

Postal beginnings at Sainte-Thérèse-de-Blainville post office, Québec

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THE post office in Sainte-Thérèse-de-Blainville was opened 6 January 1837. As depicted in Figure 1, Sainte-Thérèse is located eight miles northeast of Saint-Eustache and two hundred and nine miles from Quebec [1].



Figure 1. Map of Upper and Lower Canada, including New Brunswick and part of Nova Scotia, exhibiting post towns and mail routes. TA Stayner, DPM, January 1847 (LAC, NMC-11742).

At the opening of the office, a postal route was initiated from Saint-Eustache to Sainte-Thérèse-de-Blainville, with mail services once per week. The distance between them was eight miles, and David Mitchell, the postmaster of Saint-Eustache, was granted the contract for the sum of £10 per year. From 1844 on, there were two mail deliveries per week. The Mitchell contract specified "... that transport will be on horseback, horse-drawn carriage or sleigh," leaving Saint-Eustache on Mondays and Fridays after the arrival of mails from the Montreal route. At that time, the mail reached Sainte-Thérèse-de-Blainville in less than ninety minutes. After remaining on-site for two hours, the transport returned to Saint-Eustache as quickly as possible at an expense of £18 per year [2].

With the opening of the post office in Saint-Jérôme on 6 July 1845, another postal route was established from Montréal to Saint-Jérôme through Sainte-Thérèse-de-Blainville, a distance of fifteen miles. This first contract was awarded to E Valiquette, for the sum of £8 per year. In 1848, the mail passed on this road three times a week. The contract was awarded to Joseph Ménard, replaced in 1849 by François B dit Desrochers.

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Finally, another contract for mail service was also granted to James Parke, beginning on 6 February 1848, to transport mail from Sainte-Thérèse-de-Blainville to Saint-Martin, a distance of nine miles at a rate of £ 25 per year [3].

Early postmasters of Sainte-Thérèse-de-Blainville

Table 1 names the early postmasters from the post office’s opening in 1837 until 1863. These postmasters are discussed in turn in the next section.

Table 1. Listing of early postmasters

Postmaster	Period
Neil S Scott	6 January 1837–Winter 1837/1838
Alfred A Andrews	winter 1837/1838 – 5 January 1839
John Morris	6 January 1839–10 September 1863

Neil S Scott

Neil S Scott, merchant, was appointed postmaster of Sainte-Thérèse-de-Blainville at the opening of the office on 6 January 1837 [4]. During the summer, Scott was involved in the Rebellion of 1837 and was arrested on 8 February. We can therefore conclude that the postal service was temporarily interrupted in the winter of 1837-1838. In a subsequent letter to the Postmaster General of England, TA Stayner stated that “... it was impossible to get Scott’s latest quarterly account statements” [5].

Born in Scotland about 1813, Neil Scott was the son of William Scott and Catherine Ferguson. He was the younger brother of William Henry Scott, a merchant of Saint-Eustache. He studied at the College of Montreal from 1822 to 1824. He then moved to Sainte-Thérèse-de-Blainville in the county of Terrebonne. There, he opened a general store where he was a merchant by profession and also postmaster.



Figure 2. Signature of postmaster Neil S Scott.

In the 1830s, and at the time of the 1837-1838 rebellion, Scott was recognized as one of the leading patriots of Sainte-Thérèse-de-Blainville. From 1834 until 1837, he attended a few rallies promoting the Ninety-Two Resolutions drafted by Louis-Hippolyte Papineau and later denouncing the Ten Resolutions of

British Colonial Secretary Lord Russell. The end of 1837 marked a turning point in Scott’s political thought. Contrary to such *patriotes* as Girod and Chénier at Saint-Eustache, who openly advocated taking up arms, Neil Scott, like his brother in Saint-Eustache, was more moderate in his actions.

Nevertheless, after the fall of Saint-Eustache, General Colborne ordered Colonel Maitland and his troops to burn down Neil Scott’s home, and other dwellings owned by heads of the Patriots of Sainte-Thérèse-de-Blainville. However, with the intervention of the priest Ducharme, Scott’s properties were saved from fire. Always suspected of sympathy with the patriots, Neil Scott was arrested in February 1838 and jailed; however, without evidence of guilt and with evidence in his favour, he was released on 27 February 1838. According to the account of a man named Bastien, Scott would never have driven inhabitants of Sainte-Thérèse-de-Blainville to rebellion and was always a loyal subject of Her Majesty. Neil Scott died about 1846 [6].

