

The Georgian Courier

THE GREY, BRUCE, DUFFERIN & SIMCOE POSTAL HISTORY STUDY GROUP

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Early GEORGIAN BAY *Steamboat Mail – 1853*

[REF. 253]

Bruce Graham

This stampless folded letter from Shebahonaning, better known as Killarney, leads off our exploratory journey into postal services in the early years of Georgian Bay settlements. Datelined “Shibahwanawning” [sic] Shebahonaning, 25th August, 1853, and rated “PAID 3” with a black marking [collect from receiver], it was hand carried to Manitouwaning where it was placed on board the steamboat *Kaloolah* on her downward trip from Sault Ste. Marie to Owen Sound. The letter entered the mails at Owen Sound, witness the OWENS-SOUND C.W double broken circle dated August 25, 1853. It arrived at its destination, SAUGEEN C.W on August 26, 1853 (backstamp). Saugeen post office operated from 1851 until 1890, at which time it was renamed Southampton. The letter writer, Robert Johnston(e) was appointed postmaster for Shebahonaning, Ontario in 1853, but refused the position when the opening day arrived. The post office’s name was changed to Killarney. He accepted the position of postmaster when it opened at the same site on June 1, 1854.

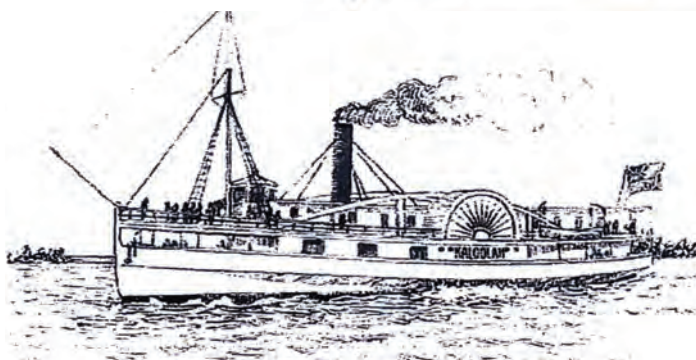
In August 1853 he wrote the Crown Lands Agent at Saugeen requesting permission to “cut down timber for staves and shingles”.

Killarney and Manitoulin Island were sites on the main route to the west. Explorers and fur traders



STEAMER MAIL
on
Georgian Bay

MAP BY SCOTT CAMERON, 2003



The S.S. Kaloolah ran from Sturgeon Bay to Sault Ste. Marie.

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Shibahwanawning 25th August 1853

A. W. C. S. S. S.

Sir

Having written to you some time since I am afraid you did not receive my letter as I sent it by a private conveyance as far as Penetanguishene my Brother was telling me had been speaking to you and thought it would be advisable to allow it instead of a pine location to get a kind of lease (I forget the term he used) however that can be done at any time afterwards and as there are some fellows here that intend going to cut down timber for staves and shingles, you will please send me the necessary papers as soon as you receive your instructions from below. I am sorry to trouble you so often but am afraid my last letter miscarried an early answer will much oblige

Your most obedt servant

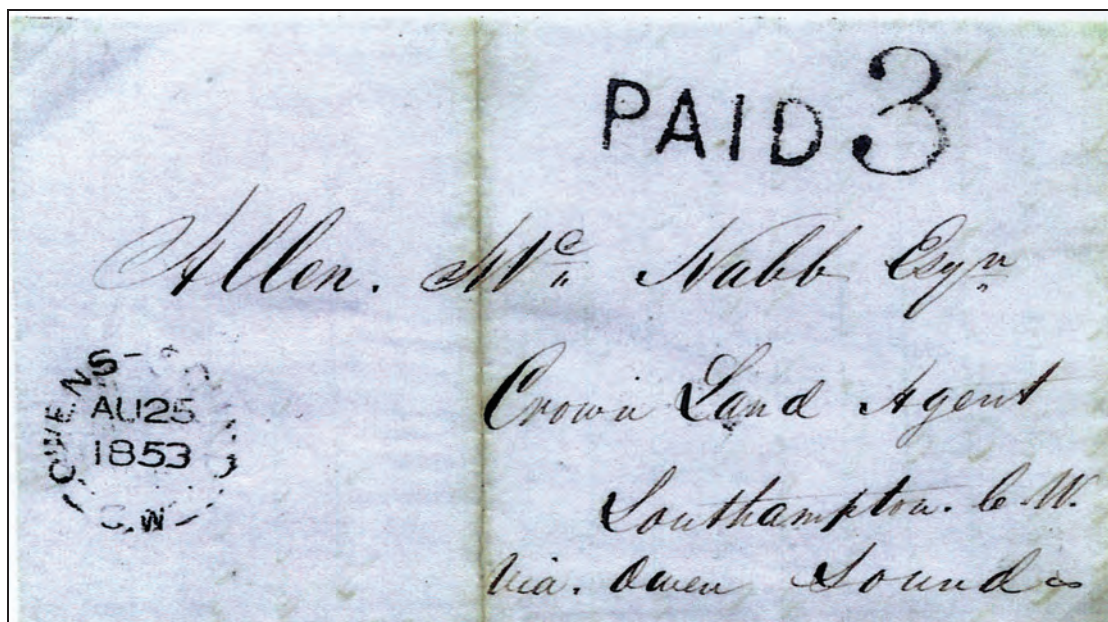
Robert Johnston

P. S. Direct your letter

Robert Johnston

Shibahwanawning

Mia. Manitowaning



PROOF STRIKES
of Owen Sound's
25.5 mm
double broken circle
postmark daters

Carried from Shibahwanawning (Killarney) to Manitouwaning, by steamboat to Owen Sound, and on to Southampton's Saugeen post office.

paddled through the narrow channel which became known as Shebahonaning (or canoe passage). Etienne Augustin Robert de la Morandière and his wife established a trading post at Killarney on June 28, 1820. The post became the major settlement in the area.

Killarney became a port during the shipping season for delivering lumber to market and for picking up supplies. After 1875 a regular scheduled route between Killarney and Owen Sound was established.

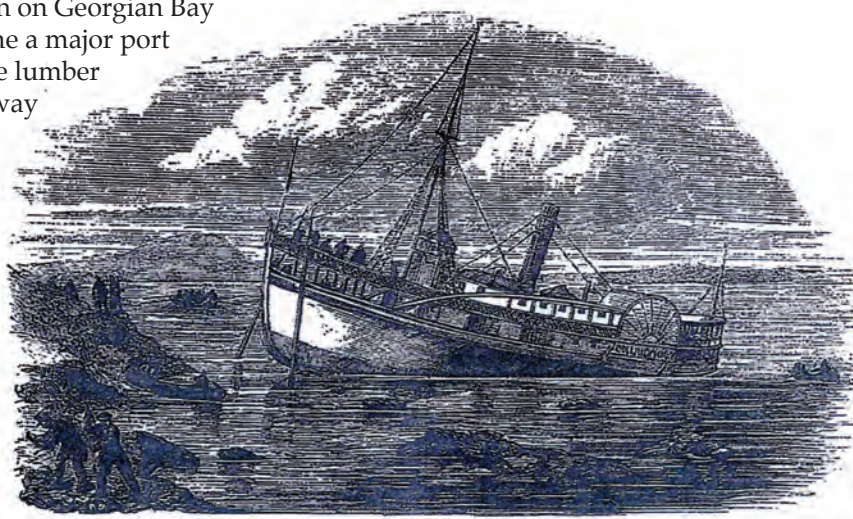
Owen Sound, Grey County, was originally known as Sydenham when it was settled in 1841. It gained its current name in 1851. It was named after Admiral Sir Edward William Campbell Rich Owen, the inlet became known as "Owens Sound". Its first two known postmarks are Owens Sound – the added "s" was dropped by 1860.

