

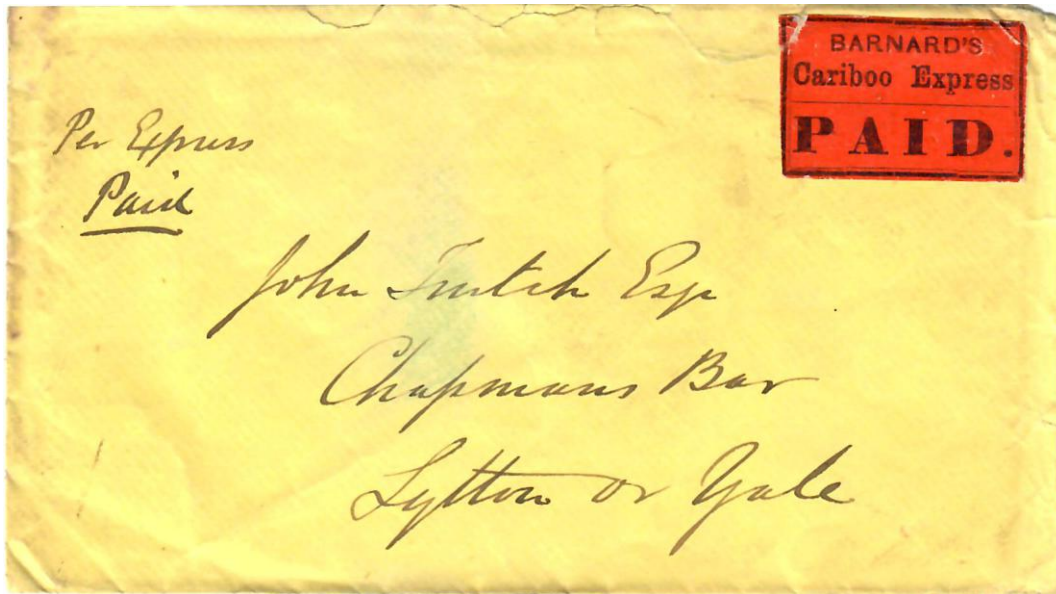


# BRITISH COLUMBIA POSTAL HISTORY NEWSLETTER

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This edition's favourite cover nicely follows up on Tracy Cooper's article in the last edition of the newsletter about the Express Companies.

Not so many years ago Jack Wallace was auctioning off a number of covers from his collection. I was determined to acquire a few of the listed items if for no other reason than to have them as mementos of our friend, who was truly one of the "good guys". I was successful on several lots including this cover, which ties in quite nicely with Tracy Cooper's article on the Express Companies. It has been a favourite ever since I acquired it and not just due to its previous ownership. One of my major collecting interests is mail that tells the story of the development of the CPR in British Columbia. The date of the cover is circa 1863, clearly well before active

development of the CPR, but yet it has a strong connection.

The cover is addressed to John Trutch at Chapmans Bar, Lytton or Yale. In 1863, John Trutch was supervising the construction of the Alexandria Suspension Bridge about 6.5 km from Yale. The cover has a "BARNARD'S Cariboo Express PAID" label and the notation "Per Express Paid", indicating that colonial postage was paid.

John Trutch was the younger brother of Sir Joseph William Trutch, the first Lieutenant Governor of B.C. They lived very parallel lives, becoming engineers and emigrating from England first to the USA and later to Canada. They carried out a number of significant surveys in Oregon. When

*(continued)*

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Joseph returned to England to lobby for a government appointment in the Colonies, John carried out additional surveys in Oregon, Washington state and one contract for J.D. Pemberton, surveying the North and South Saanich and Lake District in 1858. They moved to Canada about 1860.

In 1862 Joseph was contracted to build the section of the Cariboo Road from Chapmans Bar to Boston Bar, including the Alexandria suspension bridge from which he was to collect tolls for a period of seven years. While this toll arrangement made Joseph a lot of money and enabled him to amass large landholdings, it also, as chief commissioner of lands and works, caused him political difficulty. Joseph therefore sold the toll bridge to John.

Running the toll bridge kept John near the Fraser River and the gold fields in the Cariboo. He lived in a house in Yale, near the suspension bridge in the late 1860s.

After BC joined Canada in 1871, a number of surveys were required for the Canadian Pacific transcontinental railroad. John was in charge of the surveys from Lytton over Eagle Pass to Kamloops and from Lytton to Yale down the Fraser Canyon. In the second season John was in charge of surveys south from Kamloops and east from Hope. Subsequently he surveyed routes west from Cache Creek and in the lower Fraser valley.

In 1889 John Trutch was appointed land commissioner for the Esquimalt and Nanaimo railway - *Morris Beattie*

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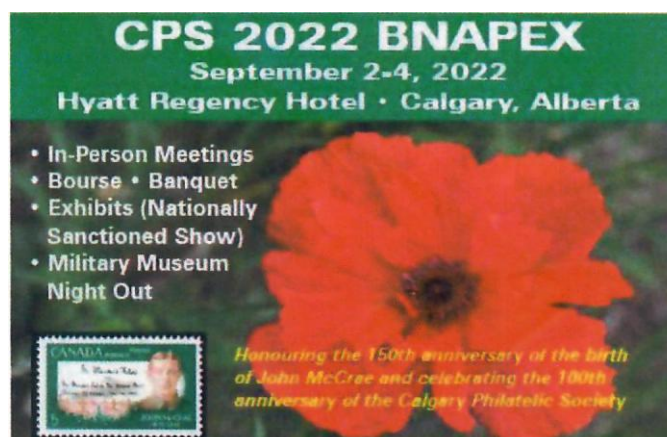
Free digital newsletters can be downloaded as PDF files at <https://bnaps.org/hhl/n-bcr.htm> (for all issues). Issues 89 to present are in full colour; earlier newsletters are in b&w only. File size is approximately 1.5 to 2 Mb/issue.

