



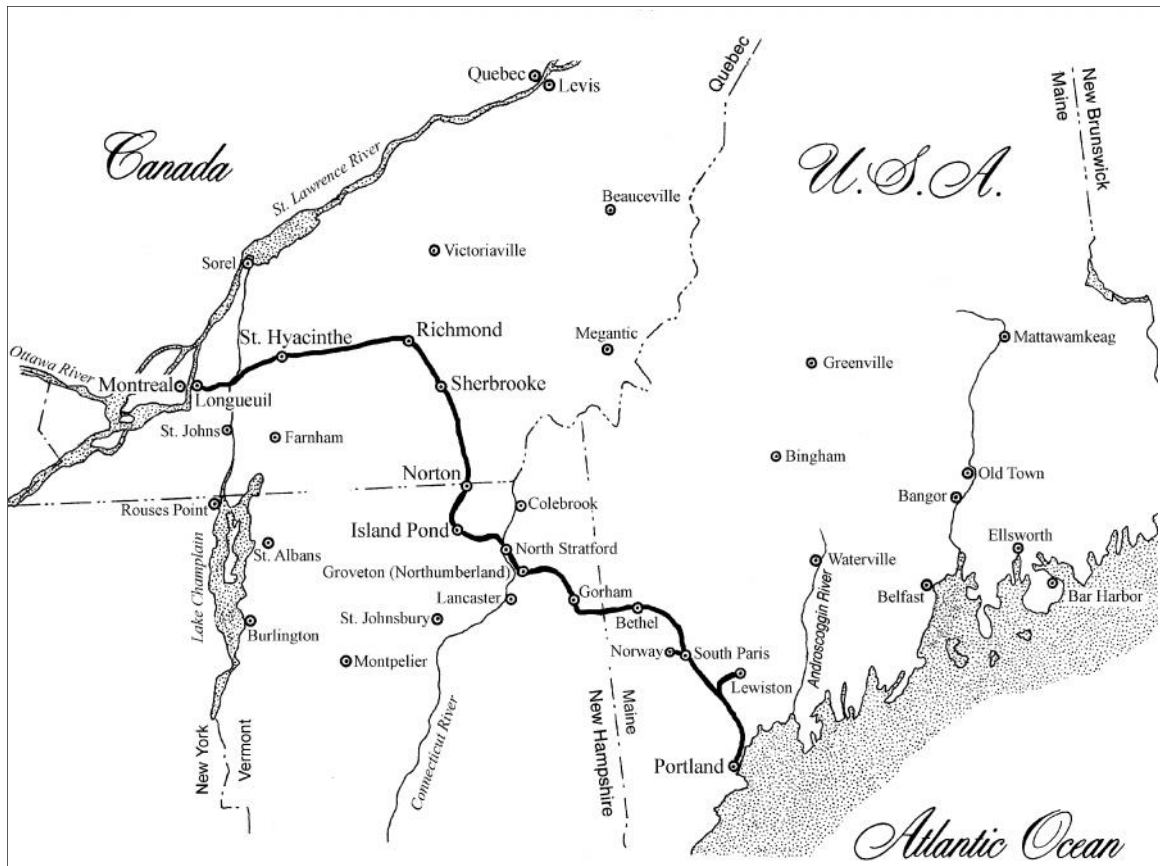
In this issue, we first travel to British Columbia for a look at the postmarks used on the **Pacific Great Eastern Railway**.

In his article about Mrs. Jasper Nicholls, **Peter McCarthy** reveals an interesting background to the correspondence, which preserved most, if not all the examples of the first postmark (**RR-143**) used on the **St. Lawrence & Atlantic Railroad**, between Montreal and Island Pond, Vermont, via St. Hyacinthe, Richmond and Sherbrooke.

I was led to do a hammer analysis of the second two cancellations (**RR-142**) used on the St. Lawrence & Atlantic Railroad, after I noticed a difference between an illustration supplied by Peter McCarthy for his article and one of my own. Since the Post Office order for the two St. Lawrence & Atlantic RR handstamps included another two (**RR-114**) for the **Ontario, Simcoe & Huron Railroad**, I proceeded to include them in the study.

Warren Bosch, our veteran hammer study expert, contributes valuable feedback on some of our recent hammer studies.

