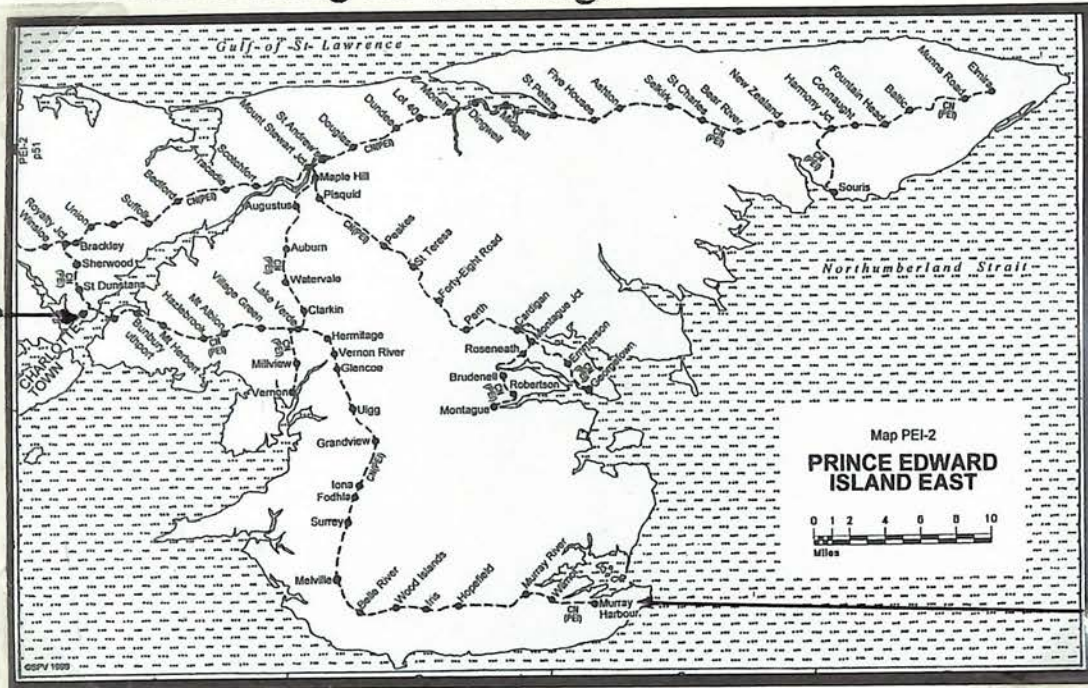


# THE MURRAY HARBOUR BRANCH LINE

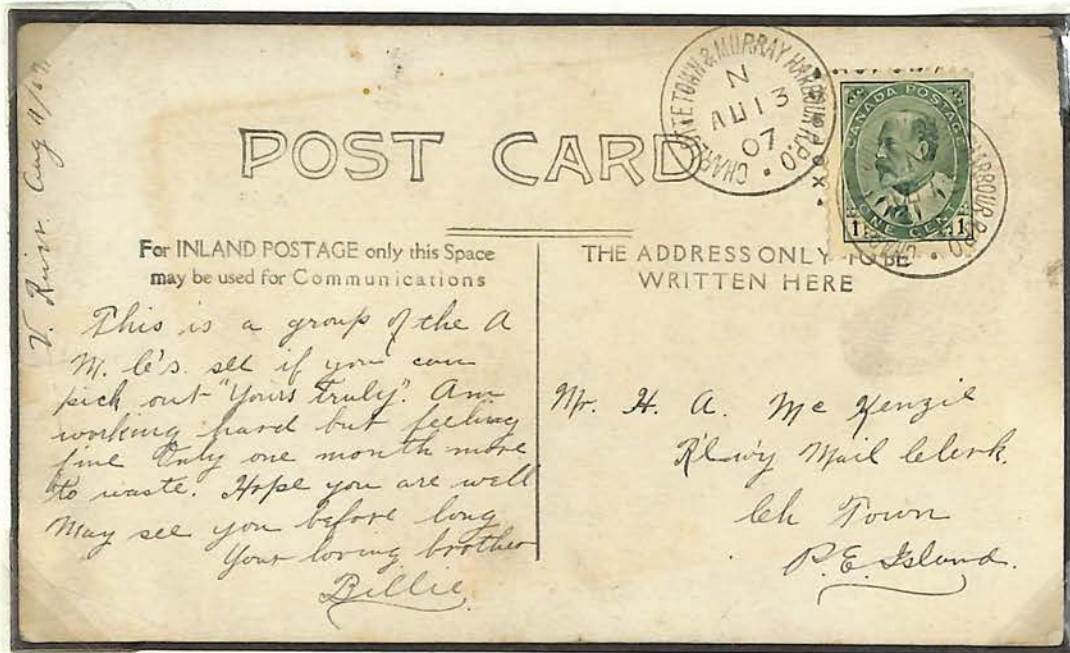
The Murray Harbour branch line was opened in 1905 and the construction necessitated a bridge over the Hillsborough River. The original railway surveyors had considered a bridge over the Hillsborough River in 1871 but decided to avoid such a lengthy span by diverting the line to Mount Stewart. Work started on the bridge in 1901 and it was completed in 1905. The post card shows a train crossing the new bridge.





# “CHARLOTTETOWN & MURRAY HARBOUR

R.P.O” no period after O, 23mm dia. with N (north). This device was in use from 1906 to 1911. The post card below is from Billie McKenzie to his brother H. A. McKenzie and is addressed to R'lway Mail Clerk Ch'Town. So this card was actually delivered on the train to H.R. probably in a special tray for the Mail Clerks. The front side is a photo of Billie and his company training in the military for several months in the summer. Billie writes he is happy he only has one more month to waste. The card is dated Au 13, 1907. Little did the men in the photo realize that in a mere 7 years they would be sent to the meat grinder that was the western front in WWI.





“CHARLOTTETOWN & MURRAY HARBOUR R.P.O” (all names spelled in full) 23mm dia. no period after O This cover was cancelled April 27, 1908 to New York with S (south).



“CHARLOTTETOWN & MURRAY HARBOUR R. P.O” no period after O with 22.5mm dia with blank indicia was used from 1911-1918. The date on this cancel is inverted. This cover was sent to Souris East on Jan 21, 1911.

“CH’TOWN & M.HBR. with R.P.O.” at the bottom with 22.5mm dia. This was used from 1911-1918. The card below was from Quebec and dated Aug 12, 1913.

