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# BNA Topics



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Number 1



Review of the new Harrison-Arfken-Lussey book,  
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# BNA Topics



The Official Journal of the British North America Philatelic Society Ltd

Volume 60 Number 1 Whole Number 494

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The image on the front cover shows a March 1904 registered double printed matter envelope from the editor's collection, mailed to Denmark (a very unusual rate, to an unusual destination in this period), confluent with the review in this issue of the Harrison-Arfken-Lussey registration book. The postage paid is 5¢ registration plus double the 1¢ UPU printed matter rate. It went from Olds (Alberta Territory) to Montreal via Calgary & Edmonton RPO, then to London, and finally Horsens (backstamp).

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Editor David Handelman, Mathematics Dept, University of Ottawa,  
Ottawa ON K1N 6N5; e-mail: dehsg@uottawa.ca

Advertising manager Hank Narbonne, 216 Mailey Dr, Carleton Place ON K2C 3X9  
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... continued on last page ...

# Editorial: Dreaming in colour

**T**HE French expression *rêver en couleur* (literally, "to dream in colour") refers to an ultimate wish list, which you don't really expect to attain. Here however, it refers to the possibility of printing *Topics* in colour.

One obvious advantage would be that details in the illustrations become easier to distinguish. Dark red on dark green comes out as dark grey on dark grey when it is printed in grey scale, unless some calisthenics are performed on the files. The use of colour would also liven up the appearance. In some cases (such as a discussion shades of stamps) colour printing could be very important in making the material understandable.

However, there is a price to pay for this. The obvious one is monetary—it costs about double to print the whole issue in colour (of course, the text remains black—it is just the illustrations that would be in colour). Less obvious is that a different and more expensive paper has to be used. Still less obvious but more important is that the Editor's current computer set-up would be inadequate and would have to be upgraded.

Colour images require typically about three times the memory of grey scale. The last few issues of *Topics*, when saved as PostScript files, weighed in at 125–175 mb each, over 99% of which was attributable to the illustrations. Full colour would require 500mb, easy enough for current computer equipment, but a great problem for my seven-year old computer. On top of that, my similarly-aged scanner is very slow, and scanning colour would require triple the time. There would be no way to print draughts of the illustrations with my ancient black and white laser printer (even grey scale prints glacially). Finally, I have no experience with colour in the typesetting software, and the latter might require an upgrade.

There are other problems as well—colour images that are poor in black and white (such as some colour xeroxes) are going to look even worse in colour, and so some standards would have to be imposed on the material I receive for publication. (Of course, we cannot obtain "true" colours in any event.) The capacity of my e-mail accounts would have to be increased, in order to accommodate the larger file sizes, an additional expense.

To address at least the obvious expense, printing costs, a compromise is to use colour only on one signature (16 pages, necessarily in the middle, pp 33–48). This is being investigated in cooperation with the printers. Arranging that the "colour" material appear in a certain page range is a nuisance, but not difficult. In any event, I will keep members posted, and I hope that you will send me comments (pro, con, or neutral) on this exciting possibility.

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# Magdalen Islands postal history II: Post offices

Jean Walton & Lola Caron

FOR the Canadian postal historian, the Magdalen Islands provide an intriguing area of study. For so small an area (78 square miles, or 202 square kilometers) stretched across some 60 miles (96km) in the middle of the Gulf of St Lawrence, the Islands have had a rich and interesting postal history. In the past 150 years, there have been 42 different post office place names in the Magdalens, representing 31 distinct offices. The remaining 11 are name changes within a single post office. Putting together a collection of all of these presents a challenge which can take years to complete.

## Post Offices

Only ten of these remain in operation today; they are indicated by the postal code in parentheses.

Amherst Island	Gros Cap
Arseneault	Havre-Aubert (GOB 110)
Aurigny	Havre-aux-Maisons (GOB 1KO)
Bassin (GOB 1AO)	House Harbour
Blaquière	La Cyr
Boisville	L'Anse-à-la-Cabane
Bryon	Lapeyrère
Bryon Island	La Vernière
Cap-aux-Meules (GOB 1BO)	Le Martinet
Chemin-des-Buttes	Lemieux
Dune-du-Sud	Le Pré
Entry Island (GOB 1CO)	Les Caps
Étang-des-Caps (GOB 1EO)	Leslie (GOB 1MO)
Étang du Nord	Magdalen Islands
Fatima (GOB 1GO)	Millerand
Fauriel	Old Harry
Grande Entrée (GOB 1HO)	Pointe-au(x)-Loup(s) (GOB 1PO)
Grand Entry	Pointe Basse
Grand Ruisseau	Portage du Cap
Grindstone Island	Solomon

As with many areas in Quebec, post office names have changed with the changing nature of the population, and with the language directives of the province. This is particularly true in the Magdalens, where a much larger Anglophone population had existed previously. Both English and French

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Keywords & phrases: Magdalen Islands, postmarks

surnames were common in Havre-Aubert, Cap-aux-Meules, Étang du Nord, and Havre-aux-Maisons. The two populations existed amicably side-by side. Today the population is about 14,000. Of this number, approximately 800 (about 6%) claim English as their mother tongue. The Anglophone population is now centred largely around Leslie in the municipality of Grosse Île, and on Entry Island.

Of the 31 separate post offices, 23 have had only one name, but eight have gone through (in some cases) a procession of names. The asterisks (\*) indicate a direct translation from English to French. (This does not include *Pointe-au-Loup*, which apparently by accident has used *Pointe-aux-Loups* and the ungrammatical *Pointe-aux-Loup*.)

- Magdalen Islands ↪ Amherst Island ↪ Havre-Aubert
- Solomon ↪ Bassin
- Bryon ↪ Fauriel ↪ Lemieux ↪ Leslie
- Grindstone Island ↪ Cap-aux-Meules\*
- South Beach ↪ Dune-du-Sud\*
- Lapeyrère ↪ Fatima
- Grand Entry ↪ Grande-Entrée\*
- House Harbour ↪ Havre-aux-Maisons\*

These eight offices account for 19 different post office names in the Magdalen Islands. The map in Figure 1 shows a basic overview of the Islands, with the main islands identified. We will indicate post office locations on maps appearing later in the article. The location of the short-lived Blaquièrre (post office open 1913–1918) is unknown, although it is suspected to have been on the Island of Cap-aux-Meules near La Vernière.

For many years, the connecting links between the Islands were tenuous. The long dunes between the islands served as roadways, and despite some sections which were literally below water level, they could be travelled at low tide between the Island of Havre-Aubert (Amherst Island) and Étang du Nord on Cap-aux-Meules Island (Grindstone Island). A drawing showing the crossing from Grindstone Island to Amherst Island appears in Figure 2. The text accompanying the illustration [c] reads as follows.

The ford was marked by twigs fixed in the bottom at rare intervals, and also by land bearings known to the guide. But it was narrow, and great care was necessary to avoid getting into deep water. The water came up repeatedly over the hubs into the bottom of the carts. The poor horses panted with the exertion. The passage was successfully accomplished after we had proceeded a distance of a mile through the water.

To the northeast of Cap-aux-Meules, a small flatbed ferry made this connection for many years before a bridge was built to the Island of Havre-aux-

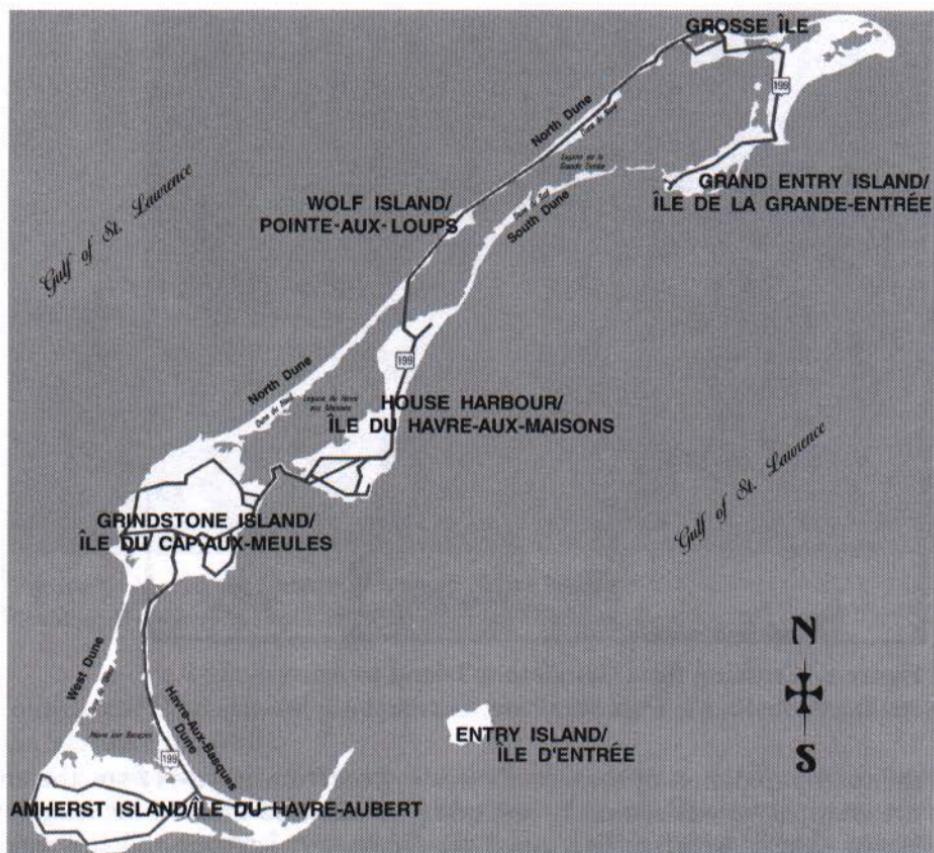


Figure 1. Map of the Magdalen Islands

Maisons. A trip north to Grande Entrée (Grand Entry) was accomplished by travelling the South Dune to its end, then raising a flag to alert local fishing boats nearby that passage was needed across the harbour entrance to Grande Entrée. A small boat called the *Local* provided the surest connection between the towns in the Islands.

In 1928, a covered bridge replaced the ferry between the Islands of Cap-aux-Meules and Havre-aux-Maisons, later replaced by a more modern bridge. However, it was not until 1947 that a bridge was built between the Island of Havre-aux-Maisons (House Harbour) and Pointe-au-Loup on the North Dune, making it possible to travel to Grande Entrée by road, and not until 1956 that the road and bridge between Cap-aux-Meules Island and the Island of Havre-Aubert was completed.

Population growth on the Magdalen Islands was slow. In the 1850s,



Figure 2. Crossing from Grindstone Island to Amerst c 1884  
Crossing the ford by way of the West Dune. This drawing appeared in [c].

the total population of the Islands was 1750. From 1854–1870, the entire archipelago was served by just one post office, located on the island of Havre-Aubert, which at that time was the busiest harbour and the major business center of the Islands. It was called simply "Magdalen Islands" (Figure 5). Even as other post offices opened, this first post office did not change its name.

By the 1870s, the population had expanded to 3200 and four other post offices were opened. With the addition of the offices at Étang du Nord (1870), Grand Entry (1873), Grindstone Island (1875), and House Harbour (1879), each of the major islands now had its own post office. In the 1890s, a number of post offices were added to those already present, so that by 1900, the Islands' 5000 residents were served by 13 post offices, including a summer office on Bryon Island.

The next thirty years brought about a proliferation of post offices, so that by 1930, there were 29—the greatest number open at any one time on the Islands—serving the 8000 residents (one post office for every 265 people). It was not until a major post office reorganization took place in 1968–1969 that seventeen of these post offices were closed, leaving twelve. All



Figure 3. Maritime Central Airways plane 1940s

Boarding passengers and mail on the beach in the Magdalen Islands.

but two of these are still in operation today (Millerand closed in 1985 and La Vernière in 1988).

Air mail service had begun, and the Islands were suddenly less isolated (Figure 3). Ties with family members who had left the Islands were reinforced by year-round mail, and the bonds with the rest of Canada, particularly the Maritimes, were forged.

We will take a geographic approach to the study of the Island post offices, beginning with Havre-Aubert in the south, where the oldest post office was established, and moving north. We will look at each island separately, and try to provide an overview of post office development over time.

Many smaller post offices were located in stores or homes. A change in postmaster would thus mean a change in the location of the post office. Marriage, death, or even a different political party in power would frequently bring about a change of postmasters in what were often one-person offices.

We will show a variety of cancels from some of these post offices. Only those post offices which were in existence in 1939 or later will have a money order office number (MOON), and only the most recent ones (since 1973) will have a POCON. We will show what we have been able to find, and supplement when necessary with cancels from the Proof Strikes of Canada (National Archives of Canada), published by Robert A Lee. The following list

summarizes the dates of opening and closing of the offices on the Magdalens, and in addition determines the order in which we discuss them.

In the following, the symbol  $\mapsto$  denotes a name change. Currently operating post offices are indicated by the postal code (GOB ...).

### **Island of Havre-Aubert**

After the closure of the offices in L'Anse-à-la-Cabane, Aurigny, Solomon, and Millerand, the communities were served by the post office at Bassin. Similarly, the regions covered by the offices at Etang-des-Caps, Portage du Cap, Vigneau, and Le Martinet were covered by the Havre-Aubert post office.

- 1854 Magdalen Islands  $\mapsto$  1899 Amherst Island  $\mapsto$  1907 Havre-Aubert (GOB 110)
- 1886-1932 L'Anse-à-la-Cabane
- 1896-1968 Aurigny  $\mapsto$  Bassin (GOB 1AO)
- 1913-1969 Solomon  $\mapsto$  Bassin (GOB 1AO)
- 1907-1968 Étang-des-Caps
- 1918-1968 Portage du Cap
- 1926-1968 Vigneau
- 1928-1985 Millerand
- 1959-1968 Havre Aubert

### **Entry Island**

- 1896 Entry Island (GOB 1CO)

### **Cap-aux-Meules Island**

After the closure of the post offices at La Vernière, Blaquièrre, Gros-Cap, and Boisville, their territories were covered by the Étang du Nord office. Similarly, the regions covered by Les Caps and Grand Ruisseau were assumed by the office at Fatima.

- 1870 Étang du Nord (GOB 1EO)
- 1875 Grindstone Island  $\mapsto$  1964 Cap-aux-Meules (GOB 1BO)
- 1899-1988 La Vernière
- 1906 Lapeyrère  $\mapsto$  1949 Fatima (GOB 1GO)
- 1913-1918 Blaquièrre
- 1914-1968 Les Caps
- 1926-1947, 1959-1968 Grand Ruisseau
- 1928-1968 Gros-Cap
- 1937-1968 Boisville

### **Island of Havre-aux-Maisons**

After the closure of all but one of the offices by 1969, the remaining office (Havre-aux-Maisons) covered the entire Island.

- 1870 House Harbour  $\mapsto$  1964 Havre-aux-Maisons (GOB 1KO)
- 1894 South Beach  $\mapsto$  1963-1969 Dune-du-Sud
- 1896-1969 Pointe Basse

1912–1932, 1937–1969 Arsenault

1923–1969 Le Pré

1927–1968 Chemin-des-Buttes

### Pointe-aux-Loups

1922– Pointe-aux-Loups (GOB 1PO)

### Gross Île & Grande Entrée

When Old Harry and La Cyr post offices were closed, their communities were covered by the Grande Entrée office.

1873 Grand Entry ↪ 1855 Grande-Entrée (GOB 1HO)

1894 Bryon ↪ 1898 Fauriel ↪ 1903 Lemieux ↪ 1906 Leslie (GOB 1MO)

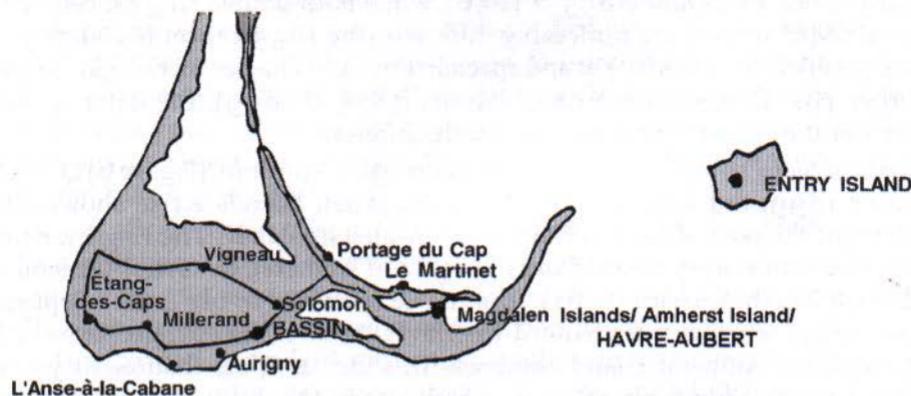
1904–1970 Old Harry

1921–1968 La Cyr

### Bryon Island

1898–1931 Bryon Island (summer only)

### Island of Havre-Aubert



Map of Île du Havre-Aubert/Amherst Island & Entry Island

Showing locations of post offices.

