

THE FLAG POLE

Newsletter of the BNAPS Flag Cancel Study Group
Volume 10 - No. 3 June - July 1997



Presumably philatelic, but still an unusual and attractive combination of stamps and markings!

A WORD FROM THE EDITOR

Once again real-life has interfered with my philatelic endeavours and as has become customary, the newsletter is well behind schedule! However the third issue of Volume 10 is finally on its way to the membership. This issue contains a couple of interesting articles - including the return of Sally Flagstaff who contributes a "tongue in cheek" article concerning an "amazing new Bikerdike find".

While cooking up one of the illustrations for Sally's article, I saved some of the intermediate Photoshop files which are presented here under the title, "Why On-line and Photocopy Exhibits Scare Me." With the increasing importance of the Internet in all fields of communication and the widespread use of photo-retouching software and scanners, I guess we will just have to rely on the integrity of our fellow philatelists.

Next, it has come to my attention that not a single member residing outside of Canada actually received Vol. 10 No. 2. Why this happened remains a complete mystery to me. All non-Canadian members will find a copy of No.2 included with this mailing.

If anyone is still missing Vol. 10 No. 2, please let me know and I will send you a copy with the next issue.

On the subject of the next issue, I have exactly nothing, nada, zip on hand to publish. Not one word, not one pixel. So, *please* if you have pretty covers, interesting thoughts or unusual usages, send them along.

To help fill the pages of this issue (and hopefully to encourage others to submit copies of some *good* covers) I have illustrated some things that I like and that just happen to have flags on them.

Finally, my apologies to Messrs. Newman and Heasman for taking so long to run their "Urgent Help Needed Ad". Thanks for waiting so patiently guys...



Three fancy flags on one my favorite stamps

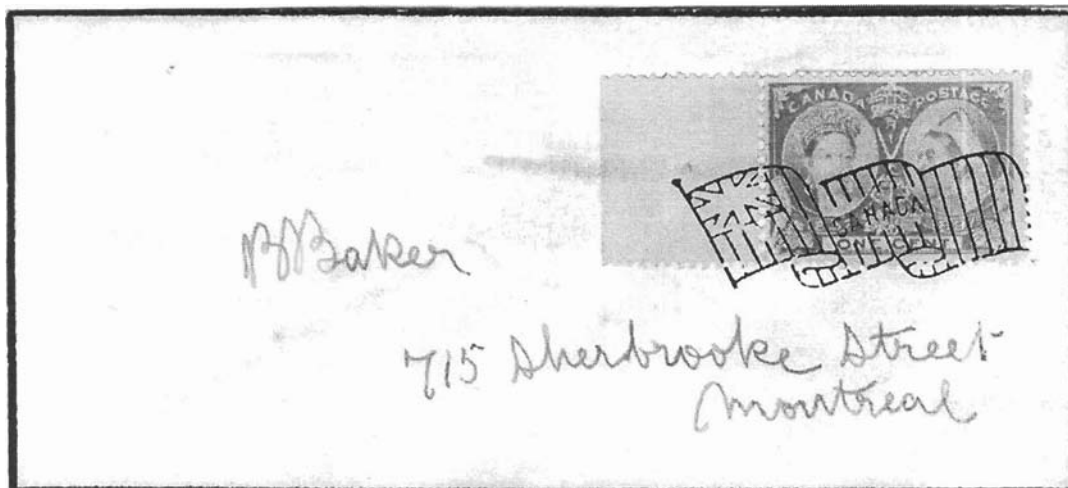
NEW BICKERDIKE MIDGET CANCEL SURFACES AFTER 100 YEARS

April 1, 1997

A Special Report by Sally Flagstaff Perth Enquirer Social Editor

Some of you may remember the article I wrote last year after attending a meeting of the Perth Stamp Club and the BNAPS St. Lawrence Regional Group. One of the members showed a previously unreported Toronto Bickerdike Machine Cancel that was used in the Legislative Assembly Post Office. For some reason this caused quite a commotion among members of the BNAPS Flag Cancel Study Group.

the 1¢ Jubilee stamp for his grandfather in the summer of 1897 (*Probably the famous 1¢ Jubilee "Baker Covers" cancelled by the Bickerdike Type 5 Flag ...ed*). However, one summer when Mr. Baker was still a small boy, tragedy struck when their house on Sherbrooke Street burned down. As a result of the fire, a large quantity of these covers was either destroyed or so badly damaged that the family was forced to throw them away.



