



OTTAWA DEAD LETTER OFFICE HANDSTAMPS 1872 to 1898 Decentralization

Purpose:

The exhibit shows the evolution of **Ottawa Dead Letter Office (DLO) handstamps** from 1872 up to the July 1, 1898, Decentralization into additional branches thru Canada.

Treatment & Structure

The use of Dead Letter Office handstamps was only by the Ottawa Office / Branch prior to decentralization in 1898.

Items are usually listed by type per catalogue order of listings, dimensions, lettering including periods, commas, and dashes. This will result in a general chronological order, but not for every item as the ranges overlap. The listing for each item includes the lettering of the handstamp and indicia, major and subtype of handstamp, dimensions, important variations as compared to similar handstamps, if a proof strike was taken and importance such as Previously Unknown, Only Reported Copy (**ORC**) or Earliest (**ERD**) and Latest (**LRD**) reported dates of use. Throughout the exhibit are numerous previously unknown, unreported, earliest, and latest reported dates discovered by the exhibitor.

Background:

The Dead Letter Office received and treated mail matter that could not be forwarded to its destination. This included mail addressed for delivery in Canada, mail posted outside of Canada and addressed for delivery in Canada, and Canadian mail originally addressed to foreign countries then returned because it bore insufficient forwarding information.

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.

Plan:

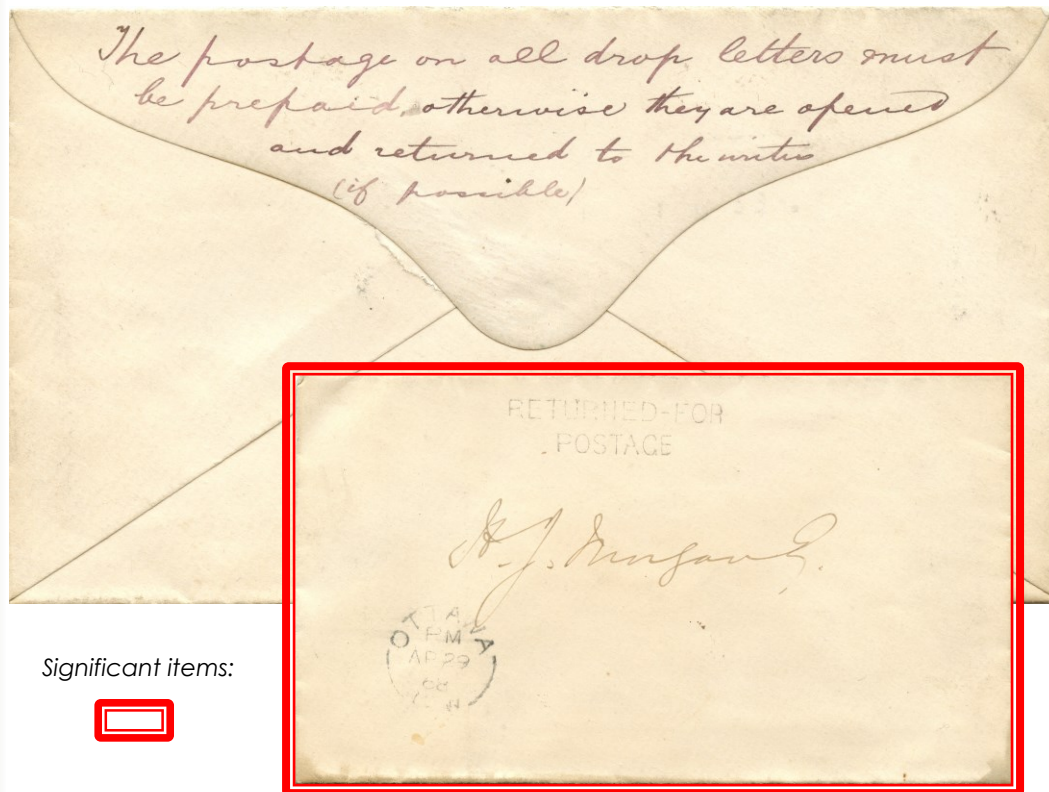
- 1 - Title page
- 2 - Split Circle Handstamp
- 6- Double Split Circle Handstamp
- 7 - Closed Circle Handstamp
- 10 - Closed Circle **RECD**
1 to 6 Number Type Handstamp
- 12 - Double Oval Handstamp
- 13 - Superintendent Double Oval Handstamp
- 14 - Circle & Diamond Shift Handstamp
- 16 - Boxed Advice Handstamp

1868 Precursor >>

With Confederation in 1867, a new Post Office Department was created but Dead Letter Office handstamps were not produced until the early 1870's.

At right is an only known 1868 precursor of later printed Dead Letter Return envelopes with manuscript instructions for un-paid letters.

April 29, 1868, un-paid letter **RETURNED-FOR / POSTAGE** examined for name and address to return to sender.



Significant items:

