

**MORDEN'S USE OF "37" IN THE SQUARED CIRCLE TIME MARK SLOT (Brian Copeland)**

Time marks were not used in the Morden, Manitoba squared circle cancel. However, the postmaster at Morden celebrated Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee (1837-97) by inserting "37" into the time mark slot during the summer of 1897, and briefly later that year in December. This article reviews the chronology of this interesting aspect of squared circle postal history.

The use of 37 in the time mark slot coincided with the release of the Jubilee stamps. These stamps, issued on June 19, 1897, had the date 1837 under a picture of the young Victoria, and 1897 under a contemporary picture. The cancel reflected this, with 37 above the month and day, and 97 below. Fig. 1 shows a cover with a 3 cent Jubilee stamp and the Morden 37/97 cancel. It is not known when the practice started, but the earliest reported example is from June 24, 1897 (Fig. 2).



Figure 1. Morden (37/JY 24/97) to Toronto.



Figure 2. Morden (37/JU 24/97) sent locally

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Many surviving strikes of the Morden squared circle during this period are receiving marks on covers sent to *Tobias & Co.*, who ran a general store in Morden. Fig. 3 illustrates a cover to *Tobias & Co.* from the *Blackwood Brothers* in Winnipeg. It was received with a strike of the Morden squared circle (37/AU 23/97). Although backstamps are often viewed as less appealing than strikes on the front of covers, these strikes are very useful in establishing the pattern of usage. Fig. 4 shows backstamps from various covers illustrating use of 37 throughout the summer of 1897.



Figure 3. Winnipeg (7/AU 20/97) to Morden (37/AU 23/97)

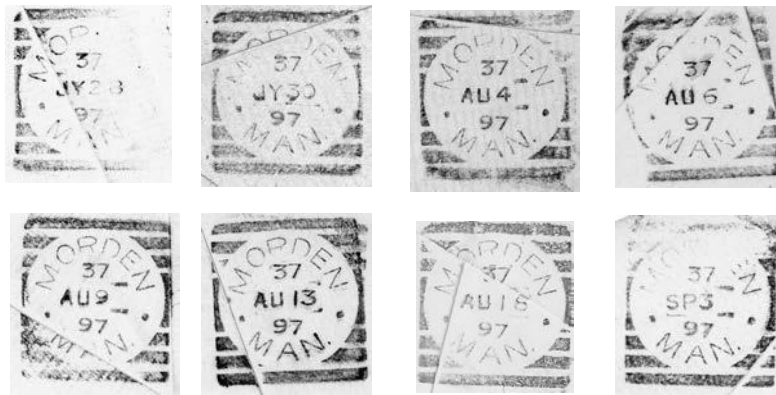


Figure 4. Receiving cancels cropped from scans of incoming covers to Morden, July to Sept. 1897

From June 24 to Sept. 7, 1897 there are a few days when 37 was absent. All known dates with a 7 in the day (such as Aug. 17, Aug. 27, and Sept. 7) do not have the 37, likely because there were not enough 7's available. All strikes I am aware of with dates not ending in 7 in this period (up to September 6) do have 37 in the time mark slot. However, strikes from many days remain unreported and so there may be anomalies. I would like to hear from readers who have items that differ from this pattern.

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Fig. 5 illustrates the pattern. The cancel on the far left is a backstamp from a cover received in Morden on Aug. 25 with 37 in the time mark slot. Next to this is a cancel on a stamp showing that 37 was also used on Aug. 26. The next scan is a cancel from Aug. 27, which has a 7 in the date. The time mark slot is blank, consistent with the theory that the 7 was needed for the day. The image on the far right (a crop of a scan of a Jubilee cover) shows that 37 was put back into the time mark slot on Aug. 28.



Figure 5. Morden 1897 strikes from Aug. 25, 26, 27 and 28.

Another example of this pattern is illustrated by the strike from Aug. 18 in Fig. 4. The Handbook reports that the time mark slot was blank on Aug. 17. The strike in Fig. 4 shows it was put back in the next day.

A deviation from the pattern occurred after Sept. 7, as shown in Fig. 6. 37 was in the time mark slot on Sept. 6, and was removed on Sept. 7 as expected. However, it was not put back in on Sept. 8. Nor was it there on Sept. 9 (far right of Fig. 6) or Sept. 11. Fig. 7 shows a Jubilee cover from Sept. 11 with the time mark slot blank.



Figure 6. Morden 1897 strikes from Sept. 6, 7, 8, and 9.

