

MARCH 4TH 2025 LEARNING WORKSHOP **NEW TOPIC!**

Starting at 7 p.m., Tuesday, March 4, 2025 via Zoom, the topic for our sixth virtual Learning Workshop of the 2024-2025 season is: **“Special Services of the Post Office.”**

Postal delivery began with couriers walking, running and riding horses to destinations, often alerting residents upon their arrival by blowing a horn – called a ‘Posthorn’.

This was followed by mail carried aboard ships, horse-drawn coaches and trains, with carriers later bringing letters and parcels to the homes and businesses of recipients. Transportation aboard automobiles, trucks and airplanes began more than a century ago.

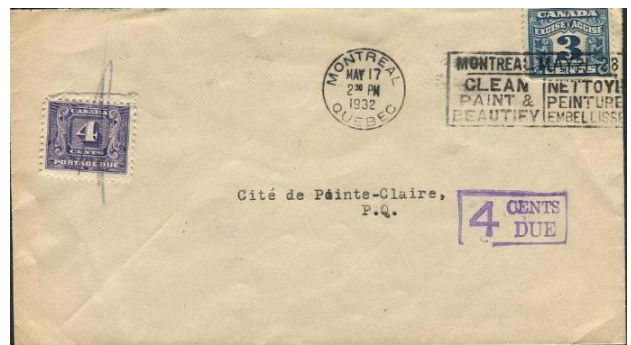


Mail had to be addressed, of course, but various handwritten markings were added by early postal staff, including pre-stamp fees, routings and reroutings, followed by text applied by handheld devices.

After the introduction of postage stamps in the 19th century, special issues were often produced for use with special services. They included: ‘Officially Sealed’ by Dead Letter Office staff after an undelivered item was



opened in a bid to learn an address it could be sent to; Postage Due issues when insufficient or improper postage was applied; Registered; Special Delivery; Precancelled stamps for bulk mail after being sold at a discount because of quicker post office processing without postmarks.



Canada’s Post Office Department also offered advance Christmas cover postings decades ago, with machine-cancelled postmarks applied with in-season red ink.

All of the above could make for a potentially fascinating postal history collection, though some items are rarer than regular mail covers.

There are also other special service markings, including ‘A-R’ on registered mail with an “Acknowledgment of Receipt” postcard attached for return to the sender as proof of an item – often an important document — being delivered. When fires on mail coaches damaged mail and later, when letters and parcels were salvaged from crashed planes, related markings or labels were applied before they were delivered. Mail damaged in transit is now delivered in Canada Post cellophane “Ambulance Covers,” with text describing what happened.

A good alternative, in many cases, are stamps that were produced for use when a special service was required.

This wide-ranging topic provides a wonderful opportunity for members and guests to share examples. Tune in, share knowledge about special rates, ask questions, offer answers and enjoy