

# The Bickerdike Machine Cancellations of

## Hamilton, Ontario.



A Bickerdike cancellation on illustrated cover from Hamilton to England dated Sunday, December 25, 1898 the **first day** of Canada's new Empire rate.

The Hamilton post office received its first automated cancelling machines from the Canadian Postal Supply Company in December 1897. Two machines were delivered, each one differentiated by the letters A and B in their obliterator.

This exhibit will show all the different types of cancellations made by these machines from 1897 to 1902. Shown will be several of the early and late dates known, double and sideways strikes as well as different usages such as to dispatch, receive and re-direct mail.

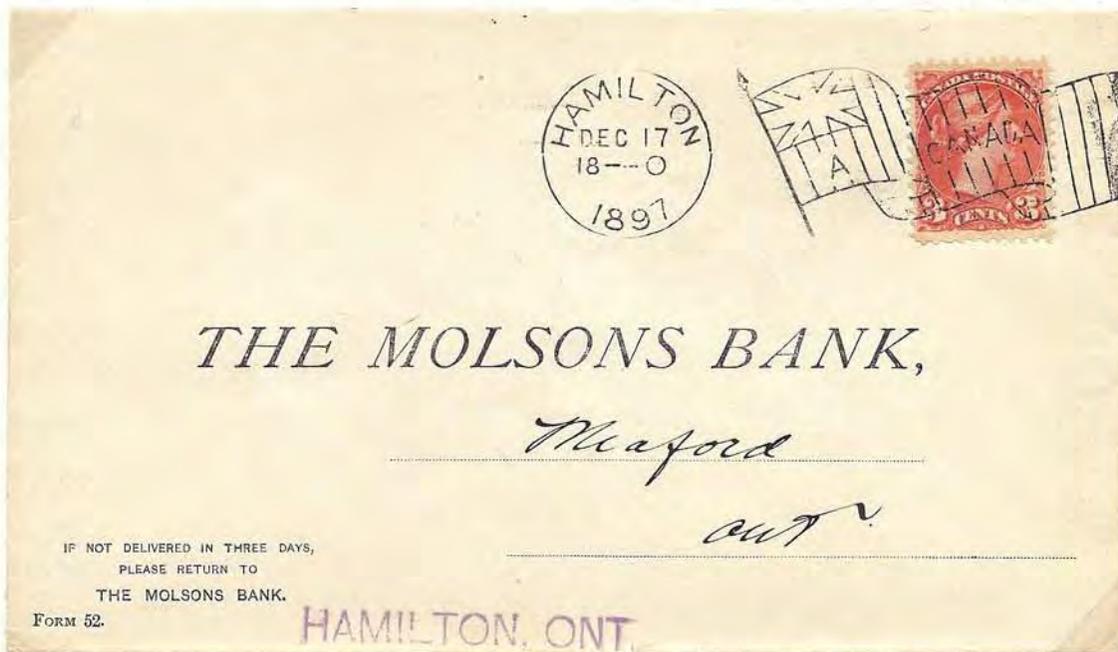
In chronological order, the cancellations used with the Bickerdike machines shown here will be Type 7-A and 7-B flags, then the rare Type 8-G flag and Type M-4 straight-line followed by Type 8-A and 8-B flags then the Type M-6-A and B straight-line cancellations. To finish off, I will show the earliest and only known example of the International machine cancellation dated Oct. 21, 1902 which replaced the Bickerdikes in Hamilton.

## Type 7 Flag Cancellations

The first cancel to be used in the Bickerdike machines at Hamilton was the Type 7 Flag, also known as the *Involute* Flag.

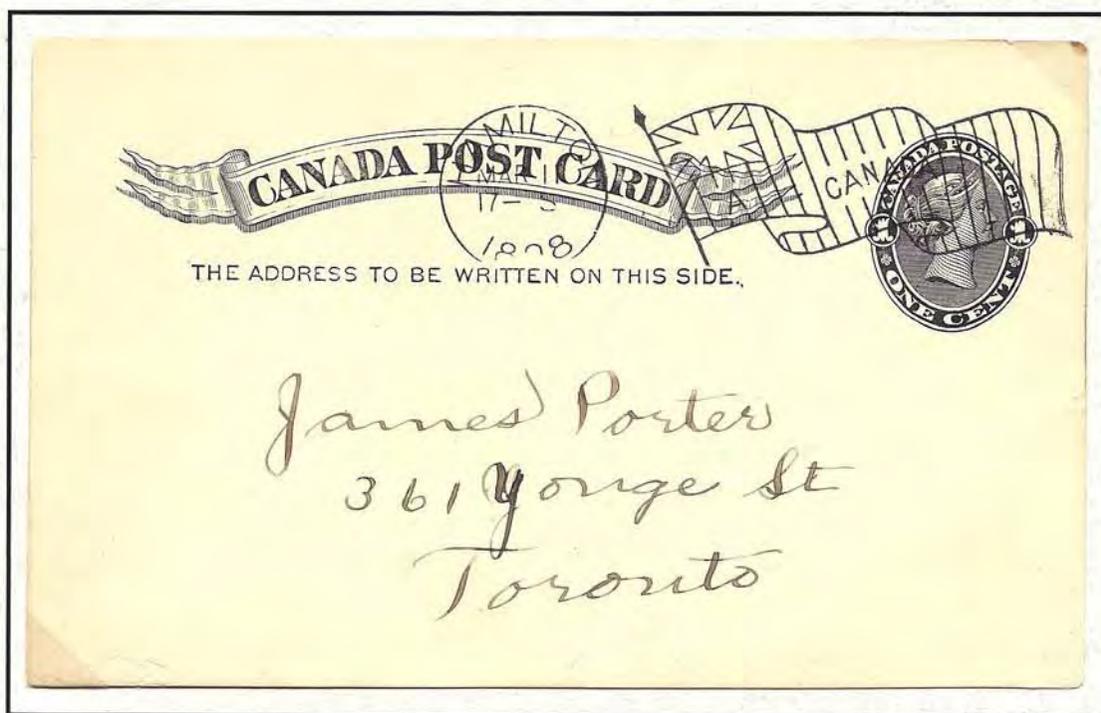
Type 7-A, also known as the *Involute* Flag.

Known used from **Dec 16, 1897 to Mar 11, 1898.**



Shown here on the **SECOND DAY** of use.

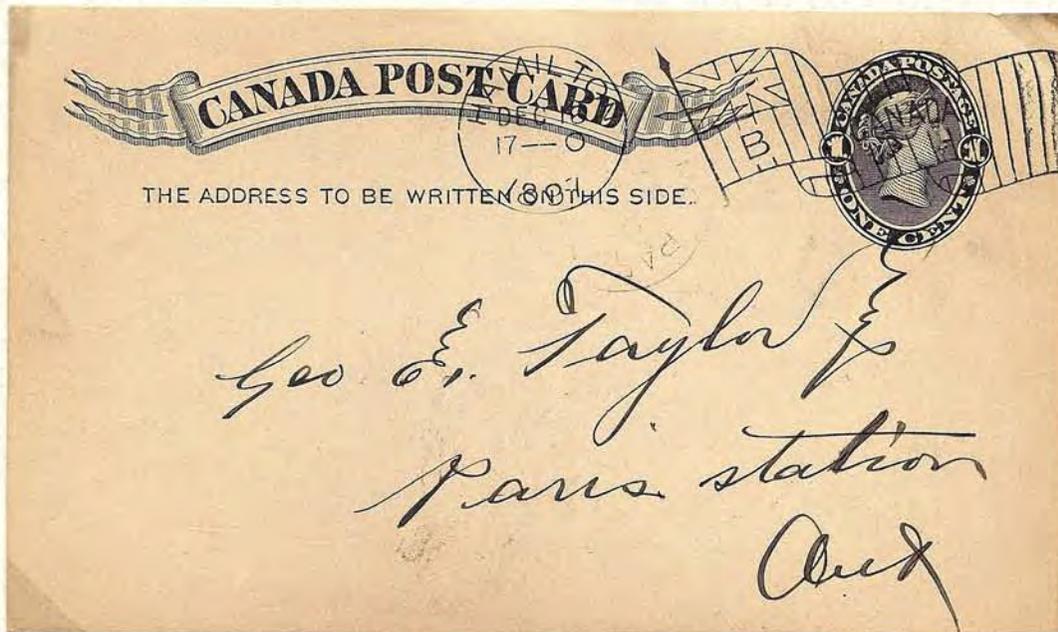
Type 7-A is much scarcer than type 7-B and is less commonly seen on cover.



This is the **LATEST KNOWN DATE** for Type 7-A. Dated March 11, 1898.

**Type 7-B, also known as the *Involute Flag*.**

Known used from **Dec 15, 1897 to Mar 11, 1898**



Shown here on the **SECOND DAY** of use.  
Only one example of the DEC 15 day is known and it is a trial impression,  
making this the **EARLIEST COMMERCIAL USE** for die B.



A full impression, on a **CROSS BORDER** cover dated fourth day of use.

Type 7-B, also known as the *Involute Flag*.

