

# THE CANADIAN POSTED LETTER GUIDE FOR MAIL IN THE 1851 - 1902 PERIOD

CATALOGUE AND EVALUATION GUIDE, 2nd Edition

BY

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All items are listed and priced in Canadian currency

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Philatelic collectors and dealers are authorized to make reference to these listings and valuations as long as proper reference is made to this work by title and edition (or year date published).

## FORWARD (1st Edition)

This listing has been intended for approximately 15 years. As happens so frequently, our days get shorter as they move on, and this manuscript was put aside time and again. Finally my good friend Vic Willson created an outline (with much completed content) before passing the draft on to me. Of course, he knew that this action coupled with his previous efforts would force me to take the bull by the horns and complete this long overdue project.

Simply put, if it hadn't been for Vic, you would undoubtedly not be holding this humble first effort in your hands.

This catalogue is the first volume of a series intended to provide a pricing guide to the covers of Canada and the British North America provinces (which eventually joined Confederation). While this is an extremely ambitious endeavor, and any catalogue of this sort will at best provide only a general indicator of price for the more unusual covers, the present demand is being supplied only by other guides that give a value for a single stamp used on cover. This, unfortunately, can only mislead the collector. (As will be seen, value may vary from one to five hundred times the price for apparently similar items.)

The pricing provided is based on our experience as collectors, retailers and auctioneers and in addition has taken into account the pricing provided by several knowledgeable dealers and collectors of BNA postal history.

The prices shown are, therefore, our estimate of the retail price a collector can expect to pay for an item “if it can be located”. Please keep in mind that values do fluctuate and as such those listed may not be realistic. All valuations noted are in Canadian currency.

Stampless covers are valued with rate marking determined **by the presence of a handstamp**; not manuscript rated. It has long been known by serious collectors that the classic period in Canadian philately is characterized by far fewer covers than is comparable for the U.S., Great Britain, or European countries. The fact that Canada is the second most collected country by U.S. collectors, and is also widely collected in England, Australia, South Africa, Switzerland and Germany, impacts pricing drastically. As knowledge of the true rarity of Canadian covers becomes widespread, the values listed in this catalogue will in the future, it is believed, appear to be bargains. That is not to say that earlier cataloguers did not recognize this rarity. They reflected, as we do, the collecting interests of their time. If covers are not sought after, the price remains low, regardless of rarity. This fact reflects that the market is, of course, driven by two factors: demand as well as supply. The shift in philately toward postal history that has taken place over the past 30+ years continues at this time unabated. It will inexorably continue moving cover prices upward, and it is entirely possible that they could reach levels that would astonish older collectors, who will undoubtedly cry, “I could have gotten that for a song”. This first edition of the catalogue contains cover listings for the stamps of Canada from the issues of 1851 to 1902. Future editions will be expanded to include the pre-adhesive period, more recent material, as well as the BNA provinces. We hope you find it useful.

## FOREWORD (2nd Edition)

This second edition is based on, but intended to expand on, the contents of the first edition. Further, while the first edition was a modestly commercial project, this edition is not being sold but instead is provided free to all users through the British North America Philatelic Society (BNAPS) website at [www.bnaps.org](http://www.bnaps.org). All rights remain reserved, however, with the authors. With almost 13 years since publication of the original version, much has changed in Canadian postal history, most notably the Internet with its tremendous information flow.

Most of the revision has been done by the first author for this edition, based on an extensive library, communication with fellow collectors, the Confederation Study Group of BNAPS, and review and support by many collectors.

The intent of this edition is to list all recorded rates and frankings for the postal history of Canada between 1851 and 1902. While in the first edition we listed a sample of rates and frankings, especially for the Small Queen and later issues, in this edition we attempt to provide a comprehensive listing that can be used to compare new finds against. In our experience, new finds are occurring almost weekly, and we make no claim the listings are complete or ever will be. For example, in the month of March 2009, a newly recorded stampless Pence rate to Spain, a stampless Decimal rate to Spain, a new franking for a registered Small Queen cover to Constantinople, and a registered Small Queen cover to Baghdad were all listed in European auctions and to our recording never before seen or listed. We encourage readers and users of this work to email us through the BNAPS website to add to the listing. We intend to make it dynamic and add new items periodically. The difficulty with a continuously changing work is that users will be confused if they have the current version, so we will set up an email notification process for any user who wishes to be informed of changes. The specifics will be detailed and new listings displayed in a new color each year. We anticipate making changes only once or twice a year to add new listings into the database, but we will have a separate ongoing listing so new items can be immediately made available to users.

Philately at its best is an interactive hobby with free exchange of information. While there are some who unfortunately hoard their knowledge, they are the losers in the long run, since their failure to share also leaves them out of the loop for new knowledge that they can apply in their own collecting. For those who do share, we hope this work gives them new ideas, information to interpret their material, and a perspective on their collecting.

