

15 Decades of Mail from Britain to Canada

– **Rates and Efficiency of Service. Synopsis of Exhibit (updated 10 July 2022)** - Additional graphs are shown in this synopsis to provide further background to my total study which is currently in preparation.

PURPOSE: To provide review, in one frame, of 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. is used on the graphs to reflect the fact that early part of period occurred before Confederation.

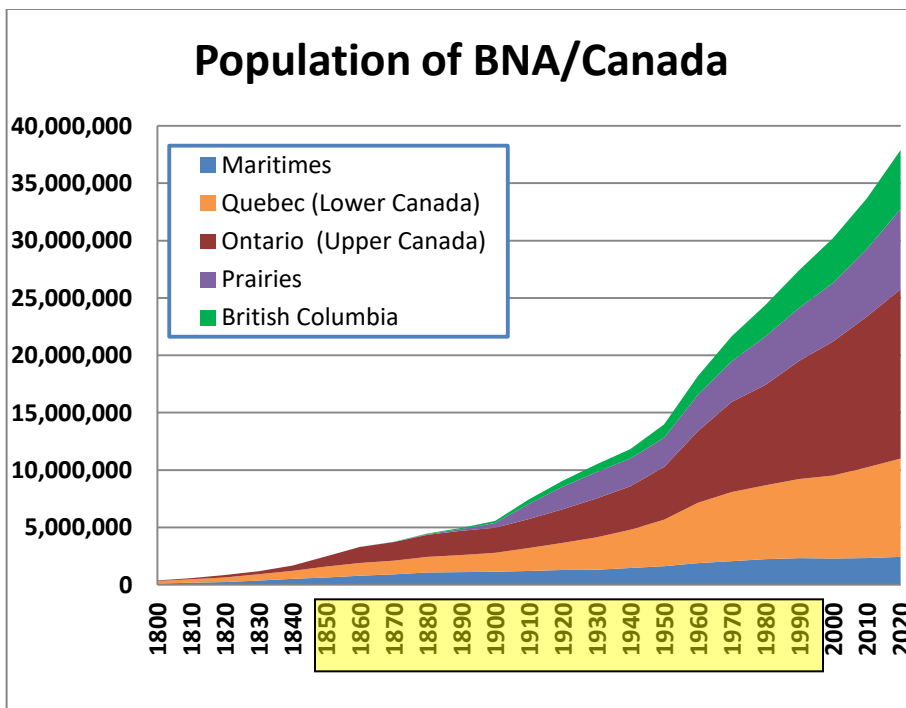
SCOPE: Emphasis is on efficiency and postal rates. Goal is to provide a simple exhibit where different decades can be easily compared. Each page is devoted to a single decade providing brief notes on issues impacting postal rates and efficiency, the statistics are summarised at top of each page in a consistent format.

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 mailing date (typically a postmark) and arrival date (typically a receiver stamp), other evidence of arrival dates come from corporate mail rooms, notes from recipient, forwarding dates etc.)

To date, >1000 examples from period 1800 to Present have been recorded in a database. Many of these are in my collection but other data have been obtained from internet sales, auction catalogues, philatelic articles and input from other collectors. A summary of efficiency is presented in a graph on Title page which reflects 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 mail service and 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: Finding good dated examples to illustrate efficiency of service (mailing date and arrival date) is difficult to impossible except for period 1860 to start of WW1, plus early Trans-Atlantic Air mail (1939). 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: Population of BNA in 1850 was ~2.5 Million (concentrated in the Maritime Colonies + Lower Canada (≡Quebec) and Upper Canada (≡ Ontario) growing to ~27 Million in 1999. Much early population came from Britain so there has been a large volume of mail from Britain to Canada. However, preserved volume of mail that meets dateable criteria of legible mailing date and evidence of receipt is a tiny fraction. Modern material is particularly difficult to find.

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

RARE or UNUSUAL ITEMS

Page 2: 1850 single rate with postage paid using stamps – an early example.

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

Page 4: 1875 3d to Victoria via USA to Justice Crease the first Attorney General of British Columbia (pre-Trans Canada railway), 41 days to deliver.

5 Oct 1875 Early usage of 2½d UPU rate introduced between GB and Canada 1 Oct 1875.

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: Moosomin, Assiniboia, NWT.

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 10: 1931 Post card, London to Montreal, sent by air to Liverpool, ship to New York, then onward by air. Not significantly faster than 1932 item sent surface all the way.

