



ASKIN & LONDON SOUTH

Gordon McDonald

History

John Baptiste Askin was born in 1798 in Detroit when it was still under British control. As a young man he worked for the Hudson's Bay Company in the fur trade. Askin fought on the British side in the War of 1812-1814, and rising to the office of colonel. In 1819 he was appointed Clerk of the Peace for the London District and Clerk of the District in 1820; he held both offices until 1847.

The administrative capital of the large London District was located at Vittoria near Long Point, toward the southeast of the London District. The courthouse and jail at Vittoria were badly damaged by fire in November 1825. Soon after the residents of Middlesex County campaigned vigorously for the removal of the administrative capital from Vittoria to London, which was much more central. They were successful. London was selected to be the new site of the administra-

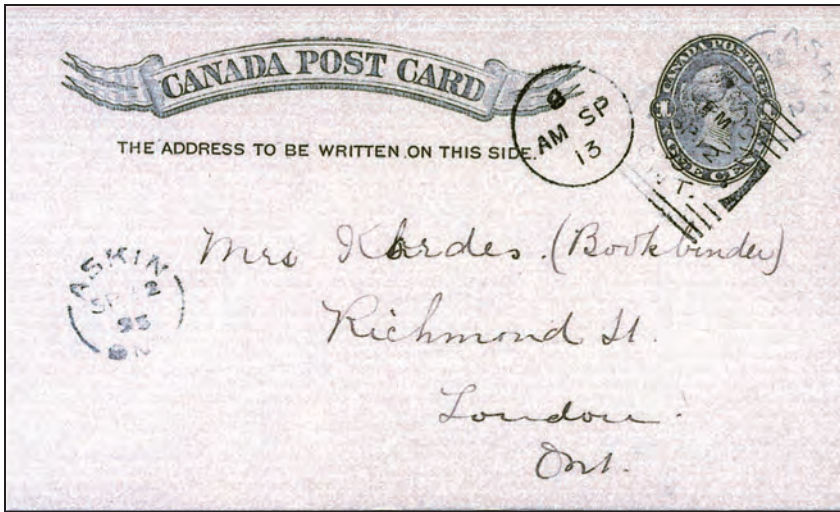


ASKIN
16
APR 7
1891

*The Crown Lands Dept
Toronto
Canada*

The first postmark from Askin was a broken circle measuring 20 mm in diameter, proofed February 25, 1876. It is reported as known used in 1884 and 1885.

This cover addressed to the Crown Lands Department in Toronto is dated April 7, 1891.



ASKIN / ONT. / SP 12 / 95
 A "local" postcard sent to London where it received a London squared circle receiver as well as a letter carrier's mark on the following day.

The ASKIN / LONDON SOUTH Post Office



This post card was produced in Great Britain prior to World War I with the inscription "Post Office, Corner Wortley Road and Askin Street, London South, Ont., Canada".

The view is looking south on Wortley Road. The street that crosses Wortley Road is named Askin Street (west of Wortley) and Craig Street (east of Wortley). The George Shaw grocery store, which housed the post office can be

seen on the left; it is actually on the southeast corner of Wortley Road and Craig Street.

The post office was located in this store beginning January, 1, 1876, when it opened with the name of Askin. The name of the post office was changed to London South July 1, 1897; it remained in this store until 1918.

The image in the article's masthead, as well as the cover image, is derived from this card.