The history of Owen Sound harbour as a functioning port started in 1844 with the building of a wharf out in the bay by W. C. Boyd. With its location on Georgian Bay and access to the Upper Lakes it became a major port city. The town's success grew out of the lumber trade. The Toronto, Grey & Bruce Railway reached Owen Sound in 1873. It was

taken over by the Canadian Pacific Railway in 1883 and soon began running both ships and trains in and out of the port.

"Saugeen", Bruce County, an approximation of an Indian word meaning the mouth of a river, was settled in 1848. The addressee of the letter, Alexander McNab, was the first reeve of the township and Crown Land's agent. There was little settlement in the area and roads were non-existent. It is amazing that this letter took only a day to reach Saugeen from Owen Sound.

The first steamship on Georgian Bay was launched at Penetanguishene in 1832, aptly named *Penetanguishene*. The steamer *Gore* was operating between Penetanguishene, Owen Sound and Sault Ste. Marie by 1847. The *Kaloolah*, 188 x 25 ft. side-wheeler, 620 tons, was built at Buffalo, N.Y. In 1852 she was moved up to Georgian Bay, and in 1853 replaced the *Gore* and ran between Sturgeon



Steamer Collingwood (ex-Kaloolah) aground at
Michipicoten Island, Lake Superior – 1857
COURTESY – National Archives of Canada, C29923

Bay and Sault Ste. Marie with stops at ports on Georgian Bay and the North Channel.

Steamboat activity was both local and limited on Georgian Bay until the Northern Railway arrived at Collingwood in 1855. Steamer trade then expanded into Lake Superior, Chicago, and other U.S. ports.

The *Kaloolah* was moved to Collingwood in 1855, renamed the *Collingwood*, and hereafter remained on the Sault Ste. Marie route. In 1857 she was chartered to carry a Canadian expedition to the head of Lake Superior to explore the Red River district. She was the first steamer to make a trip from a Georgian Bay port to the Lake-head. Replaced by faster steamers, she was returned to Lake Erie in 1859. She was wrecked at Southampton in August of 1962.

The opening of the Sault Ste. Marie Canal in 1855 meant the whole of the north shore and Lake Superior

were opened up and competitive bidding began for yearly mail contracts.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge Scott Cameron for his permission to use and quote from his article, "Steamboat Mail on Georgian Bay, the North Channel and Lake Superior," *PHSC Journal* 116, December 2003.

James Barry, *Georgian Bay the Sixth Great Lake*, Clake Irwin & Company, 1968, for valued information on steamboats.

OSAIC for information on Owen Sound.

History of the Killarney Area, R. L. Debiciki, Geology and Scenery Killarney Park Area, 1982.

History of the County of Bruce, Ontario, Saugeen Township via Electric Scotland.com ☒

Owen Sound harbour and railway yards, 1885.



HELP NEEDED!

We need your contribution – large or small ... photo, scan, anecdote, or article – to keep this Study Group and its newsletter going! Please share with your fellow members. **Thank you!**

EDITOR'S NOTE:

Please take note of our new membership classifications as listed on the back page. To keep our operation viable and costs under control we find it necessary to revert to newsletters printed in black and white since raising our dues would be counter productive. By having three classifications of membership: [1] **E-Member**, [2] **Regular Member**, [3] **Premium Membership**, we feel that we can offer an affordable product. We are hoping that this structure is agreeable to all. Relatively few members responded to our letter that was enclosed with the last issue, but we are **very thankful** for those that did.

Owen Sound Postmarks

1865-1900

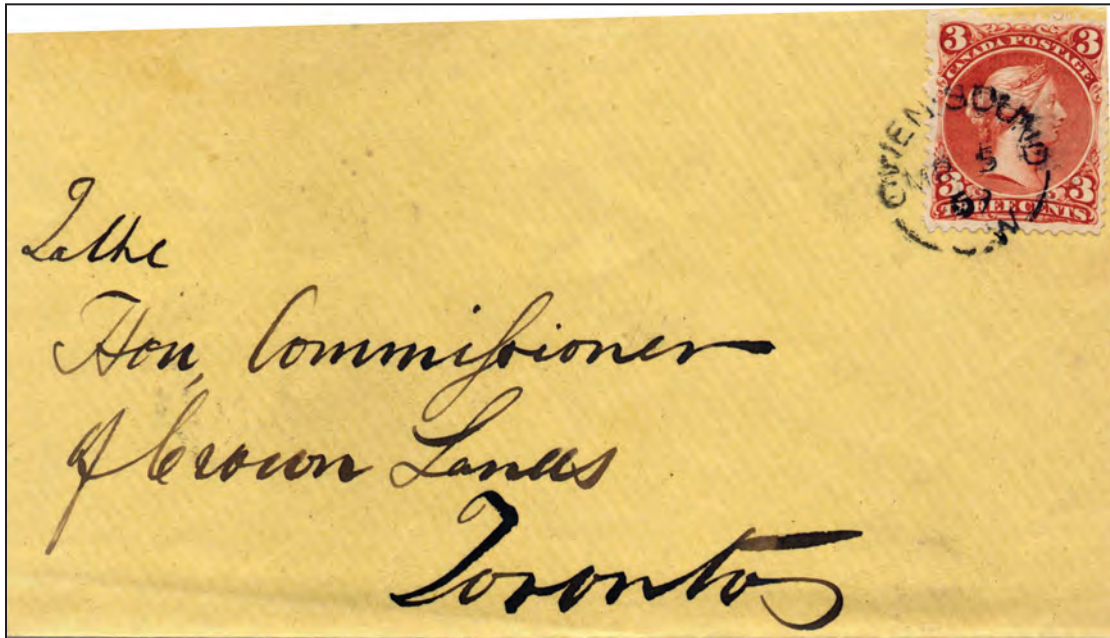
John Rossiter

Some background on the early development of Owen Sound

A survey of Sydenham Township was made by Charles Rankin in 1837 which included a portion for a town plot where the Sydenham and Potawatomi rivers empty into Owen Sound Bay. In 1840 Mr. Rankin returned to this location to be met by Land Agent John Telford and his assistant Thomas Rutherford. Joseph Black and a Mr. McKenzie had also returned and later in that same year Mr. A. M. Stephens. George Gale, later County Clerk, came in 1843 and reported a population of 40.

