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POSTAL HISTORY OF THE STIRLING SUBDIVISION, ALBERTA

by Dale Speirs

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The Track.

During the 1910s, the Canadian Pacific Railway built a track across southeastern Alberta called the Stirling Subdivision. The route ran mostly east from the town of Stirling, then angled into southeastern Alberta to Jaydot before continuing into southern Saskatchewan. The railroad was built in stages and there were brief gaps before it was fully completed. Below is a map of the rail line, simplified from a 1992 map [1].



Once train service was established, it was slow because the trains stopped at almost every siding, populated or not. Consequently the line was known by a variety of nicknames such as the Virginia Creeper [8]. The tracks began to disappear during the 1990s as the CPR abandoned the line, although portions remained.

The land was settled during abnormally moist years, then dried out and reverted to semi-desert during the 1920s, depopulating the land. Good roads made shipping grain and cattle by truck much easier and faster. The villages became hamlets and the hamlets became ghost towns. Only four post offices remained in 2023 along the route.

The CPR built sidings approximately every 15 km. Before good roads, that was the maximum round trip in a day a farmer could make hauling crops or cattle. Not every siding developed a settlement, much less a post office. Those sidings that never had post offices were Bain, Conrad, Craigower, Cressday, Jaydot, Judson, and Maybutt.

For the post offices that were established, the postmaster names and dates listed in this history are from Canadian Post Office records [2]. Rather than a strict chronological account, which would jump back and forth along the line, the post offices will be mentioned in order going east from Stirling. Many of the post offices began life out on the lone prairie, then moved to where the railroad sidings were established, changing names en route.

Stirling.

The village of Stirling was on a north-south railroad constructed in 1885. Alberta was still a territorial district at that time. The siding was named after John A. Stirling, the manager of a company investing in southern Alberta railroads [3]. This area was part of the Mormon diaspora, who were the majority of early homesteaders, including the pioneer postmasters.



The post office opened on 1900-03-01 with John Theodore Brandley as the first postmaster. His portrait shown at left. Brandley kept the post office in a corner of his general store, which had living quarters in the back. He also had a homestead, a large family, and was active in the LDS Church, eventually becoming Bishop of Stirling.

The mail was dropped off at the Maybutt siding slightly further up the track. Joe and Henry Brandley, sons of the postmaster, then picked up the mail and rode it back on horses. Outbound mail was in reverse [4]. I have not been able to locate a proof strike postmark from the territorial era.



George Oler Jr took over the post office on 1908-12-16 and built a free-standing structure for it, shown at left.

The photo shows Oler standing by the door. The other man was a postal inspector [4].



At left is the postmark proof strike for Oler's term of office. Four of Oler's daughters worked as postal clerks at one time or another. Oler died on 1929-03-15 and was briefly replaced by his daughter Mrs Vida O. Perrett, who unfortunately died a few months later on August 28.

Carl Harold Christensen then became postmaster, moving the operation to a different building. He operated the post office with his wife Elodia Libby. On 1941-11-29, Harold was granted military leave. The postmastership was briefly held by Harold's daughter Ruth Elizabeth before she received her teacher's certificate [4].



Her mother Elodia then took over on 1942-07-09 as the postmaster. Harold returned home and was reinstated as postmaster on 1945-10-23 until 1966-05-10.

During the Christensen family era, the mail deliveries changed from train to bus. The bus stop was initially two blocks from the post office, so Harold wheeled the mail back and forth via wheelbarrow. The photo shows Harold in 1965 wheeling a load of mail [4].

Eventually the bus stopped in front of the post office. When Harold retired, Elodia became postmaster again, serving until 1968-03-31 when she retired.



Clinton Ray Hardy then became the next postmaster until 1974-01-26.

He served in a wide variety of local and church positions. Mrs Grace Fletcher then took over. Her maiden name was Brandley, related to Stirling's first postmaster.

Canada Post privacy rules then cut off further information but a local history mentioned that as of 1981 she was still postmaster [4].

The photo shows the post office as it was in 1980.

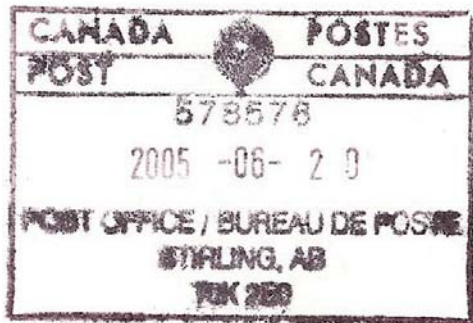
Sometime during the 1980s the post office moved into a new prefabricated building. Below is a photograph taken of the author's mother Betty Speirs in 1988 standing by the door.



Here is a Google Street View photograph from 2022 that shows the post office building was modified with a wheelchair ramp but was basically the same.



Here are a variety of modern Stirling postmarks.



The Stamps
of Canada –
worth collecting.
Les timbres du
Canada

une valeur sûre.



Wrentham.

