

Speaker Notes for “The Postage Stamps of British Columbia & Vancouver Island”
by Tom Meyerhof (presented to the OPS Canada Study Group on 5 December 2019)

Slide Title: The Postage Stamps of British Columbia & Vancouver Island

1

Slide History of British Columbia

2

- In 1858 when the Crown Colony of British Columbia was proclaimed, the northern boundary of BC (originally known as New Caledonia) only extended to the Simpson (now Skeena) River, about 58°N. In 1863 it was extended to 60°N, the present boundary with the Yukon Territory.
- A few significant dates relating to the Colonies and their stamps are shown.
- Between the 2 separate colonies of BC and VI and after their union on 6 Aug 1866, a total of only 4 face-different postage stamps were printed and issued to Postmasters. This total ignores perforation varieties, overprints or minor shade variations. Both the Scott/Unitrade and Stanley Gibbons catalogues use 17 major catalogue numbers to list the stamps produced, though with slight differences in what warrants a separate catalogue number.
- This presentation will not cover postal express covers and labels, or the US stamps available at many Post Offices to be applied to letters that went through the US mail system for destinations beyond the two colonies. This situation ended with the completion of the Canadian transcontinental railway in 1885.
- On 1 Jul 1871, the united province of BC entered Confederation.

Slide British Columbia Becomes a Crown Colony

3

- In 1843 a Hudson’s Bay Co. trading post was established in Fort Victoria (then called Camousan) and in 1849 the HBC was given a lease to colonize VI, having earlier been granted a mainland lease for trading purposes. With the Canada-US border settled as the 49th parallel in 1846, the Crown Colony of Vancouver Island was established in 1849. The first appointed Governor, Richard Blanshard, took office in 1850 and resigned within months believing the colony would not flourish. In 1851 James Douglas, a former HBC regional chief executive, was appointed as second Governor and also given mainland oversight. Settlement on the mainland was discouraged as it interfered with the profitable fur trade between the HBC and local aboriginal tribes.
- In 1858 gold was discovered near what is today Lytton BC which started the Fraser River gold rush. The HBC post at Fort Langley became an important jumping off point for more than 10,000 mainly US prospectors by Jul. When news of the gold rush reached London, the Colonial Office declared BC a colony on 2 Aug 1858 with Douglas receiving his second governorship, which he only learned of 2 months later in Oct, given the mail conveyance conditions of the time.

Slide 4 Map at the Time of the 1858-59 Gold Rush

- After creation of the colony of VI in 1849, HBC continued to take responsibility for mail transportation to and from the US and elsewhere. Their previous \$1 per letter charge instituted in 1845 no longer applied to VI residents under their new agreement with the government.
- In 1852 Captain James Sangster, a former HBC schooner commander and customs collector was appointed as the first official Postmaster for VI. He was replaced by Alexander Anderson in Jun 1858, just after the start of the Fraser River gold rush in Apr.
- The gold rush brought an influx of new settlers and adventurers. In Jul 1858, Wells Fargo & Co. was authorized by the Postmaster to transport mail to and from CA and the East coast for a 2½d or 5c premium over their regular mail rates. They were soon joined by other Express companies who saw a business opportunity. Postal service quickly improved and many Express companies slowly disappeared over the following years as people were no longer interested in paying their postal surcharge.

Slide 5 Non-Indian Population of British Columbia

- The population in BC and VI was small and widely distributed at this time. It also varied significantly over a few years as gold rush miners came and went, first in 1858 and again in 1862. The mail distribution system had to deal with a vast territory and poor travelling conditions on primitive roads and trails.
- After the route along the Fraser canyon above Lillooet to the interior was completed in 1864, Governor Frederick Seymour, successor to James Douglas, said that BC was a “Colony only in name . . . a gold mine at one end of a road and a seaport (under a different Government) at the opposite terminus”.

Slide 6 Summary of British Columbia & Vancouver Island Stamp Issues

- BC & VI separately and jointly issued a total of 10 different stamp denominations before joining Confederation in 1871.
- All stamps for both colonies were engraved en épargne (i.e. with the non-printing areas removed) and printed by Thomas De La Rue & Co., London.
- The first stamp issued in 1860 was the only joint BC & VI colonies issue.
- The 1865 stamps were issued separately by the original colony of BC and the colony of VI. In the case of the 3d BC stamp, the release of a second order occurred in 1867.
- The 1868 overprinted series was issued to the public in 2 perforation varieties over several dates by the newly formed joint colony of BC.

