

Mail Between, and Via, Canada and Japan, 1873 - 1898

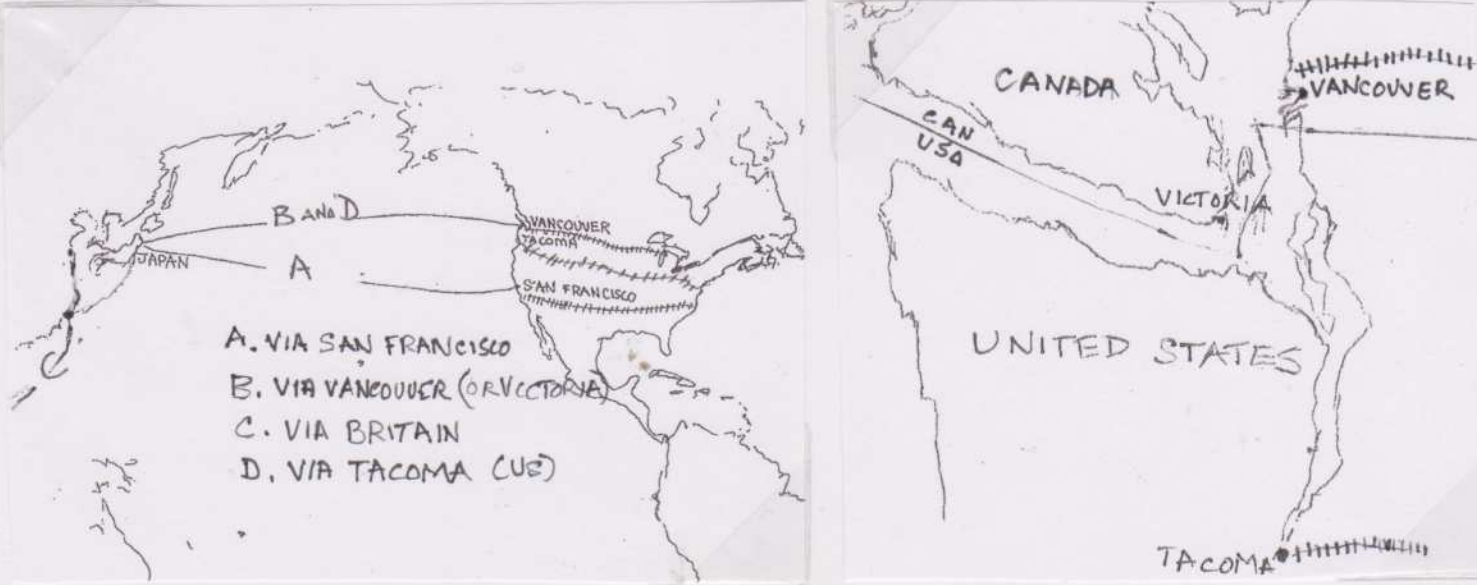
Our Pool of Covers Traditionally, this exhibit would be covers from Canada to Japan or the reverse showing different rates and stamp usages. The covers would have either the Canadian stamps known as "Small Heads" or "Small Queens" (SQ), used from the early 1870s until 1887, or have the Japanese stamps known as "Kobans", used during 1876 to 1899. However, if we expand and include both Small Queen covers & Koban covers, more than double our pool of covers!

Postal Routes Many letters were endorsed via particular cities or routes, even via specific ships! With the aid of published shipping dates & contemporary Shipping News in Vancouver newspapers, we can distinguish four different routes, each with advantages and limitations. Finally, we can see - perhaps only dimly - that other countries & colonies used the via Vancouver (or Victoria) route.

This frame is organized by those four routes, with a fifth group of wider use of via Vancouver. A. via San Francisco - the only route until 1887 - pages 2 to 4; B. via Vancouver (or Victoria) - the shortest & fastest route - pages 5 to 9; C. via Britain - the longest & slowest route for Japan-Canada mail - pages 10 to 11; D. via Tacoma (USA) - close to Vancouver and used only by exception - page 12; and E. via Japan and via Canada - a route for half the world! - pages 13 to 16. (And page 6!)

So What? During 1873-1898, the postal systems of the world transformed into the world's first global communication system! That system declared itself "Universal". But was it?

Maps Postal Routes between Canada & Japan, 1873 - 1898 Vancouver, Victoria, & Tacoma



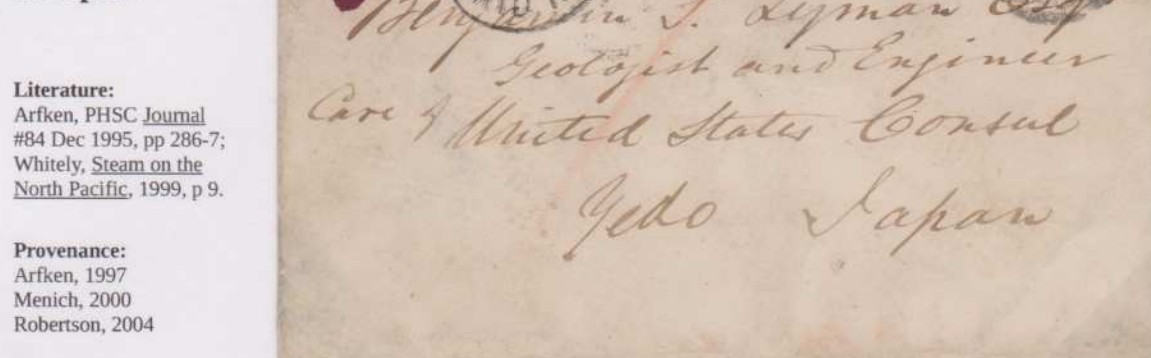
Murphy B Mai 01

Via San Francisco

By 1873-74, Pacific Mail Steam Ship Co usually had two or three monthly sailings between San Francisco & Yokohama. Service had started 1867, & Canadian letters could be sent by 1 July 1869. Of the seven Small Queen covers known from before San Francisco's mail monopoly ended, July 1887, three are exhibited here.

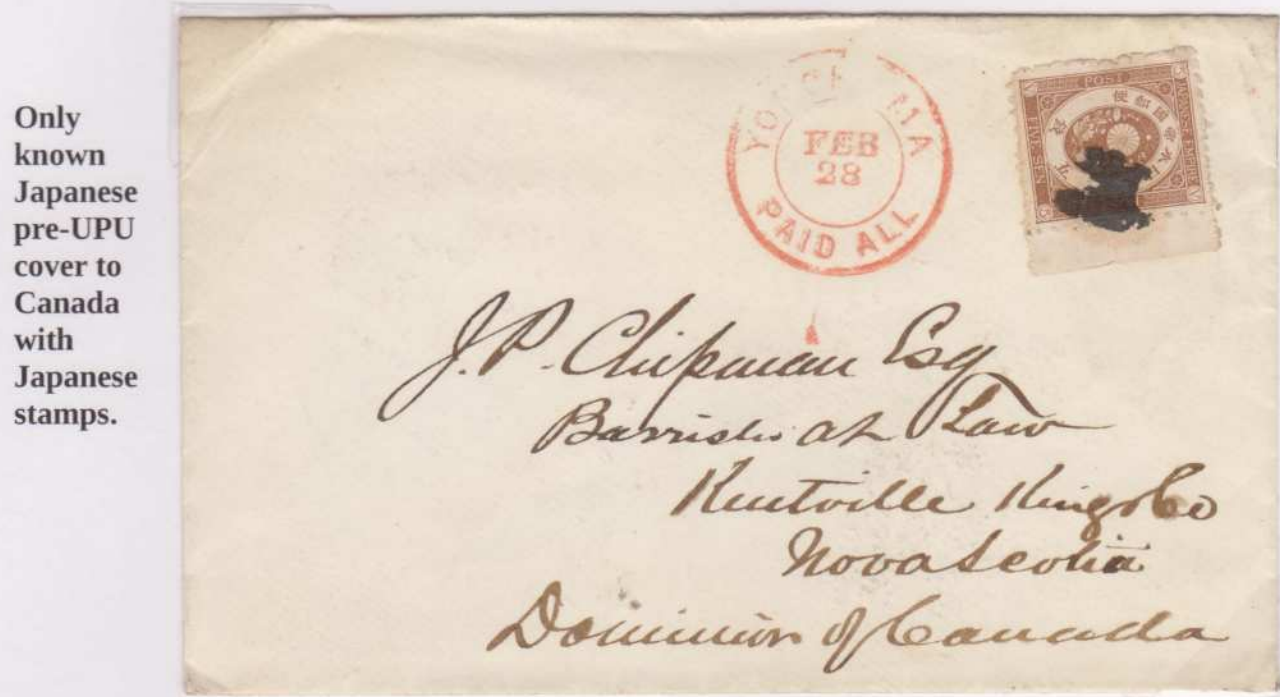
Pre-UPU 10c Letter Rate to Japan, June 1872 - January 1875, to a Consular Post Office

Earlier of the two known pre-UPU Small Queen covers to Japan.



Although prepaid only 6c, the rate to San Francisco, not 10c, the rate to Japan, the Canada PO credited 77c (UL) to the US PO, probably the 10c less 3c Canadian domestic postage. The Detroit exchange office rated the letter "Paid All". It was on PMSS's China from San Francisco 16 April 1873 to Yokohama 13 May 1873.

