

# Manufacturers of Quebec and Ontario Datestamps

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During the course of my research I found information about the principal manufacturers of datestamps used in the post offices of Quebec and Ontario. At first these instruments were rectangular in shape with serif letters; a circular format was adopted later. The stamps were made of brass, steel, rubber, and sometimes of wood. It is generally possible to identify the makers who produced a large number of these instruments.

It is not possible to identify what maker provided the instruments during the colonial period from 1831 to 1842 due to the lack of pertinent documents. This information affects particularly the double circles furnished between 1829 and 1837, and the double broken circles with serif letters produced in 1839 and 1842. However, thanks to documents found in the archives of the General Post Office (London), it is known that William B. Bokenham (1803-1876) sent the requisitions for the stamps made in 1839 and 1842 to the manufacturer(s).

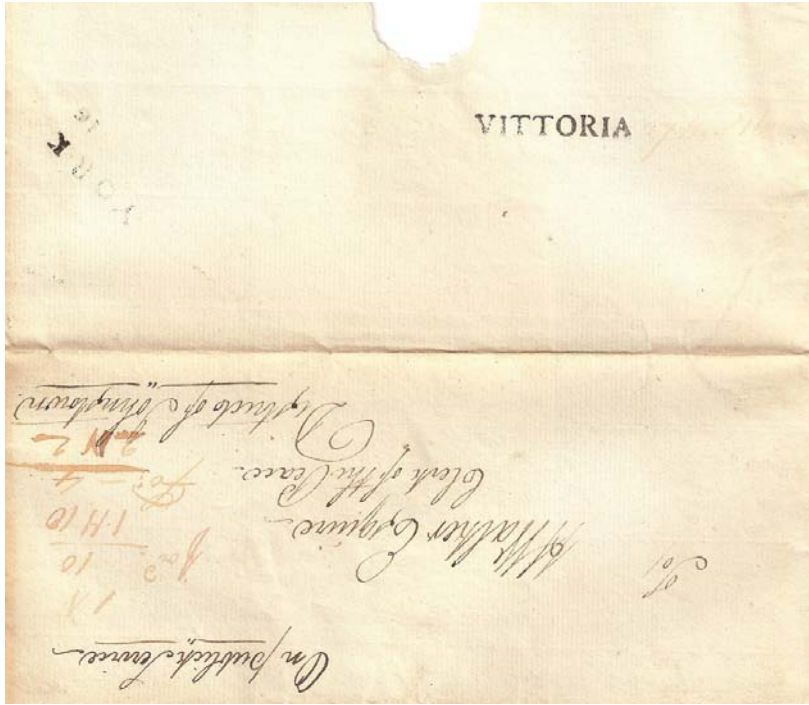


Figure 1. Straight-line postmarks of the Vittoria and the York post offices dated 1816. Robert C. Smith collection.

♦ An earlier version of this article first appeared in the *Bulletin d'histoire postale et de marcophilie*, no. 123, January-April 2014; translated by Robert C. Smith.

He also became responsible for forwarding the newly-produced instruments to Canada<sup>1</sup>.

Let us now go on to a chronological study of the known manufacturers who made dating instruments as a result of orders from Canadian postal authorities.

### ***Brown & Gilmore***

Datestamps appeared almost at the beginning of postal services. The first ones known date from 1765, and were rectangular in shape (Figure 1).

According to Morin and Poitras, it seems that the printers William Brown (1737-1789) and Thomas Gilmore (1741-1773) produced the first rectangular stamps by assembling different printing characters<sup>2</sup>. This print shop was opened in Quebec City in 1764.

Somewhat later the instruments were probably made by Samuel Nielson (1771-1793), and still later by his brother John Nielson (1776-1848), who inherited the print shop.

Business address:

- rue Saint-Louis, Quebec.

### ***M. Paul***

In 1828 the engraver M. Paul made the first double broken circle daters with serifs and generally without provincial designation at the base (Figure 2). This information is contained in a letter found in the British colonial postal archives. In this document, dated December 21, 1828, G. M. Gottwalton, postmaster at the Birmingham post office, mentions that M. Paul had completed the order for the 105 handstamps, and that he had sent him an invoice to be included with the box bound for Canada<sup>3</sup>.