Ever since that day, I've kept my eyes open for another example of this rare cancel so that I could give it to my great and good friend Geoff Newman. As a collector of antique jewelry, I often find myself poking about in antique stores and have taken to asking if they have any old Canadian envelopes for sale. During a recent vacation in Fort Lauderdale, I was looking around in

a local antique shop, when an elderly gentleman approached me with a story that I thought might be of interest to readers of The Flag Pole.

Mr. Robert Baker III, a very distinguished looking gentleman about 75 years of age had retired to Florida in the late 1980's. Overhearing me ask for early Canadian envelopes, he introduced himself and said that he had something that I might find interesting. His grandfather, the original Robert Baker, was a stamp collector in Montreal at the turn of the century with a passion for the Jubilee issue and in particular the 1¢ value. He had a close friend, a certain Mr. Gardner, who owned a machine shop that produced cancelling machines for the post office. (*The Bickerdike cancelling machines ...ed*). According to Mr. Baker, Gardner cancelled quite a few envelopes bearing

Baker then proceeded to tell me that on his fifth birthday, his grandfather had given him two very special covers for his own collection, warning him to hold on to them as they were extremely scarce. He told me, "I remember sitting on the porch of our summer home in Hudson, Quebec staring at the pretty little flag cancels on those two covers, when my mother came up and told me that Grandad's house had burnt down. As a matter of fact I'm sure I still have them." He then offered to take me to his home and let me take a look at them.

As we sat in Mr. Baker's kitchen, he showed me the covers and related the story that his grandfather had told him so many years ago. Apparently Mr. Gardner had tried to produce a cheaper, hand-operated version of the Bickerdike cancelling machine for use in smaller cities and towns across Canada. After several months, he realized that this smaller Bickerdike, which he called the "Midget", would cost almost as much to produce as the larger machines already in use at Montreal. He did however, convince officials at the Montreal post office to conduct trials for one day in November 1897, to see if it would handle large volumes of mail. Thinking that his good

friend might like a sample, he found a left over envelope with a 1¢ Jubilee stamp, addressed it to B. Baker, ran it through the machine and mailed it off to 715 Sherbrooke Street. At the time, Baker worked at the Guarantee Company of North America. After receiving the envelope with this "strange" cancel, he rushed back to work and asked the staff to check and see if any of the company mail had been through this new machine.

As Gardner had no dater hub for the "Midget", it could only be used on third class or "junk mail" which did not require a datestamp. However, some incoming Montreal mail was fed through the prototype and Baker saved the best example he could find to go along with the Jubilee cover addressed to him.

