



# BRITISH COLUMBIA POSTAL HISTORY NEWSLETTER

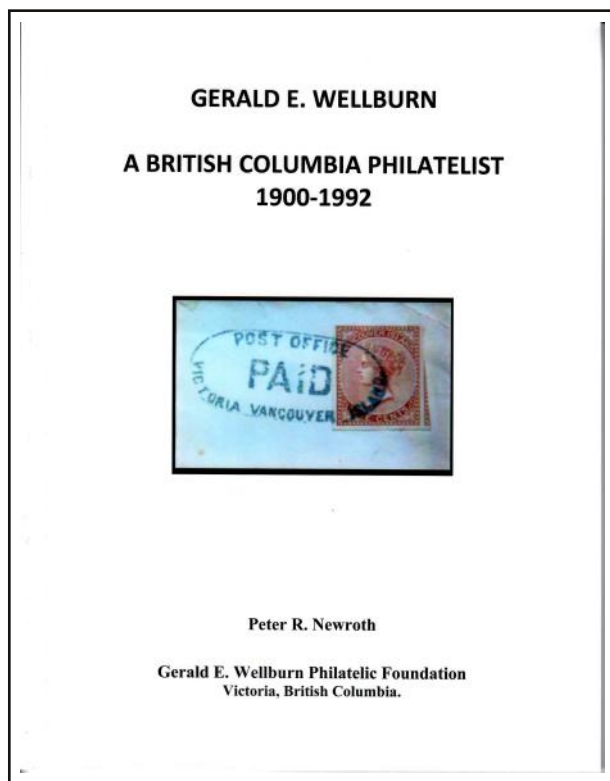
Volume 31 Number 3

Whole number 123

September 2022

## ***Special Edition***

### **- Member's Stories -**



*Reduced-size image of  
Gerald Wellburn book.*

This special edition of the newsletter follows on Andrew's article, "Mail Bonding", included in the previous issue which provided us with an insight on what makes one collector passionate about BC postal history. We now present the perspective of a number of study group members on what drives them to collect or how they arrived at collecting and studying British Columbia postal history. The stories have certain similarities but at the same time they each present unique elements.

It seems completely appropriate to start this issue with reference to the grandfather of British Columbia Postal History: Gerald Wellburn. On the left is a reduced image of the cover of a book recently prepared by Peter Newroth entitled "Gerald E. Wellburn, A British Columbia Philatelist, 1900-1992". Why did Gerry, as he preferred to be called, collect BC postal history? Simply because, like many of us, he loved it and was passionate about it. Peter's book tells us that Gerry started collecting stamps in 1908 and was presenting BC postal history as early as 1937. Remarkably, he was still giving presentations as late as 1990 at age 90! His collections were mounted on readily-recognized pages of his own design and Peter's book has a table summarizing 24 of Gerry's collections on different aspects of BC postal history. An amazing legacy!

We hope that you enjoy reading the various stories presented here and are inspired to continue with your own collection and study of BC postal history.

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## Tracy Cooper – A BC Postal History Journey

My philatelic journey started I assume much like thousands of young Canadians from the 1950's and 1960's, when at the age of six I was given a stamp album and a packet of worldwide stamps by my parents, in the hopes that it would be "good" for me to have an "intellectual" interest besides comic books. I was fascinated by the strange and colourful little pieces of paper.

During my childhood and teen years, I spent almost all of my hard-earned money on stamps, graduating from collecting worldwide, to acquiring just Canada, mint and used, before moving onto Canadian revenue stamps, amassing a fairly decent collection in only 15 years. Roger Newberry's stamp shop on Fort Street in Victoria was my go-to place and his patience, for a 7-year-old pawing through dozens of stock books and agonizing over 5c purchases, was extraordinary. I still have fond memories of spending Saturday morning hours in his jungle of a stamp store trying to fill the missing spaces in my album.

May we all be so lucky as to have one philatelic "find" in a lifetime. Mine unfortunately occurred when I was twelve and had no postal history knowledge. A long-time friend of grandmother, a decorated veteran of the Boer War died in 1965 at the age of 93. Besides being a decorated soldier, he was also a packrat/hoarder. Every piece of correspondence he had ever received was packed in bundles, stacked to the ceiling, in every room in his house. I gleefully ripped off and soaked stamps off tens of thousands of covers to fill spaces in my album. I can only imagine now how many Boer War covers I destroyed over the three months it took to clear out his house!



Figure 1  
B.C Cover

Upon graduation from university, life took precedence over collecting and my philatelic journey took a hiatus until by chance in 1983 at a bookstore in Quesnel, I came across a copy of Bill Topping's famous book: *British Columbia Post Offices*. I was fascinated by the number of small British Columbia towns both past and present that I had never heard of before. By

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).

Annual subscription fee for printed and mailed newsletters (four issues) is \$15, in Cdn or US funds. Individual print issues sell for \$2.50 each, post paid.

Dues are payable to the editor: Morris Beattie 2938 Celtic Ave, Vancouver, BC, Canada, V6N 3X7

Editor: Morris Beattie  
email: [mbeattie48@shaw.ca](mailto:mbeattie48@shaw.ca)

Associate Editor: Tracy Cooper  
email: [tracycooper100@shaw.ca](mailto:tracycooper100@shaw.ca)

Study Group Chair: Tim Woodland  
email: [twoodland@telus.net](mailto:twoodland@telus.net)

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

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.

chance I also saw a copy of a Vance auction list advertising a lot of two hundred British Columbia Post Offices on stamp and piece. For a lark I put in a small bid and surprisingly won. Once the lot arrived, I was hooked.

The journey changed direction as my then dusty world wide stamp albums of a dozen years past, got put aside and where I now strived to acquire an example of a postmark from every town in Topping's book; an impossible task. I began bidding in various stamp auctions of the day, always by mail, and soon realized that covers were more valuable than the stamps I had soaked off them. It was not until I attended my first stamp auction in person, namely Bob Lee's quarterly auction in Vernon, that my real journey to a BC Postal Historian began.

At one of the Pike Collection sales in 1988, I met Alex Price who at that time had been a collector of BC Postal History for over 25 years. We quickly became close friends and in time he became my philatelic mentor, teaching me what to look for, what was good, what was historical and what important. We shared common, but not overlapping interests and looked out for each other at bourses and sales. The most important lesson he taught me though was that knowledge was the key. I threw myself into 10 years of research in archives, old sales, and by acquiring a vast philatelic library. The culmination of that research was my two volume book, *British Columbia Post Office Revenues 1871-1921* published in 1999, which some postal historians have flatteringly described as my magnum opus. Perhaps one or two of you have a copy? I only printed twenty sets thinking that no one would be interested.