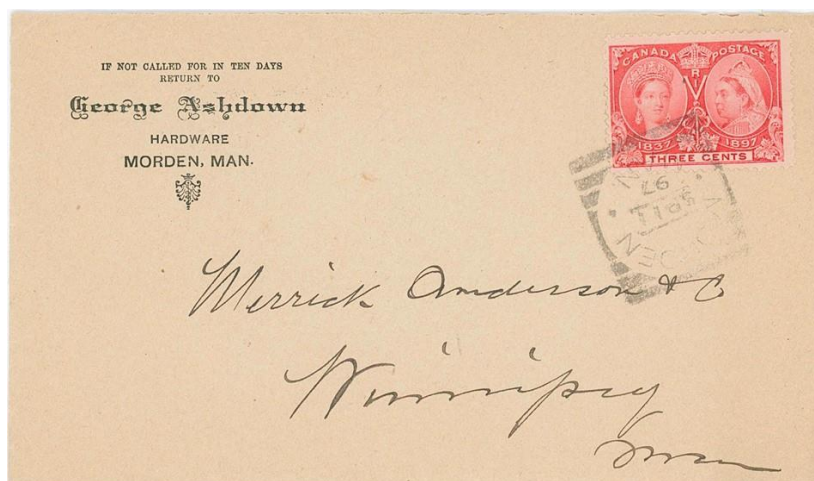


Figure 7. Morden (-/SP 11/97) to Winnipeg



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By Sept. 15, 37 was back. Fig. 8 shows strikes from Sept. 15, 22, and 24 with 37 in the time mark slot. The Handbook also reports strikes with 37 from Sept. 18 and 25.

As expected, 37 is not in time mark slot on Sept. 27 (see Fig. 8). I do not know if it was put back in the next day. The time for celebrating the Jubilee was passing. Fig. 8 shows a strike from Sept. 30 that does not have 37. As well, there are no reports of 37 from October or November 1897. Fig. 9 shows a few backstamps from these two months and Fig. 10 shows an outgoing card sent from Morden in November. In all of these cases, the time mark slot is blank.



Figure 8. Morden 1897 strikes from Sept. 15, 22, 24, 27 and 30



Figure 9. Morden 1897 strikes from Oct. 6 and Nov. 3, 12, 15 and 24.

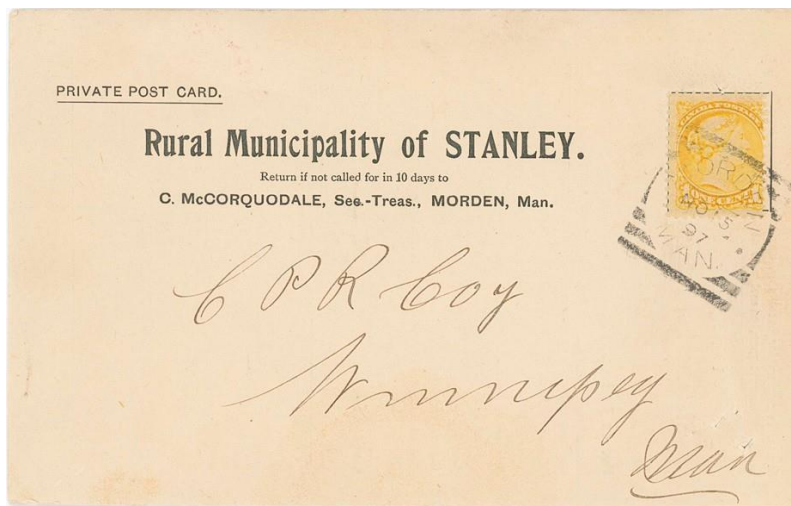


Figure 10. Morden (-/NO 15/97) to Winnipeg

There was a brief revival during the first week of December 1897 (possibly it started earlier – I have not seen Morden squared circle strikes from Nov. 25-30 to confirm). Fig. 11 shows a card with an outgoing strike from Dec. 1 with 37 in the time mark slot. Use of 37 probably continued until Dec. 6, but the only confirmed dates are Dec. 1, 2 and 6.

Fig. 12 shows a group of strikes from early December. The two strikes on the left are 37/DE 2/97 and 37/DE 6/97. The Dec. 2 strike has the colour removed to show the date more clearly.

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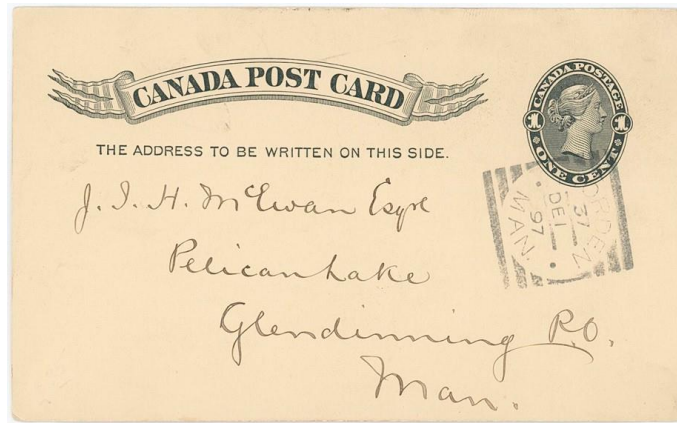


Figure 11. Morden (37/DE 1/97) to Glendinning, Man.