The municipality of Havre-Aubert today encompasses two islands, all of the Island of Havre-Aubert (formerly Amherst Island) & Entry Island, 5 miles (8 km) to the northeast and reachable only by water or air. The Island of Havre-Aubert is divided into two distinct areas, that of Havre-Aubert, and Bassin, the western half of the island, much more rural and with a much more dispersed population. The Island of Havre-Aubert is 9 miles long and 3 miles wide (14.5 km × 5 km). It is attached to the Island of Cap-aux-Meules

to the north by two long dunes and a causeway, enclosing a lagoon called Havre-aux-Basques. The causeway was completed in 1956.

*Magdalen Islands 1854–1899* (Figure 5) The oldest of the Island post offices opened on 1 September 1854, and was called simply *Magdalen Islands*—a name attributed to Champlain from his 1632 map [D].



Figure 5. Magdalen Islands post office (1854–1899)

Two distinct double broken circles in 1855 & 1856 (earlier one courtesy of Jacques Poitras, Québec; the later one appears to be from Frank Campbell), two later post-Confederation typeset dated single broken circles, 1875 & 1899.

Mme Caron mentioned this office in her AQEP article, and illustrated an 1856 cancel which we repeat here, for purposes of comparison. The two early cancels we show (1855 & 1856), while both double ring cancels with date added in pen, are noticeably different (the 1855 cancel is courtesy of Jacques Poitras, a student of and specialist in early Quebec markings). In two other post-Confederation cancellations (1875 & 1899), the dater is now part of the cancel. These too are clearly different.

*Amherst Island 1899–1907 & Havre-Aubert 1907–present* (Figure 6) On 1 October 1899, not long after the latest Magdalen Islands strike shown, the name of the post office was changed to "Amherst Island". The English name for this community comes from Jeffrey, Lord Amherst, Governor General of British North America (1761). That name remained in use until 1 September 1907, when it was changed to "Havre-Aubert", its current name. Although the Amherst Island name was in short use (less than eight years), it is a cancel seen fairly often, as merchants in this busy seaport prepared envelopes with advertising corners and apparently carried on a fair amount of correspondence. I have seen no varieties of the split ring.



Figure 6. Amherst Island & Havre-Aubert

Amherst Island (1901), and two Havre Aubert broken circles (1928 & 1935), circle (courtesy of Danny Handelman), and a 1989 POCON.

Havre-Aubert appears to be a corruption of Harbour Ober, a name found on a 1756 map [D]. The 1928 cancel uses the abbreviation QUE while the 1935 cancellation uses PQ. The money order office number was 0410, the POCON is 181781, while the postal code in GOB 110.

While no longer the "capital" of the Islands, Havre-Aubert is today the second largest community in the Magdalens, and remains a significant centre of commerce.



*L'Anse-à-la-Cabane* 1886–1932. To anyone visiting *L'Anse-à-la-Cabane* today, it might occur to them to wonder that this was the second post office to be established on the Island of Havre-Aubert (1 July 1886). Today, it is a tiny rural community overlooking the sea. It still has a small fishing port. Yet this is one of the oldest fishing villages on the Islands, a place where Basque and Norman fishermen came to hunt walrus and seal. The *Cabane* is said to refer to Micmac lodges that once stood here [D]. *Cabane* means "shack", as in *cabane-à-sucré*, "sugar shack." *Anse* means small shallow bay.

*L'Anse-à-la-Cabane* is located towards the western end of the Island of Havre-Aubert; the village of Havre-Aubert is towards the eastern end, so it makes some sense to have placed a post office here. While the post office existed for 46 years, until 30 June 1932, it is more difficult to find cancels from *L'Anse-à-la-Cabane* than from Amherst Island, a name which existed only eight years. It was closed in 1932 owing to "limited usefulness" [NA] and this area was then served by the Aurigny post office. Today it is covered by the Bassin post office.

*Aurigny* 1896–1968 (Figure 7) The next post office to be added on the Island of Havre-Aubert to serve the growing population, is midway between the eastern and western ends of the island. It opened 15 December 1896. The name is the French version of Alderney, in the English Channel.

Aurigny had a standard split ring cancel made with a metal hammer, and a money order office number of 0036. It closed on 28 October 1968, and this area is currently served by the Bassin post office.



Figure 7. Aurigny & Solomon

Aurigny broken circle (1938?) and MOON (#0036, 1962) and Solomon broken circle (1935) and circle (1956, courtesy of Danny Handelman).

*Solomon 1913–1969* (Figure 7) On 1 June 1913, the post office at Solomon was established close to Aurigny. These two post offices were hardly a mile apart and it must be remembered the the entire island of Havre-Aubert is only eight to nine miles long. It was named for a well-liked doctor on the Islands. It is now too long ago for us to discover just what social or political forces brought about a need for this additional post office so close to the first. However, both post offices existed almost side by side for 65 years, until a major reorganization in the postal service closed both.

*Bassin 1969–present* (Figure 8) When Aurigny and Solomon were closed, they were consolidated into the Bassin post office, which opened 3 November 1969. The money office order number for Solomon (1830) was carried over to the new Bassin post office. The name comes from a large pond (or “basin”) found nearby, on the southern side of the island. The office served the areas of both Aurigny and Solomon, as it does today. The POCON is 188123 and the postal code is GOB 1AO. (Confusion can occur with a Bassin post office in Chicoutimi County, open 1895–1915.)

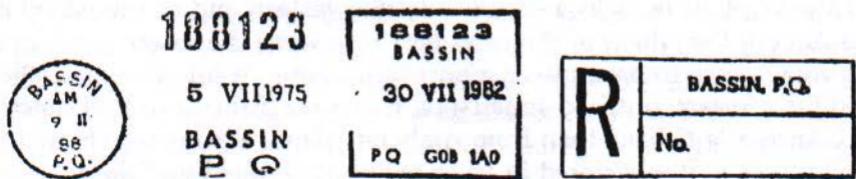


Figure 8. Bassin

Single circle (1988), POCONS (1975 & 1982), and registration box.

*Étang-des-Caps 1907–1968.* This post office opened 1 September 1907. Its name derives from a pond in the northwest corner of the Island of Havre-Aubert (*étang* means “pond”). It was a small fishing village on the west coast of the Island of Havre-Aubert. Like L’Anse-à-la-Cabane, this was a spot used by Basque and Norman fishermen for fishing and walrus hunting in the seventeenth century. Today the walrus are gone, and the collapse of the groundfish industry has left Étang-des-Caps looking to tourism for its well-being.

The post office here existed for 61 years (it closed 17 February 1966, reopened a few weeks later, and closed for good on 3 June 1968). However, we have no example to show, except one taken from the Proof Books [1], published by Robert A Lee. Note that it has a singular DE preceding the plural CAPS and no hyphens. Whether a corrected canceller was ever received remains an open question. National Archives of Canada lists the money order office number as 71450.

Perhaps the very rural nature of the community explains the dearth of cancels. The post office was located in a home and a store. With the reorganization of the post office in 1968, this post office was closed on 3 June. It is now a rural route out of the Havre-Aubert post office.



*Portage du Cap 1918–1968.* This was a post office on the road between Havre-Aubert and the islands to the north, along the Havre-aux-Basques dune, north of the village of Havre-Aubert.

This route north literally involved a portage across the entrance to Havre-aux-Basques before the road to Cap-aux-Meules was completed. This post office opened on 1 October 1918, and closed—alongwith many others—on 23 October 1968. It is currently served by Havre-Aubert.

The cancel we show is a typical steel hammer split ring. The money order office number was 1459.



*Vigneau 1926–1968.* The road which circumnavigates the western side of the Island follows the coastline to the south and west, and then cuts across a height of land now known as La Montagne. This is where the next post office—Vigneau—was opened on 16 August 1926. This area is one of the few wooded areas left on the Islands. Like Portage du Cap, this post office was also closed on 23 October 1968. It is now a rural route of the Havre-Aubert post office.

Again the steel hammer split ring cancel is typical. The money order office number was 15081.

*Millerand 1928–1985* (Figure 9) This little community is just to the northwest of L'Anse-à-la Cabane, on a rise overlooking the sea. Here a post office was opened on 10 July 1928—although the post office at L'Anse-à-la-Cabane remained open until 1932. In its 57 years of existence, the Millerand office was always housed in a store. Millerand's money order office number was 0398, and its POCON was 181722.

Millerand served as the post office for the western end of the Island of Havre-Aubert until 1985, when it closed in December. Its area of service is now covered by the Bassin post office.

*Le Martinet 1959–1968* This office opened 16 February 1959 to serve the area just north of Havre-Aubert. It probably served much like a sub-office of Havre-Aubert, and was housed in a store. It was very close to the Portage du Cap post office, so it is not surprising that it lasted only until the post office reorganization in 1968. It closed 23 October 1968. It is now served by the Havre-Aubert post office. We have no examples from this nine year period, and have found none in the Proof Books.

The Island Of Havre-Aubert has had a total of nine post offices (with a



181722  
14 VIII 1975  
MILLERAND  
P Q

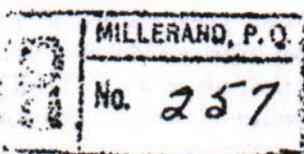


Figure 9. Millerand  
POCONS (1962 & 1975), registration box, duplex (1977), and circle (1985).

total of 12 names). Eight operated concurrently for many years. Today there are two, Havre-Aubert and Bassin.

## Entry Island

Entry Island, separate from the main chain of islands, is only  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles long and a  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile wide (about  $4\text{ km} \times 1\text{ km}$ ). This small and beautiful island is the isolated home to a community of some 150 anglophones of Scottish descent. It boasts the highest point in the Islands, Big Hill, at 556' above sea level (174m). Very few roads mar the landscape of this island even today.

*Entry Island 1896–present* (Figure 10) This office opened 16 June 1896, and still functions today. Despite this long period of use, we have found none of the early cancels, but show a variety of “modern” ones. The oldest is from the Proof Books [L]. Entry Island had a money order office number of 71432. The name is an old one, as *Entrée* appears on a 1744 map, and no doubt was given because it seems to guard the sailing channels to the Islands. Although local maps now often show the island as Île d’Entrée, the post office has always carried the name Entry Island. Its POCON is 189588, and the postal code for Entry Island is GOB 1CO. It is one of the two post offices in the Islands designated for bilingual service.

## Island of Cap-aux-Meules

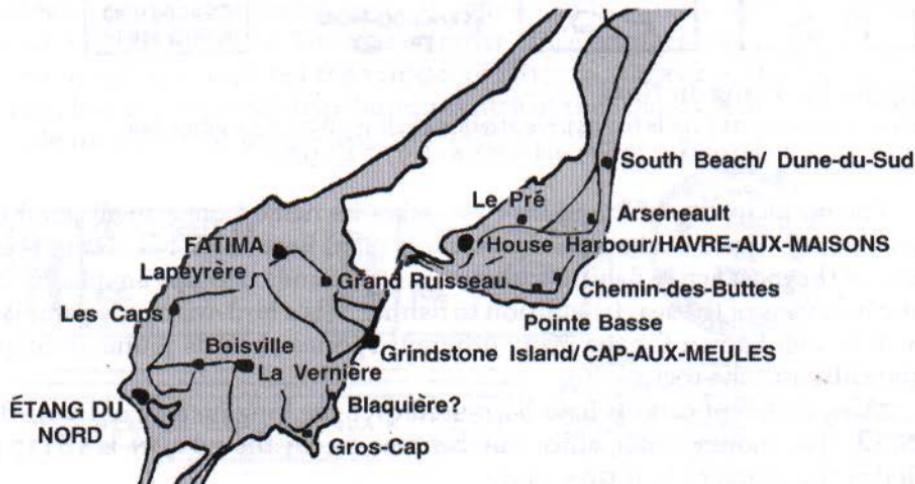
Located north of the Island of Havre-Aubert is the Island of Cap-aux-Meules, formerly Grindstone Island. It appears to have been named for the resemblance of two of its hills to grindstones. The French name is a loose translation of the English, a *meule* being a millstone or grindstone.

The Island of Cap-aux-Meules is about eight miles (13 km) north of Havre-



Figure 10. Entry Island

Circles (proof strike and 1977), registration box, POCONS (1977 &amp; 1989).

Figure 11. Île du Cap-aux-Meules & Île du Havre-aux-Maisons  
Showing locations of post offices.

Aubert, and is 6 miles long by  $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles wide (about 10 km  $\times$  6 km). In the interior is a height of land, almost as high as the Big Hill on Entry Island. Today, there are three municipalities on this island: Étang du Nord in the southwestern corner, Fatima in the northwestern corner, and the town of Cap-aux-Meules on the eastern side, each with a post office. Cap-aux-Meules is currently the "capital" of the Islands and the home of the district post office distribution centre. Several other smaller communities also had post offices in the past.

*Étang du Nord* 1870–present (Figure 12) This first post office on the Island of Cap-aux-Meules (and second over all the Islands) opened 1 July 1870, and remains open. It has operated under just one name, and appears to be written without hyphens, only occasionally with the accent on the first É.

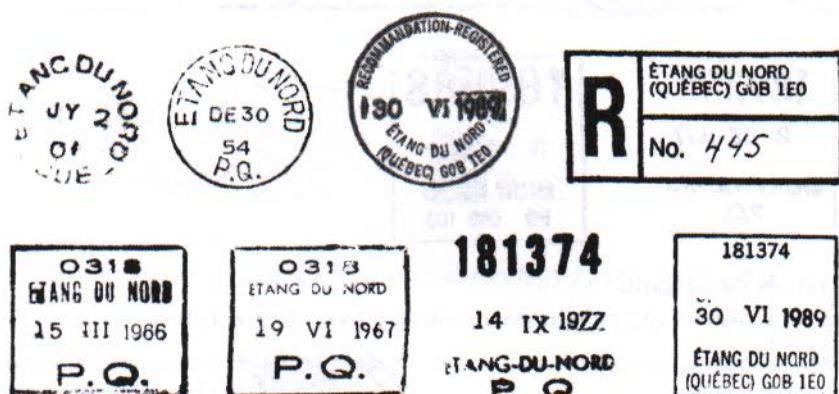


Figure 12. *Étang du Nord*

Broken circle (1901), circle (1954), registration circle (1989), registration box (1989), MOONS (1966 & 1967) and POCONS (1977 & 1989).

The municipality of *Étang Du Nord* takes its name from a small pond in its vicinity. There is a large fish processing plant here and it has always been one of the most active fishing harbours in the Islands. Houses are placed for the best view of the sea. In addition to fishing, it is a bird-watcher's paradise, as it is well known for the many different species of birds found amongst the cliffs and the rocks.

Many different cancels have been used over the long history of *Étang du Nord*. The money order office number was 0318; the POCON is 181374. Today the postal code is GOB 1EO.

*Grindstone Island* 1875–1964 (Figure 13) This was the next post office opened on Cap-aux-Meules Island, on 1 November 1875. It operated under this name until 1 November 1964, when the name changed to Cap-aux-Meules. The harbour here has now become the busiest in the Islands, and this is the centre of both government and shipping on the Islands today. Large ships dock at its piers, and the ferry from Prince Edward Island as well as boats from Montreal debark here. Most second class mail arrives here aboard the CTMA ferries that serve the Islands today. This post office has been central to the Islands for many years, and many different cancels are known. The money order office number was 0395.



Figure 13. Grindstone Island

Broken circles (1878 & 1903), circles (1933 & 1945), duplex (1959), machine (1933, slightly truncated at right), MOON (1963), registration box (1952).

*Cap-aux-meules* 1964–present (Figure 14) The name change to French took place in 1964; neighboring House Harbour was changed to Havre-aux-Maisons (its name in French) that same year. A few examples of Cap-aux-Meules cancels are shown here. It appears to have been spelled both with and without hyphens. The money order office number continued as 0395, and in 1973, it acquired the POCON of 181706. Today's postal code is GOB 1BO, but as the postal distribution centre of the Islands, it also has a postal code used for that purpose of GOB 1ZO.

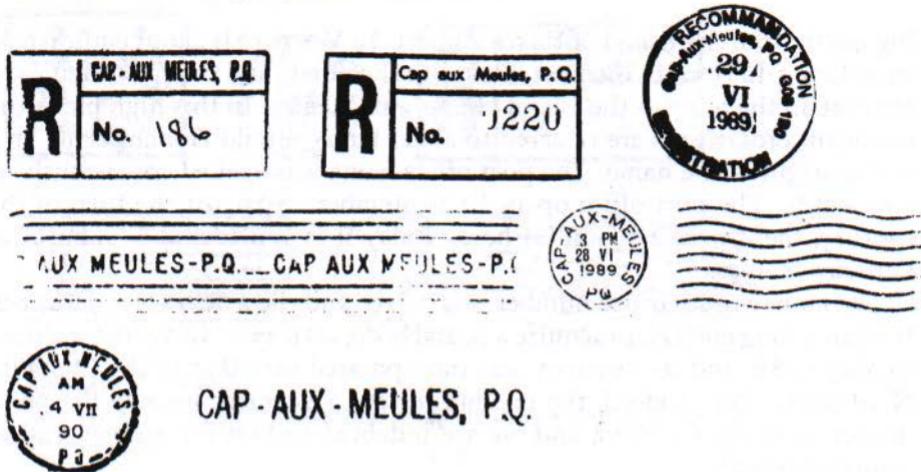


Figure 14. Cap-aux-Meules

Registration boxes (1977 & 1989), registration circle (1989, in red), roller (1989), machine (1989), straightline (1989, in red).