I am now approaching 40 years collecting BC postal history. I have been fortunate to have absorbed many of the best items from the collections of old time BC postal historians including, Bob Robertson, Abe Charkow, Ken Ellison, Bill Robinson, Bill Topping, Alex Price, Don Shorting, and most recently Andrew Scott. I am also lucky enough to have secured numerous items from the fabulous Jim Pike and Gerry Wellburn collections.



Figure 2  
Typical Wellburn  
Page



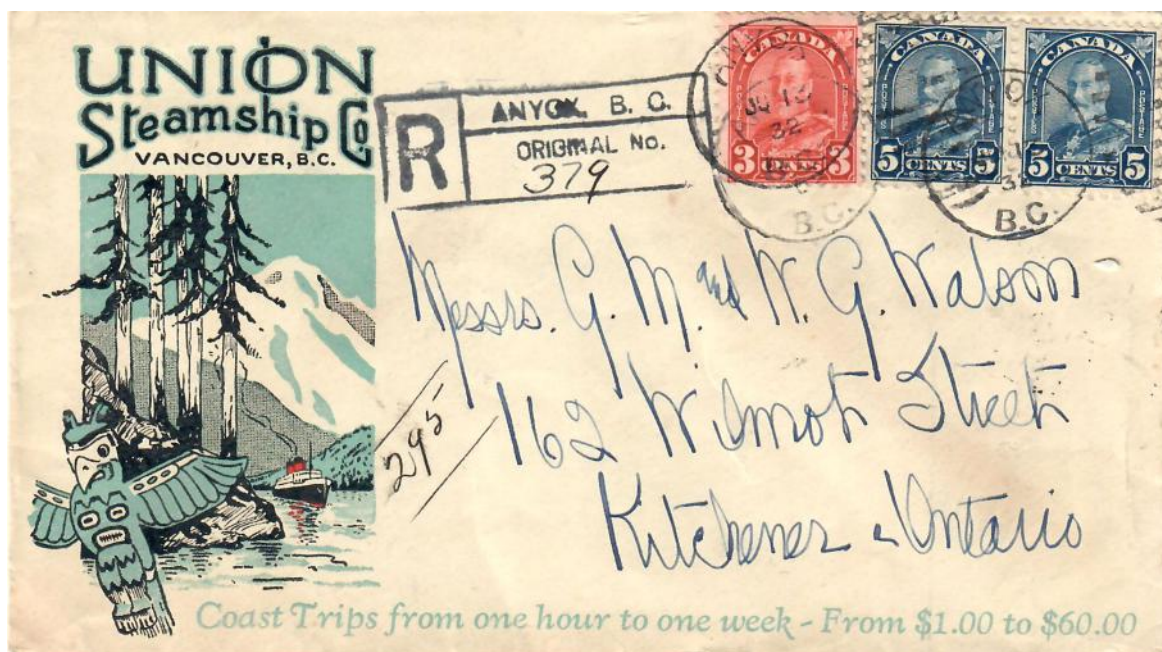
So where do I go from here? Like my mentor Alex, I am trying to share my knowledge with those that are interested, mostly by writing numerous articles and research pieces in the BC Postal History Research newsletter. My hope is that some of you find them interesting and help you on your own philatelic journey. For the last 10 years I have been researching BC colonial postal history; by retracing the source documents used by Alfred Stanley Deaville in his foundational 1928 book: *The Colonial Postal Systems and Postage Stamps of Vancouver Island and British Columbia 1849-1871*. Hopefully this new book will see the light in 2023. In fact, I already have a notional title! *The Colonial British Columbia Postal History Companion 1849-1871*.

To sum up, the best part of my postal historian journey is the people I have met along the way, the philatelic camaraderie and collaboration I have been blessed to enjoy, and the search for philatelic knowledge and answers found. I suspect many of you feel the same.

### **Morris Beattie**

In order to pursue the development of a collection with passion, one has to have the collector gene. I have it! I suspect that most of us have this gene and if we did not collect postal history we would collect something else: bottle caps, old clocks, pens, fossils, you name it. In fact, some of us likely collect something else in addition to postal history; I know that (to the distress of my banker) I collect mineral specimens as well as postal material. Having established that I am a "collector", how did I get to collect BC postal history?

Let me start from the perspective of a recent acquisition. The cover below, mailed from Anyox in 1932 using a Union Steamships Illustrated envelope, captures several aspects of the focus of my collection: it is from BC; is coastal; is mining-related and has an inference regarding how mail was carried, that is, by steamship. The image on this illustrated envelope is simply fantastic: it has mountains, trees, water and a ship. The relevance of it being from BC is simply that I love British Columbia. BC is unquestionably, from the perspective of someone who has seen many places in the world, the best place in the world to live, and the coast is the best part of BC. So, when I became interested in postal history, BC was the most likely focus and while I have been privileged to travel to almost every part of BC, I love the coast and decided to focus on that part of BC. Like Andrew and others, I had started out on a quest to collect every BC postmark and, also like him, very quickly realized the immensity of such an undertaking and became more focussed. But first, a step back to consider how I arrived at collecting postal history at all.



Union  
Steamship  
cover from  
Anyox,  
1932

I developed an interest in philately a bit later in life, although from my current perspective being in your forties does not seem to be so late. As a youngster I worked in a radio and TV repair store after school and on weekends, not at a stamp shop like some of our members. I was aware of stamps of course and eventually, while doing post-graduate work at UBC, I accumulated a number of interesting Japanese issues but at that point did not have the time to pursue stamp collecting in a meaningful way. It was my younger son who later triggered what has become an ongoing passion, possibly an obsession I dare say. While renovating our house he discovered some used postage stamps in one wall that was being demolished and it grew from there, initially as a family activity and later, once the kids had moved on, to my more focussed approach. I did not have the urge to collect worldwide stamps but was more inclined initially to collect minerals on stamps, a pursuit that still gets my interest, as well as volcanoes on stamps and covers.

At the same time as collecting mineral and volcano-related material, as I attended yearly VANPEX shows I became more and more attracted to postal history. The display that stands out most clearly in my mind from those years and the one that gave me initial direction is Pete Jacobi's display of mining-related postal history. I loved it! That deep affection might in part be due to the fact that Pete and I have a similar background in the mining industry but also due to the way that it demonstrated how a story can be developed using not just stamps but also using the history of a region or activity to develop the relevance of the postal material itself.

While I find all BC industry (forestry, fish canneries and so on) to be of great interest, I was drawn back to what I know best: mining. So, I now have developed a collection of what I call "Mining the Coast" that includes the postal history of numerous mining operations, large and small, that at one time or another existed near, or in some instances not all that near, to tidewater. One such mining venture was the coal mining operations on Vancouver Island run by Robert Dunsmuir; which in turn led me to the E&N railway and then to a current major collecting interest: the development of the CPR in BC and how that affected the development of postal services.

Along the way I was further inspired by several of our study group members or more accurately by most of our members. I continually bumped into Tim Woodland at stamp shows and observed his focus on forestry-related material, I got to know Tracy Cooper, Andrew Scott, Brian Copeland and was inspired by their approach and managed to trade some materials with them, the list goes on, as does the interest.