Pre-UPU 5 Sen Letter Rate, 1 April 1876 - 31 August 1878, from the Japan Post Office



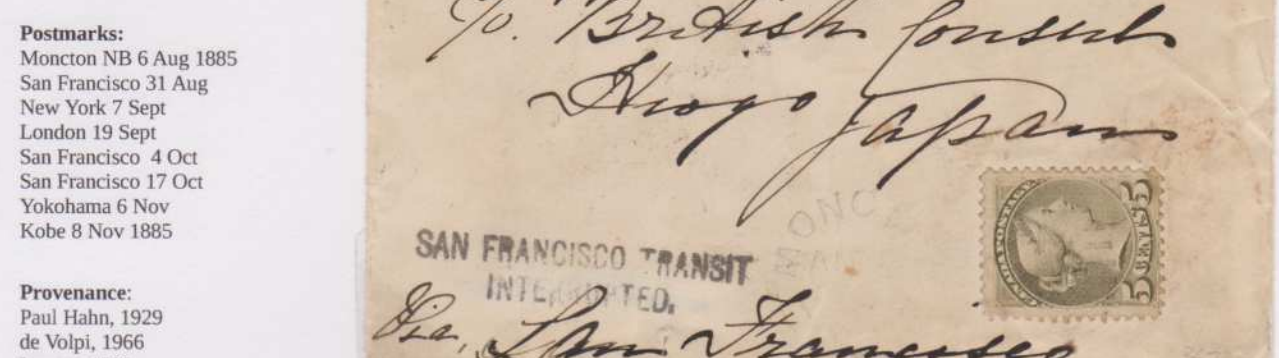
Japan began international postal service 1 January 1875, and joined the UPU 1 June 1877. On this letter, the red "Paid All" confirms that the 5 sen US treaty rate was extended to Canada - even pre-UPU Canada! This cover was on PMSS's Alaska from Yokohama 28 February 1878 to San Francisco 22 March 1878.

Murphy B Mai 02

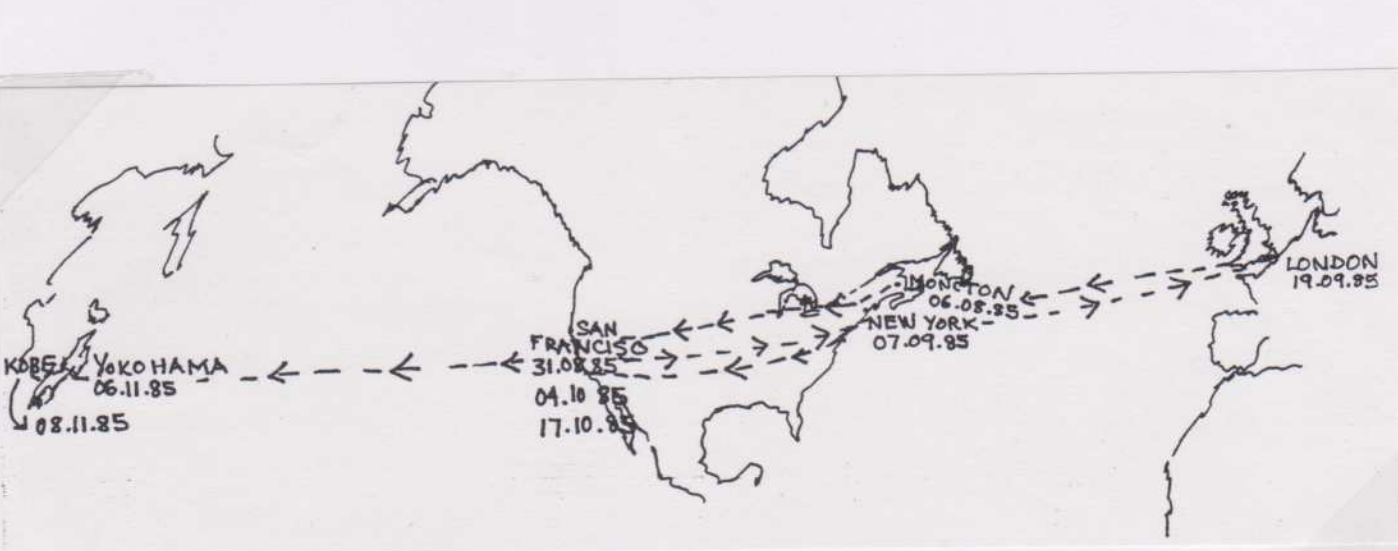
Via San Francisco

"San Francisco Transit Interrupted.", August - September 1885

Only known Canadian cover redirected twice during the 1885 Trans-Pacific interruption: 1. SF to London; 2. London back to SF.



In 1885, "San Francisco Transit [was] Interrupted" to East Asia when the Pacific Mail Steam Ship contact expired. No other trans-Pacific route existed, so the US PO began sending east Asia mail via London - the other way around the world! But PMSS service resumed, so Britain sent this letter back to San Francisco.



Murphy B Mai 03

Via San Francisco

Last Sailing During San Francisco's Trans-Pacific Mail Monopoly



Only recorded multiple rate Small Queen cover to Japan. Traditional Japanese brushwork. Backstamp: Windsor Oct 29 June 1887. San Francisco 4 June 1887. Vancouver 10 July 1887. Montreal 20 July 1887.

Until 12 July 1887, only San Francisco had ships carrying trans-Pacific mail. This cover is the latest of seven (1873 - 1887) Small Queen covers to Japan during San Francisco's mail carrying monopoly.

Two San Francisco Shipping Lines



Although the Occidental & Oriental Steam Ship Co had carried mail via San Francisco as early as 1875, its role probably grew after 1885. Here "Per S.S. City of Tokio" of PMSS & "Per Str. Doric" of O & OSS.

Murphy B Mai 04

Via Vancouver

Beginning of Canadian Pacific Steamship Company, with three leased Pioneer Steamers After completion of the trans-continental Canadian Pacific Railway in 1886, Canadian Pacific Steamship Co began monthly service between Vancouver and Yokohama & Hong Kong, May - July 1887. CP was successful and in 1891 it built and introduced its three Empress ships!



Batavia, one CP's three leased ships, carried this letter on her third trip to Canada: she left Yokohama 26 May 1888 and arrived at Vancouver 10 June. Then she continued south to San Francisco as CP investors wanted to challenge the two US lines for the trans-Pacific carrying trade.



The last trips of any CP pioneer steamer. Parthia - left Yokohama 29 July 1891; - arrived Vancouver 11 August; with the printed matter at right.

Parthia - then left Vancouver 20 August; - arrived Yokohama 3 Sept 1891; with the post card above!

Murphy B Mai 05

Via Victoria (Vancouver)

Japan to Sierra Leone via Canada; Carried by a United States Ship from Yokohama to Victoria



Murphy B Mai 06

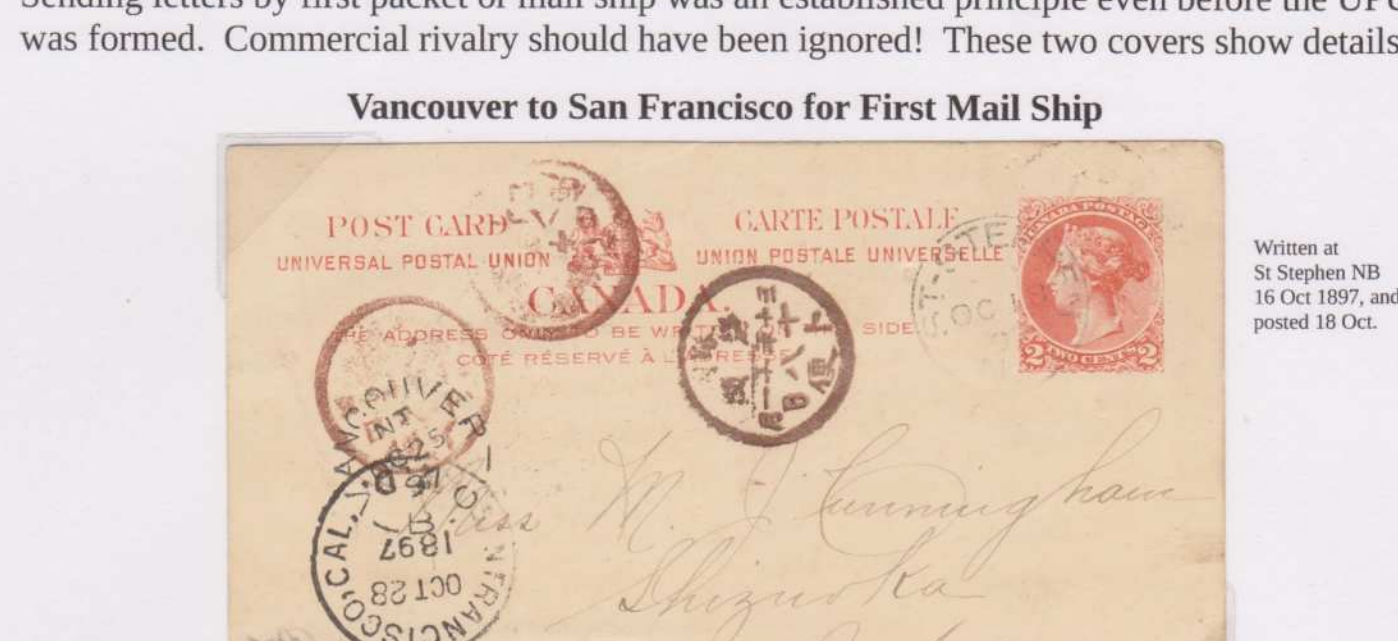


In its competition with the two San Francisco lines, CP in 1888 extended its route south from Vancouver to San Francisco 13 times! The PMSS line of San Francisco in 1890 added a stop three times at Victoria BC. The prize of the competition? Carrying East Asian trade with the Americas & with Europe. And with Africa!

Murphy B Mai 06

Via Vancouver, or Via San Francisco?

First Packet Principle Sending letters by first packet or mail ship was an established principle even before the UPU was formed. Commercial rivalry should have been ignored! These two covers show details.



