



# BRITISH COLUMBIA POSTAL HISTORY NEWSLETTER

Volume 34 Number 4

Whole number 136

December 2025



This issue's Favourite Covers are a reflection of a bygone era. This past year has seen the demise of this once venerable company and it made us reflect on the postal history associated with the HBC. The covers shown here are common but they made us wonder whether anyone had ever compiled a census of the varieties and locations from which they were sent, particularly for BC. A quick search of the BNAPS website revealed fifteen articles that mention the HBC and, of those, five relate to BC. Dale and Bob Forster previously provided us with a census of the West Coast Hudson's Bay Company Fur Trade Mail (BCPHN #125, March 2023) but we are not aware of a similar exercise for these later HBC covers. They are attractive and worthy of study.

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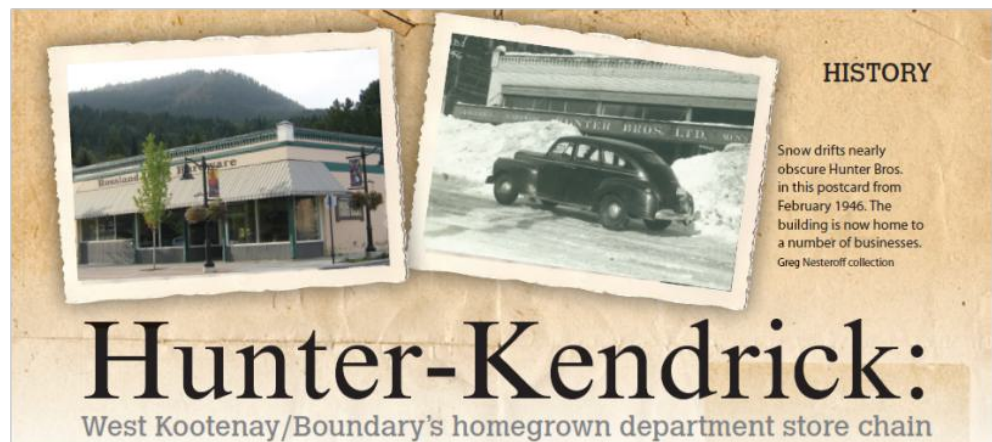
## From Our Readers:

We recently have heard from several of our readers:

From **Greg Nesteroff**: follow-up information about the article that appeared in the previous newsletter, referencing the Hunter-Kendrick company:

Very interesting about the Hunter cover. In addition to the Rossland and Greenwood stores you mentioned, Hunter-Kendrick also had branches in Grand Forks, Sandon, Northport, and Phoenix. What is more, the buildings in the first three mentioned places are all still standing! The Sandon store is now a museum, the Grand Forks store is home to many different businesses, and the Northport store was long derelict, but there is a business operating out of part of the building again. The second Rossland store also still stands. It became an Eaton's, then a SuperValu, then another supermarket, then a hardware store, and has now been carved up into a few different businesses.

*Size-reduced copy of  
the header of Greg's  
article.*



Greg also attached a two page article about this firm (*Route 3*, Summer 2015, p. 15) and nineteen pages of notes. If any reader is interested in obtaining digital copies of this information, we will happily pass this information along.

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BNAPS member **Glenn Archer** reported the postcard (shown on the next page), carrying the very rare Duthie, B.C. postmark on the rear of this card addressed to Bermuda.

The Duthie post office served an area that is about 8 miles southeast of Vancouver, in the area that is now called Burnaby. Several streets in Burnaby retain the Duthie name. The post office was open from March 1, 1908 until March 31, 1911, at which time the name was changed to Lakemere. Split ring cancels were used for both offices although use of the Lakemere cancel has not been reported and the Duthie cancel is very rare. Yearly revenues for both offices were generally less than \$50.00 and both offices were non-accounting.

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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

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.

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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. Supplements to the newsletter are also found here.





Front and back of postcard  
with Duthie cancel.



The first postmaster was William Duthie, who served from 1908 until his death in 1911. T.P. West became postmaster at that time until the Lakemere office closed in 1912.

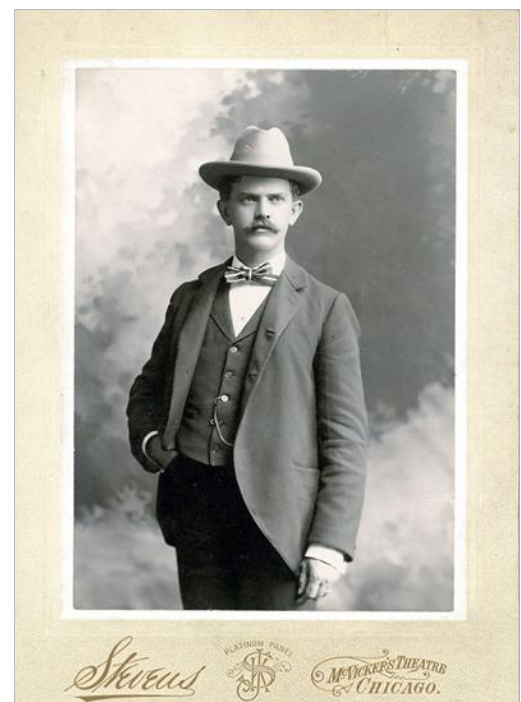
**Gray Scrimgeour** made us aware of a newly-published book by Greg Nesteroff about John Harris, who played a key role in the development of Sandon, B.C. The introduction from the book follows, beside a photo of the book's cover.

link to the book's website: <https://www.kingofsandon.com>

"In one of the most extraordinary mining towns of the West, he was the richest and most powerful man—and he guarded personal secrets that have stayed clouded in mystery for over a century.

In "The King of Sandon", Greg Nesteroff tells the tale of John Morgan Harris, drawing on new discoveries and previously undisclosed information to present the fullest profile to date of a man who built a whole city as a monument to himself: from the truth of his birth in the slave states of the American South, to a trail of undisclosed violence left behind in multiple hometowns, to his years refashioning himself as the feudal lord and benefactor of Sandon, British Columbia. That Sandon existed at all—and continued to exist long after the end of the Slocan silver boom—was a testament to his single-minded ambition, sometimes at the expense of all else.

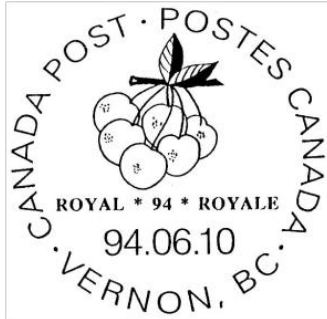
Harris' story is the story of the city he was synonymous with, and of B.C. and the West in microcosm: part colonial imperialism, part Old West melodrama, part boom-and-bust saga, part cautionary tale, and part rebirth and restoration.





From study group member **François Brisse**, we heard of his successes with designing pictorial cancellations, of which he has designed more than 400! In keeping with the recent successful BNAPS convention in Vernon, we share cancels that François previously designed for the 1994 Royal convention in Vernon.

François is currently compiling an extensive listing of BC illustrated and related postmarks.



## Agnes Bushby

by Gray Scrimgeour

Here is an ex-Gerald Wellburn cover addressed to Mrs. Bushby (Agnes Bushby, daughter of Sir James Douglas), Victoria, B.C. At the lower left, it has Wellburn's comments in pencil: "daughter of Sir J. Douglas / widow of former PMG of BC / July 18-77." The cover has a Victoria date backstamp of JY 28/77. The 3¢ Small Queen stamp is cancelled by cork #3 in Andrew Scott's chart of New Westminster corks [1]. I have other 19th century New Westminster-to-Victoria mail lacking the New Westminster dater. I do not have any other mail involving Agnes Bushby. I cannot explain the name McClean or McClain on the upper left of the cover.

