

The Stamps of Canada, Chapter I

Based on a Mekeel's Weekly Publication by B. W. H. Poole, with images added

We continue in this issue with a reprinting, with updates and new images, of *The Stamps of Canada*, a booklet that was produced for *Mekeel's Weekly* by Bertram W. H. Poole. Although this installment is headed Chapter I in the booklet, it was preceded by an Introduction that we presented in our Parts 1 and 2.

Chapter I.—Its Postal History.

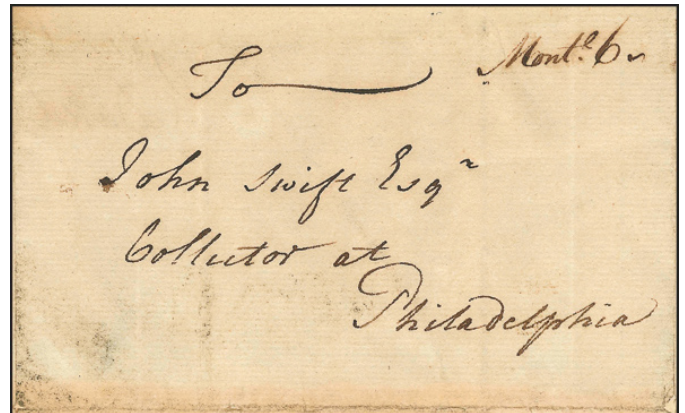
The *Stamp Collector's Magazine* for August, 1868, contained an interesting article on the history of the Canadian Post-office, largely compiled from information given in the "Canadian Postal Guide," which we cannot do better than quote in full.

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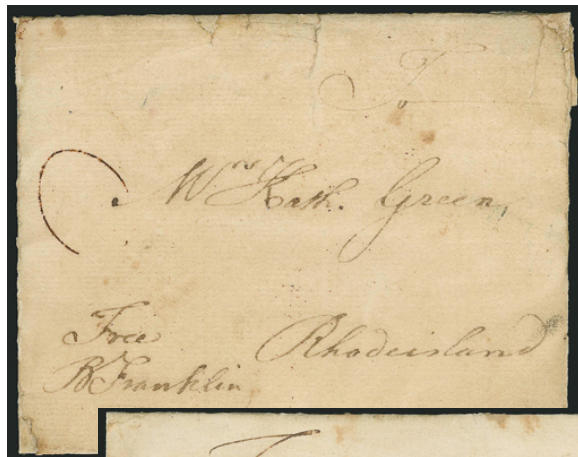
The earliest records of the administration of the post-office in Canada, are dated 1750, at which period the celebrated Benjamin Franklin was Deputy Postmaster-General of North America. At the time of his appointment, the revenue of the department was insufficient to defray his salary of \$1,500 per annum, but under his judicious management, not only was the postal accommodation in the provinces considerably extended, but the revenue so greatly increased, that ere long the profit for one year, which he remitted to the British Treasury, amounted to \$15,000.

In the evidence given by Franklin before the House of Commons in the year 1766, in regard to the extent of the post-office accommodation in North America, he made the following statement:—

"The posts generally travel along the sea coasts, and only in a few cases do they go back into the country. Between Quebec and Montreal there is only one post per month. The inhabitants live so scattered and remote from each other in that vast country, that the posts cannot be supported amongst them. The English colonies, too, along the frontier, are very thinly settled."



An 1868 folded letter with "Montl. 6-" manuscript postmark and "6" (deadweight) rate addressed "To John Swift Esqr., Collector at Philadelphia", sent by John Campbell, one of Great Britain's colonial governors in North America.



Top, a Benjamin Franklin "Free B. Franklin" free frank (lower left) as Deputy Postmaster General for the Colonies in America on a November 25, 1762 folded cover to Rhode Island, some expert restoration; bottom a circa 1772 Benjamin Franklin free frank, now as "B. Free Franklin", lower left, sent to his wife while he was in England. While he was still a representative of the Crown, still as Deputy Postmaster for the Colonies, this frank also demonstrates his evolving revolutionary spirit.