This railroad siding was named by the CPR after a village in Suffolk, England [3]. The first homesteaders arrived in 1903 but the townsite wasn't established until the railroad came through in 1913. The post office opened on 1915-03-01 with Nick C. Tregloan as the first postmaster. Below is the proof strike of the first postmark.

The mail was originally hauled overland from New Dayton until the first mail train service began on 1917-01-02. Tregloan was a well-educated man and served in a variety of local government and volunteer positions, as well as establishing various small businesses. In the early days there were many immigrants who were illiterate in the written English language. Tregloan acted as a public scribe, writing and reading letters for them and helping them deal with government matters [5].



Tregloan standing in the doorway of his post office [5].



Wilford Levar Erickson took over a postmaster on 1926-08-08 and moved the post office into his store, both of which were open all hours on demand. The store/post office burned down on 1933-01-08. A new building was constructed nearby.

According to Canada Post records, on 1946-04-30 Erickson committed suicide [2]. Local histories are silent on the cause of death, probably out of respect for the family. His widow Vera took over the store and postmastership until 1949-12-31.

Vera sold out to Gene Henry Moore, who became the next postmaster on 1950-01-01. The post office was actually operated by Sylvia Burrows because Moore was busy doing custom farm work. He resigned on 1954-12-22 to take up fruit farming in British Columbia. After a brief placeholder came and went, Mrs Hazel L. W. Hine became the next postmaster on 1955-03-16. She resigned on 1957-08-19 when she and her husband sold out and moved to Lethbridge.

After another placeholder, Mrs Helen Jones became the next postmaster on 1958-01-14 and served until 1976-07-23. She was Polish by birth and could converse with Ukrainian customers at the post office. She had been widowed in 1950 and was raising her children as a single parent while running the post office [5]. After Jones retired, there was another placeholder.

Mrs Lynne Edwards then took over on 1977-05-17 as the postmaster. She and her husband Robert built an addition onto their house for the post office. The photo on the next page shows the post office annex on the Edwards house in 1988, with Betty Speirs standing by the door.





As was her custom, Betty obtained postmarks while she was there. Interestingly enough, her sample had an error date of 2188 instead of 1988, shown at left.

On 1990-02-06 the post office was converted into a retail postal outlet [6]. It changed hands twice in the next three years before moving into the Wrentham Library on 1993-01-24, where it still was as of 2023.

Skiff.



The first settlers in the Skiff district began arriving between 1895 and 1910. The railroad reached the Skiff townsite in 1913 but settlement was slow. The post office opened on 1918-10-15 with William Demers as the first postmaster. At left is the proof strike of the first postmark.

Why the name Skiff was given is unknown. A common story was that a large slough just southwest of the townsite could only be crossed with a skiff boat to reach the village [3]. That makes no sense because anyone traveling across the prairies anywhere would simply detour around sloughs, not load and unload a boat.

Demers was a Montreal man who came out west in 1908. The family moved to Skiff a decade later, where he operated a general store, a butcher shop, and livestock agency [7]. He resigned as postmaster on 1924-08-23. The post office then rotated through six placeholders over the next five years. During this time the land was subject to droughts, and agriculture began failing.

On 1929-11-07, Henry J.G. Thompson bought the store and post office. He was postmaster in title only as his wife (no first name given in local histories) ran both operations, while he spent most of his time working out on oil rigs. The Thompsons sold out to Raymond Blaine Eshom and moved to Rocky Mountain House.

Mrs Thompson had let the store run down and concentrated on the post office. The Eshoms built the store back up but were stymied by wartime rationing [7]. Eshom served as postmaster from 1936-07-22 until 1944-11-08 when he sold out and moved to British Columbia.

The Follinglo family then bought the store, with first the husband Torbjorn Torson as postmaster, then his wife Agnes Borghild until 1946-10-28. They sold out and went farming near Foremost.

Theodore Stoffel Bailie bought the store and became the next postmaster. He was a returned veteran who had several businesses on the side. Farming called to him as well, so he sold to Raymond Orcutt, who became the next postmaster on 1952-11-30 but only stayed until 1954-01-12. The post office then moved across the street into a general store operated by Nick and Joe Poberznick. Nick became the new postmaster. He had previously worked for Raymond Eshom back when, so he was experienced in the job [7].

Canada Post records cut off at this point due to privacy laws. Sometime later Chris Kopchiak took over according to Hughes [6]. As part of Canada Post's purge of rural post offices, the Skiff post office was closed on 1992-06-12. It was replaced by a retail postal outlet which opened on 1994-06-01 with J. Throson as RePO manager. Dean and Rhonda Schroeder took over the store and RePO on 1997-11-17 but the outlet permanently closed on 1998-08-28.

The photo on the next page shows Betty Speirs at the Skiff post office in 1988, with a sample postmark she obtained shown below.