Slide 7 De La Rue & Co. Ltd., London, England

- The Thomas De La Rue Co. was founded in 1821 when Thomas set up a business to make straw hats. He subsequently made playing cards starting in 1831, before developing an envelope-making machine in 1845, turning to postage stamps in 1855 and subsequently also banknotes starting in 1860. He lived in the house on the right since 1834 and could enter the printing works via the connecting second floor passageway. By 1846 De La Rue had enough playing card and envelope printing business to require 3 paper mill suppliers. They made and repaired their own manufacturing equipment and prepared their own printing inks. They produced 20,000 finished envelopes daily. Before folding and gumming they were sent to the Board of Internal Revenue at Somerset House to have the postage stamps embossed. The equipment was kept there for security reasons and used only by Board workers. Their later stamp production business was also highly successful and displaced these earlier business ventures.
- Thomas was succeeded in 1866 by his son, Warren who was equally inventive. He in turn was succeeded in 1870 by his son, Warren William who was more focussed on operational efficiency and had a natural sales ability. He in turn retired in 1896 and was the last family owner.
- Their main customers for stamps included the Imperial Post Office in London, the Board of Inland Revenue, the Crown Agents (the body that undertook financial transactions on behalf of Britain for the colonies) and foreign countries. The stamp printing department was divided into 4 sections for security purposes. Separate rooms were devoted to work for Inland Revenue, Crown Agents, India, and production that they supervised internally.

Slide 8 De La Rue - Young Victoria Heads

- The Wyon Medal, celebrates Queen Victoria's first visit to London and was engraved in 1837 by William Wyon, chief engraver at the Royal Mint, from his 1834 model made when she was 15. Henry Corbould later produced a drawing that served as the basis of the first GB stamp in 1840, line-engraved by Perkins Bacon. In 1853 the Board of Inland Revenue at Somerset House began to use duty stamps and awarded a contract to De La Rue.
- De La Rue claimed their surface printing method had several advantages over line-engraved printing used by their rival Perkins Bacon. Their process caused less printing plate wear and so was cheaper and faster for the volume of stamps being used by this time, while also producing a high quality product. Another advantage related to perforating the printed sheets. Perkins Bacon needed damp paper for printing line-engraved stamps. This resulted in variable shrinkage after drying the paper and caused difficulty consistently achieving proper registration for the comb perforating machines at Somerset House. Surface printing was performed on dry paper and eliminated this problem. The Board decided to give them another contract, this time for the 1855 GB 4d carmine stamp.
- Engraver Jean Ferdinand Joubert de la Ferté was born in Paris and came to GB in about 1840. He first worked for the Board and then for De La Rue, becoming their

Chief Engraver from 1856-1877. He engraved stamps for GB and her colonies including all the BC and VI stamps, as well as for foreign countries. The self-portrait was engraved in 1850.

- His original QV head die engraved in 1855 has very clear lines and was used for GB stamps between 1855 and 1880. His first colonial head die has delicately engraved lines and was used for various colonies such as the joint BC & VI stamp, Hong Kong and Sierra Leone. His second colonial head die has thicker lines and greater contrast and was used for British colonies such as VI, Bermuda and Ceylon.

Slide 9 Die Prepared for Joint BC & VI Stamp

- Joubert prepared the first colonial head die in 1859, and the second in 1863. The first die was thus used for the joint 1860 2½d BC & VI stamp, and the second die was used for the 1865 5c and 10c VI stamps. The stamp design is possibly based on a sketch by William Driscoll Gosset, A/PMG BC & VI at the time.
- Joubert first burnished out the diadem (crown) from the original softened GB die and then engraved a new diadem consisting of a cross, fleur-de-lys and shamrock motif. For the second die, the new diadem ornaments consisted of 4 balls (roses?), 2 thistles and a shamrock. The jewels on the band below were also changed for each diadem design. Rather than creating new dies at £200 each, this technique cost only £50/die.
- De La Rue at this time did not have the capability to harden dies. They relied on the Royal Mint under the supervision of the Board of Inland Revenue each time this step was required. It took 4 iterations as design elements were added to produce the final hardened working die. De La Rue then made the actual printing plate which was unhardened.
- The first die and printing plate were invoiced to BC on 29 December 1859 at £90.
- Joubert was inventive and in 1858 received a GB patent for a method to electrocoat the copper printing plates with steel (originally called acierage, now known as steel-facing). This permitted the printing plate to last longer and also had added benefits of forming a thinner ink layer and increasing the colour intensity of the inked stamp design. It was possible to reface the plate several times as the steel deposit wore, thus further prolonging its life to about 70,000 impressions using the hand-operated presses De La Rue used as late as 1889.