Known used from Dec 15, 1897 to Mar 11, 1898

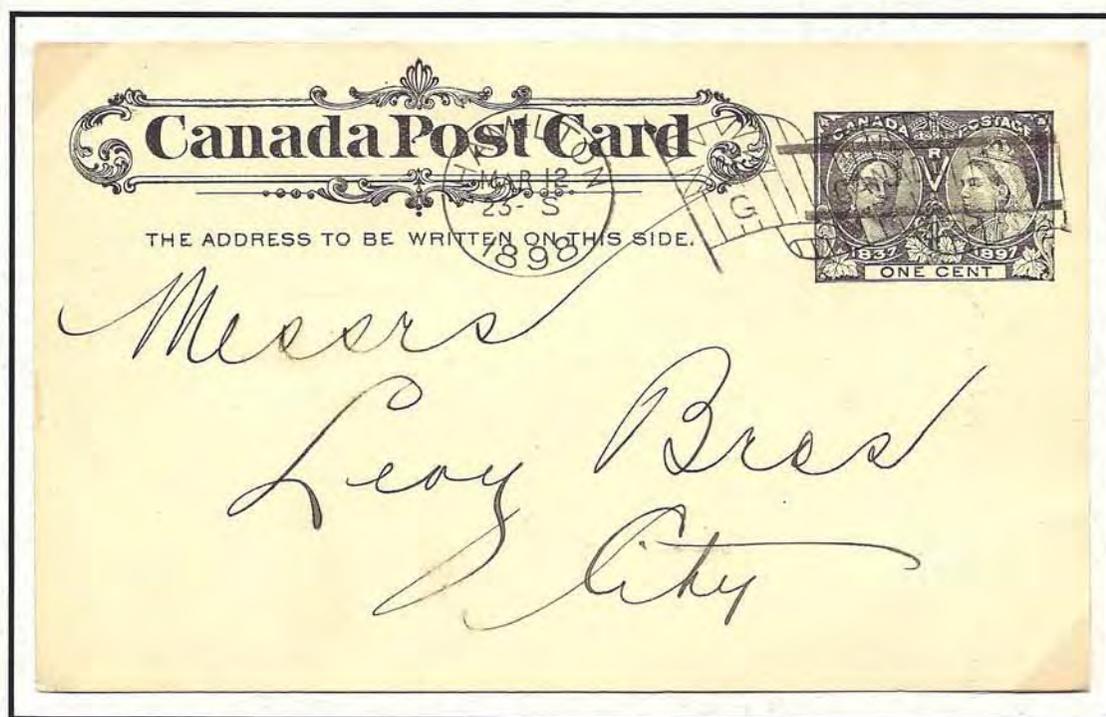


Hamilton Type 7 cancels are **seldom seen** on covers to **overseas destinations**.  
This is a **full impression** on mourning cover to Ipswich, England.  
Shown with back flap open.

## Temporary Type 8-G Flag Cancel

This die was borrowed from the Toronto post office in the short time when the A and B *Involute* Flag dies were sent to have two thick horizontal bars added to them. During this four day period, the two Bickerdike machines at Hamilton operated each with a Type 8-G flag cancel and an M-4 straight-line cancel. March 13, 1898 was a Sunday, and no examples are known on that day, making the actual period of use **three days**.