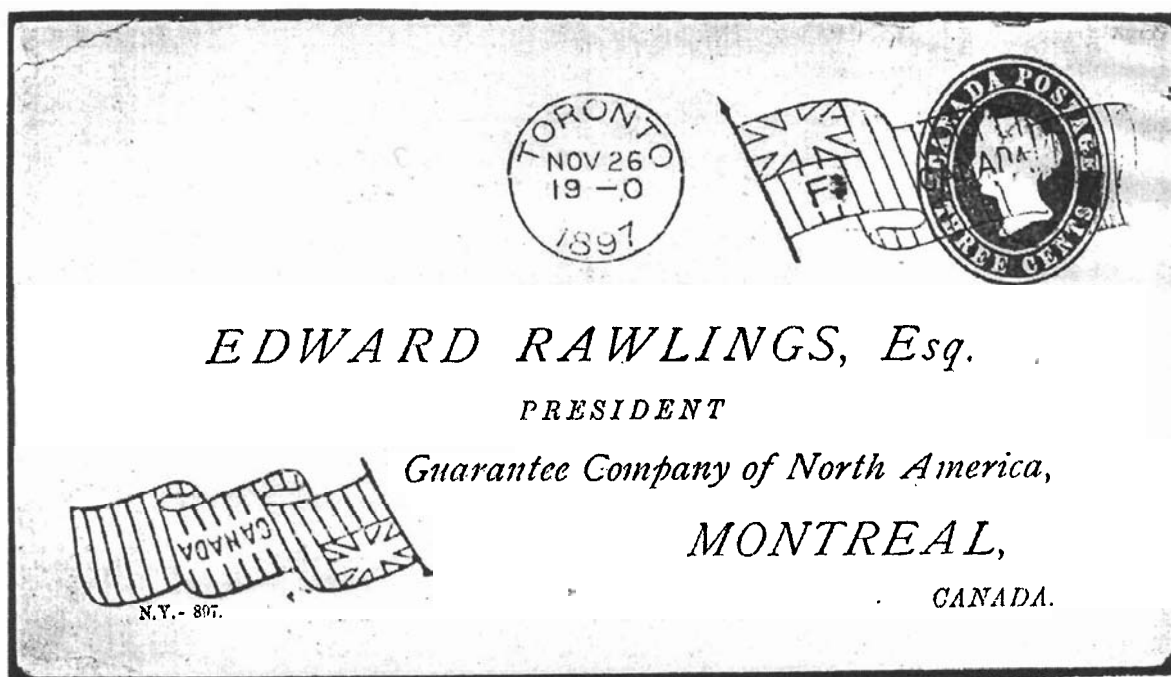
My host, the present Mr. Baker, had long since sold his stamp collection and no longer had any interest in these envelopes. He offered to give them to me - as despite the friendships he had formed with literally hundreds of philatelists over the years - I was the first person he had ever met with an interest in machine cancels. Since the Jubilee stamp and postal stationery envelope were worth only a couple of dollars, he would take nothing for them. He then insisted that I stay and have dinner with him and his wife during which he regaled me with some of his grandfather's philatelic phables, but that's a story that will have to wait for another time.

When I got back to Ottawa, I showed the covers to Doug Lingard who was kind enough to drive me home to Perth from the airport. He expressed surprise that no example

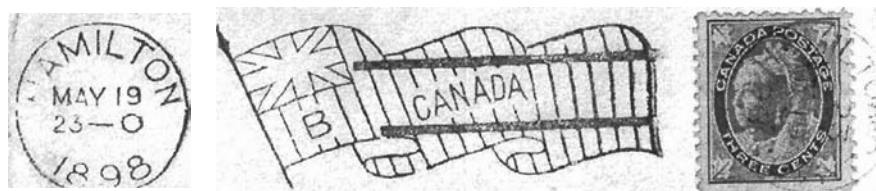
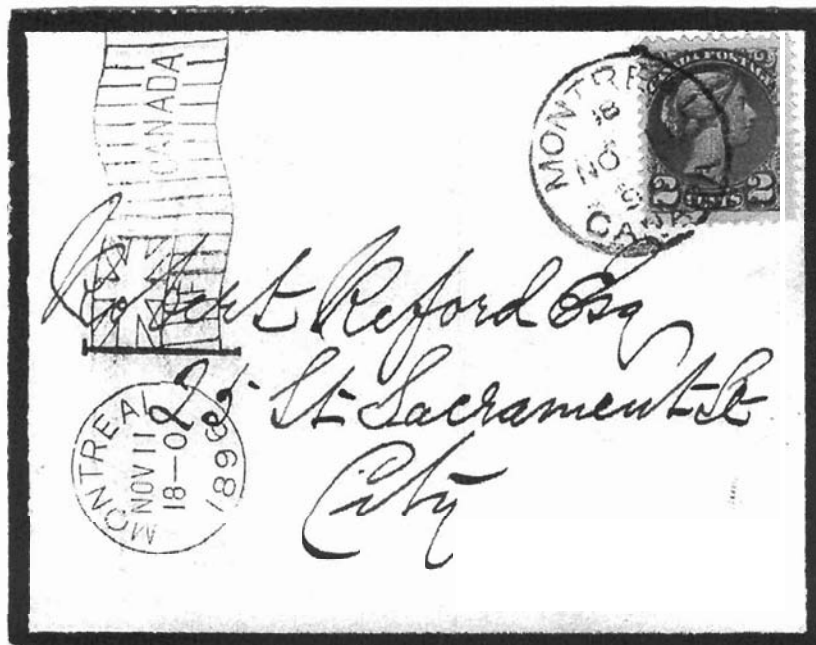
of this "Midget" flag cancel had previously surfaced and asked if I would like to sell them. I said, "Heck No, I didn't cost me anything and you were nice enough to pick me up at the Ottawa airport and drive me all the way home to Perth". Along the way, we stopped and made photocopies as I wanted to report my story to the fabulous editor of *THE FLAG POLE* whom I had met at CAPEX '97 in Toronto (*Sally's words ..ed*) as well as show them to my good neighbour, Geoff Newman.

