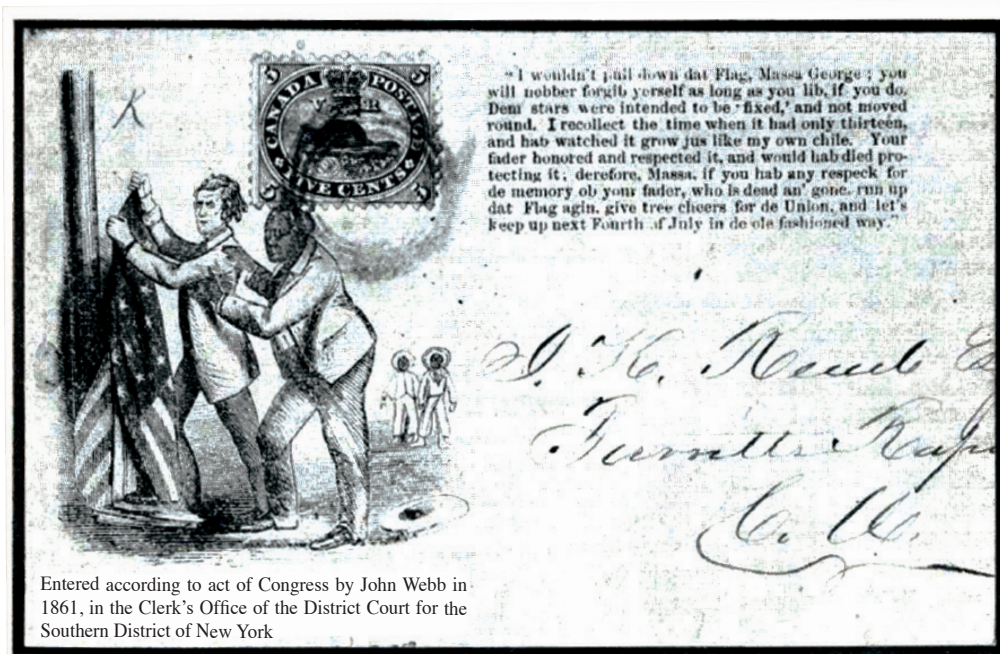


Stamp Specialist:

Victorian Canada—Part 1—Prestamp Period

By Ed Richardson (From the Stamp Specialist Volume 12, The Maroon Book)



A U.S. Civil War Patriotic cover, used from Canada. Purchased at Ogdensburg, N.Y., it was mailed at Prescott, C.W., (just across the St. Lawrence River) to Burritt's Rapids C.W. Prepaid with a Canadian 5¢ '59.

From the Jarrett Collection.

Philatelic Byways Thru 19th Century B.N.A.

VICTORIAN CANADA

By ED RICHARDSON

INTRODUCTION

This article is intended as a "conducted tour" thru some of the many fascinating fields available to collectors and students of 19th century Philatelic Canada,—Victorian Canada. It is addressed primarily, to those who have never collected Canadian stamps, or those who limit their collections by catalogue numbers and insist on leaving out many interesting and worthwhile items, simply because "it isn't listed".

Covering as it does, the entire Victorian period,—it is impossible to do little more than "hit the high spots." But a little digging on some of these high spots will reward the student with a wealth of material deserving of specialization and serious research. Although much has already been written regarding Canada's postal history and stamps, the field is still relatively unexplored,—when compared with what has been accomplished with U. S. material of this same period.

Canadian postal history, together with its political history, expansion, development, customs and traditions, is so deeply related to the U. S., it is natural that Canada should be the most popular "foreign" country among U. S. stamp collectors.

The Pre-Stamp Period

NO collection of Canadian Postal History items of the Victorian period would be truly representative without at least a few examples of the many interesting postal markings which can be found on Canadian stampless covers of the Pre-Stamp period. "The Long Reign" of Queen Victoria began in 1837, and it was not until fourteen years later that the first Canadian adhesive stamps appeared,—the 1851 laid paper, pence issues. Thru the neglect of this Pre-stamp material, the collection of the orthodox stamp collector cannot include a complete philatelic record of this era.



