



BRITISH COLUMBIA POSTAL HISTORY NEWSLETTER

Volume 33 Number 4

Whole number 132

December 2024



We follow up on the Great Finds discussion that started with the Harvey Bailey Find that was covered in the last issue . This time, thanks to Tim Woodland, we learn how the **Gordon and Belyea Find** came about and provide some examples, above and with the write-up starting on page 1495, of treasures found within this accumulation.

In this issue:

- | | | | |
|---------------------------|--------|-----------------------------|--------|
| • Rob McGuinness | p 1494 | • Patience Rewarded | p 1500 |
| • Gordon & Belyea | p 1495 | • Old Covers - New Life | p 1501 |
| • Colonial Williams Creek | p 1497 | • Maitland-Dougall/Corfield | p 1504 |
| • Nanaimo Squared Circle | p 1498 | • Ship Aground | p 1507 |
| | | • Modern Post Office | p 1508 |

Remembering

Sadly, our study group and the philatelic community lost a member recently with the passing of Rob McGuinness. Rob was one of those guys who was always uplifting and always was prepared to be helpful as well as being a respected national judge. Rob served as a RPSC director from 2008 to 2016 and was a pioneer in exhibiting Cinderellas in Canada. His contributions to Canadian philately extended well beyond judging and exhibiting, as he maintained a comprehensive database of Canadian exhibitors for over 15 years, ensuring it was regularly updated to support the national philatelic community. He will be missed by all of us lucky enough to have considered him a friend.



Milestone

For this issue, Tim pointed out to the editors that we arrive at a notable milestone: page 1500. We celebrate this milestone with an article by Tracy Cooper starting on page 1500 describing a spectacular pair of covers. It is a notable achievement for any newsletter to have such an extended timeline. Kudos to the previous editors and to all study group members who have contributed over the years. All the newsletters as well as search guidelines are available on the BNAPS website at the link shown at the bottom of this page.

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 \$20, in Cdn or US funds.

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

Readers Write

In the previous newsletter, Peter German raised a question about the Mountie sheet that we included on page 1476. Tracy Cooper tells us that "this sheet was likely part of a gold bullion shipment from the mine in the adjacent townsite of Wells which was going full blast during this period of the 1930's. Similar large sheets can be found from the Pioneer Mine in the same period."

BNAPEX 2025
 Vernon, BC



BNAPS Pacific Northwest Regional Group

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to the Beautiful Okanagan Valley

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SEPTEMBER 19 - 21, 2025

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

Free digital newsletters as well as search instructions 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 6 Mb/issue.

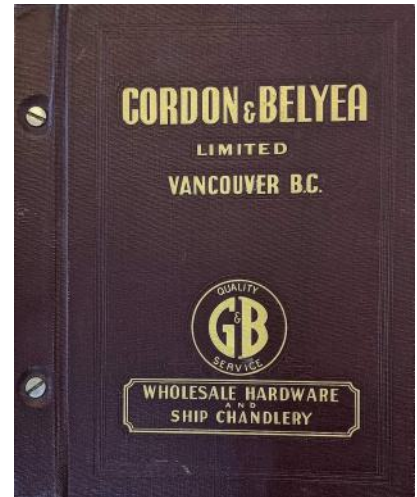
The Gordon & Belyea Find

by *Tim Woodland*

In the 1990s Vancouver B.C. stamp collecting scene there were at least a half dozen retail dealer shops, including a couple of locations run by Brian Snow. At some point in the late 1990s, Brian acquired a large archive of many cardboard boxes of incoming mail addressed to the Gordon & Belyea company.



These boxes would have contained orders and payments for all manner of goods, as Gordon & Belyea was what was called a general merchant: part ship chandlery, part logging equipment supplier, part general merchandise and hardware dealer. As such, Gordon & Belyea produced an extensive catalogue (copies of which are a collector's item themselves) and, through mail order, provided service to the most far flung reaches of the Province.



Many collectors of BC postmarks will have copies of their favourites on envelopes from this Gordon & Belyea (G&B) archive, due to it's extensive volume. I can personally remember having to make at least 3 different visits to Brian's shop in order to view all of the boxes and have acquired numerous pieces over the ensuing years as the covers have been dispersed throughout the dealer and collector communities. The covers date back to at least the early 1930s, with the majority originating from the 1940s and 50s time period.