Murphy B Mai 07

Upgraded Domestic Post Card to Japan

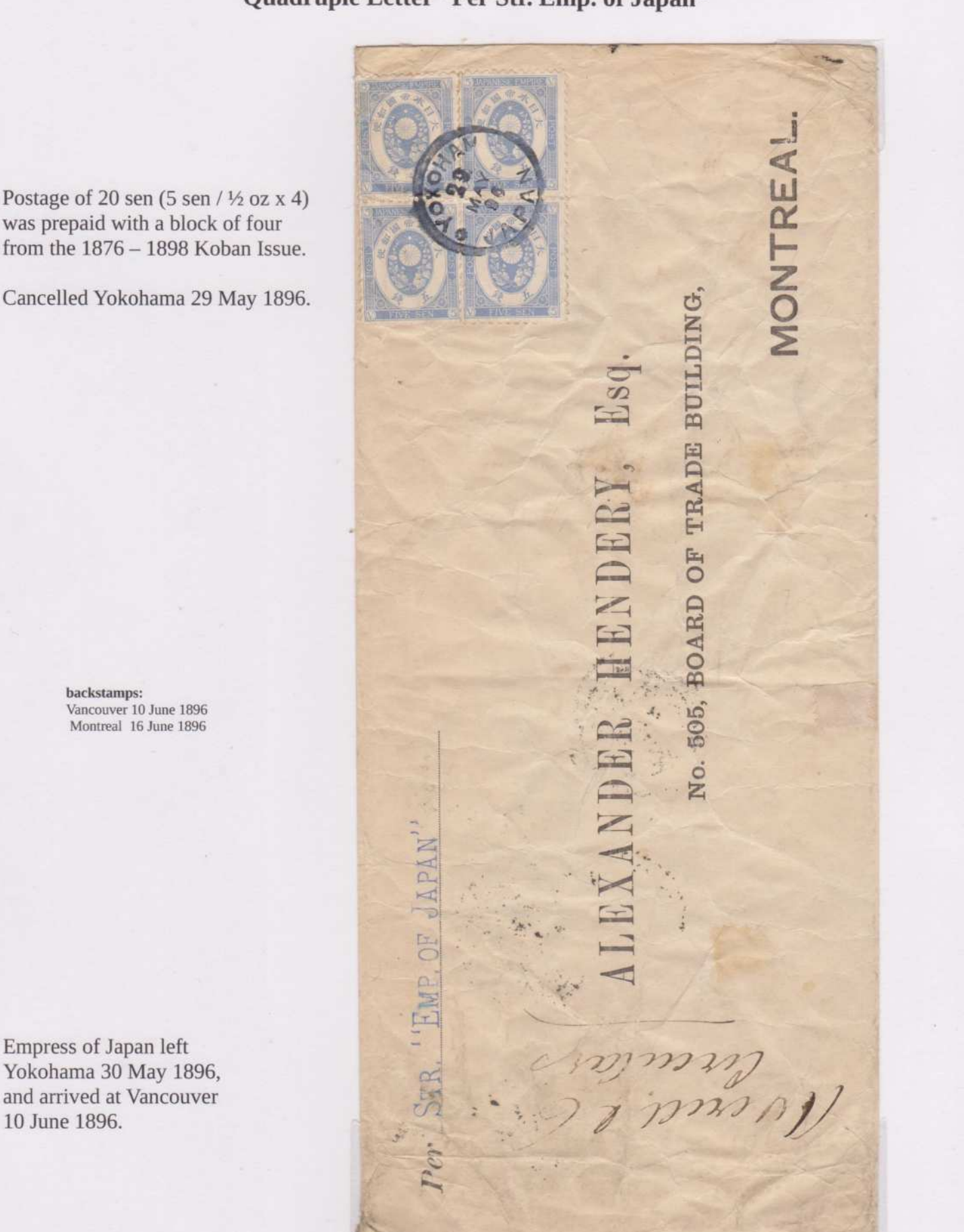


This PC from Montreal 29 October 1896 arrived at Vancouver 3- or 5- November. Five days from Montreal by train was fast! Too fast? The card was on Empress of Japan from Vancouver 9 November and arrived at Yokohama 22 November 1896. The second Yokohama cds - 69 days later - suggests the PC was unclaimed.

Murphy B Mai 08

Via Vancouver

Quadruple Letter "Per Str. Emp. of Japan"



Murphy B Mai 09

Via Britain

By 1873, the Tables of Rates of Postage from Canada had dropped P & O's route to Japan via the Indian Ocean. That route was too long for mail between Japan & Canada, and so not used.

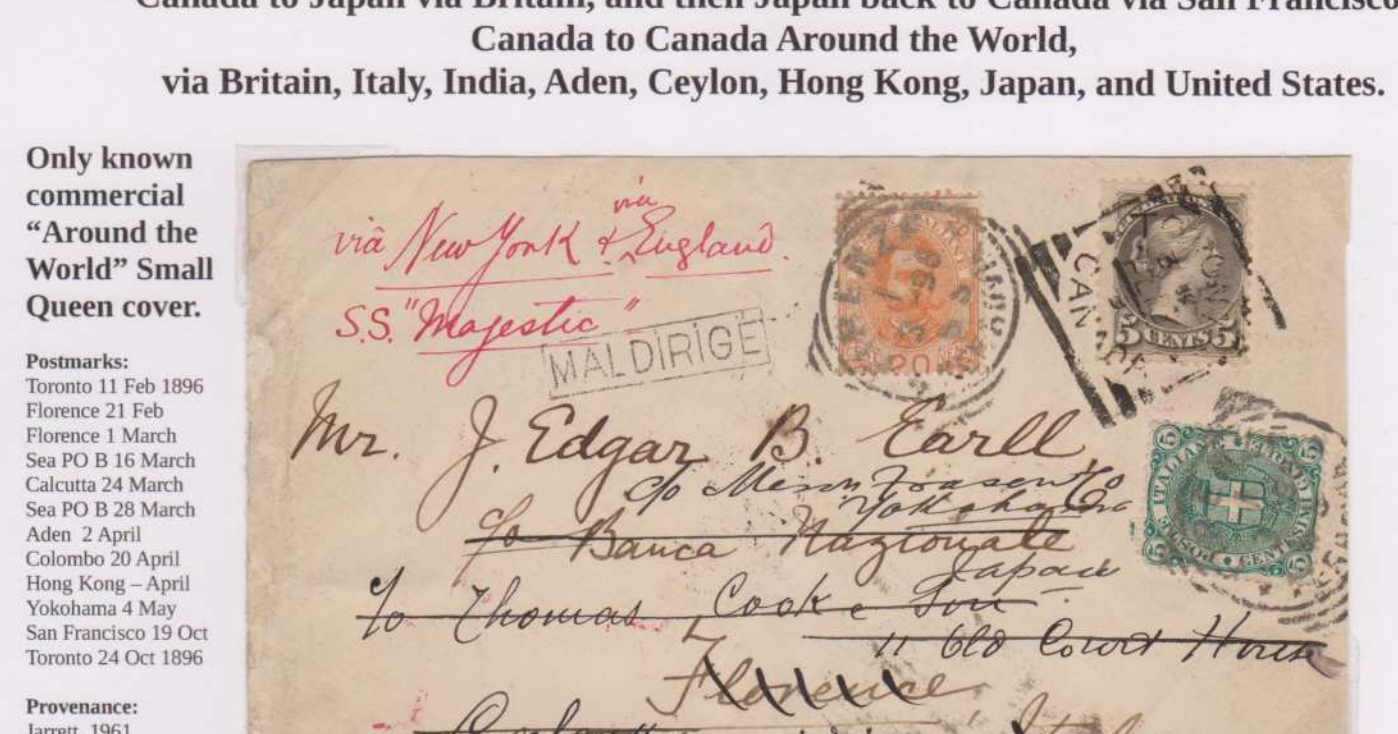
Woodblock & Watercolour Letter, Endorsed via Britain, but Sent via Vancouver to US



Murphy B Mai 10

Via Britain

Canada to Japan via Britain, and then Japan back to Canada via San Francisco: Canada to Canada Around the World, via Britain, Italy, India, Aden, Ceylon, Hong Kong, Japan, and United States.



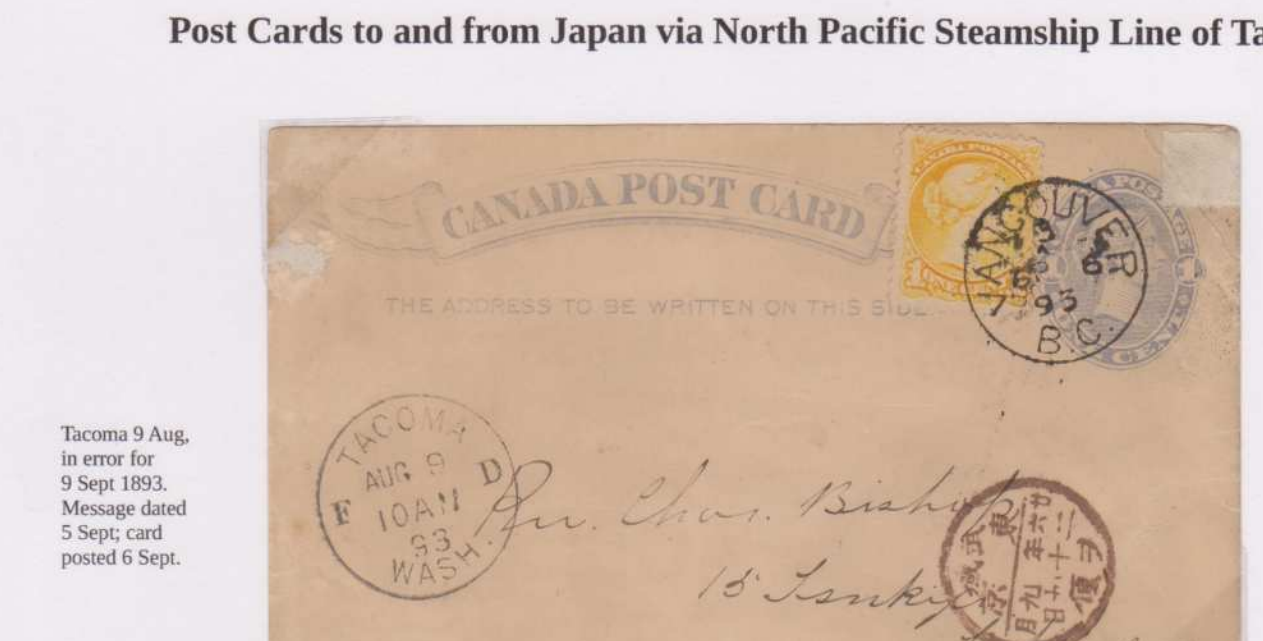
Mail rarely went between Canada and Japan via Britain and the Indian Ocean. Routes via the Pacific were shorter & faster. This cover was an exception! It was posted at Toronto 11 February 1896, endorsed, "via New York & via England, S.S. Majestic", to Florence, where it arrived in only ten days on 21 February 1896.

