

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

NEWSLETTER OF THE BNAPS FIRST DAY COVER STUDY GROUP

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Editor's Notes by Gary Dickinson

Although the demise of first day covers produced by private individuals and companies had long been anticipated following the entry of Canada Post into the field, we have shown in recent issues of First Impressions that some individuals have persisted in making them. Two articles in this issue illustrate the extent to which some collectors have demonstrated through their works a passionate interest in continuing the tradition. Terry Brewster's FDCs extended over a five-decade period and demonstrated how one person, working alone, could continue a tradition and evoke contemporary themes. My article illustrates how he presented a case that the Alaska Highway, which officially began at Dawson Creek, BC, might have been extended to begin at Edmonton, AB. A more recent unearthing of FDCs made by Donald Montgomery of Burnaby, BC is described in a second article. He mailed covers over a two-decade span wherein he did his utmost to ensure that numerous post offices and postal outlets were represented in as many as ten different places for each new stamp issue.

As both Brewster and Montgomery FDCs are relatively recent discoveries, there may be more people whose efforts remain unknown, but who have unknowingly contributed to the field. If you know of anyone else who might have made similar efforts, please let us know!

The meat in the Brewster-Montgomery sandwich is provided by John Berg's article which identifies and describes the products of four US FDC cachet makers including Harry Ioor, Walter Crosby, Ludwig Staehle, and A.C. Roessler.

Written contributions to First Impressions are sought and welcomed, and new issues will be published when warranted by the contributions received. They should be in Word format with each scan a separate attachment in jpg format at 300 dpi. Contributions may be submitted to editor Gary Dickinson at gandbdickinson@shaw.ca.

Terry Brewster Reimagined the Alaska Highway

by Gary Dickinson

Canada Post issued a commemorative stamp on May 15, 1992 (Scott #1413) featuring the fiftieth anniversary of the completion of the Alaska Highway. Although the official starting point of the highway was Dawson Creek, BC, Major Terry Brewster appears to have made a quiet, personal case through his FDCs that Edmonton could have been the true starting point for the highway. (1)

The Stamp

The Alaska Highway was built by the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers in 1942 as a way of linking the lower 48 states with the Alaskan territory. The American President of the day, Franklin Roosevelt, initiated the project with the concurrence of Canada's Prime Minister, Mackenzie King, provided that the U.S. paid for it. Construction began in 1942 under adverse climate conditions and the road was opened on November 20, 1942 although its condition was a challenge to drivers who attempted its 1,500 miles from Dawson Creek to Fairbanks. The Americans paid Canada \$147 million for the project.

The Alaska Highway commemorative was a 42 cent denomination (see Figure 1) to pay the domestic letter rate of the day. The Canadian Bank Note Company Limited was the printer, and 15 million copies were produced.

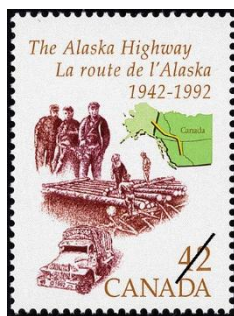


Figure 1. #1413, May 15, 1992

The official FDC issued by Canada Post at Dawson Creek, illustrated in Figure 2, shows a highway that could have been almost anywhere in Canada with mountains nearby.

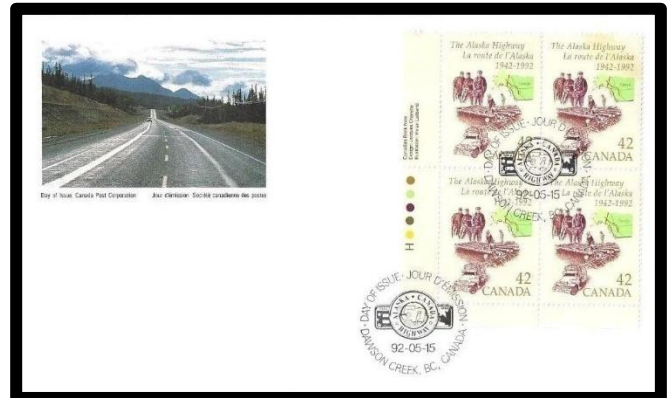


Figure 2. Official FDC for #1431

Brewster's FDCs

Terry Brewster began making FDCs in 1964 and continued doing so for five decades. (2) His initial products were plain envelopes with only the postmark to indicate that they were day-of-issue covers. He then turned to cacheted envelopes published and sold by other vendors, primarily Artopages, before starting to make his own cacheted envelopes. He rarely used the same cachet for more than one stamp issue and frequently printed more than one cachet for the same stamp. Over time he also made a variety of different envelope stocks featuring numerous colours and designs.

