

The New Carlisle Postmaster Provisional

▼ CHARLES J.G. VERGE

Is Figure 1 really a postmaster's provisional or just a fancy paid mark? That is the question that still arises when the New Carlisle, Gaspé, envelope (Figure 2) makes one of its infrequent appearance on the market. Recently on sale in Europe for \$200,000, it ranks as the highest valued cover in Canadian philately, with just one other: an 1851 12-penny black stamp on what is known as the "Paton cover."

Only one other Canadian philatelic item, the 1868 2¢ Large Queen on laid paper, has reached this monetary value. Whatever some may think of its authenticity, the Gaspé envelope is one of Canada's philatelic gems.

It has graced some better collections (Table 1), but that provenance does not necessarily silence the critics. E. B. Greenshields of Montreal, who was offered the cover around 1903, asked Donald A. King to examine it for genuineness. King was one of the more eminent Canadian dealers at the turn of the century, trading under the name of his daughter, Emily King.

King consulted a typographical expert who pronounced the printing of the ornate boxed Three Pence as contemporary, about 1851. (King was an acquaintance of Henry Heckler whose prowess with the printing press is well known. In addition, King had

been known to deal in "fraudulent" postal stationery. Perhaps they had nothing to do with this postmaster's provisional, but the turn of the century in Canada was a period where "new finds" were frequent and, in some cases, have now been proven to have been manufactured at that time.)

This examination is also reported by Canadian philatelic author Fred Jarrett in his *Stamps of British North America Standard Priced Catalogue*. It is not known when the cover was sold by Greenshields to Ferrary (Figure 3).

Why was the typographic nature of the marking important? For the answer, one must go back to the early part of 1851. Robert W. Kelly, whose name appears in manuscript on the right of the envelope, was the part-time postmaster of New Carlisle and is also reported as the local printer, although definitive proof of his profession is still to be found.

In a March 14, 1851, notice, postmasters were advised of the April 6, 1851, transfer of responsibility for the post office from the colonial office in Britain to the provincial legislature. Also, they were told that the postage rates would be changed.

Before the introduction of postage stamps on April 23, 1851, postmasters in larger offices sometimes used locally made brass handstamps to denote the charge. More frequently, they followed, like their counterparts in smaller offices such as New Carlisle, the practice of using manuscript

Table 1: Recorded Owners of the New Carlisle, Gaspé, Three Penny Postmaster Provisional

Dates of Ownership	Owner	Sale
1851 to ?	Hugh Miller	?
1904-?	E. B. Greenshields	?
?-1921	Philippe de la Renotiere von Ferrary	Ferrary Third Sale, Paris, May 4, 1921
1921-1962	Maurice Burrus	Burrus Sale, Robson Lowe, Nov. 29, 1962
1962-1964	C. N. Richardson and Derek M. Bolton of The London Stamp Exchange, Ltd. (Count Tomasini being the underbidder at the Burrus Sale)	March 25, 1964
1964-?	A. L. Michaels of Messrs. Stanley Gibbons (American dealers Herman Herst and Henry Lacks being the underbidders at the sale)	Sold privately
?-1977	An unnamed investor-collector and/or H. Kanai, who used the pseudonym "Consort"	November 24, 1977, Stanley Gibbons "Consort" Sale
1977-?	K. M. Robertson, Ltd	?
1996	Pascal and Bernard Behr in conjunction with Robert Lyman	ANPHILEX 1996 Private Treaty Sale, New York, December 1996

markings. Perhaps Kelly decided to produce his own postage indicia at this time.

Postmasters' provisionals originated with postmasters in the United States who creat-

ed stamps, which they designed for local usage, while awaiting the officially issued stamps. Kelly, as a printer and postmaster, may have seen examples of such provisionals. New Carlisle is situated on the sea (Figure 4), near enough to the Maritime provinces, where there was a fair amount of correspondence exchanged with the United States, particularly New York, for that to have happened.

The assumption subscribed to by some experts, including Jarrett, was that Kelly would have kept a supply of envelopes, which he would have printed with the ornate boxed "Three Pence," ready for sale when the three penny rate came into effect on April 6, 1851.

When the cover was written up by C. N. Richardson in *The Canadian Philatelist* in 1979, he indicated that "on minute examination what could be a possible pencilled '3' can be seen on the extreme right of centre to the right of 'Letter' by the 'R' (Figure 5). Between the writing of Richardson's column in 1979 and the illustration by Behr in the 1996 ANPHILEX Private Treaty Sale, the pencilled '3' was removed (see Figure 2). According to Richardson this could have been a sequential number applied by Kelly to help him account for the envelopes he had printed.

