

SYNOPSIS OF EXHIBIT



Ottawa Dead Letter Office Handstamps 1872 to 1898 Decentralization

Special items of interest:

- **Precursor** of later printed DLO Return envelopes with manuscript instructions for un-paid letters, page 1.
- Only reported **double split ring example**, page 6.
- Earliest reported Closed Circle DLO handstamp, page 8.
- Ultra-rare registration stamp application by the DLO with two different registration stamps 2¢ & 5¢ cancelled by the DLO, page 7.
- Rare examples of **Parcel Post ovals**, page 12.
- Earliest reported date of **Superintendent double oval** handstamp, page 13.
- Only reported copy **#3 Circle Shift** handstamp, page 14.
- Only reported copy **boxed Advice** handstamp **3 days prior to decentralization**, page 16, new.

A portion of this exhibit are either Only Reported Copies (ORC) or Earliest Reported Dates (ERD) or Latest Reported Dates (LRD). Many items are extremely rare taking many years to find from major collections or furthest reaches of the internet universe.



Items of special interest are bordered.

Importance:

Without the Dead Letter Office, the postal system would slow to a crawl. The Ottawa office was the beginning till decentralization, and the division is still in operation today as the UMO in Scarborough, Ont. The postal system is designed to work smoothly. However, it is the small percentage of material that fails delivery and requires the expertise of the DLO to allow the rest of the postal system to function.

Treatment and structure:

- The words **'Dead Letter Office/Branch** and/or initials **'D.L.O.'** appear in each handstamp.
- All handstamps are organized by type such as Split Ring, Double Split Ring, Closed Circle, Double Oval Parcel Post, Superintendent Double Oval, Circle & Diamond Shift, and Boxed Advice h/s. They do not follow a chronological order, however, are shown as per listing types in recognized DLO catalogue and updates.
- Further organization are by dimensions smallest to largest, and any other notable differences such as periods, commas, crosses seriffed or sans-serif etc.
- Any additional pertinent data is then disseminated and presented accordingly.
- Although most are scarce to very rare items as in one of a kind, those in colour frames are noted for specific reasons as compared to the material overall. Gateway markings mentioned in the exhibit are used by various post offices, not the DLO. Windowed items in the physical exhibit are notated.

History and general information:

- Canadian DLO handstamps includes a variety of postal matter both domestic and foreign, printed matter, first class, registered, insufficient postage, unpaid, fraudulently used postage stamps on cover, unclaimed.
- Each cover tells a lengthy story (5 to 10 handstamps or more) sometimes being held for a period of over several months or years as per regulations of the Post Office and Dead Letter Office.
- Due to limited space, details on each item are kept at a minimum, concentrating on the handstamps.
- The function of the DLO is to receive these letters and apply a receiving handstamp owing to failure of delivery, for any reason, under regulations that cannot be forwarded to destination.
- Items are then examined and opened to try to find the sender's name and address, or to receive and affix proper postage, including from the addressee, then forward to addressee's proper address.

General DLO Study and Research:

- **35+ years** of collecting Dead Letter Office handstamps, original research, discovery of new handstamps and detailed examination has un-earthed many new item specifics.
- **Recognized authority** for adding new finds and critique to the catalogue listings, including research and material in the latest edition of the Webb's Canada Postal Stationery Catalogue on Dead Letter Office Return covers. Editor of the Dead Letter Office Newsletter and author of **75+ articles** initiated in the Nova Scotia Post Newsletter by the NS Stamp Club with additional publication in CPSofGB Maple Leaves.
- **Only Reported Copies** are assumed based on reports made, subject to change.
- Characteristics surface from different dimensions and date formats of these handstamps including proofs.
- Many items are poorly handstamped having been handled many times or having been "damaged in the mails". This may also be a result of many handstamps on one item making interpretations difficult. Magnification of handstamp measurements were used many times to confirm dimensions.

Previous Awards:

This specialized exhibit is **totally revamped** from the **2008 Best in Show single frame exhibit ROYAL2008, Quebec.**

It has recently received a **Large Gold** at the Calgary National 2022, Large Gold at the Royal 2021 Royale Virtual show 92 points (3rd highest out of 50 exhibits). Also awarded the APS Postal History Medal.

All previous DLO exhibits single and multi-frame since 2008 have obtained Gold medals and higher awards.

Exhibit Plan:

See title page.

Items not shown:

There are several proofs that have yet to be found in the real world and may never exist.

Bibliography

The Dead Letter Office in Canada 1830 - 2002 July 2006 Brian C. Plain

The Dead Letter Office 1874 – 1954 BNAPS exhibit handbook Gary W. Steele

BNAPS Dead Letter Office Study Group Newsletter - Editor of the newsletter
<http://bnatopics.org/hhlibrary/newsletters/n-dlo.htm>

75+ articles of a continuing series Nova Scotia Post and Mail newsletter (some are yet to be posted), online www.nsstampclub.ca

Proof strikes are from the Proof Strikes of Canada Volume XXIII by Robert A. Lee

A New Era of the DLO:

On July 1st, 1898, the Ottawa Dead Letter Office decentralized into several different cities allowing for a more efficient operation. It took several months for new city type handstamps to appear for each of these offices. Although some handstamps were re-purposed many were never used again by the Ottawa DLO.