

Postal Beginnings at St. Andrews, Quebec

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Figure 1. View of St. Andrews from Abbott's Hill, Lower Canada, October 1844 [Regional Museum of Argenteuil]

The post office at St. Andrews opened on June 15, 1819¹ following the establishment by Philemon Wright of the postal route in the Outaouais linking Montreal and Hull. Helped by Thomas Peck, who already had the contract for carrying the mails between Montreal and Quebec, a contract was signed for carrying the mail from the Outaouais to Lachenaye to meet the mail stage from Quebec to Montreal. The post offices at St. Eustache, Grenville, and Hull were opened on the same date.

The St. Andrews post office took the name of the village right from the start. An office called St. Andrews was opened in 1830 in the Cornwall District in Upper

Canada. These two offices were the frequent source of confusion, and the designation L.C. and U.C. was used of necessity in order to distinguish between them. In 1842 St. Andrews (L.C.) became St. Andrews, Ottawa because it was in the Ottawa Postal District. Finally, in 1849, it was decided to name these two offices St. Andrews East in Canada East (Quebec) and St. Andrews West in Canada West (Ontario).

Name of office	Period
St. Andrews	1819 06 15 to 1842
St. Andrews, Ottawa	1842 to 1849
St. Andrews East	1849 to 1978

Guy Richards

Guy Richards was born in Norwich, Connecticut on November 8, 1787. He moved to Montreal as a young man and became a merchant, hoping to sell textiles to the army during the War of 1812, but he went bankrupt when the war ended suddenly. He became acquainted with a Miss Graham who was visiting Montreal from Massachusetts, and they married. They

moved to St. Andrews, where he bought the house belonging to Theodore Davis, which he enlarged and used for his business, notably as a lumber dealer. In 1827 he moved to a brick-clad store (currently occupied by M. La Fond?). He died on September 21, 1839².



Figure 2. Signature of postmaster Guy Richards [LAC, MG24-D8, vol. 7, p. 2009]

Postmaster	Period
Guy Richards	June 15, 1879 to sometime between April 5, 1830 and April 5, 1831
William Grimes Blanchard	Sometime between April 5, 1830 and April 5, 1831 to March 27, 1847
Henry Frederick Augustus McArthur	March 27, 1847 to 1853

