

# Victorian Canada—Part 2—Canada/U.S. Mail

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

## U. S. - Canadian Postal Relations Prior to 1851

Perhaps the most unusual and least understood chapter of Canada's Postal History is that dealing with U. S. - Canadian postal relations prior to 1851. The first formal postal agreement, that of March 1851, fixed the rates at 10c from the U. S., or its equivalent, 6d from Canada. Letters were thereby fully prepaid from point of mailing to final destination. For data on rates and apparent "working" agreements prior to this date students of Canadian postal history must turn to the study of available cover material, much of which seems to be of a contradictory nature.

Prior to the introduction of postage stamps in the U. S. in 1847, the story seems quite clear. Canada's rates remained unchanged for many years,—4½d up to 60 miles,—7d to 100 miles and 2d extra for each additional 100 miles. Prior to 1843 this rate was on a "sheet" basis. In that year these became the rates per ½ oz.

Pre-stamp covers illustrating the postal arrangements which must have existed prior to 1845, when the U. S. rates were reduced, are quite common. Two in the writer's collection are from Toronto and Hamilton, via Lewiston, N. Y., in 1839 and 1841 respectively. Aside from town markings each cover bears identical markings as follows: (1) a handstamped "Paid" with a manuscript 4½ in red applied in Canada, indicating the Canadian rate *to the border* had been prepaid at point of mailing, being further borne out with a manuscript "Paid to the Lines" on each cover; (2) a "25" in blue manuscript and in the same ink, a line drawn thru "Paid," indicating the U. S. rate of 25c, *due for conveying the letter from the border to its destination,—New York.*

After 1845 the existing U. S. rates were 5c to 300 miles, 10c for over 300 miles. Since the distance from New York to the border was over 300 miles the

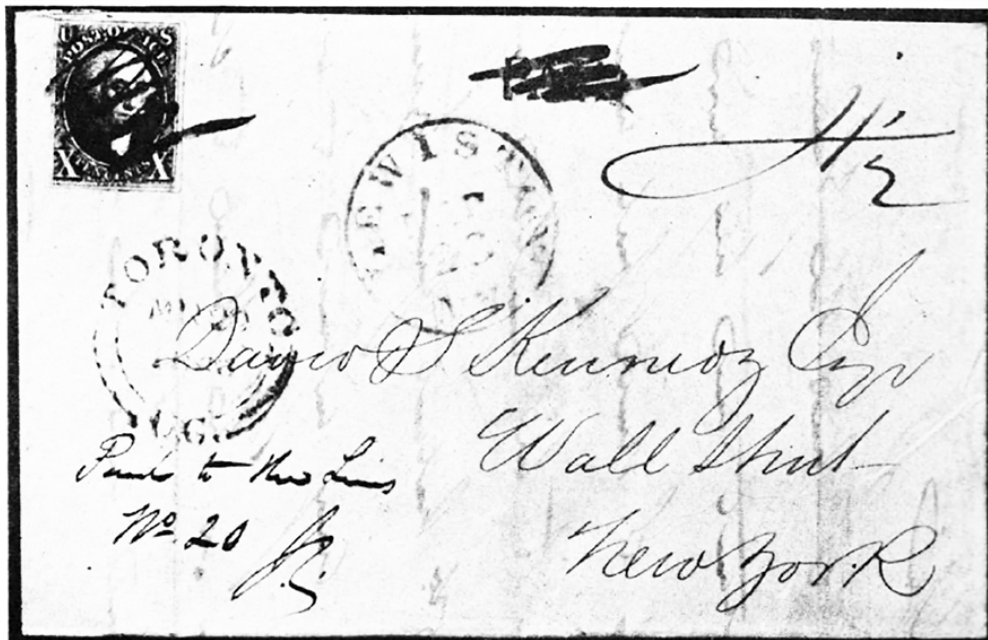


FIG. 4  
The earliest known use of U. S. stamps from Canada to the United States. Toronto, U. C., to New York, via Lewiston, N. Y., March 20, 1848. (See notes).

U. S. rate was 10c. Covers similar to the above, between 1845 and 1847, would bear similar markings, except for the U. S. rate. One would expect similar practices to be continued after the appearance of the U. S. stamps of 1847, so let's look at two covers of this period.

Fig. 4 shows the earliest known use of a U. S. '47 from Canada. This is Jarrett's cover #1 referred to (on pp. 14 and 15, 1929 BNA Book), as "the rate being *prepaid in full* by U. S. Stamps." Fig. 5 is a similar cover, bearing a pair of 5c '47s, with almost identical markings. Were these letters "prepaid in full by U. S. stamps," or did the stamps merely prepay the U. S. rate from the border? The striking similarity of markings on these covers, to those on the pre-stamp covers described above, seems to indicate that the Canadian rate of 4½d was *paid in cash*, while the U. S. stamps paid the U. S. rate *from the border*. If "fully prepaid in U. S. Stamps," then why the 4½d marking?