About seven months passed between the dispatch of the requisition and the first use of the stamps. The earliest date of use reported is June 9, 1829<sup>4</sup> (Figure 2). The business address of M. Paul is not known.

### ***Morden & Company***

An article on the website [jamaicaphilately.info](http://jamaicaphilately.info) could throw light on another maker of handstamps. It mentions that the Morden Company had obtained a three-year contract



*Figure 2. Cover from Hull dated June 21, 1829. The date on this cover seems to be the second earliest use known of this 1829-type of dater. LAC<sup>5</sup>.*

to produce stamps for the London GPO<sup>5</sup>. The contract began on October 1, 1842.

In light of this information, we are led to believe that the stamps sent from England in 1845 could have been manufactured by this company. The instruments had two broken circles and letters with no serifs. The letters L.C or U.C appeared at the base as a provincial designation (Figure 3). It is also possible that the Steamboat Letter devices originated with this same manufacturer.

Proof impressions of the various stamps are found in the proof books of the London GPO.

Business address:

- Finsbury Pavement, London in 1842.

### John H. Francis

John H. Francis is shown as an engraver and die maker in the *London Post Office Direc-*

*tory* of 1843<sup>6</sup>. In 1847 his name is mentioned in archival documents for the first time as a manufacturer of stamps<sup>7</sup>. This information leads us to believe that it was likely he who produced the datestamps up to the beginning of 1851.

J. H. Francis filled the orders sent by William Henry Griffin (1812-1900) on February 24, 1847, for which proof impressions exist. These instruments were double broken circles having letters without serifs, and with C.E or C.W at the base.

Canada took control of its postal service on April 6, 1851. It was decided at the outset of this administrative change to use the services of a Canadian datestamp manufacturer, but this would last for only a few months. After that, England was once more

in the picture. As shown in the *Reports of the Postmaster General* for the months between November 1851 and June 1852, William B. Bokenham<sup>8</sup> once again acted as intermediary between the Canadian Postmaster General and the manufacturer John Francis<sup>9</sup>.

In the Postmaster General's correspondence we learn that, beginning in the month of June 1852, J. H. Francis once again be-

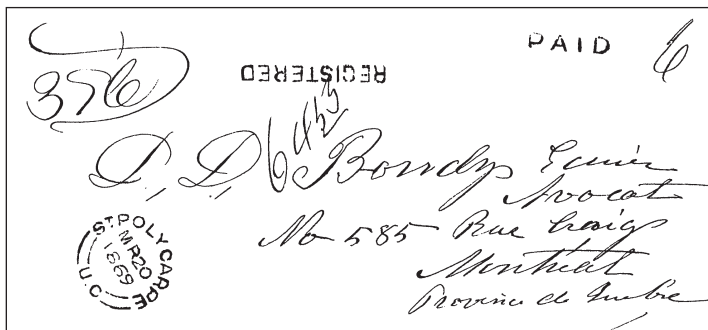


Figure 3. Impression left by an instrument which was probably made by the Morden Company. Note the abbreviation U.C rather than L.C. Ex Gray Scrimgeour collection.

came the official datestamp contractor<sup>10</sup>. He produced double broken circle daters with letters having no serifs, and with the letters L.C and U.C at the base. Furthermore, he made the first stamps used in the Railway Mail Service (Figure 4); the Postmaster General had sent a requisition to that effect on August 12, 1853<sup>11</sup>.

In his report for the quarter ending March 31, 1855 the Postmaster General showed a final payment to Francis covering the cost of manufacture of the instruments ordered in October 1854<sup>12</sup>. An interesting fact is that D. G. Berri completed the work because Francis was unable to do so. The reason was perhaps due to the fact that he was in a state of bankruptcy, or that he had sold his business to someone else, perhaps



Figure 4. Impression of the railway postmark "St. Lawrence & Atlantic Railroad" dated on March 10, 1854, one of the first stamps produced for the railway mail service. Ross Gray collection.