OWEN SOUND C.W / MR 5 / 69

A letter to the Hon. Commissioner of Crown Lands, Toronto. Note the long "s" in "Commissioner", a practice that was common in earlier days especially in German script.



The 4th postmark:

21.0-mm broken circle type A2, Berri, reported used between 1865 to 1869. Order date of this postmark from Berri was March 3, 1865.

Please reference these previous articles: -

1. James E. Kraemer's excellent write-up on "The Old Mail Road – from Barrie to Owens Sound" Reference 119 – GBD & S Newsletter No. 18, Jan. 2001
2. My response – Ref. R-119 – GBD & S Newsletter No. 19, March 2001. This article illustrates the 3 earliest postmarks for OWENS SOUND & OWEN SOUND

the cost to mail a letter was based on distance plus the number of enclosures. After that date the cost to mail a letter was generally charged according to type, the destination, and weight.

The "Village" began to grow as more settlers arrived and was named "Sydenham". As noted by James Kraemer the name "Sydenham" conflicted with other places in Canada already established using the name

Sydenham. However, on July 6, 1846, the Post Office was referring to the Village as OWENS SOUND. As noted above the first postmaster was Stan Hay. By 1856 the population had reached 1985 persons and an application was applied for to incorporate a Town to be designated "OWEN SOUND". In January 1857 the Town of Owen Sound was first recognized as a corporate entity. In that same year the first elections were held and Richard Carney was elected Mayor. The town continued to grow and by 1901 the population was 8776. This growth led to the start of many industries including ship building, sawmills, a tannery, publishing and printing, furniture factories, a foundry and many others.

This article will show the additional postmarks that were issued from 1865 and up to 1900.

Following Confederation in 1867 the 2-Ring "44" postmark was issued. While not a datestamp this was distinctive postmark and is included for reference (see opposite page).

The **4th Postmark** (shown on previous page) was ordered March 3, 1865. I have a large cover dated October 29, 1868 but choose to illustrate a later date. This broken circle hammer has a 21.0-mm dia. and was mailed from OWEN SOUND, C.W. MR 5, 1869 to Toronto, C.W. and is backstamped TORONTO, C.W, MR 6, 1869 (PM).



Owen Sound is located at the mouth of the Sydenham River (shown here) and the Pottawatomi. This Sydenham River is not to be confused with Ontario's other Sydenham which flows from Kent County westward into Lake St. Clair. – c.1874

The **5th Postmark** is an enclosed broken circle 22.5-mm dia. (I cannot find a proof date for this hammer so I'm guessing late 1868 or early 1869). This cover was mailed from OWEN SOUND, JY 21, 1869 to Thorold, Ontario. It was cancelled with the 2 Ring 44 and was received in Thorold, Ontario, July 2, 1869 (AM).

5 (a) – This 3¢ Small Queen stamp shows a somewhat better strike of the 2 Ring 44 hammer. (Very Good to Fine

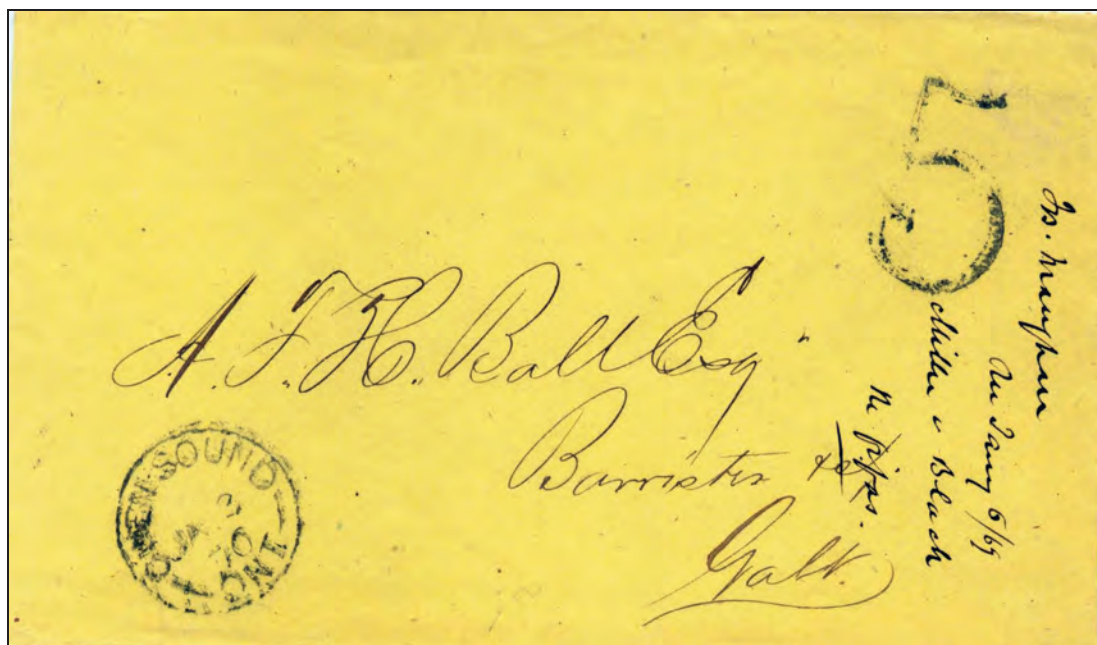


OWEN SOUND ONT. / JY 21 / 69

The 5th postmark:

22.5-mm enclosed broken circle type D2, reported used between 1869 and 1877. There is no known proof strike.





OWEN SOUND ONT. / JA 3 / 70

The 5th postmark:

22.5-mm enclosed broken circle type D2, reported used between 1869 and 1877.

strikes of the 2 Ring 44 hammer on cover are scarce.) I recall 2 covers with fine 2 Ring 44 strikes sold through Jim Hennoks final sale at approximately double the estimated bid.

5 (b) Another cover dated January 3, 1870 showing a better strike of the enclosed split circle hammer. Mailed from OWEN SOUND to Galt, Ontario, it is struck with a large 5 hammer in black indicating the cover was sent Unpaid. The recipient was responsible to pay the 5¢ postage.

In the 1870s and for some years after Owen Sound along with other towns of similar size used a number of different "Cork" cancels - "Sunbursts", "Segmented", "Crossroads" etc. These were likely prepared locally.

The 6th Postmark – In 1875 a new single broken circle was issued, 21.0-mm in dia. with arcs 7.5 and 6.0 (as we have no proof date 1875 is our best guess). This Canada post card was mailed from OWEN-SOUND, Ont., AP 8, 1875 to St. Catharines, Ont. [NOTE: *the dot between OWEN and SOUND and the segmented cork cancel*].