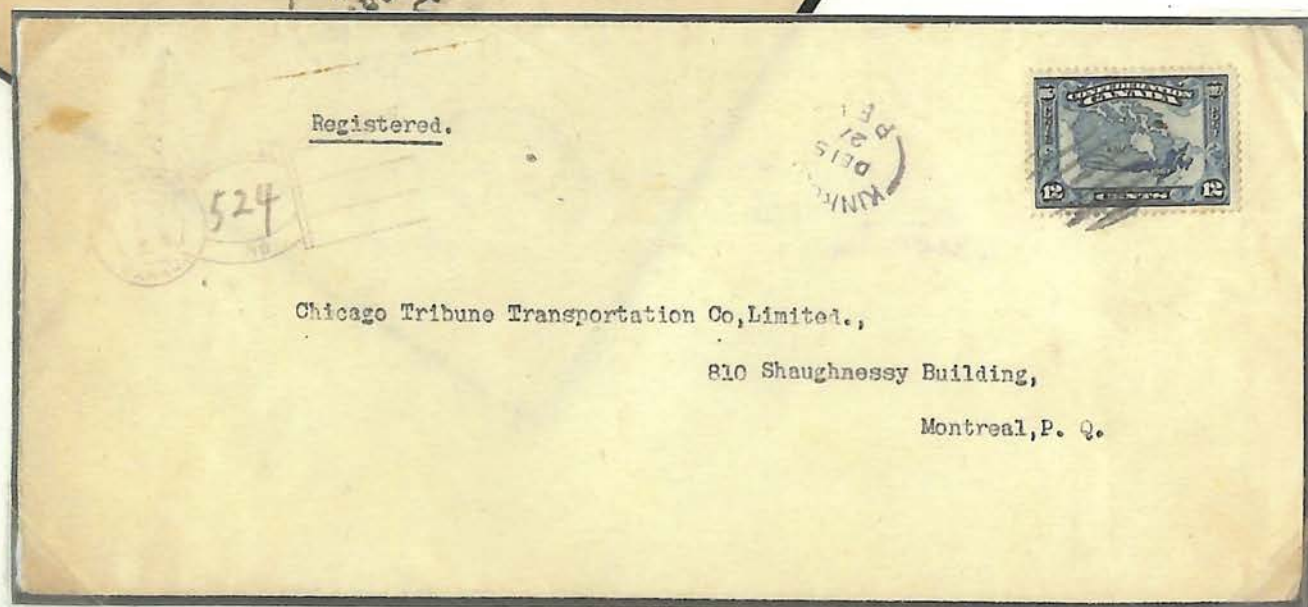
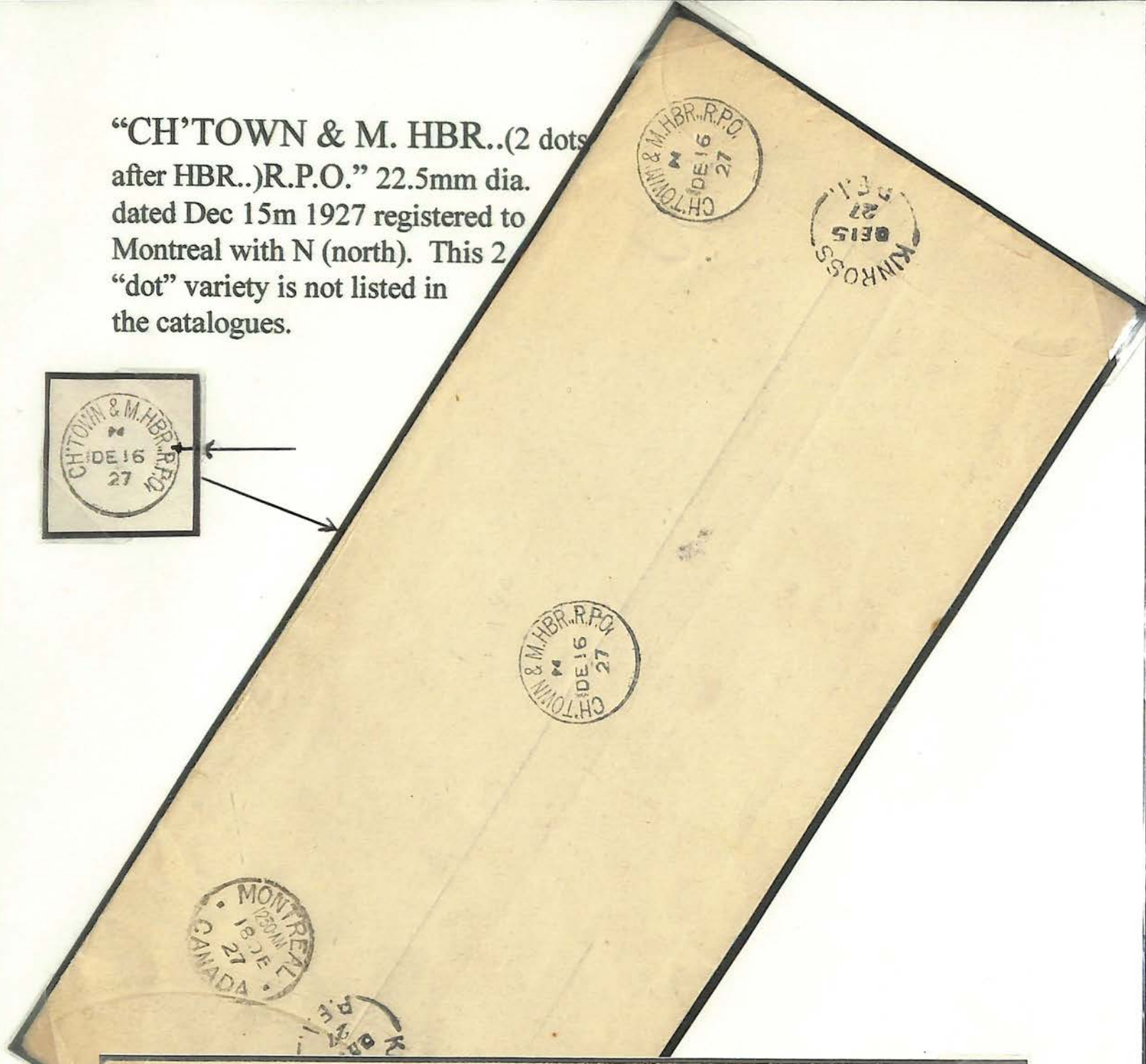


The contract for the first 10 miles of the Murray Harbour Branch Line was initially awarded to Mr. John W. McManus of New Brunswick but he had to back out due to illness. Mr. William Kitchen of Fredericton, NB who had given the second lowest bid then took over the contract. Below is an advertising corner card of Contractor -William Kitchen dated May 6, 1904.





“CH'TOWN & M. HBR..(2 dots  
after HBR..)R.P.O.” 22.5mm dia.  
dated Dec 15m 1927 registered to  
Montreal with N (north). This 2  
“dot” variety is not listed in  
the catalogues.



“CH'TOWN & M.HBR.R.P.O.” 22.5mm dia. This cover is dated April 13, 1934 to Toronto with N (north).



This cancel dated Dec 12, 1938 22mm dia. to Oakville has the uncommon “NO” for North instead of N.

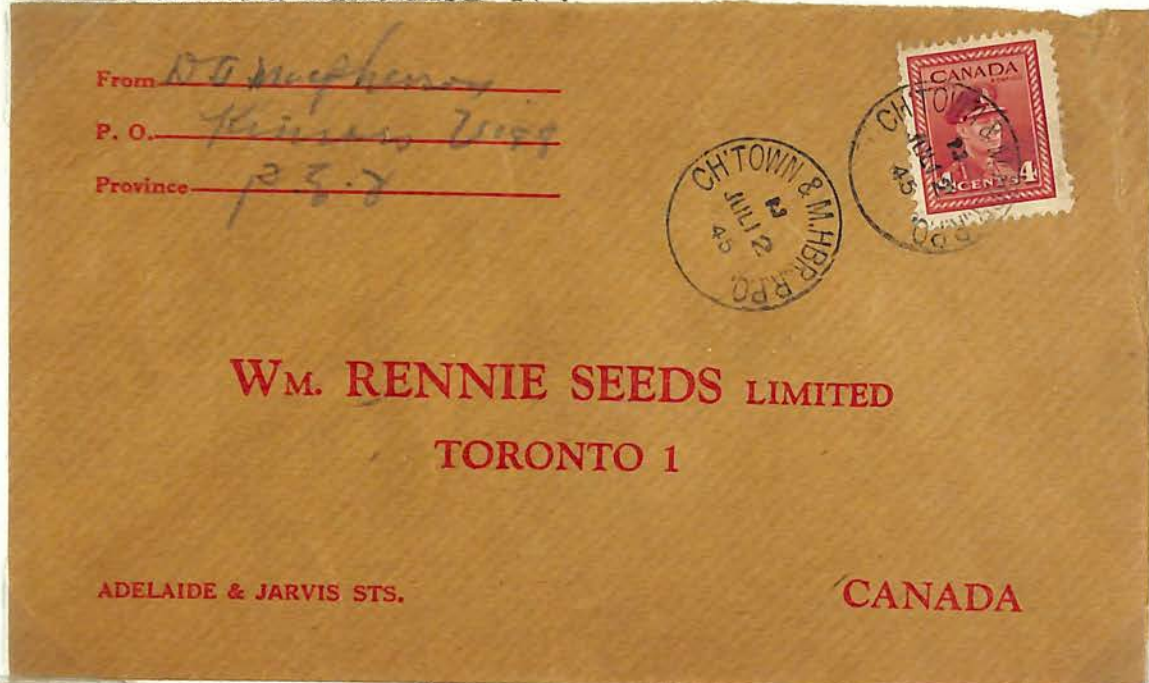


“Ch'town & M.Hbr. R.P.O. W.A.ALEXY,Ry.M.C.”

It appears that in 1942 William Vestal of Redlands, California contacted the Prince Edward Island Mail Clerks and probably requested a favor cancel of the CH'TOWN & M.HRB.R.P.O. as he probably got wind the lower right circle was becoming deformed and wanted a specimen of said cancel. This is definitely a philatelic cover. Often times when a cancel shows a oblong shape it is simply that the paper was wrinkled or the cancel was moved during the strike but in this case all four cancels show the same malformed circle. After servicing the card Alley applied his Clerk's Hand Stamp to show he was the one that cancelled the card. This Hand Stamp is what makes this card rare as there are less than 5 such strikes on cover.



“CH’TOWN & M.HBR..R.P.O.” with R.P.O. on side not bottom with 22.5mm dia. The more the handstamp was used, the more worn the “N” indicia became. This July 12, 1945 cover to Toronto shows a malformed “N”.



“CH’TOWN & M.HBR. R.P.O.” with one dot after HBR. and R.P.O. on side on Dec 6, 1936 S (south) to Toronto.