D. G. Berri (Figure 5).<sup>13</sup>

Business addresses:

- 5 Dean Street, Holborn in 1842 and 1843
- 10 Hatton Garden, London in 1847 and 1848
- 51 Myddleton Street, Clerkenwall, London from 1852 to 1854
- Hold Bath Square, Clerkenwall, London in 1855

### Thomas Wheeler

As was mentioned previously, from April of 1851 the intention was to find a Canadian postmark manufacturer to supply new datestamps, with the aim of minimizing the delivery time. The choice then fell to Thomas Wheeler, who was an engraver, a clock-maker and a lithographer in Toronto (Figure 6). He was born around 1809 in Marlborough, England, and practised his métier from 1846 to 1871<sup>14</sup>. He was in addition a member of the Toronto Society of Arts right up until his death, which occurred unexpectedly around 1880.

In the *Report of the Postmaster General* for the year ended April 5, 1852 it is

Mr. John Francis  
Hotel Bath Square Clerkenwell  
London

P.O.D. 3 April

*I am desired by the PMGenl to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 8<sup>th</sup> ulto. enclosing an (?) for steel stamps pc amounting to £86.13/. I have to observe with reference to an item therein "250 Brass stamps Paid £31. 5/ that you have charge therefor at the rate of 2/6 each, whilst the price at which you have offered to furnish them & have hitherto charged is 1/6 each.*

*I beg also to inform you that a letter dated 4 Janry last is on fyle at this office from M D.G. Berri notifying the PMGenl that he was then executing the order from this Department of the 26 Oct last, in behalf of your wife, your own business having been broken up. Before taking any steps in regard to the payment of the account you have forwarded, the PMGenl will await your observations on the foregoing.*  
I am,  
W.H. Griffin

Figure 5. Transcript of a letter sent to John Francis on April 3, 1855 by the Postmaster General. LAC<sup>14</sup>.



indicated that a sum of £141.11 was paid to Thomas Wheeler for some steel stamps<sup>15</sup>. This payment served to cover the cost associated with the manufacture of stamps in the period between July 5 and October 5, 1851 (Figure 7), when he made about a hundred stamps, intended for new post offices opened between April and August of 1851. These double broken circles without serifs had the letters C.E or C.W at the base. These abbreviations changed to L.C or U.C from the autumn of 1851.

Before continuing with the next manufacturer, it seems that Wheeler has already produced stamps for some Ontario offices. According to Frank Campbell, some time in the year 1846 the Manitowaning and Sault Ste Marie offices must have each received a stamp in the Gothic style, lacking a part of the circle and having the abbreviation C.W at the base (Figure 8).<sup>16</sup>

Business addresses:

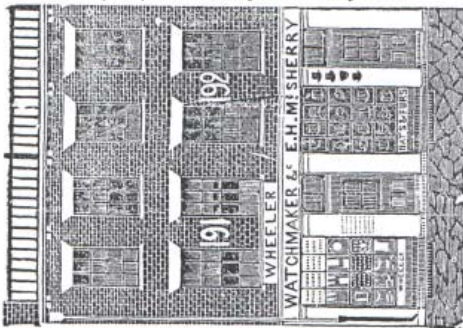
- 6 King Street East, Toronto in 1846
- 10 King Street East, Toronto in 1849
- 23 King Street East, Toronto in 1859
- 43 King Street East, Toronto in 1871.

ADVERTISEMENTS.

E. H. McSHERRY,  
**HATTER AND FURRIER,**  
**No. 4 (formerly 192) King-Street East,**  
ONE DOOR EAST OF YONGE-STREET,  
(Opposite Messrs. Ridout Brothers & Co.'s Hardware Store.)  
**TORONTO:**

**KEEPS** constantly on hand a choice selection of Gentlemen's Black, Drab, Beaver, French Satin, Silk, Youths' and Ladies' Hats; Blue, Black, Drab, and Fancy Summer Cloth Caps. A general assortment of Fur Caps, Gauntlets, Gloves, Muffs, Boas, Cuffs, Buffalo and other Robes, &c., &c.

[H]ighest price paid in CASH for all kinds of Furs.



**THOMAS WHEELER,**  
(FROM MARLBOROUGH, ENGLAND.)  
**CLOCK AND WATCH MAKER,**  
**ENGRAVER, &c.,**  
**No. 6 (formerly 191) King Street, Toronto,**

**WATCHES** and Clocks of all descriptions cleaned and repaired with accuracy and despatch. Arms, Crests, Cyphers, Brass and Silver Seals, Book, Door, and Coffin Plates Engraved. Coats of Arms found and Enblazoned.

