

THE CANADIAN DEAD LETTER OFFICE

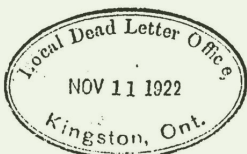
The British North America
Philatelic Society
Dead Letter Office
Study Group
Newsletter

Oct – Dec 2009 Issue 2

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Local Dead
Letter Office
Kingston



Feature Article
Brian Plain

Laying the Groundwork

The BNAPS 2009 annual convention was held in Kingston from September 11th to 14th. Those who attended enjoyed good food, excellent exhibits, and many opportunities to network and acquire unique items for their collections. The convention also provided an opportunity to meet with other collectors and interested parties and explore the possibility of establishing a formal BNAPS DLO Study Group.

Brian Plain presented an outline of most facets of DLO collecting drawing examples from a presentation entitled *The DLO in Western Canada*. Although the attendance at this meeting was small, those who did attend felt that forming a study group was appropriate. This was confirmed by discussions with other interested parties who were not able to attend.

It was decided that we approach BNAPS regarding establishing such a group. We proposed that all Newsletters would be posted on a website for all BNAPS members to view with no annual fee. All that we ask is that members send us their information to Gary Steele or Brian Plain so we know who to include on emails. However, if someone does want a hardcopy then the annual fee would be \$20 per annum US\$ or CDN\$ and I would mail a copy out.

Currently, we plan to publish quarterly with no plans on a particular length per issue. This will depend upon submissions and responses from members.

Chairman's Desk

SEAWAYPEX 2009 has come and gone. A very successful show, it saw the creation of a new BNAPS study group focusing on the Dead Letter Office (DLO) in Canada. This topic, long considered as being very far towards the "back of the book", is one in which there is a growing interest among collectors from a variety of philatelic disciplines. Most Canadian collections contain some items that relate to the processing of undeliverable mail: the pre-Confederation period where Returned Letter wrappers may be found, the early years of Canadian Confederation when all such mail was processed in Ottawa, the period of DLO expansion to regional offices and their subsequent demise, or the modern post ...

*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

The feature article in this issue is done by Brian Plain on the Kingston Local Dead Letter Office. Kingston's philatelic history is significant and the Kingston Local Dead Letter Office, though short-lived, was an essential part.

We are hoping that others will examine their specialties, whether they are regional, city, period, rate or destination collections. The Dead Letter Office touches almost every period and area of the postal system.

An exciting find recently involved RPO's on cover to Moosomin, Assa., in an article that Bob Lane did for the Postal History Society of Canada journal. The story ended with a comment regarding the receipt of the cover at the DLO. However, recently I obtained the actual Dead Letter Return envelope that held the large Moosomin envelope owned by Bob. We were thus able to detail the rest of the story with the appropriate handstamps as to where and when the cover arrived back in the hands of the original sender.

This is a great story bringing together two or three specialties. Take a look at your material the next time you have a chance. You never know the depth of some postal history. This is what attracted me to this hobby and keeps me searching.

Chairman's Desk – continued

consolidation period of today's current Undeliverable Mail Office. All may be mined for information.

Collectors of postcards will invariably find some that have DLO markings, as will individuals that specialize in military mail. First Day Cover collectors will frequently find DLO markings lurking in their collections, and so will those who collect interrupted mail. Rate study collections, specific issue collections, RPO collections, and individual town or city collections are all likely to contain hidden gems of DLO history.

It is hoped that this new study group will provide an opportunity for collectors to report their holdings to a central location and thereby enhance the databases that already exist. We know from the experience of other study groups that there is always more to be learned, and it is only by the collection and analysis of data that the story may be advanced toward a fuller understanding of the topic.

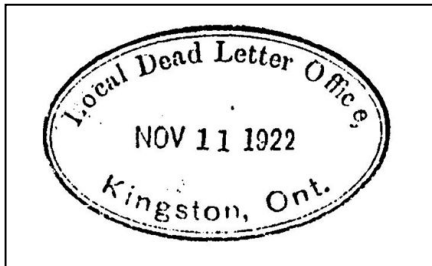
LOCAL DEAD LETTER OFFICE, KINGSTON

Brian Plain

Kingston was one of seven Local Dead Letter Offices created on July 1st, 1898 by the decentralization of postal services that dealt with undeliverable mail. As a Local DLO, Kingston was authorized to process mail of all classes with the exception of first class letter mail, which regulation specified must be sent to a Branch Dead Letter Office. Depending on the point of origin of the undelivered item, this could be Toronto, Montreal, Halifax, Winnipeg or Victoria.