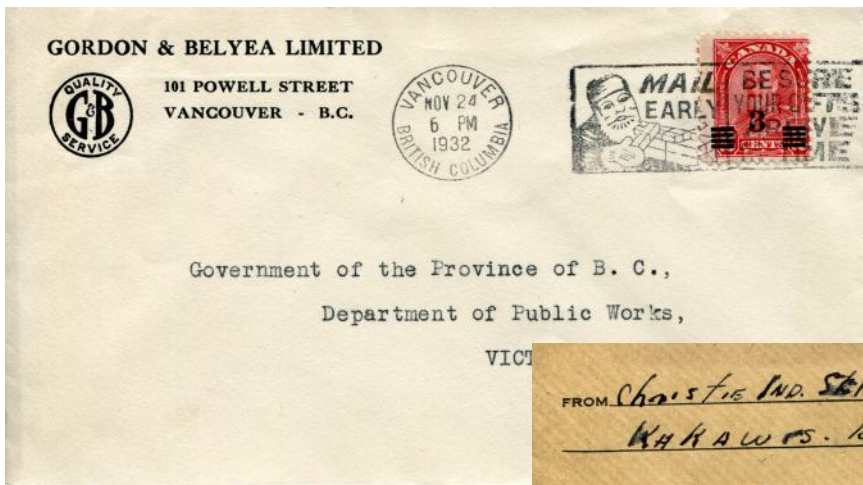
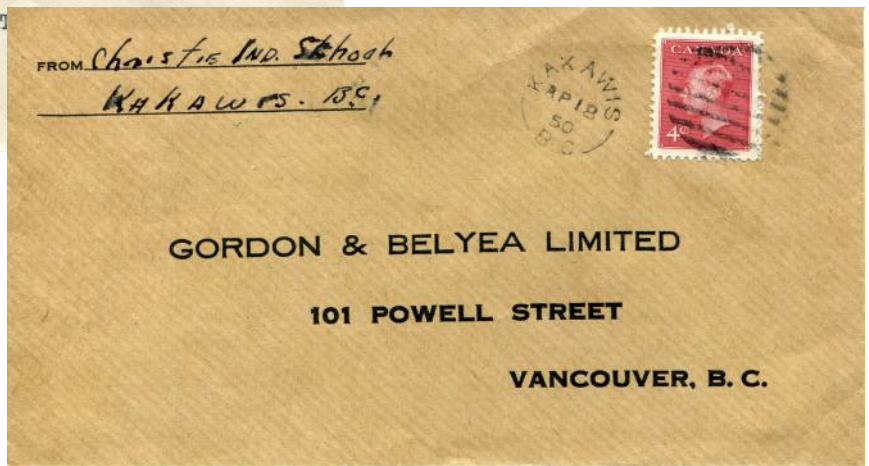


Figure 1. Corner card from Gordon & Belyea mailed from Vancouver office to Victoria.

Figure 2. Cover mailed from Kakawis, BC to Gordon & Belyea in Vancouver.



GORDON & BELYEA LIMITED
101 POWELL STREET
VANCOUVER, B. C.

We have G&B Sales Manager Ernie Reksten to thank for the preservation of the archive, which would eventually find it's way into Brian Snow's hands through one of Ernie's adult children. Ernie was initially a travelling salesman with G&B and an avid amateur photographer, who's pictures of travels all over Canada now reside in several city archives. It is proposed that Ernie may also have been a collector/historian, if not just a pragmatic business manager, in retaining such a large volume of the business mail incoming to G&B. There are also copies of Canada Post First Day Covers mailed to his personal home address, further suggesting an interest in the stamp collecting hobby.



Figure 3. First Day of Issue cover mailed to G&B sales manager, Ernie Reksten.

If the Reksten name rings a faint bell in the minds of BC historians and collectors, it might be for his daughter-in-law Terry Reksten. Terry was the noted author of several BC history works including *More English Than The English*; *Rattenbury*; *The Dunsmuir Saga*; and *The Illustrated History of British Columbia*. Terry was first wife of Ernie's son Don Reksten, whom I had the good fortune to meet in the early 2000s. Don would be known to many in Victoria BC as a member of The Old Cemeteries Society, the Old English Car Club, a postcard collector, and husband to history researcher Leona Taylor. I was able to gift Don a more personalized piece of his father's G&B archive. Regrettably, Don Reksten passed in July 2021 age 79. Unknown to me until researching this article was that Don had worked his entire career as a hydrologic engineer with the federal and provincial government, and would quite likely have known or known of well known BC postal historian, the late Jack Wallace.

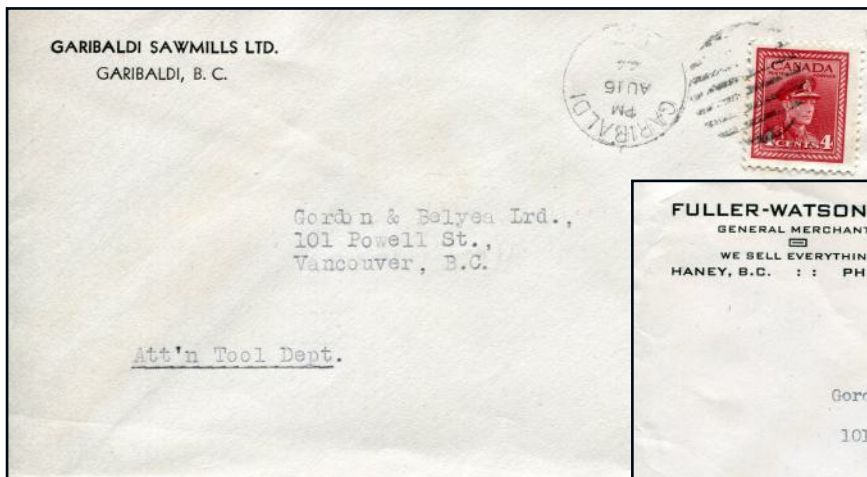


Figure 4. Cover from Garibaldi, B.C. to G&B in Vancouver.



