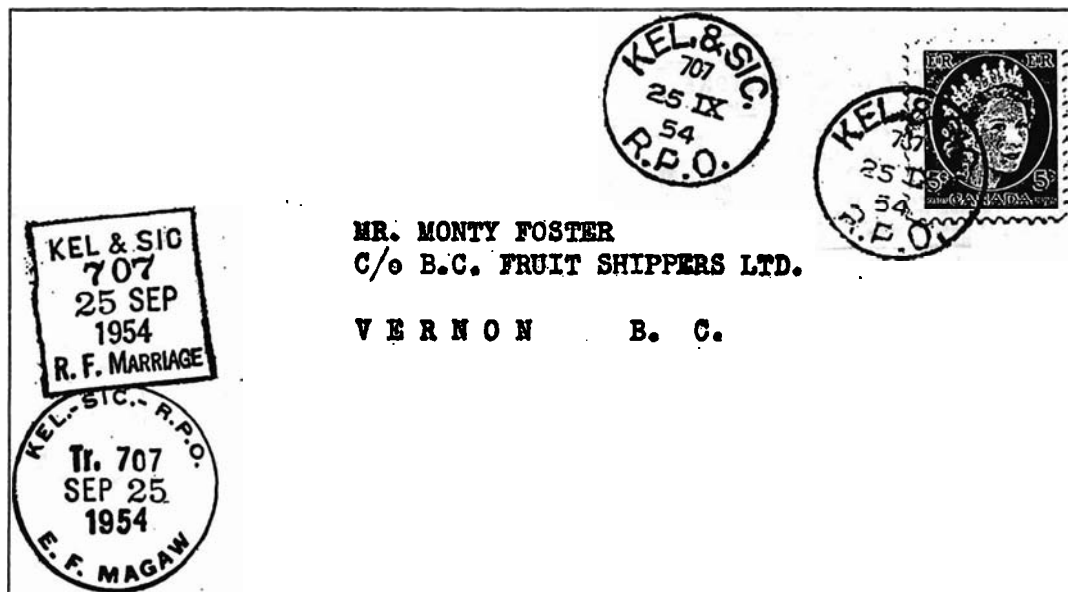
Proof Date - 1949/08/17
Period
1949 to 1954



KEL & SIC. TR.
20 SEP 54
A. D. GREEN

W-64F

Period
1951 to 1954



W-64D KEL. & SIC. / R. P. O. 707, 25 IX, 54

W-64B KEL & SIC / R. F. MARRIAGE 707, 25 SEP, 1954

W-64G KEL. - SIC. - R. P. O. / E. F. MAGAW Tr. 707, SEP 25, 1954

Although the Kootenay mining towns did a lot of business in Spokane, customs and immigration procedures added complications. The Kettle Valley line was yet to be completed. Another R.P.O. established on a water route, operated between Robson and Arrowhead. It was inaugurated in 1912, when the parsimonious Post Office Department finally succumbed to political pressure. The improved service was long overdue. The route connected the busy Kootenay mining area with Revelstoke and the main line to Vancouver. This connection was important to government and stimulated work in other parts of Canada, especially on the west coast. The R. and A. R.P.O. was abolished in 1950.

TRAVELLING POST OFFICES ON BOATS - WHY?

by R.F. Marriage



W-131a, Ornament # 192

Proof Date - 1911/06/29

Period
1912 to 1950

W-131b, Ornament # 194

Proof Date - 1911/06/29

Period
1912 to 1916

W-131c, Ornament # 196

Proof Date - 1911/06/29

Period
1912 to 1913ROBSON WEST AND REVELSTOKE
Via Arrow Lakes (Columbia River Route)