In addition, experts add the neatness of the printing to prove their theory. It would

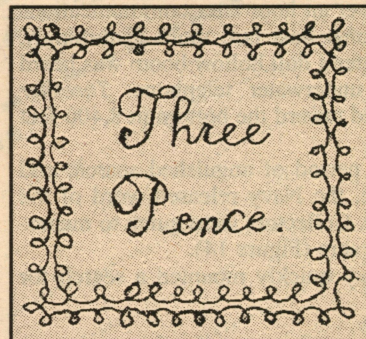


Figure 1: A cleaned and enhanced example of what the printed New Carlisle "Postmaster's Provisional" could look like.

US, CANADA, COMMONWEALTH, THAILAND • MNH, FDC's, etc.

Stamps are F-VF Mint Never Hinged unless noted.
LEGEND: FNH = Fine Never Hinged, () = Used,
MVLH = Mint Very Lightly Hinged,
Cyl = Cylindrical Block, Spec = Specimen,
PP = Presentation Pack, S/S = Souv. Sheet,
FDC = First Day Cover, MC = Maximum Card,
Bklt = Booklet, Imp = Imperf, GP = Gutter Pair,
SH = Sheet, () = Buy Price.

Ascension Island	Price	Falkland Islands	Price
454-57 FDC	4.50	162-65	2.25
920 Spec	1.50	184-87 MVLH	1.95
1026 Spec	1.50	197-209	20.95
1029 Spec	1.25	304 S/S	2.40
1043 Spec	1.25	305	40
1078 Spec	1.75	306-09	2.30
1109a Bklt	6.95	334-338	2.35
1111 FDC	1.95	334-338 GP	4.80
1119 MC	1.95	334-338 Cyl	9.60
1136-39	4.25	339-343	2.35
1154-58 PP	3.95	339-343 GP	4.95
1164 FDC	1.75	339-343 Cyl	10.50
1174-78 GP	10.00	352-53	.95
1184 FDC	3.95	352-53 GP	1.95
1184 PP	3.95	352-53 Cyl	3.95
1184a-e MC	6.50	354-59	2.75
1193 MC	1.75	354-59 GP	5.75
L55 FDC	3.00	360-370	9.95
L74 Spec	1.95	371-74	2.95
L98-101	4.00	375-78	1.95
Barbuda (Antigua)	.95	375-78 GP	3.90
248-52	.95	379-82 FDC	2.50
177 FNH	150.00	379-82	2.15
1155-61 FDC	1.50	379-82 GP	4.35
1272-73 Bklt	12.95	387-401	9.95
788-89 FDC	2.50	387-401 GP	25.95
799-800 FDC	1.95	402-03	.90
802a FDC	1.50	402-05 GP	1.80
803a FDC	1.50	404-07 FDC	3.50
804 FDC	1.40	408-10 FDC	3.95
China		412-15	3.95
2157 S/S PP	5.00	415a S/S	5.50
2188 S/S FDC	12.00	416-19	2.50
Christmas Island		416-19 GP	5.00
1-10	15.00	420-24 FDC	7.95
11-20	5.00	425-28	2.50
22-33	42.00	425-28 FDC	3.75
39-54	7.00	429-32	2.80
69-84	5.00	429-32 GP	5.75
95-110	5.00	433-36 GP	9.50
148-51 FDC	3.95	437-440 FDC	5.95
196-211 FDC	20.00	437-440 GP	11.50
211a PP	22.00	477-480 FDC	6.75
Falkland Islands		477-480 GP	6.50
158-161	9.50	481-84	3.40
		481-84 GP	6.95
		501-04	4.50