Slide 10 De La Rue Printing Process for BC & VI Stamps

- De La Rue printed all stamps for BC and VI using 240 subject relief/surface printing (more accurately referred to as letterpress printing, but often loosely called typography by philatelists).
- In surface printing, areas to appear in colour on the stamp are raised above the non-printing areas. Only the raised areas come into contact with the paper and receive ink.
- A paper-making machine uses a dandy roll with a woven wire mesh to compress the wet paper sheet as it travels over a woven wire cloth belt before being fully dried. If it also has raised wire images to create watermarks, these will be impressed on one surface of the paper in addition to the woven wire mesh. The CC (Crown Colonies) watermark found on most BC & VI stamps was a security feature developed in 1862 to detect counterfeit copies printed on normal paper. The CC dandy roll was kept locked up by a Board Inspector except when the paper mill manufactured this stamp paper. The CC watermark was replaced by the CA watermark after the Agents-General for CC office was renamed Crown Agents for the Colonies in 1863 to indicate that they were acting in an official capacity.
- After printing on dry, ungummed paper, the stamp sheets were hand-gummed using brushes with closely packed bristles which normally left no visible brush marks on the gum side. (This method did not change until 1880 when machine gumming was introduced at De La Rue). The gummed sheets were then cut into panes of 60. The guideline crosses on the sheet corners helped to position the paper for the subsequent single line comb perforation operation undertaken by a Board worker at Somerset House.

Slide 11 1859 Unissued Joint Stamp for BC & VI

- The first imperforate 2½d sheets printed by De La Rue in Dec 1859 on thin yellowish unwatermarked paper were probably never sent to the colonies. It is likely that the sheets were cut up as trade samples over time, marked “Specimen” and given to the Crown Agents to showcase their work. The colour of these imperforate stamps is slightly more orange than the later perforated stamps issued in 1860.
- In Apr 1862, 6 imperforate sheets (1,440 stamps) were reprinted by De La Rue at the request of the Duke of Newcastle and the 1 guinea cost was charged to BC. This reprinting was done in conjunction with the First International Exhibition held in London, and was the first time that any stamps were displayed at the exhibition. None of these reprinted stamps are known to have been sent to British Columbia. The reprinted stamps appear a bright orange rose shade and were printed on whiter paper than the regular perforated issue.
- Note the use of the words “Vancouver’s Island”. The possessive “’s” was dropped later in 1860.

Slide 12 Layout of 1860 Joint Stamp Issue of BC & VI

- All BC & VI stamp sheets had similar characteristics. This included a control number (plate production sequence) in a rectangular box on 2 diagonal sheet corners and the plate number in a coloured circle on the other 2 corners. Security concerns meant the sheets were perforated at Somerset House using a perf 14 comb perforator. The machine, capable of penetrating a stack 5-7 sheets thick, produced a single perforated vertical inter-pane gutter resulting in wide (wing) margins on 40 stamps. (In 1880 De La Rue was finally authorized to perforate stamps in-house. They purchased and installed the 5 Somerset House perforators built by James N Napier for about £1380 (about C\$265,000 today). De La Rue added an extra row of perforating pins and holes to eliminate wing margins.
- The vertical outer margins of each 2½d pane bear the inscription “Price 2½d per Label, 1s. 3d. per Row of Six, 12s. 6d. per Sheet of Sixty”. The 2½d value appears in an oval box on the right. The stamps went on sale in Victoria about March 1860.
- In the 1860s a resident of Mayfair St in London apparently sent £5 to the PMG of BC & VI to purchase this full sheet. It again came to light in 1918 after being found in a desk drawer along with a number of other stamp multiples from various British colonies. It was auctioned in 1925 by HR Harmers in London to the famous philatelist Alfred Lichtenstein for £750 (about C\$70,000 today). In 1956 Harmers sold it again in New York for US\$3300 (about C\$31,000 today) to Kasimir Bileski in Winnipeg who retained the bulk of the sheet, and a Vancouver resident who removed some corner blocks. Bileski subsequently broke up this unique sheet and various multiples still continue to appear periodically on the market.

