

Another Look at the Fawcett Correspondence

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Several years ago, I purchased on eBay the flimsy cover shown in Fig. 1—an 1865 cover from Victoria, Vancouver Island to Liverpool, England. It is addressed to “Mrs. John Hopkins, 233 Upper Parliament Street, Liverpool, England” and intended “For R.W. Fawcett”. It bears a damaged US 10¢ Washington stamp (which does not belong, the rate being 24¢ per ½oz) cancelled by a San Francisco cog cancel, a blue Victoria PAID oval, and a San Francisco Hoole double circle dated MAR 13, 1865. Other postmarks are a red 3 / NEW YORK BR PKT / AP 9 / 65, a red LONDON L C / PAID / AP 19 / 65 and a backstamped B 1 / LIVERPOOL / AP 20 / 65. I will describe the route taken by this cover and describe its contents but only after explaining its historical importance as part of the 1864–1865 Fawcett correspondence. I examine the Fawcett correspondence in three phases: its discovery, its postal history and its social history. First, I will describe three other covers from Victoria to Great Britain in the early to mid 1860s.



Figure 1. March 1865 cover sent from Victoria to R.W. Fawcett in Liverpool.

Three Covers from Victoria to Britain: 1862–1865

I have only three intact 1860s covers from the Colony of Vancouver Island to Great Britain (Figs. 2, 3 and 4). They demonstrate two different rates. From April 1855 to June 30, 1863, the U.S. postage rate per ½oz for a letter from Vancouver Island to Britain was 29¢¹ (plus the Colonial fee). On July 1, 1863, the rate became 24¢ per ½oz (plus the Colonial fee). Initially, for letters going via San Francisco, cash (paid at the time of posting) was included with the letters to pay the U.S. postage. From the early 1860s, the Victoria post office had a supply of U.S. 1857 Issue stamps for use on mail leaving the colonies². The denominations available were 1¢, 3¢, 5¢, 10¢, 12¢ and 24¢. Stamps applied in Victoria were cancelled in San Francisco.

All three of these covers were carried across the continent by the Overland stage-coach route and then by railway to New York City.

My earliest cover (Fig. 2, next page) was (according to the *Victoria Colonist*) carried from Victoria to San Francisco by the steamship *Pacific*, which departed from Victoria on November 4, 1862. It reached San Francisco on November 8th (see the postmark) and Evesham, England on December 17th. There is a faint New York transit mark from December 3rd. A weak strike of the POST OFFICE/VICTORIA coat of arms at the lower left shows that the 5¢ Colonial fee was paid. The U.S. postage was paid with a 24¢ adhesive and two 5¢ adhesives, so the postage was overpaid 1¢.

Transportation across the Atlantic from New York has been determined by consulting *North Atlantic Mail Sailings, 1840-75* by W. Hubbard and R.F. Winter, U.S. Philatelic Classics Society, Inc., (1988). This source shows that the cover in Fig. 2 was carried in the Cunard ship *Persia*, which departed from New York on December 3rd and reached Queenstown December 15th.



Figure 2. Cover from Victoria (November 4, 1862) to Evesham, England, overpaid by 1¢. [Ex Carr, Wilkinson, Walske.]

My next cover, to London, England (Fig. 3, next page), was picked up in Victoria on August 5, 1864 by the steamship *Oregon*, and arrived in San Francisco on August 10, 1864. The blue POST OFFICE / PAID / VICTORIA VANCOUVER ISLAND oval indicates payment of the Colonial postage fee. The 24¢ US stamp paid the postage from San Francisco to England. A transit postmark was applied at New York on October 8th and a receiver was applied at London on October 20th. This coincides with the eastbound voyage of the Inman Line *City of Baltimore*, which departed from New York on October 8, 1864 and arrived at Liverpool on October 19th.



Figure 3. Cover from Victoria (August 5, 1864) to London, England paid at the 24¢ U.S. rate.

Fig. 4 (next page) presents a cover from Victoria (April 13, 1865, carried in the *Pacific*) transiting San Francisco on April 17th and arriving in Glasgow, Scotland on June 5th. The date in the New York transit mark is unreadable. Its postage, as with the cover in Fig. 3, was the 5¢ Colonial fee plus 24¢ in U.S. stamps. This cover was probably carried across the Atlantic in the Cunard ship *Asia*, which reached Queenstown (Cobh) Ireland on June 3, 1865.

The default transcontinental route for these three covers was Overland rather than via Panama. Starting in 1861, the Overland Mail Company (formerly Butterfield) operated a six-days-a week mail contract between Placerville, California and St. Joseph, Missouri by the Central Route. The schedule for this stage-coach route called for a 20-day trip (23 days during the 4 winter months)³. [Railway from the eastern U.S. had reached St. Joseph in 1857.] The San Francisco–New York leg of the mail’s journey from Victoria consumed the most time in the trip to Britain.