James Douglas and Amelia (Connely) had six surviving children: Cecilia, Jane, Agnes, Alice, James William, and Martha. Agnes (1841–1928) married Arthur Thomas Bushby (1835–1875) on May 8, 1862 and they lived in New Westminster. Bushby held several government positions, including colonial postmaster general until Confederation. Bushby died on May 18, 1875 at the early age of 40. Sir James Douglas died on August 2, 1877, about 2 weeks after my cover was mailed.

Reference:

1. A. Scott, "New Westminster Corks and Killers," B.C. Research Newsletter, Vol. 8, No. 1, Whole No. 29 (April 1999) p. 232.

Figure 1. A cover from 1877 addressed to Agnes Bushby in Victoria. (size reduced)

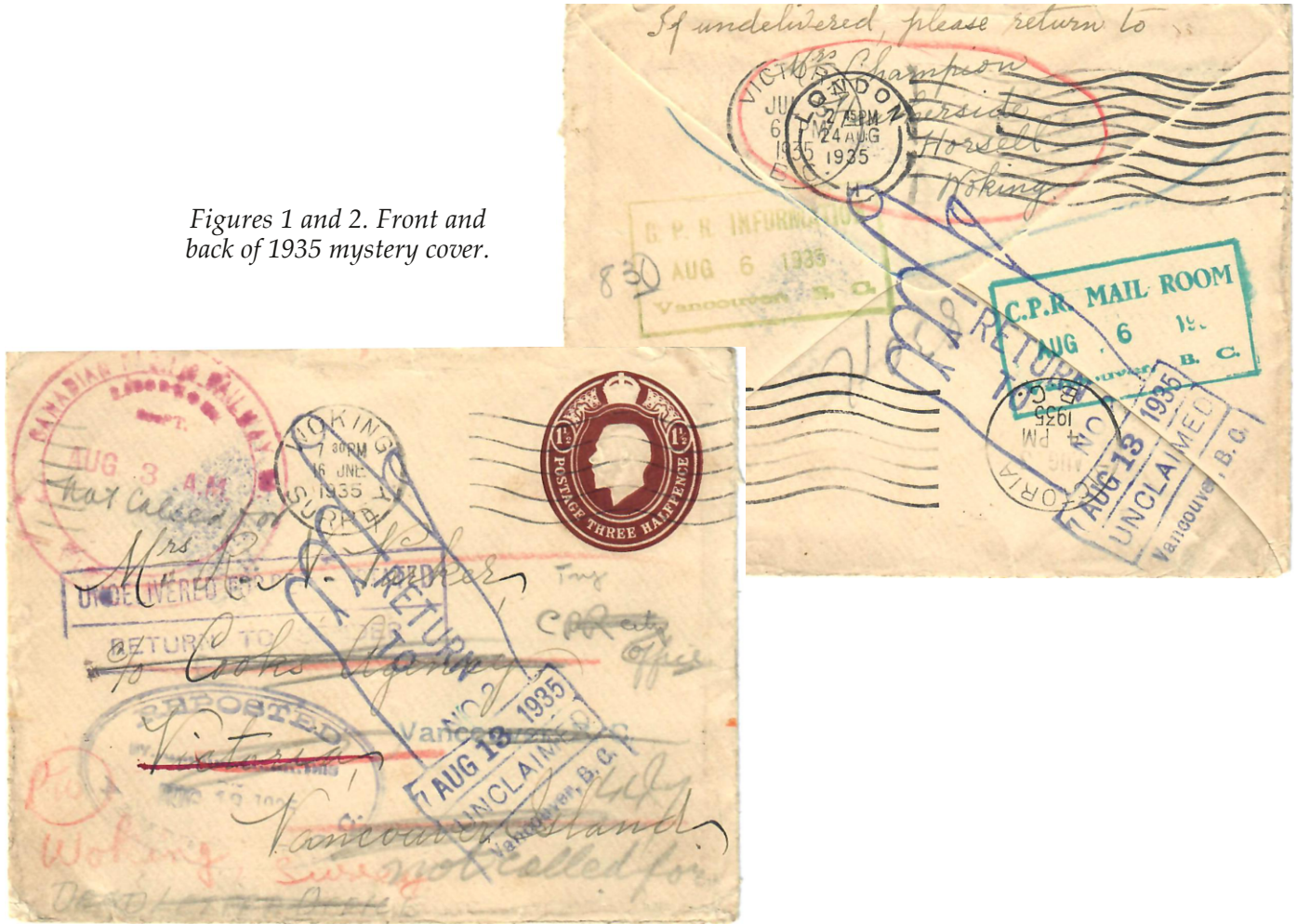


Ed note: A follow-up comment from Study Group Chairman Tim Woodland suggests that Vancouver's first mayor, Malcom A. McLean could be the sender of this cover.



*by Morris Beattie*

*Figures 1 and 2. Front and back of 1935 mystery cover.*



The next markings are also on the back, a C.P.R. Mail Room marking in blue, dated Aug. 6, in Vancouver and a C.P.R. Information marking in green, also on Aug 6 in Vancouver.



On Aug 13, both the front and back received an "Unclaimed, Return to Sender" pointed finger marking, the one on the back pointing at the return address in Woking. There is also an oval "Reposted" marking dated Aug. 13 with illegible details.

On August 24 it received a London machine cancel on the back. The return address is circled in red and the front has a "Woking, Surrey" handwritten mark, as well as a possible carrier marking.

With the travel history worked out we are left with a few questions. One question is why was it addressed c/o Cooks Agency? It seems likely that Mrs. Parker was travelling and her travels involved Cooks Agency. Not unusual at the time. When she did not appear, why did they suggest "Try CPR Office"? The CPR apparently did not know of her and so after several delays it was sent back to Surrey.

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## Telegraph Creek & Wrangell Mail Service

*By Gray Scrimgeour and Morris Beattie*

The modern history of the Telegraph Creek area dates back to the discovery of gold on the Stikine River in the 1860s and near Dease Lake in the 1870s. During this time, the Hudson Bay Company established a trading post, first down river at Glenora then later, in 1900, at Telegraph Creek.

Telegraph Creek is located 269 km (167 mi) upstream of the Stikine River's mouth, at the confluence of the Stikine River and Telegraph Creek and is considered the head of navigation on the Stikine. The village was also the trailhead for the Stikine and Teslin trails to the Klondike goldfields in the late 1890s.



*Figure 1. The location of the Telegraph Creek Post office. [1]*



*Figure 2. View downriver from above Telegraph Creek.*



From May until October, the river was navigable and mail reached Telegraph Creek via riverboat from Wrangell, Alaska, which was the primary access point. The Barrington Navigation Company of Wrangell, Alaska, operated a regular weekly service by river steamships during the season of navigation. River steamships left Wrangell every Tuesday during the tourist season, after the arrival of a Canadian Pacific steamship that left Vancouver the preceding Saturday, and arrived at Telegraph Creek on Thursday.

Mail posted on the trip up-river was thought to have received the usual Telegraph Creek town cancel. The Telegraph Creek post office was opened at this remote location on June 14, 1899.

