

# Fredericton Postal Markings During the Stampless Period

**Purpose:** The purpose of this exhibit is to show examples of the postal markings used in Fredericton up to September 5, 1851, the date that the first New Brunswick stamps were issued.

**Introduction:** The first post office was established in Fredericton in 1785 when the seat of government was moved there from St. John. Letters from Fredericton dated in the late 1780s exist, but no 'Fredericton' postal markings dated prior to 1795 have been reported.

This exhibit starts with a previously unrecorded illustration and example of an oval Fredericton Post Office handstamp from the George III period (1760-1820). No examples of this hammer used on wax seals have been reported, including at the New Brunswick Provincial Archives.

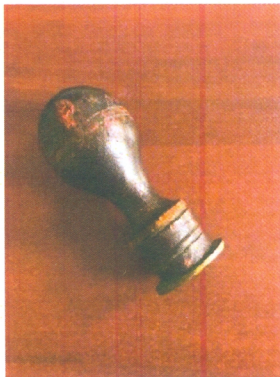
**Scope:** Postal markings, including markings for information, e.g., 'Free' and 'Paid' handstamps, their periods of use, and census data are presented. Census data compiled by the exhibitor over the past 20+ years, includes the numbers of covers to, from, or in transit through Fredericton. This is not an exhibit of rates, but manuscript rate markings are shown when they are a significant component of the postal markings.

**Exhibit plan:** Postal markings are presented chronologically and grouped into four overlapping periods of use:

- Title page (page 1)
- 1795 to 1801 (pages 2-3): Manuscript Markings (precursors to official cancels).
- 1797 to 1816 (pages 4-6): Straight line cancels.
- 1813 to 1835 (pages 7-10): Early circular handstamps and miscellaneous markings.
- 1834 to 1851 (pages 11-16): Split ring and circle date stamps.

Items of significance have a red border.

Personal research is shown using a .



Photos of a newly discovered Fredericton Post Office handstamp and a sample wax seal produced using modern sealing wax. The image at right has been reversed for illustration purposes.

This seal features 'GR' (George Rex). Although wax seals were more prevalent in the George IV period (1820-1830), the 'GR' is less ornate than cyphers typical of those used. There are no inserts of a '3' or a '4' which were often used to distinguish between George III and IV (latter information credit to Bill Longley). There are no reported examples of this hammer as either a wax bag seal or as a postmark.



## Manuscript Markings

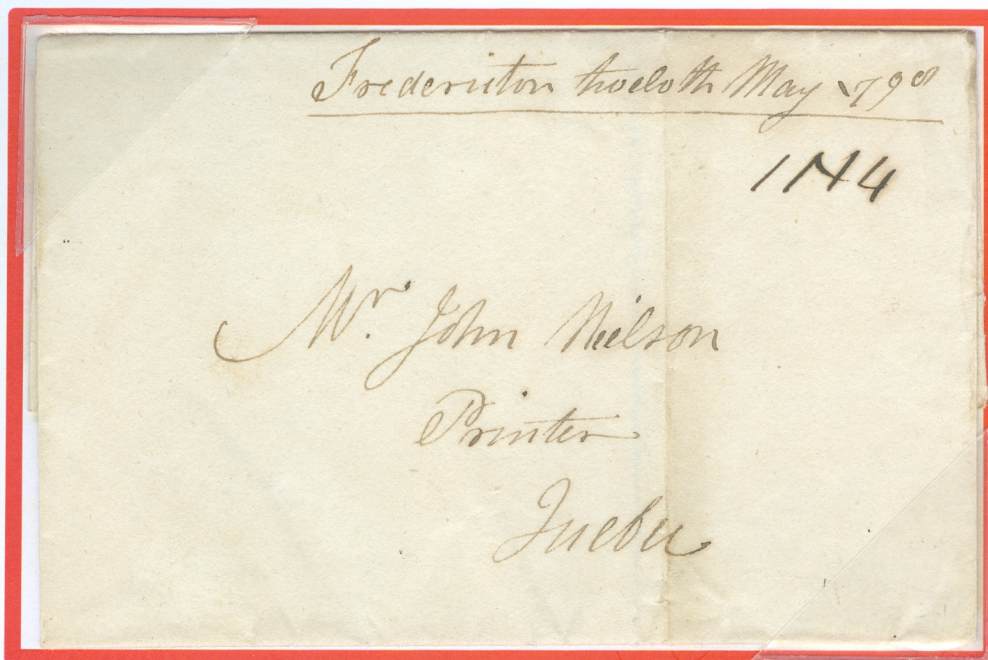
Manuscript markings were used at the Fredericton post office from 1795 to 1799. Two of the three recorded Fredericton manuscript marking covers are shown.