Figure 4. Cover from Victoria (April 13, 1865) to Glasgow, Scotland paid at the 24¢ U.S. rate.

Discovery of the Fawcett Correspondence

The Fawcett correspondence provides a scarce and fairly detailed look at mail from Victoria to Britain in 1864 and 1865. I discuss it in three stages: discovery, postal history and social history. The feature that attracted me to the cover in Fig. 1 was its endorsement at the left: "For R.W. Fawcett". Until that time, I had never seen any of the Fawcett correspondence offered for sale. My late friend Robin Clarke had told me a great deal about his find of Fawcett letters and covers (all with their stamps removed). He has reported his 1958 find in several publications⁴⁻⁶. Robin kept most of the Fawcett find and eventually traded his remaining holdings to me. This re-examination of the Fawcett correspondence supplies new information about the mails from Victoria to England and about the history of the Fawcett family.

Robin has written how a friend phoned him and told him about a cottage on Discovery Street in Victoria that was being demolished; lumber and fixtures were being sold. An old steamer trunk there contained letters and envelopes, which—because they held no stamps—Robin was given. Robin did not recognize my cover as coming from this lot, but it turns out he had a photocopy of a letter matching it.

All the letters were sent to Rowland Wignall Fawcett. Rowland—born May 28, 1840—was the eldest son of Thomas Lea and Jane (nee Wignall) Fawcett⁴. His parents were born and married in England, and emigrated to Australia in 1838. The Fawcetts (Thomas and Jane, with two sons—Rowland and Edgar) left Sydney in 1849 and arrived in San Francisco in early 1850⁴. They had planned to return to England but instead moved to Vancouver Island. The Fawcetts [the family now included two more sons, Arthur and Francis (Frank), born about 1852 and 1856, respectively] moved to Victoria. They arrived on February 11, 1859⁴. Jane Fawcett died on January 9, 1864, which left Thomas with a family of four sons. In September 1864, the eldest son—Rowland—took the youngest sons, Arthur and Frank, to England to the home of his father's aunt and uncle.

The Fawcett correspondence I have consists of 14 letters sent from Victoria by Rowland's father, his brother Edgar and two friends to Rowland while he was in England. These letters were sent in nine mailings. There also are some damaged covers related to these letters—six of them directly from Victoria (Figs. 1, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10). [Two other covers carry letters from Victoria that were remailed in England.]

Postal History of the Fawcett Correspondence

Rowland and his two younger brothers departed from Victoria in mid September 1864. Father and/or Edgar apparently tried to send a letter to Rowland each time they received a letter from him when the steamship from San Francisco arrived in Victoria. As done above, I will describe the mail route from Victoria to England in three stages: Victoria to San Francisco, San Francisco to New York, and New York to England.

There was no mail-contract service between Victoria and San Francisco during the period of the Fawcett letters⁷. Under a temporary arrangement, owners of vessels bringing the mails from San Francisco were paid \$250 per trip. At this time, five steamships served the San Francisco–Victoria run: *Brother Jonathan*, *Pacific*, and *Orizaba* (California Steam Navigation Company) and *Oregon* and *Sierra Nevada* (California, Oregon and Mexico Steam-Ship Company). Deaville⁷ reports that service was fortnightly in 1864. The data in Table 1 show this comment to be roughly correct.

Departure times for mail from Victoria followed ship arrival times by only one day or less. This left little time for someone to write a response to a letter from England. For example, on January 24, 1865, the *Oregon* brought nine bags of mail to Victoria at 10:30pm. The *Colonist* reported that the post office would probably open at daylight and the ship left at 10am, providing only a few hours to receive and answer letters by this mail.

The dates when Fawcett letters were sent are shown in bold face in Table 1—a compilation of Victoria arrival and departure dates of all the coastal mail steamers during the period of the Fawcett letters.

Table 1.
Steamer Dates, Victoria (October 19, 1864 to Jun 15, 1865)

Steamship	Arrival at Victoria	Departure from Victoria*
<i>Sierra Nevada</i>	Oct 19, 1864, afternoon	Oct 20 , 6am
<i>Brother Jonathan</i>	Oct 22, 1864	To depart Oct 23, about 8am
<i>Sierra Nevada</i>	Nov 8, 1864, 4am	To depart Nov 9, 6am
<i>Brother Jonathan</i>	Nov 17, 1864, afternoon	Nov 18, forenoon
<i>Sierra Nevada</i>	Nov 22, 1864, 7pm	Nov 23
<i>Brother Jonathan</i>	Dec 9, 1864, 11 am	Dec 10, early morning
<i>Sierra Nevada</i>	Dec 20, 1864	Dec 20
<i>Brother Jonathan</i>	Dec 23, 1864	Dec 23
<i>Oregon</i>	Jan 9, 1865, 5pm	Jan 10
<i>Pacific</i>	Jan 18, 1865, evening	Jan 19
<i>Oregon</i>	Jan 24, 1865, 10:30pm	Jan 25, 10am
<i>Pacific</i>	Feb 6, 1865	Feb 6
<i>Oregon</i>	Feb 19, 1865, 2pm	To leave Feb 20 , 10am†
<i>Pacific</i>	Feb 22, 1865, evening.	Feb 23 , 10am
<i>Sierra Nevada</i>	Mar 10, 1865, 10am	To depart Mar 11 , 8am.
<i>Oregon</i>	Mar 24, 1865, 3:30pm	Mar 25
<i>Sierra Nevada</i>	Apr 5, 1865, midnight	Apr 6 , early morning
<i>Pacific</i>	Apr 13, 1865, 3am	Apr 13
<i>Oregon</i>	May 4, 1865, 11am	May 5 , noon
<i>Orizaba</i>	May 15, 1865, morning	May 15 , 6pm
<i>Sierra Nevada</i>	May 25	May 25
<i>Brother Jonathan</i>	June 15, 4am	Jun 15 , 4:30pm