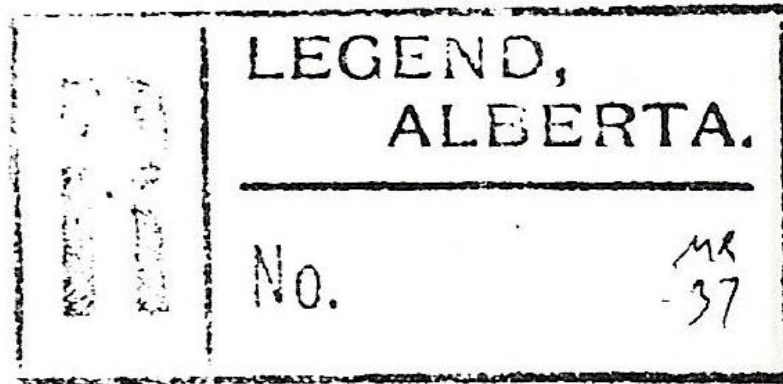




Legend.

The original name was Leg End, as this was one of the temporary gaps where the railroad stalled during construction in the 1910s [3]. As might be expected, the name was quickly corrupted into Legend. The townsite of Legend was settled in the mid-1930s, relatively late in the district's history and in the middle of the great drought.

Peter Andrew Granberg built a general store and fuel pumps with living quarters in the back for his family [7]. Not until 1937-04-01 did a post office open in the store with himself as the first postmaster. Below is the proof strike of the registration marking.



The photo below shows the general store. Granberg sold out to Juan Arthur Bullis, who became the next postmaster on 1940-12-14. In turn, Bullis sold the store and post office to Mrs May Martin, who became postmaster on 1945-05-15.



The store closed and the United Grain Growers bought the building as a house for their elevator agent Harvey Dale Barnes. He took over as postmaster on 1946-08-14. Thereafter the postmaster was the elevator agent or his wife [7]. On 1949-04-30, agent Morris Hayward Taylor succeeded as postmaster. A few months later, on November 1, he handed the postmastership to his wife Helen Hannah, who held the position until 1954-06-18.

The agency changed again to Louis Lendrem, whose wife Joyce was postmaster until 1960-03-16. Mrs Sylvia Jeanette Wiebe, wife of the next agent, served until 1964-04-20 when Mrs Carol Marie Roberts took over. By then, Legend was moribund. Mrs Rose Marie Bartsoff took over on 1966-09-14 as the final postmaster.

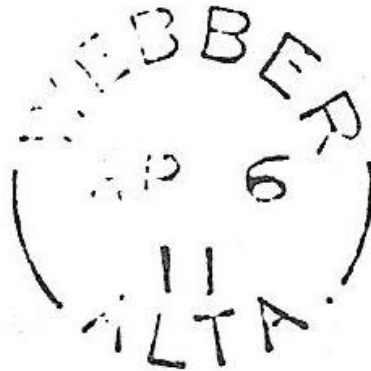
The post office closed permanently on 1969-05-16. Thereafter mail service was rural delivery from Foremost. Nothing remains of Legend today and it is only a crossroads place name.

Webber

Settlement of the Foremost district began in 1910. The first post office, however, was 3 km south of where the railroad tracks eventually came through and was named Webber. The name was in honour of two brothers who dealt in real estate in southeastern Alberta [8]. When the railroad came through at Foremost, the post office at Webber shut down and the population moved to the tracks [3].

The Webber post office operated from 1911-04-01 until 1914-01-15. Lauchlin C. McKinnon was the only postmaster and operated the post office in his general store, which had living quarters in the back. Below is the proof strike of the first postmark.

The photo on the next page shows Lauchlin in front of the building. He was standing at left with his wife and two children [8]. The others are relatives. When I examined the photograph I was startled to see he was missing his right hand. Information about him in local histories did not mention this.