\* Reference for integrity and ability kindly permitted to the Lord Bishop of Toronto.

Figure 6. Advertisement produced for the shop of Thomas Wheeler. Brown's Toronto City and Home District Directory 1846-47, published by George Brown, Toronto, 1846. P. 315.

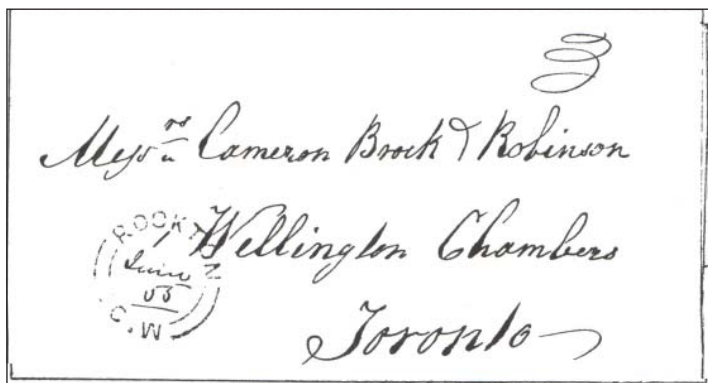


Figure 7. Cover from the Rockton post office, which was established on August 6, 1851. Ex Gray Scrimgeour collection.

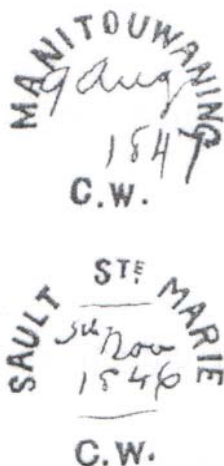


Figure 8. Drawing showing what the stamps of Manitowaning and Sault Ste Marie looked like. Frank W. Campbell, *BNA Topics* vol. 5, no. 3, March 1948, p. 42.

### **Edmund Hoole**

During the course of the year 1850 the Edmund Hoole Company of New York was established, specializing in baggage checks for railroads and the production of circular datestamps<sup>17</sup>.

Between July 1854 and June 1855 the company produced five stamps for post offices in Canada West, including Toronto and Collingwood<sup>18</sup> (Figure 9). These daters had the letters C.W at the base.

Business address:

- 160 William Street, New York

### **Boston Hand Stamp Company**

At the beginning of the year 1855, when John H. Francis stopped production of datestamps, the Postmaster General turned to another American manufacturer, the Boston Hand Stamp Com-



Figure 9. Impression left by the stamp produced by E. Hoole. Gus Knierim collection.

Figure 10. Postmark from the Three Rivers "changeling" stamp. eBay page [http://www.cafr.ebay.ca/sch/Timbres-/260/i.html?from=R40&nkw=quebec+covers&LH\\_PrefLoc=2&sop=10](http://www.cafr.ebay.ca/sch/Timbres-/260/i.html?from=R40&nkw=quebec+covers&LH_PrefLoc=2&sop=10)



pany. This company had been incorporated since May 25, 1853<sup>19</sup>. One of its shareholders was S. P. Ruggles, the same man who on September 23, 1851 had registered patent number 8388 related to a new model of dating stamp for canceling mail, a type of dater now known as a *changeling*<sup>20</sup>. The head of these instruments was made of metal. About 26 post offices used this type of instrument, which usually showed the letters C.E or C.W at the base (Figure 10).

According to the Reports of the Postmaster General, this company provided instruments for the period between 1855 and 1859.

Business address:

- 48 Winter Street, Boston, Mass.

### **David Garden Berri**

The London engraver David G. Berri took over from John H. Francis some time in the month of June 1855<sup>22</sup>. He produced several types of datestamps for the Postmaster General over a period of about eighteen years (Figure 11). He began production with double broken circle stamps without serifs, and having letters L.C or U.C at the base. Beginning in 1858 the style was modified to single broken circle stamps. From the beginning of the year 1860, due to a change in the

legal designation of these two provinces, the letters L.C and U.C were replaced by C.E and C.W. During the course of that same year Berri began the production of the first duplex stamps; he produced several circular stamps as well.