Notes for Table 1.

Data are from the Victoria *British Colonist*, online at

<http://www.britishcolonist.ca/>

† The mails closed in Victoria at 8:30am and the express at 9am.

The Overland mail route between California and Eastern U.S. was the default path for San Francisco–New York letter mail after December 1859. Overland service became daily (except Mondays) on July 1, 1861. Until 1864, letter mail to or from Vancouver Island to the East or Britain followed this routing. The Overland route was severely disrupted by Indian attacks such as the Battle of Julesburg (at Julesburg, Colorado on January 7, 1865). This raid was in retaliation to the Sand Creek Massacre in November 1864. Because of this raid and subsequent attacks on stage coach stations, mail between New York and San Francisco was diverted to the Panama route. Therefore, English letter mail to and from Vancouver Island travelled between San Francisco and New York via Panama from January 1865 until mid-April 1865. On January 25, 1865, the *Victoria Colonist* reported that “The next steamer will carry the California mails, which go via Panama until the Indian difficulties are abated on the overland mail route.” Finally, this news was published in the *Colonist* on April 14, 1865: “Only a very small mail arrived by the *Pacific* yesterday, the Panama steamer having failed to connect. The overland mail will be resumed from this date, the route now being considered safe.” Thus, all but the first Fawcett letters and the last four Fawcett letters probably went from San Francisco to New York via Panama, not Overland.

The cover shown in Fig. 1 carried a letter written in Victoria on March 11, 1865. It was carried to San Francisco in the *Sierra Nevada*. Her arrival date in San Francisco is not recorded in the *Daily Alta California* newspaper but the cover bears a March 13th San Francisco postmark. At this time, Vancouver

Island mail was being sent to the East Coast via Panama. The Pacific Mail Steamship Company (PMSC) ship *Golden City* departed San Francisco for Panama on March 13th; her scheduled departure time was 10am. The April 9th New York postmark shows that the cover took 27 days to reach New York from San Francisco. Otis⁸ describes in detail the via-Panama mail route. The 1867 steamship advertisement⁹ shown in Fig. 5 states 22 days for the San Francisco–New York. [I have not found a timetable for these ships for 1865.] The sailing from San Francisco to Panama following the *Golden City* was the *Constitution* on March 23rd; this sailing would provide only 17 days for the mail to reach New York. Therefore, the cover in Fig. 1 must have caught the *Golden City*. Perhaps the departure of the *Golden City* was delayed to wait for eastbound mail from Victoria.

PACIFIC MAIL STEAMSHIP COMPANY'S
THROUGH LINE TO CALIFORNIA,
 Touching at Mexican Ports, and carrying the U. S. Mail.
THROUGH IN TWENTY-TWO DAYS.

<p>Steamships on the Atlantic:</p> <p>ARIZONA, HENRY CHAUNCEY, NEW YORK, RISING STAR, OCEAN QUEEN, NORTHERN LIGHT, &c., &c.</p>		<p>Connecting on the Pacific with:</p> <p>GOLDEN CITY, CONSTITUTION, MONTANA, SACRAMENTO, GOLDEN AGE, ST. LOUIS, &c., &c.</p>
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One of the above large and splendid Steamships will leave Pier No. 42, North River, foot of Canal Street, at 12 o'clock, noon, on the 1st, 11th, and 21st of every month (except when those dates fall on Sunday, and then on the preceding Saturday), for ASPINWALL, connecting via Panama Railway, with one of the Company's Steamships from Panama for SAN FRANCISCO, touching at ACAPULCO. Those of the 1st touch at MANZANILLO.
 Families in Second Cabin and Steerage taken at reduced passage rates.
 An allowance of one-quarter on through rates to clergymen and their families, and school-teachers, going to practice their vocations.
 One hundred pounds baggage allowed to each adult. Baggage-Masters accompany baggage through, and attend to ladies and children without male protectors. Baggage received on the dock the day before sailing, from steamboats, railroads, and passengers who prefer to send down early.
 Departures of 1st and 21st connect with Steamers for SOUTH PACIFIC and CENTRAL AMERICAN PORTS.
 Departures of 11th of each month connects with the New Steam Line from Panama to AUSTRALIA and NEW ZEALAND.
 Through Tickets from New York to any of the ports above named furnished on application.
 The Company's New Line from San Francisco to Japan and China, carrying the U. S. Mail, is now in operation. Departure from New York of March 11th connects with Steamship "Colorado," leaving San Francisco April 3d, for ports in Japan and China.
 For Passage Tickets, or further information, apply at the Company's Ticket Office.
 On the Wharf, Pier 42, North River, foot of Canal Street, New York.
 F. R. BABY, Agent.