Falkland Islands	Price	Malaysia	Price
501-04 GP	9.20	387 S/S FDC	2.25
501-04 FDC	4.95	Montserrat	
Falkland Islands Dep.		558-565 FDC	6.95
1L9-10	1.00	744-45 PP	2.50
1L11-12	5.95	New Zealand	
1L13	9.95	8134-36 FDC	2.50
1L14-17	(12.00)	Norfolk	
1L18	1.50	121	.25
1L34-37	2.65	125	.25
1L62-65	2.40	143	.25
1L80-83	2.80	150	.25
1L80-83 GP	5.75	153	.25
1L92-96 FDC	9.50	184a VF MNH	20.00
Guernsey		382-84 FDC	3.25
390-93 FDC	3.95	Seychelles	
394-99 FDC	4.15	322a S/S	1.10
400 FDC	3.95	649-652 FDC	5.95
Hong Kong		Solomon Islands	
178-79 NH	POR	639-642 FDC	3.25
511-14 MC	12.00	643-47	4.60
531	1.00	643-47 FDC	5.95
534-7	3.50	South Georgia	
537a	21.00	16 Block of 4	40.00
538-41 GP	13.95	40a S/S	6.00
B1-4	8.75	131-34 FDC	4.95
B1-4 GP	18.00	St. Helena	
India		501-04 FDC	4.95
1126 FDC	1.50	St. Kitts	
1128-29 FDC	1.50	193-96 FDC	4.75
1130 FDC	1.50	253 S/S	3.00
1131 FDC	1.00	St. Kitts-Nevis-Anguilla	
1132-33 FDC	1.95	191-94	1.05
1134 FDC	1.00	202-05	1.25
1141 FDC	1.75	234-37	1.10
1160 FDC	1.00	249-52	1.70
1164 FDC	1.75	280-83	2.95
1165 FDC	1.00	St. Lucia	
1171 FDC	1.20	231-34	.60
1172 FDC	1.00	257-60	.70
1173 FDC	1.50	277a	2.50
1174-74 FDC	1.75	286-89	1.20
1176-77 FDC	1.50	290-93	.80
1178-81 FDC	3.25	312-15	1.25
1182 FDC	1.00	363-66	1.35
1183 FDC	1.00	782-89 FDC	6.95
1184-87 FDC	2.95	880-84 FDC	9.50
1188 FDC	1.75	921 FDC	3.25
1189-90 FDC	2.50	923-26 FDC	3.95
1191 FDC	1.00	927-930 FDC	2.50
1192 FDC	1.00	St. Vincent	
1193 FDC	1.00	514a S/S	1.25
1194	1.00	861-69 FDC	9.95
1195 FDC	1.00	980H-Q FDC	11.95
1200 FDC	1.75	1152 S/S	6.25
Malaysia		St. Vincent Grenadines	
66-73 VF MNH	23.50	1062 Bklt	1.50
386 FDC	2.50	1062 FDC	1.25




Thailand	Price	Thailand	Price
330	1.20	1065 Bklt	.75
331	.90	1065 FDC	1.75
337-3	1.50	1073 FDC	1.25
342	1.00	1074 FDC	1.00
527	.45	1075-78 FDC	4.75
557-60	5.75	1082 FDC	1.25
599 FDC	1.50	1083, 85-86 FDC	3.25
772-73 PP	2.50	1104 FDC	1.50
826 FDC	1.50	1087-89 FDC	5.95
832 FDC	1.95	1091 FDC	6.50
875-6	1.35	1101-02 FDC	2.40
894	.45	1103 FDC	1.50
901-02 FDC	1.75	1104 FDC	1.25
909-910	.90	1106 FDC	1.50
922 Bklt	2.95	1107-1110 FDC	5.95
922 FDC	1.00	1111 FDC	1.25
923 FDC	1.75	1112 FDC	2.00
933, 36 FDC	1.50	1113 FDC	1.00
939-45 FDC	25.00	1114-1117 FDC	4.25
958-59 FDC	1.50	1114-1117	16.95
976 FDC	1.50	1117 FDC	1.65
983, 992 FDC	4.00	1118 FDC	2.75
984, 988 FDC	2.75	1120 FDC	2.65
986, 990 FDC	4.65	1125 FDC	1.50
992a-b PP S/S	85.00	1126 FDC	1.50
993 FDC	1.00	1127 FDC	1.50
1002 FDC	1.50	1128-29 FDC	2.75
1003 FDC	1.00	1130 FDC	1.50
1004-07 FDC	3.50	1131 FDC	1.00
1011 Bklt	1.50	1132-35 FDC	3.25
1017 Bklt	2.00	1139-42 FDC	4.95
1017-20 FDC	3.25	1143 FDC	2.00
1021 FDC	1.65	1155 FDC	1.65
1022 FDC	1.50	1156 FDC	1.00
1023-24 FDC	1.50	1161-64 FDC	4.25
1025-26 FDC	2.95	1165-68 FDC	3.95
1029 Bklt	1.50	1170a	.55
1029 FDC	1.50	1170a FDC	1.95
1030 Bklt	1.50	1171	.30
1030 FDC	1.25	1172	.35
1031 Bklt	1.50	1173	.30
1033 Bklt	.95	1174	.30
1037 Bklt	1.50	1174 FDC	1.00
1037 FDC	1.25		
1038-39 FDC	1.95		
1043-44 FDC	4.65		
1044	1.20		
1044 FDC	1.75		
1045-46 FDC	2.25		
1046 FDC	1.65		
1047 Bklt	2.00		
1047 FDC	1.50		
1048-51 FDC	3.95		
1057 FDC	1.50		
1059 FDC	1.50		
1061 FDC	1.50		
1062 Bklt	1.50		
1062 FDC	1.25		