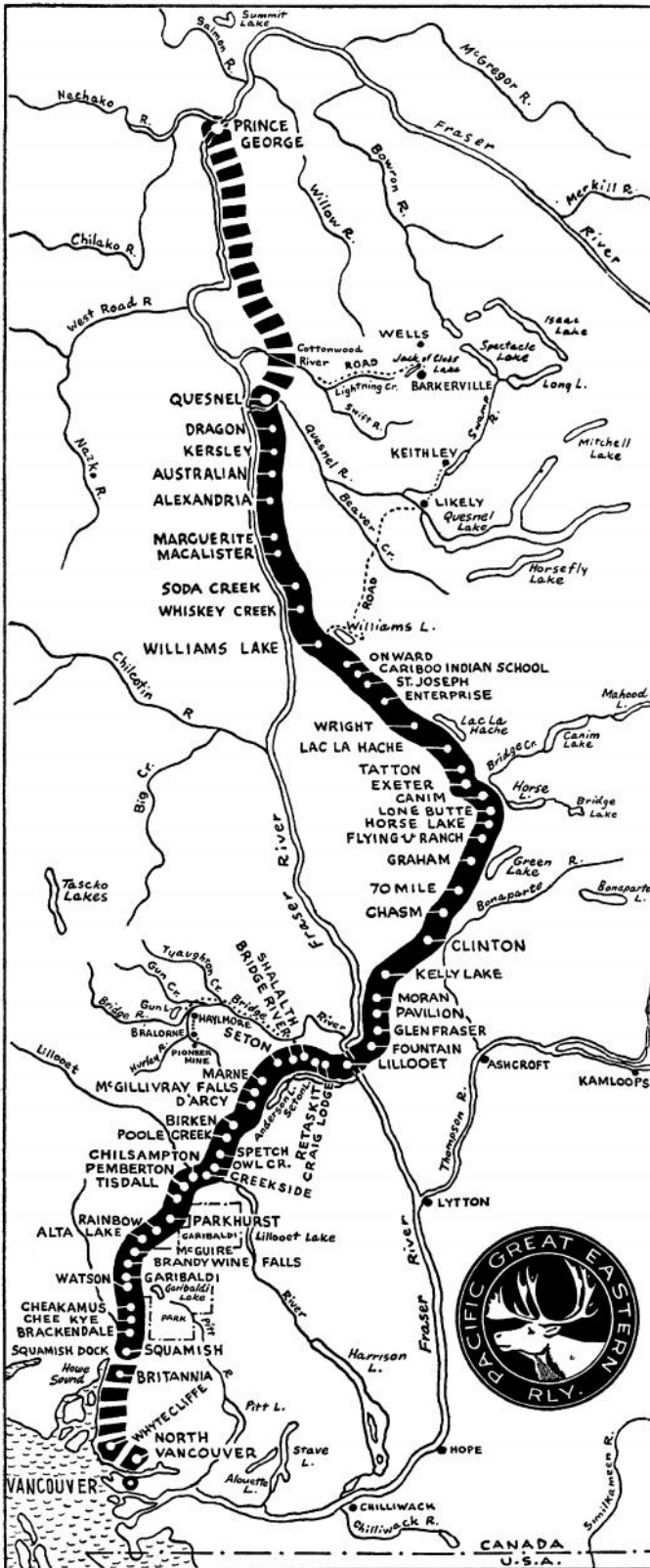
Finally, we look at some new reports including expanded dates of use and indicia varieties.



Route of the St. Lawrence & Atlantic Railroad and the Atlantic & St. Lawrence Railroad in 1853

Pacific Great Eastern Railway

ROUTE OF THE PACIFIC GREAT EASTERN RAILWAY



PACIFIC GREAT EASTERN RAILWAY

CONNECTING WITH UNION STEAMSHIPS LIMITED

68 - TIME TABLE - 68

EFFECTIVE SEPTEMBER 25, 1950

Light-face figures denote A.M. Black-face figures denote P.M.

No. 1 Monday Wednesday Friday		CONNECTING STEAMER LEAVES AND AR- RIVES IN VANCOUVER AT UNION STEAM- SHIP PIER, FOOT OF CARRALL STREET		No. 2 Wednesday Friday Sunday	
Read Down	Miles	STATIONS		Altitude	Read Up
9.30	-----	Lv. VANCOUVER Ar.....		-----	6.30
		(Via Union Steamship)			
1.00	40.0	Ar. SQUAMISH DOCK Lv.			3.15
1.20	0.0	Lv. SQUAMISH DOCK Ar.		10	2.40
2.50	1.0	(A) SQUAMISH		8	2.25
f 3.07	6.7	BRACKENDALE		76	f 2.02
f 3.14	9.3	CHEEKY		160	f 1.56
f 3.21	11.9	CHEAKAMUS		189	s 1.48
f 3.59	20.6	WATSON		973	f 1.16
s 4.05	22.6	GARIBALDI		1126	s 1.11
	28.2	BRANDYWINE FALLS		1536	
f 4.31	29.8	McGUIRE		1632	f 12.44
	36.3	JORDAN'S LODGE			
s 4.59	37.1	ALTA LAKE		2100	s 12.23
s 5.04	38.0	RAINBOW		2099	s 12.16
s 5.18	42.2	PARKHURST		1927	f 12.01
f 5.46	52.0	TISDALL		1123	f 11.13
s 6.01	57.3	(A) PEMBERTON		698	s 10.55
s 6.16	62.5	CREEKSIDE		686	s 10.34
6.23	64.4	OWL CREEK		884	s 10.29
f 6.28	66.9	SPETCH		1042	f 10.24
s 7.03	76.3	BIRKEN		1575	s 10.02
	80.4	INDIAN MEADOWS			
f 7.22	83.0	DEVINE			f 9.35
s 7.31	86.0	D'ARCY		880	s 9.25
s 7.48	91.5	McGILLIVRAY		872	s 9.03
f 7.52	93.1	MARNE		867	f 8.59
s 8.19	101.2	SETON		828	s 8.34
s 8.40	105.1	(A) SHALALTH		813	s 8.20
		For Bridge River Points			
f 8.57	111.5	RETASKIT		815	f 7.55
	117.4	CRAIG LODGE			
9.25	120.4	Ar. (A) LILLOOET Lv.		793	f 7.30
9.55		Lv. LILLOOET Ar.			7.00
f 10.14	128.1	FOUNTAIN		1059	f 6.32
f 10.38	135.7	GLENFRASER		1666	f 6.04
s 11.02	140.8	PAVILION		2175	s 5.45
f 11.22	145.9	MORAN		2706	f 5.25
f 11.55	155.0	KELLY LAKE		3509	s 5.00
s 12.22	165.7	CLINTON		3166	s 4.28
f 12.50	177.4	CHASM		3508	f 3.57
s 1.10	184.7	70-MILE		3568	f 3.36
f 1.31	193.3	GRAHAM		3581	f 3.15
	195.3	GRAVEL PIT			
f 1.47	199.1	FLYING-U		3788	f 3.00
	205.9	HORSE LAKE		3862	
s 2.17	209.0	(A) LONE BUTTE		3745	s 2.35
f 2.34	215.3	CANIM		3471	f 2.10
s 2.52	222.5	EXETER		3181	s 1.51
f 3.07	228.3	TATTON		3041	f 1.37
	232.5	CLARK'S CROSSING			
s 3.24	236.2	LAC LA HACHE		2761	f 1.17
f 3.36	240.7	CANAMA			f 1.05
f 3.50	246.1	WRIGHT		2660	s 12.52
f 4.20	256.4	ENTERPRISE		2500	f 12.21
	265.8	CARIBOO INDIAN SCHOOL		2155	
f 4.50	268.1	ONWARD		2048	f 11.51
5.15	276.7	Ar (A) WILLIAMS LAKE Lv.		1925	11.30
5.35		Lv. WILLIAMS LAKE Ar.			11.00
f 6.11	290.4	HARGREAVES			f 10.20
s 6.33	298.6	SODA CREEK		1755	s 9.48
s 6.55	307.4	MACALISTER		1603	s 9.23
s 7.06	311.4	MARGUERITE		1609	s 9.11
f 7.31	320.8	ALEXANDRIA		1800	f 8.44
f 7.51	327.8	AUSTRALIAN		1743	f 8.23
f 8.07	334.4	KERSLEY		1835	f 8.06
f 8.18	339.2	DRAGON		1771	f 7.54
8.45	347.0	Ar. (A) QUESNEL Lv.		1549	7.30