The Telegraph Creek & Wrangell mail service marking, an official Canadian Post Office cancellation, was first used in 1930, and use was then intermittent, with the latest use noted in 1945. There were two slightly different dating devices in use during this period: one proofed on March 25, 1930 and the other on June 11, 1935 (Fig. 3). These can easily be distinguished by the differences in the position of the wording "MAIL SERVICE". The use of this postmark was described by Ken Ellison [2]. From 1930 to 1945, it was applied at Wrangell to letters carried on the boat that ran from Telegraph Creek, B.C. to Wrangell, Alaska on the Stikine River. This service was supplied by the Barrington Transportation Company[3].

*Figure 3. Proof impressions of the two Telegraph Creek & Wrangell date stamps.*

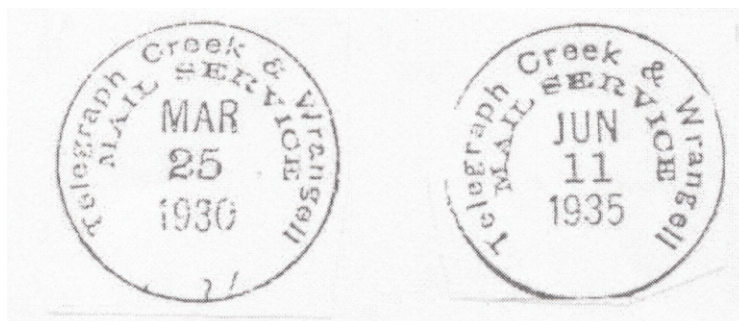
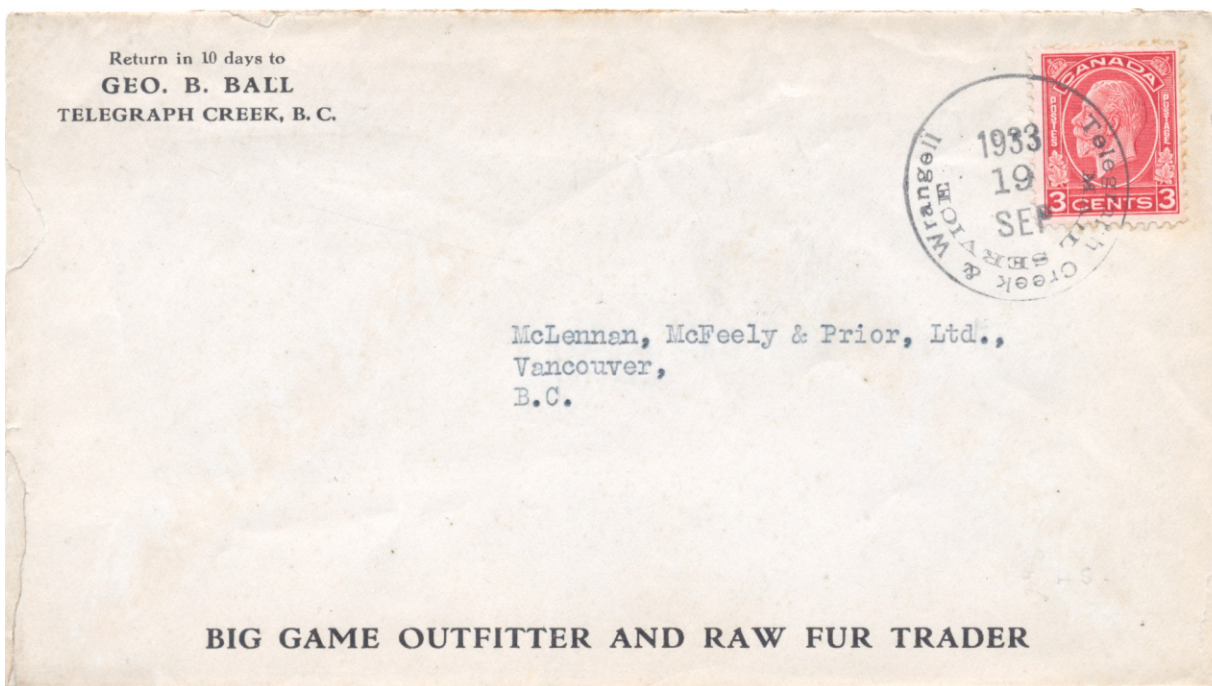


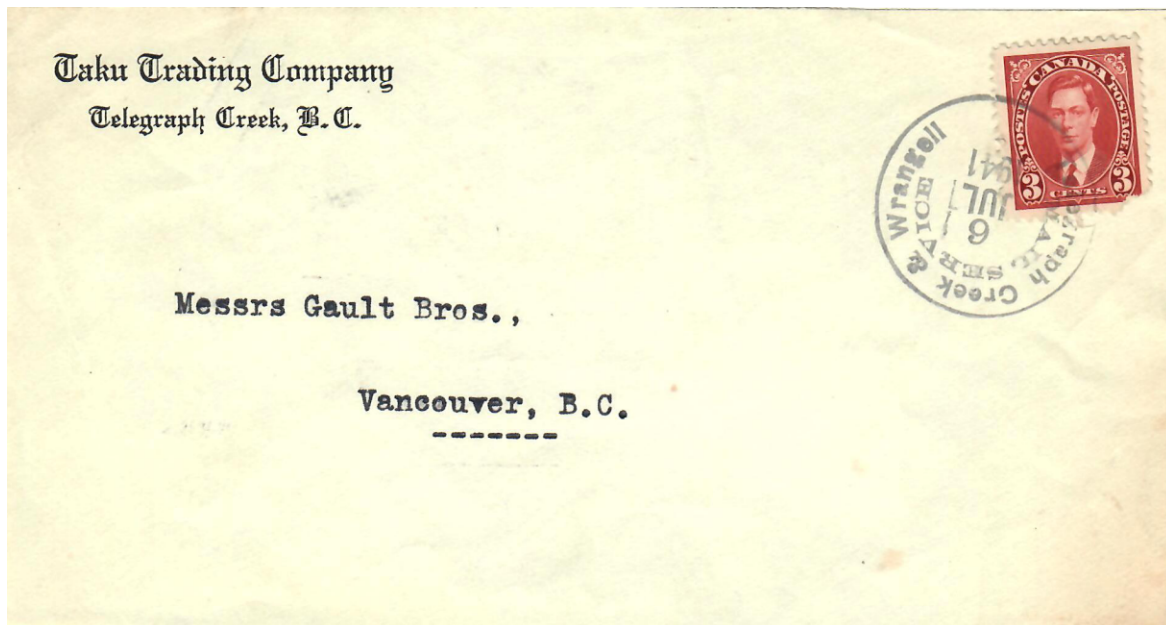
Figure 4 shows an advertising cover mailed from Telegraph Creek to Vancouver and postmarked with the first Telegraph Creek & Wrangell postmark on September 19, 1933. George Ball was a well-known big game outfitter and guide in the region.



*Figure 4. Cover sent by George B. Ball, Telegraph Creek, B.C. on 1933/19/SEP, receiving the early dater marking.*



Figure 5 shows a second advertising cover, sent from Telegraph Creek to a business in Vancouver. This cover received the later dater marking. The B.C. and Yukon Directory for 1941 shows the Taku Trading Company operating a general store at Telegraph Creek while their incorporation documents also proposed mining and prospecting.



