

Starting at 7 p.m., **Tuesday, Feb. 6, 2024** via Zoom, our 6th virtual Learning Workshop of the 2023-2024 season is **'Datestamps and Obliterators.'**

Whether cancels are on stamps or covers, collectors are attracted to them for a variety of reasons, which is the influence behind our topic in the second month of the new year.

Aptly-named 'Straightline' hand-applied cancellations bearing just a post office's name were the earliest in most countries — following hand-written 'Manuscript' cancels.

Circular Date Stamps, which applied 'c.d.s.' cancels, were next. They came in various sizes and shapes, including devices in the early 1800s with complete circles around post office and region names, with dates in the centre. Stamps were often cancelled with hand-held devices, though in many small Canadian outlets, carved bottle corks were used — and are a popular collector's topic.

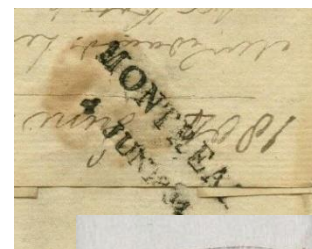
Later small postmarks with partial circles — 'split rings' — were followed by circular cancels framed within boxed horizontal lines, called 'Squared Circles'.



To make work easier for postal staff, who had to apply two separate cancellations to covers and packets, 'Duplex' hand-cancellers were developed, with both a circular date stamp portion on the left and a circular stamp-canceller consisting of wavy or horizontal bars on the right, which in some cases included a community and province's initials.



High-speed, machine-applied postmarks, with circular date stamps on the left, beside variously-configured stamp 'oblierator' sections consisting of wavy lines, flags and more common slogan-fitted text, came into use just before the 20th century.



Some horizontal machine cancellers have nicknames, usually based on the company that manufactured them. Examples include Bickerdike, which was named after Canadian businessman Robert Bickerdike and provided by the American Postal Machine Company starting in 1896; Pitney-Bowes cancellers introduced in 1975 with small circular postmarks on the left that included 'CANADA', postal codes and dates beside horizontal stamp cancellers with seven wavy lines; and Klüssendorf — produced in Germany more than 300 small Canadian post offices starting in 1983, with a larger double-circle postmark on the left, beside a horizontal boxed slogan stamp cancellation.



Though not as common in Canada for some time, more large-sized circular hand-applied postmarking devices have been issued to postal staff in recent years.

Of course countries around the world have used myriad datestamps and obliterators, including stamp cancellations consisting of numbers in circles or boxed bars.

All of the above — and with no limit on a related topic — are welcome subjects for this session.

- Ian Robertson

