



# BRITISH COLUMBIA POSTAL HISTORY NEWSLETTER

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*Registered cover from Telegraph Creek to Vancouver, dated NO 17/41, with a 40-cent registration fee. It took 12 days for the cover to reach Vancouver (NO 29/41 backstamp).*

We hope that the **favourite cover** page will become a regular feature in the newsletter. Readers are invited to send scans (300 dpi) and write-ups of their favourites for future issues.

This time around we present a registered cover from Telegraph Creek—a remote hamlet and former gold-rush settlement in northwestern BC. At first glance it seems to have *way* too much postage. The registration fee at the time was only 10 cents.

The explanation, of course, is that, starting on Aug 1, 1924, post office patrons could choose to increase the amount of indemnity they would receive if their

registered mail item was lost or destroyed. Ten cents bought \$25 worth of indemnity, 20 cents bought \$50 worth, 30 cents bought \$75 worth and 40 cents, as illustrated here, bought \$100 worth. These rates were in effect until Apr 2, 1951. Few people opted for the increased indemnity, and covers showing the higher rates (especially the \$75 rate) are uncommon.

One wonders what was valuable enough to spend 30 precious extra cents to insure. Probably cash, sent as payment on an account. Gault Bros, a dry goods company with a large mail-order business, is a major source of covers from small-town and rural BC.

## In this issue:

- |                                      |       |   |       |
|--------------------------------------|-------|---|-------|
| • Favourite cover: Telegraph Creek   | p 799 | • Thomas Gordon and post office patronage | p 802 |
| • Editorial: membership survey       | p 800 | • Two new BC “unreported” discoveries     | p 806 |
| • Recent BC auction and sale results | p 801 | • Ask the experts: Nanaimo’s serified “R” | p 809 |
|                                      |       | • Recent “wing” datestamps & “wing” list  | p 810 |

## Editorial

Don't worry, readers. We won't be asking you to wade through an editorial column every issue. Only when we feel there's something worth discussing.

This time around we'd like your feedback on several new initiatives mentioned in the last issue: the creation of a digital edition, increasing the number of newsletter pages, and the use of colour.

Many of you will have seen the full-colour digital edition by now, which premiered with the last issue. (At present, all study group members can receive this edition for free; just drop the editor a note and confirm an email address.) At the end of the year we will ask you to choose either the print edition or the digital edition—or both. Our first question to you is, "what, if anything, should be the cost of the digital edition?" Most newsletters are charging about \$5 for an annual digital subscription. We'd like to offer ours for free—or perhaps even by (non-mandatory) donation—as there are no printing or mailing costs involved. Readers who want a hard copy could print one out for themselves.

Next, we should discuss size. For many years the newsletter was ten pages (five sheets of paper) because that could be mailed at the 30-grams-or-less rate. We'd like to add pages and also use heavier stock (less see-through). That would move us to the next weight bracket (30 to 50 grams), but allow us to publish up to 16 pages per issue (eight sheets of paper). The current postal rate for this bracket is \$1.80.

Finally, the question of colour. Printing entirely in colour would make the newsletter rather expensive (\$30-40 per year). Printing costs vary, but let's say five cents a page for b&w, and 40 cents for colour. A 16-page issue with two pages of colour would thus cost \$3.30 to print and mail (or about \$13 per year). With four pages of colour this would rise to \$4 (\$16 a year). An all-b&w issue would cost \$2.60 (\$10 a year).

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).

2014 membership fees are \$8 for one year, in Canadian or US funds. (Fees are liable to change in 2015.)

A free digital version of the newsletter is also available in full colour, starting with Issue #89. It will be emailed as a PDF file (roughly 2 Mb in size). If you'd like to receive a copy, please notify the editor and confirm a current email address.

Individual print issues sell for \$2.50 each, post paid.

There's no real reason why the number of pages couldn't vary slightly, depending on what's being published. We recommend a \$15 annual fee for a print edition that would have between 12 and 16 pages each issue, with two to four of them in colour.

What do you think? Please let us know.

We hope you enjoy this issue, which has a bit of a railroad theme. You'll notice also that we've run Part One of a listing of modern BC "wing" cancels. We realize that not everyone is interested in wings, but we feel that publishing specialized lists and inventories (especially of cancel types) is an important aspect of postal history research. Any feedback from readers would be gratefully received.

## Readers respond

This from **Doug Murray** in PEI. Doug is our first digital subscriber and writes that he is "very impressed with the new edition." Despite his east-coast location, he has an interesting contribution to make.

"The cover on the front page (Issue #89, April 2014, p 787) is addressed to Louis B Hunt of Summerside, PEI. He served as postmaster from 1 October 1893 to 24 May 1924 at his death. His father before him had served in the office from 1891 to 1893.

I worked for his grandson in the 1970s and at the time bought a large wooden box full of old covers from the early part of the century. Few were as exciting as the cover you show. A great many Islanders were leaving the East for work in that period—either factories in New England, free land on the prairies or one of many mining operations that opened up from California to the Yukon. There were quite a few covers in my lot addressed to the PM—unfortunately most without contents. One that I remember was from a farmer in NS looking for a wife! PMs were resourceful people! I used that letter in my first book on PEI Post Offices."

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## Better BC postal history impresses at auction

Here are a few unusual and exotic pieces that have appeared in recent auction and private treaty sales.

From **Eastern Auctions**, Feb 14-15, 2014 (Cdn \$):

- 1897 cover from Vancouver to British Guiana, 1c and 2c Small Queens on 2c postal stationery envelope, UPU rate. Lot 432, \$750+15% buyer's premium.
- 1892 UPU mourning cover from Manitoba to China via Vancouver with 5c Small Queen and bold transit mark. Lot 441, \$550+15% (*see below*).
- 1898 UPU cover from Vancouver to Fiji with 5c Small Queen, endorsed "Per Aorangi," scarce destination. Lot 456, \$1,300+15% (*see below*).



Headlingly, Man, NO 1/92 split-ring to China. Vancouver 3/NO 5 and Shanghai C/DE 2 backstamps.