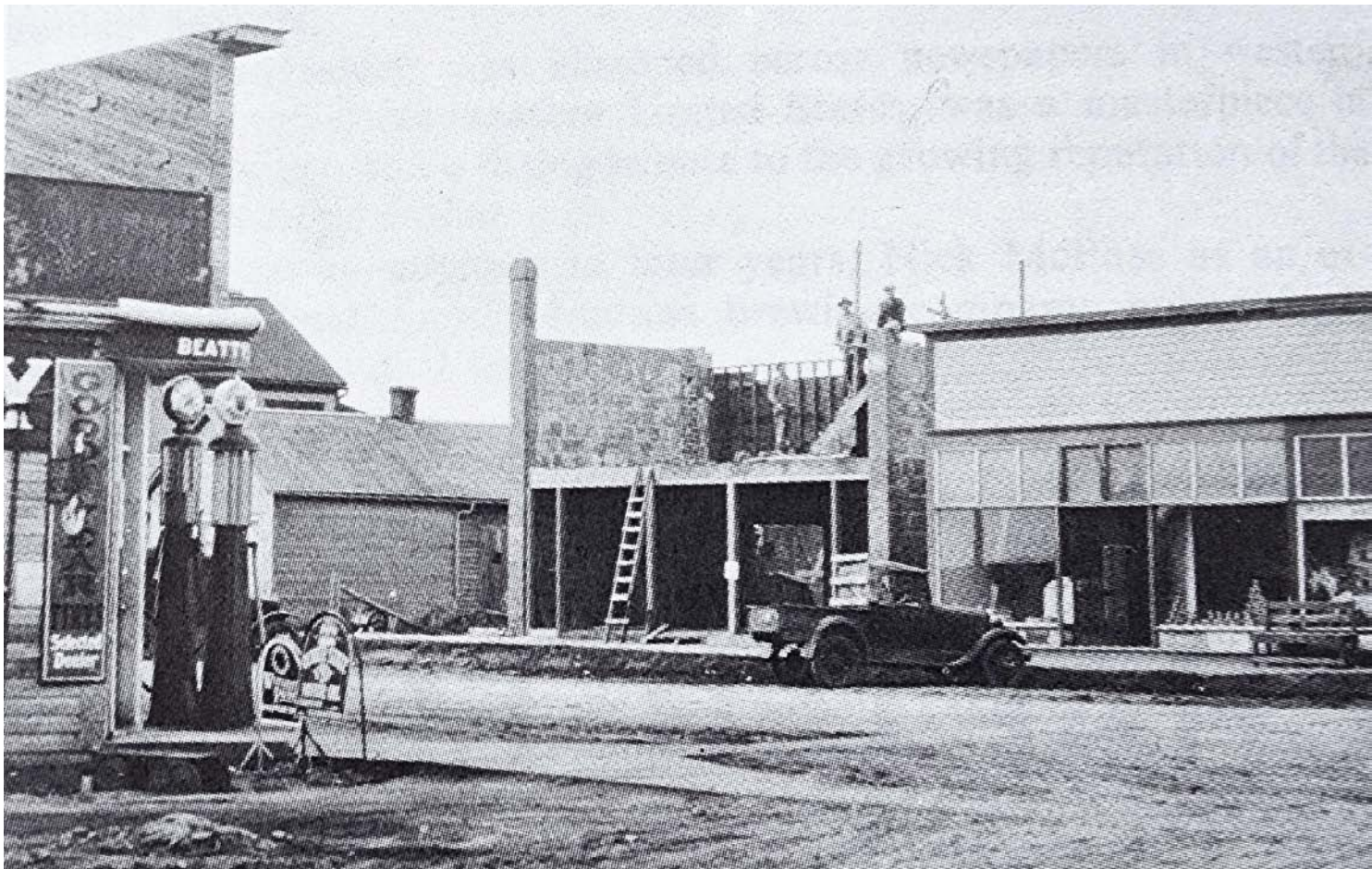


Foremost.



The same day that the Webber post office closed, the Foremost post office opened. Harry B. Hunt was the first postmaster, who operated the post office out of his hardware store. At left is the proof strike of the first postmark.

On the next page is a view of Foremost in 1928, showing the store/post office on the righthand side of the photo [8]. Harry held the postmastership until his death on 1944-01-13, almost exactly 30 years later, less two days. His widow Harriet Ann took over briefly as postmaster until moving to Lethbridge.





Mrs Jeanette Ivy Lengyel became postmaster on 1944-07-01. She handed over to Dirk Buis, a returned veteran, on 1947-04-01, who served until 1967-11-30 when he retired.

During his tenure, the post office became a Semi-Staff operation on 1948-04-01 under the direction of the Canadian Post Office. Shown at left is a selection of Foremost postmarks on parcel tags during Buis' time.

A brief placeholder came and went until Hollis Jerome Hoimyr was appointed postmaster on 1968-01-22. He later transferred to a post office in Saskatchewan on 1970-08-25 and was replaced by a placeholder. On 1971-01-01, J. William Webb took over, at which point Canada Post records cut off due to privacy laws.

Below is the Foremost pictorial postmark of 2004, which refers to the district's flat land topography.



This photo shows Betty Speirs at the Foremost post office in 1988. The dates on the door, 1913-1988, refer to the village's 75th anniversary, not the post office itself. The building was much the same in 2023.



Bingen.



The Bingen post office was established on 1913-02-01 with William G. Bowen as the first postmaster. At left is the proof strike of the first postmark.

In 1915, the railroad bypassed his crossroads store a few kilometres to the north. In December 1915, Bowen moved the store and post office to the new siding of Nemiskam. The other townies followed him and Bingen was abandoned [8]. The location had been named Bingen after a German town, there being a large number of German homesteaders in the district [3].

Nemiskam.

The name of this post office was from the Blackfoot language, meaning “between two valleys”. This referred to the hamlet’s position on a ridge separating Chin Coulee from Etzikom Coulee [3]. William Bowen continued postal service uninterrupted, the only differences being a slight change in location and a name change. Below are proof strikes of the first postmarks.



Bowen sold out to Edwin Matthews, who became postmaster on 1920-04-14. He only stayed until November 11 of that year and resigned due to overwork. At the time he was trying to establish his homestead, which kept him from full attention to postal duties.