No. 1 Tuesday Thursday Saturday		CONNECTING STAGES LEAVE QUESNEL FOR PRINCE GEORGE - WELLS - BARKERVILLE (A) AGENCY STATION Fares Shown Page 3 Stage Connections Page 4		No. 2 Tuesday Thursday Saturday	
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EQUIPMENT—TRAINS NOS. 1 AND 2

First Class Coaches — Standard Sleeping Cars — Squamish Dock-Quesnel.
Dining Cars — Squamish Dock-Lillooet.

Pacific Great Eastern Railway

The **Pacific Great Eastern Railway** was incorporated on February 27, 1912, to build a line from Vancouver, B.C., north to a connection with the **Grand Trunk Pacific Railway** at Prince George, B.C.. Although independent from the G.T.P.Ry., the P.G.E.Ry. had agreed that the G.T.P.Ry., whose western terminus was at the remote northern port of Prince Rupert, B.C., could use their line to gain access to Vancouver. The railway was given its name due to a loose association with England's Great Eastern Railway. Its financial backers were Timothy Foley, Patrick Welch and John Stewart, whose construction firm of Foley, Welch and Stewart was among the leading railway contractors in North America. Upon incorporation, the P.G.E.Ry. took over the **Howe Sound and Northern Railway**, which at that point had built nine miles of track north of Squamish. The British Columbia government gave the railway a guarantee of principal and 4% interest (later increased to 4.5% to make the bonds saleable) on the construction bonds of the railway.

By 1915, the line was opened 176 miles north from Squamish, to Chasm. However, the railway was starting to run out of money. In 1915 it failed to make an interest payment on its bonds, obliging the provincial government to make good on its bond guarantee. In the 1916 provincial election campaign, the Liberal Party alleged that some of the money advanced to the railway for bond guarantee payments, had instead gone into Conservative Party campaign funds. In the election, the Conservatives, who had won every seat in the legislature in the 1912 election, lost to the Liberals. The Liberals then took Foley, Welch, and Stewart to court, to recover \$5 million of allegedly unaccounted funds. In early 1918, the railway's backers agreed to pay the government \$1.1 million and turn the railway over to the government.

When the government took over the railway, two separate sections of trackage had been completed; a small section between North Vancouver and Horseshoe Bay, and one between Squamish and Clinton. By 1921, the provincial government had extended the railway to a point 15 miles north of Quesnel, still 20 miles south of a connection to Prince George, but it was not extended further. The track north of Quesnel was later removed. Construction of the line between Horseshoe Bay and Squamish was given a low priority because there was already a barge in operation between Squamish and Vancouver, and the railway wanted to discontinue operations on the North Vancouver-Horseshoe Bay line. However, the railway had an agreement with the municipality of West Vancouver to provide passenger service that it was unable to get out of until 1928, when they paid the city \$140,000 in support of its road-building programme. The last trains on the line ran on November 29, 1928, and the line fell into disuse, but was never formally abandoned.



For the next 20 years, the railway would run from "nowhere to nowhere". It did not connect with any other railway, and there were no large urban centres on its route. It existed mainly to connect logging and mining operations in the British Columbia interior with the coastal town of Squamish, where resources could then be transported by sea. The government still intended for the railway to reach Prince George, but the resources to do so were not available, especially during the Great Depression and World War II. The unfortunate state of the railway caused it to be given nicknames such as "Province's Great Expense", "Prince George Eventually", "Past God's Endurance", and "Please Go Easy".

Starting in 1949, the Pacific Great Eastern began to expand. Track was laid north of Quesnel to a junction with the Canadian National Railways at Prince George. That line opened on November 1, 1952. Between 1953 and 1956 the PGE constructed a line between Squamish and North Vancouver. The PGE used their former right-of-way between North Vancouver and Horseshoe Bay, to the dismay of some residents of West Vancouver who, mistakenly believing the line was abandoned, had encroached on it. The line opened on August 27, 1956.