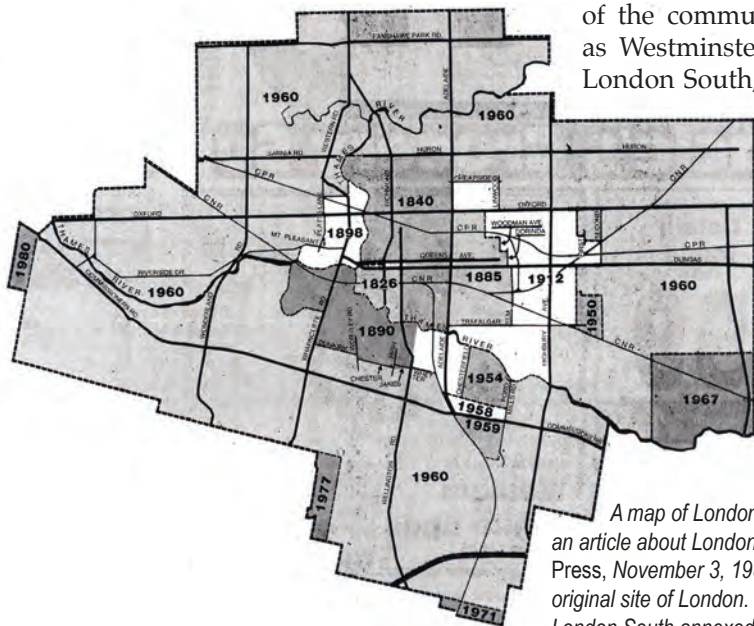
tive and judicial capital of the London District and a new courthouse and jail would soon be built there.

When the District Government was moved from Vittoria to London in 1826 its officials, including John Askin, faced the prospect of moving to a non-existent town. In some cases land grants were made available to these officials to encourage them to move. Askin's land grant was south of the Thames River in Westminster Township. The boundaries of John Askin's large grant extended north from the present-day Tecumseh Avenue to Askin Street and from Wortley Road west to Wharncliffe Road South. Mr. Askin built a large house on the northwest corner of the present-day Wortley Road and Elmwood Avenue, and he moved there in 1832. Following the death of John Askin in 1869, his estate was subdivided for development and his house was torn down (this became known later as part of London South).

What became London South was partially surveyed in 1810 and the first settlers arrived soon after. Movement from London to this area was made easier when the Westminster Bridge on Stanley Street opened in 1826 and the first Victoria bridge (Ridout Street) opened in 1848. During the 1860s and 1870s Londoners began to build houses south of the river; some of the finest homes in the county were built there by wealthy Londoners during that time because of the lower tax rates. Over time the area became less exclusively residential as small businesses, stores, bakeries, churches, hotels, etc., were built. In 1888 the London Street Railway was extended across Ridout Street bridge to what later became London South.

This area, despite development, was never amalgamated and remained part of Westminster Township until it was annexed by London in 1890.

The annexation at midnight April 30, 1890, of the community known at various times as Westminster, New Brighton, Askin, and London South, brought about 3,800 persons into the City of London and raised its total population in 1891 to 31,240. At the time of annexation much of the land was still farmland. Over the years this has almost entirely given way to residential development.



A map of London, Ontario, that appeared together with an article about London's annexations in the London Free Press, November 3, 1982. The section marked 1826 was the original site of London. The section marked 1890 to the south is London South annexed May 1, 1890.

ASKIN / ONT. / JU 22 / 97

The full circle postmark measuring 25 mm in diameter appears to be the second and last postmarker used at Askin. The proof date is unknown. The post office name was changed to London South on July 1, 1897.



Postal History

Askin post office was established January 1, 1876, being named after the aforementioned John Baptiste Askin. The 1901 *London City Directory* states the post office was located in George Shaw's grocery store on the southeast corner of 136 Wortley Road and Craig Street. At that time the post office was said to be one mile south of London. George Shaw remained

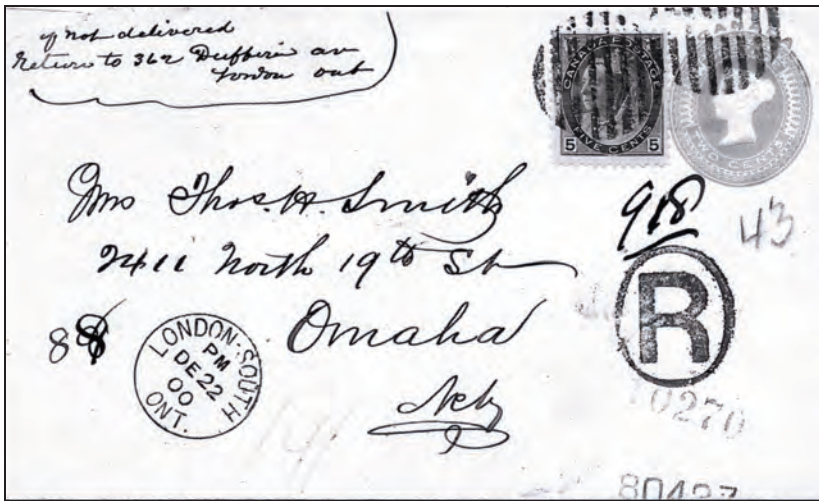
postmaster at that site until his death on October 21, 1901.