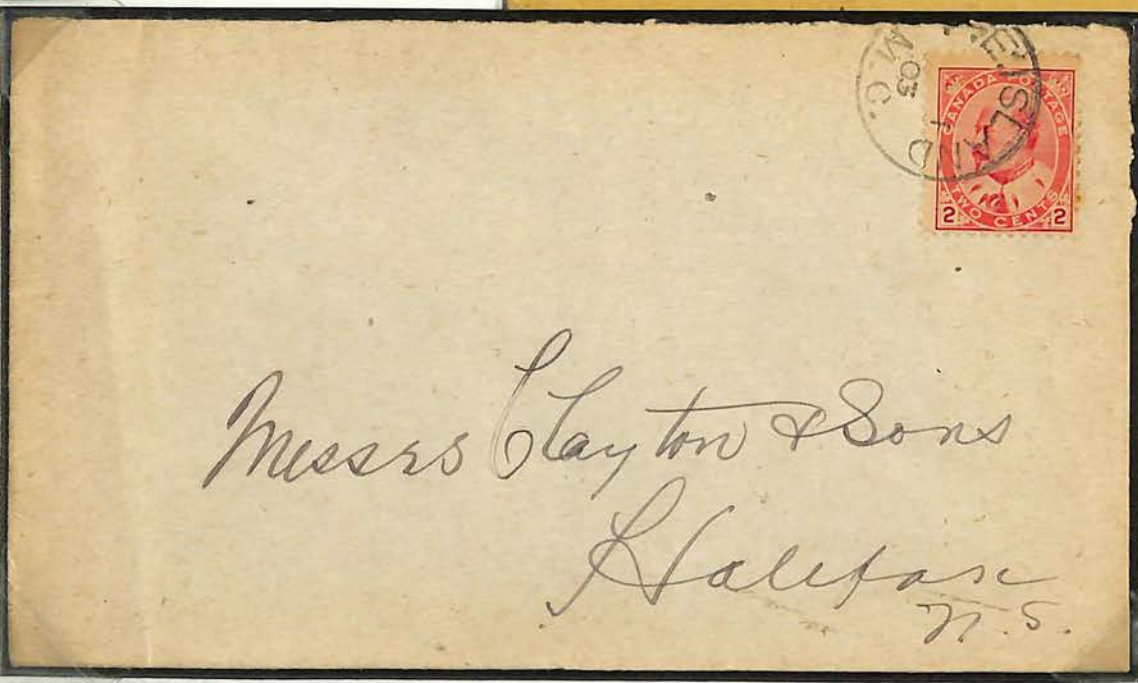
“P.E.ISLAND M.C.” In 1885 the branch line of Cape Traverse was opened and off-island mail followed the new route from Cape Traverse to Cape Tormentine, New Brunswick. It appears this mark was used on this route. Earlier strikes of this instrument are 22mm dia. but after 1889 a new device was put into use with a diameter of 23.5mm. The April 22, 1889 1 cent card to Georgetown is 22mm dia.



This Aug 31, 1889 letter to Poughkeepsie, N.Y. is also 22mm dia.

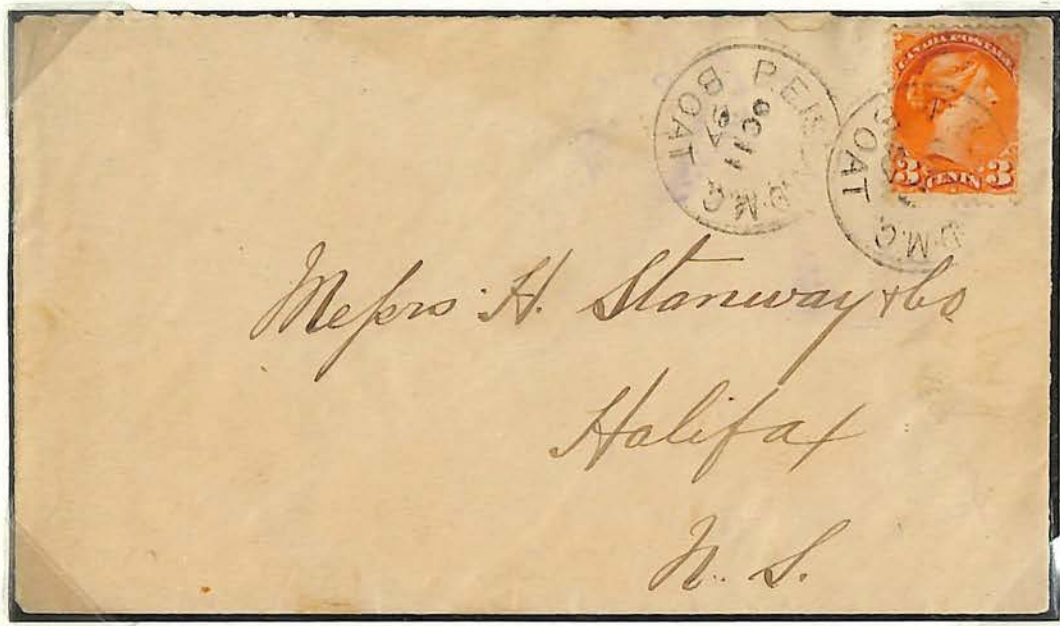


“P.E.ISLAND M.C.” with larger 23.5mm dia. cancel. The following three envelopes all show this larger cancel. June 25, 1894 to India, April 4, 1896 letter to Toronto and Dec 1, 1903 to Halifax.





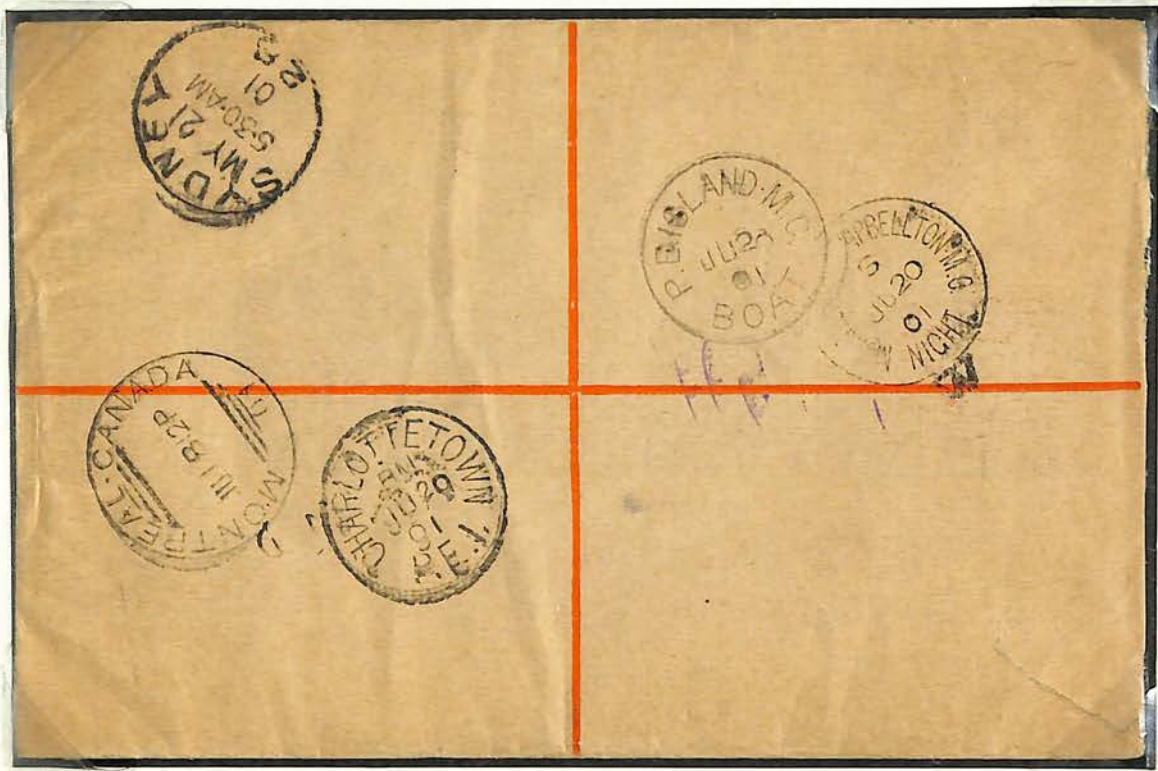
“P.E.ISLAND·M.C. BOAT” 24.5mm dia. The Oct 11,1897 cover to Halifax is an example of this cancel.



This Nov 29, 1897 cover to Halifax was originally unfranked. The Mail Boat mark is overstruck with boxed handstamp-  
“RETURNED FOR DEFICIENT POSTAGE 3ct. Also struck with two-lined RETURNED FOR POSTAGE & Dead letter office cancel.



“P.E.ISLAND·M.C. BOAT” This device was used on mail boats crossing to and from the Island between 1896 and 1904. The registered cover shown below from New South Wales was sent on May 20, 1901 and arrived June 20, 1901 for a travel time of one month. The cancels include Sydney, Montreal, Moncton & Campbellton RPO Night, and Charlottetown.