Murphy B Mai 11

Via Tacoma

After the success of CP Steam Ship Co, US railways started the North Pacific Steamship Line (NPSL) in 1892 based at Tacoma in the US northwest, near Vancouver. (See map page 1.)

Post Cards to and from Japan via North Pacific Steamship Line of Tacoma



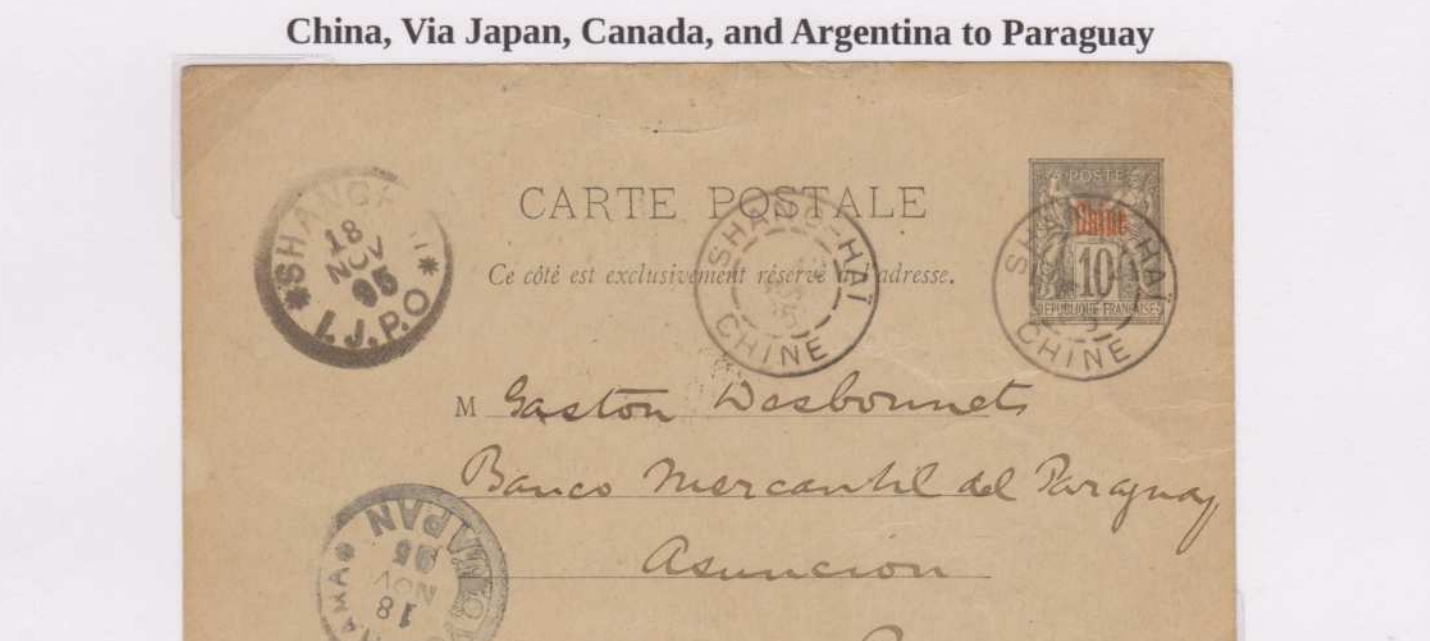
This Vancouver card was 12 days early for the next CP sailing, so the PO sent it to Tacoma. NPSL's Mogul left Tacoma & arrived at Victoria 12 September 1893, and left for Yokohama the next day. The Canadian PO would put its mail on NPSL ships - but not at Victoria - only at Tacoma, before the ships left for Victoria!

Murphy B Mai 12

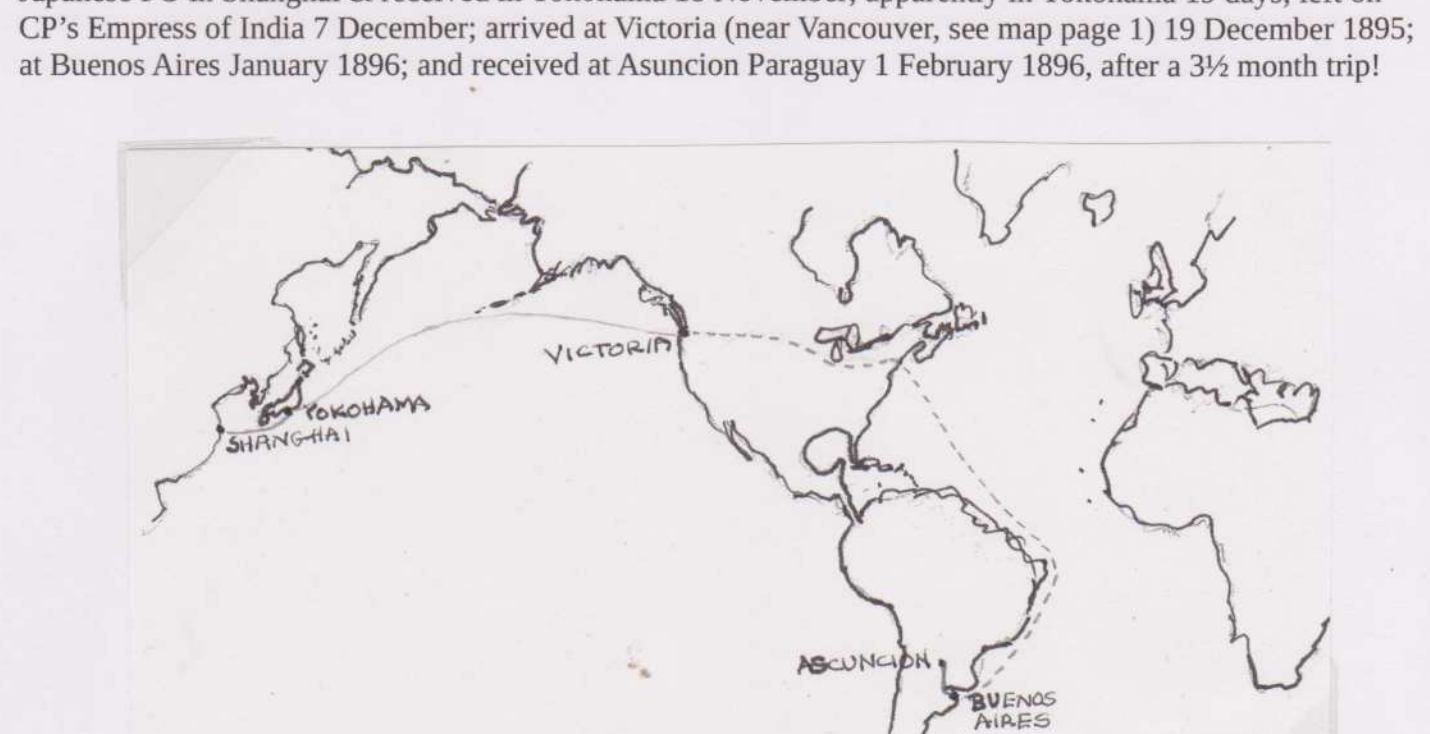
Via Japan and via Canada

"Via Vancouver" was not only the shortest & fastest route between Japan & Canada, it was also a valuable, even preferred, route between east Asia and the Atlantic World. It was used by many countries, which helped make the international postal system of the era Universal.

China, Via Japan, Canada, and Argentina to Paraguay



A long slow trip: message undated; posted at the French PO in Shanghai 127 November 1895; departed the Japanese PO in Shanghai & received in Yokohama 18 November; apparently in Yokohama 19 days; left on CP's Empress of India 7 December; arrived at Victoria (near Vancouver, see map page 1) 19 December 1895; at Buenos Aires January 1896; and received at Asuncion Paraguay 1 February 1896, after a 3 1/2 month trip!



This sketch map shows this cover's trip. Canadian Pacific's goal was not only a better and faster connection between east Asia and both North America & Europe, but also a better and faster connection between east Asia and both South America & Africa! It was a five continent ambition!

Murphy B Mai 13

Canada via Japan

Printed Matter Wrapper to Singapore, endorsed "per. Empress of China."



Canadian Pacific hoped that its three Empress ships, new in 1891, would be fast enough to compete for Canadian southeast Asian trade & mail that was being sent via Britain.