From **Robert A Siegel** #1063, Dec 19-20, 2013 (US \$):

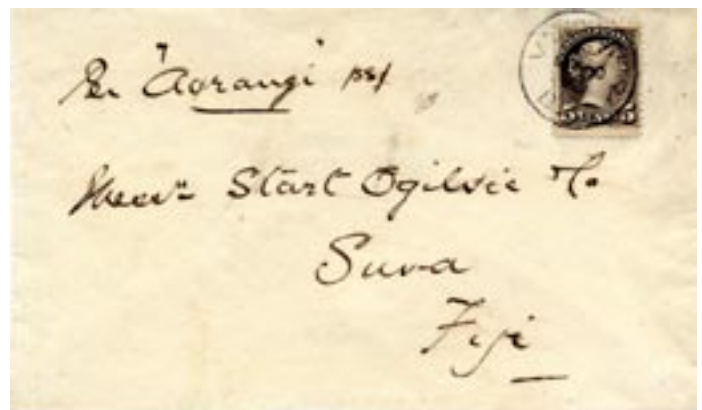
- 1872 cover from Victoria with 6c Small Queen pair to "P O'Reilly Esqre, Care of Capt Irving, Str Glenora, Fort Wrangel." Docketed "Recd 16th Sept at Cassiar on Stickeen River." Peter O'Reilly was a gold commissioner for the Omineca district in the 1870s. Ex-Wellburn, Menich. Lot 1196, \$3,250+15%.
- Fort Wrangel, Alaska Terr, 1877, to Washington, DC, via Victoria (split-ring) and San Francisco (Paid All CDS). Legal-size cover with US 3c Green (#158) and 3c Small Queen pairs. Rare US/Canadian combo on mail originating in Alaska. Lot 1197, \$1,800+15%.
- 1890 "from Arctic Ocean" to New Bedford, Mass, with two US 2c Green (#213) tied by target cancels. Probably sent by whaler but placed in BC mails instead of Alaska. Routed via Esquimalt & Nanaimo Rwy (CDS) but treated as unpaid ("6" due handstamp) and sent to Ottawa Dead Letter Office (backstamp). After receipt of Canadian postage, two 3c Small Queens affixed, tied by a DLO cancel, and letter sent on its way. Lot 1198, \$1,800+15%.

- 1898 Tagish Lake NWT split-rings tie US 2c Carmine (#267) and 3c Small Queen on cover to Montreal via Victoria (split-ring). Yukon Provisional District Coat of Arms on backflap. In Spring 1898 the NWMP, in charge of the post office, sent cover south via Dyea and Skagway. The sender used both Canadian and US stamps to ensure prepaid treatment by either postal system. Lot 1199, \$1,900+15%.



From **Robert A Siegel** #1075, June 24, 2014:

- **Pre-Colonial cover** (*above*). 18 Oct 1858 San Francisco to Ft Yale, Hudson Bay Co Territories, by Wells Fargo, addressed to Robert Chandler, purser of the steamboat *Enterprise* operating on the Fraser River. Only reported inbound usage during brief period after HBC ceased handling mail in Aug 1858 and the Colony of British Columbia was announced on Nov 19, 1858. Lot 65, US \$8,000+15% buyer's premium.



4/MR 10/98 Vancouver dispatch CDS. Obscured Suva, Fiji, backstamp and J G Crawford & Co return address.

From **WIP International** ([www.wipstamps.com](http://www.wipstamps.com)):

- The Colonial collection of Nanaimo resident Col Morgan Watkinson is currently on offer. No covers, but a fine array of BC stamps, including Scott #1 and #3. Considerable postmark interest, with many rare numeral cancels.



## Thomas Gordon and post office patronage

In the years 1880 to 1885 the major event in Canadian history was the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway. The most difficult section—and therefore most costly—was that built through BC. The western part of the line in BC was built by US contractor Andrew Onderdonk, the eastern part by numerous contractors, as well as by a large CPR force under James Ross. The thousands of workers required much in the way of support, including a system for sending and receiving mail. Contractor Onderdonk organized his own mail-handling set-up, which worked very well and had the advantage of proximity to the Pacific seaboard, where mail facilities were well established. The eastern portion of the line was a different matter. Many forms of mail handling were tried, including couriers on foot or horseback, teamsters, transient favours and so on. Later, recognizing the need for a reliable service, the CPR incorporated the C P Mail Co. Government postal services soon followed, from late 1884 through to the end of construction. These latter arrangements required an “on-the-ground” postmaster acting for both the C P Mail Co and the Dominion government. And therein lies a story.

Thomas A W Gordon was born Jan 17, 1833, in the town of Fergus, Ontario. He received a normal elementary-school education and, in the 1860s, was employed by a Fergus law firm, probably as a junior of some kind since he had no legal training. Gordon, it appears, was on a constant lookout to improve his situation. He became associated with the Conservative political party, probably around 1865, and seems to have served the party well, even developing a relationship with John A Macdonald, at that time prime minister of Canada. Then followed about 15 years of requests by Gordon for appointments in various capacities and locations—what we might today call patronage. Hoped-for positions included an 1879 “mission to the old country,” an 1880 “post in the North West,” a “factory inspector,” “postmaster at Castle Mountain” and so on. Gordon was not successful in any of his submissions. However, in June 1884, with railway construction reaching the summit of the Rockies, authorities decided that a post office was needed in that vicinity to handle mail to and from the construction forces. On June 14, 1884, an office named Mount Laggan, with T A W Gordon as postmaster, was established at Laggan station. There was strong competition for the appointment, but Gordon’s application, with help from backers, was successful.