*La Vernière* 1899–1988 (Figure 15) The next post office to open on the Island of Cap-aux-Meules is the first community one arrives at when travel-



Figure 15. La Vernière

Broken circle (1937), MOON (1962), registration boxes (1962 & 1982), roller, circles (1962 & 1977), POCONs (1975 & 1982). The use of M1 (for Magdalen Islands) on the 1982 registration box is curious, since the French version, 1M, had long been in use.

ing north from the Island of Havre-Aubert. La Vernière is about equidistant from Étang du Nord to the west, Fatima to the north, and Cap-aux-Meules to the east, in the heart of the Island of Cap-aux-Meules. In this high plain, the abundant crosswinds are referred to as *Les Vernes*, an old French term. This is the origin of the name. The post office name was spelled consistently as two words. The post office opened 1 September 1899. At the turn of the century, there were 25 families here. Today it is considered a "suburb" of Cap-aux-Meules.

The money order office number was 0610, and the POCON was 182788. It existed long enough to acquire a postal code, GOB 1LO. La Vernière closed in May 1988, and its territory was incorporated into that of the Étang du Nord post office. Indeed, the postmaster at La Vernière became the postmaster at Étang du Nord, and we are indebted to him for a great deal of information [B].

*La Peyrière* 1906–1949 (Figure 16) This town in the Island's northwest corner, was next to be added to the list of post offices on Cap-aux-Meules. The origin of the name is unknown—but families by the name of Lapierre were well-known on the Islands, and perhaps it is taken from this. This area overlooks the lagoon to the north between the North and South dunes.

The post office opened 1 October 1906. Despite the 42 years under this



Figure 16. Lapeyrère (1937)

Only reported strike.

name, we have found only one cancel. The money order office number was 0325. This number was retained by Fatima when the name changed 23 August 1949. The post offices may have been in slightly different locations. *Fatima* 1949–present (Figure 17) The heights of this village are on the aptly-named Butte-du-Vent (Windy Hill). From there, all of the islands are visible, and on a clear day, even Cape Breton in Nova Scotia is visible. The shore has particularly steep cliffs, giving way to the Dune du Nord (North Dune—mentioned above)—a long, flat dune that extends for miles to the northeast. This beach was the site of the first landing strip in the Magdalens. The current POCON is 181382, and the postal code is GOB 1GO.

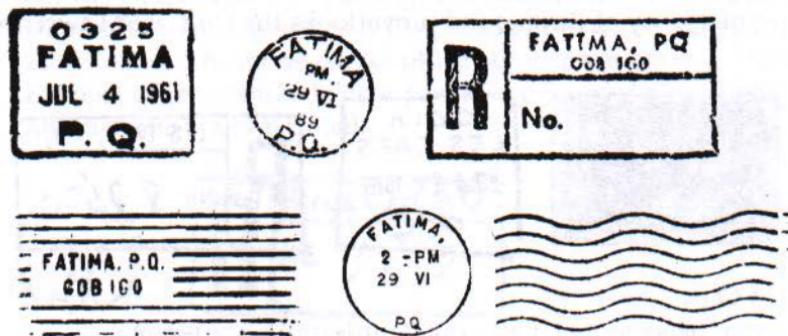


Figure 17. Fatima

MOON (1961), circle (1989), registration box (1989), small roller (1989), and machine (1989).

*Blaquière* 1913–1918. This was the next office to open on the Island of Cap-aux-Meules. This is a mystery, for there is no longer any place by that name in the Islands, and no one we have found can remember a post office by this name. In fact, the only reason we place it on the Island of Cap-aux-Meules is that the only family on the Island today with this surname lives near La Vernière—however

they too have no recollection of it. At one time, the priest at La Vernière was named Blaquière, so our assumption is that the post office was named for him, or for the family.

A "Nixie List" (an internal PO listing of closed offices and re-routings) from 1969 shows Solomon on the Island of Havre-Aubert as the place where mail to Blaquière was to be shipped, but it appears to have been created well after the fact, as this office closed in 1918. There is therefore no particular reason to suspect that information is correct, and all other evidence points to the vicinity of La Vernière. Searches have been done in Ottawa [BE] and in the Magdalen Islands for information about this post office, but so far no definitive answer has been found. The office existed for only five years (1 June 1913–31 May 1918), and we have no cancels, except the one shown here from the Proof Books [L]. We presume that the territory that this post office covered would now be a part of Étang du Nord, as is the case with La Vernière. Any further information would be welcome.

*Les Caps 1914–1968* (Figure 18) On 10 October 1914, Les Caps, (not to be confused with Étang-des-Caps on the Island of Havre-Aubert), between Étang du Nord and Lapeyrère, joined the post office community on the Island of Cap-aux-Meules. Although it was a very short distance from both of these post offices (approximately two miles), Les Caps existed for 54 years. It is within the municipality of Fatima, and it overlooks the Gulf of St Lawrence to the west.



Figure 18. Les Caps

Broken circle (1939, known used to at least 1954), circle (1964, courtesy of Danny Handelman), MOON (1962) and registration box 1962.

A few cancels are illustrated here. The money order office number was 0618. The Les Caps post office was closed on 19 October 1968, when the post office was reorganized. It is currently within the purview of the Fatima post office.



*Grand Ruisseau 1927–1947 & 1959–1968.* This office, situated between Fatima and Cap-aux-Meules, opened 1 December 1926, and was in operation for 21 years, closing 9 December 1947 because of "limited usefulness". However it reopened in

1959—on 1 August—and continued in operation until the post office reorganization. It closed on 18 October 1968. So for about thirty years it served the public, but we have managed to find only one example of its postmarks, a split ring from 1935 with the curiosity that the year (at top) and the dater are inverted in relationship to the place of origin. Perhaps one day we will find one where the postmaster was more careful.

The money order office number for Grand Ruisseau was 15082. This post office was on the northern shore of the Island of Cap-aux-Meules, in the municipality of Fatima. It is currently a part of the Fatima post office.

*Boisville* 1927–1932 & 1937–1968. Again, we have a single cancel from this office, which—like Grand-Ruisseau—opened (1 October 1927), closed (30 September 1932), and then reopened (1 February 1937). Its money order office number was 0112. Like Grand Ruisseau on the other side of the Island, it too met its demise with the post office reorganization in 1968, closing on 19 October 1968. This little community is located about midway between Étang du Nord and La Vernière, and is currently served by the post office at Étang du Nord. The illustrated postmark places the year above the date, with the timemark at the bottom.

*Gros Cap* 1929–1968 (Figure 19) This was the last post office to open on the Island of Cap-aux-Meules, on 3 September 1929. It too operated until 1968 (21 October). The money order office number was 15079. The territory that this post office covered is now part of the Étang du Nord post office. A few cancellations are illustrated.



Figure 19. Gros Cap  
Broken circle (1962) and registration box (1962).

This community sits on the southeastern tip of the Island of Cap-aux-Meules, overlooking the Baie de Plaisance. Besides its scenic attractions, it is home to a lobster processing factory. Lobster and other shellfish harvesting is now a major industry in the islands, especially with the decrease in the groundfish industry and the moratorium on seal hunting.

With this we come to the end of the many little post offices of Cap-aux-Meules Island—nine in total, plus two name changes. Three remain: Fatima,

Étang du Nord, and Cap-aux-Meules. Today, it is the "centre" of the Magdalen Islands.

## Island of Havre-aux-Maison

Just east of the northern tip of Cap-aux-Meules Island is the Island of Havre-aux-Maisons, three miles long and two wide (approximately 5 km × 3 km). The municipality encompasses this island, and the island of Île-aux-Loups, as well as the dunes between. The Island of Havre-aux-Maisons has maintained a more rural nature than Cap-aux-Meules, which has a total population today (including Fatima, Étang du Nord, and Cap-aux-Meules) of around 7500. Havre-aux-Maisons has a population of only about 2000, with another 200 at Pointe-aux-Loups. It is home to the Islands' present airport as well.

The landscape is largely treeless, because of extensive lumbering in the past. Nevertheless, the green heights of land and the beautiful red cliffs all contrast with the blue sea to make this one of the loveliest places on the Islands. To the northeast, South Dune (or Dune-du-Sud) extends towards Grande Entrée at the northern end of the archipelago. From Cap-aux-Meules Island, the parallel North Dune extends from Fatima to Grosse Île, enclosing a lagoon. It is approximately ten miles (16 km) from Havre-aux-Maisons and Cap-aux-Meules to Pointe-aux-Loups.

There are currently two post offices in this municipality: Havre-aux-Maison and Pointe-aux-Loups. As in other parts of the Islands, several others served as well.

*House Harbour 1879–1964* (Figure 20) This was the first post office on this island (once known as Alright Island). It opened 1 July 1879, and operated as House Harbour until 11 January 1964, when its name was changed to Havre-aux-Maison. This post office is still open, under its French name.

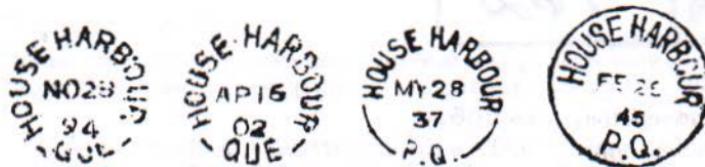


Figure 20. House Harbour

Broken circles (1894, 1902, & 1937) and circle (1945).

Postmarks from House Harbour are not too difficult to find, and we show three different split rings. The differences are very minor in the earliest two. The 1937 cancel has replaced QUE with P.Q. The money order office number for House Harbour was 0428.

*Havre-aux-Maisons* 1964–present (Figure 21) In 1964, this post office took the French version of its name. The same money order office number was used for Havre-aux-Maisons as for House Harbour (0428). Two different MOON cancels are shown below, coincidentally used only two days apart, suggesting that this post office had two MOON cancellers in service at the same time. The letters on the left are taller and unserifed, and the numbers are narrow. On the right, the letters have serifs and the numbers are broader and further apart. Currently the POCON is 181897, and its postal code is GOB 1KO.



Figure 21. *Havre-aux-Maisons*

MOONS (just two days apart in 1972), POCON (1989), circle (1989, also known in 1983), registration box, and roller (1989).

*South Beach* 1894–1963 (Figure 22) This office is on the northeastern edge of the Island of Havre-aux-Maisons, where the South Dune extends to the north. A post office was opened here on 1 October 1894. The money order office number for South Beach was 1804. Some typical cancels are shown.



Figure 22. *South Beach*

Broken circle (1913, known to at least 1934), circle (1962/1963), MOON (1962), and the "original number" registration cancel (1962, truncated at edge of envelope).

The date on the circle is determined from the fact that it was on a stamp issued in 1962, and the fact that the post office name was changed in 1963.

The original number/subsequent numbers registration cancel shown for South Beach, although light and blurred, is illustrated here because it is so unusual for the Islands. This type of cancel is frequently seen for other parts of Canada, but this is the only one of which we are aware from the Magdalen Islands.



*Dune-du-Sud 1963–1969.* On 21 September 1963, the name of the South Beach post office was changed to Dune-du-Sud, and it continued under this name until it closed on 19 July 1969. Hence cancels are somewhat difficult to find, as it only operated under this name for six years. The MOON for Dune-du-Sud was the same as that for South Beach, 1804. This post office was discontinued before the introduction of POCONS. It is currently served by the post office at Havre-aux-Maisons.

*Pointe Basse 1896–1969* (Figure 23) The next office to be opened on the Island of Havre-aux-Maisons was Pointe Bass, on 15 December 1896. This post office was on the southern shore of the Island of Havre-aux-Maisons, a fishing port and a processing point for smoked herring.



Figure 23. Pointe Basse

Broken circle (1905, known to at least 1935), circle (1962), MOON (1962), and registration box (1962).

Registered mail from South Beach seems to have gone through the Pointe Basse post office from the turn of the century into the 1930s. The money order office number for Pointe Basse was 1015. This post office, along with Dune-du-Sud, was closed 19 July 1969, before the assignment of POCONS. Cancels from Pointe Basse are fairly common. The split ring hammer seems to have been in use for a long period. This post office is currently covered by Havre-aux-Maisons.

*Arseneault 1912–1932 & 1937–1969* (Figure 24) This post office was located between Havre-aux-Maisons and South Beach, and opened 1 November 1912. The name is taken from a common surname on this island, and in fact, two of the postmasters serving here were named Arseneault. It was closed 29 February 1932, but reopened 15 November 1937. It continued in service until 20 January 1969. The office was located in a house. The

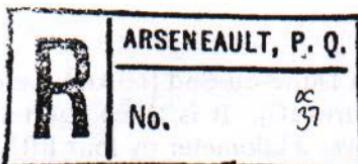


Figure 24. Arsenault

Broken circle (1912), and registration box (1937), both from Proof Books.

money order office number was 70115. Despite the 42 years of service, we have no examples of cancels to illustrate, except these from the Proof Books. This area now falls within the Havre-aux-Maisons post office.

 *Le Pré* 1963–1969. The post office at *Le Pré* ("meadow") opened 20 November 1923, in an area overlooking *Le Grand Barachois*—the lagoon of *Havre-aux-Maisons*—enclosed by the North and South Dunes. It was between *Havre-aux-Maisons* and *Arsenault*. The money order office number was 73016. The split ring cancel shown seems to have been in use for some time. It closed, along with others on this island, 19 July 1969, when the post office was reorganized. The region is currently served by *Havre-aux-Maisons*.

*Chemin des Buttes* 1927–1969 (Figure 25) The name means "path of heights". This was the last post office to open on the Island of *Havre-aux-Maisons*, on 5 September 1927. It was situated on the southeastern side of the island, not far from *Pointe Basse*, on this outer and very scenic road around the south shore of the island. The money order office number for *Chemin des Buttes* was 70910. We show a split ring and a registered box.

This post office, like others on this Island, closed 19 July 1969, when the post office was reorganized, and it is now covered by *Havre-aux-Maisons*.

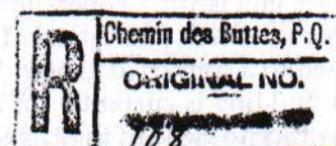


Figure 25. Chemin des Buttes

Broken circle (1964) and registration box (1962).

Thus over the period 1927–1969, six different post offices served the Island of *Havre-aux-Maisons*. Two of these went through a name change from English to French, making a total of eight names we can ascribe to this island. One remains today: *Havre-aux-Maisons*.

## Pointe-Aux-Loups

Approximately ten miles from Dune-du-Sud (16 km), we come to the tiny Island of Îles-aux Loups (Figures 26). It is three quarters of a mile long and a half mile wide (a little over a kilometer by four fifths of a kilometer), and currently has a population of 200 people. This little island is hardly more than a widening of the sand dunes, and was called Wolf Island on the oldest maps. This appears to be after the animal, not the general, although some maps show it as Wolfe Island [D]. Directly translated into French, it is today more often associated with *loup-marins*, a local term for earless seals once common here.

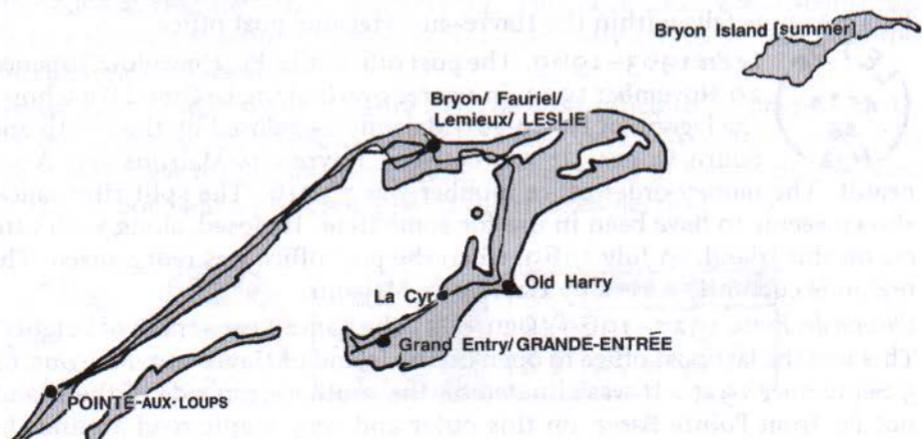


Figure 26. Map of Pointe-aux-Loups

Grosse Île, Grande Entrée & Bryon Island,

*Pointe-aux-Loups* 1922–present (Figures 27 & 28) A post office has been located here since 5 September 1927, and is still in operation today. In 1985, Pointe-aux-Loups was perhaps the smallest of the Island's freestanding post offices; Today it has been relocated to a converted garage. While this office continues to operate today, that building is currently for sale and it is rumored this will be the next post office to close in the Islands.