It is *the writer's belief* that all "across the border" covers, prior to March 1851, should show the Canadian rate *paid in cash*, and the U. S. rate either due at destination, or prepaid with U. S. stamps, but that U. S. stamps were not acceptable in payment of the Canadian postal charge.

The evidence indicates that the U. S. stamps were placed on the letters at the *Canadian point of mailing*, the practice being continued with the appearance of the Canadian 1851 issue. (Fig. 6). U. S. stamps were probably available at Toronto, Montreal and Quebec. In addition, Canadian agents of U. S. firms may have been supplied with U. S. stamps to facilitate their company correspondence.

This practice was apparently continued for some time after the appearance of the first Canadian issue, see Fig. 6.



FIG. 5

Another use of U. S. stamps from Canada to the United States. Pair of 5c '47's used from Montreal to New York, February 15, 1850. (See notes).



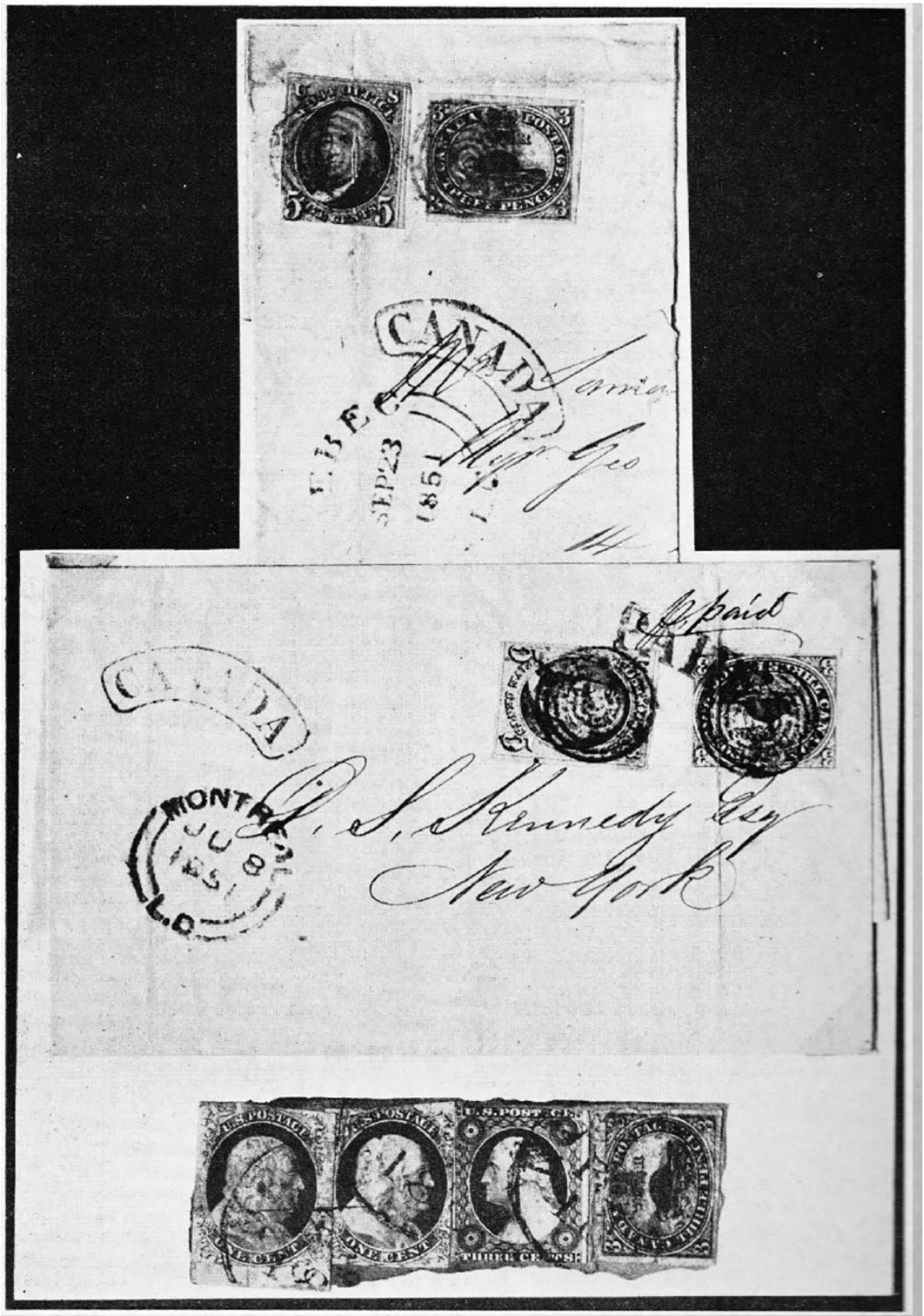
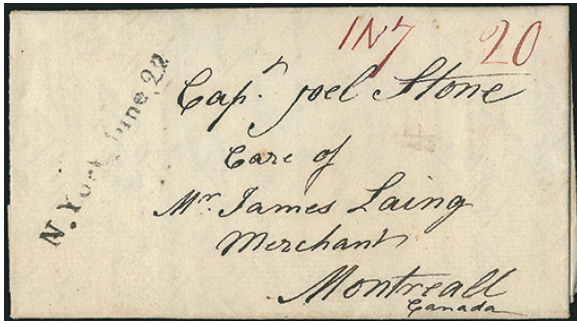