Murphy B Mai 14

Japan Via Canada

Post Card to France, by CP Pioneer Steamer

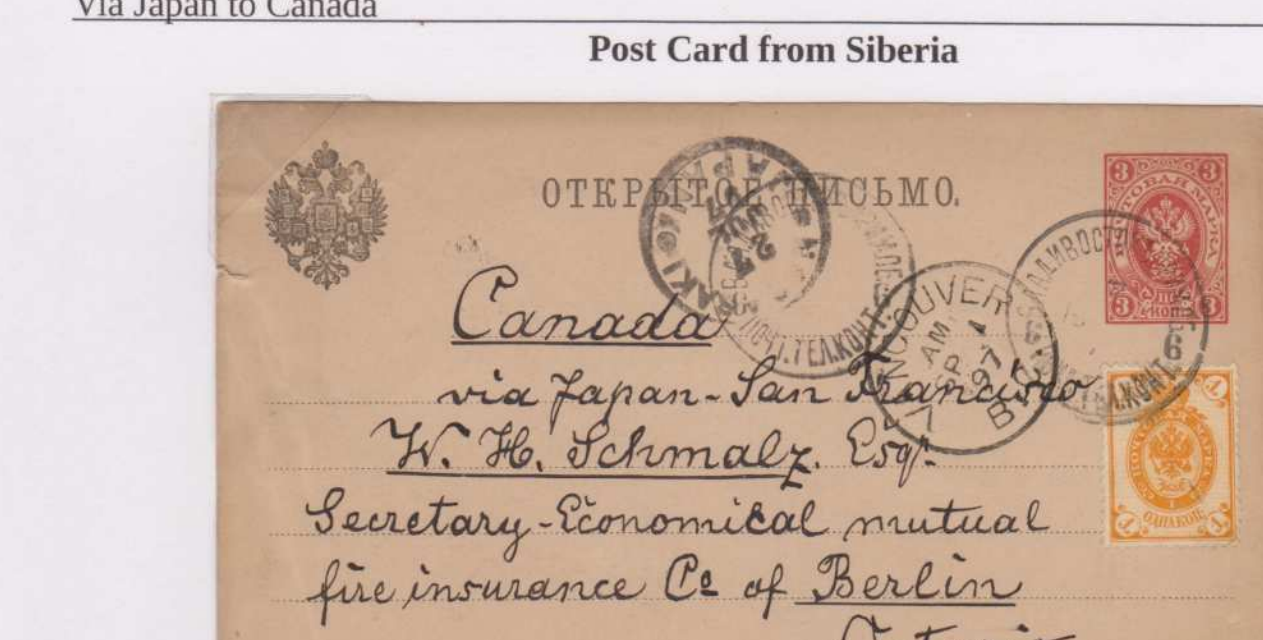


Canadian Pacific Steamships planned to create the fastest link between East Asia and Europe. This UPU post card, endorsed "via Vancouver", was on CP's Parthia from Yokohama 23 September 1888; she arrived at Vancouver 7 October. The card continued east by rail & trans-Atlantic ship, arriving in France 25 October 1888.

Murphy B Mai 15

Via Japan to Canada

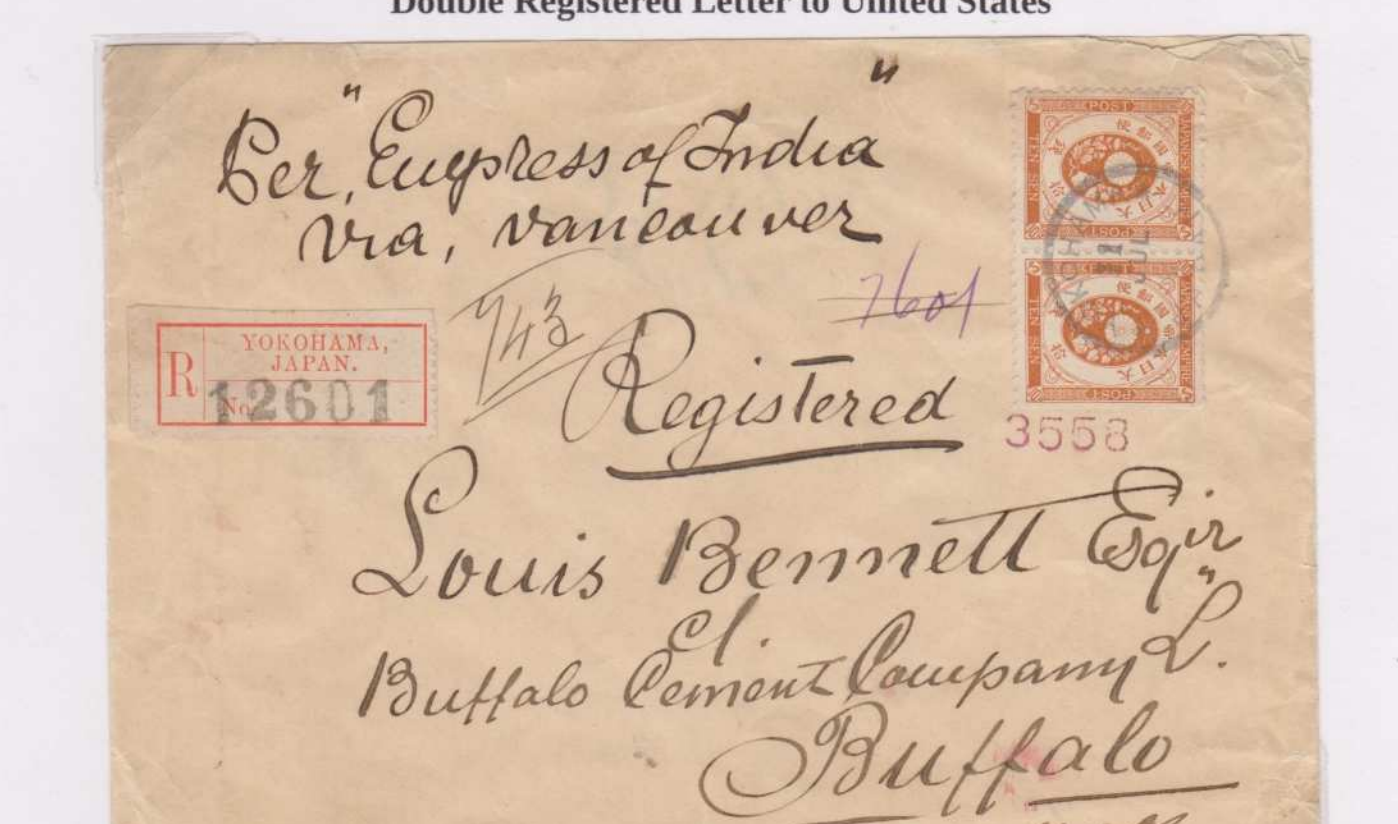
Post Card from Siberia



This Russian post card from Vladivostok Siberia was at Nagasaki 27 July 1897. Although, endorsed "via Japan-San Francisco", the Japanese PO sent it by Empress of China from Yokohama 20 August to Vancouver 31 August 1897.

Murphy B Mai 16

Double Registered Letter to United States



This letter, posted at Yokohama 11 July 1895, was on "Empress of India" when she left Yokohama 12 July & arrived at Vancouver 24 July. The letter transited Toronto 31 July & was received at Buffalo 31 July 1895. The rate was 10 sen registration plus double the preferred rate to the US of 5 sen per half ounce.

Murphy B Mai 15

Printed Matter from China, through the Japanese Post Office with Dual Franking



This wrapper was posted 18 September 1898 at Tientsin. The Chinese stamp (UR) paid only the Chinese internal postage as China was not part of the UPU; the Japanese stamp (LL) paid the international postage from Shanghai. The route is uncertain since all printed matter got few dated cancells.

Murphy B Mai 16

Mail Between, and Via, Canada and Japan, 1873 - 1898

Our Pool of Covers

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Postal Routes

Many letters were endorsed via particular cities or routes, even via specific ships! With the aid of published shipping dates & contemporary Shipping News in Vancouver newspapers, we can distinguish four different routes, each with advantages and limitations. Finally, we can see - perhaps only dimly- that other countries & colonies used the via Vancouver (or Victoria) route.

This frame is organized by those four routes, with a fifth group of wider use of via Vancouver.

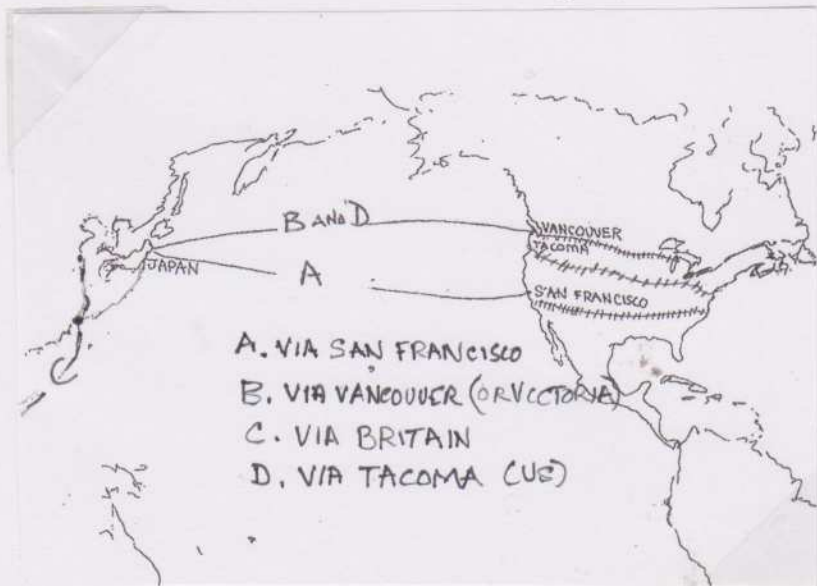
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- D. via Tacoma (USA) - close to Vancouver and used only by exception – page 12; and
- E. via Japan and via Canada – a route for half the world! – pages 13 to 16. (And page 6!)