While this post office did not go through any formal name changes, it has managed to have a series of different versions of its name, including Pointe-au-Loup (with and without hypens), Pointe-aux-Loups (usually with hyphens), and even, as Mme Caron has pointed out, a cancel with an error, Pointe-aux-Loup—with the plural *aux* but the singular *loup*. This makes collecting it a little more interesting. The sign outside the post office which read *Pointe-au-Loup* in 1985 has been changed today to read *Pointe-aux-Loups*.



Figure 27. Pointe-au-Loup post office and signs

The photograph was taken in 1985; the top sign was there at the time, and the bottom sign is the current one.

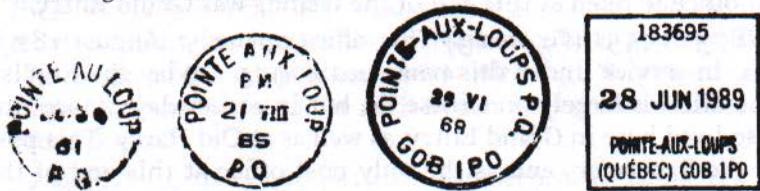


Figure 28. Pointe-au-Loup and variants

Broken circle (1961, all singular), circle (1985, plural *aux* & singular *loup*), 29mm circle (1989, year inverted), and POCON (1989).

The money order office number for Pointe-au-Loup/Pointe-aux-Loups was 1022; the POCON is 183695, and the postal code is GOB 1PO. Both of the 1989 cancels show the currently accepted form, all plural, with the postal code added.

## The Island of Grosse Île and Grande Entrée

Another nine miles (14.5 km) north along the North Dune from Pointe-aux-Loups are the islands of Grosse Île and Grande Entrée.

Grosse Île, an island which is ten miles long and three wide (16 km × 5 km), is home to an Anglophone population of about 560. The eastern end of the Island (Île de l'Est; formerly East Island) is largely made up of ponds and sand dunes. A major part of this section has been designated a National Wildlife Preserve, so while the island itself is large, compared to some others

in the archipelago, the inhabited area is actually much smaller. Long white sand beaches border it both on the north and on the east. Old Harry is at its southeastern extremity. There has never been a post office in the Magdalen Islands called "Grosse Île", although a post office has existed here since 1894.

The Island of Grande Entrée was formerly called Coffin Island, named after Sir Isaac Coffin. It is long—about seven miles (11 km)—but very narrow; at some places it is less than a mile (1.5 km) wide. The population of around 700 is centred on the southern arm, near the fishing port and harbour.

The two communities, Grosse Île and Grande Entrée, are referred to jointly as the "East End" of the Magdalen Islands. This is home to a fishing community, with lobster being the most profitable product. Blue mussels are farmed in the Bay at Grande Entrée, and lobster pounds abound. A hundred lobster fishermen use this fishing port as their base, and it is known as the "Lobster Capital of Québec".

To the east are two islands, Bryon Island and Bird Rocks, the first landing place of Cartier on these islands in 1534. Neither is inhabited today, although a lighthouse and a post office did exist on Bryon Island at one time. The first post office to open at this end of the Islands was Grand Entry.

*Grand Entry 1873–1955* (Figure 29) This office opened 1 August 1873, and continued in service under this name until 1955. Today the English speaking population is largely on Grosse Île, but in earlier days, more Anglophones also lived here in Grand Entry, as well as at Old Harry. This post office served the fishermen, and as the only post office at this end of the Islands until 1894, it was well used. The money order office number for Grand Entry was 0379. On 16 July 1955, the name was changed to Grande Entrée, using the same MOON. The cancels illustrate the use of both the English and French names.

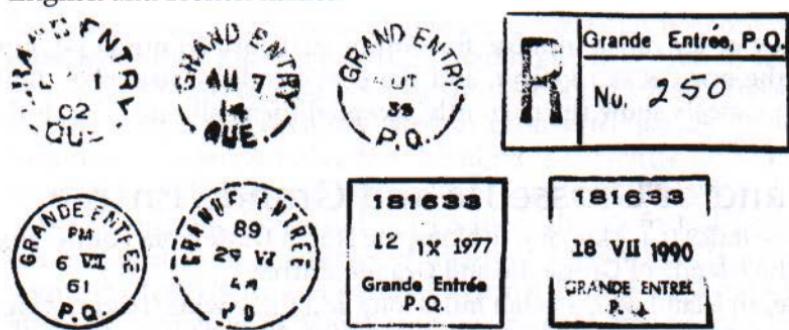


Figure 29. Grand Entry/Grande Entrée

Broken circles (1902, 1914, & 1938), registration box (1961), circle (1961 & 1989), POCONs (1977 & 1990).

*Grande Entrée* 1955–present (Figure 29) This community is still a very active fishing port. The post office, which changed to its French name in 1955, still serves the Island of Grande Entrée. We show two POCONS, 181633. The current postal code is GOB 1HO.

*Bryon* 1894–1898 (No illustration) Here is the saga of a post office which seemingly could not decide on a name. It began its life as Bryon, 1 October 1894. It was located on Grosse Île, and the postmaster was Norman Clarke, a very common name in this end of the Islands. We have no examples of cancels from this office—not surprising, since it existed for only four years under this name—although the reader will find examples of both this and the following post office in an article by Fernand Belanger [BE]. The name of this post office and that of Bryon Island can be traced back to Cartier, who in 1534 gave this name to the island lying north of Grosse Île, to honour his patron, Philippe de Chabot, Seigneur de Brion.

*Fauriel* 1898–1903 (No illustration) The Bryon office was renamed Fauriel on 1 July 1898. There seems no reason for this, except that another post office, on nearby Bryon Island, was opened on that same date, presumably there was concern that this would cause confusion and the mail would have trouble finding its proper home. Norman Clarke continued as postmaster. The origin of the name is unknown. Although Belanger [BE] shows an example, we have none, and as with Bryon, we have located no examples in the Proof Books.

 Lemieux 1903–1906. Fauriel became Lemieux 1 May 1903, and then was renamed Leslie on 1 June 1906. Lemieux was quickly taken up as a name (in fact, on the same date) by a post office in Lotbinière which had formerly been Forestdale. This is important to the collector of Magdalen Island cancels—a Lemieux postmark must be dated 1903–1906 in order to represent an office in the Magdalen Islands. Again the origin of the name is not known.

We have only one cancel from Lemieux, and consider it one of the rarer of the Island postmarks, existing for only this short three-year period.

*Leslie* 1906–present (Figure 30) The post office finally settled on the name Leslie, after Robert Leslie, Deputy for the Islands. He died in 1905 as a result of the sinking of the *ss Lunenberg*, a ship which carried passengers and mail to the Islands. Norman Clarke continued as postmaster through this final name change. The post office continues under this name today; the current postmistress is Norma Jean Clarke. The money order office number was 0607, and it used a split ring cancel for many years. The current postal code is GOB 1MO. Leslie and Entry Island are the only post offices on the Islands designated bilingual.



Figure 30. Leslie

Broken circle (1913), MOON (1961), POCON (1977), and circle (1977); second line shows a MOTO (1953), courtesy of Danny Handelman.

*Bryon Island 1898–1931 summer only* (No illustrations) Every year from 1898 to 1932, a post office operated on Bryon Island, a small island approximately ten miles (16km) north of Grosse Île and the Island of Grande Entrée. It is about four miles long and two wide (6.5km×3km) and was occupied year-round by only three families.

The summer-only designation does not indicate that this was a resort or cottage community. At the opening of navigation and the beginning of the fishing season, the population grew to around 100; fishermen came to these rich waters off the island, many spending the months here away from their families in the southern part of the Magdalens, while eking a living from the sea. Hence this post office opened every year in late April or early May, and closed again in late November or early December, when the ice closed in and it was no longer possible to fish. So we do not have a population sending post cards home about their delightful summer vacation on this northern island; these men were too busy for much communication even with their families, and so far, we have not uncovered a single postmark of this post office, nor any Proof Book examples. Belanger [BE] illustrates cancellations from thirteen Island communities, and does show an example of Bryon Island. In 1984, it became a wildlife reserve and sanctuary. There is no current population, and visits are limited to short stays.

*Old Harry 1904–1970* (Figure 31) This is a small Anglophone community on the eastern side of Grosse Île, originally a fishing village named in the eighteenth century for Harry Clarke, who it is said, was the only resident here for many years. The cliffs and crags make this my favorite place in the



Figure 31. Old Harry

Broken circle (1914, known to 1938), MOON (1961), circle (1962, courtesy of Danny Handelman), and registration box (1961).

Islands. A post office was first opened here 1 November 1904, with a postmaster named Clark (without the final "e")—in fact, the various postmasters here were all named Clark until 1961. The money order office number was 15062. The post office closed 20 July 1970, before POCON's came into use.

Old Harry is the home to CAMI, the Council for Anglophone Magdalen Islanders, which maintains an historical centre here and a museum on Entry Island. Today this area is covered by the post office at Grande Entrée.

*La Cyr* 1921–1968 (Figure 32) Named for Mme J A Cyr, a local teacher, La Cyr was the last post office to open at this end of the Islands. It opened 1 June 1921, and was in service for 47 years. This community was situated at the northern end of the Island of Grande Entrée. The money order office number was 15134. As for many post offices, it was closed with the post office reorganization of 1968–1969. The registered box (August 1961) shows considerable wear, and it is not surprising that it was soon replaced. It was struck in red, which also contributes to the difficulties in reproducing it here. La Cyr used a split ring for many years, but the month indicia changed to roman numeral c 1961. The community is currently served by the post office at Grande Entrée.



Figure 32. La Cyr

Registration boxes and broken circle (both 1961) and broken circle (1937).

The East End of the Islands has had only four offices over 150 years, although with name changes, there were eight different post office names. Two continue to operate, Leslie and Grande Entrée.

We have thus examined the 31 different post offices that existed on the Magdalens. No doubt some of this number can be attributed to politics, in the sense that a post office placed in one community no doubt created the "need" for another in a nearby community. Many post office records, particularly in the 1930s when so many post offices existed at one time, indicate dismissals of postmasters due to political partisanship—so we can infer that at one time, the position of postmaster was closely tied to the party in power.

Most of these post offices existed over a significant period of time. Some, however, had very short life spans—notably the earlier names for Leslie, Dune-du-Sud, Blaquiére, and Le Martinet, none of which were in existence for more than nine years.

## Current Magdalen Island postmarks

In updating the articles previously written on the Magdalens, a survey of the current post office cancels was done, with some interesting results. Of the ten remaining offices, seven have been issued the new "wings" type canceller. These are Bassin, Cap-aux-Meules, Entry Island, Grande Entrée, Havre-Aubert, Havre-aux-Maisons, and Leslie. Of these, Entry Island and Havre-aux-Maisons do not appear to have the new POCON canceller. The remaining offices, Étang du Nord, Fatima, and Pointe-aux-Loups, were not issued a wings canceller, but do have updated POCONS (Figure 33). Two interesting machine cancels are also illustrated (Figure 34).

Perhaps most interesting, however, is that the Bassin wings cancel, which has the proper postal code GOB 1AO, has the name *Îles de la Madeleine* instead of Bassin. In all likelihood this was an error, but it is curious to note that these Islands, originally graced originally with the post office name Magdalen Islands, now return to a post office also named (at least on the canceller) *Îles de la Madeleine*. No one in Bassin seems to find this particularly strange, but to philatelists, it is noteworthy. It is also interesting to see that Quebec is indicated in a variety of ways—even on the newer wings cancellers—it shifts between P.Q. and QC. On one of the wings cancellers (Havre-aux-Maisons), no province is indicated. The POCONS show the same lack of consistency, using P.Q. for the most part, sometimes QUÉBEC in parentheses, and in one case (Bassin), no province at all.

We recommend this field to anyone who enjoys the challenge of an area of philately requiring patience and persistence. In the 20+ years spent collecting this material, we are still missing cancels from some communities—the mysterious Blaquiére, Bryon and Fauriel (the two earlier names of what is now Leslie), Bryon Island (the summer post office to the north of the main

<b>POSTES CANADA</b>	<b>CANADA POST</b>	<b>188123</b>	<b>BASSIN</b>	<b>POSTES CANADA</b>	<b>CANADA POST</b>	<b>189588</b>
188123		2002 -07- 0 4		2002 -07- 1 8		
BUREAU DE POSTE / POST OFFICE				BUREAU DE POSTE / POST OFFICE		
ILES-DE-LA MADELEINE, QC				ENTRY ISLAND, QC		
G0B 1AO				G0B 1CO		
<b>POSTES CANADA</b>	<b>CANADA POST</b>	<b>181706</b>	<b>CAP-AUX-MEULES</b>	<b>POSTES CANADA</b>	<b>CANADA POST</b>	<b>181374</b>
181706		2002 -07- 0 9	P.Q. G0B 1BO	2002 -07- 0 5		
BUREAU DE POSTE / POST OFFICE				ÉTANG DU NORD		
CAP-AUX-MEULES, PQ				(QUÉBEC) G0B 1EO		
G0B 1BO						
<b>POSTES CANADA</b>	<b>CANADA POST</b>	<b>181633</b>	<b>GRANDS-ENTRÉE</b>	<b>POSTES CANADA</b>	<b>CANADA POST</b>	<b>181382</b>
181633		2002 -07- 1 2	P.Q.	2002 -07- 0 5		
BUREAU DE POSTE / POST OFFICE				FATIMA		
GRANDE-ENTRÉE, P.Q.				P.Q.		
G0B 1HO						
<b>POSTES CANADA</b>	<b>CANADA POST</b>	<b>181781</b>	<b>HAVRE-AUBERT, QC</b>	<b>POSTES CANADA</b>	<b>CANADA POST</b>	<b>181897</b>
181781		2002 -07- 0 2	G0B 1J0	2002 -07- 1 0		
BUREAU DE POSTE / POST OFFICE				BUREAU DE POSTE / POST OFFICE		
HAVRE-AUBERT, QC				HAVRE AUX MAISONS		
G0B 1J0				G0B 1KO		
<b>POSTES CANADA</b>	<b>CANADA POST</b>	<b>182745</b>	<b>LESLIE</b>	<b>POSTES CANADA</b>	<b>CANADA POST</b>	<b>183695</b>
182745		2002 -07- 1 5	P.Q.	2002 -06- 2 7		
BUREAU DE POSTE / POST OFFICE				POINTE-AUX-LOUPS		
LESLIE, QC				(QUÉBEC) G0B 1PO		
G0B 1MO						

Figure 33. Some current postmarks of the Magdalen Islands

Bassin (G0B 1AO) wings & POCON, Entry Island wings, Cap-aux-Meules wings & POCON, Étang du Nord POCON, Grand Entrée wings & POCON, Fatima POCON, Havre-Aubert wings & POCON, Havre-aux-Maisons wings, Leslie wings & POCON, and Pointe-aux-Loups POCON.



Figure 34. Current machine cancels—for sharp eyes only

Étang du Nord (GOB 1EO, but no town name) & Havre-aux-Maissons (mis-spelling of *maisons*).

islands), Arsenault (on the Island of Havre-aux-Maisons), and Étang-des-Caps (on the Island of Havre-Aubert). Any further information, copies of cancels, etc, would be welcome. Please contact Jean R Walton, 125 Turtleback Rd, Califon NJ 07830 or send an e-mail to [jwalton971@aol.com](mailto:jwalton971@aol.com).

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Dr N Wagner, 207, 525-11th Avenue sw, Calgary AB T2R 0C9 Canada

# Dots, slashes & projections in plating the 1898 map stamp

*Kenneth A Kershaw*

**T**HE essential plating aids for the 1898 map stamp appear largely in the form of dots and slashes scattered over each plate position. I have been unable to find any information on how these plating criteria actually developed on the printed plates, and for some time I have been trying to work how they came about.

Williams (1990) provides a comprehensive account of the production of a lead primary mould for electrotyping. By a process of electrolysis, the final plate is then coated with an appropriate harder metal ready for final printing. However, he is somewhat reticent as to how the detailed surface was placed in the floor of the moulds in the first place, and whether this step could contribute to the dots and islands that we use as criteria today.

The larger (red) colonies of the British Empire could be readily stamped out of thin sheet metal, and then fixed in position on the floor of each positional mould relatively easily. Furthermore, a single die could be used to stamp out several at a time to speed things up. Conversely, it would seem impossible to place single "islands" one by one. There are so many of them that the time element would make it too expensive, nor does it seem physically practical.

Is it possible that dies were used to stamp out groups of islands for the Pacific Island Group, the Indian Ocean Group and so on? Again, it seems that the most efficient approach would be to stamp out sheets of these for subsequent placement on the floors of the hundred mould positions, but evidence is required to support this conjecture. One major and perhaps significant observation from an examination of a few thousand stamps, is that the plating criteria are almost always closely associated with islands of some sort. Thus, the Pacific Island Group and Indian Ocean Group account for nearly half of the primary plating characters, and almost all of the remaining positions also use these same two groups, either as secondary or tertiary criteria. In addition, the islands of the China Sea Group, the Shetlands & Orkneys, Ascension & St Helena etc, are all extensively used to plate this stamp. So what is the significance of islands?

