



BRITISH COLUMBIA POSTAL HISTORY NEWSLETTER

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Registered 13-cent cover from Bevan to Cobourg, Ontario, mailed Nov 21, 1935.

Issue number 90 (July 2014) of the *BC Postal History Newsletter* included an article on pages 802-805 relating to the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway. The **Favourite Cover** presented here depended on this railway for its travels along the east coast of Vancouver Island and across the country. The front is quite unassuming. It shows that it was sent registered from Bevan, BC, to Cobourg, Ontario, in November 1935. The 3-cent Pictorial issue of 1935 paid the surface letter rate, while the 10-cent Pictorial paid the registration fee for a value under \$25.

The coal-mining settlement of Bevan, located about 8 km (5 mi) southwest of Courtenay on

Vancouver Island, was built 1911-12 as a company town at the site of the Dunsmuir family's No 7 Mine, which had opened in 1902. It became known as Bevan after a post office was established there in September 1913, named after a foreman with the Comox Logging and Railway Company. The post office closed in August 1957.

It is the back of the envelope that tells the story of its travels. The Bevan split-ring shows that it entered the mail stream on Nov 21, 1935. On the same day, it received a Cumberland split-ring cancel. Rail connections between Bevan, Cumberland and Nanaimo had been built by Dunsmuir interests and were sold (*see over*)

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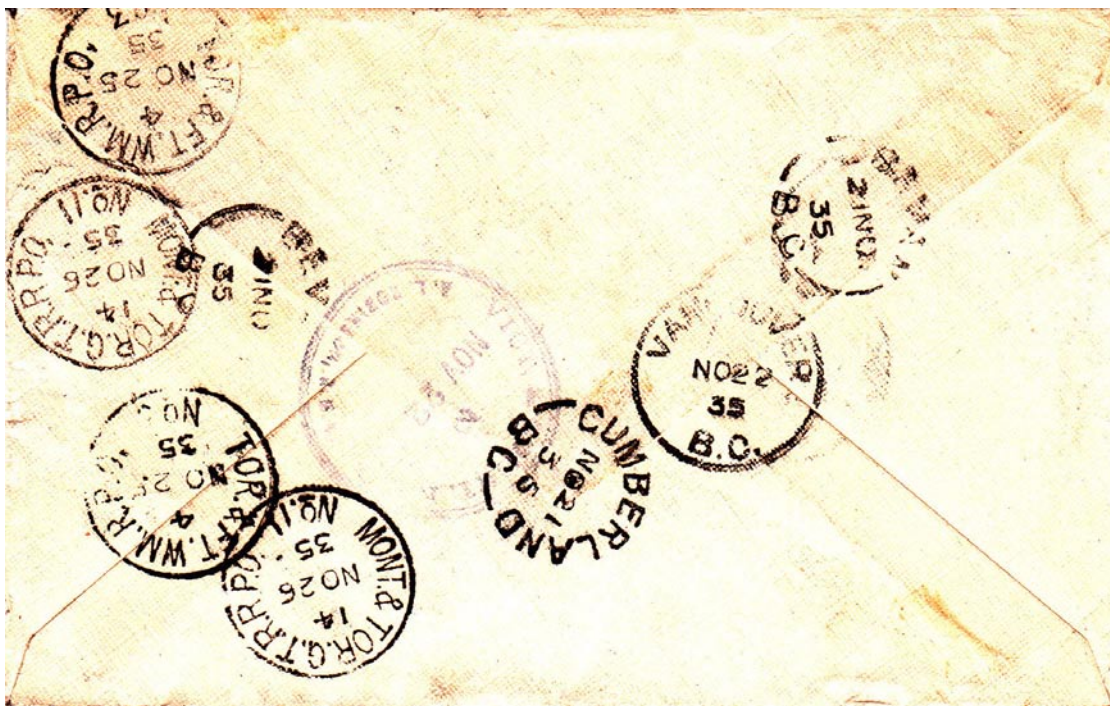
Favourite cover continued

to the CPR in 1905 as part of the E&N railway.

The cover travelled south by means of the Victoria and Courtenay railway, receiving a light purple RPO cancel from mail clerk A L Robinson, dated Nov 22. On the same day, the cover received a Vancouver CDS cancel. From Vancouver the CPR likely carried the cover through Winnipeg to Fort William in Ontario, but it did not receive any additional markings. The railway from Winnipeg to Fort William was constructed over the period 1875-82; Fort William, with its ready access to shipping on Lake Superior, was selected as the eastern

terminus of the CPR at this time. Originally a fur-trading post, Fort William was established in 1803, named in 1807, incorporated as a town in 1892 and as a city in 1907. It became part of Thunder Bay in December 1969.

From Fort William the cover travelled south to Toronto and east towards Montreal, receiving Nov 25 Toronto and Fort William RPO and Nov 26 Montreal and Toronto GTR RPO cancels along the way. Its journey across the country likely ended abruptly, when the mailbag it was in was hurled from the train as it passed through Cobourg, about 95 km (60 mi) east of Toronto. —*Morris Beattie*



The reverse shows an abundance of markings, which are itemized and explained in the text. The A L Robinson mail clerk cancel (in purple ink) is rather weak, unfortunately, and doesn't reproduce well.

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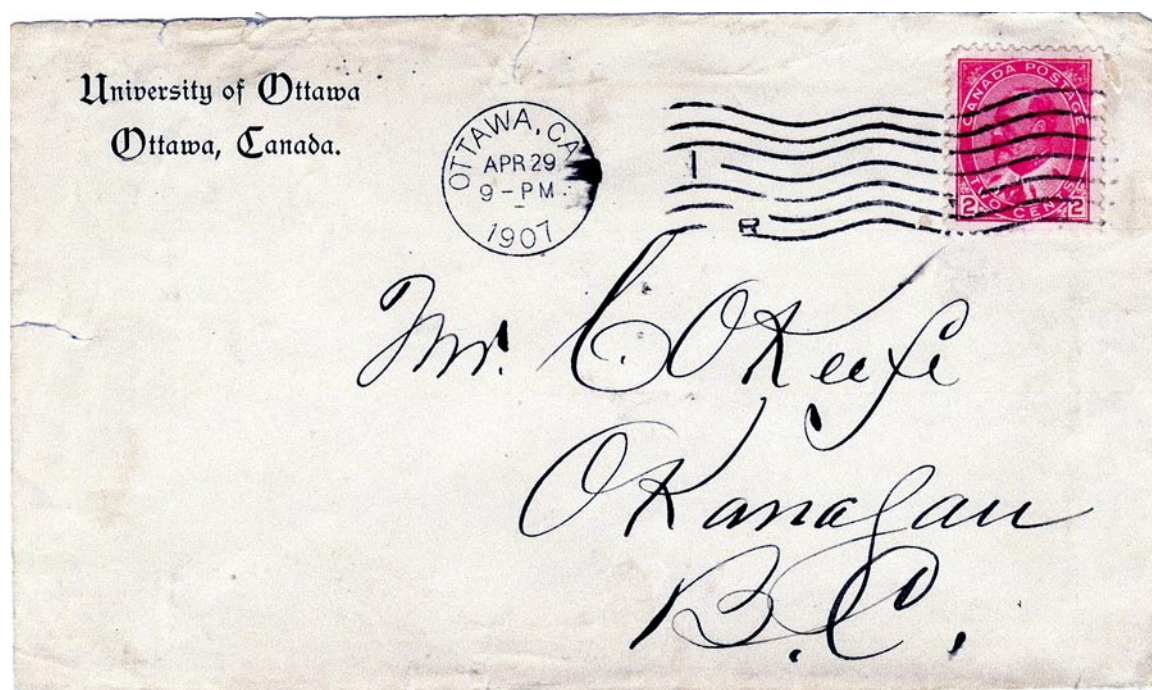
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Newsletter submissions may be sent to the editors at the addresses above.