Figure 5.
 1867
 Pacific
 Mail
 Steamship
 ad. Note
 22 days
 between
 San Fran-
 cisco and
 New
 York.

The cover in Fig. 1 bears postmarks at New York (April 8, 1865), London (April 19th) and Liverpool (April 20th). The North German Lloyd ship *America*

departed from New York on April 9th and reached Southampton on April 19th, and probably carried this cover.

Next are the other five Fawcett covers from Victoria. The first of these (Fig. 6) contains the letter written by Thomas on February 22, 1865. The POST OFFICE / PAID / VICTORIA VANCOUVER ISLAND oval at the left shows that the 5¢ Colonial fee was paid. A U.S. stamp in the upper right corner is missing. There is a San Francisco datestamp reading March 3, 1865.



Figure 6. Cover from a letter sent from Victoria on February 22, 1865.

According to the *Colonist*, the *Pacific* left Victoria on February 23rd; the *Daily Alta California* newspaper noted that the *Pacific* arrived in San Francisco from Victoria on March 2nd. The red New York and London datetamps are pale and not clear. [The New York mark may be APR 8.] There is a clear LIVERPOOL April 20/65 backstamp. According to data of Hubbard and Winter, the most likely trans-Atlantic sailing for carriage of this cover was

the North German Lloyd steamship *America*, which departed New York on April 8th and arrived in Southampton on April 19th.

The cover shown in Fig. 7 carried a letter written in Victoria on April 6, 1865. At the lower left, it bears an impression of the POST OFFICE / PAID / VICTORIA VANCOUVER ISLAND oval, indicating payment of the Colonial fee. This cover reached San Francisco in the *Sierra Nevada* on April 10th. It probably crossed the United States by the Overland route, which was restored in April. It appears to have arrived at New York on May 13th and Liverpool on May 24th. If these weak dates are correct, then the cover was carried in the Inman Line steamship *City of London*.



Figure 7. Cover from a letter sent from Victoria on April 6, 1865.

Fig.8 (next page) illustrates a cover to Liverpool that was mailed in Victoria on May 4, 1865. It also bears the blue POST OFFICE / PAID / VICTORIA VANCOUVER ISLAND oval, The cover arrived at San Francisco in the *Oregon* on May 10th, travelled east by the Overland route, transited

New York on June 6th and reached Liverpool on June 17th. It probably was carried trans-Atlantic by the Cunard's *China*, which left Boston on June 7th and reached Queenstown on June 16th.



Figure 8. Cover from a letter sent from Victoria on May 4, 1865.

Fig. 9 (next page) illustrates a second cover from Victoria that was mailed the same time and routed the same way as the previous cover. It is docketed "For R.W. Fawcett" at the left. It bears the same postmarks as the cover shown in Fig. 8.

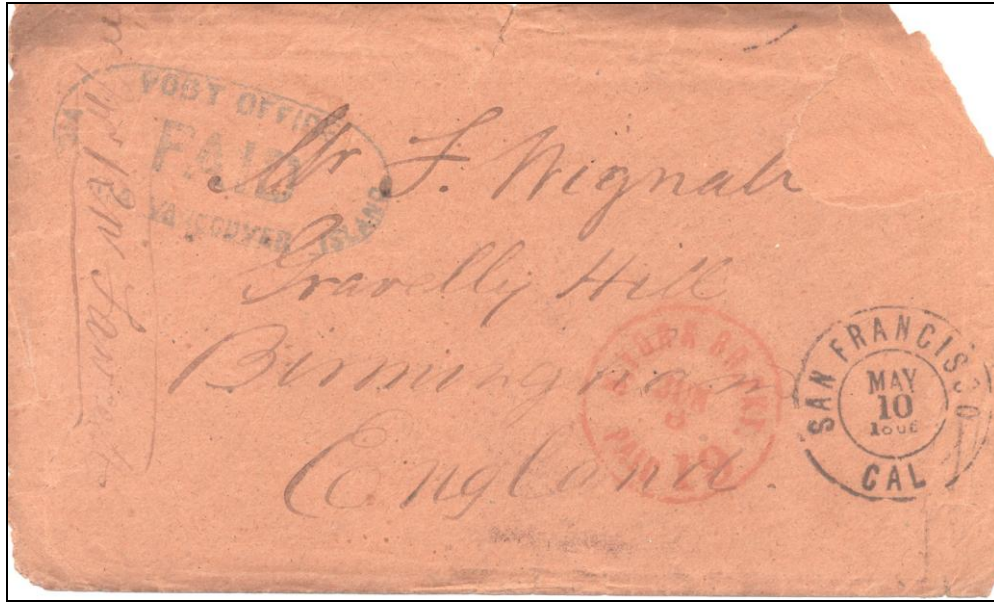


Figure 9. Another cover sent from Victoria on May 4, 1865.