Figure 12. Morden 1897 strikes from DE 2, 6, 7 and 8

As expected, 37 was removed on Dec. 7. This is confirmed by the third strike in Fig. 12 (-/DE 7/97), from a postal stationery cover sent to Toronto. The strike on the far right of Fig. 12 shows that 37 was not put back into the time mark slot on Dec. 8. The strike is a transit mark on a card from Winnipeg to Nelson, Man.

After this brief revival, the time mark slot remained empty throughout the rest of the long service of the Morden squared circle. The hammer was used up to 1923, briefly in 1934, and had a final resurgence at the end of 1946 (Fig. 13).

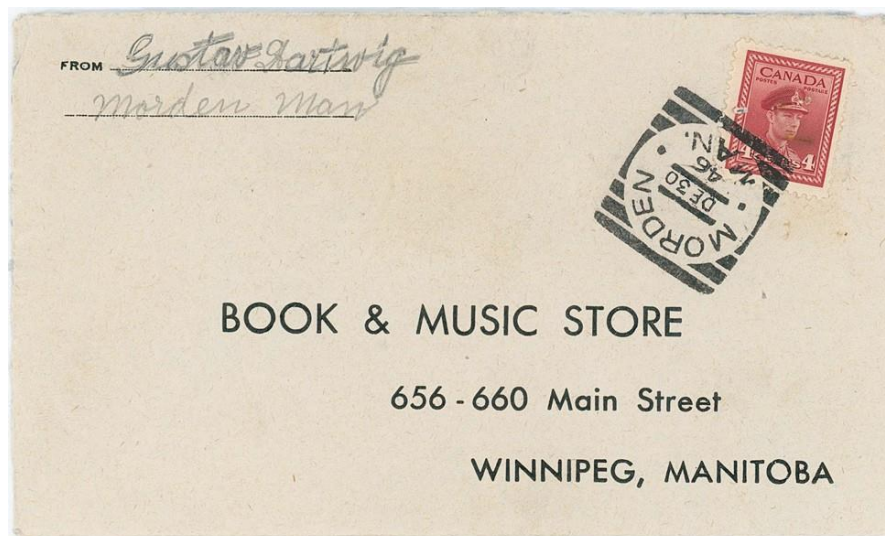


Figure 13. Morden (-/DE 30/46) to Winnipeg

## NEW REPORTS AND UPDATES – NOVA SCOTIA AND NEW BRUNSWICK

**Annapolis, NS:** First reported strike on a Jubilee postcard; strike dated -/JY 30/97 (Below, left)

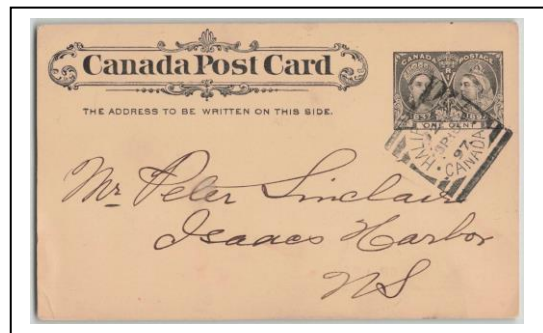
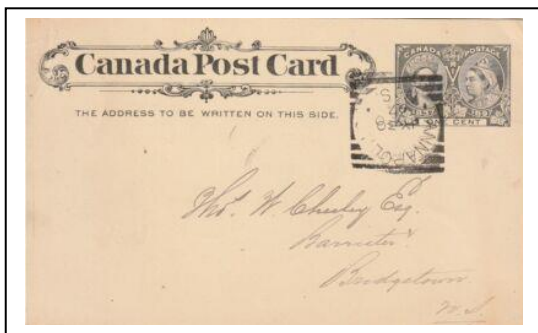
**Baie Verte, NB:** New **Latest Reported Date** for Period 1; strike on 2 cent QV Numeral dated -/MY 31/01.

## NEW REPORTS AND UPDATES – ONTARIO

**Flesherton, ONT:** First reported strike on the 6 cent QV Leaf issue; strike dated -/NO 10/98.

**Gore Bay, ONT:** Inverted “3” in year date “03”; backstamp on cover, strike dated -/MR 31/03

**Hamilton, ONT:** First reported strike on a Jubilee postcard; strike dated 12/SP 13/97 (Below, right)



**Port Hope, ONT:** First reported strike on the 8 cent QV Numeral issue; strike dated -/DE 24/98. (Below, left)

**Wooler, ONT:** First reported strike on a 1 cent Jubilee issue; strike on stamp dated -/AU 17/97 (Below, second from left)



## NEW REPORTS AND UPDATES – MANITOBA

**Winnipeg, MAN Hmr 1:** First reported strike on a 6 cent QV Leaf; strike dated 1/MY 4/98 (Above, second from right)

**Winnipeg, MAN Hmr 3:** Strike with what appears to be an inverted “19” time mark, dated **61**/NO 9/96 (Above, right). The current Handbook lists the latest reported date for a “19” time mark as 19/AU 5/96. Assuming this is a “19” time mark inverted, it extends the Latest Reported Date by 3 months.