*This card was mailed from Mount Laggan to England on SP 12/84 but went to Ottawa first, as 1-cent cards were not supposed to be used for overseas correspondence. It appears that the post office department decided to send the card on anyway (with a SP 24/84 Ottawa datestamp and the Crown cancels), as it could not be returned. The sender was likely a tourist. (Image courtesy Gray Scrimgeour)*

Track-laying west of the summit of the Rockies proceeded rapidly, with the result that the services provided by the Mount Laggan post office soon became redundant. This brought about a number of exchanges between senior postal authorities and post office inspectors concerning the need for a post office at the end of the track—one that would move forward as trackwork advanced. James Ross took steps to implement this proposal. He recommended that George Neil (probably one of his men) be postmaster, Neil “being trustworthy and competent to perform money order business.” However, this appointment did not materialize. Mount Laggan post office was closed on July 31, 1885, and postmaster Gordon was moved from that office to a new one, subsequently named End of Track, BC. The move was accompanied by considerable infighting; individuals with political influence were determined to keep Gordon “in office for personal financial reasons,” apparently as a reward for his services to the Conservative party in previous years.

*Thomas Gordon continued*

Although actual dates for the establishment of End of Track post office vary somewhat, postal records give Oct 1, 1884, as an official opening. The closing date seems similarly obscure. However, Dec 31, 1885—two months after completion of the railway at Craigellachie (on Nov 7, 1885)—is likely. Thus, while it may appear that the office existed for 14 months, a more realistic figure for actual activity would probably be about 11 months.



Two examples of the scarce End of Track/B.C. split-ring datestamp. The top cover is dated AU 17/85 to Gananoque, Quebec. The middle one, to St John, New Brunswick, with an indistinct date, has the corner card of CPR boss James Ross and a fine example of the C.P. MAIL Co./END OF TRACK instructional return address stamp.



Early Revelstoke split-ring dated NO 9/86 on cover to Clinton, Ont. The docketing at left, "Nov 9/86 - Postmaster at Revelstoke, B.C.," refers to Thomas Gordon.



In those 11 months, this office, with postmaster Gordon in charge, issued 2,207 money orders with a total value of \$124,184, an amount larger than the value issued over the same period by the city of Kingston, Ontario. The paperwork associated with processing money orders is considerable, and must have occupied much of Gordon's time. Irregularities slowly began to show in the handling and reporting of transactions. The Postmaster General's Annual Report, which lists losses of both registered and unregistered mail, describes two instances of lost registered mail for 1885, each valued at \$200, from T A W Gordon at End of

*Thomas Gordon continued*

Track to Mrs T A W Gordon of Fergus, Ontario. Such amounts were considerably larger than those usually dispatched from this office. No settlement of these losses was reported, and Gordon remained as postmaster at End of Track until the rails reached Farwell, later to be known as Revelstoke.

Railroad construction, meanwhile, continued at a fast rate. On May 24, 1884, the "Great Divide" was crossed. On Nov 5, the line reached Beavermouth, and by May 30, 1885, railway workers were at Surprise Creek. The final stages (with their dates of completion, all in 1885) were Stoney Creek (Aug 7), Selkirk summit (Aug 17), Laurie Tunnels (Sept 2), Revelstoke (Oct 8) and Craigellachie (Nov 7).

Among numerous archival photographs showing construction scenes along the route, one shows a boxcar, equipped as an office of sorts "spurred out" on a new ascending grade. A group of men is gathered around, including one man better dressed and obviously of some importance. It could very well be the End of Track post office in the boxcar, with a well-dressed Gordon, hands in pockets, asserting his authority.



*This boxcar is "spurred out" on a side track (note that the rails come to an abrupt conclusion just in front of the two gents seated at right). Could it be the End of Track post office? And is the authoritative figure second from left, standing tall with hands in pockets, Postmaster Gordon?*

During this period, Gordon wrote to postal authorities complaining that the principals in the CPR Construction Co, such as James Ross, were manipulating certain business transactions to their financial advantage. There is no record of any action being taken or any reply to Gordon. With the completion of the railway at Craigellachie, there was no further need for the End of Track post office. Indeed, it had probably not been needed for some time. A small settlement, however—named Farwell, after a local land surveyor—had formed where the railway made a second crossing of the Columbia River. The authorities determined that a post office was required there, and one was established on Feb 1, 1886. Gordon was in the area, and no longer required at End of Track, so was appointed postmaster of the new office. The name Farwell did not last long. The CPR's William van Horne insisted on Revelstoke, in order to recognize an English banker who had made a large loan to the company when desperately needed. The post office officially became Revelstoke on June 1, 1886. Gordon remained as postmaster.

Shortly after this change, financial discrepancies began to emerge at Farwell and Revelstoke, as well as at End of Track, all involving postmaster Gordon and sums of missing money. In August 1886, Gordon asked for credit for funds allegedly stolen from his office. Subsequent official enquiries questioned the postmaster's "reliability" and pointed to other irregularities. In February 1888, Gordon claimed to have remitted \$816.84 to the Merchant's Bank of Winnipeg. It was never received, and Postal Inspector Everard Fletcher was instructed to obtain a sworn statement from Gordon. On Oct 25, 1885, a CPR employee from the US left \$200 with Gordon at the Farwell post office to be sent as a money order to an address in California. The money was never sent, nor was it returned to the employee. Fletcher was instructed to pursue the matter with Gordon. Further instances of missing funds came to light. Here, for example, is the text of a letter from post office Secretary William LeSueur to Inspector Fletcher, dated Jan 18, 1889:

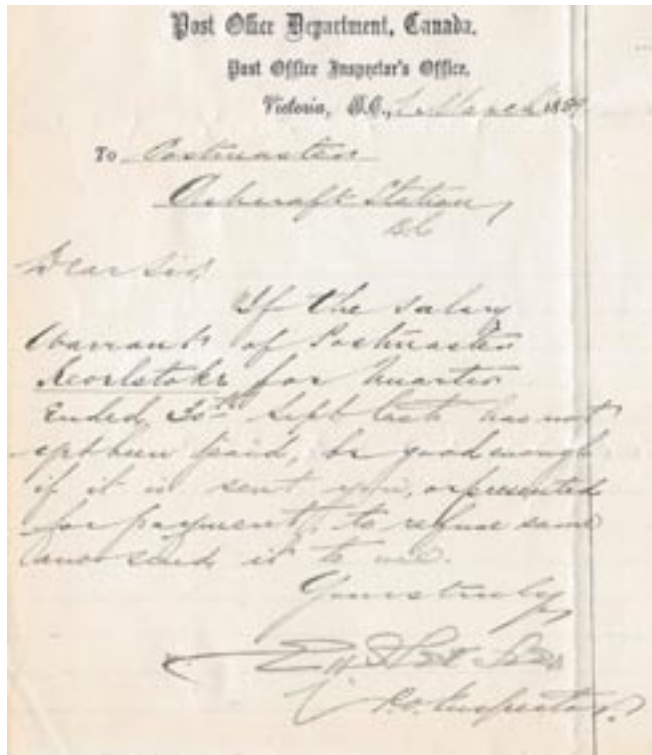


*Thomas Gordon continued*

Sir: With reference to your Report No 11 on the 19<sup>th</sup> June and 135 on the 14<sup>th</sup> November 1888 in regard to the failure of Mr T A W Gordon to account for a sum of \$200 which was entrusted to him as postmaster of End of Track for the purpose of procuring a Money Order for that amount in favor of a certain designated payee I am directed to inform you that proceedings will be instituted against Mr Gordon upon a charge of fraudulent embezzlement. I am, Sir, Your obedient servant, W D LeSueur, Secretary.

In a subsequent letter from LeSueur to Fletcher dated Dec 17, 1888, we learn that the Postmaster General had declared the Revelstoke post office vacant.

Gordon, however, had disappeared.



Exchanges between Inspector Fletcher and postal authorities continued, mostly concerned with taking legal action against Gordon. In a letter dated Feb 4, 1891, Fletcher informed LeSueur that the "late postmaster has been credited with a higher salary rate thus reducing the balance to \$5.19 and it is suggested that the late postmaster's sureties will pay the reduced balance without delay." What can be deduced from this confusing text will probably never be known; nevertheless, the suspicion lingers that strings were pulled "on high."

Concern over Gordon's debts to the post office department led to the following letter (*see above*) from Fletcher to the postmaster at Ashcroft Station, dated March 1, 1889:

Dear Sir, If the salary warrant for Postmaster Revelstoke for quarter ended 30<sup>th</sup> September last has not yet been paid, be good enough, if it is sent you, or presented for payment, to refuse same and send it to me. Yours truly, E H Fletcher, P O Inspector.

Gordon eventually left Revelstoke for Portland, Oregon, where he lived and worked until his death on March 20, 1895. His daughter arranged for the body to be brought back to Fergus, Ontario, for burial.

(Much of this story has been made possible thanks to diligent research by several BNAPS members.)

*Editor's note: The author of this article wishes to remain anonymous, but sometimes goes by the pseudonym "Low Joint," a railway term for a depressed section of track. The joint bars that connect the rails understandably take a pounding from passing wheels, and joint sections sometimes get pushed down slightly into the ballast, resulting in a "rough track." Sectionmen then have to go out and jack up the track in the vicinity of the joint and tamp additional ballast under the ties to maintain a smooth riding surface.*

## Split-rings from previously unreported BC offices

Postmarks from unreported BC post offices continue to turn up. Some collectors express surprise at this. Others feel that it's inevitable. Certainly one might expect fewer and fewer finds over the years, as available sources of material are methodically examined. Nevertheless, in this issue of the newsletter we report on two discoveries that have recently come to light. One was originally offered to a dealer in Quebec, the other to a stamp store in Victoria; both were then sold on to a postal history specialist.

The first new office to describe is **Magoffin Spur**, which opened on Oct 15, 1925, and closed Sept 29, 1928. It's hardly surprising that this postmark has never been seen before, as Magoffin Spur was a tiny place, a temporary CNR stop beside the North Thompson River, about 11 km north of Avola and 190 km north of Kamloops. Frank Reeves Purvis, an engineer and WWI hero, who was awarded the Military Cross for completing dangerous bridge and truck repairs while under enemy fire, was the first and only postmaster.

The story of Magoffin Spur is told in a remarkable 14-page article—"Embankment, or the Tale of a Buried Treasure and a Lost Locomotive"—by David Llewelyn Davies in the Nov/Dec, 1989 issue (#413) of *Canadian Rail*. We highly recommend this periodical, which focuses on Canadian railway history, with articles and photo essays on national, regional and urban railroads and rail vehicles. The magazine is published six times a year and comes free with a membership in the Canadian Railroad Historical Association. Issues that are more than two years old can be downloaded without charge from the association's website, at [www.exporail.org/en/canadian-rail](http://www.exporail.org/en/canadian-rail). They cannot, apparently, be printed out.



*Magoffin Spur to Calgary, dated MY 15/28. There are no backstamps.*

*Proof date: SP 6/25*

Anyway, to make a long story shorter, Magoffin Spur was located near a fine big trestle, now the Lyon Embankment, which was once part of the Canadian Northern line between Vancouver and Edmonton. The trestle had been constructed about 1914. Ten years later, the railway (by now the Canadian National) decided to cover the trestle with an embankment (basically a big mound of dirt), and a man named Samuel Shelby Magoffin (1888-1959) won the contract to do the work. Magoffin located a good source of gravel on nearby Lyon Creek, installed a steam shovel to dig it out, and built a narrow-gauge railway, roughly four km in length, to connect the gravel pit to the trestle. Then he began the enormous job of hauling and dumping thousands of tons of fill in order to bury the trestle and create a firmer foundation for the railway line. The work took more than two years, from 1926 to 1928, and employed 100 men, who lived in a camp a short distance along the narrow-gauge track. The camp had a post office. A short spur was run off the main line so that rail cars could be parked there. The embankment when finished stood 35 metres high with a base width of about 80 metres. It contained more than half a million cubic metres of gravel.

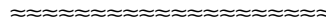


*Unreported offices continued*

In his article, David Davies describes how he hunted down the location of Magoffin Spur and then explored the overgrown track to the gravel pit and work camp, finding the remains of a water tank, some mangled dump-car frames and other debris. He was searching for a narrow-gauge locomotive rumoured to have been abandoned at the site, but this was never found. Davies did, however, provide some more facts about Sam Magoffin (as well as much more detail on the infill operation).