So What?

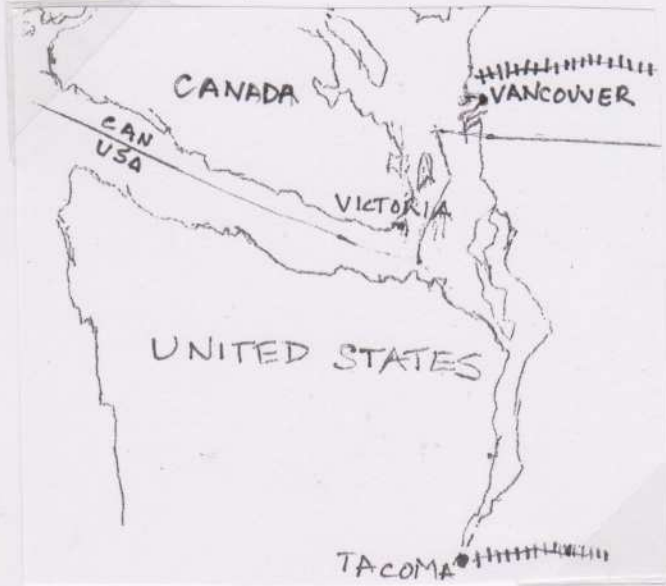
During 1873-1898, the postal systems of the world transformed into the world's first global communication system! That system declared itself "Universal". But was it?

Maps

Postal Routes between Canada & Japan, 1873 – 1898



Vancouver, Victoria, & Tacoma



Murphy B Mai 01

Via San Francisco

By 1873/74, Pacific Mail Steam Ship Co usually had two or three monthly sailings between San Francisco & Yokohama. Service had started 1867, & Canadian letters could be sent by 1 July 1869. Of the seven Small Queen covers known from before San Francisco's mail monopoly ended, July 1887, three are exhibited here.

Pre-UPU 10c Letter Rate to Japan, June 1872 – January 1875, to a Consular Post Office

Earlier of the two known pre-UPU Small Queen covers to Japan.

Literature:

Arfken, PHSC *Journal* #84 Dec 1995, pp 286-7;
Whitely, *Steam on the North Pacific*, 1999, p 9.

Provenance:

Arfken, 1997
Menich, 2000
Robertson, 2004



Backstamp: Montreal 5 April 1873

Although prepaid only 6c, the rate to San Francisco, not 10c, the rate to Japan, the Canada PO credited "7"c (UL) to the US PO, probably the 10c less 3c Canadian domestic postage. The Detroit exchange office rated the letter "Paid All". It was on PMSS's China from San Francisco 16 April 1873 to Yokohama 13 May 1873.

Pre-UPU 5 Sen Letter Rate, 1 April 1876 – 31 August 1878, from the Japan Post Office

Only known Japanese pre-UPU cover to Canada with Japanese stamps.



Backstamps: San Francisco 23 March
Kentville NS 3 April 1878

Japan began international postal service 1 January 1875, and joined the UPU 1 June 1877. On this letter, the red "Paid All" confirms that the 5 sen US treaty rate was extended to Canada – even pre-UPU Canada! This cover was on PMSS's Alaska from Yokohama 28 February 1878 to San Francisco 22 March 1878.

“San Francisco Transit Interrupted.”, August - September 1885

Only known
Canadian cover
redirected twice
during the 1885
Trans-Pacific
interruption:
1. SF to London;
2. London back to SF.

Postmarks:
Moncton NB 6 Aug 1885
San Francisco 31 Aug
New York 7 Sept
London 19 Sept
San Francisco 4 Oct
San Francisco 17 Oct
Yokohama 6 Nov
Kobe 8 Nov 1885

Provenance:
Paul Hahn, 1929
de Volpi, 1966
Lussey, 1983



In 1885, “San Francisco Transit [was] Interrupted” to East Asia when the Pacific Mail Steam Ship contract expired. No other trans-Pacific route existed, so the US PO began sending east Asia mail via London - the other way around the world! But PMSS service resumed, so Britain sent this letter back to San Francisco.



This cover's changing route: to San Francisco, then the other way to London, then back to San Francisco.

Via San Francisco

Last Sailing During San Francisco's Trans-Pacific Mail Monopoly



Only recorded multiple rate Small Queen cover to Japan.

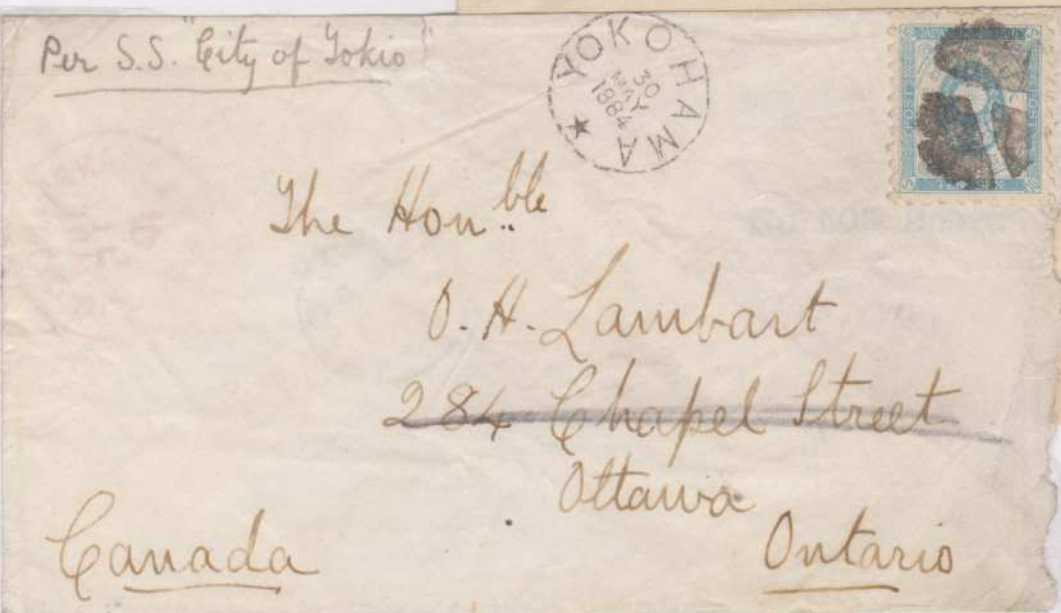
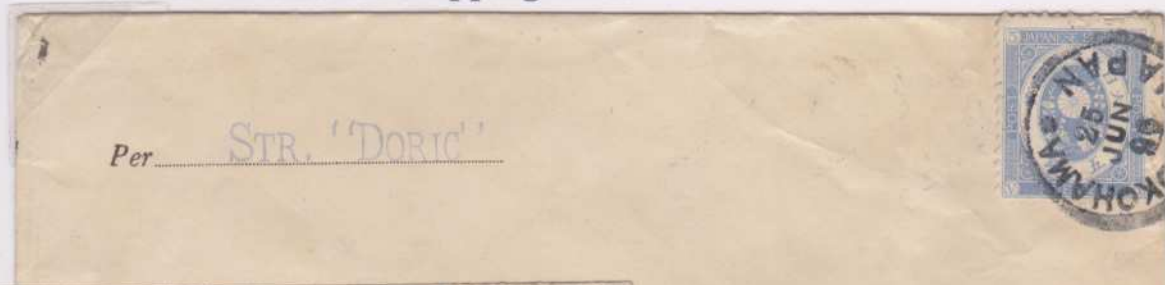
Traditional Japanese brushwork

Provenance:
Ayre, 1982
Schacter, 2014
Cantor, 2015

Backstamps: Windsor Ont 29 June 1887
San Francisco 6 July

Until 12 July 1887, only San Francisco had ships carrying trans-Pacific mail. This cover is the latest of seven (1873 – 1887) Small Queen covers to Japan during San Francisco's mail carrying monopoly.

Two San Francisco Shipping Lines



ENDERY, Esq.

Trade Building,

MONTREAL.

Backstamps:
San Francisco 12 July 1896
Montreal 20 July 1896

Backstamps: San Francisco 15 June 1884
Ottawa 22 June 1884

Although the Occidental & Oriental Steam Ship Co had carried mail via San Francisco as early as 1875, its role probably grew after 1885. Here "Per S. S. City of Tokio" of PMSS & "Per Str. Doric" of O & OSS.

Murphy B Mai 04

Via Vancouver

Beginning of Canadian Pacific Steamship Company, with three leased Pioneer Steamers

After completion of the trans-continental Canadian Pacific Railway in 1886, Canadian Pacific Steamship Co began monthly service between Vancouver and Yokohama & Hong Kong, May -July 1887. CP was successful and in 1891 it built and introduced its three Empress ships!