*Figure 5. Cover sent by the Taku Trading Company, Telegraph Creek, B.C. on July 6, 1941, receiving the second dater.*

## References

1. T. Cooper, British Columbia Post Office Revenues, 1871 - 1921, privately printed, Armstrong, B.C., 1999.
2. K. Ellison, BNAPS R.P.O. Study Group Newsletter, Vol. 18, No. 7 (October 1990) pp. 3 and 4.
3. M. Lundberg, <https://www.explorenorth.com/library/ships/hazelb.html>
4. The Northerner, Issue 7 (March 1995) p. 180.

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## WOODFIBRE – the name says it all!

*by Morris Beattie and Tim Woodland*

The name of this British Columbia town came about in 1919 as the result of a competition held to find a suitable name for the location at the time that the community applied for postal services. Prior to this time, the town was known as Mill Creek while also appearing on early maps as Britannia West or Britannia West Landing[1]. Mill Creek was deemed unacceptable by the post office as similar names were already in use in BC. Considering that for almost the next 100 years, the existence of the town was based on the use of wood fibres to produce pulp for papermaking, the name suggested by Cathy Haar, the youngster who won the competition including a \$50 prize, was well-chosen.

According to the BC Business web site, by 1954 Woodfibre was a “lively” town with two churches, a school, a swimming pool, and a bowling alley for the mill’s 750 workers and their families. They could also go to the movies with cartoons and films being shown for children at the community hall on Saturday mornings while adults could see movies in the evening at the Canadian Legion.



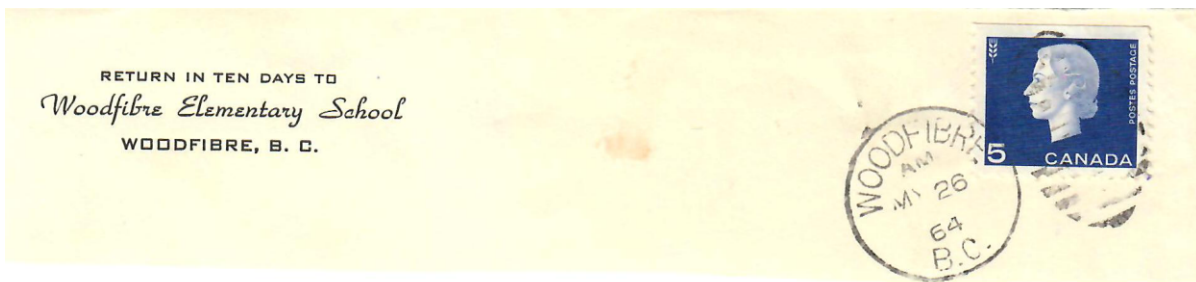


Figure 1. Piece of a cover sent by the Woodfibre school in 1964, receiving a duplex Woodfibre cancel, DBC-430.

Life at Woodfibre at times had its challenges. In 1955, an underwater slide carried pilings out from under the dock and caused warehouses to collapse, resulting in the loss of 400 tons of pulp and five forklifts. On August 18, 1963, a wood-pulp boiler exploded, killing seven men and, for a period, putting 300 men out of work. Also, in 1963, floodwaters poured down from Mount Sedgewick, north of Woodfibre, engulfing both the townsite and pulp and paper mill.

Like most coastal resource towns, Woodfibre depended on many workers from other countries, including Japan. Figure 2 shows a cover dated 1939 and a front from Japanese workers at Woodfibre to the Royal Bank in Vancouver. These workers will soon have been required to leave their jobs at a coastal location due to wartime relocations.



Figure 2. A pair of covers from Japanese workers at Woodfibre to a bank in Vancouver.



Although located only 48 km north of Vancouver, like many coastal resource towns along the coast of British Columbia, Woodfibre was isolated by geography and access was only by water. For many years, Union Steamships Limited provided service to this location by means of several vessels, including the S.S. Lady Cecilia (Figure 3, 1928), the S.S. Lady Alexandra (Figure 4, 1929) and the S.S. Lady Cynthia (Figure 5, 1949).

An ad in the Squamish Review dated September 10, 1948[3] shows the following service to Woodfibre:

UNION STEAMSHIPS  
DAILY PASSENGER AND FREIGHT SERVICE  
BETWEEN  
VANCOUVER, BRITANNIA, WOODFIBRE, SQUAMISH  
SERVING THE COAST COMMUNITIES OF BRITISH COLUMBIA FOR OVER SIXTY YEARS  
FULL INFORMATION REGARDING ALL SAILINGS AND TICKETS FROM:  
MR J. SPINK, AGENT, WOODFIBRE  
MR R.H. NEWBERRY, AGENT, BRITANNIA  
HEAD OFFICE, UNION DOCK, VANCOUVER, BC

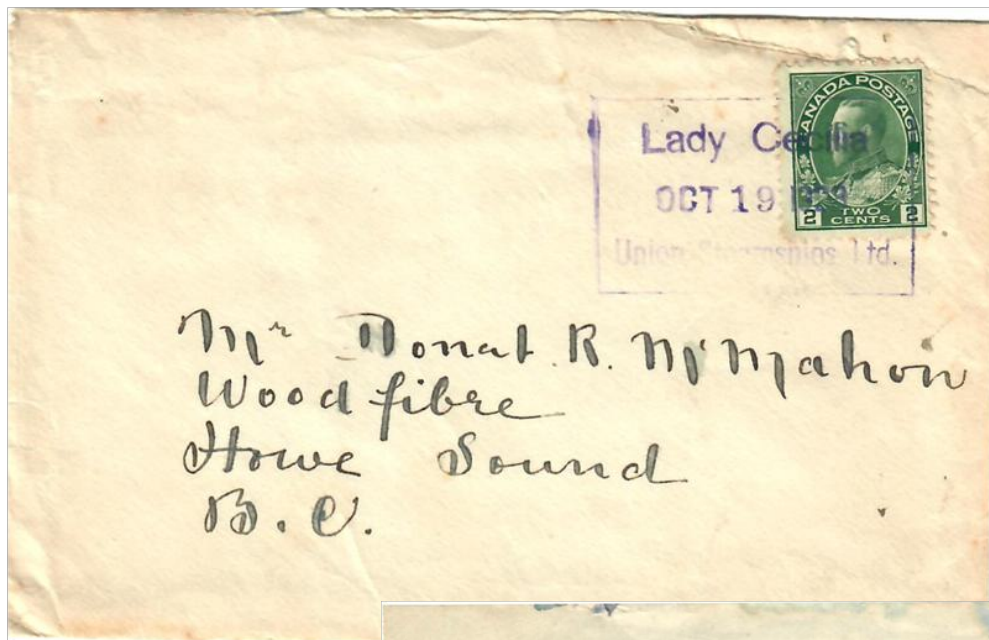


Figure 3. A cover mailed to Woodfibre at the Union dock in Vancouver or aboard the Lady Cecilia in 1928, receiving Topping type 01-RM Lady Cecilia marking, recorded in use 1928 - 1930

Figure 4. A cover mailed to Woodfibre at the Union dock in Vancouver or aboard the Lady Alexandra in 1929, receiving Topping type 04-RM Lady Alexandra marking. This marking has been recorded in use from 1929 until 1940 and is known in blue and red ink.







Figure 5. A pair of favour covers carried in November 1949 from Woodfibre by the Union Steamship vessel S.S. Lady Cynthia. Both covers received a Woodfibre CDS in addition to the Union Steamships marking, Topping type 10-RM. The letter rate at this time was 2 cents and it appears that the second 1 cent stamp was added by the Woodfibre post office prior to cancellation at this office after the initial 1 cent stamp was cancelled by the purser aboard the Lady Cynthia.