## Editor's Notes

First of all, many thanks for the very positive feedback received from a number of you for my first effort at editing the newsletter. I shall endeavor to maintain the standard and keep the newsletter interesting for all members. I would like to see contributions from many more of you so that all interests are addressed. Don't worry about how you send it, we have no trouble making things look "pretty".

Along with this edition of our newsletter we are sending an updated index as Monograph 4a for all issues of the newsletter from #1 through #120. There have been numerous additions and corrections since the previous index was provided. We ask that any readers who find further "irregularities" let us know of these to be included in future updates.

We also are including Monograph 5, a thorough review of **Correspondence from End of Track** by group member Brian Copeland.



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

## British Columbia Joins Confederation The First 10 Years 1871-1881

### Part 4 Consolidation 1872 - 1879

*by: Tracy Cooper*

With the first postal contracts, now completed by the Post Office Department of Canada under the auspices of Chief Post Office Inspector Dewe in late 1871 and early 1872, the priority of the Post Office Department for British Columbia focused on consolidating postal service into the Dominion Postal System, including the rest of the existing and newly established agricultural communities, missionary settlements, and mining camps of British Columbia.

Starting in August 1872, the first set of post offices and postal routes to service them were established at:

DUNKELD	Aug 1, 1872	OKANAGAN	Aug 14, 1872
NICOLA LAKE	Aug 1, 1872	CHILLIWACK	Sept 1, 1872
SOOKE	Aug 1, 1872	OKANAGAN MISSION	Oct 1, 1872
PAVILION (1)	Aug 1, 1872		

In 1873 additional post offices were established at:

SOMENOS	Apr 1, 1873	HARVEY CREEK	July 1, 1873
CANOE CREEK	July 1, 1873	KEITHLEY CREEK (1)	July 1, 1873
DOG CREEK	July 1, 1873	QUESNELLE FORKS	July 1, 1873
GROUSE CREEK	July 1, 1873		



Figure 1. OKANAGON/B.C. SP 12/74

*This rare cover from the Joseph Greenhow correspondence pays the 6 cent postage to England plus the 8c registration rate (no 8 cent registration stamps were available at the Okanagon Post Office) given its tiny size.*





Figure 2. NICOLA LAKE/B.C NO 30/73 and LYTTON/B.C transit DE 1/73 to Victoria from the Charles Pooley correspondence.





Figure 3.  
 QUESNELLE  
 FORKS/B.C.  
 AP 23/75  
 This post office was  
 the heart of the mail  
 route for the Cariboo  
 between Barkerville,  
 Harvey Creek and  
 Keithley Creek.



Figure 4.  
 CHILLIWACK/B.C.  
 JU 16/76  
 In blue ink to  
 Victoria from the  
 Charles Pooley  
 correspondence.



Figure 5.  
 DOG CREEK/B.C.  
 SP 29/78  
 Double weight cover to  
 Victoria from the  
 Charles Pooley  
 correspondence.

The transcript that follows is indicative of the discussions and details involved in establishing new postal routes for mail service to some of the more remote BC post communities:



“Mr. Henry Wooten

Harvey Creek Aug 14, 1873

Dear Sir: I write in reference to the Barkerville & Harvey Creek Post Route. The tenders were asked for once a week to Harvey and semi-monthly to Keithley, mouth of Quesnel through the summer and the round trip in winter every two weeks. The bid of Mr. Minnie (sp) was accepted to commence the first of April he was by hand to carry it but the route was not established till the first of July when Mr. Minnie refused to carry it. It was then given to E. Kimball the round trip only every two weeks there are responsible men who will make the round trip four times every month during the summer and every two weeks in winter for the same amount that Kimball receives. The Mail carrier instead of coming to Harvey and does not call on his return trip. He says his contract calls for 140 miles at the end of this you see two routes in miles. He gets the mail at Barkerville Friday gets to Harvey Monday night, leaves next morning at day light giving no time for answering letters by reason along the route. he goes by Keithley, he took his pack animals and trades along the route. I have written by this mail to Mr. J. Dewe informing him of the short trip of the season to get good into this part of the country and it is absolutely necessary to have a weekly mail through the summer. Mr. Harper posted a letter in Barkerville July 19th to myself in regard to him and Bacon and not receive it till 4th August. I trust you will use your influence to get a weekly mail for us in summer and oblige.

