

THE CANADIAN DEAD LETTER OFFICE

*The British North America
Philatelic Society
Dead Letter Office
Study Group
Newsletter*

Jan – Mar 2010 Issue 3

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Branch Dead
Letter Office

Winnipeg

Type I
Datestamps

*Feature Article
Brian Plain*

Moving Along

Issue #2 has been completed and can be seen or downloaded on the BNAPS website. Issue #3 will be the first one of 2010, a new year and decade. As time moves along we will advise the number of actual members having interest in our study group to help foster better communication.

Subject matter for articles on the Dead Letter Office can be endless. Although many articles could be for the advanced collector we realize that not all are at the same stage of collecting DLO material. We will try to balance articles from short to long and light detail to in-depth and provide articles on policies and regulations as compared to actual usage.

Chairman's Desk

Material from Canada's Dead Letter Office continues to arouse the interest of a diversity of collectors of Canadian postal history. It is hoped that this interest will translate into increased membership in our study group, for it is only by such a method that more material will be reported and data base listings can be enhanced. The diversity of cancellations, and the geographic spread of offices across the country, allows for regional or city specialists to participate. This will benefit us all.

Finding material can be challenging, however it is not impossible. It may be found lurking in dealer's boxes, usually labeled as *miscellaneous* or *back of the book*. It may also be found in boxes containing postage due material, postcards, military mail, and foreign mail. Clues to the presence of Dead Letter or Undeliverable Mail Office markings are often found on the front of covers in the form of advice, regulatory or directional markings. Never forget to look at the back of such covers. There, a keen eye may discover an elusive marking that fits a special niche in one's collection. The internet also provides an excellent source of material, and one should never be shy about asking a vendor for a scan of the reverse of a listed item. Failing to ask may risk missing a significant cancel or datestamp.

I would encourage all readers of this newsletter to consider joining our study group, and to become active hunters and reporters.

*The Canadian Dead
Letter Office Study
Group*

The Canadian Dead Letter Office Study Group comes under the sponsorship of The British North American Philatelic Society (BNAPS)

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Editor's Comments

In this issue we start off with an article by Brian Plain analyzing the **Branch Dead Letter Office, Winnipeg: Type I Datestamps**. Winnipeg has some of the earliest known branch DLO handstamps and covered one of the widest regions in all of Canada.

As an introduction on a variety of Dead Letter Office handstamps I have included an article on the different colour inks used titled **Dead Letter Office Ink**.

A continuation article will be written on DLO policies and procedures over different periods.

Everyone is welcome to send in an item of interest, or if you have a question we can use it as a Question & Answer session.

Included below is a short piece I found on a Postal Convention between Canada and the United States. There are many similar items that are small but can have a large impact on how material is handled over the years.

Return of Dead Letters between Canada and The United States

Postal Convention between Canada and the United States signed March 1851 printed also in Hertslet's Commercial Treaties, Vol XV, p. 435, taken from the British and Foreign State Papers, vol. LXVII, p. 1164

Articles of agreement between the Post Office Department of the United States and the Post Office Department of Canada.

Section X.

The Post Office Department of the United States and Canada shall each return to the other all dead letters, unopened and without charge, every three months, or oftener, as may best suit the general regulations of each Department.

Reciprocal agreements were the lifeblood that kept mail moving smoothly especially between high traffic neighbours like the US and Canada.

BRANCH DEAD LETTER OFFICE, WINNIPEG: Type 1 Datestamps

Brian Plain

Winnipeg was one of the Canadian post offices assigned a Branch Dead Letter Office in the postal expansion of 1898. The Winnipeg Division initially covered western Canada with the exception of British Columbia and extended into the Algoma District of Ontario, west of Port Arthur. In the initial few years, it was an extremely busy office and records one of the earliest known uses of any expansion phase date stamp (July 20th 1898). As the volume of mail processed through this office increased, the Post Office Department found it necessary to open further offices at Edmonton and Regina.

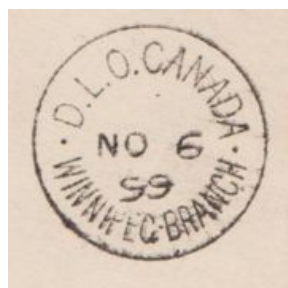
Four Type 1 date stamps are known. They are the typical, steel, CDS markings that vary in size from 23.5mm to 25mm in diameter. The database listing for these daters is shown below.