The last cover from Victoria (shown in Fig. 10, next page) is addressed to Mr. F. Wignall, 3 Wellington Terrace, Gravelly Hill, Birmingham and endorsed at the left "For R.W. Fawcett". [Rowland's mother's maiden name was Wignall.]. It was posted in Victoria on May 25, 1865, and was taken to San Francisco in the *Sierra Nevada*, arriving on May 30th. The date it arrived in New York is not clear; it reached Birmingham on July 16th. Perhaps it was carried in the North German Lloyd ship *Bremen*, which departed from New York on July 1st and reached Southampton July 12th.



Figure 10. Cover from a letter sent from Victoria to Birmingham on May 25, 1865.

The times taken from Victoria to San Francisco by these six letters were seven, four, seven, six, six and five days, respectively. This West Coast leg of their trip was shorter than either their trip from San Francisco to New York or their crossing of the Atlantic Ocean.

It is notable that all of the Fawcett letters were carried to San Francisco by steamship. Mail could also go from Victoria by coastal steamer to Washington Territory and then by coaches to San Francisco. None of my Fawcett correspondence took this overland route from Washington Territory to California, probably because of the reliability and regularity of the steamship route. The routine Victoria overnight reply pattern became a useful habit. Deaville (pp. 72–73) notes that the Pacific Coast overland route via Port Townsend and Portland was not deemed satisfactory.

Registered Mail from Rowland

Rowland registered at least three of his letters to his father. See the registration receipts in Fig. 9 below.



[Legend on p. 17.]

Figure 11. Rowland's receipts for registered letters sent from Birmingham to his father in Victoria, Vancouver Island on March 10, 1865, March 23, 1865 and May 1, 1865.

These receipts were dated on March 10, 1865, March 23, 1865, and May 1, 1865. Unfortunately, the corresponding covers and letters are not available. The May 5, 1895 letter written in Victoria by Thomas Fawcett says that he had received a registered letter from Rowland on May 4th.

Social History of the Fawcetts

The members of the Fawcett family were pioneers in Victoria. Information about them is available from a number of sources—some not available to Robin Clarke when he wrote about them⁴⁻⁶. The introduction of the book *Some Reminiscences of Old Victoria*¹⁰ by Edgar Fawcett contains some family history. An article by J.K. Nesbitt in the *Victoria Daily Colonist* issue of June 20, 1948¹¹ presents many details about the Fawcetts. Fawcett family personal papers are listed on the web site of the B.C. Archives; these include Thomas's diary of a trip to England in 1864. I believe this should be Rowland's, not Thomas's, diary.

Thomas Lea Fawcett (1815–1890) married Emma Louisa Clayton (1815–1864) on October 7, 1839 in Birmingham, England. They emigrated to Sydney, Australia, where Thomas became an upholsterer. Children Rowland (1840–1912), Louise (1842–1847), Edgar (1847–1923) and Amy (1849–1855) were born in Australia. Louise died in Australia. The family travelled to San Francisco, California in the ship *Victoria* in 1849. Arthur (1852–1938) and Thomas Francis (Frank; ca. 1852–1888) were born in San Francisco; Amy passed away there. Thomas purchased the *Victoria* and sent her to Vancouver Island for a load of lumber for England. The Fawcetts planned to go back to England in her, according to Edgar. However, the

ship never returned to San Francisco; she was wrecked on the west coast of Vancouver Island. In ruin, Thomas went north to Victoria in 1858, and the rest of the family followed in February 1859. In Victoria, he became a cabinetmaker and upholsterer.

Thomas's wife Jane died in January 1864. Thomas was left with four sons. Rowland took his two youngest brothers (Arthur and Frank) to the home of his aunt and uncle in England. Rowland lived in England for about a year. [Thomas was in Victoria on October 19, 1864 when he wrote Rowland my earliest letter.] The April 6, 1865 letter by Thomas to Rowland says that "the opportunity of learning or seeing else where decided me at last in sending you with the boys." One of my letters says that Rowland left Victoria on September 16, 1864. I conclude that was when Rowland took Arthur and Frank to England.