Pacific Great Eastern Railway

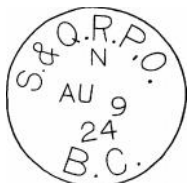


W-151

Proof Dates - 1917/07/23, 1917/07/24

ERD - 1917/10/22

LRD - 1918/05/28



W-152

Proof Date - 1920/12/02

ERD - 1922/02/17

LRD - 1953/08/12

Indicia - N, S, 1, 2, 4*

*A new report from C. Anstead,
dated AU 20, 33 (5 may exist)



W-152A

Proof Date - 1924/06/06

ERD - 1935/06/10

LRD - 1938/03/25

Indicia - 1, 2



W-153

Proof Date - 1938/07/30

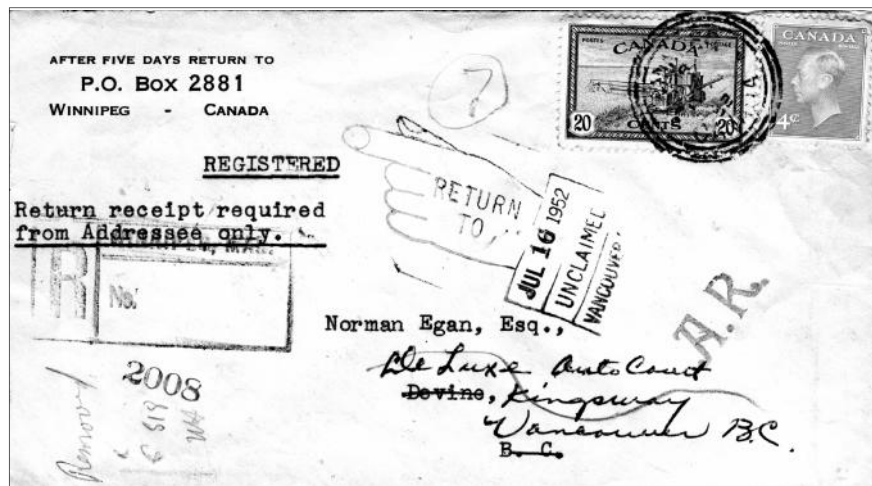
ERD - 1938/09/02

LRD - 1953/08/30

Indicia - 1, 2, 4, 5, 29?

.....

This registered cover, addressed to Devine, B.C. (Mile 83 on the P.G.E.Ry.), originated at Winnipeg on July 10, 1952 and arrived in Vancouver on July 11. It was transferred to the northbound Squamish & Quesnel R.P.O. car at Squamish the same day. The clerk, E. G. Kane, applied his private clerk handstamp to the back and the cover arrived in Devine, on Saturday evening, July 12. The letter was re-directed to Vancouver and following day, it was on the southbound R.P.O. car, where the clerk again applied his handstamp. On Monday, July 14, the cover was backstamped in Vancouver and then on July 16, it was re-directed back to the sender in Winnipeg, arriving there on July 18.



W-153C

Proof Date - unknown

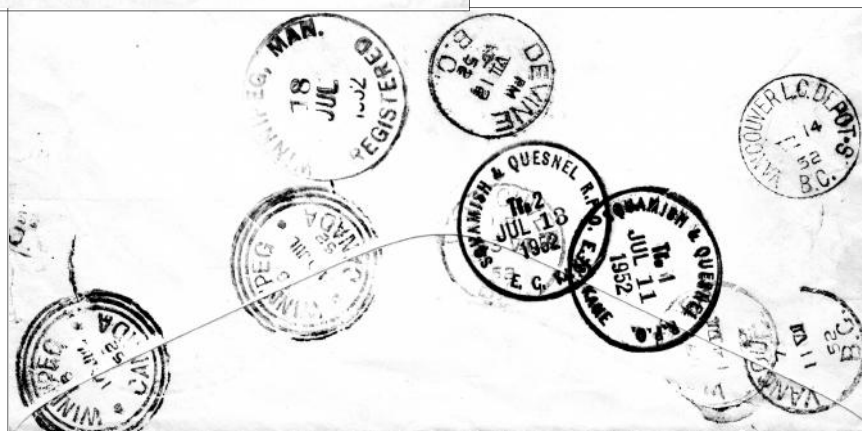
ERD - 1950/05/21

LRD - 1953/03/23

Indicia - 1, 2



W-153C



Early Handstamps

Lionel Gillam wrote the following in his 1985 book, "Canadian Mail by Rail, 1836 - 1867" based on information from Boggs;

On 12th August, 1853, the Postmaster General, James Morris, wrote to John Francis, of Clerkenwell, London, who was the official contractor to the British Post Office for handstamping equipment, in the following terms:

"I have to request you will furnish me as speedily as possible, with two steel dated stamps with the words thereon, 'St. Lawrence and Atlantic Railroad' and also two steel dated stamps with the words thereon, 'Ontario, Simcoe and Huron Railroad' - with double sets of type for each."

Ontario, Simcoe & Huron Railroad

RR-114 Hammer Study

ONTARIO - SIMCOE - & - HURON - RAILROAD

Hammer	ERD	LRD	Indicia	a	b	c
I	1855/08/18	1855/08/18	0	9+	10 1/2+	9 1/2+
II	1857/07/04*	1860/06/30	blank	10 1/4	9 1/2	8 1/2+
Listing	1855/04/18	1860/06/30	0, blank	*Peter McCarthy Collection		

Hammer I



Hammer II



Hammer I - The illustration for hammer I is from my collection and has a full month, day, year indicia set including an odd "0" indicator. We can only guess as to its meaning.