TYPE	WORDING	SIZE	PROOF	ERD	LRD	#
WIN1-a1	D.L.O.CANADA / .WINNIPEG.BRANCH.	25mm	unk	20/7/1898	6/7/21	20+
WIN1-a2	D.L.O.CANADA / .WINNIPEG.BRANCH.	25mm	unk	9/9/1898	7/8/1900	6
WIN1-a3	D.L.O.CANADA / WINNIPEG BRANCH	23.5mm	unk	4/9/07	18/11/20	8
WIN1-b1	D.L.O.CANADA.WINNIPEG.BRANCH / .	23.5mm	26/6/08	23/10/09	21/9/10	2

TYPE	COMMENTS
WIN1-a1	Letters 3.5mm. In July 1899 an '8' is seen over the date. It was initially postulated that there were two periods of use for this datestamp. However the reporting of several additional strikes has shown it to have been in continuous use throughout the recorded period
WIN1-a2	Letters 3mm
WIN1-a3	No dots
WIN1-b1	Dot at the foot of the strike, similar to RPO markings



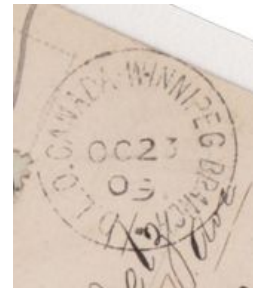
Type WIN1-a1



Type WIN1-a2



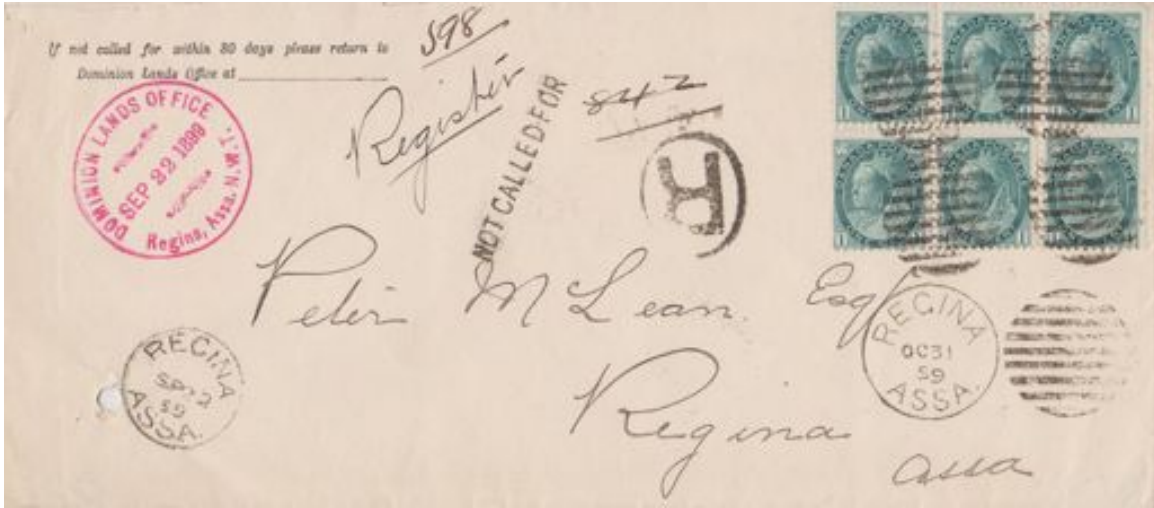
Type WIN1-a3



Type WIN1-b1

As can be seen from the above, each marking is quite distinct in appearance, and can easily be identified, even from partial strikes. Winnipeg DLO date stamps are generally, but not always, found as back strikes. Examples on cover are shown below.

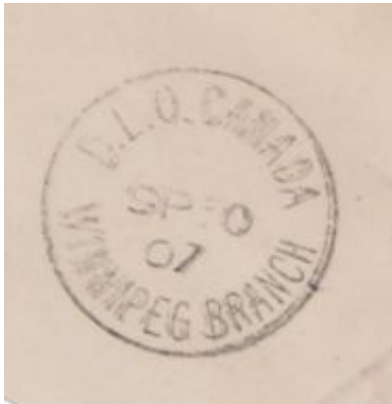
WIN1-a1 and WIN1-a2



Mailed at Regina on September 22nd 1899, this registered drop cover failed of delivery. It was held in the Regina post office until October 31st 1899, at which time the gateway marking NOT CALLED FOR was applied following which the item was sent to the Dead Letter Office, the regional branch of which was located in Winnipeg. It could not simply be returned to the Dominion Lands Office in Regina as there was no Return Request.

It was received at the Branch Dead Letter Office in Winnipeg on November 2nd 1899 where it the WIN1-a1 datestamp was applied. It was dispatched to the sender in Regina on November 6th, the WIN1-a2 signifying completion of DLO activity.