Free digital newsletters can be downloaded as PDF files at the following websites: for issues 1 to 59, go to www.bnaps.org/hhl/n-bcr.php; for later numbers, visit https://spideroak.com/browse/share/Andrew_Scott/Backissues. Issues 89 to present are in full colour; earlier newsletters are in b&w. File size is approximately 2 Mb / issue.

Here & there: notes & queries from all over

Last issue, for study group members with email, we published "Monograph #1," featuring Associate Editor Tracy Cooper's research into unreported BC town cancels. With this issue we attach "Supplement #2," featuring a "Brief History of Activities of the Vancouver Postal Censorship Station 1939-1945," as compiled by G H Clarke, District Director of Postal Services. This document was assembled in September 1945 and provides a contemporary summary of all the numerous activities of the Censorship Station, as well as a history of censored mail through Vancouver during World War II. Tracy came across the report while researching Post Office Department records for his book, *British Columbia Post Office Revenues 1871-1921*. We hope that this supplement will stimulate readers to look through their own material for interesting examples of censored mail processed through Vancouver during this period. We, of course, would be happy to run any unusual covers in the newsletter. We plan to publish these kinds of supplements on a continuing basis, bringing to light aspects of BC postal history from the historical archives. Good hunting!



Cec Coutts passed along a pair of covers addressed to Cornelius O'Keefe, who was postmaster at the Okanagan post office from 1872 to 1911. (The PO changed the spelling of its name to Okanagan in 1912.) There's a Vernon CDS on back dated May 4, 1907.

"I like the address," Cec writes. "Just Okanagan. I guess he would get it when he was PM!" Cec is working on a handbook of International machine cancels of Ontario.

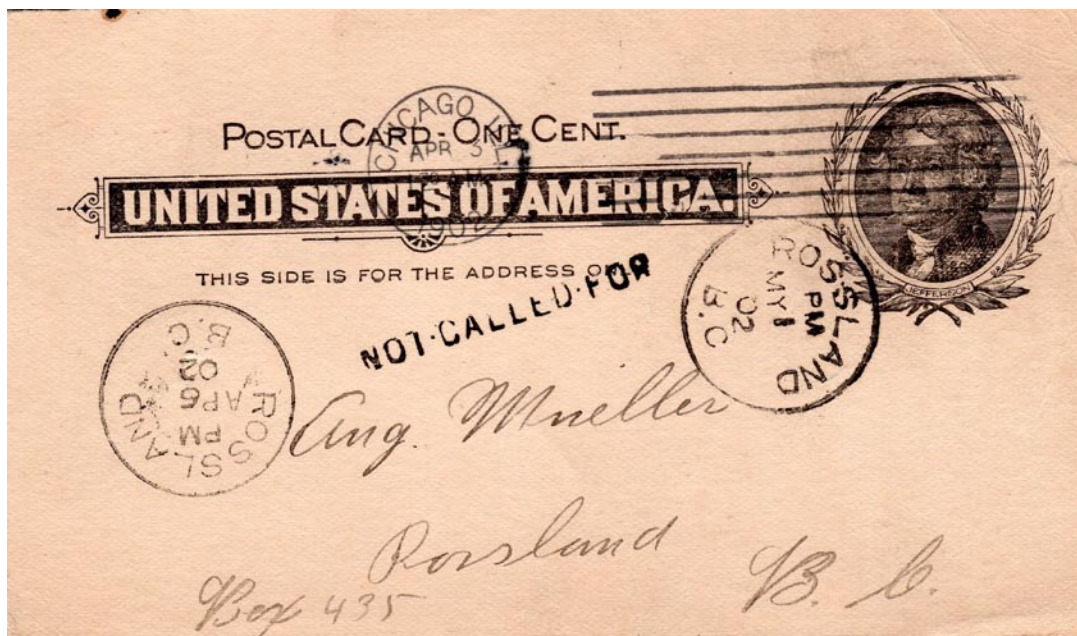


Here & there continued

Earle Covert acquired this item at CALTAPEX in a large lot. It is the upper-left corner of a plastic priority courier envelope supplied by Canada Post. The form date on the back is (94-06). According to Google, **BC MAIL Plus** is a mail preparation and mailing service for the BC government. Earle wonders if newsletter readers can shed any more light on the label? He advises that if the label is supplied or sanctioned by Canada Post then it falls into the same category as the prepaid Ontario GO and Quebec labels.



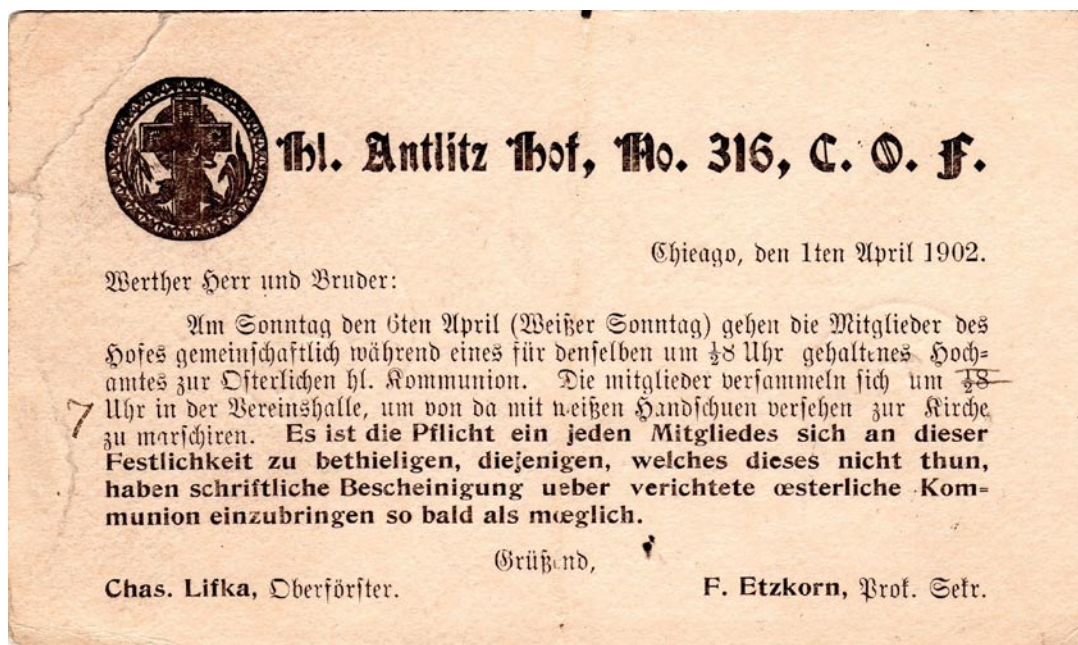
Pete Jacobi has sent along a postal card mailed from Chicago, Illinois, on Apr 3, 1902, addressed to Aug Mueller, Rossland, BC. The Rossland receiver on front is dated Apr 6, 1902. The correspondence was marked NOT CALLED FOR and returned to sender on May 1, 1902.