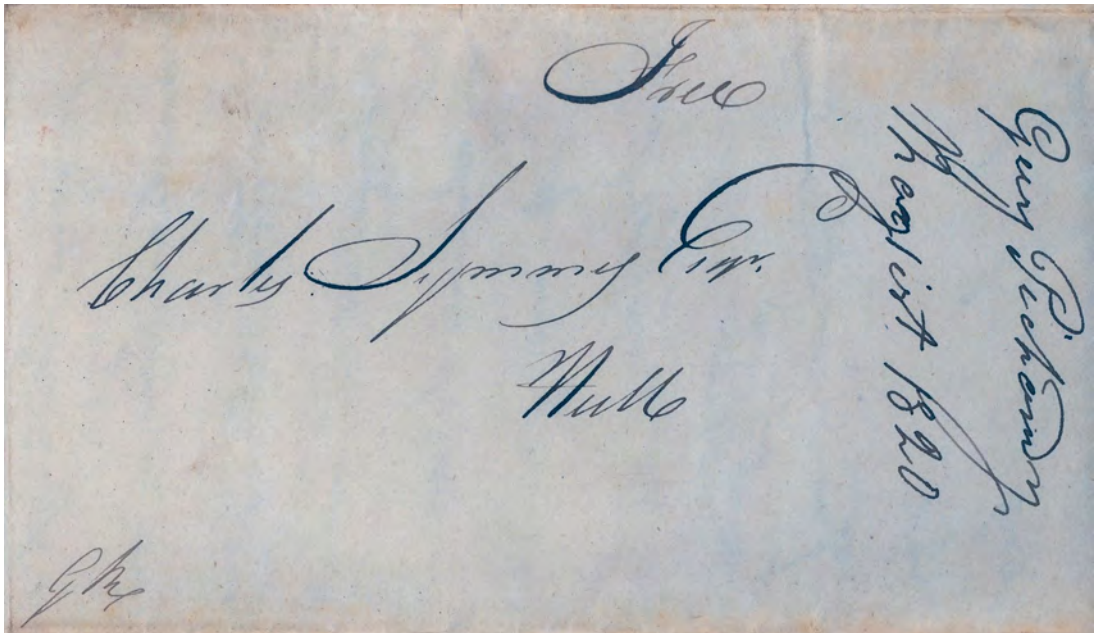


Figure 3. Letter from postmaster Guy Richards dated May 1, 1820, sent under his free frank and initialed G.R., to Charles Symmes in Hull [LAC, MG24-D8, vol. 6, no. 138]

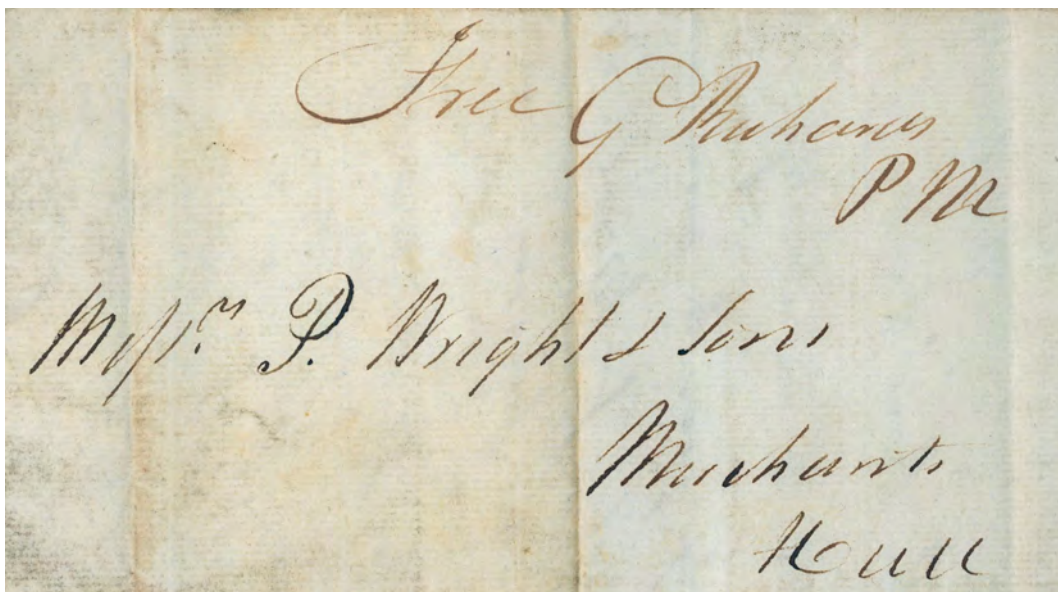
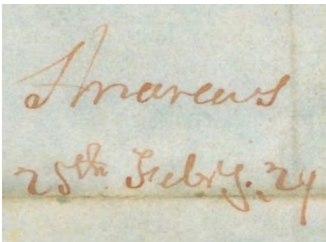







Figure 4. Letter from postmaster Guy Richards dated on January 6, 1824 sent under his free frank signed G. Richards PM [LAC, MG24-D8, vol. 12, no. 443]

Early St. Andrews postal markings

		
<p>1829 LAC, MG24-D8, vol. 18, no. 729</p>	<p>1830-1842 LAC, Walker, 1992-311</p>	<p>1843-1848 Campbell, p. 145</p>
		
<p>1847-1849 Unknown source</p>	<p>1849-1866 Proof⁽¹⁾</p>	<p>1843-1849 LAC, RG4-C1, vol. 100, no. 1190</p>

¹With indicia "A" or "I" or nothing under the year.