The 7th Postmark – On January 2, 1878 a full circle (22.5- mm dia.) was issued. This registered letter was mailed from OWEN-SOUND, SP 17, 1879 to Manitouwaning, Ont. and was received September 18, 1879. (This cover would have traveled by steamship as no other transit marks are shown). [ED. NOTE: *see previous article*]



OWEN-SOUND ONT. / AP 8 / 75

The 6th postmark:

Broken circle, 21.0-mm dia. (arcs 7.5 and 6.0 mm), reported used between 1875 and 1876. There is no known proof strike.

OWEN-SOUND ONT. /
SP 17 / 79

The 7th postmark:
Full circle, 22.5-mm dia.

PROOF STRIKE



The **8th Postmark** – On June 16, 1880 another full circle was issued 22.5-mm in dia. (with slightly larger lettering). This letter was mailed from a barrister and is struck in blue – OWEN-SOUND, JY 17, 1882 to Dublin, Ireland (5¢ postage and 1¢ overpayment). Received in Dublin July 29, 1882 (3C)

[NOTE: it should be noted that when a new postmark hammer was put into use, the older hammers also continued to be used. I believe that on occasion the hammer in use was whatever the postal clerk pulled from the drawer.]

The **9th Postmark** was issued on November 18, 1880 and was a broken circle 21.0-mm in dia. (with 5-mm arcs). This registered cover was mailed from OWEN-SOUND, March 3, 1882 to Toronto and is back-stamped Toronto, Canada, March 4, 1882.

The **10th Postmark** issued on July 20, 1881 was a broken circle 22-mm dia. (with 8.0 and 7.0 mm arcs) showing a (AM) time marking. It is unusual to show an AM marking in this period on a broken circle postmark for small towns. (Was there also a PM broken circle hammer?) Unfortunately there is no example shown in the proof book for this postmark. The only cover I have that could possibly be this marking (and this is very doubtful) is a very late usage double rate cover with 6¢ postage (exceeding 1 oz., but less 2 ozs.) and was mailed from OWEN-SOUND, December 22, 1898 showing an (A) not an (AM) to Pickering, Ont. and is backstamped Pickering, Ont., December 23, 1898 (AM).

The **11th Postmark** was issued on the same day as the 10th postmark – July 20, 1881 and was identical – a



OWEN-SOUND ONT. /
JY 17 / 82

The 8th postmark:
Full circle, 22.5-mm dia.
with slightly larger lettering.
Note the fancy blue cork
strikes.

PROOF STRIKE





OWEN-SOUND ONT. /
MR 3 / 82

The 9th postmark:
Broken circle, 21.0-mm dia.
(arcs 5.0 mm).

PROOF STRIKE



OWEN-SOUND ONT. / A / DE 22 / 98

The 10th postmark:
Broken circle, 22.0-mm dia.
(arcs 8.0 and 7.0 mm).



broken circle, 22.0-mm dia. (and with 8.0 and 7.0 mm arcs). However, this was a duplex hammer with a 13-bar killer. The only duplex cancel issued to Owen Sound prior to 1900. Bruce Graham records this hammer dated January 15, 1885. I do not have a cover with this strike so the hammer in this illustration is taken from the *Proof Strikes of Canada – Vol. VI, Duplex Proof Strikes of Ontario*, edited by Mr. J. Paul Hughes. It is reported to have been used from August 1881 until January 1883.

PROOF STRIKE

OWEN-SOUND ONT. / JY 4 / 83

The 12th postmark:
Broken circle, 21.5-mm dia. (arcs 6.0 mm).
Reported used in 1899.



OWEN-SOUND ONT. /
AM / JY 20 / 81

The 11th postmark:
Duplex DON-1224
broken circle, 22.0-mm dia.
(arcs 8.0 and 7.0 mm).
13-bar killer

The 12th Postmark issued on July 4, 1883 was a broken circle 21.5 mm dia. (with 6.0 mm arcs) This was the final Broken Circle postmark issued to Owen Sound. I do not have a cover showing this hammer so this illustration is also taken from the *Proof Strikes of Canada – Vol. II, Split Circle Proof Strikes of Ontario*, edited by Mr. J. Paul Hughes.

The 13th Postmark issued on December 28, 1887 was



OWEN-SOUND ONT. / NO 24 / 88

The 13th postmark:
Full circle, 24.0-mm dia.

PROOF STRIKE



OWEN SOUND ONT. / JY 23 / 98

The 14th postmark:
Full circle, 23.5-mm dia.

