



Early editions of the Canada Specialised Catalogue (1) included listings of the Straight Line postmarks used in Canada and the Provinces in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Unfortunately, since 1989, no such listing has been available to collectors. This collaborative series of articles is intended to correct this omission. This first part covers the postmarks from Lower Canada (or Quebec Province). This work is the result of research by Cimon Morin and Jacques Poitras, including review of material in the archival collections at Library and Archives Canada (LAC)- representing more than 2500 stampless straight line postmarks of Lower Canada. This section of the "Catalogue des marques postales du Québec" originally appeared in the Bulletin d'histoire postale et de marcophilie produced by the Société d'histoire postale du Québec (SHPQ) (2). These original articles were in French and the update here, as well as being translated into English, includes some new finds recorded since their initial work was published. A second part, under different authorship, will cover the postmarks of Upper Canada (Ontario Province) and we hope to add articles on the Maritime Provinces and Newfoundland at a later date. The intention is to list and illustrate all the known straight line postmarks and to provide sufficient information to help in their identification. No market valuations are given but some of the articles will provide an indication of relative scarcity and note where the particular marks are known only from LAC.

STRAIGHT LINE POSTMARKS – (PART 1, LOWER CANADA)

Cimon Morin and Jacques Poitras

As the name indicates, straight line postmarks show the characters aligned in one or two horizontal lines. This type of postmark always shows the name of the post office (in



Fig 1 The earliest of the Montreal straight line marks from 1774 is really a rate marking in silverweight (courtesy of Library and Archives Canada, LAC, RG4, B52, vol2).





English for the period in question) and, sometimes, also shows the date in part or whole. This type of mark was first used in Canada in 1765 at the Quebec post office and has its roots in similar types in use in England at the time of the creation of the postal system in Canada.

The devices used to make the postmarks had removable characters and originated with printers. We believe that most of these devices used in Lower Canada were made by the printers Brown and Gilmore of Quebec. The basis of the instrument was metallic and of circular form. A horizontal internal plate allowed the insertion of the characters. A wooden handle allowed the postmaster to apply the required pressure to cancel the correspondence.

These straight line postmarks were always used as a dispatch mark by the office where the letter was posted. Prior to 1827, they are almost always found on the back of folded letters. (The only exceptions to this are some of the early marks from Montreal, Quebec and Three Rivers and some of the marks from the smaller post offices which appear on the front of letters – see figs 2 and 4). Similarly, prior to 1827, most of these marks are found only in black ink. (The only exception to this is the first Montreal mark of 1774 which is only known struck in red - see fig 1).

From 1827 onward, postmasters were asked to strike these marks on the front of letters and in red ink. This change coincided with the arrival, as Administrator of Posts, of Thomas A. Stayner. These directives took some time to be adopted by all postmasters. Shortly after this, in 1829, the Canadian post office received its first batch of circular date stamps from England and these quickly replaced the straight line types in most offices. Only a few straight line types date from later than 1830.

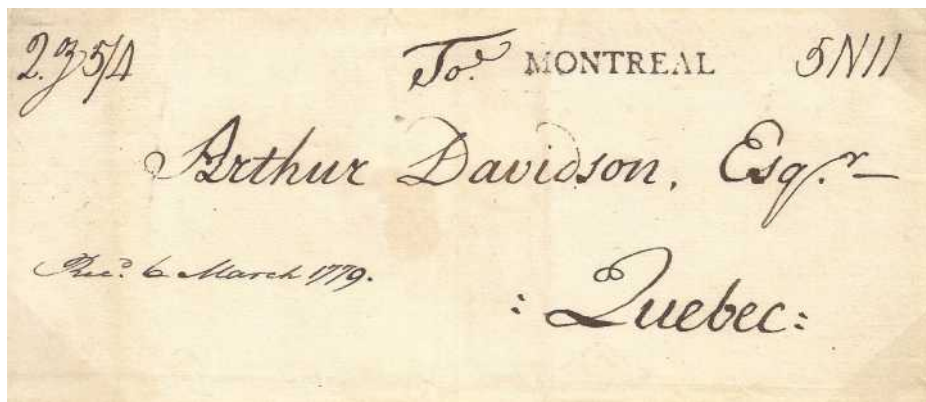


Fig 2 Montreal type IV straight line mark on a 1779 letter to Quebec. This is one of the few Lower Canada marks available to collectors to be regularly found struck on the front of letters. (courtesy Graham Searle)





