

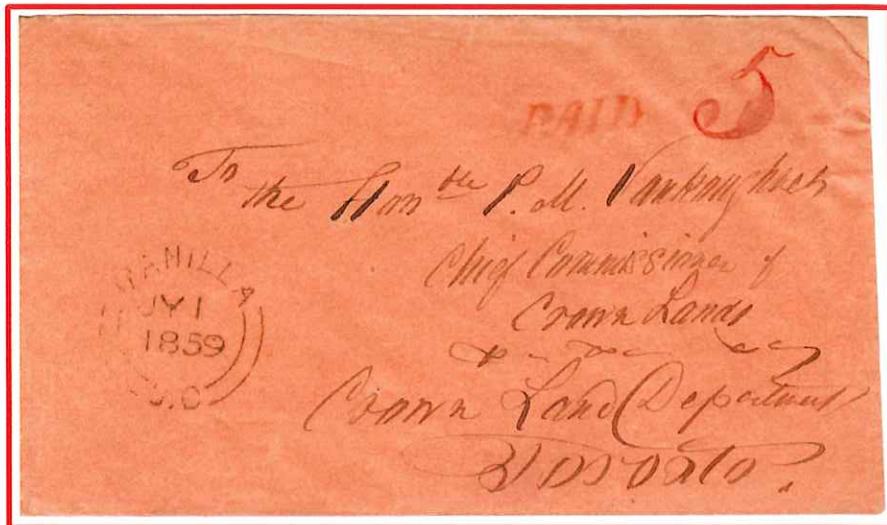
Canadian Postal History: A Rate Study using Decimal-Franked and Stampless Covers (1859 – 1868)

Draft-Final Copy Available Closer to BNAPEX

Purpose and Scope:

Study explores domestic-, interprovincial-, cross border- and international-postal rates and usages using decimal stamps on cover and stampless covers within the decimal period (1 July 1859 to 31 March 1868).

Organization of Exhibit



This eight frame Exhibit is organized as follows:

- Domestic Letter Rates;
- Domestic Unpaid-, Short Paid-, Special-Rates;
- Domestic Registered Rates;
- Domestic Printed Matter, Drop Letter Rates;
- Interprovincial: Letters to Maritimes;
- Interprovincial: Printed Matter to Maritimes;
- Rates to Newfoundland, Labrador;
- Rates to the West: Red River Settlement, British Columbia/Vancouver Island;
- Cross Border to USA: Letter Rates;
- Cross Border: Registered Rates;
- Cross Border: Letter Rates to the West;
- Cross Border: Printed Matter, Short-Paid and Forwarded Mail;

First Day (July 1, 1859) of Use of the 5¢ Prepaid Domestic Rate, ½ oz. or less.
Vincent Graves Greene Certificate, 2014

- Mail to the United Kingdom including Printed Matter, Special Rates and Registered;
- Mail to Foreign Destinations:
 - Europe: France, Belgium, Germany, Norway, Italy, Spain, Gibraltar, Switzerland
 - Caribbean and South America: Barbados, Jamaica, Tobago, Cuba, Peru
 - Other: Australia, India, Mauritius

Background

Decimal (cents) stamp issue of pre-Confederation Canada appears after pence issue. A considerable amount of mail during period was stampless so, in addition to franked envelopes, prepaid-, unpaid- and partially-paid stampless covers are shown. In some cases, stampless covers are the only examples, particularly to overseas destinations where franked examples to some countries do not exist. Covers showing assorted options of payment are found throughout Exhibit including partial payment in cash, overpayment for convenience and unusual combinations of stamps. Besides regular rates, special rates (e.g. soldiers' letter, photograph, neighboring town, parcel post, etc.) are shown. During period, use of illustrated covers (e.g. advertising, hotel, patriotic, telegraph, etc.) expanded greatly and examples are shown which depict an important part of Canadian postal history. Printed matter rates are examined including wrappers, printed circulars, prices current and franked entire newspapers.

At beginning of each chapter, a short coverage of postal rates pertaining to a particular type of mail is given. It should be noted that, particularly for international mail, confusion of rates existed either because the Canadian Postal Guide didn't specify the rate or the information was sketchy or misunderstood by postal clerks. Some examples of these inconsistencies are presented where appropriate.

Throughout Exhibit are many examples of unique covers where according to Firby listing (1) are only known examples. In other cases, only a few rate covers have survived and are indicated as: 3 known, 5 known, etc. Several decimal covers have certificates of authenticity and they are identified by year and granting body. The provenance of well-known decimal covers is noted. Significant covers to an unusual destination or with special franking will be identified by an outline frame in red.