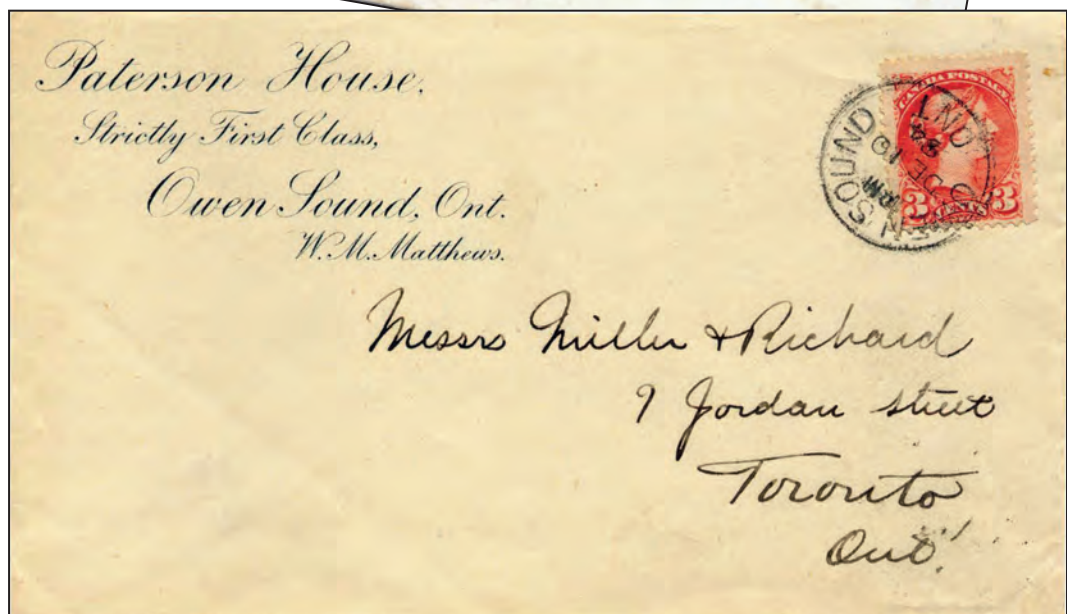
PROOF STRIKE

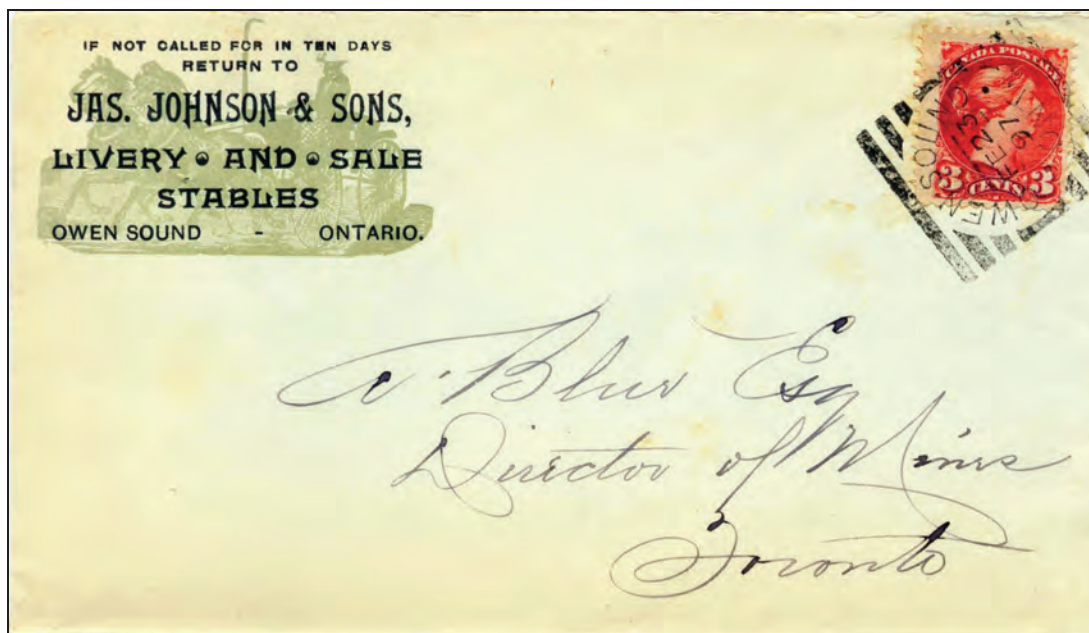


OWEN SOUND ONT. / DE 10 / 94

The 15th postmark:
Full circle, 24.0-mm dia.

PROOF STRIKE





OWEN SOUND ONT. / DE 10 / 94

The 16th postmark:
Type II Squared Circle
proofed December 20, 1893.

a full circle 24.0-mm in dia. This registered cover mailed from OWEN SOUND, Nov. 24, 1888 to Bognor, Ontario and is backstamped – Woodford (partial strike) and Bognor, Ont. Canada, Nov. 26, 1888.

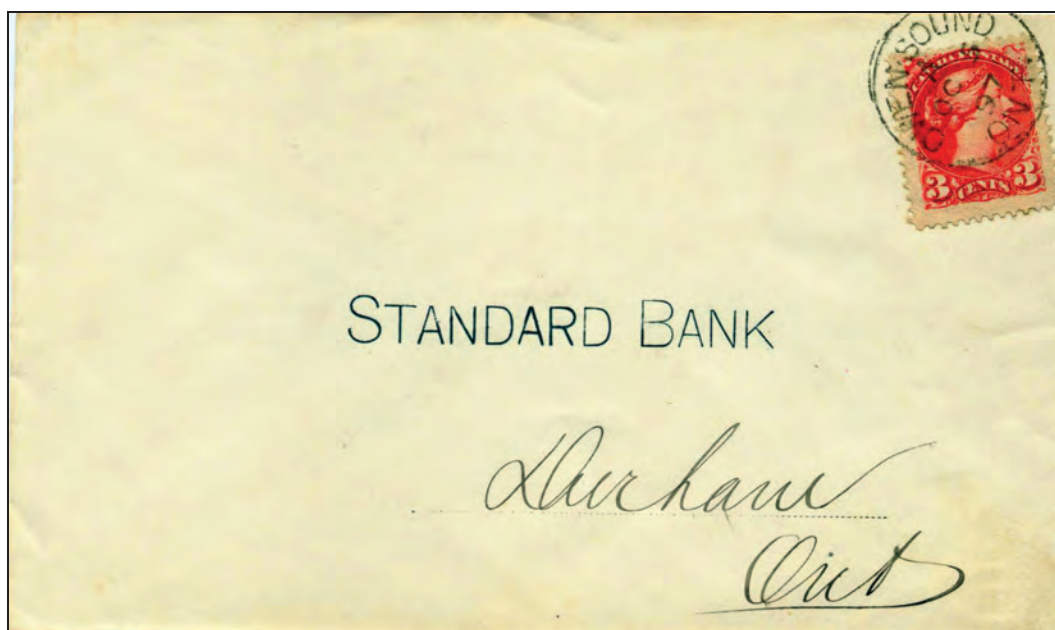
The **14th Postmark** issued on Feb. 26, 1891 was a full circle 23.5 mm in dia. This Registered cover was mailed from OWEN SOUND, July 23, 1898 (no dot between Owen & Sound) to Hamilton, Ont. and is backstamped – Tor. & Sound, M.C. July 23, 1898 (S) & Hamilton, R, Canada, July 24, 1898.

The **15th Postmark** issued on July 27, 1891 was a full circle 24.0 mm in dia. This postmark shows the PM designation mailed from OWEN SOUND, Dec. 10, 1894 to Toronto, Ont. backstamped Toronto, Ont. Dec. 11, 1894
This was the last "Full Circle" Owen Sound postmark

shown in the Proof Book up to 1900. A number of "Full Circle" postmarks that are missing from the Proof Book are shown in Fig's. 17, 17a and 17b. They are not listed in any published text. Are there others?

The **16th Postmark** estimated proof date December 20, 1893 was a Type II Squared Circle datestamp. I have a Mar. 20, 1896 strike but choose to illustrate a slightly better strike but a later date. This cover was mailed from OWEN SOUND, FE 23, 1897 to Toronto, Ont., February 24, 1897.

The **17th Postmark** is a full circle 24.0-mm in dia. This postmark shows the letter "A" above the date mailed from OWEN SOUND, OC 5, 1897 to Durham, Ont. and is backstamped Durham, Ont. October 5, 1897 – now we are back to dot between OWEN and SOUND.