Arthur lived the rest of his life in Liverpool, England. Frank, the youngest son, also lived for some time in Liverpool but returned to B.C. and died in Kamloops, B.C. in January 1888. I do not know exactly when Rowland returned to Victoria. Records show that he married his cousin Emma Louisa Clayton in England on October 7, 1865. The couple probably came to Victoria soon after the wedding. They spent the rest of their lives in Victoria. Emma died September 12, 1900 at age 56. Rowland died March 30, 1912.

All of my letters were written to Rowland. As described above, the stamps had been removed from all of the envelopes from Victoria. Probably Rowland was a collector. Paul Parizeau¹² noted that Thomas Fawcett and Sir Rowland Hill were first cousins, "and it was on the advice of Sir Rowland that the senior Fawcett took his young bride to Australia... Thomas's eldest son was christened Rowland in honour of his illustrious relative."

I have found further history of the Fawcett family and of Victoria in the content of my letters sent to Rowland in England. I have transcribed them below in chronological order and excerpted form.

Father (Thomas) wrote the earliest letter to Rowland, on October 19, 1864.

Dear Rowland,

I have enclosed the second of ex for £5 on the Bank of England. The H B C^o have advertized the sale by auction of the remainder of the old Fort lots on the 30 Nov. and also the Spring Ridge lots which are not paid for. Dr. Sage is to let me know tomorrow what is the amount due on yours. I have written to your Uncle Edwin. I told him I shall by the next mail forward him a large order and for some drawing room furniture for Mr. W.J. Macdonald [*William John Macdonald (1832–1916) was mayor of Victoria in 1866, 1867 and 1871 and was appointed to the Senate of Canada in 1871.*]. I shall give full directions about everything & I hope you will select a good ship to send them by.

If you have an opportunity, let your Aunt Emma know that I have the letter of 16 July, more than 3 months coming I believe to the Indian troubles on the plains.

Thomas also sent welcome messages to both of the boys (Arthur and Frank).

The letter to Rowland written on January 9, 1865 is signed Toni. It acknowledges a letter received the day before. The content is only neighbourhood news.

There are two letters to Rowland from Victoria dated February 19, 1865 — one from his father and one from his brother Edgar. Thomas writes:

Dear Rowland,

I have just got your letter with one from your Aunt Emma dated 27 & 29 Dec^r. The steamer has been 3 days over due having been detained on the Columbia by a terrible gale. It is now near 6 o'clock p.m. and I have

just had time to read the letters. Edgar is getting the tea ready, a very unusual thing on a Sunday for we are always out but I cannot go out this evening on account of the mail... Another steamer leaves S. F. today or tomorrow and comes direct and will be here in about 4 days then I will send another draft. You say you wish me to send for you by telegraph when I want you to return. So long as you can benefit by staying in England by improving your mind and learning to understand the historic wealth, power & greatness of that great country your time will be well be shared [?]. But if you are to do nothing but spend your money on pleasure & frivolity the sooner you return the better. I trust you will learn enough of the importance and value of money to make up your mind to do your utmost, when you do return, to work smart and save all you can for a for a future day... one year spent in the comfort & enjoyment of England is worth a lifetime spent in a colony.

Poor Mr. Cridge has just lost 4 of the children: one by whooping cough and three by scarlatina. You can tell Arthur that Richard and Mary are the only two living, and they were given up by the doctors. They are now fast recovering. [*Rev. Edward Cridge (1817–1913) was an early missionary to Victoria. He was ousted from the Anglican cathedral and formed a rival congregation. The Fawcett family attended Cridge's church.*]

There has just been an election of the city. DeCosmos & McClure are elected. [*Amor De Cosmos and Leonard McClure were elected to the Vancouver Island House of Assembly in a by-election in February 1865.*]

Edgar's February 19th letter is shorter. He also comments on the mail ship being delayed. He sent greetings to Arthur and Frank, and also tells of Mr. Cridge losing 4 children. He said "I send you eight papers by this mail." The paper of Edgar's letter was trimmed, presumably so it could fit in one envelope with his father's letter.

Thomas wrote this message at 10p.m. on February 22, 1865.

Dear Rowland,

I have this moment received a letter from your Uncle Frank, dated Dec^r 9 the same date as the same date as the first received of yours which came to hand this day month. It is a mystery where these letters were detoured unless it was started overland and ret^d to New York in consequence of the Indian disturbances which have been so serious as to cause the telegraph to be destroyed for many miles.

I wrote you 2 days ago and sent the first cheq for £9.5.3. I now send the second and the first for £20. This will be the last for some time to come.

I wish you to pay out of this £10 to your Aunt Hopkins and ask her to give her husband on my account the balance due him as pr a/c sent me but which I have not at this moment at hand. It is between £8 and £9 and tell her I wish her to take the balance to replace the money stolen at the post office which I sent to pay freight of box.