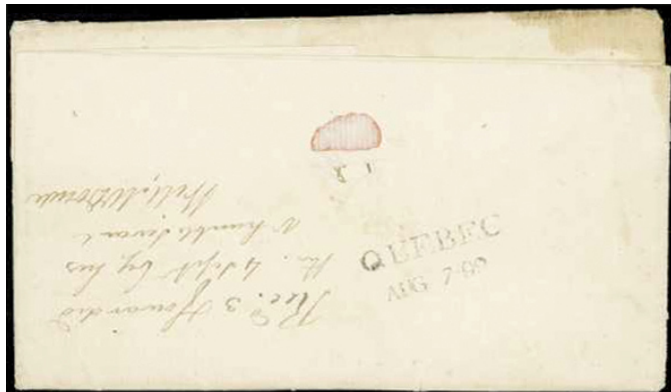
A March 18, 1795 folded letter from Detroit, then part of British North America, to Hants, England, with a "HALIFAX / SHIP LRE / JUN 18 / 95" four-line handstamp and manuscript "1/1". This letter traveled by Indian courier to Fort Niagara, then by ship up the St. Lawrence River to Halifax. From Halifax it went by packet to England. Attesting to the sketchy delivery pattern, the letter, from an army officer, notes "Our Winter Express also brought me a letter from Mr. Finnell dated 31st. Octr...the Communication is not yet open, which prevents my writing to Mr. White the Attorney General of the Upper Province who resides at Niagara...This takes it conveyance with...an Indian who is going across the Country...as he bears a tolerable good character, think it has a chance of reaching you."

In 1774, Franklin was recalled, and the following year the War of Independence broke out, and the office was filled by Mr. Hugh Finlay, who had, under his predecessor, been postmaster at Quebec.

Canada is divided into Upper and Lower. From a Quebec almanack

of 1796, we glean that there were seven offices in the former and five in the latter. Mr. Finlay is designated as "Deputy Postmaster-General of His Majesty's Province of Canada."

At that time mails were dispatched monthly to England, and semi-weekly between Quebec and Montreal, or Halifax. At Baie des Chaleurs the visits of the postman must, we conclude, have been few and far between, as they were only favored with a mail "as occasion offered".



August 7, 1799 folded letter addressed to John Peters, Kingston, U.C., with a two line "QUEBEC / AUG 7 99" datestamp dispatch.

In 1800, Mr. George Heriot succeeded Mr. Finlay. At this time Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick, were all under the authority of the Canadian administration.

The following is taken from the advertising column of the *Upper Quebec Gazette*, printed in 1807:—

The mail for Upper Canada will be dispatched from the post-office at Montreal, on the following days, to wit:

- Monday, 14th January.
- Monday, 12th February.
- Monday, 12th March.
- Monday, 7th April—the last trip.

A courier from Kingston may be looked for here in 14 or 15 days from the above periods, where he will remain 2 or 3 days, and then return to Kingston.

Another courier will proceed from this with the Niagara mail, via Messrs. Hatts', where the Sandwich (co. Essex) letters will be left, both from Niagara and this 'till the courier comes from there to return with them.

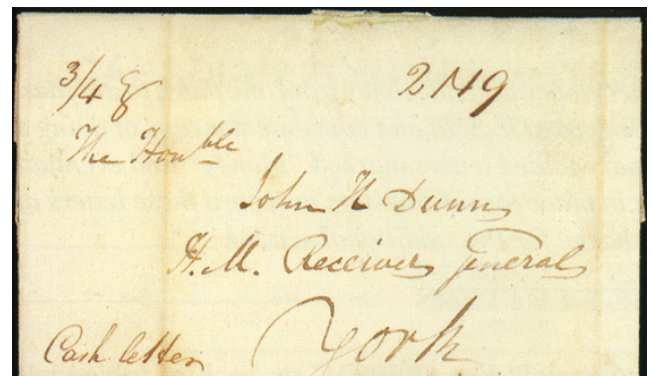
Letters put into the post-office will be forwarded any time by
W. Allan,
Acting Deputy Postmaster.