In the 1890s, Pete writes, there were hundreds (and thousands if one counts splinter groups) of fraternal orders, short-lived organizations and local societies. At the peak of this trend, in the late 19th century, most middle-class and many working-class men belonged at least briefly to a lodge. Millions of lodge brothers paraded in colourful fraternal dress, honoured their officers with extravagant and even ridiculous titles, and found a sense of community at the lodge hall. The best-known fraternal societies accepted only white men and often only Protestants as members. German, Scandinavian and East European lodges for many years operated in their own languages. (Information from encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org.)

The message side of the card (written in German and partly in Gothic script) reads as follows:

Here & there continued



Holy Antlitz Assembly, No. 316, C.O.F., Chicago, April 1, 1902, Worthy Sir and Brother,
 On Sunday, April 6 (White Sunday), the members of this assembly will walk together at 7:30 during the service of the Holy Easter Communion. The members will assemble at 7 o'clock in the meeting hall, in order to march to the church dressed in their white gloves. **It is the duty of each member to partake of this festivity, and those who are not able to do this, are required to provide written proof that they have participated in an Easter Communion elsewhere as soon as possible.**
 Greetings, Chas. Lifka, Chief Forester, F. Etzkorn, Society Secretary



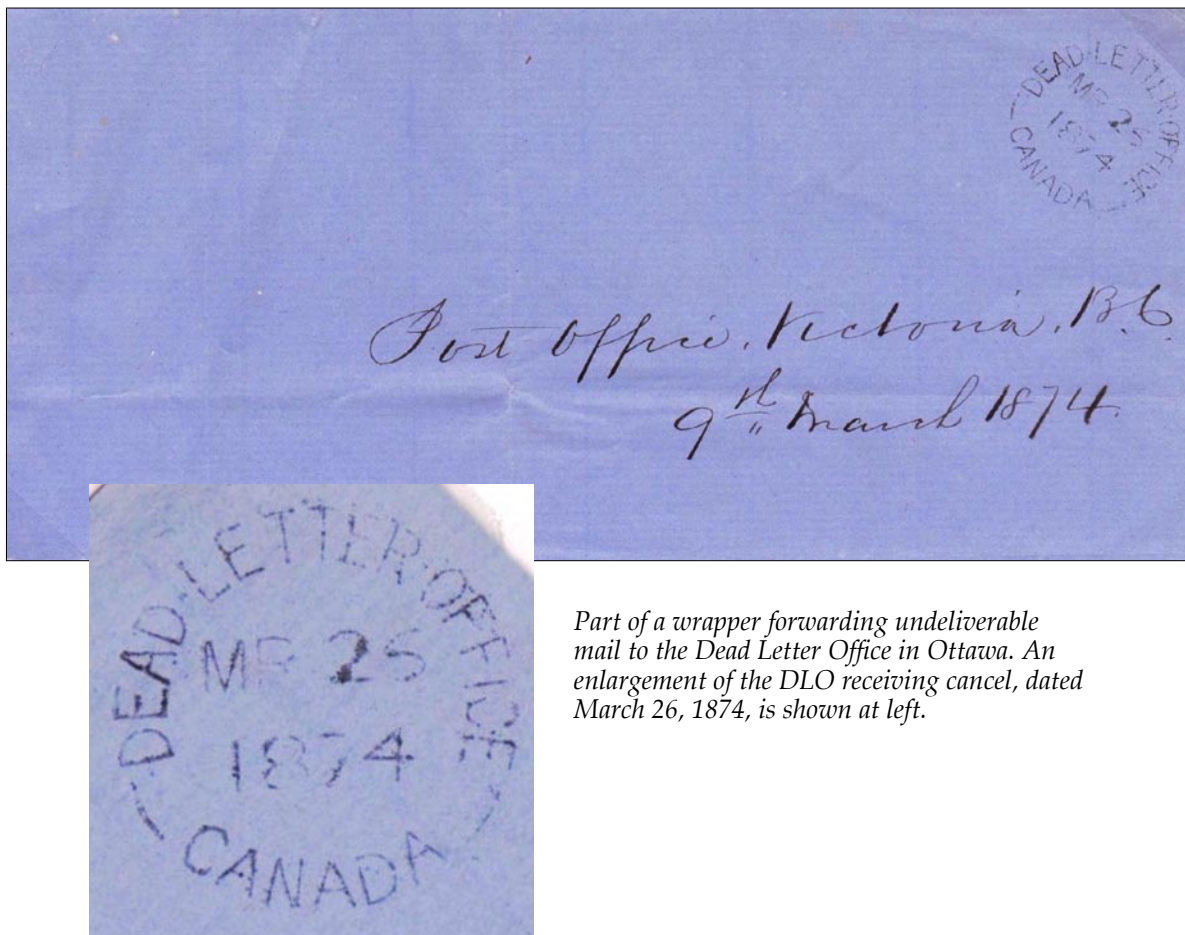
From Tracy Cooper: can readers provide any information about the many BC covers addressed to "Post Master Seattle" in the late 1890s? He wonders if they had to do with the money order exchange office.

Undeliverable mail handling at Victoria, 1874

by Brian Plain

Located on Canada's west coast, Victoria's post office—in the early years—was bound by postal regulations designed for a service based in central Canada. These regulations stated:

Letters posted without any direction, or addressed so imperfectly so that they cannot be forwarded to their intended destinations, and also unpaid or insufficiently paid letters addressed to countries to which letters cannot be sent without the postage is prepaid, are returned to the writers through the Dead Letter Office.



Part of a wrapper forwarding undeliverable mail to the Dead Letter Office in Ottawa. An enlargement of the DLO receiving cancel, dated March 26, 1874, is shown at left.

Shown above is the **reverse portion** of a wrapper forwarding a packet of undeliverable mail **to** the Dead Letter Office, which was at that time located in Ottawa. Mailed by Postmaster Henry Wooton of Victoria on March 9, 1874, it travelled on the steamer *Prince Alfred* to San Francisco, and arrived in Ottawa on March 26, 1874, via New York and Montreal. The delay in the transcontinental trip on this occasion was due to a blizzard-related train stoppage in the Sierra Nevada mountains.