You ask recollect the order for gilt mountings [?] I sent some months since, that appear to have been destroyed when they stole the money. If you have an opportunity I should like you to select a similar quantity: say 3in 2½ 2in 1½in & 1in 200 or 300 feet of each size, and with these cents be shipped and kind of good you thought would sell, that your uncle could send. Your uncle tells me that there was [?] some trouble about shipping the furniture... do nothing on the furniture and I am glad to know this as I was about to apply to the government for furnishing the Governor's new house which is to be built.

In my next I will send a memorandum of the sums I have remitted to you. Business so very dull and money very scarce.

The next letter was written March 10, 1865 by Thomas. I only have a photocopy, made by Robin, of this letter. Its cover is discussed in the Addendum.

Dear Rowland,

This morning I rec'd your letters dated Ber^m Jan. 6 and Kid^r [*Kidderminster*] Jan. 13th... I was afraid from your uncle's last letter that there would be some difficulty about the furniture, but am glad to find it all right. The House of Assembly has passed a bill for a new Gov^t House to cost \$50000 and I shall make application to supply the furniture... Should I get the Gov^t order it may be necessary to see after it being made myself and in that case I must go to England... Trade has been so bad that I fear I have not made my rent this year and people are leaving for Mexico and other places... Edgar causes me great annoyance. He will not do the smallest thing without a groan. I tell him that I cannot stand it much longer but will send him away somewhere... You might enquire of one of your uncles if they could do any thing with him and I would send him there to learn better manners. He must be placed with some one who will be very strict with him.

Three letters were sent to Rowland in the steamship that left Victoria on April 6, 1865. Thomas wrote two of them and Edgar wrote the other. I assume Thomas's longer letter (four pages) was written first. It has no date but was filed with the cover dated April 10th at San Francisco (Fig. 7). The letter starts without a salutation or date.

There will be no steamer for a fortnight. We are to have but 2 a month instead of 3. The reason is that all the traffic is going by way of Oregon to Kootenay, the new mines in B. Columbia situate near the boundary line, and can be reached easier from Portland. So we lose all the traffic

and have the county [*sic*] cleared out of gold without deriving any benefit from it. The New Westminster people have just put on an export tax of 50¢ an ounce of gold, but large sums will find their way out of the country without paying it.

Edgar is gone to Trounce, he promised Mrs. T to go over when the mail arrives, with the news. Why does not Arthur write to me? I asked his aunt to see that he does this. I was much pleased to see your description of the visits you pay and your impressions of the persons visited... As I told you in one of my former letters, you now have an opportunity of informing your mind and improving yourself which will never occur again, and I trust that you will strive to benefit by it. One of the good lessons I wish you to learn is the value of money and how very much may be done, and how much good acquired through it. To give you the opportunity of learning, and seeing for yourself what you could never have the opportunity of learning or seeing else where decided me at last in sending you with the boys. The benefits to yourself of this arrangement ought to be felt through the whole of your after life... There is no necessity of your hurrying home...

Thomas's second, shorter letter is dated April 5, 1865.

Dear Rowland,

I have just rec^d a very short note from you dated Feb. 1 enclosed with one to Edgar & 2 to John Pidwell...

I trust you are making the most of your time in England and not giving up your self control to pleasure. You have now a golden opportunity for improvement and acquiring valuable information which can never occur again...

Things are very bad with us: the Colony has never looked so gloomy...houses to let on every street and property down to about half its former value...

Edgar's three-page letter, dated April 5th/65, presents news of his recent activities and those of their friends.

Two letters to Rowland were carried in the steamship that left Victoria on May 5, 1865. Thomas Fawcett wrote:

Dear Rowland,

The Oregon arrived yesterday noon and brought a letter (very long one) from your Aunt Emma and at 9 o'clock last night I learned that a registered letter from you was posted up at the post office. [*cf. its registration receipt in Figure 9, the top image*]. I have had it just over minutes. Bill of lading and invoice from Gross [?] for Cyclone. You acknowledge the receipt of £20 which you say was dated 29 Nov. I sent no such draft on that date but I sent £25 – on 23rd Nov. and £20 on 21 Dec'...

The colony is in a deplorable state of depression which will last 6 months longer. [*He then discusses the details of his house insurance.*] ... It is generally expected that there will be a very large trade doing here next year and that every thing will be prosperous.

The other letter was from Rowland's friend C.J. Pidwell. It was started on April 29th and completed on May 3rd. It is a reply to Rowland's letter of February 1st. Most of the letter is local news. These three sentences stand out: "It appears to be the general expectation that you will bring a wife out with you.", "The people here are very much shocked at the manner of Lincoln's death; ever since the news came nearly every one has sympathized with the North." and "The telegraph line is completed to New Westminster, so we will have eastern news nearly every day."

Edgar wrote a letter to Rowland on May 15, 1865.