Figure 5. Cover from Haney B.C. to G&B in Vancouver.

Colonial Cover - Williams Creek to England

by Tracy Cooper

This BC Colonial cover, recently advertised on eBay, was of interest. It was posted from Williams Creek in mid-September 1865 and was franked with a strip of three 2½d. BC and VI stamps paying the uprated (2½d stamps uprated to 3d. as per the Postal Act of 1864) 9d rate from Williams Creek to New Westminster. The strip of three was cancelled with two strikes of the Numeral #10 hammer, assigned to Williams Creek. The cover in the upper left hand corner has the manuscript 1/- marking in red indicating that the 24¢ equivalent postal rate to its destination in England via the United States was fully paid in cash, reaffirmed with the black PAID handstamp in the lower left of the envelope



Figure 1. Cover posted September 1865 from Williams Creek to Liverpool.

The cover arrived at New Westminster on 1 OCT/1865 as denoted by the GENERAL POST OFFICE/BRITISH COLUMBIA double circle on the reverse, and was transited through San Francisco with the SAN FRANCISCO/CAL double circle handstamp on the front dated NOV/1/1865. The cover arrived in New York, likely via Panama on NOV 25, as denoted by the faint 3/NEW YORK AM PACKET CDS in red. The cover finally arrived at its Liverpool destination on 7 DE 65 as noted by the red PAID/LIVERPOOL/US PACKET/26. One final observation that triggered my interest was the fact that the strip of three 2½d. stamps had been scissor-cut horizontally and that the right hand stamp was a wing margin copy. Obviously, the operator of the scissors was not skilled as the left hand stamp had been partially cut through the stamp diagonally.

The dilemma for anyone buying a cover through Ebay, is whether or not it is genuine. Unlike your reputable auction house, you often can't return an Ebay purchase if it turns out to be fake. The bidder has to be very careful to attempt to confirm its authenticity before making a bid to purchase. As I have said many times before in my write-ups, a good philatelic library is a must and, as I have done many times before, I turned to my well worn copy of the Wellburn collection. There on Page 49 was a very similar cover from the same Miss Anne Moss correspondence to Liverpool. The Wellburn cover shown in Figure 2 was different in that Williams Creek obviously had run out of 2½d stamps and the 24¢ US stamp was likely applied in New Westminster unlike the Ebay offering which had been paid in cash but all of the other markings were identical.



Figure 2. Wellburn cover posted at Williams Creek to Liverpool.

Based on my preliminary research I was confident that the previously unreported cover shown in Figure 1 was genuine and I obtained it at a modest price. It now sits in my collection as my only example of a Colonial cover from the Cariboo to England.

The Nanaimo Squared Circle Postmark

by Brian Copeland

Nanaimo has a number of interesting postmarks, but the squared circle stands out because of its longevity and its two distinct states. It was proofed on July 26, 1893 and the earliest reported strike is Aug. 7, 1893. Figure 1 shows a cover from 1896.



Figure 1. Nanaimo (PM / Jan. 28, 1896) to Toronto

It was used for almost 3 and a half years in its original form, and then was altered in the last week of 1896. The outer bars of the hammer were filed down to yield a cancel that looks like a circular date stamp, but with dashed lines in the outer rim. This version of the hammer was used for almost 60 years until July 1956. Figure 2 shows a cover from 1948, over 50 years after the cover in Figure 1 was sent. Only two other squared circle hammers underwent a similar transformation: Schreiber and Bobcaygeon, Ont. Remarkably, Schreiber's hammer was altered around the same time as Nanaimo's.



Figure 2. Special Delivery cover from Nanaimo (7 / June 2, 1948) to Vancouver.

The hammer's longevity provides ample opportunities for study and collecting. There are covers with different rates, destinations, and stamp usages. There is an interesting time mark pattern, with AM, PM and numeral time marks used at various times. And despite the abundance of available strikes, there are rarities. Some time mark numbers are rare or unreported. Strikes for many years after 1912 are elusive, and three years in the 1920s are still unreported.



Figure 3. Strikes from 1893 to 1942.

Figure 3 shows some relatively scarce examples. The AM time mark (shown at left on a 10 cent small queen) was used in the State I version of the hammer for just two and a half months (it reappeared in the State II version in late 1898). Strikes on some stamps, such as the 20 cent Widow Weeds, are scarce. Time mark 2 is rare, with only two examples known. And time marks 10 and 20 are both rare and show that new discoveries are still possible after all these years. Both are relatively recent finds.