Known used on **March 12, 14 and 15 1898**

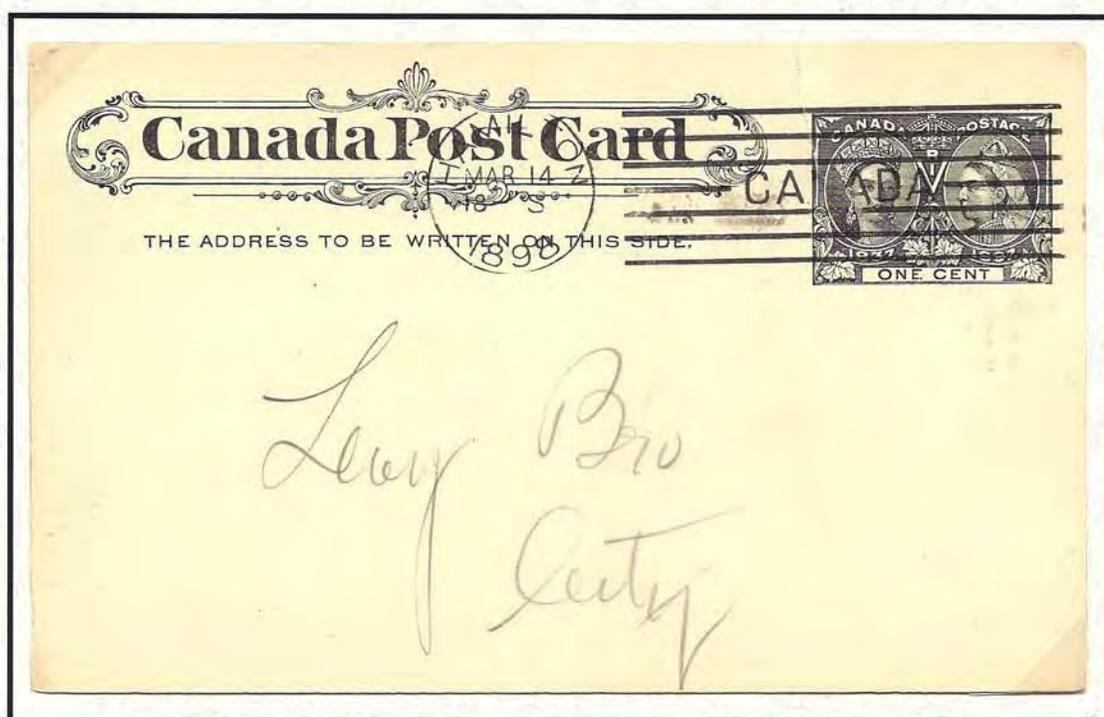


**FULL IMPRESSION** on the **FIRST DAY OF USE, MARCH 12.**  
Of the **11 KNOWN EXAMPLES**, 7 or 8 are on cards and the rest are on cover.  
This is a privately printed Jubilee card from the American Express Co.

## Temporary Type M-4 Straight-Line Cancel

This die was used in the short time when the A and B *Involute* Flag dies were sent to have two thick horizontal bars added to them. During this four day period, the two Bickerdike machines at Hamilton operated each with a Type 8-G flag cancel and M-4 straight-line cancel. March 13, 1898 was a Sunday, and no examples are known on that day, making the actual period of use **three days**.

Known used on **March 12, 14 and 15, 1898**



**FULL IMPRESSION** dated March 14.

Of the only **5 KNOWN EXAMPLES**, three are on cards and two are on cover.

This is a privately printed Jubilee card from the American Express Co.

**This is one of, if not the most desirable machine cancels in Canada.**

## Type 8 Flag Cancellations

The next type of cancel to be used in the Bickerdike machines at Hamilton was the Type 8 flag, also known as the *Barred Flag*. These are essentially type 7 flags with two thick horizontal bars added to the obliterator so they could better cancel stamps.

### Type 8-A, also known as the Barred Flag.

Known used from **Mar 15, 1898 to Jan 31, 1902**



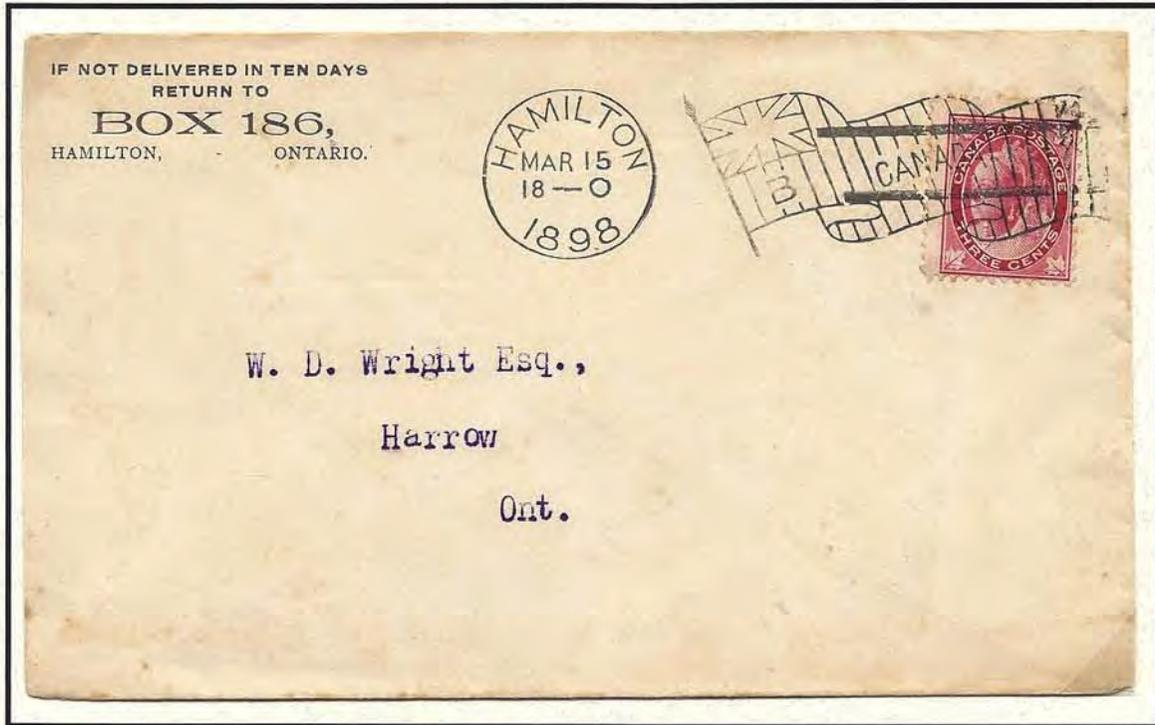
This **full impression** is on a corner card cover with a Map stamp paying the 2c. domestic rate.