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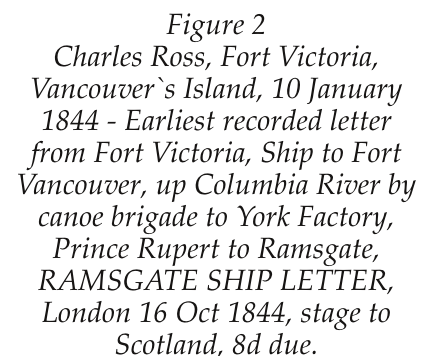
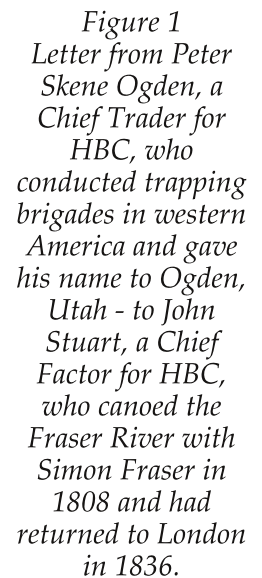
### ***Bob Forster***

My name is Bob Forster and I have been collecting colonial Vancouver Island and British Columbia postal history for more than thirty years. My interest in B.C. started in the late 1970s when we sailed the Swiftsure race for many years. In 1986 I was fortunate to be able to crew on a Santa Cruz 70 in the Victoria to Maui race. Since then I have visited B.C. many times and have seen a fair bit of the province.

My colonial V.I. and B.C. collection was started by my grandfather who passed his collection to my dad who then added to it and eventually passed it to me. With advice from my brother, Dale Forster, I have added to it over the ensuing years with items from the Wellburn and Lichtenstein sales as well as many other smaller sales.

Two of my favourite covers are from the pre-post office period. Figure 1 is from Peter Skeene Ogden in 1837 from Fort St. James to London and Figure 2 is from Charles Ross at Fort Victoria to Scotland in 1844. Both covers were carried by Hudson's Bay Company canoe brigades to York Factory and then by sailing ship to Great Britain and were more than eight months in transit. Pretty amazing transit I'd say.





## Barry Milavsky

My interest in BC Postal History began when, as a teenager, I worked for Bob Wulff at Bob's Stamp and Coin in New Westminster on the weekends. I was already a collector when I got the job.

Bob's dad, Robert, was a collector of BC postmarks. My stamp collecting was Canada plus an attempt to get at least one stamp from each country in Scotts catalogue. Ask me where Inini is – I can tell you. That desire for world geography led me to try to do the same for BC towns.

Bob often spoke about getting a Granville, BC postmark as his holy grail. For me, it was using a little ingenuity to get early marks from Mica Creek where an instant town was created to help build one of the dams on the Columbia River. New towns were always appearing and disappearing in BC.

Bob's dad was a stamp accumulator as well as collector. He had an old desk with every drawer jammed with stamps - loose or in glassine envelopes. You can't sell piles of stamps without knowing what they are, so Bob would bring me a drawer brim full of stamps, usually Canadian. My homework, during the next week or two, would be to sort through the accumulation and put them into orderly stock books for easier sale.

Along the way, Bob allowed me to select copies of the stamps for myself, providing they weren't of too great value. I would check the Canadian stamps for BC postmarks and was able to gain quite a few from smaller towns or short-lived ones like Brexton. It was a great opportunity for a teenager to get access to an accumulation and learn to look for gems, as well as to learn BC geography.

Before I could finish all Bob's dad's stuffed drawers, our family moved away. My job at Bob's shop was taken over by my classmate and still good friend, Andrew Scott, who has far outdistanced me in his pursuit of BC Postal History and did an amazing job with the BC Postal History Newsletter.

As to covers, I offer this novelty: a fire damaged cover that was noted as such by the Vancouver PO and delivered in a plastic overwrap. And a photo of me as a teen working a stamp show with Bob Wulff.



*Barry with Bob Wulff*

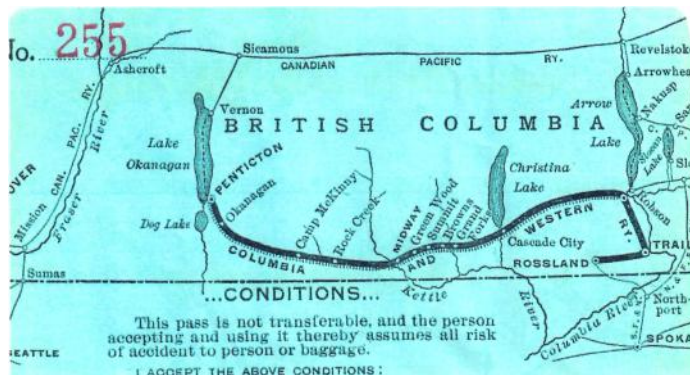
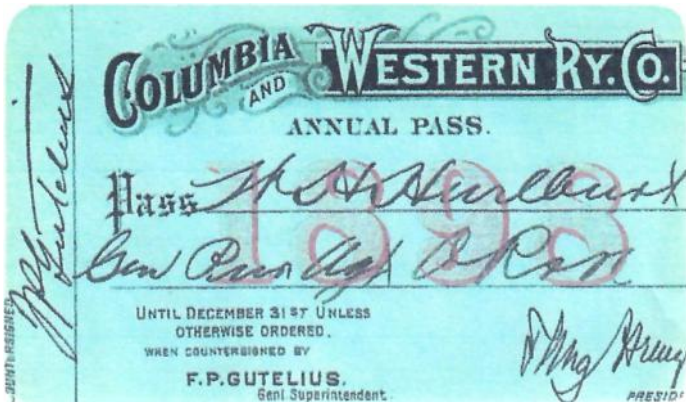
*Fire-damaged cover.*





## Peter Jacobi

This story goes back to Albert Tanner, one of our most colorful and knowledgeable dealers of the 80s and 90s. He always took at least two tables and at times even three when it came to a bourse. He was also one of my prolific suppliers of Kootenay historical material and as I came up to his table he literally threw an item at me with the comment "Hey Pete, you need this - give me 50 bucks". I picked it up off the floor; we were in the bourse section of one of the Vanpex exhibitions at the Richmond Inn and he had thrown me an annual pass issued by the Columbia & Western Railway that Fritz Augustus Heinze had built in conjunction with the Trail smelter. It was made out to one of the employees: H.H. Hurlbert and signed by F.P. Gutelius. The reverse side showed the proposed routing between Rossland and Penticton (Figures 1 and 2).