READ DOWN		Miles	TABLE 121		READ UP	
801	803		(Pacific Time)		802	804
A.M.	P.M.				P.M.	P.M.
9.05	6.15		Lv NELSON 114, 115	Ar	11.00	
6.15	3.15		Lv Rossland 114, 115	Ar	1.00	
3.15	10.30		Lv Midway 114, 115	Ar	4.35	
10.30			Ar Robson West 114, 115	Lv	9.20	
		0.0	Lv Robson West	Ar	9.00	
			Robson			
			Syringa Creek			
			Deer Park			
			Renata			
			Broadwater			
			Edgewood			
			Sherwood			
			Forslund			
			Needles			
			Fauquier			
			Burton City			
			Graham			
			MacKinson			
			East Arrow Park			
			Arrow Park			
			Birds			
			Rook Island			
			Forest Glen			
			West Demars			
		92.0	Lv NAKUSP	Ar	12.10	
			Foothill			
			St. Leon			
			Halcyon			
		116.0	Ar ARROWHEAD	Lv	9.05	
		29.0	Lv ARROWHEAD	Ar	8.45	1.35
			Sidmouth		8.35	1.20
			Wigwam		8.15	1.00
			Greenside 10		7.55	12.35
			Ar REVELSTOKE 10	Lv	7.30	12.10
			Lv REVELSTOKE	Ar	1.00	12.00
			Ar VANCOUVER 11	Lv	9.00	9.00
		535.8				

EXPLANATION OF SIGNS—TABLES 117 to 121

○ Regular Ports of Call.
 • Daily. † Daily except Sunday.
 † Daily except Mon. & Mon. and Thurs.
 • Tues. and Fri. & Thurs. and Sat.
 • Thurs. † Stops on Signal.
 • Tues. & Mon.

† Tues., Thurs. and Sat.
 • Sat. † Fri.
 • Wed. † Mon., Wed. and Fri.
 • Tues. and Sat.
 Light face figures denote A.M. time.
 Dark face figures denote P.M. time.

C.P.R. Public Timetable, March 1, 1930

References:

Kelowna Daily Courier

"Okanagan History" 63rd Report of the Okanagan Historical Society, Copyright 1999