**Earliest
Batavia
Cover**

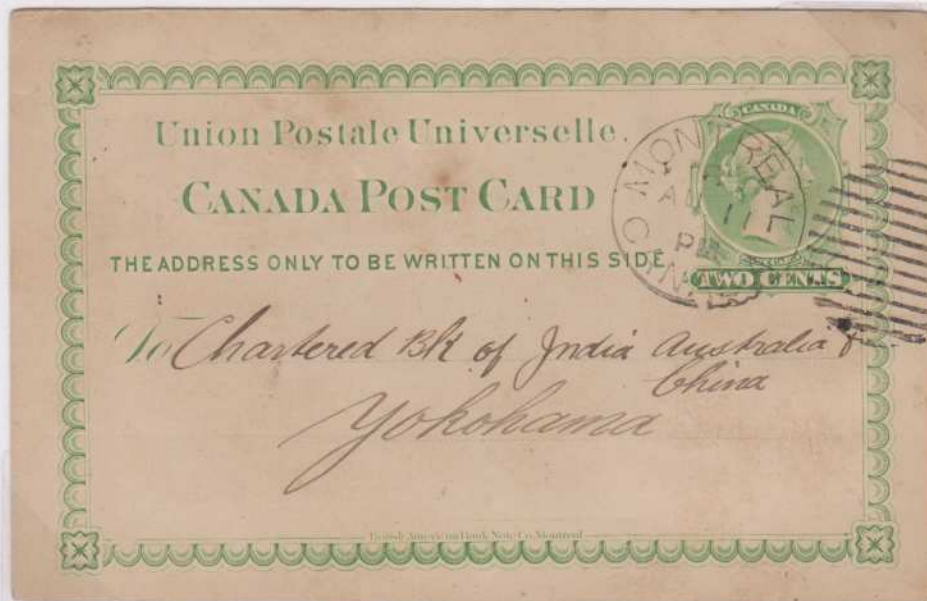


Backstamp: Vancouver 11 June 1888

Batavia, one CP's three leased ships, carried this letter on her third trip to Canada: she left Yokohama 26 May 1888 and arrived at Vancouver 10 June. Then she continued south to San Francisco as CP investors wanted to challenge the two US lines for the trans-Pacific carrying trade.

**Only
known
Canadian
Post Card
by a CP
Pioneer
Steamer**

Literature:
Unwin, *Trans-
Pacific*, p 17.



Backstamps: Vancouver 18 & 20 Aug 1891
Yokohama 3 Sept 1891

The last trips of any CP pioneer steamer.

Parthia - left Yokohama 29 July 1891;
- arrived Vancouver 11 August;
with the printed matter at right.

Parthia - then left Vancouver 20 August;
- arrived Yokohama 3 Sept' 1891;
with the post card above!



Backstamp: Belleville Station 18 Aug 1891

Murphy B Mai 05

Via Victoria (Vancouver)

Japan to Sierra Leone via Canada;
Carried by a United States Ship from Yokohama to Victoria



Sketch map of this cover's route to Africa.

Postmark:
Freetown
Sierra Leone
5 Sept 1890.

Literature:
Unwin, *Trans Pacific*, p 9;
Scrimgeour et al,
"Trans-Pacific
Mail to Canada
during a Shipping
Rate War", *PHSC
Journal* # 119,
Sept 2004,
pp 54-56.

Provenance:
Unwin, 2006



This cover:
by PMSS's
City of Peking
ex Yokohama
28 July 1890
to Victoria BC
11 Aug 1890,
14 days;

Not by CP's
Abyssina, ex
Yokohama
27 July 1890
to Vancouver
BC, 9 Aug,
13 days.

Backstamp: Victoria 11 Aug 1890

In its competition with the two San Francisco lines, CP in 1888 extended its route south from Vancouver to San Francisco 13 times! The PMSS line of San Francisco in 1890 added a stop three times at Victoria BC. The prize of the competition? Carrying East Asian trade with the Americas & with Europe. And with Africa!

Via Vancouver, or Via San Francisco?

First Packet Principle

Sending letters by first packet or mail ship was an established principle even before the UPU was formed. Commercial rivalry should have been ignored! These two covers show details.

Vancouver to San Francisco for First Mail Ship



Written at
St Stephen NB
16 Oct 1897, and
posted 18 Oct.

Backstamp: none

The PO sent this post card to Vancouver. The Vancouver PO, showing no loyalty to Canadian Pacific (CP), sent it to San Francisco as no CP ship was leaving for 14 days, and a San Francisco ship was leaving sooner.

Sent via Vancouver; returned via San Francisco

Only
Canadian
cover
carried by
Batavia

Only
Small
Queen
cover
returned
from
Japan

Provenance:
Arfken, 1997
Schacter, 2014



Backstamps: Vancouver 17 Dec 1890; Yokohama 10 (or 16?) Jan 1891; San Francisco nd; Winnipeg 16 March 1891

This cover, posted in Winnipeg 13 December 1890, arrived in Vancouver 17 December. That PO put it on CP's Batavia which was leaving soon, perhaps 24 December. The letter was in Yokohama 10 January 1891; it was sent for return from Tokio 19 February. Yokohama made up the mail 23 February, and sent it by the first packet, which was via San Francisco, date unclear. The letter was back in Winnipeg 16 March 1891.

Murphy B Mai 07

Uprated Domestic Post Card to Japan



Backstamp: none

This PC from Montreal 29 October 1896 arrived at Vancouver 3 - or 5 - November. Five days from Montreal by train was fast! Too fast? The card was on Empress of Japan from Vancouver 9 November and arrived at Yokohama 22 November 1896. The second Yokohama cds - 69 days later - suggests the PC was unclaimed.

Endorsed UPU Letter to Japan



Backstamps: Vancouver 1 April 1894
Yokohama 16 April 1894

Eastern Canadians, perhaps unaware of sailing schedules, rarely endorsed trans-Pacific mail. However, this sender did - "Via Vancouver" - and his letter arrived there one day before Empress of India sailed!

Via Vancouver

Quadruple Letter "Per Str. Emp. of Japan"

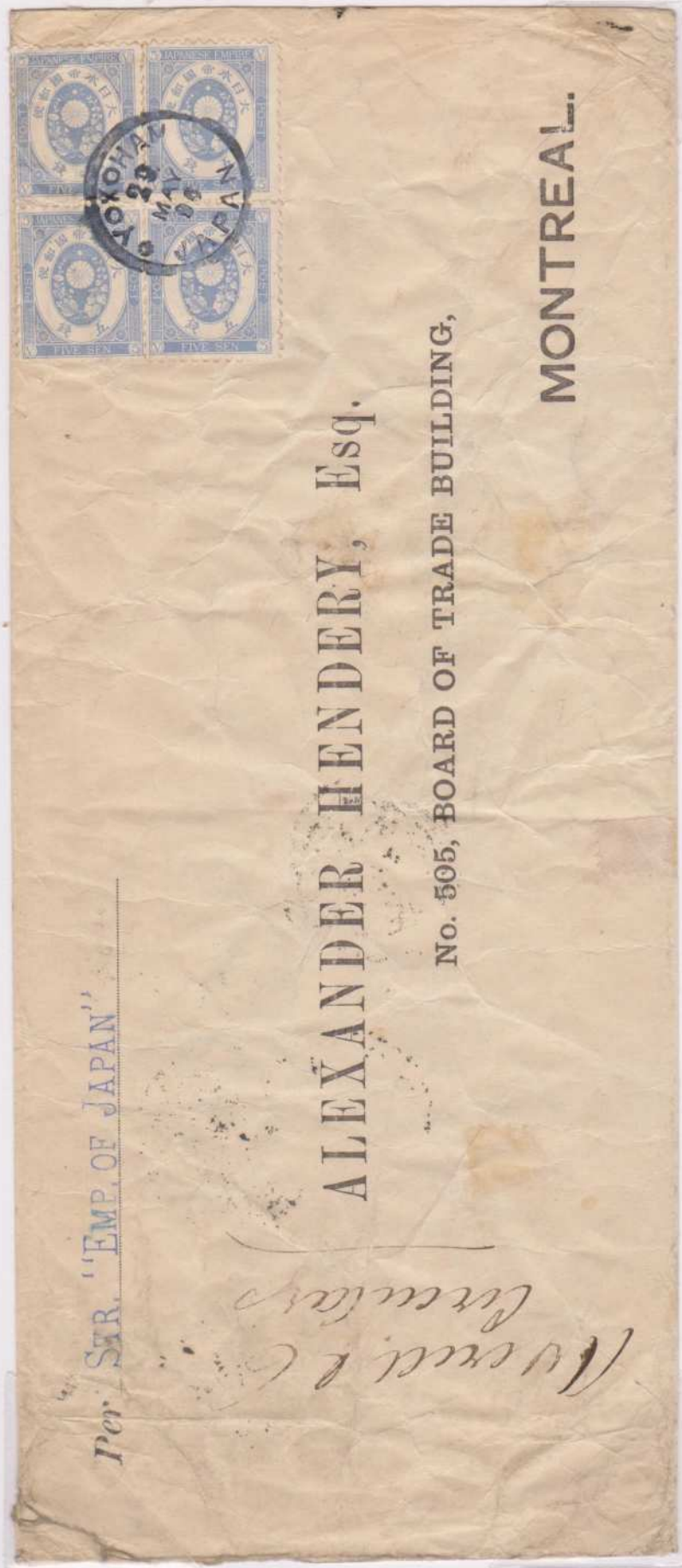
Postage of 20 sen (5 sen / ½ oz x 4)
was prepaid with a block of four
from the 1876 – 1898 Koban Issue.

Cancelled Yokohama 29 May 1896.

backstamps:

Vancouver 10 June 1896
Montreal 16 June 1896

Empress of Japan left
Yokohama 30 May 1896,
and arrived at Vancouver
10 June 1896.



Via Britain

By 1873, the Tables of Rates of Postage from Canada had dropped P & O's route to Japan via the Indian Ocean. That route was too long for mail between Japan & Canada, and so not used.

Woodblock & Watercolour Letter, Endorsed via Britain, but Sent via Vancouver to US

The pictures on this envelope and writing paper were produced in two or three stages: first, their outlines and shadows were printed by woodblock; then they were hand coloured with watercolour and red ink.



Backstamps:
Yokohama 12 Feb 1897
Vancouver AM
Detroit 16 March 1897

Japan ignored "Via P & O Verona" to England, and sent the letter via CP's Empress of India to Vancouver.

Murphy B Mai 10

Via Britain

Canada to Japan via Britain, and then Japan back to Canada via San Francisco: Canada to Canada Around the World, via Britain, Italy, India, Aden, Ceylon, Hong Kong, Japan, and United States.