At the time I was very much into exhibits of East and West Kootenay town cancels and one day Tracy Cooper approached me on behalf of Alex Price to negotiate a trade or sale of this pass from the C. & K. S.N. Co. Ltd (Figure 3) that I had purchased from Albert Tanner.. After some thought I agreed and suggested that I would pass it on for a cover of the Columbia & Kootenay Steam Navigation Co. (Figure 4). Nothing more was said but two days later there it was in our mailbox.

Figures 1 and 2  
Annual Columbia and Western  
Ry. Co. pass and reverse with  
routing.

Figure 3  
Columbia & Kootenay Steam  
Navigation Co. pass.





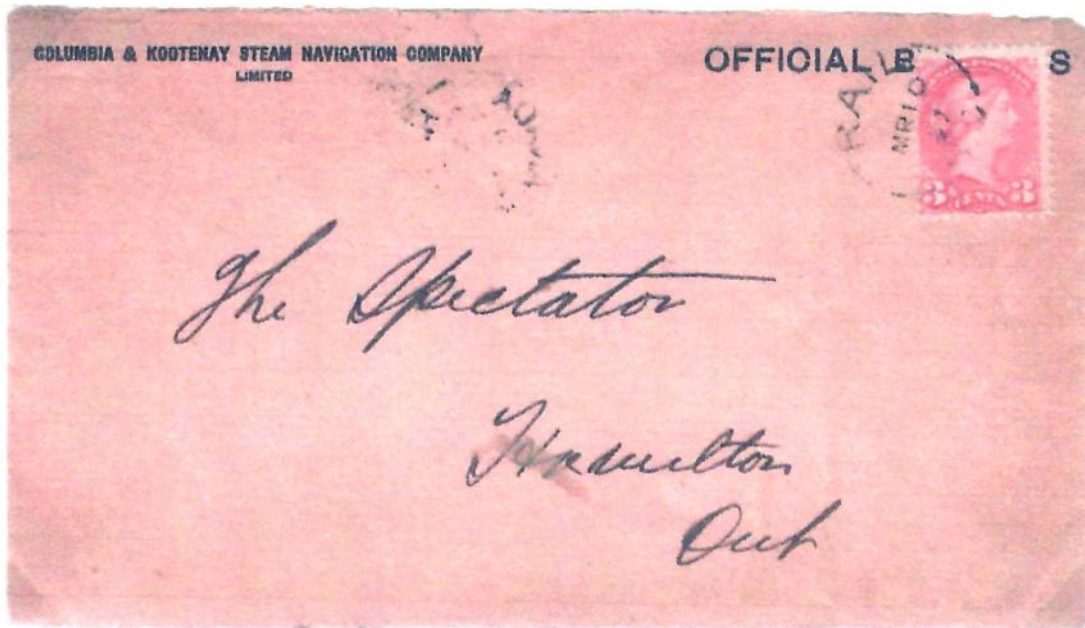


Figure 4  
Columbia &  
Kootenay Steam  
Navigation  
Company cover.

### Bruce Pollock

Having abandoned and then later finding my youthful interest in philately, I've been seriously collecting for only about the past three years. I very quickly discovered my interest in postal history – something I had never considered before. But I've had a lifelong interest in history generally and family history specifically and it was an easy philatelic connection.

I've found that I'm not much interested in flyspecking stamps, collecting colour or printing varieties, or gathering every postmark in BC. Postal history is social history and what gets my attention is learning about the people who used the mails as a critical method of communication. My main interest is the Cowichan Valley where my family has pioneer roots going back to the 1870s. Here are two examples from Cowichan Station.

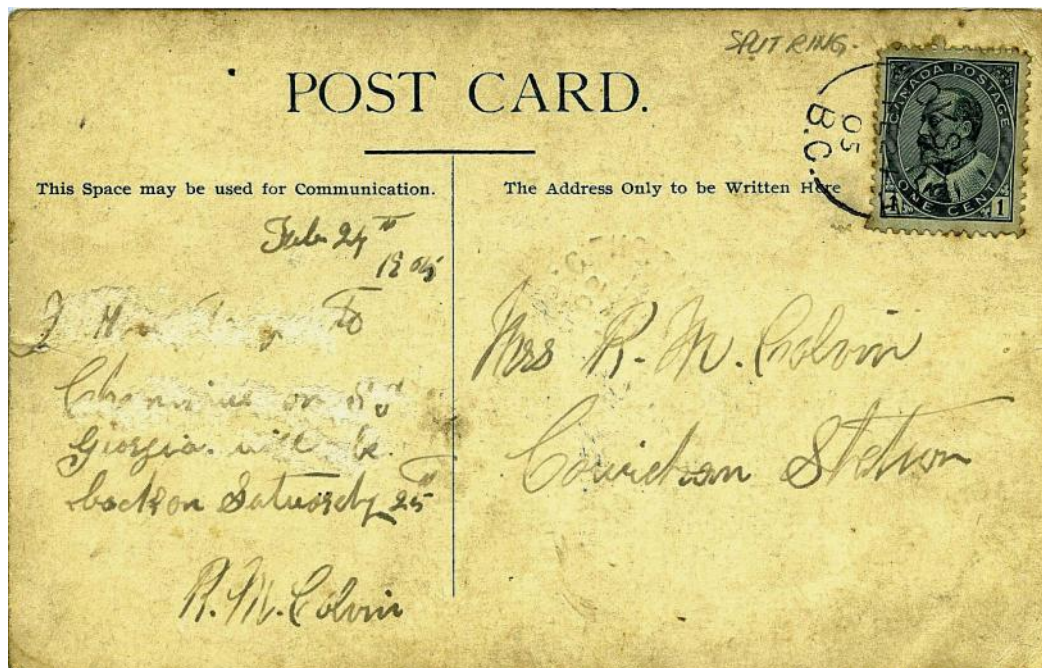


Figure 1.  
Cover from Koksilah  
to Cowichan Station.

Although the message is partially obscured, this is an interesting postcard for several reasons. It was written by Robert Mouat Colvin to his wife Jeremina and says "I have to go up to Chemainus on SS Giorgia (sic). Will be back on Saturday 25." I find it fascinating that the postal system was used much the same way we would send a text message today. This card traveled only a few kilometers from Koksilah to Cowichan Station and gave news about something that would happen tomorrow.

But apart from the postal story, Jeremina Colvin played an important role in First Nations cultural history. The Colvins settled in the Cowichan Valley in 1886 after immigrating from the Shetland Islands in Scotland. Jeremina was an experienced knitter.

West coast First Nations women had a long history of weaving garments from yarn made from dog and goat hair and after European contact, they also learned how to knit. Jeremina was instrumental in helping Quw'utsun' women develop their sweater designs based upon the Shetland "Fair Isle" patterns which eventually became known as the Cowichan Sweater. She also helped them improve their knitting techniques which strengthened the shoulder section of the sweater.

What sort of business could someone from tiny little Cowichan Station possibly have in New York City, business that required a registered letter as shown in Figure 2?