The next morning I went over to visit Geoff who was working on a pile of Estate returns. I told him about my wonderful vacation in Florida and about the chance encounter in the antique shop. As usual, he sort of ignored me (*It is not that unusual for Geoff to ignore people ...ed*) at least he ignored me until I showed him my photocopies. Then he sort of, well, 'flipped out' and Marge (his wonderful wife) and I had to restrain him. After pouring himself a triple scotch, he took a deep breath and asked if I would consider selling them for \$5,000. I said, "Heck no, I couldn't take your money, they didn't cost me a thing!" His face lit up until I continued, "Unfortunately, I've already given them to that nice Mr. Lingard for driving me home from the airport." On hearing that his former friend had acquired them, he went deathly pale and grabbed his chest while screaming out something that sounded like, "Lingaaaarghh!!!" and collapsed in a heap on the floor. As the paramedics carried him out to the ambulance for the quick drive to nearby Smiths Falls, he muttered, "If only I had offered to drive Sally home from the airport when she first asked me to".

...Continued page 5.

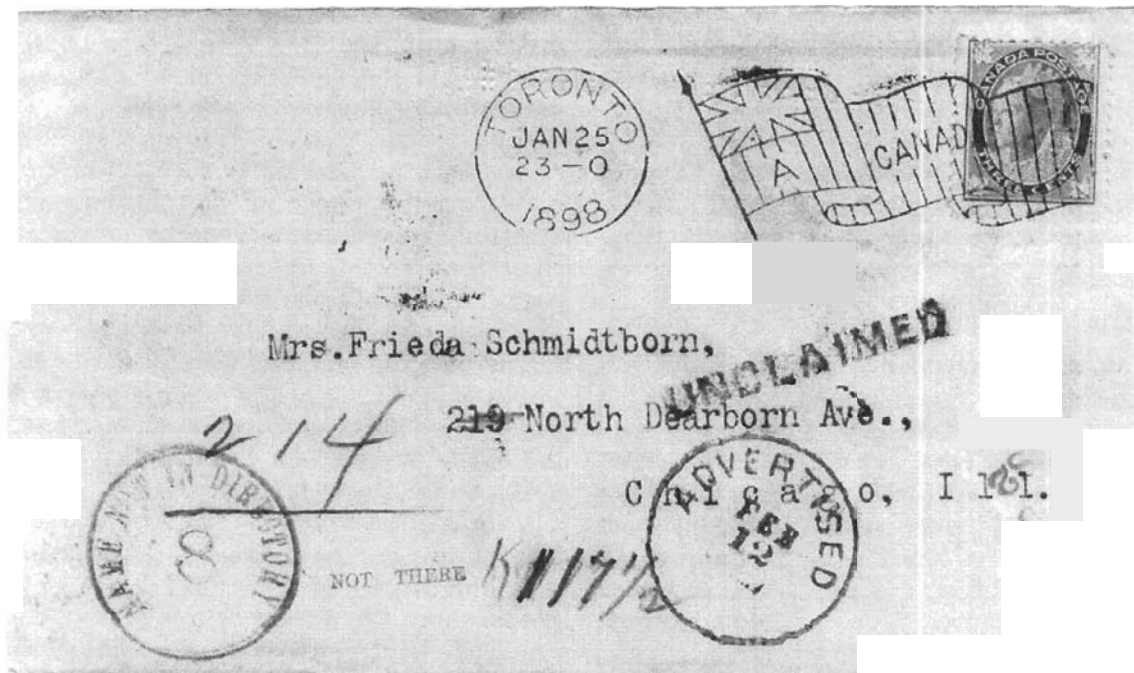


OOOPS... MISSED



*A pair of misfolded covers from Montreal (top) and Hamilton.
The stamps on both covers were handcancelled by current CDS cancels. MR.*