OWEN SOUND ONT. /
A / OC 5 / 97

The 17th postmark:
Full circle, 24.0-mm dia.,
with timemark.
No known proofmark

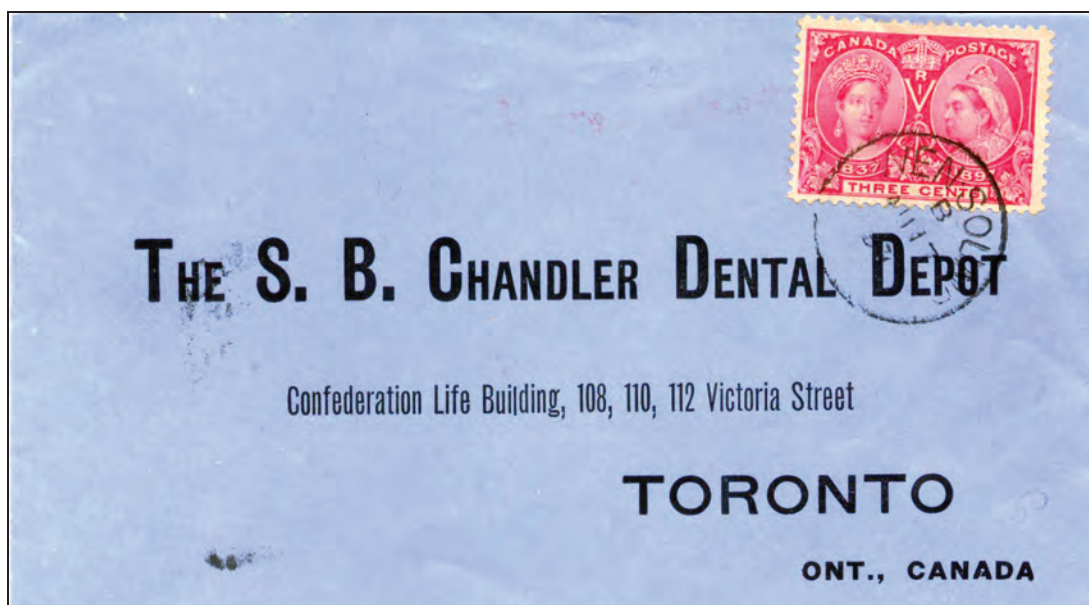
17 (a) – Another example of this postmark although an incomplete strike, shows the letter “B” above the date mailed from OWEN-SOUND, AU 17, 1897 to Toronto, Ont. and is backstamped Toronto, August 17, 1897.

17 (b) – This example shows the letter “C” above the date mailed from OWEN-SOUND, AU 26, 1898 to Little Current, Ont. (no backstamps).

The **18th Postmark** is a 23 mm Duplex hammer, Type II, killer A9, (DON-1225) mailed from OWEN-SOUND,

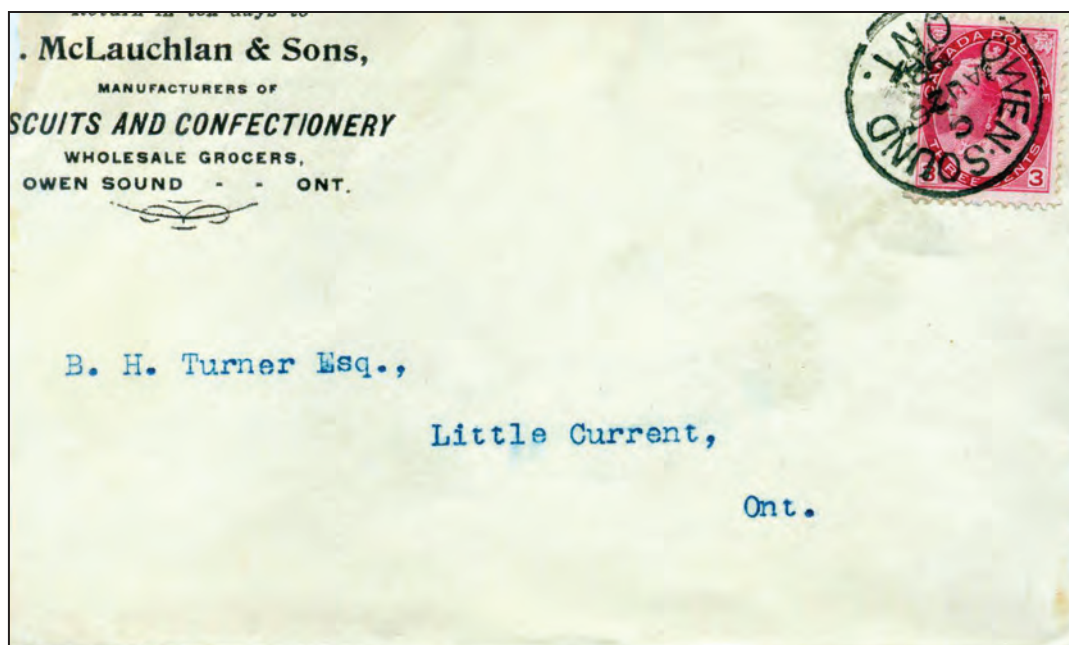
SP 4, 1900 to Gore Bay, Ont. The postmark shows the letter “C” above the date. The postcard is backstamped with a Gore Bay, Ont. Sq’d. Circle hammer September 6, 1900. (I have another strike of this hammer in 1900 with a “B” strike above the date).

This concludes the postmarks I am aware of up to 1900. If you can add any clarification to the hammers used (corrections, additions or scans) it would be appreciated, especially the 10th, 11th and the 12th postmarks.



OWEN-SOUND ONT. /
B / AU 17 / 97

The 17th postmark:
Full circle, 24.0-mm dia.,
with timemark.
No known proofmark



OWEN-SOUND ONT. /
C / AU 26 / 98

The 17th postmark:
Full circle, 24.0-mm dia.,
with timemark.
No known proofmark



OWEN-SOUND ONT. /
C / SP 4 / 00

The 18th postmark:

Duplex DON-1225
type II full circle,
23.0-mm dia., A9 killer
No known proof strike.
Reported used 1900-1902.

**POSTMASTERS AT
OWEN SOUND POST OFFICE**

1846 - 1900

Stan Hay	1846 - 1852
George Brown	1853 - Sept. 1868
John George Francis	Nov. 1, 1868 - Sept. 25, 1880
Robert Crawford	Nov. 1, 1880 - Jan. 31, 1893
William Masson	Dec. 10, 1894 - Jan. 03, 1901

REFERENCES

E.L. Marsh, *A History of the County of Grey*
Davidson, *A New History of Grey County*
Rutherford, *Grey County's 125th Year 1852-1977*
W. Bruce Graham, *Ontario Broken Circle Datestamps*
J. Paul Hughes, *Full Circle Proof Strikes of Ontario*, Vol. IX
J. Paul Hughes, *Duplex Proof Strikes of Ontario*, Vol. VI
Government of Canada – Library & Archives Canada
Dave Hanes and Michael Millar – P. O. hammers
Wikipedia – re: Owen Sound ☒