When I finally got round to plating plate 5, the following evidence came to my attention, and I was indeed forced to think of structured boxes con-

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**Keywords & phrases:** Map stamp, plating

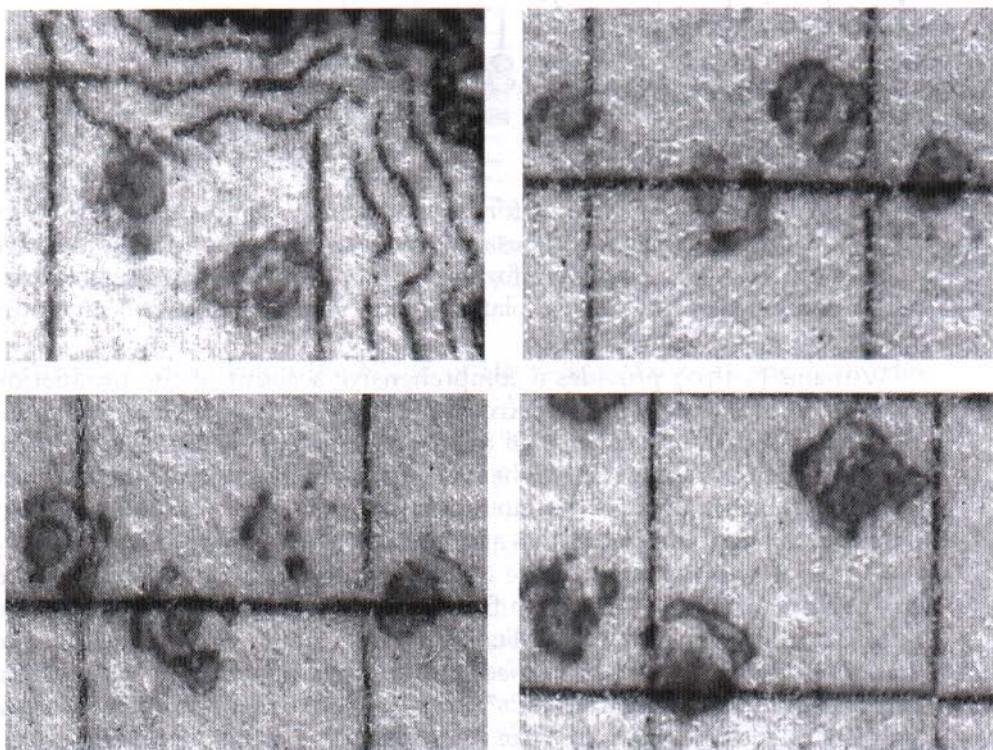


Figure 1. Apparent box containment of the Islands in plate 5

From upper left, position 20 showing St Helena, positions 31, 52 & 61 of the Pacific Island Group.

taining a round island (Figure 1). From the same plate, it is also evident from that New Zealand was also similarly constructed and positioned (Figure 2). This leads to the idea of island groupings held coherently together within a "fretwork" construct which is probably attached to the adjacent continent. Those parts of the fretwork, accidentally at the same height as the islands themselves, would also get inked, producing additional (and unintentional) dots and slashes. Further variation would then be induced by the amount of inking, which would easily account for all the different plating criteria we use today. Indeed, the variations illustrated above are all extreme cases taken from well-inked replicates, which show the surrounding box image by mistake. Additional replicates from those same positions may only show a small part of the raised portion but when viewed along side these replicates, with very defined images, they clearly match. I have only included a very



Figure 2. Position 3, plate 5

Visible remnants of the elevated surround to New Zealand. This correlates well with the frequency of the positional plating criteria used from around the north-west tip and the west side of New Zealand.

small number of illustrative examples here, but in fact numerous positions in plate 5 have small but identifiable traces of a boxed island. This leaves the problem as to why they are only really obvious and very numerous in plate 5 and are apparently rare in the earlier production of plates 1-3?

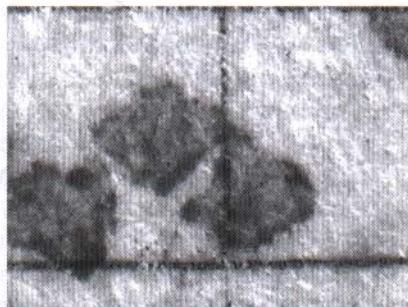
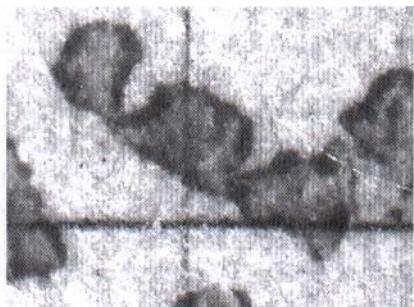


Figure 4. Position 14 Pacific Island Group, plates 1-3

Showing the boxed shape of Islands #2-3 and 5-7.

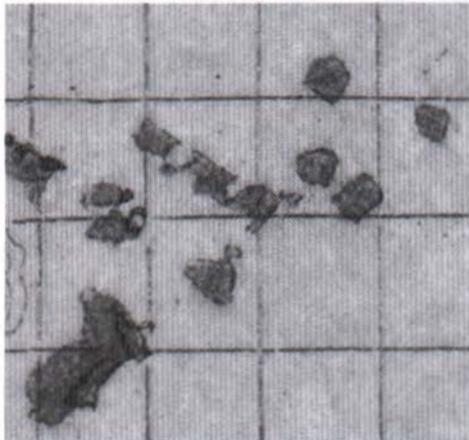


Figure 3. Position 31, plates 1-3

A fairly heavily inked plate with outlines of boxes in Pacific Island Group islands #5-7.

In the production of plate 5, there must have been considerable pressure on the printers, as plate 4 had just been abandoned as not usable, so that there was probably insufficient production time left to produce an entirely new plate. Short-cuts had to be taken. It seems reasonable to assume that there were considerable difficulties encountered in attaching these small box groups consistently and exactly level in the mould, so that only the central islands and adjacent continents were printed. With the short production time left after the prior rejection of plate 4, it is not surprising that several parts of the fretwork constructs ended up in a slightly raised position, so as to be at printing level. In contrast, the relative rarity of such printed evidence for box construction in plates 1-3, presumably represents some very careful and time-consuming work, or that a different production method was employed. The evidence for the use of an identical method in the production in plates 1-3 is limited, but it is certainly compelling (Figures 3-6). Very careful examination reveals a number of examples identical to those in plate 5, although not as complete (with the exception of positions 14 & 31 (Figures 3 & 4). Additionally there is the remarkable linear sequence of three dots between Australia and New Zealand in position 43 (Figure 5). The likelihood of this occurring by chance is very low, and could point indeed to a structural component holding New Zealand and the Pacific islands in a fixed position in relation to Australia. This concept was tested by plotting manually as an overlay, all the dots and slashes found in



Figure 5. Position 43, plates 1-3

A perfect linear dot sequence which seems hardly a chance occurrence. There appear to be a slight upper attachment to Pacific Island Group island #9, and a lower attachment to New Zealand.

all 100 positions of plates 1-3, regardless of their use as plating criteria. Some error is involved, since the alignment of the red printing varies to some extent, and a visual correction to correspond to the actual alignment in position 43 is necessary in each of these cases.

Despite this, the correspondence is quite remarkable (Figure 6), and supports strongly the concept of structural fretwork components. These have been provisionally indicated by the dashed lines. Thus the linear three dot sequence can be seen as a main structural component as originally thought, with its high points throughout all the positions, on each plate, being accidentally inked and printed. There appear to be three links with New Zealand: at the top, the bottom, and obliquely in the centre. Similarly, there appear to be three corresponding connections to Australia. The linkage around Pacific Island Group islands #8 & 9 is also very distinct, and there seems to be a further linkage running east, to island #10. Again, high points in all these linkages provide the dots and dashes used extensively for plating. In particular, the extensive linkage at the top between islands #8 & 9 is very clearly expressed in positions islands #30,37,48 & 50, where there are "debris" or very evident printed connections occurring between the two islands.

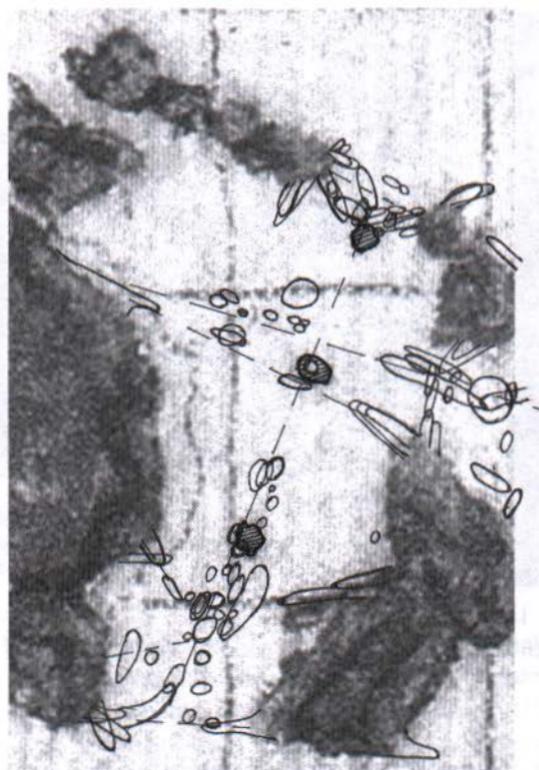


Figure 6. Overlaid slashes and dots associated to NZ and Oz

Using Figure 5, all slashes and dots from all 100 positions have been overlaid. The linear patterns are obvious, and closely associated with the linear dots. It is plausible that they were produced by high points of a fretwork holding New Zealand to Australia and the adjacent Pacific islands.

This final evidence points to the same methods being employed throughout the production of all the plates. It also indicates fairly conclusively the presence of a fretwork construct, probably attached to each continent, that holds all the island groups in position. The high points of this framework accidentally provide our plating criteria, and reinforce the perception that plate 5 was created in time pressure—innumerable high spots can be found.

However, there do remain a number of dots in Africa and the US which can not be explained this way.

# Postage stamp holders

C R McGuire

**T**HIS is a revised version of an article that appeared originally in the catalogue of STAMPEX '87, held 10-12 April in Toronto. It was the first of a series of articles that I had planned concerning philatelic artifacts; this one deals with postage stamp holders. Others that were to have been written involved postal weight scales, writing implements (pens, pen nibs, pen wipers, pencils, pencil sharpeners, . . . ), writing sets, letter openers, and miscellaneous items such as envelope & stamp moisteners.

The day over thirty years ago that my good friend Ron Stewart started me collecting stamp boxes is easy for me to remember. I still chuckle when I recall what Ron said as he handed one to me with a smirk on his face—"Since you collect stamps you can use this to keep them in!" That stamp box, or holder as I prefer to call them because they exist in numerous other forms, remains one of my finest (see Figure 2, number 11). Little did I know that I would eventually acquire over three hundred. To date, I have seen about fifteen hundred others, the majority in collections, one of which equals mine in quantity but far surpasses it in quality. This particular collection consists mainly of holders that would have been purchased by the well-to-do, while most of my examples were meant for ordinary folk.

This clearly indicates that there is a stamp holder for people of all walks of life, means and taste. It also shows there is virtually no end to the variety in style, shape, type, the materials from which they are made and the combinations in which they exist.

Over the years, I have noticed a great increase in the collecting of these artifacts and a corresponding decrease in their availability and naturally, a rise in prices. Recently, this popularity has been emphasized in articles in the antique and philatelic press, and the increasing number of auctions in which a relatively large proportion of the lots consist of stamp holders. In late 1985, a specialized study group was formed in Great Britain; if you are interested in joining, write to the Stamp Box Society, PO Box 54, Stanmore, Middlesex HA5 4ED England. They have a website (use the search engine Google, searching for "stamp box society").

This article is based on a talk I gave at the BYPEX '84 banquet in Ottawa and an exhibit I showed at STAMPEX '85 in Toronto. These two efforts helped me realize that stamp holders are of interest and even fascinate just

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Keywords & phrases: stamp holders

about everyone—collectors and noncollectors alike. It also made me aware that these objects are an intriguing subject for a well illustrated publication which I would like to produce someday.



Figure 1. Stamp holders

Beginning at the top, numbered from left to right, then top to bottom.

(Top row) (1) Sterling silver match safe with compartment for stamps. Hallmarked Birmingham. There is a chain ring and match striker at bottom. British, 1900. (2) Nickel-plated brass match safe with two circular tubes for holding a small pencil and toothpick (missing, as usual!). A hinged door at bottom covers a framed slot for stamps and a spring loaded compartment for coins. There is a chain ring and match striker on the spring loaded top. British, c1910. (3) Nickel-plated brass match safe with two compartments for stamps; the covers of the miniature "book" are spring-loaded; there is a chain ring. The front "cover" has the emblem of the Isle of Man, which suggests that it is a holiday souvenir. The match striker is at the side. British, c1910. Examples are known with celluloid "leather binding". (4) Silver plated brass pocket/purse holder, the sliding top (covering two stamp compartments) has the lion emblem of Montreal's Ritz Carleton Hotel. Made by Birks. Canadian, c1910. (5) Sterling silver case with a chain ring; the raised design of the hinged top encircles a blue and red enamel Elks Lodge emblem. Both interior top and bottom have intricately designed frames for holding stamps. Made by Alfred Schickerling Jewellery Co, 51 Maiden Lane, New York. Design patented 22 November 1910. A fine example of a watch fob-stamp holder with BFK, the owner's initials, engraved in fancy script on the back.

(Middle row) (6) Nickel-plated brass. Match safe disguised as a stamp holder for ladies who did not want it known that they smoked. The give-away match striker is at the bottom of this example which prepared as a souvenir of the Columbian World's Fair held in Chicago in 1893. A "coin" with the raised vignette of Christopher Columbus is attached to the back. Design patented as a match safe 22 April 1890. American. (7) Sterling silver "envelope" with chain ring. This is a larger version of the common small single stamp "envelope", with two stamp compartments. Meant to be worn by a lady, on a chatelaine, neck or wrist chain. American, c1900. (8) Sterling silver "purse" with engraved floral designs. Both hinged sides open and their interiors are compartments for stamps. A lovely example of a lady's stamp holder meant to be worn on a chain or carried in a purse. (9) Swing lid aluminum stamp holder. The celluloid "book" cover indicates that it is a souvenir of the Thousand Islands. The spine enumerates the various uses for this container—*postage & revenue stamps, court plasters [bandaids], "knick knacks"*. American, c1905. For a short period after it first appeared commercially, aluminum was more popular than sterling silver, probably because it is so easy to work and engrave, and of course less expensive. (10) Bakelite screw top "STAMP BOX Compliments of Massachusetts Benefit Life Association". The reverse has a Newton Calender for 1895—a form of annual perpetual calendar. Patented 10 May 1892. American.

(Bottom row) (11) Celluloid stapled folder which encloses glassine sheets for stamps, five pages of American post office information, and a 1920 calendar. The celluloid slip case advertises a Prince Edward Island insurance agent. Note the imitation stamps along the top with the inscription "Pocket Stamp Case Calendar". (12) Celluloid booklet-style imitation envelope enclosing glassine interleaves for stamps and a calendar, one page per month for 1902 & 1903. A "give away" from the Ball Railroad Watch Co. Made by Whitehead & Hoag, Newark, New Jersey, who were primarily a manufacturer of pin-backs. (13) Celluloid slip case for a celluloid folder enclosing glassine sheets. This advertising "give away" was made by Ehrman Mfg Co, Milford, New Hampshire for Hugh Cameron & Co, Toronto distributors of the "Waterous Steam Road Roller". The "post mark" reads TORONTO 9 AM and the postage stamp wishes "Good Luck and Prosperity". (14) A notebook-calender with several pages of information (not postal-related) and glassine interleaving in the centre. Made by the distributor, "Jewellers and Stationers" of New York City. The cover is fine leather, dated 1906. Apparently this firm produced "Calendar-Stamp Case" for many years. I have another example with a suede cover dated 1910.

## History

Containers for the orderly storage of postage stamps became available soon after the first stamps were issued by Great Britain on 6 May 1840. They were almost necessary as a convenience because early stamps were imperforate and had to be cut apart with scissors. To minimize what must have been a nuisance—that is, having to separate each stamp as required—stamp boxes permitted a group to be severed and stored for future use following one cutting session.

Initially, the containers were meant to sit on writing desks. In fact, many desks had built-in stamp holders, easily recognized by the familiar sloping

"ramp" or rounded base. Soon, smaller versions were developed for carrying in pockets and purses. Stamp holders are known made of virtually everything imaginable—from gold and silver to wood and plastic. The most common being brass and nickel-plated brass.



Figure 2. More stamp holders

Beginning at the top, numbered from left to right, then top to bottom.