Hammer II - This hammer appears to never have a complete date set. 4 examples in my collection are **AU / 20** (1857), **(MAR) 2 / 1858**, **JU / 24** (1858) and **JU / 30** (1860). Peter McCarthy has **JY / 4** (1857). Unless there are other postmarks or notations on a cover with this handstamp, it is not possible to determine the complete date.

St. Lawrence & Atlantic Railroad

RR-142 Hammer Study

ST - LAWRENCE - & - ATLANTIC - RAILROAD

Hammer	ERD	LRD	Indicia	ST * L	ATLA	Chord "a"
I	1855/03/05	1855/06/28	1	Mid-position dot	Full height "L"	13 ¾
II	1855/02/20*	1855/06/02	1*, 2	No dot	Short "L"	13-
Listing	1854/04/25	1855/08/18	blank, 1, 2	*Peter McCarthy Collection		

Hammer I



Hammer II



The Story Behind My Cover by Peter McCarthy

October 22, 1853 was the earliest known date of the Railway Post Office in Canada and that happened on the St. Lawrence & Atlantic Railroad between Longueuil, a point on the south shore of Montreal and Island Pond, Vermont sixteen miles south of the Quebec border. From Longueuil, the route went through St. Hyacinthe, Richmond, Sherbrooke, Lennoxville, Coaticook, and on to Island Pond, Vermont, where it connected with its United States counterpart, the Atlantic & St. Lawrence Railroad.

On August 12, 1853 James Morris, the Postmaster of the day ordered two pairs of steel stamps from John Francis of Clerkenwell, London, two for the St. Lawrence & Atlantic Railroad Co. (Fig. 1) and the other two for the Ontario, Simcoe & Huron Union Railroad.(Fig. 2)



Fig. 1 - RR-142



Fig. 2 - RR-114



Knowing full well that these handstamps would not arrive in time for the inaugural R.P.O. run in October, officials had another steel dated stamp, of unknown origin, manufactured locally for the St. Lawrence & Atlantic Railroad. It is listed in the catalogue as **RR - 143** (Fig. 3 and Fig. 4)

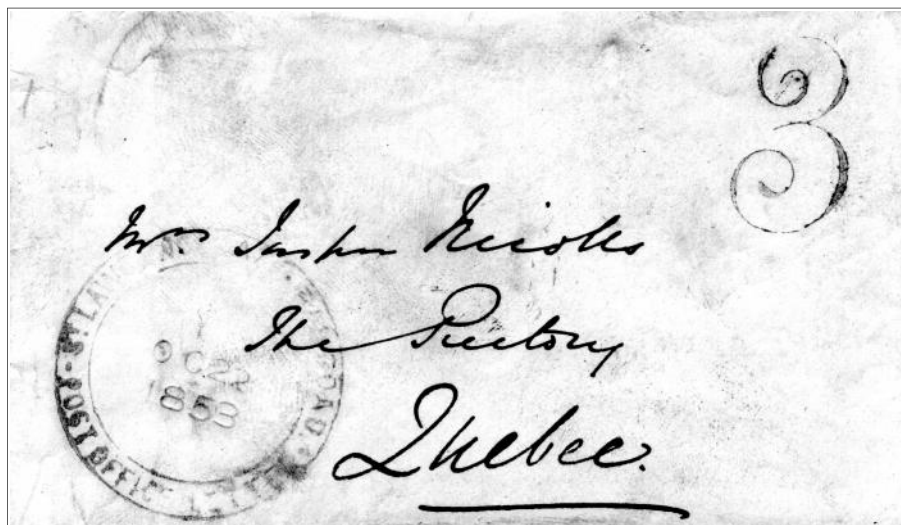
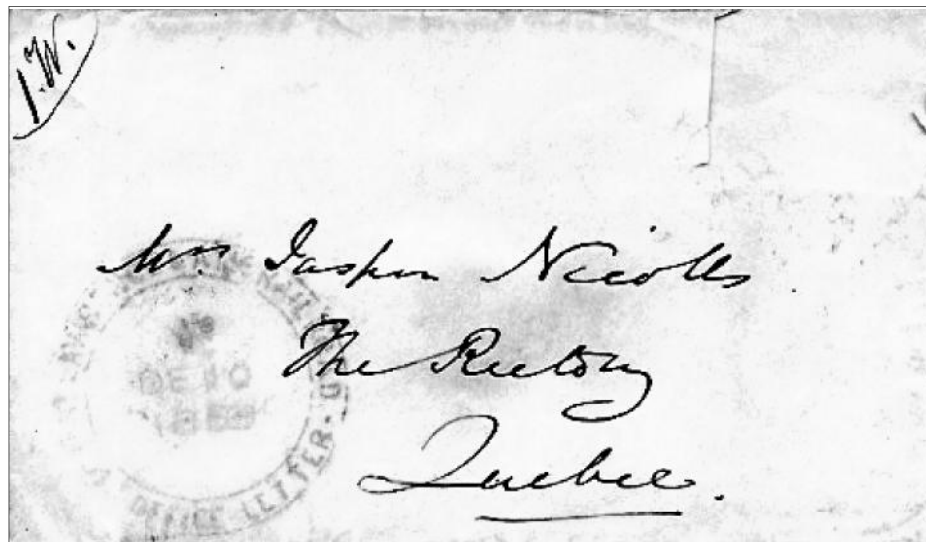


Fig. 3 - RR-143
(R. Gray Collection)