Magoffin operated S S Magoffin & Co, an earth-moving outfit, and owned an assortment of second-hand rolling stock. He is believed to have been a sub-contractor for the construction of the Canadian Northern line through the Fraser Canyon, just prior to WWI. In 1920 he was working for Grand Trunk Pacific, with his head office in Prince George. By 1925 he had moved his base to North Vancouver, where he was hired to fill in the harbour frontage. Further glimpses of Magoffin (sometimes referred to as Colonel Magoffin) can be found at the City of Vancouver Archives. He and his wife, the former Margaret Boalt (1892-1972), built a home, Rockhaven, on Marine Drive in West Vancouver in 1929 and became noted dog breeders. Sam is recognized as the founder and first president of the Golder Retriever Club of America. Both he and Margaret died in the US.

Echoes of Magoffin's story linger on today at the BC Forest Discovery Centre in Duncan, where one of his old narrow-gauge locomotives (#25, or "Sampson") still runs. In a nice touch for philatelists, it was purchased from Magoffin in 1955 by Gerry Wellburn, the dean of BC postal historians and founder of the forestry centre; it later underwent a complete overhaul and now pulls the museum's passenger train.



The second new BC marking to appear is from **Spiller River**, on the northeast shores of 520-sq-km Porcher Island, a remote location on the BC coast about 40 km south of Prince Rupert. The post office opened on Oct 1, 1912, and closed July 1, 1917. This was another tiny settlement; in fact, the entire postal revenue reported over five years of operation came to a grand total of \$66.74 (from Tracy Cooper's *British Columbia Post Office Revenues 1871-1921*). The salaries (\$210) of the three postmasters who presided over the office during the same period far exceeded any monies taken in.



Postcard acknowledgement of a Swedish Tribune-News subscription renewal (\$2.50/yr). SEP 8/1915 Chicago machine despatch cancel. Spiller River receiving backstamp with unclear Sept 1915 date.



Proof date:  
DE 16/11



*Unreported offices continued*

Porcher Island is thinly populated today (37 inhabitants, in the 2006 census), but in the 1930s as many as 1,200 people called it home. There were a surprising number of post offices: Spiller River, Oona River, Hunts Inlet, Jap Inlet, Welcome Harbour and Refuge Bay. Markings from most of them are rare or unreported; only Oona River survives today as an active settlement. The island saw a surge of homesteading activity after 1906, when Prince Rupert became the western terminus of the Grand Trunk Pacific railway. Settlers—many of them Scandinavian, plus a few from Japan—logged, trapped and fished for a living. Several developed fine reputations as boat builders. A small sawmill operated, as did, briefly, a salmon cannery and a dogfish oilery. Several places, including Spiller River, had government wharves.

Three different postmasters served at Spiller River: Thomas Lane (1912-14), H Striethorst (1914-17) and Mrs Beatrice Reynolds (1917). The first two resigned; Reynolds was employed until the office closed. The settlement was named after Cpl Richard Spiller of the Royal Marines, who worked on the paddle steamer *Beaver* from 1863 to 1870 while Lt Daniel Pender finished his historic marine survey of the BC coast. Only officers normally had places named after them, but Spiller, as Pender's loyal and long-serving personal assistant, was commemorated half-a-dozen times. (Information from *The River People: Living and Working in Oona River*, by Caroline Butler and Kenneth Campbell, and the *Encyclopedia of Raincoast Place Names*.)

The Spiller River card was part of a larger correspondence of 58 cards and covers, all inward-bound to Porcher Island and mostly addressed to Nils (or Nels) Lind at Oona River. An assortment is shown below.



Clockwise, from top left: 2c domestic rate cover from Pr Rupert (OCT 29/1927 machine) to Oona River (NO 3/27 split-ring); uprated 1c card from Chicago (JAN 17/1927 machine) to Oona River (FE 2/27 split-ring); Jamtlanus, Sweden (21.9.48 CDS), 20-öre postcard to Oona River (03 OC/48 split-ring); 4c domestic rate Fisherman's Co-op cover from Pr Rupert (APR 29/47 machine) to Oona River.

Only one item, the earliest, had a Spiller River postmark. Lind presumably homesteaded at Spiller in the early days, then, like many other Porcher Island settlers, migrated to the larger community of Oona River sometime before 1925. It seems quite certain that he was Swedish and also worked in the fishing industry. The correspondence covered a time period between 1915 and the 1950s. Most of it originated in Canada, but ten pieces were sent from the US and ten were from Sweden. A most unusual find! — Andrew Scott

## Ask the experts: a Nanaimo “R” mark in blue ink?

This regular feature will give an opportunity for our many British Columbia postal history specialists to both ask and answer particular questions related to their fields of interest.

Our question this issue deals with the unusual “R-in-circle” used at Nanaimo, BC, in the late 1890s. Horace Harrison, in his excellent reference book *Canada's Registry System 1827 to 1911*, notes that the 21 by 24-mm registration marking with the large, serified “R” was struck in **blue** ink in 1897.



A number of registered covers from Nanaimo (listed below) have been noted with the large **R**, all dated between 1896 and 1899. None feature the ink colour mentioned by Harrison (the cover at top is greener in reality than appears in the scanned image). The three illustrated on this page are boldfaced in the list.

- 1896 - **May 4** and Nov 20 - violet ink
- 1897 - Aug 10, purple ink
- 1898 - **Jan 12** - green ink
- 1899 - **Apr 17** - purple ink

The question for our experts is: “Has anyone seen an 1897 cover with the Nanaimo **R** in blue, as described by Harrison?” In fact, any reports of this unique registration mark would be appreciated.