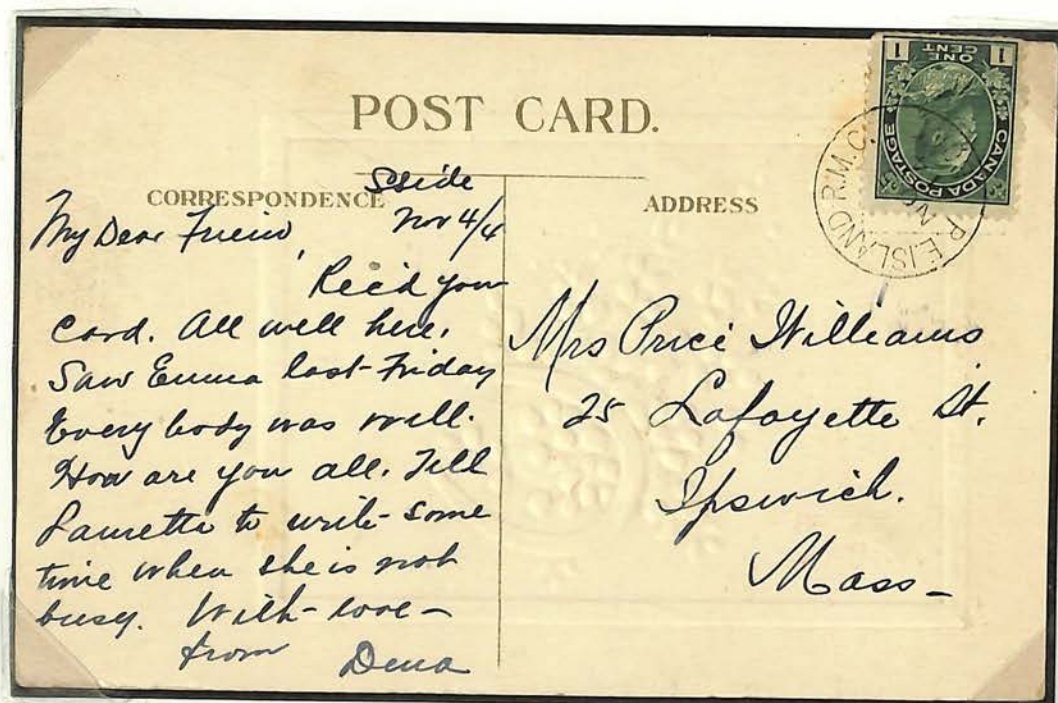
## "P.E.ISLAND·R.M.C. BOAT"

This cancel was used on steamers from 1914-1917 as shown by the Nov 5, 1914 postcard to Mass. R.M.C.= Railway Mail Clerk.

An interesting letter from the Post Office Inspector's Office written in 1937 recently came to light giving information about this "R.M.C. BOAT" cancel. In it he gives the following account:

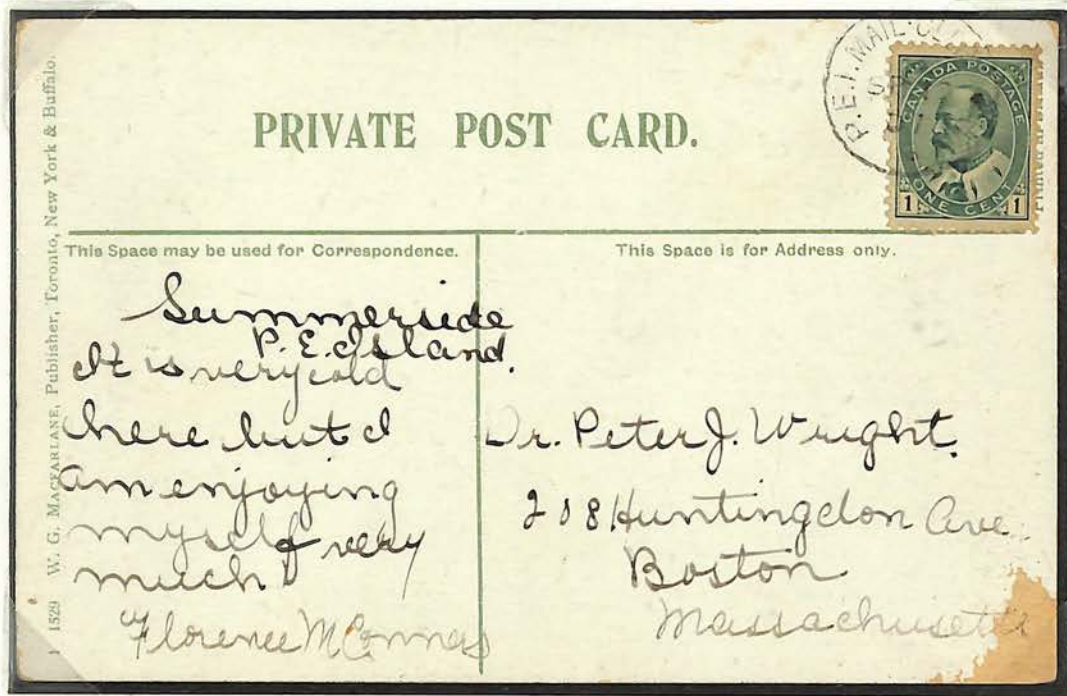
On the steamship running between Summerside, P.E.I. and Point du Chene, N.B. was a mail room equipped approximately the same as a railway postal car. This mail service on the boat was in connection with the Charlottetown and Tignish R.P.O. The routine was the Railway Mail Clerk traveled from Charlottetown to Summerside in the Postal Car. At Summerside he transferred to the mail room on the boat, proceeded to Point du Chene, returned to Summerside, transferred to Postal Car and proceeded to Tignish. While in postal car he used the 'Charlottetown & Tignish R.P.O.' date-stamp, but, while on the boat, he used the date-stamp 'R.M.C.BOAT'.

This is interesting in that the letter shows how a Mail Clerk actually moves from train to ship and back to train using different cancels depending on if he was on the train or ship. One could assume that the same was true with the earlier "BOAT" cancels although the letter does not address these earlier cancels.



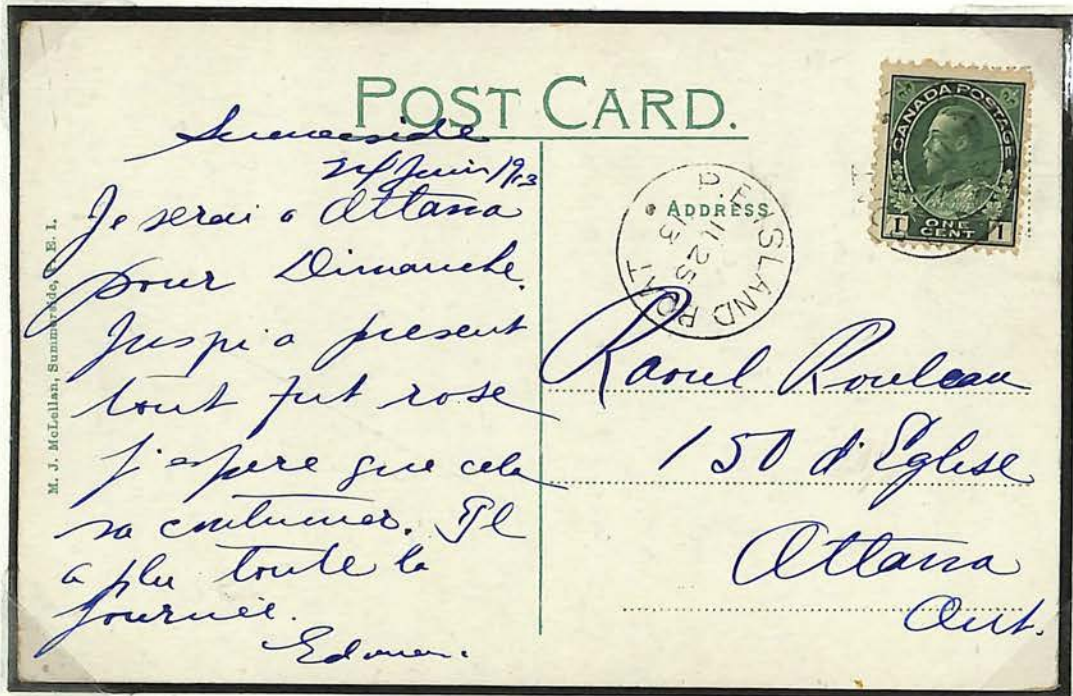


**“P.E.I. MAIL CLERK BOAT”** This Sept 10, 1907  
 postcard to Boston was struck with this cancel which was used on  
 the boats from 1901 to 1908.





“P.E.ISLAND BOAT” This Instrument was used on the ferries from 1908 to 1913. The post Card below is canceled Apr 29, 1910.