*St. John's Feb'y 2<sup>nd</sup> 1795*

*Fredericton 1/4  
well exp- 9/11  
Montreal  
Quebec*

This stampless folded letter (SFL) was mailed from Saint John to Quebec City on Feb 1, 1795 (top scan) and rated 1/4 (401 to 500 miles). The two-line Fredericton manuscript was applied as a transit marking. Dated February 9, 1795, this is the earliest recorded date (ERD) for a Fredericton manuscript marking. The Bishop mark (used 1791 to 1798) was applied in Quebec City. The letter was subsequently forwarded to Montreal and a charge of '9' added for a total of 2/1 (bottom scan).



SFL dated May 10 1798 (scan) and mailed from Fredericton to Quebec, showing a single line Fredericton manuscript marking. The 1N4 rate was for single letters travelling 401 to 500 miles

*Fredericton  
15th May 98*



## Precursor



Mailed from London (March 4, 1795 (Bishop mark UL)), postage for this folded letter (SFL) was not prepaid, so was opened by the Post Office for senders' address, endorsed "Returned to MWR (sender) at Mess's Woodman & Butts Horse Guards for 1/- packet postage" (manuscript LR), and resealed with an Inland Letter Office "Crown" wax seal, and the **red** double circular datestamp 'PAID MAR 9 1795' applied.

Endorsed "pr packet via Halifax Nova Scotia" (manuscript LL), this SFL was received in Halifax, (Halifax / N.Scotia / MAY 3 95 datestamp UR) and rated "11" (manuscript, CL) for overland postage Halifax to Fredericton.


The letter does not have any 'Fredericton' receiver markings, typical of covers extant from this early period.



Straightline cancels

In 1797, straightline hand cancelling devices with removable type elements were made for both Fredericton and Saint John. Early publications listed four different Fredericton straightline cancel types. The Postal History Society of Canada (June 2024) now lists seven, five of which have the word FREDERICTON spelled out. Of the four covers dated between 1797 and 1799, there are three different variations in the type. Examples of types IV to VII are shown.

Listing of Fredericton straightline cancels. Types (I) to (V) have the name Fredericton spelled out and for Types VI and VII the name is abbreviated. Differences among similar cancels are highlighted in red.

Type	Cancel	ERD	LRD	Cover census 
SL (I)	FREDERICTON; N.B.	1797	(cover not seen)	1
SL (II)	<b>F</b> REDERICTON N:B:	Aug 8, 1799	Oct. 10, 1799	2
SL (III)	<b>F</b> REDERICTON N B: <b>Aug</b>	1799		1
SL (IV)	FREDERICTON N B	Feb. 24, 1800	March 6, 1806 1808 cover not seen	8 + ?
SL (V)	FREDERICTON. N;B	Aug. 2, 1809	Sept. 27, 1809	2
SL (VI)	FRED,N:;N:B	May 11, 1810	May 23, 1813 1816 cover not seen	7 + ?
SL (VII)	FREDE;N:N.B	April 26, 1810	Jan. 26, 1815	3