AN UNUSUAL USAGE



An item from a little sideline collection I have of covers sent to the US then Advertised and returned to the Canadian DLO via the US DLO. This one eventually made to the Canadian DLO on March 11, 1898. ...MR

HELP URGENTLY NEEDED!!!

Does anyone have a Toronto F-7D dated
10 or 11 August 1897??

AND/OR

An F-7B or F7-D dated
24, 25, 26, or 27 August 1897??

If yes, please send a photocopy to:

Bob Heasman

4353 Parkwood Terr., Victoria, B.C. V8X 5B4

and/or Geoff Newman

13 Scott Cres., Perth, Ont., K7H 3J4

SALLY FLAGSTAFF

Continued from page 3...

Yesterday, Geoff returned home. While he looks healthy enough, he's still wandering around in a daze. The only words he could say to me were "Lingard stole my Bickerdike Midget Machine Flag Cancels. He stole my cancels. Sally, oh Sally, how could you do this to me?" (I saw Geoff at ORAPEX at the end of April and he seems fully recovered from this trying ordeal. However a few of his friends remarked that he may have lost some interest in Bickerdikes as he was seen carrying around an album of Square Circles ...ed.)

I have run out of time but will continue this story in another newsletter. However, in closing, I would like to add that it never ceases to amaze me how grown men can have such violent reactions to these funny looking little bits of paper.

TORONTO "01" DATER HUBS

In newsletter Vol. No. , Jeff Switt reported on the "Short 1", an easily recognized dater hub variety used with the Toronto flags in 1901. This was followed up in the next issue by reports from several members and the dater hub was found to have been used with no less than seven different Flag Dies.

Following the appearance of these articles, I began to keep track of all the "Short 1" dater hub covers that I saw, a task that I have been assisted in by Geoff Newman, Doug Lingard, Bill Longley, Wally Gutzman and Hank Narbonne among others.

As many of these gentlemen had provided me with photocopies of their entire holdings, and there seemed to be an awful lot of switching of the flag dies going on, I decided to investigate the other five 1901 dater hubs used in Toronto. It turns out that each has at least one major characteristic that allows it to be easily identified without resorting to complicated measuring techniques. A description of these identifying characteristics is presented below. The hub numbers have been assigned arbitrarily.

To date I have recorded just over 250 1901 flag covers. While this may seem like a lot, when you consider six dater hubs each used in combination with up to 12 different flag dies - six type 8s and 6 exhibition flags - it is really not sufficient to draw anything but the most preliminary conclusions.

My recording chart for Hub 01-3, the Short One is shown on the next page. 52 covers yielded 40 different dates, 7 hub/die combinations and 12 different periods of use. Note that the Hub was used with 2 different flag dies on 6 August and that between the 22 May and 5 June six different periods of use can be seen.

Of course, one of the reasons I am publishing this is the hope that other members will contribute and help make this study as complete as possible. As can be seen in the chart some periods of use cannot be longer than 2 or 3 days... and this holds true for the other hubs as well. With your help we should all be able to find a few rarities hidden away in our collections! Please send good, clear photocopies to me at the address shown on the front page. When the study becomes more complete, I'll write the whole thing up for the Flag Pole with appropriate kudos to those who helped.

The recording of the inverted 12-2 was taken from a very poor photocopy and cannot be considered confirmed. If any member has a copy of this elusive flag or a good photo/photocopy I would appreciate confirmation of which hub it was used with.

Michael Rixon



Hub 01-1

Tall 1
Extra piece on the front of the R in Toronto joining the round part to the front leg.



