

# The Barred Circle Postmarks of Canada and Newfoundland

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The barred circle postmarks were used in Halifax, Hamilton, London, Montreal, Ottawa, St. John, Seaforth, Toronto, Winnipeg and St. John's, Newfoundland. They are also referred to as the forerunners of the squared circles. Much information about them has been contributed by philatelists who primarily collect squared circles. Interest has been stimulated by two particularly good articles. They are, "Barred Circle Postmarks of 1892" by the late Col. Duncan McLellan published in *B.N.A. Topics* Vol. 14, No. 8, Page 202, September 1957 and "The Montreal Barred Circles" by Dr. M. W. Carstairs published in *Maple Leaves* Vol. 11, No. 10, Page 264, April 1967.

The barred circle postmarks are characterized by a circle of approximately 27 mm. diameter with the name of the town around the inside. In the central area there is an upper and a lower group of three horizontal bars. The most central bar in each group is much larger than the other two bars. In the space between the two large bars is the day, the month and usually the time mark. As a rule the year is below the most inferior bar.

There are three basic types. London and Toronto have the town name followed by CANADA and these two words are both above the lower group of bars (Fig. 1). The lower bars are much longer than the upper bars and the year 92 is under them (except for a few days when it was missing from the LONDON° CANADA postmark).

Halifax, Hamilton, Montreal, Ottawa, St. John, and Winnipeg are each followed by CANADA (Fig. 2). The letters are wider and the name extends around the circle a greater distance, originating and terminating opposite the lower group of bars. The lower group are therefore much shorter and a comparable length to the upper group of bars. The year is under the lowest bar.

St. John's and Seaforth have the town name around the upper part of the circle. The day, the month and the year are in the central area between the upper and lower bars. NEWF'D. or ONT. is below the bottom bar. There are no time indicia (Fig. 3).

The barred circle postmarks were intro-

duced in 1892. Most were used for only a few months that year. The Ottawa hammer was used for a few days in March 1893. Seaforth is recorded to have been in use until 8 March 1893. Montreal and St. John's were used for several years, usually as a town postmark on registered mail. Dr. Carstairs has identified five different Montreal barred circle postmarks, four of the hammers were in use during the same year.

The barred circle hammers were used for cancelling stamps as well as postmarks to identify the place of origin, the transit route or the destination.

## LONDON CANADA

The earliest recorded date is 26 March 1892. The latest recorded date is 2 June 1892. From the 20th April to the 6th May there was no year date under the bottom bar.

The recorded time indicia are: 10A, 12N, 1P, 2P, 3P, 4P, 5P, 6P, and 8P.

The postmark is known to cancel stamps, to identify the town of origin and as a receiving mark.

Partial strikes may be identified. The lower bars are long (similar to Toronto) and they may not have the year date under them. They have the sequence of the letters N and C at the top. It is the only town beginning with L and may be identified if this letter or part of the town name is evident.

## TORONTO CANADA

The earliest recorded date is 29 January 1892. The latest recorded date is 16 September 1892.

The recorded time indicia are: 5A, 7A, 8A, 10A, 11A, 12A, 12N, 1P, 2P, 3P, 4P, 5P, 6P, 7P, 8P, 10P and 12P.

The postmark is known to cancel stamps and to identify the town of origin.

It is similar to London with the longer lower group of bars. The sequence of the letters O and C at the top or part of the town name at the left will identify partial strikes. It is the only barred circle cancellation beginning with the letter T.

## HALIFAX N.S. CANADA

The earliest recorded date is 22 January 1892. The latest recorded date is 31 October 1892.

The recorded time indicia are: A1, A5,

A9, A10, A 12, P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P9, P10, P11, P12, 2P, 4P, 6P, 11P, and 12P. It is my impression that the number preceded the letter in the earlier postmarks.

The postmark is known to cancel stamps and to identify the town of origin.

Partial strikes are often identified because of the X.N.S.C. sequence at the top. Halifax differentiated from Hamilton because both the H of Halifax and the last A of Canada are at a lower position.

#### **HAMILTON° CANADA**

The earliest recorded date is 20 January 1892. The latest recorded date is 9 September 1892.

The recorded time indicia are: 5A, 9A, 10A, 11A, N12, 1P, 2P, 4P, 5P, 6P, 7P, 9P, 12P, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P9 and P12.

The postmark is known to cancel stamps and to identify the town of origin.

Partial strikes may be identified by the sequence N●C at the top. The H of Hamilton and the last A of Canada are at a higher position than the comparable letters of the Halifax barred circle postmark.

#### **MONTREAL° CANADA**

The earliest recorded date is 26 April 1892. The latest recorded date is 25 November 1905.