Respectfully

Sam C. Smith Postmaster”

	<u>Miles</u>		<u>Miles</u>
Barkerville to Grouse	4	Barkerville to Grouse	4
Grouse to Keithley	31	Grouse to Harvey	24
Keithley to Harvey	11	Harvey to Keithley	11
Back to Keithley	11	Keithley to Quesnelle	21
Keithley to Quesnelle	21	Quesnelle to Keithley	21
Quesnelle to Keithley	21	Keithley to Harvey	11
Keithley to Grouse	31	Harvey to Grouse	24
Grouse to Barkerville	4	Grouse to Barkerville	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>134</b>		<b>120</b>

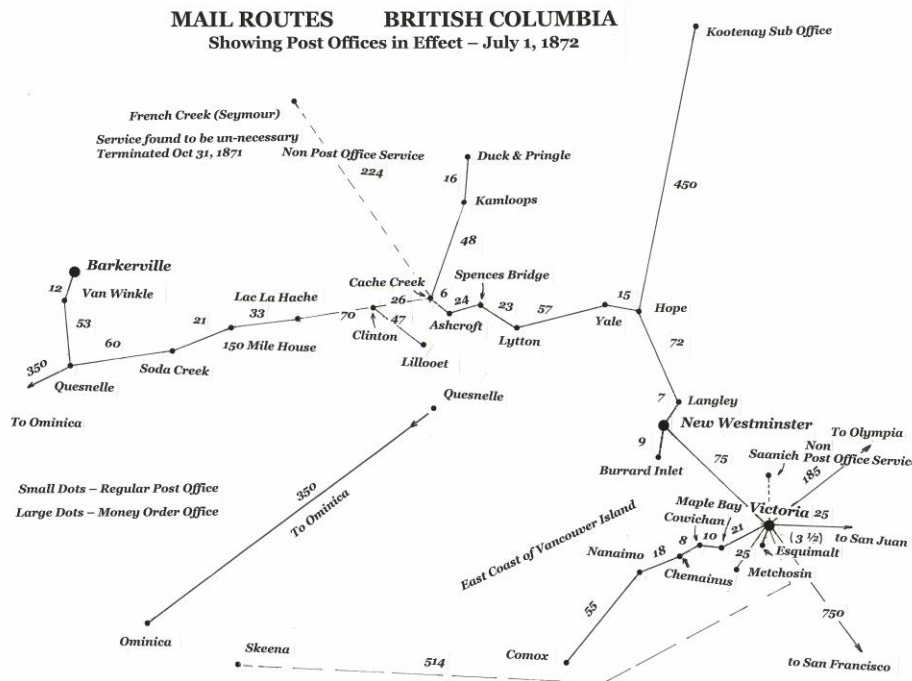


Figure 6.

Mail Routes British Columbia Showing Distance Between Each Post Office: 1872 - 1875

In 1874 through to 1878, the following remaining Post Offices were established which essentially consolidated the existing and newly created settlements throughout British Columbia.

<u>1874</u>		<u>1875</u>	
GRANVILLE	Mar 1, 1874	GLENORA (1)	Mar 1, 1875
MOODYVILLE	Mar 1, 1874	POPCUM	June 1, 1875
CASSIAR	June 1, 1874	LADNERS LANDING	Aug 1, 1875
SALT SPRING ISLAND	Sept 1, 1874	MATSQUI	???? 1875*
<u>1876</u>		<u>1878</u>	
ALEXANDRIA	Oct 1, 1876	PAVILION	Mar 1, 1878
MAPLE RIDGE	Oct 1, 1876	WELLINGTON	July 1, 1878
QUADRA	Oct 1, 1876		

It is noted that many of these early Post Offices are extremely scarce. DUNKELD, CANOE CREEK, HARVEY CREEK, POPCUM and QUADRA are still unreported while GROUSE CREEK, CASSIAR, GLENORA(1) each have less than 3 reports. For the most part, 1870's covers from British Columbia, except for Victoria, New Westminster and Yale, are all quite scarce.

*\*The exact opening date of this Post Office has not yet been determined and there is little information available in the official records. What we do know is that the Post Office Inspector, Robert Wallace, prepared Report #57 on 8th July 1874 (now lost) requesting approval for the establishment of a Post Office at Matsqui. The Postmaster General gave approval in this report #61, dated 7th January 1875, for Wallace to open the Matsqui Post Office with Felix Chapny as Postmaster. Mail delivery was to be by way of steamer between New Westminster and Yale. It is curious to not that the opening date is not recorded in the Post Office Record Card for Matsqui or noted in the Canada Gazette. More research is required to determine the opening date.*

The final chapter of this series speaks to the expansion of postal services in BC and the new commitment by Canada to expand routes and establish Post Offices to communities with little or no mail service.