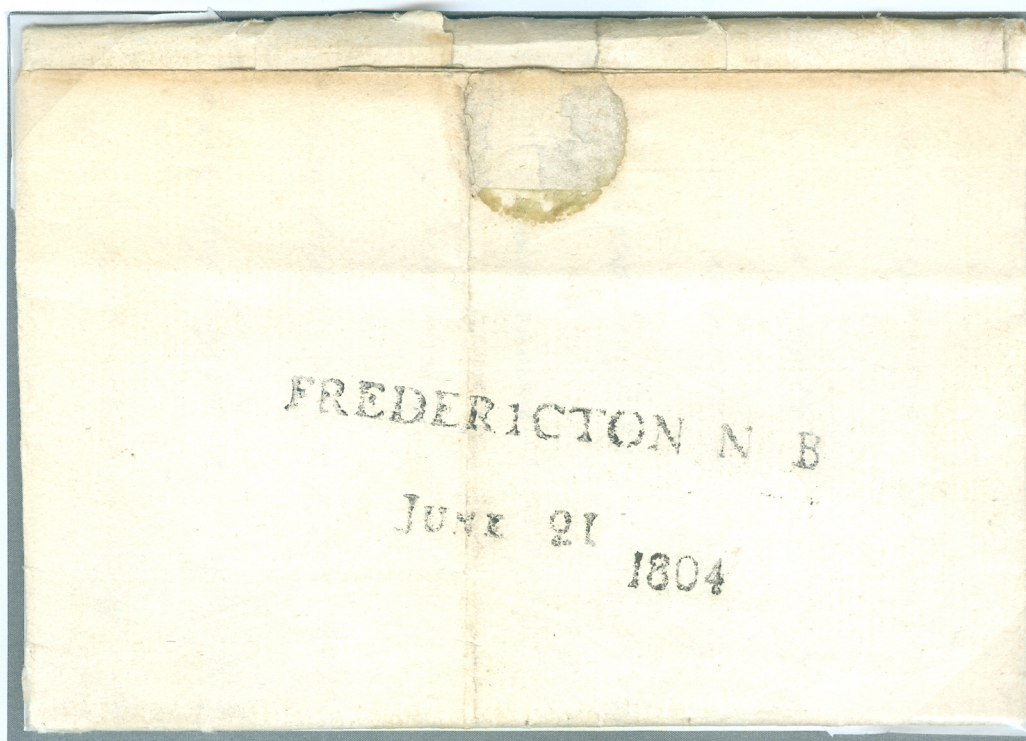
SL (IV) FREDERICTON N B



Letter dated Jan 10, 1800, from  
Fredericton to PEI via Halifax (Halifax  
transit stamp dated March 7, 1800.  
  
Earliest recorded date



SL (IV) with year and date offset.



Letter dated 'Monkton' June 15, 1804 mailed to St. John. The cancel was either applied as a transit marking or the letter was carried by favour to Fredericton prior to posting.

SL (V) FREDERICTON. N B



Letter dated Fredericton April 14, 1804 mailed to St. John. The letter was from Stephen Jarvis, the postmaster to his brother, Munson.



SL (VI) FRED,N:,N:B



Fredericton to Sackville. The cover was prepaid 1/6 and has a straightline **PAID** handstamp on front.

SL (VII) FREDE;N:N.B

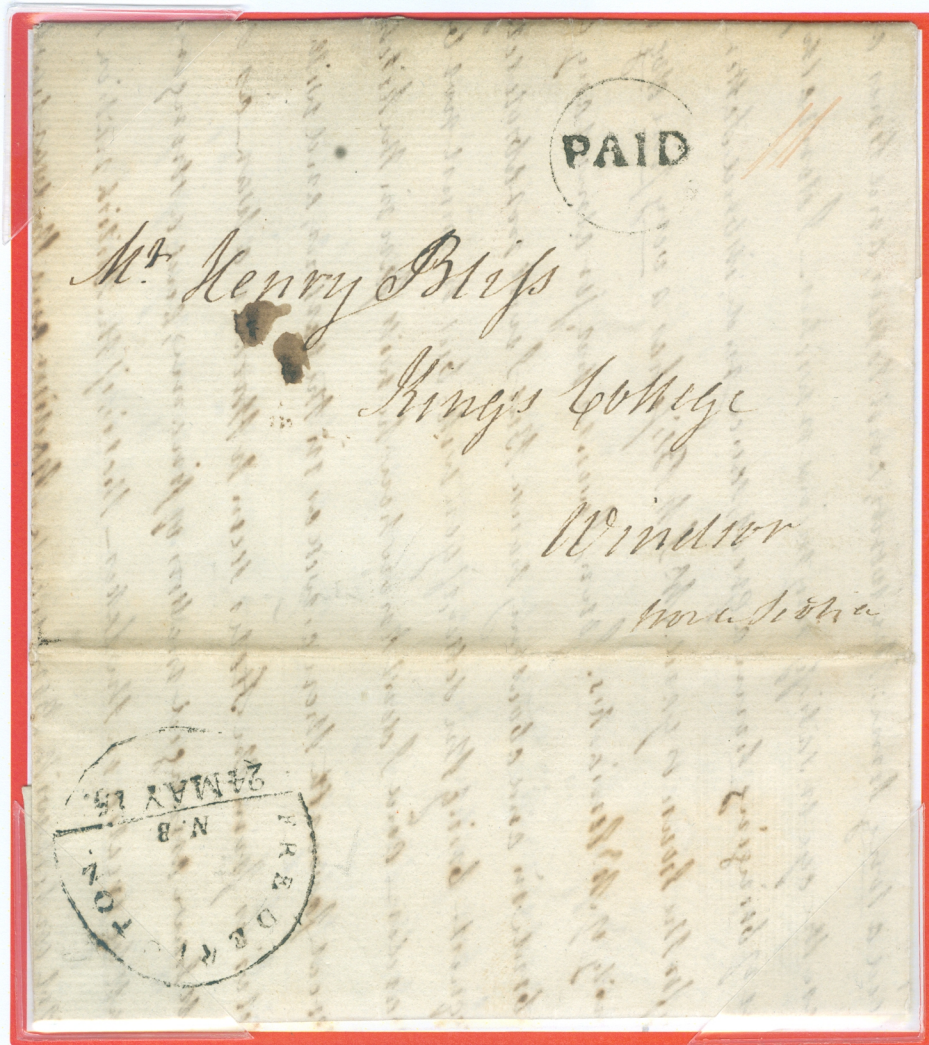


Prepaid letter dated Fredericton January 22, 1815. Mailed to Windsor NS, it has both a manuscript paid and a PAID in circle (small letters) in black and rated **11**.

