

Canadian Cinderellas of the 1860s and 1870s

▼ CHARLES J.G. VERGE

The last part of the 19th Century saw a prolific production of locals and cinderellas for potential use in Canada. In large measure this was an attempt by young enterprising stamp dealers to cash in on the popularity of collecting American "locals." Although many were produced, no Canadian local has ever been approved by the post office.



Figure 1: John Appleton Nutter (1846-1910). The photograph was taken by the Italian Court photographer Fratelli Vanelli.

In the 1860s and later, some of these labels were prepared with legitimate businesses in mind. One was John Appleton Nutter's (Figure 1) Bancroft City Express labels.

Figure 2 shows an ad published in *MacKay's Montreal Directory for 1863-64* that proves the existence of such a firm. Nutter was influenced by Samuel Allan Taylor's profitable Ker's City Post.

E.I. Bancroft, a friend of Nutter's father, had established his express company in 1863. He let young Nutter, who was 18 at the time, use his business's name and his portrait to produce the stamp. Bancroft was not involved in its production nor did he receive any payment for this venture. In fact, Bancroft thought the whole venture to be frivolous.

David Sessions in his *Philatelic Fantasies of British North America* quotes him as saying that the stamp was "got up by a boy for a lark." Nutter went to great lengths, like all his stamp dealer colleagues, to make these cinderellas acceptable to those who counted in the philatelic world: the catalogue publishers and the album makers.

To this end, Nutter produced a number of versions of his local in 1865. Figure 3 shows two examples showing Bancroft full face and in profile. These labels come in many varieties and combinations. They were printed in at least four colors on vertical and horizontal laid paper as well as wove paper. Some were perforated 12-1/2 and others were imperforate.

Another trick used by Nutter and his less

than scrupulous colleagues was to advertise these stamps as being produced, authorized and used by the companies depicted on them. Nutter ads and letters to the editor are found in many of the philatelic journals of the period including *The Stamp Collector's Record*, *The Canadian Philatelist*, etc.

He even convinced George Stewart Jr. (Figure 4), no friend of the forger and locals-maker dealers, to editorialize about the Bancroft local in Stewart's *Stamp Collector's Monthly Gazette* (Figure 5), Canada's second recorded philatelic magazine. Taylor, by then living in New York, who had mentored Nutter, took some of the Bancroft stamps, reprinted them and made them his own. This is one of the main reasons Nutter disappears from stamp dealing and the hobby by 1867.

Taylor was more successful in promoting locals than Nutter was. He managed to get in Ker's City Post labels illustrated and listed in Moen's 1862-63 and 1864 catalogues in the United States section under the title: Private Post Office of America. This is not an error, as Taylor himself advertised them as U.S. locals.

There never was a Ker's City Post or despatch company in Montreal where Taylor set himself up as a stamp dealer and produced his first "locals." There was, however, a Ker's City Express company in New York.

Since Ker & Rowlands Express was founded in 1856, it is likely that Taylor knew of its existence, having moved from New York to Montreal in 1861. Taylor's Ker's City Post labels were first issued in pence denominations and then subsequently issued in cents with a different design.

By 1862, when his first labels were produced (Figure 6), it had been three years since Canada had converted to the decimal currency of dollars and cents (July 1, 1859). Why then issue pence labels? An explanation would be that since there was no Ker City Post company in existence, Taylor may have wanted to give the labels the patina of age and pass them off as no longer on sale.

Taylor was a devious entrepreneur and it is also possible that he always intended to have a large distribution of these Ker's City Post labels by making people believe that they were both legitimate Canadian and American locals. Although the first-cent

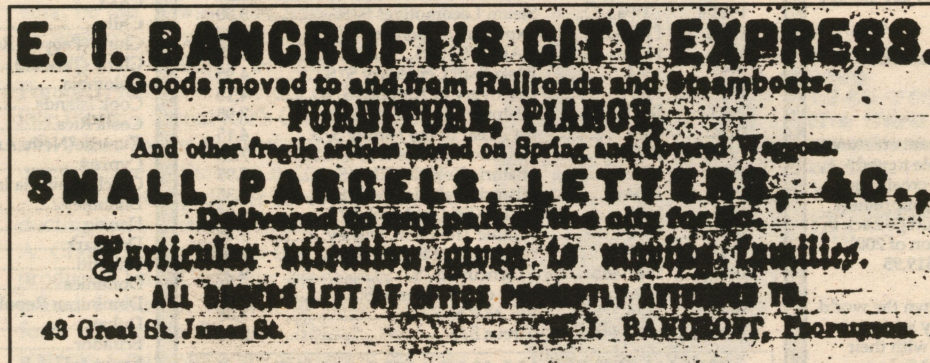


Figure 2: An ad proving the existence of the E. I. Bancroft's City Express company.