Alfred A Andrews

Alfred A Andrews was probably named Postmaster during the winter of 1837-1838 following the dismissal of Neil Scott; however, this is not a certainty. We recovered two letters he wrote to Québec in September and October 1838, charged at 11d. This would not have been the case if he had been Postmaster, since he would be entitled to free franking privileges [7]. Another source indicates that he resigned between 6 July 1838 and 5 January 1839 [8].

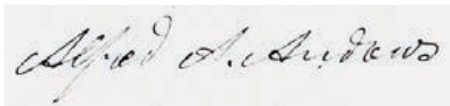


Figure 3. Signature of postmaster Alfred A Andrews.

John Morris

John Morris was born 22 March 1795 at Coupar Angus in Scotland [9]. Married there to Amilia Campbell, they had two children David and Thomas, the latter born in Sainte-Thérèse. In 1827, at the age of 31, John Morris left Scotland to make his fortune in North America. He worked at Molson's until 1840, but then he acquired—from James Porteous, who was in financial difficulty—his home, his distillery and trade shop on Church Street. Morris died at Sainte-Thérèse-de-Blainville on 5 January 1871 at the age of 75 [10].



Figure 4. Signature of postmaster John Morris.

Morris was appointed Postmaster on 6 January 1839 [11]. His clerk, Alex Garrie, was mainly assigned to his business, but also overlooked the post office. His first son, David Morris, succeeded him as Postmaster in 1863, receiving an income of £4 18s 5d for the year

ending 5 July 1840 [12]. He also used his franking privileges, which he estimated at £4 per year. He received and sent one hundred and forty letters and one hundred and nineteen newspapers annually [13].



Figure 5. Letter sent by Postmaster John Morris using franking privilege «Free J. Morris P.M.» and dated 5 March 1841. Note the double circle postmark in green. [LAC, RG4-B52, Vol. 4, N° 242]



Figure 6. The “Castel Morris” built by Thomas Porteous in 1813 and purchased by John Morris in 1840. The Post Office in Sainte-Thérèse-de Blainville was located in Morris' home [14].



	
1838 - 1860	1846
<i>LAC, RG4-A1, Vol. 619, N° 2787</i>	<i>LAC, RG4-C1, Vol. 162, N° 1774</i>

Figure 7. Early postal markings of Sainte-Thérèse-de-Blainville

Table 2. Sainte-Thérèse-de-Blainville P.O. Number of letters received each week [15].

1842	1843	1844	1845	1846	1847	1848	Average
22	9	11	17	21	19	30	18

Figure 5 shows an 1841 letter written by Mr Morris on which he used the free frank privilege. His residence in Sainte-Thérèse-de-Blainville, which also served as a post office, is depicted in Figure 6. Figure 7 displays two postmarks used during Morris’ tenure as postmaster, while Table 2 shows the average number of letters received each week at the post office during the years of his tenure. The right-hand column of Table 2 shows the average number per week over the seven-year timeframe.

Abbreviations used in text, figures and references

- LAC: Library and Archives Canada
- RG: Record group
- MG: Manuscript group

References and endnotes

- [1] LAC, MG44B, Vol 6, p 95. See also Canada Province, Parliament, Legislative Assembly, *Journals*, 1846. Appendix F, *Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Enquire into the Affairs of the Post Office in British North America*.
The auditors' report is dated 31 December 1841. Section D-16.
- [2] LAC, RG3, Vol 684, p 28, S-17.
- [3] LAC, RG4, Vol 684, p 60, S-29.
- [4] LAC, MG44B, Vol 6, pp 42-43
- [5] LAC, MG44B, Vol 34, p 299.
- [6] Text of Jonathan Lemire in <http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/>.
- [7] LAC, RG4-A1, Vol. 619, Numbers 2785 and 2789.
- [8] LAC, MG44B, Vol 8, p 248 and RG3, Vol. 1171 (circular)
- [9] <http://www.ljsvendsen.com/ljsdec09/aqwg24.htm>.
- [10] JG Gilles Charron, *Histoire de Sainte-Thérèse par ses noms de rues (parcs et institutions)*, Éditions JG Gilles Charron, 1999, p 110.
- [11] Canada Province, Parliament, Legislative Assembly, *Journals*, 1846. Appendix F *Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Enquire into the Affairs of the Post Office in British North America*. The auditors' report is dated 31 December 1841. Section D-16.
- [12] LAC, RG4-B52, Vol 4, No 224.
- [13] LAC, RG4-B52, Vol 4, No 242.
- [14] <http://www.sainte-therese.ca/ville-sainte-therese/publications-et-autres-medias/actualites/le-castel-morris-celebre-ses-200-ans.html>.
- [15] LAC, MG44B. Statistical reports found between Vols 14 (1842) and 58 (1848).

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