FIG. 2

Some examples of the contributory markings found on Canadian stampless covers.

In many ways this fourteen year period may be considered one of the most interesting in Canadian postal history. During this period occurred the French-Canadian revolt under Papineau (1837-38), the union of Lower and Upper Canada (now Quebec and Ontario) into the Colony of United Canada (1840), the renaming of these two provinces as Canada East and Canada West (1840), the inauguration of regular trans-Atlantic steam packet service (1841), the grant of responsible government to United Canada (1846), and the rapid agricultural development of the present Province of Ontario. These historical trends and events are reflected in the letters and markings of the period.

With the exception of the "Canada" marking in Fig. 2, all postal markings illustrated on these two pages, (figures 2 and 3), are of the Pre-stamp period. The exception is included as an example of the markings used on letters to the U. S. and it was first used in 1851 concurrent with the first stamps, but is most frequently found on stampless covers. Only those stampless covers postmarked before April 23, 1851 can be correctly described as Pre-stamp covers. Stampless covers after this date are common as the prepayment of postage was not made mandatory until October 1, 1875.

Pre-stamp markings may be readily classified into four main groupings: 1) Town and Date, 2) Rate, 3) Ship and 4) Auxiliary. Almost every cover will exhibit some slight difference in markings from any other, so it behooves the collector to select a few of the more outstanding examples to illustrate each group.

Some of the early type town and date markings are illustrated in Fig 3. Of these the best is the Quebec "fleuron." Those illustrated are free-hand tracings from actual covers in the writer's collection, and all types are not represented. Among others not illustrated are the "single straight line town," and the "two line straight line, town and date" postmarks from several towns.

However, the use of these "straight line" markings was almost entirely discontinued before the beginning of the Victorian period.

Two historical town markings which should be in every Canadian collection are, "York"—now known as Toronto, and "By Town" or "Bytown," now Ottawa.

Rate markings of the pre-stamp period are very scarce, except those shown in manuscript. The use of handstamps for indicating rates paid or due did not come into general use until after the advent of postage stamps.

Ship letter marks probably carry the greatest interest, and all Canadian ship markings are scarce to rare. The commonest type is shown in Fig 2, but even this type from "Hamilton" or "Toronto" is very scarce. The "Toronto City" type is too late to be classed as pre-stamp. Some of these markings are very beautiful, for example the single or double lined oval, or circle, ship letter markings with the crown in the center, used from Montreal and Quebec. The rarest ship marks are the straight line (2 lines) types.

Auxiliary or contributory markings are most prolific, but those of the pre-stamp era are largely restricted to various "Money Letter," "Paid," "Too Late," and "Forwarded" marks. In this group should be mentioned the scarce "crowned circle" paid stamps of Montreal and Quebec.

It is my hope that these brief notes may indicate that a volume, or a few pages of pre-stamp material, will add tremendously to any Victorian Canada collection.



FIG. 3
Some examples of Town postal markings found on Canadian pre-stamp covers.

Although the subject of this instalment is Prestamp Canada, I selected some stamped covers with excellent markings or for their rare or unusual usages.

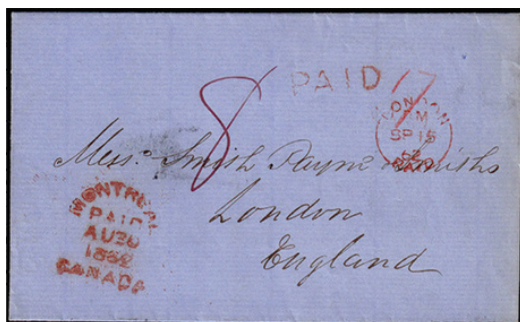
1851 12p
Black on Laid
Paper (Sc. 3),
tied by well-
struck target
cancel on
double-rate
bluish folded
cover to New
York City, red
"Montreal
L.C. Jy 21