Fig 3 A trio of the rarer straight line types from Dundee, Petite Nation and St. Denis (courtesy of Cavendish Auctions - Dr. Dorothy Sanderson sale 2006)

The following table lists all the straight line marks from Lower Canada known to us. Please note the following when making use of this table:-

- The names of post offices are based on the book by Walker and Bélanger. (3)
- Type numbers have been assigned on the following basis:-
 - Each device manufactured to mark the mail has been given a type number
 - Any modification to that device has been given a sub-type letter
 (Thus, as an example, the first two entries for Berthier in the table below are deemed to be from the same device, type I - note identical sizing and type - but at a certain time the device was modified with the capital 'I' being replaced by a lower case 'i' to create type Ia).



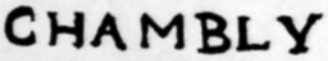
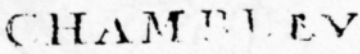

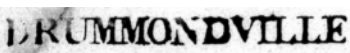
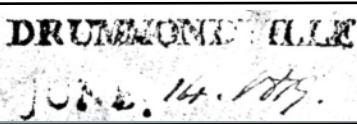


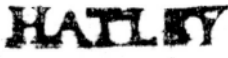
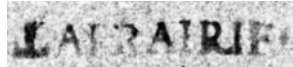
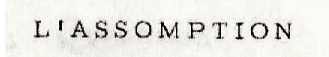
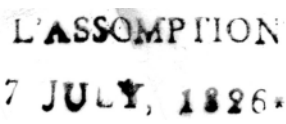
- In some cases the illustrations may have been enhanced to provide a uniform presentation. However, the relative dimensions, characters and spacing have not been changed.
- The known period of use of the mark is shown. Where the years are linked by a hyphen we believe the use to have been continuous in that period.
- The approximate size of the mark is shown in mm; width x height. These measurements are for the postmark itself (including the date line where applicable) but take no account of any manuscript portions.

Where we have not been able to personally verify dates, dimensions or colours, these are shown in *italics*. Where italics occur, the data was taken from previous philatelic printed sources such as Campbell (4), etc.

Type	Illustration	Period of use	Approx size in mm	Colour	Comments
BERTHIER					
I		1780-1794	35 x 4.7	Black	
Ia		1796-1801	35 x 4.7	Black	i' in lower case
II		1802-1803	34 x 13	Black	
Ila		1804-1813	34 x 13	Black	A hybrid of types II and Ila has been seen from 1804 showing a full date line missing just the last digit of the year.
Iib		1828-1829	34 x 13	Black <i>Red</i>	
III		1815-1817	36 x 4	Black	Only known from the archives
CARILLON					
I		1841	38 x 3.5	Red	Only recorded from the archives.

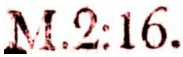

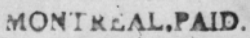
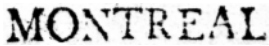
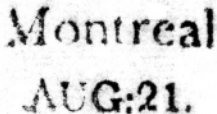

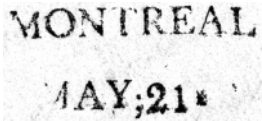
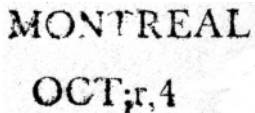
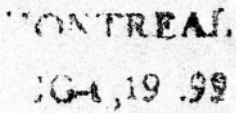
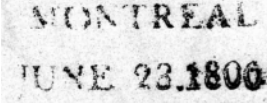
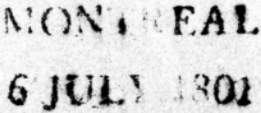




