

Durham Postal History

Androscoggin County, Maine

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The Town of Durham was incorporated on 17 February 1789 in the County of Cumberland. On 31 March 1854, Durham became part of the newly created Androscoggin County.

Researchers seeking primary source records for the post offices of Durham, especially Durham (1) and South West Bend, should be aware that records for the times before 31 March 1854 will be found under Cumberland County.

During the history of Durham, there have been four post offices.

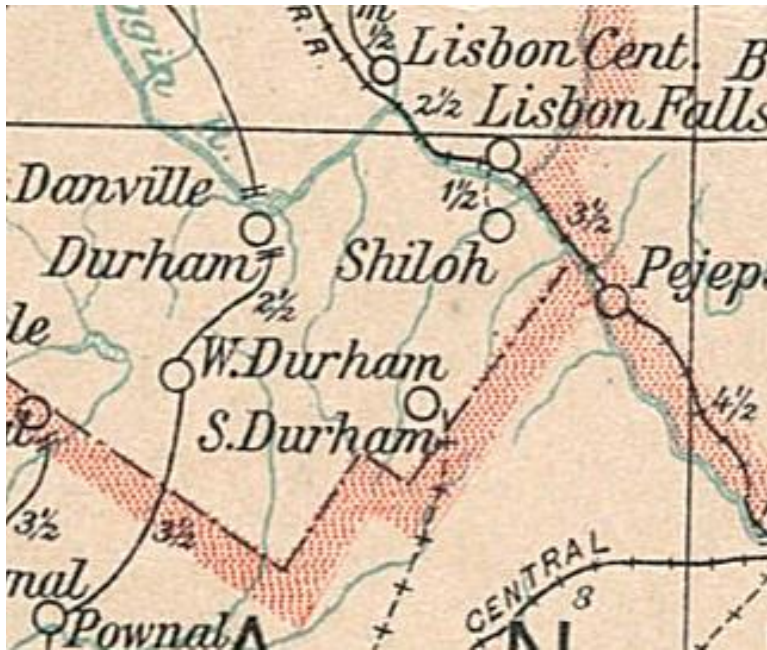
Briefly, the history of these four is as follows:

1. **Durham (1)** was established on 16 December 1818. On 3 September 1849, it was renamed **West Durham** post office, which operated until it closed on 30 July 1910. *[\(What does it mean when there is a \(1\) or \(2\) after the name of a post office? See the explanation near the end of this document.\)](#)*

2. **Shiloh** Post Office opened on 29 November 1898 and closed on 30 June 1920.

3. **South Durham** Post Office was established on 3 February 1830 and closed on 15 May 1905.

4. **South West Bend** Post Office was established on 17 December 1835, and on 3 September 1849, it was renamed **Durham (2)** Post Office, which closed on 15 September 1911.



In 1903, there were four post offices in what is now Durham:

Durham,
Shiloh,
South Durham,
and West Durham.

Extract from the 1903 Post Route Map of Maine. Map reproduction courtesy of Norman B. Leventhal Map & Education Center at the Boston Public Library.

<https://collections.leventhalmap.org/search/commonwealth:cj82km77v>

Postmarks from the town of Durham include:

[Durham \(1\)](#)

[Durham \(2\)](#)

[Shiloh](#)

[South Durham](#)

[South West Bend](#)

[West Durham](#)

Durham (1)

1818 December 16:

Durham (1) Post Office was established as part of Cumberland County. (Note: There was another post office named Durham at a different time and location. The (1) is just a notation. It does not appear in the postmarks and is only used by postal historians and collectors to differentiate between the different post offices.)

1818 December 16:

Thomas Freeman became the Postmaster for Durham (1) Post Office.

26 November 1819:

A. Robinson became the Postmaster for Durham (1) Post Office.

12 March 1822:

Job Philip Sylvester, 3rd, became the Postmaster for Durham (1) Post Office.

24 January 1831:

Aaron Turner became the Postmaster for Durham (1) Post Office.

7 April 1835:

Benjamin M. Moses became the Postmaster for Durham (1) Post Office.