This June 24, 1913 post card to Ottawa is another example of this strike.

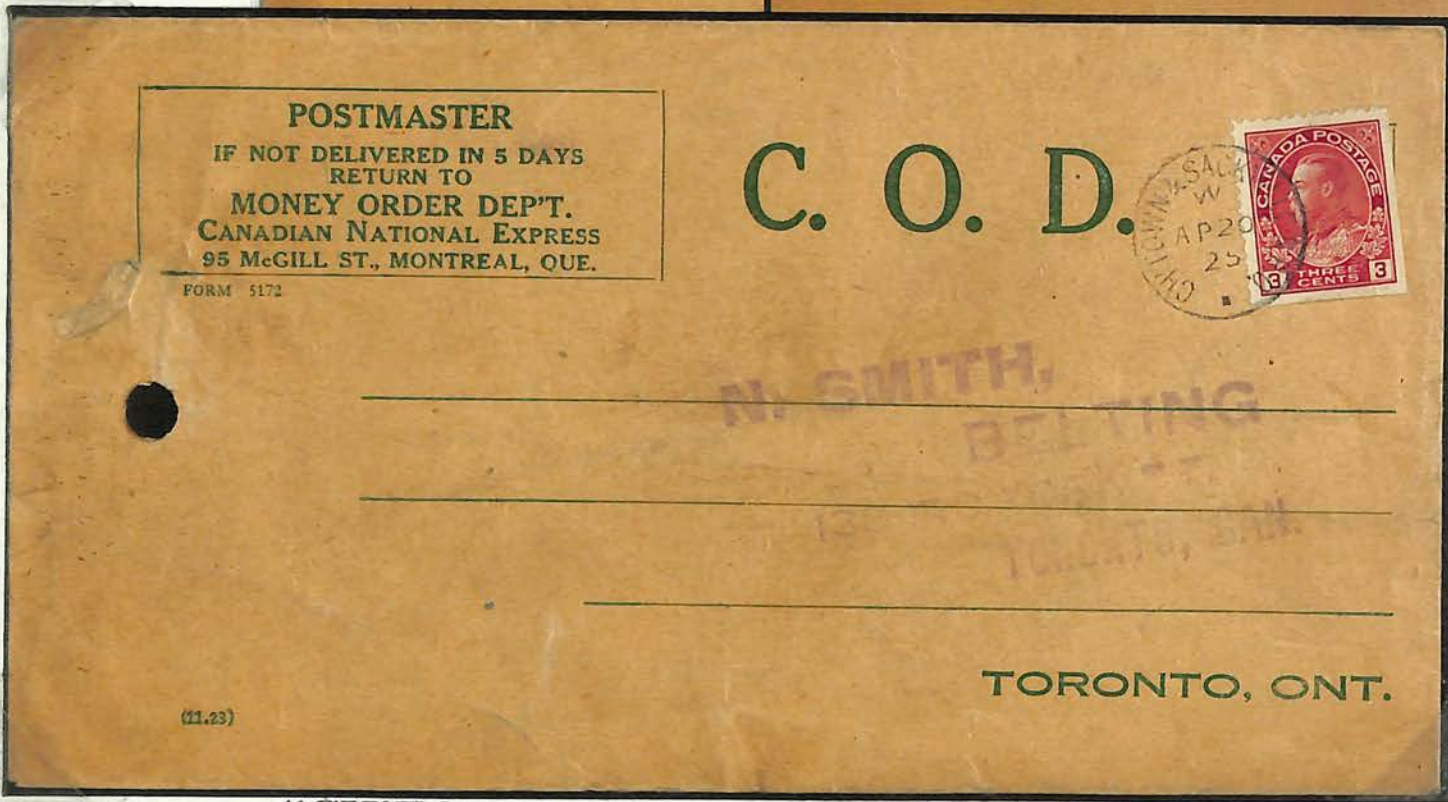


“CHARLOTTE-SACKVILLE R.P.O. E.J.GALLANT

Mail Clerk Handstamp” This partial official letter to Fredericton, New Brunswick is dated Aug 25, 1919. It is also struck with “Halifax & St. John Day R.P.O. Aug 23 1919. Both are fewer than 5 known strikes.



“CH'TOWN & SACKVILLE•R.P.O.” 23mm dia. first used on the “Prince Edward Island”. This is a registered letter from Kensington to Hamilton, Ont. on April 16, 1920.



“CH'TOWN & SACKVILLE•R.P.O.” with square dot at bottom with W (west) on a April 20, 1925 C.O.D. envelope to Toronto.



“CH'TOWN&SACKVILLE R.P.O.” also “MONT.& TOR. G.T.R. No.1” on a Jun 3, 1920 registered letter from Ellerslie, P.E.I. Also struck with CHARLOTTETOWN & TIGNISH R.P.O. The Mont & Tor. cancel is fewer then 5 known.



CH'TOWN &  
SACKVILLE →

← CH'TOWN &  
TIGNISH

MONT. & TOR.  
G.T.R. No. 1 →



297 Canada  
Ellerslie  
P.E.I.

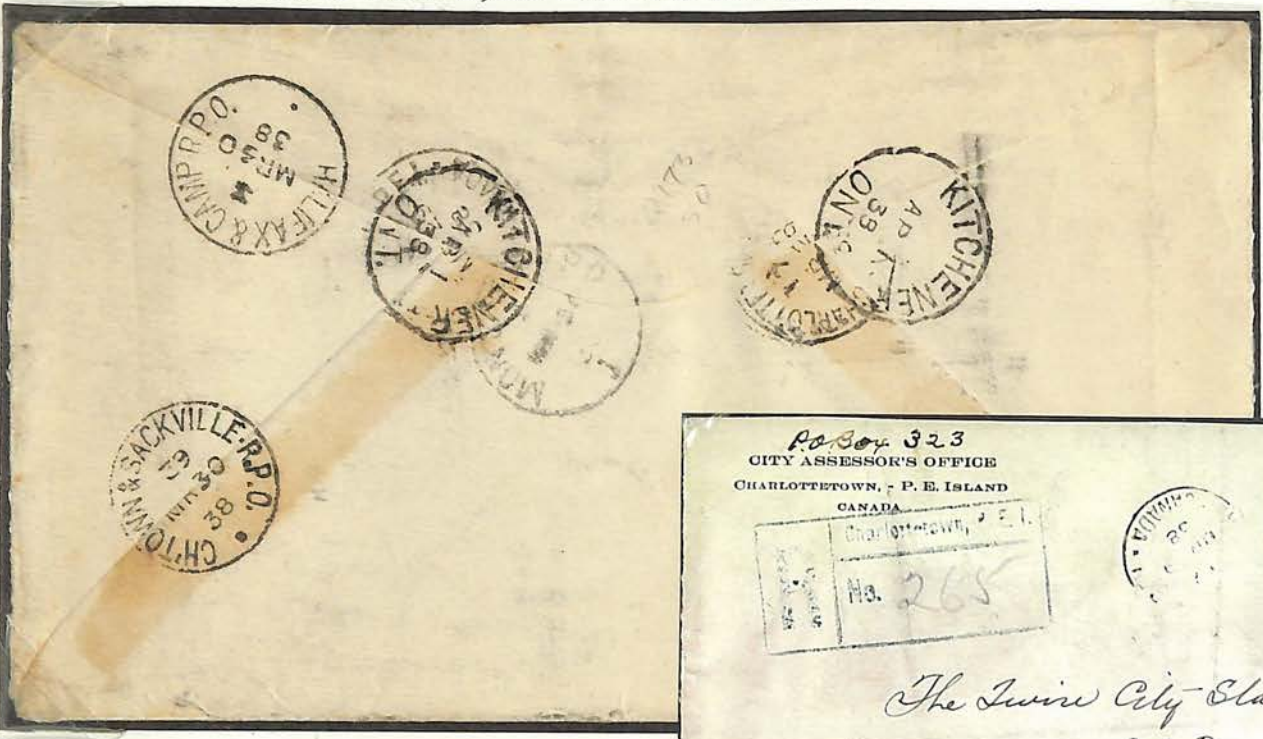
90



John A. Bruce Esq.  
Hamilton  
297 Canada



“CH'TOWN & SACKVILLE R.P.O.” Several indicia were used on these cancels. The March 30, 1938 registered letter from Ch'Town to Kitchener has Indicia 39. The Sept 22, 1934 letter to Elburn, Ill. shows a indicia 41.



