

# Wichita Stamp Club Newsletter



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An article about the town of Monticello in Johnson County, Kansas

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A bit of philatelic history surrounding the Grand Tour of North America by King George VI and Queen Elizabeth in 1939

## TRAVEL KANSAS—EAST TO WEST—NORTH TO SOUTH by Neal E. Danielson

**Travel Kansas—Monticello** is located in Johnson County (Figures 1 & 2), the Township of Monticello is in the northern part of the County. The area was a favorite place to have a cabin or even a nice settlement due to the abundance of timber. Prior to the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854 a number of white men came to live among the Indians and they married Shawnee women, thus they were adopted into the tribe. The first two, Isaac Parish and Samuel Garrett, arrived in 1847.

Once the territory was open to settlement the Monticello Township increased in white population and the town of Monticello was laid out in June 1857 by the town company, of which Col. A. Payne was President, and W. J. McCarthy, Secretary. A spacious and comfortable hotel was built by J. M. Reed, but it was accidentally burned in 1862 during the Civil War. Rich & Rively opened the first store in Monticello in 1857 and a school was built about a mile west of the settlement before one was built in the town in 1865.

In 1858, the town was almost entirely torn to pieces by a tornado, but it quickly recovered, and for some time had the ambition of being the County Seat, but failed due to its location. Olathe, being centrally located in the County, became the Seat for the County government. In any case, the town grew to two general stores, a blacksmith shop, about fifteen homes and about sixty inhabitants.

The Railroad became the life blood of the County with five major lines crossing within its boundaries: The Missouri River, Fort Scott & Gulf entering the county near its northeastern corner, running in a general southwesterly direction and leaving the County near the middle of its southern boundary; The Kansas City, Lawrence & Southern Kansas, using the line of the former road to Olathe then running southwesterly to Ottawa; the St. Louis, Lawrence & Denver, entering the County at the northwest corner, running southeasterly through Olathe and to Pleasant Hill, Missouri; and the Kansas & Midland Railroad, running along the Kansas River through the northwest corner of the County; and the Kansas City & Olathe, running north from Olathe and connecting with the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe at Waseca.

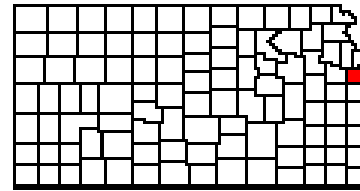


Figure 2  
Johnson County, Kansas



Figure 1  
Johnson County Railroad Map ca 1899

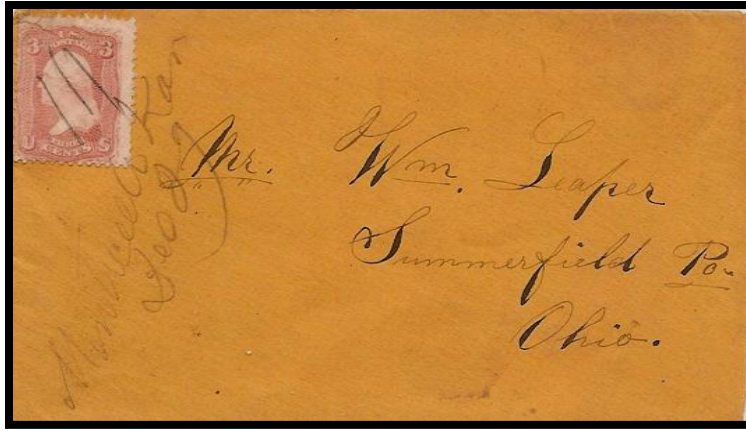


Figure 3  
Monticello, Kansas Cover with Manuscript Cancel ca 1861

Figure 3 is a cover franked with a 3¢ George Washington stamp (Scott #65 issued in 1861) with a 3-line manuscript cancel from Monticello, Kan on what appears to be Dec 29 and mailed to a Mr. Leaper at the Summerfield, Ohio post office which is a small village in Noble County, Ohio. Research into Monticello did not reveal the source as to the naming of the Township nor the Town, but logic tells us it came from President Thomas Jefferson's home near Charlottesville, Virginia called *Monticello*. The U. S. Post Office Department commemorated *Monticello* (Figure 4) in their Liberty Series on April 13, 1956 when they issued the 20¢ stamp (Scott #1047). The Post Office for Monticello, Kansas was authorized on January 15, 1858 and initially operated out of private homes before a building was actually constructed as the Post Office in 1865. The Post Office would remain viable until May 15, 1905, except for three months in 1871 (Jan. 4-April 5).



Figure 3  
Scott #1047

Reference: Blue Skyways website: <http://skyways.lib.ks.us>

## ALL ABOARD THE ROYAL TRAIN by Neal E. Danielson

In 1939 King George VI and his bride Queen Elizabeth planned to bolster support for Great Britain in North America with what was to be known as the Royal Tour of Canada. It was important that Canada and the United States maintain a friendly relationship with Great Britain. The planned month long tour to take the British monarch to North America began in the spring of 1939. This was a first for a reigning British monarch. The Royal Couple traveled nine days by Ocean Liner to Quebec City; the passage was marked by heavy seas, dense fog and towering icebergs.