The reason for which the item was being sent to the DLO was to be clearly marked by the letter carriers (with a gateway marking) on the undeliverable item prior to its being forwarded for processing. Regulation also specified that the reason be obliterated once the item was processed and placed back into the regular mail stream, although compliance with this regulation was generally poor. Considering the amount of mail sent by Canadian and non-Canadian tourists in the Kingston area, DLO markings from Kingston are surprisingly uncommon.

Two different date stamps are known from this office. The first marking, a Type2b*, was proofed in late 1922 but has not seen use so far. The second marking, a Type2d**, is the only one of the two known to have been used. Research on other markings suggests that a postal reorganization in 1922 eliminated all the Local offices and the Branch office in Victoria, however the lack of reported markings after 1914 suggests this office was closed prior to that date.



Proof strike of Kingston KIN2b-a1
 J Paul Hughes, ed., Proof Strikes of Canada, Vol. XXIII,
 'Miscellaneous Proof Strikes of Canada' (Kelowna: Robert A.
 Lee Philatelist Ltd., 1993)

* Type 2b: Double rim oval date stamp

** Type 2d: Single rim oval date stamp with a 'milled edge'

The database listing for Kingston is shown below.

TYPE	WORDING	SIZE	PROOFED	ERD	LRD	#
KIN2b-a1	Local Dead Letter Office, / Kingston, Ont. This date stamp shows the 'e' of Office drooping away from the 'c' and a comma after 'e'. Upper letters serified.	50x30mm	11/11/12	opk		
KIN2d-a1	LOCAL DEAD LETTER OFFICE / KINGSTON, ONT. Full serifs	47x30mm	unk	1905	3/7/14	11

Fig 1. Sent to Norwood, Ontario without postage, this card was marked 'RETURNED FOR / DEFICIENT POSTAGE' and rated 1¢ due by the unknown office of origin. In compliance with regulation, it was sent to the DLO in Kingston for processing where the two handstamps were ultimately applied. Evidence of payment and for final disposition of this item is lacking.

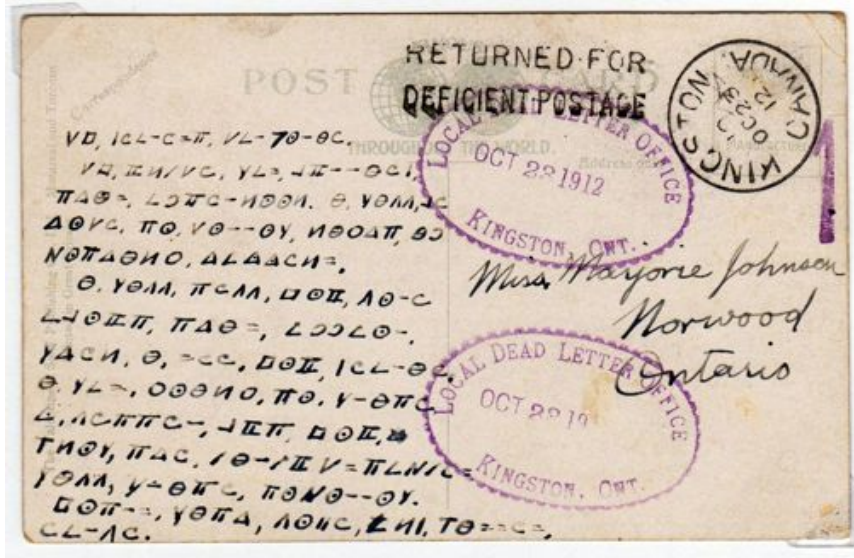


Figure 1. Kingston, Canada OC 23 1912 to Norwood, Ontario

Fig 2. This card is similar to the one above. Sent from Georgetown to Kingston (SP 25/1908) but mailed without postage, it was caught by the postal clerk and marked *not prepaid* before being sent to the (Branch) DLO in Toronto which forwarded it to Kingston for processing (SEP 30 1908). It was received in Kingston the following day where a KIN2d-a1 date stamp was applied prior to processing.