The Woodfibre post office opened March 1, 1920 and became an accounting post office April 1, 1920[2].

The following table shows the postmasters who served the area from April 1920 until 1947. From 1948 onward, post office records indicate that there was no postmaster, the office being only semi-staffed.

Name	From	Until
J. Macindoe	Apr 1, 1920	Apr 14, 1923
G.B. Hooper	Dec 15, 1927	Dec 28, 1930
Dr. C.G.G. MacLean	Apr 29, 1931	Sept 19, 1935
P.V. Parker	Oct 1, 1935	Nov 30, 1946
Miss D.L. Bundy	Jan 1, 1947	-





Figure 6. Front and back of a registered cover from Woodfibre to Vancouver in 1926. At this time, a CDS cancel was in use.

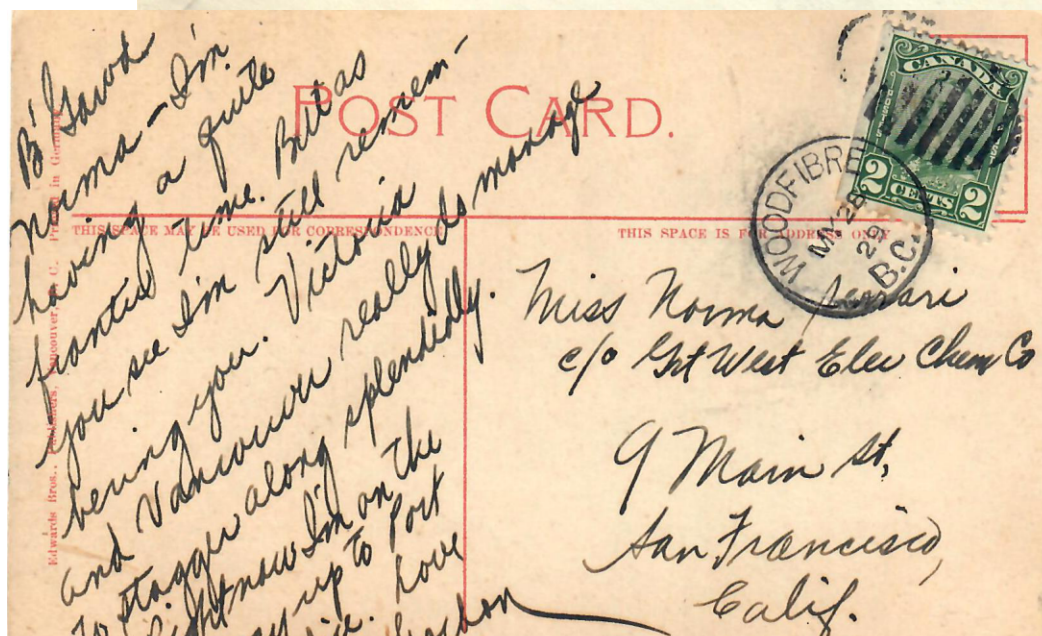


Figure 7. A postcard mailed from Woodfibre to California in 1929. By this time, a duplex cancelling device, DBC-430, was in use. This device continued in use for many years, until at least 1972.





*Figure 8. Photograph showing the Woodfibre site with the river running between the mill and the townsite.*

The corporate history of Woodfibre can effectively be illustrated through a series of covers from the various companies that were involved in the operation of the pulp mill over the period from 1925 through 2006. Prior to the construction of the pulp mill by British Columbia Sulphite Fibre Co. Ltd in 1910 through 1911, the area had been the site of a small sawmill at the mouth of Mill Creek. The pulp mill commenced production in 1912. In 1917, the mill came under the ownership of Whalen Pulp and Paper Co after BC Sulphite went bankrupt.

In 1925, British Columbia Pulp & Paper Co Limited was formed by L.W. Killam and it took over the site.



*Figure 9. A BC Pulp and Paper Company corner card mailed from Woodfibre to Vancouver in 1945.*



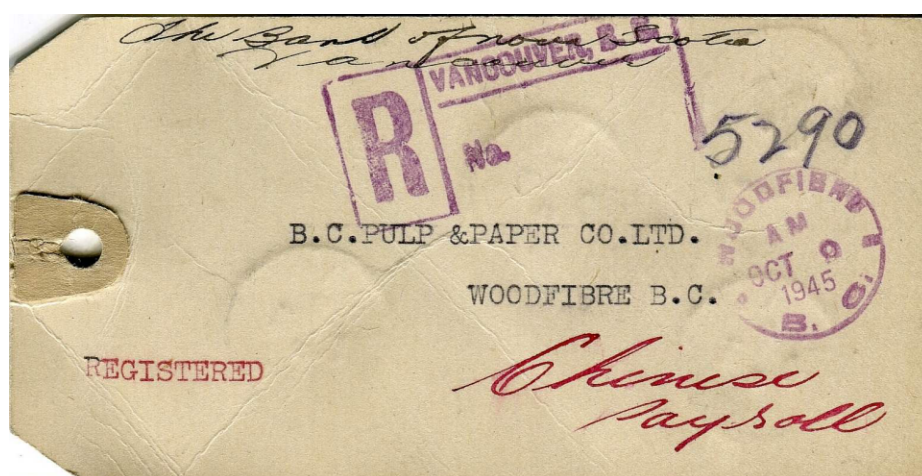
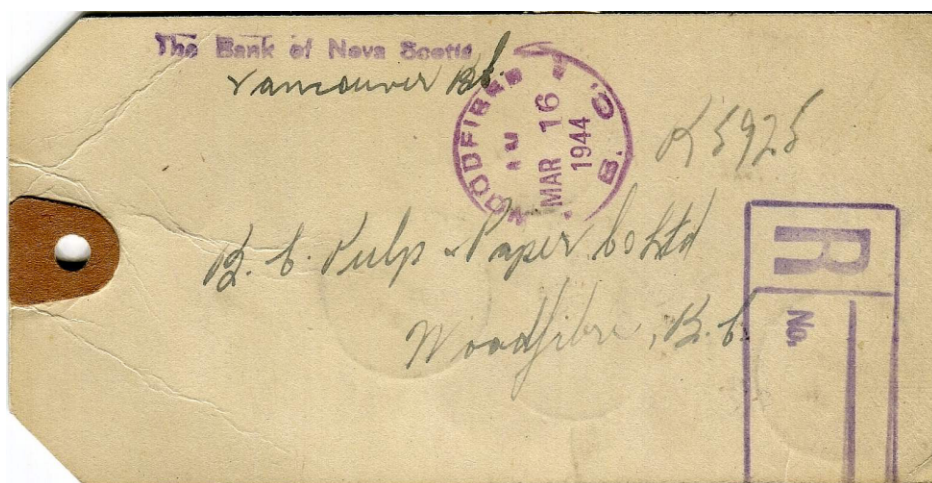


Figure 10. A pair of payroll tags addressed to B.C. Pulp and Paper at Woodfibre, receiving MOOD cancellations. Note the indication of "Chinese Payroll" on the second tag. This period of discrimination towards Chinese people is addressed more deeply in an article by Bob Ingraham, found at the following link:

<https://ephemeraltreasures.net/payday-at-woodfibre-part-1>

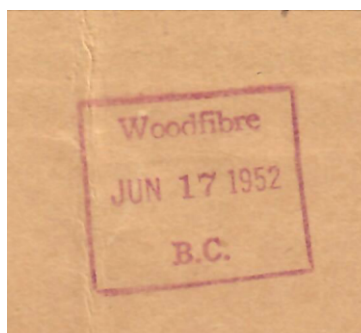


Figure 11. MOOD cancel in use at Woodfibre in 1952.