Well, it turns out that 62 Vesey Street was the editorial offices of *The Truth Seeker*, the oldest Freethought publication in the world (founded in 1873), and one of the oldest American periodicals of any genre. Eugene Montague Macdonald took over from the founding publisher D. M. Bennett and functioned as its editor/publisher from 1883 to 1909. Its contributors included Clarence Darrow and Mark Twain.

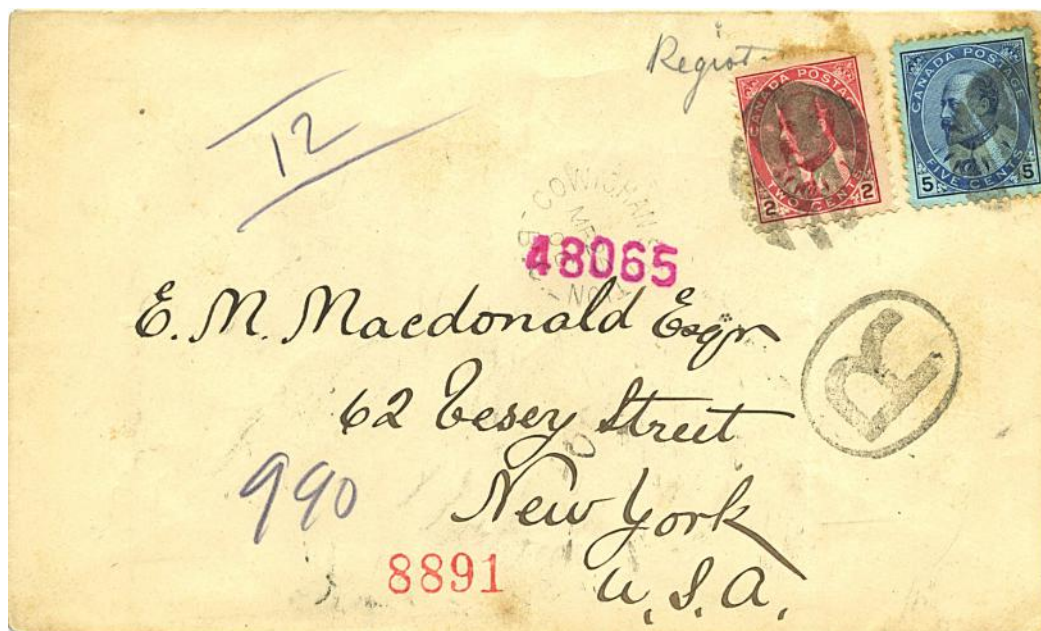


Figure 2. Cover from Cowichan Station to New York.

So, the cover probably contained a subscription money order from an intellectually inquisitive person.

What I've found is that I collect people, rather than postal items. I'm grateful to have been able to acquire a number of pieces from Gerry Wellburn's collection and to have Gray Scrimgeour as a very helpful guide.



## **Brian Copeland - Beginnings**

Many years ago, I ended up at a coin and stamp dealer's counter at Sears. I had collected stamps as a child but had long since given it up. My daughter had developed an interest in topical stamps (birds and flowers especially) and she was looking for a few treasures. While waiting, I opened a binder on the counter and flipped through the pages. It was a large accumulation of Canadian small queen stamps from the mid 1890's, mostly with town cancels from the prairies. Some had postmarks from MAN. or ALTA. But some had "ASSA." where the province should be. I had no idea what or where that was. I was told it was Assiniboia, and I realized that my knowledge of Canadian history was lacking because I wasn't sure what that was either. I also noticed postmarks from towns I had never heard of. Many were small farm towns, but I realized later that some of the towns did not exist anymore. I was intrigued. Why were the towns created? Why did they fade away?

I became hooked and started collecting early postmarks on stamps from western Canada and reading more history. After a while I realized that covers and cards were more interesting than just the stamps on them. Cancels on the back of covers could help trace out the mail route, corner cards offered glimpses into the economic history of the town, and occasionally there were interesting letters in envelopes or messages on the back of post cards.

I initially focused on my home town, Nanaimo, and was especially drawn to items with a historical connection. Figure 1 shows an early favourite – a cover from the Nanaimo Water Works Co. sent in October 1894 to Victoria. Water was first provided to Nanaimo by the private sector, initially by Josiah Stirtan who laid a system of wooden pipes to supply the Vancouver Coal Company (which was operating mines in Nanaimo); and later by the Nanaimo Water Works Co., incorporated in 1885.

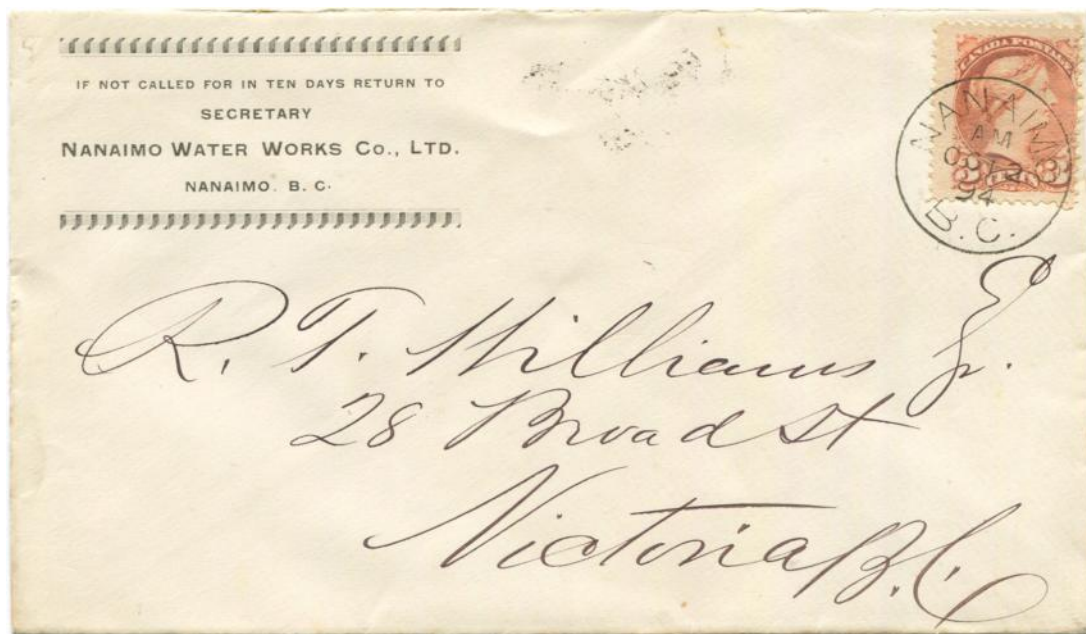
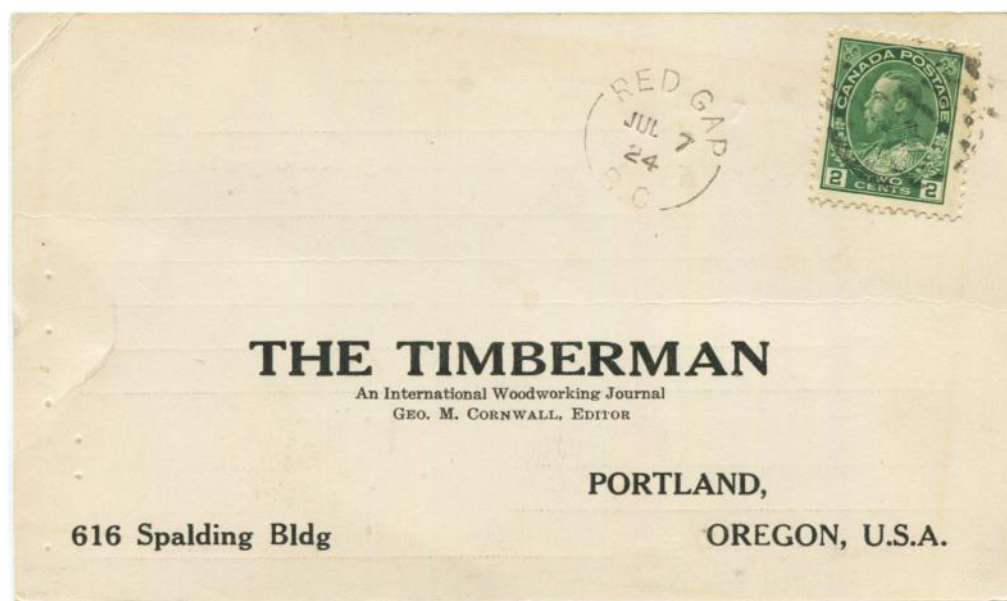