29 July 1835:

Ward Bonney became the Postmaster for Durham (1) Post Office.

21 December 1838:

Alvena Moses became the Postmaster for Durham (1) Post Office.

24 August 1839:

Joshua Lambert became the Postmaster for Durham (1) Post Office.

3 June 1841:

William G. Hoyt became the Postmaster for Durham (1) Post Office.

7 January 1847:

Job P. Sylvester became the Postmaster for Durham (1) Post Office.

1849 September 3:

Durham (1) Post Office was renamed as West Durham Post Office.

Durham (2)

1849 September 3:

The former South West Bend Post Office was renamed as Durham (2) post office. (Note: There was another post office named Durham at a different time and location. The (2) is just a notation. It does not appear in the postmarks and is only used by postal historians and collectors to differentiate between the different post offices.)

27 June 1849:

Emery S. Warren became Postmaster for South West Bend Post Office and remains Postmaster when the South West Bend Post Office name changed to Durham (2)

30 March 1853:

James Strout, Jr. became Postmaster for Durham (2) Post Office.

31 March 1854:

Durham (2) Post Office became part of the newly formed Androscoggin County.

10 August 1858:

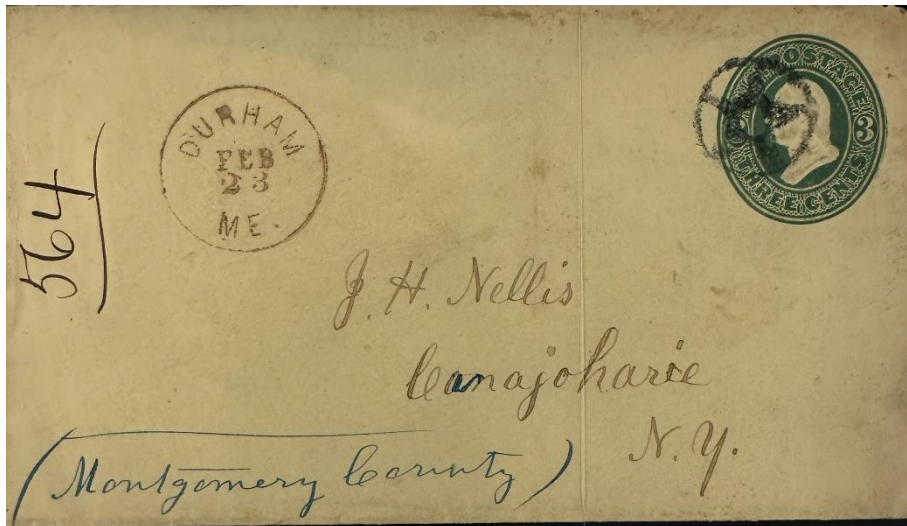
Emery S. Warren became Postmaster for Durham (2) Post Office.

6 September 1861:

Harry E. Fitz became Postmaster for Durham (2) Post Office.

21 March 1862:

James H. Eveleth became Postmaster for Durham (2) Post Office.

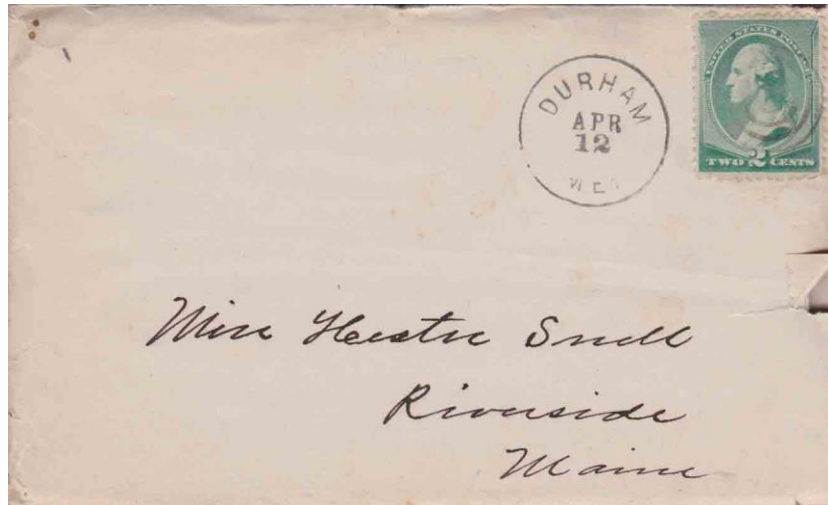


23 February circa 1880:

The circular date stamp is 25 mm in diameter with a fancy circled, holed-centered star killer.