Upon the creation of the Canadian Confederation in 1867 the letters C.E and C.W were replaced respectively by the letters Q and ONT. Initially, several double broken circle stamps were made, eight for Ontario offices (Figure 12) and three for Quebec offices. This was quickly changed back to single broken circles. From the spring of 1868 the new Quebec devices showed the letters QUE in replacement of the letter Q.

Berri also produced a number of stamps between 1867 and 1870 which consisted of a broken circle inserted inside a complete circle. He made five of these for Quebec offices and thirty-five for Ontario offices. He also made many stamps for the Railway Mail Service.

It seems that D. G. Berri ceased production of daters toward the end of the summer of 1873. In a letter dated December 10, 1873, the Deputy Postmaster General mentioned that datestamps were then made in Ottawa by a former Berri employee, H. T. Pitchard<sup>23</sup>.





Figure 11. Portion of a letterhead of the D. G. Berri company. *British Philatelist*, vol. XXX, September 7, 1937.

The letter had been sent to Thomas Henry Staples of Toronto, who has also worked with Pritchard in Berri's shop in England.

Business addresses:

- 22 Calthorpe St., Gray's Inn Road, London in 1855
- 96 Great Russell St., Bloomsbury, London in 1856
- 36 High Holborn, London from June 1863.

### **Henry Thomas Pritchard**

Henry T. Pritchard had opened his engraving workshop in Ottawa in 1872. This information is contained in a letter dated December 31, 1872, sent by the Deputy

Postmaster General, in which requisition number 3 giving the list of new datestamps to produce<sup>24</sup>. It seems that Pritchard kept a strike of each stamp that he produced right from the beginning (Figure 13).

If we can trust the *Reports of the Postmaster General* for the years 1873 to 1876, we learn that Pritchard was the sole proprietor of the shop up to the summer of 1875.

In a document produced toward the end of the 1970s we get a history of the Pritchard & Andrews Company. It is written that at the beginning of the 1870s the Postmaster General had taken measures to reduce the delay between the dates of requisition and reception of new stamps. In order



to settle this problem, a trip was made to England to see if it would be possible to establish a datestamp manufacturing shop in Ottawa. It seems that a monopoly on the manufacture of daters was offered to Pritchard and Mingard at this time. The fundamental condition was that they decide to immigrate to Canada and open an engraving shop in Ottawa<sup>26</sup>.

Business addresses:

- 75 Sparks St., Ottawa in 1872
- 5 Rideau St., Ottawa in 1873-74.

### ***Pritchard & Mingard***

Thomas A. Mingard likely arrived in Canada during the summer of 1875, since his name and Pritchard's are associated only from October 1875 on, according to the 1875 *Ottawa City Directory*<sup>27</sup>. Furthermore, in the *Report of the Postmaster General for the Year Ending June 30, 1875* only Pritchard's name appears, while in *Report for the year ending June 30, 1876* both names are mentioned. It was under their administration that several hundred daters with CANADA at the base were made in 1879.

The names Pritchard & Andrews appear in the *Reports of the Postmaster General* beginning with that for the year ending June 30, 1887. This indicates that Mingard must have left the company toward the end of 1886. Business addresses:

- 190 Rideau St., Ottawa in 1875-1876
- 158 Rideau St., Ottawa in 1877
- 190 Rideau St., Ottawa in 1878-1879
- 175 Sparks St., Ottawa from 1880 to 1887.

### ***The Pritchard & Andrews Company***

Henry T. Pritchard joined forces with John E. Andrews early in 1887. Andrews' name as administrator of the company was listed for the last time in the *Ottawa City Directory* of 1897-98 (Figure 14). The company stopped doing business in 1997 after 125 years of existence<sup>28</sup>.

This is the company which produced the greatest number of instruments. The type of stamp now known as the 'squared circle' was fabricated in this shop in the years between 1893 and 1895. Around the middle of September 1912, the letters QUE were replaced by the letters P.Q on the Quebec handstamps. The company finally completely stopped production of broken circle stamps in 1934 and concentrated on circular datestamps.

