

The Way Mails of New Brunswick

This exhibit illustrates the expansion of the postal system in New Brunswick as Way Offices were founded to serve the more remote settlements in the province .

The 1859 Post Master General Report of New Brunswick Appendix page XXXI defines Way Mail as:

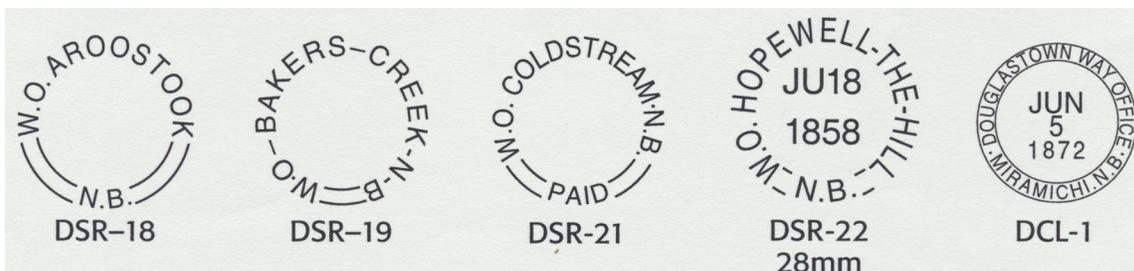
“Way Letters are those which have been received or sent by a Mail Courier and which are included in the mail but handed to the courier to be posted at the nearest office”.

Although way letters may be found from all areas of present day Canada, it was only in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia that official networks of Way Offices were established. Most Way Offices handled very little mail due to the sparse population in remote areas, but as settlements and business expanded, the majority became post offices.

The exhibit is arranged by county, flowing roughly north to south, with the way mail or way offices arranged by date from earliest to latest within each county. Many county boundaries evolved over time. The exhibit shows the offices in the county in which they would be found today. Way Office Keepers and the Mail Couriers (when known) are listed for the time of the cover shown. Revenues and salaries of selected way offices, taken from the 1861 PMG report, are also shown.

Opening, closing, moving, renaming and conversion to post office often resulted in multiple hammers. Some examples are also shown of continued use of way office hammers after the conversion to a regular post office.

Five types of hammers were used. These types are shown below:



The exhibit is arranged as follows:

Frame 1: Madawaska, Victoria, Restigouche, Gloucester

Frame 2: Gloucester, Nothumberland, Kent

Frame 3: Carleton, York

Frame 4: Sunbury, Queens

Frame 5: Queens, Kings

Frame 6: Kings, Westmoreland

Frame 7: Westmoreland, Albert

Frame 8: Saint John, Charlotte

Synopsis

The Way Mails of New Brunswick

This exhibit illustrates the expansion of postal service into some of the more remote areas of New Brunswick through a system of “Way” offices.

The PMG Reports of N.B. for the years 1856, 1861 and 1866 highlight this expansion:

| | | |
|------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1856 | 38 Post Offices | 208 Way Offices |
| 1861 | 41 Post Offices | 274 Way Offices |
| 1866 | 48 Post Offices | 393 Way Offices |

The Canadian PMG Report of 1880 shows a total of 742 Post Offices and Way Offices in New Brunswick.

Settlement on the Upper Saint John River was strongly encouraged by the Government. The winter mails from England landed in Halifax and all mails for Upper and Lower Canada passed through New Brunswick. Couriers leaving Fredericton carried 100 lb. loads on foot with little or no shelter until Temiscouata (now in Quebec). The War of 1812 and the Aroostook War, 1838-39 put mail routes at risk due to their proximity to the border with Maine. More settlers allowed a local militia to be formed, roads to be built and some shelter for the couriers. This influx of settlers needed postal service and this need was met with a series of Way Offices.

This exhibit also shows the Way Office Keepers and Mail Couriers (when known) at the time of the cover shown. Salaries and revenue are also shown for some small volume Way Offices.

Due to this low volume, covers to or from most Way Office are scarce. The covers in this exhibit have been collected over a 12 yr. span and the latest “find” was over a year ago. Over 90% of the covers shown illustrate Way Offices for which three or less known with many being unique. This is the largest exhibit of Way Mail and Offices ever assembled.

Primary documents consulted by the exhibitor in the course of his research include:

- The complete PMG Reports of New Brunswick 1856-1866
- Canadian PMG Reports 1867-1895
- Quebec Gazette issues from 1764 to
- All Postal archives on-line resource
- Fonds MG 44B from the Canadian Postal archives (approx. 20,000 pages)

Jephcott, Greene and Young (Listing 408 Way Offices) and George McManus’ “Post Offices of New Brunswick” (listing 502 Way Offices) were also consulted. The exhibitor’s research has expanded the list so that it now includes a total of 695 Way Offices.

This exhibit is arranged by County, flowing roughly from West to East and North to South, with the Way Mail or Way Offices arranged generally by opening date from earliest to latest within each county.