Mr. Heriot resigned in 1816, and was succeeded by Mr. D. Sutherland, who, on his accession to office, found Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island wholly withdrawn from the Canada charge. New Brunswick, however, continued to be included in it. This appears also to have been withdrawn in 1824, so that from that date until just lately, we have to do with Canada proper.

In 1827 there were 101 post-offices, and 2,368 miles of established post-route. The number of miles of mail-travel was 455,000. The letters that year were estimated at 340,000, and newspapers, 400,000. From the Canadian Postmaster-General's report for 1865, now lying before us, we find the number of letters had increased to 12,000,000; the miles of annual mail-travel was 6,350,000, the mails being carried regularly over 1,931 miles of railway route.

The following extract from the *Quebec Mercury*, published on July 18, 1829, conveys some idea of the postal communication with England at that period:

No later advices have been received from Europe since our last. Some further extracts from the London papers, to 31st May, inclusive, brought to New York by the *Corinthian*, will be found in another part of this number.



Top, the earliest recorded cash letter, dated October 21, 1823, with manuscript "3/4 oz" and "2N9" rate, sent from the postmaster and inspector of licenses at Perth to "H.M. Receiver General" at York, containing cash payment for tavern license fees.

Bottom, the earliest recorded Money Letter, with manuscript date "15 April" (1825) on reverse and manuscript "Money Letter and "1N10" rate, carrying a £4 duty paid by the office at Cornwall. Cash and Money letters were forerunners to Registered Mail.

In the *Montreal Courant*, dated September 2nd, 1829, was the following paragraph, showing the improvement which had been effected in the communication between Prescott and that city:—

Expeditious Travelling.—On Saturday last, the Upper Canada line of stages performed the journey from Prescott to this city in about 17 hours, leaving the former place at a little before 3 a.m., and arriving here a few minutes before 8 in the evening. Not many years ago this journey occupied two, and sometimes three days, but owing to the great improvements made by Mr. Dickinson, the enterprising proprietor, by putting steamboats on the lakes St. Francis and St. Louis, and keeping his horses in excellent condition, it is now performed in little more than one-third of the time.

Even so late as 1833, newspaper proprietors found it (particularly in the Upper Province) better to employ their own couriers. As a proof of this we transcribe from the *Queenston (Niagara) Colonial Advocate*, of that year the following advertisement:—

Post-rider Wanted Immediately.

The proprietor of this newspaper wishes to contract with a steady man (who can find and uphold his own horse) to deliver it to the subscribers once a week during the winter, on the route between York and Niagara, via Ancaster.