WIN1-a3



Mailed in Ottawa on August 23rd 1907 to an addressee at c/o the Post Office (General Delivery) in Winnipeg, this cover was NOT CALLED FOR. It was sent to the Dead Letter Office (date uncertain) but was not 'entered' for processing until September 24th. The date stamp shown above appears on the reverse and shows the date of completion date of DLO activity. Although slightly doubled, the strike shows no evidence of any side dots.

WIN1-b1



Mailed at Winnipeg on October 16th 1909, this card could not move forward to the United States as it lacked a postage stamp. A gateway marking, RETURNED FOR POSTAGE, was applied and the item was sent to the DLO where it arrived on October 18th, receiving a WIN2b oval date stamp. Upon receipt of the required amount of money or postage stamps, a stamp was applied and canceled with the WIN1-b1 date stamp on October 23rd. A second strike signifies completion of DLO activity.

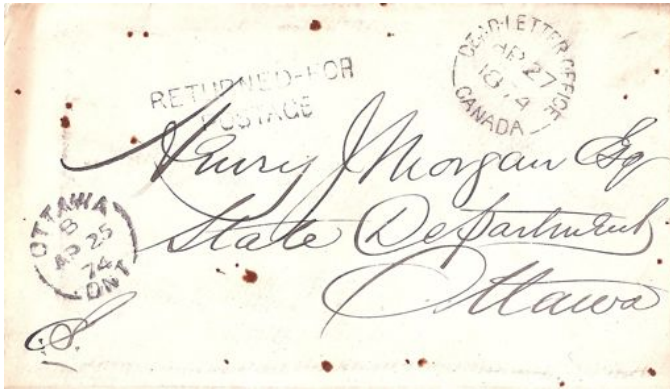
Dead Letter Office Ink

Gary Steele

This article is about the various inks used with Dead Letter Office handstamps and machine markings. Six different colour inks are found on DLO material; black, violet, purple, red, blue and green. There are also patterns of some ink colours used during different time periods such as black for the Pre 1898 period, or for specific markings such as the purple inked Superintendent double oval.

Early handstamps from 1870 to 1898 were only in black ink except for the Superintendent double oval handstamp.

Black Ink



Included in this period are the split rings, closed circles, circular and diamond shift marking handstamps.

Superintendent Double Oval blue ink



The Chief Superintendent handstamps similar to the Superintendent double ovals are also in blue ink after 1898.

Violet Ink

DEAD LETTER BRANCH W

One oddity in both type, time frame and ink used is a DEAD LETTER BRANCH W closed circle used after 1898 for a few years after decentralization of the Ottawa DLO. This item may be found in violet ink.

Note that the double circle handstamp is from the United States, as most U.S. DLO handstamps are of this colour. Lack of colours is not as visually appealing.



Purple Ink

Purple ink handstamps are less red in colour pushing more towards the blue end of the spectrum. Variations are from very light purple to dark purple as can be seen by the differences below. The darker purple is an advice bilingual marking, with the lighter handstamp a single frame rectangle from Montreal. Dates of use range from 1898 to the end of the DLO in 1954 over a broad spectrum of handstamps. It is generally the most common of ink colour used.



RECEIVED OPEN AT D.L.O.
 RECU DECACUETE AUX REBUTS
 MONTREAL

BUREAU DES REBUTS
 DEAD LETTER OFFICE
 MONTREAL, CANADA

Blue Ink

Blue and green inks are the least common colour of all DLO handstamps. There does not appear to be any pattern as to use of colour for some handstamps over others, other than what be on had at the time used with ink pens. Usage appears throughout early ovals and rectangular, although only sparingly in certain rubber circle handstamps.



Green Ink

Although not near as common as black, purple or violet ink, green does exist on oval, rubble circle and rectangular handstamps. The strikes can be as good in quality as purple and black



Red Ink

Ink colours such as red are a little harder to figure out. They could be mistaken as dark or light violet. In addition different colour paper can impact the colour.



^^ Machine steel cancellation same upright position always used with red ink.

<< Possible steel handstamp usually in red ink

Insufficiently Paid Small Queen Registered Covers to United States and Great Britain

Gary Steele

Some covers are challenging to explain, and this cover is a prime example. Mailed at Tioga, Ont. MR 19 85 to Broome Co., N.Y. with just a 2 cent registration stamp and a 3 cent Small Queen nicely tied with a star fancy cancel on each stamp.

to U.S.



Traveling by train, the cover arrived in Toronto later on the 19th. There, it was recognized as being short-paid and was marked **RETURNED FOR / DEFICIENT POSTAGE** before being forwarded to the Dead Letter Office in Ottawa, received MR 23 85 (closed circle handstamp on reverse).

The correct postage appears to be 5 cents registration fee, plus 3 cents payment for 1st half ounce and 3 cents for 2nd half ounce. At various times a short-paid registered letter required simple deficiency payment. Furthermore, should the first half ounce be fully prepaid, then by a reciprocal agreement between Canada and the United States, the only charge was the deficient amount (i.e. single deficiency on subsequent half ounces or portions thereof).