*Pictorial
Cancels
from BC*



Patience Rewarded and a Mystery Unsolved

or "The most coveted BC item we want for our collection"

by Tracy Cooper

As every serious collector of postal history is aware, patience is a virtue that cannot be overstated. As a long time collector of illustrated British Columbia covers, the following two examples show perhaps the pinnacle of the engravers art.

I first became aware about 25 years ago at a BNAPS Regional Group meeting, Jack Wallace casually showed around this illustrated cover from the MAIL ORDER DEPARTMENT of the Hudson's Bay Company in Vancouver. The cover shows in the upper left a Canadian Pacific Railway engine with the main vignette showing a superb engraving of the Hudson's Bay Company building, which still exists, at the corner of Granville and Georgia in Vancouver. Despite my enthusiasm and the passionate desire of Alex Price, who also coveted this gem, Jack Wallace, the owner, was in no mood to dispose of the item. Jack explained that he had acquired this item decades before and it was his favourite illustrated cover. As Alex and I were consoling each other over dinner, I learned that Alex's interest was piqued because he had just acquired from the Sept 1999 Maresch auction a very similar illustrated cover from the HBC from Winnipeg.



Figure 1. Hudson's Bay illustrated cover from Winnipeg to Montreal.

After my good friend and mentor Alex passed, I was fortunate enough to purchase the Winnipeg example from his estate. I approached Jack at that time and showed him my Winnipeg example and again asked if he was interested in selling. The decades had not diminished his enthusiasm for this cover but he did say that he would note my interest for his heirs when that time arrived.

With the help of my friends at Weeda stamps, my patience was rewarded and the Vancouver HBC illustrated cover, shown on the next page, joins its brethren on a very fine album page.

These illustrated covers present a very intriguing mystery. With the Vancouver example, apparently being unique, and only two examples of the Winnipeg cover reported, why, after the considerable expense the HBC incurred for engraving and printing, are they so scarce? Are there other HBC engraved covers out there from other cities? If our readers know of others, please let the editors know.



.Figure 2. Hudson's Bay illustrated cover from Vancouver to Toronto.

New Life for Old Covers

by Gray Scrimgeour

I received the Fall 2024 issue of British Columbia History today and was glad to see the two-page article "Peter O'Reilly's Diaries" by Misao Dean and Timothy Fitzhum on pp. 38 and 39. Peter O'Reilly (1827–1905) left diaries covering 1858 to 1905. He was a magistrate, gold commissioner and Indian Reserve Commissioner. The Vancouver Island Local History Society has transcribed O'Reilly's diaries, and they are now available on the group's website at vilocalhistory.ca. See their section entitled "Historical Resources".

I pulled out four pretty ordinary, even scrappy unmounted O'Reilly covers from my Cariboo album to see if I could find anything out about them. They are all ex-Wellburn, purchased many years ago—most from the Jim Pike sale. I was pleased with my results, described below.

The first cover (Figure 1) is a double-weight envelope mailed in Victoria on October 4, 1873 addressed to P. O'Reilly Esqre, care of C. Cornwall Esqre [Clement F. Cornwall], Ashcroft. It has an October 7th New Westminster backstamp. On the back, Wellburn wrote in pencil: "1866 Cornwall was Postmaster at Ashcroft. No salary. Later Lieut Govr." This is a brief quote from p. 121 of Deaville. Perhaps one of you can tell me who wrote this cover (the envelope's wax seal has a large 'H' and the wording 'TORCHITIDUNE').

The diary says that O'Reilly left Victoria on September 26th in the steamer Maude and arrived at Ashcroft on October 1st. He continued to Kamloops on October 4th, where country court was held, and returned to Ashcroft on October 9th. A horse-racing meeting was held in Ashcroft that weekend. On October 13th, he started back to Victoria, stopping at Lytton that day, where he writes that he received his first mail on the trip. Perhaps this was the letter from my cover.



Figure 1. Double-weight cover from Victoria to Peter O'Reilly at Ashcroft.

The second cover, shown in Figure 2, was sent by Peter O'Reilly to his wife in Victoria. It was posted at Cache Creek. Its pale date seems to be MY 31/76. There were backstamps applied at New Westminster (JU 2/76) and Victoria (JU 3/76).



Figure 2. Cover sent by O'Reilly at Cache Creek in May 1876.

The diary says that O'Reilly left Victoria for New Westminster on May 16th. Courts were held in New Westminster, Yale, Lytton and Kamloops. He was in Hope on May 16th, Yale on May 22nd, Boston Bar on May 24th, Lytton on May 24th, Ashcroft on May 26th and 27th, and Kamloops on May 29th and 30th. He returned to Savona and Ashcroft on May 31st and eventually reached Victoria on June 7th. He must have mailed my cover at Cache Creek as he travelled from Kamloops to Ashcroft.