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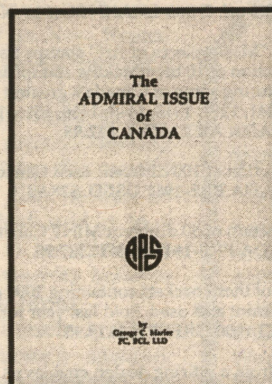


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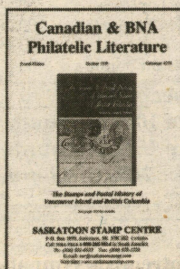
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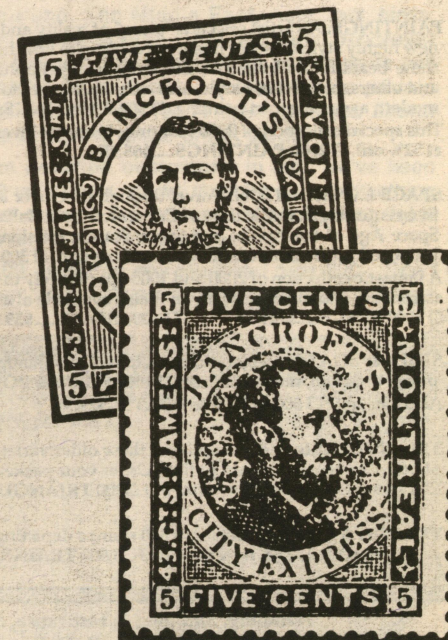


Figure 3: Two examples of the Nutter's Bancroft's City Express labels.

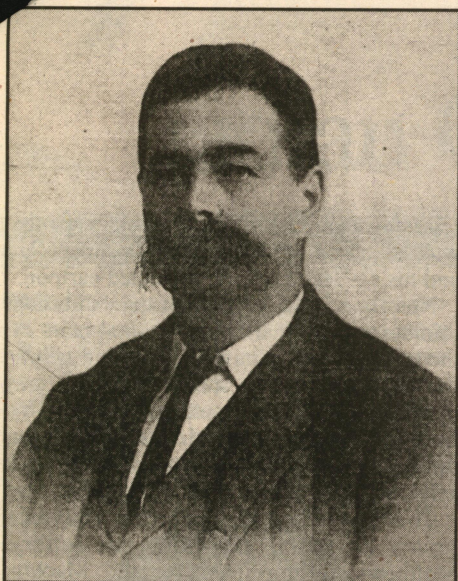


Figure 4: George Stewart Jr. (1848-1906). The antithesis of Nutter, Taylor and Craig. An honest dealer.



Figure 5: Canada's second philatelic magazine founded by George Stewart Jr.

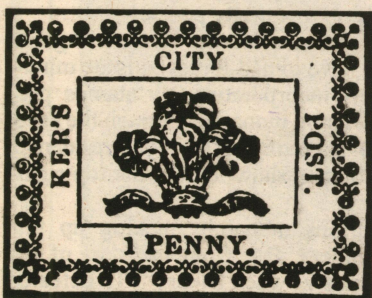


Figure 6: The first of Samuel A. Taylor's Ker's City Post labels.

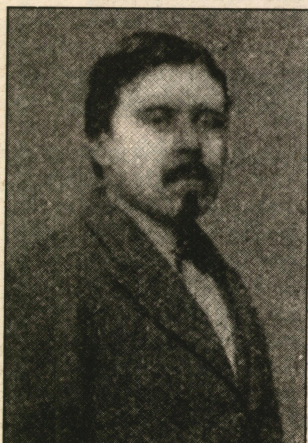


Figure 7: A photo of Taylor and photos of two of his creations. Note the resemblance in the portraits.

values were introduced in Montreal in 1863, they continued to be printed in Albany, N.Y., until 1871. The 27-year old Taylor had eloped to the United States with his 13-year old bride in 1864 and set up production of his locals in that town. The pence issues were available in 1- and 3-pence denominations and were printed in at least six different colors, mainly on a glazed wove paper. They were produced in 1862 and 1863. The 2- and 5-cent values were printed on wove paper in six colors or on colored laid paper. Some printings were made on quadrille paper.