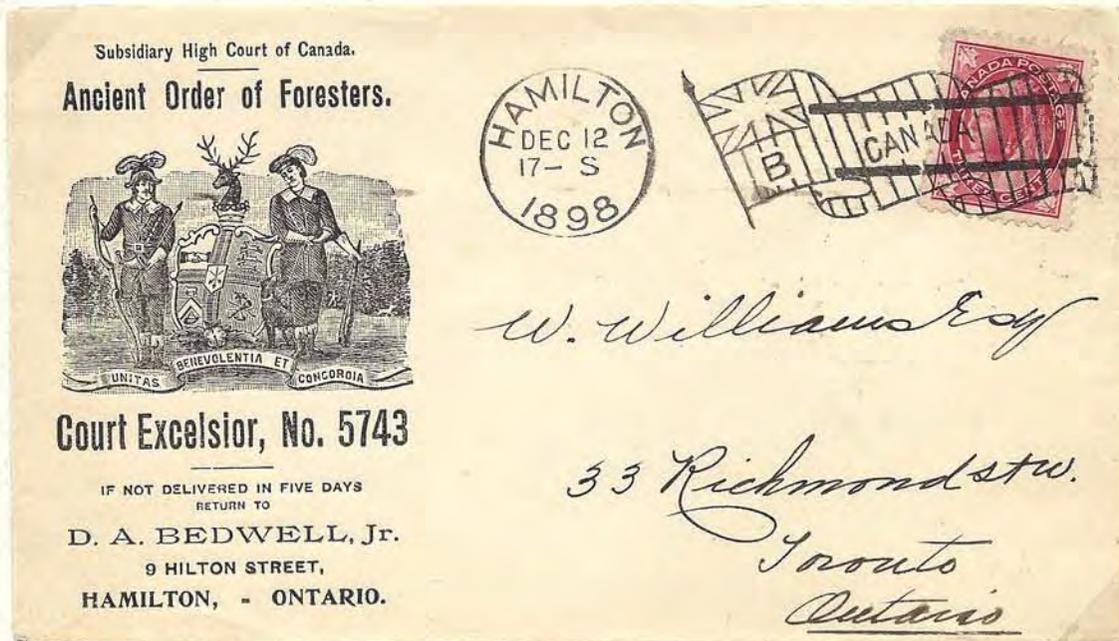
Example showing that mail could be passed through the Bickerdike machines standing up. These were usually reprocessed and properly cancelled.

**Type 8-B**, also known as the *Barred Flag*.

Known used from Mar 15, 1898 to Jan 31, 1902



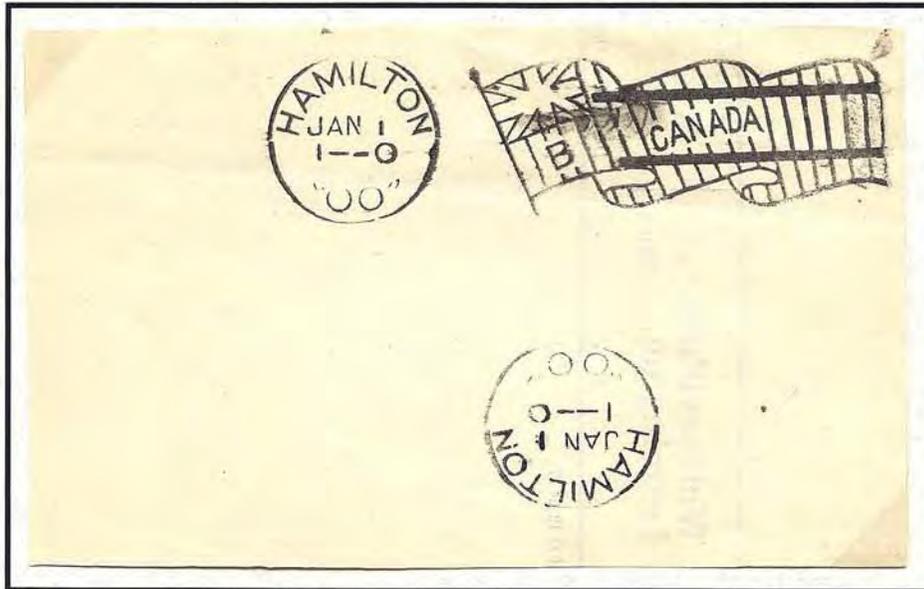
This is the **EARLIEST KNOWN DATE** and time mark of the Type 8-B at Hamilton. This is also one of **ONLY TWO KNOWN EXAMPLES** dated March 15, 1898.



This clear example is on an illustrated advertising cover for the Ancient Order of Foresters.