The 815-ton *Prince Alfred* was built at Sunderland, England, in 1852. It was 49 metres long, with a 10-metre beam and a 6.67-metre depth of hold, and its engines had been exhibited at London's Crystal Palace in 1851. The vessel first arrived at San Francisco on June 6, 1870, "from Central American ports," and was sold to entrepreneurs Rosenfeld & Bermingham, who fitted it up to work between San Francisco and Victoria. For the remainder of its career, the *Prince Alfred* remained on the Victoria run.

On June 14, 1874, three months after this item was mailed at Victoria, the steamship, carrying 85 passengers, gold (\$24,127), hides, charcoal, coal and wood, came to grief in Potato Cove, near the Golden Gate, during a dense fog. It struck Duxbury Reef and slid off with a large hole in its bottom. Although all of its pumps were started, there was a metre of water in the engine-room within 28 minutes. The fires were extinguished

Undeliverable mail continued

SAN FRANCISCO.

Wrecking of the Steamer Prince Alfred—Her Passengers Saved.

SAN FRANCISCO, June 14—8 P. M.—The steamer Prince Alfred, from Victoria for this port, ran ashore to-day in Potato Cove, about six miles north of this harbor. The passengers and mails were all safely landed, but at 5 P. M. the steamer sunk, and is a total wreck with all her cargo. The steamer was owned by John Rosenfeld, of this city.

Later—There is some hope that the steamer may yet be saved. Several tugs are at work removing portions of the cargo. The steamer is not wholly submerged.

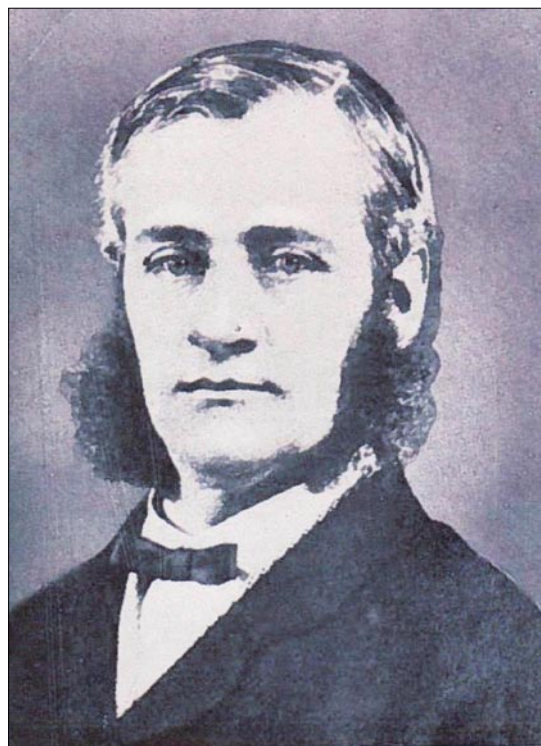
[SECOND DISPATCH.]

The Prince Alfred Goes to Pieces and Sinks.

SAN FRANCISCO, June 15. — The steamer Prince Alfred has broken in two pieces. Masters of tugs from there this afternoon report that none of the wreck was in sight.

Left: a copy of a clipping from the June 15, 1874, Los Angeles Daily Herald, that provides further information on the sinking of the Prince Alfred. An article in the Daily British Colonist of March 10, 1874, reads: "The Steamer Prince Alfred will set sail for San Francisco from the outer harbor at 6 o'clock this evening."

Right: Henry Wootton came to Victoria in 1859, as 2nd officer of the Hudson's Bay Co's new paddle steamer Labouchere. He left the HBC to become a colonial civil servant, and served in a number of different roles. Wootton was postmaster of Victoria from 1861 until his death in 1875.



Henry Wootton.

to prevent the boilers exploding, the sail was raised, and as rapidly as possible the vessel was run for the shore, striking among the rocks in the cove about 300 metres from the beach, where it soon went to pieces. The passengers, crew and mail were landed safely, but in spite of three tugs being dispatched to the wreck, the *Prince Alfred* sank and could not be salvaged. Some cargo washed ashore after the incident, but the remainder stayed on the bottom. The wreck was eventually raised, but brought only \$350 in salvage. An assiduous search of available on-line resources has failed to find any image of this ship.

Bull River: logging in the East Kootenays

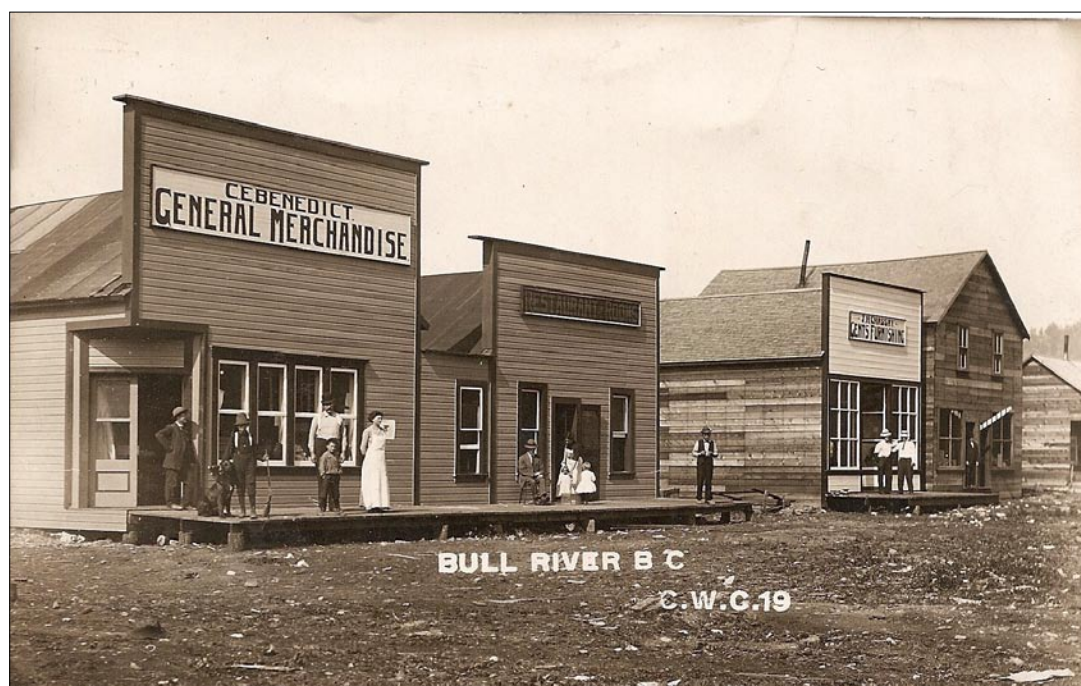
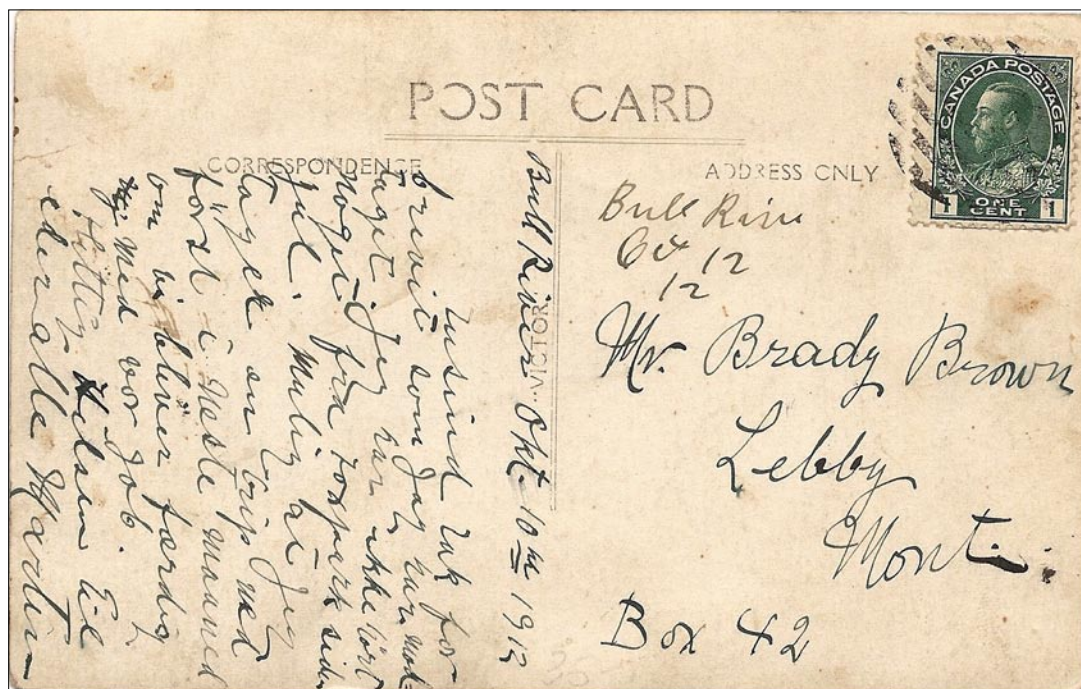
by David Piercey