Slide 13 Some 2½d Shades

- This is an album page from Gerry Wellburn, probably the world’s best known and most knowledgeable collector of BC stamps and postal history.
- Although the Unitrade catalogue only lists 2 shades for this stamp (dull rose and pale dull rose), there is a range of shades encountered on this issue, likely due to the small ink batch sizes that De La Rue was able to prepare at this time. De La Rue charged the BC treasury £104, (£90 for the die and plate and £14 for the paper and printing which presumably also included the shipping cost to BC).
- The exact issue date for this stamp is uncertain, though it is thought by Alfred Stanley Deaville to have been issued in Mar 1860. In 1928 he authored the definitive book on the postal history of BC based on extensive research in the provincial archives. Wellburn reached the same conclusion and added that all 235,000 stamps had been sold by 1867. It is known that the shipment left London on 29 Dec 1859 and would have arrived in Feb or Mar 1860. (I searched the on-line edition of The British Colonist, a Victoria newspaper which began publication in Dec 1858, but could find no reference to the availability of postage stamps).
- This stamp was sold in both colonies until Oct 1864. When VI decided to no longer use this stamp and instead require payment in cash, BC received the remaining stock as they had originally paid for the whole order. After several further postal regulation changes that saw the use and value of this stamp change, the stock finally sold out in

Jul 1867.

Slide 14 Some 2½d Plate Flaws & Printing Varieties

- This Wellburn album page shows some, but probably not all varieties found on this issue.

Slide 15 1860 Joint Stamp Issue of BC & VI

- William Gosset, the acting PMG for both colonies would have received the shipment of stamps from London, likely in Feb or Mar 1860 and arranged for their distribution to both colonies through John D'Ewes, PM at Victoria, and Warner R Spalding, PM at New Westminster.
- The exterior of the Victoria Post Office was unchanged from 1858 and stood just outside what was in 1858 the HBC fort trading post. The Customs House was also located in this building.
- The cover (lower left) from Victoria to New Westminster was correctly paid with a 2½d stamp. While no date appears on the cover, it must have been mailed no earlier than Jul 1862 according to Wellburn when the black cancellation ink pad used in Victoria was replaced with a blue ink pad.
- The cover (lower right), double weight at over ½ oz., entered the mail at New Westminster ("1" numeral) prepaid with two 2½d stamps for the BC portion of the trip. The postage for the US part of trip was marked at San Francisco as collect with 30 in a circle. The Bowmanville backstamp dated 24 Jul 1861 shows the cover took 22 days after entering the US mail system to reach its destination.
- Further 2½d stamps were issued after May 1864 when a new BC postal ordinance was proclaimed until the availability of the new 3d stamp in Nov 1865. They were provisionally rated 3d, but without any surcharge to indicate a rate change.
- In early 1867 after the first shipment of 3d stamps was exhausted, the remaining stock of the 2½d stamp was again re-issued without a surcharge as a provisional 3d in BC. It sold in pairs at 12½c as BC had changed to US currency prior to adopting Canadian decimal currency in Apr 1867.

Slide 16 1865 5¢ Queen Victoria Vancouver Island Stamp

- Die proof impressions were made by De La Rue to check the quality of the engraved die both before sending the die to the Royal Mint for hardening and upon its return.
- De La Rue wanted an easy way for quality control purposes to retain reference copies of the stamps as issued. They likely had done so for a number of years by cancelling them in a various ways before requesting formal permission. In 1870 at their request they received approval from the Inland Revenue Board to keep a copy cancelled with the word “SPECIMEN”, glued to a cardboard backing and retained under lock and key when not needed. The Board reply stated “With regard to the cancellation, the Board consider that the word ‘specimen’ should be written across the face of each label and on the sheet of paper - a mode of obliteration which, it is presumed, will not interfere with the object you have in view”.
- The imperforate stamps are usually found in a slightly deeper rose shade than the perforated copies.
- Use of the 5c stamps was restricted to VI until 8 Apr 1867, when they were adopted by the united colony of BC. All supplies of the 5c stamps had been sold by Sep 1868.

Slide 17 1865 10¢ Queen Victoria Vancouver Island Stamp

- As with the 5c stamps, use of the 10c stamps was restricted to VI until 8 Apr 1867.
- By 1871 when BC entered Confederation, only about 40% of the 10c imperf and perforated copies had been sold. The remaining stock were subsequently destroyed by burning.

Slide 18 Some 10¢ Plate Flaws & Printing Varieties

- The inverted watermark can be found infrequently on both the perforated 5c and 10c values.
- Inverted watermarks also exist on a number of subsequently issued perf 14 stamps and typically command a premium of about 100% in the Unitrade catalogue.

Slide 19 Announcement of Vancouver Island Stamps

- Henry Wootton, the PM of VI announced the availability of the first and only two VI stamps in a notice published for 1 month in the Victoria Daily Evening Post starting on 19 Sep 1865. A news item also appeared in the more popular paper The Daily British Colonist a few days later.
- About 30 imperforate sheets of the 5c and 10c values were sent for unknown reasons as part of the shipment from London on 10 Apr 1865. The shipment arrived in VI about 20 Jun and both the perforated and imperforate stamps were on sale concurrently starting in Sep.
- The intercolonial cover (lower left) shows small vertical scissor cuts between the stamps on the 5c strip done by the PM to facilitate selling single stamps from the imperforate sheets.
- The cover to England (lower right) was prepaid under the rate established in Apr 1867

and was carried between Victoria and San Francisco by the California, Oregon and Mexico Steamship Co under contract.