24 September 1885:

George E. Warren became Postmaster for Durham (2) Post Office.



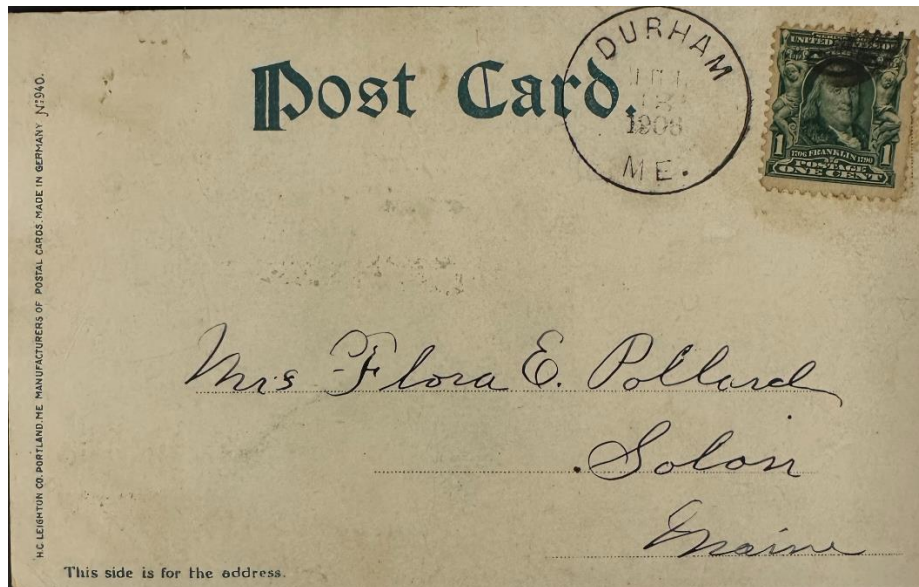
1889 April 12: (year determined by contents of the envelope)
The circular postmark is 24–25 mm in diameter.
(click on the image to enlarge)

26 June 1890:

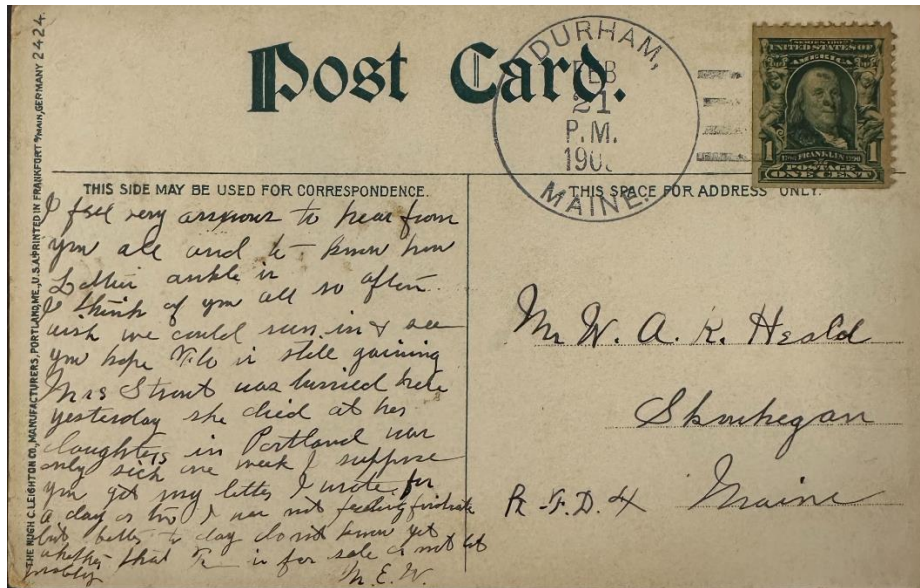
Marcus W. Eveleth became Postmaster for Durham (2) Post Office.