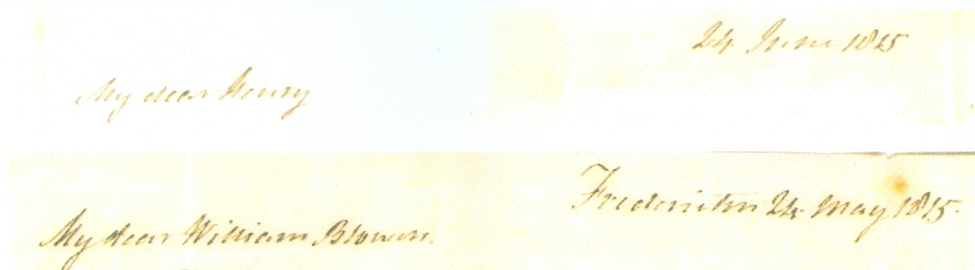


## Early Fredericton circular postmark

During the transition period from straight-line cancels to the first split-ring cancel in 1817, Fredericton introduced a large circular date stamp. Having fairly 'crude' letters, this cancel was in use for a very short period of time. There are only two recorded covers: May 24, 1815 and June 6, 1815.



Earliest of two recorded copies of the 1815 Fredericton circular handstamp. The letter, mailed May 24, 1815, was prepaid (feint **11d** manuscript in **red** at lower left). The circular PAID handstamp was used in Fredericton from 1813 to 1822.

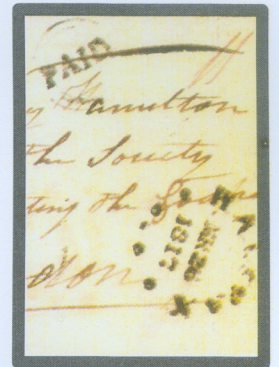


This SFL comprises a pair of letters written on a single sheet by Jonathan Bliss to his sons Henry Bliss, and William (Blowers). The letter addressed to Henry, is dated June 24, 1815 (top scan) whereas the one to William is dated May 24, 1815 (bottom scan). There are no markings to indicate this is a turned letter. Although likely a writing error, the date discrepancy adds to the uniqueness of this item



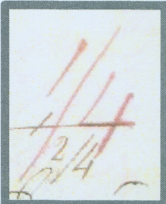
## FREDERICTON NEW BRUNSW<sup>k</sup> single split-ring cancel

Fourty one examples of a large single split-ring cancel have been recorded in the author's census. Reported as used between 1817 and 1835 by McManus, the earliest and latest recorded dates of use found were January 21, 1817 and March 3, 1834 respectively. The cancelling device had removable type elements resulting in different configurations.



Pre-paid letter from Fredericton to London England (manuscript '11' and small PAID in circle and Halifax transit markings on front scan at right) Mailed January 21, 1817, this is the earliest recorded date for this cancel.

Letter mailed from Quebec (August 24, 1830) to Miramichi routed through Fredericton.







Rated **1/4**, the postage was paid to Miramichi, but since it was routed through Fredericton, an extra '1/' was added to cover the delivery from Fredericton to Miramichi. (total **2/4**).



The large split ring cancel dated Sept 1, 1830, was used as a transit marking.



## PAID Handstamps and manuscript paid markings

Three different 'PAID' handstamps were used in Fredericton.			
Cancel	ERD	LRD	Total no. covers
	August 2, 1809	October 13, 1813	6
	October 13, 1813	April 22, 1817	7
	July 2, 1823	? - 1842	11 (10 black, 1 red)



Prepaid triple packet letter rate (manuscript 4/6) to the UK. Previously unlisted as used in Fredericton, this is the earliest recorded use of the Fredericton straight line **PAID** handstamp. The cover also has one of two recorded Fredericton straightline cancels dated in 1809.