The badly-torn third cover shown in Figure 3 was sent home by O'Reilly from Ashcroft on December 2, 1880. Its 3¢ Small Queen is tied by an attractive fancy cancel. The cover reached New Westminster on December 13th. The diary says that O'Reilly reached Ashcroft on December 1st. As usual, he stayed with the Cornwalls. The weather was cold, with snow. Court in Kamloops was postponed. O'Reilly finally arrived there (by horse) on December 6th.



Figure 3. Cover sent by O'Reilly at Ashcroft on December 2, 1880.

My fourth cover is illustrated in Figure 4. It was mailed home to Victoria on June 25, 1881 by O'Reilly when he was in Barkerville (Richfield). He had been taking a census of Indians at Williams Lake and Soda Creek. When he arrived at Barkerville on June 25th, there was heavy rain. He wrote that he had sent Letter No. 6 (presumably my cover) from Richfield. He worked his way south slowly, then made a trip up the coast to Port Essington.

Figure 4. Cover sent by O'Reilly at Barkerville on June 25, 1881.



The entry about Peter O'Reilly in the Dictionary of Canadian Biography [Vol. XIII (1901-1910)] cites relevant biographic material present at the BC Archives, including family letters. This material is not readily accessible for postal historians. The availability of O'Reilly's diaries is a big help to us, as can be seen here.

Figure 5. O'Reilly out for a buggy ride.

Miss Maitland-Dougall, Corfield BC

By Bruce Pollock

I've been meaning to submit this article for some time, but Tim Woodland's piece on the Corfield post office in the September 2024 issue has spurred me into action. There is much to add to the story of "Miss Maitland-Dougall", the addressee of the 1904 postcard, and George Corfield, the eponymous postmaster.

My Monograph #6 (in the BC Postal History newsletter index) focused on the family of James Maitland-Dougall. But Miss Edith (Edie) Maitland-Dougall was the daughter and only child of James's older brother Frederick. Frederick was born in Scotland and emigrated to Savannah, Georgia where he met and married Bessie Hopkins. Edith was born there in 1882 and within a few years, the family relocated to Cowichan Bay on Vancouver Island.

By the late 1800s, the Cowichan Valley was growing rapidly with British settlers. Among those who settled in the Cowichan Bay area were Frederick Maitland-Dougall, George Corfield and Augustus Pimbury. They were attracted by the flat fertile soil of the estuary and established their farms. Corfield's farm also included a general store and post office of which he was postmaster.



Figure 1. Cover addressed to Miss Maitland Dougall c/o the Corfield post office. Backstamped at Corfield on June 3, 1899.



Figure 2. George Corfield's General Store and Post Office, Cowichan Bay

The origins of tennis are a bit vague. Versions of it had been played in several European countries since the 11th century, but the modern version was formalized in the mid-1800s by some English and Welsh sportsmen. The game took off and the All-England Lawn Tennis Club at Wimbledon held its first match in July 1877.

It didn't take long for tennis reach Cowichan near the edges of the British Empire. The community of expats were hungry for the culture of the old country and looked for ways to bring it home. Pimbury purchased tennis equipment from England in the summer of 1886 because there was nothing available locally in Victoria. He levelled and seeded a small corner of one of his farm fields to become a tennis court and on May 9, 1887, he invited a few neighbours to come over and 'knock a few balls around'. The South Cowichan Lawn Tennis Club was born.

The game was so popular that by 1905, the SCLTC had outgrown its courts on Pimbury's farm. Frederick Maitland-Dougall was the club president and one day he sent Edie to pick up the mail and to ask George Corfield if "tennis might be played on a corner of his estate." Corfield agreed and donated two acres which the club members quickly turned into new courts. The SCLTC still exists on this property today and is the only surviving lawn tennis club in Canada.



Figure 3. Edith, Frederick and William Maitland-Dougall. William (Edie's cousin) became a submarine commander and was killed in WWI.

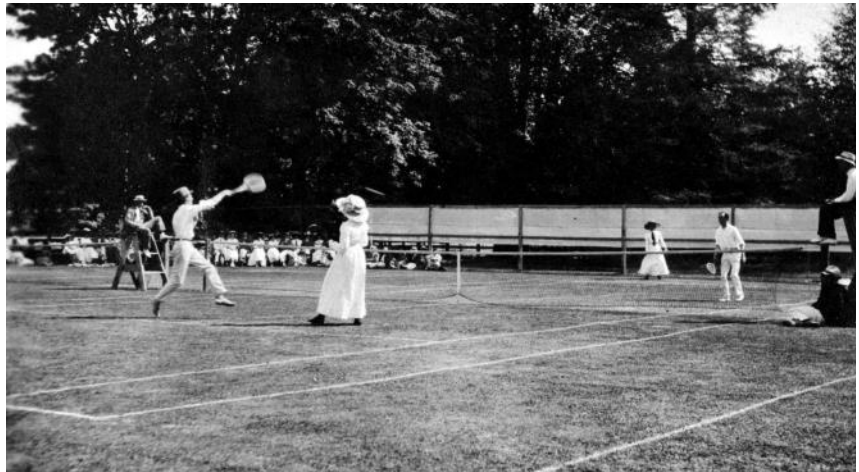


Figure 4. South Cowichan Lawn Tennis Club



Figure 5. Edith Maitland-Dougall and Billy Bundock, ca. 1910.

