

Oh, So Pretty

Prexies from Pawling Travel to Toronto via Special Postal Treaty

By Charles J. DiComo, PhD

The United States and our neighbor to the north, Canada, had special postal treaties covering everything from first class rates to registration fees, insurance fees to everything between.

The cover shown hails from Pawling in Dutchess County and was mailed to Toronto, the capital city of Ontario, Canada. Sent from a "P.H. Smith," the registered cover entered the mails on January 13, 1954, and has its normal "facial treatment" with only indistinct black target "killers" used to deface the 58-cent U.S. postage adhered, a single 15-cent Buchanan, a pair of 20-cent Garfields and a 1953 3-cent Gadsden Purchase Centenary commemorative.

As per regulations, the Pawling postal clerk struck on the front a violet boxed "Registered No. 846" handstamp and on the reverse, overlapping the back flap, the violet double-circle "Pawling, N.Y. Jan 13 1954 Registered" marking.

The cover then traveled north to Canada, addressed to "Mr. W.J. Frazer, 10 Wellwood Avenue, Toronto 10, Canada."

After a two-day cross-border trip, the small black "Toronto, Ont. REG BR A. Postal Clerk ID 1 15 54" cancel was applied at the inbound transit international Canadian Mail Branch (Registered Mail Office). The unit worked much like the New York International Registry Mail Office handling inbound/outbound registered mail for New York City.



A 1954 registered cover from Pawling to Toronto, which shows 58 cents in postage, as per an international postal treaty.



The reverse of the cover shows various handstamps from both sides of the border.

The inbound/outbound international mail unit for Toronto is in the Toronto suburb of Mississauga, Ontario, on Lake Ontario or "Toronto, Ont., Registered Branch A." The cover then made its way to Station L, where the clerk struck the blue "Toronto, Canada Postal Station "L" 15 Jan 1954" handstamp.

The U.S.-Canada Special Postal Treaties breakdown of the "58¢ Rate" is as follows:

3 cents (3cents per 1ounce) First Class Letter Rate, to Canada*

*September 1, 1932, through July 31, 1958

PLUS

55 cents Registry Indemnity Fee**, Canada (\$25.00 Indemnity)

**September 1, 1931, through July 31, 1958

Unfortunately, the cover does not have its original contents, so we will never know what Mr. Smith was sending "securely" to Mr. Frazer.

My research suggests that the sender was a relation to Pawling author Philip Henry Smith, who published "General History of Dutchess County from 1609 to 1876, Inclusive: Illustrated with numerous wood-cuts, maps, and full-page engraving" and "Curiosities in American History: The Green Mountain Boys: or Vermont and the New York Land Jobbers" in 1887 and 1885, respectively. I have yet to locate a biography for Frazer.

Regardless, what was created by the Pawling Post Office was a colorful cover using the 1938 Presidential Issue stamps, and a late use at that.

It was in the summer of 1954 that the Bureau of Engraving and Printing would issue its Liberty definitive series, with values up to \$5, to succeed the popular Prexies, which had been in use for more than 15 years.

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