Mrs Jeanette Francis (Nettie) Cooke took over on 1921-01-18. She was a war widow. When she remarried, her husband Ashley Butterwick wanted to try for a better life elsewhere. She handed the post office over to her father George A. Mills, who was postmaster from 1923-05-12 until his death on 1929-10-08. That brought the Butterwicks back to the farm. Nettie resumed the postmastership, this time in the records as Mrs Jeanette Francis Butterwick.

She gave up the job and passed it on to Carl M. Wek. He moved the post office from her farm to his general store and became postmaster on 1932-06-15. He sold the store to the Dalkey family and on 1941-10-31 the new postmaster became Mrs Kathleen Avonia Dalkey. She stayed until 1944-06-03.

The land was too dry to support as many settlers as it originally did. Nemiskam began a long slow decline to oblivion as a ghost town. Two placeholders came and went before Lyle Wilfred Hollingsworth took over on 1946-11-02. He remained as postmaster until 1951-08-24. Erland Nelson Hoibak took over until his death on 1966-05-17. By that time, the only business left was a service station.

Erland's widow Mary was the final postmaster. The post office was the last operation left in the hamlet when it closed permanently on 1970-07-02. Thereafter mail service was a rural route out of Etzikom.

Endon.



The name's source is unknown. Before the railroad, Endon was a crossroads store and post office on a homestead. The post office opened on 1911-03-15 with W.R. Shields as the first postmaster. The mail was hauled from Seven Persons out of the north, which was on a different and already established rail line. At left is the proof strike of the first postmark.

Shields sold his farm and moved away. The store and post office moved to the homestead of George A. Young. He served as postmaster from 1913-03-01 until 1916-01-04. By that time the railroad had come through a few kilometres to the south. The CPR established a siding called Etzikom, where the store and post office moved during Young's tenure [9].

Etzikom.



The name is from the Blackfoot word for 'valley'. After a placeholder briefly succeeded George Young, the next postmaster was Robert R. Paul from 1916-06-16 until 1926-10-31. At left is a proof strike of a postmark during Paul's tenure. The store burned down, after which two placeholders came and went before the post office found a new home.

The new postmaster was James Joseph Sergeant as of 1927-06-01 when he moved the post office into his store. He had previously been postmaster of the nearby hamlet of Faith in the Writing-On-Stone district. (See JAPH #27) He died suddenly on the job on 1937-04-30 while sorting mail in the post office.

Jame's son Charles took over until enlisting in the Canadian Army postal corps in 1941. Two placeholders followed before Mrs Grace Cathryne Stromsmoe became postmaster on 1943-10-01. She was Charles' sister and a war widow. Canada Post records cut off due to privacy laws but Grace was postmaster until 1977 according to a local history [9].

The photo on the next page shows the Etzikom post office in 1988, with Betty Speirs standing in front. The hamlet still exists and has a windmill museum, which was the subject of the 2004 pictorial postmark shown below.

The post office met its end in 2017 when the existing store and post office closed down. Canada Post advertised within a 50-km radius but was unable to find anyone to take over. Accordingly, mail service was transferred to Orion further to the east [10].