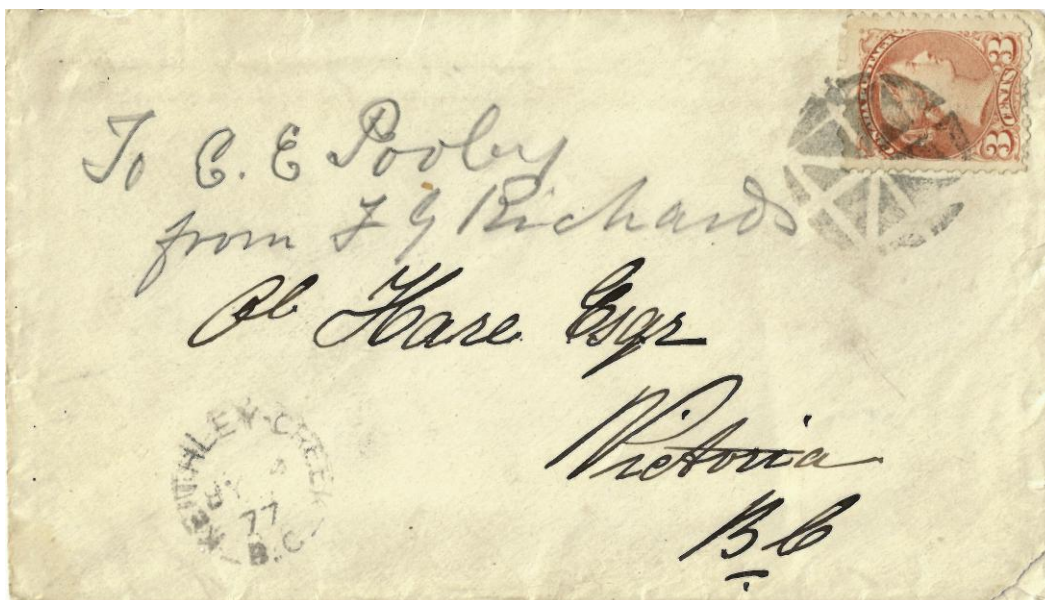


Figure 7.  
KEITHLEY  
CREEK/B.C.  
JY 4/77  
Cover to Victoria from  
the Charles Pooley  
correspondence.  
Very scarce.

## Earliest Reported Seaman's Concession Rate

by: Tracy Cooper

Lot 683 in the November 2021 Eastern Auction highlighted one of the rarest Canadian postal history items, specifically the 2 cent "concession rate" (as opposed to the standard 5 cent rate from Canada to England). While it is unknown exactly when a special rate for military enlisted members first came into effect in Canada, this cover represents by far the earliest known example. Strict rules for the allowance of this reduced rate were specified, including having the letter initialed by the Commanding Officer. In this rare example, the letter was posted by A Bureyer of the HMS Rocket on May 15, 1876 from Esquimalt and was countersigned by the Commanding Officer Chas. E. Harris (CEH) as specified in the regulation.



Front and back of 1876 seaman's cover with rare seaman's rate from Esquimalt, B.C. to England.

The gunboat "Rocket" arrived in Esquimalt in early 1876 via England and Valparaiso, Peru, San Francisco and Astoria.

The bidding for this item was spirited with 64 bids finally knocking down to the successful bidder for \$11,000 plus hammer fees and taxes. Of the six known seaman rate covers, this example is almost 20 years earlier than the next earliest example. The six reported examples are:

- |                                |                        |
|--------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1) A. Bureyer, Esquimalt       | May 1876               |
| 2) D. Sampson, Esquimalt       | Jan. 1895              |
| 3) D. Sampson, Esquimalt       | Feb. 1895              |
| 4) D. Sampson, Esquimalt       | Mar. 1895              |
| 5) Walter Bradbrook, Esquimalt | Oct. 1896              |
| 6) Walter Bradbrook, Esquimalt | Nov. 1896 (front only) |



## The *End of Track* Story Continues

A previous article by Tracy Cooper in newsletter #107 (September 2018, pp 1077 – 1081) presented some new aspects of the End of Track story including a listing of all reported BC End of Track postmarks. At that time there were just eight reported strikes, making this a rare postmark. Recently, five additional envelopes bearing End of Track strikes dated from July through September 1885 were sold on eBay by a Calgary seller, indicating that they came from “an old collection”. Three of the envelopes contained letters that add to the overall story, resulting in vigorous bidding in the auction so that the combined selling price of the five envelopes was nearly \$7,000. In this article we present the newly-discovered envelopes as well as a brief summary of the contents of the letters. The discussion of the letter contents that follows has been summarized from full transcriptions provided online by study group member Greg Nesterhof at the link provided at the end of this article. A comprehensive discussion of these letters and additional relevant material has been prepared by study group member Brian Copeland. It is provided to B.C. Postal History Study Group members as Monograph No. 5.