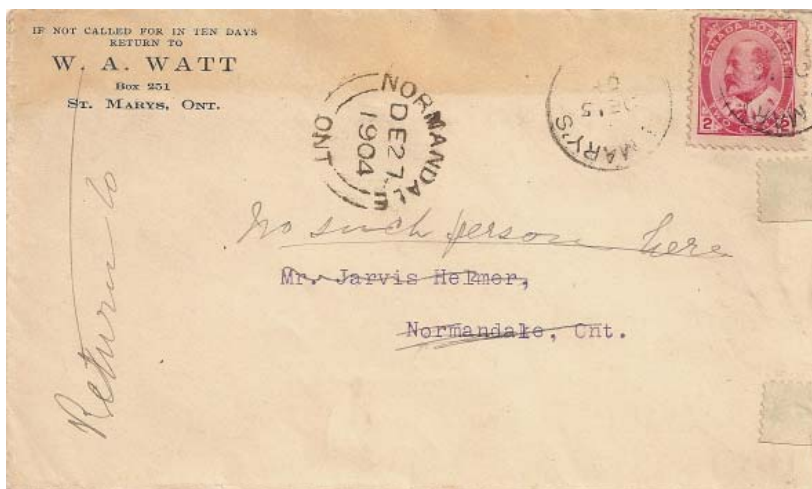


Figure 12. Late use of the Normandale stamp produced in 1867. Robert C. Smith collection.

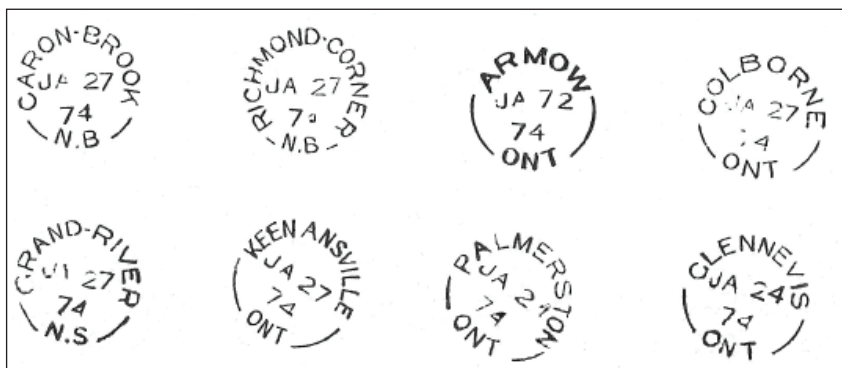


Figure 13. Several proof impressions of stamps made by Pritchard in 1874. LAC<sup>25</sup>.

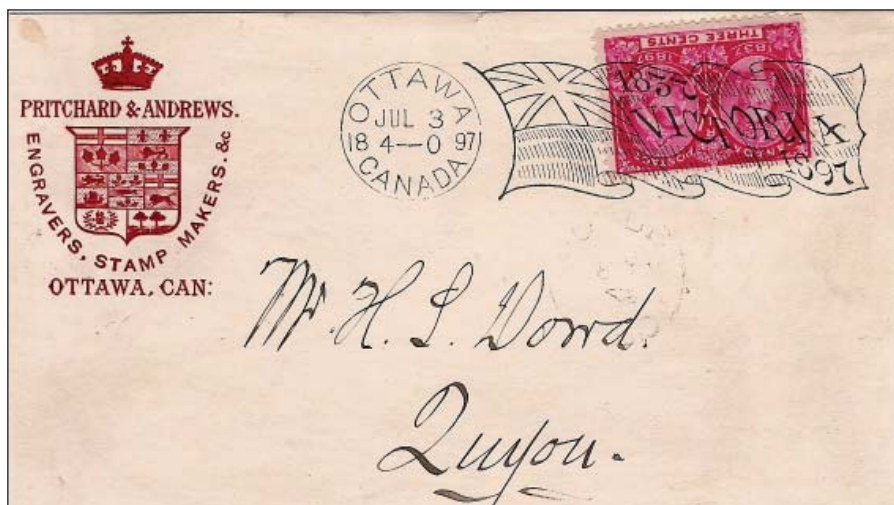


Figure 14. Commercial envelope of the Pritchard & Andrews Company in 1897. Source unknown.