Although this area was annexed by London in 1890, and the area became known as London South, the post office name remained as Askin until July 1, 1897. It then became London South, the then current name of the surrounding area.



LONDON-SOUTH / ONT. / DE 11 / 99
This broken circle postmark measuring 20.5 mm in diameter is reported as having been used from 1898 until 1909. No proof date is known.

A broken circle postmark measuring 20.0 mm in diameter appears in the proof book dated March 2, 1905. The first reported usage dated June 10, 1918 was reported in the column, "New Discoveries", in PHSC Journal 127 (Sept. 2006).



LONDON - SOUTH / ONT. / PM / DE 22 / 00
 Example of a closed circle postmark measuring 22.0 mm in diameter. No proof mark or other information is known.

After George Shaw's death, his son John Moffat Shaw continued to operate the store. He was appointed postmaster of London South November 18, 1901, and remained in this position until he resigned October 1, 1918.

The London South post office was subsequently located in various stores and businesses on Wortley Road. The postmasters were as follows:

NAME OF POSTMASTER	DATE OF APPOINTMENT	DATE OF VACANCY
Albert Tripp	Nov. 28, 1918	Jan. 24, 1921
Fred Orwell Kester	Mar. 28, 1921	Aug. 18, 1921
Francis H. Wells	Oct. 3, 1921	Feb. 25, 1922
William S. Deacon	May 18, 1922	Sept. 28, 1923
Frederck J. Huffman	Nov. 30, 1923	Mar. 9, 1949
Eugene Tait Lamont	May 17, 1949	Sept. 25, 1959
Edmond Harry Gaymer	Nov. 3, 1959 (acting)	
Edmond Harry Gaymer	Nov. 20, 1959	Sept. 9, 1960
Ralph Moore Murray	April 21, 1961	July 31, 1961
Edward Harry Gaymer	Aug. 1, 1961 (acting)	

The post office name was changed from London South to London-London South in the late 1920s.

Records of *Post Offices and Postmasters* from Library and Archives Canada state that



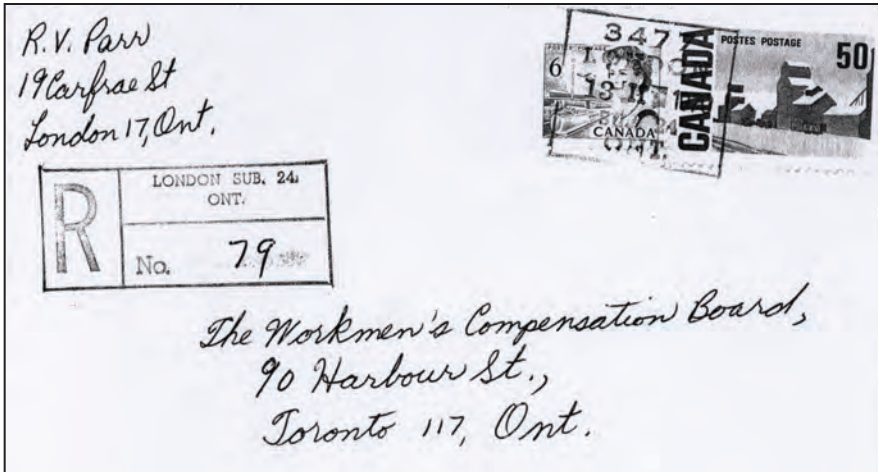
A variety of proof strikes from the London - London South post office

the name of the London-London South post office was changed to London Sub #24 on November 11, 1961.