CHAMBLY					
I		1820 - 1822	40 x 4	Black	Listed in old CS catalogues but not seen by us.
II		1821 - 1829	44 x 4	Black	Chambley with an 'e'
COTEAU DU LAC					
I		1819 - 1829	45 x 4	Black	
DRUMMONDVILLE					
I		1819 - 1829	52 x 4	Black Red	
Ia		1819	52 x 15	Black	Only known from the archives
DUNDEE					
I		1830	35 X 3	Black	Only known from the archives
II		1831	28 x 3	Red Black	
HATLEY					
I		1822 - 1823	29 x 5	Black	Often to be found struck on the front of letters. Normally with a manuscript date under.
LA PRAIRIE					
I		1820 - 1829	25 x 3	Black Red	Normally found with manuscript date under.
L'ASSOMPTION					
I		1822 - 1826	52 x 4	Black	Listed in old CS catalogues but not seen by us
II		1826	50 x 18	Black	Only known from the archives. May be modified form of type I with added date line





MONTREAL					
I		1774	28 x 7	Red	Only known in the archives
II		1774	28 x 10	Black	Only known in the archives
III		1777	28 x 3	Black	Only one or two examples recorded in private hands. Sometimes shows parts of box enclosing the letters.
IV		1779 - 1783	40.5 x 4.5	Black	Often to be found struck on the front of letters
V		1784 - 1789	34 x 16	Black	
Va		1784 - 1785	34 x 16	Black	Less than 10 examples recorded
VI		1789 - 1792	40 x 18	Black	
VII		1792 - 1799	41 x 16	Black	
VIIa		1799	41 x 16	Black	
VIIb		1800 - 1801	41 x 16	Black	Dateline width varies between 41 and 46mm
VIIc		1801	41 x 16	Black	Dateline width varies between 41 and 46mm





MONTREAL contd					
VIII		1801 - 1802	84 x 5	Black	
IX		1802 - 1810	37 x 13	Black	
IXa		1803	37 x 13	Black	
IXb		1810 - 1819	37 x 13	Black	
X		1810 - 1828	37 x 13	Black Red	
PETITE NATION					
I		1843	36 x 4.5	Black	Only a few examples known
QUÉBEC					
I		1765 1780 - 1796	35 x 5	Black	Usually found with separate Bishop Mark
II		1799	34 x 13	Black	
Ila		1800 - 1809	34 x 13	Black	Examples can be found with the day/month/year in a different order.
RIVER-DU-LOUP					
I		1829	45 x 4	Black	Only known from the archives




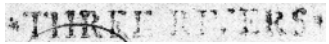
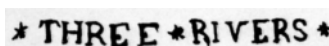


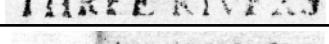
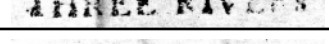
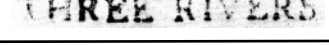
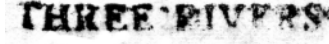

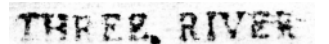

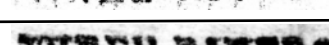

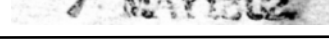

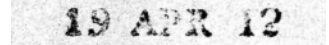
SHERBROOKE					
I	SHERBROOKE	1826 - 1829	44 x 4	Black	
SHIPTON					
I	SHIPTON	1819 - 1829	32 x 4	Black	Only five copies known in private hands
II	SHIPTON C.E.	1828	40 x 4	Black	Listed in old CS catalogues but not seen by us.
ST. DENIS					
I	ST. DENIS	1828	29 x 4	Black	Only a few examples known
ST. JOHN'S					
I	ST JOHN'S	1819 - 1821	35 x 4	Black	Only two copies are known in private hands