To be continued

The Stamps of Canada, Chapter I, Part 2

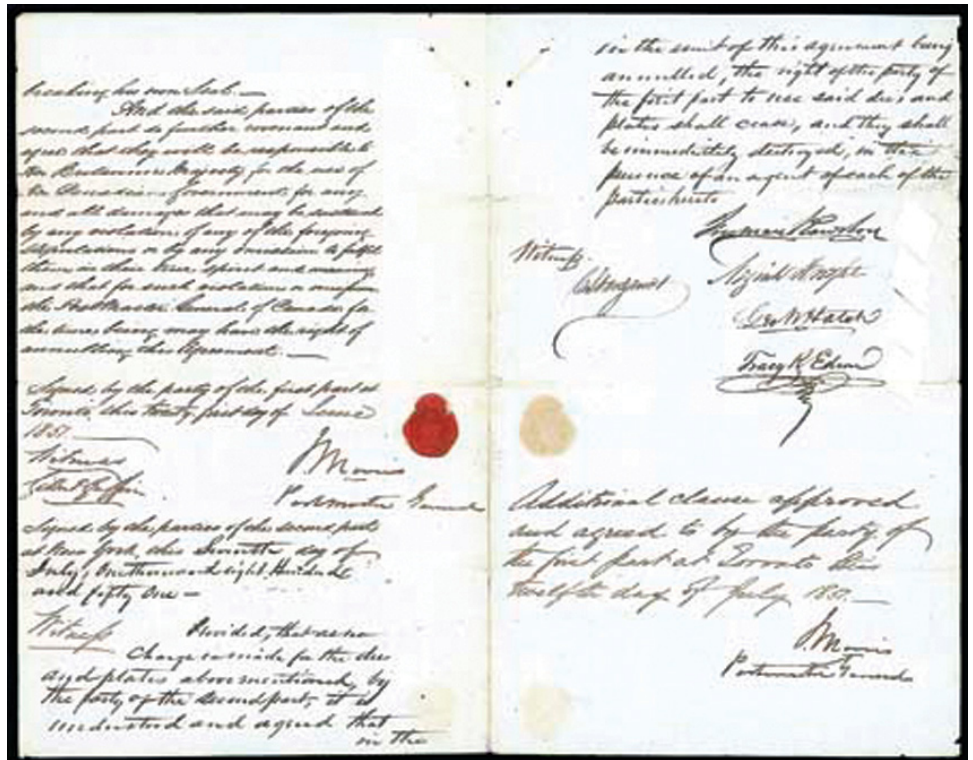
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Chapter I.—Its Postal History (Cont.)

Mr. Thomas A. Stayner was postmaster in 1841, and through his recommendation a uniform rate of 1s 2d sterling, per half ounce, was adopted between any place in Canada and the mother country. About this time regular steam communication across the Atlantic was established.

The transfer of the Canadian post-office from the control of the imperial authorities to the Colonial government, was effected April 6th, 1851. Mr. Stayner then resigned, and the office was filled by the Hon. James Morris, who was the first Postmaster-General. This may be termed the red-letter year of the Canadian post-office. In the first place, the postage, which had hitherto been according to distance and had averaged 15 cents on each letter, was reduced to a uniform rate of 5 cents per half ounce. The newspaper charge was also considerably reduced. Within a year after, the number of letters transmitted through the post had increased 75 per cent. The operation of the department was greatly extended, and last, but most decidedly not least, was the introduction of postage stamps.



A portion of the seven-page handwritten contract to print Canada's first postage stamps, between the Province of Canada, represented by the Provincial Post Master General, James Morris, and the New York engraving firm of Rawdon, Wright, Hatch and Edson. The contract spells out which stamps are to be printed: "three (3d.) pence, six (6d.) pence and shilling (1/-)" and that the stamps should be "on suitable paper of the best quality, prepared for use with gum, at the rate of Twenty Cents per thousand stamps". The contract also stipulates that the dies and plates will remain "the exclusive property of Her Britannic Majesty for the use of Her Provincial Government of Canada" and details security arrangements for the dies and plates when not in use. Signed and sealed by Post Master General Morris on June 21, 1851; signed and sealed by Freeman Rawdon, Nezhiah Wright, George W. Hatch and Tracy R. Edson on July 7.

In February, 1855, the money-order system was first begun, and has within the last few years been greatly extended. Letters seem to have been first registered in 1856. In October of that year the Grand Trunk Railway was completed as far as Toronto so that,