Bull River was a small community in the East Kootenays, about 24 km (15 mi) southeast of Cranbrook on the old Kootenay Central rail line, with a post office that operated between 1912 and 1945. *Wrigley's British Columbia Directory* of 1918 gives the following description: "A post office, town and station on Kootenay Central branch of CPR, and on the Bull River, Fernie Provincial Electoral District. CPR telegraph. Good auto roads to adjoining towns. Anglican, Presbyterian and RC churches. Local resources, farming, mining, lumbering, cattle-raising having the open range pasture, good hunting and fishing. Population 400."

The Bull River was dammed in the early 1900s with plans of supplying power to the mines at Kimberley, Moyie and the Crowsnest Pass. A small town site (called Pritchard) was built near the dam, in anticipation that the market for power would only increase as settlement and industry in the Rocky Mountain Trench continued to develop. Although this venture was somewhat premature, by the winter of 1910-11 the CPR had started extensive logging operations up the Bull River valley, and began driving logs to its Bull River Bridge, 4 km (2.5 mi) downstream from the dam site; from there the logs could be further carried down the Kootenay River to the CPR's large sawmill at Wardner, about 6 km (4 mi) distant. When construction of the Kootenay Central branch reached the Bull River in the summer of 1911, the CPR established a townsite and sawmill near the bridge in order to manufacture railway ties. The few residents at the little settlement near the dam then moved to the new site, and in September 1912 the Bull River post office was opened to serve the new logging community and its sudden influx of loggers and mill workers.

Bull River continued

The little community grew to a population of at least 400, as mentioned in the 1918 *Wrigley's*. Its amenities included the electric light and power plant, a hotel (the Tourist Hotel), a general store, a dry goods and grocery store, two pool rooms, a barber shop, an automobile garage, a tobacconist, two restaurants (one Chinese), a Chinese laundry, a school and a Provincial Police constable. The CPR also employed more than 500 men in lumber camps around the Bull River's large watershed, all provisioned from the townsite. Camp Six, 37 km (23 mi) up the Bull and the centre for all the camp operations, even had a post office, called



The printed postcard above shows a scarce manuscript marking, dated October 12, 1912, which was applied after the official opening date for the post office (Sept 15, 1912), but before receipt of the split-ring hammer (proofed Oct 23, 1912). The picture side shows a portion of the town's nascent main street as it appeared in 1912.

Bull River continued

Tanglefoot, which operated between April 1917 and October 1925. During this period the CPR was actively recruiting immigrants from Norway and Sweden for seasonal work in such camps, and many took up the offer. The 1912 postcard illustrated on the previous page is apparently from one of these recruits.

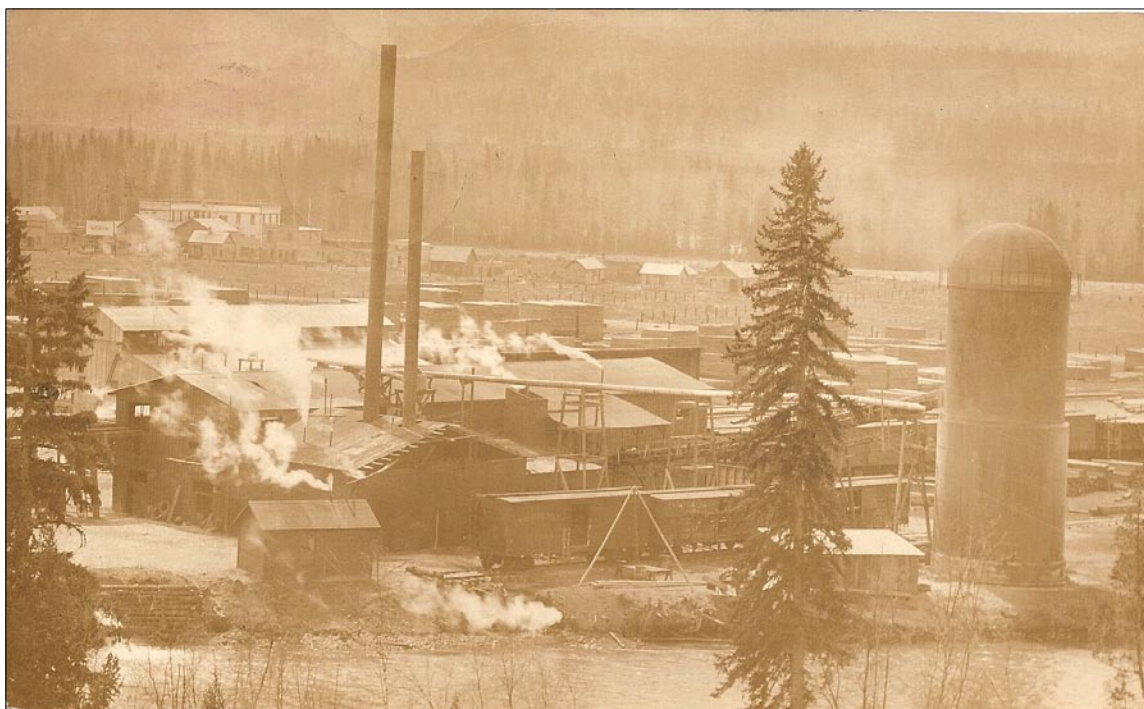
Extensive logging in the area kept the community solvent for the next 20 years, though the destructive practices so typical of that era finally resulted in all accessible timber being logged off, with the mill finally closing in 1928. The mill machinery and most of the employees then moved about 80 km (50 mi) north to begin new operations at Canal Flats, south of Columbia Lake. Although the Bull River post office continued on for several more years, in service to the local farmers and ranchers, it too eventually was closed in May 1945.