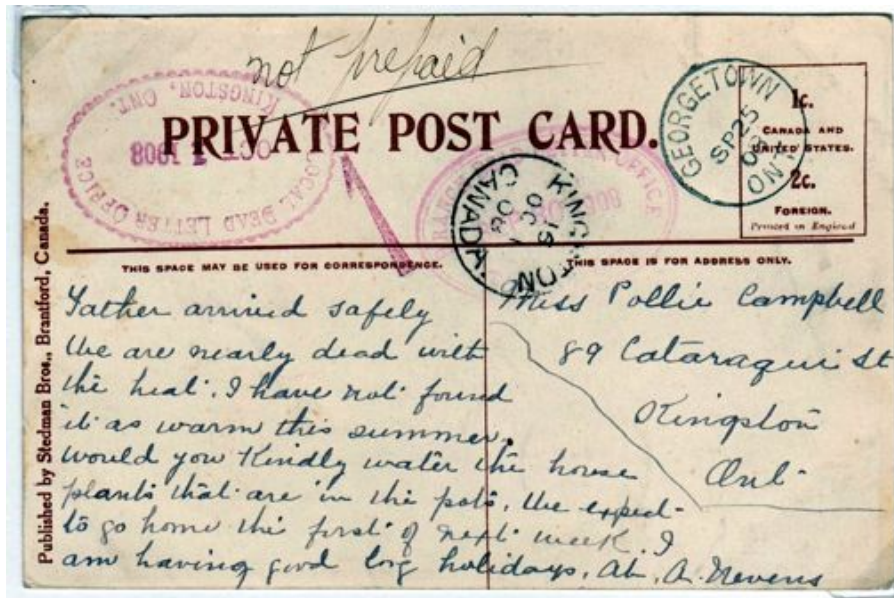


Figure 2. Georgetown, Ont. SP 25, 08 to Kingston, Ont.

Fig 3. This post card was sent from Kingston to Montreal on October 27th 1909. Mailed without postage, it was charged 1¢ postage due, marked RETURNED FOR / DEFICIENT POSTAGE, and sent to the DLO in Kingston where it was likely received the same day. The KIN2d-a1 date stamp was applied and the card sent to the (Branch) DLO in Montreal for processing. The card arrived in Montreal on October 29th (indistinct MON2b-e1) and was dispatched on November 2nd (incomplete MON3a date stamp) after postage and fees had been received from the addressee.

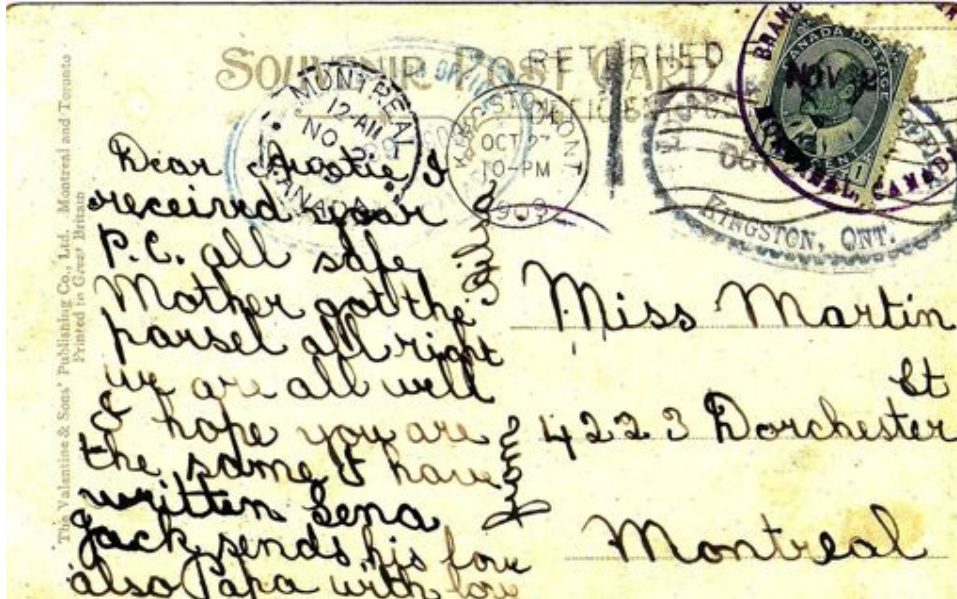


Figure 3. Kingston, Ont. OCT 27, 1909 to Montreal.