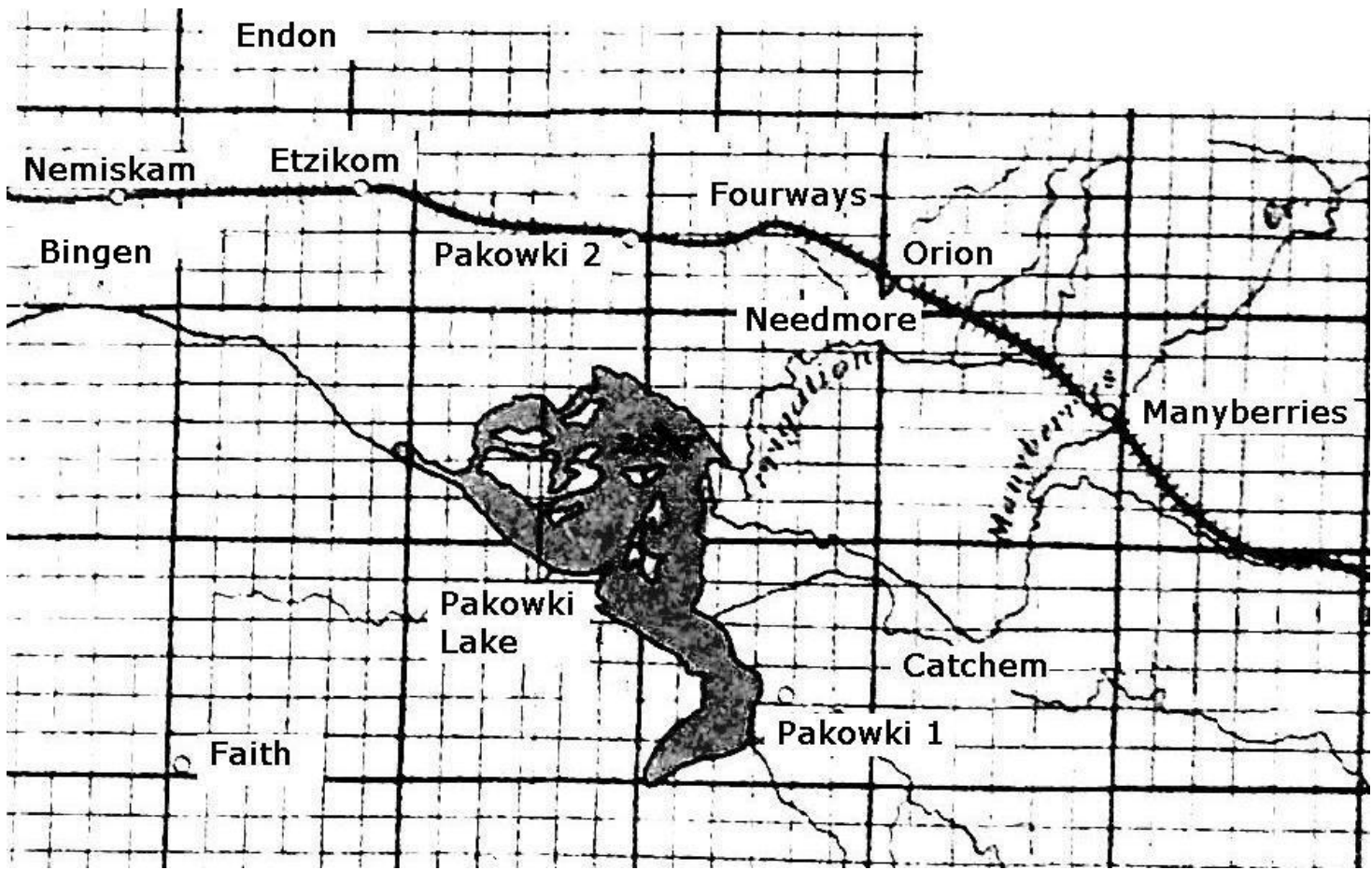


Pakowki Lake.

To the south of the railroad between Etzikom and Orion was a large water body named Pakowki Lake. The name comes from the Blackfoot word for “bad water”. The lake has no outlet and is stagnant water, generating hydrogen sulfide from decaying swamp vegetation and saline from accumulation of salts. The lake can be considered as either a deep slough or an intermittent lake. It is about 25 km long from north to south and about 5 km wide.

I mention all this because trying to sort out the post offices around the lake caused unexpected difficulty. There were two post offices named Pakowki, one at each end of the lake, and both of which had name changes. In addition, the Canada Post records were garbled and incomplete.

Fortunately a local history book filled in many of the details [11]. I have tried to sort this out in the map shown on the next page. The small squares are one mile on each side.



Pakowki / Glassford.

At the south end of Pakowki Lake, Abner L. Freed had a post office established on 1915-09-01 in his farmhouse. At bottom left is the proof strike of the postmark. The presence of the post office made the farm a popular stopping place. Then the railroad came through at the north end of the lake and pre-empted the name Pakowki for its siding.

Accordingly the Canadian Post Office ordered a name change for the Freed post office as of 1916-09-01 to Glassford. At bottom right is the proof strike of the Glassford postmark.

Freed continued as postmaster of Glassford until 1917-06-30 when the post office closed permanently. Most of the patrons went to post offices on the railroad. Ironically the new name was in honour of George E. Glasford (one 's'), a CPR engine driver who drove the first train between Calgary and Edmonton in 1891. Ironic because the Glassford post office was nowhere near any railroad tracks.



Fourways / Pakowki.



The Fourways post office opened on 1912-04-01 near the banks of Fourways Creek, which drains into Pakowki Lake. At left is the proof strike of the first postmark. William E. Cronkhite was the first postmaster. When the railroad came through, this post office moved a few kilometres west to the railroad siding named Pakowki.

The name of the Fourways post office was then officially changed to Pakowki on 1916-09-01. The date stamp and postal equipment from the other end of the lake was sent up north. William died in office in early 1917.

His daughter Beatrice was briefly postmaster from January 20 to October 10 that year, when J.H. Johnston took over. He was succeeded by W.A. McFarlane on 1924-05-13, who was the final postmaster.

By that time the land was drying out and homesteaders were abandoning their farms. The settlement dwindled away and on 1926-12-31 the post office was permanently closed. The railroad tracks were lifted in the early 2000s. Nothing remains of the townsite.

Needmore.



This was yet another post office established out on the prairie which subsequently had to move when the railroad tracks bypassed the place. Needmore was established on 1912-10-15 on the homestead of Axel Mattson, about 2 km south of where the tracks eventually came through.

The name origin is unknown. Mattson was a Finnish immigrant, so probably a Canadian Post Office official chose the name. At left is the proof strike of the postmark.

When the Mattson family left the district, the post office moved across the road to the farmhouse of James and Agnes Dickson. James became the official postmaster on 1915-10-18 but Agnes actually operated the post office. James couriered mail south to the original Pakowki post office at the south end of the lake, which became Glassford during his tenure [11].