Thailand	Price	Thailand	Price
1175-78	2.50	1467a S/S Imp	11.95
1175-78 FDC	4.25	1477a S/S	3.95
1179-82 FDC	2.50	1493a S/S	3.50
1183 FDC	1.20	1493a S/S Imp	9.75
1184 FDC	1.00	1506a S/S	4.25
1185	.30	1510a S/S	2.95
1185 FDC	1.00	1510a S/S Imp	2.95
1186-89 FDC	2.95	1529a S/S	3.95
1190 FDC	1.25	1530a S/S	2.35
1192-95 FDC	3.50	1530a S/S Imp	3.50
1197-1210 FDC	7.95	1534a S/S	3.95
1211	60.00	1545a S/S	3.75
1212	.50	1552a S/S	4.00
1212a S/S	5.75	1564a S/S	2.50
1212a S/S Imp	8.95	1566a S/S	1.00
1213a S/S	6.00	1566a S/S Imp	1.00
1213a S/S Imp	8.00	1578a S/S	2.95
1214a S/S	2.50	1587a S/S	1.00
1214a S/S Imp	5.25	1604a S/S	2.50
1215a S/S	5.25	1606a S/S	.95
1215a S/S Imp	11.00	1606a S/S Imp	.95
1216a S/S	8.95	B42a	.95
1216a S/S Imp	11.95	B43-44 FDC	3.95
1217a S/S	5.95	B45-46 FDC	2.50
1217a S/S Imp	6.25	B53	.95
1218a S/S	7.95	B53 FDC	1.25
1218a S/S Imp	6.50	B54	.50
1219a S/S	7.50	B54 FDC	2.00
1219a S/S Imp	2.95	B57 FDC	1.25
1220a S/S	4.50	B58 FDC	2.50
1220a S/S Imp	2.50	B59 FDC	1.75
1221a S/S	3.95	B60 FDC	1.75
1221a S/S Imp	8.95	B65	.90
1222a S/S	8.95	B78e S/S	1.25
1222a S/S Imp	8.95	1618-19, 620 FDC	6.95
1223a S/S	7.95	150 FDC	4.75
1223a S/S Imp	4.50	163-64	3.00
1224a S/S	4.50	163-64 FDC	3.95
1224a S/S Imp	4.75	630 S/S	3.75
1225a S/S	8.00	631-35 S/S	6.95
1225a S/S Imp	3.75	636-39, 640 FDC	7.50
1226a S/S	7.50	636-640 S/S	6.95

Tuvalu	
311-19 FDC	9.95
401-09 FDC	29.95
U.S.A.	
2026b SH	18.00
2335a PP	37.00
2431a Bklt Pane	12.95
2505a Bklt Pane	6.95
2566a Bklt Pane	6.95
2624-9 S/S	25.00
2833 S/S	9.95
2838 S/S	4.00
31443 Bklt	14.95
BK1143 Bklt	3.95
BK156 Bklt	10.50
BK157 Bklt	13.95
BK161 Bklt	6.95
BK162 Bklt	12.95
BK163 Bklt	11.95
BK169 Bklt	12.95
BK170 Bklt	6.95
BK179 Bklt	12.95
BK180 Bklt	10.95
BK181 Bklt	12.95
BK184 Bklt	20.95
BK188 Bklt	11.95
RW8 Plate Blocks	
of 6	1295.00
Vanuatu	
485-88 FDC	5.95
Virgin Islands	
572-76 Spec	8.00
577-584 FDC	6.50
595-604 FDC	12.95
603-04 S/S	6.75
618-19, 620 FDC	3.50
620 S/S	6.95
625-28 FDC	4.25
629 S/S	3.75
630 FDC	3.95
630 S/S	3.75
631-35 S/S	6.95
636-39, 640 FDC	7.50
636-640 S/S	6.95