Slide 20
Prelude to Next British Columbia Stamp

- Warner Spalding was appointed as PM of BC on the departure of William Gosset in Jul 1860. His later change in title from PM to PMG was a formality as he had looked after the postal affairs of both BC and VI since John D'Ewes, the VI PM abandoned his position in Sep 1861, absconding with public funds estimated at several thousand dollars. Spalding's salary on promotion from PM to PMG remained the same (£400, about C\$76,000 today). During his tenure he made numerous improvements to the postal service.
- By July 1862 Barnard's Express began the first contract to provide mail service throughout the colony of BC on a regular schedule depending on location and time of year, ranging from weekly to monthly. His 1862 Instructions to Postmasters was the first time expectations for their conduct and involvement with Express companies was formally described. Later that year he issued a public notice that mail would be date-stamped starting in 1863. This notice ran in each edition of the Government Gazette for a number of months along with other post office notices that changed regularly, such as mail routes and dates, rates of postage between various BC locations, and a list of unclaimed letters held at the New Westminster Post Office.
- On 4 May 1864 Ordinance No 14 to regulate the BC postal service was enacted by Governor Frederick Seymour. It stated in part, "For every letter to and from BC and VI, and delivered at Victoria or New Westminster, and not exceeding ½ an ounce, there shall be paid a postage of 3d". On 13 May, Spalding promptly announced this postal increase from 2½d to the public.

Slide 21
3d British Columbia Stamp

- The designer of this novel stamp is uncertain. It is often thought to have been the work of a Royal Engineer, with the design inspired by their uniform buttons using a "V" and Tudor Crown to signify Queen Victoria, both enclosed in an oval. An English rose appears between the diagonal lines forming the "V", with a Scottish thistle to the left and an Irish shamrock to the right. The Morse code for "V" (dot dot dot dash) is included within each diagonal of the "V". Possibly this was in recognition of recent technological advances that would allow the first telegraph cable to be laid in the Fraser River in 1865.
- The sketch was sent on 23 Sep 1864 by Governor Seymour to the Secretary of State for the Colonies with a request to have this stamp prepared and sent to BC as soon as possible, without stating the quantity required. The final design was slightly modified, probably for aesthetic reasons, but remains one of the most unusual British colonial stamps ever produced.
- On 15 Mar 1865 De La Rue sent their invoice for the production of 464 sheets of this new stamp. It read in part: "Engraving from design furnished by Colony on steel a new Postage die size of English postage stamp hardening same etc. £65, Making one special forme of 240 Multiples Duty 'Three Pence' £90". While the order was

shipped the next day from Southampton, for unknown reasons it was not received at New Westminster until 27 Sep.

- The next day Spalding announced the issue of the new 3d stamp, but failed to mention its denomination, an uncharacteristic oversight.
- In total, this 3d stamp sold at 5 different values in both sterling and decimal currency during its use in the 2 colonies, but without ever being surcharged.

Slide 22 Some 3d Plate Flaws & Printing Varieties

- Wellburn has identified a number of subtle varieties which are present on all denominations of this stamp design.
- In addition, the stamps can occasionally be found with the watermark inverted.

Slide 23 3d British Columbia Stamp Printings

- There were 2 printings of the 3d stamp, the first issued on 1 Nov 1865 (111,360 stamps in a blue shade), and a second larger printing (1,063,440 stamps in a pale blue shade on slightly thinner paper) first issued on 19 Jul 1867. Despite the Unitrade catalogue values for both mint and used copies of the blue shade being lower than the pale blue shade (the SG catalogue shows the same values for the 2 shades), the pale blue shade is much more commonly seen. This observation is consistent with the difference in the two printing order quantities.
- The first printing was exhausted in about 1 year. On 24 Mar 1866 a request for a further 320,000 stamps was sent to London, but it was only in Jan 1867 that the London authorities became aware of the request. They decided to have De La Rue print over 1M stamps making assumptions that the union of BC and VI in 1864 would significantly increase demand and that postal rates would remain unchanged (both incorrect).
- The cover (lower left) correctly pays the 3d rate from New Westminster to Victoria for a ½ oz. letter. The cover (lower right) going the other way shows the confusion in rates common at the time when the postal services were separate. It shows the VI postage of 5c was paid in cash at the Victoria Post Office, hence the blue paid Victoria handstamp and a BC 3d was added for the mainland part of the trip. On arrival at New Westminster it was handstamped “PAID” in red. In fact a 5c VI stamp would have been sufficient for postage. For any letters, however, originating in BC or VI and delivered at any location other than Victoria or New Westminster, the rate was doubled to 6d.