"Why a Century of Sternwheel Boats" by Captain O. L. Estabrooks, Copyright 1968

W-131A

Proof Date - 1912/12/31

Period
Unreported

W-131B

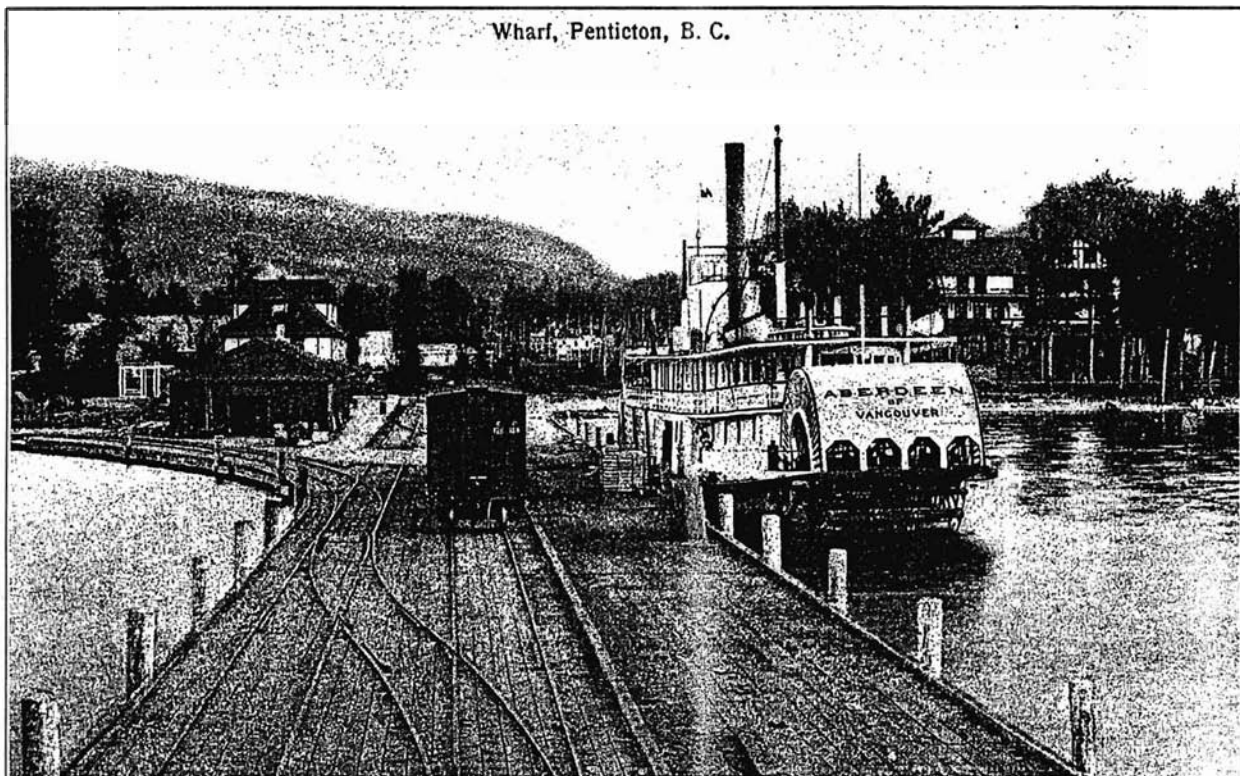
Proof Date - 1914/08/26

Period
Unreported

W-130Z

Proof Date - 1919/02/05

Period
1919



Subsequent to the publishing of Mr. Marriage's article in the January-February issue of the Canadian R.P.O. Study Group Newsletter, he made the following additional comments;

I was delighted to receive a copy of your latest newsletter reproducing my article about the R.P.O.'s, that cruised the inland waters of southern B.C., in the golden years of the railroad age. I had the privilege of a few working trips on the Robson & Arrowhead R.P.O., shortly before its demise at the end of 1950. I enjoyed particularly the various illustrations accompanying my article.

The picture of the Penticton wharf shown was taken from the top of a box car before the Aberdeen (wooden hull) was scrapped in 1916 and after the completion of the Incola Hotel (behind the trees to the right) and the Kettle Valley offices and station building on the left, behind the freight shed, in 1912. The tracks in the foreground led to the car barge apron. In the thirties the wharf was gradually replaced by rock fill and the barge slip remained in service until barge traffic was eliminated in 1972, having served its purpose since 1908.

J. Z. Johnson, whose private handstamp is shown in the article, came to B.C. from the Moose Jaw Postal District. One day in December 1934, he was taken sick going south. A doctor was called to the wharf at Kelowna and wanted to put him in the hospital but he begged to be allowed get home to Penticton. Captain Weeks helped him work the way offices and tie out the dispatches and he made it. He died in the Penticton hospital a few days later.

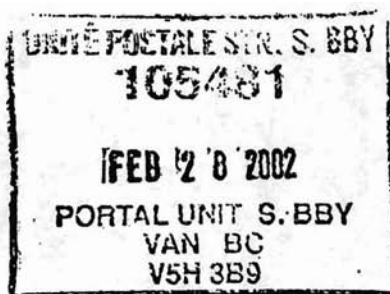
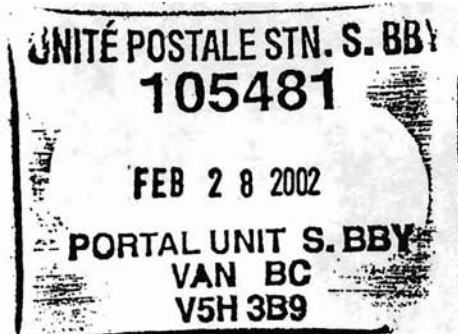
I joined the R.M.S. at Calgary, in August 1949 and learned a short time later, by way of Ottawa's distribution correction lists, of the elimination of the Lindsay & Haliburton R.P.O. Little did we realize, that the R.M.S. was headed for oblivion. A scant sixteen years later, there was nothing left west of Winnipeg and by 1971, everything else was gone. One could see that the end was inevitable.

It is gratifying to know that people are interested in the R.M.S., when many don't know that such a service ever existed and I hope you will carry on research in this fascinating field. Good luck to you.