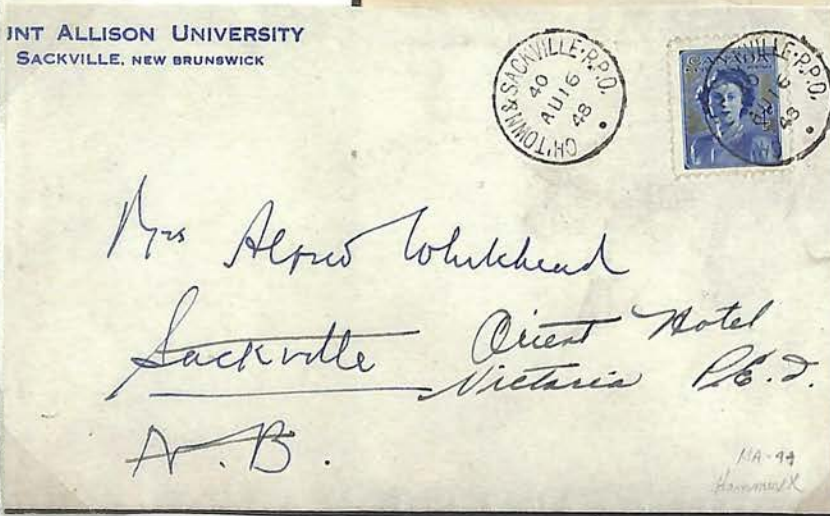


“CH'TOWN & SACKVILLE R.P.O.” with indicia 42 on July 21, 1936 registered Swiss cover to Kinkross PEI



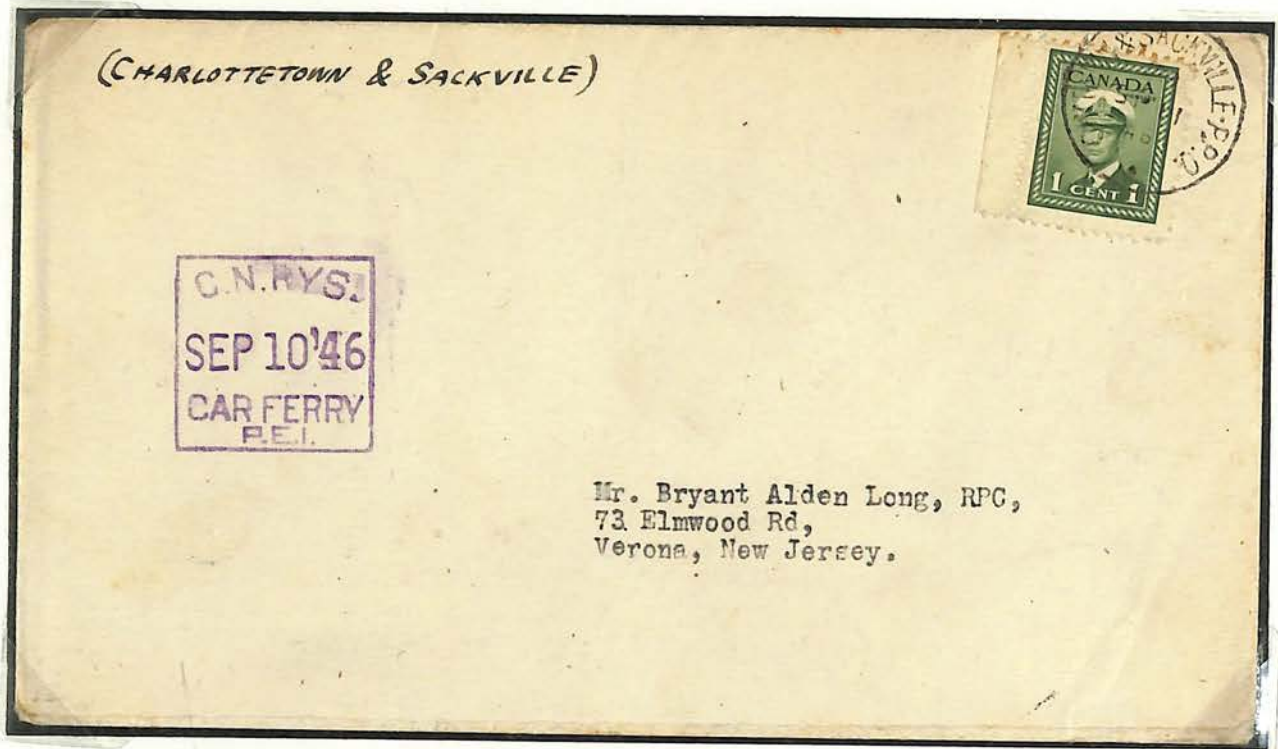
“AUG 16 1948 CH'TOWN & SACKVILLE R.P.O. W.E. BEAIRSTO” mail clerk hand stamp from Sackville, New Brunswick. There are fewer than 5 such mail clerk hand stamps known.

INT ALLISON UNIVERSITY  
SACKVILLE, NEW BRUNSWICK





“CH’TOWN & SACKVILLE R.P.O.” 23mm dia Sept 1, 1946 to New Jersey also struck with a Canadian National Railways Car Ferry PEI ticket stamp dated Sep 10’46. The 10 is probably supposed to be a 1. The time table & fare schedule was enclosed.



**CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS**  
**Motor Vehicle Ferry Service – 1946**  
 Between BORDEN, P. E. I. and CAPE TORMENTINE, N. B.  
 (ATLANTIC TIME)

<p><b>From BORDEN PIER:</b></p> <p>Lv. 9:05 a. m.          1:00 p. m.          4:30 p. m.</p>	<p><b>From CAPE TORMENTINE PIER:</b></p> <p>Lv. 10:30 a. m.          3:00 p. m.          7:30 p. m.</p>
<p><b>DAILY EXCEPT SUNDAY</b></p>	
<p>Lv. *1:00 p. m.          6:45 p. m.</p>	<p>Lv. *3:00 p. m.          8:00 p. m.</p>
<p><b>SUNDAY SERVICE</b></p>	

*Motor vehicles on Sundays will be handled under their own power ONLY*  
 \* Last trip Sunday Sept. 15

When extra freight trips of the Ferry are operated, motor vehicles will be carried at the regular rates on any of these trips.

Passenger Fare—40c one way; 65c return—Children 5 and under 12 years, half fare. Charges, all types motor vehicles, see reverse side of card. Motor vehicle and passage tickets may be purchased at railway station, daily except Sunday, Cape Tormentine 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.: Borden 7.30 a.m. to 10 p.m., or on each trip at Purser's office on Ferry. All persons, including driver, travelling in or on motor vehicles must obtain landing check at Purser's office and surrender same with motor vehicle ticket when driving off Ferry. Motor vehicles boarding Car Ferry under own power must be accompanied across Strait by driver.

**BUFFET LUNCH SERVED ON CAR FERRY AT REASONABLE PRICES.**

Visit The CHARLOTTETOWN HOTEL in Charlottetown

Visit The CHARLOTTETOWN HOTEL in Charlottetown



“CHARLOTTETOWN (note name in full) & SACKVILLE R.P.O.” one with indicia 39 to Ch’Town and one with indicia 40 to Port Borden PEI. This Oct. 24, 1962 registered cover from St. Pierre Miquelon also has a blue Marie de St. Pierre cachet, a North Sydney, N.S. cancel, a Sydney & Truro RPO and a Truro & Moncton RPO cancel and a Ch’Town registered cancel.





“CHARLOTTETOWN & SACKVILLE R.P.O.” with 23mm dia. This device was in use from 1953 to 1968 when the RPO was terminated. By the 1960’s the RPO markings had become something of a philatelic novelty. The first cover is dated Feb 28, 1965 to Nebraska with indicia 40 and the second dated Aug 26, 1963 to New York with indicia 39.





“CH’TOWN & MONCTON R.P.O.” with indicia 42.

This Dec 19, 1939 registered cover from Halifax to Kinross, PEI is also struck with Ch’Town & M,HBR.. R.P.O. This is the only hammer recorded for this strike although it was proofed Sept5, 1917. A similar hammer but with indicia 39 instead of 42 is recorded for Sept12, 1939.







D.G.S. MINTO (WINTER, 1905)

AT GEORGETOWN, P.E.I.