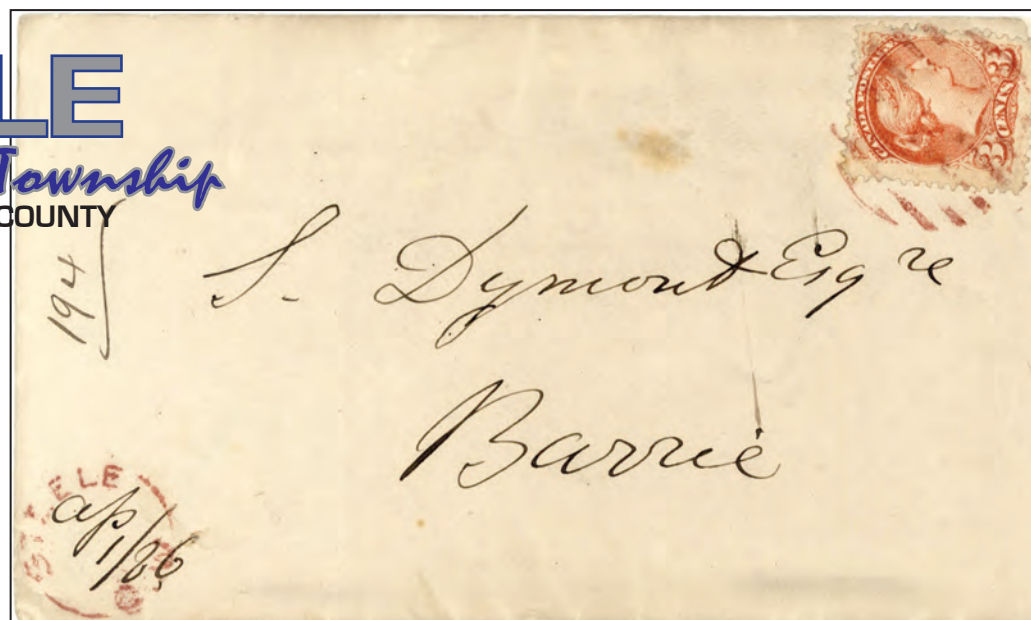
STEELE

Oro Township
SIMCOE COUNTY

A pioneer Simcoe County community that provided postal services from September 1, 1866 until January 31, 1890, for its residents. John C. Steele was the postmaster at the time that this letter was mailed on April 1, 1886. The post office had opened with Coll Robinson

in the postmaster's position, but John Steele took over in 1869.

The 1887 *Report of the Postmaster General* notes that Steele had annual revenue of just \$22.88 (including ar-



rears). From that grand sum the postmaster received a salary of \$18.00 and a forward allowance of \$26.00.

The Berri datestamp shown on the above cover was

[cont'd on page 596]

DEWE, CARLING TOWNSHIP *Parry Sound District*

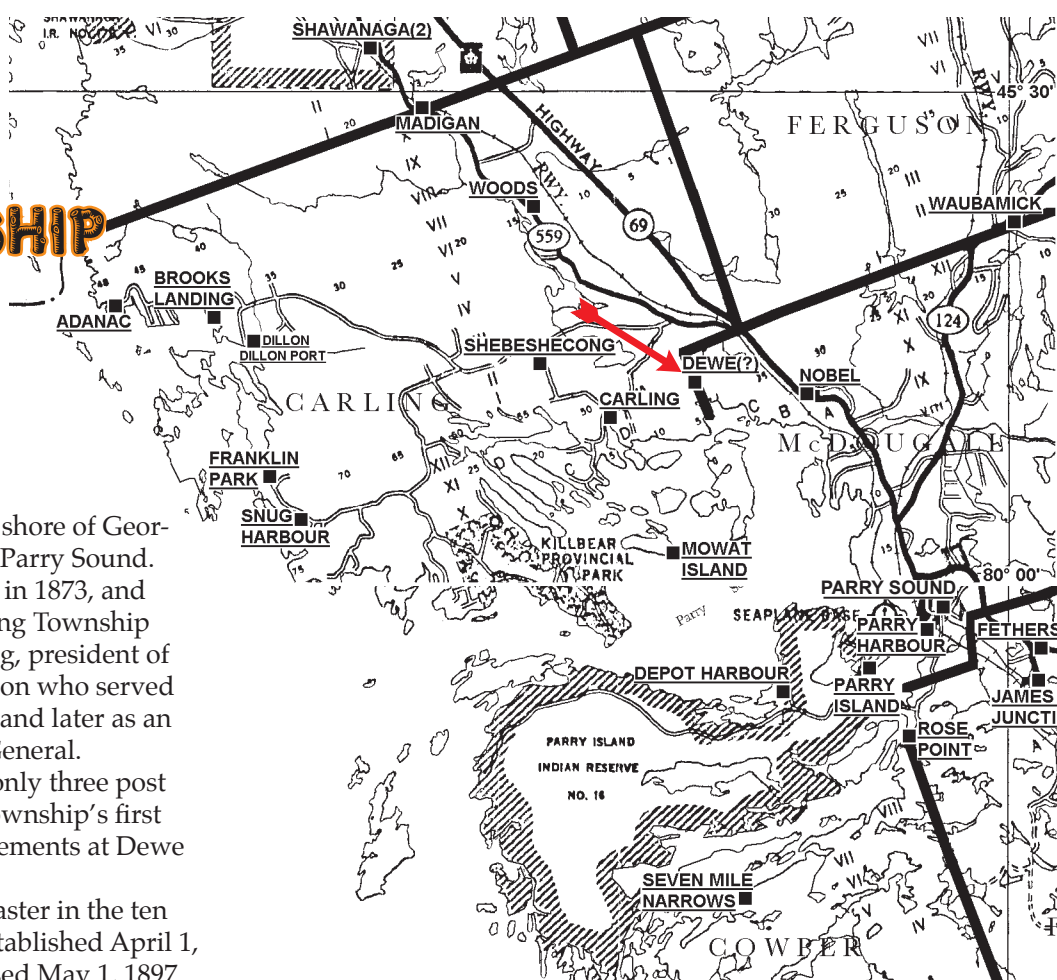
Gus Knierim

Carling Township lies on the eastern shore of Georgian Bay, northwest of the Town of Parry Sound. The area was surveyed by James Bolger in 1873, and proclaimed as a township in 1897. Carling Township was named in honour of Sir John Carling, president of Carling Brewing and Malting Co., London who served as an MPP in the Provincial Legislature and later as an MP and Canada's seventh Postmaster General.

Prior to 1900 Carling Township had only three post offices. The village of Carling had the township's first post office in 1878, followed by the settlements at Dewe and Shebeshekong in 1887.

John Wright was Dewe's only postmaster in the ten years that the office was open. It was established April 1, 1887 as a non-accounting office and closed May 1, 1897. The *Sessional Papers for the Dominion of Canada*, 1891 report that John Wright carried the mail from Parry Sound to Dewe, a distance of 11 miles, once a week. Since Dewe was very close to the Sound, the mode of transport may well have been the canoe. For the 1889 season, he received the sum of \$37.50.