Fig 4. One of the two recorded examples of the St. John's L.C. straight line mark. (Courtesy Harmers Auctions, Allan Steinhart sale 2005)

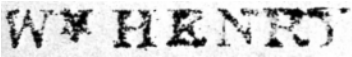
STANSTEAD					
I	STANSTEAD	1821 - 1828	44 x 4.5	Black	
TERREBONNE					
I	TERREBONNE 8 June, 1826.	1826	50 x 17	Black	Only known from the archives



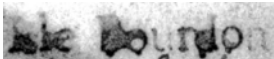
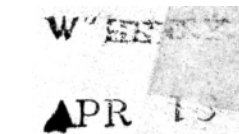
THREE RIVERS					
I		1777 - 1778	54 x 4.5	Black	
Ia		1781 - 1782	59 x 4.5	Black	
Ib		1782	53 x 4	Black	Listed in old CS catalogues but not seen by us
Ic		1784 - 1788	52 x 4.5	Black	
Id		1788 - 1790	58 x 4.5	Black	
Ie		1791	52 x 4.5	Black	Lower case 's'
If		1792 - 1799	53 x 4.5	Black	
Ig		1797	53 x 4.5	Black	
Ih		1799	53 x 4.5	Black	
Ii		1799 - 1800	50 x 4.5	Black	No 'S'
Ij		1800 - 1801	49 x 4.5	Black	No 'S'
II		1802 - 1810	39.5 x 12	Black	
Ila		1810 - 1818	39.5 x 12	Black	
Ilb		1828	39.5 x 12	Black	
III		1818 - 1823	35 x 12	Black	
IIIa		1823 - 1827	35 x 12	Black	
IV		1828	52.5 x 4	Black	





WILLIAM HENRY					
I		1815 - 1816	37 x 5	Black	

OTHER RECORDED STRAIGHT LINE MARKS

ISLE BOURDON (Way Office)					
		1829	35 x 5	Black	Only known from the archives
WILLIAM HENRY (Military Post Office)					
		1812	28 x 15	Black	Only known from the archives

The authors would be grateful if members could inform them of any other types not listed and also any date range extensions and/or different colours used. In addition they would like to hear about the existence of the types shown in *italics*. Scans of all such items should be sent to the Editor.



Fig 5 One of the rarer Lower Canada straight line marks from Shipton. Only five copies of this mark have been recorded. (courtesy Harmers Auctions – Allan Steinhart sale 2005)





Fig 6. Another example of a straight line mark struck on the front of a letter. This example from Stanstead dates from 1828 by which time Post Office directives required them to be so struck. Some earlier examples from this office and from nearby Hatley are, however, also found on the front of letters. (Courtesy Harmers Auctions – Allan Steinhart sale 2005)

References:-

1. *Canada Specialized Postage Stamp Catalogue*, Toronto, W. Maresch and A.W. Leggett, 1987 It is worth noting that the listing in the CS Catalogue had its roots in the *American Stampless Cover Catalog (ASCC)* and the last versions covering Canada and BNA were edited by Sissons and later by Steinhart. Before such publication in the ASCC, listings were prepared by Campbell and earlier by Prof Richardson and results published in the quarterly publication *Postal Markings* (1930-1934).
2. « *Catalogue des marques postales du Québec (CMPQ)*, part 1: *Marque rectiligne* », *Bulletin d'histoire postale et de marcophilie*, 107, Jan – Mar 2010, pp 37 – 42
3. *Les bureaux de poste du Québec*, Anatole Walker with the participation of Ferdinand Bélanger. Montréal, *Le marché philatélique de Montréal*, 1987. 291 p.
4. *Canada Post Offices 1755 – 1895*, F.W. Campbell, *Quarterman Publications* 1972. 208 p.