Slide 24 Request for 2¢ Value Stamp

- A.T. Bushby who succeeded Spalding was never formally appointed as PMG or paid for this added role, while he also served as Registrar of the Supreme Court and Registrar of Deeds. He was an able administrator and allowed Wootton the PM at Victoria to manage the postal affairs of VI, even after the creation of the new united colony of BC in Aug 1866.
- The New Westminster Post Office was housed in this building which also served as the Land Registry Office, the Assay Office and contained other public offices.
- Various new stamp values were needed to deal with the decimal rates created by the Apr 1867 Postal Ordinance that regulated the postal service of the united colony of BC. The first stamp requested was a 2c value.
- While Governor Seymour was willing to pay for a new die for this value, the Crown Agents decided use of the existing 3d stamp with a surcharge overprint would be much cheaper. After De La Rue was told to proceed on 2 Sep 1867, they used offset lithography and prepared 8815 sheets perforated 14 following the direction “the colour to be Brown, and the value to be affixed by an overprint, in a similar manner to the Stamps in use at St. Helena”. The stamps were shipped in 3 batches in Sep and Oct 1867 to speed availability in BC. (The St Helena stamp is line perf 12½ as it was printed by De La Rue from a Perkins Bacon plate on sheets that did not fit the Somerset House perforator, and so was perforated with permission by De La Rue themselves).
- The 2c overprinted stamp first issued 22 Jan 1868 was intended for use to mail newspapers within BC. After 1 Jul 1870 it was also valid for newspapers going to the US.

Slide 25 Request for Additional Decimal Value Stamps

- After 1 Jan 1868, a Postal Convention between GB and the US meant letters from BC required higher denomination stamps to these countries. Bushby recommended no further use of the 3d stamp which he stated “now mystifies the public”, and that new higher values should be prepared, denominated in cents. These could be used to prepay letters to Canada and the US in decimal currency.
- By Nov 1868 the VI stock of 5c stamps was exhausted. Governor Seymour proposed an altered 3d die and duty plates for the 5 needed values.
- On seeing Governor Seymour’s request for various higher value cents stamps, De La Rue had proposed to the Crown Agents making a new die with Queen Victoria’s head, similar to those prepared for other British colonies, with a blank value tablet, and a duty plate for each of the 5 denominations, a system they were later to use widely for many colonies. This would have resulted in a more artistic product, but at a cost of £135 for preparation of a new die and 240 stamp keyplate, and a further £60 for 5 new 60 stamp duty plates, totalling £185. The Crown Agents decided greater savings would occur using overprints on the 3d stamp die for all values and altered his request, spending only £60 to make the 5 surcharge overprint plates. They agreed to vary the printing inks for ease of identification.
- To save time, the first 20 sheets of each value were perforated 12½ by De La Rue on a

crude single line machine acquired in 1863 to perforate stamps they printed from Perkins Bacon plates. These 20 sheets left London on 16 Jan 1869, were received in New Westminster in early March and issued to the public starting on 12 Mar 1869.

- The cover dated 11 Jun 1869 from New Westminster to GB is franked with 50c perf 12½ stamp, 3 months after the receipt of the first shipment.

Slide 26 Further Shipment of Surcharged Stamps

- All surcharged values in both perforations were either overprinted “CANCELLED” or “SPECIMEN” by De La Rue for retention in their files as reference copies.
- The main shipment of surcharged stamps, comb perforated 14, left London on 13 Feb 1869 and arrived in New Westminster in late May 1869. All values other than the 10c and \$1 denomination were subsequently issued at various dates over the following 2 years. For the 10c and \$1 values, the first perf 12½ shipment met the limited demand for these denominations, thus the perf 14 stamps were never issued to the public.
- The higher values were almost entirely used for correspondence to GB, with smaller quantities used to the US after 1 Jul 1870.
- The cover (lower left) pays the 5c drop letter rate at Victoria. The stamp is cancelled with a circular date stamp reading “Victoria BC SEP 12 1870”.
- The cover (lower right) from Victoria to England pays the 25c rate in effect starting Jan 1868, when additional US stamps were no longer required for mail traversing the US mail system. It is postmarked with a circular date stamp in blue and the stamp is also cancelled in blue with the numeral 35 (used at Victoria).

