



21 JULY PROGRAM:

Ron Smith spoke on *The Fredericton Post Office and its Postmarks pre-1900*.

Ron was introduced by Ken Lemke.

Born in Montreal, Ron moved to Fredericton in 1973 to attend the University of New Brunswick and decided that a career in forest research was better conducted in New Brunswick than downtown Montreal. Being a small queen enthusiast, he purports to have been collecting stamps since just before the dinosaurs ate the leftovers from the Montreal Gazette Building. His main collecting passions are fancy cancels on small queens and the postal history of Fredericton, New Brunswick, pre-1900. However, he also collects most everything in Small Queens, and is always looking for fellow small queen enthusiasts to swap with!



Ron has been active in the Fredericton District Stamp club for over 40 years, including a 25 + year stint as president, recently graduating to past president. He is a long-standing member of RPSC, PHSC, BNAPS, and CPSGB and more recently AAPE and PSSC, and was Co-chair of the 1999 Royal and Chair of BNAPEX2016. He is a regular contributor to the BNAPS Fancy Cancel Newsletter, but also Confederation and Dots and Scratches. He has shown various fancy cancel exhibits locally (Atlantic Canada) at BNAPEX, the Royal, and Novapex.

He is an avid sports enthusiast having played competitive sports for most his life, especially rugby and basketball and continues to be active in cross country skiing, running, and kayaking. His wife Liz and he work hard at 'trying to keep up' with their three adult children in various outdoor pursuits and recently they have added keeping up with grandchildren to the list.



HISTORY OF THE FREDERICTON POST OFFICE AND ITS POSTMARKS PRE-1900

21 July 2021 Presentation to the PSSC by Ron Smith

Late in 1783, New England Loyalists intent on maintaining allegiance to the British Crown after the American War of Independence, sailed from New York to 'Nova Scotia', which at that time included New Brunswick. They settled mostly in the south of the province, including the regions of St. Andrews, Saint John, Gagetown, and Fredericton (Ste Anne's Point).

In February 1793, when France declared war against England, Governor Carleton convinced the British government to move the capital from Saint John to Fredericton. Carleton renamed Ste Anne's Point to Fredericton after Prince Frederick, second son of King George III. Fredericton was chosen as the new location for the capital in 1785 for both security reasons and because it was nearly equidistant from the towns and settlements that were forming at Miramichi, Bay Verte, Passamaquoddy and other parts of the province. Fredericton's central location was instrumental in the development of its postal services.

Post Office Buildings

There is reference to a 'post office' in Fredericton as early as 1788, but it is uncertain as to its location. The first post office building was a small wooden structure located on Waterloo Row, adjacent to Province Hall (Figure 1). Buildings and the year they were 'officially' recognized as post offices were as follows:

- 1825 – Queen Street above York
- 1845 – St. John Street
- 1867 – Carleton Street near Queen.

The John Thurston Clark Memorial Building on the east corner of Queen and Carlton served as the post office until the present facility was built on Queen Street in 1913.



Figure 1. View of Province Hall and Public offices, Fredericton, destroyed by fire. Completed in 1802, Province Hall. (Permission for use: New Brunswick Provincial Archives MC300-MS18 from the York-Sunbury Historical Society Collection.) This picture is of a lithograph by George Smith c 1850. From left to right, 1790 house and business of Peter Fraser, the Anglican Church, and the 1816 stone government structures on either side of province hall.



Postmasters

Although the Postal archives list Stephen Jarvis as the first postmaster in Fredericton, having been appointed in 1801, the first reference to a postmaster in Fredericton is for Garrett Clopper. Clopper was a lieutenant in the New York Volunteers and quartermaster of the corps who had his property confiscated at the end of the American Revolutionary War. Clopper arrived in Saint John in 1783, and was the grantee of a city lot, but did not stay long, moving to Fredericton in 1790 where he built a home called "Grapelawn", located at the corner of Brunswick and Saint John streets. He held many public posts in Fredericton including Deputy Postmaster, Pension Officer, and Sergeant-at-Arms in the Legislature. According to Jephcott, Green and Young, the British American Almanac for 1792, (p46) lists Garrett Clop(p)er as having served as Postmaster in Fredericton until around 1800.

Andrew Phair succeeded Stephen Jarvis as postmaster. After Andrew, management of the Fredericton Post office became a 'family affair'. Four different members of the 'Phair clan' were postmasters from 1825 to 1875: J. Phair (1825-1826), Harriet M. Phair (1826-1827), Wm. B. Phair (1827-1846) and A.S. Phair (1846-1875). The last quarter of the century saw Fredericton with the following three postmasters: H.J. Thorne (1875-1880), Patrick McPeake (1880-1890) and Frederick S. Hilyard (1890- 1906).

Early Fredericton postmarks

No 'postmarks' have been recorded from Fredericton prior to 1797. The only two recorded covers with Fredericton manuscript markings were shown (Figure 2).

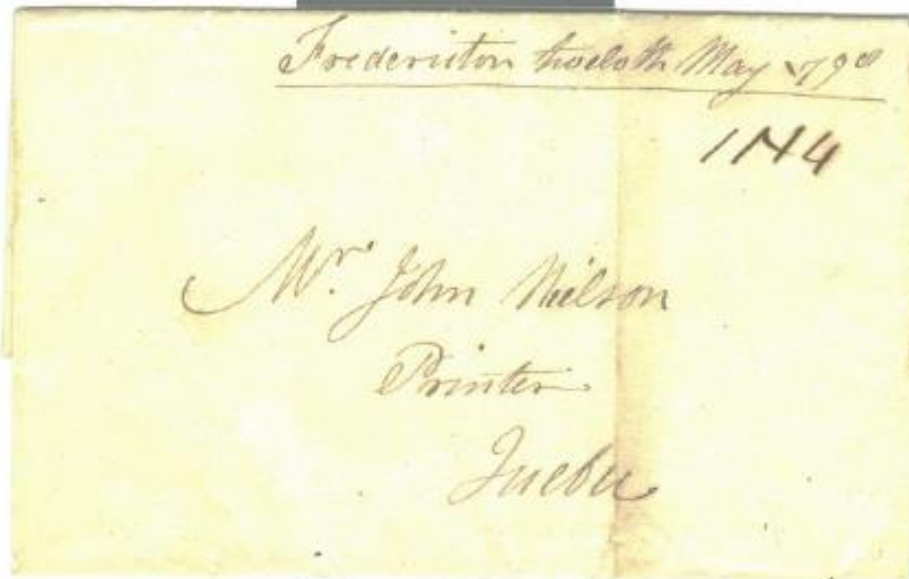


Figure 2. One-line manuscript marking mailed from Fredericton to Quebec. May 12, 1798.

1N4 rate for 401 to 500 miles.

This is one of only two reported Fredericton manuscript markings.

Straight-line postmarks

Christopher Sower, Deputy Postmaster General of N.B. introduced handstamps in 1785. Straight line types are known for Saint John in 1785 and in Fredericton from 1797. A census of the different Fredericton straight line cancels was presented. Despite having been used for 20 years, fewer than 25 covers have been recorded. A short discussion on the differences between cancels concluded that the number of different cancelling devices used is a subject for debate and



warrants further research.

Fredericton Postmarks 1815 to 1867

The postmarks used from 1815 to 1867 were presented chronologically (Figure 3). Their use as dispatch, transit and receiver marks was briefly discussed. Examples of several rare marks were presented, including one of only two reported covers from 1815 (Figure 4) and a short-lived spelling error (Figure 5).



Figure 3 Overview of postmarks used in Fredericton between 1815 and 1867.