6 April 1893:

George E. Warren became Postmaster for Durham (2) Post Office.



13 July 1906:
The circular postmark is 28 mm in diameter with a partial target killer.



21 February 1908:
The circular postmark is 31 mm in diameter with a Doane 3/2 killer.

1911 September 15:
Durham (2) post office closed.

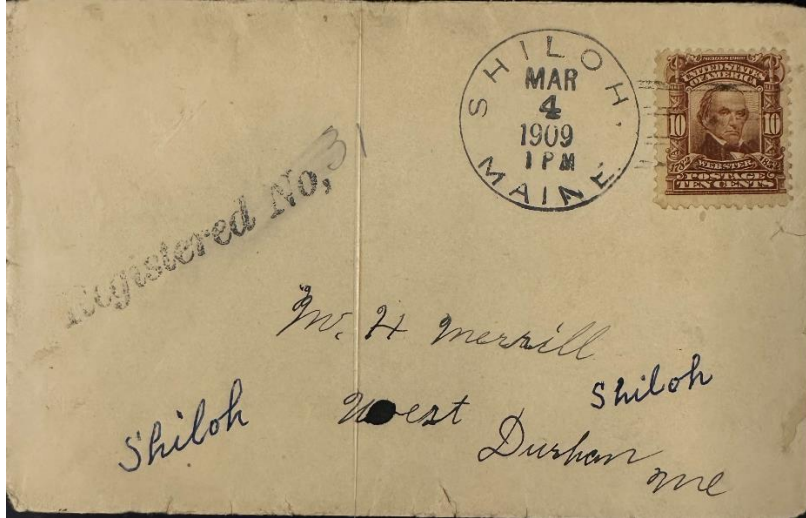
Shiloh

29 November 1898:
Shiloh post office is established.

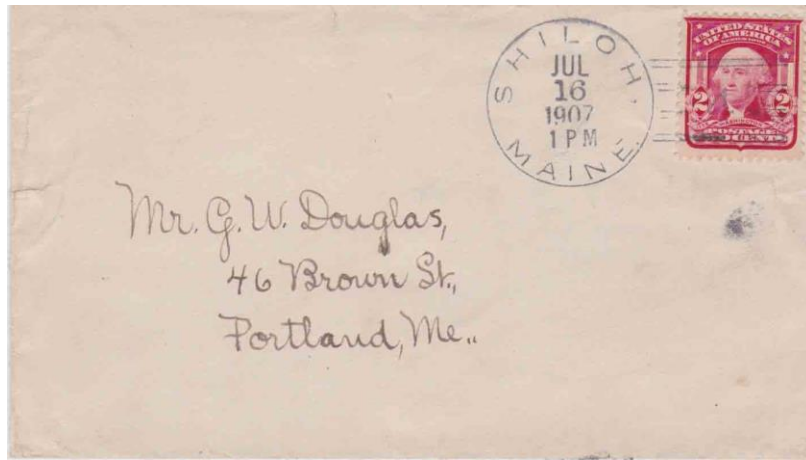
29 November 1898:
Charles E. Holland became Postmaster for Shiloh Post Office.