Hub 01-2

Twisted 1
The only hub where the "1" points to left of the first O in Toronto



Hub 01-3

Short 1
See Flag Pole Vol. 8 Nos. 2 & 3.
Top half of dater rim bent in on left



Hub 01-4

Wide "01" - 3mm separation
T points to bottom of the first letter of the month and is often truncated.



Hub 01-5

"Normal" 01 - 2.5mm separation
T points to top of 1st letter in the month, similar on hub 01-1 but can be easily separated by height of 1



Hub 01-6

Narrow "01" - 2mm separation
T points to middle of 1st letter in the month. Similar to Hub 01-2 but can be easily separated by twisted "1".

HUB 01-3/FLAG DIE RECORDINGS

Date	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
1		8-22			8-20	10-1						
2	8-22									8-21		
3					10-1							8-21
4												8-21
5	8-22					11-2		12-2				
6			8-21			11-2		12-2/10-1				
7	8-22											8-21
8								12-2 invert			8-21	
9												
10												
11												8-21
12						11-2		12-2				
13												
14												
15					12-1						8-21	
16				8-20	12-1							
17					12-1	11-2						
18												
19							12-2		8-21			
20												
21												8-21
22					12-1	11-2						
23	8-22		8-20									
24												
25					11-2	11-2						
26												
27					10-1	11-2						
28												
29					11-2				8-21			
30												
31								12-2				

Record of dies used in conjunction with Hub 01-3 - "The Short 1"

MONTREAL AUGUST 1897

In Vol. 6 No. 2, (September 1992) an article by Jo Smith suggested that there was an apparent break in the use of machines in Montreal from 11-15 August 1897 and wondered if there had been a power failure or other mechanical problem. A follow up from David Sessions in the next issue pointed out that this period overlapped with the Type V "Baker" philatelic covers - 14-18 August, and that he had a photocopy of an apparently commercial use of a Type 7 (Die 1) from 14 August time mark 16-0.

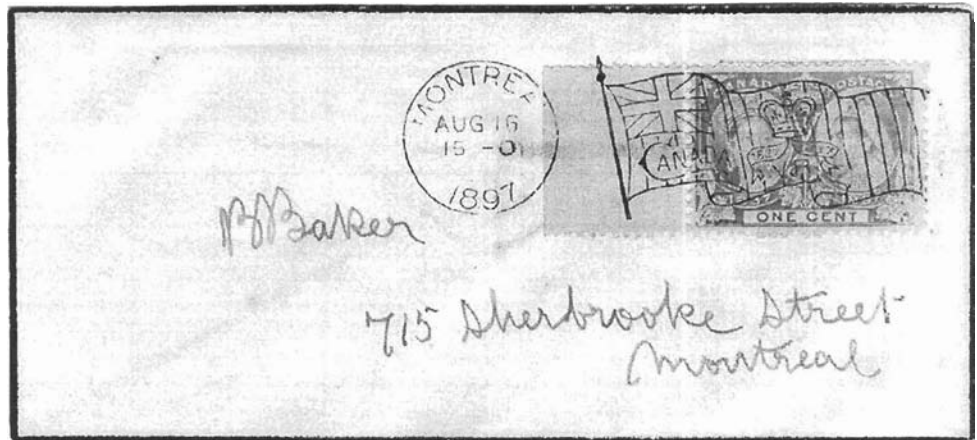
Two recently acquired covers Aug 11 TM 18-0 and Aug 14 TM 15-0 narrow the gap a little. A look at contemporary Montreal newspapers does not support the theory of an extended power failure. I would appreciate hearing from members who might have examples of Montreal flags used 12-13 August. With no reports in close to five years it is tempting to consider that they might not exist or are at least quite rare.