Postal hammers known from Bull River include its original split-ring (proofed Oct 23, 1912), two different duplexes (proofed Dec 23, 1913, and Sept 29, 1934), a registration box (proofed May 1923), a MOOD (not in the proof book, but found on covers during the 1930s) and a circular datestamp (proofed Dec 22, 1937).

Reference: Verdun Casselman, *Ties to Water: The History of Bull River in the East Kootenay*, Friesens, Altona, Manitoba (1998).



Left: Bull River split-ring, dated Jan 21, 1913. Right: the first duplex hammer, dated May 28, 1914.



This realphoto viewcard of the CPR's Bull River sawmill shows, if one looks closely, the town's main street in the upper left part of the photograph. The card was mailed from Bull River in August 1914. The mill mainly manufactured railway ties.

The tale of the Cat and Kitten Islands

by Peter Smith

Two tiny uninhabited islands off the coast of BC—part of the Discovery Islands archipelago—appear unnamed on any marine charts of the area. A recently surfaced, 56-year-old postcard, however, reveals that they did have names at one time. These weren't official names, mind you, sanctioned by the authorities, but rather little more than charming local names, known to just a few homesteaders who lived nearby on Cortes Island.

Cortes Island is quite remote in itself, only reachable by air or by a two-ferry hop (from Campbell River on Vancouver Island to Quadra Island, then from Heriot Bay on Quadra to Whaletown on Cortes). If you drive south from Whaletown to Mansons Landing on Cortes and look seaward from the dock, you can see two tiny, rocky islands topped by trees. Locals in the know used to call them the Cat and Kitten Islands. Why were they called that? I couldn't resist trying to find out.



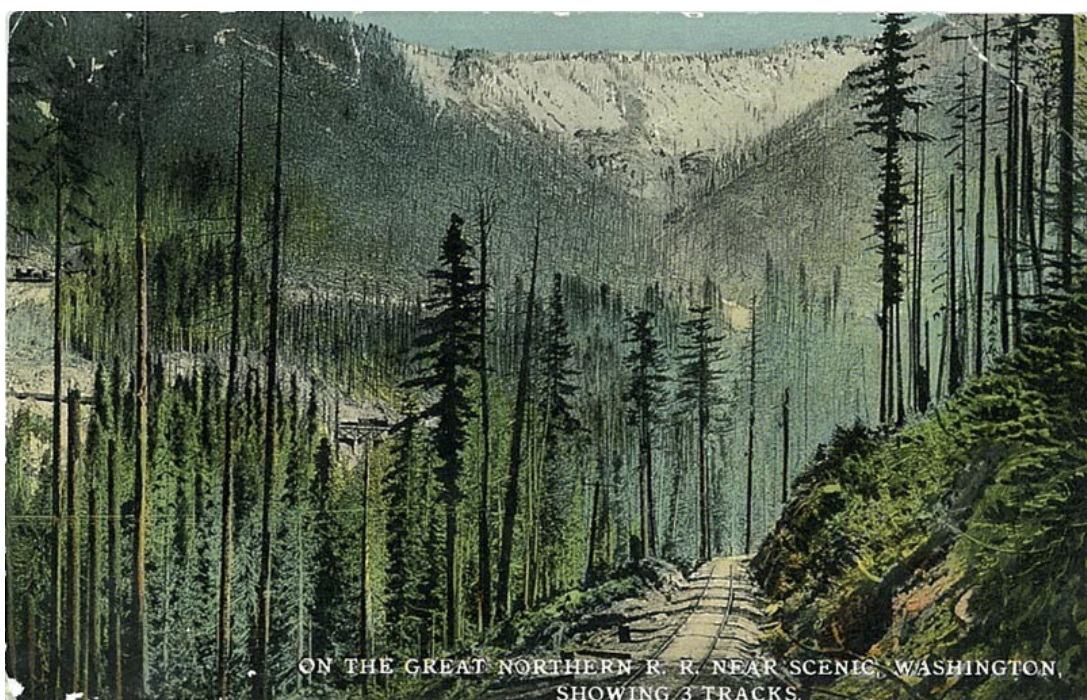
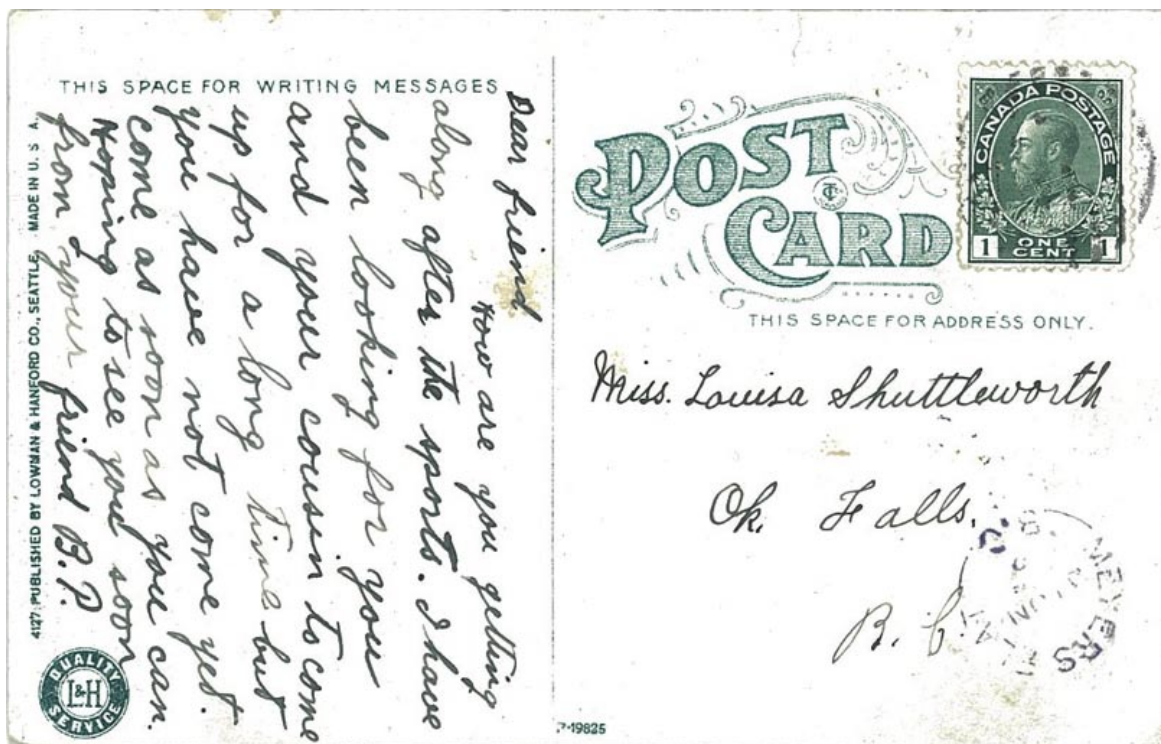
I discovered that a homesteader family built a sturdy cabin near Mansons Landing, and that the daughter of the family married Henry Hague, postmaster at Mansons Landing from 1924 to 1941. The cabin was later taken over by the Hawkins family, whose livelihood depended largely on chickens. On the days that the Union steamship carried the mail south to Vancouver, the Hawkins' eggs would go with it. There was only one problem. Every year, when the Hawkins' chicks were hatched, the family's numerous barn cats, which kept down the rats and mice, would also take a heavy toll on the chicks.

