The Montreal Straight-Line Postmarks of 1774 the First Two Types

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The Canada Specialized Postage Stamp Catalogue identifies the "MONTREAL / October, 15" postmark as the first straight-line type of Montreal. This is a flagrant error. The first Montreal postmark is the "M.2:16."

This postmark was first reported by the pioneer postal historian Prof. A. J. H. Richardson¹ of Lennoxville, Quebec in 1937 when he was researching early postal history covers in the Dominion Archives in Ottawa, now called Library and Archives Canada. Later on, Konwiser and Campbell added this find in the publication *The Canada and Newfoundland Stampless Cover Catalogue* ²; it was published as well by the postal historian W. E. Durant Halliday in his notes on the postal history of Canada³. This postmark along with other unique early postmarks were discovered by Prof. Richardson in the late 1930s. His extensive lists and notes were given to Halliday to pursue the research on early Canadian postal history and postmarks⁴.

The postmark is not unique in the Archives. We have identified three examples in the collections of Library and Archives Canada. The earliest folded letter is dated 30 July 1774,

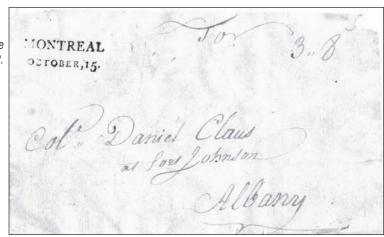
followed by 2 August 1774, and finally 15 August 1774. The marking is found in red ink only⁵. This first Montreal postmark was used only for July and August 1774 (possibly a few

Fig. 1 – Montreal straight-line postmark, type 1.

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Note: A shorter version of this article was first published in French in the *Bulletin d'histoire postale et de marco-philie* of the Société d'histoire postale du Québec, issue #96, 2nd trimester.

Fig. 2 – Montreal straight-line postmark, type 2.



days in September) as we have found examples of the regular "M" manuscript marking from 1764 to 27 June 1774 and then being continued as of 21 September 1774 to 1776.

At the time the rate was in pennyweight and grains of silver. On arrival they were rated in pence currency. This postmark represents a direct imitation of the manuscript marks used in the Canadian post offices during the first twenty years.

The Montreal second type seems to have been used only for a very short period of time – possibly only one day. It is the postmark « Montreal October, 15 » [1774]. Even though this postmark was first recorded by Konwiser and Campbell in 1946, one would think that it was provided by A. J. H. Richardson during the course of his research at the Archives. This unique cover is in the collection of Library and Archives Canada⁶. The postmark is in black.

REFERENCES

- 1 J. H. Richardson. "Montreal's First Postmark" in *Postal Markings*, vol. 7, no. 3, August 1937, p. 5. Professor Richardson moved to Ottawa around 1936 and became part of the staff of the Public Archives of Canada where he continued his research through the Archives. In the 1940s he moved to Parks Canada where in later years he was Chief of Research until the time he retired.
- 2 Konwiser, Harry M. and Frank W. Campbell. The Canada and Newfoundland Stampless Cover Catalogue, First Edition. Verona, New Jersey, Stephen G. Rich, 1946.
- 3 Halliday, W. E. Durant. "Notes on the Postal History of Canada from 1760 to Confederation in 1867". London, Regent Stamp Co. Ltd. [n.d.] 12p. These notes first appeared in *The Philatelist*, v. 15, 1948. p. 4-8, 34-37, 76-7, 9.
- 4 McGuire, C. R. "W. E. Durant Halliday 1897-1976" in ORAPEX 2004 Show and Bourse sponsored by the RA Stamp Club [Program], May 1-2, 2004, p. 24.
- 5 Library and Archives Canada (LAC). Fonds RG4-B22: Quebec - Documents Regarding the Appointment of Baillifs, 1764-1775. Vol. 2 for folded letters of 30 July and 2 August 1774 and Fonds RG4-B28: Quebec, Lower Canada, Canada East – Applications for Licences, Bonds and Certificates, 1763-1867. Vol. 2012B for the letter of 15 August 1774.
- 6 LAC. Fonds MG19-F1: Clauss Family fonds, 1755-1886. Vol. 1.