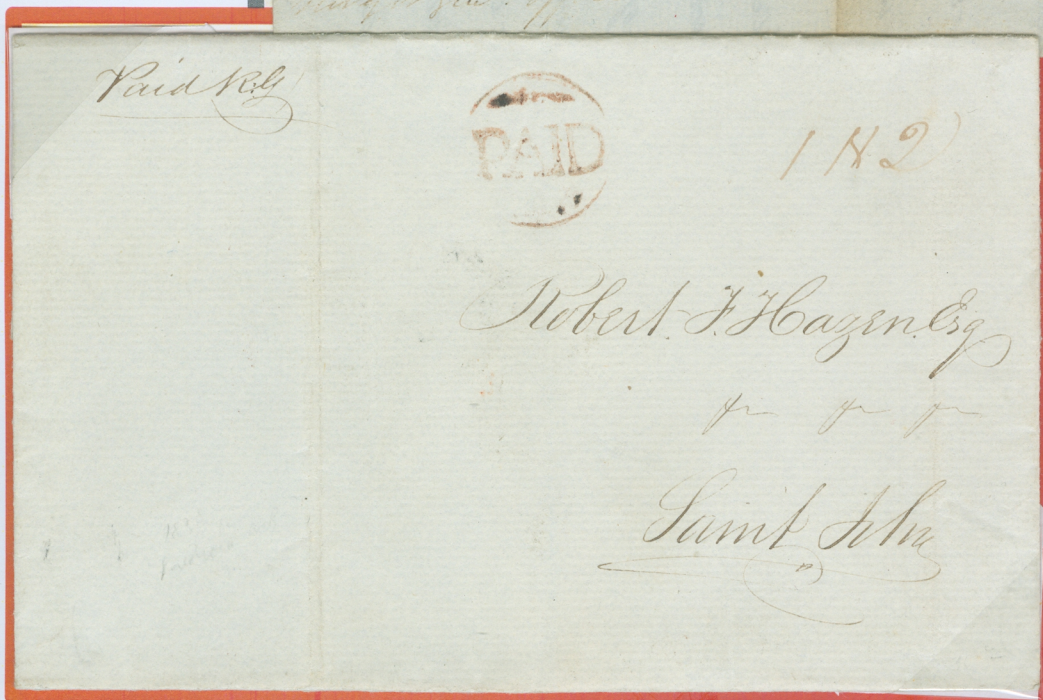
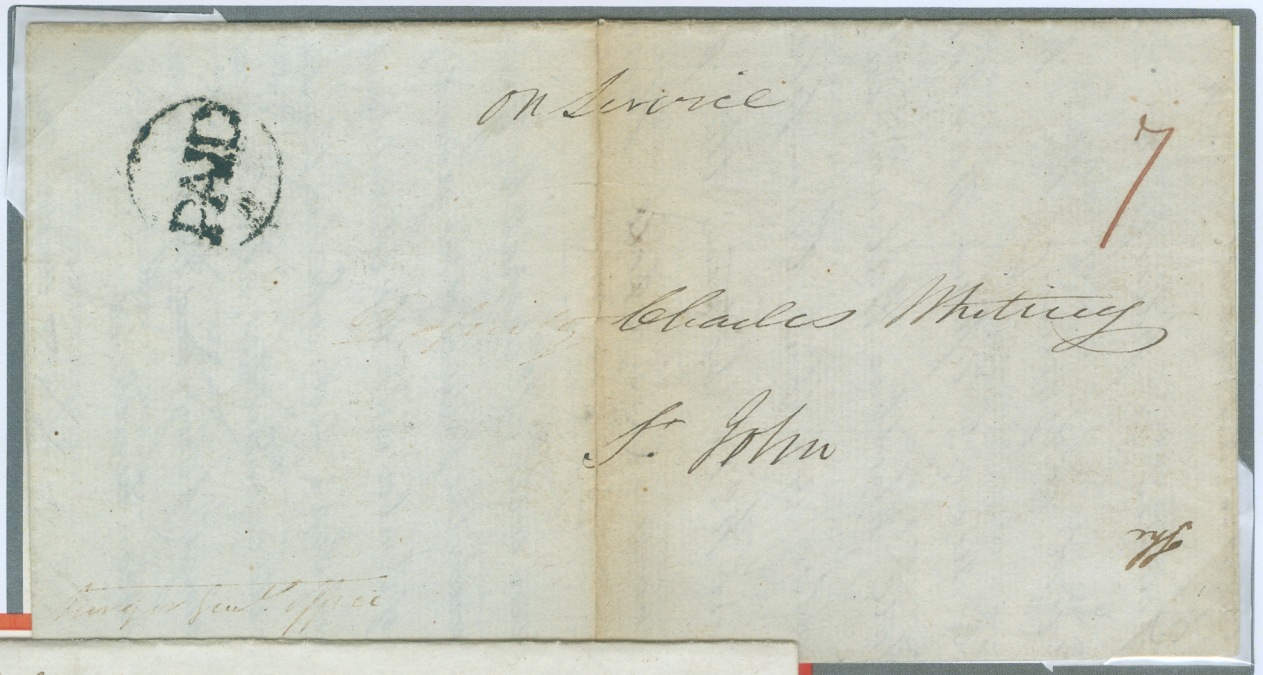


## Stampless period (pre-1851)

The is is LRD for the PAID in a circle cancel with small letters. This cover was mailed April 22, 1817 (despatch cancel below).



'On service' SFL dated April 7, 1837 ('Frederickton' dispatch on reverse) is the latest recorded use, thirteen years later than previously recorded. Postage was prepaid (manuscript '7').

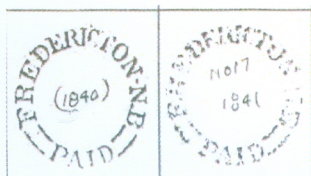


Fredericton to Saint John double weight letter (2 X 7d) = 1N2, with both a manuscript paid and a **PAID** in a circle in red ink. July 7, 1838 despatch on back (scan). This is the only recorded **PAID** strike in red ink.