There are several interesting factors connected to this R.P.O. marking. What is known is there are at least seven examples of RR - 143 in existence. Four are in Ross Gray's collection, including the earliest reported date of October 22, 1853. (Fig. 3) The author's copy is dated December 10, 1853 (Fig. 4) and there are two other copies in the hands of unknown persons. The latest reported date of use is January 28, 1854



Fig. 4 - RR-143
(P. McCarthy Collection)



The Story Behind My Cover by Peter McCarthy

And now for the story about the person to whom these covers bearing this cancellation, are addressed. Six of the seven covers are addressed to either **Mrs. Nicolls** or **Mrs. Jasper Nicolls**, The Rectory, Quebec. Six of the seven markings are stamped in red ink and one in black. The question that needs to be answered is, who is this Mrs. Jasper Nicolls? The first clue is the fact that the cover was addressed to The Rectory. That could only mean the Rectory connected to the Anglican Church named Holy Trinity in Quebec City.

Mrs. Jasper Nicolls, as it turns out, was the second of five children born to Bishop George Jehosaphat and Mrs. Mary Hume Mountain, nee Thompson and was christened Harriet Mary. Her exact birth date is not known but the year was 1816. Her older sister was named Elizabeth and the younger siblings were Arimine (ordained a deacon in June of 1846), Jacob and Kate. George J. Mountain was the third Bishop of the Anglican Diocese of Quebec, which at the time spread westward to the west coast, Principal of McGill University and principal founder of Bishop's College in Lennoxville. He was known as Lord Bishop of Montreal.

On September 17, 1837, Harriet was married to the Reverend Jasper Hume Nicolls, (b1818 - 1877d) son of General Gustavus Nicolls and Heriot Frances Thompson and a nephew of Bishop Mountain by marriage. In fact, Jasper and Harriet were first cousins, their mothers being sisters. Jasper Nicolls became the first principal of Bishop's College (*Fig. 6*) in 1845 and remained so for thirty two years until his death in 1877, being very much liked by his students. He was successful in having the status of the college raised to that of university in 1853. Even so, letters were still addressed to Mrs. Nicolls, Bishops College in 1874. Her Christian name still not being used in the address. (*Fig. 5*)

The Reverend Jasper and Mrs. Nicolls had three children; two boys and a girl. One son, Gustavus George Nicolls, was an ordained Anglican priest. Harriet Mary Nicolls died in Lennoxville on December 25, 1893.

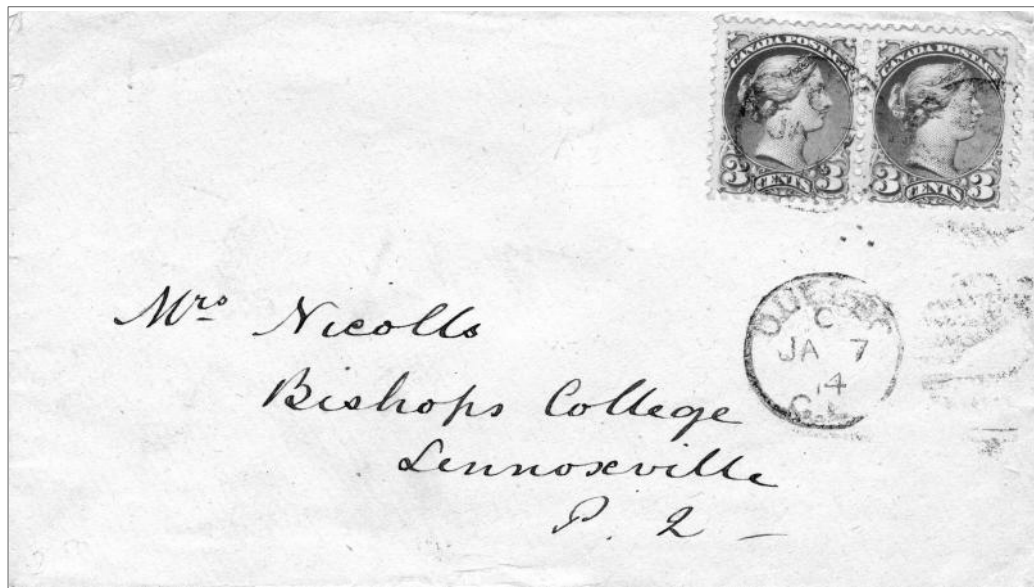


Fig. 5 - Letter to Mrs. Nicholls, Lennoxville dated January 7, 1874 from P. McCarthy Collection

Fig. 6

*Lithography by Day & Haghe after a drawing
by T. Picken.*

*This lithograph is the earliest known picture of the College.
George J. Mountain, D.D., Songs of the Wilderness;
Being a collection of poems,
Francis & John Rivington, London, 1846, frontispiece.*



Hammer Studies Updated

Warren Bosch reports and comments on recent hammer studies

Newsletter Pages 1983 - 1984

O-43 FE 01 / 67 / SOUTH (*A new ERD*)

RR-9, hammer II SOUTH / SP3 / 83 (*A new LRD for the hammer*)

Newsletter Pages 1986 - 1987

O-40, hammer I JA 27 / 90 (*A new LRD for the hammer*) Strikes may be identifiable by the measurements between the base corner of the “B” to the top corners of the “P” and “R” of “C.P.Ry.”

O-45, hammer II SP 2 / 22 (*A new ERD for the hammer*)

Newsletter Pages 1995 - 1997

Q-242, hammer I, S / DE 18 / 10 hammer shows the breaks (*A new LRD for the hammer*)

Q-242, hammer II or new hammer: ? / JA 18 / 05; S / FE 21 / 11; ? / AP 17 / 11. These three show no breaks, but do have the 3 mm spacings rather than 3.5 mm. Either these are from a different hammer, or the listed 3.5 mm measurement is a bit off.

Q-241, hammer II 1934, date unknown (*A new LRD for the hammer*)

Q-241, hammer IV 164 / NO 6 / 33 (*A new LRD for the hammer*)

Q-241, hammer V 16 JAN / 18 (*A new ERD for the hammer*)

By the way, measuring from your diagrams, column b should have 5, 5.75, and 5.25 for the top three entries rather than your listed 5, 6, 5.5+. I find the strikes from this run to be among the worst for clarity of strike and ditto for completeness of strike! Measurements a and b are the most useful in identifying.

Q-243, hammer I S / MY 14 / 10 the whole set of indicia is inverted (*A new ERD for the hammer*)

Q-243, hammer IV 164 / AU 24 / 34 (*A new ERD for the hammer*)

Q-243, hammer VIII S / MY 24 / 14 (*A new ERD for the hammer*)

Q-201, hammer II 154 / JUL 16 / 35 (*A new ERD for the hammer*). I also have **154** / MR 12 / 36. In both examples, the 154 has a middle digit with a short vertical (as in the UL of a “5”) which is significantly more to the right than is the LL part of that same digit. In other words, the short vertical does NOT line up with what would be the left side of the loop of a potential “6”. I conclude that the digit really is a “5” and not a “6”. Another early strike is 164 / SEP 9 / 35, a date which fits between the above two but which clearly has train number 164...so the digit “6” was not damaged into looking like a “5” (unless it was so damaged and then replaced and then the new one damaged again). (*Editor's Note: Chris Anstead reported similar some observations in his collection.*)

Q-201, hammer III --4 / DE 13 / 35 (*A new ERD for the hammer*)

New Reports



This example of **hammer III, O-356**, TOR. LON. & WINDSOR / R.P.O., 10, JUL 18, 32, found on a 3¢ postal stationery envelope addressed to Pennsylvania is a **new early date** for the hammer. The previous ERD was February 13, 1937. (*see page 1804*)

Struck on a Hamilton picture post card addressed to Fennells, Ontario (*West Gwillimbury Township, Simcoe County*) and dated February 1, 1912, is the first reported example of **train 29** used on **O-13 (hammer 3a)**, BEETON & COLLINGWOOD R.P.O. / N^o 3. This train number was also used on O-12, BEETON & COLLINGWOOD R.P.O. / . , during the same period.

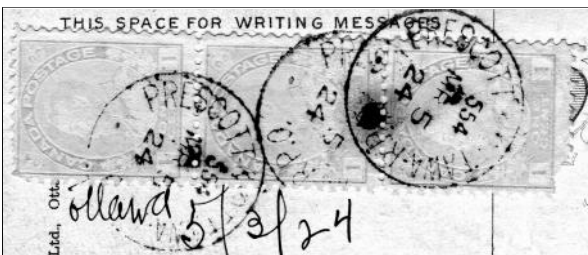


New Reports



The first report of **train 24** for **hammer I** of **Q-243** (*see page 1996*) was discovered by **Ross Gray**. It is used as a transit backstamp on a registered cover originating at St. Joseph d'Alma and addressed to St. Hyacinthe.

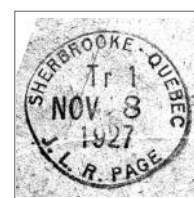
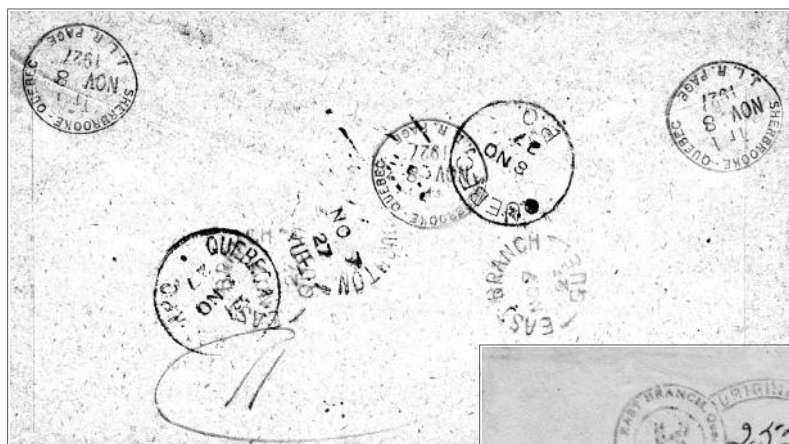
On the back of a registered cover which originated at Warwick, QC and was addressed to St. Hyacinthe, **Ross** found this example of **Q-48**, LEVIS & RICHMOND R.P.O. / DAY with a previously unreported **train 119**.