An outstanding characteristic of Brewster's FDCs was that he mailed them from a broad range of post offices that were within driving range of where his army posting was at the time. His covers often had postmarks from several different post offices in the same area. In most cases the envelopes were unaddressed, suggesting that he had received favour cancellations from the clerk or postmaster in charge, and he photographed many of the post office buildings he

visited. If the hamlet or village was large enough to have a post office, Brewster would have found it suitable for mailing his FDCs.

The areas from which he acquired documented covers were usually near army bases at Oromocto, NB, Edmonton, AB, and Winnipeg, MB. He became even more productive after he retired to Nanaimo, BC in 2000 with the rank of major. There are more than 50 different cancellations on his FDCs from post offices in BC alone. The extensive array of post offices he utilized may have contributed to his self-directed education about the communities and regions in which he served or to which he retired.

Alaska Highway FDCs

At least seventeen different post offices were used for Brewster's FDCs for #1413, the Alaska Highway commemorative, and they are shown here in alphabetical order.

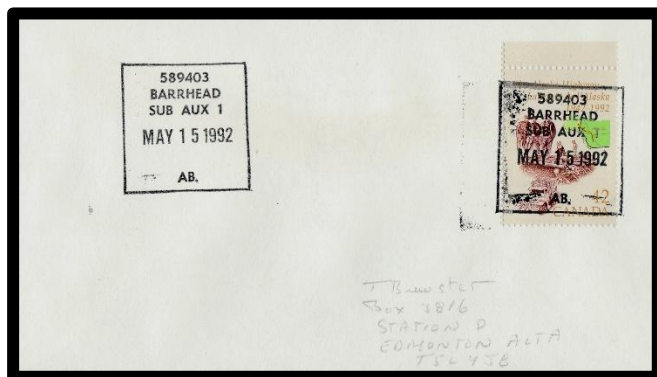


Figure 3. Barrhead

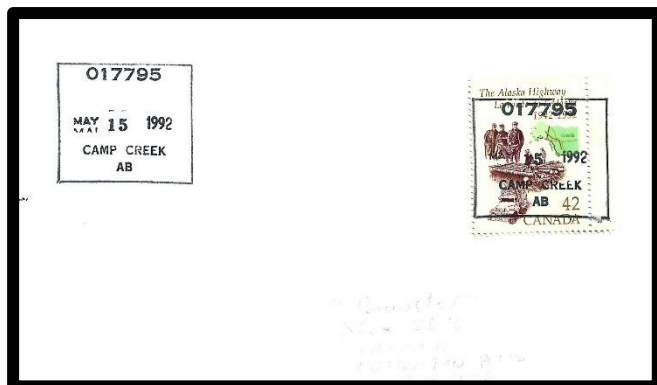


Figure 4. Camp Creek

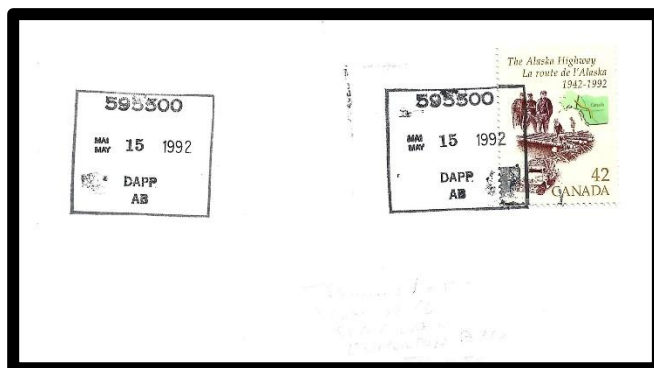


Figure 5. Dapp



Figure 6. Donnelly

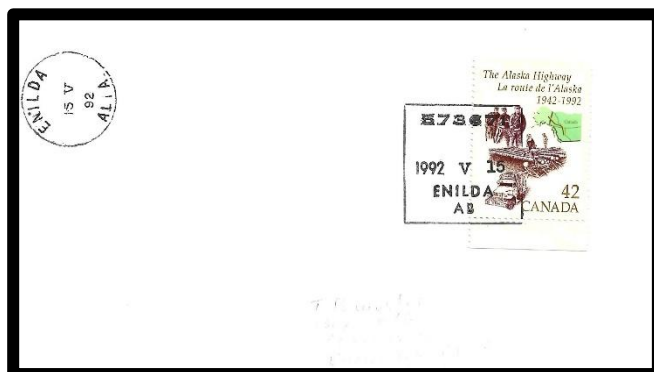


Figure 7. Enilda

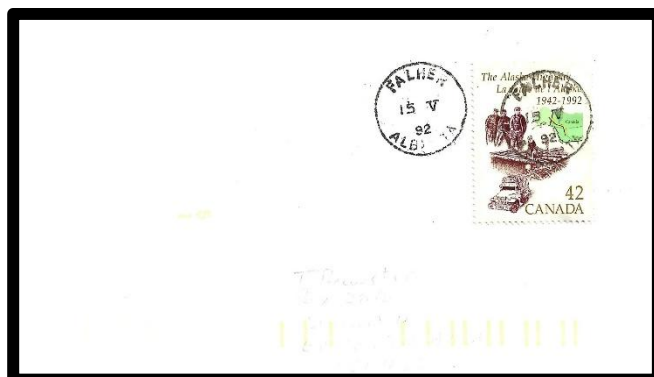


Figure 8. Fahler



Figure 9. Fawcett

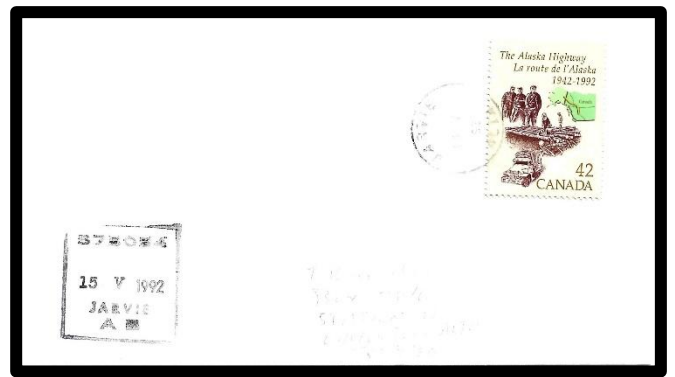


Figure 13. Jarvie

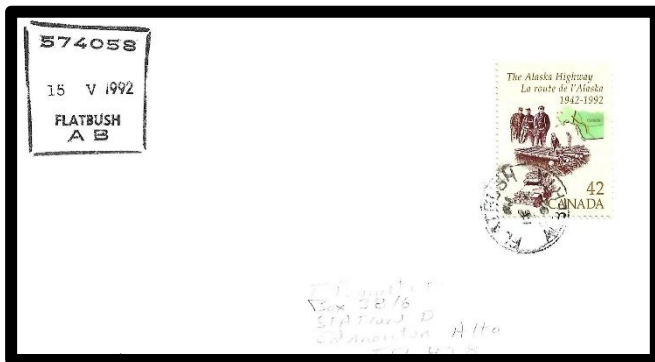


Figure 10. Flatbush

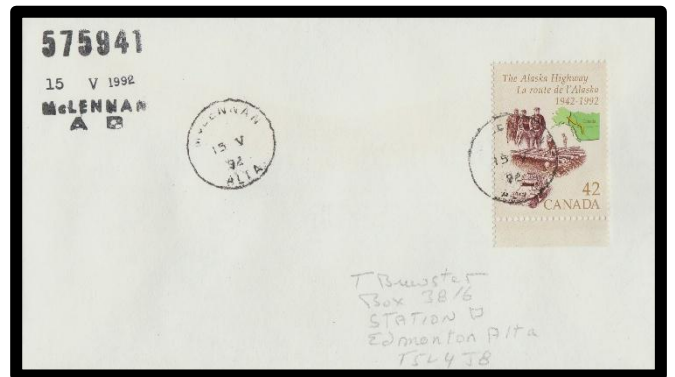


Figure 14. McLennan

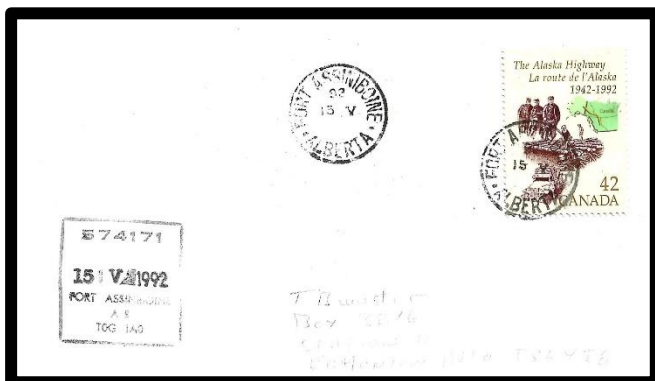


Figure 11. Fort Assiniboine



Figure 15. Neerlandia



Figure 12. High Prairie



Figure 16. Slave Lake



Figure 17. Smith



Figure 18. Tiger Lily



Figure 19. Westlock

Every envelope was addressed very lightly in pencil, usually so faint that it isn't visible on the scans. In each case the format was as follows:

T Brewster
Box 3816
Station D
Edmonton Alta
T5C 4J8

The communities represented by these postmarks were generally small ones, with Slave

Lake being the largest with a population of 6,651 while two hamlets (Dapp and Flatbush) had only 30 recorded residents. Two unincorporated places, Camp Creek and Tiger Lily, had no known number of residents. The total population of the seventeen communities listed here was less than 23,000.

The earliest opening of the seventeen post offices listed in Table I on the next page was High Prairie which opened in 1910 with four following in 1913 including Dapp, Fahler, Fort Assiniboine, and Neerlandia. Three were closed within a decade of the Alaska Highway stamp issue: Dapp, Slave Lake, and Tiger Lily. (3)

All of the communities listed are located between Edmonton and Dawson Creek, the starting point of the Alaska Highway route. They are in a north to northwest direction of Edmonton, with the driving distances shown in Table I ranging from 42 km (Donnelly) to 431 km (Fahler). More than one highway was involved in reaching these communities and their post offices, so it was not a straightforward route to drive to all of them.

It's unlikely that Brewster personally travelled to all seventeen communities on the issue date for the Alaska Highway stamp, so he probably wrote in advance to the postmaster of each location he had identified, enclosing a number of addressed envelopes and funds to pay for several stamps, and requesting them to affix a stamp and cancellation on the day of issue then return the covers to him.

As the numbers of FDCs was probably small, his possible belief that the Alaska Highway should have started in Edmonton would be kept personal and private.

Notes and References

1. My thanks and appreciation to Al Schlosser, stamp dealer in Estevan, SK, who was most helpful in identifying the Brewster FDCs for this and other stamps.
2. Major Brewster's work in making and mailing FDCs for Canadian stamps over a 50 year period is described in: Gary Dickinson, *Private Sector First Day*

Covers for Canadian Stamp Issues of the 21st Century. BNAPS, 2025.

3. RC numbers and opening and closing dates are from: William Topping, ed. *Alberta Post Offices 1990-2006*. William Topping, 2007.

TABLE I

POST OFFICES FOR BREWSTER FDCs FOR #1413 (ALASKA HIGHWAY)

	RC No.	Open	Closed	Population	Kilometers from Edmonton
Barrhead	570494	01 01 1914		4320	120
Camp Creek	570680	08 17 1934		NA	104
Dapp	572918	05 01 1913	04 21 2003	30	116
Donnelly	573078	05 15 1917		342	42
Enilda	573671	07 16 1980		145	358
Fahler	573892	06 15 1913		1047	431
Fawcett	573949	03 01 1915		60	117
Flatbush	574058	04 01 1923		30	135
Fort Assiniboine	574171	04 01 1913		158	161
High Prairie	574759	02 15 1910		2564	372
Jarvie	575054	02 09 1920		103	129
McLennan	575941	04 03 1915		695	422
Neerlandia	576751	04 01 1913		101	145
Slave Lake	594016	11 15 1989	10 30 1999	6651	257
Smith	576476	10 01 1913		227	106
Tiger Lily	16616	10 16 1990	06 27 1996	NA	110
Westlock	579300	07 01 1904		5101	91

Dapp listed as closed in 1990, but new PO not opened until 2003, so closing date may have been erroneous.

Pioneer American Cachetmakers and Their Cachets for Canadian Stamp Issues

by John Berg

Of the many American cachet makers who participated in the Canadian first day cover market, four were prominent in their activity that spanned the 1930s and 1940s. The subjects of this article are the histories and cachets of Dr. Harry Ioor, Walter G. Crosby, L. W. Stachle and A.C. Roessler.

Harry Ioor

Dr. Harry Ioor was a practicing chiropractor and proprietor of Premier Stamp and Press in Indianapolis, Indiana. After his death in 1940, his sister and business partner Travilla continued to produce cachets until 1950 when she married the owner of Fleetwood Cover Service and closed the business.

Dr. Ioor's first known cachet was for the 1929 US George Rogers Clark stamp. He experimented with various ideas until the 1934 US National Parks Series when he settled on a familiar frame, picture, and text design that he would use for most stamp issues. His first Canadian stamp cachet was for the 1935 Silver Jubilee (Figure 1) and he used a similar layout for the 1937 Coronation issue and the 1939 Royal Visit (Figures 2 and 3). Since he did not sign his cachets, the distinctive style that he used for all stamp issues is easily recognizable as his.



