

## The Early Postal System of Richmond County

The Township of Shipton as it originally was, as constituted, was bounded northeast by Tingwick, southeast by Wotton and Windsor, southwest by Melbourne, and northwest by Kingsey. In 1855 Shipton was divided into Cleveland with Richmond as the principal village and Shipton with Danville as its principal village. Around this time Richmond became the junction of the Portland (Maine), Montreal and Quebec Railroads. Prior to the construction of Craig's Road from Richmond to Quebec, the only means of transportation was the St Francis River, and therefore business and supplies for the settlers came from Three Rivers (Trois Rivieres).

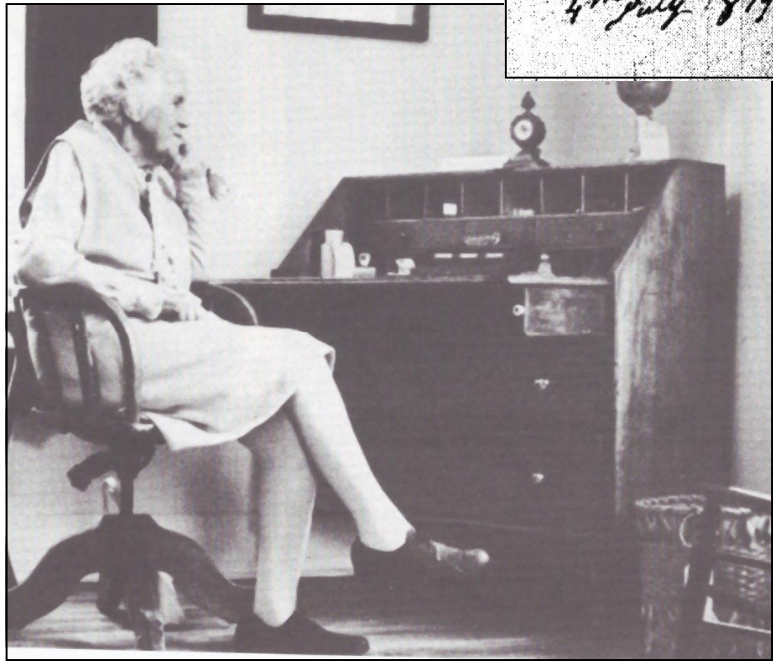
By 1817 a mail route was established extending from Stanstead via Sherbrooke, Richmond and Drummondville, to the Town of Three Rivers. With mail carried both ways once a week by horseback and/or boat. Mr. P.V. Hibbard had the contract for several years. On April 24, 1817 a post office under the name Shipton was established in the village that became Richmond. That office with its first Post Master, Issac Bernard (1817-1819) served Tingwick, Durham, Melbourne, Brompton, and Windsor. According to the Richmond County Historical Society the post office (basically a desk) was located in a small building behind what is known as "the McIver Apts". In 1820 the Post Office name changed to Richmond and Stephen Bernard became PM.

Once a roadway (trail) was built between Danville and Richmond, Leonard Thomas of Melbourne became the first contractor to deliver mail between the two villages on horseback. A Post Office was opened in Danville in 1832 with Thomas Cutler Allis as it's first Postmaster. In the beginning he had not yet been issued a postmark hammer so he simply used his pen to do so as illustrated.

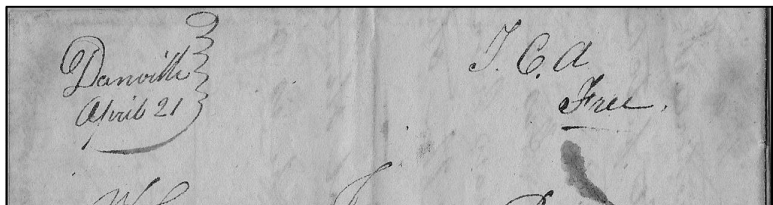
Actual Shipton postmark



SHIPTON  
4<sup>th</sup> July 1819

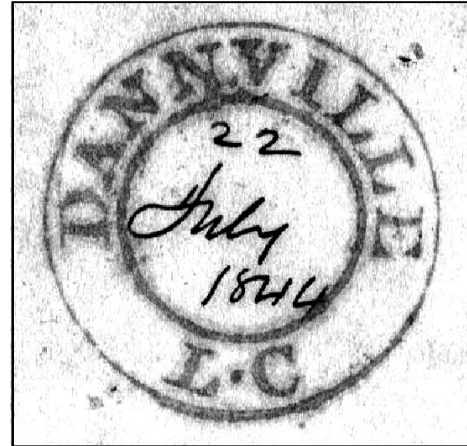


The desk can be seen in the RCHS museum



Thomas Cutler Allis was a merchant and lumber dealer in Danville. He owned a store in 1830 where he located the post office. He sold the store in 1836, to buy another store, at another corner of the Square. Around 1834 the post office sent him his first mail hammer as shown

This cancel was used from 1834-1849. Somewhere an error in the spelling of Danville happened and the hammer was delivered with the -NNö. The postal archives never released the name of the manufacturer of this type of hammer, but is assumed to be from Quebec City. The early hammers of this type did not include a dater, so the postmasters had to pen it in. Note also the use of L.C at the bottom. This being a short form of Lower Canada. CE was also used (Canada East) as Canada was not yet united into the Dominion of Canada.



The first hammer of Richmond issued in 1830-1848 was smaller but as shown from the proof hammer also didn't have a dater and the Post Master would pen it in.

Soon other post offices were opened, such as Melbourne and Kingsey and many others in the area would follow as Craig's Road and side roads opened up like Castlebar, Slatington, Denisons Mills, Nicolet Falls, Pinnacle and Trenholm. By 1855 communities and station stops were built along the railways and many opened post offices, such as St Cyr, Lorne, Corris, Titus, and Gore.



Sources:

1. Richmond County Historical Society
2. Catalogues des Marques Postales du Quebec 1763-1867 ; Morin & Poitras
3. Postal Archives of Canada
4. Pioneer's of the Eastern Townships; Ammi Parker
5. Early Settlement of Shipton; Rev. Edward Cleveland
6. Collections and files of Robert Carr