Figure 5. Letter from H. Gates sent free of postage to P. Wright (for Ruggles Wright, Hull postmaster). The letter has a manuscript mark "St. Andrews 25th February 29" and a manuscript "Free" [LAC, MG24-D8, vol. 18, no. 729]

William Grimes Blanchard

Figure 7. Signature of postmaster W. G. Blanchard [LAC, RG4-B52, vol. 3, pt 1, no. 44]

For the Commission of Enquiry into the Post Office³, W. G. Blanchard stated that his net salary for the year ending in July 1840

had been £14 10d, which is to say 20% of the revenues received at his office, and that he also had a clerk who worked for his business. He stated that he sent and received about 200 free-franked letters in addition to 500 newspapers per year, and that the post office was located in his residence.

W. G. Blanchard was Justice of the Peace at St. Andrews. He was already at an advanced age when he decided to leave his

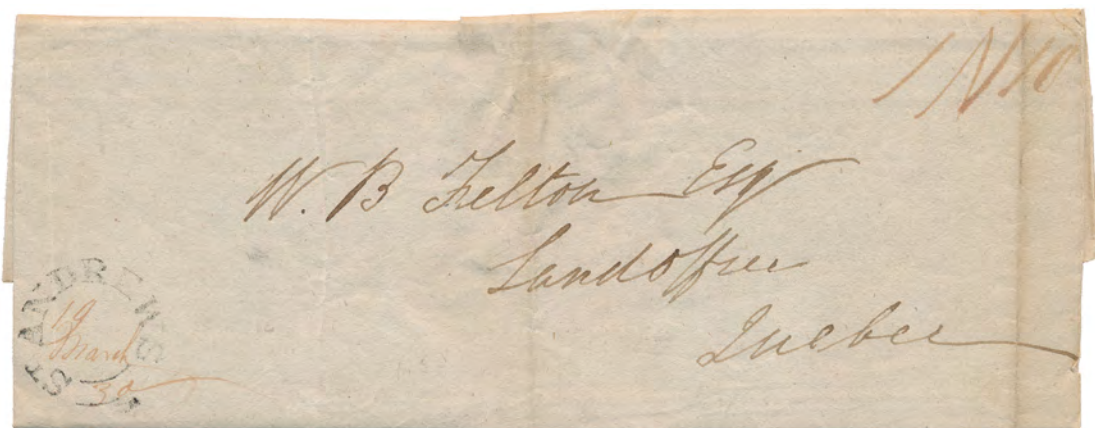


Figure 6. The earliest known letter from St. Andrews bearing the small serified broken-circle handstamp (1829 order) dated March 19, 1830 [Bruce Field collection]