## Large double split-ring PAID cancel

According to McManus, a large double split ring 'PAID' cancel with a 'nude' centre was used in 1840 and 1841. Those years corresponded to the dates of the strikes in the Pritchard and Andrews proof books (scans at left). However, this cancel was used for a significantly longer period than reported.

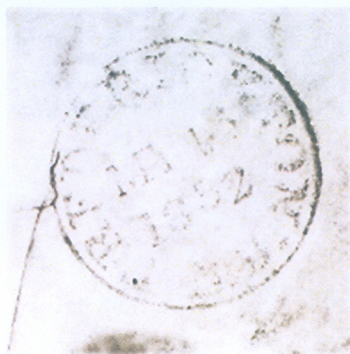


Based on a census of 38 dated covers, the earliest and latest recorded dates of use for this cancel are March 18, 1842, and May 13, 1852, respectively.



Dated Feb 26, 1844 (despatch on reverse), this letter to Boston paid 7d 'to the lines' (see Woodstock transit mark on front). The letter was then marked 18 ¾ cents due for U.S. postage

Latest recorded use for this cancel, (despatch scan below) this cover has an unlisted 'ADVERTISED AND NOT CALLED FOR' marking from St. John.





## Manuscript markings for payment

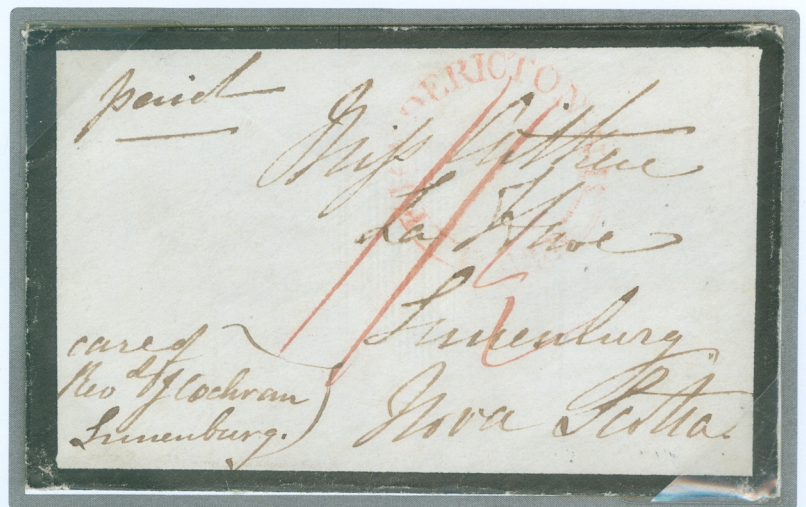


Fredericton to St. Stephen with a paid 9 (manuscript), the rate for the 90 miles distance. However, it is also marked 'to pay 4L'. The letter would have 'stopped' at St. Andrews enroute ('ST ANDREWS \*') cancel dated March 7. The '4 1/2 due' was a charge levied for the delivery of the letter from St. Andrews to St. Stephen, approximately 25 miles.



Mailed on March 4, 1835, (feint despatch on back (scan enhanced using Retroreveal), is an example of the first period of use for the black Fredericton CDS used between 1834 and 1837.

Mourning cover from Fredericton to Lunenburg NS, with a 'paid' manuscript marking in addition to the Fredericton PAID DSR cancel and the 11 1/2 rate charge.



Prepaid letter from Fredericton to Sackville dated May 4, 1843. The '9' rate was for 101 to 200 miles.

Sackville was a Way Office from 1837 to 1847. The 2d delivery charge written into the centre of the DSR could have either been a local delivery charge or a Way Office fee.