Slide 27 1869 De La Rue Invoice for Surcharged Stamps

- The early record books of De La Rue were retained intact until 1973 when they were cut up. This partial page dated Feb 13 (1869) included samples of the perf 14 surcharged stamps.
- The note at the bottom of the De La Rue invoice dated Feb 13 1869 reads: “NB. 20 Sheets of each of the above five duties was sent by mail on a previous occasion and are included in the above invoice”. This refers to the 100 perf 12½ sheets that had previously been shipped from London on 16 Jan 1869.

Slide 28 Availability of Canadian Stamps in British Columbia

- Gilbert Griffin, the Post Office Inspector responsible for Hamilton ON and westward, arrived in Victoria on 15 Aug 1871. He had completed the last leg of the journey from San Francisco via the HMS Sparrowhawk (a 3 masted barque with auxiliary steam engines), a trip that took 10 days due to poor weather.
- On 16 Aug 1871, a notice (right) first appeared in the local newspaper informing the public that all current values of Canadian stamps were now for sale at the 2 main post offices. This would have included the ½c, 2c, 6c and 12½c Large Queens and 1c and 3c Small Queens which had all been issued by 1871. It seems likely that Griffin had personally carried these stamps on his trip to BC, which is noted in the PMG report to Parliament for Jul 1871 to Jun 1872 as having cost taxpayers \$362 (roughly \$7000

today). That same year the BC PO raised \$8809 in revenue and cost the federal government \$96,872. Deficits continued for many years until the population increased and transportation improved.

- According to Wellburn a supply of the 15c Large Queens issued in Feb 1868 was not received in BC until 23 Jan 1872 for some reason.
- By a directive to BC postmasters dated 20 Aug, they were told to accept the obsolete colonial stamps still in the hands of the public and exchange them for Canadian stamps. The obsolete stamps gathered by the various BC postmasters were then to be returned to Victoria. On 9 Oct all these stamps were sent to Gilbert Griffin who by then had returned to London ON. He in turn sent the stamps to the POD in Ottawa for destruction.
- Deaville notes a number of BC postmasters purchased some of the obsolete stamps as an investment, and these later found their way onto the philatelic market.

Slide 29 British Columbia & Vancouver Island Stamp Quantities

- For many stamp denominations the quantities printed significantly exceeded the quantities required by the population. The surplus stamps were destroyed by burning in 1871 either at Victoria or later in Ottawa.
- An unknown quantity of the unissued perf 14 10c and \$1 surcharged stamps are believed to have been sold to stamp dealers rather than being destroyed in 1871.

Slide 30 Destruction of Surcharged British Columbia Stamps - I

- Among the activities Griffin undertook in BC was to oversee the destruction by burning of all obsolete BC surcharged stamps not yet issued to the public by the BC Government.
- Unfortunately the destruction certificate of stamps on hand at the Colonial Secretary's Office and never issued to post offices does not indicate the denomination(s) of stamps destroyed, but 60 stamps of each denomination were saved for documentary or other purposes.
- The affidavit by Postmaster Wootton's daughter sworn in 1943 suggests that this destruction occurred in Beacon Hill Park in Victoria, that postmasters were provided with souvenir copies, and that the event was likely witnessed by members of the public. This is consistent with comments made by Deaville in 1928 who identified several people, including a former member of the Colonial Secretary's office and a former Victoria post office inspector who recall the bonfire in the park, but Deaville could find no contemporary newspaper reference to this somewhat public ceremony.
- Perhaps this terse newspaper article on the 25 Aug is a reference to this bonfire. Given that the article identifies the value of the stamps destroyed was only \$12,500, most of the obsolete surcharged stamps were not destroyed that day.

Slide 31 Destruction of Surcharged British Columbia Stamps - II

- This 26 Aug destruction certificate indicates surcharged stamps (likely all perf 14) valued at \$503,880 were destroyed, undoubtedly again in the presence of Gilbert Griffin, whose name and title (Post Office Inspector, London Ont) are lightly pencilled in the top left of the certificate. Henry Wootton as Victoria PM would almost certainly also have been present.
- As there is no mention of the 2M plus remaining 2c surcharged stamps (valued at \$40,844) being destroyed on 26 Aug, were they the \$12,500 bonfire contents destroyed on 24 Aug? If so it would represent 30% of the 2c remainders. Supporting this theory is the fact that 2500 stamp sheets would have made a sustained bonfire using low value stamps should any accidentally escape the flames. No documentary evidence appears to remain to support this conjecture.
- Deaville felt that there were 2 burnings of obsolete stamps, one at Beacon Hill Park, and the other (this one) at the Victoria Post Office representing the remaining stock turned in from the New Westminster and Victoria post offices. The 2 dated destruction certificates support this opinion. I also believe Wootton likely received the \$1 stamp at this time and not on 24 Aug as recalled by his daughter more than 70 years later.
- The remainders of the 10c VI stamp were believed by Deaville to have been destroyed after 1867, although he could find no record. He also noted remainders of the BC 3d stamp were sent to Victoria on 19 Aug 1871 to be burned on 26 Aug, but again no evidence of their destruction appears to remain. Perhaps they were sent to Ottawa for destruction. It is known that after Griffin's return to Ontario, the last remainders collected were sent to the POD in Ottawa for destruction.