1) Charles G. Firby, *The Postal Rates of Canada: 1851-1868, The Provincial Period- A Recording, Part II*, for Canada 1859 Issue Stamps, 1976; revised September 1, 1984.

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Purpose of Exhibit

The exhibit shows the use of postal rates starting with simplest single domestic letter (1/2 oz and below) and non-letter and printed matter rates within pre-Confederation Canada to more complex rates to foreign destinations. Examples of franked- and stampless-covers will illustrate rates. Study will look at such variations as unpaid letters, special rates outside of the normal mail flow and show conflicting rates or misunderstood rates that originated within postal system of the time.

Exhibit Plan

Exhibit will begin with postal rates inside of pre-Confederation Canada (consisting of Canada West and Canada East), eastern interprovincial rates to Maritimes (Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island), mail to Newfoundland and Labrador, mail cross border to United States, to western interprovincial mail as far as British Columbia and Vancouver Island, mailing rates to the United Kingdom and finally rates to Europe, the Caribbean, and beyond Suez.

Observations

At this time in Canadian postal history, pre-paid mail wasn't required so oftentimes, a letter was sent without any franking requiring the recipient to pay the postal rate as well as a penalty. At other times, sender could pay proper rate for the letter at the post office in cash and no stamps were affixed. Also, sender could pay postage and a stamp was affixed but extra charges, for example registration, were paid in cash. Sometimes, registration was paid in stamps and postage paid with cash. So, all of these possibilities somewhat complicate a rate study but also generate interesting examples for further research. Similar to today, many special rates and services were available. Within British Empire, regular soldiers had a uniform 2¢ rate but officers did not get a special rate. There was parcel post for bulky packages and lower rates for deliveries to adjacent towns or for ferriage rates across a lake or river. Photographs, fairly uncommon at the time, had their own reduced rate. For overseas, British packet and Canadian packet mail had different rates. The list goes on. Fortunately, since the decimal period (often referred to as cents period) occurred early in philatelic history of Canada just after pence period, a number of studies have been performed on these rates including a 1976 census by Charles Firby [1], noted postal historian and dealer, a catalog by Firby and Willson [2] and an on-line update by Vic Willson [2], a book by collectors Art Leggett (also a dealer) and George Arfken [3] and a rate study by postal historian extraordinaire the late Allan Steinhart [4] covering a wide period (1711-1900). Articles in philatelic journals such as *BNA Topics* and the *Postal History Society of Canada Journal* and other journals have featured specialized rate studies that cover some aspect of Decimal period.

Nevertheless, examples of some decimal rates are hard to come up with since, according to the Firby listing, there may only be a single documented example (or perhaps only 2-3). New undocumented rates, different frankings of known rates and new examples of undocumented rate covers continue to appear; so, I have endeavoured to continue to pursue this area of classical Canadian postal history. In fact, I am currently working with BNAPS Books Department on a new book showing Leggett's award winning decimal collection that gives some great examples of decimal stamps and postal history of this era. Some covers from Art's superb collection and exhibit are displayed in my Exhibit.

Other than United Kingdom and to a lesser extent France, foreign destinations of decimal covers are particularly hard to find. With exception of Australia (8 total covers) and New Zealand (2 covers), there is a dearth of Asian covers. For example, missing from this exhibit is a Kip Missionary cover to China. Only, 12 Kip covers have been documented. It appears that the Chinese government is acquiring pieces of their culture and history (including antiques, coins, stamps and postal history) that left China over the years. I have lost two Kip covers in recent auctions to agents bidding on behalf of the Chinese government with aggressive acquisition budgets! On the other hand, I have found undocumented franked and stampless decimal era covers to Spain, Tobago, Germany, Gibraltar (I published study on newly discovered covers in Ref. [5]), Switzerland and Norway and even to the United Kingdom, all shown in this Exhibit. These "finds" as well as the research involved will be pointed out when cover is shown.

Items of Impact in the Exhibit

Items of importance will be boxed with a red border in this Exhibit. The following decimal items are highlighted:

Domestic Letter Rates: earliest known Canadian patriotic cover featuring illustration of Prince of Wales (1860) (I have researched this portion of Canadian postal history [6]); a bisected 10¢ Consort paying the 5¢ rate; largest paid cover in decimal era (\$1.42 postage); USA Civil War patriotic cover (I have also researched this area in detail [7]).

Special Domestic Rates: countersigned 2¢ soldier's letters to and from a soldier; 25¢ parcel post; 2¢ ferriage; 2¢ neighboring town; 2¢ double letter drop rate.