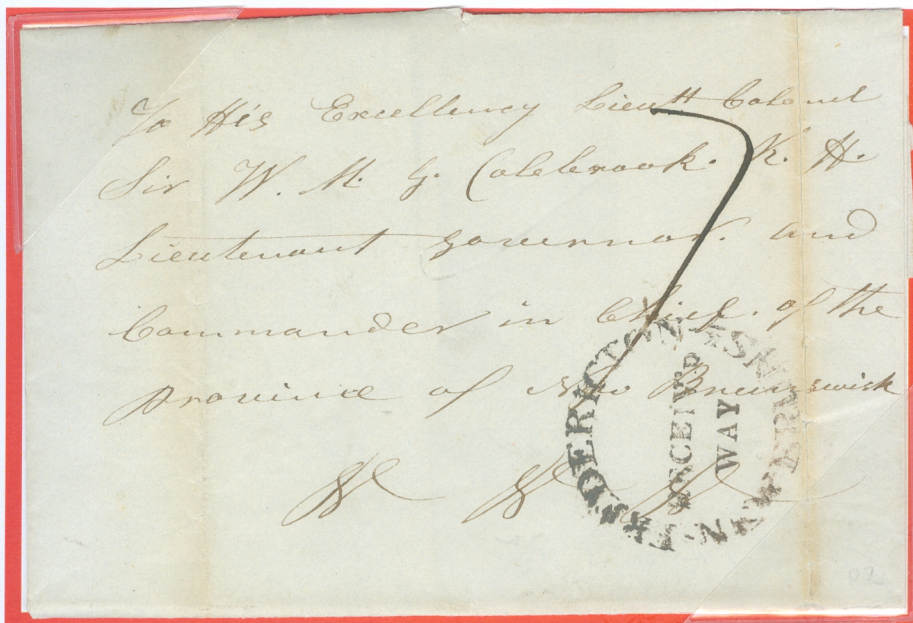


## Fredericton 'RECEIV'D' and 'RECEIV'D WAY' cancels

Two variants of the large 'FREDERICTON NEW BRUNSWICK' cancel exist. In the centre of the cancel, the date was replaced with either 'RECEIV'D' or 'RECEIV'D WAY' on two lines.



One of three reported strikes of the FREDERICTON RECEIV'D cancel. This is a new find and is dated three years later than the previous two strikes. NOTE: The Fredericton CDS cancel was applied across the letter fold and so the 'K' in Frederickton appears to be an 'X' similar to the 'X' error shown on the previous page. However close examination shows it is a K.



This is the only recorded copy of the 'RECEIV'D WAY' cancel.

This is the outside sheet from a stampless folded letter. There are no other markings or enclosures to determine where the letter was mailed from.






Solid circle CDS cancels

A solid circle CDS cancel was used in Fredericton from 1834 to 1858. A total of 138 examples have been recorded. The cancel can be found in both **red** and **black** ink. However, there appears to be three periods of use; 1) black ink April 30, 1834 to August 7, 1837 2) red ink December 13, 1839 to December 17, 1846 and 3) March 7, 1845 to June 11, 1858. The use of **red** or **black** ink did not correspond to prepaid and non-prepaid letters as was the general practice at the time. These cancels used the old spelling of 'FREDERICKTON'.

Fredericton solid circle CDS cancels, periods of use, and numbers of covers seen with the markings used as despatch, transit, and receiver cancels.



Cancel		No. covers			
		Despatch	Transit	Receiver	Total
	April 30, 1834 to August 7, 1837	6	0	1	7
	Dec. 13, 1839 to Dec. 17, 1846	19	5	38	62 + (1 indeterminate)
	March 7, 1845 to June 11, 1858	22	8	39	69 + (1 indeterminate)



Early 'first period of use' of the Fredericton solid circle cancel. Letter wrapper mailed from Fredericton (January 11, 1835 despatch) to Quebec. Rated 1/4 there are no Quebec or transit markings (scan).

Example of the 'third period of use' in **black** for the Fredericton solid ring cancel (June 18, 1851). Fredericton to LaHave, NS (receiver). St. John, Halifax, and Bridgewater transit markings.





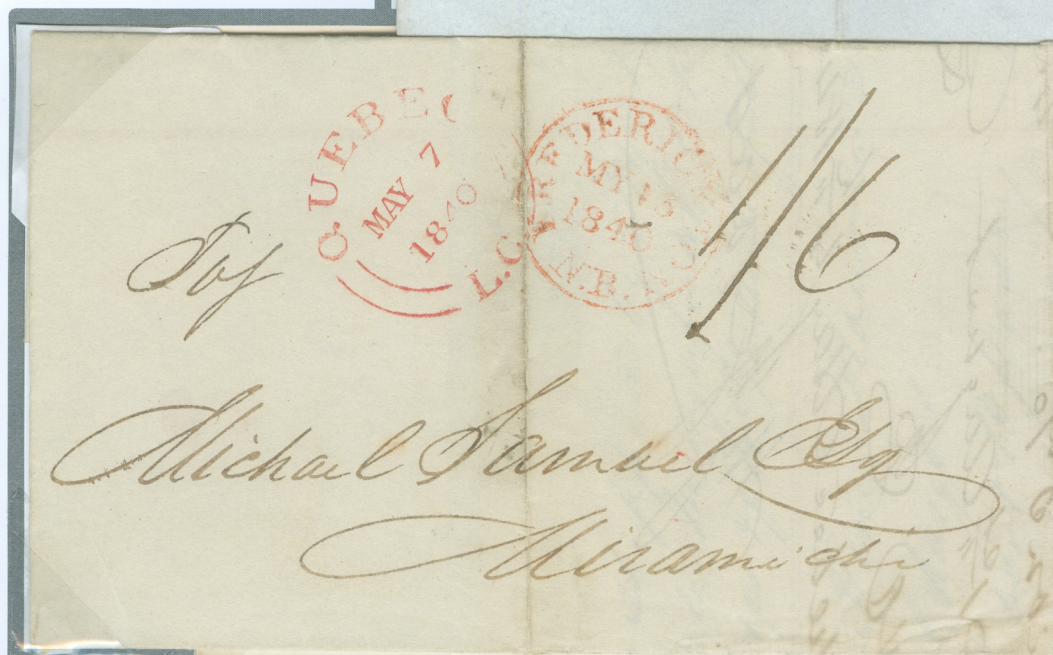
## Stampless period (pre-1851)

Examples of the **red** solid circle cancel used as despatch, transit and receiver cancels.

