Mourning: Covers, Usage and Collateral Material

Background: Although mourning covers predated Queen Victoria, it was during her reign (1837-1901) that mourning acknowledgement flourished. Queen Victoria's complete devastation on the death of her husband Prince Albert in 1861 began a serious trend in mourning habits. This exhibit's emphasis is on mourning covers and their usage within postal systems, with collateral material. Mourning covers are identified primarily by black borders of varying widths, designs and embellishments. Some covers can be bordered by grey and purple. There is no hard and fast rule as to the width of that border, some students believe the wider the border the more recent the death, the closer relationship to the deceased or even time elapsed since a death but this does not seem to be justified. During Victorian times people were generally better off financially and were able to not only write caring bereavement letters on special stationery but they could also afford to send these letters in the mail, although in some early instances they were not prepaid. Mourning covers continued to be used into the twentieth century but with less and less frequency with the advancement of technology.

Purpose: This display class exhibit shows basic stationery cover designs, followed by examples of flap embellishments, florals, monograms and crests. Various border designs were created by printers and stationers –

Exhibit Plan

Title Page

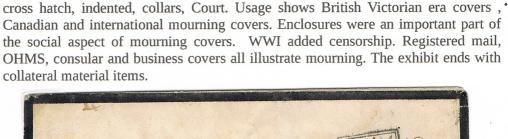
Sect.1: Basic Design Embellishments

Sect. 2: Covers Usage

Sect. 3: Notices Enclosures

Sect. 4: Collateral

2mm black border obverse: wax seal 'Elizabeth Ann"





LONDON 'OLD CAVENDISH STREET' to Montreal Lower Canada

oval L 18 AU 43 – Liverpool transit mark manuscript rate 1 shilling and 2 pence overstruck in Quebec, boxed 1 shilling 4 pence currency b/s double frame red maltese cross O.C.S. 17 AU 17 1843

This cover is pictured on page 485 of Boggs' **The Postage Stamps and Postal History of Canada** (1945) as an example of a short paid ocean mail letter. Mrs. Pelton would have paid the currency rate to receive her mourning letter.