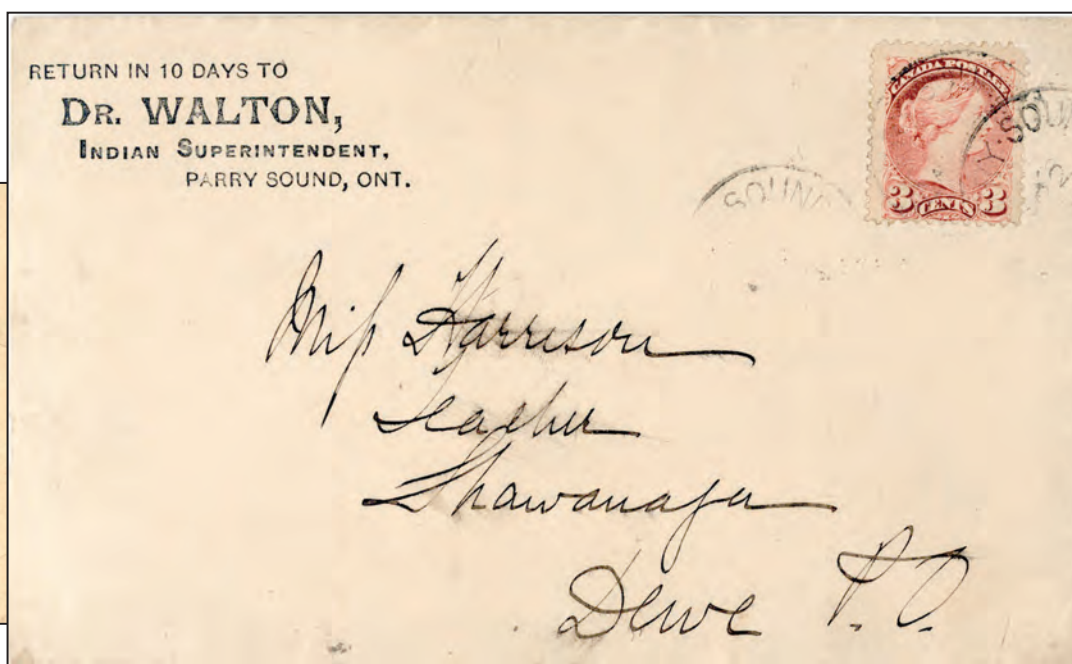
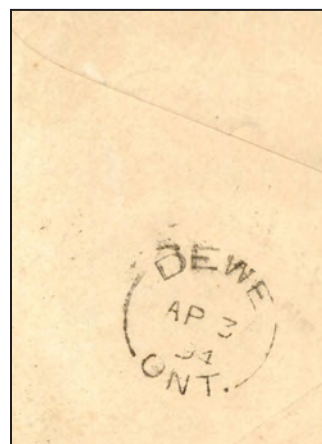
We show a registered cover mailed to John S. Pearce & Co., Seed Merchants, London, Ontario, which might

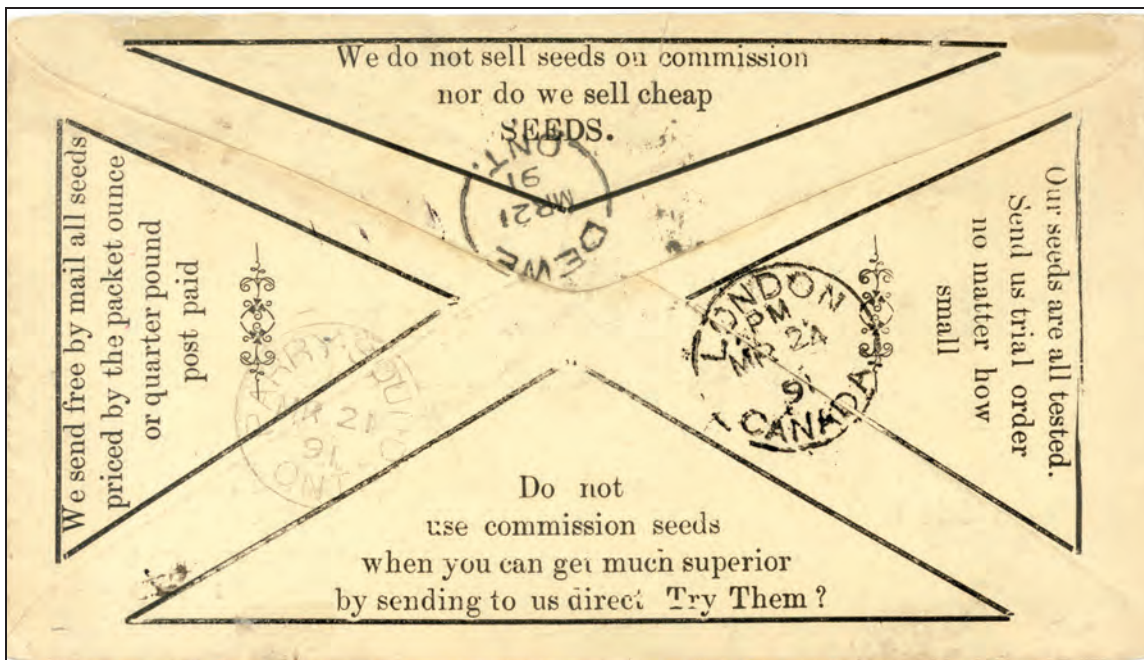


indicate that some enterprising settler was going to try his hand at farming or gardening in an area ill-suited for agriculture. The area was opened up by loggers, some of whom decided to settle and try their hand at farming. Mailed from Dewe on March 21, 1891 it received a transit strike at Parry Sound the same day. From there it would have gone by boat perhaps to Midland or

DEWE ONT. / AP 3 / 94

A letter sent by Dr. Walton, the Indian Superintendent at Parry Sound, to a Miss Harrison, teacher at Shawanaga (Madigan) in care of Dewe post office.





DEWE ONT. / MR 21 / 91

It was time to order seeds for the upcoming spring season. John S. Pearce & Co., London, received the order in just four days. Hopefully the order received the "special attention to orders by mail" that they promised on their attractive illustrated advertising cover.

Collingwood. We do not know for no further transit marks are shown. We do know that it arrived at its destination on March 24.

The letter was insufficiently prepaid. At the time registration fee was 5¢ and postage for a 1 oz. letter was 3¢ – underpaid by 3¢, hence the marking indicating the shortage. It appears that postmaster Wright was not fully aware of the current rates and fees.

Our second letter was mailed by Dr. Walton, the Indian Superintendent at Parry Sound, to Miss Harrison,

teacher, at Shawanaga (later named Madigan) via Dewe post office. Shawanaga at the time did not have a post office, and would not receive such federal presence until 1904; that meant that settlers had to go to the south of the township to receive all mail since the only operating offices in 1894 were Carling, Shebeshekong, and Dewe.

At this time we do not know why the settlement lost its post office nor what happened to the settlement. The area may have gotten logged out and not enough settlers remained to warrant postal services. Most later post offices in Carling Township were established to serve the growing popularity of the region as cottage country. ☐

[cont'd from page 593]

replaced by a type A1 broken circle dater proofed July 9, 1886. The Berri datestamp, type A2x (21.0-mm dia., arcs 8.0 and 7.5 mm) was ordered July 12, 1866 and is known used from 1869 until 1886. The 1886 broken circle dater has not been reported in use. This dater has a 20-mm dia. with arcs measuring 8.5 and 7.0 mm respectively.

John Steele resigned June 19, 1889 and the post office was closed January 31, 1890. ☒

no Ministry of Transportation. Not to be sold.

The
ONTARIO POST OFFICE
Atlas

Eric Manchec
— 2003 —

\$30.00
(+ shipping)

- 116 maps
- all Ontario Counties and Districts south of Highway 17, including Manitoulin Island
- heavy-weight quality paper
- printed on one side only
- bound in quality D-ring presentation binder

from the Editor

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