Orion.

After the railroad siding of Orion was established, the Needmore post office closed on 1916-03-18 and the Orion post office opened. The name was after the constellation of Orion and the streets were named from Greek mythology. For those residing outside Canada who read this, the constellation is very distinctive in the prairie skies and every settler would have recognized Orion's belt on clear winter nights.



The new post office of Orion was in a store managed by John C. Hanson, who had previously been postmaster at Catchem further south (see further ahead for that post office). At left is the proof strike of the postmark. Hanson resigned his position on 1917-04-20. The store was owned in partnership with John and Esther Eklund, the former becoming the new postmaster. Unfortunately he died in early 1919 during the influenza pandemic [11].

The next postmaster was a returned veteran Thomas Smith Chambers, who took over on 1919-07-03. He moved the post office into a standalone building with living quarters in the rear. Like most pioneer prairie villages, the business district of Orion consisted of wooden buildings shoulder-to-shoulder. And like most villages, there was a Great Fire which wiped out the main street. In Orion's case, its Great Fire was in 1929 and destroyed the post office along with other businesses.

Chambers built a new post office, seen circa 1930 in the photo on the next page. He is standing at the post office door [11]. He served as postmaster until his death on 1947-10-03.



After a brief placeholder came and went, Charlie Jay Tuttle served from 1948-01-09 until 1951-09-19. His main business was custom farm services and ranching, so he gave up the post office to concentrate on them.

Mrs Ruby Ayers then became postmaster until 1958-08-13. By then, Orion was well in decline due to the constant droughts. Two short-term postmasters came and went. Mrs Lydia M. Yanke then served from 1961-11-01 until 1971-10-29 when she retired. The postmastership turned over three more times before the post office became part of the Orion Co-op on 1976-01-17, which it still was in 2023.

The photo on the next page shows Betty Speirs (and post office cat) in 1988 at the Orion Co-op. Below is the postmark she obtained at the time.





The building looked much the same in 2023. Below is a Google Street View from 2012.



Below is the pictorial postmark of Orion, which featured the constellation of Orion. The slogan is not entirely correct since it was the Needmore post office that was founded in 1912, whereas the Orion post office was founded in 1916.

By 2023, the population of Orion was down to about 15 people in the hamlet, but the post office also served the surrounding district within 50 km, so it stayed open.



Catchem.

The post office named Catchem was located in the Ketchem Creek district. The spelling error of the post office name was never corrected during its brief lifetime. Local histories claimed the name was from the Blackfoot language [12]. I don't believe that because Ketchem/Ketchum is a surname from England. I checked a Blackfoot language website and the word does not appear [13]. Almost certainly the creek was named after someone of that surname. Alberta had a Ketchum post office in northwestern Alberta but that was no relation [2].



Settlers began arriving during the first decade of the 1900s. The post office opened on 1913-02-01 on the homestead of John C. Hanson, who kept it with a small store [12]. At left is the proof strike of the postmark.

Hanson later moved to Orion, and on 1915-04-13 the post office was transferred to Isaac C. Hunter. He operated the post office and a small store inside his farmhouse until 1917-12-18, when the post office closed permanently. The railroad bypassed Catchem by a wide margin in favour of Manyberries to the east and Orion to the north. All but one of the Hunter family died shortly after during the 1918 influenza pandemic.

Manyberries.