Taylor was prolific in his production of bogus "locals." Others attributed to him in addition to the Bancroft reprints and the Ker's City Post include those produced in either Montreal or Albany (Le Beau City Post, Bell's Dispatch, Grand Trunk Railway, Winslow and Co., British American College; B.S. & Co. College); in Boston (Whittely's Express); or those thought to have been issued by him but not yet proven (McLachlan's, M.O. College).

Researchers in this area have found many links between the different issues produced by Taylor. He never was very careful about what he did. It was more important for him to promote these bogus labels and make money. An example of this is found in Figure 7. It shows a picture of Taylor in the late 1860s; a 2-cent Ker's City Post label and a S. Allan Taylor promotion label. Note the resemblance of the man in the three items.

Another stamp dealer involved with producing these fictitious stamps was Edward A. Craig (Figure 8) who is recorded to have produced one Canadian cinderella. Craig joined Robert J. Melvin in May 1865 to form Craig & Melvin Stamp & Coin Dealers. Craig was a law student at the time and he and Melvin also published a small magazine called the *Stamp Argus* (Figure 9).

They are responsible for the Baldwin's Railroad local (Figure 10) in St. John, New Brunswick. The name was apparently chosen to relate to H. Baldwin who once ran an express office for the European and North American Railway. Again this might have been an attempt at creating an obsolete issue. It was also modeled on New Brunswick's popular 1-cent 1860 stamp showing a steam engine.

They advertised in Taylor's *Stamp Collector's Record* and there are records showing that Taylor bought 400 Baldwins. Six months after the opening of their firm it was no longer in business. They had sold it to a Ridgeway Jones. Sessions in his *Philatelic Fantasies of British North America* believes that Jones was Samuel Allan Taylor.

George Stewart in the March 1, 1866, issue of his *Stamp Collector's Monthly Gazette* took on Taylor and informed his readers that the Baldwin was "a forgery and the Boston dealer who now advertises it as genuine knows that it was made to sell only." He then spends the remainder of his

editorial in detailing the history behind the labels. Again, the Baldwins are available in a variety of colors and are printed on laid, wove and glazed surface paper. Craig was in ill health and moved to San Francisco where he set himself up as a stamp dealer on Geary Street, but not for long. He died in 1870 at the age of 25.

Except where noted, the illustrations used in this article are from the Archives of The Royal Philatelic Society of Canada and the Canadian Postal Archives.

If you are interested in this subject, I recommend David F. Sessions's *Philatelic Fantasies of British North America, 1860-1910* by Charles G. Firby Publications. Sessions is the longtime editor of *Maple Leaves*, the journal of the Canadian Philatelic Society of Great Britain, and an avid collector of these issues. The book is available through Charles G. Firby Publications, 6695 Highland Road, Suite 107, Waterford, MI 48327-1967.



Figure 8: Edward A. Craig (1845-70). The third member of this label-producing trio.

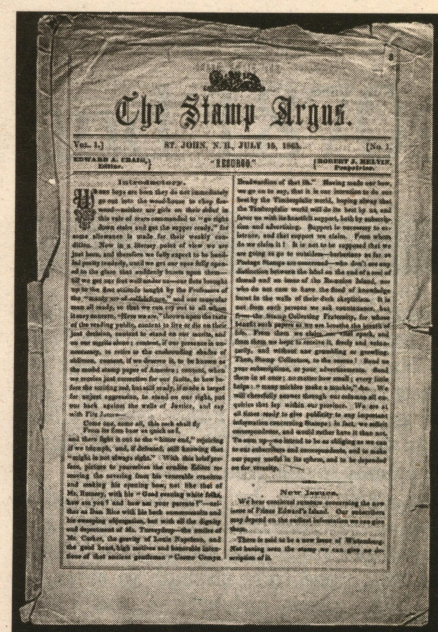


Figure 9: Craig's journal, The Stamp Argus.

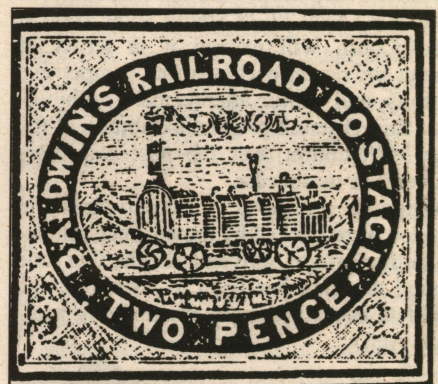


Figure 10: Craig's concoction, the Baldwin's Railroad local.

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