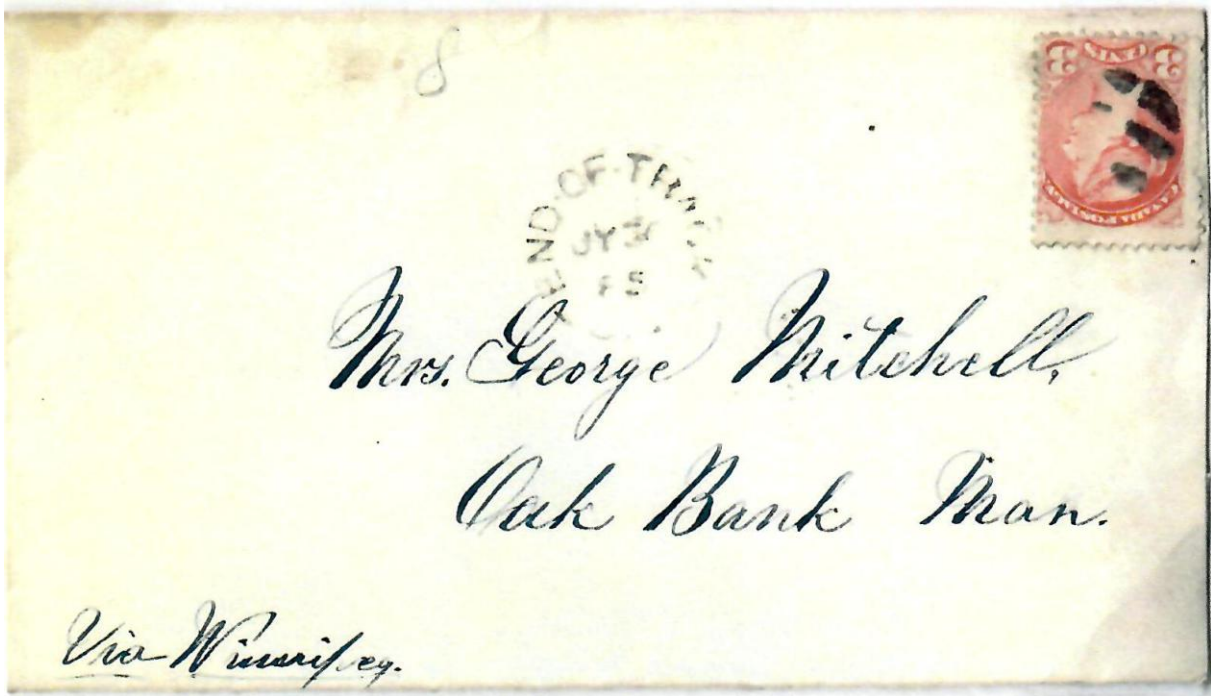


Figure 1. End of track cancel date July 30, 1885.

The letters, written in purple ink, are from a camp cook by the name of George Mitchell to his wife in Manitoba as he worked on the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway near present-day Revelstoke. In the letters, George reveals his longings to hear from his wife and children, his bread-baking plans and his troubling stomach pain.

In the first letter dated July 14, datelined “Selkirk Mountains, BC,” Mitchell told his wife “I have got away up here in the wilderness at last. It took us seven days to come from first crossing (Donald).”

He described how he and three others walked the whole way, about 100 km. En route, a Mr. Heather who was pushing a mule-drawn wagon loaded with supplies was nearly killed along with his team. As they went down a hill, one mule went over a bank, dragging the rest behind him. Heather jumped to safety.

"He may thank the Lord for planting a big tree which held the wagon from upsetting (sic)," Mitchell wrote. The mules were all right once untangled, and the wagon was only slightly damaged.

Mitchell went on to relate to his wife how he was recovering from stomach cramps. Some friends gave him the only medicine available — liquor — while another began to walk 3½ miles to find a doctor. But the doctor was away, "so he had his trip for nothing in the night in the wild woods."

Mitchell assured his wife he was getting better, but taking a few days off to recover. In the meantime, he was planning to bake some bread to test his yeast.

In the next surviving letter, from a few weeks later, Mitchell said he had nearly recovered from his illness but complained of loneliness, for he hadn't received any letters from his family. However, a friend in the camp named Albert apparently heard from them and loaned them money. Mitchell fretted about their financial situation but had nothing to offer beyond sympathy, for he feared any money he might send would get stolen along the way.

In the third surviving letter, Mitchell is despondent because he still hasn't heard from his family: "It is simply awful not to hear from you but I must grin and bear it ... I would feel a great deal better if I knew how you were getting along."

Mitchell further lamented that "everything here is an awful price. Flour \$8 per sack, beans 10 cents per pound, bacon 22, sugar 19, baking powder 60 and everything else as high as possible. It is to be hoped when the track is laid up this far that we will be able to get things a little cheaper ... It is a pure fright now."

Mitchell said he was cooking for about 15 men on a sheet iron stove and although proud of his bread, he was feeling glum, for "the most predominant feature here is selfishness." He expected to be home early in the fall. "There is no good chances here now to make money and nothing would keep me in the blooming place," he wrote.