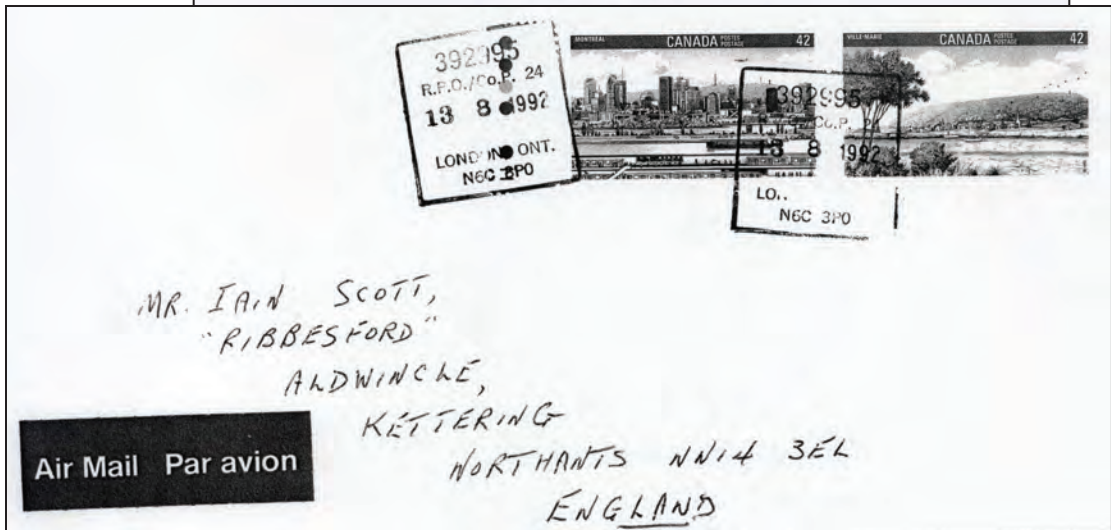
London Sub #24

Records of Post Offices and Postmasters at Library and Archives Canada state the name of the London-London South post office was changed London Sub #24 on November 11,

Registered cover
with MOON 3477
dated February 13,
1970.



Cover postmarked
at Sub #24 shortly
before the closure
of this office. It ap-
pears that Canada
Post had intended
to change this
office to a Retail
Postal Outlet.



1961, but the above source states no record of information prior to April 1, 1974, for Sub #24. R. F. Mitchell was appointed postmaster that day.

A review of Vernon's *City of London Directories* clarifies this issue. The 1961 *Directory*, dated April 1961, states that the London South post office was located at Lamont and Perkins Drug Store, 156 Wortley Road. The 1962 *Di-*

rectory, dated April 1962, states that Sub #24 post office was located at Les' Variety (postmaster Leslie Mitchell), 158 Wortley Road. Subsequent *City Directories* up to 1974 give the same information except that the 1974 *Directory* shows Ethel Mitchell as postmaster.

Information at Library and Archives Canada shows that R. F. Mitchell was appointed postmaster April 1, 1974, and resigned Janu-

ary 8, 1976, and the office closed. Sub #24 post office reopened March 2, 1976, with Mrs. Marjorie Doray as postmaster.

London Sub #20

An article in the *London Free Press* of October 19, 1956, with the headline "Sub-Post Office Open at Rectory" reads:

"A Sub-Post Office was opened at 789 Dundas Street to serve the Rectory-Dundas Streets area and the businessmen in the vicinity.

The sub-post office No. 20 at present will dispense only stamps and money orders. Registered letters can be sent from the office.