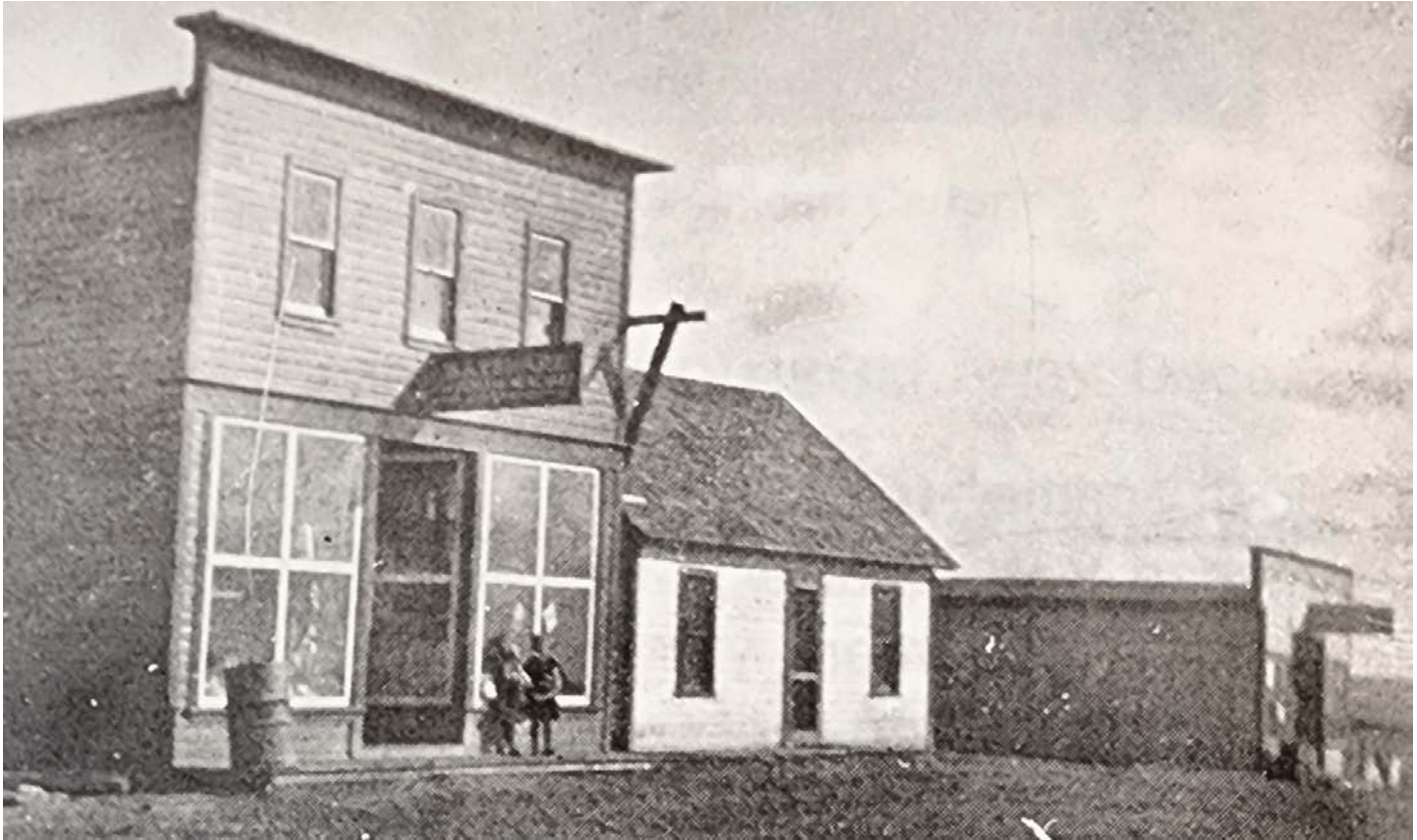
Manyberries was the easternmost post office on the Stirling subdivision railway. There were four railroad sidings further east before the Saskatchewan border but none of them had post offices. The place name is a direct translation from the Blackfoot language and refers to the abundant saskatoons and chokecherries along the creeks and sloughs of the district.



The townsite moved between three different locations until the railway arrived and settled the matter. The post office opened on 1911-02-01 in the general store of Armand R. (Archie) Marchesseault. He was a Québécois by birth but spent his years as a young man in Wyoming and elsewhere in southern Alberta [11]. At left is the proof strike of the first postmark. The photo on the next page shows his store and post office.



Marchesseault sold out to John Melvin Courtney on 1913-08-25, who held the postmastership until his sudden death on 1935-10-22. During his tenure, the railroad bypassed the existing townsite and established a siding a few kilometres away. Courtney moved his store and post office to the new location. The photo below shows the Courtney store and post office in its original location in 1913.



This photo shows the building after it had been moved to the railroad siding where the new townsite was established.



Mail service was Monday, Wednesday, and Friday nights. The entire Courtney family, with three daughters, pitched in, not only to get the incoming and outgoing mail sorted before the train left, but also to supply groceries for the railway section men further down the line [11].

Ralph Maddison Hedley became the next postmaster, serving until 1946-03-26. He had previously worked for Courtney as the store clerk.

Stanley Irvin Burr, a returned veteran, bought the Wing Long Café and Grocery Store, then transferred the post office to his building. The café was soon discontinued. In 1951, the store was sold but Burr kept the post office, moving it up the street into an old bank building as a standalone operation [11]. Below is a postal card from this era with the CDS postmark.

Burr retired on 1976-12-31. His wife Elizabeth was listed as a temporary postmaster but at that point Canada Post records cut off due to privacy laws.



DISTRICT ENGINEER,
WATER RESOURCES DIVISION,
423 PUBLIC BLDG.,
CALGARY, ALBERTA.



This photo shows the post office as it looked in 1988, with Betty Speirs.

Evidently the post office had moved into smaller quarters since the Courtney days.

Like all the other settlements in the southeastern corner of Alberta, Manyberries declined due to the droughts.

Below left is the postmark Betty obtained at the time of her visit. Below right is the pictorial postmark for Alberta's centennial in 2005.

Sometime after this, I'm guessing in the 2010s, the Manyberries post office closed down and mail service came from Orion. Unfortunately extensive searching on the Internet has failed to turn up any information about the final years.



Summary.

The southeast corner of Alberta was settled during the first two decades of the 1900s when the semi-desert land was experiencing abnormally wet years. As a result, the area was over-populated. The normal dry conditions returned during the 1920s and have persisted ever since. The population declined steadily and inexorably, taking with them most of the post offices.

References.

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