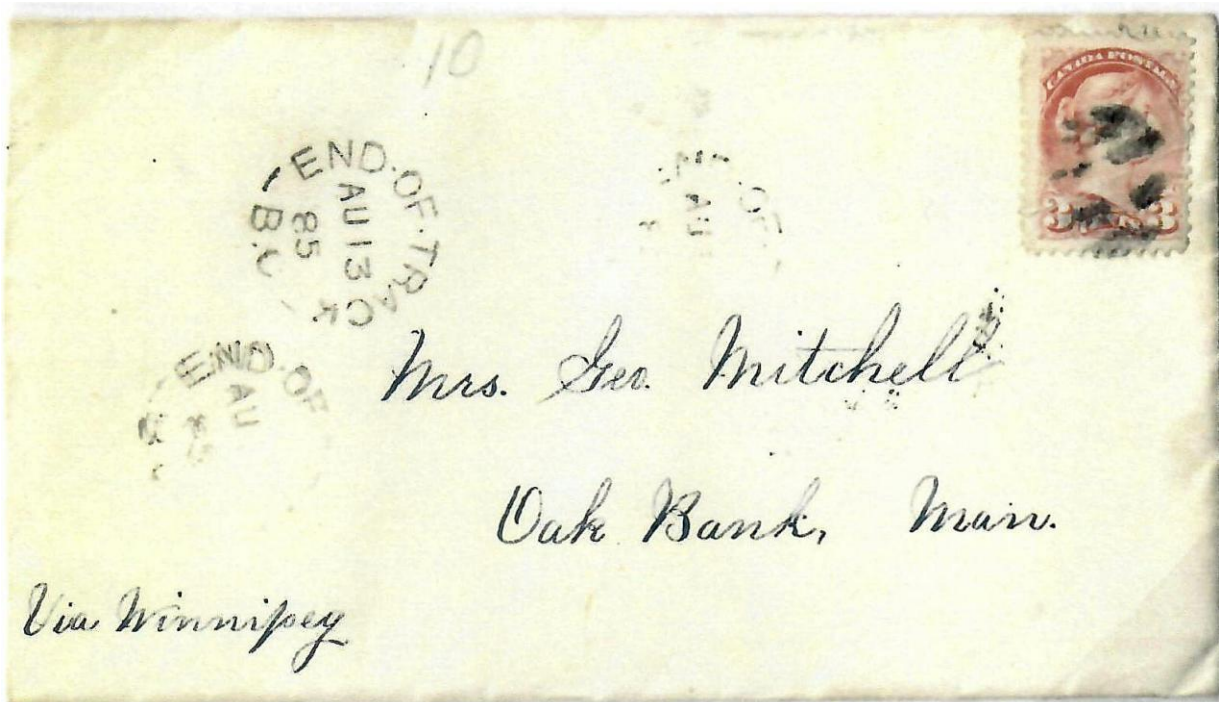


Figure 2. End of track cancel dated Aug. 13, 1885.



He signs off with a startling aside: *"There was a man shot dead a short ways from here at a saloon the other day. They don't think much of that up here."*

Possibly he was referring to an incident described in the Victoria Daily Times of July 27, 1885: *"A report reached the city on Saturday that a miner known as Jeff Davis had been shot a few days ago in the Big Bend country."*

However, a few months later the Victoria Daily Colonist met Davis, who appeared very much alive: *"Mr. Davis looks well after the numerous mishaps that have been credited as having happened to him. He was not aware of his being shot until he reached Farwell, when the first item he noticed in the paper was an account of his death. However he is still a very lively corpse ..."*

A further point of interest to this discovery has been provided by Tracy Cooper: The photo below showed up on eBay some 15 years ago showing the train on its small siding at the End of Track. The man standing with his hands on his hips is reportedly T.A.W. Gordon, Postmaster at End of Track, Farwell and for a short period, Revelstoke. The men in the picture were not identified but given that this photo was taken at the height of land crossing into British Columbia and given that the man beside Gordon has a cook's smock on, and as George Mitchell notes in his letters that he was only cooking for 18 men, it is highly probable the man shown is the now famous George Mitchell. An amazing coincidence!



Figure 3. Photo of CPR train workers including George Mitchell.

<https://gregnesteroff.wixsite.com/kutnereader/post/letters-from-the-end-of-track>

## Gitwangak – Found!

by: Tracy Cooper

I recently purchased this ex-Wellburn cover from the estate of Don Shorting, which shows the first reported split ring strike from Gitwangak. Gitwangak was a farm settlement and Indian village on the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway on the Skeena River approximately 20 miles southwest of Hazelton.

This cover, since my first research on the unreported BC town cancels in 1999, had been #1 on my predicted list of towns from British Columbia with the highest chance of success of being found.

BC Postal History Monograph No.1, "The Lost Children Revisited - 2015" noted that Gitwanga (now confirmed as Gitwangak) was the number one BC town that was expected to be found, based on the statistical analysis of the post office revenue. Why this town had not been reported previously was a bit of a mystery to me at the time since, based on the revenue, a substantial number of strikes would be expected to be extant. To recap, the Post Office was authorized as Gitwangak with a hammer proof date of October 23, 1909 and it officially opened on January 1, 1910. Gitwangak became an accounting Post Office on May 1, 1911 and it is likely that the vast amount of revenue reported from this office was from commissions on the sale of Money Orders from the railway workers who were sending their paychecks home; not the sale of stamps for letters and postcards.

This first report, dated JUL 23/10, was found in the "remnants" of the Wellburn collection and originated from the Maitland-Dougal correspondence.

The new number one BC unreported town expected to be found is "Scarf" a farm settlement 24 miles west of Victoria near Otter Point on Vancouver Island. Good hunting!



Figure 1. First reported Gitwangak cancel dated July 25, 1912.



## More Maitland-Dougall and The S.S. Port Simpson

by: Morris Beattie

When I saw Tracy's article on Gitwangak and the connection to the name Maitland-Dougall, I realized that I also had a cover from the Maitland-Dougall correspondence which I had found interesting, albeit for a different reason than Tracy's find. I had discovered this cover when I acquired Bill Topping's ship cancel collection. I was first attracted by the handwriting on the cover and its coastal connection but the interest grew once the enclosed letter was viewed. More about that in a minute.

The cover is addressed to Mrs. James Maitland-Dougall. She was born in Yorkshire, England on November 27, 1873 as Winifred Watson and married James St. Leger Maitland-Dougall in 1894. They had two sons who were both killed during World War I. James, born in Fife, Scotland, held various government posts along the coast, including that of Chief Constable at Duncan from 1892 until 1897 and at Hazelton from 1909 until 1911 at which time they appear to have left Hazelton. He later served as Stipendiary Magistrate from 1916 until 1932. James died in 1940 at age 73 while Winifred survived until 1954. The letter makes refers to their empty house at Hazelton so communication from various locations along the Skeena River to Mrs. Maitland-Dougall is entirely logical following 1911 for both Tracy's cover and the one included with this article as friends would continue to communicate with her.