So the Hawkins did what they had to do. Lynne Jordan, director of the Cortes Island Museum and Archive Society, knew the story first hand. "Each year," she told me, "when chicks were being hatched, they rowed their numerous barn cats over to the two little rocky islets just across from the Mansons Landing dock and left them there until the chicks were large enough to fend for themselves. One of the Hawkins grand-daughters visited the museum once and told me the story—even that one of the cats would swim back to Mansons Landing each year and find its way home. Everyone locally in those days called the little islets the Cat and Kitten Islands."

If the aerial photographer hadn't known the secret names—and if a family of visitors hadn't picked up the Gowen, Sutton postcard on a summer vacation in 1959 and sent it home to Pasadena, California (July 21 Vancouver machine cancel)—no one outside Mansons Landing would have ever known the story.

Updating the BC “unreported” post office list

In the last issue of the newsletter (No 95, September 2015), we updated the list of unreported BC post office markings. Since that date we’ve already been notified of three additional offices that should be removed from the list, as examples are known: Meyers Flat, Yoder and Glenlily. Thanks to Malcolm Leitch, Greg Nestoroff and Pete Jacobi for sending in reports. The discovery copies for the three offices are illustrated below.



Viewcard from Meyers Flat to Okanagan Falls, date unclear. The post office was open between Nov 1, 1909, and June 30, 1913. It was located just northwest of Oliver in the Okanagan Valley.

Unreported update continued



Yoder, southeast of Castlegar on the GNR line, was only open Sept 17, 1923, to Oct 16, 1924.















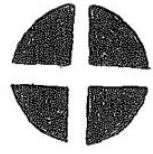
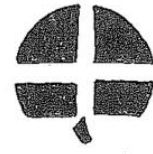










Glenlily to Calgary, dated Feb 18, 1918. The post office, shown inset, was open 1913-18 and located on the CPR line east of Creston.

BC cork cancel survey: Part 2 (Victoria)

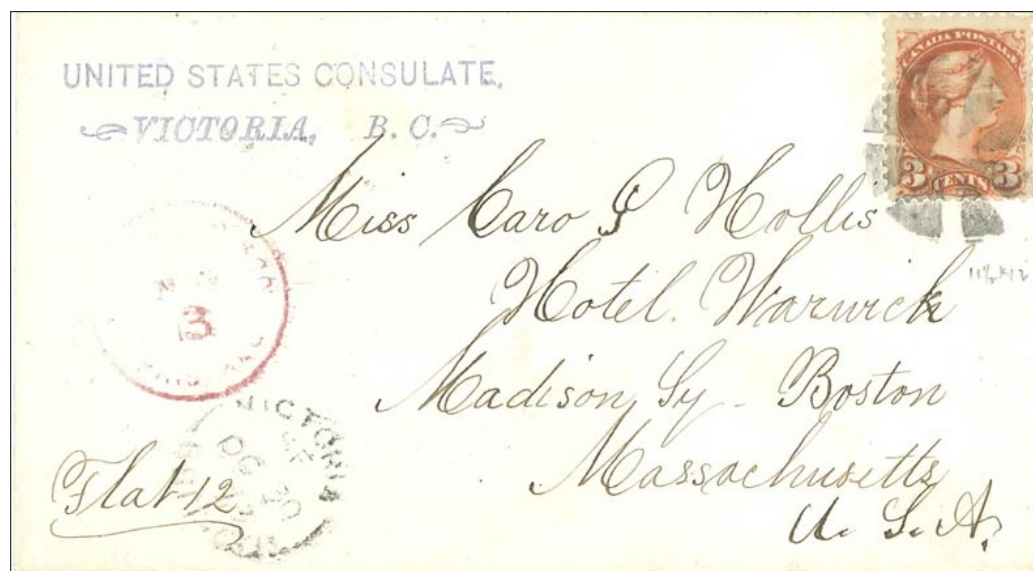
by Tracy Cooper

Way back in *BC Postal History Newsletter* number 93 (March 2015), we published Part 1 of an ongoing series concerning cork cancel usage in British Columbia. We have to report, reluctantly, that the response to this first installment was underwhelming, to say the least. Feedback on whether this sort of article is of interest to our readers is appreciated.

Part 2 of the series follows the same lines as Part 1, and shows Gerry Wellburn's classification system for Victoria corks. In this issue we cover cork cancels V.19 to V.42. We are asking readers to look through their collections and report back early and late dates for each of the cancels plus the number of examples of each cancel they hold. The results will be tabulated and a scarcity table presented after all the data is in. In this installment we are particularly interested to know if any reader can report an example of the unusual V.20 cancel (which, by the way, does not appear to be a cork cancellation). And then there's the highly collectible non-cork V.29 cancel: the Victoria and Esquimalt Crown cancellation. The editors would like to know the earliest reported usage of the Victoria Crown, so please review your holdings.