(Top row) (1) Celluloid (French ivory) box for lady's dresser or desk. Stamp compartment and two others for pens and envelope wax sealer. Part of a set? American, c1920. (2) Ebony "trunk" with ivory trim with scrimshawed floral embellishment. Wood inlaid interior with four compartments without sloping ramps. Hinged lid has lock and key. An exquisite example. India, c1890.

(Second row) (3) Leather covered wood box with gold ornamentation. Wood interior has two definitive size compartments. Italian, c1930. (4) Brass box with engraved floral designs on four sides. Seldom seen jade hinged top is carved in a floral design. Has definitive and commemorative size compartments. Chinese, c1920. (5) Accra China box with raised hand painted dragon design on the lift-off top. Has definitive and commemorative size compartments. Japanese, c1920. (6) Cinnabar box with carved floral design. Has definitive and commemorative size compartments. India, c1920.

(Third row) (7) Gold brocade fabric covered wood box with floral design on both the interior and exterior. The hinged top has a hand-painted floral design attached. Has two definitive size compartments. American, c1920. (8) Black papier-mâché box with hand-painted butterfly and floral design on hinged top. Has three definitive size compartments. British, c1890. (9) Gilt brass box with raised scene of two samurai warriors in battle on hinged top. Underside of top has another much more delicate raised scene of birds and trees. Has three definitive size silver plated compartments. Japanese, c1910.

(Bottom row) (10) As nice an example of the relatively common wood box as

you will see. It is an imitation trunk complete with carved buckled "leather" straps. Has three definitive compartments. American, c1920. (11) Tortoise shell box with celluloid framing. The wood-inlaid interior has three definitive size compartments. The three stamps in the hinged top represent the most common rates—postcard ( $\frac{1}{2}$  d), domestic letter (1 d), and international letter ( $2\frac{1}{2}$  d). British, c1905.

Figures 1–4 show some of the more interesting examples from a modest collection which alas, does not include one of gold. Does anyone care to rectify this deficiency? Any contributions of a family heirloom would be guaranteed a good home in my collection!



Figure 3. Still more stamp holders

Three rows of three.

(Top row) (1) Brass eagle holding a "ball" suitable for single stamps or a roll of coils. American, c1920. (2) Chrome-plated brass "folder" for holding stamp booklet. Top has "stamps" engraved on pokerwork design. Red and blue enamel coat-of-arms of Redhill-Reigate (Great Britain). British, c1940. Normally booklet holders are hinged, opening like a book. (3) Oxen hoof (once belonging to a farmer's prize-winning animal?) on a sterling silver "shoe" with a sterling top and hinged lid. All three pieces are hallmarked London. British, (1923).

(Second row) (4) Brass penholder-stamp box. The riding crop & stirrup indicate that it was meant for an equestrian enthusiast. American, c1930. (5) Sterling silver pocket container with chain ring. Hinged top has raised design of golfer

swinging a club. The sloping ramp has a star punched in it. May have been a golf tournament prize. American, c1910. (6) Silver-plated brass boater hat, tennis racket & two balls. The top of the hat lifts off, revealing a compartment with sloping ramp. Made by the Pierpoint Manufacturing Co of Bedford MA, a firm noted for its Tiffany-type lamps. American, c1890.

(Bottom row) (7) Sterling silver "envelope" ladies calling-card case with ornate engraved design. The chain, handle, and case are both hallmarked Birmingham. A compartment for postage stamps with a spring-loaded top is attached to the back. British, 1890. (8) Sterling silver hinged holder with a push button release and chain ring. There is a fine leather fold-out with nine compartments for stamps and a slot for a projecting pencil (included). Hallmarked Birmingham. British, 1890. (9) A very realistic nickel-plated brass turtle whose hinged "shell" top covers two compartments, one with a sloping ramp for stamps, the other for paper clips or pen nibs. A shield is attached to the top with a raised view of Boston. A holiday souvenir. American, c1910.



Figure 4. Guess what—more stamp holders &c

Items 1–3 are in their usual positions. Item 4 consists of the five pieces at the lower left, and item 7 is the bright object at the lower right.

(Top) (1) Penholder with brass plate inscribed "Souvenir of Old Canal, Pontiac Bay, Oak. from old decayed frame", and signed by the maker "T. Styles". the uncompleted canal was to join the Upper and Lower Ottawa River near Pontiac County, Quebec. A nickel-plated brass stamp box with "Stamps" engraved on the hinged lid sits between the cut glass inkwell. Canadian, c1900.

(Second row) (2) Brass art deco stamp box & letter weigh scale; the box has two definitive and one commemorative size compartments. American Tiffany-inspired design, c1910. (3) Brass inkwell-pen holder-stamp box with "Stamps"

engraved on the lift-off top. One of the pens has a celluloid letter-opener on its end. The tops of the inkwells are hinged. American, c1890.

(Lower left cluster) (4) Brass desk set made by Kronheimer-Oldenbusch Co. The stamp box-pen holder-inkwell is missing the bottle. In addition to the letter-opener, letter holder, rocking blotter and tray, there may have been additional accoutrements in the set. American, c1912-22. A metal sealer for wax sealing envelope flaps was once a popular device and an example is shown to the left of the stamp box.

(Lower right) (5) Aluminum child's desk set in original box. Rocking blotter, letter-opener and stamp box with "Stamps" engraved on the hinged lid. American, c1910. I have a c1905 brochure publicizing a range of products made of "the new aluminium", promoting them as "tarnish-proof silver . . . appearing to be sterling at less than half the cost."

The "golden age" of the stamp holder was the period prior to World War I; in this era, they were commonly made of precious metals, embellished with inlays and gem stones and were almost works of art, often by *designers*. Many of these high quality productions are signed.

Some of the most desirable and expensive were made by craftsmen such as American jewellers Charles Lewis Tiffany (1812-1902) & his son Louis Comfort (1848-1933; made a household name by the US version of *Antiques Roadshow*), and Peter Carl Fabergé (1846-1920), Russian goldsmith to the Czars. They continued to be made after the war, but generally were of less impressive materials, such as wood, composition metals, and plastics.

Today there is a revival in the manufacture of these objects particularly for holding complete rolls of coil stamps. There are several brass desk models of ornate art nouveau design being manufactured in Italy. They are sometimes offered by flea market dealers as "old", so a word of caution.

## Forming a collection

A collection may be organized in several ways, in my case, by their composition, that is, the primary material used (e.g., wood, metal, ceramic, etc). Since they are made of more than one material, I further sub-categorize them by type (e.g., desk or pocket/purse models), purpose (those with more than one function—for example, for holding stamps and matches) and size. I number each object and keep a card which records the following information:

- 1 composition
- 2 type of artifact
- 3 description of interior
- 4 miscellaneous comments
- 5 approximate date of manufacture
- 6 makers' and other marks
- 7 country of origin

## Composition

Stamp holders are made of many materials and combinations of materials with a wide variety of embellishments and finishes. I know of the existence of the following examples:

- (a) *Miscellaneous* Cinnabar, cloisonné, leather, glassine, Mauchlineware, Tartenware and Tunbridgeware. Several are actually trade names or a type of craft form of which stamp holders are but one example of several different items in a line of boxes, bowls, trays, . . . , meant to store small objects.
- (b) *Metals* Aluminum, silver\*, gold\*, chromium\*, copper, iron, nickel\*, lead and combinations of metals such as bronze (a copper-tin alloy, often with other elements), pewter (tin & lead) and the most common, brass (copper & zinc). Some metals, including the "good" ones (marked with an asterisk \*) are used for plating stamp holders made of a cheaper base, for example silver and gold on brass. While I have not seen one, I would not be surprised to find holders made of platinum. At the other extreme, tin, was also used. As with those made of wood, metal stamp holders are known with many finishes including multi-coloured enamel, flowers, birds, animals, views, country crests, and even fine reproductions of contemporary postage stamps. The last are very desirable. A popular form of decoration, known as *cinnabar* (an oriental art form) was constructed by covering the metal with several coats of lacquer, and then carving designs into the hardened surface.
- (c) *Wood* Numerous varieties including ash, beech, birch, chestnut, ebony, jacaranda, mahogany, maple, oak, olivewood, and sycamore. Often two or more different woods are used to construct the box. Papier-mâché, molded paper pulp, can also be included within this group. Wood stamp boxes are often intricately carved, painted or have metal, fabric, gesso, ivory, transfer prints and other decorative materials added or inlaid. *Pyrography*, the popular late nineteenth century pastime of burning designs into wood (sometimes adding colour) was also used for decorating stamp boxes.
- (d) *Ceramics* (for want of a better term) These include china, glass and porcelain. They are finished with hand painted or raised molded designs.
- (e) *Plastics* Bakelite, celluloid, erinoid, and plastic.
- (f) *Gemstones* Jade, marble and onyx.

## Models

Stamp holders store piles of stamps in both definitive and commemorative sizes, as well as complete booklets and rolls of coils. There are models meant to sit on desks and for carrying in pocket or purse and for dual and multi-purposes. The majority have lift-off or hinged tops. Some have unusual

methods for gaining access to the stamps, particularly those meant for coils. These incorporate complex technical design with comparable decorative features. Desk models are made to hold as many as seven stamps in separate compartments. They exist in combination both with places for inkwell(s), pen nibs, paper clips, sponges, pen holders and even letter weigh scales.

Pocket versions normally have just one section for stamps, but some exist with two and occasionally three. In addition to the lift-off or hinged tops (frequently spring-loaded), they have swivel and slide-action openings. There are several with a patent spring-loaded method of storage that pushes up the next stamp as the one on top is removed. The pocket combinations are endless and include sections for matches, pencils, sterling toothpicks, coins, bus tickets, photographs, note paper and other "smalls" that are difficult to find when really required.

Some types may also be used as watch fobs or jewellery, with key rings, or are part of wallets and card holders. It was common practice for firms to give small celluloid or leather cases as advertisements. They sometimes have colourful illustrated covers. There is glassine interleaving in the centre or in folders, that slip into a case or a slot in the cover for holding stamps and keeping them from sticking together. These also have pages with business advertising, useful information including postage rates and a calender, invaluable for dating the items. Some are imitation envelopes (Figure 1, numbers 12 & 13) complete with facsimile postage stamps with postmarks and return & mailing addresses. The latter is often that of the firms giving it as a promotion, particularly at the beginning of a new year.

Portable lap desks for travellers (made of wood, with leather or felt writing surfaces) have a place for stamps as well as paper, envelopes, writing instruments, envelope sealing implements, inkwells and a pen nib cleaner. The modern leather version (with zippers), while not having space for the antiquated objects held by its predecessor, still has space for stamps and often an address book.

Dennison (yes, the former stamp hinge manufacturer) made metal sealers (with initials) for wax sealing envelope flaps (lower left of Figure 4). They came in sturdy cardboard boxes with instructions together with compartments for the sealer, wax, candles, and naturally, postage stamps.

The artistic designs on stamp holders are many and varied—excellent carving or intricate engraving show both simple and busy scenes. Some of the finest are in gilt, of oriental activities, with the scene on the top of the lid being different from that on the underside (Figure 2, number 9).

Stamp holders come in all sizes. They are sometimes in easily recognizable shapes of birds, animals, desks and other miniature furniture and mail

boxes and bags. Themes are another collecting facet—for example, sports- or postal-related. If you like variety in a collection, I think you will agree that stamp holders offer that and more.

*Acknowledgment* Special thanks to Catherine Kerr, Arthur Holbrook and Maurice Legros for assistance with the preparation of the original article.

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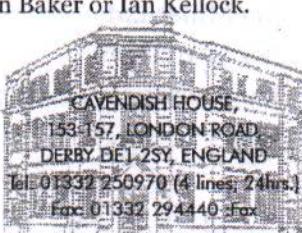
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# Premature release of the 1998 U of Ottawa stamp

Dale Speirs

I NEVER have any luck in discovering rare stamps in a musty attic, or buying a sheet or booklet and discovering an imperforate or missing colour. I did have one instance where I obtained stamps a week before they were to be issued. Such stamps are not valuable even if postmarked, but they are interesting curiosities.

On 17 September 1998, I went to a Calgary postal outlet where I regularly buy stamps for my mail. It will not be identified because the clerk at the time still works there, and I don't want to get her in trouble should a Canada Post official happen upon this article. As usual, I asked for commemoratives. I don't pay attention to the Canada Post stamp announcements, because I don't collect stamps per se, being a postal history specialist. I am vaguely aware of what stamps are coming out, based on a quick skim of the latest issue of *Details* (the Canada Post catalogue of new issues, available free by subscription or at most outlets). However, I don't pay attention to issue dates unless the stamp is being released at a Calgary first-day ceremony.

The clerk said she was out of commemoratives save for the University of Ottawa stamps. I took them for lack of any better alternative, not wanting any flag or QEII definitives. After leaving the outlet, it was nagging at the back of my mind that the Ottawa stamps shouldn't be out yet. When I got home, I checked the Canada Post announcement and discovered that the issue date was 25 September, next week.

The only method to prove a premature release date is to get it postmarked, so I self-addressed some postcards and dropped them into a street letterbox. I didn't take them in for hand cancelling lest I attract the attention of a clerk who might realize that the stamps were not authorized yet. Since all street letterbox mail is machine-processed at the big sorting plant at Calgary International Airport, I calculated correctly that the postcards would go through unchallenged. The Calgary mail processing plant handles 1.3 million items per day, and postcards would be lost in the shuffle. In due course, the two postcards were returned to me, postmarked 18 September (Figure 1).

Premature stamp releases are not rare these days and not of great value. So many issues come and go that even an experienced postal clerk can slip up. In retail outlets, operating in a corner of a convenience store or drugstore,

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Keywords & phrases: premature release

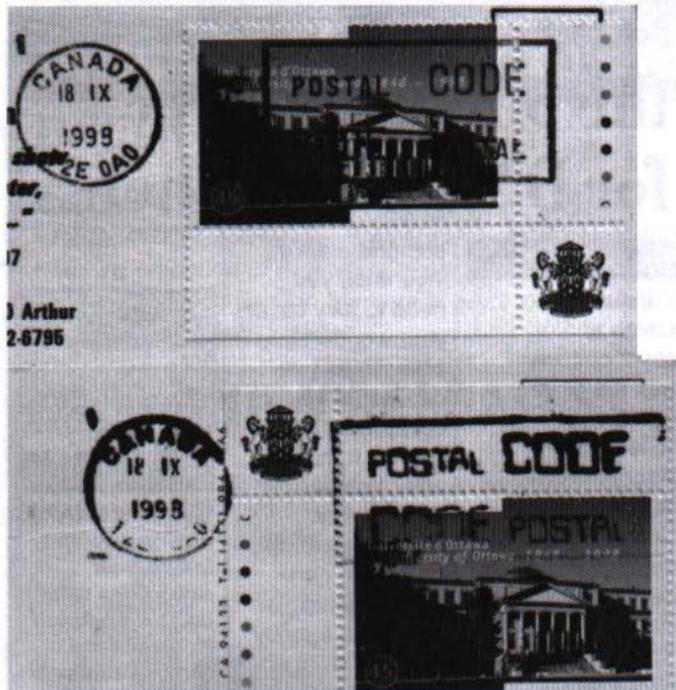


Figure 1. Uses of the stamp a week early

Dated 18 September 1998; the actual date of issue was 25 September.

there is a constant turnover of clerks. They have enough to do remembering how to use the computer terminal, never mind what stamp can be sold when. From a postal history viewpoint, accidental releases have no significance to posterity. If a stamp is used a week early, what of it? No empires will fall, and no cabinet minister will be forced to resign.

*[The editor is a faculty member at the University of Ottawa. When I first read the title, I thought that this article might be more appropriate for a medical journal.—ed]*

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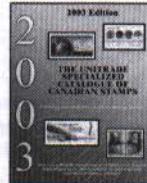
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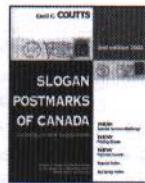
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# (35) Canadian Postal Guide ILLUSTRATED

C R McGuire

One of a series (initially 1983–89, and recommencing in 2001) illustrating points from Canada Postal Guides.

**P**RECANCELLED stamps were quite limited in their use, and were intended for large scale commercial mailings. The cover in Figure 1 shows that they were not acceptable for use on first class mail.



Figure 1. *Bad stamps* (1899)

Two 1¢ numeral precancels attempting to pay the first class domestic rate. The  $\otimes$  marking is a variation on the rarely seen (in Canada) UPU-authorized "0" (zero) used to indicate stamps not valid for postage, usually on international mail. The cover was sent to the Toronto Branch Dead Letter Office one day after it had been mailed from Peterboro, and it was handstamped RETURNED FOR DEFICIENT POSTAGE and charged 2¢ to be paid by the sender. It was opened at the Branch DLO in order to determine a return address. As it was then sent to the Ottawa DLO, no return address had been found. It would have been stored there awaiting destruction, although some dead letters, including this one, seem to have been "liberated".

Keywords & phrases: precancels

The following is from the 1914 Canada Postal Guide (paragraph 238); the cover indicates that this regulation was valid as early as 1899.