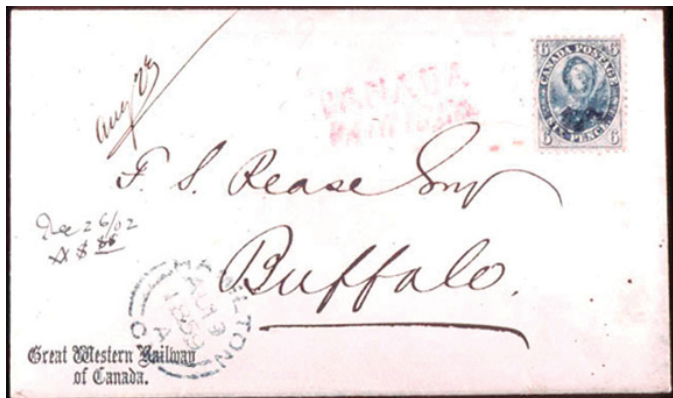


Folded letter to Montreal with "Bytown, U.C., Apr 6 1851" double-ring c.d.s. with manuscript "3" rating on—the first day of the new 3d domestic letter rate notwithstanding distance. The Canadian Government took over the responsibility for the Post Office from the British Government on April 6, 1851. The fact that April 6 in the year 1851 was a Sunday, helps to explain the rarity with only two known examples. (Bytown was renamed Ottawa in 1855 when the city was incorporated.)



Top, 1857 3p red on ribbed paper (Sc. 4c) tied by target cancel on 1858 cover to St. Therese with matching "Mon. & Isld. P.J. Grand Trk. R. Way Oct. 18, 1858" c.d.s.

in connection with the Great Western, an unbroken line of postal communication was established between Quebec in the east and Windsor in the west.



1859 6p brown violet on wove, perf 11-3/4 (Sc. 13) tied by numeral cancel with "Hamilton C.W. Au19, 1859" c.d.s. on cover to Buffalo, corner card at lower left for the Great Western Railway of Canada, also with two-line "Canada Paid 10 Cts" handstamp in red.

The decimal system of coinage was introduced in 1859; this, of course, as is well known, necessitated a new issue of postal labels.

We now arrive at the issue of labels for the new Dominion. The post-office act was passed on the 21st of December, 1867, and came into operation the 1st of April last. The internal rate is reduced from 5 cents to 3 cents the half ounce; but the postage to this country remains unchanged.

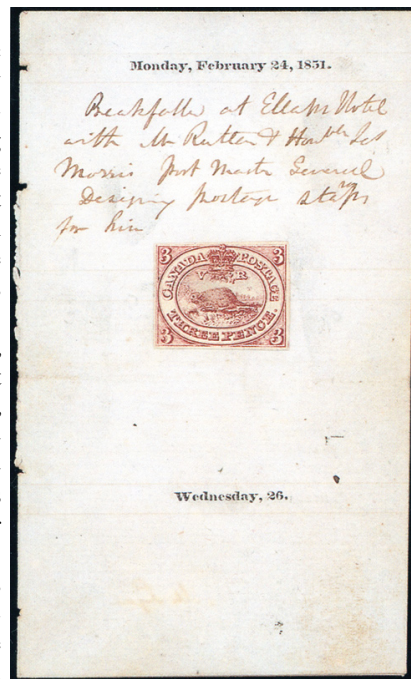
The following is the order for the issue of the new labels:—

Postage Stamps.

To enable the public to prepay conveniently by postage stamp the foregoing rates, the following denominations of postage stamps for use throughout the Dominion, have been prepared, and will be supplied to postmasters for sale:—

Half-cent stamps, one-cent ditto, two-cent ditto, three-cent ditto, six-cent ditto, twelve-and-a-half-cent ditto, fifteen-cent ditto, all bearing as a device the effigy of Her Majesty.

The postage stamps now in use in the several provinces may be accepted, as at present, in prepayment of letters, etc., for a reasonable time after the 1st of April; but from and after that date all issues and sales to the public will be of the new denomination.



February 24, 1851 plate essay with notation that the stamp designer met with Postmaster General Morris "designing postage stamps for him"

To Be Continued

The Stamps of Canada, Chapter I, Part 3

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Chapter I.—Its Postal History (Cont.)

Continuing the postal history from where the article in the *Stamp Collector's Magazine* concludes, we find that in 1869 the color of the 1¢ value was changed to yellow as it was found that the brown-red color was too easily confused with the red of the 3¢ [Scott lists this as orange yellow, Sc. 23. JFD.]. Early in the following year the



3¢ denomination appeared in a reduced size [Sc. 37] to be followed about April by the 1¢ and it was, naturally, presumed that the whole set would appear in this form. Two years elapsed, however, before further additions were made for it was not until 1872 that the 2¢ and 6¢ values appeared.