**Type 8-B**, also known as the *Barred Flag*.

Known used from Mar 15, 1898 to Jan <sup>21</sup>31, 1902



This is the **EARLIEST KNOWN EXAMPLE** of the Type 8-B with the new two-digit year date. From January 1, 1900 and on, there were only two year digits used in the dater hubs. This facing slip has two impressions, one with dater only and one with its flag obliterator. This is also the **only known** trial use for this Type of cancel.



An unusual usage of the Type 8-B Flag cancel on a cover which passed through the machine **TWICE**.

## Type M-6 Straight Line Cancellations

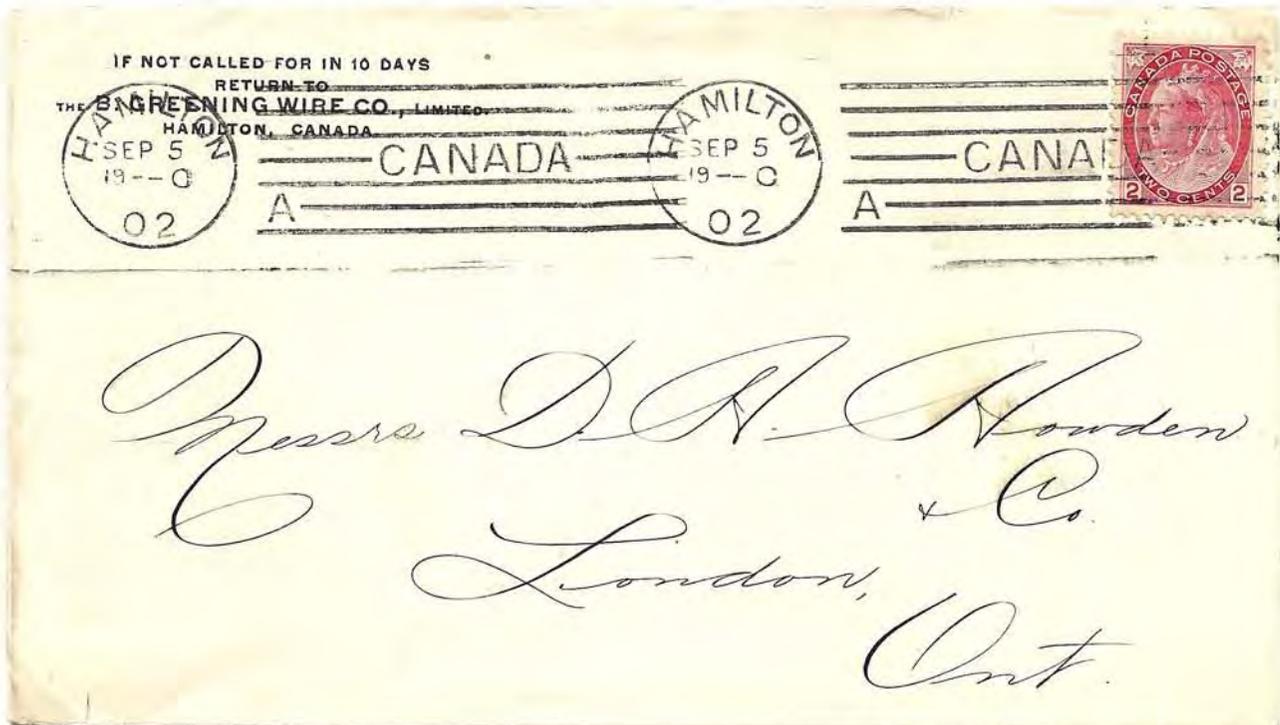
By the end of January 1902 the flag type obliterator surpassed its usefulness, had become quite worn with use and was replaced by the new straight line obliterator, containing the word CANADA and die letters A and B, one for each machine.

Type M-6-A, with straight line obliterator.

Known used from Feb 3, 1902 to Oct 21, 1902.



Shown here on the **SECOND DAY** of use on illustrated ad cover.  
Examples from the A die machine can often be seen with a second impression at left.