Slide 32 British Columbia & Vancouver Island Forgeries

- The stamps of BC and VI have all been subject to the efforts of various forgers such as André Froedel, Angelo Panelli, Erasmo Oneglia, Senf Bros., Jean de Sperati and the Spiro Bros.
- The forgeries are often easily recognized by their somewhat crude appearance and the use of unwatermarked paper. In most cases the perforations are too coarse and in some cases the colour is completely wrong (eg. top row, left stamp). Many surcharged values also have the wrong inscription (eg. middle row, stamp 3) with a surcharged numeral "2" instead of the word "TWO" or "DOLLER" for "DOLLAR (bottom row, stamp 4).
- Used copies typically bear incorrect cancels, often of European origin as befitting their forger's country.
- The 10c VI stamp (top row, stamp 3) was likely cut out from plate 4 in the book "The Royal Philatelic Collection" by Sir John Wilson, published in 1954. Sperati is also known to have produced this value about 1953, but the thick card stock paper suggests this specimen comes from the book.
- The \$1 Eaton lithograph (bottom row, stamp 5) is thought to have been created by Cal Scott in San Francisco for sale by Vancouver stamp dealer Fred Eaton in the 1960s.

Slide 33 British Columbia & Vancouver Island Handstamps

- Many of these handstamps served both as postal franks to indicate the required postage had been paid, and in other cases to indicate the town and/or date of posting or as a conventional stamp cancellation device. This range of uses is unique among the BNA colonies.
- The first 5 devices used at Victoria represent (left to right, top and middle row), (1) a brass custom's seal sent from England in 1856 that later served as the first provisional postage stamp, (2) a replacement provisional post office device from San Francisco used on post office and Express letters, (3) a locally made brass hammer preferred to the previous as the word "PAID" eliminated any ambiguity, (4) a replacement device from England used after 1863 primarily on Express letters and to cancel postage stamps, and (5, middle row, left) likely a local VI creation serving as a postal frank to replace the 2½d stamps withdrawn after the 1864 postal rift with BC, and later mainly used to cancel postage stamps.
- The Nanaimo handstamp (middle row, centre) was made in VI at the same time as Victoria Paid (5) and first used to indicate payment and later to cancel postage stamps. The New West. handstamp (middle row, right) was used as a postal frank until 1864 usually on Express letters and later to cancel postage stamps.
- The GPO (bottom row, left) was often used as a receiver on the back of covers and was the only dated canceller used in BC until replaced by the dated New Westminster and then in 1871 by the New Westminster PAID to cancel postage stamps. The dated Victoria (bottom row, right) was similarly used.
- Sperati and others are known to have forged some of these cancels on covers and postage stamps.

Slide 34 Numeral Cancels & Associated Towns

- On 8 Jun 1859, Governor Douglas had requested the Colonial Secretary to supply "about 3 dozen obliterating dies, with a proportion of ink and boxes". In Dec 1859 a total of 36 sequentially numbered handstamps were sent from London together with the 2½d stamp shipment. The handstamps were likely manufactured by David Garden Berri who had produced a similar (but not identical) series of oval numeral cancellers for England in May 1854.
- Due to a lack of postal records to correctly assign the numerals to specific post offices, covers offer the only existing evidence, provided they also have auxiliary markings. A few numerals still can not be definitively assigned, a fact reflected in the 2019 Unitrade catalogue that still lists those shown without a town on this Wellburn album page as "unknown origin".
- The 27 Spences Bridge hand canceller is typical of the wood and brass devices supplied to the post offices, measuring about 4 in. high by about 1½ in. wide near the top of the wooden handle. The device shown has been defaced by partially grinding down the brass base after it was retired from service.
- As new Canadian cancellation hammers were not received in BC until early in 1872 some months after it joined Confederation in July 1871, these numeral cancels can also be found on various Canadian Large and Small Queen stamps mailed in BC.

- Unfortunately for collectors, a number of forged numeral cancels are known to exist such as for numerals 1, 10, 27, 35, 36, and even a non-existent numeral 39.

Slide Further Reading
35