Figure 1. 1894 cover from the Nanaimo Water Works Co.

Eventually, there was a movement to bring the water supply under municipal control. After a legislative act in 1895 and lengthy negotiations and arbitration, the company was sold to the city in 1901.

Nanaimo began as a coal mining town and I realized that many places I knew from my youth in and around Nanaimo (Northfield, Brechin, Wellington, Extension, Lantzville, etc.) had post offices that had opened because of new mines. So I started looking for covers from all of these places. After the coal mines shut down, the lumber industry played a major role in the local economy. One day I found a card from Red Gap. This used to be a town north of Nanaimo on Nanoose Bay that was the site of a large sawmill. There is almost no trace of it today – I had driven past the site countless times and never knew there had been anything there. Figure 2 shows a card sent from the Straits Lumber Company in Red Gap to an industry publication in Oregon. The town name was apparently inspired by the then popular book, *Ruggles of Red Gap*. The mill's largest market was in Japan. Production shut down in 1942 soon after the attack on Pearl Harbor. The post office closed in 1943 and not too long afterward, the mill was destroyed by fire.



*Figure 2*  
*Card sent from Red Gap*  
*to Oregon.*

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## **Tim Woodland - Background to a Collector**

I first showed an interest in stamps at about the age of seven. My parents both had family in England, and friends in Australia & Malaysia, all who seemed to be frequent letter writers. There was a fresh supply of colourful worldwide stamps entering my home on a regular basis.

Although I lived on a street with only 20 houses, there was quite a diversity of foreign origins among the residents, and a further supply of stamps from Denmark, Holland, Germany and Sweden was available for the asking. A childhood friend and I were quite competitive at our regular door-knocking, stamp acquisition walks up and down the street. Then the debating and trading sessions, hockey card style would begin. Though sometimes frustrating at the time as she often got the 'pretty cats and animals' stamps, I ended up with the basis of a better definitive and higher values collection.

My grandfather in England and I also traded stamps for several years, me sending him Canadian new issues and him returning same from Great Britain. Eventually, I ended up with his worldwide collection.

Like many collectors my later teens and 20's were about starting a career and other life pursuits, and the collection was put away, out of mind and in storage for 10 years or so. Regular winter shutdowns in the forest industry led to bringing the collection out again.

In 1990 I met my then-wife Olga who was born in the Azores Islands, once a possession of Portugal and



now with Autonomous Region status. I embraced learning a new culture (the food is fantastic!) and language (to communicate with my five sisters-in-law, for whom English is spoken as second choice in their homes). You can see where this is going, a new excuse to learn about a culture's history through collecting their stamps.

About this time I met two influential people: Beverly Fox and Ron Vanderholt. Beverly ran a Vancouver stamp shop with a good selection of Portugal and Colonies stamps, and a great selection of jazz music playing in the background. This customer/dealer friendship led me to the other Vancouver dealers (FvH Stamps kept me supplied with the Azores one-page annual supplement and 3 new issues per year), and also introduced me to Roger Packer, who for over 10 years faithfully supplied a BC Phil application form until I ran out of excuses and became a regular member.

Ron Vanderholt introduced me to a Florida-based mail sale stamp dealer who specialized in Portugal & Colonies. I was mentioned in their monthly newsletter as having placed the first order on their new computerized website in 1996.

Portuguese stamps gave me a sense of history of my then-wife's culture, allowed me to partially learn a new language and better communicate with my in-laws, were featured in BC Phil and 21 Club presentations, and justified a number of Spring trips to San Francisco for the annual convention of the International Society for Portuguese Philately. Within this group I became a recognized specialist in the field, and had several research notes and new findings published in their quarterly ISPP journal "Portu-info".

I have since donated copies of the Portugal and Colonies specialized catalogues to the BC Phil library, and encourage any collector to have a look at this interesting area.