SOUTH BURNABY PORTAL UNIT

From Jim Miller

Two year ago the South Burnaby Postal Unit received two new date stamps. In both cases the date stamps read "PORTAL UNIT S. BBY." The question is "Is this a spelling error or is it some new type of postal facility?" After a very pleasant discussion with the unit manager, it would appear to be the former.

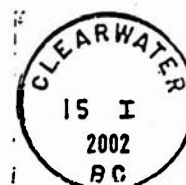
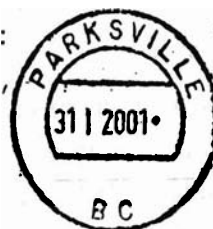


NEW RAPID CANCELLING MACHINES

The use of Rapid Cancelling Machines (RCM) in most larger post office has decreased greatly as most letter mail is now brought to the Vancouver or Victoria Mail Processing Plants for processing. As a result most of the equipment in use in the early 1990's has remained in use and only in a few cases has the equipment been upgraded or replaced. Starting in 2001, new or upgraded RCM equipment was introduced at a number of post office that formerly had RCM equipment. In February of 2002 a new type if RCM, similar to an IPS machine, came into use, and it appears this equipment is being used to replace the aging Klussendorf machines.

The following have been reported:

Klussendorf Duncan
Parksville



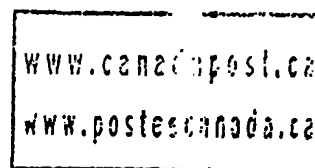
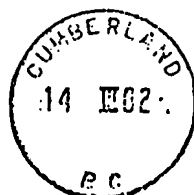
IPS HD 2 Clearwater

IPS MST Courtenay
VIE 1A0
(Salmon Arm)



Unidentified Equipment

Chetwynd	Cranbrook
Creston	Cumberland
Fort Nelson	Lantzville
Madera Park	100 Mile House
Qualicum Beach	Revelstoke
Trail	



RESPONSE FORM - New Rapid Cancelling Machines

April 2002

The dates of the recently introduced Rapid Cancelling Machines have been difficult to obtain because of the limited use of the equipment. The table below lists the latest reported date for the previous equipment and the earliest reported dates for the newly introduced RCM equipment.

Please provide any additional information on late or early dates and any unlisted equipment.

RCM	Post Office	Late date for old equipment	Early date for new equipment
Klussendorf	Duncan	1990 10 10	2001 09 06
	Parksville	1990 10 29	2001 01 31
IPS HD 2	Clearwater	new	2000 12 14
IPS MST	Courtenay	1990 11 04	2001 01 30
	V1E 1AO *	1997 12 12	1998 02 23
	*Kelowna 2 used	1997 12 15	1998 02 20
Unidentified	Chetwynd	2002 01 12	2002 03 15
	Cranbrook	2001 01 15	2001-01-30 2000 12 14
	Creston	2002 02 11	2002 02 28
	Cumberland	2002 02 28	2002 03 14
	Fort Nelson	2002 02 01	2002 03 15
	Lantzville	2002 01 28	2002 03 06
	Madera Park	2002 01 21	2002 03 22
	100 Mile House	2002 01 28	2002 02 22
	Qualicum Beach	2002 02 19	2002 02 26
	Revekstoke	2002 01 16	2002 03 11
	Trail	2001 04 17	2002 03 27

Forms should be mailed to;
Bill Topping, 7430 Angus Drive,
Vancouver, BC, V6P 5K2

Name
Address
.....

FINANCIAL REPORT 2001-2002

Revenue

Surplus previous year	712.00
Membership dues	341.00
Advanced dues	236.00
Sale of back issues	100.00
Grant from BNA	116.00
	<u>1505.00</u>

Expenses

Members News Letters	378.00
BNA officers	48.00
BNA free mailings	18.00
Complimentary	18.00
Back issues	78.00
Sample copies	1.50
	<u>541.50</u>

Surplus	963.50
Less advanced dues	236.00
Net Surplus	727.50

Note:

Plans are underway to produce an Index for Volumes 1 to 10 provided there is sufficient interest from members.

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

Membership fees are;
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437093
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