Domestic Registered Mail Rates: sextuple weight, 5¢ Nesbitt envelope with 2c registration paid with stamps.

Printed Matter (Non-Letter) Rates: octuple (8X) printed matter; 1¢ Newspaper (entire); Double weight newspaper wrapper.

Interprovincial Letters to Maritimes: 12½¢ special winter rates via Boston to Nova Scotia and New Brunswick; only registered cover to Maritimes; double circular rate to Nova Scotia.

Letters to Newfoundland and Labrador: only registered cover to Newfoundland (NF); double rate cover to NF; only recorded letters to (a registered cover) and from Labrador.

Letters to the West: franked cover to Red River Settlement; franked cover from RR Settlement via Pembina using US postage stamp; all three single rates (10¢, 15¢ and 25¢) to British Columbia and Vancouver Island one with a black-brown 10¢ Consort franking; the only decimal registered cover to British Columbia.

Cross Border to USA: early Canadian ensign flag patriotic; 10¢ Black-brown Consort; 25¢ registered cover (highest value registered postage paid); registered US Civil War patriotic used in Canada (reg. paid with cash) to NYC, blockade cover to Confederacy during US Civil War; both rates (10¢, 15¢) to California; 15¢ rate to Oregon (stampless); double printed matter rate.

Mail to the United Kingdom: triple-, quadruple-, quintuple- and 12X-Canadian packet rate (2nd largest decimal franking that exists); three colour 51¢ Cunard triple packet; 62 ½ ¢ quadruple registered Canadian rate (3 covers, one with cash payment for registration only, one with stamp payment for postage and registration and third with all cash payment); registered Cunard cover to Scotland with registration paid in cash with a Crown registered handstamp; double printed circular; franked 1¢ newspaper (entire); Cunard 15¢ reduced rate paid with decimal stamps before Large Queen stamps became available; 2¢ soldiers rate to Ireland.

Mail to Foreign Destinations: 51¢ Triple Cunard rate to France; 5¢ printed matter to France; 28¢ Cunard rate to Germany; double printed matter, single and double letter rate to Switzerland; 27¢ rate to Norway; 29¢ rate to Italy; illegal free frank to Denmark; 23¢ Empire rate to Gibraltar; including military officer's forwarded; 23¢ to Jamaica; 30¢ to Cuba; 30¢ to Tobago, forwarded; 25¢ to Peru; 23¢ rate to Australia, one via England and Suez and a second via Panama; stampless to India and Mauritius.

Throughout Exhibit, there will be examples of illustrated covers (e.g. themes include hotel, Canadian- and US Civil War-patriotic, telegraph, insurance, agriculture, manufacturing, religion) which, in the absence of TV, radio, etc. were a major vehicle for advertising and promotional events during the 1860s. These examples show major activities that were central to everyday life over 150 years ago. Still, early illustrated covers from the 1860s are difficult to find.

References

- 1) Charles G Firby, *The Postal Rates of Canada: 1851-1868, The Provincial Period- A Recording, Part II*, for Canada 1859 Issue Stamps, 1976; revised September 1, 1984.
- 2) Charles G Firby and Victor L Wilson, Volume 1, *The Canadian Posted Letter Guide, The Classic Period, 1851-1902*, Charles G Firby Publications, Waterford, MI (1996); updated but not available in hard copy by Vic Willson (2009); web-based copy on BNAPS website (www.BNAPS.org).
- 3) GB Arfken and AW Leggett, *Canada's Decimal Era, 1859-1868*, Vincent Graves Greene Philatelic Research Foundation, Toronto, ON, Canada, 1996.
- 4) Alan Steinhart, edited by Gray Scrimgeour, *The Rates of Postage of Canada 1711-1900, Including Some Rules and Regulations Regarding Rating and Treating of the Mails*, Postal History Society of Canada (2011).
- 5) Ronald E Majors, Charles Black and Richard M Lamb, "Canada-Gibraltar Correspondence During the Decimal Period (1859-1868)", *BNA Topics*, Vol 67(#3), Whole #524, Jul/Sep 2010, p. 20-24.
- 6) Ronald E. Majors and CR McGuire, A Princely Tour: The 1860 Royal Visit of the Prince of Wales to British North America and the United States, Part I, *BNA Topics*, Vol. 73 (#3), Jul-Sep 2016, p. 10-16; Part II, *BNA Topics*, Vol. 73 (#4), Oct-Dec 2016, p. 25-29.
- 7) Ronald E Majors, "United States Civil War Patriotic Covers Used in Canada", *BNA Topics*, Vol 68(#2), Whole #527, Apr/Jun 2011, p. 6-24.