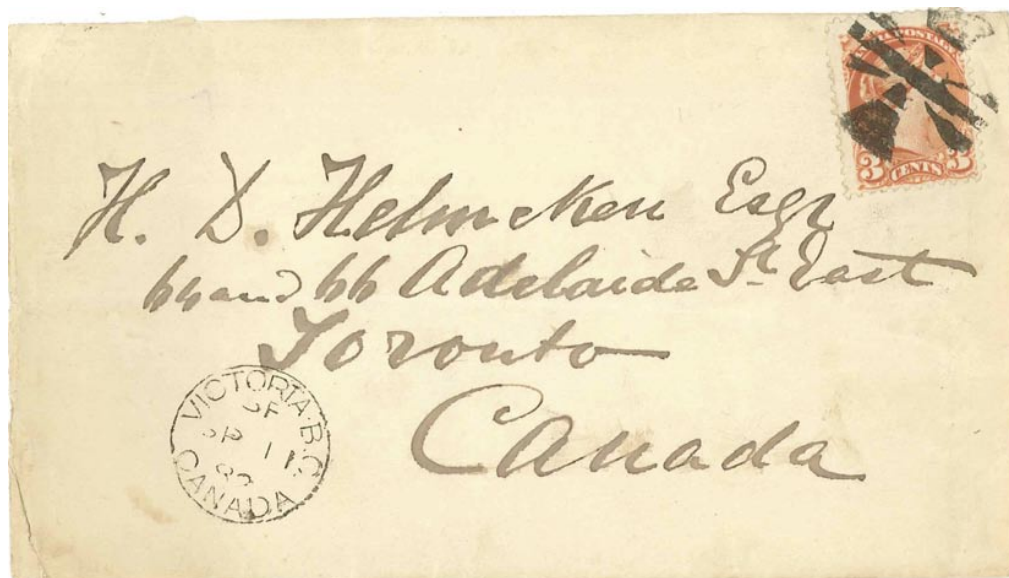
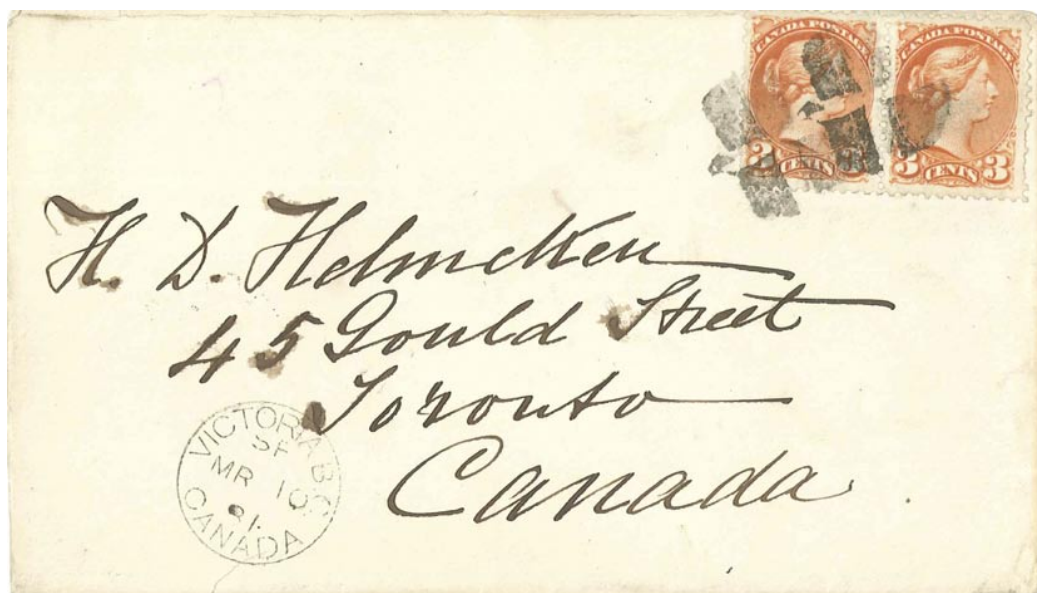
 <p>V.19 5 bars 23 mm. Dec 1877-Jan '78</p>	 <p>V.20 Fancy jewel 23 mm. Mar 1878</p>	 <p>V.21 Broken bars 20 mm. Aug 1878</p>	 <p>V.22 8 segments 23 mm. Oct-Dec 1878</p>	 <p>V.23 7 bars, large 26 mm. Jan-Feb 1879</p>	 <p>V.24 10 bars 23 mm. Apr-Aug 1879</p>
 <p>V.25 6 bars with cut 22 mm. Feb-Mar 1880</p>	 <p>V.26 5 bars, angle cut 19 mm. Aug-Sep 1880</p>	 <p>V.27 5 bars, smaller 17 mm. Sep 1880</p>	 <p>V.28 Blocks in circle 22 mm. Oct 1880-Jan '81</p>	 <p>V.29 Crown in sunburst, 40 rays, 24 mm. 1880-82</p>	 <p>V.30 8 bars, angle cut 20 mm. Jan-Feb 1882</p>
 <p>V.31 4 quarters 22 mm. Feb-Jul 1881</p>	 <p>V.32 4 quarters, re-cut 22 mm. Mar 1881</p>	 <p>V.33 10 narrow bars 22 mm. Mar 1881</p>	 <p>V.34 Irregular bars 22 mm. Apr 1881</p>	 <p>V.35 Leaf or shell 22 mm. Apr-Jul 1881</p>	 <p>V.36 6 bars 22 mm. Sep-Dec 1881</p>
 <p>V.37 Broken oval or beehive, 21 mm. Dec 1881</p>	 <p>V.38 5 small bars 15 mm. Feb 1882</p>	 <p>V.39 Broken bars 20 mm. Mar-Apr 1882</p>	 <p>V.40 7 bars 17 mm. Jul-Aug 1882</p>	 <p>V.41 Cross or chalice 23 mm. Sep-Dec 1882</p>	 <p>V.42 8 segments 22 mm. Oct-Dec 1882</p>

Victoria corks continued



Oct 30, 1878, cover from the US Consulate in Victoria showing cork V.22 (eight segments).

A Mar 10, 1881, Helmcken cover showing cork V.32 (quartered cork recut). Only used in March 1881.



Another Helmcken cover, dated Sept 11, 1882, showing V.41, one of the fanciest of fancy cork cancels from Victoria. Only four examples of the V.41 cross or chalice cork have been noted, this being the strongest strike (perhaps because of its early usage). Wellburn records this cancel used Sept-Dec 1882.

Victoria corks continued



June 29, 1881,
fancy leaf or
shell cork (V.35)
on a 6-cent
double domestic
letter rate cover
to Dr Helmcken.

Crease cover to
England show-
ing broken bars
cork (V.39) dated
Mar 19, 1882.
Three-cent and
one-cent Small
Queens make
up the 10-cent
double-weight
letter rate.



Unusual quad-
ruple letter rate
made up of four
5-cent Small
Queens. Cover
was mailed from
Victoria Aug 1,
1882, and shows
cork V.40 (seven
bars).

A mysterious large registered "R"

I purchased this cover at a Sunday bourse in Victoria. I've been watching for any McCleery mail for years, unsuccessfully. I love this cover despite its large size and damaged Small Queen stamp. The back has a Land Registry Office/Kamloops printed seal and a Vancouver CDS (JA 30/1897). No Kamloops postmark.



I have a question. Has anyone seen the large registration "R" before? I assume it was applied in Vancouver—where the envelope appears to have been mailed. But why would that be necessary, when the 3-cent stamps are tied with R-in-oval marks?

It was nice of the Eburne postmaster to apply the JA 30 receiving mark on the front.

Thanks for any enlightenment or comment you can give me.

—Gray Scrimgeour