# Recent “wing” datestamps from BC offices



ERD: 07/FE/14



ERD: 25/AP/13



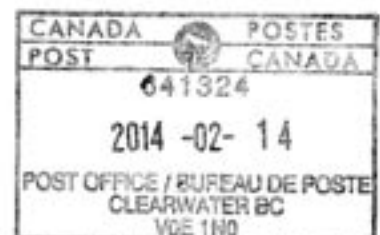
ERD: 24/DE/13



ERD: 24/JA/14



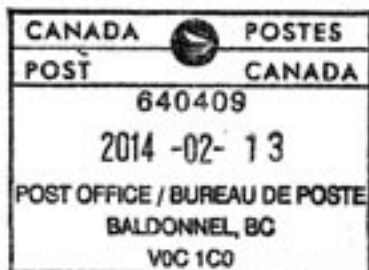
ERD: 24/MR/14



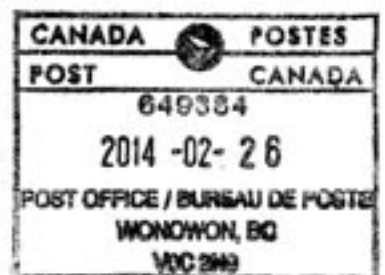
ERD: 22/JA/14



ERD: 10/JA/14



ERD: 22/JY/12



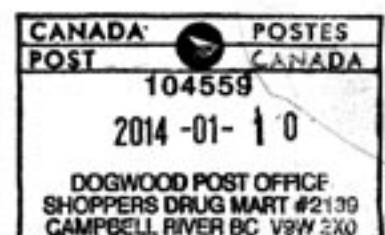
ERD: 10/DE/13



ERD: 03/DE/13



ERD: 16/AU/13



ERD: 06/JA/14

New BC “wing” datestamps continue to appear. Many offices are on their second, third or even fourth wing. The marking for Topley, for instance, shown above, is similar to an earlier cancel, but has no comma or periods in the “TOPLEY BC” line. Likewise, Kyuquot, Baldonnel and Victoria FMO are all subtly yet distinctly different in size, design or wording from earlier wings. The first four pages of a 12-page list of all known BC wings follows; the rest of the list will be published in the next two newsletters. Next issue we’ll also look at new circular rubber datestamps, which are showing up in a seemingly infinite variety of styles.

BC WING LIST Part 1, 23/AP/14	RC#	Code	Ink	ERD	LRD
Abbotsford (51x38 mm)	649961	V2T 4W0		25/JA/05	31/MR/05
"    (47x32 mm)	649961	V2T 4W0		01/FE/05	01/AP/05
Abbotsford Stn A (48x32 mm)	649961	V2T 1X0		06/AP/05	06/JY/07
"    "    "    (48x30 mm)	649961	V2T 1X0		25/JY/07	01/FE/08
Abbotsford (McCallum)	651648	V2S 5G0	B+	21/SP/00	31/DE/02
Abbotsford, Clearbrook Plaza PO	387866	V2T 5N0		05/JU/06	17/DE/13
Abbotsford (McCallum)	100475	V2S 5G0	PB+	03/MR/03	08/NO/13
Abbotsford (Seven Oaks)	101136	no code		30/DE/03	13/AP/13
Abbotsford, Sumas Way PO	101758	V2S 8H0	G+	22/NO/05	29/MY/10
Agassiz	640042	V0M 1A0		23/AU/07	24/AP/13
Aldergrove, Village Mall PO	103233	V4W 2Z0		06/OC/08	14/JA/14
Alert Bay	640166	V0N 1A0		02/JU/03	02/NO/13
"    "    ("compressed" style)	640166	V0N 1A0		21/JA/14	17/FE/14
Armstrong	640328	V0E 1B0		18/JA/00	10/DE/10
Atlin	640387	V0W 1A0		10/MR/05	02/OC/13
Baldonnel (postal code error)	640409	V0C 1B0		19/JA/00	
"    (new code, French first)	640409	V0C 1C0		09/MR/00	11/MR/09
"    ( "    "    English first)	640409	V0C 1C0		22/JY/12	13/FE/14
Bamfield	640433	V0R 1B0		16/MR/06	23/SP/13
Bella Bella (Waglisla)	101632	V0T 1Z0		07/DE/07	17/SP/13
Black Creek (Year-Mo-Dy)	640662	no code		17/JA/07	31/JY/08
"    "    (Mon Dy Year)	640662	no code		26/AP/07	15/SP/08
"    "    (code)	640662	V9J 1A0		20/SP/08	26/MR/13
"    "    (code, compressed)	640662	V9J 1A0		05/NO/12	19/DE/13
Blue River	640654	V0E 1J0		24/MR/14	
Blind Bay	640530	V0E 1H0		09/FE/09	29/OC/13
Blind Channel	640603	VOP 1B0		20/JY/11	26/AU/11
Boston Bar	640670	V0K 1C0		30/DE/10	26/JY/13
Boswell	640697	V0B 1A0		14/MR/05	24/AP/13
Bowen Island (circular)	640719	V0N 1G0		02/DE/11	26/JA/12
"    "    (expanded?)	640719	V0N 1G0		25/FE/12	31/MR/12
Bowser (no comma)	640727	V0R 1G0	P+	31/AU/05	25/JA/07
"    (comma)	640727	V0R 1G0		14/FE/07	23/OC/07
Brackendale	640735	V0N 1H0	B+	30/MY/00	25/MY/11
Brentwood Bay	640700	V8M 1P0		27/OC/04	08/JY/13
Brisco	057320	V0A 1B0		15/MR/05	27/OC/11
Britannia Beach	103559	V0N 1J0		20/NO/09	17/JY/13
Burnaby (Cascade)	100231	no code	P+	22/OC/02	04/JY/05
Burnaby Kensington	068462	V5B 1S0	B+	24/JU/07	16/MR/10
Burns Lake	640891	V0J 1E0		13/JA/10	25/OC/13
Cache Creek	640956	V0K 1H0		08/JU/10	16/MY/13
"    "    (compressed)	640956	V0K 1H0		30/NO/12	23/DE/13
Campbell River, Stn A	640999	V9W 2P0		26/AP/10	21/JA/14
Campbell River	651672	V9W 5P0		25/JY/05	13/MY/08
"    "    MPP** (no BC)	651672	V9W 5P0	RP+	24/MR/04	09/MY/06
"    "    BC, MPP	651672	V9W 5P0	R+	19/AP/04	21/JY/05
Campbell River (Dogwood)	653640	no code		02/DE/02	18/JY/03
Campbell River (South)	129615	V9W 1E0		29/MY/02	02/FE/04
Campbell River, Dogwood PO	100850	V9W 6K0	P+	29/NO/03	11/OC/12
Campbell River, Dogwood PO	104559	V9W 2X0		06/JA/14	15/JA/14
Campbell River, South RO	100910	V9W 1E0	B+	16/FE/04	21/JA/09
Campbell River, Ocean Grove PO	103575	V9H 1M0		05/MY/10	17/OC/11
Campbell River, Ocean Grove PO	104158	V9H 1M0		30/DE/11	14/JA/14