Dear Row^{ld}

This morning father was in receipt of Letter No 4 dated March & we are astonished at your saying you have not rec^d certain letters from

us. I do not think we have missed 4 steamers since you left & are particular always about paying full postage on papers I send nearly every steamer... It seems to me Frank's health is not so good as could be wished. Now if Arth could only lend him some of his. I am sure he could spare it. How glad I am always when the steamers come in, how I bolt to the Post Office with expectation big. People are continually wanting to know when you are coming back. All I can say is "I can't say, he has not told us yet"... Send us your, Arth, Frank's portrait. I sent you one of me for cousin Nelly...

There are two letters sent to Rowland on May 25, 1865: one from Edgar (in the cover shown in Figure 10) and one from John Pidwell. Edgar's letter carries the news that Rowland will bring a wife with him when he returns to Victoria. Here is Edgar's's letter:

Victoria May 25th 1865

(at the store)

Dear Rowland,

This morning we received your letters dated March 23rd and 28th. I can't read it, but which it is & one from Uncle Frank dated 28th Mar., about Jefferies business &c... I am glad to hear Arthur & Frank are well & hope Frank will steal some of Arthur's fat for he can well spare it. Give my love to both of them... I nearly jumped out of my boots when I saw your likeness... What glorious news about your bringing a helpmate with you, pick a pretty one, but I'll trust you for that. Tell us her Christian name. That will be enough until I see her. Bully for you, as the yankees say, best strike you ever made. Father is too busy to write this mail but he desires me to say he will send \$1000 next mail. He is well, in fact all of us. I write nearly every steamer if father don't every & the same with papers... I shall be at Esquimalt waiting to receive you when you do come...

John Pidwell's letter is very short. He acknowledges Rowland's letter of March 25th, and says that Edgar will give you all the news of the Birthday celebration the previous day. Then he summarizes his many activities on the holiday.

My final letter from Victoria to Rowland was written by Edgar on June 15, 1865. It must have been addressed to Birmingham because it was enclosed in an envelope mailed at Birmingham on July 20th addressed to Mr. R.W. Fawcett, care of Mr. Clayton, Wrockwardine, Wellington, Salop [*i.e.*, *Shropshire*] along with a note saying the enclosed and a remittance of £200 came last night.

The letter says:

Victoria, June 15th/65

Dear Brother,

I am almost mad this evening, this being the 2nd steamer since you wrote or we rec^d anything from you. Father rec^d one last steamer. I think it was from Aunt Clayton, but not a word did I hear of what was in it. As a general thing, Father reads or lets me read all your letters & sometimes Aunt's. I did not know what to make of it, he did not seem very pleased of it. I could see that much. A couple of days ago I saw one of his letters laying on the desk; as he was out my curiosity led me to read it. It was to Aunt Clayton (Aunt Mary) about your engaging your self to one of her daughters. Then it was that I unravelled the mystery & when Alex Mc asked him when you were coming out & weather you were married, he said, you would not very likely be so for 2 years & then you would have to work like the devil & attend to your business & not think all your time of pleasure. Now as to your marrying one of your cousins I think you in every way their equal & Father writes, he is astonished at your presuming to do such a thing. All Fudge. I suppose they are looking for some rich old cocks for their

husbands the girl herself I should not think was satisfied as all that. My advice is if you cannot get her for 2 years, come back right off. Put in your best licks here & gain all you have spent & think you have been long enough; 9 months tomorrow but of course you will do as your think proper... I suppose you have heard that Father has taken 2 lots on lease for you right opposite our house at \$4.50 per month (on the Church reserve). You had better come as soon as possible. Send the portrait of your intended & give her an extra kiss for me... Don't let Aunt see this letter.

So believe me ever, your affec't Brother Edgar.

The letters sent to Rowland reflect the difficulties this pioneer family had after the death of Thomas's wife Emma. Thomas's letters often stress the opportunities Rowland had in England that he would not have had in Victoria. Over the years, the Fawcett family took an active pioneer role in Victoria. The group of letters sent to Rowland demonstrate the delays of carrying out a correspondence between Vancouver Island and Great Britain.

The Fawcett correspondence appears to be the largest surviving multi-letter/multi-cover correspondence of Colonial Vancouver Island mail to Great Britain. Steven Walske took a census entitled *British Columbia and Vancouver Island Mixed Frankings via San Francisco 1858–1869* in 2002 [*privately distributed*]. This census showed 8 covers to Great Britain with postage paid using United States adhesives at the 29¢ rate. My 1882 overpaid cover (paid 30¢ by U.S. stamps; Fig. 2) is listed by Walske as a 9th example of this rate. The Walske census shows 35 1864f covers from Vancouver Island to Britain paid at the 24¢ rate with U.S. stamps.

Addendum:

Tracy Cooper owns a cover from Victoria to Rowland Fawcett in Liverpool. It is accompanied by the letter that Thomas wrote on March 10, 1865. The cover has an untied U.S 24¢ stamp cancelled by a San Francisco killer like that in Fig. 3. The San Francisco date stamp reads March 23, which appears to be an error (not fitting with the dates in Table 1). It reached Liverpool on April 28, 1865.

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