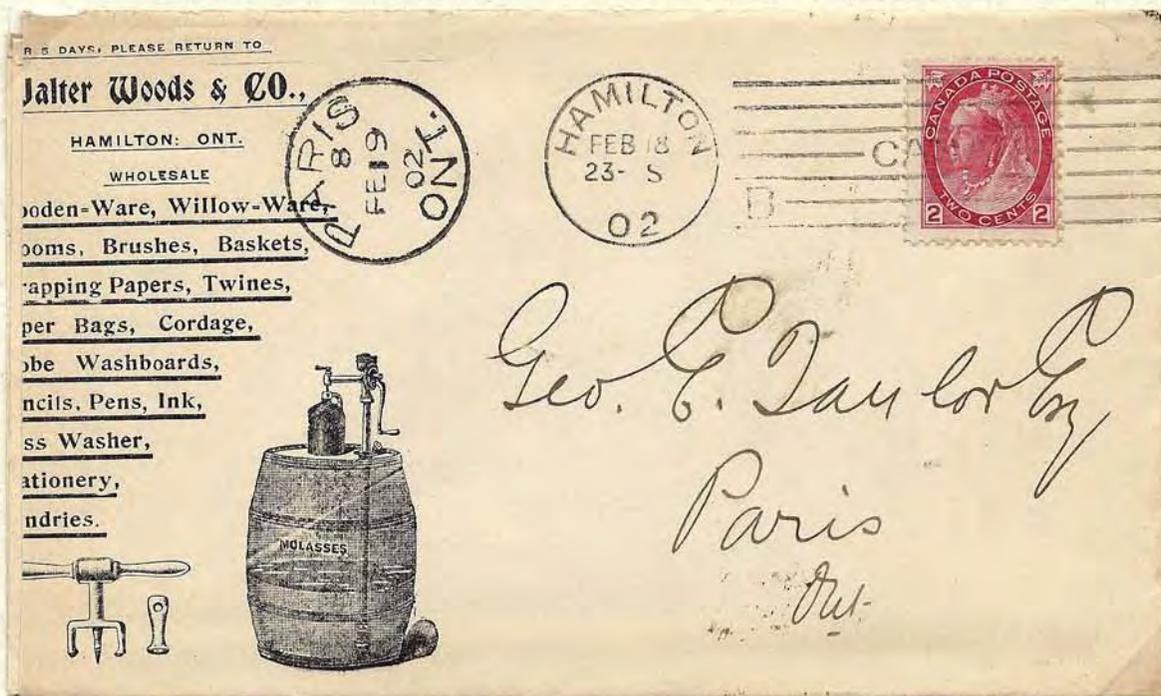


This cover shows a **FULL DOUBLE IMPRESSION** caused by slippage in the machine.

**Type M-6-B**, with straight line obliterator.

The B die is much scarcer than the A die for this Type, since the B machine was not used as often because it had become worn with use based on the poor quality of most impressions.

Known used from **Feb 7, 1902 to Oct 16, 1902.**



This illustrated ad cover shows an early strike dated Feb 18, 1902.



This is the **LATEST KNOWN DATE** of use for the M-6-B Die at Hamilton.  
A 1 cent Numeral stamp pays the 3<sup>rd</sup> Class printed matter rate.

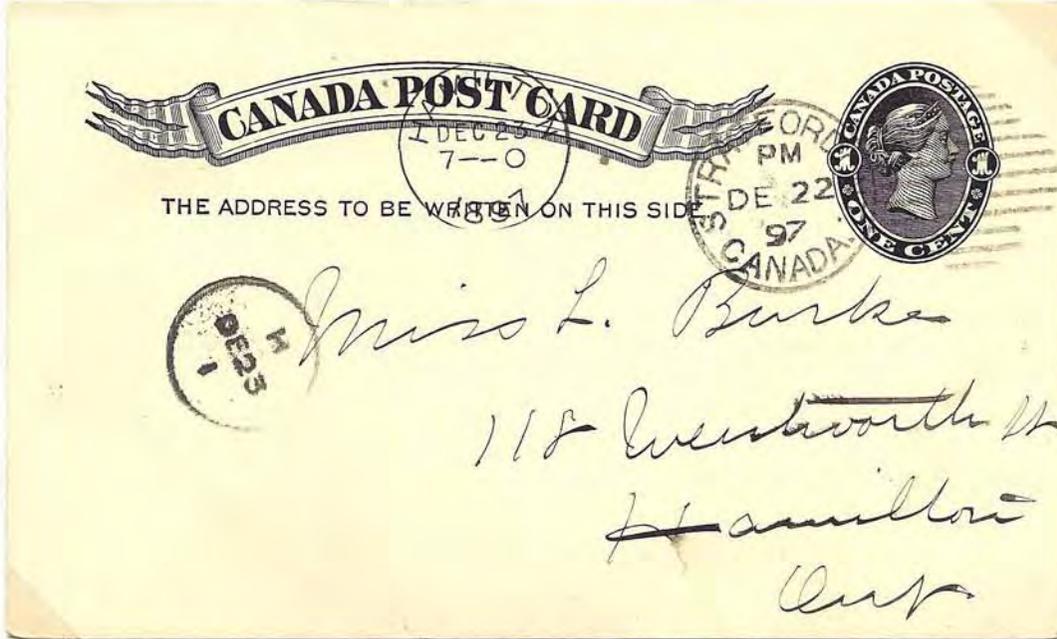
## Different Bickerdike Machine Cancel Usages

### Bickerdike Machine Dater Hub Used as Receiver.

The Bickerdike machines were used to dispatch as well as to receive mail.