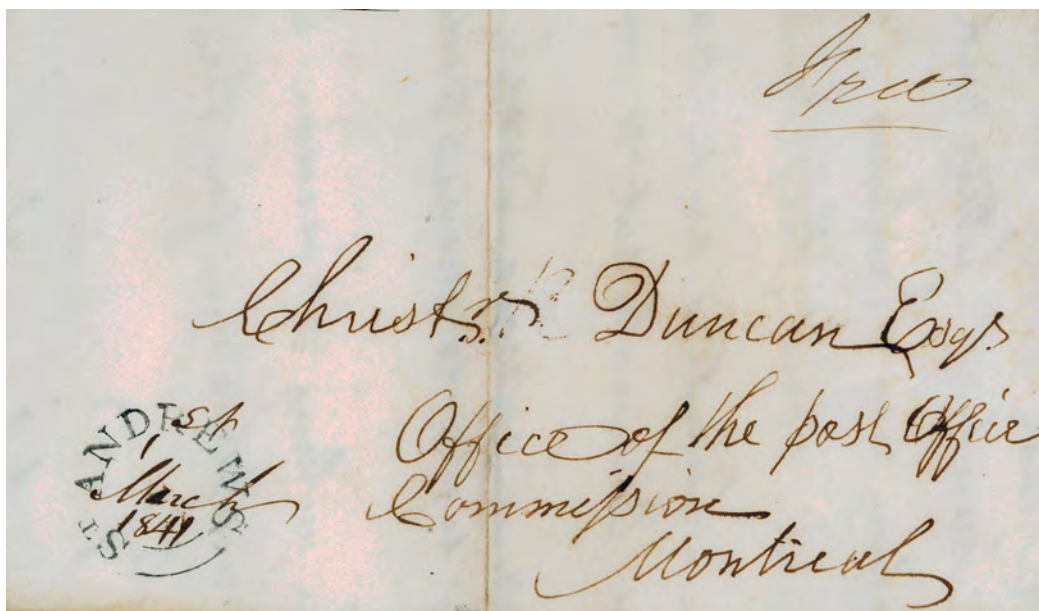


Figure 8. Letter from postmaster W. G. Blanchard dated on March 1, 1841, sent under free frank and struck with the small 1829-type broken circle in black ink [LAC, RG4-B52, vol. 3, pt 1, no. 44]

duties as postmaster, wishing to establish himself in the United States as soon as possible; this was the reason for his request for leave addressed to T. A. Stayner in March of 1847. He informed Stayner that his son-in-law Frederick McArthur had been his assistant for the preceding four or five years, and recommended him as his replacement. Furthermore, William Henry Scott, (1799-1851), Deputy for Deux-Montagnes and provincial Member of Parliament, wrote a letter in support of McArthur⁴.

Henry Frederick Augustus McArthur

Despite the recommendations of Blanchard and Deputy Scott, several criticisms were voiced by village inhabitants concerning this possible nomination. With the support of Daniel de Hertel, County Registrar, they favoured the nomination of Thomas Meikle, a St. Andrews merchant. Thomas Meikle was born in Glasgow and

had emigrated several years previously. It was he who became St. Andrews' postmaster in 1853; he and his father perished in the conflagration of the steamboat *Montreal* on June 26, 1857. In 1847, however, Deputy Scott had precedence over Daniel de Hertel, and the Provincial Secretary recommended H. F. A. McArthur as postmaster. The nomination was effective from March 18, 1848 with the approval of the British Postmaster General⁵. It can however be inferred that he was in office from March 27, 1847, since he had assisted his father-in-law in these duties for several years. At that time the postmaster's salary was £25 per annum.



Figure 10. Signature of postmaster H.F.A. McArthur [LAC, RG4-C1, vol. 195, report 1944]

