

# Montserrat: Postal History of a Caribbean Island

This exhibit follows the development of the Montserrat mail system starting as early as 1769, showing the first postal markings in 1790, and then the rather unusual history of the Post Office within the complex structure of the “Presidency” of Montserrat and the entire Caribbean Leeward Islands Colony comprising Montserrat, Antigua, St. Kitts-Nevis, Dominica, and the British Virgin Islands.

The Island of Montserrat is small enough in the philatelic sense that the exhibit covers the development of the postal history from the Forerunner Period in the 1760’s to the end of the World War II period in 1945-6, almost 200 years. The exhibit is organized as:

## Forerunners: Pre-Montserrat Postal Markings (1769-1790)

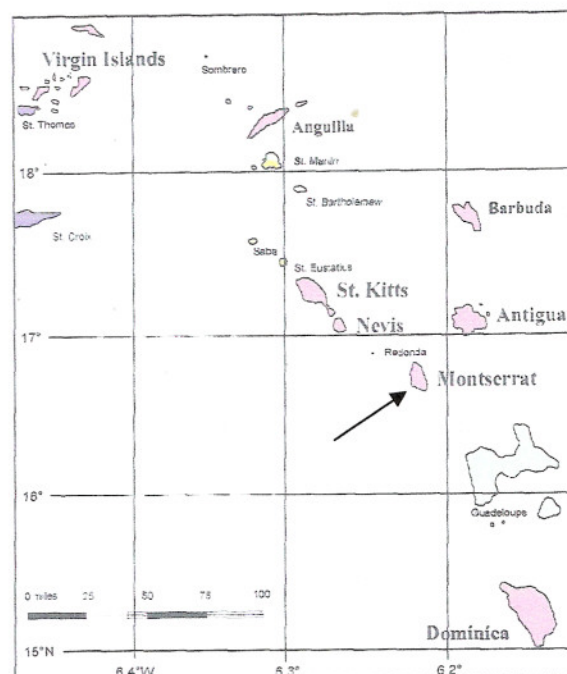
### Period 1: Montserrat Post Office 1790-1903

- Straight Line Handstamp (1790-1796)
- Horseshoe Handstamp (1804-1809)
- No Handstamps (1810-1836)
- Circular Datestamps (1836-1873)
- First Stamp Issues (1858-1889)
- Leeward Islands Period (1890-1903)

### Period 2: Reissue of Montserrat Postage 1903-1946

- Small Circular Datestamps (1903-1912)
- Large Circular Datestamps (1909 -1933)
- Plymouth Datestamps (1930-1946)
- Early Air Mail Period (1930-1936)
- George VI & World War II (1938-1946)
- World War II & Censorship (1939-1945)

**The Federal Colony  
of the Leeward Islands**



Postal History in the formal philatelic sense usually means the study of rates, routes, and markings of an area or country. Montserrat is of such a size that the term Postal History is used as well to encompass the philatelic history of the Post Office itself which covers a broader scope than just the rates, routes, and markings. Thus, the study of when various stamp issues as well as postal stationery were introduced and the political factors that influenced these issues are also discussed here as part of the island’s Postal History. Montserrat Ship, Packet and other Mail Rates are shown. Rates before 1790 are British Rates.

Any mail from Montserrat in all of the periods above is quite difficult to find. To exemplify, the literate population in Montserrat was estimated to be 240 in 1881 and dropped in succeeding decades.

The year of inception of each rate is shown, usually at the bottom of every page. Dates of individual covers are found at top right of each page.