The Club became an important social and cultural hub for the Cowichan Valley. Some members would row their boat over from Saltspring Island just to play tennis. Edith was a key member and social figure. She would later marry George Share and together they ran a successful market garden in Cowichan for many years.

Postal material addressed to Edie is often found to be incoming from far away places. She must have maintained correspondence with many travelling friends. The piece shown by Tim was incoming from Japan and then forwarded on to Savannah, Georgia where she was likely visiting her family.

Two postcards are shown here, one from Hamburg, Germany signed "J.B." and received at Corfield PO on Aug 22, 1904. But the more poignant one was mailed by Pte A. Tayleur of the 7th Company, Imperial Yeomanry depicting Grand Canary Island. Private Archie Tayleur was in transit to South Africa during the Second Boer War and the card was mailed on board the ship, franked with a Spanish stamp and postmarked London Feb 24, 1900. It was received in Corfield PO Mar 12, 1900.

Nine months after this postcard was received on Dec 17, 1900, Pte Tayleur was killed in battle near Harrisburg, South Africa. I believe this was known as the Battle of Tygerkloof.



Figure 6. Incoming postcard from Hamburg, Germany, Aug 8, 1904.



Figure 7. Incoming postcard from Pte. Archie Tayleur, Feb 24, 1900.

Ship Aground

by Gray Scrimgeour

I don't know if this cover has been recorded in the newsletter. I don't think so. I purchased it a few years ago, and found it when sorting through too many boxes. It looks contrived (philatelic), sent unsealed, with a Union Steamship Limited corner card. The Chelohsin mark in purple is dated the day the ship went aground in dense fog near Siwash Rocks. Perhaps it was first dated at Minstrel Island that day, got left behind, and came out on the next Union sailing on November 15th. Someone -- perhaps the addressee -- typed the message on the back, saying "Guaranteed to have been cancell(ed) on date ship went aground-broke up in a couple of days."

Yes, the ship went aground but did not break up. It remained on the rocks but was later towed to North Vancouver and eventually scrapped. My father and I walked through Stanley Park on the weekend after the grounding, and went down the hill far enough to see it on the rocks.