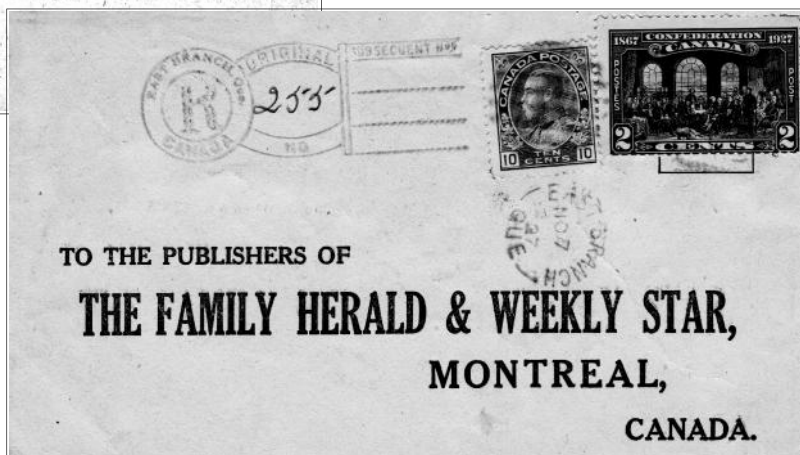
This new **early date**, March 5, 1924 for **Q-296**, PRESCOTT & OTTAWA - R.P.O. / . is used on a picture post card of Ottawa which is addressed to Montreal.



This new **early date**, December 16, 1921 for **hammer III** of **DD-40**, MONCTON STATION / N.B., is on a Christmas greeting post card addressed to Menatchee, Washington.

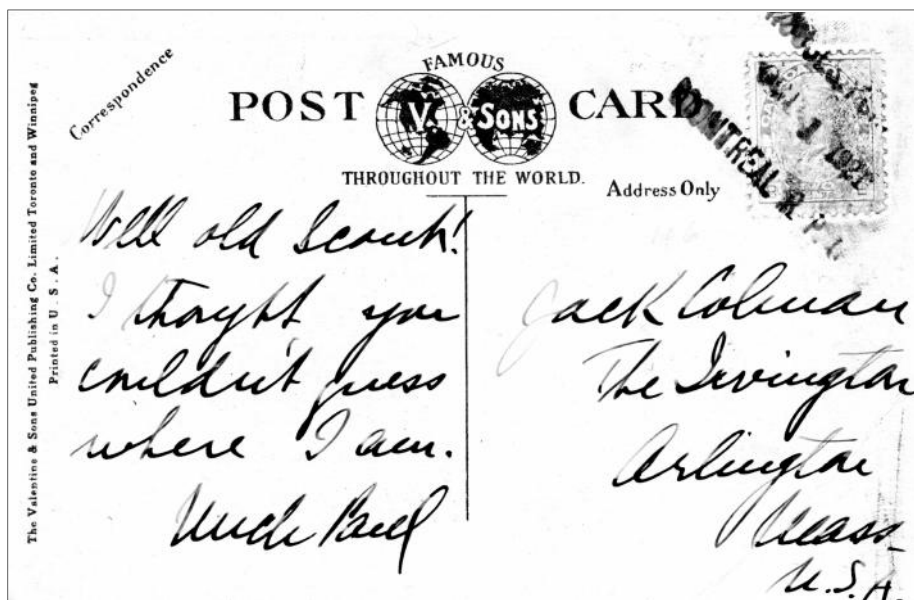


A registered cover which originated at East Branch, QC on November 7, 1927 has three strikes of **Q-286** struck in purple on the back. Previously this private clerk handstamp was only reported used on May 13, 1929, also with train 1 but was struck in blue.



This transit backstamp on a registered cover from New Brunswick to Halifax is a new **early date**, February 19, 1941, for **hammer IV** of **MA-171**, MONCTON & CAMP - R.P.O. / . Previously the earliest reported date for this hammer was April 20, 1942. Hammer IV, which was proof struck on November 23, 1940, appears to have been a replacement for hammer III, which is known used until November 15, 1939.

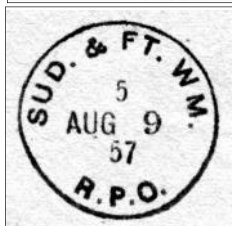
New Reports



Ross Gray found this fair strike, in blue, of **Q-164B, hammer XIII**, ROUSES POINT & / MONTREAL R.P.O. , dated October 1, 1921, on a picture post card of Windsor Station in Montreal. This is a new late date for both the listing and the hammer.



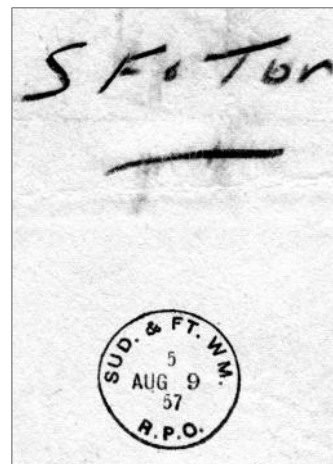
Bob Lane sends this new early date for **W-69, hammer 3a**, MAC. & CAL. R.P.O. / No. 3, 63, AU 14, 15. Previously the earliest reported date for this hammer, which was proofed on May 26, 1915, was September 30, 1918. This is also the first example of train 63.



Ross Gray reports this new rubber handstamp, SUD. & FT. WM. / R.P.O. , 5, AUG 9, 57 struck in green on a facing slip.



Ross also found this new LRD, March 11, 1958 and only the second report for **hammer III** of **MA-113** as a transit backstamp on a registered cover originating at Sussex, NB and addressed to Glasgow, Scotland.



Secretary's Report from Chris Anstead

The Handbook on BNA Philately, authored by Ed Richardson a number of years ago is being redone. A printed version will be in the same format as Topics, with perhaps 2 pages (including illustrations) devoted to RPOs. A longer version will be available online. At the recent convention in Calgary, study group members reviewed Allan's Steinhart's "RPOs offer endless and fascinating study" for suitability and accuracy. If you have insights on collecting RPOs that you can share with others, please send them to me. I will consolidate them and get them to the editors of this worthwhile endeavour.

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