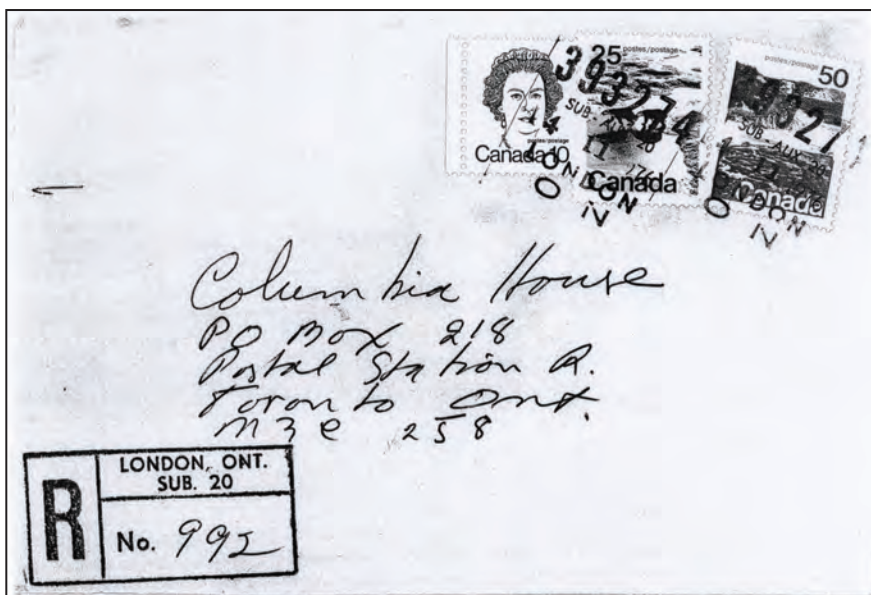
Gordon S. Hughes, operator of the store, will be postmaster."

The opening date of the office was October 18, 1956. Gordon Hughes resigned as postmaster July 31, 1957, and the sub-post office was closed that day.

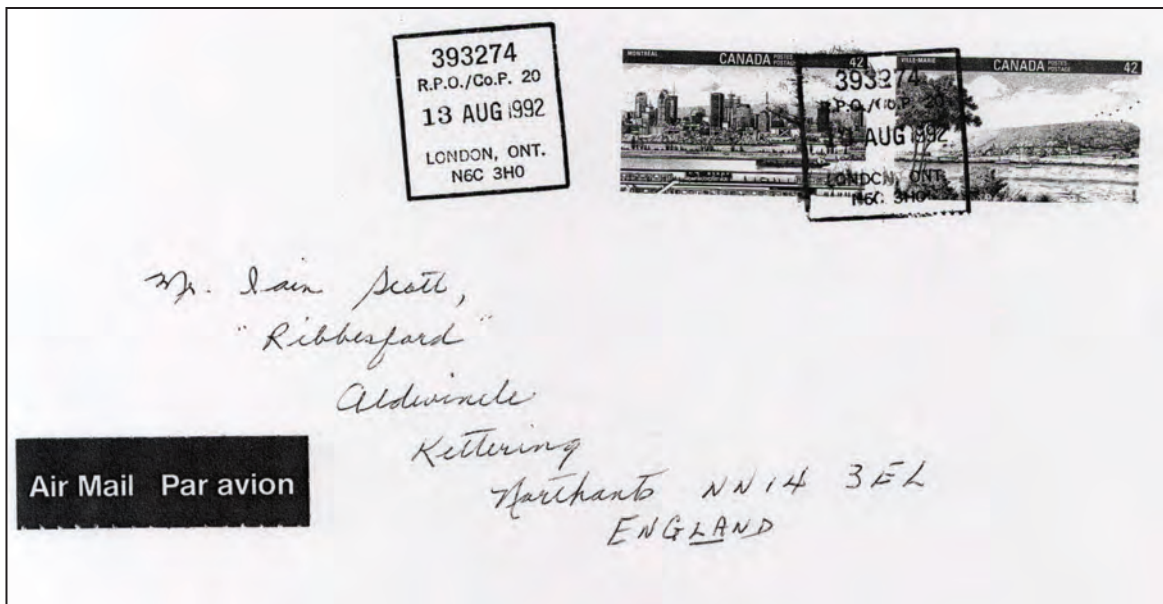
Sub-post office #20 reopened October 10, 1967; the new location was 285 Wortley

Road with Alvin B. Cundick as postmaster; this location was in London South only a few blocks from the London-London South post office. When Mr. Cundick resigned July 21, 1970 the post office was closed. The Sub-post office reopened January 12, 1971 with Mrs. Vera Harrison as postmaster, but was temporarily closed January 3, 1974: the address was 325 Wortley Road. Sub -post office #20 was reopened September 4, 1974 at the K. Tyler & Zettle Drug Store, 325 Wortley Road. This store became part of the Big V Pharmacies chain on May 2, 1988.