Only known
commercial
"Around the
World" Small
Queen cover.

Postmarks:

Toronto 11 Feb 1896
Florence 21 Feb
Florence 1 March
Sea PO B 16 March
Calcutta 24 March
Sea PO B 28 March
Aden 2 April
Colombo 20 April
Hong Kong - April
Yokohama 4 May
San Francisco 19 Oct
Toronto 24 Oct 1896

Provenance:

Jarrett, 1961
de Volpi, 1966
Lussey, 1983



Mail rarely went between Canada and Japan via Britain and the Indian Ocean. Routes via the Pacific were shorter & faster. This cover was an exception! It was posted at Toronto 11 February 1896, endorsed, "via New York & via England, S.S. Majestic", to Florence, where it arrived in only ten days on 21 February 1896.

From Florence, this cover began its adventures!

Nine days later it was reposted – not forwarded – to Calcutta. Reposting required new UPU postage, which was paid by Italian stamps. The cover went east probably by P & O, through the Suez Canal, & trans-shipped at Aden to P & O's Sutlej. It arrived at Bombay 21 March & after a three day train trip at Calcutta 24 March.

From Calcutta, this cover was forwarded to Japan, but was misdirected back to Aden! So it retraced its trip back across India by train to Bombay, and then by Sutlej, on which it had come to India, back across the Indian Ocean to Aden! On Sutlej's Sea PO it was marked "Maldirige" (Misdirected).

From Aden, the cover headed back towards Japan on the Australian Line's Britannia to Colombo – its third trans-Indian Ocean passage!

From Colombo or from Hong Kong, the cover travelled to Japan probably by Messageries Maritimes's Sydney, which arrived at Yokohama 3 May. So this cover had travelled the full length of the route from Canada to Japan via Britain!

From Yokohama, after a six month visit, the cover crossed the Pacific probably on an American ship to San Francisco & went on to Toronto by rail. There it arrived 256 days after it had left! This cover had chased its addressee around the world – via Britain, Italy, India, Aden, Ceylon, Hong Kong, Japan, and United States!

Via Tacoma

After the success of CP Steam Ship Co, US railways started the North Pacific Steamship Line (NPSL) in 1892 based at Tacoma in the US northwest, near Vancouver. (See map page 1.)

Post Cards to and from Japan via North Pacific Steamship Line of Tacoma

Tacoma 9 Aug,
in error for
9 Sept 1893.
Message dated
5 Sept; card
posted 6 Sept.



Backstamps: none

This Vancouver card was 12 days early for the next CP sailing, so the PO sent it to Tacoma. NPSL's Mogul left Tacoma & arrived at Victoria 12 September 1893, and left for Yokohama the next day. The Canadian PO would put its mail on NPSL ships – but not at Victoria – only at Tacoma, before the ships left for Victoria!



Backstamps: Victoria 23 June 1894
Ottawa 2 July 1894

This card was on NPSL's Sikh which arrived at Victoria 23 June 1894 from Yokohama en route to Tacoma. The CP Empresses that arrived at Vancouver 12 June & 2 July 1894, had not stopped at Yokohama, probably to avoid a plague then current in east Asia.

Murphy B Moi 12

Via Japan and via Canada

"Via Vancouver" was not only the shortest & fastest route between Japan & Canada, it was also a valuable, even preferred, route between east Asia and the Atlantic World. It was used by many countries, which helped make the international postal system of the era Universal.

China, Via Japan, Canada, and Argentina to Paraguay



A long slow trip: message undated; posted at the French PO in Shanghai 12? November 1895; departed the Japanese PO in Shanghai & received in Yokohama 18 November; apparently in Yokohama 19 days; left on CP's Empress of India 7 December; arrived at Victoria (near Vancouver, see map page 1) 19 December 1895; at Buenos Aires January 1896; and received at Asuncion Paraguay 1 February 1896, after a 3½ month trip!



This sketch map shows this cover's trip. Canadian Pacific's goal was not only a better and faster connection between east Asia and both North America & Europe, but also a better and faster connection between east Asia and both South America & Africa! It was a five continent ambition!

Printed Matter Wrapper to Singapore, endorsed "per. Empress of China."



Provenance:
McGuire

Backstamp: "Dominion & foreign trading Co. Ltd."

Canadian Pacific hoped that its three Empress ships, new in 1891, would be fast enough to compete for Canadian southeast Asian trade & mail that was being sent via Britain.

Letter to Singapore



Backstamp: none

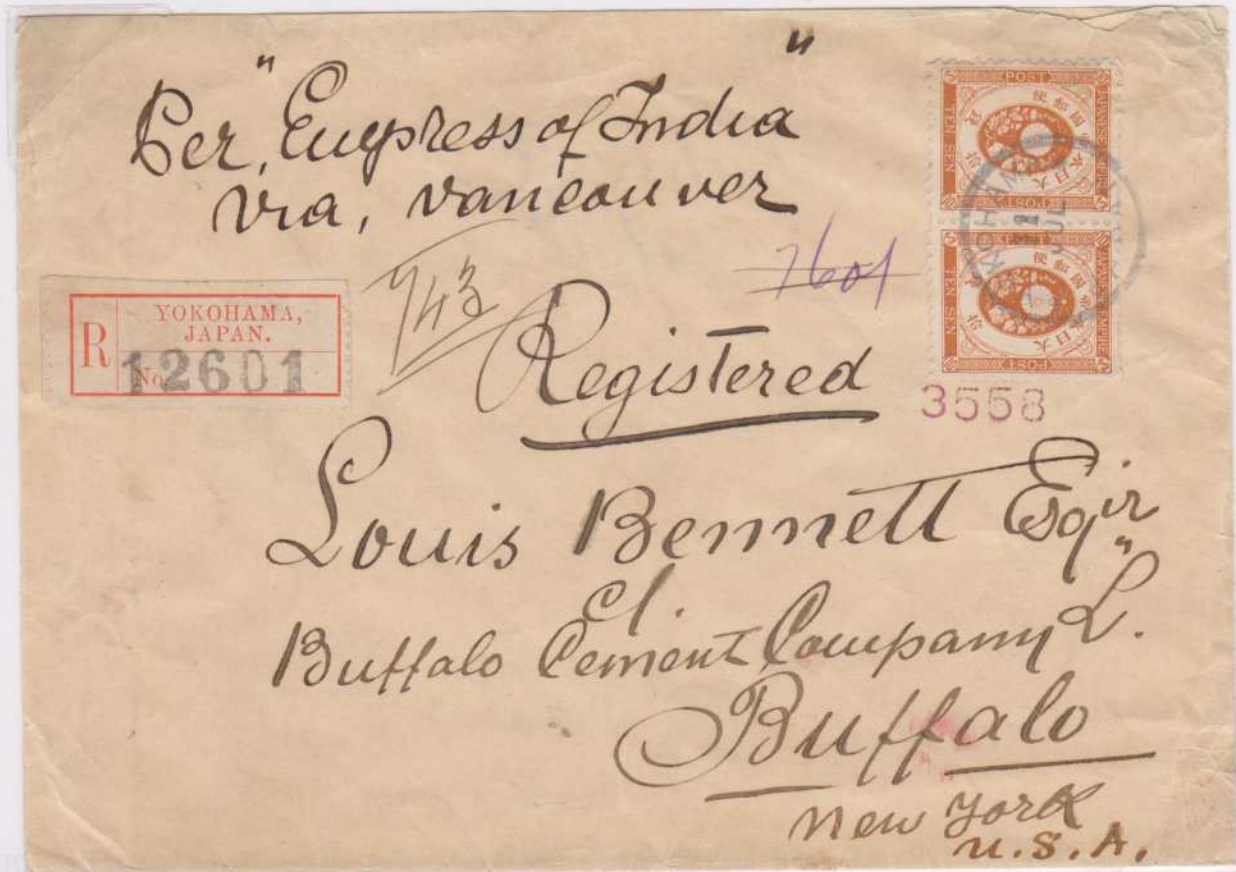
This letter was on CP's Empress of Japan, which left Vancouver 29 August 1893, transited Yokohama 11 September, & arrived at Hong Kong 19 September 1893. Despite success with these two correspondents, CP was too ambitious: Canada's mail to and from southeast Asia (except Philippines) continued to be via Britain.

Post Card to France, by CP Pioneer Steamer



Canadian Pacific Steamships planned to create the fastest link between East Asia and Europe. This UPU post card, endorsed "via vancouver", was on CP's Parthia from Yokohama 23 September 1888; she arrived at Vancouver 7 October. The card continued east by rail & trans-Atlantic ship, arriving in France 25 October 1888.

Double Registered Letter to United States



This letter, posted at Yokohama 11 July 1895, was on "Empress of India" when she left Yokohama 12 July & arrived at Vancouver 24 July. The letter transited Toronto 31 July & was received at Buffalo 31 July 1895. The rate was 10 sen registration plus double the preferred rate to the US of 5 sen per half ounce.

Post Card from Siberia



Backstamp: Berlin Ont 6 Sept 1897

This Russian post card from Vladivostok Siberia was at Nagasaki 27 July 1897. Although, endorsed "via Japan-San Francisco", the Japanese PO sent it by Empress of China from Yokohama 20 August to Vancouver 31 August 1897.

Printed Matter from China, through the Japanese Post Office with Dual Franking



Backstamps: Shanghai 21 Sept 1898
Ottawa 20 Oct 1898
Billings Bridge 20 Oct 1898

This wrapper was posted 18 September 1898 at Tientsin. The Chinese stamp (UR) paid only the Chinese internal postage as China was not part of the UPU; the Japanese stamp (LL) paid the international postage from Shanghai. The route is uncertain since all printed matter got few dated cancels.