The following is the classification as described by Dr. Carstairs. It is based on the diameter of the circle, the length of the third bar and the relationship of the letters T and R in Montreal and the first letter A and the N in Canada to the third bar.

In type one the diameter of the circle is 27 mm. The third bar is 12 mm. long, (this simplifies the identification). The right limb of R and the right limb of A point to the third bar. The earliest recorded date is 22 January 1894 and the latest recorded date is 17 February 1894. The recorded time indicia are A11 and P2.

In type two the diameter of the circle is 27 mm. (Fig. 4). The third bar is 16 mm. long. The T and the left vertical of N point to the third bar. The earliest recorded date is 18 June 1895 and the latest recorded date is 23 December 1901. The recorded time indicia are A7, A9, A10, A11, N12, P1, P2, P4, P5, P7 and 5P.

In type three the diameter of the circle is 26½ mm. (Fig. 5). The third bar is 15 mm. long. The left limb of R points to the bar and the right limb of A is just above the lower end of the bar. The earliest recorded date is 29 November 1894 and the latest recorded date is 8 June 1900. The

recorded time indicia are A7, A8, A9, A11, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P10 and P11.

In type four the diameter of the circle is 27 mm. (Fig. 6). The third bar is 16 mm. long. The T and the left limb of R and the right limb of A and the left vertical of N are opposite the third bar. The earliest recorded date is 10 January 1898 and the latest recorded date is 28 February 1902. The recorded indicia are A7, A8, A10, P2, P4, P6, P7 and P12.

Type five is very different (Fig. 7). The letters are widely spaced and the upper and lower group of bars are widely separated. The diameter of the circle is 27 mm. and the third bar is 14 mm. long. The limbs of the R straddles the third bar and the left limb of the A points to it. The earliest recorded date is 11 June 1900 and the latest recorded date is 26 December 1902. The recorded time indicia are 11A, 1P and 5P.

The barred circle postmarks of Montreal are commonly found on the back of registered mail where it was applied as a receiving or transit postmark. It was very rarely used to cancel stamps.

#### **OTTAWA° CANADA**

The earliest recorded date is 19 January 1892. It is known used continuously until 30 December 1892. It was also used from 8th to the 18th of March, 1893.

The recorded time indicia are A1, A2, A7, A9, A11, A12, N12, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11, P12, 3P, 4P, 8P and 10P.

The postmark is known to cancel stamps and to identify the town of origin.

Partial strikes may be identified by the sequence A●C at the top. Ottawa is the only barred circle postmark beginning with O.

#### **ST. JOHN° N.B. CANADA**

The earliest recorded date is 22 January 1892. The latest recorded date is 23 October 1892.

The recorded time indicia are 11A, A12, N12, P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P10, P11, 1P, 4P, 5P, 6P, 7P, 8P and 6N.

The postmark is known to cancel stamps and to identify the town of origin.

Partial strikes may be identified by the sequence N° N.B.C at the top. The letter S is much lower than the letter S of Seaforth.

#### **WINNIPEG° CANADA**

The earliest recorded date is 25 January 1892. The latest recorded date is 25 November 1892.



Fig.1



Fig.2



Fig.3



Fig.4



Fig.5

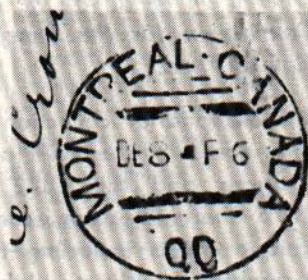


Fig.6



Fig.7

The recorded time indicia are 9A, 10A, 11A, 12A, 1P, 2P, 3P, 4P, 5P, 6P, 7P, 9P, 11P and 8N.

The postmark is known to cancel stamps, to identify the town of origin and as a transit mark.

Partial strikes may be identified by the G.C sequence at the top. Winnipeg is the only barred circle postmark beginning with W.

**SEAFORTH, ONT.**

The earliest recorded date is 4 February 1892. The latest recorded date is 8 March 1893.

There are no time indicia.

The postmark is known to cancel stamps, as a postmark of town of origin and a transit mark.

Partial strikes may be identified by the position of Seaforth at the top.

A very attractive cover with two strikes

is illustrated in B.N.A. Topics Vol. 14, No. 10, Page 284, November 1957.

**ST. JOHN'S, NEWF'D**

The earliest recorded date is 10 October 1895. The latest recorded date is 2 January 1899.

There are no time indicia.

The postmark is known to cancel stamps and to identify the town of origin on registered mail.

Partial strikes may be identified by the position of St. John's at the top.

In conclusion, it is my impression that Seaforth is the most uncommon barred circle postmark and that London is the next uncommon. Montreal is very rare on stamps. The others are quite easy to obtain. Some of the time indicia must be uncommon and no doubt many exist which have not been recorded.