In our somewhat grand original Foreword, we noted that the guide was to be the first of five spanning the Canadian postal history eras to the present. That is no longer a likely outcome, but a more modest possibility is that the first author will produce a work on the Edwards and Admirals, and possibly extending to 1939. That is in the future, however.

The **division** of the *Guide* is based on the issues of 19<sup>th</sup> century Canada. Each issue is divided into the following sections:

- DOMESTIC
- INTERPROVINCIAL
- UNITED STATES
- UNITED KINGDOM
- FOREIGN

Each section is divided again into the following subsections:

- Letter mail
- Registered letter mail
- Special non-letter mail

For each subsection, rates are listed from smallest to largest recorded. This is intended to facilitate determining the various frankings that we have recorded. It also makes figuring out what a rate was intended to pay for somewhat easier, although in some cases this must be inferred.

**Definition:** A *cover* is an envelope or folded sheet(s) of paper with an address sent through the mails; it may have stamps (frankings) or only printed or manuscript numbers indicating the amount paid for the rate.

## ABOUT CONDITION

**Very Fine** covers are fresh appearing, with no creases, stains or tears. Cancels are clean, and stamp(s) are generally fine or better. Back flaps are present, and no additional extraneous writing is present on the front. Docketing such as a receiving date is acceptable and may even add to the cover's value by confirming the period of use.

**Fine covers** may have small edge tears but nothing beyond a few millimeters. They may have slight soiling and cancels may be harder to read but are identifiable. The covers are intact without unsightly stains, writing, or scuffs; stamps may have slight damage not obvious or detracting.

**Average covers** may have a small tear or stain. The back flap may be missing. Some docketing or writing may be present but not hide the address or cancels. Some cancels may be too light to read. Covers in condition worse than average should be generally valued at a fraction of the average price. Of course, very rare rates or usages are subject to demand that render such valuations irrelevant.

**Pricing.** We provide three levels of quality of covers as discussed above. When we had reasonable evidence for different auction or sale prices at various quality levels, we provide values at each level. In many cases there are too few examples to reliably differentiate values. Particularly in these cases, our valuations are mostly indicators of the degree of rarity and desirability. In many instances a particular rate is at this time unique – only one example recorded. Uniqueness does not always translate into equal valuation, however. It is a simple fact that higher frankings with high value stamps generally sell for higher prices than equally rare covers paying obscure or lower rates.

## HOW TO USE THIS CATALOG

1. Identify the Canadian stamp issue, or if stampless, the year of mailing from any date cancels. Use a standard catalog for stamps to place the cover into the earliest issue grouping: Pence, Decimal, Large Queen, Small Queen, Jubilee, Leaf, Numeral series or Map stamp.
2. Identify the destination for the cover. Covers may only have a name and a. street address (sent within a town), b. town name; c. town and province; d. town and country.
3. Decide if the cover is registered; this was a special procedure to make sure the cover was delivered by keeping track of it from origination to destination. In the vast majority of cases the word REGISTERED is on the cover either as a printed handstamp (rubber or metal stamping device) or hand-written. Usually there are several numbers corresponding to the tracking of the cover from one town or mail clerk to the next; the number was written in a book to record the tracking.

4. Identify the total face value of the stamps attached to the cover or written or stamped number indicating amount. Until 1859, Canada used the British currency of pence, so covers before July 1, 1859, must be calculated in pence – 12 pence = 1 shilling. Stampless covers generally have a manuscript notation such as 4½, indicating 4 and one-half pence, or 1/2, which would indicate 1 shilling and 2 pence, or equivalently 14 pence. In early covers, there are other numbers that were used to account for parts of the total rate, particularly for covers that went out of country. A franking with stamps means the particular combination of stamps used to pay the total rate. Thus, a 6 cent franking might be made up of two 3¢ stamps or three 2¢ stamps, two different frankings.

5. Compare the stamp franking on your cover with those listed in the *Guide*. The greatest confusion may occur when the same rate may be found under different subsections. Thus, a drop letter in 1869 (mailed in the same city) was 1¢, as was the printed matter rate. If the cover was sent from one town to another for 1¢, it has to be a printed matter item since the letter rate between towns was 3¢ per half oz. at that time. We do not provide an extensive explanation of rates, as this would be a series of books, which have already been written by George Arfken and colleagues and the Duckworths. As your cover collection increases, it is well worth building a reference library for this material, as the price paid for these books pays for itself many times in finding good material that is underpriced by the less knowledgeable sellers.