An article appeared in the *London Free Press* on July 30, 1992 with headline "Wortley Village area losing Sub-post offices". It discussed the pending closings of the Sub #20 and Sub #24 post offices due to the ongoing strategy of Canada Post to phase out Sub-post offices, in which people were hired by the Corporation, and replace them with owner-operated franchises. Marjorie Doray, who



Registered cover with
POCON 393274 postmark
dated February 14,
1976.



Cover postmarked at Sub #20 shortly before the office was closed. It appears that Canada Post had anticipated that this office would become a Retail Postal Outlet.

had operated Sub #24 post office at her Tempo Gift Shop at 142 Wortley Road said that there were between 100 and 150 persons who dropped into her store daily for postal services. She was 62 at the time and stated that she was too old to consider a franchise, which she estimated would cost up to \$100,000. Sub #24 post office was scheduled to close September 14, 1992.

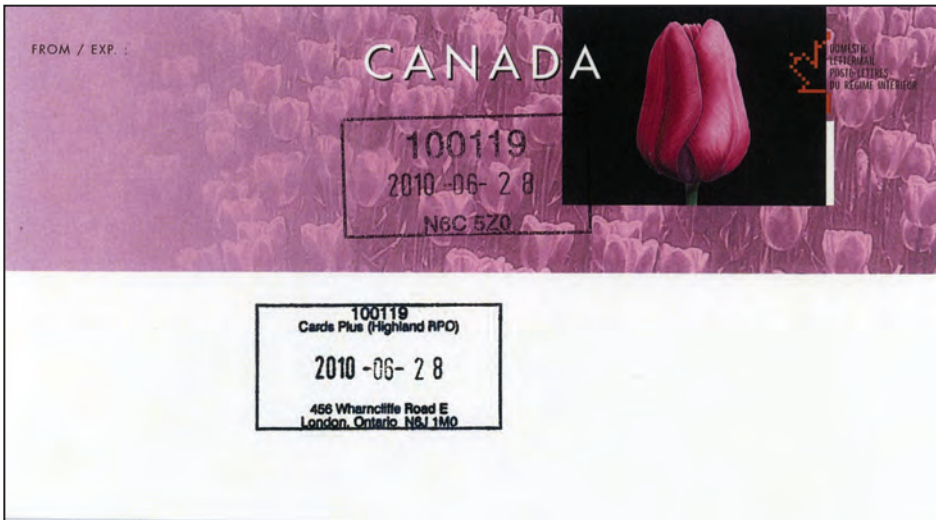
London Sub #20, located six blocks from Sub #24, was also scheduled to be closed. It was located in Zettle Big V Drug-store. Barry Phillips, the manager, said that turning the Zettle sub office into a franchise had been considered but zoning problems were anticipated. This office was scheduled to close August 24, 1992.

Canada Post spokesperson Tom Creech



POCON 100119 cancellation dated April 7, 2008 on piece of oversized envelope.

said that the two sub-post offices would be replaced by a single franchise operation at Wharncliffe Road South at Baseline Road.



Slightly different POC0N 100119 postmark with postal code of outlet when it was at 11 Baseline Road East, used after outlet had moved together with the new dater for 456 Wharncliffe Road South, London, Ontario.

Highland Retail Postal Outlet

The outlet that replaced Sub-post office 20 and 24 opened about September 1, 1992, at 11 Baseline Road East (next to Highland Avenue). On May 1, 2010, Card Plus, the store in which the post office was contained, and the post office, were moved to larger quarters at 456 Wharncliffe Road South. ☒

REFERENCES

- Vanished Villages of Middlesex*, by Jennifer Grainger.
- The South & The West*, by John H. Lutman.
- Ontario Broken Circles*, by W. Bruce Graham.
- Proof Strikes of Canada*, Vol. II, IX, and XX), edited by J. Paul Hughes.
- Post Offices and Postmasters*, Library and Archives Canada.
- Postal History Society of Canada, database.



We invite you to use the **PHSC Journal** to advertise your message. Our rates are reasonable and our advertising manager

George Power
 RR2 – 668207 20th Sideroad, Lisle, ON L0M 1M0
 gpower56@hotmail.com

would love to hear from you.