Figure 1. Cover mailed from Hazelton, July 25, 1911 to Alberni, disclosing that the S.S. Port Simpson was hung up on a sandbar in the Skeena River.

The letter inside is dated July 24, 1911 from Hazelton, Skeena River and the cover was mailed July 25, 1911, receiving a faint Hazelton duplex cancel on a pair of green 1 cent Admiral stamps. It is addressed to Mrs. James Maitland Dougall at Alberni, Vancouver Island and received a split-ring Alberni backstamp dated August 1, 1911. By this time, James's appointment as chief Constable at Hazelton had ended on May 8, 1911 and they had apparently moved to Alberni.

The first line in the letter starts "*As the Port Simpson is on a sandbar....*". It goes on to say that they expected the boat today but she was hung up on a sandbar and the "Conveyor" could not get her off. This reference to a coastal vessel piqued my interest. Very little seems to have been written about the *Port Simpson* as I could find no reference to her in the philatelic literature and a Google search did not turn up much. Certainly, for the philatelic literature this lack of coverage is understandable as Topping records no markings for this vessel in his catalog of ship's markings. The vessel does appear along the Skeena River on several postcards, one of which, produced by Valentine & Sons, is shown below and on images on government websites including the Northern BC Archives and Library and Archives Canada.

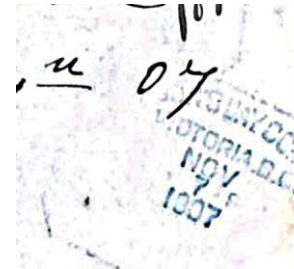
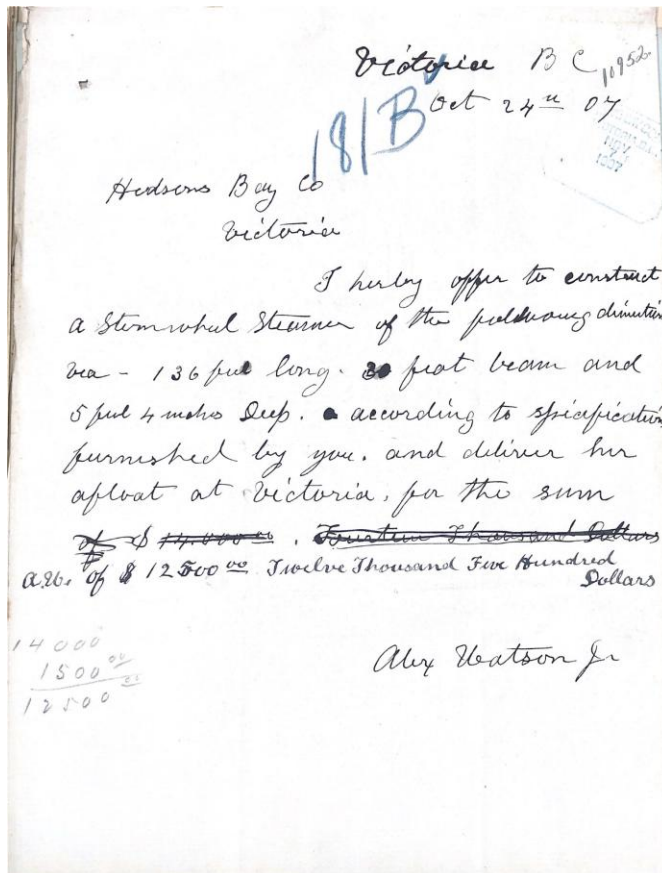


Figure 2. "*On the Skeena River Hazelton*", Library & Archives Canada image PA-021441

The internet search revealed that the *S.S. Port Simpson* was a wooden stern paddle steamer built in Victoria in 1907-1908 for the Hudson's Bay Company to replace the *S.S. Mount Royal* which had been wrecked along the river enroute from Hazelton to Port Essington in 1907. The engines from the *Mount Royal* were used for the *Port Simpson*. The *Port Simpson* served the HBC as part of the BC Transport Service along the Skeena River from 1908 to 1918, moving passengers and freight. Other than that, not much could be found so I turned to the Hudson's Bay Company Archives in Winnipeg which turned out to be literal gold mine of information thanks to a young lady by the name of Ashley who searched the archives for me. The vessel with a gross weight of 607 tons (550 tonnes) was constructed in Victoria by ship builder Alex Watson, with the boiler and associated machinery being installed by Polson Iron Works. The shipyard was located near the Graham Mill just above the Point Ellice Bridge. Watson provided an offer to construct dated October 24, 1907 as shown below. The offer has a faint Hudson Bay Company, Victoria, B.C, Nov 7, 1907 receiving stamp in the upper right. The offer is to construct a Sternwheel Steamer 136 feet long, 30 foot beam and 5 feet 4 inches deep (41.5m x 9m x 1.6m) for the sum



of \$12,500. Further correspondence from November 1907 indicates that the Watson/Polson proposal is accepted and addresses further design details. The ship was completed in March 1908 and embarked on a trial trip on March 20, 1908. By 1918 the vessel was no longer in use and efforts were being made to dispose of her, with the insurance being reduced to GBP 1,000. She was dismantled in 1922.