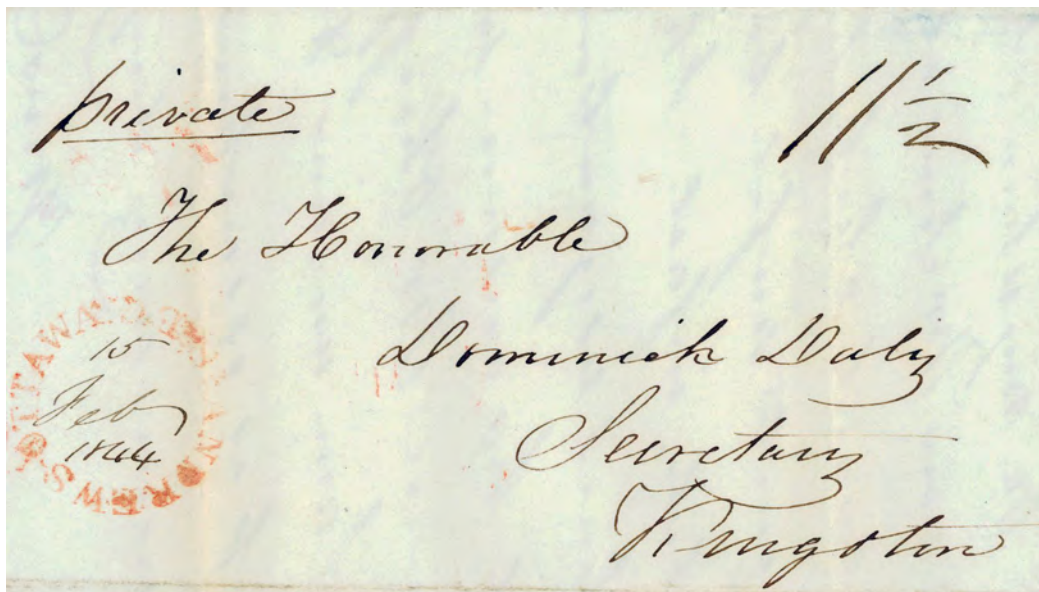


Figure 9. Letter mailed at St. Andrews dated on February 15, 1844 using the serified double broken circle reading ST ANDREWS-OTTAWA / L.C. [LAC, RG4-C1, vol. 95, no. 1126]

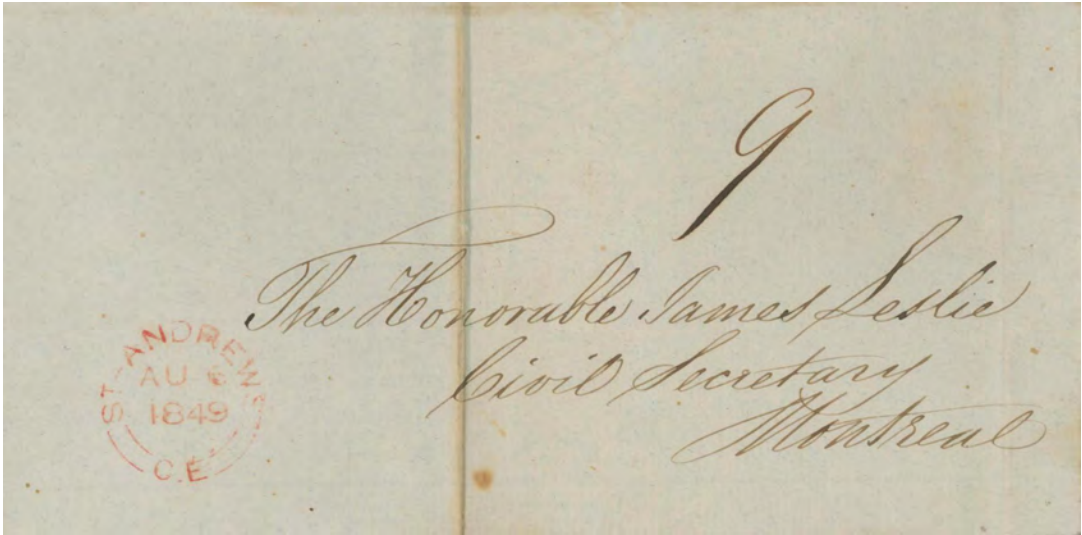


Figure 11. Letter from St. Andrews East dated on August 6, 1849 using the sans-serif double broken circle S^T ANDREWS / C.E [LAC, RG4-C1, vol. 262, no. 3110]

St. Andrews - Average number of letters received per week⁶

1842	1843	1844	1845	1846	1847	1848	Moyenne
49	58	57	56	58	60	81	60

1 LAC, MG44B, vol. 2, p. 201; vol. 3, p. 610.

2 Thomas, Cyrus, *History of the County of Argenteuil, Que. From the Earliest Settlement to the Present*, Lachute, Argenteuil Historical Association, 1981.

3 LAC, RG4-B52, vol. 3, pt 1, nos 36 & 44.

4 LAC, RG4-C1, vol. 183, Report 762.

5 LAC, MG44B, vol. 54, pp 251-252.

6 LAC, MG44B. Various statistical reports found in vols 14 (1842) to 58 (1848).



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