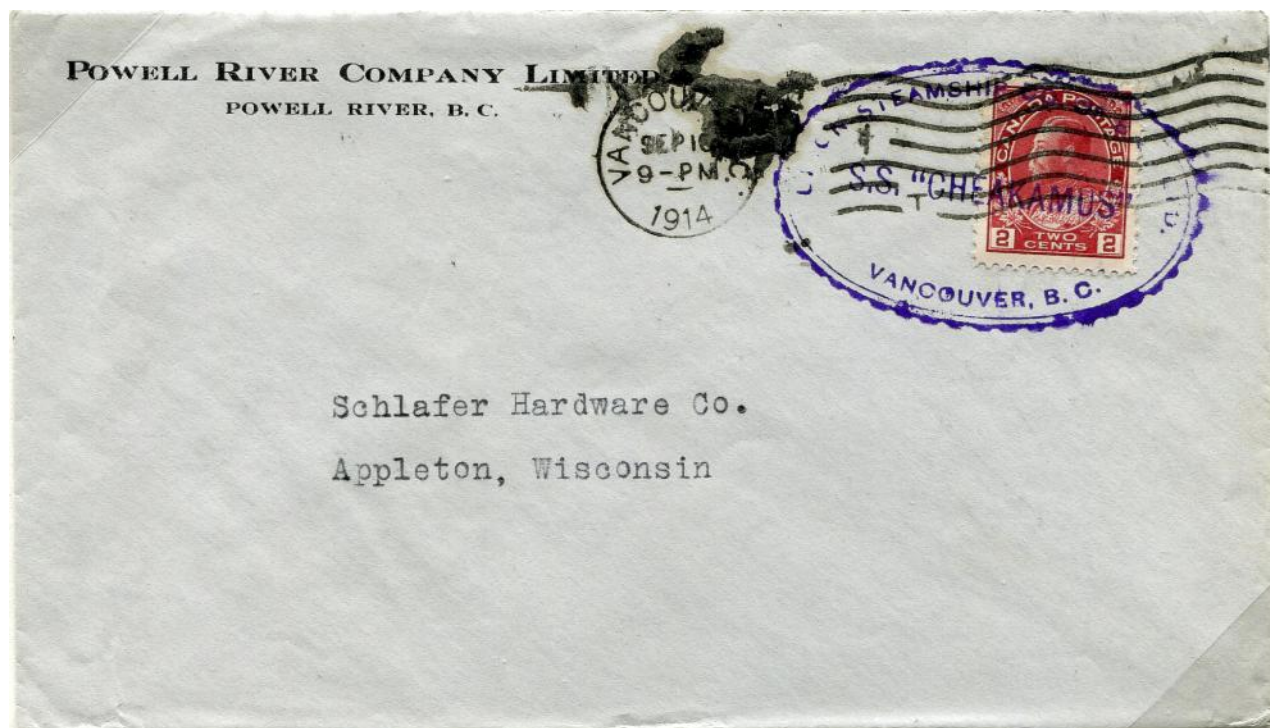


Figure 1. Cover from Powell River to Wisconsin, carried by 'S.S Cheakamus' to Vancouver, receiving only one of three known Topping-type OLDF markings for this vessel.

More recently I have combined stamp collecting with an interest in the history of the forestry and salmon canning industries on the BC Coast, and have become a cover, postcard and ephemera collector and exhibitor. Peter Jacobi, several local dealers, and eBay have helped to develop a decent collection. This too has led to presentations at BC Phil, BNAPS, and the 21 Club, and a Silver Medal and AAPE 'Best Novice Exhibitor' award at BC Phil's 2005 VANPEX.

Stamp and cover collecting has not only been a satisfying personal hobby, it has also stimulated social relationships as a customer, friend, and fellow hobbyist; catered to the extrovert in being able to publicly present and exhibit; and provided opportunities to 'give back' to the hobby by volunteering in BC Phil and VANPEX roles.

I hope this has provided some insight that the stamp collecting hobby is a significant part of my life.

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## Malcolm Leitch

I started collecting stamps as a very young boy. I am not sure what really got me interested but I have always enjoyed history and geography and stamp collecting supports those interests. I started as a traditional stamp collector with an objective of acquiring every Canadian stamp. I grew up in Kelowna and my parents supported my interest in stamp collecting – my dad was a stamp collector as well. When I was a teenager, we made a couple of trips to Vancouver and they always humored me by taking me to All Nations Stamp & Coin on Richards street and then to the Woodward's stamp counter. I can recall taking \$15 I had earned from my paper route and buying a complete mint set of the War Issue at All Nations. A local mentor in Kelowna was Dave Crane, the local golf professional, who was a keen philatelist and he certainly encouraged my interest.

Like most young people, once I graduated from high school, other interests took over and my stamp collecting took a back seat and was basically ignored for decades while I changed jobs, bought a house, got married, had 3 children, bought a bigger house etc. There were other things to do and time spent on my stamps and money for it were not a priority.

However, times change and once my children were in high school I had more time on my hands. I noticed a stamp show was taking place in Richmond (Great Western Stamp Show I believe) so I went to it, half expecting to talk to a dealer about selling him/her my Minkus album that was almost complete. Instead I met Tracy Cooper, Tom Watkins and Bill Longley for the first time and they were talking about BC Postal history and how interesting it was etc. I was hooked. At the show, instead of selling him my Minkus stamp album I bought my first BC postal history covers from Bill Longley. I still have them.

My collecting interests are concentrated on Victorian British Columbia with a focus on the express operators who carried the mail, express matter, bullion etc, from the three main gold rushes starting in about 1858. My collecting interests expanded slightly to cover all Colonial mail and BC mail up to 1901. I have been fortunate to acquire very significant covers from major collections including those assembled by Jack Wallace, Gerry Welburn, Robert Carr, Warren Wilkinson, Dale-Lichtenstein and others.

While I continue to focus on Colonial BC postal history, I have side interests in the postal history of the Okanagan and the Lower Mainland. Basically anything up to WWII in these locations. Very loose collecting parameters!!

Since that seminal meeting with Tracy, Bill and Tom in Richmond I have been fortunate to meet so many other very knowledgeable collectors like Gray Scrimgeour, Andrew Scott, Dale and Bob Forster and Jack Wallace. All these people, and more, are very sharing with their extensive knowledge and experience and I learned from all of them.

I still have my Minkus stamp album and it is basically complete with every Canadian stamp up to about



1980. I have zero interest in modern philately. Every time I start working on my postal history I learn more about BC history and postal history – the internet and electronic data storage at universities, archives etc has been a treasure trove of information. I look forward to new discoveries and learning more about our great province as I expand my BC postal history collection and to meeting my fellow postal historians, no matter what they collect, to discuss our fascinating hobby and latest finds.

Trying to select favourite covers is like saying which of my children is my favourite but I have selected two covers.



Figure 1 - YALE TO ITALY – OCTOBER 1862

*I acquired this cover from the Wilkinson collection and it has always interested me – just the fact that it went all the way from Yale to Italy. Think of the route it followed: it would have been taken by Barnard's Express (carrying the colonial mail) from Yale via New Westminster to Victoria; steamer to San Francisco; overland to New York and by steamer to Southampton and on to Bergamo Italy. The cover was 42 days in transit which, if you think about it, is quite quick for a journey of that magnitude, 160 years ago.*