Fig 4. Although this cover is lacking some markings, one may confidently speculate regarding its handling. Mailed to Ohio from Kingston without postage on February 22nd 1909, it was marked RETURNED FOR / DEFICIENT POSTAGE and sent to the DLO in Kingston where it arrived the same day and was date stamped with KIN2d-a1. The postcard rate to the USA was 1¢, but the usual 1 was not applied. As with the cover shown in Fig. 1, evidence for the final disposition of this item is lacking.



Figure 4. Kingston, Canada mailed within city.

[Items 1 and 2 belong to the author: Items 3 and 4 courtesy of Gary Steele]

DLO - S1 & DLO - S2

Brian Plain

DLO-S1

Size: 21mm

Side Arcs: 2.5mm

Proofed:

Unknown

Comment: No dots separating upper wording

ERD: 28/11/1875

LRD: 24/1/1878

Dead Letter Office split ring handstamps are organized by lettering and dimensions (diameter) alphabetically, with or without 'dots' and smaller to larger diameters. The 21mm handstamps are the smallest of this type so far known.



DLO-S2

Size: 21mm

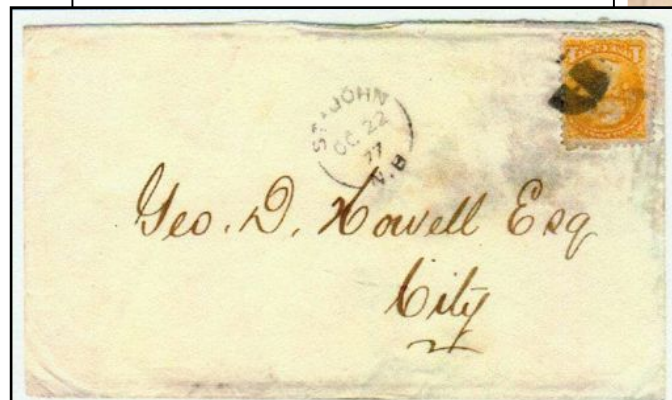
Side Arcs: 2.5mm

Proofed: 19/11/1875

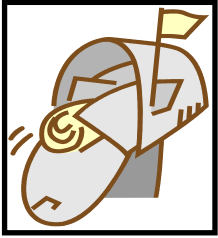
Comment: Dots separate upper wording

ERD: 17/12/1877

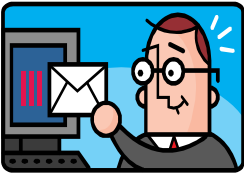
LRD: 1/3/1883



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

The 1940 Postmaster's Information book was produced to "...aid Postmasters to understand and efficiently perform the duties of their office." It was also used to help train assistants, and provide a ready reference in conjunction with the Postal Guide.

Dead Letter Mail in the index at the back of the book comes after "Day old Chicks". Fifteen different sections are listed. The first one being on page 74 **Section 564. Dead Mail Matter**

'Dead Mail Matter consists of letters and other articles of mail, which having reached office of destination, have failed of delivery for various reasons such as:

- (a) Not Called For
- (b) Unknown
- (c) Addressee deceased
- (d) Addressee removed without leaving change of address order, etc. and which cannot under the regulations be returned direct to the sender.

The above is a very short list. Anyone collecting DLO material would soon find many more descriptions such as 'House torn down' my favourite, 'addressee removed', 'Mail for this address prohibited', 'Returned for Deficient Postage', 'Returned for War Tax', 'Unclaimed', 'Advertised' covers from the U.S., 'Old Stamps', 'Stamps Previously Used', 'Refused', 'Mis-directed', 'Non-transmissible', 'Mail Service Suspended', 'No Post Office Given', 'Train wreck', 'Plane crashed', 'Party Dead', and another favourite 'Return to Sender Delivery Forbidden by Judicial Sentence'.

The list can be very long as the number of reasons. Many of these Gateway handstamps were only used in certain offices depending upon need and circumstances in each area and the volume of mail.

Many handstamps may have only been used for one occurrence without ever having been used again, or ones like "Not Called For" could have been used for 30 to 50 years.

Next issue is **Section 565. District Dead Letter Offices**

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