Figure 1



Figure 2

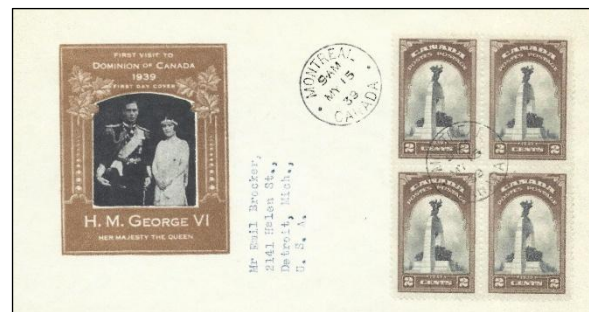


Figure 3

After Ioor's death in 1940, his sister continued to produce cachets, but in a totally different style. These cachets for the most part are signed at the bottom. She only produced cachets for two Canadian stamps in the 1940s: the 1942 War Issue and the A. G. Bell stamp of 1947 (Figures 4-6). The last Ioor cachet was produced for the 1951 US United Confederate Veterans stamp.



Figure 4

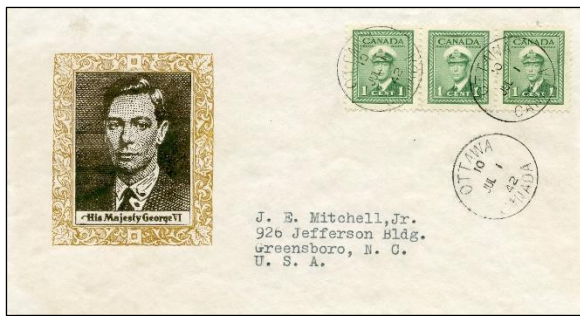


Figure 5



Figure 6

Ioor was also known for his variety of envelope borders. Figure 7 is one of about 20 different borders that he marketed for first day and special event envelopes.



Figure 7

Walter G. Crosby

Walter G. Crosby, who produced hundreds of cachets, is known for his use of small photographs (he called them "picture stamps"). His cachets are easily identified by the inclusion of the photographs.

Crosby retired from the US Navy in 1929 and opened a stamp and coin shop on the beach in San Pedro, California. He began servicing first day and special event covers in 1931 but did not

settle on his trademark thermographic style until 1935. He continued making cachets until his death in 1947. His World War II patriotic cachets were so popular that servicemen used them frequently to send mail home.

Crosby's first Canadian stamp cachets were for the 1937 Coronation issue. He produced numerous cachets for the 1939 Royal Visit and the 1942 War Issue. His last Canadian cachets were for the 1947 A.G. Bell stamp. (Figures 8-11)



Figure 8



Figure 9

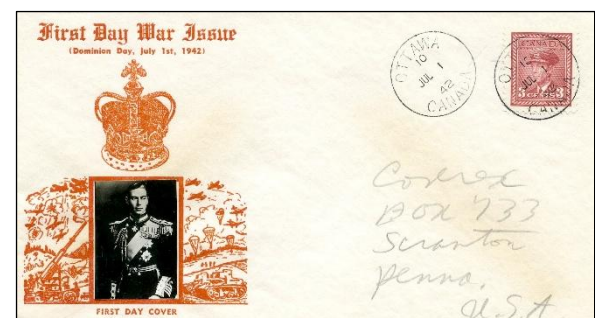


Figure 10

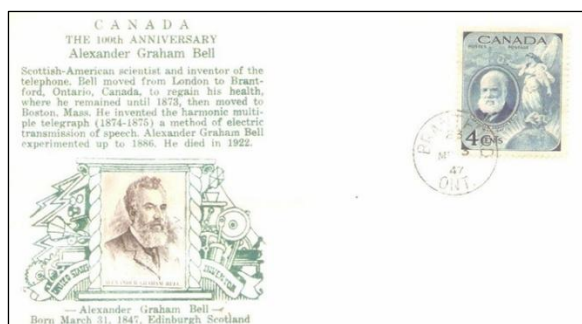


Figure 11

Walter Crosby was not hesitant about producing multiple cachets for a given stamp. For the 1939 US Panama Canal issue, there are over 700 documented cachet varieties! For the 1939 Royal Visit trio, Dickinson lists 22 different Crosby cachets.