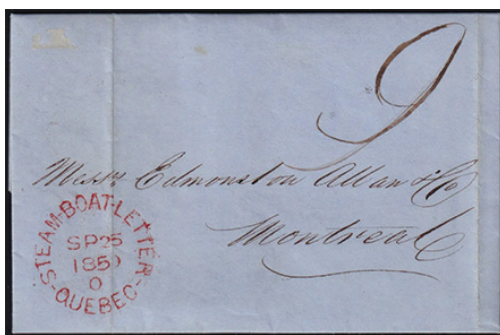
1852" circular datestamp [hereafter c.d.s.], also with matching "Canada" in framed arc cross-border handstamp, and red "Paid" handstamp. The 1851 12-pence stamp was issued for prepayment of the basic letter rate to Newfoundland, Bermuda and the West Indies, but its value—stated in pence rather than "one shilling" to avoid confusion—also corresponded to the double 6p rate to the United States and certain other countries. However, its use was very limited, and most of the printing was destroyed, with only approximately 1,500 stamps sold.

This cover sold for \$230,000 in a 1996 Siegel Galleries auction.

Arc "Montreal PAID AU 20 1862 Canada" to London, England (SP 15 62 PAID) receiver on face, with red "PAID" manuscript 17 for 17¢ rate, 8d Sterling.



Stampless folded letter to Montreal, rated 9d, with bold STEAMBOAT LETTER QUEBEC SP 25 1850 splitting handstamp.



Letter from London, Upper Canada, to Toronto, posted on Thursday, 16th April 1840, but marked "Too Late". The following day, Good Friday, was a holiday,



so the letter would not have been dispatched until 18 April. The "Too Late" mark was applied to mail that arrived in the Post Office after the overnight mail bags had been sealed, the marking explaining the reason for the delay to the sender and the recipient.

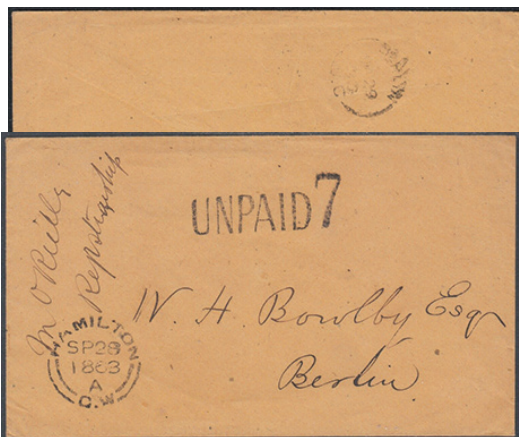
Canada 1872 stampless cover, endorsed O.H.M.S. and addressed to Quebec, originally rated "5" to collect but changed to FREE with bold large type handstamp in black, used in St. Sophie, L.C., double arc dispatch handstamp with filled in manuscript date, a rare FREE handstamp, the largest type recorded



Quebec, Lower Canada to Kingston, Upper Canada, Money Letter, with indistinct QUEBEC, L.C., JUN 13 1843 postmark and PAID AT QUEBEC L.C. Crowned circle handstamp.



1863 stampless cover, Hamilton, Canada West to Berlin, Upper Canada, with "HAMILTON / SP 23, 1863 / C.W." dispatch c.d.s. and large "UNPAID 7", indicating fee due on delivery, also with faint BERLIN next day receiver c.d.s. on reverse.



1855 10p Blue on thick wove paper (Sc. 7a), tied by square grid cancel on 1859 cover to Alton, England, with a clear strike of red "Legislative Assembly, April ?, 1859, Canada" handstamp surrounded by shield and crown, endorsed at lower left by George Macbeth (MPP to the 6th Parliament of the Province of Canada), also with red London transit.