Normally only the dater hub was needed and used to receive.

Known used as a receiving postmark from **Dec 23, 1897 to Oct 8, 1902.**



This is the **EARLIEST KNOWN** use of a Bickerdike dater hub used as a receiver.  
Receiving postmarks were always on fronts of post cards.



This is the **LATEST KNOWN** use of a Bickerdike dater hub used as a receiver.  
Receiving postmarks were always on backs of covers.

## Bickerdike Flag Cancellation Used as Receiver

This exhibitor only knows of one example of the dater and flag obliterator combination used as a receiver. Usually only the dater hub was used for this practice.



A-die flag used as a receiver on Jan 11, 1900.  
This is the **ONLY EXAMPLE** of a dater and obliterator combination used as a receiver known to this exhibitor.



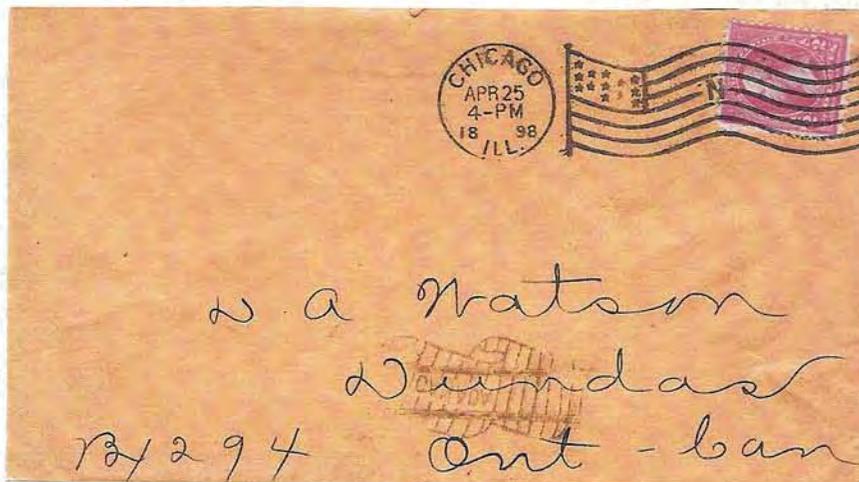
Reduced photocopy of front showing this cover was addressed to Hamilton.

## Bickerdike Flag Cancellation Used as a Transit Marking

This exhibitor only knows of one example of the dater and flag obliterator combination used as a transit marking. Usually only dated handstamps were used for this practice.



Full B-die Flag used as a transit marking on April 26, 1898.  
**ONLY KNOWN EXAMPLE** of a Bickerdike dater and flag combination **used as a transit marking.**



Reduced photocopy of front shows that the cover was sent from Chicago and addressed to Dundas.

**Bickerdike Machine Cancels Used to Receive and Re-direct**



Use of a Bickerdike dater hub dated September 7, 1898, 10 AM used as a receiver cancel and a complete flag cancel dated same day at 2 PM used as a re-directional dispatch cancel. **One of only 4 known examples** used as a re-directional marking in Hamilton.



Unusual use of an **upside down** dater hub dated April 5, 1900 at 3 AM used as a receiver and a complete **sideways** flag cancel dated same day at 5 PM used as a re-directional dispatch cancel. **One of only 4 known examples** used as a re-directional marking in Hamilton.

## Bickerdike Machine Replacement

As the Bickerdike machines became worn out, a new, more efficient single machine was ordered from the International Postal Supply Company of New York and started its use in Hamilton on October 21, 1902.



This is the **EARLIEST AND ONLY KNOWN EXAMPLE** dated October 21, 1902 of the new International machine cancel as used in Hamilton.

### TO CANCEL LETTERS

#### A New Machine in Use at the Post Office

The local postoffice has a new machine for canceling and marking letters at a speed that is marvelous, something like 810 a minute, or 48,600 an hour, so fast that the letters glide through, and it is impossible to follow them with the eye, much less count; but there is a recorder that does that. The machine is small, standing about three feet. At the base is a  $\frac{1}{4}$  horse power motor and switchboard, and the top of the machine consists of the place for feeding in letters, the rollers passing them one by one through an inked stamp which marks them more distinctly than by hand. The machine is leased by the International Postal Supply company, of New York, and is called the Hey Dolphin machine.

A chart of engravings of all the parts is furnished, and when any part breaks new ones can be ordered by number.

The machine is being installed throughout the United States and Canada, and is doing wonderful work.

The 5 p.m. mail yesterday was being handled when the machine was seen in action. The speed was at the rate mentioned, and the stamping perfect.

As can be seen in this photocopy of an article from the *Hamilton Spectator* of October 23, 1902, this machine was named the "Hey Dolphin" and was capable of cancelling 48,600 letters an hour.