Ludwig W. Staehle

Ludwig W. Staehle was a commercial artist who immigrated to New York City in 1927 and became an accomplished interior design and advertising professional. He was not a serious stamp collector or dealer but was encouraged by friends to make posters and cachets for special events. His first documented US stamp cachet was for the 1938 Swede and Finns issue, although Dickinson lists cachets for the 1937 Coronation stamp by Canada (Figure 12).



Figure 12

Staehle produced cachets for the 1938 Pictorials, the 1939 Royal Visit, the 1942 War Issue (Figure 13) and the 1946 Peace stamp set (Figure 14). The cachets for the 1942 and 1946 stamps were done under contract to the American

cachet servicer Cachetcraft. His last Canadian cachet was for the 1949 Halifax issue (Figure 15).



Figure 13



Figure 14



Figure 15

He was a prolific maker of WW II patriotic cachets, both for his own business and for many other dealers like Minkus, Smartcraft, Fliegel and Gimbels. While many of his designs are not signed, their distinctive layout is hard to miss. He retired from the domestic market in 1958 but continued to produce foreign stamp cachets into the 1960s.

A.C. Roessler

The last American cachetmaker that I would like to share with you was the earliest cachet producer of the four for Canadian stamp issues. A.C. Roessler started his stamp business in Newark New Jersey in 1921 and began servicing American stamp issues in 1924. Most of his early first day covers are only identified by his business address in big block letters. Like Ioor and Crosby, he ran his own printing business so he could produce cachets quickly. His first documented cachet was for the US Bennington-Vermont Sesquicentennial in 1927. Unlike the other pioneers, he made relatively few cachets but is better known for his distinctive envelope borders (Figure 16). Dickinson lists cachets for the 1932 Provisionals (rubber stamp) and concludes with the 1938 Pictorials (Figures 17-19).



Figure 16

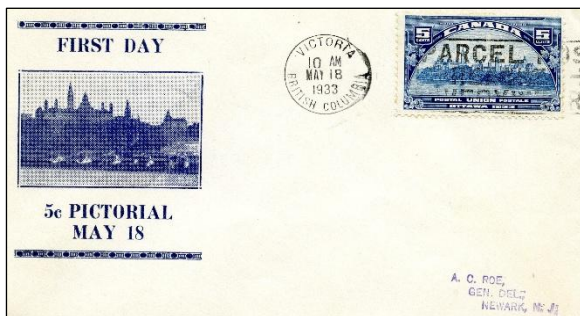


Figure 17

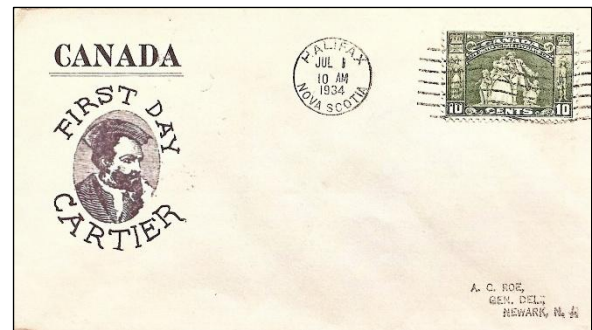


Figure 18



Figure 19

Roessler was a very successful mail order stamp dealer. He continued to make cachets for most US stamp issues although he was going blind in the late 1930s. He was completely out the stamp and printing business by the early 1940s; blind and unable to qualify for any financial disability, he died in poverty in 1952.

These four FDC producers during the 1930s and 1940s did much to pave the way both for subsequent US makers as well as for the Canadian contingent, all of whom made the decades of the 1950s and 1960s the most productive era for the hobby.

FDC Maker Donald Montgomery Collected Post Offices

by Gary Dickinson

The August 20, 2025 auction sale by Weeda Stamps of Victoria included four lots of BC FDCs in what appeared to be an estate sale. The lots (#266-269) covered the period from 1996 to 2015 in intervals of four to seven years. The lot descriptions were parallel in each case, with comments similar to the following:

“The collection contains many hundreds of covers...with each cover on a well described page, noting singles, plate blocks, and souvenir sheet frankings. The lot contains no official FDCs as the collector meticulously collected FDCs with Vancouver and lower mainland postmarks, with most pages indicating the variety of postal outlets. Some issues have up to 10 FDCs from a variety of different cities or outlets within each city.”

Having purchased one of the four lots, I'm now working on a detailed inventory and estimate that there would be at least 3,000 covers, each on a separate page, in the overall collection. The collector, Donald Montgomery, passed away in March, 2025 at the age of 96. His obituary lists “stamp collecting” as one of his passions, and he apparently worked at it very diligently for some 20 years as evidenced by his collection of post office day of issue cancellations.