The use of pre-cancelled stamps (or stamps cancelled before actually used for payment of postage) on mail matter other than letters, is permitted in some of the larger centres, where extensive mailings are made, under very stringent regulations. The only authorized pre-cancelled stamps are those cancelled with a special die bearing the name of the mailing office, and such stamps are sold only to the largest mailing concerns under special restricted conditions. Requisitions for pre-cancelled stamps must be made by the postmaster direct to the Department (Postage Stamp Branch); but only after the use of such stamps at his office has been authorized by the Department. *In no circumstances may pre-cancelled stamps be used for payment of postage on letters.*

Postage stamps cancelled with the small roller canceller have been observed on letters and other articles passing in the mails, and postmasters are accordingly instructed that under no circumstances are they permitted to precancel postage stamps. The roller canceller is reserved for the cancellation of postage stamps on articles of second, third and fourth class matter, and must be used only on stamps after being actually affixed to such matter.

Any postmaster found to be precancelling stamps in any way, or selling pre-cancelled stamps without authority, will be held responsible for the full value of such cancelled stamps, and may also be subjected to the payment of a substantial fine.

According to the standard precancel catalogues, Canada had introduced *authorized* precancels in the late 1880s (on the 15¢ large queen). However, the earliest postal guide to mention precancels is that of 1914, cited above. I know of post office memoranda dated 1904 & 1906 which refer to (mis)use of precancels, and it is very likely that much earlier ones exist as well. The last (officially authorized) precancels occurred on the floral issue of 1977. More examples of precancel misuse will appear in subsequent columns.



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# Book Reviews

⇒ *Canada's registered mail 1802–1909: From money letters through insurance for a fee* (2002) by H W Harrison, G B Arfken & H W Lussey; edited by Gray Scrimgeour. Published by the Collectors Club of Chicago, 488+xi pp, 8½"×11", hard cover, glare paper; 500+ illustrations. Available from publisher at US\$80 postpaid to the US, and from Auxano Philatelic Services at Can\$125 postpaid to Canada for members of BNAPS.

**R**Egistration is a very old postal service. Its name (in English) likely originates in the practice of entering data about the postal item in a *register* that was kept by the post office. This service, of having the recipient sign for a letter, existed under the (worldwide) medæval Venetian postal system (they also had some services which we don't have, such as gallows-guaranteed mail—the sender, by paying an extra fee, could ensure that if the mail were late on a specified leg of the route, the courier would be put to death; perhaps Canada Post should look into offering this service).

By the late eighteenth century, many European centres had made registration available. For example, Britain offered extremely expensive registration on packages coming from abroad (one guinea, i.e., 21 shillings, typically applied to parcels of diamonds, at a time when diamonds were real gems).

Great Britain instituted a money letter system in 1792. Any letter marked as such, or clearly containing coin ("money" referred to coins) would be given special treatment. There was no extra charge for the service, but the weight of the enclosure would add considerably to the postage. To obtain money letter treatment for paper items, senders would add a farthing coin. A remarkably early 1794 example is shown in the registration website of Mr Maurice Buxton, <http://www.geocities.com/mauricebuxton/>

Registration as we know it (for a flat fee, albeit without indemnity) was introduced experimentally in Ireland in the very early nineteenth century, but was begun in England only in 1841, and continued to be the subject of political battling for decades. Oddly, New South Wales introduced registration earlier than the mother country (1835).

In the US, there was no special handling applied to letters of value, until an informal system of "registration" developed in various centres (Philadelphia being the most prominent) in the mid-1840s. This was modelled on the Canadian money letter system, and at some US border offices, they actually used the term "money letter".

For more information on the history of registration in the UK, see *Registered mail of the British Isles* published by the author, James A MacKay (1982). For more on early registration in the US, see the recently published *United States registered mail 1845–1870*, by James W Milgram, published (1998) by David G Phillips.

Canadian covers marked *money letter* or *cash letter* are known from the mid-1820s, and covers which were known to have carried money but were not so marked on the outside are known in the period 1822–25 (these are called *pre-money* letters; as far as I am aware, this term first appeared in an issue of *The Registry*, newsletter of the BNAPS registration study group). Although money letters could be sent outside the Province of Canada, examples are scarce (to the US) to rare (anywhere else).

There was no charge per se for money letter service, and although special treatment was given, there was no proof of delivery, no indemnity, . . . In 1855, Canada introduced registration domestically; this involved a flat fee of 1d cy, and the sender received a receipt on registering an item. Registration to the US was available the next year, but to the UK, it took several more years, apparently as a result of bureaucratic foul-ups.

While domestic registration rates were reasonable, registration to elsewhere than the US or the British Empire, was problematic at best in this period. Until the GPU/UPU was formed in 1875–76, all foreign rates were extremely complicated, and were route-dependent. When Canada entered the UPU (1878), the rates and procedures became standardized, except of course to non-UPU countries (for example, the Australian States did not adhere to the UPU until 1891, and before then the registration fee for a letter from Canada to NSW was triple the fee to a UPU country).

In 1875, Canada issued three registration stamps, and became one of very few countries to issue any (others include: Colombia, Dominican Republic, Liberia, New South Wales, Panama, Queensland, Salvador, US, Venezuela, Victoria). Canada's are quite distinctive both in colour and design, and were in normal use for almost twenty years.

A battle had been brewing in the UK before the introduction of registration, concerning indemnity. Some postal reformers were in favour of cheap registration, and this would include indemnity. This conflict lasted decades, and it wasn't until the late 1870s that UK offered indemnity, either by default or as an extra chargeable service. However, Canada did not have any indemnity until 1904, when an insurance scheme was introduced—for a small fee, a small amount of indemnity for loss was available. This was replaced by a default indemnity c 1910, and it wasn't until 1924 that several levels of indemnity were again available on registered matter.

In 1971, Horace Harrison wrote the fundamental book, *Canada's registration system, 1827–1911*. It was slim, it was expensive (for its time—Horace was embarrassed about the price, \$7.50 for under 100 pages), it had errors and inaccuracies, it showed a few fakes (as real), but it was the basic book on the subject. More importantly, it showed what was there to be studied, what sort of material to look for, and how interesting it was.

To call the book under review "an update of . . ." Horace's first book, as the blurb accompanying the book does, is to grossly underestimate it. In many aspects, it is incredibly detailed, with over 500 illustrations. It is an essential book on Canadian registration, and a wonderful source of information. Anyone with an interest in the money letter or registration systems in Canada should fork out the money and buy the book (or become editor of a philatelic journal and—eventually—receive a review copy).

The illustrations by themselves justify publication of the book.

## Contents

The book is divided into five parts: I money letters, II registration up to the introduction of registration postage stamps (RLS); III RLS; the very long part IV dealing with registration after the introduction of the RLS, up to 1909, and V (some) registration postmarks. There are also extensive appendices, but more about these later. Unfortunately, there is virtually no discussion of the history of registration in other jurisdictions, nor very little in terms of comparison. This parochial attitude seems to be endemic to studies in Canadian postal history.

There are other problems with the book. A very minor interpretative one appears in the nineteenth century style title (prolix and capitalized). Remember (earlier in this review), I said that the first money letter items appeared in the 1820s—where did 1802 come from? It refers to an 1802 cover sent through the mails and inscribed "with a parcel/money per courier . . .". I don't regard this as a money letter, nor even as evidence of the existence of a money letter system. It simply means the same courier who was taking the mail was also taking money. Of course, interpretation is coloured by ownership of the material, and this becomes an issue in the book.

There is a scheme for rating covers according to scarcity, with seven levels, varying from VC (very common, Viet Cong, or Victoria Cross) to R (rare, or of course registered), to RRR (exceedingly rare, or return receipt requested). I believe this is from Europe, whither it should be returned. It is based on numbers of covers known. Unfortunately, in this book, this means the numbers of covers in the collections of the authors and perhaps a few other associates. It would have been more honest to give estimates of scarcity

(and four divisions are sufficient: common, scarce, rare, nearly unique) based simply on the experience of the authors, rather than resorting to statistically dubious justification. I suspect that the inclusion of rarity factors was due to pressure from dealers. If they're not willing to devote the time to study the material, they shouldn't be catered to in this manner. Moreover, some of the assigned ratings do not correspond to reality.

There are a few cases where a mountain has been made of a mole hill. For example, so-called *divided payment* is discussed on pp 6–8. Supposedly, this occurs in the money letter period when the sender pays part of the postage, and the receiver the rest. The implication is that the payment by the sender is deliberately partial. In fact, in all but one of the covers illustrated (as far as I can tell from the grainy pictures), a more likely explanation is that the cover was rerated at a subsequent office, likely because more sheets were detected (this was often done by candling). The other item (Figure 10, p 7) is a lovely cover showing that the postmaster was entitled to send two sheets of mail per mailing as part of his perquisites, but this is hardly divided payment.

Another (more well-known) example appears on p 28, in the discussion of a money letter mailed on 30 April 1855. The next day, registration replaced the money letter system. It is claimed that this letter was treated as a registered item as it travelled through the system on subsequent days. There is no evidence that it was treated as a registered letter. The 1d registration fee was not paid or charged, there could have been no receipt given to the sender, there are no registration handstamps, . . . . A corresponding situation developed when the Province of Canada took over the postal system in April 1851. Letters that were mailed as postage due under the old regime, but were delivered under the new were not charged the new (cheap) rates, but the old expensive rates.

This explains the awkward statement (p 45)

The earliest registered letter we know of for which the sender should have been given a receipt was mailed . . . on May 8th 1855 . . . .

No reference is given for this item, even though it appeared in a recent issue of the *Registry* (which the editor of the book and two of its authors had received as members of the registration study group), nor is credit given to the discoverer. Moreover, the 8 May date is not the earliest (as shown in the *Registry*). Material not belonging to the authors is frequently treated in this cavalier fashion, e.g., in some censuses in part IV. The earliest registered Canadian cover is illustrated in Figure 1.

There is fairly detailed treatment of money letters to the US and UK. The former are scarce (the latter rare). Although the US had a "registration" system from the mid-1840s, it was not official and only locally implemented.

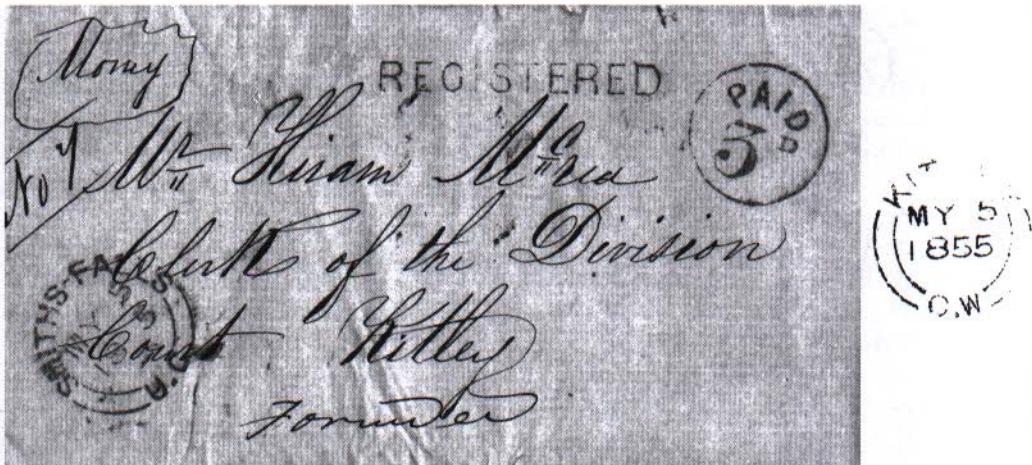


Figure 1. Earliest reported Canadian registered cover (5 May 1855)

Registration began on 1 May. The sender marked it *Money* (as would have been done several days earlier), but the postal clerk registered it. The registration number is either a one or a seven. The domestic postage was 3d, and the registration fee was 1d, both prepaid. Mailed from Smiths Falls to Kitley, where it arrived the same day; it was then forwarded to Frankville (at no extra charge, as the letter was prepaid). This cover was first illustrated in the *Registry*.

Normally, the US treatment of Canadian money letters did not involve actually marking them registered (and only a very few are known with a US registration number). There is one known exception (which also appeared in the *Registry*), illustrated in Figure 2.

There is an amusing clunker in part II (pre-RLS registration), which might also be another mountain out of a mole hill. Figure 83 (p 47) shows an 1857 registered cover from Terrebonne to Québec, purportedly rated 2/4 currency (pre-1851 rate) and corrected on receipt. In fact, what has been interpreted as 2/4 is obviously the registration number 214; in any event, a rerating would have necessitated striking through the old rate.

Parts I & II must be read with a grain of salt, and the conclusions and interpretations checked very carefully. Unfortunately, the off-hand manner in which the data and the material are presented does not inspire confidence.

Part III (about 90 pages) deals mostly with the plating of the three denominations of the RLS. There is a discussion of minor perforation "varieties" which I thought was a dead—in fact, decomposed—issue. The presence of the gutter in sheets of some of the stamps explains why so many have one horizontal straightedge. I was pleased that the authors have refuted the myth of 15 November 1875 as the first day of issue of the 2¢ RLS.

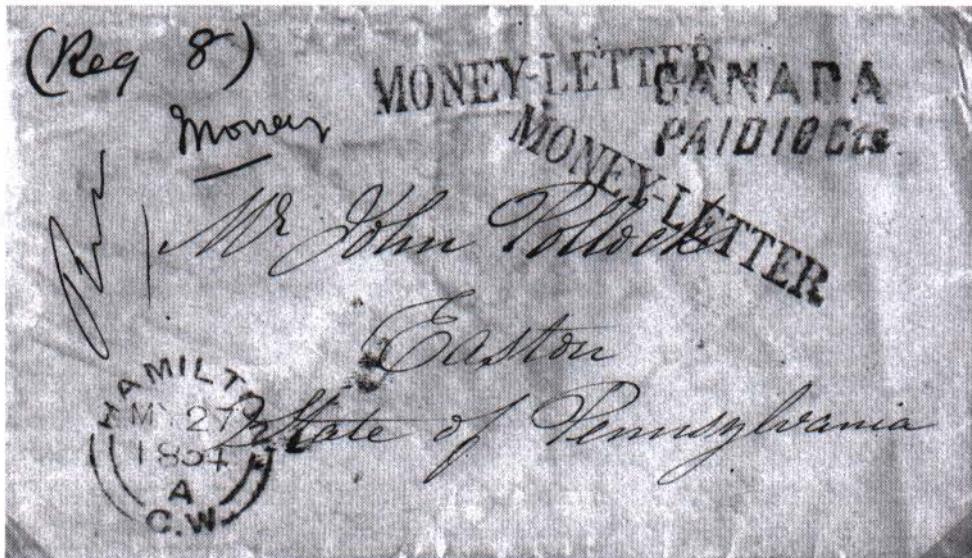


Figure 2. Hamilton to Pennsylvania, money letter to registered letter (1854)

Mailed with postage paid in full, handstamped MONEY LETTER at Hamilton. The (Reg 8) refers to a very low registration number (normal for US), and the parentheses suggest that the postmaster at Easton or the exchange point might have been unsure about how to treat it. The ms *Money* seems to be in the same ink and handwriting, and is relatively frequently seen at border towns. Only known Canadian money letter with a US "registration" marking. The sideways *Rec* marking is discussed in the book (but not listed in the index) for covers in this period.

Part IV concerns post-1875 registration. By this time, the first official postal guide had been issued, and in 1878, Canada joined the UPU. Both of these events make it much easier to find information on the registration system, and this is reflected in a more convincing treatment than is the case for pre-1875. A notable exception is the discussion of AR (*avis de réception*, acknowledgment of receipt, advice of delivery). It is misleading and holey, and the text portion of it should be ignored.

Part V discusses some registration postmarks. The first group seemed to be Horace's favourites, the registered RPO (railway post office) markings. He publicized them (over-)enthusiastically. The second group are the generally scarce oval date stamps (called OVRDS in the text). Why weren't other registered markings included?

At least a couple of illustrated covers seem a little off (e.g., Figure 25 looks too good to be true, and Figure 228, a holdover from the first registration book, appears implausible to me).

The appendices, all 36 of them, are low resolution photographs of official documents, although the occasional one is transcribed. Written in the florid language of the 19th century, these are very difficult to absorb, and in many cases the quality of the reproduction makes reading them painful. It would have been far better to transcribe or summarize most of them, and index them extensively (more about the index soon).

## Ease of use

A small font on a big page, large leading, and outrageously large paragraph spaces—the outcome is that reading is tiring. This is exacerbated by the use of “wrap-around” text. This is one of the many flashy effects offered by proprietary software, and here, text is wrapped around almost every single picture. This makes it hard to know where to read. Moreover, in a few cases, what appears to be the wrap-around text is actually a second paragraph (in the wrong font) of the caption/legend of the illustration. This illustrates the saying, “just because one *can* do something doesn’t mean one should.”

Illustrations of covers should almost always have a date (or year) in their caption or legend. This is especially important for many of the items shown here, since they are often “earliest known use of . . .”. Frustratingly, only a small proportion show the date or year.