They would take a whirlwind whistle-stop tour from coast-to-coast of Canada and the United States. The message of friendship and solidarity wouldn't have gotten out without a train. Two competing railroad lines, the Canadian Pacific Railway (Figure 1) and the Canadian National Railway (Figure 2), would each supply half the cars.



Figure 1—Canadian Pacific Railway Royal Train Engine



Figure 2—Canadian National Railway Royal Train Engine

Westbound the Canadian Pacific (CP) Hudson 2850 was decked out in royal blue and aluminum to match the 12-car train. CP Hudson 2851 was used to head the entourage, carrying the press and other dignitaries, proceeding about one hour ahead of the Royal Couple. The Royal Train began its journey in Quebec City on May 18, 1939, traveling west through Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, Winnipeg, Calgary, Banff and arriving in Vancouver on May 28<sup>th</sup> (Figure 3). The message of goodwill and solidarity was repeated in each town large and small, and the public loved it, turning out in droves to catch a glimpse of the immensely popular royal couple. At one point in the trip the Royal Couple forsook the luxury of their special cars for a thrilling ride in the lead engine “triple-header”.

Eastbound the Canadian National (CN) 6400, the nation's most advanced passenger steam locomotive, known for its high speed, was painted in a light blue and dark blue color scheme to match the cars. CN 6036 served as the pilot train. Both the Westbound and the Eastbound locomotives bore royal coats-of-arms on their smoke boxes and imperial crowns on their running boards. The eastbound segment began May 31<sup>st</sup> and took *Their Majesties* through Jasper, Edmonton, Toronto and London, where the train crossed over the border into the United States, near Niagara Falls.