Some features of his FDC products are shown and described below. There has been no evidence thus far that he made more than “one of a kind” for any post office and stamp issue combination.

Figure 1 on the next page contains an example of Montgomery's presentation of

each of his covers, all of which are on black paper stock with holes for a three-ring binder. Each cover is mounted with yellow photo corners at approximately the centre of the page and has a yellow frame. The RF number of the postal outlet is shown in the top frame, and the outlet's location and address is shown below the frame.

Large envelopes were used for souvenir sheets (Figure 2) and corner blocks (Figure 3), each of which show Montgomery's typed home address on Dunnedin Street in Burnaby and the legend “1st day of issue cancellation.” Most of his covers follow this same format except for a few that were addressed in ink by hand (Figure 4) or unaddressed (Figure 5).

In almost every case his covers were addressed to Montgomery himself, with the only exception noted to date shown in Figure 6 where it is addressed in ink to a Burlington, ON resident with Montgomery's return address in the upper left corner. This cover was also a rarity in that it is the only one of his products for this particular stamp issue.

Donald Montgomery's output of FDCs over a two decade period was remarkable and apparently done only for private and personal reasons. Unlike most who participate in the hobby, he focused entirely on collecting day of issue cancellations from postal outlets rather than on cachets which seemed to hold no interest for him.