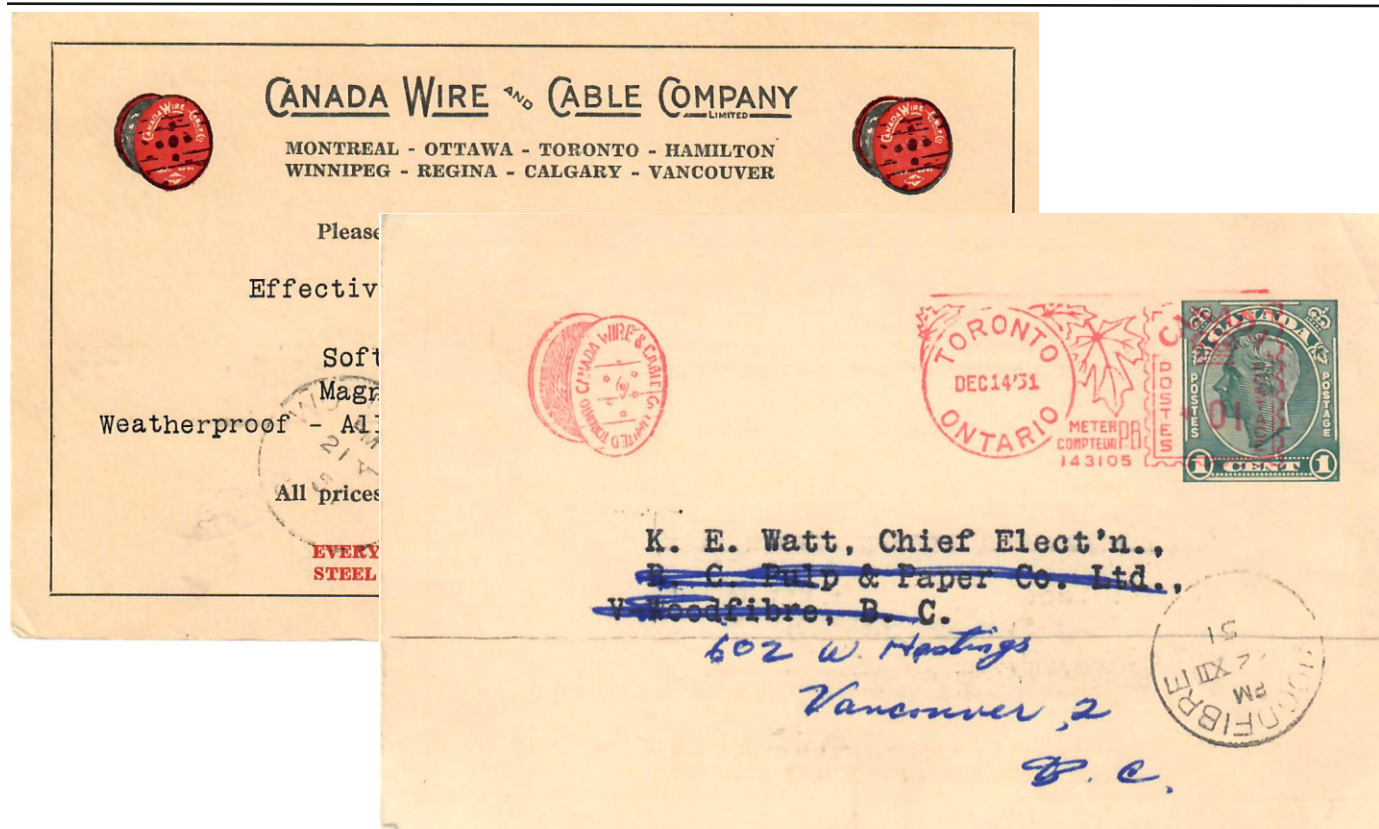


Figure 12. Incoming advertising card dated 1951 from Toronto to B.C Pulp and Paper, redirected to Vancouver.

In 1951, Alaska Pine Co. and Abitibi purchased B.C. Pulp & Paper and formed a new company, Alaska Pine & Cellulose Limited, that operated the mill until 1958. In December 1954, the company was purchased by Rayonier Inc which continued to operate it under the Alaska Pine and Cellulose name until 1959, when the company name was changed to Rayonier Canada, Ltd. Many residents were forced to move away from the site at this time and during the 1960s the townsite was demolished. At this time, workers were transported by ferry to the nearby communities of Squamish or Britannia Beach.

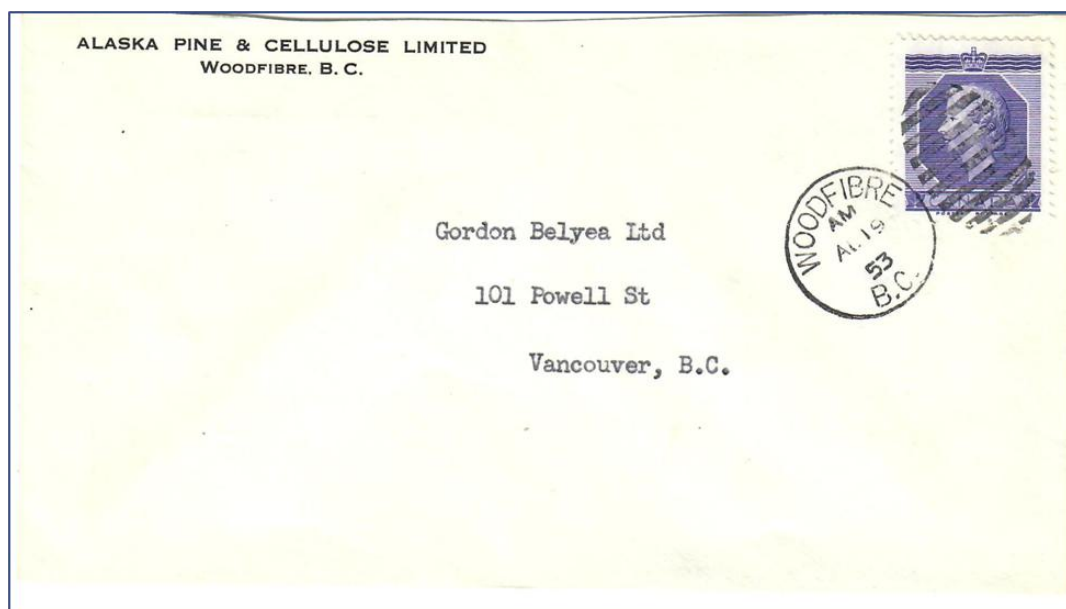


Figure 11. An Alaska Pine and Cellulose corner card mailed from Woodfibre to Vancouver in 1953.