The illustrations were based on photographs. Those in the latter half of the book (except the appendices) came out well, especially those of the stamps. Those in the first half were rather grainy and somewhat obscure. The appendices were photographs of text—these will always come out poorly unless extreme measures are adopted. (Text set by the word processor will be printed at about 1200 dots per inch; images are typically at 200–300dpi, although the resolution in the appendices is lower.)

I haven’t mentioned postal rates. Instead of a few compact tables summarizing all the rates covered by the book, the reader is subjected to bits and pieces of rates placed helter skelter in the text. Moreover, many of them are given in the verbose bureaucratese that we have come to dread. The index is somewhat helpful here. Still, it would have been preferable to put the rates in compact and readable tables, and all in the same section.

The book has 500+ illustrations. There should have been a list of illustrations, but there isn’t. There is however, a list of tables.

At least the book has an index. However, it is not adequate for a book of this importance or size. In preparing this review, I have gone through the book page by page at least a dozen times, looking for things I had seen in the text, and which were not in the index.

The index is not sufficiently detailed. There is no excuse for this, as even

such convoluted pieces of software as *Word* and *WordPerfect* have mechanisms for creating extremely detailed indices.

The style of writing is mostly pleasantly informal. There are numerous anecdotes explaining how one of the authors (almost certainly Horace) obtained or just missed obtaining one of the illustrated covers, and numerous conjectures about the stories behind the material. Normally, this type of book is written in a formal pedantic style, and I applaud the authors' decision to make the material a little lighter than normal. The authors' sense of humour is shown in the following, from the bottom of page 54<sup>1</sup>.

Pages 37–45 of *Canada's decimal era, postal usage during the decimal era, 1859–1868* are filled with illustrations and text concerning the registration of domestic letters. Later on in the same book, there are [sic] considerable text and illustrative material on registration to the us, the United Kingdom and foreign destinations. . . . *Canada's decimal era* is highly recommended.

While I don't object to withering sarcasm (and it certainly makes reading more interesting), it should be done with care; the attribution at the bottom of p 140 is false.

## Appearance and typography

As mentioned earlier, the font is too small for the page size, the leading (line spacing) too large, the paragraph spaces absurd. All-caps (REGISTERED) are overwhelming; small caps—never used in the book—(REGISTERED) are more elegant. Similarly, 214 (lower case numerals, never used in the book) is much less dominating than 214.

How fractions are set is important in this book, since pre-1859 currency notation is written as 2/4 (two shillings four pence), but fractional amounts such as 4½ (four and a half) appear frequently. It is important to distinguish the two uses of the slash. Unfortunately, a proper slashed fraction ½ is not used—instead, an awful small fraction is employed, but not consistently.

What is it about accents that makes American publications ignore them? The accents on John Dewé, payé, enregistrée, avis de réception are missing.

Finer typographical features, such as kerning, ligatures, hanging punctuation, etc, are totally absent. Widows abound, and there are frequent grotesque constructions, such as "1 cent" being separated over two lines. The letter x is used for ×. Underlining occurs extensively! How much effort does it take to read a couple of elementary books on typography?

The tables could have been made easier to interpret.

<sup>1</sup> This reminded me of a scene from the movie version of Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*—in it, one of the "book people" represents *The Martian Chronicles*—by Ray Bradbury!

There is an enormous amount of white space, in addition to that resulting from the paragraph spacing. There was no need for the awkward and heavy 8½"×11" format. I interpret the use of glare paper as an attempt (which will probably succeed) to convince readers that this is a high quality production, when in fact production values are mediocre.

The binding and covers appear to be good, but I haven't dropped the book on the floor yet.

This is an important book despite its many flaws. It is also overpriced. Nonetheless, collectors with an interest in Canadian registration should buy the book anyway.

*The Editor*

Something funny happened on my way to the rostrum by D Geoffrey Manton (2001), edited by Harry Dagnall, soft cover, 42+vi pages; ISBN 0 9525626 2 2. Published by Cavendish Philatelic Auctions Ltd (Cavendish House, 153–157 London Road, Derby DE1 2SY GB); price: £7.99

**A**s the author says in his introduction, this is a potted history of one period in the life of Cavendish Auctions. Geoffrey Manton (died in 2002) was the founder of Cavendish, a major British auction house (which often has Canadian items). He was a Fellow of one of our sister organizations, the CPSGB, and there are a few other Canadian connections—even a photograph of Stan Lum. Written in an amusing style with numerous anecdotes throughout, it is worth spending a half-hour on; more, if you are familiar with the dramatis personæ. The price is British.

*The Editor*

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# What's new?— National Archives of Canada Philatelic Collections

Cimon Morin

This column is provided on a regular basis in order to publicize new acquisitions and activities within the philatelic area at the National Archives of Canada (NA). Researchers who wish to use the NA facilities should contact, in writing, the National Archives of Canada, Reference Services, 395 Wellington Street, Ottawa ON K1A 0N3 [fax: (613) 995-6274; e-mail: [reference@archives.ca](mailto:reference@archives.ca); Internet website: <http://www.archives.ca>]

## Former acquisitions

*Rosemary J Nickle collection* [philatelic record] 1904–1918, 9 postage stamps: die proofs. Includes twentieth century process material, consistent with the overall nature of Rosemary Nickle's personal collection. Collection consists of nine progressive die proofs: 1908 Quebec Tercentenary, 2¢ & 20¢; Cartier-Macdonald Centenary (1934), 1¢, 7¢, 20¢, & 50¢. [R4047]

*Sam C Nickle collection* [philatelic record, graphic material] 1715–1885, 1935–1939, one map: hand coloured, 103cm × 62cm. one postal stationery item: essay, die proof, embossed, wove paper, light blue; one print: half-tone; eight postage stamps: essays. Collection consists of an original 1715 map, *A New and Exact Map of the Dominions of the King of Great Britain on the Continent of North America, Containing Newfoundland, New Scotland, New England, New York, New Jersey, Pensilvania (sic), Maryland, Virginia and Carolina* drawn "According to the Newest and most Exact Observations by Herman Moll, Geographer", and dedicated to the Honourable Walter Dowglass, Esqr, 1711.

The collection also contains an 1877 American Bank Note Company 3¢ postal stationery envelope essay in the form of an embossed die proof; a print depicting mail conveyance between Touchwood and Clarkes Crossing during the 1885 Northwest Rebellion, extracted from Souvenir number one of the *Canadian pictorial & illustrated war news*; as well as eight postage stamp essays hand-painted by Charles Mack, a former designer with American Bank Note Company, New York. The stamps include the 2¢ War memorial issue, \$1 sailing vessels issue, 5¢ Prince of Wales issue, 8¢ King George v

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Keywords & phrases: National Archives of Canada

issue, 50¢ Royal Yacht Britannia 1935 King George V Silver Jubilee issue, and three versions of the 1937 1¢ King George VI definitive. [R4574]

*Lindsay M McLennan fonds* [textual record] 1932–1981, one cm of textual records. Comprised of personal correspondence, research notes, stamp club meeting notices, Canadian postage stamp dealer price lists and related documents. Correspondents include Fred Jarrett and H E Guertin. Dealers include C P Arnold, F G Atkinson, Rev E A Butler, J S Siverts, and Stanley Stamp Co Ltd. The majority of the meeting notices were issued by the Stamp Club of Hamilton during the 1930s. [R4931-0-4-E]

*Ralph D Mitchener collection* [philatelic record, textual record] 1940–1957. one postal cover, 4cm of textual records (265 p), one album (three pictures, two panes of labels, one leaf). Consists of one postal cover, 4cm of textual documents, and one album (seven pages). The cover is a first day cover (FDC) with cachet for the Canada sports series issued 7 March 1957 (Scott #365–368). The textual documents include a 260 page typescript, entitled *Opening and closing dates of Canadian post offices*, researched and written by Frank W Campbell, as well as a price list (five pages), which covers Canadian postal stationery and was prepared by Nelson Bond, an American stamp dealer from Roanoke VA. Finally, the album comprises seven pages of philatelic ephemera regarding the portrait of Queen Victoria, by Alfred Edward Chalon, including an information page researched by Colin H Bayley, three commercial reproductions of the piece, two souvenir panes (each containing four labels, printed by Perkins Bacon Ltd), and a leaf of stationery containing an embossed Canadian coat-of-arms upon which is mounted an example of the Perkins Bacon Ltd label, in deep blue. [R4609-0-0-E]

*Montreal Philatelic Society fonds* [textual record] 1890–1914, 2cm of textual records. Consists of records created by the Montreal Philatelic Society in the period 1890–1914. These include the Society's constitution, by-laws, annual reports, notices and minutes of general meetings, miscellaneous correspondence, and membership lists and correspondence. [R4682-0-5-E]



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# Study group centreline

Robert Lemire

**T**HE purpose of this column is to bring to the attention of BNAPS members the fascinating specialist work being done within each of our study groups. My apologies in advance to authors and contributors whose articles are omitted; it is impossible to discuss the entire contents of every newsletter. Even with the help of the newsletter editors I can select only a few highlights. The summaries below represent what has arrived in my hands from mid-December 2002 through early March 2003.

The Slogan Cancels Newsletter, discussed below, is interesting beyond its content. It may represent part of a new wave of philately. The newsletter is being made available on the BNAPS Web site. The first issue in this format can be read as an *Adobe Acrobat* file. It will be interesting to see how these issues will be archived for long-term retrieval. The other side of this change is that because printing and postage charges have been eliminated, there is no direct charge for the newsletters, and indeed they are equally available to BNAPS and non-BNAPS members with Internet access.

*Re-entries* Volume 20, #4 of the newsletter of the Canadian Re-entry Study Group contains a guide for distinguishing similarly re-entered copies of the 3¢ beaver from three different plate positions. There is also an illustration of a lovely block of the 2¢ numeral issue, showing re-entries on all four copies. As part of a series begun in the previous issue by Ron Waldston, four more re-entry copies of the 3¢ small queen issue are shown.

*Queen Elizabeth II* In Volume 11, #4 of the *Corgi Times*, Brian Cannon describes stamp varieties that appeared only in the 2002 quarterly pre-packed collections or the annual Collection Canada album. These items, primarily cutting and folding varieties, are distinctly different from the stamps that were originally issued. Then there is the article by Robert Elias. He has examined the paper on over 13,000(!) dated copies of stamps from the Wilding definitive issues, and has established that not only is the direction of the ribbing (horizontal or vertical) important, but that the side on which the ribbing occurs (front or back) can be demonstrated to be associated with copies of stamps used in particular periods. Robin Harris provides an update on the different types of bar codes being used on sheets of the current definitive issue stamps, and notes that the font used on sheets of the 2¢ definitive is smaller than that used on sheets of other denominations.

*Revenues* Issue 40 of the Canadian Revenue Newsletter features two articles. Leopold Beaudet illustrates and discusses examples of corner folds on Cana-

dian revenue stamps (and despite running four pages with 19 illustrations, is only a short selection from his 50 page compilation). Although dismissed as oddities or freaks by some, these corner-fold items provide information on how the stamps were printed. The third part of Chris Ryan's study of *Canada's Stamp Taxation of Tobacco Products: 1864–1974* deals with tobacco stamps in use in the period 1880–1883, and the regulations that governed their use. As I mentioned when the first two parts of the series appeared, this is essential information for anyone collecting these issues.

**RPO cancels** The bulk of the November–December 2002 issue of the newsletter is devoted to "Annex 21"—five pages of new listings, corrections and amendments to the RPO catalogue. The Annex was compiled by Bill Robinson with the assistance of Chris Anstead. In the January–February issue, there are a number of short items, the most extensive of which is an illustrated discussion of the RPO on the Montreal & Toronto Canadian Pacific Railway line. It is concluded that reports of strikes prior to 1887 are probably erroneous. Chris Anstead provides an up-to-date hammer study of two hammers, O-75Z and O-76, used on the Fort William & Winnipeg run.

**Military mail** The January 2003 issue of the newsletter contains an article by Doug Sayles, based in part on *Post Offices at RCAF Stations Regulations and Instructions*, issued by the Canadian Postal Corps in 1942. Handling of general delivery mail is discussed, and the rather different processes used for registered, special delivery and parcel mail are described. Doug also suggests that the procedures were probably used on a trial basis at Trenton in 1941 before being applied more generally. From Colin Campbell comes a photocopy of an illustrated Christmas air mail letter card (marked FREE XMAS MAIL) sent by a member of the RCAF based in Ceylon—a very unusual item.

**Large & small queens** In newsletter #23 John Hillson describes two BABNC sample sheets with impressions of the left-facing portrait used for the 8¢ small queen design. He takes this as strong evidence that BABNC did not contract out the work of engraving the eight cents design. Photocopies of four pages of Herb McNaught's award-winning exhibit of the ½¢ small queen are appended to the newsletter.

**World War II** The February 2003 issue of *War Times* features an article by Gil Vatter on the v...— Morse slogan cancel that was used in 20 post offices. There are a number of excellent illustrations, including one of an O.H.M.S. cover with the scarce Campbellford marking. Rob McGuiness shows a nice assortment of patriotic envelopes used by the British Columbia and the North West telephone companies. Chris Miller presents examples of envelopes used by the Censorship Co-ordination Committee. Five different envelopes, with three different franking signatures, are illustrated.

*Squared circle cancels* The *Round-Up Annex* of January 2003 contains more than thirty new reports on squared circle cancels—updates and extension of information in the handbook. Jim Miller continues his series on the orb cancels with descriptions of the two different two-ring orb hammers used by the Dead Letter Office in Ottawa.

*Slogan cancels* The *Slogan Box New Series Vol 1, #1 (2002)* has been posted to the BNAPS Web page. Editor Cecil Coutts has contributed a number of short items on recent finds. These include a 1963 "Welcome Home Celebration" slogan from Wellington ON and a 1968 "SAGA Steam Show" slogan cancel from Collingwood ON. Seven pages of illustrations of newly reported handstamp slogans are provided. There is an announcement of the publication of the new (July 2002) edition of the *Slogan Postmarks of Canada*, by Cecil Coutts [reviewed in Topics 2002 #4—ed].

*Postal stationery* In *Postal Stationery Notes, Volume 18, #4*, Chris Ellis continues his series on illustrated cards. Cards used (1899–1936) by Thomas Robertson & Company in Montreal are featured. John Grace illustrates eight different small size (cut-down) P66 cards with the printed address "Carter, Cummings & Co., Ltd." There is also an article by Pierre Gauthier about the artist whose illustrations of birds have been used on many of the recent #8 & #10 prestamped envelopes.

*British Columbia postal history* Inspired by Tracy Cooper's discovery of the first known copy of a strike from Ferney Coombe post office, a short history of the office is provided in newsletter *Volume 11, #4*. After less than four years, the name of the office was changed to Agassiz. A further list of recent rubber CDS handstamps is provided, as is a list of recent office openings and closings in the Pacific Division of Canada Post.

*Newfoundland* The Newfoundland Study Group has been searching out the history of watchmaker/stamp dealer Nils Ohman who lived in St John's in the 1880s and 1890s. In newsletter #98, Bob Dyer provided pictures of two early Ohman-related covers, with comments from Colin Lewis on the Ohman saga and on the postal history aspects of the covers. In newsletter #99, Anne Pallen presents biographical information obtained from the granddaughter of Nils Ohman.

There are also several interesting short pieces. Colin Lewis has found a cover that pushes the earliest known date of use of the 12¢ chestnut shade of the 1894 issue back to 31 July 1894. John Talman illustrates a strike from Placentia Bay that suggests a hammer was altered to read PEACENTIA shortly after the end of World War I. Aerophilatelists may be interested in the articles describing a proposed 2004 re-creation of the 1919 Alcock & Brown flight from St John's to Clifden in Ireland.

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*British North America Philatelic Society Ltd*

Home Page: <http://www.bnaps.org>

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(lingardd@istar.ca)

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Calgary AB T2R 0C9 (order@auxanostamps.ca)

*BNATopics Editor* David Handelman, Math Dept, University of Ottawa, Ottawa ON K1N 6N5  
(rochelle2@sympatico.ca [home], dehsg@uottawa.ca [office])

*BNATopics Editorial Assistant* Audrey Covert, 187 W 200 S Ave, Raymond, AB T0K 2S0

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*Webmaster* Robert Lane, 12 Gilchrist Place, St Albert AB T8N 2M3 (webmaster@bnaps.org)

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**Subscriptions:** For members of the Society, \$ 12.50—included in membership fees; members automatically receive the journal. Non-members: \$ 20.00. For information contact the Secretary, address above.

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For electronic text, please leave a blank line between paragraphs. Names should be written with initials (or full given names) first, and without periods (as in, I P Freely, not Freely, I.P.). Preferred format for dates is day month year, as in 13 September 1752. Avoid use of all-caps, footnotes, or underscoring unless absolutely, positively NECESSARY.

**Literature for review:** Send to Literature Reviews, c/o David Handelman, Editor

Please note that unless prior agreement is obtained from the Editor, literature for review *must* be sent to the Editor, who will select an arms-length reviewer.

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