

15 Decades of Mail from Britain to Canada

– Rates and Efficiency of Service

Synopsis of Exhibit

PURPOSE: To provide review, in one frame, of the postal service between Great Britain and British North America (B.N.A.) from 1850 to 1999. 'Canada' has been used in the title but B.N.A. has been used on the graphs to reflect the fact that the early part of the period occurred before Confederation.

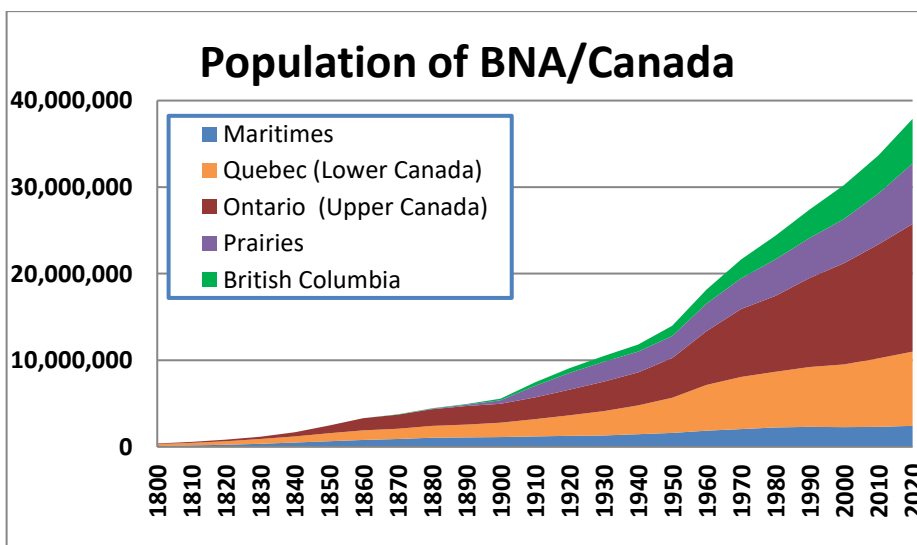
SCOPE: Emphasis is on postal rates and efficiency of service. The goal is to provide a simple exhibit where different decades can be easily compared. Each page is devoted to a single decade providing brief notes on key issues which impacted the postal rates and efficiency, the statistics are summarised in a table at the top of each page.

PERSONAL RESEARCH: I have been accumulating examples of mail between Great Britain and BNA (Canada) for 40+ years. In recent years, I have become more interested in mail which can tell a story of efficiency. Efficiency determination requires evidence of both a date of mailing (typically a postmark) and date of arrival at destination (typically a receiver stamp from the local receiving office), other evidence of arrival dates come from corporate mail rooms, notes from the recipient, forwarding dates etc.)

Examples that provide this information have been entered into a database. To date, I have recorded over 900 examples from the period 1800 to Present. Many of these are in my collection but other data has been obtained from internet sales, auction catalogues, philatelic articles and input from other collectors. A summary of the data is represented in two graphs on Page 1 which reflect the applicable Postal Rates of the period and the Efficiency of Delivery. A complete documentation of findings is in preparation.

ORGANISATION AND TREATMENT: Pages 2-16 are each devoted to a single decade showing key impacts on the mail service and a summary of rates and efficiency. This Exhibit is not intended to be a complete investigation of the topic but to provide a quick reference with a few examples shown for each decade.

CHALLENGE: With the exception of the period 1860 to start of WW1, and early Trans-Atlantic Air mail (1939), finding good dated examples to illustrate efficiency of service (mailing date and arrival date) is difficult to impossible. Since WW2 virtually all dated examples have come from 'Special delivery' type mail. Modern items are rarely found but are more likely to be found in bulk lots, and dealer's bargain boxes than they are in high end sales.



RARITY: The population of BNA in 1850 was ~2.5 Million (concentrated in the Maritime Colonies + Lower Canada (≡Quebec) and Upper Canada (≡ Ontario) growing to ~30 Million in 2020. Much early population came from Britain so there has been a

large volume of mail from Britain to Canada. However, the volume of mail that meets the criteria of having legible mailing date and evidence of receipt is a tiny fraction. Modern material is particularly difficult to find.

I am not aware of any previous research that quantifies this material. Many items are the only examples I have found to date, some of these are high-lighted with blue dots. **I have referred to these as 'Rare or Unusual' as it will involve considerably more research to quantify 'Rarity'.**

RARE or UNUSUAL ITEMS

Page 2: 1852 double rate with postage paid using stamps.

Page 3: 1868 Early usage of 7d rate to Canada West via USA.

Page 4: 1871 Envelope with postage paid 3d underpaying the 6d ($\frac{1}{2}$ -1oz) rate. 4½d due (3d Postage+ 1½d fee), converted to 12c due (Canadian Currency).

1875 3d to Victoria via USA to Justice Crease the first Attorney General of British Columbia (pre-Trans Canada railway), 41 days to deliver.

Page 6: 1896 Post card – **quickest delivery by Surface mail (7 days)**. Dated cancel and receiver are shown together.

1899 'Hands Across the Sea – A Penny All the Way' Celebrating the British Empire 1d Post (25 Dec 1898). Very fragile paper – unusual for quality and destination Moosomini, Assiniboia, NWT.

Page 7: 1901 Post Card, delivered in 8 days - one of only two, 20th Century, Surface mail items delivered in 8 days that I have found

Page 9: 1920 Registered letter the only dateable item I've found during the short-lived 2d Empire Rate.

1929 Sent Surface across the Atlantic and by Air in Canada at the **short-lived 8½d rate**. By 1930 rate had reduced to 5½d (Page 10). Trans-Atlantic Air Mail to Canada not available until 1939.

Page 11: 1944 the slow airmail deliveries during WW2.

Page 14: 1977 unsealed letter paid at the surface rate of 7Pbut sent by airmail in 7 days.

Page 16: 1997 letter delayed by Canada Post rotating strikes.

Some of the items presented are quite valuable, others are regular usages but may not have been preserved in significant numbers. I am hoping to use this exhibit to encourage collectors to take a look at their holdings and advise of examples they have that could be added to my database.

Exhibit was first shown at RPSC Virtual Stamp Show (October 2021) where it achieved a Large Vermeil. Exhibit has been extensively revised with 9 new covers and changes to the write-up.

REFERENCES:

Comprehensive listing of International Postal Rates 1875 to Present: [GB Postal Rates \[Great Britain Philatelic Society\] \(gbps.org.uk\)](http://gbps.org.uk)

[Transatlantic Mail SG \(bnaps.org\)](http://bnaps.org) TransAtlantic Study Group newsletters, 70 published between 1986-1999. Provided many examples of early covers and rates including some with routes and dates.

Arnell, J.C. Steam and the North Atlantic Mails. Published by Unitrade, 1986.

Up-dated 13th January 2022