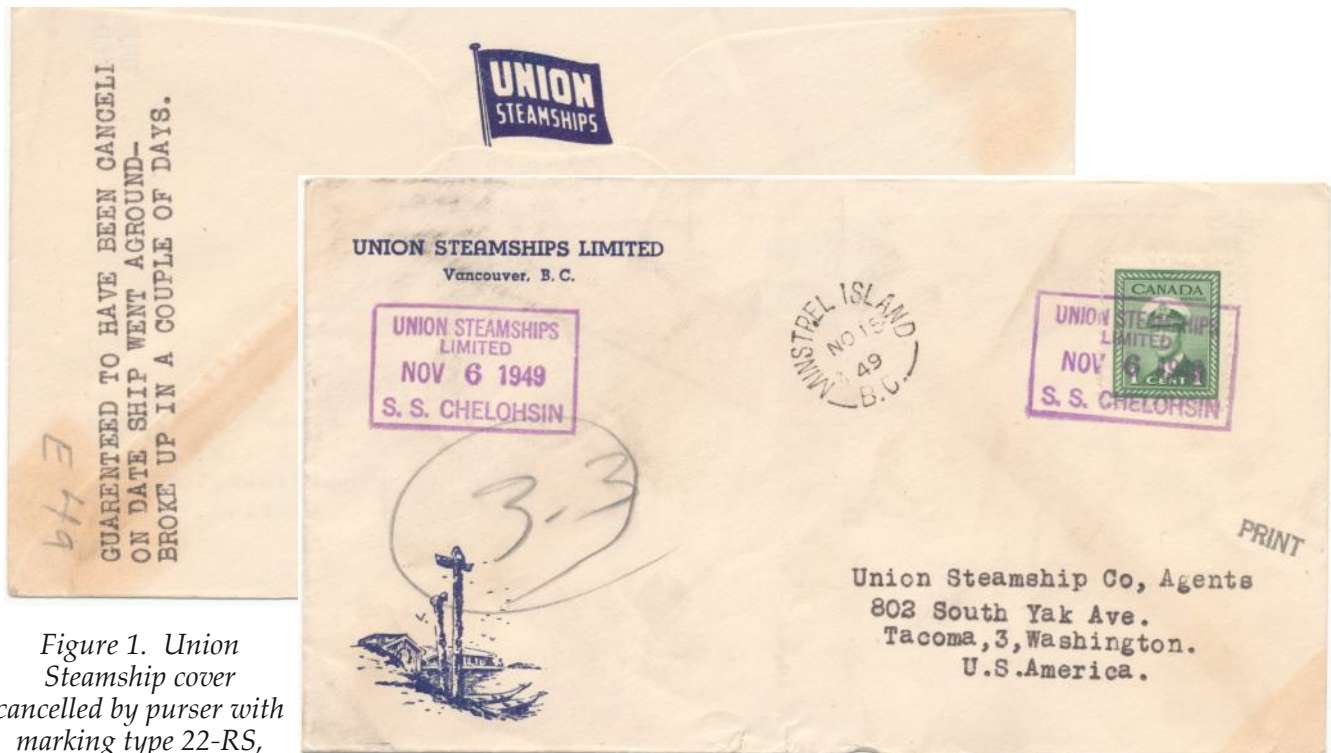
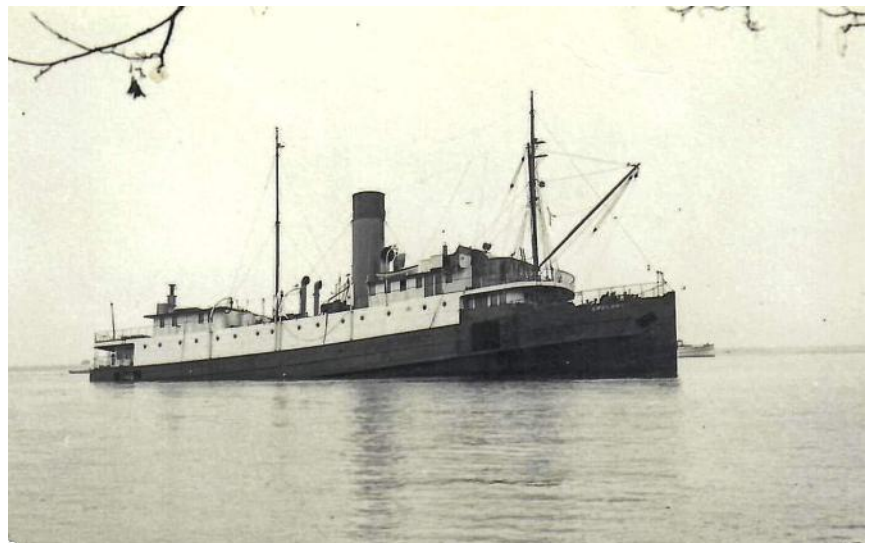
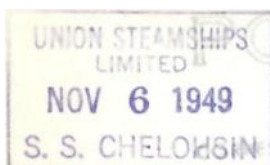


Figure 1. Union Steamship cover cancelled by purser with marking type 22-RS, aboard S.S. Chelohsin.

Figure 2. Photo of Chelohsin Nov 6, 1949, grounded near Stanley Park.

Below is scan of ship marking on reverse of card. This dater now resides at the Maritime Museum.



A Modern Post Office Story

By Tim Woodland

As collectors of older material, we may take for granted the Post Office in our current everyday lives. After many years of picking up my mail at my parent's Maple Ridge address (thereby ensuring a bi-weekly Friday visit and family out-for-dinner opportunity), I re-directed the mail to my South Surrey neighbourhood using Canada Post's Mail Forwarding service. For \$92.50 + taxes I purchased 12 months of the service, certain that my procrastinating self could complete all address up-dates, including annual only mailers like ICBC Insurance. Then the fun began.

For about 3 weeks the mail began to arrive in my new Post Office Box #38094 at the Pharmasave Grandview Corners, known within Canada Post as 2448 RPO Morgan Heights. But then a 50/50 split developed for several weeks between the old Maple Ridge and the new South Surrey destinations. This required a 1-800-pour a coffee and wait-on-hold session with Corporate Canada Post. The local Pharmasave Postmaster also did some digging, and found that at some point Canada Post's system had dropped some data out of my profile, which was causing the intermittent miss-direction. Problem resolved after a couple of weeks, and in response to my soft complaint two additional months of the service provided.



Fig 1. A variety of OCR labels for the original 12 months to May (05) 2024, extension of service to July (07) 2024, and a mix of PO Box#/no PO Box#. Also shows eBay's forced address style.

I am a daily eBay purchaser and this accounts for 50% of received mail. eBay in their infinite wisdom creates a strange address sequence with RPO designation, then PO Box#, then RPO address duplicated. This cannot be over-ridden in the eBay system. A partial example is shown in Fig. 1 above.



Fig. 2. Examples of OCR machines printing the Pharmasave RPO location info only, but not my personal Box#. Depending on how well any of the 6 or so employees know me depends on whether they manually apply my Box #. The variety of font styles and sizing has been surprising, and only max/min and a middle example of the many received are shown. Of additional note, the largest font Redirection occurs on the same envelope as the smallest font RPO line. All of this suggests that Canada Post has many different machines in service which surely increases cost of acquisition, maintenance and lifetime service compared to using standardized models. In 6 months of tracking I have been unable to categorically determine use and location of OCRs depending on whether mail comes from Foreign, USA or Domestic sources, or is processed through the main Vancouver P.O., though there have been some similarities.