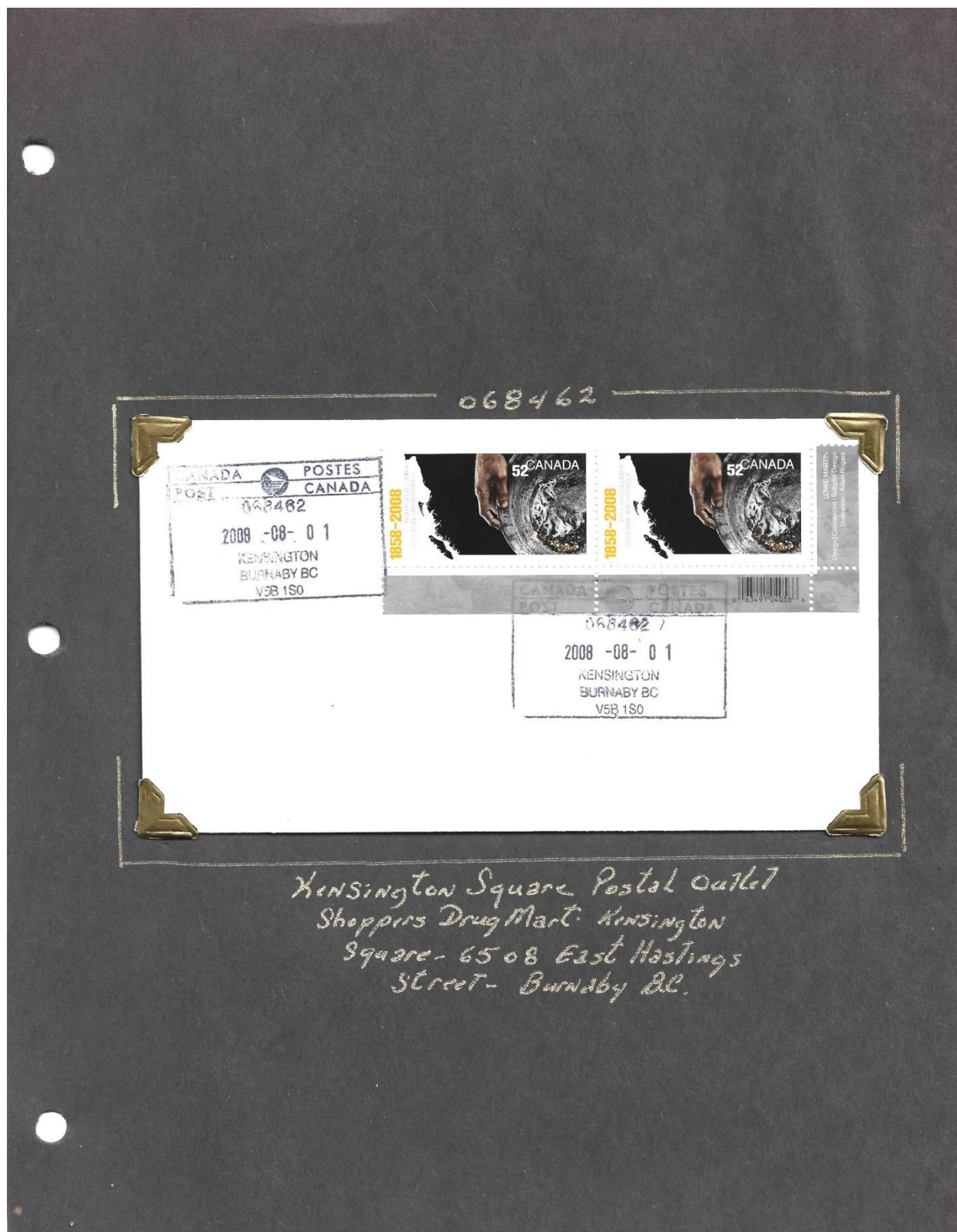


Figure 1. Montgomery's standard format for displaying his covers, this one for #2283 issued on August 1, 2008.

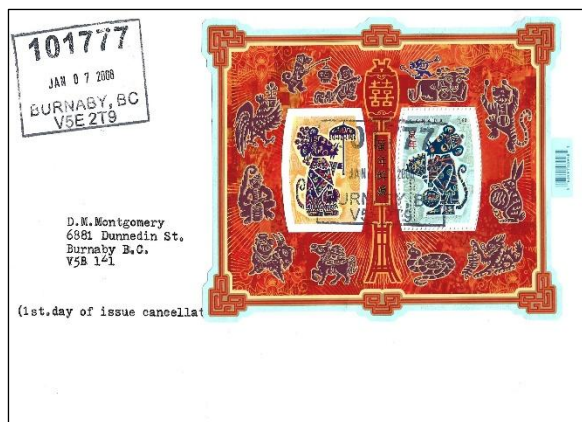


Figure 2. Souvenir Sheet for #2258

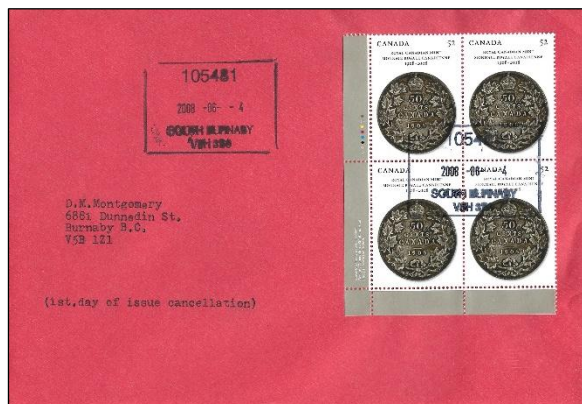


Figure 3. Lower left corner block for #2274

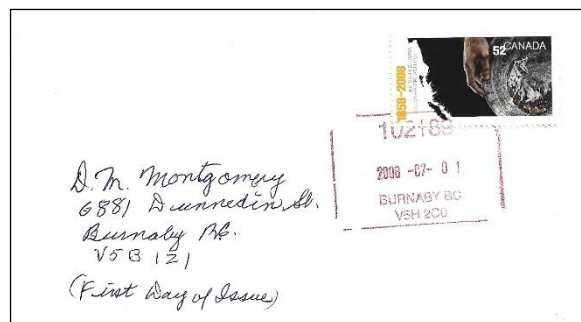


Figure 4. Hand-written address for #2283

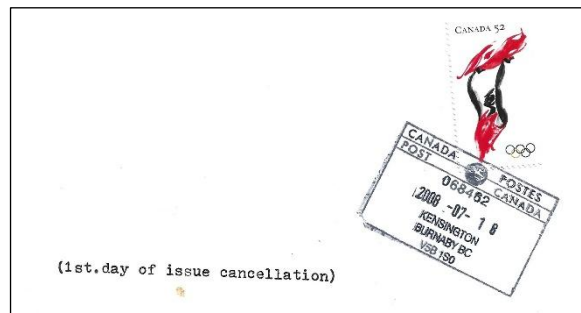


Figure 5. Unaddressed cover for #2281

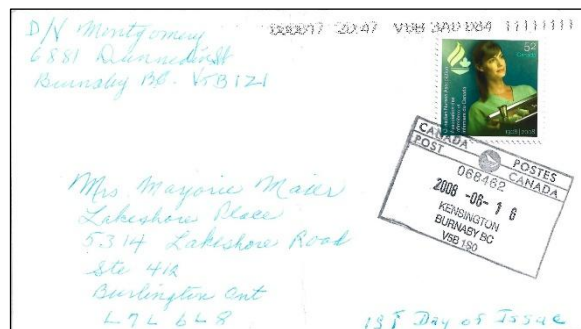


Figure 6. FDC for #2275 mailed to Ontario