This is where the interpretation gets interesting, with the requirement that registration stamps only pay the registration fees (up to May 7 1889) and regular issue stamps to pay regular postage fees. Either way six cents postage was paid with a 5 cent registration stamp (requirement to pay registration fee with a registration stamp) and a 1 cent Small Queen cancelled with an Ottawa Dead Letter Office closed circle handstamp on MR 30 85.



With no return address included the Dead Letter Office would have opened the letter to try to find the sender's address. If no address of sender was found a notice would be sent to the addressee to send funds for payment of deficient postage so that the item could be forwarded.

to Great Britain

A favourite cover of mine is this double weight registered cover to Great Britain. A 5 cent registration stamp paid the 5 cent registration fee and a 5 cent Small Queen stamp paid the 1st half ounce rate. However, as it was overweight between ½ ounce and 1 ounce another 5 cents fee were required to be collected.



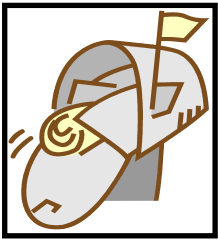
As this was a registered letter it was the responsibility of the post master to collect the proper postage.

Thus, only the simple deficiency of 5 cents was to be collected.

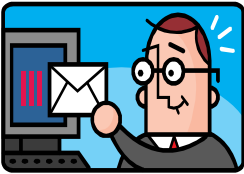
Mailed from Brantford, Ont on JY 22 91 the post office imprinted RETURNED FOR / POSTAGE on the front of the envelope. Per Canada Post Office regulations it was sent to the Ottawa Dead Letter Office 24 JY 1891 opened to determine the sender, notice sent to collect postage of 5 cents. Upon receipt a 5 cent Small Queen stamp was applied and cancelled by the Ottawa Dead Letter Office closed circle handstamp on 28 JY 1891.

Note once proper franking was applied the RETURNED FOR / POSTAGE gateway marking was crossed out. Transiting the Ottawa post office on JY 28 91 the letter made landfall in Manchester, Great Britain on 10 AU 91 arriving in Bakewell same day a mere 19 days later.

Member's Mail



We would like comments, suggestions, notes on articles, and questions posted in this section. This will be a forum for trying to use the expertise of all members. There will also be a Bulletin Board that we can use in-between newsletters to hash out certain key points and then have more concrete notes for the newsletters.



Dead Letter Office Per Postmaster's Information Book 1940

Section 565. District Dead Letter Offices

“...are located at Halifax, Quebec, Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, Winnipeg, Regina, Edmonton, Calgary, and Vancouver.”

These offices changed to the present listing above from decentralization of the Ottawa Dead Letter Office in 1898 on July 1st. By this time the Local Dead Letter Offices had been closed or changed to a Branch Dead Letter Office. In addition the Moose Jaw Branch Dead Letter Office had yet to be opened and the Victoria office was merged into the Vancouver office.

“Postmasters will be instructed by the District Director or District Superintendent as to which District Dead Letter Office returns are to be sent.”

Instructions were given and adjusted over time as to what mail was to be sent to the Dead Letter Offices, and as adjustments were made depending upon the changes in the mail system over the years. For instance the Second World War had a huge impact on the mail system with so many people traversing the globe with many lost or killed, mail being suspended to other countries or to Canada from other countries.

Section 566. “Request” and “Address” Matter

The greatest care is to be exercised to see that no letters or other items which under the regulations should be returned direct to the sender are included in a dead letter return.

This would require all return letters so marked on the front or back of the sender to not be included in any Dead Letter Return envelopes to the Dead Letter Office. Only items that require the expert attention and authority of the DLO to be opened should be sent.

Want List and For Sale List

Wanted - DLO handstamps on cover 1954 down, Registered Ambulance/Return Letter Envelopes with Wax Seals, any DLO correspondence with handstamps and Moose Jaw Local Office. Please e-mail gary.steele@ns.sympatico.ca

Wanted - Mail Service Suspended covers from the Second World War with or without DLO handstamps, please e-mail and I will advise if any particular country is still required: gary.steele@ns.sympatico.ca

For Sale - Canada covers, precancels, plate blocks and other postal history. If nothing showing in your area please email with your want list.

www.canadapostalhistorycovers.com

Wanted - Documents related to the Dead Letter Office, Canada prior to 1900 bcplain@shaw.ca

For Sale - 1 Cent Jubilee 1897 covers with and without combinations of other stamps. Please email for list or any specific needs. Also have precancels off cover and cancelled stamps gary.steele@ns.sympatico.ca