In addition to producing different sorts of stamps for the postal service, the company also made balances and small articles of brass.

Business addresses:


- 175 Sparks St., Ottawa in 1887-88
- 173-175 Sparks St., Ottawa in 1889-1890

#### REFERENCES:

- 1 LAC, Fonds MG 44B, *General Post Office, Canadian Records*, vol. 8, p. 22.
- 2 Cimon Morin & Jacques Poitras, CMPQ 1. "Marques rectilignes", *Bulletin d'histoire postale et de marcophilie*, no 107, janvier-mars 2010, p. 37.
- 3 LAC, Fonds MG 44B, *General Post Office, Canadian Records*, vol.3, p. 290.
- 4 David P. Ewens, "The 1829 Order of Hand-stamps," *PHSC Journal* #30, June 1982, p. 6

5 [http://www.jamaicaphilately.info/35\\_PH-Location/352\\_Marking-Types/09\\_OBL/1940\\_Nicholson/Nicholson\\_Obliterators.pdf](http://www.jamaicaphilately.info/35_PH-Location/352_Marking-Types/09_OBL/1940_Nicholson/Nicholson_Obliterators.pdf).  
 6 *The small edition of the Post Office London Directory 1843*, published by W. Kelly, London, 1843, p. 187.  
 7 LAC, Fonds MG 44B, *General Post Office, Canadian Records*, vol.57, part 1, pp. 15-16.  
 8 Post Office Department, *Annual Report of the Postmaster General during year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 1853*, Post Office Department, Ottawa.  
 9 LAC, Fonds RG-3, Series R-169-51-X-E, microfilm no. T-3851, vol. 366, p. 157.  
 10 LAC, Fonds RG-3, Series R-169-51-X-E, microfilm no. T-3851, vol. 366, p. 226  
 11 LAC, Fonds RG-3, Series R-169-51-X-E, microfilm no. T-3851, vol. 367, p. 255  
 12 Post Office Department, *Annual Report of the Postmaster General during year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 1855*, Post Office Department, Ottawa.  
 13 LAC, Fonds RG-3, Series R-169-51-X-E, microfilm no. T-3852, vol. 368, p. 492.  
 14 <http://heraldicsciencesheraldique.com/w.html>  
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 16 Frank W. Campbell, *BNA Topics*, vol. 5, n°3, March 1948, whole n°46, p. 42  
 17 *The Canada Directory for 1857-58*, published by

John Lovell, Montreal, p. 1426  
 18 Post Office Department, *Annual Reports of the Postmaster General during year ended 31 March 1855 and 1856*, Post Office Department, Ottawa.  
 19 <http://archives.lib.state.ma.us/actsResolves/1853/1853acts0372.pdf>  
 20 Frank W. Campbell, *1958 Version of Canada Postmark List to 1875*, Addenda E, p. 8  
 22 LAC, Fonds RG-3, Series R-169-51-X-E, microfilm no. T-3852, vol. 369, p. 36  
 23 LAC, Fonds RG-3, Series R-169-51-X-E, microfilm no. T-3860, vol. 383, p. 658-659  
 24 , Fonds RG-3, Series R-169-51-X-E, microfilm no. T-3859, vol. 381, p. 453  
 25 LAC, Canadian Postal Archives, *The Pritchard-Andrews Limited Collection of Proof Impression Books, 1925-60*, 162 sheets, Research document no. 15. In this proof book are found nine proof impressions with 1874 dates, but among proofs of the year 1930. See Gray Scrimgeour's note in the *PHSC Journal* # 58, June 1989, p. 35.  
 26 Document obtained from Robert C. Smith  
 27 *The Ottawa Directory 1875 and Dominion Guide*: containing street, alphabetical...Ironsides, published by A. S. Woodburn, Ottawa, p. 132  
 28 [http://www.thetoolgroupofcanada.com/images/Canadian\\_Tool\\_Manufacturers\\_1820-1914.pdf](http://www.thetoolgroupofcanada.com/images/Canadian_Tool_Manufacturers_1820-1914.pdf)



# PHSC

*Annual*

## GENERAL MEETING

**May 2, 2015**

at

**ORAPEX, Ottawa R.A. Centre**

*Guest Speaker: Dr. Gray Scrimgeour*