Garden of the Gulf Series. 4543

*S.S. Stanley runs between Pictou N.S. & Georgetown P.E.I. in winter. The ice being sometimes 4 to 5 feet thick through which she breaks.*



*Estelle M. Aikens*

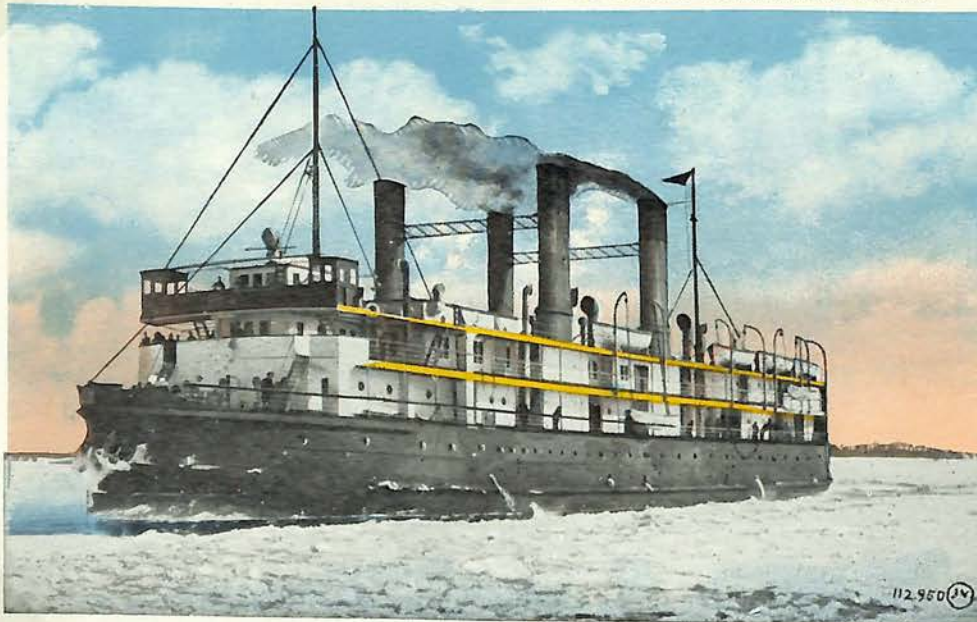
*Georgetown*

*Prince Edward Island*  
*Canada*



S.S. STANLEY. — PICTOU, N.S.

Car Ferry "Prince Edward Island," Ice Breaker, Northumberland Straits



112.950 (14)

## WINTER MAIL

The mail in the winter would be carried by the "Minto" and "Stanley" until they became ice bound. Then the ice boats would be rowed, pulled, and sailed across the strait. This changed in 1918 when the ice breaker-car ferry "Prince Edward Island" became operational. It was able to crash through the thick ice year round.



## "PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND-EMERGENCY"

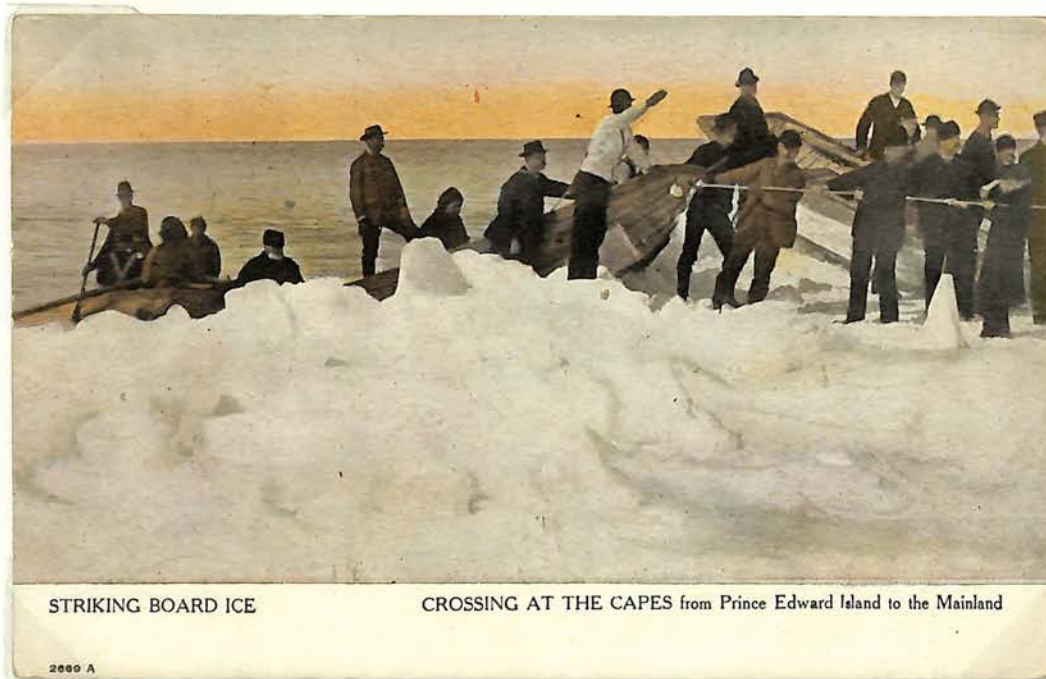
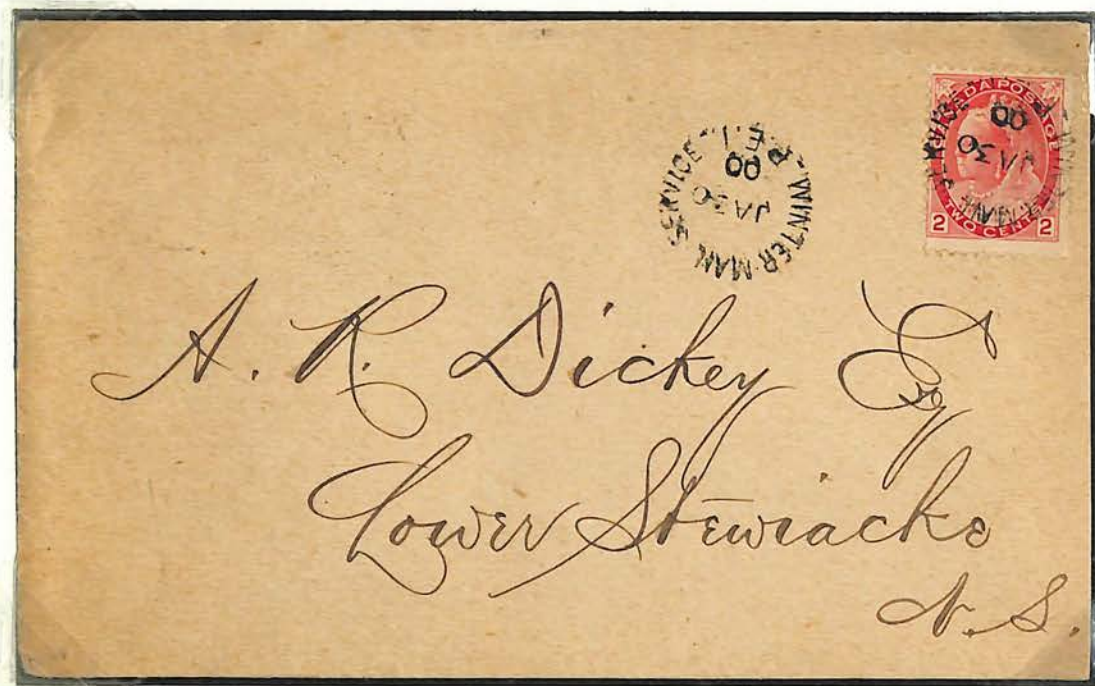
When a regularly issued canceling device was lost due to a train wreck, post office fire, theft or other emergency, a temporary hammer was dispatched from the nearest district director to be used until a replacement could be issued. Other occasions which necessitated the use of emergency devices included the delayed arrival of newly issued datestamps, broken hammers etc.

This Aug 20, 1930 strike of the Emergency Hammer is obviously a favor cancel but it along with the single stamp below dated Oct. 1958 are the only known examples of this strike.





“WINTER MAIL SERVICE P.E.I.” 21mm dia. no circle around the letters. In use during winters of 1899-1913. This cover was sent front P.E.I. to Lower Stewiacke, Nova Scotia on 1-30-1900. When the ice became so severe that the Georgetown to Pictou service could not run; the mail was switched to the iceboats which were partially hauled and partly sailed across the strait between Cape Traverse and Cape Tormentine, N.B. Less than 5 of these covers are known. The post card below shows the crews pulling the Ice Boats over the large piles of ice.



STRIKING BOARD ICE

CROSSING AT THE CAPES from Prince Edward Island to the Mainland



## CONCLUSION

Anyone under the age of 50 probably has no recollection of a train moving on Prince Edward Island. One can't go to the Old Timers and ask questions about their work moving the mails-- they all died years ago. It is only thru newspaper and magazine articles and maps, photos, and covers that an understanding of the involvement of the trains, steamers, ferries, and ice boats played in moving the mail long ago.

The train tracks are torn up to make way for hiking and bike paths. Only a few pilings remain of the Hillsborough Bridge. Most all the stations are torn down and the Confederation Bridge negates the need for steamers, ice boats and ferries. For someone who never knew where P.E.I. was for 60 years and never owned a Canadian R.P.O. cover this has been an enjoyable, educational and happy experience putting the R.P.O. exhibit together. My hope is that the judges hate this exhibit-- only then will I know that the average collector will be able appreciate and learn something from it.









RAILWAY STATION, GEORGETOWN, P. E. ISLAND.



Hunter River, P.E.I.