Michael Rixon

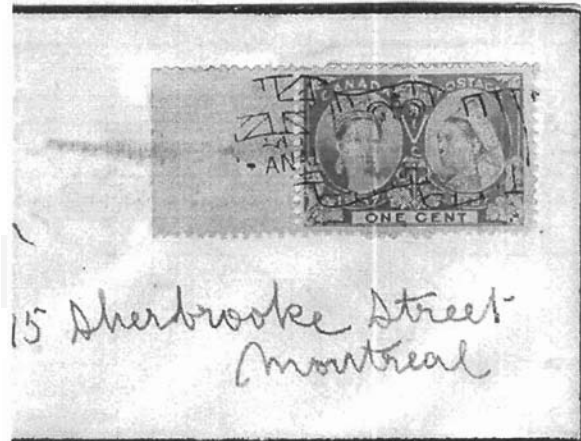
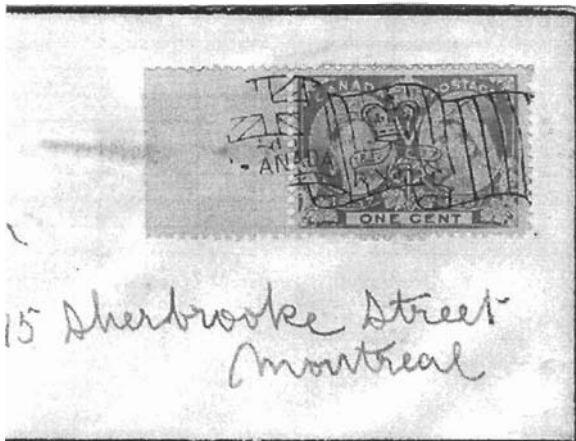


WHY ON-LINE AND PHOTOCOPY EXHIBITS SCARE ME!

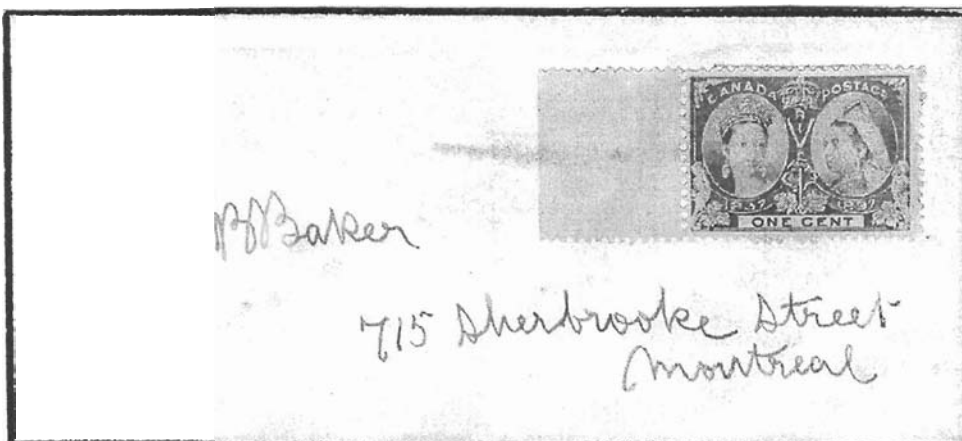
When Doug sent in his original "Sally Flagstaff" article, the illustrations he supplied were created using the time honored cut, paste, trace and photocopy technique. I found the pure white photocopied envelope and the tracing of Baker's address a little unconvincing and thought that it might be fun to see if could be improved a little. So with a self-imposed one hour time limit, I set out to doctor up a Baker cover my collection.



The original scan. The whole exercise was conducted in black and white at a fairly low resolution, about 150 dots per inch, which keeps it well within the range of what can be accomplished on inexpensive consumer equipment.



Intermediate Steps. Using Adobe Photoshop, I spent about 30 minutes removing the original cancel. While Photoshop is a very sophisticated program that can take a long time to learn to use properly, I only used the "clone" or "rubber stamp" tool which can be found in even the least expensive image editing program.



Cancel completely removed. Using the clone tool is really very simple. What you are doing is copying parts of the stamp and then using them to "paint over" the cancellation. For example, to remove the flag pole in the selvage, I selected the area just to the left of it where the tones and textures of the stamp are identical and then dragged the mouse over the cancel. It takes longer to describe than it does to accomplish, and remember it doesn't have to be perfect, just believable.



The "Midget" Cancel was scanned from one of Doug's photocopies and then pasted onto the clean cover. In the final illustration I erased the parts of the cancel that fell between the perfs.