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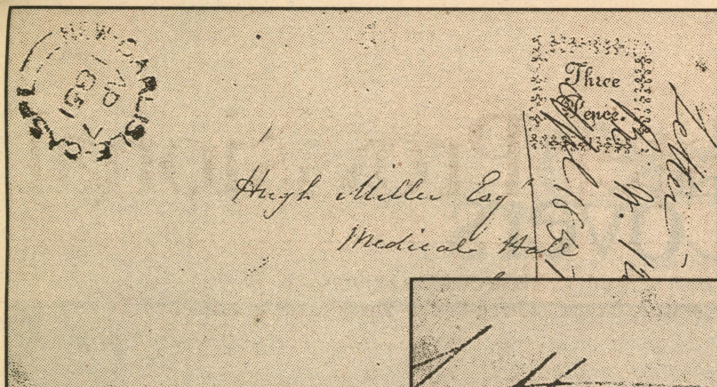


Figure 2: The unique and controversial New Carlisle "Postmaster's Provisional" for sale in 1996 for \$200,000.

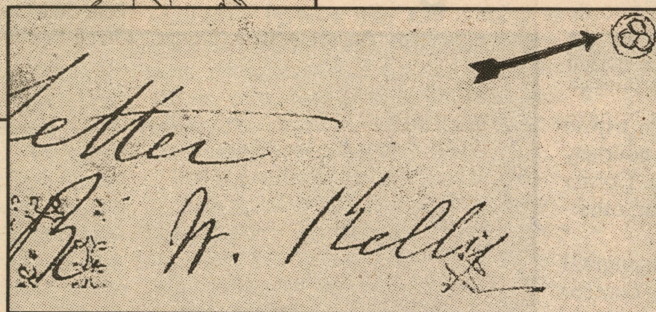


Figure 3: The trefoil in a circle found (enhanced) in the lower right corner of the envelope is the mark of Baron Philippe de la Renotiere von Ferrary. An eminent collector at the turn of the century, von Ferrary's collection was sold at auction in 14 sales during 1921-1925.

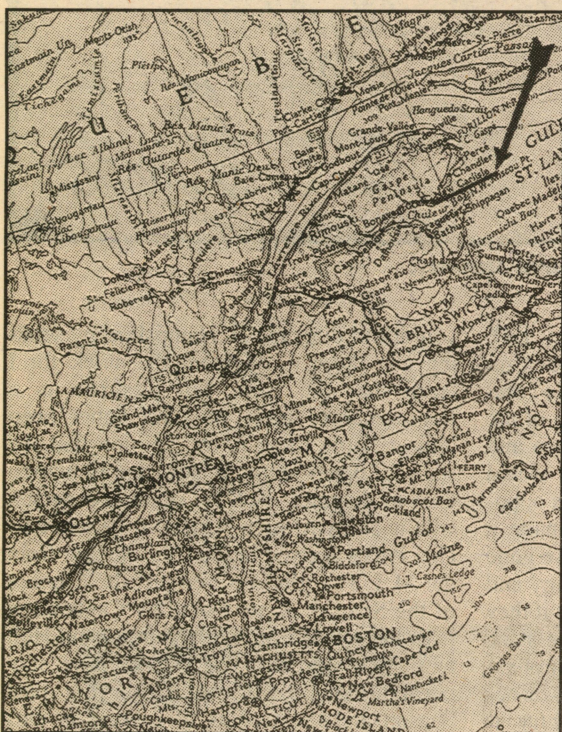


Figure 4: The location of New Carlisle, Gaspé, in relation to Montreal and New York.

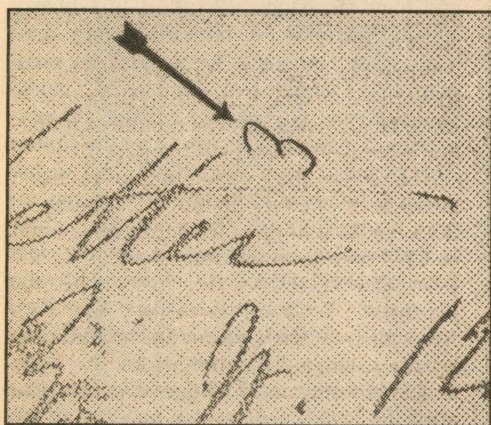


Figure 5: An enlarged photo of the right side portion of the envelope showing the (enhanced) pencilled "3" believed to be an accounting mark inscribed by the Postmaster of New Carlisle, Robert W. Kelly.

also be unlikely, the theory continues, that Kelly would have both stamped the envelope and then cancelled it with his manuscript signature when he could have just as well inscribed a large manuscript "3" in the same pen and ink.