Fredericton to Halifax



Quebec to Miramichi  
via Fredericton



St. John to  
Fredericton

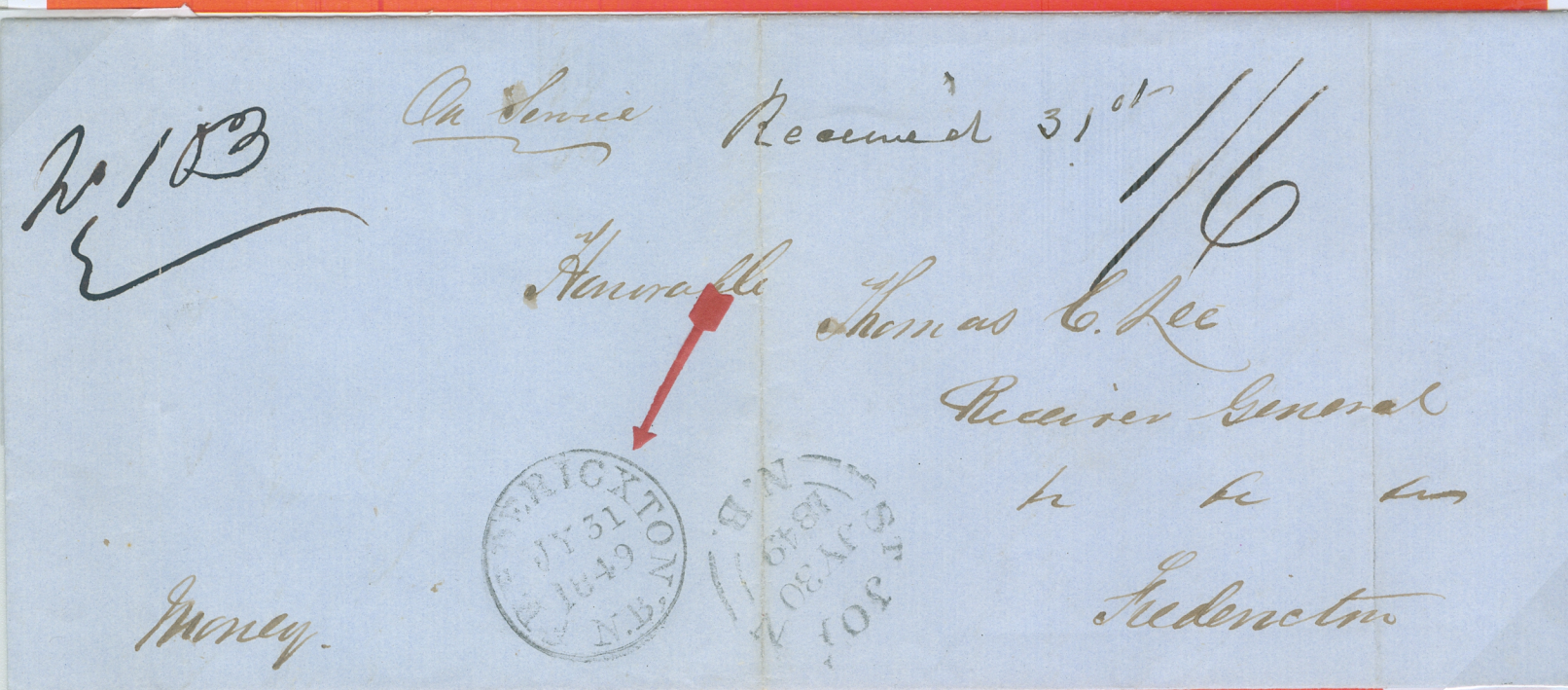




Errors/oddities



Letter mailed from Quebec to Miramichi dated September 7, 1840. The 'E' of 'SE' in the Fredericton transit cancel is reversed.



Letter from Richibucto to Fredericton dated July 30, 1849. In addition to the manuscript '1/6' for postage, this money letter has a number of manuscript markings including: 'Money', 'On service' and 'Received 31<sup>st</sup>'.

The most significant marking is the misspelled 'FREDERICXTON'. A second example of this error has been reported but this is the only one confirmed by the author.