10 January 1901:
T. Albert Field became Postmaster for Shiloh Post Office.

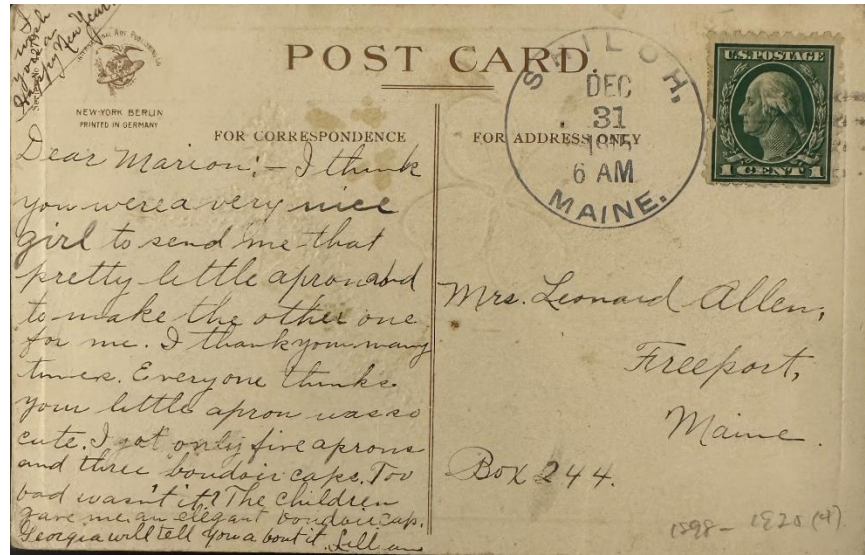
9 December 1904:
Nathaniel G. Brown became Postmaster for Shiloh Post Office.



4 March 1909:
The circular postmark for this registered letter is 28 mm in diameter with a Doane 2/1 killer.



1907 July 16:
The circular postmark is approximately 28 mm in diameter with a Doane 2/1 killer.
(click on the image to enlarge)



31 December 1915:

The circular postmark is 30.5 mm in diameter with a four-bar (A) killer.

1920 June 30:

Shiloh post office closed.

South Durham

3 February 1830:

The South Durham Post Office is established.

3 February 1830:

Thomas Tuttle became Postmaster for South Durham Post Office.

5 September 1835:

Thomas Estes became Postmaster for South Durham Post Office.

3 June 1841:

Francis A.B. Hussey became Postmaster for South Durham Post Office.

17 January 1843:

John Collins became Postmaster for South Durham Post Office.

7 June 1845:

Thomas Estes became Postmaster for South Durham Post Office.

29 May 1849:

Amos F. Lunt became Postmaster for South Durham Post Office.

30 March 1853:

Alfred Gatchell became Postmaster for South Durham Post Office.

31 March 1854:

South Durham Post Office becomes part of the newly formed Androscoggin County.

26 April 1855:

Jeremiah G. Duran became Postmaster for South Durham Post Office.

12 August 1861:

George Tuttle became Postmaster for South Durham Post Office.

25 January 1866:

Thomas C. Pinkham became Postmaster for South Durham Post Office.

17 October 1875:

Charles C. Smith became Postmaster for South Durham Post Office.

14 October 1885:

Amos F. Lunt became Postmaster for South Durham Post Office.

1905 May 15:

South Durham post office closed.

South West Bend

17 December 1835:

South West Bend post office was established as part of Cumberland County.

17 December 1835:

Joseph Merrill became Postmaster for South West Bend Post Office.

5 December 1837:

Rufus Jordan became Postmaster for South West Bend Post Office.

2 April 1839:

James Strout, Jr. became Postmaster for South West Bend Post Office.

3 June 1841:

William L. Harmon became Postmaster for South West Bend Post Office.

7 June 1845:

Rufus Jordan became Postmaster for South West Bend Post Office.



12 February, year unknown:
Manuscript Postmark

31 March 1846:

James Strout, Jr. became Postmaster for South West Bend Post Office.

27 June 1849:

Emery S. Warren became Postmaster for South West Bend Post Office.

3 September 1849:

South West Bend Post Office was renamed Durham (2) Post Office.

West Durham

3 September 1849:

The former Durham (1) Post Office was renamed West Durham Post Office.

7 January 1847:

Job P. Sylvester former Postmaster for Durham (1) Post Office, continues as Postmaster for West Durham Post Office.

5 September 1849:

William G. Hoyt became Postmaster for West Durham Post Office.

30 March 1853:

Elisha Strout became Postmaster for West Durham Post Office.

31 March 1854:

West Durham Post Office becomes part of the newly formed Androscoggin County.