	RC#	Code	Ink	ERD	LRD
Campbell River, Tyee PO	104360	V9W 5T0		02/NO/12	21/DE/13
Canal Flats	641022	V0B 1B0		15/MR/05	24/OC/13
Canoe	641057	V0E 1K0		13/JY/07	10/JU/09
Canoe	103608	V0E 1K0		26/AU/09	06/DE/09
Canyon	641049	V0B 1C0		14/AP/08	04/OC/13
Capilano Delivery Centre (circ)	no #	V7P 2L0		21/MR/06	21/AP/06
"    North Vancouver (circ)	no #	V7P 2L0		16/AP/10	04/JU/13
Castlegar, Leadhand	641138	V1N 2B0		22/OC/04	18/NO/04
Castlegar	051136	V1N 2B0		20/NO/01	01/NO/10
Castlegar, South PO	102674	no code		21/NO/07	08/JA/14
Cedar	641170	V9X 1W1		12/FE/10	15/NO/13
Charlie Lake	641340	V0C 1H0		30/JU/12	30/SP/13
Chase	641219	V0E 1M0		18/DE/10	20/DE/13
Chemainus PO (hyphen in code)	641235	V0R 1K0		05/DE/03	29/OC/13
"    BC (no hyphen)	641235	V0R 1K0		02/MR/05	29/OC/13
Chilanko Forks	641375	V0L 1H0		17/AU/09	06/NO/13
Chilliwack	641251	V2P 2P0		04/AU/05	10/JA/14
Chilliwack (Sardis)	646458	V2R 1B0		08/JU/07	23/SP/13
Chilliwack, BC (Southgate)	388254	V2P 2M0		30/MY/00	12/OC/06
"    (Southgate)	388254	V2P 2M0		20/NO/06	03/FE/10
Chilliwack, Registration	no #	V2P 2P0		26/OC/05	12/JA/06
Chilliwack, Vedder Crossing	102982	V2R 3M0		28/MR/08	29/AP/13
Clayhurst	641316	V0C 1K0		10/FE/00	29/FE/08
Clearwater	641324	V0E 1N0		22/JA/14	14/FE/14
Coal Harbour	100235	V0N 1K0		24/OC/02	02/JY/04
Cobble Hill	641413	V0R 1L0		14/NO/03	27/DE/13
Comox, Rexall RPO	386502	V9M 2H0		03/NO/10	06/SP/12
"    Rexall Drugs RPO	386502	V9M 5H0		23/FE/11	12/NO/13
Coombs	138800	V0R 1M0		16/JU/08	28/MR/09
Coombs	103428	V0R 1M0		23/AP/09	03/JY/13
Courtenay	641596	V9N 1G0	P+	04/DE/02	16/MR/12
"    Stn Main	641596	V9N 1G0		22/MY/12	12/NO/13
Courtenay, Mail Ops	050997	V9N 1G0		06/AP/09	11/JU/09
"    "    "    Supervisor	no #	V9N 1G0		11/JU/09	
Courtenay, Downtown PO	428248	V9N 1G0		27/DE/04	19/SP/13
Courtenay (South)	428434	V9N 2L0		20/MY/06	22/JU/12
Courtenay (South)	104298	V9N 2L0		16/OC/12	21/DE/13
Cranbrook (rectangle)	641634	V1C 2N0		10/FE/06	13/NO/13
"    (large square)	641634	V1C 2N0		31/JA/07	13/MY/08
"    Lead Hand	641634	V1C 2N0		24/JA/06	24/AP/13
Cranbrook, Tamarack Mall PO	134309	V1C 3S8		09/DE/05	18/NO/13
Crawford Bay	645664	no code		19/JY/05	27/SP/13
Creston	641707	V0B 1G0	R+	28/MR/03	18/DE/13
"    (circular)	641707	V0B 1G0		07/FE/14	17/FE/14
Cultus Lake	641766	V2R 5B0		14/JA/08	18/JU/13
Cumberland	641774	V0R 1S0		18/AU/05	01/JA/14
Dawson Creek	641812	no code	RP+	30/JA/06	31/DE/10
Delta, CSC, Ladner	093122	V4K 1V0		14/AP/03	26/AP/13
Delta, Nordel PO	654833	V4C 2L0		01/MY/07	19/AP/13
Delta, Sunshine Village PO	415529	V4E 2B0	B+	03/SP/05	19/JY/06
"    "    (logo touches line)	415529	V4E 2B0	B+	01/AU/06	04/JU/12
"    "    (new identical wing)	415529	V4E 2B0		30/AU/12	01/AU/13
Delta, Delta Shoppers PO	421871	V4C 6R0		15/MR/06	24/AU/06
Delta, Kennedy Heights PO	100322	V4C 6P0		19/JA/03	04/FE/04