FIG. 6

Examples showing the combination use of U. S. and Canadian stamps to prepay the postage from a Canadian point of mailing to a destination in the U. S. The 3d Canadian stamp prepaid the postage from point of mailing to border, while the U. S. stamps prepaid the postage from the border to the U. S. destination.



## Additional Images



1793 folded letter to Montreal, Canada, with "N. YORK JUNE 22." straightline datestamp, also with red manuscript "20" cents rate for carriage from New York to Burlington Vt. (250-350 miles), re-rated "IN7" for total postage due to recipient (1sh to Burlington plus 7d to Montreal (60-100 miles)).



1807 datelined folded letter to New York, from Quebec with "Quebec 3 Sep" backstamp, face with "PAID." straightline and manuscript "11 1/2" (pence) applied in Quebec for prepayment of postage to Burlington Vt. (200-300 miles), prepaid rates crossed out in Burlington and re-rated "20" (cents) for carriage from Burlington to New York (300-500 miles), also with manuscript "Burlington 10 Sptr." town marking at upper left, Very Fine example of treaty-period mail from Canada to New York, the Canadian postage had to be prepaid on southbound letters, while the U.S. postage could be paid or unpaid—in this case it was unpaid.

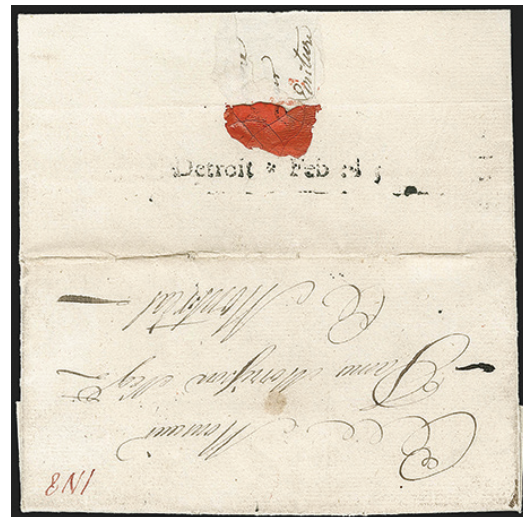


The only recorded use of an 1847 Issue block to Canada. U.S. 5¢ Red Brown (Sc. 1), tied by red square grid cancels, matching "New-York Oct. 27" circular datestamp on blue backed cover front to Montreal. The 5¢ block prepaid 20¢ for the double U.S. 10¢ over-300 miles rate from New York City to the Canadian border. It was rated 9 pence due from the addressee, the Canadian double 4 1/2p rate for under 60 miles from the cross-border exchange point to Montreal.

## A Post Treaty 1851 Cover



A cover in accordance with postal arrangements AFTER the March 1851 Postal Agreement between the U.S. and Canada, bearing Canada and U.S. First Issues, an 1851 3p "Beaver" and a 5¢ 1847, both cancelled in Montreal, each tied by a Canadian 7-ring target cancel, also with red "Montreal L.C. JU 8, 1851" c.d.s., red "CANADA" in framed arc cross-border handstamp, datelined "Montreal, June 7th 1851", sender's notation "p. paid" at top right, red "PAID" arc handstamp applied in New York ties both stamps and confirms that the 5¢ stamp affixed in Canada was accepted as full prepayment.



An exception to the U.S.-Canada postal relations discussed in this article, this letter from Saginaw, Michigan Territory, with the "Detroit" straightline, was mailed while Detroit was still under British occupation after the American Revolution.

The sender, Charles Le Pallier, was a resident of Michilimackinac, but sent this from Saginaw. While part of the United States, Michigan did not become a territory until 1805. After the Revolutionary War, Detroit was maintained by the British as part of Canada. It was not until the Jay Treaty—signed on Nov. 19, 1794, and ratified on Feb. 26, 1796—that Detroit, along with other territory, was ceded to the United States, and the official border between the U.S. and Canada was established.

This folded letter from Saginaw, Michigan Territory, to Montreal via Detroit, Jan. 24, 1792 was addressed to his brother-in-law James Morrison in Montreal. It bears a "Detroit \* Feb :4" straightline datestamp, was carried by express, and was rated "IN8" collect in red for inland Canadian postage at 601-700 miles rate.