31 March 1854:

Job P. Sylvester became Postmaster for West Durham Post Office.

4 December 1861:

Simon W. Miller became Postmaster for West Durham Post Office.



3 January 1864: (date confirmed by contents)
Manuscript Postmark

4 February 1865:

Charles W. Harding became Postmaster for West Durham Post Office.

30 March 1868: Charles G. Burgess

24 June 1870: Nathan Bangs

22 October 1878: Christopher Moses

17 December 1878: Nathan Bangs

3 October 1881: Charles D. Dow

7 November 1881: Samuel W. Wilson

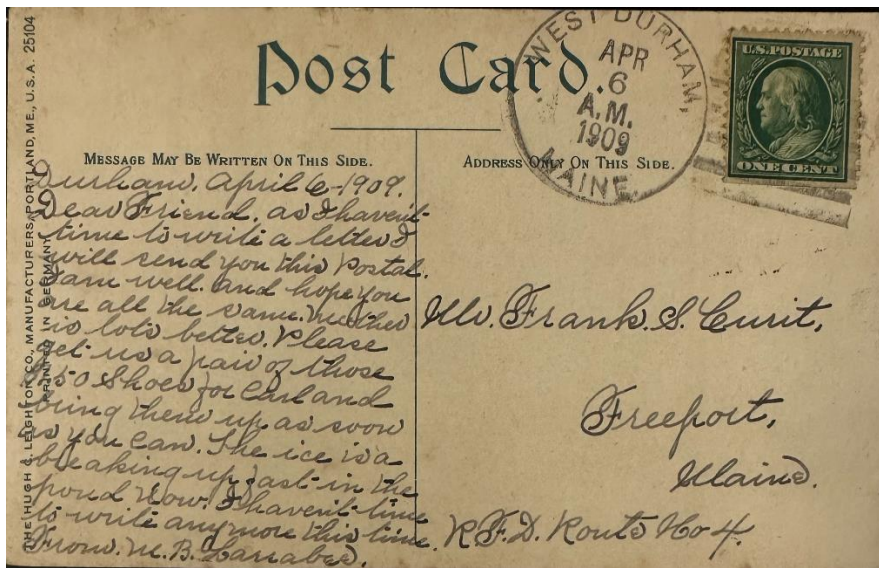
9 June 1884: Frank M. Soper

24 October 1887: Royal A. Rich

15 August 1894: William H. Merrill

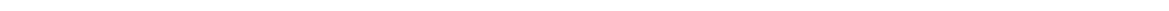


18 October 1907:
The circular postmark is 28 mm in diameter with a target killer.



6 April 1909:
The circular postmark is 31 mm in diameter with a four-bar (A) killer.

1910 July 30:
West Durham post office closed.



What does it mean when there is a (1) or (2) after the name of a post office?

Sometimes the numbers (1) and (2) appear after the name of a post office. These numbers indicate the (first) and (second) localities of post offices of the same name. If the post office name is used for two separate post offices in two respective villages at different times, they will be identified in this manner. These numbers do not necessarily indicate time periods.

These numbers do **not** represent numbered stations. Some larger places like Auburn, have postal stations with numbers. These are *not* the same thing as the post offices we call Auburn (1), Auburn (2), etc.

Credits:

This document is based on the original Durham Postal History web page compiled by the V. F. Thomas Co. (2021), with revisions and additions by James Husson and Brian Damien (2023).

Thank you for the contributions to this page by Kelvin Kindahl, James Husson, and the Strout family collection.

And thank you to the Waterville Stamp Club <https://thewatervillestampclub.com> for hosting this project.

Sources:

The Post Offices of Maine 2022, Maine Philatelic Society:

<http://www.mainephilatelic.org/books/TPOOM>

Durham [map] from the 1873 Atlas and History of Androscoggin County, Maine:

https://digitalmaine.com/atlas_androscoggin_1873/15/

Additional material, including links to official records of postmaster appointments, can be found at Sources for Researching Maine Post Offices, Postmasters, and Postal History: <http://www.mainephilatelic.org/books/post-office-sources.pdf>.