This is where the opposing set of experts comes into play. Their view is that the ornate boxed "Three Pence" marking, being in black, would indicate a nonpayment of the fee. Indication of prepayment is normally

done in red, particularly since these envelopes would have been sold as prepaid.

Their second point is that the marking is nothing but a handstamp, although ornate, no different from the many others used in other post offices. In fact, by 1852, Kelly was using a standard "3d." handstamp as a paid marking.

Finally, they view the so-called manuscript cancellation as nothing more than the endorsement of the receiver, for filing purposes, as to the sender's name and the date of the letter. This was an extremely common practice at the time in both Europe and the Americas.

The cover was carried by sea to Quebec where it received a red transit mark of "Quebec, April 16, 1851" which indicated that the stamper felt that the envelope was genuine and prepaid. It then went on its way to Toronto. Unfortunately, there is no arrival mark. The nine-day travel time for the 320 miles between New Carlisle and Quebec City may seem inordinately long. It was common at the time.

Until the envelope is certified by a reputable authority, it will always be questioned. Even after examination, it might still be impossible to prove if the ornate printed boxed "Three Pence" was contemporary. However, as Kenneth Rowe, chairman of CAPEX '96 and currently president of The Vincent Graves Greene Philatelic Research Foundation, the organization whose expert committee is recognized as the authority in certifying Canadian philatelic material, wrote in *The Canadian Philatelist* letter to the editor in response to C. N. Richardson's article, "it might be possible to establish by microscopic examination whether the filing [endorsement] note is over or under the printed impression."

Although many owners of this cover, including Stanley Gibbons Ltd., who gave it catalogue status (SG1), were content with its authenticity, many other students of the period are not. The end of this story is yet to come. It proves that there still is research to be done on early Canadian material and that research in philately includes the social, economic and political history of the period.

In the December 1997, *O Canada* col-

Figure 6: A proof example of the 1851 Canadian 6d. stamp portraying Prince Albert, Prince Consort to Queen Victoria.



umn, I wrote about the six-penny Prince Consort 1851 stamps (Figure 6). At the time, I indicated that I did not know from where the engraving of Prince Albert, the Prince Consort, had originated. Since the column was written, I have found references to its origin. From the very beginning, in 1851, everyone knew where Sir Sandford Fleming had gotten his inspiration for the three-penny beaver and the 12-penny portrait of Queen Victoria.

However, it was not until April 1946, that Gerald E. Wellburn revealed the information relating to the origins of the Prince Albert stamp. In an article in *Popular Stamps* (Vol. IX, No. 3) he wrote:

"Accompanying this paper is a reproduction of an engraving, which has been in my collection for many years, and which is undoubtedly the source of the portrait of the 6d. stamp. The steel engraving is approxi-



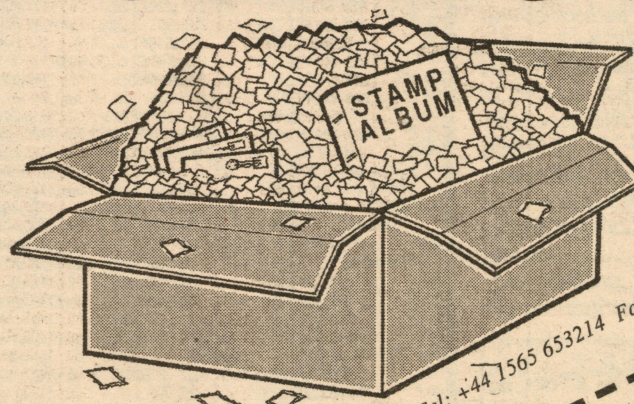
Figure 7: The Egleton engraving (circa 1840) of Prince Albert which, it is believed, was Sir Sandford Fleming's inspiration for Canada's Scott 2.

mately eight by eleven inches, and is inscribed in fine script at the bottom: 'Prince Albert. Engraved under the superintendence of Mr. Chas. Heath by W. H. Egleton from a drawing by W. Drummond, Esq.' and below is the printer's imprint in small capitals 'John & Fredk. Tallis, London, Edinburgh & Dublin.'"

Wellburn goes on to say that the engraving (Figure 7) is not dated but that he feels it would have been made around 1840 when the Prince was 21. Although little is known about Egleton and Drummond, history records that Charles Heath was the father of Frederick Heath and it is assumed that both father and son were responsible for the engraving of Queen Victoria for the United Kingdom's first stamp — the famous Penny Black in 1840. Charles Heath died in 1848.

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