	RC#	Code	Ink	ERD	LRD
Delta, Tsawwassen PO	100448	V4L 2B0		31/DE/02	05/MY/07
“ “ (no Delta)	100448	V4L 2B0		09/MY/07	07/OC/13
Delta, South Tsawwassen PO	100462	V4L 2C0		17/DE/02	17/NO/06
Delta, South Tsawwassen PO	102370	V4L 2C0	B+	24/NO/06	24/MR/12
Delta, Ladner RPO (48x32 mm)	101741	V4K 1W0		11/AU/05	04/SP/07
“ “ “ (48x30 mm)	101741	V4K 1W0		26/NO/07	31/OC/13
Delta, Ladner Trunk PO	102016	V4K 1X0		06/NO/06	20/AU/09
Delta, Scottsdale PO	102462	V4C 2A0	RP+	17/AP/07	10/FE/14
Delta, New Orleans PO	102883	V4C 6R0		26/JU/08	07/AP/10
Denman Island	641820	no code		07/MY/05	02/JU/08
Denman Island	103106	V0R 1T0		20/JU/08	25/JU/10
Denny Island (Bella Bella)	640549	V0T 1B0		08/JY/07	27/JY/09
Denny Island	103173	V0T 1B0		28/SP/08	22/JY/13
Douglas Lake	640611	V0E 1S0		12/FE/08	03/JA/12
Duncan	no #	V9L 1P0		27/DE/02	27/JA/07
Duncan	641944	V9L 1P0		05/JU/07	08/NO/13
Duncan, Beverly Corners PO	072192	V9L 2P0		29/OC/04	03/JU/08
Duncan, Beverly Corners PO	103334	V9L 2P0		06/NO/08	27/JA/12
Duncan, Village PO	103415	V9L 3P0		01/SP/09	15/NO/13
Elkford (48x32 mm)	642754	V0B 1H0	G+	06/JU/03	27/JY/11
“ (48x30 mm)	642754	V0B 1H0	B+	11/AP/12	24/OC/13
“ (large square)	642754	V0B 1H0	B+	02/MR/10	20/MR/12
Enderby (47x32 mm)	656925	V0E 1V0		04/MR/08	09/NO/09
“ (48x30 mm)	656925	V0E 1V0		02/DE/09	16/NO/13
Erickson	289051	V0B 1K0		17/MR/04	07/NO/07
Erickson	102826	V0B 1K0		05/DE/07	07/JA/14
Errington	642215	V0R 1V0		28/NO/08	22/MR/13
Fairmont Hot Springs	426679	V0B 1L0	B+	29/MY/06	12/SP/08
Fernie	642355	V0B 1M0		13/MR/07	20/NO/13
Field	642398	V0A 1G0		03/AP/05	01/DE/09
Fort Nelson (FT. NELSON, B.C.)	644560	V0C 1R0		07/MY/02	12/AU/02
“ “ (FT no period, no BC)	644560	V0C 1B0		26/SP/02	18/NO/13
Fort St John	347159	V1J 1S0		06/JU/05	25/JY/06
Fruitvale	642576	V0G 1L0		24/NO/08	21/MY/11
Fulford Harbour	642592	V8K 1B0		02/AP/07	25/JU/12
Gabriola Island	642606	V0R 1X0		23/AP/08	25/JA/13
Ganges	642630	V8K 1A0		19/NO/04	29/AP/13
Gang Ranch	103218	V0K 1N0		10/FE/10	07/JY/10
Garden Bay	642681	V0N 1S0		06/JA/11	04/SP/13
Gibsons	642703	V0N 1V0		29/SP/10	27/SP/13
Gillies Bay	103962	V0N 1W0		15/FE/11	31/AU/12
Gitwinskihlkw	100268	V0J 3T0	R+	27/NO/02	08/NO/11
Golden	642770	V0A 1H0		25/FE/13	23/DE/13
Gold River	644552	V0P 1G0		09/JU/11	21/OC/13
Good Hope Lake (circular)	103136	V0C 2Z0		06/FE/10	
Goodlow	103900	V0C 1S0		22/AU/10	10/MY/13
Grand Forks	642797	V0H1H0		23/OC/01	18/JA/13
Grasmere	642428	V0B 1R0		10/JY/06	12/SP/11
Gray Creek	100099	V0B 1S0		20/MR/03	14/JU/11
Greenville	649597	V0J 1X0	PR+	19/JY/06	13/JY/11
Grindrod (48x32 mm)	642851	V0E 1Y0		15/NO/01	17/MY/12
“ (48x30 mm)	642851	V0E 1Y0		11/JA/08	19/SP/13

	RC#	Code	Ink	ERD	LRD
Haisla	103647	V0T 2B0		05/JY/13	
Harrison Hot Springs (48x32 mm)	642924	V0M 1K0		18/OC/04	07/NO/13
"    "    "    (48x30 mm)	642924	V0M 1K0		30/OC/07	08/NO/13
Harrison Mills	642932	V0M 1L0		12/JU/03	13/OC/11
Hartley Bay (12-mm #)	649619	V0V 1A0	B+	24/JA/00	27/JY/05
"    "    (14-mm #)	649619	V0V 1A0	B+	02/JU/06	15/AU/08
Heffley Creek	643068	V0E 1Z0		28/FE/12	21/OC/13
Heriot Bay (circular)	643092	V0P 1H0		26/MY/05	27/JU/05
Honeymoon Bay	643130	V0R 1Y0		08/MR/05	08/MR/13
Hope	643165	V0X 1L0		08/FE/08	16/OC/13
Hornby Island	640964	V0R 1Z0		13/MY/04	20/JU/07
Hornby Island	103265	V0R 1Z0		15/OC/08	14/NO/13
Houston	643211	V0J 1Z0		03/FE/06	19/SP/07
Invermere, B.C. (comma)	643300	V0A 1K0		04/MR/03	14/JA/12
"    BC (comma)	643300	V0A 1K0		04/JA/05	
"    BC (no comma)	643300	V0A 1K0		24/MR/05	19/NO/13
"    (large square)	643300	V0A 1K0		26/AP/07	07/AU/13

\*\* 17/MR/09 date noted for this postmark with POCON possibly excised  
 ¶ "B" in postal code was manually changed to "R" to correct it. ERD for change: 26/JU/07  
 B/blue, R/red, P/purple, G/green, +/black noted also. ERD/LRD: early/late recorded dates.



We wrap up this issue with with a **recent error cancellation** from the Desert RPO in Osoyoos (at Pharmasave #011, 8301—78 Ave). The datestamp at top was issued with an incorrect post office number. Examples of this marking are noted, so far, between Feb 27 and Mar

3, 2014. The number was then corrected, from 105498 to 104598, and the design of the cancelling device completely changed. Mar 7, 2014, is the earliest date we've seen for the new datestamp. If readers can improve on these early or late dates, please let us know.