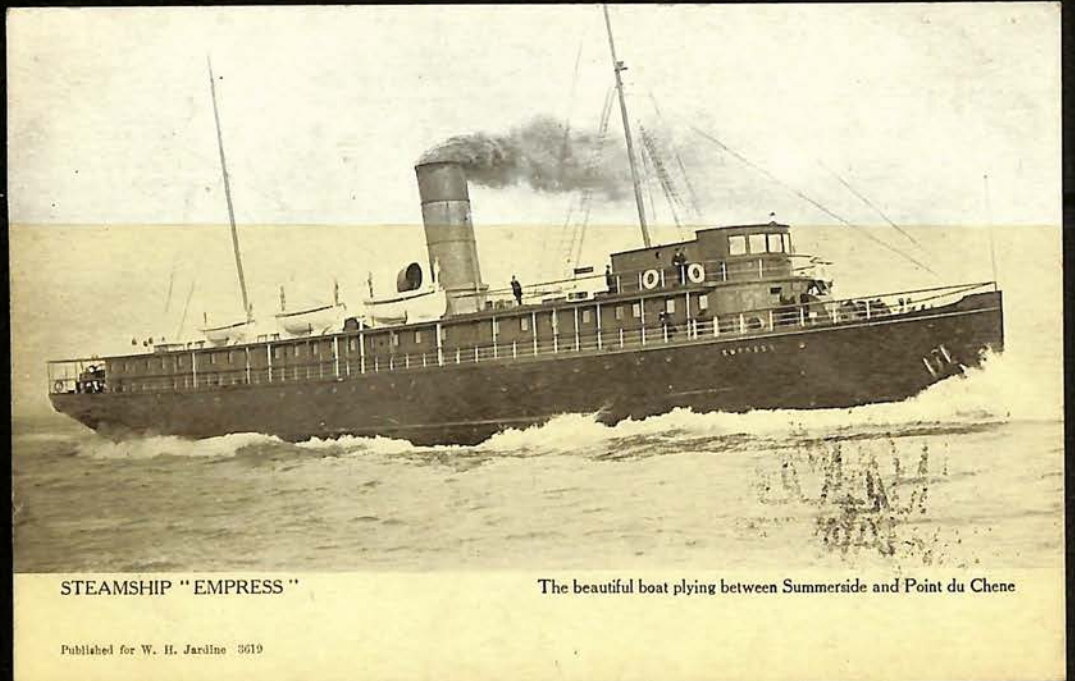
New Railway Station Montague, P. E. I.

CANADA





TRANSFER APRON. PORT BORDEN, P.E.I.

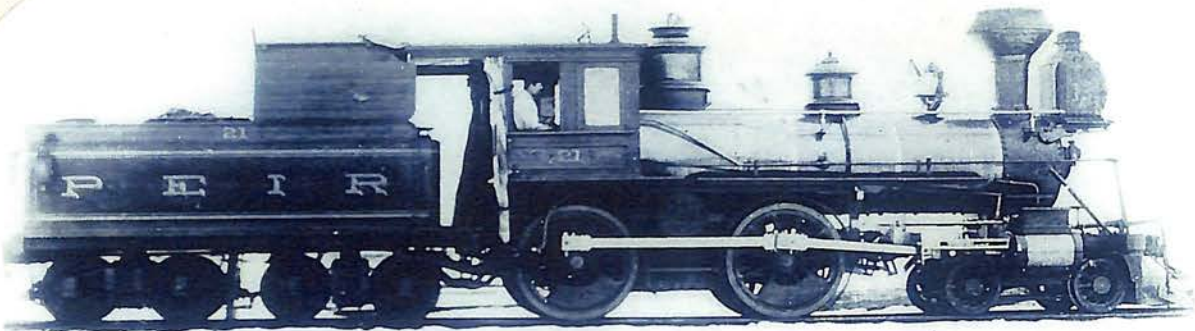


STEAMSHIP "EMPRESS"

The beautiful boat plying between Summerside and Point du Chene



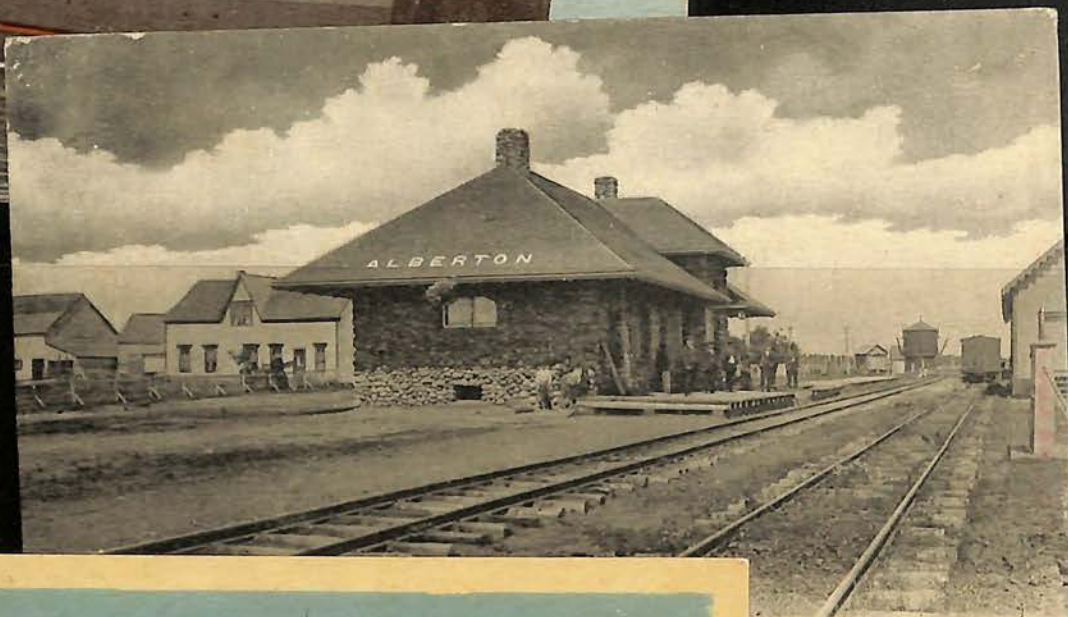
*Winter Service between Mainland & Charlottetown, P. E. I.*



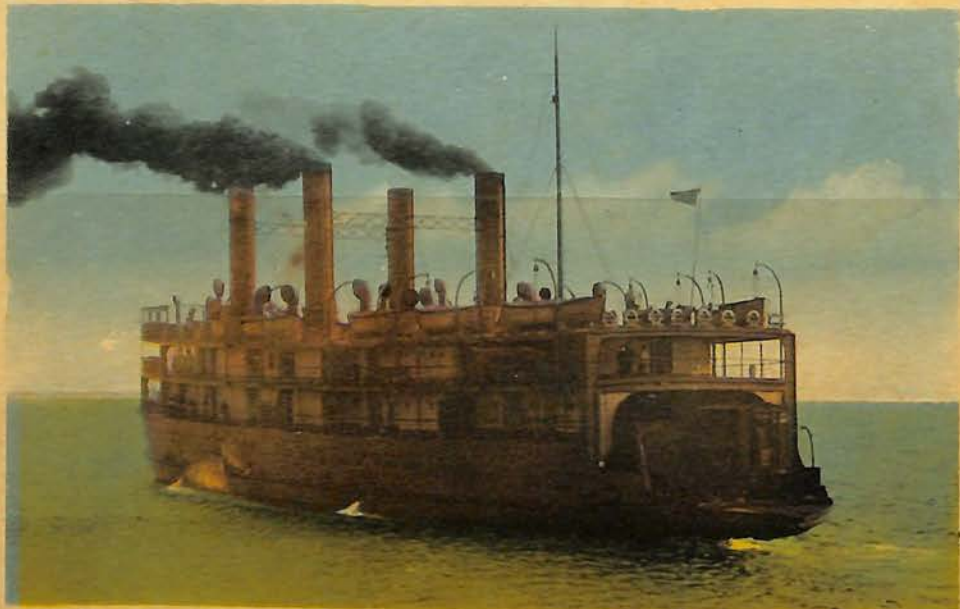
The P.E.I.R.R. #21 was acquired in April 1884 from the Canadian Locomotive Works in Kingston, Ontario. This more powerful engine had 48" diameter driving wheels and 15" diameter pistons with a 20" stroke. By 1889 the PEI Railway had 21 locomotives, 17 first class cars, 15 second class passenger and baggage cars, 3 postal and smoking cars, 175 box cars, 125 platform cars, 3 conductor's vans, 1 pay car, 8 snow plows and 7 flangers.



S. S. CHARLOTTETOWN.



ALBERTON, P.E. ISLAND.



S.S. Prince Edward Island running between Cape Tormentine N.B. and Port Borden, P.E.I.—48.



D. G. S. "Prince Edward Island"  
Ice Breaker,  
Northumberland Straits



KENSINGTON STATION, P. E. ISLAND.