In 1874, an entirely new value—10 cents [Sc. 40]—was issued and in 1875 a 5¢ stamp [Sc. 26, numbered within the 1868-76 Large Queens] made its appearance in the large size of the 1868 series.



Mr. C. A. Howes, in his admirable monograph on the stamps of Canada, explains the belated appearance of this label as follows:—"The die of this large 5 cent stamp had been engraved in 1867 with the other values of the first Dominion series, but as there were no rates requiring such a denomination in the set, it was not issued. When in 1875 the need for a 5 cent value arose, the unused die was employed to make a plate for temporary use, until a new die conforming in size and design with the small stamps could be prepared." This large 5 cent stamp had a short life of about four months when it was superseded by the 5¢ value in the same size as the other denominations of 1869-73.



In 1882, the 1/2¢ value [Sc. 34] was reduced in size so that this stamp, as in the case of its predecessor of 1868, was smaller than the other denominations. From that date until 1892 no further changes were made so far as new designs or values were concerned though some striking alterations in shade took place, notably in the case of the 6¢ and 10¢ values.



In 1892, 20¢ and 50¢ [Sc. 46, 47] stamps were issued for use on heavy packages. These not only differed in design from the other stamps of the series then



current but were also very much larger.



In 1893 an 8¢ stamp [Sc. 44] was issued which was used for prepayment of postage and the registration fee and upon its advent the special registration stamps ceased to be printed though existing stocks were, presumably, used up.

In 1897, the



Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria was celebrated by the issue of a special series of stamps comprising no less than sixteen values ranging all the way from 1/2¢ to \$5 [shown, a proof of the \$5, Sc. 65P]. As to the utility, to say nothing of the necessity, of some of the higher denominations perhaps the less said the better for before and since Canada has managed to get along very well with a highest regular denomination of 50¢.

In the latter months of the same year, and early in 1898 a new set was issued in a uniform design showing the jubilee portrait of the Queen [shown, Sc. 73]. This is known as the maple leaf issue from the fact that the lower angles are ornamented with maple leaves and in contradistinction to a modified design which almost immediately replaced it which had numerals in the lower corners.

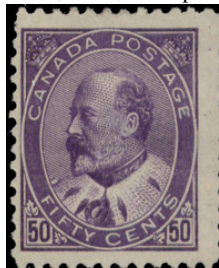


The Christmas of 1898 was marked by the issuance of the celebrated 2¢ map stamp with its proud motto "We hold a vaster Empire than has been".

This stamp [Sc. 85] was issued to mark the introduction of Imperial Penny Postage, and one consequence of the reduction in the postal rate was so to reduce the demand for the 3¢ value that in order to use up existing supplies more quickly they were overprinted "2 cents" [shown, Sc. 88].



In 1899, the color of the 2¢ stamp was changed from purple to carmine, thus conforming to Postal Union regulations. In December, 1900, a 20¢ stamp of the type of 1898 was issued on the final exhaustion of the stock of the 1893 type; and in 1902 a 7¢ value [Sc. 81] was issued in place of the 8¢ for combined use in payment of registration and postage.



In 1903, 1¢, 2¢, 5¢, 7¢, and 10¢ values were issued bearing King Edward's portrait,



a year later the 20¢ value in the same type was placed on sale, and in 1908, the stock of the old 50¢ stamps of 1893 having at last been used up, a King Edward stamp of that value was issued 9p. 22, Sc. 95]. In the same year the three hundredth

anniversary of the founding of Quebec by Champlain was celebrated by the issue of a special set of stamps these being of the same large size as the Jubilee series of 1897, but with a different design for each denomination [shown, Sc. 99, Champlain's home in Quebec] , while in 1912 a new series bearing the portrait of King George V [shown, Sc. 122]



—made its bow and this completes Canada's postal history to date.