6. If you are sure there is no listing for your item, you may have a new find. The authors are quite happy to help determine what you have. Sometimes the item fits into a subsection that was not examined, but be assured we also make such mistakes – don't worry about it. At present you can contact us at our email addresses, which can be found on the BNAPS website at [www.bnaps.org](http://www.bnaps.org). We hesitate to put an email address on this as such things change over time.

NOTE: it is almost always a BAD idea to remove stamps from the cover. Many rare and potentially expensive covers have been ruined by such actions. Covers with the stamps missing typically sell for a small fraction of what they would bring with the original stamps affixed.

Keep covers separated from each other, and for 19<sup>th</sup> century covers it is best to store them on acid-free paper using high quality supports such as gummed corner mounts. These are available from dealers such as Phillip Hartmann or various philatelic supply companies. Do not clean a cover yourself; this is a specialized expertise and inexpert attention can ruin a cover. Do not separate multiple examples that are still intact on the cover. These are termed pairs or blocks and often add significantly to a value. We did not differentiate covers with blocks from covers with single stamps in our listings, but you can expect to pay or receive more from a cover with a block of four than a cover with four separated stamps for the same rate.

## ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Other considerations to value that we were not able to address in this work include:

1. Advertising – printed advertising can add significantly to value. The fancier the advertising and the earlier it is can command great additional value. A simple printed return in general will have minimal additional value, while a pictorial display across the entire cover may be extremely scarce and multiply the cover value several times. Advertising on the front adds more than on the back. Some collectors accumulate advertising by thematic area, such as Expositions and Fairs, Animals and Farming, Guns and Ammunition, Manufacturing items, Patriotic themes, and Hotels. The visual impact can be quite stunning for such material.

2. Fancy Cancels – beginning in the late 1860s and continuing in some form through the end of the century, some postmasters purchased or made their own cancelling devices to obliterate the stamps. These include letters and numbers, geometric designs, leaf, flower, crosses, crowns, stars, and many other ingenious forms. A clean fancy cancel neatly tying a stamp to a cover has the same visual impact as an advertising cover and is often highly desirable and thus enhanced in value. As with much in this catalogue, earlier and fancier increases value accordingly. There are relatively few fancy cancels to be found by 1900 compared to three decades earlier.

3. Post card – we do not list post card rates here, as there is a very good catalog, *Webb's Postal Stationery Catalogue*, by Covert and Walton, that provides basic guidance for these, as well as all postal stationery material. We do list postal stationery when it is part of a franking with stamps in this *Guide*.

4. Postal stationery – Canada’s stamp-imprinted postal stationery is beyond the scope of this book. Classifications include envelopes, government-issued postal cards, post bands, aerogrammes, and wrappers with preprinted stamp impressions. Postal stationery generally is inexpensive, with most items under \$10, but varieties and rarities can command significant prices. We list some postal stationery items when they have postage stamps added to make up a rate. Since such material was generally not sent overseas until after 1878, most such listings are in the Small Queen and following periods. For more information on postal stationery, readers can consult the *Webb’s Postal Stationery Catalog of Canada and Newfoundland 7th edition* by editors Earle L. Covert and William C. Walton. This is available through philatelic booksellers.

## FURTHER PHILATELIC REFERENCES

The number and quality of Canadian philatelic references available have increased tremendously in the last 15 years. Users of this catalog can now find a reference to almost every item listed in this catalog in one or another of the published books on the various topics of the table of contents. We list below major works for each:

**Pence Issue:** *Canada’s Pence Era The Pence Stamps and the Canadian Mail 1851 – 1859* by George Arfken, Arthur W. Leggett, Charles G. Firby, & Allan L. Steinhart, Toronto: V. G. Greene Foundation, 1997.

**Decimal Issue:** *Canada’s Decimal Era 1859- 1868* by George Arfken & Arthur W. Leggett, Toronto: V. G. Greene Foundation, 1996.

**Large Queen Issue:** *The Large Queen Stamps of Canada and Their Use (2nd Ed.)* by H. E., & H. W. Duckworth, Toronto: V. G. Greene Foundation, 2008.

**Small Queen Issue:** *Canada’s Small Queen Era 1870 – 1897* by George Arfken, Toronto: V. G. Greene Foundation, 1989.

**Small Queen Issue:** *Canada’s Postage Stamps of the Small Queen Era, 1870 – 1897* by John Hillson and J. Edward Nixon, Toronto: V. G. Greene Foundation, 2008.

**Jubilee-Leaf-Numeral Issue:** *A Canadian Postal History, 1897 - 1911* by George B. Arfken & William S. Pawluk, British North America Philatelic Society, 2006.

**Registration Issue:** *Canada’s Registered Mail 1802 – 1909* by Horace W. Harrison, George B. Arfken & Harry W. Lussey (Ed. by K. Gray Scrimgeour), Chicago: Collectors’ Club of Chicago, 2002.

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