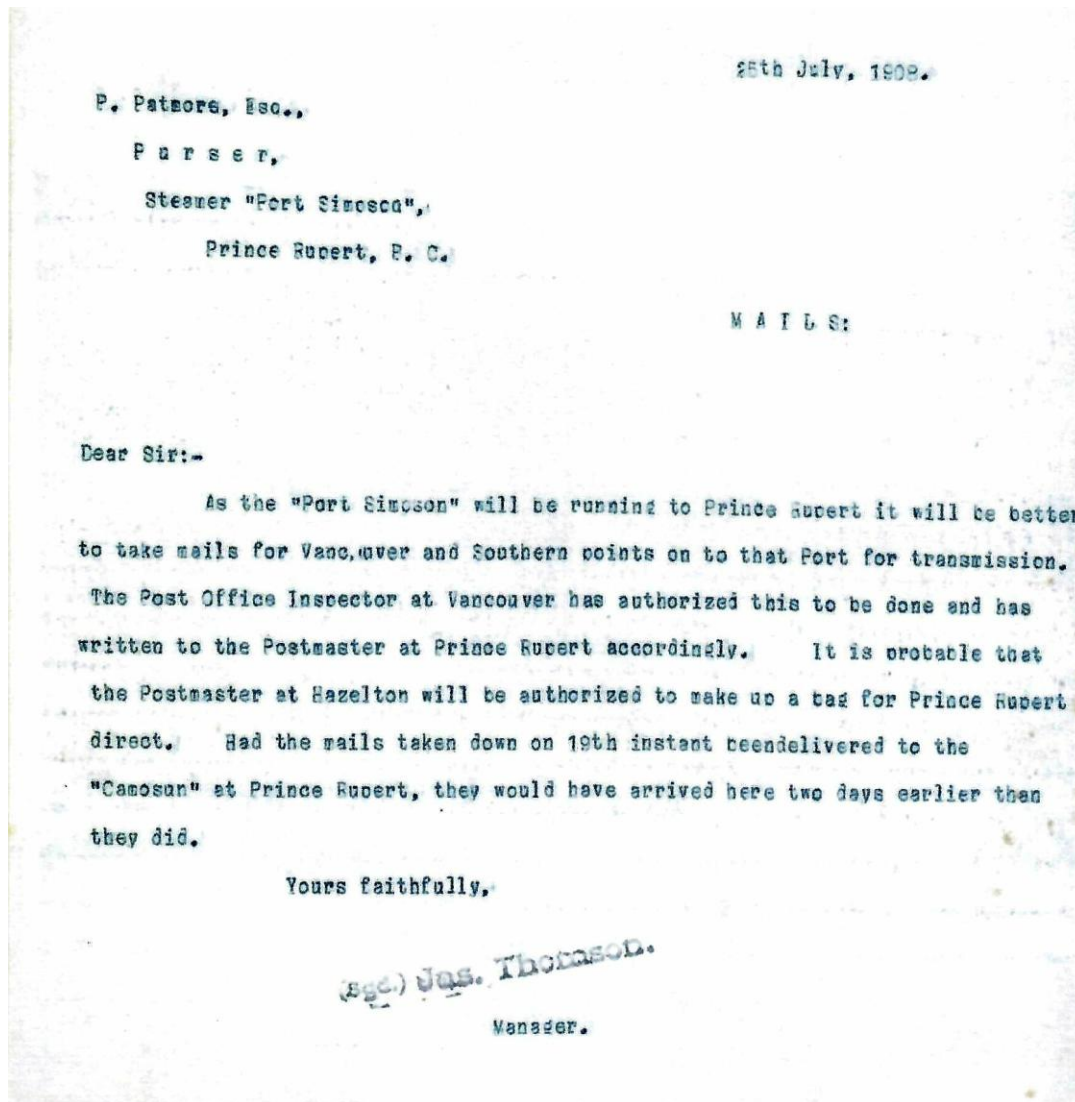


Letter from Alex Watson in Victoria offering to build the steamer for \$12,500. Note the faint Hudson's Bay stamp in the upper right corner (enhanced above).



S.S. Port Simpson shooting Kitselas Big Canyon backwards, 1911.

While no postal markings for the Port Simpson are recorded, it is apparent that she carried mail on a regular basis. By the time that she was launched in 1908, several post offices in the area that she serviced had opened, including the Skeena post office that opened as a Colonial P.O. on Feb 21, 1871 (and was changed to Port Essington in 1898) and Hazelton post office that opened on May 1, 1899. The Hudson's Bay Company had carried mail in the region for many years. It is apparent from the HBC archives that the Port Simpson carried mail to southern points including Vancouver and in 1908 had an issue with mail delivery to Lakelse Hatchery. The letter shown below to the purser of the *Port Simpson*, dated July 25, 1908, outlines a plan for mail to be transported by closed bag from Hazelton to Prince Rupert and from there by the Camosun (and likely other vessels) to Vancouver in order to shorten the travel time.



*Letter to the B.C. Transport Service addressed to the purser of the Port Simpson regarding the delivery of mail from Hazelton.*

#### References:

Hudson's Bay Company Archives, Archives of Manitoba, B.C. Transport Service, S.S. Port Simpson – steamer construction, 1907-1908 (B.226/b/53.18/B)

Hudson's Bay Company Archives, Archives of Manitoba, B.C. Transport Service, S.S. Port Simpson – mail, 1908 (B.226/b/53.18/M)