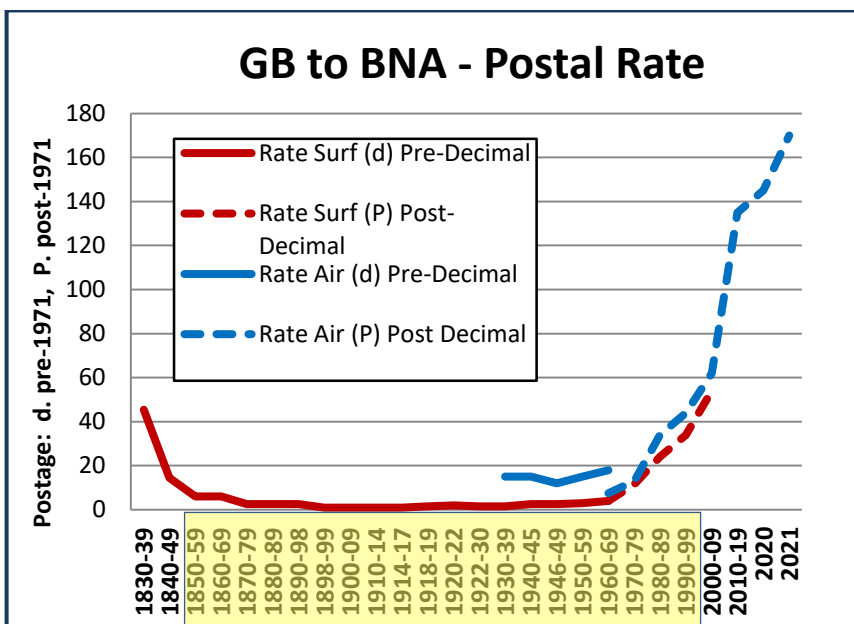
Page 14: 1971 GB Postal Strike mail sent by Hovercraft to France where put in mail and taking 2 days to Victoria.

1977 Only unsealed letter paid at the surface rate 7P, where I can date both mailing and delivery. Probably sent by Airmail

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

Some 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 that could be added to my database.

Exhibit first shown at RPSC Virtual Stamp Show (October 2021) - Large Vermeil. Exhibit has been extensively revised with 13 new covers and more consistent documentation on each page.



Postal rates (GB to Canada) are complicated to compare over long periods due to variability of services (e.g. registered), Surface vs. Air mail, decimalisation and weight class.

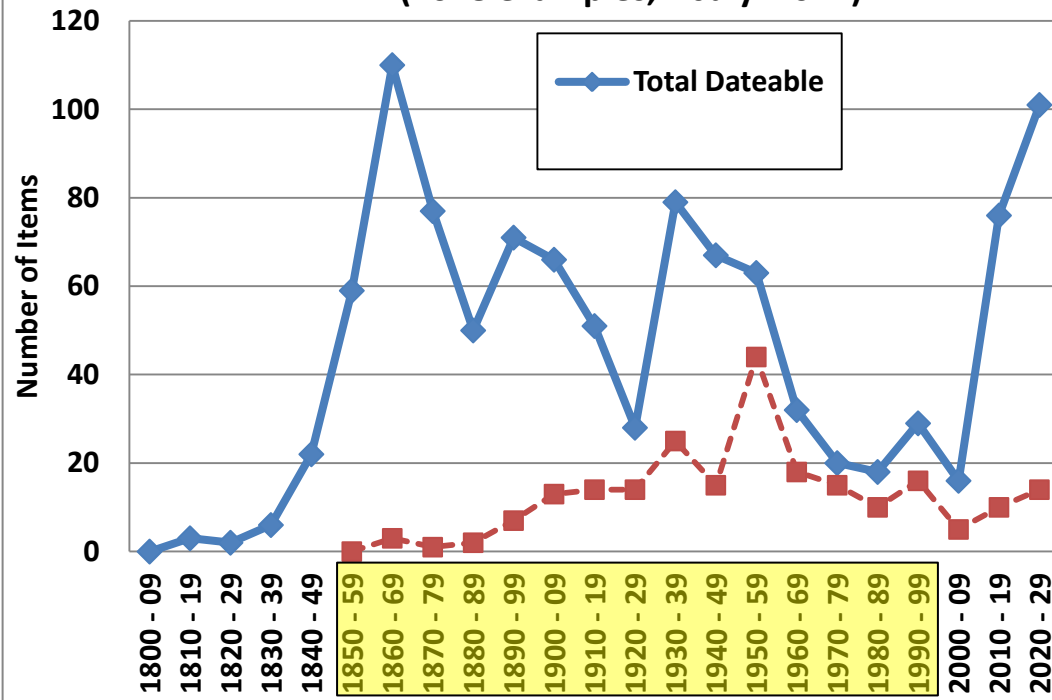
Surface rates were eventually abandoned in 2011. This study has focused on the lowest weight increment for surface and air mail as shown in graph to left.

References: Comprehensive listing of 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 (1986-1999). Provided many examples of early routes and rates including

**Total Covers GB to BNA Dateable
(1048 examples, 4 July 2022)**



Graph shows the size of dateable samples by decade from my database.

I am attempting to find at least 50 examples for every decade to provide a statistically meaningful database.

Registered material represents a high percentage of dateable examples I have found over the period 1950 to 2015. In recent years I have encouraged other collectors to mark mail with arrival dates providing a more comprehensive data base.

The early years + 1920's +1960 – 2015 are periods where I need more data and continue to seek more examples.