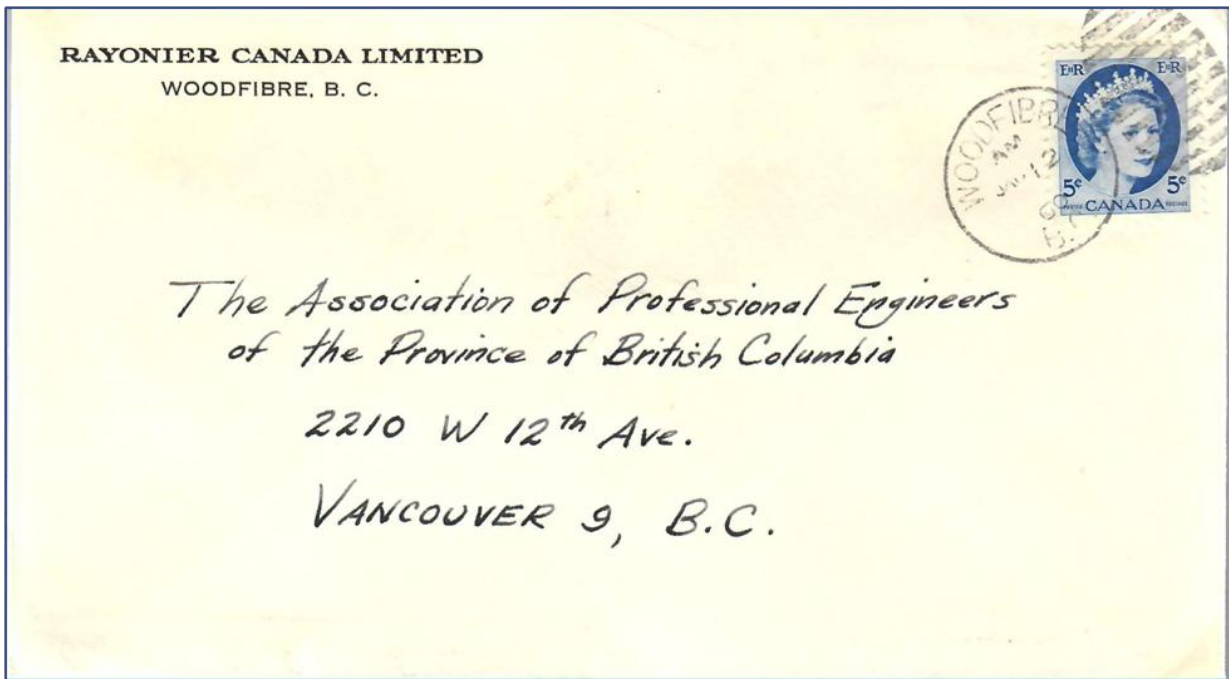


Figure 12. A cover from Rayonier Canada at Woodfibre to Vancouver, receiving a duplex cancel, DBC-430, dated 1960.

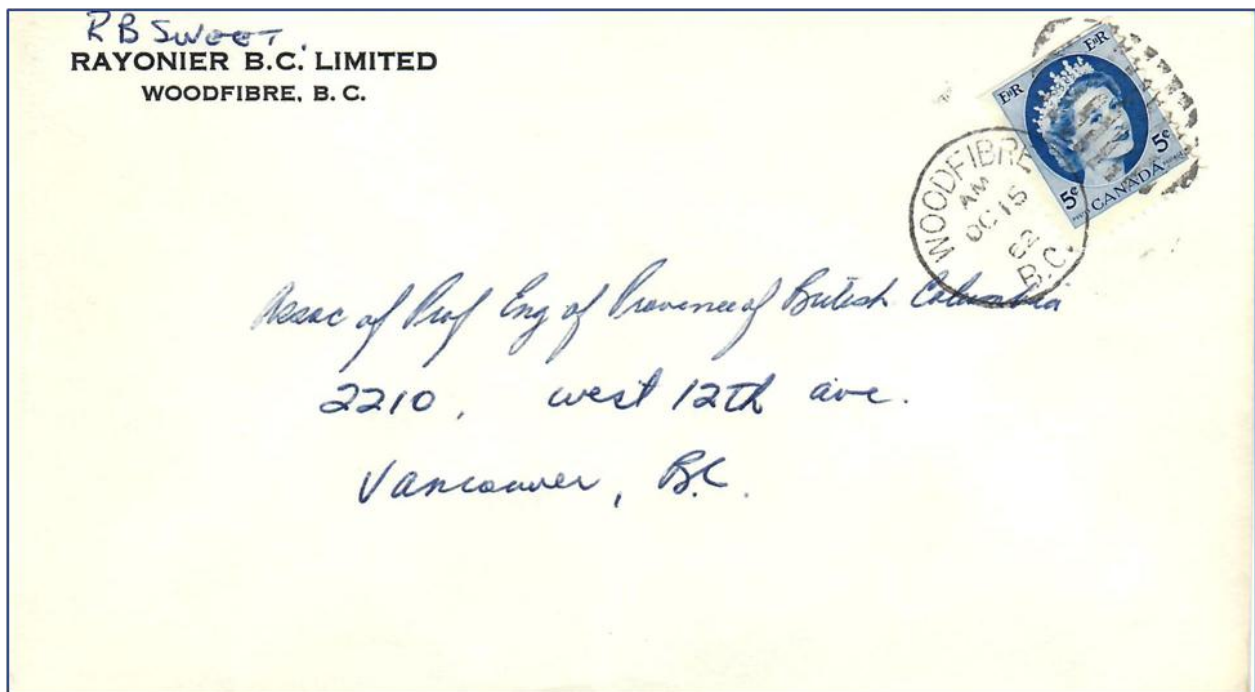


Figure 13. A cover from Rayonier B.C. Limited at Woodfibre to Vancouver, receiving a Woodfibre duplex cancel dated 1962.

In 1980, Rayonier sold the mill to Western Forest Products, a consortium of forest companies including BC Forest Products, Doman Industries and Whonnock Industries. In 1985, Western Forest Products modernized the mill and continued to operate it until 2006, at which point it was permanently shut down. Since that time, the site has been considered for a LNG facility. For mail to the site, the following instructions are posted on their website: "For snail mail, you can reach us at PO Box 2060, Squamish, BC, V8B 0B4.