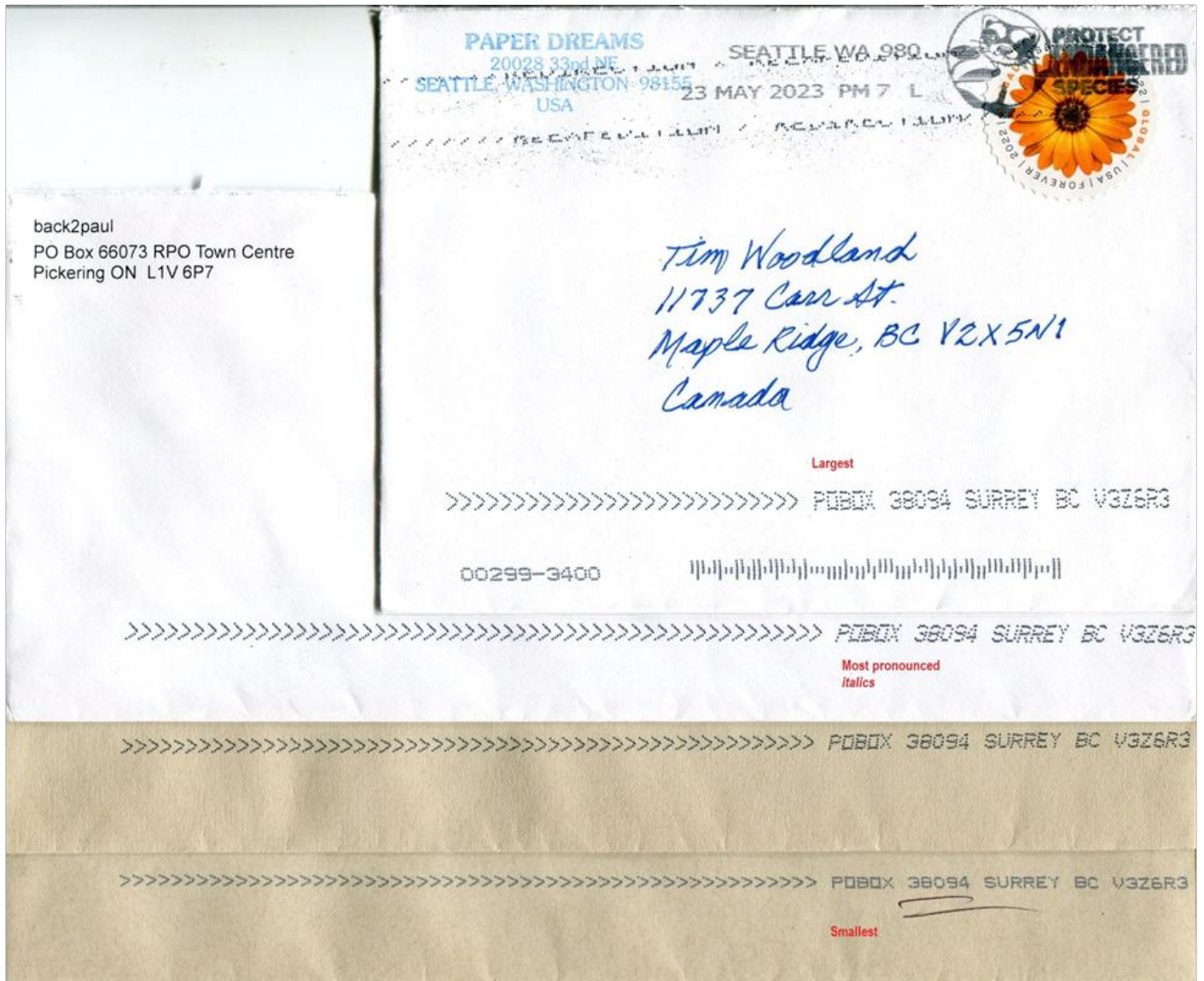


Fig. 3. Examples of OCR information for my personal Box #38094 but Not the Pharmasave RPO info. Again, many font sizes and styles exist, making one wonder about the efficiency and cost effectiveness of the modern Post Office.

Finally, of additional amusement, my P.O. box is of a smaller size, able to accommodate up to medium sized envelopes. For those who deal with Weeda Stamps, their normal size mailer just fits diagonally in the box. But my mailbox door has smaller dimensions than the box; the multi-box front cover door panel which Canada Post opens to load individual mail boxes, is 1/8" all 4 sides smaller than the individual boxes. Depending on the stiffeners used in the dealer mailings, sometimes I can gently curve the envelopes to withdraw, sometimes I must ask the employee to unlock the entire door panel to access the box contents. And every other day the box contents includes a card for an oversize item, so I get to join the back of the line