Figure 2 - EXPRESS COVER FROM THE BIG BEND MINES TO SAN FRANCISCO – 1865/1866

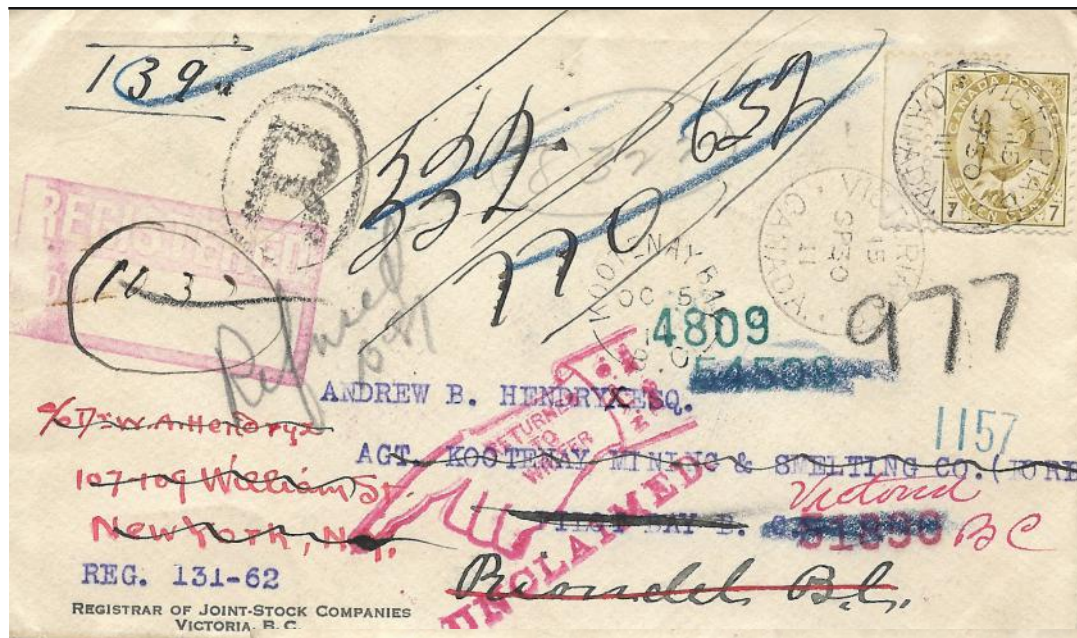
*I also acquired this cover from the Wilkinson collection and it is one of a few covers that has been carried by three different express companies: Barnard's Express would have carried it from the Big Bend gold rush to Yale; Dietz & Nelson would have taken it by steamer via New Westminster to Victoria and Wells Fargo on a steamer from Victoria to San Francisco. The cover shows evidence of all three express companies, it has US and Canadian postage on it and was displayed in the CAPEX 1996 "Gems of Canadian Philately".*

## Ed Mannings

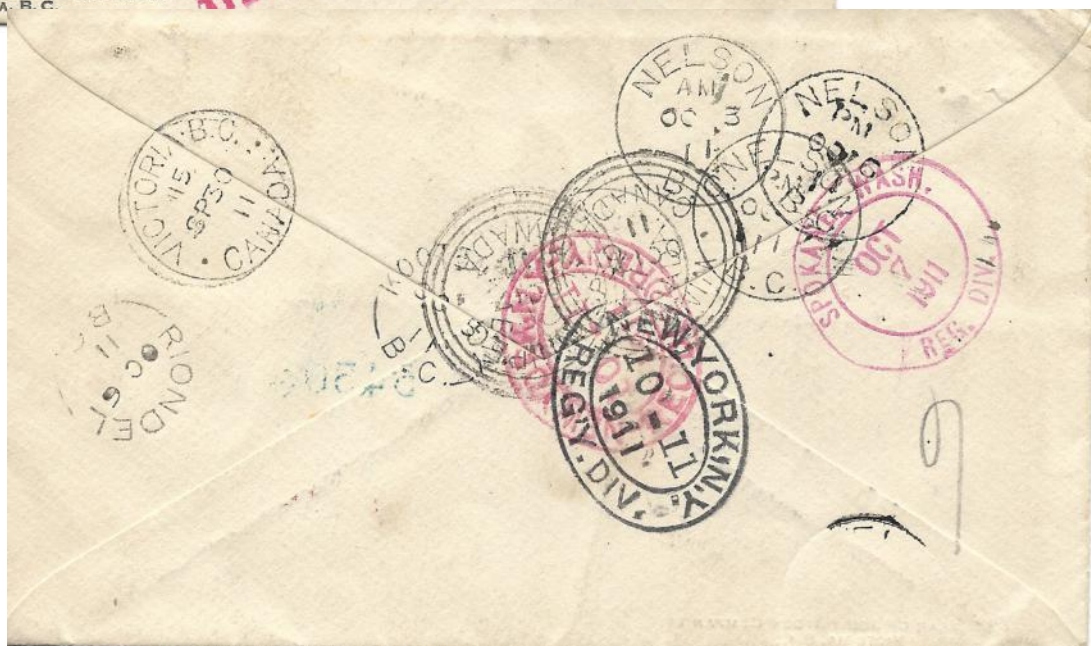
Living in Nelson BC, I am a lifelong collector and devotee of Kootenay history. My collections include postcards, photographs, stock certificates, tokens, bottles and other display artifacts, as well as all kinds of paper ephemera. And of course, historic postal covers play an important part in telling the stories of the history of the Kootenays. While deferring to others with the experience and expertise to help guide this research (people such as Andrew Scott, Tracy Cooper, Pete Jacobi, and Dale Forster), I enjoy the inspiration that the artifacts and ephemera provide, for digging into the stories behind the collectibles.

This historic cover was sent to Andrew B. Hendryx, former President of the Kootenay Mining and Smelting Co, the builders of the Pilot Bay Smelter. Most BC history lovers are familiar with the story of the Bluebell Mine at Riondel, and the infamous murder of Thomas Hammill by Robert Sproule in 1885. Prior to his execution for the murder, Sproule had somehow turned over his interests in the Bluebell to the Hendryxs' Kootenay Mining and Smelting Company of Kootenai, Idaho Territory. In the 1890's the Hendryx's built the Pilot Bay Smelter to process the ore from the Bluebell Mine.





Figures 1 and 2  
Description below.



While I do not profess to be an expert in tracking the routes of the covers in my collection by analysing the postmarks, it appears that:

*On September 30th, 1911, the Registrar of Companies mailed this Registered Letter to Andrew B. Hendryx at Pilot Bay, which seems odd since the Pilot Bay post office had been closed since March 1908. On October 3rd it was transi- postmarked in Nelson and forwarded by sternwheeler to the Kootenay Bay post office, where it was received on October 5th, and then manuscript-forwarded to Riondel. So it was returned to Nelson, where it was again transit marked on Oct 5th.*

*The Riondel post office received it on Oct. 6th and then manuscript re-addressed it to "c/o Dr. W.A.Hendryx" in New York. It was transit marked back in Nelson on Oct. 6th, and sent via Spokane where it was transit marked on Oct. 7th. It was received in New York on Oct. 11th, and marked with a red double oval postmark. It was then manuscript written "Refused" and the post office put a pointed finger red hand stamp "Returned to Writer by N.Y.P.O - UNCLAIMED" and re-endorsed it back to Victoria. It transited via Winnipeg on Oct. 17th, and then travelled back to Victoria to the sender. Andrew had actually died in 1907, and likely Wilbur (W.A.) refused to accept the letter because he wanted nothing further to do with their failed B.C. smelter venture.*