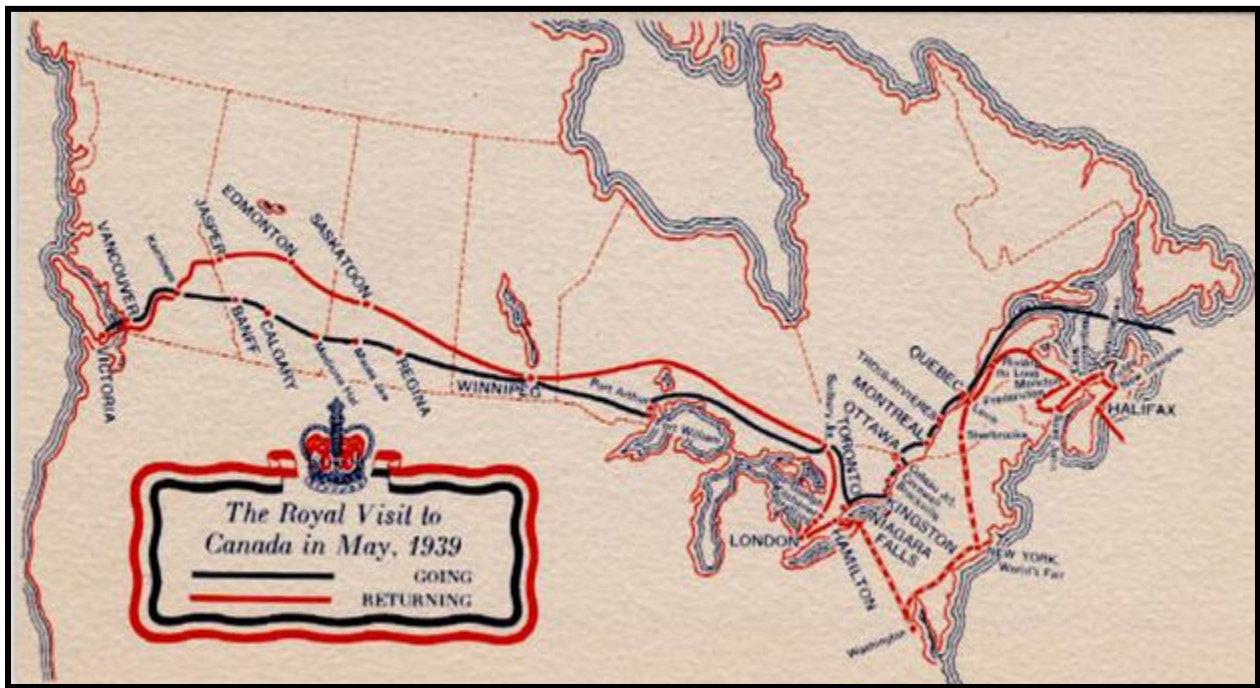


figure 3—Route Map of the Royal Train – Westbound and Eastbound

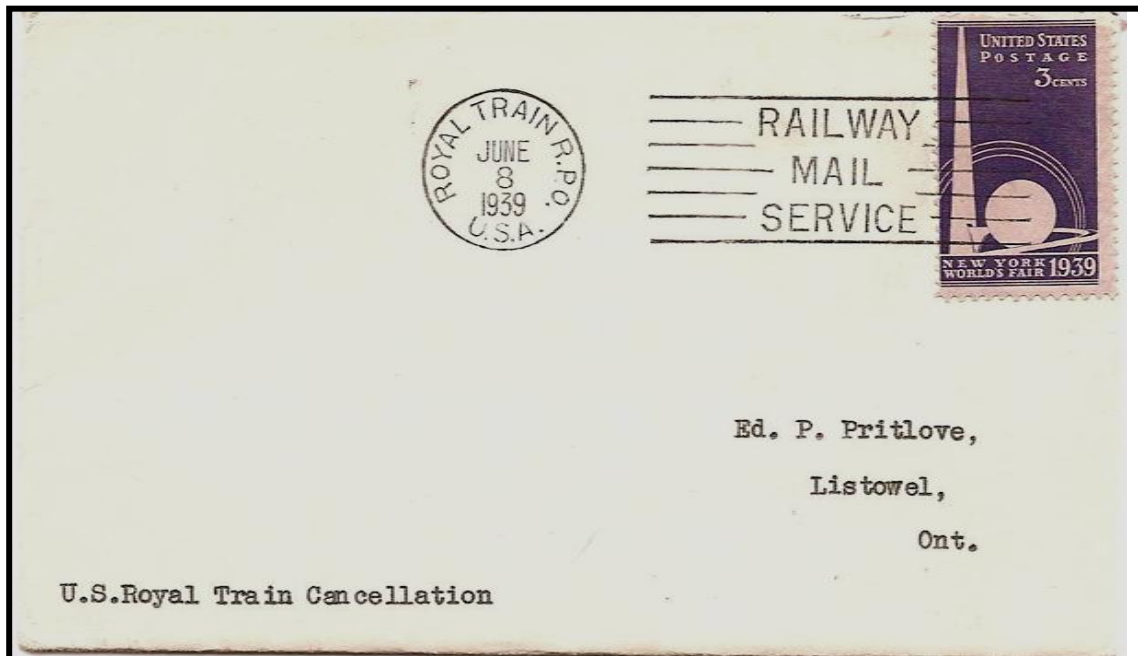


Figure 4—Royal Train Cancellation June 8, 1939 at the New York World's Fair

Once it crossed the border, The Royal Train headed for Washington, D. C. nonstop where a reception was held at the White House for the Royal Couple. The next day they traveled to New York City for a stop over at the New York World's Fair. Figure 4 is an Event Cover commemorating the Royal Train visit to the Fair. The cover is franked with the 3¢ New York World's Fair stamp (Scott #853) issued April 1, 1939. The stamp is tied to the cover with a Slogan Cancellation "Railway Mail Service" and circular-date-stamp "Royal Train R.P.O." dated June 8, 1939. Numerous Event Covers were produced to commemorate the first

reigning Monarch to visit Canada and the U.S., including photos of the Royal Couple (Figure 5). These Cachet Covers were issued all along the route from Quebec City to Vancouver on the Westbound Route and on the return on the Eastbound Route, with even more produced when the Royal Couple visited the White House and the New York World's Fair. The cancellations that were used included: "Perfect" machine cancels (as shown on Figure 4 cover); "Universal" machine cancels; black hand cancel; and purple hand cancels.



Figure 5

The Royal Couple then spent a day with President Franklin Delano Roosevelt at his White House retreat in Hyde Park. From Hyde Park the Royal Train went north to Montreal and on to Fredericton and St. John before ending its journey June 15 in Halifax. The Royal Train carrying the Royal Couple traveled 8,377 miles on their whirlwind tour across the North American Continent. The tour was the calm before the storm that would soon bring World War II to the British doorsteps. The Tour strengthened the transatlantic bonds that have lasted for decades, even today.

Canada issued a set of three postage stamps May 15, 1939 to the visit of George VI and Queen Elizabeth to Canada. Scott #246, a 1¢ green and black, depicting Princess Elizabeth and Princess Margaret Rose; Scott #247, a 2¢ brown and black, depicting the War Memorial in Ottawa; and Scott #248 (Figure 6) of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth.



Figure 6  
Scott #248

References:

- Wikipedia Free Encyclopedia website—Canadian Pacific Railway and Canadian National Railway
- The Railways of Canada Archives – Canadian National
- Canadian Pacific Railway Royal Hudson #2850 (Mason's Trains Newsletter)
- Royal Hudson – Unofficial Homepage
- Canadian National 6400 Royal Train Brochure 1939
- 1939 Royal Visit website
- Royal Train of 1939 website