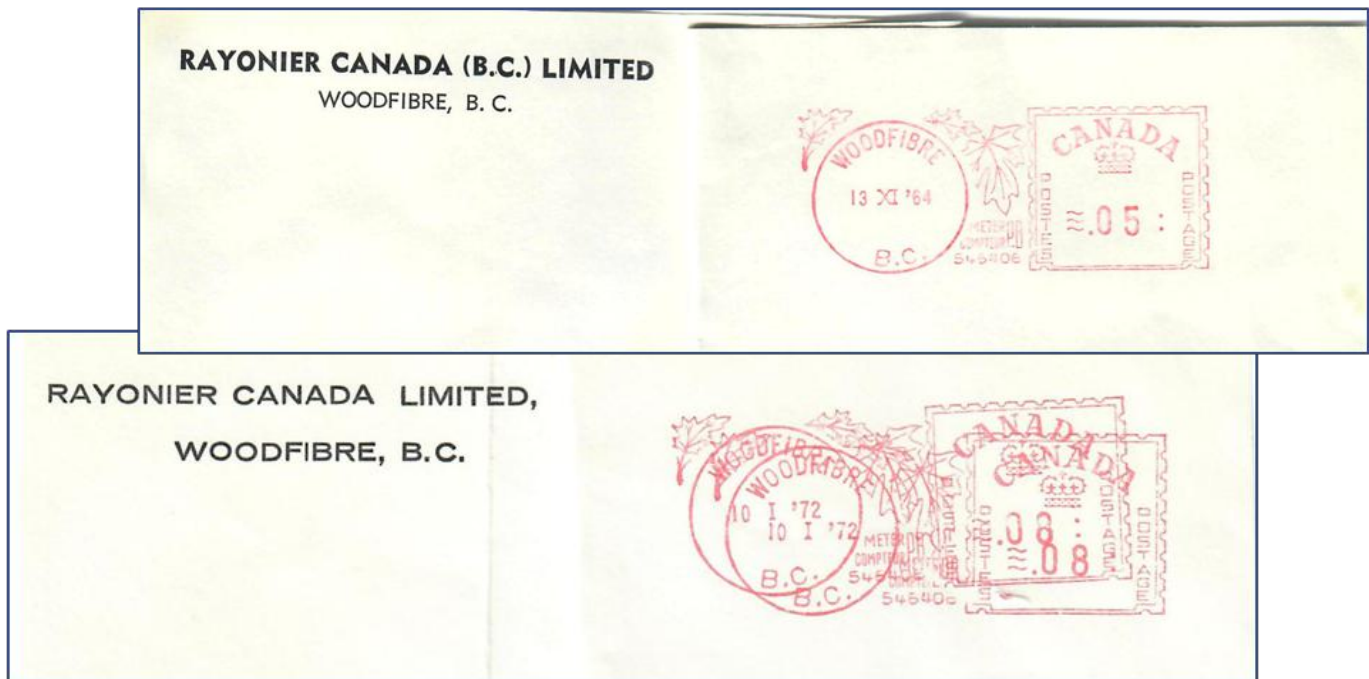


Figure 14. A pair of meter imprints from Woodfibre on piece from Rayonier Canada and Rayonier Canada (B.C.) Limited, dated 1964 and 1971.



Figure 15. A pair of meter imprints dated 1985 and 1994 on piece from Western Pulp Limited Partnership at Woodfibre, using a post box in Squamish as the return address.

## References:

1. Scott, Andrew, The Encyclopedia of Raincoast Place Names, Harbour Publishing, Madeira Park, BC, 2009.
2. Cooper, Tracy, British Columbia Post Office Revenues 1871 – 1921, Private Printing, Armstrong, BC, 1999.
3. [https://squamishlibrary.digitalcollections.ca/informationobject/browse?sort=relevance&subjects=345&names=465&sortDir=desc&places=314&sf\\_culture=en&collection=1280&topLod=0](https://squamishlibrary.digitalcollections.ca/informationobject/browse?sort=relevance&subjects=345&names=465&sortDir=desc&places=314&sf_culture=en&collection=1280&topLod=0)



# PILOT BAY

*by Pete Jacobi*

The Pilot Bay post office was short-lived, from 1892 to 1908. Post office revenues increased quickly from \$136 in the first year to \$352 in 1897, after which time they decreased steadily until the office closed. Only a split-ring cancel is known for the location.

The location, about 9 miles south of Riondel on the east side of Kootenay Lake, was the site of a sawmill, built in 1890, and lead-silver smelter treating ores from the Bluebell and Ainsworth Mines on Kootenay Lake. The smelter, employing about 200 men, was built in 1895 and operated for two years before shutting down due to technical challenges. It operated briefly again after 1909 but was never a success and the site is now a ghost town with little remaining of the operation.

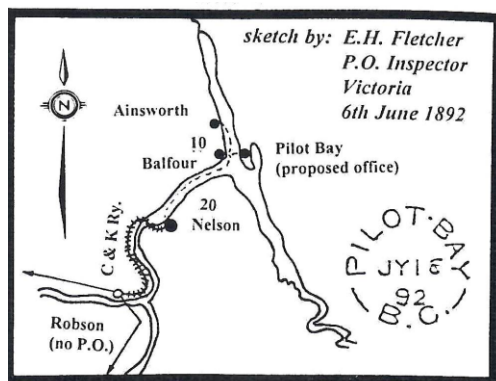


Figure 1. Location of Pilot Bay. (Courtesy of Tracy Cooper, ref 2 in article above)

Figure 2. View of smelter and camp, circa 1895 - 1898.

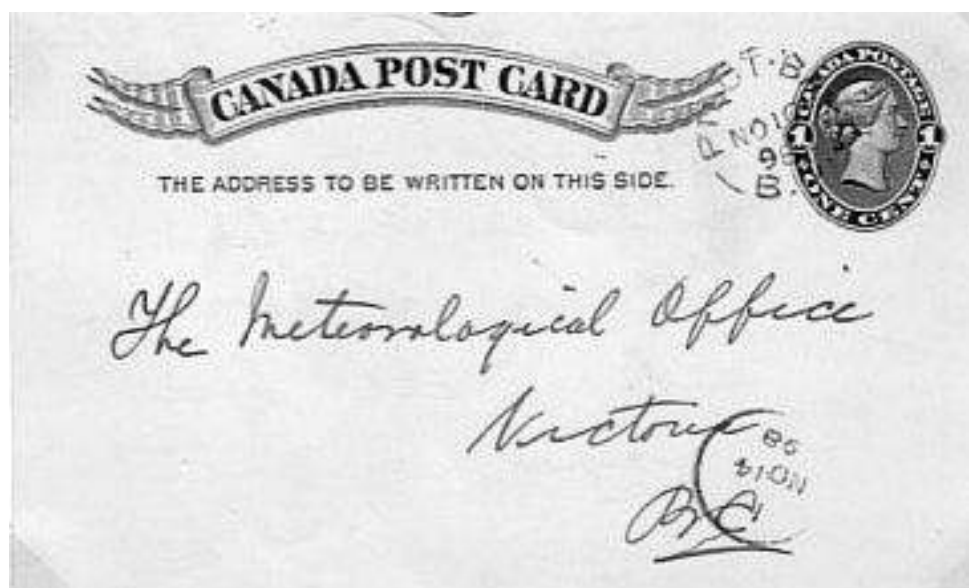
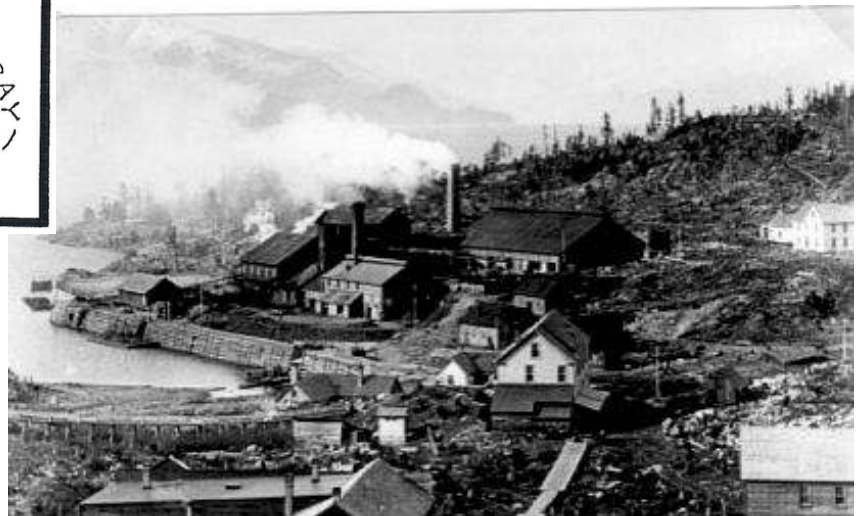


Figure 3. Cover mailed from Pilot Bay to Victoria on Nov. 10, 1898, receiving a split-ring cancel.